

Public Abstract

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Title:A NEW HEROISM: A STUDY OF THE BATTLE SCENES IN LUCAN'S BELLUM CIVILE

This dissertation provides an examination of how Lucan's *Bellum Ciuile* redefines epic heroism by focusing on the poet's use of the narrative structures that make up epic large scale battle. It argues that Lucan engages his readers in a literary dialectic, through which he questions the degree to which the epic tradition can address civil war. In this reading, Lucan's epic offers a new type of heroism that promotes community and society over individual strength and prowess.

This study centers on the three battle scenes in Lucan's epic, the siege and naval battle at Massilia, the battle at Pharsalus, and Cato's march through the Libyan desert. The opening chapter examines how epic poetry has traditionally presented heroism within the context of proper warfare, which poets create through their use of the large scale narrative scenes: the advance scene, the collective fight, the melee, and the rout. The next two chapters read Lucan's account of Massilia and Pharsalus through these structures and argue that Lucan feels traditional epic and definitions of heroism are no longer applicable in civil war. The fourth chapter presents Cato's desert march through Libya as a successful large scale battle. Lucan uses the success of this battle narrative to further his argument for a new heroism that is defined by philosophy and not warfare.

Lucan's use of the narrative structures of traditional epic reflect his greater concern, which is to redefine traditional epic narrative and heroism for life under the principate.