

Lucretius and Philodemus

Thesis

The thesis of this paper is that Lucretius was a member of the Epicurean circle around Philodemus in the Papyrus Villa in Herculaneum.¹

This thesis is by no means a matter of course. It runs counter to the view of many prominent historians of philosophy (for example Diskin Clay in his book on Lucretius and Epicurus) that Lucretius was a lone wolf who read Epicurus on his own without connection to any contemporary Epicurean school.² This theory must still be said to be the predominant one, although warning voices now little by little can be heard.³

The strongest argument in favour of the view that Lucretius had no connection with the Philodemean *contubernium*, namely that his poem does not figure among the Herculaneum books, is valid no more. Remains of *De rerum natura* have been found among the charred scrolls (see below). Hence the warnings.

But there are other arguments. David Furley has observed that Lucretius' criticism of other philosophers does not move outside Epicurus' criticism of the adversaries of his time: the Presocratics, Plato and Aristotle. The chief enemies of Epicureanism in the time of Lucretius, the Stoics, are absent from *De rerum natura*.⁴ The view has even been voiced that Lucretius was no real Epicurean.⁵

Further we have Philodemus' astounding remark in the fifth book of *On Poems* that poetry is no suitable medium for a presentation of science or philosophy.⁶ Already Christian Jensen in the early twenties for that reason doubted that *De rerum natura* could have been known to him.⁷

My thesis has a certain resemblance to the often derided theory of Della Valle from the thirties. I hasten to stress that I do not believe that Lucretius was a small Campanian farmer.⁸ For reasons already put forward by Martin Smith I strongly think Lucretius was a Roman nobleman.⁹

¹ On the Philodemian circle, see Gigante (1990) 63-79; Longo Auricchio (1992) 109.

² Clay (1983b) 196 f. *et passim*. Earlier literature, Kleve (1983) 5; Steckel (1968) 644 f.

³ Kleve (1989) loc. cit.; Rouse & Smith (1992) lv *et passim*; Armstrong (1995c) 2.

⁴ Furley (1986); Furley *ap.* Kleve (1978) 74 f.

⁵ Classen (1986); Clay (1983b) loc. cit.; Clay (1995) 11.

⁶ Phld. *Po.* V, col. 17.14-24, Mangoni (1993) 144 f.; Wigodsky (1995) 58; Armstrong (1995b) 256.

⁷ Jensen (1973, reprint from 1923) 133.

⁸ Della Valle (1933) 492.

⁹ Rouse & Smith (1992) xiv ff.

Ordo Homericus

To try and prove my thesis I am going to use a form of argumentation, beloved by Lucretius¹⁰ and in rhetoric known as the *ordo Homericus*.¹¹ The term refers to Agamemnon's order of battle *Il. IV.297 ff.* (in Pope's translation):¹²

The horse and chariots to the front assigned,
The foot (the strength of war) he ranged behind;
The middle space suspected troops supply,
Inclosed by both, nor left the power to fly.

The strongest arguments, then, come first and last, the weakest arguments in the middle, so that they may be strengthened by the arguments in front and behind.

My strongest argument which will come first, is that Lucretius has been found in Herculaneum. My next strongest argument which will come last, is paradoxically identical with the arguments of my adversaries, that Lucretius pays no regard to the Stoics. But this is, as we shall see, exactly what we should expect from the content of the Herculaneum papyri.

My middle arguments points out similarities between Lucretius and Philodemus. But as similarity does not necessarily imply dependence, these arguments will need support from the preceding and following ones.

Lucretius Herculaneus

The discovery of fragments from *De rerum natura* among the Herculaneum papyri¹³ has been met with some reluctance in Dirk Obbink's recent book on Philodemus and poetry.¹⁴ Diskin Clay is not certain that it really is Lucretius that has been found. If it is Lucretius, he may not have been part of Philodemus' library, but acquired later, after Philodemus' death, like the poem on the battle of Actium. Michael Wigodsky, Steven Oberhelman and David Armstrong doubt that if Lucretius was part of Philodemus' library, he would have been able to appreciate his Latin.¹⁵

This sounds pretty much like a modern version of the Gorgian paradoxes: Nothing exists. If anything exists, it cannot be known. If anything can be known, it cannot be communicated by language.¹⁶ But the modern paradoxes are as unsubstantial as the ancient ones.

It *is* Lucretius that has been found in Herculaneum. The discovered fragments contain remnants of sixteen hexameters from three or four books of *De rerum natura*, a discovery that has now been endorsed by Werner Suerbaum.¹⁷ Della Valle's old

¹⁰ Classen (1986) 346.

¹¹ cf. Volkmann (1910) 660.

¹² Pope (1905) 75.

¹³ Cf. Kleve (1989).

¹⁴ Obbink (1995b).

¹⁵ Clay (1995) 6, 13; Wigodski (1995) 58; Oberhelman & Armstrong (1995) 235 f.

¹⁶ Gorgias' paradoxes as phrased by Atkins, *The Oxford Classical Dictionary s.v.*

¹⁷ Endorsement of Kleve (1989); Suerbaum (1994).

hope, that at least one tiny verse from Lucretius should one day be found in Herculaneum,¹⁸ has at last been fulfilled.

Lucretius *has* been part of Philodemus' library. The Lucretian handwriting is of the very oldest Latin type, akin to Ennius and the recently discovered comedian Caecilius Statius, but quite different from the newer type of handwriting in the poem *De bello Actiaco*.¹⁹

The Lucretian handwriting is further the largest handwriting found in Herculaneum. One book of *De rerum natura* must have filled two papyrus scrolls of ordinary dimensions.²⁰ The average Latin handwriting is considerably larger than the average Greek one, and the Lucretian handwriting again is much larger than the average Latin one.²¹ This I take as a sign that *De rerum natura* has played a prominent part in the Philodemean *conturbium*. Bad eyesight should prevent nobody from reading Lucretius.

Philodemus *could* appreciate the Latin of Lucretius. He stayed permanently in Italy for several decades, and in the Papyrus Villa he was, as has recently become clear, surrounded not only by Greek philosophical books, but also by old Latin literature.²² Philodemus' beloved teacher, Zeno of Sidon, Philodemus' ideal in every respect, had so good command of Latin that he could even crack a joke in that language. Cicero could not forgive Zeno his Latin nickname of Socrates, *scurra Atticus*, 'the clown from Athens',²³ eagerly taken over by Nietzsche with other titbits from the Herculaneum papyri in his attack on Socrates in *Götzendämmerung*.²⁴

The small Greek and the large Latin handwriting calls to my mind a queer story from Cicero's *In Pisonem*: when Piso, the owner of the Papyrus Villa, gave a party for his *Graeculi*, they were packed five or more on one couch, while the great man reclined by himself.²⁵ They had neither oysters nor fish, just slabs of stale meat to eat. Cicero hints that his source was Philodemus himself. Perhaps Piso was as stingy with papyrus supplies for his *Graeculi* as he was with delicacies. To get along with their papyrus ration they had to write cramped (we even know of Greek scrolls which have been covered with writing on the outside)²⁶ while a Roman nobleman like Lucretius got the papyrus he needed, if we are not to believe Della Valle, who thinks that Lucretius fabricated his own papyrus on his Campanian farm. At least Lucretius in his sixth book (111-115) gives a vivid description of how papyrus sheets, hung up to dry flying in the wind, are slapped through the air with a thunderlike noise.²⁷

¹⁸ Della Valle (1933) 216.

¹⁹ On the types of Latin and Greek handwriting in Herculaneum with measures, see Kleve (1994) 316; id. (1996a); (1996b) 677.

²⁰ On two papyrus scrolls for one book of Lucretius, see Suerbaum (1992) 164.

²¹ Example of letter heights: the Latin text in *Lucr.* 10 mm, in other Latin papyri 4 mm, the Greek text in *Phld.* between 2 mm (*D. I*) and 2.5 mm (*de calumnia*), in *Epic. Nat.* 3 mm (not written in Herculaneum).

²² Kleve (1994) 318.

²³ *Cic. N.D.* 1.93.

²⁴ *Götzendämmerung*, in the chapter 'Das Problem des Sokrates'.

²⁵ *Cic. Pis.* 67 f. Description of the *Graeculi* party borrowed from Wright (1927) 165 f.

²⁶ On scrolls with outside handwriting (*opistographoi*), see Capasso (1991) 210.

²⁷ Della Valle (1933) 492.

Lucretius has been found in Herculaneum. He is written in *the oldest type of Latin handwriting* and with exceptionally *large letters*. This indicates that he played a prominent part in the Papyrus Villa.

It is unnecessary to presuppose that *De rerum natura* had to be formally edited before it could influence Philodemus and his circle. The large papyrus handwriting may indicate that the manuscript was made for reading aloud. There was an extensive practice among ancient authors, Virgil naturally included, of reading aloud from their works to a selected audience prior to publication. Such a practice is at least at a later date also found in the Papyrus Villa: the hexameter poem *De bello Actiaco* is originally (*PHerc.* 817) furnished with *ictus* (not reproduced in the *disegni* or the modern editions). *De rerum natura* may of course also otherwise have circulated in the Villa before publication, in parts or in its entirety.

It is not to be excluded that the Lucretius fragments we now possess, belong to the first edition, which then, like the works of Philodemus, was produced in Herculaneum.

Ennius Herculensis

Our thesis is further strengthened by the discovery of fragments from Ennius' *Annals* in Herculaneum.²⁸ This work of Ennius was Lucretius' chief poetic model.²⁹ It is written in the same type of letters as Lucretius, only somewhat smaller, dating from the first century BC, or even older.³⁰ Ennius, then, was available in the Herculaneum library and could easily have been studied there by Lucretius.

Vita et opera Philodemi

Philodemus was born about 110 BC in Gadara near the Lake of Gennesaret and had in Athens been the pupil of the important Epicurean philosopher Zeno of Sidon before he came to Italy and Herculaneum in the seventies BC. Here he became the friend and teacher of Lucius Calpurnius Piso Caesoninus.³¹ When they met, Piso was according to Cicero *adulscens*.³² At the same time Lucretius was in his twenties. Philodemus is ten to fifteen years older than Lucretius.

With him to Herculaneum Philodemus brought Epicurus' main work *On Nature* (in 37 books), writings of other Epicureans like Polystratus, Carneiscus and Deme-trius Lacon, and his own erotic epigrams, although none of them so far have been rediscovered in the Papyrus Villa.³³ So already from the start Philodemus' library in Herculaneum was quite extensive.³⁴ If Lucretius lived in the Villa, he would have had access to these works. And the library increased rapidly thanks to Philodemus'

²⁸ Kleve (1990); *id.* (1991) 59-62; Gigante (1994) 127-131; Suerbaum (1995).

²⁹ Cf. *Lucr.* I.117-126; Rouse & Smith (1992) *ad loc.*; Classen (1986) 342.

³⁰ Kleve (1994) 316.

³¹ On the life of Philodemus, see Dorandi (1990a) 2330-2332; Asmis (1990) 2371-2372.

³² *Cic. Pis.* 68.

³³ On the chronology of Philodemus' epigrams, see Gigante (1990) 63-79; Della Valle (1993) 243 ff.

³⁴ Cf. Cavallo (1983) 58-60.

own diligence as an author. More than seventy scrolls can so far be assigned to Philodemus, and new ones are continuously opened. With regard to bulk, Philodemus far surpasses Cicero's philosophical authorship.³⁵

Thanks to Cavallo's pioneering work on the different types of Greek handwriting in Herculaneum, we are for the first time able to view the works of Philodemus in a chronological perspective.³⁶ Earlier his works had to be presented according to content.³⁷ They fall in two distinct periods. The first period goes from the seventies to the fifties BC, the second period from the fifties to Philodemus' death in the thirties. The works from the first period probably fall within the lifetime of Lucretius and may have been studied by him in Herculaneum.

In the first period Philodemus writes *On the Good King According to Homer* and the two historical works *Index Academicorum* and *Index Stoicorum*, further *On Epicurus*, *To the Friends in the School*,³⁸ *On Frankness*, *On Anger*, *On Music*, *On Poems* and the three first books of the *Rhetoric*.

In the second period, after the fifties, that is after the death of Lucretius, come the last four books of the *Rhetoric*,³⁹ *On Evil*, *On Flattery*, *On Economy*, *On the Gods*, *On Piety*, *On Methods of Inference*, *On Death*, some *moralia* with unknown titles and the newly opened *On Slander*, where Philodemus in the last column addresses Virgil and three other Roman friends, the conclusive proof that Virgil was a member of the Philodemian *contubernium*.⁴⁰ Some day we may find a corresponding proof also for Lucretius.

In the second period, after the death of Lucretius, we may find reactions from Philodemus to Lucretius, although it is likely that Philodemus treated many subjects in his lessons before he wrote about them. Which way the influence has moved in each single case, from Philodemus to Lucretius or from Lucretius to Philodemus, is perhaps not so important. It is more important to show that there is a connection between them, and so have Lucretius firmly placed in Herculaneum.

Philodemus and Lucretius

To search for similarities between Lucretius and Philodemus is a lonely job. In the Lucretius commentaries Philodemus and the Herculaneum papyri are virtually non-existent, and in the Philodemus commentaries references to Lucretius are scarce. For the Lucretius commentators Philodemus with all his lacunas and reconstructions is simply too difficult. *Non leguntur*.⁴¹ The Philodemus commentators have naturally read their Lucretius, but they have hardly expected to find too many connections between them.

³⁵ On the size of Philodemus' authorship, see Asmis (1990) 2373; for his influence on Roman poets, cf. Dorandi (1990a) 2334 n. 28.

³⁶ Cavallo (1983) 61 ff.; cf. also Gigante (1990) 26 ff.; Dorandi (1990a) 2334 f.

³⁷ For systematic presentation of Philodemus' works, see Philippson (1938) 2450 ff.

³⁸ *Ad contubernales* I, *PHerc.* 1005, Angeli (1988).

³⁹ On the chronology of the *Rhetoric*, see Dorandi (1990a) 2339; Kleve & Longo Auricchio (1992) 215 n. 14.

⁴⁰ *On Slander*, *PHerc.* Paris. 2; Gigante & Capasso (1989).

⁴¹ An exception, with references to Philodemus, is Brown (1987) (albeit with only a few acknowledgements).

Maybe we should not expect to find too many similarities, at least not in details. Diskin Clay has observed that the places where Lucretius can be said to translate Epicurus, are few.⁴² He thinks the reason is that Lucretius as a poet freely chose his own formulations, although not deviating from the thought of Epicurus.⁴³ Lucretius may have had the same relation to Philodemus.

We should therefore perhaps not start searching for details, but rather for similarities of a more general kind. I am thinking of attitudes of Philodemus' which deviate from Epicurus'. Such attitudes exist, although Philodemus is apt at denying it. But there can hardly be any doubt that Philodemus took attitudes to rhetoric and poetry which differ from those of Epicurus. These attitudes were developed by Philodemus' teacher Zeno⁴⁴ in Athens and later taken over by him. Philodemus admired his teacher beyond measure and has rightly been called 'the untiring glorifier of Zeno'.⁴⁵

Zeno's views of rhetoric and poetry are connected with the new challenge that the Romans confronted the Epicureans with. Epicurus' contempt for culture and his rejection of all education would have been disastrous for the school's contact with the Roman world. Zeno realized that if the school should prosper, it had to create a link between the Romans and the Greek culture.⁴⁶

If we find these changed views on rhetoric and poetry again in Lucretius, we will take this as an indication of his connection with Philodemus.

Rhetorica

The new view on oratory is presented in the first book of Philodemus' *Rhetoric*.⁴⁷ This book is probably written in Lucretius' lifetime and may have influenced him. With reference to his beloved teacher Zeno, Philodemus asserts that there is a certain part of rhetoric which is a class by itself and does not really belong to traditional rhetoric. Traditional rhetoric consists of forensic and deliberative, that is juridical and political, rhetoric. These forms of rhetoric are themes that cannot be learnt, which is shown by the fact that they cannot guarantee secure results. At best they are useless, at worst harmful.

The case is quite different with regard to epideictic or sophistic rhetoric.⁴⁸ This is an art which can be learnt and which leads to secure results in literature and panegyrics.⁴⁹

⁴² Clay (1983b) 20 f., 127 ff.; see also Brown (1987) 3-4.

⁴³ Lucretius a true disciple of Epicurus, *DRN* III.9-13.

⁴⁴ Zeno as innovator, Cic. *N.D.* I.21.59; Fritz (1972); Asmis (1995a).

⁴⁵ 'Der unermüdliche Verherrlicher Zenons,' Steckel (1968) 644.

⁴⁶ On the relation of Epicurus and later Epicureans to culture, cf. Athen. XIII.588a (ap. Arrighetti (1973²) fr. 43 = fr. 117 Us.); Gigante (1990) 38-39; Asmis (1990) 2406; Classen (1986) 368; Steckel (1968) 629, 633-634. For Epicureans as cultural mediators in the Hellenistic world and initial difficulties for the Epicureans in setting foot in Rome, cf. Steckel (1968) 643-644.

⁴⁷ On the younger Epicureans' view on rhetoric, see Kleve & Longo Auricchio (1992).

⁴⁸ Sophistic rhetoric is not a part of traditional oratory, Phld. *Rhet.* II. col. 58.4 ff., Longo Auricchio (1977) 163.

⁴⁹ Cf. Phld. *Rhet.* II, col. 19.22, col. 37, Longo Auricchio (1977) 83, 121; Phld. *Rhet.* III, col. 40.35-col. 41.9, col.46.23-col. 47.6, col. 5a-col. 6a, Hammerstaedt (1992) 17, 22, 24, 31.

Sophistic oratory can supply the right linguistic and stylistic means to reach clarity.⁵⁰ Philodemus declares that he is following in the footsteps of the fathers of the school, Epicurus, Metrodorus and Hermarchus,⁵¹ but that is hardly true. It appears from his *Rhetoric* that Philodemus is opposed to contemporary, orthodox Epicurean schools in Rhodes and Cos,⁵² which adhered to Epicurus' total rejection of every form of rhetoric.⁵³ Philodemus is not able to present one single citation from the master to support his case,⁵⁴ but must content himself with generalizations and abusive language towards his antagonists.⁵⁵

Lucretius' mastery of rhetoric,⁵⁶ not in the least in his eulogies of Epicurus,⁵⁷ is well known. He may have trusted Philodemus and not been aware of his deviation from Epicurus, but rested in the Zenonian tradition. Cicero praises both Zeno and Lucretius for their excellent rhetoric and regards them as exceptions among the Epicureans.⁵⁸ Zeno, as we have seen, even went to the trouble of learning Latin to be more able to communicate with his Roman disciples.

One rhetorical detail may be added: in the fourth book of his *Rhetoric* Philodemus criticises the use of *hyperbata* to conceal a lack of thought.⁵⁹ This criticism seems to have an echo in Lucretius' attack on Heraclitus' *inversa verba*.⁶⁰ The fourth book of the *Rhetoric* is written after the death of Lucretius, but it is fully possible that Philodemus has treated the theme in his rhetoric lessons before that time.

Poetica

In the fourth century BC Epicurus declared that only the wise man could speak correctly about poetry, but he would not actually write poems himself.⁶¹

How different the situation in the first century BC is! At that time there were two excellent Epicurean poets, Philodemus and Lucretius. To be sure, they remained the only ones in the history of the school.

Philodemus not only wrote elegant epigrams which Cicero highly praises,⁶² he also wrote a treatise *On Poems*. Philodemus did not stop writing poems when he converted

⁵⁰ Cf. Longo Auricchio (1992) 114.

⁵¹ Phld. *Rhet.* I, col. 7, Longo Auricchio (1977) 21; *Rhet.* II, col. 44.35, col. 49.19-27, Longo Auricchio (1977) 135, 145.

⁵² *Rhet.* II, col. 52.11, Longo Auricchio (1977) 151; Philipsson (1916) 439.

⁵³ On Epicurus' rejection of rhetoric, see Philodemus *Rhet. ap. Arrighetti* ((1973²) fr. 20.3 = fr. 53 Us.); Diog. Oen. frs 112.6-8, 127 Smith (cf. Smith (1993) 294 f., 316); D.L. X.118-119; Amm. XXX.4.3; Steckel (1968) 635, 641; Gigante (1981) 185-186.

⁵⁴ Cf. Ferrario (1980) 63; Hubbell (1920) 256.

⁵⁵ Phld. *Rhet.* I, col. 7.18-29, Longo Auricchio (1977) 21.

⁵⁶ Lucretian rhetoric, Bailey (1947) 132-171; Classen (1986).

⁵⁷ For Lucretian and Philodemian praises of Epicurus, see Lucr. V.7-21; Steckel (1968) 609; Longo Auricchio (1992) 115.

⁵⁸ *N.D.* I.59; *Q.Fr.* II.9.3.

⁵⁹ Phld. *Rhet.* IV, col. 14, col. 18.14 ff., Sudhaus I (1892) 157, 160; Hubbell (1920) 296-297.

⁶⁰ Lucr. I.639, 642, cf. Clay (1995) 12.

⁶¹ D.L. X.121 (Arrighetti (1973²) p. 27). On Epicurus' theory of poetry, see Obbink (1995b); Sider (1995) 36.

⁶² Cic. *Pis.* 29.70.

to Epicureanism, but continued also afterwards.⁶³ Lucretius writes his poem about Epicurus' philosophy itself, fully realizing his originality, exploring ways where none has gone before.⁶⁴

In his treatise *On Poems* Philodemus tries to live up to Epicurus' expectation, to speak correctly about poetry.⁶⁵ His poetics also stems from Zeno.⁶⁶ For Zeno, as for Philodemus, poetry is an art which can be learnt,⁶⁷ on a par with panegyric, sophistic rhetoric. *On Poems* was written while Lucretius was still alive and may have influenced him. The following points should have been of special interest to him.

Philodemus' atomistic view of poetry, that is, his insistence that a poem is a closely interwoven unity of form and content where the order of elements cannot be changed without decisive consequences for the understanding,⁶⁸ is echoed in Lucretius.

Philodemus regards poetry as a source of delight (*terpsis*)⁶⁹ and means that we immediately know what good poetry is owing to the natural concept of poetry which has gradually developed in our minds.⁷⁰ On that account Lucretius might have felt certain that his poetic toils would bear fruit, a point where he indeed is quite confident.⁷¹

Philodemus discusses the fascinating effect (*psuchagôgia*) of poetry,⁷² and Lucretius is convinced that it is just such a fascinating influence his poem has on his friend Memmius, to whom it is dedicated. From his rich heart Lucretius' honeyed tongue can pour such inexhaustible potions that Memmius may sit spellbound until old age and death will penetrate his limbs.⁷³

Philodemus thinks that the type of people who let themselves be influenced by poetry, are to be found in the middle between sages and fools.⁷⁴ Thus Lucretius can assume that his poem is an effective means to influence Memmius. It is well known that Memmius was not a wise man, but Lucretius expected great things from him.⁷⁵

⁶³ Epigrams from the period after Philodemus' conversion are *A.P.* IX.412 and XI.35, which depict the life in Piso's Villa.

⁶⁴ *DRN* IV.1-2. Humphries' translation used.

⁶⁵ *Phld. Po.* V, col. 36.10 ff., Mangoni (1993) 162.

⁶⁶ For Zeno on poetry, cf. von Fritz (1972) 124; *Phld. Contubern.* I, col. 10.17-20, Angeli (1988) 176.

⁶⁷ *Phld. Rhet.* II, col. 22.36-39, Longo Auricchio (1977) 219; Asmis (1990) 2401.

⁶⁸ On atomistic poetics, see *Phld. Po.*, *PHerc.* 1676, col. 16.26-17.27, Sbordone (1976) 251-253; *Phld. Po.* V, col. 14.26-28, col. 29.4 -22, Mangoni (1993) 142, 155-156; *Lucr.* I.823-827; II.1013-1014; cf. *pertexere* I.418, VI.42; Asmis (1995b) 158; Armstrong (1995a).

⁶⁹ Poetry and pleasure: *Phld. Po.*, *PHerc.* 1676 fr. 10b, Heidmann (1971) 97; *Phld. Po.* V, col. 4.5 f., Mangoni (1993) 132; Armstrong (1995b) 256; *Demetr. Lac. Po.*, col. 4.1, Romeo (1988) 95; *Lucr.* I.28, 413; Asmis (1990) 2405 f.; Mangoni (1993) 28.

⁷⁰ Natural concept of poetry: *Phld. Po.* V, col. 25.14 ff., Mangoni (1993) 152; on the intuitive concept, cf. Steckel (1968) 620.

⁷¹ Toils and hopes: *Lucr.* I.136-145; II.730; III.419, toils of philosophy: *Phld. Elect.*, col. 17, Indelli & Tsouna-McKirahan (1995) 95.

⁷² *Phld. Po.* V, col. 16.9 ff., Mangoni (1993) 143; *Phld. Po.*, *PHerc.* 1676 fr. 3, 21 ff., Heidmann (1971) 94.

⁷³ *Lucr.* on the might of his poetry, I.412-417, Humphries' translation used.

⁷⁴ *Phld. Po.* V, col. 26.30-27.7, Mangoni (1993) 153.

⁷⁵ Cf. Rouse & Smith (1992) 597.

Philodemus' predilection for Homer⁷⁶ is shared by Lucretius, and in its continuation lies his predilection for the Roman Homer, Ennius.⁷⁷ Lucretius would also agree with Philodemus' emphasis on the hexameter as the meter that is best suited to describe reality, better than the meters of tragedy.⁷⁸

Philodemus stresses that from a philosophical point of view the facts (*pragmata*) embedded in a poem are more important than the charm (*terpsis*) surrounding them,⁷⁹ although the poem qua poem has to be valued on other terms.⁸⁰ Lucretius gives expression to the same thought: Epicurus is the *rerum inventor* (III.9), he has discovered how things really are. Lucretius just lends charm (*lepos*) to the master's great discoveries.⁸¹

But Philodemus, as already noticed, does not seem favourably disposed towards poetry when it comes to its ability to express scientific or philosophical truth. No poet is likely to write in a manner that will satisfy such requirements.⁸²

Scholars are at variance on how broadly this statement has to be understood. Philodemus may just criticize the Stoics for their tendency to underline the moral function of poetry and to look for a hidden meaning in poems by means of an allegorical interpretation.⁸³ No poet, Philodemus may have meant, could possibly live up to such standards. If this is so, Lucretius may escape the criticism of Philodemus.

However, if we take into account the whole exposition of Philodemus⁸⁴ and further add what his older contemporary Demetrius of Laconia says on the matter,⁸⁵ it seems more probable that Philodemus' denouncement of poetry is general. Prose is the correct vehicle for presentation of philosophical thought. Also for the sake of argument I would like to choose the broader interpretation.

It is difficult to obtain a clear understanding of Philodemus' poetics⁸⁶ as we only know it from his criticism of others.⁸⁷ He seems to have regarded the strict poetical composition,⁸⁸ including metrics, as a threat to any truthful expression, and so also the use of archaisms, tropes and figures (as Demetrius certainly does).⁸⁹ Why Philodemus raised no such questions in connection with his approval of sophistical rhetoric need not concern us here.

⁷⁶ Phld. *Po.* I, *PHerc.* 466 fr. 5; *PHerc.* 1081a, fr. 36, Janko (1995) 39-40, 69-70; Phld. *Po.* V, col. 20.1-10, Mangoni (1993) 147; Dorandi (1982a) 18; Asmis (1990) 2405.

⁷⁷ On Homer, Lucr. I.124; III.1037-1038, on Ennius, I.117-126.

⁷⁸ Phld. *Po.* IV, col. 4.17-5.24, Sbordone (1969) 323-325.

⁷⁹ Phld. *Po.* V, col. 4-5, col. 12.6 ff., col. 36.29 ff., col. 37.3 ff., Mangoni (1993) 132-133, 139, 162; *Po.*, *PHerc.* 1676, col. 12.19-24, col. 15.11-13, col. 17.16-24, Sbordone (1976) 243, 249, 253; Demetr. *Lac. Po.* I, col. 14.3-6, Romeo (1988) 97.

⁸⁰ Phld. *Po.* V, col. 32.17-20, Mangoni (1993) 159; Asmis (1995b) 151.

⁸¹ Lucr. I.21-27, 922-927; IV.8-9.

⁸² Phld. *Po.* V, col. 17.14-24, Mangoni (1993) 145.

⁸³ On the Stoics as targets, see Longo Auricchio (1992) 113; Wigodsky (1995) 58; Asmis (1995b) 151.

⁸⁴ For a view of Philodemus' exposition in *On Poems* V, see Armstrong (1995b).

⁸⁵ On poetry and ambiguity, see Phld. *Mus.* IV, col. 20.11-17, Neubecker (1986) 65; Asmis (1995b) 155; Demetr. *Lac. Po.* II, col. 14.6-8, col. 61.5-10, Romeo (1988) 104-123.

⁸⁶ For a reconstruction of Philodemus' poetics, see Pace (1995).

⁸⁷ Philodemus as critic of critics: Clay (1995) 7.

⁸⁸ On composition, see Sbordone (1976) 294; Pace (1995) 147-154; Mangoni (1993) 343 s.v. *sunthesis*.

⁸⁹ Harmful poetic devices: Demetr. *Lac. Po.* II, col. 44 ff., Romeo (1988) 114 ff.; Phld. *Po.* V, col. 31.25 ff., Mangoni (1993) 158; Armstrong (1995b) 266.

Paradoxically, Lucretius seems to agree with Philodemus. No one, he says, is able to compose a poem matching the grandeur of reality and the discoveries of Epicurus.⁹⁰ And his task is the more difficult as he writes verses in that unphilosophical language of Latin.⁹¹ But the poem had to be written for the sake of Memmius and his other Roman readers. If not, they would have been unable to grasp the dark sayings of Epicurus and his grim philosophical system.⁹² Lucretius feels like a kid in a running contest with a strong horse,⁹³ and he prays for divine help to fulfil the task.⁹⁴

But Lucretius is at least able to compose clear and distinct verses (*lucida carmina*) about obscure matters,⁹⁵ and so he satisfies Philodemus' demand for clarity (*saphêneia*) in poetry.⁹⁶

Although in the extant remains Philodemus gives no complete information about his views on poetry, Lucretius seems all the same to be in general accordance with him. A nearer exploitation of Lucretius' literary predilections might therefore enlarge our understanding of the poetics actually held in the Papyrus Villa.

In the fourth book of his *Rhetoric*, written after the death of Lucretius, Philodemus gives prominence to poets at the expense of sophists and orators, because nobody can praise like a poet. This is a theme Philodemus says he has already discussed in his work *On Praise*, now lost. He seems to speak generally of the poets' praise of the gods,⁹⁷ but he may also have thought of Lucretius' grandiose Homer-inspired eulogy of the gods in their *intermundia*,⁹⁸ and not in the least of his praise of Epicurus, a god among men.⁹⁹

Thus rhetoric and poetry, repudiated by Epicurus, were finally accepted in the Epicurean school. I think this new trend, starting with Zeno and continued by Philodemus, was a necessary precondition for the creation of a poem like *De rerum natura*.

Similarities between Lucretius and Philodemus

There are of course many similarities between Lucretius and Philodemus. They were, after all, adherents of the same philosophy. However, we have chosen similarities with the peculiarity that the two of them resemble each other, and not because they both are similar to Epicurus. If we could prove in addition that Epicurus must have differed from Lucretius and Philodemus, we would have a point. We take the subjects in the order in which they occur in Lucretius.

⁹⁰ Lucr. V.1-2, 6.

⁹¹ Lucr. I.136-137.

⁹² Dark sayings: Lucr. I.136, 410-411, 933, 943-945; IV.8-9, 18-20.

⁹³ Lucr. III.7-8.

⁹⁴ Lucr. I.24; VI.92-95.

⁹⁵ Lucr. I.933-934; IV.8-9.

⁹⁶ Phld. *Po.* V, col. 31.27, Mangoni (1993) 158.

⁹⁷ Phld. *Rhet.* IVB, col. 38a.20 ff., col. 40a.4, Sudhaus I (1892) 219-221.

⁹⁸ I.44-49; II.646-651, 1093-1094; III.18-22; IV.68-72.

⁹⁹ Lucr. I.62-79; III.1-30; V.1-54; VI.1-42.

The first book

invocatio Veneris

In the prooemium to the first book Lucretius invokes the goddess Venus. Among many other things Venus figures as a sea goddess. That Epicurus should have made such an invocation, is almost unthinkable. His intermundane gods had hardly anything to do with the sea. But Philodemus has two invocations of Aphrodite as a sea goddess in his epigrams. That an Epicurean could do such a thing, might have been a reason for Lucretius to do the same.¹⁰⁰

Epicurus victor

Immediately afterwards Lucretius depicts Epicurus as a Roman imperator returning from his campaign in the universe, after having conquered superstition.¹⁰¹ Warlike images like this are foreign to Epicurus. But such an image seems to have been used by Philodemus in the recently discovered preface to the first book of *On the Gods*. Philodemus throws his coat to fight superstition like Orestes does in Euripides' *Electra* when he draws his sword to slay Aegistus.¹⁰²

The second book

nobilitas

Lucretius expresses his contempt for nobility and political power in a way similar to Philodemus in one of his *moralia* (title unknown), and in the first book of *On the Gods*.¹⁰³

The third book

ira

Philodemus' and Lucretius' description of anger show several parallels. Philodemus wrote *On Anger* in Lucretius' lifetime and so Lucretius may have been influenced by him. Both use the image of anger flashing from the eyes.¹⁰⁴ Both are especially impressed by the roaring wrath of the lion.¹⁰⁵ Both are convinced that reason can master a fault like irascibility, but they also both agree that reason cannot totally erase such a fault.¹⁰⁶ Further both regard it as no profit, if we should all become alike (all of us always smiling, for instance).¹⁰⁷ But they agree that nothing can prevent us

¹⁰⁰ Invocations of Venus/Aphrodite as a sea goddess: Lucr. I.3 ff.; Phld. *AP* VI.349; X.21 (= Gigante (1988) 23 (no. III)); Asmis (1990) 2372; Wright (1927) 169.

¹⁰¹ Lucr. I.72 ff., cf. Steckel (1968) 634.

¹⁰² Phld. *D. I.* col. A; Kleve (1996b) 674, 679.

¹⁰³ Lucr. II.37 ff.; Phld. *PHerc.*125, col. 5.11, Schmid (1939) 17; *D. I.* col. 25.29 ff., Diels (1916) 44.

¹⁰⁴ Lucr. III.288; Phld. *Ira*, fr. 6, Indelli (1988) 55.

¹⁰⁵ Phld. *Ira*, col.18. 28, col. 27.30, Indelli (1988) 76, 84; Lucr. III.296 ff.

¹⁰⁶ Phld. *Ira*, fr. 11, 16, 22 ff., col. 1-2, Indelli (1988) 58, 61, 62-63; Lucr. III.310 ff., 319 ff.

¹⁰⁷ Phld. *Ira*, col. 38.34 ff., Indelli (1988) 94; Philippson (1916) 455; Olivieri (1914) viii; Lucr. III. 314 ff.

from living lives worthy of the gods, if we only become Epicureans.¹⁰⁸ This last view Epicurus certainly would have applauded, but he seems to have had a greater confidence in reason to extirpate our faults and so to cast us in a more common form.¹⁰⁹

Democritus

Philodemus and Lucretius pay great respect to Democritus,¹¹⁰ contrary to Epicurus who is not so polite about his predecessor in atomism.¹¹¹

mors

There are several similarities between Lucretius and Philodemus with regard to their treatment of death. Philodemus wrote *On Death* after the lifetime of Lucretius and may have received impulses from *De rerum natura*. At least Lucretius' early and tragic death seems to have made an impression on him (more details will be given later). Both depict how the fear of death darkens life and makes it generally intolerable.¹¹² Both use the image of the broken jar from which the content flows, to illustrate the common fate of body and soul.¹¹³ Both stress the common development of body and soul for the same reason.¹¹⁴ Both urge that no self will remain after death to lament our fate.¹¹⁵ Both repeat with contempt certain platitudes which people usually real off at a death.¹¹⁶ Both point out the uselessness of excessive grief and how unworthy it is to cling to life in old age.¹¹⁷ Both assure that no hell is awaiting us beyond the grave. If hell exists, it is here on earth.¹¹⁸ Death only means that we cease to exist.

terra, mare, caelum

To illustrate how absolute our non-existence after death will be, Lucretius (III.840 ff.) tells that nothing will be able to shake us then, not if earth were mixed with sea or sea with sky. This drastic illustration, which later has become popular,¹¹⁹ may be an enlargement of a formulation in *On Anger*, written before the death of Lucretius, in which Philodemus speaks of a collapse of earth and sea.¹²⁰

From book four I can present just one point, but it is the more important.

¹⁰⁸ Phld. *Piet.*, *PHerc.*, 1098 XI.22 ff., Philippson (1921) 386; Lucr. III.322; Epic. *Ep.Men.* 135.

¹⁰⁹ Epic. fr. 579 ff., Us. 332 ff.

¹¹⁰ Phld. *Mus.*, col.36. 29ff., Neubecker (1986) 87; Lucr. III.370 ff., 1030 ff.

¹¹¹ Epic. *Ep.Hdt.* 24; Cic. *Fin.* I.12; *N.D.* I.39, phrasing borrowed from Rouse & Smith (1992) 216a.

¹¹² Lucr. III.37-40; Phld. *Elect.*, col. 10.16-19, col. 20, Indelli & Tsouna McKirahan (1995) 91, 97 ff.

¹¹³ Lucr. III.434 ff.; Phld. *Mort.* IV, col. 39.3 ff., Gigante (1983) 182, 222 f. and also Görler in this volume.

¹¹⁴ Lucr. III.445 ff.; Phld. *Mort.* IV, col. 9.22, Kuiper (1925) 143.

¹¹⁵ Lucr. III.870-930; Phld. *Mort.* IV, col. 32., col. 37 f., Kuiper (1925) 158, 162 f.; Phld. *Elect.*, col. 10, Indelli & Tsouna McKirahan (1995) 91, 159.

¹¹⁶ Lucr. III.894 ff.; Phld. *PHerc.* 1251, col. 16, Schmid (1939) 39; *Mort.* IV, col. 37.7 ff., Kuiper (1925) 162.

¹¹⁷ Lucr. III.952 ff.; Phld. *Mort.* IV, col. 12.28, col. 38.21 f., Kuiper (1925) 145, 164.

¹¹⁸ Lucr. III.978 ff.; Phld. *Mort.* IV, col. 22.2 ff., Kuiper (1925) 150.

¹¹⁹ Cf. Liv. IV.3.6; Juv. 6.283 f., cit. by Anatole France in *Les dieux ont soif*, formulation from Humphries' translation.

¹²⁰ Phld. *Ira*, col. 18.6, Indelli (1988) 76, 183.

The fourth book

erotica

We will now discuss Lucretius' treatment of love. Like Philodemus, Lucretius shows no interest in paederasty.¹²¹ They both describe heterosexual love.¹²² The erotic experiences described in general by Lucretius recur in the epigrams of Philodemus as allegedly personal adventures: Love is like a chronic wound¹²³ which constantly disturbs our well-being.¹²⁴ In the middle of luxury and festivity with our loved one at our side a chilling anxiety can steal upon us. The affair destroys our economy, and the girl may even actually be interested in another man.¹²⁵ This deplorable state has to be ended as soon as possible. It may be achieved by sexual abstinence, in which neither Philodemus nor Lucretius seems to believe very much, but which looks like the solution for Epicurus.¹²⁶ It is better to keep to prostitutes.¹²⁷ They are fully able to satisfy us because they know what movements are exciting¹²⁸ — movements in which our wives are not interested, Lucretius adds.¹²⁹ However, Lucretius and Philodemus agree that it could be advisable to marry under certain circumstances, but then it is an absolute precondition that she is neat, kind and agreeable. Epicurus' view on marriage may have been more restrictive.¹³⁰

The fifth book

canonica

Philodemus' teacher Zeno made analogy the central method of inference in Epicurean logic. All phenomena, even the most remote and apparently unique and incomprehensible ones, can be explained by comparison with known data. Zeno's logic is presented by Philodemus in *On Methods of Inference*. The similarity between him and Lucretius has already been observed by De Lacy. Just one example: on a par with Philodemus, Lucretius proves that mythological creatures like Centaurs never can have existed because they lack analogy. A combination of man and horse, two species with different growth and lifetime, contradicts experience.¹³¹

Philodemus wrote *On Methods of Inference* after the death of Lucretius.¹³² But since the content is derived from Zeno, we may ascertain that Lucretius represents a philosophical phase after Epicurus.

¹²¹ Phld. *De Stoicis*, col. 22, Dorandi (1982b) 103; Philippson (1938) 2464.

¹²² Lucr. IV.1037 ff., cf. e.g. Kleve (1970).

¹²³ Phld. *PHerc.* 1251, col. 6, Schmid (1939) 19; Lucr. IV.1048 ff., 1068 ff.

¹²⁴ Phld. *AP V.* 131, Gigante (1988) 33 (no.x); *AP XI.* 41; Lucr. IV.1076.

¹²⁵ Phld. *Mus IV*, col.16.13 ff., Neubecker (1986) 59; *AP V.* 25, Gigante (1988) 27 (no. VII); *AP V.* 112, Gigante (1988) 41 (no. XV); *AP X.* 21.4; *AP XI.* 34; Lucr. IV.1060, 1131 ff.

¹²⁶ Cf. D.L. X.118.12 (Arrighetti (1973²) 27); Lucr. IV.1063 ff.; 1072.

¹²⁷ Phld. *AP V.* 46, 107, 120, 126; Lucr. IV.1070 f., 1073 f.; Brown (1987) 199.

¹²⁸ Phld. *AP V.* 132.5; Lucr. IV.1274 ff.; Rouse & Smith (1992) 375c.

¹²⁹ Lucr. IV.1277; Rouse & Smith (1992) xvi f.

¹³⁰ Cf. Phld. *Elect.*, col. 15, Indelli & Tsouna-McKirahan (1995) 94; *AP V.* 121, Gigante (1988) 25 (no. v); Lucr. IV.1190, 1280 ff.; Epic. *Ep. Pyth.* 119; Steckel (1968) 630.

¹³¹ Cf. Phld. *Sign.*, col. 31.26 ff., De Lacy (1978) 73, 122; Lucr. V.878 ff., 901 ff.

¹³² For the date of this work, cf. Phld. *Sign.* col. 2.15ff., De Lacy (1978) 31 f., mentioning Antonius, Cavallo (1983) *loc. cit.*

theologica

Lucretius and Philodemus try by means of analogical inferences to create a picture of the gods in their *intermundia* as detailed as possible.¹³³ Epicurus kept to the more general. He limited himself to the impression of gods which we get from their *simulacra* and the general notion everybody has developed in his mind.¹³⁴ By analogy Lucretius and Philodemus conclude that the gods perceive and speak, they are of course eternal and blessed, and further equipped with a certain type of bodies which Cicero mockingly calls quasi-bodies with quasi-blood.¹³⁵ The mighty strength of the gods Lucretius and Philodemus describe with almost identical expressions.¹³⁶

Philodemus' *On the Gods* and *On Piety*, where these questions are discussed, were written after the death of Lucretius. Maybe Lucretius represents a middle stage between Epicurus' generalities about the life of the gods and Philodemus' unintentionally comical details in the third book of *On the Gods*. Here the gods speak Greek or a language resembling Greek, for only Greeks have become wise. The gods do not sleep, because sleep is related to death, but they can take a nap. Philodemus seems even forced to ascribe a sort of defecation to the gods, quasi-defecation that must be, as they take in matter from the surroundings, the nectar and ambrosia of vulgar mythology.¹³⁷

Of other similarities we can mention their common contempt for people who believe they can live securely as freethinkers without being Epicureans. Met by trials they immediately relapse into the vulgar religion: the mask is torn away, reality remains.¹³⁸

Both also criticize the identification of the gods with forces of nature, thereby probably aiming at the Stoics.¹³⁹ Both stress that it is traditional religion and not Epicureanism that leads to cruel and impious acts.¹⁴⁰ 'Such are the crimes to which religion leads,' Lucretius says after having described the sacrifice of Iphigenia (to which Abraham's offering is a parallel in our religion). Voltaire believed that this verse: *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum* would last as long as the world.¹⁴¹

The Cybele festivals with their drums fascinate both Lucretius and Philodemus,¹⁴² and Philodemus may have borrowed Lucretius' description of religion as superstition, lowering over men with horrible appearance.¹⁴³

¹³³ Cf. Lucr. V.1169 ff.; Phld. *D.* III. col. a., fr.82.4 f., col. 8.34, col. 13.36 ff., fr.13.2 ff., Diels (1917) 13, 27, 36 f., 46.

¹³⁴ Epic. *Ep.Men.* 123; *Nat. lib. inc.*, fr. 39 Arrighetti; Aet. I.7.34; cf. Steckel (1968) 604 f.; Longo Auricchio (1992) 114.

¹³⁵ Lucr. V.148 ff.; Phld. *D.* III, fr.14.3f., fr.19.1, Diels (1917) 46, 47; Cic. *N.D.* I.49, 75.

¹³⁶ Lucr. V.1174; Phld. *Piet.* II, col. 66.27 ff., Gomperz (1866) 96.

¹³⁷ Phld. *D.* III, col. 13.6 (sleep), col. 14.6 (speech), col. 14.34 ff. (defecation), fr.18, 41, 77 (food), Diels (1917) 37, 38, 47, 55 f., 67.

¹³⁸ Lucr. III.41 ff., Humphries' translation used; Phld. *D.* I, col. 1.11 ff., col. 18.23 ff., Diels (1916) 9, 31; *Mal.* X, col. 4.27 ff., Jensen (1911) 7; *Elect.*, col. 1.10-13, Indelli & Tsouna-McKirahan (1995) 85.

¹³⁹ Lucr. II.655 ff., Rouse & Smith (1992) 146b; Phld. *Piet.* I, col. 11.18 ff., col. 12.26 f., col. 13.5 f., col. 15.14 ff., col. 18.1 ff., Gomperz (1866) 77, 79, 80, 82, 85; *Poem.*, *PHerc.*, 167 fr.II, *PHerc.* 1081, fr.XII, Heidmann (1971) 93 f.

¹⁴⁰ Lucr. I.80 ff.; Phld. *Piet.* I, col. 3c, *Piet.* II, col. 67, Gomperz (1866) 65, 97.

¹⁴¹ Voltaire and Lucr. I.101, Rouse & Smith (1992) 11d, Leonard's translation used.

¹⁴² Lucr. II.618; Phld. *D.* I.col. 18.21 f., Diels (1916) 31, 78 n. 3.

¹⁴³ Lucr. I.62 ff., Phld. *Piet.* II, col. 101.19 ff., Gomperz (1866) 119; Cic. *N.D.* I.45.

musica

Philodemus wrote *On Music*, also based on Zeno, in Lucretius' lifetime. Both agree that music is a source of pleasure¹⁴⁴ and think that music is developed from a primitive to a more sophisticated stage.¹⁴⁵ Lucretius' delightful description of how primitive men amused themselves with music and dance after their meal with awkward rhythms and clumsy movements, has its parallel in Philodemus' description of the song and dance characteristic of drunkenness.¹⁴⁶

Philodemus refers to a lost chapter in *On Music* where he discussed the origin of music. This chapter can be reconstructed by means of Lucretius, who tells that men first imitated the wind and the birds with their voices, while the invention of instruments took place later.¹⁴⁷

These were some points of similarity between Philodemus and Lucretius from the first five books of *De rerum natura* perhaps worth pondering. When no such point is to be found in the sixth book, it has its special reason. Book six is about natural phenomena, and Philodemus did not write about physics. This was reserved for the master, as we shall see.

dispositio

Lucretius' disorderly disposition has often caused wonder. He frequently repeats verses, accumulates arguments and follows an erratic line of reasoning.¹⁴⁸ The usual way of explaining this is to assume that he left his poem unfinished. Had Lucretius lived longer, he would have cleared up the mess.

An equally plausible explanation, however, is that Lucretius took over these bad habits from his teacher Philodemus. What is said about Lucretius, may equally well be said about Philodemus: his expositions are badly organized, he repeats himself, accumulates arguments and follows an erratic line of reasoning.¹⁴⁹ Both have also the peculiar habit of starting an argumentation with a refutation of the opposite view.¹⁵⁰ Did neither of them ever finish their works?

Philodemus lacunosus

In our *ordo Homericus* we now leave the middle rank with suspected troops and post ourselves in the rear among the footmen, the strength of war.

¹⁴⁴ Phld. *Mus.* IV, col. 10.18 f., col. 18.5-7, Neubecker (1986) 50, 62; Lucr. V.1410.

¹⁴⁵ Lucr. V.1390 ff., Phld. *Mus.* IV, col. 34,24 ff., Neubecker (1986) 84 f.

¹⁴⁶ Lucr. *loc. cit.*; Phld. *Mus.* IV, col. 1B.1 ff., Neubecker (1986) 37.

¹⁴⁷ Lucr. V.1379-1388; Phld. *Mus.* IV, col. 34.27 ff., Neubecker (1986) 84.

¹⁴⁸ On Lucretius' disposition, cf. Classen (1986) 332, from whom I borrowed my formulation.

¹⁴⁹ Cf. Asmis (1983); Dorandi (1990b) 69 f.; Philippson (1921) 399.

¹⁵⁰ Lucr. IV.823-857; V.110-234; Classen (1986) 344; Phld. *Piet.* I, Gomperz (1866); *D.* I, col. A-C, Kleve (1996b); Janko (1995) 88.

If we could show with certainty that Philodemus mentions Lucretius or undoubtedly refers to him, this would be a strong argument that there is a connection between them. I have searched in my own Philodemian data bank and that of the TLG,¹⁵¹ kindly presented to me in a provisional state, for the names ΤΙΤΟΣ, ΛΟΥΚΡΗΤΙΟΣ and ΚΑΡΟΣ, or parts of these names. The theoretical possibilities that the names have figured in many unintelligible fragments are legion. I restrict myself to two places where the meaning of the texts is somehow clear and the name of Lucretius would fit in.

The first place is in the second book of the *Rhetoric* where Philodemus stresses the importance of sophistic rhetoric, just the kind of rhetoric Lucretius stands for.¹⁵² The other place is in the fourth book of *On Death* where Philodemus speaks of childless death.¹⁵³ Unfortunately the remains of the supposed ΛΟΥΚΡΗΤΙΟΣ are respectively limited to ΛΟΥΚ and ΛΟΥ, which is not satisfactory. Other reconstructions would be equally probable. But the search will not be given up. New Philodemus scrolls are continuously opened and great parts of the unrolled material are still unknown, because one did not possess the necessary aids to read what is written on the carbonized papyrus. One day it may well happen that we find the name of Lucretius just as the name of Vergil suddenly popped up in a newly opened papyrus.

Gigante claims that Philodemus thinks of Lucretius when in the fourth book of *On Death* he takes up various causes of death, among them death by poisoning. According to St. Jerome Lucretius went mad in consequence of drinking a love-potion and took his own life.¹⁵⁴ Immediately afterwards Philodemus seems to mention the illness which led to the suicide of Epicurus.¹⁵⁵ The Epicureans admitted suicide in cases when the sufferings were intolerable.¹⁵⁶ Philodemus may have presented a list of respectable suicides.

Epicurus de natura

If we muster what remains of natural philosophy in the Papyrus Villa and what could have been there according to tradition, we shall see that Epicurus' *On Nature* is the only work on the matter, but it does occur in several copies; one of the signs that there was a school there. Later Epicureans just discussed a few specialities within

¹⁵¹ Thesaurus Linguae Graecae, University of California, Irvine, California 92717, 1595 Philodemus Phil., Copyright 1994.

¹⁵² Phld. *Rhet.* II, *PHerc.*, 408 fr.3.24 f.: Λουκ[ρήτιος ἐπαγγέλλ]εται, cf. Lucr. I.411: *hoc tibi de plano possum promittere* (= ἐπαγγέλλεσθαι) and Phld. *loc. cit.* line 21: ἐ]παγγέλλονται. Reconstruction built on David Blank's unpublished reading λουλ[.....]εται. For a Greek author citing a Roman, cf. Plu. *Fam.* 20.6, citing Liv. XXXIX.51.9-11.

¹⁵³ Phld. *Mort.* IV, col. 22.25f.]Λου[κρήτιος], Mekler (1886) 330, my reconstruction. Cf. Lucr. III.895 f. on leaving one's children at death.

¹⁵⁴ On death by poisoning, cf. Phld. *Mort.* IV, col. 5.5-9, Gigante (1983) 119 f., 147. Formulation from Rouse & Smith (1992) xviii.

¹⁵⁵ Phld. *Mort.* IV, col. 6.3 ff., Gigante (1983) 120.

¹⁵⁶ Cf. Epic. *Ep.Hdt.* 15; Kuiper (1925) 45 n. 14; Cic. *Fin.* I.49; Lucr. III.935-943; Phld. *Elect.*, col. 16.14-19, Indelli & Tsouna-McKirahan (1995) 95.

physics,¹⁵⁷ while Epicurus' *On Nature* remained the only complete presentation. Later Epicureans concentrated on ethics, culture and history of philosophy.¹⁵⁸ In natural philosophy Epicurus had said the last word.

When no need was felt to refute the Stoics from the period after Epicurus, the reason seems to be that the Stoics presented nothing new, but just built on the Presocratics who had already been refuted by Epicurus. Lucretius expects his reader to find out arguments for himself and be like a hunting dog sniffing up the prey's hiding place and laying it open.¹⁵⁹

Here, I think, we have the reason why Lucretius does not attack contemporary Stoic physics. Lucretius' source was Epicurus because no other source existed.

Lucretius epitomicus

De rerum natura is great poetry. That, however, does not prevent it from also being an introduction to Epicureanism. Such introductions, the so called *epitomae*, were of different sizes and also included surveys of some part or other of the system. They are known from all periods of the school and should help to fix in memory 'the most essential comprehension of the truth,' as Epicurus says.¹⁶⁰ Lucretius often stresses that his work is meant for beginners,¹⁶¹ a most typical introduction to the system, I would say.

Lucretius concentrates on physics and presents ethics just sporadically. This should cause no wonder, if one remembers that the study of physics was regarded as a necessary precondition for mastering ethical questions. The *curriculum* of the school¹⁶² is mirrored in the so called *tetrapharmakos* or 'fourfold remedy'¹⁶³ which can be regarded as the shortest possible *epitoma* of the system, the *epitoma epitomarum* so to say, coined by Epicurus himself:

God is not to be dreaded,
death not to be feared,
and the Good easy to acquire,
evil easy to endure.

Dread of god and fear of death have to be abolished before we can acquire pleasure and endure pain. The same order of presenting the four main themes of Epicureanism, God, death, pleasure and pain, can be found in several writings.¹⁶⁴ *De rerum natura* covers the first two themes, God and death. Book one and two and Book five

¹⁵⁷ Philonides on astronomy, Steckel (1968) 643; Phaedrus on theology, Philippson (1938) 1558; Demetrius of Laconia on geometry, von Arnim (1901) 2842; Zeno on the *minimae partes* of the atoms, von Fritz (1972) 123, cf. Steckel (1968) 598.

¹⁵⁸ On Philodemus and physics, cf. Longo Auricchio (1992) 115.

¹⁵⁹ Lucr. on the hunting dog: I.398-409.

¹⁶⁰ *Ep.Hdt.* 35-36, Bailey's translation; cf. Philippson (1939).

¹⁶¹ Lucr. I.50 ff., 411 ff., 938 ff.; II.55 f., 1023; III.1045 ff.; IV.44, 912 ff., 931; V.97 f.; VI.527, cf. Steckel (1968) 612.

¹⁶² On the Epicurean *curriculum*, cf. Kleve (1979).

¹⁶³ Cf. Arrighetti (1973²) 548; Steckel (1968) 621 f.; translation of term from De Witt (1954) 38.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Kleve (1979) 84.

and six are directed against the dread of God, Book three and four against the fear of death,¹⁶⁵ the whole poem thus structured around the two main reasons given by Epicurus for the study of physics: God and death. We do not study physics for the sake of curiosity, but to get rid of dread and fear.¹⁶⁶

De rerum natura must have been of great value to the circle of the Papyrus Villa. It was an introduction for Roman students who later should attend the lectures of Philodemus on ethical and cultural questions¹⁶⁷ and study Epicurus' great work *On Nature*.

We may suppose that the young Romans who visited the Villa (Vergil, Plotius, Varius and Quintilius, who are mentioned together with Vergil in the newly opened scroll *On Slander*, and others, among whom possibly Horace)¹⁶⁸ became thoroughly acquainted with the poem of Lucretius during their stay in the Villa, and that Lucretius later could serve as a *vademecum*¹⁶⁹ for the rest of their lifetime, constantly reminding them of the wisdom that brings life out of turbulence and darkness into serenity and shining light.¹⁷⁰ According to Epicurus that is just the reason why *epitomae* should be composed.

In conclusion: Philodemus' reluctance to accept poetry as an adequate medium for science and philosophy deterred neither Vergil nor Horace from composing didactic poems — and no more Lucretius. Allowances were perhaps made for *epitomae*. *Epitomae* could, after all, not give the whole truth, just fragments of the truth.

¹⁶⁵ On the structure of *De rerum natura*, cf. Kenney (1971) 12-13 and now Sedley in this volume.

¹⁶⁶ Epic. *KD* 11.

¹⁶⁷ For ethics and culture as Philodemus' main interests, cf. Clay (1983b) 25.

¹⁶⁸ On Philodemus' relation to the Augustean poets, cf. Steckel (1968) 644; Clay (1995) 13; Oberhelman & Armstrong (1995) 235 f., 254; Sider (1995).

¹⁶⁹ For *epitoma* as *vademecum*, cf. Epic. *Ep.Hdt.* 36.

¹⁷⁰ Life out of turbulence: Lucr. V.10-12, Humphries' translation.