

Translation of the Introduction of *Caroli Lachmanni*
in T. Lucretii Cari De Rerum Natura
Libros Commentarius

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A thousand years ago, in a certain part of the kingdom of France, there survived one ancient copy of Lucretius's poem. It was from this copy that all the other ones derived that were recorded later, unless we wish to suppose that that "one manuscript of Lucretius" which the monks of the monastery of Bobbio said they possessed in the tenth century, in a catalogue edited by Muratori among the *Antiquitates Italicae* [Italian antiquities], vol. 3, p. 820, was itself already ancient at that time. What is certain is that of this manuscript there is no trace anywhere: whereas from the one that, as I have said, existed in the kingdom of France, many manuscripts were derived, on the basis of three copies, as far as we can ascertain. The one that was the model for all the others, the ARCHETYPE (this is how I am accustomed to call it), consisted of 302 pages. Of these pages not only the first and the last ones had been left blank, but also the hundred and ninetieth one, which was located after the end of Book IV. So too, one page in Book I had been left empty, as I shall explain in the commentary to line 1093 of that book; all the other pages contained twenty-six lines each, while the last page of each book had fewer lines. Moreover, it can be ascertained from many clues that this manuscript was written in rather slender capital letters, not in uncial ones; there was no division between the words, but there was always a division between the sentences whenever this occurred in the middle of a line. From these indications we can tell that this manuscript was copied in the fourth or fifth century CE, and that it was very similar to the surviving manuscripts of Virgil of that type. Nevertheless it has to be admitted that the copyist did not do his job very carefully, and that the correctors too (who evidently made an effort to improve it) did not emend many of the errors that he had committed: certainly, they did not restore even one of the lines that he had left

Karl Lachmann, "[Introduction:] Recension – Emendation" ["Recensio – Emendatio"], in *Commentary on Lucretius' De Rerum Natura* [Caroli Lachmanni in T. Lucretii Cari De Rerum Natura Libros Commentarius] (Berlin: Georg Reimer, 1850), 3–15.

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out. So that, as they virtually admitted, they seem to me to have read their copy without having had any access to its model, and to have emended it as best they could.

Anyone who decides to consult any part of my commentary will recognize that all these things were as I have said they were. I reached most of these conclusions by assiduously studying for almost six months the copies that [scil. Syvert] Havercamp and others had collated with a total lack of judgment. The remaining ones (except for the number of the pages, which I have just calculated) became clear to me the moment that I started to collate the Vossian parchments, in April 1846, when they were transferred to this town [i.e., Berlin], thanks to the extraordinary benevolence and kindness of the renowned curators of the Leiden Academy, who, I believe, were following the advice of Jacob Geel – an excellent man, dear to me not only for the sake of his erudition. A little earlier, two very well trained young men, Hugo Purmann from Silesia and Jacob Bernays from Hamburg, followed the approach that had been demonstrated by Johan Nikolai Madvig – a very erudite man who, in a small academic dissertation [i.e., *Disputatio de aliquot lacunis codicum Lucretii* (*Disputation on a Number of Lacunae in the Manuscripts of Lucretius*)] published in Copenhagen in 1832 and republished two years later among his collected papers, was the first person to apply a salutary method to emending Lucretius. They worked on evaluating the means for emending this poem, with great zeal and with some success. Of these two, Purmann published *Lucretianarum quaestionum specimen* [A sample of Lucretian questions] in March 1846 in Bratislava, and Bernays signed his article “De emendatione Lucretii” [On the emendation of Lucretius], which F[riedrich] Ritschl accepted for the 1847 volume of *Rheinisches Museum*, in April of the very same year 1846. But although their labors certainly deserved praise for being directed to these matters, all in all, to tell the truth, they were not very useful for me, since some of what they said I already knew very well, while other things they either neglected or confused by mixing them up with mistakes due to their youth and their inadequate familiarity with Lucretius’s peculiar genius. It will be easy to recognize from the fact of our agreement the matters on which I judge that they were right; but I prefer not to review every point in detail, in order not to annoy my readers.

With regard to those three apographs, by which, as I said, the memory of Lucretius’s poem has been preserved from the ninth century CE until our own times, above all one must know that one of them survives, and that it was made from the archetype in that very same century. It is one of the two Leiden manuscripts, number 30: I call it OBLONGUS [oblong], since it is in the smaller *in folio* format [i.e., the sheets are folded in half]. I cannot say from what source it came into Isaac Vossius’s hands (for his father possessed not this one but the other one), and I do not find an indication of anyone who used it before Vossius. However, the fact that it was once in Mainz is indicated by the words written on the first page in the lower margin: “This manuscript belongs to

the library of St. Martin Church in Mainz. Signed by M. Sindicus in 1479.” There are 192 *schedae* [leaves], or, if we prefer, *folia* [pages]; every page contains twenty verses, except for leaf 42 (which is the third one of the sixth quaternion), which has twenty-seven (Book II, lines 484–536). One page after line 78 of Book VI is entirely empty: this is the back page of the fifth leaf in the ternion, of which the sixth leaf was cut out. This manuscript was corrected by two copyists at the same time as it was written. One of these CORRECTORS, using Saxon handwriting, supplied the verses that the Frankish copyist had carelessly omitted: in doing so, he erased the previous writing and left spaces for the verses that were not too narrow. This Saxon did not make many corrections, except that he often added a tail to the letter *e* so that it became *ae*. The second corrector worked after he did (for after the Saxon corrector had written lines 549 and 550 in Book I in the erasure of a single verse, this second corrector changed the last letter of the word *reparare* to *-i*), and he emended or corrupted letters and words in innumerable passages, partly by his own conjectures, partly on the basis of that same most ancient manuscript. The fact that he too used this manuscript is demonstrated by those readings which either are meaningless or else are written in the same way in the *quadratus* [square] manuscript, which I shall discuss below.

Another apograph of that most ancient manuscript was brought to Italy, and all the manuscripts used in Italy during the fifteenth century were derived from it. They are extremely close to our oblong manuscript everywhere, but nevertheless they were not derived from it, for sometimes they diverge from it and agree with the square one, and this happens in cases which no one could have produced by conjecture. I would declare that, among these manuscripts, the one from which all the others derived was brought by the Florentine Poggio [scil. Bracciolini] from Germany, for, before his time, unless I am mistaken, Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio never made any mention of Lucretius, and Guglielmo da Pastrengo follows Jerome’s *Chronicle*, except in saying that he is a comic poet – were it not for the fact that Poggio himself, in his funeral oration for Niccolò Niccoli and also in his dialogue “*De infelicitate principum*” [On the unhappiness of princes], declared that he had brought to light “a part of Lucretius”, and that he himself would thereby seem to be diminishing the praise that he had received from other people. However, I fear that Poggio was doing himself an injustice by wishing to be too learned. For since, as is well known, he had read Varro’s *De lingua latina* [On the Latin language], he might easily have been deceived by what he found written there in Book V: “From this division into two, Lucretius¹ placed this as the start of his twenty-first book: *‘To seek out the time generative of the ether and the earth.’*” There can be no doubt that the whole poem of Lucretius is contained in the codex Laurentianus plut. XXXV 30, and it is

1. A mistake in the manuscripts for Lucilius, emended by Scaliger.

thought that this manuscript was written by the hand of Niccolò Niccoli himself, a citizen of Florence, who had kept Poggio's Lucretius at his own home for twelve years. If this is true, the role played by this Niccolò (who died in 1437) in the emendation of Lucretius was not very significant. For I know that in this copy only half of line 1068 of Book I and the adjacent ones can be read, and it cannot be doubted that the *diorthosis* [correction] that was performed here was much bolder and more ingenious in this first attempt than what I tend to attribute either in general to the ITALIAN scholars or in particular to ANTONIO, the son of MARIO, a citizen and notary of Florence, who wrote the same codex Laurentianus plut. XXXV 31 in about 1440, as Heinrich Keil, a very learned man, who affirmed that he knew his handwriting very well (for he had collated it in its entirety), told me when he made this manuscript available for my use. It is evident that Michael Marullus, of whom I shall speak below, used copies that were very similar to this one. But since he only seldom collated printed editions (and I cannot easily believe Obertus Gifanius when he claims that the printed edition that, as he writes, Johannes Sambucus gave him to make use of, had been annotated by the hand of Marullus himself), he had available other copies that had been emended less, and thus were closer to the archetype's ancient readings. It is to this more primitive and trustworthy group that the codex belongs that was most imitated by the OLIM IMPRESSI ["printed long ago," i.e., the oldest printed editions or incunabula]. These agree, among many other things, in omitting two verses of Book I (157–158), and three of Book II (492–494), which Antonio, the son of Mario, and Marullus include. Moreover, the printer from BRESCIA who published "Tommaso Ferrando's edition" of Lucretius attests that only one copy had come into his hands and that this was the copy of his edition (that it was made after 1473 is denied by those, like [scil., Thomas Frognall] Dibdin in *Bibliotheca Spenceriana* [Spencer library], vol. II, p. 149, who have demonstrated that nowadays only three copies of it survive in the whole world); but since it is certain that no copy of the Brescia edition was known to the typesetters of VERONA and VENICE (these were Paul Fridenberger and Teodoro Ragazzoni, and their editions were published in 1486 and 1495), I believe that they all used either one copy or else two very similar ones. However, since the Venice edition has sixty-eight lines of Book IV (125–190) that are missing in the Verona one, but elsewhere always reproduces the Verona edition even when it is corrupt, the Venice edition must have obtained these verses from some other source. But even if I have stated that the typesetters reproduced the ancient and unemended text more faithfully than did the Florentine notary and the other Italian scholars like him, nevertheless we must be careful not to trust the printed editions more than those written by Italian pens; for in the printed editions too, many passages have been emended by conjecture, in the Brescia one somewhat more, and more audaciously, than in the Verona and Venice ones. So, as usual, those who attribute value to copies on the basis of their rarity are mistaken when they suppose that

the Brescia edition is superior to those other ones in trustworthiness and authority. Since I had at my disposal the Venice edition, and since Havercamp, [scil. Gilbert] Wakefield, and [scil. Albert] Forbiger had accepted many readings from the Verona one, it was enough for me, in order to find out what I wanted to know, to use Johannes Gerardus's study of the first four editions, ignorant and careless though it was, which appears in 240 pages of the fourth volume of the Glasgow edition (pp. 163–402).

It still remains for me to describe the third group, which, as I have said before, came from the same family. Of this group I know of two copies, one of them incomplete, neither one as old as the oblong manuscript, neither one written in such a way that the copyist must be supposed to have had before his eyes that most ancient manuscript itself. Since, as many clues indicate, in many places this most ancient manuscript had long since everywhere been worn away, nibbled, covered with dirt, in some places also torn, and the pages of leaf 68 were inverted (Book IV, lines 299–347), while those first apographs were being produced, it happened that four leaves (16, 29, 39, and 115) became detached from their bindings and were displaced from their proper positions. As a result, in this new group of manuscripts, the third one, the part of the text that was contained in these leaves (what it was I shall explain in the commentary to Book I, line 734) was omitted without any indication of the mistake in its proper place and instead was placed separately at the end of Book VI. I call this group the new, third one. For if someone were to suppose that this was the first one, and that the manuscript suffered that damage before the oblong manuscript and the father of the Italian manuscripts had been produced, he would not be able to explain how the copyists could have replaced the misplaced leaves in the right order. One of these two manuscripts is the so-called QUADRATUS [square] one, conserved in Leiden and marked as number 94, written in the tenth century CE by a copyist who – if appearances do not deceive me – was German. It has 69 leaves, with bipartite pages and 28 verses in each column. There were many CORRECTORS of this manuscript, all from the fifteenth century. Nevertheless, none of them seems to have made use of a different copy, except for one, more recent than all the others, who after line 927 of Book V wrote, “Sixty-two verses are missing, unless they have been transposed. But you can find them in the next to last page.” Even if this number is mistaken (for in fact it is 52 verses), this copyist could not have indicated it if he had not had available another copy. Moreover, before this same square manuscript came into the hands of Gerhard Johannes Vossius, it was sent from the Bertincourt monastery, near the town of Saint-Omer, to Paris, where Adrianus Turnebus collated it up to Book VI, quite carefully as it seems, and gave his *excerpta* [transcriptions] to Dionysius Lambinus to use. Eight LEAVES of the other manuscript are conserved in Copenhagen in the Royal Library, and ten in Vienna in the Imperial Library. The leaves that are conserved in Copenhagen (since they belonged to [scil. Jacobus] Gottorpianus) were collated a long time

ago by Marquardus Gudius. I decided not to make use of his handwritten transcriptions, which Karl Schönemann had very kindly provided me from the Wolfenbüttel library, after Madvig informed me that he had discovered in Copenhagen the leaves themselves, which for a long time had remained unknown. A little later, R. I. F. Henrichsen very kindly sent me his careful study “De fragmento Gottorpiensi Lucreti” [On the Gottorpiensis fragment of Lucretius], published in 1846 in Odense, a town in Denmark. I decided not to make use of the Vienna leaves almost anywhere in this commentary, although I had transcriptions of them which had been made by Heinrich Keil – but a bit inaccurately and at a time, as he himself admitted, when he did not yet have much experience in this procedure. Actually, neither the Vienna leaves nor the Copenhagen ones have any authority of their own, except sometimes when they agree with the oblong manuscript. For they agree most often with the square manuscript, even in the tiniest details, and consequently it is certain that the square manuscript erred by following its source too blindly, while the copyists of the leaves, who were many, as we know from their testimony, erred by extreme carelessness. The eight Copenhagen leaves contain Book I of Lucretius and 456 verses of Book II; but nevertheless they twice omitted fifty-two verses (I 734–785, II 253–304), as I said above, and besides these also another twenty-three verses (I 123, 890, 891, 1023, 1068–1075, 1094–1101, II 310–312). If I am not mistaken, taking into account the titles of the chapters, there are 1489 verses written in them. Regarding these leaves, Henrichsen says, “the Gottorpiensis manuscript is written on parchment in a smaller folio format, written in double columns such that almost all of them contain about forty-seven verses, very few forty-eight, and the last one forty-three.” Even if I would have preferred these figures to be expressed a little more precisely, all in all they match each other pretty well. Then one leaf was lost: it contained verses 457–640 of Book II, i.e. 188 lines (that is how many are contained in the square manuscript), that is four times forty-seven: for the Vienna leaves start from verse 641 of Book II and they contain a small part of the same manuscript, as seems quite certain to me. I would be able to prove this, if Purmann at pp. 15, 16 of his article, where he describes the condition of the leaves, had not relied on an inadequate authority, who had not even learned that, with regard to damaged and lost pages, it is necessary to state how many verses there are on each page. Nevertheless, it is clear that these leaves have bipartite pages, just like the ones conserved in Copenhagen: Endlicher, in his catalogue of the Vienna manuscripts, vol. I, p. 54, says that they are written in the *in folio* format, while Purmann says that they are in a larger *in quarto* one [i.e., the sheets are folded in four]. Endlicher assigns them to the tenth century, while Gudius too generously assigns the Gottorpiensis leaves to the eighth or ninth century. The first six Vienna leaves contain in 24 columns the whole of Book II of Lucretius, starting from the verse that I have indicated (641–1174), except for fifty-two verses (757–806) that are omitted, then the

first 621 verses of Book III – which all together make a total of 1,129 written lines, that is twenty-four times forty-seven plus one. For what is written in Purmann, p. 16, “Fol. 14, b, 1 ends” – i. e. column 23, which is the next to last one – cannot be true, if he asks us to believe what he has added: “not one thing demonstrates that the manuscript was once complete.” However, the Copenhagen numbers do not correspond to the remaining fourteen columns (for this is the number that survive: for on the back of the tenth leaf is written the beginning of Juvenal’s satires), but they are larger. Therefore I suspect that in these leaves the handwriting is narrower. For they contain the last part of Book VI, starting from verse 740, i.e. 558 verses, and also the parts included from elsewhere, i.e. 212 verses: and added together this makes 770 verses. The accounts balance if each of these fourteen columns contains fifty-five verses.

I have reluctantly been obliged to say too much about matters which are of only minimal utility. For the whole tradition of the ancient text must be derived from the Vossian manuscripts, except that sometimes the Italian ones nullify the trustworthiness of the oblong one, and occasionally the leaves, as I have said, diminish the authority of the square one. If the copyists who transcribed the Vossian manuscripts had copied down their most ancient exemplar by the individual shapes of the letters, with the same faithfulness and the same skill with which [scil. Nicolaus] Fogginius transcribed the Mediceus codex of Virgil, then the editor of the poem of Lucretius would have to do nothing more than note the very few mistakes made by either of them, given that both manuscripts were copied from the same exemplar and that they could not disagree with each other as much as the Romanus and Mediceus manuscripts of Virgil do. For what had been written by the first hand, what by the second one, what between the verses or in the margin, what had been inserted, erased, written on top, what finally had been destroyed by force or humidity – all these things our manuscripts would represent, expressed as precisely as possible. But not only was there at that time no interest in such a skill and no understanding of its usefulness, but also not even many centuries later. No man, unless he were remarkably perverse, could suspect that Joannes Jovianus Pontanus had transcribed one little book of Tacitus with such scrupulous care. And so all those degrees of authority, which, if we had the *archetype* itself (the exemplar for all the others) we could easily observe with our eyes, appear in such a confused condition that they might well seem to the editor to be equivalent. I say this: wherever, after the trustworthy witnesses have been compared with one another, it becomes clear that there were two readings in the archetype (this happens whenever the oblong and the square manuscripts disagree with one another and it is not clear, either from the leaves or from the Italian manuscripts and printed editions, which of the two of them is mistaken), one has to use judgment in editing; and it is not as certain which reading can be said to have been more ancient than it is to argue which one is true or closer to the truth. But since I reached this

most certain and secure judgment about the disagreement between the witnesses almost everywhere, I decided not to bore myself and my readers, without any benefit for discovering the truth, by enumerating the mistakes which are found in one manuscript but are not found in the other one. I know that many people will criticize my boldness in this matter, saying that I am obliging them to trust me about matters that they would like to see for themselves. But these will be mostly the same people who do not realize that they are granting the very same thing to [scil. Christian Gottlob] Heyne and Philipp Wagner with regard to the Mediceus codex of Virgil (for these two scholars did not admit that they had passed over many things in silence), or who love to attack someone else's conscientiousness only to show off the superiority of their own minds. To these people I suggest that, if they can, they should trust me – a human being, to be sure, and hence not infallible, but nonetheless not too careless or negligent – when I maintain that in our most ancient copies there is hardly ever more authority than what I have indicated; or, if they should wish to check my scholarship, they should collate the very same copies once again after I have done so, but should do so with carefulness and sharp eyesight, in order not to assign to the first hand what belongs to the correctors and not to be convicted of making more mistakes than the man did whom they wanted to criticize.

So in the task of establishing my edition I have followed the following rules. I have presented without any indication of doubt whatever fine and true reading I found either in both manuscripts or in one or the other of them. By means of numbers appended next to the verses I have signalled the order in which they were written by the ancient copyists. And I decided that emendation should be confined only to the following matters: first, to put back into the right places the verses that were transposed by the copyists (when this happened, the numbers could not follow one another in the natural sequence); then to restore, as far as possible, the words of the verses that had been lost or corrupted, but in such a way that the individual words that were written according to the authority of the manuscripts were provided with individual portions of commentary and also enumerated at the bottom of the pages of the poem.

I made the greatest effort – and it was quite a tiresome one – to find out who was the first person to propose every single emendation; for, except in the more admirable cases, I usually did not care who followed whom, or who arrived at the same conclusion on his own at a different time. Therefore, if sometimes it seemed that the copyists' hand had deviated from the truth, first of all I sought to determine whether *the most ancient corrector*, who interpolated the oblong manuscript in the ninth century, offered something better. If I was unable to get anything from him, *the correctors of the square manuscript* provided good readings in a much greater number and, among these, not a few that were most exquisite. Contemporary with these and a little more consistent in the art of emendation is *Antonio, the son of Mario*, or, rather, his *Italian* source, who removed

innumerable evident errors. The incunabula too have some good readings of their own. But it was Michael MARULLUS who surpassed all the others' studies both in genius and in diligence. A Greek by birth, but unrivalled in Latin poetry, he devoted all his efforts to the study of Lucretius's peculiar genius and art, and he excelled in the emendation of his poem much more than his successors, even the more learned ones. In March 1512, twelve years after his death in the River Cecina near Volterra, Petrus Candidus [scil. Decembrius] published an edition of Lucretius with his emendations in Florence at the printing house of Filippo Giunta. I received a copy of this edition from Johannes Schulz, a distinguished man extremely devoted to the promotion and support of literary studies, and this was very helpful for me in rendering to Marullus the praise he deserves, which most of his successors passed over in silence or defiled with criticism.

The first of these was Hieronymus *Avantius* from Verona. When he writes that he has emended this poem by means of his own talent and effort without the aid of an ancient copy, he is covering up a remarkable plagiarism; I shall demonstrate in my commentary on Book III v. 98 that he shamelessly appropriated many of Marullus's ideas. Nevertheless, this *Avantius*, whose edition was published in Venice by Aldus [scil. Manutius] in 1500, contains a fairly large number of good readings that do not derive from Marullus; some of them actually also come from manuscripts similar to our square one, and to these I have reluctantly assigned the name of that mendacious thief, since I could not do otherwise. [Scil. Heinrich Karl Abraham] Eichstädt carefully imitated his totally inept text. Johannes Baptista *Pius* from Bologna follows *Avantius* in practically everything but never makes any mention of him. In the commentary published in Bologna in 1511 *Pius* made some excellent corrections, often appealing to the authority of the most ancient copies; and yet he used nothing but the most recent manuscripts, which had been corrected by the skill of the Italians, as is revealed both by the matter itself and by the names of the people whose manuscripts he used. For he says that, like *Zeuxis*, he provided a single form to Lucretius from *four* bodies, but, unless I am mistaken, he lists *five* copies that he used (so too *Zeuxis*, according to Cicero and Pliny): 1) the manuscript of *Hermolaus* [scil. *Barbarus*] and [scil. *Julius*] *Pomponius* [scil. *Laetus*] (I believe that this is different from the Basel manuscript that was written by *Pomponius* in 1468 while he was in prison, inasmuch as [scil. *Johann Kaspar von*] *Orelli* does not report that there is any mention of *Barbarus* in his *Historia critica ecologorum ex Salusti historiarum libris* [Critical history of selections from the histories of Sallust], Zürich 1833, p. 35); 2) a manuscript that was pretty good and that belonged to "a not uncultured man of the noble *Strozzi* family"; 3) *Filippo Beroaldo's* one ("a printed copy, but nonetheless very attentively examined"); 4) then *Codrus's* (the *Brescia* codex, I think, which at Book I, v. 853 has *sanguis omoios*, which he [i.e., *Pius*] claims to take from *Codrus's* manuscript); and, finally, 5) *Marullus's*. And so from *Pius* until *Forbiger* all the editors of Lucretius had no

interest in the truth, but they assigned exactly the same value to both the ancient copies and the most recent ones, and many of them did the same also with the copies of Marullus and Aldus. As a result all of them introduced many more corruptions by their rash and ignorant conjectures than restorations of the original text by following the example of the ancient correctors, the Italians, and Marullus. Andreas *Naugerius*, whom Aldo employed as a collaborator when he edited Lucretius for the second time in January 1515, brought back Marullus's text, almost complete but more accurately punctuated; he himself introduced few innovations, and did so judiciously. Dionysius Lambinus, forty-eight years later (but I use his third edition, which was published in Paris in 1570), a man of felicitous talent, both a student of philosophy and one of the very best experts in the Latin language, was so excellent that he must be placed just after Marullus, but far behind, if one counts only the merits of both of them. For even Marullus very often made mistakes; and Lambinus, besides many things that were completely true, rashly introduced, by a kind of extraordinary intellectual frivolity, innumerable other readings without any reason, and following no definite principle. These wrongly claimed a place in editions until they were finally removed by Wakefield. Three years after the first edition by Lambinus, Obertus *Gifanius* made his appearance, more celebrated for his index or miscellaneous notes, a book that was extremely useful at that time, than for his emendations. I have not checked whether or not he was rightly said to have plagiarized either Lambinus or others. From the second edition, which was produced in Leiden in 1595, I was not able to obtain very much that earlier scholars seemed to have neglected. Nor did Tanaquil Faber, an acute but at the same time impetuous man, who edited Lucretius in Saumur in 1662, provide me with many more readings or with much more refined ones. In January of the very same year Richard *Bentley* was born. Towards the end of 1689 he attentively read Lucretius in Oxford, as [scil. James Henry] Monk has demonstrated in his biography [scil. James Henry Monk, *The Life of Richard Bentley, D.D. Master of Trinity College, and Regius Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge with an Account of his Writings, and Anecdotes of Many Distinguished Characters During the Period in which he Flourished*. 2nd ed., rev. & corr. London: J.G. & F. Rivington, 1833], p. 16; and Wakefield and Eichstädt should have known that it was at that time, i.e. before the publication in 1691 of his *Ad Millium Epistula* [*Epistle to Mill*], that he wrote what the Glasgow editors published in their fourth volume in 64 pages after p. 402. For it would be to do an injustice to Forbiger to expect him to understand even the smallest matter on his own: and indeed he had an authority he trusted, Birger Thorlacius, who ridiculously boasted of having edited Lucretius (in Copenhagen in 1813) on the basis of the 'Wakefield-Bentley edition.' But in Bentley's youthful notes there are very many things most worthy of this unsurpassed and perfect scholar: some of these he shared with Thomas *Creech*, who at that time was preparing in the same

Oxford University his edition, which was published in 1695 and republished in London in 1717. For Creech cites many conjectures that belong to Bentley, but he simply assigns them to *others*, evidently so as not to mention the name of this young but magisterial scholar, one who moreover was from Cambridge. Creech himself explained many passages better than he edited them, for he was quite industrious in explaining philosophy but totally ignorant of the Latin language. The *London edition* of 1712 was useful to me for only one thing: to find out who had first proposed a few conjectures. Nor are the two volumes that Siwart Havercamp published in Leiden in 1725 worth any praise either: for he neither produced anything memorable with regard either to emendation or interpretation, nor did he present correctly and carefully what his predecessors had done, nor was he at all reliable and diligent in reporting the authoritative testimony of the Leiden manuscripts. But everybody has always despised Havercamp: I do not know how to explain why Gilbert *Wakefield* could enjoy a certain respect among Germans, unless we are to suppose that under his appearance of modesty he was astonishingly able to impose upon people who were modest themselves and averse to any subtlety of judgment. For that modesty of his was not in fact the trait of a wise man, but, what might seem incredible, that of an almost insane one, who understood rightly that Marullus and Lambinus had arbitrarily introduced many readings against the authority of the ancient copies but then, not satisfied with expelling these, violently attacked some that were most right and certain, with anger and the most loathsome insults, and with no other purpose than to avenge an offence. In this way he became very similar to Varro's Ajax: "Then Ajax believes that he is killing Ulysses with the sword, when with a stick he cuts the forest and slays the pigs" [Varr. *Sat. Men.* 125 Astb.]. And so in Wakefield's massive commentary, which he himself published in a magnificent edition in London in 1796–1797 and which the Glasgow editors republished in 1813 in a somewhat more convenient format, you will find virtually no attempt to understand Lucretius's methods correctly, no knowledge of the Latin language, but – aside from the insults – only a certain pursuit of poetic elegance, by means of many insufficiently elaborated readings, and the noteworthy and not infrequent traces of an extraordinary genius and outstanding acumen. These features make it evident that, if he had not been thwarted by his mental perturbation, he might actually have achieved as much in the emendation of this poem as many people have believed that he really did achieve. Many of my readers will be surprised, and quite rightly, that I consider worth mentioning Heinrich Karl Abraham *Eichstädt* and Albert *Forbiger*, his imitators and his rivals in their contempt for art and scholarship, from whom I was able to derive not even as much benefit as from Havercamp: for Eichstädt emended only one verse of Book V (v. 584) and Forbiger never accomplished anything at all that was worthy of praise. But while I willingly omit those older scholars who were similar to them, such as Daniel Pareus, Ioannes Nardius,

Michael Fayus, I think it worthwhile to point out the obtuse passivity of our contemporaries, who for so many years, since 1801 and 1828, have made use of extremely corrupted editions as if they were excellent and completely free of corruptions – although most of them were not capable of being understood, nor had their own authors understood them themselves. Some of these people may have been deceived by the degree of fame attaching to the name of Eichstädt, but certainly they ought to have despised Forbiger's mercenary work, in which there is neither any method nor diligence. And so I have decided to establish a precedent so as to warn anyone of similar arrogance not to dare to take on tasks that are mighty and difficult, ones to which he knows he is unequal. But leaving aside the perversity of such people, I can conclude this preface by expressing my happy and infallible hope that, as I predict, the poem of Lucretius will be clarified by more learned interpretation in the future. Every first-rate scholar has been eagerly expecting this for a long time; and just now [scil. Anton] Joseph Reisacker has offered a really splendid sample in his *Lucretianae questiones* [Lucretian questions], published in Bonn in December 1847. In the meantime I shall go on [scil. in my commentary] to amend this poem as well as I can.