

Virgil's Reference To Lucretius in "The Georgics"

Post by "Joshua" of November 14, 2023 at 9:35 PM

Aulus Gellius on Virgil's imitation of Lucretius; [Here](#)

Quote

The positive assertion of Julius Hyginus that he had read a manuscript of Virgil from the poet's own household, in which there was written *et ora tristia temptantum sensus torquebit amaror* and not the usual reading, *sensu torquebit amaro*. Nearly everyone reads these lines from the *Georgics* of Virgil in this way: *At sapor indicium faciet manifestus et ora Tristia temptantum sensu torquebit amaro*. Hyginus, however, on my word no obscure grammarian, in the *Commentaries* which he wrote on Virgil, declares and insists that it was not this that Virgil left, but what he himself found in a copy which had come from the home and family of the poet: *et ora Tristia temptantum sensus torquebit amaror*. and this reading has commended itself, not to Hyginus alone, but also to many other learned men, because it seems absurd to say "the taste will distort with its bitter sensation." "Since," they say, "taste itself is a sensation, it cannot have another sensation in itself, but it is exactly as if one should say, 'the sensation will distort with a bitter sensation.' . Moreover, when I had read Hyginus' note to Favorinus, and the strangeness and harshness of the phrase "*sensu torquebit amaro*" at once displeased him, he said with a laugh, "I am ready to swear by Jupiter and the stone, which is considered the most sacred of oaths, that Virgil never wrote that, but I believe that Hyginus is right. For Virgil was not the first to coin that word arbitrarily, but he found it in the poems of Lucretius and made use of it, not disdaining to follow the authority of a poet who excelled in talent and power of expression." The passage, from the fourth book of Lucretius, reads as follows: *dilutaque contra Cum tuimur misceri absinthia, tangit amaror*. And in fact we see that Virgil imitated, not only single words of Lucretius, but often almost whole lines and passages.