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LUCRETIUS, EPICURUS, AND PREHISTORY

DANIEL R. BLICKMAN

OF the many topics treated by Lucretius in his survey of Epicurean philosophy, one that has attracted considerable attention in recent decades is his account of the origin and progress of human civilization at the end of the fifth book of the *De Rerum Natura*. Two of the most difficult issues raised by this account of prehistory are its structure and its relation to Epicurus' treatment of the same topics.

The first issue is whether there is an overall coherence in Lucretius 5.925–1457. Certain main divisions in the text are clear enough. There is the first stage of the most primitive human existence (925–1010), a second stage marking the formation of society and the appearance of language and fire (1011–1104), and a third stage begins at 1105 in which cities and political institutions develop.¹ These three stages of development were traditional in Greco-Roman reconstructions of prehistory.² Up to 1160, the chronological progression is not problematic. But the section on religion (1161–1240) is ambiguous. The reader, having no overt clue that chronological sequence is being interrupted, can easily upon first encounter think of it as coming next in time.³ But a more careful reading will raise the question of whether some of these phenomena should not belong among the people of the

¹ K. Barwick, "Kompositionsprobleme im 5. Buch des Lucrez," *Philologus* 95 (1943) 193–211; B. Manuwald, *Der Aufbau der lukrezischen Kulturentstehungslehre*, Mainz 1980 (*Akademie der Wissenschaften und der Literatur Mainz, Abhandlungen der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Klasse* 1980, Nr. 3) 15–18. For the text of Lucretius I have used C. Bailey, *Titi Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura* (Oxford 1947), unless otherwise indicated.

² P. Rose, "Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and the Teaching of the Sophists," *HSCP* 80 (1976) 51–54; T. Cole, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology*, American Philological Association Monographs 25 (1967) 25–46.

³ Lucretius invites us to read it this way by mentioning cities (*urbis* 1162).

first two stages (925–1104). The earliest human beings ought to have been able to perceive the gods just as well as their descendants.⁴ The existence of a break in the chronological progression is confirmed by 1241–1457. This section, with its concentration on the aetiology of various arts, makes a number of clear references to primitive conditions which fit the first two stages (925–1104) but not the third (1105–1159).⁵ There is another perplexing feature of 1241–1457: the order in which the various arts are discussed, and indeed the selection of arts mentioned, have seemed unaccountable. The section begins with metallurgy, particularly as applied to weapons (1241–1307), then proceeds to the use of animals in war (1308–1349), weaving (1350–1360), arboriculture (1361–1378), and finally music (1379–1411). The last of these is neither the most recent discovery, being known, in fact, to the most primitive people (*silvestre genus terrigenarum* 1411), nor is it important for survival. Yet it is given a treatment far beyond its practical value. Any explanation of its role as

⁴ Scholars have suspected this idea for Epicurus as a natural deduction from his theories about the gods and perception and also because of fr. 84 Us. (= G. Arrighetti, *Epicuro: Opere* [Torino 1960, 1973²] 27.1 [p. 252] = Philod. *Piet.* 113g), discussed in G. Arrighetti, “La struttura dell’ epistola di Epicuro a Pitocle,” *Studi Classici e Orientali* 16 (1967) 117–128, and cf. G. Müller, “Die fehlende Theologie im Lucretztext,” in *Monumentum Chiloniense. Kieler Festschrift für E. Burck*, ed. E. Lefèvre (Amsterdam 1975) 280; but the reading was too doubtful for confidence (Manuwald [above, n. 1] 44 n. 170). Now a new text being published by Dirk Obbink, to whom I am most grateful for making it available, provides stronger evidence:

καὶ τῷ δὴ | δεκάτ[ω] | ἐπεὶ φ[ύ] | σ[ε]ω[ς] το]ύς πρώτους | φη[σιν] ἄν[θρω]ποι | εἰς
 ν[ο]ή[ματα] (τῶν) [ἐ]ξω | βα[ι]νεῖν ἀφ[θ]άρτων | φύσεων.

“And in book 12 of *On Nature* he says that the first men arrived at conceptions of imperishable external entities.” A reconstruction of early religion could, and in the case of Epicurus probably did, distinguish between the initial perception of the gods in primeval times and the establishment of religious rites and institutions, since the latter would require more complex social organization and greater wealth. But no such distinction is made in Lucr. 5.1161–1240. Ideas about the origins of religion have a long tradition in Greek thought: A. Kleingünther, ΠΡΩΤΟΣ ΕΥΡΕΤΗΣ *Philologus* Suppl. 26.1 (1933) 109–114; W. Spoerri, *Späthellenistische Berichte über Welt, Kultur und Götter* (Basel 1959 [Schweizerische Beiträge zur Altertumswissenschaft Heft 9]) 164–174; W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* 2 (Cambridge 1965) 478–483, 3 (Cambridge 1971) 238–244; A. Henrichs, “Two Doxographical Notes: Democritus and Prodicus on Religion,” *HSCP* 79 (1975) 93–123.

⁵ See below on 1245–1246, 1283–1285, 1379–1411, and 1416–1422; Manuwald (above, n. 1) 30–34 for a full enumeration.

the climax of Lucretius' aetiology of the arts must account for these facts.⁶ The section on religion (1161–1240), therefore, may be described as the centerpiece of the whole prehistory. On the one hand, it appears to be the climax of the chronological development, but at the same time it serves to introduce the aetiological section (1241–1457) in which chronological sequence is quite neglected.

The search for a coherence in this arrangement is linked to the second of our initial problems, the relation of *De Rerum Natura* 5.925–1457 to the writings of Epicurus, or possibly of other Epicureans. If Lucretius is presenting the teachings of Epicurus, how does the evidence for the Master's views on prehistory throw light on the text of Lucretius? There is little direct evidence for Epicurus. But one such text, *Ep. ad Hdt.* 75–76, has been used by Manuwald as the basis for a study of Lucretius.⁷ Epicurus distinguishes here between two periods of development, one in which human beings are taught directly by circumstances (τὴν φύσιν [sc. τῶν ἀνθρώπων] πολλὰ καὶ παντοῖα ὑπὸ αὐτῶν τῶν πραγμάτων διδασκῶν τε καὶ ἀναγκασθῆναι) and a second period characterized by the exercise of reason (τὸν δὲ λογισμὸν τὰ ὑπὸ ταύτης παρεγγυηθέντα ὕστερον ἐπακριβοῦν καὶ προσεξευρίσκουσι).⁸ Manuwald argues that 5.925–1104 in Lucretius corresponds to the first of Epicurus' two periods and 1105–1457 to the second. Thus, in the earlier period, nature itself produces discoveries (e.g., *At varios linguae sonitus natura subegit / mittere* 1028–1029), but in the second period human reason plays a more important role (announced by 1105–1107). Moreover, despite the clear references in 1241–1457 back to the first period (925–1104), Manuwald maintains that the aetiological section (1241–1457) belongs essentially to the second period (1105 ff.) distinguished by the use of λογισμός. On his view, even the final verses 1448–1457 must be read as referring to 1105 ff. and not the whole prehistory from 925 onwards.⁹ Though the limitations of our

⁶ The latest editor of Lucretius 5, C. D. N. Costa (Oxford 1984) 147 (*ad* 1379–1435), finds the structure and logic loose — “perhaps L. was hurrying to get to the end of a long book.”

⁷ (Above, n. 1) *passim*.

⁸ In order to avoid confusion, when discussing Manuwald I use “period” to describe his bipartite analysis and “stage” for my tripartite division. One may wonder whether the two-stage theory about two periods of religious evolution which Henrichs (above, n. 4) 107 ff. has ascribed to Prodicus inspired Epicurus, since the second period for Prodicus seems to have involved the intervention of λόγος.

⁹ (Above, n. 1) 26–30. Ernout and Robin *ad* 1452 ff., also compare *Ep. ad Hdt.*

evidence should be admitted, Manuwald's central thesis about the fit between the two periods described by Epicurus in *Ep. ad Hdt.* 75–76 and the different periods which fall on each side of 5.1105 in Lucretius will generally be accepted here. But it is on the puzzles of 1241–1457 which have been mentioned above that Manuwald's approach has least to offer. There are other Epicurean texts, however, not properly considered by Manuwald or other scholars, which illuminate Lucretius' account.¹⁰

This paper will argue that Manuwald's analysis must be supplemented by consideration not only of these texts, but of Lucretius' rhetorical and poetic techniques. This evidence supports Farrington's theory that the second stage of social development (1011–1104 in Lucretius), in which society is formed but has not progressed beyond the simplest village, was the golden age for Epicurus.¹¹ Modifying Farrington I shall argue that Lucretius has deliberately reduced the primitivism of Epicurus about this second stage and enhanced through his own presentation the primitivism of the first stage (925–1010). This reversal is part of a complex rhetorical structure which extends throughout the prehistory and conveys its moral significance. Lucretius sounds his strongest primitivist tones in 925–1010, and then muffles them in 1011–1104, in order to increase the impression of a decline when we come to the third stage (at 1105–1160), which is depicted as the time when ambition and fear of the laws emerged to plague human life. In the aetiological section 1241–1457, this dual perspective of technical advance without moral improvement is maintained by Lucretius' careful deployment of the morally significant motifs of war and seafaring. In 1241–1457 he refers back not only to the music (1379–1411) but to the warfare (1245–1246, 1283–1285, 1416–1422)

75–76, but, unlike Manuwald, think *usus* in 1452 and *aetas* in 1454 roughly correspond to the direct teachings of the environment of Epicurus' first period, and only *impigræ experientia mentis* (1452) and *ratio* (1455) correspond to Epicurus' λογισμός.

¹⁰ See below on *KD* 39 and 40 and *Diog. Oen. NF* 21, published by M. F. Smith, *Thirteen New Fragments of Diogenes of Oenoanda*, in *Ergänzungsbände zu den Tituli Asiae Minoris* (Vienna 1974) 21–25.

¹¹ "Second Thoughts on Epicurus," *Science and Society* 17 (1953) 326–339 (German trans.) *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie* 3 (1955) 214–224; "Vita Prior in Lucretius," *Hermathena* 81 (1953) 59–62; "Lucretius and Manilius on Friendship," *ibid.* 83 (1954) 10–16; "The Meaning of *Persona* in *De Rerum Natura* 3.58," *ibid.*, 85 (1955) 3–12. For criticism of Farrington, see note 33 below.

of the first two stages (925–1104), only now giving a far bloodier picture of primitive times. In this way the prehistory revises its earlier views. At first, in 925–1104, the earliest human beings offer a primitivist contrast to later problems. But further on, in 1241–1457, they are included in the poet's powerful condemnation of *all* human history (1416–1435).

As a preliminary, it is necessary to recall the key Epicurean tenet which Lucretius' account of prehistory is meant to establish, namely, that the gods must be excluded from participation in human history. Rather, *usus et impigrae simul experientia mentis / paulatim docuit pedetemptim progredientis* (1452–1453). The gradual nature of the process is stressed throughout.¹² Yet clearly some of the texts which convey this rationalized view of the past (e.g., 1279, 1307, 1434) are at the same time of serious moral import. A number of scholars have commented on the moral implications of these and other passages, as this century has seemed well placed to appreciate that Lucretius does not see moral progress as a concomitant of technological advance.¹³ But there is still need for a more unified analysis of his moral concerns in the prehistory as a whole.

I. PRIMITIVISM AND THE GOLDEN AGE

The first moral issue which the composer of a prehistory must face is the relative worth and attractiveness of the different stages of development. Was there a golden age in the distant past when individuals lived in harmony among themselves and with their environment? It is possible, of course, to pursue a rationalized reconstruction of prehistory, like that of the Epicureans, which excludes the gods and yet

¹² 931–932, 1011 ff., in *dies* 1105, 1279, 1307, 1370, *minutatim* 1293, 1384, 1434; cf. Diog. Oen. fr. 10, col. 0 [τοῦ δὲ χρόνου προ|βαί]νοντος restored on the basis of lines 13–14 εἴτα δὲ προβαίνων ὁ χρόνος and the Hermarchus fragment *ap.* Porphyry *De abst.* 1.10.4 ἐλθόντος δὲ ἐπὶ πλέον τοῦ χρόνου. Diogenes explicitly denies the role of the gods (fr. 10, cols. 2–3). The text of Diogenes of Oenoanda is cited from C. W. Chilton's Teubner edition (Leipzig 1967).

¹³ The best essay about this issue is J. C. Fredouille, "Lucrèce et le 'double progrès contrastant,'" *Pallas* 19 (1972) 11–27; fullest discussion in L. Perelli, "La storia dell' umanità nel V libro di Lucrezio," *Atti della Accademia delle Scienze di Torino. Classe di Scienze Morali, Storiche e Filologiche* 101, 1966–1967 (Torino 1967) 117–285. Bibliography in Manuwald (above, n. 1) 64–66.

admits the notion of a golden age. But it will be a golden age in a qualified form. We would not, for instance, expect an Epicurean to believe in a completely idyllic or mythical golden age, such as Hesiod ascribes to his golden generation (*WD* 109–126), partly because its thoroughly beneficent and peaceful workings of physical and human nature would appear unrealistic, and partly because there might be implicit or explicit a notion that the gods favored this golden era. Nonetheless, in the present context we may use “golden age” of Epicurus or his followers to mean a period in human history which appears close to ideal by comparison with the present or other points in the past. One guise which this idea takes is primitivism, the presence of which in Lucretius has long been recognized.¹⁴ The problem is its location, strength, and source.

The first task is to review the question of primitivism in 925–1010. Furley has rightly rejected the exaggerated notion which claims that Lucretius advocates a return to the life of the earliest human beings.¹⁵ It is easy to see that this existence, without agriculture (933 f.), fire or clothing (953 f.), social bonds (958 f.), family (962 f.), and security from beasts (982–998), is a sub-human one that Lucretius could hardly pretend to extol to his readers. Yet the passage is still primitivist to some extent. The issue is whether Lucretius himself is responsible for the primitivism. We may notice first two instances in which there are insufficient grounds for such a view. The idea that the first men had a tougher physical constitution and enjoyed a greater freedom from discomfort and sickness than contemporary Romans (925–930) may seem to be primitivist, but is not, in fact, without a reasonable basis.¹⁶ Hence there is no warrant for invoking here Lucretian primitivism going beyond Epicurean theory. Second, it is expressly denied that the earliest men were frightened by the disappearance of the sun at night (973–987). This idea too may appear primitivist, since such an absence of irrational fears about the heavens would contrast favorably with the

¹⁴ L. Robin, “Sur la conception épicurienne du progrès,” *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* 22 (1916) 697–719.

¹⁵ “Lucretius the Epicurean,” in *Lucretius* (Geneva 1978 [*Entretiens sur l’antiquité classique* 24]) 13–17.

¹⁶ Furley 15 ascribes this notion to “the historical imagination of Lucretius” who “could hardly do other than give primitive men a stronger, hardier constitution than men of the Roman Republic.” His point is well taken, though the originality of Lucretius here is unproven.

later development of false beliefs.¹⁷ But given Grilli's plausible suggestion that Lucretius here reflects Epicurus' criticism of Aristotle, we should refrain from attributing primitivist additions to Lucretius.¹⁸

Where, then, can we detect Lucretius augmenting the primitivist tone? Verses 937–952, describing the food and drink available to the first men and women, are the master strokes in his primitivist coloring. Without these lines, the whole description would lose its charm, and Lucretius chooses his words carefully to leave the impression of modest desires that find abundant supplies without strenuous effort:¹⁹ *satis id placabat pectora donum* (938) sets this peaceable tone. Yet the crucial point is that the possibility of starvation is not mentioned here at all, but reserved for some moralizing later:

tum penuria deinde cibi languentia leto
membra dabat, contra nunc rerum copia mersat. (1007–1008)²⁰

This separation of the problem of starvation from the earlier description of the food supply is a telling example of how Lucretius' primitivist effects are achieved. That Epicurus probably did not make this separation is suggested by a passage in Diodorus describing the earliest men's ignorance of food-gathering and their starvation in winter (1.8.6–7).²¹ It would be typical of Epicurus to give a solution, or several of them, for this problem. Diogenes of Oenoanda (fr. 10, col. 1) knows of the rigors of winter, too, but in his text, as in Diodorus, they provide the occasion for invention (of shelter and clothing). Lucretius, on the other hand, not only avoids the problem of starvation, but turns the traditional discussion of winter to his own purposes. It is not even the cause of distress. Indeed we hardly see primitive man confronting it at all (note the oblique *nunc hiberno tempore cernis*, 940). The idea that winter berries were larger in primeval times, which one assumes was proffered originally as an explanation for survival in winter, now is

¹⁷ Robin (above, n. 14) 700.

¹⁸ "La posizione di Aristotele Epicuro e Posidonoi nei confronti della storia della civiltà," *Rendiconti dell' Istituto Lombardo, Classe di lettere, scienze morali e storiche* 86 (1953) 24–27; P. Boyancé, *Lucrece et l' épicurisme* (Paris 1963) 239.

¹⁹ Cf. D. J. Gillis, "Pastoral Poetry in Lucretius," *Latomus* 26 (1967) 357.

²⁰ Cf. T. Cole (above, n. 2) 27–28; Manuwald (above, n. 1) 60–61.

²¹ On the motif of the difficulties of winter in prehistory, see Spoerri (above, n. 4) 155–156; Eur. *Suppl.* 207–208 with Collard *ad loc.*

used in a sentence that suggests that winter then was less threatening than now (940–942).²²

The following lovely description of the water supply with its silvan haunts of the nymphs is clearly primitivist (945–952). Here the comparison to beasts betokens simplicity more than savagery.²³ Nature is seen as a nurturing agent in the slight personification of *vocabant* and *claricitat* (if that or *citat* is correct), and in *nota* and *scibant*, which are as close to a commendation of primitive man's intelligent adaptability as one gets in this section, this friendly familiarity between man and nature is reciprocated. Moreover, the attractiveness of the scene is increased by the sound effects. The stream of liquids and sibilants, which reaches a climax in 949–951, partly through the soothing repetition of *umida saxa*,²⁴ finds a beautifully smooth release in 952, where the series of stopped consonants is softened by their combination with liquids. Thus the primitivist tone seems to have been greatly enhanced by Lucretius.

The treatment of the absence of social bonds confirms this interpretation, since in this case, too, the Lucretian origin of the primitivism is betrayed by the same technique of postponing to a later passage the harsher aspects of primitive life. The description of mutual violence is the bland and passive *quod cuique obtulerat praedae fortuna* (958–961). But Lucretius will later offer a far bloodier picture of this:

sive quod inter se bellum silvestre gerentes
hostibus intulerant ignem formidinis ergo (1245–1246)

arma antiqua manus ungues dentesque fuerunt

²² Munro noted that in December large tracts of the Peloponnese are covered with the scarlet arbuté berries, and Giussani considered this an indication that this detail was drawn from Epicurus. The *miseris* in the superb phrase *miseris mortalibus ampla* (944), which forms the climax of the passage about the food supply, does not seem to undercut the primitivist tone (cf. Boyancé, above, n. 18) so much as to impart a normative aspect through both the conjunction with *ampla* and perhaps an echo of the Homeric δειλοῖσι βροτοῖσι (one might suggest that *miseris mortalibus* may be from Ennius).

²³ On the comparison to beasts in 932 *vulgivago more ferarum*, see Cole (above, n. 2) 27–28. In neither passage does Lucretius bring out the pejorative force which was generally carried by the traditional Greek description of primitive life as θηριώδης (as felt in Eur. *Suppl.* 201–202; “Critias” *DK* 88 B25.2; Ditt. *Syll.* 704.12 [vol. 2.324]).

²⁴ Costa (above, n. 6) observes (*ad* 950–951) that the repetition of *umida saxa* “is unique in the *DRN*.”

et lapides et item silvarum fragmina rami,
et flamma atque ignes, postquam sunt cognita primum (1283–1285)

sic odium coepit glandis, sic illa relicta
strata cubilia sunt herbis et frondibus aucta.
pellis item cecidit vestis contempta ferinae;
quam reor invidia tali tunc esse repertam,
ut letum insidiis qui gessit primus obiret,
et tamen inter eos distractam sanguine multo
disperiisse neque in fructum convertere quisse (1416–1422).²⁵

The first of these texts ought to refer to the second stage of development in 1011–1104 because only then is fire acquired (1091–1104). However, the phrase *bellum silvestre* distinctly recalls the most primitive era (925–1010), since *silvestre* and other references to the forest are a constant feature of it, indeed its hallmark (*silvestria templa tenebant* 948; *silvasque colebant* 955–957; *Venus in silvis iungabat corpora amantum* 962; *consectabantur silvestria saecla ferarum* 967; *silvestria membra / nuda dabant terrae* 970–972; 987).²⁶ In 1283–1285, however, there does seem to be a conscious division between the earliest weapons (1283 f.), presumably belonging to the period described in 925–1010 (cf. *silvarum fragmina rami* 1284, and *manuum mira freti virtute pedumque* 966), and the fire acquired in the second stage (1285; 1091–1104). In 1416–1422, the mention of acorns and beds of leaves recalls the first stage (*glandes* 965; *nocturno tempore capti / circum se foliis ac frondibus involventes* 971–972; *instrata cubilia fronda* 987), though presumably the distaste for them brings us to the second stage. Certainly the violence over the newly discovered garment of skin (953–954; *pellis pararunt* 1011) marks the change to the second.

²⁵ Cf. 4.843–847. 1308–1349 is omitted here because its temporal setting is uncertain, but see below. Perelli (above, n. 13) 164 thinks Lucretius silent on violence among primitive men and that strife follows only when the state of nature is left behind by making clothing, for which he cites 1418–1422. This is a good (and very typical) example of the misinterpretations which result from considering one or two passages in isolation, apart both from other relevant texts (e.g., 1245–1246, 1283–1285) and an adequate view of the prehistory's whole structure.

²⁶ The clearing of land described in 1247–1248 is precisely the action which would transform the hunters and gatherers of 925–1010 into the settlers of 1011–1104; cf. note 30 below.

These passages will receive further discussion later. Here the important point is that the dramatic change in 1241–1457 in the representation of bloodshed in the first two stages surely proves that the abbreviated comments at 958–961 are a deliberate whitewash of the earliest violence. The quaint line (965) about acorns, arbuté berries, and choice pears as gifts to women is part of this implicit moralizing. It, too, is given a new, decidedly negative turn in 1416.²⁷ Discussion of the important primitivist lines about the absence of armies and seafaring (999–1006) must also be deferred, since they are part of a larger theme. As will be seen, the handling of the motifs of war and seafaring by Lucretius is a key to the rhetorical structure of his prehistory.

If Lucretius' initial presentation enhances the primitivism of the first stage of prehistory (925–1010), he can also be detected reducing some of the favorable description which Epicurus gave to the second stage (1011–1104 in Lucretius). Lucretius offers, in fact, only a brief account of its moral and social characteristics (1011–1027), with the origins of language and fire receiving far more attention (1028–1104). Epicurus would not, of course, have depicted his golden age in mythical terms, but rather as relatively blessed in comparison with what preceded or followed. It would be naive to assume that sharing in the eternal nostalgia for the simple village life is somehow too romantic or irrational for Epicurus.²⁸ Clearly the second stage *is* such a life, even if Lucretius tends to make it appear somewhat more primitive by concentrating on its initial development.²⁹ Among the arts, language (1028–1090) and fire (1091–1104) receive all the attention, but others, especially agriculture, were available.³⁰ Farrington, in proposing the

²⁷ Although the suffering of primitive man in the cold (1426–1427) is not a revision of the earliest *mores* (as is 1416–1422), K. Westphalen, *Die Kulturentstehungslehre des Lukrez* (diss. Munich 1957) 126 is correct to observe that the milder account of the weather in 956–957 (cf. 818 f.) is part of Lucretius' primitivism in 925–1010.

²⁸ This tradition, which in modern terms refers to the neolithic village, is alive and well in the most sophisticated hands: cf. Octavio Paz, *Claude Lévi-Strauss: An Introduction* (London 1970) 68–76. In William Golding's *The Inheritors* there is an even more remarkable evocation, touched by primitivism, of human life in a prehistoric condition similar to the most primitive one in Lucretius (5.925–1010). Rather it is Aristotle's belief in the theory of recurrent cataclysms (*De philosophia*, fr. 8 Ross) which is truly distant from modern thought.

²⁹ See the discussion below.

³⁰ The Greeks and Romans always associated a settled life with agriculture. 1361–1378 is concerned with the more advanced arboriculture, and basic agriculture is presumed by the beginning of the third stage at 1105 (*agros divisere atque dedere* 1110);

life before the rise of cities as an Epicurean golden age, had as his most important piece of evidence the repetition of 2.29–33 at 5.1392–1396.³¹ In these passages this idyllic rural picnic is, respectively, an Epicurean moral ideal and an image of primitive life which corresponds to 1011–1027.³² The identity between these two conceptions remains a solid foundation for Farrington's thesis, whatever the weakness of his other arguments which, as R. Müller has shown, exaggerate Epicurus' supposed hostility to the state and its laws.³³ But Müller's attempt to dismiss the distinctly attractive impression of 5.1024–1025 is, in turn, an overstatement.³⁴ Moreover, there are texts which support Farrington's theory:

Ὅ (τὰ ἑαυτοῦ πρὸς) τὸ μὴ θαρροῦν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔξωθεν ἄριστα
 συστησάμενος, οὗτος τὰ μὲν δυνατὰ ὁμόφυλα κατεσκευάσατο,
 τὰ δὲ μὴ δυνατὰ οὐκ ἀλλόφυλά γε· ὅσα δὲ μηδὲ τοῦτο δυνατὸς
 ἦν, ἀνεπίμεικτος ἐγένετο καὶ ἐξηρείσατο ὅσα (πρὸς) τοῦτ' ἔλυσ-
 σιτέλει πρᾶττειν (KD 39)

cf. Cole (above, n. 2) 30–31; Manuwald (above, n. 1) 43; W. K. C. Guthrie, *In the Beginning* (Ithaca 1957) 95–98; *The Greeks and Their Gods* (Boston 1950) 285–287; A. Henrichs, "The Sophists and Hellenistic Religion: Prodicus as the Spiritual Father of the Isis Aretalogies," *HSCP* 88 (1984) 142–144. The neglect of agriculture in Lucretius' account is one of the clearest signs that he is willing to sacrifice major scientific points for the sake of his poetic composition. Cf. note 26 above.

³¹ Farrington ("Vita Prior" [above, n. 11]) 61–62. V. Buchheit, "Lukrez über den Ursprung von Musik und Dichtung," *RhM* 127 (1984) 147–158 has reiterated the significance of these texts and added the important suggestion that Lucretius ties his own poetry to the song of the shepherds in 5.1379 ff. who represent an Epicurean moral ideal.

³² The slight variations between the two texts are due to the differing temporal settings; M. Bollack, *La raison de Lucrèce* (Paris 1978) 208 n. 1. Discussion of these passages has neglected the possibility that they are inspired by Plato *Rep.* 372B, the idyllic picnic of the "city of pigs," a debt which might(?) increase the likelihood that Lucretius is adapting a text of Epicurus, which could have appeared in a prehistoric setting.

³³ "Lukrez V 1011ff. und die Stellung der epikureischen Philosophie zum Staat und den Setzen," in *Die Krise der griechischen Polis* 1, eds. O. Jurewicz, H. Kuch (Berlin 1969 [*Deutsche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Schriften der Sektion für Altertumswissenschaft* 55,1]) 63–76; *Die epikureische Gesellschaftstheorie* (Berlin 1972) 70 ff.

³⁴ The evidence which he claims to find in Hermarchus for breaches of the social compact ("Lukrez V 1011," 66, 68–69) is not substantial enough to show that Epicurus or another Epicurean could not have depicted the second stage as one of relative felicity. He acknowledges (73 n. 26) that different Epicureans could highlight positive or negative aspects of the various stages. Manuwald (above, n. 1) 57 follows Müller against Farrington.

Ὅσοι τὴν δύναμιν ἔσχον τοῦ τὸ θαρρεῖν μάλιστα ἐκ τῶν ὁμορροῦντων παρασκευάσασθαι, οὗτοι καὶ ἐβίωσαν μετ' ἀλλήλων ἥδιστα τὸ βεβαιότατον πίστωμα ἔχοντες, καὶ πληρεστάτην οἰκειότητα ἀπολαβόντες οὐκ ᾠδύραντο ὡς πρὸς ἔλεον τὴν τοῦ τελευτήσαντος προκαταστροφὴν (*KD* 40)³⁵

He who best knew how to meet fear of external foes made into one family all the creatures he could; and those he could not, he at any rate did not treat as aliens; and where he found even this impossible, he avoided all intercourse, and, so far as was expedient, kept them at a distance.

Those who were best able to provide themselves with the means of security against their neighbours, being thus in possession of the surest guarantee, passed the most agreeable life in each other's society; and their enjoyment of the fullest intimacy was such that, if one of them died before his time, the survivors did not lament his death as if it called for commiseration (trans. R. D. Hicks).

In *Kyriai Doxai* 40, his final saying, Epicurus describes what certainly appears to be a golden age. Müller interpreted *KD* 39 as referring to prehistory and *KD* 40 as referring to an Epicurean ideal.³⁶ But 40 should be considered to have a historical reference as well.³⁷ Consecutive *Kyriai Doxai* are repeatedly paired in a way that demands they be read together, and *KD* 39–40 fit this pattern.³⁸ The argument that the aorists of 40 are not historical is vitiated by the aorists in 39 (where the imperfect ἦν makes the historical sense clear).³⁹

³⁵ For the *Kyriai Doxai* I quote the text of G. Arrighetti, *Epicuro: Opere* (Torino 1960, 1973²).

³⁶ *Gesellschaftstheorie* (above, n. 33) 124, 126–127.

³⁷ Grilli (above, n. 18) 21 n. 3.

³⁸ *KD* 3–4, 6–7, 10–11, 12–13, 19–20, 23–24, 27–28, 29–30, 31–33, 34–35, 36–38.

³⁹ *KD* 6–7 present an instructive parallel to *KD* 39–40. Their adaptation into Lucretius' historical narrative at 5.1108–1130 (see Grilli [above, n. 18] 23–24) proves that the ideas of *KD* 39–40 could be expected to appear in Lucretius 5. It also gives some support, though not proof, to the view that the uncertain text of *KD* 6 includes an imperfect referring to the past. In other words, the *Kyriai Doxai* appear to mingle the historical and exemplary as Lucretius does in 2.29–33 and 5.1392–1396, 5.1108–1135, 5.1273–1280, and elsewhere (on which technique see C. Segal, "War, Death, and Savagery in Lucretius: The Beasts of Battle in 5.1308–49," *Ramus* 15 [1986] 1–34).

The language of *KD* 40 is unexpectedly strong.⁴⁰ These people had no irrational fear of death.⁴¹ If the passage is to be set into a period of prehistory, it must precede the final stage (at 1105 ff. in Lucretius), since by that time, as we shall see, the irrational fear of death is in evidence; and it will not be easy to find a place for this happiness in 5.1105–1160. The second stage of Lucretius (1011–1104) is the only possible setting for the gathering of the small groups described in *KD* 39 and 40.⁴² Even without the clue furnished by these texts of Epicurus, several scholars have been struck by the attractive aspects of 5.1011–1027 in Lucretius. Ernout and Robin, in their note on 5.1019–1023, observe the emphasis on the compassionate feelings developed for women and children and the role of this sentiment as a motive for the formation of the social compact.⁴³ But they are wrong to assume that in this idea Lucretius is necessarily departing from Epicurus.⁴⁴ Rather we should combine Epicurus and Lucretius here. In Lucretius affection for one's family leads to a grouping of several families (1019–1023; *KD* 39), among whom the bonds of affection likewise take hold (1024–1027; *KD* 40). Not surprisingly, the first book of Aristotle's *Politics* (1252a24–1252b27) proves to be interesting

⁴⁰ For this reason too *KD* 40 reads rather oddly on its own, since the basis of its extravagant claims is then even more obscure than when it is paired with 39. Contrast the similar but less extreme *KD* 14.

⁴¹ There appears to be an interesting paradox if Epicurus' language means that precisely *because* of their close bonds death did not bring undue grief. The lack of such intimacy in a political and urban society (1105 ff.) would then be a factor in producing a fear of death. Cf. *KD* 27–28, J. M. Rist, "Epicurus on Friendship," *CP* 75 (1980) 121–129.

⁴² B. Frischer, *The Sculpted Word* (Berkeley and Los Angeles 1982) 39–41, although taking *KD* 39 and 40 as concerning the Epicurean school, does link them to the pre-political stage of prehistory in Lucretius. Despite his citation of *Lucr.* 5.1105–1109 as corresponding to *KD* 40, it is to the *foedera* in 5.1025 that he rightly compares *πίστομα* in *KD* 40.

⁴³ Cf. G. Boas and A. O. Lovejoy, *Primitivism and Related Ideas in Antiquity* (Baltimore 1935) 239; K. Büchner, "Die Kulturgeschichte des Lukrez," *WS Beiheft* 8 (1977) 49; Hermarchus in Porphyry *De abstinentia* 1.7.1 on the natural feeling of kinship among humans. On the importance of affection within Epicurean groups and their concern (cf. *KD* 39) about outsiders' attitudes toward themselves, see now D. Clay, "The Cults of Epicurus," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 16 (1986) 11–28.

⁴⁴ Unfortunately, V. Goldschmidt, "La théorie épicurienne du droit," in *Science and Speculation*, ed. J. Barnes et al. (Cambridge 1982) 315, accepts their idea and proceeds to make even greater assumptions about the departures of Lucretius from Epicurus.

background. In Aristotle, the establishment of the household (οἰκία) and combination of several of these into a village (κώμη) correspond to the events in *KD* 39 and 40 and *Lucr.* 5.1011–1027. The kinship which characterizes the village is mentioned by both Aristotle (ὁμογάλακτας, παῖδάς τε καὶ παίδων παῖδας συγγένειαν, 1252b16–27) and Epicurus (ὁμόφυλα, *KD* 39).⁴⁵ The difference, of course, is that for Aristotle the *polis* is the highest form of human community (1252b27–1253a), while for Epicurus the *polis* (5.1105 ff. in *Lucretius*, about which more below) is accompanied by significant problems.⁴⁶ The evidence of *KD* 40, then, suggests that Epicurus regarded the second stage as the best candidate for a golden age and in describing it displayed a stronger primitivism than *Lucretius* does for this phase of prehistory, or indeed for any other. Farrington observed about 5.1024–1027 that the good behavior is not depicted as without exception,⁴⁷ and likewise *KD* 39 and 40 include careful and realistic qualifications about the extent of this secure felicity. *KD* 39 mentions the limits of the size of the group and its capacity to isolate and secure itself; *KD* 40 accords the greatest happiness only to those who were best able to achieve this security. But unlike *Lucretius*, Epicurus ventures as well a thoroughly idealized portrait of these groups' life together. It lacks nothing in security or friendship.

A fragment of Diogenes of Oenoanda published in 1974 by M. F. Smith describes a future golden age presumably based on the

⁴⁵ Plato and Aristotle, who are interested in political forms, do not differentiate consistently between a stage of individual families and that of their union in a village. Plato *Laws* 680D7–E4 speaks of those who lived scattered κατὰ μίαν οἰκησιν καὶ κατὰ γένος. The latter phrase indicates more than one household. However, Homer's description of the Cyclopes (θεμιστεύει δὲ ἕκαστος | παίδων ἢ δ' ἀλόχων), which might seem appropriate only to a *single* family, is quoted (690B–C) as suitable for the larger group (κατὰ γένος) as well. Likewise Aristotle *Politics* 1252b20–24 combines the idea of "kingly rule" (βασιλεύω) in the οἰκία and κώμη and cites Homer on the Cyclopes as an example. Hence the apparent failure of *KD* 39 to mention clearly the initial establishment of an individual οἰκία is insignificant. A text of Philodemus, apparently following the language of Epicurus, describes Epicurus' associates as κατὰ τὴν οἰκίαν, in contrast to τῶν ἔξωθεν (PHerc. 1232 fr. 8 col. I 8–10, cited from Clay [above, n. 43] 13). On the Cyclopes' association with a golden age see the lucid analysis of R. Mondì, "The Homeric Cyclopes: Folktales, Tradition, and Theme," *TAPA* 113 (1983) 17–38.

⁴⁶ Cf. the firm remarks of Frischer (above, n. 42) on the Epicurean rejection of the *polis* as Aristotle conceived it.

⁴⁷ "We are not in the realm of myth" ("Lucretius and Manilius" [above, n. 11] 13).

philosophy of Epicurus which, I would suggest, complements the evidence of *KD* 39–40.⁴⁸

- [ὅτε — — — — — βι]-
 Col. I οὔμεν, ἐπεὶ πάντες μὴ
 δύνανται, δυνατὸν δὲ
 αὐτὴν ἀνυπο|. γμ . θ,
 τότε ὡς ἀληθῶς ὁ τῶν
 5 θεῶν βίος εἰς ἀνθρώπους
 μεταβήσεται. δικαιο-
 σύνης γὰρ ἔσται μεστὰ
 πάντα καὶ φιλαλληλίας,
 καὶ οὐ γενήσεται τειχῶν
 10 ἢ νόμων χρεῖα καὶ πάν-
 των ὅσα δι' ἀλλήλους
 σκευωρούμεθα. περὶ δὲ
 τῶν ἀπὸ γεωργίας ἀναν-
 χαίων, ὡς οὐκ ἔσομέ-
- Col. II νων ἡμ[εῖν γῆς ἐργατῶν]—
 καὶ γὰρ ἀ[ρόσομεν πάντες]
 καὶ σκάψ[ομεν, καὶ προβά]-
 των ἐπιμελ[ησόμεθα],
 5 καὶ ποταμο[ὺς παρατρέ]-
 ψομεν καὶ τὰ[
 ἐπιτηρήσο[μεν — — — —]
 μενα μὴ τῶ[
 μένοι καιρὸ[ν
 10 καὶ διακόψει [εἰς τὸ]
 δέον τὸ συνε[χῶς φι]-
 λοσοφεῖν τοια[ῦτα·
 τὰ]
 γὰρ γεωργή[ματα ὧν ἡ]
 φύσις χρήζει[ι ἡμῶν πα|ρέξει

⁴⁸ Text and translation of Smith (above, n. 10); other restorations in A. Casanova, *I frammenti di Diogene d'Enoanda* (Florence 1984) 276–279.

Line 15 [πᾶν ζῶ]ον οὐ δύναται συνθήκηγ [ποιεῖσθαι ὑπὲρ τοῦ μὴ βλάπτειν μηδὲ βλάπτεσθαι]

Translation

Col. I [When we are living], since all have no power and it is possible . . . it . . . , then truly the life of the gods will pass to men. For all things will be full of justice and mutual love, and there will come to be no need of fortifications or laws and all the things which we contrive on account of one another. And with regard to the necessities derived from agriculture,

Col. II as we shall have no [farm-labourers— for indeed we all shall plough and dig and mind flocks and divert rivers and watch . . . — And such activities will interrupt the continuous study of philosophy for needful purposes; for the farming operations will provide us with the things which our nature wants.]

Line 15 [Every animal] is not able [to make] a compact [not to harm or be harmed.]

Although the ideal society of Diogenes is an enlightened Epicurean society of the future and that of Lucretius is in the past, this type of utopian thinking moves easily between past and future, since its real interest is in the nature of the ideal society, with projection into the past serving as a blueprint for the future. The evidence of Diogenes thus deserves to be considered for its description of the ideal social conditions for Epicureans, who enjoy righteousness within, and hence need no laws, nor walls against outsiders—the latter for reasons which are not clear in Diogenes, unless perhaps the utopia is world-wide?⁴⁹ This Epicurean future recalls Vergil's "Saturnian" golden age in ancient Italy: *neve ignoret Latinos / Saturni gentem haud vinclo nec legibus aequam, / sponte sua veterisque dei se more tenentem* (*Aen.* 7.202–204).⁵⁰ Fortifications and laws come in the third stage of Lucretius (5.1108–1109, cf. 232–233; 1136–1160). It is important to note

⁴⁹ The apparently close link between δικαιοσύνη and agricultural work in the fragment is an old one in Greek culture. Despite some exaggerations, see J.-P. Vernant, *Myth and Thought among the Greeks* (London 1983) 248–270 = *Mythe et pensée chez les Grecs* (Paris 1965) 16–36.

⁵⁰ "Latinus means that the way of life of the *Saturnia regna*, the Golden Age of primitive innocence, still has force in his kingdom" (Fordyce *ad loc.*); cf. Ovid *Met.* 1.89 ff. *aurea prima sata est aetas quae vindice nullo / sponte sua sine lege fidem rectumque colebat. / poena metusque aberant*, etc.

that again an Epicurean text offers a far more idealized vision of a golden age than does Lucretius. The text, as restored, gives an almost Jeffersonian picture of farming philosophers (Jefferson would have had philosophical farmers) and social equality, particularly if slavery is to be abolished.⁵¹ Naturally friendship and security loom large in this Epicurean golden age, as in *KD* 39–40.⁵²

II. THE EMERGENCE OF IRRATIONAL FEARS AND DESIRES

The interest of Epicurus in a golden age becomes clearer in light of the developments in the third stage of prehistory (described by Lucretius at 5.1105–1160). In this period cities, kings, and laws arise, that is, the characteristic institutions of the Greco-Roman world. According to Manuwald, for Epicurus it is also the period in which the exercise of reason begins to make major contributions. But there is another feature of this third stage which seems even more distinctly Epicurean: only in this era do the irrational fears and other evils emerge which plague human life and to the eradication of which Epicureanism is specifically dedicated.⁵³ This Epicurean view reveals a reason why both Epicurus and Lucretius would postulate an earlier golden age.⁵⁴ If irrational fears

⁵¹ The absence of slavery was a radical idea even in ancient utopias: J. Vogt, *Ancient Slavery and the Ideal of Man* (Oxford 1974) 26–38; M. I. Finley, *The Use and Abuse of History* (London 1975) 178–192. Slaves are not clearly mentioned in Plato's "city of pigs" (*Rep.* 369C–372E), but will exist in the more luxurious, ideal state: G. Vlastos, *Platonic Studies* (Princeton 1973) 140–146 = *CP* 63 (1968) 291–295.

⁵² The concern in *KD* 39–40 to specify to what extent security could be achieved is suggestive for what lies behind the fragmentary beginning of col. 1 in the fragment of Diogenes, since here too there seems to be an attempt to set out the necessary conditions before depicting its felicity (τότε . . .) in relatively unrestrained terms. If so, Lucretius appears to have reversed the order of these *topoi*: 1011–1023 are the more idyllic lines; 1024–1027 hedge in the positive statement of the general uprightness (1025) with a realistic qualification (1024) and an anticlimactic utilitarian explanation for the extent of this goodness (1026–1027). The initial friendship (1019) and consequently any notion of finding in this stage inspiration for contemporary life are thus subtly eclipsed.

⁵³ For what follows I am indebted to D. Konstan, *Some Aspects of Epicurean Psychology* (Leiden 1973) 35–58.

⁵⁴ Epicurus is not, of course, to be thought of as simply advocating a return to primitive life *in toto*, since that would deprive us not only of some useful arts, the discovery of which is hence a good, but indeed his own philosophy. It is impossible to think of Epicurus as regretting the development of λογισμός. In 4.572–594 Lucretius explains the origins of religious superstitions among simple shepherds as arising from their perplexity at the phenomenon of echo, and M. Taylor, "Progress and Primitivism in Lucretius," *AJP*

had not yet developed, at least into their full form, it would follow that a previous era was one of relative felicity.⁵⁵

The first bad element which enters human life in the third stage is ambition and the struggles which it brings (1120–1142). These lines echo *KD* 6–7. In both Epicurus and Lucretius the goal of the ambitious is the proper Epicurean ideal of a secure life (ὁ βίος ἀσφαλής is the natural good, τὸ τῆς φύσεως ἀγαθόν *KD* 7; *placidam degere vitam* 1122). In both, however, the search for security through wealth and power proves illusory.⁵⁶ Moreover, Lucretius 5.1120–1142 suggests how Epicurus' pre-political golden age as described in *KD* 40 differs from the following period. The absence of the fear of death is expressly remarked in *KD* 40. In Lucretius the fear of death, which lies behind the dread of poverty, is a principal cause of great and misguided ambitions for wealth and status.⁵⁷

denique avarities et honorum caeca cupido
 quae miseros homines cogunt transcendere finis
 iuris et interdum socios scelerum atque ministros
 noctes atque dies niti praestante labore
 ad summas emergere opes, haec vulnera vitae
 non minimam partem mortis formidine aluntur.
 turpis enim ferme contemptus et acris egestas
 semota ab dulci vita stabilique videtur
 et quasi iam leti portas cunctarier ante. (3.59–67)⁵⁸

As in 5.1120–1142, this idea of foolish ambition is conveyed through the image of the incessant, but vain, struggle to reach the heights. The word *summum* is the leitmotif in the later passage (1123, 1125, 1127)

68 (1947) 192–193 interprets this scene historically as an example of how “the much extolled simple life of the shepherd and farmer,” which succeeded the first stage of 925–1010, was yet inadequate without Epicurean philosophy. Cf. Buchheit (above, n. 31) 141–147.

⁵⁵ Similar reasoning inspires more recent versions of primitivism. If modern industrialization and the breakdown of religious faith have resulted in a new and greater alienation from our social, physical, and metaphysical surroundings, a time and place innocent of these developments is supposedly more attractive.

⁵⁶ Pace the special pleading of Müller (*Gesellschaftstheorie* [above, n. 33] 68–69) on behalf of these ambitions. He fails to mention the explicit condemnation in *Lucr.* 5.1117–1119.

⁵⁷ Cf. below on 2.39–61, Farrington (“The Meaning of *Persona*” [above, n. 11]).

⁵⁸ Cf. 2.7–13.

and is brought to a climax at 1141–1142:

res itaque ad summam faecem turbasque redibat
imperium sibi cum ac summatum quisque petebat.

Thus the casting of the greatest into *Tartara taetra* (1126) recalls the proem to the third book with fine irony. The ambition which is spurred by the fear of death actually results in the very thing that it fears.⁵⁹ Clearly, therefore, Epicurus in *KD* 40 is describing the time before the appearance of a fear of death which does harm by nourishing the irrational desire for wealth and status.⁶⁰

The second example of a fear only fully developed into its contemporary form in the third stage is that of punishment for breaking the law (1151–1160). Müller, with reference to 1130–1150, argues fairly that the laws are not considered an evil in and of themselves.⁶¹ But the negative nature of the resulting *fear* in Epicurean terms is obvious.⁶² The passage begins: *inde metus maculat poenarum praemia vitae* (1151). The wrongdoer cannot easily lead a peaceful life (1154–1155, cf. 1122). Avoidance of the fear of punishment which results from doing injustice was one of the major goals of Epicurus' philosophy (Lucr. 3.1011–1123; *KD* 5, 17, 34, 35; fr. 532 Us.; *Gnom. Vat.* 70). The importance for Epicureans of the initial appearance of this fear in prehistoric human life is vividly confirmed by Hermarchus' attention to it (Porphyry *Abst.* 1.7.3–4, 8.2–5, cf. 9.4). Likewise, the new golden age fragment of Diogenes of Oenoanda, which was unknown to Müller, indicates that the ideal Epicurean community could dispense with laws.⁶³

⁵⁹ This interpretation is supported by the similar idea at 3.79–86, especially 79–82; cf. 3.978–1023.

⁶⁰ The earliest human beings and presumably even some animals fear injury or death (cf. *paventes* 986), but only in the third stage does the fear of death contribute to something ἄλογος. Konstan (above, n. 56) 41–42 invokes here the distinction made in Diogenes of Oenoanda (fr. 29, col. 2) between “clearly perceived (τετρανωμένως)” and “obscure (ἀτράνωτος)” fears.

⁶¹ “Lukrez V.1011ff.” (above, n. 33) 64–67.

⁶² Cf. Emout and Robin *ad* 1151–1160. Recognition of this fact does not demand acceptance of Konstan's argument ([above, n. 56] 52–58) that the Epicureans did not approve of the social use of the fear of punishment.

⁶³ A discrepancy with Lucretius arises if the account of Hermarchus in Porphyry *Abst.* 1.7–12 is interpreted as implying that the fear of punishment was present from the beginning of the social compact, that is, in the second stage of prehistory (at 5.1011–1104 in Lucretius), since Lucretius clearly represents this fear as a phenomenon of the third stage

Next Lucretius explains the origins of irrational religious fears (1161–1240). As with fear of punishment for breaking the laws, there is reason to think that such fears might have appeared before the third and final stage of prehistory, and we noted at the outset that the chronological references in this section are vague. On the other hand, it is at least clear that Lucretius' rhetorical strategy is to present them as the third evil which appears in a developed urban life. This effect is achieved by the placement of the section on religion (1161–1240), which associates its subject with the birth of ambitions (1120–1135) and fear of punishment (1151–1160).⁶⁴ Moreover, one needs to distinguish between the origins of religion, which probably belong among the earliest men,⁶⁵ and the origins of misguided religious fears. The rhetoric of Lucretius is in harmony with the ideas of Epicurus if the latter described these fears as having become fully noxious only in the third stage of prehistory, even if their initial appearance was earlier.

There is, in fact, some evidence for this view. One item is 5.973–987, which has been held to show that Epicurus thought at least some later superstitions did not exist in the earliest times.⁶⁶ The people of that era were too preoccupied with their struggle against wild animals. Lucretius first mentions religious *misconceptions* at 1183–1193.⁶⁷ Could these belong to the second stage or only the

(1105–1160). Indeed, logic demands that there must have been some fear of sanctions, if they existed (denied by Perelli [above, n. 13] 192), for violating the *foedera* (1025) of the initial social compact. Hence it would not be surprising if Hermarchus had discussed the origins of such fears in a prehistoric setting earlier than that of *Lucr.* 5.1151–1160, or treated the second and third stages as one, at least in that for the purposes of his topic he had no occasion to remark on the greater social and political complexity of the latter. There is a comment in Porphyry (1.10.4) about the advent of ἐπιλογισμός which Manuwald (above, n. 1) 21–22 interprets as corresponding to the development of λογισμός in *Ep. ad Hdt.* 75–76. But in the Hermarchus fragment as a whole I cannot identify two distinctive stages, whether one draws a line at 1.10.4 or elsewhere, which would correspond to those in Lucretius at 5.1011–1104 and 1105 ff. Cf. R. Philippson, "Die Rechtsphilosophie der Epikureer," *Archiv für Philosophie* 23 (1910) 313–319; M. Boyd, "Porphyry, *De abstinentia* 1.7–12," *CQ* 30 (1936) 188–191; Cole (above, n. 2) 70–79; *Porphyre De L'Abstinence Livre I*, ed. J. Bouffartique, M. Patillon (Paris 1977) 15–18.

⁶⁴ Above, n. 3.

⁶⁵ Above, n. 4.

⁶⁶ Above, n. 18.

⁶⁷ On these lines see Henrichs (above, n. 4) 104.

third?⁶⁸ An answer is perhaps to be sought in the criterion of the use of reason. Insofar as these lines are interpreted as implying the exercise of λογισμός, there would be a basis for assigning these false beliefs to the third stage of 1105 ff. But reason is not explicitly mentioned. Lucretius first explicitly mentions the *problems* of religion in the much-discussed verses beginning at 5.1194.⁶⁹ Here lies the rhetorical weight of the passage, and here the explanation of religious fears through the idea that reason tries and fails to explain the workings of nature seems to point clearly to the final stage of prehistory, which, according to *Ep. ad Hdt.* 75–76, is essentially defined for Epicurus by the use of reason:⁷⁰ *temptat enim dubiam mentem rationis egestas, ecquaenam fuerit mundi genitalis origo . . .* (1211–1212).⁷¹

Despite the uncertainties, some conclusions emerge. Lucretius depicts the third stage of prehistory as the period in which our present afflictions reached their mature form, and the evidence indicates that in this he is following Epicurus. Moreover, this view of the third stage confirms our hypothesis about an earlier golden age, since in the preceding era of the simple village life these irrational fears had not yet stained human existence.

On another level, if the historicism in Lucretius derives from Epicurus, the philosophical point that deserves emphasis is how historically minded Epicurus was in explaining the origins of the problems which it was the central goal of his philosophy to solve. *KD* 10 speaks of the fears in the mind (τῆς διανοίας) of μετέωρα, θάνατος, and ἀλγήδονες. This set of fears is echoed in Diog. Oen. fr. 28, col. 6–7: the φόβοι which vex the ψυχή are of the θεοί, θάνατος, and ἀλγήδονες. (Fears of μετέωρα and the θεοί overlap.) These three fears correspond well to those reflected in Lucretius' account of prehistory: the origins of fear of the gods are explained in 1161–1240, the beginnings of the misguided ambitions arising from the fear of death in

⁶⁸ 1183–1193 should be considered in relation to 1436–1439, and Schrijvers (in *Lucrèce* [above, n. 15]) 32 suggests that the latter passage is connected with the origins of agriculture (cf. 1.174–183), which would put them in the second stage.

⁶⁹ Barwick (above, n. 1) 203–204.

⁷⁰ See Manuwald (above, n. 1) 46; Furley's lucid remarks (above, n. 15) 17–22; Grilli (above, n. 18) 24–27; *Ep. ad Hdt.* 79.

⁷¹ Perhaps Epicurus saw as one of the marks of the transition from the second to the third *social* stages (family/village to political/urban) the gradual intensification of the exercise of λογισμός; see Konstan (above, n. 53) 44–50, Taylor (above, n. 54).

1120–1135 (with 3.59–67; cf. *KD* 40), and the origins of the fear of pain in 1151–1160.⁷² The links between the writing of prehistory and philosophy here are significantly closer than in Plato or Aristotle. For this approach Epicurus is likely to be indebted to a fifth-century thinker such as Protagoras, Democritus, or Prodicus.⁷³

Lucretius may follow established Epicurean ideas in his description of the birth of these irrational fears and their effects in the third stage, but why has he departed from Epicurus by enhancing the primitivism of the first stage (925–1010) and reducing that of the second one (1011–1104)? The answer, it was suggested, is that he does so for rhetorical purposes which must be understood as encompassing 925–1457 as a unity. We can now develop the claim that the poet reverses the primitivist emphasis of Epicurus about the first two stages of human evolution in order to increase the impression that history, at least from a moral perspective, has been continuously downhill.

III. WAR AND SEAFARING

The key to understanding the relationship between 925–1240 and 1241–1457 in this regard lies in the motifs of war and seafaring. The passages from 1241–1457 cited above which look back to the violence of earlier times (925–1104) and also 999–1006 are part of this moral theme, which associates the motifs of war and seafaring or shipwreck

⁷² The correspondence is most extensive if the “fear of pains” in *KD* 10 and the Diogenes fragment (28) is fear of the pain of *punishment*. The alternative, I suppose, would be to interpret it as fear of bodily wants which are not satisfied. Fear of bodily pains would issue in excessive desire (cf. *KD* 14). But perhaps this interpretation makes the texts repeat themselves, for after listing the three fears, they both speak “in addition” of excessive desires. It is also possible that both types of pain are meant. In any case, the correlation between these canonical lists of fears in *KD* 10 and Diogenes and those explained in Lucretius’ prehistory is noteworthy.

⁷³ Cf. E. A. Havelock, *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics* (New Haven 1967) Chapter 4 for the subversion in Plato and Aristotle of the historical approach; Chapters 6 and 7 on Democritus and Protagoras are more speculative, but the evidence about them and other fifth-century thinkers makes it clear that a historical approach was current; W. K. C. Guthrie, *In the Beginning* (above, n. 30) 99–101; Henrichs (above, n. 4); Rose (above, n. 2). On the other hand, K. Reinhardt, *Posidonios* (Munich 1921) 399 would still find Epicurus a less *empirical* historian than Posidonius, since the latter used ethnography for historical reconstruction, while Epicurus is more of a rationalist whose method is based in the Democritean and sophistic tradition of arguing in accordance with εἰκός.

with the misery that results from an ignorance of the proper aims of life. Introduced in Book 1, these ideas are developed systematically until they reach their climax in the latter half of the prehistory. A thorough study of this theme is beyond the scope of this paper, but a survey of its continuity through the proemia of the earlier books and the prehistory will help to show that in Book 5 Lucretius is indeed in control of his material and that 1241–1457, far from being a confused and badly finished composition, is skilfully constructed.

The motifs of war and seafaring come to the fore in the latter half of the prehistory, but are introduced early in the poem. The first glimpse of them is provided by the description of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia (1.84–101). In this episode, however, religion and the slaughter of the girl are the targets. The launching of the fleet provides the ominous setting, but is not itself impugned. It is the prooemium of the second book which links war and shipwreck to the ignorance of the proper limits of pleasure and desire. Indeed, this whole prooemium strongly foreshadows the other images and themes of the prehistory as well.⁷⁴ It begins with the pleasure that results from being free from the dangers of shipwreck and war (2.1–6). But the greatest pleasure is to be firmly ensconced on the heights by the teaching of the wise, whence one can look down on the ignorant who strive to rise to the height of power and gain possession of the world (7–13). The folly of the ambitious consists in not knowing that nature demands a life of simple pleasure, not luxury (14–39).

Lucretius then poses the possibility that the objects of ambition, an army and fleet, banish religious fears and anxiety over death (39–61).⁷⁵ The passage looks both backward and forward. The insistence on religious fears amidst armies and kings recalls Agamemnon at Aulis. But there has been added to the fear of the gods that of death (44–46). In denying that these disappear among political and military leaders (47–53), Lucretius would seem to be refuting an implied argument which supported the pursuit of great commands. But no one, of course, is actually making such an argument. Instead, in 39–61 Lucretius is restating the idea of 7–38 that these pursuits result from ignorance. In

⁷⁴ Cf. the similarity of 2.7–13 to 5.1120–1142 and 2.29–33 to 5.1392–1396. P. De Lacy, "Distant Views: The Imagery of Lucretius 2," *CJ* 60 (1964) 50–53 traces the military images of the prooemium through the rest of Book 2.

⁷⁵ Line 43a, cited by Nonius, gives us a most suitable reference to a fleet.

this case, however, he concentrates not on the ignorance of the proper aims of life (14–19), but on the lack of understanding of the workings of nature (54–61). The implication of 39–61 is that ignorance of nature produces the fears of the gods and death (44–46) and that the latter are, in fact, the causes of great ambitions. The last point, as we have seen, is then made explicit in the next prooemium (3.3 ff., especially 59–67).

The development of these ideas and motifs through the first three prooemia finds extensive echoes in the prehistory. So far we have noticed them mainly in the case of 3.59–67 and 5.1120–1142. But the motifs of war and seafaring enter the prehistory dramatically near the end of the section on primitive man (999–1006; cf. 2.551–559). The sea and seafaring are here described in terms appropriate to a courtesan enticing one beyond the proper limits of pleasure, and these lines are part of Lucretius' enhancement of the primitivism of 925–1010. The subsidiary and less explicit association of war and sailing with religion appears in 1218–1240. Not only are religious fears not absent from military leaders (2.39–61), but now, in a brilliant passage, an endangered commander serves as the example of how they arise in the face of storms. Indeed, there is an almost savage irony about 1218–1240, as if the generals are finally receiving their just deserts. Their ambitions, we have been told repeatedly, are wrong and due to ignorance and fear. Now these ambitions unravel, and there is a full and humiliating revelation of ignorance and fear.⁷⁶ This passage marks a climax in the development of these motifs, but only a preliminary one.

In the finale of Book 5 (1241–1457) they become even more important, and an understanding of them can resolve some of the puzzles in this aetiological section. The selection and arrangement of material in

⁷⁶ One thinks again of Agamemnon and the similar reversal of 5.1120–1142. Thus, if the fate of war-fleets in Lucretius is considered as a whole, one discovers (not for the first time) that a Greek philosophical system expresses a truth of Greek myth, in this case, the divine retribution on the Greek fleets which sailed to Troy, in a new form. The connection of 5.1218–1240 to the theme of war-fleets and the ignorance of their commanders elsewhere in the poem is ignored by G. Müller (above, n. 4) 277–295, who thinks 5.1218–1240 refers to backsliding from Epicurean philosophy, and by Gillis (above, n. 19) 355–356, who sees mainly sympathy for the admiral. Müller 288 says that the admiral's prayer (1229) is absurd for an Epicurean, but surely being an admiral at all is already so in *De Rerum Natura*. Müller's idea that the admiral could be identified with Memmius must also be rejected.

these two hundred lines is bizarre when considered from the perspective of the historian. Despite a number of detailed discussions, the composition has not been satisfactorily explained. A fuller recognition is needed of how the moral interests of Lucretius here push aside the exposition of scientific doctrines about the past. My suggested approach is to consider all the passages in this section that involve war, seafaring, and the idea of changing tastes. That is, each section of 1241–1457 will be read in terms of the moral significance imparted to it by these motifs, taking into account other relevant features as well.

In the beginning of the section, at 1241–1280, Lucretius re-introduces, as it were, his leading motifs (cf. below on 1245–1246 and 1275–1280) and then carefully manipulates them in an alternating rhythm. To a large extent, therefore, the composition of 1241–1457 is determined by the need to build to an initial negative climax (1305–1307), and then to work back toward a positive one (1379–1411), all for the purpose of preparing Lucretius' dramatic conclusion (1412–1435). Our first task, then, is to follow the poem as it leads us through an aetiology of the arts which at the same time describes alternating fortunes of war and peaceful felicity. At the end, the final verses of Book 5 give us the opportunity to contemplate the prehistory as a whole and to consider how the poet's moral and scientific concerns have fashioned his narrative.

The opening discussion of metallurgy falls into two halves.⁷⁷ The first deals with the origins of the art and the earliest uses of bronze, gold, and silver (1241–1280), while the second is mainly concerned with how iron replaced bronze (1281–1307). The difference between the two parts, however, lies not only in content, but involves a contrast in moral perspective as well, since the first half is much less negative than the second. Warfare in primeval times is introduced early (1245–1246) and, as we saw, is to be developed further (1283–1285, 1416–1422). But the poet concentrates on molding the first part to lead to its moral conclusion on change of tastes (1275–1280). The first *tela* (1266) that these men made were used to cut down forests, hew timber, plane beams smooth, to bore, punch, and drill holes. There is no mention of war. These simple carpenters tried to use silver and gold too, but scorned their softness, obviously indifferent to any other

⁷⁷ On metallurgy in the Greco-Roman tradition about prehistory, see Cole (above, n. 2) Index s.v. "metallurgy."

exploitation of them. So copper was then of more value, though now the reverse is true. Here the idea of the change of tastes is expressly introduced (1275–1280):

nunc iacet aes, aurum in summum successit honorem.
 sic volvenda aetas commutat tempora rerum:
 quod fuit in pretio, fit nullo denique honore;
 porro aliud succedit et e contemptibus exit
 inque dies magis appetitur floretque repertum
 laudibus et miro est mortalis inter honore.

The truth, by contrast, is constant, and the description at 1108–1142 of the instability of irrational ambitions, based on mere opinion (1133–1135), is given a slight reprise here: terrible struggles for wealth and position followed this discovery of gold (*posterius res inventast aurumque repertum . . .*, 1113–1142).⁷⁸ Despite these echoes, it is necessary to emphasize the restraint of 1275–1280. The parallel with 1245–1246 is exact. Just as these two lines introduce the topic of primitive warfare, so 1275–1280 lay the foundation for the later treatment of the topic of changing tastes in 1412–1435, where we shall see the two finally interwoven.

In the meantime, Lucretius reverts to his “proper” subject of metallurgy in order to explain how the nature of iron (*ferri natura*) was discovered (1281–1282). But the discussion is immediately taken over (1283 ff.) by a description of the advance in weaponry. When we get to 1289, the newly found bronze is now mainly used for mixing up the waves of war (note the sea imagery, *belli fluctus* 1289–1290), sowing wounds, and seizing flocks and fields, not chopping wood. This development builds to a crescendo at 1305–1307:

Sic alid ex alio peperit discordia tristis,
 horribile humanis quod gentibus esset in armis,
 inque dies belli terroribus addidit augmen.

⁷⁸ With the shift from the past tenses of 1273–1274 (*nam fuit in pretio magis aes aurumque iacebat . . .*) to the present and perfect tenses of 1275 (*nunc iacet aes, succedit*) Lucretius deploys the same technique as in 1108–1142 (where *voluerunt* and *fecere* connect past and present). The two texts also share vocabulary (*ad summum succedere honorem* 1123; *in summum successit honorem* 1275; cf. *honor*, 1114, 1139; 1277, 1280) and the vivid image of rise and fall (cf. *iaceo*, 1136; 1273, 1275).

The first three dactyls of 1305 help to summarize and convey the rapid advance just narrated. 1305–1307 is one of the passages conveying the basic scientific point about gradualness, and the *alid ex alio* is repeated in 1456 (*namque alid ex alio clarescere corde videbant*), the “scientific conclusion,” a repetition which shows how the moral and scientific concerns are merged.⁷⁹ Progress seems to be of that which is *horrible humanis gentibus in armis*.

The next section (1308–1349) is the most notorious passage in the whole poem. For the present argument, the essential point is that either 1305–1307 (if 1308–1347 are excised) or 1308–1349 itself forms the initial climax of the theme of war; the latter interpretation has now been impressively argued by Segal.⁸⁰ Afterwards, Lucretius shifts away in a masterly fashion to arrive at some of his most charming scenes (1361–1411).⁸¹ How does he do it?

From 1350 Lucretius writes in increasingly attractive tones. He continues to supply some links in content between topics to smooth the course of his discussion. Thus the invention of weaving is linked to the discovery of iron (1351). But in terms of its moral significance 1350–1360 at last deals with peace, honest work, and offers a hint of wholesome domesticity. The mention of farming (1357) points to the subject of arboriculture (1361–1378). The planting of trees is hardly the fundamental technology which the growing of crops is, but Lucretius is less interested here in reconstruction of the past than in fashioning his moral commentary on the history of human culture. Thus, the hard agricultural labor of 1359–1360 is now transformed into a gentle, nurturing process (1365–1369), and then, the ground prepared, so to speak, the poet can develop his unsurpassed description of the countryside (1370–1378).⁸² The attractiveness of the charming picture so

⁷⁹ The phrase is used in these two passages for the only times after Book 3. Cf. Fredouille (above, n. 13) 19, but his explanation of the link between paragraphs in 1241–1457 is vague.

⁸⁰ Segal (above, n. 39). His idea that the advance in weaponry (up to 1307) leads to a reversal in 1308–1349, since the mauling by beasts constitutes a reversion to primeval conditions (990–998), fits other such ironies, as at 1108 ff., and in general complements the present argument.

⁸¹ One effect of 1341–1349, with its unexpected break in the narrative to discuss whether such things ever really took place, is to disengage us from the wild scenes of battle in preparation for peaceful ones.

⁸² Above, n. 30.

vividly painted in these verses is at the opposite extreme from the scenes of war and violence at 1283 ff., and we have traced the gradual steps by which Lucretius moves us from one to the other. There is no explicit moral commentary in 1361–1378, but that comes in the next section on music (1379–1411) which forms the climax of this shift from the negative to the positive. If there is a link in content between arboriculture and music, it would be the fact that each refers to a rural setting. A more accurate account of the transition, however, would be that it is the idyllic tone of 1370–1378 that carries us effortlessly over to the topic of music. That is the reason for 1370–1378 appearing where it does, and only an overly positivist reading of the poetry could complain of this construction. By this point, the experience of the countryside makes us fully ready for singing, playing music (1379–1391), and enjoying a rural picnic (1392–1396).

But Lucretius now shifts the tone once again, this time more rapidly. Toward the end of the section on music, the comment (1409–1411) that watchmen now gain no more pleasure from music than did the woodland race of earthborn men brings on Lucretius' terrible indictment of human history, in which the change of tastes, the ignorance of the true limits of pleasure, and navigation and war (see 1434–1435) unite in a powerful climax (1412–1435).⁸³

In his valuable discussion of the end of the book, Furley has emphasized that 1379–1435 are most appropriately concerned with assessing humanity's achievement of "the goal of all moral endeavor according to Epicurean philosophy: pleasure."⁸⁴ Furley contrasts this moral finale with 1448–1457 which he finds to be "a totally *non-moral* conclusion" (his italics), an overstatement which should be corrected by considering the moral implications of 1440–1457.⁸⁵ Overtly 1440–1447 makes the point that this prehistory must be inferred through the exercise of *ratio*. The idea is an old one, as we know from the first chapter of Thucydides. Diodorus inserts it between the end of his prehistory and the beginning of his account of Egypt (1.8.10–1.9.4). As in Lucretius, the problem in Diodorus is the lack of written records

⁸³ I follow Munro and Merrill in taking *in altum* (1434) as meaning "into the deep sea" against Bailey, whose attempt to limit the reference here to war, not navigation, ignores their repeated association and the sea imagery of 1435, where his own note cites 1289 *belli miscebant fluctus*.

⁸⁴ (Above, n. 15) 22–27; quotation is from 24.

⁸⁵ (Above, n. 15) 23.

for the earliest polities. Thus these verses have a good scientific purpose. Nevertheless, the erection of citadels and the division of land remind us that struggles for power soon followed (1440–1444, 1108–1142), and the seafaring and allied armies carry strongly negative associations (1442–1443). The manuscript reading *propter odores* in 1442, understood as a reference to the popular trade in perfumes and thus to unnecessary luxuries and, by association, to erotic life, makes good sense in terms of these motifs. Lucretius has already mentioned the implied erotic allurements of the sea (in 999–1006, where they are again linked to armies; cf. 2.551–559), and the reference to seafaring should be seen as an example of the *topos* in Latin poetry that “the invention of ships marks the beginning of moral decay.”⁸⁶ Indeed, it is hard to avoid the impression that there is a critical glance at Homer (1444–1445), who now appears to have celebrated the wrong achievements.⁸⁷ He bore a heavy responsibility for the establishment of the *res gestae* (1444) of Agamemnon and the Greeks in pursuit of Helen as a cultural ideal.⁸⁸

The final verses (1448–1457) contain similar ambiguities. There is a mixture of good and bad arts listed at the outset, though *navigia* and *arma* are still prominent:

Navigia atque agri culturas moenia leges
arma vias vestis et cetera de genere horum,

⁸⁶ Mondì (above, n. 45) 27 n. 36 citing Horace *Carm.* 1.3.17 ff., Ovid *Met.* 1.94–96, *Am.* 3.8.43–44, Tibullus 1.3.35–40, Vergil *Ecl.* 4.37–39; cf. Hesiod *WD* 236–237. Writing of the Augustan age, J. Griffin, “Augustan Poetry and the Life of Luxury,” *JRS* 66 (1976) 93 observes, “In the poets perfumes altogether loom much larger than the restrained taste of our own society would lead us to expect; in this they exactly reflect their own society.” On fragrances and *erōs*, M. Detienne, *The Gardens of Adonis* (Sussex 1977). Retaining *propter odores*, we could read *mare velivolium*, cf. *V. Aen.* 1.224 with Austin *ad loc.*). Otherwise M. F. Smith’s *propterea quod* is tempting (“Lucretius, *de rerum natura*, v.1440–7,” *Hermathena* 98 [1984] 45–52).

⁸⁷ Costa (above, n. 6) 153 (*ad* 1446–1447): “From 326–7 above it is clear that L. regarded Homer and the *Thebais* as the earliest surviving poetic records.”

⁸⁸ The complaint against Homer, then, is moral, not factual, *pace* G. Müller (in *Lucretius* [above, n. 15] 215; cf. Manuwald (above, n. 1) 13 n. 41. Lucretius, like Thucydides (1.9), seems content to follow the tradition that Helen was the reason for the war. At least so one could interpret 1442–1443, where Lucretius is again merging smoothly the past and present. The use of the Roman military terms *auxilia ac socios* points the moral for Lucretius’ contemporaries.

praemia, delicias quoque vitae funditus omnis,
carmina picturas, et daedala signa polire . . . (1448–1451)

But the arts of 1450–1451 have not appeared in the prehistory. Some background is required in order to evaluate them. Barwick observes that the text of Lucretius, with its division of the political and technical arts (1448–1449) from those which make life pleasurable (1450–1451), reflects a traditional distinction between necessary and unnecessary arts.⁸⁹ Democritus, for instance, said that music was a relatively recent (νεωτέραν) invention and did not answer to a need (μὴ ἀποκρίναι τὰναγκαῖον DK 68 B144). Of course given the arguably Epicurean conception of a golden age in a small farming community which will supply all needs (Diog. Oen. NF 21 Smith, col. 2, lines 12–14), it is not surprising to find that some of the arts traditionally thought necessary are not so regarded by Epicureans.⁹⁰ The independence of Lucretius from this tradition can be seen in the fact that he takes one traditionally unnecessary art, music, and, in an effective twist on the implication that such an art is a luxury, turns it to his primitivist purposes, while several others, the plastic arts of 1450–1451, are given quite different associations. They echo the luxury of the prooemium to Book 2 (20–28), and the explicit and repeated recollections of the latter in the prehistory make the connection certain. The scene in 2.20–28 is contrasted with the rural picnic of 2.29–33, repeated, of course, at 5.1392–1396, and the strong words of 5.1418–1429 on the uselessness of luxurious clothing renew the lesson of 2.34–36. So the *daedala signa polita* and other decorations of 5.1450–1451 recall the impressive description of the *aurea simulacra* in 2.24–26, including a hint of the decadence which is the whole point of the earlier passage.⁹¹ Finally, the last line, *artibus ad summum donec venere cacumen*, is remarkable. Giussani, observing that *artes* refers to the form of inquiry as well as the product, takes *artibus* as ablative, “by the arts.” Bailey thinks this leaves *cacumen* awkwardly alone and interprets it as a “Lucretian” dative in place of the unmetrical *artium*, “the highest pinnacle of the arts.” In either case,

⁸⁹ Barwick (above, n. 1) 208–209.

⁹⁰ Thus the *moenia* and *leges* of 1448 are not needed in the golden age fragment of Diogenes (col. 1, lines 9–12).

⁹¹ The significance of statues is also established by 3.78, cf. scholion on *KD* 29. The only other use of *pictura* besides 1451 is 2.35; cf. *delicias quoque multas* 2.22 and *delicias quoque omnis* 5.1450.

though more so on Giussani's interpretation, the line contains a delicate ambiguity. On the one hand, Lucretius fosters the impression that he is describing the attainment after a long and slow advance of high civilization (Athens follows in Book 6.1 f.). But again it is as if a shadow flickers across the page as the image of rising to the heights in this scientific conclusion recalls not so much the distant prooemium of Book 2 (7–13) but the ugly struggles of 5.1120–1142.⁹²

In 1241–1457 as a whole, then, the deep and systematic interweaving of the primary moral and scientific ideas is clear. Its composition and content, while thoroughly chaotic from the perspective of a scientific aetiology of the arts, are far more satisfactory when read in terms of its moral concerns. The poet enhances the primitivism of the first stage of human life (925–1010) in order to create the impression of a deterioration in our moral situation from this initial condition, in which, whatever its problems, thousands were not killed in war or at sea (999–1006; cf. 1007–1010), to our current state, in which this disaster is well known (1226–1240) and caused by our ignorant and excessive desires, more culpable than any known to the earliest human beings (1416–1435). The use of the motifs of war and seafaring in 999–1006 for primitivist purposes strengthens the likelihood that the reversal of Epicurus in the first two stages (in 925–1104) is linked to the deployment of the same motifs in 1241–1457. Hence there can be little doubt that in 1241–1457 Lucretius is responsible for the invasion of the scientific aetiology of the arts by these morally significant motifs.

Some final details reveal how the whole structure beginning with the enhanced primitivism of 925–1010 is a unity. At 1379–1411, Lucretius attributes the earliest enjoyment of music to the “woodland race of earthborn men” (*silvestre genus terrigenarum* 1411; Bailey's translation). As noted earlier, *silvestre* recalls 925–1010, as does *terrigenarum*. But of course this first stage is too primitive for the scene described in 1379–1404.⁹³ This rural picnic properly belongs to the

⁹² I believe that Lucretius has insisted upon this imagery in 1120–1142 (cf. 1275–1280) partly in order to achieve this effect at 1457. On the image of the heights, Fredouille (above, n. 13) 19–20 cites earlier views; cf. also D. Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (Ithaca 1983) 258. For a more pessimistic reading of the final verses, see P. Giuffrida, “Il finale (vv. 1440–1457) del V libro di Lucrezio,” in *Epicurea in Memoriam Hectoris Bignone*, Genova 1959 (*Pubblicazioni dell' Istituto di Filologia Classica, Facoltà di Lettere, Università di Genova* 2) 129–165.

⁹³ Manuwald (above, n. 1) 32 n. 129; Cole (above, n. 2) 43; Costa (above, n. 6) *ad* 1379–1435.

second stage of 1011–1027 (and would be fully at home in the setting of *KD* 40). Lucretius effects the sleight of hand of implying that it belongs to the earliest period both by the primitivism of 925–1010, where 937–952 describes nearly the same rural picnic, and by dwelling on the relatively primitive aspects of the second stage.⁹⁴ This artful design allows him to recall *implicitly* in 1379–1411 the relative superiority of the earlier stages of human existence, in preparation for the *explicit* statement of the same point in 1425–1429. The other side of the proposition, the idea that people have *not* changed, rather that tastes change and people compete to satisfy them, is in the end the dominant notion (1412–1424, 1430–1435). But the primitivism of Lucretius, which is displayed so effectively one last time in 1379–1411 and 1425–1429, helps him to express concisely and powerfully the increasingly irrational sweep of history in verses (1430–1435) that in our own age become ever more prophetic and terrifying.⁹⁵

IV. EPICURUS AND HISTORY

One reason that Lucretius fashions his account of prehistory in this manner is his desire to glorify the position of Epicurus in the history of civilization. The subtlety with which the prooemia of Books 5 and 6 achieve this effect has not been fully appreciated. Both 5.1–54 and 6.1–42 are concerned with the historic significance of Epicurus' philosophy. The first of these passages prepares the ground for the prehistory, the second builds upon it. At the beginning of Book 5, in a neat and unexpected turning of the tables on euhemerist views, Lucretius says that Epicurus should be considered a god (*deus ille fuit* 8) because he who found that principle of life which is now called *sapientia* has conferred greater benefits than Ceres or Liber, whose gifts it is even possible to live without (6–17).⁹⁶ Nor do Hercules' *beneficia* outweigh those of Epicurus (22–42). But it was not possible to live well "till our

⁹⁴ The blending of the first two stages at 1245–1249, discussed above, may be motivated in part to prepare for the same technique at 1379–1404.

⁹⁵ Hence, *pace* Costa (above, n. 6), 1379–1435 is tightly conceived.

⁹⁶ Frischer (above, n. 42) 209–231, 246–261 argues that the portrait of Epicurus shows him as culture-hero and god; see also Smith (above, n. 10) 13–14 on Epicurus as an oracle.

breasts were swept clean" (18).⁹⁷ Lucretius has mentioned before that in expounding the truth Epicurus was *primus* (1.67, 71; 3.2), but only now is this accomplishment compared to the gifts of others, thus opening up a truly historical perspective: *confer enim divina aliorum antiqua reperta* (5.13). Yet the other benefactors are still those of legend, as befits this prooemium's rhetorical apotheosis. The focus of the passage is the greatness of Epicurus' gifts, while their chronological position remains implicit.

But in the prooemium to Book 6 after the account of civilization's rise, the *historical* position of Epicurus comes into focus, although the content is otherwise basically the same. *Primae Athenae* gave to men the fruits that bear corn, fashioned life afresh, and enacted laws (6.1–3). Agriculture and laws, of course, are the gifts of Ceres (cf. 5.14–15) or Demeter, and the reference is to the Eleusinian myth. Nevertheless, the realm of legend has in a sense been left behind, for although Lucretius has explained the development of agriculture and laws without implying that Athens was responsible for them, the conception of Athens as the bringer of civilization would evoke for his readers her fifth- and fourth-century achievements. That is, both 5.1 ff. and 6.1 ff. compare Epicurus to other divine or heroic benefactors, but in the second case Lucretius' use of legend places Epicurus in a specific (and glamorous) historical context. By referring to Demeter, Lucretius can allude to the glory of Athens without mentioning the political or cultural achievements on which it was based. The cleverness of the conceit lies not least in its historical accuracy about the place and time of Epicurus. In this manner, the achievement of his discoveries (the *divina reperta*, 6.7, 5.13) is now placed explicitly in its historical position, the peak of civilization, and described in relation to the condition of life as he had found it (6.9–16, which summarize the central scientific and moral theses of the prehistory). Thus the moral commentary in 5.925–1457, which conveys the sense of ever more complicated discoveries without any improvement in human wisdom in using them, is turned in Book 6 to the historical glory of Epicurus,

cuius et extincti propter divina reperta
divulgata vetus iam ad caelum gloria fertur. (6.7–8)

⁹⁷ Translation of *puro pectore* by R. E. Latham in the Penguin edition; cf. Costa (above, n. 6) *ad loc.*

Is it possible that Epicurus himself saw his historical position as Lucretius presents it? The significant point is not in the disputed question of Epicurus' attitude toward his predecessors in philosophy, especially since Sedley has exonerated him from the excesses of the traditional accusations of dishonesty and ingratitude toward them.⁹⁸ But Epicurus certainly did consider himself to have established certain fundamental principles about nature which would not be refuted and which provided the basis for leading the good life.⁹⁹ As we have seen, he systematically wrote his own problems into history insofar as he was particularly concerned to analyze the origins of our irrational fears and desires. This approach to the past definitely implies that his philosophy should be considered a piece of good news, and we may retain the possibility that he wrote a discussion of his solutions into the same history.¹⁰⁰ Just as significantly, in forming Epicurean communities which were alternatives to traditional society Epicurus and his followers *acted* as if he were the savior in history which Lucretius presents him as, and current work on Epicurean social practice is most suggestive here.¹⁰¹ His famous last words, as reported by Hermarchus, were an injunction to remember his teachings (*D.L.* 10.16).¹⁰² This conviction about the value of his own teachings and the nature of the communities which he organized on the basis of his principles must make us cautious about giving Lucretius all the credit for highlighting the historical position of

⁹⁸ "Epicurus and his Professional Rivals," in *Etudes sur l' Epicurisme antique*, J. Bollack, A. Laks eds. (*Cahiers de Philologie* 1) 121–159.

⁹⁹ See the challenging, if possibly overdrawn, essay of M. Nussbaum, "Therapeutic Arguments," in *The Norms of Nature: Studies in Hellenistic Ethics*, M. Schofield, G. Striker eds. (Cambridge 1986).

¹⁰⁰ Pace Furley (above, n. 15) 6–7, a living individual, such as the founder of a religious movement, can claim to be an *evangelium*. The issue of Epicurus' philosophical predecessors is largely irrelevant here, since such assertions are not based on "sufficient reason" in any case. If any earlier Greek philosopher, such as Pythagoras, was considered an *evangelium* for human culture, this fact is not an argument against the possibility of Epicurus' having thought of himself as such.

¹⁰¹ J. M. Rist, *Epicurus* (Cambridge 1972) 9–13; Clay (above, n. 43); Frischer (above, n. 42) 52–66, cf. 231–240 (cf. 78–79) for the idea that the portrait of Epicurus refers to that of Asklepios because Epicurus, like Asklepios, is a savior.

¹⁰² Cf. his advice to learn the fundamentals of his philosophy in order to attain peace of mind (γαληνισμός, *Ep. ad Hdt.* 82–83; cf. 36; *D.L.* 10.12). A. S. Cox, "Lucretius and his Message," *G&R N.S.* 18 (1971) 6 n. 1 links this description of the ideal Epicurean peace of mind as a "sea-calm" with the imagery of storms at sea in Lucretius.

Epicurus. Thus Lucretius had good reason, if not an explicit model, for shaping his prehistory around the coming of Epicurus in Book 6.

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