

details of his description or distorted true features to fit the larger significance of the letter. On the contrary, I think that Pliny took real details as he found them, selected well, and arranged them in order to exploit their allegorical possibilities. This seems to be his technique generally, for he seems elsewhere interested in developing an inner line of thought only where the things that can support it are true. *Ne vera minuantur*: he saw poetic truth clearly expressed in the world as it was, but only diminished by distortions made to serve allegory.

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ARE LUCRETIVS' DANAIDS BEAUTIFUL?*

In his comment on *aevo florente puellas* (*De rer. nat.* 3. 1008), E. J. Kenney implies that *aevo florente* essentially means "beautiful": "One of the two women in Polygnotus' picture [in which they are drawing water in broken jars, Paus. 10. 31. 9] was represented as beautiful, ἐν ὡραία τὸ εἶδος, but the detail is not in itself particularly appropriate to the Danaids. Lucretius brings it in to cement the allegory by identifying them with the Seasons, Ὠραι, who were represented as beautiful women: cf. ὡραῖος = 'beautiful.'"¹ The allegory to which Kenney refers is this (3. 1003–10):

deinde animi ingratham naturam pascere semper
atque explere bonis rebus satiareque numquam,
quod faciunt nobis annorum tempora, circum
cum redeunt fetusque ferunt variosque lepores,
nec tamen explemur vitae fructibus umquam,
hoc, ut opinor, id est, aevo florente puellas
quod memorant laticem pertusum congerere in vas,
quod tamen expleri nulla ratione potestur.

* A slightly different version of this paper was presented at the 1980 meeting of CAMWS. All quotations are from C. Bailey's second edition of Lucretius (Oxford, 1922).

Along with most commentators, let us assume that Lucretius means for us to think of the Danaids here (as for why they are not named, see p. 146 and nn. 2 and 6). Pl. *Gorg.* 493 is the first to mention people with leaky jars in Hades. Socrates reports a "clever fellow's" philosophical interpretation of what was presumably an already existing myth; see E. R. Dodds (ed.), "*Gorgias*" (Oxford, 1959), p. 302. However, these allegorized water carriers are not female (see 493B5 οὔτοι ἀθλιώτατοι, etc.). Whoever wrote the *Axiochus* mentioned "the unending water-drawings of the Danaids" in the same breath as Tantalus, Tityos, and Sisyphus (371E6). Other references postdate Lucretius but provide an account of crime and punishment, e.g., Hor. *Odes* 3.11 and Ov. *Her.* 14; see Bernhard on "Danaides" in W. H. Roscher (ed.), *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1884–90), cols. 949–52. But see J. Cousin, "Lucrèce, les verseuses et la vita stultorum (*de nat. rer.* III 1003sq)," *Mélanges de philologie, de littérature et d'histoire anciennes offerts à Alfred Ernout* (Paris, 1940), pp. 97–106, who believes that the girls indicate not Danaids but "non-initiées," such as those described by Paus. 10. 31. 9 or in the *Gorgias*. E. Keuls, *The Water Carriers in Hades: A Study of Catharsis through Toil in Classical Antiquity* (Leyden, 1974), pp. 106–12, believes that Lucretius' water carriers are modeled on Plato's and that neither group should be identified as Danaids.

1. Lucretius "*De rerum natura*" Book III (Cambridge, 1971), p. 228.

In Lucretius' carefully constructed thought our feeding, filling, and still never satisfying of our souls, which is what the seasons do to us, is what tradition recounts that "the girls in flowering age" do to their leaky jar. Structurally, then, the girls are to their jar as the seasons are to us. However, if we adopt Kenney's explanation, Lucretius' choice of words here is inept. The only function of *aevo florente* would be to connect the Danaids—forcibly, since there certainly is no inherent reason for them to be beautiful—to the seasons, which are sometimes portrayed as beautiful women, though not in this passage. Besides, the meaning "beautiful" adds nothing to the basic idea of the sentence, *hoc . . . id est*: our filling of the "ungrateful nature of the soul" is equivalent to the girls carrying water to a leaky jar.

Lucretius' word choice is in fact congruent with his thought, if we pay attention to the texture of imagery in the passage as a whole, instead of looking to the *Ἠρα* for an explanation. *Aevo florente* does, as Kenney says, "cement" the Danaids to the seasons, but it does so within the *Latin* context, *tempora*, literally, "the times." The phrase means "in the flowering age" or "in the flowering time of life" and connects the girls to the seasons, not through mutual beauty, but through the notions of time and of the fruitfulness of each particular time. Each season or "time" has its gifts to bring us; the girls in their flowering time also have much to give, but their punishment² is to heap up "gifts" of water into an eternally leaky jar.

Further, *aevo florente* leads us back through the relative clause dealing with these "times" or seasons and our inappreciativeness of their fruits, and helps us to understand the main thought of the sentence: that we feed and fill yet never satisfy our ungrateful soul. The sentence in question is complex, having several major parts which nonetheless merge in their imagery. We feed the soul, which is what the seasons do to us; *hoc* refers to the infinitive phrases of lines 3. 1003–4 which are in turn explained by the action of the girls: *id est . . . quod (puellas . . . congerere)*. The metaphors inherent in *pascere* and *explere* are made evident in *tempora . . . fetus ferunt*. *Vitai fructibus* further unites the first two parts, for "fruits of life" refers not only to the gifts of the seasons but also to the *bonis rebus* with which men vainly try to satisfy the soul in this life. Next *aevo florente* connects the girls to the seasons, both through time and through the imagery of

2. R. Heinze, *T. Lucretius Carus "De rerum natura" Buch III* (Leipzig, 1897), p. 189, believes that since the poet does not name the Danaids (as Horace, Propertius, and others do) but calls them *aevo florente puellas* carrying water to a broken jar, Lucretius associates them with the flowering seasons exclusively and so calls attention away from their crime and punishment, which the proper name would have evoked. While Heinze is right to insist upon the imagistic connection of this phrase to the seasons, one need not assume that such a formulation has less reference to crime and punishment than the proper name. Both Bailey, *"De rerum natura" libri sex*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1947), and Kenney report Heinze's argument in such a way that the reader has the impression that Heinze thinks the Danaids are not named because the action of men to which their water carrying is equated is not a punishment. Bailey, p. 1162: ". . . but possibly, as Heinze suggests, since this [insatiability] is not a punishment, Lucr. refrains from mentioning them by name." Kenney, p. 227: "It is suggested by Heinze that this is L.'s reason for not naming them. . . ." Kenney concludes that, unlike Tantalus, Tityos, and Sisyphus, ". . . the Danaids must be taken as a type of behaviour rather than of suffering. . . ." I fail to see how the Danaids' activity is less of a punishment than that of the others or how the actions of these are less comparable than the Danaids' to self-inflicted punishments of mortals in life. Lucretius would undoubtedly consider the constant exertion of trying to fill the jar a *dolor*. So too our exertion of constantly filling the soul with food that does not satisfy would make the consumption of what appear to be pleasures painful.

plants; because the girls are in flower, they are potential producers of fruits, like the seasons and, by implication, like the one who is continually feeding the soul. The verb *congerere*, which describes the girls' unending labor, is in fact more suited to the piling up of fruit than to the pouring of liquid and so recalls the activity of the *tempora* and the man feeding his soul. All three parts of the sentence place special emphasis on the notion of unsuccessful filling, as is indicated by the repetition of *explere*, *explemur*, and *expleri* with the negatives *numquam*, *nec*, and *nulla*.³ We realize that the attempts of men in this life, of the seasons, and of the girls to fill the soul, "us" (3. 1005 *nobis*), and the jar respectively are futile.⁴

Lucretius uses the periphrasis *aevo florente puellas* instead of the metrically impossible *Danaides* or the hexameter *Danaï proles* (e.g., Tib. 1. 3. 79).⁵ By so doing he calls attention to the youthfulness of the Danaids and at the same time ironically reminds us that they wasted the potential fruitfulness of their lives.⁶ Girls in the flowering time of life usually marry and raise families. The Danaids killed their husbands on their wedding night and so lost, as Lucretius says here of the seasons, *fetus . . . variosque lepores*, the children and varied charms that come from marriage, the good things appropriate to their sex and age. The stately movement of the personified *tempora*, who eternally and generously proffer their creations, becomes in Lucretius' nonexistent Hades a punishment of endless drudgery.⁷ Unlike the seasons, the Danaids are doomed always to be in flower, but never to bear fruit, that is, to fill the jar.⁸

In this context our constant feeding but never satisfying our souls comes to denote more than simple insatiability and dissatisfaction with the good things of life.⁹ In addition it is to be viewed as an attitude by which we waste our own "flowering time"—our lives—in ultimately unsatisfying consumption. The girls in their prime have to try to fill their broken jar because they rejected the husbands who would have brought them to maturity through marriage. Naturally the jar never gets enough water. Through this analogy Lucretius may suggest that it is the nature of souls to be "ungrateful" (*ingrata*) when filled with what most men

3. See Cousin, "Lucrèce," p. 97.

4. On 3. 1009 Kenney (p. 228) denies any emphasis on futility.

5. See n. 2 for Heinze's opposing view.

6. F. O. Copley (trans.), *Lucretius "The Nature of Things"* (New York, 1977), p. 80, in his note on the girls says, ". . . their futile activity in Hades is symbolic of the emptiness and futility of their lives on earth." Cousin, "Lucrèce," pp. 102–3, maintains that Lucretius' girls are not named because, while ceasing to designate those who are uninitiated in the Eleusinian mysteries, they are ". . . not yet called upon to play overtly the role of Danaids in the Roman imagination." Cousin cites a wealth of interesting material which points to an age-old connection between water carriers and fertility, e.g., in the Eleusinian mysteries, the Thesmophoria (a rite for married women at sowing time), on funeral reliefs of those who died *ἀγαροί* (and so unproductive), and as companions of brides (the potentially productive). Although he considers the myth of the Danaids a part of the evolution of this tradition, he almost perversely resists seeing a direct allusion to them here, perhaps because he places more emphasis on the analogy of the seasons (and the primitive vegetation rites which he associates with them) than on the major point: the relationship of the girls to those who feed their souls in vain. It is more probable that a Roman audience would think of Danaids than of anti-Eleusinians as inmates of Acheron with a leaky jar.

7. I wish to thank Prof. K. Reckford for advising me to include this point.

8. Kenney in his discussion of Tityos (984–94) maintains that in Lucretius' treatment the crimes of Tantalus, Tityos, Sisyphus and the Danaids are "not relevant" to the allegories Lucretius makes on their punishments (p. 223). However, it is hard to imagine that the reader would never think of the possible similarities between the crimes and the allegories or that Lucretius has no interest in them.

9. Against Bailey, pp. 1157–58, 1162, and Kenney, p. 227. Insatiety as such is indeed the argument of 3. 935–37, the phrasing of which is recalled in the present passage; see also 3. 954–62. In agreement with Bailey and Kenney are Keuls, *Water Carriers*, pp. 106–12, and G. F. Gianotti, "*Animi ingrata natura*," In *marginis a Lucr. III 1003–1010*, *AFLN* 16 (1973–74): 5–18.

consider “good things” (*bonis rebus*), because these things are not truly good for (or needed by) the soul.

This interpretation is supported by other statements of Lucretius both earlier and later in the poem. Early in Book 2 Lucretius tells us that the soul needs not *gazae*, *nobilitas*, or *gloria regni* (2. 38)—usually considered good things—but release from our superstitious cares and worries about death. This release is accomplished by the “power of reason” (2. 53 “quid dubitas quin omni’ sit haec rationi’ potestas?”). Then in the proem of Book 3, when Lucretius praises his master for supplying us with *praecepta*, he says that we feed upon Epicurus’ golden words (3. 11–12):

floriferis ut apes in saltibus omnia libant,
omnia nos itidem depascimur aurea dicta. . . .

These earlier passages suggest that, when we feed (*pascere*), fill, and still do not satisfy the soul’s “ungrateful nature” with good things such as money and political power, we are constantly “flowering” like the girls, but run the risk of never bringing our souls to maturity on Epicurus’ “food”: the *ratio* which proclaims the *natura rerum* (3. 14–15).¹⁰ This attitude also rules our rejection of the seasons’ gifts; if we are intent on mere consumption, as Lucretius seems to imagine us, we are never filled with the genuine fruits of life which, for the soul, is Epicurean philosophy. An implicit point in the phrase *aevo florente*, then, is that we mortals will not always have an *aeuum florens*,¹¹ just as the girls themselves do not; their punishment is simply a story that people *memorant*, not the truth-speaking words of a sage such as Epicurus.

The Danaid passage in fact looks forward to the proem of Book 6 in which similar imagery occurs, but now in terms of the satisfactions that Epicurus’ *ratio* can bring to men who are unhappy despite their possession of the world’s goods. Athens first gave *frugiparos fetus* (6. 1) to sick mortals, restored their lives (6. 3 *recreaverunt vitam*), and gave *solacia dulcia vitae* (6. 4) when it bore Epicurus, who appears as a successful “pourer” of “all things”: “omnia veridico qui quondam ex ore profudit” (6. 6). Lucretius has Epicurus assess men’s unhappiness with their wealth, their honor, their praise, and even with their children (6. 12–13) through the metaphor of the soul as a *vas* both leaky (*pertusum*) and corrupting (6. 17–23).¹² Here Epicurus and his philosophy are the remedy: “veridicis igitur purgavit pectora dictis” (6. 24). It is surely significant that Epicurus’ successful pour gives him lasting glory although he is dead (6. 7–8):¹³

cuius et extincti propter divina reperta
divulgata vetus iam ad caelum gloria fertur.

10. That this food is seen as satisfying and attractive is indicated by the repetition of *omnia* (3. 11–12) and *aurea* (3. 12–13). Cousin, “Lucrèce,” pp. 105–6, also suggests that the Danaid passage contains a veiled reference to Epicurus but from different reasoning; the girls as uninitiates in the Eleusinian truths point to those of us who reject or are ignorant of Epicurus’ teachings and so lead a *stultorum vita* (cf. 3. 1023).

11. Unlike the *annorum tempora*, where the plural *annorum* indicates the succession of returns which will continue as long as our world continues to exist.

12. The similarity in thought between “quod tamen expleri nulla ratione potestur” (3. 1010) and “ut nulla posset ratione explerier umquam” (6. 21) serves to connect the two passages closely in our minds.

13. See 3. 13 “[dicta] . . . perpetua semper dignissima vita.”

We easily see the difference between the immortal, prosperous Epicurus and the unfruitful but continually flowering Danaids whose punishment in Hades does not even exist. We also discern the contrast between Epicurus' success and the failure of men who waste their brief lives in futile consumption.

If the aim of commentary is to illumine a difficulty of translation or interpretation in the clearest way possible, the above arguments have the advantage of explaining the Danaid passage in terms of the Latin words in it (as opposed to the Ὠραι who are not) with the aid of other statements of Lucretius. Kenney's note on *aevo florente puellas* is daunting fare, especially for the often Greekless undergraduate, for it implies that a student will not be able to understand Lucretius' meaning without Greek erudition.¹⁴ One will have to know that *tempora* = Ὠραι, that the Ὠραι were portrayed as beautiful women, and that ὥραιος = "beautiful." Here the note seems mistaken as well as erudite; ὥραιος may mean "beautiful" in Pausanias, a writer of the second century A.D.,¹⁵ but LSJ's only references for that specific meaning occur in the Greek Old and New Testaments. This at least calls into question the currency of the meaning for Lucretius' time and earlier. The phrase *aevo florente* is not likely to be a translation problem even for most new readers of Lucretius.¹⁶ However, Kenney's note on it leads the student away from the Latin and creates a difficulty—why indeed should Danaids be beautiful?—where there really is none. It is quite possible that Lucretius' Danaids are beautiful, at least in the sense that all young creatures are (e.g., Pl. *Charm.* 154B9–10), but this is not Lucretius' point here.

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14. By this I do not mean that a knowledge of Greek language and literature would not be helpful in understanding Lucretius' poem generally, but here Kenney's references to Greek words seem to be beside the point.

15. Even here one may doubt, for *ἐτι* suggests that the woman was "still youthful in appearance," a meaning of ὥραιος attested by Plato, Pindar, Xenophon, and Aristophanes (LSJ).

16. Most published translations are more or less literal: e.g., C. Bailey (Oxford, 1936), "in the flower of youth"; R. M. Geer (Indianapolis, 1965), "in the flower of life"; H. A. J. Munro (London, 1913), "in the flower of their age"; F. O. Copley (New York, 1977), "young as flowers"; R. Humphries' "those young and lovely girls" (Bloomington, 1968) seems to anticipate Kenney's interpretation.

"AUSPICIA ET AUGURIA ROMANA . . . SUMMO LABORE COLLECTA": A NOTE ON MINUCIUS FELIX *OCTAVIUS* 26. 1

The text of Minucius Felix *Octavius* 26.1 reads: "Iam enim venio ad illa auspicia et auguria Romana, quae summo labore collecta testatus es et paenitenter ommissa et observata feliciter." Recent translators of and commentators on *Octavius* almost unanimously follow the received opinion and construe *testatus es* both with "(auspicia et auguria) . . . et paenitenter ommissa et observata feliciter" and with "(auspicia et auguria) . . . summo labore collecta."¹ This construction is, however,

1. See, e.g., G. W. Clarke, *The "Octavius" of Minucius Felix* (New York, 1974); J. Beaujeu, *Minucius Felix: "Octavius"* (Paris, 1974). G. Quispel, *M. Minucii Felicis "Octavius"* (Leyden, 1973), ad loc., comments: "*collecta* scil.: abs te." J. P. Waltzing in his classic edition of and commentary on *Octavius* (Bruges, 1909) does not discuss the meaning and construction of *collecta*. I am grateful to Prof. E. Badian for excerpting for me the relevant passages from Waltzing's commentary.