

Dardana ab ortu moenia: Capua's Revolt in Punica 11 as a Betrayal of Ancestry
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Throughout Silius Italicus' *Punica* there exists a sense of inevitable downward movement from Rome at her height towards civil strife. One area in which this decline can be traced is the depiction of cities. Although the epic celebrates Rome at the height of its republican glory and virtue, Silius' use of intertextuality undercuts this by foreshadowing the erosion that will occur once the danger of Carthage is removed. Silius establishes this theme from the beginning of his poem with his treatment of the siege of Saguntum, drawing heavily on the sack of Troy from Book 2 of Vergil's *Aeneid* and "defin[ing] a close relationship between Silius' Punic wars and the civil wars still to come"¹ by adapting scenes of slaughter from Lucan's *de Bello Civili*.

In Book 11 Silius narrates Capua's revolt from Rome and subsequent alliance with Hannibal. Much of his account relies on Livy's Book 23, with "the only appreciable difference [being] over the Capuan embassy about the consulship."² This is not, however, a minor deviation. Whereas Livy records, but expresses serious doubt about, the claim in some ancient historians that the Capuans demanded that they should hold one of the consulships at Rome as a reward for their loyalty (23.6), Silius builds the revolt of Capua on this particular event. While it is quite likely that Silius used another historian as a model in his depiction of the Capuan embassy to Rome,³ the question of his source is less productive than examining the effect of his choices.

Silius' adaptation and manipulation of his source materials creates a similar dynamic to the one found in the Saguntum episode. From the first mention of Capua's treachery, Silius uses vocabulary that alludes to the city's Trojan ancestry, much as he has for Rome, thus reminding his audience of the shared blood of the two cities. At the same time, he alludes to Lucan and Capua's role as Pompey's seat of operations at the beginning of the Civil War (2.392 ff). Thus, in drawing inspiration from the civil strife of Lucan even as he simultaneously looks back to Rome's foundation, Silius' depiction of events at Capua continues the theme that Rome is already on a path that will lead inevitably to the fall of the Republic.

¹ Donald T. McGuire, *Acts of Silence: Civil War, Tyranny, and Suicide in the Flavian Epics* (Hildesheim, 1997): 214.

² John Nicol, *The Historical and Geographical Sources Used by Silius Italicus* (Oxford, 1936): 114.

³ Nicol agrees with Vollmer's suggestion of Valerius Antias (55).