

Hopefully Surviving: Despair and the Limits of *devotio* in Virgil and Others

*Revised from a paper given to the Virgil Society on 10 May 2008**

The image of the solitary hero who rushes into the midst of the enemy and, by immolating himself, brings death and destruction upon them, has for obvious reasons become a less straightforwardly positive one in Western culture over the last decade.¹ Yet numerous popular books and films still testify that, perhaps on the principle that one man's terrorist is another man's freedom fighter, the pervasive figure of the villainous suicide bomber has not succeeded in totally obliterating that of the lone hero who stays behind to give up his life for his buddies, taking as many of the faceless enemy as he can along with him.² In Roman culture, this image has, of course, a further, religious dimension as a result of the rite of *devotio ducis*.³ The ritual, particularly associated with the figure or figures of P. Decius Mus, in one, two or three generations, involved a leader of the Roman army's consecration of himself and the enemy to the gods below, rushing unarmed into the said enemy, and as a result bringing confusion and defeat upon them, as well as death upon himself.

*Versions of this paper were delivered to the Virgil Society in May 2008 and the Classics and Ancient History Departmental Seminar, University of Sydney, in September 2010. I am very grateful to all the helpful questions and suggestions from those two audiences, in particular those from Chris Malone, Anne Rogerson, Paul Roche, Andy Stiles, and Kathryn Welch. I am also extremely indebted to the editor of *PVS*, Daniel Hadas, for his penetrating comments, which have improved the final version immeasurably, though its many defects remain entirely my responsibility. The article is dedicated, with Bloomian affection, to Matthew Leigh. All translations are my own.

¹ For the place of *devotio* in the pre-history of "terrorism", see Chaliand & Blin (2007) 368-89.

² For a more complex example, where the heroes are more explicitly depicted as suicide bombers, see Goulyart & Joe (2008) 181-82.

³ Extensive discussion in Versnel (1976), (1981); Leigh (1993). More recently, see also Barton (1995) 40-46; Feldherr (1998) 85-92; Dyck (2004); Hill (2004) 189-90; Edwards (2007) 19-45, esp. 25-28; O'Gorman (2010).

In a paper published in *FVS* in 1993, Matthew Leigh traced Virgil's evocations of *devotio* throughout the *Aeneid*, responding in particular to critics such as C. Bennet Pascal, who disputed the validity of Turnus' claims to be a *devotus*, and asserting that the rite's symbolic power and ideological associations in Roman culture are more significant than the niceties of ritual orthopraxy:

“What we see [Turnus] doing in giving his own inevitably inexact and yet substantial sense to the *devotio* is not so strange. It is what successions of Roman writers did when they described a heroic self-sacrifice with the formula for the rush to death. When they did so, they understood the *devotio ducis* less as a ritual, a *votum* with payment in anticipation of success, than as the ultimate expression of a military code which expected courage from a general, and heroism in defeat”.⁴

This article, despite its title's antiphrastic allusion to Leigh's, does not intend to counter this argument in favour of the pervasive and resonant use of such motifs in the *Aeneid*. It will indeed examine instances in the poem and in other Roman texts where the act of self-sacrifice is problematized. However, the problematization in these cases will not be based on a narrow conception of the orthopraxy or efficaciousness of a non-standard *devotio*. Nor, as might be tempting in a post-9/11 context, will it derive from the perspective of the enemy or of neutrals, whose moral evaluation of such an act of heroism-cum-terrorism might be expected to differ from that of the *devotus*' compatriates. Rather, it will be based on a Roman perspective, but one where the general's ostensibly noble and self-sacrificing decision to die is shown to be paradoxically damaging to the common good, and where the superficially cowardly and selfish choice to survive is represented as the more beneficial. Indeed, just as Leigh shows that the loose and symbolic evocation of *devotio* is frequently used to represent a set of military values, I shall argue that it is also by evoking *devotio* in similar terms that those same values are questioned and challenged. The factors which determine whether it is more in the interests of the *res publica* for a general to live or die are complex, based partly on very practical considerations, partly, as I shall argue, on an ideological shift whereby the survival of the important and irreplaceable individual begins to outweigh his duty to die with his men. Several of the texts which I shall discuss not only reflect but explore that shift from, crudely speaking, the collective ideology of the Republic to the monarchic Principate, in which the invaluable synecdochic hero must not be hopelessly devoted, but hopefully survive.⁵

⁴ Leigh (1993), quoting from 104-05, *contra* Pascal (1990). Nicol (2001) 190-91, like Pascal, downplays the importance of *devotio*.

⁵ For the synecdochic hero, see Hardie (1993).

Go tell the Romans ... Paulus and Varro at Cannae, part I

We begin where we shall also end, on the field of one of Rome's worst defeats, at Cannae in 216 BC. No formal *devotio* took place at this battle, but the death in the field of one of the consuls, L. Aemilius Paulus, who had tried to prevent the battle but been overruled by his hot-headed colleague (in the traditional version of events), C. Terentius Varro, though it brought no immediate or perceptible victory to the Romans or defeat to the Carthaginians, nevertheless reflects what Leigh describes as a related "range of secular military values: the responsibility of the general to his men; the pursuit of the *mors pulchra per vulnera*; the challenge to the aristocrat's *virtus*".⁶ More specifically, Paulus refused to escape on horseback when the opportunity was offered to him, so that his remaining in the throng when he might have fled to safety approximates to the *devotus*' charge from safety into the throng. Indeed, the last words which Livy gives to Paulus allusively set him in a very distinguished tradition of heroic self-sacrifice (22.49.10): *abi, nuntia ... privatim Q. Fabio L. Aemilium praeceptorum eius memorem et vixisse adhuc et mori*. ("Go, give this message in private to Quintus Fabius, that Lucius Aemilius both lived up to this point and died mindful of his instructions"). Paulus is here aligned with Fabius Maximus' policy of *cunctatio*, as against the rash engagement with Hannibal which has resulted in the disaster at Cannae, but, aside from the content, the formulation surely cannot but evoke Simonides' famous epitaph on Leonidas and the Three Hundred Spartans who died at Thermopylae (*AP* 7.249 = *Hdt.* 7.228.2): ὦ ξεῖν', ἀγγέλλειν Λακεδαιμονίοις ὅτι τῆδε / κείμεθα, τοῖς κείνων ῥήμασι πειθόμενοι. ("Stranger, tell the Spartans that here we lie, after obeying their instructions"). The heroic resistance to Xerxes' Persians not only parallels the Roman *devotio* but, according to John Marincola, was depicted, by Diodorus Siculus at least, in those very terms.⁷ In a similar manner to that in which the Spartans held up the Persians, Paulus and the Roman army at Cannae, according to Livy, delayed the victory of the Carthaginians, who were so infuriated they had to slaughter those they could not drive off.⁸ Livy also contrasts the situation at Rome's other great defeat, the Allia, when the army, by its flight, saved itself but betrayed the city; he notes how few fled Cannae and leaves the reader to supply the antithesis about

⁶ Leigh (1993) 105.

⁷ Marincola (2007) 117.

⁸ *equitum pedestre proelium, quale iam haud dubia hostium victoria, fuit, cum victi mori in uestigio mallent quam fugere, victores morantibus victoriam irati trucidarent quos pellere non poterant*. ("There was an infantry battle of cavalry, such as when there is already no doubt of the enemy's victory, when the defeated preferred to die in their tracks than to flee, the victors in rage slaughtered those delaying their victory whom they could not drive off"). Liv. 22.49.4.

the effect this had in saving the city.⁹ Paulus' self-sacrifice does, in this narrative, save the community and, in an extended sense, represent a true *devotio*.

Yet other interpretations of such a death are possible, especially those which, unlike Livy's, do not stress or even mention any efficacious aspect of Paulus' "self-sacrifice". It is suggestive to consider how Nathan Rosenstein, in his superb study of defeated generals in the Roman Republic, comments on Paulus' decision:

"In some ways ... dying in the midst of calamity could seem attractive to a defeated general. He might achieve a measure of glory to enhance his memory and increase the honor of his family, whereas the very fact that he had come back alive could become a potential source of danger if questions were raised about how he had managed to survive when so many others had died".¹⁰

Although I do not think it Rosenstein's main purport, there may be read without too much difficulty a mild accusation of cowardice and solipsism into this analysis of the motivation of the general who chooses to die with his men. Certainly the loss of one's life is no trivial matter, but in Roman values, the avoidance of the shame of survival and indeed the achievement of the precise opposite, glory for oneself and one's *gens*, might easily outweigh mere death. Yet this acquisition of personal glory must be weighed against the usefulness of, even the necessity of, one's life for the safety and flourishing of the *res publica*. One need only note, as skilfully elucidated elsewhere in Rosenstein's book, the elaborate means employed by the Romans to rehabilitate defeated generals and send them back into service,¹¹ to realize how such highly-trained commanders and proven leaders were not expendable, and how, regardless of the aristocratic military code, it was more useful for the *res publica* to have such men alive than for them to acquire purely personal glory in death.

Such an interpretation of Paulus' death might also be found in a tendentious – or perhaps a straightforward – reading of his entry among the men whom Horace might praise in *Odes* 1.12: *animaeque magnae / prodigum Paulum superante Poeno* ("and Paulus prodigal of his great life when the Carthaginian conquered"). As Nisbet and Hubbard point out, *prodigum* is "normally pejorative" though of course it "is here used in a good sense". Porphyrio is more neutral, saying that the phrase must be understood as "despising his

⁹ *fuga namque ad Alliam sicut urbem prodidit, ita exercitum servavit: ad Cannas fugientem consulem vix quinquaginta secuti sunt, alterius morientis prope totus exercitus fuit.* Liv. 22.50.1.

¹⁰ Rosenstein (1990) 123.

¹¹ I am grateful to Kathryn Welch for reminding me about this aspect of Rosenstein's analysis.

life”, *prodigi* being, etymologically, those who throw their goods away from themselves.¹² Certainly the reception of the phrase tends to give it an at worst neutral sense, as in Ovid’s Gallus, Statius’ Maeon, and Silius’ euthanasia-practising Spaniards, but even here, as the *TLL* shows, there is that suggestion of prodigality, not of counting life as cheap because cheap it is, but of undervaluing it and throwing it away, even though you owe it to others.¹³ The characteristic Horatian pregnancy of the ablative absolute *superante Poeno* also suggests further meanings; not only might it diminish the grandeur of Paulus’ careless gesture, since he made it in a context where he was already defeated (*OLD s.v. supero*, 4) but it also, perhaps, hints he threw his life away while the Carthaginians survived (*OLD*, 7b), a continuing threat to Rome which perhaps Paulus ought to have lived on to face. These are, of course, secondary meanings, but they are not inconsistent with the unsettling catalogue which notoriously includes Tarquinius Superbus and Cato. Glancing ahead to Silius Italicus’ treatment of Paulus, with which I shall conclude this discussion, they are available for Silius to activate by his tendentious reception of them, both on the large canvas of his narrative of Cannae and in the small detail of having Voluptas claim that Virtus prodigally threw away Paulus’ life.¹⁴

Something of the same message may be read, at the very least between the lines, in Frontinus’ synkrisis of Paulus and his surviving colleague, Varro, as exemplars of *constantia* (*Strat.* 4.5.5-6):

¹² *animae ergo prodigum ‘contemptorem vitae’ intellegendum. prodigi enim dicuntur proprie, qui bona sua a se dispergunt, quasi porro ea ab se agentes.* (“Therefore *prodigum* must be understood as ‘contemptuous of life’, for they are properly called *prodigi* who scatter their goods from themselves, as if driving them off from them”). Porphyry. *ad Hor. Carm.* 1.12.37. Cf. Nisbet & Hubbard (1970) *ad loc.*

¹³ *TLL* 10.2.1613.3-20: *speciatim respiciuntur qui vitam impendunt, se periculis offerunt sim.* Ov. *Am.* 3.9.64, Stat. *Theb.* 3.69 (*vitae* for *animae*), Sil. 1.225. *TLL* *ibid.* *hic illic subluceat respectus perdendi*, though the prime example given, Macrobius 7.3.21, has quite the opposite sense, since it describes the ironic, bantering criticism which chaffs a brave man for holding his life cheaply and dying for others, but of course implies the opposite. Cf. *TLL* *ibid.* 26-42: *qui perdunt, male consumunt vel contemnunt.* Sen. *Dial.* 10.1.4 (*non accipimus brevem vitam, sed facimus, nec inopes eius sed prodigi sumus*) refers to wasting life as a finite and usable length of time, rather than as a single entity which can be preserved or wasted, but it does suggest a witty manipulation of the Horatian motif.

¹⁴ This witty variation has Voluptas argue to Scipio that Virtus has wastefully sent his father and uncle, Paulus, and the Decii down to the underworld: *haec patrem patrumque tuos, haec prodiga Paulum, / haec Decios Stygias Erebi detrusit ad undas, / dum cineri titulum memorandaque nomina bustis / praetendit nec sensurae, quod gesserit, umbrae* (15.42-45). Her (upper and lower case) Epicurean contrast is, of course, of the courageous, but futile and very final death, with the life of pleasure, rather than with the courageous life, preserved to serve one’s country, but the colouring of its Horatian intertext does show how Paulus’ prodigality with his life, just like Virtus’, can be interpreted, not as gloriously indifferent, but perniciously wasteful.

L. Paulus, amisso ad Cannas exercitu, offerente equom Lentulo, quo fugeret, superesse cladi quamquam non per ipsum contractae noluit, sed in eo saxo, cui se vulneratus acclinaverat, persedit, donec ab hostibus oppressus confoderetur.

Varro, collega eius, vel maiore constantia post eandem cladem vixit gratiaeque ei a senatu et populo actae sunt, quod non desperasset rem publicam. non autem vitae cupiditate, sed rei publicae amore se superfuisse reliquo aetatis suae tempore approbavit: et barbam capillumque summisit et postea numquam recubans cibum cepit; honoribus quoque, cum ei deferrentur a populo, renuntiavit, dicens felicioribus magistratibus rei publicae opus esse.

(“Lucius [Aemilius] Paulus, when he had lost his army near Cannae and Lentulus offered him a horse on which to flee, was unwilling to survive the disaster, even though it had not been brought about through him, but continued to sit on that rock on which he had propped himself when he was wounded until he was overwhelmed and run through by the enemy.

Varro, his colleague, with even greater steadfastness lived on after the same disaster and he was thanked by the senate and people because he had not despaired of the *res publica*. That he had survived not from a desire for life but from love of the *res publica* he proved in the remaining period of his life: he let both his beard and hair grow long and never afterwards ate reclining; magistracies too, when they were assigned to him by the people, he refused, saying that the *res publica* needed luckier magistrates”).

Frontinus is explicit in praising Paulus for his *constantia* and there is even a telling antithesis between his determination to die and his lack of culpability for the disaster; this antithesis carefully differentiates him from generals whose deaths might be taken as expiation for the defeat they had caused, and especially from those who would prefer death to the repercussions of such tactical incompetence. Cannae was not Paulus’ fault, so these were not his motives. There is no explicit criticism of the consul here, and not even anything implicit, except in the juxtaposition with Varro. For Frontinus cannot write that the latter was *more* steadfast in surviving, in choosing precisely the opposite course of action, without implicitly suggesting that Paulus was in some way *less* steadfast, that all the praises heaped on Varro cannot be applied to him. Paulus, presumably, *did* despair of the *res publica* and his love for it was in some way less than that which prompted Varro to live on. Varro too is carefully differentiated from those with baser and more conventional motives for survival. Indeed it is notable that Frontinus does not underline, that, unlike Paulus, Varro (according, again, to the dominant tradition) *was* responsible for the defeat. As a result of this, he might have been expected to owe his life as expiation

for his culpability, but more significantly he might reasonably have chosen to die rather than face the consequences of that culpability. One might read Frontinus' omission of this detail about Varro's responsibility as active suppression or even tacit correction of the usual version; less radically one might take it as a decision not to foreground something which all his readers would know anyway, but which might diminish the rhetorical force of his exemplary point. Either way, it is clear that, regardless of the consuls' differing levels of responsibility and the way in which that impacted upon their decision, Frontinus represents Varro, unlike Paulus, as deciding that his survival was more important for the *res publica* than his glorious death.

This is the notion which I shall endeavour to trace in Virgil and subsequent Roman epicists, finally drawing the two strands together in considering Silius Italicus' epic depiction of Cannae. Before turning to the Roman epic tradition, however, it will be instructive to consider one example which is distant in time and place from the very Roman notion of *devotio*, but which nevertheless stands as a significant parallel in structural and also as an important antecedent in intertextual terms: the decision of Hector to face Achilles in *Iliad* 22.

Hector's choice

Hector in the *Iliad* is the defender of Troy, the synecdochic hero who keeps the city standing by his very existence. The flip side of this is, of course, that his death entails the destruction of Troy, and any decision which leads – directly or indirectly – to that death makes him culpable – directly or indirectly – for that destruction. This idea is most clearly expressed by Hector himself in his great monologue, waiting for Achilles outside Troy (*Il.* 22.104-07):¹⁵

νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ ὤλεσα λαὸν ἄτασθαλίησιν ἐμῆσιν,
αἰδέομαι Τρῶας καὶ Τρωάδας ἔλκεσιπέπλους,
μή ποτέ τις εἴπησι κακώτερος ἄλλος ἐμεῖο·
Ἔκτωρ ἦφι βίηφι πιθήσας ὤλεσε λαόν.

(“But now, since I have destroyed my people by my acts of recklessness, I am ashamed towards the Trojans and Trojan women whose gowns drag, in case at some point

¹⁵ On this speech, see Redfield (1975) 157-58; Fenik (1978) 81-85; Sharples (1983); Schofield (1986) 20-22; Taplin (1992) 233-35; Gill (1996) 81-93; Haubold (2000) 92-94. Haubold intriguingly differentiates between Hector protecting (or neglecting) the city, and his doing the same for the people (λαός). As reviewers have commented, this distinction is less than clearly made.

someone of less merit than me may say ‘Hector trusting in his own might destroyed his people’’).

Of course, the destruction to which Hector here refers is principally that already caused by his ignoring the advice of Polydamas to retreat within the walls, but it is in striking juxtaposition to his determination not to retreat himself now. Here we have a very close correspondence to the Roman general whose misjudgement or recklessness causes disaster and who hence decides that it is less shameful to die than to return, partly in recompense for his mistake, partly to avoid the disgrace which will be heaped on him back in the city. Indeed, Hector is quite explicit about his motivation, a sense of αἰδώς towards the Trojans and a fear of his status’ being diminished by the criticism of someone of lower status. This establishes that Hector’s reasons for standing firm are primarily selfish and have little to do with a desire to reverse the effect of his earlier recklessness, for all that he deludedly holds out the remote possibility that he might win (personal) glory by actually defeating Achilles.¹⁶ Yet it does not in itself establish that his decision to remain outside the walls and in all probability die has actively negative effects and is the opposite of the duty he owes to Troy and the people of Troy. That point is established by Priam.

Priam’s plea to his son to come inside the walls (*Il.* 22.56-58, 71-76) is, of course, immensely powerful, but it is also extremely complex in its representation of the (lack of) justification, symbolic meaning, and repercussions of Hector’s decision:

ἀλλ’ εἰσέρχαιο τεῖχος ἐμὸν τέκος, ὄφρα σαώσης
 Τρῶας καὶ Τρωάς, μὴ δὲ μέγα κῦδος ὀρέξῃς
 Πηλεΐδῃ, αὐτὸς δὲ φίλης αἰῶνος ἄμε ρθῆς ...
 ... νέω δέ τε πάντ’ ἐπέουκεν

ἄρηϊ κταμένω δεδαϊγμένω ὀξεί χαλκῶ
 κεῖσθαι· πάντα δὲ καλὰ θανόντι περ ὅτι φανήη·
 ἀλλ’ ὅτε δὴ πολιόν τε κάρη πολιόν τε γένειον
 αἰδῶ τ’ αἰσχύνωσι κύνες κταμένοιο γέροντος,
 τοῦτο δὴ οἴκτιστον πέλεται δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσιν.

“But come inside the walls, my son, so that you may save the Trojan men and Trojan women, lest you provide great glory for the son of Peleus, and you yourself be deprived of your dear life ... [a description of the horrors which will occur at Troy’s sack and in particular Priam’s own death] ... and everything is seemly for a young

¹⁶ *Il.* 22.108-09. It is also worth remembering that, in the final crisis, Hector *does* flee after all and only turns to face Achilles as a result of Athena’s trick (22.214-95).

man when he lies is killed in war, cut down by sharp bronze; everything appears beautiful for him, even though he is dead. But when dogs disgrace the grey head and grey beard and shameful parts of a slain old man, this is the most pitiable thing for poor mortals”).

Since Hector is the synecdochic hero, the embodiment of Troy, whose death will seal the city's doom, Priam vividly foresees the destruction which that death both entails and symbolizes (and which, of course, as the scholia note, the scope of the poem does not permit the poet to describe).¹⁷ Priam is explicit that, far from his death's saving the city, it is by coming inside the walls, specifically by *not* throwing his life away, that Hector will achieve that goal. As Christopher Gill elegantly puts it, “as his father, Priam, underlines, there is a case for seeing retreat as the proper exercise of Hector's role as a son and as Troy's defender ... What prevents him doing so is his sense of shame at having to retreat into Troy under such circumstances”.¹⁸ Yet Priam's argument is not simply a judicious balancing of the different courses of actions and their different outcomes. He *inverts* the conventional military code that death in battle on behalf of one's people is the warrior's duty. In particular the idea that such a death was “beautiful”, the antecedent of the Roman *mors pulchra*, is undercut by being reduced to purely physical terms: to be sure everything is glorious, καλᾶ, *pulchra*, for the hero who dies, but the selfishness of that act is shown by the contrast with what happens to those left behind, the old men who suffer, not the *mors pulchra* of battle, but the shameful, ugly death associated with the sack of the city. That Priam is inverting a *topos* and the ideology which underlies it seems to have occurred to, and somewhat puzzled, the writers of the scholia. They note of lines 71-73 that δοκεῖ τοῦτο προτρεπτικὸν εἶναι μᾶλλον ἐπὶ θάνατον ἢ ἀποτρεπτικόν· καίτοι φαίνεται βουλόμενος πείθειν τὸν Ἑκτορα εἰσεῖναι εἰς τὸ τεῖχος καὶ μὴ ὑπομένειν τὸν Ἀχιλλεῖα. (“This seems to be an exhortation to death, rather than an exhortation against it; and yet [Priam] clearly wants to persuade Hector to come into the city and not to wait for Achilles”).¹⁹ The similarity to Tyrtæus *fr.* 10.21-30 West, which urges the young to protect the old in battle by fighting in the front line, has even led

¹⁷ προαναφωνεῖ τὴν Ἰλίου ἄλωσιν. (“He describes in advance the sack of Troy”), Σ A *ad Hom. Il.* 22.61-65; ἐναργῶς πέφρακε τὰ τῶν πορθήσεων, ... καὶ μὴ γράψας δὲ τὴν Ἰλίου πόρθησιν ὁμῶς ἐδήλωσεν αὐτῆς τὰ παθήματα, πᾶσαν ἡλικίαν τὴν ἐν πολέμῳ τι πάσχουσιν παραλαβόν. (“He has clearly described the events related to the sacking of cities ... and, while not writing about the sack of Ilium, nevertheless shows what was suffered during it, taking in every group that suffers something in war”), Σ bT *ad loc.*

¹⁸ Gill (1996) 82.

¹⁹ Σ bT *ad Hom. Il.* 22.71-73.

Neoanalysts to suggest that Homer has adapted a similar exhortation from a common epic source to a different context, or that a late intrusion into the *Iliad* is indebted to Tyrtaeus himself.²⁰ Whether it derives from an earlier text or from the stock of traditional formulae, Priam redeploys language suited to urging soldiers to die in battle to urge his son not to die in battle but to flee and live to fight another day.²¹ Already in this scene, the conventional military decorum is inverted.

Aeneas, Hector and the Old Lie: *dulce sed non decorum*

Finally, we turn to the *Aeneid* and specifically to book 2, where Aeneas' response to the sack of Troy is marked both by the imagery of *devotio* and by the quality of despair. Leigh's comments on Aeneas and Priam are suggestive:

“Priam and Aeneas are the leaders of Troy, and their actions are a direct response to the destruction of the city. In this, they conform to the conditions identified by Versnel as necessary for patriotic self-sacrifice, namely ‘an all-pervading crisis challenging the continued existence of society as a whole’.”²²

Certainly Priam's courageous, if futile, reaction to Pyrrhus' killing of Polites and Aeneas' exhortation of his desperate band both match Leigh's notion of a sort of sublimated *devotio*, the surrendering of one's life from a sense of obligation without the particulars of ritual correctness or, it would appear, the functional effectiveness which is, one might consider, the rite's *raison d'être*. Yet it is not as clear that they “seek to sacrifice themselves out of a sense of responsibility to others”,²³ since it is hard to see what aspect of that responsibility their deaths, actual or intended, fulfil. The quotation from Versnel is particularly telling, since it is surely not a strained interpretation of it to imagine that the *devotio* is not an undirected response to the “all-pervading crisis” but rather an attempt to *ensure* “the continued existence of society as a whole”. Priam's action might be considered neutral, achieving nothing, but causing no harm. Aeneas, however, in a much clearer and more marked way than Paulus, has a positive duty towards the community to survive and not to throw his life away from despair or the quest for personal glory.

²⁰ Discussion by Richardson (1993) *ad loc.* See also von der Mühl (1952) 333; Griffin (1976) 171.

²¹ It is worth noting that the scholia suggest that Priam's inversion of these conventional values may be a rhetorical ploy aimed at appealing to Hector's φιλοτιμία (Σ βΤ *ad Il.* 22.56-57): φιλότιμον αὐτὸν εἰδὼς ὑπήλλαξε τὴν λέξιν, πρὸς εὐκλειαν καὶ κοινὴν σωτηρίαν αὐτῷ τὴν φυγὴν εἶναι λέγων. (“Knowing that [Hector] loves honour, he slightly alters his speech, saying that, for him, flight would lead to glory and the common salvation”). Yet this does not diminish the validity of Priam's argument, since his rhetorical strategy coincides with the truth of the situation.

²² Leigh (1993) 95, quoting Versnel (1981) 143.

²³ Leigh (1993) 95-96.

Virgil's problematization of Aeneas' attempted *devotio* emerges most clearly from his *hortatio* to the rag-tag band of desperate Trojans whom he has assembled (*Aen.* 2.347-55):

*quos ubi confertos ardere in proelia vidi,
incipio super his: 'iuvenes, fortissima frustra
pectora, si vobis audentem extrema cupido
certa sequi, quae sit rebus fortuna videtis:
excessere omnes adytis arisque relictis
di quibus imperium hoc steterat; succurritis urbi
incensae. moriamur et in media arma ruamus.
una salus victis nullam sperare salutem'.
sic animis iuuenum furor additus.*

(“When I saw that they were gathered and burning for battle, I began in these words: ‘Young men, bravest of hearts in vain, if you have a sure desire to follow one who dares to the very end, you see what fortune our affairs have: all the gods have left the abandoned shrines and altars, the gods through whom this empire had stood; it is a city on fire that you are running to help. Let us die and rush into the middle of battle. The one salvation for the defeated is to hope for no salvation’. In this way frenzy was added to the hearts of the young men”).

It is a cliché of Virgilian scholarship at all levels from school essay to monograph that Aeneas in the early part of the narrative displays the qualities and values of a Homeric hero, before developing into a different, more Roman, more Augustan kind of hero, and that his behaviour at Troy is particularly marked with a martial ethic of personal glory. Yet in this passage, the language is very Roman and suffused with a sense of responsibility towards the community, but in a notably perverted fashion. In particular, as Leigh notes, the “death-rush formula ... has no place in the world of the Iliadic warrior, who is not accustomed to charge the line of the enemy with the deliberate intention of getting killed”.²⁴ We might observe that, for all the resonances with *devotio* narratives which were detected in the depiction of Hector's choice in *Iliad* 22, he still asserted the faint hope of victory over Achilles, so that, for all that the probabilities of the situation rendered his decision an effective self-immolation, that was not its unambiguous aim.

In contrast, it is unambiguously *devotio* which is evoked by Aeneas' exhortation to “rush into the middle of battle”, but it is a *devotio* which he himself emphasizes will be futile. Repeatedly, Aeneas undercuts the conventional *topoi* of epic pre-battle *hortationes*,

²⁴ *ibid.* 93.

stressing that his men's hearts are brave in vain; he teeters on the brink of paradox by emphasizing that the city to whose aid they are running is burning, and hence beyond that or any other aid; then plunges headlong into it with the notorious line about the only salvation for the defeated being to hope for no salvation. Even the *topos* of the city's being abandoned by its gods (a recurrent feature of *urbs capta* narratives)²⁵ might have further point in undermining any sense that the *devotio* could deflect the gods' hostility from Troy onto the Greeks. Capping everything is the reflection of Aeneas the narrator that these words added *furor*, the irrational, destructive principle of chaos against which the forces of order are constantly struggling, to the hearts of the young men.

Furor also appears a little earlier in Aeneas' narrative, where it is coupled with *ira*, and the two passions, almost paradoxically, spur him to seek a glorious death (*Aen.* 2.316-17):

*furor iraque mentem
praecipitat, pulchrumque mori succurrit in armis.*

("Frenzy and rage send my mind headlong, and it occurs to me that it is a beautiful thing to die in the midst of arms").

Hans-Peter Stahl, in his salutary but somewhat overstated defence of Aeneas' behaviour at the sack of Troy, takes these lines as indicating that *furor* and *ira* cannot be intrinsically negative, since they can inspire such patriotic feelings: "It appears impossible that Virgil should condemn a frenzy that leads to noble death for one's country".²⁶ Certainly there is considerable complexity in Virgil's depiction of the passions, including *furor* and *ira*, and much important work has been done in recent years to try to contextualize in particular Aeneas' frenzied killing of Turnus within Aristotelian and Epicurean conceptions of anger.²⁷ However, rather than assuming that a "noble death for one's country" is such an unambiguous good that any connection with it can render otherwise negative passions positive, we might consider it at least as likely that the negative passions throw into question whether such a death is indeed an unambiguous good, or more precisely whether in this case Aeneas is indeed dying "for his country". As we have seen, Aeneas makes no suggestion that his death, for all its resemblance to a formal *devotio*, will do anything to save Troy. In fact, he explicitly denies the possibility of anyone or anything doing so. *furor*, *ira* and despair may drive a leader to seek a *mors pulchra* which has the secular features of a

²⁵ For the belief in general, there is a useful survey and list of examples at Pelling (1988) 303 *ad* Plut. *Ant.* 75.4-5.

²⁶ Stahl (1981) 166.

²⁷ *e.g.* Fowler (1997); Wright (1997); Gill (2003); Indelli (2004).

devotio which Leigh identifies, but the presence of those passions (along with the absence of the crucial hope of saving the city) underlines the limits of such a *devotio*.

This is not to join those who harshly condemn Aeneas' actions in book 2. The case has been frequently and convincingly made that the situation on that dreadful night, at least as Aeneas himself depicts it, more than justifies his failure to heed or even comprehend the instructions of Hector, Venus and Creusa, his despairing determination to die in his dying city, and his risk of everything to find his lost wife. In evaluating Aeneas' actions at the sack of Troy, we must of course take into account that they are described from his perspective and to serve his rhetorical aims, and we shall return to some reflections on the implications of this for *devotio* motifs at the end of this section. However, for now, it is important to note that the narrators, both epic and intradiegetic, Virgil (if the author is not dead) and Aeneas, problematize not the character of Aeneas but the value-system which leads him to pursue a death which, so far from being "for his country", is in fact very much to its detriment. *Devotio* has its limits and Aeneas finds them in burning Troy.

The flip-side of the coin which depicts self-sacrificing death as inglorious and unpatriotic is, of course, the depiction of conventionally ignoble flight as courageous, dutiful, and in the interests of the community. In terms of our central antithesis between the consuls at Cannae, any criticism of Paulus' action entails approbation of Varro's. Moreover, in purely spatial terms, flight is also the antithesis of the death-rush, since it too involves rapid motion, but *away from* the enemy. We have already seen how Homer's Priam tries to convince Hector that flight into the walls is his duty to Troy, and it is surely no coincidence that it is the ghost of Hector who instructs Aeneas not to make the same mistake, but to flee (*Aen.* 2.287-95):

*ille nihil, nec me quaerentem vana moratur,
sed grauius gemitus imo de pectore ducens,
'heu fuge, nate dea, teque his' ait 'eripe flammis.
hostis habet muros; ruit alto a culmine Troia.
sat patriae Priamoque datum: si Pergama dextra
defendi possent, etiam hac defensa fuissent.
sacra suosque tibi commendat Troia penatis;
hos cape fatorum comites, his moenia quaere
magna pererrato statuas quae denique ponto'.*

("He made no response, and did not delay over my asking pointless questions, but heavily heaving groans from the bottom of his chest, 'Alas, flee, goddess-born, and

snatch yourself he said, ‘from these flames. The enemy holds the walls; Troy is collapsing from its lofty pinnacle. Enough has been given to homeland and to Priam: if Pergamum could be defended by a right hand, even by this one it would have been defended. Troy entrusts its sacred objects and household gods to you; these take as companions of your destiny, with these seek the great walls which you will eventually build after wandering all over the sea’’).

We are told by Aeneas himself that the ghost of Hector is not a spruced-up, funeral-parlour “Hector as I’d like to remember him”, but rather the bloody, dusty, mutilated corpse dragged round the walls by Achilles (2.272-73). While this image has many resonances with Hector as the symbol of falling Troy,²⁸ it also binds him closely to the Hector of *Iliad* 22, who was in a similar position to Aeneas and who received similar advice. Unlike Priam’s call to come inside and prevent the horrific sack, Hector’s speech to Aeneas emphasises that the sack is already in irrevocable progress and hence that any defence by Aeneas is in vain. It is notable that, for all that Aeneas ignores most of Hector’s instructions, there are close parallels between their assessments of Troy’s desperate situation. When Aeneas addresses his band of brothers, he takes Troy’s doom as reason for a desperate and futile pseudo-*devotio*, but Hector more radically interprets the impossibility of saving Troy as justification for flight. His assertion that, if Troy could have been saved, he would have done it, also recalls his failure to heed Priam’s advice, to flee and hence to save Troy. Aeneas’ duty is also to flee, not to *save* Troy, but to carry the sacred objects and *penates* which she entrusts to him.

The call to flee is Hector’s first command and would be his first word were it not qualified by *heu*, a poignant interjection which expresses his distress, not simply at the general horror of Troy’s sack, but also more at the necessity of urging on his kinsman and fellow-warrior a course of action which is the antithesis of their military code and which he himself had notoriously rejected. Servius’ comment on this passage provides one of his more insightful readings (Serv. *ad* Virg. *Aen.* 2.288):

GEMITUS. nec enim parvus dolor est viro forti fortem virum fugam suadere. et nota, omnes suasoriae partes hoc loco contineri.

(“GROANS: for it is no small anguish either for a brave man to urge a brave man to flight. And observe that all the elements of an exhortation are contained in this passage”).

²⁸ Kragellund (1976) 11-39; Fuqua (1982); Hershkowitz (1998) 86-90.

However, Hector's paradoxical command to flee is not a simple overriding of the conventional military exhortation to stand, fight and die. Just as the scholiast noted on the Iliadic Priam's speech *to* Hector, so Servius here points out that all the elements of an exhortation (προτροπεπτικός / *suasoria*) are present. Yet they are inverted so as to advocate flight, not as a countercultural, self-consciously antiheroic act in the Archilochean mould,²⁹ but rather as an almost paradoxical redefinition of the proper exercise of ἀρετή / *virtus*. Aeneas is urged to snatch someone to safety, but the object of that heroic rescue is, perhaps unexpectedly, himself: *teque his ... eripe flammis*. The choice of *eripere* is perhaps even more striking because, despite its common sense of "saving" (*TLL* V.2.794.10-42), it retains strong physical overtones of picking someone up and snatching them from the very jaws of danger. As such, reflexive uses of it are relatively uncommon, and the reader here might expect it to be Anchises or the *penates* which are the object of Aeneas' rescue. That Hector casts self-preservation in terms more conventionally used of the heroic saving of others emphasizes that the two are ethically equivalent.

Before leaving Aeneas and his companions on Ida, let us briefly glance at three other references to *fuga* in his narration. The first comes in Venus' address to her son accompanying the terrifying apocalypse of the gods destroying Ilium (*Aen.* 2.617-20):

*'... ipse pater Danais animos virisque secundas
sufficit, ipse deos in Dardana suscitāt arma.
eripe, nate, fugam finemque impone labori;
nusquam abero et tutum patrio te limine sistam'.*

("The father himself supplies courage and victorious strength for the Danaans, he himself rouses the gods against the Dardanian arms. Snatch, son, flight and put an end to your effort; at no point shall I be absent and I shall set you safely on your father's threshold").

Again the emphasis is on the hopelessness of the situation, but again the response is to urge not despairing self-annihilation but hopeful survival. Venus' formulation recapitulates Hector's exhortations to flight and rescue, but combines them to form an even more radically arresting phrase. Horsfall notes the echo and offers a range of possible explanations: "V[irgil] may be reworking material, or creating links between Hector's words and Venus', or indeed both".³⁰ There can surely be little doubt that Virgil is not only creating links

²⁹ On this motif in the new Archilochus fragment (*POxy.* LXIX 4708), see Barker and Christenson (2006).

³⁰ Horsfall (2008) 445 *ad loc.*

between the two speeches, but marking a progression from Hector's to Venus'. The bold collocation *eripe ... fugam* cannot be simply smoothed out to mean, as Brandt's *TLL* entry glosses it, *raptim capesse*,³¹ and certainly not when it recalls the two concepts discretely expressed in Hector's speech. It was incongruous and paradoxical enough for Hector to urge that Aeneas snatch himself away from the flames in parataxis (verging on hendiadys) with the command to flee. Here, flight, shameful resort of the coward and tergiversator, is promoted to the level of the cherished and vulnerable object which must itself be rescued and snatched away.

Newly obedient to the commands of the supernatural forces ranged beside him, Aeneas does indeed go to his father's threshold, where it is now Anchises who (initially) resists the call of destiny and threatens to derail Jupiter's teleological plan (*Aen.* 2.638-40):

*vos o, quibus integer aevi
sanguis, ait, 'solidaeque suo stant robore vires,
vos agitate fugam'.*

(“O you, for whom blood with the health of youth’ he said, ‘and firm strength stand in their own might, *you* undertake flight”).

fuga here has strong overtones of its other (closely related) sense of “exile”, especially since Aeneas has just mentioned in *oratio obliqua* that Anchises' complaints included saying that he could not endure exile (*exilium ... pati*, 2.638). However, he is referring at least as much to the flight which will lead to exile as to the exile itself, and it is notable that such flight is set apart as being appropriate to the young and strong, as opposed to the old and feeble. Once more we have an echo of the *topoi* of exhortations to glorious death in battle as something sweet and appropriate to brave, strong youths, but here it is flight which is not merely defended as an acceptable course of action, but taken for granted as the sort of thing which is only suited to the young and strong, *because* they are young and strong. The notion of flight as courage reaches its climax.³² Its climax, but not its last appearance.

³¹ *TLL* V.2.791.63-64. An indication of *how* bold a collocation it is may be given by the only other occurrence, at *Sil.* 1.330-31, where the Saguntines are circumvallated by Hannibal and in a still striking but more conventional sense “see their [means of] flight snatched away [from them]” (*stat dura iuuentus / ereptamque fugam et claudi uidet aggere muros*).

³² We might, even more briefly, note further exhortation to flight. Anchises' fateful panic, which leads to the loss of Creusa – ‘*nate*’, *exclamat, 'fuge, nate'* (“My son’, he shouts, ‘flee, my son’”, 2.733) – could be construed as symbolically expressing the destined necessity of leaving Creusa, as well as Troy, behind. For Creusa as a synecdoche for Troy, see Syed (2005) 140-41.

In book 3, the Trojans round Actium and set up a shield as a trophy. Yet this trophy is not in celebration of a victory in battle, but to mark a successful flight. The institution of the Actian Games, *victory* games, which the victor of Actium would also celebrate centuries later, are held in memory of their glorious “flight” – this refers principally to their sea-journey westwards from Troy, but surely also evokes the escape from the city (3.282-83): *iuvat evasisse tot urbes / Argolicas mediosque fugam tenuisse per hostis* (“We are glad to have escaped so many Argive cities and to have held our flight through the middle of the enemy”). Note how the *devotio* motif of rushing to one’s death in the midst of the enemy is transformed into achieving flight through their midst.³³

It is by now probably clear that the discourse of *Aeneid* 2 exploits the imagery of *devotio* to suggest that, in some circumstances at least, the conventionally heroic death-rush can in fact be futile, detrimental to the common good, and motivated by selfish and irrational motives, while the conventionally disgraceful act of flight and self-preservation can be not only expedient but positively heroic and in the best interests of the community. It remains to consider why this inversion takes place. As with all the problematizations of *devotio* discussed in this article, one of the most important (if perhaps one of the least interesting) reasons is that it is simply the case that in certain circumstances, the continued survival of a leader *is* of greater utility to his community (because, say, of his ability to rally, organize and motivate it in crisis, or govern it more generally in stability) than a superficially heroic death which, in those specific circumstances, might achieve nothing other than the preservation or enhancement of his personal reputation. Yet even here, we should perhaps be wary of saying that anything is *simply* the case, since such complex weighing of advantages, and in particular their depiction and perception, must always be underpinned by ideological considerations. We must therefore situate the limits of *devotio* within Aeneas’ narrative, within the *Aeneid*, and within Augustan Rome.

Aeneas’ escape from Troy was problematic. There is no need to join Menecrates of Xanthos and the other conspiracy theorists (possibly including Dido) who believed that Aeneas had betrayed Troy to the Greeks, or at least cut a deal to be allowed to escape, for the reader to feel a certain unease.³⁴ If one wishes to adopt a psychologising approach, however broadly conceived, it is not difficult to imagine that Aeneas suffers from survivor’s guilt and

³³ The paradox of this victorious defeat is perhaps best summed up by the inscription on the Argive shield they dedicate: *AENEAS HAEC DE DANAIS VICTORIBVS ARMA* (“AENEAS [SET UP] THESE ARMS [TAKEN] FROM THE VICTORIOUS DANAANS”, 3.288). On the significance of its being Abas’ shield, see Miller (1993).

³⁴ *FGrH* 769 F 3. On the tradition that Aeneas betrayed Troy, see Ussani (1947) and Casali (1998), the latter of whom detects an allusion to it in Dido’s reference to *facta impia* at *Aen.* 4.596.

needs to justify his failure to die with so many others, including his king and his wife, to himself. If this seems anachronistically psychological — the *Aeneid* is not a William Styron novel — then the more externalizing need for self-representation and self-assertion on the part of the wandering hero is less problematic. Whatever he may feel himself, if indeed Virgil and his readers are interested in such matters, it is undeniable that he must justify to the various communities of which he is leader, vulnerable guest, ally, or future ruler, the fact that he did not follow the conventional heroic or military code, that he *did* flee and, for whatever reason, survive. To pan out one level further: the poet must also, at least up to a point, justify his hero's escape in terms which, while they might redefine the conception of heroism, at least do not expose him to accusations of cowardice or treachery (or at least not too blatantly). These three related approaches are valid, but they are all predicated on an implicit assumption that, in the final analysis, Aeneas' flight from Troy *was* problematic and *did* need justification by something verging on special pleading. On this reading, the underlying heroic and military code remains basically intact, with the assumption that Aeneas ought *really* to have died heroically in Troy (as of course he repeatedly tried to) and that the justifications for his flight have at best a rhetorical validity.

Perhaps more interesting is the approach which takes the redefinition of duty seriously, but locates it in an ideological shift concerning the relationship between the leader and the community. There is no room here for a detailed analysis of the shift from, crudely-speaking, the collective ideology of the republic (if indeed it ever existed in those terms) to the monarchical ideology of the Principate (whose existence is, I hope, uncontroversial, even if it is less certain at what point it became fully developed). Nevertheless, it is not difficult to detect the affinities between, on the one hand, the former and the values represented by *devotio*, and on the other, the latter and the redefined emphasis on hopeful survival. Two passages from Horace's fourth book of *Odes* nicely illustrate the contrasting views, and their juxtaposition in successive odes might suggest a deliberate antithesis. In the first, Hannibal laments over the death of Hasdrubal at Metaurus and reflects upon the Romans' ability to regroup and rise from defeat, like the hydra or the *spartoi* (C. 4.4.61-64):

*non hydra secto corpore firmior
vinci dolentem crevit in Herculem,
monstrumve submisere Colchi
maius Echioniaeve Thebae.*

("The hydra when its body had been cut did not grow stronger against Hercules who grieved to be defeated, nor did the Colchians or Echion's Thebes plant a greater monster").

For all that this ode celebrates Drusus through his great Claudian ancestor, this is a clear statement of republican ideals. The death of one general, whether in heroic self-sacrifice or otherwise, does no lasting harm to the collective of the Roman *res publica*, since there will always be countless other generals and soldiers to spring up, like heads from the hydra's neck or sown men from the dragon's teeth, to take their place. This being so, the service done to the collective by *devotio*-like death far outweighs the harm caused by the loss of one leader among many, who can so easily be replaced. In contrast, Ode 4.5 stresses the homeland's devotion to and reliance on the unique and irreplaceable figure of Caesar. The *patria's* longing for him is like that of a mother for her sea-faring son (9-16), and it is contingent on his individual safety (*incolumi Caesare*, 27) that Italy's land will be fertile, Rome's institutions sound, and both safe from their enemies. It is only when the whole safety and even continuing existence of the community depend upon the safety and continuing existence of one individual, the synecdochic hero (a precise reversal of the *devotio*, where it is the substitutional sacrifice of that individual which ensures the community's safety and continuing existence), only in these circumstances and on this ideological basis, that it can be considered "simply the case" that it is in the community's best interests for a leader like Aeneas to rush away from the enemy in flight rather than into them to devoted death.³⁵ It is a matter for debate how far the *Aeneid* interrogates as well as representing this ideological position, but that question can be illuminated by examining its reception in two of Virgil's best readers, Lucan and Silius Italicus.

A Big Man, But in Bad Shape: Lucan's Pompey

Devotio takes its place among the other aspects of Roman ideology which are twisted and perverted in Lucan's twisted and perverted poem about a twisted and perverted world.³⁶ Cato offers himself as a *devotus* in the explicit tradition of the Decii, longing to take the guilt of all Romans, and their destruction, upon himself.³⁷ Yet, even if one sees Lucan's Cato as heroic paragon rather than hilarious parody, he aspires merely to prevent

³⁵ One might also situate Virgil's critique of Aeneas' despair within an Augustan and Tiberian discourse of *spes*, a positive attribute far removed from the destructive *ἐλπίς* of Hesiod and Thucydides. On Augustan *spes*, see Clark (1983); on despair in association with Germanicus' death, see Versnel (1980). I am grateful to Andy Stiles for these references.

³⁶ I am indebted to Paul Roche for reminding me of the extent of references to *devotio* in the *Bellum Civile*, and to Anne Rogerson for noting how, like so many Roman values, and especially military ones, those associated with *devotio* become meaningless or at least problematic in civil war (and indeed in *The Civil War*). On *devotio* in Lucan, see esp. Leigh (1997) 128-43.

³⁷ Luc. 2.306-19. On Cato's *devotio*, see Rudich (1997) 122-23; Hill (2004) 230; D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 156-58; Stover (2008) 573-75.

bloodshed rather than to save the Roman people from the yoke of servitude to which they are already resigned and even enthusiastic. With his imagined death, in all its hyperbolic grotesquery, the last defender of the laws would die, but not in such a way as to save them: he would merely open the way for the peace which comes with a master, as foreseen by Nigidius Figulus (1.670). More grotesque and futile still is the mutual slaughter of Vulteius' men, who prefer freedom (albeit the "freedom" to be Caesar's "slaves") to defeat by the Pompeians and who are depicted as a *devota iuventus* (4.533). Here is a microcosm of civil war, as Romans slaughter each other in a misguided act of conventional valour, valour which has and can have no place in the perverted world of the *Bellum Civile*.³⁸ Finally, we might note briefly a figure to whom we shall return, Caesar's centurion Scaeva, who single-handedly prevents Pompey's army from breaking the blockade at Dyrrachium, a heroic act of the one against the many, except that, for all the gruesomely hyperbolic wounds which he sustains, he fails to die, and the result of his self-sacrificing *virtus* is, as the narrator points out, that he readies a master for himself.³⁹ However, I wish to focus here, not on the perversion of *devotio* in general, but specifically on its *inversion*, as in the series of passages which we have already noted problematising self-destruction and valorising flight. This motif arises in the *Bellum Civile* when Pompey flees from Pharsalus.

Pompey's flight, and the epic narrator's assessment of it, are among the most intensely debated parts of the *Bellum Civile*.⁴⁰ Already in Caesar's commentaries on the civil war, it was used to denigrate his predecessor, and many, most influentially Marti, have seen Lucan's depiction of the flight as a direct corrective, not only rehabilitating Pompey but actively heroizing his retreat.⁴¹ It has been widely noted that the general's spurring on of his horse to a gallop evokes the death-rush of the *devotus* (7.677-79):

*tum Magnum concitus aufert
a bello sonipes non tergo tela paventem
ingentisque animos extrema in fata ferentem.*

³⁸ 4.402-581. On Vulteius, see Leigh (1997) 259-63; Esposito (2001); Eldred (2002); D'Alessandro Behr (2007) 36-45.

³⁹ 6.118-262, esp. 262: *infelix, quanta dominum virtute parasti!* ("Unlucky man, with what valour you got ready a master!") On Scaeva, see esp. Rutz (1960) 462-66; Marti (1966); Conte (1974); Ahl (1976) 117-21; Saylor (1978) esp. 250-53; Henderson (1987); Johnson (1987) 57-60; Fantham (1995); Leigh (1997) 158-90, 243-46; Hershkowitz (1998) 214-16, 243-44; Gorman (2001) 277-79; Sklenář (2003) 45-59, 149-51.

⁴⁰ 7.647-711, with esp. Leigh (1997) 110-57; Bartsch (1997) 79-82.

⁴¹ Marti (1945).

(“Then a spurred-on charger carried Magnus away from war, not fearing weapons in his back and carrying his great courage to his final destiny”).

It has also been noted, of course, that this is an inverted *devotio*, since the general is riding not *into* but *away from* the enemy. Moreover, there is a potential irony in his fearlessness concerning weapons in his back: unlike most heroes who share this lack of fear, it is not because his front is the only part the enemy can see, but because he has rapidly ridden out of range! Yet, as we have seen with a number of other *devoti manqués*, an inverted *devotio* need not be interpreted straightforwardly as a bitter parody contrasting cowardly flight with the heroic death-rush which the general *ought* to be undertaking. Rather such inversion of the physical externals of the *devotio* may also serve to invert the system of values which underpins it. In assessing Pompey’s actions, we must also assess his motivations, and in addition the motivations of Lucan’s uniquely engaged narrator.

The situation is clarified, or in all likelihood further complicated, by Lucan’s explanation of why Pompey fled (7.652-58):

*tot telis sua fata peti, tot corpora fusa
ac se tam multo pereuntem sanguine vidit.
nec, sicut mos est miseris, trahere omnia secum
mersa iuvat gentesque suae miscere ruinae;
ut Latiae post se vivat pars maxima turbae,
sustinuit dignos etiam nunc credere votis
caelicolas, vovitque, sui solacia casus.*

(“He saw his own death aimed at by so many weapons, so many bodies strewn and himself dying in so much blood. And he did not, as is the way of the wretched, decide to pull everything down with him and drown it, or to mix the nations up in his own fall; he managed to believe that the sky-dwellers even now were worthy of his prayers, and prayed that the greatest part of the Latian crowd should live after him, a solace for his own fall”).

Though this is clearly doubly focalized through Pompey and the facet of the narratorial voice which is so fanatically devoted to him,⁴² if taken at face value, it presents Pompey

⁴² “due versi emblematici dello stato d’animo di Pompeo, ormai in preda al panico”, Gagliardi (1975) *ad* Luc. 7.652-63; “the idea of the synecdochic hero is present first in the imaginings of Pompey, second in the suggestive figurations of the narrator”, Leigh (1997) 153; cf. Bartsch (1997) 80: “A strange *devotio* that saves the sacrifice and offers up the beneficiaries, but this noble flight instils not the least bit of discomfort in our narrator, who now addresses Pompey in rapturous terms and for some fifty lines”.

with the dilemma of Hector. He is the one who stands for the many and whose death will take those many down with him. Yet he chooses not, as is the way of the wretched, to drag everything down with him but, unlike Hector, to live and, unlike Hector, to try to save his people. His is an inverted *devotio*, not merely because he does not ride to a glorious death, but because (in his perception at least) such a glorious death would not save but destroy his people.⁴³ As Sklenár puts it, “Pompey evinces an essential component of Stoic *virtus*, a concern for the commonwealth of humankind”.⁴⁴ The situation does not appear to call for a Decius, but for a right-thinking Hector. Yet this assumes that Pompey (along with his partisan narrator) is correct in his interpretation of the situation. If, as many have argued, most forcefully Leigh, Pompey is deluded by his own egomania, so that he does not see “the part standing for the whole, the hero for his people, but rather the whole standing for the part”, then the inverted *devotio* is a parody after all.⁴⁵ Is there a way of interpreting Pompey’s flight as inverted *devotio* other than simply preserving the quintessentially Lucanian paradox of the situation, as Johnson does with characteristic (and Lucanian) irony, referring to Pompey’s “gallant desertion”?⁴⁶

Simple condemnation of Pompey’s action misses something of the point. Pompey *is* megalomaniacal and egomaniacal, monarchical rather than Republican, in his equation of the many with the one, but almost everything we are told in the epic suggests that he is correct in his assessment of the situation. The criticism is not so much of Pompey himself as of the world-turned-upside-down in which he operates, in which a single synecdochic figure *can* drag everything down with him. Pompey is to be criticized only inasmuch as he is a product, a part (and no doubt something of the cause also) of this world in which the collective values of the republic have all but disappeared. If the republic which the narrator so nostalgically and unrealistically longs for still existed (as it does briefly in the aftermath of Pompey’s flight, when the dying Senate shows that it fought for itself),⁴⁷ it would make

⁴³ A similar finesse is used by Cicero to figure his exile as a *devotio* to prevent bloodshed, on which see May (1988) 97-99 and Dyck (2004).

⁴⁴ Sklenár (2003) 120. Cf. Lintott (1971) 501: “Pompey bears his misfortune with calm dignity and leaves the field to put an end to the slaughter”; Radicke (2004) 422: “Lucan hingegen [i.e. unlike historiographers] macht die Flucht des Pompeius, der sein Heer führerlos dem Untergang preisgab, zu einem bewußten Rückzug aus Humanität und wertet den negativen Vorgang in einen positiven um”.

⁴⁵ Leigh (1997) 155. Cf. *adnot. super. Luc. ad 7.653: nam exercitus corpus est imperatoris*. On this undermining of Pompey’s depiction more generally, see Ahl (1976) 167-68; Bartsch (1997) 79-80; Edwards (2007) 35.

⁴⁶ Johnson (1987) 99.

⁴⁷ *teque inde fugato / ostendit moriens sibi se pugnasse senatus*. (“When you had fled from there, the senate dying showed that it had fought for itself”), Luc. 7.696-97.

sense for a republican general to perform a true *devotio*, to die, and to save his people. In the world of civil war and of *The Civil War*, such actions, like the values on which they are based, make no sense, or rather are perverted. Pompey's death would have caused more destruction rather than salvation, and his flight does reduce the bloodshed. Yet the change to *devotio* is not just the result of the category-confounding nature of civil war; it is the monarchical ideology of the Principate, and of the preceding decades, with its proto-monarchical dynasts such as Pompey and Caesar, which makes *devotio* redundant and even counterproductive. When individuals become more important than the community, then their destruction is indeed destructive and their preservation does indeed preserve the community. Yet, whereas Virgil depicted this shift and its embodiment in Aeneas as (on the surface at least) a neutral or even positive one, in Lucan it is clearly negative. Pompey does the best he can in the worst of possible worlds. That his best is so poor is the ultimate condemnation of that world.

Little Big Man: Paulus and Varro at Cannae, part II

There are two sustained engagements with *devotio* in Flavian epic. The suicide of Menoeceus in *Thebaid* 10, though it of course has its origins in the Greek tradition, most notably Euripides' *Phoenician Women*, is clearly depicted in terms of a *devotio*. Many interpret it as an unambiguously positive action on Menoeceus' part, as he selflessly saves the city by giving up his life, in contrast to the self-consciously impious assault on the walls by the *contemptor divum*, Capaneus.⁴⁸ However, Alan Heinrich has persuasively shown how, in terms both of Menoeceus' self-serving and competitive motivation, and especially of the futility of the act, which leads not to salvation or resolution, but to an obsessive repetition of the same crimes to which Thebes and her people are doomed, the *devotio* is pointless, if not impious.⁴⁹ In a manner which is parallel to, but distinct from, Lucan's depiction of a world out of joint, Statius' nefastic universe, or at least "guilty Thebes" within it, renders all positive values and actions at best meaningless and at worst as criminal as itself. However, for all its problematization of both the motivation for and the efficacy of self-immolation, Statius' Menoeceus episode does not fall into the category of inverted *devotio* upon which we are focusing, in which the death-rush is deprecated and flight valorised. For an instance of that motif in Flavian epic, we must return to our starting point, the contrasting decisions and fates of the two consuls at Cannae, not as depicted in Livy's history or Frontinus' book of stratagems, but in Silius Italicus' *Punica*.

⁴⁸ e.g. Vessey (1971).

⁴⁹ Heinrich (1999).

The motif of *devotio* can be detected elsewhere in the *Punica*, though I would disagree with Raymond Marks's argument that the deaths of various hot-headed Roman generals at the sites of Hannibal's early victories constitute some sort of virtual *devotio* which eventually contributes to Rome's victory.⁵⁰ However, *devotio* is unquestionably central to Silius' depiction of Paulus' death at Cannae, which constitutes an intertextual *tour de force* of incredible complexity, alluding to and commenting on the *devotiones* (actual, virtual, or inverted) of Aeneas, Priam, Turnus, Hector, Scaeva, and Pompey, at least, in addition to their situation in the historiographical and exemplary tradition about Paulus himself. We have examined in some detail the examples of Hector, Aeneas, and Pompey, but it will be worth reminding ourselves of the circumstances leading to Turnus' *devotio*, which, while it is not in itself part of the epic problematization of *devotio*, is an important intertext for that of Silius' Paulus', which is, and links it to the other epic *devotiones*.

In *Aeneid* 12, Turnus has been led by his sister Iturna, disguised as his charioteer Metiscus, to the edges of the battle, where he is safely and futilely scything down sword-fodder. He hears the cry from the city which arises when Aeneas attacks it and Amata commits suicide, while Latinus, like Priam, throws dust on his hair in grief.⁵¹ Virgil skilfully combines Priam's supplication of the living Hector (itself a form of pre-emptive mourning)⁵² with his mourning for his death, but it is Amata's death which symbolizes the destruction of the city, and – though the juxtaposition of the scenes makes the connection – Turnus himself is not addressed. The city, like Troy, is falling, but Turnus is not there, and it is another's death which is equated to that fall.⁵³ The contrast underlines the difference between Hector and Turnus, that, while Hector's duty is to save himself and hence save the city, Turnus – though also a synecdochic hero – must die to save the city.

In place of Priam and Hecuba's supplications, Virgil synthesizes all the advice, supplications, divine deceptions, and self-debate which Hector receives and indulges in – Andromache, Priam, Hecuba, Polydamas, Athena-Deiphobos, and his own great monologue – and then splits them again into two contrasting figures giving contrasting advice. Iturna, like Athena, impersonates a comrade of the hero, but, instead of a false sibling tricking him to his death, a true sibling tries to trick him to safety.⁵⁴ The shadowy

⁵⁰ Marks (2005b).

⁵¹ Turnus on the fringes: *Aen.* 12.614-21; Latinus and the people of Latinus: 12.608-11; Priam: Hom. *Il.* 22.33-35, cf. 408-09. Knauer (1964) 429 only notes the second parallel.

⁵² Cf. Alden (2000) 282 on the hair-tearing at Hom. *Il.* 22.77-78.

⁵³ Cf. Hershkowitz (1998) 82: "The fall of Troy is mirrored by the siege of Latinus' city".

⁵⁴ In many ways, Iturna-Metiscus combines half (*i.e.* two quarters) of the functions of the Homeric Athena in (epiphanizing to and) aiding Achilles and deceiving (and destroying) Hector.

figure of Saces, perhaps an externalization of Turnus' own *conscia virtus*, urges him to come and fight and save the city. Suggestively for both Hector and Paulus, safety for Turnus, which will leave the city to its fate, as advocated by Iturna-Metiscus, requires him to stay where he is, while death and the salvation of the city (Saces' exhortation) can only be achieved through motion towards the city. There is also a distinction on the related issue of whether or not Turnus is a synecdochic hero: according to Iturna-Metiscus, he can stay where he is because "there are others to defend the city" (*sunt alii qui tecta manu defendere possint*, 12.627). Saces, however, like Priam, asserts that Turnus *is* the synecdochic hero, in whom is the "final chance of safety" (*suprema salus*, 653), the one man to whom all eyes and faces are turned (*in te ora Latini, / in te oculos referunt*, 656-67); the difference is that, whereas Priam used this as an argument for Hector to flee and live, for Saces, it means Turnus must fight, which all the narrative's signals make clear means also that he must die. We might note here that Iturna-Metiscus' claim is drawing an intertextual parallel with Homer's Idomeneus, who (in the opposite direction) tells his charioteer, Meriones, that there are others to defend the Greek ships while they seek glory on the left wing;⁵⁵ the irony of the intertext is that, whereas Idomeneus can point to the two Aiantes and Teucros as credible defenders, for Turnus (and for Hector) there is no one else. From this dense intertextual debate, the question will emerge for Silius' reader as to whether Paulus is a sole defender, like Hector and Turnus, or whether, like Idomeneus, he can point to others, Fabius, Lentulus, and the inhabitants of the city, who can defend Rome.

Turnus responds to both figures with the same decision: Iturna-Metiscus urges him to slaughter as many Trojans as he can to even up numbers, but he refuses and determines to face Aeneas; Saces urges him to come and save the city, to which he agrees and determines to face Aeneas. Peter Schenk, consistent with his unrelentingly negative interpretation of Turnus' character throughout the poem, argues here that it is primarily his sense of shame and the fear of dishonour which drives him to face Aeneas, and even to save the city.⁵⁶ This is certainly supported by the references in his reply to Iturna-Metiscus to giving the lie to the words of Drances and in his refusal to let this land see him in flight (12.643-45). We might consider this a slightly harsh and over-simplified account of Turnus' motivation, even if we take it as only *part* of that motivation, yet it tellingly both parallels and contrasts

⁵⁵ νηυσὶ μὲν ἐν μέσσησιν ἀμύνειν εἰσὶ καὶ ἄλλοι / Αἴαντές τε δῶ Τεῦκρός θ', ὃς ἄριστος Ἀχαιῶν | τοξοσύνη, ἀγαθὸς δὲ καὶ ἐν σταδίῃ ὑσμίνῃ (*Il.* 13.312-14). The parallel is noted by Knauer (1964) 430.

⁵⁶ Schenk (1984) 177-85, esp. 178: "Das entscheidende Stichwort dieser Rede [12.632-49] ist *dedecus*, das bei Turnus stets mit dem Todesgedanken verbunden ist. Einen flüchtenden Turnus, der es zuläßt, daß die Stadt der Zerstörung anheim fällt, wird die Welt nicht sehen".

with Hector's. As we have seen, Hector's sense of shame, especially for rejecting the good counsel of Polydamas, leads him to face his enemy, just like Turnus;⁵⁷ yet Hector's shame leads him to put that personal value above the safety of his city, whereas Turnus' shame that he has endangered the city leads him to give his life to save it. There may be an element of truth in Heinze's general claim that Aeneas fights for his people, but Turnus for himself, but here at least it is for the city that Turnus will fight.⁵⁸

As we shall see, unlike that of Hector and Paulus, who resemble him but resemble each other more, Turnus' choice, though painful, is relatively simple and even conventional: flee and save himself, or fight and save the city. In comparing his situation to Paulus', it is instructive to consider the parallels Debra Hershkowitz has drawn between Saces and the ghost of Hector in *Aeneid* 2.⁵⁹ Both Aeneas and Turnus experience the sudden appearance and exhortations of Hector and Saces in a dream-like state, which contributes to the sense that they are simultaneously external figures and expressions of the heroes' psychological state. The visitations not only report but embody the destruction of the city, as "like Hector's wounds, Saces' wounds reflect the destruction he describes".⁶⁰ Hershkowitz's paralleling of the scenes is insightful but, in the context of the debate between fight and flight, we might wish to nuance her analysis a little. She claims that "Hector admonishes Aeneas, telling him to flee the hopeless ruin of his city; similarly, Saces admonishes Turnus, telling him to fight in the hopeless battle for his city".⁶¹ Here is the familiar contrast between flight and fight, but are both situations truly hopeless? The fall of Troy in *Aeneid* 2 is genuinely a hopeless situation, inevitable defeat and destruction ordained by the gods, as Venus reveals to Aeneas; in these circumstances, as we have seen, Aeneas' duty, like Hector's, is to flee and save the city – not Troy, which cannot be saved, but the new Troy which he will carry with him to the west; instead he repeatedly tries to embrace a conventional, despairing, "heroic" *mors pulchra*, like Hector, but repeatedly supernatural interventions – beginning with Hector's ghost – insist that he follow the unconventional heroic duty which the circumstances demand: flight. The attack on Latinus' city, on the other hand, is not a hopeless cause; in the most literal and short-term sense, Turnus' action

⁵⁷ "Beide Helden erkennen, daß die von den Ratgebern prophezeite Situation eingetreten ist, und ihr Ansehen ihnen gebietet, den bisher vermiedenen Kampf auszufechten". Schenk (1984) 178.

⁵⁸ "Vor allem kämpft er nicht wie Aeneas für sein Volk und dessen Zukunft, sondern, wie ihm mit Recht vorgeworfen wird, für seine eigenen Ansprüche, und ihre willen einen Krieg zu entfachen, ist frevelhaft". Heinze (1915) 211.

⁵⁹ Hershkowitz (1998) 86-90.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* 88.

⁶¹ *ibid.* 87.

saves the city as Aeneas turns away from it to face him; it is clear that in another, hard-to-define sense, the sacrifice of Turnus – for all its negative connotations – is essential to save the city that is to come.⁶² The connection between Hector's ghost and Saces, Aeneas and Turnus, is therefore partly parallelism – the synecdochic hero must save the city – but partly contrastive – Aeneas must achieve this by fleeing and surviving, Turnus by fighting and dying.

Like Turnus in the *Aeneid*, Paulus in the *Punica* is visited by two advisers. Like Turnus' advisers, one of Paulus' is a deceptive, disguised divinity (albeit a hostile one unlike the benign Iuturna) and the other a positive representative of normative military values. However, unlike Turnus' two advisers, both of Paulus' urge the same course of action: flight to save himself and, by so doing, to save Rome. It will be worth looking at the arguments of both figures side-by-side before analysing them further. The first adviser is Juno, enemy of Rome (despite all that business with Jupiter in *Aeneid* 12), partisan of the Carthaginians and especially of Hannibal. Juno is anxious lest Paulus might meet Hannibal in battle and kill him. She therefore disguises herself as L. Caecilius Metellus (who will reappear as the leader of a cowardly band who advocate abandoning Rome after the defeat at Cannae)⁶³ and tries to persuade Paulus to retire from the field (Sil. 10.47-58):

*in faciem pavidi Iuno conversa Metelli
'quid vanos,' inquit 'Latia spes unica consul,
incassumque moves fato renuente furores?
si superest Paulus, restant Aeneia regna;
sin secus, Ausoniam tecum trahis. ire tumentem
tu contra iuvenem et caput hoc abscidere rebus
turbatis, o Paule, paras? nunc Hannibal ipsi
(tam laetus bello est) ausit certare Tonanti.
et iam conversis (vidi nam flectere) habenis
evasit Varro ac sese ad meliora reservat.
sit spatium fati, et, dum datur, eripe leto
hanc nostris maiorem animam: mox bella capesses'.*

⁶² On constructive destruction in the *Aeneid*, especially as represented by imagery relating to sacrificial violence, see Morgan (1998).

⁶³ Plan to leave Rome (and Scipio's foiling thereof): 10.415-48 (cf. Liv. 22.53.4-13; Val. Max. 5.6.7). His only other contribution to the narrative is to be punished for this by demotion to the rank of *tribunus aeriarius*, after Marcellus' victory at Nola: 12.304-05; Silius gives no more details than *punitur*, but the punishment is described at Liv. 24.18.6. On the appropriate choice of Metellus: Niemann (1975) 222, n.2

(“Juno, transformed into the likeness of the cowardly Metellus, said ‘Why, consul and sole hope for Latium, do you exert your frenzy in vain when fate is opposed? If Paulus survives, the kingdom of Aeneas survives; but if not, you drag Ausonia down with you. Are you making ready, O Paulus, to march against a cocky youth and to cut off this head from a state which is already in turmoil? At this moment Hannibal would dare (so exultant is he in war) to fight the Thunderer himself. And now Varro, has turned round his reins (for I saw him change course), escaped and preserved himself for better times. Let fate have room and, while the opportunity is presented, snatch from death this soul greater than ours: later you will take up war”).

The second adviser is Cn. Cornelius Lentulus, whose attempt to rescue Paulus is also attested in the historiographical tradition (and depicted in a dramatic painting by the American Revolutionary artist John Trumbull), and who urges Paulus to the same course of action using almost precisely the same arguments, but for innocently patriotic motives (Sil. 10.260-75):⁶⁴

*ecce, Cydonea violatus harundine plantam,
Lentulus effusis campum linquebat habenis,
cum videt in scopulo rorantem saxa cruore
torvoque obtutu labentem in Tartara Paulum.
mens abiit, puduitque fugae. tum visa cremari
Roma viro, tunc ad portas iam stare cruentus
Hannibal; Aetoli tum primum ante ora fuere
sorbentes Latium campi. ‘quid deinde relictum
crastina cur Tyrios lux non deducat ad urbem,
deseris in tantis puppim si, Paule, procellis?
testor caelicolas,’ inquit ‘ni damna gubernas
crudelis belli vivisque in turbine tanto
invitus, plus, Paule, (dolor verba aspera dictat)
plus Varrone nocet. cape, quaeso, hunc, unica rerum
fessarum spes, cornipedem. languentia membra
ipse levabo umeris et dorso tuta locabo’.*

(“See, wounded in the foot by a Cydonean arrow, Lentulus was leaving the field with slackened reins, when he saw on a spur, bedewing the rocks with blood, slipping

⁶⁴ Liv. 22.49.6-13; the incident is also reported in Plut. *Fab.* 15.7-9/183e-f. On the Silian scene, see von Albrecht (1964) 121-22; Niemann (1975) 241-44; Ahl-Davis-Pomeroy (1986) 2535-36; Ripoll (1998) 61.

down to Tartarus with fierce gaze Paulus. His intention left him, and he was ashamed of his flight. Then it was that Rome seemed to him to be on fire, then it was that Hannibal seemed to stand blood-soaked before the gates; then first were the Aetolian plains [of Cannae] sucking down Latium before his eyes. ‘What reason then is left why tomorrow’s light should not lead the Tyrians to the City, if you are abandoning the ship, Paulus, in such storms? I call the heaven-dwellers to witness’, he said, ‘unless you steer the losses of a cruel war and live on in such a whirlwind, Paulus, though you don’t mean to be, you are more (anguish prescribes harsh words) more guilty than Varro. Take, I beg you, sole hope of our exhausted state, this horse. I myself shall lift your drooping limbs on my shoulders and place them safe on its back”).

Lentulus, like Juno-Metellus, urges Paulus to leave because he is the one hope for Rome, and, like Juno-Metellus, he fails. The only differences are in the persona of the persuader and in Paulus’ reaction. Karl-Heinz Niemann succinctly states the problem, but only partially solves it:

“Both situations represent a temptation for Paulus to be untrue to his character. The contrast between the two scenes lies in the fact that Metellus’ makes a negative impression on Paulus, and Lentulus, in contrast, a positive one. That has its deeper reasons in the different character of Juno-Metellus’ and of Lentulus’ speeches: while in the first case it is an enemy of Rome, disguised as a Roman, who speaks, in the second, it is a real Roman who speaks; what one means insincerely, the other means sincerely”.⁶⁵

This is well-observed and nicely summed up, but it leaves the troubling question as to how the same advice, expressed (*pace* Niemann) in very similar terms, can be given by an enemy of Rome in the persona of a light-heeled coward and by a courageous Roman hailed as the hope of the city. Most pointedly, how can Paulus upbraid one as *degener altae / virtutis patrum* (10.68-69) and laud the other, for making the same suggestion, with the exclamation *macte o virtute paterna* (277)? The question posed is not merely “how can Juno-Metellus and Lentulus give the same advice?” but “what are the rights and wrongs of courageous self-sacrifice as against cowardly flight, or of futile, despairing, glory-seeking self-destruction as against enduring, hopeful survival?” That these rights and wrongs are far from obvious is underlined by the fact that the same course of action can be advocated

⁶⁵ “Beide Situationen stellen für Paulus eine Versuchung dar, seiner Gesinnung untreu zu werden. Der Kontrast zwischen beiden Szenen liegt darin, daß sich ‚Metellus‘ dem Paulus negativ, Lentulus dagegen positiv darstellt. Das hat seinen tieferen Grund in dem unterschiedlichen Charakter der Juno-Metellus- und der Lentulusrede: Während im ersten Fall ein als Römer getarnter Feind Roms spricht, spricht im zweiten Fall ein echter Römer; was der eine unaufrichtig meint, meint der andere aufrichtig”. Niemann (1975) 243.

from such different motives. Much of Silius' discussion of the question is constituted by complex intertextual engagements with his epic predecessors, which takes us back to Turnus, Iuturna and Saces.

The parallels between the Virgilian and Silian advisers are clear. Juno-Metellus is a disguised divine protector (albeit of Hannibal rather than Paulus) and even the name of Metellus, perhaps etymologized as a diminutive of *metus* through the glosses *metuens* (10.44), *pavidi* (46), and *pavidissime* (65), recalls Metiscus, also a diminutive and which Paschalis has seen as suggesting both *metus* and μη̄τις.⁶⁶ Lentulus' kinship with Saces is even more clearly expressed as the reader is commanded to behold, *ecce*, each of them as they ride, both wounded, Saces in the face, Lentulus in the foot. Yet the crucial difference is that the consul's two advisers are not giving him conflicting advice, but urging him to do the same thing – flee; or, to be more accurate, they are *both* giving the advice of *both* Turnus' advisers: you must save the city and, in order to accomplish that, you must save yourself. This further combinatorial and divisive imitation — blending Iuturna-Metiscus' and Saces' messages into one, and then duplicating it — is signalled by cross-echoes, so that Juno-Metellus uses Saces' reproach that the hero is wasting his time on futile fighting, while Lentulus inverts Iuturna-Metiscus' claim that others can save the city by insisting that *only* Paulus can save it.⁶⁷ The contrast with Turnus derives from the fact that, painful though it is, Turnus' choice appears on the surface to be at least simple: Iuturna-Metiscus' claim that remaining in the field while others defend the city will bring victory seems a transparent equivocation to justify self-preservation; Turnus can save either himself or the city. In this respect, he is in a diametrically opposite position to Hector, who must choose between, on one side, his honour and, on the other, the mutually dependent preservation of his life and the city. Paulus too is presented with the choice of saving himself and the city, or dying, with all that might entail.

This conflict over the rights and wrongs of the general leaving the battle evokes another figure whose complex relationship with *devotio* we have noted: Lucan's Pompey. Silius evokes Pompey as a literary predecessor (and historical successor) of Paulus in various ways. There is a consistent play on their names – Paulus, “the Small”, antiphrastically recalling

⁶⁶ Paschalis (1997) 390.

⁶⁷ *quid vanos, inquit, Latio spes unica consul, / incassumque moves fato renuente furores* (“Why, consul and sole hope for Latium, do you exert your frenzy in vain when fate is opposed?”) Sil. 10.48-49 – *tu currum deserto in gramine versas*. (“You take your chariot for a spin in deserted grassland”), *Aen.* 12.664. *quid deinde relictum / crastina cur Tyrios lux non deducat ad urbem, / deseris in tantis puppim si, Paule, procellis?* (“What reason then is left why tomorrow's light should not lead the Tyrians to the City, if you are abandoning the ship, Paulus, in such storms?”) Sil. 10.267-9 – *sunt alii qui tecta manu defendere possint*. (“There are others who can physically defend the houses”), *Aen.* 12.627.

Pompey “the Great”, Magnus being not only his cognomen but his most common designation in the *Bellum Civile*, where there are innumerable, mainly ironic, plays on it.⁶⁸ Silius’ wordplay on Paulus is most clearly foregrounded in Mago’s narration of Cannae to the Carthaginian senate, when he describes the two consuls taking the field (11.511-12): *hic Varro et magnum Latia inter nomina Paulus / nomen* (“Here were Varro and, a great name among Latian names, Paulus”). Not only does this contrast the greatness of Paulus’ *nomen* (reputation) with the smallness of his *nomen* (the literal meaning of his name), but it evokes Lucan’s famous description of Pompey as the mere shadow of a name: *magni nominis umbra*.⁶⁹

We shall examine later the ways in which Paulus’ death triangulates with those of Pompey (in his Lucanian, historical, and other manifestations) and Priam, but let us return to Juno-Metellus’ temptation of Paulus. The terms in which Paulus’ importance is couched closely echo those which we have seen Pompey use to justify his flight from the battle of Pharsalus. In particular, Juno-Metellus’ claim that, by dying, Paulus will “drag Ausonia down” with him (*Ausoniam tecum trahis*, 10.51) closely recalls the narrator’s (or the focalizer Pompey’s) assertion that Pompey decided not “to drag everything down with him” (*trahere omnia secum*, Luc. 7.654), as is the way of the wretched. She goes on to urge him to snatch from death his *maiolem animam* (58), his life which is more important than that of the masses, more *magnus* than that of Magnus;⁷⁰ the suggestion is that Paulus, by his intransigence, will bring about precisely what he claimed before the battle that his colleague Varro was doing by his rashness: *trahit omnia secum* (8.232). Yet, as we noted, this assumes that Lucan’s Pompey is correct in his interpretation of his situation. If we accept the stress laid on Pompey’s egomania by Leigh and others, then the intertextuality with Paulus might affect the reader rather differently. Juno-Metellus tempts Paulus not with the equivocating, self-justifying rhetoric of Iuturna-Metiscus (“there are others to save the city”), but with the monarchical, self-aggrandizing discourse of Pompey (“only *you* can save the city, and only by fleeing”).⁷¹ It is worth noting again, as mentioned above, that the exegetic tradition of the *Iliad* already hints that Hector, like Paulus, is the

⁶⁸ See esp. Feeney (1986); cf. Henderson (1987) 149-50. Hor. C. 1.12.37-38 (discussed above) may also have this wordplay: *animaeque magnae / prodigum Paulum*.

⁶⁹ 1.135, on which, again, see Feeney (1986), esp. 239-40.

⁷⁰ Cf. Marpicati (1999) esp. 197-98, on the contrast between the flight of Pompey and the steadfastness of Paulus.

⁷¹ Note also Paulus’ repeated insistence on not showing his back to the enemy (10.7-8, 286-87), rejecting Pompey’s ironic lack of fear that he be wounded in the back (*non tergo tela paventem*, “not fearing weapons in the back”, Luc. 7.678, with Leigh (1997) 137-39) and indeed imputing such cowardice to Juno-Metellus for suggesting Pompeian flight (*non hostica tela / excipias tergo, superos precor*. – “I pray to the gods that you may not be hit by enemy weapons in your back”, 10.62-63).

object of flattery, and that perhaps both he and the reader / audience should be cautious about accepting that he is indeed a synecdochic hero. Perhaps both inversions of the rule of heroism are merely rhetorical ploys, Priam's tailored to Hector's weaknesses, Juno-Metellus' to Paulus', both unsuccessfully.

Yet, to return to Paulus, the same "temptation" which Juno-Metellus presents is offered by the entirely positive Lentulus, so that, as we have seen, the advice to flee and save the city is given the authority of both the enemy of Rome and its embodiment. In rejecting it from each, Paulus simultaneously assumes the mantle of an honour-obsessed, despairing, self- (and city-) destructive Hector, but also asserts the Republican ideal that the city is more than one man; he destroys the city and he saves it, and he does this, not simply for positive and negative reasons, but for reasons which are simultaneously both positive and negative. The paradox is quintessentially Silian, and finds perhaps its closest parallel in the mass-suicide of Saguntum.⁷² There the self-immolation is simultaneously inspired *both* by Fides, sent by Hercules to bring his colonists glory, *and* by Tisiphone, sent by Juno to destroy them;⁷³ it is simultaneously *both* a glorious, pseudo-Stoic, final, desperate means of maintaining their sacred faithfulness to Rome *and* a hideous, fratricidal, suicidal simulacrum of civil war.⁷⁴ Any attempt to separate or privilege one side is to miss the point.

Paulus' death scene constitutes the same paradoxical combination of failed, perverted, and successful *devotio*: he is compared to a mortally wounded tiger opening its flagging jaws for futile bites (*vanos morsus*), just like the futile bouts of rage of which Juno-Metellus accused him.⁷⁵ The introduction to the scene, asserting that Paulus did not allow what remained of his life to go unavenged (292-93), sets up a deliberately false expectation – shared by Paulus – that he will achieve some great feat before dying; in fact, he surprises the spear-fodder non-entity, Iertes, who thought he was dead, but, before he can achieve his desired *Zweikampf* with Hannibal, he is killed by a shower of spears.⁷⁶ The model of the epic hero,

⁷² On this most widely-discussed of episodes in the *Punica*, see von Albrecht (1964) 57-62, 181-83; Vessey (1974a); Kißel (1979) 97-99; Küppers (1986) 107-70; McGuire (1989) 33-41, (1997) 207-19; Feeney (1991) 307-08; Hardie (1993) 81-82; Dominik (2003), (2006).

⁷³ Cf. Feeney (1991) 308: "In effect, Fides and Tisiphone are collaborators". In contrast, von Albrecht (1966, 56), Vessey (1974, 28-29), Kißel (1979: 97-8), Küppers (1986, 123-25), and Schenk (1989, 360) all focus overwhelmingly on *fides*.

⁷⁴ On the civil war colouring of the fall of Saguntum, see esp. McGuire (1989) 37-41, revisited and expanded at (1997) 211-19; cf. Hardie (1993) 82; Dominik (2003).

⁷⁵ Simile: 10.293-97; futility: 10.294-10.48-49. "The fact that he dies with his *ira* unable to achieve its aims is ominous for the Roman cause in general". Braund-Gilbert (2003) 263.

⁷⁶ Iertes, or a character of the same name, kills Nomius at Trasimene (5.259-60). Since Liv. *Per.* 89.6 refers to King Hiertes (or Hierta – he only occurs here in the accusative *Hiertam*) of Numidia

the Hector or Turnus, to be killed by or (as he always vainly hopes) kill his heroic enemy, is set up only so that it can be rejected. Yet the death of Paulus is not a complete anti-climax, though it stops short of the very Decian rush into the enemy described by Plutarch.⁷⁷ The shower of spears is taken from Livy, but there they are thrown by the indistinct *hostes* and the consul suffers the ultimate indignity of being killed amongst a crowd of men in flight without even being recognized.⁷⁸ Silius says nothing to suggest that the enemy do not kill Paulus deliberately and in full knowledge of his identity, but the more marked departure is the sheer variety of peoples involved, described with polysyndetic plenitude (304): *et Nomas et Garamas et Celtae et Maurus et Astur*, (“Numidians and Garamantians and Celts and Moors and Asturians”). Contingents from the African South, the Gallic North, and the Spanish West: every corner of the Carthaginian alliance is involved, making this an effective representation of the whole of Hannibal’s army killing Paulus. The many have killed the one, as in a *devotio*, where the shower of missiles is also a common feature.⁷⁹

Yet this is not a *devotio*, nor even an inverted *devotio* of the kind we have seen earlier in this article. Paulus’ refusal of Lentulus’ offer of a horse constitutes a refusal to perform a Pompeyque inverted *devotio* by galloping away from the enemy,⁸⁰ but his determination to die represents an inversion of *devotio* all the same, one which preserves its external features but which brings destruction on the wrong side. To compare the case of the elder Decius, who devoted himself at the battle of Veseris against the Latins in 340 BC, three important aspects of the narrative are inverted by Paulus. Firstly, Decius devotes himself and the enemy army to the *Dei Manes* and *Mater Tellus*, but the despairing Paulus – while bursting into the midst of the enemy and drawing all weapons to himself, like a true *devotus*⁸¹ – asserts that

as being killed in Pompey’s African expedition of 80 BC, it is tempting to suspect some play with Paulus’ role as a Pompey-figure, but the surviving evidence does not allow more than suspicion.

⁷⁷ αὐτὸς δὲ ῥίψας ἑαυτὸν εἰς τοὺς φονευομένους ἀπέθανε. (“But *he* died throwing himself into those who were killing him”). Plut. *Fab.* 16.9.

⁷⁸ Liv. 22.49.12. No details beyond περιπτειῶν βιαίοις πληγαῖς ἐν χειρῶν νόμῳ μετήλλαξε τὸν βίον (“falling under violent blows, he quit his life in the midst of the action”) at Polyb. 3.116.9.

⁷⁹ e.g. Liv. 8.9.12.

⁸⁰ Paulus’ refusal could be interpreted as a normalizing re-inversion of Pompey’s cowardly inversion of the *devotio* in riding headlong *away* from the enemy. Riding headlong: Liv. 8.9.9, 10.28.18, with further examples and discussion at Versnel (1981) 152-56, Leigh (1993) 95-96, and, including Pompey’s flight, (1997) 128-31.

⁸¹ *in medios fert arma globos seseque periclis / ingerit atque omni letum molitur ab ense.* (“He bears arms into the middle of the throng and waged himself against dangers, and contrives death from every sword”). 10.4-5.

he will lead *his own army* down to the Manes.⁸² Secondly, the immediate effect of Decius' *devotio* is to demoralize the enemy, who are struck by fear and confusion; Paulus' death immediately leads to the demoralization and panic of the *Roman* army.⁸³ Finally, Decius' body is, after some time, eventually found – significantly and symbolically – under a pile of enemy corpses, the many whom this one has destroyed. Paulus, in contrast, appears to be buried – just as significantly and symbolically – under a pile of Roman corpses; Silius does not specify that they are Roman corpses, but that is surely the default assumption if it is not otherwise specified, and moreover, they are described using Silius' favourite, perhaps overused metonymy: *arma virumque*, the mangled corpses of the descendants of Aeneas.⁸⁴

The image of one man against an army must inevitably make the reader think of another *deuotus manqué*, Lucan's Caesarian centurion Scaeva, who single-handedly prevents Pompey's army from escaping from the blockade at Dyrrachium.⁸⁵ This

⁸² Decius: *legiones auxiliisque hostium mecum Deis Manibus Tellurique devoveo*. (“I dedicate the legions and auxiliaries of the enemy along with myself to the gods below and the Earth”), Liv. 8.9.8; cf. Liv. 10.28.13. Paulus: *perstate et fortiter, oro, / pectoribus ferrum accipite ac sine vulnere terga / ad manis deferte. viri. nisi gloria mortis, / nil superest. idem sedes adeuntibus imas / hic vobis dux Paulus erit*. (“Stand, I beg you, and bravely receive the sword in your breasts and carry your backs, free from wounds, down to the gods below. Nothing is left except the glory of death. You will have the same general, Paulus, as you go to your dwelling places in the depths”). 10.6-10.

⁸³ *ita omnis terror pavorque cum illo latus signa primo Latinorum turbavit, deinde in totam penitus aciem pervasit. evidentissimum id fuit quod, quacumque equo invectus est, ibi haud secus quam pestifero sidere icti pavebant; ubi vero corruit obrutus telis, inde iam haud dubie consternatae cohortes Latinorum fugam ac vastitatem late fecerunt*. (“In this way the fear and panic which were borne with him first threw into confusion the front ranks of the Latins, then spread deep into the whole army. That was most clear because, wherever he was borne on horseback, there they panicked exactly as though struck by a plague-bearing star; indeed when he fell, overwhelmed by weapons, the cohorts of the Latins, already beyond doubt in total dismay, fled from that spot and gave it a wide berth”), Liv. 8.9.11-12; cf. Liv. 10.29.1-2. *postquam spes Italum mentesque in consule lapsae, / ceu truncus capitis, saevis exercitus armis / sternitur, et victrix toto fremit Africa campo*. (“After the hope and spirits of the Italians had collapsed in the collapse of their consul, the army, as though decapitated, is laid low by the cruel arms, and Africa rages victorious over the whole plain”). 10.309-11. Panic is also a more widespread and long-lasting effect of the defeat at Cannae.

⁸⁴ *inventum inter maximum hostium stragem, coopertum telis*, (“found in the midst of a very large heap of the enemy, covered with weapons”), Liv. 8.10.10; *permixta ruina / inter et arma virum et lacerata cadavera Pauli / eruerant corpus media de strage iacentum*. (“Among weapon mingled in a heap and the mutilated corpses of men, they had dug out the body of Paulus from the middle of a pile of those lying dead”). 10.504-06. On the use of *arma virumque* as metonymy for epic, see Bloch (1970) and in Silius: 1.132, 241, 364, 519; 2.675; 3.526; 4.98, 253; 5.325; 6.6; 7.8; 8.272, 661; 9.100, 597; 10.505, 554; 12.168-69, 189; 17.102, 279, 442-43, 516. We might also note that Livy's Paulus tells Lentulus *me in hac strage militum meorum patere expirare*, (“Let me breathe my last in this heap of my own men”), 22.49.11.

⁸⁵ See n.39 (above).

image is most succinctly expressed in lines which also parallel Paulus' attempts to draw all weapons to himself at the opening of *Punica* 10 (Luc. 6.189-92):

*illum tota premit moles, illum omnia tela,
nulla fuit non certa manus, non lancea felix;
parque novum Fortuna videt concurrere, bellum
atque virum.*

("It is upon *him* that the whole mass weighs, upon *him* all the weapons, there was no hand which was not sure, no lance which was not lucky; Fortune sees a new gladiatorial pair clash, an army and a man").

The parallel is further reinforced by the incidental detail of Paulus' killing of Iertes, who thought he was dead, just as Scaeva's simulated surrender enables him to dispatch the gullible Aulus.⁸⁶ Intertextuality with Scaeva has complex resonances. Scaeva's *devotio* is itself a paradox (quite apart from his survival), because it is simultaneously successful in bringing victory to his own (Caesarean) side but also, in the paradox that is civil war, brings defeat, in the form of the slavery of the Principate, to his greater (Roman) side.⁸⁷ Silius challenges us to assess the likeness and unlikeness of Paulus' situation: does his apparently glorious end have a similarly destructive effect on Rome, or does, in an inversion of Scaeva's, its short-term effect of defeat lead to a longer-term victory? Cannae is not part of a civil war, despite many elements which liken it to one. Yet the central Silian paradox of greatness in defeat and the perils of victory (since Rome's military triumph will lead to her moral decline) is very similar to the Lucanian world, where the victor in civil war is guilty and the loser not only innocent but even great.⁸⁸ Perhaps Paulus might be unaware, in this war, as Scaeva was unaware in the civil war, *quam magnum virtus crimen . . . esset* (Luc. 6.148).

In one sense, at least, the relationship with Scaeva is a contrastive one: Scaeva succeeds in his one-man battle against the (enemy) many to save the many; Paulus dies. This is particularly relevant to our analysis in that Scaeva is depicted as a wall, *stat non fragilis pro Caesare murus*, standing for Caesar, but also for the wall, the camp, the surrogate city, which protects him.⁸⁹ As Conte and Leigh point out, this image is also used of Hector

⁸⁶ 10.298-30 ~ Luc. 6.236-9.

⁸⁷ Summed up in the capping *sententia*: *quanta dominum uirtute parasti!* Luc. 6.262.

⁸⁸ Guilty winners and lucky losers: Luc. 7.123, 701-08; on this as a result of "moral luck", see now Long (2007) 192-93.

⁸⁹ Luc. 6.201. On Scaeva as a wall, see Marti (1966) 247-48, comparing Bitias at Virg. *Aen.* 9.704; Saylor (1978); Leigh (1997) 185-90.

in Seneca's *Troades*.⁹⁰ Since Scaeva is a wall, he must be attacked with siege engines and rocks for battering walls (*muralia*), an image used, as Conte notes, for the spear with which Aeneas fells another of our city-defenders, Turnus.⁹¹ When Paulus' body is found, so different (like Hector's ghost) from what he once was, his teeth have been smashed by the hurling of a *saxum murale*. This is the *saxum ingens* which felled him at 10.235-37, a successful reassertion of the symbolic defeat of Troy, which Virgil had reversed by having Turnus fail to replicate the Homeric Diomedes' felling of Aeneas.⁹² Thus, while Scaeva the wall stood firm, Paulus the city-wall has been breached

This imagery of the death of the defender not merely entailing but symbolizing the fall of the city is, of course, part of Paulus' association with Hector, who is mourned as if Troy had fallen.⁹³ We recall Lentulus' vision of the sack of Rome which is effectively embodied in the sight of the dying Paulus (10.264-66). Yet it is not only Hector who represents the fall of Troy: the death of Priam in *Aeneid* 2 even more clearly embodies, by synecdoche rather than prolepsis, the sack of his city (*Aen.* 2.557-58):

haec finis Priami fatorum ...
... iacet ingens litore truncus,
avulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus.

("This was the end of Priam's destiny ... There lies on the shore a great trunk, the head wrenched from its shoulders and a body without a name").

The allusion to the death of Pompey in the description of Priam's headless corpse on the shore both made and enabled later writers, most notably Lucan, to make the connection

⁹⁰ Sen. *Tro.* 126, with Conte (1974) 56, Leigh (1997) 186-87.

⁹¹ Luc. 6.198-201, Marti (1966) 248; Virg. *Aen.* 12.921-22, Conte (1974) 55.

⁹² *saxum ingens*: Virg. *Aen.* 12.896-97; see Quint (1993) 68-72 on this as a Freudian "repetition-as-reversal" (51), whereby Turnus both fails to replicate Diomedes (*Il.* 5.302-10) and replicates the failure of Aeneas (*Il.* 20.283-91), before Aeneas' spear, through the simile, successfully replicates Diomedes. The author of the *Ilias Latina* seems to point the allusion by likewise calling Diomedes' rock *saxum ingens* (460); cf. Scaffai (1997) 474 on "Baebius" modelling of his Achilles-Hector duel on Aeneas and Turnus. Cf. also Stat. *Theb.* 10.856, where the Thebans hurl *ingentia saxa* at Capaneus, not *qua* wall or city, but *qua* besieging army.

⁹³ Hom. *Il.* 22.408-11. The simile can be interpreted in terms either of cause and effect – "This emphasized similarity comes very close to saying that by killing Hector, Achilles has in effect burned Troy", Taplin (1992) 250 – or of symbolism – "the fall of Troy is not depicted, but that Hector's demise symbolises it is made clear", Bowie (1990) 470-71 – or even of identification: "Hector is Troy, in a way that no Achaean, even Achilles, stands for the Greek side", Ross (1998) 121.

between the fall of Priam and Troy and that of Pompey and, in some sense, Rome.⁹⁴ As for the death of Paulus, it clearly evokes, not only those of Priam and Pompey, but the symbolic interpretation to which they were susceptible (Sil. 10.305-11):

*hic finis Paulo. iacet altum pectus et ingens
dextera, quem, soli si bella agitanda darentur,
aequares forsā Fabio. mors addidit urbi
pulchra decus misitque viri inter sidera nomen.
postquam spes Italum mentesque in consule lapsae,
ceu truncus capitis, saevis exercitus armis
sternitur, et victrix toto furit Africa campo.*

(“Here was the end for Paulus. He lies, a lofty breast and a huge right hand, which, if the wars had been given to him alone to wage, perhaps you would have matched to Fabius. His beautiful death added honour to the city and sent his name up among the stars. After the hope and spirits of the Italians had collapsed in the collapse of their consul, the army, as though decapitated, is laid low by the cruel arms, and Africa rages victorious over the whole plain”).

The verbal echoes are clear,⁹⁵ even if the reader had not been prepared for them by a series of allusions to Priam’s epitaph in the deaths of the Phorcys and Curio, the latter of which is wittily followed, in a new sentence, by a further echo, *ingens*, referring to Paulus and marking the transition into the narrative of his death.⁹⁶ Further preparation is furnished by the way that Viriathus kills Servilius before Paulus’ eyes, like Pyrrhus killing Polites before Priam.⁹⁷ After Lucan’s allusion to Virgil, who may in turn have been alluding to the *Historiae* of Asinius Pollio, the reader is primed to recognize allusions to this scene and, moreover, to recognize them *as* allusions and repetitions, like Lucan’s frenzied *matrona*.⁹⁸

⁹⁴Virg. *Aen.* 2.557-58, with Serv. *ad loc.* *Pompei tangit historiam*; “come nella fine di Priamo si rispecchiava quella di Troia, così nella morte di Pompeo si riflettono il crollo di Roma e la fine della libertà”, Narducci (1973) 323; cf. *id.* (1979) 44. See also Ahl (1976) 184-89 (also comparing the simile of Dido’s death); Bowie (1990); Hinds (1998) 8-10. Cf. Ov. *Met.* 13.404: *Troia simul Priamusque cadunt* (“Troy and Priam falls together.”)

⁹⁵Briefly, Spaltenstein (1991) *ad loc.*, cross-referencing to 5.328; for more detail, see Marpicati (1999) 195-97.

⁹⁶*iacet ingens Phorcys ab antris*, (“There lay huge Phorcys from the caves”), 10.173; Curio: *Hadriaca iacuit sine nomine mortis harena*. (“He lay on the Adriatic sand without the glory of his death”). 10.214). Silius’ wit is again evident, since the identified Curio is not, like the unrecognizable Priam and Pompey, without a name, but, because he drowned rather than falling in battle, without glory in his death.

⁹⁷10.219-25; Paulus’ reaction is similar to Priam’s, but more successful as he kills Viriathus.

⁹⁸Luc. 1.685; Narducci (1973). Hinds (1998) 8-10 further interprets the *matrona*’s recognition as “dramatizing our own realization, as readers, that we too have seen this decapitated trunk before: in the second book of the *Aeneid*”. On Pollio, see Moles (1982-83); Morgan (2000).

Paulus, of course, unlike Priam and Pompey, is not himself beheaded, but Silius skilfully elucidates the allegory of their deaths. Priam and Pompey simultaneously symbolize the city deprived of its political head and constitute that head itself. By applying the word *truncus*, not to Paulus himself, but to the Roman army deprived of him, their head, Silius performs an allusive exegesis on the symbolism of Virgil and Lucan's headless leaders. Paulus' death parallels those of Priam and Pompey in many ways, but Silius translates their literal beheadings into a simile (*ceu truncus capitis*) which — in a manner which might be considered pedestrian but which is undeniably insightful — makes their the symbolic connotations entirely clear.⁹⁹ Such “commentaries” on Virgil and others, translating symbolic narrative into explicit simile or metaphor (and sometimes vice versa), are characteristic of Silius. In the case of Paulus, Virgil and Lucan's allegorical narratives of the headless man as the city without its leader are turned into the simile of the leaderless city as “headless”. It is clear that, just as dead, headless Priam represented the fall of Troy, just as dead, headless Pompey in some way represented the fall of Rome, so dead Paulus, with his headless army, the city wall felled by a *saxum murale*, in some way represents the fall of the city, but not the ultimate fall of Rome, which will survive this crisis to become the *caput rerum*, even though it costs her her soul.

We are left, then, with a complex and ultimately ambivalent depiction of *devotio* in Silius, and hence an ambivalent interpretation of the motif in earlier epic. Paulus is urged to flee both by an enemy and by a defender of Rome, but resists each. His decision to die is certainly detrimental to the Roman cause, and its immediate result is in fact the precise opposite of that which a true *devotio* would have. Yet there is also the sense that the republican Paulus is reacting against the monarchical tendencies which underpin the decision of his epic predecessors, Aeneas and Pompey, not to die in battle and that, for all the short-term negative impact which his death has for Rome, other figures arise to save the city and ultimately to carry her to victory. The final irony is that that victory will be achieved by a synecdochic hero and proto-*princeps*, Scipio Africanus.¹⁰⁰

University of Sidney

ROBERT COWAN

⁹⁹ Cf. Manil. 4.64; Luc. 1.685; 8.722; 9.53; Marpicati (1999). Ovid likewise unpacks the allegory by applying a different part of the image to the city rather than its leader: *iacet Ilion ingens*, *Met.* 13.505.

¹⁰⁰ Critics generally agree that Scipio is depicted as a proto-*princeps* ushering in the shift from Republic to Principate, but differ as to whether that shift is portrayed as a positive or negative one. The most important advocate of the positive is Marks (2005a). Among those who interpret it as negative, see esp. Ahl-Davis-Pomeroy (1986). My preferred interpretation is to see here instead the characteristically Silian attitude of ambivalence.

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