

THREE EMENDATIONS IN COLUMELLA

I refer to the editions of the third book of Columella by S. Hedberg (Uppsala, 1968) and J. C. Dumont (Paris, 1993).

. . . nullus tamen uel iniquissimus locus non maiorem quaestum reddet quam acceperit inpensam: siquidem, ut cultoris neglegentia sex milia seminum intereant, reliqua tamen decem milia tribus milibus nummorum libenter et cum lucro *redemptorum erunt* . . . 3.3.12–13

Even if 6000 plants die, the contractor(s) will buy up the rest with a will.

'redemptorum erunt' is the reading of one branch of the tradition (SA). The other, R, gives 'redemptor emerit', which gives a more plausible phrase but a strange tense. 'redemptores mercantur' (Hedberg) is not very near to the manuscripts (and why the present?). Rather, we should read 'redemptores ement' or, nearer to R, 'redemptor emet' (Columella has just mentioned a *cultor* in the singular).¹

Neque enim parum refert suspensissimum esse pastinatum et, si fieri possit, uestigio quoque inuiolatum, ut mota aequaliter humus nouelli seminis radicibus, quamcumque in partem praepererint, molliter cedat nec incrementa duritia sua reuerberet sed tenero *ueluti nutritio* sinu recipiat et caelestes admittat imbres eosque alendis seminibus dispenset ac suis omnibus partibus ad educandam prolem nouam conspiret. 3.13.7

Trenched ground should be kept as loose as possible, so that the ground 'takes growths, as it were, into its tender nourishing bosom'.

The MSS have 'uelut in nutritio' or the like, and the emendation printed above is that of Hedberg. But the two adjectives *tenero* and *nutritio* should surely be linked by a conjunction. Read either 'tenero et ueluti' (4.4.2 'supina et uelut recubans') or 'tenero ac ueluti' (cf. 3.11.2 'inpeditum ac uelut inretitum'). For the sense, cf. 4.1.4 'uelut hospitali atque etiam materno sinu recipiat'.

Idemque Poenus auctor probat uinacea, permixta stercori, depositis seminibus in scrobem ammouere, quod illa prouocent et eliciant nouas radículas, hoc per hiemem *frigenti uiti calorem*, tum per aestatem uirentibus alimentum et umorem praebeat. 3.15.5

Mago recommends application of grape-husks and dung to vine slips in their trench: the former encourage root formation, the latter provides warmth in winter and nourishment and moisture in summer.

The MSS give 'frigentem ut humum scrobibus inferre calorem, tempestate ac per aestatem'. Hedberg, not before time, deleted 'humum scrobibus inferre', an importation from the next sentence. The same scholar is responsible for 'frigenti uiti', Richter for 'tum' replacing 'tempestate ac'. Sense, and balance, require no more than 'hoc per hiemem frigentibus [sc. seminibus] calorem, per aestatem uirentibus alimentum et umorem praebeat'. This avoids the awkward move from *uiti* (in itself difficult after *seminibus*) to *uirentibus* ('parties vertes', according to Dumont)². There is no need for anything (certainly not *tum*) to link the antithetical clauses. Where 'tempestate ac' came from is a matter for conjecture³ (it can hardly stand, *pace* Hedberg). We could if

¹ I first thought of 'redemptorum ementur'. But *libenter* seems to demand an active verb.

² Columella regularly uses *uirentia* as a plural noun to mean 'growing things' (1.5.8; 2.2.23; 3.1.9 [of vines], 3.6.4 [of vines]; 3.8.1; 4.1.4 [of vines]; 9.5.6; 11.3.50). But of course that does not mean he cannot use the word as a participle (so 9.4.4 'semina [in a different sense] . . . crudo caespit uirentia').

³ P.-P. Corsetti ingeniously suggests (Dumont, 97) that *tempestate* might derive from a dittography of *per* ['écrit avec un p barré'] (*a*)*estatem*.

we wished try ‘per hiemem ac tempestates’ (cf. 3.11.7 ‘tempestatibus et gelu nec minus aestiuis putrescere caloribus ac resoluti’), but that is less than elegant.

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TWO TEXTUAL NOTES ON PS.-SEN. *OCTAVIA* (458; 747)

NE. calcat iacentem uulgu. SE. inuisum opprimit.
NE. ferrum tuetur principem. SE. melius fides.
NE. decet timeri Caesarem. SE. at plus diligi.
NE. metuant necesse est . . . SE. quicquid exprimitur graue est.
NE. iussisque nostris pareant.

(*Octavia* 455–9)

At the peak of this heated confrontation between Nero and Seneca, in which the latter exhorts the emperor to seek the people’s love and trust rather than their hatred, Nero retorts that it is meet for the people to fear their prince (457–8). This is unsurprising and represents Nero as merely the latest in a long line of tragic tyrants (in the wake of Atreus’ *oderint dum metuant* in Accius [203–4 R²]).¹ In the exchange that follows, however, is the slightly puzzling (458): ‘metuant necesse est’ :: ‘quicquid exprimitur graue est’. It is not only that Nero simply reiterates a concept already asserted in the line before (‘deceat timeri Caesarem’) which had prompted Seneca’s ‘at plus diligi’. More than that, Seneca’s *exprimitur* (‘all which is extorted is disliked’) is a *non sequitur* after ‘metuant necesse est’.² *exprimere* is to ‘squeeze out’, ‘to extort’, ‘to elicit’, but in Latin *metus* is hardly ever ‘extorted’. *exprimere*, on the other hand, is commonly said of sincere or pretended assent, applause, jubilation, or forced admission. The verb occurs again at 494 ‘humiles . . . uoces exprimit nostri metus’; 581 ‘exprimere ius est, ferre quod nequeunt preces?’; elsewhere in Sen. *Oed.* 529 ‘ulline poena uocis expressae fuit’; *Clem.* 1.1.7 ‘omnibus . . . nunc ciuibus tuis . . . haec confessio exprimitur esse felices’; Plin. *Pan.* 2.2 ‘uoces illas quas metus exprimebat’.

I think the problem lies with the previous half-line ‘metuant necesse est’. Seneca’s *exprimitur* seems in place: the citizens of Rome will surely resent (‘graue est’) Nero’s forcing something upon, or extracting from, them. Nero must have expressed the view that his subjects will have to approve his actions willy-nilly. I have no conclusive proposal to mend the line, but, in my view, something like *laudent* or *proben* would yield the best sense. Could this be paralleled by Tiberius’ wordplay (Suet. *Tib.* 59) ‘oderint dum probent’? Cf. also Sen. *Clem.* 1.13.4 ‘adprobare imperia sua ciuibus cupiens’. Alternatively, *faueant*, *ament* (in response to ‘at plus diligi’) seem also

¹ The passages transmitting this famous quote are collected in J. Dangel’s edition of Accius for the *Collection Budé* (Paris, 1995), 118. On its fortune in the characterization of tyrants by later authors see also M. Leigh, ‘Varius Rufus, *Thyestes* and the appetites of Anthony’, *PCPhS* 42 (1996), 187.

² Nero’s reply ‘iussisque nostris pareant’ comes as no help to clarify the sense of *exprimere*, since Nero disregards Seneca’s interruption altogether with his ‘and obey they must our orders’, but interruptions with suspended syntax are normal in *antilabai* and a parallel case for continuity of syntax can be observed at *Oct.* 195–6 (NUT. ‘iam metuuit eadem . . .’ OCT. ‘nempe praelatam sibi.’ NUT. ‘subiecta et humilis atque monumenta exstruit’).