This passage presents a short catalogue of wild and fruit-trees culminating in a laudation of the vine. Its obvious function is to enhance the theme of variety dominating in the first part of the second book, which is devoted entirely to the arborum cultus. It is not, however, my intention to elaborate on this important aspect, but rather to focus the attention on the interpretation of three passages in this catalogue, which in fact require closer examination.

The first of these appears at line 87, where we read: 'pomaque et Alcinoi silvae'. The issue here, of course, is the interpretation of 'poma', which some commentators and translators apparently have rendered incorrectly with 'apples'. For, if Vergil in fact had only apples in mind, he probably would have written 'mala', which fits just as well as 'poma' into the metre of this line. Why, then, 'poma'? 'Poma', to be sure, is a collective referring to various kinds of fruit, amongst others apples in particular. By using 'poma' instead of 'mala', Vergil obviously states more emphatically the vast variety of fruit-trees cultivated in Italy, a fact which is specifically borne out by the addition of 'Alcinoi silvae'. For, as we know from Homer, this legendary Phaeacian king was famous for his orchards, where next to pears, pomegranates, figs and grapes, apples in particular could be found. And so, without using the usual word for apples, Vergil in the first place could have implied apples. As a matter of fact, the apple-tree is one of the oldest and most useful trees in the history of mankind, and therefore one would expect it to be included in a catalogue like this. However, that it is not mentioned here by name, surely does not detract from this fact. I therefore suggest that 'poma' be here rendered by 'fruit-trees', as Vergil indeed uses it elsewhere in this book. Otherwise the reference to Alcinous' orchards in this specific context has, in my opinion, very little sense.

The second problem is raised by lines 95-96, where the vitis Rhaetica is at issue. Here it strikes one immediately that Vergil does not comment on the quality of this vine, which was especially cultivated on the southern slopes of the Alps, and naturally also in the vicinity of his homeland city Verona. In fact,
he professes to be uncertain how he should praise it, finally warning the vine against entering the lists with the famous Falernian: 'et quo te carmine dicam, / Rhaetica? nec cellis ideo contende Falernis.' That these lines are obviously ambiguous was noted by the ancients. Thus Seneca quotes them in an ambiguous context. This point has, however, been overlooked by those commentators who consider these lines to be outright praise. Though praise might have been Vergil's ultimate intention, as the context and the phrasing perhaps imply, the question still remains why he did not do so openly. In other words, for this ambiguity there must at least have been a specific reason.

Perhaps this is to be found in the fact that ancient opinion differed very much on the quality of this vine. So we are informed that while the elder Cato and Augustus both sang the praises of wine made from this grape, Catullus censured the *vitis Rhaetica* as altogether useless ('nulli rei apta'). Moreover, the elder Pliny states that whereas *vinum Rhaeticum* was famous in Italy, it had found no recognition whatsoever in the outside world, adding, however, that for this lack in quality the very productive *vitis Rhaetica* made up in quantity. Again, elsewhere he relates that a variety of the *vitis Rhaetica*, cultivated only in the *Alpes Maritimae*, produced wine of a very poor quality. Presumably Vergil was aware of these facts, and so instead of openly praising the *vitis Rhaetica* turned to ambiguous language, leaving it to his readers to interpret these lines in whatever way they wished. Of this kind of ambiguity we have examples not only elsewhere in Vergil but also in Catullus.

The final and most difficult problem is presented by lines 101–102, which in part read: 'non ego te, dis et mensis accepta secundis, / transierim, Rhodia . . .' It seems reasonable to accept that these lines refer to both the Rhodian grape and Rhodian wine. This implies, first of all, that Rhodian grapes could be offered as a sacrifice to the gods and be relished as dessert; and secondly, that Rhodian wine was offered as a libation to the gods but also drunk at the end of a meal. The question, however, is: why Rhodian wine, and, more specifically, why was it considered to be 'dis . . . accepta'? On this question Richter, who believes that 'dis' points to a specific cult, has recently speculated, referring to both the Rhodian cult of Dionysus and the annual festival held in honour of Athena as patroness of the Rhodian citadel. Perhaps one may even here include the cult of the sun-god Helios, whose head in fact appeared on stamps attached to amphorae in which Rhodian wine was exported over an area stretching from Carthage to southern Russia especially from the 4th century BC onward. But even so, the question, as Richter himself admits, still remains why Rhodian wine was used for this purpose; we therefore have to look elsewhere for a clue to this problem. Now, from Aristotle we learn that Rhodian wine was very sweet. As such it would at least have been enjoyable as a dessert-wine, and possibly also considered to be welcome to the gods ('dis . . . accepta') in the sense that in taste it more or less resembled nectar, the drink of the gods, which was also thought of as sweet. Admittedly this may sound far-fetched; nevertheless I venture to put it forward as a possible solution of this problem.
NOTES


7. Quaest. Nat. 1,11; cf. Serv., *ad loc.:* 'sciens ergo utrumque Vergilius medium tenuit'.

8. E.g. Conington-Nettleship (1881), and Richter (see above note 6), *ad loc.


11. *NH* 14,4,41.


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SPRACHLICHES UND QUELLENKRITISCHES ZU BENZO

Benzo, Bischof von Alba in Ligurien, ist als eifriger Parteigänger Heinrichs IV. bekannt. Vor seinem Tode (1086–90) hat er selbst seine Schriften, teils in Versen und teils in Prosa, gesammelt. Die einzige Handschrift, die sie überliefert, ist nach allgemeiner Ansicht ein Autographon; sie wird in der Universitätsbibliothek von Uppsala unter dem Sigel C 88 aufbewahrt. ¹

Benzos Schriften, die er unter der Überschrift ‘Ad Heinricum imperatorem libri VII’ zusammenfasste, wurden zuletzt von K. Pertz in den *MGH Scriptores* 11 (1854) S. 591 ff. herausgegeben. Seine Kollationen waren, wie ich durch einige Stichproben an Hand eines Mikrofilms festgestellt habe, sorgfältig. Benzos Sprache ist aber interessant genug, um eine Einzeluntersuchung zu verdienen, und Pertz’ Quellenapparat lässt sehr viel zu wünschen übrig. Dr. K. Manitius plant eine neue Ausgabe in den *MGH* zu veröffentlichen, aber nach dem, was mir die Leitung der *MGH* mitteilte, wird es noch einige Jahre dauern, bis sie erscheint. Inzwischen werden hier einige sprachliche und quellenkritische Bemerkungen gedruckt, die hoffentlich der Neuausgabe zugute kommen können.²
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