

Re-founding Troy: Caesar as anti-Aeneas in *De Bello Civili* 9.950-1002

I propose to examine Caesar's tour of Troy in Lucan's *De Bello Civili* 9 as an allusion to and repurposing of Aeneas' tour of the future site of Rome in *Aeneid* 8. By alluding to Aeneas' tour of Rome, *De Bello Civili* creates a contrast between Caesar and Aeneas as well as between the ruins of Troy and the future site of Rome. Caesar projects himself onto the landscape and its ruins and seeks to portray himself as the rebuilder of the ruined city while the text portrays him as an anti-Aeneas.

In *Aeneid* 8, Aeneas views a nearly empty countryside and cannot conceptualize what the site will become, even though Evander acts as a guide. As Aeneas views the landscape he marvels, *miratur*, is captivated by it, *capitur*, and seeks out, *exquirat*, and hears, *audit*, from Evander the stories of the men who had previously inhabited the site (310-312). As an admirer, *mirator*, Caesar seeks, *petit*, Troy and walking around the ruins of the city seeks the remains, *quaerit vestigia*, of Apollo's walls without a guide (961-5).

Caesar sees, *aspicit*, the famous sites at Troy (970-3) though the entire site of Troy is overgrown, covered in trees and brambles, and even the ruins are ruined, *etiam periere ruinae* (966-9) and nothing identifiable remains. Rossi has observed that the various meanings of *aspicit* include 'to perceive mentally' and 'to visualize internally'¹ and these meanings suggest that Caesar is projecting onto the landscape the names of sites he already holds in his mind. For Caesar 'no stone lacks a name,' *nullum est sine nomine saxum* (973) since he identifies for himself and gives meaning to the landmarks he visualizes. However, in stumbling unawares over the Xanthus and Hector's tomb, Caesar is shown to have been ignorant, *inscius*, and careless, *securus*, all along (974-5). This is only revealed once he actually interacts with the landscape, rather than just viewing it.

¹ Rossi (2001) 316.

While the future site of Rome in the *Aeneid* is full of potential for Aeneas, Troy in the *De Bello Civili* is a metaphor for a ruined Rome. Caesar's vow to re-found Troy is purely self-serving and the incongruity of him invoking the Penates, the gods he attacked in Book 1, is astounding. He seeks to re-found Troy as a Roman and Julian Troy, a *Romana Pergama*. But unlike Aeneas' unshakable destiny set by the gods, Caesar follows Fortune and quickly forgets Troy in favor of pursuing Pompey and his own destiny, revealing the selfish motivation behind his vow and his nature as an anti-Aeneas.

Works Cited

Rossi, Andreola. 2001. "Remapping the Past: Caesar's Tale of Troy (Lucan "BC" 9.964-999)."

Phoenix 55: 313-326.