

LUCAN'S *SILVAE* IN THE *VITA VACCAE*: A PREDECESSOR OF STATIUS' OCCASIONAL POEMS?*

ABSTRACT

An anonymous biography of Lucan known as the *Life of Vacca* attributes to the poet the composition of a work called *Siluae*. This information has been accepted by scholars with regard to both Lucan and Statius, thus transforming Lucan into a predecessor of Statius' *Siluae*. This article seeks to demonstrate that neither the manuscript tradition of Lucan's biography nor alleged references to Lucan's *Siluae* in Statius' collection substantiate the affirmation that Lucan composed a work called *Siluae*. It is argued that the *Life of Vacca* is most probably late and its very long catalogue of works (mostly problematic or otherwise unknown) aggrandizes Lucan in response to the need for a commendatory biography of the poet when he became a school author. Pomponio Leto is responsible for perpetuating the mention of Lucan's *Siluae* by including it in his influential biography of Lucan (the first to reach the printed press). It is further argued that the circumstances of the tradition of Statius' *Siluae* explain Leto's acceptance of Lucan's work of the same title. Leto was working on a commentary on the recently rediscovered *Siluae*, which explains his inclusion of a work called *Siluae* in his biography of Lucan, a great poet who had preceded Statius. Finally, this article deconstructs the theories that find references to Lucan's *Siluae* in Statius' *Siluae* or that justify Statius' silence about Lucan's *Siluae* with its political motifs.

Keywords: Statius; Lucan; *Siluae*; *Vita Vaccae*; ancient biographies; Pomponio Leto; humanism

... cum me Roma sui respersit Tybridis unda
seruatumque foro traxit Phoebouque dicauit.
Hinc siluae geminaeque faces reus inde Sagitta.
Orpheus ingrati stimulus liuorque tyranni,
dum ciuile nefas aperit Pharsalia ...

... when Rome sprinkled me with her Tiber's wave
and drew me, saved, from the Forum, and consecrated me to Phoebus.
Hereupon *Siluae*, two fires, then the defendant Sagitta.
Orpheus, the incitement and envy of the ungrateful tyrant,
while the *Pharsalia* unveils civil crime ...

Pomponio Leto, *Epitaph for Lucan*, vv. 4–8
Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 3285, fol. 135v

The poetic list of Lucan's works by Pomponio Leto (1428–1498) is part of the epitaph that he composed for the Roman epicist alongside a most influential biography. Both pieces are found in Leto's codex of Lucan's *Pharsalia*, prepared for his student

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Fabio Mazzatosta.¹ This biography, revised and now incorporating the epitaph, would open the *editio princeps* of the *Pharsalia* prepared by Giovanni Andrea Bussi, bishop of Aleria, and printed in Rome by Konrad Sweynheym and Arnold Pannartz in 1469.² Leto's poem signals what were, in his opinion, the most significant events of Lucan's life.³ Similarly, with regard to the poet's literary production, the items commemorated in the epitaph are selected from the much longer list of writings included in the biography. According to Leto's choice of *opera*, the first that deserves attention is the *Silvae*. This work precedes two writings on 'fires', which refers to the poems on the famous burning of Rome and the ending of the Trojan War. The 'defendant Sagitta' is Octavius Sagitta, whom Lucan is said elsewhere to have both accused and defended.⁴ The poem *Orpheus* is deemed responsible for arousing Nero's envy of the poet. It was followed by Lucan's magnum opus, the *Pharsalia*, his epic on the Civil War. Some elements suggest that the writings are presented in chronological order: Lucan's exchange of *forum* for Phoebus—a career devoted to the court is abandoned for poetry—indicates that the list begins with Lucan's first works, and the adverbs *hinc* and *inde* (v. 6) seem to establish a sequence.

The present study focusses on a problem raised by the biographical tradition on Lucan. Catalogues of the epicist's works are part of the so-called *Vita Vaccae*, a biography of Lucan of uncertain authorship and date, and Statius' *Silvae* 2.7, a homage to Lucan commissioned by the latter's widow a few years after his death. The *Vita Vaccae* states that Lucan wrote a work called *Silvae*, now lost, but Statius does not mention that title. Such incoherence is all the more compelling since Lucan's *Silvae* would provide Statius with a precedent for the collection into which he incorporated his panegyric of Lucan. At least, that has been the interpretation of Statius scholars for the last few centuries. To offer but two recent examples, Paolo Asso presumes similarity in 'generic composition' and 'literary intent' between Lucan's and Statius' *Silvae*, while Carole Newlands speaks of a 'poetic genealogy' of Statius' collection that goes back to Lucan's *Silvae* and Virgil's *Eclogues*.⁵ As these comments illustrate, Lucan's *Silvae*, hitherto unquestioned, has fired the imagination of Statius scholars, encouraging speculation and conclusions both on Lucan's lost poetry book and on Statius' *Silvae*.

I will demonstrate that neither the manuscript tradition of Lucan's biography nor alleged references to Lucan's *Silvae* in Statius' collection support the mention transmitted by the *Vita Vaccae*; that is, they do not substantiate the affirmation that Lucan composed a work called *Silvae*. Further, I will argue that there is an intimate connection between the preservation of the mention of Lucan's *Silvae* and the transmission history of Statius' *Silvae*.

¹ See S. Maddalo, 'I manoscritti Mazzatosta', in T. Sampieri and G. Lombardi (edd.), *Cultura umanistica a Viterbo. Atti della giornata di studio per il V centenario della stampa a Viterbo, 12 novembre 1988* (Viterbo, 1991), 47–86, at 58–9 with n. 51.

² See E. Camperlingo, 'Le annotazioni di Pomponio Leto a Lucano (Vat. lat. 3285): libri I–IV con un'appendice sulla *Vita Lucani*' (Diss., University of Salerno, 2010–2011), 243–4; F. Stok, 'La riscoperta umanistica della biografia di Lucano', in F. Galtier and R. Pognault (edd.), *Présence de Lucain* (Clermont-Ferrand, 2016), 465–80, at 476–7. The website www.repertoriumpomponianum.it is a most useful resource.

³ Stok (n. 2), 475.

⁴ See the testimony of the *Vita Vaccae* below.

⁵ P. Asso, *A Commentary on Lucan, De Bello Civili IV. Introduction, Edition and Translation* (Berlin, 2010), 6; C. Newlands, *Statius' Silvae and the Poetics of Empire* (Cambridge, 2002), 36.

LUCAN'S *SILVAE*: BIOGRAPHIES HAVE THEIR STORY

Pomponio Leto stands at the end of a complex tradition of biographies of Lucan: in producing the last to circulate in manuscript form and the first to be printed, he brought the manuscript tradition to a close. The writings referenced by Leto in the epigram and in the *Vita Lucani*, as well as the order in which he presents them, are thus traceable to earlier *Lives of Lucan*. There are also passages in ancient texts that provide material on the poet, mainly in Martial, Tacitus and Cassius Dio.⁶

The earliest testimony to Lucan's writings is Statius' *Silvae* 2.7. According to Statius' preface to the second book of the *Silvae*, this panegyric composition was written at the request of Lucan's widow, Polla Argentaria.⁷ It enjoys a unique importance for the establishment of the corpus, for its proximity to Lucan's life, and for being dedicated to Polla.⁸ Statius' catalogue of Lucan's writings, which affords precious material for Lucan scholars, has made this one of the most-studied poems of the *Silvae*.⁹

Three biographies attest to earlier scholarship on Lucan:¹⁰

- (a) *M. Annaeus Lucanus Cordubensis ... prima ingenii experimenta*, today accepted to be Suetonius' *Life of Lucan* in the *De poetis*. The attribution of the biography to Suetonius is modern, and rests on similarities between the phrasing of the text and the phrasing of Jerome's reference to Lucan's death (*Chron. ad Ol.* 210.3).¹¹ It is biased against Lucan, depicting him in demeaning terms.¹²
- (b) *Lucanus iste hispanus genere*, an anonymous text transmitted by the tenth-century MS Leiden, Universitätsbibliothek, Voss. lat. F 63.¹³ It encompasses material from Suetonius' biography and from the *Commenta Bernensia*.¹⁴
- (c) *M. Annaeus Lucanus patrem habuit*, an anonymous and highly apologetic biography associated with the name 'Vacca' and, as stated above, the only text to mention Lucan's *Silvae*. The attribution of the text to a Vacca depends upon a proposal by Weber that has been demonstrated to be untenable.¹⁵ There is

⁶ Ancient sources on Lucan's life: Tac. *Ann.* 15.49, 15.56–7, 15.70–1, 16.17; *Dial.* 20; Cass. Dio 62.29.4; Mart. 7.21–3, 10.64, 14.194; Petron. *Sat.* 118; Fronto, fr. *De orationibus ad M. Antonium*; *Anth. Lat.* 668.

⁷ The text is quoted below.

⁸ F. Ahl, *Lucan: An Introduction* (Ithaca and London, 1976), 343.

⁹ On *Silvae* 2.7, see S. Tzounakas, 'Encomiastic strategies in Statius' *Genethliacon Lucani* (*Silv.* 2.7)', *Prometheus* 43 (2017), 145–60; C. Newlands, *Statius Silvae Book II* (Cambridge, 2011), 224–54; H.-J. van Dam, *P. Papinius Statius. Silvae Book II. A Commentary* (Leiden, 1984), 450–506; see also R.G.M. Nisbet, 'Felicitas at Surrentum (Statius, *Silvae* II. 2)', *JRS* 68 (1978), 1–11 on Polla Argentaria. For further bibliography, see Tzounakas (this note), 145–6 with nn. 1 and 5.

¹⁰ The reference edition of the *Lives* is C. Braidotti, *Le vite antiche di M. Anneo Lucano* (Bologna, 1972). For Suetonius' *Life of Lucan* there is now the edition by M. Stachon, *Sueton, De poetis. Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar zu den erhaltenen Viten nebst begründeten Mutmaßungen zu den verlorenen Kapiteln* (Heidelberg, 2021).

¹¹ Asso (n. 5), 2 n. 2.

¹² F. Glaeser, 'Quaestiones Suetoniana. De vitis Persii, Lucani, Horatii' (Diss., Bratislava, 1911) has questioned whether this *Life* is biased against Lucan.

¹³ R. Bergmann and S. Stricker (edd.) (in collaboration with Y. Goldammer and C. Wich-Reif), *Katalog der althochdeutschen und altsächsischen Glossenhandschriften* (Berlin and New York, 2005), 1.806–7, §368.

¹⁴ Braidotti (n. 10), 26–7.

¹⁵ K.F. Weber, *Vitae M. Annaei Lucani collectae, Particula I. Indices Lectionum et publicarum et privatarum quae in Academia Marburgensi per semestre aestivum* (Marburg, 1856), 15. See V. Ussani, 'Il testo lucaneo e gli scolii bernensi', *SIFC* 11 (1903), 29–83, at 41; B.M. Marti, 'Three new glosses from Vacca's commentary on Lucan', *CPh* 36 (1941), 64–5; B.M. Marti,

evidence of a commentator on Lucan called Vacca,¹⁶ and this name occurs in marginalia to the *Bellum Ciuile*.¹⁷ This commentator's identification encouraged several very different perspectives, ranging from recognizing him as an ancient scholar studied by St Jerome to making him an obscure medieval writer.¹⁸ None the less, Vacca was quoted as an authority at the level of Servius, Priscian and Isidore.¹⁹

These *Lives* provided material for the biography of Lucan written by the twelfth-century scholar Arnulfus of Orléans.²⁰ His *Vita Lucani* was part of the *accessus* to his commentary on the *Pharsalia*, entitled *Glosule super Lucanum*, which immediately became a work of reference. Arnulfus does not discuss Lucan's literary production besides the *Bellum Ciuile*. He did, however, make use of the *Life of Vacca*, but only for an episode of the poet's biography (the bees searching for baby Lucan's mouth).²¹

The last stage of the manuscript tradition of Lucan's biographies is represented by Pomponio Leto himself.²² The MS Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vat. lat. 3285 is written in Pomponio's hand (1469). The *Vita* preserved in this manuscript is not identical to that found in the *editio princeps*. The minor differences between the *uitae* may be due to Bussi's intervention at the request of the editors, which is mentioned after the catalogue of Lucan's titles.²³

The catalogues of Lucan's *opera* that have come down to us in the manuscript tradition are as follows (the printed version of Leto's catalogue is included in the interest of completeness):

(a) *Stat. Silu. 2.7.54–66, ed. Courtney (1990)*

In *Siluae 2.7*, after a lengthy invocation of the Muses of song and poetry (vv. 1–23), there follows a presentation of the poem's theme and the introduction to the core of

'Vacca in Lucanum', *Speculum* 25 (1950), 198–214, at 209–10; B. Munk Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classiques latins aux XIe et XIIe siècles. Tome IV, Ire partie: la réception de la littérature classique, travaux philologiques* (Paris, 2009), 39–40.

¹⁶ In particular, a note acknowledges 'Vacca, expositor Lucani' (Berlin, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin — Preußischer Kulturbesitz, lat. 2° 34 [V. Rose, *Verzeichniss der lateinischen Handschriften der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin, Vol. 2: Die Handschriften der Kurfürstlichen Bibliothek und der Kurfürstlichen Lande* (Berlin, 1905), 1016, §863]), and a twelfth-century catalogue of possessions of the library of Corbie attests to a *Vacca in Lucanum* (Vatican City, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Reg. Lat. 520, fol. 5r).

¹⁷ A considerable number of glosses bearing the name 'Vacca' led to Marti's tentative reconstruction of his commentary on Lucan, which would include a *Vita*, but not the one usually ascribed to him. See Marti (n. 15 [1950]), 212–13.

¹⁸ Marti (n. 15 [1950]), 198–9; P. Schmidt, 'Vacca', in *DNP* 12.1 (Stuttgart and Weimar, 2002), 1075. See also S. Werner, 'On the history of the *Commenta Bernensia* and the *Adnotationes super Lucanum*', *HSPH* 96 (1994), 343–68, at 344 n. 5; Munk Olsen (n. 15), 39–40.

¹⁹ Marti (n. 15 [1950]), 203, 211–12.

²⁰ B.M. Marti, 'Arnulfus and the *faits des romains*', *Modern Language Quarterly* 2 (1941), 3–23; Marti (n. 15 [1941]) and (n. 15 [1950]). Edition of Arnulfus' *Vita Lucani*: B.M. Marti (ed.), *Arnulfi Aurelianensis. Glosule super Lucanum* (Rome, 1958), 3–5.

²¹ Stok (n. 2), 466–7.

²² V. Ussani, 'Le annotazioni di Pomponio Leto a Lucano', *RAL* 13 (1904), 366–85; J. Ramminger, 'The *Vita Lucani* of Pomponio Leto and Perotti's *Cornu copiae*', *StudUmanistPiceni* 33 (2013), 49–56; F. Stok, 'La biografia lucanea di Siccio Polenton', in P. Esposito and C. Walde (edd.), *Lecture e lettori di Lucano. Atti del convegno internazionale di studi Fisciano, 27–29 marzo 2012* (Pisa, 2015), 301–23; Stok (n. 2).

²³ The lines are quoted below. This is the proposal of Ramminger (n. 22), 54.

the composition (vv. 24–35), the prophecy of the Muse Calliope (vv. 36–106). She is attracted by the cries of the baby Lucan and, for the first time, she puts aside her mourning for her son, Orpheus, to hold the baby up and foretell Lucan's poetic production (vv. 54–66):

<p>54 ac primum teneris adhuc in annis 55 ludes Hectora Thessalosque currus 56 et supplex Priami potentis aurum, 57 et sedes reserabis inferorum; 58 ingratus Nero dulcibus theatris 59 et noster tibi proferetur Orpheus. 60 dices culminibus Remi uagantes 61 infandos domini nocentis ignes. 62 hinc castae titulum decusque Pollae 63 iucunda dabis adlocutione. 64 mox coepta generosior iuuenta 65 albos ossibus Italis Philippos 66 et Pharsalica bella detonabis</p>	<p>And first, still in boyhood's years, you shall dally with Hector and the Thessalian chariot and royal Priam's suppliant god, and unbar the dwellings infernal. Ungrateful Nero and our Orpheus you shall recite to kindly theatres. You shall tell of monstrous fires of a guilty ruler at large over the roofs of Remus. Next a charming address to chaste Polla, bestowing fame and ornament. Presently, nobler in early manhood, you shall thunder Philippi, white with Italian bones, and Pharsalian Wars.²⁴</p>
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62 huc *LM* post 67 uersum excidisse uidit Saenger²⁵

After predicting Lucan's writings, the Muse prophesies his marriage to Polla and death. Calliope then resumes her mourning, although she now mourns for Lucan. The poem is closed by a consolation addressed to Polla (vv. 107–35).²⁶

(b) *The Life of Vacca, ed. Braidotti (1972)*

The earliest manuscripts preserving the text are dated to the period from the late ninth to the twelfth centuries. MSS Bern 370, Bodmer 182 and Munich Clm 4610 transmit scholarship on Lucan.²⁷ In fact, these are fundamental testimonies of the two nuclei of exegesis on Lucan that appeared in the tenth and eleventh centuries: the *Commenta Bernensia* and the *Adnotationes super Lucanum*. The relationship between the two nuclei as well as their origins are highly controversial issues in Lucanian studies.²⁸ The text also circulated in manuscripts of Lucan's *Pharsalia*.²⁹

²⁴ All the translations of the *Siluae* are from D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Statius Silvae*, rev. C. Parrott (Cambridge, MA, 2015).

²⁵ E. Courtney (ed.), *P. Papini Stati Silvae* (Oxford, 1990). MS L: Laurentianus plut. 29.32, saec. IX (ad 2.7); MS M: Matriensis 3678, ann. 1417 uel 1418.

²⁶ On the structure of the poem, see S.T. Newmyer, *The Silvae of Statius: Structure and Theme* (Leiden, 1979), 75–80 and van Dam (n. 9), 454.

²⁷ (a) Bern, Burgerbibliothek, 370 (saec. IX–X, Rheims?, near Soissons? B. Bischoff, *Katalog der festländischen Handschriften des neunten Jahrhunderts* [Wiesbaden, 1998], 1.126, §587), *Commenta Bernensia in Lucanum, Adnotationes super Lucanum* (Books 1–4, 9–10); *Vita*: fol. 1r–v. (b) Cologne, Fondation Martin Bodmer, 182 (saec. XI Pellegrin; saec. XI–XII Endt; Tegernsee?): *Annotationes super Lucanum; Vita*: fol. 1r–v. (c) Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4610 (first part: saec. XI; second part: c.1100; Tegernsee), *Adnotationes super Lucanum + Commentum in Metamorphoses Ouidii; Vita*: fol. 1r–v. There are other manuscripts that preserve part of the *Vita Vaccae*, but in them the *Vita* is interrupted at different points before the catalogue of writings.

²⁸ Werner (n. 18) surveys the problem. See also P. Esposito, *Gli scolii a Lucano ed altra scolastica latina* (Pisa, 2004), 11–24, who argues for a different perspective.

²⁹ See Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, lat. 9346 (saec. XI, Echternach): Lucanus, *Pharsalia; Vita*: fol. 2r–v; Munich, Bayerisches Staatsbibliothek, Clm 4593 (XII¹; Benediktbeuern): Lucan, *Bellum Ciuile; Vita*: fol. 2r–v.

The *Life of Vacca* begins with an account of the poet's family, emphasizing the poet's sophisticated education and rhetorical talent, and the attention of the *princeps* to him. Nero is said to have come to envy and hate Lucan for his success as a poet. In consequence of his ban from theatres and the courts, Lucan is said to have joined the Pisonian conspiracy and then to have been betrayed by his collaborators. At the end of the text, after a comparison of Lucan with Ovid for not having been allowed to correct the remains of his epic, the *Life* presents a list of Lucan's works:

Reliqui enim [48] VII belli ciuilis libri locum calumniatibus tamquam mendosi [49] non darent, qui tametsi sub uero crimine non egent patrocinio: [50] in isdem dici, quod in Ouidii libris praescribitur, potest: [51] 'emendaturus, si licuisset, erat'. Exstant eius complures et alii, ut [52] Iliacon, Saturnalia, Catachthonion, **Siluarum X**, tragoedia Medea [53] inperfecta, salticae fabulae XIV et epigrammata, prosa oratione [54] in Octauium Sagittam et pro eo, de incendio urbis, epistolarum [55] ex Campania, non fastidiendi quidem omnes, tales tamen, ut belli [56] ciuilis uideantur accessio.³⁰

The remaining seven books of the *Bellum Ciuile*, although uncorrected, gave no ammunition to detractors; they have no need of defence even after committing a true crime: in these could be said what is written in front of Ovid's books: 'I would have corrected them, if I could'. Several survive and others, such as *Iliacon*, *Saturnalia*, *Catachthonion*, ten [books of] *Siluae*, the unfinished tragedy *Medea*, fourteen *salticae fabulae* and epigrams, a prose speech against Octavius Sagitta and one in his defence, *On the City's Fire*, [books of] letters from Campania. None of these should be despised, but they appear to be only a prelude to the *Civil War*.

The transmission of Statius' *Siluae* and the circulation of the mention of Lucan's work of the same title are closely related. In this regard, the date of composition of the *Vita Vaccae* is an important issue. Attempts at dating the *Vita* have seen a huge range of proposals. For Rostagni and Martina, who were impressed by the quantity and the quality of information conveyed by the biography, it was almost contemporary with Lucan.³¹ According to Rostagni and Martina, only the author's temporal closeness to Lucan would explain the apologetic character of the *Life*.³² In Martina's opinion, the polemic around the publication of the *Bellum Ciuile* is to be understood in the context of the discussion of the quality of Lucan's poem and its suitability as an epic. In addition, still according to Martina, the absence of the *Adlocutio ad Pollam* from the *Vita* does not hinder the theory that the *Life of Vacca* stems from the first century, since that omission is balanced by the massive list of minor works.³³ What is more, the definition of a date is intimately connected to the biographer's assertion that, as quaestor, Lucan organized 'gladiatorial games with colleagues, as was usual then' (*cum collegis more tunc usitato munus gladiatorium edidit*).³⁴ The reference to the gladiatorial games would point to a very early date. In Martina's view, the collegial organization of the games (*cum collegis*) was rare, and that would suggest a time soon after Lucan's death.³⁵ Similarly, Rostagni signals that the gladiatorial games are

³⁰ I quote Braidotti (n. 10). There are two misreadings of MS W (Cologne, Fondation Martin Bodmer, 182) in Braidotti's apparatus criticus: in line 50, W reads *perscribitur* (not *proscribitur*); in line 52, W reads *kataseonion* (not *catasconion*).

³¹ A. Rostagni, *De poetis e Biografi minori. Restituzione e commento* (Turin, 1944), 176–8; M. Martina, 'Le vite antiche di Lucano e di Persio', *CCC* 5 (1984), 155–89.

³² Rostagni (n. 31), 176–8; Martina (n. 31), 159–60.

³³ Martina (n. 31), 159–63. See Braidotti (n. 10), 22 n. 37 for bibliography on the relationship between the biography of Suetonius and the *Vita Vaccae*.

³⁴ Braidotti (n. 10), 37, lines 26–7.

³⁵ Martina (n. 31), 160–5.

proof of a date between the death of Nero and the beginning of Domitian's reign, since during that period the games were rarer.³⁶

Today the hypothesis that the biography once attributed to Vacca belongs to the first century has been put aside in favour of a later chronology. To begin with, the author refers to Lucan's works as being 'those that remain' (*extant*), which makes less attractive the theory that the biography is contemporary, or near-contemporary, to Statius. Likewise, in Statius' time the *Adlocutio ad Pollam*, mentioned in *Siluae* 2.7 but ignored by the anonymous life, was most probably extant.³⁷ Furthermore, Gresseth has made clear that the information conveyed by the *Life of Vacca* is not as accurate as it might seem. He has shown convincingly that the account of the famous quarrel between Lucan and Nero, which finally led to the poet's death, is inaccurate, beginning with the order of events.³⁸ Only in the *Vita Vaccae* is the quarrel connected to the Neronia, and this is impossible, since it was not until after Lucan's death that Nero first performed at a festival in Rome (at the second Quinquennial Games: *Tac. Ann.* 14.15). In Gresseth's view, the quarrel born because of Nero's jealousy of Lucan's recitations, or owing to a contest between Lucan and Nero, is an understandable interpretation of a later generation based on ancient data, Lucan being the greatest poet under an emperor who considered himself a poet, and joining a conspiracy against that emperor that would lead to his death.³⁹ In stark contrast, by reading the *Vita Vaccae*, the biography attributed to Suetonius, and *Siluae* 2.7, Ahl argues that it was Lucan's recitation of parts of the *Pharsalia* that earned him his ban, and that he wrote the *De incendio Vrbis* in response.⁴⁰

With regard to the organization of games, Ahl reasonably argues that the mention of gladiatorial games points to a moment when they were no longer held, that is, after their abolition by Honorius in 404. Further, a date of composition in the fifth century would explain the comment that, in organizing the games, Lucan was proceeding according to custom (*more tunc usitato*). The biographer was thus saving Lucan from being considered barbarous for organizing gladiatorial games.⁴¹

Brugnoli's approach to the *Vita Vaccae* points to the chronology proposed by Ahl. Brugnoli insists on the *Life's* consistency with other late antique biographies. He identifies a series of themes that are likewise to be found in the *Life of Virgil* by Suetonius–Donatus and in the *Life of Persius*: the idea of a contest between Lucan and Nero; the unfinished poem;⁴² the posthumous edition; the need of an editor who assumes responsibility for issuing the poem.⁴³ In like manner, Camperlingo observes that the prodigy of the bees⁴⁴ provides a link between the *Vita Vaccae* and Phocas' poem on Virgil (*Carm. de Verg.* 53–8), a text equally dated to the late fourth or early fifth century.⁴⁵ Stok points to the same direction. He argues for a *terminus post quem*

³⁶ Rostagni (n. 31), 177.

³⁷ Ahl (n. 8), 333–6.

³⁸ G.K. Gresseth, 'The quarrel between Lucan and Nero', *CPh* 52 (1957), 24–7, at 25–7.

³⁹ Gresseth (n. 38), 24–6 n. 16.

⁴⁰ F. Ahl, 'Lucan's *De incendio Vrbis*, *Epistulae ex Campania* and Nero's ban', *TAPhA* 102 (1971), 1–27, especially 19–20 (conclusions) and 26–7 (chronology of events).

⁴¹ Ahl (n. 8), 334. For a different interpretation, see Martina (n. 31), 161–2.

⁴² A passage that is taken at face value, e.g. by K. Rose, 'Problems of chronology in Lucan's career', *TAPhA* 97 (1966), 379–96, at 384.

⁴³ G. Brugnoli, 'Osservazioni sulla *Vita Lucani* di Vacca', *Vichiana* 11 (1982), 35–51, at 47–9.

⁴⁴ Camperlingo (n. 2), 266–7.

⁴⁵ S. McGill, 'Larger than life: the elevation of Virgil in Phocas' *Vita Vergiliana*', in A. Powell and P. Hardie (edd.), *The Ancient Lives of Virgil: Literary and Historical Studies* (Swansea, 2017),

in the fourth century. In his opinion, it is probable that the text answered to the need for a more laudatory biography of Lucan than that of Suetonius, at a time when Lucan became a school author. For Stok, the version of this *Life* that came down to us is definitely late antique.⁴⁶

Brugnoli, Camperlingo and Stok agree in situating the composition of the *Vita Vaccae* in Late Antiquity. It is known that the fourth-century poet Ausonius was well acquainted with the *Silvae*, as was Sidonius Apollinaris in the next century.⁴⁷ It is only from the sixth century that the evidence for the circulation of the *Silvae* becomes rarer.⁴⁸ Therefore, it is certain that the scholar who added the *Silvae* to the impressive list of Lucan's works knew Statius' work of that title.

The discovery of a manuscript of Statius' *Silvae* by Poggio Bracciolini in 1417 had such an impact among the humanists that the collection generated a new genre. Statius even displaced Virgil as a theme of scholarship in most important Italian 'studies'.⁴⁹ The codex found by Poggio, which was held in a monastery in the area of Lake Constance, also contained Manilius and Silius Italicus. Its source might have been the 'Ouidii Metamorphoseon Sili et Stacii uolumen I', catalogued at a library in the same area, probably Reichenau.⁵⁰ What has come down to us is the copy of the manuscript that Poggio ordered. The entire tradition of the *Silvae* rests on this one manuscript, the *Matritensis* (Madrid, Biblioteca Nacional de España, 3678), with the sole exception of *Silvae* 2.7. The latter, known as the *Genethliacon Lucani*, enjoyed an independent circulation, and was perhaps thought to have been composed by Lucan himself.⁵¹ It is preserved in Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, Plut. 29.32 (fols. 29r–30r), dated by Bischoff to the first third of the ninth century, suggesting that this manuscript was produced in western Germany and may descend from the same source as the *Matritensis*.⁵²

Reeve points out that the *Silvae* did not start to circulate before 1453, when Poggio Bracciolini established himself in Florence, or perhaps not before his death in 1459.⁵³ In the second half of the fifteenth century, the discovery of Statius' *Silvae* had a significant impact in Italian studies. The first copy of the manuscript to be produced in Rome dates to 1463. As Reeve also emphasizes, the notes preserved in the codex attest to the fact that work on the text was already under way.⁵⁴ A few years later, around 1470,

93–114, at 93 n. 1; S. Harrison, 'The *Vita Phocae*: literary context and texture', in A. Powell and P. Hardie (edd.), *The Ancient Lives of Virgil: Literary and Historical Studies* (Swansea, 2017), 73–91, at 73.

⁴⁶ Stok (n. 2), 466.

⁴⁷ See, more recently, C. Newlands, 'The early reception of the *Silvae*: from Statius to Sidonius', in F. Bessone and M. Fucocchi (edd.), *The Literary Genres in the Flavian Age* (Berlin, 2017), 167–84 with bibliography.

⁴⁸ K.M. Coleman, *Statius Silvae IV* (Oxford, 1988), xxxii; B. Gibson, *Statius, Silvae 5. Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary* (Oxford, 2006), 1 with n. 99.

⁴⁹ G. Abbamonte, 'Naples: a poet's city', in J. Hughes and C. Buongiovanni (edd.), *Remembering Parthenope: The Reception of Classical Naples from Antiquity to the Present* (Oxford, 2015), 170–88, at 177–9.

⁵⁰ M.D. Reeve, 'Statius', in L.D. Reynolds (edd.), *Texts and Transmission: A Survey of the Latin Classics* (Oxford, 1983), 394–9, at 398.

⁵¹ A. Klotz, *P. Papini Stati Silvae* (Leipzig, 1911), vii.

⁵² Reeve (n. 50), 397–8. On the manuscript, see B. Munk Olsen, *L'étude des auteurs classiques latins aux XIe et XIIIe siècles*. Tome II: *Catalogue des manuscrits classiques latins copiés du IXe au XIIIe siècle: Livius-Vitruvius: Florilèges—essais de plume* (Paris, 1985), 534 ([B. 27]) and Bischoff (n. 27), 1.259, §1224 with bibliography.

⁵³ Reeve (n. 50), 398; M.D. Reeve, 'Statius' *Silvae* in the fifteenth century', *CQ* 21 (1977), 202–25, at 205, 220–1.

⁵⁴ Reeve (n. 50), 398.

Pomponio Leto was writing a commentary.⁵⁵ Perotti had likewise begun commenting on Statius' *Siluae* by the start of the 1470s, and would issue an *Expositio Siluarum* within a few years. Even though Statius did not allude to a work entitled *Siluae* in his account of Lucan's *opera*, it might have appeared all the more likely, now that a poetry book with that title was known, that an important poet such as Lucan had essayed a similar collection some decades in advance of Statius. Pomponio Leto deemed that hypothetical work important enough to award it a place of honour in the epitaph he composed for Lucan, which has been quoted at the beginning of this article. In my opinion, the discovery and circulation of Statius' *Siluae* encouraged the idea conveyed by the *Vita Vaccae* that Lucan composed a work of the same title.

(c) *Pomponio Leto*

The *Vita* discusses Seneca's origins and family, Lucan's privileged education, his marriage and his public offices. The cooling of relations between Lucan and Nero is attributed to a poetic competition entered by both and won by the former, for which Nero banned him from theatres and the Forum. There follows an account of Lucan's participation in the conspiracy against Nero. The catalogue of Lucan's literary production precedes Leto's quotation of Quintilian's characterization of him, to which Leto adds several more qualities.

In Leto's handwritten manuscript, the passage on Lucan's writings runs as follows (fols. 135v–137r):⁵⁶

scripsit Saturnalia siluarum libros X Medeam Orpheum incendium urbis et incendium troianum sub titulo ilie conitae adiecta Priami calamitate. oratione sua Ottauium Sagittam qui Pontiam confoderat damnauit. Pharsaliam cuius primos tris libros cum uxore correxit

He wrote the *Saturnalia*, ten books of *Siluae*, *Medea*, *Orpheus*, the fire of the city and the Trojan fire (under the title *Ilie conitae*), to which was added Priam's misfortune. In a speech he convicted Octavius Sagitta, who had harmed Pontia. [He wrote] the *Pharsalia*, whose first three books he corrected with his wife.

In the biography preserved in the *editio princeps*, Leto explains:

Scripsit Saturnalia Siluarum libros X Medeam Orpheum Incendium urbis Incendium Troianum cum Priami calamitate. Oratione sua Octauium Sagittam qui Pontiam confoderat damnauit. Pharsaliam non finiuit cuius primos tris libros cum uxore correxit quos inscitia deprauatos cum reliquis septem. Io. Andreas Antitestes Aleriensis diligentissime nostro tempore emendauit rogantibus Conrado et Arnoldo qui ne lingua romana pereat libros laudabili inuentione imprimunt.

He wrote the *Saturnalia*, ten books of *Siluae*, *Medea*, *Orpheus*, the *City's Fire*, the *Trojan Fire* with Priam's misfortune. With a speech he convicted Octavius Sagitta, who had harmed Pontia. He did not finish the *Pharsalia*, whose first three books he corrected with his wife. Ignorance left the remaining seven full of errors. Iohannes Andreas Antitestes from Aleria corrected them with the utmost diligence in my time, at the request of Conradus Sweynheim and Arnoldus Pannartz, who print the books with this commendable invention [the printing press], so that the Latin language may not perish.

⁵⁵ V. Fera, 'Pomponio Leto e le *Silvae* di Stazio', *Schede Umanistiche* 16 (2002), 71–83; Reeve (n. 53), especially 207–10, 217–19, 223.

⁵⁶ For other manuscripts and editions, see Camperlingo (n. 2), 243–7. Stok (n. 2), 470–7 edits the biography. The phrase *oratione ... damnauit* is in a marginal gloss.

Let us examine in detail the available evidence. With the sole exception of the *Laudes Neronis*, the literary works acknowledged both in *Siluae* 2.7 and in the *Vita Vaccae* coincide with the works of which we possess fragments: *Iliacon*, *Catachthonion*, *Orpheus*. To these fragments can be added some verses attributed to epigrams, and others that cannot be identified with any specific work.⁵⁷

As seen above, Statius refers to Lucan's pieces through a series of allusions.⁵⁸ Two famous scenes from the end of the *Iliad*—Hector's corpse being dragged by Achilles' chariot and Priam's demand for his son's body—represent the *Iliacon* (vv. 55–6). Lucan is then said to reveal the 'other world'⁵⁹ in the *Catachthonion* (v. 57). Next, Nero is associated with recitations in the theatre: his ingratitude recalls the paradox that the subject of the *Laudes Neronis* was the topic that put Lucan to death (vv. 58–9). The *Orpheus* is explicitly mentioned (v. 58). Over the following verses, Nero is offered a negative depiction again, this time as the *dominus nocens* responsible for the great fire of Rome, which is the theme of the *De incendio Urbis* (vv. 60–1). Almost at the end of the catalogue, in a place of honour, the *adlocutio* addressed to Polla allows for eulogizing Lucan's widow as *casta*, thus introducing the theme of Lucan's wedding⁶⁰ (vv. 62–3). Finally, Italian bones are a dreadful reminder of the *Bellum Ciuile* (vv. 64–6).

The apologetic character of the *Life of Vacca* must underlie any conclusions about its content. Like Statius, the author of the *Vita* is determined to present the best possible picture of Lucan. As an illustration, it will suffice to note that Lucan's participation in the plot against Nero is downplayed, so that the poet is said to have been tricked by the conspirators.⁶¹

Regarding the record of Lucan's literary production, the author of the *Vita Vaccae* aggrandizes the poet by attributing to him a large and varied *œuvre*.⁶² The list in the *Life of Vacca* is significantly longer than that preserved in *Siluae* 2.7. To the titles alluded to by Statius it appends *Saturnalia*, *Siluae* (ten books, perhaps mimicking the length of the *Bellum Ciuile* or doubling the number of books in Statius' *Siluae*), a tragic *Medea*, the fourteen mysterious *salticae fabulae*, orations both accusing and defending Octavius Sagitta, letters and another title that, owing to textual issues that will be addressed below, has been interpreted in different ways (in Braidotti, it reads as *epigrammata*); the *Laudes Neronis* and the *Orpheus* are absent from the catalogue, but they had been named before in the *Vita*.⁶³ It is clear that the author of the *Life of Vacca* does not depend upon *Siluae* 2.7 for his catalogue of Lucan's literary production.

The titles *Iliacon* and *Catachthonion*, and Statius' description of these works, lead us to think of exercises (hence the verb *ludes*, *Silu.* 2.7.55) in epic poetry, or at least poems in hexameters.⁶⁴ Van Dam points out that Statius has a tendency to focus on details;

⁵⁷ The fragments were edited by C. Hosius, *M. Annaei Lucani Belli Civilis libri decem* (Leipzig, 1913³), 328–31 and, more recently, by R. Badali, *Lucani opera* (Rome, 1992), 391–8 and J. Blänsdorf, *FPL* (Berlin, 2011⁴), 319–23.

⁵⁸ On the relevance of allusion in *Siluae* 2.7, see Tzounakas (n. 9), 149–51.

⁵⁹ On which, see van Dam (n. 9), 479.

⁶⁰ On which, see van Dam (n. 9), 473.

⁶¹ Braidotti (n. 10), 38, lines 41–3.

⁶² Compare the attribution of rhetorical works to Juvenal in the *Vita* edited by P. Wessner, *Scholiam in Iuvenalem vetustiora* (Leipzig, 1931), 1 and discussed by E. Courtney, *A Commentary on the Satires of Juvenal* (London, 1980), 7.

⁶³ Braidotti (n. 10), 37, lines 30–6.

⁶⁴ Van Dam (n. 9), 478. See Stachon's proposal below about a possible association between the *Catachthonion* and the *Culex*.

therefore, his verses on the *Iliacon* must not be considered to reveal the poem's main themes.⁶⁵ Lucan seems to have experimented with drama, considering the mention of a *Medea* and perhaps the *salticae fabulae*, if they were pantomimes. The last title has been corrected to *satyricae fabulae*, which could consist in an imitation of Petronius' *Satyricon*.⁶⁶ But Lucan might have composed another dramatic work, if the word edited by Braidotti to give *epigrammata* is read as *appamata*: this could be an attempt at writing ὀγόρματα, a sort of pantomime.⁶⁷ However, if, with Giralduus, we read *hypomnemata* instead of *epigrammata*, Lucan may not have set aside historiography;⁶⁸ *hippasmata*, a work related to horses and horsemanship, has likewise been considered for this *locus*.⁶⁹ Finally, epistolography, with the letters from Campania, extends Lucan's *curriculum*.

The categorization of Lucan's *opera* as poetry or prose has also received critical attention.⁷⁰ At the core of the discussion lies the expression *prosa oratione*. Some scholars argue that it relates only to the orations on Sagitta, while others defend the claim that the expression applies to all the works listed thereafter: to the orations, the *De incendio Urbis* and the epistles written from Campania.⁷¹ *Siluae* 2.7 is significant in the debate: Statius may have included only poetry in his homage;⁷² if so, then the *De incendio Urbis* is a poem, and Vacca's *prosa oratione* is indeed limited to the orations. As a consequence, the epistles from Campania might likewise be poetry. Furthermore, the first part of the list might suggest an organization according to genre and a hierarchy of genres according to relevance: the epic works (*Iliacon*, *Catachthonion*) would be grouped together at the beginning; there would follow the dramatic production (*Medea*, *salticae fabulae*?) and then the minor genre of epigram (if *epigrammata* is indeed what the author of the *Vita Vaccae* wrote). This neat picture is disrupted by the *Saturnalia*, since it is easy to imagine this title indicating an epic, and by the enigmatic *Siluae*. However, there is good reason to consider that the works listed after the expression *prosa oratione* might form a new section, consisting of Lucan's prose production; since the Sagitta affair occurred in 58, the orations would belong to Lucan's first works, and it would not make sense to mention them almost at the end of the record, if the record was indeed chronological.⁷³

Regarding his literary production as a whole, Lucan apparently tackled both mythological and historical themes and still put his rhetorical skills to work by both accusing and defending Sagitta (in *suasoriae*?).⁷⁴ Ultimately, such a large literary production explains the quality of the *Bellum Ciuile*; indeed, the author of the *Vita Vaccae* affirms that these many works appear to be a preparation (*accessio*) for the epic.

⁶⁵ Van Dam (n. 9), 478.

⁶⁶ Rose (n. 42), 392–3 with n. 32. But note that the Neronian date of the *Satyricon* has been called into question by U. Roth, 'Liberating the *Cena*', *CQ* 66 (2016), 614–34, at 630–4.

⁶⁷ M. Stachon, 'Zu den verlorenen Werken Lucans', *Maia* 68 (2016), 689–700, at 699.

⁶⁸ G.G. Giralduus, *Historiae poetarum tam Graecorum quam Latinorum dialogi decem quibus scripta & vitae eorum sic exprimuntur, ut ea perdiscere cupientibus, minimum iam laboris esse queat* (Basel, 1545), 526.

⁶⁹ Weber (n. 15), 24, who also considers the reading *hippamata*. See also Stachon (n. 67), 699.

⁷⁰ For a summary of the discussion, see van Dam (n. 9), 480–1.

⁷¹ Rose (n. 42), 386 n. 20; M.J. McGann, 'Lucan's *De incendio Urbis*: the evidence of Statius and Vacca', *TAPhA* 105 (1975), 213–17; Ahl (n. 8), 335–6; Stachon (n. 67), 695.

⁷² As argued by Ahl (n. 40), 3–5.

⁷³ Van Dam (n. 9), 481.

⁷⁴ This is the suggestion of van Dam (n. 9), 481.

This survey adds little to our knowledge of Lucan's *Silvae*. Since the *Life of Vacca* offers no more than the title, one must look at the arrangement of the items in the catalogue for further clues. However, there is no question of the *Silvae* being a prose work, since it is not among the *prosa oratione*; we are left with considerations of genre, which in the case of the *Silvae* is not a productive approach. If it was similar in form and theme to Statius' collection, it would have defied the labels of the traditional generic hierarchy.⁷⁵ Notwithstanding, if the works detailed in the *Vita Vaccae* were arranged according to genre, the *Silvae* might have been classed as epic. That is, again, if it was in epic metre, as Statius' *Silvae* largely is. Concerning the adjacent titles in the list, the *Silvae* can hardly be related to the dramatic *Medea*; if the *Catachthonion* was something like the ps.-Virgilian *Culex*,⁷⁶ a mock-epic, the *Silvae* might have shared the same metre, and perhaps a certain levity of theme. But all of this is pure speculation.

It was in the *Vita Vaccae* that Leto found material for his record of Lucanian works.⁷⁷ Indeed, he made a selection from the information provided in the biography by Vacca: the *Catachthonion* is omitted, as are the *salticae fabulae*, the epigrams (?) and the *Epistulae ex Campania*; nothing is said of *Medea*'s unfinished state; the *De incendio Urbis* is listed among the poems; only a speech against Sagitta is acknowledged. The amount of new and detailed information that differs from the *Life of Vacca* is considerable, and rests on Leto's use of material preserved in other ancient sources. The different approach to the Sagitta affair depends on information conveyed by Tacitus (*Ann.* 13.44), which presumably also accounts for Leto's omission of the oration in Sagitta's defence.⁷⁸ In addition, the inclusion of the *De incendio Urbis* among the poems is probably due to Statius' incorporation of that title in the catalogue of *Silvae* 2.7, which most likely comprised only poetry. The poem about Troy's fall is designated by the detail that pairs it with another work, that on the fire of Rome, and the theme of Priam's misfortune is specified. Yet Leto's recourse to other sources did not affect the acceptance of *Silvae* in the list, nor did the supposed intervention of Bussi in the printed version of Leto's *Vita Lucani*. The printed text omits the *Ilie conitae* and the speech against Octavius Sagitta,⁷⁹ but still the *Silvae* remains a constant among Lucan's writings; the attribution of *Silvae* to Lucan had definitely found its way into print.

Pomponio Leto and other scholars of his milieu attest to a boom of interest in the *Vitae* of ancient authors.⁸⁰ Their passion for returning to the ancient texts suggests a break with the medieval tradition of biographies,⁸¹ as illustrated by the biographical tradition around Lucan. In the second half of the fifteenth century, several scholars composed biographies of Lucan in which they displayed their familiarity with *Silvae* 2.7 and Tacitus in particular. Besides two acolytes of Pomponio—Niccolò Perotti (1429–1480) and Giovanni Sulpizio da Veroli (c.1440–post 1508)—other humanists

⁷⁵ A good example of this is W.J. Dominik's recent entry on 'Flavian Literature' in *Oxford Bibliographies Online* (2022) (<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780195389661/obo-9780195389661-0379.xml>). The bibliography is organized by genre, which left him at pains to attribute a label to the *Silvae*.

⁷⁶ As proposed by Stachon (n. 67), 691–2.

⁷⁷ Stok (n. 2), 470–7 signals the information for which Leto depends upon Vacca.

⁷⁸ Stok (n. 2), 475.

⁷⁹ Ramminger (n. 22), 53–4.

⁸⁰ M. Pade (ed.), *Vitae Pomponianae: Lives of Classical Writers in Fifteenth-Century Roman Humanism, Renaissanceforum* 9 (2015), II.

⁸¹ Pade (n. 80), II–III; Stok (n. 2), 467.

assumed the task: Filippo Beroaldo (1453–1505); Pietro Crinito (1474–1507) in the *Libri de poetis Latinis*; and Giglio Gregorio Giraldi (1479–1552). With the sole exception of Sulpizio da Veroli,⁸² they all include the *Siluae* among Lucan's *opera*.⁸³

Over the centuries, scholars who read the *Vita Vaccae* rejected several of the titles it mentions. Unsurprisingly, the first to be cut are the least clear.⁸⁴ Such is the case of the *salticae fabulae XIII*, which did not make it into the Renaissance biographies. The Greek titles were particularly problematic. The *Catachthonion* is attested with several spellings in the manuscripts, and was left out of Leto's list. We know this title from a scholium of Lactantius Placidus on Stat. *Theb.* 9.424, where it also has different spellings in different manuscripts. The title that Braidotti edits as *epigrammata* does not appear in any of the oldest manuscripts of the *Vita Vaccae*, which read *et ippammata* (MSS Bern 370, Bodmer 182 [*ippamata*], Paris lat. 9346) or *et appammata* (MSS Munich Clm 4610, Clm 4593). The *Iliacon* is likewise absent from the oldest manuscripts, which transmit the phrase *alii utilia consaturnalia*; again, we owe the title *Iliacon* to Lactantius Placidus' scholia on Stat. *Theb.* 3.641 and 6.322. Pomponio Leto calls the poem on Troy *Ilie conitae*, a title derived from a misreading of a copy of the *Life of Vacca* or, as Ussani proposed, from an attempt to translate *Iliacon*;⁸⁵ the title is absent from Leto's printed biography of Lucan, as noted above. In stark contrast, the word *Siluae* posed no such problems, and this might be part of the reason why the title survived throughout the transmission of the catalogue of Lucan's works. One biography that is an exception to this rule has already been mentioned: that of Sulpizio da Veroli, who was proudly building on Statius' *Siluae* 2.7 (*scripsit pene puer, ut Papinius docet ...*). The easiest explanation for his exclusion of the *Siluae* is that Statius does not mention them.

A PREDECESSOR OF STATIUS' *SILVAE*?

Readers of Statius have addressed his silence on Lucan's alleged *Siluae* in various ways. Some wish to find an allusion in the catalogue of *Siluae* 2.7 and seek to prove it, while others attempt to justify its absence. For Vollmer, the allusion to the Lucanian *Siluae* is possibly there. Statius might have substituted the *Siluae* with the reference to the *Adlocutio ad Pollam*,⁸⁶ which, unsurprisingly in a poem commissioned by Polla, deserves the distinction of being the last work to be mentioned before the *Bellum Ciuile*.⁸⁷ The *Adlocutio ad Pollam* is thought to have been the model of *Siluae* 3.5, a poem that Statius addressed to his wife with the intention of persuading her to move with him to Naples.⁸⁸ Nisbet goes further, suggesting that the absence of the

⁸² See Camperlingo (n. 2), 288–94 on the relationship of Sulpizio's *Vita* to Pomponio's.

⁸³ The *Vita Lucani* by Niccolò Perotti reproduces in the *Cornu copiae* Leto's biography of Lucan in the version of the printed edition, which fits well with Leto and Perotti having worked together in projects related to Flavian literature. Rammingier (n. 22), 52.

⁸⁴ See Weber (n. 15), 23–4 for a useful summary of different readings of the titles listed in the *Vita Vaccae*.

⁸⁵ Ussani (n. 22), 373; Stok (n. 2), 475.

⁸⁶ See F. Vollmer, *P. Papinius Statius. Silvarum libri* (Leipzig, 1898), 377. See also Newmyer (n. 26), 34 and van Dam (n. 9), 482.

⁸⁷ As has been recognized e.g. by van Dam (n. 9), 478. In contrast, the chronological arrangement of Statius' list has been taken to be certain by Rose (n. 42), 386 n. 20.

⁸⁸ See Vollmer (n. 86), 377; van Dam (n. 9), 482; Stachon (n. 67), 695–7 with bibliography.

Adlocutio in the *Life of Vacca* may even be an indication that it belongs to the *Silvae*.⁸⁹ In poem 2.7, then, the *Adlocutio* would stand as a 'representative' of the whole collection of the *Silvae*. Vollmer further explains that the term *adlocutio*, which might suggest a prose work, does not hinder his interpretation. He identifies parallels for the use of the word in poetic contexts, and compares them to Statius' depiction of *Silvae* 3.5 as a *sermo*.⁹⁰ It is indeed reasonable to associate the *Adlocutio ad Pollam* with Statius' composition addressed to his wife. Moreover, considering that *Silvae* 2.7 was composed at Polla's request, to make of the poem addressed to her a symbol of the *Silvae* would certainly be a gallant gesture.

However, as Stachon and Rose adduce, the *Adlocutio ad Pollam* would also fit the *Epistulae ex Campania*.⁹¹ And, if a parallel from Roman literary tradition is necessary, Ovid's letter to his wife, *Tristia* 3.3, might be proposed. What is more, a passage of Sidonius Apollinaris encourages us to question the association of the *Adlocutio ad Pollam* with a lost *Silvae*. Sidonius mentions Lucan and Polla among a list of romantic pairs that should prove to his friend Hesperius, about to get married, that wives may well inspire their husbands (*Epist.* 2.10.6). Lucan is named as one of the love poets. However, as Stachon notes, it does not follow from Sidonius' list that Lucan composed elegiac poetry.⁹² Actually, there is not much to be extracted from this passage beyond the perception that the *Adlocutio ad Pollam* may well have been something very different from what has been proposed in scholarship thus far; and, as van Dam affirms, 'its subject cannot be reconstructed'.⁹³ If Lucan wrote love poetry to his wife, as Sidonius seems to imply, there might be other, even more suitable collections for the *Adlocutio ad Pollam* than the *Silvae* and the *Epistulae ex Campania*, or the love poetry might have been independent of a collection.

Another approach to the absence of Lucan's *Silvae* from Statius' account is the idea that the book falls into the category of works that Statius did not want to recall. For its supporters, the political argument is obvious. Stachon affirms that the *Silvae* would have been court poetry composed between the years 60 and 63, and therefore best forgotten under the next emperor.⁹⁴ For Rose, who lists the *Silvae* among Lucan's 'frivolous poems', 'it would not be tactful or appropriate to say much about his years of friendship at the Court'.⁹⁵

Without disregarding the political engagement of Lucan, whom Ahl calls 'a man of strong republican convictions',⁹⁶ it seems to me that Statius' complete silence on Lucan's *Silvae* is hard to explain on an exclusively political basis. First of all, the political context did not prevent him from mentioning the *Laudes Neronis*.⁹⁷ As noted above, Statius counterbalanced the reference to the encomiastic poem on the tyrant *princeps* with his depiction as 'ungrateful' (*ingratus Nero*, v. 58). Nero is also the *dominus nocens* when the Lucanian *opus* on the great fire of Rome is brought up (v. 61). If Lucan's *Silvae* had focussed on the *princeps* and perhaps on figures of his entourage, Statius could have offset a reference to the collection with another negative

⁸⁹ Nisbet (n. 9), 5.

⁹⁰ Vollmer (n. 86), 377; van Dam (n. 9), 482.

⁹¹ See Rose (n. 42), 391; Stachon (n. 67), 696.

⁹² Stachon (n. 67), 696.

⁹³ Van Dam (n. 9), 482.

⁹⁴ Stachon (n. 67), 699.

⁹⁵ Rose (n. 42), 392–3, 386 n. 20.

⁹⁶ Ahl (n. 40), 14.

⁹⁷ For the date of composition of the *Laudes Neronis*, see van Dam (n. 9), 480 with bibliography.

depiction of the *princeps* (later on in the poem, he goes so far as to imagine Nero being chased in the ‘other world’ by his mother, who holds a torch like the Furies, avengers of blood crimes).⁹⁸ In addition, the whole catalogue of Lucanian works is pronounced by Calliope, mythical foster mother of Lucan. Through this elegant device, in line with the practice of Hellenistic panegyrics,⁹⁹ Statius distances himself from the eulogy while raising it to a divine level. Despite the political risks, Statius might have alluded to the *Silvae* of his predecessor in this carefully crafted framework.

Further, one might contend that ‘political circumstances’ is a vague and convenient argument. The debate about Statius’ silence on Lucan’s *Silvae* recalls the discussion on the publication of Martial’s tenth book. At the end of his life, Martial is said to have retired to his native Bilbilis because of the political context, following the assassination of Domitian, the *princeps* so frequently eulogized in his epigrams. Martial is also credited with having produced a second edition of Book 10 minus the epigrams about Domitian. Both events are hard to explain solely on a political basis. In brief, deleting the murdered *princeps* from Book 10 could hardly have enhanced Martial’s image, when all his previous books were in circulation, several of them weighed down by encomiastic epigrams addressed to Domitian (for example the prefaces to 4.1, 8.2, 9.1). Moreover, the recent political climate—which Martial commemorates in the epigrams collected in Book 12—hardly justifies the epigrammatist’s departure from Rome when others conspicuously engaged in politics could stay and flourish on the new political stage.¹⁰⁰

Still another approach to the omission of Lucan’s *Silvae* in Statius’ *Silvae* is grounded in politics—or rather the avoidance of politics. Newlands rightly emphasizes that poem 2.7 focusses on Lucan as a poet, and ignores the facts that led to his premature death on Nero’s orders. Part of Statius’ strategy for rehabilitating Lucan’s image, in Newlands’s view, is to interpret the *Bellum Ciuile* as poetry of lament and consolation, thus assimilating Lucan’s major epic with his own *Thebaid* and *Silvae*. Such a reading is supported by the idea that ‘giving consolation is in essence the project of the *Silvae* as well as a major theme of the *Thebaid*’.¹⁰¹ According to Newlands, this is particularly true of *Silvae* Book 2, in which Lucan is commemorated. This proposal would elucidate the transfer of Lucan, at the beginning of poem 2.7, to a Theban grove, a symbol of Stavian poetry. The strategy of identification between poets would also ‘turn [the reader] away from the aggressive republicanism of the *Bellum Ciuile* and accommodate the poem to the less threatening poetics of the *Silvae*, and of the *Thebaid* also, which offers an allegorical poetics of civil war’.¹⁰² Yet the absence of any allusion to the *Silvae* of Lucan remains without justification. On the contrary, Newlands’s interpretation further exposes the intriguing omission of the Lucanian *Silvae* in a context where the reader

⁹⁸ Stat. *Silu.* 2.7.118–19 with Newlands (n. 9), 250–1.

⁹⁹ K.M. Coleman, ‘Mythological figures as spokespersons in Statius’ *Silvae*’, in F. de Angelis and S. Muth (edd.), *Im Spiegel des Mythos. Bilderwelt und Lebenswelt—Lo specchio del mito. Immaginario e realtà* (Wiesbaden, 1999), 67–80, at 72–3, 76–9.

¹⁰⁰ P. Howell, ‘Martial’s return to Spain’, in F. Grewing (ed.), *Toto notus in orbe. Perspektiven der Martial-Interpretation* (Stuttgart, 1998), 173–86, at 184–5; J.P. Sullivan, *Martial: The Unexpected Classic* (Cambridge, 1991), 44, 52, and contrast the review of K.M. Coleman in *JRS* 83 (1993), 221–2, at 222; O.G. Kolosova, ‘*Callaicum mandas siquid ad Oceanum ... Zur Zeit und Ursache der Heimkehr Martials*’, *Géron* 18 (2000), 323–41; and S. Lorenz, *Erotik und Panegyrik: Martials epigrammatische Kaiser* (Tübingen, 2002), 220 n. 46 with bibliography.

¹⁰¹ C. Newlands, ‘The first biography of Lucan: Statius’ *Silvae* 2.7’, in P. Asso (ed.), *Brill’s Companion to Lucan* (Leiden, 2011), 433–51, at 445.

¹⁰² Newlands (n. 101), 445–6.

would be invited to associate Lucan's poetry book with the 'less threatening poetics of [Status'] *Silvae*'. Status' dialogue with Lucan is based on an interplay with his *Bellum Ciuile*, not with the *Silvae*; if Newlands is right, then Status missed the opportunity to engage with the *Silvae* of his predecessor.

Traces of Lucan's *Silvae* have also been found outside poem 2.7—namely, in the preface to Book 2, where the *Genethliacon Lucani* is introduced, and in the preface to Book 1, where the publication of the collection is defended.

At the opening of Book 2, Status announces that he composed the *Genethliacon* at the request of Lucan's widow and comments briefly on the metre used:

cludit uolumen genethliacon Lucani, quod Polla Argentaria, rarissima uxorum, cum hunc diem forte consuleremus, imputari sibi uoluit. ego non potui maiorem tanti auctoris habere reuerentiam quam quod laudes eius dicturus hexametros meos timui.

A Birthday Ode to Lucan concludes the volume. Polla Argentaria, a pearl among wives, requested it as a favour when we chanced to be spending this day together (?). I could not show more reverence for so great an author than by distrusting my own hexameters for a poem in his honour.

Status' choice of hendecasyllables has prompted discussion. In Vollmer's opinion, it would follow that Lucan's *Silvae* did not include this metre.¹⁰³ If we consider Status' practice as an example of what Lucan's *Silvae* might have been, then hexameter poetry would have had a very considerable presence in the lost work; in the Statian collection, 26 out of 32 poems are in hexameters.¹⁰⁴ But this is also purely speculative. Status' statement is a clear eulogy of Lucan's epic,¹⁰⁵ or more generally of Lucan's poetic production in hexameters, in line with the apologetic tone of poem 2.7. Status humbly professes his doubt that his hexameters are worthy of singing of Lucan.¹⁰⁶ It may be objected that, in the preface, Status is referring to the occasional poem that he composed in honour of Lucan, which legitimates comparison to Lucan's *Silvae*, not to the *Bellum Ciuile*. Yet Status does not even hint at the *Silvae* of his predecessor, even if a preface—particularly the preface to a book closed by a commemoration of Lucan—is the place one would expect to find that kind of interplay.

Vollmer claims to have found a fragment of the preface to Lucan's first book of *Silvae* in an anecdote narrated in Suetonius' biography of the poet. According to Suetonius' account, Lucan had underlined his precocity in comparison to Virgil by writing in a preface *et quantum mihi restat ad Culicem!*¹⁰⁷ As is well known, Status mentions the *Culex*, alongside the *Batrachomachia* [*sic*], in an apology of his 'minor' works in the preface to *Silvae* Book 1. Vollmer argues that the *Culex* thus forges a link between Lucan's and Status' prefaces. Nevertheless, the reference to the *Culex* could serve distinct purposes in Lucan and Status. On the one hand, it supports Lucan's self-advertisement as a poet who surpassed Virgil; on the other, the *Culex* provides a precedent for Status' composition of 'minor' poetry. Yet, more than furthering our knowledge of Lucan's *Silvae*, as is the case with Newlands's reading,

¹⁰³ Vollmer (n. 86), 314. On the use of hendecasyllables in *Silvae* 2.7, see L. Morgan, *Musa Pedestris: Metre and Meaning in Roman Verse* (Oxford, 2010), 64, 68, 106–13, 378; see also van Dam (n. 9), 453.

¹⁰⁴ Newmyer (n. 26), 56–7.

¹⁰⁵ Contrarily to Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.90; see also Mart. 14.194.

¹⁰⁶ See Gibson (n. 48), XXI for a different interpretation of the passage.

¹⁰⁷ Status resumes this idea in *Silu.* 2.7.73–4: Vollmer (n. 86), 11 n. 1.

Vollmer's approach emphasizes the absence of Lucan in Statius' prefaces: Statius could have justified his practice of publishing occasional poetry—as Martial did for his epigrams¹⁰⁸—by stating that he was working within a tradition inaugurated by Lucan; indeed, one might expect him to appeal to the authority of such a precedent, but he did not. A much more attractive proposal has been made by Stachon, who suggests that the exclamation about the *Culex* refers to the *Catachthonion*, since the *Culex* itself contains a long description of the underworld (vv. 200–384).¹⁰⁹

The idea of a homage, or even affiliation, within a poetic tradition, apparently announced by the identical title of Lucan's and Statius' works, is contradicted by the latter's silence about his predecessor. Poem 2.7 would have been the place for Statius to acknowledge a forerunner, which would suit the attribution of the title of Lucan's collection of occasional poetry to his own.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, Statius' apologetic prefaces would have benefitted from calling upon the existence of a predecessor, thus validating the production of such a collection. But there is no indication whatsoever that Statius was writing within a tradition apparently inaugurated in Latin by Lucan, not even in the preface to the first book of the *Siluae*, when the poet answers detractors who might attack the publication of his collection of occasional poetry. That preface is affected by *lacunae*, which obscure Statius' discussion of his decision to publish the collection (1–7); the problem does not, however, affect the lines dedicated to literary precedents (the *Batrachomachia* and the *Culex*), where one might expect Lucan's *Siluae* to be mentioned (7–9). With regard to avoiding recollections of poetry potentially centred on Nero's court, if the *Siluae* of Lucan were seen so negatively, it is justifiable to ask why Statius would have given his collection the same title. Even if the content of Lucan's *Siluae* were significantly different, by using the same title Statius would already automatically be perceived to be paying homage to Lucan and creating a bond with him. What is more, the political argument for the motivation of Statius' silence about Lucan's *Siluae* is undermined by the overt reference to the *Laudes Neronis*, an encomium of the tyrannical *princeps* who later had the poet killed.

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The connection of the so-called *Life of Vacca* to scholarship written in Late Antiquity and the complete omission of the *Siluae* of Lucan from Statius' collection of the same title suggest that the very existence of Lucan's *Siluae* remains an open question. The testimony of the biography once attributed to Vacca is not to be dismissed; however, it is inconceivable that a homage to Lucan's *Siluae*, which potentially begins with the assumption of its title, would not have merited a single word on Statius' part. Actually, it is possible that, though inspired by Lucan, Statius forged a poetic project very different from his. But, again, this would not justify Lucan's complete absence from Statius' collection. Taking into account the most probably late, highly apologetic and at times inaccurate testimony of the text known as *Life of Vacca* against that of his near-contemporary fellow-poet Statius, Lucan's *Siluae* is likely an example of philological fiction. It was invented out of the desire to elevate the subject of the *Vita*, raising

¹⁰⁸ See e.g. C.A. Williams, *Martial Epigrams Book Two. Edited with Introduction, Translation and Commentary* (Oxford, 2004), 8, 240–1 on *Cosconius*, and C. Henriksen, *A Commentary on Martial Epigrams Book 9* (Oxford, 2012), 220–1 on *Gaurus*.

¹⁰⁹ Stachon (n. 67), 691–2, already mentioned above.

¹¹⁰ D.F. Bright, *Elaborate Disarray: The Nature of Statius' Silvae* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1980), 36–7; Newlands (n. 5), 36 n. 164.

Lucan's status as a great poet by padding out his *œuvre*, in keeping with its apologetic tone. The author of the biography must have been aware of the existence of a book of poetry by Statius entitled *Silvae*. With regard to the preservation of the mention of a work called *Silvae* in later printed catalogues of Lucan's writings, Leto played an important role as intermediary between manuscript and printed lives. For a Renaissance scholar working on the recently rediscovered *Silvae* of Statius, it would have seemed quite conceivable that other *Silvae* had been written in the previous generation. Therefore, I argue that the history of the transmission of Statius' *Silvae* itself sheds light on the survival of the mention of Lucan's *Silvae*, despite the unlikelihood of its existence.

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