

An Empedoclean Reading of Nigidius Figulus' Prophecy:

Love and Strife in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*

1. NIGIDIUS FIGULUS' PROPHECY

a) Luc. *BC* 1.658-63:

Tu, qui flagrante minacem

Scorpion incendis cauda chelasque peruris,

quid tantum, Gradive, paras? Nam mitis in alto 660

Iuppiter occasu premitur, Venerisque salubre

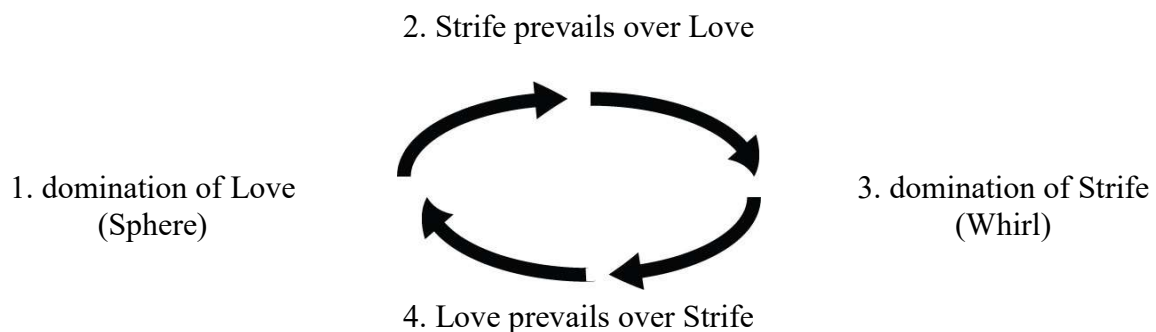
sidus hebet, motuque celer Cyllenius haeret,

et caelum Mars solus habet. (ed. Shackleton Bailey 1988)

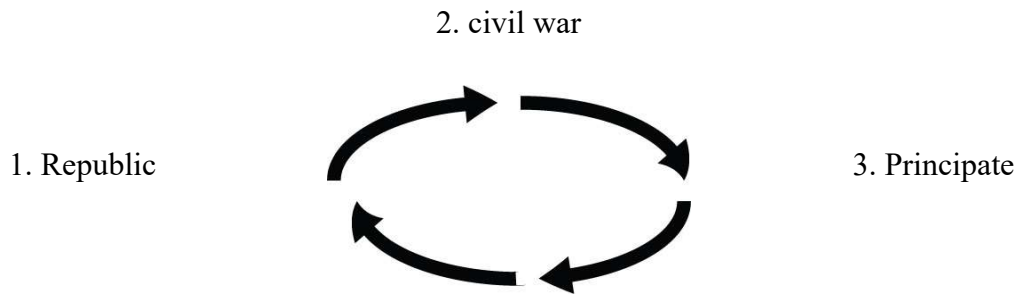
But Mars—what dreadful purpose do you have, when you kindle the Scorpion menacing with fiery tail and scorch its claws? For the benign stars of Jupiter is hidden deep in the West, the healthful planet Venus is dim, and Mercury's swift motion is stayed; Mars alone lords it in heaven. (trans. Duff 1928)

2. EMPEDOCLES' AND LUCAN'S CYCLES

a) Empedocles' cosmic cycle:



b) Lucan's historical cycle:



3. ACOREUS' EXPLANATION

a) Luc. *BC* 10.206:

Habet ventos incertaque fulmina Mavors.

Mars is lord of the winds and of thunder that has no fixed season.

b) Luc. *BC* 10.208-9:

*At fecunda Venus cunctarum semina
rerum possidet.*

Fruitful Venus is mistress of the seeds of all things that exist.

c) Luc. *BC* 10.207:

Sub Iove temperies et numquam turbidus aer.

Under the rule of Jupiter is temperate climate and air that is always bright.

d1) Luc. *BC* 10.209:

Inmensae Cyllenius arbiter undaest.

Mercury controls the vast element of water.

d2) Luc. *BC* 10.230-3:

*Dare iussus iniquo
temperiem caelo mediis aestatibus exit
sub torrente plaga, neu terras dissipet ignis
Nilus adest mundo.*

But, having orders to mitigate an oppressive climate, he issues forth in the torrid zone at midsummer; and, in order that fire may not dissolve the earth, Nile comes to help the world.

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