General introduction

1 Preliminaries

It is no coincidence that the rise of many new approaches to reading classical texts, including a fresh appreciation of the intellectual and artistic value of intertextuality—no longer simply ‘imitation’ but rather ‘self-conscious appropriation’, to borrow some of Hinds’ terminology—has been accompanied by a renewed interest in the epic of Silius Italicus over the last few decades. Aptly styled “the most intertextual of poems”, the *Punica* is a prime example of a poem steeped in literary tradition, inviting readers to recognize its creative engagement with the intertexts which shape its meaning. Of its seventeen books, book 13 illustrates particularly well how Silius develops and manipulates the material of other writers to suit the needs of his epic. As Rome slowly begins to gain the upper hand in the Second Punic War, Hannibal and his allies, the besieged inhabitants of Capua, have to come to terms with their literary ancestry, which casts them as the losing side of the epic; young Scipio, the future Africanus, ventures into the depths of the rich poetic past in his *Nekyia* to converse with and be inspired by the shades he encounters and to define his own position as an epic hero.

This commentary intends to offer insight into the ways in which Silius fashions his narrative, both in a literary sense (as a reader of other poets, through intertextuality) and a linguistic sense (as a narrator, through the structure of his scenes). For the purpose of detailed analysis, the text of book 13 has been divided into eighteen scenes; for each of these scenes, the notes are prefaced by an introduction falling into two sections. The first section (abbreviated Intr.) discusses the primary historical and poetic intertexts for the scene and its major themes and motifs; the focus is on intertextuality and its interpretation. The second part has its own subtitle “Analysis of the presentation” (abbreviated An.) and discusses the structure of the scene from a discourse linguistic point of view. The aim of this General introduction is to offer a concise overview of the main strands of interpretation in this commentary and is, consequently, relatively light on argumentation and bibliographical references in some areas, instead directing the reader to the fuller discussions in the introductions to the various passages. The last paragraph will discuss the scope of the various parts of the commentary.

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2 Wilson 2004: 248, a description which for its appropriateness has been quoted also in the prefaces of other recent studies of Silius’ work.
2 Silius’ life

Of the life of Silius Italicus, more details have come down to us than of most poets of the first century AD. Our sources include seven epigrams of Martial (4.14, 6.64, 7.63, 8.66, 9.86, 11.48 and 11.50) and especially Pliny’s obituary (Ep. 3.7). Tiberius Catius Asconius Silius Italicus was born around AD 26/27; by the time of his death around AD 101/102, he had witnessed the reigns of twelve emperors. His place of birth has been the subject of some speculation, yet remains unknown. Silius only fully turned to his literary interests at an advanced age, having first pursued a successful forensic and political career. He practised as an orator in the Centumviral court (Mart. 7.63.5–8), was suspected of having tainted his name by acting as an informer under Nero (Plin. Ep. 3.7.3) and was later appointed consul ordinarius by the same emperor in AD 68 (3.7.9). During the year of the four emperors, Silius remained an important figure as an associate of Vitellius, and served as a witness in the negotiations between Vitellius and Flavius Sabinus, the brother of Vespasian (Tac. Hist. 3.65.2). Under the Flavians, he attained the prestigious position of proconsul of Asia, probably in AD 77, as the crowning event of his political career. He was one of the most distinguished citizens of Rome, and devoted his otium, his peaceful retirement, to writing and to learned discussions with his frequent visitors. In his old age he witnessed first the consulsip of his elder son Decianus in AD 94 and then, shortly after, the death of his younger son Severus. At some point, the aged consular withdrew from Rome and spent the rest of his days in Campania, where he possessed several villas, until he chose to end his anguish from an incurable tumour and stepped out of life by abstaining from food.

Silius was a man of taste and an admirer of beauty, with the wealth to buy it; he owned numerous works of art and a large amount of books. Among his possessions he counted one of Cicero’s estates and the tomb of Vergil, a tribute to his admired predecessors in the

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4 Silius’ full name is attested by an inscription he commissioned during his term as proconsular governor of Asia Minor, found near the site of Aphrodisias; see Calder 1935, Calder / Cormack 1962: 76 (MAMA n°. 411), PIR S722.

5 Pliny notes that Silius reached the old age of 75 (3.7.9 annum quintum et septuagenimum excessit). Sherwin-White puts the third book of Pliny’s epistles at AD 100–103 (1966: 41, 758) and notes that 3.7 is to be dated “a fair interval after late 99” (1966: 226). Trajan’s arrival in Rome which is alluded to at 3.7.6. If Friedländer (1886: 2.256) is correct in identifying the addressee of Mart. 12.67 (which wishes long life to one who celebrates Vergil’s birthday) with Silius Italicus, Silius’ death should postdate its publication in AD 101 (cf. also Miniconi / Devallet 1979: xv).


7 Plin. Ep. 3.7.3 in Vitelli amicitia sapienter se et comiter gesserat.

8 Silius’ proconsulate is to be dated between 73 and 79 (cf. Magie 1950: 1582). Both he and four other known proconsuls of Asia Minor in this period may all have attained this position nine years after their consulsip, as M. Ulpius Traianus did (cos. 70, procos. 79), in Silius’ case therefore in AD 77–78; see Eck 1970: 83–84, 124

9 Plin. Ep. 3.7.4 fuit inter principes civitatis sine potentia, sine invidia; cf. Mart. 6.64.9–10, where Silius is mentioned in the same breath as the proceres urbisque forique.

10 Mart. 8.66, 9.86, Plin. Ep. 3.7.2.

11 For the nature of the malady, clavus, see Dominik 2010: 430 n.46.
two pursuits of his life, oratory and epic poetry. His reverence for Vergil especially, and Pliny’s depiction of a Silius observing the birthday of the Augustan poet with more devotion than his own and visiting his tomb as if it were a temple (3.7.8), has appealed to the imagination of later generations, but has also fuelled the derogatory views of countless critics who saw Silius as nothing more than a slavish and mindless imitator of Vergil. But Silius was recognized as a literary man in his own right, not only by Martial, who addressed him as Sili, Castalidum decus sororum (4.14.1) and who proudly named Silius among the worthies who deigned to read his nugae (6.64.9–10), but also by Cornutus, the Stoic philosopher and teacher of Lucan and Persius, who dedicated to him his commentary on the Aeneid. Silius took great care over his writing, often asking the opinions of others at recitals of his work. Apart from his poetic interests, Silius has often been credited with Stoic views, although the external evidence is disputed.

The more difficult question regarding the dating of Silius’ composition of the Punica, as well as its relation to the political realities of contemporary Rome, will be the subject of § 6. The next few paragraphs will focus on book 13: its structure, its intertextual models and its position in the epic as a whole.

3 The structure of Punica 13

Punica 13 is composed of three episodes of unequal length, separated by recapitulating dum-clauses at 94 and 381. The first and shortest episode (1–93) centres around Hannibal and his retreat from Rome; the second (94–380) describes the fall of Capua, Hannibal’s ally, to the Romans; the remainder of the book (381–895) is devoted to Scipio and his Nekyia, in which he summons the shade of the ancient Sibyl of Cumae and is encouraged and educated by the meetings with the ghosts of his family and other famous phantoms.

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12 Plin. Ep. 3.7.8.

13 Mart. 11.48 (cf. 11.50), where he compliments Silius with being not only the owner of their relics but also the spiritual heir to both authors; cf. also 7.63.5–6 sacra cothurnati non attigit ante Maronis / implevit magni quam Ciceronis opus.

14 It is useful to compare Statius’ similar image of himself singing at Vergil’s tomb (Silv. 4.4.51–55)—a gesture of homage, but also suggestive of Statius’ confidence in his own poetic powers. To Martial, Silius’ restoration of the neglected tomb of Vergil similarly suggests the revitalization of the epic genre by a worthy poet (11.50.4 vatem, non minor ipse, colit; cf. Hulls 2011: 165).


16 Plin. Ep. 3.7.4 scribebat carmina maiore cura quam ingenio, non numquam judicia hominum recitationibus experiebatur. Pliny’s judgment of Silius’ literary qualities has heavily influenced the hostile views of many scholars of the 19th and 20th century (see for an overview of Silius’ modern reception Dominik 2010: 431ff.), although it is the verdict of only a single contemporary critic.

17 i) Silius’ association with Cornutus (more likely a literary one); ii) Pliny’s description of his suicide (3.7.1 irrevocabili constantia; apart from this detail, nothing in the obituary suggests strong philosophical convictions); iii) Epic. Diss. 3.8.7, where the Greek philosopher describes his meeting with “Italicus, who among them [sc. the Romans] is especially reputed to be a philosopher”; whether this man is to be identified with Silius cannot be established, but in any case the Greek does not refer to him as a Stoic, and the continuation of the passage suggests that this Italicus did not want to be seen as an austere philosopher like Epictetus. For the scholarly hunt for Stoic traces in the Punica, see Dominik 2010: 429–430; for Punica 13, see Intr. 417–493 and n.663–665.
General introduction

Each of the three episodes is a self-contained narrative unit, with a clear internal structure based upon symmetry and contrast. These same principles apply to the book as a whole.

3.1 HANNIBAL’S RETREAT (1–93)

Having been driven from Rome by Jupiter at the end of book 12, Hannibal intends to attack the city again and reinvigorates his men; the traitor Dasius informs him, however, that Rome is protected by the Palladium, which Diomedes had brought to Aeneas after the Trojan war. Hannibal gives up and, after plundering the nearby sanctuary of Feronia, retreats to Rhegium.

- Hannibal halts his retreat from Rome (1–6)
- Hannibal’s speech reinvigorates his soldiers (7–29)
- Counterspeech: Dasius’ narrative on the Palladium (30–81)
- Hannibal withdraws to southern Italy (82–93)

The episode begins and ends with the theme of withdrawal. The first part shows Hannibal ready to try and assault Rome again, capable of instilling renewed fervour in his troops; this effort is then completely undone by Dasius’ tale, after which the general’s spirit is broken (82 *his fractus*), a sharp contrast with his men who are glad to leave Rome and the thunderbolts of Jupiter behind.

3.2 THE FALL OF CAPUA (94–380)

The first episode opened with Hannibal’s reaction to the climax of book 12; in the second, our attention is focused on the Roman response to the same events. Returning victoriously from Rome, the consul Fulvius arrives at the city of Capua, a former ally which had defected to Carthage in book 11, to recommence the siege; he exhorts his men to punish Capua’s crimes. Before the assault on the walls begins, an omen occurs: a tame white hind flees from the city. The animal is then captured and sacrificed by the Romans. The hind equals the city in age and is considered its *numen*; the flight and death of the animal thus represents the impending fall of Capua (Intr. 94–141). After this prelude, the assault commences. A second personification of Capua enters the scene: the Capuan champion Taurea challenges the Roman Claudius, but then flees the duel and is chased through the streets of Capua. Like the death of the hind, Taurea’s flight and Claudius’ penetration into the city is an adumbration of Capua’s doom (Intr. 142–178). At the end of the episode, when Capua has fallen, Taurea commits suicide; his story thus frames that of the city which he represents.

In between this framing narrative, the fall of Capua is described in three passages. The assault on the walls in the first anticipates Capua’s surrender in the third passage; the poet

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18 The order is day – night – day. The omen of the hind and Taurea’s challenge had also taken place on the first day; its dawn is mentioned at 132 *primos ad luminis ortus*. In the commentary, I have split the discussion of the...
here focuses primarily on the feats of Fulvius and Scipio whose victories reflect the success of the Roman army. Towards the end of the assault, a Capuan soldier is beheaded in full flight by a Roman, which again symbolizes the fate that awaits the city (with perhaps a play on caput – Capua) and adumbrates the beheading of the Capuan senators (the senate is ominously identified as perfidiae ductorque caputque at 261) in the aftermath of the siege. The assault is interrupted by nightfall. The events during this night form the central passage and climax of the Capuan episode. The leading senator Virrius delivers a speech in which he eulogizes his own achievements (the direct counterpart of Fulvius’ incriminating speech, but now from a Capuan perspective) and states his intent to commit a dignified suicide before the city falls. His positive ‘spin’ is countered a few lines later by the goddess Fides (Good Faith) as she condemns the Capuan betrayal of Rome. When Capua surrenders to the Roman attack at dawn, the Romans are eager to put the city to the torch, but the god Pan intervenes and mollifies them; the city is plundered, instead. The description of the aftermath ends with reward (of the soldier Milo, who was the first to scale the walls) and punishment (of the remaining Capuan leaders, who are beheaded). The final scene is Taurea’s suicide and Fulvius’ response, who ends the episode, much like he began it, with incriminating words.

Fulvius’ rousing speech: Capua’s crimes (99–103)
Preparations for the assault (104–110)
  Dawn: Prelude and omen: the hind of Capua is captured and sacrificed by the Romans (111–137)
  Capua is encircled (138–141)
Taurea: challenge and flight through Capua (142–178)
The assault upon Capua (179–255)
  Aristeia of Fulvius (186–212)
  Aristeia of Scipio (213–243)
  A Roman decapitates a Capuan soldier (243–248)
  Nightfall postpones Capua’s fall (254–255)
Night in Capua: the suicide of Virrius and other Capuans (256–298)
  Virrius’ speech (264–275)
  Fides’ speech (284–291)
Dawn: the surrender of Capua (299–368)
  The soldier Milo is first on the walls; the Capuans surrender (299–313)
  Capua is not sacked; for the god Pan softens the Romans’ hearts (314–325)
  Digression: description of Pan (326–347)
  Capua is plundered (348–360)
  The soldier Milo is decorated (361–366)
  The Capuan senators are beheaded (367–368)
  Taurea’s speech and suicide (369–376)
  Fulvius’ response: rebuke of Taurea / Capua (377–380)

third of these passages in two: 299–347 (the capitulation and Pan’s softening of the Romans’ wrath) and 348–380 (the aftermath, including Taurea’s suicide).
3.3 SCIPIO’S NEKYIA (381–895)

The Roman success at Capua is countered with a loss; Scipio is informed of the deaths of his father and uncle, who had commanded the Roman forces in Iberia. Determined to summon their spirits through a ritual blood offering to the dead (*nekyia*)\(^{19}\) in order to assuage his grief, he seeks aid from Autonoe, the priestess of Apollo in Cumae. The structure of the first part of the episode is delineated by her three speeches. She first instructs Scipio (404–416); the hero arrives at midnight at the entrance to the underworld and performs the required sacrifices. Autonoe’s second speech (435–444) forms the transition between the sacrifice and the meeting with the first ghost, Appius Claudius.\(^{20}\) Finally, she cuts short Scipio’s conversation with Appius and heralds the arrival of the ghost of the ancient Sibyl, who will be Scipio’s guide for the remainder of the book; she then leaves to continue the sacrifices (488–493).

### Scipio’s grief (381–394) and visit to Autonoe (395–403)

### Autonoe’s instructions to Scipio (404–416)

- Preparations and the sacrifice (417–434)
- Autonoe describes the arrival of the first shades (435–444)
- Encounter with unburied Appius Claudius (445–487)

### Autonoe introduces the ghost of the ancient Sibyl and leaves (488–493)

#### The Sibyl prophesies Scipio’s future (494–516)

- Scipio’s reply (517–522)
- Description of the underworld by the Sibyl (523–612)
- Encounter with the shades (1), from present to mythic past:
  - Pomponia, Scipio’s mother (613–649)
  - Scipio’s father and uncle (650–705)
  - Paulus (706–715), with other consuls (716–720)
  - Catalogue of Roman war heroes (721–731)
  - Hamilcar (732–751)
  - Alexander (762–777)
  - Homer and the Homeric warriors (778–805)
- Encounter with the shades (2), from mythic past to present and beyond:
  - Catalogues of Roman women: heroines (806–830) and sinners (831–850a)
  - Catalogue of future Romans: civil war leaders (850b–867)
- Scipio’s reply (868–873)

#### The Sibyl prophecies Hannibal’s future (874–893)

- Scipio returns from his *nekyia* (894–895)

The second and main part of the *Nekyia* episode (494–895) displays (similarly to the first and second episodes) a symmetrical structure, as is outlined above. The two prophecies of the Sibyl (about the futures of Scipio and Hannibal) frame the main part of the *Nekyia*.

\(^{19}\) Throughout the commentary, lower case ‘*nekyia*’ will be used to refer to the ritual itself and capitalized ‘*Nekyia*’ to refer to the episode as a narrative unit and to its status as a recurrent feature in the epic genre.

\(^{20}\) For the use of speeches as a transitional device between scenes in the *Nekyia*, see An. 417–493.
After her first prophecy, Scipio asks her to enumerate the ghosts of the dead and to describe the underworld. She complies with these two requests in reverse order. Her description of the nether realm consists of a series of catalogues. The first of these, of the various gates in the underworld and its denizens, serves as a rough index to the order in which the spirits arrive later in the book (Intr. 517–614). The description closes with a focus on the punishment of tyrants and so anticipates both Hannibal’s end which is the finale of the Nekyia and the catalogue of the future leaders of the civil war which precedes that finale; the Sibyl’s description of the underworld and this vision of the Roman future thus form the inner frame of the Nekyia (An. 850b–895).

The two narrative units at the beginning (prophecy and description) and the two at the end (future Romans and Hannibal) thus enclose the encounter with the shades of the past; here again a division into two parts may be made.\(^{21}\) In the first part, the Nekyia pushes deeper and deeper into history and eventually myth; starting with Scipio’s parents and contemporaries, we ultimately find ourselves confronted with Homer and the warriors of the Iliad. The second, far shorter part starts with the age of myth (Lavinia) and moves back towards Roman history.

For a true appreciation of the order of the various elements in Silius’ Nekyia, a comparison with his primary models is indispensable, such as is illustrated in Figure 1 on the next page.\(^{22}\) In the interest of clarity, the figure displays only the major allusions in the intertextual nexus with Odyssey 11 and Aeneid 6; although these two works are, of course, far from the only intertexts for Silius’ Nekyia,\(^{23}\) they are the main models for its overall structure. Even a brief glance at the figure shows that on a formal level, Silius has followed Homer’s ordering of events and meetings quite faithfully; in regard to the interaction with Vergil, the allusive web is far more complex. Multiple models are at the basis of Scipio’s encounters with the various ghosts that host Silius’ Nekyia; interestingly, these ghosts do not necessarily share the ‘role’ of their model. While Scipio’s father, for instance, on the face of it may be compared to Anchises, in that their respective sons brave the horrors of the underworld to see them again, the reminiscences of Anchises’ appearance in Aeneid 6 are limited in the meeting with the elder Scipio; his role is far more comparable to that of Homer’s Agamemnon and Vergil’s Deiphobus, as he tells the story of his demise (the result, like that of his models, of a betrayal), to name only the most obvious parallel. The intertextual connections outlined in Figure 1 will be discussed in detail in the Introductions to the various passages.

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\(^{21}\) The six narrative units which make up the second, main part of the Nekyia are divided through the use of the marker *sed* (An. 517–614), while this second part as a whole is marked as a new narrative move with *at* (494).

\(^{22}\) In his seminal study of the imitation of Homer by Statius and Silius, Juhnke included a similar, but more detailed, overview of a number of intertexts (1972, Übersicht 9: Odyssey 11, Aeneid 6, Sen. Oed. 530–658, Stat. Theb. 4, Luc. 6, Sil. Pun. 13). Juhnke focuses primarily on the presence (rather than order) of narrative elements and also does not take into account the ‘role’ of most of the ghosts (marked with italics in Figure 1).

\(^{23}\) For the use of a double *vates*, we may compare Statius’ Thebaid 4 (Intr. 494–516), while Seneca’s Hercules Furens is a major intertext for the description of the underworld, a passage in which Silius’ use of multiple other poetic sources is also amply illustrated (Intr. 517–614). This underworld description by the Sibyl (523–612) also draws from the entirety of Aeneid 6, which Figure 1 cannot reflect accurately.
General introduction

Figure 1: the structure of Silius’ Nekyia and its primary models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homer (Od. 11)</th>
<th>Silius (Pun. 13)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(23–36) blood offering</td>
<td>blood offering sacrifices</td>
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<tr>
<td>(36–50) arrival of the shades</td>
<td>arrival of the shades</td>
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<td>(51–83) Elpenor</td>
<td>Appius Claudius unburied companion</td>
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<td>(90–151) Teiresias</td>
<td>the Sibyl dead sage personal prophecy underworld description</td>
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<tr>
<td>(152–225) Antikleia</td>
<td>Pomponia mother motivator</td>
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<tr>
<td>(225–330) catalogue of women</td>
<td>P. &amp; Cn. Scipio father</td>
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<tr>
<td>fellow warriors: (387–466) Agamemnon (1)</td>
<td>warrior (1) with story of death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(466–540) Achilles (2)</td>
<td>with other consuls</td>
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<tr>
<td>with other Greek warriors (Patroclus and Antilochus)</td>
<td>Roman war heroes Roman res gestae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(543–567) Aias (3)</td>
<td>Hamilcar warrior (3), hostile news of son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(568–575) Minos, Orion</td>
<td>Alexander parallel for protagonist</td>
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<tr>
<td>three sinners: (576–600) Tityos, Tantalus, Sisyfus</td>
<td>Homer poet encomium</td>
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<tr>
<td>(601–627) Heracles</td>
<td>virtuous women Roman res gestae</td>
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<td>Vergil (A. 6)</td>
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<td>Sibyl’s prophecy (83–97)</td>
<td>sacrifices (236–254)</td>
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<td>arrival in underworld (268–336)</td>
<td>Palinurus (337–383)</td>
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<td>crossing of the Styx (384–425)</td>
<td>Lugentes Campi (426–444)</td>
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<td>catalogue of women (445–449)</td>
<td>warriors (477–493)</td>
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<td>Dido (450–476)</td>
<td>Deiphobus (494–547)</td>
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<td>Tartarus (548–627)</td>
<td>sinners</td>
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<tr>
<td>Elysium (637–678)</td>
<td>Orpheus, Musaeus</td>
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<td>Anchises, Heldenschau (679–892)</td>
<td>as Roman res gestae</td>
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<td>as vision of the future</td>
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<tr>
<td>Augustus (791–807)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marcellus (860–886)</td>
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*italics* narrative role
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model
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secondary model (in some cases contrast)

prophecy on Hannibal: *vision of future beyond the epic*

catalogue of civil war leaders: *vision of future beyond the epic*
3.4 The Internal Cohesion of *Punica* 13

While the three episodes of *Punica* 13 all display a clear internal cohesion, there exist also a number of connections between these episodes. In the first episode, the expectation of a second attempt on Rome is raised and subsequently frustrated; in the second, this anticipated siege of Rome is replaced with a siege of Capua (Intr. 94–141). Three connections between the second and third episode are the opposition of success and loss (383 *fortuna ... permiscens tristia laetis*, i.e. the Roman success at Capua vs. the loss of the brothers Scipio in Spain), the geographical proximity of Capua to the entrance of the underworld (cf. 397), and the identity of the first ghost to arrive, Appius Claudius, one of the consuls in command of the siege of Capua, who died of a wound he took there (453–456).

Between the three episodes, there is a shift from Hannibal as the main protagonist to Scipio; as Hannibal marches away to southern Italy, he also marches outside the focus of attention and cedes his place to the Romans. In between is the city of Capua, which functions both as a substitute Rome (falling where Rome does not) and a substitute Carthage (anticipating the fall of Carthage, see § 4.3.1 below), a suitably ‘grey’ area between the Punic and Roman leader.

A key passage to the structure of *Punica* 13 is its finale, the prophecy on Hannibal’s end. The framing technique that is present in all three separate episodes also characterizes the book as a whole; it opens and closes with Hannibal in decline and attempting to repeat his earlier success (see § 5.2.1 below) yet constantly moving away from his goal. Hannibal is devastated when he learns that Rome cannot be taken (82 *his fractus*), which is picked up at the end when the Sibyl describes the defeat of Carthage as his personal misfortune (876 *fractus opum*; also 886–887 *falsusque cupiti Ausoniae motus*). Scipio’s joy in the closing lines (895 *laetus*) contrasts both with his grief which prompted his nekyia (388–393), but also, and more importantly, with Hannibal’s displeasure as he moves away from Rome (94 *haud laetus*): the Punic leader is forced to abandon his epic goal, whereas the Roman has learned of his future victory. Knowledge is an important motif, as it is in the whole epic; the education of Scipio contrasts with that of Hannibal, who learns only now, after twelve books, that Rome is untouchable on account of the protection by the Palladium.

Hannibal’s end is also anticipated in the Capua episode. In its central panel, the vengeful goddess Fides impresses upon the desperate Capuans that perfidy will be punished with losing one’s home and family (286–291), a fate which also awaits Hannibal, as the Sibyl predicts in words echoing Fides’ (874–881). Directly afterwards, the Capuan senator Virrius takes his life by poison, in a clear adumbration of Hannibal’s similar end. Both Hannibal’s exile and death are also foretold by the narrator at the end of book 2; the significance of this repetition will be explored in Intr. 850b–895.

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24 This proximity is also important in book 12, when Hannibal is guided around Cumae by the Capuan nobles, but ‘fails’ to perform a visit to the underworld; see n.397–398 *hortatur vicina palus ... stagnans Achærusius umor*.


26 For the contrast between Hannibal’s imperfect knowledge of the future with Scipio’s clearer vision, see Intr. 494–516.
Finally, two other ways in which cohesion between passages is established is through shared themes and intertexts. The next paragraph will discuss important motifs and intertexts, while § 5 explores the significance of the recurrent theme of book 13—the anticipation of the end—in the context of the epic as a whole.

4 Intertextuality and motifs

Much of the charm of the *Punica* lies in its intertextual wealth. Beyond the works of Livy, Vergil and Homer, which have long been recognized as important intertexts, allusions to numerous other poets and prose authors attest to the breadth of Silius’ reading, including but not limited to Greek writers such as Plato and Apollonius Rhodius, Cicero’s philosophical prose, poets such as Horace and Propertius, the tragedies of Seneca, and all Roman epic from Ennius to Silius’ contemporaries Valerius Flaccus and Statius. Hardly a line goes by without a significant turn of phrase or image borrowed and adapted from another text enriching the meaning of his narrative. Such intertexts are rarely just local and isolated; most allusions contribute to one or more underlying motifs in the *Punica*, a few of which are discussed in the following sections. But first some notable aspects of Silius’ poetic technique will be described to aid a clear understanding and appreciation of the intertextuality in the *Punica*.

4.1 Silius’ allusive technique

The intertextuality with Homer and Vergil in the *Nekyia*, briefly outlined in § 3.3 above, is exemplary of Silius’ simultaneous engagement with multiple intertexts. It is a rare passage in the *Punica* that sticks to only one model. The poet sometimes combines allusions to several corresponding passages in other authors, such as in the sacrifice at the opening of the *Nekyia* (Intr. 417–493) or in the Sibyl’s description of the underworld (Intr. 517–614), two scenes which clearly show Silius’ debt to and reception of nearly all his predecessors and the way in which they had created their infernal scenes. Those are direct parallels, dealing with the same theme; but the direction of Silius’ narrative may also be shaped by his complementary use of several models which do not follow immediately from his chosen theme. When at 381ff. Scipio grieves excessively over the deaths of his family and decides to perform his *Nekyia*, the obvious parallels are Homer’s Odysseus and Vergil’s Aeneas; but in the grieving hero who is roused to action we may also see Achilles, ready to dominate the action of the last books of the *Iliad*, Valerius Flaccus’ Jason who seeks to end his numbing grief through an offering to the dead in *Argonautica* 3 and perhaps even Statius’ Argia, the wife of Polynices, who sets out to claim her dead husband in *Thebaid* 12 (Intr. 381–416). In many cases, the various models add a specific aspect, or aspects, to the meaning of a passage. This is demonstrated most clearly in the series of encounters with the ghosts in the last part of the book. The first ghost to step forward after

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27 Smolenaars (1994: xxi ff.) has made similar observations about the literary technique of Silius’ contemporary Statius; see also his footnote 14 for bibliography on Vergil and Valerius Flaccus.
the description of the underworld is Pomponia, Scipio’s mother, who exhorts her son to perform great deeds by disclosing his divine parentage to him. In her status as mother, she evokes Homer’s Antikleia; but the scene also has other aspects which are underscored by allusions to a number of Vergilian passages. Reminiscences of Anchises’ speech in *Aeneid* 6 emphasize Pomponia’s role as motivator of her son; intertextuality with Creusa’s appearance to Aeneas at the end of *Aeneid* 2 reinforces the main message of the scene, that Scipio should look to the future with new hope; contrasts with Dido mark Scipio’s role as the future saviour of Rome, the response to the Carthaginian hostility promised by Vergil’s Dido (Intr. 615–649). A last example of Silius’ combinational technique is his use of double (sometimes opposite) models for a character, which may serve to highlight a conflict between the character’s ‘self-proclaimed model’ and his ‘actual model’; a case in point is the opening of book 13, where Hannibal deceives himself that he can ‘imitate’ the opening moves of (Lucan’s) Caesar again, whereas the context rather exposes his likeness to Pompey.28 Silius is adept at effectually fusing allusions to multiple, often quite distinct intertexts to create a coherent narrative which operates at several levels at once.

Another characteristic of Silius’ allusive technique is inversion. The structural importance of this technique to the *Punica* is well illustrated by the experiences of Hannibal, whose epic story mirrors that of Vergil’s Aeneas: the Punic leader captures a city in the beginning of the epic and is shipwrecked in its final book.29 Inversion can be found on all levels in *Punica* 13. It can be as simple as a borrowed phrase with a slight adjustment so that its meaning is opposite, or the inversion of a simile or metaphor of an earlier poet so that what is compared and what it is compared to are interchanged.30 More often, the inversion is a form of profound engagement with the literary tradition, carrying a deeper significance than mere reminiscence and verbal play. Usually, intertextual allusion draws attention to a certain analogy or parallel between two epic characters or situations, allowing the themes of the intertext to shimmer through. With Silius, however, we can often witness a sort of ‘inverted parallelism’; verbal echoes still evoke an intertext and its themes, but the allusion does not point to a parallel but rather to contrast, such as a reversal of epic roles or moral positions. Such inversion allows the poet to draw out to full extent the ambiguity or multi-interpretability of certain intertexts, as in the case of the siege of Capua, which is largely based upon the siege of the Trojan camp in *Aeneid* 9 (see § 4.3.2 below); it also may underline the shift in the balance of power in the war (see e.g. § 5.1) and define the contrasts between Rome and Carthage (see e.g. § 4.3.1 on the opposition of Saguntum and Capua and the evaluation of Dido). These examples illustrate that this kind of inversion takes place both within the epic (intratextual) and in relation to other poetry (intertextual).

By defining his characters, his narrative scenes or in short his epic through contrast with earlier literary models, the poet casts his work in sharp relief, and at the same time

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28 See § 4.3.3 and Intr. 1–29; see also Intr. 142–178 fn.15 for a similar dramatic irony in the use of models for Taurea. Note that ‘self-proclaimed’ does not imply explicit mention of a model, but rather that the actions, words and attitude of the character evoke this model. This type of intertextuality is prominent in the characterisation of Hannibal throughout the *Punica* (see also § 5.2.1). For double models in the *Punica*, see Klaassen 2010.

29 See Ahl / Davis / Pomeroy 1986: 2515–2516 and Hardie 1993: 13–14; see also Pomeroy 2000 for other examples of Silius’ technique of inversion in his recreation of three scenes in *Aeneid* 8.

30 See e.g. nn.24–29 and 240–243 *ventis fugit octor*. 
estabishes the position of his epic in the literary tradition as a response to themes and problems raised in earlier (epic) poems.31

A third recurring feature, not as frequent as inversion, is what might be labelled retroactive intertextuality. By this I understand that the poet, in his treatment of a certain subject, alludes to a passage in an earlier poet who used that subject as an intertext; the later poet has ‘recognized’ the intertext of his predecessor and expresses his recognition by ‘returning’ to this original context in his own narrative with verbal allusion to the intermediary text. In other words, the portrayal of the narrative element (a character, object or event) is coloured through allusion to an intertext which has that element as its own intertext. A classic example is the reception of Vergil’s line on Priam at A. 2.557 *iacet ingens litore truncus* by Lucan, who recognizes it as an allusion to the headless body of Pompey and by referring to it at Luc. 1.685–686 casts the prophecy to Pompey’s death as a intertextual reference to Vergil: “Him I recognize, lying on the river sands, an unsightly headless corpse”; ‘him’ is the future Pompey of Lucan’s book 8, but also the Pompey in Vergil’s Priam. A parallel is thereby evoked between the ruin of Troy and the disasters of the Roman civil war.32 In this example, the original model is the fate of the historical Pompey; Vergil alludes to Pompey in his narrative of the death of Priam; Lucan, in turn, in describing Pompey alludes to this intermediary text by Vergil and adds a layer to his text. In the *Punica*, the same type of allusion is used quite often, and here, too, the allusion to the intermediary text adds another layer of meaning to the narrative. Lucan had modelled his Caesar partially after Hannibal; in turn, Silius portrays his Hannibal after the Caesar of the *Bellum Civile* (Intr. 1–29 fn.8; see also § 4.3.3 below on the sustained motif of civil war). This parallelism between Caesar and Hannibal is continued both by Lucan and Silius, as the Neronian poet quite explicitly uses the historical Saguntum (the city that would not surrender to Hannibal) as a model for his Massilia (the city that defied Caesar), while in the *Punica* Lucan’s Massilia is evoked in the description of Saguntum and its more perfidious counterpart Capua (Intr. 94–141). Hannibal and his attack on Rome may also have inspired Vergil, more specifically for the narrative in Aeneid 9, where Turnus beleaguerers the Trojan camp, an episode which is an important subtext for Silius’ own creation of *Hannibal ante portas* in book 12 (but also for the siege of Capua, which falls instead of Rome; see for both Intr. 142–178). A fourth example is the panegyric tradition around Alexander the Great, which is evoked in Vergil’s description of Augustus in Aeneid 6; Silius’ Alexander, in turn, evokes Augustus (Intr. 650–704).33

31 An example would be Silius’ assertion of the conclusion of civil war through the divine intervention of Pan by inverting Valerius’ image of Pan, who starts a ‘civil’ war; see § 4.3.3 and Intr. 299–347.
33 Other, less important examples can be found at n.181–182 *saxeus imber* and n.191–193 (both a return to a Homeric context through the medium of Vergil/Ennius), n.382–384 *geminos ... Scipiadas* (via Vergil back to Ennius) and n.658–660 (the tomb of a Scipio inspiring Vergil’s tomb for Marcellus inspiring Silius’ tomb for the brothers Scipio). But in a sense the entire *Nekyia* is a demonstration of this intertextual procedure, since Silius returns to the Homeric setting and order of scenes, while throughout alluding to the Vergilian intermediary text.
4.2 Historical Intertext: Livy

The *Punica* stands in the tradition of Roman historical epic. It is fortunate that the last decades have seen a break with the well-nigh exclusive attention of earlier generations of critics to its ‘historical’ part, which would treat the poem as little more than versified history; recent scholarship has abundantly attested to the ‘epic’ qualities of the *Punica*, and this commentary will similarly focus on the poetic and literary aspects of book 13. Nonetheless, Silius’ debt to the historiographical tradition cannot (and should not) be denied or ignored and remains an important subject of study. Livy is by far the most important historiographical intertext. Although the influence of other historians should not be ruled out, at no point in book 13 have I seen reason to suppose that a difference with Livy’s account is the result of Silius’ consultation of other historical texts; on the contrary, such deviations are better explained as deliberate choices by the poet, and in most cases point to his engagement with a specific poetic intertext.34

In several passages of book 13, Livian influence is unmistakable; Silius’ narrative verbally echoes that of the historian.35 Rather than underscoring parallelism, however, these echoes often mark Silius’ adaptation of his historical source; indeed, much of his narrative in book 13 significantly differs from the historiographical accounts. The opening passage is a fine example, as on the one hand it picks up Livy’s description of Hannibal withdrawing from Rome, but on the other also markedly deviates from it; Hannibal’s slow, grim retreat and his desire to turn back and attack the city a second time are entirely Silius’ invention (Intr. 1–29). The same technique is visible at the transition to the Capuan episode, which bears a clear resemblance to the beginning of Livy’s description of the siege; the subsequent narrative, however, is completely different (Intr. 94–141). This does not mean that the poet disregards the historian for the rest of his narrative in the book. Livy’s *Ab Urbe Condita* provided him with much material, ready to be moulded and adapted to the needs of his epic. Silius has made selective use of this material, often taking inspiration from variants offered by Livy (even those discarded by the historian) without simply adopting a single one; instead, he subtly creates a new narrative from two different stories. In the process, the poet adds significant details while ignoring undesired ones, changes the chronology, and adjusts the emphasis.36

In four passages, the engagement with Livy is especially clear. The first is the duel between the Capuan knight Taurea and the Roman Claudius, which combines details from two such duels much earlier in Livy’s account of the siege of Capua (Intr. 142–178). At the end of the Capuan episode, the scene of Taurea’s suicide is similarly composed of the elements of two variants recounted by Livy; compared to the source text, the new scene created by Silius aggrandizes the deeds of both Taurea and Fulvius (Intr. 348–380). Virrius’ speech to his fellow senators, in which he exhorts to suicide, is clearly influenced by the...
corresponding speech in Livy, but the emphasis is markedly different; the recital of Capuan crimes is now transformed into a eulogy of Virrius’ achievements (Intr. 256–298; the incriminating speech is transferred to Fulvius at 99–103). Finally, the speeches of Scipio’s father and uncle in which they relate the story of their deaths are obviously based upon Livy’s account of their disastrous final campaign in Iberia, but Silius again shows care in his selection of his material; by adopting the experiences of only one of the brothers in Livy and distributing them over the two speeches, the poet entirely omits their fatal miscalculation of dividing the troops and replaces it with an emphasis on brotherly harmony, which is developed into an important theme (Intr. 650–704). In all these cases, Silius’ recreation of the Livian material not only makes the narrative and its characters more heroic, but also evokes significant poetic intertexts. The sustained motifs to which these intertexts contribute are explored in the following sections.

The most obvious chronological displacement in this part of the epic is that Silius presents Hannibal’s march on Rome and the subsequent Roman capture of Capua as roughly simultaneous to the deaths of the Scipio brothers in Spain (13.382 interea) and prior to the capture of Syracuse (Punica 14), while according to Livy and Polybius these last two events predated the first two by about a year. In effect, the two Capuan episodes (Hannibal’s sojourn there in book 11 and its capture in book 13) frame Hannibal’s attempt to take Rome (book 12), which in turn stresses Capua’s significance both to Rome and to Carthage; see § 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 below, and § 5.1 for an intertextual reading of the sequence of events in Punica 11–13.

4.3 POETIC MODELS AND MOTIFS

4.3.1 Haunting Dido

One of the strongest connections between Vergil’s Aeneid and Silius’ Punica is the curse of Dido, which is central to the plot of the Flavian epic. Vergil suggests that the wars between Carthage and Rome originated in the fatal love between Dido and Aeneas; when the latter has departed, Dido calls for an avenger to pursue the heirs of Troy (A. 4.622–627), a clear hint at the future Hannibal, but also an invitation for a future epic. In response, Silius presents his poem as a sequel to Vergil’s epic, with the war being one between the descendants of Aeneas (1.2 Aeneadum) and those of Dido; her ghost haunts Hannibal’s footsteps, as the poet evokes the mythical cause of the Second Punic War on the eve of the Punic general’s greatest deeds: i) Juno resumes her role of antagonist from the Aeneid, including her favour of Dido’s Carthage, and imbues Hannibal with her ira towards Rome (1.21–55). ii) As a young boy, he echoes the call of Vergil’s Dido as he swears before his father Hamilcar to pursue the Romans, an oath made in the temple of Dido and by the manes of the Carthaginian queen in remembrance of the vengeance that still needs to be

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37 Cf. Burck 1979: 263; Marks (2005: 76 n.38) notes that the transposition of events reduces Hannibal’s presence after book 13, which “allows Silius to focus more extensively and exclusively on Scipio in books 13–17”.
38 Ganiban 2010: 73.
39 For an overview and discussion of these scenes, see Ganiban 2010 with bibliography.
iii) In the second book, during the siege of Saguntum, Hannibal is presented with a shield displaying in full the story of Dido’s life, love, suicide and call for vengeance, with another panel picturing the oath of Hannibal, her utor (2.406–456). The description of the shield is followed by the narrative of the fall of Saguntum, his first victory. iv) Likewise, his greatest and ultimate victory, the resounding defeat of the Romans at Cannae, is introduced with yet another recollection of Dido’s tragedy. Anna, the sister of Dido and now an Italian nymph, is sent by Juno to exhort Hannibal to do battle with the Romans; but first, the poet tells Anna’s story, which is essentially a retelling of Aeneid 4 from a Carthaginian perspective (8.50–201).

In the second half of the Punic, Dido keeps haunting the poem, but in a far more subtle way. Every Roman defeat may be considered a partial fulfilment of Dido’s prayer; when the ghost of the elder Scipio recounts the story of his death to his son, his words evoke Dido’s last speech, suggesting that the Romans suffer in the same way at the hands of their enemies as she did when Aeneas abandoned her and that vengeance is hers (Intr. 650–704). But the same scene also shows that the story does not end there; the perfidy of the enemy which caused the demise of the elder Scipio and his brother and indeed all the casualties of the war now calls for Roman vengeance, a Roman utor to counter Hannibal: Scipio. Carthage must pay, as Scipio says, ut merita est, “as she deserves” (697), thereby echoing Dido’s words as she condemns herself to death. The echo signifies that it is not Rome, but Carthage which must share the fate of its queen; the curse has backfired.

Carthage’s future fate is anticipated in the fall of its ally Capua. The city is called a ‘second Carthage’ (altera Carthago) by both Punics and Romans: it is a home to Hannibal at 11.425 and equal to their worst enemy to the Roman consul Fulvius at 13.100. Capua serves in more than one way as a substitute for Carthage, as will be discussed in full in Intr. 256–298. One of the connections is its affinity with Dido. Hannibal’s sojourn at Capua in book 11 evokes the hospitality extended to Aeneas by Dido in Aeneid 1, and his stay is just as fatal to his host. In book 13, Hannibal marches away to southern Italy, abandoning Capua to be captured by the Romans. The hind of Capua is killed (115–137) and an arrow pierces the heart of the city (185), both images which evoke Vergil’s comparison of Dido with a deer fatally struck by a hunter (see n.184b–185). But the suicides of the Capuan elite constitute the clearest parallels with Dido’s death; the speech and suicide of the leading senator Virrius counterbalances the final moments of the Carthaginian queen (Intr. 256–298). At the same time his death by poison also adumbrates the fate of Dido’s avenger, Hannibal, whose suicide is foretold in the closing lines of the book (13.892).

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40 Silius alludes to this oath scene in Scipio’s encounter with Hamilcar’s ghost; see Intr. 705–761 with fn.15.
41 For the use of Aeneid 4 as an intertext for the fall of Saguntum, see Intr. 256–298 with fn.33.
42 When in book 7 the god Proteus foretells that such an avenger will arise, his phrasing suggests that this utor is a direct response to the one Dido had called for; cf. Verg. A. 4.625 alquis nostris ex ossibus ultor and Sil. 7.487–488 ille e furto genitus ... ultor. The phrases also contrast the two avengers: Hannibal descends from mortal Dido and is bound by his national past, Scipio has been fathered by the supreme god Jupiter and represents the future.
43 Several verbal echoes underpin the allusion (and at the same time draw out the contrasts between the two scenes); see Burek 1984: 15–18 and 22–23. Silius’ allusions to Dido are interwoven with his reception of the Cyzicus episode in Valerius Flaccus (2.629–3.458), which is also intertextual with Aeneid 1 and 4 and features the same fatal hospitality (see Manuwald 1999); for Silius’ reception of Valerius’ episode, see § 4.3.3 below.
Subtle contrasts with Vergil’s portrayal of the Carthaginian queen illustrate the reversal of moral positions in the *Punica*. Dido may have the reader’s sympathy when she calls Aeneas perfidious, a viewpoint which is elaborated in the retelling of their story in *Punica* 8 with what we might call the ‘Punic voice’ of the epic. In the Second Punic War, however, it is the Carthaginians and their allies who are characterized by perfidy, and the validity of their ‘voice’ is questioned. Virrius ‘tragic heroism’ in replaying Dido’s suicide is undercut by the words of the goddess Fides, who exposes the suicide as a just punishment for Capua’s betrayal of Rome (Intr. 256–298). In his *Nekyia*, Silius has replaced the silent incrimination of Aeneas by Dido’s ghost with a glorifying speech by Hamilcar, but Hannibal’s father primarily succeeds in underscoring that his son’s position is a problematic one: in order to uphold his oath sworn before his father, he has broken the national oath sworn to Jupiter (Sil. 1.9 *iuratumque Iovi foedus*, i.e. the treaty with Rome; see Intr. 705–761). Dido’s story is also a subtext for the two encounters with the ghosts of Roman women, whose presentation draws out the contrasts between Rome and Carthage. In the meeting with Scipio’s mother, Silius reveals Venus’ designs to ensure Roman survival and glory, thereby echoing and responding to the speech of Dido’s sister Anna who in *Aeneid* 4 hoped to secure the same things for Carthage (Intr. 615–649). Some two hundred lines later, a catalogue of seven founding mothers of Rome highlights Roman virtue, but through its verbal allusions also contrasts with the presentation of Dido, thus problematizing the founding mother of Carthage.

4.3.2 Heirs of Troy

The story of Dido and Aeneas is far from the only motif which Silius adopts—and adapts—from the *Aeneid*. The *Punica* also replays Vergil’s engagement with the *Iliad* in the second half of his epic, in which the Augustan poet presents the war between the Trojans and Latins as a repetition of the Trojan war, a Roman version in which the Trojans eventually get the upper hand; this is stated quite explicitly by the Sibyl as she foretells Aeneas that another Achilles awaits him in Latium, another war with a woman as its cause (*A*. 6.83–97). There is a similar re-enactment of the Trojan war in the *Punica*. In his oath, young Hannibal states that he will ‘wind back’ the fates of Troy (1.115 *Rhoeteaque fata revolvam*), that is, re-enact its fall; he identifies himself with Homer’s Greeks, especially when he gains his greatest victory at Cannae (books 8–10), which is the most Iliadic part of the epic. In book 7, the god Proteus recounts the story of Paris’ judgment, the origin of the Trojan war, on the eve of the battle of Cannae which has that Trojan war as an intertext. After the catalogue of Roman troops (8.356–616), the narrator notes that one might pardon Varro for being eager to fight at the sight of such a great army, comparing this great host to the Greeks attacking Troy (8.617–621; cf. 3.329–330); but the comparison primarily underlines that Varro mistakes his epic position: in the coming battle, his Romans are to play the roles of Homer’s Trojans rather than the Greeks. At Cannae, on the fields of

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44 See the discussion in Intr. 705–761. See also Ganiban (2010: 94–95).
45 Hannibal fails to realize that the threads of fate cannot be wound back; see Feeney ad 1.115 *fata revolvam*. In the *Aeneid*, Turnus similarly thinks that history will be repeated and that he plays the role of Achilles; see Intr. 30–93 fn.28.
Diomedes, Hannibal performs a Diomedeia (*Iliad* 5) under the protection of Minerva (Intr. 30–93). Rome nearly falls at Cannae; but the epic is not over yet. As the successor to two epics with opposite plots, the *Punica* seems to present two possible outcomes. Will the heirs of Troy lose or win, that is, will the war be a replay of the *Iliad* or rather of the *Aeneid*? Which of the two cities in this new Trojan war vying for world dominance will play the role of old Troy and fall? To Silius’ readers, the eventual victory of Rome is a given, but that does not prevent him from pursuing the question to its full extent.

Each of the three episodes in book 13 has a part in developing this theme. The first and most obvious engagement with the fall of Troy is the tale of the traitor Dasius (36–81), who narrates how after the Trojan war Diomedes brought the Palladium to Aeneas in Latium. The scene should be read in conjunction with the end of *Punica* 12, Hannibal’s attack on Rome; for together, the two passages are a complete inversion of the fall of Troy in *Aeneid* 2.46 It emerges that the situation is not at all similar to that in the Trojan war; Rome, the new Troy, will not fall, and Hannibal will not replay the role of the victorious Greeks. Indeed, Dasius’ tale makes clear that Hannibal’s identification with Diomedes had been faulty; for with the return of the Palladium, Diomedes had aided in ensuring Rome’s future victory (Intr. 30–93).

Silius repeats this ambiguous play with the distribution of literary roles in his narrative of the siege of Capua. Like Rome, Capua was founded by Trojans, and thus may lay claim to the Trojan legacy, a fact which the poet uses to good effect. An important intertext for the siege is *Aeneid* 9–10, in which the Rutulians besiege the Trojan camp; but while in Vergil’s narrative the defending heirs of Troy eventually surface as the victors, here the Trojan Capuans play the losing role, with the attacking Trojan Romans as their conquerors (Intr. 94–141 fn.9, Intr. 142–178, Intr. 179–255). Towards the end of the episode, it is clear that Capua is, like Rome, a new Troy, but in this case this means that it re-enacts its fall; the spoils of war evoke the plundering of Troy, and the death of the Capuan champion Taurea parallels that of Trojan Hector (Intr. 348–380). Unlike its literary ancestor, however, the city is not burned, because the Romans are reminded of their blood ties with Capua by the god Pan (Intr. 299–347).

In the *Nekyia*, the fall of Troy is again used as a motif to represent the dire straits in which Rome finds itself after the defeat at Cannae. Both the meeting with Scipio’s father and uncle, who relate their deaths in Iberia, and the conversation with Paulus, who died commanding the Roman forces at Cannae, interact with the meeting of Aeneas with the ghost of his old friend Deiphobus during his *katabasis* (Intr. 650–704 and 705–761). Deiphobus tells of his death during the fall of Troy; his fate serves to contrast the misery of the past with the glory of the future which will be shown by Anchises. Silius’ *Nekyia* shows the same movement, looking ahead to the victory of Scipio, who will found a new future for his country on the ashes of his house and nation.47 This is emphasized by the correspondences between Pomponia and Vergil’s Creusa, whose shade encourages Aeneas to look to the future when all seems lost at the end of *Aeneid* 2 (Intr. 615–649). Eventually, the roles will be fully reversed, and it will be Carthage which will play the role of Troy, as

46 See § 5.1.
47 In the tales of the brothers Scipio, there are also several echoes of *Aeneid* 2, suggesting that in some way their deaths are comparable to the fall of Troy (Intr. 650–704).
the fall of Capua (*altera Carthago* but also *altera Troia*) already anticipates; when the Sibyl prophesies Hannibal’s flight from Carthage after the Second Punic War, he is cast as an (imperfect) Aeneas fleeing from the ruins of Troy (n.876–881).

### 4.3.3 Civil war

The depiction of the siege of Capua, with the Roman heirs of Troy beleaguering their fellow Trojans, illustrates a third important motif in the *Punica*: that of civil war. Since Vergil’s narrative of the war in the second half of his *Aeneid*, with its undercurrents of a civil conflict between two groups of proto-Romans, the engagement with civil war established itself as a defining feature of Roman epic; the problems and questions which had been raised in the *Aeneid* were further explored and exploited by Vergil’s successors, most clearly by Lucan in his *Bellum Civile*. The Flavian poets, writing after the traumatic civil strife following the death of Nero, and writing after Lucan, each integrated the theme in some way. Valerius Flaccus inserted a civil war into the myth of the Argonauts in his sixth book; in Statius’ *Thebaid*, the war of the Seven against Thebes is a war between brothers, culminating in their mutual fratricide. In the *Punica*, the war against Hannibal is similarly evocative of Rome’s future civil wars. At several points in the epic, Silius refers to the internal strife that awaits, the names of some of his characters allude to important figures in the civil wars of the first centuries BC and AD. The suggestion of civil war is strongest, however, by Silius’ appropriation of the treatments of the theme by his predecessors and contemporaries. The plot of the *Punica* is informed by allusions to Lucan, but also to the civil war episodes of other poets. The main intertexts for book 13 will be discussed below. It should be noted, however, that Silius’ allusions in this book do not ‘simply’ present the Hannibalic war as a kind of civil war; the poet manipulates his intertexts (frequently through inversion) to suggest also the *conclusion* of civil war. This paragraph will discuss Silius’ engagement with each of the aforementioned poets in turn.

Silius’ narrative of the capture of Capua, with its pronounced civil war aspects, begins with the death of a tame deer; with this, he picks up the similar opening of the war in Latium in Vergil’s *Aeneid*, where the killing of a pet stag of Tyrphus, herdsman of king Latinus, sparks a battle between the Trojans and the angry local farmers (Intr. 94–141). The Vergilian scene evokes the contrast in the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics* between rustic peace and the horrors of civil war. Silius employs the same contrast in his depiction of Italy ravaged by war. In book 7, the narrative of Hannibal’s destruction of the Italian countryside shows a “sustained thematic relationship with Virgil’s *Georgics*”, which casts it as the violation of Georgic Italy. In book 13, Hannibal’s plunder of Feronia similarly evokes the *Georgics* (n.83b–85). By contrast, the Romans are prevented from such destructive acts by the god Pan, who by softening the Romans’ hearts averts the torching of Capua, in view of the city’s importance to Campanian agriculture. Pan reminds the Romans also of the Trojan

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48 Cf. e.g. 3.589–590, 9.346–353, 10.657–658, 15.125–127 and most explicitly 13.853–867. 49 In book 13, cf. Marius (231) and Milo (300, 365). The concentration of ‘anachronous’ names is greatest in the Cannae episode (see McGuire 1995, Dominik 2006: 126); the civil war of AD 69 is evoked most clearly at 10.194–201, where a leader named Galba recaptures a standard from the enemy but is then killed himself. 50 See especially Intr. 94–141, 299–347, 348–380 and 850b–895. 51 Littlewood 2011: xl.
roots of Capua; his saving of Campania is coupled with the conclusion of the destructive civil strife between the Roman and Capuan descendants of Troy. When the Roman furor has abated, the god significantly returns to Arcadia, Vergil’s idealized countryside (Intr. 299–347).

Lucan’s civil war between Caesar and Pompey is replayed twice in the Punica, as Marks (2010a) has shown. In books 1–10, it is the Romans and their allies who are identified through allusions to Lucan with the victims of and the vanquished in civil war; in books 11–17, Carthage and her allies are in this position. Capua, as the first city captured and punished by Rome, serves as a pernicious perversion of Lucan’s Massilia, the first city to oppose Caesar (Intr. 94–141). When the city falls, more echoes of Lucan suggest that civil war has ended. Capua is stripped of its opulence (13.353–360), which had caused its defection from Rome in book 11; the removal of luxury responds to Lucan’s identification of luxury and moral decline as the root of civil war (Intr. 348–380). The Lucanian intertext is even more clear in Silius’ portrayal of Hannibal. In the first part of the epic, the Carthaginian general is modelled after Lucan’s Caesar; after his failure to take Rome, Hannibal tries to reinvigorate his epic mission at the opening of book 13 by mimicking Caesar again, but his backward glance and his withdrawal from Rome mark that his new literary model is actually Lucan’s Pompey (Intr. 1–29). At the end of the Nekyia, the poet presents us with a vision of the future, but names only the leaders of the Roman civil war, a scene which clearly hints at Lucan’s epic; Silius does not only adumbrate the inception of the future civil wars, however, but also their end with the prophecy of Hannibal’s final years, in which he is cast as a fugitive Pompey (Intr. 850b–895).

Silius’ Capuan episode shows a sustained and intricate interplay with the plot of Valerius Flaccus’ Argonautica 2 and 3. At the end of book 2, the Argonauts are welcomed by king Cyzicus. After their departure, the king provokes the wrath of Cybele by hunting a favourite lion. The goddess causes the Argonauts to return, unknowing of their whereabouts, and Pan is sent to sow panic and incite a battle between the Cyzicans and their former guests, which is evocative of civil war. When Cyzicus is killed and the combatants realize their error, the grieving Argonauts are unable to continue on their voyage, until Jason performs a rite to send the shades of the Cyzicans to the underworld. Silius’ reception of Valerius’ episode is mainly characterized by inversion; the death of a tame animal now creates divine favour (Intr. 94–141), Valerius’ Pan who incites civil war is replaced by a Pan who ends one (Intr. 299–347), and Scipio, like Jason, then seeks to end the sorrow which paralyzes himself and the progress of the epic by bringing an offering to the dead, but in this case to summon them (Intr. 381–416 with fn.8 and 9).

In recent years, there has been a renewed interest in the vexed question of the interrelation between Silius and his contemporary Statius. The possibility of mutual—rather than one-sided—influence both complicates and enriches the study of this relation. But even without addressing the priority question, reading Statius and Silius together can be

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52 Saguntum, the ‘first’ city in the first part of the epic, is also modelled after Massilia; see Marks 2010a: 143–144 and Intr. 94–141.
53 Cf. Marks 2010a: 143.
54 For parallels between the end of Argonautica 2 and Punica 11, see Intr. 299–347 fn.21.
55 See Intr. 299–347 fn.22.
56 For another engagement with Argonautica 2 see Intr. 256–298.
illuminating for the interpretation of either poet. In the case of Punica 13, if we take the motif of civil war as an example, Silius’ imitation of the fratricidal war in the Thebaid may underline his presentation of the Second Punic war as civil war, or, conversely, if Statius imitates Silian passages in his own development of civil war themes, this would suggest that at least he would have read the Punica along these lines. Here, I would like to focus upon the parallels between the narrative of book 13 and the last books of the Thebaid. In his unsuccessful attack upon Rome in Punica 12, Hannibal bears a striking resemblance to Statius’ Capaneus, who assaults Thebes in Thebaid 10 but is struck down by Jupiter’s thunderbolts; in book 13, Hannibal tries once again to assume the role of Capaneus as he prepares to turn back to Rome (Intr. 1–29). The duel between Eteocles and Polynices in Thebaid 11 briefly shows as an (inverted) intertext at the beginning of the duel between Taurea and Claudius, but towards the end of that passage and at Taurea’s suicide, verbal parallels rather point to a connection with the just punishment of Creon at the hands of Theseus in Thebaid 12. Thebes’ submission to Theseus is also an intertext for Capua’s capitulation (Intr. 299–347). These parallels suggest that rather than a fratricidal conflict, Rome’s siege of Capua is a righteous act and ends, rather than perpetuates, civil war. Like the Valerian intertext, the parallel with Thebaid 12 spills into the next episode. In his actions after mourning his dead father and uncle, Scipio first mirrors Statius’ Argia, who sets out to bury her husband Polynices, and then resembles Theseus, through his promise of burial to Appius Claudius; the subsequent catalogue of funeral rites at 471–487 arguably engages with one of the major themes in the Thebaid, the denial of burial to the fallen.

Silius’ careful use and adaptation of specific intertexts thus suggests a conclusion of the motif of civil war permeating Roman epic. This may seem at odds with the earlier observation that the Punica frequently evokes the Roman civil wars which would ensue after the Punic wars; these tensions are resolved, however, if Silius’ portrayal of the Hannibalic war is read not as an adumbration of civil war, but as a parallel to it, illustrating both the crisis of Roman civil strife and its end (a reading which is elaborated in Intr. 850b–895). For the suggestion of a conclusion of civil war, the Capuan episode again serves as a microcosm for the entire epic (similar to how Capua’s fate anticipates that of Carthage in the motifs of Dido and Troy); the resolution of the ‘civil war’ between the Roman and Capuan heirs of Troy parallels the end of the war with Hannibal, which itself represents a kind of civil war. The poet reinforces this sense of closure with a number of submotifs. The notion of fratricide is countered with an emphasis on brotherly harmony in the portrayal of the brothers Scipio (n.650–651a). The Capuan episode closes with the problem of how to deal with those defeated in civil war; Silius juxtaposes righteous punishment and clemency (Intr. 299–347, 348–380). The punishment which awaits the

57 For a discussion and a (non-exhaustive) overview of possible interrelations between Punica 13 and the works of Statius, see the Appendix.
58 See n.146–148 trepido ac lituum tinnitu stare neganti ... equo.
59 See nn.173–178 meriti ... crwoirs and 374b–376 torvum ... et furiale renidens.
61 Note how the closure of the Capuan episode (381 Capua infaustam luit haud sine sanguine culpam ... et furiale renidens) interacts with Aeneas’ final words as he kills Turnus in the closing lines of the Aeneid: Pallas ... poenam scelerato ex sanguine sumit (A. 12.948–949); but see also n.381 for civil war intertexts.

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wicked returns as a motif in the *Nekyia* episode; the judgment of the tyrants (601–612), the penalties of the women whose actions harmed their country (833–849) and the promised punishment of both the civil war leaders (867) and Hannibal (869–873) all interact with each other.62

The last way in which Silius suggests the end of civil war is through allusions to Augustus’ conclusion of the internal wars of the first century BC. The narrative is littered with hints of the final victory in the naval battle of Actium.63 Scipio, the victor of Hannibal, figures as the parallel of Augustus, as the uniting leader who ends civil war and as proto-princeps (see Intr. 850b–895); his function as an emperor figure is underpinned by the imagery and intertexts in the *Nekyia*. Scipio appropriates and embodies the various models, parallels and prefigurators of Augustus: not only Aeneas, but also Alexander the Great, Romulus, Camillus and the Greek demigods Hercules and Bacchus.64 Silius’ use of Augustan imagery does not preclude the possibility that Scipio serves as a model, or parallel, for the Flavian dynasty; see § 6.

### 4.4 MEPAPOETICS

Silius’ reflection upon the long literary tradition in which he stands and the position of his own epic in that tradition not only emerges from the numerous verbal echoes which attest to his engagement with the works of his predecessors; it is also signposted by various metapoetic phrases and passages. The *Nekyia*, as an encounter with the shades of the past, particularly invites poetic self-reflection.65 The underworld (and its inhabitants) is a locus poeticus to which Scipio and the reader only gain access through the mediation of the vates (priest or poet?) who is suggestively named Autonoe;66 she instructs the hero in the tradition (405 mos, with note) of viewing ghosts and helps him in summoning the umbra of a maior vates, that is, the Vergilian Sibyl.67 Scipio is guided through Silius’ literary past by the shade of his admired predecessor’s creation; it is she who describes the underworld to him, which fittingly mirrors how earlier renderings of the underworld (not least Vergil’s own) speak to us through Silius’ text (Intr. 517–614). The *Nekyia* episode may usefully be seen as an overview of various epic intertexts.68 The hero encounters the deceased characters of Silius’ own epic;69 but soon, the Sibyl guides him to the Greek past, to Homer

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64 For Vergil’s Augustus, see n.634–636; for the nexus Scipio – Alexander – Augustus, but also Romulus and the demigods, see Intr. 615–649 and Intr. 762–805 (with n.763–766); for Camillus, see n.721–723 superos aequantem laude. Scipio’s embodiment of all these models culminates at 17.645–652.
66 For the priestess as a representative of Silius himself see n.400–403 Autonoe and Intr. 494–516.
67 See n.409 quae poscis maiori vate canentur.
68 Most (see fn.65) similarly argues that Homer’s and Vergil’s underworld episodes embrace and allude to the entirety of the epic genre (both heroic and didactic, with the addition of Roman historical epic in Vergil).
69 I.e. his father, Aemilius Paulus and the other Roman consuls, but also Hamilcar, who features in 1.70–139. Cf. Parkes 2010 on Statius’ similar practice of staging dead characters from his own epic in the *Nekyia in Thebaid* 4 to suggest the importance of his personal contribution to the literary tradition.
himself and his cast of characters. This most metapoetic passage of all does not only reflect
upon Silius’ relation to Homer and Scipio’s status as an epic hero, but also serves as an ode
to the power of poetry (Intr. 762–805). It is flanked by two passages with Roman heroes
and heroines (721–754 and 806–849); the homage to the roots of the genre, Greek
mythological epic, is thus juxtaposed with, or encapsulated within, the rich tradition of
Roman historical epic of which the Punica itself is a part.70 Finally, peering into the future
from this infernal setting, the poet adumbrates through the mouth of his (Vergil’s) vates the
epic of Lucan, his recent literary ancestor, but also looks beyond Lucan to the more distant
future with the hopeful words of Vergil’s fourth Eclogue, Silius’ more distant literary past
(Intr. 850b–895 with n.890b–893).71

Metapoetic phrases may also be found in other parts of Punica 13. Hannibal’s plunder
of the shrine of Feronia (83–91) is the plunder of a poetic site.72 In the preceding lines,
Dasius had recounted the wanderings of his ancestor Diomedes; his embedded narrative is a
sustained intertextual play with Sinon’s tale in Aeneid 2 and various other scenes from the
Aeneid. Silius’ ‘remembering’ of the Vergilian text is marked by memori ... mente (40) and
by volvens veterum memorata antiqua parentum (35), where veterum ... parentum alludes
to Vergil’s status as literary ancestor to Silius. His version is, however, quite different from
Vergil’s. In Dasius’ tale, Diomedes plays the role which Aeneas has in the Aeneid,
suggesting that the Greek hero is an alternative Aeneas and the story an alternative Aeneid
(Intr. 30–93); in this light, volvens may perhaps also be read as ‘reworking’.73 Finally,
while Silius often replays the epics of his predecessors in various ways, he hints at a replay
of his own epic in the final scene of book 13, where the Sibyl foretells that after the defeat
of Carthage, Hannibal will want to wage war on Rome again (878 rursus bella volet ...
instaurare, with note); that is, he will attempt another Punica.74

5 The position of book 13 in the Punica

The structure of the Punica as a whole is not immediately clear, not least since the
seventeen books of which it is composed defy a division into two or three equal parts. Over
the last century, several theories have been offered to explain its structure. In this section, I
will not attempt to outline the various theories, their merits or deficits, nor propose yet
another division; for not only does the subject deserve a more serious treatment than can be
offered here, but I also do not believe that Silius’ poem is structured according to a single

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70 Silius may well express a debt to all chroniclers of Roman history, not only (e.g.) Ennius’ Annals but also (e.g.) Livy’s prose composition.
71 Counterbalancing Lucan’s epic theme at the end of the Nekyia is the ‘incorporation’ (and appropriation) of another contemporary epic at the beginning of the episode through Scipio’s catalogue of funeral rites (471–487): Statius’ Thebaid. See § 4.3.3 above and Intr. 417–493.
72 At 83, itur in agros draws attention to the intertextuality with Vergil’s Georgics (n.83b–85), while Silius’ borrowing from Helvius Cinna is first signposted by the alexandrian footnote fama est (86) and is then, not without humour, identified as a rapina (90) (n.86–89).
73 For other metapoetic signposts, see nn.71 memores irasque metusque, 75–76a nunc age, quod superest and melioribus ... auspiciis.
74 An attempt that will come to nothing, however, as Hannibal will be ‘cheated’ of his war against Italy (886–887 falsusque cupiti Ausoniae motus) and commit suicide to escape capture by the Romans (890–893).
principle of arrangement. While divisions of the *Punica* into groups of books are often made on the basis of thematic connections, equal importance should be attached to intertextual signs. Silius links passages together both through parallel (or inverted) narratives and through shared intertexts; these internal connections should be central to a study of the architecture of the *Punica*, requiring an in-depth analysis of the intertexts throughout the poem. The previous paragraph has shown that several important motifs and intertexts are replayed twice (and perhaps even more) over the course of the poem, once for Rome and her allies, once for Carthage and her allies. There is not just a single caesura, however, which marks the turning point; at least two points in the second part of the epic may be identified as such, namely the openings of book 11 and 13. The first one, according to which a new part begins in book 11, opposes the fortunes of Rome and Carthage, with Rome’s decline culminating at the battle of Cannae (books 9–10) and Carthage’s at Zama (book 17). The second one may be described in the simplest of terms as the watershed of the epic missions of Hannibal (1–12) and Scipio (13–17). The use of a double structure creates dramatic irony; although Hannibal is at the height of his power in book 11, prompting Capua to declare for Carthage, and although he views his siege of Rome in book 12 as the culmination of his epic campaign, the epic is in fact already building towards Rome’s victory. Hannibal’s realisation of the shift in balance in book 13 paves the way for the emergence of his future victor, Scipio. The following sections will chart the place of *Punica* 13 in these two coexisting structures.

It was noted in § 3 that book 13 is composed of three separate episodes; combined with the above observations on its motifs being part of different structures, this might give the incorrect impression that the book is not a unified whole. Book 13 derives much of its

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75 See Augoustakis 2010b: 9–10 for a brief summary, and Fröhlich 2000: 20–28 for a detailed overview of the various theories. One approach has been to suppose an intended total of eighteen books (the assumption being that Silius had to abridge the final part due to failing health), which can be more easily divided into smaller groups (e.g. Bickel 1911, Wallace 1958, Kittel 1979: 211–218, Burck 1979: 260–270, Delarue 1992, Braun 1993). Recent decades, however, have seen more defenders of the view that the *Punica* was from the outset composed with the odd number of books in mind, a view to which I also subscribe. Among the theories outlining the architecture of a 17-book *Punica*, noteworthy proposals are those by Niemann (1975: 3–36), who divides the *Punica* in three unequal sections (1–2 Saguntum, 3–10 Roman defeats, 11–17 Carthaginian defeats); the symmetrical / parabolic structure championed by Ahl / Davis / Pomeroy (1986: 2505–2511), according to which Rome’s fortunes are in decline until the central episode of the defeat at Cannae, then rising again until the victory at Zama, resulting in a division of 1–2, 3–5, 6–7, 8–10, 11–12, 13–15 and 16–17; the theory by Fröhlich (2000: 18–19, 28–58) of three pentads divided by single books performing a hinge function (1–5, 6, 7–11, 12, 13–17); and that by Stürner (2011), of a central triad (8–10) flanked by two hebdomads (1–7 and 11–17), within each of which two further triads are distinguished (1–3 and 4–6 + 7, 11–13 + 14 and 15–17). Especially the latter two (quite ingenious) theses have merit, Fröhlich’s for signalling various thematic and intratextual connections between books, Stürner’s for his identification of triads. Limiting myself to book 13 here, none of these theories, however, is able to fit all the observations offered in the following sections on the intratextual connections between book 13 and other books (e.g. the link between Saguntum and Capua in 2 and 13, or perhaps 1–2 and 11+13, or the strong connections between 13 and 17). The best solution seems to presume that the various caesurae and structural parallels function not all in the same structure, but in multiple coexisting ones.

76 The studies by Gärtner (2010) and Stürner (2011), more alert to intertextual signs, hopefully mark a new trend.

77 See especially § 4.3.3 on Lucan, but the observation about Silius’ double replay of the *Bellum Civile* (Marks 2010a) holds for most other intertexts and motifs as well.

78 By marking these turning points, I do not intend to imply that, say, books 1–10 or 1–12 are unified wholes without their own relief or turning points. This paragraph only outlines those aspects of the structure of the *Punica* in which book 13 has a specific place.
coherence from its central theme, the ultimate victory of Rome. In the first episode, Hannibal learns of the protective presence of the Palladium in Rome; the second narrates the fall of Capua, foreshadowing the defeat of its ally Carthage; the third episode, the *Nekyia*, prepares Scipio for his task of taking command over the Roman forces and looks forward to his future triumph. The epic has entered a new and final phase; several elements in the book support its main theme, the anticipation of the end. These elements will be discussed below.

5.1 A NEW PHASE IN THE WAR (THE DECLINE OF CARTHAGE, 11–17)

The narrative of book 13 is part of a new phase of the war, or new part of the epic, which began already in book 11. When in the aftermath of the resounding victory at Cannae, Hannibal refused to march on Rome, his brother Mago drew the conclusion that Hannibal’s epic mission was a failure: 10.382–383 *tanta mole ... non Roma, ut creditur, ipsa, sed Varro est victus*, “Our mighty effort has not defeated Rome itself, as is believed, but only Varro”; Hannibal, who as the anti-Aeneas set out to subvert Aeneas’ legacy (Verg. A. 1.33 *tantae molis erat Romanam condere gentem*, “Such a mighty effort it took to found the Roman race”), gained not the desired result with his epic victory. Book 11 marks a new beginning after Cannae; its opening lines, which lists the regions and cities which went over to Hannibal (chief among which is Capua), clearly alludes to the beginning of the second half of Vergil’s *Aeneid* and its catalogue of the Italian resistance against the Trojans. As in the *Aeneid*, the war between Rome and the other Italian peoples is akin to civil war (see § 4.3.3). That this is a ‘new’ war and a new ‘half’ of the epic is also marked by a few other choice allusions to *Aeneid* 7 in book 13. The domesticated hind of Capua obviously recalls Silvia’s stag at A. 7.479–522, and Silius is not the only poet to narrate the death of a tamed animal as a herald of (civil) war at a structurally significant point in the epic (Intr. 94–141). Scipio, the main protagonist for this last phase of the war, laments at 13.451 that Appius had died now that *horrida bella*, “horrible wars”, require men such as he; the words echo Vergil’s phrase for the second half of his epic (A. 6.86, 7.41 *dicam horrida bella*).

But in a way, in book 11 the epic also begins anew entirely. The structure of 11.1–13.380 should be compared to that of *Aeneid* 1–4. Capua assumes the role of Vergil’s Carthage, or Dido (see § 4.3.1); the city must pay for its hospitality to Hannibal in book 11 with its fall in book 13. In between, Hannibal’s wandering in Italy and siege of Rome correspond to *Aeneid* 2 and 3, but with Silius’ characteristic inversion:

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79 Sil. 11.1–2 nunc age quos ... populos ~ Verg. A. 7.37 nunc age, qui reges, Erato, ...
80 This ties in well with the observation above (§ 4.3.2) that the *Iliad* (to which the *Aeneid* is a ‘sequel’) is a major intertext for the Cannae episode in books 8–10.
General introduction

(A. 1.630ff.) Aeneas is hosted by Dido

Hannibal is hosted in Capua (Sil. 11.259ff.)

(A. 2.25–39) the Trojans leave their city

wandering through Italy, attempting at sieging cities (Sil. 12.1–294, 420–448)

(A. 2.77–144) Sinon’s tale (Palladium) unsuccessful siege of Rome (Sil. 12.507–732)

(A. 2.250ff.) fall of Troy

the Romans leave their city (Sil. 12.739–752)

(Aeneid 3) wandering over the sea, attempts at founding cities

Dasius’ tale (Palladium) (Sil. 13.36–81)

(Aeneid 4) Aeneas abandons Dido; her suicide

Hannibal abandons Capua; suicide of Virrius and Taurea (Sil. 13.94ff.)

Silius has reversed both the movement of the books and the role of the protagonist. Hannibal is the anti-Aeneas in all respects; his mission is to destroy a city rather than to found one. In Aeneid 2, Venus shows Aeneas that the gods are destroying old Troy and that defending it is futile (A. 2.604–623), whereas in Punica 12, Hannibal’s patroness Juno allows him to see the gods defending Rome, new Troy, admonishing him that attacking is equally futile. When the Carthaginians leave, the Romans suspect treachery from Hannibal, but emerge from the city when it is clear that he has truly left; the end of Punica 12 is a clear reversal of the beginning of Aeneid 2, where the Trojans similarly pour out of the city, tricked into believing that the Greeks have left. In the beginning of book 13, Dasius’ tale corresponds to that of Vergil’s Sinon; but it is narrated after the siege, and to the attacker instead of the defender. Whereas in the first part of the Punica (1–10), Hannibal’s portrayal as anti-Aeneas suggests that he will undo Vergil’s epic by destroying Rome (which at least would be Hannibal’s own reading), the revaluation of his role in books 11–17 rather indicates that as the opposite of Aeneas, who succeeded in his mission, Hannibal by necessity cannot succeed. When his country had fallen, Aeneas went out to found a new Troy; Hannibal, conversely, goes from unsuccessfully besieging this new Troy to the fall of his country in Punica 17.

In the beginning of book 13, Hannibal seeks to turn the tide again, to put up resistance against Fortune’s (or the poem’s) new favour of Rome. His attempts parallel those of Fabius in Punica 7, who, albeit temporarily, checks the Punic onslaught through his delaying tactics; the connections between books 7 and 13 primarily emphasize the differences, however. The simile in 13.24–29 comparing Hannibal’s reinvigoration of his men to a pebble creating ripples across an entire pond is a seemingly favourable image of his rhetorical power only until we consider the corresponding simile in book 7, where Fabius’ opposite action (his speech calms his men) is likened to Neptunus calming a raging sea (n.24–29). Fabius protects his men like a shepherd protecting his sleeping flock from

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81 For both inversions see Ahl / Davis / Pomeroy 1986: 2500–2501.
82 See Intr. 1–29 and Intr. 30–93 for a more detailed discussion.
the wolves. Hannibal, on the other hand, abandons his ally Capua to the Romans; the difference with the narrative in book 7 is symbolized by wolves penetrating the city in the night, startling the hind which represents Capua, and it is now the attackers, rather than the defenders, who can sleep in peace. 83 Unaided by Hannibal, the Capuans display the fatal rashness against which Fabius had protected his men in *Punica* 7. 84 In the Roman camp, the new phase in the war calls for a revaluation of the strategy to be used against the enemy; Fabian tactics are abandoned in favour of a bolder approach. 85

5.2 HANNIBAL’S EXIT (THE EPIC MISSION OF SCIPIO, 13–17)

5.2.1 Hannibal’s failed repetition

Repetition is central to the *Punica*. As the above sections have shown, Silius replays the epics of his predecessors at various levels. It is primarily Silius’ Juno and her protégé Hannibal who are obsessed with repetition. Not only is the entire war a reiteration of the first Punic war (1.35–36 *iterum instaurata ... arma*, a phrase which also suggests a replay of the *Aeneid*), but Hannibal also regards his war as a reprise of the Trojan war (§ 4.3.2, Intr. 30–93). The same kind of repetition may be witnessed within the epic; over the course of the poem, the major motifs and subplots are played out and then replayed. It is important to note that in these various replays, the poet subtly changes the distribution of roles. Silius’ characters are not always aware of these changes, and this is partly what constitutes the tragic quality of Hannibal’s portrayal. To Hannibal’s mind, repetition means that he can try again. But he often fails at reading the intertexts correctly and identifies himself with the epic victor, while in fact he more and more plays the loser’s role.

After twelve books of taking the initiative, culminating in his grand victory at Cannae, Hannibal attempted to ‘finish’ his epic mission by taking Rome, but was repelled by Jupiter. His twelve books of epic, his anti-*Aeneid*, thus had a failed closure. In book 13, he seeks to renew his efforts, and thus to renew the epic, with a second attempt at taking Rome. He tries to imitate the opening moves of Lucan’s Caesar once again, but his imitation is flawed (Intr. 1–29); instead, the opening of book 13 marks the intensification of the use of Lucan’s Pompey as a model for Hannibal (see § 4.3.3 above). Next, Dasius’ narrative informs Hannibal that his identification with the Greeks attacking Troy (see § 4.3.2) is similarly faulty; Diomedes, Hannibal’s role model in the earlier books, made peace with Aeneas and returned the Palladium to him (thereby ensuring the divine

83 See nn.130–134 *incursu saevorum .... luporum* and 257–260 *sapor impavidus*. The Roman siege of Capua parallels Fabius’ own entrapment of Hannibal later in *Punica* 7 (n.138–141 *spissa vallata corona*).
84 See n.213–217a *eruperat ... reclusa in campum porta*. For the parallelism between Varro (the Roman consul responsible for the catastrophic defeat at Cannae) and his Capuan counterpart Virrius, see Intr. 256–298.
85 See nn.155–156a and 772–773a. Other parallels (and contrasts) between 7 and 13 are the devastation versus the preservation of the countryside by Hannibal and the Romans respectively (see § 4.3.3 above and Intr. 299–347), the significant stories about the past narrated to Hannibal by Cilnius and Dasius in the beginning of each book (7.29–68, 13.30–81; cf. Fröhlich 2000: 45), the proleptic prophecies (Proteus at 7.479–493 adumbrates books 8–17, the Sibyl at 13.507–515 books 15–17) and more generally the emergence of a Roman opponent capable of facing Hannibal: Fabius as his equal (cf. 7.25, 8.3), Scipio as his victor. For Scipio and Fabius, see nn.707–709 *multum uno maiora viro*, 721–723 Camillum.
General introduction

protection of Aeneas’ city),\textsuperscript{86} and thus turns out not to be a fitting role model at all. Hannibal only succeeds in repeating the failure of Vergil’s Turnus to repeat the \textit{Iliad} (Intr. 30–93). At the end of \textit{Punica} 13, the Sibyl foretells that after the defeat of Carthage, Hannibal will try to renew the war, and the epic, yet again (878). He will attempt to retrace his steps as an (anti-)Aeneas, but the final lines of the book witness rather the completion of his modelling after Lucan’s Pompey (Intr. 850b–95). In book 13, Hannibal has to cede his position of the epic victor, of the hero modelled after Aeneas, to Scipio.\textsuperscript{87}

5.2.2 The Nekyia: the preparation of Scipio

In the \textit{Aeneid}, the hero is prepared for his mission and for the war which he will have to fight in Latium through his \textit{katabasis}. Silius’ \textit{Nekyia} similarly prepares, or ‘educates’, Scipio for his major role in the last books of the \textit{Punica} and his task of facing, and defeating, Hannibal.\textsuperscript{88} In the first book, Hannibal is invested with his epic mission by Juno and through his oath to his father (1.38–119); a Massylian priestess then foretells his future (1.119–139), but only up to his siege of Rome and the confrontation with Jupiter (book 12). Thereafter, Hannibal has to give way to Scipio, and the Roman hero accordingly receives his epic mission in book 13. The Sibyl’s prophecy of Scipio’s future counterbalances the one in book 1 by covering the remainder of the epic;\textsuperscript{89} it motivates him with the prospect of a victory divinely sanctioned by Jupiter (Intr. 494–516). The hero is encouraged to take up a double role: that of avenger of his family and nation (507 \textit{ulcisceris}) and saviour of his country (504 \textit{deque tuis pendentia Dardana fatis}).\textsuperscript{90} The sense that Scipio is invested with these tasks is reinforced through allusions to the scenes in which Vergil’s Aeneas is sent on his epic journey by the ghosts of Hector, Creusa and his father.\textsuperscript{91}

Scipio’s preparation includes a combination of several lessons. It is revealed that Jupiter not only supports him, but actually is his father (Intr. 615–649). The hero receives advice from his (mortal) parents and from his role model Alexander (Intr. 615–649, n.669b–670, n.772–773a). He views \textit{exempla} from Roman history, who represent the virtues which contribute to Rome’s victory over its foes (Intr. 705–761, 806–850a), and the Homeric characters, a viewing which underlines Scipio’s place in the epic tradition as he sets out to attain his own epic victory (n.793–795). The Sibyl’s description of the horrors of the underworld, with which Hannibal is associated in the \textit{Punica}, suggests that Hell can be contained and that Hannibal will be punished, a lesson which is later reinforced by the prophecy on the Carthaginian’s final years (Intr. 517–614, 850b–895).

\textsuperscript{86} In other words, Diomedes’ ‘alternative \textit{Aeneid}’ (Intr. 30–93) exposes the futility of Hannibal’s anti-\textit{Aeneid}.

\textsuperscript{87} For the opposite behaviour of Hannibal and Scipio as epic heroes in books 12 and 13, see n.397–398.

\textsuperscript{88} For the ‘education’ of Scipio, see especially Marks 2005: 113–161 (p.133–161 on the \textit{Nekyia} episode).

\textsuperscript{89} See also fn.85 above for Proteus’ similar prophecy in book 7.

\textsuperscript{90} See particularly Intr. 650–704 and 705–761. The first role is emphasized through the modelling of his slain family after Aeneas’ Pallas and Achilles’ Patroclus, the second through allusions to the fall of Troy and Aeneas’ mission to secure a new future for his country.

\textsuperscript{91} For Hector see n.707–709, for Creusa and Anchises see Intr. 615–649.
5.2.3 The anticipation of the end

Ever since Hannibal’s attack on Saguntum in books 1–2, the epic had been building towards his siege of Rome. Now that this assault has failed, his decision to move away from Rome’s walls coincides with the transference of the initiative in the war to the Romans.\textsuperscript{92} The siege of Rome is substituted by the siege of Capua. The latter is functionally similar to the siege of Saguntum, which is the opening move of Hannibal’s campaign against Rome; likewise, the fall of Capua is the first real step towards Carthage’s defeat (Intr. 94–141, 256–298).\textsuperscript{93}

There are two other ways in book 13 in which Silius looks ahead at the following books, adumbrating Rome’s ultimate victory. The first is a series of images suggestive of Carthage’s future defeat. Hannibal summons before his soldiers a picture of Carthage pleading; while it is meant to stimulate and reinvigorate his men, the intertexts for Hannibal’s imagery suggest that his city is losing (n.12b–14). Dasius’ tale ominously describes how the Gaus who took Rome in 390 BC and who serve as models for Hannibal were destroyed by divine punishment (n.79–81). Of the Capuan fighters, Taurea had been credited with surpassing Hannibal’s African troops; consequently, his defeat at the hands of the Roman champion Claudius spells doom for the Carthaginians.\textsuperscript{94} Some twenty five lines later, three Capuan brothers defending the walls are compared to the three-bodied giant Geryones; since the monster represents the threat posed by Carthage, the slaying of one of these three brothers (‘bodies’) by the Roman consul Fulvius anticipates the Punic defeat, and also symbolizes that the capture of Capua is but the first step (Intr. 179–255).

Secondly, several events in book 13 have a direct counterpart in book 17. The fall of Capua not only marks the beginning of Carthage’s defeat, but also, as altera Carthago, represents its fall (see § 4.3.1 above). This technique of foreshadowing is witnessed also within the Capuan episode, with the death of the hind and the flight of Taurea symbolizing the impending doom of the city. A few other instances of passages in book 13 foreshadowing those in book 17 may be added. Hannibal’s backward gaze on Rome is later picked up by his gaze on Italy as he sets sail for Africa (including a failed attempt to return; see Intr. 1–29). Hannibal abandons his plan to assault Rome because of the protective presence of the Palladium, just as in book 17, the Romans acquire another talisman, the image of Cybele, in order to repel Hannibal from Italy (Intr. 30–93). The ship containing this image can only be brought safely into Rome through the virtue of Claudia Quinta, whose crucial role in book 17 is anticipated in the catalogue of Roman women in the Nekyia (Intr. 806–850a).

The last scene in book 13 with a counterpart in book 17 is the final one. The prophecy of Hannibal’s death, a decidedly closural scene, is seemingly offset by the far more open

\textsuperscript{92} Hannibal’s order to move away echoes his order at the start of the march towards Rome in book 3; see n.82–83a convelli signa. Von Albrecht (1964: 24–46) calls attention to the motif of the walls protecting Rome (the moenia Roma) in books 1–12, which is reversed in the last books when it is Carthage’s walls that are threatened.

\textsuperscript{93} The narrative of Hannibal’s defeat at Zama in book 17 closely parallels his failed siege of Rome in book 12, even to the extent that the battle is presented as a siege of Carthage (Marks 2005: 194–200). Thus the beginning and the end of the Carthaginian campaign against Rome (1–12) mirror the beginning and end of the Roman campaign against Carthage (13–17). For mirrored beginnings and endings in the Punic, see also Marks 2010a.

\textsuperscript{94} See n.142–145 superare lacerto ... et Autololas dabat et Maurusia tela.
ending in book 17, when Hannibal is spirited away from the battlefield by Juno and leaves the epic with the threat that Rome will never be at peace while he is alive (17.606–615). Still obsessed with repetition, Hannibal survives and therewith embodies the promise of future wars, future epics—such as Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*, given Hannibal’s connection to civil war (§ 4.3.3). For this tension between a ‘true’ closure through prophecy and a more ambivalent ending in the last book, we may compare Vergil’s *Aeneid*; the adumbration of Augustus’ triumph in book 8 is counterbalanced by the more equivocal nature of the last lines of *Aeneid* 12 where Aeneas kills Turnus in anger. But the *Punica* does not end with Hannibal’s threatening exit. The final scene of the epic is Scipio’s triumph, which clearly picks up the end of *Aeneid* 8. In book 17, Silius juxtaposes (or perhaps we might even say ‘responds to’) the open ending of Hannibal’s escape with the closure of Scipio’s victory, a movement which mirrors that in book 13, where the disturbing vision of the civil war leaders is answered by the prophecy of Hannibal’s death. It emerges that in both books, the ‘open ending’—the adumbration of (civil) war in the catalogue of 13.853–867 and in Hannibal’s escape in 17.606–615—is countered (or ‘closed’) by the subsequent closural scene—Hannibal’s death and Scipio’s victory. We may also observe that Silius has interchanged the position of Vergil’s two types of closure: the death of the antagonist and the triumph of the victor. By inverting his predecessor’s order and ending with a triumph, the poet seems to impose upon the Roman epic genre the ‘true’ closure which Vergil so tantalizingly seems to withhold from his readers.

6 The dating of the *Punica* and its relation to contemporary Rome

Little is known (and much has been speculated) about the chronology of Silius’ composition of the *Punica*. The epigrams of Martial suggest that by 88 AD, Silius had established a name as an epic poet writing about the Second Punic War (4.14), and in 92 at least several books of the *Punica* were available for reading, as follows from 7.63. In the latter epigram, Martial reminds his readers that Silius had first been a successful orator (see fn.13 above) and that after his consulship he had devoted his years of retirement to poetry (7.63.9–12). It is now commonly assumed that Silius started working on his epic shortly

95 Hannibal’s threat thus parallels Dido’s curse in the *Aeneid*, which (for Silius’ readers) similarly ‘anticipates’ another epic: the *Punica*.
96 See Hardie 1997: 142–151. The fact that in both epics the prophetic closure is found four books before the end seems hardly coincidental.
97 In book 17, the sense of true closure despite Hannibal’s escape is reinforced by the words which immediately follow at 17.618 hic finis bello.
98 The final lines of the epic allude to the final lines of *Bellum Civile* 8, Lucan’s words on Pompey buried in Egypt (Hardie 1997: 159–160). By referring to the death of Pompey at the close of the *Punica*, Silius reinforces the parallel between the end of the war with Hannibal and the end of civil war (*pace* Tipping 2007: 239–241, 2010a: 215–218; cf. Marks 2010a: 149 “the allusion reminds us, one final time, of Hannibal and his likeness to Pompey and in this respect reinforces the defeated and vanquished outcome of the war for Carthage and her leader”, and Bessone 2013: 98). We may note that the same parallelism between Pompey in defeat and Hannibal in defeat is found in the corresponding finale of book 13 (see Intr. 850b–895). This final allusion to Lucan thus contributes to Silius’ putting an end to the theme of civil war.
after his term as proconsul, roughly at the time of Domitian’s ascension (AD 81), but in truth, we cannot know; Martial’s reference to his consulate may suggest a much earlier starting date, and in any case it seems unwise to press this poetic dichotomy between Silius’ forensic and poetic activities into a biographical clue—the two may well have overlapped.100 Similar problems attend the attempts to date the composition of individual books. Two assumptions underlie most of these attempts: that Silius wrote his books in order (without returning to them afterwards), and/or that he averaged a pace of a book per year.101 These must remain only assumptions, however, and arguments based on the practice of other poets have been made both in support and against them.102 It is clear that Silius wrote the Punica at least partially under emperor Domitian, in view of the eulogy of the Flavian dynasty at 3.594–629, which culminates in the reign of Domitian; since the emperor is referred to as Germanice (3.607), the terminus post quem of the passage is likely AD 83 (his victory over the Chatti).103 A question which has been occupying scholars for quite some time is whether the Punica was also finished under the same emperor. Four passages in the Punica have been variously interpreted as references to contemporary events or comments on Domitian or his successor (Nerva or Trajan). Three of these passages are in book 13, and the below discussion will focus on them.104

The infernal penance of an unchaste Vestal which is described at 13.844–848 has frequently been connected with the punishment of three of these priestesses in the early part of the reign of Domitian and especially with the live burial of the senior Vestal around AD 91. Both the singularity of Domitian’s revival of the ancient traditional punishment and Silius’ mention of only a single Vestal suggest that this passage evokes the later event of the two and thus should be dated at or after 91, but due to the existence of the earlier trial (itself already a distinctive event in Domitian’s reign), we cannot be completely certain.105 Conversely, it has been asserted of two other passages in book 13 that they could not have been written under Domitian since they would entail criticism of the emperor: the judgment of the tyrants in the underworld (13.601–612) and the praise for Sulla’s abdication (13.858–860). This verdict is hardly justified if the passages are read in their context. In the latter case, there is little reason why Domitian would have identified himself with Sulla (see n.858–860). The earlier passage is more controversial. On the one hand, the justice done to tyrants in the afterlife is a familiar theme in descriptions of the underworld; on the other hand, Domitian is known to have executed the sophist Maternus for speaking against

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100 See also Wilson 2013: 16 n.10, 25.
102 Linear composition (the unfinished epics of Lucan, Valerius Flaccus, Statius’ Achilleid) vs. ‘dynamic’ composition (Vergil, cf. Donat. Vit. Verg. 21–24); pace of composition: one book per year (e.g. Statius’ Thebaid; see further Wistrand 1956: 59–60) vs. a slower (Vergil, Horace) or faster pace (Ovid).
103 The reference to a victory over the Sarmatians (3.616–617) could (as many scholars think) be an indication that the encomium was written later, after AD 92; conversely, Wistrand (1956: 5–30) argues that the reference is to be interpreted as a panegyric hope for future triumphs, and that book 3 is to be dated around AD 83/84.
105 See for an extensive discussion Intr. 806–850a.
tyrants in a practice speech. But in this case as well it is important to consider the context of the passage. The judgement of the tyrants forms the climax of the description of the underworld and of Silius’ conscious reworking of the models provided by Vergil’s *Aeneid* 6 and Seneca’s *Hercules Furens*. It has a function in the plot; the scene informs Scipio that evil deeds will be punished in the underworld, and a plausible interpretation is that it is the evils perpetrated by the ‘tyrant’ Hannibal which (on the narrative level) should come to our minds first and foremost. Placed at the beginning of the *Nekyia*, the underworld description with its emphasis on justice in the afterlife counterbalances the final two scenes: the viewing of the future civil war leaders (including the assurance that they will be punished), which is paired with the foretold end of Hannibal. Any interpretation of the tyrants’ penance (including the perception of an anti-Domitianic sentiment) should therefore also take stock of this pairing and its significance.

As has been noted in § 4.3.3, the Hannibalic war in the *Punica* lends itself to be read as a parallel for the Roman civil wars; unlike Lucan (but like Vergil), Silius also looks beyond the horrors of civil war to the emergence of a single leader who saves Rome by ending the war—Scipio, who in many ways is cast as a proto-*princeps* (see also § 4.3.3). The last few decades have witnessed a trend in Silian scholarship towards interpreting the epic in its synchronic, political context. If the Hannibalic war is a parallel for civil war, the promise of punishment for Hannibal and the future civil war leaders (13.867–875), and the viewing of penalized tyrants in the underworld should be connected with the end of civil war rather than with the misdeeds of Domitian; or more broadly formulated and in a Flavian context, the plot outlined above more properly represents the emergence of the Flavians than the ascension of Nerva or Trajan.

Book 13 gives little reason therefore to suppose a post-Domitianic composition or revision; the next question is whether there is positive support to be found in the epic for the hypothesis implied above, that Scipio is not only a proto-*princeps* (i.e. an “Augustus”) but also in some sense a proto-Flavian (i.e. a “Domitian”). A comparison with Vergil is

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106 Dio C. 67.12.5; cf. Fröhlich (2000: 14), who in support of a dating after Domitian’s death also argues “daß die Vorstellung von büßenden Tyrannen vorzüglich dann in Mode kommt, wenn ein rücksichtloser Herrscher von der Weltbühne abgetreten ist”, aduding the treatment of Claudius in Seneca’s *Apocolocyntosis*. Perhaps so, but Seneca wrote his *Hercules Furens*, including its description of tortured tyrants in the underworld, in all probability during Claudius’ reign (Intr. 517–614 fn.24). Furthermore, we cannot deduce from the Maternus incident that the subject of tyrants was generally taboo (it was a favourite motif in declamations, after all; see Nauta 2002: 418 n.127); we simply do not know what he said that would have offended Domitian, and how Silius’ passage compares to it.

107 See Intr. 517–614. This integration also shows that the passage is not merely appended to the description, such as might perhaps be expected if it were part of a (politically inspired) revision following Nerva’s ascension.

108 See Intr. 517–614 and n.612 *letiferis ... tyrannis*.

109 Perhaps, if we are set on viewing the passage as a reference to contemporary emperors, we should see Nero behind the tyrants who are accused by their own dead victims; see n.609–611 for a parallel with the punishments outlined for Nero in the tragedy *Octavia*.

110 Cf. Marks 2010a: 152 “just as Rome in the first half of the *Punica* is comparable to Rome in her recent civil wars, so the emergence of Scipio in the second half is comparable to the emergence of the Flavians and, above all, Domitian out of those civil wars” and Littlewood 2011: liii “The rise of Scipio after Cannae and Rome’s subsequent victories represents the emergence, after civil war, of Vespasian and the benign rule of the Flavian dynasty.” For the pairing of Scipio and the Flavian dynasty in the prophecy of Jupiter in book 3 (a pairing which balances that of Hannibal and the future civil war leaders in book 13), see Intr. 850b–895.
instructive here. The *Punica* is a sequel to the *Aeneid* not only because it continues Dido’s storyline; it also develops and modifies the Vergilian anticipation of the principate. Just as history repeated itself in AD 68–69 with another traumatic civil war followed by the rise of a new imperial dynasty, so too Silius reuses the motifs which Vergil employed for his presentation of Augustus to narrate the rise of the Flavian dynasty through prefiguration and characterization. There are a few indications that Silius in his epic adapts these motifs to fit their new Flavian context. In the first place, the poet moves subtly away from the Julio-Claudian myths and the prominence of Aeneas as the progenitor of their dynasty. Scipio is an *Aeneades* (13.767), an heir of Aeneas, but unlike Augustus, he can lay no claim to a family tie with the hero of legend.\footnote{Family and ancestry still plays an important role in the *Punica*— Fabius is characterized through his descent from Hercules, for instance, and Scipio can boast Jupiter as his father (for the role of family in the *Punica*, see Bernstein 2008, 2010). It is specifically the family connection with Aeneas which has lost its special relevance.} It is his deeds and his virtues which make him another Aeneas to Rome. He is the ultimate representative of the *Aeneadae* whose glory is sung in the *Punica* (1.2)—not the descendants of Aeneas by blood or adoption, but all Romans. Aeneas’ own role in the foundation of the Roman empire is also curtailed, as may be illustrated by Dasius’ story (13.36–81); in this tale, it is not the Vergilian hero, but Diomedes who brings the Palladium to Latium and provides the future Rome with its divine protection. With its numerous Vergilian echoes, Dasius’ tale serves as an ‘alternative’ *Aeneid*; the prominence of a non-Trojan hero arguably reflects the shift of power from the ‘Trojan’ Julio-Claudians to the Sabine Flavian dynasty (Intr. 30–93).

The same tale also suggests another link with the reigning emperor Domitian by attributing an important role to the goddess Minerva in securing Rome’s future (as it is she who tasks Diomedes with restoring her Palladium to the Trojans in Latium); she was the favourite deity of Domitian, a fact which may also be important in other parts of the epic. On the eve of the battle of Cannae, the poet (through the prophetic speech of Proteus) looks back to the judgment of Paris, who chose Venus, the patroness of the Trojans and the ancestor of the Julio-Claudian dynasty. In the second part of the epic, the contest between goddesses is replayed when Scipio is offered a choice between Voluptas (Venus) and Virtus (Minerva); this time, the choice falls on the warlike goddess.\footnote{For Proteus’ narrative of the beauty contest in *Punica* 7 and the parallels with Voluptas/Virtus, see Littlewood 2011: 165–166.} The two differing choices may be argued to reflect the patron deities of the two successive imperial dynasties; Scipio, like Domitian, chooses the virtues embodied by Minerva.\footnote{By a delicate irony, Paris’ choice for Venus over Minerva is one of the passages which led Bickel (1911) to draw the opposite conclusion, as he argued that *Punica* 7–17 could not have been written under Domitian; he also adduced Minerva’s aid to Hannibal in the battle of Cannae at 9.438ff. Bickel’s thesis was refuted by Wistrand (1956: 53–57). For the role of Minerva in the *Punica*, see further Intr. 30–93.}

A third indication for a Flavian reading of Scipio in book 13 may be the connections which can be made between the eulogy of Domitian and his house in 3.594–629 and Scipio’s meeting with Greek role models in 13.762ff. Silius’ description of the achievements of Alexander the Great (in whose footsteps Scipio seeks to tread) evokes not only Augustan panegyric but also encomiastic poetry for Domitian (Intr. 762–805). The order of models (Alexander – Homer) parallels the order in 3.607–621 of Domitian’s talents as general and poet. Most importantly, the advice which Alexander gives to

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Scipio—of allowing virtus to reach for the stars—will be realized by the Flavians. Silius herewith anticipates the promise of apotheosis to Scipio by Virtus in book 15, an apotheosis which again underlines his status as a proto-princeps.

Exploring the political dimension of the Punica may thus be profitable. It is not, however, the only dimension along which meaning is created. Just as the Aeneid is not only ‘about’ Augustus (nor in any univocal way), but also, for instance, ‘about’ the position of Roman literature versus its Greek models, the Punica may be fruitfully studied in its literary quality of ‘heir’ to a long tradition of classical literature, which it envelops, appropriates and perhaps tries to conclude (see § 5.2.3). In this area of study, too, the regard for the poem’s diachronic context (i.e. the literary tradition which fuels the narrative of the Punica) has been in recent years been complemented with a greater attention to its synchronic context—Silius’ interaction and poetic competition with his contemporaries Valerius Flaccus and Statius. Some aspects of mutual influence between Silius and Statius are charted in the Appendix. Beyond enriching our readings, a study into the interrelation of these poets might even—if only as its most prosaic by-product—shed some light upon the dating of the Punica, provided that it is at all possible to establish the direction of influence with datable intertexts.

7 Introduction to the commentary

7.1 Arrangement of the commentary

This commentary studies Punica 13 from several angles. Since different users expect different perspectives from a commentary, an attempt has been made to facilitate varying uses of the volume; I have chosen, however, to explore two of the possible angles of study in more depth. As noted in § 1, each of the eighteen scenes of Punica 13 receives an introduction which is composed of two main parts. While both parts examine how Silius gives shape to his narrative, the first does so through the lens of intertextuality, the second through an analysis of the narrative structure. In the first section, the focus lies on the main intertexts of the scene, the interpretation of Silius’ engagement with these literary models, on major themes and motifs, and on interrelations with other scenes in book 13 and the rest of the Punica; many of the conclusions have been summarized in this General Introduction.

The tools for the analysis in the second section are primarily supplied by narratology and discourse linguistics; it will examine narratological features (tempo, focalisation) and

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116 Cf. e.g. Lovatt 2010 and the collection of studies in Manuwald / Voigt 2013.  
117 It is important to observe the reservations voiced by Lovatt (2010) about the possibility to identify this direction in the case of the Punica and Statius’ Thebaid, in view of the likelihood of mutual interplay (i.e. there is not one direction). A more fruitful avenue, however, might be an intertextual comparison with Statius’ Silvae and the epigrams of Martial; since these poems were written much faster and presumably published not too long after, the same type of mutual interplay is less probable. See the Appendix for a discussion.
discourse linguistic features such as tense usage, anaphoric reference and particles, supported by observations on metre and stylistic features (such as alliteration), to map out the way in which Silius builds his story, highlights certain elements, realizes fluid transitions between his scenes, balances and mirrors speeches. While these second sections may be of special relevance to readers interested in the poet’s narrative technique, the two parts of the introductions are expressly meant to be read together, since they often complement each other and observations made in the first section are supported by those in the second, or vice versa. For a complete interpretation and appreciation of Silius’ lines, an analysis of the narrative structure is just as indispensable as a literary analysis. For the sake of clarity and accessibility, I have made an effort to limit the amount of linguistic jargon; some frequently used terms will be discussed below. The analyses will be limited to examining the narrative at scene level; readers looking for a philological discussion at sentence level are referred to the notes, which will focus on interpretation and explain single words or phrases, point out verbal or conceptual parallels with other texts, elucidate matters of syntax or textual criticism and discuss a selection of realia.

7.2 ANALYSES: LINGUISTIC FRAMEWORK

This short paragraph will outline the main methods of analysis in the sections devoted to the poet’s presentation of his narrative. Central to these sections is the study of the structure of each scene; the theoretical framework which will be used for these studies is that of discourse linguistics, complemented by narratological observations. In discourse linguistics, the focus of study is the text rather than the sentence, specifically the relation of the text to its communicative context; particular attention is paid to the way in which an author establishes textual cohesion between smaller units of his narrative.118 The alternation of units is often one between different modes in which the narrator presents his material (‘discourse modes’, in linguistic terms); this alternation of modes forms the basis of the narrative structure, i.e. of the organization of a text. We may distinguish between various such modes: narrative (in the more limited sense of a chronologically related sequence of events), description (a spatially related sequence of particulars), information (the narrator fills in background details for his story) and comment (the narrator makes a comment, often evaluating in nature, about his own narrative). At the boundaries between such units, cohesion needs to be marked more explicitly, by a variation of means which are discussed below. Studying these markers provides insight in the layout of the narrative, its highlights and the way in which some parts are presented in relation to others; these results may, in turn, be usefully combined with a literary approach for the interpretation of the text and its message.

118 For Classics, this field of study is still relatively new and primarily practised by Dutch scholars; a few key works of inspiration for this approach from outside Classics are: Labov (1972) Language in the Inner City, Toolan (1990) The Stylistics of Fiction, Fleischman (1990) Tense and narrativity, Chafe (1994) Discourse, Consciousness and Time, and Smith (2003) Modes of Discourse. A good example of the application of discourse linguistics for a literary interpretation of a Latin work is Kroon 2007, which also provides an introduction into the theory; see also Kroon 2002, 2005 and 2012.
A well-recognized group of markers of textual cohesion are particles, which have no intrinsic ‘meaning’ but rather make explicit the relation between two textual units, which can be sentences, but also larger bodies of text (e.g. 30 at, 51 nam). Somewhat related, in that they also mark a new narrative step, are temporal and spatial adverbs functioning as connectives such as hinc, inde and tum. Other means of marking the transition to a new unit are (recapitulating) sub clauses (e.g. the dum clause at 94) and participles.

The narrative structure may also show in the specific choice of referential expressions within so-called ‘chains of reference’. The less clear it is which referent is meant, the more heavy is the type of referential marker used. New topics are often introduced by a full noun phrase; well established topics receive no marking at all (zero anaphora). In between are anaphoric pronouns such as hic and ille; these are found when the referent is already known but needs to be marked again explicitly. In the case of ille this may be to mark the transition to another, earlier introduced character (e.g. 523); hic is often used when a new step is made in the narrative (e.g. 343, at the transition between description and narrative). The type of referential marker thus gives a clue as to the structure of the text.

The last marker of textual structure to be discussed here is the use of tenses, along with its relation to discourse modes. The interpretation of tenses differs between the various modes (e.g. in a narrative, a perfect tense form is chronologically related to the other verbs, while in a comment the perfect primarily expresses anteriority to the moment of speech). Furthermore, a narrator may choose to vary the orientation point from which he tells his story: either from his own time, in past tenses, or as a ‘live report’ in present tenses, creating the illusion that the events are unfolding, as it were, before the eyes of his audience. A narrative passage may, therefore, be either in present tenses or perfect tenses, whereas a descriptive segment can be in present or imperfect tenses. While the majority of Silius’ narrative is presented from the story time as a ‘live report’, an episode is often framed by a few lines in past tenses (the orientation and the conclusion of the episode). Comments, due to their very nature, are mostly presented from the narrator’s own time. Tense usage and cohesion markers are not the only indicators of the alternation of modes and therewith of the organization of the text; this organization also emerges from various semantic indicators, such as spatial connectors for descriptions or evaluating words (e.g. superlatives) in comments. For a clear example of a passage in which this alternation is well visible, see An. 94–141. For a short list of publications on cohesion markers, tenses and discourse modes, see the Bibliography (“Linguistic publications”).

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119 This representation is somewhat simplified, as for instance a perfect tense form can also have a place in a narrative related in present tenses (a ‘live report’) to narrate something which ‘has just happened’ as a means to maintain the illusion that the events are unfolding quicker than the narrator can show them; see e.g. 247 iacuit and the discussion in An. 179–255.
120 Silius sometimes uses description as an alternative to narrative, furthering his story not with chronologically related events but with a description of a lengthy situation in all its different aspects, a description which has no internal chronology but which does cover a certain time span. See An. 256–298 for an example.
121 Cf. e.g. the framing of the Nekyia episode by lines 381–387 and 894–895 in past tenses.
122 The exception would be ‘prophetic’ narratorial comments in future tenses about events that are yet to come in the time of the story; cf. e.g. 11.123–126.
At various points, I have made use of the narrative subcategories identified by Labov (1972). A prototypical story may have the following structure:

a. abstract An announcement that a story will follow in the form of a brief outline of it, which encapsulates the point of the story.
b. orientation The scene is set: the narrator indicates time, place, the main characters and their activity / the situation
c. complicating action The development of the narrative action
d. peak Climax of the narrative action
e. evaluation The narrator comments upon the content and/or the significance of the story
f. resolution The aftermath or outcome, which wraps up the story
g. coda A closure, which forms a bridge back to the time of narrating

This structure in different narrative steps is often what is expressed by the alternation of discourse modes, and by the alternation of tenses typically used for these modes, as was described above. A nice and short example is the tale by the ghost of Gnaeus Scipio of his own death at 687–695:

687 excipit inde suos frater coniungere casus: abstract about: suos casus
688 excelsae turris post ultima rebus in artis orientation opening situation subsidium optarem supremaque bella ciebam. (pluperfect and imperfect tenses)
690 fumantes taedas ac lata incendia passim complicating action + peak et mille inieceret faces.
691 nil nomine leti evaluation evaluation of his death de superis queror; (present tense)
692 haud parvo data membra sepulcro resolution outcome (and explanation of the evaluation): nostra cremaverunt in morte haerentibus armis. cremation in the tower (perfect tense)
694 sed me luctus habet, geminae ne clade ruinæ cesserit affusis oppressa Hispania Poenis. coda bridge to present: remaining Carthaginian threat to Spain (present tense)

Finally, in some sections there will be mention of a ‘camera’, or ‘shift of camera view’. With this metaphor I understand the focus of the narrator’s attention, what he is ‘showing’ to his audience; the metaphor is often used in relation to the particle at, which marks a shift to a (often spatially) different scene.
7.3 NOTE ON THE TRANSLATIONS

Each note begins with a translation of the respective lines. These translations have not been combined to face the text of *Punica* 13 by deliberate choice; they are expressly meant as part of the commentary to elucidate my interpretation of the text and do not reflect any literary aspirations. In order not to burden further a book already quite full, only the most relevant textual parallels are accompanied by a translation. For citations from the rest of the *Punica*, the translation by Duff has been used and, where necessary, adapted; similarly, for quotations of the texts of other authors the translations in the Loeb series have been utilized.123

7.4 NOTE ON THE TEXT

All extant manuscripts of the *Punica* stem from a single codex discovered in 1417 by Poggio Bracciolini. A stemma of the mss. has been drawn up by Josef Delz in his now authoritative Teubner edition of 1987 (see below).


123 For Lucan, I have made use of the excellent translation by Braund (1992).

124 From 9.379 onwards, ms. Γ is copied from a different source; see Delz 1987: xl.
Among the most important manuscripts are F and L, which together form branch \( \alpha \); both possibly descend directly from the copy made for Poggio,\(^{125}\) which itself has now been lost together with the original manuscript. In the more complex branch \( \beta \), the main witnesses are G (the parent of several other mss.), V, \( \Gamma \) and O. In addition to the manuscript found by Poggio, there was a codex preserved in Cologne (the \textit{Coloniensis}), which was collated by Carrio and Modius in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century; when Nic. Heinsius looked for it in the next century, it had disappeared, but he was able to copy a collation (perhaps the one by Carrio). The collations and emendations of these renaissance scholars are preserved in Drakenborch’s edition of 1717.

The following text is the unaltered text of Delz, reprinted by kind permission of Verlag Walter de Gruyter, including critical apparatus. Accompanying the notes in the commentary, readers will find the same text (without apparatus) with a small number of modifications which will be defended in the notes. These different readings are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>line</th>
<th>Delz</th>
<th>this volume</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>ad omnes</td>
<td>ad auris (( \omega ))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>mala</td>
<td>male (QY( r2 ))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>148</td>
<td>videt et clamare propinquum,</td>
<td>videt et clamore propinquo, (( \omega ), post propinquum \textit{interpunxi})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>162</td>
<td>ruens</td>
<td>furens (Nic. Heinsius)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>211</td>
<td>balteo</td>
<td>ab alto (( \omega ))</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>439–441</td>
<td>est’ (iam cuncta videbat, / ... / ... equos); ‘contende</td>
<td>est. iam cuncta videbis, / ... / ... equos. contende (Ruperti)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>581</td>
<td>morbis</td>
<td>Morbis (Spaltenstein)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>674</td>
<td>†devexa†</td>
<td>devicta (Summers)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>737</td>
<td>mitis</td>
<td>miti (\textit{edd. a r1})</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>799–800</td>
<td>accipit umbras / ire viro. stupet</td>
<td>accipit umbras. / invicto stupet (Thilo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>845</td>
<td>Orthus</td>
<td>Orthrus (L( \beta )Ch)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>850</td>
<td>satis.’ mox deinde: ‘†videntem†</td>
<td>satis. mox deinde sequentum (ego)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Delz also begins a new paragraph at 277; to my view, the new paragraph begins only at 279.

\(^{125}\) Delz 1987: xv and xx, where he surmises that \( \alpha \) was Poggio’s copy. See for further discussion Reeve 1989.
Sigla

E praefatione Josephi Delz ea excerpsi quae ad librum tertium decimum pertinent.

ω consensus stirpium α et β
α consensus codicum F et L
  F: Firenze, Bibl. Laur., Aed. 196
  L: Firenze, Bibl. Laur., Laur. 37, 16
β consensus codicis G cum γ
  G: Firenze, Bibl. Laur., Laur. (Gadd.) 91 sup. 35
γ consensus codicis V cum δ
  V: Città del Vaticano, Bibl. Vat., Vat. lat. 1652
δ consensus codicum Γ et O
  Γ: Città del Vaticano, Bibl. Vat., Ottob. lat. 1258
  O: Oxford, Queen’s College 314
Cc lectio codicis Colonensi a Carrione prolata
Cm lectio codicis Colonensi a Modio prolata
Ch lectio codicis Colonensi a Nicolao Heinsio prolata
Cd lectio codicis Colonensi a Arnoldo Drakenborch prolata
F² etc. significat lectionem primam codicis mutatem esse sive ipsius librarii sive alterius manu

ceteri codices:

K Firenze, Bibl. Laur., Laur. 37, 18
P Paris, Bibl. Nat., Lat. 8066
Q Città del Vaticano, Bibl. Vat., Vat. lat. 1651
R Città del Vaticano, Bibl. Vat., Vat. lat. 3300
W Città del Vaticano, Bibl. Vat., Vat. lat. 2779
Y Città del Vaticano, Bibl. Vat., Vat. lat. 3302
Ξ Cesena, Bibl. Malatestiana, Cod. Mal. S XII 3
Σ Roma, Bibl. Casanatense Ms 1064
Φ Oxford, Bodl. Libr., Lat. class. c. 4
ς codices deteriores aut pars eorum

ditiones:

b1 editio Basiliensis prior 1522
b2 editio Basiliensis secunda 1543
j editio Juntina ab Ambrosio Nicandro castigata Florentiae 1515
l editio Damiani Benessae Rhacusei Lugduni 1514
m editio Mediolanensis 1481
p editio Parmensis 1481
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sigla</th>
<th>Edition and Commentaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>r1</td>
<td>editio Romana princeps 1471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>r2</td>
<td>editio Romana secunda a Pomponio Laeto recognita 1471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v</td>
<td>editiones Venetae cum commentariis Petri Marsi, v1 1483, v2 1492, v3 1493</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Bauer**

**Bothe**

**Dausqueius**
- *In C. Silii Italici viri consularis Punica seu de Bello Punico Secundo libros XVII.* Cl. Dausqueius Sanctomarius Canon. Tornac. Parisii 1618

**Drakenborch**
- *Caii Silii Italici Punicorum libri septemdecim ... curante Arnoldo Drakenborch,* ..., Trajecti ad Rhenum 1717

**Duff**
- *Silius Italicus Punica with an English Translation* by J.D. Duff, London / Cambridge Mass. 1934

**Heinsius**
- Annotationes Nicolai Heinsii in editione Arnoldi Drakenborch prolatae

**Lefebvre**
- *C. Siliii Italici de bello Punico secundo poëma ad fidem veterum monimentorum castigatum ... curante I.B. Lefebvre de Villebrune*, Paris 1781

**Marsus**
- Commentarii Petri Marsi edd. v additi

**Ruperti**

**Summers**

**Commentationes et alia opera:**

**ALL**
- Archiv für lateinische Lexikographie und Grammatik

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- Caspar Barth, *Adversariorum libri LX*, Francofurti 1624

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- R. Bentley, [Emendationes ad Silium], *Classical Journal* 3 (1811): 381–386

**Blass**
- Hermann Blass [Emendationes manu scriptae quas citat Bauer]

**Blass 1867**

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- Ferdinandus Buchwald, *Quaestiones Silianae*, Diss. Breslau, Gorlicii 1886

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- Petrus Burmann [Emendationes ab Arnoldo Drakenborch adductae]

**Damsté**

**Delz 1975**
Sigla

Gronovius  
\textit{Johannis Frederici Gronovii Observationum libri tres}, Ed. II auctior, Lugdunum Batavorum 1662

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J.B. Hofmann – Anton Szantyr, \textit{Lateinische Syntax und Stilistik}, München 1965

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annotationes a Johanne Livineio in exemplari editionis b2 adscriptae

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Lucian Müller, \textit{De re metrica poetarum Latinorum praeter Plautum et Terentium libri VII}, Lipsiae 1894

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J.P. Postgate [Emendationes manu scriptae quas citat Summers]

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Iohannes Schrader, \textit{Observationum liber}, Franequerae 1761

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\textit{Sylloges epistolarum a viris illustribus scriptarum tomi quinque collecti et digesti per Petrum Burmannum}, Leidae 1727

Thes.  
\textit{Thesaurus Linguae Latinae}

Thilo 1864  
Georgius Thilo, “Emendationes Silianae”, \textit{Symbola philologorum Bonnensium in honorem Friderici Ritschelii collecta}, fasc. prior Lipsiae 1864, 397–410

Watt 1984  

Withof  

\textit{compendia:}

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{ad l.} = ad locum
  \item \textit{coll.} = collato (-is)
  \item \textit{coni.} = coniecit
  \item \textit{def.} = defendit
  \item \textit{fort.} = fortasse
  \item \textit{i.} = id est
  \item \textit{lac.} = lacuna
  \item \textit{m.} = manu
  \item \textit{om.} = omisit
  \item \textit{s.l.} = supra lineam
\end{itemize}

\textit{xlix}