BRILL

MNEMOSYNE 77 (2024) 405-433

MNEMOSYNE
A Journal of Classical Studies
brill.com/mnem

Lucretius' Allegoresis and Invective

De rerum natura *2.598-660*

Mikolaj Domaradzki | ORCID: 0000-0002-9603-1930
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Faculty of Philosophy,
Poznan, Poland
mikdom@amu.edu.pl

Received 3 June 2022 | Accepted 5 October 2022 |
Published online 23 January 2024

Abstract

The present paper suggests that Lucretius' Magna Mater interpretation (2.598-660) can fruitfully be approached through the lens of invective oratory. While this difficult passage of *De rerum natura* has long puzzled scholars, this article argues that in his interpretation Lucretius masterfully transforms the encomiastic *topos* of allegoresis into a powerful means of blame: the poet allegorically interprets various aspects of the cult of Cybele with a view to showing how religious convictions and customs go awry. When thus exposing the cult as impious, Lucretius ingeniously exploits several *topoi* of rhetorical hymns (nurture, propitiation, etc.) for the purpose of making his vituperation all the more compelling. Hence, on the reading advocated here, the Magna Mater interpretation is a carefully constructed invective against those aspects of the cult (of Cybele) which an Epicurean is bound to frown upon (providential illusion, divine punishment, etc.).

Keywords

Lucretius – allegoresis – Magna Mater – invective – inversion – rhetorical hymns

 | DOI:10.1163/1568525X-BJA10207
 | ISSN: 0026-7074 (print) 1568-525X (online)

1 The Controversy over the Magna Mater Interpretation

The Magna Mater passage (2.598-660) is one of the most intriguing in the entire *De rerum natura*.[1] Remarkably, the elaborate interpretation that Lucretius puts forward has all the trademarks of allegoresis. First, the earth is equated with *deum mater* (598, 659). Second, multiple hidden meanings are excavated from beneath the mythical formulations (600-643). Third, the authority of the 'authors' is expressly invoked, as Lucretius appeals first to the 'learned poets of ancient Greece' (*veteres Graium docti … poetae*, 600) and then also to 'different nations' (*variae gentes*, 610). Finally, the unveiled ὑπόνοιαι are conceived of as deliberate allegories, since Lucretius frequently and explicitly credits the 'authors' with the intention of such an esoteric composition (602: *docentes*, 612: *edunt*, 616: *significare volunt*, etc.). That a professed Epicurean should have anything to do with the tradition of allegoresis was scarcely palatable to many a scholar.

Henri Patin took the Magna Mater passage as a clear sign of "l'Antilucrèce chez Lucrèce",[2] and since then a plethora of diverse explanations has been offered for the poet's apparent flirting with allegorical interpretation. As it would be impossible to cite all these divergent accounts here, suffice it to mention the following solutions. One way to account for the presence of this disturbingly un-Epicurean allegoresis is to explain it as a poetically justified departure from orthodox Epicurean philosophy. Thus, for example, Erich Ackermann, in his highly influential study, argued that to understand why Lucretius did not embrace Epicurus' rejection of allegoresis, one should discriminate three different aspects of Lucretius' hermeneutical activity: (i) "der Philosoph Lukrez", (ii) "der Dichter Lukrez", and (iii) "der Philosoph und der Dichter Lukrez".[3] While this account builds on Patin's notion of a rift between Lucretius the poet and Lucretius the philosopher, Ackermann found the "Kybeleallegorese" to be motivated theoretically and practically: Lucretius' "Gebrauch von Mythen" is warranted inasmuch as it serves the purpose of "Verbreitung seiner Lehre".[4] More recently, this line of explanation has been furthered by Clotilde Craca, who devotes her entire book to the Magna Mater

1 The text is that of Bailey 1947 and the translation (at times modified) is that of Smith 2001.

2 Thus, in connection with the Magna Mater interpretation Patin 1868, 126 diagnoses: "Lucrèce, par un heureux effort d'imagination, peut se transporter passagèrement dans un ordre d'idées et de sentiments auxquels sa philosophie est hostile. Ainsi, quand il explique par des allégories, des symboles, la divinité et le culte de Cybèle, qu'il décrit épisodiquement la pompe de la déesse, il se sent un moment gagné à la piété de la foule". See also below n. 94.

3 Ackermann 1979, 103-106.

4 *Ibid.* 93-94.

passage, draws similar conclusions with regard to Lucretius' use of allegoresis,[5] and offers an inspiring account that is, however, in many aspects antithetical to the one advocated here.[6]

An important corollary of Patin's dichotomy is that scholars attempt to sieve Lucretius' 'genuine' allegoresis from other types of hermeneutical strategy employed by the poet. While this—*sit venia verbo*—'classificatory' approach also goes back to Ackermann,[7] it is regularly adopted in the German literature on the subject, as scholars painstakingly categorize Lucretius' interpretations with a view to differentiating between the poet's bona fide allegoresis and other forms of hermeneutical activity on his part (rationalization, euhemerism, etc.). Thus, for example, Christoff Neumeister singles out the Magna Mater interpretation as a rare case of Lucretius' authentic "allegorische Deutung",[8] which he distinguishes from other kinds of interpretation on the grounds that it presupposes an intention on the part of the author.[9] Yet this is not without controversy, since other scholars choose to characterize the Magna Mater interpretation as an instance of Lucretius' "rationalization".[10] While the answer to the question of whether the Magna Mater interpretation qualifies as allegoresis or rationalization depends obviously on how one defines these practices,[11]

5 According to Craca 2000, 80, Lucretius "sembra apprezzare la tendenza a considerare i misteri allegorie di leggi o fenomeni naturali, perché essa rispondeva ad una richiesta di comprensione che rendesse accettabili alla ragione riti apparentemente paurosi e bizzarri".

6 See below nn. 16, 50 and 60.

7 Ackermann 1979, 104 identifies three "Mythendeutungen" in Lucretius: "allegorische", "rationalistische" and "euhemeristische" (see also 12-15).

8 Neumeister 1997, 26.

9 *Ibid.* 30: "Lukrez unterstellt hier den Dichtern, in allegorischer Absicht Mythen oder mythische Vorstellungen geschaffen zu haben, die aber später religiös mißverstanden, d. h. *eigentlich* genommen worden sind". In a similar vein, Konstan 2008, 62 n. 66 explains that the Acheron interpretation (3.978-1023) "is not allegory in the traditional sense, for no intention is ascribed to the inventors of the tales, nor are they seen to convey a hidden meaning to be decoded by the audience". Whether allegoresis is to be defined in terms of its intentionality is a hotly debated issue, on which see Domaradzki 2022, 150-153 with further references.

10 See e.g. Gale 2000, 216-217 or Konstan 2008, 65 n. 70 (but cf. also below n. 19).

11 The Acheron interpretation (3.978-1023) is most frequently adduced as an example of Lucretian allegoresis: the overwhelming preponderance of scholars classify this passage as (in one way or another) allegorical (see e.g. Cumont 1920; West 1969, 97-103; Pépin 1976, 174; Wallach 1976, 85-89; Ackermann 1979, 62-74; Gale 1994, 36-38; Reinhardt 2004; Most 2010, 27; Gellar-Goad 2012, 97, 232 and 2020, 146, 197; Kenney 2014, 209-218; Buglass 2020, 67-71 and Farrell 2020, 232), but there are also scholars who have reservations about this characterization (see e.g. Neumeister 1997, 25 or Konstan 2008, 62 n. 66). For recent attempts to distinguish allegoresis from rationalization, see Domaradzki 2019, 2020a and 2022 with

still another manner of handling the Magna Mater conundrum is to derive it from another source. Jacques Perret, for example, argued for "une origine romaine",[12] whereas Pierre Boyancé opted for "un Grec, sans doute stoïcien".[13] But even if Lucretius was inspired by such a source, he could not have merely copied it, for that would have significantly undermined the relevance of his poem for the contemporary debate.[14] Hence, scholars who want to explain the Magna Mater interpretation as an elaboration of some source(s) may point to Greek and/or Roman and/or contemporary motifs in the passage.[15]

The aforementioned attempts to account for Lucretius' recourse to allegoresis are surely instructive and very often stimulating, but they also frequently have the undesirable consequence that in one way or another *De rerum natura* is misconstrued as an eclectic work profoundly influenced by the long tradition of allegorical interpretation (whether Stoic or otherwise).[16] This, on the other hand, can be misleading since the unfortunate implication is that Lucretius the poet freely blended various heterogeneous (perhaps even contradictory) philosophical positions without paying much attention to their internal consistency. To avoid this misconception, the present paper will suggest that the Magna Mater interpretation can fruitfully be approached through the lens of invective oratory. While to the best of my knowledge such an analysis has not been attempted thus far, it is important to note that several studies have cogently argued that in the Magna Mater passage Lucretius turns allegoresis into an object of ridicule. Groundbreaking work in this area has been done

---

further references; see also Wallach 1976, 88-89 with n. 107. Given the epideictic perspective adopted here, I would be tempted to view the Acheron interpretation as an instance of ἀνασκευή (see Schrijvers 1999, 32-39), that is, a rhetorical exercise whose task was not only to 'refute' (ἀνασκευάζειν) a given myth, but also to explain its origin (see Theon 95.8-10 and Hawes 2014, 99-103 with further references). Due to space limitations, however, the issue cannot be pursued any further here.

12 Perret 1935, 352.

13 Boyancé 1941, 147.

14 As Summers 1996, 365 with n. 84 points out; see also Summers 1995, 52.

15 See e.g. Conte, Canali and Dionigi 1990, 201: "Nella complessa e stratificata descrizione della figura e del culto mistico e orgiastico della *Magna Mater*, Lucrezio sembra adottare e adattare l'eziologia e l'allegoria delle fonti greche (vv. 600, 604, 611, 629) con gli elementi romani (vv. 626-628; cfr. Ovidio, *fast*. 4, 346 e 350 sgg.), desunti anche dalla realtà attuale (cfr. vv. 608 sg., 611)".

16 E.g. Ackermann 1979, 105: "Man könnte hier von einem Eklektizismus der Argumente sprechen, die jede Philosophenschule dann auf ihre Grundidee zurechtbog. Lukrez benutzt infolgedessen auch die Allegorese, um damit seinen Gegner, die Stoa, zu schlagen". More recently, Craca 2000, 35: "Lucrezio si pone dunque nel solco di una tradizione, per quanto non esclusivamente epicurea: ma in un testo in fondo eclettico come il *De rerum natura* questo atteggiamento non stupisce".

by David West,[17] James Jope,[18] and Monica Gale.[19] Also, we should note here that in her article on Lucretius' use of a "rhetorical" mode of presentation, Elizabeth Asmis has characterized the Magna Mater passage as a "rhetorical digression".[20] Finally and most recently, T.H.M. Gellar-Goad, whilst tracking satiric elements in *De rerum natura*, has pointed to the moralizing indignation that concludes the Magna Mater interpretation.[21] Although the latter study only briefly mentions the Magna Mater passage and does not discuss Lucretius' allegoresis in depth, it is of great importance for the present considerations because it makes a very strong case for a close connection between satire and vituperation in *De rerum natura*.[22] As various invective passages have been identified in the poem for a long time,[23] this paper will suggest that a 'psogistic' account of the Magna Mater interpretation enables us not only to

17 West 1969, 103-114. The scholar stresses Lucretius' "scorn for priests and rites and petitionary prayers" and "his loathing for the fear and misery occasioned by false doctrine about the gods" (at 112), upon which he concludes that Lucretius is "ridiculing superstitious ceremonial" and "superstitious fear" (at 114).

18 Jope 1985, 257 argues that Lucretius' "interpretation attributes to the cult a misconceived design to inculcate *pietas* through fear".

19 Gale 1994, 28 observes that the Magna Mater interpretation could be characterized as "a parody of the ingenuity of the allegorists"; see also her comments on the Magna Mater allegoresis as being a "pastiche" used to challenge the major assumptions of the allegorical tradition (at 90-91).

20 Asmis 1983, 64. Relatedly, Farrell 2007, 89 stresses that such digressions as the Magna Mater are designed to mediate between the philosophical exposition of the poem and the expectations of the readers who were either new to philosophy or accustomed to different poetry. Nethercut 2018, 82-83, on the other hand, considers the Magna Mater digression to be an instance of the "Alexandrian footnote", i.e., a rhetorical device employed to cite and often correct an unnamed (though specific) source, whether poetical or philosophical.

21 Gellar-Goad 2012, 118-119 and 2020, 157. The omnipresence of satire in *De rerum natura* is now widely acknowledged: see e.g. Gale 2007, 68-69; Hardie 2007, 125-126 and Kenney 2007, 94-95 with further references.

22 Gellar-Goad 2012 (e.g. 61-79, 99-139) and 2020 (e.g. 127-137, 148-163). It is noteworthy though that the close connection between satire and vituperation in *De rerum natura* was emphasized already by Waltz 1949, who, in his "Lucrèce satirique", stated that for Lucretius religion and love are two "bêtes noires" against which "il invective avec une égale fureur" (at 90-91). For excellent discussions of the complex relationship between invective, satire and other genres, see e.g. Agosti 2001; Keane 2007 and Rosen 2007 with further references.

23 Lucretius' mockery of the various Presocratic thinkers is perhaps the most obvious example (see e.g. Brown 1983 or Tatum 1984). However, one could also mention, for example, Fowler 2002, who places 2.24-28 "in a long tradition of the philosophic ψόγος of luxury" (at 96) or Summers 1995, who begins his discussion with the observation that in 5.1198-1203 "Lucretius inveighed against the outward modes of worship" (at 33) and concludes that lines 1.62-79 "are programmatic and forebode further invectives against *religio*" (at 57).

look at this piece of Lucretian allegoresis from a fresh perspective but also to better do justice to the passage's rhetorical structure.

2 Vituperation in Rhetorical Handbooks

At the outset of our inquiry, we should emphasize the enormous difficulties in providing a single and universally applicable definition of invective. Indeed, Laurent Pernot, in his seminal discussion of ψόγος, has acutely observed that appraising the practice of blame is very challenging because of the "caractère polymorphe de ce genre".[24] Given that vituperation could assume diverse forms and could be organized in a number of different ways, it goes without saying that the following references to epideictic accounts of invective will serve merely as illustrations of certain general tendencies and principles that can arguably be discerned in the Magna Mater passage. However, the perspective of the handbooks of rhetoric is valuable, since by the time epideictic theorists came to codify various prescriptions for specific rhetorical genres, there was already in existence—as Francis Cairns helpfully points out—"a body of generic examples stemming from Homer which to a large extent dictated the contents of the rhetoricians' prescriptions".[25] This means that the heavily schematized prescriptions found even in such late authors as Menander are useful for our understanding of much earlier poetry.[26]

In rhetorical theory, praise is regularly defined in contrast or opposition to something censurable, and many epideictic treatises content themselves with characterizing blame as a derivation from the topics opposite to those of encomium (see e.g. Arist. *Rh.* 1.1368a37; Cic. *De orat.* 2.349; Theon 112.20-21; Nicol. 53.20-54.1).[27] Most crucially, however, the ἐκ τῶν ἐναντίων rule unequivocally

24 Pernot 1993, 485. In a similar vein, Flower 2013, 52 notes that the term "invective" has "come to be applied to a great variety of literary works", whereas Agosti 2001, 219 employs the broad concept of ἰαμβικὴ ἰδέα to capture the fluidity of the genre.

25 Cairns 1972, 36.

26 See *ibid.*, but also Farrell 2022, 160, who similarly observes that the standard technical terms of rhetorical theory "remain quite stable over a long time, certainly well into the imperial period". In what follows, Menander is cited after Russell and Wilson 1981, though occasionally Race 2019 has also been consulted. For the progymnasmata, on the other hand, this paper relies on: Patillon and Bolognesi 1997 (for Theon); Rabe 1913 (for Pseudo-Hermogenes) and 1926 (for Aphthonius); Felten 1913 (for Nicolaus) and Foerster 1915 (for Libanius). The translations (at times slightly modified) are those of Kennedy 2003 and Gibson 2008.

27 Pernot 1993, 481-483 speaks justly of a "fausse symétrie" between praise and blame in rhetorical theory: the topics of encomium are always given substantial attention in epideictic

shows how natural the transition from one exercise to another was: the topics of both προγυμνάσματα are employed in exactly the same manner and exactly the same things are either extolled or denounced. This can be spectacularly observed in Libanius' treatment of the two exercises, where, for example, an *encomium* of Achilles (8.3) is followed by an *invective* of the hero (9.1),[28] whereas an invective of *wealth* (9.5) is accompanied by an invective of *poverty* (9.6).[29] Nevertheless, it would be wrong to infer from this that vituperation was merely an eristic, although enjoyable, frivolity. More often than not, the ultimate purpose of blame was *ethical*. Indeed, Anthony Corbeill has made a very strong case for the primarily "ethical basis" of Roman invective: vituperation sharply opposes what is appropriate for a man to what is not.[30] Thus, for example, Quintilian states in no uncertain terms that such exercises as 'praising the famous men' (*laudare claros viros*) and 'blaming the wicked' (*vituperare improbos*) are of great pedagogical value, since 'the mind is exercised by the variety and multiplicity of the material and the character is formed by the contemplation of right and wrong' (*ingenium exercetur multiplici variaque materia et animus contemplatione recti pravique formatur*).[31] This helps to explain why censure could be levelled at anything that was deemed reprehensible: a specific individual (e.g. a mythological figure, political opponent), a group of individuals (e.g. a philosophical school, the elite), a set of values and beliefs (e.g. the pursuit of wealth, superstitious fear), and so on. In what follows, it will be contended that Lucretius' mockery in the Magna Mater passage has a clearly identifiable ethical underpinning: the poet's aim is not solely and simply to denigrate the *vituperandum* but first and foremost to dissuade from the erroneous (i.e. non-Epicurean) worldview which misguides people and makes them miserable. Thus, the objective is to cure the individual from their spiritual maladies and diseases of the soul which result from a false credence or a wrong practice. While this seems fairly uncontroversial, Lucretius' recourse to allegoresis may still baffle many a reader.

---

treatises, whereas those of invective are usually dealt with cursorily, as vituperation is repeatedly described in derivative terms.

28 It may not be superfluous to note here that Aristotle had already discussed (*Rh.* 2.1396a25-30) how Achilles could be praised, blamed, etc. On Libanius' use of the hero as an ideal subject for controversy, see Cribiore 2007, 144-145.

29 Pernot 1993, 484 rightly associates this *in utramque partem* mode with the tradition of "l'antilogie sophistique".

30 Corbeill 1996, 19-20. This view is now generally accepted (see e.g. Arena 2007, 154; Baker-Brian 2013, 45 and Flower 2013, 56).

31 Quint. *Inst.* 2.4.20. The text along with translation (slightly modified) is that of Russell 2001.

After all, in epideictic treatises the use of the allegorical mode is recommended for *praising* the addressee. Thus, for example, Menander I in his hymns to the gods (e.g. 333.15-18, 337.1-17, 338.24-27, 341.24-28) or Menander II in his *Sminthian Oration* (438.27-29, 442.28-32).[32] Why would Lucretius resort to allegoresis if his interpretations disparage rather than extol? To make sense of this rhetorical manoeuvre, we need to bear in mind that some ancient texts—as Laurent Pernot astutely points out—"s'inscrivent plus nettement dans la perspective épidictique en inversant sciemment des types d'éloge répertoriés".[33] This mechanism of inversion has been brilliantly discussed by Francis Cairns in his classic study on composition in Greek and Roman poetry: a genre is "inverse" when the generic characters and situation are preserved but "the normal function of the genre is replaced by a diametrically opposite function".[34] While a prime example thereof is obviously a substitution of invective for encomium,[35] this paper will suggest that Lucretius does precisely this: he transfers the encomiastic *topos* of allegoresis to his vituperation. This is what makes his use of allegorical interpretations so multifaceted and hard to pigeonhole: once allegoresis is employed, the reader would expect an encomium rather than an invective, since the standard function of allegoresis is to *praise* rather than *blame*. Nevertheless, Lucretius jolts his audience into critical reflection by showing hostility and scorn where one would anticipate admiration and awe. Thus, the ensuing discussion of the Magna Mater interpretation will demonstrate that this piece of inverse allegoresis displays great complexity and allusiveness in the use of topics prescribed by epideictic theorists.

3 Lucretian Invective against the Delusion of *pietas*

The Magna Mater interpretation exposes the irrationality and unethicality of various religious conceptions which delude people and make their lives wretched. For this purpose Lucretius converts the encomiastic *topos* of allegoresis into a powerful means of blame: he has his allegorist interpret various aspects of the cult of Cybele to show how religious convictions and customs go awry. Thus, Lucretius makes vituperative use of the *topos* of the cult which

32 See further Pernot 1993, 766-767 and Domaradzki 2021a, 45. For a recent discussion of encomiastic allegoresis, see Domaradzki 2020b with further references.

33 Pernot 1993, 487.

34 Cairns 1972, 129 (see also 47). The work offers an extensive discussion of the principle of inversion and provides numerous examples of it (see esp. 127-137).

35 On invective as inversion of panegyric, see Flower 2013 (e.g. 20, 51 with n. 95, 53, 55-56, 93, 102, 104, 124, 162).

forms an integral part of rhetorical hymns.[36] While this *topos* is abundantly found in poets (e.g. Call. *Dian.* 225-259) and epideictic theorists (e.g. Men. Rh. 334.27-335.20), the aforementioned *Sminthian Oration* is particularly relevant for the present discussion, because it recommends that a praise of god include a section on the allegorical message, on the one hand, and a section on cult or worship, on the other. Indeed, Menander II first advises (442.28-32) the reader that they philosophize 'a little' (μετρίως), that is, utter the 'more secret doctrine' (ἀπορρητότερος λόγος) concealed in the myths about Apollo.[37] Subsequently, he also urges (444.2-20) that a section on the city be inserted, which is to describe how the city was established and consecrated to Apollo, how the god's 'providence' (πρόνοια) and 'favour' (εὐμένεια) continually receive their due 'worship' (εὐσέβεια) through 'hymns' (ὕμνοι) and 'festivals' (πανηγύρεις) so that 'thanks' (χάριτες) are properly returned for the benefits received.[38] Lucretius, on the other hand, exploits the encomiastic *topos* of allegoresis for the purpose of castigating those aspects of the cult (of Cybele) which an Epicurean is bound to frown upon (providential illusion, divine punishment, etc.). Thus, his inverse allegoresis reveals that the worshippers' ideas of virtue are misplaced, and that their conduct is at variance with their self-interest (i.e. ἀταραξία). Importantly, Lucretius lampoons here not only the conventional *pietas* but also the one that the Stoics advocate (more often than not with the aid of allegoresis).[39] Hence, this denigration makes the case for the Epicurean alternative all the more attractive. Let us look at this ingenious piece of allegoresis.

As he elucidates that no object can consist of merely *one* type of atom (2.581-588), Lucretius gives the earth as the prime example of a body which must contain *different* particles to thus be able to produce things as *diverse* as

36 On the "structure de l'hymne rhétorique" in general, see Pernot 1993, 220-238. On the *topos* of "les *timai* dont jouit le dieu", that is, "le culte que lui rendent soit tous les peuples", see *ibid.*, 231-232.

37 In the first part of his *Sminthian Oration* (438.24-29), Menander similarly associates philosophy with uncovering the 'truer knowledge' (ἀληθεστέρα γνῶσις) hidden in the story about Apollo's birth.

38 Menander cites here (444.24-26) Isocrates' *Panegyricus* 44, as he clarifies that the description of the festival should include the θέσις about the benefits that come from festivals.

39 Furley 1966 famously argued that Lucretius completely ignored the Stoics and focused his criticism solely on the Presocratics, the Platonists and the Aristotelians. More recently, this argument has been furthered by Sedley 1998, who observed that even if a Stoic influence can be found in Lucretius' critique of allegoresis (applied, for example, to the worship of Cybele), it has probably come to him through Hellenistic literature and literary theory, rather than through his interest in Stoicism as such (at 75 with n. 62). In what follows, I shall argue against this view (see also below nn. 41 and 84).

springs, flames, crops, animals, and so on (589-597). This creative profusion invites construing the earth in maternal terms. Accordingly, Lucretius concludes his mechanistic explanation with the famous observation that the earth 'is therefore called the great mother of the gods and the mother of wild beasts as well as the single parent of our flesh' (*quare magna deum mater materque ferarum | et nostri genetrix haec dicta est corporis una*, 598-599). What follows is a complex interpretation which—as has been noted—seems to meet all the criteria of allegoresis but is actually a sophisticated attack on the practice. Indeed, this is made clear at the end of the exposition, where Lucretius flatly repudiates all the ἀλληγορίαι he has been so diligently unearthing: they may appear to be conveyed 'well and outstandingly' (*bene et eximie*), but they 'are nevertheless far removed from true reasoning' (*longe sunt tamen a vera ratione repulsa*, 644-645). Why present an elaborate piece of allegoresis only to reject it so vehemently? In line 680 Lucretius states the purpose of his vituperation in no uncertain terms: to dissuade his readers from 'tainting the mind with repulsive superstition' (*religione animum turpi contingere*).[40] Thus, Lucretius employs allegoresis to *blame* what the Stoics *praise* with the help of allegorical interpretations.

The parallels between Lucretius' account of Cybele and that of the Stoic Cornutus made Pierre Boyancé draw the conclusion that "Lucrèce s'inspire de l'exégèse stoïcienne".[41] While such obvious correspondences as the chariot drawn by lions[42] or the turreted crown[43] strongly suggest the possibility of a common source, it is noteworthy that Lucretius' account is conspicuously vituperative of the perspective embraced by his archenemy from the Porch. Cornutus' allegorical 'Survey of the Greek Theological Tradition' (Ἐπιδρομὴ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἑλληνικὴν θεολογίαν παραδεδομένων) concludes, for example, with the passionate exhortation (75.18-76.16) that one should study the account which the ancients expressed 'through symbols and enigmas' (διὰ συμβόλων καὶ αἰνιγμάτων), because one will then be led to 'piety' (τὸ εὐσεβεῖν) and not to 'superstition' (τὸ δεισιδαιμονεῖν).[44] In a similar vein, Cicero has his Stoic Balbus contrast

40 As Friedländer 1941, 19 points out, Lucretius, in stark contrast to Roman practice, conflates *religio* and *superstitio*.

41 Boyancé 1941, 156. For reservations about Boyancé's argument, see esp. Jope 1985, 253 with n. 7 but also West 1969, 106-107 and above n. 39. For scholars who (rightly in my opinion) accept Boyancé's argument, see e.g. Gigandet 1997, 211 and 2004, 238; Luciani 2017, 60-62 and Galzerano 2019, 95-96 with further references.

42 Lucr. 2.601 and Corn. 6.1-2.

43 Lucr. 2.606 and Corn. 6.3-4 (see also below n. 49).

44 The text is that of Lang 1881. The translation (at times slightly modified) is that of Boys-Stones 2018.

superstitio with *religio*, as the discussion also seeks to steer clear of two religious extremes (*N.D.* 2.71-72): irrationality (when people mistake shallow ritualism for piety and equate the cult with the divinity) and irreligiousness (when people see the emptiness of unreflective rituals yet repudiate not only the cult but all divinity as well).[45]

Most generally, the purpose of Stoic hermeneutics was to purify traditional religion from unacceptable anthropomorphism. This is why, for example, Cicero has Balbus lament that in conventional mythology everything has been transferred to the gods 'in the likeness of human weakness' (*ad similitudinem inbecillitatis humanae*, *N.D.* 2.70), whereas Chrysippus similarly deplores that (in traditional as well as in Epicurean theology) the gods are presented 'childishly' (παιδαριωδῶς), since they are conceived of 'in human form' (ἀνθρωποειδεῖς, Phld. *Piet.* 11 = *SVF* 2.1076).[46] For the Stoics, allegoresis is, then, a means of purging *religio* of *superstitio*, which leads to *pietas*. For Lucretius, on the other hand, allegoresis is a means of exposing the *superstitio* of *religio* which poses as *pietas*: his invective amalgamates and assails *all* these concepts. Accordingly, he does not allegorize the cult of Cybele to provide a philosophical justification for the traditional theology, but rather to bring to light the dark side of conventional religious practices, which the Stoics as well as many of Lucretius' contemporaries erroneously hail as venerable piety.

Lucretius quickly dispenses with the latent teachings of the learned poets: the goddess seated in a chariot signifies that the earth is suspended in airy space (2.600-603), the team of lions yoked to the goddess' chariot conveys that even the most savage offspring must be tamed to obey parental authority (604-605), and the mural crown encircling the top of the goddess' head denotes the fortifications which protect cities in the earth's highest places (606-607). Undoubtedly, such esoteric messages would sit well with a Stoic[47] and an encomiast[48] who wishes to praise a deity with the aid of allegoresis. Thus, for example, such an allegorist might say that Cybele wears a *corona muralis* because the goddess has endowed the first *urbes* with *muri*.[49] Yet

45 While Epictetus also offers (*Ench.* 31) an analogous picture of εὐσέβεια, Plutarch's *De Iside et Osiride* (e.g. 11.355C-D, 67.378A) provides us with a particularly eloquent treatment of the aforementioned distinction between δεισιδαιμονία and ἀθεότης (see further Domaradzki 2021b).

46 Where no English reference is provided, the translation is my own.

47 Suffice it to cite here the aforementioned (n. 44) admonition by Cornutus (75.18-76.16) that one delve into the ancient views expressed διὰ συμβόλων καὶ αἰνιγμάτων.

48 Let us recall here Menander's ἀληθεστέρα γνῶσις (438.28-29) and ἀπορρητότερος λόγος (442.29), quoted above.

49 When accounting for the turreted crown, Cornutus provides first an explanation (6.4-5) which is very much like that of Lucretius: 'the first cities were established on hills for the

Lucretius has no patience with this nonsense. This is why he has his allegorist dissociate himself from the ὑπόνοιαι that are unravelled: the hidden doctrines are explicitly attributed to the ancient poets, who are labelled as *docti* (600) and *docentes* (602).[50] This rhetorical strategy of signalling one's distance from what one adduces is the hallmark of epideictic treatments of myths.[51] More importantly, however, in lines 608-609 Lucretius turns from interpreting the goddess' *veteres* representations to bemoaning how 'now' (*nunc*) her image is exploited 'to induce horror' (*horrifice*). Here, Lucretius shifts his attention to contemporary adherents of the Cybele cult.[52] Thus, he launches an invective against the false virtues of the goddess' followers, as his inverse allegoresis uncovers the erroneous beliefs that underlie the cult.

First, Lucretius explains that the worshippers of Cybele call the goddess 'Mother of Ida' (*Idaea Mater*) and provide her with an escort of 'Phrygians' (*Phrygias*), because they claim that the production of 'crops' (*fruges*) originated in this land (610-613).[53] While the etymology has obvious Stoic parallels,[54] the explanation builds on the *topos* of 'nurture' (ἀνατροφή), which Menander II illustrates (384.14-18) with Aristides' celebrated example (*Panath.* 31-38) of how the Athenians received their 'crops' (καρπούς) from Demeter and then passed

sake of fortification' (καταρχὰς ἐπὶ τῶν ὀρῶν τίθεσθαι τὰς πόλεις ὀχυρότητος ἕνεκεν). But subsequently he adds an explanation (6.5-6) which has a clear encomiastic purpose: the goddess 'is the founder of the first and archetypal city, the cosmos' (ἀρχηγός ἐστι τῆς πρώτης καὶ ἀρχετύπου πόλεως, τοῦ κόσμου).

50 This paper sides with those scholars who argue that Lucretius unequivocally distances himself from the ἀλληγορίαι he presents (see e.g. West 1969, 104; Jope 1985, 253 and Gale 1994, 28). Nonetheless, there is still no consensus with regard to this difficult passage. Craca 2000, 41, for example, places Lucretius' allegoresis in the context of Roman education and insists that the poet's interpretation is sympathetic towards the cult: "Lucrezio si adopera ancora una volta per rendere comprensibile un culto che doveva sembrare in certi aspetti particolarmente barbarico agli occhi dei suoi concittadini". While the idea that Lucretius offers here a benign interpretation goes back to Perret 1935 (esp. 343), this reading stumbles upon the problem of *horrifice* in line 609 (on which see below in the main text). Thus, Craca 2000, 41 is forced to speak of "un brusco cambiamento nel testo". By contrast, the psogistic account of the Magna Mater passage advocated here avoids this difficulty, since the concept of inverse allegoresis allows us to view Lucretius' interpretation as consistently (if not always openly) blaming the cult.

51 On the pervasiveness of this strategy, see Pernot 1993, 763-765.

52 As Jope 1985, 254 has cogently argued; see also Neumeister 1997, 27.

53 It is possible that Lucretius alludes here to Herodotus' report (2.2) that the oldest word for 'bread' (βεκός) came from the Phrygians (see further Fratantuono 2015, 123).

54 See e.g. Balbus *ap.* Cic. *N.D.* 2.67: *Ceres—Geres—gerere fruges* = Δημήτηρ—γῆ μήτηρ and likewise Corn. 52.10-11: Δημήτηρ—γῆ μήτηρ.

them on to others.[55] Lucretius, however, does not espouse the view that Cybele bestowed any *fruges* upon the helpless *Phryges*: the *edunt* in line 612 makes his scepticism about the ἀλληγορία clear. Also, at the beginning of Book 6 the production of crops is derived from Athens rather than from Phrygia (1-2).[56] Obviously, when crediting the city with the invention of agriculture, Lucretius does not think of divine provision ('Athens was fed by the gods'), because he impugns the entire premise of the cult: what motivates the worshippers of Cybele is the feeling of misguided gratitude to the goddess, since the *fruges* are fallaciously taken as evidence of providential care. Crucially, this was not only the Stoics' position,[57] but also a recurring theme in the encomiastic tradition.[58] Thus, Lucretius' antifinalistic invective strikes at the heart of the conventional *pietas*, which invariably interprets the world teleologically. If Epictetus, for example, stresses that god has introduced man to be not only a 'contemplator' (θεατής) of god and his works but also their 'interpreter' (ἐξηγητής, *Diss*. 1.6.19), then Lucretius mocks the view that one can demonstrate providential design from divine names, ritual practices, and so on.

Second, Lucretius clarifies that the self-castrated Galli are assigned as eunuch-priests to the Mother Goddess, because the adherents of her cult believe that those who have 'violated' (*violarint*) the 'divinity of the Mother' (*numen … Matris*) and have been 'ungrateful' (*ingrati*) to their 'parents' (*genitoribus*) should be punished by being denied the right to have progeny: thankless children deserve no offspring (2.614-617). This explanation could also be juxtaposed with Stoic interpretations,[59] and here likewise the *significare volunt* in line 616 leaves no room for doubt about Lucretius' attitude towards the allegorical justification of the practice. What motivates this aspect of the cult of Cybele is the feeling of misguided fear of the goddess, since the castration is misconstrued as symbolizing the inevitable divine punishment for transgression: those guilty of violation and ingratitude will suffer from the weapons which in line 621 are characterized as 'tokens of violent madness' (*violenti*

55 In a similar vein, Pseudo-Hermogenes recommends (7.82) that an encomium of a city include the *topos* of τροφή, which describes how the city 'was nurtured by gods' (ὑπὸ θεῶν ἐτράφησαν).

56 As pointed out by West 1969, 106 and Jope 1985, 257; cf. also Lucr. 5.14 (again, with a distancing *fertur*).

57 As reported extensively by Cicero in Book 2 of *De natura deorum*.

58 Menander I, for example, discusses (361.22-23) the state of 'being loved by the gods' (θεοφιλότης) which he illustrates (362.12-14) with, among other things, the Athenians who obtained 'grain' (σῖτος) from the gods (see further below in the main text).

59 See e.g. Corn. 6.14-19, who, however, connects the service of Galli with the myth about the castration of Ouranos.

signa furoris).[60] It is this premise of the cult (i.e. our dread of the gods) that Lucretius' vituperation further targets in the following lines.

When ridiculing the ritual procession of Cybele, Lucretius exploits a *topos* that is used regularly in hymns.[61] Thus, for example, in his *Hymn to Artemis* Callimachus describes how the Amazons dance their 'war dance' (πρύλις) for the goddess:

> πρῶτα μὲν ἐν σακέεσσιν ἐνόπλιον, αὖθι δὲ κύκλῳ
> στησάμεναι χορὸν εὐρύν· ὑπήεισαν δὲ λίγειαι
> λεπταλέον σύριγγες, ἵνα ῥήσσωσιν ὁμαρτῇ
> ... αἱ δὲ πόδεσσιν
> οὖλα κατεκροτάλιζον, ἐπεψόφεον δὲ φαρέτραι.[62]
>
> First armed with shields, then arraying a broad chorus in a circle; clear-toned pipes sang delicately in accompaniment, so that their feet might beat in time ... They stamped their feet rapidly and their quivers rattled.[63]

It is to such ecphrases that Lucretius alludes,[64] as he first highlights the intimidating and insufferable cacophony of the procession with several conspicuous alliterations:

60 Craca 2000, 53, on the other hand, believes that in lines 614-617 Lucretius "vuole sottolineare un concetto che gli sta a cuore e che considera significativo e comprensibile per il suo pubblico". She clarifies further that Lucretius is not critical of the cult of the Magna Mater, because the poet finds it "efficace a incutere timore nel volgo" and evaluates it "secondo una visione aristocratica della società" (Craca 2000, 53; see also 62-63). Nevertheless, this interpretation misses the relevance of *significare volunt* in line 616, which marks Lucretius' clear distance from the ἀλληγορία that is brought to light (see further Gale 1994, 27 n. 96 on Lucretius' use of "distancing formulae").

61 Summers 1996, 342-351 argued for a decidedly Roman character of the *pompa* that Lucretius describes. This, however, does not preclude a vituperative use of certain Greek elements: a faithful Epicurean would have abhorred the *whole* of traditional religion and might easily have exploited *any* Hellenistic source(s) for the purpose of amplifying the mockery (see above n. 15). Furthermore, as Summers himself 1996, 338-339 notes, the cult of Cybele was far from uniform, since it underwent a variety of changes. Cf. also Robertson 1996, 292 in the same volume: "Lucretius drew from some Greek source a picture of actual armed dancers who attend the Mother in procession".

62 Call. *Dian.* 240-247.

63 The translation (slightly modified) is that of Stephens 2015.

64 Naturally, one could cite here various other instantiations of this *topos* as possible sources of inspirations for Lucretius' vituperation (e.g. *H.hymn.* 14 or E. *Ba.* 120-134). Nonetheless, it has been well established that Lucretius made use of Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus* (*Jov.* 52-54), on which see esp. Brown 1982, 86-87, but also Craca 2000, 96-102; Luciani 2003,

> tympana tenta tonant palmis et cymbala circum
> concava, raucisonoque minantur cornua cantu,
> et Phrygio stimulat numero cava tibia mentis.[65]
>
> The taut drums thunder under their palms, all around are the concave cymbals, and the horns menace with their raucous blast and the hollow pipe goads the mind with its Phrygian rhythm.

Lucretius establishes a derisive correlation between the deafening uproar of the procession and the pietistic ecstasy of its participants, as he describes how the orgiastic music drives the devotees to religious frenzy (*stimulat … mentis*, 620) and highlights the threatening atmosphere of the event (*minantur*, 619). In lines 621-623 he hammers home the point that the hysteria of the boisterous believers manifests itself in their belligerent brandishing of the ritual weapons to thus 'terrorize' (*conterrere*) the 'ungrateful minds' (*ingratos animos*) and 'impious hearts' (*impia pectora*) of people 'with the fear of the goddess' divinity' (*metu … numine divae*).[66] Hence, Lucretius' invective unmasks the same horror lurking behind the castration of the *ingrati* Galli who violated their mother's *numen* (614-615) and the terrifying jangle of the orchestra: the dread of divine punishment for *ingratitudo* and *impietas* (622).

The misconception that the divine in any way relishes the racket people make is then ridiculed and rebutted by the serene portrayal of the tranquil deity: Lucretius emphasizes that the goddess is 'silent' (*tacita*), as she blesses

---

471; Nethercut 2018, 82-83, and further below in the main text. Thus, several details in the above passage suggest that Lucretius might actually have conflated two Callimachean *loci* here. First, the phrase περὶ πρύλιν ὠρχήσαντο (*Dian*. 240) appears also in the *Hymn to Zeus* (*Jov*. 52), where the Cretan Curetes dance their war dance, 'beating [their] armour' (τεύχεα πεπλήγοντες) to protect the crying Zeus from his ruthless father (53-54). Second, in the *Hymn to Artemis* the Amazons too are said (*Dian*. 241) to dance 'in arms' (ἐνόπλιον) and 'in a circle' (κύκλῳ), while their instruments 'provide the accompaniment' (ὑπήεισαν), which makes the dancers act accordingly (242-243). Lastly, the verb κατεκροτάλιζον (247) builds on the noun κρόταλον, which denotes a clapper used in the worship of Cybele (LSJ) and thus enables Callimachus to transfer the rattling sounds of this castanet to the dancers whose quivers clatter like a κρόταλον (Stephens 2015, 154). Given that all these *topoi* appear in the Magna Mater passage, it is not far-fetched to imagine that Lucretius might also have had in mind Callimachus' *Hymn to Artemis* when he depicted the terrorizing atmosphere of the procession.

65 Lucr. 2.618-620.

66 Corn. 5.9-15 interprets the clamour of the procession as symbolizing the noise of thunder and lightning. His allegoresis is predominantly *physical*, whereas that of Lucretius is primarily *ethical*, which is consistent with the clearly identifiable *moral* basis of his invective (see above n. 30).

mortals with her 'mute salutation' (*muta salute*, 625), which not only contrasts sharply with the piercing clangour of the procession, but also anticipates the ensuing exposition of Epicurean theology in the versified κυρία δόξα 1: the divine remains forever unaffected by all human noise and spectacle (see further below). This brief but suggestive *comparatio* could therefore be categorized as is σύγκρισις in Pseudo-Hermogenes' classification (8.22-24): the kind that not only praises one thing but also 'completely' (ὅλως) blames the other,[67] since the obnoxious μανία of the worshippers is compared unfavourably with the perfect calmness of the divine. Lucretius concludes this passage (2.626-628) with a mocking description of how the frightened acolytes shower Cybele with their offerings and flowers to thus appease the goddess with her own products (*aes*, *argentum*, *rosae* etc.). The *topos* of propitiation (e.g. Hom. *Il.* 1.65-67) is here caricatured mercilessly, since from an Epicurean perspective the idea that the divine can be placated into bestowing special favours upon men is as ludicrous as the idea that a sage can be terrorized into superstitious faith (by castration, cacophony and the like). Hence, Lucretius' vituperation dispels the irrational fear that passes for piety and the destructive ignorance of οἱ πολλοί.

Finally, Lucretius puts forward two interpretations of the goddess' retinue. First, he explains (2.629-632) that the Greeks call this armed company *Curetes* because these boys (κοῦροι = *pueri*)[68] 'play' (*ludunt*) with weapons and 'leap' (*exultant*) with rapture: 'revelling in blood' (*sanguine laeti*)[69] and 'shaking the terrifying plumes with a nod of their heads' (*terrificas capitum quatientes numine cristas*). The savageness of the Curetes (conflated by the poet with the Corybantes) is signalled explicitly by their excitement at the shedding of blood, but also implicitly by their resemblance to the *leones* which in the nearly identical line 5.1315 are portrayed as wildly tossing their 'terrifying heads' (*terrificas capitum*) and 'manes' (*cristas*). In the latter case, the context is also highly vituperative, since the line occurs in the famous 'beasts of battle' passage: here Lucretius first describes the dangerous experiments with the use of bulls, boars and lions in battle (1308-1340), upon which he expresses his amazement at the stupidity of people who failed to foresee the disastrous consequences of such

67 While Pseudo-Hermogenes (8.21-27) allows for the possibility of comparing unequal things, Aphthonius (31.12-14) hails the topic of comparing small things to greater ones as 'particularly' (μάλιστα) forceful.

68 See Lucr. 2.635: *pueri circum puerum*. For the etymology, see e.g. Demetrius of Scepsis: κόροι (Str. 10.3.21).

69 Mund-Dopchie 1971 emends the original *sanguine laeti* to *sanguine fleti*, which, however, as the scholar herself stresses, does not affect Lucretius' strong criticism of the "pratiques sanglantes du culte de Cybèle" (at 212).

perilous experiments (1341-1349). Thus, the echo of 2.632 at 5.1315 assimilates the Curetes not just to wild, predatory animals, but to wild, predatory animals at their most aggressive and unmanageable, in another situation engineered by misguided human beings.[70] The upshot is that this armed and bloodthirsty entourage reveals the bestiality of religious devotion, which is shown to have grave consequences for our happiness and tranquillity of mind: in the eyes of an Epicurean this 'piety' is tantamount to self-annihilation.

While Lucretius posits here an etymological connection between *Curetes* and κοῦροι (= *pueri*), this indubitably brings to mind Callimachus, who in his *Hymn to Zeus* establishes an etymological link between Κούρητες and κουρίζειν (*Jov.* 52-54): the war dance that the Curetes perform prevents Cronus from hearing Zeus 'cry like a boy' (κουρίζοντος).[71] When Lucretius refers to the Dictaean Curetes dancing round Jupiter,[72] he similarly clarifies that they could be the mythical dancers who saved the infant god by drowning his wailing with their armed dance and deliberately clamorous conduct (2.633-640).[73] His account, however, is clearly vituperative, as the whole story about the loathsome infanticide is ridiculed with the inflated periphrases in lines 638-639 (*ne Saturnus eum malis mandaret adeptus* | *aeternumque daret matri sub pectore volnus*),[74] upon which the idea that the earth might be (emotionally) 'wounded' is explicitly rebutted in line 649 (*privata dolore omni*).

On the other hand, in lines 641-643 Lucretius also suggests that the armed escort could symbolize the goddess' demand that men gallantly defend their 'fatherland' (*patria*) and 'be prepared' (*parent*) to protect their 'parents' (*parentes*).[75] Neither of the two aforementioned interpretations is embraced by Lucretius. He distances himself explicitly from the former with the telling *referunt* (633) and *feruntur* (634),[76] whereas the latter is irreconcilable with Lucretius' exhortation to withdraw from public life and his censure of any involvement *pro patria:* this traditional Roman ideal is spectacularly denounced

70 I thank the anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to me. For a recent discussion of Lucretius' use of repetition and internal allusion, see e.g. Buglass 2022 with further references (cf. also Buglass 2020, 66-67).

71 Brown 1982, 87 lists other correspondences of verbal detail: *circum* / περί, *pernice chorea* / οὖλα … ὠρχήσαντο, *armati* / πρύλιν, *pulsarent … aera* / τεύχεα πεπλήγοντες, *ne Saturnus* / ἵνα Κρόνος … μή (see also Craca 2000, 101-102 and Nethercut 2018, 83).

72 Cf. Str. 10.3.19, who cites Hes. fr. 123 Merkelbach and West.

73 See above n. 64.

74 Lucretius' makes use here of both Accius (fr. 229-230 Ribbeck = Cic. *De orat.* 3.217: *ipsus hortatur me frater ut meos malis miser* | *manderem natos*) and Hesiod (*Th.* 467: 'Ρέην δ' ἔχε πένθος ἄλαστον), on which see Craca 2000, 97-98.

75 See further Friedländer 1941, 21; West 1969, 109 and Snyder 1980, 96-97.

76 See above n. 51.

by Lucretius' scathing use of the *exemplum* of Sisyphus (3.995-1002), which is foreshadowed in the Proem to Book 2 (esp. 12-13) and then further elaborated in the digression on political ambition in Book 5 (esp. 1120-1135).[77] Hence, there can be no doubt that the worshippers of Cybele falsely believe that the goddess urges them (i) to adhere to the sanguinary rite and (ii) to fight for their country as well as their family.

Most importantly, however, all the aforementioned ὑπόνοιαι are unequivocally rejected as *longe a vera ratione repulsa* (2.645, see above). Thus, the versified κυρία δόξα 1 that follows (646-651)[78] the allegoresis turns out to be the real message. The oppressive racket of the procession and the abominable bloodlust of its participants are not only scorned as the delusion of *pietas* but also sharply opposed to the composed tranquillity of the truly divine. While the σύγκρισις offers a profound alternative to the flaws of traditional theology, two tenets are particularly relevant for the present discussion: (i) that the divine in no way intervenes in or interferes with our world (*semota ab nostris rebus seiunctaque longe*, 648) and (ii) that the divine is in no way affected by our good or bad conduct (*nec bene promeritis capitur neque tangitur ira*, 651). Lucretius' vituperation is here entirely congruous with Epicurus' repudiation of the conventional *pietas*. Thus, for example, in the *Letter to Herodotus* 76 Epicurus asserts that celestial phenomena do not occur under the guidance of some higher being who 'is ordaining' (διατάττοντος) them now or 'will be ordaining' (διατάξοντος) them in the future, whereas in his *Letter to Menoeceus* 123-124 he states that it is an 'impious' (ἀσεβής) man who believes that the gods inflict the greatest 'harms' (βλάβαι) upon the bad and bestow the greatest 'blessings' (ὠφέλειαι) upon the good. As has been noted, Lucretius' invective targets both these errors: the worshippers of Cybele fallaciously attribute to the deity concern for human affairs and responsiveness to human attitudes and actions. Crucially, both these misconceptions constitute the traditional view of *pietas*.

Menander I, for example, divides 'piety to the gods' (περὶ τοὺς θεοὺς εὐσέβεια) into two categories: 'being god-loved' (θεοφιλότης) and 'god-loving' (φιλοθεότης, 361.20-22). He then clarifies that the former entails 'being loved by the gods and receiving many blessings from the gods' (τὸ ὑπὸ τῶν θεῶν φιλεῖσθαι

77 See Kenney 2014, 212-213 and Gale 2020, 433-434. Also, when such *res gestae* as the Punic Wars are alluded to (e.g. 3.832-837, 5.1302-1304), it is not—as Luciani 2003, 462 rightly stresses—for "un dessein laudatif ou patriotique". And likewise, when Lucretius mentions the Trojan War (e.g. 1.84-101, 464-477), he finds—as Farrell 2020, 237 aptly points out—"only negative ethical exempla in the behavior of the heroes who fought on both sides of it".

78 The transmitted text of Lucretius' poem is highly problematic (2.646-651 = 1.44-49). A recent and extensive discussion of this thorny issue is offered by Butterfield 2020.

καὶ παρὰ τῶν θεῶν πολλῶν τυγχάνειν), whereas the latter consists in 'loving the gods and having a relationship of friendship with them' (τὸ φιλεῖν τοὺς θεοὺς καὶ φιλίαν ἔχειν περὶ αὐτούς, 22-25). While this distinction was well established around Lucretius' time,[79] the poet wants nothing to do with it: his inverse allegoresis scornfully reveals that what underlies the cult of Cybele are the feelings of (i) unwarranted gratitude to the goddess (the *fruges* ostensibly attest to providential care for those who are 'god-loved') and (ii) an equally unfounded fear of the goddess (the castration allegedly testifies to the inevitability of divine retribution for those who failed to be 'god-loving'). Again, both these misconceptions have dire ramifications for our ἀταραξία. Having presented the true nature of the divine, Lucretius moves on to describe the true nature of the earth.

Most generally, Lucretius strips the Earth Mother of all divinity, as he argues that (i) the earth is not sentient, let alone divine, and that (ii) the earth's maternity must, therefore, be taken solely figuratively. First, he explains that the earth is 'at all times devoid of sensation' (*caret omni tempore sensu*), but remains capable of bringing forth many different things because it is composed of diverse atoms (2.652-654).[80] Then, he clarifies that if one desires to call the sea 'Neptune', crops 'Ceres', wine 'Bacchus', or the earth 'Mother of the Gods',[81] one may certainly indulge in this provided one does not slip into the *religio turpis* that hails these as real deities (655-659). As he proclaims liberation through Epicurean science, Lucretius cautions that nowadays (i.e. after Epicurus) the designation 'Mother of the Gods' needs to be employed only metaphorically.[82] This means that such terms as *mater* (598) and *genetrix* (599) are nothing but heuristically useful figures of speech: they can be employed to illustrate the intricate principles of atomist physics, but it is fallacious to hypostasize them into anthropomorphic personifications ('the earth is a living

79 See e.g. Ph. *De Abrahamo* 50: καὶ πάντας φιλοθέους ὁμοῦ καὶ θεοφιλεῖς, ἀγαπήσαντας τὸν ἀληθῆ θεὸν καὶ ἀνταγαπηθέντας πρὸς αὐτοῦ (see further Russell and Wilson 1981, 264).

80 Gigandet 1997, 212 and 2004, 239 n. 17 astutely points out that these lines can be viewed as containing "un argument plus technique dirigé contre la thèse stoïcienne des degrés de constitution des choses".

81 As the poet himself is prepared to do (e.g. Lucr. 2.472: Neptune = sea, 3.221: Bacchus = wine) and as the rhetorical tradition frequently recommends (e.g. Cic. *De orat.* 3.167: *Cererem pro frugibus, Liberum appellare pro vino, Neptunum pro mari …*).

82 Gale 1994, 30 with n. 109 brilliantly connects the original *nomine abuti* (2.656) with the Greek κατάχρησις (e.g. Cic. *Orat.* 94), noting that both imply certain "*mis*use or misapplication" (see further also Neumeister 1997, 29; Garani 2007, 32; Fratantuono 2015, 126 and Piergiacomi 2020, 322). Relatedly, Schrijvers 1999, 196-197 aptly stresses that "la représentation de la Terre-Mère" serves an explicatory purpose and has no ontological status. For a recent discussion of this "maternité métaphorique", see Luciani 2017, 49-51.

and sentient being, endowed with consciousness and will, benevolently overseeing the creation', etc.). With that, allegorical interpretations are dismissed as invalid and impious explanations of the world. Lucretius takes here a gibe at the theology of the Stoics, who identify the divine with the world, search for its different manifestations in various aspects of the cosmos, and end up deifying lumps of insensate matter. Diogenes Laertius, for example, relates that according to the Stoics god is called

> Δία since all things are through him (δι' ὅν), Ζῆνα in so far as he is the cause of life (ζῆν) or permeates life (ζῆν), Athena because his governing part extends into the aether (εἰς αἰθέρα), Hera because it extends into the air (εἰς ἀέρα), Hephaestus because it extends into the artful fire (εἰς τὸ τεχνικὸν πῦρ), Poseidon because it extends into the water (εἰς τὸ ὑγρόν), and Demeter because it extends into the earth (εἰς γῆν).[83]

In a similar vein, Cicero has (*N.D.* 2.71 = *SVF* 2.1080) Balbus recognize a god that is diffused 'through the nature of each thing' (*per naturam cuiusque rei*), that is, 'through the earth' (*per terras*) as Ceres, 'through the sea' (*per maria*) as Neptune, and so on. While this idea that god is πολυώνυμος and therefore revered under many names is developed forcefully in Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* (*SVF* 1.537 = Stob. *Ecl.* 1.25.3-27.4),[84] litanies of invocations intertwined with allegorical equations appear also frequently in the encomiastic tradition (e.g. Men. Rh. 438.10-29). To all those who assume that the divine pervades the whole of the universe, adopting diverse forms and names in accordance with its distinct powers, Lucretius replies that this unscientific assumption makes them vulnerable to the charges that they worship random masses of atoms (the earth, sea, etc.), take mythical images literally (e.g. the earth is the mother of the gods) and, thereby, reduce philosophical discourse to naïve mythology. Hence, Lucretius argues that allegorical deification of the insentient earth is not only false but also dangerous, because it inevitably opens the door to all sorts of superstitions that his invective targets.

---

83 D.L. 7.147 = *SVF* 2.1021. The Stoic provenance of these notions is further corroborated by Cornutus, who provides parallel testimonies (see e.g. 3.5-6, 3.8-9, 3.16, 4.10-12, 33.11-12, 36.7-8, 52.4-6, 52.10-11).

84 Asmis 1982 persuasively argued that in his opening invocation to Venus (1.1-43) Lucretius made use of the Stoic concept of Zeus to fashion his Venus as an allegorical rival to the Stoics' deity. More recently, support for this argument has been cogently advanced by Campbell 2014, who has made a very strong case that Lucretius appropriated not only the Cleanthean Zeus but also the Empedoclean Aphrodite as he toppled the Stoic Kronion from his throne and put Aphrodite/Venus back in her rightful place. For other scholars who stress that from the outset of his poem Lucretius engages polemically with Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus*, see e.g. Gee 2020, 198-200.

4 A Psogistic Approach to *De rerum natura*

So far this paper has argued that although in the Magna Mater passage Lucretius appears *prima facie* to be working squarely in the tradition of allegoresis, he actually subverts conventionally encomiastic aspects of this tradition and turns these into a vehicle for censure.[85] In other words, Lucretius *only initially* endorses the allegorical interpretation he offers (hence the diversity of scholarly views discussed in section 1), but if one reads attentively (paying heed to the emphases in the tailored description of the cult and the careful distancing of the *praeceptor* from the allegoresis), one will realize that this is a ψόγος rather than an ἐγκώμιον. While this tactic is fairly typical of Lucretius,[86] this section will show that the present analysis of the Magna Mater passage corresponds to various well-known rhetorical strategies that have already been identified in Lucretian scholarship. This will make it possible to demonstrate that the reading advocated here is grounded in uncontroversial and ubiquitous phenomena in *De rerum natura*.

First of all, Lucretius' use of allegoresis in the Magna Mater passage is very much in line with the practice which Jason S. Nethercut has termed "provisional argumentation" and illustrated—alongside many other examples—with Lucretius' use of Venus in the Proem to Book 1 and at the end of Book 4.[87] According to Nethercut, Lucretius employs this rhetorical strategy for the purpose of exploiting the expectations of his audience: Lucretius begins with a fairly straightforward (albeit misleading) presentation of an idea, only to later completely revise and reject his initial account.[88] Thus, for example, the opening invocation to Venus contains not only a providential and interventionist

85 This section has greatly benefited from the anonymous reviewers' generous engagement with my analyses.

86 Consider, for example, the myths of Phaethon and the Flood at 5.392-415. Here also the story is initially presented in a straightforward manner only to be bluntly dismissed at the end: *quod procul a vera nimis est ratione repulsum* (406). Here likewise Lucretius clearly signals his distance from the narratives with the formula *ut fama est* (395, 412) and here likewise the authority of the 'ancient Greek poets' (*veteres Graium … poetae*) is expressly invoked (405). Thus as, for example, Gigandet 1997, 210 rightly stresses, both the passage on Cybele and the one on the flood or Phaeton conclude with the same warning: "les récits rapportés et interprétés sont fautifs" (see also Ackermann 1979, 95 on Lucretius' "direkte Ablehnung" at 5.406, 2.645 and others). For excellent discussions which highlight the structural and rhetorical similarity of this passage and the Magna Mater digression, see Gale 1994, 33-34 and 2009, 137-139.

87 See Nethercut 2017, 102-103; 2019, 523-526, 532 and 2021, 117-118.

88 Clay 2011, 161-162 similarly characterizes Lucretius' method: the poet gradually destroys various extraneous conceptions "in what seem digressions or passages irrelevant to his main objective". Crucially for the present discussion, Clay 2011, 162 compares Lucretius' method to Quintilian's *sustentatio* (*Inst.* 10.1.21).

portrayal of the goddess but also a fervent petition that she guide the poet and protect the Romans (1.1-43). Now, this grossly contradicts the fundamental assumption of Epicurean theology that the divine never interferes with our world (see above). Accordingly, Lucretius gradually refines his initially un-Epicurean picture of Venus until eventually the deity is reduced to nothing more than the sexual drive common to all creatures: *haec Venus est nobis* (4.1058).[89] While Nethercut suggests that this handling of Venus is programmatic in respect to the poem as whole, his analyses of Lucretius' rhetorical strategy are consistent with the present account of the Magna Mater passage: Lucretius' initial espousal of the allegoresis exploits his readers' expectations on the basis of their exposure to traditional forms, but ultimately he pulls the rug out from under his audience in the service of a properly Epicurean account of traditional cult and piety.

Secondly, Lucretius' recourse to allegoresis in the Magna Mater passage sits very well with his technique of appropriating language and imagery from epic poetry only to turn them against their authors. This has recently been discussed by Gordon Campbell, who analyzes how Lucretius translates (3.14-22), for example, Homer's description of Olympus (*Od.* 6.42-45) only to "invert the Homeric world view".[90] Thus, Campbell shows how Lucretius uses Homer against himself: the poet's portrayal of the peaceful abode of the gods is invoked only to undercut the Homeric view that the divine intervenes in human affairs (the point being that although the gods are *beyond* mortal men, the complete tranquillity that they enjoy is *within* the reach of humanity). While Campbell also argues that in his *Hymn to Venus* Lucretius similarly appropriates Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* and turns the tables on the Stoics by using their technique of allegorizing, his account is, again, congruous with the psogistic account of the Magna Mater passage advocated here: in both cases Lucretius can be seen as giving his opponent (i.e. the enemy from the Porch) just enough rope to hang themselves, at which point he comes in with the killer blow.

Thirdly and finally, Lucretius' abuse of allegoresis in the Magna Mater passage fits well with his exploitation of ambiguity, obscurity and vagueness as discursive devices. This issue has recently been covered by Joseph Farrell,

89 See also e.g. Ackermann 1979, 189: "Die Venus in Buch IV ist eingeschränkt auf die Liebesleidenschaft, ist nicht mehr kosmische Gewalt und wirkt negativ, den Menschen feindlich" or Garani 2007, 42: "the Goddess is totally degraded" and identified with "the purely physiological passion of sexual intercourse".

90 Campbell 2014, 34; see also Gale 1994, 56 and 111. For various discussions of Lucretius' use of inversion, see e.g. Campbell 2003, 142, 324; Farrell 2007, 87-88 and Gale 2013, 33-34, 41-44, 47.

who has made a strong case that Lucretius frequently means the very opposite of what he says explicitly,[91] and that his images are, therefore, not 'clear' in our sense of the term.[92] Crucially, Farrell places Lucretius in the tradition of rhetorical theory (e.g. Cic. *Orat.* 66-67, *De orat.* 3.100; Quint. *Inst.* 2.16.10, 8.3.61-62, 8.3.70), as he persuasively argues that Lucretius construed Epicurus' prized σαφήνεια (e.g. D.L. 10.13) as *vividness* (i.e. ἐνάργεια) rather than *clarity*.[93] Indeed, this helps us to better understand Lucretius' un-Epicurean decision to compose a didactic poem, which for his master was intrinsically ἀσαφής. Importantly, that Lucretius chose poetry and vividness over prose and clarity is, once again, consistent with his deceptive use of allegoresis: by inverting the topics catalogued by epideictic theorists Lucretius managed to produce a vituperation of both the cult itself (which is conducive to anxiety rather than ἀταραξία) and the allegorical interpretation (which is based on false physical and ethical premises). Thus, his invective denounced and denigrated with the maximum possible *vividness* rather than with the maximum possible *clarity*. That is precisely why Lucretius was willing to employ such an un-Epicurean resource as allegoresis, even if this entailed a certain amount of ἀσάφεια in his exposition.

5 Conclusions

This paper has argued that epideictic treatises can provide us with new insights into the Magna Mater interpretation. More specifically, the passage may be viewed as a carefully constructed invective against the distressing horrors of the cult of Cybele, which serves as a prototype for unphilosophical superstition and ignorance: the adherents of the cult misconceive the nature of the divine and misconstrue as literal what ought to be taken figuratively. This becomes the source of their misery and anguish. To make his case against *religio turpis* stronger, Lucretius masterfully transforms the encomiastic *topos* of allegoresis into a tool of invective, which enables him to expose the cult of Cybele as utterly impious (whether interpreted allegorically or not). Apart from the *topos* of allegoresis, this article has identified several other *topoi* of rhetorical hymns (cult, nurture, propitiation, etc.) which Lucretius skilfully exploits for

91 Farrell 2022, 141-149. A prime example of this strategy is Lucretius' invocation of "the poverty topos", on which see Farrell 2001, 39-51.

92 Farrell 2022, 157-167.

93 Thus, in the famous debate over whether σαφήνεια or ἐνάργεια is the quality appropriate to poetry, Farrell 2022, 165-166 situates Lucretius on the latter side of this dispute. For a discussion of this Hellenistic controversy, see Asmis 1995.

the purpose of making his vituperation all the more compelling. On the reading suggested here, the Magna Mater interpretation is an instance of inverse allegoresis, which blames various assumptions and aspects of the cult with a view to dissuading people from its observance. While the unveiled ὑπόνοιαι show that the virtues of the devotees misguide them into thwarting their own happiness, the entire allegoresis castigates the delusion of *pietas* that causes the individuals to suffer.

In conclusion, we can observe that although Patin rightly claimed Lucretius to have been perfectly capable of transporting himself into a set of convictions to which his philosophy was hostile, the scholar was wrong to assume that Lucretius was in any way "won over by the piety of the crowd".[94] Rather—as this study has aimed to show—Lucretius offers a fierce invective against the delusion of traditional *pietas*, as he draws a sharp ethical distinction between the appropriate (i.e. Epicurean) and inappropriate (i.e. non-Epicurean) approach to such Roman values as obedience, gratitude, veneration and patriotism. It is precisely in opposition to the conventional piety that Lucretius famously defines *pietas* as 'the ability to contemplate everything with a tranquil mind' (*pacata posse omnia mente tueri*, 5.1203). According to this definition, *pietas* no longer involves the formation of Roman citizens who devoutly serve their family, country and gods. Thus, Lucretius does not seek to salvage, let alone praise, the cult of Cybele and its underlying mythology. On the contrary, his inverse allegoresis brings to light the horrors and superstitions of the traditional *religio*, which beguiles people and makes their lives unbearable. A.T. Fear once noted that Attis and Cybele were "a favourite target for the invective of Christian writers".[95] This paper has argued that the Magna Mater interpretation could be viewed as an Epicurean prefiguration of these Christian vituperations.[96]

Bibliography

Ackermann, E. (1979). *Lukrez und der Mythos*. Wiesbaden.

Agosti, G. (2001). Late Antique Iambics and *Iambikè Idéa*. In: A. Cavarzere, A. Aloni, and A. Barchiesi, eds., *Iambic Ideas. Essays on a Poetic Tradition from Archaic Greece to the Late Roman Empire*, Lanham/Boulder/New York/Oxford, pp. 219-255.

94 See above n. 2.

95 Fear 1996, 37.

96 I would like to thank *Mnemosyne*'s anonymous reviewers for their useful comments and helpful suggestions.

Arena, V. (2007). Roman Oratorical Invective. In: W. Dominik and J. Hall, eds., *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric*, Malden, pp. 149-160.

Asmis, E. (1982). Lucretius' Venus and Stoic Zeus. *Hermes* 110, pp. 458-470.

Asmis, E. (1983). Rhetoric and Reason in Lucretius. *AJP* 104, pp. 36-66.

Asmis, E. (1995). Philodemus on Censorship, Moral Utility, and Formalism in Poetry. In: D. Obbink, ed., *Philodemus and Poetry. Poetic Theory and Practice in Lucretius, Philodemus, and Horace*, New York/Oxford, pp. 148-177.

Bailey, C., ed. (1947). *Titi Lucreti Cari De rerum natura libri sex* (3 vols). Oxford.

Baker-Brian, N. (2013). Between Testimony and Rumour. Strategies of Invective in Augustine's *De moribus manichaeorum*. In: A.J. Quiroga Puertas, ed., *The Purpose of Rhetoric in Late Antiquity. From Performance to Exegesis*, Tübingen, pp. 31-53.

Boyancé, P. (1941). Une exégèse stoïcienne chez Lucrèce. *REL* 19, pp. 147-166.

Boys-Stones, G. (2018). *L. Annaeus Cornutus, Greek Theology, Fragments, and Testimonia*. Atlanta.

Brown, R.D. (1982). Lucretius and Callimachus. *ICS* 7, pp. 77-97.

Brown, R.D. (1983). Lucretian Ridicule of Anaxagoras. *CQ* 33, pp. 146-160.

Buglass, A. (2020). Lucretius' Journey to the Underworld. Poetic Memory and Allegoresis. In: M. Scherer and R. Falconer, eds., *A Quest for Remembrance. The Underworld in Classical and Modern Literature*, New York/London, pp. 61-86.

Buglass, A. (2022). Atomistic Imagery. Repetition and Reflection of the World in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. In: J.S. Clay and A. Vergados, eds., pp. 105-136.

Butterfield, D. (2020). Critical Responses to the Most Difficult Textual Problem in Lucretius. In: D. O'Rourke, ed., pp. 19-39.

Cairns, F. (1972). *Generic Composition in Greek and Roman Poetry*. Edinburgh.

Campbell, G.L. (2003). *Lucretius on Creation and Evolution. A Commentary on De Rerum Natura Book Five, Lines 772-1104*. Oxford.

Campbell, G.L. (2014). Lucretius, Empedocles and Cleanthes. In: M. Garani and D. Konstan, eds., *The Philosophizing Muse. The Influence of Greek Philosophy on Roman Poetry*, Newcastle, pp. 26-60.

Clay, D. (2011). Lucretius, Venus, Cybele, Love, the Gods. *Prometheus* 37, pp. 153-162.

Clay, J.S., and Vergados, A., eds. (2022). *Teaching through Images. Imagery in Greco-Roman Didactic Poetry*, Leiden/Boston.

Conte, G.B., Canali, L., and Dionigi, I. (1990). *Tito Lucrezio Caro, La natura delle cose. Introduzione di Gian Biagio Conte, traduzione di Luca Canali, testo e commento a cura di Ivano Dionigi*. Milan.

Corbeill, A. (1996). *Controlling Laughter. Political Humor in the Late Roman Republic*. Princeton.

Craca, C. (2000). *Le possibilità della poesia. Lucrezio e la Madre frigia in De rerum natura II 598-660*. Bari.

Cribiore, R. (2007). *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch*. Princeton/Oxford.

Cumont, F. (1920). Lucrèce et le symbolisme pythagoricien des enfers. *RPh* 44, pp. 229-240.

Domaradzki, M. (2019). Democritus and Allegoresis. *CQ* 69, pp. 545-556.

Domaradzki, M. (2020a). Antisthenes and Allegoresis. In: D.C. Wolfsdorf, ed., *Early Greek Ethics*, Oxford, pp. 361-379.

Domaradzki, M. (2020b). Marrying Stoicism with Platonism? Pseudo-Plutarch's Use of the Circe Episode. *AJP* 141, pp. 211-239.

Domaradzki, M. (2021a). Plutarch's Fragment 157 and Epideictic. *GRBS* 61, pp. 34-61.

Domaradzki, M. (2021b). The Lotus and the Boat. Plutarch and Iamblichus on Egyptian Symbols. *TAPA* 151, pp. 363-394.

Domaradzki, M., (2022). Stoic Allegoresis. The Problem of Definition and Influence. *CP* 117, pp. 139-162.

Farrell, J. (2001). *Latin Language and Latin Culture from Ancient to Modern Times*. Cambridge.

Farrell, J. (2007). Lucretian Architecture. The Structure and Argument of the *De Rerum Natura*. In: S. Gillespie and P. Hardie, eds., pp. 76-91.

Farrell, J. (2020). Was Memmius a Good King? In: D. O'Rourke, ed., pp. 219-240.

Farrell, J. (2022). Are Lucretius' Images Clear? In: J.S. Clay and A. Vergados, eds., pp. 137-171.

Fear, A.T. (1996). Cybele and Christ. In: E.N. Lane, ed., pp. 37-50.

Felten, J., ed. (1913). *Nicolai progymnasmata*. Leipzig.

Flower, R. (2013). *Emperors and Bishops in Late Roman Invective*. Cambridge.

Foerster, R., ed. (1915). *Libanii opera, Vol. 8*. Leipzig.

Fowler, D. (2002). *Lucretius on Atomic Motion. A Commentary on De Rerum Natura Book Two, Lines 1-332*. Oxford.

Fratantuono, L. (2015). *A Reading of Lucretius' De Rerum Natura*. Lanham/Boulder/New York/London.

Friedländer, P. (1941). Pattern of Sound and Atomistic Theory in Lucretius. *AJP* 62, pp. 16-34.

Furley, D.J. (1966). Lucretius and the Stoics. *BICS* 13, pp. 13-33.

Gale, M.R. (1994). *Myth and Poetry in Lucretius*. Cambridge.

Gale, M.R. (2000). *Virgil on the Nature of Things. The Georgics, Lucretius and the Didactic Tradition*. Cambridge.

Gale, M.R. (2007). Lucretius and Previous Poetic Traditions. In: S. Gillespie and P. Hardie, eds., pp. 59-75.

Gale, M.R. (2009). *Lucretius, De Rerum Natura V. Edited with Translation and Commentary*. Oxford.

Gale, M.R. (2013). Piety, Labour, and Justice in Lucretius and Hesiod. In: D. Lehoux, A.D. Morrison, and A. Sharrock, eds., *Lucretius. Poetry, Philosophy, Science*, Oxford, pp. 25-50.

Gale, M.R. (2020). Lucretius. In: P. Mitsis, ed., pp. 430-455.

Galzerano, M. (2019). *La fine del mondo nel De rerum natura di Lucrezio*. Berlin/Boston.

Garani, M. (2007). *Empedocles Redivivus. Poetry and Analogy in Lucretius*. New York/London.

Gee, E. (2020). The Rising and Setting Soul in Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 3. In: D. O'Rourke, ed., pp. 195-215.

Gellar-Goad, T.H.M. (2012). *Lucretius' De Rerum Natura and Satire*. Diss. University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Gellar-Goad, T.H.M. (2020). *Laughing Atoms, Laughing Matter. Lucretius' De Rerum Natura and Satire*. Ann Arbor.

Gibson, C.A. (2008). *Libanius's Progymnasmata. Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric*. Atlanta.

Gigandet, A. (1997). L'interprétation des mythes comme lieu et enjeu de la polémique philosophique dans le *De rerum natura*. In: K.A. Algra, M.H. Koenen, and P.H. Schrijvers, eds., *Lucretius and his Intellectual Background*, Amsterdam, pp. 209-213.

Gigandet, A. (2004). L'interprétation épicurienne des mythes est-elle allégorique? In: B. Pérez-Jean and P. Eichel-Lojkine, eds., *L'Allégorie de l'Antiquité à la Renaissance*, Paris, pp. 235-241.

Gillespie, S., and Hardie, P., eds. (2007). *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*. Cambridge.

Hardie, P. (2007). Lucretius and Later Latin Literature in Antiquity. In: S. Gillespie and P. Hardie, eds., pp. 111-127.

Hawes, G. (2014). *Rationalizing Myth in Antiquity*. Oxford.

Jope, J. (1985). Lucretius, Cybele, and Religion. *Phoenix* 39, pp. 250-262.

Keane, C. (2007). Defining the Art of Blame. Classical Satire. In: R. Quintero, ed., *A Companion to Satire. Ancient to Modern*, Malden, pp. 31-51.

Kennedy, G.A. (2003). *Progymnasmata. Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*. Atlanta.

Kenney, E.J. (2007). Lucretian Texture. Style, Metre and Rhetoric in the *De Rerum Natura*. In: S. Gillespie and P. Hardie, eds., pp. 92-110.

Kenney, E.J. (2014). *Lucretius, De Rerum Natura Book III*. 2nd ed. Cambridge.

Konstan, D. (2008). *A Life Worthy of the Gods. The Materialist Psychology of Epicurus*. Las Vegas.

Lane, E.N., ed. (1996). *Cybele, Attis and Related Cults. Essays in Memory of M.J. Vermaseren*. Leiden/New York/Cologne.

Lang, C., ed. (1881). *Cornuti Theologiae graecae compendium*. Leipzig.

Luciani, S. (2003). *Veteres Graium docti poetae*. Ancienneté et tradition poétique chez Lucrèce. In: B. Bakhouche, ed., *L'Ancienneté chez les Anciens*, Montpellier, pp. 457-479.

Luciani, S. (2017). Cybèle et les mystères de la matière (Lucrèce, *De rerum natura* II, 581-660). *REL* 94, pp. 45-65.

Mitsis, P., ed. (2020). *The Oxford Handbook of Epicurus and Epicureanism*. Oxford.

Most, G.W. (2010). Hellenistic Allegory and Early Imperial Rhetoric. In: R. Copeland and P.T. Struck, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Allegory*, Cambridge, pp. 26-38.

Mund-Dopchie, M. (1971). Lucrèce *De rerum natura* II 631. *AC* 40, pp. 210-214.

Nethercut, J.S. (2017). Empedocles' "Roots" in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. *AJP* 138, pp. 85-105.

Nethercut, J.S. (2018). The Alexandrian Footnote in Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. *Mnemosyne* 71, pp. 75-99.

Nethercut, J.S. (2019). Provisional Argumentation and Lucretius' Honeyed Cup. *CQ* 68, pp. 523-533.

Nethercut, J.S. (2021). *Ennius Noster. Lucretius and the Annales*. Oxford.

Neumeister, C. (1997). Lukrezens Umgang mit dem Mythos. In: H.-J. Horn and H. Walter, eds., *Die Allegorese des antiken Mythos in der Literatur, Wissenschaft und Kunst Europas*, Wiesbaden, pp. 19-36.

O'Rourke, D., ed. (2020). *Approaches to Lucretius. Traditions and Innovations in Reading the De Rerum Natura*. Cambridge.

Patillon, M. and Bolognesi, G., eds., tr. (1997). *Aelius Théon, Progymnasmata*. Paris.

Patin, H.J.G. (1868). *Études sur la poésie latine, Vol. 1*. Paris.

Pépin, J. (1976). *Mythe et allégorie. Les origines grecques et les contestations judéo-chrétiennes*. Paris.

Pernot, L. (1993). *La rhétorique de l'éloge dans le monde gréco-romain* (2 vols). Paris.

Perret, J. (1935). Le « mythe de Cybèle » (Lucrèce, II, 600-660). *REL* 13, pp. 332-357.

Piergiacomi, E. (2020). Language. In: P. Mitsis, ed., pp. 308-332.

Rabe, H., ed. (1913). *Hermogenis opera*. Leipzig.

Rabe, H., ed. (1926). *Aphthonii progymnasmata*. Leipzig.

Race, W.H., ed., tr. (2019). *Menander Rhetor;* [*Dionysius of Halicarnassus*] *Ars rhetorica*. Cambridge, MA.

Reinhardt, T. (2004). Readers in the Underworld. Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura* 3.912-1075. *JRS* 94, pp. 27-46.

Robertson, N. (1996). The Ancient Mother of the Gods. A Missing Chapter in the History of Greek Religion. In: E.N. Lane, ed., pp. 239-304.

Rosen, R.M. (2007). *Making Mockery. The Poetics of Ancient Satire*. Oxford.

Russell, D.A., and Wilson, N.G., eds., tr. (1981). *Menander Rhetor*. Oxford.

Russell, D.A., ed., tr. (2001). *Quintilian, The Orator's Education. Books 1-2*. Cambridge, MA.

Schrijvers, P.H. (1999). *Lucrèce et les sciences de la vie*. Leiden/Boston/Cologne.

Sedley, D. 1998. *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom*. Cambridge.

Smith, M.F. (2001). *Lucretius, On the Nature of Things. Translated, with Introduction and Notes*. Indianapolis/Cambridge.

Snyder, J.M. (1980). *Puns and Poetry in Lucretius' De Rerum Natura*. Amsterdam.

Stephens, S.A. (2015). *Callimachus, The Hymns. Edited with Introduction, Translation, and Commentary*. Oxford.

Summers, K. (1995). Lucretius and the Epicurean Tradition of Piety. *CP* 90, pp. 32-57.

Summers, K. (1996). Lucretius' Roman Cybele. In: E.N. Lane, ed., pp. 337-365.

Tatum, W.J. (1984). The Presocratics in Book One of Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura*. *TAPA* 114, pp. 177-189.

Wallach, B.P. (1976). *Lucretius and the Diatribe against the Fear of Death. De Rerum Natura III 830-1094*. Leiden.

Waltz, R. (1949). Lucrèce satirique. *Lettres d'humanité* 8, pp. 78-103.

West, D. (1969). *The Imagery and Poetry of Lucretius*. Edinburgh.