

## SEVEN LUCRETIAN EMENDATIONS

By

DAVID BUTTERFIELD

ABSTRACT: Seven emendations are offered upon the text of Lucretius' *De rerum natura*, with particular focus upon Book IV (II 250; IV 284; IV 418 f.; IV 638; IV 790; IV 791; IV 845).

II 246-250:

namque hoc in promptu manifestumque esse uidemus,  
pondera, quantum in sest, non posse obliqua meare,  
ex supero quom praecipitant, quod cernere possis;  
sed nil omnino <recta> regione uiai

250 declinare quis est qui possit cernere sese?

**249** *recta recte suppl.* LF : *om.* OQG : *nulla Lachmann* || **250** *possit* OQ : *praestet Lachmann* : *poscat Winckelmann* : *uas sit Bockemüller* | *sese* OQG : *sensus Bernays* : *de se olim Munro* : *sensu Giussani* : *suesse Nencini* : *recte Romanes* : *posse MacKay* : *sensim Orth* : *se e se García Calvo* : *uaria ci. Fowler*<sup>1</sup> | *dicere uere Merrill* : *consciis esse Richter*

The close of 250 presents a well-known crux about which few editors have reached agreement, although there is almost universal acceptance of the Italic supplement<sup>2</sup> *recta* in the previous verse<sup>3</sup>. A persistent group over the centuries have continued to defend the paradosis of 250, taking *sese* as the reflexive object of *declinare*: “but who is there who could discern that they [= *pondera* as in 246–248] in no way at all swerve themselves from their vertical path”? Three

---

<sup>1</sup> *aut clare uel coram uel certe uel quicumq; post cernere, aut corpora uel pondera ante possit, aut confirmare uel declinare potissit pro possit cenere sese.*

<sup>2</sup> It should be made clear at the outset of this article that I am among those convinced that the Italic mss of Lucretius are not witnesses to the tradition independent from OQGVU, and I therefore treat them primarily as a repertory for Renaissance conjectures. Nevertheless, the clear and painstaking contribution to the field made by Szymański 2006 served to show that, even with acceptance of this critical standpoint, the Italic mss still repay close collation.

<sup>3</sup> It is therefore most surprising that, in the most recent critical edition of the work (Flores 2002–2004), no critical note at all is offered upon 250.

difficulties are immediately evident with this strategy: (i) *sese*, an oddly emphatic pronominal form in itself, is placed at some remove from *declinare* and in a position that is potentially ambiguous after *possit cernere*; (ii) in discussing inanimate weights and the spontaneous atomic *clinamen* they experience, the suggestion of active deflection of their movements is unwelcome; (iii) the evidence for *declinare* employed transitively with regard to such motion is scanty.

To take the last objection first, our focus should lie on Lucretius' practice elsewhere: at II 221 and II 253, both passages concerning atomic motion, he employs *declinare* intransitively; in the third and final instance, at II 259, the manuscripts present a transitive use of the verb: "declinamus item motus nec tempore certo/ nec regione loci certa, sed ubi ipsa tulit mens". In this particular context, however, Lucretius could have chosen to use *declinare* transitively in order to express humans' active power to move according to their will; nonetheless, it is also possible that the reverse of the corruption at II 251 (where *motu* is transmitted for *motus*) has occurred here, and that we should read *declinamus item motu*, "we likewise swerve in our motions"<sup>4</sup>. More forceful than this potential grammatical obstacle, however, is the second, that of sense. At the close of the section II 216–250, it is completely unwelcome for Lucretius to imply that inanimate *pondera* "swerve themselves" rather than suffer random minimal shifts in their vertical line of travel. The intransitive usage leaves the awkward issue of agency unresolved; a transitive construction, by contrast, unduly implies that the atoms can move themselves in a manner akin to active agents, i.e. at will. For a Roman poet the difference between, say, *amnis declinat* and *amnis se declinat* is potentially one of real significance. Finally, to come to the first objection, the placing of *sese* is not perhaps fatal but the resultant text is undeniably clumsy, for the pronoun could theoretically be taken as the subject of *declinare*: "who is there who can discern that he does not himself swerve at all from the vertical line of his path?"<sup>5</sup>. If Lucretius did indeed wish to write *se(se)*, I find it difficult to accept that he would not have written "sese [or haec se] declinare quis est qui cernere possit", availing himself of a not unlucretian rhythm<sup>6</sup>.

I therefore believe that most editors are right to conclude that the transmitted *sese* cannot stand. Of the many emendations heretofore suggested, I am of the opinion that any which alters *possit cernere* is misguided. These words are an intentional repetition of *cernere possis* in 248 to drive home Lucretius' point and

---

<sup>4</sup> Similarly weak instances of bare *motu* can be seen at IV 136 and V 551. I also follow the emendation of Davies *ad Cic. De fato* 46, where *qua declinet atomus* should be read for *quae d. atomum*. For further discussion of transitive and intransitive *declinare* with regard to this crux, see Richter 1974: 23 f.

<sup>5</sup> This reading, although certainly not attractive in sense, was suggested by Bollack 1976: 173 f.

<sup>6</sup> For a word occupying the first foot followed by a word that terminates at the weak caesura in the third foot, see in Book II, e.g. 86, 407, 619, 830, 1110 (of which 619 and 1110 further lack any fourth-foot caesura).

they perfectly satisfy the required meaning. As regards 250, word order strongly suggests that the final foot of the line should be taken with the immediately preceding relative clause. Of emendations with these restrictions, Giussani's *sensu* is passable in sense but undeniably otiose and Fowler's *clare* or *certe* present the unwelcome suggestion of our perhaps discerning such a change of movement "almost clearly" or "almost for certain". I propose that we should read *per se*, "for themselves", i.e. with their own sensory capabilities: there is no human who with their own visual powers can discern this minimal motion (although it can be apprehended, as Lucretius has shown, by logical thought)<sup>8</sup>. Either *perse* was corrupted to *sese* by dittography or anticipation of *se*, or *per*, perhaps written *p*, was lost and a second *se* added to repair metre<sup>9</sup>.

IV 279–288:

280 sic ubi se primum speculi proiecit imago,  
dum uenit ad nostros acies, protrudit agitque  
aera qui inter se quomquest oculosque locatus,  
et facit ut prius hunc omnem sentire queamus  
quam speculum; sed ubi [in] speculum quoque sensimus ipsum,  
continuo a nobis in eum quae fertur imago  
285 peruenit et nostros oculos reiecta reuisit  
atque alium prae se propellens aera uoluit  
et facit ut prius hunc quam se uideamus, eoque  
distare ab speculo tantum semota uidetur.

283 in OQ : *del. Marullus* || 284 in eum OQ : in id haec (*olim c. haec in id a n.*) *Lambinus* : iterum *Lachmann* : in idem *Munro* : itidem *Bockemüller* (*quod sibi trib. C.L. Howard*) : in tum *Merrill* : illuc *Watt* : in eo *García Calvo* | quae fertur in illud *K. Müller*

The removal in 283 of the unmeaning and unmetrical *in* is an assured correction. In the following verse, however, less certainty surrounds the transmitted *in eum*. If

<sup>7</sup> Orth wished to take *sensim* with *declinare*. Such an ambiguous placing of the adverb would, however, fail to satisfy the important canon of Townend (1969: 338): "nowhere in Lucretius is there a sentence whose meaning is determined by the presence of a comma".

<sup>8</sup> It has been kindly suggested to me by the anonymous referee for "Eos" that *per se* could modify *declinare* rather than *possit cernere* but I am not convinced. Firstly, the word order is such that, even with the collocation *quod cernere possis* two lines above, there is no indication to the reader that *per se* modifies something outside the relative clause and Townend's canon (see the preceding note) is violated. Secondly, the emphasis in the passage is upon the minimal motion (cf. *nil omnino*) of these atoms from their straight path: it is irrelevant for Lucretius to add to his question the stipulation that this motion is self-motivated, as if this fact could affect one's ability to see it. Thirdly, as a development of the last objection, were *per se* to refer to *declinare*, the close of the question becomes strangely marked rhetorically to emphasise something of no real importance.

<sup>9</sup> I argue elsewhere (Butterfield 2009: 311 f.) that *cernere per se* should be read for *cernere posse* at III 359.

the text is correct, *eum* (with antecedent *speculum*)<sup>10</sup> would be the sole example in Latin literature of a masculine form *speculus*<sup>11</sup> before its appearance in the pseudo-Cyprianic *Liber de montibus Sina et Sion*<sup>12</sup>, a tract written in vulgar Latin around the turn of the third century AD which can bear little comparative value, since the work's Latinity is widely regarded as "barbarisch schlechtes"<sup>13</sup>. It would be folly to defend Lucretian practice by reference to such a work<sup>14</sup>. Nonetheless, Christ, Merrill (*olim*), Diels, Orth and Valentí, among a few others, have indeed granted this licence to Lucretius, with Diels (1922: 52) asserting "dass neben *hoc speculum* [...] ihm aus der Volkssprache auch ein *speculus* bekannt war" (Diels 1922: 52). Yet this unique change of gender would here be entirely unmotivated (metrical convenience could hardly be cited) and we have clear testimony elsewhere in the work (III 974 and IV 151) that Lucretius, like all other Latin literary authors, did employ neuter *speculum*. Therefore, it seems as good as certain that if Lucretius did wish to employ a prepositional construction, *in id* or *in illud* was necessarily required.

Unfortunately, among the suggested emendations, Lambinus' *in id haec* is clumsy (though neater than his first offering) and Müller's transposition *quae fertur in illud* comparatively violent; Munro's tidier *in idem*, by contrast, presents a useless emphasis on the identity of the mirror under discussion. In short, there seems no means of retaining a suitable prepositional phrase with *in*<sup>15</sup>. I believe therefore that Watt took the right tack in searching for a spatial adverb and his *illuc* may be correct. Nonetheless, *eo*, "to there" (as at IV 1055: *eo tendit*), seems more natural and could be preceded by the appropriate *item*, "likewise", emphasising that the journey of the image from us to the mirror is identical to that of

---

<sup>10</sup> The idea of Romanes (1935: 40) that *in eum* = *in aera* has unsurprisingly not won scholars' approval.

<sup>11</sup> I only note in passing the perverse theory of Wakefield (1813, *ad. loc.*), who reaches the following remarkable conclusion on the basis of the transmitted reading: "tuto nobis videtur colligendum, antiquos *eum* in neutro adhibuisse pro *id*!" Such wild decrees deserve the charge of Lachmann (1850, *ad loc.*) that Wakefield is "Latinitatis auctor mirificus". No argument is given by the first modern commentator Pius (1514, *ad loc.*), where he simply states "In eum. In id speculum!"

<sup>12</sup> "Quis est speculus immaculatus patris?" (13).

<sup>13</sup> The words are those of Lampe 1987: 119, n. 382.

<sup>14</sup> As is rightly stated by Ernout (1925, *ad loc.*), "si l'on rencontre dans notre auteur des façons de parler qui appartiennent à la langue familière, on n'a pas le droit de lui prêter des barbarismes qu'on trouve seulement dans la bouche des affranchis illettrés et barbares du banquet de Trimalcion".

<sup>15</sup> Lachmann's *iterum* is untrue in sense and demands that *peruenit* be taken absolutely, a usage which has no close Lucretian parallel (for, at IV 554 and VI 87 = VI 383, the verb is used with *unde* and with the implication of 'coming'). I do not understand García Calvo's *in eo* (abl.), even with the help of his Spanish translation. Merrill's horrific *in tum* (demanding tmesis of *in... fertur*) does not require discussion.

the image of the mirror to us (279 f.), but in the reverse direction<sup>16</sup>. If either *item* was wrongly contracted to *im/in* or *eo* corrupted to *eum* (via *eo* taken as *eū*), “correction” to *in eum* could easily have followed<sup>17</sup>. To translate 283–285: “But when we have seen the mirror itself also, at once the image which is likewise carried from us reaches it and, once reflected, returns to our eyes”<sup>18</sup>.

## IV 414–419:

415 at conlectus aquae digitum non altior unum,  
qui lapides inter sistit per strata uiarum,  
despectum praebet sub terras impete tanto,  
a terris quantum caeli patet altus hiatus,  
nubila despiciere et caelum ut uideare uidere  
corpora mirande sub terras abdita caelo.

414 conlectus *Lambinus* : coniectus OQ || 418 despiciere OQ : dispiciere *Lachmann* | caelum ut O : caelum Q : caeli ut *Goebel* (*et Bergk suo Marte*) : uolucrum (*nisi* (atque) auium) *Munro* : uiua ut *Palmer* : rerum ut *Nettleship* : astra uel solem ut *Brieger* (*lac. post 418 stat.*) : clare *Everett* : caeno *Bignone* : mole ut *Housman* | uidere OQ : et aperta *M.F. Smith* | et post uidere olim *add. Lambinus* (*quod sibi trib. Bernays*) || 419 corpora OQ : ut prope *Lachmann* : caerula *Polle* : cetera *primum Munro* (418 intacto et mirando in 419 lecto) | mirande O : mirandae Q : miranda *Itali plerique* : mirando F : mirandi *Lambinus* : mirandum *Bentley* : mirandum est *Birt* : miraclo *Lachmann* : mirantes *Purmann* | terras abdita OQ : terris abdita *Purmann* : terras addita *Palmer* : terra subdita *Cartault* | caelo OQ : caeli *Lambinus* : pacto *Faber* : retro *Bentley* : signa *Goebel* : caeno *Bergk* : ludo *Polle* : cernas *M.F. Smith* | 419 ante 418 *transp. Lachmann*

As the size of the above apparatus suggests, verses 418 f. have been much discussed over the last five centuries<sup>19</sup>. The two lines as transmitted simply cannot stand: *caelum* [...] *corpora* cannot be construed and *caelo* closing 419 is most difficult indeed<sup>20</sup>. In view of the sheer number of suggested emendations it

<sup>16</sup> Bockemüller and Howard would presumably have introduced *item* instead of the rarer *itidem*, had they thought it possible.

<sup>17</sup> It has been plausibly suggested to me as an alternative explanation by the anonymous referee for “Eos” that *eo* was misunderstood as a pronoun not a verb, and the standard construction of *fertur + in + acc.* was introduced, without due heed paid to the gender of the referent.

<sup>18</sup> *item* is also elided at VI 537, VI 711 and VI 1192. For the elision of a pyrrhic word ending in *-m* in the arsis of the hexameter, cf. III 339 (*enim*), III 906 (*quidem*) and VI 80 (*quidem*). The comparative metrical rarity introduced by my emendation is, I concede, not ideal and to avoid it one could tentatively suggest *et* (‘also’) *eo*. *et* is corrupted to *in* at II 749.

<sup>19</sup> Writing to W.H.D. Rouse, the editor of the first Lucretius *Loeb* (London 1924), on 21 Jan., 1921, A.E. Housman confessed “IV 418–9 is a passage I have often broken my head over without avail” (Trinity College Dublin MS 2287; see Housman 2007: vol. I, 462).

<sup>20</sup> The rendering of Merrill 1916: 55, who believes (like Martin) that the transmitted text is defensible, is pure fantasy: “that to look down on the clouds and to behold heaven you seem, bodies in wondrous fashion put down under the earth, withdrawn from the sky”.

is a relief that the overall sense of the two verses is clear: when looking down into the reflective surfaces of puddles one is able to see the sky and its contents apparently beneath the surface. I believe that most critics are right to retain the transmitted *despicere* in 418 (cf. *despectum* 416), notwithstanding Lachmann's objections that it typically has a tone of disapproval, and *mirande* in 419, an adverb employed again shortly after this passage<sup>21</sup>. I also think it certain that O's *ut* should be kept in 418, the particle having easily been omitted by either Q or its exemplar.

In an attempt to bring sense to the passage, Lambinus, Bernays and others have sought to add *et* at the close of 418, thereby taking *corpora* of 419 as referring in general terms to physical bodies. Not only is such a vague use of bare *corpora* improbable but it remains a serious objection that Lucretius nowhere else in the work avails himself of the metrically most useful expedient of placing *et* at the close of the hexameter<sup>22</sup>. Such an unparalleled licence should not therefore be assumed by the Lucretian critic<sup>23</sup>. The greater changes made by M.F. Smith are skilful but, I think, excessively interventive for the problem at hand. Since Howard's attempt to take *uidere* as appositional to *despicere*, with a comma placed after *uideare*, is too convoluted to have been understood in a text without punctuation (cf. n. 7 above), it seems to me certain that *uidere* must be the second infinitive dependent upon *uideare*. Finally, *sub terras* (n.b. not *sub terris*) must be taken closely with *abdita*; as a result, *caelo* closing the line cannot be construed: something cannot be "buried down beneath the earth in the sky"<sup>24</sup>. The word is presumably a mistaken reminiscence of its appearance in 418 and 417, as Faber first suggested.

With all of this said in preface, we can now turn to the adoption of two palmary conjectures. Firstly, Goebel's *caeli* (which later occurred, apparently independently, to Bergk) for *caelum* is excellent in 418, since it allows the genitive to be dependent upon *corpora*: these "objects of the sky" are predominantly the sun, the moon and the stars but can include whatever happens to be in the sky at the

---

<sup>21</sup> IV 462: "cetera de genere hoc mirande multa uidemus", where recent editors are certainly right to retain the adverb.

<sup>22</sup> The attempt of Faber and (independently) the great Madvig to insert *et* at the close of I 557 is likewise to be rejected. Similarly, Lucretius does not place the equally proclitic *ac* or *atque* at the close of the verse. I have argued elsewhere (Butterfield 2008: 123–125) that *atque* transmitted at the close of VI 1108 is a metrical stopgap resulting from the interpolation of the following verse.

<sup>23</sup> Dionigi (1994, *ad loc.*) takes the curious step of defending *et* for its leonine rhyme with *et* in the middle of the verse: "L'integrazione *et* alla fine del v. 418 [...] oltre a formare la rima leonina [...], consente anche una perfetta specularità e addirittura equivalenza strutturale e semantica dei due emistichi".

<sup>24</sup> In his recent critical edition (2002–2004, *ad loc.*), Flores says of *abdita*: "est amphibologia, cum referatur et ad *sub terras* et ad *caelo*". This assertion merely describes the difficulty without resolving it.

time of observation (clouds, birds etc.). Secondly, since *caelo* cannot stand at the close of 419, I adopt Bentley's most apt conjecture *retro*<sup>25</sup>. The collocation *abdita retro* is used by Lucretius at IV 607: "ergo replentur loca uocibus abdita retro"<sup>26</sup>.

Konrad Müller, in his bold and beautiful (but regrettably hard-to-come-by) edition of 1975, was the first and only scholar to adopt (without argument) these two emendations. A significant point of difference arises, however, in his also adopting Polle's alteration of *corpora* to *caerula*. Although *corpora caeli* (or *mundi*) is not attested as a collocation until Latin of the late antique and early mediaeval periods, and Bailey (comm. *ad loc.*) dismisses it as "a strange expression", I see no particular problem with the phrase. For the expression is suitably general, with *corpora* being simply "objects" and *caeli* providing the specified location; of course, the "heavenly bodies" are primarily meant<sup>27</sup> but Lucretius leaves the image open for wider interpretation, by day or by night (about which, *pace* the commentators, the passage is inspecific). By contrast, Polle's *caerula*, which introduces a collocation also found at I 1090 and VI 96, cannot be dismissed as impossible but it limits the picture to the daytime and replaces the imagery of diverse reflected objects (astral and otherwise) with the general, and certainly less striking, reflection of the sky's colour. There is no obvious need to reject a fully defensible paradosis for a less compelling emendation. Instead, this note has sought to defend two attractive but often-overlooked emendations and to recommend to future editors that this pair of conjectures be adopted alone for the first time. Finally, I append a translation of verses 418 f., once the emendations of Goebel and Bentley are taken together: "and you seem to look down on the clouds and to see the heavenly bodies wondrously buried deep beneath the earth".

#### IV 636–639:

tantaque <in> his rebus distantia differitasquest,  
 ut quod alis cibus est aliis fuit acre uenenum;  
 †est itaque ut† serpens, hominis quae tacta salius  
 disperit ac sese mandendo conficit ipsa.

**636** in *Non.* 136, 29 *L.* ABFC : om OQ || **637** fuit O<sup>1</sup>L AFC : fruat O : fiat Q || **638** est itaque ut OQ : est utique ut *Marullus* : saepe etenim *olim Lambinus* : est aliquae *Lachmann* : dedicat ut *Bernays* : esse ita quit *uel* extetque ut *Munro* : est itaque et *N.P. Howard* : mutuaque ut *Albert* : haesitat ut *Bockemüller* : est ut quae *Brieger* : excetra ut est *Ellis* : bestia ut est *Cartault* : uescitur ut *Merrill* : fontis aquae ut *Meurig-Davies* : est scytale *Bailey* : pestifera

<sup>25</sup> If the first *r* were transcribed as *c*, or the second as *l*, *cetro* or *retlo* could have subsequently been altered to *c<a>elo*.

<sup>26</sup> Bentley also compares I 1058 f.: "et quae pondera sunt sub terris omnia sursum/ nitier in terraque retro requiescere posta".

<sup>27</sup> It is worth noting Lucretius' choice of words when he states at V 476 that the sun and moon move as if they were alive: "ut corpora uiua".

ut Richter (*lac. post 637 stat.*) : dira uelut *K. Müller* : est in aquis *Watt* | est ita ut in serpente *dub. Büchner* | quae tacta OQ : contacta *Lambinus* : quom tacta *Nencini* (est itaque ut *retentis*) : quae est tacta *K. Müller*

The text of 638 presents a remarkably stubborn crux and, some 430 years after the first printed edition of the poem (Brescia 1473), a Lucretian commentator could declare without qualification that “[t]he line still needs medicine” (Merrill 1907, *ad loc.*). The three transmitted words *est itaque ut* cannot stand: *itaque* serves no purpose (for these verses do not express a consequence)<sup>28</sup> and *ut* is unexpected (and without an exact Lucretian parallel in its temporal sense)<sup>29</sup>. The preceding two lines have stated that foodstuffs can have such widely differing effects on different creatures that one’s food can be another’s poison. The following two verses treat the case of a snake which, on being touched by human saliva, chews itself to death. Comparison of passages discussing the matter (e.g. Plin. *NH* VII 15; XXVIII 38; Nic. *Ther.* 86; Ael. *NA* II 24) suggests that this was thought to be a general reaction of snakes to the substance<sup>30</sup>. Accordingly, the attempts to introduce specific serpents by Ellis (*excetra*) and Bailey (*scytale*) seem to be instances of misplaced learning on the scholars’ part.

I can see no need to remove *est ita*<sup>31</sup>; the only question is what should precede *serpens*. I think that the required general sense is “so it is when a snake” and, since *est ita uti* would be contrary to Lucretian usage, I conjecture *est ita quom*, also adopting Müller’s insertion of *est* after *quae* (neater than Lambinus’ *contacta*; for *quae est* cf. V 900). If *itaqu(o)* were mistakenly transcribed as *itaque*, it is not impossible that the remaining letter(s) were “corrected” to *ut* or, if no letters survived, that the apparently harmless particle was added to repair metre. The loss of *est* is well paralleled in the Lucretian tradition: cf. III 203; IV 799; V 587; VI 208; VI 890.

#### IV 788–791:

quid porro, in numerum procedere quom simulacra  
cernimus in somnis et mollia membra mouere,

<sup>28</sup> Critics have rightly rejected the interpretation of *itaque* as *ita + que* proposed by Everett 1896: 32. Even stranger is the supposition of Merrill 1911: 125, that *est itaque ut* is “merely a tautological expression for *sic*”; mercifully, Merrill later came to see (1916: 61) that “[t]he text cannot stand”.

<sup>29</sup> It has been asserted by Lachmann, Munro and others that Lucretius did not employ temporal *ut*. Two examples are, however, typically retained by editors (I 1030 and IV 610) but in both of these instances *ut* is supported by the necessarily temporal *semel*. It therefore does seem to be true that Lucretius did not allow *ut* unbolstered to bear the role of temporal *ubi*.

<sup>30</sup> Arist. *HA* 607a 29 f. states that saliva is deadly to venomous creatures in general.

<sup>31</sup> For if *ita* is retained, *est* can be taken impersonally and the objection of Richter (1974: 76) that “es hängt beziehungslos in der Luft” loses its force; cf. I 684: “uerum, ut opinor, ita est” and IV 489: “non, ut opinor, ita est”.

790 mollia mobiliter quom alternis brachia mittunt  
et repetunt †oculis† gestum pede conuenienti?

790 mollia OQ : callida Richter || 791 repetunt OQ : referunt Lachmann | oculis OQ : manibus dub. Lambinus : ollis Creech : rotulis Orth : agilis Richter : docili Watt | conuenienti codd. : conuenienter Bockemüller

There are two awkward words in the passage above. The first is the repeated *mollia* in 790, the other the surprising *oculis* in 791. The latter *mollia* has been retained by all editors of the text. Early editors, and in the nineteenth century Lachmann and Bernays, placed a comma after *mollia*, evidently understanding it as an instance of a favourite repetition of the poet, whereby a word or phrase from the preceding verse also opens that which immediately follows<sup>32</sup>. Yet *mollia* is far more naturally to be taken with *brachia* than *membra*. Bailey is clear on the point, stating that the adjective is “with *brachia*, not a Lucretian repetition of *mollia* in 790 though certainly intended to recall it”. The reappearance of *mollia* therefore strikes me as strange: having stated *mollia membra mouere*, would Lucretius have chosen to modify *brachia mittunt* also with *mollia*? The mobility of a subset of the limbs hardly needs “recalling” immediately after it has been stated. Perhaps Lucretius did repeat the adjective, but there seems sufficient scope for doubt. The alliterative *mollia membra mouere* and the following *mobiliter* could have led a scribe to repeat the word at the beginning of 790 as a *Perseverationsfehler*, thus ousting a different adjective.

If this hypothesis is sound, there is no palaeographical guidance for restoring the word opening 790 and there is no obvious need to carry over the alliteration into this verse. Richter (1974: 82–86), the only other scholar I know to have rejected the veracity of the adjective, was convinced that these lines depicted a boxer, and therefore offered *callida*: since I rather follow the majority view that a form of elegant, rhythmical dance is here being depicted, *callida* (used elsewhere by Lucretius only of Calliope, for evident wordplay)<sup>33</sup> does not seem a particularly attractive suggestion. Instead, I conjecture *candida*, a word commonly associated with arms and limbs in general<sup>34</sup> and which would well suit the picture of elegant (and presumably female) dancers.

<sup>32</sup> For instances of such epizeuxis (sometimes true anadiplosis), cf. I 872–874; II 159 f.; II 955 f.; III 12 f.; V 298 f.; V 950 f.; V 1189 f. (s.v.l.); V 1327 f. (s.v.l.); VI 528 f. This list is an expansion of that given by Bailey (Prol. VII.21(a)).

<sup>33</sup> “Callida Musa/ Calliope” (VI 93 f.).

<sup>34</sup> With *brachia*: Prop. II 16, 24; II 22a, 5; Ov. *Am.* III 7, 8; *Her.* 20, 140; *Eleg. Maec.* 162; Sil. *Pun.* III 414; Stat. *Silv.* III 5, 65 (“candida seu molli diducit brachia motu”); with *membra*: Ov. *Met.* II 607 and Sil. *Pun.* IV 204; of other possible adjectives, *splendida*, *leuia* and *lubrica* are potential alternatives.

Moving to 791, the presence of *oculis* is puzzling. It is most naturally taken as a dative: these figures “repeat their motion to our eyes, their feet in time”. Yet since we are in the strict context of dreams, *oculis* cannot denote the eyes. Instead, it would have to represent the “mind’s eye”. Such a use of the word, however, would be clumsy, for Lucretius stresses that all the senses are inactive during sleep (cf. IV 762 f.) and implies that images then enter the mind from all quarters, not through the eyes alone (*cernimus* in 789 cannot be regarded as specific). Lachmann’s weak *referunt* of course does nothing to mitigate the problem presented by the word. An even more troublesome reading is to take *oculis* as ablative, referring to those of the dancing figures: Giussani, who first espoused this view, claimed that *oculis* stands for *capite*, i.e. “with their head”<sup>35</sup>. Few will find this suggestion at all credible, not least because focus on the dancing figures’ eyes is wholly unwarranted. If an emendation in this field is desired, Lambinus’ *manibus* is far superior in sense but evidently removed from the paradox.

Of other emendations, Creech’s *ollis* (*scil. brachiis*, dependent upon *conuenienti*) is regrettably superfluous and, to use the just phrase of Godwin (1986, *ad loc.*), “unbearably dull”: in context there is no scope for confusion concerning with what the movement of the foot/feet harmonises. Orth’s *rotulis*, intended in the sense “*motiones circulares; homines enim saltantes in circulo videntur*” (Orth 1960: 319), is inherently improbable, as is Richter’s introduction of *agilis* as a genitive singular substantive. More attractive is an adjective modifying *pede* and Watt’s *docili*, though a word not otherwise attested in Lucretius, is deserving of consideration<sup>36</sup>. As a possible alternative, I suggest that the missing word is a simple dative relating to us, the audience of this sleeping spectacle: *nobis*. The word modifies the pair *mittunt/ et repetunt* and merely serves to emphasise (after *cernimus* of 789) that this image does occur in our very own minds. With or without the loss of *n-* after *-nt*, if *obis* were taken as *olcis* or *oclis* (cursive *b* in Lucretius’ day having its bowl to the left), the introduction of *oculis* would have soon followed<sup>37</sup>.

#### IV 843–847:

at contra conferre manu certamina pugnae  
et lacerare artus foedareque membra cruore

<sup>35</sup> Giussani 1896–1898, *ad loc.*: “e cogli occhi [colla testa: nel quale movimento della testa la direzione e l’espressione dello sguardo ha una gran parte; tanto più se si tratta di ballerine] vanno dietro alle movenze (*gestum*), accordandosi anche il movimento dei piedi”.

<sup>36</sup> Watt very tentatively suggested that *conuenienter* (a conjecture that he was unaware Bockemüller had already made) could perhaps be read, so as to avoid a second epithet modifying *pede*. However, since *conuenienti* here has verbal force, this further alteration is unnecessary.

<sup>37</sup> Although Deufert (1996: 282 ff.) provides thorough and thought-provoking discussion of the problems of IV 788–793, I believe that, with the emendations offered above, these verses represent the unpolished work of Lucretius himself rather than the substandard verses of an interpolating hand.

845 ante fuit multo quam lucida tela uolarent,  
 et uolnus uitare prius natura coegit  
 quam daret obiectum parmai laeua per artem.

The use of the phrase *lucida tela* here has rarely occasioned comment. The pairing is otherwise only found in a verse repeated four times in the work (I 147 = II 60 = III 92 = VI 40), where it refers metaphorically to the shining rays of the sun, stands in juxtaposition with praise of the enlightening power of philosophical reasoning and is qualified by *diei*. Although it is perfectly possible that Lucretius here chose to modify *tela* ‘weapons’ with *lucida* ‘shining’, it strikes me as possible that this is a mistaken scribal reminiscence of the important phrase prominent elsewhere in the prooemia of the work. Only one other critic, to my knowledge, has suspected the adjective. Orth, in his elusive edition of the poem<sup>38</sup>, suggested *lurida*, which is a fine example of the horrific results that the palaeographical method can bring: even with his irrelevant comparison of IV 332 (307) (concerning the vision of those suffering from jaundice!), Lucretius could never have qualified weaponry with the adjective *luridus*. If, however, Lucretius had originally written *duellica tela*, ‘weapons of war’, the unfamiliarity of this archaic form of *bellicus* may have encouraged the introduction of *lucida* (all of which letters it contains). For *duellicus* in Lucretius, see II 661; outside Lucretius see Pl. *Epid.* 450<sup>39</sup>.

*Christ's College, Cambridge*

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bollack 1976: M. Bollack, *Momen mutatum: La déviation et le plaisir (Lucrèce, II, 184–293)*, in: J. Bollack, A. Laks (eds.), *Études sur l'épicurisme antique*, Lille 1976 (Cahiers de Philologie I), pp. 163–189.
- Butterfield 2008: D. Butterfield, *Lucretiana quaedam*, *Philologus* CLII 2008, pp. 111–127.
- 2009: *Emendations on the Third Book of Lucretius*, *Euphrosyne* XXXVII 2009, pp. 309–316.
- Deufert 1996: M. Deufert, *Pseudo-Lukrezisches im Lukrez*, Berlin 1996.
- Diels 1922: H. Diels, *Lukrezstudien V*, *SBAW* I 1922, pp. 46–59.
- Dionigi 1994: I. Dionigi, *Tito Lucrezio Caro. La natura delle cose*, Milano <sup>2</sup>1994.
- Ernout 1925: A. Ernout, *Lucrèce. De rerum natura. Commentaire exégétique et critique*, Paris 1925.
- Everett 1896: W. Everett, *Studies in the Text of Lucretius*, *HSCPh* VII 1896, pp. 21–36.
- Flores 2002–2004: E. Flores, *Titus Lucretius Carus: De rerum natura*, vols. I–II (*Libri I–IV*), Napoli 2002–2004.
- Housman 2007: A.E. Housman, *The Letters*, ed. by A. Burnett, Oxford 2007.
- Giussani 1896–1898: C. Giussani, *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, Torino 1896–1898.

<sup>38</sup> Orth 1961. To my knowledge, there is no copy of the edition in public institutions, as opposed to private hands, in Britain.

<sup>39</sup> I am most grateful to the editorial board of “Eos”, and in particular to the journal’s anonymous referee, for improving my discussion in many places.

- Godwin 1986: J. Godwin, *Lucretius: De rerum natura IV*, Warminster 1986.
- Lachmann 1850: K. Lachmann, *In T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libros sex commentarius*, Berlin 1850.
- Lampe 1987: P. Lampe, *Die stadtrömischen Christen in den ersten beiden Jahrhunderten: Untersuchungen zur Sozialgeschichte*, Tübingen 1987.
- Merrill 1907: W.A. Merrill, *T. Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, New York 1907.
- 1911: *Studies in the Text of Lucretius*, UCPCPh II 1911, pp. 93–150.
- 1916: *Criticism of the Text of Lucretius with Suggestions for its Improvement. Part II: Books IV–VI*, UCPCPh III 1916, pp. 47–133.
- Orth 1960: E. Orth, *Lucretiana*, *Helmantica* XI 1960, pp. 311–336.
- 1961: *Lukrez. Naturphilosophie (De rerum natura)*, Salamanca 1961.
- Pius 1514: J.B. Pius, *In Carum Lucretium poetam commentarii*, Paris 1514.
- Richter 1974: W. Richter, *Textstudien zu Lukrez*, München 1974.
- Romanes 1935: N.H. Romanes, *Further Notes on Lucretius*, Oxford 1935.
- Szymański 2006: M. Szymański, *Lucretius' O, Q, L, F: Doing Justice to Manuscripts*, *Eos* XCV 2006, pp. 132–134.
- Townend 1969: G.B. Townend, *Some Problems of Punctuation in the Latin Hexameter*, *CQ* XIX 1969, pp. 330–344.
- Wakefield 1813: G. Wakefield, *T. Lucretii Cari De rerum natura libri sex*, Glasgow 1813.