P.Herc. 395 was unrolled in 1805 by F. Casanova and G. Braibanti and is mounted in 17 “cornici”. The Catalogo dei Papiri Ercolanesi classifies the papyrus as “illegibile”, but it can in fact be read. So far I have been through “cornici” 4, 5 and 17, all of which contain fragments from Lucr. II. The readings, presented in the Appendix, are based upon my colour macro slides¹ which still have to be controlled against the papyrus. The text will be published in the Cronache Ercolanesi by Gianluca Del Mastro and myself.

Twelve years ago I identified some tiny “pezzi in cassetto” 114, which turned out to belong to other books of Lucretius: I, II, IV and V².

However, Mario Capasso has recently announced that there is no Lucretius in Herculaneum³: In a paper read in Lille he has proved that all my former readings are wrong, and that P.Herc. 395 cannot possibly have contained the De rerum natura, but what it has contained, he is unable to say. Capasso feels like Dr. Stockmann in Ibsen’s play An Enemy of the People, who reveals that the public baths are polluted⁴.

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² Kleve, Lucretius in Herculaneum (s. n. 1), 5–27.

³ The papyrological bulletin PAPY@listserv.hum.ku.dk, Wed, 15 Nov. 2000: “NO LUCRETIUS IN HERCULANEUM. In a paper read at International Congress ‘Philodemus et Lucretius’ (Lille, 28–30/9/2000) I have proved that until now Lucretius’ text is not in Herculaneum. The P.Herc. 1829–1830–1831 dont contain the “De rerum natura” but another unidentified latin text. These papyri are the exterior part of a volumen, whose internal part is P.Herc. 395, That dont contain equally Lucretius. Mario Capasso”. This announcement appeared immediately after an e-mail of mine about the discoveries in P.Herc. 395. The title of Capasso’s Lille paper is “Filodemo e Lucrezio: due intelletuali nel patriai tempus iniquum”, ms 29 pp. P.Herc. 1829–1830–1831 refer to the “pezzi in cassetto” 114, which have been numbered after the publication of the article mentioned in note 2. It is Capasso’s merit both to have detected the “pezzi” and their connection (but hardly satisfactorily) to P.Herc. 395 and thus inadvertently to have lead to the discovery of Lucretius among the Herculaneum papyri.

⁴ “In quell’occasione mi senti vagamente, se mi è permessa una similitudine letteraria, come il protagonista del dramma di H. Ibsen, Un nemico del popolo. Strana e variegata la storia dei papiri ercolanesi, che ha visto anche
On the papyrus strip to the right we see three letter sequences, placed vertically, one above the other: UM TAS UM. They are terminated by slashes (/ distinctiones), which indicate that they are verse endings and thus necessarily conclude the lines. Verses ending in UM and in TAS occur fairly often in Latin poetry. Verses ending in UM followed by verses ending in TAS are, of course, not that frequent, but still frequent enough, and so is also the case with verses ending in TAS followed by verses ending in UM. But verses which end in TAS and are both preceded and followed by verses ending in UM, are not frequent, occurring only six times in the extant Latin literature B.C., Ovid included: once in Terence (And. 276–278), twice in Lucretius (I 109–111, II 1081–1083), once in Vergil (Aen. XI 7–9) and twice in Ovid (Met. IV 532–534, Tr. V 6. 25–27).

But six times are still five times too much for an identification. Fortunately, there are more remnants on the line above, slightly to the left of the uppermost UM: CE · M (left part of M visible). The dot (interpunctio) is a word divider, sparingly used in the Latin papyri.

With this extra information the fragment can be identified. There is only one place corresponding to our findings: the remnants on the picture must belong to Lucr. II 1080–1803:

sint genere. in primis animalibus indiCE · Mente
invenies sic montivagum genus esse ferarUM/
sic hominum geminam prolem, sic denique muTAS/
squamigerum pecudes et corpora cuncta volantUM/

There are still more traces of writing (recorded in the Appendix Text 17C), but the remnants pointed out so far are enough for identification.

Capasso offers some readings of his own from “cornici” 11, 12 and 13, which have not yet been inspected by me, in an attempt to prove that our papyrus has nothing to do with Lucretius. Curiously enough, his readings fit well in with the text of De rerum natura II:

Example 1: [IL] [N] [N] may be part of II 69: et quasi LoNqquae fluere omnia cernimus aev
Example 2: [UE] FUGI (where I think the uncertain U really is a distinctio or sign of verse ending, cf. the right stroke of the U in the photo above) may be part of II 45: /EFFUGIunt animo pavidae, mortisque timores
Example 3: [ULCI] U (where I think the dot is the remnant of a S) may be part of II 474: umor dULCIŞ
UbI per terras crebris idem
Example 4: [SI]N- [H] (where I think the dot is the remnant of a T) may be part of II 400: at contra taetra abSINTBien natura ferique
Example 5: [SII] which, pace Capasso, need be not a word ending may be part of one of several verses, II 35, II 36, II 958, II 974, in the combinations SI In or SI lAm.

The text searches have been performed by means of PHI Workplace, a computer program available to everybody.

My former Lucretius readings (cf. note 2) are also illustrated by slides and drawings which I think should be clear enough to meet Capasso’s criticism, whenever published.

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momenti in cui discutere una determinata congettura o interpretazione, evidentemente opinabile se non manifestamente errata, significava contrastare intessi superiori”. Capasso’s Lille paper p. 11.

5 Steve Booras’ digital imaging method could have made it easier to show all the traces of writing. But unfortunately P.Herc. 395 is not yet among the digitized papyri.

6 “Sui pezzi conservati nelle cornici è possibile leggere porzioni di testo costuite, nel peggio dei casi, da lettere isolate e, nel migliore dei casi, dai resti di due o tre linee. Alcune di queste porzioni (per es. [IL] [N] [N] - - - - - - [UE] FUGI) leggibili al centro del pezzo della cr. 17; [ULCI] U - - - - - - [SI]N · [H] visibile sulla destra del pezzo della cr. 12; [SII] finale di (sic) leggibile nella parte centrale del pezzo della cornice 13) non rientrano assolutamente nel testo del De rerum natura di Lucretio”. Capasso’s Lille paper 18.

7 PHI Workplace, Silver Mountain Software, 1029 Tanglewood, Cedar Hill TX 75104–3019.

8 An example to show that at least one of my readings is right: P.Herc. 1829 (“pezzo, cassetto” 114, cf. p. 3 and note 3): This pezzo was for a long time my only evidence of Lucretius’ presence in Heculeum. Unfortunately it has twice been exposed to damage, and the photos are now the sole testimony of its original appearance. Capasso (Lille paper 11ff.) reads [M-ES[ ] ] /EHIL[ ] and thinks everything is written on the same papyrus layer. But beneath the M there is an ink remnant standing on the brink of a sovrapporto. To the sovrapporto also belongs the vertical
P.Herc. 395 is more than eight hundred years older than Oblongus and Quadratus, but is still not the original manuscript of Lucretius. This can be deduced from two metrical (but not grammatical) errors: Text 4E (cf. Appendix) reads II 224 nihil instead of the correct nil (principis ita nil [not nihil] unquam natura creasset). Text 5E (cf. Appendix) reads II 748 tum with short syllable where a long syllable is required. The easiest correction for tum is tunc (quod quoniam vinco fieri tunc esse docebo). This is against nunc OQ, but nunc may be a hyperlogical emendation taken over from the archetype. Tunc need, of course, not refer to time, but can also, as here, denote a next in numeration.

The metrical errors further show that the Lucretian text was not dictated, but transcribed, as was usually the case with the Herculaneum papyri.

A third error (if it is an error) occurs in Text 5C (cf. Appendix): the spelling II 663 graemina instead of gramina (saepe itaque ex uno tormentes graemina campo). Was the scribe a graeculus with a failing Latin, or may the spelling tell us something about the pronunciation of the Latin a?

The papyrus can settle a discrepancy between O and Q. Text 5A (cf. Appendix) shows that II 187 fraudem O is right against frudem Q (correct reading: ne tibi dent in eo flammarum corpora fraudem [not frudem]).

The papyrus confirms collective readings of OQ against later emendations. Text 17C (cf. Appendix) reads II 1080: indice with OQ against Lipsius inice (correct reading: sint genere in primis animalibus indice mente [not inice mentem]). The same text further reads II 1089 his with OQ against Bernays hic (correct reading: quam genus omnne quod his [not hic] generatim rebus abundant).

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stroke which appears just behind the tiny ink remnant after the S. I take this stroke to be the left part of an R, and the sovrapposto thus fits in with Lucr. V 1408–1410:

unde etiam vigiles nunc haec accepta nuncR
et numerum servare genus didicere neqUE HILO
maiorem interea capiunt dolcedine fructuM

Lucr. V 1409 being the only extant Latin verse ending in neque hilo. The sottoposto, in full |TUM-ES,[ ]|COR[,

goes with Lucr. V 1301–1302:

et quam falcefēros armaTUM ESCendere currus
inde boves lucas turrito CORpore uetras

For further information cf. the article mentioned in note 2, pp. 6ff., 14f., 22. For the original letter forms see Appendix and K. Kleve, An Approach to the Latin Papyri from Herculaneum, in: Storia Poesia e Pensiero nel Mondo Antico, Studi in onore di Marcello Gigante, Naples 1994, esp. 315–319.

Text 5E (cf. Appendix) reads II 749 et with OQ against Laurentianus (35. 31) in, often used in modern editions (correct reading: omnis enim color omnino mutatur et [not in] omnis), thereby confirming the existence of a lacuna, noted by Brieger, after this line. The papyrus even seems to supply us with the concluding words of the missing verse: defecit et addit.

Text 5E (cf. Appendix) further confirms the existence of another lacuna, noted by Munro, after II 748 and indicates the conclusion of the lacuna’s first line, possibly aversa viai, and also the conclusion of its second line, possibly neque hilum.

The remains of an extensive lacuna appear in Text 5X (cf. Appendix). It is probably the lacuna noted by Pontano between II 164 and II 165, as this seems to be the only place in Lucr. II, where so much as ten or more verses may have been lost. This lacuna will become a hard nut to crack.

Four texts present remains from two columns, which run parallel to each other: Text 4B (cf. Appendix), Text 4F (cf. Appendix), Text 5E (cf. Appendix) and Text 17B (cf. Appendix). They give an opportunity of measuring the length of columns, which turn out to vary between 19 and 22 lines.

The first line in Text 17B (cf. Appendix) shows a vertical stroke which signals the omission of a letter, in our case, added above the line. I think I have seen this sign before in another Latin papyrus (P.Herc. 78, cf. n. 1).

P.Herc. 395 is the first Herculaneum papyrus of some length ever found with a known text. It will thus give us valuable information of what a text looks like after having been exposed to flood, pressure, carbonization, decomposition and unrolling. I find it especially interesting to learn more about sotto- and sovrapposti and their whereabouts.

But the greatest benefit by having Lucretius securely placed in Herculaneum is that it now finally becomes acceptable to study the relation between him and the Philodemus group in the Papyrus Villa.

Appendix

P.Herc. 395 (Lucr. II)

Legend

AB/ certain letters and signs in papyrus
AB/ remnants of possible letters and signs in papyrus
ab letters in OQ etc. (modern editions)

Commentaries in cursive

“Cornice” 4
Text 4A (sottoposto)

II 8 edita doctrina sapientium tempia serena
II 9 despicere UNDe QuEas alios passimque uidere
II 10 erRARE ATQVe UIAM palantis quaerere utiae
II 11 certaRE Ingenio contendere mobilitate

Cf. commentary to text B below.

Text 4B (sottoposto)

II 20 ergo corpoream ad naturam paucha UIDeMUS
II 21 esse opus omnino quae demant cUMQue dOLoRem
II 22 delicias quoque uti multas substeRNere possiNt
II 24 si non aurae sunt iuuenum simulacra per AEDes

Text A and B are displaced and horizontally compressed.

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11 I shall have to correct my former view that the length of a Lucretian column just amounts to fifteen verses (cf. pp. 9–11 in the article mentioned in note 2).
One column contains 19 verses (41 – 22 = 19), cf. below text F and corn. 17, text B. The columns are vertically compressed whereby ends of verses (II 21 rem II 22 nt) and beginnings (II 40 si II 41 fer) have disappeared.

Text 4C (sottoposto)

II 78 inque breui spatio mutantur saECIA Animantum,
II 79 et quasi cursum eiusui lampaDA tRADUnt

Text 4D

II 185 CONfirmare tibi nullam rem posse sua ui
II 188 SUrSUs enim ursus gignuntur et augmina sumunt
II 190 PONDera quantum in se est cur deorsum cuncta ferantur
II 191 NEC CUM subsiliunt ignes ad tecta domorum
II 192 et CeLERI flamma degustant tigia trabesque
Verses 185–188 and 188–190 are horizontally compressed.

Text 4E (sovrapposto)

II 223 nec foret offensus natuS nec plaga creat
II 224 principiis ita nHILL UMquAm natura creasset
nihil in contrast to nil in modern edd. indicates a visual copying, cf. corn. 5, text E and M. Capasso, Manuale di Papirologia Ercoleanea, pp. 219f.

Text 4F (sovrapposto)

II 391 et quamvis subito per column uina UIDEmus II 413 Mobilibus digitis expergefacta figurant
II 392 perfluere at contra tardum cunctATur olium/ II 414 nEU simili penetrare putes primordia forma
II 393 aut quia nimirum maioribus est eleMentis II 415 IN Nares hominum cum taetra cadauera torrent
One column contains 22 verses (413–391 = 22), cf. above text B. and corn. 17, text B.

Text 4G (sovrapposto)

II 488 summA atque ima locans transmutans dextera laeuis
II 489 omniModis expertus eris quam quisque det ordo
II 490 forMAi speciem totius corporis eius
II 491 quOD superest si forte uoles uariare figuras
II 492 ADDendum partis alias erit inde sequetur

Text 4H (sovrapposto)

II 504 et contemptus odor sMYRNAe melissque sapore
The only place in whole Lucretius with the letter sequence myrna.

Text 4J (sovrapposto)

II 753 nam quodcumque suis mutaTUM finibus erit
II 754 continuo hoc mors est iLLIUs qUOD fuit ante

Texts with uncertain references

M SIMuLAC AE NCILI E HIBE IX UID U A IBE
These fragments may fit several places in Lucr. II.
“Cornice” 5

Text 5A

II 185 confirmare tibi nullam rem posse sua UI
II 186 corpoream sursum ferri sursumque MEAre
II 187 ne tibi dent in eo flammarenum corpora FRAUDem
II 188 sursum enim uestus gignuntur et augMINa SUMUn
cf. corn. 4, text D 187 fraudem against Q frudem

Text 5B

II 446 et quasi ramosis aliTE COMpacta teneri
II 447 in quo iam genere in primis ADAMantina saxa
II 448 prima acie constant ictus contEMNere sueta

Text 5C

II 660 saepe itaque ex unO TONDENTES GRAEMINA campo
graemina for gramina not attested elsewhere

Text 5D

II 705 tum flammam taeto splRantis oRE CHIMAERAS

Text 5E

II 748 quod quoniam uINco FieRI TUM ESSE DOCEBO/ II 767 Uertitur in canos candidi marmore
fluctus

The metrically impossible tum for tunc indicates a visual copying of the ms.
(edd. nunc) 748, 767 One column consists of 19 lines (767–784 = 19)
new line 1 cf. 1 1041 auersa uiai
new line 2 horizontally compressed, cf. III 867 neque hilum 749 et = OQ

Text 5F

II 1029 quod non paulLATim minuant mirarier omnes
II 1030 principO CAELI clarum purumque colorum

Texts with uncertain references

IA NIB CES E TC A U (four times) C U L O ERU A
These fragments may fit several places in Lucr. II

Text 5X (lacuna II 164–165?)

II 1041 auersa uiai
new line 2 ] [ ] [ ]
new line 3 ] [ ] [ ]
new line 4 [ ] ED[2] [ ]
new line 5 ] [1] [ ]
new line 6 ] [1] [ ]
new line 7 ] [ ]
new line 8 ] [ ]
new line 9 ] [1] [ ]
new line 10 ] [1] [ ]
new lines 2, 5, 7, 8 horizontally compressed. The only lacuna in Lucr. II where ten (or more) lines have been lost, seems to be between verse 164 and 165, cf. M. F. Smith ad loc. in Rouse-Smith’s Loeb ed.

“Cornice” 17

Text 17A (“sottoposto”)

II 879 ergo omnes NATURae Clbos in corpora uiua
II 880 uerit eT HINC SENsus anIMAntum procreat omnis

Text 17B

O

II 1022 cum permutantur mutari res Qu/Que DEBENT II 1042 IUDice perpende et si tibi uera uidentur
II 1023 nunc animum nobis adhibe uerRAM AD Rationem II 1043 DEDE manus aut si falsum est accingere contra

II 1044 quAerit enim rationem animus cum summa loci sit

One column contains 20 verses (1042–1022 = 20), cf. corn. 4, text B.

Text 17C (“sovrapposto”)

II 1078 unica quae gigNATUR et Unica SOLAquE CrescAt
II 1079 quin aliquoiqui’ sicT Sascl permutTaQUE eodem
II 1080 sint genere in primis anIMALIbus INDICE MeNte indice = OQ
II 1081 inuenies sic montiVagUM GENUs esse feraRUM/ 1080–1081 compressed?
II 1082 sic hominum geminam prOLem sic DENiQUE MuTAS/
II 1083 squamigerum pecudes et corpora unicA UOLANTUM/
II 1084 quaupropter caelum simili ratione FATENDUms
II 1085 terramque et solem lunam mare CETera Quae sunt
II 1086 non esse unica sed numero mAGIS innumerati
II 1087 quandoquidem uita depaCTUS terminus alte
II 1088 tam manet haec et tam NATivo corpore constant
II 1089 quam genus omne quod HIS generatim rebus abundat his = Q
Text 17D ("sovrapposto")

II 1122 nam quaecumque UIDES hilaro grandescere adauet

II 1127 et plus dispendi faCIAnt quam uescitur aetas