

POMPEY, VENUS AND THE POLITICS OF HESIOD IN LUCAN'S *BELLVM CIVILE* 8.456–9¹

Pompey does not accept defeat at Pharsalus. Rather, in an effort to gain support from powers beyond Rome, he makes for Egypt and, unbeknownst to him, his decapitation. As narrated in Lucan's *Bellum civile*, after deliberating in Cilicia with his senatorial advisers (8.259–455), Pompey stops at the island of Cyprus (8.456–9):

tum Cilicum liquere solum Cyproque citatas
immisere rates, nullas cui praetulit aras
undae diua memor Paphiae, si numina nasci
credimus aut quemquam fas est coepisse deorum.

Then they left the Cilician soil and steered their vessels in haste for Cyprus—Cyprus which the goddess, mindful of Paphian waves, prefers to any of her shrines (if we believe that deities have birth, or if it is lawful to hold that any of the gods had a beginning).

In Lucan, Pompey's trip to Cyprus is brief and includes a somewhat curious reference to Venus (*diua*), her origins (*undae ... Paphiae*) and the birth of the gods.² Other authors also record Pompey's visit to Cyprus, although the details vary. Some, including Julius Caesar, set his deliberations not in Cilicia but on Cyprus itself (Caes. *BCiu.* 3.102.3.1–8.1; cf. Plut. *Vit. Pomp.* 77.1.1–2.1). Others, it seems, provide few if any details of Pompey at the island, for example the scanty evidence from Livy, *Per.* 112.1–10.³

¹ This paper began in a seminar, 'Lucan and the Poetics of Civil War', at Stanford University led by Christopher Krebs, whose comments and encouragement assisted greatly in its various stages. It likewise owes a debt of gratitude to several individuals who generously responded to drafts, including Edward Kelting, Brittney Szempruch, Scott Weiss, Maud Gleason, Matthew Loar, Alessandro Barchiesi, Stephen Harrison and David Petrain. Catherine Kearns, Dan-el Padilla Peralta, Justin Leidwanger and Sturt Manning provided helpful thoughts on the geography of Cyprus. I am also grateful to the anonymous reader and to the *CQ* editors for their insightful criticisms and revisions. Texts are cited from D.R. Shackleton Bailey (ed.), *Marcus Annaeus Lucanus: De bello civili libri X* (Berlin, 2009), F. Solmsen (ed.), *Hesiodi: Theogonia, Opera et Dies, Scutum* (Oxford, 1990) and R.A.B. Mynors (ed.), *P. Vergili Maronis opera* (Oxford, 1972). Translations of Lucan are adapted from J. Duff (ed.), *Lucan: The Civil War* (Cambridge, MA, 1928) and of Hesiod from G. Most (ed.), *Hesiod: Theogony, Works and Days, Testimonia* (Cambridge, MA, 2018); other translations are attributed as they occur or are otherwise my own.

² Scholars have thus far deemed the mythological reference of little significance; cf. R. Mayer (ed.), *Lucan: Civil War VIII* (Warminster, 1981), 139–40.

³ *Cn. Pompeius cum Aegyptum petisset, iussu Ptolemaei regis, pupilli sui, auctore Theodoto praeceptore, cuius magna aput regem auctoritas erat, et Pothino occisus est ab Archelao, cui id facinus erat delegatum, in nauicula antequam in terram exiret. Cornelia uxor et Sex. Pompei<us> filius Cypron refugerunt. Caesar post tertium diem insecutus, cum ei Theodotus caput Pompei et anulum obtulisset, infensus est et inlacrimauit.* For a thorough discussion of Cyprus in Greco-Roman literature, see C. Kearns, 'Cyprus in the surging sea: spatial imaginations of the Eastern Mediterranean', *TAPhA* 148 (2018), 45–74.

A particularly suggestive version of Pompey's visit to Cyprus comes from a generation prior to Lucan in the *Facta et dicta memorabilia* of Valerius Maximus (*De ominibus*, 1.5.6.1–11):

Pompeius uero Magnus in acie Pharsalica uictus a Caesare, fuga quaerens salutem cursum in insulam Cyprum, ut aliquid in ea uirium contraheret, classe direxit adpellensque ad oppidum Paphum conspexit in litore speciosum aedificium gubernatoremque interrogauit quod ei nomen esset. qui respondit Κατοβασίλεια uocari. quae uox spem eius [quae] quantulumcumque [restabat] conminuit, neque id dissimulanter tulit: auertit enim oculos ab illis tectis ac dolorem, quem ex diro omine ceperat, gemitu patefecit.

When Pompey the Great was defeated by Caesar at the battle of Pharsalia, he sought safety in flight and directed his fleet to the island of Cyprus in the hope of gathering some force there. Putting in at the town of Paphos, he observed a handsome edifice on shore and asked the skipper its name. The same replied that it was called Catobasileia. His words shattered what little hope Pompey had left, nor did he try to conceal it. He turned away from the structure and with a groan made plain the distress the baleful omen had caused him. (transl. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Valerius Maximus: Memorable Doings and Sayings*, vol. 1 [Cambridge, Mass., 2000], 61)

Valerius' narrative, which does not occur elsewhere, includes a mythical reference that helps to make sense of Lucan's version. In the *Memorabilia*, Pompey observes a building (*aedificium, illis tectis*) named the Catobasileia. For Pompey, who is fleeing (*fuga*) for his life, such a name could certainly evoke its translation, that is, the 'Kingdom Below' or Hades, a possibility his emotive response confirms: in response to the Charon-like ferryman (*gubernator*), he loses hope (*spem*) of survival and makes clear his pain (*dolorem patefecit*) with a groan (*gemitu*).⁴ For Valerius, the mythological connotations of Cyprus ominously (*diro omine*) reorient Pompey's environment and prefigure his death. Like Valerius, Lucan also includes a mythological detail, that is, the Birth of Venus, though he leaves out any emotional reaction by Pompey. Instead, after mentioning Venus, Lucan includes a seemingly tangential speculation on the birth of gods.⁵

If this moment in Pompey's itinerary provides an opportunity for other Roman authors to foreshadow the general's death, what should we make of the Birth of Venus in Luc. 8.456–9? In fact, it may serve a similar function. The cult of Venus was a well-known *locus* of political rivalry in first-century B.C.E. Rome. Sulla was probably a devotee of the goddess and, in addition to *Felix*, took the adnomen *Epaphroditus*.⁶ Pompey himself established a cult to *Venus Victrix*, included a temple to the goddess in his theatre, and employed her image on coinage.⁷ Yet, no Roman general of the first century associated himself with Venus more than Julius Caesar. In his eulogy for his aunt Julia, Caesar claimed not only devotion to the goddess but also direct genealogical descent (Suet. *Iul.* 6) as his *dignitas generis* ('excellence by birth'). As Krebs states, 'in the heat and aftermath of the Civil War, Venus adorned coins as conqueror of Gaul, ran as *Venus Victrix* in the battle cry of Pharsalus, and

⁴ The building itself is of unknown identity. For excavations at Nea Paphos, see J. Mlynarczyk, 'Palaces of *strategoï* and the Ptolemies in Nea Paphos: topographical remarks', in W. Hoepfner and G. Brands (edd.), *Basileia: Die Paläste der hellenistischen Könige* (Mainz, 1996), 193–202.

⁵ For the seemingly Stoic character of the question, see, for example, G. Viansino (ed.), *Marco Anneo Lucano: La Guerra Civile (Farsaglia) libri VI–X* (Milan, 1995), 779.

⁶ Although possible, it is less certain that Sulla established a cult to *Venus Felix*: cf. J. Rives, 'Venus Genetrix outside Rome', *Phoenix* 48 (1994), 294–306, at 297–300.

⁷ Cf. R. Schilling, *La religion romaine de Vénus depuis les origines jusqu'au temps d'Auguste* (Paris, 1982), 296–301. For Pompey's own name adorning temples, see Luc. 8.818–21.

inhabited as *Venus Genetrix* a temple consecrated in 46 (in Caesar's own forum) ... in arms she even sealed with wax countless Caesarian communications'.⁸ The Caesarian association with Venus certainly continued to Lucan's day, with special attention paid to her birth from the waves. Pliny the Elder (*HN* 35.91) attests that Augustus consecrated Apelles' *Venus Anadyomenē* ('Venus rising from the sea') in the temple to Caesar and that, when the painting had deteriorated, Nero himself commissioned a replacement to be made by Dorotheus.⁹

After Pompey's defeat, the reference to the mythic origin of Venus could trigger this historical politics of the goddess. At Pharsalus, Caesar won both the battle and the claim to Venus. Lucan takes advantage of Pompey's geographical itinerary to introduce this particular mythopolitical reference, by which readers are reminded of Caesar's familial affiliation with Venus as part of his ideology and propaganda.¹⁰ In this way even Lucan's choice of the word *nasci* ('born', 8.458) echoes the epithet of Caesar's *Venus Genetrix* and amplifies the thematic resonance. Pompey cannot escape Caesar's victory, a pitiful fact heralded by the reference to Venus' birth at Cyprus. For an audience attuned to the mythopolitical valences of Venus, the reference would foreshadow Pompey's demise.

Yet, there is additional complexity to the mythological allusion that prefigures themes and imagery found later in the *Bellum ciuile*. In these lines, I propose that Lucan references Hesiod's *Theogony* and its own narration of the birth of Aphrodite, and that the *Theogony* is fundamental to our understanding and appreciation of the passage.¹¹ The *Theogony* provides the *locus classicus* for the birth of Aphrodite.

⁸ C.B. Krebs, 'More than words. The *Commentarii* in the propagandistic context', in L. Grillo and C.B. Krebs (edd.), *The Cambridge Companion to the Writings of Julius Caesar* (Cambridge, 2018), 29–42, at 36. Cf. also Lucretius' *Aeneadam genetrix* (1.1); for the relationship between Caesar and Lucretius, see e.g. C.B. Krebs, 'Caesar, Lucretius and the dates of *De rerum natura* and the *Commentarii*', *CQ* 63 (2013), 772–9.

⁹ *Venerem exeuntem e mari Diuus Augustus dicauit indelubro patris Caesaris, quae anadyomene uocatur, uersibus Graecis tantopere dum laudatur, aeuis uicta, sed inlustrata. cuius inferiorem partem corruptam qui reficeret non potuit reperiri, uerum ipsa iniuria cessit in gloriam artificis. consensuit haec tabula carie, aliamque pro ea substituit Nero in principatu suo Dorothei manu.* Apelles' Aphrodite was by no means the only Greek artwork to be thrust into Roman politics; cf. S. Rebeggiani, 'Buried treasures, hidden verses: (re)appropriating the Gauls of Pergamon in Flavian Rome', in M.P. Loar, C. MacDonald, D. Padilla Peralta (edd.), *Rome, Empire of Plunder: The Dynamics of Cultural Appropriation* (Cambridge, 2017), 69–81. For Nero's similar renovation of a Lysippus (by gilding), see Plin. *HN* 34.63.

¹⁰ For the way in which Lucan associates mythological entities with Pompey (Heracles) and Caesar (Fama), see M.T. Dinter, *Anatomizing Civil War: Studies in Lucan's Epic Technique* (Ann Arbor, 2012), 56–7.

¹¹ For recent work on the reception of Hesiod in Latin literature, see R. Faber, 'Vergil's "Shield of Aeneas" (*Aeneid* 8.617–731) and the "Shield of Heracles"', *Mnemosyne* 53 (2000), 49–57; T. Heckenlively, 'Clipeus Hesioidicus: *Aeneid* 8 and the *Shield of Heracles*', *Mnemosyne* 66 (2013), 649–65; H. Koning, *Hesiod: The Other Poet* (Leiden, 2010), 341–9; A.N. Michalopoulos, 'Hesiodic traces in Ovid's *Heroides*', in C. Tsagalis (ed.), *Poetry in Fragments: Studies on the Hesiodic Corpus and its Afterlife* (Berlin, 2017), 219–44; S. Nelson, *God and the Land: The Metaphysics of Farming in Hesiod and Vergil* (Oxford, 1998); H. Van Noorden, *Playing Hesiod: The 'Myth of Races' in Classical Antiquity* (Cambridge, 2015); G. Rosati, 'The Latin reception of Hesiod', in F. Montanari, A. Rengakos and C. Tsagalis (edd.), *Brill's Companion to Hesiod* (Leiden, 2009), 343–74; S. Scully, *Hesiod's Theogony: From Near Eastern Creation Myths to Paradise Lost* (Oxford, 2015), 142–8; D. Sider, 'Vergil's *Aeneid* and Hesiod's *Theogony*', *Vergilius* 34 (1988), 15–24; I. Ziogas, *Ovid and Hesiod: The Metamorphosis of the Catalogue of Women* (Cambridge, 2013); and id., 'Ovid's Hesiodic voices', in A. Loney and S. Scully (edd.), *The Oxford Handbook of Hesiod* (Oxford, 2018), 377–93. For Lucan's reception of Hesiod as a

After the castration of Ouranos by his son Cronos (*Theog.* 159–82), Ouranos' genitals float across the Aegean Sea from Cythera to Cyprus (*Theog.* 190–5):

ὧς φέρετ' ὄμι πέλαγος πολὺν χρόνον, ἀμφὶ δὲ λευκός 190
 ἀφρός ἀπ' ἀθανάτου χροὸς ὄρνυτο· τῷ δ' ἐνὶ κούρῃ
 ἐθρέφθη· πρῶτον δὲ Κυθήροισι ζαθέοισιν
 ἐπλήτ', ἐνθεν ἔπειτα περίρρυτον ἵκετο Κύπρον.
 ἐκ δ' ἔβη αἰδοίη καλὴ θεός, ἀμφὶ δὲ ποίη
 ποσσὶν ὑπο ῥαδινοῖσιν ἀέξετο· 195

thus (his genitals) were borne along the water for a long time, and a white foam rose up around them from the immortal flesh: and inside grew a maiden. First she approached holy Cythera, and from there she went on to sea-girt Cyprus. She came forth, a reverend, beautiful goddess, and grass grew up around her beneath her slender feet.

Two details in the language of the Lucanian passage provide more certainty that Lucan refers to Hesiod. First, both Hinds and Conte have shown that Roman poets alluded to other texts through explicit attention to 'memory'.¹² Venus as *memor* ('mindful', 8.457), surrounded by the mythical reference to the *undae ... Paphiae*, could plausibly trigger a context of allusion. Moreover, Lucan also provides a double reference to the dominant theme and indeed to the title of Hesiod's *Theogony* in the parenthetical aside: *si numina nasci | credimus aut quemquam fas est coepisse deorum* (8.458–9). Both *numina nasci* and *coepisse deorum* are Latin calques of the Greek *Theogonia*, a title that was also given in periphrasis by other authors.¹³ Lucan emphasizes the phrases not only through pleonastic repetition of the same idea—that is, the birth of the gods—but also by placing them in chiasmic word order (noun-infinitive, infinitive-noun), syntactically at either end of the *si*-clause, and metrically stacked at line end.

The above evidence—that is, the mythic reference to the Birth of Venus-Aphrodite, the language of allusion (*memor*), and the emphatic double calque of the *Theogony* (*numina nasci ... coepisse deorum*)—suggests that readers should have Hesiod's epic in mind. It is important that they do, as this intertextual frame alerts the reader to Hesiodic themes and imagery of familial violence and succession found later when Pompey meets his end at Egypt. After his beheading, the Egyptians embalm Pompey's head through 'forbidden art' (*arte nefanda*; cf. *fas est*, 8.459).¹⁴ Soon after, Lucan describes the headless corpse of Pompey floating in the sea in lines reminiscent of the castration of Ouranos (8.705–11):

Civil-War poet, see S.A. Sansom, 'Typhonic voices: sounds of Hesiod and cosmic war in Lucan's *Bellum civile* 6.685–94', *Mnemosyne* (forthcoming).

¹² S. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (Cambridge, 1998), 3–4; G. Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets* (Ithaca, 1986), 57–69.

¹³ Cf. M.L. West (ed.), *Hesiod Theogony* (Oxford, 1966), 150: 'many later writers preferred to avoid the standard title, and employed periphrases such as θεῶν γένεσις, etc.' See Cic. *Nat. D.* 1.14 *Hesiodi Theogoniam, id est originem deorum*; Lactantius Placidus' commentary on Stat. *Theb.* 4.482 *de Theogonia*; Serv. *ad Aen.* 8.314 *Hesiodi Theogoniam primo deos genitos*; cf. G.J.C. Muetzell, *De emendatione Theogoniae Hesiodae libri tres* (Leipzig, 1833), 355–6. Cf. also Manilius 2.11–24.

¹⁴ For the influence of Pompey's decapitation in the *Bellum civile* on, for example, the *Punica* of Silius Italicus, see R. Marks, 'Getting ahead: decapitation as political metaphor in Silius Italicus' "Punica", *Mnemosyne* 61 (2008), 66–88, at 72–5, 82–3.

Pompeiusque fuit qui numquam mixta uideret 705
 laeta malis, felix nullo turbante deorum
 et nullo parcente miser; semel impulit illum
 dilata Fortuna manu. pulsatur harenis,
 carpitur in scopulis hausto per uolnera fluctu,
 ludibrium pelagi, nullaque manente figura 710
 una nota est Magni capitis iactura reuolsi.

Pompey was the only man who never experienced good and evil together: his prosperity no god disturbed, and on his misery no god had mercy. Fortune held her hand for long and then overthrew him with one blow. He is tossed on the sands and mangled on the rocks, while his wounds drink in the wave; he is the plaything of Ocean, and, when all shape is lost, the one mark to identify Magnus is the absence of the severed head.

Similar to Cronos castrating Ouranos in the *Theogony* (178–82), Fortuna strikes Pompey with a ‘delayed hand’ (*impulit ... dilata manu*).¹⁵ The designation of Pompey’s corpse as the ‘plaything of Ocean’ (*ludibrium pelagi*) likewise recalls the language of the *Theogony*’s aetiology of Aphrodite (for example the Greek πέλαγος [*Theog.* 190] in the same *sedes*), its characterization of Aphrodite as from seafoam (a *figura etymologica* that may likewise be behind Lucan’s mention of *nulla ... figura*), and the final reference to the dismemberment of Ouranos at the end of the passage (*Theog.* 196–200).¹⁶ Moreover, in Lucan the rare word *ludibrium* has a familial context similar to the violent encounter between Cronos and Ouranos. In his final words to his troops before Pharsalus, Pompey predicts that, ‘unless you conquer, I, Magnus, am an exile, a **plaything** to my **socer** and a disgrace to you ...’ (*Magnus, nisi uincitis, exul, | ludibrium soceri, uester pudor, 7.379–80*). *socer* certainly denotes Caesar, Pompey’s father-in-law by his former marriage to Caesar’s daughter Iulia.¹⁷ Through the watery association of Venus and Caesar at Cyprus (*undae*), Lucan seamlessly replaces *ludibrium soceri* with *ludibrium pelagi* and fulfils Pompey’s prediction. Through its reuse, *ludibrium* conjures connotations of familial strife that are augmented by the Hesiodic frame, combining themes of intergenerational conflict from Pompey’s speech as well as the Hesiodic birth of Aphrodite.

The Birth of Venus-Aphrodite likewise haunts Pompey’s burial and the flight of Cato and of Pompey’s wife Cornelia. Before the quaestor Cordus can cremate and inter Pompey’s remains on the Egyptian coast (8.716–872), Lucan explains Cordus’ presence: ‘as *quaestor* he [Cordus] had made the ill-starred voyage with Magnus from the Idalian shore of Cyprus, where Cinyras once reigned’ (*quaestor ab Idalio Cinyreae litore Cypro | infaustus Magni fuerat comes, 8.716–17*).¹⁸ Aphrodite looms in the ominous epithets as both the tutelary deity of Idalium (cf. Verg. *Aen.* 1.681) and the lover of Cinyras’ son, Adonis. Her birth from foamy mutilation emerges again in the extended labour of Cordus to extract Pompey’s corpse from the notably Hesiodic ‘white sea’ (*cano sed discolor aequore truncus | conspicitur, Luc.*

¹⁵ This follows the Homeric topos of Zeus’s jars of good and ill fortune (Luc. 8.705–7; cf. Hom. *Il.* 24.525–33).

¹⁶ For the relation of *Bellum ciuile* 8.710–11 to the fate of Priam in *Aen.* 2.557–8, cf. Mayer (n. 2), 167 and Serv. ad loc.

¹⁷ *ludibrium* occurs twice later: as the spirit of Pompey looks down from the sky and laughs serenely at the *sui ludibria trunci* (9.14), and in reference to the body of Alexander the Great, whose body, the narrator claims, should have been a *ludibrium* to dissuade imperial impulses (10.26).

¹⁸ Shackleton Bailey adopts *Idalio* (8.716) from more recent manuscripts in contrast to Housman’s *Icario* (Ω C); cf. *Icariae* (8.244).

8.722–3 ~ λευκὸς ἄφροϋς, Hes. *Theog.* 190–1), from which he finally retrieves the body (*pelagoque iuuante cadauer* | *impellit*, 8.725–6; cf. *transuerso ... aestu*, 8.462; *ludibrium pelagi*, 8.710; and *impulit*, 8.707). After Pompey's burial, the narrative shifts to Cato, whose itinerary also plots his doom with reference to the dead (*apertam Taenaron umbris*, 9.36) and to the other Theogonic island of Aphrodite's birth, *Cythera* (9.37; cf. *Theog.* 192). Likewise, when Cornelia flees to Cato's camp in Libya, the island of Cyprus 'first received her ship with **its foaming waves**' (*prima ratem Cypros spumantibus accipit undis*, 9.117; cf. *undae*, 8.458). Through the aquatic imagery of foaming water, Lucan recalls Aphrodite's birth as a reminder of Caesar's inescapable victory over those he has conquered.¹⁹

As a resource for themes and imagery of the Birth of Venus-Aphrodite from intergenerational conflict, the use of Hesiod's epic construction enriches the politics of Venus in Lucan. As a myth, the Birth of Venus certainly functions on its own as *exemplum* of contestation between members of the same mythical, political and social family. Similar to Valerius Maximus, we see Lucan engaging in mythological elaboration in a detail of Pompey's flight from Pharsalus to Egypt. With the reference to Hesiod, however, Lucan imbues the moment with additional significance. By alluding to Hesiod's narrative of the Birth of Aphrodite, Lucan accesses its dominant themes of intrafamilial war. By alluding to the father-son dismemberment of Ouranos by Cronos in the familial relationship of Pompey and Caesar, Lucan magnifies themes of intrafamilial civil war from the *Theogony* that are central to his historical epic. Through the Birth of Venus, Lucan recalls Caesar's victory; by alluding to Hesiod, he provides his readers with a mythological frame for subsequent themes and with imagery of familial violence.

Finally, there is the possibility that Lucan also intended readers to recognize an additional textual interlocutor for his treatment of Hesiodic Venus. Other Roman poets had, of course, also included the birth of Venus in their poetry.²⁰ Most notably for our purposes, in Book 5 of the *Aeneid* Neptune mentions the birth of Venus while talking to the goddess herself: *fas omne est, Cytherea, meis te fidere regnis* | *unde genus ducis* ('it is entirely right, Cytherean, that you trust my kingdom, from which you are born', *Aen.* 5.800–1). The Hesiodic background of these lines was not lost on Servius, who in his commentary cites the account of the Birth of Venus found in the *Theogony*, including the castration of Caelus by his son Saturn (cf. *Saturnius*, *Aen.* 5.799) as well as a citation of the Greek etymology of her name 'from the foam' (*unde et Ἀφροδίτη dicitur, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀφροῦ*; cf. τὴν δ' Ἀφροδίτην | ἀφρογενέα τε θεῶν ... οὐνεκ' ἐν ἀφροῖ | θρέφθη, *Theog.* 195–8).²¹ It is noteworthy that both Lucan and Virgil employ not only the same myth but also similar language: both speak of trust or belief (*fidere* ~ *credimus*) and assert

¹⁹ Although it is beyond the literary focus of this paper, the way in which Caesar's victory and its association with the Birth of Venus predetermine the outcome of the characters in the poem parallels what Liebeschuetz and others have identified as the working of providence in Lucan's Stoic philosophy; cf. J.H.W.G. Liebeschuetz, *Continuity and Change in Roman Religion* (Oxford, 1979), 140–55, especially 140: 'The historical events of the Civil War are shown to be part of an unbroken chain of cause and effect stretching from the beginning of the world to its end.'

²⁰ For a brief overview of Aphrodite-Venus in Roman literature, see M.S. Cyrino, *Aphrodite* (London, 2010), 127–30.

²¹ *unde genus ducis ut diximus supra, quia feliciter est nauigaturus Aeneas, Venerem dicit a mari procreatam. ut fert fabula, Caelus pater fuit Saturni. cui cum iratus filius falce uirilia amputauit, delapsa in mare sunt: de quorum cruore et maris spuma nata dicitur Venus: unde et Ἀφροδίτη dicitur, ἀπὸ τοῦ ἀφροῦ. sed hoc habet ratio: omnes uires usu uenerio debilitantur, qui sine corporis damno non geritur: unde fingitur Venus nata per damnum; de mari autem ideo, quia dicunt physici sudorem salsum esse, quem semper elicit coitus. unde etiam myrtus ei consecrata est, quae litoribus gaudet, ut*

positions concerning rightfulness (*fas*) for such trust or belief with the same rare phrase, *fas (omne) est*.²² Virgil's use of the topographical adjective *Cytherea* attests to the goddess' multiform birth narratives (cf. *celsa est mihi Paphus atque Cythera | Idaliaeque domus*, *Aen.* 10.51–2), something I suggest Lucan acknowledges as well (cf. Cato and Cythera above). Both versions emphasize Aphrodite's watery birth, a detail that contrasts with other accounts of her origins, for example as the child of Zeus and Dione in Homer (*Il.* 5.370–82; cf. *Dionaea*, *Aen.* 3.19). With these similarities in mind, we could reasonably recognize Virgil functioning as a type of 'window reference' or 'two-tier allusion' for Lucan to Hesiodic Aphrodite.²³

If Lucan indeed responds to Virgil's use of the myth and its Hesiodic background, his response differs in both tone and sentiment. In Virgil, Neptune proclaims the goddess' birth from the waves unequivocally and with authority, all so that she may 'trust' (*fidere*) in his domain (*meis ... regnis*), that is, the sea. Conversely, Lucan's narrator questions whether it is right to speak of the birth of gods at all. As we have seen, the foamy waters associated with the goddess' origins are anything but trustworthy for the enemies of Caesar. In this inversion, we may recognize what Narducci, Conte and Asso have called the 'antiphrastic' stance of the *Bellum ciuile* to the *Aeneid*.²⁴ Lucan noticeably inverts structural, linguistic and thematic aspects of Virgil's *Aeneid*, including the itinerary of Aeneas westward to Italy in the movement eastward of Pompey and Caesar.²⁵ Similarly, whereas Virgil employs the Birth of Venus without problematizing its violent origins, Lucan seizes it as an opportunity to question the *Theogony* and its themes of violent succession.

It is thus possible to recognize parallels between the intertextual use of Hesiod by Lucan and Virgil and the political use of Venus in the historical politics of first-century B.C.E. Rome. Virgil upholds the political order of Olympus textualized in the *Theogony*, wherein Zeus violently ascends to power and dominion of the cosmos. Through her

ait 'litora myrtetis laetissima'. ideo autem diximus 'Caelus pater', ut deus significaretur: nullus enim deus generis neutri est. nam caelum genere neutro elementum significat.

²² The phrase *fas est* occurs only twice elsewhere in Virgil, both times in the *Aeneid* (*mihi iussa capessere fas est*, 1.77; *uos quoque Pergameae iam fas est parcere genti, | dique deaeque omnes, quibus obstitit Ilium et ingens | gloria Dardaniae*, 6.63–5). In Lucan, the phrase is marked by intertextual associations that increase the likelihood of heightened referentiality in 8.456–9. The most significant of these occurrences is at 9.980–6, wherein the narrator refers to the Muses (*Latiis ... Musis*), to Homer (*Zmyrnaei ... uatis*) and perhaps even to the title of Lucan's own poem (*Pharsalia nostra*); see also the references to the Gigantomachy (3.328–9 and 7.455–9) and to the gods (10.414–16). The phrase likewise has an emphatically Hesiodic context in Ovid's *Pont.* 4.8.55–62; cf. Rosati (n. 11), 372–3. On the *Pharsalia*, see T.A. Joseph, 'Pharsalia as Rome's "day of doom" in Lucan', *AJPh* 138 (2017), 107–41.

²³ Cf. S. Hinds, *The Metamorphosis of Persephone: Ovid and the Self-Conscious Muse* (Cambridge, 1997), 9 and 151; and D. Nelis, *Virgil's Aeneid and the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius* (Leeds, 2001), 5.

²⁴ The technique is described in G.B. Conte, *La 'Guerra Civile' di Lucano: studi e prove di commento* (Urbino, 1988), 38 as follows: 'selezionare alcuni tratti marcati del modello virgiliano, ... accentuarli fino ad esasperarne il significato, renderli pertinenti al proprio discorso attraverso un gesto sempre e comunque antifrastico (per opposizione o rovesciamento), è questo il modo in cui Lucano lavora il suo testo'. For a similar definition, see P. Asso, *A Commentary on Lucan, 'De Bello Civili' IV* (Berlin, 2010), 10; cf. E. Narducci, *La provvidenza crudele. Lucano e la distruzione dei mitti augustei* (Pisa, 1979).

²⁵ Cf. A. Rossi, 'The *Aeneid* revisited: the journey of Pompey in Lucan's *Pharsalia*', *AJPh* 121 (2000), 571–91. For Lucan's polemical stance towards Virgil, see, for example, G.B. Conte, 'Il proemio della *Pharsalia*', *Maia* 18 (1966), 42–53; C. Martindale, 'Paradox, hyperbole and literary novelty in Lucan's *De bello ciuili*', *BICS* 23 (1976), 45–54; and especially S. Casali, 'The *Bellum ciuile* as an anti-*Aeneid*', in P. Asso (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Lucan* (Leiden, 2011), 81–109.

birth in the waves Aphrodite emerges from this ascendancy and through her progeny—including Aeneas himself (*Theog.* 1008–10)—extends Zeus’s political order to mortals. Virgil, too, promulgates a Hesiodic cosmology in the *Aeneid* through the Birth of Venus and the explicitly divine origins of the Principate (for example *Augustus Caesar, diui genus, Aen.* 6.788–95).²⁶ In contrast, Lucan questions Hesiod’s text and the role it serves in legitimizing the cosmic order that gave rise to mortal progeny, the *dignitas generis* of Caesar, and the bloodshed of the Civil War. Instead of importing its gods into his poem, Lucan opens Hesiod’s poem to criticism—quite literarily if we read *numina nasci* and *coepisse deorum* as calques of the poem’s title: ‘if we believe the *Theogony* ...’. The contestation of Venus mirrors this intertextual dispute, but with the difference that Lucan invokes Hesiodic mythology not to claim it as his own but to reject it.²⁷

By raising doubts about the *Theogony* and by stressing its familicidal imagery and themes, Lucan lumps it together with previous Roman epics and their gods. As Feeney has argued,

from any viewpoint which was unsympathetic to what the emperors had done to the *res publica*, the divine characters of Naevius, Ennius, and Vergil were no longer available as a vehicle for communal meaning, since they had become the creatures of the princes. They are the gods of the victor, of course, hence repulsive to Lucan’s representation.²⁸

I suggest that, based on the intertextual evidence above, we could plausibly add Hesiod to Feeney’s list of authors whose divine characters—filtered through previous Latin epics as well as directly accessible in the *Theogony*—Lucan rejects. The mythopolitical significance of Venus, which had preoccupied the generals of first-century B.C.E. Rome and the Principate thereafter, takes a Theogonic form in Lucan’s account of Pompey’s visit to Cyprus, unlike any other version of his flight to Egypt. The familial violence in Hesiod that gave rise to Venus’ birth from the waves emblemizes the conflict of Pompey, Caesar and the *cognatas acies* (1.4). The differentiation from Virgil’s use of the myth allows Lucan to evoke Hesiodic themes and imagery more evocatively, a fact we see in vivid detail in Pompey’s corpse manipulated by the foamy waves off the coast of Egypt.

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²⁶ Virgil is not, of course, uncritical of Julius Caesar’s role in the Civil War; cf. *Aen.* 6.827–31 with C. Martindale, ‘The politician Lucan’, *G&R* 31 (1984), 64–79, at 70–1.

²⁷ Cf. C.B. Krebs, ‘The world’s measure: Caesar’s geographies of *Gallia* and *Britannia* in their contexts and as evidence of his world map’, *AJPh* 139 (2018), 93–122, at 94: ‘it is true ... that, by substituting natural history for the traditional mythical topic, Lucan adheres to his overall “historical” poetics’.

²⁸ D. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic* (Oxford, 1991), 294.