

Lucan: Historical Repo Man
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It is commonly accepted that the Julio-Claudian emperors, and Julius Caesar before them, took ownership over the Roman past and rewrote history to culminate in their own rule. As Wallace-Hadrill has shown, Augustus inserted himself into all aspects of Roman time, from day-to-day life inscribed in the *fasti* to the astral time of the *horologium* in the Campus Martius to the procession of Roman history on the triumphal *fasti*, “turning all Roman time into Augustan time” (Wallace-Hadrill 223-227, quote: 226). Similarly Caesar’s calendar was “part of a larger revolution of systematizing and personal control in many departments of Roman life, by which Caesar’s name and presence were made indispensably central” (Feeney 197). The Roman past still existed, but it had been rewritten to present Augustus and his successors as the logical, necessary choice from the very beginning.

Lucan, as many have noted, rebels against the Julio-Claudian cooptation of the past by creating a “counter-memory” of the war that ended the Republic (Gowing 94, cf. Bartsch 137-149). This paper examines how Lucan repossesses the memory of even earlier internal conflicts, notably the Civil War between Sulla and Marius and the proscriptions, not with an pragmatically political view or goal, not as a means to restoring the old Republican government, rehabilitating the Pompeian cause, or suggesting reform of the imperial system; but rather to blend the violence and conflict of the past with the terror and trauma of the present, to link the suffering of Romans in previous civil conflicts with the fear and paranoia of aristocratic life under the emperors. Book 2 is the key for this process, as it is dominated by discussions of these conflicts (an old man’s account of Sulla and Marius and the Sullan proscriptions at 2.67-233, Pompey’s speech at 2.531-95) and of civil war in the abstract (Brutus and Cato’s debate at 2.234-325). In this paper, I analyze the way these speeches counteract the sanitized or abstracted views of the past seen in imperial historiography and rhetoric (Gowing 82), recreate a Julio-Claudian atmosphere (à la Tacitus’ *Annals*) in the past, and use this restored memory of conflict to establish an alternate identity for the contemporary elite. As a *comparandum*, I cite the use of American Civil War memory to create or maintain separate identity in the former Confederacy (Blair, Blight).

Bibliography

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