

Lucan's Phemonoe and Ovid

Lucan's *Bellum Civile* is the first epic to negotiate its relationship to both Vergil's *Aeneid* and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Keith (2011, 112) proposes that "Lucan opposes the Augustan teleology of Virgil's poem through inversion and opposition, often by drawing freely on the diction, themes, myths, characters, treatment of the hexameter, and rhetorical schemata derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*." This paper builds off Keith's insight and contributes to studies on Lucan's reception of Ovid by examining the Phemonoe episode in *Bellum Civile* Book 5. I argue that Lucan reformulates an Ovidian poetics of sexual violence through the Phemonoe episode's narrative structure and thematic affinity with Ovid's Daphne, and in so doing, interrogates the persistent association between myth, violence, and Roman political power.

In the first part of the paper, I propose that Lucan refashions an Ovidian poetics of sexual violence by rewriting a key narrative sequence from *Metamorphoses* Book 1: the flood, re-creation of the world, and Apollo's rape of Daphne (1.240–566). It will be shown that Lucan reproduces this Ovidian narrative sequence in Book 5 with his own excursus on the flood, Apollo's slaying of Python, and Phemonoe's assault at Delphi (5.71–236). While Fratantuono (182) points out that Lucan's account of the flood "reminds the audience briefly of the first book of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*" and Masters (144) notes that Apollo spiritually rapes Phemonoe, according to Moscadi (49), most criticism focuses on Phemonoe's relationship to Vergil's Sibyl and Lucan's Erictho in Book 6. I propose that Ovid's Daphne offers another relevant model for interpreting Phemonoe's experience with divine and imperial violence and that Lucan's episode offers a sophisticated response to Daphne's rape by reshaping the Ovidian patterns (James).

The paper concludes by considering other possible instances of Lucan's reception of an Ovidian poetics of sexual violence in the *Bellum Civile* and the significance of this poetic legacy in Roman epic.

Select Bibliography

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