Transactions of the American Philological Association 108 (1978) 243–257

BELLI SPES INPROBA: THE THEME OF WALLS IN LUCAN, *PHARSALIA VI*

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On many occasions, at Massilia, Curicta, Dyrrachium, at Pharsalus itself, Lucan presented military conflicts as ironic self-destruction of Rome and Romans instigated by Caesar. Each conflict has drawn comment on its special nature and significance for the whole work. Yet for all the abundant comment on one of these, the battle of Dyrrachium, critics have not perceived that the episode contains extensive imagery and symbolic topography designed to convey the nature of civil war waged by Caesar and the opposing character of Pompey, all in accord with the dominant views of Lucan in the *Pharsalia.*[1] Lucan gives Dyrrachium this special significance in three ways, through symbolic topography, through symbolism in the main figure, Scaeva, and through the theme of walls that pervades 6.1–332. These are developed in concert throughout, but it is walls that form the governing idea of the episode, constitute its main theme, and make of 1–332 an artistically unified whole.

This is most easily explained by beginning with Cassius Scaeva. For in a skillful analysis of Scaeva's *aristeia*, Berthe Marti has shown how through a sequence of significant words Scaeva is identified with, indeed becomes the

[1]For Massilia, see R. J. Rowland, Jr., "The Significance of Massilia in Lucan," *Hermes* 97 (1969) 204–08; I. Opelt, "Die Seeschlacht vor Massilia bei Lucan," *Hermes* 85 (1957) 444–45; F. M. Ahl, *Lucan: An Introduction* (Ithaca 1976) 51–53, 315 (hereafter cited as *Lucan*). For Curicta and Vulteius, Dyrrachium and Scaeva, since the two characters are often treated together, see Ahl, *Lucan* 118 ff. and references of 118 note 1, especially W. Heyke, *Zur Rolle der Pietas bei Lucan* (Diss., Heidelberg 1970) 147–54; W. Rutz, "*Amor mortis* bei Lucan," *Hermes* 88 (1960) 463–66; B. Marti, "Cassius Scaeva and Lucan's *Inventio,*" in L. Wallach, ed., *The Classical Tradition: Literary and Historical Studies in Honor of Harry Caplan* (Ithaca 1966) 239–57; W. Metger, "Kampf und Tod in Lucan's *Pharsalia,*" in W. Rutz, ed., *Lucan* (Darmstadt 1970) 423–38. On Pharsalus, Ahl, *Lucan* 209–22, and "Pharsalus and the *Pharsalia,*" *C&M* 29 (1968) 133–36. Overall, the most relevant treatment for this essay is Marti's, but none has explored the features to be discussed here. References are to the text of A. E. Housman, *M. Annaei Lucani Belli Civilis Libri Decem* (Oxford 1950). I am indebted to one of the journal's anonymous referees for suggestions throughout.

wall which prevents Pompey's attempt to break out of Caesar's fortifications. When Caesar's wall crumbles at one place, Scaeva interposes himself; under incredible pain his face and resolve remain fixed like a wall; only engines used for battering walls are able to move him.[2] Add that even in death Scaeva like a wall seeks to crush someone in his fall (206), and the description of his wound is like that of a breached wall (*perfosso pectore*, 253). He is totally what Lucan names him at 201:

stat non fragilis pro Caesare murus

Now the main topic of the entire conflict at Dyrrachium is the wall that Caesar builds around Pompey and his army. If, as Marti has shown, the extended metaphor of man as wall pervades the *aristeia* of Scaeva which is Dyrrachium's most conspicuous episode, it seems natural to suppose that this stress on walls may in some way be connected with the emphasis on Caesar's wall that appears throughout 1–332. And indeed, if the events of Dyrrachium are considered, it becomes clear that Scaeva as wall is not an isolated metaphor but organically related to the whole account of Dyrrachium as its most conspicuous, compendious symbol of the battle and in particular of the civil war mentality of Caesar *vis-à-vis* that of Pompey.

As Book 6 and the account of Dyrrachium begin, so too begins the emphasis on walls. The armies are at first pitched opposite one another on neighboring heights near Dyrrachium. In this situation Pompey trusts his entrenchments (*clauso fidere vallo*, 12) and will not be drawn into battle, and thus Caesar marches covertly to seize Dyrrachium. Pompey counters by occupying Petra and in this way protecting Dyrrachium. Lucan stresses that, although the city has walls or fortifications (*moenia*, 17, 26; *turribus*, 18), it is made secure by no man-made structures but its protection is natural position (19–23):

> non opus hanc veterum nec moles structa tuetur
> humanusque labor facilis, licet ardua tollat,
> cedere vel bellis vel cuncta moventibus annis,
> sed munimen habet nullo quassibile ferro
> naturam sedemque loci;

The apparent ambiguity which has troubled some editors comes from Lucan's wish to say that Dyrrachium's real defense is in the integration of

[2]For full discussion, see Marti 247–48 who is chiefly interested in showing how the *aristeia* is a masterly innovation of the story of Scaeva in use of epic themes, echoes of the *Aeneid*, rhetorical figures, and negative definition of Scaeva's *virtus*.

human and natural, man-made walls aptly positioned on natural topography, a point that will be seen to accord well with the rest of the description.[3]

Now as prelude to the theme of walls, some important ideas emerge here. The first walls mentioned are normal military ramparts as both armies are encamped and Pompey uses the protection of a *vallum.* Next, however, Pompey deploys his troops about a city whose defense is not dependent on walls, or rather one whose wall is unique because rendered effective by its situation in the natural site. The description poses an implicit contrast between military rampart and city walls however unique, a contrast relevant later. More immediately, city walls take on special metaphorical significance. For with this move Pompey is at once associated with the city and assumes a position in conformity with nature. By scattering over Dyrrachium's great hills (30), he and his men deploy themselves so effectively with the natural terrain that they cannot be easily attacked and thus need no wall. While they protect the city they are also like the city which is well placed in conformity with natural topographical defenses. Caesar, by contrast, assumes a position against the city and against Pompey's natural position in conformity with the city. He is associated not with natural topography but with his wall, a man-made structure imposed on the landscape in opposition to Pompey and Dyrrachium. Pompey thus acquires all the associations of man, city, and nature aptly joined, Caesar none. Moreover, Pompey's association with Dyrrachium is deeper and more complex than position because the site is consonant with his character. Dyrrachium is described as lofty, isolated because nearly an island, and something natural. The description recalls the oak tree of 1.136–43, a thing of nature which is also lofty (*sublimis*, 136) and isolated among the younger, stronger trees about it. Like Dyrrachium, the oak continues to stand by its own natural means (*pondere fixa suo est*, 139). The single oak, like the oak grove of Massilia later, is threatened by the lightning-like violence of war which is shortly introduced with Caesar's simile (151–57).[4] In this way, the description forms an association, and if seen in connection with the earlier episodes of oak tree and grove also acts

[3]The apparent ambiguity in saying that the city is secure *solis turribus* (18) and defended by natural site disturbed C. F. Weber, *Marci Annaei Lucani Pharsalia* 2 (Leipzig 1829), who wanted *nullis* or *sine* for *solis*, and J. D. Duff, *Lucan: The Civil War* (Cambridge 1969), takes the conjecture *rupibus* for *turribus* in his edition. The problem is artificial, however, if it is understood that the city was so well protected by its natural site that it could be defended by *turres* alone, i.e., without a garrison. So the note of C. E. Haskins, *M. Annaei Lucani Pharsalia* (London 1887), and the glosses recorded on *turribus* and *munimen* (22) by Housman.

[4]For connection of the oak of Book 1 and the grove at Massilia, see Rowland (above, note 1) 207.

as foreshadowing that Caesar will shortly manifest himself in some destructive way against Pompey and the features conveyed by Dyrrachium.

It is appropriate then that whereas Pompey shares the identity of the natural place, Caesar counters this position by violence to nature and landscape, namely by construction of his wall. The lengthy description of the wall is designed on the one hand to show the unnatural, impious character of Caesar and conversely to amplify the good associations of Pompey.[5] In this construction natural turf is ignored by Caesar and houses of natives are used indiscriminately along with parts of city walls. The vast wall shuts in rivers, forests, and wild animals, yet it is like the wall of a city because it rivals the city walls of Troy or Babylon, and is built to withstand engines of siege. Caesar must rest at some point when going around its perimeter. Lucan calls it *belli . . . spes inproba* (29) and states that Caesar works against nature: he might have changed for the better some other part of earth against the will of nature *(quamvis natura negasset*, 59). At the conclusion of the account of Dyrrachium it is said that Caesar abandoned a position occupied against the will of god (*averso possessam numine sedem*, 314). It is most indicative of the wall's character that Lucan ends the description with explicit, extended reference to Xerxes' yoking of the Hellespont (48-63). Xerxes is meant to evoke a certain train of associations, memories of hubris towards nature. For the description is consistent with the formula in Lucan whereby Caesar is identified with ruthless, destructive, and unnatural treatment of nature, usually with overt or implicit reference to Xerxes' deeds. Both the situation and explicit comparison to Xerxes here are analogous to the episode of Brundisium (2.658–79) where Caesar is furious that Pompey should have a foothold on the land or liberty to move at sea. There in a more direct imitation of Xerxes Caesar chokes the sea with rocks, and when the sea will not be mastered in this way constructs a boom of trees cut down and chained together in order to block Pompey. Like the impious *redemptor* in Horace, Caesar extends land into water with unnatural "new land" (*nova tellure*, 680) demonstrating his contempt of nature's boundaries.[6] At the Sicoris

[5]The importance of the description to Lucan can be judged from Caesar's own prosaic account in *B.C.* 3.43 ff., and from Lucan's complete suppression of the fact that Pompey also constructed fortifications inside the wall with greater diligence according to *B.C.* 3.44

[6]Cf. Horace *Odes* 3.1.33–37 and 2.18.20–22 with the article of H. Womble, "Repetition and Irony: Horace, *Odes* 2.18," *TAPA* 92 (1961) 542. For Xerxes and the evocation of the builder's character in his construction, cf. the writer's "The Emperor as *Insula*: Pliny *Epist.* 6.31," *CP* 67 (1972) 49–50.

River in Spain (4.137–43) Caesar throws a bridge across the water, then punishes the stream for unruliness by dividing its channel so as to destroy its very character as a river. Xerxes is not mentioned, but Caesar imitates the despot's punishment of the Hellespont when its waters resist Xerxes' bridge. The bridging is similar to the treatment of water at Brundisium, the imitation of Xerxes in accord with Caesar's actions constraining nature at Dyrrachium.[7] Although the topography differs in each instance, Caesar's treatment of natural landscape in all three is the same in spirit. Ultimately, all accord with and extend his crossing of resisting Rubicon (1.183–227) where the specter of Rome opposes his passage, the beginning of civil war.[8] Seen in this way, Dyrrachium's wall forms the latest and most ambitious in a series of such acts. The inordinate size, compass, and strength of the wall thus stand as an exhibition of a characteristic (in Lucan) impiousness towards nature, a refusal to respect the boundaries or limits in things, expressed here paradoxically in the building rather than breaking down of walls which are themselves ordinarily boundaries. At the same time it is essential to see that this violation takes place as much against a city as against nature, indeed is outstanding among Caesar's other violations in this respect. Commentators have rightly observed that nature's marvelous engineering in the site of Dyrrachium spurs Caesar to build his wall in a kind of rivalry.[9] Yet, as noted, what makes Dyrrachium unusual is not nature alone but the apt integration of man's structures with nature's formations into a city, much as Pompey's position is the result of how landscape is used for deploying men. Given this, given the stress on walls, and given the description which emphatically makes Caesar's wall an enormous city wall rather than any military rampart in the field, the implication is that Caesar is inspired by rivalry with the city wall, essentially the city itself. He insists, in other words, on walling the city again, or on seeing Dyrrachium defined as a city not by its own wall, but by his. Pompey as one sharing symbolically the position and character of the city, and Pompey's containment as military objective are not forgotten but merely subsumed in the larger significance of Caesar's rivalry with Dyrrachium the city.

The episode of plague and famine which follows at 64 carries forward the wall theme along three lines. First and most important, it completes the

[7]Alexander is recognized as the primary association for Caesar as hubristic tyrant. Cf. Ahl, *Lucan* 222–30; M. P. O. Morford, *The Poet Lucan* (Oxford 1967) 13–19. Certainly Xerxes is an important secondary association with special reference for Caesar's impious treatment of nature.

[8]On Rubicon, cf. Heyke (above, note 1) 12, 25, 32–33; Ahl, *Lucan* 210 and references in note 10.

[9]Heyke 100; F. König, *Mensch und Welt bei Lucan im Spiegel bildhafter Darstellung* (Diss. Kiel 1957) 42–43.

idea of Caesar's rivalry with Dyrrachium as city. For what makes the afflictions of the plague remarkable in an account of field warfare is that they would normally be found not in the field but in the account of a walled city under siege. They recall most perhaps the plague of Athens in Thucydides or Lucretius since they duplicate for both sides the worst conditions characteristic of a city besieged. The place of the civil community normally shut inside city walls in such accounts of plague is here taken by Pompey and his army. For Pompey, who is identifeid with the city of Dyrrachium, bears the plague that a city's community would if it were enclosed by Caesar's wall. With the plague then Caesar's wall-building appears as follows. Caesar cannot tolerate the vision of Pompey and the city as naturally one and unassailable. In rivalry with this union, he strives with his wall to redefine both as a city besieged. The result is the facsimile, complete with plague, of a city under siege and the impression of Caesar indulging with great determination the desire to assault a civil community if only in simulation. The enormous labor, the size and compass of the wall, its hubristic, unnatural character become the measure of that desire. Another aspect of this desire is the mixed, abnormal character of the wall and its purpose. A city wall normally defines, protects, and makes possible the community it encloses, so much so that walls may symbolize the attainment of settled, civilized life. It is no accident that *moenia* should consistently characterize Aeneas' responses to things or that walls are central to the myth of Romulus and Remus and the founding of Rome. Caesar's purpose with the wall, however, to simulate the assault on a city while prosecuting a civil conflict, makes of the wall a gross confusion of the concept of city walls vs. military ramparts, an exquisite perversion of things civil and military by nature. In retrospect now the description at the very head of Book 6 which presents Pompey's military rampart and Dyrrachium's city wall as the separate and distinct things they are constitutes a foil and standard to the abnormal thing of mixed nature that Caesar constructs.

The other two things presented by the plague characterize Caesar's wall. One is amplification of the wall's unnaturalness. From Homer to Camus plague and similar afflictions are signs of disorder in the world of man. Now both afflictions are the direct result of the wall: the plague begins with carcasses of horses who die from lack of fresh fodder; there is famine on the other side because the besiegers cannot secure food while keeping the siege (106–17).[10] On one level, the plague and famine are simply nature's protest against the confinement of landscape, animals, and men. On another level, however, the wall is a graphic, topographical representation of Caesar's

[10]Cf. the matter-of-fact account by Caesar, *B.C.* 3.48–49.

pressing in of civil conflict upon Pompey in the war generally as it is of his present tactic at Dyrrachium. Plague and famine are then an argument that Caesar's forcing of the civil conflict, the pressing of Roman upon Roman, is wrong and against nature. The second thing about the plague is its equalizing, mutually destructive effect, or the turning on self of destruction intended for an enemy. This mutuality of destruction is marked in the symmetrical quality of the afflictions on both camps, since both arise from lack of food whether for man or animal (the Caesarians look in desperation finally for food fit for animals), and underscored by the paradox of besieger besieged. With famine the Caesarians become no different from those they have enclosed (108–09):[11]

> sed patitur saevam, veluti circumdatus arta
> obsidione, famem.

If the Scaeva episode is left aside momentarily, the events in the last phase of the battle (263–332) are as follows. Pompey makes a second, successful attempt to break through the wall. When Caesar learns this, he rushes to the spot where the wall has been breached and attacks there a group of Pompeians led by Torquatus. Torquatus collects his men behind an inner wall (*interius muro breviore*, 288). When Caesar attacks this position, Pompey coming from the outside catches the Caesarians between himself and the wall protecting Torquatus. The Caesarians are trapped by the wall (*obsaeptum hostem*, 292), and retreat leads them directly into the enemy (298–99). In failing to press the trapped Caesarians, Pompey according to Lucan misses his chance to destroy Caesar and end the war. This episode is important because it repeats in more emphatic form the self-destructive character of the wall presented in the sequence of plague and famine.[12] Equally important, the episode shows Pompey acting in the totally opposite way to Caesar. For with the Caesarians trapped by the wall, the situation of the leaders is dramatically reversed.[13] Pompey,

[12]As for the exact location of this "shorter wall," Lucan's account is impressionistic as in other details of the battle, and treats the wall as some inner part of the complex of Caesar's walls about Dyrrachium. In Caesar's account of this battle in *B.C.* 3.66–72 the wall is that of a fortified central portion of a camp originally built by Caesar. The wall of this camp is itself encircled by Caesar's main siege wall near the point of Pompey's break-out. Cf. Weber (above, note 3) on 288; König (above, note 9) 70–71; A. G. Peskett, ed., *Caesar: The Civil Wars* (London 1914), map of Dyrrachium in appendix. If Lucan's readers were familiar with the exact location, it would enhance the impression of self-entrapment in one's own walls since Caesar is caught by walls within walls of his own making.

[13]The name Torquatus does not appear in Caesar's account, and Lucan may have chosen to mention it as an allusion to the turning around of situation for Caesar.

[11]Such mutuality of suffering, or leveling of differences for all concerned, is a classic feature of plagues in literature. Cf. R. Girard, "The Plague in Literature and Myth," *Texas Studies in Lit. and Lang.* 15 (1974) 834–35.

however, now the besieger and able to be victor by means of the wall, refuses to use the advantage so offered.

If now having surveyed the events of Dyrrachium we return to Scaeva, he appears as a central symbol comprehending and giving single, unified expression to the varied significance of walls in the whole account. He epitomizes or acts out, that is, the primary features noted of Caesar's wall, the pressure for civil war, Caesar's confusion of purposes with the wall, the violation of nature or natural limits, and the effect the wall has of turning destruction upon self. The first of these is evident throughout Scaeva's *aristeia.* For by interposing himself as a miniature wall in the spot breached, he dramatizes on a smaller, more concentrated scale the confining pressure for civil war exerted by Caesar's great wall. Second, where there was noted in Caesar's purpose with the wall a confusion of civil and military out of a desire to attack a city formed of Dyrrachium and Pompey, a similar confusion is dramatized in Scaeva's use of the wall. For Scaeva does not really defend the wall and contain his enemies with it so much as become a fierce attacker of the inner space. The change is marked when Scaeva, not content to rebuild the wall and stand himself as a rampart keeping the Pompeians within, leaps into the midst of the Pompeians fighting to get out.[14] The likeness now of the *aristeia* to that of Turnus inside the Trojan fortifications reinforces the image of the besieger fighting inside the wall he besieges.[15] Confusion of positions is further stressed when Scaeva is surrounded, walled in (*vallatus*, 185) by those against whom he has only just stood as wall. Again, as Scaeva fights like an invader inside the wall, the same wall that moments before was none other than himself, the paradox of his actions is marked by the statement that only siege engines could move him (199). The same was said earlier of Caesar's wall when it had exceeded in purpose any military rampart for siege. Thus Scaeva's confusion of purposes with the wall is manifest in his complete mixing of rôles. He begins on the outside, defending the wall and besieging the enemy, but he ends inside as a besieged attacker of the Pompeians. All the while his metaphorical character as a wall makes more complex his mixing of rôles. Scaeva's confusion reenacts in spectacular form Caesar's more profound confusion of purpose with his great wall. Both begin as besiegers of walls they have constructed in order to contain the enemy. Both, however, are drawn by an obsession with the area inside their walls to become attackers in a special way of the walled-in enemy. With Scaeva it is a misdirected military valour, but with Caesar it is rivalry with the city and Pompey symbolically allied, a perverse desire to act as attacker of that city.

[14]The move marked by the spectacular simile of 183, remarked by Marti (above, note 1) 252–53.

[15]The adaptation of Turnus' *aristeia* in 185–95 discussed by Marti (above, note 1) 248–49.

The third way in which Scaeva functions as an intense, individual expression of Caesar's mentality is in his violation of natural limits. In Caesar's case this is his hubristic transformation of nature with the wall. Where Caesar brutalizes nature in this way, Scaeva brutalizes human nature by transforming himself into a wall. This violation of human limits is played out point by point in the spectacular account of his disfigurement which is at the same time the account of his transformation of self into a wall. Each mutilating wound received, each blow virtually self-inflicted, each disfiguring cut not only makes Scaeva more difficult to recognize as a human being but measures his spiritual regression away from being human until he ends as a wall, a completely unfeeling, inhuman entity. His self-immolation has been seen by some as a brave, meaningful assertion of self, but this view largely ignores the loss of identity implied in disfigurement and the dehumanized wall which is the end of the process described.[16] Unlike many wounds described in literature, as for instance the scar of Odysseus, the blinding of Oedipus or Gloucester, or the hand of Scaevola, Scaeva's mutilation signals no compensatory gain in spiritual faculties, no transcendence of the flesh or the world of sight and feeling. Rather, analogous to those in the sea-fight for Massilia, the mutilations are here negative and in passing all natural limits signal only the gradual loss of ability to perceive self as human, the crossing over into something else.[17] In all of this, if Scaeva's exceeding of human limits, though more conspicuous, seems smaller than Caesar's violation of nature's limits on a large scale, yet Scaeva's deed is more significant. For Scaeva presents a culmination by expressing Caesar's influence on the individual human nature. He is the creature and product of Caesar because he has flourished in Caesar's service (144–48); his *aristeia* is inspired by *pietas* to Caesar. Now so far Caesar's effect has been shown first on inanimate nature by means of the wall, then on human nature by means of plague and famine. Afflicted armies, however, are but large, faceless masses of humanity. Thus Scaeva, who stands forth unique in the account as a single distinct personality only to be lost in his transformation, is the appropriate culmination to mass human nature. That is, the ascending order of things transformed for the worse by Caesar is inanimate nature at large, human nature in general, and finally Scaeva, the individual human nature. The series thus appears comprehensive, and also has a certain symmetry. For the first and last

[16]For the positive view of Scaeva's death, see W. Rutz (above, note 3) 463–66, and his "Lucan 1943–1963," *Lustrum* 9 (1965) 281–82, after P. Schunck, *Römisches Sterben* (Diss. Heidelberg 1955) 49–50; the rationale (though concerning Massilia) of Metger (above, note 1). Against this, on the grounds of a negative *virtus*, Ahl, *Lucan* 118 and commentators cited in note 10, especially Marti (above, note 1) 254 and Heyke 106–12, 147–54.

[17]For the negative character of deaths at Massilia, Rowland (above, note 1) 208.

transformations for the worse are violations of limits that are presented as the construction of walls, first Caesar's great wall and finally Scaeva's rampart.

The final respect in which Scaeva epitomizes Caesar's actions at Dyrrachium is in the turning of destruction on self, the mutual, suicidal effect of the wall stressed by the sequence of plague and famine and again in the battle about the inner wall with Torquatus. The suicidal effect produced by walls is formulated in Scaeva's case most extensively in the suicidal manner of his whole *aristeia.* Like Caesar he becomes equally besieged, equally involved in the destruction meant for his adversaries. In his transformation where he is both a wall and its invader, he becomes metaphorically attacker of himself. Besides this, however, the suicidal, self-centered quality of Scaeva's *aristeia* is captured in the unusual simile of the Pannonian bear (220–30) where in a closed, self-contained circle the animal seems to pursue itself, and the rage that should be directed outwards turns instead in upon self to find its adversary. The simile's remarkable feature, its image of self-involvement and self-directed violence formulates Caesar's actions with the wall on a large scale, describes the circle of walls in which self is involved in destruction while seeking the enemy, much as Scaeva, merging with the wall, moves inward upon the Pompeians and in that same circle seeks himself with fury that is ultimately self-directed and suicidal. In connection with this self-involvement throughout the account there occurs a significant repetition, perhaps subconscious, in the narrative. With the superabundance of words meaning "wall," "walling," "surround," or "besiege," one phrase alone similar in construction appears three times, each time the epitome of events at hand:

> . . . Caesareo circumdatus agere . . .
> . . . circumdatus arta / obsidione . . .
> . . . omni / vallatus bello . . .

The first (44) describes Pompey, the second (108–09) Caesar beset by famine, the last (184–85) Scaeva hemmed in by Pompeians. The similar phrase equalizes all three men, levels those technically besiegers with those besieged, comprehends all in the conflict enclosed by walls. Scaeva, subsuming all as principal symbol of self-involvement, epitomizes well Dyrrachium but in fact formulates pointedly the whole civil conflict of the *Pharsalia* with Romans turned upon Romans, Romans turned upon themselves.

The purpose of the theme of walls, all its manifestations described, is to present a certain view of Pompey vs. Caesar. The essence of this view is put forward in the concluding episode where Pompey escapes the wall, has a chance to defeat Caesar now trapped by an inner wall, then declines to do

so. The view Lucan wishes to present causes certain distortions in the account. In the first place, the opportunity for victory afforded Pompey by walls is overstated since it appears that one wall, that of the camp, does not so much trap Caesar's forces as prevent their retreat from becoming a rout.[18] Again, Pompey's refusal to press the Caesarians is made to seem a reasonable, pious act since he claims he will not kill any more Romans. Yet, permitting Caesar's retreat is at least unwise because Pompey only continues to follow Caesar, aware that he must shed Roman blood elsewhere and perhaps with less advantage, less sparingly towards an end of the war. The discrepancies seem deliberate in order to shape the account in conformity with the theme of walls. For consistent with that theme, walls should function as a trap, a device of self-destruction, rather than as an advantage for Caesar. Next, if walls symbolize all the negative features of Caesar's civil war mentality as epitomized by Scaeva, it follows that Pompey cannot use a wall to win since it would align him with Caesar and Scaeva. Scaeva is characterized as *pius* (151, 155) for his display of a pernicious form of military *virtus*, essentially, that is, for acting as a wall. The next and only other time *pius* appears in this account it characterizes Pompey in his refusal to use the advantage of a wall, or more pointedly, to act as a wall against Caesar and other Romans (*pio genero*, 305).[19] In effect, Scaeva is not only the main symbol of the episode but constitutes the foil to Pompey. The narrative causes the two instances of *pius* to confront one another in order to suggest that Pompey is the one who is truly *pius* because, unlike Scaeva, he does not act as a wall; Pompey lets the Caesarians escape instead of shutting in and destroying them when it was in his power to do so. In this way, Scaeva and the theme of walls that have presented Caesar's mentality now show the opposite in Pompey.

This is the place to note that this view of Pompey vs. Caesar by means of the wall has a special dimension that gives the account greater scope and significance than first appears. Up to this point it has been held that Caesar uses the wall to create in form at least the siege of a city, Dyrrachium as the general concept of city, or Dyrrachium and Pompey in symbolic association as city. On closer inspection, however, Dyrrachium represents not any city but Rome itself. The idea is not unique in the *Pharsalia*, for Lucan presents other places allegorically as Rome. One is Massilia which, as Rowland has demonstrated, is subtly identified with Rome by various devices such as envoys, environs, and the dead on its battlefield who are finally indistinguishable from Romans.[20] Then, as Ahl has shown, the

[18]Besides the slow advance of Pompey's infantry for fear of ambush. Cf. Caesar in *B.C.* 3.68–70, and the remark of Robert Graves, *Lucan: Pharsalia* (Baltimore 1957) 136 note 1.

[19]Cf. Heyke (above, note 1) 106–12.

[20]Rowland (above, note 1) 205–08.

association established between the description of desolated Italy, Rome, and the ruins of Troy is designed to let us see in Troy the image of Rome destroyed and to envision the battlefield of Pharsalus itself as the ravaged city of Rome.[21] There are several indications that Dyrrachium too is to be envisioned as Rome. At the point where Pompey holds back his soldiers from rushing upon the trapped Caesarians, Lucan interposes an apostrophe not to Dyrrachium but to Rome (299–313), naming the city twice (302, 312), and lamenting that Rome could have been saved at this moment by Pompey's attack. Immediately following is placed Pompey's speech declaring that he will never return to Rome with his troops, will follow Caesar to fight in the furthest regions of the world, is determined to keep war far from the city, and failing that would even let Caesar have Rome. Thus Lucan groups together the apostrophe that puts Rome before our minds, Pompey's speech about Rome's sanctity, his refusal to press the advantage of the walls at hand, and his pursuit of Caesar when it was more advantageous to have attacked him in the walls surrounding Dyrrachium. This grouping is designed to suggest that there is a certain identity between Rome and Pompey's walled position at Dyrrachium. In his speech Pompey vows not to fight in Rome, in his concomitant actions he refuses to fight in the walls surrounding Dyrrachium, as if indeed the walls he flees and those within which he refuses to fight Caesar are not those of Dyrrachium, but Dyrrachium representing Rome. It fits this idea that Pompey's vow to avoid Rome by fighting Caesar in the furthest, most alien part of the globe should be immediately realized in the ghastly, otherworldly topography of Pharsalus which is next described; the city Pompey avoids at this point is Dyrrachium, not Rome. It is also significant, indicative of Pompey's vision of a walled battlefield like Dyrrachium as Rome, that at Pharsalus his exhortation to his army (369 ff.) takes the form of the *teichoskopia*, or "view from the wall," but from Rome's wall: he exhorts his men to imagine they fight before the walls of Rome; from the city's topmost towers mothers urge them on with disheveled hair and senators come forth to entreat them on bended knee. Again, early in the account it is said that Pompey claimed for himself a certain position within the perimeter of Caesar's wall. The space was equal to the distance that separates lofty Rome from small Aricia and its grove sacred to Mycenean Diana, or the same distance that Tiber, flowing past the walls of Rome would take to reach the sea without bends in the stream (73–77). As Duff notes, this is a very strange way of saying that Pompey's lines were about fifteen miles long.[22] The description is quite

[21] Ahl, *Lucan* 209–22.

[22] Duff (above, note 3) 310 note 1.

meaningful, however, if in line with other implications that Dyrrachium is a substitute for Rome, it is designed to suggest that the area of Dyrrachium within Caesar's walls is to be thought of as Rome and the locations mentioned indicative of Pompey's chosen position in respect to the city. Both places, near Rome yet lying outside the city, define the position Pompey would wish to take under Caesar's pressure to make Rome itself the battleground, as Pompey's disavowal of entering Rome with his army later overtly states. He wishes to be outside Rome's walls, defending the city and keeping the military conflict away from her, the position in fact he assumes in respect to Dyrrachium. In contrast, the position Caesar wished to occupy is suggested at the beginning of the account. He is said there to deploy his troops in eagerness to destroy Italy (*Latiae ruinae*, 10). Caesar then deploys his troops not about Italy or Rome but Dyrrachium.

What Dyrrachium seen in this way says about Caesar is condemning. It means that the pressure for civil war, the confusion of purposes with the wall, the violation of limits both natural and human, and the turning of destruction on self, in brief all the negative features exhibited in Scaeva, Caesar brings to bear not against Dyrrachium but against Rome itself. Historically, Lucan could not show Caesar behaving in this way against Rome, but such evil designs could be shown played out against surrogates like Massilia, Dyrrachium, or at Pharsalus. As intimated earlier, however, the indictment is even stronger because of the special relationship of Dyrrachium and Pompey. The combination of Dyrrachium and Pompey, or Rome and Pompey, is characterized as natural. The wall is an unnatural attempt to rival, redefine, contain, and finally assault a union of Rome and Pompey, a symbolic position of Pompey as Rome, that is not only civilly certified (because the Pompeians are the lawfully constituted defenders of Rome) but in accord with nature.[23] In other words, the importance of the episode is that it extends beyond description of Caesar eager to assault Rome and Pompey as only a civil entity, and shows him trying to destroy something established in nature and thus more fundamental, more essential even than the civil forms that certify it. In this regard, in describing Caesar's assault on something that is more than civil, or *plusquam civile*, the Dyrrachium episode is integral with and advances the theme of the work.[24]

[23]Dyrrachium makes graphic Ahl's point that Pompey was not only Rome-Oriented, a lover of the city, but seems sometimes to be Rome incarnate. Cf. "The Pivot of the *Pharsalia*," *Hermes* 102 (1974) 309, 315–17.

[24]So in my opinion the essential meaning of the phrase since, as at Massilia, Caesar's assaults on civil entities are presented in terms of attacks on nature. It is too lengthy to develop the idea here, but see for its general lineaments the earlier part of the essay concerned with Caesar as Xerxes. I cannot agree with Due's interpretation of the phrase to mean a war that

What Dyrrachium says about Pompey on the other hand is laudatory. Besides representing Rome and Pompey, Pompey as Rome, as a right and natural thing beset by designs of Caesar both pernicious and unnatural, it glorifies Pompey as Rome's lover and defender. In an important essay on Pompey's character, Ahl finds Pompey the most human and affectionate of the main figures. Ahl maintains, however, that these qualities were alloyed with a certain inability to be mover rather than moved, to seize things aggressively, something that might be called tentativeness, arising out of a desire to be first sincerely wanted and appreciated.[25] Whatever the source, such tentativeness was out of place. Part of the *Pharsalia*'s tragedy is that victory in the civil war demanded audacious desire, a willingness to seize things without regard for limits or for the lives of fellow Romans. The victor had to be willing to injure or destroy something in trying to get it, even if the object was Rome itself. O. S. Due puts it succinctly as the paradox that one had to be wrong to win, right to lose.[26] Dyrrachium is important to the *Pharsalia* because it exhibits so well Pompey's tentativeness. As Lucan represents it, Pompey does not win at Dyrrachium and finish the war because of his regard for Rome and his inability to take the lives of fellow Romans, except that this is expressed in his refusal to use Caesar's walls about Dyrrachium and all the negative, self-destructive things they stand for in an effort to possess as victor the place and city representative of Rome. Pompey's outward, centrifugal movement consistent with his tentativeness, Caesar's inward, constricting movement about Dyrrachium with his walls are also related to the whole work. For if the strategy or civil war mentality of both generals could be plotted over the whole world of the *Pharsalia*, Pompey's would be like his direction at Dyrrachium and Pompey. The combination of Dyrrachium and Pompey, periphery that like his tentative attitude towards Rome reveals a desire to keep Rome and Romans safe, out of reach of the conflict. Caesar's would also be like that at Dyrrachium, inwards upon the center, constraining Rome and Pompey with all the evil intent and results of the wall, forcing to a head the civil conflict even when this means as it means for Scaeva an involution of Roman upon Roman. Pompey's seemingly irrational speech in Book 8 urging that the outer, alien nations be brought into the war

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could have no good issue because his evidence is too indirect. The meaning given here, however, seems to me to embrace the more common view that *plusquam civilia* means the war involved fathers and sons, brothers and brothers, i.e., relationships socially recognized but established first and essentially in *nature*. Cf. O. S. Due, "An Essay on Lucan," *C&M* 22 (1962) 106–20, 108 and notes; Ahl, *Lucan* 313.

[25]Ahl (above, note 23) and *Lucan* 156–89, especially 156–58. The term "tentativeness" is my own.

[26]Due 117–18.

against Caesar makes in this context a certain sense. Granted that the war would go on, as a last resort Pompey's plan would draw off Romans against those outside, away from the center and away from Rome, and stop pitting Romans against themselves in the mad involution exhibited by Scaeva. Dyrrachium with its walls is important to the *Pharsalia* because it provided the stage on which this mentality of Pompey vs. Caesar could be cogently, graphically acted out.

Finally, it must be noted that Dyrrachium's walls allow Pompey an impressive display of his mentality, but one that is only momentary. For part of Pompey's tragedy is that his tentativeness or centrifugal orientation out and away from Rome (or Dyrrachium) only leads him to Pharsalus where he is forced to fight and lose before, symbolically, those same walls of Rome that, as he envisioned things, he was rendering safe by moving away from Dyrrachium. Lucan, that is, seems to use Dyrrachium to grant Pompey a certain passing moment of glory, to show him where he had a choice striving to escape the war as Caesar's wall and Scaeva's combat would define it. Pompey assaults the wall and fights Scaeva only to go forth out of that position and reject it, transcending in spirit the conflict within the walls as desired by Caesar. It is a fine reversal of the conventional picture of attack on city walls, much like Epicurus in Lucretius who moves triumphantly beyond the *moenia mundi.* Even if some call it tentativeness, Pompey with that epic move goes forth in pursuit of a better vision of civil conflict than Caesar. At that moment, it is appropriate that, understood in line with the theme of walls, *pius* confers on Pompey all the honor of one seeking to avoid and in avoiding maintain rather than fight within the walls of a civil community in general and Rome in particular, like a latter-day Aeneas in a world reversed.