

MISZELLEN

LUCRETIUS 3.962 – *SUPPLENDUM*

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*(nunc aliena tua tamen aetate omnia mitte)
aequo animoque aedum †magnis† concede: necessesst.*

Yet another conjecture on this line, to be added to the more than thirty listed by Butterfield 2017, 85–87? Yes – but a supplementary one which will allow the defiant *magnis* to stand as transmitted, without obeli.

Nature scolds the old man who protests and laments excessively the inevitability of death; he must give up all that is foreign to his age and with calm mind yield ... Of the two most recent attempts on *magnis*, Butterfield's introduces a 'royal' plural, *nobis* (> *nis* > *magnis*), which certainly would accord well with the majesty of Nature in *DRN*. Here, however, it is not her majestic self but rather a specific atomic entity in dynamic process that she would have the old man yield to. The poet / narrator explains that process (964–65):

cedit enim rerum nouitate extrusa uetustas / semper ...

the oldness of things ever yields, thrust out by their newness

The old man therefore must yield to the 'new'. Deufert 2019 (cf. 2005, 232) prints *iuueni* (> *mani* > *magnis*), adding the contrast drawn between old age and flowering youth at 5.886–88 (*aetate senecta ... aeuuo florente iuuentas*), but a representative 'young man' is not young enough for the context. The age limits of *iuuentus*, technically the stage of life between *adulescentia* and *senectus*, are imprecise (cf. Parkin 2003, 316–17, with n. 34); some of the oldest *iuuenes* are probably well on their way to early old age, yet even if Deufert's '*iuueni*' may refer to the very youngest *iuuenes*, it can hardly connote the absolute, pushy newness of things, *rerum nouitas*, which *uetustas* must yield to.

The urgency in Nature's harangue reflects a grim truth. Since nothing can be created from nothing (1.149, *nullam rem e nilo gigni diuinitus umquam*), she needs the elderly's atomic material, surrendered in death, for the creation of new generations (3.967, *materies opus est ut crescant postera saecula*); the birth of one depends on the death of another (1.263–64, *alid ex alio reficit natura nec ullam / rem gigni patitur nisi morte adiuta aliena*).

In light of that truth, a reference to an emergent new generation, dependent upon the representative old man's death, is needed. Jacobson 2005 proposed *aequo animoque aedum nascentibus cede: necessesst*, with *nascentibus* = 'the coming generation'. This reading captures well the idea of fresh creation but it is too far removed from the manuscripts' reading.

I suggest that the line originally held a contrastive reference to the *infantes* of the new generation in terms of their physical size. The adjective *magnus*, ‘big’, may mean “also, fully grown” (OLD s.v. 1b, citing Plaut. Amph. 1103, *puer ille ... ut magnust homo et multum ualet*; Truc. 508, *iam magnust*; Lucil. Sat. 6.242, *non magnus est.*). With that definition, the received *magnis concede* would mean, ‘yield to the fully grown’ (which, incidentally, is how Wakefield 1796–97 understood the phrase, glossing *magnis* with *grandibus aetate ac florentibus*); Lucretius then may have referred to the not ‘fully grown’ in a strong litotes:

aequo animoque aedum (haud) magnis concede: necesses

Implicit in *(haud) magnis = paruis* (cf. 1.186, *infantibus paruis*) will be the fact of tender age, contrasting with the explicit fact of the old man’s advanced years (3.955, *grandior ... iam seniorque*; 959, *mors ad caput adstitit*; 961, *aliena tua ... aetate omnia mitte*). We might compare the contrast between e.g. Cic. de orat. 2.58.7, *minimus natu ... Timaeus*, and Liv. 10.38.6. *Ovio Paccio ... homine magno natu*. An ellipse of *aeuo* or *natu* with *(haud) magnis* hardly needs to be pleaded, given the context and preceding *aetate* (962), but it may be worth recalling the high frequency of ellipses in *DRN*; see Kenney 2014, 252 for a lengthy list of such in book III alone.

For the posited litotes, compare e.g. 3.328, *haud facile est*, ‘it’s not easy’ = ‘it’s very difficult, impossible’. A rhetorically strengthening device, litotes is found in Latin poetry of all periods; cf. Enn. Ann. 10.335, *haud magna cum re*; Plaut. Capt. 357, *haud molestum est*; Virg. G. 3.41, *haud mollia iussa*. For the third foot elision, compare e.g. Lucr. 3.75, *macerat invidia ante oculos illum esse petentem*, and for that elision with *haud*, Virg. G. 2.133, *laurus erat folia haud ullis labentia uentis*; Aen. 7.203, *Saturni gentem haud uincolo nec legibus aequam*. As for the loss of *haud*, many small words are missing in the manuscripts: see Butterfield 2008; Leonard / Smith 1965, 125 n. 67; Allen 1991, 64, with reference (n. 5) to conjectured restorations of *haud* in Cicero. Negatives in particular are susceptible to omission; cf. Bendel 1763, 373, “At saepe *non* omissum in codd. Lat. ... omnino apud Latinos tam lubrica sub calamo est *non* particula”. Here, similarity of letters, with attendant assonance in *-dum haud*, would have contributed to scribal omission of *haud*.*

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