8. Lampe furnishes the patristic examples; cf. Anth. Pal. 5. 56 (Dioscorides), 252 (Paulus Silentiarius).
11. Perhaps inspired by a contemporary controversy, in the light of Gellius' text.
12. Wilson, SB 137.
13. Wilson, SB 90.
14. Wilson, SB 146.

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LUCRETIUS DRN V 11 — A NOTE ON WORD ORDER AND IMAGERY

quique per artem
fluctibus e tantis vitam tantisque tenebris
in tam tranquillo et tam clara luce locavit

(DRN V 10–12)

Word arrangement in v.11 strikingly supports the storm/calm, light/darkness imagery commented on by Costa. 1 ‘Vitam’, denoting human life, is the middle word in the line, surrounded by storms (fluctibus) and darkness (tenebris) in the emphatic beginning and end positions. The degree of hopelessness in pre-Epicurean days is emphasized by the repeated adjective tantis flanking vitam on either side. (Perhaps the crossed lines of the chiastic noun-adjective phrases may be seen as stressing the entanglement of life without Epicurus’ sapienitia of v. 10.)

But the preposition e suggests hope, and in 12 Epicurus is shown indeed to have plucked life from tempest and dark and to have placed it in calm and light, again emphasized by repetition, this time of the adverb tam.

It is a pity that commentators Costa, Duff and Bailey 3 neglect to point out the device to show beginners that the often puzzling word order in Latin poetry may serve a higher purpose than obedience to the demands of metre.

NOTES
2. I am grateful for this suggestion by Mr D.J. Coetzee.

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