

COLUMELLA: *DNP* 3.85–87; *LMA* 3.67–68; *OCD* p 367; *RE* 10/1.1054–68.

Lucius Junius Moderatus Columella was born near modern Cadiz in the Roman province of Hispania and flourished in the early first century A.D. Little is known of his life apart from what he tells us in his only two surviving works, *De re rustica* and *De arboribus*, in which he informs us that he served as tribune with the sixth legion of the Roman army in A.D. 36, probably in Syria, and that he owned and operated several farms in Latium and Spain. In *De re rustica*, Columella is concerned with what he sees as the decline of Roman agriculture. He addresses the problems associated with running a Roman farm and offers in twelve books a practical guide to various issues including the duties of the estate manager and his wife, types of farm labor, how to deal with domestic and wild animals on the estate, and how to manage the buildings. He seems to have issued each of the twelve books separately. Thus at the beginning of Book IV he confronts criticism he had received on Book III. In Book X his admiration for **VERGIL** is demonstrated through his response to Vergil's **GEORGICS** and his attempt to write in hexameters. His poetic efforts in Book X are generally considered not to be his best writing. In *De arboribus*, which seems to have been an originally separate work, Columella treats the subject of trees on the estate and their properties. In the manuscripts, the single surviving book of *De arboribus* is often inserted between Books II and III of *De re rustica* as if the latter were a thirteen-book treatise.

Two Carolingian manuscripts of *De re rustica* and *De arboribus* survive: St. Petersburg (Leningrad), Russian National Library F.v.1, and Milan, Biblioteca Ambrosiana L.85 sup. The St. Petersburg manuscript was written at Corbie ca. 830 and remained there until 1638, when it migrated to Saint-Germain-des-Prés; from there it was taken to St. Petersburg by the Russian diplomat and manuscript collector Peter Dubrowski at the end of the eighteenth century. The Milan manuscript was copied at Fulda in the first half of the ninth century in an Insular hand and found its way to northern Italy in the early fifteenth century. These two manuscripts, the only surviving manuscripts of Columella's works prior to 1400, were both copied from a single original, now lost. All subsequent manuscripts derive from the Milan manuscript. For an exhaustive study of the manuscripts, see Hedberg (1968). Two twelfth-century Corbie library booklists that record the presence of the St. Petersburg manuscript are printed by Becker (1885; see p 189 no. 204 and p 285 no. 335). The standard edition of Columella's works is the seven-volume edition by Josephson, Lundström, and Hedberg (1897–1968).

There are several manuscripts of English provenance that contain all or part of Columella's works, but these are all of the fifteenth century or later. There is no direct evidence for knowledge of Columella in pre-Conquest England. Ogilvy (*BKE* p 21) intimates this state of affairs when he remarks that in spite of the Insular connections of the ninth-century manuscripts produced at Corbie and Fulda, where the two oldest Columella manuscripts were made, Columella seems to have been unknown in Anglo-Saxon England.

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Works Cited

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