

ENCOMIASTIC STRATEGIES IN STATIUS'  
*GENETHLIACON LUCANI (SILV. 2.7)*

The birthday poem is a genre of particular versatility, as it can easily be combined with other poetic genres<sup>1</sup>. A characteristic example is the *Genethliacon Lucani ad Pollam* – composed by Statius at the request of Lucan's widow Polla Argentaria<sup>2</sup>, as the latter was in the habit of celebrating her husband's birthday even after his passing<sup>3</sup> – resulting in a work that combined the genres of *genethliacon* and *laudatio*. The purpose of the present article is to explore the encomiastic elements and relevant strategies chosen by Statius in the particular poem to praise Lucan<sup>4</sup>. This poem, however, having been composed for the celebration of the now dead poet's birthday, also includes the expression of grief in the form of a *lamentatio* (89 ff.), as well as elements of a *consolatio* (107 ff.); thus, the poem bears similarities with the kind of poetic *consolatio*<sup>5</sup> often found in the *Silvae*, while at the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. e.g. Tib. 1.7 and 2.2, two birthday poems which incorporate elements of *laudatio* and *epithalamium* respectively. On birthday poems as a specific, albeit fluid, genre in antiquity, especially in Latin literature, see, for instance: E. Cesareo, *Il carne natalizio nella poesia latina, con una parte introduttiva su i precedenti del carne in Grecia, due appendici e un indice-prospetto e un'antologia ad uso delle scuole*, Palermo 1929; V. Buchheit, *Statius' Geburtstagsgedicht zu Ehren Lucans (Silv. 2,7)*, "Hermes" 88, 1960, 231-249; F. Cairns, *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry*, (Edinburgh 1972), revised edition Ann Arbor 2007, 112-113, 135-137, 165-169, 221; K. Burkhard, *Das antike Geburtstagsgedicht*, Zurich 1991; K. Argetsinger, *Birthday Rituals: Friends and Patrons in Roman Poetry and Cult*, "CIAnt" 11, 1992, 175-193; D. Feeney, *Caesar's Calendar: Ancient Time and the Beginning of History*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 2007, esp. 158 and 281 n. 122; F. Cairns, *Horace Odes 3.17 and the Genre Genethliakon*, in Id. (ed.), *Roman Lyric: Collected Papers on Catullus and Horace*, Berlin-Boston 2012, 412-440.

<sup>2</sup> For more information about Polla Argentaria and the question of her possible identification with the wife of Pollius Felix, see R. G. M. Nisbet, *Felicitas at Surrentum (Statius, Silvae II. 2)*, "JRS" 68, 1978, 1-11.

<sup>3</sup> For the same occasion Martial composed epigrams 7.21-23, for which see e.g. V. Buchheit, *Martials Beitrag zum Geburtstag Lucans als Zyklus*, "Philologus" 105, 1961, 90-96; G. Galán Vioque, *Martial, Book VII: A Commentary*, translated by J. J. Zoltowsky, Leiden-Boston-Cologne 2002, 168-179. For a brief comparison between Statius' and Martial's poems, see Buchheit (n. 1) 245-247 and more recently C. E. Newlands, *Statius, Poet between Rome and Naples*, London 2012, 37.

<sup>4</sup> Strategies of Statius' self-praise, which abound in this poem, are out of the scope of my article. More generally, for Statius' encomiastic strategies in his *Silvae*, see C. Damon, *The Emperor's New Clothes, or, on Flattery and Encomium in the Silvae*, in J. F. Miller - C. Damon - K. S. Myers (eds), *Vertis in usum: Studies in Honor of Edward Courtney*, Munich-Leipzig 2002, 174-188; G. Brunetta, *Strategies of Encomium in Statius' Silvae*, Diss., Royal Holloway, University of London 2013, where, however, poem 2.7 is not discussed.

<sup>5</sup> For the typical structure of the poetic *consolationes*, which includes 1) Introduction, 2) *laudatio*, 3) *lamentatio*, 4) *descriptiones (morbi, mortis, and funeris)*, 5) *consolatio*, see H.-J.

same time<sup>6</sup> it also reflects the complexities of Lucan's voice in his *De Bello Civili* and the shift in mood from lament to consolation in this epic<sup>7</sup>.

The aspect of Lucan Statius primarily chooses to praise is that of the poet, rather than the man<sup>8</sup>, though common elements of the *laudatio* are also present. Within this context, one can identify elements of literary criticism, as well as the skilful use of certain established motifs from earlier literature which help highlight the poetic glorification of the dead *laudatus*. Statius' principal strategy is to try to allude to Lucan's apotheosis<sup>9</sup>. As I shall attempt to demonstrate in due course, the writer's choice to centre on Lucan's image as a poet makes his task considerably easier, as it was widely believed that literature could defeat the ravages of time and lead both the creator and his subject to immortality<sup>10</sup>.

Statius' efforts begin already in the poem's Introduction (1-23). The religious atmosphere expected in a *genethliacon*<sup>11</sup> is here enhanced, laying the

Van Dam, P. *Papinius Statius, Silvae, Book II: A Commentary*, Leiden 1984, 66, who also notes (452) that, despite its similarities, Statius' poem *Silv.* 2.7 "is fundamentally different from a *consolatio*"; cf. also S. T. Newmyer, *The Silvae of Statius: Structure and Theme*, Leiden 1979, 25-26, 75-80, where interesting comments on the poem's structure and its relation to *consolatio* are presented; A. Hardie, *Statius and the Silvae: Poets, Patrons and Epideixis in the Greco-Roman World*, Liverpool 1983, 115-118, who sees the poem as a combination of *genethliacon* and *laudatio funebris* and investigates its epideictic style; M. A. Malamud, *Happy Birthday, Dead Lucan: (P)raising the Dead in Silvae 2.7, "Ramus"* 24, 1995, 1-30, at 2, who comments on the generic fusion and the tension created by the combination of a birthday ode and a consolatory poem; M. Rühl, *Literatur gewordener Augenblick: Die Silven des Statius im Kontext literarischer und sozialer Bedingungen von Dichtung*, Berlin-New York 2006, 94 and 277-281, who underlines the consequences in the poem's composition deriving from the fact that the celebrated poet had been dead for more than twenty years and discusses the poem's paradoxical status as it combines elements of *genethliacon* and *epicedium*. The poem's similarities with the λόγος ἐπιτάφιος and the *laudatio funebris* have already been suggested by F. Vollmer, *P. Papinii Statii Silvarum liber*, Leipzig 1898, 373, while for a good discussion on Statius' debt to the rhetorical and poetical tradition as well as on his innovations, see Buchheit (n. 1) 241-245.

<sup>6</sup> For *Stat. Silv.* 2.7 as a *sphragis* ("seal") poem for Book 2 and a reminder of Statius' poetics, see C. E. Newlands, *Statius' Silvae and the Poetics of Empire*, Cambridge 2002, 43.

<sup>7</sup> See C. Newlands, *The First Biography of Lucan: Statius' Silvae 2.7*, in P. Asso (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Lucan*, Leiden-Boston 2011, 435-451, at 442, 445-446.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Van Dam (n. 5) 452; Newlands (n. 7) 440.

<sup>9</sup> Such a strategy is not alien to Statius; cf. his attempt to exalt Vergil to the ranks of the gods in the epilogue of his *Thebaid*, for which see e.g. G. Rosati, *Statius, Domitian and Acknowledging Paternity: Rituals of Succession in the Thebaid*, in J. J. L. Smolenaars - H.-J. Van Dam - R. R. Nauta (eds), *The Poetry of Statius*, Leiden-Boston 2008, 175-193, at 175-177.

<sup>10</sup> For this conviction, cf. e.g. *Hor. Carm.* 3.30 and the relevant comments by R. G. M. Nisbet - N. Rudd, *A Commentary on Horace: Odes, Book III*, Oxford 2004, esp. 371-374; S. Tzounakas, *The Peroration of Cicero's Pro Milone*, "CW" 102, 2009, 129-141, at 134-136.

<sup>11</sup> See C. E. Newlands, *Statius, Silvae, Book II*, Cambridge 2011, 225, who also mentions

ground for the implication that this ceremony will be praising no ordinary person, but a deity. Thus, Statius does not call upon *Genius* or *Dies Natalis*, but upon Hermes, Bacchus, Apollo and the Muses, in other words the deities of poetry (5-8)<sup>12</sup>. Let us not forget that it was common practice to invoke deities in hymns, where the deity's name was often accompanied by a reference specifying his/her area of worship or sphere of influence (cf. here 5: *ipsi quos penes est honor canendi*<sup>13</sup>). Also found in hymns and prayers is the combination of the vocative form with an apposition presenting a characteristic (cf. here 6: *vocalis citharae repertor Arcas* or 7: *et tu, Bassaridum rotator Euhan*). Both of these structural forms are found here, reinforcing the poem's overall hymnic atmosphere<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, the request for total shade in lines 14-15: *et, si qua patet aut diem recepit, / sertis mollibus expleatur umbra* is compatible with the presence of a divinity<sup>15</sup>. All indications that Statius wants to lend Lucan divine status are further reinforced in the final part of the Introduction.

The sacral tone of lines 19-23 (cf. 19: *favete linguis*, 23: *colitur*, 23: *sacerdos*) implies that Lucan is a poet-priest or prophet (*vates*) who inspires religious awe<sup>16</sup>. He is referred to as *chori sacerdos* (23) and his association with the Muses, who are here implied in the word *chori*, alludes to their strong connection, even identification, as has already been suggested in line 20, where it is stated that Lucan's day is also the day of the Muses: *vestra est ista dies, favete, Musae*<sup>17</sup>. Lucan is also depicted as being worshipped (23: *colitur*), with requests for grand honours to be paid to him on the altars (16-

(226) the sacred connotations of the word *frequentet* in line 1; cf. Buchheit (n. 1) 241.

<sup>12</sup> According to Van Dam (n. 5) 452, this innovation in the genre of the *genethliacon* is due to the fact that Lucan was a poet. Cf. also Newmyer (n. 5) 75-76, who aptly notes: "The unusual length of the invocation suggests that Statius felt that he was dealing with a very great figure and needed all the divine help which he could muster".

<sup>13</sup> For the Latin text of Statius' *Silvae* I follow the edition of Newlands (n. 11).

<sup>14</sup> See Van Dam (n. 5) 458.

<sup>15</sup> See Newlands (n. 11) 229, who cites Sen. *Ep.* 41.3: *illa proceritas silvae et secretum loci et admiratio umbrae in aperto tam densae atque continuae fidei tibi numinis faciet* and notes that Statius "creates a sacral, literary setting".

<sup>16</sup> See Newmyer (n. 5) 76-77; Van Dam (n. 5) 456, 464; H. Lovatt, *Statius, Orpheus, and the Post-Augustan Vates*, "Arethusa" 40, 2007, 145-163, at 152. Apart from Lucan, Statius also appears as poetic *vates* here. For the latter's role as *vates* in this passage and the Horatian influence (esp. *Carm.* 3.1.1-4) here, see S. M. Kershner, *Statius as Horatian Priest of the Muses in Silvae* 2, 7, in C. Deroux (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History* 15, Brussels 2010, 311-334, esp. at 315, 324-334. On the rich literary tradition behind the phrase *Romani colitur chori sacerdos*, see Buchheit (n. 1) 235 n. 2.

<sup>17</sup> See Van Dam (n. 5) 464. On Statius' frequent etymological pun on Lucan's name and the words *dies* and *lux*, see Newlands (n. 7) 448; Newlands (n. 11) 225-226, 230, 251; Newlands (n. 3) 37.

17: *centum Thespiacis odora lucis / stent altaria victimaeque centum*). It is worth noting that, whereas normal birthday celebrations are bloodless, in Lucan's case 100 oxen are slaughtered<sup>18</sup>, pointing to the worship of a superior divinity. The verbal gemination of *favete* in lines 19 and 20, in the same metrical *sedes*, also serves the same purpose, since such geminations are associated with divine revelation and ritual<sup>19</sup>.

Similar examples appear towards the end of the poem<sup>20</sup>. Specifically, in line 116 Lucan is referred to as *sacer*, a word which implies his semi-divine status by grace of the protection and inspiration of the Muses<sup>21</sup>. In line 120, instead of calling upon divinities related to birthdays, Statius invites Lucan himself to appear: *adsis lucidus*. Thus, Lucan's *Genius* and the dead Lucan become one and the same<sup>22</sup>. Statius' linguistic choices are also revealing. The phrase *adsis lucidus* is a hymnic formula by which a divinity is summoned, completing the invocation which begins in line 107, while the adjective *lucidus* is often used to describe gods<sup>23</sup>. Lines 124-131 describe how Lucan's wife Polla Argentaria worships her husband privately, while it is important to pay attention to the phrase *haec te non thiasis procax dolosis / falsi numinis induit figura* (124-125), in which, on a second level, one could identify the implication that Lucan is not a *falsum numen*, but a real deity. Finally, if in Polla Argentaria's case Lucan's worship is a private matter, in the closing lines of the poem the dead poet's worship acquires broader dimensions. Here Statius creates an atmosphere of optimism (cf. 131-132: *procul hinc abite, Mortes: / haec vitae genialis est origo*) and requests anew that those present at the ceremony worship Lucan (133-135: *cedat luctus atrox genisque manent / iam dulces lacrimae, dolorque festus / quicquid fleverat ante, nunc adoret*), effectively connecting the ending of the poem with the laudatory atmosphere of the Introduction, bringing his celebratory theme full

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Newlands (n. 11) 229, who also notes: "The sacrifice here can be understood as a metaphor for poetic genre: the large, rich offerings symbolise epic poetry and fittingly honour L."

<sup>19</sup> See Newlands (n. 11) 230, who cites J. Wills, *Repetition in Latin Poetry: Figures of Allusion*, Oxford 1996, 61-62.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. F. M. Ahl, *Lucan: An Introduction*, Ithaca-London 1976, 337, who, however, restricts himself to the note: "The concluding 29 lines are a kind of apotheosis of the poet and a *consolatio* to his soul"; cf. also Buchheit (n. 1) 238: "Der erste größere Gedankenablauf des letzten Abschnittes ist damit zu Ende. Gleichzeitig schafft aber die Vorstellung, daß Lucan göttliche Ehren genießt, den Ausgangspunkt für den weiteren Verlauf"; Hardie (n. 5) 117, where it is stated that Statius' apostrophe to Lucan in the kletic address of lines 107 ff. "reinforces the idea of Lucan as a quasi-deity".

<sup>21</sup> See Newlands (n. 11) 249.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Buchheit (n. 1) 238; Van Dam (n. 5) 452, 501; Newlands (n. 11) 251.

<sup>23</sup> See Van Dam (n. 5) 501; Newlands (n. 7) 448; Newlands (n. 11) 251.

circle<sup>24</sup>. The choice of the poem's final word (*adoret*) is also of special interest in this framework, as it implies that Lucan is honoured as a god<sup>25</sup>.

Statius also tries to serve his intention to allude to Lucan's apotheosis in other more indirect ways. One device which proves to be especially effective is the skilful introduction of the Muse Calliope into the poem (36 ff.), the Muse of epic poetry, who is shown to be adopting<sup>26</sup> and praising<sup>27</sup> the poet, shedding, for the first time, her grief for the loss of her son Orpheus<sup>28</sup>. The fact that Lucan is presented as Calliope's adopted son, a son she welcomed in her arms from the very first moment of his birth, prepares the ground for the connection between Lucan and Orpheus, the mythical archetype of music and poetry. Thus, Statius implies that Lucan is Orpheus' counterpart, while the eloquence of his poetry is compared to Orpheus' ability to charm rivers, wild beasts and trees. Indeed, it is implied that, with his eloquence, Lucan can charm a demanding audience (46-47: *et doctos equites et eloquente / cantu purpureum trahes senatum*). The connection between the two is further facilitated by the fact that Lucan had composed a poem entitled *Orpheus*, mentioned in line 59: *et noster tibi proferetur Orpheus*, while a further analogy is to be found in the premature deaths of both, a theme developed in lines 98-104: *sic ripis ego murmurantis Hebri / non mutum caput Orpheos sequebar. / sic et tu, rabidi nefas tyranni, / iussus praecipitem subire Lethen, / dum pugnas canis arduaque voce / das solacia grandibus sepulcris, / (o dirum scelus, o scelus!) tacebis*.

Another strategy which aims at Lucan's apotheosis is the allusion to the motif of catasterism. The theme is first implied in lines 33-34: *attollat refluos in astra fontes / Graio nobilior Melete Baetis*, where praising Baetica, Lucan's place of birth, and the river Baetis which runs through it, Statius calls upon the river to raise to the stars its springs that flow backwards. Here the poet is using the image of the stars as symbols of poetic immortality to his advantage and, combining it with the image of rivers as sources of poetic

<sup>24</sup> For indications of Statius' intention to provide the poem with a ring-composition structure, see Newmyer (n. 5) 79-80; Buchheit (n. 1) 240 with n. 1.

<sup>25</sup> See Van Dam (n. 5) 506; Newlands (n. 6) 60 n. 50; cf. Buchheit (n. 1) 238 with n. 6; Nisbet (n. 2) 9; Rosati (n. 9) 176 n. 3.

<sup>26</sup> On the motif of the poet who receives a dedication, see Van Dam (n. 5) 470-471; cf. Newlands (n. 11) 233-234.

<sup>27</sup> According to Ahl (n. 20) 337, Calliope's praises are extravagant; cf., however, Malamud (n. 5), who believes that Calliope's song of praise is ambivalent (14). On Calliope's speech, see also K. Coleman, *Mythological Figures as Spokespersons in Statius' Silvae*, in F. de Angelis - S. Muth (eds), *Im Spiegel des Mythos. Bilderwelt und Lebenswelt. – Lo specchio del mito. Immaginario e realtà. Symposium, Rom 19.-20. Februar 1998*, DAI, Wiesbaden 1999, 67-80, at 72-73, who underlines its emphasis on the pathos of Lucan's premature death.

<sup>28</sup> On Lucan as a new version of Orpheus, see Lovatt (n. 16) 152-153.

inspiration<sup>29</sup>, implies Lucan's poetic immortality, reflected even in his place of birth. Besides, in my view it seems that Statius' allusion to Lucan's apotheosis is furthermore facilitated here by the hymnic structure and style of the whole passage (24-35), as e.g. the verbal repetitions<sup>30</sup>.

Statius' attempt to make use of the implications of the catasterism motif continues with intertextual allusions to Lucan's own work. By means of such allusions Statius attempts to mingle Lucan's persona with that of Pompey, one of the protagonists of his *De Bello Civili*. The latter is presented at the beginning of the 9th book as ascending to the sky following his death, reaching the place where the half-divine shades live, and finally marvelling at the stars (Luc. 9.1-14); thus the relevant echoes of this passage in Statius' poem (esp. 107-110: *at tu, seu rapidum poli per axem / famae curribus arduis levatus, / qua surgunt animae potentiores, / terras despicias et sepulcra rides*)<sup>31</sup> reinforce the implication that Lucan had a similar posthumous fate. This interpretation is supported by the very content of Statius' lines, as both the reference to Fame's chariot and the accumulation of words relating to rising or ascending all point to poetic immortality and apotheosis<sup>32</sup> even more effectively. As has already been noted by many scholars, the model for Lucan's passage is the famous *Somnium Scipionis* in the 6th book of Cicero's *De Republica*<sup>33</sup>, through which the poet alludes to Stoic characteristics in Pompey's image. True to his model, Statius presents Lucan as also following in Pompey's footsteps and attributes him Stoic characteristics<sup>34</sup>.

The ascent to the sky is one of two possible outcomes Statius offers here with regards to the dead Lucan's posthumous fate. The second option, which follows directly (111-119), is Lucan's arrival at Elysium, which is also based

<sup>29</sup> For the two images, cf. e.g. Hor. *Carm.* 1.1.36: *sublimi feriam sidera vertice* and Hor. *Carm.* 3.4.25: *vestris amicum fontibus et choris* respectively and see Newlands (n. 11) 233.

<sup>30</sup> For the hymnic structure of this passage, see Buchheit (n. 1) 232 n. 1, 245.

<sup>31</sup> The similarity between the two passages has already been mentioned by Van Dam (n. 5) 496-497; D. Quint, *Epic and Empire: Politics and Generic Form from Virgil to Milton*, Princeton, New Jersey 1993, 133; Malamud (n. 5) 16; G. Liberman, *Stace, Silves, Édition et commentaire critiques*, Paris 2010, 244; Newlands (n. 7) 442-443; Newlands (n. 11) 247-248.

<sup>32</sup> See Newlands (n. 11) 248; cf. Van Dam (n. 5) 496.

<sup>33</sup> See mainly E. Narducci, *Pompeo in cielo (Pharsalia IX 1-24; 186-217), un verso di Dante (Parad. XXII 135) e il senso delle allusioni a Lucano in due epigrammi di Marziale (IX 34; XI 5)*, "MH" 58, 2001, 70-92, at 71-75; E. Narducci, *Lucano: Un'epica contro l'impero: Interpretazione della Pharsalia*, Rome-Bari 2002, 337-339; cf. M. Seewald, *Studien zum 9. Buch von Lucans Bellum Civile, Mit einem Kommentar zu den Versen 1-733*, Berlin-New York 2008, 33-43, esp. 37 ff., where the influence other writers exercised on Lucan's particular passage is investigated; C. Wick, *M. Annaeus Lucanus, Bellum Civile, Liber IX, Kommentar*, Munich-Leipzig 2004, 5-17.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Nisbet (n. 2) 9; Newlands (n. 7) 443; Newlands (n. 11) 248.

on an image connected to Pompey in Lucan's epic (Luc. 6.802-805)<sup>35</sup>. There, according to Statius, Lucan is accompanied by the Pompeys and Catos (114-115). I have already mentioned the hint at Lucan's apotheosis through his connection to Pompey, a connection further reinforced in the next line (116): *tu magna sacer et superbus umbra*, which recalls Lucan's famous phrase about Pompey in line Luc. 1.135: *stat magni nominis umbra*<sup>36</sup>. The connection with Cato serves the same purpose, as in Lucan's epic he too is a figure portrayed as having divine characteristics (cf. e.g. Luc. 9.188-189: *pauca Catonis / verba sed a pleno venientia pectore veri* and 9.564: *deo plenus*). Statius has already taken care to connect the two figures intratextually by using the adjective *pius*<sup>37</sup>, a word with religious connotations, in lines 68: *libertate gravem pia Catonem* and 70-71: *tu Pelusiaci scelus Canopi / deflebis pius*. Furthermore, as the adjective *sacer* is strongly associated with Cato as Republican martyr<sup>38</sup>, the description of Lucan with the same adjective in line 116 makes the connection between Lucan and Cato even stronger in regards to their semi-divinity.

Finally, it is worth noting that even the structure of lines 107 ff. helps grace Lucan with divine characteristics. The use of *tu... seu... seu... adsis* recalls a hymn in tone<sup>39</sup>, a fact which points to the implicit deification of Lucan, perhaps because of the intended equation of Lucan with Genius.

Statius also achieves the desired result with the use of suitable symbols, which in turn facilitate intratextual connections with other relevant figures. A characteristic example is the skilful comparison of Lucan with thunder, a symbol of Jupiter, in lines 64-67: *mox coepta generosior iuventa / albos ossibus Italis Philippos / et Pharsalica bella detonabis, / quo fulmen ducis inter arma divi*. Although the word *detonabis* is used as a term of literary criticism here, just like *intonare* and *tonare* which refer to the high style of the epic and tragedy, as in the characteristic example of Callimachus (*Aet.* 1.20: *βροντᾶν οὐκ ἑμὸν, ἀλλὰ Διός*)<sup>40</sup>, the indisputable connection of the image with Jupiter acquires additional functional value in the context of Statius' overall effort to elevate Lucan to divine heights. Such implicit comparisons constituted common practice since the time of Augustan literature<sup>41</sup> and are

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Van Dam (n. 5) 498; Newlands (n. 7) 443; Newlands (n. 11) 247-248.

<sup>36</sup> For Statius' line as a rewriting of Lucan's famous phrase, see Newlands (n. 11) 249; cf. Van Dam (n. 5) 485; Malamud (n. 5) 16-17.

<sup>37</sup> See Van Dam (n. 5) 485; Newlands (n. 11) 240.

<sup>38</sup> See Newlands (n. 11) 249.

<sup>39</sup> For the repetition of *seu... seu* as a characteristic of prayer and the hymn-like style of the passage, see Van Dam (n. 5) 495; Newlands (n. 11) 248.

<sup>40</sup> Van Dam (n. 5) 483; Newlands (n. 11) 239.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. e.g. Hor. *Carm.* 1.2 or 1.12 and see R. G. M. Nisbet - M. Hubbard, *A Commentary*

clearly exploited by Statius intentionally. Besides, there are other arguments to support this line of thought. By the choice of *detonabis* in line 66 Lucan is connected to Caesar, who is portrayed as a thunderbolt (*fulmen*)<sup>42</sup> in the very next line (67: *quo fulmen ducis inter arma divi*) and is referred to as *divus*. Furthermore, the choice of *detonabis* facilitates Statius' attempt to link Lucan with Alexander the Great in lines 93-95: *sic natum Nasamonii Tonantis / post ortus obitusque fulminatos / angusto Babylon premit sepulcro*<sup>43</sup>. By the use of the word *fulminatos*, the latter is portrayed as having stricken east and west with thunder, while by the word *Tonantis* he is also referred to as Jupiter's son. This word, recalling *detonabis* which was used earlier for Lucan, makes the attempted connection even stronger and the idea of Lucan's deification more implicit and allusive, and, therefore, less obtrusive.

Another encomiastic strategy of Statius' is the inclusion of Lucan on a list of persons with similar characteristics. Thus, in the section of lines 89-104, where Calliope is portrayed as mourning for Lucan's premature death, the latter appears to be completing a list of legendary figures<sup>44</sup> who died young: Alexander the Great, Achilles, Orpheus<sup>45</sup>. The choice of persons is not random. All three are depicted as children of deities: Alexander the Great is called son of Nasamonian Thunderer, thanks to his claims that he hailed from Jupiter Ammon (93: *natum Nasamonii Tonantis*), Achilles was the son of Thetis and Orpheus the son of Calliope. By extension, Lucan's inclusion on the same list allows him to appear to be of the same standing as the others, while allowing Statius to give him quasi-divine characteristics more easily. There is, however, a further motive to be sought in the choice of the particular persons. It was common to compare the figure of an encomium with Alexander the Great, not just amongst Hellenistic leaders, but also amongst Romans. A good example is the case of Anchises' encomium for Augustus in the *Aeneid* (Verg. A. 6.788-807), where the Roman leader is

on Horace, *Odes*, Book I, Oxford 1970, 16 ff. and 142 ff.

<sup>42</sup> Evidently this is because of the famous programmatic simile in Lucan's *De Bello Civili*, where Caesar is compared to the thunderbolt (Luc. 1.151-157); cf. e.g. Van Dam (n. 5) 484; Newlands (n. 11) 239. On this simile and its programmatic function, see, for instance, J. A. Rosner-Siegel, *The Oak and the Lightning: Lucan, Bellum Civile 1. 135-157*, "Athenaeum" n.s. 61, 1983, 165-177; S. Tzounakas, *Caesar as hostis in Lucan's De bello civili*, "BStudLat" 43, 2013, 510-525, at 518 n. 34 with relevant bibliography.

<sup>43</sup> On the link between Caesar, Alexander the Great and Lucan through the imagery of lightning, see Malamud (n. 5) 7, 13.

<sup>44</sup> For legendary comparisons as a recurrent encomiastic strategy of the *Silvae*, see Newlands (n. 11) 24 and 244; cf. Van Dam (n. 5) 474.

<sup>45</sup> According to Van Dam (n. 5) 490, respectively the three examples suggest Lucan's premature death, his murder by a lesser person and that he was a great poet; see also Coleman (n. 27) 72.



implicitly compared to the Greek commander<sup>46</sup>. In such encomia it is common to compare figures with the demigod Hercules and Dionysus/Bacchus, a god of the arts, two figures who are here replaced by Achilles and Orpheus respectively. The latter is particularly suitable in this case, as he is also the archetype of poetry, was the subject of one of Lucan's poems, and contributes to the creation of a pathetic atmosphere, as these words are spoken by his mother Calliope. The replacement of Hercules with Achilles is also highly effective in this instance, as Achilles was murdered by Paris, who, as is well known, was Nero's central and favourite hero in his epic *Troica*<sup>47</sup>. As Paris quite reasonably could point to Nero, and Statius is going to great lengths to stress Lucan's rivalry with the emperor, the connection between Lucan and Achilles seems all the more natural. Finally, perhaps, we should not rule out the possibility that in the choice of Achilles there is evidence of Statius' personal interest in the particular hero, an interest which later led to the composition of his *Achilleid*. Consequently, by drawing connections with figures such as Alexander the Great, Achilles and Orpheus, Statius is being true to the conventions of an encomiastic speech and praises Lucan very effectively.

Lucan's encomium in this particular instance is made more effective by the choice of his untimely death as the theme dominating in this section. As this motif is marked by the contradictions and tensions between the brevity of life and the virtues and abilities of the deceased, through this antithetical structure Lucan's untimely death offers Statius the opportunity to portray him as a leader with exemplary virtues who belongs among the *summa* (90), *ardua* (91) and *magna* (92).

The inclusion of the *laudatus* on a list of highly regarded figures seems to be a favourite strategy of the encomium, at least in the particular poem of Statius. If in the case of the list of those who died young there are for obvious reasons no comparisons or hierarchical order, in other cases the encomiastic intention is reinforced by value judgements that find Lucan enjoying the place of honour.

More specifically, immediately after the Introduction, following a common *topos* in *laudationes*, Statius praises Baetica in Spain (24 ff.), Lucan's place of birth<sup>48</sup>, which he calls exceptionally fortunate and blessed. After

<sup>46</sup> For the implicit comparison of Augustus to Alexander in Vergil's passage, see, for instance, E. Norden, *Ein Panegyricus auf Augustus in Vergils Aeneis*, "RhM" 54, 1899, 466-482, repr. in B. Kytzler (ed.), *Kleine Schriften zum klassischen Altertum*, Berlin 1966, 422-436.

<sup>47</sup> Serv. A. 5.370: *sane hic Paris secundum Troica Neronis fortissimus fuit, adeo ut in Troiae agonali certamine superaret omnes, ipsum etiam Hectorem*.

<sup>48</sup> For the praise of *civitas/patria* as a common *topos* in *laudationes*, cf. *Rhet. Her.* 3.10 and see e.g. Van Dam (n. 5) 466-467.

describing certain advantages of the land, such as its geographical position and rich production of oil, which surpasses even that of Athens, he concludes that the highest honour for the area lies in the fact that it was Lucan's birthplace, while through the use of economic imagery the connection with Lucan is shown to be increasing the value of the area. Lucan's value is further praised when it is stressed that he surpasses other literary figures that come from the same area, such as his uncles Seneca and Gallio, also mentioned in the text. Thus, Lucan is presented as the foremost literary figure of an area already known for its production of leading literary figures. Still, Statius does not confine his praise to the comparison of Lucan to other eminent members of the Annaei family, or other writers born in Baetica. Lucan is immediately compared to the most leading figures of the epic, Homer and Vergil, and is shown to be superior to both and, thus, is portrayed as the greatest poet of all times. In this comparison, rather than name Lucan, Statius refers to the river Baetis of Baetica, which is compared, firstly, to the river Meles in Smyrna, one of the cities that claimed to be the birthplace of Homer, and secondly to Mantua, the birthplace of Vergil<sup>49</sup>.

The fact that Statius places Lucan above Homer and Vergil has understandably troubled scholars, as in many other passages of his work he acknowledges Vergil's supremacy<sup>50</sup>. According to Harm-Jan Van Dam, it is an exaggeration that is in keeping with this kind of poetry, as Statius is writing a poem of praise and must support the claim that Lucan is a great poet, and a motif frequently found in cases of court flattery<sup>51</sup>. According to Carole Newlands, commenting on lines 79-80, "Calliope's claim of L.'s poetic supremacy fits with the poem's consistent depiction of L. as a literary rebel who, like an epic hero, seeks to surpass all others"<sup>52</sup>. I do, however, believe that there could be another possible interpretation that deserves attention. A similar statement, claiming a Caesar's, possibly Nero's, superiority to Homer and Vergil is found at the end of the first of the *Carmina Einsiedlensia* (1.48-49: *haud procul Iliaco quondam non segnior ore / stabat et ipsa suas delebat Mantua cartas*), an *incerti auctoris* work, but one which by many scholars is

<sup>49</sup> This alternation between river (*Melete*) and city (*Mantua*), while Mantua's river Minicius could be used as a reference, could be attributed to Statius' intention for *variatio*, a stylistic characteristic of neoteric poetry, by which both Statius and Lucan were influenced. For other possible interpretations, see Van Dam (n. 5) 470.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. e.g. Stat. *Theb.* 12.816-817: *vive, precor; nec tu divinam Aeneida tempta, / sed longe sequere et vestigia semper adora*. For more passages where Vergil is recognized as Statius' master, see Van Dam (n. 5) 470. On Statius' intention to belittle and juvenilize Vergil in this poem, see Quint (n. 31) 131-137.

<sup>51</sup> Van Dam (n. 5) 470.

<sup>52</sup> Newlands (n. 11) 242.

attributed to Lucan. If that is indeed the case, it is possible that Statius is paying homage to Lucan by using for the man a comparison he had chosen previously himself. Within this context, I believe that Statius' poem, given the frequent allusions to Lucan's poetry, could reinforce the conjecture attributing the authorship of the particular work to Lucan.

Statius follows a similar strategy for praising Lucan by comparing him to other poets in other parts of his poem. Thus, through the first words uttered by Calliope in lines 41-42: *puer o dicat Musis, / longaevos cito transiture vates*, he highlights Lucan's superiority to other poets well established through time, while in lines 48-53, again through Calliope's speech, he stresses the originality of the Roman themes of Lucan's poetry, themes which are juxtaposed with the trite<sup>53</sup> themes of other poets not mentioned by name. Here it is worth noting the choice of the structure *alii... tu*, which forms a Priamel, a reference of other people's choices in contrast to someone's particular stance. This is often found in a *recusatio*, where the poet refuses to compose a particular form of poetry (usually an epic), pretending that others would do better, though it is also found in encomia<sup>54</sup> and elsewhere<sup>55</sup>. Thus, the particular structure is effective both for Lucan's encomium, as well as for the purpose of highlighting his departure from the practices of other epic poets.

Statius mentions three hackneyed themes handled by other epic poets: the fall of Troy, the wanderings of Ulysses and the expedition of the Argonauts<sup>56</sup>. The subjects are so general, that in all likelihood Statius is not alluding to particular writers, but is preparing the comparison of lines 75 ff. and the superiority of Lucan to poets who are actually named there<sup>57</sup>.

Having started from line 54 ff. to present through the words of Calliope the wealth of works Lucan composed in his brief life, Statius concludes in lines 73-74 with the observation that the lauded poet composed his epic *De Bello Civili* at a much younger age than Vergil was when he composed his *Culex* (which according to Statius' statement would be at the age of 26): *haec primo iuvenis canes sub aevo / ante annos Culicis Maroniani*. Thus, yet

<sup>53</sup> The metaphor of the well-worn paths used to describe the trite themes chosen by other poets in line 51: *trita vatibus orbita sequantur* and the aspiration to travel along untrodden paths are attributed to Callimachus' famous phrase *κελεύθους / ἀτρίπτους* (*Aet. fr.* 1.27-28). For the employment of a familiar Callimachean metaphor here, see further Van Dam (n. 5) 476; Newlands (n. 11) 235.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. e.g. Hor. *Carm.* 1.7.1 ff.: *laudabunt alii...* and see Nisbet - Hubbard (n. 41) 92, 94-95.

<sup>55</sup> See Van Dam (n. 5) 474-475; Newlands (n. 11) 235; cf. Coleman (n. 27) 72.

<sup>56</sup> See Van Dam (n. 5) 476, who notes that Statius cleverly avoids topics concerning the Theban cycle or Achilles' life, as they are topics he too explored in his own works; cf. also D. Vessey, *Statius and the Thebaid*, Cambridge 1973, 47.

<sup>57</sup> See Van Dam (n. 5) 476.

again Lucan is compared to Vergil and is found to be superior, at least in terms of the time when he composed his epic. Immediately afterwards, in lines 75-80 there is a list of four poets who wrote extensive hexametric poems, who also yield to Lucan's superiority: Ennius, Lucretius, Varro Atacinus, Ovid. Even the *Aeneid* shall honour Lucan, by expressing its admiration for the patriotic aspect of his poetry. It is indeed worth noting that the question in line 79: *quid maius loquar?* is an ironic echo of Propertius' line 2.34.66: *nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade*, which refers to the *Aeneid*<sup>58</sup>. Consequently, the praise of Lucan's literary abilities leads to the impression that he was the greatest poet of Rome, a poet to whom all his famous predecessors must yield. Statius skilfully presents these comparisons through Caliope's words, and not directly as though they were his own personal opinion.

Focusing on Lucan's literary virtues constitutes one of the characteristic ways the lauded poet is praised in the poem in question, a poem which aims to call attention to Lucan's artistic genius. Let us look at some characteristic examples:

In the Introduction, by calling upon anyone concerned with poetry to attend the ceremony in honour of Lucan, Statius effectively stresses the need to connect poetic inspiration with *doctrina*, recalling in this way the famous conflict in the ancient world between *ingenium* and *ars*<sup>59</sup> and implying that Lucan combined the two. Apart from the references to inspiration from sacred springs, such as Pirene and Hippocrene, this thought is effectively reinforced in line 3: *docto pectora concitatus oestro*, where the phrase *concitatus oestro* alludes to inspiration from poetic mania, corresponding to *furor poeticus*, while the word *docto* implies knowledge and points to the famous *ars* and the Hellenistic poetic principles<sup>60</sup>.

Frequently alluded to in the poem is the adhesion endorsed by both Sta-

<sup>58</sup> Cf. Van Dam (n. 5) 474, 488; Newlands (n. 11) 241, 242.

<sup>59</sup> On this dispute, cf. for instance Hor. *Ars* 295-298: *ingenium misera quia fortunatius arte / credit et excludit sanos Helicone poetas / Democritus, bona pars non unguis ponere curat, / non barbam, secreta petit loca, balnea vitat*.

<sup>60</sup> Cf. Van Dam (n. 5) 457; Malamud (n. 5) 4-7; Newlands (n. 11) 226; K. S. Myers, *Statius on Invocation and Inspiration*, in W. J. Dominik - C. E. Newlands - K. Gervais (eds), *Brill's Companion to Statius*, Leiden-Boston 2015, 31-53, at 39. On Statius' allusions to the combination of neoteric sophistication and epic grandeur, cf. also 10-11: *candidamque vestem / perfundant hederæ recentiores*, where the word *hederæ* points to lower poetic genres, while *perfundant* "suggests wide-ranging poetic capacity"; 12: *docti largius evagentur amnes*, where *docti* points to Callimachean aesthetics, while *largius* and *evagentur* point to the *genus grande* of epic; 15: *sertis mollibus expleatur umbra*, where *mollibus* is a word with neoteric connotations, while *expleatur* points to "fullness of style" and consequently to epic, and see Newlands (n. 11) 228-229.

tius and Lucan to the stylistic principles of Hellenistic poetry and the neoteric movement, which enjoyed a renaissance in Nero's time. For example, Carole Newlands mentions that the choice of the words *novate* and *recentiores* in lines 9-11: *laetae purpureas novate vittas, / crinem comite, candidamque vestem / perfundant hederæ recentiores* suggests the neoteric characteristic of Statius' poem<sup>61</sup>, but at the same time it seems that it also alludes to Lucan's similar poetic principles. The emphasis placed on Lucan's sweetness by the use of the adjective *dulcis* also moves in the same direction, as sweetness (*suavitas*) was one of the principal stylistic characteristics of neoteric poetry<sup>62</sup>. Thus, he is described as *dulcis* from the time of his infancy (37), surpasses Gallio, who is also described as *dulcis* (32), in literary worth, while the sweetness of Lucan's poetry is also alluded to in line 58 with the phrase *dulcibus theatris*.

Lucan is also praised for the scope of his literary production, extensive both in poetry and in prose (21-22), the originality and Roman character of his epic *De Bello Civili* (48-53)<sup>63</sup>, as well as for his polemical disposition (cf. 53: *carmen fortior exseres togatum*)<sup>64</sup>, while the long list of works he produced during his brief life (54 ff.) testifies to his early development, speed of composition, and ability to shift between genres, from the *lusus* to the *genus grande* of epic, which he approaches with the most suitable of tones (cf. 66: *et Pharsalica bella detonabis*; 72: *Pompeio dabis altius sepulcrum*; 102-103: *dum pugnas canis arduaque voce / das solacia grandibus sepulcris*). Moreover, in lines 72: *Pompeio dabis altius sepulcrum* and 102-103: *dum pugnas canis arduaque voce / das solacia grandibus sepulcris* Statius also makes sure to highlight the greatness and timeless value of Lucan's epic by comparing it to great material creations made to preserve the memory of individual people. In this direction he effectively uses to his advantage both the related literary tradition and the prime example of Horace's ode 3.30 (cf. esp. Hor. *Carm.* 3.30.1-5: *Exegi monumentum aere perennius / regalique situ pyramidum altius, / quod non imber edax, non aquilo impotens / possit diruere aut innumerabilis / annorum series et fuga temporum*), as well as the allusion found in *De Bello Civili* to the fact that Pompey's insignificant

<sup>61</sup> Newlands (n. 11) 228.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. e.g. Hor. *S.* 1.10.23-24: *at sermo lingua concinnus utraque / suavior, ut Chio nota si commixta Falerni est* and see e.g. N. Rudd, *The Satires of Horace*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-Bristol 1982<sup>2</sup>, 119; P. M. Brown, *Horace: Satires I, with an Introduction, Text, Translation and Commentary*, Warminster 1993, 186; S. Tzounakas, *Horace and the Poetology of Tibullus' Elegy 2.1*, "MH" 70, 2013, 16-32, at 19.

<sup>63</sup> Cf. Newmyer (n. 5) 77; Quint (n. 31) 131-132; Coleman (n. 27) 72; Newlands (n. 7) 443-445.

<sup>64</sup> For the various implications of this line, see Van Dam (n. 5) 477; Newlands (n. 11) 236.

grave is compensated by the poetic handling of the man in Lucan's epic<sup>65</sup>.

A more implicit strategy Statius chooses for praising Lucan is that of connecting him to famous literary figures through intertextual allusions. More specifically, the description of Lucan's possible visit to Elysium (111-119) recalls the episode in the 6th book of the *Aeneid*, in which Aeneas makes the same journey<sup>66</sup>, and thus allows the reader to think of Lucan and Aeneas as similar. This implicit equation of Lucan with Aeneas is further reinforced by the description of Lucan with the adjective *pius*, strongly associated with Aeneas, in line 71. Furthermore, Statius' request that Polla Argentaria ask the gods of the Underworld to allow the dead Lucan to meet with her and the poet's statement *solet hoc patere limen / ad nuptas redeuntibus maritis* (122-123) implicitly equate Lucan both with Orpheus, through the myth in which the latter ventures down to the Underworld to meet Euridice<sup>67</sup>, as described in Vergil's *Georgics* 4 and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 10, as well as with Protesilaus, as it evokes the myth of Protesilaus and Laodamia, as described in Ovid's *Heroides* 13. The allusions to the particular myth are also evident in other lines in Statius' poem, as, for example, in the reference to the statue both women have of their dead husbands (124-131)<sup>68</sup>. Finally, the verbal similarities between Statius' lines 89 ff. and Verg. A. 6.868 ff.<sup>69</sup> could lead to an implicit equation between Lucan and Marcellus. Undoubtedly, Statius was familiar with these lines of Vergil. He alludes to them when referring to the premature death of Melior's foster son Glaucias in *Silv.* 2.1, who is thus likened to Marcellus<sup>70</sup>. In my view a similar strategy is at work in Stat. *Silv.* 2.7, allowing the poet to suggest that

<sup>65</sup> For Lucan's poetic confidence as exemplified in his references to Pompey's insignificant tomb and more generally for his belief that his epic will secure eternal fame and immortality, see S. Tzounakas, *The Dialogue between the Mytileneans and Pompey in Lucan's De Bello Civili* (8,109-158), "Minerva" 25, 2012, 149-165, at 159-163, where Statius' exploitation of this thought is mentioned; cf. also Van Dam (n. 5) 485, 494; Malamud (n. 5) 7-15, esp. 8-12; Newlands (n. 11) 240-241, 246-247.

<sup>66</sup> For parallels, as e.g. Stat. *Silv.* 2.7.117-118 and Verg. A. 6.557-558 or Stat. *Silv.* 2.7.119 and Verg. A. 6.548, see Newlands (n. 11) 249-251; cf. also Van Dam (n. 5) 491, 497-498, 500. Similar influence of Vergil's *Aeneid* 6 is also evident in Statius' poem *Silv.* 5.3, an epicedium for the poet's father, for which see M. S. Ventura, *The Death of the Father: A Contribution to the Study of the Flavian Reception of Virgil* (Stat. *Silv.* 5.3), "MD" 64, 2010, 201-216.

<sup>67</sup> See Newlands (n. 11) 252. She also suggests (251) an additional allusion to the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice through the choice of *respicias* in line 119.

<sup>68</sup> For Statius' intention to evoke the myth of Protesilaus and Laodamia in lines 120-131, see Buchheit (n. 1) 239; Van Dam (n. 5) 501-503; Malamud (n. 5) 17; Newlands (n. 11) 251-253.

<sup>69</sup> On these similarities, see Buchheit (n. 1) 237 n. 2.

<sup>70</sup> Statius' allusions to Vergil's famous *epicedium Marcelli* (A. 6.860-886) in *Silv.* 2.1 have skilfully been demonstrated by D. W. T. Vessey, *Transience Preserved: Style and Theme in Statius' Silvae*, 'ANRW' II.32.5, 1986, 2754-2802, at 2771-2782.

as Marcellus was the lost glory of Rome, Lucan was the lost glory of Latin literature.

The poem also includes some common *topoi* of a *laudatio*<sup>71</sup>, though, as we have seen, more emphasis is given to Lucan's poetic virtues. I have already mentioned how the birthplace of the *laudatus* is praised in lines 24-35, or the praise of his family in the same section, two common practices in encomiastic texts. Another such practice is the praise of the wife<sup>72</sup>, praise which, by extension, reflects well on the husband. Statius praises Polla Argentaria generously in lines 81-88, where the reader can find most of the common *topoi* of a conventional *laudatio*<sup>73</sup>. Lucan's successful marriage points to his maturity, despite the youth of his years<sup>74</sup>, while also proving the soundness of his judgement. Let us not forget that it was Polla Argentaria who organized the ceremony in honour of her husband and commissioned Statius and, therefore, the praise she receives is to be expected.

Another common practice in encomiastic texts was to praise the physical attributes (*forma*) of the *laudatus*. In the present text this does not occur directly; besides, Lucan had been dead many years at the time of the poem's composition, and such direct praise would have been inappropriate. Still, Statius' decision to present Lucan as the son of Calliope could partly make up for this. The etymology of the Muse's name points to beauty and thus the *topos* so well established in a *laudatio* as a form of praise is implicitly included.

Statius manages to offer an encomium which is exceptional for the circumstances, one which is skilfully adapted to the setting in which it would be read. Any hyperbole should be interpreted within the context of the restrictions the traditions pertaining to the genre enforce, and of the obligations Statius himself undertook to fulfil. By making sure already from the *prae-fatio* of the 2nd book that it is known he has been commissioned by Polla

<sup>71</sup> For the main *topoi* of a *laudatio*, cf. e.g. *Rhet. Her.* 3.10 ff.; *Cic. Inv.* 2.177 ff.; *de Orat.* 2.340 ff. According to *Rhet. Her.* 3.10, for example, such instances constitute references to *res externae* (as e.g. *genus, educatio, divitiae, potestates, gloriae, civitas, amicitiae*), to *res corporis* (as e.g. *velocitas, vires, dignitas, valetudo*) and to *res animi* (as e.g. *prudentia, iustitia, fortitudo, modestia*); see e.g. S. Tzounakas, *Introduction*, in Id. (ed.), *Praises of Roman Leaders in Latin Literature*, Nicosia 2014, 1-12, at 8.

<sup>72</sup> References to wedding and more generally to the element of love interest are a frequent *topos* in the birthday poems as well; see e.g. Hardie (n. 5) 116.

<sup>73</sup> *Stat. Silv.* 2.7.81-88: *nec solum dabo carminum nitorem / sed taedis genialibus dicabo / doctam atque ingenio tuo decoram, / qualem blanda Venus daretque Iuno / forma, simplicitate, comitate, / censu, sanguine, gratia, decore, / et vestros hymenaeon ante postes / festis cantibus ipsa personabo.*

<sup>74</sup> See Quint (n. 31) 131-132; Newlands (n. 11) 242.

Argentaria to compose this *genethliacon*<sup>75</sup>, Statius lets it be understood that the poem shall satisfy the requirements of the person commissioning it and does not, therefore, reflect the writer's views entirely, but incorporates everything that such a commitment would entail.

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ABSTRACT:

This article investigates Statius' encomiastic strategies when praising the dead poet Lucan (Stat. *Silv.* 2.7). The fact that Statius centres on Lucan's image as a poet cannot help affecting his choice of strategies. More specifically, he alludes to Lucan's apotheosis, mixes Lucan's persona with those of the protagonists of his epic, connects him to famous literary figures by way of intertextual allusions, places him on lists of persons with similar characteristics, where Lucan's superiority is demonstrated and, in many different ways, highlights the literary principles of Lucan's poetry.

KEYWORDS:

Statius, *Silvae*, Lucan, *genethliacon*, encomiastic strategies.

<sup>75</sup> Stat. *Silv.* 2.pr.22-28: *cludit volumen genethliacon Lucani, quod Polla Argentaria, rarissima uxorum, cum hunc diem forte †consuleremus†, imputari sibi voluit. ego non potui maiorem tanti auctoris habere reverentiam quam quod laudes eius dicturus hexametros meos timui.*