

Lucan, *Bellum Civile* 1.1-32: Prologue

Bella per Emathios plus quam ciuilia campos
 iusque datum sceleri canimus, populumque potentem
 in sua uictrici conuersum uiscera dextra
 cognatasque acies, et rupto foedere regni
 certatum totis concussi uiribus orbis 5
 in commune nefas, infestisque obuia signis
 signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis.
 quis furor, o ciues, quae tanta licentia ferri?
 gentibus inuisis Latium praebere cruorem
 cumque superba foret Babylon spolianda tropaeis 10
 Ausoniis umbraque erraret Crassus inulta
 bella geri placuit nullos habitura triumphos?
 heu, quantum terrae potuit pelagique parari
 hoc quem ciuiles hauserunt sanguine dextrae,
 unde uenit Titan et nox ubi sidera condit 15
 quaque dies medius flagrantibus aestuat horis
 et qua bruma rigens ac nescia uere remitti
 astringit Scythico glaciale frigore pontum!
 sub iuga iam Seres, iam barbarus isset Araxes
 et gens siqua iacet nascenti conscia Nilo. 20

- 1: plus quam ciuilia:** “worse than civil”
per Emathios campos: Lucan uses Emathia as a synonym for Phrasalia and Thessaly
2: canimus: introduces the list of things the narrator will sing about, **populum** (2), **acies** (4), **certatum** (5), **signa**, **aquilas**, and **pila** (7)
3: conuersum [ferrum]: the sense is middle, “having twisted [a sword] **in sua... viscera**”
uictrici... dextra [manu], abl., “with their victorious right hand”
4: cognatasque acies: “kindred battle lines”, i.e. where kin fights kin, a civil war
rupto foedere regni: abl. absolute, “when the pact of tyranny was broken”; i.e. when the first Triumvirate collapsed.
5: totis... uiribus: abl. of means with **concussi**
6: nefas: “infamy, miasma, guilt”; what is sanctioned by the gods is *fas*, that which is forbidden is *nefas*.
obuia: “opposed to” with dative (**infestis signis**)
7: aquilas: eagle standards were the symbol of the Roman legions.
pilum: javelin, a heavy iron-tipped throwing spear
minantia > minor: threaten, speak/act menacingly
8: ferri: “of the sword”
9: inuisis > inuisus ADJ: hated, detested; hateful, hostile
praebere > praebeo: supply, provide
10: superba... Babylon, used as a synonym for Ctesiphon, the capital of the Parthian Empire
foret... spolianda: “must be stripped”
Ausoniis > Ausonius ADJ: “Italian, Western”
11: umbra... inulta: “an unavenged shade”, in apposition with **Crassus**
12: placuit: impersonal, “it was pleasing to”
geri > gero, passive infinitive, “to be waged”
bella... habitura: “wars that would have...”
14: hauserunt > haurio: drain, exhaust
15: Titan, i.e. “Sun”
16: quaque = et qua, “and when”
17: bruma: “winter”; **nescia uere remitti:** “unable to be thawed by spring”
18: astringit > astringo, freeze, solidify
19: Seres, “Chinese”; **Araxes:** a river that rises in northeastern Turkey (near the source of the Euphrates) and flows generally eastward through Armenia to the Caspian Sea
20: gens siqua = “quaecumque gens”
nascenti conscia Nilo: “conscious/aware of/knowing/privy (to)/sharing (secret) knowledge of” + dat.

Lucan, *Bellum Civile* 1.1-32: Prologue

tum, si tantus amor belli tibi, Roma, nefandi,
totum sub Latias leges cum miseris orbem,
in te uerte manus: nondum tibi defuit hostis.
at nunc semirutis pendent quod moenia tectis
urbibus Italiae lapsisque ingentia muris
saxa iacent nulloque domus custode tenentur
rarus et antiquis habitator in urbibus errat,
horrida quod dumis multosque inarata per annos
Hesperia est desuntque manus poscentibus aruis,
non tu, Pyrrhe ferox, nec tantis cladibus auctor
Poenus erit: nulli penitus descendere ferro
contigit; alta sedent ciuilis uolnera dextrae.

- 21 **21: nefandi** > nefandus ADJ: impious, wicked;
abominable
sub Latias leges: “beneath Latin laws”
cum miseris: cum clause with fut. perf. indic. of mitto
23: uerte: imperative > verito
defuit: “there is a lack of” + genitive of thing lacked
(**hostis**)
25 **24: semirutis**: “half-ruined”
moenia: “defensive fortifications”; **tectis**: “building
walls”; **muris**: “city walls”
26: domus: nominative plural subject of **tenentur**
28: dumis > dumus: thorn or briar bush
inarata: “uncultivated”
30 **29: Hesperia**, “The West”, with adjectives **horrida** and
inarata
manus: here, “bands, groups”
31: Poenus: “Carthaginian”
nulli... ferro: nulli is dative of an i-stem adjective
32: contigit: “it came to pass, happened”
alta sedent: “strike deep”, **sedent** is transitive
uolnera = vulnera, with **alta**, which, as often, means
“deep”