

ΔΗΜΟΣΙΕΥΜΑΤΑ ΤΗΣ ΕΤΑΙΡΕΙΑΣ ΜΑΚΕΔΟΝΙΚΩΝ ΣΠΟΥΔΩΝ

ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ

ΦΙΛΟΛΟΓΙΚΟΝ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΚΟΝ ΚΑΙ ΛΑΟΓΡΑΦΙΚΟΝ
ΠΕΡΙΟΔΙΚΟΝ ΣΥΓΓΡΑΜΜΑ

ΕΠΙΤΡΟΠΗ ΤΗΣ ΣΥΝΤΑΞΕΩΣ
ΑΝΤ.-ΑΙΜ. ΤΑΧΙΑΟΣ, Ν. Χ. ΚΟΝΟΜΗΣ

ΚΑΘΗΓΗΤΑΙ ΤΟΥ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟΥ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ

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ΣΥΜΜΙΚΤΑ

LUCRETIUS ON THE SEASONS: *DE RERUM NATURA* 5.737-747

it Ver et Venus, et Veneris Praenuntius ante
pennatus graditur, Zephyri vestigia propter
Flora quibus mater praespargens ante viai
cuncta coloribus egregiis et odoribus opplet. 740
inde loci sequitur Calor aridus et comes una
pulverulenta Ceres

<et> etesia flabra Aquilonum.
inde Autumnus adit, graditur simul Euhius Euan.
inde aliae tempestates ventique sequuntur,
altinonans Voltumnus et Auster fulmine pollens; 745
tandem Bruma nives adfert pigrumque rigorem
reddit Hiemps, sequitur crepitans hanc dentibus Algor¹.

The merits attributed to this passage on the succession of the four seasons are often limited to its pictorial vividness and powerful rhetoric, with the result that scholars have downplayed its contribution to the proposed argument. It is our purpose to argue that this illustration functions cogently and essentially in the Lucretian hypothesis, and that its artfulness is Lucretius' means of achieving more effectively his aim to lure the reader into accepting his argument that natural phenomena are created and destroyed in a fixed order and at certain times (5.731-6).

Before discussing the example *per se*, however, we have to place it in its context. This description of the succession of the four seasons follows Lucretius'

1. The text printed is that of OCT [C. Bailey (ed.), *Lucreti De Rerum Natura Libri Sex*, Oxford 1922, rpt. 1967] with two minor deviations: first, within each group I have capitalized the names of the participants to highlight that they are personified, following W. E. Leonard & S. B. Smith (eds.), *T. Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura Libri Sex*, Madison, Wisconsin 1942, rpt. 1984, s.v. 707-708, and C. L. Howard, *Lucretiana*, CP 56 (1961) 156-7; secondly, in 745 instead of a period I used the semicolon to suggest that 744-7 comprises the winter season.

discussion that *luna potest...nitere* (705), for which he offers three plausible explanations. The first two are positions propounded by philosophers before Lucretius (705-730), while the third one is apparently Lucretius' own contribution to the reason for the moon's shining²:

denique cur nequeat semper nova *luna creari* 731
ordine formarum certo *certisque figuris*,
 inque dies privos *aborisci* quaeque *creata*
 atque alia illius *reparari* in parte locoque,
 difficilest ratione docere et vincere verbis, 735
ordine cum videas tam *certo multa creari*.

It is this new hypothesis that fresh moons may be created in succession and vanish daily which posits a twofold difficulty for Lucretius: *ratione docere et vincere verbis* (735). Lucretius' conscious awareness of this problem is the governing principle of the entire poem, for he understood clearly the challenge of his undertaking to mold Epicurean doctrine into intelligible and enticing poetry³. Thus, these carefully composed lines on the succession of the four seasons (737-747) are employed here to resolve this difficulty, i.e., to win over the reader by the force of Lucretius' style (*vincere verbis*) and instruct him through reasoning (*ratione docere*). Lucretian scholars, however, have judged him successful only in the former goal⁴, although

2. C. Bailey (ed.), *T. Lucreti Cari De Rerum natura Libri Sex*, 3 vols, Oxford 1947, rpt. 1986, vol. 3, 1437-1441, discusses in detail the history of these theories, but for the third one it is not clear whether or not it is drawn from the passage in *Ep. ad Pyth.* 92; see also Leonard - Smith (above, note 1) s.v. 706. It may very well be a Lucretian argument formed by analogy to the arguments of the sun (5.650-3, 660-2), and according to the Epicurean methodology of the *μετάβασις ἀπὸ τῶν φαινόμενων εἰς τὰ ἀφανῆ* (see W. Kullmann, *Zu den historischen Voraussetzungen der Beweismethoden des Lukrez*, *Rh. Mus.* 123, 1980, 97-125, 108).

Lucretius himself, after the exposition of the first two explanations, criticizes both of them (5.727-730):

ut Babylonica Chaldaeum doctrina refutans
 astrologorum artem contra convincere tendit,
 proinde quasi id fieri nequeat quod pugnat uterque
 aut minus hoc illo sit cur amplectier ausis,

and then he proceeds to offer a new (perhaps his own or Epicurus') explanation (731-750), which he claims to be less wonderful than the previous hypotheses (748), and apparently the one that he favors (see below, note 5).

3. For the view that in Lucretius philosophy, poetry and rhetorical presentation are fused together in an intelligible composition see the convincing arguments of: C. J. Classen, *Poetry and Rhetoric in Lucretius*, *TAPA* 99 (1968) 77-118, and E. Asmis, *Rhetoric and Reason in Lucretius*, *AJP* 104 (1983) 36-66.

4. See for example: C. Bailey (above, note 2) vol. 3, 1440-1; P. H. Schrijvers, *Horror ac*

Lucretius apparently satisfied with his example, emphatically concludes his treatment of the whole subject:

quo minus est mirum si *certo tempore luna*
gignitur et certo deletur tempore rursus,
cum fieri possint tam certo tempore multa. 750

The Lucretian argument, then, being very specific and focused upon the moon's orderly creation and destruction at a fixed time and in fixed shapes (*certo tempore, certo ordine, certis figuris*), is strongly emphasized by the verbal repetition of these essential points (731-6, 748-750) which are, in fact, clarified by the example of the succession of the four seasons⁵.

Surely, the illustration of the seasons is designed by Lucretius not only to excite the reader's visual imagination with its lively picture (*cum videas*, 736), but to appeal to his *ratio* as well⁶. Actually, this example cogently illustrates the possibility that the moon may be created in a regular succession of forms, and there are evident stylistic elements which seem designed to reinforce this parallel. First of all, the orderly and rapid succession is conveyed by the paratactic style: only one subordinate clause appears (*quibus... opplet* 739-740); the verbs are in the present tense and indicate motion (*eo* 737, *gradior* 738; *sequor* 740, 744, 747; *adeo* 743); the anaphora involving the repetition of *inde* (741, 743, 744) indicates the rapid change of seasons. Then, chiasmus is employed to hold together and correlate the members of a season: *Calor aridus* × *pulverulenta Ceres* / *etesia flabra Aquilonum* 741-2, and in exactly the same way *Bruma adfert* × *reddit Hiemps* / *sequitur Algor* 746-7; *Autumnus adit* × *graditur Euius Euan* 743; *altitonans Voltumnus* × *Auster fulmine pollens* 745. Moreover, each season is clearly represented in succession: 737-740 the spring, 741-2 the summer, 743 the autumn, and 744-7 the winter. This division, supported by the anaphora of *inde*, the chiasmus, and the balanced structure of the whole example —4 lines devoted to spring, 2 lines to summer, 1 to autumn, and 4 to winter⁷— suggests an orderly progression. In short, this

Divina Voluptas. Études sur la poésie de Lucrèce, Amsterdam 1970, 59, 244-5; C. D. N. Costa, *Lucretius, De Rerum Natura V*, Oxford 1984, 95-6.

5. For these striking sound patterns and their persuasive effectiveness see: R. E. Deutsch, *The Pattern of Sound in Lucretius*, Diss., Bryn Mawr College 1939, 58, 111-2. The Lucretian fondness of placing a particularly powerful argument at the end of a series is discussed by K. Büchner, *Über den Aufbau von Beweisreihen im Lukrez*, *Philologus* 92 (1937) 68-82, who does not include the passage under discussion; and Classen (above, note 3) 92, note 29, where he simply adds this passage as an example to Büchner's observation with no discussion.

6. This implication of the formula *cum videas* is discussed by A. Schiesaro, *Nonne vides* in *Lucrezio*, *MD* 13 (1984) 143-157.

7. The division of these lines is perhaps more complex: *Ver, Venus, Cupid, Zephyrus*. and

paratactic disposition of lines creates an atmosphere of orderly, fixed succession through which Lucretius conveys the notion of *certus ordo* and *certum tempus* in nature.

In addition to the paratactic and orderly structure, Lucretius also employs the device of 'personifications', which remarkably implements his argument, not only by reinforcing the notion of *certus ordo* and *certum tempus*, but by conveying the notion of *certae figurae* as well. This device, which is extensively employed elsewhere in Lucretius according to the diatribal style of writing⁸, allows the poet to provide the reader with a visual, more comprehensible, representation of the seasons, and, also, to describe them in human terms, thereby implying the human cycle of birth and death. So, instead of an abstract description of the seasons and their characteristics or events, Lucretius creates *personae* both for each season and its features which become the season's attendants. Thus, he illustrates his fundamental points on two levels: the orderly succession at a fixed time and in certain shapes takes place not only among the seasons, but also among the attendants within each season.

Finally, and most importantly, the arrangement of the example places significant emphasis on the first and last seasons, spring and winter. Admittedly, these two seasons do not form the natural pairing that one expects, since normally we think of spring as opposite to autumn, and of summer as opposite to winter. And yet, from another perspective, to regard spring and winter as opposites is fully justified, because in antiquity these two seasons have always been the representatives

Flora represent spring (737-740); *Calor* and *Ceres* stand for the summer (741-2), while the *etesia flabra Aquilonum* (742), which occur late in the summer and early in the autumn, may introduce the reader to the next group; autumn appears here to be a transitional season represented by *Autumnus* and *Euhius Evan* (743). Bailey (above, note 2) s.v., Leonard & Smith (above, note 1) s.v., and Costa (above, note 4) s.v., assign lines 744-5 to Autumn, or the 'stormy season' (late Autumn), despite the fact that the presence of *inde* suggests a transition to the next season, winter. The difficulty that arises, then, is whether or not *tempestates*, *venti*, *Volturnus*, and *Auster* can be assigned to a particular season. In fact, of the four only *Volturnus* comes close to a season, namely winter: the examples offered in *OLD* s.v. *Volturnus*¹ are admittedly later than Lucretius, but it is plausible to assume that Seneca and Pliny understood this wind as a winter wind, like Lucretius. It seems better to take these two lines with winter as representative of its early, stormy period, with *Bruma* and *Algor* representing the snowy one.

8. For the Epicurean methodology of the μετάβασις ἀπὸ τῶν φαινομένων εἰς τὰ ἀφανῆ, which Lucretius consciously follows, see: Kullmann (above, note 2) 97-125; B. P. Wallach, *Lucretius and the Diatribe against the Fear of Death: De Rerum Natura III 830-1094* [*Mnemosyne* Suppl. 40], 1976; and Bailey (above, note 2) 1441 and note 1, where he suggests that "for the comparison of the 'periods' of the heavenly bodies with those of terrestrial things we may compare the *Letter to Pythocles* §9: 'ἔτι τε τάξεις περιόδου, καθάπερ ἔνια καὶ παρ' ἡμῖν τῶν τυχόντων γίνεται, λαμβανέσθω'; it was obviously an accepted Epicurean comparison".

of the most essential aspects of life, i.e., birth and death⁹. The idea, therefore, of death and rebirth, which is essential for Lucretius' hypothesis (*certo tempore luna gignitur et certo deletur*, 748-9, 731f.), is further elucidated by the natural juxtaposition of winter and spring, by their elaborate presentation (each occupying 4 lines), and by their prominent position as spring commences and winter closes the natural cycle of life. Clearly then, the rhetorical enhancements of this passage are directed towards winning over and instructing the reader through reasoning (*ratione docere et vincere verbis*, 735) that the apparently Lucretian argument apropos of the moon's shining is indeed conceivable: fresh moons may be made daily and in succession, just like the succession of the seasons comes about at a fixed time, orderly, and in certain shapes¹⁰.

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ΕΝΑΣ ΚΟΙΝΟΣ ΤΟΠΟΣ ΣΤΟΝ ΨΕΥΔΟ-ΦΩΚΥΛΙΔΗ*

Μιά από τις πρωτεϊκές και έν πολλοῖς αἰνιγματικῆς μορφῆς τῆς ἑλληνορωμαϊκῆς ἀρχαιότητος εἶναι ὁ ποιητῆς μιᾶς ἑξαμετρικῆς σύνθεσης 230 στίχων, ὁ ὁποῖος χρησιμοποιεῖ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ Φωκυλίδη. Εἶναι ἀξιοσημείωτο ὅτι, ἕναν αἰῶνα μετὰ τὴν πρώτη ἔντυπη ἔκδοση τοῦ ποιήματος (Βενετία 1495), τὸ ἔργο αὐτὸ θεωροῦνταν γνήσιο προῖόν τοῦ γνωστοῦ ἀρχαικοῦ γνωμικοῦ ποιητῆ¹. Ὁ Fr. Sylburg ἦταν ὁ πρῶτος πὺ διατύπωσε διστακτικὰ κάποιες ἀμφιβολίες γιὰ τὴ γνησιότητα τοῦ ἔργου τὸ 1591, ἀλλὰ τὴν ἀπόδειξη τῆς ψευδεπίγραφης προέλευσῆς του τὴν ὀφείλουμε στὸν μεγάλο φιλόλογο Joseph Scaliger². Ἡ μετρικὴ, τὸ

9. E.g. Hom. *Il.* 6.145ff.; *Mimn.* 2; Alc. 286(a) L-P; Leonidas of Tarentum (*Anth. Pal.* 10.1); *Catul.* 46; Hor. *Od.* 1.4.

10. I am thankful to Profs J. M. Snyder and S. V. Tracy for their valuable comments on a draft of this note; to Prof. F. Moreland in particular for introducing me to Lucretius; to my colleague S. Frangoulidis for his valuable and critical discussions; and to the anonymous referee of the *Hellenika* for the meaningful suggestions.

* Ἡ προκείμενη ἐργασία ἐκπονήθηκε στὸ πλαίσιο τοῦ προγράμματος «Σχέσεις Ἑλλήνων καὶ Ἰουδαίων κατὰ τοὺς τελευταίους προχριστιανικοὺς καὶ πρώτους μεταχριστιανικοὺς αἰῶνες» πὺ χρηματοδοτήθηκε ἀπὸ τὴ Γενικὴ Γραμματεία Ἑρευνας καὶ Τεχνολογίας τοῦ Ἰπουργείου Ἑνέργειας, Βιομηχανίας καὶ Τεχνολογίας.

1. Γιὰ τὸν Φωκυλίδη, τὸν ποιητῆ τοῦ βου αἰ. π.Χ., βλ. πρόχειρα τὸ σχετικὸ ἄρθρο τοῦ P. Ahlert στὴ *RE* 20 (1941) 503-505.

2. Βλ. τὸν ἄκρως διαφωτιστικὸ καὶ ἐμπεριστατωμένο κριτικὸ ἔλεγχο τῆς ψευδοφωκυλίδειας ἔρευνας ἀπὸ τὴν *editio princeps* ὡς τὸ 1975 στὸ σημαντικὸ βιβλίο τοῦ P. W. Van der Horst, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides*, Leiden 1978, σ. 3-54. Σχετικὰ μὲ τοὺς δύο