Fate and The Divine in Lucan’s *Bellum Civile*

I. Lucan’s General Religious Outlook

   a. Lucan a religious pessimist
   b. Society corrupt and deserves Divine punishment
   c. Human fate not determined by the gods, but human action
   d. Traditional gods characterized by indifference, apathy, and passivity.
      … mortalia nulli sunt curata deo.
      (“… mortal affairs are of no concern to a god”) (7.454-5).

II. Lucan’s Stoicism and the Divine

   a. Single unified cosmos; ἔκπυρωσις, great conflagration at the end of the world:
      … sic, cum conpage solute
      saecula tot mundi suprema coegerit hora
      antiquum repetens iterum chaos, omnia mixtis
      sidera sideribus concurrent, ignea pontum
      astra petent, tellus extendere litora nolet excutietque fretum (1.72-7).
   b. Stoic sympathy
   c. Personal disaster not differentiated from cosmic disaster (Julia’s death)

III. Fate and Fortune

   a. Fortuna, not gods, takes precedence after the battle of Pharsalia (Fantham: 2004)
   b. Fortune a more powerful force than Divinity; divi or superi in most contexts mean “Fortune” or “Nature” (Ahl: 1976)
   c. Cato describes Jupiter in natural, not religious terms: *Jupiter est quodcumque vides, quodcumque moveris* (“Jupiter is whatever you see, whatever you think about,” 9.580)
   d. *Virtus*, not *Fortuna*, determines what is right
   e. Cato as Lucan’s exemplar of *virtus*: *uictrix causa deis placuit sed uicta Catoni* (1.128)

IV. Men as Divine Actors

   a. Men acquire the status of semi-Divine forces
   b. Nero’s deification (1.45ff.)
   c. Caesar and Cato
   d. Caesar as “anti-god”
Bibliography


