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*Narratives in
Silius Italicus'
Punica*

PIETER VAN DEN BROEK

BRILL

Narratives in Silius Italicus' *Punica*

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Narratives in Silius Italicus' *Punica*

By

Pieter van den Broek



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Abbreviations of Editions and Reference Works

- Budé Miniconi, P., Devallet, G., Martin, M., and Volpillac-Lenthéric, J. 1979–1992. *Silius Italicus. La guerre punique*. 4 vols. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.
- CIL* 1862–. *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*. Berlin: De Gruyter.
- Delz Delz, J. 1987. *Sili Italici Punica*. Stuttgart: Teubner.
- Duff Duff, J.D. 1934. *Silius Italicus Punica*. 2 vols. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
- Forcellini Forcellini, E., Furlanetto, G., Corradini, F., and Perin, G., eds. 1940 [= 1864–1926⁴]. *Lexicon Totius Latinitatis*. Padua: Typis Seminarii.
- LSJ* Liddell, H.G., Scott, E., and Stuart Jones, H., eds. 1996. *A Greek-English Lexicon. With a Revised Supplement*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- OCD* Hornblower, S., and Spawforth, A., eds. 1999³. *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- OLD* Glare, P.G.W., ed. 1968–1982. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- DNP* Cancik, H., and Schneider, H., eds. 1996–2003. *Der Neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*. Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler.
- Roscher Roscher, W.H., ed. 1844–1937. *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*. Leipzig.
- TLL* 1900–. *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Texts and Translations

Latin authors are abbreviated in accordance with the *OLD* (e.g. *Ov. Ep.* 2.15), Greek authors in accordance with the *LSJ* (e.g. *Hdt.* 3.30). There are two exceptions: Virgil is referred to as *Virg.* (instead of *Verg.*), and lines from the *Punica* are usually not preceded by an abbreviation. Only in cases where ambiguity may arise, the abbreviation *Pun.* is used.

Unless otherwise indicated, the following text editions and translations have been used. I have freely adapted many of the translations; this is especially the case for texts from the *Punica*.

Callimachus

Harder, M.A. 2002. *Callimachus, Aetia: Introduction, Text, Translation, and Commentary*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Stephens, S.A. 2015. *Callimachus: The Hymns*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Catullus

Cornish, F.W., Postgate, J.P., and Mackail, J.W., revised by G.P. Goold. [1913] 1995². *Catullus. Tibullus. Pervigilium Veneris*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Mynors, R.A.B. 1958. *Valerii Catulli Carmina*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Curtius Rufus

Lucarini, C.M. 2009. *Q. Curtius Rufus Historiae*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Rolfe, J.C. 1946. *Quintus Curtius. History of Alexander*. 2 vols. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Herodotus

Wilson, N.G. 2015. *Herodoti Historiae*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Homer

Monro, D.B., and Allen, T.W. 1902–1912. *Homeri Opera*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Murray, A.T., revised by W.F. Watt. 1999. *Homer. Iliad*. 2 vols. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Murray, A.T., revised by G.E. Dimock. 1995. *Homer. Odyssey*. 2 vols. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Homeric Hymns

West, M.L. 2003. *Homeric Hymns, Homeric Apocrypha, Lives of Homer*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Horace

Fairclough, H.R. 1926. *Horace. Satires. Epistles. The Art of Poetry*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Wickham, E.C., revised by H.W. Garrod [1901] 1912. *Q. Horati Flacci Opera*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Juvenal

Braund, S.M. 2004. *Juvenal and Persius*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Livy

Walters, C.F., and Conway, R.S. 1967. *Titi Livi Ab urbe condita. Tomus III. Libri XXI–XXV*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Yardley, J.C. 2018. *Livy. History of Rome, Volume XI: Books 38–40*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Yardley, J.C. 2019. *Livy. History of Rome, Volume V: Books 21–22*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Lucan

Braund, S.H. 1992. *Lucan Civil War, Translated with Introduction and Notes*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Shackleton Bailey, D.R. [1988] 1997². *M. Annaei Lucani de Bello Civili libri x*. Stuttgart: Teubner.

Lucretius

Bailey, C. 1947. *Titi Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura libri sex. Edited with Prolegomena, Critical Apparatus, Translation, and Commentary. Vol. 1*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Martial

Shackleton Bailey, D.R. 1990. *M. Valerii Martialis Epigrammata*. Stuttgart: Teubner.

Naevius

Blänsdorf, J., Morel, W., and Büchner, K. [1927] 2011⁴. *Fragmenta poetarum Latinorum epicorum et lyricorum praeter Enni Annales et Ciceronis Germanicique Aratea*. Berlin: De Gruyter.

Nonnus

Fayant, M.-C. 2000. *Nonnos de Panopolis, Les Dionysiaques. Vol. 17: Chant XLVII*. Paris: Les Belles Lettres.

Ovid

- Alton, E.H., Wormell, D.E.W., and Courtney, E. 1978. *P. Ovidi Nasonis Fastorum libri sex*. Leipzig: Teubner.
- Miller, F.J., revised by G.P. Goold. [1916] 1977³. *Ovid. Metamorphoses*. 2 vols. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
- Mozley, J.H., revised by G.P. Goold. [1929] 1979. *Ovid. Art of Love. Cosmetics. Remedies for Love. Ibis. Walnut-tree. Sea Fishing. Consolation*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
- Showerman, G., revised by G.P. Goold. [1914] 1977. *Ovid. Heroides, Amores*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
- Tarrant, R.J. 2004. *P. Ovidi Metamorphoses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Wiseman, A., and Wiseman, T. 2011. *Ovid. Fasti. A New Translation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Pausanias

- Jones, W.H.S. 1933. *Description of Greece. Volume 3. Books 6–8.21 (Elis 2, Achaia, Arcadia)*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Propertius

- Goold, G.P. [1990] 1999. *Propertius. Elegies*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Seneca

- Fitch, J.G. 2002–2004. *Seneca. Tragedies*. 2 vols. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.
- Reynolds, L.D. 1965. *L. Annaei Senecae Ad Lucilium Epistulae Morales*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Silius Italicus

- Augoustakis, A., and Bernstein, N.W. 2021. *Silius Italicus' Punica: Rome's War with Hannibal*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Bernstein, N.W. 2017. *Silius Italicus, Punica 2. Edited with an Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*.
- Delz, J. 1987. *Sili Italici Punica*. Stuttgart: Teubner.
- Duff, J.D. 1934. *Silius Italicus Punica*. 2 vols. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Statius

- Hill, D.E. [1983] 1996². *P. Papini Stati Thebaidos Libri XII. Recensuit et cum apparatu critico et exegetico instruxit*. Leiden: Brill.
- Shackleton Bailey, D.R. 2003. *Statius*. 3 vols. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Tibullus

Lee, G., and Maltby R. [1975] 1990³. *Tibullus: Elegies. Introduction, Text, Translation and Notes*. Leeds: Cairns.

Valerius Flaccus

Ehlers, W.-W. 1980. *Gai Valeri Flacci Setini Balbi Argonauticon libri octo*. Stuttgart: Teubner.

Mozley, J.H. 1934. *Valerius Flaccus. Argonautica*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Valerius Maximus

Briscoe, J. 1998. *Valeri Maximi Facta et Dicta Memorabilia*. 2 vols. Stuttgart: Teubner.

Shackleton Bailey, D.R. 2000. *Valerius Maximus: Memorable Doings and Sayings*. 2 vols. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Virgil

Mynors, R.A.B. 1969. *P. Vergili Maronis Opera*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fairclough, H.R., revised by G.P. Goold. [1916] 1999. *Virgil*. 2 vols. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press

Markings

Intratextual and intertextual similarities are marked in the following way:

Bold

Indicates verbal similarities, when (parts of) Latin words are identical, have the same stem or are derivatives of the same root.

Indicates verbal similarities between Latin and Greek words with similar meanings.

Indicates sound similarities.

Blue

Indicates verbal similarities between Latin words with similar meanings.

When an intratext or intertext is cited in a footnote, similarities are only marked there and not in the citation in the main text.

Introduction

1 Embedded Narratives in the *Punica*

The time that a study on Silius Italicus' *Punica* had to start with an *excusatio* explaining why on earth the author had undertaken the effort of studying the allegedly most boring extant epic from Latin literature is long gone. Nor is it necessary to quote from Pliny's obituary the infamous words *maiore cura quam ingenio* ('with more care than talent', *Ep.* 3.7).¹ Since Scaliger this phrase has served as proof of Silius' mediocre abilities as a poet (if he even deserved that title).² Numerous articles, monographs, conferences, commentaries on single books, and an inevitable companion that have been published in the past two or three decades show that the *Punica* is a text that deserves serious scholarly attention and is able to evoke a lively debate. It is perhaps an exaggeration to speak of an *aetas Siliana*, but this millennium certainly has seen an enormous boost in Silian studies—in the slipstream of the renewed interest in the Flavian literature and age in general, which has been going on for somewhat longer.³

The *Punica* has often been read as a 'revisionist' epic—a return to a supposed Virgilian optimism after Lucan's dire epic on the civil war *Bellum Civile* or Statius' horror-epic *Thebaid*. How the message of *Punica* should be understood is an ongoing debate, some allowing for a more positive interpretation (e.g. Feeney and Vessey), others rather highlighting negative or ambivalent sides of

1 This rather derogatory evaluation "puts Silius on a par with Callimachus, whom Ovid described as 'strong in skill, if not in talent' (*Am.* 1.15.14: *quamvis ingenio non valet, arte valet*)" (Pomeroy 1989: 139 n.78).

2 Scaliger on Silius: *quem equidem postremum bonorum poetarum existimo; quin ne poetam quidem* (*De Arte Poetica*, p.324, as cited by Conte 1994: 492).

3 It goes without saying that current scholarship on the *Punica* is greatly indebted to earlier studies, such as the trail-blazing monograph of Von Albrecht 1964 and the sometimes undervalued commentaries on the entire epic of Spaltenstein 1986; 1990. Dominik 2010 gives a good overview of modern Silian studies, as does Augoustakis 2014a. See also Ariemma 2000a and Schaffernath 2010a: 9–10. A *Forschungsbericht* of the last decade is a desideratum. Recent monographs that concentrate solely on the *Punica* are Stocks 2014 on the portrayal of Hannibal, Haselmann 2018 on the motif of rivers and other water bodies, and Jacobs 2020, providing an introduction to Silius Italicus and his epic. Commentaries on single books or smaller units from the last decade include Bernstein 2017 on Book 2, Augoustakis and Littlewood 2022 on Book 3, Schedel 2022 on Book 4.1–1–479, Littlewood 2011 on Book 7, Lee 2017 on Book 8.1–241, Zaia 2016 and Bernstein 2022 on Book 9, Littlewood 2017 on Book 10, Telg genannt Kortmann 2018 on Book 12.507–752, Van der Keur 2015 on Book 13, and Roumpou 2019 on Book 17.341–564; more commentaries are expected to be published in the coming years. Augoustakis and Bernstein 2021 is a fresh English translation of the *Punica*.

the epic (e.g. McGuire, Dominik, and Tipping). The same, of course, applies to the debate on Silius' most important model-text, the *Aeneid*, in which both "optimistic" and "pessimistic" voices have been detected.

This study aims to shed more light on the complexity of the *Punica* by investigating four embedded narratives, demarcated passages that at first sight may seem to be at the fringe of the epic or that are at least less obviously connected to the main narrative of the Second Punic War.⁴ The narratives under investigation are, however, not merely loosely 'embedded' in the epic, but foreshadow or look back on elements that are found elsewhere in the main narrative. In this way, they serve as 'mirrors' of the main narrative, in that they reflect upon certain aspects of it. It is of course never a one-on-one reflection (that would mean that the embedded narrative would be an exact copy of the main narrative),⁵ but it is clear that they resemble other parts of the epic or even the epic as a whole. These connections between the main narrative and embedded narratives are forged by an intricate poetics of intratextuality, which functions in a comparable way as intertextuality does in Latin epic poetry: marked words or phrases can activate an intratextual link and subsequently invite a comparison.

At the same time, these embedded narratives are in dialogue with a plethora of other texts—they are as 'hyper-allusive' as the rest of the *Punica*.⁶ These intertexts give shades of meaning to the embedded narratives, and by proxy also to the main narrative. In this thick forest of allusions, it is easy to get lost. I hope that I will be able to guide my narratees so that in the end they still can see the wood for the trees. Since the texts of this study are narratives, which themselves are embedded in a narrative, I found it necessary and useful to combine my intra- and intertextual readings with narratological vantage points. Sometimes these different methodological outlooks may overlap, for example when

4 With 'main narrative' I mean the events told by the primary narrator, except for external analepses and prolepses. This definition is based upon the term 'main story' in De Jong, Nünlist, and Bowie 2004: XVI.

5 "If they resembled each other completely, we would have identical texts": Bal [1985] 2009³: 60.

6 I borrow this term from Zissos 1999: 300, who applied it to Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica*. Wilson 2004: 248 aptly calls the *Punica* "the most intertextual of poems". Modern scholarship does not question the intertextual richness of the *Punica* (see e.g. contributions in Coffee et al. 2020). This massive intertextuality has contributed to no small degree to reservations about Silius' poetical abilities, cf. e.g. Häußler 1978: 162 n.30 in a critique of Bassett 1955 and 1959: "so dünkt uns das mit minutiöser Geduld versammelte Material fast allzu üppig, das Netz der von Vers zu Vers sich rankenden subtilen Beziehungen und Anklänge allzu fein gesponnen: man staunt, wie Silius—gleichsam *poeta doctissimus* und universales Gedächtnisgenie—vor so viel Bäumen den Wald noch sehen und ein 17 Bücher langes Epos auf seine alten Tage hin zustandebringen konnte."

the narrator of the embedded narrative is a character in the main narrative or when he recalls a narrator from another text.

Embedded narratives are a standard feature of epic since Homer—think only of the long narrative of Odysseus on his adventures (Books 9–12 of the *Odyssey*) or that of Aeneas on the fall of Troy and his journey across the Mediterranean (Books 2 and 3 of the *Aeneid*). In these narratives, the protagonists (Odysseus and Aeneas) and the major themes (the journey of the hero) coincide with those of the surrounding main narrative. Other embedded narratives deal with other persons and events, and thus are not directly connected with the characters and plot of the epic, although there may be thematic connections. A good example is the song of Demodocus on Ares' adultery with Aphrodite (*Od.* 8.266–366). It is this type of 'free' embedded narratives that I will be examining. In fact, all embedded narratives in the *Punica* are of this 'free' kind; there is no example of an embedded narrative so strongly connected with the main narrative as those by Odysseus and Aeneas. This does not mean, however, that these 'free' embedded narratives are totally disconnected from the main narrative; the connections are simply less obvious. The nature of these embedded narratives fits into a larger pattern of digressions from the main narrative which abound in the *Punica*, such as aetiologies and ecphrases. This episodic structuring of an epic is reminiscent of Hellenistic literary preferences. It especially recalls the concatenation of stories in Ovid's bold epic experiment *Metamorphoses*. Wilson even contends that "there are many digressions along the way, often inspired by Ovidian prototypes, so that the Livian Punic war narrative can also be read as a unifying principle for a diversity of aetiological, mythological, creative-epic inventions, not dissimilar in concept to the *Metamorphoses*."⁷

It is thus only to be expected of my hypothesis that these embedded narratives, although they are no part of the plot, are both intricately connected with the main narrative and central to the understanding of the *Punica*. An

7 Wilson 2004: 237. Conte 1994: 495 argues that the digressive nature of the *Punica* "seems to produce strong centrifugal thrusts within a structure whose unity shows itself to be ever more formal and less substantial." For digressions as part of a 'centrifugal' poetics (as opposed to 'centripetal' poetics), see Heath 1989: 5 and 11 n.18. He concedes that Aristotle's theory of unity ("single and complete") implies that ornamental digressions can be part of a unity when admirers of this type of poetry expect it to be part of it (Heath 1989: 9 n.16). However, Heath dismisses 'allegorical' interpretations that explore thematic affiliations between digressions and the work as a whole. An interesting article that discusses Aristotelean ideas of unity is Friedrich 1983. For epic poetry he contends: "In epic poetry, the alternative is not unity or diversity; rather, the poet's aim is *unity in diversity*." (1983: 46).

increased interest in these narratives over the last years shows their critical potential. Next to articles on single embedded narratives, we have the survey of Schaffenrath on embedded narratives in the *Punica* and Walter's monograph on narrators in Flavian epic.⁸ This study builds on their research, but aims to provide a fuller exploration of embedded narratives in the *Punica*. The larger part of this book deals with the four case studies in which I provide close-readings of embedded narratives. They show how embedded narratives in the *Punica* operate in practice. In this introductory chapter, I first briefly discuss embedded narratives in general and in the *Punica* more specifically. Then, I give a first taste of my combined methodology of narratology, intertextuality, and intratextuality by applying it to the embedded narrative of Proteus. It shows that a narratological vantage point strengthens both intertextual and intratextual readings.

2 Embedded Narratives and Their Functions

The simplest definition of an embedded narrative, or tale within a tale, is “a narrative that is embedded in the main narrative, either told by the primary or a secondary (or tertiary etc.) narrator.”⁹ Simple as this definition is, it contains an important nuance to other definitions which suggest that embedded narratives are merely situated at a secondary narrative level.¹⁰ Embedding is, however, not necessarily a change in narrative level. This is the case when the primary narrator gives an external flash-back or flash-forward, narrating events which fall outside the time limits of the main narrative. The two examples of this type that I discuss, the narratives of Falernus and Anna, are distinguished from the main narrative by separate proemia. Other examples where the narrator

8 Schaffenrath 2010b and Walter 2014. Schaffenrath discusses embedded narratives told by secondary narrators who take over the role of the primary narrator; he exemplifies his ideas with a discussion of Marus' narrative on Regulus. Walter's study, encompassing all three Flavian epicists, investigates both primary and secondary narrators and the interaction between the different narrative levels. With regard to the *Punica*, it covers the embedded narratives of Bostar, Proteus, Anna, and Teuthras. Another related study is Fucecchi 2008 on 'epyllia', discussing the Regulus and Falernus episodes. Recent articles on single embedded narratives include Stürmer 2015 on Bostar, Vinchesi 2011 and Walter 2018 on Regulus, and Fernandelli 2009 and Chiu 2011 on Anna Perenna. Older scholarship has also shown a relatively large interest in this phenomenon. I mention here the seminal studies of Bassett 1955 on Regulus, Vessey 1973 on Falernus, and Santini 1991: 5–62 on Anna Perenna as notable examples.

9 This definition is taken almost literally from De Jong, Nünlist, and Bowie 2004: xv.

10 E.g. Bal [1983] 2009³: 56–57.

remains the same, show a change in the nature or ‘universe’ of the narrative. This is the case, for example, in the narration of dreams, in which events “take place in an alternate universe created by a character’s mind rather than being physically carried out in the spatial-temporal universe of the rest of the narrative”, as Nelles explains.¹¹ Examples of this type in the *Punica* are the dream of Hannibal (3.183–213) and the aetiologically motivated narrative of Pyrene, a nymph that was raped by Hercules in the mythological past (3.415–441). Both of these embedded narratives take place in another ‘universe’, but are told by the primary narrator.

Embedded narratives can have several functions: they can be explanatory, predictive, thematic, persuasive, distractive, and delaying.¹² When they serve as flashbacks (analepses) of events inside (internal or intradiegetic) or outside (external or extradiegetic) the main narrative, we call this the *explanatory* function. An example from the *Punica* is the embedded narrative of Dido’s sister Anna in Book 8, whose journey to Italy and transformation in a water nymph shed light on her role as instigator of Hannibal in the main narrative (see Chapter 4). Other embedded narratives are flash-forwards (prolepses) and can be called *predictive*. This is the case in prophesies of several gods, such as the oracle of Jupiter Hammon in Book 3 that is reported to Hannibal through an intermediary (see Chapter 1). In other cases, such prophesies are mainly intended for the primary narratees, as is the case in the embedded narrative of Proteus in Book 7, whose story is not heard by any character from the main narrative except the water nymphs, his direct narratees. Third, embedded narratives can have a *thematic* function if they share one or more themes with the main narrative. The longest embedded narrative of the *Punica*, about Regulus in the First Punic War, is a good example, as it deals with *uirtus* (‘virtue’ or ‘heroism’), *patientia* (‘perseverance’), *fides* (‘loyalty’) and *perfidia* (‘perfidy’), key-concepts of the epic as a whole (see Chapter 2). A fourth function is *persuasive*: this is the case when the embedded narrative is intended to influence the course of the main narrative. An example is Cilnius’ embedded narrative on the bravery of the three hundred Fabii (7.34–68). Cilnius, a prisoner of war, relates this story in order to arouse Hannibal’s anger and so to get killed. The primary narrator explicitly states this goal in the introduction to his speech: ‘this man longed for an end to his misery and to break his life’ (*hic ardens extrema malis et rumpere uitam*, 7.33). After Cilnius has finished his story of the Fabii, Hannibal, his direct narratee, sees through this

11 Nelles 1997: 132–133.

12 This list is taken from De Jong 2014: 34–35. Cf. also De Jong 2004: 10.

plan and refuses to give him what he wants: “In vain you arouse my anger, fool,” he said, “and seek to escape from your captive chains by dying” (*‘nequiquam nostras, demens,’ ait, ‘elicis iras | et captiua paras moriendo euadere uincla’*, 7.70–71). In this case, the persuasive function of the narrative is annulled, as Cilnius is forced to stay alive. The fifth function is *distractive*, when the narrative is primarily told to entertain. In the *Punica*, the second song of Teuthras in Book 11 is an example. When he is asked to entertain Hannibal and his entourage, the bard carefully ‘selected out of many the following song as the most graceful for the dinner’ (*haec e multis carpsit mollissima mensae*, 11.439).

Needless to say, embedded narratives can have more than one of these functions at the same time. In such cases, it is often useful to make a distinction between the function on the level of the secondary narratees (argument function) and on the level of the primary narratees (key function). The second song of Teuthras, for example, is *distractive* for the Carthaginians (argument function). The primary narratees, however, are able to see a persuasive function of this narrative that is lost to both Teuthras and his audience (key function). Venus, as the primary narratees have learned shortly before, has ordered her Cupids to enfeeble the Carthaginians with *Wein, Weib und Gesang* (11.405–409); Teuthras song fits perfectly into this divine scheme and manages to achieve the desired effect on the Punic army, as the primary narrator remarks when the bard has finished his story: ‘So then the Pierian Teuthras was breaking the breasts of these men, hardened by wars, by a Castalian song’ (*sic tunc Pierius bellis durata uirorum | pectora Castalio frangebat carmine Teuthras*, 11.481–482). From this point onwards, the strength of Hannibal and his army starts to wane. The hibernation in Capua amidst all sorts of luxury has affected the war spirit of the Carthaginians, as the primary narrator stresses when they set out from the city on a new campaign (12.15–19). Later in Book 12, Hannibal’s attack on Rome is checked by the gods, which marks the decline of Carthaginian dominance in the war and the epic and eventually leads to their defeat. The entertaining song of Teuthras therefore plays a significant role in changing the course of the main narrative, without the Carthaginians having been aware of it.

3 Embedded Narratives and Tactics of Delay

The *Punica* is full of sideways and digressions. The epic abounds in ecphrases, etymological vignettes, and embedded narratives. This is a feature that the *Punica* shares with other imperial epics. “The expansive, digressive nature of these

epics has always been seen as one of their worst features”, as Fowler observes.¹³ For a long time, digressions have been viewed as redundant or even disruptive for the unity of the epic.¹⁴ At best, they were seen as artful interruptions of the main narrative. Steele, for example, argues that variety was the most important function of the embedded narrative on Regulus: “Silius tried to vary the monotony of historical narrative by the introduction of a hero of the First Punic War.”¹⁵ Ribbeck, who in general is not unsympathetic about such digressions in the *Punica*, also stresses their distractive function. The aetiological narrative of Falernus in Book 7 is a “gemütliche Episode”, and “die hübsche Schilderung” of Pan in Book 13 is “[ü]berraschend und wahrhaft erquicklich”.¹⁶ Stärk, in an article on the prophesy of Proteus, looks for the motivation of such digressions in the biography of Silius, whom Pliny in *Ep.* 3.7 had labelled as an excessive φιλόκαλος (‘art connoisseur’) and a vehement worshipper of Virgil: “[D]as Interesse der poetischen Digressionen [ist] bei keinem anderen römischen Dichter mit der persönlichen Lebensweise, der eigenen ästhetischen Existenz so eng, so intim verbunden wie bei Silius.”¹⁷ He deems such narratives as second-hand creations (“*art après l’art*”), which are only loosely connected with the rest of the epic.¹⁸ The Proteus narrative lacks, according to Stärk, a meaningful embedding in the work as a whole: “Übrig bleibt aber die Beobachtung eines evidenten Mangels an Tektonik, an funktional sinnvoller Eingliederung ins Ganze des Werkes.”¹⁹

The view on these digressions *vis-à-vis* the epic as a whole has drastically changed, especially in the last few decades. This study aims to show for the embedded narratives how intricately they are connected with the main narrative. This said, there is of course a sense of ‘separateness’ to these embedded narratives, precisely because they are embedded in a larger whole. Due to their nature, they ‘pause’ the course of the main narrative and contribute to a sense of delay. Masters has convincingly argued that the delays in Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* should be seen as conscious acts of the narrator to procrastinate the continuation of the civil war. “[P]owerless as Lucan may be to prevent the final catastrophe, he has at least the power, as poet, of delaying it within his poem;

13 Fowler 2000a: 299.

14 A good example is Legras 1905: 152, who deems the digressions in Statius’ *Thebaid* unnecessary and disruptive for the unity of the epic.

15 Steele 1922: 325.

16 Ribbeck 1892: 200–202.

17 Stärk 1993: 142.

18 Stärk 1993: 143.

19 Stärk 1993: 139. A similar view is taken by Perutelli 1997, who argues that the Proteus narrative is merely ornamental.

we can conclude, then, that Lucan is anxious to display his reluctance to allow the action to proceed, and he achieves this by erecting barriers that are at once literary and artificial. But again there is more. Although Lucan is reluctant, he does yet continue the action; and in writing the poem he is allowing the civil war to be re-enacted, he *is* re-enacting the war.²⁰ *Mutatis mutandis*, this can also be said of Silius and his *Punica*. The narrator is consciously creating a re-enactment of the greatest defeats from Roman history, culminating in the Battle of Cannae that occupies the central books of the epic.²¹ It has been suggested that the 17 books of the epic refer to the duration of the war: 17 years (218–202 BC).²² The years of the war are, however, not evenly distributed over these books: the first two years up to the Battle of Cannae take up Book 1–10, whereas the other fifteen years are dealt with in the seven remaining books.²³ Compared to Livy, who treats the same events in his third decade, Silius is delaying the build-up to Cannae. As Fucecchi points out, *Punica* 1–10 correspond to Book 21 and 22 of the *Ab urbe condita*, while the remainder of seven books compresses the material of Book 23–30.²⁴ It is as if the narrator on the one hand is delaying the zenith of Hannibal's campaign, whereas on the other he is speeding up its nadir at Zama. Embedded narratives form an important means to bring about such retardation of the main narrative. It should come as no surprise, then, that most of these embedded narratives are clustered in the first eight books of the *Punica*, including the two longest ones, the story of Regulus in Book 6 of about 500 lines and the story of Anna Perenna in Book 8 (almost 200 lines). Ribbeck already suggested that there is a broader connection between the Regulus episode and the surrounding main narrative: "Durch die Ernennung des Fabius kommt der Krieg zum Stehen. So füllen das sechste Buch wesentlich episodische Rückblicke auf den ersten Krieg."²⁵ In Book 6,

20 Masters 1992: 5–6. Delay is also structural to Virgil's *Aeneid*, where the description of the war in Latium only starts in Book 7. On delay in imperial epic, see Fowler 2000a: 299–301.

21 For reflections on the *Makrostruktur* of the epic, see Kießel 1979: 211–217, T. Gärtner 2010, and Stürmer 2011.

22 Zinn in Von Albrecht 1964: 133 n.35. *Pace* Kießel 1979: 217 n.18. The decisive Battle of Zama took place in 202 BC, although peace was only made in 201 BC. I consider the *Punica* as a 'finished' work, with Book 17 as its final book. The number 17 is, however, very unusual for an epic. For a convenient overview of the discussion on *Makrostruktur* and the number of books, see Schubert 2010: 22–23 with n.39 and also Augoustakis 2010a: 9–10. Wenskus 2010 relates the number of 17 to its importance in ancient medical thinking.

23 Kießel 1979: 213.

24 Fucecchi 2008: 41.

25 Ribbeck 1892: 193. For a metapoetic reading of Fabius and his delay of the war, see Tipping 2010: 131–137.

the narrator copies, so to speak, the delaying tactics of the Roman general by inserting a flashback of the First Punic War. This poetical copycatting continues in Book 7, where we find the embedded narratives of Falernus and Proteus. They momentarily manage to pause the narration of the war in Campania at the same moment that Fabius tries to delay the war in the main narrative.²⁶ Interesting, too, is that these latter two narratives display generic modes other than ‘essential epic’, such as aetiology, theoxeny, elegy, and comedy.²⁷ So, on a generic level, too, the embedded narratives in Book 7 form part of an antimartial, anti-epic agenda.²⁸ But in spite of all these delaying tactics by both Fabius and the narrator, the martial exploits of Hannibal are unstoppable.²⁹

4 Embedded Narratives as *Mise en Abyme*: The Example of Proteus

Embedded narratives are fertile ground for literary self-reflexivity. As miniatures of storytelling they are often mirroring (parts of) the main narrative, the primary narrator, and/or its primary narratees.³⁰ In this way, they can represent the epic as a whole and shed light on the poetics behind it. In such cases, we can speak of an embedded narrative as a *mise en abyme*, to use the famous term coined by Gide.³¹ This reflexive aspect of embedded narratives is especially

26 The landscape of Campania, too, helps to delay and obstruct Hannibal according to Biggs 2019: 211–212.

27 On the Falernus narrative, see Chapter 3. The term ‘essential epic’ is a coinage of Hinds 2000: 223. On this idea, see also Heerink 2015: 18–19.

28 For the generic variety in the Proteus narrative, see Perutelli 1997. A similar mechanism is found in Book 14, the self-contained episode of Marcellus’ campaign in Sicily. Marks 2017 argues that non-epic digressions in that book delay the epic narrative. In the case of Sicily, the delaying tactics of the narrator turn against the invasion of the *Romans*.

29 This is quite similar to the Nemean episode, the longest *mora* in Statius’ *Thebaid*. For all its Callimachean associations, this is the place and moment where the war narrative takes off. Cf. Soerink 2014: 47–56 (providing a bibliography on *mora* in Statius in n.228).

30 Fowler 2000b: 90.

31 The most extensive study of the phenomenon is Dällenbach 1977 (English translation Dällenbach 1989). He quotes Gide’s original passage (Dällenbach 1989: 7) and then gives the following definition: “‘mise en abyme’ is any aspect enclosed within a work that shows a similarity with the work that contains it” (Dällenbach 1989: 8). Heerink 2015: 29 n.30 gives a convenient overview of this metapoetic technique, with references to classical scholarship. Bal [1985] 2009³: 62 suggests to use the term mirror-text instead of *mise en abyme*. De Jong 2014: 36–37 understands the term mirror-story as “[a]n embedded narrative that reflects the main narrative, as flash-back/flash-forward or thematically”, and considers it as a subtype of *mise en abyme*. Fowler 2000a: 301 points to the difficulties of relating the *mise en abyme* to the main narrative: “Often it will not be clear exactly how we are to relate

foregrounded when the secondary narrator is a bard, the traditional symbol of epic poets themselves. As Fowler puts it, “[a] poet within a poem is the most obvious form of *mise en abyme*.”³² Prophets are the other favourite surrogates for the poet, as both are *uates* that are imbued with prophetic powers.³³

As Schaffenrath observes, *mise en abyme* “ist eine bei Silius sehr beliebte Technik.”³⁴ With regard to the *Punica*, the phenomenon has most extensively been treated by Deremetz.³⁵ He applies the theory of Dällenbach to the two narratives of Teuthras in Book 11, arguing that they operate as *mises en abyme* on different levels: they reflect parts of the main narrative, the act of narrating, and the literary history that Silius tries to reconstruct.

I want to illustrate this phenomenon with the embedded narrative of Proteus (7.409–493), one of the examples of *mise en abyme* in the *Punica* that are listed by Deremetz.³⁶ As in the song of Teuthras, we can discern multiple aspects of *mise en abyme*. The most obvious one is the prediction of the course of the Hannibalic war. The Roman defeat at Cannae, Hannibal’s attack on Rome, and the Roman victories at the Metaurus and at Zama that are predicted by Proteus will all appear to be major events in the ensuing main narrative of the *Punica* (Book 9, 12.479–540, 15.493–823, and 17).³⁷ Proteus can be viewed as mirroring the primary narrator. This becomes especially clear in the introduction to his narrative:

tunc sic, euoluens **repetita exordia** retro,
incipit ambiguus uates reseratque futura (7.435–436)

the story to the rest of the work, and the interpretation of the stories may frequently be thematized into a more general hermeneutical problematic.”

- 32 Fowler 2000a: 29. I will therefore use the term *mise en abyme* not only for embedded narratives themselves, but also for secondary narrators that represent the primary narrator. Besides Fowler, Heerink uses the term in this way, for example when he discusses the secondary narrator Orpheus in the *Argonautica* as a *mise en abyme* of Valerius Flaccus (Heerink 2013: 274–276). Dällenbach, too, seems to allow for this ‘extended’ use of *mise en abyme*, when he includes “the story being told *and* the agent of the narration” (Dällenbach 1989: 43) as a possible object of reflexivity. Cf. also Deremetz 1995: 434–435 and 443–445.
- 33 The *locus classicus* for the poet as *uates* is Hor. *Ars* 391–401 (with Brink 1971: 391). This does not mean of course that every *uates* in Latin epic is a *mise en abyme* of the primary narrator / poet. See e.g. Lovatt 2007 for a nuanced stance on the role of *uates* in Statius. Walter 2014 pays quite some attention to the role of prophets as secondary narrators in Flavian epic and their relation to the primary narrator.
- 34 Schaffenrath 2010b: 119.
- 35 Deremetz 1995: 411–474, esp. 434–467.
- 36 Deremetz 1995: 446–447.
- 37 Deremetz 1995: 446.

Then the ambiguous prophet starts, unfolding the origins that again are repeated, and reveals future events.

These lines introduce Proteus and his narrative, but could well have been said of the primary narrator himself, who also intends to uncover the origins of the war in his *Punica*. Compare the introduction of Proteus' narrative with the last line of the epic's prooemium: *iamque adeo magni repetam primordia motus* ('and now I will bring back the origins of this great upheaval', 1.20). In addition, *exordia* and *incipit* signal an allusion to the very first word of the epic (*ordior*, 'I begin').³⁸

Proteus' narratees, too, can be interpreted as *mise en abyme* for the primary narratees of the *Punica*. When a Carthaginian fleet lands at Caieta, they might wonder whether this is a reversal of Aeneas' arrival at the same port, or even whether the *Punica* brings about a reversal of the *Aeneid*.³⁹ Cymodoce, the oldest of the Nereids, fires a barrage of questions at Proteus. These reveal that she is not only a spokesperson for the other nymphs, but also for the primary narratees: *quid Tyriae classes ereptaque litora nobis | portendunt? num migrantur Rhoeteia regna in Libyam superis?* ('What do these Tyrian ships and the coasts that have been robbed from us indicate? Are the gods migrating the Rhoetean empire to Libya?', 7.430–432). The 'coasts that have been robbed from us' recall the *litoribus nostris* from *Aeneid* 7.1. There, the Virgilian narrator apostrophizes Caieta, Aeneas' nurse who had given these shores eternal fame by her name (*aeternam ... famam*, *A.* 7.2). Does the *Punica* intend to reverse the eternal settlement of Trojans in Italy and bring them back to Carthage where they left in *Aeneid* 4? Proteus' answer will partly ease the minds of the nymphs and primary narratees: in the end, the Romans will be victorious, but first they will have to undergo the Battle of Cannae. And this is also a message of the *Punica* at large.

38 *Reserat* is another wink to the prooemium. The same verb is found there of Scipio Africanus conquering Carthage: *reserauit Dardanus arces | ductor Agenoreas* ('the Dardanian general opened the Agenorean citadel', 1.14–15). The victory of Scipio is one of the future events that Proteus is about to disclose. Littlewood 2011: 174 and Walter 2014: 314–316 rather highlight the markers of intertextuality in this passage (e.g. *repetita* and *retro*), which signal that Proteus will engage with the literary tradition. Proteus' prooemium evokes other epic prooemia. There is an echo of Ennius' prooemium to Book 7: 'we have dared to open <the sources>' (*nos ausi reserare <fontes>*, Skutsch fr. 210); for this phrase and its reception in Virgil and Statius, see Suerbaum 1968: 275–280. It also interacts with the prooemium of Statius' *Thebaid*, as Ruurd Nauta has suggested to me (cf. *euoluere*, *primordia*, and *retro* in *Theb.* 1.2–7). For *retro* and *reuoluam* as prooemial markers in the prooemium of the Anna episode in Book 8, see Chapter 4, section 5.

39 See Walter 2014: 307–308, who argues that the arrival of the Carthaginians at Caieta "für jeden Kenner Vergils ein Alarmsignal darstellen muss."

5 Theory and Method

The embedded narratives in this study will be examined on a narratological, intertextual, and intratextual level. It is my firm belief that the combined application of these three theoretical frameworks can yield rich and meaningful readings of embedded narratives in Flavian epic.⁴⁰ In this section, I will in brief compass review the ideas and terminology that I use from these theories, and in passing sketch the possibilities of these theories for embedded narratives. I will illustrate this, again, with the narrative of Proteus in *Punica* 7.

5.1 *Narratology*

The study of embedded narratives is inextricably bound up with issues of narrative levels; in many cases, not the primary narrator (the ‘poet’), but a character takes over the role of (secondary) narrator; in turn, they often introduce speaking characters of their own, with which we descend to the tertiary level. In order to say something about the meaning and interrelation of the main and embedded narrative and their narrators, it is necessary to keep clear track of these different levels of narration. The foundation of thinking about narrative levels is irrefutably the work of Genette;⁴¹ his terminology, however, is somewhat arcane for the uninitiated reader. Following De Jong, I will therefore use ‘primary’, ‘secondary’, and ‘tertiary’ to refer to narrative levels instead of ‘extradiegetic’, ‘intradiegetic’, and ‘metadiegetic’.⁴² When narrators play a part in their own story—which is often the case in embedded narratives in the *Punica*—I speak of ‘internal’ narrators; when they do not participate in their narrative, I call them ‘external’ (as for example the primary narrator of the *Punica*).⁴³ By analogy I will speak of primary, secondary, and tertiary narratees. To avoid needless confusion, I have refrained from adducing the concept of the implied author/poet, or implied readers/addressees. I do, however, allow myself the use of ‘Silius’ as an occasional metonym for the primary narrator of the *Punica*,

40 To my knowledge the combination of these three theories has not been applied to the *Punica* (at least not explicitly). Walter 2014 comes closest; although she does incorporate inter- and intratextual readings, she gives precedence to a narratological methodology.

41 Genette [1972] 1980; Genette [1983] 1988. An overview of theoretical thinking on narrative levels is given by Pier 2014 in the online *Living Handbook of Narratology*.

42 Schaffernath 2010b: 116 calculates that approximately 30 percent of the *Punica* consists of speeches on this secondary level. Tertiary narrators are most often encountered in embedded narratives (Schaffernath 2010b: 117 n.24).

43 De Jong 2004: 1–4 and 2014: 19–20. Genette’s corresponding terms are homodiegetic and heterodiegetic. See also Schmid [2005] 2010: 67–70 for a simplification of Genette’s terminology.

especially in places where narratology is more in the background of the discussion. Since De Jong's application of narrative theory on the epics of Homer, narratology has become one of the mainstream methodologies for studying ancient narrative texts.⁴⁴ Most of its terminology such as analepsis, prolepsis, and metalepsis, will by now be familiar to most classical scholars.⁴⁵

When we apply the narratological terminology to the Proteus episode, we can speak of the divine prophet as the external secondary narrator. The nymphs that come to him in distress and ask about the future are the external secondary narratees of his story. He addresses his daughters explicitly (*at uos, o natae*, 7.479), when he warns them to stay clear from the Adriatic Sea near the mouth of the Aufidus, because the Battle of Cannae will stain these waters with blood.

His narrative contains both analeptic and proleptic elements, as the introductory lines make clear: he will both reveal the origins (*exordia*, 7.435) of the current war and disclose its future course (*future*, 7.436). Indeed, Proteus starts with an external analeptic story on the Judgement of Paris, the Trojan war, and the quest of Aeneas (7.437–475). He then continues with an abstract, a general prophecy of Rome's empire (7.476–478), followed by an internal prolepsis of the Second Punic War (7.479–491). The end of Proteus' prophecy exceeds the boundaries of the main narrative: the last two lines are an external prolepsis about the Third Punic War and Rome's final victory over Carthage (7.492–493).

In his longest analepsis, the Judgement of Paris, Proteus introduces Venus as a tertiary narrator (7.449–457). She mirrors Proteus as a narrator, in that she addresses *her* children, the Cupids (*alloquitur natos*, 7.449). Like Proteus, she is able to foresee the future and predicts her own victory in the beauty contest (*uictoria nostra*, 7.455). This is an internal prolepsis in Proteus' narrative, as the sea-god will narrate Venus' triumph only a little later.

Proteus' narrative remains unobserved by any other character on the secondary level. This is emphasized when Proteus has finished his speech and the primary narrator makes a transition back to the main narrative:

quae dum arcana deum uates euoluit in antro,
iam monita et Fabium bellique equitumque magister
exuerat mente ac praeceptis tendebat in hostem. (7.494–496)

While the prophet revealed these secrets of the gods in his cave, the master of the war and the knights [i.e. Minucius] had already put from his

44 Starting with De Jong 1987.

45 A convenient glossary of narratological terminology can be found in De Jong et al. 2004: xv–xviii, while examples from Greek and Latin literature are found in De Jong 2014.

mind the warnings of Fabius and was pressing head over heels towards the enemy.

The secrets of the gods (*arcana deum*) are revealed to the nymphs *and* the primary narratees, but the agents of war in the main narrative are unaware of these warning prophecies and continue their doomed warfare.

5.2 *Intertextuality*

Intertextuality has proven to be a particularly meaningful way of approaching Latin poetry in general and Flavian epic in particular, and therefore hardly needs justification.⁴⁶ The *Punica* is one of the highly intertextual epics from this period that plays an intricate game of *imitatio et aemulatio* with the earlier literary tradition, both Greek and Latin.⁴⁷ This is especially the case for the earlier epic tradition and Virgil in particular.⁴⁸ The first two words of the epic (*ordior arma*) already signal this; Barchiesi reads these words as ‘I am beginning; here is a poem in the Virgilian tradition’.⁴⁹ From the outset it is clear that the *Punica* is a continuation of the *Aeneid*, a realization of Dido’s curse in *Aeneid* 4.621–629 and a resurgence of Juno’s wrath that was seemingly put aside in *Aeneid* 12.841–842.

The *Punica* is also a continuation of the epic predecessors of the *Aeneid*. This is made explicit when Ennius is staged as a soldier in 12.393–414. Apollo as god of poetry prevents the poet-warrior from being killed in battle. The god predicts that Ennius ‘will be the first to sing of Italian wars in noble verse and will raise their commanders to heaven’ (*hic canet illustri primus bella Itala uersu | attolletque duces caelo*, 12.410–411). This is of course an allusion to Ennius’ *Annales*, which among other events deals with the Second Punic War. Apollo’s words also recall the first line of the *Punica*: ‘I begin the war, by which the fame of the Aeneadae was raised to heaven’ (*ordior arma, quibus caelo se gloria tollit | Aeneadam*, 1.1–2). The implication seems to be that Silius is a true successor of

46 For intertextuality and Latin poetry, see Coffee 2013; for intertextuality and Flavian epic, see Coffee et al. 2020.

47 For an introduction to intertextuality in Silius, see Von Albrecht 1999: ch. 12, who deems it “the guiding principle of invention” of the *Punica*.

48 Cf. e.g. Bernstein 2018: 249: “Intertextual engagement with Virgil’s *Aeneid* is one of the dominant compositional characteristics of Roman epic of the first century CE.” See also Hardie 1993 and Hinds 1998.

49 Barchiesi 2001a: 129. It must be added that *ordior* is also suggestive of Roman historiographical tradition; cf. the use of this verb in Liv. *praef.* 12 f. with Feeney 1982: 6–7. Saliiently, Livy himself starts his *Ab urbe condita* with a hexameter and treats ‘poetical’ subject matter in his first decade.

this first epic poet to write in hexameters of *Roman* wars (not Greek wars, like Livius Andronicus); Silius can be said to pose himself as an epic poet in the true Ennian tradition of historical epic, as authorized by Apollo himself.⁵⁰ Upon reflection, the opening word *ordior* ('I begin') seems, however, to challenge the 'first-ness' of Ennius (*primus*): Silius begins to narrate the Hannibalic war. In this time of narration, the *Annales* still have to be composed, and their composition is only predicted. This makes Silius' *Punica* 'first'.⁵¹ Homer, too, appears as a character in the epic. In Book 13, Scipio meets the bard's ghost (13.778–797). The Roman hero wishes that the great bard of the Greek would still be alive, to sing of his deeds: 'If fates would permit that this poet would sing of Romulean deeds throughout the world, how much more would these same deeds impress posterity if he testified to them!' (*si nunc fata darent, ut Romula facta per orbem | hic caneret uates, quanto maiora futuros | facta eadem intrarent hoc ... teste nepotes!*, 13.793–795). Because Homer cannot fulfil this task, the wish paves the way for Silius to become a 'Roman Homer' for Scipio.⁵² In this way, Silius' intertextuality creates its own "immanent literary history": the position that the *Punica* should have in literary history is shaped by the *Punica* itself.⁵³

Another example of this 'do-it-yourself literary tradition'⁵⁴ is the way Proteus puts the *Punica* in line with the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*. As we have seen above, Proteus can be seen as a mirror of Silius, and his prophecy of the course of the war as a *mise en abyme* for the ensuing books of the *Punica*. Before the prophecy proper, the god traces the origin of the war back to the Judgement of Paris (7.437–471). His account is conspicuously long, especially when compared to the short references of Homer and Virgil to this event, both consisting of merely two lines (*Il.* 24.29–30 and *A.1.*26–27).⁵⁵ Proteus thus highlights a scene

50 On Silius Italicus and the tradition of Roman historical epic, see now Augoustakis and Fucecchi 2022.

51 Ennius, in turn, presents himself as the reincarnation of Homer. For this 'genealogy' of Homer, Ennius, and Silius, see Deremetz 1995: 470–474. For Ennius and Silius, see esp. Marks 2010a. Suerbaum 1968: 281 discusses Ennius' use of the '*primus* motif' in the prooemium to *Annales* 7.

52 Cf. e.g. Bernstein 2018: 248: "Silius accordingly creates an [*sic*] space for himself to be a new Homer, this time as the poet of Scipio's deeds." For the encounter of Scipio and Homer, see especially Van der Keur 2014.

53 For the idea of "immanent literary history", see Schmidt et al. 2001. For allusion as a way of shaping literary history, see Hinds 1998 and Deremetz 2001: 147: "la tradition n'existe que mobilisée par des textes; chaque texte, en choisissant ses modèles, en respectant certaines règles de production, institue et désigne lui-même la tradition vive à laquelle il prétend se rattacher."

54 I borrow this phrase from Hinds 1998: 123.

55 See Walter 2014: 309. The two lines from the *Iliad* are athetized by some.

which is only mentioned in passing by the greatest epic poets. Next, he reduces both Homer and Virgil to footnotes in his account of the epic past, permitting only four verses for an epitome of the Trojan war and travels of Aeneas (7.472–475).⁵⁶ Right after this summary, Proteus starts his prophecy of the Punic wars, for which he reserves much more space (7.476–491). This representation simplifies epic literary history to a succession of *Iliad*, *Aeneid*, and *Punica*. Silius' poem is framed as the logical successor of Homer and Virgil, and at the same time as the culmination of the epic tradition (yet in the making). It should be no coincidence that it is Proteus, a prophet who featured prominently both in Homer (*Od.* 4.349–570) and Virgil (*G.* 4.387–529), who constructs this honourable position of the *Punica* in the literary tradition.

The *Punica* also alludes widely to post-Virgilian epic. I have already pointed to the importance of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* as model for many 'digressive' elements in the epic, such as embedded narratives.⁵⁷ Again, the Proteus episode may serve as an illustration. Proteus, who since Homer is famous for his ability to change shapes, is an Ovidian figure *avant la lettre*. The changeable god plays only a marginal role in the *Metamorphoses*, also in the capacity of a seer (*Met.* 11.221–223; 11.249–256). Nevertheless, he is presented in the *Punica* as an Ovidian character. When the nymphs, in distress about the arrival of the Carthaginian fleet, come to Proteus' cave to ask about the future, the god duly shows his tricks, changing into a snake and a lion: 'he eluded them by taking various shapes' (*per uarias lusit formas*, 7.423).⁵⁸ Littlewood rightly tags *lusit* as a metapoetical marker;⁵⁹ in addition, I would suggest that the *uarias ... formas*

56 Lines 7.472–473 highlight the arrival of the Greek army and the fall of Troy. These events, marking the start and end of the Trojan war, are properly part of the Epic Cycle. The story of the *Iliad* is glossed over and only implied by mentioning the two limits of the war. Of course, Homer's epic contains references to the beginning of the war (e.g. the catalogue of *Iliad* 2) and foreshadows the fall of the city (e.g. Zeus conceding Troy to Hera in *Il.* 4.25–49, and Agamemnon stating that Troy surely will fall in *Il.* 4.163–168).

57 On Silius and Ovid, see especially Wilson 2004. Foundational studies that have explored Ovidian elements in the *Punica* are Bruère 1958 and 1959.

58 This is a nod to *and* an abbreviation of the literary tradition, only performing the first two of in total six metamorphoses listed in *Od.* 4.456–458. At the same time, this return to Homer is a 'correction' of Virgil, whose Proteus changes into fire, beast, and running water (*G.* 4.441–442). Pace Juhnke 1972: 393 and Perutelli 1997, who deny a direct influence of Homer in this instance. See Thomas 1988b: 219–220 for the Virgilian adaptation of the Homeric tradition in this passage. Littlewood 2011: 172 notes: "Silius' friendly seer plays along, *lusit* (423) with a few showy transformations, hissing like a snake and roaring like a lion." But lion and snake are two animals that are strongly associated with Hannibal in the *Punica*; this makes Proteus at first sight much scarier for the already alarmed nymphs (and also for the primary narratees) than Littlewood allows.

59 Littlewood 2011: 171–172. Pace Spaltenstein 1986: 474, who contends that "chez Sil., ces

are a transformation of and an allusion to the *mutatas ... formas* of the opening line of the *Metamorphoses*. This prepares the narratees for the ‘Ovidian’ narrative of Proteus, which has been viewed as a confrontation of ‘epic’ and ‘elegiac’ elements, especially with regard to the story of the Judgement of Paris.⁶⁰ Negotiations between epic and elegy are of course an important feature of Ovid’s poetic programme in the *Metamorphoses*,⁶¹ and embedded narratives such as the Proteus episode are likewise the main generic battlegrounds in the *Punica*.

Another important intertext is Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, the only other extant historical epic from the first century AD. The *Punica*, with a reintroduction of the divine machinery and mythological elements, has often been viewed as a restoration of the Virgilian epic principles that Lucan had expelled from his epic on the civil war. The *Punica* positions itself as an epic in the middle: the *medium bellum* from the prooemium (1.12) is not only a reference to the Second Punic War as the middle of the three consecutive wars against Carthage, but also suggests the epic’s intermediary position in between the *Aeneid* and the *Bellum Civile*. The Hannibalic war of Silius is as it were a prequel of the civil war between Caesar and Pompey of Lucan, just as it is the sequel of the *Aeneid*.⁶² The *Punica* refers to future events (Roman civil wars), while alluding to a work from the literary past (Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*).⁶³ That the *Punica* is foreshadowing the *Bellum Civile* can, again, be shown with Proteus’ narrative. After the epitomes of the *Iliad* and *Aeneid*, Proteus makes a statement about the rule of the Romans:

**dum cete ponto innabunt, dum sidera caelo
lucebunt, dum sol Indo se litore tollet,
hic regna et nullae regnis per saecula metae.** (7.476–478)

transformations n’ont pas de raison d’être, ce qui montre aussi le caractère convenu de ce passage.”

60 Walter 2014: 309: “Wie kaum ein anderes eignet sich dieses Thema für eine Erörterung der Frage, welcher Gegenstand epischem Erzählen angemessen ist und wo die Grenze zwischen Elegie und Epos verläuft.”

61 For Ovid and genre, see e.g. Harrison 2002.

62 “In singing of Roman history, Silius self-consciously constructs a continuation of the mythological time of Virgil’s *Aeneid* and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* and the historical time of Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*.” (Bernstein 2018: 263). See also Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy 1986: 2501–2502. For the relation between Silius and Lucan, see e.g. Meyer 1924; Brouwers 1982; Marks 2010b.

63 Barchiesi 2001a: 105–127 calls this type of allusion a ‘future reflexive’.

As long as sea-animals shall swim in the sea, as long as stars shall shine in the sky, as long as the sun will rise from the Indian shore, [their] rule will be here and there will be no limits to [their] rule over the centuries.

These lines have unsurprisingly been read as a confirmation of Jupiter's prophecy in *Aeneid* 1 that Rome will rule the world without limits.⁶⁴ At first sight, these lines are indeed meant as a reassurance for the nymphs who have come to their father Proteus in distress about the Carthaginian advance: his message is that, in the end, the descendants of Aeneas will rule the world. A closer look at these lines reveals, however, that this statement is perhaps less reassuring. Proteus is truly an *ambiguus uates* (7.436). First of all, it is not made absolutely clear, whose *regna* (note the plural) he means. In the context, a ready assumption is that he means *of the Romans*, but in fact he only states that in Italy (*hic*) there will be empire(s) (*regna*) over the centuries (*per saecula*). This allows for the possibility that *Roman* rule will eventually come to an end. And even if *regna* refers to eternal Roman rule, the plural might be more than just a poetic variation of *regnum*. Does Proteus make a veiled prophecy of Roman civil wars in the centuries to come with various Romans striving for *regnum*, or 'tyranny'? Here Lucan enters the intertextual game. In his first book, the poet states that Rome will continuously be haunted by civil discord (in fact, Rome came to being as a result of civil war, Romulus having killed his brother Remus). Lucan, like Proteus, uses a *dum*-clause to stress the perpetuity of Roman civil wars:

dum terra **fretum** terramque leuabit
aer et longi uoluent **Titana** labores
noxque diem **caelo** totidem **per signa** sequetur,
nulla fides **regni** sociis (Luc. 1.89–91)

As long as earth supports the sea and air the earth, as long as Titan revolves in his lengthy toils and in the sky night follows day through all the constellations, there will be no loyalty between associates in tyranny.

64 Compare for example the note of Littlewood 2011: 183: "The word *regna* conveys power and dominion, while *meta* and *saecula* signal allusions to Jupiter's pronouncement on the eternity of Rome (Virg. *Aen.* 1. 278–279 *his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono; | imperium sine fine dedi*). The continuation of the Virgilian speech touches Silius' epic closely." See also Walter 2014: 316.

Proteus employs similar cosmic images to stress the eternity of the *regna*: the sea, the sun, and the stars. *As long as* the cosmos exists, (Roman) rule(s) over Italy will exist. If we accept the Lucanian intertext as relevant for Proteus' prophecy, the *regna* might be taken as a reference to the civil wars that will plague Rome in the centuries to come.

This cycle of civil war will, however, come to an end. By means of an analogy Lucan uses the image of an apocalypse that will force 'so many centuries of the cosmos' (*saecula tot mundi*, Luc. 1.73) to collapse into chaos. Therefore, the limitless rule *per saecula* that Proteus speaks of is limited after all. When we take into account these allusions to the *Bellum Civile*, the prophecy of Proteus is in line with Jupiter's prophecy in *Punica* 3. There, the supreme god, addressing *his* daughter's worries about the Carthaginian successes, predicts a *long* rather than *eternal* rule for her descendants: 'your blood is holding the Tarpeian citadel and will hold it for a long time' (*tenet longumque tenebit | Tarpeias arces sanguis tuus*, 3.572–573).⁶⁵

A vexed problem is the relation between the *Punica* and the other Flavian epics. Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* is often dated in the Vespasianic era and is therefore regarded as a predecessor of the *Punica*, but the chronological relationship between Statius' *Thebaid* and Silius' epic is subject to debate.⁶⁶ Although it is certain that Statius finished his epic project earlier, this does not automatically cast Silius into the role of the *alluding* poet and Statius in the role of the poet *alluded to*. In fact, it is well possible that these poets influenced *each other*, having heard/read parts of the other's poem while composing their own. Therefore, it is hard, if not impossible, to pin down who alludes to whom.⁶⁷ In spite of these chronological issues, Flavian intertextual readings of the *Punica* can yield interesting observations and interpretations.⁶⁸

65 *Contra* Spaltenstein 1986: 478: "Le vers 478 contredit le vers 3,572 (où l'empire romain est dit limité dans le temps)."

66 For Silius and Valerius Flaccus, see e.g. Ripoll 1999 and Augoustakis 2014c; for Silius and Statius, see e.g. Ripoll 2015.

67 Agri 2020: 1–3 gives a convenient overview of the chronological debate. She herself only allows for mutual influence in Books 1–12 of the *Punica*, on the assumption that both Statius and Silius adopted a linear style of composition and completed approximately one book a year. For a similar 'work in progress' scenario in the Alexandrian Mouseion, see e.g. Heerink 2015: 15.

68 Examples are Lorenz 1968, Lovatt 2010, Heerink 2013, Soerink 2013, and Agri 2020. There is also interaction between the *Punica* and Statius' *Achilleid*. Ripoll 2000a: 105 and 2015: 440–441 gives examples where Proteus' account of the Judgement of Paris influenced Statius' *Achilleid*. Walter 2014: 310–312 on the other hand contends that Silius alludes to Statius.

So far, I have merely discussed Silius' intertextual engagement with other *epics*. Their prominence in my own and other intertextual readings of the *Punica* is understandable enough: they share both a comparable generic outlook (including generic crossovers) and a similar language (including vocabulary and metre). As we have seen above, Silius positions himself in this epic tradition. This focus on epic intertexts runs the risk of developing blind spots for intertextual connections with other genres, be it poetry or prose. Silius, in fact, uses a plethora of intertexts, as I hope to show in my case studies; I do not pretend, however, to be all-encompassing. It is impossible to detect, describe, and interpret all possible allusions in a highly intertextual epic like the *Punica*: "The critic, like the poet, can only bring finite resources to the infinity of discourse."⁶⁹

A name largely absent in this book is Livy. The influence of the third decade of the *Ab Urbe Condita* on the *Punica* can hardly be underestimated, but the embedded narratives in Silius' epic deal with stories that mostly cannot be found in Livy's work. An exception is Regulus' encounter with the giant snake, but Livy's account is unfortunately only transmitted in excerpted form (*Liv. Per.* 18).

The praxis of a modern intertextualist includes a digital component, such as the use of *Tesserae*, *Diogenes*, and the digital collection of the *Packard Humanities Institute* for checking or hunting down allusions. These digital tools have made it possible to track references that would otherwise perhaps have escaped notice and make 'distant' readings of texts possible that can hardly be performed by a human.⁷⁰ It makes one wonder how 'natural' this digital reading is, especially compared to an average reader from Silius' own time. But perhaps we should not worry too much about this artificiality: in the end, it is up to the reader, whether using digital tools or not, to accept a certain intertext and to interpret it.

It is also good to be aware of blind spots of digital intertextual methods.⁷¹ A potential danger is a strong focus on *verbal* allusions, because, for example, thematic similarities are not easy to trace digitally. Intertextual studies of Roman literature have traditionally concentrated on verbal markers of intertextuality, and my study is no exception to that rule. Nevertheless, I hope to show that the allusive practice of Silius also manifests itself on the level of sound,

69 Hinds 1998: 52.

70 See e.g. Bernstein 2020 and Coffee 2020. An interesting comparison between *Tesserae* and philological commentaries on Lucan's *Bellum Civile* 1 is given in Coffee et al. 2012.

71 Hinds 2020 provides some *caveats* of digital intertextuality, especially the trouble of detecting negotiations between Greek and Roman epic traditions. On Greek literary traditions in Flavian poetry, see Augoustakis 2014b.

metre, word order, narrative techniques, and themes. When it comes to terminology, I have allowed myself to freely use ‘allusion’, ‘reference’, ‘echo’, ‘influence’ when describing intertextual links. It goes without saying that I do not think we can know the (intertextual) intentions of the author, but I do think that the alluding poet is a “good tool to think with”.⁷² I hope that the reader can forgive my lack of philological fundamentalism in this matter.

Allusions in Silius are frequently signposted: markers in the text alert the reader that a reference to another text is made. One can think of ‘Alexandrian footnotes’, such as *fertur* or *dicunt*, words that denote repetition (*iterum*, *repeto*, *re-*, *rursus*), or old and new (*antiquus*, *nouus*). As they draw attention to the process of poetical creation, I usually refer to them as (metapoetical) markers or signposts of intertextuality.⁷³

5.3 *Intratextuality*

The third critical tool that I use is intratextuality. Although this term is not as widely used as its far commoner pendant intertextuality, I think of it as a useful means of looking at texts, especially for my purpose of relating embedded narratives to the epic as a whole.⁷⁴ Intratextuality looks at chunks of texts from the same text and the relations between them. As Sharrock puts it: “Reading intratextually means looking at the text from different directions (backwards as well as forwards), chopping it up in various ways, building it up again, contracting and expanding its boundaries both within the *opus* and outside it.”⁷⁵ The last two words betray the affinity with *intertextuality*. Tellingly, Fowler, in an article in the same volume, easily crosses boundaries between the two in his discussion of the Virgilian episode of Nisus and Euryalus: “With this we move on from intratextuality to intertextuality, but the two phenomena are of course constantly involved with each other.”⁷⁶ My contention is that *intratextuality* in

72 Hinds 1998: 50, in his apology of the term ‘allusion’. See Edmunds 2001: 164–169 for a critique of Hinds’ alleged “nostalgia for the presence of the author”.

73 For such metapoetical signposts, see Wills 1996: 30–31, who calls them ‘external markers of allusion’, and Hinds 1998: 1–5, who discusses the ‘Alexandrian footnote’ together with other forms of ‘reflexive annotation’. For *re-* see Hardie 2013: 115 and Casali 2017: 100 on *A.* 2.3 (*renouare*); for *rursus*, see Barchiesi 2001a: 139–140 and Heerink 2015: 7–8 on *V. Fl.* 3.596–597.

74 An example of an intratextual approach of an embedded narrative in Statius’ *Thebaid* is Van den Broek 2016.

75 Sharrock and Morales 2000: 5. Their collected volume is (still) the most important contribution to the theorizing and application of intratextuality. A recent volume that collects papers on intratextuality in Latin literature is Harrison, Frangoulidis, and Papanghelis 2018.

76 Fowler 2000b: 91.

the *Punica* roughly works in the same way as intertextuality does. It is often through verbal allusions that a link is forged between two passages from the same work, inviting a comparative reading. As is the case with intertextuality, it is up to the reader/narratee to decide what to do with the allusion: do the passages confirm each other, or does the allusion rather highlight a contrast? And these are of course only two interpretative paths that one can take.

Intratextuality is for me not a tool to uncover a supposed unity of the text. Just as intertextuality, as developed by Barthes and Kristeva, allows readers to freely associate, intratextuality is an act on the part of the readers. They should themselves decide whether a bit of text is a subdivision in the first place and whether there is a relation with other bits, the whole or not at all. In the words of Sharrock: "Intratextuality is about how bits need to be read in the light of other bits, but it is also about the bittiness of literature, its uncomfortable squareness-in-round-(w)holeness."⁷⁷ There is no need to see intratextuality as a totalizing quest for unity and coherence—nor does it exclude the possibility of reading unity and coherence. Of course, there is a big difference between intertextuality and intratextuality. The former offers a scope of possible associations that is in theory infinite, whereas the latter is restricted by what is regarded as the whole—in my case, the *Punica*.⁷⁸

To illustrate intratextuality in the *Punica*, let us for the last time go back to the Proteus episode. A strong and well-recognized example of verbal intratextuality is the diminutive *paruulus*, which describes the size of Cupid's quiver: 'a tiny quiver and a golden bow glittered at his shoulder' (*paruulus ex humero corytos et aureus arcus | fulgebat*, 7.443–444). This elegiac diminutive adds to the un-epic atmosphere of the arrival of Venus on Mount Ida and Judgement of Paris at large. The attentive narratee will signal its repetition in Venus' speech to her Cupids in Book 11, where, again, the word is applied to their panoply: *paruula nos arcu puerili spicula sensim | fundimus* ('we but gently launch tiny arrows from boyish bows', 11.393–394).⁷⁹ The strongest marker of intratextuality is of course the repetition of *paruulus*, at the beginning of the verse. In addition, *paruulus* is a repetition of a rare word, as these are the only two attestations in the *Punica*. But there are more echoes from Book 7 that support the intratex-

77 Sharrock and Morales 2000: 7.

78 This paragraph owes much to a discussion with Piet Gerbrandy about the (potential) implications and presuppositions of both intertextuality and intratextuality.

79 The intratextual echo has not escaped modern readers of the *Punica*: Spaltenstein 1986: 475, Barchiesi 2001b: 339 with n.37, and Walter 2014: 318–319. Littlewood 2011: 176 signals that the "neoteric atmosphere is heightened by the sentimentality of the diminutive *paruulus*", but seems to have missed the intratextual significance.

tual reference: note the repetition of *arcus* ~ *arcu*, the assonance of the last two words *aureus arcus* that is picked up by the alliteration *spicula sensim*, and the enjambement of the verb *fulgebat* ~ *fundimus* (both starting with *fu-*). Each on its own, these more subtle echoes can be dismissed as chance or irrelevant. What is important is their accumulation: they confirm the intratextual link, already signalled by the verbal repetition. Such an accumulation of echoes is something we will see more often in the *Punica*, in cases of both intratextuality and intertextuality.

For that matter, *paruulus* is a marker of an intertextual allusion, too. It is an echo of the famous Virgilian *hapax* in *Aeneid* 4.328, where Dido muses on having a baby with Aeneas, a ‘tiny Aeneas’ (*paruulus* ... *Aeneas*), who could have been a comfort (and substitute) for his father’s absence.⁸⁰ Her daydreaming runs counter to the epic *telos* of Aeneas, as decided by Fate, and therefore her wish does not come true. The stay at Carthage as a whole is an ‘elegiac’ *mora* of the main narrative: the hero has to abandon Dido and return to his mission of reaching Italy. *Paruulus* stands for a world that is the opposite of this epic quest. These elegiac overtones are also present in Proteus’ and Venus’ descriptions of Cupid’s armoury. But ironically, the weapons of Venus and her sons *do* affect the epic narrative—more than that, epic *depends* on them: Proteus goes back all the way to Venus’ enchantment of Paris to explain the origins of the wars that are fought in the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, and the *Punica*.⁸¹ In Book 11, we can see that these ‘elegiac’ powers of Venus are still significant for the course of war: the goddess orders her Cupids to weaken the hearts of the Carthaginians and they duly obey to her words. After their stay in Capua, Hannibal and his men are no longer capable of gaining victories over the Romans.⁸²

6 Scope of This Study

In the following chapters I will apply the combined method of narratology, intertextuality, and intratextuality to four embedded narratives from the *Punica*. The interpretation of narratological mechanisms, allusions, and intratextual references takes up quite some space. Of course, it would have been possible to deal with *all* of Silius’ embedded narratives, but that would have meant

80 Spaltenstein 1986: 475 and Barchiesi 2001b: 339 note the parallel.

81 Barchiesi 2001b: 339 n.37.

82 See Introduction, section 2 above. For the influence of Venus on the main narrative, see also Walter 2014: 318–319.

that I could only touch upon them superficially. Instead of being exhaustive in the number of embedded narratives that I discuss, I have therefore chosen to treat four of them in great depth.

The four case studies that I have selected are representative of the phenomenon of embedded narratives in the *Punica*. They show a variety both in function and narrative levels. Chapter 1 deals with Bostar's report to Hannibal of his visit to Jupiter Hammon's oracle and is an example of a flash-back with a flash-forward embedded (3.647–714). The long narrative of Marus on the Roman hero Regulus (6.62–551) is the subject of Chapter 2. This narrative is a flash-back or analepsis of events from the First Punic War; its historical subject-matter is very much in line with Silius' own main narrative on the Second Punic War (although it includes, like the rest of the *Punica*, elements that are less historical). Marus' narrative, containing speeches on the tertiary level of Regulus and his wife Marcia, alternates with interruptions of his direct narratee Serranus and the primary narrator. Chapter 3 discusses the story of Falernus (7.162–211), an example of a narrative with a strong aetiological nature, explaining the name and origin of Falernian wine.⁸³ This otherwise unknown farmer is visited by the god Bacchus. Like the story of Regulus, it treats events from the past, but now from a rather mythological perspective. Besides a flash-back to a mythological past, it also contains a prolepsis of events to follow in the ensuing books of the epic. This story is told by the primary narrator, but is clearly demarcated as an embedded narrative. The last case study (Chapter 4) deals with the story of Anna Perenna, Dido's sister (8.44–201). This analeptic story also deals with the mythological past and is at the same time a continuation of the *Aeneid*, like the *Punica* as a whole. It therefore forms an important link between both epics. The story is told by the primary narrator, but (unlike the narrative of Falernus) includes secondary narratives by Anna (8.81–103 and 8.116–159).

83 See especially Chapter 3, section 1 and 3. Two other (but shorter) examples of similar invented aetiologies on geographical names told by the primary narrator are the story of Pyrene (3.415–441), explaining the name of the Pyrenees, and the story of Thrasymennus (5.3–23), explaining the name of Lake Trasimene. In fact, all embedded narratives in the *Punica* contain one or more elements of aetiology. Bostar explains the name and workings of the mysterious Spring of the Sun (see Chapter 1, section 3.1 and 4.2), Marus introduces his narrative of Regulus as an explanation of the origin of his spear (see Chapter 2, section 4), and the narrative of Anna Perenna gives answer to the question why a Carthaginian goddess is worshipped by Romans (see Chapter 4, section 1). Besides embedded narratives, the *Punica* is brimmed with shorter aetiological explanations. Up to now there is no specific study of aetiology in Silius that I know of. On aetiology in Greek and Roman literature, see Walter 2019 and 2020.

Another criterium for selection was length; I have included the three longest ones: Bostar (68 lines), Regulus (489 lines), and Anna Perenna (158 lines). All the other embedded narratives in the *Punica* cover less than 60 lines. Of these smaller ones, I have selected the story of Falernus, because with its 49 lines it is the longest of the subgroup of aetiologies. This does of course not mean that the narratives that have fallen out of my selection are unsuitable for my approach.⁸⁴ In fact, I hope to show that my approach can yield interesting interpretations of all embedded narratives in the *Punica*, but for the time being I leave them for future research.

7 Relevance of This Study

In these times of ecological and climatological crises, geopolitical unrest, and existential uncertainty, one might ask why we should continue to study classical texts and Silius' *Punica* in particular. Is there any relevance in reading them? And: does this text-oriented study in any way contribute to debates on issues in the real world? With some hesitation and at risk of sounding too arrogant, my answer to both questions is yes.

First of all, Silius and his narratees were people of flesh and blood. They, too, lived in uncertain times, full of political unrest, war, and natural catastrophes—think of the eruption of Vesuvius in AD 79. Although the *Punica* relates events from about 300 years earlier, they would have read (or rather heard) that past against their own times. It is not too daring to assume that they could perceive the characters and events in the epic as reflections of contemporary events, such as the civil wars in AD 68–69.

In turn, classical texts like the *Punica* can act as mirrors for us as readers in the twenty-first century. They can help to reflect on modern situations like (always recurring) wars and questions of all times regarding leadership, grief, and generational trauma, to name a few. The fact that these texts were created and situated in a distant past, creates a gap. This gap makes them sometimes difficult to understand, but also creates a certain distance that render them useful as starting points of critical thinking and discussion of perennial or modern issues.

84 The embedded narratives that do not receive an in-depth analysis in this study are the two aetiological narratives by the primary narrator on Pyrene (3.415–441) and Thrasymennus (5.3–23), Cilnius' narrative on the Fabii (7.34–68), the prophecy of Proteus (7.409–493; discussed in this Introduction), Cinna's narrative on Cloelia (10.478–502), Teuthras' songs in Capua (11.288–302 and 11.440–480), Virrius' account on the origin of Apollo's temple at Cumae (12.88–103), and Dasius' story of the Palladium (13.36–81).

The present study inevitably touches upon issues that are relevant for the modern reader. Inevitably, because these issues are simply there in the text of the *Punica*. They are, however, not the focus of this study, which is very much text-oriented. Nevertheless, this textual approach is in a general sense also relevant for a wider public than classicists alone. It arose from general questions such as how a text is put together and how we should read it. I hope to demonstrate that texts like the *Punica* are not so easy to interpret and often turn out to be ambiguous—and that this is exactly what makes studying them worthwhile. In a world where mankind is increasingly leaving reading and writing to AI, it is important to show that slow reading of a complicated text from a real person can be rewarding.⁸⁵

85 I thank Piet Gerbrandy for encouraging me to address the wider relevance of this study.

An Ambiguous Oracle from the Libyan Desert

1 In the Footsteps of Alexander

‘Son of Zeus.’ This is how the priest of Zeus Hammon allegedly greeted Alexander the Great when he arrived at the shrine of the god in the Siwa Oasis.¹ Alexander travelled to this sacred place in the middle of the Libyan desert to obtain an oracle for his upcoming march against Asia. Whatever the authenticity of this event, the greeting of Alexander as son of the supreme god was regarded as a sign of divine favour, which would result in a successful conquest of Asia, and was even taken literally as proof of his divine descent.²

The visit of Alexander to this oracle has also found its way into the *Punica*. Alexander’s consultation is nowhere explicitly mentioned, but Hannibal sends his envoy Bostar to the same temple at a crucial point of *his* military enterprise, right after the capture of Saguntum and just before crossing the Alps at the very beginning of Book 3:

nec uatum mentes agitare et praescia corda
cessatum super imperio. citus aequore Bostar
uela dare et rerum praenoscerre fata iubetur.
prisca fides adytis longo seruat ab aeuo,
qua sublime sedens, Cirrhaeis aemulus antris,
inter anhelantes Garamantas corniger Hammon
fatidico pandit uenientia saecula luco.
hinc omen coeptis et casus scire futuros
ante diem bellique uices nouisse petebat. (3.5–13)

He does not stop to urge the minds of seers and prescient hearts on the topic of supreme power. Bostar is ordered to quickly set sail over the sea and to learn the fate of events beforehand. An ancient faith is preserved

1 Plutarch (*Alex.* 27.5) attributes this form of address to a flawed Greek pronunciation of the priest. According to Plutarch, the priest just wanted to call Alexander ‘child’ to reassure him. Instead of ὦ παιδίον he said ὦ παιδίος, as if he were saying ὦ παῖ Διός.

2 Plutarch (*Alex.* 26.6–27), Curtius Rufus (4.7.5–32), Arrian (*An.* 3.3.4), and Diodorus Siculus (17.49–51) mention Alexander’s visit to the oracle of Hammon. See Nicol 1936: 7–9 and Stürner 2015: 185 and 203.

by a sanctuary from an early age, where the horned Hammon sits on high, a rival of the Cirrhaean caves, and reveals the coming eras from his prophetic grove between the panting Garamantes. From here Hannibal sought an omen for his undertakings and knowledge on the future chances and the vicissitudes of war before their date.

Only at the end of Book 3, when Hannibal has just crossed the Alps and arrived in Italy, does Bostar return from Libya and give a report of his journey and the oracle of Hammon. This ring composition adds to the suspense of the story: both Hannibal and the primary narratees only hear the words at the very end of the book.³

There is no historical evidence for Hannibal's consultation of the oracle at this point of his military enterprise—Silius is the only source to mention it.⁴ In this chapter I explore the role of Bostar's narrative in Book 3 and the *Punica* as a whole. How does it relate to other prophecies? And more specifically: what does the narrative have to say about Hannibal and his relationship with the gods?

Before answering these questions, I examine the narrators and narratees of this episode, because this helps to see whether Bostar can be seen as a "Spiegel-oder Schattenbild" of Hannibal, as Walter has argued.⁵ After that, I discuss the intertexts of the passage. The Silian narrative resonates two other visits to the same oracle. Apart from Alexander's famous visit, Bostar's expedition recalls Cato's journey through the Libyan desert in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* 9, as has been widely acknowledged.⁶ Aeneas' encounter with the Sibyl in Virgil's *Aeneid* 6 is another oracular consultation that comes to mind when reading Bostar's narrative.⁷ In what way do Alexander, Cato, and Aeneas effect the characterization

3 Vessey 1982: 334 calls the mission of Bostar 'otiose', as Hannibal has already crossed the Alps: there is no way back. Hannibal did, however, not send his envoy to Hammon for getting divine permission, but divine information. On a narrative level, the oracle is a prolepsis of the battles until Cannae and especially of the battles in Book 4 and 5. On the ring composition of Book 3, see also Von Albrecht 1964: 197 and Küppers 1986: 189–190.

4 On this matter, see especially Stürmer 2015: 184–186, who explains that Bostar's visit might have been inspired by the tradition that Hannibal visited the oracle of Hammon in 193 BC, when he was living as an exile at the court of Antiochus III in Ephesus. He got an ambiguous oracle, saying that he would be buried in Libyssian earth, which he interpreted as Libyan earth: ὁ μὲν δὴ ἤλπιζεν ἀρχὴν τε τὴν Ρωμαίων καθαιρήσειν καὶ οἴκαδε ἐς τὴν Λιβύην ἐπανελθῶν τελευτήσειν γῆρα τὸν βίον ('so he hoped to destroy the Roman empire, to return to his home in Libya, and there to die of old age', Paus. 8.11.11). The oracle turned out to have prophesied his suicide as an exile in Libyssa, a town in Bithynia. See also Seibert 1993a: 514.

5 Walter 2014: 300.

6 E.g. Gibson 2005: 187–193, Walter 2014: 300–303, Stürmer 2015: 194.

7 Walter 2014: 303.

of Bostar and by extension Hannibal? In the final part of this chapter, I examine the intratextual relation between Bostar's embedded narrative and the main narrative of the *Punica*.⁸

2 Synopsis of the Narrative

After his crossing of the Alps Hannibal pitches his camp in northern Italy. At this moment his officer Bostar returns from Libya, where he has received an oracular response from Hammon (3.647–649). Bostar begins by narrating to Hannibal his journey through the desert (3.650–665). Then he describes the arrival at the grove of Hammon, where he met the priest Arisbas (3.666–674). An aetiological tale on the origin of the forest and shrine follows, put in the mouth of the priest (3.675–691). Bostar continues to relate how the god takes possession of the priest (3.692–699), before finally quoting the oracular response itself (3.700–712), which predicts fierce warfare in Italy and fear for the Romans as long as Hannibal is alive. This message raises the spirits of Hannibal's troops and makes them belligerent (3.713–714, the final lines of the book).

3 Narratological Structure

The embedded narrative, counting 68 lines (3.647–714), has three levels of narration. The primary narrator quotes the words of Bostar, who addresses Hannibal. Bostar in turn ventriloquizes the words of the priest Arisbas, who is a tertiary narrator with Bostar as his narratee. This tertiary level consists of 30 lines (3.675–691 and 700–712) or almost half of the total. Interestingly, Bostar and Arisbas are narratological look-alikes, as we will see: they mirror each other in their role of narrator.

We can even discern the merging of narrative levels, or metalepsis.⁹ This is the case when Arisbas utters the oracular message while being possessed by the god. The tertiary narrator—either Arisbas or Hammon—addresses at this point Hannibal, who is narratee on a secondary level. I will argue that this mirroring and merging of narrators and narratees has implications for the understanding of the narrative as a whole.

⁸ The recent commentary on Book 3 of Augoustakis and Littlewood 2022 has not been incorporated in this study.

⁹ For metalepsis, see e.g. De Jong 2014: 41–42.

3.1 *Bostar and Arisbas: Mirroring Narrators*

While Bostar narrates events he has seen and experienced in person, Arisbas recounts events that go beyond the geographical and temporal boundaries of the narrative. This role befits Arisbas, who as a priest is supposed to have knowledge of past and future. From his mouth the aetiological story on the origin of the oracle and the prophecy of Hammon gain more authority than they would have had if Bostar had summarized them.

The two narrators show close resemblance. Just as the primary narrator has introduced Bostar as *laetus* (3.648), Bostar in turn says that Arisbas tells the aetiological tale ‘with a joyful heart’ (*laetaque ... mente*, 3.674). As an eyewitness, Bostar is emotionally involved in the story he tells.¹⁰ This involvement can be felt in exclamations like *nouum et memorabile* (‘strange and remarkable!’) in 3.669, before he starts his description of the wondrous Spring of the Sun, and *ecce* (‘look!’) in 3.697 when he tells how the god takes possession of the priest.¹¹ His engagement is also clear from a phrase like *dumque ea miramur* (‘while we were still astonished by his words ...’, 3.692). This describes his reaction on hearing the miraculous story of Jupiter’s doves from the priest Arisbas. Like Bostar, this priest, too, is an emotionally involved narrator. An example is his use of the exclamation *admirabile dictu* (3.685) before narrating that the dove could actually utter oracles. This echoes Bostar’s own exclamation *nouum et memorabile* (3.669).¹²

Another similarity between the two narrators is their stress on the divine. Bostar states that the grove is ‘full of god’ (*loca plena deo*, 3.673) and that it is the god who takes possession of the priest: *ecce intrat subitus uatem deus* (‘look, the god suddenly enters the priest’, 3.697). Arisbas, too, stresses the involvement of the god in the grove, both in the past and the present: ‘Jupiter set foot in these forests’ (*calcatosque Ioui lucos*, 3.676); ‘a divinity is present in these trees’ (*arbor numen habet*, 3.691). These similarities between Bostar and Arisbas contribute to their mirroring qua narrators.

10 A characteristic of many narrators in the *Punica*, as Schaffenrath 2010b: 118 observes.

11 The particle *ecce* often marks subjective engagement of the narrator and is frequently used when supernatural events are narrated; see Dionisotti 2007: 84–85 and 90. Virgil has introduced the word in epic, using it 37 times in the *Aeneid*, of which 11 in Aeneas’ narration in Book 2 and 3. Silius also uses the word frequently, 44 times in total.

12 Besides the similarity in sound, *memorable* and *admirabile* share the same metrical *sedes*. The exclamation (*admirabile dictu*) appears eight times in the *Punica*, of which four times in embedded narratives (Arisbas in 3.685, Marus in 6.305, Cilnius in 7.44, and Teuthras in 11.440), and four times in the main narrative (14.66, 15.211, 16.363, 17.595). In all cases, the narrators use the expression as an introduction to events whose validity might be questioned by the narratees.

The second narrative of Arisbas is the oracular response itself. The divine message is uttered through the mouth of the priest, but who is the actual narrator? The god has in fact just entered the priest, as Bostar had just told, after which mysterious sounds and a loud voice were heard:

alta sonoro
collis trabibus uoluuntur murmura luco,
ac maior nota iam uox prorumpit in auras (3.697–699)

Tree branches clash against one another, a deep murmuring rolls through the resounding forest and now a voice, louder than the known one, bursts forth into the air.

Bostar observes that Arisbas does not speak with his normal voice, as it is louder than usual (*maior nota*).¹³ This observation of Bostar suggests that the prophecy from the mouth of the priest is that of Hammon himself.¹⁴

This is analogous with Bostar's own role as the middleman of Hannibal. After the first tale of Arisbas, Bostar had reported to the priest the questions that Hannibal had ordered: *mandatas effudi pectore uoces* ('I had poured out the words that had been assigned to me', 3.696). The repetition of the word *uox* stresses the similar role of both narrators, who are voicing someone else's words: Bostar repeats the *mandatas ... uoces* of Hannibal, Arisbas resounds the *uox* of Jupiter Hammon.

3.2 *Hammon and Hannibal: Metalepsis*

Not only the narrators, but also the narratees of the prophecy deserve attention. Bostar and his men are the (tertiary) narratees of this prophecy, which is confirmed by verbs in the second plural (*tenditis ... paritis*, 3.700) and the vocative plural *Libyes* ('Libyans', 3.701). From line 705, however, Hannibal himself is addressed (second person singular) and given instructions to invade Italy (imperative singular):

tu, qui pugnarum euentus extremaque fati
deposcis claroque ferox das uela labori,
inuade Aetoli ductoris Iapyga campum. (3.705–707)

13 Or any known human voice. See for the two interpretations Spaltenstein 1986: 261. In any way the adjective *maior* indicates a divine transformation of the priest.

14 This is very similar to the prophecy of the Sibyl in *Virg. A.* 6.49–50, on which see section 4.2 below.

You, who demand the outcome of war and the fated end, you who boldly set sail for glorious toils, invade the Iapygian field [i.e. Cannae] of the Aetolian leader [i.e. Diomedes].

Arisbas, or rather Hammon, no longer addresses Bostar and his men, but the *secondary* narratee Hannibal, as if anticipating that the message would be conveyed to him.¹⁵ Although the prophecy is an embedding to the third degree (the primary narrator tells of Bostar who in his turn reports Arisbas' words), the god is now speaking directly to Hannibal, thereby crossing narrative boundaries.

How should we understand this mirroring and metalepsis? Because Bostar and Arisbas are stand-ins for Hannibal and Hammon respectively, it is as if the latter two are communicating directly with each other, as if temporal and geographical boundaries have been dissolved: Hannibal can, as it were, be present in two places at once and hear Hammon's message directly.¹⁶ It also indicates Hannibal's ability to be in touch with the divine. This is in line with other instances in the *Punica* where Hannibal receives divine messages. Together with Scipio he is the character that gets closest to knowledge of his fate, although not everything is disclosed to him. The metalepsis also brings about a closer connection with the Alexander episode. Whereas the Macedonian general was present at the site and received divine information in person, Hannibal sent his officer. But because the god speaks directly to Hannibal, the Punic general *does* get his information virtually first hand.¹⁷

Only the primary narratees (and the primary narrator), however, know the full story, because they have shortly before heard the prophecy of Jupiter to Venus in which the god promises the Romans victory (3.571–629). In the final part of that prophecy, the supreme god apostrophizes emperor Domitian (3.607, 3.625), predicting his victories and apotheosis. In the case of Hannibal, this last narrative boundary—between the secondary and primary level—is not crossed: neither Bostar nor Hannibal has a complete overview of the Carthaginian fate.

15 Although the metaphor of 'giving sails' refers to the campaign of Hannibal, it echoes the sea travel of Bostar as well: *citus aequare Bostar* | *uela dare ... iubetur* ('Bostar is ordered to quickly set sail over the sea', 3.6–7).

16 See also Walter 2014: 300.

17 Walter 2014: 307 rather stresses the narrative *distance*: a secondary narrator (Bostar) quotes a tertiary narrator (Arisbas) who articulates the words of the god.

4 Intertextuality

Now that we have examined the narrative structure, I turn to the literary models that should be taken into account. As already said, these intertextual allusions create a link between Bostar and Hannibal on the one hand and Alexander the Great, Cato, and Aeneas on the other. Although Hannibal resembles these literary predecessors to a certain extent, there are also notable differences.¹⁸ I will argue that a consideration of these intertextual models in Bostar's narrative helps to shed light on the heroism of Hannibal and his relation with the gods in the preceding part of Book 3 and the rest of the *Punica*.

4.1 *Hannibal and Alexander*

Neither Bostar nor the primary narrator explicitly mentions Alexander's visit to Hammon's oracle. The consultation of this specific oracle suffices to evoke the reminiscence of Alexander. Bostar's description of the mysterious Spring of the Sun, which boils at midnight and is cold at noon, confirms the association with Alexander. This spring forms part of Curtius Rufus' account of Alexander's visit to Siwa, and specific verbal correspondences confirm that his *Historiae* are indeed an intertext of Bostar's narrative.¹⁹

Bostar locates the oracular shrine in a wooded grove: *lucos nemorosaque regna | cornigeri Iouis* ('the groves and the wooded kingdom of the horn-bearing Jupiter', 3.666–667). Nearby there is a spring:

stat fano uicina, nouum et memorabile, lympha,
 quae nascente die, quae deficiente tepescit
 quaeque riget, **medius cum sol** accendit Olympum,
 atque eadem rursus **nocturnis feruet** in umbris. (3.669–672)

In the vicinity of the shrine there is—strange and remarkable—water, which is lukewarm in morning and evening, but cold when the sun at midday kindles the sky and which is boiling again in the shadow of the night.

18 On this topic, see Vessey 1982; Gibson 2005; Stürmer 2015.

19 Spaltenstein 1986: 258. Although little is known about Curtius' life, most scholars date his *Historiae* at the beginning of Claudius' reign (AD 41), while others opt for a Vespasianic date. A minority suggests a post-Silian dating. For an overview of the discussion and further references, see Atkinson and Yardley 2009: 2–9.

Bostar's exclamation 'strange and remarkable' is also an intertextual signpost: from a literary point of view, the spring is not 'strange' (*nouum*), but in fact very well known, and therefore indeed 'worthy of being recorded' (*memorable*). The vocabulary of these lines alludes partly to Lucretius and Ovid, who describe the same spring.²⁰ Specific correspondences with Curtius alone confirm that his *Historiae*, too, should be taken into account:

est et aliud Hammonis nemus: in medio habet fontem (**Solis** aquam uocant): sub lucis ortum **tepida** manat, **medio** die, cuius uehementissimus est calor, frigida eadem fluit, inclinato in uesperam calescit, media nocte **feruida** exaestuat, quoque nox propius uergit ad lucem, multum ex nocturno calore decrescit, donec sub ipsum diei ortum adsueto tepore languescat. (Curt. 4.7.22)

There is also another grove of Hammon; in the middle of it is a fountain (they call it the water of the Sun): at daybreak its flow is lukewarm, in the middle of the day, which is very hot indeed, the same fountain is cold, as the day inclines towards evening it grows warmer, in the middle of the night it boils forth hot, and as the night approaches dawn, it decreases greatly from its nocturnal heat, until at daybreak it cools off to its normal temperature.

While Lucretius and Ovid focus on the bipolarity of the temperature (cold vs. hot), both Curtius and Silius add that the water is tepid in the morning and evening (*tepidus* ~ *tepescit*). The boiling of the water, absent in Lucretius and Ovid, also recalls the account of Curtius (*feruida* ~ *feruet*).²¹ Another possible echo of Curtius is *medius cum sol accendit Olympum*, which seems to be a conflation of the two phrases *Solis aquam uocant* and *medio die*—a clever way of

20 *Esse apud Hammonis fanum fons luce diurna | frigidus et calidus nocturno tempore fertur* ('near the sanctuary of Hammon is a spring cold during daytime and warm in night-time, as the story goes', Lucr. 6.848–849); *medio tua, corniger Ammon, | unda die gelida est, ortuque obituque calescit* ('in the middle of the day, horn-bearing Hammon, your water is cold and it grows warm at sunrise and dawn', Ov. *Met.* 15.309–310). Curtius' description also alludes to these two passages. Interestingly, Silius' allusions to Lucretius and Ovid (*cornigeri*, 3.667; *fano*, 3.669; *nocturnis*, 3.672) are words that Curtius does *not* echo. This might be a sign that the Silian passage looks back to Lucretius and Ovid through a Curtian lens.

21 Boiling also features in Herodotus' description of the same spring: *ἐπι δὲ μάλλον ἰὸν ἐς τὸ θερμὸν ἐς μέσας νύκτας πελάζει, τηνικαῦτα δὲ ζέει ἀμβολάδην* ('[the water] becomes increasingly warmer till midnight until it is boiling and bubbling', Hdt. 4.181.4).

referring to the spring's name without actually mentioning it. These echoes of Curtius' text serve to underscore the parallel between Hannibal and Alexander.

Both generals get instructions from the oracle. Alexander learns to which gods he should sacrifice to make his conquest of Asia successful,²² while Hannibal receives the order to continue his invasion of Italy. The most important difference, of course, is that Hannibal, unlike Alexander, is not recognized as the son of a divine parent. In fact, the final two lines of the oracle rather hint at Hannibal's mortality. The Romans will live in anxiety 'as long as Hannibal draws breath in the upper world' (*nec ponet pubes umquam Saturnia curam, | dum carpet superas in terris Hannibal auras*, 3.711–712). The conjunction *dum* suggests that there will actually come an end to Hannibal's life (and the fear of the Romans), while the words *superas in terris ... auras* stress that Hannibal now lives on earth, but will eventually descend to the underworld.²³ The word *curam* might actually recall Hannibal's last words before committing suicide as recorded by Livy: *liberemus ... diuturna cura populum Romanum* ('let us free the Roman people from long-lasting anxiety', Liv. 39.51.9).²⁴ Although for the time being Hannibal stirs great fear in Roman hearts, he remains a mortal and will not receive the same divine status as Alexander during and after *his* lifetime. The absence of this divine status makes clear that Hannibal is no second Alexander.

4.2 *Hannibal and Aeneas*

Bostar is a host (*hospes*, 3.668), reminiscent of Euander who received Aeneas in Pallanteum in *Aeneid* 8. Both are of old age and show their guest a sacred forest (*nemus*) that has been visited by Jupiter (3.675–676 ~ *A.* 8.351–353). The old men both tell an aetiological story about the places they visit and lead their guest into their house: *tectis inducit* (3.668) ~ *subter fastigia tecti | ... duxit* (*A.* 8.366–367). It is as if Bostar, and by extension Hannibal, is following in the footsteps of Aeneas.²⁵

22 Arr. *An.* 4.19.4. The *Anabasis* itself is dated after AD138, but its sources are of course older. See also Tarn 1948: vol. 2 354.

23 Perhaps there is a pun in the word *superas*. The adjective means here 'earthly' (*OLD* s.v. *superus* 2a), but another meaning is 'celestial, heavenly' (*OLD* s.v. *superus* 3). Hannibal is only a 'god' as long as he is among the living.

24 This allusion has been noted by the humanist Calderini; see Muecke and Dunston 2011: 278.

25 The correspondences between these two hospitality scenes have been pointed out to me by Ruurd Nauta. The scene from *Aeneid* 8 is also a model for the arrival of Serranus at Marus' hut in Book 6, for which see Chapter 2, section 4.1. For other hospitality scenes in the *Punica*, see Chapter 3, section 4 and Chapter 4, section 8.

Bostar's journey to Hammon also evokes the visit of Aeneas to the Sibyl, as many scholars have noticed.²⁶ Book 6 of the *Aeneid* comes especially to the fore when Bostar narrates how the god takes possession of the priest Arisbas:

dumque ea miramur, subito stridore tremendum
 impulsae patuere fores, maiorque repente
 lux oculos ferit. ante aras stat ueste sacerdos
 effulgens niuea, et populi concurrere certant
 inde ubi mandatas effudi pectore uoces,
 ecce intrat subitus uatem deus. alta sonoro
 collis trabibus uoluuntur murmura luco,
 ac maior nota iam uox prorumpit in auras (3.692–699)

While we were still astonished by his words, the doors were set in motion and opened formidably with a sudden creaking and a brighter light suddenly struck our eyes. The priest was standing before the altar, shining with his white garb and people flocked together in rivalry. Then when I poured out the words that had been assigned to me, look, the god suddenly enters the prophet. Tree branches clash against one another, a deep murmuring rolls through the resounding grove, and now a voice, louder than the known one, bursts forth into the air.

A clear analogy are the doors of Hammon's temple that open of their own accord, corresponding with the hundred openings of the Sibyl's cave: *ostia iamque domus patuere ingentia centum | sponte sua uatisque ferunt responsa per auras* ('and now the hundred mighty mouths of the house have opened of their own will and carry the oracles of the seer through the air', Virg. *A.* 6.81–82).²⁷

Arisbas performs the role of the Sibyl. Notice for example that Bostar calls him at this point of the narrative a *uates*, the same word that Virgil used twice for the Sibyl (*A.* 6.78 and 6.82). Bostar's observation *ecce intrat subitus uatem deus* (3.697) echoes the words of the Sibyl, when she notices the sudden approach of Apollo: *deus ecce deus!* (*A.* 6.46).²⁸ At this point, Arisbas' voice changes into one 'louder than the known one' (*maior nota ... uox*, 3.699). This picks up the metamorphosis of the Sibyl, who becomes 'taller to behold' and also does not sound mortal anymore: *maiorque uideri | nec mortale sonans*

26 Ernesti 1791: 175 and Ruperti 1795: 253 were the first to list parallels with *Aeneid* 6. See also e.g. Gibson 2005: 185–186, Walter 2014: 303–304, Stürmer 2015: 188–189.

27 Spaltenstein 1986: 260 and Walter 2014: 303.

28 In addition, the word *subitus* might be an echo of *subito* in *A.* 6.47.

(A. 6.49–50).²⁹ Arisbas' mirroring of the Sibyl is also clear from the prophecy itself. Arisbas predicts harsh wars in Italy in 3.701: *coepta aspera cerno* ('I see harsh enterprises'). A few lines later he adds the gruesome detail of 'horse reins dripping with streams of blood' (*multoque fluentia sanguine lora*, 3.704). This recalls the prophecy of the Sibyl in *Aeneid* 6: *bella, horrida bella, | et Thybrim multo spumantem sanguine cerno* ('wars, grim wars I see and the Tiber foaming with streams of blood', A. 6.86–87). In both prophecies the cruelty and bloodshed of future wars in Italy are emphasized.³⁰

Bostar and his men in turn are reminiscent of Aeneas and his fellow Trojans. This is underlined by the opening of the prophecy. The oracle starts with the words *tenditis in Latium* ('you are heading towards Latium', 3.700). This is an echo of Aeneas addressing his men after the sea storm in *Aeneid* 1: *tendimus in Latium* ('we are heading towards Latium', A. 1.205).³¹ Hammon's words almost mean: "You are heading for the same land as Aeneas did."

The association of Hannibal with Aeneas is again underscored by the prophecy's reference to Hannibal's mortality:

nec ponet pubes umquam Saturnia curam,
dum **carpet** superas in terris Hannibal **auras**. (3.711–712)

The Saturnian men [i.e. the Romans] will never be free from anxiety as long as Hannibal draws breath in the upper world.

The unusual phrase *carpere auras*, meaning 'to breathe, to be alive', is an echo of Venus' greeting of Aeneas, when he has safely landed on African soil:³²

quisquis es, haud, credo, inuisus caelestibus **auras**
uitalis **carpis**, Tyriam qui adueneris urbem. (Virg. A. 1.387–388)

Whoever you are, not hateful, I think, to the powers of heaven do you draw the breath of life, since you have reached the Tyrian city [i.e. Carthage].

29 Gibson 2005: 185–186 and Walter 2014: 303 note this parallel. Verbal repetition in the verse ending aligns Arisbas also with Orpheus, another priest mentioned in *Aeneid* 6: *ueste sacerdos | effulgens niuea* ('the priest, shining with his snow-white robe', 3.694–695) ~ *Threicius longa cum ueste sacerdos* ('the long-robed Thracian priest', A. 6.645).

30 Gibson 2005: 185–186 and Walter 2014: 304.

31 Walter 2014: 304.

32 Virgil and Silius are the only two classical authors to use this collocation; see *TLL* 3.494.39–41 s.v. *carpo*. Ernesti 1791: 176 and Ruperti 1795: 254 cite the allusion without comment.

In both cases, a divinity speaks about the protagonist as being alive (*carpere auras*), but the contrast is telling: Venus stresses the fact that the Trojan is still alive after a shipwreck, while Hammon hints at the Carthaginian's mortality.³³

All intertextual allusions that I have mentioned put Hannibal's mission on a par with that of Aeneas. Like the Trojan leader, Hannibal will go to Italy and wage terrible wars against the local people, in which he will prove to be victorious. But whereas subsequent prophecies in *Aeneid* 6 predict a glorious future *after* the war, not only for Aeneas and his fellow Trojans, but also for later generations of Romans, the glory of Hannibal and Carthage will not last long. Even during his own lifetime, the general will be confronted with a reversal of fortune.³⁴

4.3 *Hannibal and Cato*

Another important literary model for Bostar's narrative is Lucan's episode of Cato's march through the Libyan desert from the Syrtes towards Mauretania in Book 9 of the *Bellum Civile*.³⁵ The incorporation of a visit to Hammon's oracle, a detour to the opposite southeastern direction of about 600 kilometres, is an invention of Lucan, just as Bostar's visit to the same oracle in the *Punica* has no historical precedent.³⁶

The connection between the two episodes is already clear from the first part of Bostar's narrative, in which he relates his journey through the desert. He finds himself in a sand storm that closely resembles the one that Cato experienced in Lucan:³⁷

33 Note, too, that Hammon has switched from the second to the third person (*carpet*), now talking *about* Hannibal instead of apostrophizing him. Venus addresses Aeneas in the second person (*carpis*).

34 On the other hand, one can argue that Hannibal's fame lives on, of which the *Punica* itself is a good example. The last words of the Carthaginian general in the epic point in that direction: *non ullo Cannas abolebis, Iuppiter, aeuo, | decedesque prius regnis, quam nomina gentes | aut facta Hannibalis sileant* ('not in any age, Jupiter, will you wipe out Cannae and you will give up your reign sooner than people keep silent about the name and deeds of Hannibal', 17.608–610). In this (literary) sense, Hannibal is immortal. Silius is here voicing the well-known topos of poets making their subjects immortal; see e.g. Suerbaum 1968: 217–223.

35 Livy also mentions this journey, of which we only have a summary (Liv. *Per.* 112). For a comparison between the two passages in Lucan and Silius, see Walter 2014: 299 and Stürner 2015: 94–95.

36 See e.g. Morford 1967, Radicke 2004: 475, and Seewald 2008: 278. In Strabo (17.3.20) Cato travels along the coastline of the Syrtes.

37 A land storm in epic seems to be an invention of Lucan. See Seewald 2008: 22: "Mit der Be-

nos tulit ad superos perfundens sidera **Syrtis**,
 nos paene **aequoribus** tellus **uiolentior** hausit. (3.652–653)

The Syrtis, which splashes the stars, raised us towards the gods above and the land, more violent than the seas, almost swallowed us.

Cato, too, departs from the Syrtis, where the Roman fleet came to a standstill (Luc. 9.368–373), and he, too, is overtaken by a desert storm:

nam litore sicco,
quam pelago, **Syrtis uiolentius** excipit Austrum,
 et terrae magis ille nocens. (Luc. 9.447–449)

For more violently on dry shore than on the sea does Syrtis take the Auster's blast—he does greater damage on land.

The violent sand storm forces Bostar and his men to travel by night so that they can rely on the stars for navigation: ‘we steer out of these valleys by observing the stars’ (*has obseruatis ualles enauimus astris*, 3.662). This, again, recalls Lucan, who states that Cato and his men ‘found their way by the stars’ (*sideribus nouere uiam*, Luc. 9.495).³⁸ These allusions create the image of Bostar as a Cato-like figure, who defies the dangers of the desert, relying on his navigational skills, rather than on divine help.³⁹ But as the narrative moves on, it will be clear that Bostar cannot put himself on a par with his Stoic predecessor.

schreibung eines Wirbelsturms in der Wüste betritt Lucan episches Neuland und bereichert die Gattungstradition, die bis dahin nur die Schilderung eines Seesturms kannte.’ A land storm also appears in the first book of Statius’ *Thebaid*, when Polynices travels from Thebes to Argos (*Theb.* 1.345–389). There, Polynices is compared with a sailor, caught in a sea storm. The comparison of the desert with the sea occurs in several accounts in the Alexander tradition, as Stürmer 2015: 187 observes. Curtius, for example, compares Alexander’s journey to Hammon with sea travelling: *haud secus quam profundum aequor ingressi* (‘no different than if they had entered a vast sea, Curt. 4.7.11).

38 See Wick 2004: vol. 2 188 on other instances of the topos ‘navigating through the desert by the stars’. A parallel might be found in Curtius Rufus’ passage on Alexander’s journey in Bactria: *itaque qui transeunt campos nauigantium modo noctu sidera obseruant, ad quorum cursum iter dirigunt* (‘so they who cross these fields observe the stars at night, like sailors, to steer their course by’, Curt. 7.4.28). Nicol 1936: 8 quotes Alexander’s trip to the Siwa Oasis in Arrian (*An.* 3.3.4), a passage that is close to 3.655–662. There we read that the desert lacked physical landmarks by which Alexander could navigate, ‘just as seamen do by the stars’ (*καθὰ περ ναῦται τοῖς ἀστροῖς*).

39 Walter 2014: 300 rightly remarks that Bostar seems to have learned all this from Lucan’s

When Bostar arrives in Siwa, he meets Arisbas, the priest of Hammon. The latter explains why the oasis is so fertile in comparison with the surrounding desert. Bostar introduces the response of the old man as follows:

tum loca **plena deo**, dites sine uomere glebas
ostentat senior laetaque ita **mente** profatur: ... (3.673–674)

Next the old man shows the places full of god, soil that is rich even without a ploughshare, and in good spirit speaks thus: ...

These lines echo the way in which Lucan introduces Cato's speech to his soldiers, right after the Stoic general has *refused* to consult the oracle of Hammon:

ille **deo plenus** tacita quem **mente** gerebat
effudit dignas adytis e pectore uoces. (Luc. 9.564–565)

He, full of the god that he carried in his silent mind, poured forth from his breast words worthy of a shrine.

Instead of consulting the oracle Cato gives a quasi-oracular speech. The general himself is the source of divine (Stoic) wisdom, according to the Lucanian narrator (*deo plenus*), which he carries silently in his mind (*tacita ... mente*). His divinely inspired words—stating that god cannot be found in sacred groves, but only in the minds of men—match those of an oracle (*dignas adytis ... uoces*).⁴⁰ Bostar, however, argues that Hammon's oracular seat is actually divine (*loca plena deo*) and that the priest, who rejoices in his mind (*laetaque ... mente*), has a divine message to announce.⁴¹

The second line of the Lucanian passage is echoed when Bostar says: 'I poured out the words that had been assigned to me' (*mandatas effudi pectore uoces*, 3.696). This again creates a contrast. While Cato utters an almost oracular speech without actually consulting the oracle, Bostar obediently asks Arisbas for a prophecy as ordered to him by Hannibal. He is only a reporter, not like Cato an independent person.⁴²

Cato. The other epic travellers of that same desert, the Argonauts, get help from deities no less than three times (A.R. 4.1223–1619). See Wick 2004: vol. 1 112–19 on the relation between this Argonautic episode and Cato's journey in the *Bellum Civile*.

40 On Cato's divine status, see Tipping 2010: 231.

41 The verb *profatur* has often oracular connotations. See *TLL* 10.2.1732.66–1733.5 s.v. *profor*.

42 Walter 2014: 302–303.

The description of the grove that the priest gives is another marked contrast with Lucan's version. Arisbas describes the place as a *locus amoenus* with many lofty trees that provide ample shadow when he asks Bostar to honour the place:

has umbras nemorum et conexa cacumina caelo
calcosque Ioui lucos prece, Bostar, adora. (3.675–676)

Bostar, honour in prayer the shades of the forests, the treetops that touch heaven and the groves that Jupiter has trodden.

The cause of this lush vegetation in the middle of the desert is, according to the priest, Jupiter's personal involvement.⁴³ In the past, the supreme god sent a divine dove to the oracle, which started prophesying. Hereafter the forest spontaneously started growing: *mox subitum nemus atque annoso robore lucus | exsiluit* ('then the forest, a grove of ancient oaks, suddenly sprang forth', 3.688–689). The supernatural cause of this vegetation is underlined by the suddenness of its creation (*subitum*) and the fact that the oak trees, an atypical species for an oasis (*robore*), are immediately full-grown (*annoso*).⁴⁴

In the *Bellum Civile*, Hammon's grove has a very different appearance. The narrator states that the trees can barely protect their own trunks from the sweltering heat of the sun:

hic quoque nil obstat Phoebo, cum cardine summo
stat librata dies; truncum uix protegit arbor,
tam breuis in medium radiis compellitur umbra. (Luc. 9.528–530).

43 Lines 3.675–676 contain an allusion to a less favourable example of Jupiter's involvement. Arisbas unwittingly echoes Jupiter's own words when chasing Io: '*pete*', *dixerat*, '*umbras | aliorum nemorum*' (*et nemorum monstauerat umbras*) | '*dum calet et medio sol est altissimus orbe*.' ('he [i.e. Jupiter] said: "Seek the shadows of the high forests" (and he showed her the shadows of the forests) "now it is warm as the sun has reached its zenith"', *Met.* 1.590–591). The words *umbras nemorum* might also recall Cato's exhortation to his soldiers not to seek any shadow in the burning desert: *aut umbras nemorum quicumque petentem*, | *aestuet* ('and let him swelter, whoever [sees] me heading for the shade of trees', *Luc.* 9.399–400); Cato's speech also echoes Jupiter's words in Ovid.

44 Compare the sudden creaking with which the doors of the temple spring open, only a few lines later (*subito stridore*, 3.692). Old oak trees are often associated with sacred locations, for example in the story of Erysichthon, who violates an oak dedicated to Ceres: *stabat in his ingens annoso robore quercus | una nemus* ('there stood among these a mighty oak with strength matured by centuries of growth, itself a grove', *Ov. Met.* 8.743).

Here too there is no obstacle to Phoebus when the day stands poised at the zenith; the trees protect their trunks with difficulty: so short is the shadow driven by the rays towards the centre.

The lack of shadow is in sharp contrast with the lush and shadowy trees in Bostar's account. The ancient oaks that Bostar mentions are conspicuously absent in Lucan's account of Cato's journey. In fact, the narrator of the *Bellum Civile* explicitly denies that Libya has 'ancient oaks' to obstruct desert storms: *nec ruit in siluas annosaque robora torquens | lassatur: patet omne solum* ('[the wind] does not rush upon the woods and grow exhausted twisting aged oaks: all the soil lies open', Luc. 9.452–453).

Apart from the contrast in appearance between the two forests, their origin is also explained differently. Lucan's narrator first suggests that the spring near Hammon's shrine is proof of a divine presence: *esse locis superos testatur silua per omnem | sola uirens Libyen ... solus nemus abstulit Hammon* ('that there are gods in the place is proven by the lone green forest in the whole of Libya ... Hammon has taken the forest for himself', Luc. 9.522–523 and 525). He then immediately corrects himself by giving a rational explanation: *siluarum fons causa est* ('the cause of the forest is a spring', Luc. 9.526). In other words, the forest is perhaps located in an unusual environment, but its origin can be perfectly explained by a natural cause. This is of course the opposite from Bostar's and Arisbas' assumption that the forest came into being because of Jupiter's personal involvement.⁴⁵

These contrasts between Silius and Lucan have been read as evidence for the idea of the *Punica* as an anti-*Bellum Civile*: the idea that Silius reintroduces the gods in epic and "returns to Virgilian optimism".⁴⁶ This idea is in general an oversimplification. There are many overlaps between the *Bellum Civile* and the *Punica*, foremost the theme of civil war, as has been pointed out in recent Silian scholarship.⁴⁷ In the case of Bostar's narrative, Arisbas' capacity as priest explains his supernatural explanation of the vegetation. For him it is only natural to ascribe the creation of the grove to a divine force. This does not mean that this focalization of the tertiary narrator can automatically be attributed to the primary narrator. Moreover, it is difficult to argue that Bostar's narrative should be interpreted as a mainly positive appraisal of the

45 Note, too, that the spring in the *Bellum Civile* is not unusual in any respect; Lucan does not mention abnormal fluctuations in temperature, as most other accounts, including Bostar's, do.

46 Liebeschuetz 1979: 168.

47 See Marks 2010b: 128 with n.4 for further references.

gods. Although Bostar and Hannibal receive a divine message and understand it as an affirmation of the Punic cause, it hardly leads to a positive outcome for either Carthaginians or Romans. Rather, it indicates the manipulative involvement of the gods in epic warfare.

The contrastive allusions should not be read as a ‘correction’ of the Lucanian epic without gods. Instead, the *Punica* provides a confirmation for Cato’s distrust of oracular shrines in general and this one in particular—when we consider the *Punica* as a prequel to the *Bellum Civile*.⁴⁸ Although Bostar and Hannibal both attribute divine power to the oracle, Cato—as if he has read the *Punica*—knows that putting trust into this oracle is to no avail.

5 The Function of the Narrative in the *Punica*

Now that we have explored the intertextual models, I turn to the place of Bostar’s narrative in the *Punica*. I want to show that the oracle’s concealment of information is in line with prophecies that Hannibal has received earlier in the epic. Next, I will address the relation between the oracle of Hammon and the prophecy of Jupiter in the preceding part of Book 3.⁴⁹ Finally, I argue that a mirroring scene in Book 13 of the *Punica* makes clear that Scipio should be seen as the rightful successor of Alexander and Aeneas—a claim that Bostar’s narrative (implicitly) makes for Hannibal.

5.1 *Earlier Prophecies for Hannibal*

Hannibal receives his first prophecy when his father Hamilcar made him as an eight-year-old swear eternal hatred towards the Romans, as told in Book 1 of the *Punica* (1.125–137). The fact that both this prophecy in the early part of Book 1 and that of Arisbas at the end of Book 3 have the same number of lines (13) strengthens the idea that we should read them together.⁵⁰

48 For the idea of the *Punica* as an epic chronologically situated between the *Aeneid* and the *Bellum Civile*, see Introduction section 5.2. Chaudhuri 2014: 240–243 compares Hannibal in Silius to Caesar in Lucan, who also crossed the Alps.

49 Vessey 1982: 321 rightly observes that Book 3 is full of prophecies, starting with Hannibal’s dream, followed by Jupiter’s prophecy to Venus, and concluded by Jupiter Hammon’s oracle.

50 So Stürmer 2015: 196 n.50, although it should be noted that the prophecy in Book 1 covers *almost* thirteen lines, as the last two words of 1.137 fall outside the quotation. Stürmer 2011: 153–154 and 2015: 196 n.52 argue that the ring composition between the two prophecies marks Book 1–3 as introductory unit of the epic, instead of Book 1–2. On the other hand,

On a verbal level, too, the two prophecies mirror each other. After the oath of the young Hannibal, the priestess of Elissa examines the entrails of a sacrificial animal in order to predict the child's future. She foresees wars and mentions the shedding of blood:

'Aetolos late consterni milite campos
Idaeoque lacus **flagrantes sanguine cerno.**' (1.125–126)

I see the Aetolian fields covered far and wide with soldiers' corpses and lakes glittering with Trojan blood.

At the end of the prophecy the involvement of the gods in these wars is mentioned:

'magna parant superi. tonat alti regia caeli,
bellantemque Iouem cerno.' uenientia fata
scire ultra uetuit Iuno, fibraeque repente
conticuere. latent casus longique labores. (1.136–139)

'The gods above are preparing great things: the palace of high heaven thunders and I see Jupiter waging wars.' Then Juno forbade her to learn more of the coming fates and suddenly the fibres kept silent. Calamities and long-lasting hardships were concealed.

So before the priestess can tell more about the course of the war, for example the downfall of Hannibal, Juno forbids her to foresee more.⁵¹

Arisbas' prophecy mirrors this earlier scene. Hammon's priest, too, *sees* before his mind's eye future wars and gods participating in them: *coepta aspera cerno* | *Gradiumque trucem currus iam scandere* ('I see harsh enterprises and savage Mars already ascending his chariot', 3.701–702).⁵² He likewise stresses the bloodiness of the battles: *multoque fluentia sanguine lora* ('horse reins dripping with streams of blood', 3.704). This warfare culminates in the Battle of Cannae: *inuade Aetoli ductoris Iapyga campum* ('invade the Iapygian field

the Bostar episode also forms a ring composition with Bostar's departure at the beginning of Book 3. Perhaps we should think of the *Punica* as having multiple subdivisions.

51 The goddess did the same with Helenus in *Virg. A.* 3.379–380. But there, as Feeney 1982: 93 rightly observes, Juno did not want to encourage the Trojans, whereas here she does not want to discourage the Carthaginians.

52 For *cerno* referring to seeing in the future, see Feeney 1982: 90.

of the Aetolian leader', 3.707).⁵³ As in Book 1, Hannibal only gets a restricted view of the future, up until Cannae.⁵⁴

Earlier in Book 3, after sending off Bostar but before crossing the Pyrenees and Alps, Hannibal receives a second prophecy, when Jupiter sends Mercury in his sleep (3.163–221).⁵⁵ In this dream, Hannibal sees a giant serpent, which is bulldozing forests in its course. Mercury prophesies that Hannibal will crush the Romans, just as the snake destroyed forests:

bella uides optata tibi. te maxima bella,
te strages nemorum, te moto turbida caelo
tempestas caedesque uirum magnaue ruinae
Idaei generis lacrimosaque fata sequuntur. (3.204–207)

You see the wars you have wished for: mighty wars follow you, destruction of forests, and violent storms in a stirred sky, the slaughter of men, great destruction of the Idaean people and tearful fates.

Again, the prophecy only mentions Hannibal's victories and keeps silent about his eventual downfall and the Roman victory.⁵⁶

This dream is a key moment in the epic, inciting the Carthaginian general to come into action. One would perhaps have expected a pro-Carthaginian god or goddess to be Hannibal's motivator, rather than Jupiter who in the end promotes the cause of the Romans.⁵⁷ "[W]hy should he actually incite his people's

53 Neri 1986: 2042 lists a few other verbal parallels, e.g.: *trepidantia fumant* | *moenia* ('shivering walls are smoking', 1.129–130) ~ *trepidabunt Dardana regna* ('the Dardanian empire will shiver', 3.710).

54 Küppers 1986: 15 and 189–190. In the prophecy of Book 1, some events go beyond that moment, like Marcellus' death. See Feeney 1982: 91–92. Cf. the exhortation of Anna in Book 8, who also urges Hannibal to go 'to the Iapygian fields' (*Iapygios ... in agros*, 8.223). She was instructed to do so by Iuno in 8.30–38. There, the goddess does again not specify Hannibal's future *after* Cannae. Anna, however, explicitly states that Cannae will cause Rome's downfall. See Chapter 4, sections 2 and 16.

55 On this episode, see e.g. Vessey 1982: 329–331 and Brouwers 1985.

56 Note that the phrase *lacrimosa fata* is ambiguous: Hannibal would connect it naturally with *Idaei generis* in the same line, but Mercury might also hint at Hannibal's own *lacrimosa fata*.

57 The dream of Hannibal is mentioned in many other writers, such as Cicero (*Div.* 1.49), Livy (21.22.6–9), and V. Max. (1.7 ext. 1). Quintus, the narrator of the dream in the *De Divinatione*, ascribes the story to Silenus, the Sicilian historian who accompanied Hannibal on his campaign. The story could have originated from the Carthaginians, giving Hannibal's invasion of Italy a divine sanction; see Händl-Sagawe 1995: 144 for references. In this

enemy to the task of inflicting those disasters?”, Feeney asks rhetorically.⁵⁸ The answer is that Jupiter wants to put the Romans to the test by means of a replay of the Trojan war:

tum pater omnipotens gentem exercere periclis
 Dardanium et fama saeuorum tollere ad astra
 bellorum meditans priscosque referre labores ... (3.163–165)

Then the omnipotent father, intending to test the Dardanian people by perils and to lift the fame of savage wars to the stars and to repeat ancient toiling ...

This plan of the supreme god (*pater omnipotens*) to test the Roman people to the extreme is rather cynical and conflicts with the optimism that some have noted in Jupiter’s role in the *Punica*.⁵⁹ In fact, Jupiter intends to increase the fame of *savage wars*, a striking formulation, as one would rather expect that the god wants to increase the fame of *the Romans*. In the end, Jupiter prevents Rome from being destroyed by the Carthaginians. This is made clear when Jupiter assures his daughter Venus (as well as the primary narratees of the *Punica*) that the Romans will prevail.

5.2 *Jupiter’s Prophecy vs. Hammon’s Prophecy*

This prophecy of Jupiter (3.571–629) is juxtaposed to that of Hammon.⁶⁰ The narrator stresses their closeness in time, when he states that Hannibal was

‘original version’, it might have been Baal Hammon who appeared to Hannibal, as Walsh 1973: 163 suggests. In Quintus’ retelling, Hannibal is invited by Jupiter to join a council of the gods, in which he was given an unnamed ‘guide’ (*ducem*, Cic. *Div.* 1.49). Livy, followed by Valerius Maximus, refers to this guide as a ‘young man sent by Jupiter’ (*iuuenem ... ab loue ... missum*, Liv. 21.22.6). Silius’ identification of the guide as Mercury gives a particular Virgilian touch to the scene, as the same god warned Aeneas in *Aeneid* 4, as noted by Spaltenstein 1986: 196–197 and Foulon 2000: 678–680. Foulon 2003 suggests that Silius had Mercury Aletes in mind, a protecting deity of Carthage. For an overview and comparison of the different accounts, see Seibert 1993b: 184–191. For references, see also Wardle 2006: 231.

58 Feeney 1991: 305–306.

59 See e.g. Liebeschuetz 1979: 173: “But the core of old religion, the providential care of Jupiter Optimus Maximus for Rome, is proclaimed with greater assurance than ever.” See Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy 1986: 2503–2504 on the paradoxical idea in the *Punica*, like in Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, that “defeat is morally better than victory”; see also Von Albrecht 1964: 17–18.

60 Jupiter’s prophecy has received quite some scholarly attention. See e.g. Kiesel 1979: 38–46, Schubert 1984: 45–70, Ripoll 1998: 509–515, and Marks 2005: 211–217.

crossing the Alps *at the same time* ‘while Jupiter reveals the course of the future age’ (*dum pandit seriem uenturi Iuppiter aeui*, 3.630). Shortly thereafter, Bostar returns to Hannibal with the oracle of Hammon (3.647–649), to whose shrine he was sent in the beginning of the book: *corniger Hammon | fatidico pandit uenientia saecula luco* (‘the horn-bearing Hammon reveals the future eras from his prophetic grove’, 3.10–11). This means that this oracle must have been given to Bostar at the time that Hannibal was crossing the Pyrenees and Alps, so during or right after the conversation between Venus and Jupiter in heaven. The closeness of the two prophecies invites the narratees to compare the two.⁶¹ Are they presenting a similar or a different view on the future?

A first important question is whether the two prophesying gods have to be considered as identical or separate deities. There is in this case no easy answer. In general, Silius does not always make a clear distinction between Jupiter and Hammon.⁶² In the Bostar episode in particular, Hammon is consequently called ‘Jupiter’, suggesting that the two gods are identical.⁶³ On the other hand, it is only natural in Latin to call supreme gods of other peoples ‘Jupiter’, and this might also be the case here, as has been argued.⁶⁴ In other parts of the *Punica*, there is indeed a clear distinction between the two gods, for example when in the Battle of Cannae Hammon is cited by the primary narrator as one of the gods who sides with the Carthaginians (9.298). Likewise, when the Numidian king Syphax wants to make a treaty with Scipio, he suggests to call upon both ‘the horn-bearing and Tarpeian Jupiter’ (*cornigerumque Iouem Tarpeiumque*, 16.261) to ask for omens.⁶⁵

Walter considers the two prophecies in Book 3 to be very different and sees them respectively as symbols for the ‘Roman’ and ‘Carthaginian’ voices in the

61 E.g. Schubert 1984: 192, Walter 2014: 305, Stürmer 2015: 195.

62 On the status of Jupiter and Hammon, Schubert 1984: 59 observes: “Silius läßt offen, ob er Jupiter und Hammon als letztendlich identische Gottheiten sieht oder nicht.”

63 All narrators of the episode do this. The primary narrator: *Iouis* (3.647), *Tonante* (3.649); Bostar: *cornigeri Iouis* (3.667); and Arisbas: *Ioui* (3.676), *Iouis* (3.677). Note that the primary narrator called the god by his Carthaginian name in the beginning of Book 3: *corniger Hammon* (3.10).

64 Schubert 1984: 123 and 1986: 60–61. Caneva 2012 discusses the Greek ‘interpretation’ of Hammon from Herodotus to Alexander the Great. He assumes an early assimilation of Hammon, Amon and Zeus, as shown by Pindar *Pyth.* 4.14–16. He convincingly argues that Hammon is used as a divine legitimization of Alexander’s imperial world rule and that ever since the association between Alexander and Hammon survived, even when in historical times the oracle lost its importance as a cult site (cf. Strabo 17.43).

65 These turn out to be unfavourable. In the end, Syphax was taken captive by Scipio for siding with Carthage (17.140–145).

epic.⁶⁶ She considers the *aetion* of the oracle, as told by the priest Arisbas, to be another symbol of this split voice. The two doves of Jupiter, departing from Thebes, flew in different directions and founded the oracles of Dodona and Siwa. The former ‘fills the Dodonian oak with prophetic murmuring’ (*implet fatidico Dodonida murmure quercum*, 3.680), while the latter is explicitly framed as an oracle for the local ‘Marmarican peoples’ (*Marmaricis ... populis*, 3.687).⁶⁷ Walter suggests that the Dodonian oracle stands for the voice of the ‘Roman’ Jupiter, and Siwa for that of the ‘Carthaginian’, even though these twin doves (*geminas ... columbas*, 3.678) share the same origin. However, it is not so easy to make this distinction between the two oracles; the oracle of Dodona is neither consulted by Romans, nor said to be specifically Roman. Stürner rather sees the god at Siwa as another manifestation of the same Jupiter that is now comforting Venus. He also does not see a huge difference between the two prophecies and argues rightly that the oracular message of Hammon is not conflicting with Jupiter’s earlier prophecy in Book 3, as the former does not give a full disclosure of the future either.⁶⁸

Thebes being mentioned as the place of origin of the two doves can be regarded as an intertextual signpost to the *Thebaid* of Statius, in which the two oracles are twice mentioned in close combination.⁶⁹ In Book 3 of that epic, the seer Amphiarus, while addressing the supreme god (*Iuppiter omnipotens*, *Theb.* 3.471), states that *all* oracles are an inadequate way of revealing the future in comparison to interpreting the signs of birds. When Amphiarus lists important oracles that have to yield to bird augury, he juxtaposes the Dodonian oak and Hammon in the same line: *aut frondes lucis quas fama Molossis | Chaonias sonuisse tibi, licet aridus Hammon | inuideat* (‘or the Chaonian leaves in the Molossian groves that are said to sound on your behalf, although parched Hammon is envious’, *Theb.* 3.475–477).⁷⁰ The second time that they are mentioned

66 Walter 2014: 305–307.

67 The story of the two doves originates from Herodotus (2.55), who talks about Thebes in Egypt, while Silius thinks of Thebes in Greece. This can be deduced from 3.681, where the dove, heading for Siwa, flies over the Carpathian Sea that lies between Crete and Rhodes. See Spaltenstein 1986: 258.

68 Stürner 2015: 195.

69 See also Walter 2014: 306, who links their origin from Thebes with the theme of civil war. Of course, there is also a possibility that Statius alluded to Silius. For the issue of Flavian intertextuality, see Introduction, section 5.2.

70 Snijder 1968: 192–193 has the following comment: “What is striking is that among the holy places are mentioned the sanctuaries of Dodona and Hammon, which were dedicated to Jupiter. This proves that only the quality of the oracles given by the priests of the ancient Greek shrines are meant, not the oracular abilities of the gods concerned, for this would be the same as saying that Jupiter is inferior to himself.”

together is in Book 8, when Amphiaraus has just died and his mourning comrades say that from now on all other oracular priests will be silent, including those in Dodona and Siwa:

quin et **cornigeri** uatis nemus atque Molosso
quercus anhela Ioui Troianaque Thymbra tacebit. (*Theb.* 8.201–202)

Yes, even the forest of the horn-bearing priest and Jupiter's panting oak in Molossus and Trojan Thymbra will be silent.

In one way, the oracular response that Bostar brings to Hannibal proves the words of Amphiaraus' friends to be untrue, as the oracle still continues to give out prophesies. On the other hand, the words of Amphiaraus himself inform us that oracles, even those from Jupiter, are not to be trusted.

That the oracle of Hammon is unreliable has been experienced already by Hiarbas, a Garamantian soldier fighting in the Carthaginian army during the siege of Saguntum, whom the narrator had apostrophized:

tu quoque **fatidicis Garamanticus** accola **lucis**
 insignis flexo galeam per tempora **cornu**,
 heu frustra reditum sortes tibi saepe locutas
 mentitumque Iouem increpitans, occumbis, Hiarba. (1.414–417)

You, too, fall down, Hiarbas, Garamantian neighbour of the prophesying grove, conspicuous by your helmet with curved horns over your temples, ah, in vain accusing the oracles that often promised your return and Jupiter for having lied to you.

His name is suggestive of Hiarbas, the son of Hammon and father of Asbyte (2.58–59). This warrior Hiarbas is dressed like Hammon himself, wearing horns on his helmet. This was a means of claiming allegiance to the god.⁷¹ Although Silius does not explicitly say so, it must be assumed that he is a priest of Hammon, as he is called a 'Garamantian neighbour of the prophetic grove' (*fatidicis Garamanticus accola lucis*).⁷² This is exactly how the grove of Hammon is described in the beginning of Book 3: *inter anhelantes Garamantas corniger Hammon | fatidico pandit uenientia saecula luco* ('the horn-bearing

71 This was how special devotees and alleged children of the god, like Alexander, were represented, for example on coins. See Roscher s.v. Ammon and Feeney 1982: 218.

72 Spaltenstein 1986: 69, however, does not think Hiarbas to be a priest.

Hammon reveals the future eras from his prophetic grove among the panting Garamantes', 3.10–11). Hiarbas has often consulted the oracle, which promised his safe return home. He is killed all the same and while dying accuses the god of being a liar (*mentitumque Iouem*). Another priest of Hammon, Nabis, meets a similar fate in the Battle of the Metaurus in 15.672–699.⁷³ He, too, wore a helmet with Hammon's horns (*casside cornigera*, 15.679) and imagined himself to be safe under the protection of his god: *fatidicis Nabis ueniens Hammonis harenis | improba miscebat securus proelia fati | ceu tutante deo* ('Nabis, coming from the prophetic sands of Hammon, joined the wicked battle, having no fear of death, as if the god were safeguarding him', 15.672–673).⁷⁴ This priest, too, falls in battle, slain by a Roman soldier and sees his faith in Hammon's protection betrayed.

Hammon did not even protect Asbyte, who claimed to be his granddaughter: *unde genus proauumque Iouem regina ferebat | et sua fatidico repetebat nomina luco* ('from there the queen took her descent and claimed Jupiter to be her grandfather and traced her name back to the prophetic grove', 2.66–67).⁷⁵ After her *aristeia*, she met a gruesome death, when Theron beheaded her with her own axe and put her head on a spike to show it to the Carthaginians (2.199–205). These examples show that Hammon and his prophecies cannot be trusted. The warriors that regard themselves as his closest worshippers and even his granddaughter do not survive the war.

The role of Venus in Hammon's oracle has been overlooked or downplayed in discussions of this episode. It was in fact *her* bird that founded the temple and became the first prophet:

at quae Carpathium super aequor uecta per auras
in Libyen niueis tranauit concolor alis,
hanc sedem templo **Cythereia** condidit ales. (3.681–683)

73 In his case, there is no doubt about his status as priest: he wears ritual fillets (*infula*, 15.679) and his garb is called sacred (*sacras uestes*, 15.698). During his *aristeia*, he shouts out the name Hammon: *ouans et ouans Hammona canebat* ('celebrating his triumphs he chanted the name of Hammon over and over again', 15.688). The verb *cano* has prophetic connotations and is reminiscent of Jupiter's dove, who also 'sang oracular responses' (*responsa canebat*, 3.687). Nabis' name is probably Semitic and may be related to Hebrew נָבִי *nabi* 'prophet', as Lefebvre suggested. See Ruperti 1798: 468 and Spaltenstein 1990: 386.

74 The deceptiveness of Hammon is suggested by *ceu tutante deo*; compare Bostar who thought that he had seen Jupiter: *ut uiso ... Tonante* ('as if he had seen Jupiter', 3.649).

75 Her name recalls Asbystes, a cult title of Hammon; see Spaltenstein 1986: 110 and 112 and Bernstein 2017: 69.

But the other one travelled through the air over the Carpathian sea and flew across to Libya, having the same colour as its snow-white wings; there the Cytherian bird founded this site for a temple.

The reference to Venus has been explained away as being merely ornamental, as doves are generally consecrated to this goddess.⁷⁶ But they are actually reminiscent of the twin doves that helped Aeneas to find the golden bough (*geminas ... columbas*, 3.678 ~ *geminas ... columbae*, Virg. *A.* 6.190). The Trojan hero immediately identified them as birds sent by his divine mother: *maternas agnouit aues* (*A.* 6.193). This intertextual allusion makes clear that in the Bostar episode, too, it really was a bird coming from Venus that became the first priest at Siwa. On an intratextual level, the adjective *Cythereia* echoes the way in which Jupiter had addressed his daughter earlier in Book 3: *Cytherea* (3.572, 3.593).⁷⁷

When we pursue this line of thought, Arisbas is the successor of the prophesying white dove. This connection is underscored by the snow-white robe of the priest, mirroring the colour of the bird: *ante aras stat ueste sacerdos | effulgens niuea* ('the priest stands before the altar, shining with his snow-white robe', 3.694–695).⁷⁸ The altar before which the priest is standing is exactly the place where in the olden days the dove was standing between the horns of Hammon, as Arisbas had just told Bostar: 'here where you now see the altar, [the bird] gave oracular responses, standing right between the horns' (*hic, ubi nunc aram ... uidetis (...) media inter cornua perstans | ... responsa canebat*, 3.684 and 686–687). The priest of Hammon does not only mirror the bird of Venus, he also echoes the words of the goddess herself in his prophecy, when referring to the war plans of the Carthaginians: *belloque agitare paratis | Assaraci prolem, Libyes* ('Libyans, you prepare for waging war against the lineage of Assaracus',

76 E.g. Spaltenstein 1986: 259: "Cette périphrase est ici de pure décoration, Vénus n'ayant aucun lien avec ce temple."

77 Both are rare forms in the *Punica*; the goddess is also called *Cytherea* by Proteus in 7.458, while the adjective *Cythereius* is used once more for the morning star in 12.247.

78 Many editors have suggested emendations for *niueis*, such as *nigris*, as they understand *concolor* meaning 'having the same colour as the people of Libya'. Another reason for suspecting a corruption is that Herodotus speaks of two black doves (*Hdt.* 2.55). Delz places the word between *cruces*. The Budé defends the manuscript reading, arguing that the dove has the same colour as the white-crested waves (155 n.4). I, however, follow Spaltenstein 1986: 259 in taking *concolor* together with *niueis ... alis*: the dove has the same colour as its wings, i.e. the dove is totally white. The correspondence with the colour of the priest's garment is another argument for defending the manuscript reading. Cf. *TLL* 4.81.24–41 s.v. for examples of *concolor* with a dative, where 3.695, however, is not listed. See also Stürner 2015: 189 n.25, who suggests that Silius does not draw on Herodotus, but on an alternative tradition.

3.700–701). The mention of Assaracus, the grandfather of Anchises, is a repetition of Venus' question to Jupiter where Romans should go to when their city would be destroyed: *quo ... | Assaracique larem et Vestae secreta feramus?* ('whither (...) should we bring the house god of Assaracus and the mysteries of Vesta?', 3.565–566). The repetition of Venus' words by Arisbas emphasizes that the Carthaginians are indeed plotting to turn Rome into a second Troy. But between the question of Venus and the oracle of Hammon, the goddess and the primary narratees have already heard the master plan of Jupiter himself, who has assured them that Rome will not be destroyed. This makes the oracle of Hammon less frightening from a Roman perspective: we know that the house of Assaracus will be saved. This is also confirmed by the intertextual echo from a vatic passage in Virgil's *Georgics* 3: the narrator describes the marble statues of the Trojan ancestors that will be put in an imaginative temple: *stabunt et Parii lapides, spirantia signa, | Assaraci proles* ('here in Parian marble shall stand statues, breathing life, the lineage of Assaracus', *Virg. G.* 3.34–35).⁷⁹ This is another confirmation that the lineage of Assaracus will survive the Hannibalic war. The references to Venus in the Bostar episode suggest that this goddess plays a role in safeguarding the descendants of this family by misleading Hannibal. In Book 11, it is this goddess that will cause the downfall of Hannibal during his stay in Capua.⁸⁰

In conclusion, the oracle of Hammon is not conflicting with that of Jupiter, but only gives a restricted view of the future. Whereas Hannibal rejoices over this message from the god, the primary narratees know that Hammon's message is in line with the plans of Jupiter, and that Rome will survive.⁸¹

5.3 *Scipio as the True Successor of Alexander and Aeneas*

At this point in the *Punica*, the victory of the Romans is still far away. In the following books, Hannibal will achieve victory after victory, which culminate in the Battle of Cannae in Book 9 and 10. Only after this major victory does the success of Hannibal start declining, and it becomes clear that he is not the true

79 Note that Venus' words in turn evoke the words of Ascanius to Nisus: *per magnos, Nise, penatis | Assaracique larem et canae penetralia Vestae | obtestor* ('I implore you by the great Penates and the household god of Assaracus and the sanctuary of the hoary Vesta', *Virg. A.* 9.258–260). These two clear allusions to Virgil suggest that it is probably no coincidence that the name Assaracus occurs seven times in the *Punica*—the same number as in the *Aeneid*.

80 See Introduction, sections 2 and 5.3 and Chapter 3, section 8.

81 Chaudhuri 2014: 241. Vessey 1982: 334 assumes that *laetis* in 3.713 only refers to the Carthaginian soldiers and that we do not learn Hannibal's reaction. I think that Hannibal should be included in those who rejoice.

successor of Alexander or Aeneas. The person who can rightfully claim this title is the Roman general Scipio, as is most clearly articulated in the famous *Nekyia* scene in Book 13. Accompanied like Aeneas by the Sibyl, Scipio meets the ghosts of several famous men, including Alexander the Great. This is the only place in the *Punica* where Alexander is explicitly mentioned. Scipio asks him how to achieve the same *gloria* as he has:

incipit Aeneades: 'Libyci *certissima proles*
 Hammonis, quando exsuperat tua gloria cunctos
 indubitata duces similique cupidine rerum
 pectora nostra calent, quae te uia, fare, superbum
 ad decus et summas laudum perduxerit arces.' (13.767–771)

The descendant of Aeneas begins: 'O most sure offspring of Libyan Hammon, since your undoubted glory exceeds all other generals and my heart burns with a similar desire for such deeds, tell me what road has led you to proud glory and the highest citadel of honours.'

Scipio, who himself is called a descendant of Aeneas by the primary narrator, calls Alexander the son of Hammon. By acknowledging Alexander's divine parentage, Scipio creates an analogy between the Macedonian general and himself. Mars had already called the young Scipio 'true offspring of Jupiter' (*uera Iouis proles*, 4.476).⁸² Shortly before his meeting with Alexander, his mother Pomponia revealed to him that his real father is Jupiter (13.637–644). The god had come to Pomponia in the form of a serpent, just as a snake had allegedly paid a visit to Alexander's mother.⁸³ On an intertextual level, the phrase *certissima proles* connects Alexander also with Aeneas, whom Virgil's Sibyl addresses with the words *deum certissima proles* (Virg. *A.* 6.322). Since Scipio is a descendant of Aeneas (*Aeneades*), this adds to the idea that Scipio is the true successor of both Alexander and Aeneas. The primary narrator will confirm Scipio's divine parentage in the final two lines of the *Punica*:

nec uero, cum te memorat de stirpe deorum,
 prolem Tarpei, mentitur Roma, Tonantis. (17.653–654)

82 C. Reitz 1982: 113.

83 C. Reitz 1982: 113. Livy 26.19.6–7 tells the same story of Scipio and makes an explicit comparison with the birth of Alexander. For the serpent visiting Olympias, see e.g. Plu. *Alex.* 2.6 and 3.1–2. For further references, see Van der Keur 2015: 331. See also Chapter 2, section 7.3.

Truly Rome does not lie, when it tells that you have a divine origin and that you are a child of the Tarpeian Thunderer.

In fact, Scipio outclasses his semi-divine predecessors, since he is the son of the supreme god Jupiter, while Aeneas is the son of Venus and Alexander of Hammon.⁸⁴

Hannibal, on the other hand, is explicitly said to be the son of his mortal father Hamilcar, whose ghost also appears to Scipio in the same scene in Book 13. Hamilcar refers to his son with the words ‘o true child of mine’ (*o uera propago*, 13.749). Clearly, Hannibal is the son of a mortal man, not of a god. Scipio addressing Alexander as son of Hammon, only twenty lines later (13.767–768), underscores the difference with Hannibal: although the latter had received an oracle from this same god in Book 3, he did not acquire any divine status, which makes clear that he is not the successor of Alexander.⁸⁵

The presence of the Sibyl enables Scipio to get a clearer view of past and future than Hannibal could ever get through his stand-in Bostar and the Sibyl’s double Arisbas in Book 3. The Sibyl predicts that the Punic general will die ignobly in a foreign country by poisoning himself. Then ‘he will free the world at last from long-enduring fear’ (*tandem terras longa formidine soluet*, 13.893). These last words of the Sibyl are a sequel of Hammon’s oracle in Book 3, who predicted never-ending fear as long as Hannibal was alive: she discloses to Scipio *how* the life of Hannibal will actually come to an end.

That the prophecy in Book 13 echoes the one in Book 3 is also apparent from Scipio’s reaction: he returns to his comrades joyfully (*laetus*, 13.895). The same emotion is ascribed to Hannibal and the other Carthaginians after hearing the prophecy of Hammon (*laetis*, 3.713).⁸⁶ The difference is of course that the Carthaginians were rejoicing too soon, as they did not know the outcome of the war, while Scipio is now rightfully cheerful, since he knows that Hannibal’s successes will come to an end.

84 Walter 2014: 271–272, however, contends that the finale of the *Punica* still leaves room for doubt about Scipio’s parentage, pointing at the central position in the last verse of *mentitur* (although negated by *nec*).

85 See Vessey 1982: 321–322 on Hannibal as a “lost Alexander”.

86 After the dream of the serpent earlier in Book 3, Hannibal had shown mixed emotions of both joy and fear: *laetoque pauore* (3.215). On this oxymoron, see Ruperti 1795: 199. In Livy, Hannibal was simply happy after having received this dream: *hoc uisu laetus* (Liv. 21.23.1). The happiness of Scipio in Book 13 contrasts with Hannibal’s sadness earlier in that book (*haud laetus*, 13.94); see Van der Keur 2015: 476.

6 Conclusion

In several ways, the narrative of Bostar functions as a mirror text. On a narrative level Bostar and Arisbas mirror each other as narrators. In turn they are stand-ins for respectively Hannibal and Hammon. This means that Bostar acts as a substitute for Hannibal. We have also seen that Hammon skips a narrative level and speaks, as it were, directly to Hannibal. This indicates that Hannibal is in close touch with the divine world.

The allusions to Alexander the Great, Aeneas, and Cato shed another light on Bostar's mission. Although the visit to Hammon's shrine recalls the visits of Alexander and Cato to the same oracle and Aeneas' meeting with the Sibyl, it is made clear that Bostar, and by extension Hannibal, cannot live up to these famous literary predecessors. Arisbas does not identify Hannibal as being a child of Jupiter Hammon, as the priest had done in the case of Alexander. The oracle of Hammon predicts the same bloody wars in Latium as the Sibyl's in *Aeneid* 6, but whereas Aeneas and his descendants will eventually benefit from these, Hannibal will only reap a bitter harvest. The echoes of Cato's journey through the Libyan desert in Lucan make Bostar at first sight comparable to the Stoic general, but Bostar's confidence in the divine nature of the oracle is the opposite of Cato's scepticism. The allusions to Lucan thus indicate that his confidence is ungrounded and call in question the reliability of the oracle.

Allusions to other parts of the *Punica* confirm that Hannibal, although in close touch with the gods, never acquires full knowledge of his fate. The two earlier prophecies that Hannibal has received in Book 1 and 3 are quite similar to the oracular message of Hammon: the great defeats of the Romans are emphasized, while the final defeat of Hannibal is kept silent. The oracle of Hammon is therefore highly ironic: while Bostar thinks that Jupiter as supreme god has given his assent to the Punic enterprise, the primary narratees know that Jupiter has other plans, as the god himself has affirmed to Venus. Hammon's oracle is therefore nothing more than an instrument of Jupiter's will.

Hannibal almost accomplishes the fall of Rome, but finally has to acknowledge the superiority of Scipio. In Book 13 of the *Punica* Hannibal's Roman rival is identified as son of Jupiter and the true successor to both Aeneas and Alexander.

Regulus: An Exemplary Hero?

1 Introduction

The longest embedded narrative of the *Punica* is found in Book 6. Central in this narrative are the deeds of Regulus, the exemplary Roman general of the First Punic War. The narrative is told by Marus, an otherwise unknown figure, who receives the wounded Serranus, Regulus' son, in his little abode in the aftermath of the Battle of Lake Trasimene (Book 5). The narrative has attracted considerable attention from scholars, on the one hand due to its conspicuous length (6.62–551), on the other because it is the longest surviving account of Regulus' deeds, one of the most famous exemplars in Roman culture.¹ That the narrative has a wider significance than an exemplary tale for Serranus has long been recognized.² Scholars have pointed to the thematic significance of the narrative for the rest of the *Punica*. Regulus is commonly viewed as the forerunner of especially Fabius and Scipio. Most of these studies consider Regulus as the almost perfect embodiment of Roman *fides* (loyalty) and *uirtus* (virtue), and thus as a prime example of Stoic perseverance. Recently, some critics have started to cast doubt on the exemplarity of Regulus and have discerned 'further voices' in Marus' narrative, an idea that I will elaborate in this chapter.³

The fact that the Regulus episode is an *embedded* narrative has not received much attention. Often, the story is discussed as if it is part of the main narrative, told by the primary narrator instead of a secondary narrator.⁴ Distinguishing the narrative levels and the narrators is an essential step before making any statements on the narrative's meaning and relation to the main narrative.

1 Genre and Loutsch 2001: 131 n.6 gives a good overview of the legend of Regulus, citing 24 different sources. The final section of this study gives a convenient overview of the correspondences and differences between these accounts (2001: 169–171). Earlier studies on Regulus include Blättler 1945 and Mix 1970.

2 The most thorough discussion of the episode is the commentary by Fröhlich 2000. Older, but still important studies are Bassett 1955 and Häußler 1978: 168–177.

3 Especially G.D. Williams 2004, Augoustakis 2006, and Augoustakis 2010b: 156–195.

4 Often critics use the tag 'Silius' when referring to words or sentences that are actually voiced by the secondary narrator Marus. Schaffnerrath 2010b: 119–123, however, discusses the passage while taking into account the different narrative levels. Walter 2018 treats the inconsistencies between Marus and other narrators.

Verbal repetition within the narrative as well as between the narrative and other parts of the *Punica* is another element that deserves closer examination.⁵ These repetitions often signpost parallels or contrasts between passages. Discussion of these intratextual allusions uncovers relations between Marus' narrative and the rest of the *Punica*. They can therefore serve as a gateway to explore the function of the narrative within the epic as a whole.

Regulus is the central figure of the narrative. Is he, indeed, an example of Roman values, as has often been stated, or should we regard him as a more ambiguous figure? And what does this general from the First Punic War tell us about the Roman leaders in the Second? In what sense is Scipio a successor to Regulus? I will argue that the narrative of Marus gives mixed answers to these questions. It cannot be denied that Regulus possesses good qualities, such as courage on the battlefield, loyalty to his fatherland, fidelity to his own word and perseverance in bad circumstances, but at the same time, there seem to be cracks under the surface indicating that these qualities are not uncomplicated. During his African campaign, he killed a sacred animal and was too easily lured into a trap set by the Carthaginian commander Xanthippus. His loyalty and fidelity to his fatherland have severe consequences for his wife and children: his perseverance makes him almost divine, but at the same time he becomes an inapproachable and therefore almost inhuman person. This may not be so obvious at first glance, but intratextual and intertextual allusions shed more light on the ambiguities of Regulus' character. In turn, Regulus mirrors ambiguities that are central to the *Punica* as a whole. In this way, Marus' narrative can be seen as a *mise en abyme* of the epic.

2 Synopsis of the Narrative

Book 6 opens with the aftermath of the Battle of Lake Trasimene. One of the survivors is Serranus, the son of the famous general Regulus. Although he is wounded, he manages to reach the hut of an old man (6.62–80). This old man, Marus, immediately recognizes Serranus as Regulus' son; Marus had served as a soldier under Regulus in the First Punic War. After an emotional recollection of Regulus' death in this previous war (6.81–89), Marus takes care of the young man's wounds (6.89–100).

5 The commentary of Attia 1955 provides useful lists of parallels, but usually does not comment on them. Augoustakis 2010b: 165–167 pays special attention to verbal repetition in Marcia's speech to Regulus (6.437–449).

The next day, Serranus calls upon Jupiter and laments the calamities that the Romans are facing (6.102–116). Marus interrupts him and starts a long retrospective narrative on the First Punic War. The first part narrates the battle with a giant snake on the banks of the river Bagrada near Carthage (6.118–293). Marus and two fellow soldiers were looking for water when this monster attacked them (6.139–204). Only Marus managed to escape, whereupon Regulus ordered his troops to kill the snake (6.205–260). The snake almost devoured Regulus, but Marus managed to rescue his general. Finally, the two men succeeded in killing the monster (6.261–293). After hearing this story, an emotional Serranus states that the recent Roman defeats would not have taken place if Regulus had still been alive; he apostrophizes Lake Trasimene, almost holding this lake responsible for the recent Roman deaths (6.296–298).

Again, Marus cuts the young man short and continues with the second part of his narrative on the First Punic War (6.299–414). After defeating the snake, Regulus got the upper hand in some of the battles against the Carthaginians; their new Spartan general Xanthippus, however, laid an ambush for Regulus and made him prisoner of war (6.299–345). Carthage sent Regulus, together with Marus, to Rome in order to negotiate peace and exchange of war prisoners (6.345–382). When Regulus arrived in his fatherland, he asked Marus to keep his family at bay; his wife and two children—one of them the young Serranus—were waiting for him on the shore (6.382–414). Serranus, again strongly moved by Marus' story, apostrophizes his dead father and accuses him of having been too hard-hearted towards his next of kin (6.416–430).

Then Marus continues with the third and last part of his narrative. He now tells how Regulus passed his own house on his way to the guesthouse where he was lodged with the Carthaginians. The old man quotes the words of Regulus' wife Marcia, who in vain asked her husband to come back to her (6.437–449). The next day Regulus delivered a speech in the senate, strongly arguing against a treaty with the Carthaginians and therefore sealing his own death (6.452–489). He persuaded the senators to follow his line, whereupon they sent him back to Carthage (6.490–496). When the ship set off, Marcia addressed her husband for a second time, desperately asking him to take her and their children to Carthage. Again, Regulus did not respond to her. She then accused him of being unfaithful as a husband (6.497–520). In the last section of his narrative, Marus describes how Regulus was tortured to death; Serranus should find comfort in the endurance of his father: the way in which he accepted his fate is an example that later generations will remember (521–550).

3 Narratology

The narrative of Marus, who acts as secondary narrator, consists of four parts, as we have seen: an emotional outburst when he recognizes Serranus as Regulus' son (6.81–89) and three larger units that provide scenes of Regulus' role in the First Punic War (6.118–293; 6.299–414; 6.432–550). In these, Marus makes Regulus a tertiary speaker by quoting speeches to his soldiers (6.241–247) and to the Roman senators (6.467–489); Marcia is the other tertiary speaker that Marus brings to stage; Regulus' wife addresses her husband three times (6.437–449; 6.500–511; 6.516–518). Marus' narrative alternates with three lamentations of Serranus, who at these points changes from secondary narratee into secondary speaker (6.102–116; 6.296–298; 6.416–430). Short transitional passages, by the primary narrator, link these embedded narratives (6.89–102; 6.117–118; 6.294–295; 6.415; 6.430–431). The passage is thus a combination of different narrators and speakers on three narrative levels.

When we leave Regulus aside, these narrators and other speaking characters show remarkable similarities in subject matter and emotional involvement. Regulus is at the centre of their narratives or speeches. Although they have different relationships with Regulus, they all share an attachment with the famous general, which is shown in lamentations, emotional forms of address, and words stressing their connection with Regulus. On a narratological level, too, these narrators and characters bear striking resemblances. They structure their narratives and speeches by means of ring compositions and only rarely address their narratees—instead they all use apostrophes, turning away to address absent entities. Apostrophe and other emotional forms of address are so frequent that I will discuss this feature in more detail (3.1). Apostrophe is a form of structural intertextuality, recalling the exuberance of the same device in Lucan. In the next section (3.2), I will compare Marus, the narrator of the embedded narrative, with Virgilian narrators. These intertextual allusions suggest that we should regard Marus as a surrogate of the primary narrator, too (3.3).

3.1 *Apostrophe and Other Emotional Forms of Address*⁶

Regulus is the focal point of the embedded narrative. This is already prepared for by the primary narrator at an early stage. When he introduces Regulus' son Serranus into the main narrative, he does so by emphasising the fame of his father:

⁶ Van den Broek 2022 is an earlier and more concise version of this section.

Serranus, clarum nomen, tua, Regule, proles,
 qui longum semper fama gliscente per aeuum
 infidis seruasse fidem memorabere Poenis,
 flore nitens primo patriis heu Punica bella
 auspiciis ingressus erat miseramque parentem
 et dulces tristi repetebat sorte penates
 saucius. (6.62–68)

Serranus, a famous name, is your son, Regulus, you whose fame ever increases with the passage of time, and of whom it will never be forgotten that you kept faith with the faithless Carthaginians. Serranus was in the flower of his youth: but, alas, he had begun the Punic war with his father's ill-fortune, and now, sore-wounded, he sought in sad plight to return to his unhappy mother and the home he loved.

Serranus is called 'a famous name' (*clarum nomen*). The default interpretation is that he comes from a famous family, due to his father's renown. At the same time, Serranus is an otherwise unknown son of Regulus. *Clarum nomen* is therefore self-referential: it is the *Punica* that will make Serranus famous.⁷ The narrator then turns away from his default addressees and apostrophizes Regulus (*Regule; memorabere*), before explaining Serranus' situation. When he turns back to Serranus, he stresses the similarity of fate between son and father: Serranus entered the Battle of Lake Trasimene under the bad omen of his father's example (*patriis ... auspiciis*).⁸

Since Homer apostrophe is an epic convention.⁹ By this device, as De Jong explains, the narrator "adds to the authenticity of the story and the admiration for the semi-divine heroes."¹⁰ At the same time it can highlight emotional or crucial events. These three aspects all apply to our example: the apostrophe of Regulus is a first suggestion that Regulus, like Homeric heroes, is a person with a semi-divine status, an idea that is developed later in the narrative as I will explain shortly. Secondly, it highlights the emotional involvement of the narrator at this point in the narrative: Regulus' son Serranus is heavily wounded.

7 On the name Serranus, see Spaltenstein 1986: 395 and Fröhlich 2000: 150–151.

8 Fröhlich 2000: 127–128.

9 Apostrophe has received quite some scholarly attention over the last two decades, e.g. De Jong 2009: 93–97 on Greek literature, mainly focussing on Homer; Klooster 2013: 151–173 on Homer, Apollonius, and Callimachus; Nauta 2013: 234–243 on Latin literature; Georgacopoulou 2005 on Statius; Asso 2008 on Lucan. Older studies on this device in Latin epic are Endt 1905 and Hampel 1908. Apostrophe in Silius has not been treated systematically.

10 De Jong 2009: 97.

Finally, the apostrophe underlines the importance of the Roman defeat at Trasimene. It is remarkable, however, that the primary narrator does not apostrophize the character of his narrative (Serranus), but rather his father. So, the narrator anticipates Regulus' status as main character in the ensuing embedded narrative by apostrophizing him here.

When Serranus reaches the humble abode of Marus, a similar apostrophe occurs. Marus instantly recognizes the wounded soldier that knocks at his door as the son of Regulus. Without addressing Serranus, he apostrophizes his former general:

quod scelus, o nimius uitae nimiumque ferendis
 aduersis genitus cerno? te, maxime, uidi,
 ductorum, cum captiuo Carthagini arcem
 terteres uultu (6.81–84)

What horror is this I see!—I who have lived too long and was born to suffer too much adversity. I have seen you, greatest of generals, when your aspect terrified the citadel of Carthage, though you were a prisoner.

Here, too, the apostrophe anticipates Marus' narrative about Regulus that will follow, a first hint that Marus is a *mise en abyme* of the primary narrator, who had also apostrophized Regulus. Marus continues his monologue blaming Jupiter for what has happened to Regulus in the past and wondering whether the gods are concerned about the Romans at all now that his son, too, has been suffering from the Carthaginians: *estis ubi en iterum, superi?* ('ah, where are you again now, o gods?', 6.87). The gods are conspicuously absent in the ensuing narrative. This makes this episode of the *Punica* recall the absence of the gods in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.

The next morning, Serranus invokes the gods as well. His prayer shows many correspondences with the one of Marus.¹¹ Like the old man, he shows strong emotions, laments his own situation and holds the gods, especially Jupiter, responsible for the sufferings of the Romans.¹² Finally, Serranus, too, apostrophizes his father Regulus:

11 Fröhlich 2000: 137–138.

12 Serranus addresses Jupiter as *genitor* (6.105) 'father', which at first sight could also apply to Regulus. The fact that he starts the sentence with a reference to the Tarpeian rock, which is usually a metonym of the Capitoline temple, makes clear that he means Jupiter. Cf. Spaltenstein 1986: 398. Fröhlich 2000: 160 adds that Serranus lifts his eyes to heaven, which is unusual when invoking the *manes* of a mortal.

testor, mea numina, manes
 dignam me poenae tum nobilitate paternae
 strage hostis quaesisse necem, ni tristia letum
 ut quondam patri nobis quoque fata negassent. (6.113–116)

I swear by your soul, my deity, that I sought death in striking the enemy—a death befitting the famous sufferings of my father; but cruel fate denied me death, as it had once done to my father.

With *mea numina* Serranus addresses the *manes* of Regulus, stressing the god-like status of his father.¹³ Once more we are prepared for the ensuing narrative about Regulus that stresses his almost supernatural abilities to endure hardship, like Lucan's Cato.

After this lament Marus speaks for the first time directly to Serranus with the vocative *fortissime* ('bravest', 6.118) before starting his narrative on Regulus. Serranus, on the other hand, does not address Marus until 6.425 (*Mare*). In the meantime, Serranus apostrophizes two other entities: Lake Trasimene (6.296–298) and again his father:

'magne parens' inquit 'quo maius numine nobis
 Tarpeia nec in arce sedet, si iura querelis
 sunt concessa piis, cur hoc matrique mihi que
 solamen, uel cur decus hoc, o dure, negasti,
 tangere sacratos uultus atque oscula ab ore
 libuisse tuo? dextram mihi prendere dextra
 non licitum? leuiora forent haec uulnera quantum,

13 Most commentators think that *mea numina* refers to Regulus and compare Aeneas' words in Virg. *A.* 2.431–434. So Ruperti 1795: 409, Duff, Spaltenstein 1986: 398–399, Fröhlich 2000: 134. In Ov. *Ep.* 3.105 we find another parallel for our passage: Briseis uses *mea numina* in an oath, referring to her brothers that were killed. The use of *manes*, a plural, for the spirit of a single person is quite common; see *TLL* 8.297.46–298.66 and *OCD* s.v. *manes*. Likewise, the plural *numina* often refers to one god (Forcellini s.v. *numen* 3) and can be used for humans as well (especially Augustus, cf. Forcellini s.v. *numen* 4). Attia 1955: 58 adds that Regulus is later called a *numen* by both Marus (6.123–124) and by Serranus (6.416–417). Slightly odd, however, is that Serranus seems to see his father's *manes* as separate from his father: he refers to him with the adjective *paternae* and the noun *patri* where one would perhaps have expected a possessive pronoun *tuae/uestrae* and a personal pronoun *tibi/uobis*. Calderini understands that Serranus is talking to his own *manes*, adducing Virg. *A.* 12.646–647 (Muecke and Dunston 2011: 388). This is highly improbable as he is not on the brink of death.

si ferre ad manes infixos mente daretur
 amplexus, uenerande, tuos.' (6.416–424)

'Great father,' he said, 'not less divine to me than even the deity who dwells on the Tarpeian rock, if love has a right to complain, why did you so sternly deny my mother and me this consolation and this glory—to touch your sacred face and take kisses from your lips? Was I forbidden to clasp your hand in mine? How much lighter my present wounds would be, had I been allowed to carry to the grave the undying memory of your embrace, o worshipful father.'

This apostrophe is even more daring than the one in Serranus' first prayer. There he addressed Jupiter (*genitor*, 6.105), before invoking his father (*mea numina*, 6.113). This prayer starts with an apostrophe of Regulus as 'great father' (*magne parens*, 6.416), a grandiloquent form of address that is usually reserved for Jupiter.¹⁴ It therefore prepares for what Serranus goes on to say, that his father is as mighty or even mightier than the supreme god himself, as Marus had suggested before in 6.123–124. This recalls two identical apostrophes of Domitian in Statius' *Silvae*, in which the emperor is put on a par with or even surpassing the father of the gods.¹⁵ The assimilation between Regulus and Jupiter is so hyperbolic that it is hard to read as a mere compliment. In fact, Serranus continues to accuse his father of having been too harsh for his family (*o dure*, 6.419). When he came back to Rome as a prisoner, he did not comfort his wife or allow his family to touch him.¹⁶ Nonetheless, Serranus addresses him as a godlike figure (*uenerande*, 6.424). His father is someone who should be honoured as a god, but this superhuman status makes the distance on a personal level only greater. The apostrophes, thus, stress the unbridgeable gap between father and son.

Marcia is the third person to address Regulus. She stands on the threshold of their house when Regulus passes by as captive of the Carthaginian envoys. She implores him to stay in his own house instead of the lodgings of the Carthaginians: 'Where are you going, Regulus? This is no Carthaginian prison that you should shun' (*quo fers gressus? non Punicus hic est, | Regule, quem fugias, car-*

14 Examples are Virg. *A.* 9.495, *Ov. Met.* 7.617, *Pers.* 3.35, *V. Fl.* 5.644 (*magne pater*), and *Sen. Ag.* 655 (*magne parens*).

15 Janus to Domitian in *Stat. Silv.* 4.1.17: *magne parens mundi* ('great father of the world'); the poet to Domitian in 4.2.14–15: *regnator terrarum orbisque subacti | magne parens* ('ruler of the lands and great father of the subjugated world'). See Coleman 1988: 72, 89–90.

16 Fröhlich 2000: 257.

cer, 6.437–438). She does so again when Regulus sails off to Carthage. First, she addresses him as husband (*coniunx*, 6.501), and begs to be taken with him to Carthage. As Regulus does not react, the tone of her words becomes hostile, and she accuses him of faithlessness—infidelity being probably the worst insult she can voice: *data foedera nobis | ac promissa fides thalamis ubi, perfide, nunc est?* ('but where is now the compact made with me, and the fidelity you promised at our marriage, unfaithful one?', 6.517–518).¹⁷ From *coniunx* Regulus now becomes *perfidus*, an adjective with a strong Virgilian ring. Dido famously called Aeneas *perfide* twice (Virg. *A.* 4.305, 4.366) and once more referred to him as *perfidus* to her sister Anna (*A.* 4.421).¹⁸ Whereas Aeneas had at least tried to comfort Dido, Regulus does not answer at all, as if he has not heard the words of his wife. Although in these cases the general is addressed when physically present, he seems as unapproachable as in the earlier apostrophes in Book 6. Regulus does, however, hear the words of his wife: *ultima uox duras haec tunc penetrauit ad aures* ('these were the last words that penetrated his harsh ears', 6.519). Augoustakis suggests that Regulus is perhaps not so Stoic after all and points to the use of the strong verb *penetrare* ('to penetrate').¹⁹ Marcia has managed to get through to the seemingly impenetrable mind of her husband. Nonetheless, his ears are still 'harsh' (*duras*). This is an echo of Serranus' apostrophe, who had called him *dure* before in 6.419, but also of Marcia's own words shortly before. When she implored Regulus to accompany him, she argued that she could 'perhaps soften the harsh anger of Carthage with tears' (*forsan duras Carthaginis iras | flectemus lacrimis*, 6.507–508). If the hostile city 'shuts its ears' (*praecloserit aures | ... suas*, 6.508–509) and shows no mercy, Marcia would at least die together with him. The fact that Regulus does not react to her at all makes him as harsh as Marcia had imagined Carthage to be. So, from her point of view nothing changes. She remains in Rome, alone, without her husband.

Marcia reappears as a character in the main narrative when Marus and Serranus have arrived in Rome. She addresses Marus, whom she immediately recognizes as Regulus' former companion: *fidei comes inclite magnae* ('famous companion of great loyalty', 6.579).²⁰ Delz prints *Fidei* with a capital, under-

17 Pomeroy 2010: 70 notes that this is the only instance in the *Punica* that a Roman is accused of perfidy.

18 Augoustakis 2010b: 177.

19 Augoustakis 2010b: 179.

20 Marus had earlier called himself a *comes* of Regulus (6.129). *Inclite* is self-referential: Marus is only famous because of his role in the *Punica*. See also 3.2 below and compare the *clarum nomen* of Serranus (6.62), discussed above in section 3.1. It also stresses the resemblance

standing Fides as a personified goddess and Fröhlich accordingly translates “der großen Gottheit Treue”.²¹ I rather follow Ruperti in understanding *fidei ... magnae* as a metonymic reference to Regulus, followed by Duff (“of the most faithful”) and the Budé (“d’un héros si féal”).²² *Fides* is of course Regulus’ most famous character trait. In addition, the adjective *magnus* corresponds with earlier apostrophes of Regulus (*maxime*, 6.82; *magne parens*, 6.416). Marcia’s words again stress the equation of Regulus and the concept of *fides*, but in irony.

After invoking the gods, she speaks directly to her son (*nate*, 6.584). She urges him not to follow his father’s example. She considers her life as a long-term punishment and ends her speech by begging the gods to spare her from further distress: *quaeso, iam parcite, si qua | numina pugnastis nobis* (‘please, spare us now, gods, if ever you have fought against us’, 6.588–589). The *numina*, which are invoked here, are usually taken to be the same as the *superi* she apostrophized earlier in her speech (6.584).²³ Marcia, however, does not specify who these *numina* are. Is it possible that she implicitly refers to the *numina* of Regulus? There is good reason to think so. As Fröhlich points out, Marcia’s speech closely follows topics of Marus’ narrative: she discusses Regulus’ *fides* (or the lack thereof), complaints of the harshness of life, and invokes the gods.²⁴ When we pursue this line of thought, it is not implausible that *numina* echoes the same word that Serranus and Marus have already used three times when referring to Regulus.²⁵ Except for this reader-oriented intratextuality, Marcia has her own reasons for referring to Regulus as *numina*. Her husband has been affecting all of her life and made things difficult for her and her family (*pugnastis nobis*). She has constantly been suffering since his death, as the primary narrator made clear before:

olim post fata mariti
non egressa domum uitato Marcia coetu
et lucem causa natorum passa ruebat
in luctum similem antiquo. (6.575–577)

of the two men: shortly before, Marus had apostrophized Regulus as *dux inclite* (6.549).

21 Fröhlich 2000: 316.

22 Pace Spaltenstein 1986: 431–432, who understands *fides* in a more general sense.

23 Duff, the Budé, Fröhlich 2000: 316, and Augoustakis and Bernstein 2021 all translate ‘gods’. I follow the latter two in taking *qua* as adverbial (‘ever’). Van den Broek 2022: 574 still regarded *qua* as a nominative with *numina* (‘any gods’).

24 Fröhlich 2000: 320–323.

25 Cf. 6.113, 6.123 and 6.416–417. Marcia has of course not heard them talking, so she cannot be consciously alluding to their words.

After her husband's death she never left the house, shunned any contact, and endured to be alive only because of her children; now she rushed out to mourn as she mourned long ago.

This is the first time since his demise that Marcia appears in public, and she feels the same grief all over again now that she sees that her son has become victim of the Carthaginians too. She reproaches Serranus for having followed in the footsteps of his father, against her advice:

quotiens heu, nate, petebam,
ne patrias iras animosque in proelia ferres
neu te belligeri stimulare in arma parentis
triste decus. (6.584–587)

Ah, my son, how often did I ask you not to carry into battle the anger and spirit of your father, and not to be urged to arms by the sad glory of your belligerent parent.

As Regulus is apparently so on her mind, it is plausible that Marcia now implores her husband's *numina*, which have vexed her up until the present day, to save her and her family this time (*iam parcite ... nobis*): she practically begs that the curse of his *fides* is not to be transferred to their son; this *fides* cost him his life and will be fatal for Serranus as well. This means that Regulus is referred to at the beginning and end of Marcia's speech (*fidei ... magnae ~ numina*), which symbolizes his permanent influence over his relatives.

After this emotional scene, Marus, Serranus, and Marcia disappear from the epic. Regulus, however, pops up one more time at the end of Book 6. When Hannibal visits the town of Liternum, the narrator gives a description of the paintings of the temple which depict scenes from the First Punic War.²⁶ Hannibal is the one looking at these paintings, as the narrator makes clear in the introduction of the ecphrasis: 'he views the illustrious monument with various depictions of the previous war, which was brought to an end by their fathers' (*uaria splendentia cernit | pictura belli patribus monumenta prioris | exhausti*,

26 This ecphrasis has received quite some scholarly attention: Fowler [1996] 2000a: 93–107, Fröhlich 2000: 360–368, Marks 2003, Tipping 2007, Manuwald 2009, and Harrison 2010: 287–289. Usually the paintings are thought to be divided into nine panels (Fowler [1996] 2000a: 97–98, Fröhlich 2000: 360–368). Manuwald 2009: 44–45 contends that there are no clear transitions, "which turns the passage into a continuous narrative."

6.654–656); during the ecphrasis proper, we are repeatedly reminded that we are looking at the monument through Hannibal's eyes (*cernit*, 6.670; *uidet*, 6.672), suggesting that he is the focalizer, but as we will see his focalization is only intermittent.²⁷

The ecphrasis (6.658–697) describes some events that Marus had already recounted in his narrative of the First Punic War, such as Regulus pursuing Carthaginian troops and fighting the snake at the Bagrađa (6.674–679). The paintings also give new information: one panel shows Xanthippus being drowned by the Carthaginians. He was the Spartan mercenary leading the Punic army who had ambushed Regulus, as we already heard from Marus (6.327).²⁸ In the description of this panel, the narrator takes over the focalization from Hannibal:

necnon proiectum puppi frustraue uocantem
 numina Amyclaeum mergebat perfida ponto
 rectorem manus, et seras tibi, Regule, poenas
 Xanthippus digni pendebat in aequare leti. (6.680–683)

Elsewhere, the Spartan general, hurled from the stern and in vain calling upon the gods was drowned in the sea by a treacherous crew and Xanthippus at last paid the penalty to you, Regulus, by a death at sea as he deserved.

The Spartan who tricked Regulus is now tricked by the Carthaginians, who are described as a 'treacherous crew' (*perfida ... manus*, 6.681–682). The use of the adjective *perfida* signals that the narrator has taken over the focalization of Hannibal.²⁹ His focalization also colours the way in which Xanthippus' death is presented: the Roman hero Regulus is sympathetically apostrophized, while the adjective *digni* frames the Spartan's death as atonement of what he did to Regulus. It is as if the narrator is reacting to the indignant question of Marus

27 Compare the shield of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 8.615–731. At the beginning and end of this ecphrasis, Aeneas is emphatically presented as the focalizer, but it is also made clear that he did not understand what he was looking at. It is the primary narrator who decodes the depictions. See De Jong 2015.

28 Silius follows the version of Xanthippus' violent death that is first attested by Valerius Maximus (9.6 ext. 1); see also Appian (8.4). Polybius (1.36.2–4) mentions that he safely left Carthage right after the First Punic War. See also Spaltenstein 1986: 439 and Fröhlich 2000: 387–388.

29 Fowler [1996] 2000a: 99–100, who notes that "the 'play of focalizations' is as usual complex." See also Fröhlich 2000: 386 and Manuwald 2009: 42–45.

earlier in Book 6: *quae poena sequetur | digna satis tali pollutos Marte Laco- nas?* ('what fitting punishment shall attend the Spartans for their foul manner of warfare?', 6.344–345).³⁰ Death by drowning is the answer that the narrator gives here.

Xanthippus' death ironically mirrors Regulus' own death: the Spartan 'paid the penalty' (*poenas ... pendebat*) for his treacherous imprisonment of Regulus. This phrase corresponds with the description of Regulus' punishment in an earlier ecphrasis. Hannibal's shield depicts the Roman hero hanging on a cross: *iuxta, triste decus, pendet sub imagine poenae | Regulus* ('next to him [i.e. Xanthippus] hangs Regulus, grim glory, [on a cross] in a representation of his punishment', 2.435–436).³¹ Neither Marus nor the paintings at Linternum explicitly mention that Regulus was crucified, but this intratextual allusion recalls the version of his death as presented on Hannibal's shield. The shield had depicted Xanthippus as triumphant (*uictor*, 2.435), whereas the painting on the temple of Linternum shows his defeat. By apostrophizing Regulus at the moment of Xanthippus' drowning, the narrator signals the correlation between their deaths.³² At the same time, he adds pathos to the scene by showing sympathy for Regulus. This invites the primary narratees to engage in the description of Xanthippus' death, which they should view as justified.

The address of Regulus is a bold example of apostrophe, as the narrator addresses a character not actually depicted in the painting. Apostrophe itself is not uncommon in ancient ecphrases, but in such cases the narrator usually addresses characters depicted.³³ Virgil, for example, addresses Catiline, who is depicted on Aeneas' shield: *et scelerum poenas, et te, Catilina, minaci | pendentem scopulo* ('and [Vulcan had added] the penalties of crimes and you, Catiline, hanging on a menacing cliff', *A.* 8.668–669). This passage probably inspired the Silian apostrophe, as both authors describe a villain who is being punished for

30 Fröhlich 2000: 388 notes the parallel without comment.

31 Bernstein 2017: 201–202. Duff, as he explains in a note, understands the scene differently: he suggests that *poena* refers to the torture of Regulus preceding the crucifixion and translates: "Near them hung Regulus ... beneath a picture of his punishment." The expression *pendere poenas* 'to pay the penalty' is common in Latin, but appears only five times in the *Punica*; the other three attestations are 2.456, 2.488, and 7.517–518. Regulus' crucifixion is most explicitly described by Gestar in 2.343–344. See also section 7.4 below.

32 Fowler [1996] 2000a: 99 n.41.

33 The appearance of apostrophe in ecphrases seems to be a Hellenistic invention. The narrator of Philostratus' *Imagines* often addresses characters depicted on the paintings; see Baumann 2013: 260–261.

his crimes (note the verbal correspondences).³⁴ A difference is that Silius does not address the villain, Xanthippus, but rather his victim Regulus.³⁵

This absence of the person apostrophized evokes Icarus in Virgil's description of the temple doors in Cumae: *tu quoque magnam | partem opere in tanto, sineret dolor, Icare, haberes* ('you, too, Icarus, would have a large share in such a work, did grief permit', *A.* 6.30–31). Due to his grief, Daedalus was unable to depict his son's death, but the narrator turns to Icarus, as if he were part of the painting. Austin calls it a "pathetic apostrophe (which vividly suggests the viewers' sad imaginings)."³⁶ In other words, the apostrophe in the Virgilian passage reflects the emotions of Aeneas and others viewing the temple doors in Cumae, which in this case coincide with those of the primary narrator and the narratees. Silius' apostrophe of Regulus is clearly modelled on this Virgilian example: here, too, the narrator is emotionally involved and addresses a character not depicted on the actual work of art; another similarity is the theme of drowning.³⁷ There is also a significant inversion: the address of Regulus can be labelled 'pathetic' from the viewpoint of the primary narrator (and his narratees), expressing a strong sympathy for the retribution of Regulus' death. This focalization is, however, certainly not that of the secondary focalizer Hannibal, who as a Carthaginian would not have felt any sympathy for Regulus. The intervention of the narrator contributes to the pro-Roman message that the paintings in Liternum emanate. They give a one-sided view of the previous war. Although the narratees are mainly looking at the paintings through Hannibal's eyes, they actually see a Roman monument with the narrator as its ultimate focalizer.³⁸ Although Hannibal cannot agree less with this perspective on the

34 The description of Aeneas' shield contains yet another apostrophe of a treacherous figure who is punished, the Alban dictator Mettus (or Mettius) Fuffetius (*A.* 8.643). Other examples of ephrastic apostrophes in Latin literature are Catullus (64.253) and Ovid (*Met.* 8.112). Fröhlich 2000: 388 also cites Stat. *Theb.* 6.541, but this apostrophe of Admetus, a character in the primary narrative, falls outside the ephrasis proper.

35 Regulus did, however, figure in the first (6.658–659) and previous (6.672–679) panels that the narrator described.

36 Austin 1977: 46.

37 The apostrophe of Icarus in *Aeneid* 6 has inspired yet another passage in the *Punica*. In 2.142, the narrator apostrophizes Icarus, the son of Mopsus, who falls from the walls of Saguntum after being hit with a stone by Hannibal. For the parallel with *Aeneid* 6, see Laudani 2017: 75–76. She also discusses Virrius' short narrative on Daedalus and Icarus in 12.88–103.

38 See also Manuwald 2009: 42, who argues rightly that "most of the scenes are described from an omniscient Roman perspective", with Hannibal only intermittently called to mind as focalizer.

First Punic War, he has minutely studied the paintings and does understand its overall message, as we can deduce from his emotional reaction:

quae postquam infesto percensuit omnia uultu
arridens Poenus, lenta proclamat ab ira: ... (6.698–699)

After the Carthaginian had surveyed all these pictures with a face of anger and contempt, he cried out with rising anger: ...

Hannibal has been looking at the paintings with inimical and derogatory eyes and then unleashes the anger that he has built up during the viewing of the temple (*lenta ... ab ira*).³⁹ In the ensuing speech he imagines a monument to be built in Carthage commemorating his own deeds. As if reacting to the apostrophe of Regulus by the narrator, he apostrophizes his city. Realizing that the construction of this Punic monument lies in the future, Hannibal orders his men to destroy at least the Roman monument: ‘give this monument to ashes and envelop it in flames!’ (*in cineres monumenta date atque inuoluite flammis*, 6.716). With this destruction in the last sentence of Book 6, Hannibal attempts to destroy the Roman memory of the First Punic War. Of course, the narratees know that this destruction will be in vain: the temple, which the narrator described as a ‘monument of the previous war’ (*belli ... monumenta prioris*, 6.655) is immortalized by the ecphrasis they have just heard. They may also remember the way that Regulus has reacted to ‘monuments’. The Roman hero remained unmoved by the sight of his own spoils of war (*magni monumenta triumphis*, 6.435) when passing his house in Rome as a captive of the Carthaginians, so Marus told in his narrative. Like a true Stoic, he bears his fate without yielding to emotions.⁴⁰ By contrast, Hannibal at the end of Book 6 reacts in anger, the worst of emotions according to Stoicism.

The apostrophe of Regulus also works on a macro-structural level, because it picks up the narrator’s apostrophe at the beginning of Book 6: *tua, Regule,*

39 The phrase *lenta ira* can here be understood in two ways: it is either anger that is slowly increasing (so Fröhlich 2000: 392 and Duff) or anger that is temporarily checked. In the latter sense, this phrase is used twice more of Hannibal’s anger (1.451 and 11.378). This revengeful anger recalls the gods who do not forget their intention to punish. Cf. Juv. 13.100: *lenta ira deorum est* (‘the anger of the gods is really slow’). See *TLL* 7.2.1164.54 s.v. *lentus*.

40 It is significant that shortly after this passage the pyre of Hercules, the champion of Stoicism, is mentioned: *Herculei monumenta rogi* (6.453). This stresses the Stoic perseverance of Regulus, who follows in the footsteps of Hercules.

proles (6.62). Points of identity are the metrical *sedes* of the vocative, a preceding pronoun of the second person (*tua ~ tibi*), and similar sounds of the final words (*proles ~ poenas*). The two apostrophes thus form a ring composition between the beginning and end of Book 6, which starts and ends with Regulus.⁴¹ The repetition of these apostrophes is therefore not only a structural device, but also marks the all-embracing presence of Regulus in Book 6: the general is not only a figure from the heroic past: Marus' narrative and his appearance on the temple of Litemum make him almost come alive in the main narrative as well. The apostrophes bring Regulus therefore closer to the world of the primary narratees, as the primary narrator speaks directly to him. He addresses Regulus as if he were still alive, much in the way that Homer apostrophizes his heroes.⁴²

In addition, the apostrophe suggests a hymnic style and adds to the idea that Regulus should be considered a deity.⁴³ This confirms Marus' earlier qualification of Regulus as a god. In his narrative, the old veteran had called Regulus 'that sacred figure, not inferior to any deity' (*sacer ille et numine nullo | inferior*, 6.123–124). Finally, the apostrophe in 6.682 marks Regulus' departure from the epic. The apostrophe is a last, forceful farewell of the narrator to the character that has dominated almost all of Book 6.⁴⁴

3.2 *Marus Mirroring Maro*

Marus enters the epic stage when the wounded Serranus, Regulus' son, knocks on his door. The narrator introduces him in a parenthetical sentence: *uetus ille parentis | miles et haud surda tractarat proelia fama* ('he served long ago under his father [i.e. Regulus] and fame did not turn a deaf ear to the battles he fought', 6.74–75). This is a self-referential remark of Silius, as the fame of his martial

41 Fröhlich 2000: 388 argues that the repetition of the same apostrophe in 6.62 and 6.682 is "sicherlich kompositorische Absicht". It is, however, somewhat one-sided to explain the repetition solely from a structural perspective, as Manuwald 2009: 42 n.24 rightly comments.

42 Klooster 2013: 158: "The apostrophe of a dead hero is a very marked way of emphasising the credibility and immortality of this hero in poetry, and thence testifies to the immortalising power of song." See also De Jong 2009: 95.

43 De Jong 2009: 95–97 suggests that the ultimate origin of apostrophes lies in hymns to the gods.

44 This structural use of an apostrophe is probably influenced by Statius' apostrophe of Admetus (or *vice versa*). In *Thebaid* 6, Admetus is one of the competitors in the chariot race. His participation in the Nemean Games is an invention of Statius. There, too, the narrator marks the last appearance of this character with an apostrophe (Stat. *Theb.* 6.541). On this specific apostrophe, see Georgacopoulou 2005: 54–55.

achievements is nowhere else attested than in the narrative that Marus is about to tell himself;⁴⁵ *Punica* 6 is the only source for his renown.⁴⁶

In this section I will focus on the role of Marus as narrator in the *Punica*. Marus, relating a traumatic story from the First Punic War, first of all evokes Naevius—the first Latin epic poet. Marus resembles the writer of the *Bellum Poenicum* in three aspects. Both are eyewitnesses of the same war, both have served in the Roman army as ordinary soldiers, and both are narrators of events that took place in the First Punic War. Although we cannot be sure, it is not improbable that Naevius even included the story of Regulus in his epic. Due to the scanty textual evidence of the *Bellum Poenicum*, I leave the comparison with the *Punica* at that.⁴⁷ Besides Naevius, Marus is a representation of a number of Virgilian narrators, as I will argue.

Scholars have passed over Marus' name almost in silence.⁴⁸ It is my contention that this name is of great significance, as it resembles Virgil's cognomen Maro.⁴⁹ This is the name with which other writers in antiquity regularly refer to Virgil.⁵⁰ In the *Georgics*, Virgil himself puts his *cognomen* in first position in the syllabic acrostic *MA VE PU* (i.e. MAro VERgilius PUBlius).⁵¹ The similarity of their names invites a comparison between Marus and Virgilian narrators, first and foremost Virgil himself, but also Aeneas; the latter is the most important secondary narrator in the *Aeneid* and extensively narrates his own traumatic experiences in Book 2 and 3. In both respects, Marus can be seen as his coun-

45 For *surdus* meaning 'not heard with attention, falling on deaf ears,' see *OLD* s.v. 3 and Spaltenstein 1986: 396, who lists 8.246 and Stat. *Theb.* 4.359 as parallels. The former is a reference to Varro, whose ancestors are not famous (*surdumque parentum | nomen*, 8.246–247).

46 Later in Book 6, Marcia will call Marus 'famous' (*inclite*, 6.579), as if she had heard his narrative. See also the *clarum nomen* of Serranus, as discussed in section 3.1 above.

47 The resemblance between Naevius and Marus has been kindly suggested to me by Stephen Harrison. For Silius as Naevius' poetic successor, see Biggs 2020: 183 and 199. For yet another example of possible Naevian influence, see Chapter 4, section 8. I will revisit the role of Naevius and the *Bellum Poenicum* in the *Punica* in a future paper.

48 Spaltenstein 1986: 396, for example, only remarks: "Ce nom est courant." Vinchesi 2006: 260 and 2011: 248 rightly contend that the name is rare and archaic; it is only attested in three inscriptions: *CIL* 9.652, 9.1015, and 10.6555. Cf. Forcellini s.v. *Marus*.

49 Jacobs 2009: 156 is to my knowledge the only study that suggests a connection between the names Marus and Maro.

50 E.g. Mart. 8.56, 12.64, 14.186; Stat. *Silv.* 2.6.20, 5.3.63; Juv. 6.436, 7.227, 11.180. Although the etymology is hazy, both Marus and Maro may derive from the same stem *mār-*. See Schulze 1904: 360, Gordon 1934: 3, and Vinchesi 2011: 248 n.17.

51 Virg. *G.* 1.429–433. On this acrostic, see Feeney and Nelis 2005. In *A.* 10.198–203, Virgil might play yet another game with his *cognomen*, on which see Reed 2016: 98–99.

terpart in the *Punica*.⁵² But there is more. One of the first things Marus says is that he has witnessed Regulus from nearby: *te, maxime, uidi* ('I have seen you, greatest of men', 6.82). Marus refers to his role as eyewitness yet again, when he reflects on his role of narrator in the final section of his narrative:

**infelix uidi patriamque remissus in urbem
narrator poenae dura mercede reuerti.** (6.529–530)

I, unlucky one, was a witness and was sent back to my hometown and I returned at a hard price as a narrator of his punishment.

Marus presents himself both as witness and narrator of Regulus' death; by returning from Carthage to Rome he became the narrator of the latter's horrible demise. The verb *reuerti* does, however, not only refer to his physical return to Rome (as *remissus* already does). By telling his story, Marus re-experiences the traumatic sight of his general being tortured to death. The repetition of the suffix *re-* in *remissus* and *reuerti* suggests that Marus had to tell the story more than once. This is the 'hard price' he had to pay for returning to Rome alive. And retelling this story once more to Serranus is exactly what he is doing right now.⁵³

Marus' self-consciousness as narrator is a subtle echo of Aeneas' words to Dido in the beginning of *Aeneid* 2. When the queen asks him to narrate his adventures, the Trojan hero, too, mentions the traumatic consequences of retelling horrible events:

**infandum, regina, iubes renouare dolorem,
Troianas ut opes et lamentabile regnum
eruerint Danaï, quaeque ipse miserrima uidi
et quorum pars magna fui.** (Virg. *A.* 2.3–6)

Too deep for words, o queen, is the grief you bid me to renew, how the Greeks overthrew Troy's wealth and woeful realm—the sights most piteous that I saw myself and in which I played no small role.

Reluctance to narrate terrible events is an epic topos since the *Odyssey*, but the allusion suggests a specific connection between Marus and Aeneas on this

52 A huge difference is of course that Aeneas is the protagonist of the *Aeneid*, whereas Marus is only a minor character in the *Punica*.

53 For *re-* as a metapoetical signpost, see Introduction, section 5.2 n.73. The word *narrator* itself already suggests repetitiveness, as such verbal nouns on *-tor* usually indicate a "permanent or habitual quality or function" (Pinkster 2015: 957).

point.⁵⁴ The Trojan hero is reluctant to start his story as it brings back (*renouare*) his ‘unspeakable pain’ (*infandum ... dolorem*).⁵⁵ Aeneas underscores the fact that he has witnessed the terrible events with his own eyes right from the start of his narrative (*ipse ... uidi*), and will recall his status as witness six times more with *uidi*.⁵⁶ That Marus, too, stresses his role as eyewitness should be seen as an intertextual allusion to Aeneas. In spite of their reluctance, both Aeneas and Marus narrate what they have experienced. One of Aeneas’ harsh experiences is the loss of his wife Creusa: *quid in euersa uidi crudelius urbe?* (‘what crueller sight did I see in the overthrown city?’, *A.* 2.746). Looking for her, Aeneas returns to the city and has to experience the fall of Troy all over again:

ipse urbem repeto et cingor fulgentibus armis.
stat casus renouare omnis omnemque reuerti
per Troiam et rursus caput obiectare periclis. (*Virg. A.* 2.749–751)

I myself seek again the city, and gird on my glittering arms. I am resolved to renew every risk, to retrace my way through all Troy and once more expose my life to every peril.

Marus returns (*reuerti*) to his fatherland, Rome. Of course, this city is not burning like Troy and Marus does not have to face the same perils as Aeneas. Nevertheless, returning to his city means that he has to retell and relive his traumatic experience. This is of course also the case with Aeneas; his arrival at Carthage and his retelling of his past means for him a re-enactment of what has happened.

In addition, the rare Latin noun *narrator*, with which Marus refers to himself, brings to mind another passage in the *Aeneid*. Although the word itself is not found in Virgil, or in any Latin poet for that matter, it echoes a reference to Aeneas as a repetitive narrator in *Aeneid* 4:⁵⁷

54 Hom. *Od.* 7.241–243, 9.12–18, and 12.450–453. See Hunter 2014 for a discussion of these passages and their reception.

55 The change of *infandum* into *infelix* makes Marus paradoxically reminiscent of Dido, too. In the *Aeneid*, Dido is called *infelix* five times (*Virg. A.* 1.749, 4.68, 4.450, 4.529, and 6.456).

56 *Virg. A.* 2.347, 2.499, 2.501, 2.561, 2.746, 3.537. On Aeneas as an eyewitness, see Deremetz 2001: 165. For *uidi* as a metapoetical signpost, see Papanghelis 1999: 281 and Heerink 2017: 69. See also De Jong 2017: 139–166 for a discussion of *Aeneid* 2 as an example of a narrative by an eyewitness (internal narrator).

57 *Narrator* is a technical term that is only found in rhetorical treatises: Cic. *Orat.* 2.54.3, 2.219.5, Quint. *Inst.* 11.136.4, [Var.] *Sent.* 24.1, 68.1. The cognate *enarrator* occurs in Aulus Gel-

Iliacosque iterum demens audire labores
 exposcit pendetque iterum **narrantis** ab ore. (Virg. *A.* 4.78–79)

Again, in her madness she craves to hear the sorrows of Ilium and again hangs on the narrator's lips.

Dido wishes to hear the story of Aeneas again and again (*iterum ... iterum*) and apparently Aeneas obliges. The repetition of the suffix *re-* in the *Punica* therefore also functions as a marker of this allusion: it invites the primary narratees to 'return', so to speak, to the *Aeneid* and make a comparison between Marus and Aeneas as narrators.⁵⁸ Marus does not only return physically to Rome or mentally to Carthage, he also makes the narratees 'return' to the epic of his namesake Maro.⁵⁹

3.3 *Marus as Mise en Abyme of Silius*

Aeneas has been viewed as a *mise en abyme* of the primary narrator of the *Aeneid*. For example, the reaction of Dido to the story of Aeneas just quoted might be taken as self-referential: just as the queen was enchanted by the Trojan hero, we as primary narratees should be similarly impressed by Virgil who has voiced Aeneas' words.⁶⁰ When we accept that Aeneas is in certain aspects a

lius (18.4.2.2, 18.6.8.2 and 13.31.1.3) and Porphyrio's commentary on Horace's second book of *Epistulae* (2.1.230). In addition, Schaffnerath 2010b: 119 lists Tac. *Ann.* 16.2, taken over from Forcellini s.v. *narrator*. Modern text editions of the *Annales*, however, do not accept the emendation *a narratoribus* for the corrupt *auaratoribus*. On this textual matter, see Koestermann 1968: 338.

58 *Reuertor* is used in other contexts in a similar metanarrative sense. See for examples *OLD* s.v. *reuertor* 3 'to return (to a subject) after a digression' and 4 'to refer (to books, documents)'. A comparable example from the *Aeneid* is Anchises who recalls the prophecies of Cassandra: *nunc repeto* ('now I remember', *A.* 3.184). Wills 1996: 29–30 suggest that this is one of the markers that signal an allusion to Catullus 64. West 1983: 34–35 also argues that this phrase is a marker of intertextuality, but suggests that it evokes Lycophron's *Alexandra*.

59 In Book 8, Anna tells Aeneas that Dido had often gone back in her mind to the nights that he had told his stories: *diem et conuiuia mente reduxit | festasque aduentu mensas teque ordine Troiae | narrantem longos se peruigilante labores* ('Dido recalled the banquet and the feast for your arrival when you told in order the long labours of Troy, while she stayed awake all night', 8.136–138). Here, the suffix *re-* marks both an intertextual allusion to *A.* 4.78–79 and an intratextual one to 6.529–530. See also Chapter 4, section 11, n.200.

60 For Aeneas as a *mise en abyme* of Virgil, see Papanghelis 1999; Deremetz 2001; Heerink 2017. There is of course also a big difference: whereas Virgil is an external omniscient narrator, Aeneas is an internal narrator, with all due restrictions. For an analysis of the differences, see e.g. Heinze 1915: 1–63 and De Jong 2017: 139–166.

double of the primary narrator, this in turn might also be said of Marus. In what ways does he reflect the primary narrator of the *Punica*? And when we accept that Marus mirrors the primary narrator, can his narrative be seen a *mise en abyme* of the main narrative of the *Punica*?

We have already seen that the primary narrator and Marus make use of the same narrative devices. They both apostrophize Regulus in an emotional way and structure their account of Regulus as a ring composition. Apart from these more general similarities, the subject of Marus' narrative is an even stronger argument for the parallel. For the *Punica* as a whole, Tipping has convincingly argued that "Silius' heroes are exactly the *maiores* ('ancestors') to whom the Romans looked for moral example."⁶¹ Marus, on a smaller scale, narrates an exemplary tale of a hero from the past. In the last part of his narrative Marus makes the exemplarity of his story explicit:

nec tibi nunc ritus imitantem irasque ferarum
Pygmalioneam temptarem expromere gentem,
 si maius quicquam toto uidisset in orbe
 gens hominum, quam quod uestri ueneranda parentis
 edidit exemplum uirtus. pudet addere questus
 supplicii, quae spectau placido ore ferentem.
 tu quoque, care puer, dignum te sanguine tanto
 fingere ne cessa atque orientes comprime fletus. (6.531–538)

And I would not have made an attempt to disclose to you how the people of Pygmalion imitated the manners and cruelty of wild beasts, if mankind had ever seen in any part of the world a nobler example than was set by the splendid courage of your father. I am ashamed to complain of the torments which I saw him endure with a calm expression. You too, dear boy, must not cease to image yourself worthy of such noble blood and check those starting tears.

Marus would rather have remained silent about the cruelty that the Carthaginians inflicted on Regulus. The reason for him to disclose it all the same is the exemplarity of Regulus' courage (*edidit exemplum uirtus*). This echoes the proemium of the *Punica*, in which the primary narrator had stated that he is allowed to disclose (*aperire*, 1.19) the reasons of the Carthaginian cruelty

61 Tipping 2010: 7. For exemplarity in ancient historiography, see e.g. Marincola 1997 and Chaplin 2000.

towards the Romans (*tantarum causas irarum*, 1.17). Marus does exactly the same, revealing the cruelty of the Carthaginians to Regulus (*irasque ... temptarem expromere*).⁶² Marus calls the torturers ‘the people of Pygmalion’ (*Pygmalioneam ... gentem*), referring to the cruel brother of Dido, who had murdered her husband Sychaeus. Significantly, the only other attestation of the neologism *Pygmalioneus* is the very first word of the epic narrative after the prooemium, when the primary narrator refers to Phoenicia as the ‘lands of Pygmalion’ (*Pygmalioneis ... terris*, 1.21) from which Dido had escaped.

After his account of the tortures that Regulus had to endure, Marus again stresses the qualities of Serranus’ father, who not only possessed *uirtus*, but also *patientia* and *fides*:

absiste, o iuuenis, lacrimis. **patientia** cunctos
 haec superat currus. longo reuiescet in aeuo
gloria; dum **caeli** sedem terrasque tenebit
casta Fides, dum **uirtutis uenerabile nomen**,
 uiuet; eritque dies, tua quo, inclite dux, fata
 audire horrebunt a te calcata minores. (6.545–550)

Weep no more, young man. That endurance is greater than all triumphs. His laurels will be green throughout the ages. As long as unstained Loyalty keeps her seat in heaven and on earth, as long as virtue’s name is worshipped, they will last. A day will come, on which posterity will shiver when hearing your fate, famous general, that you trampled upon.

It is clear from these quotations that Regulus should be seen as an exemplary figure, first of all for Serranus, who should curb his emotions in imitation of his father’s Stoic attitude (*placido ore ferentem*, 6.536). This exemplary function applies no less to future generations (*longo ... in aeuo; minores*), and by extension to the primary narratees, who will hear this story (*audire*). The durability of Regulus’ fame touches, again, upon a major theme of the *Punica*, as stated in the prooemium. Just as Marus records the everlasting *gloria* of a general from the First Punic War, the primary narrator wishes to immortalize the fame of the Roman leaders from the Second (*quibus caelo se gloria tollit*, 1.1). Marus’ exemplary account of Regulus can therefore be seen as foreshadowing the feats of

62 The Silian hapax *expromere* signals another link between Marus and Aeneas as narrators. The same verb occurs only once in the *Aeneid* as well, when Aeneas introduces the speech that he uttered in his dream to Hector’s ghost: *maestas expromere uoces* ([‘I seemed] to utter these sad words’, A. 2.280).

Fabius and Scipio which the primary narrator will tell in full detail in the ensuing books of the epic. This exemplarity is by no means uncomplicated, as I will explain below.

4 Marus as a Host

The narrative of Regulus is embedded in a hospitality scene. Hospitality scenes are a stock element of epic from Homer's *Odyssey* onwards. These scenes are often the frame for a conversation between host and guest, and in the case of Odysseus and Aeneas it concerns long narratives. Marus as a narrator therefore follows in the footsteps of these epic predecessors. In his case, however, the host's narrative takes up much more space than the guest's speech, for obvious narrative reasons: the narratees have just heard *in extenso* about the Roman defeat at Lake Trasimene, whereas the Regulus narrative falls outside the main narrative. Aetiology is an important element of such hospitality stories, too.⁶³

4.1 *Marus and Euander*

A young man getting information from an old comrade-in-arms of his father finds its ultimate model in Telemachus' visits to Nestor in Book 3 of the *Odyssey*.⁶⁴ But a much stronger intertext is Aeneas' visit to Pallanteum, where the old Euander, a Nestor-like figure himself, receives the Trojan in his humble palace.⁶⁵

ut te, **fortissime** Teucrum,
accipio agnoscoque libens! (Virg. *A.* 8.154–155)

Bravest of Teucrians, how gladly I receive and recognize you!

63 For a categorization of stock elements in hospitality scenes, see Bettenworth 2004: 35–110 and 2019. See also Ripoll 2019: 44–47. In Hellenistic hospitality scenes, hosts are usually older than their guests (Hollis [1990] 2009: 342). Aetiology is an important element of this Alexandrian type. Callimachean examples are the tales of Hecale and Molercus. Roman examples of this type are the story of Philemon and Baucis in Ovid (*Met.* 8.626–724; see Van den Broek 2019) and the story of Falernus in Silius (7.162–211; see Chapter 3). A fuller discussion of hospitality scenes and especially the subtype of theoxeny can be found in Chapter 3, section 4. For other hospitality scenes, see Chapter 1, section 4.2 and Chapter 4, section 8.

64 Already Ruperti 1795: 394–395 notes the similarity. Bassett 1955: 3 adds the conversation between Telemachus, Menelaus, and Helen in *Odyssey* 4.

65 For similarities, but also differences between Euander and Nestor, see e.g. Eden 1975: 53–54.

In both scenes the older man uses a similar form of address (*fortissime*, 6.118) and immediately recognizes the younger person, because he looks like his father (*ora agnouit*, 6.77).⁶⁶

The way in which Euander recounts his first encounter with Anchises also resonates in Marus' words, as we will see. The Arcadian king tells that he saw Anchises at a young age, when he was beginning to show the first signs of a beard: *tum mihi prima genas uestibat flore iuuentas* ('at that time first youth dressed my cheeks with bloom', *A.* 8.160). Anchises had once visited his hometown in Arcadia as member of a Trojan delegation. Euander commemorates how impressed he was by the Trojan's physical appearance and how much he wanted to be with him:

mihi mens iuuenali ardebat amore
compellare uirum et dextrae coniungere dextram;
accessi et cupidus Phenei sub moenia duxi. (*Virg. A.* 8.163–165)

My mind burned with youthful love to address that man and to hold hands with him; I went up to him and led him eagerly into the walls of Pheneus.

As has been observed, these lines suggest a sexual desire for Anchises on Euander's part.⁶⁷ He portrays himself as a typical Greek *eromenos*, not yet having a full beard.⁶⁸ Many words also have erotic connotations (*iuuenali ... amore, ardebat, cupidus*), and there is a play with verbs that are also regularly used of marriage (*coniungere, duxi*).⁶⁹ The way Marus describes his first acquaintance with Regulus shows analogies with Euander's description:

uix puerile mihi tempus confecerat aetas,
cum primo malas signabat Regulus aeuo.
accessi comes, atque omnes sociauiumus annos (6.127–129)

66 In Euander's case, this is made explicit (*A.* 8.155–156). Silius does not explain *how* exactly Marus recognizes Serranus. He has seen the young man as a little boy, as he recalls in 6.403, but it is implied that Serranus looks like his father Regulus. Marus' apostrophe of Regulus, right after the recognition scene (6.82), is a clear indication that Serranus calls to mind his father. Cf. the recognition scene of *Hom. Od.* 4.140–153, where Telemachus reminds Helen of his father Odysseus.

67 Lloyd 1999. See also Reed 2007: 185.

68 On the significance of facial hair in homoerotic contexts, see C.A. Williams 1999: 26 and 73–74, and Lloyd 1999: 7–8 on this specific case.

69 Lloyd 1999: 8–12. Older commentators, however, ignore these *double entendres*, and Frantouono and Smith 2018: 286–288 is cautious.

I had hardly outgrown the years of boyhood, when Regulus' cheeks were indicating his first youth. I went to him as his comrade and we have spent all years together.

The clearest verbal echo is the repetition of *accessi* in the first position of the hexameter. In both cases, the initiative of the meeting comes from the younger person. There is a similar age difference between Marus and Regulus, but both are an age group younger than Euander and Anchises: Marus is merely a boy (*puerile ... aetas*), and it is Regulus who has the first signs of down on his cheeks.⁷⁰ Although the language of Marus is in general less suggestive than that of Euander, the word *sociauimus* also bears connotations of marriage and sexual intercourse.⁷¹ Unlike the short encounter between Euander and Anchises, Marus stresses the long duration of their relation (*omnes ... annos*, 'all years'), which only ended by Regulus' death. The repetition of the phrase *accessi comes* in 6.371, when Marus accompanied Regulus as a prisoner of war to Rome, again underlines their long-lasting relationship. Of course, one can read Marus' words as describing a purely *military* partnership, but the Virgilian intertext suggests that, at least from Marus' point of view, their long-lasting relationship might have been more than meets the eye.⁷²

A further correspondence is the bestowing of gifts. Euander receives arrows, a military cloak and horse bits from Anchises:

ille mihi insignem pharetram Lyciasque sagittas
discedens chlamydemque auro **dedit** intertextam,
frenaque bina meus **quae nunc** habet **aurea** Pallas. (Virg. *A.* 8.166–168)

He gave me, when he left, a glorious quiver with Lycian arrows, a cloak woven with gold, and a pair of golden bits that now my Pallas possesses.

Marus also lists the honourable gifts that Regulus had bestowed upon him:

70 Commentators since Ruperti 1795: 310 quote Ov. *Met.* 13.754 as intertext: *signarat teneras dubia lanugine malas* ('[Acis] marked his tender cheeks with a faint down'). This sixteen-year-old boy is Galatea's object of love. This allusion emphasizes the erotic connotation of down.

71 *OLD* s.v. *socio* 1b, 2b, and 3.

72 The archetype is of course the bond between Achilles and Patroclus. Compare also the relation between Heracles and Hylas. Propertius introduces the latter as 'the companion of the invincible young man' (*comes inuicti iuuenis*, Prop. 1.20.23).

ille ensem **nobis** magnorum hunc instar honorum
 uirtutisque ergo **dedit** et, sordentia fumo
quae cernis **nunc**, **frena**; sed est **argenteus** ollis
 fulgor. (6.133–136)

So he gave me this sword, matching great honour and on account of my virtue, and the bits, which you see now blackened with smoke; but they possess a silver splendour.

In both cases, all of the gifts have a military nature. The only gift that is similar is the bit—in Marus' case made of silver instead of gold. In both texts, the men make mention of the current status (*nunc*) of the bits. Euander has passed them on to his son Pallas, whereas those of Marus are not in use anymore and are blackened by the smoke of the hearth (*sordentia fumo*). Marus uses strikingly solemn language when referring to Regulus' gifts, as is shown from the rare postposition *ergo* for *propter* and the archaic pronoun *ollis* for *illis*.⁷³ The spear he got from Regulus for slaying the giant snake even receives worship from Marus. He is making a libation of wine when talking to Serranus: 'It is worthwhile to know the reason why you see me pour the liquids of Lyaeus in its honour' (*cui me libare Lyaei | quod cernis latices, dignum cognoscere causam*, 6.138–139). This leads Marus to narrate the story of the snake of the Bagrada, which explains why Regulus gave his spear to him (6.291–293). This brings us back to Euander, who explained his worship of Hercules by narrating the story of the hero's killing of the monster Cacus.⁷⁴ Apart from the obvious parallel of the slaying of monsters, Marus' narrative of the snake echoes Euander's story several times, suggesting also a link between Regulus and Hercules.⁷⁵

73 Both forms occur in Virgil's *Aeneid*, on which Fröhlich 2000: 166–167. For the effect of such archaisms, see Quint. *Inst.* 8.3.24. *Ollis* is probably an allusion to the shield of Aeneas, where Virgil uses the same form of the pronoun when he refers to the golden hair of the Gauls who are attacking the Capitol: *aurea caesaries ollis* ('they had golden hair', *A.* 8.659). The adjective *argenteus*, only here in Silius, strengthens this allusion, as it echoes the Virgilian hapax *argenteus* in *A.* 8.655. There, it refers to a goose, depicted on the shield in silver, which warned about the approaching enemies. These subtle allusions to the Gallic attack on the Capitol might suggest that history is repeating itself: Hannibal and his army are about to attack the Capitol, as the Gauls have done before.

74 Both aetiologies are marked off by a ring composition: *Virg. A.* 8.185–189 corresponds with *A.* 8.268–272 underlined by the repetition of *ara, honos* and *seruo*; *Pun.* 6.137–139 is picked up in 6.291–293 with the repetition of *hasta*.

75 For the relation between Regulus and Hercules, see Bassett 1955.

4.2 *Marus and Amyclas*

The arrival of Serranus at Marus' dwelling also contains references to a hospitality scene in Lucan, wherein Caesar pays a visit to the humble abode of the Greek fisherman Amyclas. The general has secretly left his camp in the middle of the night to seek a boat for crossing over to Italy:

Caesar sollicito **per** uasta silentia gressu
 uix famulis audenda parat, cunctisque relictis
 sola placet Fortuna **comes**. tentoria postquam
 egressus uigilum somno cedentia membra
 transiluit, questus **tacite** quod fallere posset,
 litora curua legit, ... (Luc. 5.508–513)

Caesar with troubled step through desolate silence tries a venture too bold even for a slave and, leaving all else behind, chooses Fortune as his sole companion. After passing by the tents he jumped over the sentries' limbs, which were yielding to sleep, silently complaining that he could elude them, picks his way along the curving shore, ...

Compare this to Serranus leaving the battlefields of Lake Trasimene:

haud illi **comitum** super ullus et atris
 uulneribus qui ferret opem. **per** deuia fractae
 innitens hastae furtoque ereptus opacae
 noctis iter **tacitum** Perusina ferebat in arua. (6.68–71)

Not one of his comrades was left or anyone to cure his black wounds. Using bypaths, leaning on his broken spear and having escaped in secret he made in silence his journey in the dark night to the fields of Perusia.

The verbal echoes are perhaps not very strong when considered in isolation, but between them they reinforce the general similarity between the two scenes. Serranus, too, leaves the battlefield alone and in secret and travels through the countryside in silence. Just as Caesar puts himself in the hands of Fortune, Serranus relies on Fate when he starts knocking on Marus' door:

hic fessus parui, quaecumque ibi fata darentur,
limina pulsabat tecti, cum membra **cubili**
 euoluens non tarda Marus
 (...)

procedit renouata focis et paupere Vesta
lumina praetendens. (6.72–74 and 76–77)

Here, the tired man knocked on the door of the small house, whatever fate might be given him there. Marus did not slowly roll his limbs from his bed (...) and came forward, holding a torch in front of him, which he had rekindled from the poor hearth, dedicated to Vesta.

Serranus' knocking is a somewhat less aggressive version of the impatient banging of Caesar on Amyclas' house:

haec Caesar bis terque manu **quassantia tectum**
limina commouit. molli consurgit Amyclas
quem dabat alga **toro**. (Luc. 5.519–521)

Twice and three times with his hand Caesar struck this threshold, shaking the roof. From his soft bed provided by seaweed Amyclas rises.

The similar words in first position (*hic* ~ *haec* and *limina*), and the identical metonymies of 'threshold' for 'door' and 'roof' for 'house' make a strong case for an allusion to Caesar in the *Bellum Civile*.⁷⁶ Marus' reaction, too, copies that of Amyclas. He rises immediately from his bed, rekindles a fire (cf. Lucan 5.524–525) and proceeds to the door to let the nightly visitor in.⁷⁷ The fact that the torch of Marus is 'renewed' (*renouata*) can be read as an intertextual marker to Lucan's scene, inviting to read the two passages next to each other.⁷⁸

A comparison of the two arrival scenes shows important differences. Serranus did not *choose* to travel alone and to trust in Fate as Caesar did, but left the battlefield of Lake Trasimene on his own because all of his comrades had died.

76 Brouwers 1982: 81–82 notes the repetition of *limina*. Spaltenstein 1986: 396 and Fröhlich 2000: 153 also suggest a connection between the two scenes.

77 Both hosts also recall Ovidian Baucis who rekindles the hearth (*Met.* 8.641–643), as Häußler 1978: 170 rightly notes. The adjective *sedula* 'industrious' that Ovid uses to describe Baucis (*Met.* 8.640) echoes in Silius' description of Marus as *non tarda* 'not slow'. Within the *Punica*, Marus foreshadows the old man Crista, who recognizes his enemy Hannibal: 'but his old age was not slow; for he recognized the man by the light [of his helmet]' (*nece tarda senectus*; | *agnouit nam luce uirum*, 10.103–104) For another link between Crista and Marus, see n.104 below.

78 *Renouare* is also a metapoetic statement of *aemulatio*: Marus 'repeats' the arrival of Caesar at Amyclas' abode, but does it in a new way (*nouare*). See the discussion on *re-* in section 3.2 above and Introduction, section 5.2 with n.73.

Marus, on the other hand, is not the opposite of Serranus in the same way that Amyclas is Caesar's antithesis.⁷⁹ The Lucanian fisherman is unaffected by the war raging around him, because he knows that his humble belongings are not interesting enough for the parties in this civil war (Luc. 5.526–527). In this way, the lifestyle of the Greek fisherman contrasts starkly with the military interests of his Roman visitor.⁸⁰ Only when Caesar asked to help him to cross over to Italy, Amyclas is unable to stick to his seclusion and is forced to take part in the war. Marus, on the other hand, is quite similar to his guest Serranus, in the sense that he is a Roman and a former soldier. The spear he worships in his little house evokes his own glorious deeds in the past. This heroic spear corresponds with the broken spear on which Serranus is leaning when travelling through the countryside (6.69–70). While Serranus tries to escape from the battlefield, he cannot really escape the war. Even small and simple dwellings in the *Punica* do not offer a world that can stay unaffected by warfare. And despite all differences between Amyclas and Marus, this conclusion is in fact not so different from the situation in the *Bellum Civile*: Amyclas, living in a secluded world and ignorant of the civil wars raging around him, becomes a puppet in the power game between Caesar and Pompey.

5 Exemplarity as Medicine?

Like a good host, Marus provides his guest with food and drink (6.94–95), but Serranus needs more than that. The young soldier is one of the many wounded Romans (*saucia turba*, 6.55), and the narrator stresses that he is heavily injured: he is 'wounded' (*saucius*, 6.67) and 'suffering from horrible wounds' (*aegrum | uulneribus diris*, 6.77–78). The news of the disastrous defeat at Lake Trasimene had by then already reached Marus: *funesti rumore mali iam saucius aures* ('his ears were already wounded by the report of the fatal calamity', 6.80). Marus is mentally 'wounded', making him like Serranus a victim of the defeat. After a short lamentation (6.81–89) he starts taking care of Serranus, putting him on a bed and treating his wounds (6.89–93). After a night of wholesome sleep,⁸¹

79 On the difference between Marus and Amyclas, see Häußler 1978: 170–171. Note, too, that Amyclas is a young man (*iuuenis*, Luc. 5.533).

80 Although Caesar had disguised himself as a civilian, his way of speaking betrayed that he was not a private citizen (Luc. 5.538–539).

81 Bettenworth 2004: 104 notes that usually nightfall marks the end of a hospitality scene. In *Punica* 6, the night of sleep attributes to the healing process and does not form a closure of the scene.

Marus continues his treatment of Serranus: *Marus instat uulneris aestus | ... medicare* ('Marus made haste to treat the inflamed wounds', 6.98–99). After his long narrative Marus resumes his role as a doctor: *maesta refouebat uulnera cura* ('again Marus took care of the wounds, a sad task', 6.551). This ring composition stresses Marus' capacity as healer of physical injuries, but framing his narrative it also suggests that his *words* are part of the healing process: through them he tries to cure the mental distress of Serranus.⁸² In the ensuing sections I will explore Marus' role as a healer. In what way does he reflect other epic healers? And how successful will he be as healer of the soul? And what are the wider implications for the epic as a whole?⁸³

5.1 *Marus as an Atypical Epic Healer*

Doctors in epic have a long pedigree. The archetype of the epic healer is Homer's Machaon, who removes an arrow from Menelaus' body (*Il.* 4.210–219). The most prominent intertext for Marus as a healer is, however, a scene in *Aeneid* 12, where Iapyx treats the wounded Aeneas (*A.* 12.383–440).⁸⁴ A comparison with that scene will lead me to argue that Marus is a rather atypical kind of epic healer.

The trigger for the intertextual connection with Iapyx is the way Serranus arrives at Marus' hut, 'supporting his faltering steps with a broken spear' (*lapsantes fultum truncata cuspidе gressus*, 6.79). This recalls the spear that Aeneas uses for supporting his steps when he returns from the battlefield: *alternos longa nitentem cuspidе gressus* (*A.* 12.386).⁸⁵ Silius closely follows the metre and phrasing of the Virgilian line. The identical verse endings are clear enough: *nitentem* has been rendered by *fultum*, both construed with a slightly odd accusative (*gressus*).⁸⁶ The surrounding hyperbaton *alternos ... gressus* ('every other step') is changed into *lapsantes ... gressus* ('faltering steps'). This makes Serranus even less steady on his legs than Aeneas.⁸⁷ There are some other dif-

82 Fröhlich 2000: 138–139 notes to the double capacity of Marus as physical and mental healer.

83 For body and soul as political metaphors in Roman thought, see Lowrie 2020.

84 Fröhlich 2000: 157 mentions both the Homeric and the Virgilian texts as examples of the motif of the epic healer but does not elaborate on these parallels.

85 The parallel is noted by Tarrant 2012: 187, but he does not elaborate on its significance.

86 For a discussion of these accusatives, see Fröhlich 2000: 154 and Tarrant 2012: 187.

87 This deviation from Virgil may have been triggered by a Valerian allusion to the same passage. Valerius Flaccus tells how the Lemnians find the crippled Vulcan, whom Hera has thrown from the Olympus: *adclinem scopulo inueniunt miserentque fouentque | alternos aegro cunctantem poplite gressus* ('they find him leaning against a rock, took compassion

ferences: Aeneas holds a long spear (*longa*), Serranus a broken one (*truncata*); Serranus comes to Marus all by himself with ‘not one of his comrades left’ (*haud illi comitum super ullus*, 6.68), while Aeneas is set down in the camp by ‘Mnestheus, loyal Achates and Ascanius at his side’ (*Mnestheus et fidus Achates | Ascaniusque comes*, *A.* 12.384–385). Mentally, too, their situation is different. Serranus flees from the battlefield in despair, heavily affected by the disastrous outcome of the battle, whereas Aeneas orders his men to treat his wound immediately, so that he can return to the war. In short, Serranus’ situation is both physically and mentally worse than that of Aeneas.

When Iapyx appears on stage, he is introduced as the favourite of Apollo, from whom he had received the gift of medicine. The narrator stresses this relation with Apollo when Iapyx is dealing with Aeneas’ wounds:

ille retorto

Paeonium in morem **senior** succinctus amictu
 multa manu medica Phoebique potentibus herbis
nequiquam trepidat, **nequiquam** spicula dextra
 sollicitat (*Virg. A.* 12.400–404)

The aged man, with robe rolled back and girt in the fashion of Paeon, with healing hand and Phoebus’ potent herbs works anxiously, but in vain; in vain with his hand he pulls the arrow.

The narratees will expect this almost divine doctor to be successful in treating Aeneas, but line 403 dashes this expectation: the repetition of *nequiquam* stresses that his appliance of medicine has no effect.⁸⁸ No god comes to his aid, until finally Venus, unobserved, adds medical power to the water he uses:

inficit occulte medicans, spargitque salubris
 ambrosiae **sucos** et odoriferam panaceam.
fouit ea uulnus lymphæ longæueus Iapyx
 ignorans (*Virg. A.* 12.418–421)

on him, nursed him, as on weak knees he moved slowly every other step’, *V. Fl.* 2.92–93). That Serranus is also called *aegrum* in 6.77 can be seen as a nod to this Valerian passage. Serranus then is reminiscent of the crippled Vulcan, too. Poortvliet 1991: 80, Spaltenstein 2002: 334, and Tarrant 2012: 187 all draw attention to the similar phrasing of the three authors.

88 Tarrant 2012: 193.

She steeps [an herb] with secret healing and sprinkles potions of healing ambrosia and fragrant panacea. With this water the aged Iapyx treated the wound, unwitting.

This treatment causes the spear to drop out of the wound spontaneously and the pain to disappear immediately, after which Aeneas regains his former strength. Iapyx attributes his recovery to an unknown god and exhorts Aeneas to resume fighting.

Certain aspects of the Silian healer are reminiscent of his Virgilian predecessor. Marus is like Iapyx a *senior* (in 6.94, 6.118 and 6.299), and the description of his treatment of Serranus contains echoes from the scene in the *Aeneid*:

inde aegra reponit
membra toro nec ferre rudis medicamina (quippe
callebat bellis) **nunc** purgat **uulnera lympha**,
nunc mulcet **sucis**. (6.89–92)

Next he lays the sick man on the bed and with the skill of applying medicines (which he had learned in war) now cleanses the wounds with water, and now soothes it with a potion.

The treatment with water and a medical potion (*lympha, sucis*) recalls Iapyx's method, but there are significant differences that should be noted. Marus' medical skill is not a divine gift, but gained from practical knowledge during the war. The gemination *nunc ... nunc* can be taken as a contrastive echo of *nequiquam ... nequiquam* (*A.* 12.403): Silius stresses that Marus is swiftly applying the right actions in treating Serranus, whereas Virgil stresses that Iapyx's bustling about is all in vain.⁸⁹ The same contrast is observable, when Marus treats Serranus the next morning for a second time:

Marus instat uulneris aestus
expertis **medicare** modis gratumque teporem
exutus senium **trepida** pietate ministrat. (6.98–100)

Marus made haste to treat the inflamed wounds with tried remedies and, forgetful of his old age, applies a pleasant coolness with trembling piety.

89 As Tarrant 2012: 194 observes, repetition is used to emphasize the effectiveness of Venus' intervention, contrasting with the repetition of *nequiquam* in *A.* 12.403.

Again, the narrator stresses Marus' expertise (*expertis ... modis*), which contrasts with Iapyx's ignorance of the divine intervention in healing his patient (*ignorans*, *A.* 12.421). It is telling that the verb *medicare* in the *Aeneid* is said of Venus (*A.* 12.418), whereas Silius applies it to Marus. This, again, stresses the fact that it is really Marus who is curing the wound of Serranus, whereas in the case of Iapyx it is actually Venus who is the healer.⁹⁰ The phrase *trepida pietate ministrat* recalls the unsuccessful attempts of Iapyx to treat Aeneas' wound: *nequiquam trepidat* (*A.* 12.403).⁹¹ But whereas Iapyx was bustling in vain, the 'trembling piety' of Marus does bring relieve for the patient.

On an intratextual level, Marus echoes another healer in the *Punica*, the African Synhalus. This doctor, also an old man, had successfully treated his patient, Hannibal's brother Mago. Saliently he, too, got wounded in the Battle of Lake Trasimene (5.344–375). The strongest verbal connection to this earlier scene can be found in 6.90–92, cited above. These lines clearly correspond with the way that Synhalus treats Mago:

tum proauita ferens leni medicamina dextra
 ocus intortos de more adstrictus amictus
mulcebat lympha purgatum sanguine uulnus. (5.366–368)

Then he applied the medicines of his ancestors with his soothing hand and with his twisted garment he quickly soothed the wound with water, having cleansed it from blood.

Both men apply medicine and clean the wounds with water.⁹² Does this mean, then, that Marus is similar to this Carthaginian doctor? The words *intortos de more astrictus amictus* (5.367), which has no equivalent in our episode, suggests rather the opposite. Like other epic healers Synhalus is dressed in a girded cloak. In fact, these words strongly echo the way that Iapyx's dress is described: *ille retorto | Paonium in morem senior succinctus amictu* ('the aged man, with

90 The verb *medicare*, together with the alliteration *medicare modis*, also picks up the 'many things' that Iapyx undertakes 'with his healing hand'—in vain: *multa manu medica* (*A.* 12.402).

91 The verb *trepido* has connotations of haste and anxiousness, but might also hint at the trembling hands of the old men. See Attia 1955: 51.

92 Both Fröhlich 2000: 158 and Spaltenstein 1986: 397 notice this intratextual echo, but offer no interpretation. Another parallel is their gentle method of working: *leni dextra* (5.366) ~ *mollis tactu* (6.92–93). A similarity on a metaliterary level is that both characters are inventions of Silius. On the invention of Synhalus, see Spaltenstein 1986: 362.

robe rolled back and girded in the fashion of Paeon', Virg. *A.* 12.400–401).⁹³ This indicates that Synhalus is, like Iapyx, a traditional epic doctor, who got his medical knowledge from the gods. Before the actual treatment of Mago, the narrator stresses that Synhalus' ancestor, who went by the same name, was a son of the god Hammon. After him, the 'heavenly gift' of medicine (*caelestia dona*, 5.360) was handed down from generation to generation. In addition, Synhalus is a practitioner of magic, which involves herbs, incantations, and snakes:

unguere uulnus
herbarum hic sucis ferrumque e corpore cantu
exigere et somnum tacto misisse chelydro
anteibat cunctos (5.352–355)

Synhalus exceeded all in applying herbal potions to a wound, driving a weapon from a body by incantations and in putting asleep snakes by merely touching them.

This also recalls Iapyx who in vain used 'potent herbs' (*potentibus herbis*, *A.* 12.402), and who could remove the arrow from Aeneas' body in a miraculous way: *iamque secuta manum nullo cogente sagitta | excidit* ('now the arrow, following his hand, without force applied, dropped out [of the wound]'; *A.* 12.423–424).⁹⁴

Conversely, Marus, as we have seen, has no divine knowledge, but learned medicine from practicing it on the battlefield. Moreover, his treatment includes bandaging Serranus' wounds, serving small amounts of food, and letting him rest. These steps are in line with medical knowledge of the imperial age, such as Celsus' prescriptions for treating a patient.⁹⁵ This makes Marus more similar to an actual doctor of the first century than his divinely inspired epic counterparts such as Iapyx or Synhalus. Marus does not rely on gods or magic, but rather on his practical and rational abilities in healing Serranus. This rational approach of his patient also shows in his attempt to comfort Serranus on a psychological level. Marus tries to assuage the traumatic experiences of Serranus by his exemplary narrative.

93 Spaltenstein 1986: 362–364 notes this echo of Iapyx and discusses several other verbal parallels (besides 5.367 also in 5.344, 5.351, and 5.353). See also Vinchesi 2006: 267–268.

94 The absence of force is a sign of the miraculous, as Tarrant 2012: 199 notes.

95 Cf. Celsus 5.26.21–28. See for this idea Vinchesi 2006: 268–270 and Fröhlich 2000: 157. The *OCD* dates Celsus in the reign of Tiberius (AD 14–37).

5.2 *Marus as a Stoic Healer*

Marus tries to be more than a physician. Equally if not more important is his role as a Stoic healer for the soul.⁹⁶ He has the intention of lifting the young man's spirits by telling a story about his father; the exemplary narrative itself is the medicine he applies to the wounded soul of Serranus. That the latter is heavily traumatized is clear from his emotional outburst when Marus is curing his wounds. The narrator emphasizes the emotions of the young man: he has a 'sad face' (*maestos ... uultus*, 6.101) and starts talking 'with groans and tears' (*cum gemitu lacrimisque simul*, 6.102). Before summing up all defeats the Romans have suffered so far, which culminated in the death of consul Flaminius, he states that there is yet 'no limit to our adversities' (*nec deinde aduersis modus*, 6.107). Finally, he mentions his survivor's guilt: he wished he would have died fighting.

It is interesting to compare Serranus to Mago, the patient that is treated by Synhalus earlier in the *Punica*. Although he is seriously injured, he could comfort himself by thinking back to his killing of Appius, the enemy that had wounded him. Mago even tries to comfort his brother Hannibal:

parce metu, germane. meis medicamina nulla
aduersis maiora feres. iacet Appius hasta
 ad manes pulsus nostra. si uita relinquat,
 sat nobis actum est. sequar hostem **laetus** ad umbras. (5.372–375)

Check your fear, brother. You could bring me no greater medicine for my adversities than this. Appius is slain, driven to the dead by my spear. If life should abandon me, I have done enough. I will happily follow my enemy to the shades.

In other words: his mind-set is his medicine. Unlike Serranus, Mago does not want to die out of guilt or shame, but would accept his fate happily (*laetus*).

Of course, Serranus cannot seek comfort in heroism like Mago does, because the Roman army has been defeated. Nevertheless, Marus 'works hard to calm him down, as he makes other matters more bitter by his complaining' (*cetera acerbantem questu lenire laborans*, 6.117). Marus wants to sooth (*lenire*) the

96 Fröhlich 2000: 138: "Fürsorglich durch und durch, nimmt Marus auch die innere Pein des aufgewühlten und immer heftiger klagenden Serranus ernst und lässt das Amt des Wundarztes ruhen, um als stoischer Seelenarzt das Wort an sich zu ziehen und dem sich abhärmenden Linderung zu verschaffen." Seneca often uses physical afflictions as metaphors for mental problems, and medical procedures as metaphors for his philosophy. See Fröhlich 2000: 138 for examples from Seneca and other Stoic texts.

young man's mental pain, which is intensified by his emotions (*questu*).⁹⁷ He does so by giving philosophical advice for dealing with adversity and presenting his father Regulus as an example of this attitude towards life:

patrio, fortissime, ritu
quicquid adest duri et rerum inclinata feramus.
 talis lege deum cliuoso tramite **uitae**
per uarios praeceps casus rota uoluitur aeu. (6.118–121)

Bravest of men, in your father's fashion we have to endure all hardships and troubles. According to the laws of the gods the wheel of time rolls in headlong movement along the steep path of life through various misfortunes of that kind.

These lines are an amalgam of Stoic ideas, as commentators have noted.⁹⁸ Especially the phrasing of the last two lines is quite complex, with various concepts being intertwined.⁹⁹ Although the Stoic ideas that Marus paraphrases are familiar enough, they do evoke specific texts. One can think of Nautes, who gives Aeneas similar Stoic advice:¹⁰⁰

nate dea, quo fata trahunt retrahuntque sequamur;
quidquid erit, superanda omnis fortuna ferendo est.
 (Virg. *A.* 5.709–710)

Son of a goddess, we have to follow where Fate brings us to and fro. Whatever may be, every fortune can be overcome by endurance.

The metaphor of time as a wheel seems to be borrowed from Anchises' words to Aeneas in the underworld. Anchises explains that souls can return to earth

97 *Lenio* has medical connotations, as it is a technical term for mitigating the pain of wounds, e.g. Cels. 2.8.10; *TLL* 8.2.1142.14–38 s.v. lists more examples. Seneca argues that philosophical words are a mitigating device: *his sermonibus et his similibus lenitur illa uis ulceris* ('by these words and words of this kind, the malignity of the ulcer is calmed down', Sen. *Ep.* 98.15). Words are the cure for dealing with adversity, just as Marus' words should mitigate Serranus' sorrow.

98 Sechi 1951: 288, Bassett 1955: 4, and Fröhlich 2000: 139–140.

99 Spaltenstein 1986: 399.

100 Mentioned in passing by Fröhlich 2000: 140. According to R.D. Williams 1960: 176 these Virgilian lines "express Stoic ideas", whereas Fratantuono and Smith 2015: 633 rather sees them as "a pair of commonplace platitudes, however true or praiseworthy the sentiments."

‘when they have rolled the wheel through a thousand years’ (*ubi mille rotam uoluere per annos*, *A.* 6.748).¹⁰¹ The combination of the wheel of time and the shortness of human life is also found in the first choral song of Seneca’s *Hercules Furens*, which also rings through in Marus’ words:¹⁰²

properat cursu **uita** citato,
uolucrique die
rota praecipitis uertitur anni. (*Herc. F.* 179–181)

Life hurries apace, and with each winged day the wheel of the headlong year turns forward.

So even if Marus is not a philosopher, he does use Stoic language. As an example of this attitude, Serranus has to remember his father. His fame should be enough to curtail his emotions:

sat tibi, sat magna et totum uulgata per orbem
stant documenta domus: sacer ille et numine nullo
inferior tuus ille parens **decora alta** parauit
restando **aduersis** (6.122–125)

Enough for you, great enough are the examples of your house, famous over the entire world: that father of yours, sacred and inferior to no god prepared for this high glory by defying adversity.

It is as if Marus is repeating the words of Mago, who deems his actions in the past good enough: *sat nobis actum est* (5.375). When even this Carthaginian can cope with adversity, such a noble father should provide Serranus with enough ammunition to fight his own troubles.

At the same time, Marus foreshadows the advice that the ghost of Scipio the Elder gives to his son in Book 13:¹⁰³

101 This is the earliest attestation of the ‘wheel of time’ in Latin poetry. Virgil has taken the image from Ennius, according to Servius. See Billerbeck 1999: 263.

102 Bassett 1955: 4. Billerbeck 1999: 262 contends that this specific stanza vents Epicurean rather than Stoic ideas. The first choral song of Seneca’s *Agamemnon* voices the idea that kings are short-lived in similar wordings: *ut praecipites regum casus | Fortuna rotat* (‘as Fortune whirls the fates of kings in headlong movement’, *Sen. Ag.* 71–72).

103 This intratext is well known: Attia 1955: 61, C. Reitz 1982: 95 n.2, Marks 2005: 140 n.73, Van der Keur 2015: 364.

per nostri, **fortissime**, leti
 obtestor causas, Martis moderare furori.
sat tibi sint documenta domus! (13.669–671)

By the cause of our death, bravest one, I beseech you: temper your fury in war. Your house gives you sufficient examples!

Scipio the Elder addresses his son with the same vocative (*fortissime*) and reminds him of his own unfortunate death: the younger Scipio should temper his reckless behaviour on the battlefield and show more caution than his father and uncle did.¹⁰⁴ The difference is that Serranus should follow in the divine footsteps of his father, whereas Scipio the Younger is advised to avoid the same mistakes as his father.¹⁰⁵

Marus repeats a word from Serranus' complaint (*aduersis*, 6.107) in the same metrical *sedes*, when explaining that his father received his fame 'by defying adversity' (*restando aduersis*, 6.125).¹⁰⁶ His father is a famous example of a *sapiens*, equal to the gods, according to Marus. Similar words are repeated later in the narrative, when Marus states that according to Regulus 'fleeing away from adversity by precaution is not as honourable as taming it by endurance' (*nec tam fugisse cauendo | aduersa egregium, quam perdomuisse ferendo*, 6.375–376).¹⁰⁷ Serranus therefore should follow his father's example and endure his fate.

The 'high honour' (*decora alta*, 6.124) of Regulus suggests a link with Hannibal in Book 3. He is speaking there to his Spanish wife Imilce, whom he sends off to Carthage. In his farewell speech, he tries 'in haste to calm her fears and to console her mind which suffers from astonished cares' (*lenire metus pro-*

104 The word *documentum*, derived from *doceo* ('to teach'), fits in the didactic structure of both narratives. The warning of Scipio the Elder echoes a similar advice of Fabius given to Scipio the Younger in Livy 28.41.14. See Marks 2005: 140 n.73. There are two other attestations of the word in the *Punica*. In the Battle of Cannae, Crista wants to show his sons 'examples of a fight that is calling' (*pugnae documenta fuocantisq*, 10.112), which ironically ends in their own deaths. Hannibal's brother Hasdrubal tries to incite his soldiers to fight the Romans by stating that 'Fortune labours to give Latium examples by adversity' (*Latio Fortuna laborat | aduersis documenta dare*, 15.640–641). These words are heavily ironic, too, as the Romans will kill Hasdrubal and show his head on a stake to his brother.

105 Van der Keur 2015: 364.

106 The metrical opening of both verses is also identical: spondees in the first two and a half feet, with an elision in the second.

107 Fröhlich 2000: 165.

perans aegramque leuare | attonitis mentem curis, 3.131–132). This is similar to the goal of Marus, who aims to comfort (*lenire laborans*, 6.117) a suffering Serranus (*aegrum*, 6.77). Hannibal's speech, however, is rather an explanation of his own motives and apparently also an admonition to himself. After a short contemplation of the brevity of life, he indicates how the ghost of his father Hamilcar urges him to fulfil the oath he swore to fight against the Romans: *stant arae atque horrida sacra | ante oculos* ('the altars and the horrible sacrifices stand before my sight', 3.140–141). He then explains that he wants to be famous not only in Italy, but all over the world: *letique metu decora alta relinquam?* ('should I abandon high honour from fear of death?', 3.144).¹⁰⁸ Both Hannibal and Serranus have to live up to the bar set by their deceased fathers. In the end, Hannibal, not Serranus, will get the *decora alta* of worldwide renown he is looking for, just as Regulus did before.

The story that Marus tells about Regulus has the goal of comforting Serranus. The old man sees Serranus as someone who now experiences what he himself has suffered in the past. Marus narrates how he himself had experienced a narrow escape, when a giant snake had already devoured two of his companions:

sic **dirum** nobis et **lamentabile** monstrum
effugisse datur. quantum mens **aegra** sinebat,
appropero **gressum** (6.204–206)

So only I was given the chance to flee away from the horrible and deplorable monster. As much as my suffering mind would let me, I hastened my pace.

These words make an implicit analogy with Serranus' current situation. His arrival was phrased in a similar way:

108 Attia 1955: 61 and Spaltenstein 1986: 194 signal this last parallel. The latter draws attention to the Virgilian legacy of this phrase: *ueterum decora alta parentum* ('the high decorations of their ancestors', *A.* 2.448). There, *decora alta* refers to gilded rafters of Priamus' palace that the Trojans throw down upon the Greeks. The phrase also appears in *Stat. Theb.* 5.424, referring to the Argonauts landing in Lemnos: *magnorum decora alta patrum* ('the tall pride of great fathers'). In all three authors, the phrase is connected with the relation between parents and children. The only other attestation of *decora alta* (*A.* 1.429), referring to the theatre under construction in Carthage, is debated. Many editions, like the OCT, accept Bentley's conjecture *apta*; for a discussion, see Austin 1971: 148–149. Conte 2009 in his Teubner, however, prints *alta*, the reading of all manuscripts, and refers in his *apparatus criticus* to the two passages in Silius.

utque ora agnouit et aegrum
uulneribus **diris**¹⁰⁹ ac, **lamentabile** uisu,
lapsantes fultum truncata cuspidе **gressus** ... (6.77–79)

As soon as [Marus] recognized the face of the man suffering from horrible wounds, and, deplorable to behold, supporting his faltering steps with a broken spear, ...

Serranus' deplorable appearance is focalized by Marus (*agnouit*).¹¹⁰ In retrospect, we can understand that the old man at this moment does not only recognize Serranus, but also recognizes a younger version of himself. The situation of Serranus is 'deplorable to behold' (*lamentabile uisu*) and it is exactly with the same adjective that he describes the snake: *lamentabile monstrum*.¹¹¹ After the giant snake had devoured his two comrades he ran back to Regulus 'as much as my suffering mind would let me' (*quantum mens aegra sinebat*, 6.205). He had no physical, but psychological wounds, whereas Serranus suffers from both. Somewhat later in his story, Marus quotes Regulus, who reproaches his men for having no courage: *si ... | ... uiso mens aegra effluxit hiatu* ('if your weak spirit has oozed away at the sight of his open mouth ...', 6.244–245). If they do not have enough guts to face the monster, he will kill it singlehanded. Marus then decides to join Regulus in the final fight against the snake; the speech of Regulus 'cured' his feeble mind. The message to Serranus is that he, too, can do something about his *mens aegra*.¹¹²

The question is how successful Marus is in being a Stoic healer of the soul. It is significant that a still highly emotional Serranus interrupts Marus in the middle of his story (*medioque ... sermone*, 6.295). He must have been weeping all along: 'already a long time his face was wet with tears' (*iamdudum uultus lacrimis atque ora rigabat*, 6.294). In 6.415 he interrupts Marus yet again 'with deep sighing and surging tears' (*alto ... gemitu lacrimisque coortis*). Marus con-

109 On the basis of the intratext of 6.204–205, I follow this conjecture of Schrader (Van Veen 1888: 213). Delz and Spaltenstein 1986: 396 opt for the manuscript reading *diris*.

110 Evaluative adjectives like *diris* and *lamentabile* fit into this idea. It can also explain why line 6.79 contains the same information that the primary narrator has already given in 6.69–70: we once more look at Serranus, but now through Marus' compassionate eyes.

111 These are the only two attestations of *lamentabilis* in the *Punica*.

112 This expression has Stoic resonances. Seneca, for example, often uses *aeger* for people who have not the right, i.e. Stoic, mind-set, e.g. *Ep.* 15.1: *sine hoc aeger est animus* ('without this [i.e. philosophy] the soul is sick'). Other examples are *Ep.* 2.1, 50.9, 74.34, and *Ben.* 7.16.6. Cf. *TLL* 1.941.16–53 s.v. *aeger*. Hannibal reproaches his *mens aegra* in 12.497, after which he decides to begin his march on Rome.

tinues his narrative, as he thinks that Serranus is making his wounds (physical, mental, or both?) worse by his complaints (*inhibens conuellere uulnera questu*, 6.431). Right after he has narrated his father's death, Marus exhorts Serranus to stop crying, which implies that he still does: *absiste, o iuuenis, lacrimis* (6.545). One may ask whether the narrative of Regulus has been a good way of assuaging Serranus' emotions; it is safe to say that it did not have the desired effect of curbing Serranus' emotions *during* the narration itself. This unfulfilled goal also has implications for the *Punica* at large. As we have seen, Marus can be seen as a *mise en abyme* for the primary narrator. The epic, a return to the Roman past, can be seen as a solace for the civil war of AD 68–69 that Silius and many of his narratees have experienced themselves. As Schaffenrath argues, Serranus should be seen as a figure with which the primary narratees can identify themselves.¹¹³ But if Serranus cannot be comforted by a narrative about the Roman past, how can Silius' narratees? The exemplary past does not give solace for the present.

6 Learning from the past?

Looking back to a previous war as an example for the present is a feature that occurs in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* as well. The allusions to the arrival of Caesar at Amyclas, as discussed in section 4.2 above, prepare for more intertextual references to the *Bellum Civile*. As a narrator, Marus recalls the anonymous old man in Book 2, whose flashback of the preceding civil war between Marius and Sulla forms the largest speech in the *Bellum Civile* (2.68–232). The general similarities are immediately clear: Marus' narrative is the longest narrative of the *Punica* and recounts events from the previous war.¹¹⁴ The narrators show more specific similarities: they both can be seen as *mise en abyme* of the primary narrator; they both have been eyewitnesses and hence use emotional language when speaking about the past; and they both tell accounts about the past which foreshadow events that will happen in the current war.¹¹⁵

This Lucanian intertext has been viewed as foil to the narrative of Regulus: whereas the old man in Lucan tells his story 'seeking examples for his great fear'

113 Schaffenrath 2010b: 122.

114 Does the name Marus perhaps also echo Marius?

115 For the anonymous narrator in Lucan as *mise en abyme* of the primary narrator, see Barrière 2016: 37. For Marus, see section 3.3 above. Ambühl 2010: 30–31 notes the similarity between the old man and Aeneas as narrator in *Aeneid* 2, which is also an intertextual model for the Silian narrative, as I have discussed in section 3.2 above.

(*magno quaerens exempla timori*, Luc. 2.67), Marus tries to find some comfort in the previous war, both for himself and his narratee Serranus. He rather sees Regulus as an example to be worshipped: ‘the honourable virtue of your father set an example’ (*uestri ueneranda parentis | edidit exemplum uirtus*, 6.534–535).¹¹⁶ The portrayal of Regulus contains some allusions to Marius and Sulla, which put the Roman hero in contrast to those rivalling generals. One can see Regulus’ imprisonment by the Carthaginians, for instance, as an antithesis of the incarceration of Marius by the Romans. The old man in Lucan tells that Marius was pining away in his cell:

mox uincola ferri
exedere *senem* longusque in carcere paedor. (Luc. 2.72–73)

Then, the old man was corroded by iron chains and the lengthy squalor in a prison.

Next, he miraculously escapes to Libya, where he gathers strength for an attack on Rome. The narrator portrays Marius as a new-born Hannibal:

solacia fati
Carthago Mariusque tulit, pariterque iacentes
ignouere deis. Libycas ibi colligit iras. (Luc. 2.91–93)

Carthago and Marius had consolation for their fate: both equally prostrate, they forgave the gods. Here he gathered Libyan wrath.

Marius then returns to Italy as an avatar of Hannibal to wreak havoc among the Roman population.¹¹⁷ Regulus, on the other hand, returns to Rome from Carthage as a prisoner of war to negotiate new peace conditions. In the senate, he advises against exchanging prisoners, as he has little worth as a soldier due to this long incarceration. The way in which Regulus describes his waning strength echoes the imprisonment of Marus in *Bellum Civile* 2:¹¹⁸

116 Brouwers 1982: 85. See also Haüßler 1978: 175–176.

117 For Hannibal’s anger, cf. 1.38–39: *iamque deae cunctas sibi belliger induit iras | Hannibal* (‘and now the belligerent Hannibal put on all the anger of the goddess’). Marius is at the same time a proto-Caesar: Caesar was compared with a raging Libyan lion in Luc. 1.205–207. See Barrière 2016: 47 and section 7.1 below.

118 Fröhlich 2000: 404 lists this parallel, without interpretation.

nunc etiam **uinclis** et **longo carcere** torpent
 captiuo in **senio** uires. (6.475–476)

Now my strength has waned due to the chains and long captivity in my imprisoned old age.

Regulus' captivity was truly *longus* as he was in a Carthaginian prison from 255 to probably 250 BC,¹¹⁹ whereas the *longus ... paedor* of Marius in Lucan should be seen as a rhetorical exaggeration when we adduce the account of Plutarch, according to whom the imprisonment was very short.¹²⁰ Encouraged by Regulus' speech, the Romans decide to decline the Carthaginian peace offer. This infuriates his prisoners: *Tyriae sese iam reddidit irae* ('he handed himself back now to Tyrian anger', 6.490). Regulus is brought back to Carthage to be executed. This is of course the opposite of what happens to Marius, who fled to Carthage and came back to Rome as a destroyer.

Regulus' perseverance in all situations was almost beyond belief, as Marus states. His expression did not change, whether he was in Carthage, in Rome or on the torture rack:

si **qua fides**, **unum**, puer, inter mille labores,
unum etiam in patria **saeuaque** in Agenoris urbe
 atque **unum uidi poenae** quoque tempore **uultum**. (6.386–388)

If you can believe me, young man, I have seen that he had the same expression amid a thousand dangers, the same expression both in his fatherland and in the cruel city of Agenor, and the same expression in the time of his torture.

This singularity of Regulus' expression conjures up a comparison with the death through torture of Marius' son, Marius Gratidianus, by Sulla's men:

uix erit **ulla fides** tam **saeui** criminis, **unum**
 tot **poenas** cepisse caput. (Luc. 2.186–187)

Hardly will a crime so savage be believed, that one man can incur so many tortures.

119 Attia 1955: 225.

120 Plu. *Mar.* 38–39. See Van Campen 1991: 100.

The old man in Lucan stresses, like Marus, that he has witnessed this torture (*uidimus*, Luc. 2.178), in which the man's face (*uultum*, Luc. 2.191) was maimed beyond recognition. An important theme of this passage in Lucan is the cruelty of the torturers (*saeui criminis*), which Marus also reports about the Carthaginian executioners (*saeua in Agenoris urbe*).¹²¹

The cruel killing of Marius' son resonates again in the description of the giant snake. The henchmen of Sulla cut out the boy's tongue:

exectaue **lingua**
palpitat et muto uacuum ferit **aera motu**. (Luc. 2.181–182)

His cut-out tongue quivered, beating empty air with noiseless motion.

This is echoed in the flickering tongue of the monster:

trifido uibrata per auras
lingua micat motu atque adsultans **aethera** lambit. (6.222–223)

Its tongue flickers with three-forked movement, vibrating in the air, and jumping up licks the skies.

Although one can argue that these Silian lines are rooted, as the rest of Marus' description, in earlier accounts of snakes, there is at least one element that seems to be inspired by the passage in Lucan: the movement of the tongue in the air.¹²² In this way, the lethal snake brings to mind the cruelty of Rome's first civil war.

That the snake of the Bagrada evokes the civil war is not so strange when we consider that in Lucan, too, the terror of Sulla is compared with mythological monsters, such as Antaeus. The old man rhetorically argues that even Libya did not see such a quantity of bodies hanging 'on the doorposts of Antaeus' (*postibus Antaei*, Luc. 2.164). The giant Antaeus happened to live near the same river Bagrada as the snake did, as Lucan will later commemorate (Luc. 4.587–590).¹²³

121 Regulus' perseverance has no parallel in the death by torture of Marius' son, whose reaction is nowhere mentioned.

122 Fröhlich 2000: 210. For the 'snake language' in these lines, see also Attia 1955: 106, Spaltenstein 1986: 211, and Soerink 2013: 368–369

123 See section 7.1 and 7.2 below. Lucan's account of the fight between Hercules and Antaeus recalls Euander's account of Hercules and Cacus in *Aeneid* 8; the fight between Regulus and the snake also alludes to this Virgilian model. See section 4.1 with n.74 en 75 above.

Shortly before the long speech of the anonymous old man, Lucan refers to the Second Punic War. The soldiers of both Caesar and Pompey complain that they are not living in the age of those previous wars and implore the gods to send a foreign enemy:

o miserae sortis quod non in Punica nati
tempora Cannarum fuimus Trebiaequae iuuentus.
non pacem petimus, superi: date gentibus iras (Luc. 2.45–47)

O how unfortunate that we were not born in the time of the Punic war, to fight at Cannae and at Trebia. It is not peace we ask for, gods: inspire with rage the foreign nations.

Book 6 of the *Punica* seems to question this wish: Serranus fought in the war, which the soldiers in the *Bellum Civile* recall with longing, but he comes to Marus' hut as a broken man. Marus, although distressed by the current disaster, tries to find some comfort in his experiences in the previous Punic war. The old man in Lucan, however, cannot find any comfort in the past, but rather a precedent that confirms his fears of the crimes to come. As part of the older generation he looks in anxiety at what is happening around him:

at miseros angit sua cura parentes,
oderuntque grauis uiuacia fata senectae
seruatosque iterum bellis ciuilibus annos. (Luc. 2.64–66)

But miserable parents are tormented by a special sorrow: they detest their long-enduring lot of oppressive age, their years preserved for civil war a second time.

His pendant in the *Punica* is Serranus' mother Marcia, who has also lived long enough to experience both wars.¹²⁴ She implored her son many times not to follow the example of his father, but he had not listened to her advice:

quotiens heu, nate, petebam,
ne patrias iras animosque in proelia ferres
neu te belligeri stimularet in arma parentis

124 Steele 1922: 329. For Marica, see section 3.1 above.

triste decus. nimium uiuacis dura senectae
supplicia expendi. (6.584–588)

Ah, my son, how often did I ask you not to carry into battle the anger and spirit of your father and not to be urged to arms by the sad glory of your belligerent parent. I have paid heavy penalties for my old age that lasts too long.

Just as the parents in the *Bellum Civile*, she has experienced the savagery of the previous war and now sees that her fears have become reality. While Marus tried to find comfort in the past, she underlines the horrors of the war; whether it be a war between Roman citizens or a war against a foreign enemy, the consequences for parents are equally cruel. She hopes that she can put an end to the perpetuity of warfare that is passed on from father to son.¹²⁵

Marcia is also reminiscent of Cornelia in the *Bellum Civile*, the wife of Pompey.¹²⁶ When her husband is killed, she rebukes herself for not having committed suicide. She will pass her remaining days in misery: ‘before that, I will take revenge on my life itself for being long-lived’ (*poenas animae uiuacis ab ipsa | ante feram*, Luc. 9.103–104).¹²⁷ She decides to stay alive to pass on the political testament of her husband Pompey to his son Sextus: ‘deceived, I have lived on, should I not, a traitor, carry off the words entrusted to me’ (*deceptaque uixi | ne mihi commissas auferrem perfida uoces*, Luc 9.99–100). Likewise, Regulus’ wife did not stay alive for herself, but only ‘endured life because of her children’ (*lucem causa natorum passa*, 6.577). The message they pass on to the children of their husbands, however, could not be more different. Cornelia ventriloquizes the orders of Pompey to her stepson: ‘you, Sextus, seek the hazards of warfare and move you father’s standards through the world’ (*tu pete bellorum casus et signa per orbem*, | *Sexte, paterna moue*, Luc. 9.84–85). She then proceeds to quote Pompey’s words, which encourage Sextus to continue the civil war against Caesar (Luc. 9.87–97); in the end, however, Caesar will defeat all resistance, including Sextus himself. Marcia seems to have ‘learned’ from Cornelia’s

125 The continuity of warfare from generation to generation is a theme that Silius addresses in his prooemium: *mandata nepotibus arma* (‘arms that are commissioned to descendants’, 1.18); see also section 7.4 below.

126 Her name echoes yet another character from the *Bellum Civile*. Cato’s wife is called Marcia, cf. e.g. Luc. 2.328 and 2.344. As the name of Regulus’ wife is otherwise unknown, scholars have seen the correspondence of their names as a conscious allusion. See Von Albrecht: 1964: 65 with n.52 and Spaltenstein 1986: 419.

127 Spaltenstein 1986: 432 and Wick 2004: vol. 2 40 note the correspondence with 6.587–588.

example. Instead of encouraging warfare, she has actually often advised Serranus against taking up his arms in the fashion of his father. In doing so, Marcia goes against the purpose of Marus' narrative "to secure generational continuity and literally to illustrate for young Serranus his father's heroic exploits."¹²⁸ Her warnings did, however, not result in the desired effect: Serranus *did* follow in the footsteps of his father and almost got himself killed. Marcia has not been able to stop the cycle of wars; but she has at least managed to question heroism as such. There is no reason for optimism in this phase of the war.

Only much later in the epic, when the tide of the Romans has turned for the better, a Roman mother dares to encourage her son to wage war against Hannibal. In Book 13, the ghost of Pomponia urges Scipio to have no fear and promises him eternal fame (13.634–636), which will actually materialize.¹²⁹ A possible explanation for this different outcome is that both Serranus and Scipio should follow their father's virtue, but not their spirit in war. Serranus had made a mistake in imitating his father's fury (*patrias iras*, 6.585) in fighting the Carthaginians. He returns from the battlefield as a broken man. A similar temerity also got Scipio's father and uncle killed. Scipio should not follow their example, as we have seen above (section 5.2). Marus, however, is blind to the negative sides of Regulus' exemplarity and urges Serranus to continue in the footsteps of his father.¹³⁰

7 Marus' First Narrative: The Fight with the Snake

In the previous sections of this chapter, we have seen that Marus presents his story as an *exemplum* to cure the afflicted Serranus. I have also shown that this exemplarity is questioned explicitly by Marcia and implicitly by intratextual and intertextual references. In this section, I will concentrate on the first part of Marus' narrative (6.140–298) which deals with the fight against the monstrous snake. This episode has attracted quite some scholarly attention, perhaps because of the blending of historical and mythological elements. We should treat this story as legendary, although some scholars assume an underlying reality.¹³¹ Before Silius, the fight against the snake was already a well-known part of the tradition around Regulus.¹³² The encounter of a hero with a mon-

128 Augoustakis 2010b: 173.

129 Augoustakis 2011: 198.

130 For this difference, see Van der Keur 2015: 353.

131 For references, see Fröhlich 2000: 189 and Soerink 2013: 363 n.17.

132 E.g. Liv. *Per.* 18.1, V. Max. 1.8 ext.19. Polybius omits the story. See Soerink 2013: 363 n.15.

ster fits perfectly into the idea of epic: one can think of Odysseus and Scylla, Jason slaying the dragon in Colchis, the snake that Cadmus kills near Thebes in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 3 or the giant Antaeus that Hercules kills in Lucan's *Bellum Civile* 4. Slaying a monster is therefore part of 'essential epic', to borrow a phrase from Stephen Hinds.¹³³ Silius' innovation of this tradition is that he situates this truly epic fight in historical times instead of a vague mythological era.¹³⁴ In the following discussion I will explore the intertextual and intratextual ramifications of this narrative. It will appear that the fight of Regulus has important consequences for understanding heroism and exemplarity in the *Punica* at large.

7.1 *The Bagrada as a Generic Marker*

The location of the fight marks a transition to 'essential epic'. The broad, slow and muddy waters of the Bagrada¹³⁵ recall the famous closing lines of Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, in which epic poetry is compared to the vast sea (πόντος) and the 'Assyrian river': Ἀσσυρίου ποταμοῖο μέγας ῥόος, ἀλλὰ τὰ πολλὰ | λύματα γῆς καὶ πολλὸν ἐφ' ὕδατι συρφετὸν ἔλκει ('the flow of the Assyrian river is vast, but it draws along much refuse from the land and much garbage on its waters', Call. *Ap.* 108–109).¹³⁶ The muddiness and the boundlessness of the Bagrada are clear echoes of this Assyrian river:

turbidus arentes lento pede sulcat harenas
Bagrada, non ullo Libycis in finibus amne
 uictus limosas extendere latius undas
 et stagnante uado patulos inuoluere campos.
 hic studio laticum, quorum est haud prodiga tellus,
 per ripas laeti saeuus consedimus aruis. (6.140–145)

Turbidly it furrows with a slow pace the dry sands—the Bagrada, superseded by no river in Libyan lands in spreading its muddy waves more widely and covering wide plains with its stagnant pool. Here, longing for water, which is not abundant in this country, we were glad to encamp upon the banks in those savage fields.

133 Hinds 2000.

134 Martin 1979: 31. But compare also Cato's journey through the Libyan desert in *Bellum Civile* 9, where he encounters a multitude of snakes.

135 Modern Medjerba. Bagradas is the form preferred in prose. For clarity's sake, I will use the hexametrical variant Bagrada. See Haselmann 2018: 122 n.368.

136 See Kahane 1994 and Soerink 2013: 364.

This is the place where the army of Regulus pitches a camp; although the Bagrada with its muddy stream is not the best river to drink from, the soldiers are glad to have found a site where there is any water at all.

The description of the Bagrada also alludes to the description of the same river in Lucan; Caesar's legate Curio pitches his camp 'where slowly the Bagrada proceeds, the furrower of the dry sand' (*qua se | Bagrada lentus agit siccae sulcator harenae*, Luc. 4.587–588).¹³⁷ As Asso notes, Lucan renders an image of the river as a snake, which furrows the sand with its body, probably inspired by an Ovidian snake: *litoream tractu squamae crepitantis harenam | sulcat* ('it furrows the coastal sand with a trail of its chafing scales', Ov. *Met.* 15.725–726).¹³⁸ Asso argues that Lucan's snaky river is also an echo of the snake that Regulus killed on the same spot according to the legendary tradition.¹³⁹ Silius' allusion to Lucan signals that he 'reads' the story of Regulus, known from many sources, through a Lucanian lens. He also acknowledges the Ovidian heritage by changing Lucan's *sulcator* back into *sulcat*. Marus' image of the river Bagrada as a winding snake foreshadows the appearance of the snake later in his narrative, like the 'savage fields', too, are a foreboding of the savage monster (*saeuis ... aruis ~ saeui serpentis*, 6.266).¹⁴⁰

As Antoniadis has shown for Lucan, Statius, and Valerius Flaccus, rivers can often be read as generic markers: "the appropriation of Callimachus' Assyrian river is used as a 'generic tag' which, typically for the genre, anticipates or points toward some piece of martial action or, by contrast, to its postponement."¹⁴¹ That the Bagrada can be read as a generic marker is confirmed not only by the echo of Callimachus, but also by a reference to the same river by Statius in *Silvae* 4.3, the eulogy on the Via Domitiana. The river Vulturnus in Campania thanks the emperor for having tamed his course; he feels ashamed about his former state, in which he had no fixed banks (*ripas habitare nescientem*, *Silv.*

137 The intertext is already noted by Ruperti 1795: 411. The allusion to Curio's failed campaign in Africa and his defeat at the battle at the Bagrada, as described in *Bellum Civile* 4, casts perhaps a shadow over Regulus' military efforts in the same area, as Marks 2010b: 134 n.18 seems to suggest. On the connection between Regulus and Curio, see Marks 2010c, and also Fucecchi 2008: 44–45.

138 Asso 2010: 219. The Ovidian allusion had already been signalled by Häußler 1978: 163.

139 Perhaps we can interpret Lucan's snaky Bagrada as a form of 'rationalizing myth': the serpentine river is the rational explanation for the origin of the legend about the monstrous snake. Compare the idea that Hylas (< ὕλη) was in fact a twig falling into the water; on such rationalizing elements in Theocritus' *Idylle* 13, see Hunter 1999: 279.

140 A suggestion made already by Ruperti 1795: 411, although he does not mention the parallel of 6.266.

141 Antoniadis 2018: 936.

4.3.74) and he was still turbid (*turbidus*, 4.3.76). Now he can flow with a wide and clear stream (*puro gurgite*, 4.3.94) into the Tyrrhenian Sea, free of muddy soil. As scholars have noted, these words of Vulturinus can be read as a metapoetical manifesto, strongly reminiscent of Callimachean and neoteric notions of poetry.¹⁴² The Vulturinus contrasts himself with muddy rivers and explicitly mentions the Bagrada:

... qualis Cinyphius tacente ripa
 Poenos Bagrada *serpiti* inter agros (Stat. *Silv.* 4.3.90–91)

... like the Cinyphian Bagrada snakes by his silent banks amid Punic fields

The fact that the Bagrada ‘snakes’ through Punic fields has been viewed as a veiled allusion to the narrative in *Punica* 6, in which a snake is killed.¹⁴³ The Bagrada in Silius is still *turbidus* and flows across the surrounding fields without fixed banks like the Vulturinus did in its former state. Statius’ reference to the Silian Bagrada is even read as a metapoetical challenge to the *Punica*: the Vulturinus, synecdochically representing the *Silvae*, is not a winding epic filled with mud like Silius’ epic, but rather a clear, fast-flowing type of poetry.¹⁴⁴ This Statian allusion retrospectively confirms a play on Callimachean poetics in Silius.

The swiftness of the Vulturinus is the opposite of the sluggishness of the Bagrada (*tacente ripa*, *Silv.* 4.3.90, and *lento pede*, 6.140). Paradoxically, the Libyan river is also twice referred to as having a rapid stream. The first time is when Marus narrates how the snake was used to quench its thirst with water:

isque ubi feruenti concepta incendia pastu¹⁴⁵
 gurgite mulcebat rapido et spumantibus undis,
 nondum etiam toto demersus corpore in amnem
 iam caput aduersae ponebat margine ripae. (6.162–165)

142 Smolenaars 2006: 231–233. See also Newlands 2002: 306–309. B.L. Reitz 2013: 161–162, however, argues that Statius deliberately departs from Callimachean poetics.

143 Smolenaars 2006: 232–233.

144 Van der Keur 2015: 484–485.

145 I follow, with Fröhlich 2000: 196, the manuscript reading *pastu* instead of Heinsius’ conjecture *ab aestu*, as printed by Delz. An extra argument in favour of the manuscripts is the intratextual allusion to this line in 17.448, on which see below.

When it tried to soothe the heat that was engendered by its fiery food in the rapid stream and foaming waves, before it had plunged its whole body in the river, his head was already resting on the edge of the opposite bank.

Rapido and *spumantibus* could be understood proleptically, referring to the rapid movement and foaming of the water caused by the snake itself. It seems more natural, however, to understand these adjectives as being descriptive of the river. This is certainly the case when Marus relates how one of his comrades tried to escape from the snake that had suddenly appeared:

infelix fluuio sese et torrentibus undis
crediderat celerique fuga iam nabat Aquinus. (6.200–201)

The unfortunate Aquinus had entrusted himself to the rushing waves and already tried to swim away with a swift flight.

Spaltenstein signals this paradox, but contends that ‘rapid’ and ‘foaming’ are traditional adjectives for a river and that Silius did not care about the divergence with 6.140.¹⁴⁶ Haselmann gives a more convincing explanation of the paradox, arguing that it indicates the untrustworthiness of the river: one moment it has a slow current, the next it foams and rushes forth. This twofold nature corresponds with the character of the neighbouring Carthaginians: they are untrustworthy as well.¹⁴⁷ We probably should think of the Nile, too, as this is the other large river on the same continent that flows through the desert and floods its surrounding fields. In a long narrative at Cleopatra’s palace (Luc. 10.172–331), the Egyptian priest Acoreus informs Caesar about the nature of the Nile. The river that is known for its gentle stream also has a wilder nature:

quis te tam lene fluentem
moturum totas uiolenti gurgitis iras,
Nile, putet? (Luc. 10.315–317)

Who would think, to see you flow so quietly, that you, Nile, can arouse the wholesale anger of your violent flood?

¹⁴⁶ Spaltenstein 1986: 402: “Sil. ne s’est pas soucié de la contradiction avec les vers 140 sqq.”

¹⁴⁷ Haselmann 2018: 126–127. On the idea of *sympatheia* between the inhabitants of Africa and their environment, see Ripoll 2000b: 7.

When we understand the Nile as *pars pro toto* for Egypt, it is possible to connect its 'hidden' aggressive nature to the perfidy of its people. Caesar is dining with Cleopatra in the royal palace, unconcerned 'as if in safety of peace' (*uelut in tuta ... pace*, Luc. 10.332), but in the meantime Pothius, a eunuch and minister of king Ptolemy, plots Caesar's assassination. Similarly, Marus and his comrades will be surprised by the sudden appearance of the snake, and Regulus will be ambushed by the Carthaginians under the command of Xanthippus.

I would add that these contrastive descriptions of the Bagrada also draw attention to the double status of Marus' narrative on a metapoetical level. On the one hand the longest narrative of the epic causes a temporary pausing of the Hannibalic war after the defeat of Lake Trasimene. The 'slow pace' (*lento pede*, 6.140) of the meandering Bagrada can be read in terms of *mora*: the narrative is delaying the main narrative. On the other hand, the Bagrada foreshadows two martial episodes, first the battle against the snake, and next the fight between Regulus and Xanthippus.

This double metapoetic significance of the Bagrada can be demonstrated by looking at rivers from other imperial epics. A first example is Lucan, where the slow Bagrada anticipates the aetiological story of an anonymous farmer about the fight between Hercules and the giant Antaeus (Luc. 4.593–660). Curio is 'eager to learn the origin' (*cupientem noscere causas*, Luc. 4.590) of the place, which is echoed in Marus' introductory phrase *cognoscere causam* (6.139). Here, too, we see the paradox of a delaying episode that contains a stereotypical martial story. Another Lucanian river that temporarily brings the martial exploits of the main narrative to a halt is the digression on the river Nile, whose origins Caesar wants to know (*tibi noscendi Nilum, Romane, cupido est*, Luc. 10.268); the Roman general diverts his attention from the war to the didactic explanations of Acoreus. Only after this long digression does the plotting of his enemies end the seemingly peaceful situation at Cleopatra's palace and brings the war back on track.¹⁴⁸

Another complex example is the Nemean episode in Statius *Thebaid* 4–6, which covers 1900 lines. Here the Argive army comes to a halt and this interruption of the campaign against Thebes has been viewed in Callimachean terms.¹⁴⁹ The Nemean interlude and story of Regulus are interconnected, as Soerink has convincingly shown for the description of the snakes in both episodes.¹⁵⁰ In the Statian episode, water, too, plays an important role. Apollo causes a drought to

148 Another metapoetical reading of the Nile excursus is given by Manolaraki 2011: 177–181.

149 McNelis 2007: 76–96, esp. 86–88 and, more nuanced, Soerink 2014: 47–56

150 Soerink 2013. It is impossible to determine which poet influenced the other; even mutual interaction cannot be excluded. For this issue, see Introduction, section 5.2.

bring the Argives to a standstill and Statius remarks that the situation is such ‘as if they scour yellow Libya and the deserts of African dust and Syene that no cloud ever shades’ (*ceu flauam Libyen desertaque pulueris Afri | conlustrent nullaue umbratam nube Syenen*, *Stat. Theb.* 4.744–745). Then the army encounters Hypsipyle, whom they ask for help. King Adrastus hopes she can provide them with water, even when it is unclean: *da fessis in rebus opem, seu turbidus amnis, | seu tibi foeda palus* (‘help us in our tired state, whether you have a turbid river or a foul swamp’, *Theb.* 4.763–764). The soldiers of Regulus, too, camped near *turbidus ... Bagrada*, because they longed for water. Hypsipyle, however, shows the Argives the clear waters of the Langia. The soldiers rush into the river to quench their thirst:

modo lene uirens et gurgite puro
perspicuus, nunc sordet aquis egestus ab imis
alueus; inde tori riparum et proruta **turbant**
gramina; iam crassus **caenoque** et **pu luere** torrens,
quamquam expleta sitis, bibitur tamen. agmina bello
decertare putes iustumque in gurgite Martem
perfurere aut captam tolli uictoribus urbem. (*Stat. Theb.* 4.824–830)

The riverbed, which was at one time gently green and transparent with pure water, is now dirty, disturbed from its watery depths. Then the ridged grassy banks are thrust forward and disturb the stream. Now, although their thirst is slaked, the torrent thick with mud and dust is yet drunk. One would think that armies were fighting it out in battle and that a regular war raged in the waters or that a captured city was being destroyed by conquerors.¹⁵¹

The avalanche of soldiers causes the clear river to become muddy and sordid. Its pure stream ironically turns into the turbid river that Adrastus asked for. The poet explicitly compares the action of the soldiers with a naval battle or a siege. Scholars have consequently read the churning up of the clear water in metapoetical terms: the soldiers change the clear water into a muddy river that conjures up martial action.¹⁵²

151 Translation Parkes 2012.

152 Parkes 2012: xxiii and 323. This is a reversal of the change in *Silvae* 4.3, where the muddiness of the Vulturnus is changed into a clear stream (*puro gurgite, Silv.* 4.3.94). For another ‘epic turn’ in the Nemean episode, see Soerink 2014: 56.

The muddiness of the Bagrađa already signals, as I have argued, epic themes. The same metapoetical symbol can be found in Ovid's *Amores* 3.6, where the poet is prevented from reaching his mistress by a large river. When he stands on its muddy banks (*limosas ... ripas*, *Am.* 3.6.1), he addresses the river, complaining that it, once a small stream, has now become a rushing stream:

nunc ruis adposito niuibus de monte solutis
et turpi crassas gurgite uoluis aquas. (*Ov. Am.* 3.6.7–8)

Now the snows have melted from the near-by mountain and you are rushing on, rolling gross waters in muddy, whirling streams.

In the poem this prevents him from reaching his mistress, but on a generic level it prevents the poet from writing love poetry; the muddy and whirling 'epic' river is the opposite of neoteric poetic principles.¹⁵³

The opposite happens at the banks of the Rubicon, whose little stream seems unfit for grand epic warfare when Caesar arrives 'at the waves of the small Rubicon' (*parui Rubiconis ad undas*, *Luc.* 1.185). *Patria*, a personification of Rome, appears in an attempt to prevent the general from crossing the stream, but this only results in a short delay:

inde moras soluit belli tumidumque per amnem
signa tulit propere: sicut squalentibus aruis
aestiferae Libyae uiso leo comminus hoste
subsedit dubius, totam dum colligit iram (*Luc.* 1.204–207)

Then he [i.e. Caesar] broke the pause of war and through the swollen river quickly took his standards. Just so in torrid Libya's barren fields a lion, on seeing his enemy at hand, crouches in hesitation till he has concentrated all his anger.

Lucan compares Caesar with a Libyan lion, which casts him in the position of hated Carthage and Numidia, Rome's foreign enemies.¹⁵⁴ As soon as Caesar decides to commence his war in Italy, the Rubicon seems to adapt itself to its new epic status: it starts as a small stream in the mountains that 'snakes through

153 For a metapoetical reading of *Am.* 3.6, see Barchiesi 2001a: 54–55. See also Antoniadis 2018: 925–926.

154 Barrière 2016: 47. For lions in the epic tradition, see Roche 2009: 216. Marius is associated with Libya, too. See *Luc.* 2.93 and section 6 above.

the valley's depths' (*perque imas serpit uallis*, Luc. 1.215), but now it has changed into a large 'swollen river' (*tumidumque ... amnem*, Luc. 1.204) which the army will cross.¹⁵⁵

This change of the Rubicon from a small stream into a swollen river may also underlie the sudden transformation of the sluggish Bagra into a fast and churning stream. The rapidness and the foaming of the waters in 6.163 (*gurgite ... rapido et spumantibus undis*) coincide with Marus' description of the snake and foreshadow the fight that will follow. Like the lion in the Lucanian simile it is a creature from Libyan soil, 'a deadly monster, born due to the anger of the Earth' (*monstrum exitiabile et ira | Telluris genitum*, 6.151–152). This monster, however, outclasses the raging lion with which Caesar is compared, as the snake has lions as its meal: *aluum deprensi satiabant fonte leones* ('lions, caught at the fountain, saturated its belly', 6.156).

The two aspects that mark Bagra as an anticipation of martial action, rapidness and foaming, are probably an allusion to the river Phasis in Valerius Flaccus. Although the adjectives *rapidus* and *spumans* are of course regularly applied to any river, it seems no coincidence that exactly these two words are connected with the Phasis in the lead-up of the battle that Jason is to fight in Colchis. Only in two places in the *Argonautica* is the rapidity and foaming of the Phasis mentioned. The first time is in Book 4, when Phineus predicts that this river is the destination of the Argonauts' quest: *sic demum rapidi uenies ad Phasidis amnem* ('so finally you will reach the river of the rapid Phasis', V. Fl. 4.616); the second in Book 5, when the Argonauts have finally arrived in Colchis, 'where the great Phasis with its foaming mouth rushes into the opposite sea' (*magnus ubi aduersum spumanti Phasis in aequor | ore ruit*, V. Fl. 5.179–180). The description of the Phasis anticipates the battle that will follow.¹⁵⁶ Valerius has modelled his description of the Phasis on Ovid, who speaks of 'the rapid waves of the muddy Phasis' (*rapidas limosi Phasidos undas*, *Ov. Met.* 7.6). The Bagra with its 'muddy waves' (*limosas ... undas*, 6.142) and rapid currents shows that Silius combines the two descriptions of the Phasis and 'restores' the muddy aspect of the river that Valerius excluded.

The combination of muddiness and rapidness is also a feature that Bagra shares with the Tiber, as seen by Aeneas in *Aeneid* 7:

155 On the metapoetical value of the Rubicon, see Antoniadis 2018. The Ticinus in *Punica* 4 is, like the Rubicon, a small, unepic stream, but nevertheless becomes the scene of a major battle. See Haselmann 2018: 107–108.

156 Antoniadis 2018: 929–931. Pace Wijsman 1996: 104 and Spaltenstein 2004: 352, who consider the description of the Phasis to be conventional.

hunc inter fluuio Tiberinus amoeno
uerticibus **rapidis** et multa **flauus** **harena**
in mare prorumpit (Virg. *A.* 7.30–32)

Through its [i.e. the forest's] midst the Tiber's lovely stream leaps forth to sea in rapid eddies, blond because of its many sands.

This description of the Tiber and its surrounding forest as a *locus amoenus* comes right before the 'second proem' of the epic, in which the poet announces 'to sing of horrible wars' (*dicam horrida bella*, *A.* 7.41).¹⁵⁷

In conclusion, the Bagrađa in the introduction of Marus' narrative at the same time signals a delay of the main narrative (*lento pede*), and foreshadows an embedded narrative full of martial action. The intertexts of the Bagrađa cast Regulus as an amalgam of earlier epic protagonists arriving at rivers at turning points in their epic exploits; in the case of Aeneas one could argue that this is a positive comparison, but when it comes to Caesar at the Rubicon and his delegate Curio at the Bagrađa, Regulus' literary heritage is harder to assess in a favourable light.

7.2 *A Hellish Snake*

Regulus and his men have arrived at a *locus horridus*, as they will soon discover.¹⁵⁸ They are at first not aware of the threats that this place poses to them and are happy (*laeti*, 6.145) to have found a spot with access to water. Ironically, Marus and his two companions set out to explore 'the peace of the place' (*pacemque loci*, 6.168),¹⁵⁹ when they feel an indeterminable anxiety and pray to appease the nymphs and deity of the place: *Nymphas numenque precamur | gurgitis ignoti* ('we pray to the nymphs and the deity of the unknown stream', 6.170–172). This, again, echoes Aeneas' arrival in Latium, who is *laetus* (*A.* 7.36) when he sails up the Tiber and somewhat later prays to many deities, including the nymphs and the river god: *geniumque loci primamque deorum | Tellurem Nymphasque et adhuc ignota precatur | flumina* ('he prays to the genius of the

157 See Antoniadis 2018: 931, who also adduces *A.* 6.87, where the Sibyl speaks of the 'foaming Tiber' (*Tybrim ... spumantem*), and *A.* 11.547–549 and 562–563, where the foaming and rapid river Amasenus precedes the final attack of the Trojans.

158 On the Bagrađa as a *locus horridus*, see Haselmann 2018: 122–135, who discusses the contrast with the description of the Ticinus as a *locus amoenus* in *Punica* 4. He draws parallels between the latter river and the Tiber in *Aeneid* 7 (Haselmann 2018: 105–108).

159 An example of experiencing focalization by Marus as internal narrator: at that moment they did not know whether the place was peaceful or not. Cf. also the deceitful peace at Cleopatra's palace in Luc. 10.332 (*uelut in tuta ... pace*), on which see section 7.1 above.

place, and Earth, first of gods, and to the nymphs and the river yet unknown', Virg. *A.* 7.136–138).¹⁶⁰

Right after their prayers Marus and his friends perceive that a 'Tartarean whirlwind' (*Tartareus turbo*, 6.175) comes out of the nearby cave, followed by 'the baying of Cerberus' (*stridore ... Cerbereo*, 6.177–178). Finally, the hellish snake itself appears, who can be considered as the unknown genius of the Bagrada.¹⁶¹ This chthonic monster is explicitly compared to the serpentine Giants: *quantis armati caelum petiere Gigantes | anguibus* ('armed with such huge snakes the Giants stormed heaven', 6.181). This signals that the Romans have to prepare for a battle that recalls a gigantomachy—an epic theme *par excellence*.¹⁶² The Bagrada and its snake represent chthonic powers. Earth conceived the snake out of anger (*ira | Telluris*¹⁶³ *genitum*, 6.152), as she once gave birth to the Giants while being angry about the imprisonment of the Titans.¹⁶⁴ The monster at the Bagrada unleashes this inherited chthonic anger on Regulus and his men: *furit ilicet ira | terrigena* ('the earthborn monster raged with anger', 6.253–254). The gigantic heritage resonates in these words: the noun *terrigena* can be considered as a *figura etymologica* of the Greek *Γῆρας*,¹⁶⁵ and *furit* might refer to the Giant's sisters, the Erinyes or Furies, who according to Hesiod were born right before the Giants.¹⁶⁶ In addition, this aligns the snake, again, with the giant Antaeus, who is also a child of Earth and born right after she had given birth to the Giants (*post genitos ... Gigantas*, Luc. 4.593).¹⁶⁷

The characteristics of the Libyan river—slow, muddy, sandy, but also foaming and rapid—will in retrospect turn out to be infernal, too. When the Sybil in Book 13 gives a description of the rivers in the underworld, the Bagrada rings through:

tum iacet in spatium sine corpore pigra uorago
limosique lacus. large exundantibus urit

160 Attia 1955: 83.

161 Santini 1991: 97.

162 For the idea of the Punic wars as a gigantomachy, see Tipping 2010: 11–12. Roman poets used gigantomachy as a tag for epic poetry, although in actual epic poems the fight between Olympians and Giants was never extensively dealt with. See Innes 1979.

163 Delz prints *telluris* in lower case.

164 Apollod. 1.6.1. According to this same author, the goddess, grieved by the defeat of the Giants, had intercourse with the Tartarus and bore the monster Typhon (1.6.3).

165 Cf. Luc. 3.316 *terrigenae ... Gigantes*, and V. Fl. 2.16 *terrigenum ... Gigantum*. That *Gigas* means *terrigena* was acknowledged by ancient etymologies. See Maltby 1991: 259 s.v.

166 Hes. *Th.* 185.

167 In Stat. *Theb.* 6.894, Antaeus is referred to as 'the Libyan earthborn monster' (*terrigenam ... Libyn*). Cf. the Nemean snake, sacred to Jupiter, which Capaneus compares to a Giant (Stat. *Theb.* 5.569–570), with Soerink 2013: 370.

ripas **saeuus** aquis Phlegethon et turbine anhelō
 flammārum resonans saxosa incendia torquet.
 parte alia **torrens** Cocytos sanguinis atri
 uerticibus **furit** et **spumanti gurgite** fertur.
 at magnis semper diuis regique deorum
 iurari dignata palus picis horrida riuo
fumiferum uoluit Styx inter sulphura **limum**.
 tristior his Acheron **sanie** crassoque **ueneno**
aestuat et **calidam**¹⁶⁸ eructans cum murmure **harenam**
 descendit nigra **lentus** per **stagna** palude. (13.562–574)

Then there lies stretching far and wide a sluggish pool without substance and muddy lakes. Savage Phlegethon burns its banks with abundantly overflowing waters and rolls along rocky fires resounding with a roaring blast of flames. Elsewhere the rushing Cocytus rages with whirls of black blood and goes along with a foaming stream. Next the Styx, by which the great deities and the king of the gods deign to swear, a swamp dreadful with its stream of pitch carries down smoking mud and sulphur together. Acheron, more fearful than these, burns with venom and clotted poison and spouting up hot sand with a rumbling noise descends slowly with its black swamp through the stagnant pools.

The Bagrada shares many characteristics with these infernal rivers. The basin into which all subterranean rivers discharge has no clear boundaries and is circumscribed as ‘a muddy lake’ (*limosique lacus*, 13.563 ~ 6.142),¹⁶⁹ a characteristic that it shares with the Styx, which carries mud (*limum*, 13.570). The Cocytos is a wild river (*torrens*, 13.566 ~ 6.200) ‘with a foaming stream’ (*spumanti gurgite*, 13.567 ~ 6.163), and the poisonous Acheron carries hot sand (*calidam ... harenam*, 13.572 ~ 6.140) while descending slowly through stagnant pools (*lentus per stagna palude*, 13.573 ~ 6.140 and 6.143). The Bagrada appears to be an amalgam of all those infernal waters.¹⁷⁰ When we accept this intratextual reference, these rivers are also in some aspects reminiscent of the snake of the Bagrada.

168 The manuscripts read *gelidam*; *calidam* is Schrader’s conjecture, which Delz is inclined to adopt (“recte ut puto”). See Haselmann 2018: 132 n.402. Pace Spaltenstein 1990: 254 and Van der Keur 2015: 311–312.

169 *Limosus* is a rare word, occurring only four times in the *Punica*.

170 On the relation between the Bagrada and the rivers in the underworld, see Haselmann 2018: 130–135.

The snake was, like the Phlegethon, described as ‘savage’ (*saevius ... Phlegethon*, 13.564 ~ *saevi serpentis*, 6.266) and ‘rages’ as the Cocytos does (*furit*, 13.567 ~ 6.253). The smoking Styx echoes the foaming mouth of the beast: *serpens euoluitur antro | et Stygios aestus fumanti exsibilat ore* (‘the snake glided forth from the cave and hissed forth Stygian heat from its smoking mouth’, 6.218–219). The Acheron, finally, ‘burns with venom and clotted poison’ (*sanie crassoque ueneno | aestuat*, 13.572–573); the words *sanies* and *uenenum* are repeatedly used for the poison that the snake exhales in *Punica* 6.¹⁷¹ This intratext from Book 13 adds to the idea that the Bagra and its snake are associated with infernal and chthonic powers, and are the opposite of the Olympian order of Jupiter.¹⁷²

7.3 *The Snake as a Mirror of Hannibal*

In the main narrative, Juno uses chthonic powers in promoting the cause of the Carthaginians. A primary example is Tisiphone, who helps Hannibal to conquer Saguntum in Book 2. Therefore, Regulus fighting the snake can be seen as a *mise en abyme* for the fight of Rome against Carthage. In the *Punica*, Africa is portrayed as breeding place of poisonous snakes (e.g. 1.211–212 and 3.312–313) and its inhabitants are associated with wild beasts, primarily snakes and lions.¹⁷³ Regulus explicitly contrasts the Romans and Italy with the Libyan snake they are fighting:

serpentine Itala pubes
terga damus Libycisque parem non esse fatemur
anguibus Ausoniam? (6.242–244)

Shall we, men of Italy, retreat before a snake, and admit that Ausonia is
no match for Libyan snakes?

This exhortation should primarily encourage his soldiers to fight the snake at the Bagra, but seems to have wider connotations for the primary narratees of the *Punica*, as Hannibal and his men are frequently compared with snakes.¹⁷⁴

171 *Sanies* in 6.187, 6.237, 6.277; *uenenum* in 6.155, 6.282. The phrase evokes also other snakes in Virgil and Lucan; see Van der Keur 2015: 311.

172 Von Albrecht 1964: 67–68.

173 Ripoll 2000b: 7–8, who compares the long snake excursus in Lucan 9.890–937 with these short and dispersed references to African snakes in the *Punica*.

174 On Hannibal’s association with snakes, see e.g. Von Albrecht 1964: 67, Burck 1984: 156, Muecke 2007: 84–85.

In Book 3, the Carthaginian general has a dream in which he sees a huge snake (3.183–213). Mercury explains that the destruction which the snake causes is a foreshadowing of the wars that he himself will wage in Italy (3.208–213).¹⁷⁵ In Book 12, Hannibal and his army leaving Capua are compared to a snake leaving its winter lair (12.6–10), whereas Naples defending itself with missiles against the Carthaginians is equated with an eagle defending its kids from being attacked by a snake (12.55–59). Especially interesting for our case is a scene from the last book of the epic. Hannibal reproaches the Bruttians, who were fighting for the Carthaginians, as they are fleeing from the battlefield: *nudantes conspexit Hamilcare cretus | terga fuga* ('the son of Hamilcar saw them baring their backs in flight', 17.444–445). His words have no effect and he returns to the fighting. At this point, the narrator compares Hannibal with an African snake:

qualis in aestiferis Garamantum *feta ueneno*
 attollit campis *feruenti pastus* harena
 colla Paraetonus serpens lateque *per auras*
 undantem torquet *perfundens nubila tabem*. (17.447–450)

Even so, on the parching planes of the Garamantes, a Paraetonian snake that has fed on the burning sands lifts its neck, pregnant with venom, up high and hurls far through the air liquid poison while drenching the clouds.

Spaltenstein deems this simile traditional and denies that it recalls a particular passage.¹⁷⁶ I would like to argue, however, that it specifically alludes to the snake of the Bagrada. The fact that the Paraetonian snake is 'pregnant with venom' (*feta ueneno*) is a calque of *gravidamque uenenis* (6.155).¹⁷⁷ His nourishment in the desert recalls the other's 'heat that was engendered by its fiery food' (*feruenti ... incendia pastu*, 6.162). The hyperbolic image of the snake drenching the clouds with its venom, suggesting an enormous monster, finds two close parallels in the Bagrada episode:

175 See also Chapter 1, section 5.1.

176 Spaltenstein 1990: 474 does, however, note a link with the simile of 12.6–10. Burck 1984: 156 also adduces 3.210.

177 Cf. *OLD* s.v. *fetus*¹ 2c. Cf. also the description of Africa: *sed qua se campis squalentibus Africa tendit, | serpentum largo coquitur fecunda ueneno* ('but where Africa spreads its barren fields, it is parched, fertile with the abundant venom of snakes', 1.211–212).

tractae foeda grauitate **per auras**
ac **tabe** afflatus uolucres. (6.158–159)

Birds were dragged down through the air by the foul stench and the corruption of the [snake's] breath.

extulit adsurgens caput atque in **nubila** primam
dispersit saniem et caelum foedauit hiatu. (6.186–187)

Rising up he lifted his head and first scattered its venom unto the clouds and defiled heaven with its gaping mouth.

As Spaltenstein rightly notes, *caelum* in 6.187 means more than just 'air': the snake here recalls the Giants storming heaven.¹⁷⁸ The Paraetonian snake poisoning the clouds can therefore also be considered gigantesque, an association that also extends to Hannibal.¹⁷⁹

The theme of Gigantomachy returns in the last scene of the epic, where the defeated Carthaginians are compared to Giants:

aut cum Phlegraeis confecta mole Gigantum
incessit campis tangens Tiryntius astra. (17.649–650)

and so marched the Tirynthian, when he had slain the mass of the Giants, in the fields of Phlegra, [with his head] touching the stars.

Scipio is here presented as a slayer of Giants, following in Hercules' footsteps; ironically, the 'Giant' Hannibal, although defeated by the Roman, managed to escape the battlefield alive.

The fact that the snake is described as *Paraetonus* adds to the image of Hannibal as a gigantic general. The adjective of Paraetonium, a border-town between Egypt and Cyrene, is sometimes loosely used in poetry for 'Egyptian' and has been understood as 'African' in this specific passage.¹⁸⁰ I think that the choice of this adjective is less arbitrary than hitherto acknowledged. The town

178 Spaltenstein 1986: 404. Cf. also 6.222–223: *trifido uibrata per auras | lingua micat motu atque adsultans aethera lambit* ('its tongue with three folded movement vibrated and flickered through the air and rising up it licked the sky').

179 Roumpou 2019: 136. For the connection between Hannibal and chthonic powers, see Fröhlich 2000: 194–195. Stocks 2014: 223–227 discusses the Titanic aspirations of Hannibal.

180 *OLD* s.v. *Paraetonus* 2b and Spaltenstein 1990: 475.

of Paraetonium can be connected with two other 'gigantic' generals: Alexander the Great and Mark Antony.¹⁸¹ The former visited Paraetonium before he set out to visit the oracle of Hammon in the Siwa Oasis, usually located in the area of the Garamantes, who are also mentioned in the simile.¹⁸² Lucan seems to refer to this same event when he refers to Alexandria as *Paraetonium ... urbem* (Luc. 10.9). At the same time, Lucan and Silius might refer to Mark Antony, who harboured at Paraetonium after Actium to set up a defence for Egypt.¹⁸³ Ovid refers to this episode when he describes the ships of Mark Antony depicted on the temple of Palatine Apollo as *Paraetonias ... rates* (Ov. *Ars* 3.390). Hannibal should then be understood as a double of both Alexander and Mark Antony.

As O'Hara has shown, the meaning of Gigantomachy in the *Aeneid* is not so black-and-white as one would perhaps expect; Aeneas, for example, is compared in a simile to the Hundred-hander Aegaeon fighting against Jupiter (Virg. *A.* 10.565–569).¹⁸⁴ This can also be said, *mutatis mutandis*, of the snake imagery in the *Punica*. Scipio is the other figure in the epic that is most closely linked to snakes. When Scipio is accepted as Rome's new leader, a meteor appears in the sky (15.138–145), which is described as a snake (*anguis*, 15.141). The people interpret this as a favourable sign, sent by Jupiter. They connect the snaky star to Scipio's descent from the supreme god, as the ghost of his mother Pomponia had revealed in 13.632–633: Jupiter visited her in the disguise of a snake—a conception that aligns him with Alexander.¹⁸⁵ Arguably, we can consider the snake as a positive symbol in the case of Scipio, like the Romans did in 15.146–148. Van der Keur, for example, states that "Scipio's serpentine parentage makes him a worthy opponent of Hannibal." It opposes the negative, destructive snakes of Hannibal's dream and the Bagrada.¹⁸⁶ Others are more careful: "Jupiter's fathering of Scipio in the form of a snake must certainly inform our positive reading of the sign of the snake in *Punica* 15, but like that sign may also remind the reader of the snakes earlier in the epic."¹⁸⁷

181 Alexander and his successors tried to portray their enemies as Giants; cf. the frieze of the gigantomachy on the altar of Pergamum and Plu. *De Alex. fort.* 2.10. For the Battle of Actium as a gigantomachy, see Hor. *Carm.* 3.4.37–80 and Virg. *A.* 8.671–713, with Hardie 1986: 97–109.

182 Arr. *An.* 4.3.3. Hannibal had consulted the same oracle in *Punica* 3 (see Chapter 1, section 1).

183 Plu. *Ant.* 70; Flor. 4.11.

184 O'Hara 2006: 98–101.

185 Tipping 2010: 167, Stocks 2014: 189. See Chapter 1, section 5.3.

186 Van der Keur 2015: 332–333. For another positive appraisal of the snaky star, see Marks 2005: 86–87, who compares it to the star in Virg. *A.* 2.699–704.

187 Dietrich 2005: 84.

7.4 *Regulus as Ambiguous Monster Slayer*

Regulus, as a killer of a gigantic snake and a kind of Hercules, can therefore be viewed as a predecessor of Scipio. However, Marus' narrative also shows sides of Regulus that do not fit the image of the Stoic exemplar that he is supposed to represent. In this respect, he is a model of what Tipping calls complex and controversial exemplarity in the *Punica*.¹⁸⁸ It is especially his passion for war and his anger that attract attention. When Marus reports that his two companions were killed by the snake, Regulus, 'eager as he was for fights and Mars and battles and enemies, burned with desire to dare great things' (*utque erat in pugnas et Martem et proelia et hostem | igneus et magna audendi flagrabat amore*, 6.208–209). His desire for battle, emphasized by tautology, seems to be more important than military strategy. His incautionsness almost cost him his own life, when he meets the snake in single combat: had it not been for his horsemanship and the intervention of his soldiers, the snake would have killed him, as Marus stresses twice (6.256–260; 6.263–264).¹⁸⁹ When the Romans combine their strength—Marus is keen to stress his own heroism in 6.261–263—they finally manage to slay the snake. The moment that the snake breathes its last venomous gasp, one would have expected a cheerful reaction, like the premature cheering when Regulus hit the monster for the first time: *clamor ad astra datur, uocesque repente profusae | aetherias adiere domos* ('their shouting rises to the stars and their suddenly produced shouts reached the heavenly abodes', 6.252–253).¹⁹⁰ By contrast, a loud wailing arises when the snake dies:

erupit tristi fluuio mugitus et imis
murmura fusa uadis, subitoque et lucus et antrum
et resonae siluis ulularunt flebile ripae. (6.283–285)

A bellowing escaped from the sad river and a murmuring spread from the depths of its waters, and suddenly the grove, the cave and the banks echoing the forests wailed in sorrow.

The river and its surroundings mourn the snake's death. This pathetic fallacy is not surprising when we take into account the close connection between

188 Tipping 2010: 7–13.

189 On this specific instance of the 'what if' topos, see Nesselrath 1992: 110.

190 Pace Spaltenstein 1986: 408, who understands the shouts to come from the injured monster. The text is not specific and both *clamor* and *uox* can sometimes be used of animals; however, it seems to be more natural to take the shouting and voices as those of the soldiers, also because of the plural of *uoces*.

the snake and its environment.¹⁹¹ A close parallel is the death of the Nemean snake in *Thebaid* 5.579–582, whose death is bewailed by the Lernaean swamp, the nymphs, Nemean fields, and Fauns. As Soerink rightly argues, these lines “raise questions about the nature of the snake, both epic and pastoral, both monstrous and pitiful.”¹⁹² This is *mutatis mutandis* also the case with the snake at the Bagrađa. Should we consider its death as something positive or negative?

The reaction of nature is reminiscent of the slaughtering of yet another monster. Valerius Flaccus relates in Book 2 of the *Argonautica* how Hercules kills the sea monster that was sent against Hesione by Neptune:¹⁹³

fluctus defertur belua in imos
iam totis resoluta uadis. Idaeaque mater
et chorus et summis ulularunt collibus amnes. (V. Fl. 2.535–537)¹⁹⁴

The beast is carried off into the deep waves already
enfeebled by all the waters. The Idaean mother and her
chorus and the rivers from the hilltops raise cries.

In this case, however, the environment is probably raising shouts of joy, as it has been freed of an alien monster. The sympathy of nature lies therefore with the monster-slaying Hercules.¹⁹⁵ In Marus' narrative, this joyous reaction of Mount Ida is changed into lament: the adjectives *tristi* and *flebile* make clear that the natural surroundings of the Bagrađa bemoan the death of their autochthonous snake. This casts the Herculean feat of Regulus and his men into a darker light; he cannot really live up to his mythic example, who in Valerius Flaccus was praised by nature for having killed a monster.

Regulus also mirrors Hasdrubal, the brother-in-law of Hannibal. In the first battle scene of the entire epic, this cruel general executes the Spanish king

191 The resounding banks of the Bagrađa recall those of the Hebrus echoing the murmuring from Orpheus' head in *Ov. Met.* 11.52–53 (Bassett 1955: 9). For the literary tradition of pathetic fallacy, see e.g. Soerink 2014: 160.

192 Soerink 2014: 159.

193 Bassett 1955: 9 already mentions this Valerian intertext without interpretation.

194 Following Mark Heerink's forthcoming revision of the Loeb, I print *belua*. This is the reading from the Codex Carrionis. Ehlers, who does not accept the existence of this codex, prints a lacuna.

195 Poortvliet 1991: 279–280, who gives more examples of *ululare* in contexts of joy. Cf. also Spaltenstein 2002: 457–458.

Tagus by crucifixion—the punishment that Regulus himself will suffer too.¹⁹⁶ The nymphs bewail Tagus, who is closely associated with their river that goes by the same name:¹⁹⁷

auriferi Tagus adscito cognomine fontis
perque **antra** et **ripas** nymphis **ululatus** Hiberis (1.155–156)

Tagus, who had taken his name from the gold-bearing river, was mourned by the nymphs of Hiberia through the caves and banks.

Hasdrubal has to pay dearly for his misstep of killing Tagus, just as Regulus will suffer from killing the snake: a servant of Tagus avenges his death by killing the savage general with his master's sword. In turn, the Carthaginians torture this man to death. The Stoic attitude of the servant deserves attention: *mens intacta manet. superat ridetque dolores | spectanti similis* ('His mind remains untouched. He overcomes his pain and laughs at it as if he were a mere onlooker', 1.179–180). This corresponds with the mindset of Regulus, when *he* is tortured by savage Carthaginians, as Marus relates to Serranus: *suppliciiis, quae spectauit placido ore ferentem* ('the tortures, which I saw him endure with a calm expression', 6.536). Bereaved of its general, the Carthaginian army chooses a new leader: Hannibal. Therefore, the story of Tagus does not only provide the official start of Hannibal's generalship, but also points to the cyclic nature of wars; the death of one enemy causes the rise of yet another.¹⁹⁸ The correspondences with the story of Regulus underline the theme of perpetual wars, an example of what the prooemium calls 'the arms that are commissioned to descendants' (*mandata nepotibus arma*, 1.18). The fact that Regulus' behaviour in Book 6 echoes both the aggression of Hasdrubal and the suffering of Tagus and his servant complicates his exemplarity.

Marus leaves no doubt that in retrospect the killing of the snake has been a violation for which the Romans (note the plural of 'we') have to pay the prize:

196 Compare *erecto suffixum in robore* ('[Tagus] fastened high on wood', 1.153) and *crucem* ('cross', 1.181) to Gestar's eye-witness account of Regulus' crucifixion: *uidi, cum robore pendens | Hesperiam cruce sublimis spectaret ab alta* ('I was looking on, when [Regulus] hung high upon the wood and saw Hesperia from his lofty cross', 2.343–344). Delz prints in 1.153 *suffossum*, but I follow Feeney 1982: 104 in reading *suffixum* instead. For Regulus' crucifixion, see section 3.1 above.

197 On the close relation between king Tagus and the river, see Haselmann 2018: 118.

198 It is fitting that the gold of Hannibal's shield originates from the Tagus (or king Tagus?), where his military career was launched (2.403–404).

heu quantis luimus mox tristia proelia damnis,
 quantaque supplicia et quales exhausimus iras!
nec tacuere pii uates famulumque sororum
 Naiadum, tepida quas Bagrada nutrit in unda,
 nos uiolasse manu seris monuere periclis. (6.286–290)

Alas, how great were the losses by which we soon payed for this unhappy fight, how great the punishments and what rage we had to endure! The pious soothsayers were not silent and warned us about future dangers now that we had violated with our hand the servant of the Naiads, the sisters who are fostered by the tepid waves of the Bagrada.

Marus implies that the ensuing defeat, captivity, and death of Regulus should be seen as divine retribution for the death of the snake. These are the ‘future dangers’ (*seris ... periclis*) that the *pii uates* warned about. Haüßler suggests that this part of the Regulus story has been inspired by Ovid’s episode of Cadmus, who, too, had to suffer personally for killing a *sacer serpens*.¹⁹⁹ Regulus, however, was warned about imminent danger, but supposedly ignored the words of the soothsayers. The speaking up of these anonymous *uates* recalls Hecuba’s words in the prologue of Seneca’s tragedy *Troades*. She, too, had informed her husband about the future: *prior Hecuba uidi grauida nec tacui metus | et uana uates ante Cassandram fui* (‘I, Hecuba, saw first while pregnant, and I was not silent about my fears; I was a futile prophetess before Cassandra’, Sen. *Tro.* 36–37). Just as the Trojans did not pay heed to the words of these women, Regulus seems to have ignored the *pii uates* of his own day, to his own doom.

Marus, however, also seems to imply that the Romans are still paying the prize for this mistake. Whereas the perfect tense and prefix of the verb *exhausimus* point to the fulfilment and completion of the penalties at the moment of speaking, the first verb *luimus* is either perfect or present tense. This ambiguity leaves the possibility open of interpreting the ‘we’ in two ways: it either refers to Regulus and his men or it may include the Romans in the Second Punic War. They are then still bearing the consequences of the snake’s death, now fighting against the embodiment of a second snake, Hannibal.²⁰⁰ Earlier, Marus com-

199 He understands Regulus’ suffering as a result of “tragisch-unvermeidlicher Schuld” (Haüßler 1978: 172). This ‘tragic’ reading of the episode also underlies the discussion of Fröhlich 2000: 177–182. Cf. Stat. *Theb.* 6.86–87, where the killing of the Nemean snake, sacred to Jupiter, is called ‘the crime of killing the snake’ (*crimina caesi | anguis*).

200 Perhaps similarly ambiguous is *luimus* in Virg. *G.* 1.502, as Stephen Harrison suggested to me.

pared the snake with three other monsters: the snakes of the Giants (*quantis... anguibus*, 6.181–182), the Hydra of Lerna (*quantus ... serpens*, 6.182–183), and Ladon in the Garden of the Hesperides (*qualisque ... anguis*, 6.183–184). These comparisons stress the enormous size and danger that the snake poses to Regulus and his men.²⁰¹ The tricolon in Marus' exclamation cited above seems to repeat this earlier comparison: *quantis ... damnis, quantaque supplicia, quales ... iras*. It is as if the punishment of the Romans equals the monstrosity of the snake. That the defeats, punishments, and furies (all plural!) are not only those of the First Punic War, but also those of the Second becomes plausible when we reconsider the anonymous *pii uates*. As has been recognized, the phrase originates in *Aeneid* 6.662, where such prophets are situated in the Elysian Fields: *quique pii uates et Phoebos digna locuti* ('the pious prophets that speak words worthy of Phoebus').²⁰² As Austin remarks, *uates* can refer either to prophets or poets, or, I would add, to both.²⁰³ An example of the second meaning can be found in Valerius Flaccus, who calls Orpheus a *pious ... uates* (V. Fl. 4.348) right before the latter commences his song of Io. So, the primary narratees of the *Punica*, too, can understand the *pii uates* as poets, and specifically as a *mise en abyme* of Silius himself.

The plural of the *pii uates* calls for attention: is it possible that Silius not only refers to himself, but also to other poets? But to whom and which are the punishments the Romans pay? A clue may lie in another Virgilian intertext. In *Aeneid* 5, Acestes' arrow catches fire and flies off to heaven like a meteor. The narrator adds a cryptic sentence about the prophetic value of this event: *docuit post exitus ingens | seraque terrifici cecinerunt omina uates* ('later a momentous event taught [its meaning] and fear-inspiring seers sang about its future import', Virg. *A.* 5.523–524). Aeneas interprets it as a prosperous omen for the Sicilian king and gives him a prize. The text suggests, however, that the real meaning of the omen will only reveal itself later (*post*). Many proposals have been brought forward to explain the *exitus ingens* and *sera ... omina*, both positive and negative, both within and beyond the scope of the epic itself. Although it is impossible to pin down which 'momentous event' is meant exactly, the passage at least calls to mind the *sidus Iulium*, the comet that appeared during the funeral games in honour of Julius Caesar. For our passage, it is important that the *seris ... periculis* that the *uates* predict can allude

201 The triple comparison is perhaps an emulation of Statius' emulation of Ovid's Cadmean snake. See Soerink 2013: 370.

202 Attia 1955: 134.

203 Austin 1977: 209. See Introduction, section 4 with n.33.

to later events, which fall outside the boundaries of the story.²⁰⁴ A probable candidate for such an external prolepsis is the civil war between Pompey and Caesar. In his *Bellum Civile*, the *uates* Lucan had put the African campaign of the Caesarian Curio in the perspective of the Second Punic War.²⁰⁵ The old farmer finishes his narrative of Antaeus, the earthborn monster that Hercules had slain, with a reference to Scipio's victory over Hasdrubal Gisco at the Bagra in 203 BC. The outcome of this battle made it necessary for Hannibal to return from Rome to Africa and was therefore essential for the course of the war:

sed maiora dedit cognomina collibus istis
 Poenum qui Latiis reuocauit ab arcibus hostem,
 Scipio; nam sedes Libyca tellure potito
 haec fuit. en, ueteris cernis uestigia ualli.
 Romana hos primum tenuit uictoria campos. (Luc. 4.656–660)

But a greater name was given these hills by Scipio, who recalled the Carthaginian enemy from the citadels of Latium; for this was his position when he reached the Libyan land. Look, you can see traces of the ancient rampart. These are the fields first held by Roman victory.

Curio interprets this as a good omen for his own campaign, but the narrator makes clear that he is mistaken and hints at Curio's imminent defeat:

Curio laetatus, tamquam fortuna locorum
 bella gerat seruetque ducum sibi fata priorum,
 felici non fausta loco tentoria ponens
 inclusit castris et collibus abstulit omen
 sollicitatque feros non aequis uiribus hostis. (Luc. 4.661–665)

Curio was delighted, as if the fortune of the place would wage his wars and maintain for him the destiny of former leaders, and pitching his unlucky tents on lucky ground, he spread wide his camp and robbed the hills of their good omen and with unequal strength provokes a fierce enemy.

204 Pace Fröhlich, who mentions this parallel and then states: "Man (...) schätzt sich glücklich, daß man die außergewöhnlich dunkle Vergilstelle nicht wirklich herbeiziehen muß, um die ganz und gar unproblematischen Verse des Silius zu erfassen."

205 Lucan refers twice to himself as *uates* (Luc. 1.63 and 7.553). See O'Higgins 1988.

After the successful feats of Hercules against Antaeus and of Scipio against Hasdrubal, Curio will not be able to repeat their success and will suffer defeat on this same site; in a way, he recalls the defeat of Regulus at the same spot against the Carthaginians. The big difference is of course that Curio is fighting in a *civil* war. This civil war is paradoxically an indirect consequence of Scipio's victory over Hannibal; when Scipio has defeated the 'snake' Hannibal, this means the ruin of Carthage, but also the disappearance of the *metus Punicus*. Without an external enemy, the Romans will start fighting each other. The narrator of the *Punica* expresses this idea most explicitly after the defeat at Cannae, where the Romans showed their moral superiority:

haec tum Roma fuit. post te cui uertere mores
si stabat fatis, potius, Carthago, maneres. (10.657–658)

This was how Rome was back then. If afterwards her morals were fated to change, it would be better, Carthage, that you were still standing.

The fall of Carthage was the reason for the decline of Roman morality, which eventually resulted in the civil wars of the first century BC.²⁰⁶ So, just as the killing of the snake at the Bagrađa resulted in negative consequences for the Romans, the defeat of Carthage will also cost the Romans dearly, as the *pius uates* of the *Punica*, too late we might say, predicts.

8 Marus' Second Narrative: The Defeat of Regulus

The direct consequences of killing the snake are explained in the second narrative that Marus tells to Serranus (6.299–338). Serranus had exclaimed that the defeats at the Trebia and Lake Trasimene would not have happened, had his father still been alive. Marus then starts to provide an account of Regulus' 'memorable feats' (*memorandis ... ausis*, 6.318) against the Carthaginians. His account, however, gives again an ambiguous picture of Regulus as a soldier and general. Shortly after each other, Marus uses two similes to illustrate the war between Regulus and the Carthaginians.²⁰⁷ In the first one, Regulus' *aristeia* on the battlefield is compared to a hurricane:

206 On the relation between the decline of morality and civil war in *Punica* 10, see Littlewood 2017: xlvi–lv. Cf. also Sall. *Cat.* 10.1 and Marks 2005: 256.

207 This is in itself noticeable, because in the *Punica* similes are less frequent in secondary narratives than in the main narrative. Cf. Von Albrecht 1964: 93 and Matier 1986: 152. This

sic ubi nigrantem **torquens** **stridentibus** **Austris**
 portat **turbo** globum piceaque e nube ruinam
 pendentem terris pariter pontoque minatur,
 omnis et agricola et nemoroso uertice pastor
 et pelago trepidat subductis nauita uelis. (6.321–325)

So, when a whirling hurricane brings a dark cloud with shrieking southwinds and from a pitch-black cloud threatens earth and sea alike with impending destruction, every farmer, herdsman on wooded heights, and sailor on the sea—his sails taken in—shivers.

In this simile, all kinds of people fear the destruction that the storm will bring. This simile is remarkable, because it echoes the infernal hurricane that escaped from the cave of the snake at the Bagrađa:

Tartareus **turbo** atque insano saeuior **Euro**
 spiritus erumpit, uastoque e gutture fusa
 tempestas oritur mixtam **stridore** procellam
 Cerbereo **torquens**. (6.175–178)

A Tartarean hurricane and a blast fiercer than the frantic east-wind burst out and a storm rises, poured out from the wide mouth, a whirlwind mixed with the barking of Cerberus.

The havoc that Regulus wreaks on the battlefield therefore recalls the infernal destruction of the snake.²⁰⁸ In addition, the panel on the temple of Litemum that shows Regulus chasing the African enemies evokes the image of a snake: *instabat crista fulgens et terga premebat* | *Regulus* ('Regulus was urging and pressing on the backs [of the enemy] with glittering crest', 6.674–675). The postponed subject of this sentence leaves the narratees for a time wondering what kind of crest is meant; *crista* is usual enough for the crest of a soldier's helmet, but the only other earlier occurrence of the word in Book 6 refers to the crest of the Bagrađa snake (*cristae*, 6.222), right before the monster is pursuing the fleeing Romans (*premebat*, 6.240; *terga damus*, 6.243). It is therefore not improbable that the narratees first think that the snake of the Bagrađa is

is a general epic phenomenon. Long similes are truly the instrument of the primary narrator. For similes in the epic tradition, see U. Gärtner and Blaschka 2019.

208 Cf. also the confrontation with the snake: Regulus 'hurls' (*torquet*, 6.248) a lance, which hits the beast 'with an effective whirl' (*non uano turbine*, 6.249).

depicted on the painting, which played a major role in Marus' story. Only in the next verse, the description makes clear that it is actually a depiction of Regulus, not the snake.

In this first simile, the thunderstorm threatened people from different professions, including a herdsman. This image returns in the second simile, which comments on the ambush that Xanthippus has prepared for Regulus:

haud secus ac stabulis procurans otia **pastor**
 in foueam parco tectam uelamine frondis
 ducit nocte lupos positae balatibus agnae. (6.329–331)

Not unlike a herdsman, seeking rest for his herds, at night lures wolves by the bleating of a tethered lamb into a pitfall that is masked by a cover of leaves.

It is obvious that in this simile Xanthippus is the *pastor*, while Regulus and his men are the wolves threatening the herdsman and his sheep.²⁰⁹ As Gajderowicz has shown, the second image of the herdsman is a reversal of a simile in Book 2, in which Hannibal storming the citadel of Saguntum is compared with a raging lion that kills sheep and herdsmen alike (2.681–692). There, the sheep represent the Saguntine citizens, the shepherds (*pastorumque cohors*, 2.690) either their soldiers or the Romans, who failed to defend their allies.²¹⁰ Noteworthy also is that the lion does not eat his victims completely: *incubat atris | semesae stragis cumulis* ('he couches on black heaps of half-eaten slaughter', 2.686–687). This gruesome detail returns twice in Marus' narrative of the snake: before the monster's cave 'half-eaten bones' (*semesa ... ossa*, 6.159–160) of animals were to be seen and later it leaves behind the 'half-eaten limbs' (*semesaque membra*, 6.238) of Romans.²¹¹ These intratextual repetitions of *semesa* confirm the correspondence between the lion-like Hannibal and the savage snake. In the simile of the ambush in Book 6, however, the tables are turned: the Carthaginians are the sheep, Xanthippus their shepherd, and Regulus the wild animal. In

209 As Spaltenstein 1986: 413 notes, this simile is unique in the epic tradition. Ruurd Nauta made me aware of a similar trick in Longus 1.11 (though not in a simile); there, the trap is to no avail, as the wolf notices that something is amiss. Silius' simile recalls Turnus, who is compared to a nightly wolf when he rides back and forth around the Trojan camp: *ac ueluti pleno lupo insidiatus ouili | cum fremit ... | nocte super media; tuti sub matribus agni | balatum exercent* ('and as when a wolf, lying in wait at a crowded fold, growls ... at midnight; safe beneath their mothers the lambs keep bleating', Virg. A. 9.59–62).

210 Gajderowicz 2011: 137–140.

211 Bernstein 2017: 268.

this case, the foreign shepherd Xanthippus manages to protect his herds, while the ‘wolf’ Regulus is trapped. This negative image puts Regulus in a bad light.

After these ambiguous similes, Marus stresses the cunning of Xanthippus (*fallax fiducia*) and the honesty of Regulus (*mentis honestae*). At the same time, his account of Regulus’ behaviour unintentionally complicates his master’s heroism. Regulus pursues Xanthippus on his own, without looking back for the support of his fellow soldiers:

non socios comitumue **manus**, non arma sequentum
 respicere; insano pugnae tendebat amore
 iam **solus** (6.334–336)

To no allies or troops of companions, to no weapons of his followers did he look back; alone now he was pressing on in his insane desire for battle.

This individual operation made him extra vulnerable to the ambush that Xanthippus and the Carthaginians had set up for him. The phrase *insano ... amore* makes clear that there is no rational thinking behind this action. It therefore recalls his rashness against the snake, which almost cost him his life. Before Regulus launched his attack against the monster, he assured his men that he did not need their help: *ibo alacer solusque manus componere monstro | sufficiam* (‘I will go boldly and alone I will suffice in setting my hands against the monster’, 6.246–247). In this case, *manus* means ‘hands’, but the military meaning ‘troops’ is also audible: Regulus will use his hands against the snake as if they were an entire army.²¹² In both cases, the solitary action of Regulus is unsuccessful. Another blurring of Regulus’ exemplarity is the parallel with Hannibal, whom Juno had chosen to oppose Fate: *hunc audet solum componere fatis* (‘him alone she dares to set against fates’, 1.39). Hannibal matches the power of complete armies and is able to upset the entire world: *dux agmina sufficit unus | turbanti terras pontumque mouere paranti* (‘this single leader provides the troops the goddess needed when she was disturbing the earth and planning to set the sea in motion’, 1.36–37).²¹³ Regulus, however, is not the instrument of a deity,

212 The *TLL* 3.212.21 s.v. *compono* cites this as the only example of the phrase *componere manus* in a military context, but it may evoke more regular combinations like *componere exercitum* etc. ‘to arrange an army’ (cf. *OLD* s.v. *compono* 6).

213 These lines are complicated and scholars have proposed alternative punctuation and emendations for *agmina* (e.g. *omnes* and *omnia*). See Feeney 1982: 36–37. Silius seems to combine a transitive meaning of *sufficio* (‘to provide’; *OLD* s.v. 1) and an intransitive (‘to have sufficient strength’; *OLD* s.v. 4).

but deems himself capable to match the dangers he faces on his own. In his confrontation with the Carthaginians, his blind love for glory proves to be inadequate for dealing with these crises, making him not such a suitable example for the Romans in their current war against Hannibal.

9 Conclusion

In this chapter I have explored the significance of the embedded narrative of Marus on Regulus in the First Punic War. I have argued that this narrative is a *mise en abyme* of the *Punica*; it is a miniature of the epic on different levels.

Regulus, as I have shown, is not the straightforward “paradigm for Republican ‘greatness’, the ‘greater’, the more ready he is to sacrifice, or ‘devote’, himself to the public good.”²¹⁴ Of course, Regulus is still an example of *fides* and *uirtus*. His slaying of the gigantesque, infernal serpent is a heroic feat that foreshadows the Roman war against the serpentine Hannibal and especially the role of Scipio. But his irrational passion for battle and his solitary actions on the battle field rather reveal personal heroic aspirations, befitting a general whose name means ‘little king’.²¹⁵ In that sense, he mirrors Roman generals like Minucius and Varro, whose unthinking zeal for fighting is criticised in the main narrative.²¹⁶ Regulus, who hovers over all of Book 6, is therefore an ambiguous exemplar: he certainly has positive traits, but lacks the all-encompassing character that is needed in the current war against Hannibal. This complex and controversial exemplarity is a key theme in the *Punica* as a whole.²¹⁷

On a more general level, the narrative on Regulus explores the repetitiveness of warfare, handed over from generation to generation. In Book 6, the Second Punic War is most prominently presented as a repetition of the First, but also recalls scenes from the *Aeneid*. The Punic wars can also be seen as a prelude to the civil wars to come. Intertextual play with Lucan’s *Bellum Civile* evokes specifically those of the first century BC, but the primary narratees could also think

214 Hardie 1993: 9.

215 On the epic theme of ‘the One and the Many’, see Hardie 1993: 3–10. This motif is as old as Homer. For a positive example, cf. e.g. *Od.* 16.117–121 with De Jong 2001: 393, where Odysseus on his own (*μόνος*) has to take a stand against many suitors.

216 See e.g. Ariemma 2010.

217 Interestingly, Livy inserts in Book 22, after the description of the Battle of Lake Trasimene, the embedded narrative of the Spanish Abellux, as Caroline Kroon kindly pointed out to me. This narrative, too, revolves around the concept of *fides* and has a similar thematic function, supporting Livy’s main narrative. I will use this as a vantage point for a future study on the Regulus narrative.

of the recent civil wars in AD 68–69. The repetition of history and the inheritance of warfare from earlier generations is an important theme in the *Punica*. Serranus and Marus cannot escape from it; Marcia, Regulus' wife, tries in vain to break this chain of war frenzy that has affected her husband, her son, and herself.

The narrative also explores the significance of stories. Marus recalls other epic narrators, especially from Virgil. He is also a *mise en abyme* of the primary narrator of the *Punica*, while Serranus can be seen as a *mise en abyme* of the primary narratees. What is the effect of story telling? Can the narration of earlier events help the narratees in the present? Like Amyclas in the *Bellum Civile*, the old veteran Marus cannot escape from the atrocities of the current war. He recognizes in Serranus both his former comrade Regulus and a younger version of himself: he is brought back to his own days as a soldier. He uses his experience to offer the young man assistance, both physically and mentally. Marus attends to Serranus by treating his wounds and by narrating the story of his father's persistence in the previous war. Whereas the medical treatment seems to work out well, the narrative does not provide genuine comfort, judging from the emotional reactions of Serranus. At the same time, Marus' narrative underlines the power of story-telling. Not only does it revisit Regulus' renown, it also provides its narrator a chance to tell his own role in history. The power of story-telling is a recurrent theme in Book 6. Serranus is a 'famous name' (*clarum nomen*) only because his fate is highlighted by the primary narrator. The temple of Liternum is burned down by Hannibal, but the ecphrasis spared its depictions from oblivion. The temple can be destroyed, the stories it told cannot. No matter how great the adversity or destruction, narratives and narrators safeguard the memory of people from the past.

A Peaceful Theoxeny amidst Hannibal's Fury

1 Introduction

After the Roman defeats at Trebia and Lake Trasimene Hannibal demolishes the Italian countryside. Returning from Apulia, the Carthaginian general sets his mind on destroying the Campanian vineyards:

uertit iter Daunique retro tellure relictā
 Campanas remeat notus populator in oras.
 hic uero, intrauit postquam uberis arua Falerni
 (diues ea et numquam tellus mentita colono)
 addunt frugiferis inimica incendia ramis. (7.157–161)

He turns his course and leaving the land of Daunus he goes back to the Campanian coasts that already know this plunderer. But this time, after he entered the fields of fertile Falernus (this land is rich and has never betrayed its cultivator), his men set hostile fire to the fruit-bearing branches.

The fertility of the area is stressed (*uberis, diues, frugiferis*), which contrasts with Hannibal's plans to destroy the Falernian vines with 'hostile fire' (*inimica incendia*). At this point, the narrator interrupts his martial epic narrative to tell the story of Falernus, who is presented as eponym of the local wine. This old farmer received the god Bacchus in disguise in his humble abode. As reward for this hospitality the god gave him wine, so far unknown to him, and covered the surrounding mountain slopes with vines. This aetiological story (7.162–211) stands out from the surrounding narrative, as several scholars have noticed. The "lightness of tone"¹ contrasts with Hannibal's destruction of these god-given vineyards. When the narrator resumes the main narrative, the narratees are plunged right back into the darkness of the Punic Wars, as Hannibal is still continuing his devastation of the countryside: *haec tum uasta dabat terrisque infestus agebat | Hannibal* ('this was the land which

1 Hutchinson 1993: 201.

Hannibal then was destroying and treated violently', 7.212–213).² It is not surprising that scholars have discussed this contrast between the embedded narrative and the surrounding main narrative in black-and-white terms of good and evil.³ The story of Falernus is consequently read as a 'positive theoxeny':⁴ the god Bacchus bestows the blessings of Falernian wine on Falernus and all inhabitants of Italy after him. Although Bacchus can certainly be viewed as benefactor and Hannibal as violator of the *ager Falernus*, this opposition is potentially undermined by an earlier scene in the *Punica* (3.101–105). In these lines, the narratees have already learned what happened *after* Bacchus' visit to Italy: the god is portrayed as a violent conqueror, associated with fury and lust.⁵ This makes the exemplarity of Bacchus and of the Falernus episode as a whole more problematic than a reading at first glance would suggest.⁶

In order to explore the ambiguity of this narrative, I will first discuss its position in Book 7. Next, I have a closer look at the story itself, investigating the literary heritage of this otherwise unknown theoxeny. What can we learn from a comparison with similar stories from the Hellenistic age, Virgil, Ovid, and Lucan? After that, we examine the connections of this story to other parts of the *Punica*.

2 A New Beginning

The Falernus episode comes at a significant point in the *Punica*. Since Ennius' *Annales* and Virgil's *Aeneid*, readers of a Roman epic expect Book 7 to contain a new beginning.⁷ Book 7 is of course not the 'mathematical' middle of the seventeen-book *Punica*, but it does form one of the turning points in this "epic

2 This reopening of the main narrative strongly evokes the Virgilian story of Nisus and Euryalus, as Littlewood 2011: 108 points out. Line 7.212 echoes the words of Nisus: *haec ego uasta dabo* ('here I will deal destruction', Virg. *A.* 9.323). Their raid of the Rutilian camp would cost them their lives. Littlewood convincingly suggests that by this allusion the narrator implies that Hannibal "may live to regret his detour of destruction", because in the meantime Fabius was able to block his supply lines.

3 E.g. Littlewood 2013: 213 and McIntyre 2008: 192–193.

4 Littlewood 2013: 213.

5 See section 9 below.

6 The episode has received relatively little critical attention. The only studies that are solely focused on this narrative are Vessey 1973 and La Penna 1999. Von Albrecht 2011: 107–113 devotes a considerable part of his article to the Falernus episode.

7 McNelis 2007: 263 and 275–278, who discusses Statius' *Thebaid* 7 (beginning of the fighting at

of many middles”.⁸ Book 6 ended with Hannibal’s destruction of the temple at Linternum, an attempt to eradicate the memory of Rome’s victory in the First Punic War. The first line of the next book makes clear, however, that Rome cannot be blotted out and that Hannibal is confronted with a formidable opponent: Fabius. Silius presents him as Rome’s ‘sole hope’ (*spes unica*, 7.1) in these dark hours, and ascribes a supernatural mind and power to him (*mens humana maior*, 7.5; *sacra seni uis*, 7.9).⁹ Fabius all by himself embodies Rome’s entire military power:

tot milia contra
Poenorum inuictumque ducem, tot in agmina solus
ibat et in sese cuncta **arma uirosque** gerebat. (7.6–8)

Against so many thousands of Carthaginians and their invincible leader, against so many battle arrays he alone went forth and carried in himself all weapons and men.

This one general is defending Rome and what it stands for against all its Carthaginian foes.¹⁰ The phrase *arma uirosque* obviously echoes the opening words of the *Aeneid*, but also the proemium of the *Punica* itself:

ordior **arma**, quibus caelo se gloria tollit
Aeneadum patiturque ferox Oenotria iura
Carthago. da, Musa, decus memorare **laborum**
antiquae Hesperiae, quantosque ad bella crearit
et quot Roma **uiros** (1.1–5)

I begin the war, by which the fame of the Aeneadae was raised to heaven and fierce Carthage submitted to Oenotrian laws. Allow me, Muse, to recount the splendid toils of ancient Hesperia and how great and how many men Rome created fit for war.

Thebes). See also Smolenaars 1994: xxxvi on connections between *Aeneid* 7 and *Thebaid* 7. In Lucan there is another turning point in Book 7 (the Battle of Pharsalus).

8 Tipping 2004: 370, who discusses in this article Book 12 as one of those ‘middles’. For *Punica* 7 as a ‘middle’, see Tipping 2010: 105 with n.160 and Von Albrecht 2011: 102–104.

9 This recalls Regulus’ semi-divine portrayal in Book 6. See Chapter 2, section 3.1.

10 The notion of a single defender has epic roots, cf. Hector who ‘alone’ defends Troy (with De Jong 2012: 191–192).

Whereas this prooemium speaks of *multiple* Roman heroes (*Aeneadum, uiros*) who oppose the Carthaginians, in Book 7 Fabius is presented as the *only* person that embodies all Roman valour.¹¹ A few lines later the narrator apostrophizes Fabius as the saviour of Rome, who prevents a repetition of the sack of Troy:

summe ducum, qui regna iterum labentia Troiae
 et fluxas Latii res maiorumque labores,
 qui Carmentis opes et regna Euandria seruas,
 surge, age et merito sacrum caput insere caelo. (7.16–19)

Highest of leaders, you who are saving the kingdom of Troy that is collapsing for a second time, the weak power of Latium, the efforts of our forebears, the power of Carmentis, and the kingdom of Euander: stand up and raise your sacred head up to heaven because you have earned it.

Again the narrator links Fabius to the prooemium of the epic. The efforts of Rome in the First Punic War (*maiorumque labores*) are threatened to come to naught, due to Hannibal's successes. Only Fabius' tactics of delaying can prevent that these had been in vain and assure that the Romans can actually receive the honour from the current war which was promised in the prooemium (*decus ... laborum*). Fabius is addressed as the most important Roman hero so far and is invited to claim the fame that in the first line of the epic was promised to all Romans.¹² By twice recalling the proem, the narrator signals that Book 7 is a 'new beginning'.

The successful delaying tactics of Fabius unnerve Hannibal so much that he is led to rashness, as becomes apparent from the following exhortation to his soldiers: *ite citi, ruite ad portas, propellite uallum | pectoribus* ('go quickly, rush to the gates, overthrow the wall with your chests', 7.101–102).¹³ He is, however, unable to unleash this rage, as Fabius keeps avoiding a confrontation. At that moment Hannibal directs his anger towards the Campanian landscape. The narrator pauses his narrative and starts to apostrophize the god Bacchus:

11 See Hardie 1993: 9–10 on the theme of 'the one and the many' in *Punica* 7. See also Chapter 2, section 8.

12 Littlewood 2011: 43 argues rightly that this apostrophe puts Fabius on a par not only with his divine ancestor Hercules, but also with Aeneas, Quirinus and Augustus. The phrase *sacrum caput* is also used by Lucan of Pompey (Luc. 8.677) and by Seneca of Cato (*Dial.* 2.2.3). After the Falernus episode, the narrator asks the Muse to 'give this man to fame' (*da famae, da, Musa, uirum*, 7.217). The phrase echoes the prooemium (1.3–5). Fabius is, again, presented as the only person that deserves fame, as the singular *uirum* underlines.

13 Stocks 2014: 122–123.

haud fas, Bacche, tuos tacitum tramittere honores,
 quamquam magna incepta uocent. memorabere, sacri
 largitor laticis, grauidae cui nectare uites
 nulli dant prelis nomen praeferre Falernis. (7.162–165)

It is not permitted, Bacchus, to pass over your honours in silence, although a great enterprise is calling upon me. You will be remembered, bestower of the divine liquid, in whose honour the vines, heavy with nectar, allow no other wine to have a name more renowned than the Falernian presses.

The narrator explicitly announces that he is putting his epic task (*magna incepta*) aside for the time being in order to praise Bacchus as the founding father of viniculture in this region. By stating that it is ‘not permitted’ (*haud fas*) to be silent on this topic, the narrator, once again, alludes to the prooemium. There, he claimed to have permission to disclose the war between Romans and Carthaginians: *mandata nepotibus arma | fas aperire mihi* (‘I am permitted to reveal the arms that are commissioned to descendants’, 1.18–19). Now that Hannibal is ravaging Italy, he interrupts his own epic enterprise for an aetiological digression, copying the delaying tactics of Fabius on a narrative level.¹⁴ That the primary narrator is emotionally involved can be deduced from the high frequency of apostrophes: four within the scope of fifty lines. Three times the narrator addresses Bacchus (7.163, 7.187, 7.205) and once Falernus (7.199).¹⁵

On an intertextual level, Silius’ interruption of his war narrative interacts with the *mora* of the Nemean episode in Statius’ *Thebaid*: when the Argive army has reached Nemea, the narrator apostrophizes Apollo and asks him to tell ‘whence came delay’ (*unde morae*, Stat. *Theb.* 4.650).¹⁶ Immediately hereafter, we learn that Bacchus is the reason for the drought that will delay the Argive army, which is heading for his native city of Thebes—it is only in Book 7

14 As the narrator had already done in Book 6 by inserting the extensive Regulus narrative on the First Punic War. See Chapter 2, section 7.1 and Stocks 2014: 122–123.

15 Apostrophe is quite uncommon in epic hospitality scenes, as Bettenworth 2004: 376 notes in her discussion on the apostrophe of Pacuvius’ son Perolla in 11.304–306; she has apparently overlooked the apostrophes in the Falernus episode: “in Gastmahlszenen ist dieses Element sonst nicht zu finden” (Bettenworth 2004: 376 n.378). For apostrophe, see also Chapter 2, section 3.1.

16 Bacchus himself is apostrophized in Stat. *Theb.* 5.712. The two apostrophes serve therefore also as a structural device, enclosing the narrative of the draught of Nemea, as Georgacopoulou 2005: 130–131 rightly argues.

that they will continue marching.¹⁷ McNelis suggests that the drought in Nemea can be read as a diversion from heroic epic narrative: "Given that the similes of a raging river and of the ship setting out from port symbolize the commencement of martial themes, the parching dryness here may be viewed metaphorically, as a counter to that poetic agenda."¹⁸ The Nemean episode symbolizes a poetic world that is rather 'Callimachean' than epic. In Silius, the pausing of the war narrative entails a generic change as well. In addition to the intertextual echoes of the Nemean episode in Statius, this is underscored by an allusion to the opening of Virgil's *Georgics* 2, which is dedicated to arboriculture. There the narrator, too, apostrophizes the god of wine: *nunc te, Bacche, canam* ('now I will sing of you, Bacchus', Virg. *G.* 2.2). The narratees of the *Punica* know now that they are leaving the heroic epic behind and enter a world that is both 'Callimachean' and georgic.¹⁹

3 A Georgic World

The Falernian narrative has a distinctively different atmosphere from the surrounding main narrative. We enter a world in which warfare and destruction have no place. Its aetiological nature is signalled by the word *nomen* (7.165): the episode will explain how Falernian wine got its name. The narratees learn the answer already in the next lines, in which Falernus is presented as an old farmer:

Massica sulcabat meliore Falernus in aeuo
ensibus ignotis senior iuga. pampinus umbras
nondum uuae uirides nudo texebat in aruo,
 pocula nec norant sucis mulcere Lyaei.
 fonte sitim et pura soliti defendere lymphæ. (7.166–170)

17 For *mora* as one of the central themes of *Thebaid* 4, see Parkes 2012: xvii–xx. It is not improbable that the role of Bacchus in the Nemean episode is an invention of Statius, on which see Vessey 1970: 48–49 and Parkes 2012: 285. This would add another intertextual dimension, as Silius' Falernus episode is likewise an invented narrative about Bacchus and his power. For Bacchus' importance in the *Thebaid*, see also Legras 1905: 193–194 and Vessey 1970: 47.

18 McNelis 2007: 87. See also Parkes 2012: xxi–xxiii. A Callimachean model for the Nemea episode in the *Thebaid* is *Aetia* 3 on the Nemean games. On embedded narratives and *mora* in the *Punica*, see Introduction, section 3.

19 Von Albrecht 2011: 107–108. For the idea of (Roman) Callimacheanism, see e.g. Heerink 2015: 17–19 with further bibliography.

In a better age, when weapons were still unknown, the old man Falernus ploughed the meadows of Mount Massicus. Not yet were vine-leaves casting green shadows over bare fields, and people did not know how to soothe their cups with the liquid of Lyaeus, but were wont to quench their thirst with pure spring water.

The negations stress the blissful ignorance of this era: people did not now weapons (*ensibus ignotis*) and did not know wine (*nec norant*), but only drank water that nature provided.²⁰ That this latter situation is about to change by the god of wine is foreshadowed by *nondum* ('not yet'). But an important question is: does this change Falernus' world for the better? After all, this age is called 'better' *before* Bacchus' arrival.

The phrase *meliore in aeuo* is intriguing. The comparative points to the deterioration of life in Campania since the arrival of Bacchus, of which Hannibal's devastation will be the absolute climax. At the same time, it makes clear that Falernus lived in times close to, but not synchronous to, the Golden Age;²¹ Falernus and his fellow countrymen have to plough the fields for their sustenance, whereas in the Golden Age nature spontaneously provided men with food.²² Nevertheless, this agricultural society is set in a better time, which recalls Virgil's praise of country life (*G.* 2.513–531). Farmers do have to till the land, but reap the profits of their labour: the land is so fertile that the farmer can sometimes even enjoy some rest. This Virgilian country life is associated with the rule of Saturn in Italy: *aureus hanc uitam in terris Saturnus agebat* ('Golden Saturn lived such a life on earth', *G.* 2.538). Virgil does not make explicit whether humans of this era were involved in agriculture, but the god himself apparently was.²³ This idealized Saturnian age also did not know weapons yet:

20 This 'description by negation' is a common feature of ancient accounts of blissful life. Compare e.g. the descriptions of Alcinoüs' garden in Hom. *Od.* 7.114–116 and the Elysian Isles in Hor. *Epod.* 16.49–62. Davies 1987 gives an overview of this type of narration in Greek and Latin literature. Primitive men drinking spring water recalls Lucretius' account of pre-historic times: *at sedare sitim fluuuü fontesque uocabant* ('but to slake their thirst streams and springs summoned them', Lucr. 5.945).

21 The phrase *meliore ... in aeuo* recalls Horace's *Carmen Saeculare* in which Apollo 'is prolonging a continuously improving age' (*meliusque semper | prorogat aeuum*, Hor. *Saec.* 67–68). Augustus' reign is often associated with a new Golden Age (cf. e.g. Virg. *A.* 6.792–794). Spaltenstein 1986: 456 sees an association with the heroic age of Aeneas' Trojan ancestors 'who were born in better years' (*nati melioribus annis*, Virg. *A.* 6.649).

22 E.g. Hes. *Op.* 117–118, Ov. *Met.* 1.101–102, Virg. *G.* 1.125–128.

23 Aratus was probably the first poet to introduce the concept of agriculture in the Golden Age. In 112–113, the goddess Dike provided men with the ploughing-ox. See Kidd 1997: 112. But like Saturn in Virgil's *Georgics*, it is rather the goddess who does the actual farming,

nec **etiam** audierant inflari classica, **nec** **impositos** duris crepitare incudibus **ensis**. (Virg. *G.* 2.539–540)

Not yet did they hear the blaring of trumpets, not yet the clattering of swords that were put on hard anvils.

The absence of weapons in Falernus' age and similar wording makes it clear that we are entering a world that has strong affinities with the Saturnian age of the *Georgics*.²⁴

Viticulture is an important subtheme of the second book of the *Georgics*, which has arboriculture as its main subject. The narrator praises many wines from other regions, but Campanian types take priority over these:

non eadem arboribus pendet uindemia nostris,
quam **Methymnaeo** carpit de palmite Lesbos.
(...)

quo te carmine dicam,
Rhaetica? nec cellis ideo contende **Falernis**.
sunt et Aminneae uites, firmissima uina,
Tmolius adsurgit quibus et rex ipse **Phanaeus**
(Virg. *G.* 2.90–91 and 95–98)

Not the same vintage hangs down from our trees as the one, which Lesbos gathers from Methymna's branches. (...) How am I to praise you in my song, Rhaetic? But even so, do not contend with Falernian cellars! There are also Aminnean vines, producing very strong wine, for which the Tmolian and the Phanaean, himself a king, rise in respect.

This type of praise is also found at the end of Silius' Falernus story. When Bacchus has covered the hillsides with vines, the Falernian wine is explicitly compared with three Greek wine regions that were also mentioned in the passage from the *Georgics* just quoted: Lydia, Chios, and Lesbos:

so that humans are still kept free from labour. See Johnston 1980: 28 and Smolenaars 1987: 395–396.

24 Compare also Euander's account of the Saturnian Age (Virg. *A.* 8.324–325) and Ov. *Met.* 1.98–99. In Lucretius' account of prehistoric times, people did kill each other in individual fights, but did not die in massive battles, as warfare was yet unknown (Lucr. 5.999–1000).

ex illo tempore diues
Tmolus et ambrosiis **Ariusia** pocula sucis
 ac **Methymna** ferox lacibus cessere **Falernis**. (7.209–211)

From that time onwards, the rich Tmolus, Ariusian cups filled with liquid ambrosia, and the fierce Methymna yield precedence to Falernian vats.

The wine from Chios is referred to with the learned toponym *Ariusia*, corresponding to the equally learned circumscription *rex ipse ... Phanaeus* in the *Georgics*.²⁵ Whereas that phrase marked the Chian wine as royal, Silius goes a step further: the wine even has divine qualities, as it is compared to ambrosia.²⁶ This of course also enhances the quality and fame of the Falernian wine, to which these other wines yield precedence. The focus on the Falernian wine is also emphasized by the absence of the Amminean, the only other Italian wine in the passage from the *Georgics*, and the order of the names: the Falernian wine is placed at the climactic end.²⁷

Silius' praise of Falernian wine also corresponds to a later passage in the *Laus Italiae*, in which the wine is presented as one of the blessings of the Italian country: *sed grauidae fruges et Bacchi Massicus umor | impleuere* ('but the land was filled with heavy branches and the Massic juice of Bacchus', *G.* 2.143–144). The Falernian vines that grow on Mount Massicus are symbols of Italy's fertility. Bacchus' role in viticulture is also addressed in a passage later in the same book:

hinc omnis largo pubescit uinea fetu,
 complentur uallesque cauae saltusque profundi
 et quocumque deus circum caput egit honestum.
 ergo rite **suum Baccho** dicemus **honorem**
 carminibus patriis ... (Virg. *G.* 2.390–394)

Hence every vineyard ripens with abundant produce; fullness comes to hollow valleys and deep glades, and every spot towards the god has turned

25 The Phanae is a mountain, Ariusia a wine region on Chios. Silius 'translates' the Virgilian hapax legomenon *Phanaeus* with another one: besides this text, *Ariusia* is only attested in Virg. *Ecl.* 5.71. There the Ariusian wine is called nectar, like Falernian in 7.166.

26 This might be an echo of the second Homeric hymn to Dionysus, where the scent of wine is compared to ambrosia: ἄρυστο δ' ὀδμή | ἀμβροστίη ('and there rose a smell ambrosial', *h.Hom.* 7.36–37).

27 Silius' metonym *lacibus ... Falernis* is a variation on Virgil's *cellis ... Falernis*.

his comely face. Duly, then, in our country's songs we will chant for Bacchus the honour he claims ...

In order to ensure the benevolence of Bacchus, the god has to be praised with songs (or poems). This literary aspect of worship also plays an important role in the Falernus narrative, as the narrator explicitly stops his epic story to honour Bacchus (*haud fas, Bacche, tuos tacitum transmittere honores*, 7.162). We can therefore see the Falernus episode as an example of a *carmen patrium* to sing praise of Bacchus.

In Silius, the *honores* refer not only to the honour brought to Bacchus by the narrator, but also to the honour that Bacchus bestowed on mankind—the reason for praising the god. Falernus is the first to receive these divine blessings, but in the final section of the episode the god makes wine available to the rest of Campania by covering the mountains with vineyards:

uuiferis late florebat Massicus aruis
miratus nemora et lucentes sole racemos.
it monti decus. (7.207–209)

The Massicus was widely overgrown with grape-bearing fields and the mountain looked in amazement at its forests and clusters that were shining in the sunlight. The splendour went up to the mountain.²⁸

This finale of the Falernus episode creates a ring composition with the beginning, where the narrator called Bacchus *sacri | largitor laticis* (7.163–164). Bacchus is presented here in his role of benefactor and civilizer, although we do not hear how Falernus' life changed after this metamorphosis of the Campanian countryside.

Silius' intertext, the *Georgics*, however, gives a more ambivalent message of viticulture. After the praise of Bacchus who bestows his blessings on the Italian countryside, Virgil emphasizes the ceaseless toils of the vinedresser (*G.* 2.397–419). The stress on *labor* in this passage of the *Georgics* contrasts with

28 The phrase *it monti decus* is ambiguous. Littlewood 2011: 107 translates: 'The reputation of the mountain spread'. Cf. Duff: 'The fame of the mountain grew.' Spaltenstein 1986: 460 suggests: 'la célébrité échet à cette montagne.' The Silian words, however, echo a similar Virgilian verse opening: *it clamor caelo* ('clamour went up to heaven', *Virg. A.* 5.451); cf. also *it caelo clamorque* (*A.* 11.192). Therefore, we should take the verb *eo* (*ire*) with dative as 'to go up to'. *Decus* is then not so much the 'reputation', but rather the 'splendour' or 'ornamentation' of the Falernian vines that grow all the way up the mountain.

the discussion of the olive and other trees that grow effortlessly, a feature of the Golden Age.²⁹ The labour that viniculture creates does not fit well with images of a Golden or Saturnian Age. Although men are able to cultivate the vine through *labor*, the Virgilian narrator questions the purpose of all this toil in comparison with other trees. He even ends his section on viniculture with an invective of Bacchus and wine:

quid memorandum aeque Baccheia dona tulerunt?
 Bacchus et ad culpam causas dedit; ille furentis
 Centauros leto domuit, Rhoecumque Pholumque
 et magno Hylaeum Lapithis cratere minantem.
 (Virg. *G.* 2.454–457)

What have the gifts of Bacchus brought that they should earn equal fame? Bacchus even provided grounds for blame. He overcame the raging Centaurs with death, Rhoecus, Pholus and Hylaeus, when he was threatening the Lapiths with a great mixing vessel.

Wine is presented here as the cause of the famous battle between the Centaurs and Lapiths at the wedding of Pirithous and Hippodamia. The message that Virgil gives is therefore ambiguous: Bacchus is praised, but his liquid can also cause lethal fights.³⁰

Silius, on the other hand, stresses the fame of Falernian wine and includes no references to *labor* at all, as the vines cover the hills spontaneously. Nevertheless, the narratees of the *Punica*, who are invited to read the narrative of Falernus with the *Georgics* in mind, might question this sheer positive representation of Bacchus' gift; the fact that Falernus has knowledge about wine indicates that we are already moving away from the 'better age' that Falernus is living in: from this moment onwards the people of Italy get acquainted with a product that stands for *luxuria*, which causes them to lose their previous innocence. In the *Georgics* only bulls still know this soberness:

atqui non **Massica** Bacchi
 munera, non illis epulae nocuere repostae:

29 Thomas 1988b: 237. *Labor* is almost the motto of the *Georgics*; cf. *labor omnia uicit* (*G.* 1.145).

30 Thomas 1988a: 242–243. Mynors 1990: 161 states that the adverbial *et* in the phrase *et ad culpam* suggests “that the vine works good as well as evil”. Erren 2003: 505 argues that we should not take this invective too seriously.

frondibus et uictu pascuntur simplicis herbae,
pocula sunt fontes liquidi atque exercita cursu
 flumina, nec somnos abrumpit cura salubris. (Virg. *G.* 3.526–530)

Yet no Massic gifts of Bacchus, no repeated feasts harm them. They feed themselves on leaves and simple grass, their cups are clear springs and rivers spurred on by their stream, and no care breaks their wholesome sleep.

The anaphoric negations underline that unlike bulls people *are* lethally harmed by luxury, of which the Falernian wine of Mount Massicus is mentioned as first example.³¹ Before the arrival of Bacchus, people in Italy were much like those bulls, in that they were used to drink water and knew of no wine (7.169–170). The Falernus episode marks this translation towards a life with more *luxuria* and further away from this 'better age'. As in the *Georgics*, the non-georgic world is never far away. Falernus did not know of any swords (*ignotibus ensibus*), but right after the Falernus episode, the narratees are transported back to epic reality. Hannibal cannot bear the postponement of fighting: *sicci stimulabant sanguinis enses* ('the fact that his swords were dry without any blood was vexing him', 7.213). Due to the delaying tactics of Fabius, but also due to the *mora* of the narrator, Hannibal is unable to release his bellicosity. Unable to meet the enemy in combat, the Carthaginian turns his rage on to the Italian landscape. So even though Hannibal cannot use his swords against the Romans, his fire destroys the idyllic and weapon-free world of Falernus.³²

4 The Story of Falernus as an Ideal Theoxeny

Let us now turn to the story itself, which is clearly modelled on the theme of 'the visit of a divine guest' or theoxeny. The reception of a god by Falernus can be read as another sign of a time closer to the Golden Age. Before our Iron Age at least, gods and heroes are said to have roamed the earth and frequented the houses of men.³³ This theme of theoxeny is as old as Homer, but became

31 Thomas 1988b: 140.

32 See Von Albrecht 1964: 155–157 for this parallel in specific and the contrast between the Falernus episode and the rest of the narrative in general.

33 Cf. the *δαίμονες* in Hes. *Op.* 122–123, Dike in Arat. 100–101, Cat. 64.384–386, and Virg. *Ecl.* 4.15–16. See Smolenaars 1987: 395.

especially popular from the Hellenistic Age onwards.³⁴ This theme is also frequently found in Latin literature, with Ovid's story of Philemon and Baucis in *Metamorphoses* 8 as the most famous example.³⁵ The story of Bacchus' visit to Falernus is not found in any other source and is generally taken to be Silius' own invention.³⁶ Nevertheless, it is clearly modelled on these earlier theoxenies. These stories typically follow the same pattern:³⁷

1. Gods (or heroes) roam the earth in disguise and are looking for shelter at the beginning of the evening.
2. The gods are on a mission or about to perform an important task.
3. The gods are received by humble (and often old) people.
4. The meal and other signs of hospitality are described.
5. A miracle takes place during the meal or shortly afterwards.
6. The gods reveal their true identity.
7. The gods bestow a reward for the hospitality they received.

Of course, not every theoxeny contains every single element, and sometimes the order is slightly changed.³⁸ The story of Falernus, however, closely sticks to this basic outline.

(1) Bacchus is seeking hospitality at the end of the day (*extremumque diem*, 7.172) and is not recognized by Falernus: *nec senserat hospes | aduenisse deum* ('the host did not notice that a god had arrived', 7.176–177). (2) What the god is doing on earth is not made explicit. The narrator says that he is on his way

34 For theoxeny in Homer, see Reece 1993: 47–57, with a list of examples. Famous Hellenistic theoxenies are Callimachus' story of Heracles' visit to Molorcus in *Aetia* 3 (Harder fr. 54b–i), Theseus' visit to Hecale (Hollis [1990] 2009²) and Eratosthenes' *Erigone* on Dionysus' visit to Icarus (Rosokoki 1995).

35 Ov. *Met.* 8.626–724. Some examples are Hercules' visit to Euander (Virg. *A.* 8.200–201), Ceres visiting Celeus (Ov. *Fast.* 4.507–560), and Ovid's 'own' visit to an anonymous farmer (*Fast.* 4.679–712). For theoxenical motifs in the Regulus episode, see Chapter 2, section 4.

36 This has been noticed by editors since Drakenborch. See e.g. Lemaire 1823: 421, Nicol 1936: 11–12, La Penna 1999: 177, and Muecke and Dunston 2011: 429.

37 The list is taken from Van den Broek 2019: 55–56 and is based on the motif-index of Thompson 1955–1958², especially Q1.1, Q42.3, and Q286.1, the basic outline of such divine visits according to Flückiger-Guggenheim 1984: 11–12, and the index on 'the hospitality theme' in Hollis [1990] 2009²: 341–354. Cf. also tale types ATU 750A, 750B and *750 in Uther 2004: 398–399 and Hansen 2002: 211–223.

38 Sometimes the miracle and the reward coincide or the gods reveals their identity at an earlier stage (e.g. in the story of Hyrieus in Ov. *Fast.* 5.495–544). Another variant is the 'negative theoxeny', in which the host violates the rules of hospitality. Instead of a reward, the host receives a punishment. Examples in Ovid are Lycaon (*Met.* 1.209–243) and the Lycian farmers (*Met.* 6.317–381). For the terms positive and negative theoxeny, see Loudon 2011: 32.

to the 'coasts of Calpe' (*pergentem ad litora Calpes* 7.171), the rock of Gibraltar.³⁹ An intratextual allusion to Book 3 makes clear that the god is about to conquer Spain.⁴⁰ (3) The god enters the humble cottage of Falernus, which is metonymically referred to as 'the small Lares' and 'a humble roof' (*paruosque Lares humilisque ... tecti* 7.173–174). The layout of the hut is simple, with the table standing before the hearth 'as was the custom in this poor age' (*ritu pauperis aevi*, 7.175). The narratees already know that Falernus is an older man (*senior*, 7.167), which is stressed again by *senectae* (7.178). (4) Falernus applies himself diligently to his task as host (7.177–185). He serves a purely vegetarian banquet (*opes festas*, 7.179) with fresh vegetables and fruit from his own garden. He ends his efforts by sacrificing a firstling to Vesta. (5) Bacchus is charmed by the industriousness of the old man (*sedulitate senili | captus*, 7.186–187) and causes the cups, milk pails, and mixing vessel to brim with wine (7.187–191). (6) The god then reveals his true identity: purple ivy-berries crown his head, long locks are flowing down from his shoulders, he holds a cup in his right hand and a thyrsus in the other (7.194–197). Together with the transformation of the god, the direct environment also undergoes a metamorphosis, with vines overgrowing the table of Falernus (7.198). The next morning all of Mount Massicus turns out to be overgrown with vines (7.205–208). (7) Falernus gets a double reward for his hospitality: Bacchus not only produces wine for instant consumption, but also promises the old man great fame as cultivator of the wine that is to be named after him: *uiticolae nomen peruulgatura Falerni | munera* ('gifts that will bring fame to Falernus' name as its cultivator', 7.193–194). Falernus immediately drinks the wine presented to him, which causes him to become drunk and fall asleep (7.199–205). The reward of fame also proves to be correct, as the narrator ends the narrative with the statement that since that day Falernian wine is to be preferred above Greek vintages (7.209–211).

In conclusion, the story of Falernus meets all elements of a typical theoxeny. Let us now turn to two important theoxenical models for the Falernus episode. It will turn out that Silius has changed important elements of these models in order to create his 'perfect' theoxeny.

4.1 *Model 1: Bacchus and Icarius*

An obvious model for the Falernus episode is the story of the Attic farmer Icarius, another host of Bacchus. This man, too, received wine as thanks for providing the god with food and shelter, and became in fact the first viticulturist of Greece. This theoxenical story was the theme of Eratosthenes' *Erigone*. It

39 The verb *pergo* is often used in military contexts in the sense 'to advance, to go against'. See *TLL* 10.1.1428.67–10.1.1430.10 s.v. for examples.

40 See section 9 below.

has been suggested that this work is an important model for Silius, although the few surviving fragments from this Hellenistic poem do not allow for a detailed intertextual comparison.⁴¹ This assumption is confirmed by Nonnus' adaptation of Eratosthenes' *Erigone* in Book 47 of his *Dionysiaca*. This work probably stems from the fifth century AD, but nonetheless it can shed some light on how Silius has reworked Eratosthenes' story of Icarus from the third century BC.⁴² Apart from general similarities there are some striking verbal correspondences between the *Dionysiaca* and the Falernus narrative.⁴³ The god is served goat milk (*γλάκος αἰγῶν*, Non. *D.* 47.40) just as Falernus puts milk on the table (*lacte* 7.181); in both cases the god stops the proceedings of his host before he produces wine (7.186–191 ~ *D.* 47.41–44); Dionysus is holding a drinking cup in his right hand before addressing his host: *δεξιτερῇ δ' εὐδομον ἔχων δέπας ἡδέος οἴνου* ('he is holding a fragrant cup of sweet wine in his right hand', *D.* 47.43). In Silius, too, the fragrance and sweetness of the wine is stressed right before Bacchus speaks to Falernus: *dulcis odoratis umor sudauit ab uuis* ('sweet liquid sweated from the fragrant grapes', 7.191).⁴⁴ After his speech, the god also holds a cup in his right hand: *dextraque pendit | cantharus* (7.196–197). The god's words to Icarus and Falernus also bear great similarity:

δέξο, γέρον, τόδε δῶρον, ὃ μὴ δεδάσιν Ἀθῆναι.
 ὦ γέρον, ὀλβίζω σε· σὲ γὰρ μέλψουσι πολῖται
 τοῖον ἔπος βοόωντες ὅτι κλέος εὖρεν ἐλέγξαι
 Ἰκάριος Κελεοῖο καὶ Ἥριγόνῃ Μετανείρης. (Non. *D.* 47.45–48)

Accept, old man, this gift, which Athens does not know yet. Old man, I give you a blessing. For the citizens will sing praise of you uttering the following word: 'Icarus has found fame that can rival with that of Celeus, and Erigone with that of Metaneira.'

41 See Rosokoki 1995: 102–105, who discusses possible parallels and gives a brief overview of the scholarly discussion. Littlewood 2011: 93 mentions the *Erigone* only in passing.

42 It cannot be excluded that Nonnus had read Silius, although scholars have not even raised this possibility. When this would be the case, the Icarus story in Nonnus is an example of window allusion: an adaptation of Eratosthenes *through* Silius' Falernus episode.

43 General similarities are e.g. the fact that both men are old farmers, entertain the god in a simple but cordial way, and are rewarded with wine. On the relation between the *Erigone* and the *Dionysiaca*, see Rosokoki 1995: 64–67 and Shorrock 2001: 100–101.

44 In Silius, the adjective *odoratus* has eastern connotations: it is used for describing the tombs of Egyptian kings (13.475) and the Indians (17.647), the latter also in a context of Bacchic conquest. For *odoratus* in connection to wine, see Ov. *Fast.* 3.301: *plenaque odorati ... pocula Bacchi* ('cups full of fragrant Bacchus').

In Silius, too, the god orders the old man to accept his gift, stressing his previous ignorance of wine, and promises great fame for Falernus in the future:⁴⁵

'en cape' Bacchus ait 'nondum tibi nota, sed olim
uiticolae nomen peruulgatura Falerni
munera.' (7.192–194)

'Come on', said Bacchus, 'take gifts that are yet unknown to you but that will once bring fame to Falernus' name as its cultivator.'

In Nonnus, Icarius is presented as first cultivator of wine and as such he will out-class Celeus' son Triptolemus, whom Demeter taught the art of agriculture. In turn, mankind learned from him to cultivate grain. Falernus cannot, of course, obtain the same status as inventor, because viniculture was already known in Greece. The god, however, promises him that his Falernian wine will surpass the fame of already existing Greek vintages (7.210–211).⁴⁶

Both Icarius and Falernus drink many goblets of wine (*D.* 47.58 ~ 7.200) and become drunk. When Icarius stands up to praise the god for his reward, he shows a wobbling gait:

δόχμιος ἀμφιέλικτος ἐρισφαλῆς ἴχνος ἐλίσσων
ποσσὶν ἀμοιβαίοισιν ἀνεσκίρτησεν ἄλωεύς (Non. *D.* 47.63–64)

Aslant and wavering he dragged along his tottering gait and hopped on his alternating feet.

Falernus, too, cannot walk properly anymore at the moment he wants to thank the god. The narrator signals the old man's instability while apostrophizing him: *pede risum* | ... *titubante moues* ('you raise a laugh with tottering feet', 7.200–201).

Because of these many similarities, the different ending of both stories is all the more striking. Icarius introduces the new drink to his neighbours, who also become drunk. When sober again they consider the unknown beverage

45 For correspondences between 7.192–194 and *Dion.* 47.45–48, see Rosokoki 1995: 103 and Fayant 2000: 135.

46 The explicit rivalry between Dionysus and Demeter in the story of Icarius is perhaps hinted at in Silius' description of grain produce as 'gifts of Ceres' (*Cerealia dona*, 7.183) and the offer that Falernus gives to this goddess. Falernus turns from a worshipper of Ceres into a follower of Bacchus.

a poison and decide to kill Icarus. His daughter Erigone subsequently commits suicide when she finds out about her father's fate.⁴⁷ Silius' story does not have such a negative ending: Falernus falls asleep, after which we hear that Mount Massicus is covered in vines. The Campanian farmer does not suffer any negative consequences from Bacchus' gift except for his drunkenness, which is described in a rather humorous way.⁴⁸

4.2 *Model 2: Philemon and Baucis*

An even closer model for the Falernus episode is the famous story of Philemon and Baucis.⁴⁹ As I have tried to show elsewhere, the narrator Lelex moulds his theoxeny to fit the purpose of his story: to prove that gods are almighty and that people will be rewarded for their piety or punished for their crimes.⁵⁰ The story as a whole and the happy ending in particular are too good to be true, especially when compared to other Ovidian theoxenies.⁵¹ Although Lelex's narratees are convinced, Ovid's primary narratees might question this interpretation of the story.

The narrator of the *Punica* closely follows his Ovidian predecessor, especially when narrating the god's entrance into the humble cottage and the hospitality scene itself.⁵² At the same time, the Silian narrator tries to surpass the idealism of the Philemon and Baucis story by omitting divine vengeance. Should the narratees of the *Punica* accept this positive message like Lelex's narratees in the *Metamorphoses* did? Even when we take into account that it is now the more authoritative primary narrator that tells the story instead of a secondary narrator, the sharp contrast between right and wrong seems all too neat, which should make the narratees suspicious.

47 According to Ovid, the god had raped Erigone by changing into a bunch of grapes, a version hinted at by Statius (*Theb.* 4.691), but otherwise unknown. See *Met.* 6.125 with Rosati, Tarrant, and Chiarini 2009: 267 and Borgeaud 2011: 168.

48 Littlewood 2011: 105. For the contrast between the endings of both stories, see Borgeaud 2011: 189.

49 Von Albrecht 1964: 156–157. Littlewood 2011 notices several parallels in the running commentary, but does not mention this famous story when discussing the theme of theoxeny (Littlewood 2011: xlvi–xlix and 92–93).

50 Van den Broek 2019: 57–60.

51 A good example is the visit of Jupiter, Neptune, and Mercury to Hyrieus in *Fast.* 5.495–544. Littlewood 2011: xlvi–xlix has pointed out the sharp contrast with the Falernus episode. For a comparison between the story of Hyrieus and that of Philemon and Baucis, see Van den Broek 2019: 65–67.

52 The lack of a female character is a marked difference: no daughter like Icarus' Erigone or wife like Philemon's Baucis is mentioned.

Let us take a closer look at the way the Silian narrator has incorporated the story of Philemon and Baucis into his own narrative. The entrance of Bacchus clearly mirrors that of the gods in Ovid's story:

nec pigitum paruosque lares humilisque subire
limina caelicolam tecti. cepere uolentem
fumosi postes (7.172–174)

It did not displease the heaven-dweller to enter the small household gods and threshold of his humble home. The smoky doorposts received the willing god.

In the *Metamorphoses*, too, Jupiter and Mercury have to stoop when they are entering the small cottage of Philemon and Baucis:

ergo ubi caelicolae paruos tetigere Penates
submissoque humiles intrarunt uertice postes ... (Ov. *Met.* 8.637–638)

So when the heaven-dwellers reached their small household gods and entered the humble doorposts while lowering their heads, ...

The contrast between the heavenly gods and the humble household gods also indicates a generic change in both epics: the gods, referred to with the grandiloquent Ennian compound *caelicola*, enter the non-epic, rustic world of a farmer.⁵³

The diligence of Falernus when serving the god (*hac sedulitate*, 7.187) mirrors that of Philemon and Baucis in Ovid (*Met.* 8.626–724).⁵⁴ The old couple entertains Jupiter and Mercury to the best of their abilities. The meal that Falernus serves also sounds familiar: like the Ovidian hosts, he serves apples in baskets, dairy, honey, and products from his well-watered garden.⁵⁵ Even their tableware is similar. Bacchus causes the beechen cups (*fagina ... pocula*, 7.188) and a hollow oaken mixing vessel (*quercu in cratera cauata*, 7.190) to brim with

53 Enn. *Ann. sed. inc.* 445 and *dub.* 6 (Skutch). See Hollis 1970: 115 and Littlewood 2011: 98–99. The latter signals an intertextual link with Euander's invitation to Aeneas to follow in the footsteps of Hercules by entering his cottage in *A.* 8.362–365. See also n.121 below.

54 Baucis shows the same quality (*sedula*, *Met.* 8.640). See Bruère 1958: 493.

55 The verbal parallels are: *puris ... poma canistris* (7.179) ~ *in patulis redolentia mala canistris* (*Met.* 8.675); *nunc irriguis citus extulit hortis* | *rorantes humore dapes* (7.180) ~ *quodque suus coniunx riguo collegerat horto* (*Met.* 8.646); *lacte fauisque* (7.181) ~ *lactis massa coacti* (*Met.* 8.666), and *in medio fauus est* (*Met.* 8.677). For these and other parallels with Ovid, see Wezel 1873: 87–88 and Bruère 1958: 493.

wine. This scene echoes the miracle in the Ovidian story, where the wine in the mixing vessel is replenished automatically (*Met.* 8.679–680). Earlier, the narrator had mentioned that Philemon and Baucis serve their drinks in hollow beechen cups, pouring wine from a mixing vessel:

post haec caelatus eodem
sistitur argento crater fabricataque fago
pocula, qua caua sunt, flauentibus inlita ceris. (*Ov. Met.* 8.668–669)

Next, they put down an engraved mixing vessel of the same silver and cups made of beech wood, coated where they are hollow with yellow wax.

The narrator stresses the simplicity of the mixing vessel: it is made out of the ‘same silver’ as the other tableware, so either terra cotta or wood. Silius glosses this ambiguity with the straightforward word *quercu*: the mixing-vessel is made of wood.⁵⁶

But when it comes to austerity, Falernus even outclasses the pious Philemon and Baucis. Whereas they serve a simple table wine (*Met.* 8.672) and pork (*Met.* 8.647–650), the Campanian farmer offers the god a purely vegetarian meal without any wine: *nulloque cruore | polluta castus mensa Cerealia dona | attulit* (‘and the chaste man brought the gifts of Ceres to the table not polluted by any blood’, 7.182–184). Vegetarianism is a sign of the Golden Age, as the echo of Pythagoras’ speech in the *Metamorphoses* makes clear: *nec polluit ora cruore* (‘[people in the Golden Age] did not pollute their mouths with blood’, *Met.* 15.98).⁵⁷ The implication is that Falernus is still closer in time to this paradisiacal era than Philemon and Baucis, who even intended to kill their sole goose.⁵⁸

In both stories the gods bestow multiple rewards on their hosts, which affect their environment and exceed their own lifetime. Philemon and Baucis are rescued from the flood that washes away their vicinity; their cottage—also

56 Like Silius, Hollis 1970: 121 and Kenney, Tarrant, and Chiarini 2011: 373 understand *eodem* together with the cups, so made of wood. Anderson 1972: 396 and Bömer 1977: 216 think that *eodem* refers back to the earthenware plates on which the food is served, mentioned in the same line (*fictilibus*, *Met.* 8.668). Hyrieus, too, has a terra cotta mixing vessel and beechen cups: *terra rubens crater, pocula fagus erant* (‘the bowl was red earthenware, the cups were beech’, *Fast.* 5.522).

57 Pythagoras repeats this precept in the final line of his speech: *ora cruore uacent* (‘let your mouths be void of blood’, *Met.* 15.478). For another example of the link between vegetarianism and the Golden Age, see Virg. *G.* 2.536–538. The eating of meat is introduced in the Age of Jupiter, see e.g. *G.* 1.139–140.

58 The gods prevent them from doing so (*Met.* 8.688). See Hollis 1970: 119–120.

saved from the deluge—turns into a temple, where the old couple may serve as priests; according to their wish, the one does not outlive the other, as they turn simultaneously into trees, and as such they are worshipped as gods by following generations. Falernus, in turn, enjoys the new wine in the presence of the god, the surrounding hills are covered with vineyards, and Bacchus promises that the new vine will bear his name and will become more famous than existing wines.⁵⁹

A marked difference with the Ovidian model is the lack of punishment. Jupiter and Mercury predict that they will take revenge on the impious neighbours of Philemon and Baucis for refusing hospitality to them: *meritasque luēt uicinia poenas | impia* ('this impious neighbourhood will get its due', *Met.* 8.689–690). The ensuing deluge enhances the contrast between the pious couple and their impious neighbours.⁶⁰ In the story of Falernus, however, there is no divine punishment at all, precisely because there is no impiety in his world. That does not mean that destruction is far away, a message that is shimmering through in the description of the next morning:

hinc ubi primo
ungula dispersit rores Phaethontia Phoebo,
 uuiferis late florebat Massicus aruis
 miratus nemora et lucentes sole racemos. (7.205–208)

When the hoofs of Phaethon had dispersed dew with the first Phoebus, the Massicus was widely overgrown with grape-bearing fields and the mountain looked in amazement at its forests and clusters that were shining in the sunlight.

This is a positive ending to the Falernus episode: the whole region is beaming with fertility thanks to the benevolence of Bacchus. At the same time, however, this peaceful image foreshadows the future doom of the vines. Now the grapes are glittering in the sunlight, but the narratees will remember that the Carthaginians have set fire to these same vine-plants: *addunt frugiferis inimica incendia ramos* (7.161).⁶¹ The mention of Phaethon also adds to the ominousness of the scene: did this son of Sol not set the whole earth on fire, as

59 Vessey 1973: 245 argues that also the vision of the god is a reward in itself.

60 Baucis is called *pia* in the beginning of the story (*Met.* 8.631). Otis 1970: 201–203 and 414 points to the contrast between the piety of Philemon and Baucis and the impiety of Erysichthon in the next narrative.

61 Morzadec 2009: 156.

Ovid had famously and extensively told (*Met.* 1.153–332)? Hannibal had shortly before referred to that same story when calling the Po the ‘river of Phaethon’, using the same rare adjective in the same metrical position: *Phaethontius amnis* (7.149).⁶² In that context, Hannibal brought to his soldiers’ mind the image of the river turned red with the blood of the Romans. The image of Sol’s horses dispelling the morning dew also contains a gloomy reference to Turnus’ horses riding over the corpses of his enemies: *spargit rapida ungula rores | sanguineos* (‘the galloping hoofs were spattering the bloody dew around’, *Virg. A.* 12.339–340). Earlier in the *Punica*, Silius had used this same intertext to describe the Gallic cavalry riding over Roman corpses at the Battle of the Ticinus: *ungula pulsu | et circumuolitans taetros e sanguine rores | spargit humo* (‘the hoofs, as they ride round, scatter hideous dew of blood over the ground’, 4.164–166).⁶³ So, although Silius deviates from his theoxenical models in omitting divine punishment, the narrative foreshadows destruction in the main narrative.

5 Lucanian Echoes

The story of Falernus also echoes two hospitality scenes in Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*. In the first, Caesar visits the dwelling of the poor fisherman Amyclas, in the second he is entertained with excessive splendour by Cleopatra.⁶⁴ These intertexts can be interpreted as foil to the benevolence of Bacchus and the hospitality of Falernus. But when reading the Falernus episode against these two scenes, the narratees can also discern some disturbing resemblances between the *Bellum Civile* and the *Punica*.

In the first scene, Lucan playfully incorporates elements of the theoxeny theme into his story.⁶⁵ Caesar wants to cross the sea from Dyrrachium to Italy in

62 Littlewood 2011: 107 notes the similarity between the two passages, but denies any ominous associations in 7.206: “The peace of the Golden Age suffuses even this allusion to Phaëthon’s ride.” In 10.110 Phaethon and Phoebus are again mentioned as a pair; there Littlewood 2017: 81 does acknowledge the “ominous assonances” of the adjective *Phaethontius*. Compare also Marks 2006: 393–395.

63 Spaltenstein 1986: 278. Silius was fond of the image of blood as dew, as he uses it again in 14.486 and 15.363–364. Originally it was a Homeric phenomenon (*Il.* 11.53–54). See also Tarrant 2012: 174.

64 These two scenes resonate in Marus’ narrative, too. For echoes of Caesar’s visit to Amyclas, see Chapter 2, section 4.2; for echoes of his stay in Cleopatra’s palace, see Chapter 2, section 7.1.

65 In particular the visits of Aeneas to Euander in *Aeneid* 8 and the story of Philemon and Baucis. See Matthews 2008: 22–23.

order to summon the troops under the command of Antony to join him against Pompey. In the middle of the night, he leaves his camp without notifying anyone and comes to the house of the fisherman Amyclas—a variant of the usual farmer. Like a god in a theoxeny, Caesar is in disguise, for we are told that he is dressed as a humble man (*plebeio tectus amictu*, Luc. 5.538). Nevertheless, his manner of speaking betrays his true nature—mirroring more or less the usual epiphany. Caesar asks Amyclas for no hospitality, but a crossing to Italy for which the poor fisherman will be generously rewarded:

ne cessa praebere deo tua fata uolenti
angustos opibus subitis implere penates. (Luc. 5.536–537)

Do not delay to present your destiny to the god who wants to fill your humble home with sudden riches.

Caesar seems to suggest that he himself is that god. Although this promise of instant wealth does not seem to impress Amyclas that much, he does comply with Caesar's request (Luc. 5.557–558).

It may be clear that Amyclas echoes the humble host from other theoxenies. His poverty is stressed multiple times (e.g. *pauper Amyclas*, Luc. 5.539) and his home is even more simple than usual, lacking wooden beams for support and being partly covered by an upturned skiff (Luc. 5.516–518).⁶⁶ What connects Falernus with Amyclas more than with other hosts is the contrast between their peaceful life and the war in the surrounding main narrative. Despite the ominous knocking of Caesar upon his house, the fisherman feels no anxiety. This gives occasion for the narrator to praise a poor man's life and to blame people who do not appreciate such a simple lifestyle:

securus belli: praedam ciuilibus armis
scit non esse casas. o *uitae* tuta facultas
pauperis angustique lares! o munera nondum
intellecta deum! (Luc. 5.526–529)

He has no anxiety for war: well he knows that in civil warfare huts are not the loot. O safe the lot of a poor man's life and humble home! O gods' gifts not yet understood!

66 Another similarity is Amyclas' kindling of a smouldering fire (Luc. 5.524–525). His young age is a reversal of the usual seniority of the host. Another deviance is the lack of a meal, for which there is no time as Caesar urges him to board his vessel immediately.

The reference to Amyclas' simple existence rings through in the *Punica*, as Falernus' hut is described as *paruosque lares* (7.173) and his circumstances are called 'poor' twice (*pauperis aeuī*, 7.175 and *pauperis hospitii*, 7.189). According to the Lucanian narrator, people fail to see this carefree life as the real present of the gods; this is picked up by Bacchus' words to Falernus in the *Punica* when he calls the Falernian vine 'gifts still not known to you' (*nondum tibi nota (...)* *munera*, 7.192 and 194).

These intertextual echoes signal that Falernus' life is exactly the condition that Lucan was praising, but also that it is even better than that of Amyclas. The fisherman is, after all, aware of the civil war raging around him: he *knows* that he will not be a victim of it and this makes him carefree. The arrival of Caesar nevertheless causes him to play a part in the civil war, as he becomes Caesar's *ad hoc* helmsman.⁶⁷ Falernus, on the other hand, has no knowledge of warfare at all, as he is living in an age without weapons, let alone civil war: *meliore Falernus in aeuo | ensibus ignotis* (7.166–167).⁶⁸ His rustic life remains untouched by warfare or even any other forms of violence.

Falernus' honest and simple hospitality finds its counterpart in Cleopatra's extravagant reception of Caesar in *Bellum Civile* 10. Lucan makes it clear that Romans at that time were not acquainted with such Eastern luxury: *nondum translatos Romana in saecula luxus* ('[she displayed] luxury that was not yet transferred to the Roman race', Luc. 10.110). Her palace was entirely composed of precious materials (Luc. 10.111–126), and the meal she served up was excessive, consisting of every animal available in her kingdom (Luc. 10.155–159). Interestingly, the wine that is served is not Egyptian, but Italian: the precious cups are filled with Falernian—the only attestation of this wine in the entire *Bellum Civile*:

... gemmaeque capaces
 exceperere merum, sed non Mareotidos uuae,
 nobile sed paucis senium cui contulit annis
 indomitum Meroe cogens spumare Falernum. (Luc. 10.160–163)

... and huge jewelled cups received the wine, but not of Mareotic grape, but noble, fierce Falernian which Meroë had aged in not many years, compelling it to foam.

67 His meteorological knowledge recalls Palinurus in Virg. *A.* 5.13–25. See Matthews 2008: 23 and 142–144.

68 Dominik 2018: 286–288 shows that Silius often links the word *ensis* with civil discord, although he does not cite this passage.

The heat of Egypt is able to make Falernian wine age quickly, which normally requires a long fermentation process.⁶⁹ In the Falernus episode, too, the wine foams immediately, when due to Bacchus 'the beechen cups foamed with the juice of the vine' (*fagina pampineo spumarunt pocula suco*, 7.188). But in this case, the miracle of the god was a 'reward for poor hospitality' (*pauperis hospitii pretium*, 7.189). The effect of this intertextuality with Lucan is therefore one of contrast: Cleopatra uses the Falernian wine, poured in precious cups, to tempt her guest into dealing with her brother. In fact, the unnatural aging of the Italian wine mirrors the corruption of Caesar by the Egyptian luxury surrounding him. Lucan claims that even great and sober Romans from the old days (*nomina pauperis aeui*, Luc. 10.151) would not have been unmoved by such wealth, let alone a general who was waging war against fellow citizens. The exact same verse ending is found in the Falernus episode, where it is stated that the farmer's hospitality was 'in accordance with the rites of a poor age' (*ritu pauperis aeui*, 7.175). This allusion demonstrates that Falernus is one of those poor people of old, still untouched by decadence.

But the allusions to the *Bellum Civile* also lead to a more paradoxical reading of Bacchus' gift to Falernus. Just as Caesar tempts Amyclas with promises of wealth and Cleopatra seduces Caesar with unrestrained luxury, the god of wine rewards the Campanian farmer with a drink he does not strictly need—as he was used to drinking spring water. After having received this gift, Falernus is not able to restrain himself and drinks several cups of the divine liquid, which causes him to become drunk. This inebriety can be seen as a departure from the sober lifestyle he had adhered to so far. Bettenworth observes that excessive drinking is exceptional in epic hospitality scenes. She underestimates, to my opinion, the possible negative undertone of Falernus' inebriety. It is of course much more innocent than the reckless ambition of Caesar or the excessive luxury at Cleopatra's palace, but it does signify a lack of restraint that Falernus had not known before: this is a victory of the eastern, decadent Bacchus over the farmer's former Italic sobriety.⁷⁰

69 E.g. Plin. *Nat.* 23.34, Athen. 26c, Var. *R.* 1.65. See M.G. Schmidt 1986: 244 and Holmes 1990: 111.

70 Bettenworth 2004: 359–360 cites as example the drunkenness of the Cyclops in Hom. *Od.* 9.371–374. In the *Punica*, the banquet in Capua serves as a negative example. She repeatedly states that the inebriety of Falernus is different and should not be viewed negatively, but does not provide an argumentation for the difference (Bettenworth 2004: 359, 374–375, 377). For a negative appraisal of inebriety in general, see e.g. Seneca *Ep.* 83.25.

6 Falernus Overcome by Bacchus

Falernus' transition from drinking water to drinking wine also ties in with meta-poetical connotations of 'water-drinkers' and 'wine-drinkers'. Since Hesiod, drinking spring water is a metaphor for poetic inspiration in general, but from the Hellenistic age onwards, it became associated with Callimachean poetry in particular. This can be traced back to Callimachus' *Hymn to Apollo*, in which he suggests a similarity between creating refined poems and gathering small amounts of pure water from a sacred spring:⁷¹

Δηοῖ δ' οὐκ ἀπὸ παντὸς ὕδωρ φορέουσι μέλισσαι,
ἀλλ' ἦτις καθαρή τε καὶ ἀχράαντος ἀνέρπει
πίδακος ἐξ ἱερῆς ὀλίγη λιβάς ἄκρον ἄωτον. (Call. *Ap.* 110–112)

Not from any source do bees carry water to Demeter, but what creeps up, pure and unpolluted, from a holy spring, a tiny drop, the choicest of waters.

After Callimachus, poets have associated Callimachean poetry with drinking water, whereas the opposite, especially the 'masculine' poetry of Homer or Archilochus, became associated with drinking wine; a famous example is a poem of Antipater of Thessalonica.⁷² Although the exact categories of water-drinkers and wine-drinkers vary, Roman poets use these same metaphors for discerning different poetic styles.⁷³ Horace, after having criticized the water-drinking poets, ranges epic poets with wine-drinkers:

laudibus arguitur uini uinosus Homerus;
Ennius ipse pater numquam nisi potus ad arma
prosiluit dicenda. (Hor. *Ep.* 1.19.6–8)

Homer, by his praises of wine, is convicted as a winebibber. Even Father Ennius never sprang forth to tell of arms save after much drinking.

71 For a discussion of the metapoetics of the Callimachean passage, see F. Williams 1978: 93–97, Heerink 2015: 12–13, and Stephens 2015: 73, 98–99. For the relevance of the *Hymn to Apollo* for another passage in the *Punica*, see Chapter 2, section 7.1.

72 Antipater of Thessalonica *GP* 20 (= *Ant. Pal.* 11.20) with De Jonge (forthcoming). See also Kambylis 1965: 118–122, and Fantuzzi and Hunter 2004: 446–449.

73 Crowther 1979 nuances the sharp distinctions that have been made between the two types. See also De Jonge (forthcoming).

Propertius claims that he is the first to follow the footsteps of Callimachus and Philitas and calls himself 'priest from a pure spring' (*puro de fonte sacerdos*, Prop. 3.1.3), clearly evoking the spring in the *Hymn to Apollo*.⁷⁴ Before Bacchus' arrival, Falernus and his fellow Campanians were used to drink water: *fonte sitim et pura soliti defendere lymphā* ('they were wont to quench their thirst with pure spring water', 7.170). When we read this as an allusion to both Callimachus and Propertius, we can understand it as yet another indication that we are entering a narrative with Callimachean overtones.

The arrival of Bacchus and the discovery of wine change Falernus from a water-drinker into a wine-drinker. At first glance, this change does not indicate a transition to the martial world of epic. On the contrary, the narrator describes the farmer's first drunkenness with some humour, as the tottering old man can barely pronounce his words when he wants to thank the god:

nec facilis laeto certasse, Falerne, saporī,
 postquam iterata tibi sunt pocula, iam pede risum,
 iam lingua titubante moues patrique *Lyaeo*
tempora quassatus grates et praemia digna
 uix intellectis conaris reddere uerbis,
 donec composuit luctantia **lumina Somnus**,
 Somnus, **Bacche**, tibi comes additus. (7.199–205)

It is not easy for you, Falernus, to contend with the joyful juice, and after you had a second cup, you raise a laugh, now with tottering feet, now with tottering tongue. With pounding temples you try to render father Lyaeus the thanks that he deserves with words hardly understandable, until Sleep closed your struggling eyes—Sleep that is joined to you, Bacchus, as your companion.

Commentators have called Silius' description of Falernus 'comical', noting a change in style compared to the epiphany of Bacchus in the previous lines.⁷⁵ Besides comedy, these lines also conjure up the atmosphere of Roman love elegy, in which drunkenness is often a cure for the pangs of love.⁷⁶ In the perception of Roman poets, elegy is Callimachean poetry *par excellence*, and is the genre that is most strongly felt as the opposite of (martial) epic: it revolves

74 Camps 1966: 53. Cf. Prop. 4.6.1–7, where water also has poetical dimensions.

75 Spaltenstein 1986: 459 and Littlewood 2011: 105.

76 Since Antipater of Sidon (*Ant. Pal.* 9.323.5), being 'wine-stricken' (*οἶνονπλήξ*) is a topos in love elegy. Cf. Henderson 1979: 60.

around *otium* and *amor* instead of epic *negotium* and *arma*.⁷⁷ Although Falernus is obviously no elegiac *amator*, his throbbing temples recall those of the desperate lover in the opening lines of Tibullus' second elegy.⁷⁸ The lover, who is not let in by his mistress, wants to drown his suffering in drinking and sleep:

adde merum uinoque nouos compesce dolores,
 occupet ut fessi **lumina** uicta **sopor**;
 neu quisquam multo **percussum tempora** **Baccho**
 excitet, infelix dum requiescit amor. (Tib. 1.2.1–4)

Pour it neat, boy. Discipline fresh misery with drink, letting sleep invade these tired defeated eyes, and when Bacchus in his strength has hit me on the temples see that no one wakes me while unhappy love is at rest.

Silius carefully follows the language of Tibullus: the accusative of respect (*tempora*) with the participle 'hit' (*percussum* ~ *quassatus*) and the metonymy of the god's name for the wine itself (*Baccho* ~ *Lyaeo*) are retained from the model. But whereas Tibullus' lover wants to drink away his sorrows purposefully, the wine strikes Falernus unexpectedly. That Falernus' temples are shaken by wine is also reminiscent of Ovid's *Remedia Amoris*, in which the poet advises to abandon leisure (*otia*);⁷⁹ sleep and wine are, after all, a breeding ground for love and result in mental weakness:

Languor, et inmodici sub nullo uindice **somni**,
 aleaque, et multo **tempora quassa mero**
 eripiunt omnes animo sine uulnere neruos:
 adfluit incautis insidiosus Amor. (Ov. *Rem.* 145–148)

Laziness, and immoderate sleep with no one to check you, and dicing, and temples shaken by much wine rob all people of their mental strength without a wound: insidious Love glides into those who are off guard.

In order to free themselves from the consequences of love, men should instead occupy themselves with warfare, business in the forum or agriculture (*Rem.* 151–224). The Ovidian text also alludes to Tibullus 1.2 (*multo percussum tempora Baccho* ~ *multo tempora quassa mero*), resulting in a window allusion.

77 See Heerink 2015: 17–19 on Roman Callimacheanism.

78 Spaltenstein 1986: 460.

79 Bruère 1958: 495.

That Silius alludes to Tibullus through the Ovidian intertext is flagged by the change of Tibullus' *percussum* into *quassatus*. This indicates that the drunkenness of Falernus is an effect of this harmful *otium* that has replaced his former *negotium* as a farmer. Although the *otium* can be viewed positively as a relief from his heavy labour as a farmer, it can also be read in metapoetical terms and indicate a departure from a simple world towards (elegiac) *luxuria*.

The world of epic seems to be far away. The wine stands for *otium* and *luxuria* as we know it from elegy, so it seems. But there are signs that the wine actually does indicate a change towards the martiality of epic. Let us first have another look at Falernus and the elegiac lover in Tibullus. The latter wishes to be overcome by sleep and wine, using military metaphors: sleep will 'occupy' (*occupet*) his eyes so that they are 'conquered' (*uicta*)—he wants to numb his agony. Silius' text contains similar military imaginary, but there is also an important difference: Falernus fights against the consequences of *luxuria*: the farmer is 'contending' (*certasse*) with the wine and his eyes are 'struggling' (*luctantia*) against Sleep, who is called the 'comrade in arms' (*comes*) of Bacchus.⁸⁰ Finally, however, Falernus has to give in. This is therefore not the carefree sleep that the Tibullan lover longs for, but rather one that forebodes danger.⁸¹ A parallel is the restless sleep of Thebans shortly after the arrival the army of the Seven in Statius' *Thebaid*: *si tenuis demisit lumina somnus | bella gerunt* ('if light sleep cast down their eyes, they were waging wars', *Theb.* 7.463–464). The Thebans are already fighting future battles in their dreams.

Two scenes in the *Punica* of soldiers dying on the battlefield confirm the ominous connotation of Sleep mastering Falernus. The first is the Carthaginian Sychaeus, who was killed by consul Flaminius: *longo componit lumina somno* ('he closes his eyes in a long sleep', 5.529). The second example is the death of a Roman soldier, in a later passage in Book 7: *erratque niger per lumina Somnus* ('black Sleep wanders over his eyes', 7.633). Like in the case of Falernus, Sleep

80 The juxtaposition *comes additus* also has a strong military flavour; it occurs in Virg. *A.* 6.528, referring to Odysseus as member of the death squad entering the room of Deiphobus, and in Stat. *Theb.* 8.184, referring to Amphiaras as a part of the doomed Argive army. In Book 13, the Sibyl points out the 'great cohort' (*quanta cohors*, 13.579) that is menacing the shades in the underworld. One of them is Leanness (*Macies*), who is 'added as a companion to terrible diseases' (*malis comes addita morbis*, 13.581). See Van der Keur 2015: 315 for these and other references.

81 Littlewood 2011: 106 notes that in love elegy wine-induced sleep poses a danger to girls and their protectors. Falernus is neither a *puella* nor a *custos*, but the allusion to this topos adds to the feeling that something is amiss. For the consequences of *luxuria* on Hannibal, see section 8 below.

is here personified.⁸² The deaths of Eurydice in Virgil's *Georgic* and Palinurus in the *Aeneid* are two other scenes that ring through. When Eurydice recedes into the underworld, she shouts to Orpheus: *fata uocant, conditque natantia lumina somnus* ('fate calls me back, and sleep closes my swimming eyes', *G.* 4.496). In the account of Palinurus' death, the god Somnus plays an active role in the drowning of the helmsman:

ecce deus ramum Lethaeo rore madentem
uique *soporatum* Stygia super utraque quassat
tempora, *cunctantique natantia lumina soluit.* (Virg. *A.* 5.854–856)

Look, the god [i.e. Somnus] shakes a bough, dripping with Lethe's dew and soporific by Stygian power, over his temples and frees his swimming eyes despite his efforts.

The sleeping Palinurus falls into the sea, while his sleeping comrades do not hear his calls for help: *socios nequiquam saepe uocantem* ('he often called his comrades in vain', *A.* 5.860). Falernus' struggling eyes in Silius (*luctantia lumina*, 7.204) recall in sound and meaning both Palinurus' 'swimming eyes' (*natantia lumina*) and his resistance against Sleep (*cunctanti*). Falernus, too, was not able to use his voice effectively anymore: *grates et praemia digna | uix intellectis conaris reddere uerbis* ('you try to render [Bacchus] the thanks that he deserves with words hardly understandable', 7.202–203).⁸³ Hardie observes on the Virgilian passage: "We have here a self-contained little episode, an encounter between a mortal and a god which is decisively concluded first by loss of consciousness, and then, as it appears, death by drowning."⁸⁴ The same can be said of Falernus, only that he drowned in wine.

These intra- and intertextual parallels bring to the surface an association between Sleep and Death, which of course has a long literary and iconograph-

82 Delz does not print a capital in 7.633, but the verb *errat* shows that Somnus is here personified, too. An identical verse ending reappears once more in Book 13, when Pomponia is visited by Jupiter, whom she recognized in spite of her sleepy eyes: *implebat quamquam languentia lumina Somnus, | uidi, crede, Iouem* ('although Sleep filled my weary eyes, believe me, I have seen Jupiter', 13.641). Contrastively, this encounter would result not in death, but in the birth of Scipio. See Van der Keur 2015: 345–346.

83 The apostrophe of Falernus echoes that of Palinurus in Virgil (*te ... tibi*, Virg. *A.* 5.840); *uix*, too, is an intertextual allusion, as the word occurs twice in the Palinurus episode (*A.* 5.847 and 5.857).

84 Hardie 1998: 108.

ical pedigree.⁸⁵ This makes the sleep of Falernus, the 'comrade in arms' of Bacchus, less peaceful and elegiac than a superficial reading might suggest. His excessive drinking therefore not only evokes the world of elegy, it also foreshadows the change from his 'Callimachean' world into the world of martial epic.⁸⁶

7 Foaming Cups: Intra- and Intertextual Ramifications

Whereas it is not made explicit that Sleep and wine kill Falernus, the narrative in Book 7 can be seen as a prefiguration of a morbid scene in Book 13: the collective suicide of the Capuan traitors during a dinner. This event takes place when the Romans are laying siege to Capua for having collaborated with Hannibal. Virrius, the leader of Capuans who decided to betray Rome, invites his supporters to his house. Drinking wine will make it easier for them to commit suicide, he claims:

dum copia noctis,
cui cordi **comes** aeterna est Acherontis ad undam
libertas, petat ille meas **mensasque dapesque**
et uictus mentem fuso per membra **Lyaeo**
sopitoque necis morsu medicamina cladis
hauriat ac placidis exarmet fata uenenis. (13.270–275)

As long as there is plenty of night, let him, who wants to have liberty as eternal companion at the water of the Acheron, come to my table and meal. And let him, whose mind Lyaeus has conquered by spreading through the limbs, thus having soothed the sting of death, take the medicine of defeat and disarm fate with peaceful venom.

The language of this banquet recalls the meal at Falernus' hut, but now Bacchus has become an assistant in committing suicide.⁸⁷ In the final part of this

85 One can think of Sarpedon, whose body is removed from the battlefield by the twins Hypnos and Thanatos in *Il.* 16.671–683. Hardie 1998: 109 gives some other Homeric examples. In Virgil, Sleep is called 'of the same blood as Death' (*consanguineus Leti Sopor*, *A.* 6.278).

86 In *Aetia* fr. 178.11–12 (Harder), Callimachus poses himself as a moderate drinker, like Icus he is sitting next to. This guest is the narrator of the next *aition* and therefore wine-drinking seems to have an underlying metapoetical significance; see Scodel 1980: 39–40 and Harder 2012: 972.

87 E.g.: *mensasque dapesque ~ mensae*, 7.176 and *dapes*, 7.181; *Lyaeo ~ Lyaeo*, 7.201.

sinister feast, cups foaming with venom replace the wine. The goddess Fides transforms into a Fury and serves these poisonous drinks in person:⁸⁸

**ipsa etiam Stygio spumantia pocula tabo
porrigit et large poenas letumque ministrat.** (13.294–295)

She herself hands them the cups foaming with Stygian poison and serves punishment and death in abundance.

These lines are a clear echo of the wine wonder in the Falernus episode: *subito, mirabile dictu, | fagina pampineo spumarunt pocula suco* ('suddenly, wondrous to tell, the beechen cups foamed with the juice of the vine', 7.187–188). The context of foaming cups in Falernus' cottage has been changed drastically: from a cheerful epiphany in Book 7 to a collective suicide in Book 13, where the boundaries between Heaven and Hell have become blurred.⁸⁹

This intratextual echo also has an intertextual dimension: in the first book of Valerius Flaccus' *Argonautica* we find a very similar reversal. There, too, foaming cups of wine are foreshadowing a suicidal scene later in the same book. The first passage comes from the festivities of the Argonauts before their departure to Colchis. Achilles was sitting on the lap of his father Peleus, one of the crewmembers. The little child was not impressed by the cups of wine: *illum nec ualido spumantia pocula Baccho | sollicitant* ('the cups foaming with strong Bacchus do not attract his attention', V. Fl. 1.260–261). These Valerian lines are echoed in the wine cups of 7.188, not only on a verbal level, but also in word order and sound: *fagina pampineo spumarunt pocula suco*. The foaming cups of venom in *Punica* 13, in turn, are reminiscent of a scene at the end of *Argonautica* 1, where Jason's father Aeson together with his mother commits suicide, aided by one of the Furies:

**adstitit et nigro spumantia pocula tabo
contigit ipsa graui Furiarum maxima dextra;
illi auide exceptum pateris hausere cruorem.** (V. Fl. 1.815–817)

88 Van der Keur 2015: 165 rightly argues that Fides becomes a Fury. Especially convincing for this interpretation is his argument that Fides is already acting as a Fury in an earlier stage (*furiare*, 13.279). He also compares the furibund Venus in the Lemnos episode in V. Fl. 2.101–106. Others, like Spaltenstein 1990: 226, understand a Fury, not to be identified with Fides, to have appeared suddenly.

89 For this phenomenon in Flavian epic, see Hardie 1993: 76–87.

The eldest of the Furies stands nearby and touches with her heavy hand the cups that are foaming with black venom. Eagerly they drank the blood taken from the bowls.

In this case, the cups are foaming with venomous bull's blood.⁹⁰ However, the suicide, the role of the Fury, and other verbal and sound repetitions confirm that *Punica* 13 is a reworking of this scene.⁹¹

Silius repeats the order of the two Valerian scenes when referring to foaming cups: first in a positive, then in a negative context.⁹² In the case of Falernus, the foaming cups of wine are a divine miracle, but they return as a means of the Fury to bring about the suicide of the Capuan senators in Book 13. Likewise, the cups of wine were used in a happier context of feasting in the beginning of Book 1 of the *Argonautica* and in a much gloomier situation at the end of it, when Jason's parents commit suicide at the instigation of the Furies. This second, negative use of the cups in retrospect also casts a shadow over its earlier use. The departure of his son on a heroic quest has at least contributed to Aeson's decision to end his life: the threat of his brother Pelias urges him to meet the heroic standards of his son (mentioned first!), ancestors, and his own heroism in earlier wars:

magnos obitus *natumque* domumque
et genus Aeolium pugnataque poscere bella. (V. Fl. 1.769–770)

His son, his house, his Aeolian race and previous wars all demanded a glorious death.

Likewise, the foaming cups in Falernus' cottage are foreshadowing the suicide of the Capuans in Book 13. The inhabitants of this city serve as a foil to Falernus, as they are living more or less in the same area, close to the *ager Falernus*, but

90 Taking these intratextual and intertextual parallels into account, I follow Heinsius' reading of *spumantia* instead of *fumantia*, which was also in the *Codex Coki* according to Burmannus 1724: 255. For these and other arguments in favour of the reading *spumantia*, see Heerink and Van den Broek: 2022. For a defence of *fumantia*, see Kleywegt 2005: 471–472. Zissos 2008, although maintaining *fumantia*, translates 'foaming'.

91 The intertext between *Punica* 13.294–295 and the *Argonautica* has been acknowledged since Ripoll 1999: 513–514. See also Zissos 2008: 409 and Van der Keur 2015: 166. The intertextual play between V. Fl. 1.260–261 and the foaming cups in the Falernus episode has not been noticed.

92 So, the intratextuality between the two passages in Silius is in fact intertextual, because it is based upon the intratextuality in Valerius Flaccus.

are leading a life of unbridled *luxuria*. The wine of Bacchus has corrupted them in such a way that they changed it into a means of killing themselves.

8 The Falernus Episode and Hannibal's Downfall

Capua is an important turning point in the epic. Its collaboration with Hannibal first seems to help the Carthaginians in weakening Rome even more after the destructive Battle of Cannae, but after their hibernation in Capua (Book 11), Hannibal's soldiers and the general himself are enfeebled by the luxury of their hosts. The former vigour has disappeared and from this moment onwards the Romans will increase their military successes, which culminate in the Battle of Zama at the end of the *Punica*. So, paradoxically, the moral decay of Capua helps the Romans to overcome their archenemy. Hospitality in general and wine in particular play an important role in the weakening of the Carthaginians. In this light, the Falernus episode can be read as a foreshadowing of the defeat of the Carthaginian army, as I will argue in this section.⁹³

The desertion of Rome's former ally is salient, because one of Aeneas' companions, Capys, was its founder. Silius stresses this common Trojan origin of the two cities at the beginning of Book 11: *Dardana ab ortu | moenia barbarico Nomadum sociata tyranno* ('[who could believe] that a city of Trojan origin would become an ally of a barbarian tyrant of Nomads?', 11.30–31). The narrator's explanation for the betrayal is the excessive luxury and wealth of the Capuans, which caused them to become morally depraved (11.32–43). An example is their ancient habit of gladiatorial fights during meals, which often resulted in a bloody spectacle: *saepe et super ipsa cadentum | pocula respersis non parco sanguine mensis* ('often the combatants even fell on top of the cups and the tables were splattered by no small amounts of their blood', 11.53–54). This is a first indication that we should view the Capuans as the opposite of Falernus. While their tables are covered in blood, Falernus' table has not even been polluted by animal blood (*nulloque cruore | polluta ... mensa*, 7.182–183). The moral depravity of the Capuans is in strong contrast with Falernus' frugal dinner habits.

When Hannibal and his men are invited to enter the city, they are regaled with an excessive dinner party. This luxurious hospitality is again the opposite

93 See also Morzadec 2009: 157–158. On the role of Capua in the *Punica*, see Pyy and Van der Keur 2019.

of the simple country dishes that Falernus serves 'according to the habit of his ancestors' (*de more parentum*, 7.177). The Capuans have diametrically opposed habits:

instituunt **de more** epulas festamque per urbem
 regifice exstructis celebrant conuiuia mensis.
 ipse deum cultu et sacro dignatus honore (11.270–272)

According to their habits they prepare meals and give banquets throughout the festive city with tables piled up in a regal manner. He [i.e. Hannibal] himself is deemed worthy the worship of gods and sacred honour.

The theoxenical character of the Falernus episode also rings through, as Hannibal is honoured as a god.⁹⁴ But instead of one sedulous old man, throngs of servants are serving the Carthaginian guests (11.274–276). The tough soldiers are looking at this splendour in amazement, unused to such refinement and wealth.⁹⁵ First, Hannibal frowns upon this display of luxury in his honour: *tantos damnat honores* ('he condemns honour of such measure', 11.283). But finally, he, too, gives in to the abundance of food and wine: *pulsa fames et Bacchi munera duram | laxarunt mentem* ('the expulsion of his hunger and the gifts of Bacchus made his mind relax', 11.285–286). The phrase 'gifts of Bacchus' recalls the reward of the god in Book 7, where the god himself speaks about wine as his *munera* (7.194). These echoes of the theoxeny in Book 7 invite a comparison between the characters of the two episodes. The Carthaginian general is indulging in the hospitality of the Capuans, just as Bacchus enjoyed the hospitality of Falernus. On the other hand, Hannibal mirrors Falernus, who was overcome by the gift of Bacchus; now the god of wine holds the Carthaginians firmly in his grasp.

The dinner at Capua almost becomes fatal for Hannibal, as the Capuan Perolla planned an assault on the general. The narrator apostrophizes this young man, stating that he cannot pass over his plan in silence.⁹⁶

94 See Bettenworth 2004: 381.

95 Cf. Caesar and his Romans banqueting at Cleopatra's palace in *Bellum Civile* 10. See section 5 above.

96 Silius nowhere mentions his name, but the story of Perolla is told at length by Livy (23.8–9). On this episode in the *Punica*, see Bernstein 2008: 145–150 and Stocks 2014: 143–146.

neque enim, iuuenis non digne sileri,
 tramittam tua coepta libens famamque negabo
 quamquam imperfectis, magnae tamen indolis, ausis (11.304–306)

For I would not want, young man worthy to be mentioned, pass over your deeds in silence and I will not deny fame to the endeavours of great ingenuity, though they were unsuccessful.

This introduction is reminiscent of the opening lines of the Falernus episode, where the narrator apostrophizes Bacchus in a similar way:⁹⁷

haud fas, Bacche, tuos tacitum transmittere honores,
 quamquam magna incepta uocent. (7.162–163)

It is not permitted, Bacchus, to pass over your honours in silence, although a great enterprise is calling upon me.

Perolla is in a way put on a par with Bacchus in Book 7, in that his story deserves to be told by the primary narrator. In this sense, it is surprising that the young man is the only person in Capua who has remained sober, as the narrator explicitly states:

mens una, inuiolata mero nullisque uenenis
 potando exarmata decus (11.307–308)

He was the only one whose mind was untouched by wine and whose honour was not disarmed by drinking any of this poison.

Perolla is therefore the only person in Capua not under Bacchus' spell. The narrator presents the 'gift of Bacchus' in a very negative way, calling it 'poison' that has the power to rob a person of his honour. The fact that Perolla was not intoxicated made it possible for him to plan the assassination of Hannibal. Finally, he did not manage to carry out his plan, as the narrator had already anticipated by the phrase *quamquam imperfectis*. His father Pacuvius, the leader of Capua, prevents Perolla from attacking Hannibal by imploring his son not to violate the rules of hospitality and not to cause a massacre:

97 The narrator has prepared for this intratextual allusion by naming the god twice in the preceding sentence: the soldiers follow Hannibal in pouring wine (*Bacchique ... liquorem*, 11.301) in libation and grow heated by drinking (*ardescitque Lyaeo*, 11.302).

absiste inceptis, oro, ne **sanguine** cernam
polluta hospitia ac **tabo** repleta **cruento**
pocula et euersas pugnae certamine **mensas**. (11.334–336)

Abandon your undertaking, I beg you, lest I see hospitality polluted by blood, cups filled with bloody gore and tables overturned by strife.

Pacuvius' words sound as if they were those of Falernus, who truly had 'a table not polluted by any blood' (*nulloque cruore* | *polluta ... mensa*, 7.182–183). The words of this father are, however, rather hypocritical when we take into account how bloody Capuan dinners often get: *saepe et super ipsa cadentum* | *pocula respersis non parco sanguine mensis* ('often the combatants even fell on top of the cups and the tables were splattered by no small amounts of their blood', 11.53–54).⁹⁸ Pacuvius convinces his son to abandon his plot against Hannibal.

When revealing his plans, Perolla had called them 'greater undertakings' (*inceptis ... maioribus*, 11.323). This recalls the narrator's reference to his own epic undertaking at the start of the Falernus episode: *magna incepta* (7.163).⁹⁹ The primary narrator continues his epic narrative after the 'Callimachean' Falernus episode. Perolla's potential epic glory, however, yields to wine and sleep. Returning with his father to the dinner party, he drowns his sorrow in feasting until he is overcome by sleep (11.361–368). So, in Book 11 Hannibal is victim of Bacchus, but paradoxically his life is saved under the influence of the same god: Perolla, the one Capuan that up to now was unaffected by wine, falls victim to excessive drinking.¹⁰⁰

After this failed assassination plan, the deterioration of Carthaginian valour continues. This time the moving force is Venus, who plans to destroy the Carthaginians by luxury. The goddess is about to launch a new assault:

nec Venerem interea fugit exoptabile tempus
 Poenorum mentes caeco per laeta premendi
 exitio et luxu corda importuna domandi. (11.385–387)

98 At the same time, the words of Pacuvius are ironical, as they foreshadow his own death. The Capuan traitors commit suicide by drinking poison during a dinner: *Stygio spumantia pocula tabo* ('cups foaming with Stygian venom', 13.294).

99 For the epic connotations of *magnus*, cf. Virgil's proem to the second half of the *Aeneid*: *maior rerum mihi nascitur ordo*, | *maius opus moueo* ('a greater sequence of deeds is produced by me, a greater work I set in motion', *A.* 7.44–45).

100 For the idea of Hannibal as a victim of Bacchus, see Tipping 2010: 76–77 and Vessey 1973: 245–246.

Meanwhile Venus, too, did not miss out this welcome opportunity to oppress the minds of the Carthaginians with invisible destruction disguised as joy and to tame their savage hearts with luxury.

The goddess instructs her Cupids to break the fierceness of the Carthaginians, for which wine is an important weapon. After the enemy has been overcome by wine, other forms of indulgence will follow:

... discatque Lyaeo
 imbellem donare diem. tum deinde madenti
 post epulas sit grata chelys, segnisque soporas
 aut nostro uigiles ducat sub numine noctes. (11.406–409)

... and let [Hannibal] learn to offer a warless day to Lyaeus. Then, let him enjoy the lyre when he is soaking drunk after meals and spend the night in lazy sleep or stay awake under my power.

After this exhortation the Cupids get to work. The Carthaginians embrace the luxury that is brought to them: *Bacchi dona uolunt epulasque et carmina rursus* | *Pieria liquefacta lyra* ('again, they want the gifts of Bacchus and meals and songs that are made sweet by a Pierian lyre', 11.414–415). This is an echo of the earlier drinking scene of the Carthaginians, when they indulged in 'the gifts of Bacchus' (*Bacchi munera*, 11.285). Due to Venus' workings, the Carthaginians immerse themselves in luxury and wine again (*rursus*).

The word *rursus* is also an intratextual signpost to the Falernus episode: once more, Bacchus' gifts have a destructive force. Therefore, the repetition of the names Bacchus and Lyaeus in Book 11 is not just a conventional metonymy for wine, but stresses the involvement of the god in the weakening of the Carthaginians. Hannibal is completely defeated by luxury: the narrator states that Capuan vices had a harmful effect on his character in contrast to his previous successes on the battlefield: *intactumque secundae* | *fortunae ingenium uitia allicientia quassant* ('enticing vices shook his character that had remained untouched by his success', 11.425–426).

From this moment onwards, the force of the Carthaginians is broken and they will achieve no major victories anymore. This becomes clear when the war narrative continues in Book 12:

sed non ille uigor, qui ruptis Alpibus arma
 intulerat dederatque uias Trebiaque potitus
 Maeonios Italo scelerauit sanguine fluctus,

tunc inerat. molli luxu *madefacta meroque*,
illecebris somni torpentia membra fluebant. (12.15–19)¹⁰¹

They did no longer have the vigour, which had broken the Alps and made way for armed combat, which had conquered Trebia, which had polluted the Maeonian streams with Italian blood. Their limbs were lax, drenched in soft luxury and wine, inactive by seductive sleep.

Wine and sleep have overcome the Carthaginians. They have become similar to the Capuans who invited them into their city and who had already been corrupted by luxury (11.32–54).¹⁰² The stay in Capua has turned out to be a crucial turning point in the war. It is as if Bacchus repays Hannibal for having destroyed the Falernian vineyards in Book 7, by subduing his army with wine.¹⁰³

9 Bacchus as an Unstable Exemplar in the *Punica*

Bacchus is often used for legitimizing divine rule and conquest. This paradigm has a long pedigree, going back to the time of Alexander the Great and frequently found in Augustan literature.¹⁰⁴ Like Hercules, with whom Bacchus is often paired, the god is no straightforward example of benevolence, but rather a two-faced divinity: on the one hand he is a cultivator, bringing viniculture to other parts of the world, on the other he stands for violent and suppressive autocracy.¹⁰⁵ In the *Punica*, too, we see reflections of this ambiguity. In this section I will explore this double image of Bacchus in the *Punica* in order to get a clearer view on his role in the Falernus episode.

From Book 1 onwards, we find references to Bacchus as a god of fertility. Spain is called 'not inhospitable to Bacchus' (*nec inhospita Baccho*, 1.237) and the mountains around Sorrentum are 'fertile due to Bacchus' (*felicia Bac-*

101 Together with Duff, I do not print a comma after *somni* (12.19).

102 The connection is enforced by the repetitions of *luxus* (11.32 ~ 12.18) and *madefacta* (11.40 ~ 12.18).

103 Capua is also a turning point in the Punic War in Livy (23.18.10–16). For more references, see Matier 1980: 391.

104 See Austin 1977: 246–247 for some examples. Mark Antony associated himself with Dionysus in order to legitimize his authority in both the East and the West. The god's associations with luxury and Otherness made this image problematic, as Zanker 1987: 65–73 shows.

105 Tipping has argued that the exemplary role of Bacchus is similar to that of Hercules: "both are unstable exemplars" (2010: 80).

cho, 5.465). In these cases, Bacchus stands for the viniculture of the areas mentioned.¹⁰⁶ In Book 7 Bacchus is presented as bestower of blessings (*largitor*, 7.164), contrasting with Hannibal who takes on the role of the aggressive violator of the Italian landscape. Bacchic fertility as opposed to Carthaginian destruction returns briefly after the Battle of Cannae. From the battlefield the enemy marches straight to Rome, laying waste to the Campanian countryside once again: *hinc Allifanus Iaccho | haud inamatus ager nymphisque habitata Casini | rura euastantur* ('next they destroyed the farmland of Allifae, loved by Iacchus, and the countryside of Casinum, inhabited by nymphs', 12.526–528). The use of Bacchus' cult name Iacchus invites the narratees to connect this passage with the earlier Falernus episode, which contains the only other attestation of this name in the *Punica* (7.187).¹⁰⁷ Once more Hannibal's troops are destroying an idyllic landscape that was dear to the god of wine—a rehearsal of the Carthaginian destructiveness in the same region in Book 7.¹⁰⁸ Once again, a Bacchic landscape falls victim to the aggression of Hannibal.

In other places in the *Punica*, Bacchus figures rather as a god of conquest. This is especially apparent from a short episode in Book 3, where the narrator tells about the god's subjection of Spain:¹⁰⁹

tempore quo Bacchus populos domitabat Hiberos
 concutiens **thyrs**o atque armata Maenade **Calpen**
 lasciuo genitus Satyro nymphaque Myrice
 Milichus indigenis late regnarat in oris
 cornigeram attollens genitoris imagine frontem. (3.101–105)

Since the time when Bacchus subdued the peoples of Spain, shaking Calpe to its foundation with his thyrsus and his armed troupe of Maenads, Milichus, born from a lustful Satyr and the nymph Myrice, held sway far and wide over his indigenous coasts, bearing horns on his forehead, like those of his father.

106 Other examples are 14.24 and 15.177 on viniculture in Sicily and Tarraco in Spain respectively.

107 See Telg genannt Kortmann 2018: 127 n.44, who suspects an intratextual reminiscence, but does not explain how we have to understand it.

108 Compare 12.526–528 with the resumption of the main narrative after the Falernus episode: *haec tum uasta dabat terrisque infestus agebat | Hannibal* ('this was the land which Hannibal then was destroying and treated violently', 7.212–213).

109 Bacchus' conquest of Spain is also told by Varro according to Pliny the Elder (*Nat.* 3.8).

That Bacchus and his companions were aggressive invaders is apparent from words like *domitabat*, *concutiens*, and *armata*. The local nymph Myrice is victim of sexual aggression by one of Bacchus' satyrs, as his epithet *lasciuus* seems to imply.¹¹⁰ The topography is relevant here, for Calpe is the place where Bacchus is heading in the Falernus episode: *attulit hospitio pergentem ad litora Calpes | extremumque diem pes dexter et hora Lyaeum* ('a lucky step and hour brought Lyaeus at the end of the day to this hospitable home, while he was travelling to the coast of Calpe', 7.171–172).¹¹¹ The repetition of this toponym makes clear that the story of Falernus has to be read as the prequel to Bacchus' western campaign.¹¹² Vessey states: "His beneficent and creative activity in Campania is set in symbolic antithesis to the destruction and havoc caused by Hannibal, who had come from victory in Spain to further triumphs in Italy."¹¹³ However, the beneficial role of Bacchus in Book 7 can be questioned, since the narratees have already learned about his violent conquest of Spain that follows after his departure from Italy.

The Falernus episode contains yet another allusion to the Spanish campaign of Bacchus. The thyrsus, the weapon of the Menaeds in 3.102, is echoed in the epiphany of Bacchus in Book 7:¹¹⁴

inde nitentem
lumine **purpureo frontem** **cinxere corymbi**,
et fusae per colla comae, dextraque **pendit**
cantharus, ac **uitis thyrso** delapsa **uirenti**
festas Nysaeo redimiuit **palmite** mensas. (7.194–198)

Next, his head, shining with a purple light, was wreathed with ivy-berries, his locks flowed over his neck, from his right hand a drinking cup hang

110 See Tipping 2010: 80. Hannibal's wife Imilce is a descendant of this Milichus. Sexual aggression returns in a more explicit scene later in Book 3, when Hercules is told to have raped the girl Pyrene (3.415–441). Strikingly, Bacchus again plays a role here, as Hercules comes to his deed due to inebriation: the hero is 'possessed by Bacchus' (*possessus Baccho*, 3.423).

111 Spaltenstein 1986: 190 and 457 observes this parallel.

112 Bacchus' conquest of the East is much more famous, e.g. A.R. 2.905–910, *Ov. Met.* 4.20–21, *Virg. A.* 6.804–805, and *Sen. Oed.* 113–116. In Euripides' *Bacchae*, however, the god is travelling from East to West (*Ba.* 13–16). See Töchterle 1994: 222.

113 Vessey 1973: 241.

114 The thyrsus is a common attribute of Bacchus and his followers, but is mentioned only three times in the *Punica*. The other attestation of this word is 3.393.

down, and the vine descending from his green thyrsus wrapped the festive tables with branches from Nysa.

Bacchus 'conquers' Campania by introducing the vine from his native mountain Nysa in the East (*Nysaeo ... palmite*), which takes over Falernus' hut and later the whole countryside.¹¹⁵ This is much less aggressive than his conquest of Spain, where Calpe is shaking in terror due to Bacchus' thyrsus and his Maenads.

But even this rather peaceful conquest of Campania in Book 7 is not unproblematic. The epiphany of the god alludes to two scenes from the *Metamorphoses* where the god shows his vengeful side. In *Metamorphoses* 3, the ship of the Tyrrhenian sailors was covered by the same ivy-berries (*corymbi*) before the crew was transformed into dolphins.¹¹⁶ Right after this Bacchic hijacking of the ship, the god transforms into his divine self, shaking a spear, while his forehead was wreathed with grapes:¹¹⁷

impediunt hederæ remos nexuque recuruo
serpunt et grauidis distinguunt uela **corymbis**.
ipse racemiferis **frontem circumdatus** uuis
pampineis agitat uelatam frondibus hastam. (Ov. *Met.* 3.664–667)

Ivy hinders the oars, snaking up with winding bindings and decks the sails with heavy ivy-berries. The god himself, with his forehead garlanded with clusters of grapes, shakes a spear covered with vine-leaves.

An even clearer example is the punishment of the daughters of Minyas.¹¹⁸ Before they are transformed into bats, their loom is overtaken by Bacchic vegetation, even producing a purple glow:

resque fide maior, coepere **uirescere** telae
inque hederæ faciem **pendens** frondescere uestis;
pars abit in **uities** et, quae modo fila fuerunt,

115 For Nysa as the birth place of Bacchus, see *h.Hom.* 1.8–10 with Allen, Halliday, and Sikes 1936: 103–104.

116 These are the only attestations of this word in both the *Metamorphoses* and the *Punica*.

117 For the parallel, see also Bruère 1958: 494, Von Albrecht 2011: 110, and Littlewood 2011: 104–105.

118 Only Spaltenstein 1986: 459 briefly mentions this parallel.

palmite mutantur; de stamine pampinus exit;
purpura fulgorem pictis accommodat uuis. (Ov. *Met.* 4.394–398)

Something beyond belief, their looms turned green and the hanging cloth was overgrown with ivy-leaves. A part became vine and what were just now threads changed into vine-branches. From the warp vine-leaves came down. The purple tapestry matches its brightness to the variegated grapes.¹¹⁹

These intratextual and intertextual allusions problematize a sheer positive appraisal of Bacchus' arrival and epiphany in Book 7: he is not merely a benefactor, but can also be a violent and overpowering god, as Euripides had already made amply clear in his *Bacchae*.¹²⁰ The contrast between Bacchus and the Carthaginian general therefore also becomes less stark. They are both conquerors, the one heading *to* Spain, the other departing *from* there.

Bacchus' destination of his western campaign is highly symbolic. Calpe is not only a metonym for the most western extremity of the world, but also the location where Hercules—on his way to the monster Geryon in Gades—is thought to have erected the pillars that were named after him. That Bacchus is following the footsteps of Hercules is made clear at the beginning of the Falernus episode. The initial word of 7.171 (*attulit*) is one of the allusions to Hercules' arrival at Euander's dwelling, as the king tells his guest Aeneas: *attulit et nobis aliquando optantibus aetas | auxilium aduentumque dei* ('time once brought to us the help and arrival of a god, when we were wishing for it', Virg. *A.* 8.200–201).¹²¹ Hercules came to Pallanteum when he was driving Geryon's

119 Commentators usually understand *purpura* as referring to the tapestry and *pictis ... uuis* to the real grapes, see e.g. Barchiesi et al. 2007: 294. The language is, however, ambiguous as the sentence can also be understood the other way around: 'the purple colour (of the real grapes) matches its brightness to the painted grapes (on the tapestry)'. This is exactly the point: nature and art become indistinguishable.

120 In Statius' *Thebaid*, too, the god is portrayed as a conqueror, with in his train personifications of Ira, Furor, Metus, Virtus, and Ardor (*Theb.* 4.652–663, with Parkes 2012: 286). Another text that rings through is the 'Bacchic ode' in Seneca's *Oedipus*. The Theban chorus evokes the god thus: *effusam redimite comam nutante corymbo, | mollia Nysaeis armatus brachia thyrsis, | lucidum caeli decus, huc ades* ('bright glory of heaven, garland your flowing hair with nodding ivy-berries, you whose hands are armed with the thyrsus from Nysa, please come here', Sen. *Oed.* 403–405). *Armata Maenade* in 3.102 might be an echo of this same Senecan passage, also because we have to suppose those Maenads to be armed with thyrsi. For the idea, see already Euripides (*Θύρσοις ... ὠπλισμέναι*, *Ba.* 773).

121 See Littlewood 2011: 98–99, who also compares 7.173–174 with Virg. *A.* 8.362–365. See also n.53 above.

cattle back from Spain, while Bacchus is still heading for Spain. Hannibal also portrays himself as a successor to Hercules in travelling this route.¹²² This is for example apparent in the speech to his men just before the Battle of Cannae: *Herculeis iter a metis ad Iapygis agros | uincendo emensi* ('you have traversed victoriously from the Pillars of Hercules to the Iapygian fields', 9.185–186). Hannibal portrays himself as a powerful conqueror, like Hercules and Bacchus before him.

In the second part of the *Punica*, after the Battle of Cannae, Scipio rather than Hannibal is the character most readily associated with Bacchus and Hercules.¹²³ Two passages in particular bring this to the fore. The first is Virtus' speech in Book 15, when the goddess promises the Roman general eternal glory:

at quis aetherii seruatur seminis ortus,
caeli porta patet. referam quid cuncta domantem
Amphitryoniadem? quid, cui, post Seras et **Indos**
captiuo **Liber** cum signa referret ab Euro,
Caucaseae **currum duxere per oppida tigres?** (15.77–81)

For those in whom the issue of heavenly seed is preserved, the gate of heaven stands open. Why should I mention the son of Amphitryon, who tamed everything? Why should I mention Liber, who, after subduing the Chinese and Indians, brought back military standards from the conquered East, whose chariot was brought through cities by Caucasian tigers?

According to Virtus, Scipio is the rightful successor to Bacchus and Hercules. This is affirmed by the primary narrator at the end of the entire epic. In the triumphal procession, images of the conquered areas are shown, among them Calpe: *laudibus olim | terminus Herculeis Calpe* ('Calpe, once the limit of Hercules' honour', 17.637–638). Scipio is therefore following in the footsteps of Hercules, assuming the honour that once belonged to the Greek hero. After the Roman citizens have looked in amazement at a picture of Hannibal fleeing from the battlefield, the focus turns to Scipio. His appearance in the triumphal procession is explicitly compared to that of Bacchus and Hercules:

122 For Hercules as exemplar of Hannibal, see e.g. Stocks 2014: 218–221.

123 Marks 2005: 222–227 and Tipping 2010: 16 and 46.

qualis odoratis **descendens Liber** ab Indis
egit pampineos frenata **tigride currus**,
 aut cum Phlegraeis confecta mole Gigantum
 incessit campis tangens Tiryntius astra. (17.647–650)

So looked Liber, when he came down from the fragrant Indians, driving his chariot, that was wreathed in vine-leaves and drawn by tigers, and so looked the Tiryntian when he drove over the fields of Phlegra after having killed the huge Giants, reaching with his head the stars.

These lines are the realization of Virtus' prophecy: Scipio has become as triumphant as Bacchus and Hercules once were. The image of Bacchus riding on a chariot drawn by tigers is exactly as Virtus had pictured the triumph of the wine god in Book 15. But we should also recall Anchises' prophecy in *Aeneid* 6. There, Aeneas is told that Augustus will surpass the conquests of Hercules and Bacchus:

nec qui **pampineis** uictor iuga flectit habenis
Liber, agens celso Nysae **de** uertice **tigris**. (Virg. *A.* 6.804–805)

Not [did] Liber [cover so much of the earth], who steered his chariot with reins of vine-branches, driving his tigers from the lofty peak of Nysa.

Apart from the similar imagery of a chariot drawn by tigers, there are two more resemblances. The first are the vine-leaves on the chariot, as the repetition of the rare adjective *pampineus* in the same metrical *sedes* underlines.¹²⁴ This detail of Scipio's chariot was also subtly foreshadowed in the Falernus episode.¹²⁵ The second similarity is Bacchus' route: in the *Aeneid* he descends from Mount Nysa in India, where he was born, in the *Punica* he descends 'from the fragrant Indians' (*odoratis ... ab Indis*). This phrase suggests that Bacchus introduced viniculture to the Indians, too. Again, we can see a subtle reference to the Falernus episode, where we read about the miraculous wine that comes from 'fragrant grapes' (*odoratis ... ab uuis*, 7.191). The fact that both Roman

124 Albeit in a different function: in Silius the vines seem to be decorative, in Virgil they are used as reins. The adjective *pampineus* is probably a Virgilian coinage (Horsfall 2013 vol. 2: 549).

125 In the *Punica*, the only other attestation of this adjective comes from the Falernus episode, where wine is called *pampineo ... suco* (7.188).

leaders are compared to Bacchus in a very similar way makes it plausible to see Scipio as a prefiguration of Augustus.¹²⁶

The other Roman that is compared to Bacchus in the *Punica* (and is actually said to surpass him) is Domitian.¹²⁷ Jupiter prophesied that the emperor's conquests in the East will outdo those of Bacchus:

hic et ab Arctoo **currus aget axe per urbem,**
 ducet et Eoos **Baccho** cedente triumphos. (3.614–615)

From the North Pole he [i.e. Domitian] will drive his chariot through the city and he will lead triumphal processions for victories in the East, to which Bacchus yields.

Again, we see a leader driving a chariot, although the tigers are absent.¹²⁸ Another difference is that Domitian will celebrate his triumphal processions in the only *urbs* that really matters: Rome; Bacchus did so through anonymous *oppida* (15.81). Just like Augustus in the prophecy of Anchises, Domitian will surpass the conquests of his divine counterpart.¹²⁹

The Falernus episode might also implicitly refer to another association between Domitian and Bacchus. Around AD 91, Domitian issued the so-called vine edict. Suetonius (*Dom.* 7.2) informs us that the emperor ordered that no more vines were to be planted in Italy and that the existing vineyards were to be cut down by half.¹³⁰ This measure was taken because of a shortage of corn, according to Suetonius, but Statius frames it as a moral, rather than an economic decision in his *Silvae*:

qui **castae Cereri** diu negata
 reddit iugera sobriasque terras (Stat. *Silv.* 4.3.11–12)

126 Tipping 2010: 187–188.

127 For Hercules and Bacchus as models for Domitian, see Marks 2005: 222–227.

128 Driving a chariot is a well-known metaphor for leading a state, see e.g. Virg. *G.* 1.512–514 with Balot 1998: 92. For the topos in Statius, see Rebggiani 2013 and 2018: 101–110.

129 The narrator probably implies that the Flavian emperor will even outdo Augustus. See Tipping 2010: 188. Another example of Domitian surpassing Bacchus is found in Mart. 8.26. Martial describes the triumphal arch that commemorated Domitian's northern campaign against the Sarmatians (*Arctoi ... belli*, Mart. 8.65.3). On top of the arch stood a golden statue of Domitian steering two chariots (*currus*, Mart. 8.65.9), each drawn by two elephants.

130 See Coleman 1988: 107 and Jones 1992: 77–78.

[Domitian] who [as censor] restores to chaste Ceres acres long denied to her, sober fields.

It seems as if Silius is commenting on this Statian text when he says that a 'chaste' Falernus 'brought gifts of Ceres' to his table (*castus ... Cerealia dona | attulit*, 7.183–184); Domitian is bringing the landscape of Italy back to the time before Bacchus' arrival in the region, returning almost to a Golden Age.

If we only read the Falernus episode, Bacchus would be considered a potent but innocent divinity, bestowing his vines on Italy. As such he is the antithesis of Hannibal the destroyer. Narratees who remember the god's violent invasion of Spain can question this black-and-white interpretation: Bacchus and Hannibal, both conquerors of Spain, have perhaps more in common than the text in Book 7 at first glance suggests. In the second half of the epic, after Cannae, it is Scipio who assumes the role of Bacchus and Hercules, with the final triumphal procession as the climax.

10 Conclusion

The Falernus episode stands out in an epic that deals with the greatest defeats of Roman history. Silius creates for a moment a world in which people were simple farmers and where a god acts as a cultivator, instead of a destructive force. The story serves as a georgic antithesis to the destruction of the Campanian countryside by Hannibal. The epic narrative and thus Hannibal's destruction is paused. This narrative pause is mimicking the confrontation-avoiding tactics of Fabius in the main narrative. This *mora* can only be temporarily: after the theoxeny, Hannibal continues his devastation of the Italian land.

Nevertheless, the Falernus episode will appear to be an overture for themes that are elaborated in the ensuing books of the epic. The gift of wine that Falernus receives is ambiguous. It means a removal from the 'better age' of Falernus towards excessive luxury in later times. Capua, not far from the *ager Falernus* is an example of the harmful effects of *luxuria*, of which wine is an important element. Paradoxically, the vices of the Capuans will save Rome, as their sumptuous lifestyle infects Hannibal and his soldiers during their stay in Capua. In this respect, the Falernus episode foreshadows the weakening of Hannibal by Venus and Bacchus in Book 11.

The contrast between Bacchus and Hannibal is, however, less great than the Falernus episode at first glance suggests. In other parts of the epic, the god is a symbol of conquest. The Falernus episode is the prequel to Bacchus' western campaign, in which he conquers Spain, as was told in Book 3. The god also

subdues Falernus by making him drunk and changing his life drastically; the military metaphors employed in the episode also point in that direction. Hannibal is of course also a conqueror: having subdued Spain, he sets out for an eastward campaign, which will lead him to Campania.

In the later books of the *Punica*, Scipio takes over this role of a new Bacchus, following in the footsteps of Aeneas. Scipio is here portrayed as the predecessor of Domitian: the emperor is the only other Roman in the epic that is equalled to Bacchus. Jupiter even prophesies that the emperor will surpass the god's conquests in the East. The mirroring between Bacchus and these Roman leaders seems to confirm the antithesis between Bacchus and Hannibal in Book 7. But Bacchus, as we have seen, is an unstable model. Are Scipio and Domitian to be seen as cultivating forces, bringing back Rome to something that resembles a Golden Age? Or do they rather stand for conquest and autocratic rule? The Falernus episode contributes to the ambiguity of Bacchus and the gift of wine, without providing definite answers.

Anna and the Paradox of Cannae

1 Introduction

Dido's sister Anna, a minor character in Book 4 of the *Aeneid*, becomes pivotal in Silius' representation of the Second Punic War. On the eve of the Battle of Cannae, the subject of Book 9 and 10, the goddess Juno incites Anna, now a river deity in Italy, to remind an anxious Hannibal of his mission to defeat the Romans. At this point, the primary narrator inserts a long secondary narrative (8.44–201), designed to explain the double nature of this goddess, who is both Carthaginian and Roman. In this aetiologically motivated narrative, a sequel to *Aeneid* 4 and modelled upon an episode in Ovid's *Fasti*, we are told how Anna fled from Carthage to Italy after the suicide of her sister, found shelter in Aeneas' palace, and finally became an Italian deity.¹ This makes her role in the *Punica* complicated: a Roman goddess with Carthaginian roots encourages Hannibal to take up his arms against the Romans in what would become his greatest victory and their greatest defeat. How should we understand this narrative and Anna's role in it?

In this chapter I will explore the central role of the Anna episode in the *Punica*. From the prooemium of the epic onwards, it is clear that Dido's curse is one of the major causes of the Second Punic War. Anna's role in encouraging Hannibal to achieve his greatest victory is therefore a reminder that the actions of the Carthaginians in the *Punica* cannot be dissociated from this Virgilian past. At the same time, this embedded narrative is in some respects a rewriting of that Virgilian heritage. The four narrators of this episode (the primary narrator, the secondary narrators Anna and Aeneas, and Dido, who narrates both on the secondary and tertiary level) give different 'readings' of the *Aeneid*, by accentuating, adding or skipping certain aspects from that epic.² At the same time, the embedded narrative is a sequel to *Aeneid* 4, based upon the Ovidian story of Anna in Book 3 of the elegiac *Fasti*. Again, we will see that the Silian narrators sometimes follow, but often deviate from this literary past. On a generic level, the embedded narrative plays with genres of epic and elegy, as is for

1 See section 4 with n.41 below. For aetiology in the *Punica*, see Introduction, section 6 with n.83.

2 Cf. Ovid's alternative versions of the *Aeneid*: Dido's letter (*Ep.* 7) and the 'Ovidian *Aeneid*' in *Met.* 13.623–14.582. On the latter, see Hinds 1998: 104–122

example shown in Anna's portrayal of Dido as abandoned heroine. In the end, the epic narrative 'takes back control', preparing for the epic Battle of Cannae in the ensuing books.

Recent scholarship has evaluated Anna's double role in different ways. Chiu, for example, argues that Ovid's Romanized Anna has been changed back into a Carthaginian goddess that encourages Hannibal to take up arms against the Romans that worship her. As such, she becomes an example of *Punica fides* and of shifting loyalties that occur elsewhere in the *Punica* (e.g. in the case of Capua).³ Manuwald sees Anna in a somewhat more favourable light. She suggests that Anna has a "potential of mediation", but is prevented from fulfilling this role by her sister Dido, who reminds of the enmity between the Trojans and Carthaginians.⁴ Anna is for Manuwald an example of an ambiguous character that has a special relationship with both sides: "The presentation of these complex figures enables the poet to look at all possible nuances and aspects of the conflict and to suggest that on a pure human level there is no essential difference between the two sides, while there is no question about Rome being superior to Carthage and her eventual victory."⁵

There are actually two moments in this episode in which Anna and the Trojans/Romans almost achieve reconciliation. In the end, the mediation of Anna only suggests an alternative history: what if the Romans and Carthaginians would have made peace? The mytho-historical reality prevents this. Anna becomes an Italian goddess but gives aid in bringing about the greatest defeat of Roman history. She is therefore not so much a symbol of reconciliation, but rather of civil war. That her festival is celebrated on the Ides of March is already an ominous sign.

2 Juno's Intervention in the War

At the beginning of Book 8 the war has come to a standstill. Fabius Cunctator has been successful in avoiding confrontations with Hannibal.⁶ The Cartha-

3 Chiu 2011. Cf. also Santini 1991: 60–61 and Dominik 2006: 117–119.

4 Manuwald 2011: 62.

5 Manuwald 2011: 67–68. Other scholars who stress the ambiguity of Anna are Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy 1986: 2498, Marks 2013: 298–300, and Stocks 2014: 91–96

6 This is repeatedly stressed: *lentando feruida bella* ('by prolonging furious wars', 8.11); *arte sedendi* ('by his skilfull inactivity', 8.13); *caede sine ulla | ... bella geri* ('wars that were waged without any slaughter', 8.18–19); *siccisque cruore | ... dextras* ('hands dry with blood', 8.19–20). For embedded narratives and *mora*, see Introduction, section 3.

ginian general cannot stand this inactivity (*impatiensque morae*, 8.4), as he knows that this is a great threat to his position. His army has run out of supplies, his Gallic allies are about to return home, and his rival Hannon prevents the senate from sending reinforcements.⁷ Paradoxically, Fabius has defeated Hannibal without fighting him: *quamquam finis pugnaque manuque | haud-dum partus erat, iam bello uicerat hostem* ('although an end of fighting and battles was not yet gained, he had already defeated the enemy in the war', 8.14–15). At this moment Juno steps in to keep Hannibal and the war going:

quis lacerum curis et rerum extrema pauentem
ad spes armorum et furialia uota reducit
praescia Cannarum Iuno atque elata **futuris**. (8.25–27)

Though he was broken by these anxieties and fearing the worst, Juno brought back his hope for arms and recalled his frenzied vows,⁸ having foreknowledge of Cannae and being exalted by the future.

Juno's intervention is a replay of her role as instigator in Hannibal's youth:⁹

iamque deae cunctas sibi belliger induit iras
Hannibal (hunc audet solum componere fatis),
sanguineo cum laeta uiro atque in regna Latini
turbine mox saeuo **uenientum haud inscia** cladum (1.38–41)

Now warlike Hannibal clothed himself with all the anger of the goddess (she dared to match him alone against fate), because she was rejoicing in this bloodthirsty man and was by no means unaware of the fierce storm of upcoming disasters for Latinus' kingdom.

In this programmatic scene, Hannibal becomes Juno's tool for bringing disaster upon the Romans; he almost becomes identical with the goddess by putting on her anger as if it were a cloak. Rejoicing at the idea of the Roman defeats, which are about to take place, she needs to stir up Hannibal, as he is an essential means for her to achieve these goals.

7 This results in even more stress: *maioribus aegrum | angebant curis* ('[this situation] vexed him, distressed by even greater anxieties', 8.10–11).

8 His father Hamilcar made him swear this oath in Dido's temple (1.114–119).

9 Gärtner 2010: 88 n.30.

After this start, she appears to the sleeping general in Book 4 to spur him on after the battle at the river Trebia and reminds him of his earlier vows.¹⁰ She does so without delay¹¹ and takes on the guise of the lake god Thrasymennus.¹² After her speech, Hannibal immediately breaks up his camp and marches over the Apennines to Lake Trasimene for his next confrontation with the Romans.¹³

In Book 8, Juno uses Anna as an intermediary for conveying her message to Hannibal, instead of taking on another god's guise:¹⁴

namque hac accitam stagnis Laurentibus Annam
affatur uoce et blandis hortatibus implet:
'sanguine cognato iuuenis tibi, diua, laborat
Hannibal, a uestro nomen memorabile Belo.
perge age et insanos curarum comprime fluctus.' (8.28–32)¹⁵

Summoning Anna from the waters of Laurentum she [i.e. Juno] addresses her with the following words and fills her with flattering exhortations: 'A young man, of kindred blood, goddess, is suffering, Hannibal, a memorable name descended from your Belus. Go on, hurry, and suppress the raging flood of his anxieties.'

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- 10 There, too, a pause of warfare triggered Juno: *pelle moras* ('repel your delay', 4.732). She reminded him of his oath: *quantum uouisti, cum Dardana bella parenti | iurares, fluet Ausonio tibi corpore tantum | sanguinis* ('as much blood as once you have vowed, when you swore Dardanian wars to your father, will flow from Ausonian bodies for you', 4.733–735).
- 11 *Nec ... moratur* (4.722). Although the subject of *moratur* is *deus*, in the general meaning 'the divine' (perhaps with Stoic implications), it is Juno who comes into action. See Kießel 1979: 23 n.43, Spaltenstein 1986: 324, and *TLL* 5.1.890.16 s.v. *deus*.
- 12 Her appearance mimics the anthropomorphic Tiber in Virg. *A.* 8.31–35. See Spaltenstein 1986: 324 and Haselmann 2018: 218–225. For the idea of a river in human form in Roman literature and art, see Campbell 2012: 145–159. Silius is as far as I can see the first to stage a divinity of a *lake* in this way.
- 13 A difference with Book 8 is that Hannibal right before this divine apparition had temporarily forgotten his sorrows by sleeping: *omnia somni | condiderant aegrisque dabant obliuia curis* ('sleep had buried everything and gave oblivion to vexed anxieties', 4.723–724). Instead, the words of the goddess cause anxiety and distress: *stimulat subitis praecordia curis | ac rumpit ducis haud spernanda uoce quietem* ('[she] stirred the general's heart with sudden anxieties and broke his rest with a voice that he could not ignore' 4.727–728).
- 14 A similarity with Thrasymennus is Anna's status as a water deity, as is shown from the repetition of *stagnum* (4.725 ~ 8.28). They also share a common background: both used to be humans and both have a non-Italian background. Thrasymennus' father Tyrrhenus was a Lydian king. See 5.7–23 with Cowan 2009.
- 15 Ironically, the narrator echoes with the words *hortatibus implet* (8.29) the same phrase in 5.150, where Flaminius incites his soldiers to attack Hannibal at Lake Trasimene. Whereas

The narrator does not immediately identify the goddess as Dido's sister, but Juno's words leave no doubt: she stresses the blood relationship (*sanguine cognato*) between Anna and Hannibal through their common ancestor Belus.¹⁶ At the same time, it is clear that this Anna is now a goddess (*diua*) residing in 'waters of Laurentum' (*stagnis Laurentibus*), i.e. the Numicius (as becomes clear in 8.179). Since Laurentum and its inhabitants are synonyms for Rome and the Romans in the *Punica*, the juxtaposition *Laurentibus Annam* stresses right from the start that the Carthaginian Anna has become a goddess in Roman territory.¹⁷

Anna's new status as Roman goddess does not prevent Juno from persuading her to help her old fatherland: *tendat iamdudum in Iapyga campum. | huc Trebiae rursum et Thrasymenni fata sequentur* ('let [Hannibal] move instantly to the Iapygian plain; there the fate of the Trebia and Trasimene will be repeated', 8.37–38). The marked conjunction *Iapyx campus* for Cannae has appeared earlier in Juno's speech to Hannibal in Book 1: *Cannas ... campumque ... | ... Iapyga cernam* ('I discern Cannae and the Iapygian plain', 1.50–51).¹⁸ At that time, too, she had predicted the battles at the Trebia and Lake Trasimene. Another scene where the phrase occurs is the oracle of Hammon, in an exhortation to Hannibal: *inuade ... Iapyga campum* ('invade the Iapygian plain', 3.707).¹⁹ The repetition of these words in Book 8 underline that Cannae is the climactic battle that Hannibal should strive for, in accordance with Juno's plan; the battles of Trebia and Trasimene have already been successful, and will be repeated at Cannae (*rursum ... fata sequentur*).

Anna reacts immediately to Juno's words and declares that she is willing to help the goddess. Although she is aware of her double nature, she wants

Flaminius' exhortation led to the slaughter of his army, Juno's exhortation of Anna will lead to the greatest victory of Hannibal.

- 16 Chiu 2011: 8–9 and Lee 2017: 44 discuss the phrase as part of Juno's rhetoric for helping her relative. The juxtaposition is reminiscent of the suicide of the Saguntines in Book 2 of the *Punica*, after Juno has sent Tisiphone. When the men, possessed by the Fury, kill their own relatives, the narrator states: *inuitas maculant cognato sanguine dextras* ('against their will they stain their hands with kindred blood', 2.617). For this intratextual echo, see Bernstein 2017: 252 and Dominik 2006: 118–119, who compares Anna's role with that of Tisiphone in Book 2.
- 17 For Laurentines as synonym of the Romans, see e.g. Hamilcar inciting Hannibal in Book 1: *age, concipe bella | latura exitium Laurentibus* ('go on, start wars that will bring doom upon the Laurentines', 1.109–110).
- 18 The combination *Iapyx campus* is only attested in Silius. Iapyx was a son of Daedalus, who settled in southern Italy (see e.g. Plin. *Nat.* 3.102.4). The area was named after him Iapygia. Comparable are Virg. *A.* 11.247 (*Iapygis agris*) and Ov. *Met.* 15.52 (*Iapygis arua*).
- 19 See Chapter 1, section 5.

nothing more than to help Carthage. Anna is thus the opposite of inertia and therefore of the Roman army; while Juno calls Fabius ‘the only delay’ (*sola ... mora*, 8.33–34) in subduing the Romans, Anna states that she will come into action right away (*haud ... morari*):

tum diua Indigetis castis contermina lucis
 ‘haud’ inquit **tua ius nobis praecepta morari.**
 sit fas, sit tantum, quaeso, retinere fauorem
 antiquae patriae mandataque magna sororis,
 quamquam inter Latios Annae stet numen honores.’ (8.39–43)

Then, the goddess, who dwells near the chaste groves of Indiges, said: ‘It is my duty not to delay your orders. I only beg you that it may be rightful to keep the goodwill of my former fatherland and carry out the important instructions of my sister, although the deity Anna receives Latin honours.’

This recalls Aeolus’ answer to Juno in the *Aeneid*: *tuus, o regina, quid optes | explorare labor; mihi iussa capessere fas est* (‘your task, o queen, is to search out what you want; for me it is rightful to carry out your commands’, Virg. *A.* 1.76–77).²⁰ The intertextual allusion suggests that Anna is about to cause the Romans harm, as Aeolus’ winds had done to Aeneas’ fleet. Anna’s words signal to the narratees that her actions will be a sequel of the *Aeneid*: she explains her loyalty to Carthage (*antiquae patriae*) on the basis of Dido’s instructions (*mandataque magna sororis*), which the narratees only know from the *Aeneid*.²¹ Although she realizes that she has obligations to her Latin worshippers (*quamquam inter Latios ... honores*) too, she hopes that the gods allow (*fas*) her to help the Carthaginians.²²

20 The allusion was already signalled by Ruperti 1795: 540. See also Ariemma 2000b: 42–43. The intertextual technique of Silius is quite ingenious: the impersonal expression *mihi ... fas est + inf.* becomes *ius nobis (est) + inf.*, while *fas* returns in the next line. At the same time *ius* echoes the sound of *iussa* from the original (which is ‘translated’ with *praecepta*). Note, too, that the personal pronoun *nobis* is juxtaposed to *ius* as *mihi* is to *iussa*.

21 *Mandata* does not only refer to Dido’s curse in *A.* 4.621–629, as Duff 1934: 396 and Santini 1991: 36 note, but also to Dido’s admonishment when Anna was staying at Aeneas’ palace, as narrated in 8.168–182. Dido assures her sister that the Romans and Carthaginians can never be friends. In addition, Walter 2014: 278 notes a link with the prooemium (*mandata nepotibus arma*, 1.18), connecting Anna’s words with the poetic programme of the *Punica*.

22 Chiu 2011: 9–10 observes that Anna is aware of her ties to both the Romans and the Carthaginians: “Juno’s direct command to Anna opens the Pandora’s box of the Punic past.” See also Santini 1991: 35–36 on the use of *ius* and *fas* in this passage. Fucecchi 2013: 25 thinks that Anna “is ready to pay a last homage to her origins, but not at the cost of

The introductory line to Anna's response (8.39) makes her problematic status even clearer. The goddess (*diua*) resides next to a grove sacred to the god Indiges. As scholars have noted, we should identify this 'native god' with Aeneas.²³ This means that Anna and Aeneas are worshipped at almost the same location. This is emphasized by the juxtaposition *diua Indigetis* and the iconic word order, by which the grove of Aeneas (*castis ... lucis*) envelopes the word that indicates Anna's domain (*contermina*). This proximity suggests an intimate relation, and might even evoke the tradition according to which not Dido, but Anna was Aeneas' lover.²⁴ Although the adjective *castis* indicates by enallage that the two did not engage in illicit sexual relationships,²⁵ the spatial vicinity suggests a close connection between Aeneas and Anna, which also becomes clear from the ensuing narrative.

The area where the deified Aeneas and Anna are residing is also the place where the Trojans landed in Latium; the Numicius is the first location that is identified by Aeneas' explorers.²⁶ This highly symbolic and sacred place, almost where Rome came into being, now becomes a source of Roman destruction.

losing the benefits of Roman citizenship.' It is rather the other way round: she hopes that her Roman worship is no obstacle for carrying out her sister's behests.

- 23 For this identification, see especially Jupiter's speech to Juno in the last book of the *Aeneid*: *indigetem Aenean scis ipsa et scire fateris | deberi caelo fatisque ad sidera tolli* ('you yourself know, and admit that you know, that Aeneas, as native god, is claimed by heaven, and by fate is raised to the stars'; Virg. *A.* 12.794–795). Other references are e.g. Liv. 1.2.6 *Iovem indigetem appellant* ('people call him Jupiter the native god'), Tib. 2.5.44, and Ov. *Met.* 14.608. For the origin of the story, see Porte 1985: 148 and Santini 1991: 32–33. The latter also quotes epigraphic evidence for the cult of Aeneas in the neighbourhood of the Numicius.
- 24 Varro followed this tradition according to Servius Dan. *ad A.* 4.782: *Varro ait non Didonem, sed Annam amore Aeneae impulsam se supra rogam interemisse* ('Varro says that not Dido, but Anna, driven by love for Aeneas, killed herself on the pyre'), and *ad A.* 5.4: *sane sciendum Varronem dicere Aenean ab Anna amatum* ('it should be known that Varro says that Dido was loved by Anna'). See D'Anna 1975, Santini 1991: 34, Chiu 2011: 5. Perhaps we can understand the repetition of Varro's name in Juno's speech as a metapoetical pun: *cum Varrone manus et cum Varrone serenda | proelia* ('you should join a fight with Varro, battles with Varro', 8.35–36).
- 25 So Ariemma 2000b: 42–43. The words *castus* and *lucus* reappear in close combination in 13.546: *umentes ubi casta fouet Proserpina lucos* ('where chaste Proserpina tends the moist groves'). Here, *casta* indicates that Proserpina is *uniuira*; she presides over the area in the underworld where all the sons of married and chaste women go to. See Van der Keur 2015: 299.
- 26 Virg. *A.* 7.149–150: *urbem et finis et litora gentis | diuersi explorant: haec fontis stagna Numici, | hunc Thybrim fluuium, hic fortis habitare Latinos* ('by separate ways they explore the city, boundaries and the coasts of the people: these are the waters of Numicius' fountain, this the river Tiber, here live the brave Latins').

3 Anna and Juturna

The episode of Anna is also reminiscent of the role of Juturna in *Aeneid* 12.134–160, as has been widely acknowledged.²⁷ Juno uses the mediation of that nymph for encouraging her brother Turnus on the eve of his final battle with Aeneas, just as that same goddess encourages Anna to exhort her relative Hannibal before Cannae. Verbal reminiscences to this Virgilian episode (*stagnis Laurentibus*, 8.28; *affatur*, 8.29; *diua*, 8.30) confirm the thematic parallel:

prospiciens tumulo campum aspectabat et ambas
Laurentum Troumque acies urbemque Latini.
 extemplo Turni sic est **adfata** sororem
diua deam, **stagnis** quae fluminibusque sonoris
 praesidet (Virg. *A.*12.136–140)

From the [Alban] hill [Juno] looked upon the field, the double battle lines of Laurentines and Trojans and the city of Latinus. Immediately, as goddess to a goddess, she spoke to Turnus' sister, who controls the waters and sounding rivers.

Juturna is a goddess that rules over waters somewhere near Laurentum, so in the same region as Anna's dwelling place.²⁸ The topographical name has, however, an opposite significance in both epics: in the *Aeneid* Laurentum is the enemy of the Trojans, while in the *Punica* the Laurentians are synonymous to the Romans. Another difference is that the young man Hannibal (*iuuenis*, 8.30) is about to win his greatest victory over the Romans, while Turnus is about to be defeated.²⁹ The Virgilian Juno is very much aware of his inescapable fate: *nunc*

27 See Bruère 1959: 228, Santini 1991: 27, Ariemma 2000b: 40, Manuwald 2011: 57, Chiu 2011: 7 n.5, and Lee 2017: 43–44.

28 Servius notes *ad A.* 12.139 that Juturna's spring was located 'next to the river Numicius' (*iuxta Numicium fluium*). Its waters, he says, were taken to Rome for sacrifices. In Rome itself, a fountain of Juturna from around 117 BC is located next to the temple of Castor and Pollux at the Forum Romanum.

29 In the opening lines of Book 8, Hannibal has already been reminiscent of Turnus. When Hannibal 'roars impatient of delay' (*impatiensque morae fremit*, 8.4) this evokes the famous comparison of Turnus with a wounded Punic lion at the beginning of *Aeneid* 12, who 'roars with blood-stained mouth' (*fremet ore cruento*, *A.* 12.8). Their fury may be similar, their situation, however, is quite different. Whereas Hannibal is incapable of satisfying his rage, almost as a caged lion, Turnus gives a clear field for his wrath: *ultra implacabilis ardet*

iuuenem imparibus uideo concurrere fatis ('now I see the young man meeting an unequal fate', *A.* 12.149). Since she does not wish to watch the upcoming fight, she urges Juturna to assist her doomed brother instead:

tu pro germano si quid praesentius audes,
perge; decet. forsan miseros meliora sequentur. (*Virg. A.* 12.152–153)

Go on, if you dare to do something more efficacious for your brother. It is proper for you. Perhaps a better future will follow for these miserable men.

How different is Juno's attitude in the *Punica*. She foresees the victory of Cannae and is excited about the future (*elata futuris*, 8.27). The goddess exhorts Anna to assist Hannibal (*perge*, 8.32), as she exhorted Juturna to help Turnus. But instead of delegating the whole enterprise to a lesser deity, the goddess stresses that she herself will be present at the battlefield: *nec desit fatis ad signa mouenda*. | *ipsa adero* ('and may [Hannibal] not abandon his fate and fail to move his standards; I myself shall be there', 8.36–37).³⁰ She has no doubt that Cannae will be a success: *huc Trebiae rursum et Thrasymenni fata sequentur* ('there the fate of the Trebia and Trasimene will be repeated', 8.38). In the *Aeneid*, Juno was (rightly so) uncertain (*forsan*) whether the future for the Latins would be better (*meliora sequentur*); in the *Punica* she knows that the Carthaginians will be victorious again. Juno ignores, however, the future after Cannae—at least she remains silent to Anna about it, as she did in her speech to the young Hannibal (1.38–55).³¹ The reminiscences to *Aeneid* 12 in general, and Turnus in particular, are, however, ominous forebodings of the eventual downfall of the Carthaginian leader.

| *attollitque animos* ('he blazes with unappeasable wrath and raises his courage', *A.* 12.3–4). A few lines later he makes clear to king Latinus that nothing will stop him: *nulla mora in Turno* ('no delay lies in Turnus', *A.* 12.11).

30 Lee 2017: 50.

31 The words *rursum ... fata sequentur* also echo Hannibal's oath to repeat the Trojan war: *Romanos terra atque undis, ubi competet aetas, | ferro ignique sequar Rhoeteaque fata reuoluam* ('when I come to age, I will follow the Romans over land and sea with sword and fire and I will repeat the Rhoetean fate', 1.114–115). Cf. also Mercury's prediction of future victories in Hannibal's dream: *magnaeque ruinae | Idaei generis lacrimosaque fata sequuntur* ('great disasters and a tearful fate will follow for the Idaean people', 3.206–207).

4 The Prooemium to the Narrative

When Anna is about to execute the orders of Juno, the narrator interrupts the main narrative, at the same time imitating and prolonging the delaying tactics of Fabius.³² The device of a secondary narrative puts the epic main narrative on hold and delays the Roman defeat for the time being.³³

That the narrator is embarking on an embedded narrative is clearly marked with an internal prooemium in which he states its purpose:

multa retro rerum iacet atque ambagibus aevi
 obtegitur densa caligine mersa uetustas,
 cur Sarrana dicent **Oenotri** numina templo
 regnisque **Aeneadum** germana colatur Elissae.
 sed pressis **stringam** reuocatam **ab origine famam**
 narrandi metis **breuiterque** antiqua **reuoluam**. (8.44–49)

A long antiquity of past events lies in between, and it is hidden by the obscurity of time, immersed in a thick mist, why the Oenotrians should consecrate a temple to a deity of Sarra, and why Elissa's sister should be worshipped in the country of the Aeneadae. But I will keep the story, recalled from its beginning, within retrained limits of narration, and I will briefly unwind the past.

The narrator thematizes Anna's ambiguous status and announces that he is going to uncover the origin of her cult. Why do Romans worship a Carthaginian goddess in the first place and especially one that is about to support Rome's greatest foe? I will show that in doing so, the narrator explores accounts of Anna's life by other poets, foremost Virgil in *Aeneid* 4 and Ovid in *Fasti* 3. That Ovid is an important model for the upcoming narrative was only to be expected. In his *Fasti* the poet narrates three alternative stories on Anna Perenna, whose festival was celebrated on the Ides of March. The first (and longest) of these identifies Anna with Dido's sister, and Silius is clearly following this variant.³⁴

32 Walter 2014: 277.

33 See Introduction, section 3 for the theme of delay in the *Punica*. *Mora* is also a motif in elegy, especially in farewell scenes, for which see Tränkle 1963: 474, Hübner 1968: 70–71, and Jöne 2017: 355–357. Silius here pauses the epic main narrative by inserting an embedded narrative with clear elegiac tendencies, as I will show.

34 Ovid is to our knowledge the first to elaborate on this connection between the Roman nymph and Dido's sister. Before him, Virgil has already shown awareness of this tradition,

The words *retro*, *reuocatam* and *reuoluam* are therefore intertextual signposts, indicating that the narratees can expect a *re*-telling of known stories. This does not mean of course that everything will be identical to those earlier accounts; the prefix *re*- has connotations of both repetition and reversal.³⁵

Silius' prooemium to his embedded narrative subtly alludes to the opening distich of Ovid's Anna episode:

quae tamen haec dea sit quoniam rumoribus errat,
fabula proposito nulla **te**genda meo. (Ov. *Fast.* 3.543–544)

Which goddess is this, though? Since that varies in common talk, no story must be concealed in my exposition.

Ovid states that several rumours exist concerning the origin of this goddess, and therefore expresses his wish not to hide any story related to her. Ironically, Ovid is actually contributing to the confusion by providing, in addition to her Carthaginian identification, five alternative versions.

Like Ovid, Silius, too, uses an indirect question (*cur*), to which the ensuing narrative is the answer. He also points to the obscurity of the tradition (8.44–45), which is hidden (*obtegitur*) in the mist of time.³⁶ At the same time, Silius states that his story will be short (*breuiter*) and that he will keep his tale within restrained limits (*pressis ... metis*). This seems to be a metapoetical comment on the narrator's relation to the Ovid of the *Fasti*: he, for a moment, becomes an Ovidian narrator. The metaphor he uses is that of a charioteer, skimming (*stringam*) along the turning posts of the Circus (*metis*); the junction of these

as Wright 2019 points out. This is most apparent in Virg. *A.* 4.634–647, where Dido orders her nurse to call Anna. The lines read as an acrostic, *ades* ('be present'), a standard invocation of a deity in a Roman prayer (cf. Green 2004: 59–60 on Ov. *Fast.* 1.67). Anna should cleanse Dido with river water (*fluuiiali ... lympa*), a foreshadowing of her future metamorphosis into a river goddess.

35 At the same time, the narrator counters Hannibal's replay of the Trojan war: *Rhoeteaque fata reuoluam* ('I will repeat the Rhoetean fate', 1.115): the embedded narrative of Book 8 postpones the Battle of Cannae. The narrator is, however, unable to 'reverse' the course of fate. *Retro* and *reuoluam* are also prooemial markers, echoing both the prooemium of Proteus' narrative in Book 7 and that of Statius' *Thebaid*. See Introduction, section 4.

36 The verbal stem *teg-* is an allusion of Ovid's *te*genda; cf. Ariemma 2000b: 44. I would suggest that *ambagibus* is an echo of Ovid's *errat*. Both words hint at Anna's wandering journey from Carthage to Italy, as Heyworth 2019: 193 argues for *Fast.* 3.543–544 and Ariemma 2000b: 43 for 8.44–47. Lee 2017: 53 observes that "the labyrinth of words" of 8.44–45 reflects "the windings of time and the fog of antiquity in which the sources of myth must be sought."

two words, albeit in a literal sense, can be traced back to Ovid, in a poem where he imagines being a charioteer: *nunc stringam metas* ('now I will skim the turning posts', *Ov. Am.* 3.2.12).³⁷ The metaphor of the poet as a charioteer has a long pedigree, going back to Pindar.³⁸ Ovid, too, uses the trope, when in the opening lines of the last poem of the *Amores* he asks Venus to find another poet for writing love poetry: *quaere nouum uatem, tenerorum mater Amorum!* | *raditur hic elegis ultima meta meis* ('Look for a new poet, mother of tender Amores! This is the last turning post that is grazed by my elegies', *Am.* 3.15.1–2). Here, too, *meta* demarcates the limits of writing, while *raditur*, like *stringam*, implies a dangerous task. Silius might allude to yet another Ovidian passage, the prooemium of the *Fasti*. There Ovid asks his addressee Germanicus, a poet himself, to rein him in: *si licet et fas est, uates rege uatis habenas* ('if it is allowed and rightful, hold, as a poet, the reins of a poet', *Fast.* 1.25). Germanicus should steer (*rege ... habenas*) Ovid in the right poetical direction, just as Ovid's *Fasti* is now Silius' code model. By using this metaphor of the poet as charioteer, Silius acknowledges his debt to Ovid and at the same time emphasizes the difference from his predecessor's approach of Anna: he will only limit himself to one aetiological explanation.

The narrator also connects himself with Virgilian narrators through the words *ab origine*. The juxtaposition with *famam* first calls to mind the narrator of the *Georgics*. When the poet is about to embark on the Aristaeus episode, he states: *altius omnem | expediam prima repetens ab origine famam* ('more profoundly I will unfold the whole story, tracing it back to its first beginning', *Virg. G.* 4.285–286).³⁹ The combination *ab origine* "indicates that what follows is aetiological".⁴⁰ The words are therefore fitting in the introduction to another 'epyllion' with an aetiological tendency.⁴¹ A difference with the *Georgics* is that Silius promises to stay within restrained limits (*pressis ... metis*), while Virgil emphasizes that he will tell the *whole* story (*omnem ... famam*).

37 Silius was fond of this Ovidian junction, as *stringere metas* can also be found at 5.25, 13.299, and 16.361. See Ariemma 2000b: 44 for a discussion on this phrase in the *Punica*; he does not cite *Am.* 3.2.12.

38 Nünlist 1998: 255–264. Cf. also *Virg. G.* 3.17–22, a literary statement on Callimachean poetry. See Thomas 1988b: 42–43.

39 See Spaltenstein 1986: 502.

40 Thomas 1988b: 197.

41 The phrase also recalls the prooemium of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*: *prima ab origine mundi* (*Met.* 1.3), where the beginning of the narrative coincides with the creation of the world. Ovid, in turn, alludes to Lucretius 5.548: *prima ... ab origine mundi*. In the *Punica*, the phrase is often used in aetiological explanations of names, e.g. 4.719, 9.202, 12.334, 12.393, 14.462–463, 16.369.

Aeneas actually echoes the narrator of the *Georgics* when he shows reluctance to tell Venus his story from the start: *o dea, si prima repetens ab origine pergam ...* ('o goddess, if I would go on to tell, tracing back from the first beginning ...', Virg. *A.* 1.372). At the end of Book 1, Dido urges him to tell the fall of Troy from its very origins: *immo age et a prima dic, hospes, origine nobis, | insidias ... Danaum* ('go on and tell us, guest, from its first beginning the treachery of the Greeks', *A.* 1.753–754). Again, Aeneas is reluctant to do so, and instead promises to give the queen a short version: *sed si tantus amor ... | ... breuiter Troiae supremum audire laborem, | ... incipiam* ('but if your desire is so great ... to hear briefly the final suffering of Troy, ... I will begin', *A.* 2.11–13).⁴² The use of *breuiter* in *A.* 2.11 has been seen as a nod to the Alexandrian or neoteric poetic principal of *breuitas*.⁴³ Aeneas refuses to tell his voyage from beginning to end, but indicates that his story will be a short version of the events. However, his story will cover two entire books, in which he narrates events of the past at leisure, such as the fall of Troy.⁴⁴

When the narrator of the *Punica* uses *ab origine* and *breuiter* in close connection, he draws attentions to this same paradox: he claims that he will start from the beginning which implies length (anti-Alexandrian), and that he will be brief (Alexandrian). We can find a similar paradox in the prooemium of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the narrator calls his work a *carmen perpetuum*, suggesting epic length, but uses a Callimachean metaphor for his poetical praxis (*deducite*).⁴⁵ Likewise, Silius seems to suggest that he is starting his narrative from the beginning, but will combine it with the Alexandrian principle of *breuitas* that Aeneas had opted for. Of course, this brevity is relative: both Aeneas and the narrator of the *Punica* are about to begin lengthily embedded narratives—respectively the longest and second longest of the entire epic.⁴⁶ But length does matter here: Aeneas' narrative fills almost two books, while

42 Servius already notices that *breuiter* is a refusal of Dido's request to start from the beginning, i.e. the abduction of Helen (Serv. *ad A.* 1.753). Horsfall 2008: 54 suggests that Aeneas' words recall those of Odysseus to queen Arete, before starting his flashback: ἀργαλέον, βασίλεια, διηγεκέως ἀγορεύσαι | κήδε' ('hard were it, queen, to tell from beginning to end the tale of my woes', Hom. *Od.* 7.241–242). Cf. Callimachus' programmatic statement in the first lines of the *Aetia*; his enemies criticize him because he did not complete 'one single continuous song' (ἐν ἄεισμα διηγεκέες, fr. 1.3 Harder). For the implications of *διηγεκέες*, see Harder 2012: 20–22.

43 Especially Deremetz 2000: 86–87; see Horsfall 2008: 54 for other references.

44 See on this passage also De Jong 2017: 146.

45 Ov. *Met.* 1.3. For weaving as a poetological metaphor, see Deremetz 1995: 289–293, Heerink 2009: 310–313, and Heerink 2015: 18 and 30 with n.35.

46 Walter 2014: 286.

the tale on Anna only takes 151 lines. *Breüter* can therefore be read as a meta-poetical comment on Aeneas' story: the Silian narrator will, unlike Aeneas, stick to the Alexandrian principles of brevity, even if he is telling a story *ab origine*.⁴⁷

Finally, the prooemium of the Anna narrative ties in with the larger themes of the *Punica*. The names that the narrator uses for the Romans in 8.46–47 are echoing the prooemium of the *Punica*:

ordior arma, quibus caelo se gloria tollit
Aeneadum patiturque ferox **Oenotria** iura
 Carthago. (1.1–3)

I begin the war, by which the fame of the Aeneadae was raised to heaven
 and fierce Carthage submitted to Oenotrian laws.

The *Punica* aims to explain the hegemony of the descendants of Aeneas (*Aeneadum*) over Carthage. It is therefore a paradox why a Carthaginian goddess (*Sarrana ... numina*),⁴⁸ in fact Dido's sister (*germana Elissae*), is honoured by the Romans (*Oenotri*)⁴⁹ with a temple. By repeating the same names for the Romans (*Aeneadae* and *Oenotri*), the narrator makes clear that his 'Callimachean' aetiological story on Anna touches upon the main topic of the *Punica*, the epic strife between Romans and Carthaginians, and its origins, the love affair of Aeneas and Dido.

47 The use of *breüter* is therefore not just "conventional", as Spaltenstein 1986: 502 states. Another allusion to Aeneas as narrator is *reuoluam*; it recalls Aeneas' rhetorical question in Virg. *A.* 2.101: *sed quid ego haec autem nequiquam ingrata reuoluo?* ('but why do I vainly unwind this unwelcome tale?'). For the use of *reuoluo* in the sense 'to go back over (past events, etc.) in thought or speech' (*OLD* s.v. 2c), see Horsfall 2008: 124. Yet another epic parallel of 1.115 and 8.48–49 is Stat. *Theb.* 8.227–228: *nunc fata reuoluunt | maiorum ueteresque canunt ab origine Thebas* ('now [the Thebans] go back over the fates of their ancestors and they sing of ancient Thebes from its beginning'). The Thebans actually sing of the Tyrian origin stories that the primary narrator explicitly had refused to tell (*Theb.* 1.7 and 1.16–17). See Augoustakis 2016: 158.

48 *Sarranus* is used as an adjective for the Carthaginians throughout the *Punica*. It first appears in 1.72 (*Sarrana prisci Barcae de gente*), referring to Hamilcar's ancestry.

49 *Oenotri* is a name that refers to the original inhabitants of Italy. Cf. D.H. 1.23 and Virg. *A.* 1.532 (= *A.* 3.165), with Feeney 1982: 10.

5 Dido's Death

The Anna narrative itself begins with the suicide of Dido, like Ovid's account (*Fast.* 3.545–550). In the four lines in which the demise of the queen is told, the narrator summarizes the final part of *Aeneid* 4:

Iliaco postquam deserta est hospite Dido
 et spes abruptae, medio in penetralibus atram
 festinat furibunda pyram. tum corripit ensem
 certa necis, profugi donum exitiale mariti. (8.50–53)

After Dido was abandoned by her Trojan guest and hope was destroyed, she hurries in her frenzy to the dark pyre in the middle of the palace. Then, resolved on death, she grasped the sword, a lethal gift of her runaway husband.

The stress on Aeneas' role in Dido's suicide recalls her epitaph, as cited at the beginning of Anna's narrative in Ovid's *Fasti*:

PRAEBVIT AENEAS ET CAVSAM MORTIS ET ENSEM
 IPSA SVA DIDO CONCIDIT VSA MANV. (Ov. *Fast.* 3.549–550)

Aeneas gave both reason for death and a sword,
 Dido herself fell using her own hand.

Although there is minimal verbal correspondence, both texts stress that Dido killed herself with a sword given by Aeneas.⁵⁰ While in Ovid these lines are attributed to Dido (they are a quotation from Dido's letter to Aeneas),⁵¹ in the *Punica* it is the primary narrator who confirms them.⁵²

As was to be expected, many words from 8.50–53 can be traced back to *Aeneid* 4.⁵³ The opening words *Iliaco postquam* recall Dido looking to Aeneas' clothes on the pyre: *postquam Iliacas uestes ... | conspexit* ('after she looked at

50 See Santini 1991: 41. In both texts, the word *ensem* is the last word of the penultimate line of the prooemium. Ariemma 2000b: 45 notes that the sword already appears in Book 1, where it is said to be lying before the statue of Dido in Carthage: *ante pedes ensis Phrygius iacet* ('the Phrygian sword lies before her feet', 1.91).

51 Ov. *Ep.* 7.195–196.

52 Ariemma 2000b: 45.

53 See Spaltenstein 1986, Ariemma 2000b, and Dietrich 2004: 5–6 on these lines.

the Trojan clothes ...', A. 4.648–649); the pyre is also located in the centre of the palace (*pyra penetrali in sede*, A. 4.504); and Dido's determination (*certa necis*) recalls Mercury's words to Aeneas: *certa mori* ('she is resolved on dying', A. 4.564).⁵⁴ Dido suggests that she 'would not seem totally abandoned' (*non ... omino ... deserta uiderer*, A. 4.330), when she had a child from Aeneas; after her sister's suicide, Anna also calls herself abandoned (*deserta*, A. 4.677).⁵⁵

A striking difference is that the narrator of the *Punica* uses words to describe Dido's situation which in the *Aeneid* are only used in Dido's and Anna's direct speech. The narrator, for example, calls Dido 'abandoned' (*deserta*, 8.50). This is also the case in the description of Aeneas as 'guest' (*hospes*, 8.50). This is how Dido calls him twice; first to Anna in A. 4.10, and later with much bitterness in an address to Aeneas himself: *cui me moribundum deseris hospes | (hoc solum nomen quoniam de coniuge restat)?* ('for whom do you desert me on the point of death as a guest (since that alone is left from the name of a husband)?', A. 4.323–324). The narrator takes over this vocabulary and describes Aeneas also as a 'guest' and, even more striking, as a 'runaway husband' (*profugi ... mariti*, 8.53). One can argue that lines 50–53 are told from the perspective of the primary narrator, who has just announced in first person to tell Anna's story (*reuoluam*). The primary narrator then shows much more sympathy for Dido's situation than Virgil did.⁵⁶ Together, these words (*deserta, hospes, profugi ... mariti*), however, rather suggest an embedded focalization of Anna—a focalization that continues in the following lines, as I will show, and that prepares for her secondary narrative in line 81 and onwards.⁵⁷ From the start of the embedded narrative, it feels if we are looking over Anna's shoulders.

Dido's qualification as *furibunda* is then Anna's focalization too, echoing the narrator of the *Aeneid*: *et altos | conscendit furibunda rogos enseque recludit | Dardanium, non hos quaesitum munus in usus* ('and she ascends in her frenzy the high pyre and unsheathes the Trojan sword, not chosen as a gift for this use', A. 4.645–647).⁵⁸ Whereas the Virgilian narrator emphasizes that the sword was

54 Which in itself echoes the narrator's statement that Dido has decided to die (*decreuitque mori*, A. 4.475). Ariemma 2000b: 45 connects the phrase with Aeneas' resolve to leave Carthage in 4.554: *certus eundi*.

55 The lost hope of Dido (*spes abruptae*, 8.51) might recall Dido's insincere facial expression, pretending hope while there was none left, when she meets with her sister Anna: *spem fronte seremat* ('her face beamed with hope', A. 4.477).

56 Ganiban 2010: 93

57 Stocks 2014: 92 calls the account "distinctly pro-Carthaginian in perspective". Dietrich 2004: 16 attributes the description *maritus* to Anna. For other examples of Anna's embedded focalization, see section 6 and 8 below.

58 Stocks 2014: 92 also notes a parallel with Imilce's frenzy in 4.774–777.

not intended for suicide (*non hos quaesitum munus in usus*), the Silian narrator, focalizing Anna's perspective, calls it a 'lethal gift' (*donum exitiale*).⁵⁹ In itself, this neither means that Aeneas really intended his sword for this purpose, nor denies it. The suggestion of intention becomes, however, stronger when taking into account the allusion to the Trojan horse, that has been called 'a lethal gift of unmarried Minerva' (*innuptae donum exitiale Mineruae*, A. 2.31). Aeneas' lethal gift is framed as a destructive device that has been given deliberately. It is an even more abject 'gift' than the Trojan horse, as he gave it to his own wife Dido (as he is her *maritus*).⁶⁰ Although many words correspond to *Aeneid* 4, the take on Aeneas' role in Dido's suicide has changed drastically in favour of the Carthaginian queen.

Aeneas is also put in a less positive perspective by allusions to Catullus' *Carmen* 64, casting him as a Theseus. The first two words, *Iliaco postquam* (8.50), are in sound, rhythm, and lexical category reminiscent of the opening that poem: *Peliaco quondam* (Cat. 64.1).⁶¹ This is strengthened by the ensuing *deserta*, which recalls Ariadne being left behind by Theseus on the beach of Naxos: *desertam in sola miseram se cernat harena* ('she sees herself abandoned on the lonely sand', Cat. 64.57).⁶² Like Dido, Ariadne had no hope left when she was abandoned (*nulla spes* Cat. 64.186 ~ *spes abruptae* 8.51). The idea that Aeneas reflects the behaviour of Theseus is enforced by the echo of *hospes*: the Athenian hero, too, has been called such, both by the primary narrator in Cat. 64.98 and by Ariadne herself: *nec malus ... | ... in nostris requiesset sedibus hospes!* ('nor [I would] that this wicked man had reposed in our dwellings as a guest!', Cat. 64.175–176).

One can argue that many of these verbal echoes of Catullus' *Carmen* 64 are reminiscent of *Aeneid* 4, too. In fact, this 'epyllion' was an important model for *Aeneid* 4.⁶³ So what does this mean for the image of Aeneas in *Punica* 8? Does

59 Earlier, the Virgilian narrator referred to the sword as 'the sword that had been left behind' (*ensemque relictum*, A. 4.507), suggesting that it was left behind accidentally. The phrase *corripit ensem* (8.52) recalls *uaginaque eripit ensem* ('she pulled the sword out of the sheath', A. 4.579).

60 Note the antithesis between Aeneas as a married man (*mariti*) and Minerva as being an unmarried virgin (*innuptae*).

61 Fernandelli 2009: 156. The anastrophe of *postquam* is also inspired by *Carmen* 64, where the conjunction occurs four more times, always in second position (Cat. 64.202, 267, 303, and 397). For the formal features of allusion here at work, see Wills 1996: 18–24.

62 In *Carmen* 64, the beach of Naxos is also called 'abandoned', but by enallage this applies to Ariadne as well: *deserto liquisti in litore, Theseu?* ('have you left me on this abandoned beach, Theseus?', Cat. 64.133); *omnia sunt deserta* ('all is abandoned', Cat. 64.187).

63 See Wills 1996: 26–30 and Libby 2016: 67–70. Some clear examples of Virgil's debt to Catullus are A. 4.10 (~ Cat. 64.176) and A. 4.316 (~ Cat. 64.141).

Silius simply copy Virgil's depiction of Aeneas as Theseus? My suggestion is that he goes one step further and frames Aeneas as an actual second Theseus, while the Virgilian Aeneas in the *Aeneid* is not; Dido accuses Aeneas of the same "self-centred forgetfulness",⁶⁴ but the Virgilian primary narrator makes clear that the hero is actually different from Theseus—he leaves Dido for a higher purpose, whereas the Athenian abandons Ariadne without good reason.⁶⁵ The Silian Aeneas is more similar to Theseus. Both are called 'husband' by the primary narrator, when he refers to their departure: *liquerit immemori discedens pectore coniunx* ('her husband left her, departing with a forgetful heart', Cat. 64.123); and *profugi ... mariti* ('a runaway husband', 8.53).⁶⁶

The contrast with the Virgilian Aeneas is heightened by the use of *profugus*. It is an echo of the prooemium of the *Aeneid*, where Aeneas is called 'an exile of fate' (*fato profugus*, A. 1.2). The Trojans as a group are also referred to as 'exiles' (*profugi*) on several occasions in the *Aeneid*.⁶⁷ Following this line of thought, *profugus* in 8.53 can be read as 'exiled'—Aeneas is after all a Trojan fugitive. The unique collocation with *maritus*, however, changes the meaning: he is not a fugitive because he is driven from Troy or because a god wants him to go to Italy, but because he flees from Carthage of his own accord.⁶⁸ The Silian narrator confirms Dido's repeated accusations of Dido in the *Aeneid* that Aeneas flees from *her*, instead of obeying a divine order.⁶⁹

On an intratextual level, Aeneas foreshadows the fate of Hannibal, who, as the Sibyl prophesies to Scipio in Book 13, will be a *profugus*, leaving his wife and child behind:

damnatusque doli, desertis coniuge fida
et dulci nato linquet Carthaginis arces
atque una profugus lustrabit caerulea puppe. (13.879–881)

64 Libby 2016: 70.

65 For the conflict in *Aeneid* 4 between personal emotions and divine mission, see G. Williams 1968: 383–386 and Feeney 1998: 117–119. Theseus' heroism in Catullus has been viewed in varying ways. For a negative evaluation, especially compared to Aeneas, see Perutelli 1997; for Theseus as a positive foreshadowing of Roman heroism, see Harmon 1973: 330; for a more nuanced position, see Nuzzo 2003: 49–51.

66 In the *Aeneid*, only Dido herself views her union with Aeneas as a marriage (A. 4.172, 4.192, 4.431), while Aeneas denies this explicitly (A. 4.338–339); the primary narrator makes clear that their relation was illicit and certainly no marriage (A. 4.172 and 4.193–195).

67 By Juno in A. 7.300, by Aeneas in A. 8.119, and by the primary narrator in A. 10.158.

68 Originally *profugus* seems to have implied a voluntary departure, as opposed to *exul*; see TLL 10.2.1736.24–32 s.v. *profugus*.

69 Cf. e.g. *mene fugis?* ('are you fleeing from me?', A. 4.314). Dido repeats this accusation in her letter to Aeneas: *dum me ... fugis* (Ov. Ep. 7.46), with Piazzzi 2007: 168–169.

Damned for treachery, he will leave the citadel of Carthage, abandoning his faithful wife and sweet son, and as an exile he will sail the seas with only one ship.

Like Aeneas in 8.53, he will abandon Carthage and his wife. The difference is of course that Hannibal is forced to do so, as he is found guilty of treachery.⁷⁰ Still, there is a strong contrast between *desertis* and *fida*: “the faith-breaker flees, his faithful wife stays behind.”⁷¹ Similarly, Aeneas can be seen as the faith-breaker, leaving Dido behind.⁷²

6 Anna’s Stay at Cyrene

In the next scene, the narrator describes Anna’s flight from Carthage to Latium, which is inspired by Ovid’s account in the *Fasti* (3.551–600). These wanderings cast Anna both as a second Dido and a second Aeneas. It starts with the threat of Iarbas, who puts himself on the throne of Carthage now the queen is dead:

despectus taedae regnis se imponit Iarbas,
et tepido **fugit** Anna rogo. quis rebus egenis
ferret opem **Nomadum** late terrente tyranno? (8.54–56)

Iarbas, scorned for marriage, imposes himself on the kingdom and Anna flees from the smouldering pyre. Who would bring her help in her need, while the tyrant of the Nomads spread terror far and wide?

Fears that Iarbas would take over the city without a male protector, as voiced by Anna (*despectus Iarbas*, *A.* 4.36) and Dido (*A.* 4.320–326) in the *Aeneid*, have now become reality. The question in 8.55–56 is, again, an example of embedded focalization of Anna. Silius thus confirms the version of Ovid and underlines this with verbal allusions:⁷³

70 Van der Keur 2015: 469 notes that Hannibal here is again cast as an (anti-)Aeneas, who performs the deeds of the Virgilian hero, but is doomed to failure.

71 Van der Keur 2015: 470.

72 *Profugus* also forges an intratextual connection between Aeneas and Dido. In 2.391 Carthage is described as ‘the kingdom of exiled Elissa’ (*profugae regnis ... Elissae*). Bernstein 2017: 186 states that “[t]he epithet pairs her conceptually with the refugee Aeneas”. It also recalls Juno’s love for the Carthaginians: *optavit profugis aeternam condere gentem* (‘she wishes to found an eternal race for the fugitives’, 1.28).

73 Spaltenstein 1986: 502.

protinus inuadunt Numidae sine uindice **regnum**
 et potitur capta Maurus **Iarba** domo
 seque memor **spretum** ... (Ov. *Fast.* 3.551–553)

Numidians immediately invade the kingdom which has no defender, and Iarbas the Moor takes possession of the captured house, and remembering that he has been rejected ...

A difference with Ovid, as commentators have noted, is that the Silian Anna immediately flees the scene; her sister's pyre is still warm.⁷⁴ In the *Fasti*, the Carthaginian population takes the flight (*diffugiunt Tyri*, *Fast.* 3.555), while Anna stays for unknown reasons for another three years, until she is expelled (*pellitur Anna domo*, *Fast.* 3.559).⁷⁵ The Silian Anna is fleeing of her own accord from Carthage (*fugit* as opposed to *pellitur*), which also recalls Aeneas as a *pro-fugi mariti* (8.53).⁷⁶

Like Aeneas, Anna does not reach a final destination at once. Her first stop is Cyrene, where the friendly king Battus gives her shelter:

Battus Cyrenen **molli** tum forte fouebat
 imperio, mitis Battus lacrimasque dedisse
 casibus humanis facilis. qui **supplice** uisa
 intremuit regum euentus dextramque tetendit. (8.57–60)

Then by chance Battus fostered Cyrene with a mild reign, Battus who was gentle and inclined to give tears to human suffering. After he saw the suppliant, he trembled at the fate of kings and stretched forth his hand.

74 The image of the warm pyre (*tepido ... rogo*) comes from elegy and has connotations of black magic. Tibullus got a charm from a witch, who 'calls down bones from a smouldering pyre' (*tepido deuocat ossa rogo*, Tib. 1.2.48). Hypsipyle accuses Medea of an even more gruesome practice in her letter to Jason: *certainque de tepidis colligit ossa rogis* ('she gathers from the smouldering pyre the appointed bones', Ov. *Ep.* 6.90). Anna has performed magical rituals herself by order of Dido, so she tells Aeneas in 8.116–117. See section 11 below.

75 See Ariemma 2000b: 46. Another possibility is to transpose lines 3.557–558 after 3.574, as Murgia proposed, followed by Heyworth 2019. In that case, the three years refer to Anna's stay at Battus. See Heyworth 2019: 197.

76 Santini 1991: 42 explains Silius' change (a flight of Anna instead of the entire population) as part of his programmatic idea that the Carthaginians that fight against Rome are the descendants of Dido.

The king is the absolute opposite of the terror-spreading tyrant Iarbas: his rule is mild (*molli ... imperio*) and benefits the city (*fouebat*), and he has a sensitive character (*mitis; lacrimas dedisse ... facilis*).⁷⁷ When he sees Anna as a suppliant, he feels sorry for her, perhaps imagining himself in a similar situation (*intremuit regum euentus*). The scene recalls Dido's request to Anna to approach Aeneas in the *Aeneid*: *hostem supplex adfare superbum* ('speak as a suppliant to the arrogant enemy', *A.* 4.424). Dido attributes to her sister the unique ability to make contact with Aeneas: *sola uiri mollis aditus ... noras* ('you alone know how to get easy access to the man', *A.* 4.423). Anna does not succeed in convincing Aeneas, but Battus is a man who *does* understand her.

Scholars have drawn attention to Silius' location of Battus' kingdom in Cyrene. In Ovid, he is the king of Malta, perhaps to avoid the anachronism of Cyrene not being founded yet.⁷⁸ Silius' choice for Cyrene can be viewed as a correction of Ovid's version, as Battus was the legendary founder of both the city and the dynasty of the Battiads, in power for eight generations.⁷⁹ More importantly, it stresses the link between Battus and Callimachus, who was also an inhabitant of Cyrene and is often called 'descendant of Battus' (*Battiades*).⁸⁰ The words *molli* and *mitis* can therefore also be read as generic mark-

77 His name is often interpreted as 'Stammerer' (see e.g. Hdt. 4.155 and cf. the verb βατταρίζω 'to stammer'). The Silian text reflects this etymology by the repetition of his name (*Battus ... Battus*) and repeated sounds, suggesting stammering (*forte fouebat; dedisse; tetendit*). Ovid, too, has played with this name's meaning when describing another Battus in *Met.* 2.702–705 (by repeating words) and more subtly in *Fast.* 3.572 (by repeating sounds). See Barchiesi 1995: 9 and Heyworth 2019: 199.

78 Cyrene was only founded around 630 BC; see *DNP* s.v. Kyrene. Ovid is unique in his connection between Battus and Malta; Bömer 1958: 186 notes that Malta has switched sides in the Punic Wars and proposes that this was the reason for Ovid to connect it with the Anna episode. Santini 1991: 43–44 suggests that the stay of Anna on Malta hints at the historical cult of the deity Άννα on eastern Sicily.

79 *DNP* s.v. Battus and Battiaden. Bruère 1959: 229 and Spaltenstein 1986: 503 take the unlikely view that Silius unwittingly confuses the Maltese king with the Cyrenean.

80 Barchiesi 1995: 9–12. Callimachus calls himself βαττιάδῃω ('son of Battos') in his epitaph (*Epigr.* 35.1). For Callimachus as *Battiades* in Latin literature, see Cat. 65.16 and 116.2, *Ov. Am.* 1.15.13, *Tr.* 2.367 and 5.5.38, *Ibis* 55, and *Stat. Silv.* 5.3.157. The name Cyrene may also evoke the 'Callimachean' episode of Aristaeus in Virgil's *Georgics* 4, as the beekeeper's father was Apollo and his mother the nymph Cyrene (Virg. *G.* 4.321–323). There, too, Cyrene has connotations of Alexandrian poetry. According to Apollonius Rhodius (2.500–527), Cyrene was originally a mortal woman, who was turned into a water nymph by Apollo. The Cyreneans identified her as their city's foundation goddess; see Erren 2003: 915–916. Cyrene's story can be seen as a prefiguration of Anna's metamorphosis into a river nymph.

ers, invoking a non-epic world without fighting. Barchiesi cites this passage as an example of the recurring antagonism to ‘pure epic’ in the *Punica*.⁸¹

For two years Anna is safe in Cyrene (the same period as her stay with Battus in *Fast.* 3.575–576), but no longer, as the narrator remarks: *nec longius uti | his opibus Battoque fuit* (‘no longer could she make use of Battus and his resources’, 8.62–63). The reason is that her brother Pygmalion is on his way to kill her.⁸² She is forced to resume her odyssey: *ergo agitur pelago* (‘so she is driven to the sea’, 8.65). The peaceful Battus is apparently no match for Pygmalion; in Ovid this clash between the softness of Battus and the warlike spirit of Pygmalion is made explicit: ‘Her brother comes and seeks war. The king detests weapons: “We are unwarlike”, he says, “flee and be safe”’ (*frater adest belloque petit. rex arma perosus | ‘nos sumus imbelles, tu fuge sospes’ ait*, *Ov. Fast.* 3.577–578). This also signifies a clash on the generic level, between epic Pygmalion (*belloque petit*) and non-epic Battus (*rex arma perosus* and *imbelles*).⁸³ In the *Punica*, too, the Callimachean interlude cannot last for long, as the pace of the narrative suggests: Anna’s actual stay with Battus takes up eight lines (8.57–64), even shorter than Ovid’s ten lines (*Fast.* 3.569–578). Anna’s epic quest has to continue.⁸⁴

81 Barchiesi 2001b: 334–335.

82 See *Ov. Fast.* 3.574 and 577–578. Littlewood 1980: 309–310 draws attention to the epicizing style of Silius. Battus’ direct speech in Ovid is replaced by a more grandiloquent indirect statement and the rather flat *frater* has been replaced by grander *Pygmaliona*. In the *Aeneid*, the threat of Pygmalion is felt by both sisters (*A.* 4.43–44, 325; cf. also *Ov. Ep.* 7.127–128).

83 The juxtaposition of *rex* and *arma* is salient: these two words are strong markers of epic, but *perosus* denies them. See Heyworth 2019: 200. Barchiesi 1995: 9–10 adduces two examples from Ovid: *nos odimus arma* (‘we hate arms’, *Am.* 3.2.49); and: *imbelles elegi* (‘unwarlike elegies’, *Am.* 3.15.19).

84 The Battiads play a double role in the *Punica*. On the one hand, they are the allies of Carthage. They are listed in the catalogue of Hannibal’s troops (3.252–253) and repeat the hospitality of Battus when providing shelter for Carthaginians after the Battle of Zama: *pars Batti petiere domos* (‘some go to the dwellings of Battus’, 17.591). On the other hand, the Roman Decius could escape from the hands of Hannibal after a sea-storm had driven him to Cyrene: *Iuppiter antiquam Batti uertisset ad urbem* (‘Jupiter had driven him to the ancient city of Battus’, 11.380). He could escape from there, as the city fell apparently under the sway of the Ptolemean empire, as Silius explains in 11.381 (cf. *Liv. Per.* 14). This tendency of switching to both sides explains perhaps the designation of the Cyreneans in 3.253 as ‘faithless’ (*prauos fidei*). In our passage, too, Anna cannot count on the protection of Battus; as soon as Pygmalion arrives on the scene, she is told to leave. In 2.61, the Battiads are listed as subjects of Iarbas, for which see Bernstein 2017: 70–71.

7 Sea Storm and Arrival in Latium

After her departure from Cyrene, Anna has to deal with two hostile forces: she is 'hated by the gods and herself' (*diuis inimica sibi*, 8.65).⁸⁵ The phrase recalls Juno's words to Aeolus: *gens inimica mihi Tyrrhenum nauigat aequor* ('a people hated by me navigates the Tyrrhenian sea', *A.* 1.67). After this the goddess asks Aeolus to let loose his winds on the Trojan fleet of Aeneas. In *Punica* 8, Anna does not only find the gods as her opponents, as is usual for epic seafarers, but also herself.⁸⁶ The reason for this self-hatred is that she did not follow her sister's example: *quod se non dederit comitem in suprema sorori* ('because she had not given herself to her sister as a companion in death', 8.66).⁸⁷ When the sea storm rages, Anna is shipwrecked and thrust on the shore of Latium:

... donec **iactatam** laceris, miserabile, uelis
fatalis turbo in Laurentes expulit oras.
 non caeli, non illa soli, non gnara colentum
 Sidonis in Latia trepidabat naufraga **terra.** (8.67–70)

... until she was tossed around, her sails torn apart (a miserable sight!) and a fatal whirlwind cast her on the Laurentian coast. Not knowing the sky, not the land, not the inhabitants, the shipwrecked Sidonian stood trembling on the Latin land.

Again, she is cast as Aeneas, who also found himself in a sea storm (*A.* 1.94–97).⁸⁸ Echoes of the *Aeneid's* prooemium confirm this situational similarity: *iactatam* (8.67) corresponds to *iactatus et alto* ('tossed on the sea', *A.* 1.3); the 'fatal whirlwind' (*fatalis turbo*, 8.68) parallels the role of fate in Aeneas' jour-

85 Keith 2016: 269 translates 'hating the gods and hating herself', taking the datives *diuis* and *sibi* as patients of *inimicus*, as is often the case (*TLL* 7.1.1632.23–39 s.v. *inimicus* and *OLD* s.v. 1). Duff and the Budé also follow this line. The datives in 8.65, however, indicate the agents of the hate, not the patients: see *TLL* 7.1.1632.39–49 s.v., listing both *A.* 1.67 and *Pun.* 8.65 as examples.

86 Note also that the roles have been reversed: in the *Aeneid* the Trojans were the *gens inimica* of Juno, now the Carthaginian Anna is the enemy of unspecified gods.

87 Ariemma 2000b: 49 notes an echo of Virgil's Anna accusing the dying Dido: *comitemne sororem | spreuisti moriens?* ('did you scorn your companion and sister in your death?', *A.* 4.677–678). In Silius, Anna accuses *herself* of not having joined her sister in committing suicide. This recalls the wish of Ismene to die with her sister in *S. Ant.* 544–545. See Hardie 1998: 62–63 for the idea of *Aeneid* 4 as a tragedy.

88 See e.g. Santini 1991: 45 and Ariemma 2000b: 48.

ney in *A.* 1.2: *fato profugus* ('an exile of fate'); moreover, Anna's destination is virtually the same as that of Aeneas: *Laurentes ... oras* (8.68) ~ *Launiaeque ... | litora* (*A.* 1.2–3).

Although Silius is very concise, he manages to highlight the personal drama of Anna (*inimica sibi; non gnara; trepidat*) and arouses pathos with the interjection *miserabile*, the anaphora of *non*, and the iconic hyperbaton of the torn sails (*laceris ... uelis*). This pathos can be traced back to Ovid's storm scene in the Anna episode. He focuses on the personal drama of the human sufferers and the storm is not described "with the impersonal magnificence of an epic clash of warring elements".⁸⁹ This becomes clear from the instructions of the captain to use the oars that cannot be carried out by the crew, the prayer of the helmsman to the gods, and Anna's envy of Dido's death: *tum primum Dido felix est dicta sorori* ('then for the first time Dido was called fortunate by her sister', *Fast.* 3.597). Anna's wish to have died with Dido (8.66) corresponds with Anna's envy of Dido and other dead women in Ovid (*Fast.* 3.597–598),⁹⁰ which can be traced back to Aeneas' envy of Trojan war victims (*A.* 1.94–97).⁹¹ Silius follows Ovid both in focussing on the personal suffering of Anna and in likening her to Aeneas.

Anna is also cast as her sister Dido; she, too, has fled her country and made a sea journey from Tyre to Carthage, as was narrated right after the proemium of the *Punica*:

**Pygmalioneis quondam per caerula terris
pollutum fugiens fraterno crimine regnum
fatali Dido Libyes appellitur orae.** (1.21–23)

Once from the land of Pygmalion over the sea, Dido fled the kingdom polluted by the crime of her brother and was cast on the fated shore of Libya.

These verbal reminiscences show that we should read Anna's journey also in the light of her famous sister. History repeats itself: again, Pygmalion forms a threat (*Pygmaliona*, 8.64), again a Carthaginian woman lands on the coast of a foreign country as ordained by fate.⁹² The antonomasia *Sidonis* (8.70 = *Fast.*

89 Littlewood 1980: 310. The topos can already be found in Hom. *Od.* 5.306–312.

90 Note the repetition of *sorori* at the end of both lines, although in Silius it refers to Dido, in Ovid to Anna.

91 Littlewood 1980: 310.

92 Spaltenstein 1986: 503 notes the correspondence between *fatalis* and *fatali*, without interpretation.

3.649) for Anna also evokes Dido, who was called thus by Ovid (*Met.* 14.80) and *Sidonis* by Virgil (*A.* 1.446 and 9.266).⁹³ Anna's situation is perhaps even worse: the recasting of the juxtaposition *Dido Libyes* into *Sidonis in Latia* underlines that Anna arrives not only in foreign, but also in hostile territory.⁹⁴ Also the change of *ap-pellitur orae* into *ex-pulit oras* is significant. Whereas *appello* is the usual verb for ships landing on a shore, *expello* is stronger, implying shipwreck: the sea 'expels' the ship from the sea and drives it to the shore.⁹⁵ The verb *expello* therefore also underlines Anna's status as an exile:⁹⁶ she has been forced to leave both Carthage and Cyrene and is now forced to continue her life in Italy, the realm of the archenemy.

The narrator of the *Punica* usually reserves the interjection *miserabile* for pitiful situations of the Romans or their allies.⁹⁷ His sympathy for Anna recalls especially his emotional description of the Roman troops at the Trebia, who were driven to the banks of the river by Hannibal:

palantes agit ad ripas, miserabile, Poenus
impellens trepidos fluuioque immergere certat. (4.571–572)

The Punic leader drives the wandering troops to the riverbanks (a miserable sight!), pushing them as they trembled, and he strives to drown them in the river.

Juno summons the river to attack the Roman troops, after which the Roman soldiers drown—almost as if it were an epic sea storm.⁹⁸ Like the Roman soldiers,

93 Sidon was the mother-city of Tyre, see Heyworth 2019: 215. The rare feminine adjective *Sidonis* is also used by Ovid for Europa, another Tyrian princess travelling across the sea (*Ov. Ars* 3.252, *Fast.* 5.610; cf. also Stat. *Theb.* 9.334).

94 Santini 1991: 45 and Ariemma 2000b: 49.

95 See *TLL* 5.2.1637.69–88 s.v. *expello*. Cf. the wish of Styruis, who rather wants to have a shipwreck than give up the pursuit of his runaway fiancée Medea: *uos modo uel solum hoc, fluctus, expellite corpus* ('rather cast this body, you waves, on the land', V. Fl. 8.349); little later his ship sinks to the bottom of the sea in a storm.

96 For the common meaning of *expello* 'to drive into exile, banish', see *TLL* 5.2.1632.57–1633.44 s.v. and *OLD* s.v. 5c. Cf. e.g. *finibus expulsum patriis* ('[Teucer] expelled from his fatherland', *A.* 1.620).

97 For the Saguntines (1.672), the Romans at the Trebia (4.571), the *magister equitum* Minucius (7.706), a sinking Roman ship (14.329), and an equestrian crash in the Scipionic games (16.412).

98 Compare Juno's incitation of Aeolus and the subsequent sea storm. Commentators have drawn attention to Silius' Homeric model, the battle between the river Scamander and Achilles in *Il.* 21.205–327. See Juhnke 1972: 11–24 and Santini 1991: 80–91.

Anna is pushed (*agit* ~ *agitur*, 8.65; *impellens* ~ *expulit*, 8.68) in the direction of a waterfront (*ad ripas* ~ *in ... oras*, 8.68) and is trembling with fear (*trepidus* ~ *trepidabat*, 8.70).

The only other time that the narrator uses the interjection *miserabile* for a Carthaginian is at the end of the *Punica*, for Hannibal. Once the general had watched the Roman troops being slaughtered at the Trebia, Po, Lake Trasimene and Cannae, but now he sees his own soldiers die under the hands of the Romans at Zama: *miserabile uisu* (17.602). Soon after this pitiful sight, he leaves the battle-field as a fugitive: *sic rapitur paucis fugientum mixtus* ('then he hurries away, joining a few fugitives', 17.616). As a bridge passage between Book 4 and 17, Anna's flight foreshadows that Hannibal and his troops will have to suffer the same fate as the Romans did before at Trebia.

8 Anna Meets Aeneas

On the beach of Latium, Anna suddenly (*ecce autem*)⁹⁹ sees Aeneas and his son Ascanius walking in her direction. She gets frightened when she recognizes the Trojan and holds the knees of his son as a suppliant. Aeneas manages to comfort her and brings her to his palace:

*ecce autem Aeneas sacro comitatus Iulo,
iam regni compos, noto sese ore ferebat.
qui terrae defixam oculos et multa timentem
ac deinde allapsam genibus lacrimantis Iuli
attollit mitique manu intra limina ducit.* (8.71–75)

But look, Aeneas, accompanied by sacred Iulus, already master of the kingdom, was approaching, whose face she knew. In great fear she keeps her eyes to the ground and then falls down at the knees of Iulus who was crying. He raises her up and brings her with gentle hand inside the palace.

We are looking at the scene through the eyes of Anna, who recognizes Aeneas' face (*noto ... ore*). So in an environment that she does not know at all (*non*

99 *Ecce autem* marks a sudden development or unexpected arrival; see Kroon 1995: 261–262, Horsfall 2000: 203, and Dionisotti 2007. Silius uses the juxtaposition *ecce autem* five times. Littlewood 2011: 168 states that it is most commonly found in Roman comedy, but a search in the *PHI* database shows that there are actually more attestations in epic: 25, as compared to 20 in comic texts.

gnara) she suddenly notices a familiar face. Instead of comforting her, however, this sight frightens her, precisely *because* she knows what he is capable of. For the narratees, the arrival of Aeneas is not so surprising, as Ovid had included it in his version, too. The word *noto* can therefore also be read as a metapoetical signpost: the narratees already know Aeneas is arriving.

There are, again, some divergences from the version in the *Fasti*, in which Aeneas was ‘accompanied by Achates alone’ (*solo comitatus Achate*, *Fast.* 3.603).¹⁰⁰ The recognition happened the other way round. Aeneas recognizes Anna first, but cannot believe his eyes; Achates affirms what he thinks: ‘while Aeneas thinks this to himself, Achates cries out: “It’s Anna!”’ (*dum secum Aeneas, ‘Anna est!’ exclamat Achates*, *Fast.* 3.607).¹⁰¹ The change from the war companion Achates to the son Iulus in *Punica* 8 offers opportunity for an emotional scene: Anna grasps his knees as a gesture of supplication and he himself starts crying.¹⁰²

The first two lines of this scene stress the royal status of Aeneas. He has already become ruler of a new kingdom (*iam regni compos*), only two years after he had left Carthage; in Ovid, at least five years have passed when Aeneas and Anna meet. Moreover, Ovid explains Aeneas’ rise to power by his marriage with Lavinia: *iam pius Aeneas regno nataque Latini | auctus erat, populos miscueratque duos* (‘by now dutiful Aeneas had been enriched with the kingdom and the daughter of Latinus, and had blended the two peoples’, *Fast.* 3.601–602). The coast they are standing on is labelled with the adjective *dotali* (‘as a dowry’, *Fast.* 3.603). In Silius, *regni compos* is vague and neither Lavinia nor the mingling of Trojans and Latins are mentioned, as if the war between Trojans and Latins had not taken place. In addition, the presence of Ascanius also stresses “the continuation of Aeneas’ family and leadership”.¹⁰³ By making Iulus his father’s companion, his role as successor is alluded to, as Jupiter promised

100 Achates had also joined Aeneas on the beach of Carthage, to which Ovid clearly alludes: *ipse uno graditur comitatus Achate* (‘he proceeds accompanied by Achates alone’, *A.* 1.312).

101 This, in turn, echoes Achates’ cry when he spotted Italy: *Italiam primus conclamat Achates* (*A.* 3.523). See Heyworth 2019: 206. Ahl 1985: 313 and Porte 1985: 149 draw independently attention to the similarity in sound between *Aeneas* and the elided *Anna (e)st*; their names almost sound identical.

102 Spaltenstein 1986: 503. Anna’s act of supplication has a somewhat disturbing undertone, as the collocation *allapsam genibus* is only paralleled by *allapsa genibus* (*Sen. Phaed.* 667). There, it refers to Phaedra who grasps the knees of her stepson Hippolytus and confesses her love for him. *Lacrimantis Iuli* repeats the same phrase from *A.* 9.501, when Ascanius cried over the death of Euryalus. Spaltenstein 1986: 503 cites these parallels without further comment. Bruère 1959: 229 calls the change from Achates into Iulus “probably involuntary”, suggesting that Silius was not paying attention when reworking the Ovidian scene.

103 Manuwald 2011: 58.

to Venus in *Aeneid* 1 and as was actualized in *Metamorphoses* 14.¹⁰⁴ The epithet *sacer* (as substitute of the Ovidian *solus*) stresses his status as future ruler.¹⁰⁵

From line 75 it is clear that Aeneas is benevolent to Anna. He helps her up (*attollit*) and leads her right away into his palace (*intra limina*). The collocation *mitique manu* marks the kindness of Aeneas towards Anna, but is also reminiscent of her former host Battus (*mitis Battus*, 8.58). Once again, Anna meets a king that receives her with his hospitality: *casus aduersorumque pauorem | hospitii leniuit honos* ('the honour of hospitality soothed her misfortune and fear of adversaries', 8.76–77). The verb *leniuit* calls to mind the two failed attempts of Aeneas to assuage Dido's grief in the *Aeneid*. The first time was in Carthage: *lenire dolentem | solando cupit et dictis auertere curas* ('he wished to sooth her in her grief by comforting her and to avert her cares with his words', *A.* 4.393–394);¹⁰⁶ the second in the underworld: *lenibat dictis animum* ('he tried to sooth her soul with his words', *A.* 6.468). Whereas Aeneas did not manage to mitigate the grief of Dido, he now successfully comforts Anna.¹⁰⁷ Instead of using mere words (*dictis*) he offers her true hospitality (*hospitii*, stressed by the enjambment). At first Anna was afraid of Aeneas. Her downcast eyes recall Dido's gaze in the underworld: *illa solo fixos oculos auersa tenebat* ('she kept her eyes to the ground, averted from him', *A.* 6.469).¹⁰⁸ But whereas Dido did not even deem Aeneas worthy a glance, Anna lets go of her fear and joins her new host to his palace.¹⁰⁹

At the same time, Anna is reminiscent of Virgil's Aeneas. When the Trojan leaves the cave of the Sibyl, after having consulted her with Achates, he walks out with a similar posture: *Aeneas maesto defixus lumina uultu | ingre-*

104 *Met.* 14.583–584. See Brugnoli 1991: 155–156.

105 When we accept the focalization to be that of the primary narrator. Poets sometimes apply *sacer* to members or attributes of the imperial house (*OLD* s.v. 7). The most important parallel is Jupiter's prophecy in Book 3: *sacris ... Iulis* (3.595). Ovid apostrophizes Augustus' mother Atia with 'o glory, o woman worthy of the sacred house' (*o decus, o sacra femina digna domo*, *Fast.* 6.810). Statius uses the word three times in connection with Domitian; the clearest example is *sacer ... Germanicus* in *Silv.* 5.2.177. See Gibson 2006: 145. The repetition of the name Iulus, instead of Ascanius, reinforces these imperial associations, as he is the ancestor of the *gens Iulia*. Alternatively, we can understand *sacro* as the focalization of Anna—following the example of her sister Dido, she considers Iulus to be divine. See section 9 below.

106 Walter 2014: 279.

107 Note also the change in tense: *lenibat* is an imperfect, *leniuit* a perfect.

108 For this parallel, see Dietrich 2004: 5 and Walter 2014: 278–279.

109 The words *intra limina ducit* (8.75) recall Dido taking Aeneas into her palace: *Aenean in regia ducit | tecta* ('she brings Aeneas into her royal house', *A.* 1.631–632). Note the same *sedes* of *ducit*.

ditur ('Aeneas went forth with a sad countenance, keeping his eyes down', *A.* 6.156–157).¹¹⁰ Anna's relief from fear also recalls Aeneas' first visit to Carthage. When he was standing before the doors of Juno's temple, again accompanied by Achates, he felt hope for the first time: *hoc primum in luco noua res oblata timorem | leniit, hic primum Aeneas sperare salutem | ausus et adflictis melius confidere rebus* ('first in this grove did a strange sight appear and sooth his fear, here first did Aeneas dare to hope for safety and put surer trust in his miserable situation', *A.* 1.450–452). Silius' scene on the coast of Latium is an allusion which combines these several passages in the *Aeneid*. It renders Anna reminiscent of both Dido and Aeneas at the same time.¹¹¹ As Aeneas felt safe in Carthage and enjoyed Dido's hospitality, so Anna is at ease in Aeneas' palace in Latium. Unlike her sister, she is able to come to terms with Aeneas.

In his palace, Aeneas asks Anna to tell about the fate of her sister: *tum discere maesta | exoptat cura letum infelicis Elissae* ('then with sorrowful anxiety he asks to learn the death of unhappy Elissa', 8.77–78). Scholars have noted the contrast with the explicit prohibition of Ovid's Aeneas to narrate Dido's fate: *ne refer* ('do not tell!', *Fast.* 3.619).¹¹² The Silian Aeneas, however, sees an opportunity to hear the story from an eyewitness. In the underworld, he had already asked the ghost of Dido (*infelix Dido*, *A.* 6.456)¹¹³ similar questions (*A.* 6.456–458). There, as we already observed, Aeneas got no answer from Dido. This is his second chance to hear the story. Unlike her sister, Anna is willing to do so, although she has difficulties controlling her emotions:

cui sic verba **trahens largis** cum fletibus Anna
incipit et blandas addit pro tempore uoces: ... (8.79–80)

And so Anna, dragging out words with abundant tears, begins and adds flattering words for the occasion: ...

Her introduction as narrator is designed along the same lines as Aeneas in Dido's palace. When the queen asked him who he was, he also had difficulties controlling his emotions: *ille | suspirans imoque trahens a pectore uocem* ('he

110 Spaltenstein 1986: 503.

111 See Ahl 1985: 314 for this idea.

112 See e.g. Ariemma 2000b: 51.

113 There are six other instances of *infelix Dido* in the *Aeneid*; see Horsfall 2013: 343. See also 6.529, where Marus calls himself *infelix*, discussed in Chapter 2, section 3.2.

sighed and draw out his voice from the depth of his breast', *A.* 1.370–371).¹¹⁴ In Ovid's *Fasti*, Aeneas starts crying when speaking to Anna, because she reminds him of Dido: *flet tamen admonitu motus, Elissa, tui* ('but he weeps, moved, Elissa, by being reminded of you', *Fast.* 3.612).¹¹⁵ The verb that indicates she is beginning to narrate (*incipit*) echoes the introduction of Aeneas' narrative in Carthage (*incipiam*, *A.* 2.13).¹¹⁶ Whereas Ovid attributes only one line of direct speech to Anna, in the *Punica* she becomes a full-fledged epic narrator, following in the footsteps of the Virgilian Aeneas.

As a narrator Anna is cast as Aeneas, but at the same time Dido lurks in the background. The Carthaginian exile is using "an appropriately non-aggressive style", as she is seeking asylum from Aeneas.¹¹⁷ Walter sees in *pro tempore* an echo of Dido's request to Anna to mitigate Aeneas: *sola uiri mollis aditus et tempora noras* ('you alone know the right time for getting easy access to the man', *A.* 4.423).¹¹⁸ Whereas she failed to convince the Trojan guest in the *Aeneid*, she now has a second chance to fulfil her role of mediator. The flattering words (*blandas ... uoces*) that Anna is using echo Juno's address of Anna in the main narrative: *affatur uoce et blandis hortatibus implet* ('she addresses her with the following words and fills her with flattering exhortations', 8.29). At the same time, they call to mind Dido. Venus in her complaint to Jupiter claimed that the queen kept Aeneas hostage by using seductive language: *nunc Phoenissa tenet Dido blandisque moratur | uocibus* ('now Phoenician Dido keeps and retains him with her flattering words', *A.* 1.670–671).¹¹⁹ Anna seems to have learned the trick of talking seductively from her sister. The same phrase might yet also allude to a scene from the second book of Naevius' *Bellum Poenicum*, where someone asks Aeneas to tell his story:

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- 114 Spaltenstein 1986: 504. Cf. especially the meaning of *traho* 'to draw out (sighs, sounds, etc., from within the body)' in *OLD* s.v. *traho* 11c, where this specific *locus*, however, is not listed.
- 115 Aeneas also wept when he saw Dido in the underworld (*A.* 6.455, 476). See Heyworth 2019: 207. Anna's tears (*largibus cum fletibus*) also recall Aeneas' meeting with Anchises in the underworld: *sic memorans largo fletu simul ora rigebat* ('so he spoke, his face wet with abundant tears', *A.* 6.699). This, in turn, is an intratextual allusion to Hector's tears in Aeneas' dream: *largosque ... fletus* (*A.* 2.271).
- 116 Fernandelli 2009: 152. In *Fast.* 3.628, the verb *incipit* (same metrical *sedes*) prepares for the short speech of Aeneas in which he introduces Anna to his wife Lavinia.
- 117 Manuwald 2011: 59. See also Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy 1986: 2497.
- 118 Walter 2014: 279.
- 119 Ariemma 2000b: 51. The word *blandus* also has the connotation of 'beguiling'. Venus casts Dido as another Calypso, as Austin 1971: 204 notes, quoting Pallas' words to Zeus in the first book of the *Odyssey*: *αἰεὶ δὲ μαλακοῖσι καὶ αἰμυλίοισι λόγοισι | θέλγει, ἕπως Ἰθάκης ἐπιλήσεται* ('[Calypso] continually bewitches him with tender and beguiling words, so that he forgets Ithaka', Hom. *Od.* 1.56–57).

blande et docte percontat, Aenea quo pacto
Troiam urbem liquerit (Blänsdorf fr. 20 = Morel fr. 23)

She inquires flatteringly and skilfully, under which
circumstances Aeneas had left the city of Troy.

The subject of the main sentence might well have been Dido, but some have suggested that it also could be Anna.¹²⁰ Either way, the Silian narrator seems to hint at the possibility of an amorous relation between Aeneas and Anna. *Blandus* is a word that is a generic marker of elegy.¹²¹ It prepares the narratees for the elegiac nature of Anna's ensuing narrative and the mirroring between Anna in *Punica* 8 and Dido in *Aeneid* 1 and 4.

9 First Narrative of Anna: Dido's Demise

From here onwards, Anna takes on the role of epic narrator, like Aeneas did in *Aeneid* 2–3. As we have seen above, this is a departure from the *Fasti*, in which Aeneas explicitly discouraged her to tell her sister's story once again. In the *Aeneid*, Anna's role as narrator is confined as well. Her speech to Aeneas, for example, is only mentioned by the primary narrator, but not actually quoted in direct speech (*A.* 4.437–440).

The primary narratees of the *Punica* of course know the story of Dido's suicide from *Aeneid* 4. Earlier scholars have therefore judged this narrative as a needless rehearsal of a Virgilian narrative, which Ovid wisely avoided. Silius could simply not resist to handle this episode at length due to his excessive veneration for the Great Master.¹²² From a narratological (and metapoetical) point of view, however, the story fits in well. Anna's secondary narratee Aeneas may know already the *outcome* of the story (he has seen the ghost of

120 Scarsi Garbugino 1987: 197–200 discusses three possible candidates for the subject: Dido, an unknown male host or Anna. She prefers the last option.

121 E.g. Propertius refers to his own poetry as *blandi carminis* (1.8.40). Fedeli 1980: 227 compares this phrase with *mollem ... uersum* (Prop. 1.7.19); *blandus* is therefore a marker of elegy, opposed to *durus uersus* designating epic. Ovid calls Propertius *blandus* twice (*Tr.* 2.465; 5.1.17). See also Fernandelli 2009: 152.

122 E.g. Bruère 1959: 228: "Ovid had avoided this subject (his Aeneas begs Anna not to speak of her sister's death), but the temptation to retell the fourth *Aeneid* was too much for so devout a Virgilian as Silius, and as a result the Ovidian portions of his Anna story are separated by a long Virgilian enclave."

Dido in the underworld), but he does not yet know *how* it all came about, as Dido had refused to answer his questions:

infelix Dido, uerus mihi nuntius ergo
 uenerat exstinctam ferroque extrema secutam?
funeris heu tibi causa fui? (Virg. *A.* 6.456–458)

Unhappy Dido, did I then receive a true message that you died and that you sought death by the sword? Ah, was I the cause of your funeral?

So finally, Anna provides him here with an answer. The story is also interesting for the primary narratees of the *Punica*, as they might expect Anna to shed her own light on this famous story: as an eyewitness she will narrate what happened back in Carthage, a story that has been touched upon only very briefly by the primary narrator (8.50–53). The narrative leaves the primary narratees in suspense as to how exactly it happened and what the differences may be with other accounts of Dido's death, primarily *Aeneid* 4.¹²³

Anna starts her narrative with a *captatio benevolentiae*, acknowledging the divine parentage of Aeneas and stressing his importance for Dido's reign and life. This turns out to be a dubious honour, as she calls upon Dido's death and pyre as witnesses:

nate dea, solus regni lucisque fuisti
 germanae tu **causa** meae. **mors** testis et ille
 (**heu** cur non idem mihi tum!) rogas. (8.81–83)

Son of a god, you alone were the cause of my sister's reign and life. Her death is my witness, as is that pyre. (Ah, why not the same pyre for me at that time!)

The form of address *nate dea* is epic in tone, as commentators have noted. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas is addressed in this way eleven times.¹²⁴ Dido calls him thus in *A.* 1.615, but when it is clear that he will sail off to Italy, she denies his divine parentage: *nec tibi diua parens* ('you have no divine parent', *A.* 4.365). Anna seems to 'repair' this insult by properly addressing Aeneas. The rest of the sentence is, however, an accusation in disguise: by stating that Aeneas

123 Fernandelli 2009: 150.

124 See e.g. Ariemma 2000b: 51–52.

was the reason for Dido to live, it also means that he was responsible for her death and so it positively answers Aeneas' last question in the underworld: *funeris heu tibi causa fui?* ('ah, was I the cause of your funeral?', *A.* 6.458).¹²⁵ Anna's words also tie in with Dido's statements on the cause of her death in Ovid. In the *Heroides*, she predicts that others will blame Aeneas for her suicide: *tu potius leti causa ferere mei* ('you shall rather be reputed the cause of my own death', *Ov. Ep.* 7.64). Later she repeats this accusation in her self-quoted epitaph: *PRAEBVIT AENEAS ET CAVSAM MORTIS ET ENSEM* ('Aeneas provided the cause for her death as well as the sword', *Ep.* 7.195 = *Fast.* 3.549).¹²⁶

The question of causation also evokes the get-together of Aeneas and Dido in the cave: *ille dies primus leti primusque malorum | causa fuit* ('that first day caused death and that first day caused disasters', *A.* 4.169–170). The epic narrator calls the *moment* of their being together the primordial cause of Dido's death and all misery that followed.¹²⁷ Anna, however, puts the blame on Aeneas himself, not only for her sister's death, but also for the fall of Carthage: he, and he alone, kept Dido's empire (*regni*) stable. When he had left and Iarbas took over Carthage (*regnis se imponit Iarbas*, 8.54), this was also the cause of Anna's own misery: she had to flee Carthage and wished herself to be dead (8.66), as she does now (8.83). Her words betray that she does not only feel grief for her sister's death, but also for her own misery.¹²⁸

Anna's words recall another Callimachean-Ovidian narrative in the *Punica* on the aetiology of the Pyrenees.¹²⁹ When Hercules had raped the princess Pyrene, she fled to the mountains and was torn to pieces by wild animals. The primary narrator accuses Hercules of being responsible for her miserable death: *sine uirginitate reliquit | Pyrenen, letique deus, si credere fas est, | causa fuit leti miserae deus* ('he left Pyrene without her virginity and the god, if it is permitted to believe, the god was the cause of the death, the death of this miserable girl', 3.425–426). Of course, Aeneas is not a rapist, but like Hercules he leaves a woman behind in miserable circumstances which lead to

125 Ariemma 2000b: 52.

126 Blaming one's death on the one you love is an elegiac topos. Piazzzi 2007: 184 lists *Ov. Ep.* 2.147–148 and *Am.* 2.10.30 as other examples. For the epitaph, see also section 5 above.

127 The topos of the origin of misery has a long pedigree in epic and historical texts. Cf. e.g. *Hom. Il.* 11.604, *Hdt.* 5.97.3, *Th.* 2.12, *Virg. A.* 7.481–482, *V. Fl.* 7.37–38.

128 She stresses her own involvement with *germanae ... meae* and *mihi*. The word *germana*, referring to Dido, contains the sound of her own name *Anna*, indicating their similarity, as Ahl 1985: 311 suggested for 8.47.

129 On this embedded narrative, see e.g. Augoustakis 2003, Ripoll 2006, and Augoustakis 2014c: 351–354.

her death. The opening words of Anna are therefore not so flattering (*blandis ... uocibus*) when one reads between the lines.

In the ensuing lines, Anna casts her sister Dido as an elegiac heroine, as the primary narrator of the *Punica* had done before (see section 5 above). Already in the *Aeneid*, the Carthaginian queen shows similarities with Ariadne and Medea. In general, Book 4 is considered as the most elegiac part of Virgil's epic.¹³⁰ Anna's narrative in the *Punica* highlights these elegiac elements already present in the Virgilian story:¹³¹

ora uidere
postquam est ereptum miserae tua, litore sedit
interdum, stetit interdum, uentosque secuta
infelix oculis magno clamore uocabat
Aenean comitemque tuae se imponere solam
orabat paterere rati. (8.83–88)

After the possibility was taken away from the miserable woman to see your face, she sat on the shore sometimes, she stood there sometimes and following the winds with her eyes the unhappy one called with a loud cry "Aeneas!" and begged that you would allow her alone to be taken aboard of your ship as a companion.

The conjunction *postquam* picks up the same word that the primary narrator used for the time after Aeneas' departure (*postquam*, 8.50); the moment she lost sight of Aeneas (*ora uidere ... est ereptum*) coincides with the loss of her hope (*spes abruptae*, 8.51).¹³² Whereas the primary narrator cut the story short and immediately jumped to Dido's death on the pyre (8.51–53), Anna keeps on narrating what happened after Aeneas' departure. Her sister repeatedly (*interdum ... interdum*)¹³³ paid visits to the beach (*litore*). There she would in vain scream his name to the empty sea, wishing that he had taken her with him.

130 For the question of genre in such elegiac parts of epic, see e.g. Jöne 2017: 23–25. Hübner 1968 and Cairns 1989: 129–150 discuss the influence of elegy on Virgilian epic. Hardie 1998: 57 shows that the *Aeneid* incorporates many genres, resulting in a "generic polyphony".

131 Fernandelli 2009: 152–153, 157, 159; see also Ariemma 2000b: 51–52, Rosati 2005: 148, Walter 2014: 280.

132 Fernandelli 2009: 153 and 160. These lines also echo Ariadne's letter to Theseus: *quid potius facerent, quam me mea lumina flerent, | postquam desideram uela uidere tua?* ('What better could my eyes do than cry, after I had ceased to see your sails?', Ov. *Ep.* 10.45–46).

133 The gemination of *interdum* is iconic of her repetitive acts; see Ariemma 2000b: 53. It can

The beach is the stereotypical space where abandoned heroines follow their betraying lovers with their eyes.¹³⁴ In the *Aeneid*, Dido was also said to be looking towards the sea, but from a watchtower (*e speculis*, *A.* 4.586), and she did not visit the beach itself, which she observed to be abandoned: *litoraue et uacuos sensit ... portus* ('she noticed that the coasts and ports were empty', *A.* 4.587). Another difference is that she could still see the sails of the Trojan ships: *uidit et aequatis classem procedere uelis* ('and she saw the fleet move on with even sails', *A.* 4.588). In Anna's account Dido did not catch sight of Aeneas: she could only stare in the direction in which he sailed off (*uentos secuta | ... oculis*).

Anna's Dido recalls Ariadne specifically, the "elegiac heroine *par excellence*",¹³⁵ which is marked by a combinatorial allusion to Catullus' *Carmen* 64 and Ovid's *Heroides* 10. Ariadne, too, looked towards the sea from the beach where she was left behind: *prospectans litore* ('looking forth from the coast', *Cat.* 64.52); *desertam in sola miseram se cernat harena* ('she sees herself abandoned, miserable on the lonely sand', *Cat.* 64.57). In her letter to Theseus, Ariadne describes herself sitting on a rock: *aut mare prospiciens in saxo frigida sedi* ('or, looking out upon the sea, I have sat all chilled upon the rock', *Ov. Ep.* 10.49).¹³⁶ Anna's portrayal of Dido after Aeneas' departure is therefore an elaboration and amplification of the already elegiac elements in Virgil's Dido.¹³⁷

The shouting of the absent lover's name is another topos of elegiac farewell scenes.¹³⁸ Dido's calling of Aeneas' name is, again, reminiscent of Ariadne shouting to Theseus on the beach (e.g. *Catullus* 64.132–133).¹³⁹ Anna's words echo *Heroides* 10: *summa Thesea uoce uoco. | 'quo fugis?' exclamo; 'scelerate revertere Theseu! | flecte ratem! numerum non habet illa suum.'* ('I call Theseus with loud voice. "Whither are you fleeing?" I cry; "Come back, wicked Theseus! Turn about your ship! It does not have all of its crew!'", *Ov. Ep.* 10.34–36). The shouting of Theseus' name is a repetitive act, as she has mentioned doing it before (*Ep.* 10.21) and as is suggested by the repetition of his name

be compared to the repetition of *iterum*, for which see Wills 1996: 116–117. His extensive lists do not include *interdum*. For the gemination of that word in the same line only 2.227 seems to be a parallel, where it underlines a repetitive act of launching weapons.

134 See Jöne 2017: 243, who states that Anna's Dido shows the typical behaviour of an abandoned woman in Roman epic. For the beach as marker of elegy, see Sharrock 1990: 571, Santini 1991: 49, Heerink 2015: 196 n.111, and Jöne 2017: 345–346.

135 Newlands 1996: 336.

136 Bruère 1959: 245 n.5. Cf. also the abandoned Phyllis, who watched for Demophon, Theseus' son, on the coast (*Ov. Ep.* 2.121–130).

137 Lee 2017: 66.

138 Jöne 2017: 402.

139 Fernandelli 2009: 155 with n.39.

(*Thesea; Theseu*). Anna's Dido is also calling her lover's name more than once, as the imperfect tense of *uocabat* indicates.

Dido's wish to be taken aboard is yet another reminiscence of Ariadne. In the *Heroides* she says that Theseus' crew is not complete (*Ov. Ep.* 10.36); and in Catullus the Minoan princess even went so far as wishing that she could be Theseus' slave (*Cat.* 64.160–163). Verbally, Dido's wish in Anna's narrative rather recalls a similar impossible suggestion she made in the *Aeneid*: *sola fuga nautas comitabor ouantis?* ('shall I alone accompany the exultant sailors in their flight?', *A.* 4.543).¹⁴⁰ In Virgil this question is part of Dido's *monologue intérieur* when she is alone at night, while Anna's Dido is begging Aeneas in public to join him (although he is already out of sight). The words *infelix* and *orabat* foreshadow the alternative of accompanying Aeneas: death. The combination of these words is reminiscent of Dido's wish when she found out that Aeneas would leave her: *infelix ... Dido | mortem orat* ('unhappy Dido wishes death', *A.* 4.450–451).

Anna stresses Dido's obsession by repeating a similar scene at the beach somewhat later in her narrative: *iam tecta domumque | deserit et rursus portus furibunda reuisit, | si qui te referant conuerso flamine uenti* ('she leaves already her palace and revisits again the port in her frenzy, whether the winds would return you with a reversed gale', 8.95–97). The verb *desero* has obvious elegiac connotations.¹⁴¹ Being abandoned the queen cannot find peace of mind and trades her palace for the coastline. Her frantic state of mind shows from the adjective *furibunda*, an echo of the primary narrator (8.52) and in turn of Virgil's *Aeneid*.¹⁴² Dido's frenzy brings to mind Ariadne once more, who acted like a Bacchante when Theseus left her.¹⁴³ The hope that the winds would bring back Aeneas is also in line with that of an elegiac heroine, as it recalls Phyllis' hope for Demophon's return: *saepe putauit | alba procellosos uela referre Notos* ('often I thought that the stormy southern winds had returned the white sails', *Ov. Ep.* 2.11–12).¹⁴⁴ The repetitiveness of Dido's act is reinforced by the suffix *re-* and the adverb *rursus*. Both can also be read as markers of intertextuality, as

140 See Spaltenstein 1986: 504, who hesitates to read it as an actual allusion: "cette idée est aussi très naturelle." In *A.* 4.540–541, she expressed doubt whether the Trojans would be willing to take her aboard.

141 Cf. *deserta* (8.50) and section 5 above.

142 See section 5 above.

143 In *Cat.* 64.61, Ariadne is compared to the statue of a Bacchante and in *Ov. Ep.* 10.47–48 her ceaseless roaming is put on a par with that of a Bacchante.

144 Anna's *sententia* 'love does never put down hope' (*non umquam spem ponit amor*, 8.95) is a stronger version of a similar thought of Phyllis: 'Hope, too, was slow to leave; we are tardy in believing, when belief brings hurt. You are harmful for me even now, because I love you

Anna's narrative is a replication of Dido in the *Aeneid* and of such other elegiac heroines as Ariadne and Phyllis.¹⁴⁵

This elegiac Dido mirrors two other abandoned women in the *Punica*: Hannibal's Spanish wife Imilce and Regulus' wife Marcia. The former is expelled from her native country to Carthage, when Hannibal is about to begin his march on Italy. The farewell scene takes place on the coast, where she is put on a ship: *steterant in litore* ('they stood on the coast', 3.128). She asks why Hannibal does not want to have her as a member of his army: *mene, oblite tua nostram pendere salute, | abnuis inceptis comitem?* ('Do you forget that our well-being depends on yours? Do you reject me as a companion for your enterprise?', 3.109–110). Her claim that her life depends on that of Hannibal is similar to Anna's claim that Dido's life depended on Aeneas alone (8.81–82). Likewise, he refused to take the Carthaginian queen aboard, though she begged him to be his companion (*comitemque*, 8.87).¹⁴⁶

Marcia was standing on the coast when her husband Regulus was voluntarily taken back to Carthage, where he would receive the death penalty. Her behaviour is very much like Dido's: *tum uero infelix mentem furiata dolore | exclamat fessas tendens ad litora palmas* ('then the unhappy one cried in her frantic state of mind, while stretching her tired hands towards the coast', 6.514–515). She, too, wants to be his 'companion in punishment and death' (*comitem poenaeque necisque*, 6.500) and join him in his misery: 'this alone, husband, this alone I beg: may you allow me to suffer with you all the toils' (*hoc unum, coniunx, ... | unum oro: liceat tecum quoscumque ferentem | ... pati ... labores*, 6.501–503).¹⁴⁷ Anna's Dido had likewise begged (*orabat*) for Aeneas' permission (*paterere*) to be his companion (*comitem*). Of course, one could argue that the similarities between this passage and that of Book 8 are stock elements of farewell scenes and that Marcia echoes the Virgilian Dido and/or other elegiac figures.¹⁴⁸ The point remains that abandoned women in the *Punica* are portrayed as abandoned elegiac heroines from the literary tradition. Anna's Dido

against my own will' (*spes quoque lenta fuit; tarde, quae credita laedunt, | credimus. inuita nunc es amante nocens, Ep. 2.9–10*).

145 For *re-* and *rursus* as a metapoetical signposts, see Introduction, section 5.2.

146 A difference is that Imilce, unlike Dido, finally accepts her fate, as she realizes that she cannot alter the situation: *cedo equidem nec fata moror* ('I yield indeed and do not delay my fate', 3.115). Imilce is in this respect reminiscent of Cornelia, Pompey's wife, who is also forced to leave her husband and put on a ship (Luc. 5.799–801).

147 Marcia repeats this idea a few lines later: *adest comes ultima fati* ('here is a last companion of your fate', 6.511). For this scene, see also Chapter 2, section 3.1.

148 Fröhlich 2000: 296 notes for example that *tum uero infelix* in 6.514 echoes Virg. *A.* 4.450.

therefore embodies the same traits as her elegiac predecessors (Virgil's Dido, Ariadne, Phyllis) and women in similar circumstances in the *Punica* (Imilce, Marcia).

In the next scene Anna takes us to Dido's bedroom, where the queen went after her visits to the beach. She refrained from touching the spousal bed, but obsessively fondled images of Iulus and Aeneas.

mox turbida anhelum
 rettulit in thalamos cursum *subitoque* tremore
 substitit *et* sacrum timuit tetigisse **cubile**.
 inde **amens nunc** sideream fulgentis **Iuli**
effigiem fouet amplexu, nunc tota repente
 ad uultus conuersa tuos **ab imagine pendet**
 conqueriturque tibi et sperat *responsa* *remitti*. (8.88–94)

She hurried back to her room, gasping in her confusion, and with a sudden quivering, she stood still and feared to touch the sacred bed. Now she frantically fondles with her embrace the starry image of shiny Iulus, the next moment she turned completely to your face and hangs upon your image, making complaints to you and wishing that answers would be returned.

Like her visits to the beach, this was a repetitive action, as the iteration of the suffix *re-*, the polysyndeton (*-que, et, -que*), and the gemination of *nunc* underline. The whole scene breathes Dido's restlessness and indecisiveness.¹⁴⁹

At the same time, the suffix *re-* is (again) a marker of intertextuality.¹⁵⁰ The embracing of Aeneas' image recalls the beginning of *Aeneid* 4, where Dido listens in adoration to Aeneas' stories all over again: *Iliacosque iterum demens audire labores | exposcit pendetque iterum narrantis ab ore* ('again in her madness she craves to hear the toils of Ilium and again hangs on the speaker's lips', *A.* 4.78–79). There, too, Dido shows signs of obsessive adoration of Aeneas, as the repetition of *iterum* and the adjective *demens* indicate. Anna's narrative

149 Other examples are the iteration of dentals and sibilants in 8.88–94 and words that denote suddenness (*mox*, 8.88; *turbida*, 8.88; *subitoque*, 8.89; *repente*, 8.92). See also Ariemma 2000b: 53 on the repetition of sounds in this passage.

150 A comparable repetition of *re-* can be found in the scene of Creusa in *Virg. A.* 2.739–753: *resedit* (2.739); *reddita* (2.740); *respexi, reflexi* (2.741); *repeto* (2.749); *renouare, reuert* (2.750); *repeto, retro* (2.753). Here, too, one can read *re-* on a metapoetical level. See Introduction, section 5.2.

has a similar gemination (*nunc ... nunc*) and a synonymous adjective (*amens*). In the *Punica*, the obsessiveness of Dido goes one step further, as she does not hang on Aeneas' lips (*pendet ... narrantis ab ore*), but on his image (*ab imagine pendet*). The fondling of Aeneas' and Ascanius' images is a realization of the queen's imagination in *Aeneid* 4. There she finds herself alone in her palace, but still sees Aeneas and Ascanius before her mind's eye: *illum absens absentem auditque uidetque, | aut gremio Ascanium genitoris imagine capta | detinet* ('though absent, each from each, she hears him, she sees him, or, captivated by the image of his father, she holds Ascanius on her lap', *A.* 4.83–85).¹⁵¹ In Anna's account Aeneas has not only left her palace, but Carthage—which drives Dido to caress lifeless images instead. Her feelings of abandonment and longing have not only continued after Aeneas had left Carthage, but have even intensified.

The spousal bed and the image of Aeneas also occur at the end of *Aeneid* 4, but in a totally different context: they are tokens of Aeneas that end up on the pyre: *notumque cubile | conspexit* ('and she looked upon the familiar bed', *A.* 4.648–649); *effigiemque toro locat* ('and she places his image on the bed', *A.* 4.508).¹⁵² In Anna's account, Dido will also gather memorials of Aeneas on the pyre: *congessit in atram | cuncta tui monumenta pyram et non prospera dona* ('she piled up all memorials and ill-starred gifts of you on the black pyre', 8.102–103). In 8.88–94, however, she still shows almost religious awe for the bed they shared: she does not even dare to touch it, as if it were a sacred object (*sacrum timuit tetigisse cubile*). Iulus is cast as a god-like figure: his effigy is called *sidereus*, an adjective with divine connotations. In the *Punica* only the souls of the loyal Saguntines that committed suicide (2.696) and the son of emperor Domitian (3.629) receive this epithet.¹⁵³ The boy himself is called *fulgentis*, which is an allusion to the ominous flame that appeared on his head back in Troy (*A.* 2.682–686).¹⁵⁴ Dido's embrace of Iulus' image is paralleled with Anna's supplication at the knees of 'sacred Iulus' (*sacro ... Iulo*, 8.71) at the beach of Latium (8.74), which forges again a link between the two sisters.¹⁵⁵

151 Note the gemination of *-que*, which recurs in Anna's narrative.

152 Dido uses the *effigies* of Aeneas in this magic ritual as a kind of voodoo doll. See Austin 1955: 151.

153 Lee 2017: 68–69.

154 Ariemma 2000b: 53. Spaltenstein 1986: 505 remarks that the word indicates either the shining marble of a statue or the beauty of the boy himself. He is called *pulcher Iulus* in the *Aeneid* (e.g. *A.* 5.570). *Sidereus*, too, can have connotations of beauty. For this use of *sidereus* in Statius' *Thebaid*, see Van den Broek 2016: 59.

155 On this scene, see section 8 above.

Dido embracing the images of Iulus and Aeneas also calls to mind the last night together of Pompey and his wife Cornelia, right before she is sent off to Lesbos, as Lucan narrates in *Bellum Civile* 5. The intratextual parallels with Imilce and Marcia, who are also modelled after Lucan's Cornelia, have already prepared for this intertextual allusion. Dido's fondling of the images recalls Cornelia embracing her husband: *fouet amplexu grauidum Cornelia curis | pectus* ('Cornelia hugs in her embrace his breast weighed down with troubles', Luc. 5.735–736). Pompey remains resolved to send her away in safety, after which she decides no longer to postpone their separation: *exiluit stratis amens tormenta que nulla | uult differre mora. non maesti pectora Magni | sustinet amplexu dulci, non colla tenere* ('Up she jumped, demented, abandoning the bed and wishing to postpone her agony by no delay. She cannot bear to hold in sweet embrace unhappy Magnus' breast or neck', Luc. 5.791–793). In the night that follows, Cornelia does not touch the side of the bed where her husband would have been: *non iuuat in toto corpus iactare cubili: | seruatur pars illa tori* ('she does not like to fling her body over all the couch: that part of the bed is reserved', Luc. 5.812–813). While this last sentence bears similarity to Silius' Dido refraining from touching the spousal bed, Cornelia's behaviour is in stark contrast with Dido's. Although Cornelia feels love for Pompey, she shows restraint by repeatedly (*non ... non*) refraining from embracing her present husband, whereas Dido repeatedly (*nunc ... nunc*) did embrace the images of Iulus and Aeneas.¹⁵⁶ Dido even talks to the image of Aeneas and hopes it will return answers (*sperat responsa remitti*). Her love for Aeneas has really driven her mad (*amens*),¹⁵⁷ turning her into a kind of Pygmalion. This sculptor, too, talks to the still lifeless statue and imagines it to return his affection: *oscula dat reddique putat loquiturque tenetque* ('he gives her kisses and thinks they are returned and talks to her and holds her', Ov. *Met.* 10.256).¹⁵⁸ But in Pygmalion's case, his wishes will come true, whereas in Dido's case it remains wishful thinking.

The last part of Anna's first narrative (8.98–103) deals with the magic ritual that Dido performed with the help of Massylian priests. Again, her words correspond with a passage from *Aeneid* 4, in which Dido announces her plans for

156 Embracing is often a way of postponing someone's departure. See Jöne 2017: 367–372. Cornelia could have done so, but chooses not to. Dido embraces the image of Ascanius when he and his father are long gone. This stresses that Dido's action is purposeless.

157 There might be a pun here on the similarity in sound between *amens* and *amans*. Cf. the proverbial *amens amans* in e.g. Pl. *Mer.* 82 and Ter. *An.* 218. See Otto 1890: 18 s.v. *amare* 6.

158 The triple repetition of *-que* of the Ovidian line might be echoed with the triple *-que* in the Silian passage, albeit not in the same line (8.88, 8.89, 8.94).

these magic rites to Anna (*A.* 4.478–498).¹⁵⁹ In the *Punica*, we see this scene through the eyes of Anna, who was a witness of the actual event, as she states explicitly (*uidi*, 8.102). Therefore, it also draws attention to the fact that both Aeneas and the primary narratees have no direct knowledge of these events.¹⁶⁰ Anna gives her own assessment of the magical rites we already know from the *Aeneid* and describes them in very negative terms:

ad **magicas** etiam fallax atque **improba** gentis
Massylae leuitas descendere compulit **artes**.
heu sacri **uatum** errores! dum **numina noctis**
eliciunt spondentque nouis medicamina curis,
quod uidi decepta **nefas!** conguessit in **atram**
cuncta tui monumenta pyram et **non prospera dona.** (8.98–103)

The deceitful and wicked shallowness of the Massylian people compelled her to descend to magic arts. Ah, these accursed delusions of priests! While they called up the deities of the night and promise a medicine for her recent pains, what an impiety did I, who was deceived, see! She piled up all memorials and ill-starred gifts of yours on the black pyre.

The Massylian priests promise a cure for Dido's state of mind, but their words are deceitful and have no real value (*fallax atque improba ... leuitas*).¹⁶¹ In fact, they are abject from both a moral (*improba*) and divine (*nefas*) point of view. The paradoxical exclamation *heu sacri uatum errores* brings this to the fore: the priests are prophets (*uates*) that should have knowledge of the future, but in

159 See Spaltenstein 1986: 505–506 and Ariemma 2000b: 55 for parallels.

160 See Chapter 3, section 3.2, on *uidi*, marking Marus as an eyewitness. Achaemenides uses *uidi* twice in his narrative on the Cyclops (*A.* 3.623–627), for which see Papanghelis 1999: 281 and Heerink 2017: 69–71. Aeneas, too, stresses his status of eyewitness at the beginning of his narrative: *quaeque ipse misserrima uidi* ('the most piteous sights that I saw myself', *A.* 2.5). The stress on seeing also recalls tragic messengers, who frequently refer to what they have seen (and their narratees did not). See Horsfall 2008: 49–50, Casali 2017: 99, and De Jong 2017: 145 on *A.* 2.5, and De Jong 1991: 9–10 on Euripidean messengers as eyewitnesses.

161 In the *Aeneid*, Dido was advised by only one Massylian priestess (*Massylae gentis ... sacerdos*, *A.* 4.483), who also promised a cure for her problems: *haec se carminibus promittit soluere mentes | quas uelit, ast aliis duras immittere curas* ('with her spells she promises to set free the hearts of whom she wishes, but on others to bring cruel pains', *A.* 4.487–488). That her plan did not work out is shown by Anna's use of the word *cura*. Instead of inflicting love pain on Aeneas (implied in *aliis*) as planned, Dido is troubled by *curae* herself (*nouis ... curis*).

reality they stray from the right path (*errores*).¹⁶² Anna's negative judgement of the seers is a specific interpretation of a much-disputed clause in the *Aeneid*. When the Virgilian Dido had the entrails of a victim inspected, the Virgilian narrator inserts an apostrophe: *heu, uatum ignarae mentes* (*A.* 4.65). This can be taken as a critique either of human ignorance of the future and specifically that of Dido ('ah, minds who are ignorant of seers'), or of the seers themselves ('ah, ignorant minds of seers').¹⁶³ The rituals she performs do not give her peace of mind, just as the Massylian priests in Anna's narrative are unable to cure her pangs of love. Anna follows the second line of interpretation and accuses the seers for having misled her sister.¹⁶⁴

While accusing the priests, Anna tries to downplay the role of both her sister and herself. They pushed her to perform these rites (*compulit*), which was in fact misleading, as *fallax* and *errores* indicate.¹⁶⁵ In the *Aeneid*, Dido claimed that she turned to magic unwillingly, not because any priest has forced her, but because Aeneas has rejected her: *magicas inuitam accingier artes* ('against my will I have armed myself with magic arts', *A.* 4.493). Anna, however, portrays Dido as a victim of these priests, instead of Aeneas.

Anna admits that she was fooled (*decepta*) too, and in addition states that she was only a bystander watching the rites to be performed (*uidi*), while her sister actually acted upon the advice of the priests to build a pyre for burning all gifts of Aeneas (*congessit*). These words, again, echo Dido's plans in the *Aeneid*: *abolere nefandi | cuncta uiri monimenta iuuat* ('it pleases to destroy all memorials of that impious man', *A.* 4.497–498). But whereas Dido thought it would be helpful to burn all memories of Aeneas, whom she calls impious, Anna calls the ritual itself impious (*nefas*). Where Dido was relying on northern African magic, Anna distances herself from these rites, voicing a much more Roman point of view.¹⁶⁶ Again we can understand these changes when we realize that she is talking to Aeneas.

162 Paradoxically, Anna calls these fallacies 'sacred'. The word *sacer* has both positive and negative connotations, see Forcellini s.v. and Lee 2017: 71. I follow in my translation Spaltenstein 1986: 505, who opts for the negative meaning. Ariemma 2000b: 56 follows Ruperti in understanding *sacri* as an enallage with *uatum* ('delusions of sacred men'). Perhaps the ambiguity of the phrase is a nod towards the ambiguity of *A.* 4.65, on which see below.

163 Gildenhard 2012: 101–103 gives an overview of the different interpretations, himself opting for *uatum* as an objective genitive.

164 Lee 2017: 71 argues that Anna "sententiously misquotes" *A.* 4.65. That is not the case: she gives her own view on the events.

165 See also Lee 2017: 70–71.

166 Servius *ad A.* 4.493 compares Dido's reluctance to fall back upon magic with the Roman attitude towards these rites: *cum multa sacra Romani suscipierent, semper magica damnarunt* ('while the Romans were suspicious of many sacred rituals, they always condemned

Anna's account of these dark rituals also recalls the ceremony that a young Hannibal attended in *Punica* 1, right before his father made him swear his famous oath of eternal hatred of the Romans. There, too, a priestess from the same Massylian tribe was involved: *euhantis Massylae* ('the Massylian priestess raving in her frenzy', 1.101). She had invoked the gods of the underworld: *Hennaeae numina diuae | atque Acheronta uocat* ('she calls the deities of Henna's goddess and the Acheron', 1.93–94). These gods are reminiscent of the 'deities of the night' (*numina noctis*, 8.100) that the priests of Dido call upon. Comparable is also the element of compulsion: Hamilcar orders his son to enter the temple where the priestess is performing her rites (*patrio iussu*, 1.99), like Dido is compelled (*compulit*, 8.99) to seek recourse to magic.

The two scenes are interconnected on a thematic level, too. The ritual in Book 1 marks Hannibal's transition from a boy to the avenger of Dido. He takes over Dido's lust for revenge, which results in his 'wicked virtue' (*improba uirtus*, 1.58), mirroring the wickedness (*improba ... leuitas*, 8.98–99) of the Massylian priests in Anna's account.¹⁶⁷ He also inherits her destructive nature. When Hannibal sees depictions of the First Punic War on a temple in Liternum at the end of *Punica* 6, he orders his soldiers to set the temple on fire: *in cineres monumenta date atque inuoluite flammis* ('give this monument to ashes and envelop it in flames', 6.716). This final line of Book 6 mirrors Dido's destruction of Aeneas' memorials, which she had gathered on a pyre (*monumenta*, 8.103; same metrical *sedes*). The parallel also marks the uselessness of their destructive acts: just as Dido's pyre could not blot out the memory of Aeneas, Hannibal, too, was unable to abolish the Roman victory of the First Punic War or prevent a second one.¹⁶⁸

By mentioning Dido's pyre and Aeneas' gifts, Anna rounds off her narrative at exactly the same point where the primary narrator ended his short account of Dido's death. Anna repeats his 'black pyre' (*atram | ... pyram*, 8.51–52 = 8.102–103) in exactly the same metrical position. She also refers to the sword as a lethal gift: *donum exitiale*, 8.53 ~ *non prospera dona*, 8.103. Both narrators describe Dido's pyre and Aeneas' gift in negative terms. The ring composition suggests

magic'). In the *Punica*, Dido is made the founder of the Carthaginian practice of child sacrifice (4.765–767). See Littlewood 2013: 205, who notes the stress on nocturnal darkness and chthonic rituals in Silius' Anna episode. This turns it into "a sinister version (...) from Ovid's lively aetiological narrative".

167 Stocks 2014: 93 with n.39.

168 See also Chapter 2, section 3.1.

that Anna, like the primary narrator before, will only implicitly refer to Dido's death, while leaving the actual suicide untold. This prompts a reaction from Aeneas, who had indicated before that he wanted to learn how the queen died (8.77–78).¹⁶⁹

10 Aeneas' Narrative

Silius' Aeneas, too, is cast as an elegiac lover in his speech to Anna, as has been observed.¹⁷⁰ The primary narrator, introducing his speech, states that he is 'struck again with sweet love' (*Aeneas dulci repetitus amore*, 8.104).¹⁷¹ Aeneas' speech itself ends with the word *amori* (8.113), so love literally surrounds it.¹⁷² The word *repetitus* indicates that Aeneas has the same feelings all over again, but it also functions as a marker of intertextuality: the text we are reading is a replay of his attempt to speak with Dido in the underworld: *demisit lacrimas dulcique adfatus amore est* ('he sent down tears and addressed [Dido] with sweet love', A. 6.455).¹⁷³ The repetition of words and sounds indicates that Aeneas feels the same emotions as in the underworld. His speech to Anna also repeats the general content of his words in *Aeneid* 6. After an oath (8.105–107 ~ A. 6.458–459), the Trojan hero stresses that he left Dido and Carthage unwillingly (8.108–109 ~ A. 6.460) and blames the gods for his departure (8.109–111 ~ A. 6.461–463).¹⁷⁴

On a microlevel there are, however, differences. In the *Aeneid*, his oath had a grander register, as he swore upon the stars, gods and faithfulness. In the *Punica*, he swears upon his new land and Iulus:

**tellurem hanc iuro, uota inter nostra frequenter
auditam uobis, iuro caput, Anna, tibi que
germanaeque tuae dilectum mitis Iuli (8.105–107)**

169 Fernandelli 2009: 151–152.

170 Ariemma 2000b: 57, Rosati 2005: 145–147, and Walter 2014: 280.

171 The collocation *dulci ... amore* recalls Ariadne's unconditional love for Theseus: *omnibus his Thesei dulcem praeoptarit amorem* ('she chose before all the sweet love of Theseus', Cat. 64.120).

172 Fernandelli 2009: 149.

173 Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 25 note the parallel. For other instances of *re*-words which function as metapoetical signposts in this narrative, see section 9 above. See also Introduction section 5.2.

174 Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 26 provide an extensive comparison of both passages.

I swear upon this land, which you have heard often when I made vows,
I swear upon this head, Anna, of gentle Iulus, beloved by you and your
sister.

The wording of his oath rather recalls the oath he made to Anna in the *Fasti*, where he swore upon Italy and the Penates:¹⁷⁵

Anna, per hanc iuro, quam quondam audire solebas
tellurem fato prosperiore dari,
perque deos comites, hac nuper sede locatos ... (Ov. *Fast.* 3.613–615)

Anna, I swear by this land, which you once used to hear was given by
a more favourable destiny, and by the gods who came with me, newly
settled in this place ...

The close resemblance also highlights the change Aeneas makes. In Ovid, Aeneas' narratees might first expect he is swearing upon Dido (*per hanc*), only to be corrected by *tellurem* in the next line. In Silius, it is immediately clear that he swears upon Italy, but he surprisingly includes Iulus in the second part of his oath.¹⁷⁶ The gods in Ovid are substituted by 'gentle Iulus' (*mitis Iuli*), who was loved by both Anna and Dido.¹⁷⁷ This gives Aeneas' oath a distinctly more elegiac touch than the one in the *Fasti*.¹⁷⁸

Aeneas diminishes his own responsibility in leaving Carthage even more than in the *Aeneid*. According to Silius' Aeneas, Mercury had threatened him and forcefully put him aboard his vessel. The god is even made responsible for an offshore wind: *magna minatus | meque sua ratibus dextra imposuisset et alto | egisset rapidis classem Cyllenius Euris* ('after strong threats the Cyllenian god put me on my ship by his own hand and drove the fleet with swift south-eastern winds to open sea', 8.109–111). In *Aeneid* 6, his apologetic remarks to Dido's ghost were much vaguer. Then, too, he stated that he left the queen unwillingly (*inuitus*, A. 6.460), but did not blame a specific god: *me iussa deum (...) imperiis egere suis*, ('the gods' decrees drove me with their behests', A. 6.461 and 463).

175 Brugnoli 1991: 160–161.

176 Heyworth 2019: 207 draws attention to the changed position of *tellurem* in Silius.

177 Iulus' inclusion in an oath hints, again, at his supernatural status, as predecessor of the Roman emperors. See section 8 above. Aeneas swearing by his son's head 'confirms' Iulus' words in *Aeneid* 9: *per caput hoc iuro, per quod pater ante solebat* ('by this head, by which my father was wont to swear before', A. 9.300). Spaltenstein 1986: 506 and Ariemma 2000b: 57–58 both note the intertextual connection.

178 For *mitis* as a generic marker of elegy, see section 6 above.

In his speech to Anna, Aeneas exaggerates the role of Mercury compared to *Aeneid* 4, where Mercury did not utter threats or force him physically to board his ship. By doing so, Aeneas expresses more clearly that the gods were responsible for him leaving Carthage.¹⁷⁹

While the Silian Aeneas denies any responsibility, he emphasizes his distress over leaving Dido: *respicens aegerque animi tum regna reliqui | uestra* ('looking back and sorrowful in my soul I then left your kingdom', 8.108–109).¹⁸⁰ His feelings are similar to those of Dido after his departure. According to Anna she had a 'sorrowful heart' (*aegram mentem*, 8.118). Another example of the "emotionally charged atmosphere"¹⁸¹ in this scene is Aeneas' suggestion that his relation with Dido was a marriage: he had left their bedroom (*abscessem thalamo*, 8.109), because Mercury forced him to; *thalamus* is a common metonym of marriage, which also features in Dido's complaints after she was abandoned by Aeneas in *Aeneid* 4.¹⁸² By saying that he left their *thalamus*, Aeneas seems to acknowledge the marriage. At the same time, he claims that Mercury

179 So Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy 1986: 2499, Ganiban 2010: 95, Stocks 2014: 92 n.38, and Lee 2017: 75, but *pace* Dietrich 2004: 12. The unfavourable portrayal of Mercury here contrasts with two other scenes in the *Punica*, in which the god functions as a helper. In Book 3, the god appears in a portentous dream to Hannibal (3.168), which reignited his fighting spirit. Unlike Aeneas, Hannibal is happy with Mercury's intervention and offers a bull to him: *niueoque ante omnia tauro | placatus meritis monitor Cyllenius aris* ('first of all the admonisher Cyllenius was propitiated on deserving altars with a snow-white bull', 3.218–219). Note the identical metrical *sedes* of *Cyllenius* and recurring sounds of these lines in 8.110–111. In Book 13, the soul of Pomponia declares to her son Scipio that Mercury accompanied her to the Elysian fields: *miti dextra Cyllenia proles | imperio Iouis Elysias deduxit in oras* ('with gentle hand the offspring of Cyllene brought me to Elysian shores on the authority of Jupiter', 13.630–631). For the motif of gods forcing humans by touching them with their hand, see Hom. *Il.* 15.694 and Ennius fr. 581 (Skutsch).

180 Looking back is a topos in farewell scenes, as Jöne 2017: 385–394 explains. Usually, it is the woman who looks back. Aeneas turns his eyes to Carthage in *A.* 5.3 (*moenia respiciens*), but there he shows no emotions, as Rosati 2005: 146–147 notes. Aeneas in 8.108 rather seems to recall the elegiac Anna in Ov. *Fast.* 3.566: *moenia respiciens, dulce sororis opus* ('looking back at the walls, her sister's sweet work'). See also Porte 1985: 146 n.1, Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 26, and Fernandelli 2009: 150–151. The motif of looking back returns in *Punica* 12 when the Romans look back to their loved ones as they march out of their besieged city: *respectantque suos* ('they look back repeatedly to their family', 12.594). See Telg genannt Kortmann 2018: 195.

181 Manuwald 2011: 59.

182 When Dido is constructing the pyre, Anna has to fetch the weapons that Aeneas left in her chamber: *arma uiri thalamo quae fixa reliquit | impius* ('the weapons of the man, which the impious one left hanging in my bedroom', *A.* 4.495–496). Dido uses the same word in two other instances as a synonym of marriage (*A.* 4.18, 4.550). See also Lee 2017: 75 and *OLD* s.v. *thalamus* 2b.

has forcefully taken him out of their relationship and frames his departure as a “personal tragedy”,¹⁸³ much in line with Dido’s perspective in *Aeneid* 4.

Aeneas, however, rounds off his speech with a question that contains an accusation of both sisters:

sed cur (heu seri monitus!), cur tempore tali
incustodito saeuire dedistis amori? (8.112–113)

But why (ah, too late are these warnings!), why did you both allow un-
guarded love to rage in such a time?

The second plural of *dedistis* means that Aeneas is not only talking here to Anna, but that he is also apostrophizing Dido.¹⁸⁴ He imagines that both sisters were in great distress because of his departure (*tempore tali*).¹⁸⁵ At the same time he blames Dido for not having curbed her fatal passion for him.¹⁸⁶ The word *incustoditus* (‘unguarded’) seems to be an accusation primarily addressed to Anna: she should not have left her sister alone in her grief, because in that moment of inattention Dido took the opportunity to kill herself.¹⁸⁷

Silius’ Aeneas shows more of his feelings than the hero of the *Aeneid*. But despite his gentler tone and use of words that suggest a marriage (*thalamus*), he in fact denies *any* responsibility for what happened. He accuses Mercury of having forcefully taken him away to Italy and suggests that both sisters let things get out of control.

11 Anna’s Second Narrative

Anna’s emotions are stirred up, probably by the accusations of Aeneas. She was already crying when she started speaking for the first time (*uerba trahens*

183 Manuwald 2011: 59.

184 Aeneas has consistently coupled Dido and Anna in his speech: *auditam uobis* (‘that you both heard of’, 8.106); *tibique | germanaeque tuae* (‘by you and your sister’, 8.106–107); *regna ... | uestra* (‘the kingdom of you both’, 8.108–109).

185 The phrase suggests great calamity as it echoes Fabius’ words in 7.227; there, the Roman general refers with *tempore tali* to the war with Hannibal.

186 Line 8.113 recalls A. 4.532: *saeuit amor*. Or does Aeneas suggest that Anna, too, was in love with him? See for this idea Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 27; cf. also section 8 above and Lee 2017: 73–74.

187 Aeneas’ question recalls Anna’s counterfactual wish to have joined Dido’s suicide in 8.83: *heu cur non idem mihi tum!*

largis cum fletibus Anna, 8.79), but now she can hardly speak anymore: *uoluens uix murmur anhelum | inter singultus labrisque trementibus Anna* ('Anna [responds] hardly producing a panting murmuring between her sobs and quivering with her lips', 8.114–115).¹⁸⁸ She then continues to narrate Dido's actual suicide. Her narrative is also an apology for her own role in it, as Aeneas has just accused her of not keeping an eye on Dido (*incustodito ... amori*). Her narrative differs at several points from the canonical version of the event in *Aeneid* 4. Anna makes her own role greater and more rational, while continuing to cast Dido in the role of an elegiac heroine.

Anna opens her narrative with a description of an expiatory sacrifice she was performing to appease Pluto and Proserpina:

nigro forte **Ioui**, cui tertia regna laborant,
 atque atri sociae thalami **noua sacra parabam**,
 quis **aegram mentem** et trepidantia corda leuaret
 infelix **germana** tori, furuasque trahebam
 ipsa manu properans ad **uisa pianda** bidentes. (8.116–120)

I happened to be preparing strange sacrifices for the dark Jupiter, for whom the third realm labours, and for the companion of his dark bedroom; these had to mitigate the sorrowful and trembling heart of my sister, unhappy in love. I was hastily bringing black sheep with my own hand to avert my visions.

The ritual recalls Dido's 'strange sacrifices' that were meant to ease her sorrows: *sacra Ioui Stygio, quae rite incepta parauit, | perficere est animus finemque imponere curis* ('it is my intention to fulfil the sacrifices for Stygian Jupiter, which I have duly begun and prepared, to put an end to my woes', *A.* 4.638–639); the Virgilian Anna does not suspect that these rites are a cover-up for her suicide: *non tamen Anna nouis praetexere funera sacris | germanam credit* ('yet Anna does not think that her sister veils her death with strange sacrifices', *A.* 4.500–501).

In the *Punica*, Anna stresses that she is the only one performing this ritual (*parabam*, 8.117; *trahebam*, 8.119; *ipsa manu properans*, 8.120; *oro ... ac ... purgor*,

188 I follow Spaltenstein 1986: 506 and Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 27 in retaining the manuscript reading *uoluens* over Håkanson's emendation *soluens*, which is taken over by Delz. A parallel with Stat. *Theb.* 10.440 renders a change of the text unnecessary: *supremaque murmura uoluens* ('producing his final murmurings').

8.125), without any mention of Dido's involvement.¹⁸⁹ In fact, the sacrifices are an appeasement for the apparition of Sychaeus that Anna had in her sleep (*ad uisa pianda*, 8.120). She had heard him call Dido's name three times and had seen his joyful appearance:

namque et per somnum dirus me impleuerat horror
 terque suam Dido, ter cum clamore uocarat
 et laeta exultans ostenderat ora Sychaeus. (8.121–123)

For a horrible fear had filled me in my sleep. Three times, three times Sychaeus had with a loud cry called Dido his own and had shown a joyful face while rejoicing.

Sychaeus claims Dido 'as his own' (*suam*) and is filled with joy, because he knows that his wife will join him soon. Sychaeus' voice also appears in the *Aeneid*, where it comes out of the shrine dedicated to him in Dido's palace: *hinc exaudiri uoces et uerba uocantis | uisa uiri* ('from within [Dido] heard, it seemed, the voice and words of her husband calling', *A.* 4.460–461).¹⁹⁰ In the *Punica*, Anna, not Dido, hears Sychaeus' voice and even sees him. Note the change in meaning of *uisa* from 'it seemed' to 'visions'. Anna understands the words and expression of Sychaeus as being ominous and tries to prevent her sister's death. In doing so, she—ironically—loses sight of her sister and thereby gives her the opportunity to kill herself.

Anna's claim to have performed strange sacrifices (*noua sacra*) to dark gods (*nigro Ioui; atri sociae thalami*) seems paradoxical. In her previous narrative she had explicitly distanced herself from the magical rites that Dido and the Mas-sylian priests had performed (8.98–102), which elicited similar deities (*numina noctis*, 8.100).¹⁹¹ The confession that she was also involved in such rituals makes

189 In *A.* 4.635–636, it is Dido who asks Anna via the wet nurse to purify her body with water (8.125) and bring sheep for a sacrifice (8.119–120).

190 Spaltenstein 1986: 507. Anna's version also recalls Dido from the *Heroides*, as Ariemma 2000b: 60 notes: *hinc ego me sensi noto quater ore citari; | ipse sono tenui dixit: 'Elissa, ueni!'* ('from within it four times have I heard myself called by a voice well known; he himself said in faintly sounding tone: "Elissa, come!"; *Ov. Ep.* 7.101–102). In the *Punica*, too, it is clear that it is Sychaeus who is calling and that he invites Dido to join him; similar is also the multiple calling (*quater ~ ter*). A difference is of course that Dido heard his voice, not Anna.

191 The repetition of the adjective *nouus* reinforces the connection of the two scenes. Dido's 'recent/strange sorrows' (*nouis ... curis*, 8.101) drive her in the hands of the Massylian priests, while Anna uses *noua sacra* to quell her sister's distress.

sense for the question of responsibility: the sacrifice was an ultimate attempt to save Dido. Anna bounces back the responsibility to Aeneas, albeit implicitly. She does so by repeating words from his claim that he left Dido with a sorrowful mind (*aegerque animi*, 8.108). Anna was trying to remedy Dido's depression (*aegram mentem*, 8.118), which he had caused by his departure.¹⁹²

Whereas the Virgilian Dido carefully plans her suicide, Anna portrays her sister's actions as irrational. Again, the queen descended to the shore (*ad litora*, 8.126 ~ *litore*, 8.84)¹⁹³ and even gave kisses to the sand where Aeneas' had walked before:

illa cito passu peruecta ad **litora** mutae
oscula, qua steteras, **bis terque** infixit harenae
 deinde **amplexa sinu** late uestigia fouit,
 ceu cinerem orbatae pressant ad pectora matres. (8.126–129)

She went with swift pace to the shore and gave two or three times kisses to the silent sand where you had been standing. Then she caringly embraced your footsteps, pressing it to her breasts, like mothers bereft of their children press their ashes to their chests.

The scene recalls Ariadne touching the traces that Theseus had left on their bed (*tua ... uestigia tango*, Ov. *Ep.* 10.53). Anna has told before that Dido was embracing the images of Iulus and Aeneas (*effigiem fouet amplexu*, 8.92), but here she acts even more strikingly in that she presses sand to her breast. Dido acts as if a loved one has died, as she is compared with mothers caressing the ashes of their deceased children.¹⁹⁴ Verbal echoes evoke a sinister comparison with Meleager's family in the *Metamorphoses*. After the hero's demise his mother

192 Like Aeneas, Anna refers to Dido by the word *germana* (8.107 ~ 8.119). The repetition of *thalamus* is also conspicuous: because Aeneas had left the bedroom of Dido (*abscessem thalamo*, 8.109), Anna now has to make sacrifices to the infernal couple of Pluto and Proserpina (*atri sociae thalami*, 8.117). Lee 2017: 81 suggests that Dido's unhappy relationship with Aeneas is contrasted here with the marriage of Proserpina and Pluto "which (after its violent beginning) seems to have been a partnership of equals".

193 Again, Catullus' Ariadne is evoked; verbal resonances recall her arrival at Dia: *aut ut uecti rati spumosa ad litora Diae* ('or how the ship was brought to the foaming shores of Dia', Cat. 64.121). This reference to *Carmen* 64 is not listed by Fernandelli 2009: 156 n.46.

194 The 'silent sand' prepares for this simile, as the ashes of the deceased are often called *mutus*. Cf. Cat. 101.4 (*mutam ... cinerem*) and Prop. 2.1.77 (*mutae ... fauillae*), both cited by Spaltenstein 1986: 507. In the *Aeneid*, Dido complains that she does not even have a child of Aeneas, which would have made his departure more bearable (*A.* 4.327–330).

commits suicide when she hears the news of her son's death (*Met.* 8.531–532). Dido's actions on the beach particularly recall the reaction of Meleager's sisters:

dumque manet corpus, corpus refouentque fountque.
 oscula dant ipsi, posito dant oscula lecto;
 post **cinerem** cineres haustos **ad pectora pressant**
 (*Ov. Met.* 8.537–539)¹⁹⁵

While his corpse remains, they caress the corpse over and over again. They give him kisses and give kisses to the bier as it stands there; when he is ashes, they gather his ashes and press them to their chests.

The repetitive nature of their acts, in Ovid iconically evoked by verbal repetition (*corpus, corpus; refouentque fountque; oscula dant ... dant oscula; cinerem cineres*), returns in Anna's account of Dido's grief with the phrase *bis terque* ('two or three times', 8.127).

This collocation also has ominous connotations, as it recalls the aid of Tisiphone in the suicide of Saguntum's nobles. After the Fury had set fire to the pyre and had helped a father kill his child with a sword, Tisiphone cracks her whip several times: *impulit ensem | et dirum insonuit Stygio bis terque flagello* ('she pushes the sword and made two or three times a dire sound with her Stygian whip', 2.615–616).¹⁹⁶ The sword and pyre feature prominently in Dido's death as well. The same word *ensis* is used twice in Anna's narrative (8.148–149). Dido's elevated pyre recalls that of Saguntum: *euasit propere in celsam, quam struxerat ante | magna mole, pyram, cuius de sede dabatur | cernere ... totam Carthaginis urbem* ('She climbed hastily the high pyre, which she had built before, a huge structure. From its site one could see ... the whole city of Carthage', 8.131–133).¹⁹⁷ The Saguntine pyre was also elevated, huge, and built in

195 In addition to the verbal correspondences the Silian text also preserves the metrical position of *oscula, cinerem* and *ad pectora* of the model. Several commentators have noted the similarity between the two scenes, e.g. Spaltenstein 1986: 507 and Ariemma 2000b: 62. The latter also cites other examples of similar scenes.

196 The collocation *bis terque* can be found in yet two other places in the *Punica*, also in portentous contexts. In 4.118, the dove that landed on young Scipio's helmet cooed 'two or three times' before it flew towards heaven, predicting the boy's future command; when the senate is debating whether to give Scipio the command over the troops that are to be sent to Carthage, Jupiter thunders *bis terque* (15.143), so asserting his divine assent.

197 *Magna mole* can also be understood as 'with great difficulty', perhaps an ironic echo of *tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem* ('such difficulty it was to found the Roman people', *A.* 1.33).

the middle of the city: *certatim structus surrectae molis ad astra | in media stetit urbe rogas* ('a pyre, built zealously, was standing in the centre of the city, whose structure rose to the stars', 2.599–600). The Saguntines throw all their belongings on the pyre (2.600–608), like Dido did with the gifts of Aeneas (8.102–103). The parallels between these scenes underline the fact that both have been betrayed: Dido by Aeneas, the Saguntines by the Romans—his descendants (the *Aeneadae* from the prooemium). There is a relation between Dido's fury of love and the madness of the Punic war, in a similar way as the start of the war between the Trojans and Latins in *Aeneid* 7 mirrors Dido's insanity and suicide in *Aeneid* 4.

Dido's caressing of the sand on the beach of Carthage also recalls Ovid's Anna. In the *Fasti*, Anna presses the ashes of her sister (probably in an urn) to her mouth: *cineres ter ad ora relatas | pressit* ('three times she took up the ashes and pressed it to her mouth', *Fast.* 3.563–564).¹⁹⁸ In the *Aeneid*, Anna finds her sister still alive and embraces her: *semianimemque sinu germanam amplexa fouebat* ('[Anna] caresses her half-living sister, pressing her to her breast', *A.* 4.686). In Anna's narrative, Dido's actions on the beach are therefore via an intertextual hint foreshadowing her imminent suicide.

In the next scene Dido sits on top of the pyre. She is wearing the dress that Aeneas had given her: *hic Phrygiam uestem et bacatum induta monile* ('wearing a Phrygian dress and a pearl necklace', 8.134).¹⁹⁹ Although Anna was not present, she gives this report as if she were there, even expressing what her sister was thinking at that moment. Dido's thoughts, according to Anna, go back to the day that she had received those gifts from Aeneas (8.135–136). In her mind she replays the festive meal and long night in which the Trojan hero told her his fortunes (8.136–138).²⁰⁰ With the same obsessiveness with which she had caressed the image of Iulus (*amens*, 8.91), she now looks at the harbour where Aeneas had left: *in portus amens rorantia lumina flexit* ('frantically she turned her dewy eyes to the harbour', 8.139). The last two words echo Dido's

198 Heyworth 2019: 198 mentions the parallel. The scene in Ovid presumably takes place on the beach as well, for Anna is said to have left the city walls (*Fast.* 3.559–560) and ascends a ship immediately afterwards (*Fast.* 3.565).

199 Cf. *A.* 1.648–655 with Santini 1991: 53–54. Marks 2013: 295 suggests that Dido longs to be a Trojan, but fails to achieve this, while Anna actually becomes Trojan/Roman.

200 These lines are a summary of *Aeneid* 1–3; see also Spaltenstein 1986: 508 and Ariemma 2000b: 63–64. Anna refers to Aeneas' role as narrator: *narrantem longos se peruigilante labores* ('you were telling your long labours while she kept awake', 8.138). See also Chapter 2, section 3.2 n.59. The sound of this line recalls Iopas, another Virgilian narrator, as Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 31 point out: *hic canit errantem lunam solisque labores* ('he sings about the labours of the wandering moon and sun', *A.* 1.742).

accusatory question to Aeneas in the *Aeneid*: *num lumina flexit?* ('did he ever turn his eyes [to me]?', *A.* 4.369).²⁰¹ While Aeneas did forsake Dido, she kept looking back to the place where he left her, even in the last moments of her life.²⁰²

12 Dido's Final Words

At this point, Anna reports in direct speech Dido's last words, presumably reported to her by others; Anna was not present herself. Only after the servants in the palace start lamenting does Anna learn what has happened to her sister: *magnis resonant ululatibus aedes*. | *accepi infelix* ('the palace resounds with loud shrieks. I, unhappy, heard the news', 8.151–152).²⁰³ The primary narratees of the *Punica* know Dido's last words from the *Aeneid* (*A.* 4.651–662). Anna's version partly overlaps with that account, but she also adapts her sister's words for her secondary narratee Aeneas.

In the *Aeneid*, Dido starts her last monologue with an address to Aeneas' sword: *dulces exuuiae, dum fata deusque sinebat*, | *accipite hanc animam* ('ah relics, dear to me as long as fate and god allowed, accept this soul', *A.* 4.651–652). Then she announces her imminent descent to the underworld: *et nunc magna mei sub terras ibit imago* ('and now my great shade shall go to the world below', *A.* 4.654). She declares that she has avenged her husband Sychaeus by building Carthage: *urbem praeclaram statui, mea moenia uidi*, | *ultra uirum poenas inimico a fratre recepi* ('I have built a famous city; I have seen my walls; avenging my husband, I have exacted punishment from my hostile brother', *A.* 4.655–656). Speaking broadly, these elements return in Anna's version:

201 Ariemma 2000b: 64–65.

202 The act of looking back also recalls Hannibal's dream in Book 3. Mercury had explicitly forbidden him to do so, but the general forgot this divine order when he heard the sound of a snake: *turbatus lumina flectit* ('in dismay he turned his eyes', 3.188).

203 Once again, the suffix *re-* is a marker of intertextuality. Anna recalls here Andromache, who does not know of Hector's death in *Il.* 22.437–446. Upon hearing the screams of cries of others in the palace (*Il.* 22.447–8.151), she goes out of her room to check what happened. When she sees her husband being dragged behind Achilles' chariot, Andromache calls herself unhappy: *Ἐκτορ, ἐγὼ δῦστηνος* ('ah Hector, how wretched I am', *Il.* 22.477) ~ *accepi infelix* (8.152). Lines 8.150–151 also echo the description of the wailing servants in Dido's palace in the *Aeneid*: *lamentis gemituque et femineo ululatu* | *tecta fremunt, resonat magnis plangoribus aether* ('the palace rings with lamentation, with sobbing and with shrieks of women, and heaven echoes with loud wails', *A.* 4.667–668). For this Virgilian intertext, see Heitland 1896: 202, Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 34 and Lee 2017: 98.

'di longae noctis, quorum iam numina nobis
 mors instans maiora facit, precor,' inquit 'adeste
 et placidi uictos ardore **admittite manes.**
 Aeneae **coniunx, Veneris nurus, ulta maritum,**
uidi constructas nostrae Carthaginis arces.
nunc ad uos magni descendet corporis **umbra.'** (8.140–145)²⁰⁴

'Gods of the long night,' she said, 'whose divine powers seem greater for me now that death is approaching, help me, I pray, and kindly give access to a soul conquered by love. I, the wife of Aeneas, the daughter-in-law of Venus, avenging my husband, saw the citadel of my Carthage constructed. Now the shadow of my great body shall descend to you.'

On a microlevel there are notable differences, however. Instead of addressing Aeneas' sword (*dulces exuuiiae*), Dido calls upon the infernal gods (*di longae noctis*). This picks up Anna's earlier description of the Massylian priests invoking similar chthonic gods: *dum numina noctis | eliciunt* ('while they called up the deities of the night', 8.100–101).²⁰⁵

In Anna's version, Dido calls herself explicitly Aeneas' wife (*Aeneae coniunx*). This echoes the words of the primary narrator, who called Aeneas her husband before (*mariti*, 8.53).²⁰⁶ By calling herself Venus' daughter-in-law, Dido repeats a similar self-reference in her Ovidian letter to Aeneas (*Heroides*

²⁰⁴ Lines 8.144–223 are part of the so-called *Additamentum Aldinum*, whose authenticity is heavily debated; Poggio's copy of the Sangallensis did not contain them, but both the Medieval manuscripts and Poggio's transcript are lost. The lines are first quoted in a collection by Iacobius Constantius in 1508 and then pop up in the edition of Asulanus published by Aldus Manutius in 1523. Asulanus does not name his source and his reading deviates on seven points from that of Constantius; see Sabbadini 1905: 182 for a comparison. Scholars are divided between those who take the lines as authentic (e.g. Heitland 1896: 210 and Brugnoli and Santini 1995), those who remain indecisive (e.g. Spaltenstein 1986: 508), and those who view them as a humanistic interpolation (e.g. Sabbadini 1905: 182 and Delz 1987: LXVIII). Lee 2017: 20–33 and 144 provides a convenient overview of the *status quaestionis*. It is beyond the scope of this study to give a full analysis of the question. In a future paper, I will explore this matter in depth. In the meantime, I am inclined to accept the authenticity of these lines, together with most modern Silian scholars. A strong argument for its authenticity is the metrical similarity of the *Additamentum* to other parts of the *Punica*. For this argument, see Duckworth 1969: 110; Lee 2017: 26–28 is more careful.

²⁰⁵ The 'long night' might also echo the night in which Aeneas told of his 'long labours' (*longos ... labores*, 8.138) a few lines earlier.

²⁰⁶ In the *Aeneid*, Juno hopes that Aeneas will be her husband: *liceat Phrygio seruire marito* ('may she serve a Phrygian husband', *A.* 4.103); cf. also Dido's complaint: *cui me moribundam deseris hospes | (hoc solum nomen quoniam de coniuge restat)?* ('for whom do you

7), in which she called upon the goddess as her mother-in-law for help: *parce, Venus, nurui* ('spare, Venus, your daughter-in-law', *Ep.* 7.31). Later in the same letter she refers to herself as his wife (*coniugis*, *Ep.* 7.69).²⁰⁷ At the same time, Dido positions herself as successor to Aeneas' first wife Creusa, who called herself *Veneris nurus* in *A.* 2.787 (same metrical *sedes*). The same title pops up again in Book 13, where the Sibyl accompanies Scipio in the underworld and calls the ghost of Aeneas' Italic wife Lavinia 'the happy daughter-in-law of Venus' (*felix ... Veneris nurus*, 13.809). The epithet *felix* marks the stark contrast with Dido, who is almost by definition *infelix* (e.g. 8.86, 8.119).²⁰⁸

The last two words of 8.143 (*ulta maritum*) complicate the earlier part of the sentence: the husband that she has avenged by founding Carthage (8.144) must be Sychaeus, just as the similar phrase *ulta uirum* (*A.* 4.656) also refers to her former Tyrian husband. In the last two sentences of her speech, Dido confirms that she longs to go back to Sychaeus and thereby rejects her relation with Aeneas: *me quoque fors dulci quondam uir notus amore | exspectat curas cupiens aequare priores* ('perhaps the man that I once knew with sweet love expects me, willing to love me equally like before', 8.146–147). This recalls Dido's ghost in the underworld taking refuge with Sychaeus after her meeting with Aeneas: *coniunx ubi pristinus illi | respondet curis aequatque Sychaeus amorem* ('[the forest] where her former husband Sychaeus responds to her sorrows and gives her love for love', *A.* 6.473–474).²⁰⁹ The collocation *dulci ... amore* (8.146) echoes Aeneas' 'sweet love' (8.104) for Dido. Here Anna's Dido makes clear that these feelings come too late; the love that Sychaeus had for her is real and on the same level, even after her relation with Aeneas and beyond death.²¹⁰ Dido makes a clear choice for her old husband Sychaeus over the unreliable Aeneas.²¹¹

Conspicuously absent in Anna's version are Dido's final words from the *Aeneid* (*A.* 4.659–662).²¹² In these lines, the queen utters her wish for revenge

desert me on the point of death as a guest (since that alone is left from the name of a husband)?, *A.* 4.323–324).

207 Ariemma 2000b: 67.

208 See Spaltenstein 1986: 508 and Van der Keur 2015: 435.

209 Heitland 1896: 202 and Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 33.

210 The adjective *dulcis* also recalls the *dulces exuuias* of Aeneas in *A.* 4.651, which are conspicuously absent in Dido's words here.

211 Cf. also the description of Dido's statue in her temple in Carthage: *ipsa sedet tandem aeternum coniuncta Sychaeo. | ante pedes ensis Phrygius iacet* ('There she herself was seated, at last for eternity united with Sychaeus. The Phrygian sword lies before her feet', 1.90–91).

212 Walter 2014: 281.

for Aeneas' betrayal, as she could not take it herself: *moriemur inultae* ('we shall die unavenged', *A.* 4.659). She hopes that her death will be a bad omen for Aeneas. It seems as if the secondary narrator Anna deliberately silences her sister Dido in leaving this message out.²¹³ She does so because of her own purposes with her speech. By giving a milder, less vindictive version of Dido's last words Anna allows for a reconciliation with Aeneas, which actually takes place right after she has finished her narration (8.160–161).²¹⁴ On a higher level, too, Anna's omission is striking, as Dido's curse is the central motive of the Second Punic War. In Anna's version, Hannibal's war is not foreshadowed by Dido's final words.

13 Anna Tries to Become Dido (but Fails)

Anna cuts her sister's words short and continues to describe the actual suicide, focusing again on the emotional role of the sword.²¹⁵ Originally meant as a guarantee for their love, it actually became the murder weapon: *ensem Dardanii quaesitum in pignus amoris* ('the sword, sought as a pledge of Dardanian love', 8.149). Anna affirms the earlier references to the sword by the primary narrator (*tum corripit ensem | certa necis, profugi donum exitiale mariti*, 8.52–53) and her own qualification of the sword as part of 'all memorials and ill-starred gifts of yours' (*cuncta tui monumenta ... et non prospera dona*, 8.103). Together, these references to the sword recall two scenes in *Aeneid* 5. In the first, Aeneas seeks friendship with Acestes by giving a bowl that once was given to Anchises: *in magno munere Cisseus | ferre sui dederat monumentum et pignus amoris* ('[the Thracian king] Cisseus had given [this] as part of a great gift as a memorial of himself and a pledge of his love', *A.* 5.537–538). In the second scene, some thirty lines later, we read that Atys, the *puer dilectus* of Iulus, rides a 'Sidonian horse' (*Sidonio ... equo*, *A.* 5.571), which Dido 'had given to be a memorial to herself and a pledge of love' (*esse sui dederat monumentum et pignus amoris*, *A.* 5.572). A sword as present,

213 Anna's version of Dido's last words has exactly the same length (8 lines) as the first part of her speech in the *Aeneid* (4.651–658).

214 This is in line with the primary narrator's statement that Anna uses 'flattering words for the occasion' (*blandas ... pro tempore uoces*, 8.80).

215 Note the repetition of *ensem ... ensem* (8.148–149), on which see Wills 1996: 125 and 172. As Lee 2017: 96–97 observes, this is a clear allusion to Turnus' sword. In *A.* 12.89–90, we find the same rhetorical figure (*ensemque ... ensem*), also marking the emotional significance of the sword. The allusion perhaps stresses the fact that Dido has become a victim of Aeneas, just like Turnus in *Aeneid* 12.

instead of a bowl or horse, is in itself already ominous. Even though Dido asked for this gift (*quaesitum*, 8.149),²¹⁶ the verbal allusions to *Aeneid* 5 stress that the sword is a perversion of these genuine tokens of friendship and love. Again, Anna subtly puts the role of Aeneas in Dido's suicide in a negative light.²¹⁷

In the final lines of her second narrative, Anna focuses on how she herself dealt with the news of her sister's suicide. In this section, she casts herself as her sister, starting with Dido's epithet *infelix*:

accepi **infelix** dirisque exterrita fatis,
ora manu lacerans, lymphato regia **curso**
tecta peto **celsosque gradus euadere** nitor. (8.152–154)

I, unhappy, heard the news; terror-stricken by this dreadful fate I scratched my face with my hand and rushed with frenzied haste to the palace and struggled to climb the steep steps.

The haste with which Anna ascends the citadel of Carthage corresponds with the headlong return of Dido from the beach to the palace: *tum rapido praeceps cursu resolutaque crinem | euasit propere in celsam ... | ... pyram* ('then headlong with rapid pace and loose hair she climbed hastily the high pyre', 8.130–131).²¹⁸ Both have the appearance of a mourner: Dido has loose hair, Anna a torn face. That Anna cannot match her sister is clear from her failed attempts

216 As already in the *Aeneid*: *ensemque ... | Dardanium, non hos quaesitum munus in usus* ('and the Dardanian sword, a gift not sought for this use', *A.* 4.657). For this intertext, see Ariemma 2000b: 69 and Lee 2017: 97.

217 The death of Dido contrasts with the survival of Hannibal at the end of the *Punica*. Whereas Dido killed herself with a 'pledge of love', Hannibal is saved by one. Juno begs her husband and brother Jupiter to keep Hannibal alive 'by the mutual pledge of double love' (*gemini per mutua pignora amoris*, 17.364). Jupiter grants his sister-wife this request.

218 Heitland 1896: 202 discusses the intertextual echoes with the *Aeneid*, where Anna also rushed to the palace 'terror-stricken with trembling haste' to the palace (*trepidoque exterrita cursu*, *A.* 4.672), 'tore her face with her nails' (*unquibus ora ... foedans*, *A.* 4.673), and 'climbed the high steps' of the pyre (*gradus euaserat altos*, *A.* 4.685). Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 34 signal an echo of Amata running through Lavinium: *infelix ... | ... furit lymphata per urbem* ('unhappy she rushes in frenzy through the city', *A.* 7.376–377). I like to add an intratextual similarity with Hannibal, who runs headlong to the battlefield to kill the Saguntine Murrus: *ruit ocius amens | lymphato cursu* ('he runs swifter, out of his mind with a frenzied haste', 1.458–459). This parallel is marked, because it is the only other occurrence of the collocation *lymphatus cursus* in Latin.

at suicide.²¹⁹ Three times she wants to fall upon the sword, but is unable to do so. Instead, she falls, alive, on the corpse of her sister:

**ter diro fueram conata incumbere ferro,
ter cecidi exanimae membris reuoluta sororis.** (8.155–156)

Three times I had tried to fall on the dreadful sword,
three times I fell rolling back on the body of my lifeless sister.

The gemination of *ter* echoes the three times that Anna heard Sychaeus call the name of Dido (*dirus me impleuerat horror | terque suam Dido, ter cum clamore uocarat*, 8.121–122). It was also three times that Dido embraced the sand on the beach of Carthage where Aeneas had sailed off (8.127). The farewell scene between Dido—still alive—and Anna in the *Aeneid* also resonates. Anna's failed suicide recalls Dido 'trying to lift her heavy eyes' (*grauis oculos conata attolere*, *A.* 4.688) and her attempt to prop her body when Anna found her: *ter sese attolens cubitoque adnixa leuauit, | ter reuoluta toro est* ('three times rising she struggled to prop herself on her elbow, three times she rolled back on the bed', *A.* 4.690–691).²²⁰ The similarity in wording marks the contrast between the two sisters: while Dido could not lift herself (*attolens, leuauit*) as she was dying, Anna cannot throw herself on the sword (*incumbere*) because she apparently wants to live. That Anna fails to follow her sister's example is also underlined by an echo of Ovid's 'Little *Aeneid*': the phrase *incumbere ferro* recalls Dido's suicide: *incumbuit ferro* ('she fell upon the sword', *Met.* 14.81).²²¹

The failed suicide of Anna recalls two earlier scenes in the *Punica* that involved (the thought of) suicide. The first is the Saguntine Mopsus, who lost his two sons, both killed by Hannibal. The parallel is triggered by the repetition of the same numeral *ter*: he tries three times to use his bow to take revenge on Hannibal, but misses strength to carry out his plan: *correptos arcus ter maesta mouit ab ira, | ter cecidit dextra* ('he grabbed his bow and bent it three times in his sad anger, three times his hand fell down', 2.139–140). When he realizes that his attempts are in vain, he commits suicide by throwing himself from the

219 Anna loosely recalls Ismene, the most famous example of a woman who failed to join her sister in committing suicide. In Sophocles' *Antigone* 544–545, Ismene voices her wish to die together with Antigone, but the latter forbids her to do so.

220 Heitland 1896: 202, Spaltenstein 1986: 509, and Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 35. 'Three times X, three times Y' is an epic motif as old as Homer. See De Jong 2001: 511 on *Hom. Od.* 21.125–128.

221 An intertext brought to my attention by Ruurd Nauta.

tower of the city on top of his already fallen son: *delapsus pondere prono | membra super nati moribundos explicat artus* ('fallen down with a prone weight he spreads his dying limbs over his son's body', 2.146–147). Mopsus killed himself because of the loss of his sons, unable to carry out revenge. Anna aborts her suicidal attempt, but this will give her the opportunity to become an instrument of revenge in *Punica* 8.

In this respect, Anna echoes the Roman general Scipio, who also had attempted suicide multiple times, in his case because of his fatally wounded father. When the elder Scipio had received a lethal blow in the Battle of the Ticinus, the son expressed the wish to die before him: *bis conatus erat praecurrere fata parentis | conuersa in semet dextra, bis transtulit iras | in Poenos Mauors* ('twice he tried to precede his father's fate, laying hands on himself, twice Mars turned his anger to the Carthaginians instead', 4.457–459). Scipio stays alive and can take revenge on the Carthaginians, in the ongoing battle as well as in the second part of the *Punica*; Anna, too, will be an instrument of revenge for her sister—although she does not know this at the time of speaking to Aeneas. Her encouragement of Hannibal that follows little later in the *Punica* results in the Battle of Cannae.²²² Her triple abortion of suicide does not stop the Carthaginians to take revenge on Rome even three times, as the prooemium of the *Punica* reminds us:

ter Marte sinistro
iuratumque Ioui foedus conuentaque patrum
Sidonii fregere duces, atque impius ensis
ter placitam suasit temerando rumpere pacem. (1.8–11)

Three times the Sidonian leaders break the treaty they had sworn by Jupiter and the agreements with the senators and three times the unholy sword incited them to break the peace they had approved by violating it.

The 'dreadful sword' (*diro ... ferro*, 8.155), with which Dido committed suicide, results in three wars. While Anna was unable to fall on the sword, the 'unholy

²²² Anna's self-inflicted wounds on her face may be echoed in the mutilation of the Roman consul Paulus by an anonymous Carthaginian at Cannae: *saxum ingens ... caeca | uenit in ora manu* ('a huge rock struck him in the face [thrown] by unseen hand', 10.235–236); this resulted in the laceration of his face as we learn later: *lacero manantem ex ore cruorem* ('blood flowing from his torn face', 10.276). The similar wounding of the consul and his ultimate death at Cannae can be seen as a retribution for Anna's grief over her sister's death.

sword' (of Aeneas?) drove the Carthaginians to warfare.²²³ The Punic Wars are a retribution for Aeneas' betrayal and Dido's death, symbolized by the 'the Phrygian sword' (*ensis Phrygius*, 1.91) that lies at the feet of her statue—the very sword with which she committed suicide.²²⁴

Anna winds up her narrative by summarizing her flight from Carthage (8.157–159), repeating in brief what the primary narratees have already heard from the primary narrator in a slightly more extended version (8.54–68): the threat of Iarbas (8.54–56 ~ 8.157a), the stay at Cyrene (8.57–64 ~ 8.158), and the sea-storm that brought her to the coast of Latium (8.65–68 ~ 8.159):²²⁵

iamque ferebatur uicina per oppida rumor:
 arma parant Nomadum proceres et saeuus Iarbas. [157a]
 tum Cyrenaeam fatis agitantibus urbem
 deuenio; **hinc** uestris pelagi uis **appulit oris**. (8.157–159)²²⁶

The rumour was already brought to neighbouring cities: the leaders of the Nomads and savage Iarbas prepare weapons. Then I came to the city of Cyrene, driven by Fate; thence the violence of the sea drove me to your shores.

Just like in the final lines of her first narrative, Anna echoes here several words from the primary narrator's account, resulting again in a ring composition.²²⁷

223 The phrase *impius ensis* has connotations of parricide, suggesting that the Punic Wars are a kind of civil war. The juncture originates from Ovid, as Feeney 1982: 19 notes. In *Met.* 7.396, it denotes the sword with which Medea killed her children and in *Met.* 14.802, it is used for the war between the co-related Romans and Sabines.

224 See also sections 5 and 12 above.

225 See Spaltenstein 1986: 509 and Ariemma 2000b: 71. Line 8.157, however, gives a new snippet of information. The rumour of Dido's death (and Aeneas' departure) reaches the surrounding Numidians, who prepare for war against Carthage. This recalls Iarbas praying to Jupiter for revenge in the *Aeneid*, when he heard the rumour of Dido having embarked upon a relation with Aeneas: *rumore accensus amaro* ('incited by the bitter rumour', *A.* 4.203). This is the only occurrence of the word *rumor* in the first half of the *Aeneid*.

226 We know line 8.157a only from Constantius; the Aldine edition leaves it out. Although Ariemma 2000b: 71 deems the content of this line not strictly necessary, I agree with Heitland 1896: 203 that it makes the transition to 8.158 less abrupt.

227 Cf. *Iarbas* (8.54); *Nomadum ... tyranno* (8.56); *Cyrenen* (8.57); *ergo agitur pelago* (8.65); *fatalis turbo in Laurentes expulit oras* (8.68). Bandiera 1993: 198 signals the metrical repetition of the opening words of 8.56 (*ferret opem Nomadum*) and 8.157a (*arma parant Nomadum*). Anna's final words also recall Aeneas' words in Ovid's account: *seu ratio te nostris adpulit oris | siue deus* ('whether purpose or some god has driven you to our shores', *Ov. Fast.* 3.621–622). See Heitland 1896: 203 and Walter 2014: 285.

On the primary level, the verbal repetition shows that Anna is giving a faithful eyewitness report of the events that happened.²²⁸

This 'double' presentation of events is also not redundant on the secondary level of narration: Anna wants to inform Aeneas about her fortunes, as she hopes that he will receive her as a guest in his palace. She confines herself to the basic outlines of her wanderings: it is important that Aeneas knows that she is a shipwrecked person, like he was before. She stresses their similarity. Importantly, the last words of her narration are almost identical to the last words of Aeneas' narrative in the *Aeneid*: *hinc me digressum uestris deus appulit oris* ('departing thence, a god drove me to your shores' Verg. *A.* 3.715).²²⁹

14 Reconciliation Prevented

The less aggressive approach of Anna pays off: Aeneas is touched by her words and accepts her in his palace (8.160–161), just as Dido once received the Trojans.²³⁰ Anna lets go of her sorrows almost immediately: *iamque omnes luctus omnesque e pectore curas | dispulerat* ('already she had driven away all her sorrows and all her cares from her heart', 8.162–163). The repetition of *omnes* stresses the total evaporation of all of her troubles, something that her deceased sister had hoped Sychaeus would give her: *curas cupiens aequare priores* ('willing to love me equally like before', 8.147). Anna feels totally at ease in Aeneas' palace and in no time (*iam*, again a gemination) feels herself part of her new home: *Phrygiis nec iam amplius aduena tectis | illa uidebatur* ('and already she seems no longer a stranger under these Phrygian roofs', 8.163–164). It almost seems as if Trojans and Carthaginians can live in peaceful coexistence. For a short moment, the primary narratees of the *Punica* can imagine an alternative course of history in which the Romans and Carthaginians will *not*

228 See De Jong 1987: 219–220 on the functions of characters repeating narrator-text in Homer.

229 An intertext that Ruurd Nauta brought to my attention. The words *pelagi uis* (8.159) may also echo Aeneas' words shortly before the end of his narrative: *pelagi tot tempestatibus actus* ('I, who have been driven by so many storms of the sea', Verg. *A.* 3.708).

230 Heitland 1896: 203 notes this similarity. Cf. the reaction of Aeneas towards Anna with the reception of the Trojans in Carthage: *motus erat placidumque animum mentemque quietam | Troius in miseram rector susceperat Annam* ('he was moved and the Trojan leader took up a placid heart and a quiet mind for the miserable Anna', 8.160–161) ~ *in primis regina quietum | accipit in Teucros animum mentemque benignam* ('for the first time the queen took up a quiet heart and a benign mind for the Trojans', *A.* 1.303–304). See also Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 36.

become enemies.²³¹ This idea finds its origin of course in *Aeneid* 1–4: Aeneas' whole stay at Carthage toys with the idea of a different course of history.

As an example of pathetic fallacy, nature copies the peacefulness of the situation: *tacito nox atra sopore | cuncta per et terras et lati stagna profundi | condiderat* ('the dark night had hidden everything on earth and the waters of the wide sea in a silent sleep', 8.164–166). Narratees of the *Aeneid*, however, feel that something is wrong in these lines, when they recall a similar night at Carthage: *nox erat et placidum carpebant fessa soporem | corpora per terras* ('it was night and tired bodies enjoyed a placid sleep on the earth', *A.* 4.522–523).²³² That peaceful night contrasted starkly with Dido's anguished feelings; the queen was incapable of sleep and could not stop thinking of Aeneas' betrayal.²³³

Night is also the time when Dido appears to Anna in Ovid's version of the story: *nox erat* (*Fast.* 3.639). As expected, Dido steps in before things get too close between Anna and Aeneas. The difference between the two sisters can hardly be greater: Dido appears visibly affected in her dream: *tristi ... Dido aegerima uultu | has uisa in somnis germanae effundere uoces* ('a very vexed Dido with a sad countenance seemed to pour out the following words in her sister's dream', 8.166).²³⁴ Dido's ensuing speech is long (16 lines) in comparison with her short order to leave Aeneas' palace in Ovid: *fuge, ne dubita, maestum fuge ... tectum* ('flee, don't hesitate, flee this gloomy house!', *Fast.* 3.641). Silius' Dido elaborates in her speech on the reasons for Anna to flee. First, she reminds Anna (and also the primary narratees) of the enmity between Trojans and Carthaginians, recalling the curse (*A.* 4.621–624) which Anna had glossed

231 See Walter 2014: 283 for this idea of side-shadowing; cf. also Manuwald 2011: 60–61 and Marks 2013: 287–288. For other examples of side-shadowing in the *Punica*, see Nesselrath 1992: 107–122.

232 Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 37, Ariemma 2000b: 73.

233 Line 8.165 is an exact copy of 7.282. There, sleeping nature contrasts with Hannibal's inability to sleep due to the difficulties on the battlefield. While Anna does have peace of mind, Hannibal mirrors the insomnia of Dido in *Aeneid* 4, for which see Littlewood 2011: 132. This self-repetition, already signalled by Ruperti 1795: 551, has frequently been used as an argument for a non-Silian origin of the *Additamentum Aldinum*. Courtney 1989: 327, for example, argues that the repetition of complete lines is a phenomenon not found in post-Ovidian authors. But I would suggest that the self-repetition of 8.165 is as a metapoetical nod to the fact that we are dealing here with an Ovidian story: Ovid, too, copied a line within his own epic (*Met.* 4.795 = 9.10). Note, too, Ovid's self-citation in Anna's episode: *Fast.* 3.549–550 is identical to the *Abschluss epigramm* of Dido's letter in *Ep.* 7.195–196. On this last example of Ovidian repetition, see Bömer 1958: 182 and Heyworth 2019: 195–196. For metapoetical implications of the repetition of 8.165, see Ariemma 2000b: 73.

234 Still, this is a mild version compared to Dido's horror-look in Ovid: *ante torum uisa est adstare sororis | squalenti Dido sanguinolenta coma* ('Dido full of blood with squalid hair seemed to stand before her sister's bed', *Fast.* 3.639–640).

over in her narrative to Aeneas: *pax nulla Aeneadas inter Tyriosque manebit* ('no peace will last between the Aeneadae and Tyrians', 8.175).²³⁵ Dido feels that Anna is slow to apprehend the faithlessness of the Trojans. This shows from the rhetorical questions that Dido fires at her sister, one of them emphatically starting with *at nondum* ('but not yet'): *at nondum nostro infaustos generique soloque | Laomedontea nosciscis telluris alumnos?* ('but do you not yet understand that the children of Laomedon's land are unfortunate to our people and soil?', 8.171–172). Dido has learned this hard lesson long before. Her indignant question echoes her self-accusation in the *Aeneid*: *nesciscis heu, perditam, necdum | Laomedontea sentis periuria gentis?* ('ah, do you not know, lost one, and do you not yet feel the perjury of Laomedon's people?', A. 4.541–542).²³⁶ The second reason for Anna to flee is the threat of Lavinia, as Dido insinuates that the new wife of Aeneas is plotting her assassination: *surge, age; iam tacitas suspecta Lavinia fraudes | molitur dirumque nefas sub corde uolutat* ('Come on, rise! Lavinia, whom I mistrust, devises secret plots and ponders a dire crime in her heart', 8.176–177). The word *tacitas* repeats the statement of the primary narrator in Ovid's *Fasti* that Lavinia hides her jealousy for Anna 'in her silent mind' (*mente ... tacita*, *Fast.* 3.634). On another level, *tacitas* can be read as a metapoetical comment: Lavinia's taciturnity matches her literary reputation. In Virgil's *Aeneid*, she is a completely silent character. Lavinia remains so in Ovid and Silius. While the primary narrator of the *Punica* has been silent on Lavinia's plotting, the tertiary narrator Dido reveals her plans to Anna, breaking Lavinia's lethal silence. The 'silent sleep' (*tacito ... sopore*, 8.164) of all living creatures contrasts with these secret plans of Lavinia.²³⁷

In warning Anna, Dido resembles several supernatural apparitions that Aeneas has experienced.²³⁸ The Trojan hero told Dido how a deeply mournful Hector visited him in his sleep, warning him to flee from Troy: *in somnis ecce ante oculos maestissimus Hector | uisus adesse mihi largosque effundere fletus* ('look, in my dreams before my eyes a very sad Hector seemed to be present and to pour out abundant tears', A. 2.270–271). Dido also mirrors Mercury in *Aeneid* 4. This god appeared in Aeneas' sleep, warning him to flee from Carthage: *obtulit in somnis rursusque ita uisa monere est* ('[the god] appeared to him in his sleep

235 Bruère 1959: 245 n.7, Santini 1991: 58, and Walter 2014: 283. Note the iconic position of *inter*, separating the Romans and Carthaginians. Dido's words also foreshadow Hannibal's oath, especially *non Martem cohibentia pacta* ('no treaties will bar warfare', 1.116).

236 Heitland 1896: 204, Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 38, and Walter 2014: 283. The assonance of the Virgilian source is preserved in the Silian adaptation, although with a change from mainly e to o.

237 See also Bruère 1959: 229, Kißel 1979: 195, and Spaltenstein 1986: 510.

238 Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 37–39.

and once more seemed to warn him thus', *A.* 4.557). The god made clear that Aeneas was not safe: *nate dea, potes hoc sub casu ducere somnos, | nec quae te circum stent deinde pericula cernis?* ('son of a goddess, can you slumber in such hazard and do you not see the dangers that surround you?', *A.* 4.560–561). Dido's warnings to Anna sound very similar to his:

his, soror, in tectis longae indulgere quieti,
 heu nimium secreta, potes? nec, quae tibi fraudes
 tendantur, quae circumstent discrimina cernis? (8.168–170)

Can you, sister, enjoy a long rest under these roofs, ah, all too comfortable?
 Do you not see the plots that are laid for you, the dangers that surround
 you?

The words with which Dido describes the crime that Lavinia is devising for Anna (*dirumque nefas*, 8.177) are also an echo of Mercury's speech to Aeneas: *illa dolos dirumque nefas in pectore uersat* ('she revolves in her heart deceits and a dire crime', *A.* 4.563). While Mercury is alluding to Dido's suicide and the guilefulness of the Carthaginians, Dido turns the tables: Aeneas and his new wife are the ones that are untrustworthy and therefore Anna should flee her new abode as soon as possible. Perhaps surprisingly, Dido prophesies Anna's new status as deity in the river Numicius and thus also her permanent stay in Italy:²³⁹ *aeternumque Italis numen celebrabere in oris* ('you will be honoured as an eternal deity on Italian shores', 8.183). *Aeternum* is a gloss of her divine name Anna Perenna, of which the second part is often taken as a derivative of *perennis* ('perennial').²⁴⁰ It also echoes Juno's unfulfilled wish to 'found an eternal race' in Carthage (*aeternam condere gentem*, 1.28). By having her sister as eternal goddess in Italy, Dido and her tutelary deity Juno have the perfect instrument of revenge.

After these portentous words, Dido vanishes into the air—like Mercury in the *Aeneid*.²⁴¹ Dido, who had been cast as an elegiac heroine in her sister's

239 Her assurance to Anna echoes almost literally another divine apparition to Aeneas, namely Tiberinus predicting the omen of the sow: *ne falsa putes haec fingere somnum* ('lest you think that sleep invents these things falsely', 8.178) ~ *ne uana putes haec fingere somnum* ('lest you think that sleep invents these things in vain', *A.* 8.42). See Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 40.

240 Cf. Anna's own explanation in the Ovid: *anne perenne latens Anna Perenna uocor* ('hiding in the perennial river I am called Anna Perenna', *Fast.* 3.654). On this *figura etymologica*, see Porte 1971: 282 and Heyworth 2019: 216.

241 Cf. *sic fata in tenuem Phoenissa euanuit auram* ('having spoken in such way, the Phoeni-

narrative, has prevented with her *Aeneid*-style apparition and exit a possible reconciliation (or even elegiac romance) between her sister and Aeneas, bringing the story back on to its epic track. Like Mercury on behalf of Jupiter puts an end to the elegiac *mora* of Aeneas in Carthage, Dido makes now exactly the same epic move with regard to Anna in Italy—ironically with the opposite goal of harming the Trojan cause.²⁴²

15 Anna Decides to Flee

Anna's perception of the situation changes drastically because of her sister's intervention. This is signaled by the use of *uideor*: first she seemed to have become a Trojan (*uidebatur*, 8.164), but now she realizes that this was only day-dreaming. After the lifelike apparition and speech of her sister in her dreams (*uisa*, 8.167), she wakes up, horrified by the vision of her sister (*nouis ... uisis*, 8.185); her peaceful state of mind has changed to pure fear: *Anna nouis somno excutitur perterrita uisis, | itque timor totos gelido sudore per artus* ('Anna is jolted awake, horrified by these unseen visions and a fear flows through all her limbs, together with a cold sweat', 8.185–186).²⁴³ Anna's physical reaction recalls Aeneas receiving warnings from the Penates: *tum gelidus toto manabat corpore sudor* ('then a cold sweat flowed all over his body', *A.* 3.173).²⁴⁴ Here, Anna fears to stay near the exact same Penates.

Anna decides to follow the advice of Dido and runs out into the open fields. Close verbal repetition recalls the same scene in Ovid's account (8.185–189 ~ *Fast.* 3.643–646), but also highlights deviations from Ovid: Anna is put in a less

cian vanished into thin air', 8.184) with Mercury's disappearance after his first apparition to Aeneas: *et procul in tenuem ex oculis euanuit auram* ('and from a distance he vanished from sight into thin air', *A.* 4.278); this line is literally repeated in *A.* 9.658, right before Apollo delivers a message to Ascanius.

242 Santini 1991: 57, Dietrich 2004: 28. Marks 2013: 294 sees irony in the fact that Anna by becoming a nymph settles permanently in Italy. This was, however, exactly Dido's objective, as she makes clear in 8.183.

243 The vision of Dido is 'new' (*nouis*) in the sense that Anna has not seen such a dreadful apparition of her sister; the word also has the connotation of 'coming as the repetition of an action' (*OLD* s.v. 7); she has already had a similar apparition in her sleep of Sychaeus before (8.121–123), what also had caused her great fear. On a metapoetical level, the *nouis ... uisis* indicates that the Silian narrator is giving here his own, new version of Dido's apparition, as previously narrated by Ovid in *Fasti* 3. Cf. Wills 1996: 31 on this use of *nouis*.

244 Ariemma 2000b: 79–80. Anna's sweating also recalls the same physical reaction that Hannibal showed when he had visions about the future wars with Rome, both in 1.66–69 and 3.214–216. See Diaz de Bustamante 1985: 31–32.

elegiac and more epic light.²⁴⁵ Ovidian Anna is compared with a deer flying from wolves (*Fast.* 3.646), an allusion to the love-stricken Dido in *A.* 4.39. Silius' Anna, however, runs through the fields 'with swift feet' (*plantis pernicibus*, 8.189), a clear echo of the warrior princess Camilla, who outran a horse on the battlefield (*pernicibus ... plantis*, *A.* 11.718)—in turn a reminiscence of Achilles' swiftness in Homer.²⁴⁶ As Lee rightly argues, this mirroring foreshadows the role of Anna as instigator of Hannibal in the epic main narrative (8.214–224).²⁴⁷

Anna's subsequent immersion in the Numicius is described in less sexually aggressive terms than in Ovid. In *Fasti* 3.647, the Numicius is said to have 'snatched her away with his swollen waves' (*hanc tumidis rapuisse ... undis*).²⁴⁸ In the *Punica*, the reception of Anna in the slow flowing water of the river seems to be more peaceful: *harenoso ... Numicius illam | suscepit gremio utreisque abscondidit antris* ('the Numicius took her on his sandy lap and hid her in his vitreous caves', 8.190–191).²⁴⁹ The hiding in a watery cave is—once again—reminiscent of the nymph Juturna; when she realizes that she cannot help her brother Turnus, she plunges into the water: *se fluuiio dea condidit alto* ('the goddess hides herself in her deep stream', *A.* 12.886).²⁵⁰ But whereas Juturna hides herself in the water right before her brother is killed, Anna hides herself only to be summoned by Juno to incite her relative Hannibal. When Anna appears to him, her role as a second Juturna is confirmed: Hannibal addresses her just like Juno had addressed Juturna in the *Aeneid*: '*nympha, decus generis, quo*

245 A first example, noted by Bruère 1959: 229, is that Anna simply 'exits through a low window' (*humilique egressa fenestra*, 8.188) instead of that she 'quickly flings herself through a low window' (*uelox humili ... fenestra | se iacit*, *Fast.* 3.643–644). The second, noted by Lee 2017: 113, is that Anna goes into the fields 'just as she was, covered by one thin garment' (*ut erat tenui corpus uelamine tecta*, 8.187), whereas in the *Fasti* 3.645 her gown was unbelted: *tunica uelata recincta* ('veiled in an ungirt shift'). The latter phrase recalls Ariadne in *Ov. Ars* 1.529: *utque erat e somno tunica uelata recincta* ('just as she was from sleep, veiled in an ungirt shift'). The Silian narrator, by alluding to both Ovidian intertexts, makes Anna's appearance somewhat less compromising.

246 Cf. his epithet πῶδας ὠκύς. Gransden 1991: 130.

247 Lee 2017: 113.

248 *Rapio* is a verb that often denotes rape; see *OLD* s.v. 4. I deviate from the Teubner text, which gives preference to the reading *cupidis ... undis* ('with his desiring waters'); both *cupidus* and *tumidus* have sexual connotations, as Heyworth 2019: 215 points out.

249 On this contrast, see Haselmann 2018: 247 and Ariemma 2000b: 80, who takes *harenoso* as opposite of *tumidis*. Anna's friendly reception into the river also contrasts with the abduction of the boy Thrasymennus by the nymph Agylle in 5.15–21; the boy is seized on the shore (*litore correptum*, 5.17) and is clearly uncomfortable when the nymphs try to embrace him (*trementem*, 5.21).

250 This is in itself an echo of the disappearance of the river god Tiberinus in his own water: *lacu fluuius se condidit alto* ('the river hides himself in the deep water', *A.* 8.66).

non sacratius ullum | numen' ait 'nobis' (“nymph, glory of our people”, he said, “who is more sacred than any deity to us ...”, 8.227) ~ *'nympha, decus fluuiorum, animo gratissima nostro'* (“nymph, glory of rivers, most dear to our heart ...”, A. 12.142).

When Aeneas' men find out that Anna is no longer in her bedroom, they start looking for her:

... cum nullam Aeneadae thalamis Sidonida nacti
et Rutulum magno errantes clamore per agrum ... (8.193–194)

... when the men of Aeneas did not find the Sidonian in her bedroom.
With loud shouting they wandered through the Rutulian country ...

Again, verbal parallels echo the Ovidian version: *Sidonis interea magno clamore per agros | quaeritur* (‘meanwhile the Sidonian is sought for with loud shouting through the fields’, *Fast.* 3.649). The Silian narrator, however, makes several alterations that recall the flight of Aeneas himself. The word *thalamus* recalls Aeneas' flight from Dido's bedroom (*abscessem thalamo*, 8.109). The antithesis of *Aeneadae* and *Sidonis* reflects the irreconcilability between the two peoples that Anna has been reminded of by her sister: *pax nulla Aeneadas inter Tyriosque manebit* (‘no peace will last between the Aeneadae and Tyrians’, 8.175). The loud shouting of Aeneas' men is reminiscent of Dido calling Aeneas' name on the shore of Carthage: *magno clamore uocabat | Aenean* (8.86–87). The tables are turned again: now the Trojans are calling the name of a Sidonian woman who left them, instead of the other way round. This results in a renewed wandering (*errantes*, with its connotations of epic journeys), while Anna has found a final dwelling place.²⁵¹

When the Trojans find Anna in the river Numicius, there is again the suggestion of reconciliation. The now divine Anna appears to the Trojans in a way that recalls the earlier apparition of Dido:

inter caeruleas uisa est residere sorores
Sidonis et placido Teucros affarier ore. (8.198–199)

²⁵¹ Cf. e.g. A. 1.31–32: *multos per annos | errabant* (‘they were wandering during many years’). The wandering may also recall Ovid's description of the festivities on the Ides of March, as Wezel 1873: 89 observes: *protinus erratis laeti uescuntur in agris | et celebrant largo seque diemque mero* (‘at once they feast, joyful, in the fields through which they wandered, and celebrate themselves and the day with plentiful wine’, *Fast.* 3.655–656).

The Sidonian seemed to be sitting amidst her cerulean sisters and to speak to the Teucrians with peaceful countenance.

Dido, too, seemed (*uisa*, 8.167) to speak to Anna (*effundere uoces*, 8.167), as Anna now in turn speaks to the Trojans. While Dido had a visibly vexed expression (*tristi ... Dido aegerrima uultu*, 8.166), Anna looks upon Aeneas' men with a 'peaceful countenance' (*placido ... ore*), echoing the earlier conciliatory attitude of Aeneas towards Anna (*placidumque animum*, 8.160).²⁵² She addresses Aeneas' men "as if she has already forgotten her sister's injunction".²⁵³ Dido seems to be forgotten: the other nymphs of the Numicius are her new family (*inter caeruleas ... sorores*). Thereupon the Trojans establish Anna's cult:

ex illo primis anni celebrata diebus
per totam Ausoniam uenerando numine culta est. (8.200–201)

From that day onwards her cult is celebrated on the first days of the year, when her divine power is venerated all over Ausonia.

These are the concluding lines of the digression that the narrator embarked upon in 8.43. He has given an answer to the question why a Carthaginian goddess is honoured in Roman temples.²⁵⁴ All's well that ends well—but also this second reconciliation between Anna and the Trojans will not last forever, as we will learn soon in the main narrative.

In addition, the reference to Anna Perenna's festival contains an implicit reference to civil war. The goddess 'shares' the Ides of March with the commemoration of Caesar's assassination. Ovid's final lines on this day in the *Fasti* mention Octavian's revenge, referring to the Battle of Philippi: *hoc opus, haec pietas, haec prima elementa fuerunt | Caesaris, ulcisci iusta per arma patrem* ('this was the task, this the duty, this the first lesson of Caesar [i.e. Octavian], to avenge his father through just warfare', *Fast.* 3.709–710). Although the Silian

²⁵² In Ovid, Anna describes the Numicius as peaceful: *placidi sum nympha Numici* ('I am a nymph of the placid Numicius', *Fast.* 3.653). See Fernandelli 2009: 167–168.

²⁵³ Lee 2017: 119.

²⁵⁴ This final sentence of the narrative confirms Anna's important place in the Roman calendar. The Ides of March was associated with the first full moon of that month, which formed traditionally the beginning of the Roman year. For Anna's place in the Roman calendar, see Bailey 1921: 28 and 121 and Magini 2001: 46–59. The aetiology surrounding the narrative is also a marker of the importance the *Fasti* for this narrative; see Barchiesi 2001b: 335. *Anni* is again a gloss on Anna Perenna's name; see Marks 2013: 290.

text shows no obvious verbal reminiscences to these specific lines, the memory of civil war is closely connected to this day.²⁵⁵

16 Anna's Incitation of Hannibal

The main narrative continues right from where the narrator left his narratees in 8.43:

hanc **postquam** in tristes Italum Saturnia pugnas
hortata est, celeri superum petit aethera curru
optatum Latii tandem potura cruorem. (8.202–204)

After the daughter of Saturn had urged her [i.e. Anna] to miserable battles against the Italians, she went back on her swift car to the heaven of the gods; finally, she was about to drink the blood of Latium that she had hoped for.

The connection between the main narrative and the preceding embedded narrative is stressed by the emphatic position of *hanc*, referring to the latter's main character Anna, who is going to play the role of Juno's messenger and Hannibal's instigator of the war in the ensuing lines.²⁵⁶ The position of *postquam* recalls the opening line of the Anna episode: *Iliaco postquam deserta est hospite Dido* ('after Dido had been abandoned by her Trojan guest', 8.53). The repetition of this conjunction forges a causal link between Aeneas' deeds in the past and the upcoming Battle of Cannae.

Juno goes back to heaven, knowing that she will have her way. Her wish for blood recalls Hannibal's thirst of blood: *penitusque medullis | sanguinis humani flagrat sitis* ('deep in his marrow he burns with thirst for human blood', 1.59–60).²⁵⁷ Anna acts immediately upon the orders of Juno and goes to her fellow Carthaginian Hannibal: *diua deae parere parat magnumque Libyssae | ductorem ... petebat* ('the deity prepares to obey the goddess and goes to the great leader of Libya', 8.205). Her reaction again recalls Juturna getting instructions from Juno (*Saturnia Iuno*, A. 12.156) to help her brother Turnus before his

255 See also Marks 2013: 296.

256 See Bolkestein 2000: 122–123 on the use of the anaphoric pronoun *hic* "in a clause with which the speaker is returning to his original storyline or line of reasoning after some digression."

257 Ganiban 2010: 95.

final battle with Aeneas; the opening words of 8.205 (*diua deae*) are a clear echo of A. 12.139, where we find the same collocation (*diua deam*).²⁵⁸ Juno leaves Juturna in great distress: *sic exhortata reliquit | incertam et tristi turbatam uulnere mentis* ('after having urged her thus, [Juno] leaves her behind uncertain and troubled with a sad wound in her mind', A. 12.159–160).²⁵⁹ Anna, however, does not show any signs of misery or uncertainty; the battles that she will stir will be miserable for the Italians (*in tristes Italum ... pugnas*)—the focalization of the primary narrator. Rather, her hands-on mentality recalls Aeneas after having received orders from Mercury to leave Carthage: *ille patris magni parere parabat | imperio* ('he prepared to obey the command of the great father [i.e. Jupiter]', A. 4.238–239).²⁶⁰

Her kinsman Hannibal is, by contrast, anxious and is worrying about the vicissitudes of war: *incertos rerum euentus bellique uolutans | anxia ducebat uigili suspiria mente* ('he was pondering the uncertain outcomes of events and war and drew anxious breath while his mind was awake', 8.208–209).²⁶¹ Anna addresses Hannibal in a friendly way in order to relieve his mind: *cui dea sic dicitis curas solatur amicis* ('she thus comforts his cares with friendly words', 8.210). Her friendly address recalls Juno's approach of Anna in 8.29 (*blandis hortatibus*), but also of the way she herself talked to her host Aeneas: *cui sic uerba trahens ... | ... blandas addidit ... uoces* (8.79–80). These echoes indicate both that Anna knows how to convince another man, and that she is ventriloquizing the ideas of Juno.²⁶²

258 Fucecchi 2013: 24 n.25; the order of goddess and nymph is, however, reversed: *diua deae* in the *Punica* refers to Anna and Juno respectively, whereas *diua deam* in the *Aeneid* refers to Juno and Juturna.

259 Another difference is that Juno will be present at Cannae, as she had announced in 8.37 (*ipsa adero*), while she declares to Juturna that she is unable to even watch the upcoming battle between Turnus and Aeneas (*non pugnam aspicere hanc oculis ... possum*, A. 12.151).

260 Heitland 1896: 206.

261 The last word of 8.209 is heavily disputed. Constantius and the Aldine edition read both *uoce*, also printed by Delz; together with *uigili* this might mean 'awake and talking aloud to himself', as Heitland 1896: 206 suggests. Other suggestions are *nocte*, *corde* and *uoto*. I take over Heitland's emendation *mente* (1896: 207), as the meaning fits the context and it recalls the stress of Juturna in A. 12.160: *tristi turbatam uulnere mentis*. For an overview of the debate, see Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 44. The reflective attitude of Hannibal is reminiscent of Aeneas, e.g. in A. 10.159–160: *hic magnus sedet Aeneas secumque uolutat | euentus belli uarios* ('here the great Aeneas sat down and ponders the various outcomes of war'); Brugnoli and Santini 1995: 45, who cite some other examples, too.

262 The words also recall the introduction to Tiberinus' prophecy to Aeneas: *tum sic adfari et curas his demere dictis* ('then [Tiberinus] spoke thus and took away his cares with the following words', A. 8.35). This line is a repetition of A. 2.775 and 3.135.

In her speech to Hannibal (8.211–224), the nymph ticks all the boxes that Juno has ordered her to do. First, she tells him to let go of his cares, as Juno had instructed her: *insanos curarum comprime fluctus* ('suppress the raging flood of his anxieties', 8.32):

quid tantum ulterius, rex o fortissime gentis
Sidoniae, ducis cura aegrescente dolorem? (8.211–212)

Why are you prolonging your sadness any longer and let your cares grow,
bravest king of the Sidonian people?

Anna addresses Hannibal as king (which he is not) by way of flattering. At the same time, she reminds him of Carthage's Sidonian origins; in the preceding narrative Anna herself has been called *Sidonis* by the primary narrator (8.70; 8.193; 8.199), in turn recalling Dido in the *Aeneid*.²⁶³ The enjambment of *Sidoniae* stresses Carthage's origin as a Phoenician colony and therefore Hannibal's blood relation with both Sidonian women. Shortly later, Anna stresses these ties more explicitly: *ego Oenotris aeternum numen in oris | concelebror, uestri generata e sanguine Beli* ('I am honoured as an eternal deity on Oenotrian shores, sprung from the blood of your Belus', 8.220–221). This echoes Juno's speech, reminding Anna of her own blood relation with Hannibal: *sanguine cognato iuuenis tibi, diua, laborat | Hannibal a uestro nomen memorabile Belo* ('a young man, a blood relation of yours, is suffering, goddess: Hannibal, a memorable descendant of your Belus', 8.30–31). At the same time, Anna is repeating almost literally the prophetic words of Dido: *aeternumque Italis numen celebrabere in oris* ('you will be honoured as an eternal deity on Italian shores', 8.183). Hannibal might have been frightened by the first part of her introduction when Anna states that she is an Italian deity, but she immediately assures him that she is in fact related to him and therefore on his side. The close repetition of Juno's and Dido's words signal that Anna affirms her allegiance to her Carthaginian origins.²⁶⁴

Anna starts her speech with a rhetorical question, which recalls the similar opening of Dido's speech to Anna (8.168–172); whereas Anna was too comfortable in Aeneas' palace, Hannibal is too anxious to confront the Romans; a similarity is that both have to be reminded of Carthage's enmity with the

263 See section 7 above.

264 See Dominik 2006: 119 and Chiu 2011: 6–15. I do not believe, as Lee 2017: 133–134 suggests, that Anna distances herself from Hannibal by using *uester* instead of *noster*.

Trojans/Romans. Like Dido has assured her sister that her message was not a vain dream (*ne falsa putes haec fingere somnum*, 8.178), Anna emphasizes to Hannibal that she is truly sent by the Olympian gods: *me tibi, ne dubites, summi matrona Tonantis | misit* ('lest you are in doubt, the wife of the highest Thunderer has sent me to you', 8.219–220). Anna even implies that Jupiter is supporting her mission by stressing the matrimonial link between Juno and the supreme god.²⁶⁵ The reference to these gods has to convince Hannibal of the value and truth of her words.²⁶⁶

Anna assures Hannibal that he should not fear Fabius anymore, as he is no longer consul (8.216–217 ~ 8.33–34) and has to engage battle with Varro, who is called 'another Flaminius': *cumque alio tibi Flaminius sunt bella gerenda* ('you have to fight wars with another Flaminius', 8.218).²⁶⁷ She suggests that the upcoming battle will be a repetition of Hannibal's victory at Lake Trasimene, as Juno had predicted to the nymph in 8.38. At the same time, Anna makes clear that the claim of the Roman officer Minucius that Hannibal had to fight with Fabius holds no truth. Minucius had apostrophized Hannibal in his speech to Fabius, in the presence of the Roman army: *cum solo tibi iam Fabio sunt bella gerenda* ('you have to fight wars now with Fabius and him alone', 7.745). Anna makes clear that Hannibal does not have to fear Fabius' tactics anymore.

265 Jupiter actually supports Hannibal at this point, but abandons him after Cannae. Marks 2013: 298–299 sees a parallel between Anna and Jupiter in the fact that both help the Carthaginians on the short term, but are beneficial for the Romans in the long run. But whereas Jupiter oversees all his actions and carefully plans them, it is never made clear that Anna, a minor goddess, oversees all consequences of her actions.

266 Fucecchi 2013: 25, on the other hand, reads the reference to Juno as "a sign of rejection of any personal responsibility: she looks as if she were restraining her emotions, if not even dissimulating the knowledge of Hannibal's ultimate future". There are, however, no clear indications that Anna knows what will happen with Hannibal in the future or that she rejects her own responsibility. Rather she exaggerates Juno's words, for example in stating that all gods are supporting Hannibal's case: *omnis iam placata tibi manet ira deorum, | omnis Agenoridis reddit fauor* ('all anger of the gods has now been appeased for you, all favour has come back to the descendants of Agenor', 8.213–214). This recalls the prophecy of Tiberinus to Aeneas: *tumor omnis et irae | concessere deum* ('all wrath and anger of the gods has abated', A. 8.40–41). Servius notes that this is not true, as the anger of the gods will only subside in Book 12. R.D. Williams 1973: 232 adds that it may be regarded "a rhetorical exaggeration to encourage Aeneas, prophetic rather than actual in meaning." In Anna's case, the first part of this observation still holds: it is a rhetorical way of encouraging Hannibal; the prophetic meaning, however, falls short, as not all gods will support Hannibal.

267 This is an echo of Juno's words in 8.35–36: *cum Varrone manus et cum Varrone serenda | proelia* ('you should join a fight with Varro, battles with Varro'). See also section 2.

Her address of Hannibal as ‘bravest king of the Sidonian people’ echoes Aeneas’ apostrophe of Diomedes: *o Danaum fortissime gentis | Tydide* (‘son of Tydeus, bravest of the Greek people’, *A.* 1.96–97). This reference to Diomedes subtly foreshadows the Battle of Cannae, a place where the Greek hero allegedly settled after the Trojan war.²⁶⁸ In her final words Anna orders him explicitly to move his army to Apulia:

haud mora sit; **rapido** belli rape fulmina **cursu**,
celsus Iapygios ubi se Garganus **in agros**
 explicat. haud longe tellus; **huc** dirige **signa**.
 haec, **ut** Roma cadat, **sat erit uictoria Poenis.** (8.222–224a)²⁶⁹

Let there be no delay; take up the thunderbolts of war with great haste where the high Garganus unfolds itself into the Iapygian fields; that land is not far, lead your standards there. This victory will be enough for the Carthaginians, resulting in Rome’s fall.

The upcoming battle is a revenge for Aeneas’ betrayal of Dido. Words that recall her suicide are echoed in Anna’s words to Hannibal: Dido climbed ‘with great haste’ (*rapido ... cursu*, 8.130) ‘the high pyre’ (*in celsam ... pyram*, 8.131–132), as Anna had earlier told Aeneas; Hannibal should now move his army with a similar speed to a highrising area.

Anna’s command of course also echoes Juno’s words:

ne desit fatis ad **signa** mouenda.
 ipsa adero. tendat iamdudum **in Iapyga campum**.
huc Trebiae rursus et Thrasymenni fata sequentur. (8.36–38)

Let him not fall short of his fate in moving his standards. I myself will be present. Let him immediately march to the Iapygian field. There the fate of Trebia and Trasimene will follow him again.

²⁶⁸ Hannibal picks this up in his speech to his troops: *diua ducente petamus | infaustum Phrygiis Diomedis nomine campum* (‘let the goddess lead us to the field, ominous to the Trojan because of Diomedes’ name’, 8.240–241). See Fernandelli 2009: 163 and Fucecchi 2013: 25 with n.27. Marks 2013: 301 sees dramatic irony in this reference: Diomedes had made peace with the Trojans by returning the Palladium to Aeneas.

²⁶⁹ The *Additamentum Aldinum* ends at 8.223. Line 224a is debated, as it is printed in the texts of Constantius and Asulanus, the same editions that introduced the *Additamentum*. Heinsius deemed it spurious and subsequently most editors have either bracketed it or omitted it altogether. See Ariemma 2000b: 90.

Like in her prophecy in Book 1 (*campumque ... | ... Iapyga*, 1.50–51), Juno does not predict the future beyond the Battle of Cannae.²⁷⁰ If line 224a is authentic, Anna, however, adds the (false) prediction that the Battle of Cannae will cause the downfall of Rome and result in the final victory for the Carthaginians. Anna uses similar words as Fabius did when he stressed the perilous situation of the Romans to his soldiers: *una, ut debellet, satis erit uictoria Poeno* ('one more battle will be enough for the Carthaginian to finish the war', 7.233).²⁷¹ Once more, Anna uses hyperbolic language to persuade Hannibal.

The haste that Hannibal should make corresponds with Juno's wishes and contrasts with the delaying tactics of Fabius. Anna's stress on haste is an indication that the war is about to take its course again, just like the main narrative is resumed after the long aetiological story of Anna.

Earlier in her speech, Anna had already ordered Hannibal to make haste: *eia, age, segnes | rumpe moras, rape Marmaricas in proelia uires* ('come on, end these sluggish delays, take your Marmaricans to battle', 8.214–215). The words recall Mercury's admonition to Aeneas (*heia age rumpe moras*, *A.* 4.569). Anna's address of Hannibal urges him to stop his elegiac *mora* and continue his epic quest against the Roman people. The same words also echo Iris' admonition of Turnus: *rumpe moras omnis et turbata arripe castra* ('end your delay and seize the bewildered [Trojan] camp [of Aeneas]', *A.* 9.13).²⁷² Hannibal will become a second Turnus for the Romans, which frames the Second Punic War as a succession to the battles in the second half of the *Aeneid*.²⁷³

The references to Turnus and Dido are not only a positive mirror for Hannibal, but also have ominous undercurrents; just as Turnus cannot defeat Aeneas

270 Cf. the prophecy of Hammon, which also does not go beyond Cannae (*Iapyga campum*, 3.707). See Chapter 1, section 5.1.

271 Ariemma 2000b: 90.

272 Fucecchi 2013: 23. The way that Anna leaves Hannibal also recalls Iris' departure: *dixit et in nubes umentia sustulit ora* ('so she spoke and she rose her wet face into the clouds', 8.225) ~ *dixit et in caelum paribus se sustulit alis* ('so she spoke and she rose into the sky on poised wings', *A.* 9.14). Fucecchi 2013: 26 and Marks 2013: 298 n.34 infer from this parallel that Anna returns to heaven, but Anna is unlike Iris not a celestial goddess.

273 It also recalls Virgil's self-address in the *Georgics*: *en age segnes | rumpe moras* (*G.* 3.42–43). Virgil urges himself to continue his work on that poem, a task entrusted to him by Maecenas, while only later he will start writing an epic on Octavian's battles (*pugnas | Caesaris*, *G.* 3.46–47). The same collocation is also used by Medea as self-address, urging herself to start her revenge on Jason: *rumpe iam segnes moras* ('now end your sluggish delays', *Sen. Med.* 54). This intertext may also ring through in Anna's address of Hannibal, as his warfare with the Romans is a revenge for what Aeneas did to Dido. The collocation *eia age* echoes similar exhortations in the speeches of Juno and Dido to Anna (*perge age*, 8.32; *surge, age*, 8.176).

in the final battle of the *Aeneid*, Hannibal will also be unable to win the war against the Romans. And by making a parallel between Cannae and Dido's pyre, Anna unwittingly foreshadows that Cannae will cause the eventual downfall of Hannibal.²⁷⁴

17 Hannibal's Response

The repetition of Juno's and Dido's words indicates that Anna is ventriloquizing their message and has returned to her origins as a Carthaginian. Although she was and is still honoured as a goddess on Italian soil, she helps Hannibal. The Carthaginian general is cheered up by Anna's message and promises to honour her with a cult in Carthage, where she will be worshipped together with Dido:

ast ego te **compos** pugnae Carthaginis arce
marmoreis sistam **templis** iuxtaque dicabo
 aequatam gemino simulacri munere Dido. (8.229–231)

I, having been granted this fight, will put you in a marble temple in the citadel of Carthage and I will honour Dido in an equal way with the identical gift of a statue.

Hannibal acknowledges the bond between the two sisters and will treat them as equals. The marble temple recalls the sanctuary of Dido in the middle of Carthage (*urbe ... media (...) templum*, 1.81 and 84), where Hannibal has sworn eternal hatred to the Romans. That temple was adorned with marble statues of his ancestors (1.86–89), including one of Dido (1.98). Acknowledging Anna's importance, he wants to honour her in the same place.²⁷⁵ Of course, Hannibal cannot make this promise come true, as he will never be able to erect a temple

²⁷⁴ The only implicit indication that Anna might know Hannibal's future might be hidden in the phrase *umentia ... ora* ('her wet face', 8.225). Fucecchi 2013: 26 cautiously suggests that means Anna is weeping when leaving Hannibal; in 9.30, the collocation *ora umentia* refers to tear-stained faces. I do not follow this interpretation, as Anna's face is *umentia* because she is a river nymph.

²⁷⁵ The pleonastic phrase *aequatam gemino simulacri munere* stresses the close similarity between the two sisters; they are almost identical. *Geminus* is an adjective originally meaning 'twin-born'; Dido had used the verb *aequo* earlier for describing the mutual feelings of Sychaeus (8.147).

or statue for Anna in Carthage.²⁷⁶ The phrase *compos pugnae* (8.229) recalls Aeneas, who received Anna when he already held sway over Latium (*iam regni compos*, 8.72). Hannibal will be granted the victory at Cannae, but will never be able to achieve the status of Aeneas as ruler of his country. Aeneas had made a similar promise to Apollo if he could settle in Latium: *tum Phoebus et Triviae solido de marmore templum | instituum* ('then I will set up a temple to Phoebus and Trivia of solid marble', *A.* 6.69–70).²⁷⁷ Aeneas' promise looks forward to the dedication of Apollo's temple in 28 BC by Augustus, which would contain statues of Apollo and Diana.²⁷⁸ This means that Aeneas' promise to Apollo eventually has become reality. The comparison between Aeneas and Hannibal emphasizes the inability of the latter to carry out his promise to Anna.²⁷⁹

The institution of a temple cult in Carthage can also be read on a metapoetical level, as it recalls the famous promise of Virgil to erect a marble temple: *templum de marmore ponam* ('I will set up a temple in marble', *G.* 3.13).²⁸⁰ There, the poet uses the marble temple as a metaphor for his future epic enterprise that we came to know as the *Aeneid*.²⁸¹ Of course, Hannibal is no epic poet, but breaking up his delay and continuing his epic enterprise against the Romans can be seen as a way of honouring Anna and Dido.²⁸² The ensuing Battle of Cannae as told in *Punica* 9–11 is in a way the (epic) temple that he erects for the two sisters. In the end, however, also this metaphorical sanctuary will not last.

18 Conclusion

After her encouragement of Hannibal, we do not hear of Anna anymore. What we do know is that she remains an Italian goddess, in the same river where

276 In 6.700–713, Hannibal envisioned another temple to be built in Carthage after the war. See Chapter 2, section 3.1.

277 Spaltenstein 1986: 514.

278 Austin 1977: 64 and Horsfall 2013: 113–114.

279 Fucecchi 2013: 23–27 compares Hannibal's attempt at transferring Anna with the ancient ritual of *translatio*. According to him, the Anna episode "indirectly points out the impossibility of transferring gods to the Carthaginian side, no matter whence they originate."

280 Ariemma 2000b: 91 and Lee 2017: 138 cite the parallel without explanation.

281 See e.g. Thomas 1988b: 36. The interpretation is, however, complicated as for example Hardie 1998: 39–43 shows. See also Heerink 2015: 4–5, with n.10 for a bibliography on the matter.

282 Hannibal obeys to Anna's command (8.214–215), which also contained an echo of the beginning of *Georgics* 3. See n. 273 above.

Aeneas was deified, and that she was honoured with a festival on the Ides of March on which the consuls took office. Her loyalty to Carthage is therefore striking. Her double identity and collaboration with the Carthaginians mirror the paradoxes of the Battle of Cannae. Hannibal defeats the Romans, but this will simultaneously turn out to be a prelude of his downfall. The Romans, on the other hand, having lost their archenemy, will almost destroy themselves in successive civil wars. Anna, as a goddess honoured on the Ides of March, is a reminder of this everlasting destructive tendency in Roman history.²⁸³

283 *Pace Marks* 2013: 300, who understands the episode as a message “that differences between Carthaginian and Italian/Roman or friend and foe can be reconciled.”

Conclusion

1 Embedded Narratives as Reflections of the Whole

Embedded narratives enable the narrator and the narratees of the *Punica* to reflect upon the epic as a whole, as the four case studies of this study have demonstrated. Their relative ‘separateness’ makes it possible to look at main themes and characters from different angles. Sometimes they are in sync with the main narrative, but more often they contain elements that question or contradict other parts of the epic. Paradoxically, these separate narratives appear to be intricately tied in with the rest of the epic. These internal relations are evoked by a finely spun web of intratextual allusions; repetitions of words, sound, and metre point to connections with earlier or later parts of the epic. Embedded narratives in the *Punica* also prove to be a fertile space for narrative and generic crossovers, and engagement with other texts, epic or non-epic, from the literary tradition. This almost obsessive interaction with other texts and genres turns embedded narratives into suitable vehicles for metapoetics. This especially comes to the fore when they are told by another narrator, like Bostar, Marus, and Anna. Embedded narratives are miniatures, mirroring the *Punica* as a whole.

2 Value of Combined Methodology

My combination of narratology, intertextuality, and intratextuality has proven to be a valuable way to read these narratives; it contributes to a more comprehensive understanding than only one of these three methods would do. At the same time, it confirms the value of each individual approach for studying embedded narratives in specific and the *Punica* in general.

Intertextuality has consistently been a favourite tool to approach Silius’ epic. The case studies in this book have uncovered the myriad of intertexts that are at work in embedded narratives. There are still many allusions to be discovered in the deep layered text of the *Punica*, especially to Ovid, Lucan, and the other Flavian epicists. In addition, many intertextual references are tucked away in commentaries and footnotes with no more explanation than a preceding “cf.”. These are begging to be investigated in a more interpretative and comprehensive way. This study hopes to have shown the intertextual exuberance of embedded narratives and the value of exploring the possible effects of these intertexts.

This millennium has witnessed the emergence of studies that approach the *Punica* from a narratological perspective, following a longer existing trend in classical scholarship. Embedded narratives are suitable passages for reading through a narratological lens. We have seen that the toolkit of narrative levels, narrators, narratees, apostrophe, focalization, and metalepsis—to name some important pieces of equipment—can gain valuable insights in the workings of embedded narratives that would otherwise perhaps have escaped notice. I am convinced that a more structural application of narratology would be beneficial for a better understanding of other parts of the epic as well.

Finally, intratextuality is a method that definitely deserves more scholarly attention, as each of my case studies has shown. Commentaries and other studies of the *Punica* have always pointed to verbal or thematic parallels or contrasts with other parts of the epic, but usually not on the same scale as intertextuality is employed. This book has tried to bring intratextuality into the limelight and show the wealth of internal mirroring in the *Punica*. I have reviewed a multitude of intratextual references—many of them unnoticed before—that shed light on earlier scenes or foreshadow later parts of the epic. From these examples, the *Punica* emerges as a carefully structured work, containing a web of finely spun internal reflections. An awareness of this intratextual richness of the *Punica* hopefully results in a more systematically appliance of this method.

The combined methodology of narratology, intertextuality, and intratextuality has yielded new and meaningful readings of embedded narratives in the *Punica*, as I will show by returning to the narratives that I have explored in this book.

3 Narrative of Bostar

The narrative of Bostar, Hannibal's envoy to the oracle of Hammon, is a palace of mirrors in its own right. Bostar and the priest Arisbas mirror each other as narrators. In turn they are stand-ins for respectively Hannibal and Hammon. The god Hammon speaks directly to Hannibal as it were, another indication of Hannibal's close affiliation with the divine. The great defeats of the Romans are emphasized, while the final defeat of Hannibal is kept silent. The oracle of Hammon is therefore highly ironic: while Bostar thinks that the supreme god has given his assent to the Punic enterprise, the narratees know that Jupiter has other plans, as the god himself has affirmed to Venus.

The oracle from Siwa recalls visits of Alexander the Great and Cato to that same oasis; Aeneas' consultation of the Cumaean Sibyl is evoked as well. Hannibal, however, cannot be put on a par with these predecessors. Unlike Alexander

he is not proclaimed the son of the god; unlike the sceptic Cato he is all too ready to accept the message of the oracle; and unlike Aeneas he is unable to accomplish his mission. In Book 13 of the *Punica*, Hannibal's Roman rival Scipio is identified as son of Jupiter and the true successor to both Aeneas and Alexander.

4 Narrative of Regulus

The long narrative of Marus of Regulus' exploits in the First Punic War causes a delay of the epic main narrative. As first scene of action in this narrative, the river Bagrada is highly symbolic. As a marker of intertextuality, it evokes other epic protagonists arriving at rivers at turning points in their own epic mission; in the case of Aeneas one could argue that this is a positive comparison, but when it comes to Caesar at the Rubicon and his delegate Curio at the same Bagrada in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, Regulus' literary heritage is harder to assess in a favourable light.

Regulus has often been viewed as the embodiment of Stoic qualities. In the narrative of Marus he definitely shows perseverance and loyalty, but we see also the drawbacks of his character. His loyalty turns out to be harmful for both Rome and his family. On the battlefield, his love for glory proves to be inadequate for dealing with crises, making him an unsuitable example for the Romans in their current war against Hannibal. His solitary actions reveal personal heroic aspirations, befitting a general whose name means 'little king'.

5 Narrative of Falernus

The story of Falernus is a 'perfect' theoxeny and takes the narratee from the grim war in the Second Punic War to an almost Golden Age. For a moment, Silius creates a world in which people were still farmers and in which a god acts as a cultivator, instead of a destructive force. The story serves as an antithesis to the destruction of the Campanian countryside by Hannibal. The epic narrative and thus Hannibal's destruction is temporarily paused, copying the tactics of Fabius in the main narrative. The arrival of Bacchus does, however, bring about a change of Falernus and his world that is not necessarily for the better. The miraculous appearance of wine results in excessive drinking, marking a shift from the Golden Age. At the same time, it signals a turn from a Callimachean world towards the grim reality of martial epic, as after this narrative Hannibal continues his devastation of the Italian land.

The gift of wine that Falernus receives is therefore ambiguous. It means a removal from the 'better age' of Falernus towards excessive luxury in later times. Capua, not far from the *ager Falernus*, is an example of the harmful effects of *luxuria*, of which wine is an important element. Paradoxically, *luxuria* will turn out to be the rescue of Rome: during their stay in Capua, Hannibal and his men are weakened by wine and merriment to such an extent that it precipitates their downfall. In this respect, the Falernus episode foreshadows the weakening of Hannibal by Venus and Bacchus in Book 11. At the same time, the story points to the instability of Bacchus as an exemplar, as both Domitian and Scipio are explicitly compared to this god.

6 Narrative of Anna Perenna

A tantalizing episode is the narrative of Anna Perenna. In this Silian remake of Ovid's sequel in the *Fasti* to *Aeneid* 4, Dido's sister has become an Italian deity, residing in the same river as the deified Aeneas. Nevertheless, she remains loyal to Carthage and her sister. Anna turns out to be an instrument of Juno in encouraging Hannibal to continue his warfare against the Romans. Her double identity and collaboration with the Carthaginians mirror the paradoxes of the Battle of Cannae: Hannibal defeats the Romans, but his victory will simultaneously turn out to be a prelude of his downfall. On the other hand, the Romans, having lost their of their archenemy, will almost destroy themselves in civil wars in centuries to come. Anna, as a goddess honoured on the Ides of March, is a reminder of this destructive tendency of Roman history, exemplifying the idea of the Punic Wars as a prelude to the civil wars of the first century BC and the more recent events of 68–69 AD.

7 Envoi

This book indicates some perspectives for further research on Silius' epic. It goes without saying that other embedded narratives in the *Punica*, which have fallen out of the scope of this study deserve the same close reading as the four case studies here presented. I am convinced that the combined method of narratology, intertextuality, and intratextuality applied here will open new perspectives on these narratives as well.

This book has also shed light on some recurrent themes in the *Punica*. I will mention three of them that in my opinion deserve more attention in future research. Building on recent scholarship, this study has affirmed the signific-

ance of civil war as one of the major themes in Silius' epic. Lucan's *Bellum Civile* has proven to be a fundamental intertext for many passages in the *Punica*, which can be seen as its 'prequel'. I have demonstrated that this intertext more than once puts seemingly positive events and characters in another, often more ambivalent light. A more comprehensive synthesis of the interactions between Silius and Lucan would definitely provide important insights in the *Punica* and the theme of civil war.

Another recurrent issue is the 'Ovidian' poetics of many passages, especially aetiology. Silius shows a strong interest in origins throughout his epic, which bring to mind Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and *Fasti*. Many such aetiologies seem to be invented by Silius himself, but at the same time they breathe an Ovidian atmosphere. A good example is the narrative of Falernus, which echoes multiple theoxenical stories from the literary past. It would be worthwhile to investigate the theme of aetiology in the *Punica* on its own right.

A last *Leitmotiv* in the *Punica* that deserves more attention is metapoetics. The high-degree of intertextuality is already a sign of the epic's continuing dialogue with the literary past, but there are many passages where the narrator engages even more explicitly with his predecessors. Embedded narratives have proven to be parts of the epic where metapoetics thrives: secondary narrators and their narratives do not only reflect the primary narrator and his main narrative, but also the relation between the *Punica* and other texts. This study has indicated some directions for studying the immanent literary history and the role that metapoetics plays in the *Punica*.

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This study investigates the role of embedded narratives in Silius Italicus' *Punica*, an epic from the late first century AD on the Second Punic War (218–202 BC). At first sight, these narratives seem to be loosely 'embedded' in the epic, having their own plot and being situated in a different time or place than the main narrative. A closer look reveals, however, that they foreshadow or recall elements that are found elsewhere in the epic. In this way, they serve as 'mirrors' of the main narrative. The larger part of this book consists of four detailed case studies.

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