# INTRODUCTION

## 1 BOOK 7

Book 7 treats the decisive encounter between the armies of Caesar and Pompey at the Battle of Pharsalus, which took place on 9 August 48. The whole book is devoted solely to this event and its aftermath, a period of a little more than 24 hours.[1] When *BC* 7 begins, the reader's attention has already been focused on the region near Pharsalus for nearly 500 lines: at 6.332 Pompey arrives in Thessaly in pursuit of Caesar, at 6.333–412 Lucan gives an excursus on the geography of the region and at 6.413–830 he narrates the encounter between Sextus Pompey and the witch Erictho. The proportion of narrative concentrated upon one place, as well as the amount of space given over to the circumstances and aftermath of a single event, are unique within the poem.[2]

The events of book 7 may be set out as follows:

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| 1–6 | The sun reluctantly rises. |
| 7–44 | Pompey dreams of being applauded in his theatre at Rome. |
| 45–61 | Pompey's camp demands that he give battle to Caesar. |
| 62–85 | Cicero urges Pompey to fight Caesar. |
| 85–127 | Pompey relents and agrees to give battle. |
| 127–50 | Pompey's camp responds with commotion and fear. They prepare their weapons and are compared to gods arming for battle against giants. |
| 151–84 | Portents of disaster assail the Pompeian forces. |
| 185–213 | In Patavium the augur Cornelius foresees the outcome of the battle. The narrator predicts (201–13) that when the events of his poem are read they will provoke hope, fear and prayers in his readers: they will seem like events that have not yet occurred and they will elicit support for Pompey. |
| 214–34 | The arrangement of the Pompeian forces. |
| 235–49 | Caesar sees the Pompeians descend to the plain. |
| 250–329 | Caesar exhorts his soldiers to battle. |
| 329–36 | Caesar's camp eats, arms itself and rushes to battle in no order. |
| 337–84 | Pompey exhorts his solders. |

[1] Lines 712–27 are the exception, when attention shifts momentarily to Larisa.
[2] Any summary of the poem's events, e.g. Dinter 2012: 5–8 or the structural schemes set out in Radicke 2004, will show the typical pattern of narrating multiple events and locations within a single book.

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|---|---|
| 385–459 | The troops charge at each other. The narrator reflects on the permanent consequences of the battle (387–459): the loss of future Roman generations; the depopulation of Italy; the cessation of Roman imperial expansion; the loss of liberty. If Jupiter will watch Pharsalus without intervening, Rome has her revenge by deifying emperors. |
| 460–505 | The battle begins. Crastinus casts the first spear; hand-to-hand combat ensues. |
| 506–44 | The Pompeian cavalry is routed. |
| 545–56 | The centre of the battle, where Romans fight Romans. The narrator refuses to tell of this part of the battle. |
| 557–85 | Caesar in the centre of battle. |
| 586–96 | Brutus. |
| 597–616 | The death of Domitius Ahenobarbus. |
| 617–46 | The narrator passes over individual deaths and bitterly denounces the battle as bringing permanent slavery to Rome. |
| 647–97 | Pompey's flight. |
| 698–711 | The narrator apostrophizes Pompey. |
| 712–27 | Pompey at Larisa. |
| 728–60 | The Caesarians take Pompey's camp. |
| 760–86 | Caesar and his soldiers dream of their victims. |
| 786–824 | The next morning Caesar views the dead as he eats breakfast; he refuses them burial. |
| 825–46 | The dead are plundered by carrion animals. |
| 847–72 | The narrator apostrophizes Thessaly. |

The individual scenes listed above may be grouped into four larger panels of roughly equal length: (i) Pompey's camp (1–213); (ii) Caesar and Pompey on the plain (214–459); (iii) the battle narrative (460–646); (iv) Pompey's flight and the aftermath of battle (647–872). Each panel ends with a major interjection by the narrator in which the enormity of the battle is conveyed to the reader. Different divisions between groups and other larger structural patterns are of course possible; a broad division into three panels – before (1–213), during (214–646) and after battle (647–872) – is another obvious pattern.[3]

## 2 BATTLE

The space that Lucan devotes to the events in Thessaly is a sign of their importance, but the battle narrative itself is only a small proportion of this

[3] Supported by e.g. Radicke 2004: 374 and Lanzarone 1–4.

whole (less than a quarter of book 7; about one seventh of the narrative based at Thessaly at 6.333–7.872). Moreover, the manner in which it is presented illustrates a number of idiosyncrasies at work within *BC*.

The Battle of Pharsalus was promised in the first line of the poem as its subject matter (1.1 *Bella . . . per Emathios . . . campos*). It is repeatedly anticipated: foreseen (1.679–82), foreshadowed (1.38–9, 3.296–7, 4.255–6, 4.803–4, 5.391–2, 6.62) and marked as fated (6.313, 6.332). However, in keeping with the expansive and digressive nature of epic narrative, the decisive encounter between the poem's protagonists is delayed for six books.[4] Even within book 7 the battle itself is postponed for over 400 lines. In *BC* the narrative strategy of delaying Pharsalus moves in step with the historical Pompey's military strategy of falling back before Caesar's invasion of Italy, of blocking his supplies, effectively prolonging the war and avoiding a decisive encounter with Caesar.[5] Delay in *BC* is more importantly bound up with the narrator's overall determination to retard Caesar's march to victory, since that will mean the permanent loss of liberty for Rome (cf. e.g. 1.670 (Figulus) '*cum domino pax ista uenit*').[6] Whereas in the *Aeneid* delay is typically orchestrated by divinities, in *BC* delays are more commonly caused by the poem's narrator. Freighting this common narrative strategy with a heavy ideological load is one of Lucan's most conspicuous contributions to epic narration.[7] As in earlier epic, the motif of delay gains further prominence as the summative encounter draws near. A comparison of the theme and vocabulary of delaying in *Aeneid* 12 is instructive.[8] In *BC*, the terms *mora* or *morari* occur five times in book 7, all before the battle proper begins: this is about a quarter of their occurrences in the poem when applied to the progress of Caesar or the war;[9] in the same way, about a quarter of these words' occurrences within the *Aeneid* are found in book 12.

Within book 7 itself this process of delay is reflected both in the sun's reluctance to rise and in various explicit comments made by characters: for example, at 82 Cicero accuses Pompey's *signa* of being *morantia*; at 87–8 Pompey disavows further delay in a manner evoking Virgil's Turnus; at 240 Caesar is sick of delay; at 338 Pompey sees that no further delays are

[4] On delay as a 'generator of epic plot' see Hardie 1997: 145–7; cf. Fowler 1997: 16–17.

[5] On the republican strategy in the civil war see Welch 2012: 43–91.

[6] Masters 1992: esp. 1–10; index s.v. 'delay (*mora*) of narrative'.

[7] Its influence can be felt, for example, in Statius' use of delaying the climactic *nefas* of fratricide in the *Thebaid*: see Vessey 1973: 165–7; Feeney 1991: 338–40; Ganiban 2007: 152–75.

[8] See Hardie 1997: 145; Tarrant 2012: 3–4.

[9] I count twenty-three such occurrences (out of thirty-five total appearances); I disregard examples describing natural phenomena (e.g. rivers) although these instances may still contribute to the thematic importance of delay in the poem.

permitted; at 460 the plain separating the onrushing armies is described as 'delaying destiny'. After book 7 the frequency of these terms declines radically.[10] Delay in the *Aeneid* is one means of drawing attention to the closural force of Turnus' death: of postponing the climactic encounter, of generating suspense and of allowing space for themes to develop which deepen the reader's understanding of the end of the poem.[11] We can attribute these same effects to delay in *BC*, albeit without the closural force which the theme brings with it in the *Aeneid*.[12]

When the battle finally does commence the theme of delaying gives way to that of omission and silence. The most extreme example is the narrator's flat refusal to recount the action at the centre of battle where Romans fight Romans (545–56; esp. 556 *quidquid in hac acie gessisti, Roma, tacebo*).[13] Before and after this moment several standard scenes and elements found in epic battle narratives are conspicuous by their absence.[14] There is no example of a full-scale *aristeia* of Pompey, Caesar or individual warriors in the Homeric and Virgilian manner: the narrator explicitly states that he will not recount *singula fata* at 617–31.[15] A full-scale arming scene such as one encounters in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* is withheld; instead the Pompeians collectively prepare their weapons for battle at 139–43, and we are simply told of the Caesarians at 330 *armaque raptim | sumpta*. The only individual death scene in the book is that of Domitius Ahenobarbus at 597–616. This conforms to a well-established generic pattern that renders Domitius a problematic emblem of dying senatorial freedom and suggests a model of behaviour for Pompey, heroic death in battle, that he fails to emulate (see 597–616n.). Lucan moreover does not narrate any encounter between named individuals on the plain, a basic component of Iliadic battle. The omission of a confrontation between the poem's protagonists, Caesar and Pompey – averted by the latter's flight from Pharsalus at lines 677–9 – may count as *BC* 7's most striking

[10] Once in each of books 8–10 applied to the war, five times in total. It is idle – and contingent upon one's view of the poem's intended structure – to speculate whether the theme might have been reprised as the narrative got closer to Thapsus.

[11] Semple 1959: 182; Tarrant 2012: 5. Leigh 1997a: 86 n. 16 notes also how attention to the anticipatory emotions, such as hope and fear, intensifies as the battle approaches.

[12] One could argue that Lucan's adaptation of this Virgilian closural device at a point in his poem when so much of its narrative remains serves the overall theme of the endlessness of civil war, on which see Masters 1992: 247–59; Day 2013: 93–8.

[13] Lebek 1976: 253–4; Johnson 1987: 97–100; O'Higgins 1988: 215–16; Masters 1992: 148; Leigh 1997a: 101–3.

[14] Bramble 1983: 543 'a book singularly lacking in Homeric or Virgilian narrative action'.

[15] Gorman 2001: esp. 267–72 on Pharsalus.

omission in view of its numerous pointers to *Iliad* 22 and *Aeneid* 12; the ensuing pursuit by Caesar throughout the eastern Mediterranean will be resolved only in the harbour of Alexandria at 9.1010 where Caesar will be presented with Pompey's head. The preceding discussion is not to say that common details from epic battle narratives are completely lacking. These can be found, for example, in the blaze of bronze armour (214–15) and motifs such as the 'first spear cast' in the battle (472–3) or the 'cloud of weapons' (519). But the reader's generic expectations are more typically frustrated than fulfilled in book 7.

While many elements within Lucan's Pharsalus narrative are atypical of earlier epic, there is much in his description of battle at 460–646 that is characteristic of his own earlier battle narratives. Pompey's squadrons, so densely packed that they can hardly wield their swords (492–5), recall Curio's crowded forces under attack at 4.777–83. The reader is well prepared for the focus on amputation wounds, dismembered and disintegrating bodies (at e.g. 619–30) by the 'amazing sights of varied deaths' (3.634 *uarii miracula fati*) recounted in the sea battle at Massilia (3.635–751) or at the siege at Dyrrachium (e.g. 6.175–9).[16] The narrator's attention to blood flowing, congealing or being dammed at the site of battle (e.g. 636–7) is similarly familiar from the same details at 3.572–3 and 4.785 (cf. also the effects of mass execution at 2.209–20).

## 3 THE GODS AND RELIGION

Divine participation in epic narratives, including those treating historical subjects, was a standard feature of the Greek and Roman tradition.[17] Lucan breaks from this pattern in three important respects. First, at the beginning of the poem he does not invoke the Muses for their assistance (cf. Virg. *A.* 1.8–11); instead he opts for the poetic inspiration of the emperor Nero at 1.63–6. Second, he cites no divine causation for the civil war in his proem (cf. Virg. *A.* 1.4); only at 2.1–4 does he reveal that the anger of the gods was made manifest in the prodigies of 1.469–695. Third, Lucan does not show divine characters in speech and action throughout the course of his epic.[18] This strategy has a number of consequences. Lucan's narrator, characters and readers are denied access to one of epic's 'most powerful and economical frame[s] of reference':[19] the gods do not justify,

[16] On Lucan and the human body see Most 1992 (on Neronian poetry more generally); Bartsch 1997: 10–37; Dinter 2012.

[17] For a survey of the evidence and issues see Liebeschuetz 1979: 140–55 and esp. Feeney 1991: 269; cf. 264–9.

[18] Early exceptions are the appearance of *Patria* to Caesar at 1.185–203 and the Fury who hovers over Rome at 1.572–7: see Feeney 1991: 270–3.

[19] Feeney 1991: 285.

condone or interpret the poem's outcome in their own words as they do in Homer and Virgil. In the Roman epic tradition, the foundation of Rome or its hegemony over the Mediterranean is endorsed by an accommodation made between opposed gods, such as the reconciliation of Juno and Jupiter at Virg. *A.* 12.791–842. Such a framework was available to Lucan: the Roman civil war could have been mirrored in a divine conflict between Caesar's progenitor Venus and Hercules, whom the republicans had promoted as the divinity of their cause.[20] Petronius' poetaster Eumolpus adopts precisely this strategy in his own poem on the civil war when Venus, Minerva and Romulus are shown to support Caesar while Apollo, Diana, Mercury and Hercules support Pompey (124.264–70). A divine apparatus of this kind – requiring Caesar's ultimate victory over the republicans to be endorsed by an accommodation between Hercules and Venus and met with the approval of the pantheon of gods – would be irreconcilable with the narrator's position as an entrenched opponent of Caesar and the principate.[21]

Lucan's rejection of the assistance of the traditional muses means that he forgoes the omniscient authority typical of the epic narrator. We can see his performed ignorance foregrounded at a number of points in the poem (e.g. multiple, alternative explanations at 19–24; doubt at 172–3; reliance upon the *fides* of those *memorantes* at 192). The existence of the gods is assumed in the poem – and is evident e.g. in the appearance of omens and prodigies (151–84) or in augury (192–200) – but their influence over events is always observed from the perspective of human experience. Prayers and invocations of the gods are very frequent in *BC* but the efficacy of human prayer has to be inferred from the outcome of events on earth. Caesar's inexorable path to victory in the poem thus points to his divine support.

*BC*'s theodicy is clearly announced at 1.128 *uictrix causa deis placuit sed uicta Catoni*, but the manner and reasoning of this theodicy are obscure to the narrator and withheld from the human protagonists of the poem. Cicero believes that divine support for the republican cause is a given (76–7). Pompey on the other hand recognizes that the day has been appointed by the gods in answer to the prayers of Caesar (113–14; cf. 339). Although he suspects that they have betrayed him (85–6), he still believes (or claims) that the gods have preserved him in order to defeat Caesar and protect the laws (349–55). After his cavalry is defeated,

[20] App. *BCiv.* 2.76.319 records that the night before Pharsalus the watchword for the Pompeians was 'Hercules Invictus', while that for the Caesarians was 'Venus Victrix'. Jal 1963: 194–5; Ahl 1976: 286. For Pompey and Hercules more generally see Rawson 1970.

[21] On Lucan's deeply engaged, partisan narrator see Masters 1992: 5–6, 87–90; D'Alessandro Behr 2007: esp. 1–15.

Pompey realizes that the gods have abandoned him (646–9), but even now believes in the efficacy of his prayers (657–66). In contrast, Pompey's decision to fight demonstrates to Caesar his divine support: the battle answers his prayers (238–9) and he sees the gods draw close to him in the imminent battle (297–8). His prayers for victory at 311–14 are answered and at 796 he 'sees fortune and his gods' in the post-battle carnage.

Those on the losing side of history are frequently baffled or outraged at the epic's unfolding events, most typically the poem's narrator. Evidence of the gods' support for Caesar or their indifference to the republicans or Pompey often evokes reproaches against them (e.g. from the people of Larisa at 725). The most elaborate example occurs at 445–59 where, after reflecting upon the permanent consequences that will follow from the battle, the narrator exclaims in quick succession that there are no gods for the Romans (445–6), that Jupiter's sovereignty is a lie because all things are swept along by chance (446–7) and that human affairs are of no concern to Jupiter because he is able to watch the bloodshed without casting his thunderbolts (447–54).

## 4 STOICISM AND EPICUREANISM

*BC* is pervaded by the conflicting tenets of Stoicism and Epicureanism.[22] The most significant point of difference between these two philosophies concerns the Stoic notion of a universe governed by a benevolent divinity and subject to the fates, and the Epicurean belief in detached, uncaring gods and events unfolding according to random chance.[23] In *BC* this opposition is stated most explicitly at 2.7–13,[24] but is revisited at many points in the poem. Neither the narrator nor many of the human characters of the poem – with the notable exception of Cato (cf. 9.566–84) – know whether the events of the poem occur by design or chance; and this uncertainty is felt at many discrete moments. A further complication is that the terms *fata* and *fortuna* are frequently used in close proximity (cf. e.g. 88–9, 205–6, 250–2, 504–5, 600–1, 647–9, 686): usage which is in keeping with the Stoic tendency to call the same organizing principle of their universe by multiple names (see 1n.), but which in *BC* has the effect of forestalling attempts to differentiate destiny from chance events.[25]

[22] Long and Sedley 1987 provide key sources with commentary for both schools. For orientation on Stoicism see *OCD* s.v. 'Stoicism' and the essays in Inwood 2003; for Epicureanism see *OCD* s.v. 'Epicurus', the essays in Warren 2009 and Kenney 2014: 1–5.

[23] The actual role and importance of chance in Epicurean physics is debated: see Long 2006.

[24] Feeney 1991: 281; Fantham 1992: note on Luc. 2.1–66n.

[25] Feeney 1991: 280. For *fatum* and *fortuna* in *BC* see Friedrich 2010; Dick 1967.

The world of the poem is often described in essentially Stoic terms:[26] in *BC* 7 the *lex aeterna* (1) and the fates 'dragging' the world along as Pompey's camp demands war (46) both evoke the predetermined universe of the Stoics; that the sun is fed by vapour from the ocean is also a Stoic belief (5). Pompey tries to dissuade his camp from battle with essentially Stoic aphorisms at 105–7, while Caesar seems to allude to the cosmic sympathy by which Pharsalus was brought to pass at 301. Furthermore, when at 211 the narrator predicts the emotions that his poem will arouse in its future readers (*spesque metusque simul perituraque uota*), relevant to his claim is the Stoic belief in the beneficial arousal of fear and pleasure by poetry in its audience.[27] Conversely, the narrator refers to the Epicurean belief in divine disinterest in human concerns at various moments in book 7: Pharsalus distracts the care of the gods from the heavens at 311–12; the fact that the battle takes place without intervention by the gods prompts the narrator to an impassioned denial of divine concern for the Romans and an affirmation that events are swept along by chance (445–7, 454–5).

Stoic and Epicurean beliefs regarding death also offer important context for *BC* 7. At 470–1 the narrator prays that the gods give Crastinus not death but post-mortem sensation: i.e. a fate contrary to the Epicurean position that the dissolution of the soul's union with the body at the point of death marked the end of sensation.[28] After the battle, the narrator assures Caesar that the bodies of the dead to whom he denies burial will be received back into the earth (810–11, 818–19): a position that was not exclusive to Epicureanism but had been forcefully stated by Lucretius (2.999–1003). Shortly after, the narrator turns to Stoic alternatives: the dead will be consumed in ekpyrosis (812–15, alluded to earlier at 136) and they will achieve astral immortality (816).

## 5 POMPEY AND CAESAR

Pompey's psychological profile in *BC* is more complex than that of either Caesar or Cato. Scenes such as 5.722–815 and 8.560–636 stress the loving, human relationship he has with Cornelia, and he generally occupies a more moderate, fallible position between the extremes of Caesar and Cato.[29] His essential charactersitics are established in his introduction

[26] See Lapidge 1979.
[27] D'Alessandro Behr 2007: 76–8.
[28] See e.g. Kenney 2014 on Lucr. 3.839–42.
[29] For major discussions on Lucan's Pompey see Ahl 1976: 150–89; Johnson 1987: 67–100; Bartsch 1997: 73–100; Leigh 1997a: esp. 110–57; Narducci 2002: 279–367; Sklenář 2003: 106–27; Day 2013: 179–233. Also important is Feeney 1986b, who inter alia draws attention to Lucan's habit of punning on Pompey's cognomen *Magnus* with various adjectives denoting greatness or its opposite.

to the poem at 1.129–43:[30] he is older, mellowed by civil life, a populist reliant upon his past successes. The oak tree to which he is compared at 1.135–43 illustrates both his frailty and the esteem with which he is regarded by his community. In *BC* 7, although he believes he has the better cause (349), and lays claim to the support of the gods (349–55), he vacillates between confidence in victory and despair (despair at e.g. 89–92). He makes at times shocking concessions and compromises, especially in his speeches: he would gladly die from the first javelin cast if it did not mean ruin for the republican cause (118–20); he would grovel before his soldiers' feet if he could do so with his dignity intact (378–9); he will suffer exile, not death in defeat (379–80); he may learn to serve Caesar (382). His desire for popular approval is marked early in the book (in his dream at 9–12; in his concern for his name at 120–3) and the love felt for him by the city is made clear e.g. at 28–44.[31] This desire to be loved sets him apart from the other heroes of the poem. His love of Cornelia partially motivates his flight (675–7), and he presumes that familial love drives his soldiers: he urges them to win back family life with the sword at 346–8 (contrast Caesar, who orders his troops to summon fate with their sword at 252). Pompey has a vanity which at times borders on self-absorption: at 354–5 the fact of his existence is proof to him of the gods' support for his cause and at 671–2 he fears that if he falls in battle his whole army will die over his body. Pompey has a complex relationship with his soldiers. To his rank and file, as to his more exalted allies, his strategy appears to stem from personal ambition rather than disinterested reasoning: to them he is slow, timorous (52; 68–75, 78) and addicted to world-rule (53–5). His control over his camp is tenuous (45–127) and his catastrophic concession to the army on the issue of fighting Caesar at Pharsalus is marked by a simile illustrating his abnegation of authority (cf. esp. 125–7).

Nevertheless, the concern of his camp for him is made clear (133–8). Pompey is a failure as an orator (337–84; cf. 2.531–95, 8.262–327). He is repeatedly cast in the mould of an experienced general pursuing a sensible strategy, undermined by the impatience and inexperience of his subordinates (45–61; cf. 647–97); his decision to flee battle rather than to rally the troops or die heroically sits in contrast to this pattern. In his flight Pompey's desire to limit casualties (656–8, 689–91) at once speaks to his compassion and to a basic misunderstanding of the ideological conviction of his troops (694–7). The portrait of the courageous,

[30] For the introduction of Pompey and Caesar at 1.135–57 see Rosner-Siegel 1983.

[31] Cf. Pompey's abiding concern for his *fama*, which remains a priority as he faces his death at 8.622–35.

self-contained man who flees from battle is, presumably, scathingly ironic (680–6).

Caesar's characterization stands in contrast to that of Pompey.[32] In *BC* 7 his portrayal as a force of unstoppable, destructive energy and overreaching ambition, established at 1.143–57, is amply confirmed. He craves the summative confrontation that Pompey seeks to avoid (239); he is sick of delay and possesses a burning desire for power (240–2). His confidence in divine support prior to the battle (e.g. 297–9) is answered by his 'seeing his gods' in the carnage on the following morning (796). Whereas Pompey looks for compromise, Caesar pursues an absolutist, 'all or nothing' approach. Defeat means death (305); if his soldiers so much as look back before victory he threatens to commit suicide (304–10). This attitude is well symbolized in his order to destroy their own camp before battle (326–9).[33] Whereas Pompey appeals to family ties, Caesar repeatedly and graphically urges his soldiers to ignore such bonds of *pietas* in battle (320–5). Caesar acknowledges (or claims) his reliance upon his soldiers: it is they who will 'summon fate' for him (252); his soldiers are strongly assimilated to him by their outlook and description (320–2, 332–3, 334–6nn.) and by the arresting comparative image of his army being comprised wholly of him (334–6). Above all, Caesar is in control of his soldiers in a way that Pompey is not. He efficiently stirs them to action (329–36); he becomes an almost superhuman agent of their frenzy in the midst of battle (557–85); he can stop their killing (730–1) and redirect their energies (albeit to plundering) after the battle has been won (731–7, 746–9). Caesar's characterization is extreme but not unchanging. Before battle we see a moment of doubt and hesitation (245–7) and Caesar suppresses a feeling of dread before he addresses his troops at 248, just as Pompey does at 339–41. After the battle, he is subject to the same guilt, mental turmoil (779) and harrowing dreams as his soldiers (771–6). Be that as it may, the lasting image of Caesar from book 7 comes from the morning after Pharsalus: his diabolical delight in the carnage (794–5); his lingering gaze over the bodies; his unabated *furor* (797) and *ira* (809), which motivate his denial of burial to the dead.

[32] For Lucan's Caesar: Ahl 1976: 190–230; Henderson 1987: 141–51; Johnson 1987: 101–34; Narducci 2002: 187–278; Sklenář 2003: 128–51; Day 2013: 106–78.

[33] And chimes with other self-destructive imagery associated with Caesar in *BC*: e.g. 1.151–7, lightning raging against its own precinct of the sky; 1.205–12, a lion thrusting itself on hunting weapons.