

EMENDATIONS IN COLUMELLA, *DE RE RVSTICA* BOOK 10*

ABSTRACT

Columella's poem on horticulture, which forms Book 10 of his prose treatise De re rustica, has predominantly been edited by experts in agricultural writings rather than in Latin poetry, leaving many textual problems unsolved or even unrecognized. This article discusses a number of passages and proposes some thirty emendations.

Keywords: Latin poetry; didactic poetry; textual criticism; horticulture

Rodgers's recent OCT edition of Columella's *De re rustica* has deservedly been hailed as offering a radically improved text, with a hint that it may occasionally have gone a little too far in attempting to emend the paradisis *ope ingenii*.¹ While it is true that Rodgers's is the most readable text to date, and while some of his interventions may, nevertheless, be less successful than others, more than once he seems to have gone not far enough, leaving a number of textual issues untackled. Book 10, a didactic poem on horticulture, is the case in point: edited more often by specialists on agricultural writings than those on Latin poetry, the poem still arguably remains even more rustic than it was originally created.² In what follows I propose some thirty emendations in the text of the tenth book of the *De re rustica*, with varying levels of uncertainty.

LINES 9–10

Columella begins his account of horticulture by explaining what kind of soil is suitable for a vegetable garden (6–12):³

* I should like to thank *CQ*'s editor Bruce Gibson and the anonymous reviewer for their valuable comments and suggestions.

¹ R.H. Rodgers, *L. Iunii Moderati Columellae Res rustica* (Oxford, 2010). See especially the review by D. Butterfield, *Gnomon* 85 (2013), 561–4, concluding: 'Never have both the *Res rusticae* and the *Liber de arboribus* enjoyed so provocative and imaginative an editor nor been presented in such elegant form; once the dust has settled, and the pendulum inevitably swung back from such a radical edition, it is indubitable that the scholar-farmer of Gades will owe a formidable debt to this scholar-farmer of Vermont.' Cf. also the review by K.T. von Stackelberg, 'Columella', *CR* 62 (2012), 513–14.

² Cf. N. Horsfall, review of F. Boldrer, *L. Iunii Moderati Columellae rei rusticae liber decimus* (Pisa, 1996), *RFIC* 126 (1998), 320–6, at 321: 'Apart from a few suggestions made by Housman to Postgate, Col.'s poem has never received the serious attention of a good textual critic.' Note also that Rodgers ignores some attractive conjectures by earlier scholars, for instance the proposals by E. Courtney, 'Notes on the minor Latin poets', *Mnemosyne* 39 (1986), 401–6, at 402–3 to read *spinis miniantibus* for *spinisque minantibus* [R: *imitantibus* SA] at line 240, or *et* for *sed* at line 361, which at the very least should appear in the apparatus criticus.

³ Here and below, I take Rodgers's text as my starting point. I have also taken into account the following editions and commentaries (even if I may not always cite them individually): V. Lundström, *L. Iunii Moderati Columellae Rei rusticae liber decimus* (Uppsala, 1942); E.S. Foster and E.H. Heffner, *Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella, On Agriculture X–XII; On Trees* (Cambridge, MA, 1955); E. de Saint-Denis, *Columelle: De l'agriculture, livre X* (Paris, 1969); W. Richter, *Lucius Iunius Moderatus Columella, zwölf Bücher über Landwirtschaft; Buch eines*

principio sedem numero praebat horto
pinguis ager putres glaebas resolutaque terga
qui gerit et fossus gracilis imitatur harenas,
atque habilis natura soli quae gramine laeto
parturit et rutilas ebuli creat **uuida** bacas; 10
nam neque sicca placet nec quae stagnata palude
perpetitur querulae semper conuicia ranae.

The syntactic role of *habilis natura* (9) has been interpreted in two ways. One option is to take it as a second subject of *praebat* (6, along with *ager*, 7); *atque* (9) recommends such a construal, but it makes the overall syntax rather heavy, and the sense is less than ideal ('the nature of the soil' cannot normally be said to provide a spot for a garden).⁴ The alternative, clearly superior and followed by the majority of editors and translators, has been to take *habilis* (with implied *est*) as the predicate of *natura*. This I believe is the correct construal, but in the transmitted version of the text it faces two obstacles. First, *atque* 'and' normally links coordinate syntactic units, whereas here it has to mark the transition from a jussive clause (*praebat*) to an indicative one (*habilis* [*sc. est*]), which may rather be seen as explaining or elaborating the preceding prescription.⁵ Second, the lack of an expressed copula invites the reader to take *habilis natura* as a noun phrase, and it is only at the end of the following *quae* clause that he realizes that *habilis* must be interpreted as the predicate. These obstacles can be avoided by replacing *atque* with *est* (→ *et* → *atque*).⁶ Before we move on, it may be worth briefly revisiting an old conjecture that has been ignored by the more recent editors. All modern editions unanimously print *uuida* at line 10, despite the fact that the proper term for moist soil would be *umida*, conjectured by Lipsius.⁷ In fact, *uuidus* may not be an appropriate term to describe the quality of the soil suitable for garden plants, as it seems to imply an excessive amount of liquid: the soil should be moist, not dripping wet.⁸

LINE 43

Columella describes the tasks that need to be performed around the time of the autumnal equinox (41–6):

Oceani sitiens cum iam Canis hauserit undas
et paribus Titan orbem librauerit horis,
cum satur Autumnus **quassans** sua tempora pomis

Unbekanntes über Baumzüchtung, vol. 2 (Munich, 1982); Boldrer (n. 2); D.J. White, 'Columella *Res rustica* 10: a study and commentary' (Diss., University of Florida, 2013).

⁴ Rodgers's punctuation may seem to presuppose this interpretation.

⁵ To illustrate the point, in no way exhaustively, we may consider other instances of *atque* in line-initial position in the tenth book of Columella's *De re rustica*: at line 2 *atque* joins two direct objects of the same verb, at line 211 two subjects; at line 55 *atque* links two consecutive instructions (*expectetur* [52] and *ne parcite* [58]); at lines 123, 312 and 371, *atque* connects two coordinate clauses.

⁶ An easy alternative would be *haec* (→ *et* → *atque*).

⁷ See e.g. J.G. Schneider, *Scriptorum rei rusticae veterum latinorum*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1794), 474 (I have been unable to identify the original place of publication). Cf. *OLD* s.v. *uuidus* 1: '(of ground, etc.) Wet, moist'; note that Columella uses this adjective several times to describe the appropriate kind of soil, in terms reminiscent of the present passage (e.g. *itaque pinguisimum locum et modice umidum poscit*, 2.10.17; *loco modice umido, non uliginoso*, 3.6.3; *pingui solo et modice umido*, 5.6.6).

⁸ *OLD* s.v. *uuidus*: 'Wet, soaked, dripping'. The adjective only occurs once elsewhere in Columella, in reference to climate (*ubi caeli status uuidus uentosusque est*, 7.3.3; I wonder if we should not read *pluuus*: cf. *ubi aeli status neque praegelidus neque nimium pluuus est*, 5.6.20).

sordidus et musto spumantis exprimet uuas,
 tum mihi ferrato uersetur robore palae 45
 dulcis humus, si iam pluuiis defessa madebit.

As Boldrer discusses, line 43 has been interpreted in three ways.⁹ First, *pomis* has been construed with *satur* ('replete with fruits'), but the distance between the two words speaks strongly against this, whereas *satur* works well enough in isolation (and perhaps plays on the contrast with *sitiens* [41], likewise absolute). Second, *pomis* has been taken with *sordidus*, but again the enjambement is harsh, and the sense awkward ('stained with fruits'). Third, scholars have interpreted the line to refer to a crown of fruits: this is clearly the sense we should expect, but the syntax cannot be construed to produce it.¹⁰ In other words, we need a word to govern *pomis* that would convey the idea of Autumnus being crowned with fruits. One option might be to replace *sua* (which, with *quassans*, is rather superfluous) with a passive participle, but none I can think of produces the required sense.¹¹ The alternative is to replace *quassans* with *cingens*: 'crowning his head with fruits'; for the phrasing, we may compare lines 256–7 *iam uersicoloribus anni | fetibus alma parens cingi sua tempora gaudet*.¹²

LINE 53

Columella associates the beginning of the winter season with two astronomical events, the evening setting of the Corona Borealis and the morning setting of the Pleiades (50–4):

quod si nec caeli nec campi competit umor 50
 ingeniumque loci uel Iuppiter abnegat imbrem,
 expectetur hiemps, dum Bacchi Cnosius ardor
aequore caeruleo celetur **uertice mundi**
 solis et aduersos metuant Atlantides ortus.

I fail to see how line 53 can possibly make sense. The first three words are intelligible: the constellation 'disappears in the blue sea'; but what does *uertice mundi* mean? A number of unconvincing interpretations have been advanced,¹³ but in any event the presence of two bare ablatives (*aequore* and *uertice*) is a clear indication that the text is corrupt (cf. below on lines 152 and 294). The Virgilian model is unfortunately of little help (*G.* 1.221–2 *ante tibi Eoae Atlantides abscondantur | Cnosiaque ardentis decedat*

⁹ See Boldrer (n. 2), 137.

¹⁰ For the idea, cf. Hor. *Epod.* 2.17–18 *cum decorum mitibus pomis caput | Autumnus agris extulit* (no doubt a model behind our passage), Prop. 4.2.17 *insitor hic soluit pomosa uota corona*.

¹¹ For *quassare* used in reference to a wreath, cf. especially Lucr. 4.587 *pineae semiferi capitis uelamina quassans* and Verg. *Ecl.* 10.25 *florentis ferulas et grandia lilia quassans*; note, however, that the verb is unparalleled with *tempora* (though it is frequent with *caput*), and that the gesture appears to imply a negative emotion (see *OLD* s.v. *quasso* 1b), a connotation that would be unwelcome in the present passage.

¹² Note that at line 257 the correct reading *cingi* only survives (or is restored?) in the *recentiores* (R), whereas the medieval manuscripts (SA) read the nonsensical *piumgi* (corrected to *pingi* by the second hand in MS S); this may lend support to the case for the corruption of *cingens* to *quassans* at line 43. For the idiom, which is very common, cf. further e.g. Catull. 61.6 *cinge tempora floribus*, Verg. *G.* 1.28 *cingens materna tempora myrto*, *Aen.* 5.71 *cingite tempora ramis*, Hor. *Carm.* 3.25.20 *cingentem uiridi tempora pampino*; the metonymy *pomis* for *pomosa* ... *corona* (Prop. 4.2.17 quoted in n. 10 above) may be somewhat bolder than the usual metonymies such as *myrto* for 'myrtle wreath', but is hardly objectionable.

¹³ See Boldrer (n. 2), 142.

stella Coronae), but Columella's own references to the evening settings of other constellations in the next prose book (11.2.34 *Vergiliae uespere celantur*, 11.2.36 *Suculae se uespere celant*, 11.2.37 *Canis se uespere celat*) make it likely that *uertice* is an error for *uespere*. Although it might be marginally possible to make sense of *uespere mundi* ('the evening setting upon the sky'), and although some might be happy to have a local (*aequore*) and a temporal (*uespere*) ablative in the same clause, I tentatively propose further changes. If we accept *uespere*, a shadow of doubt is cast over *aequore caeruleo*, which allows us to reinterpret *mundi* as *in undi<s>*. The next step is to restore, in place of *aequore caeruleo*, a genitive dependent on *undis*, and a conceivable option is *aequoris occidui* (*oc* → *coe*, *cid* → *rul*): 'in the evening the Corona disappears in the waves of the western sea'. I admit that, in view of the number of changes involved, this may not be an indisputable solution, but all the changes are palaeographically plausible, and they do restore a meaningful text.

LINE 59

Columella argues that the extant human race is not the one created by Prometheus from clay but a subsequent generation produced by Deucalion from stones (58–67):

nescia plebs generis matri ne parcite falsae.
 ista Prometheae genetrix fuit **altera cretae**;
 altera nos enixa parens, quo tempore saeuos 60
 Tellurem ponto mersit Neptunus et inum
 concutiens barathrum Lethaeas terruit umbras.
 tumque semel Stygium regem uidere trementem
 Tartara, cum pelagi streperent sub pondere Manes.
 nos fecunda manus uiduo mortalibus orbe 65
 prognerat, nos abruptae tum montibus altis
 Deucalionae cautes peperere.

Editors are unconcerned by the shape of line 59, but *ista* and *altera* cannot both be right at the same time, as only one is needed to provide a counterpart for *altera* at the beginning of the next line. Suspicion falls on *altera*, since *ista* is necessary to indicate that the line is speaking about the earth, referred to as *matri ... falsae* in the preceding line. In fact, the two medieval manuscripts (SA) are defective at this point, as they omit *cretae* at the end of line 59 and *altera* at the beginning of line 60, and it is only the younger manuscripts (R) that supply the omission; while it is not impossible that the *recentiores* (R) preserve the paradosis, their reading may be no more than a conjecture (or worse). This suspicion is corroborated by the fact that the medieval manuscripts read *Promethei* rather than *Prometheae*, which may indicate that the original reading was *limi* (the term used by Horace at *Carm.* 1.16.13–15 *fertur Prometheus addere principi | limo coactus particulam undique | desectam*), while *cretae* could be an interpolated gloss. If *altera* (59) is corrupt, it probably replaces an epithet of *genetrix*. I have thought of *aspera* ('unloving?'), but perhaps *infera* would be more pointed (almost 'infernal'). In the lines that follow, Columella makes a point of demonstrating that the current race of humans cannot have been created by the earth, because during the flood it was completely submerged, including the underworld. We, Columella insists, have different ancestors: rocks taken from high mountains (*montibus altis*, 66). It would make sense if the opposition of the two races were not merely based on the difference of material (rock as opposed to earth) but also included a hierarchical

dimension (low as opposed to high, implying closeness to the underworld as opposed to heaven).

LINES 151–2

Columella instructs his readers that, if the garden lacks an ample supply of irrigation water, seedlings should be grown on specially constructed dry beds (150–4):

at si dumosis positi sunt collibus horti 150
 nec summo **nemoris** labuntur uertice riui,
 aggere praeposito **cumulatis** area glaebis
 emineat, sicco ut consuescat puluere planta
 nec mutata loco sitiens exhorreat aestu.

One problem is *nemoris* (151): on the one hand, *uertex nemoris* is not a plausible turn of phrase; on the other, the point of *dumosis* is that nothing naturally grows on those hills or slopes other than thorns (a grove would require a source of irrigation). I have considered writing *umoris* (*umoris ... riui* would be a variation on the standard idiom *riuus aquae*), but *montis* (*mōtis* → <ne>*moris*, interpolated from the preceding *nec*) seems altogether preferable in sense:¹⁴ the garden is spread over a mountain's slope (*collibus*), but there is no stream running from the mountain's top.¹⁵ Another problem is the accumulation of two ablatives absolute in line 152 (cf. above on line 53 and below on line 294).¹⁶ The easiest way to solve the issue is by adding *-que* after *cumulatis* (cf. below on line 261), which will produce a reasonable description of the process of building this kind of plant bed: first a mound of rubble should be amassed (to serve as drainage?), then clods of earth should be piled on it.¹⁷

¹⁴ The resulting case of 'syllabic homophony' (see J. Korpanty, 'Syllabische Homophonie in lateinischer Dichtung und Prosa', *Hermes* 125 [1997], 330–46; K. Lesiak, 'Homofonia sylabiczna w klasycznej epice rzymskiej', *Scripta Classica* 10 [2013], 19–32) is not objectionable *per se*: cf. e.g. Lucr. 1.66 *primum Graius homo mortales tollere contra*, Ov. *Met.* 6.372 *summo modo gurgite nare*, Lucr. 1.184 *ingentesque animo motus*, Stat. *Silv.* 5.1.118 *tenor idem animo moresque modesti*; for this to become a case of cacemphaton, the junction must produce an obscenity, as in Verg. *Aen.* 2.27 *Dorica castra* (cf. Korpanty [this note], 332; N. Adkin, 'More yukky Virgil: *Aeneid* 2,410–15', *Hermes* 134 [2006], 398–406, at 402 n. 35).

¹⁵ For *colles* ('slopes') as part of a *mons*, cf. e.g. Culex 46–7 *pastor et excelsi montis iuga summa petiuit*, | *lurida qua patulos uelabant gramina colles*, Stat. *Theb.* 2.498–500 *gemini procul urbe malignis | faucibus urguentur colles, quos umbra superni | montis et incuruis claudunt iuga frondea siluis*, *Theb.* 9.678–80 *cum lapsa per auras | uertice Dircaei uelox Latonia montis | astitit; agnoscunt colles*.

¹⁶ Some take one ablative absolute as dependent on the other (e.g. Boldrer [n. 2], 169: 'da un argine fatto di zolle ammassate uno spiazzo si elevi'), but more often they are construed as coordinate (e.g. White [n. 3], 76: 'let a space be made, standing out, with a pile placed in front, with the clods heaped up'); the latter is the right approach, but the asyndeton is harsh.

¹⁷ The participle *praeposito* is usually taken in the spatial sense 'put in front', but I fail to understand what purpose a mound of rubble put in front of the bed can serve (such a dam could be used to trap water, but that would be exactly the opposite of the effect intended here). It seems preferable to take the verb in the rarer temporal sense 'to put down first, by way of preparation' (cf. Lucr. 6.998–9 *ubi haec confirmata atque locata | omnia constiterint nobis praeposta parata*, with *OLD* s.v. *praepono* 2: 'To lay down in advance'); cf. de Saint-Denis (n. 3), 59: 'Columelle dit *aggere praeposito*, parce que c'est un travail, antérieur aux binage, semis et arrosage'. But even if I am wrong about the technicalities, *-que* still improves the syntax.

LINE 158

Columella explains when seedlings should be transplanted (155–8):

mox ubi nubigenae Phrxi nec portitor Helles 155
 signorum et pecorum princeps caput efferet undis,
 alma sinum tellus iam pandet adultaque poscens
 semina depositis cupiet se **nubere** plantis.

A long-established problem is the use of reflective *se* with *nubere* at line 158.¹⁸ The *recentiores* (R) eliminate it by writing *denubere* (which is problematic for other reasons), Holford-Strevens conjectures *iam nubere*.¹⁹ Yet *nubere* itself is questionable too, since only a few lines later transplanted seedlings are metaphorically described as ‘adopted children’ (*priuignasque rogat proles*, 163). Accordingly, Richter prints *sinere ubera plantis* (‘den eingesetzten Pflänzchen die Brüste zu geben’), but the expression seems unparalleled.²⁰ I suggest we should write *se iungere*, for which an excellent parallel is provided by lines 194–5 *dum cupit et cupidae quaerit se iungere matri | et mater facili mollissima subiacet aruo* (in reference to planting lettuce).

LINE 165

Columella continues with his advice on seedlings (163–5):

date nunc sua matri
 pignora, tempus adest: uiridi redimite parentem
 progenie, tu **cinge** comas, tu dissere crines. 165

At first he speaks about seedlings as a garland with which the earth should be wreathed (*uiridi redimite parentem | progenie*, 164–5), but then they become the earth’s own hair that needs to be looked after (*tu cinge comas, tu dissere crines*, 165). The second imperative singular appears to produce a clear sense (‘arrange her locks’), but the point of *cinge* is less obvious: while *cingere* can be used of hair, it means ‘to crown’ and requires a specification of what hair is crowned with.²¹ I suggest we should write *finge* ‘dress her hair’.²² While the two imperative clauses might in principle be largely synonymous, it seems more likely that they refer to two different hairstyles. Note that *crinis* is properly ‘a lock’, and that the prefix of *dissere* may suggest a relatively free arrangement;²³ by contrast, *finge* could imply a more ‘fixed’ coiffure.²⁴

¹⁸ OLD s.v. *nubo* 1 recognizes reflective usage, but only cites the present context for it.

¹⁹ In Rodgers (n. 1), 408. On *denubere*, see R.O.A.M. Lyne, ‘The constraints of metre and the *Ciris*: a brief note’, *Latomus* 28 (1969), 1065–7, at 1066.

²⁰ Richter (n. 3), 434–5, citing in support Verg. *Aen.* 9.620 *sinite arma uiris et cedito ferro*.

²¹ Cf. e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 8.274 *cingite fronde comas*, Prop. 3.17.30 *cinget Bassaricas Lydia mitra comas*, Ov. *Am.* 1.7.36 *cinge comam lauro*.

²² OLD s.v. *finigo* 4: ‘To modify the form or arrangement of; (esp.) to tidy, arrange, groom (the hair)’; cf. e.g. Prop. 3.10.14 *et nitidas presso pollice finge comas*, Tib. 1.2.94 *et manibus canas fingere uelle comas*, Ov. *Med.* 29 *funguntque comas*, *Ars am.* 1.306 *quid totiens positas fingis, inepta, comas?*

²³ OLD classes our context under *dissero*², which in fact is poorly attested in the general sense ‘to arrange, distribute’ (cf. *TLL* 5.1.1459.29–37, noting that ‘satis dubia auctoritas huius notionis’), but it may conceivably belong with *dissero*¹, in the wider sense ‘to scatter’ or ‘to separate’, which would suit my interpretation even better.

²⁴ Cf. especially Manilius 5.147–9 *tortos in fluctum ponere crines | aut uinclis reuocare comas et uertice denso | fingere*, which explicitly refers to two different hairstyles: loose tresses of curly hair

LINE 177

Columella instructs that it is now time to transplant flower seedlings (174–7):

et male damnati maesto qui sanguine surgunt
 Aeacii flores immortalesque amaranti 175
 et quos mille parit diues natura colores,
 disponat plantis holitor, **quos** semine seuit.

It is awkward that the (implied) object of *disponat* (*sc. colores*, 177) should have two relative clauses, introduced by the same pronoun in the same form (*quos* at lines 176 and 177) but entirely different and unrelated in content. It will make better sense to write *quas* for the second *quos* and to take its clause to refer to *plantis*: ‘let the gardener plant those flowers with seedlings which he has grown from seed’.

LINE 184

Columella describes different varieties of lettuce (181–4):

altera crispa uiret, fusco nitet altera crine,
 utraque Caecilii de nomine dicta Metelli;
 tertia quae spisso set puro uertice pallet,
haec sua Cappadocae seruat cognomina gentis.

At line 184 both *haec* and *sua* are superfluous: the anaphoric *haec* after such a short relative clause with the same subject is unnecessary, whereas the possessive pronoun *sua* is in conflict with the possessive genitive *Cappadocae ... gentis* (contrast *seruat flauae cognomina cerae*, 417). It seems clear that *haec sua* conceals an adjective, though it is more difficult to decide which, as is often the case with epithets. I have thought of *incluta* (*inc* → *hic* → *hec*, *lita* → *fua*?), but *hospita* (*hos* → *hoc* → *hec*, *pta* → *fua*?) might be somewhat more pointed, stressing the contrast with the two former varieties named after a Roman.²⁵

LINE 203

Columella describes the effect of the spring on the sea (200–3):

nunc pater aequoreus, nunc et regnator aquarum, 200
 ille suam Tethyn, hic pellicit Amphitriten,
 et iam caeruleo partus enixa marito
 utraque nunc **reserat** pontumque natantibus implet.

(referred to with *crines*) or a tight knot (for which *comas* and *ingere* are used). Cf. also Luc. 5.142–4 *tum torta priores | stringit uitta comas, crinesque in terga solutos | candida Phocaica complectitur infula lauro*, where the coiffure combines two different elements: tightly dressed hair over the brows (*stringit ... comas*) and relatively free-flowing locks at the neck (*crinesque ... solutos*).

²⁵ For *incluta*, cf. *Anth. Lat.* 835.1 *incluta Torquatae dedit hic cognomina genti*, further e.g. Verg. *Aen.* 8.48 *Ascanius clari condet cognominis Albam*; for *hospita* ‘foreign’, cf. Manilius 1.6 *hospita sacra ferens nulli memorata priorum* (cf. *TLL* 6.3.3031.1–4).

I fail to see how *reserat* ‘opens’ (203) can possibly be right. It is true that *reserare* can be used in contexts speaking of childbirth in reference to ‘opening the womb’, but this cannot work with *pontum*.²⁶ In the present context the sense could only be ‘opens the sea for navigation (or swimming)’; while as such this is not an impossible idea, in both what precedes and what follows, Columella is speaking about new creatures being produced in the sea (*natantibus* refers to neither sailors nor bathers). I suggest we should write *reserit* ‘repopulates’: the verb can be used to refer to ‘resowing’ a field, and in a poem on agriculture this would not be an inappropriate metaphor.²⁷

LINES 218, 220 AND 224

Columella rejects the ambition of a didactic poet concerned with matters of a cosmic scale (217–24):

ista canit, maiore deo quem Delphica laurus
 inpulit ad rerum causas et sacra **mouentem**
 orgia naturae secretaeque foedera caeli
extimulat uatem per Dindyma casta Cybebes 220
 perque Cithaeronem, Nyseia per iuga Bacchi,
 per sua Parnasi, per amica silentia Musis
 Pierii nemoris, Bacchea uoce frementem
 ‘Delie **te** Paean’ et ‘**te Euhie Euhie** Paean’.

The first problem is that *mouentem* (218) fails to produce plausible sense with *orgia* and *foedera* (219). Foster and Heffner render it with ‘explore’, White with ‘evoking’, but neither is a valid translation.²⁸ With *orgia*, the verb could perhaps mean something like ‘to perform’, but this cannot work for *foedera*.²⁹ I think *monentem* would be an undeniable improvement: ‘teaching the sacred mysteries of nature and the hidden laws of the universe’. There is, however, another problem, concerning the articulation of the passage as a whole: the clause of *inpulit* (218) is disproportionately concise if not abrupt, whereas that of *extimulat* (220) is extremely convoluted. The ellipsis of *inpulit ad rerum causas* (‘has pushed towards the causes of things’) borders on being incomprehensible, and one also has a feeling that *rerum causas* and *sacra ... orgia naturae* belong together. One option might be to substitute the gerund *monendum*, which would have *causas*, *orgia* and *foedera* as its direct objects; however, I cannot parallel *ad* with a gerund clause in poetry. I suggest we should rather write the gerundive *monenda*, likewise taking it with *causas*, *orgia* and *foedera*.³⁰ To avoid the clauses of

²⁶ Pace Boldrer (n. 2), 236, who comments on *reserat*: ‘Verbo specifico del parto (vd. Sept. *Poet.* 22 M. *si tibi virgo [Lucina] favens reseret cita claustra puerperii*), che regge qui probabilmente come oggetto *pontum* ἄπὸ κοινοῦ con *implet*; cfr. per tale nesso (in contesto diverso) Lucan. 2,682 [*Pompeius curis animum angit*] *ut reseret pelagus*.’

²⁷ OLD s.v. *resero*¹: ‘To put into the ground a second time, resow, replant; to sow or plant (land) over again, reseed’; cf. e.g. Varro, *Ling.* 9.39 *ager restibilis, qui restituitur ac reseritur quotquot annis*; note that Columella uses this rare verb in the prose part of the treatise: *si reserere uelimus [sc. uineta]*, 3.11.2.

²⁸ Foster and Heffner (n. 3), 25, echoed by Boldrer (n. 2), 73 (‘indaga’); White (n. 3), 79.

²⁹ OLD s.v. *moueo* 17: ‘To set on foot, undertake, initiate (an activity)’? In any case, this is probably not the sense we want.

³⁰ For the construction, cf. e.g. Ov. *Am.* 2.2.63–4 *non ad miscenda coimus | toxica, Met.* 3.702 *electus facienda ad sacra Cithaeron, 4.75 ad oscula danda pateres*, Manilius 1.10 *uiresque facis ad tanta*

inpulit and *extimulat* being connected asyndetically, we have then also to change the latter, either to *extimulans* or, which seems to produce better style, to *et stimulat*. Finally, there are problems with the last line of the quoted passage. To begin with, the hiatus between *Euhie* and *Euhie* (224) is a cause for concern,³¹ as is the exclamation itself: *Euhie* normally addresses Dionysus, whereas *Paeon* at the end of the hexameter should refer to Apollo, as it clearly does before the caesura.³² In fact, the manuscripts read *et ehyie ehyie paen* for the second half of the verse: *Euhie* may not as such be an implausible correction for *ehyie*, but it is far from certain. I suggest that a more appropriate exclamation would be *ieie ieie*, which can be paralleled in Varro Atacinus, fr. 127.2 Hollis *hortantes 'o Phoebe' et 'ieie' conclamarunt* (for which the witnesses read, instructively, *loliscona clamarunt* and *locolicon aclamarunt*). A conceivable objection could be that in Greek texts ἰήε seems never to be repeated twice in a row, and that the final epsilon never seems to be elided (which may reflect the derivation from ἰή ἰή); but this need not hold true for Latin. If we do wish to conform to Greek usage, though, we could write *ieie o ie Paeon* or *ieie Delie Paeon*.³³ Once we have fixed the second half of the line, and established that there is no need for *te* (humanist) after *et*, we may wonder what *te* is doing in the first half. I fail to see how *te* can be part of the exclamation itself, and while it could in principle depend on *frementem*, such a construal is rather awkward. I suggest that we should write *io*, or perhaps *ie* (ἰή), instead (compare Ov. *Ars am.* 2.1 *dicite 'io Paean!' et 'io' bis dicite 'Paean!'*). The verse 224 may thus originally have read along the lines of *'Delie ie Paeon' et 'ieie o ie Paeon'*, though unfortunately certainty seems unobtainable.

LINE 261

Columella lists a number of spring flowers (258–62):

iam Phrygiae caltae gemmantia lumina promunt
 et coniuentis oculos uiolaria soluunt,
 oscitat et leo, et ingenuo confusa rubore 260
uirgineas adaperta genas rosa praestat honores
 caelitibus templisque Sabaeum mulcet odorem.

At lines 260–1 *ingenuo confusa rubore* and *uirgineas adaperta genas* are coordinate, and the asyndeton is harsh and pointless; we should add *-que* after *uirgineas* (cf. above on line 152).

canenda, 3.45 *certas det in arte uias ad fata uidenda*, Sil. *Pun.* 8.120 *properans ad uisa pianda*, 16.670–1 *currere sortem | hanc sinite ad ueterum delenda opprobria cladum*. On neuter plural adjectives with nouns of different gender, cf. E.J. Kenney, *Lucretius De rerum natura Book III* (Cambridge, 2014²), 96; id., *The Ploughman's Lunch – Moretum: A Poem Ascribed to Virgil* (Bristol, 1984), 29.

³¹ While it is true that one could easily expect 'Graecizing' hiatus in such a line (cf. e.g. Verg. *Ecl.* 6.44 *litus 'Hyla, Hyla' omne sonaret*, which likewise involves repetition), hiatus produced by unelided short vowels is vanishingly rare and would require very strong arguments to be acceptable; see especially J.M. Trappes-Lomax, 'Hiatus in Vergil and in Horace's *Odes*', *PCPhS* 50 (2004), 141–58, though contrast my treatment of *Ciris* 326 in B. Kayachev, *Ciris: A Poem from the Appendix Vergiliana* (Swansea, 2020), 145.

³² It is true that Dionysus is invoked repeatedly with Εὐοῖ ὦ Ἰόβακχ' ὦ ἰὲ Παιάν in Philodamus' *Paeon*, but it is a poem in which Dionysus is deliberately assimilated to Apollo.

³³ For the former, cf. Pind. fr. 52d.31 (= 62) ἰή ἰή, ὦ ἰὲ Παιάν, Maced. 32 ἰή ἰέ, ὦ ἰὲ Παιάν; for the latter, cf. Soph. *OT* 154 ἰήτε Δάλιε Παιάν.

LINES 294 AND 296

Columella advises his readers to pluck daffodils and pomegranate flowers at either sunrise or sunset (294–7):

quare age **uel** iubare exorto iam nocte suprema
 uel dum Phoebus equos in gurgite mersat Hiberno, 295
sicubi odoratas **praetexit** amaracus umbras,
 carpite narcissique comas sterilisque balausti.

The passage hosts a number of problems. First, line 294 has two bare and uncorrelated ablatives with a temporal force (*iubare exorto* and *nocte suprema*), which, moreover, contradict each other: the sun does not rise in the last part of the night. As Stat. *Theb.* 3.683–4 *iam nocte suprema | ante nouos ortus* shows, the sense we need is ‘in the last part of the night, *before* the sunrise’, and it can be obtained by writing *sub* for *uel*, which will also eliminate one of the bare ablatives (*sub* may have been omitted before *iubare* owing to homoeoarchon, after which *uel* would have been supplied to fix the metre).³⁴ Second, *sicubi* ‘if at any place’ (296) fails to produce a plausible sense; translators usually take it to mean ‘wherever’ (which it does not), but the question remains why you should harvest daffodils and pomegranate flowers only where marjoram grows. I suggest that the line is an alternative reference to the evening: *aut ubi*, ‘or when the marjoram is casting a shade’.³⁵ This brings us to the third problem, the sense of *praetexit* (296): editors take it to mean ‘to extend’, and this is indeed the sense we expect, but the verb cannot convey it. We should write *protendit*, ‘the marjoram stretches forth its shade’.³⁶

LINE 310

Columella announces that it is time to sell roses and marigolds at the town market (306–10):

iam rosa distendat contorti stamina iunci
 pressaque flammeola rumpatur fiscina calta,
 mercibus ut uernis diues Vertumnus abundet,
 et titubante gradu multo madefactus Iaccho
 aere sinus gerulus plenos **grauis** urbe reportet. 310

First, a minor issue of interpretation: White translates *pressa* (307) as ‘little’, but, even though *pressus* can mean ‘moderate, restrained’ (*OLD* s.v. *pressus*¹ 6), a flower-seller

³⁴ *OLD* s.v. *sub* 8: ‘(in a temporal sense) Immediately before, at the approach of’; cf. e.g. Ov. *Her.* 19.195 *sub aurora, iam dormitante lucerna*. For *nox suprema* referring to the time *just before* sunrise, cf. further Cic. *Aratea* 34.81–2 *tum sese Orion toto iam corpore condit | extrema prope nocte* (rendering Arat. *Phaen.* 309–10 ὁ δὲ δύεται ἥδη πρὸ | ἄθροος Ὠρίων), German. *Arat.* 310–11 *signum erit exoriens nobis tum nocte suprema | Scorpius* (rendering Arat. *Phaen.* 304 Σκορπίος ἀντέλλων εἰη πυμάτης ἐπὶ νυκτός).

³⁵ For *aut ubi* following on a *cum* clause, cf. e.g. Lucr. 5.1067–8 *at catulos blande cum lingua lam-bere temptant | aut ubi eos lactant ...*

³⁶ *OLD* s.v. *protendo* 1: ‘To stretch out before one, cause to reach out, extend’; cf. Luc. 10.236–7 *donec in autumnum declinet Phoebus et umbras | extendat Meroe*. The transmitted *praetexit* could perhaps make sense with ablative *umbra* (‘veils with its shade’), but it still would require a direct object, which it is not easy to supply.

will use a basket as large as he can carry; Boldrer offers ‘dilatato’, but it is doubtful that *pressus* can have this sense.³⁷ I think *pressa* must mean here ‘heavy with, weighed down by’.³⁸

Now the main problem, the exact point of *gravis* (310). It is clear that the line reworks Verg. *Ecl.* 1.35 *non unquam gravis aere domum mihi dextra redibat*, and it may appear natural to construe *gravis* with *aere* in our context as well; yet this will be strained in syntax as well as repetitive in sense, since *aere* properly belongs with *plenos*. Alternatively *gravis* can be taken absolutely, but this will produce the wrong sense: no matter how much money the flower-seller may have made, it can only be described as ‘heavy’ in relative terms, and certainly not in comparison with the basket he brought to the market. This objection is substantiated by the Virgilian parallel, where, moreover, *gravis aere* is specifically said of *dextra*, as well as by its imitation in *Mor.* 80 *inde domum ceruice leuis, gravis aere redibat*: a farmer returning from the market can be said to be loaded with money, but in absolute terms he is travelling light. This I suggest should likewise be the point in our context, *gravis* being an error for *leuis*: the flower-seller lightly carries his pockets full of money. The corruption may be due to scribal recollection of the Virgilian passage (or simply be a polar error); cf., for example, the opposite corruption *leues* for *graves* at Sen. *Herc. f.* 1117.³⁹

LINE 313

Columella advises which plants and vegetables should be harvested and sold around the time of the summer solstice (311–15):

sed cum maturis flaeubit messis aristis
atque diem gemino Titan extenderit astro
hauserit et flammis Lernaei bracchia Cancri,
allia tunc caepris, Cereale papauer anetho
iungite dumque uirent nexos deferte maniplos. 315

Line 313 refers to the sun entering the constellation of Cancer, but the phrasing raises doubts: while it is true that *haurire* can be used of fire, a constellation can hardly be said to be ‘consumed’ by flames.⁴⁰ The idea we should expect is that of the sun scorching or setting aflame the constellation it is passing through, not destroying it.⁴¹ This sense can be obtained by writing *usserit*.⁴²

³⁷ White (n. 3), 83; Boldrer (n. 2), 81.

³⁸ *OLD* s.v. *premo* 13: ‘To press from above, press on (as with a load), weigh down, burden’; cf. e.g. Tib. 1.3.40 *presserat externa nauita merce ratem*, Verg. *G.* 1.303 *ceu pressae cum iam portum tetigere carinae*, Ov. *Met.* 11.334–5 *iuuenco | spicula crabronum pressa ceruice gerenti*.

³⁹ I also wonder whether we should not swap *gerulus* and *plenos*.

⁴⁰ *OLD* s.v. *haurio* 7a: ‘(of fire, also of other destructive agents) To consume, devour’. Note also the future perfect form *hauserit* ‘will have burnt down’.

⁴¹ Cf. e.g. Ov. *Met.* 10.126–7 *solisque uapore | concaua litorei feruebant bracchia Cancri*, *Fast.* 6.727 *sol abit a Geminis, et Cancri signa rubescunt*, German. *Arat.* 6 *qua Sol ardentem Cancrum rapidissimus ambit*.

⁴² *OLD* s.v. *uro* 2: ‘To expose to the action of fire, heat by fire, roast, scorch, etc.’ Cf. *Anth. Lat.* 623.2 *Cancer sole perustus* (with *OLD* s.v. *peruro* 3: ‘(of the sun, etc.) To affect excessively with heat, scorch, burn’).

LINES 333–6

Columella describes two kinds of pest caterpillar, one that damages vines and willows and another that infests garden plants (331–6):

saepe etiam grauidis inrorat pestifer undis,
 e quibus infestae Baccho glaucisque salictis
 nascuntur uolucrae serpitque **eruca** per hortos,
quos super ingrediens exurit **semina** morsu,
quae capitis uiduata comas spoliataque nudo 335
 uertice trunca iacent **tristi** consumpta ueneno.

The passage presents a number of minor and easily eliminated problems. First, the metaphorical reference to the damage inflicted by the second kind of caterpillar (*exurit* ‘scorches’) alludes to the folk etymology behind the alternative form of *eruca* (333): *uruca* (*urica*), which should be restored in the text.⁴³ Second, as is shown by lines 335–6, the *uruca* does not eat seeds but plants; it is true that *semen* can refer to ‘anything planted by way of propagation (a slip, cutting, etc.)’ (*OLD* s.v. 3), yet, apart from the potential ambiguity, it is doubtful that the *uruca* should be imagined to be so selective as only to damage seedlings; *germina* ‘shoots’ would produce a far more fitting sense.⁴⁴ Third, the pyramid of subordinate adjective clauses (*e quibus*, 332; *quos*, 334; *quae*, 335) is inelegant even by Columella’s standards; in addition, relating *super ingrediens* (‘stepping upon’, 334) to *hortos* produces a less than ideal sense (contrast *serpitque uruca per hortos* ‘creeps through the garden’). The object of *super ingrediens* should be *germina*: this can be achieved by replacing *quos* with *quae* (note that in fact the two medieval manuscripts [SA], and most of the *recentiores* [R], read *quo*, not *quos*), while changing *quae* to *haec* at the beginning of the next line.⁴⁵ Fourth, though less certain, the standard epithet of *uenenum* is *taetrum*, not *triste* (336): perhaps we should restore *taetro* here as well.⁴⁶

LINE 368

Columella compares the effect of menstrual blood on pest caterpillars to that of Medea’s magic on the serpent which guarded the Golden Fleece (367–8):

sic quondam magicis sopitum cantibus anguem
 uellere Phrixeo delapsum uidit **Iolcos**.

The obvious problem is that Iolcus, about a thousand miles away from Colchis, could not witness the serpent fall asleep. One option has been to take *Iolcos* (368) as a metonymy for the Argonauts, but there are a number of obstacles: first, the name of

⁴³ Note that MS A reads in fact *euruca*; note also that *uruca* is the form transmitted in the prose part of the treatise (11.3.63 and 64).

⁴⁴ For the corruption, cf. *Ov. Met.* 9.280 *impleratque uterum generoso semine*, where some manuscripts read *germine*, and *Juvenecus, Evang.* 4.17 *nondum de germine cretis*, where some manuscripts read *semine*.

⁴⁵ One could perhaps consider writing *haec* (*sc. uruca*) at the beginning of line 334, but *super* in this position seems to require a preceding accusative.

⁴⁶ For *taetrum*, cf. *Lucr.* 4.685 *a taetro resilire ueneno*, *Prop.* 2.24.27 *taetra uenena libens, Dirae* 23 *taetra uenena*; for *triste*, I can only cite *Prudent. Ham.* 335 *qui sub adumbrata dulcedine triste uenenum*, where *triste* ‘bitter’ (*OLD* s.v. *tristis* 8) is intended to produce contrast with *dulcedine*.

a city could stand for its actual inhabitants but hardly for people who left it; second, in fact far from all Argonauts came from Iolcus; third, Jason was the only Argonaut present when Medea charmed the serpent.⁴⁷ The alternative is to interpret *Iolcos*, or rather *Iolcus* as recently argued by Lucarini, as an adjective periphrastically referring to Jason ('the Iolcian').⁴⁸ It is, however, highly doubtful that *Iolcus* can be an adjective: the derivation of demonym adjective Ἰωλκός from toponym Ἰωλκός (fem.) is morphologically most implausible, and given the lack of classical attestations (in either Greek or Latin) one needs very strong reasons to accept it. Lucarini cites in support Dictys Cretensis (*quid Medeam? ignoratisne a Colchis in Iolcorum fines transuectam?* 2.26) and Servius (on Verg. *Ecl.* 4.34 *socii uero Iasonis Minyae appellati sunt uel ab agro huius nominis Iolcorum* [Vossius: *Colchorum* codd.]). Besides the fact that these are late texts, however, in Servius *Iolcorum* is only a conjecture, and in Dictys the best and oldest manuscript reads *Iolchorum* (no doubt under the influence of the preceding *Colchis*), which the rest further corrupt to *Colchorum* (or worse); since *Iolchorum* could as easily be a corruption for *Iolciorum* as for *Iolcorum*, it seems quite likely that the former should be restored in both cases.⁴⁹ I suggest we should read *Iason*; while the corruption is not implausible in terms of palaeography (*a* → *ol*, *f* → *c*), the fact that Iolcus is thematically relevant to the context may no doubt have also contributed.

LINE 371

Columella tells his readers that it is now time to harvest certain varieties of vegetable (369–71):

sed iam prototomos tempus decidere caules
et Tartesiacos Paphiosque reuellere thyrsos 370
atque apio fasces et secto **cingere** porro.

It is clear that line 371 should refer to the making of bunches of celery and leek, but *cingere* cannot be construed to yield such a sense.⁵⁰ Some translators take the line to refer to the binding of some other bunches *with* sprays of celery and leek, but such an interpretation is absurd; besides, *cingere* does not mean 'to bind' either.⁵¹ The required sense is restored by writing *iungere* (note that MS A reads in fact *cingere*, which has the exact same number of strokes as *ungere*).⁵²

⁴⁷ See e.g. Boldrer (n. 2), 323: 'Iolco [...] qui designa, con ardità metonimia, l'eroe stesso, l'unico presente al furto assieme a Medea'.

⁴⁸ C. Lucarini, 'Ad Columellam', *Mnemosyne* 67 (2014), 648–59, at 657.

⁴⁹ Although *Iolcius* seems otherwise unparalleled in Latin (*Iolciacus* is the usual adjective), Ἰωλκίος is amply attested in both literary and epigraphical sources.

⁵⁰ Pace Boldrer (n. 2), 324: 'La preparazione di mazzi di erbe, già indicata per altri ortaggi al v. 315 *nexos deferte maniplos*, è qui riproposta in forma variata con un uso singolare di *cingo*, corrispondente, in questo nesso con *fascis*, all'espressione più comune *in fascem ligare* (cf. Colum. 6.3,3 *vicia in fascem ligata*).'

⁵¹ See e.g. White (n. 3), 86: 'to tie bundles with garlic and the cut leek'.

⁵² *OLD* s.v. *iungo* 5: 'To make by joining or combining'; cf. especially Sen. *Dial.* 10.18.5 *pontes nauibus iungit*.

LINE 401

Columella explains when it is time to harvest different tree fruits (400–3):

cum canis Erigones flagrans Hyperionis aestu 400
arboreos aperit fetus cumulataque moris
 candida sanguineo manat fiscella cruore,
 tunc praecox bifera descendit ab arbore ficus ...

Line 401 has two problems. First, *aperit* ‘opens’ is not a plausible verb to refer to (presumably) the ripening of fruits.⁵³ Second, advising that certain kinds of tree fruit should be harvested ‘when tree fruits ripen’ is not very informative; in fact, Columella is quite clear that only *some* varieties (note, for instance, *praecox* ‘early’, 403) mature at this time. As the second sign—the harvesting of mulberries, or perhaps rather blackberries—suggests, the first one should likewise come from outside the realm of horticulture.⁵⁴ Sirius is often conceived of as scorching the fields and, more specifically, ripening the wheat;⁵⁵ without complete confidence, I propose *triticeos urit* ‘scorches the wheat crops’.⁵⁶

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⁵³ Pace Boldrer (n. 2), 337: ‘Espressivo l’uso di *aperio* che allude alla maturazione dei frutti, in particolare al formarsi di fenditure nella buccia caratteristiche dei fichi (vd. al v. 418 *scissa Libyssa*), riecheggiando Hor. *carmin. saec.* 13 *rite maturos aperire partus / lenis, Iliithya*; diversamente de Saint-Denis [(n. 3), 72] pensa a frutti visibili tra il fogliame.’

⁵⁴ The reference is usually taken to be to mulberries, but they begin to ripen in June, which is too early, whereas blackberries ripen in July–August.

⁵⁵ See esp. Ov. *Fast.* 4.939–40 *est Canis, Icarium dicunt, quo sidere moto | tosta sitit tellus praecipiturque seges*, Pers. 3.5–6 *siccas insana Canicula messes | iam dudum coquit*; cf. Tib. 1.4.42 *et Canis arenti torreat arua siti*, 1.7.21 *arentes cum findit Sirius agros*, Verg. *G.* 2.353 *hiulca siti findit Canis aestifer arua*, Aen. 3.141 *sterilis exurere Sirius agros*, Stat. *Silv.* 3.1.53–4 *ictusque Hyperione multo | acer anhelantis incendit Sirius agros*.

⁵⁶ For *triticeos* ... *fetus*, cf. Ov. *Fast.* 1.693 *triticeos fetus*. I have also considered writing *arbuteos*, but strawberry-tree fruits ripen in late autumn or in winter (cf. e.g. Lucr. 5.940–1 *et quae nunc hiberno tempore cernis | arbuta puniceo fieri matura colore*).