

P. VERGILII MARONIS
GEORGICON
LIBRI IV

LIBER I: INTROITUS; GENERALIA; DE CULTU ARVORUM ET DE SIDERIS
LIBER II: DE VITIS ARBORIBUSQUE
LIBER III: DE PECIBUS
LIBER IV: DE APIBUS

ON THE *GEORGICS*

Page xviii–[end of intro] is excellent.

On Hesiod, Parmenides, and Empedocles as Vergil's precedents and models for didactic poetry, though the resemblance should not be pressed too far: the *Georgics* is not didactic in the full sense that is applicable to these models.

The *Georgics* were written at Naples over seven years, starting in 9964 (37). (Dates vary, see the Chronologia in yr general Vergil notes.)

Page notes in at least two sections of his introduction (xxxvi and one earlier) the "extreme care and skill which the work exhibits", which "may be judged by the exquisite finish of the rhythm".

See Generalia for bibliography.

Wilkinson, GLA, pp. 74–83, analyzes a number of lines from I.45–392 for Vergil's techniques of "expressiveness". These will be noted ad loc., in the form "GLA [page]."

The assignment of a distinct subject matter to each of the *Georgics* reflects Vergil's statements about the work, but one should beware of making too much of it. Each book contains much discussion of general agricultural topics, as well as of social, moral, and political matters. One might well speak of field crops, trees and vines, herds, and bees as the motifs, rather than the topics, of the several poems.

THE NEW AGE; VERGIL'S TREATMENT OF IUPPITER

Vergil proclaims a radical view of the course of history in his time, and of Octavian's role in history. Vergil's treatment of Iuppiter, in some instances at least, seems related to this.

V. Page ad I.24 for perspective. Inter alia, he notes Herakles, Aesculapius, and Bacchus as mortal benefactors of mankind who were deified. Romulus is also a Roman precedent. Comparing Augustus to Herakles isn't really out of line, and Herakles became a constellation, though not of Zodiac-rank. However, Vergil goes farther than suggesting that Augustus will join the company of the gods: he talks about Augustus displacing whichever of them he will.

In I.24–36, Vergil states that Octavian might, if he wished, replace Pluto, Neptune (note "sola", 30), and Ceres—and comes as close as he dares to suggesting that Caesar might supplant Iuppiter. (Cf. I.503ff: "Iam pridem nobis caeli te regia Caesar, invidet. . .") He also suggests that Octavian might instead take a place in the Zodiac, in the area of Libra. For an ancient, that was the equivalent of suggesting that he might like to decree a new fundamental law of physics. On the religious background of this suggestion, an importation from Asiatic religions, v. Cumont, *AATGAR*, 53. Lucan, I.45ff, made similar declarations to Nero, and Statius, *Theb.* I.22, to Domitian (I owe both citations to Cumont); Lucan's was provocative irony, and Statius' a defiance of the opinion of his class.)

Was the possibility of naming a month for Octavian mooted at the time of writing? Perhaps not (though flattery might well have suggested it): Vergil was inventive enough to have originated it, having in mind the calendar reforms under Iulius Caesar, the renaming of Quintilis for Iulius in 9957, and perhaps being aware of the necessity for the further tweaking that was done under Augustus. The *Georgics* were written in 9964–71. In the event, Augustus supplanted none of the gods; the suggestion in 32 was realized, however, though with a place in the calendar, not one in the zodiac: Sextilis was renamed for Augustus in 9993, 21 years before his death. (The gods are not, after all, jealous. But the stars have never welcomed non-legendary kings: later on, the Lizard, a far humbler constellation than Libra, was to hold its own against both Louis XIV and Frederick the Great.)

N.b. the prophecy of the of the New Age in *Bucolic* IV: "Magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo / ... redeunt Saturnia in regna / iam nova progenies caelo dimittitur alto". The prophecy of the new heavenly order, as well as a new earthly one, is explicit.

On the style of the invocationes deorum et Caesaris at the opening of the *Georgics*, v. Wilk. GLA192–3 (plausible in the light of Wilkinson's preceding, and very interesting, historical discussion beginning on 189). "The movement is highly Lucretian, and is clearly meant to give the impression of one carried away by an enthusiasm that breaks all bounds of normal classical art." Also Wilk. HAHL31.

Vergil's intellectual studies must be kept in perspective. He was not a magus, or even an Epicurean sage. He was one of the world's great literary geniuses, but he had neither the moral independence of Horace nor the penetration of Lucretius. He was never a man who could hope to subsist, on a level higher than that of Tityrus, without the direct and constant support of someone more powerful. He seems, like many such, to have generalized his own needs into a cosmic truth, and into a prophecy for the immediate future that he would live to see.

Note that Iuppiter is not invoked in the proemion; in I.125 et seq., the age of Iuppiter is associated with the rigors of life in the age that followed the golden age; perhaps Vergil is intimating that that stern age is ending. But the necessity of labor, imposed by Iuppiter, is still an explicit and major theme of the *Georgics* (I.118ff) and Vergil does not foresee the end of that necessity within any morally relevant timespan—if he did, the *Georgics* would be pointless. Perhaps, instead of the childish Cockaigne prophesied in *Bucolic* IV, he sees a new Saturnian age, an agricultural age like the old one, that is one of labor, but of peace and simplicity in which man can expect to reliably enjoy the fruits of his labor.

In I.278ff, the reference to Zeus' defeat of Otos and Ephialtes, and to the revolt of the Titans, is ambiguous, but quite suggestive. The rebels are grouped with Orcus as inauspicious, but they are the children of Earth (who is dear to

Vergil and to all who live on the land) and one, Iapetus, was the father of Prometheus, the friend of man. Further, some of the revolts were directly incited by Gaia. (Cf. note to I.278–83.) If nothing else, the theme of cosmic revolution echoes the invocation of Caesar at the beginning of the poem.

A fearsome and memorable picture of Iuppiter Tonans is given at I.328–34, where the contrast with Ceres (I.338–50) is notable.

Not all references to Iuppiter are negative. At I.353, it is Iuppiter who has established the signs by which men may predict the weather. In I.418–19, he appears neutrally, as the weather god (“Iuppiter uvidus”). At II.15, the venerable Iuppiter of the oak groves appears, obiter.

THE PRESENT TEXT

For general notes on the text of Vergil’s poems, which share a common tradition, see *Generalia*.

My original working text was that of the Mynors OCT; any divergences from Mynors have been noted in the commentary. To save keying, the text of the *Georgics* was downloaded (9/7/02) from <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/> (that text, according to the credits, was posted by Konrad Schroder from J. B. Greenough, *Bucolics, Aeneid, and Georgics of Vergil* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1900). The downloaded text was then proofread against the OCT and corrected to match it exactly. The downloaded text is here referred to as *LL*.

In proofreading the downloaded text of books I–III against Mynors’ text, the only literal difference found was *uui-* for *umidus* in line 418—which looks like a scanner error but is actually a very plausible MS variant (see commentary). The only mistakes found were at II.125 and III.467, where *LL* had two plus signs, while Mynors prints an em dash. The only other differences in those books were: *ae-* where Mynors prints *aë-*; and about half a dozen minor differences in punctuation.

Book IV of *LL* was another matter entirely, with important differences in editorial style, and a several of what seem to be obvious mistakes (215: *admirantur LL:-untur*. 387: *Carpathio LL Carphatio*. 518: *Riphaeis LL Rhipaeis*. In passages enclosed by single quotes in *LL*, open or close quotes are missing at lines: 414, 449, 547; 453, 527 may want quotes as well). *LL* also chose different MS readings in about fourteen cases. *LL* showed *aë-* where Mynors did, capitalized the opening words of sentences, uses l.c. ‘v’ for consonantal ‘u’, -es for -is in the accusative plural of many third-declension adjectives and participles (Mynor’s practice in this seems consistent in all four books; there may in fact have been some morphological basis for the variation: v. Varro *LL*, somewhere), varies in several instances from the paragraphing in Mynors, and uses a different, rather more close, punctuation style. Due to the large number of corrections, Book IV was double-read, and even at that, I cannot be entirely sure that I caught all the discrepancies. All proof sheets have been saved in the Vergil box.

Some of the marginal headings are after the divisions in La Penna (general introduction and introductions to individual books), but I have often seen the need to revise these. In any case, the poem is not a systematic treatise, and a neat hierarchical division of subjects does not reflect the poem’s structure. The divisions given here are to be regarded as guides, external to the poem.

AGENDA

It would be interesting to read Geymonat and other modern eds. against Mynors someday. (Reading against Mynors rather than your text would provide an extra check on yours. XX, or scan, Mynors, enlarged, to use as text for marking. Use color-coded light-color pilot pens &/or pencils. Mark all differences. Also expand sigla.

XX Geymonat’s text (110pp), (& others?), for the apparatus & reading? Variants not in OCT or Geymonat’s text prob. not important enough to make it worthwhile, and reasing at library may be feasible. But perhaps xx other material.

Further reading; update notes, print new as needed or when putting it down indefinitely:

LaPenna’s intro

Bucolics (v. main agenda), update notes.

PROCEDURES

When making up books III & IV for the first time, go through OCT apparatus in advance, and key any notes that look worth recording. Also selected from LaP’s notes and heads.

Pagination in sequence from previous book.

Mark in pencil, not in pen.

Rather than scanning entire lines, mark key quantities where this will do. It’s the quantities that are basic (and which you need to learn); the meter follows from them.

When first line of page is scanned, make box 1p longer and start at Y = 4p10.8 (1p0.2 higher)
After first reading is complete, print on heavier bond to avoid show-through. (Perhaps later, more stable, versions on
Brightwater?)

**P. VERGILII MARONIS
GEORGICON
LIBER I**

LIBER I: INTROITUS; GENERALIA; DE CULTU ARVORUM ET DE SIDERIS

- 3 **habendo pecori** habendo here = raising
- 4 **experientia** = labor; sc. sit **apibus parcis** "thrifty bees" (Page)
- 6 **lumina** Servius Danielis: "numina fuit, sed emendavit ipse".
- 8 **Chaoniam** La Penna ad loc.: = Dodoniam; "Dodona [era] ritenuto origine prima del'umanità (i Càoni erano una delle principali popolazione del luogo.)" **pingui arista** **tellus glandem mutavit arista** referring to the discovery of agriculture
- 9 **poculaque Acheloia** The Achelous (now Aspropotamos) is the largest river in Greece. Here it just stands for water, esp. pure water; perhaps also (mcy), since it flows through the same region as Dodona, it shares, in this context, the primeval connotations.
- 11 **ferre** impv.; obj. is **pedem**
- 14 **cultor nemorum** Aristaeus (v. *OCD*); here a woodland herdsman, at 4.317 the teacher of beekeeping.. **pinguia** with 'dumeta', 15. **Cea** = Ceos
- 15 **dumeta** thickets
- 16 **saltūs** acc. pl. **Lycaei** gen., qualifying saltus.
- 17 **curae** dat. of respect?
- 18 **Tegea** Arcadian city where the cult of Pan was prominent **favens**; commam postposit Mynors.
- 19 **inventrix**; commam postposit Mynors.
monstrator aratri; Triptolemos. Commam postposit Mynors.
- 20 **teneram** . . . Page: (sc. pulled up) by the root, i.e., roots and all—for transplanting, says Page. The cypress was an ancient Italian symbol of Silvanus, one of his few attributes that were not assimilated to those of Pan.
- 21 **tueri** infinitive as nominative of verbal noun modifying **studium** **quibus** sc. est **arva** neut. pl., direct object of 'tueri'
- 22 **non ullo** = nullo
- 23 **largum** here = plentiful
- 24 Incipit invocatio Caesaris, non minus longa quam illa deorum. See notes above, on the New Age. V.q. LaP. ad loc., Wilk. *HAHLP*.31. **tuque adeo** "thou above all". Everything that follows, from quem through line 39, is a parenthesis.
quem Perhaps meant vaguely as something like a predicate accusative or accusative of secondary object. In any case, irreducibly vague, I think, and carrying no meaning beyond the redundant specification that the counsels referred to are w.r.t. Caesar. It can't be the subject of 'invisere', since that would leave "Caesar velis" without a function. Translate: "w.r.t. whom".
- 25 **urbisne terrarumque invisere** the subject of this infinitive clause is "Caesar velis", the object is "curam". Caesar's wish is identified with the counsels of the gods. -ne introduces the first of a series of alternatives. **urbisne** apparatus Mynorsii: "urbisne *PR*_ω, 'liber manu ipsius correctus' teste Probo ap. *Gellium* xiii 21.4, *Seru.*: urbesne *Mabcrv.*" Cf. *GLA* 19.
- 26 **te** d.o. of accipiat, 28, of which the subject is **maximus orbis** (LaP: "il vasto universo").
- 27–30 **auctorem frugem . . . deus immensis maris** Et quid de Neptuno? de Cerere?
- 28 **materna myrto** the myrtle, sacred to Venus, who was ancestress of the gens Iulia.
- 29 **tua nomina sola nautae colant** he will be the *sole* god of sailors!
- 31 **Tethys emat** Buys him with his daughters, dowered with **omnibus undis**, like a petty noble contracting an alliance above his station. Quid de Livia?
- 32 **tardis mensibus** the specific meaning, if there is one, is not clear; Page suggests a reference to the slow months of summer.
- 33 **Inter Erigonen Chelasque sequentis.** **Erigo** Virgo **Chelasque** The claws of Scorpio. Vergil is suggesting that Caesar might become a new constellation in the area of Libra, which was an ambiguous constellation in Roman times: the rather faint Libra (Caesar's stars would doubtless be brighter) was sometimes counted as a separate constellation, sometimes as part of the claws of the Scorpion, sometimes as a pair of scales held in the claws. In any case, faint, and so arguably open: at 35, Scorpio takes up more room than is proper, and is already pulling back his claws to make room for Augustus. For more on this, v. Intro.

LIBER I

<p>PROEMIUM 1-42</p>	<p>Quid faciat laetas sēgētes, quo sīdere terram uertere, Maecenas, ulmisque adiungere uitis conueniat, quae cura boum, qui cultus habendo sit pecori, apibus quanta experientia parcis, hinc canere incipiam. uos, o clarissima mundi</p>	<p>5</p>
<p>INVOCATIO DEORUM 5-23</p>	<p>lumina, labentem caelo quae ducitis annum; Liber et alma Ceres, uestro si munere tellus Chāōniam pingui glandem mutauit arista, poculaque inuentis Acheloia miscuit uuis; et uos, agrestum praesentia numina, Fauni (ferte simul Faunique pedem Drŷādesque pŷellae: munera uestra cāno); tuque o, cui prima frementem fudit equum magno tellus percussa tridenti, Neptune; et cultor nemorum, cui pinguia Ceae ter centum niuei tondent dumeta iuuenci; ipse nemus linqens patrium saltŷsque Lycaei Pan, ouium custos, tua si tibi Maenala curae, adsis, o Tegeae, fauens; oleaeque Minerua inuentrix; unciue puer monstrator aratri; et teneram ab radice ferens, Siluane, cupressum:</p>	<p>10 15 20</p>
<p>INVOCATIO CAESARIS 24-42</p>	<p>tuque adeo, quem mox quae sint habitura deorum concilia incertum est, urbisne inuisere, Caesar, terrarumque uelis curam, et te maximus orbis auctorem frugum tempestatumque potentem accipiat cingens materna tempora myrto; an deus immensi uenias maris ac tua nautae numina sola colant, tibi seruiat ultima Thule, teque sibi generum Tethys emat omnibus undis; anne nouum tardis sīdus te mensibus addas, qua locus Erigonen inter Chelasque sequentis</p>	<p>25 30</p>

- 35 **iusta parte** The object of 'reliquit' is 'plus'.
- 38 **miretur** here, it must have the sense of "envy"
- 39 **sequi** 'Proserpina' is the subject, 'matrem' the object. Proserpina would not want to return to earth. The frequentative **repetita** refers to the annual cycle of the myth and the seasons.
- 40 **adnue coeptis** cf. *Bucolicon IV*. Caesar is invoked as Muse.
- 41-42 "and pitying with me (or "me and"? *OCD* 1607A implies the former) the unenlightened country folk, accustom yourself from this moment to be addressed in prayers." **viae** may go with *ignarus* (but would then be superfluous) or, more likely, with **ingredere** (impv. of deponent). In any case, the *agresti* need guidance, both Vergil's and Augustus'.
- 43 **gelidus** (frozen) **umor** **canis** (adj.) **montibus**
- 44 **putris glæba** subject of **se resolvit**
- 45 **depresso aratro** "with the plow digging deep". *GLA* 74-83. **incipiat** subj. of command: man's burden of labor bears on his chattels **iam tum** "already": the work starts ASAP as soon as it is warm enough **ingemere mihi** perhaps from the unaccustomed labor after the winter break; or perhaps they always groan.
- 47 **demum** here implies "not until"
- 49 **illius** refers to "agricola" **immensae messes**
- 50 **scindimus aequor** Page notes that *aequor* usually refers to the sea, and that Vergil is implying a comparison to the sailor's need for foresight and forethought as to wind and weather.
- 51 **varium morem caeli**
- 52 **sit**, *commo posui* **patrios** Page takes it to modify *cultus* and *habitus*, which leaves the first -que problematic, but not seriously so. Perh. sc. 'deos', i.e., the local numina. Note "di patrii *Indigetes*", 498. "Di patrii" is cited from Cicero and Tibullus. The sentiment would fit with Vergil's program, and the phrase and concept might have been sufficiently present in the minds of Romans that it would have been understood as the intended sense here, *meliore carente*.
- 53 **quaque regio**
- 55 If there is a caesura here it's after *alibi*, and it splits an elision, which latter is thus purely nominal. The run-on, if there is one, would sound good after the previous line, which is broken up by alternatives. **arborei fetus** the nom. pl. seems to go with **gramina**, as it can in fact; **atque** would, in normal word order, precede *arborei*.
- 56 **nonne vides** . . . Some of these details are erroneous: v. LaP. **Tmolus** A mountain in Lydia. Known, in fact, for wine, not for saffron; saffron is grown in Cilicia, elsewhere in Anatolia. (LaP., and cf. 2.98) **odores** perfumes; saffron was used as a perfume, *inter alia*, by the Romans.
- 58-9 **virosa castorea** "strong-smelling beaver musk" **Eliadum palmas** Olympic palms, symbol of victory; presumably they grow there; otherwise a fanciful "product". **Epirus equarum** A fanciful syntactic switch, with the place of origin now in the accusative.
- 60 **continuo** straightaway, right after the flood. **foedera** here, more than laws: natural compacts that are powers of nature
- 65 **fortes invertant tauri** *GLA* 74.

LIBER I

panditur (ipse tibi iam bracchia contrahit ardens
 Scorpius et caeli iusta plus parte reliquit); 35
 quidquid eris (nam te nec sperant Tartara regem,
 nec tibi regnandi ueniat tam dira cupido,
 quamuis Elysios miretur Graecia campos
 nec rēpetītā sequi curet Prōserpīna matrem),
 da facilem cursum atque audacibus adnue coeptis, 40
 ignarosque uiae mecum miseratus agrestis
 ingredi et uotis iam nunc adsuesce uocari.

DE CULTU FRUMENTI
 43–203
 DE PRAEPARATIO
 AGRORUM
 43–49

Vērē nōuo, gelidus canis cum montibus umor
 liquitur et Zephyro putris se glaeba resoluit,
 dēpresso incipiat iam tum mihi taurus aratro 45
 ingemere et sulco attritus splendescere uomer.
 illa seges demum uotis respondet auari
 agricolae, bis quae solem, bis frigora sensit;
 illius immensae ruperunt horrea messes.

ELECTIO CULTŪS
 PLANTARUMQUE PRO
 SOLO ET TEMPESTATE
 50–70

ac prius ignotum ferro quam scindimus aequor, 50
 uentos et uarium caeli praediscere morem
 cura sit, ac patrios cultusque habitusque locorum,
 et quid quaeque ferat regio et quid quaeque recuset.
 hic segetes, illic ueniunt felicius uuae,
 arborei fetus alibi atque iniussa uirescunt 55

gramina. nonne uides, croceos ut Tmolus odores,
 India mittit ebur, molles sua tura Sabaei,
 at Chalybes nudi ferrum uirōsaque Pontus
 castorea, Ēliadum palmas Ēpiros equarum?

continuo has leges aeternaque foedera certis 60
 imposuit nātūra lōcis, quo tempore primum
 Deucalion uacuum lapides iactauit in orbem,

Tempus
 primae arationis
 60–70

unde homines nati, durum genus. ergo age, terrae
 pingue solum primis extemplo a mensibus anni
 fortes inuertant tauri, glaebasque iacentis 65
 puluerulenta coquat maturis solibus aestas;

- 68 **Arcturus** currently rises just before sunrise in October, when it is also setting in the evening. Vergil is probably referring to the season when it rises at sunset—currently early April. **suspendere** with its extended meaning of “lift up”, it is used of plowing (i.e., raising a furrow, sulcus), for which it is here just a poetic synonym.
- 69 **illic pinguis terra officiant impede herbae** here = weeds
- 71 **Alternis** adv., = alternately. **tonsas novalis** land that lies fallow in alternate years **cessare** to lie fallow
- 72 **segnis** idle **patiere** future as impv. **situ** by lying fallow; abl. of means; “sitting nidle” is a known extension of the sense of situs = site **durescere** here, strengthen itself
- 73 **farra** grain
- 74 **unde** with **sustuleris** (70) **siliqua** (pod) **quassante legumen** *GLA* 75.
- 74–6 See *GLA* 75. **tenuis** (acc., = -es) **fetus** (seedling; acc.) **viciae** vetch has slender stems **fragilisque calamos tristis** (bitter) **lupini silvamque sonantem** the plants are compared to rustling underbrush **sustuleris** you will have harvested; dd.oo. are the accusatives **laetum legumen, tenuis fetus, fragilis calamos, silvamque sonantem**.
- 77 **linum** flax
- 78 **urunt . . . somno** *GLA* 75.
- 79 **alternis** adv., here = “in their turns”. **facilis labor** sc. est.
- 80 **ne saturare . . . neve . . .** *GLA* 75 **fimo** = with manure **ne pudeat** don’t be ashamed to manure or dress with ashes.
- 83 **nec nulla . . .** nor in the meantime will there be (sc. a period of) no returns (gratia) from the land (sc. since it is) cultivated
- 84–5 *GLA* 76.
- 85 **stipula** stubble; Page: “the stubble under the ancient method of cutting corn probably included nearly all the straw”
- 86 **inde** modifies **concipiunt** (take up) **occultas viris et pingua pabula** acc. pl. **terrae** subject of **concipiunt**
- 87 **illis** i.e., terris
- 89 **pluris** (acc.) **vias et caeca spiramenta**
- 90 **novas herbas** **qua** = whereby
- 91 **magis** rather. As Page notes, Vergil seems to be considering the possibility that the effects, though always beneficial, might be different in different types of soil.
- 92 **acrior** (adj.) **potentia** **rapidi** (here = thirsty) **solis**
- 93 **penetrabile frigus Boreae** Page: adjective in -bilis usually passive, but can be active in poetry
- 94 **adeo** Vergil often uses **adeo** to add strong emphasis to the preceding word (Page ad *Ecl.* 4.11). **mulrum iuvat arva qui rastris frangit glaebas inertes trahitque cratis vimineas . . . (97) et qui . . .**
- 95 **cratis vimineas** = harrow made of osiers, used after the rastrum had broken the heavier clods (Page)
- 95–6 **Ceres illum** (i.e., agricola) **nequiquam** (“not for nothing”; i.e., he will be rewarded with a good harvest) **spectat**.
- 97–8 **proscisso aequore** refers to the preceding operations **qui, quae terga** (ridges) **suscitat, rursus in obliquum per-rumpit**. Vergil is describing cross-plowing.
- 99 **imperat** Page notes that this is a very strong word for a Roman, implying the military discipline that comes with imperium, and is so strong and distinct that it is incompatible with civil life.

LIBER I

at si non fuerit tellūs fēcunda, sub ipsum
Arcturum tenui sat erit suspendere sulco:
illic, officiant laetis ne frugibus herbae,
hic, sterilem exiguus ne deserat umor harenam. 70

DE CULTU PRO
TEMPORA ANNI
71–103
*Novalis; successio
satuum variorum*

Alternis idem tonsas cessare noualis
et segnem patiere situ durescere campum;
aut ibi flaua seres mutato sidere farra,
unde prius laetum siliqua quassante legumen
aut tenuis fetūs uiciae tristisque lupini 75
sustuleris fragilis calamos siluamque sonantem.

urit enim lini campum seges, urit auenae,
urunt Lethaeo perfusa papauera somno;
sed tamen alternis facilis labor, arida tantum
ne saturare fimo pingui pudeat sola neue 80
effetos cinerem immundum iactare per agros.

Agros incendere

sic quoque mutatis requiescunt fetibus arua,
nec nulla interea est inaratae gratia terrae.
saepe etiam stērīlis incendere profuit agros
atque leuem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis: 85

Ratio huius

siue inde occultas uiris et pabula terrae
pinguia concipiunt, siue illis omne per ignem
excoquitur uitium atque exsudat inutilis umor,
seu pluris calor ille uias et caeca relaxat
spiramenta, nouas ueniat qua sucus in herbas, 90
seu durat magis et uenas astringit hiantis,
ne tenues pluuiiae rapidiue potentiā solis
acrior aut Bōreae penetrabile frīgus adurat.

Solum colere

multum adeo, rastris glaebas qui frangit inertis
uimineasque trahit cratis, iuuat arua, neque illum 95
flaua Ceres alto nequiquam spectat Olympo;
et qui, proscisso quae suscitāt aequore terga,
rursus in obliquum uerso perrumpit aratro
exercetque frequens tellurem atque imperat aruis.

- 100 **serenas** i.e., with no rain, as the next verse makes clear.
- 101 **hiberno pulvere** abl. of condition: "with the winter's dust"; i.e., a dry winter makes the fields fat (*LS* s.v. *pulvis*, ad h.loc.). Per White (p. 140), this is because they might become waterlogged in a rainy winter. "A snowless winter is hurtful to fields, fruit trees, and perennials, hence the saying 'January warm, the Lord have mercy'." (*Old Farmer's Almanac Calendar*, January, 2016.) **laetissima farra, laetus ager** sc. sunt
- 102–3 **Gargara** of Mount Ida, in **Mysia**, a region in NW Anatolia; LaP.: "generica allusione a una qualunque terra fertile"; the very mountain looks down with amazement on the fertility of its region
nullo ... messis Interpretations vary (v. Page ad loc.) One cited by Page seems possible: "Under no type of cultivation does Mysia boast itself so much (i.e., as does the field which has had a dry winter.)
 La Penna: Not even Mysia so boasts itself of its harvest as does a field with dry winters. This has the same general sense as the above, but fails to account for "nullo cultu".
 Or perhaps (mcv, less likely) Mysia is understood to enjoy "umida solstitia" et "hiemes serenas". In that case, tr.: "Mysia, bearing without cultivation, boasts greatly of itself [i.e., of its harvests] and Gargara itself marvels at its own produce."
- 104 **quid dicam** In addition to its literal—and superfluous—sense, probably echoes the common phrase "quid dico", introducing a correction or amplification of the speaker's immediately preceding words (*LS* s.v. *quis* (1)). Thus Vergil acknowledges the contrast between "nullo cultu" and the constant labor of the real farming his readers know. Introduces the long list of labors that leads up to the discussion (118 et seq.) of labor as the lot of man. (Page ad loc., similiter.) Perhaps tr.: "Whatever the winter was like, I shall sing of the man who ...".
comminus hand-to-hand. Page, citing Keightley: "iacto ... comminus insequitur: 'the image is that of the Roman soldier throwing his *pilum*, and then attacking the foe sword in hand.'"
- 105 **male pinguis** LaP.: "infeconda"; because heaped up and therefore dry and unavailable for rooting?
- 106 **sequentes** following the farmer's hoe as he makes a path for the water (Page)
- 107–9 *GLA* 76. **cum** when **aestuare** burn (fig.) **herbis** abl. of attendant circumstance: so much for the winter, here is summer's work
- 108 **tramitis** "in side channels"; trames lit. = (side) path; "trames aquae" can refer to an irrigation channel. Wilk.: "the sloping channel". **clivoso supercilio** supercilium here = raised bank, by analogy with the eyebrow ridge (*OLD*). Thus perh. tr. "in steep-banked irrigation channels".
- 109 **raucum murmur** **levia saxa** smooth pebbles, a bit of a stretch for *saxa*; or proper *saxa*, worn smooth
- 110 **ciet** arouse, elicit **scatebris** with its bubbling and splashing
- 111 **quid** (sc. *dicam*) **qui** continuing the thought of 104 **culmus** stalk
- 112 **luxuries** the rank growth of the young plants **depascit** turn animals out to pasture on; in this case, sheep, per Page
- 113 **sata** (neut. pl.) that which was sown **sulcos** i.e., altitudinem sulcorum **paludis** marshy spots in the field
- 114 **collectum umorem** *GLA* 77. The line refers to draining by means of trenches filled with sand.
- 115 **incertis mensibus** the spring and autumn months, when heavy rains are a risk (Page) **si** mcv: "in case", or "if" = "in those places where"
- 116 **exit** sc. e *paludibus* **obduco** (p.p. abl. of means) draw over, as a cover
- 117 **unde...** whence the (other) low spots **tepidus** implies "stagnant"
- 119 **experti labores** here = "resorted to", implying "expended" **nihil** object of 'officiunt' (impede); the subject of the verb is 'labores'.
- 120 **Strymoniaequae** The Strymon, between Macedonia and Thrace, pooled to form a great gathering place for migrating cranes. **intiba** Vergil, at least, estimates chicory at its true worth.
- 121 **nocet** Agrees in number with the nearest, the first, and the majority of the alternative subjects. The clause is grammatically independent of the rest of the sentence: "nihil officiant: anser . . . nocet." **pater** Note the view of Iuppiter here taken, and cf. the opening invocation of Caesar. **viam colendi voluit**
- 123 **per artem movit agros** movit stands for something more specific: "ordered the fields (i.e., agriculture) as they are", as described in 129ff. **corda** wits (Page, as seated in the heart), obj. of *acuens*.
- 124 **torpere** The subject of the infinitive is "sua regna" (neut. pl.). The infinitive clause is the object of 'passus' (sc. est). **gravi veterno** dull lassitude
- 125 **ne quidem** not even (*OLD*) **signare partirive limite** able of means; Page: limes here prob. refers to the actual boundary stones
- 127 **in medium** in common
- 129 **malum virus** the taint of the ills of the world **serpentibus** abl. of means **atris** symbolic of their deadliness
- 132 **vina currentia rivis** !

LIBER I

<i>Tempestas optima</i>	<p>Vmida solstitia atque hiemes orate serenas, agricolae; hiberno laetissima puluere farra, laetus ager: nullo tantum se Mysia cultu iactat et ipsa suas mirantur Gargara messis.</p>	100
<i>Post sementem, solum aequare</i>	<p>quid dicam, iacto qui semine comminus arua insequitur cumulosque ruit male pinguis harenae,</p>	105
<i>Aquas ducere</i>	<p>deinde satis fluuium inducit riuosque sequentis, et, cum exustus ager morientibus aestuat herbis, ecce supercilio cliuosi tramitis undam elicit? illa cadens raucum per leuia murmur saxa ciet, scatebrisque arentia temperat arua.</p>	110
<i>Luxuries herbarum moderare</i>	<p>quid qui, ne grauidis procumbat culmus aristis, luxuriam segetum tenera depascit in herba, cum primum sulcos aequant sata, quique paludis collectum umōrem bibulā dēdūcit harenā?</p>	
<i>Aquas deducere</i>	<p>praesertim incertis si mensibus amnis abundans exit et obducto late tenet omnia limo, unde cauae tepido sudant umore lacunae.</p>	115
DE LABORE 118–159	<p>Nec tamen, haec cum sint hominumque boumque labores uersando terram experti, nihil imprōbus anser Strymoniaeque grues et amaris intibā fibris officiunt aut umbra nocet. pater ipse colendi haud facilem esse uiam uoluit, primusque per artem mouit agros, curis acuens mortalia corda nec torpēre graui passus sua regna ueterno.</p>	120
<i>Aetas aurea...</i>	<p>ante Iouem nulli subigebant arua coloni: ne signare quidem aut partiri limite campum fas erat; in medium quaerebant, ipsaque tellus omnia liberius nullo poscente ferebat.</p>	125
<i>...et finis eius</i>	<p>ille malum uīrus serpentibus addidit atris praedarique lupos iussit pontumque moueri, mellaque decussit foliis ignemque remouit et passim riuis currentia uina repressit,</p>	130

- 133 **ut . . . artis** *GLA* 77. **varias artis** obj. of **extunderet**, of which the tacit subject is 'mortales' **usus** obj. of **meditando**
- 134 **quaereret in sulcis herbam frumenti**
- 135 **abstrusum** hidden (by Iupiter), modified by **vena**, here of minerals
- 136 **alnus** alder **sensere** 3 pl. perf. of 'sentio'; subject is **fluvii**.
- 137 **navita** nauta
- 138 The rising of the Pleiades marked the beginning of the season for navigation (LaP.). The acronycal rising (latest visible at sunset) and setting (sunset) of the Hyades marked rainy periods; these dates are given by Eudoxos (first half of 960os) as, respectively, 10/17 and 4/12. **Lycaonis Arcton** Callisto, daughter of Lycaon.
- 140 **magnos** ... surround the long-leaping prey with dogs
- 141 **alius** another man **funda** "a dragnet" (Traup.); can also mean "sling", perhaps a derivative meaning. **alta** the deeps, or the things in them
- 142 **linum** linen, line, fishline, net. Page makes this sentence not a contrast between net and line (which would be *linum*, singular: *mcv*), but between two types of net: the cast net, which reaches the bottom, and a trawled net in the sea (**pelago**, loc. of *pelagus*). **iam** merely emphatic, thus here connoting the next item in a series
- 143 **argutae** refers to the noise made by the saw (Page, noting a characteristic use), or perhaps (*mcv*) also the skill needed to make a saw.
- 145 **venere** 3 pl. perf.
- 146 **duris rebus**
- 148 **arbutum** the fruit, as opp. to *arbutus*, the tree. *A. unedo* (fam. Ericaceae, order Dileniidae) is indigenous to S. Europe, where it is "cultivated for ornament and food" (*RHDI*). 'Arbutus' is sometimes used of the true strawberry (fam. Rosaceae, order Rosidae), but *unedo* was the *arbutus per excellentia* for the ancients. *LS* cites a passage from Varro in which, as here, the *arbutus* is mentioned with acorns as a food of primitive man. Perhaps the insipid taste of *A. unedo* is a reason for this pairing; in any case Vergil might be making use of such primitive associations. **sacrae silvae**
- 149 **victum** sustenance
- 150 **mala robigo culmos esset** 'culmus' is "synechdochal" or "Greek" accusative (also called acc. of specification), a poetic and late use, signifying the part affected by an action.
- 151 **segnis carduus** The verbs are in the subjunctive of purpose, governed by "ut". The thistle is "lazy" because it is a sign of neglectful cultivation.
- 152 **intereunt die** **subit** take the place of
- 153 **lappae** burs of various sorts **triboli** (also *tribuli*) lit. "caltrops", figuratively of thorns or other prickly growths.
- 154 **lolium** darnel
- 156 **ruris** genitive, modifying 'umbras'
- 158 **magnum acervum alterius** another's fine harvest **frustra** adv.
- 159 **concussaque . . . quercu** A vivid and pointed picture of the hapless failure beating on an oak tree to shake down acorns to eat. He's probably whacking the trunk. **solaberis famem**
- 160 **arma** continues the comparison of the farmer with the soldier (as at 104)
- 161 **quis** = *quibus* **potuere** 3 pl.
- 162 **vomis** = *vomer* **grave robur inflexi aratri**
- 164 **tribula** threshing sledge **traheae** sledges **rastrum** drag-hoe (*OLD*); some at least had teeth (Cato), and were heavy enough to break clods (Page)
- 165 **virgea supellex** implements woven of osiers **Celeus** Legendary king of Eleusis, who was taught by Ceres the art of weaving implements out of osiers. Father of Triptolemos, to whom Ceres taught the use of the plow, and who was one of the founders of the Eleusinian mysteries. **vilis** LaP.: "umile".

LIBER I

<i>Artes</i>	<p>ut uarias usūs meditando extunderet artis paulatim, et sulcis frumenti quaereret herbam, ut silicis uenis abstrusum excuderet ignem.</p>	135
	<p>tunc alnos primum fluuii sensēre cauatas; nauita tum stellis numeros et nomina fecit Pleiadas, Hyadas, claramque Lycaonis Arcton. tum laqueis captare feras et fallere uisco inuentum et magnos canibus circumdare saltūs;</p>	140
<i>Labor improbus omnia uicit</i>	<p>atque alius latum fundā iam uerberat amnem alta petens, pelagoque alius trahit umida līnā. tum ferri rigor atque argutae lammina serrae (nam primi cuneis scindebant fissile lignum), tum uariae uenēre artes. labor omnia uicit imprōbus et dūrīs ugens in rebus egestas.</p>	145
<i>Aratrum— et labor cultus 147–159</i>	<p>prima Ceres ferro mortalis uertere terram instituit, cum iam glandes atque arbuta sacrae deficerent siluae et uictum Dodona negaret. mox et frumentis labor additus, ut mala culmos esset robigo segnisque horreret in aruis carduus; intereunt segetes, subit aspera silua lappaeque tribolique, interque nitentia culta infelix lolium et steriles dominantur auenae. quod nisi et adsiduis herbam insectabere rastris et sonitu terrebis auis et ruris opaci falce premes umbras uotisque uocaueris imbrem, heu magnum alterius frustrā spectabis aceruum concussaue famem in siluis solabere quercu.</p>	150
<i>Arma coloni 160–175</i>	<p>Dicendum et quae sint duris agrestibus arma, quis sine nec potuēre serī nec surgere messes: uomis et inflexi primum graue robur arātri, tardaue Eleusinae matris uoluentia plaustra, tribulaque traheaeque et iniquo pondere rastrī; uirgea praeterea Celei uilisque supellex,</p>	160
		165

166 arbuteae crates Specialized wicker implements made of arbutus, the strawberry tree. **Iacchus** LaP.: “propriamente nome o apostrofe mistica in Atene ed Eleusis”, an epithet or alternate name of Bacchus, god of the vine, who, “in unione con Cerere forma la coppia fondamentale degli dei protettori delle gente dei campi.” **vannus** winnowing fan

167 memor Substantive adj., subject of **repones**.

168 digna takes abl., **te**, thus has the general sense of “appropriate for you, sc. if you are worthy of it”. But see Page.

169 The living elm is trained to grow into the required shape for the part.

169: THE ROMAN PLOW For further general background, see Supplementary Notes, at the end of Book I.

The Roman plow (arātrum) was what modern agricultural writers call an “ard”, or “breaking plow”. The ard is best suited for the light soils of warmer and dryer regions, which do not need turning, and would indeed suffer from it. It is therefore historically typical of Mediterranean countries. It cuts shallowly, and breaks the soil, pushing it to either side without turning it. (Variations from this were possible, however: White p. 139; also note 2.261.: supinatas glaebas) The moldboard or turning plow is suitable for the heavier soils of cooler and wetter regions. It cuts deeply and inverts the top layer of the soil, turning it to one side of the plow.

There were various types of arātrum, but the following is a typical arrangement, conforming to Vergil’s plow: The **bura** (gen. buris), or “plow-beam”, is the section of the beam that bends downward from the temo, being attached at its lower end to the dentale. The **temo** or “yoke-beam” is the part of the beam extending between the bura and the yoke. The **dentalia** is translated as “sole”. (The singular ‘dentale’, used by White, is also found, but only the plural form is classical per *LS*.) It is the long piece of wood on which the plow rests, over one end of which the **vomer** (share) is fixed. At the other end is fixed the lower end of the bura, which transmits the pull of the draft animals. The meaning of “duplex dorsum” is debated; it probably refers to the two arms often found extending back from the dentalia. The nature of the **ures** is not clear. (They are not the twin blades of the arrow-like point often found on the vomer.) They enabled a higher ridge to be formed, where this was desirable for drainage. (*LS*’s “moldboard”, however, is anachronistic.) A reconstruction, shown in Page, has, well, ears, extending from the back of the dentale like the fins on a ’57 Caddy; this accords with line 173, esp. if one removes Mynors’ comma after aures, as I have done. The **stiva**, “stilt” is the upright at the back of the plow, its base fixed either in the dentalia or the bura; at its top is the **manicula**, or handgrip. The stiva was the focus of the plowman’s effort and attention: by moving it and pressing (strongly) on it he kept the plow straight and the share at the proper depth and angle.

170 Commam post ‘burim’ posui. **171 huic** sunt **a stirpe** from (its) base **protentus** stretched forth

173 caeditur iugo here, and with stiva, the abl., a sort of ablative of specification, expresses the purpose. **tilia levis** American tiliae, at any rate, are light, but they are not strong.

174 currus Servius explains this as a reference to wheeled plows characteristic of Vergil’s home region. Pliny the Elder refers to such plows as a recent development in Gaul (“Raetia Galliae), but White (p. 141) maintains that this does not warrant accepting them in Cisalpinia, and cites Catullus’ “currus” used of the Argo.

175 All the parts are hardened slowly, suspended at a certain height over the hearth (mcv). (In Hesiod, *Wks*, the steering oar of a ship is hung over the hearth in between sailing seasons.) LaP.’s translation, “il fumo ne prova la robustezza”, misses the point. Vergil is vivid and lifelike here: “explorat robur” points to the purpose—strength—but literally means “seeks out the heart-wood”, as its effects indeed would, after long drying over the fire. The reference to smoke is synecdoche: the piece would necessarily be high enough so that as much smoke as heat reaches it.

177 piget worries (tr.), subject of the infinitive clause. **tenuis curis**

178 cum primis = ‘imprimis’, “first” or “chiefly”. Some non-capital MSS have ‘primum’, which scans if -um is not elided.

179 creta White (chalky) clay is turned into the soil of the threshing floor. This must be done before it is rolled—the order of the description here is a minor poetic liberty. (The wording excludes the possibility of transposition.)

180 pulvere fatiscat “breaks up into dust. Post ‘fatiscat’ Mynors commam posuit; delevi, et parentheses posui sequentes. **victa** modifies area.

181–6 Parentheses posui. These lines describe the consequences of the conditions noted in 180.

181 inludant Some capital MSS have, in the first or second hand, ‘inludent’ or ‘ludent’.

183 oculis capti idiomatic, = “blind”. **184 inventus** here a participial adj. = cavicolus. **186 inopi senectae**

187 contemplator the word is rare as a noun; here it is a 2nd pers. sing. future passive imperative. Page: “Mark the dignity of the word, and cf. 4.61. It is borrowed from Lucretius (2.114) and is strongly didactic in tone, this form of the imperative being especially used in laws.” **item** moreover **nux** alone, can mean the almond; LaP. translates “mandorlo”. Vergil at this point refers to the tree, not the nuts. Page notes that the flowering of the almonds is “one of the striking features of spring in Italy”. **nux plurima silvis** plurima here is an adj. meaning “most frequently occurring” (*OLD* s.v.); silvis is loc.

189 fetus nuts **190 tritura** threshing **191 umbra** in shade (leaves) rather than in fruit

192 nequiquam here = “fruitlessly” **pinguis palea** (chaff) **culmos** fat with chaff, not with grain

194 nitrum potash (Traup.); carbonate of soda (Page)

195 ut fetus esset grandior siliquis fallacibus “more than empty husks”

196 quamvis maderent (intrans., a normal sense of maderē, to be wet; maderent is impf. subj.). Page makes quamvis an adv., but whatever interpretation is given to this passage, the conjunction would do better: the adv. implies that there is no limit to how moist, or how quickly cooked, the legumes might be—the outcome would always be success. **properata** agrees with semina (193) **quamvis ... maderent** “and though the early-sown seeds become soaked (i.e., and rot) in the wan warmth (sc. of the early spring)”. See Supplementary Notes, at the end of Book I, on this interpretation, by mcv, which seems much more plausible the accepted interpretation of this line.

197 lecta diu long-selected (strains) **diu et multo labore spectata** **spectata** here = “striven for”

198 degenerare from their previous nature **ni** here = nisi

LIBER I

	arbūteae crātes et mystica uannus ĩacchi; omnia quae multo ante memor prouisa repones, si te digna manet diuini gloria ruris.	
Aratrum	continuo in siluis magna ui flexa domatur in burim, et curui formam accipit ulmus aratri. huic a stirpe pedes temo protentus in octo, binae aures duplici aptantur dentalia dorso. caeditur et tilia ante iugo leuis altaque fagus stiuaque, quae currūs a tergo torqueat imos, et suspensā fōcīs explōrat rōbora fumus.	170 175
Praecepta varia 175–204 <i>De area</i>	Possum multa tibi ueterum praecepta referre, ni rēfūgis tenuisque piget cognoscere curas. area cum prīmīs ingenti <u>aequanda</u> cylindro et uertenda manu et crētā solidanda tenaci, ne subeant herbae neu puluere uictā fatiscat (tum uariae inludant pestes: saepe exiguus mus sub terris posuitque domos atque horrea fecit, aut oculis capti fōdēre cubilia talpae, inuentusque cauis būfō et quae plurima terrae monstra ferunt, populatque ingentem farris aceruum curculio atque inopi metuens formica senectae.)	180 185
<i>De praedictione messis</i>	contemplator item, cum se nux plurimā siluis indūet in florem et ramos curuabit olentis: si superant fetus, pariter frumenta sequentur magnaque cum magno ueniet tritura calore; at si luxuria foliorum exuberat umbrā, nequiquam pinguis paleā teret ārea culmos. semina uidi equidem multos medicare serentis et nitro prius et nigra perfundēre āmurca, grandior ut fetūs siliquis fallacibus esset et quamuis igni exiguo properata madērent. uidi lecta diu et multo spectata labore degenerare tamen, ni uis humana quotannis	190 195
<i>Medicamentum lectionemque seminum</i>		
<i>(labor continuus)</i>		

- 199 **maxime quaeque** sc. semina **fatis** by (the decree of) the fates
- 200 **ruere, referri** historical infinitives, per Page; perh. (mcy) with the notion "all things have ever..."
- 201 **non . . . subigit** *GLA* 77. **lembum** "a small, fast-sailing boat" (*OLD*), but here stands primarily for any small boat that can be rowed; secondarily, Vergil may also have in mind an illustration of the fact that, without continuous labor, the swiftest boat has no chance against the fated opposition of the way the world is ordered.
- 202 **remisit** relax, leave off
- 203 **illum** = **lembum**; Page: "illum is rightly referred to *lembum* by Kennedy, who says that "the comparison is between the seed which retrogrades when man does not select, and the boat which retrogrades when man does not pull'." **alveus** channel or current of a stream (also a trough or hull) **prono amnis** "downstream". (In context, 'prono' alone can have this meaning; Traup. lists "secundo amni" as = "downstream".)
- 204 **tam** with *quam*, 206. **Arcturus** here by synechdoche for Boötes (cf. 229). LaP.: "tramonta [sets] il 21 ottobre"; at the same season it rises just before sunrise. **nobis** = dat. of person concerned, with gerundive.
- 205 **Haedi** η and ζ Aurigae; the Charioteer, as traditionally pictured, is encumbered in his person with a she-goat and two kids, for reasons known only to ancient Mesopotamians. LaP.: "segnale di tempo piovoso". The objects of *servandi* are sidera, dies, and Anguis. **Anguis** = Draco, as is clear from 244–5. "Il suo sorgere e il suo tramontare scatenano tempeste."
- 206 **quibus vectis** Page: perfect passive participle used for the lacking present passive participle, as often in Latin. This navigator must observe the same stars.
- 207 **Pontus, fauces** are the grammatical subjects of *temptantur* **Abydos** A town on the Hellespont, which it here signifies.
- 208 **die** = dieī (gen.). Vergil refers to the fall equinox, when the sun enters Libra. (LaP.) Mynors: "die *AMP*_ω, *Serv.*, *Gramm.*: diei *Rr*: dies *b*, *quod in libro Vergilii idiographo invenerunt nescio qui ap. Gell.* ix 14. 7: dii *ut vid. legit Auson.* vii 7. 31 (cf. *A.* i. 636, *Char.* 126. 31)"
- 211 **bruma intractabilis** "the difficult season of the winter solstice"
- 213 **tempus** sc. est **iamdudum** lit., "long since"; here with the sense of simple "long"
incumbere press upon, apply; can take acc. or, as here, dat.
- 214 **nubila** adj., here = 'nubes' **pendent** hang, i.e., do not burst
- 215 **medica** alfalfa; the plant is addressed as "te" **putres** furrows plowed in the previous winter, now collapsing.
- 216 **milium** millet (see note to 220)
- 218 **Canis occidit astro averso cedens** LaP. makes this a reference to Procyon and Canis Minor, but it was Sirius above all that was connected with the word 'Dog', and astronomically, as far as seasons are concerned, what is true of Procyon is more or less true of Sirius, which rises less than an hour in the nightly cycle (two weeks in the yearly) ahead of Procyon. Perhaps Sirius is setting at sunset during this season (check—seems about right), and is thus seen as ceding to Taurus, its "opposite". There is a play on words here: 'aversus', in the sense of ill-omened, applies to also Sirius, harbinger of the heat and plagues of summer (cf. *Il.* XXII.225–32; *Works and Days* 417, 587; *Shield of Herakles* 153).
- 219–24 Vergil seems to be describing specialized grain farming, as opposed to diversified or subsistence farming—single-crop farming can be more profitable, but may carry greater risks than a farmer without healthy financial reserves can afford.
- 219 **triticeam** "wheaten" **far, farris** (neut.) spelt
- 220 **solis instabis aristis** LaP. translates: "incalzi soltanto per le spighe"; on this interpretation, the passage means "if you specialize in ears (i.e., in grain)". But milium, 216, in the contrasted passage preceding "at si" (219), is also a grain with ears. It has, however, forms with multiple ears or seed-bearing spikes radiating from the ears (Root). (Might it also be distinguished from wheat by having multiple stems on each plant? Do wheat and spelt typically have a single stem? Crabgrass, a form of millet, has multiple stems.) This suggests that the passage means "if you specialize in the single-eared grains". Whether this has any agricultural plausibility is another question.
- 221 **Eoae** "of the dawn"; the reference is to the heliacal setting of the Pleiades (in legend, daughters of Atlas) about the beginning of November (LaP.). **Atlantides** As a Greek noun, the nom. pl. is in -ēs. The line doesn't scan without a hiatus in the third foot. Note the spondee in the fifth. (Much less likely is a hiatus in the second foot—this would require that the ultima of tibi be long, as it can be, exceptionally, and crisis of -ae Atl-. But a caesura is more likely there than crisis; the two are not exclusive, but I doubt Vergil would have intended this when a more elegant alternative is present.
- 222 **Cnosia Corona** The Crown is that of Ariadne, daughter of Minos of Knossos, and connected in legend to Bacchus. Its heliacal rising is in October.
- 223 **quam . . . quamque** As I read it, the quams are not grammatically parallel, though they have similar senses: the first is an adverb, modifying 'committas' and qualified by 'sulcis': seed in proportion to the furrows, i.e., to the area to be planted. The second is a pronoun, agreeing with *spem*: "what hope you have for the year", i.e., "all that you hope for from the year". (After LaP.)
credere here = "entrust" **properes** has its usual sense of "hurry"; in this context, = "labor hard under a deadline".
- 224 **invitae . . . terrae** *GLA* 77.
- 225 **occasum Maiaie** Maia stands for the Pleiades as a whole. The sense requires a different season than that designated by the "ante Atlantides abscondantur" of 221. Perhaps Vergil refers here to the acronycal setting of the Pleiades, given by Eudoxos as April 12th. Might 'occasus' and some of the other words used by Vergil in such contexts have had specific technical meanings, making clear which rising or setting was being referred to in a given passage?
- 226 **vanis elusit avenis** "the hoped-for harvest eluding them amongst the useless oats". Oats are a much less valuable crop than wheat; as weeds, they can invade fields of more desirable grains (Root).
- 227 **viciamque** -que is here sort of an adversative conj. (*AG* 324). Cf. 279 **seres** future, from *serere* **vilis** "humble", as at 165
phaselus a kidney bean, or bean with an edible pod; LaP.: "fagiola".
- 228 **Pelusium** A town on the eastern mouth of the Nile; Per LaP., Egyptian lentils are here taken as being of notable quality.
- 229 **Bootes** V. 204. "Incipe!" is the sign it sends.

LIBER I

	maxima quaeque manu legeret: sic omnia fatis	
(entropia)	in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri,	200
	non aliter quam qui aduerso uix flumine lembum	
	remigiis subigit, si bracchiã forte remisit,	
	atque illum in praeceps prono rapit alueus amni.	
DE TEMPORIBUS	Praeterea tam sunt Arcturi sidera nobis	
204-350	Haedorumque dies seruandi et lucidus Anguis,	205
DE SIDERIBUS	quam quibus in patriam uentosa per aequora uectis	
204-230	Pontus et ostriferi fauces temptantur Abydi.	
	Libra die somnique pares ubi fecerit horas	
	et medium luci atque umbris iam diuidit orbem,	
	exercēte, uiri, tauros, sērite <u>hor</u> dea campis	210
	usque sub extremum brumae intractabilis imbrem;	
	nec non et lini segetem et Cereale papauer	
	tempus humo tegere et iamdudum incumbere aratris,	
	dum siccã tellure licet, dum nubilã pendent.	
	uere fabis satio; tum te quoque, mēdica, putres	215
	accipiunt sulci et milio uenit annua cura,	
	candidus auratis aperit cum cornibus annum	
	Taurus et auerso cedens Canis occidit astro.	
	at si trīticeam in messem robustaque farra	
	exercebis humum solisque instabis aristas,	220
	ante tibi <u>E</u> ōae Atlantidēs abscondantur	
	Cnosiaque ardentis decedat stella Coronae,	
	debita quam sulcis committas semina quamque	
	inuitae properes anni spem credere terrae.	
	multi ante occasum Maiiae coepēre; sed illos	225
	expectata seges uanis elusit auenis.	
	si uero uiciamque seres uilemque phaselum	
	nec Pelusiacaē curam aspernabere lentis,	
	haud obscura cadens mittet tibi signa Bootes:	
	incipe et ad medias sementem extende pruinas.	230

231–39 The cosmology may not impress a modern, but these lines are a masterfully brief sketch of the whole of the earth and the whole of the heavens.

232 **duodena astra**

235 **circum quam extremae trahuntur**

238 **via secta qua . . .** “a way is cut, along which . . .”

240 **Riphaeus** Legendary mountains at the northern bounds of the world, with perhaps some original connection with the Urals.

arces “mountain fastnesses” combines all the connotations of ‘arx’. **arduus mundus** V. 324 for ‘arduus’.

241 **Austros (sc. ventos) Libyae** (LaP.)

242 **vertex** pole. In Vergil’s time, Draco was significantly closer to the Pole than it now is. (Also, in Mesopotamia at least, the constellation was extended farther than in the modern figure, embracing even more of the polar region.) **hic . . . at illum** = hic . . . at alter. From here through 251, Vergil speaks of the underworld as if it were situated in the southern temperate zone—the other of the two temperate zones given to mortals (cf. 238). Note Vergil’s unwillingness to commit himself as to the relationship between the celestial phenomena of the northern and southern hemispheres. Note also that in the more “scientific” alternative given, he confuses the relation between the northern and southern hemispheres with that between the day and night sides of the Earth. As with many educated people in ancient times, Vergil’s penetration of the astronomical science known to specialists of his day was not profound.

244 **hic** adv. (cf. *illic*, 247) **elabor circum** the verb is deponent; perhaps tr. “slithers around” **Anguis** Draco

247 **ut perhibent** “as they say” **intempesta** connotes both darkness and unhealthiness

249 **redeo** return

250 **equis anhelis** i.o. of *adflavit*, which probably carries connotations of “warming with its breath”. The puffing horses appear only to fill out the line, though if horses characteristically puff when first going about on a cold morning (as I think they do), they fill out the line most evocatively.

253 **infidum marmor impellere** “to beat the treacherous calm sea” (labor at the oars being required in a calm, treacherous or otherwise). Traup. notes ‘marmor’ as having the extended meaning of “marble pavement”, further extended metaphorically to a flat sea.

256 **tempestivum** full grown, ready for harvest. (The season is crucial because the sap content, which affects usefulness as lumber, varies seasonally.)

257 **speculamur** deponent, = “watch for”. **parem** with ‘temporibus’ (dat. of respect) = “equally divided”.

260 Post ‘multa’ commam Mynorsii delevi. **caelo sereno** i.o. of *maturare*

261 **maturare** prepare **procutit dentem obtunsi vomeris** “hammers out the turned blade of the share”. If the metal was soft enough to turn rather than dull, hammering would indeed be the thing, rather than sharpening—less loss of expensive metal, which had to be traded for.

262 **lintres** tanks

263 **aceruis** LaP. translates “moggi”, bushels. Probably synecdoche for “stores” (Traup. and *LS* give no meanings but the literal “heap”), and, w.r.t. *acervis*, probably stands as much for inventorying as for physically numbering.

LIBER I

DE TEMPORIBUS SOLI
ET DE ORIGINE
CALENDARIJ
231–258

Idcirco certis dimensum partibus orbem
per duodena regit mundi sol aureus astra.
quinque tenent caelum zonae: quarum una corusco
semper sole rubens et torrida semper ab igni;
quam circum extremae dextra laeuaque trahuntur 235
caeruleae, glacie concretae atque imbribus atris;
has inter mediamque duae mortalibus aegris
munere concessae diuum, et uia secta per ambas,
obliquus qua se signorum uerteret ordo.
mundus, ut ad Scythiam Riphaeasque arduus arces 240
consurgit, premitur Libyae deuexus in Austros.
hic uertex nobis semper sublimis; at illum
sub pedibus Styx atra uidet Manesque profundi.
maximus hīc flexu sinuoso elabitur Anguis
circum perque duas in morem fluminis Arctos, 245
Arctos Oceani metuentis aequore tingi.
illic, ut perhibent, aut intempesta silet nox
semper et obtentā densentur nocte tenebrae;
aut redit a nobis Aurora diemque reducit,
nosque ubi primus equis Oriens adflauit anhelis 250
illic sera rubens accendit lumina Vesper.
hinc tempestates dubio praediscere caelo
possumus, hinc messisque diem tempusque serendi,
et quando infidum remis impellere marmor
conueniat, quando armātas dēducere classis, 255
aut tempestiuam siluis euertere pinum;
nec frustrā signorum obitūs speculamur et ortūs
temporibusque parem diuersis quattuōr annum.

Frigidus agricolam si quando continet imber,
multa forent quae mox caelo properanda sereno, 260
maturare datur: durum procudit arator
uomeris obtunsi dentem, cauat arbore lintres,
aut pecori signum aut numeros impressit aceruis.

*Signa coelestia
temporum*

LABORES
HIEMALES
259–75

- 264 **valli** stakes, as used in stockades and fences. **furcae** “fork-shaped props”, used for vines, etc.
- 265 **Amerina retinacula** (neut. pl.) ‘Retinacula’ means rope or cable. Ameria (mod. Amelia), a very ancient municipium in Umbria, was important throughout the classical period, but there is no indication that it was noted for wine so that its name could easily stand for viticulture in general. LaP. suggests that the retinacula mentioned here might represent a technique characteristic of the town, though acknowledging that the intent in any case is just a general signification of something to be prepared for the vines.
- 266 **rubea** “of bramble” (rubeus, It. “rovo”). **fiscina** wicker basket
- 267 **fruges** typically grain (LaP.: “grano”), d.o. of ‘torrete’ and ‘frangite’
- 268 **quippe etiam** “to be sure” **festis** (dies) festus is poetic for the metrically impossible *fēriae* and its forms. Cf. Michels, 69ff.
quaedam subject of *sinunt*
- 270 **segeti praetendere saepem** “to fence off a field”
- 271 **vepres briars**
- 273 **costas** sides, ribs; d.o. of ‘onerat’. We are still in winter: the crops brought to town are the tail end of the harvest, and worth little. The whole passage is drab as a muddy day in winter.
- 274–5 He comes back from town with a millstone, or some pitch—and grammar as sordid as his wares.
- 276–7 **Luna ipse** (nom. s.) **dedi dies felicis alios** (all three acc. “gave us the auspicious days, each . . .”) **alio ordine** (abl. of accompaniment: “each with its own class of work”) **operum**.
- 277 **quintum fuge** The fifth of the month. (Could some misinterpretation or alternate interpretation of this passage or its basis, making this the fifth day of the *week*, be the basis for the belief that Friday is inauspicious? Or perhaps the number five was generally considered inauspicious.)
- 278 **satae** sc. hoc die. Applies also to Orcus. Lit. “sown”, whence the senses of “begotten” and, by extension, as here, “born”.
- 278–83 Vergil brings in here by allusion the stories of the major revolts and revolutions among the gods—two of which were incited by Gaia. These stories existed in many versions. A summary of some possibly relevant main points of the major ones is as follows. Iapetos and Coeus were Titans, children of Ouranos and Gaia like Kronos and Rhea of the same generation. Iapetos (quadrisyllabic: Īăpētos) was the father of Prometheus, Epimetheus, and Atlas. Coeus (with Phoebe) was father of Leto. The Hecatoncheirs (Briareus, Gyges, and Cottus) and Cyclopes, also children of Gaia and Ouranos, were cast into Tartaros by Ouranos. Gaia, in revenge, incited the Titans to revolt against Ouranos. They succeeded, and placed Kronos on the throne. Kronos cast the Cyclopes again into Tartarus, wherefore they aided Zeus in his revolt against the Titans. Otus and Ephialtes were sons of Poseidon and Iphimedia (herself of semi-divine descent). They were of gigantic stature, and staged a serious assault on Olympus. The story is related to that of the revolt of the Giants, with which it has important points in common. Typhon was conceived by Gaia (with the help of Tartatos) in revenge for the killing of the Giants. A monster of cosmic proportions, with a hundred snakes for hands, he too made a terrible assault on Olympus.
- 279 **Iapetumque** The final syllable is light. I have in my notes the statement: “Rules of position do not usually apply to final vowels followed by a word beginning with two consonants.”
Typhoea Scanned either *-ōea* or *ōeā*. Cf. *Aen.* I.665, *tela Typhōēā* (in the fifth foot). Here an adj. modifying Terra, mother of Typhoeus. Alternatively, Typhoea is d.o. of *creat*, and refers to the hundred heads of the monster. In any case, *saevumque* modifies Iapetum (and perhaps also Coeum), and there is at least one superfluous enclitic. (For that of *Coeumque*, cf. 227; that of *saevumque* may simply echo that of Iapetumque.)
- 281–3 *GLA* 78.
- 282 **involvere** with dat., = pile upon
- 285 **prensos domitare boves** LaP: “prendere i giovenchi e domarli”. Presumably wild cattle were not captured in Italy, so this is the only sense it can have (the lexica offer no extended senses of *pre(he)nsus*)—they have to be caught only because they haven’t been trained. Thus as far as imagery goes, *prensus* here is equivalent to “protesting”.
licia telae (parts of a weave of cloth) **addere** = simply, “to weave”.
- 286 **fugae melior, contraria** (takes dat.) **furtis** I cannot resolve this paradox, and LaP. doesn’t try to. Perhaps some early augur wanted to follow the omens while still keeping people honest.
- 287 **adeo** here purely emphatic
dedere the best I can make of this is that it is 3 pl. pres. of ‘*dēdo*’ (to surrender), but shortened as for the 3 pl. perf. of ‘*do*’, and with the short first syllable of the latter.
- 288 **Eous** The Morning Star. Vergil takes a liberty with the normally long first syllable. (Cf. 221, where *Eoae* appears in a line with metric anomalies.)
- 289 **leves** adj. **stipulae** stubble. Contrast 297, where midday is best for cutting ripe grain—which was perhaps more easily handled dry, due perhaps to its length and uniform height, and which had to be kept dry in any case.
- 290 **lentus umor** LaP: “molle guazza”, “soft dew”
- 291 **et quidem ad seros ignis hiberni luminis pervigilat** “And this one stays up by the evening fires—winter’s light— . . .”
- 292 Putting points on torches. So they can be stuck in the ground?
- 294 **pecten** comb **tela** weave (nom.) or some other phenomenon connected with weaving
- 295 *GLA* 78. **Volcano** here stands simply for fire.
- 296 **trepidati aeni** bubbling cauldron **despumo** skim (the scum off the boiling must). This was apparently, at least in verse, done with leaves in some cases. Strainers were known, but the poor probably did not have them.

LIBER I

exacuunt alii uallos furcasque bicornis
atque Amērīnā pārant lentae retinācula uiti. 265

(etiam diebus festis)

nunc facilis rubeā texatur fiscīnā uirgā,
nunc torrete igni fruges, nunc frangite saxo.
quippe etiam festis quaedam exercere diebus
fas et iura sinunt: riuos deducere nulla
religio uetuit, segeti praetendere saepem, 270

insidias auibus moliri, incendere uepres
balantumque gregem fluuio mersare salubri.
saepe oleo tardi costas agitator aselli
uilibus aut onerat pomis, lapidemque reuertens
incusum aut atrae massam picis urbe reportat. 275

DE TEMPORIBUS
LUNAE
276–286

revolutiones caelestis

Ipsa dies alios alio dedit ordine luna
felicis operum. quintam fuge: pallidus Orcus
Eumenidesque satae; tum partu Terra nefando
Coeumque Iāpētumque crēat saeuumque Typhoea
et coniuratos caelum rescindere fratres. 280

ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam
scilicet atque Ossae frondosum inuoluere Olympum;
ter pater exstructos disiecit fulmine montis.
septima post decimam felix et ponere uitem
et prensos domitare boues et licia telae 285

DE TEMPORIBUS DIEI
287–299

addere. nona fugae melior, contraria furtis.
Multa adeo gelida melius se nocte dedere
aut cum sole nouo terras inrōrat Eōus.
nocte leues melius stipulae, nocte arida prata
tondentur, noctes lentus non deficit umor. 290

et quidam seros hiberni ad luminis ignis
peruigilat ferroque faces inspicat acuto.
interea longum cantu solata laborem
arguto coniunx percurrit pectine telas,
aut dulcis musti Volcano decoquit umorem 295
et foliis undam trepidi despumat aëni.

297 **medio aestu** in the heat of mid-day. V. n. 289.

299 **ara** Traup., *LS*, *OLD*, list no senses but "altar", and the related "refuge" or "plinth"; LaP. gives It. 'ara' = altar. But the winter was hardly void of religious ceremonies. Sense suggests 'ara' is meant as = 'aratione'. Or perhaps nudus is a hyperbole—in this season there's little to put on the altar. **ignava** "a lazy time for" Interpunct Mynors: "sere nudus. . . colono:"

300 **frigoribus** abl. of accompaniment, denoting time when **parto** sb. = stores; abl. obj. of fruuntur

302 **invitat** invites

303 **ceu** just as **iam** here = tandem

304 **imposuere** like tetigere, plup.: their cares are resolved and release is had when both actions are completed.

305 **quernas** "of oak" **stringere** pick **tempus** sc. est

308 **auritos** long-eared **figere** lit., fix, as with a nail; the colloquial American "nail" is apt here.

damma general term for deer, antelope, chamois, etc.; here perhaps refers to a smaller species than 'cervis' (307).

309 **stuppea** (hempen) **verbera** (de nom. verber = whip) **torquentem** acc. as subject of infinitive **Balearis fundae**

310 **trudunt** push, drive

311–34 *GLA* 78–80.

311 **Quid dicam** cf. 104; perhaps here introducing the change in topic from winter to other seasons. Tempestates and sidera are d.o. of dicam (transitive: mention, tell, say), and quid, parallel to quae, calls for a "sc. esse": its sense is adverbial: "How might I make mention of".

314 **Spicea messis** "the wheaten harvest". But there are no ears yet: inhorrui, as LaP.'s translation ("si erge irta") catches, connotes fields bristling with shoots, not waving with grown plants.

315 **lactentia** tender, juicy, infant; agrees with frumenta. Mynors reports several MS variants.

317 **hordea** neut. pl. acc.

320 **sublimem** apparatus Mynorsii: "sublime *deγ*". Colon post 'eruerent' ponit Mynors, sed reliqua dicet de hieme, non de tempore messis.

323 **foedus** adj., dirty, horrible

324 **arduus** (lit. steep, difficult due to height or steepness) **aether** d.o. of diluit, wash away

325 **pluvia** (rain) **ingenti** abl.

327 **spirans** here = foaming, spraying. Lit. = breathing, exhaling; in the poets, can have connotations of force. *LS* cites, inter alia, this passage and a similar one in Lucretius.

329 **molior** to manipulate an immense mass **maxima terra**

LIBER I

DE TEMPORIBUS
TEMPESTIBUSQUE
ANNI 299–350
HIEMS 299–310

at rubicunda Ceres medio succiditur aestu
et medio tostas aestu terit area fruges.
nudus ara, sere nudus: hiems ignaua colono.
frigoribus parto agricolae plerumque fruuntur 300
mutuaque inter se laeti conuiuia curant.
inuitat genialis hiems curasque resoluit,
ceu pressae cum iam portum tetigere carinae,
puppibus et laeti nautae imposuere coronas.
sed tamen et quernas glandes tum stringere tempus 305
et lauri bacas oleamque cruentaque myrta,
tum gruibus pedicas et retia ponere ceruis
auritosque sequi lepores, tum figere dammas
stuppea torquentem Balearis uerbera fundae,
Autumnus cum nix alta iacet, glaciem cum flumina trudunt. 310
Quid tempestates autumnii et sidera dicam,
Ver atque, ubi iam breuiorque dies et mollior aestas,
quae uigilanda uiris? uel cum ruit imbriferum uer,
spicea iam campis cum messis inhorruit et cum
De tempestatibus frumenta in uiridi stipula lactentia turgent? 315
316–350 saepe ego, cum flauis messorum induceret aruis
agricola et fragili iam stringeret hordea culmo,
omnia uentorum concurrere proelia uidi,
quae grauidam late segetem ab radicibus imis
sublimem expulsam eruerent; ita turbine nigro 320
ferret hiems culmumque leuem stipulasque uolantis.
saepe etiam immensum caelo uenit agmen aquarum
et foedam glomerant tempestatem imbribus atris
collectae ex alto nubes; ruit arduus aether
et pluuiam ingenti sata laeta boumque labores 325
diluit; implentur fossae et caua flumina crescunt
Iuppiter Tonans cum sonitu feruetque fretis spirantibus aequor.
ipse pater media nimborum in nocte corusca
fulmina molitur dextra, quo maxima motu

- 330 **tremīt** pres. **fugere** perf. 3. pl. The change of tense is basically *metri gratia*, but the perfect brings in the idea (quite clear to a native speaker) that before the great Earth herself trembles, her creatures have long since fled in fear. It is the mark of a great poet to have a happy hand with such expedients.
- 331 **stravit** perf. of *sterno*
- 332 **Atho** Mynors: "Atho *N. Heinsius, coll. Theocr.* vii 77 (cf. *A. xii* 701); Athon *codd. (ut Val. Flacc. i* 664)". Geymonat and *LL* also accept 'Atho'. 'Atho' is found for the acc. (necessary for agreement with the apposite Rhodopen and Ceraunia). *V. LS* s.v. it is at the tip of the easternmost peninsula of Chalkidia. **Rhodope** is the range in Macedonia near Thrace. **Ceraunia** Acroceraunia (of which "alta Ceraunia" is a literal translation) is a peninsula between Illyria and Epiros (*BA* 49). Noted for thunderstorms (*κεραυνός* = thunder) and rough country; the name was used proverbially of any dangerous area. The mountain or range that formed the promontory was called Ceraunia or Ceraunia Montes. *V. LS* s.v.
- 333 **ingemino** = redouble, but doubtless echoing *ingemo* = moan; note also *ingens*, next line, and *plangunt* = wail
- 336 **se receptet** betakes himself to (*LS*)
frigida stella Saturni Saturn in Aries brought storms and hail (*LaP.*); it is the coldest planet because farthest from the Sun.
- 337 **quos in orbis ignis Cyllenius** *LaP.*: Mercurius, from his birthplace, Mt. Cyllene in Arcadia; the warmest planet because nearest the Sun
- 338 **venerare** impv. of *venero* **annua** annual
The celebrations for Ceres here described seem most likely to be those of the *Cerealia* (4/19, preceded by the *Ludi Cereales* from 4/12). They are certainly pre-harvest rites, which would serve to check the date; there was a sowing festival in January. *V. Liber Deorum*.
- 339 **operatus** *LS* s.v. *operor*, *hunc locum laudans*: " = sacrificans"; this is the sense, but I still can't see the grammar. *Perh. sc.* esto: "be you diligently occupied in performing the rites".
- 341–2 *GLA* 81.
- 342 **densae umbra** under the newly-leafed trees
- 343 **cuncta tibi pubes agrestis** Wilkinson: "your rustic youth". *LaP.*: "tutta la tua famiglia agreste"; not quite literally: *pubes* = adults or young adults—who perhaps had their children along.
- 344 See 166. **favus** honeycomb **dilue** wash away, melt
- 345 **novas fruges felix hostia** The victim circles the new crops thrice.
- 346 **quam** refers to *hostia*
- 348 **falx** sickle **suppono** "put to"
- 349 **redimio, -itus** to wreath **quercu torta tempora** "with oak wreathed (lit. twisted) about his temples"
- 350 **det . . . dicat** *GLA* 81.
- 354 **Austri** the wind from Africa
saepe essentially superfluous, since recurrence either within a year or over the years, is plain from the context.
- 355 **armenta** herds
- 356–9 *GLA* 81.
- 356 **continuo** My best guess is here = straightaway (thus *Wilk.*), following from the dying of the south winds and/or the signs that keep the herds close to home. **aut . . . aut** here not exclusive
- 357 **aridus fragor** The roaring of the winds?
- 360 **male se temperat a** "hardly holds itself back from" (after *LS* s.v. *tempero*).
- 361 *GLA* 82. **medio ex aequora** *Wilk.*: "from mid-ocean"; *LaP.*: "dell' alta mare". **mergus** seagull

LIBER I

	terra tremit, fugere ferae et mortalia corda	330
	per gentis humilis strauit pauor; ille flagranti aut Atho aut Rhodopen aut alta Ceraunia telo deicit; ingeminant Austri et densissimus imber; nunc nemora ingenti uento, nunc litora plangunt.	
	hoc metuens caeli mensis et sidera serua,	335
	frigida Saturni sese quo stella receptet, quos ignis caelo Cyllenius erret in orbis.	
<i>Sacra Cereris</i>	in primis uenerare deos, atque annua magnae sacra refer Cereri laetis operatus in herbis extremae sub casum hiemis, iam uere sereno.	340
	tum pingues agni et tum mollissima uina, tum somni dulces densaeque in montibus umbrae. cuncta tibi Cererem pubes agrestis adoret: cui tu lacte fauos et miti dilue Baccho,	
	terque nouas circum felix eat hostia fruges,	345
	omnis quam chorus et socii comitentur ouantes et Cererem clamore uocent in tecta; neque ante falcem maturis quisquam supponat aristis quam Cereri torta redimitus tempora quercu det motus incompositos et carmina dicat.	350
DE SIGNIS PRAEDICATIVIS 351-464 <i>Tempestates</i>	Atque haec ut certis possemus discere signis, aestusque pluuiasque et agentis frigora uentos, ipse pater statuit quid menstrua luna moneret, quo signo caderent Austri, quid saepe uidentes agricolae propius stabulis armenta tenerent.	355
	continuo uentis surgentibus aut freta ponti incipiunt agitata tumescere et aridus altis montibus audiri fragor, aut resonantia longe litora misceri et nemorum increbrescere murmur. iam sibi <u>tum</u> a curuis male temperat unda carinis,	360
	cum medio celeres reuolant ex aequore mergi clamoremque ferunt ad litora, cumque marinae	

363 **fulicae** waterfowl **notas** familiar

364 **ardea** heron

365 **videbis** is the subject through 369. Yes, shooting stars presage great winds.

366 **praecipites caelo labi** *GLA* 82.

368 **palea** chaff **caducus** falling, fallen

369 *GLA* 82.

370 **trux, trucis** (adj.) savage **de parte** from its quarter

371 **Eurus** The SE (or E) wind. If identifiable with Voltumnus, had a Roman festival on 8/27. **Zephyrus** The west wind. For the Romans, a mild wind, harbinger of spring, which rose in February and had a festival on 2/13. But a storm wind to the Greeks (LaP. ad 44).

373 **umida** It's raining. **legit** picks its way, coasts **imprudens** the unforeseeing. The sense is that no-one is caught unawares by the rain. The animals know it's coming, and they themselves are signs for men.

374 **obsum** to be opposed or harmful to **illum surgentem** refers to imber

375 **grūs (gruis), gruis** (m/f) crane **bucula** heifer

377 *GLA* 83. **arguta** clever, piercing; of birds, can refer to the quality of the voice **hirundo** swallow **circumvolavit** Perhaps chasing insects that abound over ponds in such weather? 'Circum' here connotes "all over"; volito means "flit" rather than pursuing a continuous course.

378 *GLA* 83. **querela** here = "plaint"

380 **bibit arcus** The rainbow drinks

381 **decedens** The subject is exercitus.

382 **corvus** "Raven" per *LS*, Traup.; LaP.'s 'corvo' could be crow or raven.

383 **volucres** nom. here; in 385-7, 'volucris' is understood as d.o. of videas and subject of the infinitives. **circum Asia** (adj.) **prata**

384 **rimor** deponent: search for, rummage **Caystros** River in Lydia, rising on Mt. Tmolus and reaching the sea at Ephesus; its marshes were famous since Homer for harboring great flocks of birds.

385 **umeris** lit. shoulders, here = wings **infundere rores** spread out in the rain or spray

387 **incassum** in vain **gestire** to strain in eagerness

388-9 *GLA* 83; his explication is most apt.

388 **cornix improba** "Crow" per *LS*, Traup.; "raven" in Wilk.; LaP.'s 'cornacchia' = crow (incl. the European rook)

390 **pensum** that which is weighed out, a quota of work, esp. spinning (cf. Fr. 'boulot'). "Pensum carpens", in context, would be understood by all the ancients to mean "spinning". 'Carpens' refers to the characteristic actions of the hands.

391 **testa** crockery, sherd, or other item of baked clay; here = lamp (for which, I believe, sherds were sometimes used)

392 **scintillare oleum** some effect of the humidity—or actual drips under an old-style roof—on the flame, perhaps related to what you see when you pour water into a hot pan on the stove.

395 **acies** here = 'clarity' **videtur** also the subject of the following infinitives.

LIBER I

in sicco ludunt fulicae, notasque paludes
 deserit atque altam supra uolat ardea nubem.
 saepe etiam stellae uento impendente uidebis 365
 praecipitis caelo labi, noctisque per umbram
 flammarum longos a tergo albescere tractus;
Imber saepe leuem paleam et frondes uolitare caducas
 aut summa nantis in aqua concludere plumas.
 at Boreae de parte trucis cum fulminat et cum 370
 Eurique Zephyrique tonat domus, omnia plenis
 rura natant fossis atque omnis nauita ponto
 umida uela legit. numquam imprudentibus imber
 obfuit: aut illum surgentem uallibus imis
 aëriae fugere grues, aut bŭcula caelum 375
 suspiciens patulis captauit naribus auras,
 aut argŭtă lăcŭs circumuolitaui hirundō
 et ueterem in limo rānae cecinere querelam.
 saepius et tectis penetralibus extulit oua
 angustum formica terens iter, et bibit ingens 380
 arcus, et e pastu decedens agmine magno
 coruorum increpuit densis exercitus alis.
 iam uariae pēlagi uolucres et quae Asia circum
 dulcibus in stagnis rimantur prata Caystri—
 certatim largos umeris infundere rores, 385
 nunc caput obiectare fretis, nunc currere in undas
 et studio incassum uideas gestire lauandi.
 tum cornix plēnā plūuiam uocat improbă uoce
 et sola in sicca secum spatiat harena.
 ne nocturna quidem carpentes pensa puellae 390
Sol nesciuere hiemem, testa cum ardente uiderent
 scintillare oleum et putris concrecere fungos.
 Nec minus ex imbri soles et aperta serena
 prospicere et certis poteris cognoscere signis:
 nam neque tum stellis acies obtunsa uidetur, 395

- 396 **obnoxia** here = "submissive to" or "oppressed by". Vergil believes that the phases of the moon are linked to weather. (Cf. 424ff.)
- 397 **tenuia vellera** thin fleeces; neut. pl., metaphorically for small clouds **lanae** gen. of material
- 399 **alcyo** kingfisher. *LS*: also *alcedo*. Forms in *h-* arose "from a fancied connection to *ἄλς*, the sea". The bird was believed to nest on the ocean; the "halcyon days" were the fourteen days in winter when it did so. **os, oris**
- 400 **immundi sues** (de 'sus') **non meminere iactare** "cease to strew" **maniplos** sheaves. I'll take Vergil's word for it.
- 402 **de culmine summo** Probably inside an outbuilding, up under the roof, or perhaps under the eaves.
- 403 **noctua** owl
- 404 **Nisus** King of Megara. His power was contained in a lock of purple hair on his head. While he was being besieged by Minos, his daughter Scylla, in love with Minos, clipped the lock and offered it to Minos, who refused it. Scylla was transformed into a sea bird (the *ciris*, species unknown; perhaps a heron, per LaP.), and Nisus into a sea eagle, which pursues the *ciris*. The story is related in the *Ciris* (*Appendix Vergiliana*), generally thought to be spurious. (V. *OCD* s.vv. *Appendix Virgiliana, Ciris*.)
- 405 **poenam dare** to pay the penalty
- 406 **quacumque** (adv.) wherever **levem** the sea eagle, skilled in flight; d.o. of *fugiens*
aethera the regular Gk accusative sing. of aether (f.)
- 408 **qua** (adv.) where
- 409 **raptim** in a panic
- 410 **liquidas** only poetic license justifies extending this to mean something like "far-carrying"; 412 specifies that their song is sweeter than normal, but "nescio qua" and "strepitant" emphasize the relative nature of this qualification **guttur** throat
- 412 **qua dulcedine**
- 414 **revisere** return to **dulcis** to a crow, after an absence
- 415 **haud . . . quia sit** the sense is that he finds it difficult to understand because it is apparently a thing divine
divinitus (adv.) from heaven, by divine gift
- 412 Post 'maior' colon pro semicolo Mynorsii posui.
- 417–19 **ubi . . . relaxat** These words form a unit of sense and a distinct part of the period—a temporal clause hanging from "verum". But I can find no satisfactory way to mark this clearly with punctuation: parens or em dashes would be logically adequate, but not aesthetically. The latter would be too abrupt for the flow, the former would set the clause too far apart from the rest.
- 417 Commam posui post 'verum'.
- 418 **uuidus** Mynors prints "umidus": "uuidus *M*: *umidus ceteri, Prisc. viii 95, Seru.*" *LL* and LaP. give 'uuidus'. Note 'umidus' at 373 and 462, both uncontested on the evidence of Mynors, *LL*, and LaP. The choice is difficult. Both words have the same meaning. 'Uuidus' is probably so likely a variant pronunciation (and copyist's error) due to a nasalized or elided 'm', that the principle of *lectio difficilior* has no weight here; that error or variation may well have been the source of the variant in the classical vocabulary (mcv). Mynors thus has reason to follow the majority of MSS. But 'umidus' as an unwarranted scribal correction of a *lectio difficilior* is still a plausible hypothesis, and assonance also argues for 'uuidus'—the line is in the key of 'u', though a nasalized or elided 'm' would also be consistent with this. The question may thus be more one of nuances of pronunciation than of orthography. Also in favor of 'uuidus' is the possibility that a change of register might be warranted when speaking of Iuppiter, making it clear that the sense is figurative: "Iuppiter of the rains", not "soppy Iuppiter".
Austris abl. of means; for the plural, cf. 241, 354.
- 419 **denset** de *densēre*; transitive, the object is "quae rara modo erant". *Densare* is also found, but this is indicative, like *relaxat*. Post 'modo' commam Mynorsii delevi.
- 420 **pectora** subject of *concupiunt* **motus alios**
- 421 **nunc** in the clear weather discussed above **nubila** = nubes, as at 214
- 422 **concertus** concert
- 424–37 Vergil's precepts in these lines boil down to: a hazy sky predicts rain and/or wind, a clear sky predicts calm. Good advice as far as it goes. The phases of the moon are irrelevant—either superstition or poetic license carried to lengths that obscure the sense—if not by Vergil, than perhaps by some forgotten poet who was the source of the notion.
- 424 **respicias ad rapidum solem lunasque** **ordine** abl. of manner or respect
- 425 **crastinus** (adj.) tomorrow's
- 426 **hora** here used very generally: tomorrow's schedule (sunrise, sunset), seasonal characteristics, and the works appropriate to them
noctis serенаe (clear) i.e., a clear night won't deceive you about tomorrow's weather **capiere** = *capiaris*
- 427 **colligit revertentis ignis** (acc.) waxes (LaP.); *revertentis* itself is ambiguous, but there would be no horns (next line) if it was beginning to wane.
- 428 **nigrum aera** *aera* is a Greek accusative. *Aer* is masculine in Latin and Greek, though feminine in early writers. Vergil is describing a hazy night, which softens and blunts the outlines of the moon, and also hides the fainter stars, making the night blacker.

LIBER I

nec fratris radiis obnoxia surgere Luna,
 tenuia nec lanae per caelum uellera ferri;
 non tepidum ad solem pennas in litore pandunt
 dilectae Thetidi alcyones, non ore solutos
 immundi meminēre sues iactare maniplos. 400

at nebulae magis ima petunt campoque recumbunt,
 solis et occasum seruans de culmine summo
 nēquiquam sēros exercet noctua cantus.
 apparet liquido sublimis in aëre Nisus,
 et pro purpureo poenas dat Scylla capillo: 405

quācumque illa leuem fugiens secat aethera pennis,
 ecce inimicus atrox magno stridore per auras
 insequitur Nisus; quā se fert Nisus ad auras,
 illa leuem fugiens raptim secat aethera pennis.

tum liquidas corui presso ter gutture uoces 410
 aut quater ingeminant, et saepe cubilibus altis
 nescio quā praeter solitum dulcedine laeti
 inter se in foliis strepitant; iuuat imbribus actis
 progeniem paruam dulcisque reuisere nidos.

haud equidem credo, quia sit diuinitus illis 415
 ingenium aut rerum fato prudentia maior:
 uerum, ubi tempestas et caeli mobilis umor
 mutauēre uias et Iuppiter uuidus Austris
 denset erant quae rara modo et quae densa relaxat,

uertuntur species animorum, et pectora motūs 420
 nunc alios, alios dum nubila uentus agebat,
 concipiunt: hinc ille auium concentus in agris
 et laetae pecudes et ouantes gutture corui.

Si uero solem ad rapidum lunasque sequentis
 ordine respicies, numquam te crastina fallat 425
 hora, neque insidiis noctis capiere serena.
 luna reuertentis cum primum colligit ignis,
 si nigrum obscuro comprehenderit aera cornu,

De aspectu lunae
 424-437

- 432 **sin** adversative conj. (responding to 'si', 430) **ortus quartus** lit. the fourth rising, i.e., the fourth night after the new moon. It may seem a bit much, even for an ancient, to say that this day can predict the weather for the next twenty-four, but cf. Hesiod on the fourth, in *Works*, 498ff: "for this day has great authority", etc.
- 433 **exactum ad mensem** until the end of the month **pluvia, -ae** rain(s)
- 436 **servati** whose lives were preserved by the fine weather for which they prayed
- 437 The objects of the sailors' prayers are enumerated: Glaucus, a sea-god; Panopea, a Nereid; Ino, a sea-divinity identified with the Roman Mater Matuta; and her son Melicerta, identified with Palaemon and Portunus. For all except Panopea, LaP. cites legends according to which they were originally mortals who fell (Glaucus, after he ate a hallucinogenic plant) or jumped (Ino, with the infant Melicerta, fleeing Ino's violent husband) into the sea and were transformed into deities.
- 440 **quae mane refert** indications given by the aspect of the sun itself at its rising (when it best reveals the nature of the atmosphere, since its light passes through a much greater volume of air than at other times)
surgentibus astris locative ablative, figurative: signs in, i.e. consisting of, the stars that rise at sunrise
- 444 **Notus** generally = Auster, but here perhaps the SE wind, the scirocco (LaP.). per RHD, the scirocco is sometimes (or for some) hot, dry, and dusty; alternatively it is hot and rainy; here it is rainy. **sinister** inauspicious (LaP.); so it was for the Greeks, whose augurs faced N, with sunrise on the right; for the Romans it often had this sense too, but in augury was auspicious—Roman augurs faced S.
- 445 **sub lucem** at sunrise (acc. of time)
- 447 **Tithonus** husband of Aurora **croceum cubile** golden bed
- 448 **mitis** the grapes are ripe, or nearly so **pampinus** tendril or leaf
- 449 **grando** (f.)
- 450 **decedit** the sun is understood as the subject; attention now shifts to its appearance as it sets.
emetior lit., "measured", here in the sense of "traversed".
- 453 **caerulus** dark blue **Eurus** SE (or E) wind
- 455 **nimbus** rain cloud, rain (abl. of attendant circumstances, or of agent)
- 456 **illa nocte** abl. of time when **quisquam** anyone
- 457 **a terra convellere funem** weigh anchor or unmoor
- 458 **referet . . . relatum** rises and sets
- 459 **terreo** (transitive)
- 460 **Aquilo** NE wind

LIBER I

maximus agricolis pelagoque parabitur imber;
 at si uirgineum suffuderit ore ruborem, 430
 uentus erit: uento semper rubet aurea Phoebe.
 sin ortu quarto (namque is certissimus auctor)
 pura neque obtunsis per caelum cornibus ibit,
 totus et ille dies et qui nascentur ab illo
 De aspectu solis exactum ad mensem pluuiā uentisque carebunt, 435
 438-464 uotaque seruati soluent in litore nautae
 Glauco et Panopeae et Inoo Melicertae.
 sol quoque et exoriens et cum se condet in undas
 signa dabit; solem certissima signa sequentur,
 et quae mane refert et quae surgentibus astris. 440
 ille ubi nascentem maculis uariauerit ortum
 conditus in nubem medioque refugerit orbe,
 suspecti tibi sint imbres: namque urget ab alto
 arboribusque satisque Notus pecorique sinister.
 aut ubi sub lucem densa inter nubila sese 445
 diuersi rumpent radii, aut ubi pallida surget
 Tithoni croceum linquens Aurora cubile,
 heu, male tum mitis defendet pampinus uuas:
 tam multa in tectis crepitans salit horrida grando.
 hoc etiam, emenso cum iam decedit Olympo, 450
 profuerit meminisse magis; nam saepe uidemus
 ipsius in uultu uarios errare colores:
 caeruleus pluuiam denuntiat, igneus Euros;
 sin maculae incipiunt rutilo immiscerier igni,
 omnia tum pariter uento nimbisque uidebis 455
 feruere: non illa quisquam me nocte per altum
 ire neque a terra moneat conuellere funem.
 at si, cum referetque diem condetque relatum,
 lucidus orbis erit, frustra terreberere nimbis
 et claro siluas cernes Aquilone moueri. 460
 denique, quid Vesper serus uehat, unde serenas

DE TEMPORIBUS
 ROMAE
 464-514

464 **operta** secret

466 Cf. LaP. ad loc, on Vergil's use of Caesar.

467 **nitidum** bright **ferrugo** here = gloom

468 **saecula** here = generations, i.e., people

469 **quamquam** "although not only that, but also"

470 **obscaenus** ill-omened, impure **importunus** ill-omened, out of place

471 **quotiens** exclamatory **agros Cyclopum** Sicily, with particular reference to their forges under Mt. Aetna.

475 **motibus** Mynors: "montibus *M¹R²bdr*". *LL* & LaP. also give 'motibus'. LaP.: According to popular belief, earthquakes never occurred in the Alps.

478 **obscurum** sb.

479 **sistunt** here = halt **dehiscunt** gape

480 **maestum ebur**

481 **proluo** wash away **uertex** = uortex

482 **fluuiorum** The 'i' is treated as consonantal, and so makes position.

484 **fibra** fibers or entrails, perhaps specifically the veins of the liver

485 **puteus** a well or similar excavation **manare** drip or flow **cruor** m. sing. nom.

486 **resonare** resound; the subject is 'urbes'.

487 **alias** before

488 **arsere** 3 pl. perf. of ardeo

489 **iterum** Vergil is using geographic terms rather broadly. The earlier battle alluded to is in fact that of Pharsalus in 9953 (48) in Thessaly; Phillipi, 9959 (42), was in Macedonia, near Thrace. Both, however, were in the same Roman province (LaP.).

491 **Emathia** an early name for Macedonia

494 **molitus** pp. of molior (v. 329); sc. erit (for fut. perf.)

LIBER I

De prodigiis mortem
Caesaris
significantis
464–488

uentus agat nubes, quid cogitet umidus Auster,
sol tibi signa dabit. solem quis dicere falsum
audeat? ille etiam caecos instare tumultus
saepe monet fraudemque et operta tumescere bella; 465
ille etiam exstincto miseratus Caesare Romam,
cum caput obscura nitidum ferrugine textit
impiaque aeternam timuerunt saecula noctem.
tempore quamquam illo tellus quoque et aequora ponti,
obscenaeque canes importunaeque uolucres 470
signa dabant. quotiens Cyclopum efferuere in agros
uidimus undantem ruptis fornacibus Aetnam,
flammarumque globos liquefactaque uoluere saxa!
armorum sonitum toto Germania caelo
audiit, insolitis tremuerunt motibus Alpes. 475
uox quoque per lucos uulgo exaudita silentis
ingens, et simulacra modis pallentia miris
uisa sub obscurum noctis, pecudesque locutae
(infandum!); sistunt amnes terraeque dehiscunt,
et maestum inlacrimat templis ebur aeraque sudant. 480
proluit insano contorquens uertice siluas
flūuiorum rex Eridanus camposque per omnis
cum stabulis armenta tulit. nec tempore eodem
tristibus aut extis fibrae apparere minaces
aut puteis manare cruor cessauit, et altae 485
per noctem resonare lupis ululantibus urbes.
non alias caelo ceciderunt plura sereno
fulgura nec diri totiens arsēre cometae.
ergo inter sese paribus concurrere telis
Romanas acies iterum uidere Philippi; 490
nec fuit indignum superis bis sanguine nostro
Emathiam et latos Haemi pinguescere campos.
scilicet et tempus ueniet, cum finibus illis
agricola incuruo terram molītus aratro

De bello
tragico civile
489–497

Precatio: ut liceat
Octaviano saeculum

495 **exesa** pp. of *exedo*; = eaten up

496 **galea** helmet

498 **di Indigetes** the native gods

499 **Tuscum** adj. **Palatium** the Palatine (LaP.: "Palatino"), which was thought of as the original Roman settlement of Romulus. The neuter plural is intelligible, but called for only by metrical necessity.

500 **hunc iuvenem** Octavian **saltem** at least **everso** turned upside down **succurrere** succour

502 **Laomedon** Father of Priam, who cheated Poseidon and Apollo after they built for him the walls of Troy. Per LaP., this misdeed was seen by the Augustan poets as a sort of Roman original sin, given the legendary Trojan origins of Rome. In fact, of course, cheating the gods was a sin the Romans most assiduously avoided, at least with respect to formalities.

503 **nobis** i.o. of 'invidet', subject of which is 'regia caeli', object of which is 'te'. "Regia", like the invocation of Caesar at the beginning of the poem, suggests that the heavens envy not merely the presence of Octavian, but his rule.

504 **queritur** subject is 'regia caeli' (again), object is '(sc. 'te') curare triumphos hominum'

505 **quippe . . . nefas** LaP.: "dove il lecito si muta nell'illecita". But that seems like a shot in the dark, not adequately explaining 'versum atque'. I prefer to read "quippe ubi" as "no matter whether", and "versum" as the adverb = "turned toward", here = "tending to". This adverb takes the acc. ('fas') with, and sometimes without, a preposition; much more frequent is the form 'versus'; 'versum' is used here metri gratia. (V. *LS* s.v. 'verto'.)

506 **facies** forms, pretexts, faces (some of them inevitably specious)

507 **dignus honos** the plow is not given its due ("however humble" might perhaps be understood; otherwise the phrase seems a bit extravagant, at least rhetorically).

510 **vicinae urbes** **ruptis legibus** "their pacts broken"

511 **Punctum finalem** post 'ferunt' posui, in loco semicoli Mynorsii Geymonatique. Non magnum interest, sed mihi meliorem finem facit, singulam imaginem ante oculos mentis relinquere. **toto orbe** throughout the world

512 **carcer** here = starting gate **quadriga** four-horse chariot, used for racing; subject of *addunt*. Post 'quadriga' et 'spatium' commata delevi: praecipitat sententia, cuiusque membri sensus sensum priori directe insequitur.

513 **addunt** increase (sc. in fury) **in spatium** with each lap ('spatium' is so used in racing contexts)

retinacula here = cords, reins

514 **habena** here (as often) = reins

LIBER I

succurrere	<p> <u>exesă</u> inueniet scabrā robigine pilă, aut grauibus rastris galeas pulsabit inanis grandiaque effossis mirabitur ossa sepulcris. di patrii Indigetes et Romule Vestaque mater, quae Tuscum Tiberim et Romana Palatia seruas, hunc saltem euerso iuuenem succurrere saeclo </p>	495
Dira belli	<p> ne prohibete. satis iam pridem sanguine nostro Laomedonteaē luimus periuria Troiae; iam pridem nobis caeli te regia, Caesar, inuidet atque hominum queritur curare triumphos, quippe ubi fas uersum atque nefas: tot bella per orbem, tam multae scelerum facies, non ullus aratro </p>	500
Insania	<p> dignus honos, squalent abductis arua colonis, et curuae rigidum falces conflantur in ensem. hinc mouet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum; uicinae ruptis inter se legibus urbes arma ferunt saeuit toto Mars impius orbe, ut cum carceribus sese <u>effudēre</u> quadrīgae, addunt in spatia et frustra retinacula tendens fertur equis auriga neque audit currus habenas. </p>	505
		510

LIBER I: SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES

169 **THE ROMAN PLOW** (supplement): On the Roman plow, its parts, and their terminology, v. K.D. White, *Ag. Impl. Rom. Wld*, 126 et seq. (xeroxed; nunc habeo), excerpted here; note his illustrations. The diagrammed one is of a Pakistani ard; an Italian ard is illustrated elsewhere, and the plates show bronze images of Roman plows. Similar ards survived in Italy and elsewhere into the 11900s (and for all I know, down to the present). The interpretations of many commentators have been fanciful, and some seem to have been based on attempts to explain the passage from itself, with inadequate attention to other ancient agricultural writers. Also, some commentators thought only in terms of the North European moldboard plow, and were ignorant of the South European ard. (*LS* seems to reflect this, where checked.) (The “*incurvum aratrum*” of L.494 refers not to a moldboard but to the overall shape of the plow, especially the beams.)

The Roman plow (*arātrum*) was what modern agricultural writers call an “ard”, or “breaking plow”. The ard is best suited for the light soils of warmer and dryer regions, which do not need turning, and would indeed suffer from it. It is therefore historically typical of Mediterranean countries. It cuts shallowly, and breaks the soil, pushing it to either side without turning it. (Variations from this were possible, however: White p. 139; also note 2.261.: *supinatas glaebas*) The moldboard or turning plow is suitable for the heavier soils of cooler and wetter regions. It cuts deeply and inverts the top layer of the soil, turning it to one side of the plow.

196 **Page, La Penna, and *OLD* take this passage to mean that one result of the treatment was that the harvested legumes, dried for storage, would cook more quickly. This seems to me a strained interpretation, unlikely because it departs from agriculture to the relatively refined subject of cuisine. (Beans are refined in comparison to the acorns and arbutus that are the farmer’s urgent incentive to industry, as at 159.) Some interpretation more agricultural and more immediately relevant should be sought, though none is obvious; the culinary interpretation is not obvious either.

I would suggest the following translation: “and though the early-sown seeds become soaked (i.e., and rot or be permanently weakened) in the wan warmth (sc. of the early spring)”. Spring damp, slow to dry in that cool season, is a well-known problem for farmers, since it can rot the seeds or seedlings. I don’t know about agricultural uses of the substances that may be referred to here as *nitrum*; potash, at least, was anciently used as a fertilizer, and that may be its real role here. *Amurca*, however, may indeed be of some use as a preventative against microorganisms and/or damage to seeds by insects and other critters). Varro (*RR* 1.57) recommends *amurca* as an ingredient in the plaster for granary walls, because it keeps out mice and worms; he notes that some treat the stored grain itself with *amurca*. Cato (*Agr.* 91–2) gives similar advice, and enjoins that the rammed surface of the threshing floor should be soaked in *amurca*, so that ants will not injure it, and weeds will not grow. This passage may have brought *amurca* to Vergil’s mind shortly before, when he referred to it or recalled it while writing his own lines, 178–86, on the construction of a threshing floor.

Whatever the crop, the question of early sowing is often a fraught one. The farmer risks a great deal by sowing too early, but practical and market considerations may be strong incentives to sow as early as possible. Any means of reducing the risk would be of great interest to the farmer.

It looks like the present passage of the *Georgics* was early despaired of, and resignation passed from one editor to another, so that no-one sought again for a more likely meaning. The meaning proposed, however, is not really obscure—once a knowledgeable agriculturist gives serious thought to this particular passage, or, as in the present case, once an agriculturally ignorant reader intent on a better elucidation of this passage happens to possess the right bit of agricultural information, which bubbles up to the surface of his mind when the muck of random sediment is stirred by exegetical effort. Knowledgeable agriculturists have read Vergil with care since the beginning of the modern era and before; perhaps the first publication of this interpretation should be sought in agricultural journals.