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5 | Intermediality in Latin epic – *en video quaecumque audita*

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This paper plunges into the thick of Latin poetry to interrogate one particular example of epic's engagement with the visual: ekphrasis. It considers how the theoretical approach of 'intermediality' can provide a framework for exploring the blurring of ekphrastic and narrative modes in Latin epic. This framework helps us better understand the relationship of art and text in Latin epic in general and the workings of epic construction.

Ekphrasis

I will begin with some general thoughts about the nature of ekphrasis before looking at key passages from Latin epic in more detail.[1] Narratologically, ekphrasis constitutes a pause in the flow of a story.[2] It would thus not necessarily be perceived as fulfilling an obvious function in the narrative.[3] However, ekphrasis usually features 'metaphoric or especially metonymic links with the plot, particularly ones of prefiguration'.[4] In addition it has also been suggested that readers should perceive and interpret ekphrasis rhetorically, thereby 'conferring on the ekphrasis the status of a *figure*'.[5] This approach lifts ekphrasis to the same level as myth, simile and allusion. These all function as moments in a text where we are invited to 'stand back' from the narrative and to consider a passage both on its own and within its wider context. As we as readers have all experienced, the outcome tends to be ambiguous, for 'elements shift and are transformed

[1] Elsner 2002: 1 and Webb 1999: 11 and 2009 stress that the Graeco-Roman definition of ekphrasis does not confine itself to denoting the descriptions of works of art as does the usual modern meaning of the term ekphrasis. They cite the descriptions of persons, places, time and events as well as plants, animals and festivals as possible subjects of ekphrasis in antiquity.

[2] Elsner 2002: 2 thus describes Homer's shield as 'a pause in the narrative that allows other kinds of narratives to figure both within the main text and bracketed apart from it, an implicit meditation on the totality of the text within which it constitutes but a small episode, and yet a material item with its own significant part to play in the *Iliad*'s main story'.

[3] Even though sometimes the object described has an important function as is the case with Achilles' shield.

[4] Fowler 1991: 27.

[5] Fowler 1991: 34 building on the work of Perutelli 1978.

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as we move from detail to whole'.[6] Taking this figurative approach to ekphrasis a step further I propose that a trope as well established in the epic tradition as ekphrasis would itself already invite discourse and thus itself provide material for allusion.[7] This will constitute the particular point of entry for my investigation: I will examine how Latin epic chooses to interrogate, play with and fragment ekphrasis. For the intact, holistic images of ekphrasis the epic tradition serves up might well turn out to be fragmented once this tradition has become more experimental.[8] As mere visual quotes from larger images they refer us to a wider context and function as allusions to ekphrasis. The readers have to join the dots of the literary puzzles and put together the pieces of the literary mosaics that the Latin epicists present to gain access to the wider picture. Accordingly I shall argue that tiny morsels of ekphrasis feed and nourish our view of entire epics.

Visual quotes, these products of the (inter)textual world of epic successors, work by bringing two modes into dialogue and exploiting the fact that with ekphrasis and narrative 'two semiotic systems partially overlap'.[9] The concept of ekphrasis is not only to be interpreted as an attempt 'to capture the visual in words' but is also a far more general term which 'denotes any kind of intermedial and self-reflexive relationships between two different media which constantly ponder their own material characteristics'.[10] A further point of my examination will accordingly be to provide a framework for describing and defining the allusive use of ekphrasis in Latin epic.

A prime example from the epic tradition of an episode that parades its in-between status – not only in between art and text as we might expect but also in between ekphrasis and narrative – is the way in which Dido's appearance as she administers her city's laws in *Aeneid* 1 immediately after the text's first ekphrasis, blurs with the artistic representation that precedes it: *dum stupet obtutuque haeret defixus in uno*, 'while he is stupefied and paralysed, fixed in one gaze' (*Aen.* 1.495).[11] Putnam in his

[6] Fowler 1991: 34. Similarly Rogerson 2002 explores 'the edges of ekphrasis and simile' in passages from Virgil's *Aeneid* where ekphrastic techniques are appropriated by epic similes describing Ascanius.

[7] Elsner 2002: 2: 'the descriptive inset about a work of art becomes not only virtually a necessary trope to prove a text's participation in the great tradition, but also an increasingly complex device for authorial self-reflection on how readers might relate to the text'.

[8] Cf. Elsner 2002: 4: 'Within a tradition such as this, there is an inevitable tendency for the trope of ekphrasis itself to turn to all kinds of variation and innovation.'

[9] Barchiesi 1997: 278.

[10] Rippl forthcoming: 10 quoting Bolter 1996: 264.

[11] Boyd 1995.

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analysis of the ekphrasis of Dido's murals notes that the portrait of Penthesilea (*Aen*. 490–3) that concludes the actual ekphrasis differs ever so slightly from the ekphrastic scenes preceding it. Putnam observes that this final scene 'lacks any locating word' and 'is narrated completely in the present tense with only active verbs'.[12] In addition there is no reaction from Aeneas to this scene, no allusion to past events or of action to come. The description of Penthesilea is thus full of 'events which appear to be still happening before our eyes'.[13] Indeed, Putnam's uncovering of Virgil's verbal strategy is worth quoting in full: 'Such is the poet's extraordinary sleight-of-hand in the creation and placement of his final episode that the unspoken boundary between ekphrasis and narrative, between apparently timeless visual art under scrutiny . . .and the time-ridden world of epic narrative tends to break down. The inescapable narrational aspect of ekphrasis, which by definition as a figure it must seek to minimize, takes control as the ending of the description blends into the resumption of the story line. Ekphrasis and narrative begin finally to merge . . .'.[14] Virgil closes this deal by linking ekphrasis with narrative through an almost immediate simile (1.498–502), which connects Penthesilea to Dido to Diana.[15] According to Lyne, 'The main function of a simile is not to illustrate something already mentioned in the narrative, but to add things which are not mentioned, in a different medium: imagery. The poet is switching modes, switching from direct narrative to "narrative" in the suggestive medium of imagery; and he capitalizes on the fact that he is now operating in a suggestive, not an explicit medium'.[16] As Fowler has noted, this observation places simile in the vicinity of ekphrasis.[17] From the perspective of intermediality we understand that simile depends on conjuring up an 'as if' mode in a similar way to ekphrasis.[18] Both ekphrasis and simile use a type of language that makes the listener see things. The very 'as if', however, that serves as marker of a simile (in the same way as 'and on it we see . . .' would mark out an ekphrasis) deflates the illusion created by a simile to a certain extent – whatever is described in a simile is not actually present in the narrative whilst what is described in an ekphrasis usually claims a presence there. As a result, the illusion created by a simile is not necessarily altermedial; similes hover, depending on their

[12] Putnam 1998: 35. [13] Putnam 1998: 35. [14] Putnam 1998: 36.
[15] Lowenstam 1993: 43–4. [16] Lyne 1989: 68 as quoted by Fowler 1991: 34.
[17] Fowler 1991: 34. Cf. also Putnam 1998: 11 and 209 and Bartsch 1988.
[18] Rogerson 2002: 56 discusses a case where ekphrasis incorporates simile and concludes: 'We can, then, characterise Virgil's description of Ascanius in *Aeneid* 10 as an ekphrasis, **notwithstanding** the presence of two ornamental similes at its centre' (my emphasis).

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content, between **inter**medial references with **alter**medial illusions (as is the case in the passages in *Aeneid* 10.130–42 comparing Ascanius to a gem and ivory)[19] or **intra**medial references with **intra**medial illusions (as is the case with similes where the comparison is referring to a narrative). At times these distinctions may fray as it will be impossible to determine whether the content of a simile is derived from literature or another medium, a question which by definition ekphrasis proper is never allowed to leave open. Indeed the description of Diana in the simile under discussion (*Aen*. 1.498–503) clearly looks back to the Homeric description of Artemis (*Od*. 6.102–9) but by the time of Virgil might well have been subject of a cultic frieze or statue as well.[20]

When turning away from the simile and back to the initial introduction of Dido we notice that it, too, is construed so as to continue the ekphrastic mode: Dido's name appears in conjunction with an ablative of quality describing her great beauty (*forma pulcherrima Dido*, 'Dido, most beautiful in appearance', *Aen*. 1.496) whilst a further ablative introduces her entourage (*magna iuvenum stipante caterva*, 'accompanied by a great crowd of young men', 497). Both characteristics are then taken up in the following Diana simile which is framed with the descriptive expression *qualis . . . talis erat Dido* (498–503). Most significantly, all that Aeneas does in this scene is to provide a frame of viewing and seeing for the passage introducing Dido (*haec dum Dardanio Aeneae miranda* ***videntur***, 'while these things seemed wonderful to Dardanian Aeneas', 494; *cum subito Aeneas . . .* ***videt***, 'when suddenly Aeneas . . . sees', 509–10). We are only gradually moving away from the ekphrastic mode and it is only the *cum inversum* at the end of the passage describing Dido that makes clear that Aeneas and the reader need to refocus. In the *Aeneid*'s first ekphraseis Virgil thus allows the systemic markers for the contamination of two semiotic systems that typically accompany ekphrasis to outstay the ekphrasis itself. Virgil is here consciously stretching the limits of ekphrasis by blurring the boundaries between description and narrative.[21] The initial appearance of Dido thus achieves intermediality, an in-between status, that makes us reflect on the functioning and differences between ekphrasis, narrative description and simile. What is more, by almost turning Dido into a work of art as part of a temple frieze, Virgil objectifies her and simultaneously creates a

[19] On this passage cf. Rogerson 2002.

[20] Cf. Smith 2005: 100 and *LIMC* entry Artemis/Diana 361–7 for examples of depictions of Artemis/Diana as huntress from the north-eastern provinces).

[21] Boyd 1995 points out the permeability of Virgil's ekphrastic frames.

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correspondence to her final appearance in the underworld of *Aeneid* 6. There she appears as cold towards Aeneas as if she were made from stone (Aen. 6.470–71).[22] In addition there is a further correspondence with Aeneas himself when, just afterwards, Venus beautifies her son and turns Aeneas into something akin to a work of art as well.[23] As the entire episode displays shades of intermediality, the two lovers in their statuesque beauty share also an intermedial component which links not only into the ontological problem of text versus image and flesh versus image, but also a theological aspect – human versus divine.

Intermediality

But what exactly is meant by intermediality? On the most basic level intermediality is a hyperonym for all phenomena which cross the borders between media and are accordingly – as the prefix *inter* indicates – located in some way or other between media.[24] In a recent attempt to define and systematise intermediality, three areas of research have been highlighted: the combination of media,[25] the transformation of media[26] and intermedial connections,[27] the last of which includes phenomena such as ekphrasis.[28] The term 'intermedial connection' describes a way of constituting meaning through the (actual) connection, which a medial product (in our case texts) can form with the product of another medium or a medial system itself. To create meaning the medial product (i.e. text) thus uses in addition to its usual means also intermedial ones. This contact between media products or systems lets both of them – AND their medial differences and equivalences – be absorbed by their consumer (i.e. reader in the

[22] Cf. Dinter 2005: 161–2 on this passage.

[23] Aeneas' overhaul by his mother is compared to creating a work of art: *quale manus addunt ebori decus, aut ubi flavo | argentum Pariusve lapis circumdatur auro* ('Just as hands add glory to ivory, or when silver or Parian stone is gilded with tawny gold', *Aen.* 1.592–93). Cf. Hardie 2002b: 185 on this passage.

[24] Cf. Rajewsky 2002: 12. For my purposes a medium is defined by **the use of one or more semiotic systems**. Cf. Wolf 1999: 40. Cf. also Schaefer 1997: 216 on the medial approach in the philologies and dependence of thinking on media.

[25] Rajewsky 2002: 15 Medienkombinationen (such as 'Photoroman'): the addition of two distinct systems of media.

[26] Rajewsky 2002: 16 Medienwechsel (such as turning a book into a film).

[27] Rajewsky 2002: 16–17 intermediale Bezüge.

[28] Rajewsky does not fail to point out that a single medial product can fit several or even all these categories; they are not mutually exclusive.

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case of texts).[29] Intermedial connections thus partake in the creation of meaning in a way that is fundamentally different from the standard way employed by texts. As texts remain the sole medium that is present, elements and structures of other media or another medium itself are thematised, simulated and as far as possible reproduced with the means specific to texts.[30] The only way in which a medium such as literary texts can make elements and structures of other media such as film, music or painting its own even though it only has its own, media-typical literary means at its disposal is by investing these elements and structures with an 'as-if mode'. It thus creates an illusion of the other, alien medium. To such extent and in such a way it is actually possible to quote, reproduce or incorporate a medial system, or medial product, within literary texts.[31] In addition, these illusions are often marked out and identified as medial connections by an explicit reference to the alien medium which has been incorporated for the purpose of directing the readers' reception.

The question remains: where does the difference between intermediality and intertextuality lie? Julia Kristeva has proposed a concept of intertextuality in which 'any text is a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another'.[32] Moreover, she has widened the term 'text' to include any cultural system and any cultural structure. Literary scholars on the hunt for intentional allusions of specific texts to specific texts, however, needed to narrow down the term 'text' if they wanted to employ intertextuality. For my study I will use this term in its most narrow meaning referring to literary texts only. 'Intertextuality' will thus only refer to the relation of one literary text to one or several other literary texts.

Intermediality on the other hand is 'an intended and identifiable use or incorporation of at least two usually distinct media in one artefact'.[33] Its 'overt/direct' form, the combination of media that is, is characterised by the fact that 'at least in one instance more than one medium is present . . . whereby each medium appears with its typical or conventional signifiers, remains distinct and in principle "quotable"'.[34] Intermedial connections on

[29] Cf. Rajewsky 2002: 17.

[30] Cf. Rajewsky 2002: 17 and n. 26. As I will be discussing texts only in this piece I have chosen the wording of this section accordingly.

[31] Much work has been done on how twentieth-century writers such as Alfred Döblin, Franz Kafka, James Joyce and John Dos Passos have employed structures and techniques characteristic of the film medium to express the simultaneity and fragmentation of city life as well as the relativity of time, space and visual perception. Cf. Kaemmerling 1973, Lowry 1974, Paech 1988, Ryf 1959, Scheunemann 1988, Spiegel 1976, Spiegel 1973 and Dörr 1991.

[32] Kristeva 1980: 66.

[33] Wolf 1998: 238 (trans. by author).

[34] This terminology has been defined by Wolf 1999: 42.

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the other hand feature 'involvement of (at least) two conventionally distinct media in the signification of an artefact in which, however, only one (dominant) medium appears directly with its typical or conventional signifiers, the other one (the non-dominant medium) being only indirectly present "within" the first medium as a signified (in some cases as a referent). It is, as it were "covered" by the dominant medium (though the description of a statue in a novel, for instance, involves visual art, it still remains literature), and hence the two media cannot be separated from each other, as in the case of the overt/direct intermediality'.[35] Whilst intertextuality uses the term 'textual reference' to describe how texts relate to each other, intermediality employs 'systemic reference' to refer to the relation between a text and one or several semiotic systems (such as genres or other types of discourse).[36]

Naturally systemic references come in different shapes and sizes but there are two sub-categories which will be of relevance to my discussion. One is the contamination of two semiotic systems such as full-blown ekphrasis where the reader witnesses the overlap of the visual medium and the textual. The 'as if' mode of ekphrasis which attempts an actualisation and reproduction of the visual with the means of the literary medium creates here an altermedially referenced illusion, which is usually clearly marked out by a systemic pointer to the medium referenced à la 'there is an object and on it we see' which leads the way for the readers' reception. In cases where the medium referenced is less easily discernible or detectable (e.g. film) these systemic pointers can serve as signals of intermediality. On the other hand, where the medium referenced is easily discernible and detectable the systemic pointers may be implicit.

One further way of referencing a semiotic system will be of particular prominence in my discussion. In addition to a contamination of two semiotic systems which results in a full altermedial illusion, a medium can also be only partially reproduced by another medium which leads to a partial altermedial illusion. Here components (or parts thereof) which are characteristic of another medium are reproduced – in our case in literature.[37] Important is that these altermedial components are recognised as such by the reader – as before they might have been signposted by

[35] Wolf 1999: 44.

[36] Rajewsky 2002: 60 contrasts 'Einzeltextreferenz' with 'Systemreferenz' building on the work of Hempfer 1991 and Penzenstadler 1993.

[37] Often these components are specific to the *histoire* level (story) (as opposed to the *discours* level (narrative)) of the genre or discourse reproduced and thus frequently refer to content rather than form.

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systemic pointers – who then associate with them those medial components which could not be reproduced by the text. As a result the altermedial components reverberate with the other absent characteristics of the medium or genre they belong to. This partial reproduction of a medium has also been dubbed 'associative quotation'.[38] In sum, a microform such as an associative quotation (= visual quote) can evoke a macroform such as the genre of ekphrasis or the medium film.

As we could observe from the example of Dido above, one of the systemic markers that characterises ekphrasis as a contamination of semiotic systems is focalisation, that is directing the reader's view. Beck comments that 'ekphrasis entails describing visual art from the perspective of an observer – description has "a point of view" more explicitly than either a piece of visual art or non-descriptive narrative'.[39] For that reason, when looking for further examples of Virgil blurring the line between narrative and the ekphrastic – these instances will not necessarily qualify as a full contamination of semiotic systems but rather as a partial reproduction of one medium in another – it will be worth noting that in Aeneas' tour of the underworld in *Aeneid* 6 viewing becomes the hero's main activity. We as readers experience the underworld through Aeneas' eyes.[40] In addition the reader will notice the frequency of adverbs and expressions of place throughout the underworld episode, which create the illusion of space and thus could be interpreted as systemic markers.[41] This is not dissimilar to the formulaic use of ἐν δέ in the description of the shield of Achilles[42] or to Virgil's more varied expressions locating the scenes on Aeneas' shield.[43] The groundwork is thus laid for *Aeneid* 6 to culminate in a scene whose protagonists are reminiscent of the *imagines* in a funeral procession or gallery of honorific statues.[44] Smith in his analysis of the parade of heroes points out that Aeneas is being taken here to an appropriate vantage point and receives several visual prompts from Anchises; in addition the entire scene is marked by the repeated use of

[38] Cf. Wolf 1999: 67. He cites examples such as the (partial) quotation of a song text in a novel which would then evoke the song's melody in the readership.

[39] Beck 2007: 535 quoting Fowler 1991: 33: 'there is an obvious sense in which description in language inscribes a point of view more forcefully and more unambiguously than plastic art'.

[40] Several studies on vision in the *Aeneid* have appeared in recent years; see e.g. Syed 2005 and Smith 2005.

[41] Cf. *hic* 660, *medium* 667, *ante* 677, *desuper* 678 to cite just a few examples.

[42] Cf. Hom. *Il.* 18. 535, 541, 550, 561.

[43] Cf. *illic* (*Aen.* 8.626); *nec procul* (635); *haud procul* (642); *in summo* (653).

[44] Flower 1996: 110 on funerary parallels in the parade of heroes and 70 on the rise of the honorific statue in Rome.

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demonstrative pronouns.[45] With plenty of systemic markers around, all we need then is a systemic pointer to the medium that is referenced by Virgil in the parade of heroes to declare a case of intermediality. And indeed we find the visual arts thematised in Anchises' famous dictum (6.847–8): *excudent alii spirantia mollius aera | (credo equidem), vivos ducent de marmore vultus* ('For other people will, I do not doubt, still cast their bronze to breathe with softer features, or draw out of the marble living faces …'). After Virgil has just showcased how to create a living gallery of Rome's great and good with words we find visual arts, sculpture in particular, brought to mind. The semiotic system Virgil references in literature is thus explicitly mentioned here. What is more, through the way he describes artefacts made from bronze and marble as breathing he even explicitly touches on *enargeia*, the power of a medium to create a vivid presence, which has been dubbed 'the heart of ekphrasis'.[46] Virgil thus enhances his partial reproduction of another medium in the parade of heroes and the resulting partial altermedial illusion with pointers and markers to direct the readers' response. These reverberations ensure that readers recognise the media specific correlations in play. As we have seen from my brief survey, Virgil is planting small seeds of intermediality the fruits of which are later harvested by his epic successors.

Ovid

Among the Latin epicists the visual ambitions of Ovid's oeuvre have gathered the most attention.[47] Not only does Ovid scatter images of the poet around the *Metamorphoses* and thereby stage a metapoetic discourse, but because his subject matter is transformation he also needs frequently to face up to the challenge of describing the incredible process of metamorphosis in 'quasi-ekphrastic' narratives.[48] Because it affects the clarification

[45] Smith 2005: 86 lists *vides* (*Aen.* 6.760), *aspice* (771) and *viden* (779), *vis videre* (817–18), *aspice* (825 and 855).

[46] Cf. Webb 1999: 13.

[47] Cf. Brown 1987 on the palace of the Sun and Vincent 1994 on the Arachne episode. Leach 1974 explores the thematic pattern of Ovid's ekphrasis. Salzman-Mitchell 2005 offers a book-length study. Rimell 2006 offers Medusa as totemic for the Ovidian artistic process, since her myth implies a more dialectical process of viewing and creating. Most recently Fondermann 2008 has examined Ovid's 'Anschaulichkeit'.

[48] Hardie 2002b quoting the work of Rosati and La Penna 1983 introduces this terminology and further cites 'poetics of "spectacularity"'. Cf. Pavlock 2009 for a book-length study of poet figures in the *Metamorphoses*.

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of an essence, the narrative of metamorphosis has been interpreted as something akin to the creation of art. It thus calls for 'ekphrastic assent' from the reader who digests Ovid's pictorial illusionism wrapped in verbal fictionality.[49] From the perspective of intermediality, I note that the elision of the 'formal division between narrative and description that characterises ekphrasis, through an incorporation of the ekphrastic address to the reader, of the type "you could see . . .", within the narrative itself' constitutes the planting of systemic markers for visual media.[50] In addition the *Metamorphoses* is rich in systemic pointers to the medium referenced, which are both frequent and unmissable.[51] Ovid, however, does not only use the 'as if' mode of ekphrasis which attempts an actualisation and reproduction of the visual with the means of the literary medium creating an altermedially referenced illusion; instead he frequently transcends traditional ekphrasis by making its frame permeable. In the *Metamorphoses*, ekphrastic images become narrative reality either 'by [Ovid] producing a "work of art" that *is* the event that it depicts'[52] or by producing an event that turns an ekphrasis into actuality or narrative.[53] The 'as if' mode of ekphraseis thus becomes narrative reality. By deliberately creating situations in which neither the narrative's protagonists nor the reader can assign instances firmly to ekphrasis or narrative, Ovid stretches the frontiers of intermediality towards transmediality: art has become like narrative and narrative like art.[54]

Lucan

Whilst descriptions of *objets d'art* stud the texts of Lucan's epic predecessors and successors, this poet displays a suspicious lack of this epic 'convention' – maybe Ovid's overdose of the visual has spurred outright rejection. Admittedly, Lucan's subject matter of civil war does not naturally generate a description of a shield displaying the Virgilian holistic

[49] Hardie 2002b: 174. [50] Hardie 2002b: 174.

[51] Hardie 2002b: 191 provides a catalogue of statues moving in and out of stasis.

[52] Hardie 2002b: 179.

[53] Hardie 2002b discusses two striking examples of both phenomena: Perseus' statue gallery at 178–186 and Pygmalion at 186–193.

[54] I do not refer to transmediality in the sense of a transfer from one medium into another. I rather use it in the sense of phenomena which are unspecific to a single medium and for whom the medium of origin cannot always be defined. The rich web of media strategies in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* merits its own study and I can only provide a sketch of its complexity within the scope of this article.

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vision of cosmos and *imperium*.[55] Neither does it easily share Ovidian delight in playfully depicting life metamorphosing into art. Nevertheless, without difficulty we could imagine – even postulate – a Roman arsenal or spread of Alexandrian luxuries as ekphrastic vehicles for Lucan's darkened image of the Roman world. Instead Lucan ostensibly chooses to capture the imagination of his readers with lengthy geographical descriptions and excursuses.[56]

Nevertheless, in Lucan's innovative work above all, we may expect to find a fresh take on the tropes and traditions of epic, as part and parcel of the author's novel approach to the genre he is writing. First we should consider what it is that Lucan cuts from the epic repertoire. It is straightforwardly the case that he describes no work of art in his entire epic, not one.[57] Even the description of the palace of Cleopatra, a prime opportunity to narrate a setting overflowing with artistic splendour, merely lists materials and describes no works of art – it is all about quantity and empire, reminding one of an inventory or of the descriptions of triumphs and the artworks carried in them.[58] Bastet, however, suggests that we should see Lucan's restraint in describing works of art as an expression of the Stoic criticism of luxury.[59] Nevertheless, forty years ago Rutz already wondered: 'Isn't it remarkable that Lucan, who fulfils all the demands the tradition of the genre places on the epic poet (epic storm, oracles, *katabasis*) and who makes otherwise ample use of *ekphrasis*, offers nothing which could in any way be compared with the description of a shield?'[60]

Nevertheless, under the auspices of intermediality I shall argue that Lucan thematises the process of ekphrastic viewing by providing only single elements of ekphrastic units, 'visual quotations,' as I have called them. As stated earlier, these are a sub-category of associative quotations, in which altermedial components reverberate with the other absent characteristics of the genre they belong to. Through the microform associative

[55] On Aeneas's shield cf. Hardie 1986, Quint 1993, Gurval 1995. Putnam 1998 provides a study of all ekphrasis in the *Aeneid*.

[56] I am aware that geographical descriptions qualify as ekphrasis, cf. above where I lay out my narrow use of this term.

[57] Bastet thus states: 'En effet, même une lecture superficielle des dix livres du *Bellum Civile* nous amène rapidement à constater que le poète lui-même s'intéresse peu aux arts plastiques.' Bastet 1970.

[58] Cf. Bastet 1970 with reference to this passage: 'Mais ce qui nous frappe par son absence, c'est la figuration.' The reader might confidently expect a description of Cleopatra's carpet at least. Beard 2007: 147–51 on artworks displayed in triumphs.

[59] Bastet 1970.

[60] Rutz in the discussion following Bastet 1970. Rutz refers here to ekphrasis in the general sense of 'detailed description'.

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quotation, a macroform such as the genre of ekphrasis with all its ideological luggage can be evoked, to be eschewed.

The *Bellum Civile* repeatedly directs our gaze and attention to its fighting scenes, many of which have been identified as spectacles.[61] Leaving aside ideology, I shall focus on one of Lucan's battle scenes in my search for visual quotations. In the bloodstained seventh book of the *Bellum Civile* Lucan employs a telling image in the midst of fighting, not in an ekphrasis proper but as part of a simile: Caesar is likened to Bellona, Roman goddess of war:

> quacumque vagatur,
> sanguineum veluti quatiens Bellona flagellum
> Bistonas aut Mavors agitans si verbere saevo
> Palladia stimulet turbatos **aegide** currus,
> nox ingens scelerum est; caedes oriuntur et instar
> immensae vocis gemitus, et pondere lapsi
> pectoris arma sonant confractique ensibus enses. (*BC* 7.567–73)

> Wherever he goes round –
> like Bellona brandishing her blood-stained lash
> or like Mars, rousing the Bistonians, if with savage whips
> he goads his steeds maddened by Pallas' Aegis –
> there is a vast night of wickedness; slaughter follows
> and the groans as of a voice immeasurable, and armour clatters
> with the weight of falling breast, and swords on swords are
> shattered. (trans. Braund)

The image of this simile, however, is lifted from the Virgilian ekphrasis of the shield of Aeneas, where it features in the section describing the battle at Actium. As before, we find Bellona in the company of her brother Mars:

> saevit medio in certamine Mavors
> caelatus ferro tristesque ex aethere Dirae,
> et scissa gaudens vadit Discordia palla,
> quam cum sanguineo sequitur Bellona flagello. (*Aen*. 8.700–3)

> In the middle of the fray storms Mavors, embossed in steel, with the grim Furies from on high; and in rent robe Discord strives exultant, while Bellona follows with her bloody scourge. (trans. Fairclough)

Lucan's aggressive rewriting of the *Aeneid* has long been recognised.[62] However, in the case of this particular parallel, the ekphrastic context from

[61] Leigh 1997: index s.v. 'spectacle and spectators'.
[62] Cf. Narducci 2002 and n.100 on these verses.

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which it has been drawn, the shield of Aeneas, has not been taken into account. When read from an intermedial perspective, this passage constitutes a visual quote, whose associations and reverberations provide a link not only to visual arts, but also the genre of ekphrasis. Moreover Caesar does not just behave like the **Virgilian** image of Bellona. When read through the lens of the ekphrastic tradition, the verses immediately preceding Lucan's simile are illuminated by a parallel with the Homeric ekphrasis of the shield of Achilles.

> obit latis proiecta cadavera campis;
> vulnera multorum totum fusura cruorem
> opposita premit ipse manu. (*BC* 7.565–7)
>
> He visits bodies stretched upon the wide fields;
> with the pressure of his hand he personally staunches many a wound,
> which would have poured out all the blood. (trans. Braund)

With the image of Bellona in mind, however, we can appreciate how the depiction of Caesar is inspired by the image of bloodstained Fate wading through the bodies of those wounded and slain on the shield of Achilles in the section of the city at war, a city which has now been substituted by Rome.

> ἐν δ' Ἔρις ἐν δὲ Κυδοιμὸς ὁμίλεον, ἐν δ'ὀλοὴ Κήρ,
> ἄλλον ζωὸν ἔχουσα νεούτατον, ἄλλον ἄουτον,
> ἄλλον τεθνηῶτα κατὰ μόθον ἕλκε ποδοῖιν
> εἵμα δ' ἔχ' ἀμφ' ὤμοισι δαφοινεὸν αἵματι φωτῶν.
> ὡμίλευν δ'ὥς τε ζωοὶ βροτοὶ ἠδ'ἐμάχοντο,
> νεκρούς τ'ἀλλήλων ἔρυον κατατεθνηῶτας. (*Il.* 18.535–40)

And among them Strife and Tumult joined, and destructive Fate, grasping one man alive, fresh wounded, another without a wound, and another she dragged dead through the melee by the feet. The raiment she had about her shoulders was red with the blood of men. Just like living mortals joined they and fought; and they each were dragging away the bodies of the others' slain. (trans. Murray)[63]

Moreover Lucan's mention of Athena's aegis (*BC* 7.570) functions as a systemic pointer to both the medium referenced and the ekphrastic genre, thus serving as a signpost for the reader pointing us in the direction of the ekphrasis of famous shields.[64] In addition, Lucan prominently starts this particular

[63] Edwards 1991: ad loc. points out that these verses may be interpolated from Hesiod's *Aspis* (156–9) – a further indication that the figures depicted are part of the established inventory of **any** shield.

[64] *Palladia stimulet turbatos* ***aegide*** *currus* (*BC* 7.570). According to Homer Strife is also depicted on Athena's aegis; cf. ἐν δ' Ἔρις, ἐν δ'Ἀλκή, ἐν δὲ κρυόεσσα Ἰωκή ('and on it is Strife, on it Valour,

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passage with *hic* as if to signal the beginning of an ekphrasis.[65] Indeed in Lucan's passage systemic markers abound: the reader will have noticed the frequency of adverbs and expressions of place in the previous lines, which create the illusion of space.[66] You can see a technique not dissimilar in the ekphrastic scenes of Virgil's parade of heroes, signalling the intermedial connection to ekphrastic shields and guiding the reader's reception towards it.

We should also consider the point in his epic where Lucan introduces this image. Earlier we established that ekphrasis constitutes a narrative pause in the flow of epic. If we pay attention to the context of this passage in the *Bellum Civile*, we discover that it stands precisely at such a moment – a standstill. Lucan indicates this twice; first he lets the rush of battle ebb away and the advance of Caesar's forces stop:[67]

> quod totos errore vago perfuderat agros
> **constitit** hic bellum, fortunaque Caesaris haesit. (*BC* 7.546–7)
>
> The fighting which had flooded in random course across
> all the fields halted here and Caesar's fortune came to a standstill.
> (trans. Braund)

Secondly in a fervent apostrophe Lucan demonstratively refuses to narrate *nefas* any further and thus puts the epic on hold. Faber, in his survey of apostrophe in Lucan's epic, concludes that, whilst they demonstrate the narrator's engagement with the internal characters, they also create distance 'by drawing attention to the literary reconstruction of the civil war'.[68] In this particular apostrophe Lucan parades the powers of the narrator and thus makes us receptive to the workings of his text: *quidquid in hac acie gessisti, Roma,* ***tacebo*** (*BC* 7.556). *Tacebo*, 'I shall remain silent', stands as the last word before the passage describing Caesar begins.

We are bound to wonder whether the visual quote, whose references and medial relations I have traced, serves to communicate what Lucan hesitates

and on it Assault, that makes the blood run cold', *Il.* 5.740). Cf. Hardie 1986: 99 with n. 37 on possible parallels between the shield of the Pheidian Athena Parthenos and the shield of Aeneas.

[65] ***hic*** *Caesar, rabies populis stimulusque furorum* (*BC* 7.557).

[66] Cf. *constitit* ***hic*** *bellum* (*BC* 7.546); ***ille locus*** *fratres habuit*, ***locus ille*** *parentis.* | **hic** *furor*, **hic** *rabies*, **hic** *sunt tua crimina, Caesar* (*BC* 7.550–1). Moreover Lucan also introduces the section that follows with the same adverb *hic*: ***hic*** *patriae perit omne decus: iacet aggere magno* | *patricium campis non mixta plebe cadaver* (*BC* 7.597–8).

[67] Hardie 2002b: 181 discusses instances of stasis in ekphrasis such as the king 'standing silent' in the middle of the reaping scene on the Shield of Achilles (*Il.* 18.556–7), first pointed out by Heffernan 1993 'where the stilling of the narrative coincides with a sculptural or pictorial immobility'.

[68] Faber 2005.

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to tell. This works on two levels: through intertextuality, Lucan links the civil war between Caesar and his father-in-law Pompey to a narrative of the civil war between Augustus and his brother-in-law Mark Antony. Through intermediality – that is the reverberations of visual quotations – Lucan also creates links with the genre of ekphrasis and the visual representation of shields in particular. Ekphrasis is enacted and realised here. Rather than depicting a crucial moment of history in and on an ideological work of art, as Virgil does with the battle of Actium, Lucan chooses to realise civil war.

For in this same section Lucan rewrites a further central Virgilian passage, which bears, as we have seen, at least some of the characteristics of ekphrasis. Virgil's 'Heldenschau', the parade of future Roman heroes described by Anchises in the underworld, features the following names of Republican heroes awaiting lives to be spent in the service of Rome:

> quin Decios Drusosque procul **saevomque securi**
> aspice **Torquatum** et referentem signa Camillum. (*Aen.* 6.824–5)

Nay, see apart the Decii and Drusi, and Torquatus of the cruel axe, and Camillus bringing home the standards. (trans. Fairclough)

Lucan in his battle reverses this perspective and depicts the death of Republican figures, reading the parade of heroes as a funeral procession:[69]

> caedunt Lepidos caeduntque Metellos
> Corvinosque simul **Torquata**que nomina, rerum
> saepe duces summosque hominum te, Magne, remoto. (*BC* 7.583–5)

> they slaughter Lepidi, Metelli,
> Corvini along with famed Torquati, often leaders
> of the state and greatest of men, with you excepted, Magnus.
> (trans. Braund)

What is more, the *nomina Torquata* 'those who have the honorary *agnomen* Torquatus', falling here by the hands of brothers and fathers, look back to and reinterpret Virgil's reference to Torquatus' 'cruel axe'. For according to tradition T. Manlius Imperiosus Torquatus, the *Urvater* and most famous member of this family, in the early years of the Republic sentenced his own son to death for deserting his post without leave.[70]

[69] Dilke 1960 ad loc. comments: 'Lucan seems to be choosing aristocratic names at random, since we do not know of anyone bearing these names who was killed in the battle.' But cf. Gowing 2005: 144 on the connection between Virgil's parade, Augustus' gallery and Roman funerary practice.

[70] Cf. Liv. 7, 1–22 and Oakley 1997–2005, vol. 2: 436–9.

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At Pharsalus then history repeats itself when fathers kill sons – but without the glorious aura of republican virtue.[71]

Moreover, a further parallel to the shield of Aeneas is on display. Pompey's troops feature the paleness of death even before battle: *multorum pallor in ore | mortis venturae faciesque simillima fato* (*BC* 7.129–30 – 'The paleness | of coming death is on many faces, a look like their fate.'). This certainly recalls Dido *pallida morte futura* ('pale with approaching death', *Aen.* 4.644),[72] but, when encountered in the context of fighting, points especially to Cleopatra as depicted on the shield of Aeneas:

> illam inter caedes pallentem morte futura
> fecerat Ignipotens undis et Iapyge ferri. (*Aen.* 8.709–10)

amid the carnage, the Lord of Fire had fashioned her pale at the coming of death, borne on the waves and the wind of Iapyx. (trans. Fairclough)

This ekphrastic passage also intentionally breaks the ekphrastic illusion by pointing to Vulcan as the maker of the shield of Aeneas. Given the ekphrastic obsession with pointing to an *artifex*, by which it is stressing its own status as an illusion, depictions of shields regularly refer to the process of their manufacture, which, as Hardie has shown, corresponds to the creation of the universe.[73] In Lucan's anti-*Aeneid*, however, we witness not the making, but the unmaking of Rome, which, at least since the Virgilian identification of cosmos and *imperium*, stands for the universe.[74] Lucan reverses the process of Roman progress depicted by Virgil. Accordingly, we still find many of the motifs Virgil employs in his shield, but distorted and reinterpreted. Hence the allusion above to Virgil's shield is not set in the context of cosmogony but graced with apocalyptic imagery.[75] What is more, Lucan inserts reference to the very anvil that shaped the shield of Aeneas in a simile referring to weapons made for the undoing of Rome.[76] Throughout *Bellum Civile* 7, then, Virgil's shield is taken to pieces. The single components, often twisted, do not add up to a whole.

[71] Cf. *ille locus fratres habuit, locus ille parentis* (*BC* 7.550).

[72] Dilke 1960 *ad* 129–30.

[73] Cf. Fantuzzi and Reitz 1997: 943. Cf. Hardie 1986: 339: 'the great circle of the Shield of Achilles . . .is an image of the whole universe, an allegory of the cosmos. The Shield of Aeneas is also an image of the creation of the universe, but of a strictly Roman universe'.

[74] Cf. Hardie 1986: 363.

[75] Cf. *quis litora ponto | obruta, quis summis cernens in montibus aequor | aetheraque in terras deiecto sole cadentem, | tot rerum finem, timeat sibi?* (*BC* 7.134–7).

[76] Cf. *si liceat superis hominum conferre labores, | non aliter Phlegra rabidos tollente gigantas | Martius incaluit Siculis incudibus ensis* (*BC* 7.144–6).

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Conclusions

It is time to step back from these passages for a broader survey: how does the process of identifying visual quotations frame our reading of *Bellum Civile* 7 as a whole? Can we make out further links to the shield of Aeneas?

In his analysis of the Homeric and Virgilian shields, Hardie points out that the shield of Achilles depicts two cities, one at peace and one at war, whilst '[t]he Shield of Aeneas portrays just one city, Rome, and the main themes . . . are those of war'.[77] The war depicted here, however, will finally lead to the *pax Augusta*. Lucan depicts the same city at war and throughout relies heavily on the imagery of cosmos and *imperium* established by Virgil. Nevertheless, Lucan eradicates any positive direction. Whilst the Virgilian ekphrasis foreshadows the bright future of triumph and Roman world dominion, Lucan's lengthy apostrophes provide a running commentary on the spectacle of Pharsalus and provide a substitute for ekphrastic prophecy.[78] Instead they draw a vivid picture of Rome's doom. The very foreign peoples that are paraded in Augustus' triumph, to form the high-point of Aeneas' shield denoting the outer limits of the Roman empire, take over Rome's future in Lucan's gloomy predictions.[79] Moreover Lucan's previous apostrophe predicts the decline of precisely those towns whose rise Virgil projected in his parade of heroes: Alba Longa, Gabii and Cora.[80]

Hardie stresses the recapitulatory and climactic nature of Virgil's Shield of Aeneas.[81] Let us consider the position of Book 7 in Lucan's literary project in a similar way: it constitutes both the pinnacle and the turning point of civil war. Lucan points us to his dialogue with Virgil's ekphrasis by employing these visual quotes which in combination with his dark outlook on the unmaking and remaking of Rome provides a new perspective on the texture of his epic. In *Bellum Civile* 7 the glorious vision of Virgil's shield is broken down into its elements. We are served up single components, often in twisted shape, but remain cheated of the unified image. These visual quotes indicate that Lucan has transformed the functions of conventional ekphrasis to work in different ways in his narrative, to create his own integrated image of a world in pieces.

[77] Hardie 1986: 358. However, he subsequently points out that the Homeric binary form is reflected in the description of Rome at war and Rome at peace.

[78] Cf. *BC* 7.387–459; 7.535–44.

[79] Cf. *Aen.* 8.722–8; *BC* 7.535–44. Even though Lucan uses different tribes, he indicates inhabitants of the same areas of the world as Virgil does.

[80] Cf. *Aen.* 6.766; 773; 775 and *BC* 7.392–4.

[81] Hardie 1986.

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