Two notes on Virgil’s *Aeneis* (8.503 and 9.570)

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**Abstract:** The text and interpretation of two Virgilian passages are discussed: at 8.503 an emendation is offered to obviate a serious metrical difficulty; at 9.570 a suggestion is made about potential further significance that Virgil’s employment of the little-known name Lucetius may bear.

**Key words:** Virgil; textual criticism; metre; Lucetius, Iopas.

Dos notas a la *Eneida* de Virgilio (8.503 y 9.570)

**Resumen:** Se discute el texto y la interpretación de dos pasajes de la *Eneida* de Virgilio: en 8.503, se propone una enmienda para resolver una dificultad métrica grave; en 9.570, se presenta una sugerencia sobre el posible significado que encierra el empleo que hace Virgilio del nombre poco conocido de Lucetius.

**Palabras clave:** Virgilio; crítica textual; métrica; Lucetius; Iopas.

1) *Aen.* 8.503

“o Maeoniae delecta iuuentus,  
flos ueterum uirtusque uirum, quos iustus in hostem  
fert dolor et merita accendit Mezentius ira,  
nulli fas Italo tantam subiungere gentem:  
externos optate duces.” tum Etrusca resedit  
hoc acies campo monitis exterrita diuum.

(8.499-504)

The prophetic response of the *haruspex* (499-503), cited by Evander, king of Pallanteum, has rarely occasioned suspicions from critics about its text, and I do not wish to raise any here. However, it is possible that corruption may lurk in the words that immediately follow this quotation, for the elision of *tum* before
Etrusca is highly irregular. This adverb, which occurs 240 times throughout the poem, is only elided once elsewhere, at 7.616 (hoc et tum Aeneadis indicere bella Latinus), where the appearance of the choriambic patronymic Aeneadis and the idiomatic pairing et tum effectively necessitates the use of this licence. Furthermore, the occurrence is mitigated by the preceding monosyllable et (with which it coheres), a device commonly employed by Virgil and other poets when eliding monosyllables. Indeed, the elision of monosyllables is comparatively restricted in the Aeneis, and most commonly found in the case of pronouns and conjunctions; with the exception of iam, it is very rare in adverbs or declinable words. More significantly, of 132 elided monosyllables in the poem, only twice elsewhere does such an elision occur with the initial word of a sentence: at 2.102 si is elided (before omnis) at the impassioned close of Sinon’s speech to the Trojans, perhaps reflecting feigned conversational familiarity, and at 7.295 num is elided (before incensa), which thus allows rhetorical anaphora, num having already occurred twice at the beginning of both clauses of the preceding sentence (294-5).

In the present passage, however, where 503 introduces not only a new sentence but also a change of speaker, the elision of tum, which here bears emphasis and an accent, would be doubly irregular and not evidently motivated by any stylistic factor. The appearance of Etrusca does not provide a cogent explanation for the licence, for a simple alternative to this adjective was available to Virgil, namely Tusca. Virgil employs Tuscus several times elsewhere in the sense of Etruscus, either in his poetic narrative or in the mouth of others. It thus

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1 Jean Soubiran, L’Élision dans la poésie latine, Paris 1966, at pp. 409-410, building on the work of Joseph Helleguarc’h’s Le Monosyllable dans l’hexamètre latin (Paris 1964), highlighted the frequency with which a monosyllable precedes the elided monosyllable in dactylic poetry. He then proceeded to observe (ibid., p. 411) that 70% of monosyllables elided by Virgil stand in the second place of a syntactic phrase; that the only elisions of nam (1.308) and ne (8.39, 10.11) occur at the beginning of a short parenthetic phrase suggests that their delivery was more casual and colloquial in nature.

2 Of the three other monosyllables ending in -um which Virgil elided (5.693 cum, 7.71 dum, 295 num, 528 cum, 10.503 cum, 11.540 cum, 12.38 sum, 941 cum) none bears an accent. Twice in the Georgica Virgil elided tum but in both cases it coincided with a preceding iam (1.360 iam sibi tum, 2.405 iam tum), thus mitigating the elision (cf. n. 5 below).

3 Since Etruscus scans in the Aeneis not only with a long first syllable (as at 9.150, 10.180 and 11.598) but also a short (as at 8.480, 9.521, 10.148, 238 and 429), and Etruria with a long first syllable at 12.232 but a short at 8.494, it was suggested by Carl Zander (Eurythmia vel compositio rhythmica prosae antiquae, Leipzig 1910-1914, vol. II p. 602) and later suo Marte by Soubiran (as n. 1, p. 411, thereby rejecting the possibility that tum could be elided under these circumstances), that the scansion should be tum Etrusca, i.e. with tum standing in prosodic hiatus. This is highly improbable. Such a metrical licence is not attested in Virgil with another monosyllable ending in -m, and is only found once at all, in the case of an unaccented pronoun: at 6.507 the poet wrote tē āmice, a technique imitating conversational diction (as amice itself attests), and thus appropriate to Aeneas’ loving words to Deiphobus; for a use of this same licence to convey informality in Vergil’s earlier works, one may compare Ecl. 2.65 (o) and 8.108 (qui). It is unthinkable that this licence was employed with tum at 8.503.

4 10.164, 203, 11.629, 12.635; in addition, at 8.473 (Evander speaking), 10.199 and 11.316 (Latinus speaking), and Geo. 1.499, Tuscus is used of the river Tiber, since it rose in Etruria.
seems perfectly possible that Virgil here wrote tum Tusca resedit, thus avoiding both metrical irregularity\(^5\) and metrical ambiguity (see n. 3). Just as Evander can casually use Tyrrhena of the Etruscan regna at 8.507, so too could he here speak of their army as Tusca... acies. A simple accidental expansion by a scribe to the slightly commoner\(^6\) Etrusca (perhaps under the influence of 480 Etruscis and/or 494 Etruria) need simply have occurred at some point in the following few centuries.

Aen. 9.570

Ilioneus saxo atque ingenti fragmine montis
Lucetium portae subeuntem ignisque ferentem,
570
Emathiona Liger, Corynaeum sternit Asilas...

(9.569-571)

Virgil here recounts the slaughter of Trojan forces by Rutulian warriors led by Turnus, who have filled up trenches outside the Trojan camp and begun to hurl brands at it. The name of one of Ilioneus’ victims, Lucetius, appears only once in the poem, here at 9.570. Yet this figure is not only absent from the rest of the Aeneis but also from other Latin accounts. Servius explicitly notes of Lucetius (ad 9.567) that solum hoc nomen est quod dictum a Vergilio in nullo alio reperitur auctore. To judge from the literature that survives to the modern day, Servius’ statement (whether based upon contemporary evidence or earlier testimony to the same effect) could well have been accurate. It may therefore be worthwhile to enquire what motivated Vergil to conjure up this name (about whose form the major manuscripts are in complete agreement).

If we continue with Servius’ account ad loc., he states that Lucetius was an Oscan name for Jupiter, bearing an etymology associated with light (a luce), just like Latin Iuppiter does with dies.\(^7\) Two centuries prior, Aulus Gellius (5.12.6) likewise observed that Lucetius was a name employed of Jupiter quod nos die et

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\(^5\) More generally, the elision of tum is extremely rare among all dactylic poets from the first century B.C. onwards. It is very scarce in the verses of Lucretius (5.855) and Catullus (68b.87 nam tum, 86.6, 100.6), despite their comparative metrical freedom; thereafter, it is found almost exclusively in the idiomatic pairing iam tum: this Vergil used in the first two feet of the line (Geo. 1.360, 2.405) and was taken up later by Ovid (Met. 13.921; tum est at 11.71 is rather a case of prodelision), Valerius Flaccus (2.103, 3.515) and Silius Italicus (11.116, 16.179). Beyond these cases, tum is only elided in Propertius (2.26a.9, where qua tum is repeated in both halves of the pentameter), the Ilias Latina (294), and in the more colloquial style of Horace’s Sermones (1.5.84, 2.8.77).

\(^6\) Etruscus occurs eight times elsewhere in the poem, Tuscus seven.

\(^7\) Sane lingua Osca Lucetius est Iuppiter, dictus a luce, quam praestare hominibus dicitur. Ipse est nostra lingua Diespiter, id est diei pater.
luce quasi uita ipsa afficeret etiuaret. Interestingly, Gellius adds Lucetium autem Iouem Cn. Naeuius libris Belli Poenici appellat (ibid. 7), thus providing the only evidence that the name occurred in any other poetry (no such fragment of Naeuius survives). This evidence, bolstered by ample epigraphic data, shows that Lucetius was indeed regarded as a cult name of Jupiter, primarily outside Rome but still known to its citizens. Nevertheless, it remains difficult to see what role such associations of Lucetius with Jupiter could have played in the cameo appearance of this name amidst a rapid account of slaughter in battle.9

Several critics have instead attempted to give the name significance by observing that the popular (and probably correct)10 etymology that derives Lucetius from lux may be echoed by the fact that he is said to be ignis ferens at the line's close, his fire-bearing activity thus suiting his own name.11 Although this may well be the case, I would like to suggest another possible motivation behind to Virgil's choice. To carry a firebrand and to attempt to enter the gate of the camp are, of course, necessary initial phases in attempting to storm the Trojans' defences; it may well be, therefore, that the name Lucetius was chosen to carry out this significant activity of 570 rather than the activity fashioned from the name. This pioneering deed ascribed to Lucetius (although ultimately unsuccessful) seems reminiscent of a description penned a generation before by the poet who had the greatest influence on Virgil, namely Lucretius.

In the proem to Lucretius' De rerum natura, after the opening address to Venus, Lucretius lavishly praises his philosophical guide, Epicurus (1.62-79). At verse 70, he records the Greek philosopher's fervent eagerness effringere ut arta / naturae primus portarum claustra cupiret.12 Epicurus thus strove, as

8 Paul the Deacon's abbreviation of Festus' De uerborum significatu provides a similar gloss (102L: LVCETIVM Iouem appellabant, quod eum lucis esse causam credebant), which may originate from the original Augustan work of Verrius Flaccus. Cf. also Macr. Sat. 1.15.14 nam cum Iouem accipiamus lucis auctorem (unde et Lucetium Salii in carminibus canunt)... ipsi quoque Romani Diespitrem appellant ut diei patrem. This assertion about the presence of Lucetius in carmina Saliania seems to be borne out by the Saturnian preserved by Terentius Scaurus (GLK 7 28.9-11) ut Numa in Salii carmine: quome tonias, Leucesie, prae tet tremonti (as restored by Bergk and tweaked by Morel), where the vocative Leucetie perhaps ought to be read: see A. ERNOUT, Notes de philologie latine, Paris 1971, pp. 84-86, although the gloss Lucerius Zev~ in the glossary of Pseudo-Philoxenus (CGL II.124) may be a rhotacised form of Lucesius.

9 More profitable in this respect would be to identify Virgil's Lucetius with the Leu- or Loucetius (no doubt the same word in origin) employed as an epithet for Mars, attested in several Celtic inscriptions (see, e.g., H. DESSAU, ILS II.2 4572, 4572a, 4573, 4586a, 4586b, and III 9136); however, it is doubtful whether Virgil would have known of this particular association, or would have distinguished it from Jupiter's cult title if he did.

10 Lucetius is almost certainly derived from the IE root *leuk-, and thus cognate with lux and derivatives.


12 Vergil appears to echo this very verse when he records, as an unexpected detail, that portarum ingentia claustra hung in Latinus' palace (7.185).
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primus, to burst through the very gates of Nature, armed not with fire but rather with his ardent intellect; in the following two lines (71-72) this intellectual vigour is duly contrasted with the flaming universe that his mind succeeded in surveying: ergo uiiuida uis animi peruisit et extra / processit longe flammantia moenia mundi.

In the dramatic context of an Italian warrior being the first to storm the gate of a fortified camp bearing fire,13 and thus aiming to enter into the flammantia moenia of the camp,14 is it mere chance that Virgil chose to employ the name Lucetius, only one letter removed from that of Lucretius, the poet who repeatedly emphasised his own primacy in his poetic and intellectual mission of iconoclasm?15 I suggest not. At 11.543 Virgil explicitly records that the virago Camilla’s name was taken from that of her mother, Casmilla, with a partial alteration (the removal of the letter s): nomine Casmillae mutata parte.16 The selfsame association – via the detraction of a consonant – may here be hinted at with Lucetius ~ Lucretius.17 If so, yet another, more explicit, allusion to Lucretius can be found in this intertextually dense passage,18 and we find yet further evidence of Virgil’s playful employment of names.19

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13 subeuntem presumably means ‘nearing’, since the gate is not opened until 672-6 (and is closed once more at 722-6).
14 The efforts of the Italians (9.521-522, 535-537) had succeeded in setting the camp’s defensive walls and towers on fire.
15 The verse has some verbal correspondence with Virgil’s account of the death of Laocoon, himself a prophet whose words were not happily received by his audience (2.216 [sc. Laocoonta auxilio subeuntem ac tela ferentem]).
16 Contrast the opposite alteration of Ilus to Iulus recorded at Aen. 1.267-268.
17 The difference in scansion (Lucetius versus Lucretius) need not trouble the reader: etymological derivations and verbal punning almost invariably turned a blind eye to quantity (cf., e.g., Câmilla not Cámilla, as would be expected from Casmilla). It is not possible to scan Lucetius with synizesis as a molossus.
18 For instance, Virgil appears to imitate Lucretius’ famous depiction of animals being able to recognise the calls of their young (DRN 2.355-360) in verses 565-566 two sentences before this passage. Equally, the suggestion of 9.569, that Ilioneus has torn out a huge fragment of a mountain, is reminiscent of another passage from DRN 1 (199-204), where Lucretius rejects the existence of giants who could magnos manibus diuellere montis (201). Finally, regarding this same gate of the Trojan camp, Virgil speaks of Turnus’ failure (as uictor, cf. DRN 1.71 peruicit) rumpere claustra manu sociosque immittere portis, further highlighting verbal correspondences with Lucretius’ praise of Epicurus (cf. n. 12 above).
19 A name that has puzzled commentators is that which Vergil chose for the bard who sings of astrological and meteorological matters in Dido’s court, viz Iopas (1.740). This name is likewise unattested elsewhere, in both Latin and Greek. Servius’ claim (ad 1.738) that Iopas was a rex Africorum, unus de procis Didonis, ut Puncia testatur historia, for which no other evidence survives as support, probably originated either from an attempt to explain the Virgilian oddity or confusion with Iarbas, king of Gaetulia and Dido’s most persistent suitor (Aen. 4.36, 196, 326); the case for the name being Phoenician, and cognate with Joppa (modern Jaffa), made in brief by J.H. LEOPO LD (“Ad Verg. A en. 1 740”,

ISSN: 1578-7486
Revista de Estudios Latinos (RELat) 11, 2011, 33-38
PhW 42 (1922), coll. 887-88), is unpersuasive. The Homeric models for Iopas' song (1.740-6), of Phemius singing for Penelope's suitors (Od. 1.325-9), and Demodocus singing at the Phaeacian banquet of Alcinous (8.43-45, 62-94, 266-366, 487-520), are of course unavoidable, as is reminiscence of the song of Orpheus in A pollonius Rhodius (1.496-515). Y et Virgil also incorporated two similar songs in his earlier works, namely that of Silenus in Ecl. 6 (cf. esp. 31-40) and his own programmatic declaration in Gae. 2.475-489. In particular, Virgil highlights the similarity of Iopas' song with the latter of these passages by repeating verbatim verses 481-2 from it when describing the bard’s performance at Aen. 1.745-746. Such an intimate link between Iopas’ public performance, and Virgil’s own assertions in his earlier didactic work (here sung once more), suggests the Augustan poet’s awareness that his Aeneis remains a performance to be judged by others. The presence of Lucretius seems to lurk behind Iopas’ song as well, just as that in the second Gecicon implicitly highlighted his indebtedness to the Epicurean (see, most obviously, 490 felix qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas). For the Lucretian nature of Iopas’ song is inescapable, treating as it does the course of heavenly bodies (742, 744), the evolution of man and animals (743), weather systems (743) and the explanation of the seasons (745-6); the similarity in content is such that Quintilian’s view (Inst. 1.10.9-10) that Iopas represents the idealised philosopher-musician of old must be dismissed as too simplistic. The explicit assertion that Atlas taught Iopas his skill (741) need not be pressed, as it probably reflects only the tradition that the Titan invented astronomy (cf. Plin. Nat. Hist. 7.203).

If Iopas does somehow represent Virgil’s own poetic career, as argued by THEODORE DUKE (“Vergil: a bit player in the Aeneid?”, C 45 (1950), pp. 191-193) and several scholars in his wake, could there be any significance to the choice (or invention) of the bard’s name? Perhaps it is designed to conjure up the cry io Pan (for which see, e.g., Soph. Ai. 694), evoking the rustic god of pipe music and the rival of Apollo and his lyre, thus suggesting the potential poetic rivalry Virgil met with predecessors and contemporaries? We may note that Lucretius in his sole mention of Pan (4.586) spoke of him (albeit dismissively) as playing songs on his pipe to keep the silvestris musa alive (586-589), as had Vergil’s Eclogae. If the association were rather with Apollo directly, and divine poetic inspiration, Iopas may hint at the ritual cry io Paean (for which see, e.g., Soph. Trach. 221, Ar. Ach. 1212 and Ov. Ars. 2.1); it is perhaps significant that Apollo, like Iopas (740), is similarly described as crinitus at 9.638 (cf. also the same collocation in Ennius’ Alcmeo (Sc. 28)), and Homer’s ωκρεν τὸν αὐτοκράτορα (II. 20.39) and that Iopas wields a gilted lyre (cf., e.g., Pindar Pyth. 11 and Hor. Carm. 4.3.17). Of course, the name could itself simply serve as a poet’s call to attention (“listen, everyone!”): cf. Soph. OC 884 λο ἔκτυς [λαυδ]. These are only tentative suggestions about Virgil’s motivation(s), which would perhaps have been more natural to a Roman reader than the only other etymological suggestion I have encountered from the past eighty years, namely ALEXANDER MCKAY’s association of Iopas with Juba II (“Dido’s court philosopher”, R.B. Egan & M.A. Joyal (edd.), Daimonopylai: Essays in classics and the classical tradition presented to Edmund G. Berry, Winnipeg 2004, pp. 297-307), which seems too removed from Iopas in both spoken and written form, despite the neat link of crinitus with iuba.

It remains a strange coincidence that another name employed and reinvented by Virgil in the Eclogae, viz Iollas (2.57, 3.76, 79), is so similar to Iopas in form; the claim of LÉON HERRMANN (Les masques et les visages dans les Bucoliques de Virgile, Brussels 1930, and “Crinitus Iopas (Virgile, Énéide, I, 740)”, Latomus 26 (1967), pp. 474-476), that Maecenas is alluded to in the persons of both Iolas and Iopas, is much too fanciful to persuade, not least since’ Vergil employed Iollas of a Trojan warrior at Aen. 11.640 without any apparent significance.