

I shall make reference by name alone to the following editions and commentaries: J. B. Pius, *In Carum Lucretium poetam commentarii*, Parisiis 1514²; D. Lambinus, *T. Lucretii Cari de rerum natura libri VI*, Francofurti 1583⁴; T. Faber, *Titi Lucretii Cari de rerum natura libri sex*, Salmurii 1662; T. Creech, *Titi Lucretii Cari de Rerum Natura libri sex*, Oxonii 1695; G. Wakefield, *T. Lucretii Cari de rerum natura libri sex*, Glasguae 1813²; A. Forbiger, *T. Lucretii Cari de rerum natura libri sex*, Lipsiae 1828; J. Bernays, *T. Lucretii Cari de rerum natura libri sex*, Lipsiae 1852; F. T. Bockemüller, *T. Lucretii Cari de rerum natura libri sex*, Stade 1873-4; K. Lachmann, *In T. Lucretii Cari de rerum natura libros commentarius*, Berlin 1871⁴; H. A. J. Munro, *T. Lucretii Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, Cambridge 1886⁴; C. Giussani, *T. Lucretii Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, Torino 1896-8; R. Heinze, *T. Lucretius Carus. De rerum natura Buch III*, Leipzig 1897; W. A. Merrill, *T. Lucretii Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, New York 1907; H. Diels, *T. Lucretius Carus de rerum natura lateinisch und deutsch*, Berlin 1923-4; W. E. Leonard - S. B. Smith, *T. Lucretii Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, Madison 1942; C. Bailey, *T. Lucretii Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, Oxford 1947; E. Orth, *Lukrez. Naturphilosophie. «De Rerum Natura»*. Salamanca 1961; A. Ernout - L. Robin, *Lucretius. De rerum natura. Commentaire exégétique et critique*. Paris 1962²; J. Martin, *T. Lucretii Cari de rerum natura libri sex*, Lipsiae 1963⁵; K. Büchner, *T. Lucretii Cari De rerum natura*, Wiesbaden 1966; E. J. Kenney, *Lucretius. De Rerum Natura Book III*, Cambridge 1971; K. Müller, *T. Lucretii Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, Zürich 1975; J. Godwin, *Lucretius: De rerum natura VI*, Warminster 1991; M. Ferguson Smith, *Lucretius. De rerum natura*. London 1992²; P. M. Brown, *Lucretius. De rerum natura III*, Warminster 1997.

When referring to the manuscripts of Lucretius, I employ the typical single-letter sigla, qualifying them (if necessary) with ^{a.c.} (*ante correctionem* by the scribe) or ¹ (first later correcting hand). Since I am of the firm resolution that the Itali of Lucretius are of no textual value independent from OQGVU, they are of interest to me only as repertories of humanist conjectures.

3.417-20

nunc age, natiuos animantibus et mortalis
 esse animos animasque leuis ut noscere possis,
 conquisita diu dulcique reperta labore
 digna tua pergam disponere carmina uita. 420

The text of 420 as printed above has been accepted by many an editor, although English translations of *digna tua... uita* have been rather liberal: “worthy of your way of life” (S. B. Smith), “worthy of your (great) calling” (Kenney), “worthy of your career” (Brown), “worthy of your manner of life” (M. F. Smith); R. C. Trevelyan’s “worthy to guide your life”, after Giussani (“*carmi degni che tu li prenda come regola della tua vita*”), is beyond the bounds of possibility. Even from the time of Pius, the first modern commentator on Lucretius, we find a fudge: 420 is glossed as “*carmina divina et caelestia cantabo digna tua vita et mente ad caelestia indaganda nata*” (comm. ad loc.). A number of scholars since Creech¹, however, have felt uneasy about the veracity of *uita*: it has been objected, and in my opinion with good reason, that *tua uita* could hardly serve here as a periphrasis for *moribus tuis ac uirtutibus* (so Wakefield² and Heinze) or merely for *te* (so Faber³, Ernout-Robin and Bailey *inter alios*). For no parallel for such a usage of *uita* can be adduced in Lucretius; even if one could be, it is bathetic for Lucretius to proclaim that he will *try*

¹ Who complains (comm. ad loc.) “haec intelligi non possunt”.

² “*tuâ vitâ*: i.e. “*moribus tuis ac uirtutibus, quem Musa rebus omnibus ornatum in omni tempore uoluit excellere. Quem virum! quae carmina!*” Hanc potestatem nomen *vita* passim nanciscitur” (comm. ad loc.).

³ “*Tua Vita*] *Te*, neque aliter boni scriptores Latinitatis” (comm. ad loc.).

to write poems worthy of the life Memmius already leads: this is neither geared towards philosophical conversion nor, given Memmius' reputed lifestyle, seemingly much of a challenge⁴. The alternative, to take the passage in literal terms, is nonsensical: how could Lucretius write poems that are worthy of the very life of Memmius? Yet, however *uita* is interpreted, it seems to me quite inappropriate when applied to his addressee, whose very *uita* is here sought to be converted for the better. It is nothing but wishful thinking to believe that *digna... uita* can be taken proleptically: “*carmina* worthy of your life, once it has been converted to Epicureanism [by these very *carmina*]”.

Accordingly, a number of emendations have been suggested to date: Lachmann's *cura* (followed by Munro, Brieger and apparently Housman⁵) at least allows focus to be upon Memmius' study of the philosophy at hand; K. Müller's *mente* (also conjectured independently by W. S. Watt⁶) concentrates upon the mental qualities of his addressee in a manner that seems to me out of place, particularly when the state of the addressee's mind can hardly be known to Lucretius and, if his rhetoric is to be believed, can hardly be something that would deserve *carmina* of the highest order (cf. n.4). Creech's quondam suggestion *tuos... uate* is ingenious but impossible in context, not least because Lucretius

⁴ We cannot forget Cicero's statement (*Brut.* 247) that Memmius was ‘*perfectus litteris, sed Graecis, fastidiosus sane Latinarum*’, or the fact that the Latin literature he did compose apparently included scandalous erotic verse (cf. *Ov. trist.* 2.433-4 *quid referam Tigidiae, quid Memmi carmen, apud quos / rebus abest* (Bentley) *omnis* (Rottendorphius) *nomibusque pudor?*), described by Gellius (19.9) as ‘*dura*’ when compared to Greek poets; even in the grammatical tradition Memmius was dismissed as a writer ‘*cuius auctoritas dubia est*’ (Nonius 194 M.)

⁵ As seems to be implied by his rebuking (J. Diggle & F. R. D. Goodyear (edd.), *The Classical Papers of A. E. Housman*, Cambridge 1972, 524) the young Cyril Bailey for retaining the paradosis in his first *OCT* (*Lucreti de rerum natura libri sex*, Oxford 1900); Bailey went on to retain the paradosis in both his second edition of 1922 and his full-scale commentary of 1947.

⁶ “Lucretiana”, *Hermes* 117, 1989, 233-6, at 234.

used *uates* only in a pejorative sense (1.102, 109); Romanes' *uitta* was thankfully retracted within a year⁷.

There is evidently scope for a new suggestion. If we recall a passage that is clearly a direct imitation of 420, namely *culex* 10 (*ut tibi digna tuo poliantur carmina sensu*), it could well be that Lucretius himself opened the verse with *digna tuo* and closed it with *cultu*⁸ ('devotion', 'close attention', cf. *OLD* s.v. 11): securing Memmius' devotion to the philosophy expounded (cf. *disponere*) – the very purpose of Lucretius' work – is of far more import than his writing poetry worthy of Memmius' present way of life. With the loss of its initial letter⁹, VLTV is little removed from VITA, and an "untimely reminiscence"¹⁰ of a striking verse in the book's proem (3.13 [sc. *dicta*] *perpetua semper dignissima uita*) could well have hastened the error.

⁷ N. H. Romanes, *Notes on the Text of Lucretius*, Oxford 1934, 20; replaced (by *digna tuo; ...multa*) in id., *Further Notes on Lucretius*, Oxford 1935. For an assessment of Romanes' Lucretian work, cf. my forthcoming "N.H. Romanes and the text of Lucretius".

⁸ For good parallels one could compare Quint. *inst.* 2.16.17 *si nihil a dis oratione melius accepimus, quid tam dignum cultu ac labore ducamus...?*, and Cic. *inv.* 2.161, where *obseruantia* is defined as what certain men of worthy standing experience when *cultu quodam et honore dignantur*.

⁹ For the loss of initial 'c' in our ninth-century mss, cf., e.g., *luere* (QG) for *cluere* at 1.480 and *perditum* (OQV) for *perdit cum* at 3.358; of course all initial letters were equally prone to loss and such an error is by no means rarely found.

¹⁰ Watt, "*Lucretiana*", 234, rightly refers to Housman's use of this phrase in his brief treatment of the phenomenon (*Classical Papers*, 436-7).

only here)¹³ functions substantively¹⁴, yet the expression is bold and unnecessarily harsh. With *colentes* one could endeavour to compare the use of *pennipotentēs* for *aves* (2.878, 5.789) or *balantes* for *oues* or *agni* (2.369, 6.1132), yet the very nature of these words brings the animals' key features instantly to mind, whereas *colo* is wholly unspecific. Indeed, *Stymphala colentes* would most naturally mean "the men that occupy the Stymphalian regions"¹⁵.

I believe that Lachmann's instinct was (as so often) right in spotting corruption in *nobis*, a word that can hardly be termed "emphatic" (Bailey, comm. ad loc.). Instead, it is otiose, for having been supplied with *nobis... obesset* at 24-5, we then naturally understand *nobis obesse* with *posset* in 27, and *nobis obesse posset* in 28-31. With the introduction of a new compound of *ob-* in 30, this line of thought is smoothly continued, and *nobis* need not be explicitly supplied; its appearance adds nothing of weight to the line of thought. In its place Lachmann conjectured *et aves*¹⁶ but I neither believe in substantival *Stymphala* nor seek a connective particle. Rather, since we require both a nominal subject and object of *colentes*, I suggest *loca aves*. Neither word, to be sure, is particularly poetic or exciting but both are required to complete the picture. The *aves* that attend the *loca Stymphala*

¹³ The nominal form is *Stymphalus (-os)* or *Stymphalum*. It is unclear to me why Lucretian *Symphala* passes unmentioned in the *OLD* alongside adjectival *Stymphalius* and nominal *Stymphalum*.

¹⁴ *Ismara* in the previous line, along with *Pergama* (an Ennian reminiscence) at 1.476, could be offered as parallels, since they are Latin formations without a Greek plural analogy. Nonetheless, these instances are strictly nominal in nature, whereas with the formation *Stymphala* certainty on such a matter is impossible.

¹⁵ Indeed, of the verb's five other occurrences in the work, three (5.955, 1145, 1150) are used of habitation with men as the subject, the remaining two (5.1369, 1441) with specific reference to agriculture, again with human agents. Without sufficient qualification, therefore, one could naturally interpret men as the subject of *colentes*.

¹⁶ Birds were first explicitly supplied as the subject by Marullus, who in the lacuna that he posited between *nobis* and *Stymphala* supplied *uncisque timendae / unguibus Arcadiae uolucres*.

are what Plautus terms the *aves Stymphalicae* (*Per.* 4), Catullus the *Stymphalia monstra* (68.113) and Hyginus the *aves Stymphalides* (*fab.* 30.6); for Seneca (*Herc. f.* 244), Petronius (136.6) and Martial (9.101.7), they are simply *Stymphalides*. For *Symphala loca*, cf. *Auerna loca* at 6.738 and 818¹⁷.

The cause of corruption was perhaps the intrusion of an interlinear or marginal *nobis* (as an elementary gloss on *officerent*) or a possible restoration of Latin from a form like *locabis* (having arisen from a pronunciation error)¹⁸. The suggestion seems to me more economic than positing a lacuna and transposition, as, e.g., Marullus, Bernays, Munro, Brieger, Giussani, Merrill, Bailey, Ernout-Robin, Leonard-Smith, D. A. West¹⁹, Müller and M. F. Smith.

5.483-6

inque dies quanto circum magis aetheris aestus
 et radii solis cogebant undique terram
 uerberibus crebris extrema ad limina †partem† 485
 in medio ut propulsa suo condensa coiret,

485 *partem* OQ : *in artum* Munro : *apertam* Turnebus :
raptim Bentley : *partes* Bockemüller (*terrae* in 484 lecto) :
passim Deutsch : *fartam* Martin : *opertam* Orth
a limini parte Lachmann

It is certain that *partem* of 485 is corrupt but I am not particularly attracted to any emendation yet offered. Editors typically follow Munro's *in artum*, comparing the use of the same phrase at 6.178, yet here a prepositional phrase (to be taken

¹⁷ It may be objected that *Auerna* is supported by a noun in these two passages purely because it is consciously etymologised as an adjective (as if = ἄορνα) at 6.740-6. Although this objection seems weak to me, if one were swayed by it, *ea aues* could instead here be read.

¹⁸ For the confusion of *u* and *b* (a pervasive pronunciation error), cf. *b* for *u*: 2.216 (*habemus* (OQ^{a.c}G) for *auemus*), 902, 1082 (O), 3.957 (*abes* (O) for *aues*), 1082-3 (*habemus* bis (O^l) for *auemus*), 5.778, 1019 (Q); *u* for *b*: 1.1108, 2.99, 152 (OQ^{a.c}G), 3.1011 (OQ^{a.c}), 4.445, 5.965 (O^{a.c}QU), 6.695.

¹⁹ D. A. West, "Lucretius 5.312 and 5.30", *Hermes* 93, 1965, 496-502, at 499-502.

closely with *cogebant*) is not particularly neat after *extrema ad limina*. Turnebus' *apertam*, often wrongly attributed to Lambinus, was for centuries the vulgate but can hardly satisfy with such feeble sense. Nonetheless, it is fitting for 485 to close with a verbal element, from which *uerberibus... limina* would then hang²⁰. Orth's *opertam* is appealing palaeographically but the earth's being "buried" by the sun's rays is hardly appropriate; the less said of Martin's *partam* the better. A more suitable alternative could be *pressam*. To translate: "And day by day the more the surrounding tide of the aether and the rays of the sun forced together²¹ the earth on all sides, pressed by continual blows upon its outermost parts, with the result that beaten together it compacted and concentrated (*coiret*) at its middle position²², [so much...]" If -ss- were misread as -rs-²³, an unintelligible form such as *prersam* or *persam* could have been subsequently altered to the common *partem*²⁴; alternatively, *pressam* when transcribed as a whole could have suffered transposition of its letters to *prassem* or *parssem*, which would have likewise led to the same scribal change²⁵.

²⁰ As at 5.1103-4 *quoniam mitescere multa uidebant / uerberibus radiorum atque aestu uicta per agros*.

²¹ For this sense of *cogere* in Lucretius, cf. 1.761, 1020, 6.201, 274, 511, 734.

²² The difficult phrase *in medio... suo*, largely ignored by commentators, I take to mean, after C. L. Howard ("Lucretiana", *CPh* 56, 1961, 145-59, at 155), "in that middle position which is proper to it".

²³ Cf. 1.668 *funditur* for *funditus* (OQ^{a.c.G}), 3.988 *dispersis* for *dispessis*, 4.270 *rem(m)ota* for *semota*, 606 *respargere* for *se spargere* (Q), 6.48 *exirtant* for *existant*.

²⁴ In 28 instances in *de rerum natura* does a form of *pars* close the hexameter.

²⁵ If another part of speech is to be tried, I think Deutsch's *passim* the best conjecture to date (reported by W. A. Merrill, "Criticism of the text of Lucretius and suggestions for its improvement. Part II.", *UCPCPh* 3, 1916, 47-133, at 83), although the adverb's distance from *cogebant* would be striking.

5.513-14

inde alium [sc. aera] supra fluere atque intendere eodem
quo uoluenda micant aeterni sidera mundi.

aeterni OQ : *alterni* J. Susius (et Faber et Goebel
inscientes) : *nocturni* Merrill

I find myself among the minority that cannot believe that our poet, *quamuis thyrso percussus*, termed the *mundus* “*aeternus*” in a book that seeks (in part) to establish its very mortality²⁶, whether the adjective is employed casually²⁷ or with supposed irony²⁸; it is most improbable that *aeterni* is here being foisted by Lucretius onto a party other than himself. In the present passage, Lucretius outlines various theories concerning the motion of the celestial bodies of our world. This, his first theory (attributed to Anaximenes and Anaxagoras, although perhaps infused with some Democritean elements), explains that air currents external to the *mundus* whirl round the sphere of the universe and thereby set in circular motion the *aether* and the heavenly bodies

²⁶ The conclusion reached at 374-9.

²⁷ So Forbiger (comm. ad loc.): “[n]imirum *aeternus* hic nil nisi epitheton ornans est habendum. quo poëta utitur, philosophum Epicureum nunc quidem oblitus.”[!] Many critics have sought to compare *corpora uiua* of 5.476 (set against 5.125, 144-5), used of the sun and moon. Yet such scholars evidently stopped reading their Lucretius at 477, for it is clear that the sun and moon are described as moving like “living bodies” purely as an anticipation of 478-9, in which the activity of the various limbs of the human body is said to be directly analogous. There is no need to read Lambinus’ *bina* or Bentley’s *priua*. On *aeternam* at 5.402, again often adduced by commentators, see the following note.

²⁸ As has long been noted by critics (see esp. D. A. West, *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius*, Edinburgh 1969, 50-3), when Lucretius parodies the lofty language of god-fearing epic poetry in 5.396-410, he ironically employs *pater omnipotens* (399) and *aeternam lampada... mundi* (402). Any such irony here, however, would be quite out of place, for Lucretius has a serious theoretical discussion at hand. The difficulty of the text, incidentally, is by no means escaped by reading Bockemüller’s adverbial *aeternum* (not otherwise found in Lucretius).

within it. What could be more natural therefore than Lucretius' qualifying *mundi*, in this unique instance peculiar to this theory, with *interni*? It is crucial that Lucretius emphasises the location of the spherical *mundus* as being *inside* the area that the circular extra-mundane (cf. *extra* 512) air-currents cover. Wakefield's *externi*, offered without argument for its sense (comm. ad loc.), can only have arisen from an unfortunate misunderstanding of the particular context and must be wrong²⁹.

5.1349

[*sc. homines*] qui numero diffidebant armisque uacabant.

This verse closes a passage (1341-9) in which Lucretius concludes his treatment of primitive men and their rash attempt to employ wild animals in warfare. Housman's bold theory that these verses are the casual marginal jottings of Cicero cannot seriously be entertained³⁰. Since I therefore fully credit Lucretius with the composition of 1349, we should be concerned by the fact that it seemingly contradicts what has been said in the preceding lines. For the declaration that "the men were without arms" clashes with 1311, where we read of the *doctores armati* of lions; as M. F. Smith notes³¹, mention of *uinclis* (1312) and their allies' *tela* (1327) makes clear that a period after the discovery of metal-working is being envisaged. Therefore, lest *armisque uacabant* be in stark discord with the passage it is supposed to wrap up, a very weak sense would have to be attributed to

²⁹ I do not think that *materni*, an adjective which Lucretius elsewhere uses of the earth, has yet been conjectured. Such an epithet would, however, bear little relevance here and it is unlikely that Lucretius would have attributed such maternal notions to the *mundus* as a whole, notwithstanding the aid provided for humans by *terra, sol* and *luna*.

³⁰ It is almost certainly no more than Hieronymian fancy that Cicero (and Jerome must mean Marcus Tullius) had any involvement in either the 'editing' or the 'publication' of Lucretius' work. Equally, there is no compelling case for dismissing, with Neumann, 1341-9 as a bizarre interpolation.

³¹ Cf. his Loeb note ad loc.

uacabant, such as “were without force” or “were weak” (in weapons). Alas, such a usage finds no parallel in Classical Latin and cannot be approved. Nor can much be said in favour of the verb’s alteration to Bockemüller’s *lababant*, Diels’ *negabant* (with a verse supplied immediately after) or Orth’s *uagabant*, all of which are barely intelligible.

Rather, we are told in 1347 that a *spes uincendi* was not foremost in their minds and in 1349 that they had no trust in their (small) numbers. Indeed, since they knew that their slaughter was a certainty (1348), they lacked all confidence about their battles. Perhaps then it was in spirit that they were lacking: *animisque uacabant*. For this use of *animi*, most easily corrupted into *armis*³², cf., e.g., Verg. *Aen.* 1.202, 3.260, Hor. *ars* 402, Ov. *met.* 10.656, Liv. 21.53.9.

5.1427-33

at nos nil laedit ueste carere
 purpurea atque auro signisque ingentibus apta,
 dum plebeia tamen sit, quae defendere possit.
 ergo hominum genus incassum frustra laborat 1430
 semper et curis consumit inanibus aeuom,
 nimirum quia non cognouit quae sit habendi
 finis et omnino quoad crescat uera uoluptas.

We may ask what interest it is to learn in 1428 of the size of the embroidered *signa*. Perhaps larger ones were more splendid than others and “huge” ones were really quite something? Perhaps, but an adjective concerning their decorative nature would presumably be more in keeping with the imagery. One could write *nitentibus*³³, “gleaming”, of which *ingentibus* would have

³² If ‘r’ were written for ‘n’, *animis* would have assuredly become *armis*. For such a corruption, cf. 1.646 (*uro* (OQ^{ac}V) for *uno*), 4.143 (*gerantur* (OQ) for *genantur*; cf. also 159), 6.466 (*arta* (OQ) for *-ant a-*) and 1021 (*sporte* (O^{ac}QU) for *sponte*).

³³ Cf. esp. Stat. *Theb.* 1.540 [sc. *pateram*] *signis perfectam auroque nitentem*.

been a most easy corruption, not least because of the proximity of *signis* (pronounced, of course, *singnis*)³⁴.

In 1431 *in* is almost universally inserted by editors after *et*, as was first suggested by certain Italic scribes (FC). Wakefield instead attempted to solve the line by a simple transposition, *et semper*. Although this is possible, good parallels of *semper et* opening a verse (with enjambment of the adverb) can be adduced (2.76, 3.965, 4.970); *et semper*, for what it is worth, is attested only (in the second and third feet) at 3.997. Since, however, *semper* would nonetheless function well with *consumit*, and since a preposition is by no means required with *curis... inanibus*, it may well be that in the place of *et* should stand *enim*³⁵. The reason for man's vain toil is therefore supplied in 1431 and is itself then explained by 1432-3. *semper enim* opens five other Lucretian verses (4.145, 375, 1229, 5.275, 6.1027) and *enim* is followed by *nimirum quia* at 1.812-14, 3.193-4 and 6.658-62.

6.548-51

et merito, quoniam plaustris concussa tremescunt
 tecta uiam propter non magno pondere tota,
 nec minus exultant †esdupuis cumque uim† 550
 ferratos utrimque rotarum succutit orbes.

550 presents a remarkable corruption that remains stubbornly unsolved, with some editors leaving the passage in despair³⁶,

³⁴ J. Jortin, cited by Wakefield (comm. ad loc.) was also uneasy about *ingentibus* and therefore suggested *rigentibus* on the model of Verg. *Aen.* 1.658 *pallam signis auroque rigentem* (cf. also *Aen.* 11.72). Yet *rigentibus* adds little to the imagery of lavish and gaudy decoration in the Lucretian passage (instead suggesting formal, heavy embroidery) and seems rather another instance of pushing Virgilian reminiscences of Lucretius too far. Merrill, “*Criticisms*”, 107, also offered forth a conjecture for the right reasons but I find his *exstantibus* distinctly unappealing, since in context it would more naturally mean “projecting” than “outstanding” (cf. 4.397). I do not understand the force of *uigentibus* printed in the *ed. Veron.* (1486), the *ed. Venet.* (1495) and the first Aldine (1500).

³⁵ It is perhaps worth noting that at 3.792 Q has *enim* for *et in*.

³⁶ “Nos meliores Codd. exspectare, quam tot pericula incerta novis augere maluimus” (Forbiger, comm. ad loc.).

and with Lachmann's *uiai* for *uim* alone enjoying general acceptance. It would only be wearisome to record here the details of the vast number of conjectures that have been made on the line, which nears triple figures and of which the great majority are unappealing³⁷. What they do prove, however, is that any emendation that is plausible in sense must be somewhat removed from the *ductus litterarum* of the bizarre *esdupuis*³⁸. It seems to me certain that what is missing from the force of the passage at present is a feature of the surface of roads that causes the jolting of *plaustra*, the natural subject of *exultant* (the verb being ridiculous when applied to houses)³⁹. Bare mention of a rock of any type (such as Lachmann's *lapis*, Munro's *scrupus*⁴⁰ or Bergk's *rupis*) will therefore not do the trick, nor will

³⁷ Romanes, *Notes*, 50, only employs a little comic exaggeration when he writes, "Several suggestions appear to have been entries in a competition for the platitude which most completely misses the point."

³⁸ The best attempt to retain the forms of these letters is Munro's *ut scrupus*, yet a *scrupus* is, specifically, a small, sharp and therefore painful rock (cf. esp. Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 6.238 *scrupus proprie est lapillus brevis*). Furthermore, it would seem an odd expression to speak of a *scrupus uiai*; indeed, *lapis uiai* could only mean the road's paving. Finally, on the problem of *utcumque* see n.45 below.

³⁹ I believe that those critics who have sought to supply a subject for *exultant* with a pronoun (e.g. Merrill's *ea* or Bailey's *ipsa*) are misguided in thinking that such an addition facilitates the transition from neuter plural *tecta* to neuter plural *plaustra*. Those that have supplied an explicit subject (*currus* Lambinus etc. (after certain Itali), *sedes* [plaustrorum] Christ, *plaustra* or *r(a)edae* Meurig-Davies, *cisia* M. L. Clarke) have only introduced an unnecessary (and with the last two over-explicit) statement of the obvious subject. Bockemüller's view, accepted by Merrill, that *res* (= "furniture of the house") should be recorded as the subject is grotesque, Ellis' *aedes* (= *tecta*, after Wakefield) yet more so. Incidentally, Müller ad loc. prints *currus ubicumque*, a rearrangement which he attributes to himself; it had, however, already been suggested by Wakefield in his notes, to whom (it should be added) Lachmann should have given some credit for his *uiai* (after his predecessor's *uiarum*).

⁴⁰ From his extant lecture notes on Lucr. 6 (Cambridge U.L., Mss Add. 6895) it is evident that Housman approved of Munro's *scrupus*, reading *cumcumque*, for which he compared the most dubious instance at 2.114; in a later hand he has deleted this (not particularly appealing) suggestion.

something vague to the point of obscurity (such as Diels' *res dura*⁴¹ or Martin's *quiduis*). Rather, we here seek the word for any fault in the surface of a road, whether a rut, crack or pothole. As it happens, the Latin language does have a word specifically charged with covering such various faults, namely *salebra*. Such an imperfection would of course be the most natural candidate that *utrimque succutit* the rims of cartwheels⁴². The suitability of the word for the passage is further increased when it is realised that it is cognate with *exultare*, both words denoting, respectively, a cause and an instance of *saltus*. I believe therefore that *salebra* and *ubicumque* should be restored to the text⁴³. The most natural way to do this is to read *ubicumque salebra* in place of *esdupuis cumque*⁴⁴: *uiscumque* could well have arisen from *ubicumque*⁴⁵; *esdup* is quite a different matter. One

⁴¹ Wrongly attributed by Godwin (comm. ad loc.) to Leonard - Smith, who only followed the conjecture.

⁴² *succutere* is also used of a *currus* by Ovid (*met.* 2.166).

⁴³ It is worth comparing Sen. *nat.* 6.22.1 (apparently first cited by Creech, comm. ad loc.): *si quando magna onera per uices uehicularum plurimum tracta sunt et rotae maiore nisu in salebras inciderunt, terram concuti senties*. For an interesting parallel of *salebra* with *succutio*, albeit metaphorical, cf. Val. Max. 6.9 *ext.* 5 *semel dumtaxat uultum mutauit, perquam breui tristitiae salebra succussum, tunc cum admodum gratum sibi anulum de industria in profundum, ne omnis incommodi expers esset, abiecit*.

⁴⁴ If *salebra* must precede *esdupuis*, *salebra alta ubicumque* would be my favoured reading, although I believe this is yet more difficult palaeographically. For the amphibracchic scansion of *salebra*, cf. Mart. 9.57.5 and Lucretius' variable scansion of the medial syllables of *tenebrae* and *latebrae*.

⁴⁵ For *ubicumque* ("wherever") cf. 1.980 and 6.100. By contrast, *utcumque* should not be approved here: if it is taken as "whenever", temporal *ut* is not attested in Lucretius unless in the combination *ut semel* (1.1030, 4.610) and *utcumque*, in the one instance where it occurs (5.583, in tmesis), means "however"; if it is taken in the sense of "wherever" (= *ubicumque*), that sense is apparently found in Pomponius Mela (1.86) alone and even local *ut* is unlucretian. *cumque* cannot stand independently, and Munro's attack ("On Lucretius VI", *JCSPh* 5, 1871, 115-27, at 120) upon Ellis' attempt to make it do so here is worth quoting in full: "[Ellis'] reading too requires *cumque* to stand independently. Here too I cannot

possibility is that a supralinear annotation, written in a (barely legible?) cursive hand above *salebra*, ousted it⁴⁶. For those that doubt that so major a change could ever have occurred in the text of Lucretius, I only advert to the following remarkable instances elsewhere in the poem: 2.43 presents the unsolved *itastuas*, and the preceding verse offers, impossibly, *Epicuri*; 4.545 presents the nonsense *ualidis nete* (O¹Q : *necti* O^{a.c.}) *tortis* and 2.355 offers forth the mysterious *Oinquit* (Q : *Oinquit* G : *Nonquit* O), neither of which has been satisfactorily emended; there remains no certainty about how *propter odores* entered the text at 5.1442, or for what the unlucretian *tam magnis* followed by the impossible *montis* stands at 6.490; *creatur* (O¹) is read for the monstrous *oracantu* (QG : *orcartu* O^{a.c.}) at 1.177 and *summersaque saxa* for *summersosca* (OO) at 6.541. The list could happily be extended⁴⁷.

6.653-4

quod bene propositum si plane contueare
ac uideas plane, mirari multa relinquo.

Although I am sensible of Lucretius' penchant for repetition, I think it more likely that the latter *plane* is a mistaken repetition of the former⁴⁸ (and therefore hides a different adverb) than, as

follow him, as the impossibility of this is to my mind a demonstrated fact, if aught in philology and grammar can be said to be demonstrated. If ten thousand instances one way are to be overborne by one isolated passage in Horace [= *carm.* 1.32.15], then reasoning must be at an end."

⁴⁶ A reader's explanatory noting of the subject of *exultant* such as "id est pl." (= i.e. *plaustra*) could, with some scribal confusion and a small stretch of the will, have produced *esdup*.

⁴⁷ The closest emendation in sense to mine is P. Rusch's *fissura ubicumque*. My doubts about *fissura* are primarily that the word is rare (only used by Pliny the Elder, Columella and Scr. Largus) and, despite the defence offered by W. Richter, *Textstudien zu Lukrez*, München 1974, 130-1, it is little easier in palaeographical terms than my conjecture.

⁴⁸ For such errors in the text of Lucretius, cf. the extensive and useful *Adnotatio* on 6.131 in Müller's edition. We have already witnessed the remarkable dittography *bistonia bistonias* in Q at 5.30.

Munro and others have strained to defend, that an important difference between *contueri* and *uidere* is here to be envisaged (mere tautology being highly improbable). I suggest either *penitus* (cf. 1.145 *penitus conuisere*, Cic. *fin.* 5.69 *penitus uiderent*, *Tusc.* 4.68 *penitus uidere*) or, closer to the *ductus*, *clare* (cf. 1.921 *clarius audi*).

6.662-4

nimirum quia sunt multarum semina rerum
et satis haec tellus morbi caelumque mali fert,
unde queat uis immensi procreescere morbi.

The appearance of *morbi* in both 663 and 664 has rightly worried a number of critics. Lucretius' repeating a word is not *per se* a cause of any concern. Here, however, it is not only a little odd for him to speak of a *morbus malus*⁴⁹ but also, much more importantly, it is sheer nonsense to say that the earth and sky produce enough *malus morbus* from which could grow a *uis immensi morbi*⁵⁰. The difficulty can be removed by seeing *morbi* of 663 as a mistaken anticipation of that form at 664⁵¹

⁴⁹ It is true that we find *turpi morte malaque* at 1241 but the force of *mala* can there more naturally be understood as 'evil' and *morbus*, unlike *mors*, is a bad thing without possible qualification. Commentators are quick to cite Celsus (2.4 *mali etiam morbi signum...*), but the immediate context demonstrates that this is intended to be a medical subdivision of *morbi*, namely those that are 'serious' or 'grave'. It is impossible in our Lucretian passage to separate *mali* and *morbi*, as some earlier commentators attempted to do, understanding *satis morbi tellus et satis mali caelum fert*.

⁵⁰ This point is forcefully made by Housman in his lecture notes (as n.40) ad loc.: "What Marullus and Lambinus and Lachmann and students who read their author have objected to is not the repetition of *morbi* but the nonsense which arises from its repetition: 'earth and sky produce enough sickness to give rise to a huge amount of sickness'. What they produce is enough baneful stuff to create in man a huge amount of sickness: therefore *nobis* Marullus." Lambinus (comm. ad loc.) was equally disparaging of the retention by his (wildly inferior) rival Gifanius of the paradosis: "quae lectio nullo modo ferri potest. Hanc tamen tuetur Zoilus, tale est hominis palatum."

⁵¹ Cf. n.48 above.

and regarding *mali* as substantival, as very often elsewhere in Lucretius⁵²; Marullus emended *morbi* to *nobis*, which is good in sense, albeit a little redundant; Lachmann suggested *orbi*, which gives a rather queer meaning⁵³. Diels, who reluctantly printed the paradosis, termed these two emendations “incredibile utrumque” (app. ad loc.). Following Lachmann’s lead, however, I suggest that *tellus morbi* obscures *terrarum orbis*, a phrase used by Lucretius at 2.613, 658, 1056 (*terrarum orbem caelumque*)⁵⁴, 1075, 5.74, 1346 and just above at 6.629: alongside the *caelum* as a producer of disease, then, is the earthly realm (with a natural and understandable focus upon its dry land). The confusion of *l* and *r* is common enough in the major Lucretian manuscripts⁵⁵, and once either *terrarum* became *tellarum* or *orbis* became *morbi* by anticipation, the correction we find in OQ was inevitable. Of course, *hic* must be read for *haec*, but the introduction of the latter was effectively guaranteed by the appearance of *tellus*.

6.799-801

denique si calidis etiam cunctere lauabris
 plenior †efflueris†, solio feruentis aquai 800
 quam facile in medio fit uti des saepe ruinas!

⁵² *mali* would function best if not qualified by any adjective, therefore I am not attracted to W. S. Watt’s *foedi* for *morbi* (“Lucretiana”, *PCPhS* 49, 2003, 158-60, at 159).

⁵³ A form of *orbis* had long ago been offered – but most improbably – by Pius: *et satis haec tellus orbem caelumque malum fert*.

⁵⁴ A collocation also found at *Ov. met.* 2.7.

⁵⁵ *l* for *r*: 1.744 (*solem* for *rorem*), 824 (*bellis* (OQ^{a.c.G}) for *uerbis* (Q¹)), 2.414 (*penetrabile* (OQ^{a.c.G}) for *penetrare* (Q¹)), 3.914 (*fluctus* for *fructus*), 5.790 (*uulgultaque* (OQ^{a.c.}) for *uulgultaque* (Q¹)), 6.246 (*classis* for *crassis*), 277 (*alto* for *arto*), 368 (*ligoris* (O^{a.c.}Q) for *rigoris*), 516 (*tela* for *cera*), 695 (*resoluet* for *resorbet*); *r* for *l*: 2.54 (*raboret* (O^{a.c.}Q^{a.c.G}) for *laboret* (Q¹)), 5.230 (*arme* (OQ^{a.c.}) for *alme* (Q¹)), 1091 (*gradem* (O^{a.c.}) or *cradem* (Q^{a.c.}U) for *cladem* (Q¹)), 1177 (*mari* for *mali*).

800 has long been a source of editorial trouble, since *efflueris* (OQ : *effueris* U) is Latin in form but impossible in sense⁵⁶; yet, as Merrill augured with remarkable clairvoyance (comm. ad loc.), “[w]hen the sentence is finally emended, the words will meet with an adequate explanation.” The vulgate text is based upon Naugerius’ emendation of *efflueris* to *et fueris* (often wrongly attributed to Wakefield). Although accepted by very many editors, this can hardly be right⁵⁷, for disregarding its weak sense, no foundation exists for postponed *et* in Lucretius. Overlooking this serious stylistic problem, those critics that have sought to emend *fueris* to another verb have not found one that is both close to the paradosis and good in sense⁵⁸. Since *solio* must reasonably be taken with *in medio*, it seems instead that another part of speech must lurk behind OQ’s *efflueris*⁵⁹. What, we may ask, would make one more likely to faint in hot baths, if one is already stuffed full of food? Surely dehydration⁶⁰? It so happens

⁵⁶ For an informative and detailed discussion of past attempts to repair the line, see M. F. Smith, “Lucretius 6.799-803”, *MH* 58, 2001, 65-9, at 65-7; he concludes in favour of Bernays (for whose conjecture see below).

⁵⁷ Pace Godwin (comm. ad loc.) who declares that it is thus “emended plausibly”.

⁵⁸ *frueris* (Madvig and, independently, Bockemüller), *laueris* (Lachmann, changing *cunctere* to *cunctare* in 799), *lueris* (Diels, a dubious form).

⁵⁹ Bernays conjectured “olim audacius” (Prol. LXXX), but later rejected, *ex epulis*, a suggestion which has appealed to a number of subsequent critics. I do not find the conjecture attractive, since *epulae* is a word of a particularly negative stigma for the Epicurean and is used by Lucretius only in his polemic against the luxurious life at the opening of Book 2 (26); such negative overtones would be entirely inappropriate here. Furthermore, *ex* is not used in the temporal sense of “after” in *de rerum natura*, and if *ex* means “as a result of”, it is a curiously prosaic detail. In short, we do not seek a word that explains by what means someone is *plenior*, since the adjective is perfectly intelligible in the sense of being full of food (cf. 3.938, 960). More unappealing is Merrill’s *effluuiis*, “[rather full] from exhalations”, which, however close to the paradosis, introduces an unattested usage of *effluuium* and awkward sense.

⁶⁰ Dehydration and fainting were associated by the ancients as closely as they are in the present age. For explicit collocations, one naturally looks to Celsus: a quick search turns up the two allied in his discussion of the symptoms of cholera (4.18.2): *urget sitis, anima deficit*.

that, in minuscule, the *ductus litterarum* of *lueris* is almost identical to that of *itiens*, and that *f* and *s* are often confused in the Lucretian tradition⁶¹. I therefore propose that *efflueris* is a simple corruption of *et sitiens* (transcribed as a single unit)⁶², an error no doubt encouraged by the presence of the second person subjunctive *cunctere* three words previously.

6.1219-21

nec tamen omnino temere illis solibus ulla
comparebat auis, nec †tia† saecla ferarum 1220
exibant siluis;

1220 *nectia* QU : *noctia* O : *nec tristia* Macr. sat. 6.2.14 :
nec fortia F : *nec noctibus* Lachmann

I believe that it is more likely that 1220 was corrupt by the time Macrobius wrote the *saturnalia* in c. 385 A.D. than that *tristia* is Lucretius' original adjective. Since the work of Pieri⁶³, Macrobius' halo has fallen somewhat with regard to the indirect tradition of Lucretius. In this particular passage, as Pieri's detailed discussion shows⁶⁴, Macrobius presents the banalisations *sedibus* for *solibus* (1219) and *exsuperant* for *exibant* (1221). One should therefore not shy away from emendations that differ from Macrobius' *tristia*. After all, this adjective, if meaning "fierce", would be of little interest, and perhaps over-specific, and, if meaning "miserable", would employ a rare sense of the

⁶¹ For example, *f* for *s*: 2.497 (*femina* (O^{a.c}.Q) for *semina* (Q^l)), 6.909 (*fit* for *sit*); *s* for *f*: 2.683 (*sucus* for *fucus*), 4.843 (*conserre* (O^{a.c}.Q) for *conferre* (O^l)), 6.804 (*seruis* (O) for *febris*).

⁶² Housman (in his lecture notes (cf. n.40) and in the *Lucretiana* published by T. B. Haber, "New Housman *Lucretiana*", *CJ* 51, 1956, 386-90, at 388) conjectured adjectival *effultus*, W. S. Watt ("Lucretiana", *Philologus* 140, 1996, 248-56, at 255) *effertus*; since both are participial, a conjunctive particle is not required, yet both make an awkward tautology with *plenior*.

⁶³ A. Pieri, *Lucrezio in Macrobio: Adattamenti al testo virgiliano*, Firenze 1977.

⁶⁴ Pieri, *Lucrezio*, 208-20.

adjective in Lucretius, elsewhere used only of humans (2.1168, 3.997, 6.1184). Furthermore, as Pieri well observes, *tristia* could have been introduced by anticipation of Macrobius' subsequent quotation from Lucretius (3.72), which contains *tristi funere fratris*.

Lambinus' *noctibus* and Bentley's apparent defence of *noctis*⁶⁵ are not attractive: we want an emphasis upon neither nocturnal nor diurnal creatures; O's *noctia* is in reality a corruption of *nectia* (<*nec ...tia*), as found in QU. Perhaps *hiantia* (following *nec*) should be read, since the beasts (as we learn in the following sentence) *languebant pleraque morbo / et moriebantur*; cf. also *sitientia saecla ferarum* at 5.947⁶⁶. The gaping hunger and thirst of the beasts seems better brought out by *hiantia* than Bockemüller's *edacia* (also suggested independently by Romanes), an adjective not used by Lucretius. It would be irrelevant to object that the appearance of the animals cannot be recorded since they did not leave the woods: the very words that follow underline the narrator's familiarity with their particular fate. It is therefore entirely unproblematic for Lucretius to assert that, prior to the majority of them "languishing from disease and dying", they did gape with desperate starvation and thirst in their sylvan haunts⁶⁷.

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⁶⁵ With the comparison of the largely irrelevant 4.710; the reading is found in certain Italic mss and was printed in the *ed. Veron.* (1486) and *ed. Venet.* (1495). I am not taken by Pontanus' *agrestia*, I. Voss' *noxia* or N. Heinsius' *inertia*.

⁶⁶ *hiare* is used similarly at 3.1083 of humans greedily hungering after life.

⁶⁷ I am most grateful to the two anonymous referees who provided points and queries that have allowed me to clarify and, in parts, bolster my arguments. I do concede that there will always be those who object that the texts of ancient writers are being changed by modern scholars unnecessarily. Yet 'necessity' for conjecture cannot be used as a valid critical rule: as Martin West said of A. Wartelle's dictum "toute conjecture inutile

est fausse”, “[t]his is tantamount to saying that a passage *must* be sound if it is not demonstrably corrupt. A more fatuous standpoint could hardly be imagined.” (*Studies in Aeschylus*, Stuttgart 1990, 370). If there is genuine room for doubt about the veracity of the paradosis – and so often with Lucretius there is – then challenging it by conjecture can only perform the beneficial services of sparking debate over the text at hand and demanding closer reading of it. The pendulum of critical attitudes is ever swinging to and for between conservatism and radicalism but its present motion, as far as I can discern, is away from the latter. Provided, however, that scholars are constantly on guard when working through a printed text, the particular place of the pendulum matters little. Yet one would wish that it were more widely acknowledged that there can hardly be any graver flaw in literary scholarship than taking the transmitted text for granted. To close with Housman: “there is no trade on earth, excepting textual criticism, in which the name of prudence would be given to that habit of mind which in ordinary human life is called credulity” (*M. Manilii Astronomicon Liber Primus*, London 1903, xliii).

