

SIX LUCRETIAN EMENDATIONS

1, 716–721:

quorum [sc. philosophorum] Agragantinus cum primis Empedocles est,
 insula quem triquetris terrarum gessit in oris,
 quam fluitans circum magnis anfractibus aequor
 Ionium glaucis aspargit uirus ab undis

720 angustoque fretu rapidum mare diuidit undis
 Italiae terrarum oras a finibus eius.

720 *undis* OQG Priscian *GL* II, 27, 3 : *undans* Lachmann : *almae* Bernays :
intrans Grasberger : *oris* Goebel (*Italia... affinibus* in 721 lectis) : *aeque*
 Merrill : *unda* Brakman : *omnis* Orth : *arcens* Shackleton Bailey 721 *Italiae*
 LPA^aFC : *Haeliae* O^{a.c.}QG : *Haeoliae* O² : *Aeoliae* G. Vossius (et Heinsius suo
 Marte) : *Aeolidae* (si non *Italiae*) dub. Sandbach

The text of 721 has elicited much discussion from previous critics but is not my concern here. It will suffice for present purposes to say that *Italiae*, the emendation (appropriately enough) of certain Italic manuscripts,¹ is very little removed from the paradosis once it is realised that *it > h* is not a difficult corruption in early minuscule;² *Aeoliae*, by contrast, lacks a parallel for its application to southern Italy and cannot therefore be introduced with any confidence into the text. I wish rather to focus upon the final word of 720. The repetition of the same word in the same case at the close of two successive verses is stylistically striking but there are few secure Lucretian parallels to support the usage.³ What is more troublesome is the wholly otiose nature of the latter *undis*: we are told in 718–721 that the Ionian sea sprinkles brine from its waves around Sicily and that the choppy

¹ I wish to make clear at the beginning of this article that I am of the firm opinion that the Italian mss of Lucretius do not provide a witness to the text independent from OQGVU and should therefore merely serve as a repertory for conjectures of the Quattrocento.

² The reverse error (*it* for *h*) can be seen at 4, 822: *in his* O : *initis* Q.

³ In a forthcoming *Prometheus* article I discuss the matter of repetition of identical forms of the same word or words at the close of successive Lucretian hexameters. I conclude that there are only four true instances of exact repetition (1, 393–394; 2, 597–598; 4, 509–510; 5, 1178–1179), of which 4, 509–510 is the only example where no obvious motivation (poetic or otherwise) lies behind the iteration.

sea divides by a narrow strait *with its waves* the shores of the Italian land from its borders. The ablatival *undis* therefore bears no real semantic weight and, even as a metrical filler, falls lamentably beneath Lucretius' artistic threshold, particularly in a passage as striking as this famous praise of Empedocles (716–733). With the repetition of *undis* from the preceding verse being so easy, and so well paralleled, an error,⁴ I believe that Lachmann and subsequent critics have been right to suggest emendations in its stead. That *undis* has support from the indirect tradition in a late-antique grammarian need not cause undue alarm: provided that this corruption took place in the five centuries intervening between Lucretius and Priscian, and that the latter had access to a similar manuscript tradition to that which survived the fall of Rome (as is very likely), there is no problem with the hypothesis of textual error at the close of 720.

Unfortunately, few emendations made to date can be deemed at all probable: Lachmann's, Grasberger's and Shackleton Bailey's participles not only complicate the syntax but are superfluous in sense; Merrill's *aeque* is weak, Bernays' *almae* is surprising and Goebel's alterations to this and the following verse are too convoluted to convince; Brakman's *unda* only shifts the problem to the singular. I believe, however, that Orth took the right tack in introducing an adjective to modify *oras* of 721, although his *omnis* is untrue: the whole of Italy is not divided from Sicily by the Ionian sea. It strikes me as a considerably more attractive option to read *udas*, 'damp', 'moist', i. e. wave-splashed. For a similar employment of the adjective, cf. Hor. *Carm.* 1, 32, 7–8 *iactatam religarat udo / litore nauim* and Stat. *Silv.* 3, 1, 68 *forte diem Triuia dum litore ducimus udo*. The similarity of the *ductus* of *udas* to *undis* would certainly have aided the corruption.

4, 104–109:

sunt igitur tenues †formarum dissimilesque†

105 effigiae, singillatim quas cernere nemo
quom possit, tamen assiduo crebroque repulso
reiectae reddunt speculorum ex aequore uisum,
nec ratione alia seruari posse uidentur,
tanto opere ut similes reddantur quoique figurae.

104 *formarum* OQ : *formae rerum* Purmann *dissimilesque* OQ : *consimilesque*
Lambinus : *similesque* Purmann : *illis similesque* Lachmann (*formarum*
retento) : *his similesque* Postgate

⁴ K. Müller (ed.), *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura* (Zurich 1975) in his critical note *ad loc.* aptly compares 1, 1023; 2, 422; 2, 467; 2, 636; 2, 1168; 3, 594; 4, 493; 4, 990; 6, 15; 6, 1012.

Although the text of 104 is metrically sound, it cannot be what Lucretius wrote: ‘therefore there are thin and dissimilar idols of forms’ is distinctly unwelcome for two reasons. Firstly, Lucretius is here offering the conclusion that there exist *similar* images emitted from things and traversing the air, and any mention of dissimilarity is thus grossly inappropriate.⁵ Secondly, these *effigiae* are the likenesses of *res* in general and therefore have a shape similar to them; they are not the likenesses of *formae*. Emendation is clearly required. It is of primary importance for correcting the text, as Bailey and other commentators have noted, that *forma* is used by Lucretius strictly for the *shape* of the images produced from things, not as a synonym for the *simulacra* or *effigiae* themselves (cf. 4, 52; 4, 69; 4, 87). Accordingly, Lachmann’s *formarum illis similesque* reads like a conjecture, introducing as it does *formae* in an unparalleled sense, and is inherently risky (*-que* is to be construed in second position); Bailey is skirting the issue by generously translating “images of the shapes of things like to them” and stating that there is only “a slight awkwardness of expression”.⁶ Since a more general genitive dependent upon *effigiae* is required, most editors instead follow Purmann’s *formae rerum* (independently conjectured by Munro) along with Postgate’s *his similesque*, a suggestion which again presents *-que* trajected to second position. Again, the plural *formae* presents the same difficulty of referring to the *simulacra* themselves rather than a property of them, a usage not employed by Lucretius elsewhere.

I believe that critics have been mistaken in looking for two separate entities in 104–105: the subsequent lines 105–109 seem to treat the single phenomenon of emitted *simulacra*, whether reflected or not. Accordingly, since *effigiae* is guaranteed as our subject, I suggest that the transmitted *formarum dissimilesque* should be emended to *forma* (abl.) *rerum similesque*. The *effigiae rerum* are ‘thin (cf. 4, 85 *effigias... tenues*) and like in shape’.⁷ To translate 104–106: ‘therefore there are semblances of things thin and alike in shape which, although no one can see them individually, nonetheless are reflected by continual and unremitting repulsion and return (to us) an image from the surface of mirrors’. Once *forma rerum* was contracted to *formarum* by an easy error, a

⁵ The theory of W. A. Merrill, “Studies in the text of Lucretius”, *UCPCPh* 2 (1911) 93–150, at 117, that *dissimilesque* “here appears to be a cautious parenthetical qualification” since *effigiae* “are similar, and yet unlike, for they are often distorted or slightly changed”, is manifestly untenable.

⁶ C. Bailey (ed.), *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex* (Oxford 1947) *ad loc.*

⁷ This construction is easier than taking *rerum* as a genitive dependent upon *similesque* (with *-que* in second position): ‘idols thin in shape and alike things’.

scribe with a head for metre but little interest in the minutiae of the physics at hand expanded *similesque* to *dissimilesque*.

4, 598–602:

colloquium clausis foribus quoque saepe uidemus;
ni mirum, quia uox per flexa foramina rerum

600 incolumis transire potest, simulacra renutant;
perscinduntur enim, nisi recta foramina tranant,
qualia sunt uitri, species qua trauolat omnis.

I wish merely to suggest that editors return to the pre-Lachmannian vulgate in 602, that is reading *quae* for the transmitted *qua*.⁸ Lucretius employs *trauolare* transitively at 4, 559 and we would naturally expect the same here.⁹ *qua* is inelegant for *per recta foramina* after *species*; *quae*, once written *que* as per mediaeval orthography, could have easily been ‘corrected’ to *qua*. *qua* is wrongly transmitted in lieu of *quae* at 1, 484.

4, 757–761:

nec ratione alia, quom somnus membra profudit,
mens animi uigilat, nisi quod simulacra lacessunt
haec eadem nostros animos quae quom uigilamus,

760 usque adeo, certe ut uideamur cernere eum quem
†reddita† uita iam mors et terra potitast.

760 *quem* FC et al. Itali : *que* OQ 761 *reddita* OQ : *relicta* I. Vossius : *reddita*
pro Lachmann : *reddigit a* Bockemüller : *concessa* Merrill : *reddidit a*
Krokiewicz : *derepta* Romanes : *reddita ea* Orth

reddita of 761 is at once unmetrical and inappropriate in sense: one does not give one’s life back on death and, even if some did hold that belief, Lucretius would certainly not have endorsed it, casually or otherwise. Isaac Voss’ *relicta* has been widely accepted, on the grounds that *re-* has a prevocalic byform *red-* which was occasionally employed before consonants in early Latin. Certain editors have written *redlicta* or *rellicta* to make the prosodic anomaly clear but Bailey and subsequent critics have typically retained the Classical spelling (which indeed Vossius employed in his manuscript note, cited by Munro).¹⁰ Yet

⁸ The 15th-century corrector of Q curiously chose to add a virgula to the word so as to read *quam*, a fact which has not, to my knowledge, been noted previously.

⁹ It is a moot point what verb should be read for the transmitted *transuiat*, a *hapax*, at 6, 349.

¹⁰ H. A. J. Munro (ed.), *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex* (Cambridge 1886) app. crit. *ad loc.*

relictā uita is a rather weak expression¹¹ and the metrical licence with *relinquo* not only has no verbal parallel but is apparently unmotivated, for the natural scansion of ablative *relictā* (a bacchius) is tractable elsewhere in the hexameter. It would seem better method to offer a participle that does not fall foul of such objections.

Romanes' *derepta* is suitably forceful but rather removed from the paradosis; Merrill's *concessa* arises from the improbable supposition that *reddita* is a gloss of a lost participle. Orth's suggestion involves the awkward elision of a cretic and an unwanted pronominal adjective. The conjectures of Lachmann, Bockemüller and Krokiewicz can also be dismissed quickly: Lachmann wishes to take *reddita* in agreement with *mors* followed by *pro uita*, an expression which Bailey was right to term "very improbable";¹² the two other scholars inappropriately introduce a personified *Mors*, and the former posits a verbal form of equally questionable prosody. To offer a more striking participle, I suggest that Lucretius wrote *restincta*, 'after his life has burned out', 'after his life-force has been extinguished' (cf. *OLD* s. v. 1 a [*in fig. phrs.*]), thereby invoking the pervasive Classical imagery of life as a flame. If *restincta* (*restīcta*) was miscopied as *restitta* or *redincta*, 'correction' to *reddita* by a scribe with little knowledge of Classical metre could easily have followed.

4, 907–909:

nunc quibus ille modis somnus per membra quietem
irriget atque animi curas e pectore soluat,
suauidicis potius quam multis uersibus edam.

907 *modis* O²Q² Macr. Sat. 6, 1, 44 : *modo* O^{a.c.}Q^{a.c.} *quietem* Macr. loc. cit :
quiete OQ

Although I wish to discuss 907, I have nothing to say about *modis... quietem*, both of which are certain supplements from the indirect tradition. Instead, I find the employment of *ille* puzzling. Of those commentators that have addressed the word, the responses to the pronoun have been remarkably varied: "der viel besprochene, oft erwähnte Schlaf" (Bockemüller);¹³ "di cui s'è parlato sopra" (Gius-

¹¹ Would Lucretius even say that life could be left behind? We may compare his phraseology at 5, 63, where contrariwise *life* is said to leave the human: *cernere cum uideamur eum quem uita reliquit*. Lucretius' discussion of the dispersal of the *animus* and *anima* from the body in Book 3 further supports focus on the fact that it is the vital spirit that leaves mortal man.

¹² Bailey (n. 6) *ad loc.*

¹³ F. Bockemüller (ed.), *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura* (Stade 1873–1874) *ad loc.*

sani);¹⁴ “oft mentioned sleep” (Merrill);¹⁵ “i. e., the well-known phenomenon we think and talk about so often” (S. B. Smith);¹⁶ “i. e. sleep of which he has spoken in iv. 757 ff. and 788 ff.” (Bailey).¹⁷ Yet I cannot believe that Lucretius would have referred to a literally everyday occurrence for all humans as ‘that well-known sleep’. Giussani and Bailey are on better ground in believing that *ille* refers to earlier discussions in Book 4 yet the argument at hand does not require the reader to cast his mind back to what were instead basic discussions about dreams. The passage would read more smoothly if *ipse* were read for *ille*: it is sleep itself that spreads quietude throughout the body’s limbs.¹⁸

4, 1126–1128:

scilicet et grandes uiridi cum luce zmaragdi
auro includuntur teriturque thalassina uestis
assidue et Veneris sudorem exercita potat.

During his tirade at the close of Book 4, Lucretius derides women carried away by love for their extravagant behaviour and lavish expenditure *amoris causa*. In 1126–1128 we are told that such women wear great emeralds encased in gold and that ‘the sea-blue dress is continually rubbed away and, worn out, drinks up the sweat of love’. *teritur* comes as something of a surprise, since Lucretius jumps straight from the mention of the cloth to its being ‘continually chafed’. Few commentators have addressed this verb directly. Wakefield¹⁹ stated “i. e. res amatoria non feliciter procedit, nisi vestes pretiosissimae, quae solummodo peculiare in occasiones induuntur, usu diurno conterantur”; similarly S. B. Smith: “‘is worn shabby’, i. e., the robe, in spite of its costliness, is worn so frequently in the course of the lovers’ dalliance that it becomes frayed and thin”.²⁰ Brown provides parallels of varying rel-

¹⁴ C. Giussani (ed.), *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex* (Turin 1896–1898) *ad loc.*

¹⁵ W. A. Merrill (ed.), *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura* (New York 1907) *ad loc.*

¹⁶ W. E. Leonard, S. B. Smith (edd.), *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex* (Madison 1942) *ad loc.*

¹⁷ Bailey (n. 6) *ad loc.*

¹⁸ As a response to Merrill’s barely relevant comparison of 5, 67 (*et quibus ille modis congressus materiai...*) I offer 4, 1263 (*et quibus ipsa modis tractetur blanda uoluptas*).

¹⁹ G. Wakefield (ed.), *T. Lucretii Cari De rerum natura libri sex* (Glasgow 21813).

²⁰ Smith (n. 16) *ad loc.*

evance and date for *terere* used of chafing clothes²¹ but it is the abrupt mention of the verb, not its semantics, that seems to me suspicious. For, even amidst satiric hyperbole, *teritur assidue* detracts from the full force of the final damning element of the sentence (*Veneris... potat*). It therefore seems to me more probable that this particular clause concerns the daily wearing of such costly clothing (extravagant and unnecessary in itself), not its daily attrition; it is because this cloth is worn continually that it becomes worn out (*exercita*) during any sexual encounter. I therefore suggest that we read *geriturque*, 'is worn'. Lucretius uses the same verb of wearing clothes at 5, 1420.²² The preceding *-tur* and subsequent *-eritur* could have led to the corruption of *g* to *t*.

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В статье предлагаются шесть эмендаций текста Лукреция, в основном к IV книге. В трех случаях рассматриваются хорошо известные текстологические трудности (I, 720; IV, 104; IV, 761); в трех случаях эмендации предложены там, где текст не вызывал (или вызывал крайне редко) сомнения у предшествующих исследователей (IV, 602; IV, 907; IV, 1127).

²¹ R. D. Brown, *Lucretius on Love and Sex. A Commentary on De rerum natura IV, 1030–1287* (Leiden 1987) *ad loc.*

²² *gerere* of wearing clothes is not given sufficient space in *OLD*; for due treatment see *TLL* s. v. I A1 a (i. e. VI.2 col. 1930, 43–79).