

SOMNIA FICTA IN LUCRETIIUS AND LUCILIUS

tutemet a nobis iam quovis tempore vatum
 terriquois victus dictis desciscere quaeres.
 quippe etenim quam multa tibi iam *fingere* possunt
 somnia , quae vitae rationes vertere possint
 fortunisque tuas omnis turbare timore!

Lucretius, *DRN* 1.102–6

In *CQ* n.s 32 (1982), 237, Howard Jacobson comments on Lucretius' expression *fingere somnia* , for which he can find only two parallels, both later than Lucretius.¹ He suggests that the phrase can best be understood as a reference to the actual practice of dream control, or *oneiropompeia* , for which he provides several useful references. A fragment of Lucilius, however, provides not only a parallel, but perhaps even a model, for Lucretius' phrase, and for his criticism in 1.102–35 of the lies or fictions of both religious figures and poets.

Lucilius fragments 484–9 and 480–3 Marx² seem to come from one satire in Book 15 explaining how philosophy can free man from superstition.³ In 484–9M Lucilius criticizes those who believe the *somnia ficta* of superstitious religion:

terrículas, Lamias, Fauni quas Pompiliique
 instituire Numae, tremit has, hic omnia ponit.
 ut pueri infantes credunt signa omnia aena
 vivere et esse homines, sic isti *somnia ficta*
 vera putant, credunt signis cor inesse in aenis:
 pergula pictorum, veri nihil, omnia ficta.

The manuscripts at 487 have the impossible *sic isti omnia ficta* , so most editors print Lachmann's plausible emendation *somnia ficta* .⁴ If the resemblance between Lucilius and Lucretius here is just a coincidence, then this is at least a parallel for Lucretius' phrase that seems to have escaped the notice of commentators.⁵ Several features of both passages, however, suggest that Lucretius may be more deeply indebted to the poem of Lucilius from which fragment 484–9 comes.

First, the immediate contexts of the passages are similar. Both poets speak disapprovingly of the superstitions and fears promoted by the religious establishment. Lucretius' *vates* (102) correspond to Lucilius' *Fauni...Pompiliique...Numae*

¹ Verg. *Ecl.* 8.108 *an qui amant, ipsi sibi somnia fingunt?* , and Claudian, *Eutrop.* 1.170 *fingere somnia possunt* , where *somnia* is subject rather than object.

² F. Marx, *C. Lucili Carminum Reliquiae* (2 vols.; Leipzig, 1905) = fragments 490–5 and 482–5 in W. Krenkel, *Lucilius Satiren* (2 vols.; Leiden, 1970) = 520–9 in E. H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin* , vol. III, *Lucilius. Laws of the XII Tables* (Cambridge, MA, and London, Loeb Classical Library, 1967²) = xv, 18–19 in F. Charpin, *Lucilius Satires* (2 vols.; Paris, Budé, 1978).

³ Cf. Marx *ad* 515 (ii.192), who notes that fragments attributed to Book 15 could describe philosophy's ability to free one from *superstitio* (480–9), *avaritia* (492–503) and *iracundia* (506–14), and also Warmington and Krenkel *ad locc.*

⁴ L. Mueller suggested *istic omnia* , which is possible but not attractive. Marx *ad* 484M (ii. 181) notes “‘omnia’” pro “‘somnia’” mendose praebuit Palatinorum archetypus Plaut. *Rud.* 594.

⁵ I have checked Bailey, Munro, Merrill, Leonard and Smith, Guissani, Lachmann (his 1850 Lucretius; his Lucilius dates from 1876), Paratore and Pizzani, and Ernout and Robin.

Some of these, as Jacobson reports, have been troubled by the phrase. C. Bailey, *Titi Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura Libri Sex* (Oxford, 1947), says *ad* Lucretius 1.105, ‘though you can be said to “fashion a dream for yourself”, it is not easy to see how you can do it for someone else.’ Lucilius has *somnia ficta* with no agent expressed, though one is implied by the previous sentence: *Fauni Pompiliique Numae* . Lucretius puts the phrase in the active voice, with an explicit subject. The oddity of letting someone else fashion dreams for you remains, but that this is both odd and undesirable is Lucretius' point.

(484–5). Lucilius' *terrículas*, *Lamias...tremet* (484–5) may be compared with Lucretius' *terriloquis victus dictis* 103 and *turbare timore* 106. Both poets have *terri-* at the beginning of a line (Lucil. 484, Lucr. 103), which may be either a subconscious echo, or a deliberate one.

Second, Lucilius 486ff. slightly resembles another passage of Lucretius, the recurring lines 2.55–8:⁶

nam *veluti pueri* trepidant atque *omnia* caecis
in tenebris metuunt, sic nos in luce timemus
interdum, nilo quae sunt metuenda magis quam
quae pueri in tenebris pavitant *fiuntque* futura.

The resemblance here is not strong, and as Bailey notes *ad loc.*, the thought is a commonplace, so an argument cannot be made from this alone that Lucretius knew Lucilius 486ff. Still, the parallel helps show how the tone of Lucilius to some extent anticipates, if it did not in part inspire, that of Lucretius.

Third, the larger context in Lucretius and what seems to be the larger context in Lucilius are similar. Both Lucretius and Lucilius appear to link superstition with belief in the lies of poets. In Lucretius 1.102ff., the word *vates* in 102 seems at first to mean 'prophet' or 'priest'. The passage immediately follows the description of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, which may call to mind the soothsayer Calchas, although he is not named, and which ends *tantum religio potuit suadere malorum* (101). But when Lucretius goes on to say that *religio* owes its power to men's fear of punishment after death, the person he names as one of those responsible for the erroneous notion that there is an underworld is not a religious figure, but the poet Ennius: *esse Acherusia templa/ Ennius aeternis exponit versibus edens* (121–2). From this underworld came the Homer of Ennius' dream: *unde sibi exortam semper florentis Homeri/ commemorat speciem* (124–5). The role of poets in propagating errors about the underworld would appear to be a new topic here, but as Diskin Clay has recently noted, Lucretius is exploiting the ambiguity of the word *vatum* in 102, which Clay is right to translate 'poets and priests',⁷ although this is only apparent after one has read further. Lucretius links religious leaders and poets as figures against whose picture of the world he is arguing.

Lucilius does not mention poets in 484–9 M, but talks about the fictions of Homer in fragment 480–3 M:

multa homines portenta in Homeri versibus ficta
monstra putant, quorum in primis Polyphemus ducentos
Cyclops longus pedes: et porro huic maius bacillum
quam malus navi e corbita maximus ullast.

Krenkel and Marx *ad loc.* suggest that these lines may have opened the poem in which 484ff. appeared. The similarity of *portenta...ficta/ monstra putant* (480–1) and *somnia ficta/ vera putant* (487–8) is noteworthy. If the passages belong to the same poem,

⁶ These lines recur at 3.87–90 and 6.35–8. On the resemblance here, which was first noted by Lachmann, see C. Murley, 'Lucretius and the History of Satire', *TAPA* 70 (1939), 382.

Speaking more generally of Lucilius 484ff. M, W. Krenkel, 'Zur literarischen Kritik bei Lucilius', in *Die römische Satire (Wege der Forschung* 238, ed. D. Korzeniewski; Darmstadt, 1970), 188 n. 129, says, 'in Lucretius fand Lucilius einen Nachfolger'.

⁷ D. Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (Ithaca, NY, and London, 1983), 222. That the word can mean 'poet' at this date is not always acknowledged (for references see Nisbet and Hubbard on Horace C. 1.1.35), but acceptance of this point is not crucial to my argument.

On this passage see too P. R. Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid. Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford, 1986), 17–18, following E. Paratore, 'Spunti lucreziani nelle "Georgiche"', *Atene e Roma* 7 (1939), 197.

Lucilius would seem to be linking belief or disbelief in the *ficta* of Homer with belief in the *ficta* of religion, providing precedent for the thought as well as the language of Lucretius 1.102ff.⁸

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⁸ For interpretation of 480–1, cf. Charpin ('Les hommes pensent que beaucoup de prodiges rapportés dans les vers d'Homère, sont des monstres véritables') and Warmington ('People think that in the poetry of Homer there are many prodigies which are make-believe monstrosities'). I favour Charpin; see his note, ii.245.

I thank David Konstan and Diane Juffras for comments on a draft of this note.

NOTES ON CATULLUS AND OVID

Catullus 67.7ff.

dic agedum nobis quare mutata feraris
in dominum veterem deseruisse fidem.
'Non (ita Caecilio placeam, cui tradita nunc sum)
culpa mea est, quamquam dicitur esse mea, 10
nec peccatum a me quisquam pote dicere quicquam,
verum† istius populi ianua qui te facit†,
qui, quacumque aliquid reperitur non bene factum,
ad me omnes clamant: ianua, culpa tua est.

The writer purports to be conversing with the door of a house, now owned by a man named Caecilius, which is alleged to have harboured a scandal in the time of its previous occupants. For this the speaker reproaches the door, as having through negligence been partly responsible. The door replies (beginning at line 9) that it is wholly innocent in the matter; but people lay blame on it for everything that is done amiss. Line 12, in the door's speech, is obviously corrupt, and the greater part of it is obelized by editors accordingly.

Did Catullus perhaps write in that line 'verum istuc populi *fabula iniqua* facit'? That is: 'What causes (*facit*) the wrong idea about me that you refer to (*istuc*) is the malice of popular gossip (*populi fabula iniqua*)'. This gives precisely the sense required, and gives it in good Latin: for *istuc facit*, cf. Plautus, *Trinummus* 857 (*argentum hoc facit*); for *populi fabula*, cf. Propertius 2.13–14 (*populi . . . fabula*); for *fabula iniqua*, cf. Ovid, *Fasti* 4.307 (*rumor iniquus*) and Catullus 69.5 (*mala fabula*); for the position of the elision in *fabula iniqua*, cf. Catullus 113.3 (*milia in unum*).

The supposed corruption of *fabula* to the *ianua* given by the MSS might be an example of the substitution of one dactylic word for another by scribal error, remarked by Housman on Manilius 1.476, and here much assisted by the emphatic presence of *ianua* in the context and the identity of the vowel sounds in the two words.

Since writing the above I learn from a friend that Lachmann in his edition of 1829 suggested 'istud populi fabula, Quinte, facit'. Scaliger had printed *Quinte*, but *fabula* was new.

Ovid, *Heroides* 9.59–70

non puduit fortis auro cohibere lacertos,
et solidis gemmas opposuisse toris? 60
nempe sub his animam pestis Nemeaea lacertis
edidit, unde umerus tegmina laevus habet!
ausus es hirsutos mitra redimire capillos?
aptior Herculeae populus alba comae.
nec te Maeonia lascivae more puellae 65
incipi zona dedecuisse pudet?