

(1 A) *eo praedam redditum* 'I am on the way to returning the loot' with (1 B) its infinitival form *me ire praedam redditum* and (1 C) **praeda it redditum* 'the loot is on the way to being returned' (lit. 'going towards the returning') with (1 D) infinitival **praedam ire redditum*. The latter pair were subsequently marked for passivity at the only point where they could be, yielding (2 D) *praedam redditum iri* and (3 C) *praeda redditum itur*. This derivation is not only simpler in itself but achieves its simplicity precisely by eliminating the most objectionable stage, the impersonal *itur* (cf. § 2.5). Even though it is much easier to derive (3 C) from (1 C) here than it was to derive the corresponding (4 A) from (2 A) in the previous diachrony, the fact that Gellius deemed the Catonian usage worthy of special treatment and offered no parallel for it still favours the derivation of (3 C) from (2 D): *uideo praedam redditum iri* → *praeda uidetur redditum iri* → *praeda redditum itur*.

4.1. We need not be surprised that Gellius connected both the current *factum iri* and Cato's *quae factum itur* with the only passive use of the verb that he knew, the impersonal in Vergil's *itur in antiquam siluam* etc. He could hardly have done otherwise. Now, after more than eighteen centuries, his explanation can perhaps be superseded.

Luteus: Pink or Yellow?

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The accepted authorities assign more than one meaning to the Latin adjective *luteus*,¹⁾ including both "yellow" and "red."²⁾ Nevertheless, as will be seen below, modern translators show a very strong preference for "yellow" as a translation for this term, not only in contexts where red or yellow would be equally suitable, but even in passages where red (or perhaps pink) is clearly preferable.

¹⁾ Long *u*; not to be confused with *lūteus*, 'sooty, grimy.'

²⁾ E.g. von Kamptz in *TLL* VII. 2. 1895–97 *s.v.*: "2 a. *ruber* . . . b. *flavus* . . ."; Karl Ernst Georges, *Ausführliches Lateinisch-Deutsches Handwörterbuch* (Basel 1951⁹) *s.v.*: "IIa) goldgelb, safrangelb, orangegelb . . . b) rosenfarben, rosenroth, hellpurpurn . . ."; Jacques André, *Étude sur les Termes de Couleur dans la Langue Latine* (Paris 1949), pp. 151–52: "'orange' . . . 'jaune.'"

What is the reason for this persistent preference? To some extent it may arise from discomfort with the prospect of one term representing two different hues. And, if one of the two colors is to be excluded in the interest of consistency, then the evidence for its meaning "red" may appear weak.³⁾

This feeling is evident in von Kamptz's article *s. v.* in the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*. Under the subheading "ruber" he cites the passage from Gellius (quoted below) classifying *luteus* among the reds, but then adds:

*exempla certa . . . non exstant nisi: Catull. 61, 195 . . . [lute]-umve papaver . . . videtur poeta pro rufo [lute]-um colorem posuisse tamquam nuptiis melius accommodatum . . .*⁴⁾

Von Kamptz has undervalued the strength of the evidence, and his idea that Catullus altered the natural color of a well-known flower to a hue more appropriate to a wedding cannot be seriously entertained. The context is a realistic one, devoid of fantasy; we are far from the colored rams of Vergil and the scarlet swans of Horace.⁵⁾

First, the evidence from Gellius is unambiguous. At II. 26.8, reporting the opinion of Fronto, he writes:

'fulvus' enim et 'flavus' et 'rubicus' et 'poeniceus' et 'rutilus' et 'luteus' et 'spadix' appellationes sunt rufi coloris.

True, in this passage *luteus* keeps company with the xanthic terms *fulvus* and *flavus* as well as with the reds; but a little later (26. 15) the author adds: "'luteus' contra rufus color est dilutior," where the comparative strongly suggests the idea of "pink."

Next, the passage from Catullus establishes beyond doubt that the term can mean "red." The passage concerns the changes of the bride's complexion on her wedding day; she is described as "alba parthenice velut / luteumve papaver" (lines 187–88; = 194–95 in many older editions).

³⁾ That it often means "yellow" cannot be denied, since it is applied to sulfur at Ovid *Metamorphoses* 15.351 and frequently to the yolks of eggs, as in Pliny's *Naturalis Historia* 21.80.87, 23.7.63–64, 30.14.49. On the other hand, Hugo Blümner went so far as to deny that *luteus* belongs among the reds at all: "Die Farbenbezeichnungen bei den römischen Dichtern," *Berliner Studien* 13 (1892) pp. 1–220, at p. 125. (The earlier version of Blümner's study, published in *Philologus* 48 (1889) pp. 142–67, 706–22, does not touch upon *luteus*.)

⁴⁾ *Loc. cit.* (*supra*, n. 2) 1895. 42–57.

⁵⁾ *Eclogues* 4. 43–45; *Odes* IV. 1. 10.

What color is the bride's face? The choices are: (i) yellow, (ii) red –or more likely pink, (iii) "pale".

It is noteworthy that a good many translators have chosen the first option, as though the bride were queasy or temporarily jaundiced. Examples include:

1. Robinson Ellis, in his commentary: "The bride's complexion was probably *μελίχλωρος*, a sort of olive, now looking pale, now yellow or like honey."⁶) Since "pale" must here refer to *alba* in line 187, "yellow" represents *luteum*.

2. F. W. Cornish: "like a white daisy or yellow poppy."⁷)

3. Sir William Morris: "like a golden poppy-bloom or a daisy white."⁸)

4. Bernardo Clariana: "como blanca margarita o amarilla admiradora."⁹)

5. Peter Whigham, "a lily among yellow field-flowers."¹⁰)

6. C. H. Sisson: "like a white daisy or a golden poppy."¹¹)

7. Celia and Louis Zukovsky: "a yellow poppy."¹²)

Such translations defy both the facts of botany and the data of common experience. In the first place the existence of a yellow poppy is unattested in classical antiquity. Pliny the Elder writes:

papaveris sativi tria genera: candidum . . .

alterum genus est papaveris nigrum . . .

tertium genus . . . flore rufo . . .¹³)

It is the red poppy which is frequent in classical literature, e. g. Propertius I. 20. 38: "[lilia] candida purpureis mixta papaveribus."¹⁴)

Next, what do brides do at weddings? They do not turn yellow. At times they turn pink (hence the cliché, "the blushing bride"); at times they may turn pale.

⁶) Robinson Ellis, *A Commentary on Catullus* (Oxford 1889) p.235.

⁷) "The Poems of Gaius Valerius Catullus," tr. by F. W. Cornish in *Catullus Tibullus and Pervigilium Veneris* (London and New York 1913), p. 81.

⁸) Sir William Morris, *Catullus Translated* (Oxford 1924).

⁹) Bernardo Clariana, *Los Epitalamios de Catulo* (Havana 1941), p. 35.

¹⁰) Peter Whigham, tr., *The Poems of Catullus* (Harmondsworth 1966), p. 129.

¹¹) C. H. Sisson, tr., *The Poetry of Catullus* (New York 1967), p. 93 = *Catullus* (Worcester and London 1966), p. 45.

¹²) Celia and Louis Zukovsky, trr., *Catullus* (London 1969); pages not numbered.

¹³) C. Plinius Secundus, *Naturalis Historia*, edd. L. Ian and C. Mayhoff (Leipzig 1865–1906, reprinted Stuttgart 1967–1970), XIX. 8. 53.

¹⁴) The word *purpureis* is chromatic here, and does not mean "bright"; see n. 21 below.

It is not surprising that certain translators have thought that *luteum* means "pale" here—for example, Frederic Raphael and Kenneth McLeish, "pale as a white convolvulus."¹⁵) This would be in conformity with experience; and it cannot be denied (a.) that *luteus* does sometimes signify paleness, as at Horace *Epodes* 10.16, "tibi pallor luteus"; and (b.) that paleness is conventionally associated with persons who are in love, as at Ovid *Ars Amatoriae* I. 729, "palleat omnis amans: hic est color aptus amanti." However, Ovid is referring to the complexion of a swain whose love is unrequited or, at least, furtive and uncertain, hardly to lovers on the day of their marriage. And the pallor to which Horace refers is produced by the fear of imminent death by drowning, not by imminent matrimony.¹⁶)

That this term can be used to express the idea "to redden" is established by a glance at Nemesianus *Cynegetica* 319, "rubescere luto." And Tibullus I. 8.52, "sed nimius luto corpora tingit amor," could refer to either pallor or blushing. The bride's blushes on the wedding day are mentioned at length by Lygdamus later in the Tibullan corpus: III. 4.29–34. Thus, the bridal context in Catullus 61 leads one to expect redness of cheek, not paleness. Moreover, 'pale' provides scarcely any contrast with white (*alba*), hence would be artistically weak here.

Several Catullan translators have evaded the problem altogether. Examples:

1. Elmer Truesdell Merrill, in his note *ad loc.*: "flame-colored."¹⁷)
2. Horace Gregory, "flowering among poppies and sweet asters."¹⁸)
3. James Michie, "Her face raised like a flower / Poppy-flushed, daisy-white / and radiantly bright."¹⁹)

¹⁵) Frederic Raphael and Kenneth McLeish, trr., *The Poems of Catullus* (London 1978), p. 69.

¹⁶) The pallor of lovers is associated with the color of violets: Horace *Odes* III. 10.14, "tinctus viola pallor amantium." But what color is the violet? Clearly that flower can be either dark or light in color: Vergil speaks of "pallentis violas" (*Eclogues* 2.47), but also writes "nigrae violae sunt" (*ibid.* 10.39) and "violae subluceat purpura nigrae" (*Georgics* IV. 275). Pliny, *N.H.* 14.27, distinguishes three main kinds: "[violetum] plurima genera, purpureae, luteae, albae". It is obvious that *some* violets are of the color usually called "violet" by the moderns, and that of these three terms *purpureae* is the most likely to match that hue (cf. André, *supra* n. 2, p. 95). The "pale" violets should be *albae*. Those of the remaining variety (*luteae*) are probably pink.

¹⁷) Elmer Truesdell Merrill, ed., *Catullus* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1893) p. 109.

¹⁸) Horace Gregory, tr., *The Poems of Catullus* (New York 1956²) p. 83.

¹⁹) James Michie, tr., *The Poems of Catullus* (London 1969) p. 113. "Flushed" could imply blushing.

Such evasions are unnecessary. Many translators have handled the epithet correctly. Examples:

1. G.A. Williamson in his note *ad loc.*: "LUTEUM: presumably 'pink,' though in line 10 it meant 'yellow.' Elsewhere it is used to describe roses, dawn, and egg-yolk! The Romans were shockingly vague in the terminology of colour; look up *purpureus* in a large dictionary."²⁰) Rather, one should look up *purpureus* in the pages of Glotta.²¹) The problem is not one of "vagueness" on the part of the Romans, but of inattention on the part of the moderns.

2. Ulrich von Willamowitz-Moellendorff: "hellrot" (i.e., pink).²²)

3. Frank O. Copley: "the red glow of the poppy."²³)

4. C.J. Fordyce, in his note *ad loc.*: "the poppy is luteum, i.e. red."²⁴)

5. Rudolf Helm: "Rot wie Blüten vom Mohne".²⁵)

6. Barriss Mills: "red poppies."²⁶)

7. Paolo Fedeli shows his understanding of this passage by citing twelve parallels, all of which involve red/white contrasts.²⁷)

There are many other passages in Roman literature where the term *luteus* might mean either "red (or pink)" or "yellow" with about equal ease. In such cases modern translators nearly always opt for "yellow" as the meaning. An examination of a few of the more familiar passages of this sort will make the pattern clear.

²⁰) G.A. Williamson, ed., *Poems of Catullus* (n.p., n.d.) p. 140.

²¹) Helmut Gipper, "Purpur," *Glotta* 42 (1964) pp. 39–69; R. J. Edgeworth, "Does *Purpureus* Mean 'Bright'?" *Glotta* 57 (1979) pp. 281–291.

²²) Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Hellenistische Dichtung in der Zeit des Kallimachos* (Berlin 1924) II p. 281 n. 4.

²³) Frank O. Copley, tr., *Gaius Valerius Catullus, The Complete Poetry* (Ann Arbor 1957) p. 60.

²⁴) C. J. Fordyce, *Catullus: A Commentary* (Oxford 1961) p. 252. But on p. 240 he writes "*luteum* . . . is a reddish yellow (or yellowish red) . . ." and ". . . for the bride it [the shoe, referred to as *luteus*] is orange-yellow." Fordyce thus provides four different equivalents for *luteus*, but acknowledges no confusion.

²⁵) Rudolf Helm, tr., *Catull, Gedichte* (Berlin 1963).

²⁶) Barriss Mills, tr., *The Carmina of Catullus* (West Lafayette [Indiana] 1965) p. 94.

²⁷) Paolo Fedeli, *Il Carme 61 di Catullo* (Fribourg [Switzerland] 1972; = SEGES 16); English translation and second edition, *Catullus' Carmen 61* (Amsterdam 1983; = London Studies in Classical Philology 9), tr. by M. Nardella, pp. 122–23. Brief references to Catullus' use of the colors have also been made by H. Bardon, *Propositions sur Catulle* (Brussels 1970) p. 57, and by T. Mantero in *Studi Traglia* (Rome 1976) I p. 176 and n. 56, cf. p. 190.

I. Lucretius *De Rerum Natura* IV. 75–76

lutea russaque vela / et ferrugina.

The passage refers to the shadows cast by the awnings at the theater upon the throngs below.

1. H. A. J. Munro: "yellow and red and dark-blue awnings."²⁸⁾
 2. R. C. Trevelyan: "awnings, yellow and red and purple."²⁹⁾
 3. Cyril Bailey: "*lutea*: 'yellow', *russa* 'a coarse red', *ferrugina* 'dark purple' . . ."³⁰⁾
 4. Alban Dewes Winspear: "The awnings over mighty theatres stretched / Purple in colour, yellow, red."³¹⁾
 5. Josef Martin: "die gelben und roten und braunen Segel."³²⁾
- However, I have previously argued in these pages that "the Lucretius passage actually displays the poet's keen eye for precision in visual details: there is a progression among reds—from "lutea" (pale red, pink) through "russa" (medium red) to "ferrugina" (dark red, red-brown)."³³⁾

II. Lucan *Pharsalia* II. 361

[non] lutea demissos velarunt flammea vultus.

Ridley and Duff and Graves all translate it as "no saffron veil."³⁴⁾ Bourgery similarly gives "pas de jaune flammeum."³⁵⁾

That the *flammeum* or bridal veil was *luteum* is certain.³⁶⁾ That it was necessarily yellow is not entirely clear.³⁷⁾

²⁸⁾ H. A. J. Munro, tr., *Lucretius On the Nature of Things* (London 1864, edn. by J. D. Duff issued London 1914) p. 125. For the reference to "dark-blue" awnings, see n. 33 below.

²⁹⁾ R. C. Trevelyan, tr., *Lucretius De Rerum Natura* (Cambridge 1937) p. 131.

³⁰⁾ Cyril Bailey, ed., *Titi Lucreti Cari De Rerum Natura* (Oxford 1947) III p. 1189.

³¹⁾ Alban Dewes Winspear, tr., *The Roman Poet of Science, Lucretius: De Rerum Natura* (New York 1955) p. 140.

³²⁾ Josef Martin, tr., *Lukrez, Über die Natur der Dinge* (Berlin 1972) p. 227.

³³⁾ "What Color is 'ferrugineus'?" *Glotta* 56 (1978) pp. 297–305; quotation is from pp. 304–05. André (*supra*, n. 2) p. 152 remarks of this Lucretius passage: "le sens d'orange doit être préféré à celui de jaune".

³⁴⁾ Sir Edward Ridley, tr., *The Pharsalia of Lucan* (London *et alibi* 1905) p. 44; J. D. Duff, tr., *Lucan, The Civil War* (London and New York 1928) p. 83; Robert Graves, tr., *Lucan, Pharsalia* (Harmondsworth 1957) p. 57.

³⁵⁾ A. Bourgery, tr., *Lucain, La Guerre Civile* (Paris 1926) p. 47. *Ibid.*, n. 3: "Le flammeum . . . devait son nom à sa couleur feu." True; but what color is fire? Latin lacks a color cliché for fire.

³⁶⁾ Pliny *N. H.* XXI. 8. 22: "lutei video honorem antiquissimum, in nuptialibus flammeis totum feminis concessum . . ."

³⁷⁾ *TLL s. v.* (*supra*, n. 2) 1895, 50–51: "de . . . flammeo . . . non satis constat".

III. *Plautus Menaechmi* 916–17

Quin tu me interrogas, Purpureum panem an puniceam solem ego esse³⁸) an luteam?

Since the examples are drawn from fantasy (such as “purple bread”), context does *not* provide any indication of the meaning of *luteum* here.

Translators again steadily favor yellow:

1. W. Binder - W. Ludwig: “Frag auch das noch: ob ich rotes Brot / Oder ob ich violettes esse, ob safranfarbenes . . .”³⁹)

2. Lionel Casson: “Why don’t you ask me whether my diet includes purple or red or yellow bread?”⁴⁰)

3. E. F. Watling: “Why don’t you ask me whether I eat pink, purple, or yellow bread?”⁴¹)

Erich Segal, however, displays originality: “Why not ask / Do I favor purple bread or pink or maybe even mauve?”⁴²)

I rather suspect that here, as in the Lucretius passage, we are dealing with three different reds; scarlet, crimson, pink.⁴³)

IV. *Horace Epodes* 10.16

tibi pallor luteus . . .

The noun certainly steers one away from redness here, but not necessarily to yellow.

1. A. Kiessling - R. Heinze: “gelbe Blässe”.⁴⁴)

2. C. L. Smith: “*luteus*: expressing the greenish yellow hue of paleness in dark complexions, such as are common in southern Europe . . .”⁴⁵)

³⁸) Long *e*; not to be confused with *esse*.

³⁹) *Antike Komödien* (Munich n. d.), tr. by Wilhelm Binder, rev. by Walther Ludwig, I p. 448.

⁴⁰) Lionel Casson, ed. and tr., *Six Plays of Plautus* (Garden City [New York] 1963) p. 232.

⁴¹) E. F. Watling, tr., *Plautus, The Pot of Gold and Other Plays* (Harmondsworth 1965) p. 136.

⁴²) Erich Segal, tr., *Plautus: Three Comedies* (New York *et alibi* 1969) p. 200.

⁴³) The term *purpureus* is usually a red: André (*supra*, n. 2) pp. 90–102, esp. pp. 96–97.

⁴⁴) Q. Horatius Flaccus, *Oden und Epoden*, commentary by Adolf Kiessling, rev. by Richard Heinze (Berlin 1958⁹) p. 528.

⁴⁵) Clement Lawrence Smith, ed., *The Odes and Epodes of Horace* (Boston and London 1903²) p. 373. Virtually the same note appears in Clifford Herschel Moore, ed., *Horace, The Odes, Epodes and Carmen Saeculare* (New York *et alibi*

3. F. Plessis: "*pallor luteus* une pâleur jaune".⁴⁶⁾
But Hans Färber simply gives "blasse Furcht".⁴⁷⁾

V. *Vergil Aeneid VII. 26*

Aurora in roseis fulgebat lutea bigis.

The dawn may be rosy or yellow or both; in Homer Eos is often *ῥοδοδάκτυλος*, sometimes *κροκόπεπλος*. Vergil *may* have wished to allude here to both Homeric epithets, but from the line itself we cannot be certain this was his intention, or that the terms *must* refer to different hues. Nevertheless translators are largely loyal to the yellow standard:

1. J. H. Voss: "Leuchtete gelb Aurora vom rosig-blinkenden Zweispann".⁴⁸⁾
2. H. Rushton Fairclough: "saffron-hued Aurora".⁴⁹⁾
3. J. Götte - K. Bayer: "glänzte in rosigen Zweigespann goldfarben Aurora".⁵⁰⁾
4. Robert Fitzgerald: "And saffron-robed Aurora in high heaven / Shone on her rosy car".⁵¹⁾

But Rolfe Humphries avoids the chromatic issue entirely: "Aurora glowing in her ruddy car".⁵²⁾

And R. D. Williams advances an original and plausible suggestion: "... *lutea* ('orange') ...".⁵³⁾

VI. *Ovid Fasti IV. 714*

(an imitation of the preceding passage):

Memnonis in roseis lutea mater equis.

1902) p. 436. The same idea is expressed by Kirby Flower Smith, ed., *The Elegies of Albius Tibullus* (New York *et alibi* 1913; repr. Darmstadt 1971) p. 355.

⁴⁶⁾ F. Plessis, ed., *Oeuvres d'Horace* (Paris 1924; repr. Hildesheim 1966) p. 357.

⁴⁷⁾ Hans Färber, ed., *Horaz, Sämtliche Werke* (Munich, n. d.) p. 245.

⁴⁸⁾ Johann Heinrich Voss, *Werke* (Braunschweig 1799; 1822³).

⁴⁹⁾ H. Rushton Fairclough, tr., *Virgil* (London and Cambridge [Mass.] 1916, rev. 1932) II p. 5.

⁵⁰⁾ Johannes Götte with Karl Bayer, ed. and tr., *Vergil: Aeneis und die Vergil-Viten* ([Munich] 1958) p. 273.

⁵¹⁾ Robert Fitzgerald, tr., *Virgil, The Aeneid* (New York 1983) p. 196.

⁵²⁾ Rolfe Humphries, tr., *The Aeneid of Virgil* (New York and London 1951) p. 178.

⁵³⁾ R. D. Williams, ed., *The Aeneid of Virgil* (Basingstoke and London 1972–73) II p. 168.

Translators:

1. Sir James Frazer: "Memnon's saffron-robed mother on her rosy steeds . . ." ⁵⁴)

2. Wolfgang Gerlach: "Tritt . . . Memnons Mutter hervor, hoch auf dem roten Gespann".⁵⁵)

Dawn is *lutea* twice in the *Metamorphoses*, but Horace Gregory finds little color in the epithet:

lutea mane videt pulsas Aurora tenebris (*Metamorphoses* VII. 703)

Gregory: "When pale Aurora drove the night away".⁵⁶)

Memnonis . . . lutea . . . mater (*Metamorphoses* XIII. 579–80)

Gregory: "For she, the brilliant mother of bright Memnon . . ." ⁵⁷)

Examples could be multiplied, but the point is already clear. Modern translators usually prefer to translate *luteus* as "yellow"; but other meanings, such as "pink," often seem equally good (or perhaps better) in context.

Finally, what of the seeming difficulty (referred to in the second paragraph of this article) of supposing that the same term can bear two quite different color meanings? The answer is found in the origin of the term *luteus* itself. It refers to a plant, *lutum* (*Luteola Reseda*)⁵⁸), and means "colored by *lutum* dye," or of the same hue as something colored by that dye. This plant can produce more than a single hue.⁵⁹)

A close analogy occurs in the case of the term *purpureus*, which refers to any hue produced by the *purpura* dye. In fact we know that the dyeing could produce a variety of colors, from brilliant red to pale violet.⁶⁰) All of these were *purpureus*.

⁵⁴) Sir James George Frazer, ed. and tr., *Fastorum Libri Sex* (London 1929) I p.229.

⁵⁵) Wolfgang Gerlach, ed., *Fasti* (Munich 1960) p.237.

⁵⁶) Horace Gregory, tr., *Ovid, The Metamorphoses* (New York 1958) p.200.

⁵⁷) *Ibid.* p.371.

⁵⁸) John Sargeant, *The Trees, Shrubs and Plants of Virgil* (Oxford 1920) p.73: "The common dyer's weed or weld (*Reseda luteola*) . . ." Unfortunately this plant is not found in Elfriede Abbé, *The Plants of Virgil's Georgics* (Ithaca [New York] 1965).

⁵⁹) Sargeant, *loc. cit.* (*supra*, n.58): "it yields a yellow dye . . . In commerce the dye is known as Dutch pink."

⁶⁰) André (*supra*, n.2) p.92: "La nuance varie avec le coquillage . . . Elle varie suivant le temps d'exposition au soleil du suc tiré du coquillage." For further details, see J. Marquardt, *La Vie Privée des Romains* (Paris 1892) or Alexander Dedekind, *Ein Beitrag zur Purpurkunde* (Berlin 1898).