

“THE MOST DESPERATE TEXTUAL CRUX” IN LUCRETIVS—5.1442

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IT IS DOUBTFUL if any passage of Lucretius has stimulated the publication of more nonsense than Lucretius 5.1442. I therefore offer the following paper at considerable risk, but in the hopes of reducing rather than increasing the supply.

Bailey prints Lucretius 5.1440–47 so:¹

Iam validis saepti degebant turribus aevum
et divisa colebatur discretaque tellus;
tum mare velivolis florebat †propter odores†
auxilia ac socios iam pacto foedere habebant,
carminibus cum res gestas coepere poetae
tradere; nec multo priu' sunt elementa reperta. 1445
propterea quid sit prius actum respicere aetas
nostra nequit, nisi qua ratio vestigia monstrat.

1442 *tum*] *iam* Lachmann *propter odores* OQ: *navibus pontus* cit. Servius: *navibu'*
pandis Marullus: *maris . . . navibus pontus* Housman: *navibus ponti* Martin: *puppibus*,
et res Lachmann: *puppibus, urbes* Munro: *proreis florebat opertum* Ellis.

Of *propter odores*, Bailey says: “perhaps the most desperate textual crux in the poem. It could only be construed ‘to search for spices,’ but it is clearly impossible, as Clodacz (Eos xxvi 103) maintains, that Lucr. can have given that as the sole reason for navigation.”²

Part of the trouble with attempts to deal with this “crux” arises from Bailey’s definition of the problem. Because of Bailey’s eminence as a Lucretian scholar, subsequent scholars often seem to start from Bailey’s definition, and even those who notice that Bailey has misspelled Chodaczek’s name seem not to notice that Bailey has also misrepresented Chodaczek’s views.³ Chodaczek⁴ simply supports Wakefield’s interpretation that

1. C. Bailey, ed., *Titi Lucreti Cari “De Rerum Natura” Libri Sex*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1947). This edition and commentary is henceforth referred to as Bailey. In keeping with ancient practice, I use the present tense in describing the views of authors, even after they are deceased.

2. Bailey 3:1546.

3. So M. F. Smith, “Lucretius, *de rerum natura* v. 1440–7,” *Hermathena* 98 (1964): 45: “‘*propter odores*’ cannot reasonably be defended, although a vain attempt has been made to show that Lucretius regarded the quest for spices as the sole cause of navigation.”

4. “Lucretiana,” *Eos* 26 (1923): 105–6 [sic]. Page 103, cited by Bailey and scholars who get the citation from Bailey, marks the beginning of the article, but not of the note on this passage.

odores stands for *luxuriosissimas merces quaslibet*.⁵ The claim that spices would have to be the sole reason for navigation belongs not to Chodaczek, but to Bailey. Great scholar though Bailey was, he seems here never to have heard of poetic specification.

Of attempts to emend *propter odores*, Bailey thought Hermann Diels' *navibus, tumque* to be the worst. But Bailey could not foretell the future, and stimulated by Bailey's description of this line as the most desperate crux in Lucretius, modern scholars have produced a crop of worthy rivals for the inanities of earlier critics.⁶

Before proceeding further, we should examine why it is that suspicion has fallen on *propter odores*. The first reason is a belief that Servius cites this line with a different ending (on *Aen.* 7.804):

FLORENTES AERE CATERVAS Ennius et Lucretius florere dicunt omne quod nitidum est:
hoc est secutus Vergilius, aliter acyrologia est: Lucretius (5.1442) *florebat navibus pontus*.

Scholars have noticed that Servius is frequently inaccurate in his citations of Lucretius and other authors,⁷ but have generally not recognized the reason why. The reason is that much of the time Servius only paraphrases early poets—even paraphrases in the meter and style of the poets. I select six examples:⁸

Servius at *Aeneid* 12.7: Plautus in Pyrgopolinice aperte ostendit quid sint latrones, dicens
(*Mil.* 75–76) *rex me Seleucus misit ad conducendos latrones*.
[iambic septenarius]

5. With Chodaczek, I cite Wakefield from *T. Lucretii Cari "De Rerum Natura" . . .*, vol. 3 (Glasgow, 1813), 229. Wakefield's original edition was London, 1796–97.

6. Since Bailey, conjectures include *propter adora* (J. Colin, "Les voiles de l'annone et l'évolution de l'humanité: Lucrèce v. 1442," *Athenaeum* 32 [1954]: 121–33); *propter oporas* (E. Orth, "Lucretiana," *Helmanica* 7 [1956]: 75–76); *tum (vada) velivolis florebat navibus ponti* (O. Foss, "On Lucretius," *C&M* 22 [1961]: 51–52); *propterea res* (L. A. MacKay, "Notes on Lucretius," *CP* 56 [1961]: 103–5); *propter olores* (M. L. Deshayes, "À propos d'un vers de Lucrèce," *Humanités. Revue d'Enseignement secondaire et d'Éducation* 41 [1964–65] no. 5, p. 28); *proptereaquod* (Smith, "*de rerum natura* v. 1440–7" [n. 3 above], 45–52); *navibus altum* (K. Büchner, ed., *De rerum natura* [Zürich, 1956]); *propter ad oras / navibu'*, non ausi *tum in altum vertere proras* (H. G. Lord, "A Lost Line of Lucretius," *G&R* 17 [1970]: 197–98); *navibus altum / atque animam nautae perdebant propter odores (exempli gratia*, W. Richter, "Nachträgliches zum Lukreztext," *RhM* 119 [1976]: 158–61). R. Waltz ("Lucretiana," *REL* 29 [1951]: 198) offers *navibus omne*, expressing amazement that no one had thought of it—but it is already in W. H. D. Rouse's Loeb edition, *Lucretius* (London, 1924). R. G. Boehm ("Lukrez V 1442," *Eos* 73 [1985]: 257–61), who argues for *propter edores* (based on Festus' etymology of *ador* as *edor quondam appellatum ab edendo*, which does not prove that any word *edor* ever was in use), notes also the following conjectures: *litorea propter* (A. Ernout, ed., *Titus Lucretius Carus; "De la nature"* [Paris, 1924]); *velis florebat prorisque decoris* (A. Krokiewicz, "Emendationes quaedam Lucretianae," *Eos* 23 [1918]: 29–30); *nariibus ponti* (O. Gigon, ed., "*De rerum natura*" *libri sex* [Zürich, 1948]); *propter honores* (J. Wikarjak, "Lukretianum V 1442," *Eos* 71 [1983]: 5–9).

7. E.g., A. E. Housman, "Lucretiana," *JP* 25 (1897): 244. Smith ("*de rerum natura* v. 1440–7," p. 52, n. 33), in arguing against Servius' accuracy, cites *nascuntur* (at *Aen.* 1.123; so also at *Ecl.* 6.31) for *procrecere* (Lucr. 1.715), and *spoliatus lumine aer* (at *Aen.* 4.654) for *lumine cassus aer* (Lucr. 4.368–69). For the correct reading in Servius at *Aen.* 4.654, see my note in "Critical Notes on the Text of Servius' Commentary on *Aeneid* III–V," *HSPH* 72 (1967): 340 (against the printing of a spurious *supra* before *spoliatus*).

8. Statistics on citations of Plautus and Terence by Servius and Servius Auctus are given by R. B. Lloyd, "Republican Authors in Servius and the Scholia Danielis," *HSPH* 65 (1961): 291–341. For the statistics on Plautus, see pp. 316–17; on Terence, pp. 318 and 320–21. Of twenty-nine quotations of Plautus in Servius, only nine, all very short, do not differ from the Plautine mss. Fifteen are very "free." In contrast, of sixty-one quotations in D (the non-Servian scholia in Servius Auctus), twenty-seven correspond precisely, and only seven "could be termed at all free." Lloyd correctly concludes that most of the "inaccuracies of quotation" originate with Servius. He errs however in referring them to Servius' "carelessness."

For Terence, Servius is much more precise: of 137 citations, eighty-five show no conflict with the mss, and only seven are described as free or remote from the Terence text. Of eighty-five citations in D, none

Miles gloriosus 75–76: nam rex Seleucus me opere oravit maxumo
ut sibi latrones cogerem et conscriberem. [iambic trimeter]

Servius at *Aeneid* 12.87: orichalcum autem fuisse pretiosum etiam Plautus docet, qui ait
in milite glorioso (658) *ego istos mores orichalco contra
comparem*. [iambic trimeter]

Miles gloriosus 658: cedo tris mi homines aurichalco contra cum istis moribus.
[trochaic septenarius]

Servius at *Aeneid* 11.545: SOLORUM NEMORUM desertorum: Terentius . . . *nonne
hunc abici oportet in solas terras?*

Terence *Phormio* 978–79: Non hoc publicitus scelus hinc asportarier
In solas terras?

Servius at *Aeneid* 4.250: verbum nunguit non hinc venit, sed ab eo quod est 'haec
ninguis' et 'hae ningues'; Lucretius *albas effundere ningues*.

Lucretius 6.736: albas descendere ningues.

Servius at *Aeneid* 4.625: secundum Anaxagoran, qui homoeomerian dicit . . . Lucretius
nunc ad Anaxagorae veniamus homoeomerian.

Lucretius 1.830: nunc et Anaxagorae scrutemur homoeomerian.

Servius at *Aeneid* 9.649: Statius de Menoeceo: *et laudibus inplet honestis*.

Statius *Thebaid* 10.685: atque ignibus inplet honestis

Consider the first: two iambic trimeters of Plautus have been given as one iambic septenarius. Of Servius' citation we find in Plautus the words *rex, me, Seleucus*, but not in that order, and the word that is the reason for the citation, *latrones*; but the words *opere oravit maxumo ut sibi cogerem et conscriberem* have been paraphrased as *misit ad conducendos*. This is not inaccurate citation from memory. Servius Auctus has on this passage a conflation of Servius' paraphrase with a genuine citation of the lines, and this citation was probably obtained from a scholium on which Servius is himself dependent:⁹ that is to say, we have evidence that Servius had before

is remote from the ancient text. Even among the forty-five citations in Servius that Lloyd regards as only slightly changed, I believe that Servius' difference in method sometimes stands clearly revealed. For instance at *Aen.* 3.594 the citations should be read as (Ter. *Eun.* 236) *video sentum squalidum* in D (accurate), and *video quendam sentum* in Servius (see my note in *HSPH* 72 [1967]: 326). *Quendam* has been imported by Servius from Ter. *Eun.* 234, for the sake of intelligibility.

The factors determining the frequency of paraphrase for different authors seem to be two: the need for intelligibility and concision, and, also affecting intelligibility, the familiarity of the readers. So Plautus, whose language is diffuse, archaic, and difficult for readers of the late empire, gets the most paraphrase. Terence, who was the standard author read by students before they turned to Virgil, is treated with relative precision. To judge by the quantity of paraphrase of Lucretius by Servius, Lucretius cannot have been very familiar to Servius' students. But Virgil, Horace, Lucan, and Statius are usually quoted precisely.

It cannot reasonably be claimed that the relative freeness in citation of authors like Plautus and Lucretius is indicative of the use of an aberrant MS tradition. First, Servius cites normally not from the author's texts but from the quotations transmitted by earlier commentators (that is, from the same sources as D), and we have evidence that the versions in this scholiastic tradition differed little from the versions in extant MSS of the authors. Second, the freeness operates in definable ways which relate to Servius' purposes. If he had used an aberrant MS tradition of Plautus for instance, we might find Servius imputing the word *latrones* to Plautus in a passage where our MSS had rather a different word that meant *latrones*. That we do not find. What is essential for Servius' purpose is always precisely accurate. But the insertion of *quendam* in the citation of Ter. *Eun.* 236 fulfils a need that exists only for someone citing *video squalidum* out of context.

9. Cf. my discussion of this passage in *Prolegomena to Servius 5: The Manuscripts* (Berkeley, 1975), 102.

him the full citation of Plautus; Servius chose to condense and paraphrase. Again for Plautus *Miles gloriosus* 658, Terence *Phormio* 978–79, Lucretius 6.736, and Lucretius 1.830, the words for which the lines are cited are given accurately; the rest is paraphrased. In Lucretius 1.830 the motivation for the change is the desire to avoid explaining the meaning of the unusual word *scrutemur*. Again at *Aeneid* 9.649, in order to avoid explaining the meaning of *ignibus* in Statius *Thebaid* 10.685, Servius has changed it to *laudibus*: but when *ignibus* was changed to *laudibus* for the sake of clarity, *atque* was changed to *et* for the sake of meter.

We can therefore establish the following principles for Servius' paraphrases: Servius quotes accurately the word that is the reason for the citation (so *florebat* in Lucretius 5.1442), changes anything that might be obscure (so *velivolis* was changed to *navibus* to avoid explaining that it meant *navibus*) and then makes any other change necessary for meter (so *mare* was changed to *pontus* and moved to the end to complete a half-line).

Attempts by scholars to show how *propter odores* could have supplanted a reading *navibus pontus* in the MSS are misdirected. The pages of Servius are filled with evidence that the differences between Servius and the MSS of Lucretius here are to be explained by Servius' normal practice.¹⁰

The second objection made against the transmitted reading is that *velivolis* is not found elsewhere as a substantive, although Ennius uses *navibus velivolis*.¹¹ But the epic poets, not least of all Lucretius, are fond of kennings. The *American College Dictionary* (1954) defines a kenning so: "a descriptive poetical name used for, or in addition to, the usual name of a person or

10. G. P. Goold, by private correspondence, raises the objection that "it would argue a pretty deviousness on Servius' part to get his metre so nicely contrived: *florebat navibu' pontus* is surely not a fake (see the tables in Bailey, vol. I page 124, which show that Lucretius largely resorted to the suppression of final *s* in the dat.-abl. plural in the fifth foot of the hexameter, precisely what Servius seems to attest)." A similar argument is made by S. Timpanaro, "Lucrezio V 1442 (e I 324, e V 1203)," *RCCM* 19 (1977): 723–49.

It is no guarantee of authenticity that *florebat navibus pontus* contains a Lucretian rhythm. The suppression of final *s* in the dat./abl. plural in the fifth foot of the hexameter is common not only in Lucretius, but in Ennius. It is likely enough that Servius was aware, probably consciously, at least unconsciously, of this characteristic of early hexameter. For Servius' ability to mimic Lucretius, we may compare a nonmetrical paraphrase: Servius at *Aen.* 4.654: "umbra quam Lucretius sic definivit: *spoliatus lumine aer*". *Lucr.* 2.366: *aera . . . privatum lumine*, 368–69: *lumine cassus / aer*, 4.377: *spoliatur lumine terra*. The phrase *spoliatus lumine aer* nowhere is found in Lucretius. If Servius refers to 2.368–69, the paraphrase was prompted by the word *cassus*, which Servius has to explain: at *Aen.* 2.85, he glosses *CASSUM privatum, vacuum*, at 11.104 *CASSIS vacuus*, and at 12.780 we find *CASSA* glossed *inania*. But it is interesting to note that Servius' paraphrase of Lucretius is not Servian in diction (*privatus, vacuus, or inanis*), but deceptively Lucretian. Clearly Servius has in mind the Lucretian diction and rhythm of *spoliatur lumine terra*. This could be called deviousness or fakery, to use Lucretian diction, and in part Lucretian rhythm, to paraphrase Lucretius, but I think that these are the wrong terms. Similarly Lloyd is wrong to suspect Servius of carelessness. It takes considerably more care to invent a plausible paraphrase than it does to quote precisely.

I think that I can best illustrate the mind of Servius by citing a modern parallel. Ovid in *Met.* 3.106–14 describes the rising of the sown men of Thebes from the ground, first their spear tips, then their helmets, shoulders, breasts, etc., just as when the curtain is raised at a theater, and we see first the faces and then the rest of the figures depicted. The Roman curtain of course rose from below, and so operated the reverse way from the curtain in modern theaters. Rolfe Humphries translates Ovid's simile so (Indiana [1955]: 60): "The opposite of the way a curtain rises, / Showing feet first, then knees, and waists, and bodies / And faces last of all." Humphries might not want to admit it, but his is a kindred spirit to Servius'. He would go to any lengths to avoid putting in a footnote, even to foisting off on Ovid the first example in antiquity of a reverse simile. Servius did not have the option of using footnotes, but like Humphries he abhors unnecessary explanations. To avoid them, he paraphrases, but tries to remain as true as otherwise possible to the authors' diction, meter, and rhythm. This should not be called deviousness or carelessness, but rather normal method.

11. *Scenica* 79, A 388 Vahlen.

thing. *Example*: ‘a wave traveler’ for ‘a boat.’” Such compounds are not only poetical but a common part of popular speech. *Bidentes* and *tridens* spring readily to mind in Latin. Of poetical kennings, Lucretius uses *balantes* for sheep (2.369, 6.1132), and *lanigerae* (1.887), although he also uses *lanigerae pecudes* (2.318 and 622); fish are *squamigeri* (1.162, 372, 378; 2.343, 1083), birds are *pennipotentes* (2.878, 5.789), men are *terrigenae* (5.1411).¹² With these examples before us, it would be rash indeed to deny to Lucretius the ability to use a kenning *velivolae* (sail-flyers) for ships.¹³ Further, Lucretius admits the kenning before a caesura, where Augustan poets, for formal balance, would require an answering noun in the second half of the verse: so Lucretius 1.378 *nam quo squamigeri poterunt procedere tandem* (where, for *tandem*, a later poet would have written *pisces*). For those who still feel attachment to the formal balance of *velivolis florebat navibus*, it should be pointed out that in Lucretius’ three other examples of this metaphorical use of *florere* the verb is modified by an ablative noun without balancing adjective:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1.255 | <i>hinc laetas urbis pueris florere videmus</i> |
| 4.450 | <i>bina lucernarum florentia lumina flammis</i> |
| 5.911–12 | <i>aurea tum dicat per terras flumina vulgo
fluxisse et gemmis florere arbusta suesse</i> |

It is important to bear in mind that it is the text of Lucretius that is being determined, not Ovid. For a close antecedent of Lucretius, compare Cato (*ORF* 29 Malcovati) *mare velis florere videres*. From the correspondence of Cato and Lucretius, combined with Servius’ claim that the use of *florere* is Ennian, Norden concludes that Cato imitates a line of Ennius;¹⁴ note that there is no *navibus* or *pontus* in Cato, and that the shared *mare* of Cato and Lucretius’ MSS provides testimony against Housman’s emendation of *mare* to *maris*.

The next problem of language is the use of *propter odores* with the meaning *odorum causa*. The “final” sense of *propter* is relatively rare, but is found in the best authors. Colin¹⁵ cites several examples, including Cicero,¹⁶

12. Most of these have been cited by Smith, “*de rerum natura* v. 1440–7,” 48. As the examples illustrate, poetic kennings in Latin usually consist in compound adjectives used in place of the noun that they traditionally modify. For a popular discussion of kennings, see Jorge Luis Borges, “The Kenning,” *The New Yorker*, 26 January 1976, 35–36. Borges cites from Norse poetry “beast yoked to the waves” and “the horse that rides the reefs,” both for ships.

13. George Goold objects that the fact that *velivolus* “can refer to ‘sea’ as well as ‘ship’ (Serv. *Aen.* 1.224) diminishes the likelihood that it was used *tout court* to mean the latter.”

The fact that *velivolus* is found modifying *mare* as well as *naves* does not diminish the likelihood of the kenning *velivolis = navibus*. Consider the kenning *alipedes* for horses found in (e.g.) Stat. *Theb.* 3.427–28 *flatuque impulsa gementum alipedum*. *Alipedes* is found modifying *cervi* (Lucr. 6.766), as well as *currus* (Val. Flaccus 5.611) and *equi* (Verg. *Aen.* 12.484). Clearly *alipedes* could be used of any swift animal. Yet, despite the slight possibility of ambiguity, Statius and others were able to use the word absolutely. Contrast Lucretius, *iam mare velivolis florebat*; there is absolutely no ambiguity, as a literal translation shows: “the sea was abloom with sail-flyers” is as intelligible in English as in Latin, and, in this context above all, there is not the slightest risk of supplying *maribus* rather than *navibus*. If a kenning can be employed where there is a possibility of ambiguity, it follows that one can be used where there is no possible confusion.

14. *Die Antike Kunstprosa*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1898), 168.

15. “Les voiles de l’annonce” (n. 6 above), 129. I cite only the examples that I consider apt. Examples of *te propter* for *tui causa* and such are very common, but they do not usually mean “to acquire you.”

16. *Fin.* 1.7.23: “sed ita prorsus existimo, neque eum Torquatium, qui hoc primus cognomen invenit, aut torquem illum hosti detraxisse, ut aliquem ex eo perciperet corpore voluptatem, aut cum Latinis tertio consulatu conflaxisse apud Vesperim propter voluptatem.” Here the balances make it clear that *propter voluptatem* is an equivalent of *ut perciperet voluptatem*.

Propertius,¹⁷ and Pliny the Elder.¹⁸ Unfortunately (but understandably), he fails to cite the example that should have proven Lucretius' use of a "final" *propter* here; for in *Sermo* 1.3.99–105, Horace imitates this section of Lucretius, giving his own view of the development of man from primitive state to the invention of laws:

cum prorepserunt primis animalia terris,
mutum et turpe pecus, glandem atque cubilia propter,
unguibus et pugnīs, dein fustibus atque ita porro
pugnabant armīs, quae post fabricaverat usus,
donec verba, quibus voces sensusque notarent,
nominaque invenere; dehinc absistere bello,
oppida coeperunt munire et ponere leges . . .

I have given the text as I believe it should be punctuated:

When animals crept forth on [or: from] primordial earth (a mute and lowly flock) in quest of acorn and lairs, they fought with fingernails and fists, then with clubs, and then eventually with whatever arms experience had fabricated, until they discovered verbs and nouns with which they could render their cries intelligible; then they began to abstain from war, build fortified towns, and make laws . . .

Where Lucretius in 5.1440–45 traces men's progress to the development of writing, Horace traces it to the development of language (103–4), and thence to laws (105–6). Horace is generally indebted to a wider section of Lucretius 5. His *glandem atque cubilia propter* shares the diction and meaning of *propter* with Lucretius 5.1442, and the use of poetic specification ("acorn" being used for "food," *cubilia* for "homes," whether in the aspect of shelter or of a place to propagate and rear young), but it also has a relationship in meaning with Lucretius 5.804 *victum vitamque petentes*, of the cicadas leaving their husks:

principio genus alituum variaeque volucres
ova relinquebant exclusae tempore verno,
folliculos ut nunc teretes aestate cicadae
linquunt sponte sua victum vitamque petentes.

This relationship is obscured by the modern punctuation of *Sermo* 1.3.100, without a comma following, thereby placing *glandem atque cubilia propter* at the beginning of the main clause, rather than at the end of the *cum* clause. But the initial position in a clause is a position of emphasis, and the emphasis on *unguibus et pedibus*, contrasted with *fustibus* and *armis* . . . *usus* (and all of them eventually with *verba*, *nomina*, and *leges*) marks *unguibus* as the start of the main clause: the point of the passage (ll. 99–119) is not that primitive man fought over acorns and now we fight over more important things, but that man fought first with primitive weapons, then more advanced weapons, but now he can solve disputes with words and laws. So quest for food and lairs was the motive first for leaving the security of mother earth, and only secondarily for fighting.

17. 2.9.25: *haec mihi vota tuam propter suscepta salutem*.

18. *HN* 10.56.115: *intrans pastorum stabula caprarumque uberibus advolant suctum propter lactis* . . .

Horace's treatment of early man is conventional, but is generally recognized to owe its debt to Lucretius among its sources,¹⁹ including 5.932, *vulgivago vitam tractabant more ferarum* (with which compare also Horace *Sermones* 1.3.109, *more ferarum*); 5.939, *glandiferas inter curabant corpora quercus*; 5.1058, *pro vario sensu varia res voce notaret*; and 1059, *pecudes mutae*, used by Lucretius in an oxymoron of real flocks uttering different cries according to their emotions (both in Lucretius and in Horace's *mutum et turpe pecus*, mute does not mean "incapable of making sounds," but "incapable of speech"). Lucretius describes the development of language in 5.1028–90, and the development of law in 5.1144, summed up in 5.1448 *Navigia atque agri culturas moenia leges. . .* Horace's *oppida coeperunt munire* (*Serm.* 1.3.105) has its Lucretian precedent in 5.1108 *condere coeperunt urbis* (as well as in 5.1440), and his line 101 in 5.1283–84 *arma antiqua manus ungues dentesque fuerunt / et lapides et item silvarum fragmina rami*.

The relatively rare use, then, of *propter* with "final" sense in this passage of Horace with Lucretian resonance, combined with its presence in the MSS of Lucretius at 5.1442, makes it clear that Horace found this use of *propter* in his text of Lucretius. In Lucretius, to be sure, the meaning cannot be confined to "in quest of perfumes" as in Horace it means "in quest of acorn and lairs." The sea is abloom with ships, some of which are in quest of perfumes, and others laden with perfumes bringing them back. It is also true that the pursuit of perfumes would have to be the motive not of the sea but of the sailors, but the transference is easy enough, since the sailors are the effective agents.²⁰

There is, then, not only no serious problem of language, but good reason to believe that our transmitted text of Lucretius goes back at least to the time of Horace, who found no trouble in understanding it. There is another good reason why we should be reluctant to abandon or change the words *propter odores*. This is because *propter odores* is found elsewhere ending a line in Lucretius, at 2.417: *araque Panchaeos exhalat propter odores*; and Lucretius' diction is formulaic. In 2.417, *propter* is used adverbially; but the ring of the phrase is the same, which is the important determinant.²¹ Formulaic diction is adopted by Lucretius mainly as an artistic device in

19. Horace's familiarity with Lucretius cannot be doubted. For instance, earlier in the same satire (1.3.43–53) Horace draws inspiration from *Lucr.* 4.1160–69, and in *Serm.* 1.5.101–3 he parodies *Lucr.* 5.82, as, later (*Serm.* 2.4.93–95), he parodies *Lucr.* 1.927–28.

20. I admit that the phrase is awkward. About this I have more to say below. The transference may have been aided by the verbal element in *velivolis*, which brings to mind the agency of the sailors. But although *velivolis* may contribute its psychological effect, grammatically *propter odores*, because of its position, should modify *florebat*.

21. Parry defined the formula in Homer as "a group of words which is regularly employed under the same metrical conditions to express a given essential idea" (see A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* [Cambridge, 1960], 30), but it has since been pointed out (M. N. Nagler, "Towards a Generative View of the Oral Formula," *TAPhA* 98 [1967]: 295–96) that even in Homer a phrase like *πίονι δῆμῳ* (*δῆμῳ*) functions in much the same way, whether the meaning is "rich fat" or "flourishing populace," and that indeed one even finds syntactic variations like (*H. Merc.* 120) *ταμῶν κρέα πίονα δῆμῳ*. Nagler's comment is that "the oral poet who 'knew,' consciously or otherwise, that he could produce *πίονι δῆμῳ* (*δῆμῳ*) as an adonean clausula, knew in the same way that he could do so with *πίονα δῆμῳ* in order to end a verse with an entirely different periodicity of thought in which the adonean section is not a separable syntactic unit."

conscious imitation of Greek oral poets and their imitators. The poet who chooses to adopt a formulaic diction imposes upon himself restrictions somewhat comparable to those of an English poet who chooses to compose within a fixed verse form, like a sonnet. The poet shows his skill by the range and precision of expression that he can achieve while confining himself as strictly as possible to the scheme—not by the licenses that he has to take. Here it is not required of Lucretius that he end line 5.1442 with a formulaic expression, but the poet displays more skill in being able to say what he wants to say with a formulaic conjunction of sounds than if he were forced to use an entirely novel expression. If in the one instance *propter* is an adverb, in the other a preposition, all the more the display of skill in fitting the formula to a new context.

The most important reason why suspicion has been directed at *propter odores* is the failure of scholars to understand the words. Bailey's supposition that *propter odores* would mean that the "search for spices" was the sole reason for navigation is extreme. Colin,²² who suggests *propter adora*, shows an understanding of poetic specification (ancient term κατ' ἐξοχήν). Where he fails is in imposing his own attitude toward seafaring on Lucretius. To Colin seafaring is apparently an important step in human progress, leading toward the salvation of man from hunger. Not so Lucretius.

Lucretius is heir to a long poetic tradition that looked at seafaring as a major source of human misery. His own negative attitude is manifested in many similes depicting the perils of the sea. These are too numerous to require citation. More to the point is what Lucretius has to say in Book 5 (998–1008). Human suffering (specifically miserable death), Lucretius says, was no worse in the primitive days of man than now (5.988–89). Then (5.990–98) men were prey to wild beasts:

at non multa virum sub signis milia ducta	
una dies dabat exitio nec turbida ponti	1000
aequora lidebant navis ad saxa virosque.	
hic temere incassum frustra mare saepe coortum	
saevibat leviterque minas ponebat inanis,	
nec poterat quemquam placidi pellacia ponti	
subdola pellicere in fraudem ridentibus undis.	1005
improba navigii ratio tum caeca iacebat.	
tum penuria deinde cibi languentia leto	
membra dabat, contra nunc rerum copia mersat.	
(Lucr. 5.999–1008)	

Seafaring is linked with war as one of the two major evils afflicting modern man. In Lucretius' mind sailing, with all its hazards, supplies man not with the necessities of life but with *copia*—excess.

To come down now to the context immediately preceding line 1440, we find Lucretius again comparing ancient and modern states of man, and again finding the modern state not superior in relation to human happiness (5.1423–35):

22. Colin, "Les voiles de l'annonce."

tunc igitur pelles, nunc aurum et purpura curis
 exercent hominum vitam belloque fatigant;
 quo magis in nobis, ut opinor, culpa resedit. 1425
 frigus enim nudos sine pellibus excruciat
 terrigenas; at nos nil laedit veste carere
 purpurea atque auro signisque ingentibus apta,
 dum plebeia tamen sit quae defendere possit.
 ergo hominum genus incassum frustra laborat 1430
 semper et (in) curis consumit inanibus aevum,
 nimirum quia non cognovit quae sit habendi
 finis et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas.
 idque minutatim vitam provexit in altum²³
 et belli magnos commovit funditus aestus.

On lines 1426–29 Bailey says:²⁴

Here we are on the ground of the Epicurean ethic, and, as Robin has pointed out in a very valuable note, we must make a distinction. Epicurus²⁵ divided human desires into three classes: “some are natural, some are vain, and of the natural some are necessary for happiness, others for the repose of the body, and others for very life.” This is put more simply in one of the Κύρια Δόγματα:²⁶ “Among desires some are natural (and necessary, some natural but) not necessary and others neither natural nor necessary, but due to idle imagination.” If this doctrine is applied to clothing, the desire of primitive man to protect himself from the weather by his coverings of leaves is both natural and necessary for the repose of the body; and as his powers are weakened (v. 1014–8) and nature becomes less kindly in providing for him (ii. 1150–74), it is again both natural and necessary that he should take to the more effective protection of the skin, though this at first was an element of envy and discord (1419–22). The inventions of planting and weaving (350–60) were natural but not necessary, but the gold-embroidered robe of modern civilization is neither natural nor necessary; it is a “vain imagining,” for, as

23. I interpret 5.1434–35 so: “And this has gradually sailed life out into deep water and has stirred from the depths great tides of war.” The meaning is that apparent material progress coupled with ignorance of the teachings of Epicurus has gradually made life more complicated and dangerous: as a specific illustration of this complication, Lucretius amplifies *altum* with *belli magnos aestus*. This makes the lines follow a common pattern of amplification, in which the first of a pair gives the genus, the second a concrete illustration: e.g., Verg. *Aen.* 1.30 *reliquias Danaum atque immitis Achilli*. So in 5.1423–24, *curis* is the more general term, *bello* is more specific.

Bailey follows Giussani and interprets *vitam provexit in altum* “has advanced life to its high plane” of material prosperity and luxury. This seems a rather strange sentiment to be sandwiched between lines 5.1430–33 and line 1435. Lucretius is being satirical in this section; he is not being sarcastic.

Others (e.g., K. Barwick, “Kompositionsprobleme im 5. Buch des Lukrez,” *Philologus* 95 [1943]: 207, n. 23) seem to take *vitam provexit in altum* literally, meaning “led to the invention of navigation.” This obviously would suit my interpretation of line 1442 very well, but it should be rejected. If we assume that Lucretius can carry through a consistent image, the clue to the meaning of the ambiguous *altum* must be found in the metaphorical use of *aestus*.

My interpretation is not unique with me, but to my ears it differs somewhat from Merrill’s (“*altum* is the sea of trouble, *vitam* the ship of life”), which makes Lucretius’ bold and appropriate image seem rather trite. *Altum* does balance *curis* in line 1423, but its meaning to the reader does not come from the recognition of a common metaphorical use, but first from the sequence, whereby the selection of words (*provexit, belli aestus*) defines the image first as nautical, then as metaphorical, and second from all the connotations of worry and danger inherent in seafaring in the mind of the reader based on his experience, particularly the vicarious experience derived from Lucretius’ own poem, where image after image has implanted in the reader’s mind a particular attitude.

24. 3:1540.

25. *Ep. Men.* 127.

26. *RS* 29.

far as protection goes, man would get that equally well from the common garment of the poor (1427–9).

Lucretius in the end of Book 5 is building up to the preface of Book 6. The preface starts with a praise of Athens, first for giving man grain (6.1)—a type of something that is both natural and useful for human life—and finally for giving the world Epicurus (6.5). It was Epicurus who saw that just about everything that a man needs for life is ready at hand (6.9–11), and that what man needed for happiness was a limit to desire and fear (6.25).

We are now ready to consider lines 5.1440–42. We need make only one change in the transmitted reading: the adoption of *iam* with Lachmann in 1442 for the manuscripts' *tum*. Attempts have been made to defend *tum* as referring onward to *cum* in 1444,²⁷ or as referring back and meaning "further."²⁸ But explanations of the meanings or appropriateness of *tum* are irrelevant. The problem is that we clearly have a group of three clauses joined in asyndeton, and to provide the connection we need anaphora. So we need either three *iam*'s or three *tum*'s. The change of *tum* to *iam* is easiest.²⁹ The error probably arose in an early Caroline minuscule MS,³⁰ in which the *a* of *iam* was written as an open *a*, and confused with *u*, and the initial *I* was written in rustic capitals (as are the initial letters of each line in OQ) and confused with rustic capital *T*.

I translate Lucretius 5.1440–47 so:

They were already passing their life fenced in with strong towers and the land that they cultivated had already been divided up and marked off, already the sea was abloom with sail-flyers for the sake of perfumes, they already held auxiliaries and allies bound by treaty when poets began to hand down their exploits in verse; and it was not much before that writing was discovered. Therefore our age cannot look back and see what was done before unless reason points out the tracks.

Lucretius' style in this passage, as in the preceding ones cited, is that of the satirist. Of *saepi debebant aevum* in line 5.1440 an ancient commentator would remark: *invidiose dictum*. The "progress" of building forts leaves men spending their lives penned in like animals. By selection of detail and diction Lucretius obliquely makes a negative comment. So in line 5.1442, since seafaring in Lucretius' mind is joined with war as one of the twin evils afflicting modern man, and since he will claim twenty-four lines later that (6.9–10) *ad victum quae flagitat usus omnia iam ferme mortalibus esse parata*, it is essential that sailing be represented as pursued not for something natural and necessary, but for something neither natural nor necessary.

27. So Bailey 3:1546.

28. So Barwick, 206, followed by Colin, "Les voiles de l'annone," 123. Timpanaro, "Lucrezio V 1442" (n. 10 above), explains it as equalling *deinde*.

29. It is also most appropriate. Lucretius is not trying to claim that the building of towns, etc., came at this point in the history of man. The building of citadels and division of land was already described in 5.1108–10, cultivation in 1361–78. See Barwick, "Kompositionsprobleme," 205–7.

30. There are other scripts in which the error could have occurred, but I am convinced that the latest common exemplar of OQ was so written (and probably even earlier ancestors as well). The old theory of an Insular intermediary does not merit the respect of serious scholars.

To indicate this Lucretius selects κατ' ἐξοχήν *propter odores*. By *odores* he means incense, myrrh, unguents—all the perfumed products of the orient. Chodaczek compares Lucretius 4.1125 where *unguenta* comes first in a list of luxuries.³¹

The belittling effect of *propter odores* is comparable to that achieved by Horace in *Odes* 1.1.3–4: *sunt quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum / collegisse iuvat*. No scholar objects with a straight face that contestants do not enter chariot races because they want to collect dust. It is amazing that anyone could have thought that the pursuit of perfumes would have to be the sole, or even a main, purpose of seafaring.³²

Lucretius therefore states in this passage that all the excesses of modern civilization had already developed by the time recorded history began. So it is only through reason—that is, Epicurean philosophy—that we can look back and see that such excesses are unnecessary.³³

It is interesting to contrast Virgil's handling of essentially the same thematic elements (*Ecl.* 4.31–45):

pauca tamen suberunt priscae vestigia fraudis, quae temptare Thetim ratibus, quae cingere muris oppida, quae iubeant telluri infindere sulcos. alter erit tum Tiphys et altera quae vehat Argo delectos heroas; erunt etiam altera bella	35
atque iterum ad Troiam magnus mittetur Achilles. hinc, ubi iam firmata virum te fecerit aetas, cedet et ipse mari vector, nec nautica pinus mutabit merces; omnis feret omnia tellus non rastros patietur humus, non vinea falcem;	40
robustus quoque iam tauris iuga solvet arator. nec varios discet mentiri lana colores,	

31. Scholars who consider *unguenta* there corrupt are wrong as Chodaczek has proven ("Lucretiana," 103–5).

32. Wakefield ("De Rerum Natura," [n. 5 above], 3:229) is misleading here. Immediately after explaining *odores* as *luxoriosissimas merces quaslibet*, which is essentially correct, he adds: *Eleganter utique, quod orientalium maximus erat usus, et pretium maximum Romanis*. The choice of *propter odores* has no direct relationship to the importance of perfumes as an item of trade, but to its suitability as a specific example of goods that are unnecessary for human happiness.

Wakefield does aptly compare Hor. *Serm.* 1.31, where the Epicurean ideal of contentment with native products is well expressed. Note that in lines 10–15 of that ode a merchant is represented as pursuing Syrian wares, and entering the Atlantic ocean. To L. Müller's objection that the importation of Syrian merchandise did not involve entering the Atlantic, Nisbet and Hubbard (*A Commentary on Horace: "Odes" Book I* [Oxford, 1970], 355) reply: "The merchandise is Syrian because that is the richest and most exotic, the sea the Atlantic because that is the most dangerous." The Syrian merchandise of Horace, there used by poetic specification for rich and exotic goods for which one would sail the sea, must include the *odores* of Lucretius.

In his text, Wakefield retains *tum*, and his punctuation is not compatible with a correct understanding of the passage. He seems to take the first *iam* and *tum* as connectives, and to join the last *iam* closely with *pacto foedere*.

33. We can probably not escape from this paper until we have commented on the old chestnut of whether Lucretius manifests a conception of progress. It is important to bear in mind that Lucretius' interests are primarily ethical. On the ethical plane, man makes no progress toward happiness until the coming of Epicurus. The change then may be compared to the change from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Up to the time of Epicurus, there was only the preparation of the way for the "Messiah." There was indeed a development in the arts (5.1457), but no gradual development toward happiness—rather an immediate and complete change for those who received the "good news" from Epicurus (6.7–4).

ipse sed in pratis aries iam suave rubenti
murice, iam croceo mutabit vellera luto;
sponte sua sandyx pascentis vestiet agnos.

We find a very similar grouping of elements of evil: seafaring (32, 34–35, 38–39), walling of cities (32–33), agriculture (33, 40–41), war (35–36). There are several points to be noticed.

1) Virgil also undercuts seafaring, but his method of doing so is characteristically different from Lucretius'. The first meaning of *temptare Thetim* should be to "make a trial of the sea," and in this meaning it is connotive of danger. But Virgil is probably taking advantage of the common use of *temptare* to mean "assault," combined with the personification of the sea as Thetis to suggest, by poetic ambiguity, that the act of sailing is a sinful act: this suits the introductory *uestigia fraudis*. But sinfulness can be no part of Lucretius' objection to sailing. Lucretius could, as he has done previously, describe it in a way that emphasizes the dangers and cares inherent in it; or he could be satisfied that he had already made that point, and simply depict it as pursued for vain purposes. The image *mare velivolis florebat* does not sound like an introduction to the former approach; and the latter is what the manuscripts give us.

2) Although Virgil's choice of the words *temptare Thetim* is designed to give a negative coloration to seafaring, *cingere muris oppida* and *telluri infindere sulcos* needed only to be stated, without coloration of vocabulary. Similarly in Lucretius, negative coloration is found in 1440 and 1442, but the content of 1441 and 1443 required no further hint of the poet's attitude.

3) In Virgil the golden age will be brought about by a change in man's material circumstances. Seafaring for trade will be made unnecessary because every land will bear all goods (39); even the sheep will bear wool already colored (42–45). Imported dyes as a motive for navigation occupies in *Ecl.* 4 the role that perfumes do here for Lucretius. But where Lucretius would have man achieve happiness right now by recognizing that he has no real need for either dyes (1423, 1428) or perfumes (1442), Virgil's golden age will bring happiness, not by convincing man to forgo luxuries, but by allowing him to gain them without venturing onto the sea (38–39).

4) For three *iam*'s connecting clauses through anaphora, compare lines 4, 6, 7 of this *Eclogue*.

5) It follows from the above that although Virgil may be influenced by Epicureans in this *Eclogue*, specifically by Lucretius, his treatment of the themes is characteristically Virgilian, and is incompatible with Epicureanism.

On making comparisons of Virgil and Lucretius, it is often impossible to avoid concluding, as here, that where Lucretius is more successful as an advocate, Virgil is more successful as a poet. This leads us to take up what I regard as the great unspoken objection to *propter odores*: that is, that the line "does not sound right." Let me admit that it does not sound right to me either. This is not, I think, simply because scholars have been used to considering the phrase spurious. Nor is it because we are more accustomed to the formal balance of Ovidian verse. It is not because *propter odores* confronts us with a logical conception in the midst of a pictorial passage: the

following words, *auxilia ac socios iam pacto foedere habebat, e. q. s.*, are hardly pictorial either. It is not even simply because of the awkwardness of the switch from the sea as subject to the motive of the sailors. Rather what is most jarring about the phrase is the fact that, by our standards, it is not poetic to state a reason as a reason. "The sea was abloom with ships laden with perfumes" is poetic; "the sea was abloom with ships for the sake of perfumes" is not. The better poet describes in terms of evocative images, and allows the motivation to be deduced. It does not fully justify the usage to point to the other instances of the causal use of *propter* in Lucretius, since all are found within passages that are conceptual and philosophical, while the basic form of this passage is narrative. But it should be pointed out that it is important to Lucretius to express causality clearly, and he often does so even in poetic passages. For instance in 5.1430–35:

ergo hominum genus incassum frustra laborat
semper et (in) curis consumit inanibus aevum,
nimirum quia non cognovit quae sit habendi
finis et omnino quoad crescat vera voluptas.
idque minutatim vitam provexit in altum
et belli magnos commovit funditus aestus.

The injection of the causal clause *nimirum quia . . . cognovit* instead of *nescium* or *ignarum* is prosaic, but Lucretian, and suggests that we should be slow to deny to Lucretius equal explicitness in *propter odores*, particularly since *propter odores* is the specific exemplification of the general causality expressed in *nimirum . . . voluptas*.

Lucretius' virtues are different from Virgil's. Let me call attention to the concision with which 5.1440–44 seem to be written. Concision is not one of Lucretius' usual features, but virtually every word in this passage seems to count for something; this I take to be appropriate to a satirical style. I have already commented on the negative connotations of *saepti debebant turribus aevum*. *Validis* is not just an idle filler, but contributes both to the pictorial image and the conception of the stage of martial development. *Divisa* and *discreta* are amplification, but not simply duplication: there is a distinction between the legal division of fields (*divisa*) and the act of visibly marking the division (*discreta*): "divided and fenced" gets the force; in 5.1443, *auxilia ac socios* are amplification, but both are needed, as well as *pacto foedere*, to express clearly the relationship involved: in particular the relationship of dominance and subservience, and the military nature of the alliances must be brought out, lest Lucretius be thought to be describing simple social contract, which in Epicurean philosophy is a good. When we come now to line 5.1442, a remarkable thing about most attempted emendations is that they contribute little or nothing to either image or concept. Consider Housman's version, which by virtue of its Latinity and perfection of form might have the strongest attractiveness:³⁴ *iam mari' velivolis flore-*

34. Housman's version is supported briefly by E. Riganti, "Nota Lucreziana," *Bolletino di Studi Latini* 9 (1979): 251–52, and with full argument and his usual learning by Timpanaro, "Lucrezio V 1442," 723–49. It is also adopted by P. H. Schrijvers, *Lucrece et les sciences de la vie*, Mnemosyne Suppl. 186 (Leiden, 1999), 112–13.

bat navibu' pontus. Up to *florebat* we have the image of the sea, and blossoming with sail-flyers. To this *navibus* adds nothing, visually or conceptually, nor does *pontus*. This is good Ovidian verse (though Ovid would not say *maris pontus*), but it does not seem to be what Lucretius is doing here. Part of the awkwardness of *propter odores* lies in the compression. It is not, I concede, a phrase that we can anticipate after *iam mare velivolis florebat*. If the style is thought of as purely narrative, it is jarring. But if the style is partly satirical, then the concise manner of commenting is appropriate, as Horace's own use makes clear.

In summation then, we should retain the transmitted *propter odores* in 5.1442. The antiquity of the reading is assured by Horace's imitation. The words are the concrete exemplification of the general statement of 1432–33. They are needed to undercut the development of navigation as a step toward human happiness and so to prepare for the revelation of the true path to happiness in the preface to Book 6. The phrase was selected both because of the suitability as a representative of idle pursuits that do not lead to happiness, and because it permitted expression of the required sentiment in a preferred, formulaic way.³⁵

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35. This paper was delivered in shorter form at the December 1975 meeting of the American Philological Association. In an early version (1975–76) it has benefited from the criticism of Professors Robert F. Renehan and George P. Goold. Neither should be blamed for the judgments that I express.