

Don't Blow a *gliscit*: Turnus as an Epicurean *Amator*

It is well-established that Vergil incorporates substantial language and thought from Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* as shown by Cleary (1970), Farrell (1991), Gale (2004), and Hardie (2007). The cumulative effect of this interaction opens a textual dialogue that allows for a Lucretian interpretation extending from the individual intertexts to even the themes and figures of Vergil's work. Among these intertexts, Putnam (1965) and Tarrant (2012) have noticed the unique use of *gliscit* by Vergil in *Aeneid* 12.9 to describe Turnus' reaction to seeing the Latins retreat - *haud secus ad censo gliscit violentia Turno* – and have subsequently connected this to Lucretius' *De Rerum Natura* 1.474 - *ignis Alexandri Phrygio sub pectore gliscens clara accendisset saevi certamina belli*. Although Vergil could have had this Lucretian passage in mind, there is another use in *De Rerum Natura* which can bring new context and understanding to Vergil's use of *gliscit*, specifically *DRN* 4.1069 - *inque dies gliscit furor atque aerumna gravescit*. Although Robert Brown (1987) and Julia Dyson (1996) have noticed the connection, no one has given an account of why Vergil might be invoking this specific passage.

This paper proposes that Vergil uses *gliscit* to describe Turnus' violent state in order to echo Lucretius' use at the end of Book 4 in which he describes the condition of a man under the duress of his acute emotions. Upon closer inspection of the relation, it becomes apparent that these two figures share more than a verb, but also similar motives, imagery, and other language. For instance, both men are rapacious as lovers, consumed by fury, and at points completely inept in delirium. Since Lucretius presents the man in Book 4 as a paragon of why humans need Epicureanism, this study not only examines the similarities, but also examines why Vergil would present his antagonist as such. Ultimately, this Lucretian interpretation reveals aspects of Turnus'

character and rationale that frame him within ancient philosophical discourse, and contributes a larger understanding of Vergil's skill and sources.

To support the connection between *Aen.* 12.9 and *DRN* 4.1069, I first summarize briefly scholarship on Lucretius' influence on Vergil. I then examine the origin and meaning of *gliscere*. This overview provides context for the nuance of the word and also reveals how infrequent *gliscere* appears in Latin literature before Lucretius. Third, I explore Turnus' character and how it relates to man in *DRN* Book 4 in terms of similar language and imagery. Next I discuss the parallel most scholars attribute to *Aen.* 12.9, *DRN* 1.474, and argue how the context surrounding 4.1069 elucidates both 12.9 and 1.474 and also how the language in the last section of Book 4 provides a stronger connection to Book 12 of the *Aeneid*. Lastly, I examine why Vergil may have wanted to invoke this Lucretian interpretation of Turnus. This paper does not propose to establish Turnus as a paragon of why humans need Epicureanism, nor to regard the *Aeneid* as adhering to any single ancient philosophy. For I consider Vergil as depicting the contemptuous philosophical discourse and political climate in his works sans committing to a single ideology. Rather, this paper serves to provide a better understanding of Turnus and of Vergil's sources.

Bibliography

- Brown, Robert D. *Lucretius on Love and Sex: A Commentary on "De Rerum Natura" IV, 1030-1287, with Prolegomena, Text and Translation*. First edition. Leiden ; New York: Brill, 1987.
- Cleary, V. J. "The Poetic Influence of the De Rerum Natura on the Aeneid." *Classical Bulletin* 47 (1970): 17–21.
- Dyson, Julia. "Dido the Epicurean." *Classical Antiquity* 15.2 (1996): 203–221. *JSTOR*.

Farrell, Joseph. *Vergil's Georgics and the Traditions of Ancient Epic: The Art of Allusion in Literary History*. 1st edition. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Gale, Monica. *Virgil on the Nature of Things: The Georgics, Lucretius and the Didactic Tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Hardie, Philip. "Lucretius and Later Latin Literature in Antiquity." *The Cambridge Companion to Lucretius*, edited by Stuart Gillespie and Philip Hardie, Cambridge University Press, 2007: 111-130.

Putnam, Michael C. J. *The Poetry of the Aeneid*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1989.

Tarrant, Richard, ed. *Virgil: Aeneid Book XII*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.