mirrors the decadence that empire brought for Rome (1.158–82), but whereas *that* city was corrupted only by military success, Alexandria stands for an ancient narrative of corruption with no republican idealism at its heart. If Troy offers a primary contaminatory model (ruin-as-ruin) for the world that Caesar's dangerous brilliance makes inevitable, then the version that Lucan presents for us at Alexandria represents the moral and ethical ruin-that-follows-success, familiar, as Mario Labate (n. 13), 168–71, notes, even in Sallust's version of Roman decline (*Bell. Cat.* 2.6–13) and forcefully expressed in Horace, *Epode* 16. Lucan's inclusion of Sulla's Rome, half a century before Caesar's clash with Pompey, offers a mass grave from which a new Rome could grow (2.98–232) whereas the alternative Rome represented by Alexandria remains a luxurious sepulchre (8.692–700, 729–872; 10.9–52) forever implicated in 'orientalist' decadence and perversion (10.53–171).

In conclusion, I suggest that reading these touristic segments redefines Lucan's civil-war landscape as a paradoxical story of the way in which opening up the present to the past can result in a closing down of opportunities for progression and change. Troy and Egypt, together with the Caesars who define them, corrupt the possibility of critical and intellectual engagement with the past. Fascination with the sights of the Mediterranean sets the stage for the ordered chaos of a series of mytho-historical theme-parks, stage-managed and instantly recognizable back-drops for Lucan's voluble tableaux.

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