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ÉDITIONS LATOMUS – BRUXELLES

On the Meaning of *bella plus quam ciuilia* (Lucan 1,1). A Relevant Hyperbole

Lucan has been considered a rhetorician, even since antiquity ⁽¹⁾, which has provoked, as a consequence, the rejection of some of his most brilliant achievements : hyperbole and paradox, which, in terms of their frequency and quality, characterize ⁽²⁾ his style. Such tropes have also been labelled rhetorical ⁽³⁾ ; in antiquity the most negative criticism in this sense ⁽⁴⁾, is that made by Fronto, who seems to accuse our poet ⁽⁵⁾ of unrestrained verbosity :

Unum exempli causa poetae prohoemium commemorabo, poetae eiusdem temporis eiusdemque nominis : fuit aequae Annaeus. Is initio carminis sui septem primis uersibus nihil aliud quam "bella plus quam ciuilia" interpretatus est. Numera replicet quot sententiis : "Iusque datum sceleri", una sententia est. "In sua uictricis conuersum uiscera", iam haec altera est. "Cognatasque acies", tertia haec erit. "In commune nefas", quartam numerat. "Infestisque obuia signa", <accumu>lat quoque quintam. "Signis, pares aquilas", sexta haec Herculis aerumna. "Et pila minantia pilis", septima, de Aiace scuto corium. Annae, quis finis erit ? Aut si nullus finis nec modus seruandus est, cur non addis 'et similes lituos' ? Addas licet 'et carmina nota

(1) It is true that the concept of 'rhetoric' is not the same in antiquity as now – we have gone through the romantic revolution and its declaration of war on rhetoric. The well known judgement of QUINTILIAN – *Inst.* 10,1,90 : *magis oratoribus quam poetis imitandus* – probably does not mean more than that Lucan gives the impression of not using fiction but of presenting things as they happened ; that is, as a historian would have done, and therefore could serve as a model more for the oratorical genre than for the poetic (See E. M. SANFORD, *Lucan and his Roman Critics* in *CPh* 26, 1931, p. 233-256).

(2) See C. A. MARTINDALE, *Paradox, Hyperbole and Literary Novelty in Lucan's 'De Bello Civili'* in *BICS* 23, 1976, p. 45-54.

(3) See W. E. HEITLAND, introduction to C. E. HASKIN's edition of LUCAN's *Pharsalia*, London, 1887, lxxvii-viii. Some authors have come to label a figure of speech with the epithet of rhetorical (A. HOLGADO, *Las paradojas retóricas en Lucano* in *Actas del V Congreso Español de Estudios Clásicos*, Madrid, 1978, p. 371-376).

(4) The censure of Eumolpus, the character of PETRONIUS (*Saturae* 118,6) seems to refer only to the suppression of the *deorum ministeria* although this is precisely what might approximate it to a *maxime oratorium* genre as was the historical one (cf. *Cic.*, *leg.* 1,5).

(5) The poet to whom he refers is evidently Lucan, as he has just spoken of Seneca, of whom he says was used to expressing the same thought dressed up in a thousand different forms (*ibid.* 5 : *eandem sententiam milliis alio atque alio amictu indutam referunt.*).

tubarum'. *Sed et loricas et conos et enses et balteos et omnem armorum supellectilem sequere* (6).

P. H. Schrijvers (7) has shown regarding the text above that Lucan uses, in the first seven lines of *Bellum Ciuile* (henceforth *BC*), a compositional device, recurrent throughout the poem, consisting of the rhetorical figure of *interpretatio*. *Bella plus quam ciuilia* would form the basis of an enigma that would be disclosed in the following lines. The first three lines would explain, although still in a veiled way, their meaning by use of the affected hyperbole *plus quam ciuilia* together with the erudite periphrasis *per Emathios campos* and the lapidary and metonymic expression *ius datum sceleri*. In lines 4-7 the sense would be clearly revealed, thus establishing with the first three, a *explicandum-explicatio* relationship. This author insists that this device must not be mistaken for the Horace's rule (*ars* 143), as this poet refers to a progressive unfolding throughout the work, whilst in Lucan this would appear in the same close context.

We shall try to demonstrate throughout our study how the *plus quam ciuilia* enigma is disclosed as the poem progresses, thus responding to the rule set out by Horace. This at the same time will constitute an *a fortiori* proof of the authenticity of these first seven lines.

It was probably the Fronto text, quoted above, which motivated (8) the belated news (9) that these seven lines were apocryphal, added precisely by his uncle Seneca or a brother, in order to avoid the ex abrupto beginning : *quis furor...* of line 8. The problem seems to have been resolved in favour of their authenticity thanks to the work of E. Malcovati (10) and G. B. Conte (11), who showed how these initial lines only imitate the structure of the exordia of the epic poems, especially those of the Iliad and of the Aeneid, which makes their authentic nature *more likely* (12).

(6) FRONTO 151, 7 HOUT. The ancients would have used perhaps the term *Asianus* or *Asiaticus* to refer to the defect censured by Fronto (cf. CIC., *Brutus* 51 : *Asiatici oratores ... parum pressi et nimis redundantes*).

(7) *Interpreter Lucain par Lucain (La Pharsale I 1.8, II 234-325)* in *Mnemosyne* 42, 1989, p. 62-75.

(8) And this was what H. GENTHE (*De M. Annaei Lucani vita et scriptis*, Berlin, 1859, p. 81) proposed.

(9) Such as appears in the *Commenta Bernensia* or in the *Adnotationes super Lucanum*. As has been pointed out by E. MALCOVATI (*Sul prologo della Farsaglia* in *Athenaeum* 29, 1951, p. 100-108 ; = *Zum Prolog der Pharsalia* in *Lucan*, Darmstadt, 1970 [Wege der Forschung], p. 299-308) there is no trace prior to the 8th century regarding the spurious character of these first seven lines.

(10) *Op. cit.* [n. 9].

(11) *Il proemio della Pharsalia* in *Maia* 18, 1966, p. 42-53 (= *La 'Guerra civile' di Lucano*, Urbino, 1988, p. 11-23 ; = *Lucan* [n. 9], p. 339-353).

(12) For MALCOVATI, *op. cit.* [n. 9], p. 305, these seven lines that are sought to be suppressed are so appropriate to the Lucan style that they could be ascribed to Lucan even if they had been handed down to us without the author's name.

The reinstatement of Lucan as poet ⁽¹³⁾ highlighted the fact that the key to this poem consisted of the *aemulatio* of Virgil *kat'antiphrasim* ⁽¹⁴⁾. The Aeneid would be his archetype, his architext but his imitation would consist of a denial of that expressed by Virgil ⁽¹⁵⁾, especially all that which contributed to the propaganda in the politic of Augustus. *Bella... canimus* (BC 1f.) would allude *per anti-phrasim* to *arma uirumque cano*, that is, to that which would be a romantic vision of the way which the fates had found in order to arrive at the *pax Augusti* ⁽¹⁶⁾. A peace that, for Lucan, came with the burden of a tyrant, as will be put expressly in the prophecy of Nigidius Figulus : *cum domino pax ista uenit* (BC 1, 670).

Plus quam ciuilia constitutes, without doubt, a hyperbole but what does *more than civil* mean? Already in antiquity, posterior to Lucan, there were doubts among commentators. Thus Florus in his *Epitome*, paraphrases the beginning of BC interpreting that this surpassed other civil wars as a result of the participation of many foreign peoples :

Caesaris furor atque Pompei urbem Italiam, gentes nationes, totum denique qua patebat imperium quodam quasi diluuiio et inflammatione corripuit, adeo ut non recte tantum ciuile dicatur, ac ne sociale quidem, sed nec externum, sed potius commune quoddam ex omnibus et plus quam bellum ⁽¹⁷⁾.

In the *Adnotationes super Lucanum*, on the other hand, we read ⁽¹⁸⁾ that the reason for *more than* stems from the fact that a son-in-law (Pompey) fought with his father-in-law (Caesar) :

Plus quam ciuilia inter generum enim et socerum gerebantur.

(13) See E. NARDUCCI, *La provvidenza crudele. Lucano e la distruzione dei miti augurei*, Pisa, 1979, p. 9-16.

(14) Cf. G. CONTE, *I giorni del giudizio : Lucano e l'antimodello* in *La 'Guerra civile' di Lucano* [n. 11], p. 38 : "Insomma : selezionare alcuni tratti marcati del modello virgiliano, moltiplicarli in un meccanismo che è insieme di citazione e di autocitazione, accentuarli fino ad esasperarne il significato, renderli pertinenti al proprio discorso attraverso un gesto sempre e comunque antifrastico (per opposizione e rovesciamento), è questo il modo in cui Lucano lavora il suo testo". Cf. also E. Narducci, *op. cit.* [n. 13], and his recent and splendid work *Lucano. Un'epica contro l'impero*, Roma-Bari, 2002.

(15) It seems A. THIERFELDER (*Der Dichter Lucan* in *Archiv für Kulturgeschichte* 25, 1, 1934, p. 1-20 = *Lucan* [n. 9], p. 50-69) was the first to speak of an anti-Virgilian stylistic technique (*eine Art Gegen-Virgil*). C. A. MARTINDALE (*Redeeming the Text : Latin Poetry and the Hermeneutic of Reception*, Cambridge, 1993, p. 35) has recently proposed to see the great 'imitative' texts "as rereadings of the works imitated".

(16) Hence the allusions pointed out by E. NARDUCCI [n. 13], p. 27 : *Quod si non aliam uenturo fata Neroni / inuenere uiam ...* (BC 1, 33-32), where a clear allusion to Virgil appears (*Aen.* 10, 113) : *fata uiam inuenient*.

(17) FLOR, *Epit.* II, 13

(18) And the same explanation can be read in the *Commenta Bernensia* (*ad loc.*).

And it is these two interpretations, principally the second, that have been accepted by modern translators of *BC*. The first seems rather ingenuous and schoolboyish ⁽¹⁹⁾. The second seems more rational and for this reason has been the most accepted ⁽²⁰⁾. But it raises serious problems, which have been obviated, probably thanks to the fame of Lucan as rhetorician : it must be a case of affected hyperbole. However, such as has been shown by P. Jal in his splendid study on the civil war in Rome, struggles between fathers and sons, among members of the same family, constitute a cliché in the treatment of all civil wars : they pursue each other, they kill each other, they denounce each other in the proscriptions that follow the confrontations ⁽²¹⁾. In the speech that Sallust puts in the mouth of Cato replying to Caesar in the Senate, (*Cat.* 52) he says that the supporters of Catilina escape the punishment they deserve *qui patriae, parentibus, aris atque focus suis bellum parauere* (§ 3). Lucan himself shows us how in the proscriptions of Sulla, which followed the civil war :

*infandum domini per uiscera ferrum
exegit famulus, nati maduere paterno
sanguine, certatum est cui ceruix caesa parentis
cederet, in fratrum ceciderunt praemia fratres* ⁽²²⁾.

(19) The explanation of Florus does not seem to have convinced most translators and critics ; we have only found one translation to follow it (S. MARINER, *Lucano. Selección de la "Farsalia"*, Catania, 1971, p. 66 : "Cantamos las guerras, no solamente civiles..."), which the author defends in a footnote ("porque en estas guerras llegaron a tomar parte (y no como simples tropas auxiliares de los romanos) ejércitos extranjeros: Juba con sus númeridas, Aquilas, Arsínoe y Ganímedes con tropas ptolemaicas y, sobre todo, varios monarcas orientales en alianza con Pompeyo precisamente en las llanuras de Farsalia").

(20) Some even explain the reason for the hyperbole : "not only between citizens but between relatives ; probably with special reference to the connexion of Caesar and Pompeius as *socer* and *gener*" (C. E. HASKINS [n. 3], *ad loc.*). "Because Pompey and Caesar were not merely fellow-citizens but kinsmen" (J. D. DUFF, *Lucan, the Civil War*, Cambridge, Mas. - London, 1928, *ad loc.*). "The exaggeration implies that the war was waged not merely between citizens, but between relatives like Caesar and Pompey" (R. J. GETTY, *Lucan, De bello ciuili I*. With a bibliography by Ch. MARTINDALE, Bristol, 1992 [1st 1940], p. 25). "Cette expression outrancière ... Désignant une guerre où les adversaires sont non seulement concitoyens mais parents, elle peut s'appliquer aux deux chefs, César et son gendre Pompée, mais non aux soldats" (P. WUILLEUMIER - H. LE BONNIEC, *Lucain. La Pharsale. Livre I*, Paris, 1962, p. 14) ; "il nesso pregnante *plus quam ciuilia* sottolinea come la linea di divisione passi non soltanto fra cittadini romani, ma all'interno delle stesse famiglie, a cominciare da quelle di Cesare e Pompeo, imparentati tra loro" (D. GAGLIARDI, M. A. *Lucani Belli ciuilis l. I*, Testo critico, introduzione e commento, Napoli, 1989, p. 7). See also F. M. AHL, *Lucan, an Introduction*, Ithaca and London, 1976, p. 313. P. LEJAY (*M. Annaei Lucani de bello ciuili liber primus*, Paris, 1894, p. 1-2) echoes both interpretations.

(21) *La guerre civile à Rome. Étude littéraire et morale*, Paris, 1963, p. 393-40.

(22) *BC* 2, 148-151.

Ovid also terms fratricidal struggles as civil war :

*Terrigenae pereunt per mutua uulnera fratres
ciuilique cadunt acie* (23).

That is, wars among family members form a part of civil wars. For this reason these, in the opinion of Roman historians, constitute a degeneration. If the struggles among family members constitute a cliché, a commonplace in the treatment of civil wars, the *plus quam* still remains unexplained. Nor would it seem that the importance of the two protagonists and relatives (who, at the end of the day no longer were) is sufficient cause, if it were not weighing upon this interpretation the intended rhetorical nature of Lucan's style, that is, if it were not taken for granted that *bella plus quam ciuilia* is no more than an affected hyperbole, an exaggeration. However, the poet now clarifies the meaning of his enigma in the following lines, although in a veiled way : it is *more than* a civil war, because it is not between some citizens and others (*ciues contra ciues = bellum ciuile*), but, rather, the citizenry against itself (*ciuis ipse / ciuitas ipsa contra se = bellum plus quam ciuile = suicidium*) (24) :

*canimus populumque potentem
in sua uictrici conuersum uiscera dextra* (25)
“... we sing and of a powerful people
turned their victorious right hand against their own viscera”.

This third line has drawn the attention of scholars because of the allusions to or imitations of other poets that Lucan was making. Thus, E. Narducci (26) pointed out the paralleling of this exordium with lines I, 46-51 of the *Eclogae* of his contemporary Calpurnius Siculus. Especially, with the expression *in sua ... torquebit uiscera*, with its architecture of *uersus aureus* ; both seem also to refer to the prohibition which, in the *Aeneid*, Anchises puts on the souls of Caesar and Pompey (27). Previously other intertextual relations had been pointed out. Thus S. F. Bonner (28) proposed, correctly, that the model upon which this proem would have been based would be Horace's 7th *epode*. In this also appears the metaphor

(23) *Met.* 7, 141-42.

(24) FLORUS, who evidently echoes Lucan, interprets however that this happens in all civil wars : *denique in se ipse* [sc. *Populus Romanus*] *conuersus Marianis atque Sullanis, nouissime Pompei et Caesaris manibus, quasi per rabiem et furorem – nefas ! – semet ipse lacerauit.* (*Epit.* 1,34).

(25) *BC* 1, 2-3.

(26) E. NARDUCCI (*op. cit.* [n. 13], p. 28 = *Ideologia e tecnica allusiva nella Pharsalia* in *ANRW* II, 32.3, 1985, p. 1543) believes, although hesitatingly, that this first *Eclogue* is prior to book I of the *Pharsalia*.

(27) *Aen.* 6, 833. This reference had already been pointed out by C. E. HASKINS, *op. cit.* [n. 3], *ad loc.*

(28) *Lucan and the Declamation Schools* in *AJPh* 87, 1966, p. 257-289 (quot. p. 259).

of the City that dies by its own hand. In this game of allusions to poems that form part consciously or otherwise of the propaganda apparatus of Augustus, Lucan has innovated, as is appropriate for a great poet ; let us observe the elements from which he starts : the idea of ‘a people who turns its own hand on its own vitals’ was expressed in Virgil with the metaphor *in uiscera*. Really with *uiscera* as the vitals of the body of the *res publica*, we are already, in Virgil, before a common metaphor, a cliché ⁽²⁹⁾ ; Horace will innovate emphasising with the possessive adjective (*sua dextera*), the idea that it is about suicide likewise with Calpurnius Siculus (*in sua uiscera*). Lucan, whose ever-present technique is the highest degree of ‘deviation’ ⁽³⁰⁾ in every trope (be it hyperbole, paradox or, as here, metaphor), is not content to emphasise with *sua*, now be it *uiscera* or *dextera*, to draw attention to the fact of suicide. In Lucan the epithet *uictrix* applied to *dextera* will appear with literary relevance. Suicide is committed by the “victorious right hand”. All this appears in a line, whose architecture *uersus aureus* (or *argenteus*) ⁽³¹⁾ with the alliteration (*sua uictrici conuersum uiscera*) makes it epigrammatic (and recurrent with *neu patriae ualidas in uiscera uertite uires ! Aen. 6, 833*). But we are not dealing with a simple felicitous discovery : the idea that the result of the civil war, even for the victors, was political suicide, is a constant throughout the whole poem. A revealing passage is that of the only *aristeia* in the poem ⁽³²⁾, that of the soldier Scaeva, whom, after his squandering of courage, Lucan will upbraid :

*felix hoc nomine famae,
si tibi durus Hiber aut si tibi terga dedisset
Cantaber exiguis aut longis Teutonus armis.
non tu bellorum spoliis ornare Tonantis
templa potes, non tu laetis ululare triumphis.
infelix, quanta dominum uirtute parasti ! ⁽³³⁾*

(29) Cf. Cic., *Catil.* 1, 31 : *Etenim iam diu, patres conscripti, in his periculis coniurationis insidiisque uersamur, sed nescio quo pacto omnium scelerum ac ueteris furoris et audaciae maturitas in nostri consulatus tempus erupit. Nunc si ex tanto latrocinio iste unus tolletur, uidebimur fortasse ad breue quoddam tempus cura et metu esse releuati, periculum autem residebit et erit inclusum penitus in uenis atque in uisceribus rei publicae.*

(30) We are using this term in the sense given it by J. COHEN, *Structure du langage poétique*, Paris, 1966, *passim*.

(31) See L. P. WILKINSON, *Golden Latin Artistry*, Cambridge, 1963, p. 215-16.

(32) It is true that the journey of Cato through the desert of Lybia and his struggle with the forces of nature, especially his stamina, can be considered, as M. P. O. MORFORD (*The Poet Lucan. Studies in Rhetorical Epic*, Oxford, 1967, p. 14) does, an *aristeia*. But although the structure lends itself to this, it would not be a conventional one. On the *aristeia* of Scaeva see G. B. CONTE, *La ‘Guerra civile’ di Lucano* [n. 11], p. 111-12.

(33) *BC* 6, 257-262.

We are dealing with a clear *exemplum*, of the realisation in this one *aristeia*, of the suicide of a powerful people, of the civil death of the very victor. A consistent suicide in which, being free, they have procured a master as Nigidius Figulus foretold in :

*cum domino pax ista uenit. duc, Roma, malorum
continuum seriem clademque in tempora multa
extrahe ciuili tantum iam libera bello* ⁽³⁴⁾.

Where also it is shown to be relevant the paradox of wishing to prolong the wars themselves, as only through the duration of these can the citizens live freely.

In our opinion, Lucan has indeed been faithful to Horace's rule, applicable to epic exordia. Because throughout the poem keys (*lucis*) will be given to underwrite, rather than disentangle, what is suggested in the first lines of the poem. Thus in Book II of the *BC*, an extended evocation of the civil wars of Marius and Sulla is produced, the function of which is to show what the true face of civil wars is. But apart from this function, as shown by G. B. Conte ⁽³⁵⁾, there is another masterfully evoked – connoted – with allusions to the first line of the *BC* : ... *grauiora, ... maiore, ... nec plus ... quam ...* :

*haec rursus patienda manent, hoc ordine belli
ibitur, hic stabit ciuilibus exitus armis.
quamquam agitant grauiora metus, multumque coitur
humani generis maiore in proelia damno.
exulibus Marii bellorum maxima merces
Roma recepta fuit, nec plus uictoria Sullae
praestitit inuisas penitus quam tollere partes :
hos alio, Fortuna, uocas, olimque potentes
concurrunt. neuter ciuilia bella moueret
contentus quo Sulla fuit.' sic maesta senectus
praeteritique memor flebat metuensque futuri* ⁽³⁶⁾.

It is evident : the wars waged by Marius and Sulla were *bella ciuilia*, but the older citizens, who have known them, fear something *more than* ⁽³⁷⁾, because neither Caesar nor Pompey (*neuter*), would promote wars between citizens prepared to make do with that of previous warmongers.

(34) *BC* 1, 670-2.

(35) G. B. CONTE, *La guerra civile nella rievocazione del popolo : Lucano, II 67-233. Stile e forma della 'Pharsalia'* in *Maia* 20, 1968, p. 224-253 (quot. p. 240).

(36) *BC* 2, 223-233.

(37) Cf. J. HENDERSON, *Lucan / the Word at War* in *Ramus* 16, 1987, p.122-164 (quot. p. 131) : "the difference, between the Marius / Sulla and Caesar / Pompey civil Wars will be ... inexpresible difference, *plus quam*".

But it will be in the climactic point of the poem, after recounting the battle of Pharsalus, when the reason is revealed as to why these wars are *plus quam ciuilia*, in lines which have been considered as an authentic *epicedion*, and in which again appear the recurrences *maius quam* and *plus quam*. Lucan ends by revealing to us the meaning of *bella plus quam ciuilia* through one of his characteristic apostrophes :

*maius ab hac acie quam quod sua saecula ferrent
uolnus habent populi ; plus est quam uita salusque
quod perit : in totum mundi prosternimur aeuum.
uincitur his gladiis omnis quae seruiet aetas* ⁽³⁸⁾.

It is *more than* life and *more than* safety that is lost (*uita salusque* is what is lost in civil wars). We shall become prostrated for ever. Victory means to become a slave (*pax ista cum domino uenit !, dominum parasti !*). Hence the expression *indomita ceruice mori* (BC 9, 380) takes on a special meaning. It is preferable to die than to live without freedom. Biological death is preferable to civil death. The episode enlisted to illustrate this is that of the collective suicide of the soldiers of Vulteius, who harangues them to take their own lives rather than fall into the hands of the enemy ⁽³⁹⁾.

We are not dealing, therefore, with a rhetorical exaggeration – what we reject is the epithet –, but, rather, with a highly relevant hyperbole and, consequently, a paradox. Hyperbole and paradox are the hallmark tropes of the Lucan style.

However, it seems that Fronto was right, at least in part, when he says that in the first seven lines our poet did nothing more than interpret (*interpretari*) '*bella plus quam ciuilia*'. But it is a question of an anatomic interpretation : a dissection of the *semes* which intervene in the hyperbole and that, as with a painting by Picasso, deconstruct and analyse until it is unrecognizable yet ever suggesting its meaning : the breakdown of law that was the civil war, establishing tyranny, the paradox of a people at the height of its power striking out at itself, committing political suicide, after all, the elements which partake are military formations 'born of the very fathers', twin formations ; the conflict spread throughout the sphere which is now that which commits suicide deploying all its members (*infestisque obuia signis / signa, pares aquilas et pila minantia pilis*) ⁽⁴⁰⁾.

(38) BC 7, 638-41.

(39) See BC 4, 576-579 : *percipient gentes, quam sit non ardua uirtus / seruitium fugisse manu, sed regna timentur / ob ferrum, et saeuis libertas uritur armis, / ignoran-
tque datos, ne quisquam seruiat, enses.*

(40) Fronto is not right (cf. NARDUCCI [n. 14], p. 21), however, with his censure (with which SRIJVERS [n. 7], p. 64, seems to agree) that Lucan did not know how to end this passage and stopped off, as he could have continued with '*omnis armorum supellex*'. It is evident that our poet has named metonymically the legions and their bodily parts, with the only elements capable of suggesting them : *signa*, 'ensigns in the abstract', *aquillae* 'ensigns of the legion', *pila* 'characteristic weapon of the Roman soldier' (cf. SERVIUS, *ad*

Suicide is the key ⁽⁴¹⁾, then, of this disconcerting syntagma ⁽⁴²⁾. And suicide is what is suggested by the form adopted by Lucan to describe the battles of the civil war. A good example of this is the description of the battle of Pharsalus ⁽⁴³⁾, which presents the features of a suicide rather than those of a real combat between two armies, and where clear allusions appear in relation to the first lines of the poem :

*odiis solus ciuilibus ensis
sufficit et dextras Romana in uiscera ducit* ⁽⁴⁴⁾.

Following on is a recount of how from all sides the vitals are reached (through recurrent use of *ad uiscera*) and where only one of the formations wages war, the other suffers it :

*qua torta graues lorica catenas
opponit tutoque latet sub tegmine pectus,
hac quoque peruentum est ad uiscera : totque per arma
extremum est quod quisque ferit. ciuilia bella
una acies patitur, gerit altera* ⁽⁴⁵⁾.

Never losing the chance to insist on that idea in which one side wields the sword, the other yields the neck :

*perdidit inde modum caedes ac nulla secuta est
pugna, sed hinc iugulis, hinc ferro bella geruntur* ⁽⁴⁶⁾.

And a little further on, Caesar shows the *victorious hand* where the vitals of the *res publica* (*libertas ultima mundi*) are to be found :

*in plebem uetat ire manus monstratque senatum.
scit cruor imperii qui sit quae uiscera rerum,*

Aen. 7, 664 : *pilum proprie est hasta Romana, ut gaesa Gallorum, sarissae Macedonum*). Neither the *loricae*, nor the *coni*, nor the *enses*, *baltei et omnis armorum supellex* had that capacity to evoke metonymically the Roman soldiers.

(41) Cf. C. H. MARTINDALE [n. 15], p. 48 and recently T. D. HILL, *Ambitiosa Mors. Suicide and Self in Roman Thought and Literature*, New York - London, 2004, p. 213.

(42) Cf. D. GAGLIARDI [n. 20], p. 47.

(43) J. C. BRAMBLE in one of the most correct commentaries, in my opinion, regarding the style of Lucan (*Lucan in The Cambridge History of Classical Literature. II, 4 : The Early Principate*, Cambridge, 1983, p. 37-61; quot. p. 43) has observed that "Lucan, on the other hand, refuses to narrate : Virgil, admittedly, had introduced emotional and moral language into his narratives of such actions, but narratives they remained. But now sequence is minimal, ousted by static moral comment". But the refusal to narrate contributes efficiently in order to give the impression that combat is missing, that there is no fight, as with suicide.

(44) *BC* 7, 490-1.

(45) *BC* 7, 498-502.

(46) *BC* 7, 532-33.

*unde petat Romam, libertas ultima mundi
quo steterit ferienda loco* (47).

Returning to the proem of the poem we observe that the *interrogatio* :

quis furor, o ciues, quae tanta licentia ferri ? (48)

refers to Virgil :

*'quis furor iste nouus ? quo nunc, quo tenditis' inquit
'heu miserae ciues ? non hostem inimicaque castra
Argiium, uestras spes uritis. en, ego uester
Ascanius !* (49)

Where Ascanius warns them that they are fighting against themselves, a thing which their madness (*furor*) prevents them from seeing (50). It is truly an aggressive madness (*furor*), that which can lead a people to suicide (51), the same madness which blinded the wives of the Trojans in the passage from the *Aeneid* quoted above, the same which led Catilina to attack the vitals of the *res publica*. Only madness can explain the progression from *bella ciuilia*, that is, *ciues contra ciues*, represented by the wars of Marius and Sulla (whilst afterwards the *res publica*, the *libertas* would have been restored), to the *bella plus quam ciuilia*, the war of *ciuis ipse contra se*, that is, the *suicidium* even of the victor (*uictrix dextra*), represented by the wars of Caesar and Pompey, Octavian and M. Antony. Independently of whether our interpretation is correct or not, the recurrence of the syntagma *plus quam*, which we have been able to analyse, makes the authenticity of the first seven lines *more than* probable.

University of Oviedo (Spain).

Juan Maria NÚÑEZ GONZÁLEZ.

(47) *BC* 7, 578-581.

(48) *BC* 1, 8.

(49) *Aen.* 5, 670-3.

(50) The *furor* is also present in *CIC.*, *Cat.* 1, 1 ; 1, 31 [n. 29], where the metaphor *uiscera rei publicae* is documented for the first time. But there is another passage to which this eighth line of the *BC* might be alluding or, which, in any case, helps us to reconstruct what might have been aroused in a contemporary audience-readership. It is the case of the upbraiding of the priest Laocoon to his fellow citizens that they prevent the horse from entering the gates of Troy, thus he says (*Aen.* 2,42) : *et procul 'o miseri, quae tanta insania, ciues ?* SERVIUS (*ad Aen., ad loc.*) interprets it in the following terms : *'quae tanta insania ?' quia insanorum est contra se sentire. aut 'insania' dementia.* That is, in the same way that DONATUS interprets the upbraiding of Ascanius : *factum ... quod estis adgressae ... insaniam uestram, ciues, amentiamque testatur. Nullus est enim nisi satis uehementerque desipiens qui rebus suis interitum ferat. ausus huiusmodi aut dementis esse constat aut hostis* (5,670).

(51) Cf. D. HERSHKOWITZ, *The Madness of Epic. Reading Insanity from Homer to Statius*, Oxford, 1998, p. 197 ff. The term *furor* also appears in the harangue Vulteius addresses to his soldiers (*BC* 4, 517 : *Mortis agor stimulis : furor est*).