

Commentary on Marcellus' Death in the *Punica*

Title: **Commentary on Marcellus' Death in the *Punica***

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CONTENTS

Acknowledgements.....	5 – 6
Abstract	7 – 8
The Poet	9
The Poem	9 – 10
Commentary on Marcellus' Death in the <i>Punica</i> ...	11 – 76
Bibliography	77 – 82

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Intertextuality and intratextuality as well as cross references will be used to achieve the length of the commentary as required, i.e. 16,500 words.

Abstract: This is a detailed commentary of the Latin historical epic poem – Silius Italicus' *Punica*. Lines 15.343 – 98 tell the death of Marcellus in the battle in the ill-fated Apulia and eulogy given by Hannibal. Book XV is the second part of the poem (Book XI – XVII), which mainly talks about Carthage's *Civil War*.¹

Although Book XV narrates Scipio's Campaigns in Spain, the Flavian poet reminds his readers of Marcellus' death is throughout the epic.² It is *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) that makes Rome regain its confidence by defeating Hannibal when the Carthaginian army attacks Nola in 215 BCE (Book XII); moreover, the Campaign in Sicily (Book XIV), culminates in the fall of Syracuse. The poet aims at opposing Marcellus against Scipio, in battle to take on Hannibal (cf. 15.363).

The narrative of Marcellus' death begins with a flashback (15.334 – 42) of the fallen general lying dead already on the battlefield: *iacet campis Carthagini horror, / fors Scipiadae confecti nomina belli / rapturus, si quis paulum deus adderet aevo* (15.340 – 2). At the same time, the flashback suggests that it was not Scipio but Marcellus who was the real *Carthagini horror*.³

¹ The *Punica* can be seen as allusions to Lucan's *Pharsalia*, which underline new direction of the Second Punic War (218 – 201 BCE). On an allusive level, *Pharsalia* – the civil war between Caesar and Pompey is play twice, from start to finish; whereas in the *Punica*, fortune shifts on each side: the first part (Books I – X) tells of Rome and its ally Saguntum who suffer, are defeated, or even get killed in the civil war; whilst the second part (Book XI – XVII), the Carthaginians are identical. (Marks 2010:129 – 30)

² See further: 1.132 – 3, 3.587, 8.254 – 5, 12.278 – 80, 17.298 – 9, 17.305 – 6.

³ See 15.343 – 98 and 15.385.

Silius brings Marcellus' son into the narrative, when the father yields to the Carthaginians only after his son gets killed right in front of him (Death *ante ora parentum*⁴). Marcellus dies with Jupiter sending a bloody dew and dark drop of blood (15.363 – 5). Marcellus finished his words with excitement whilst hugging him. Furthermore, *forsan* used in 15.375 and 15.393, as well as in 15.341, is to speculate on how events might have been different: the death of Marcellus marks a significant turning point, i.e. Rome has lost one of its most important generals for the subsequent course of the war and the poem. Simultaneously, the introduction of Marcellus' son reminds the reader of the *Aeneid* 6.854 – 92, where Aeneas and his father are talking about the future generation in the Underworld, Marcellus does not appear with his son, but with a later descendant of his – Augustus' heir. This suggests the importance of Marcellus during the Second Punic War.

⁴ See 15.343 – 98.

1. The Poet

Silius Italicus (cir. 26 – 101 CE), born during the reign of Tiberius (cir. 28 CE), was an epigone of Virgil (70 – 19 BCE).⁵ As a devotee, the Flavian poet even purchased the tomb around Virgil's tomb in Naples (Martial 11.48 – 9). 'He would visit Virgil's tomb as if it were a temple.' (Pliny *Epist.* 3.7). He had been a consul under Nero (37 – 68 CE) before retiring to a life of letters (Pliny *Epist.* 3.7). Later, under Vespasian (reigned 69 – 79 CE), the first Flavian emperor, he was proconsul of Asia (77 – 8 CE).⁶ One of his sons was suffect consul under the third, Domitian in 94 CE (McDermott and Orentzel 1977: 24 – 7). Shortly after his proconsulship, it seems, Silius retired from public life to Naples and began writing the *Punica*, which he worked on from about 80 to 98 CE, composing at a rate of roughly one book per year (Wistrand 1956).

2. The Poem

Some critics believe that the poem is incomplete, suggesting that the poem was an imitation as well as parallel to the size of Ennius' *Annals* (Matier 1991).⁷ The 17-book (over 12,000 verses) epic is the longest extant Latin historical epic. The poem is devoted to the memory of Virgil, as the most significant epic model, which can be seen as an affiliation revealed straightaway in the proem.⁸ The word *arma* at the beginning of both poems shows Silius' acknowledgement of the importance of Virgil's *Aeneid* to his epic.

The second half of the *Aeneid* recalls Homer's *Iliad*, but the *Punica* recounts an Iliadic war throughout *arma*. A considerable portion of the poem is devoted to military matters; according

⁵ Conte 1999: 481 – 6.

⁶ An inscription has been found out from his time in Asia, recording his full name as Ti. Catius Asconius Silius Italicus: Calder (1935)

⁷ For the relationship between the *Punica* and Ennius'. See Matier (1991); Marks (2005a: 155 with 155 n. 119).

⁸ *Ordior arma, quibus caelo se gloria tollit / Aeneadum patiturque ferox Oenotria iura / Carthago.* (*Punica* 1.1 – 3); *Arma virumque cano* (*Aeneid* 1.1).

to one estimate, battle scenes and troops catalogues account for about 5,000 (around 40 percent) of 12,202 verses (Martier 1989b: 5). This does not only show the numinous presence of Homer but can be seen as '*arma*' debt to Vergil.⁹

The rise of Hannibal in which Book I to VII followed by a decline that begins in Book XI, which is counterpointed by the rise of Scipio from Book XIII onwards is well described by Ahl, Davis and Pomeroy as a 'parabola' (Ahl et al 1986).

⁹ Landrey 2014: Skeletons in Armor: Silius Italicus' *Punica* and the *Aeneid* Proem

Commentary on Marcellus' Death in the *Punica*

15.343 – 98 This section of Book XV of the epic poem, the *Punica*, tells of the death of Marcellus, *spolia opima*,¹⁰ by the ambush of the Carthaginians. Book XV is in the second part of the poem, i.e. Carthage's *Civil War* (cf. n.1), whereas the first (Book I – X) tells of Rome and her ally Saguntum suffering in civil war.

The *Punica* tells of events of the Second Punic War, the Flavian poet connects the intentions and actions of the gods and the heroes where Virgil left in the *Aeneid*: Juno's resentment¹¹ (*Aeneid* 1.12 – 49) – the descendants of Troy will someday topple down her Tyrian stronghold; Dido's curse to Aeneas (*Aeneid* 4.584 – 629) and his descendants (*Aeneid* 4.622 – 9) are all part of an unbroken causal chain of events that led to Hannibal's War against Rome. Nevertheless, in the *Punica*, Juno continues her implacable resentment towards the true Romans – the descendants of Aeneas (*Punica* 1.21 – 8): 'but then she saw great Rome lift its head higher than other cities and even send its ships across the seas to bring the victorious Roman battle-standards through the world. Juno feared encroaching danger and goaded the Carthaginian hearts with madness for war. However, the first war crushed their attempt, and the Sicilian waters shattered their undertaking. And yet Juno took up renewed arms and tried once more. One leader, Hannibal, provided for her as she troubled the earth and prepared to roil the

¹⁰ When a Roman general killed the enemy leader in a single combat, he could dedicate the armour as *spolia opima*, so to speak 'the rich spoils' to Jupiter Feretrius in Rome as a part of a triumphal procession.

¹¹ 'Anger and epic seem to go hand in hand. If different genres are particularly associated with different emotions, then epic surely lays claim to anger.' (Braund S. and Most G. W. 2003: 3)

sea.’ (*Punica* 1.33 – 7), together with Dido’s curse, Hamilcar sows the seed of hatred to Hannibal towards the Romans¹² (1.104 – 12) as well as Hannibal’s response (1.113 – 8) in the temple of Dido. Therefore, Hannibal is the avenger of Carthage and executor of Dido’s curse as well as Juno’s anger in the Second Punic War. In other words, the war between Rome and Carthage is even conceived as a continuation of the *Aeneid*, not only in that Dido’s curse, but in a Virgilian teleology defines its end (Ahl et al. 1986: 2493 – 501; Pomeroy 2000).

Although Hannibal does not have a divine parent, at the beginning of the *Punica*, Juno manages to instigate her anger upon Hannibal in his youth¹³ (1.38 – 41), then Hecate tells him the future (1.125 – 36). Later, he receives his prophecy in his dream before crossing the Pyrenees and Alps from Mercury, sent by Jupiter (3.163 – 211). The prophecy from Mercury tells Hannibal that the Romans will be crushed by him, just as he sees in his dream that a giant serpent destroys the forests (3.204 – 7), indicating that the Romans will be crushed by Hannibal; when Bostar brings prophecy of oracle (3.647 – 714), he says, as long as Hannibal is alive and breathes the air of the upper world, the youth of Rome will never put this anxiety away.’ (*nec ponet ... Saturnia curam, / dum carpet ... Hannibal auras*; 3.711 – 2).¹⁴ Moreover, Juno appears to Hannibal (4.722 – 38) at the eve of the Battle of Trebia¹⁵ and says, ‘Hannibal – a glorious name! A name that makes the Romans cry. Had the Fortune made you a Roman, you would

¹² Throughout the *Punica*, Silius depicts Hannibal as a non-stop sworn rival of Rome, who is fierce and determined to attack and fight the Romans. (Roumpou 2022: 273)

¹³ Gartner 2010: 88, n. 30.

¹⁴ This is as Hardie (1993: 12 – 4) addresses that there is frequent play with endings as “new beginnings” in Latin epic poetry.

¹⁵ See further Book IV for more details.

have been one of the great gods' (o *felix* ... lacrimabile nomen / *Hannibal*, Ausoniae ... *creasset* / *ad magnos venture deos*!; 4.729 – 31). In preparing for the Battle of Cannae,¹⁶ Juno summons Anna, Dido's sister,¹⁷ to inspire Hannibal (8.1 – 38). When the Italian goddess Perenna¹⁸ visits Hannibal (8.202 – 41), she rouses him to battle against the Romans (8.210 – 224), more importantly, she urges him to 'go to the lapygian fields' (*celsus lapygios* ... *in agros* / *explicat* , 8.223 – 4) without any doubt (8.219 – 21).

Furthermore, any epic on a material theme, might be expected to include some or all of the following: narrative of the cause on the outbreak of hostilities, catalogues of the opposing forces, preparation of the battle (cf. 15.352 – 3), accounts of battle on land (cf. 15.343 – 4), including tactics (cf. 15.347 – 51) and various of the death,¹⁹ the *aristeia* of one or more eminent individuals (cf. 15.343 – 98), the treatment of the defeated and the dead.²⁰ In addition, *arma* can be found throughout the whole section as well as the battle scenes and troops catalogues.

'The close position of *arma* (1.1) and *viros* (1.5) that Silius puts the *Punica* is to let his reader observe the periodic emergence of an *arma virumque* (*Aeneid* 1.1) leitmotif.' (Landrey 2014: 600). The reuse of the first two words of the *Aeneid* is not only a repetition,²¹ but also Virgilian reiteration, duplication and convergence. (Landrey 2014: 600) *Ordior*, the first word of the *Punica*, has a strongly Livian register, particularly when combined with *viros* (*et quot Roma*

¹⁶ For the battle itself, see further Books VIII – X for more details.

¹⁷ See further 8.39 – 143 for more details.

¹⁸ See further Ovid, *Fasti* 3.523 – 696 for more details.

¹⁹ See also 15.343 – 80, 15.366 – 80 and 15.397 – 8.

²⁰ See also 15.387 – 92 and 15.397 – 8.

²¹ Ahl et al. (1986: 2501), argue that 'although his intimate knowledge of the *Aeneid* is at the heart of the "*Punica*", [Silius] reworks what he uses to good and original effect.'

viros, 1.5).²² This is as Landrey (2014: 602 – 3) says that “*ordior*” introduces a prosaic note that gestures towards Silius’ debt to history, and especially the historian Livy.’.

The proem²³ of the *Punica* (1.1 – 20) can be divided in into three parts: first (1.1 – 11) can be seen as the general subject of all the three Punic Wars;²⁴ then (1.12 – 16), the second part, the poet tells of his own interest in the Second Punic War; and the third (1.17 – 20), Silius gives an explanation of the causes of the conflict.

Moreover, the Flavian poet reminds his readers the significance of the poetic tradition, that is to create collective memory of Rome. Therefore, Silius picks up work of Livy and Virgil respectively on purpose. In this way, he successfully weaves his poem together with the other two poets for his contribution to the Second Punic War.

As for Livy, the obvious starting point of his Book 21²⁵ can be seen as the core cause of the *Punica*:

In *ab urbe condita*, Livy (21.1.1) claims that the Second Punic War is “the most remarkable war of all that has ever been waged”,²⁶ his words emphasise the long-lasting impact on the collective memory of Rome. On top of that, Livy ‘affirms the unique historical and cultural

²² For the relationship between the *Punica* and Livy’s *ab urbe condita*, see Touhari (2004); and for the relationship between the *Aeneid* and the *Punica*, see Ahl et al (1986), Pomeroy (2000).

²³ The proem of the *Punica*, according to Livy’s preface (cf. n. 25), can be divided into three sections in accordance with the *Punica*: Section 1 (*Punica* 1.1 – 11 ~ *Livy* 21.1.1) focuses on the Second Punic War of both texts at the beginning; Section 2 (*Punica* 1.12 – 6 ~ *Livy* 21.1.2) explains why the war was the greatest that had ever fought; and Section 3 (*Punica* 1.17 – 20 ~ *Livy* 21.1.3) traces back the origin of the conflict to the hatred between Rome and Carthage.

²⁴ There were altogether three Punic Wars in history between Rome and Carthage, namely the First (264 – 41 BCE) (cf. Naevius’ *Bellum Poenicum*), the Second (218 – 201 BCE) and the Third (149 – 146 BCE) Punic War.

²⁵ See further *Livy* 21.1.1 – 3.

²⁶ *bellum maxime omnium memorabile quae unquam gesta sint*; *Livy* 21.1.1

importance of the conflict' (Jacobs 2021: 70); whereas in the *Punica*, the Flavian poet uses judgement of the significance of the war, as he prays to Muse to give him the honour to 'remember' (1.3) with his own version.

The second word, *arma*, in the *Punica*, echoes the first word of the *Aeneid* (cf. n. 8), signifying the poem is post-Virgilian epic. Moreover, *Aeneadum* (1.2) is the pointed name for the Romans, as they are the descendants of Aeneas, namely Virgil's *vir* in plural form. The proem of the *Punica* has the same sort of structure in response to Virgil as it is to Livy: the *Aeneid* 1.1 – 7 vs. the *Punica* 1.1 – 16, the theme of the epic, mentions the walls of Rome;²⁷ then switch to the causes of the war.²⁸ However, *virumque* (*Aeneid* 1.1), the proem of the *Aeneid*, identifies its hero, Aeneas; whereas the *Punica* celebrates *decus memorare laborum* (1.3) of multiple *viri*, the hero of 'Aeneas' or 'Aeneases', around whom the epic's action revolves and in whom its heroic ideals are embodied (von Albrecht 1964: 20 – 3). In other words, the *Punica* merges different variations of Aeneases.

In this way of having intertextuality weaved together with his poem and the works of the other two, Livy and Virgil throughout his prologue respectively, Silius successfully makes his own his contribution to the Second Punic War.

The death of Marcellus (15.343 – 98) in the *Punica* begins with a flashback²⁹ of the fallen general laying on the battlefield: 'he, the horror of Carthage, lies on the field, if some god would

²⁷ *atque altae moenia Romae; Aeneid* 1.7 ~ *ac muris defendit Roma salutem; Punica* 1.16

²⁸ *tantaene animis caelestibus irae; Aeneid* 1.11 ~ *Tantarum causas irarum; Punica* 1.17

²⁹ *iacet campis Carthaginis horror, / forsan Scipiadae confecti nomina belli / rapturus, si quis paulum deus adderet aevo; 15.340 – 2*

have extended a little bit to his life, perhaps he might have seized the distinction of accomplishing the war instead of Scipio.’ (15.340 – 2). At the same time, the flashback suggests that it is not Scipio but Marcellus that is the real *Carthaginis horror*³⁰ (cf. 15.381 – 98), though Scipio is looked as *Carthaginis horror in* Lucretius.³¹

Cited by Stocks (2014: 164, n. 47), according to Polybius, Marcellus’ death (10.32.1 – 7) is brief: he is killed swiftly (10.32.5) and his son escapes (10.32.6). ‘In fact, the son was injured but not dead during the battle. The injury prevented him from saving Marcellus. The son was saved and taken back to the camp whilst the body of Marcellus was left on the battlefield.’ (Landrea 2019: 34, n.76). Moreover, Polybius censures Marcellus for his recklessness (10.32.7), which he contrasts with the behaviour of Hannibal, who recognised that victory depends on the survival of the leader (10.33.1 – 6).³² Livy, too, shows the recklessness of Marcellus which jeopardized the state.³³ Apart from that, Marcellus, in his sixties,³⁴ is associated with the death of his son, i.e. the untimely youthful death motif. Furthermore, the death of Marcellus helps pave way for the emergence of Scipio as a new kind of *imperator*. It is typical in the epic the fall of one person helps the rise of another, since Book XV concerns ‘Scipio’s Campaign in Spain’. Marcellus’ death presents not only the death of the ‘one man’ left who

³⁰ See further 1.123 – 39, 12.273 – 80.

³¹ *De rerum naetura* 3.1034 – 5, see also n. 211.

³² Shuckburch (1889, Vol. II.: 33) holds the idea that ‘...if he (the leader) has fallen, the pilot as it were of the ship, even should fortune give the victory to the army, no real advantage is gained, because all hopes of the soldiers depend upon their leaders.’

³³ *et prope totam rem publicam in praeceps dederat*; Livy 27.27.11

³⁴ *iam enim maior sexaginta annis erat*; Livy 27.27.11

might have delayed (15.334 – 42), but, the death of the few remaining pillars of the Republic (cf. 15.383 – 5).

However, Silius tells the story in a different way as ‘poetic license allows for the exaggeration of many passages and the invention of characters or the giving of them a more prominent role.’ (Landrea 2019: 34) ‘Maybe he would have escaped the quick cruel straits of this danger, if the weapon from the enemy had not come through his son’s limbs. Then the father’s hand trembled; and he released by grief, his unlucky shield fell from his rigid palms. A lance came and pierced his naked breast, and his chin’s imprint marked the grass as he fell.’ (15.375 – 80). According to this version, the cause of Marcellus’ death is the love of a father towards his son (cf. 15.355 – 60). At the same time, Jacobs (2021: 54) argues that Silius’ narrative is different from that of Polybius, this is because Silius is using counterfactual history³⁵ to tell his own story. As a poet, Silius tells his story in his own belief of what happened during the Second Punic War (Jacobs 2021: 55). Therefore, I argue that Silius, as an elite Roman,³⁶ attempts to change the narrative of the course of Marcellus’ son being saved into being killed. In this way, it allows the Flavian poet to leave his own mark in epic.

³⁵ ‘Counterfactual history is popular but controversial. The very premise that history could have taken many courses tends to favour models based on contingency. Counterfactuals have been used to explore the historical process of the ancient world.’ (Cowan 2010: 324).

³⁶ See also The Poet.

Marcellus' death in Apulia happens just at the same time Quintus Fabius Maximus ³⁷ (6.619 – 52) captures Tarentum (15.320 – 33) in Italy after Scipio captures the city of New Carthage (15.149 – 285). M. Claudius Marcellus first appeared in Virgil's *Aeneid* when Aeneas goes to the Underworld accompanied by the sibyl (*Aeneid* 6.404), to see his father. Anchises mentions Marcellus (*Aeneid* 6.854 – 885) as *spolia opima* ³⁸ (*Aeneid* 6.855) about future generation. This shows Silius' devotion to Virgil as well as his acknowledgement to Virgil's *Aeneid*.

The premature death of Marcellus is because he and his fellow consul Crispinus (cf. 15.345), equal-in-command, make their joint decision to scout out a nearby hill between the camps of the two armies (cf. 15.343 – 51) in Apulia (cf. 15.344). Marcellus assures the general that everything will be fine as long as they work together. Whilst the soldiers are about to make the expedition on their horse (cf. 15.352 – 3), Marcellus is talking to his son with excitement (cf. 15.353 – 65). Then, all of a sudden, the Romans are attacked by the Numidian cavalry (cf. 15.368) just as the Roman army is in position. Marcellus dies right after seeing his own son die before his eyes³⁹ (cf. 15.366 – 80).

³⁷ Quintus Fabius Maximus was appointed as Dictator (6.600 – 40), by the panicking Roman Senate after the Roman army was defeated by Hannibal in three major battles in prompt succession (7.1 – 26) – Tacinum River (218 BCE, Book IV), Trebia River (218 BCE, Book IV) and Lake Trasimene (217 BCE, Book V), aiming at addressing the emergency.

³⁸ 'See Spaltenstein (1986b) *ad* 1.132, who notes that Marcellus is inseparably tied in *spolia opima* in the *Punica*. See also *Aeneid* 6.855 *insignis spoliis Marcellus opimis*; 3.587 (Jupiter: *gratusque mihi Marcellus opimis*) and 8.254 – 5 (*Scipiadas interque Iovi spolia alta ferentem / Marcellum*; winner of the spoils) in the *Punica*.' (Stocks 2014: 147, n. 2)

³⁹ During any war, the death of a young soldier in a war is not uncommon. 'The premature death of the young as a common theme in Greek and Roman literature is hardly surprising, given the prevailing demographic conditions that made such death relatively common' (O'Sullivan 2009: 451). *ante ora parentum* ('before the faces of one's parents'; 'Briggs 1980: 24 "for Virgil, the most tragic way to die" O'Sullivan 2009, 448 n.2) is particularly Virgilian resonance of death. Sullivan quotes Conte on 'tragic subject as (Conte 2007: 46) 'Casting death through the eyes of the parents spectators is appropriate in a poem that is famously all about

In the *Aeneid*, death '*ante ora parentum*' and related formulae appear multiple times (O'Sullivan 2009: 449):

- *quis ante ora patrum Troiae sub moenibus altis / contigit oppetere!* (*Aeneid* 1.95 – 6)
- *ut tandem ante oculos evasit et ora parentum, / concidit ac multo vitam cum sanguine fudit.* (*Aeneid* 2.531 – 2)
- *iamque aderit multo Priami de sanguine Pyrrhus, / natum ante ora patris, patrem qui obtruncat ad aras.* (*Aeneid* 2.662 – 3)
- *namque manus inter maestorumque ora parentum* (*Aeneid* 2.681)
- *incedunt pueri pariterque ante ora parentum / frenatis lucent in equis.* (*Aeneid* 5.553 – 4)
- *...tuentes / Dardanidae veterumque agnoscunt ora parentum.* (*Aeneid* 5.575 – 6)
- *pueri innuptaeque puellae / impositique rogis iuvenes ante ora parentum* (*Aeneid* 6.307 – 8)⁴⁰
- *exclusi ante oculos lacrimantumque ora parentum / pars ...fossas urgente / ruina;* (*Aeneid* 11.887 – 9).

points of view' (Conte 1986: 141 – 86). 'Enduring the loss of a child was a fact of life, and a host of consolatory themes and rhetorical tropes helped the bereaved to talk about and endure *mors immatura*.' (O'Sullivan 2009: 451 n.11) Lattimore takes *mors immatura* as an inversion of the natural order (cf. Lattimore 1942: 187 – 91). In the *Aeneid*, when talking about future race with Anchises, Aeneas even talks with his father about the lament for Marcellus (*Aeneid* 6.860 – 86) – the theme of *mors immatura*, another youth buried before the eyes of a parent (O'Sullivan 2009: 454).

⁴⁰ See further *Georgics* 4.475 – 7: *matres atque viri defunctaque corpora vita / magnanimum heroum, pueri innuptaeque puellae, / impositique rogis iuvenes ante ora parentum*

Since Silius was a devotee to Virgil⁴¹ and as an affiliation to the *Aeneid*,⁴² there is no doubt that the *Punica* will continue Virgil's 'tragic subjectivity'. In fact, the death of Marcellus' son in front of him is similar to what Virgil adds in the *Aeneid*,⁴³ when Virgil tells Priam's fate; O'Sullivanian '*ante oculos*' is a standard Latin phrase for the desired effect of powerful rhetoric' (O'Sullivan 2009: 460).⁴⁴

These deaths *ante ora parentum* can all be traced back to the *Iliad*, when Achilles kills Hector from the walls of Troy with his parents' witness.⁴⁵ This shows that Virgil is not merely an epigone of Homer, but the forefather of the Augustan age, and of future generation.⁴⁶ In fact, from Virgil's time onwards, epic poets had to respond to the numinous presence of Virgil as well as Homer.

'In antiquity readers already became aware of the narrative possibilities of this device. "Almost-episodes" are frequently used to enhance rapid and dramatic courses of actions: battles, duels, competitions, heated debates, perilous situations of all kinds, and many other occasions where the narrative reaches a climax. Since the times Homer played a considerable

⁴¹ See also The Poet.

⁴² See also The Poem.

⁴³ *ut tandem ante oculos evasit et ora parentum* ; *Aeneid* 2.531

⁴⁴ 'Cf. *Rhet. Ad Her.* 4.68 *Demonstratio est, cum ita verbis res exprimitur, ut geri negotium et res ante oculos esse videatur.* "*Demonstratio* is when something is expressed in words in such a way that the event seems to be being carried out and the event itself is happening before the eyes.'" (O'Sullivan 2009: 460 – 1, n. 41)

⁴⁵ See further *Iliad* 22. 247 – 404 for more details.

⁴⁶ 'For a suggestion that the paternal focus of the book has metaliterary implications, see Nugent 1992: 257 – 8; Oliensis 2001: 60 – 1.' (O'Sullivan 2009: 469, n. 64).

role in ancient epic, from him onwards, the device on “almost-episode” makes its way through all ancient epics.’⁴⁷ (Nesselrath 1992, 3: 566)

Forsan in 15.393 is the phenomenon called an ‘almost-episode’, so to say “‘if not’-situations” which exists in both Greek and Roman epic. De Jong’s ‘if not- situations’ definition (De Jong 2004: 68) is passages of the type: ‘and now x would have happened, if somebody had done y.’ It enables the poet to narrate the unfolding action, until it almost becomes reality, and then introduces a turn of events by which this reality is aborted.

As the *Punica* recounts an Iliadic war, *Iliad* is worth looking into. ‘In the 19th century, von Nagelsbach (²1861) collected almost all Iliadic passages in which divine intervention leads to the abandonment of an alternative course of action.’⁴⁸ In the early 20th century, Arend (1933) looked at some ‘almost-episodes’ in which a hero finds himself confronted by several possible ways to act and considers which of them he should choose.’ Both Basset (1938) and Schadewaldt (1938) devoted short hints to ‘almost-episodes’. More authors including Kullmann (1956), Reinhardt (1961) and Fenik (1968) made their remarks. In De Jong’s study *Narrators and Focalizer: The Presentation of the Story in the Iliad*, there are 46 “‘if not’-situations’ in *In Iliad*, in which a possible development of an action unfolds until it becomes irrevocable reality.’ (Nesselrath 1992, 3: 565).

⁴⁷ ‘For respective remarks in the Homeric *scholia* and in Eustathius’ commentaries, see Nesselrath (1992, 3 *Structures in Epic Poetry*: 565 – 608).

⁴⁸ For more detailed references to von Nagelsbach (²1881), see Nesselrath (1992: 5 – 10).

As to Roman epic, it has been shaped and influenced by Greek epic, it works well with the use of 'almost-episodes'. In the *Aeneid*, some differences can be noted with regard to the Greek models. First, the use of 'almost-episodes' is less frequent than its Greek counterpart; Roman 'almost-episodes' are very often more extensive and more elaborate, and tend to have more weight within the context. This may be connected with the fact that fate (*fatum / fata*) plays a more important role in Roman epic – positively in Virgil and Silius – than in Greek epic. Moreover, Roman poets often choose different kinds of events and actions for the use of 'almost-episodes' compared to the Greeks. In Roman epic, combat and war often play bigger role, but Roman 'almost-episodes' do not appear very frequently in fighting scenes. (Nesselrath 1992, 3: 586)

Although Hannibal is excited to see the death of Marcellus in the battlefield, he honours Marcellus with a massive pyre together with his eulogy (15.381 – 98).

15.343 – 51 The war against Carthage waged together by the two generals – Marcellus and Crispinus, are equal in command.

15.343 – 4 *Collis Agenoreum ... vallum / Ausonio ... arvis*: these lines introduce the terrain of the battlefield between the armies of Carthage and Rome.

15.343 *Agenoreus*: house of Cadmus, used everywhere in the poem so to indicate the origin of Carthage and its grandeur. When Hannibal enters Italy (3.630 – 46), he is described as *ductor Agenoreus* (3.631). When a soldier foretells disaster (8.656 – 76) before the Battle of Cannae, he says, '... a Carthaginian carries the consul's axes, as if our custom, and a lictor carries the

blood-stained fasces...’⁴⁹(*gestat Agenoreus ... secures /consulis ... sanguine fasces*; 8.671 – 2). When Hannibal attacks Nola (12.158 – 80), Marcellus blocks him with triumph⁵⁰ (12.181 – 294), ‘the Carthaginian leader had barely driven the enemy from rampage, becomes furious...’ (*...furens, postquam ... hostem, / ductor Agenoreus ...*; 12.281 – 2). Thanks to Juno’s intervention⁵¹ (12.701 – 28), Hannibal’s retreats, but he wears to come back to Rome (12.729 – 32). When Hannibal withdraws to River Tutia ‘with a grim countenance towards Rome, he was ready to get back’. (*torvos ... ad urbem / ductor Agenoreus ...parabat*; 13.2 – 3) After the death of Marcellus, the battle gradually turns in the Romans’ favour. When Hasdrubal rallies his soldiers, ‘Look! The Carthaginian general, entered into the battlefield, dragging with him a troop covered with dust, twisting the weapon with his arms and shouted...’(*ecce, trahens ... turmam, / ductor Agenoreus ... lacertis / tela, sonat ...* 15.740 – 2). During the prophesies of final Battle of Zama,⁵² Jupiter says ‘...the Carthaginian leader came, shining in purple, raising his head high and his ruddy crest with nodding plumes.’ (*ibat Agenoreus in ostro, / excelsumque ... nutante levabat / crista rubens*; 17.391 – 3).

⁴⁹ Translations are my own.

⁵⁰ See also 15.352.

⁵¹ In fact, in the *Punica*, Juno engages herself into several other interventions to save her avenger throughout the epic: in the beginning, when watching Hannibal gets wounded by Jupiter’s lightning bolts, Juno covers herself with a dark cloud and manages to get him out of the battlefield. (1.535 – 55) After the Battle of Cannae, Paullus enters combat with the Carthaginians. As soon as he rescues Cato, he hunts for Hannibal for a single combat, whose effort frightens Juno. Therefore, Juno, in the disguise of Lucius Caecilius Mettalus (10.45 – 58) to dissuade Paullus. However, the attempt turns out unsuccessful (10.1 – 91). Seeing the disguise useless, Juno somehow changes her appearance into Gelesta the Moor, this time she turns Hannibal away (10.59 – 91). In the Battle of Zama (202 BCE), when Juno hears that Scipio wants to face her avenger Juno creates a phantom Scipio to take Hannibal away from the battlefield (17.522 – 52).

⁵² See further Book XVII for more details.

Agenor: King Agenor, Cadmus' father, king of Tyre and Sidon tribes. Tyre is the ancient name of Carthage. Metonymy is used to indicate the origin of Carthage as well as its grandeur.

15.344 *Ausonia*: ancient Greek name for lower Italy. Metonymy is used to indicate Rome.

Dauni: Daunians, a tribe of southern Italy, inhabiting the part of Apulia bounded by the rivers of Aufidus and Frento. Metonymy is used to refer to Apulia. At the same time, the name of the battlefield is revealed with delay. Delay is a signature of epic (cf. n. 80). Apulia is where Cannae is situated, a crucial battleground during the Second Punic War. The Battle of Cannae is the most notorious defeat in the Roman history, and River Aufidus is near Cannae. It is ill-omened to the Romans due to Juno's resentment. Juno, can tolerate Rome's fate status as *caput mundi* – so long as Hannibal has his devastating victories, as she says, '...The River Aufidus, on its banks, can barely make its path to the shores of Adriatic through shields and helmets, and severed limbs of the men.' (...*vadi ...Aufide, ripis / per clipeos ... per artus / vix iter ...ad litora ponti*; 1.52 – 4) This, therefore, is an indicator of Marcellus' death (cf. 15.377 – 80). Moreover, the prediction of the defeat of the battle has already been made during the conversation between Venus and Jupiter (3.557 – 629). In answering the complains from Venus (3.557 – 69), Jupiter says, '...*hi tantum ... regnum, / quod ... mente nepotes / non tamen ... ipse creates*; 3.588 – 90). In the Proteus episode (7.435 – 503), with the Proteus recalling the Judgement of Paris⁵³ (7.43 – 73), when the nymphs come to him, Proteus makes the prophecy (7.474 – 503). He warns his daughters to stay away from the Adriatic Sea near the mouth of

⁵³ an external analeptic story as well as the origin of the war.

Aufidus (*at vos ... filum, / Hadriaci ... Sasonis harenas*; 7.479 – 80), for ‘The swollen Aufidus will mingle with waves of blood into the sea and push the ruddy tide deep into sea.’ (*sanguineis tumidus ... undis / Aufidus ... aequora fluctus*; 7.481 – 2), emphasising how evilness the river is.⁵⁴ Now, the Romans are back in Apulia, as the battle is about to begin, it is possible that Rome will lose again at the same place with the same enemy – Hannibal, the invincible foe. Therefore, the atmosphere is tense.

Mavors: since epic is stereotypically associated with war. *Mavors* is used to conjure up the epic genre. Metonymy is the vivid use of the god of war.

15.345 – 6 *curarum comes ... honoris / Marcello ... ciebat*: the interaction between Marcellus and Crispinus, equal-in-command and ally, it is more like *sodales*, as Nisus and Euryalus (*Aeneid* 9.179, 182 – 183). They are in Apulia where the Battle of Cannae occurred, where Rome was defeated. There is another reason for the loss of Battle of Cannae – disagreement between the two consuls, C. Terentius Varro and Aemilius Paullus lead the Roman and Italian troops to their respective commanders when they are on the march to Cannae to fight against Hannibal (8.349 – 621). In fact, the primary cause of the fall of Cannae is Varro, whose foolish conduct is opposite to Fabius’ strategy of *cunctatio*⁵⁵. Varro is keen to blame Fabius for his

⁵⁴ See further from omens of disasters (8.22 – 55) till after the death of Paullus (10.319 – 20).

⁵⁵ As the appointed Dictator, Fabius earned the name of ‘the delayer’ (7.1 – 9) by adopting a policy of delaying. He avoids having an open combat with Hannibal (7.217 – 59) to prevent Hannibal from progressing. Hannibal eventually has no choice but to get into the battle with the Romans in Cannae (216BCE, 9.267 – 86). During the battle, the Carthaginian army butchered the Roman army with the help of their elephants (9.556 – 619), the defeat is so massive and so terrifying that the Romans start to see Hannibal as an invincible enemy and revert back to Fabius’ strategy – *cunctatio*. Simultaneously, Hannibal achieves his most famous victory against the Roman Republic.

strategy, insisting on attacking the Carthaginians by stirring up the masses⁵⁶ (8.242 – 77), whereas Paullus swears to do his duty, that is follow to Fabius' strategy⁵⁷(8.327 – 55).

Moreover, before the Battle of Canne, the conflict arises between the two consuls: Varro rouses the men to attack the Carthaginians (9.1 – 38), whereas Paullus warns him not to do that (9.39 – 65). When Satrius gets killed by his son, Solymus, by accident (9.66 – 119), the dying Satrius issues a warning to Varro with his own blood (9.120 – 77). However, Varro chooses to ignore the warning whilst ordering his legions to attack, which finally leads the loss of the battle. However, he survived a shipwreck returning to Rome as a helmsman at the cost of his whole crew.⁵⁸

15.345 *curarum comes*: alliteration is used to highlight the importance of working together (cf. 15.347 – 51).

Crispinus: Titus Quinctius Crispinus, Consul in 208 BCE with Marcellus. In fact, this is Marcellus' fourth time⁵⁹ as a consul, previous three times were 222 BCE, 214 BCE and 210 BCE respectively.

15.346 *Marcellus*:⁶⁰ Following Rome's defeat in Cannae (cf. 15.345 – 6), numerous Italians no longer have faith in Rome and go over to the Carthaginian side (11.1 – 27). Capua, powerful but corrupted city, inclines too (11. 28 – 54). When Virrius and other envoys are sent to Rome

⁵⁶ See Fucecchi 2010: 229

⁵⁷ See also 15.368.

⁵⁸ This can be seen as a comparison between Fabius and the elderly helmsman (1.687 – 9) during the debate whether to go into with Hannibal in the Roman Senate (1.672 – 94).

⁵⁹ However, at the election, as a chosen consul in 215 BCE, he immediately resigned from his office right after he heard thunder. 'Livy 23.32.12 – 14, Plut. *Marc.* 12.1.' (Flower 2000: 39, n. 29)

⁶⁰ See also 15.343 – 98.

at the instigation of Pacuvius, challenging Rome by demanding consulship from the Roman Senate (11.55 – 72), which is refused indignantly by the leading figures as Torquatus (11. 73 – 86), Fabius (11.87 – 96), and Marcellus. Marcellus is so furious that he cannot resist his anger and berates scornfully to Varro (cf. 15.345 – 6) and the shameless request from the Capuans by interrupting Fabius' speech upon the Capuans (11. 99 – 109).

bellum: one of the stereotypes that conjures up the genre of epic.

15.347 – 51 Marcellus discusses his military plan with Crispinus, he proposes to scout out the terrain, because they are going to fight again against Hannibal, as Hannibal is the 'fear of the enemy' – so fearing a strong external enemy' (*metus hostilis*)⁶¹ to Rome. In fact, Silius presents the development of the *metus hostilis* in three passages: 3.557 – 629, 7.409 – 93, and 9.340 – 53 respectively of the poem (Jacobs 2010: 126 – 37)

Marcellus tries to convince Crispinus that joint command might be a chance for them to win the battle.⁶² Cannae,⁶³ featured as a turning point of the Second Punic War, after that, the Romans begin to gain more success in battles. This is because 'when the consuls / generals work together, Rome enjoys success in foreign war.' (Jacobs 2021: 117). The fact that Marcellus has been a consul multiple times (cf. 15.345), suggesting 'a tradition about Marcellus centred on his dedication of the *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363). ' (Flower 2000: 47)

⁶¹ The term, 'may have originated in the debate in the Roman Senate between M. Porcius Cato and P. Scipio over the fate of Carthage just before the outbreak of the Third Punic War in 149 BCE. At the same time, as a powerful cultural idea, *metus hostilis*, has its deep roots in ancient political theory, as well as in ancient conceptions about the rise and fall of states (e.g. Plb. 6.57.1 – 9).' (Jacobs 2010: 123 – 4)

⁶² See also 15.345 – 6, 15.350 – 1.

⁶³ See also 15.344, 15.345 – 6 and n. 16.

Moreover, Hannibal is *saevus*⁶⁴ (1.41, 1.299), in the Battle of Cannae, after the death of Paullus (cf. 15.349), Hannibal has spent a long day in ‘savage slaughter’ (*saevus / caedibus* 10.326 – 7), and his cruelty and savagery also reveals that he takes pleasure when he surveys the bloody battlefield after his victory.⁶⁵ (10.499 – 53)

15.347 – 9 Marcellus is cautious about the surrounding.⁶⁶ This is because of Mopsus is at the siege during the fall of Saguntum (2.89 – 147) and Satrius just before the Battle of Cannae (cf. 15.345 – 6). At the same time, this is another battle between Marcellus and Hannibal, previously they fought against each other in Nola.⁶⁷ It is Marcellus that leads Rome to its first victory. In the proem of the *Punica*, *viros* (1.5) is used to indicate that there are multiple *virumque* (*Aeneid* 1.1). Cited by Marks (2005b: 529 – 30), *virum* in the *Aeneid* is Aeneas, whereas in the *Punica*, there will be many ‘Aeneases’ (von Albrecht 1964: 20 – 3). Although many scholars agree with the argument of von Albrecht – Hannibal, Fabius, and Scipio as a heroic triad should be the focus, Jacobs (2021:116) believes that Marcellus should be featured as hero in a much more prominent way in the *Punica* since he is the last to win the *spolia opima* in terms of his special status.⁶⁸ Moreover, when Jupiter answers Venus for her complaint

⁶⁴ Livy condemns Hannibal as ‘inhuman cruel, more treachery than Punic, there is no truth in him, nothing is holy to him, he has no fear of god, he swears no oath and he has no religious belief’ (*inhumana crudelitas, perfidia plus quam Punica, nihil veri, nihil sancti, nullus deum metus, nullum ius iurandum, nulla religio; Ab urbe condita* 21.4.9). ‘At 21.57.14, he characterized the Carthaginian leader as cruel towards the defenders of *Victumulae*; at 24.45.12 – 14, Hannibal is characterised as cruel, greedy and guileful in his treatment of Altinius and his family; at 26.38.3, as greedy, cruel and inclined to despoil what he could not protect when leaving Capua.’ (Tipping 2010: 52)

⁶⁵ There is a clear reminiscence here of Caesar at Luc. 7.728 – 824 (Tipping 2010: 64, n. 32).

⁶⁶ See also 15.343 – 4 and 15.347 – 51.

⁶⁷ See also 15.343, 15.352, 15.363 and 15.383 – 7.

⁶⁸ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.363.

(cf. 15.344), he mentions that 'Marcellus is my favourite by gaining the rich spoils.' (*gratusque mihi Marcellus opimis*, 3.587).⁶⁹ I tend to agree with Jacobs, without Marcellus, Rome cannot have regained its morale to fight against Hannibal (cf. 15.363). Therefore, without doubt, Marcellus is one of the 'Aeneases' in the *Punica* (cf. 15.343 – 98). In short, *viros* (1.5) is the unification of power under *vir* (*Aeneid*, 1.1), suggesting the Virgilian reiteration, reduplication and convergence by Silius, always causes conflict with each other in a violent way. The troubled *exemplum* of Aeneas is the origin, and it keeps causing the bloodshed. (Landrey 2014: 602) This means that there are two Aeneases who are going to fight with each other on the battlefield (Landrey 2014: 619), Silius is pitting Aeneas against Aeneas (Landrey 2014: 601).

Regarding the Battle of Cannae, Livy (30.28) made it clear that 'danger' is the synonym of Hannibal (Roumpou 2022: 273). However, Livy is more severe towards Marcellus, 'This was the situation in Spain. Consul Marcellus took Salapia through treachery.'⁷⁰ (*Livy* 27.1), accusing him of being imprudent and impiety.⁷¹ Silius presents him as not only the victim of fate, but of Punic disloyalty.

15.347 – 8 *gestit lustrare ... / mens*: indicates that Marcellus has heroic aspiration, it is like Nisus in the *Aeneid*, when he says to Euryalus, '...my mind has been agitated' (*mens agitat mihi*, *Aeneid* 9.187). It seems that Nisus' link is ominous. As Nisus is fighting against Rutulians with Euryalus, just as Marcellus accompanied by Crispinus fighting against the Carthaginian.

⁶⁹ See also 15.343 – 98.

⁷⁰ *Hic status rerum in Hispania erat. in Italia consul Marcellus Salapia per prodicionem recepta;* *Livy* 27.1.

⁷¹ The historian joins a whole tradition unfavourable to Marcellus: Polybius:10.32.7

Silius hints that both will die from ambush (cf. 15.366 – 70) as Nisus and Euryalus (*Aeneid* 9.367 – 459).⁷² At the same time, Marcellus' death (cf. 15.375 – 80) has been introduced in the flashback (cf. 15.343 – 98). The battle is again against Hannibal (cf. 15.345 – 6), because of the loss of Cannae (cf. 15.345 – 6), the defeat has already become a dark place in the collective memory of the Romans. This is not only because Hannibal is the protégé of Juno, but also the oracle's response that Bostar brings (cf. 15.343 – 98). Marcellus' concern is that there might be an ambush⁷³ (cf. 15.366 – 70) because their *metus hostilis*⁷⁴ is Hannibal.⁷⁵ Therefore, scouting is a must.

15.348 *medioque ... monti*: the war is waged by the two generals (cf. 15.345 – 6), Marcellus is about to place his army and make them ready for the battle that is around the corner.

15.349 *Libys*: Metonymy is used to indicate Hannibal, since Carthage established her settlement on the Libya coast. Dido (cf. 15.343 – 98), founder of Carthage, is said to have fled to exile from Tyre. When Hannibal takes command of the Carthaginian forces, 'The Libyans were first to salute (Hannibal) as a leader by acclamation' (1.89).

During the Battle of Lake Trasimene, 'the gods turned their faces away and gave Fate greater place to Fate unwillingly. Mars himself was astonished by the good fortune of the Carthaginian leader' (5.201 – 3). After the death of Paullus, Hannibal buries him with honour,

⁷² For the relationship between Nisus and Euryalus, see Fucecchi 2010: 234.

⁷³ Livy identifies deceit and entrapment as Hannibal's military specialties (21.34.1 and 27.26.2) (Tipping 2010: 52)

⁷⁴ See also 15.347 – 51.

⁷⁵ During the Battle of Lake Trasimene (Book V), Hannibal sets a trap for Flaminius and gets him killed (5.664 – 78).

he even gives eulogy to Paullus in front of the pyre, ⁷⁶ 'as he speaks, and suddenly, with the flames crackling on all sides, Paullus' exulting soul rises swiftly into the heaven.' (*haec Libys... undique / flammis, / aetherias ... in auras*; 10.576 – 7).

The death of Gracchus makes Hannibal happy, though he is furious about the Carthaginian fleet escaping Tarentum (12.434 – 48). 'For Gracchus, whilst seeking a dialogue to gain the allegiance of the false Lucanian, he was killed by his treacherous host and was murdered ambushed by hidden guile. Hannibal snatches the praise of burying him.' ⁷⁷ (12.475 – 8).

During the Battle of Zama, when Hannibal fights to save Carthage, 'the Carthaginian general attacks the fray with the mixed crowd, rushing on, he forces the enemy to turn their back and flee.' (*tum Libys ... turbae / convertitque ... hostilia terga*; 17.472 – 3)

occultis ... ausis: Marcellus announces⁷⁸ what will cause his death.

occupet: indicates that there is possibility for Hannibal to set a trap for the Roman army (cf. 15.347 – 8). Therefore, his eagerness (cf. 15.347) to check the surroundings (cf. 15.347 – 8) makes sense.

15.350 – 1 Marcellus is assuring Crispinus that everything will be fine as long as they work together as one. This is a sharp contrast between to Varro (cf. 15.345 – 6) and Paullus (8.242

⁷⁶ 'Go, glory of Rome. Where it is right to go with the for spirits proud in deeds and virtue to go. Glory has been won by your remarkable death. Fortune still turns our labour, and chance bids us not to see what is going to happen in the future.' (*i, decus Ausoniae, quo fas est ire superbas / virtute et factis animas. tibi gloria leto / iam parta insigni: nostros Fortuna labores / versat adhuc casusque iubet nescire futuros*; 10.572 – 5)

⁷⁷ *namque per ... caesus, / colloquium ... perfida gentis / Lucanae, Gracchus ... astu, / occiderat...rapiebat humandi*; 12.475 – 8.

⁷⁸ See also 15.347 – 8 and 15.366 – 80.

– 355), consular colleagues, who refuses to cooperate with each other (9.1 – 65), which eventually causes the disastrous defeat at Cannae (10.309 – 25). It is Scipio who prevents desertion (10.415 – 48). In epic, it is a stereotype for one to fail and the other to rise. Moreover, Marcellus wants to show Crispinus that the joint command of the Republican tradition is still in function. This happens later in the book when Nero joins his force with Salinator whilst racing to River Metaurus, and it is at River Metaurus, with the joint effort, that they defeat Hasdrubal. As Nero defeats Hasdrubal in a single combat by beheading him and sends the head to his brother Hannibal (15.658 – 823).

si cordi est ... participes / esse velim: Marcellus is wondering whether his relationship with Crispinus could be as partner (cf. 15.345), closer than equal-in-command as well as ally (cf. 15.346), because of his heroic inspiration (cf. 15.347 – 8). He also believes that the battle loss at Cannae was due to the lack of joint command (cf. 15.345 – 6). Now as they are back at the same area (cf. 15.344), if the two can take partnership, then joint command as the Republic tradition can be carried out, and this will lead them to victory. This also shows that Marcellus is thirsty for personal success and glory.⁷⁹

On the contrary, in the *Aeneid*, Nisus uses *esse velim*, when talking to Euryalus in a protective way, he says, ‘If some chance or some god were to lead me to disaster, then I would like you to survive, for your young age is more worthy than your life ’ (*si quis ...deusve, / te*

⁷⁹ See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.355 – 60, 15.363 and 15.373.

superesse uelim ... aetas; Aeneid 9.211 – 2). Nisus wants Euryalus, the one that he loves, to live instead of dying with him (cf. n.72).

15.351 *velim*: indicates as equal-in-command, Marcellus is not sure whether Crispinus wants to agree with him. *velim* is delayed is for atmosphere amplification.⁸⁰ Moreover, his intention is to remind Crispinus of the reason of their lost in the Battle of Cannae.⁸¹

numquam ... duobus: Marcellus is assuring that they will be able to fight the invincible enemy to the Romans (cf. 15.344) as long as they carry out the command jointly.

duobus: The consulship was established in 509 BCE, two years before the Romans expelled the king. Two consuls elected annually with equal powers in *comitia centuriata* were the chief magistrates of the Roman states throughout the Roman Republican and Empire periods. The elected consuls were granted imperium. That means they had supreme civil and military power. Consuls carried out their functions under the principle of collegiality, and each consul had the power to veto his colleague. Nevertheless, it is crucial that the day on which the consuls took office varied during the Republican period: the consular year started on the Ides of March from the beginning of the war against Hannibal. It was until the first century BCE, consuls no longer played the important military role they had in previous centuries, whilst their role in day-to-day politics substantially increased: throughout the late Republican period the consulship underwent a process of politicization, and the consuls were expected to be the most visible

⁸⁰ 'Much of any must consist in delay, obstruction, deferral: anachronic time for hermeneutic thickening, for atmospheric amplification' (Henderson 1993: 182)

⁸¹ See also 15.344 and 15.345 – 6.

political leaders at the center stage of Roman politics. The title of consul continued to exist throughout the Empire. However, after Augustus, the consuls lost their power significantly under the Principate: military power and most of their civil responsibilities were taken away. All in all, the consulship, always remained a great honour.

15.352 – 65 Marcellus converses with his son as a leader (cf. 15.343 – 98).

15.352 – 3 *haec ubi ... sese / iam ... in equos*: The Roman soldiers are ready to mount on their horse to do the scouting (cf. 15.347 – 51).

15.352 *haec ubi sedere*: indicates that Crispinus agrees with Marcellus to work as one (cf. 15.350 – 1).

ardentes attollere: alliteration is used indicate the eagerness to fight.

ardentes ... sese / iam ... in equos: shows that Marcellus is a great commander, not only the soldiers but horses are motivated with pride and confidence that they can win the battle as their generals are now carrying out the joint command. This is because Marcellus is the core of the Battle of Nola. When he sees Hannibal cannot stay strong (cf. 15.383 – 7) on the battlefield, right after the Romans rush into the chaotic Carthaginian army. Unlike the previous commanders, he immediately challenges the Carthaginian general with war, says he ‘...Let the cohorts dismiss from the slaughter, I, Marcellus demand you a single battle.’ (*dimitto e caede cohortes, / spectemur ... proelia posco*; 12.197 – 8). He aims at killing Hannibal, i.e. killing a general in a single battle. Marcellus just wants to copy the battle in 222 BCE against the Gauls

(cf. n.141), to acquire new *spolia opima*.⁸² This is not only because Marcellus was an outstanding soldier since he was young and frequently won in single combat (Flower 2000: 36), but the potential of Marcellus surpasses Hannibal. This is typical in epic, where one fails and the other triumphs. The poet establishes a clear parity between the two counterparts which is substantiated by his variance from Livy's description⁸³ of the battle. Moreover, the Battle of Nola marks the first victory for Rome ever since the outbreak of the Second Punic War that Hannibal gets held back in the battlefield. 'Then they (the Romans) praise Marcellus as equal as the Mars in glory, he walks with a triumph greater than the victory when he bore the rich spoils to Jupiter, the Thunder god.' (*tum Martis adaequant / Marcellum decori: graditur comitante triumph / maior, quam ferret cum victor opima Tonanti*; 12.278 – 80). The association with Mars establishes Marcellus as the forerunner to Scipio and as a suitable foil to Hannibal, the first man capable of defeating him in the battle.⁸⁴ At the same time, 'Silius aims at opposing Marcellus against Scipio in a literary, if not historical, battle to take on Hannibal. This is the foundation upon which the Flavian poet constructs his unique version of the death scene.' (Jacob 2025: 2) Furthermore, he conquered Syracuse despite the plague on both sides of the

⁸² See also 15.343 – 98, 15.363.

⁸³ According to Livy, during the battle (34.13.1 – 17.8), Marcellus gives signal to his force to retire instead of raging, even when they are in victor; however, Nero ruined his plans for the battle (24.17.1 – 7). Therefore, a comprehensive victory over Hannibal fails (24.19.1 – 20.16).

⁸⁴ 'Burck (1979: 286) notes that Marcellus is a well-established hero in the *Punica*, and is a forerunner to Scipio in the final book.' (Stocks 2014: 149, n. 10).

armies (14.580 – 688) right after the sea battle (14.341 – 579).⁸⁵ On top of that, it indicates the poignant reminder that the horses will lose their masters including Marcellus' (cf. 15.397 – 8). 15.353 – 4 *Marcellus, ut arma / aptantem natum ... tumultu*: Marcellus sees his son getting ready for the upcoming battle. As the son of Marcellus, he must imitate his father and inherit the values of a warrior. This shows that Marcellus' son is young and inexperienced. Therefore, he needs training as a young and inexperienced *nobiles* to fight on the battlefield.

Ephebe⁸⁶ can be traced back to Virgil's *Aeneid*. Pallas, young and inexperienced, is allowed to fight with Aeneas,⁸⁷ eventually dies during the fight with Turnus.⁸⁸ Furthermore, in the *Thebaid*, being a *nobile*, Parthenopaeus' participation in the seven against the Thebes⁸⁹ can be seen as ephebe, though inexperienced and young, enthusiastic to war (*a rudis ... nova gloria suadet!*; 4.247), he is burning to hear the sound of the weapons and trumpet (*arma, tubas audire calens*; 4.261), 'and to soil his blond hair with the dust of war, and to be carried back by a foe's horse. He is weary of the forest, it is a shame for him that his arrows did not yet know the human blood' (4.261 – 4). He, too, dies after injury.⁹⁰

⁸⁵ 'The sea battle at Syracuse is extensively modeled at the sea battle at Massilia in Lucan's *Pharsalia* 3, the first battle recounted at length in Lucan's epic.' (Marks 2010: 144)

⁸⁶ Ephebe itself is derived from the ancient Greek word ἐφηβος (*ephebos*), meaning puberty. The origin of *ephebos* in terms of date and circumstances is provided in Athens by Aeschine with his own experience. (Friend 2019: 15) "Ephebes", literally those at (*ep'*) their youthful prime time (*hebe*).

⁸⁷ See further *Aeneid* Book VIII for more details.

⁸⁸ See further *Aeneid* 10.426 – 509 for more details.

⁸⁹ The other six of seven against Thebes in the *Thebaid* are: Adrastus (4.32 – 73), Polynices and Tydeus (4.74 – 115), Hippomedon (4.166 – 64), Capaneus (4.165 – 86), Amphiarus (4.187 – 245), and Parthenopaeus (4.246 – 308).

⁹⁰ See further *Thebaid* 9.841 – 905 for more details.

Both the young and inexperienced *nobiles* in the *Aeneid* and the *Thebaid* are eager to fight in the war end with death, a hint given that Marcellus' son will not be able to survive.

15.353 *arma*: as weapon conjures up the genre of epic. What is more, *arma* here does not only echo the second word of the proem (cf. 15.343 – 98), but it is an echo of the *Aeneid*, Virgil's masterpiece (cf. n.8).

15.354 *natum*: Metonymy is used to indicate the son of Marcellus, as the only son, it shows how much love he has from his father. In the *Punica*, Silius describes Marcellus' son as a child, since he is young, immature and inexperienced.⁹¹ Therefore, ephebe (cf. n. 86) is a must for his first battle. However, in tradition, the son was a military tribune. Silius wants his readers to evoke the sorrow of the death of Marcellus' son at such a young age. Moreover, Fucecchi (2010: 239) mentions that 'Silius softens by contaminating traditional epic *Pathosformeln*, such as ὄρφαν-*theme* and the tragedy of the "orphan-father".'

As Stocks says (2014: 165, n. 48), although the two generations die on the battlefield, Marcellus, like Hannibal, maintains a 'timeless' quality; as Marks (2005a: 31 n. 50) notes 'one might even suppose that Marcellus was much younger than he was ... because Silius turns his son, who was a military tribune (*Livy* 27.26.12, 27.11), into a mere *puer*'.

aptantem ... aspexit: As this might be his first participation in a battle (15.353 – 4), Marcellus' son is excited and constantly making sure that his weapon is in the right position for him to fight when the battle comes. This shows that he is inexperienced. Therefore, ephebe is a must (cf.

⁹¹ See also 15.355 and 15.356.

15.353 – 4). Moreover, as a soldier, Marcellus' son, like everybody else, is aroused, believing with the joint command of both commanders-in-chief, the Romans will win the battle fighting against their *metus hostilis*.⁹²

laetum: indicates that Marcellus' son is excited and enthusiastic.⁹³ It is poignant that he is so happy that he can take part in the battle soon without knowing that he will be killed in front of his father, i.e. death *ante ora parentum* (cf. 15.343 – 98).

Moreover, in the *Punica*, disagreement seldom happens between father and son, and ongoing state of estrangement has never happened (Berstein 2010: 381). This is different from other Flavian poets' work. For example, in Statius' *Thebaid*, Oedipus condemns his two sons after tearing his own eyes out.⁹⁴ Moreover, the prophesy during the necromancy is all about Laus' hatred towards Oedipus and his two grandsons.⁹⁵

15.355 – 60 Marcellus is talking to his son with excitement, feeling proud of his son's participation in the siege of Syracuse⁹⁶ (212 BCE). He invites his son to follow his heroic model (15.359) and encourages him to achieve his accomplishment under his own command as the general of the battle (15.360). This shows that Marcellus is not only proud and eager to teach his son the art of war but the thirsty for his personal success and glory.⁹⁷ On top of that, he believes that this time he can win even at the same place where they lost the Battle of

⁹² See also 15.347 – 51.

⁹³ See also 15.355.

⁹⁴ See further *Thebaid* 1.46 – 87 for more details.

⁹⁵ See further *Thebaid* 6.604 – 25 for more details.

⁹⁶ See also n. 119.

⁹⁷ See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.363 and 15.373.

Cannae.⁹⁸ This shows that Marcellus is an egotist, seeing his *natum* (cf. 15.354) arouses his pride of being *spolia opima*,⁹⁹ and the victory in Nola,¹⁰⁰ whilst forgetting about the importance of scouting (cf. 15.347 – 8). Therefore, his preparation for the battle is insufficient and decision rather irrational.

Nevertheless, the conversation is very similar to what happens in Book VII when Fabius is talking with his son¹⁰¹ about diplomacy, urging him not to spread the fire of resentment upon the foe with tears (7.547 – 65). When Fabius rescues his son (7.705 – 29) in the battlefield whilst protecting him with his shields (*clipeoque paventem / protegit*, 7.709 – 10). This is because of Fabius' policy – delay, shows that he is cautious, patient, and always puts Rome first instead of his own glory. This can be seen as the sharp contrast between the two Roman Aeneases (cf. 15.347 – 51).

The two conversations reveal different characteristics of the two heroic figures¹⁰² on the Roman side. Marcellus is a great commander (cf. 15.352 – 3), proud (cf. 15.359 – 60), but at the same time fierce (cf. 15.346) and thirsty for personal success and glory;¹⁰³ whereas 'Fabius, by contrast has adopted different tactics – *cunctatio* (cf. n. 55), to be more precise, guerrilla warfare, by which to stem: When Hannibal wins three major battles in quick successions (cf.

⁹⁸ See also 15.347 – 51 and 15.349.

⁹⁹ See also 15.343 – 98, 15.347 – 9 and 15.363.

¹⁰⁰ See also 15.352, 15.363 and 15.383 – 7.

¹⁰¹ See also Marks 2005a: 25, n.33 and Bernstein 2008: 139 – 45.

¹⁰² 'von Albrecht (1964: 161) argues that in the *Punica*, Silius reprises the multiple heroes that Ennius presented in the *Annales*.' (Tipping 2010: 3, n.3).

¹⁰³ See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.363 and 15.373.

15.343 – 98), he is patient and restrained.’¹⁰⁴ (Fucecchi 2010: 219). Again, the decision to fight against Hannibal in the ill-omened Aufidus (cf. 15.344) is rather a rash move.

Moreover, in the *Aeneid*, when Venus heals Aeneas (*Aeneid* 12.383 – 467), though Aeneas is hungry for battle, when Ascanius is going to re-enter the fight. Aeneas wants to offer his paternal protection, trying hard to prevent his son from experiencing the war at a young age (*Aeneid* 12.430 – 40). At the same time, Aeneas does not want to taste the sadness of death *ante ora parentum* (cf. 15.343 – 98). Furthermore, Aeneas already passes on the values of the past to future, and he cares more about generations to come, instead of what is happening now. (Ariemma 2008: 146)

Silius wants to show that the love from Marcellus towards his son is different from Aeneas and Fabius, it is his thirst for his individual success and glory¹⁰⁵ instead of protecting his son as Aeneas and Fabius that leads to the death of his son.

15.355 *nostros mirando ardore vigores*: Marcellus is praising his son for his ardour to fight against the Carthaginian. Moreover, Spaltenstein (1990) believes that Silius is alluding here to Aeneas’ address to his son, Ascanius (cf. 15.355 – 60), which I tend to agree. When Aeneas is talking to his son, as a mentor, not only does he teach his son arts of war and embrace his duty but to carry his inheritance (*Aeneid* 12.435 – 40). Although both fathers want their sons to learn the arts of war for the sake of their love, Aeneas wants his son to return home safe in terms of

¹⁰⁴ Before Varro’s arrival to Rome, Fabius shifts the crowd’s attention to take Varro as a scapegoat (10.615 – 22).

¹⁰⁵ See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.355 – 60, 15.363 and 15.373.

the future of Rome; whereas Marcellus just wants his son to fight for the fame despite of his own life.

adore: indicates that Marcellus' son is excited to participate in the upcoming battle.¹⁰⁶ This is ominous as it shows the youthful rashness.

15.356 – 8 Marcellus is happy for his son could watch the siege of Syracuse,¹⁰⁷ fighting his first battle with him. As a father, he is telling his son that he is too young to be involved in any battle, showing his parental love towards his son.

15.356 *sit praematurus felix labor*: Marcellus is expressing his encouragement towards his son.

praematurus: ominous (cf. 15.353 – 4) in epic, which suggests that the ephebe (cf. 15.353 – 4) is going to eventually cause his death *ante ora parentum* (cf. 15.343 – 98) together with his father (cf. 15.361 – 80).

felix: Marcellus is happy and excited to see his son get ready for his first battle.¹⁰⁸

In the *Aeneid*, when Turnus lays siege to the camp,¹⁰⁹ Nisus is with young Euryalus,¹¹⁰ before they fight against Turnus side by side. Nisus mentions Euryalus' young age (cf. 15.350 – 1) during the conversation of the mission proposal (*Aeneid* 9.184 – 221). However, Euryalus

¹⁰⁶ See also 15.354 and 15.356.

¹⁰⁷ See further Book XIV for the siege of Syracuse.

¹⁰⁸ See also 15.354, 15.355.

¹⁰⁹ See further *Aeneid* 9.123 – 67 for more details.

¹¹⁰ 'a boy with the first signs of a young man who cheeks are not yet shaven. And none is more handsome amongst the people of Aeneas' side', nor does he wear Trojan armour. They were one in love and they rush into war together.' (*quo pulchrior alter / non fuit Aeneadum Troiana neque induit arma, / ora puer prima signans intonsa iuventa. / his amor unus erat pariterque in bella ruebant; Aeneid* 9.179 – 82).

is captured and slaughtered by Volcens.¹¹¹ Furthermore, Ascanius is *praematurus* (cf. 15.355 – 60) when he is involved in war. When talking to Ascanius (cf. 15.360), Aeneas calls him *puer* (*Aeneid* 12. 435) and says ‘... soon when you become mature in years...’¹¹² (*mox ... adoleverit aetas; Aeneid* 12.438).

His son, young, though age unclear, encouraged by the father, challenges Hannibal in the battlefield (7.714 – 5). However, he clears the Carthaginian general off the field (7.713 – 6), this shows that the young Fabius does not challenge Hannibal directly. At the same time, this shows that Fabius, the delayer (cf. n. 55) is ‘opportunistic’ (Fucecchi 2010: 219). Therefore, the encouragement from him to his son is sensible.

All the above has suggested that the ephebic son of Marcellus (cf. 15.353 – 4) will not be successful.

urbe Sicana: capital city of Sicily, metonymy is used to indicate Syracuse. Silius separates Marcellus’ Campaign in Sicily where Syracuse gets sacked.¹¹³ In addition, Silius uses various names for Syracuse throughout Book XIV to provide a detailed description and characteristics of Syracuse to emphasise its role plays in the Second Punic War. Moreover, although Marcellus is the victor of Syracuse, getting a bigger picture, we need to realise that this will eventually turn into another perspective of our knowledge of history.

¹¹¹ See further *Aeneid* 9.367 – 437 for more details.

¹¹² See further *Aeneid* 12.318 – 467 for more details.

¹¹³ Marcellus’ defeats the Carthaginians in the sea battle (14. 353 – 579) despite the plague on both sides (14.580 – 688).

At the beginning of Book XIV, Silius does not only describe the place more beautiful than the other cities in Sicily (*sed decus...pulchrius oris*, 14.50), but tells the reader the origin¹¹⁴ (*quam quae Sisyphio ...ab Isthmo / et multum ... alumnis*; 14.51 – 2). Moreover, *Arethusa*¹¹⁵ (Akiyama-Kim: 2015) is used to as metonymy for Syracuse. On the Carthaginian side, Syracuse¹¹⁶ is described as famous for its defensive capabilities and robust nature (14.277 – 86). When talking about Archimedes, the poet uses *Isthmus* (14.341) for Syracuse (Gowers 2010: 77, n.55).

15.357 – 8 *qualem te ... aetas / cum tibi bella*: Marcellus is telling that his son is too young to fight in his first battle (cf. n. 119). Talking to his own son right before a battle reminds us what Hannibal addresses his son when he visits the Temple of Hercules at Cadiz whilst witnessing the ebb and flow of the Atlantic.¹¹⁷ ‘...if my instinct doesn’t play with my innermost feeling, great trouble will rise in this land. I recognise the face of my father in you and his grim eyes under your fierce forehead, your harsh cries, and the elements of my anger.’ (*ni praesaga ... sensus, / ingens ... ora parentis / agnosco ... fronte minaces / vagitumque gravem ... mearum*; 3.74 – 7). This indicates that Marcellus hopes that his son will perpetuate his legacy of his father (cf. 15.359). It also shows Marcellus’ thirst for his own success and glory.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ Ephyra was the ancient name of the city of Corinth, Ephyra was in fact a mythical nymph. According to ancient Greek myths (Hard 1997: 44), Corinth was founded by Sisyphus. In ancient times, Corinth and Ephyra were often used interchangeably.

¹¹⁵ See further 14.53, 14.117 and 14.356 for more details.

¹¹⁶ Syracuse is also described as an ally (*sociata*, 14.157) with Carthage.

¹¹⁷ See further 3.69 – 79 for more details.

¹¹⁸ See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.355 – 60, 15.359 – 60, 15.363 and 15.373.

15.357 *nondum permetteret aetas*: indicates that his son, at a young age¹¹⁹ should not be involved in any war (cf. 15.355 – 60). Calling his son ‘young’ in age, though the poet highlights the affection from a father towards his son, who is ready for his first battle.¹²⁰ It is said that the parental love (cf. 15.355 – 60) towards his son is the cause of Marcellus’ death (cf. 15.375 – 80).¹²¹

However, Marcellus’ son is lucky as he survives in Syracuse, watching the battle (cf. n. 119). There are unhappy endings during the ephebe. Hunting was seen as a form of ephebe in ancient Greece. According to Greek mythology, when hunting, Actaeon accidentally saw Artemis naked whilst she was bathing in the forest. The goddess turned him to a stag to punish him. Without being able to recognise him, his own hunting dogs chased after him and killed him in the end.

15.358 *cum tibi ... vultu!*: Marcellus is telling his son is too young to fight in a battle, his age¹²² as well as his first fight¹²³ make the reader believe that his son is young and therefore vulnerable to war. This seems ominous. When Hannibal decides to send his wife and son to safety (3.62 – 157), he addresses his still nursing son (3.69 – 79), mentioning that he may die and his words might not be realised (*si quis ... actus / et nostro ...primordia rerum*, 3.78 – 9). In the *Iliad*, when Hector speaks with Andromache, his wife, when their son is still nursing before he takes the leave

¹¹⁹ As his son, exact age not revealed, was eagerly watching the battle during the siege of Syracuse (cf. 15.356 – 8) four years ago, learning how to fight. Therefore, he is not that young. However, Silius makes the son seem young, participation in the first battle is a vulnerable time in epic.

¹²⁰ See also 15.354.

¹²¹ ‘*Livy 27.27.7*’ (Landrea 2019: n.71)

¹²² See also 15.357.

¹²³ See also 15.343 – 4 and 15.347 – 51.

to the battlefield (6.440 – 93), he says that not only does he know that Troy will fall, but he will die. No mortal can change the will of gods.

tibi bella, meo: shows that Marcellus is excited that he will witness his son's first battle (cf. 15.347 – 51) himself.

15.359 – 60 Marcellus invites his son to follow his steps and achieve his military accomplishment under his leadership, another sign of the tie between father and son (cf. 15.354).

15.359 *huc, decus, huc ... paterno*: Marcellus is not only proud of that his son was watching him in the siege of Syracuse,¹²⁴ but at the same time, boasting that his son should follow suit. This is another sign for his keenness of individual glory,¹²⁵ at the same time, it also shows that having *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) passed on to his son can be dangerous, both for him and his son (cf. 15.361 – 80) as well as for the republic. I agree with Fucecchi's idea (2010: 235) of Marcellus' believing that his obsessiveness of having his son getting the *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) as the major cause of the death of his son and his own. This is because 'Marcellus vows to consecrate to Jupiter Hannibal's weapon, won by his son (cf. 15.362 – 3). It is suggested that Marcellus hopes that his son will kill Hannibal, the father is certainly delusional, foretelling the son the honour of *spolia opima*. This is similar to Virgil's *Aeneid*, when Mezentius

¹²⁴ See also 15.356 – 8.

¹²⁵ See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.355 – 60, 15.363 and 15.373.

vows to his son,¹²⁶ though he does challenge Aeneas in the battlefield,¹²⁷ the father dies after his son's death (*Aeneid* 10. 833 – 908). This strongly indicates that both Marcellus and his son are going to die in the battlefield as well (cf. 15.366 – 80). Silius 'integrated his own combinatorial allusion to the two passages into his strikingly original reworking of the death of Marcellus.' (Jacobs 2025: 6) This is as the argument of Ahl et al. (1986: 2501), 'although his imitates knowledge of the *Aeneid* is at the heart of the "*Punica*", [Silius] reworks what he uses to good and original effect.' (Landrey 2014: 600, n.4).

Both the fathers want their sons to take *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) as they both forget that the title is only for the generals, as 'for a Roman commander the *spolia opima* were the most exalted military honour he could aspire to. Dedicating such spoils fell to a Roman general who had himself killed the enemy leader in battle and stripped the corpse of its armour.' (Flower 2000: 34). Therefore, the death of Lausus (*Aeneid* 10.755 – 832) is not only *ante ora parentum*¹²⁸ (cf. 15.343 – 98), but 'serves as a scenographic support' (Ariemma 2008: 147), indicating that Marcellus' son is going to follow suit. Therefore, the death of both the fathers and sons seem ominous.

However, the interpretation of Stocks (2014: 164) addresses that Marcellus wants to bring *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) back by asking aid from his son to defeat Hannibal. I am against this

¹²⁶ In the *Aeneid*, Mezentius vows to have Lausus have the *spolia opima* ('*dextra mihi deus et telum, quod missile libro, / nunc adsint! voveo praedonis corpore raptis / indutum spoliis ipsum te, Lause, tropaeum / Aeneae.*' 10.773 – 6).

¹²⁷ See further *Aeneid* 10.762 – 8 for more details.

¹²⁸ In fact, the death of Lausus is heard by Mezentius (*Aeneid* 10.841 – 56), O'Sullivan holds the idea that this is 'similar to the generic evocation of children placed on the funeral pyres *ante ora parentum* at *Aeneid* 6.308.' (O'Sullivan 2009: 472, n. 71).

viewpoint. This is because of the way of becoming a *spolia opima* (Flower 2000: 34). Since this is Marcellus' son's ephebe (15.353 – 4), i.e. first battle (cf. 15.354), there is still a long way for him to be a general. With Marcellus' son killing Hannibal is against the tradition of the *spolia opima* (Flower: 2000). Therefore, Marcellus and his son have to die (cf. 15.361 – 80). On the other hand, doing this will allow Silius to tell a different story about the death of Marcellus' son (cf. 15.343 – 98), this is because the strong tie between father and son. 'Marcellus' filial bond and affection for his son are said to have caused his death, according to this version. This same mortal wound is attested in the Livian account.' (Landrea 2019: 34) At the same time, this directly leads Hannibal to have Marcellus' rich spoils instead of the other way around.

decus: glory, a defining feature of the genre of epic.

lateri te iunge paterno: Marcellus wants his son to join him, so to speak, to follow his steps, as the commander-in-chief, he wants his son to achieve his own military accomplishment.

15.360 *me disce ... magistro*: Marcellus is boasting about teaching his son the art of war himself. This shows that Marcellus is so proud that he, as the *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363), claims that he will teach his son the art of war (cf. 15.355 – 60) in person. However, he does not have the chance to do so. Due to this excitement, he forgets about scouting,¹²⁹ that is to say that he exercises poor judgement, which will eventually lead to the death of both his son and him (cf. 15.361 – 80). Whilst his son is too keen to go off first, not only because he is very much influenced by his father's glorious title – *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363), but he is aroused by the talk

¹²⁹ See also 15.347 – 8 and 15.352 – 3.

that he could win Hannibal's spoils with the help of his father (cf. 15.362 – 3). This is one of the causes of his death. (cf. 15.359)

novum: although his son was watching the battle at the siege of Syracuse (cf. n. 119), this might be his real battle for the first time (cf. 15.353 – 4). Therefore, the art of war is new to Marcellus' son.

novum Martem: since this is ominous, which fits the pattern of doomed ephebe (cf. 15.353 – 4). In the *Aeneid*, though wounded, Aeneas also talks to his son (cf. 15.355 – 60), 'From me, my son, learn bravery and hard toil from me...' (*disce, puer ... laborem*; *Aeneid* 12.435). Aeneas wants to teach his son to be brave in a war; whereas Marcellus wants to teach his son how to fight in a war. Ascanius survives because he does not gain *spolia opima*,¹³⁰ whereas Marcellus' desire of his son getting the title leads him directly to his death *ante ora parentum* (cf. 15.343 – 98). Moreover, it is a stereotype that epic is associated with war. Therefore, *Mavors* is used to conjure up the epic genre.

novum Martem ... magistro: Marcellus is boasting that he will teach his son the art of war himself. This shows he is grasping any opportunity to show that he is thirsty for individual success and glory,¹³¹ even in front of his son. Moreover, as the unique honour, *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363), Marcellus is one of the 'Aeneases' in the *Punica* (cf. 15.347 – 51), wanting his own son to have this title also means that he wants his son to be as one of the *viros*¹³² (1.5).

¹³⁰ See also 15.343 – 98, 15.347 – 9 and 15.363.

¹³¹ See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.355 – 60, 15.363 and 15.373.

¹³² See also 15.347 – 51.

Furthermore, cited by Flower (2000: 41) that *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) do not appear of central importance in Livy's portrait of Romulus (1.10.4 – 7). 'It seems that Marcellus had a decisive impact on the tradition of *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) at Rome, starting in his own lifetime.' (Flower 2000: 46). This shows how famous *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) is in the *Punica* (cf. 15.347 – 51); at the same time, it echoes to what Anchises says to Aeneas (*Aeneid* 6.854 – 885 and 6.859).¹³³

Martem magistro: the new thing – the art of war, that Marcellus' son is going to learn from his own father. The irony here is that Marcellus claims that he will teach the art of war to his son in person, but because of his excitement at seeing his son (cf. 15.353), he does not have the opportunity to show his son how, instead, he dies with his son. (15.361 – 80).

15.361 – 80 The Roman army has been caught in the ambush,¹³⁴ Marcellus dies right after his son's death *ante ora parentum* (cf. 15.343 – 98). Silius is changing tradition to make his narrative more grandeur and heroic.

15.361 Marcellus is so excited and proud that he cannot help embracing his son for his first fight, whereas Aeneas is embracing Ascanius to offer parental protection¹³⁵ (*Aeneid* 12.430 – 40).

pueri colla amplectens: indicates Marcellus' affection and hope towards his son makes him embrace his son,¹³⁶ though he is no longer young (cf. n.119). However, his age (cf. 15.357) as

¹³³ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.363.

¹³⁴ See also 15.347 – 8.

¹³⁵ See also 15.355 – 60.

¹³⁶ See also 15.343 – 4 and 15.357 – 8.

well as his first fight¹³⁷ make the reader believe that his son is young. Therefore, he is vulnerable to war.

15.362 – 3 Marcellus prays to Jupiter for his son by sanctifying the weapon that belongs to Hannibal, since he could not kill Hannibal during the Battle of Nola (cf. 15.343). Stocks (2014: 164) argues that this shows the poignancy of Marcellus' hope to bring *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) home again, which is an impossible ambition to achieve. In addition, it brings a full circle of Marcellus' Sicilian identity,¹³⁸ he is seeking to remodel his past as his future. In other words, he is still thirsty for his individual success and glory.¹³⁹ Marcellus' desire for his son to conquer the *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) recalls Mezentius' wish for Lausus¹⁴⁰ (cf. 15.359; Fucchechi 2010: 235).

15.363 *opima feram*: indicates that Marcellus wishes Jupiter would pass the *spolia opima*¹⁴¹ which he earned to his son. In the *Aeneid*, when mentioning Marcellus (cf. 15.343 – 98), Anchises is specific about the slaughter (*Aeneid* 6.855 – 6) and him being the third to the rich spoils (*Aeneid* 6.859). Moreover, this also shows that Marcellus is thirsty for individual success and glory¹⁴²).

¹³⁷ See also 15.343 – 4 and 15.347 – 51.

¹³⁸ See further Book XIV for more details.

¹³⁹ See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.355 – 60, 15.363 and 15.373.

¹⁴⁰ See further *Aeneid* 10.774 – 6 for more details.

¹⁴¹ During the battle of Clastidium in 222 BCE (Flower 2000: 35 – 41) he had won the victory over the *Galli Insubri*, Marcellus had slaughtered the Gallic chieftain Viridomarus (Stocks 2014: 147) in a single combat, and had dedicated the spoils to Jupiter Feretrius, and hereby earned *spolia opima*. That was the third and the final time in Roman history.

¹⁴² See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.355 – 60 and 15.373.

In the *Punica*, this prestigious title appears elsewhere whenever Marcellus' name is mentioned.¹⁴³ At the very beginning of the poem, when the prophetess tells the future (1.123 – 39) after Hamilcar sows the seed of hatred at the Temple of Elissa (1.70 – 105), the prophecy foresees the death of *spolia opima*, 'Dead, his face grim, on a pile of weapons and men, who was third to carry rich spoils in triumph, to the thunder god.' (... *iacet ... arma uirosque / tertia qui tulerit ... opima Tonans*, 1.132 – 3). However, Marcellus' name does not appear for his appearance. This is because the poet decides to have Marcellus become the victim of his own *spolia opima* (cf. 15.366 – 80). Moreover, apart from being inseparably tied in *spolia opima* in the *Punica*¹⁴⁴ (cf. n. 38), Marcellus demands a single battle with Hannibal in the Battle of Nola (cf. 15.352), and the death of Marcellus with a flashback (cf. 15.343 – 98). Even after the death of Marcellus, Hannibal, when giving a speech whilst addressing his troops in Africa right before the Battle of Zama (17.292 – 340), says '...you carried the warlike rich spoils, Marcellus (*tibi pugnacis gestantur opima / Marcelli*, 17.298 – 9) ... 'stand here at the front line of the battle, where consul Crispinus fell in arms' (*huc prima ... in armis / Crispinus cecidit*; 17.305 – 6).

However, there is no comparison between him and Hannibal¹⁴⁵ (cf. 15. 343 – 98), let alone Scipio. Mars calls him 'true offspring of Jupiter' (*vera Iovis proles*!, 4.476); also, revealed by his mother when Scipio meets Pomponia's shade in the underworld (13. 615 – 49) that his true

¹⁴³ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.347 – 9.

¹⁴⁴ See also 15.343 – 98.

¹⁴⁵ Ariemma 2010: 241, 54n.

father is Jupiter. This shows that Marcellus is only favoured by Jupiter¹⁴⁶ (cf. 15.347 – 9), even at the moment of his own death (cf. 15.363 – 5). Nevertheless, the speech made by Hannibal during the Battle of Zama has placed Marcellus on a par with both Hannibal (1.433 – 6) and Scipio (17.486 – 90).¹⁴⁷

The text exploits two scenes in the *Aeneid*: (*Aeneid* 9.33 – 46)¹⁴⁸ is the first where Turnus attacks the Trojan camps during his attack to the Trojan fleet (*Aeneid* 9. 25 – 76); and later when he orders different soldiers to carry out different tasks (*Punica* 12.72 – 8), the poet implies the reaction from Turnus in terms of an approaching siege (*Aeneid* 11.463 – 7).¹⁴⁹

During the campaign in Sicily,¹⁵⁰ Marcellus not only spreads fire and *arma* throughout wherever he goes, unleashing the pestilence of war upon people (14.119 – 20). In other words, he is war. But he compares himself to Boreas (14.121) hurling waves, recalling Hannibal in Saguntum (1.468 – 72) and his army at Syracuse (14.186 – 8) as well as his army at Nola (12.186 – 6). The war has made Marcellus become ‘new’ Hannibal (1.265 – 7). When outside of the gates of Saguntum, the Carthaginian general makes sure that no one escapes from his

¹⁴⁶ See also 15.375 – 80 and n. 38.

¹⁴⁷ ‘Ripoll (1998a: 181) notes that Marcellus’ association with Mars likens him to Hannibal and paves way for Scipio.’ (Stocks 2014: 149, n. 9).

¹⁴⁸ The comparison between the *Punica* and the *Aeneid*: *ubi Agenoream procul adventare per aequor / et ferri ad muros nubem videt* (*Punica* 12.167 – 8) vs. *hic subitam nigro glomerari pulvere nubem* (*Aeneid* 9.33); *hostis adest* (*Punica* 12.169) vs. *hostis adest* (*Aeneid* 9.38).

¹⁴⁹ The comparison between *Punica* and the *Aeneid*: *‘tu limina dextrae / servabis portae, Nero; tu converte cohortes / ad laevam patrias et Larinatia signa, / clarum Volscorum, Tulli, decus. ast ubi iusso, / per tacitum ruptis subita vi fundite portis / telorum in campos nimbium. ferar ipse revulsa / in medios equitumque traham certamina porta.’* (*Punica* 12.172 – 8) vs. *‘tu, Voluse, armari Volscorum edice manipulis, / duc’ ait “et Rutulos. equitem Messapus in armis, / et cum fratre Coras latis diffundite campis. / pars aditus urbis firment turrisque capessant; / cetera, qua iusso, mecum manus inferat arma.’* (*Aeneid* 11.463 – 7).

¹⁵⁰ See further Book XIV for more details.

attack.¹⁵¹ Like Hannibal (1.345 – 8), Marcellus urges his soldiers to greater feats of achievement (14.134 – 9) and their response (14.140 – 2).

The poet highlights the rivalry between the two and the strong desire to surmount each other. When Hannibal exhorts his troops (1.327 – 44), his soldiers act as one inspired by his words (1.339 – 44), they become an extension of the Carthaginian general himself (1.345 – 6); whereas when Marcellus addresses his men, everyone of them wants to compete the title of ‘spoils’, the desire to have the title of *spolia opima*. In other words, the desire to become another Marcellus. This is a hint of civil strife, indicating the struggle inside of Rome that *virī* are to face when there are no enemies to fight with. Both troops on each side strive to echo their generals – for Carthaginians, Hannibal acts as a unifying force; whilst Marcellus brings out the propensity of Rome for civil strife.

As this is post-Sicilian war, the poet uses the flashback (cf. 15.343 – 98) to announce the death of Marcellus, and how it really happened, which is a shock to everyone. This is because, as Marcellus has become an egotist, thirsty for his own glory,¹⁵² and his concern for his son (cf. 15.355 – 60), and even ‘new’ Hannibal, eventually leads to his own death.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Comparison between Marcellus (Book XIV) and Hannibal (Book I): he rushes through the whole plain (*ruit aequore toto*; 14.128 vs. *ruit ocius amens*; 1.458), and the blood of Ceres fertilised the plain (*et Cereri placitos fecundat sanguine campos*; 14.130) and the speed: and the rapid battle snatched the death away by escaping on foot (*pedibusque evadere letum / eripuit rapidus Mavors*; 14.131 – 2; vs. *quotiens campo rapidus fera proelia miscet*; 1.266).

¹⁵² See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.355 – 60 and 15.373.

¹⁵³ ‘On the death of Marcellus and his son, see Ahl, Davis and Pomeroy (1986: 2539), and Ariemma (2010:144 – 9).’ (Stocks 2014: 162, n. 43).

During the Second Punic War, the recurring *spolia opima* image provides a fixated background that hides behind Marcellus' major achievement, apart from the conquest of Syracuse.¹⁵⁴

15.363 – 5 The black drops of blood from Jupiter suits for the grief – death *ante ora parentum* (cf. 15.343 – 98) that is waiting for him as a father to his son. This is same as the death of Sarpedon¹⁵⁵ lamented by Zeus in the *Iliad*. This is appropriate for Marcellus, *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363), who is only favoured by Jupiter (cf. n.146), as for the voiceless youth. The leading factors of the death of Marcellus' son are the parental love and hope from Marcellus for his son to acquire *spolia opima*.¹⁵⁶ Landrea (2019: 33) argues that this is due to Marcellus' misinterpretation of the signs sent by the gods (cf. Plutarch *Marc.* 29, 9 – 10; Landrea 2019: n.71).

15.365 *non prospera*: metonymy to indicate Marcellus' armour.¹⁵⁷

15.366 – 80 As a soldier, Marcellus' son, under his leadership, dies in front of him followed by his own death in the ambush.¹⁵⁸ There is no greater pain than seeing your child die in front of your eyes. Moreover, *ante ora parentum* (cf. 15.343 – 98) is not only the *Iliad*-style story that accrues from death in battle, witnessed by fathers (presumably by others), but even in some cases a Roman-style patriotism (Highet 1972: 190).¹⁵⁹ As a matter of fact, death *ante ora*

¹⁵⁴ See further Book XIV for more details.

¹⁵⁵ See further *Iliad* 16.426 – 507 for more details.

¹⁵⁶ See also 15.355 – 360, 15.363.

¹⁵⁷ See also *arma infelicia* in 15.378 and 15.391.

¹⁵⁸ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.366 – 70.

¹⁵⁹ 'On the *Aeneid* 1.94 – 6: 'A favorite theme of Vergil: Trojans are nobler, being patriots, not aggressors.' (O'Sullivan 2009: 456, n. 27).

parentum (cf. 15.343 – 98) carries no glorious overtones. In other words, premature death is indeed tragic as it threatens the process of generational immortality. This makes the death of Marcellus' son fit in the *immatura mors* pattern in Roman epic.

15.366 – 70 Scarcely has Marcellus finished speaking to his son, the Roman army is again sacked in ambush (cf. n.73), which explains Marcellus' cautiousness about the surrounding is reasonable (cf. 15.347 – 8), as well as the atmosphere was tense previously (cf. 15.344). Marks (2014: 135) mentions that the siege of Saguntum¹⁶⁰ by Hannibal is a step forward for his siege of Rome later. Therefore, the Romans may be considered amongst the besieged.

However, seeing his son makes him too excited to carry out the scouting that he thinks is a must (cf. 15.347 – 8), this shows that Marcellus is not cautious enough, which eventually leads to the death of his son's death *ante ora parentum* (cf. 15.343 – 98) and his own death (cf. 15.361 – 80). Moreover, there is not even a chance for glory (cf. 15.359), let alone teaching his son the art of war (cf. 15.360) as well as having Hannibal killed by his son (cf. 15.359 – 60) to acquire new *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363).

Moreover, as this is the ill-fated place (cf. 15.344), another battle in Apulia,¹⁶¹ ambush from Hannibal is inevitable as Hannibal is famous for his ambush (cf. n. 73). At the beginning of the poem, the fall of Saguntum¹⁶² is the result of Hannibal's siege, where the Saguntines suffer from famine and plague (2.457 – 74). During the Battle of Lake Trasimene, as soon as

¹⁶⁰ See further Book II for more details.

¹⁶¹ Different places but both are in Apulia.

¹⁶² See further Book II for more details.

Flaminius rallies his troop (5.130 – 186), the trap that Hannibal sets breaks forth from their hiding places in hills, amongst whom are Numidians (5.192 – 4), their allies, ‘on this side of the rocks, on this side of the lake, on this men with their weapons and cries sounded together, hem the Romans in. The ring of the Carthaginian soldiers pass the signal throughout the hills, shouting for battle.’ (*hinc pariter ... arma simulque / consona vox ... vicissim / per colles ... corona*; 5.198 – 200). During the Battle of Cannae, when Hannibal promises his troops rewards, and sends them into the battle with the Romans (9.178 – 248), ‘The Numidians were ordered to ride around and carry their rage throughout the whole battlefield. (*cetera iam ... vagosque / ferre ... fervere campo*; 9.242 – 3); whereas although Varro hears the warning from Solymus, he chooses to ignore and attack (9.249 – 286), ‘Scipio’s task is to go against the attacks any crafty attacks by the swift Numidian cavalry; and he is ordered to spread whenever the enemy lays an encirclement by breaking their formation.’ (*his ... Nomadumque volucrem / Scipiadae datur ... arte dolisque / scindent ... praedicat spargere bellum*; 9.275 – 7). During the aftermath of Battle of Cannae,¹⁶³ whilst Pullus is looking around for Hannibal after killing Ierxes by surprise (10.298 – 302), ‘the Numidians, Garamatians, Celts Moors, and Asturians, threw him a shower of missiles from every direction (*sed vicere ... telis / et Nomas ... Astur*; 10.303 – 4).

15.367 *letiferi collis fauces*: indicating this is an ill-fated place (cf. 15.344). It is another battle of Cannae, meaning that the Roman army will be defeated again. However, because of his thirst

¹⁶³ See further Book X for more details.

for individual success and glory,¹⁶⁴ and his acquirement to new *spolia opima*,¹⁶⁵ as well as his belief in two consuls / general working together (cf. 15.347 – 51), make him forget that he should not have risked to get in this location.

turba volucris: metonymy used to indicate Numidians (cf. 15.368), as one of allies, Numidians are renowned for their speed.

15.368 *Nomades*: metonymy is used to indicate Hannibal's allies, i.e. Numidians (cf. 15.366 – 70), one of the allies of Carthage, play a significant role in the Second Punic War. Throughout the Second Punic War, Numidians' loyalty shifts from time to time. Their involvement in the *Punica* is vital to the victory for Carthage (before and during the Battle of Cannae) and later on Rome (after the Battle of Cannae).

Apart from the Numidians as a whole, the role of the Numidian leaders – Syphax¹⁶⁶ and Masinissa,¹⁶⁷ play even more crucial role as the Numidians shift their alliances,¹⁶⁸ which eventually leads the victory on the side of Rome. Especially during the Battle of Zama, when the battle lines on both sides draw closer, the soldiers with their swords in hand, came face to face. 'Fervent in his nature and fervent in his age, Masinissa brings his mighty limbs in the Macedonians' leading troop, and he flies around the battlefield with his soldiers carrying

¹⁶⁴ See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.355 – 60, 15.363 and 15.373.

¹⁶⁵ See also 15.363 and 15.363 – 5.

¹⁶⁶ A Numidian king who allied with the Romans against the Carthaginians, but because of his marriage to Sophonisba (daughter of Hasdrubal), switched sides. Defeated by Scipio, his camp was burned.

¹⁶⁷ Another Numidia king, used to be allied with the Carthaginians. Right after he receives an omen from the gods in his dream, he defects from Carthage and supports Scipio and the Romans (16.115 – 69).

¹⁶⁸ See also n. 165 and n. 166.

javelins.’ (*fervidus ingenii ... fervidus aevi / in primas ... membra / infert ... alite campum*; 17.413 – 5).

The above also shows that the Numidians are one of the *viros* (1.5), indicating that ‘Silius is not a mere Virgilian imitator, but a Virgilian collaborator.’ (Landrey 2014: 603 – 4)

nimbo: cloud, metaphor to indicate ‘darkening clouds’ of weapons (Baldwin 2025: 195), which has precedents in epic tradition. There are cloud episodes of war images throughout the poem.

When the Battle of Lake Trasimene begins, the Romans, ‘with unanimous effort and concentrated daring, threw the javelins forcefully towards the Carthaginians’ (*funditur unanimo ... ausis / pilorum in Poenos nimbus*, 5.214 – 5). When Flaminius counter-attacks

Carthaginian troop whilst Hannibal is absent from the battlefield, ‘Thus, Jupiter sends a torrent downpours with the thundering hail, splashing the earth.’ (*sic ubi ... nimbum / illidit terris*; 5.384 – 5). Later in the battle, the earthquake threatens all the soldiers away whilst Flaminius keeps

fighting. Right after he scolds those runaways, he, ‘simultaneously, was overwhelmed by the missiles thrown from all directions; and a cloud of weapons dashing through the sky struck the consul and left no one to be able to boast about Flaminius being killed with their own hand.’

pariter tunc undique fuis / obruitur ... per auras / contextus ... iactare reliquit / Flaminium cecidisse sua; 5.655 – 8). During the battle of Cannae, when Hannibal deploys his elephants to

terrify the Romans, ‘...and the Carthaginians poured down a cloud of missiles everywhere from high above.’ (... *passimque volanti / celsus ... aggere nimbum*; 9.579 – 80). Later on, when

Marcellus gives orders during Hannibal’s attack to Nola, says he, ‘...but when I command, open

the gate in silence with a sudden force, and then hurl a cloud of missiles onto the battlefield.' (*ast ubi iusso, / per tacitum ... portis / telorum in campos nimbum*; 12.175 – 7). The cloud of war image symbolises the destructive force of nature, representing chaos and disorientation that war brings, making the atmosphere overwhelming. In the *Aeneid*, the cloud of war represents confusion and hidden dangers. As cited by Baldwin (2025: 195), this is Homeric inspiration.

15.369 – 70 The Romans are ambushed by the Numidians (cf. 15.366 – 70), verifies that the place is ill-fated (cf. 15.344).

15.369 *latebra*: verifies Marcellus' concern (cf. 15.347 – 8).

15.370 – 80 Marcellus dies after the death of his son's *ante ora parentum*¹⁶⁹ due to the ambush.¹⁷⁰ 'The entire piece is filled with Virgilian reminiscences.' (Ariemma 2008: 147).

15.370 *armatos in bella globos*: *armatos* and *bella* conjure up the genre of epic, since they are war-related.

15.371 – 3 *nil restare videt ... ultra / iam ... sub umbras / nomen mortis avet*: Being dead makes Marcellus realise that only the living have duties towards gods. Since he is dead already, he no longer has any duties towards gods, as death is imminent.¹⁷¹

15.371 *virtus*: although Marcellus has not yet met his death at this moment of being surrounded, death is inevitable due to his love towards his son (cf. 15.355 – 60).

¹⁶⁹ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.359.

¹⁷⁰ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.366 – 70.

¹⁷¹ See further *Aeneid* 11.51 for more details.

15.373 – 4 It shows the balance between his weapons¹⁷² from afar and close at hand. This shows Marcellus' potential to fight as an outstanding soldier (cf. 15.363).

15.373 *nomen*:¹⁷³ glory, a defining feature of the genre of epic; moreover, Marcellus, knowing that death is inevitable (cf. 15.371), he even wants his name and the name of his title, i.e. *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) to be carried to the Underworld. This is another evidence for his thirst for his individual glory and egotism.¹⁷⁴

15.374 *saevit*: as *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363), his weapons (cf. 15.373 – 4) are a threat to the enemy, in other words, *Cartheginis horror* (cf. 15.343 – 98).

ense: as weapon, conjures up the genre of epic.

15.375 – 80 Death of Marcellus. Stereotypically in epic, for one to fail is for the other to rise. Therefore, the death of Marcellus is the preparation for the Roman's victory in the Battles of Metaurus River (15.735 – 77)¹⁷⁵ and Zama (17.406 – 654). Moreover, Marcellus' death, though triggered by the death of his son (cf. 15.343 – 98), has already been predicted by Jupiter when answers Venus when she complains about Hannibal, ¹⁷⁶ *'iamque tibi ...rerum / nobilior sit ... nostro / non indigna ... Paullus, / hinc Fabius ...Marcellus opimis.'* (3.584 – 7). In fact, he is responsible for his son's death.¹⁷⁷ As a leader, the scouting should have been carried out (cf.

¹⁷² See also 15.374.

¹⁷³ See also 15.384.

¹⁷⁴ See also 15.346, 15.350 – 1, 15.355 – 60 and 15.363.

¹⁷⁵ See also 15.350 – 1.

¹⁷⁶ See also 15.344 and 15.347 – 9.

¹⁷⁷ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.355 – 60.

15.347 – 8). However, his age (cf. 15.343 – 98) makes him play the role as a father, paying more attention to his son.¹⁷⁸

Moreover, Silius' Marcellus, a brilliant warrior who undermined by family loyalty – the tragedies of father dying with their sons. The death of his son can be seen as parallel to Mopsus and his sons Dorylas and the aptly named Icarus¹⁷⁹ (2.89 – 147), as well as to Satricus and his sons, Solimus and Mancinus¹⁸⁰ (9.66 – 177), Marcellus now has become a broken man without any strength for the loss of his son and his future hope.

15.375 – 6 *forsan et enasset ... pericli, / ni telum adversos ... in artus*: Silius makes it clear that had Marcellus not seen his son's death, *ante ora parentum*,¹⁸¹ he could have survived. This is similar to what happens to Nisus in the *Aeneid*, when he finds out that he has lost his beloved Euryalus after escaping from the enemy.¹⁸²

375 *forsan*: Silius makes clearly here that Marcellus might have escaped the calamity. As a counterfactual word, there are ten occurrences of *forsan* throughout the poem. However, this one is the second in the episode of Marcellus' death,¹⁸³ which can be seen as anaphora. It echoes with the flashback¹⁸⁴ (15.334 – 42), emphasising that Marcellus could have grabbed the glory of ending the war from Scipio. Moreover, as Natividade (2024: 112) points out that this is

¹⁷⁸ See also 15.355 – 60, 15.359 and 15.362 – 3.

¹⁷⁹ See also 15.377 and 15.380.

¹⁸⁰ See also 15.380.

¹⁸¹ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.366 – 80.

¹⁸² See further *Aeneid* 9.386 – 90 for more details.

¹⁸³ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.393.

¹⁸⁴ See also 15.343 – 98.

a parallel reading¹⁸⁵ with the comparison between Paullus and Fabius (10.305 – 7). This reemphasises that had Marcellus not died prematurely in the ambush (cf. 15.366 – 70), it would have been he, instead of Scipio that leads Rome to the final victory in the Second Punic War (Jacobs 2025: 2).

freta saeva pericli: This is the battlefield between Rome and Carthage (cf. 15.343 – 4), any battle is cruel and dangerous, especially with Hannibal.¹⁸⁶

The nine *forsans* used in the poem (Natividade 2024: 112, n. 27), three in the death of Marcellus, other two places are 15.341 (cf. n. 29) and 15.393. As Natividade says *forsan* is not a common word in the *Punica*, *forsan* here can be seen as anaphora if 15.341 is taken as the first. It emphasises ‘if-not-situations’ (cf. 15.343 – 98).

freta: echoes *fregit* (14.168), synecdoche is used to refer to the sea. During the battle in Syracuse (14. 341 – 579), the Syracusans are fighting against the Roman army led by Marcellus with the various war equipment invented by Archimedes (14. 292 – 340), where Marcellus eventually spares the city (14.641 – 84).

saeva: The sea battle in Syracuse is cruel. This echoes ‘However, no cruel of evil could break the Romans, their leader (Marcellus) was intact, the safety of one life amongst the wreckage.’ (*Nulla ... dura malorum, / incolumi ... clademque rependit / unum inter ... caput* ; 14.618 – 20).

¹⁸⁵ ‘The parallel is noted by Burk, 1984, p.63, n. 26.’ (Natividade 2024: 112, n.25).

¹⁸⁶ See also 15.347 – 9 and 15.347 – 51.

15.376: *adversos*: in front, indicating the braveness of Marcellus' son. The son is too willing to show that he is ready to fulfill his father's desire,¹⁸⁷ and it is an honour for him to take *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) from his father (cf. 15.359). In fact, Marcellus should have been in the front as he is more experienced; however, the excitement of seeing his son (cf. 15.355 – 60) makes him not only forget about the scouting (cf. 15.355 – 60) but he should have protected his son.

15.377 – 80 Marcellus' grief for his son,¹⁸⁸ in fact, is a grief of a warrior for himself, his desire¹⁸⁹ is gone with the death of his son *ante ora parentum* (cf. 15.343 – 98), leaving him unable to defend himself and give his life in the hands of Fate (cf. 15.379 – 80).

15.377 *tum patriae... luctu*: Spaltenstein (1990, *ad* 15.376) notes that 'Marcellus laisse tomber ses armes (vers 377), comme Mopsus est incapable d'agir (vers. 2,319 sq.).' (Stocks 2014: 164, n. 48).

patriae tremuere manus: The reaction of seeing his own son's death *ante ora parentum*¹⁹⁰ makes him stop fighting. This is for Marcellus to 'recall the other instance of that particular collocation,' (Jacobs 2025:7) (in Ovid *et patriae tremuere manus*, *Metamorphoses* 8.211, and Virgil *bis patriae cecidere manus*, *Aeneid* 6.33)¹⁹¹ showing that this is the desperate fury of Virgilian models that now replaced by another Virgilian figure, filtered through an Ovidian lens. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Daedalus' grief towards Icarus' death, that he is guilty for crafting the

¹⁸⁷ See also 15.354 and 15.362 – 3.

¹⁸⁸ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.366 – 80.

¹⁸⁹ See also 15.360 and 15.362 – 3.

¹⁹⁰ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.363 – 5.

¹⁹¹ Fucicchi 2010: 235.

wings, the cause of his son falling from the sky while escaping from the labyrinth. This indicates ‘the mythical hero’s failure to present his family’s disaster on the ekphrastic level.’ (Augoustakis 2010: 105). In Virgil’s *Aeneid*, while Aeneas is in the temple of Cumae, he is warned that Iracus’ death is due to the love from his father, indicating that it is the father’s love towards the son that causes the death of the son. At the last stage of his life, Marcellus feels guilty that he did not spend enough time training his son at a younger age as Hannibal’s father did to him in Carthage (1.70 – 139), because he was conquering Syracuse at the time.¹⁹² Moreover, the father even fails to fulfill his promise that he is going to teach his *natum*¹⁹³ the art of war (cf. 15.359 – 60). *patriae*: metonymy is used to indicate Marcellus. As Stocks (2014: 165) mentions that this is Silius’ final description of Marcellus simply as a father, but not ‘Marcellus’, nor *spolia opima* (cf. 363). The reason being that his hope (cf. 15.362 – 3) died with the death of his son (15.366 – 80). Simultaneously, this is the cause of him to drop his shield and give his life up (cf. 15.379 – 80).

tremuere manus: because of witnessing his own son’s death *ante ora parentum*,¹⁹⁴ Marcellus is now grieving for his son.

luctu: The tragedy of losing his own son seeing him falling down.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹² See further Book XIV for more details.

¹⁹³ See also 15.354.

¹⁹⁴ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.366 – 80.

¹⁹⁵ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.366 – 80.

15.378 *arma infelicia*:¹⁹⁶ ill-fated is because of the poignancy of Marcellus' hope (cf. 15.362 – 3).

arma: weapon, conjures the genre of epic.

15.379 – 80 The final moment of Marcellus, the fragility of his existence as a human being. This is an echo of the flashback. This echoes at the prophecy at the very beginning of the poem (cf. 15.363) and the flashback of Marcellus' death (cf. 15.343 – 98). In other words, Roman has lost one of her *viros*¹⁹⁷ (1.5).

15.380 *signavit*: Augoustakis (2010: 105) points out that by using the verb '*signare*', the Flavian poet wants to imply that the portrait of Marcellus' imprint on the grass is the creation of a piece of art. Stocks (2014: 164, n. 48) mentions that this is 'fallen son' *topos*. Mopsus, as an outsider (*externo Gortynius advena*; 2.148), in fact 'a Greek, brought from the bronze-clashing caves of the Curetes.' (*Cres erat, aerisonis ... ab antris*; 2.93), but as he grew poorer, he refused to waste his time on hunting, and he was driven to cross the sea due to his poverty. (*verum ut ... vitam / abnuit ... per aequor*; 2.102 – 3). Coming to a new land for a new identity and better luck, Mopsus is another Daedalus (cf. 15.377) in another form, who cannot protect his son as Marcellus, but remains an alien, memorised only through his tragic death. At the siege of Saguntum, after the death of his twin sons – Dorylas and Icarus killed by Asbyrte and Hannibal respectively (2.123 – 137), Mopsus throws himself down from the walls of Saguntum, spreading his dying limbs over his son – (a different) Icarus' corpse (2.140 – 7) (Augoustakis 2010: 117)

¹⁹⁶ See also 15.391 and n. 157.

¹⁹⁷ See also 15.347 – 9.

Moreover, Satricus, a Trojan descendant, captured slave on the Libyan shore, on the eve of Cannae, wishing to go back home, arms with the armour of Marcinus without a shield in the battlefield in the disguise of the night. Then accidentally gets killed by his other son, Solymus. This eventually leads to his son killing himself (2.77 – 177). This indicates that when father and sons are in the battlefield at the same time, father is unable to protect his son(s), and both will end with tragic death. From Daedalus (cf. 15.377), Mopsus and Satricus, we can predict that Marcellus is going to die right after his son's death *ante ora parentum* (cf. 15.343 – 98).

15.381 – 96 Eulogy that Hannibal gives for the fall of Marcellus. Previously Hannibal buried Paullus with honour (10.509 – 77) in the aftermath of the Battle of Cannae and Gracchus (cf. 15.349), Hannibal does the same on the death of Marcellus, though he is happy that *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363) is no longer a threat to Carthage.

15.381 – 3 *At postquam ... proelia ductor / infixum adverso ... telum, / immane exclamat:* indicates the reaction of Hannibal when seeing the fall of Marcellus.

15.381 *Tyrius*: (cf. 15.349), metonymy is used to indicate Carthaginian. Epithet is used to suggest that 'his Carthaginians are frequently described as if they were to their Phoenician ancestors – is also symptomatic of his desire to stress the genetic connection between past and present; or perhaps it would be more accurate to say that his desire to explore the connection between the past and present.' (Cowan 2007: 4) 'The *Punica* is entailed by the *Aeneid*, as the Romans and the Carthaginians are the descendants of Trojans and Sidonians,

just as the Second Punic War is caused by the bitter separation of Aeneas and Dido.’ (Cowan 2007: 3)

saeua: one of the characters of Hannibal (cf. 15.347 – 51).

15.383 – 7 Eulogy made by Hannibal on the death of Marcellus. Although Marcellus’ death is directly linked with the fall of his own son, Hannibal does not mention about death of the consul’s son. This is because Hannibal only takes Marcellus as *metus hostilis* (cf. 15.347 – 51), since he is dead, there is no one that Carthage should be afraid of. Previously, after the death of Paullus, Hannibal honours him (cf. 15.349). This shows that Hannibal takes Paullus as one of the *viros* (1.5), i.e. heroes.

The Flavian poet gives credit to the burials that Hannibal gives to the Roman generals during the Second Punic War. While burying Paullus, Hannibal sings high praise for Paullus,¹⁹⁸ although his motive is questioned: ‘he boasted of honour shown the death of his enemy.’ (*hostilis leti iactabat honorem*; 10.559; Farron 1986: 76) In burying Gracchus (cf. 15.349), similarly, Silius says that the burial is because Hannibal only ‘wants to seek fame and gentleness for his meek personality, (*famam nomenque volentem/ mitificae mentis*; 12.473 – 4) that is why Hannibal snatches the praise of burying him.’ (*laudemque Libys rapiebat humandi*; 12.478).

Hannibal is interested in defeating Marcellus because Hannibal becomes a passive figure¹⁹⁹ in the Battle of Nola (cf. 15.352), whereas Marcellus seeks protection in weapons (*qui*

¹⁹⁸ See also 15.349.

¹⁹⁹ See further 12.161 – 200 for more details.

non ... arma / defendenda daret ; 12.164 – 5).²⁰⁰ It is Marcellus who leads Rome to her first victory in Nola.²⁰¹ To him, Marcellus is *metus hostilis*²⁰² as well as the real *Carthaginis horror*.²⁰³ Marcellus is the victor of Nola whilst Hannibal victus,²⁰⁴ and now vice versa. With the death of Marcellus, Hannibal believes that no one can beat him.

15.383 *immane exclamat*: indicate Hannibal's excitement of the death of Marcellus.

Latias ... timere / desine iam leges: Agri (2022: 92) holds the idea that Hannibal is now urging that Carthage should no longer fear Rome after Marcellus' death. This is because it is Marcellus who first leads Rome to have her first victory in Nola²⁰⁵ ever since the outbreak of the war. Moreover, Hannibal has a narrow escape if it is not for Juno's intervention (cf. 15.343), since Marcellus is looking for Hannibal for the close combat. 'Ironically, Hannibal's rhetorical bid to distant Carthage to stop fearing Rome puts the Punic city on a par with Rome in depicting the conflict from the Carthaginian side as war on Rome terror.' (Agri 2022: 92). Marcellus is *metus hostilis* (cf. 15.347 – 51) to Carthage and *Carthaginis horror* (cf. 15.343 – 98).

15.384 – 5 *iacet exitiabile nomen / Ausonii columnen regni*: Stocks (2014: 165) points out that when giving a funeral to Paullus,²⁰⁶ Hannibal does not only make himself equal with Marcellus, but acknowledge his mythic status, to reiterate that the name associated with the *spolia opima*

²⁰⁰ 'Ahl, Davis and Pomeroy (1986: 2537) have Marcellus combine Fabius' wisdom with speed of action: "what Marcellus has that Varro and the others lack the ability to distinguish a good opportunity from a bad one".' (Stocks 2014: 148, n.4).

²⁰¹ See also 15.347 – 9 and 15.352.

²⁰² See also 15.347 – 51 and 15.383 – 7.

²⁰³ See further 1.123 – 39, 12.273 – 80 and 15.340 for more details.

²⁰⁴ See also 15.352.

²⁰⁵ See also 15.352 and 15.363.

²⁰⁶ See also 15.347 – 9 and 15.383 – 7.

(cf. 15.363) is dead. At the same time, he calls Marcellus 'deadly name' (*exitiabile nomen*) and 'pillar of Rome's realm' (*Ausonii columnen regni*). Silius is playing on meaning of 'glory'.

15.384 *iacet*: repetition for 1.132 and 15.340 (cf. n. 29), this can be looked as tricolon crescens, stressing the fact that Marcellus is already dead and gone, emphasising that had Marcellus still been alive, he could have led the Romans to defeat Hannibal. Moreover, it is a fulfillment of the prophecy at the beginning of the poem (cf. 15.363).

exitiabile nomen: The name that used to be so deadly is now just a name that will no longer threaten the Carthaginians. At the same time, Hannibal equates himself with Marcellus and acknowledges his mythic status (Stocks 2014: 147, n. 2)

exitiabile: definition in *Cassell's Latin Dictionary* (228) is 'deadly, destructive'. On the one hand, Marcellus has already been destroyed when seeing his son's death *ante ora parentum* (cf. 15.343 – 98), on the other, it indicates the death of Marcellus is a destructive blow to the Romans, which will have huge impact of the morale of the Roman army.

nomen:²⁰⁷ indicates that Hannibal's fear for the name – Marcellus, the name of *metus hostilis* (cf. 15.347 – 51) for Carthage, the name of *spolia opima* (cf. 15.363), the name that leads Rome for her first victory against him in Nola,²⁰⁸ though this time he is the victor instead of the victus.

15.385 *Ausonii columnen regni*: indicates the importance of Marcellus (cf. 15.347 – 9). Without Marcellus, it would be impossible for Rome to fight against Hannibal and drive him away (cf. 15.343). It is under the leadership of Marcellus that the Romans regain their confidence by

²⁰⁷ See also 15.373.

²⁰⁸ See also 15.352, 15.363.

defeating the Carthaginian army for the first time when Hannibal attacks Nola (cf. 15.343), making it ‘the first day that no one dares to believe that god would allow Hannibal to be held back on the battlefield.’ (*ille dies ... nemo / auderet superis ... sisti / posse ducem Libya*; 12.273 – 5), as well as ‘The Romans carry booty back including weapons.’ (*et vivis ...reportant / tegmina ...atque abeunt*; 12.276 – 7). This is more important than any other battles for Marcellus, as when Hannibal is heard of, panic spreads out amongst the Romans²⁰⁹ making him the invincible foe to Rome, i.e. *metus hostilis* (cf. 15.347 – 51). Whilst on the Carthaginian side, Marcellus is the *Carthaginis horror* (cf. 15.343 – 98) not Scipio. This is because that Marcellus is *spolia opima*,²¹⁰ though Scipio is described as ‘the thunderbolt of war, the terror of Carthage, gave his bones to the earth just as if he were the humblest servant.’²¹¹ His death, therefore, makes Hannibal and Carthaginian army more glory.

Moreover, Hannibal is praising Marcellus, this is not only to make himself look better, but he is seeking a good reputation out of cruelty,²¹² since he is ‘inhuman cruel’ (cf. n. 64).

15.385 – 6 *sed dextera nostrae / tam ... ad umbras*: indicates that Hannibal is making sure that the two are closely associated even when Marcellus is dead. This is to demonstrate to his audience the ties that binds him and Marcellus, noting that in the honours shown to Marcellus²¹³ (Stocks 2014: 165).

²⁰⁹ See further 6.552 – 88, 7.74 – 89, 12.541 – 57, 15.399 – 409 and 15.577 – 86 for more details.

²¹⁰ See also 15.343 – 98, 15.363.

²¹¹ *Scipiadas, belli fulmen, Carthaginis horror, / ossa dedit terrae proinde ac famul infimus esset*; Lucretius, *De rerum natura* 3.1034 – 5.

²¹² See also 15.347 – 51.

²¹³ See also 15.389 – 90.

15.387 – 92 The Carthaginian general had previously buried Paullus and Gracchus (cf. 15.349) before Marcellus. As Marcellus is the *metus hostilis* (cf. 15.347 – 51) to Hannibal and Marcellus is the ‘new’ Hannibal (cf. 15.363), a massive pyre is built to honour Marcellus under the command of Hannibal. Moreover, in burying the three generals of Rome, ‘Hannibal believes that he is, in essence burying the Republic: indeed he is; at the same time, he is preparing himself for burial in the process by helping to clear path for Scipio.’ (Jacob 2016: 5).

Furthermore, as Landrey (2014: 604) says that Hannibal is Rome’s best friend although he is the invincible enemy to Rome. Ahl, Davis, and Pomeroy (1986: 2516) name Hannibal ‘the prime Aeneas figure of the epic, the unconscious builder of Roman greatness’ whilst making a similar observation.

15.387 – 8 *alta sepulchri / protinus extruitur ... ara*: Hannibal is now associating himself closely with Marcellus, a worthy enemy (cf. 15.385 – 6). Moreover, this image completes the dead body of Marcellus in the prophecy in Book I (cf. 15.363). When the pyre set up for Paullus (10.528 – 36) was consisted of a large variety of trees, Baldwin (2025: 196) argues that it is actual deforestation of long-established groves in Italy. The scale of the funeral indicates how important Marcellus is to Rome (cf. 15.385), as he is Rome’s greatest and grandest hero (Jacobs 2016: 2); at the same time, the Carthaginians are afraid of Marcellus,²¹⁴ since he is the *Carthaginis horror* (cf. 15.343 – 98). Since Marcellus has become ‘new’ Hannibal (cf. 15.363), i.e. Roman Hannibal, Hannibal himself is anxious to know about his own fate.

²¹⁴ See also 15.343 – 98, 15.347 – 51 and 15.383 – 7.

15.388 *protinus extruitur caeloque*: shows the massiveness of Marcellus' pyre, a worthy enemy to Hannibal. On the other hand, it makes Hannibal appear great as he is cruel (cf. n. 64)

15.389 *silvis ingentia*: indicates the importance of Marcellus not only to Rome,²¹⁵ but to Hannibal as well as the Carthaginians.²¹⁶ This is because as *spolia opima*,²¹⁷ Marcellus leads Rome to its first victory²¹⁸ in the Second Punic War (cf. 15.363). Moreover, Marcellus is *metus hostilis* (cf. 15. 347 - 51).

credas: Silius is telling the reader to imagine that this is the funeral of Hannibal on the Carthaginian side, indicating the magnificence of the death of Marcellus. On the other hand, it signifies the importance of the role that Hannibal plays.

15.390 *Sidonium cecidisse ducem*: the pyre of Marcellus is massive. This shows how much Marcellus' death means to Hannibal (cf. 15.384 – 5). At the same time, as Marcellus has become 'new' Hannibal (cf. 15.363), this could be seen as a rite for Hannibal himself.

'In truth, Livy's narrative (27.28.4) makes clear that Hannibal tried to use Marcellus' signet ring to forge orders sent to Salapia. Under these circumstances, he cannot also have returned the body since he was keeping Marcellus' death a secret. It seems highly unlikely that the family could have staged a normal funeral for Marcellus without his body.' (Flower 2000: 39) That is to say that Marcellus did not receive a proper funeral. The writing of Marcellus' funeral undertaken

²¹⁵ See also 15.352 and 15.363.

²¹⁶ See also 15.363 and 15.383 – 7.

²¹⁷ See also 15.343 – 98, 15.347 – 9 and 15.363.

²¹⁸ See also 15.352, 15.363 and 15.383 – 7.

by Hannibal in the poem indicates Silius' ambition to outlive his predecessors by creating his own poetic "signature" and becoming the author of his own myth. (Roumpou 2018: 38)

Sidonium: Cowan (2007: 3 – 4) points out that P.J. Davis elegantly put 'The use of comparatively abstruse epithets ... is symptomatic in the case of Statius not so much of a fondness for learned display but of an intention to stress the genetic connection between past and present.'

15.390 – 1 *tum tura dapesque / et fasces ... fertur*: the offerings to Marcellus in the rite.

15.391 *tura dapesque*: offerings on the Carthaginian side, shows how happy the Carthaginians are with the death of Marcellus: to them, the funeral is indeed a celebration.

fasces clipeusque: Marcellus' weapon as part of the offerings in the altar, shows honour as well as hatred from Hannibal. It is with these weapons that Marcellus fights in the battles against Hannibal (cf. 15.363). Moreover, the shield was what Marcellus' dropped²¹⁹ when seeing his son's death *ante ora parentum*.²²⁰

15.392 – 6 Speech continued by Hannibal after the treatment of Marcellus' dead body (cf. 15.387 – 92).

15.392 *ipse facem subdens*: the torch is not only to burn the pyre of Marcellus. Previously when burying Paullus, Hannibal also uses a torch (cf. 15.349). It shows how much he wants to burn not only the Roman generals that fight against him, but the morale of Rome. At the same time, it shows how much Hannibal wants to wipe Rome out.

²¹⁹ See *arma infelicia* in 15.378 and n. 157.

²²⁰ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.363 – 5.

ipse: emphasises Hannibal's involvement. He is very invested, since he hopes that he is the one that brings Rome to its end.

laus: shows that Hannibal is the one that kills Marcellus, Carthaginian *metus hostilis*,²²¹ so to aggrandize himself as a hero, *viros* (1.5), on the Carthaginian side.

15.393 – 4 With Marcellus, leader of the Roman army, being killed, Hannibal thinks that Rome would have no morale and ability to fight against Carthage (cf. 15.343 – 98).

15.393 *Marcellum abstulimus Latio*: zeugma is used to reiterate that Marcellus is killed (cf. 15.385), and this will eventually lead to the destroy of Rome.

deponere: Hannibal thinks that Rome now is fighting the war without a leader, since Marcellus is dead. Therefore, he will witness the fall of Rome, as he believes that the decisive factor of the victory is the survival of the leader (Polybius 10.33.1 – 6)²²²

forsan echoes *forsan*²²³ in the death of Marcellus (cf. 15.370 – 80). This is the third and last *forsan* for the death of Marcellus including the flashback (cf. 15.343 – 98), which can be seen as tricolon crescens. This is 'by far the densest cluster of examples in the epic' (Jacobs 2016: 5), indicating had Marcellus not died from the ambush,²²⁴ he would have, could have, and should have led Rome to her final victory over Hannibal in the Second Punic War, (Jacobs 2016: 1), as Marcellus is one of the pillars of Rome.²²⁵ With the fall of Marcellus, Rome would

²²¹ See also 15.347 – 51 and 15.383 – 7.

²²² Stocks 2014: 164, n. 47.

²²³ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.375.

²²⁴ See also 15.343 – 98 and 15.366 – 90.

²²⁵ See also 15.347 – 9 and 15.385.

continue to fight against Carthage without a leader. Therefore, there is no need to worry (cf. 15.383 – 5).

15.394 *arma*: as weapon, conjures up the genre of epic.

15.394 – 6 *vos ite superbae / exsequias animae ... supremi / muneris officio*: Hannibal is deliberately praising Marcellus, thus making himself feel and look good.

Praise, often, is viewed as a defining feature of the genre of epic.

15.396 *numquam ... Roma, negabo*: Hannibal is desperate to destroy Rome.

15.397 – 8 The death of the other general – Crispinus (cf. 15.345 – 6). Concerning Crispinus, Landrea (2019: n.68) says that there are several traditions coexisting. According to Livy (27.33.6 – 7), the death of the general was caused by his severe wound a few days after the battle. The death of the two consuls left the state orphaned, according to the historian. This version is repeated by Plutarch (*Marcellus* 29.18). For Silius Italicus, the consul was killed in the confrontation (15.397 – 8). Silius here not only mentions the consul as well as the general who is in equal command²²⁶ dies within simply two lines, but also his death during the battle. It shows that Marcellus is far more important than Crispinus though they are equal in command, i.e. Crispinus is a minor player of the battle, though both are dead, Silius uses a different story for the death of the other general is because of his engagement with Livy. 'The Flavian poet regularly expands and, far more often, contracts the narrative of events, rigorously simplifies the cast of characters.' (Jacobs 2021: 54).

²²⁶ See also 15.345 – 6 and 15.347 – 51.

15.397 *alterius*: Metonymy is used to indicate Crispinus, as the battle is waged by Marcellus and Crispinus (cf. 15.345 – 6)

eadem fortuna laborum: indicating Crispinus' fate is as same as Marcellus – dead as equal-in-command.²²⁷

15.398 the way how Crispinus is treated for death shows that his death can never compare to Marcellus, as Marcellus is not only the *spolia opima* (cf. 15.636) but also *Carthaginiis horror* (cf. 15.343 – 98).

consulis: Crispinus is a consul as well (cf. 15.345 – 6). Metonymy is used to indicate Crispinus. The title of Crispinus is postponed until the start of the next line, as delay is a sign of epic. (cf. n. 80)

exanimen sonipes ... revexit: the way how Crispinus is treated after he dies. Although equal-in-command in the battle,²²⁸ the dead body of Crispinus is treated differently from that of Marcellus, indicating the importance of Marcellus.²²⁹

Word Count: 16,417

²²⁷ See also 15.345 – 6 and 15.347 – 51.

²²⁸ See also 15.345 – 6, 15.347 – 51 and 15.397.

²²⁹ See also 15.363 and 15.381 – 96.

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