



Statius and Epic Games: Sport, Politics and Poetics in the Thebaid (Cambridge Classical Studies)

Helen Lovatt

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Epic games are more than just an interlude; they reflect the realities of epic: heroism, power and war. This first major study of the athletic games in Statius' *Thebaid* Book 6 uses them to produce a new reading of the poem as a whole. It explores each event in Statius' games, discussing intertextual manoeuvres, historical context and poetic positioning, developing a theme from each: audience power, cosmic disruption, national identity, masculinity and the body, games and war, kingship and narrative control. This book uses a close reading of one part of one text to range over ancient literature. It casts light on the tradition of games in ancient epic as a whole, examining the works of Homer, Virgil, Apollonius, Ovid and Lucan. It is essential reading for the student of Statius and of ancient epic and of interest to historians of Roman society with an interest in sport and spectacle.



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