Notes on the Meaning of

Κολοκύντη

J. L. HELLER

[0.01] Dio gives an account (LX. 35) of the hypocrisy of Agrippina and Nero after the death of Claudius—the man whom they had murdered and then pretended to mourn with a state funeral and laudation delivered by Nero but composed by Seneca (Tac. Ann. XIII. 3), and later with an official consecratio (Ann. XIII. 2) or deification—which includes the witty comment of Seneca’s brother Gallio on their accomplishment. Tucked parenthetically into this account comes the now famous sentence: “Seneca too was the author of a composition which he called 'Αποκολοκύντωσις as if it were a kind of immortalization.” The formation and meaning of this strange word have been discussed endlessly. Most scholars believe that it was applied as a title to the extant wickedly satirical parody of dramatic narrative in prose and verse (which, however, is titled differently in the manuscripts), and that Seneca coined it as a comic substitute for 'Αποθέωσις, the Greek word which might have been expected from the conversation in the central part of the satire and is actually used in the title of the Sangallensis: Divi Claudii 'Αποθέωσις per satiram. But why did he base his comic formation on κολοκύντη, the Attic form of κολοκύνθη, which LSJ defines as the plant called by Duchesne (1786) Cucurbita maxima, whose large round fruit we call a pumpkin or squash, the Germans (Riesen-) Kürbis, the French courge or potiron, the Italians zucca (commune or da mangiare)? Various answers have been given. What we may call the prevailing view has been restated in a recent article (Harvard Studies in Classical Philology 82 [1978],
265–70) by H. Eisenberg, "Bedeutung und Zweck des Titels von Senecas 'Apocolocyntosis'."

[0.02] Referring to the useful survey of M. Coffey and the fundamental work of O. Weinreich,1 Eisenberg concludes (270) that Seneca inscribed his newly coined Greek word as a formal title for his composition because he wished to stimulate his readers, to arouse their curiosity and put them in the right frame of mind for the reading of the satire, and to let them understand that what they held in their hands was directed against Claudius, a travesty of his deification. Though the readers might be disappointed on finding that the satire did not contain (265) any transformation into a kolokyntê—as the obvious analogy with apoteôsis might lead them to expect—and though the single word of the title did not mention Claudius (267), the sophisticated aristocracy of the court, for whose entertainment the work was designed (266), would understand, as they read along, the joke in this title. They would know that the Greek word kolokyntê had special prominence only in a few expressions which became proverbial, the ύπερστερον κολοκύντας of Epicharmus and Sophron and the ἡ κρίνον ἡ κολοκύντην of Diphilus and Menander (269 with footnotes 14 and 15; Eisenberg does not refer to the delightful fragment of Epicrates ridiculing the philosophers who were attempting to define the word, on which see Coffey, Roman Satire, 168).2 And here the vegetable stands as the embodiment of health or a symbol of life as a lily was of death. But in Latin the equivalent cucurbita had the extended meaning Dummkopf or "stupid" in popular speech (Apul. Met. I. 15. 2 and Petron. 39. 13 are cited [270] from Weinreich),3 and Seneca’s readers, remembering (269) the laughter which had greeted Nero’s laudation (Tac. Ann. XIII. 3) of Claudius’ providentia and sapientia, and finding in the satire itself many references (e.g. 1. 1; 4. 1, v. 2; 7. 3; 8. 3) to Seneca’s real opinion of the opposite

1 Lustrum, 6 (1961), 239–71; Coffey’s views are repeated without much change in chapter 9 of his book, Roman Satire (London and New York 1976). See also O. Weinreich, Senecas Apocolocyntosis, die Satire auf Tod, Himmel- und Höllenfahrt des Kaisers Claudius . . . (Berlin 1923), especially p. 11 for a list of Greek, Latin, Italian, English, and German expressions in which the word for Kürbis, a large globular vegetable, is applied to a person, implying his empty-headedness or stupidity.

2 Eisenberg also neglects to mention the Aristophanic taunt (Nub. 327, λημὼς κολοκύντας which R. Kilpatrick (in Class. Journ. 74 [1979], 193–96) coupled with the separative function of ἀπό in some Greek denominative verbs in order to suggest that Seneca’s title implies that the deified Claudius was being relieved of the pumpkin-like impediments to his vision.

3 Here Eisenberg wisely omits Juvenal’s ventosa cucurbita (14. 58; see below, 1.01) which Weinreich had listed on his p. 11.
qualities of the μῶρος Claudius, could not fail to grasp the point of the title. In an ἀποκολοκύντωσις Claudius would attain “die Gestalt der cucurbita” (270), a derisive name (i.e. Dummkopf as inferred from Petronius and Apuleius) which already applied to him “wegen seiner Torheit”—an altogether appropriate transformation. Thus the single word of the title is interpreted by Eisenberg, not so much as “transformation into a fool,” for Claudius was already that in his lifetime, as “transformation (by means of deification) of a fool (i.e. Claudius),” or as C. F. Russo put it, not “trasformazione in una zucca” but “deificazione di una zucca” or “zucconeria divinazzata.” And thus Eisenberg would explain (though he did not mention them) the popular renderings of the title as Verkürbissung⁵ or Pumpkinification.⁶

[0.03] Before reaching this conclusion, Eisenberg had rejected some other theories about the formation of the title, namely (268, note 11) H. Wagenvoort’s 1934 proposal that it was modelled on the poorly attested ἀπορεφανίδωσίς, and (265) that of J. Gy. Szilágyi, who in 1963 suggested ἀποβίωσις, meaning “departure from life” with reference to Nero’s joke (Suet. Nero 33) that when Claudius ceased morari inter homines he also ceased to be a fool (mörari). As for the ingenious article by A. N. Athanassakis (Trans. Am. Philol. As. 104 [1974], 11–22), Eisenberg (266) welcomes his idea that “in satire we must always watch for the double-entendre” (see also Athanassakis’ previous article, Classical Philology 68 [1973], 292–94), but remains cool to the suggestion that at the end of this satire, when Claudius is passed around rapidly from one person to another in the infernal court—what Coffey (Lustrum 6, 247) called his final degradation—he is very much like the large round ball with which Romans exercised at the baths (see, e.g., Petron. 27), so that he is indeed transformed figuratively into something resembling a pumpkin or kolokyntē. In turn Athanassakis had been cool (12) to Russo’s (and thus Eisenberg’s) interpretation of the title.

⁴ Coffey (Roman Satire, note 10), pointing out that “deification of a pumpkin” is still open to objection, refers to p. 18 of the 4th edition (Firenze 1964) of Russo’s useful Latin text with Italian commentary. The objection to Weinreich’s 1923 theory (namely that apokolokyntōsis could not mean “transformation into a fool” because Claudius was already that in his lifetime) was raised by the Czech scholar, F. Stiebitz, in an essay included (391–99) in a Festschrift (Μνήμα) for J. Zubatěho (Praze 1926).

⁵ See the Tusculum edition and translation by W. Schöne (München 1957): Seneca Apokolokyntōsis, Die Verkürbissung des Kaisers Claudius, with a vignette of a round pumpkin on the title page.

⁶ First used by C. Merivale in his History of the Romans under the Empire (1850–62); adopted by R. Graves for his translation in an Appendix to his novel, Claudius the God (London 1934).
And Athanassakis had not neglected considerations of botanical and medicinal science. While here favoring the interpretation of kolokyntē as the fruit of Cucurbita maxima (see above, 0.01), he had noted (16) that Wagenvoort in 1934 had specified that the implement of the title, which he explained as addressed to Claudius and saying in effect, me radicasti tu (you punished me with a radish) quidem (when you exiled me), iam te cucurbitaboto (now I’ll pay you back with something more painful), was the pointed tip of the swelling fruit of Lagenaria vulgaris (Seringe [1825], elevating Linnaeus’ Cucurbita lagenaria to a genus), what we call a (bottle-) gourd or calabash, the Germans (Flaschen-) Kürbis, the French cougourde or calebasse, the Italians zucca (da vino or dal collo), and the Spaniards calabaza. He had referred (ibid., footnote 16) to the important article by F. A. Todd, “Some Cucurbitaceae in Latin literature” (Classical Quarterly 37 [1943], 101–11), which also looked to the fruit, this time dried and empty, of a small bottle-gourd (see below, 1.02 and Figure 4) in order to explain the title of the satire and certain other passages. Then at the beginning of his article (12) Athanassakis had noticed the sensational letter to the Sunday Times of London for May 18, 1958, “New light on an old murder,” by Robert Graves. “Graves assumed that the kolokyntē of our title is the purgative colocynth, a dangerous alkaline poison, and that the meaning of the title [no longer to be rendered “Purgative, as he had done 20 years before: see note 6 above] is: deification by means of a colocynth.” See Coffey (Lustrum, 6, 253) for criticism: such an interpretation is impossible linguistically; the idea had been suggested long ago in the Animadversiones of the humanist physician H. Junius (1511–75) and was soon refuted by Heinsius and Fromond. But Athanassakis found it interesting as leading to a cluster of his double-entendres. For the purgative derived from the plant which Pliny called cucurbita silvestris or colocynthis and we call Bitter Apple, see below, 1.02 and Figure 6.

For the nature of the poison, called colocynthine by the pharmacists who isolated it in 1948, classicists can—and by all means should—turn to an article in the (Harvard) Botanical Museum Leaflets, No. 5 (1973), 213–44, by F. Deltgen and H. G. Kauer. They were refuting an earlier article (Leaflets, No. 3 [1972], 101–28) by the scholarly mycologist, R. G. Wasson, who had examined the circumstances of “The death of Claudius, or Mushrooms for murderers.” After a very entertaining discussion of the use of various species of Amanita in various fictional or pseudo-historical murders (including

7 See Coffey (Lustrum, 6, 254) and my article, pp. 181–92 in Homenaje a Antonio Tovar (Madrid 1972), esp. p. 191.
acute criticism of the late Dorothy Sayers’ *The Documents in the Case*), Wasson had accepted Graves’ suggestion that colocynthine, administered *per clysteram* (Suet. Claud. 44. 3), might have done the trick after the dinner of poisonous mushrooms had failed. In their laborious reply, Deltgen and Kauer take up Wasson’s points one by one and demolish them on various grounds, historical, philological, and pharmacological. In particular, an impossibly large amount of raw fruit would have had to be processed to produce a lethal dose, and colocynthine is not a rapid poison; in fact there is no record of a person’s actually dying from it. They conclude by endorsing Russo’s version of the title (*zucceria divinazzata*) rather than English “Pumpkinification” or German *Verkürbissung*. They have noted the botanical definition (*Cucurbita maxima*) in *LSJ* (see 0.01) and they have accepted the old claim (on grounds indicated in 0.02) that “every educated Roman of the time knew that the Greek word stood for the Latin *cucurbita*, which was a commonly used metaphor for ‘fool’ or ‘madman’.”

[0.06] But in so doing Deltgen and Kauer neglected a very important point made by Wasson when objecting to Graves’ former “Pumpkinification.” “The botanist,” he says (125), “is rendered uncomfortable by an anachronism; the pumpkins and squashes were introduced into Europe in the 16th century, being native to America. The Mediterranean shores knew other curcubits, but not the pumpkins and squashes.” If this is really so, all the interpretations of *ἀποκολοκύντωσις* in terms of pumpkins will have to be discarded, and the botanical definition in *LSJ* as *Cucurbita maxima* must be rejected. Actually it has been superseded already in the recent etymological dictionaries of Frisk and Chantraine, who define *κολοκύνθη* as *Lagenaria vulgaris.*

The philological evidence which supports this conclusion will be discussed later on (see 2.03). Here we must look briefly at the botanical and archaeological evidence, much of it published in German, which the British scholarly botanist, who drew up the botanical definitions for *LSJ* during or just before the First World War, may perhaps be forgiven for ignoring in favor of French scholarship.

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9 This was Sir William Thiselton-Dyer, F.R.S. See Sir Henry Jones’ preface to the 1940 edition of *LSJ*, noting (p. vii) that Dyer had already communicated a number of his identifications to Sir Arthur Hort for use in the Loeb Classical Library edition (1916) of Theophrastus’ *Historia Plantarum*. Three installments of Dyer’s notes
Our purpose is to determine, if possible, the places of origin—whether Old World (Europe, Africa, and Asia) or New World (the Americas, Indonesia, and Australia)—of the family of cultivated plants known as Cucurbitaceae or (for short) cucurbits. The pioneering work in the field of plant geography was done by the French botanist, Alphonse de Candolle, whose Origine des plantes cultivées (Paris 1883) has become a classic, translated into many languages. His methods stressed first of all the location of wild or semi-cultivated varieties and only secondarily and with caution their classical or vernacular names, because identification of their species was often problematical. Of more importance was the archaeological evidence derived from ancient paintings, mosaics, and sculptured monuments or from pictures in medieval manuscripts and early Renaissance herbal. Since Candolle's time the various kinds of evidence have been greatly enlarged by research in the records kept by early explorers and by the observation of botanists who are now included regularly on the staffs of archaeological expeditions. The resultant conclusions, which differ considerably from Candolle's, were summarized in 1932 by Elisabeth Schiemann in her authoritative Entstehung der Kulturpflanze, published at Berlin as Bd. III, Teil L of the Handbuch der Vererbungswissenschaft edited by E. Baur and M. Hartmann; see especially her tremendous bibliography (336–75), her introductory chapter on methods of inquiry, and her pages (237–42) on "Cucurbitaceen." This is the first section of a chapter (237–50) on "Weitere amerikanische Kulturpflanzen" which also discusses the Tomato and Tobacco. See also p. 64, Tabelle 9, III, for the spread from America to Africa and thence to Europe of the three species of Cucurbita (C. Pepo, moschata, and maxima) which have been called, in distinction to Linnaeus' Cucurbita lagenaria (and the minor relative which Pliny called cucurbita silvestris, see 0.03 above and 1.02 below), the true cucurbits (echte Kürbisse), i.e. the pumpkins and squashes mentioned by Wasson. In general, Schiemann's conclusions have been accepted with only minor corrections by later handbooks and special studies, and Wasson's claim of anachronism is fully sustained.

The case of Lagenaria vulgaris Seringe (now known as Lagenaria

defending his choices appeared in the Cambridge Journal of Philology, beginning on pages 195 of Vol. 33 (1917) and 78 and 290 of Vol. 34 (1918), including one on sikya (34, 297–99) which is instructive on his misconceptions, and another on kolokynite (34, 303–05).

sicervaria Molina [1782] since the 1930 article by Standley in *Publ. Field Mus. [Chicago]*, ser. bot. 3, 435) is peculiar in that it seems to have been cultivated from very early times in both the New and Old Worlds. A recent article by Richardson has collected and reviewed, area by area, the evidence from the earliest archaeological remains of *Lagenaria* in an attempt to evaluate “the hypotheses that have been formulated to explain its world-wide pre-Columbian distribution.”  

He concluded (1) that *Lagenaria* is not a monotypic genus but enjoyed an ancient pantropical distribution, (2) that human utilization of *Lagenaria* is at least 15,000 years old in the New World (S. America, Peru) and 12,000 years in the Old World (Africa, Egypt), (3) that these dates are far too early to suggest transoceanic diffusion by man, though drifting from Africa or Asia may have occurred, (4) that the earliest *Lagenaria* used by man was probably a wild plant in the context of a hunt-and-gather society, and (5) that *Lagenaria* was domesticated independently in the Old and New Worlds.

[0.09] Assertions about the homeland of the true cucurbits have been more controversial. In the English translation of his *Origine* (1886), Candolle added a paragraph admitting the cogency of the arguments raised by his American critics, Asa Gray and J. H. Trumbull, and based on the names and descriptions of plants reported by early travelers in America, to the effect that squashes and pumpkins had been known in Mexico long before the arrival of Columbus. He maintained, however, that *Cucurbita maxima* at least was originally at home in Africa, and this opinion was accepted by Dyer (see above, note 9). Dyer also noted some evidence, brought out later than Candolle, which favored an origin in ancient India. This evidence was countered by Schiemann when she noted in her 1932 book (240) that in America the cultivated forms were sharply divided geographically (*C. maxima* in South America, Peru to Bolivia; *C. moschata* in Colombia and Venezuela to Mexico; *C. Pepo* the same as *moschata* but extending as far north as Texas), whereas in Asia their ranges overlap, the absence of geographical separation indicating an imported culture. For the counter to Candolle’s claim for Africa see our next paragraph (0.10); here we note that well before Schiemann other German scholars had reached the negative conclusion that the true cucurbits were not among those garden-plants whose existence can be traced in reliable records from Pliny on, right through the Middle Ages (the Capitulary of Charlemagne) to Albertus Magnus and the earliest

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illustrated herbals. The leader here was R. von Fischer-Benzon in his *Altdeutsche Gartenflora* (Kiel and Leipzig, 1894), discussing the history of the *Cucurbitaceae* on pages 89–92. This was soon taken up by the philologist Otto Schrader in the first edition (Strassburg, 1901) of his *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde* (see p. 483). Then in the fifth edition (1887) of Victor Hein’s deservedly popular *Kulturtüllen und Hausthiere . . .* (first published in 1870, with a third edition in 1877 which Candolle rather enviably disparaged in his preface of 1886), the botanist A. Engler noted that the homeland of the true cucurbits (e.g. *C. Pepo*) was most likely in America, and in the seventh edition (1902) Schrader added (319) the statement “dass die echten Kürbisse den Alten noch fremd waren.” These opinions were repeated by Orth in the *R-E*, bd. 7 (1912) on “Gurke” and bd. 11 (1922) on “Kürbis,” but Dyer failed to see any of them. So too most recent classicists (except Wagenvoort and Todd), misled by the definition in *LSJ*, have missed this important point. This includes Weinreich, Russo, Coffey, and others, including myself in my former article (see note 7). But with a sure hand, Frisk (above, note 8) pointed to the *Reallexikon* of Schrader and Nehring (1917–23).

[0.10] Candolle’s argument for an African homeland had been based on the report of a single traveler on the banks of the river Niger. In a thorough review of all the botanical evidence for and against an “American Origin of the Cultivated Cucurbits,” Whitaker12 has shown how weak this evidence is in the face of the numerous investigations of related species in the Americas, and he has added the negative evidence of the late appearance of these species in European herbals of the sixteenth and even seventeenth century, from which he supplies eight figures in two plates. His argument would be stronger if he had also compared earlier herbals. Candolle had examined one such, a *Herbarius Pataviae Impressus* (1485), which he had reported (in his English *Origin*, 247) as containing a recognizable figure of *Lagenaria vulgaris* but not (256) of *Cucurbita Pepo* or *C. maxima*. But Whitaker’s arguments, when added to those of the German authorities, are convincing enough. I know of only one dissenting argument, that of Don and Patricia Bothwell. In their recent book, *Food in Antiquity* (London 1969), they say (127–28): “The genus *Cucurbita* seems to be about as confusing as that of *Lagenaria*, for whilst many species may be counted definitely American in origin, it seems likely that one, the pumpkin (*Cucurbita maxima*) was already wild in Africa before European or American contact was made there, and indeed some of

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12 T. W. Whitaker, *Annals of the Missouri Botanical Garden*, 34 (1947), 101–11. It is noteworthy that he does not refer to Schiemann or any of the German authorities.
the Greek and Roman references to *cucurbita* would fit in well with this genus." That is, they are still accepting both Candolle's argument, which I think has been discredited, and the botanical definition of *κολοκύνθη* in *LSJ*, which followed Candolle and was, I believe, a serious mistake on the part of Thiselton-Dyer.

[0.11] Here we should acknowledge that the lexical definition in *LSJ* is simply "round gourd," followed by the botanical name, *Cucurbita maxima*. Previous editions of Liddell and Scott's *Lexicon* had said "the round gourd or pumpkin, Lat. *cucurbita*, the long one being called *σκύα*." This is unobjectionable, going back to a passage in Athenaeus as interpreted in the great *Thesaurus* of Stephanus (see below, 2.02)—except that the implied equivalence of "gourd" and "pumpkin" seems curious to an American reader. But to an Englishman this would be quite natural. Candolle in his English *Origin* headed the section on *Cucurbita maxima* (249) with the word "Gourd," though it was "Potiron" in the original French. And just before this, where the section on *Lagenaria vulgaris* (245) is headed by the words "Gourd or Calabash," he placed a footnote: "The word *gourd* is also used in English for *Cucurbita maxima*. This is one of the examples of the confusion in common names and the greater accuracy of scientific terms." The *Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia* (New York 1889) notes that formerly *gourd* designated the fruit of various cucurbitaceous genera, including melons, pumpkins, squashes, etc. as well as gourds themselves, but now, in a restricted sense, the fruit of *Lagenaria lagenaria* or the plant itself. There are other examples of this old-fashioned usage. One of the best occurs in the *History* of Merivale (above, note 6). In explaining his novel term "Pumpkinification" for Seneca's skit, he refers (in a footnote on p. 463 of the fifth volume of the New York edition, 1864-79) to "the number of unwieldy and bloated gourds which sun their speckled bellies before the doors" in modern Rome, "to form a favorite condiment to the food of the poorer classes."

[0.12] The history of the word "pumpkin" is also very pertinent here. Dictionaries trace it back to medieval Latin *pepon*, through Old French *pompon* and earlier English *pompion*, applied to any large round fruit, e.g. a melon (compare also English *pippin*). And classical lexicographers (e.g. Steier on "Melone" in the *R-E* 29 [1931], 562-67; Schrader and Nehring [1917-23, above, 0.09]; and of course *LSJ* and Frisk) trace the medieval *pepon* back through Latin sources all the way to the Greek adjective *πεπων*, properly meaning "ripe or mature" but applied metaphorically in Homer and Hesiod to persons in mild or affectionate reproach (*ο* *πεπων*, *Il*. VI. 55, IX. 252; Hes.
The adjective was frequently attached to the noun σικνος, "cucumber" (Hp., Morb. III. 17, Vict. II. 55, Pl. Com., fr. 64. 4, etc.) in a phrase indicated the (sweet) melon, which would not be eaten until fully ripe, whereas cucumbers were eaten green, whether raw or cooked. The adjective was also substantivized in Greek and was recognized by Pliny as the name for an unusually large (Nat. XIX. 65) and salubrious (XX. 11) variety of cucumis, probably the watermelon, which was known in ancient Egypt and was called Cucurbita Citrullus by Linnaeus, and Citrullus lanatus by Thunberg in 1794. Steier also notes that Pliny's description (XIX. 67) of the golden color and sweet odor of the small quince-like fruits, called melopepones, of another variant of cucumis (which Pliny thought, mistakenly, had appeared spontaneously in Campania) is strikingly apt for the sweet melon. Later the originally Greek compound (e.g. μηλοπέπων, Galen VI. 566) was shortened to melones, whence come Linnaeus' trivial name (Cucumis) Melo and the familiar words in the modern vernaculars. But the word pepo, which continued to denote the watermelon, was sometimes applied to other fruits of similar shape (compare Fuchs' Pepones in my Figure 8, identified by modern botanists as fruits of Cucumis Melo), whence come the various words in the modern vernaculars noted above and Linnaeus' somewhat arbitrary (Cucurbita) Pepo, which even Candolle admitted was probably at home originally in America.

In the sections which follow, I propose, first, to examine lexicographically all the contexts in which the word cucurbita occurs, especially in the writings of St. Jerome (where I think several expressions need clearing up), in order to determine the range and relative familiarity of its meanings, whether literal, figurative, or transferred, which cluster around its central meaning, i.e. a plant, Lagenaria vulgaris, or one of its fruits. Secondly, since Candolle said...

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13 The woodcut illustrations of plants in my Figures 3–7 are reproduced through the courtesy of the Hunt Botanical Library of Carnegie-Mellon University, from two rare books in their collection. The first (Figure 3) is from Lobelius (Matthias de l'Obel). Plantarum seu Stirpium Icones (Antverpiae 1581), p. 641 at the right-hand side. Whitaker (see note 12) agrees with Candolle that this is "the first illustration of a plant that is definitely referable to C. maxima." The other figures are drawn from the 1549 octavo edition (Vivae Imagines) of the De historia stirpium Commentarii (Basileae 1542) of Leonhart Fuchs. Secure identifications of its plants were made by T. A. Sprague, J. Linn. Soc. London, Botany, 48, 545–642, from which we note the following: my Figures 4 and 5, Lagenaria vulgaris Seringe; 6, Citrullus Colocynthis (L.) Schrader; 7, Cucumis Melo L. But Fuchs' pages 402 and 403 (not shown here) have recognizable figures of Cucurbita Pepo L., labeled respectively Cucumer turcicus and C. marinus, and in both cases said (Commentarii, 702) to be recent introductions into
flatly (Origin, 246) “Greek authors do not mention the plant,” though he recognized Lagenaria vulgaris in passages from Columella and Pliny describing cucurbita (see below, 1.25 and 26). I propose to examine similarly some (but by no means all) of the Greek contexts—especially those in Athenaeus which preserve fragments of Greek comedy (see above, 0.02)—in which the word κολόκυντη (or -υθή) or κολόκυντα (or -θα) or one of its derivatives is used. I hope to show that in the range of their meanings the words are not incompatible with Latin cucurbita and the nature of Lagenaria. Here Alexandrian papyri and at least one painting from Herculaneum will be useful in demonstrating that the plant and its fruits were well known to the Romans of Seneca’s time. Then in the third and last section I will return to the problem of apocolocyntosis. Directing attention to the end of the satire, where the divine Claudius becomes a very minor civil servant in the underworld, I will suggest (as I did in my former study, see note 7) that here he was being made over into something very much like a living plant, still useful but to the wrong people and in very humble circumstances. This would be a figurative transformation (as Athanassakis suggested) and “a kind of immortalization.” But I cannot believe Eisenberg’s assertion that Seneca applied his coinage to the satire as a formal title. Everything suggests that it circulated among its first readers anonymously and with no more title than its opening words: Quid actum sit in caelo. . . . Perhaps the word was uttered in a private conversation (like the other comments reported by Dio), in answer to a question about the satire and in somewhat rueful acknowledgment of his authorship.

I. St. Jerome on Cucurbita

[1.01] In his Commentary (c. 406 A.D.) on Amos (II. 5, p. 289 Vallarsi; Migne 25, col. 1042) St. Jerome was concerned with God’s action in raising the salt waters of the sea by means of heavenly heat and then transforming them into the sweet savor of the rains. In this action, he says, God is instar medicinalis cucurbitae, quae calore superioris gyri humorem et sanguinem sursum trahit. The fine simile was cited in Mayor’s invaluable note (Thirteen Satires of Juvenal, vol. 2, 1881) on the phrase ventosa cucurbita (14. 58), together with references to ancient medical writers who describe the implement, necessarily made of fire-resistant material (metal, bone, baked clay, or glass) and
prescribe its application by means of fire, which exhausts the air within the instrument and draws blood and the less material agent of disease from the affected parts of the body, including (Celsius, III. 18) the back of the head in cases of mental derangement—which is precisely what Juvenal implies here. In modern practice the hypodermic syringe has replaced the implement and the more dangerous expedient of venesection, but both methods of drawing blood were still popular in eighteenth-century Europe, and for the ancient world archaeology has revealed many examples of the actual metallic implements or their outlines in vase painting or in relief on sculptured stone or stamped coins. The implements are quite small, ranging from three to six inches in overall height and from two to four inches in gross diameter, measured at the base of the swelling top, which is either conical in profile (as in my Figure 1) or more or less perfectly semicircular. Below this diameter the neck or collar of the instrument stretches downward for a couple of inches, ending in a rounded lip where the mouth of the instrument, ranging from a bare inch in diameter to 2½ inches, would fit nicely over the skin of the patient. Jerome’s “heat of the upper circle” fits admirably both the sun in the sky and the burning lint or oil in the swelling globe of the instrument—provided that it is visualized hanging empty by a ring on the wall of a surgeon’s office. In actual use, of course, the implement was applied horizontally; otherwise whatever burned inside would fall down on the skin of the patient. Compare Paul of Aegina (VI. 41, cited by Milne, p. 102) and the famous riddle (I saw a person gluing bronze to a man with fire) in which χαλκῶν κολλησαντα is explained (Arist. Rhet. III. 2, 1405 b 1; cf. Plut. Conv. [Moralia, 154 b] and Athen. X. 452 b) as σικο/AIDS προβαλώντα.

[1.02] The terms applied in antiquity to this vessel, known in modern times as a cupping-glass (Schröpskopf in German, ventosa in Italian and Spanish, and ventouse in French), were studied long ago by G. Helmreich (Archiv f. lat. Lexicogr. u. Gramm. 1 [1884], 321–23). In Greek it was usually called σικο/AIDS (as above) and in Latin cucurbita because in shape it resembled a small pyriform gourd. Compare my Figure 4, where two little gourds can be seen at the left of and below

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14 See text and illustrations in J. S. Milne, Surgical Implements in Greek and Roman Times (Oxford 1907), T. Meyer-Steineg and K. Sudhoff, Geschichte der Medizin im Überblick mit Abbildung (Jena 1921), and John Scarborough, Roman Medicine (Ithaca 1969). The extensive collection of the modern Greek physician K. P. Lampros (Peri sikhôn hai sikhaseôs para tois archaios, a Festschrift for Ernest Curtius, Athens, 1895) is known to me only through the review by R. Fuchs in Wochenschr. f. klass. Phil. 12 (1895), 458–61.
the large gourd labeled by Fuchs (p. 209) *Cucurbita maior* or *Grosz Kürbsz*. Thus Scribonius Largus and (much later) Caelius Aurelianus use the expressions *cucurbitam adfigere, apponere, or adhibere*, where the Greek expression in Hippocrates and elsewhere was regularly *σκόνη προσβαλέω*. But since products of the plant *cucurbita* were also utilized in various medicinal preparations (see, e.g., Pliny, *Nat. XX*. 16–17), certain authors tried to distinguish the implement linguistically. In Celsus the plant and its fruit remained *cucurbita*, but the implement of similar shape was called *cucurbitula* regularly (see the Thesaurus for references). The diminutive was often used by later writers in this sense, so that it became the regular technical term for the implement in modern medical Latin. But Scribonius Largus (106) and others following him had also used the diminutive to denote the *cucurbita silvestris* or *colocynthis* (Pliny, *Nat. XX*. 14–15; cf. Diosc. IV. 176 [Wellmann] κολόκυνθα ἄγρια ἢ σικών πικρά ἢ κολοκυθικά), Coloquinte or Bitter Apple, a plant which is cultivated today in various warm regions (northern Africa, Cyprus, southern India) for its dried fruits, which contain a drastic purge (as noted by both Pliny and Dioscorides), and for its oil-bearing seeds; see my Figure 6 (Fuchs 212). Hence Pliny and Juvenal found it necessary to add an adjective to *cucurbita* in order to designate the implement, Pliny medicinalis in a passage (*Nat. XXXII*. 122–23) that compares the use of natural leeches (*hirudines*) and of the instrument for drawing blood, and Juvenal ventosa, as we have seen. Pliny’s adjective denotes the instrument in a few places among later writers on medicine, including St. Jerome’s contemporary, Theodorus Priscianus (once only, IV. p. 110 N. according to Helmreich), but never became a regular designation. Juvenal’s ventosa, however, which Helmreich thought was drawn from popular speech, was taken up by others. Helmreich cites 12 places in Theodorus Priscianus where the simple *cucurbita* denotes the instrument, six places where ventosa is joined to *cucurbita*, and five places where ventosa alone is used. But in later Latin translations from the Greek of Alexander of Tralles and Oribasius the trend is reversed: *cucurbita* is rare, ventosa more frequent, until it emerges as the technical term in the Romance languages.

[1.03] We can conclude that in using the term medicinalis *cucurbita*

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15 E.g. the physician Leonhart Fuchs added his translation of a libellus of Galen, *De hirudinibus, revulsione, cucurbitula, et scarificatione*, to his translation with commentary on the related work, *De curatione per sanguinis missionem* (Lugduni 1546).

16 Most children learn, as I did near beaches of the Atlantic Ocean, that if one holds any concave object, an open shell or a cup, or even a cupped hand, over his ear loosely, he will hear a wind or the roar of the surf. Compare Lucan’s phrase (IX. 349) ventosa concha.
Jerome had been consulting his copy of Pliny, and we shall soon find evidence that he drew from Pliny on earlier occasions, when he was speaking of the plant rather than the instrument whose shape resembled a small fruit of the plant. Mayor, however, concluded his long note by pointing to a cut, printed by Rich, which he said represented an instrument actually "made out of a pumpkin, preserved in the Vatican library," and we must examine this bit of information before going on. The cut, shown in my Figure 2, is taken from the once deservedly popular illustrated Dictionary of Roman and Greek Antiquities by Anthony Rich, whose article (in his 3rd edn., London 1873) reads as follows:

Cucurbita and Cucurbitula (κολοκύνθη, σικώα). A pumpkin, or gourd; thence, a cupping-glass, which the ancients made out of these fruits (Juv. Sat. 14. 58) as well as of horn or bronze (Celsius ii 11). The example represents an ancient original made out of a pumpkin, now preserved in the Vatican Library, and published by Rhodius.

But most of this is misinformation. The object was never in the Vatican Museums, and the woodcut which Rich copied was not published by the learned Danish physician, Johan Rhode, who died at Padua in 1659. After a deal of searching in various libraries I found it in an edition of Celsius’ eight books De medicina (which also contained Rhode’s Vita Celsi), published at Amsterdam in 1687. Here on p. 562 the cut, supplied by the editor, Th. J. van Almelooven, illustrates one of three bronze and seven figuline cucurbitulae catalogued (p. 80) in the Antiquitates Neomagenses (Nijmegen, 1678) by Johannes Smetius (father and son). Unfortunately, as I am told by the director, A. V. M. Hubrecht, of the present Museum van Romeins Nijmegen, the entire collection was sold in 1703 to the Kurfürst of the Pfalz. Later it was dispersed among various museums in Germany, and, while some of the bronzes have been located at a museum in Mannheim, this distinctive vessel was not one of them. Finally, the object has the shape of a small gourd (see again Figure 4), not a pumpkin. Except that its neck is closed and an open mouth has been made at the opposite bulbous end, it is not unlike the bronze implement of Figure 1, and it would work just as well. The object may still exist and it may be genuinely ancient, but it was probably made of baked clay if not of bronze, and Rich’s statement about its manufacture has no foundation. The article in the great Dictionnaire of Daremberg and Saglio, which superseded Rich, does not mention him or his cut and explains the semantic shift of cucurbita and cucurbitula from course or gourde to ventouse just as we have done
above (1.02), because the instrument was sometimes made "en forme
de gourde."

[1.04] Before going on in Jerome we digress to discuss one of the
passages alleged by Eisenberg (above, 0.02) and others to mean
*Dummkopf*. This is in Trimalchio's reading of the horoscope (Petron.
39. 12): *in aquario copones et cucurbitae*. Since only people are mentioned
as being born under the various signs, *cucurbitae* cannot have its literal
meaning, and since most of the people are obnoxious in one way or
another, the meaning "fools" or "blockheads" has been read into
*cucurbitae*. But Friedlaender in his translation (1906) had rendered
the word as *Schröpsköpfe*, giving the implement a figurative meaning,
"persons who bleed or fleece one." I think this must be right. The
metaphor is confirmed by the novel personal name Σικφως, applied
in jest to a fawning parasite, one of those *ellogimoi kolakes*, who clung
to the hand of his indolent patron, according to a story from Clearchus
of Soli reported by Athenaeus (VI. 257 a). Gulick in his Loeb
translation (1930) quite missed the point when he rendered the name
as "Cucumber"! People who cling like leeches are still proverbial. In
Jacobean England the older figure was applied to student drudges:
"Still at their books, they will not be pull'd off; / They stick like
cupping-glasses."17

[1.05] Our next set of references in St. Jerome concerns the plant
in the Biblical story of Jonah which the Lord appointed to provide
shade for Jonah (Vulg. *Jon*. 4:6) as he sat under the bower or booth
(*umbraculum*, ibid. 4:5) which he had made for himself to the east of
the city of Nineveh, watching to see what would happen to it. Jonah
was grateful for the shade of the plant (4:6). But at dawn the next
day the Lord appointed a worm to attack the plant (4:7) so that it
withered away. Then when the sun rose the Lord aroused a hot,
burning wind and the sun beat down on the head of Jonah until he
was in great distress (*aestuabat*, 4:8) and begged to die. And the Lord
said to Jonah, "Do you think you are right to be so distressed (*irasci*,
4:9) over a plant?" And when Jonah replied, "Yes I am right to be
distressed even to death," the Lord answered, "You grieve over a
plant (4:10) for which you did not labor, neither did you make it
grow, which came into being in one night and perished in one night,
and am I not to pity (*non parcam*, 4:11) that great city Nineveh?"

[1.06] In the five places above where the word "plant" occurs in the
Revised (American) Standard Version of the Old Testament (1952),

17 Lines from a play by Fletcher (and others) cited in the Century Dictionary and
Cyclopedia (1889) under "Cupping-glass."
the version of the LXX had κολόκυνθα (or ράκα). This had been rendered as cucurbita in the Old Latin versions which St. Jerome followed in the translation from the LXX which he prefixed to his Commentary on the relevant verses of Jonah; see the recent (1956) and excellent text edited by P. Antin, pages 108, 113, and 115 (Vallarsi 425–28, Migne, PL 25, 1147–50).® Thus it was recognized that this rapidly climbing, shade-producing plant was called in Latin cucurbita and in Greek kolokyntha. Compare also Ambr. Hex. V. 11. 35; Aug. Gen. ad litt. IX. 14, Epist. 102 (4 times in sections 30–36: CSEL 34, p. 570. 15, 574. 15 and 19, and 576. 11); and Jerome himself in his dedicatory preface to Chromatius (Antin p. 54: quod . . . cucurbitae sit delectatus umbraculo).

[1.07] If the Christian Fathers needed documentation for these two characteristics of the evidently familiar plant cucurbita, they could have found it in a passage of Pliny (Nat. XIX. 69–70) which is confirmed by another in Columella (X. 378–80). Both authors describe cummis and cucurbita together. Pliny asserts that the nature of both growing plants is such that they are eager to reach aloft (natura sublimitatis avida) and often do climb (scandentes), fastening themselves by means of their creeping, whip-like shoots (reptantibus flagellis) to the rough places on walls (per parietum aspera), rapidly (velocitas pernix)—provided they do have some support (vires sine adminiculo standi non sunt)—all the way to the roof (in tectum usque), where they cover the vaults (camaras) and sheds (pergulas) or (in Columella) trellises (trichilas) with gentle shade (levi umbra). Hence, Pliny adds (70), there are two kinds, a genus camararium and a genus plebeium in which it (the plant) creeps along the ground (quo humi repit).® In the former kind, Pliny continues, a heavy weight (i.e. the fruit) hangs balanced motionless in the breeze (libratur pondus inmobile aurae), dangling (i.e. from the camara) on a surprisingly slender foot-stalk (mire tenui pediculo). And he adds that the growth of cucurbita too (i.e. the fruit, like the fruit of cucumis, whose shape is artificially controlled; see 65, crescunt qua coguntur forma) is controlled (crescit qua cogitur forma) by wicker-work sheaths placed over the withering flowers so that the figure of a writhing serpent is often produced, but if the fruit is allowed to hang free (libertate vero pensili concessa) it has been

® Saint Jérôme sur Jonas, introduction, texte latin, traduction et notes de Dom Paul Antin, O.S.B., moine de Ligugé (Paris 1956; Sources Chrétiennes, No. 43). Antin (p. 7) dates the Commentary to 396, the translation from the Hebrew to 391–94.

® Or, if we adopt Mayhoff’s conjecture and translate: in which it (the fruit) grows along the ground (quo humi crescit).
known to attain a length of nine feet. With this the lines of Columella (X. 378–80) are to be compared: *Tum modo dependens trichilis, modo more chelydri / sole sub aestivo gelidas per graminis umbres / intortus cucumis praegnasque cucurbita serpit.* Here the epithet for *cucurbita* suggests the swelling belly of the cupping-vessel (Figures 1 and 2) and the pyriform shape of Fuchs’ *Gros Kürbsz* (Figure 4). The longer cylindrical form may be seen in Fuchs’ *Lang Kürbsz* (Figure 5) and the frail, slender peduncle is apparent in both sixteenth-century figures.

[1.08] But when St. Jerome came to translate from the Hebrew in what has become the Vulgate Version, he substituted the word *hedera* for *cucurbita* in the five places noted above (1.06). This was to involve him in a long controversy—what he later called (*Epist.* 115. 3 = Aug. 81. 3) *ridicula cucurbitae quaestio*—with St. Augustine and others who in general objected to Jerome’s use of Hebrew sources which were at variance with the familiar Latin phrases based on the version of the LXX which had served the apostles and the early church so well. This particular problem has been discussed repeatedly and, given the nature of an age-old story, is perhaps insoluble. Hence the Revised Version used the neutral word “plant” (rather than the “gourd” of the King James Version or the “ivy” of the Douay translation) with a footnote: Heb. *qiqayon*, probably the *castor-oil plant*. Commentators on the Bible and on the plants of the Bible (e.g. H. W. and A. L. Moldenke, Waltham, Mass. 1952) generally agree, identifying the plant as *Ricinus communis* L. 20

[1.09] The conflict with St. Augustine began in 394 when “the younger man, wishing to open relations with the renowned scholar of Bethlehem, made the disastrous mistake of sending Jerome a letter questioning certain aspects of Jerome’s scholarship.” 21 The first of these was Jerome’s project of translating the OT prophets from the original Hebrew rather than from the LXX. Augustine thought this was both unnecessary and imprudent (see above). The second was Jerome’s opinion, expressed in his Commentary on Galatians and due ultimately to Origen, that the scene in which Paul rebuked Peter (Galatians 2:11–21) for his continued observance of the Old Law, was only a rhetorical device. Augustine worried that if this were

accepted it would legitimize the use of lies in teaching and would ruin Christian morality. But this letter, entrusted to the priest Profuturus, who died soon afterward, was never delivered. Subsequently (c. 398), Augustine, encouraged by a letter from Jerome reporting on his efforts to separate the bad from the good in Origen, repeated his former query about Galatians and added some new ones, tactfully asking for Jerome’s advice. This letter too, carried by a certain monk Paul, went astray; so that rumors from Rome reached Jerome at Bethlehem that Augustine was attacking him. Further correspondence ensued between the arrogant and suspicious Jerome—see Wiessen (note 21 above) for examples of his tone—and the respectful but persistent Augustine, until in 403 Augustine sent copies of his two former letters, including the one which Profuturus had failed to deliver. In his accompanying letter 71 (= Hier. Epist. 104) Augustine brought up (§ 5) the now famous incident at the African town of Oea (modern Tripoli), in order to drive home the practical dangers of departing from the familiar versions of the LXX. After the reading of Jerome’s new version of Jonah from the Hebrew, a great tumult arose in the congregation, especially from the Greeks who claimed that the reading was false in one respect to what they all knew by heart. The bishop was compelled to submit the question to some Jews. And they, whether out of ignorance or malice (here Augustine indicates his sympathy for Jerome!), reported that the Hebrew rolls were in accord with what the Greek and (Old) Latin texts said. Then the bishop, fearing to lose his hold on the congregation, had announced publicly that the new reading was at fault. Thus, Augustine concluded, even you can sometimes make a mistake. But, he adds, we all appreciate your great efforts in translating the Gospel from the Greek.

[1.10] Towards the end of his letter of the following year (112. 22 = Aug. 75. 22), in which Jerome replied, soberly and at length, to Augustine’s criticisms, he reverts to the episode at Oea and acknowledges that the word in question was hedera, which he had substituted for cucurbita. This point, he says, had come up many years before through a person whom he calls, curiously, both Cornelius and Asinius Pollio. Here he is alluding to the ponderous jesting (which we will examine later, 1.23) with which, in his Commentary on Jonah (dated to 396 by Antin, see note 18) he had introduced his serious explanation of his procedure in translating verse 6 of chapter 4. We can conflate the two passages, following the Commentary but enclosing supplements from the letter within pointed brackets.

In place of cucurbita or hedera in the Hebrew <roll> we read ciceion,
which in Syriac or Punic is called *cieia*. It is a kind of bush or shrub (*genus virgultī vel arbusculae*) having (broad) leaves like those of the grape vine (*pampinus*) and a very dense shade. Supporting itself by its own trunk,\(^{22}\) it grows very copiously in Palestine, especially in sandy places, and marvelously, if you have cast a seed on the ground, it is warmed quickly to germinate and rises to a tree, and within a few days what you had seen as a blade of grass (*herba*) you now see as a shrub (*arbuscula*). For this reason we too, at the time when we were translating the prophets [i.e. 391–94, see note 18], desired to write this very word of the Hebrew tongue (expressed more clearly in the letter: “When translating word for word, if I had desired to set down *cieion*, no one would understand it, . . .”), since Latin speech had no word for this kind of tree [but see 1.12 below]. But we feared that the *grammatici* would find an opportunity to comment and would chatter about “Indian beasts” or “Boeotian mountains” or other marvels of that sort, [and so] we followed the old translators who also rendered the word as *hedera*, which in Greek is called *κισσός,\(^{23}\) since they had nothing else to say.

Here the parallel explanation in the letter continues the multiple condition which began in the insertion above (ending “no one would understand it”) with:

> if I should write *cucurbita*, I would be saying what is not in the Hebrew, [and therefore] I actually wrote *hedera*, so as to agree with the other translators.

The letter then adds a little joke about the Jews’ testimony to the bishop at Oea (see below, 1.14).

[1.11] The Commentary continues:

> Let us then examine the story, and before its mystical sense [see below, 1.29] let us study its literal meaning. [The plants] *Cucurbita* and *hedera* are of such a nature that they creep along the ground (*ut per terram*

\(^{22}\) Here Antin notes (p. 111) that the words *suo trunco se* were supplied by Martianay (1704) and Vallarsi (1734–42) from the letter, where the phrase is fitted to *sustinens* less awkwardly than in the Commentary: *cito consurgit in arbusculam absque ullis calamorum et hastili pro ductibus, quibus et cucurbitae et hederae indigen, suo trunco se sustinens*.

\(^{23}\) I.e., the old translators of the Hebrew, knowing only that the word *cieion* represented some kind of shade-producing plant, rendered it as *kissos*, which came over into Latin as *hedera*. The very first sentence of the explanation in the letter actually named Aquila as one of the translators who used the Attic form *kittos*. Delbrueck (see note 20) notes that Field’s edition (1871–75) of the fragments of Origen’s *Hexapla* cites Symmachus for *κισσός* but places Aquila and Theodotion under *Ricinus* as reading *κικέλων*. See Jerome’s preface *In Ezr*am (as cited by Cavallera [see note 21], II. 108), referring to these three Ebionite translators as collected in Origen’s *Hexapla*. 
reptent) and do not seek higher places unless they are supported by poles or props (furcis vel adminiculis). How then, when the prophet was unaware of it, did cucurbita, springing up in a single night, offer him a shady place (umbraculum) when by nature it had no capacity to spring aloft (in subl ime consurgere) without sheds (pergulis) or canes (calamus) or upright shafts (hastilibus)? Whereas ciceion, while it provided a miracle in its sudden growth and showed the power of God in the safeguard of the green shady place (in protectione virentis umbraculi), [simply] followed its own nature.

A few sentences later (Antin, p. 213), Jerome shows his affection for ciceion in the phrase "our modest little tree (nostra arbuscula modica), quickly springing up and quickly withering."

[1.12] Evidently Jerome was proud of his knowledge of the three plants. His reason for rejecting cucurbita (= kolokynthia) in this context appears to be clear, and he could claim support from Pliny if he needed it. Compare the sentence above (1.07), vires sine adminiculo standi non sunt, with the sheds (pergulae), the adminicula and other props in both the Commentary (1.11) and the letter (note 22). As for hedera (= kissos or kittos), probably the common English ivy, as we call it, or what Linnaeus called Hedera Helix, he could rely on general knowledge for its need of external support. But on ciceion, suo trunco se sustinens, he made at least one mistake: the Romans did have a name for it. See Pliny, Nat. XV. 25, discussing the oils produced from trees:

Next comes the oil [whose processing and use in lamps he describes subsequently] from cici, a tree which is very common in Egypt [cf. kíki, an Egyptian word in Hdt. II. 94]—some call it croton [cf. krotón Tpr. HP I. 10. 1, III. 18. 7, from the resemblance of the oil-bearing seeds to insect ticks, krotónes as in Dsc. I. 77], others sili [attested only here, but cf. σίσλα Κύπριον, Dsc. IV. 161], others sesamon silvestre [only here,

24 The plant (see 1.08 above and note 20) is known in Germany as Wunderbaum (Stadler in the RE under "Ricinus"), but there it is only an ornamental shrub, planted annually, whereas in really warm climates, as in the Sudan and Abyssinia but probably not in Palestine, it grows to be a tree 12–15 meters high: see Antin's long note (p. 111) quoting P. Fournier, who approves Jerome's account as perfectly just, especially on the point of rapid growth when water is present and equally rapid withering when it is not.

25 This is implied by Pliny when he mentions (XVI. 152) a rigens hedera which alone among all the kinds of ivy can stand without support, though he adds, curiously, ob id vocata cissos. For helix as the name of a prominent species of hedera, see Pliny XVI. 145–49. Hence Linnaeus capitalized his specific epithet; it is a noun and not an adjective.
but cf. *s. agrest*, Dsc. lat. IV. 156 = gr. IV. 161—and there not long since; also in Spain it comes forth suddenly (*repente provenit*) with the height of an olive-tree, with pithy stalks (*caule ferulaceo*), leaves like those of grape vines, seeds like those of graceful and yellow grapes. Our people call it *ricinus* from the resemblance of the seed (to the insect *ricinus*, as above). The seeds are boiled in water and the floating oil is skimmed off; but in Egypt..."

[1.13] Other Romans, then, were familiar with the nature of the castor-oil plant under its Egyptian name *kiki* or its Latin name *ricinus* (= Greek *κρότων*). And Jerome should not have said that the Greeks had no other word than *kissos* for *ciceion* (i.e. *qiqqāyōn* in the modern transcription; see note 23). Of course St. Jerome was genuinely concerned to get at the literal and spiritual meaning of the original Hebrew, but this part of his explanation does not ring true, and it did not convince St. Augustine, as we will see (1.18). I cannot help suspecting that Jerome had some other reason for rejecting *cucurbita* besides its need for external support—an objection which applies also to *hedera*, as he freely admits; that he substituted *hedera* as equivalent to Greek *kissos* in the belief that Aquila or others of the early translators mentioned by Origen had rendered the Hebrew correctly; and that only afterward, when he had learned from his Palestinian informants about the nature of *ciceion*, did he come up with this device, in which he ignored Pliny's evidence, whether deliberately or through pardonable forgetfulness, and also transferred that artificial *umbraculum* of verse 5 (which Jonah had built for himself, 1.05) to the natural shady place or shade (*umbra*) made by his shrub *ciceion* in verse 6 (above, 1.11). But he underestimated the power of the tradition in which the congregation at Oea and many others (as we will see, 1.19) visualized the rapidly climbing *cucurbita*—and not any *hedera*—as attached to the *umbraculum* of verse 5, a bower or trellis as in Pliny and Columella.

[1.14] Returning to letter 112, we note that where we left off (above, 1.10) Jerome continues:

But if those Jews of yours, whether in malice, as you say [see 1.09], or in ignorance, said that the reading in the Hebrew rolls agrees with what is contained in the Greek and Latin books, it is clear that either they could not read Hebrew writing or told a wilful lie in order to make the *cucurbitarii* seem ridiculous.

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26 These references come from J. André's invaluable *Lexique des termes de botanique en latin* (Paris 1956). I have checked with those in *LSJ*. 
The substantivized adjective occurs nowhere else, but Souter\textsuperscript{27} follows the *TLL* in seeing here the people who grow gourds (i.e. the fruits of the plant *cucurbita*). They would be ridiculous, from Jerome’s point of view, because, poor fellows, they had to support their plants on poles or trellises, which his *ciceion* did not require. For the largest and best fruits were those which hang down from the plant as it climbs upward: see Pliny and Columella cited above (1.07), and add Pliny, *Nat.* XIX. 61:

Quaedam iacent crescentque, ut cucurbitae et cucumis; eadem pendente, quamquam graviors multo iis quae in arbore gignuntur;

and XIX. 73:

Cibis, quo longiores tenuioresque, et gratiores [sunt cucurbitae], et ob id salubriores quae pendendo crevere.

Compare the riddle of Symphosius headed *Cucurbita* (no. 440).

[1.15] Columella tells us (XI. 3. 50) that if we are producing commercial fruit we should choose seeds from the neck of the stored *cucurbita*, quo prolixior et tenuior fructus eius nascatur, qui silicet maius ceteris invenerit pretium. Diocletian’s Edict (6. 26, 27)\textsuperscript{28} lists two grades of *cucurbitae* (both at the same price), the first ten to a bundle, the second twenty to a bundle. They are followed, incidentally, by two grades of *cucumeres* (28, 29) with the same distinction (10 to 20), and two grades of the evidently larger *melopepones* (two to four) and one grade of *pepones* (four to a bundle), all of them at the same maximum price. (For the Latin names of the fruits see above, 0.11, and for their Greek equivalents, below, 2.01.)

[1.16] At this point we may diverge to add the culinary uses of *cucurbita* to the medicinal uses already noted (1.02, citing Pliny, *Nat.* XX. 16–17 as an example which could be extended by other passages on its dietary value: Cels. II. 20, 24, 27; Anthim. 56, and for specific remedies, Scrib. Largus 39; Pliny, *Nat.* XXVIII. 205; Chiron., *Mulomed.* 61. 18 [Oder] and several other late medical and veterinary writers cited by the *TLL*). While the elder Pliny had some doubts about the digestibility of the fresh fruit (compare Celsus, II. 18. 3), he does say (XIX. 71) that as food (*cibus*) it was *saluber ac lenis pluribus modis*. Commenting on this recommendation, André notes\textsuperscript{29} that


\textsuperscript{28} See now the excellent edition of S. Lauffer, *Diokletians Preisedikt* (Berlin 1971).

\textsuperscript{29} Again (see note 26) J. André, *L’alimentation et la cuisine à Rome* (Paris 1961), 42.
Apicius (III. 4. 1–8, IV. 5. 3) has no fewer than nine recipes involving cucurbitae, including one for "gourde farcie." The younger Pliny (Epist. 1. 15) includes cucurbitae among the plain home-grown foods on his own table, which his friend Septicius had avoided, in spite of the good conversation he would have had there, in order to dine elsewhere on imported delicacies like ostrea, vulvae, echini, and Gaditanae (fici). We can compare Gellius (XVII. 8. 2) on the philosopher Taurus at Athens whose sober dinners usually consisted entirely of a pot of Egyptian lentils (see André, 39) mixed with a finely chopped cucurbita. That Roman aristocrats generally regarded cucurbita as cheap food is shown in Martial’s epigram (XI. 31) on a certain Caecilius, mockingly called Atreus cucurbitarum because he cut them up into a thousand parts like the sons of Thyestes, so that with the help of his baker and butler he could serve up an entire dinner composed of gourds in various shapes, forms, and disguises, all at the cost of a single penny (as). But by the fourth century the fruits were a familiar article of diet for everyone. Compare Arnob. Nat. IV. 10 and VII. 16, Diocletian’s Edict above, and Augustine, Serm. 247. 2 and C. Faust. (CSEL 25) VI. 4, where he twice personifies the fruits cucurbitae and even speaks of the person who breaks his fast on a Sabbath and steals into a garden to cut down the fruits from their vines as a murderer, homicida cucurbitarum—surely an echo of Martial’s mocking phrase above!

[1.17] Soon after Jerome’s long reply in letter 112 (= Aug. Epist. 75), he dispatched another letter (115 = Aug. 81), much shorter and rather apologetic, at the close of which he hoped that if Augustine had read his Commentary on Jonah he would not take up again that ridiculous question of cucurbita (see 1.08). Then in a final sentence he adds, “But if the friend who first attacked me with the sword has been repulsed by my pen, your sense of humanity and justice will blame him if he attacks me again, but if he does not reply, you will allow us to joust (ludamus) on the field of the Scriptures without mutual injury.” As Cavallera saw (see note 17, I, p. 304), the “friend” must be Rufinus of Aquileia, who had attacked Jerome in his Apologia (two books in 401) and had been repulsed after Jerome’s two-book Apologia by a vitriolic third book (401 or 402). The quarrel between the two former friends had been deplored by Augustine (Epist. 73. 6 = Hier. Epist. 110. 6) but continued on Jerome’s part even after the death of Rufinus in 411.30

[1.18] Then in 405 St. Augustine finally replied in a long letter (Epist. 82 = Hier. 116) to St. Jerome, reviewing all the points at issue between the two of them and firmly rejecting Jerome’s contentions in his letter 112 (see 1.09 above). At the end of the letter (§ 35) the bishop of Hippo informs the solitary scholar at Bethlehem, as politely as possible, that he will not allow Jerome’s version of the Hebrew to be read in churches,

lest we introduce something new contrary to the authority of the LXX and thus create a great stumbling-block for the understanding of Christians, whose ears and hearts have been accustomed to hear that version which was approved even by the apostles. Whence that bush (virgultum) in Jonah, if in the Hebrew it is neither hedera nor cucurbita but something else which stands firmly upright on its own trunk and requires no props (adminicula) for its support, I should now prefer to be read as cucurbita in all Latin versions, for I do not think the LXX would have used this word unless they knew the plant was something like it.

And Augustine closes (Epist. 82. 36) by urging Jerome to write back his own opinion of all this, while promising to take good care in the future that his letters to Jerome would reach him before anyone else, who might divulge their contents. Here Augustine apologizes for the misadventure of the letters carried by Profuturus and the monk Paul (see above, 1.09). But if he really expected any admission from St. Jerome, he was disappointed. So far as we know, Jerome did not answer this letter, though some years later he did join forces with St. Augustine “in a common battle against the Pelagian heresy” (Wiessen [above, note 21], 240).

[1.19] Here we should note that Jerome’s Commentary on Jonah had also been read by Rufinus, and that he had referred to that virgultum in much the same context as St. Augustine and only a few years before him. This was in the course of his Apologia of 401, where Rufinus was defending himself against charges brought by Jerome and was raising the counter charge that Jerome’s translations from the Hebrew were introducing new elements to the confusion of Christians whose ears, in Jerome’s own words, for four hundred years had been filled with versions based on the LXX, but now were being told to set aside familiar things like the story of Susannah as untrue and the song of the three holy children as not worthy to be sung in church. And with cutting sarcasm he adds:

Now after four hundred years the truth of the Law comes forth to us as purchased from the Synagogue. Now that the world has grown old and all things are hastening toward their end, let us write on the
tombs of our ancestors, so that they themselves, who had read otherwise, will know that Jonah did not have the shade of a *cucurbita* but of *hedera*, and again, since that is the wish of the Legislator, not *hedera* either, but of a different shrub (*alterius virgultii*).

As Vallarsi saw, Rufinus was referring to the sculptured scene of Jonah sleeping under gourds (*sub cucurbitis dormantis*, i.e. the fruits hanging down from a leafy vine stretched on supports over his resting body) which was often found in the tombs of early Christians. The sculpture ought to be changed, Rufinus suggests, and the dead ought to be warned by an inscription that Jonah was not resting under the shade of a *cucurbita* but of the *hedera*. Vallarsi refrained from noting the further correction made by Jerome in his Commentary on the shrub, and of course he toned down Rufinus’ scornful *Legislator* to the conventional *S. Doctor*, but Vallarsi and Rufinus were quite right in pointing to the numerous scenes of “Jonah resting” in early Christian art, especially as sculptured in relief on sarcophagi of the late third century, and Jerome must have been mortified by this public reminder of his unfortunate neglect of a good Christian custom. Nowhere does he even allude to this charge, but I suspect that it did supply one motive for his continued attacks on Rufinus even after his death.

[1.20] My Figure 8 is reproduced (by permission of the Hirmer Fotoarchiv München) from the Praeger paperback edition (New York 1963) of *Art of the Byzantine Era*, by D. T. Rice, his Figure 8. It is a detail from an ivory diptych, one leaf of which is now in the Ravenna Museum, having come from a monastery at Murano, where it had served as a book cover. On the bottom panel of this leaf (see Rice’s Figure 7) the story of Jonah is represented in two scenes, Jonah shown being cast overboard from a ship on the right, and on the left, resting with “the whale beside him,” according to Rice’s caption (actually the snapping mouth resembles rather an Egyptian crocodile). In his text (p. 18) Rice admires the leaf as

illustrative art at its peak. One would associate such competence with a great city, such as Alexandria; the angular poses and the expressive gestures are distinct from what was being done at Constantinople.

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32 See also his *Masterpieces of Byzantine Art* (Edinburgh Festival Society, 1958), no. 6: Ivory Book Cover, early 6th century, Ravenna, Museo Nazionale. Here Rice refers to the places where parts of the other leaf may be found; and he assigns this work either to Palestine or Egypt.
And in the detail, where the hanging gourds certainly resemble those of Fuchs’ *Lang Kürbsz* (his p. 211, my Figure 5), my botanical consultants, Dr. Frederick Meyer of the U.S. National Arboretum in Washington and Prof. Charles Heiser of Indiana University, made no difficulty about identifying the plant as the bottle-gourd vine, now called *Lagenaria siceraria* (Molina) Standley (see above, 0.08). They agreed on the shape of the gourds and the general posture of the plant, while Heiser added that the leaves as shown resembled his own drawing of leaves (his Figure 1) in his article, “Variation in the Bottle Gourd.”

[1.21] But there is difficulty if we regard this scene and the many others of “Jonah resting,” mostly without the “whale,” which are known in paintings from catacombs or from sculptured sarcophagi, as illustrations of the Biblical story. In the first place, Jonah is usually shown lying down on a couch or cushion, either by the sea or in some countryside where he is surrounded by animals or other rustic figures, not sitting down or standing before his shed somewhere east of Nineveh, long after his release from the great fish. In the second place, he is regularly shown naked, without clothing of any kind. These features have been explained in various ways. Anthropologists and historians of religion have compared other versions in classical and oriental folk tales of what most scholars now believe was a very old and widely diffused story—though Jerome and his Christian contemporaries of course accepted it as a unit, literally the word of God expressed through the historical prophet—and have found traces in Rabbinic and Islamic sources of tales in which Jonah lost his


34 See the collections made long ago by J. Wilpert, *Le piture delle catacombe romane* (2 vols., 1903) and *I sarcofagi cristiani antichi* (3 vols., 1929–36). Antin (see note 18), in his note on “l'iconographie céméteriale” on p. 33, observes that in the paintings Jonah is shown naked and lying down in his shady spot some 33 times, being cast up by the monster about 26 times, and being thrown overboard and swallowed by the monster about 15 times. I thank the director, Miss Rosalie Green, of the Index of Christian Iconography at Princeton University, which of course includes much more than Wilpert’s paintings, for giving me (in 1976) the following count of the three leading scenes: Jonah cast overboard, 240 examples; Jonah cast up on land, 330; and Jonah resting under the gourd-vine, 250 examples, mostly before A.D. 700.


36 See Delbrueck’s 1952 book (above, note 20), pp. 22–24. I add that Delbrueck believed that the richly decorated and so-called *leipsana* (i.e. a reliquary containing *leipsana* or remains of the dead), which he was describing, was originally a kind of
clothing as a result of being roasted inside the whale and needed a period of rest and recreation after that exhausting experience. Archaeologists and historians of art, however, have looked for classical themes in literature (metrical epitaphs) and plastic art (sarcophagi and other memorials) which expressed the hope for a happy life after death, so that Jonah's nudity on the sarcophagi is explained by the copying of antique pagan models (in which the heroes of mythology were regularly nude) in ateliers of the third century which catered to the pseudo-rustic tastes of wealthy city-dwellers, Christian and pagan alike. Engemann and others have pointed to a terra cotta plaque in the Louvre which shows a nude Dionysus sleeping in a posture remarkably similar to Jonah's on a sarcophagus in Berlin. It was only necessary to change the bunches of grapes in the arbor above Dionysus to gourds, and the sleeping figure becomes Jonah.

[1.22] Possibly it was these scenes on sarcophagi to which Rufinus (1.19) referred, but closer relationship to the canonical story has been seen in catacomb paintings which show Jonah reclining in the usual posture but under a four-posted pergola from whose rafters the gourds dangle. On the other hand, the dangling gourds by themselves, without visible reference to Jonah, can be seen in fragments of sculpture found in catacombs and engraved below and to the left of a late third-century inscription commemorating a certain Galatilla. Can these gourds have been intended as a visual symbol of the "sign of Jonah" promised long before (Mt. 12:40)? I doubt it.

treasure-chest for an aristocratic lady of the first half of the third century. Like the much later ivory at Ravenna, it does not belong to sepulchral art.


38 See J. Engemann, *Untersuchungen zur Sepulkralsymbolik der späteren römischen Kaiserzeit* (Münster, 1973; Ergänzungsband 2, *Jahrb. f. Antike u. Christentum*), esp. 70-84 and Taf. 33 c (side of a sarcophagus in Berlin, Staatliche Museen) and 35 a (terra cotta plaque in the Louvre). The central part of the sarcophagus and the whole of the plaque can also be seen in Tafel 8 (c and a respectively) which illustrates Stommel's article (above).

39 See Ferrua's 1962 article (above, note 37), figure 5 (p. 12). Antin's note (above, note 34) also refers to "un Jonas sous pergola" in an earlier article (by Josi) in the same *Rivista* 5 (1928), 198.

40 Ferrua, p. 47, figs. 27-29. The inscription (figure 29) is a fragment from the catacomb at Pretestato.
This is only one of the many things we do not know, and I close this unsatisfactory commentary on Rufinus’ criticism by saying that I know of no artistic representation at all of Jerome’s ciceion and only one of his hedera, and that one very late. A pair of drawings in a fourteenth-century manuscript Biblia pauperum shows Jonas (so labeled) emerging from the mouth of the great fish with a branch of ivy leaves at the right side of the picture. As expected, he is nude, but he is also bald as a baby, though he had a good head of hair in the drawing at the left where he is shown, wrapped in a cloak, being shoved into the mouth of the monster.41 Here the reading of St. Jerome’s Vulgate is preserved, but the long artistic tradition which represented Jonah resting after his ordeal is almost unanimous in preferring the bottle-gourd plant, what Linnaeus called Cucurbita lagenaria, as providing him with shade.

[1.23] Returning to Jerome’s Commentary, I reproduce Antin’s text (which hardly differs from Vallarsi’s in Migne, except for the punctuation) of the “ponderous jesting” (above, 1.10) which precedes his serious explanation for his change of cucurbita to hedera in verse 6 of chapter 4: In hoc loco, he says,

quidam Canterius de antiquissimo genere Corneliorum sive, ut ipse iactat, de stirpe Asinii Pollionis,
dudum Romae dicitur me accusasse sacrilegii quod pro cucurbita hederam transtulerim:
timuit videlicet ne si pro cucurbitis hederae nascerentur unde occulte et tenebrose biberet non haberet. Et revera in ipsis cucurbitis vasculorum quas vulgo saucomarias vocant, solent apostolorum imagines adumbrari ex quibus et ille sibi non suum nomen adsumpsit. Quod si tam facile vocabula commutantur ut pro Corneliiis seditiosis tribunis Aemilii consules appellantur, miror cur mihi non liceat hederam transferre pro cucurbita. Sed veniamus ad seria.

41 See Abb. 4 in an article by E. M. Vetter and W. A. Bulst, pp. 127–38 in the Heidelberg University magazine, Ruperto-Carola, bd. 46 (Juni 1969). Through hints in Schmidt and Steffen (above, note 35), the authors trace the loss of Jonah’s hair to a medieval variant in the myth of Heracles’ rescue of Hesione. See Tzetzes, Schol. ad Lyrophr. 34, and Frazer’s note in the Loeb Apollodorus (I, p. 207): “Tzetzes says that Hercules, in full armour, leaped into the jaws of the sea-monster, and was in its belly for three days hewing and hacking it, and that at the end of the three days he came forth without any hair on his head.”
[1.24] *Dudum* in line 3 means "recently" (as Antin notes), i.e. shortly before the composition of the Commentary in 396 but after the publication of the translation from the Hebrew in 391–94 (see above, note 18). This squares with the *ante annos plurimos* of Jerome’s letter (112. 22) of 404, in which he blames a person whom he calls both Cornelius and Asinius Pollio (see 1.10), clearly the same person who is graced here (line 1) with the ridiculous nickname Canterius (line 1, or as in Vallarsi, Cantherius). See Antin’s notes for the degrading connotations of the four names here, also Piganiol in Antin’s note on our line 13, where *seditiosi tribuni* is so outrageously applied to the patrician Cornelii that the reader knows that Jerome must be inventing freely. His purpose in creating all this business of names, apart from his usual technique as a satirist (see Wiessen [note 21], esp. 200–12), is revealed in lines 12–16 above: if words can be changed so readily in these names, why shouldn’t I be allowed to change *cucurbita* to *hedera?* In line 11 Jerome implies that his critic on this occasion, which he reports only by hearsay (*dicitur*, line 3), was a cleric who had taken his new name from one of the apostles. One thinks of the monk Paul who carried Augustine’s second critical letter (above, 1.09) to Rome rather than to Jerome in Bethlehem, but his misadventure did not happen until after 398. And it seems likely that Jerome had no specific person in mind. See Cavallera (note 21 above), II, 106–09, who notes Jerome’s expressions in various prefaces for the unnamed people who criticized him for preferring Hebrew texts to the LXX, but also that later on he named Palladius as the chief calumniator.

[1.25] As usual in his attacks on the clergy, Jerome’s first charge (lines 5–8) involves luxurious living. His critic was afraid that if *hederae* were grown instead of *cucurbitae* he would not have anything from which to drink in secret and in some dark corner. Ivy would offer cover for clandestine tippling but not a container for the wine—precisely the function which gave the plant its modern names. In the two sentences which precede Columella’s directions for choosing seeds for the production of the longer cylindrical fruit (see above, 1.07 and 1.15), he tells us (XI. 3. 49) that seed chosen from the middle part of the stored *cucurbita* will produce fruit of larger size (*incrementi vastioris*), and that these fruits are quite suitable for use as containers (ad *usum vasorum*), like the *cucurbitae* from Alexandria, once they have been dried out (*cum exaruerunt*). In the parallel passage in verse (X. 383–88; see above, 1.07 for the preceding lines in which *cucumis* and *cucurbita* are characterized together), Columella had recommended the same choice of seed as above for the production
of larger fruit with swelling belly, and here he mentions more uses for the product (385–88): sobolem dabit illa capacem / Naryciae picis, aut Actaei melliis Hymetti, / aut habilem lymphis hamulam, Bacchove lagoenam, / tum pueros eadem fluiüs innare docebit. From the woody rind of the dried fruit (see Pliny below) can be made a container for pitch, a vessel for honey, a water-bucket, or a bottle for wine; or even air-tight floats with which boys learn how to swim. Hence Linnaeus (Species plantarum [1753], 1010) gave the epithet lagenaria in the margin opposite his first species of the genus Cucurbita, citing Morison’s Historiae Oxoniensis pars secunda (1680) for an illustration and the name Cucurbita lagenaria, flore albo.42 And the common English name for the plant is Bottle-Gourd (no doubt in use long before Morison), the Germans call it Flaschenkürbis, and the Italians Zucca da vino, dal collo, or (from floats smaller than Columella’s) da pescare.

[1.26] Pliny’s discussion of kitchen-garden plants (hortensia, see his § 73, cited below) begins (XIX. 61) by noting the posture of the fruits cucurbitae and cucumis (plural, cited above, 1.14) and distinguishing their physical composition: cucumis cartilagine et carne constat, cucurbita cortice et cartilagine; cortex huic uni maturitate transit in lignum. (Note this as a second unique feature [see note 42] of Cucurbita lagenaria.) It continues the characterization of these two important plants in a long discussion (64–74) in which Pliny describes now cucumis, now cucurbita, but mostly the two together (see 1.07 above), but on the uses of cucurbita he is quite clear (XIX. 71): cucurbitarum numerosior usus [sc. quam cucumerum], et primus caulis in cibo, atque ex eo [sc. partes, i.e. fructus] in totum natura diversa [i.e. the parts (fruits) which come after the stalks, being of a different nature altogether]; nuper in balnearum usum venere urceorum vice [i.e. pitchers or hamulae for carrying water in baths], iampridem vero etiam cadorum ad vina condenda [i.e. jars for storing wine]. And a little later (73) he notes how those fruits which were not cut down for eating (compare Aug. C. Faust. cited above, 1.16) when green (and the rind was still soft; compare 71: cortex viridi tener, deraditur nihilominus in cibus) are prepared to serve as containers: eas quae semini non serventur ante hiemem praecidi non est mos; postea fumo siccantur condendis hortensiorum seminibus et rusticae supellectili. That is, after the onset of cold weather when the fruits have stopped growing and the rinds are becoming hard and woody (61 above), they are cut down; later they (the empty rinds) are dried in smoke in order to form storage jars for the seeds of kitchen-garden plants and homemade utensils. Compare Columella

42 Bauhin in his famous Pinax (1623) had also noted the white flower as a distinctive feature of the plant, which he called Cucurbita oblonga, flore albo, folio molli.
on *cucurbitae* from Alexandria (above, 1.25). Some of the possibilities latent in that *rustica supellex* and all the steps in the modern process are indicated in the unsigned article on "Gourd" in the *Britannica* (11th edn.):

The remarkable fruit [of *Lagenaria vulgaris*] first begins to grow in the form of an elongated cylinder, but gradually widens toward the extremity, until, when ripe, it resembles a flask with a narrow neck and large round bulb; it sometimes attains a length of 7 ft. When ripe, the pulp is removed from the neck, and the interior cleared by leaving water standing in it; the woody rind that remains is used as a bottle; or the lower part is cut off and cleared out, forming a basin-like vessel applied to the same domestic purposes as the calabash (*Crescentia*) of the West Indies; the smaller varieties, divided lengthwise, form spoons.

[1.27] The drying of the gourds by means of smoking is not mentioned here, nor by Lucian (*Vera Hist.* II. 37) when he describes how the *Kolokyntheipiratai* make their 60-cubit long πλοία κολοκύνθινα by drying out a gourd (surely not a pumpkin here!), and then hollowing it out and stripping it of its contents, but whether or not the emptied rinds were hung in a smokehouse, they certainly must have been hung up to dry somewhere under cover. The drying rinds of *cucurbitae* would have been a familiar sight in many an ancient household, even in the kitchens of wealthy city-dwellers, and I suggest that this explains the remark of Psyche's envious sister (Apul. *Met.* V. 9) when she complains that her own husband is older than her father, balder than a *cucurbita*, and weaker than any male child. For the surface of *Lagenaria vulgaris*, unlike that of other cultivated cucurbits, is described by botanists as smooth and glabrous. Probably that is also the point of the indignant remark of the porter (*Met.* I. 15), "You may want to die, but I don't have the head of a *cucurbita* so as to die for you." The rind of a drying gourd might look like a head, and its emptiness would certainly suggest thoughtlessness or stupidity, as critics from Weinreich to Eisenberg have insisted. I do not deny this, and I can add one other place in which *cucurbita* is coupled with emptiness in a derisory context. This is in the Latin translation of the important work *Contra Haereses* of St. Irenaeus, the probably Syrian-born bishop of Lyons in the late second century, just about 200 years before St. Jerome and almost contemporary with Apuleius. In a paragraph of his first

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43 The best modern analogue, I think, is provided by P. Robert, *Dictionnaire alphabétique et analogique de la langue française* (Paris 1966) when he notes under the word *Carafe*, which means ordinarily "vase destiné à contenir un liquide," that it is used in popular speech of an "homme sans intelligence": "Quelle carafe!" people say.
book (I. 11. 4 in Massuet's numbering)," Irenaeus undertakes to parody a fundamental tetrad of Valentine's gnostic aeons (series of emanations):

There is a certain royal Proarchē (pro-principle) which is Proanennoētos (pro-inconceivable), a Proanypostatos (pro-unsubstantial) virtue, Proprocyldomenē (pro-prostrating itself). With it there is a virtue, which I call cucurbita; with this cucurbita there is a virtue, which in itself I call perinane (absolute void). This cucurbita and perinane, since they are a unity, have issued (emiserunt), without sexual action (cum non emissisent), a fruit that is visible on all sides, edible, and tasty, and common speech calls this fruit cucumis. With this cucumis is a virtue of the same power as itself, which in itself I call pepo. These virtues, cucurbita et perinane, et cucumis, et pepo, have issued the remaining host of Valentine's ridiculous pepones.

The reason why Irenaeus chose these three names from the vegetable world, which he rightly asserts are much more credible than Valentine's, being in everyday use and understood by everyone, is revealed towards the end of the next paragraph, where (p. 107 in Harvey) the last word is used in its Homeric sense in what Harvey saw was probably a parody of II. II. 235: O pepones, sophistae vituperabiles et non veri. The fruit pepo, then (see above, 0.10), was the melon (πέπων), cucumis the cucumber (σκύνος), and cucurbita the bottle-gourd (κολοκύνθη). And I can see no reason for his equating perinane with cucurbita unless he thought that the sight of drying and emptied gourds would be as familiar to people everywhere as they evidently were to his fellow Syrian Lucian.

[1.28] Here we do have a second passage, replacing the one in Petronius which we have removed (above, 1.04) from Eisenberg's note (above, 0.02), in which cucurbita might be interpreted as Dummkopf. But our object here is to note the frequency and familiarity of the word in all its meanings, and we return now to the discussion of St. Jerome's jesting preface to his serious explanation (above, 1.23). "And in fact," he resumes in lines 8–11, "people are accustomed to engrave the likenesses of the apostle (from whom he drew the name that is not his own), in ipsis cucurbitis vasculorum quas vulgo saucemarias vocant." Jerome had just been referring to the cucurbitae which could be used as vessels to hold wine (see above, 1.26), but these were made of the woody rinds of bottle-gourds and could not hold the

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44 Page 106 in the edition by W. Wigan Harvey (Cantabrigiae 1857). For the eastern origin of Irenaeus and the date of his Greek work, see Harvey's preliminary observations, clii and clxiii, and clxiv for the use by Tertullian of the Latin translation, which must have been made immediately.
elaborate engraving of the beechwood cups pledged by Menalca in Vergil, Ecl. 3. 37–39, much less the chasing or engraving of the well-known metallic vessels here called *vascula*. I think Antin (above, note 18) was right in translating "*sur les panses de ces vases,*" though he lets the relative clause, which he renders "*nommés communément saucomariae,*" follow "*ces vases*" directly. But the antecedent of *quas* is not *vascularum* but *cucurbitis*, and if the reader will turn back to Pliny's names for the two kinds of *cucurbita* (and apparently of *cucumis* too, above, 1.07), he will find that the first was the climbing plant, called *genus camararium* because it reached up to the vaults or *camarae*. In place of that strange and hitherto unexplained word *saucomarias*, which Antin said he found in all the MSS he had seen (none of them earlier than the ninth century), we should surely read *camararias*. Then in that case, when Jerome said *quas* (i.e. *cucurbitas*) *vulg* *camararias vocant*, his authority for that *vulg* would have been simply Pliny; compare above, 1.03. But for some reason (see above, 1.13) Jerome refused to admit that the plant which provided shade for Jonah was a *cucurbita*.

[1.29] And there is one more jest which St. Jerome could not resist making as he began his mystical interpretation: *Ad personām vero Domini Salvatoris . . .* (Antin, 112). He quotes his version of Isaiah 1:8 ("And the daughter of Zion will be left like a booth [*tabernaculum*] in a vineyard and like a lodge in a cucumber-field") and comments on the phrase *velut casula in cucumerario*, "let us say, since we have not found [the word] *cucurbita* in any other place in Scripture, that wherever *cucumis* grows, there usually grows *cucurbita* also." What is asserted as fact is rather Jerome's inference from Pliny's sometimes confusing account (see above, 1.07 and 1.26); here we should add Pliny's directions for the annual planting of both *cucumis* and *cucurbita* (XIX. 69), which are also named together in the parallel passage of Columella, XI. 3. 48. The inference would be supported by several 45 See the article on "burette" in the *Dict. d'archéol. chrét. et de liturgie* (Gabriol-Leclercq-Marrou), t. 2, col. 1354. Fig. 1747 shows a circular bronze bottle shaped much like the water-canteen which hikers suspend over a hip, except that one side is completely flat while the other swells out to a greater extent. The neck is much longer than on a canteen. Antin refers at the end of his note 3 (p. 110) to this vase, found in a tomb at Conceveux; but he does not mention the fact that Leclercq thought that its local designation as "gourd" was scarcely appropriate. But the swelling side, which is what Jerome calls *cucurbita vasculi* is not unlike a vertical half of a pyriform gourd as seen in Fuchs' p. 209 (my Figure 4). No date is given for this vessel, but others are known from the fourth or fifth century, slender and with long necks, made of terra cotta, with painted surface and various scenes and symbols.
other passages, especially in poetry, where, if the one plant or its fruit is mentioned, the other trails along immediately; see Prop. IV. 2.43; Priap. 51. 17; Colum. X. 234 and 380. Thus Jerome makes a jocular concession to his reader. He will not leave \textit{cucurbita} altogether out of consideration, though he has removed it from the text of Jonah, the only place in Scripture where he had found it. But since a derivative of \textit{cucumis} is found in Isaiah, and since \textit{cucurbita} regularly goes along with \textit{cucumis}, the reader is free to suppose that Isaiah was also talking about \textit{cucurbita}. What is really notable here is that in introducing his concession (\textit{Ad personam . . . Salvatoris, ne penitus propter φιλοκολοκύνθων cucurbitam relinquamus. . . . Et dicamus . . .}) Jerome has coined a new Greek word which has not been noticed in \textit{LSJ} and which Antin (above, note 18) thought (112, note 3) was a ridiculous word, echoing the \textit{Apocolocyntosis} of Seneca. It is possible that Jerome had been reading Seneca’s skit, but altogether unlikely that he had been reading Roman history in the Greek of Dio Cassius, our only source for the word (see above, 0.01). On the other hand, he was perfectly capable of forming a new Greek word, which on the analogy of φιλόσοφος and countless others must mean, simply, “a lover of κολοκύνθη,” i.e. of the fruits which supply tasty food, not so very different from the \textit{cucurbitarii} or “growers of cucurbits” in \textit{Epist.} 112 (above, 1.14). In other words, it is on account of some reader who may be a cucurbit-lover that Jerome does not abandon \textit{cucurbita} altogether. And actually on other occasions, when he was not discussing the Hebrew text but its spiritual meaning (see above, 1.06 on the preface, Antin 54, and at Antin 107 on 4. 5 and 115 on 4. 9), Jerome himself uses the word \textit{cucurbita} of Jonah’s shade-plant, accommodating his vocabulary to his readers’ preference.

[1.30] For most of the time in St. Jerome and his contemporaries the word \textit{cucurbita} denotes a commercially grown, edible fruit: compare especially Jerome’s \textit{cucurbitarii} in \textit{Epist.} 112, φιλοκολοκύνθως at Antin 112 (just above), \textit{cucurbitae camarariae} (no longer saucomariae) at Antin 109 (above, 1.28), Diocletian’s Edict (above, 1.15), and Augustine’s \textit{homicida cucurbitarum} (\textit{C. Faust.} VI. 4, 1.16 above). On one occasion, however (see 1.25 above), Jerome alluded to the wine-bottles which, according to Columella and Pliny, could be made, along with other homemade utensils (\textit{rustica supellex}), from the woody rinds of mature fruits after they had been emptied of their contents and thoroughly dried (see 1.26)—passages from which Linnaeus drew the specific epithet (\textit{Cucurbita}) \textit{lagenaria} and in which Candolle recognized the plant which Seringe called \textit{Lagenaria vulgaris}. And we have suggested that it was the familiar sight of the smooth-skinned bottle-gourds,
hanging dried and empty from the rafters, which lies behind Apuleius’ figures (*Met.* I. 15 and V. 9) and Irenaeus’ coupling of *cucurbita* and *perinane* (see above, 1.27). Jerome also knew the use of the implement which we call a cupping-glass (see 1.01) and he, following Pliny (1.02), called a *medicinalis cucurbita*—a linguistic transfer owing to the similarity of its shape to that of the gourds when small (1.08). And next we saw (1.04) that *cucurbitae* in Petronius (39. 12) is probably a figurative application of the transferred name of the implement to people whom Trimalchio and his guests considered obnoxious.

[1.31] So far we have been noting the cases in which *cucurbita* refers primarily to a part of the plant, its fruit. But in the sections which follow (1.05–1.22) *cucurbita* refers to the whole plant. According to the Old Latin translations of the book of Jonah, made from the Greek versions by the LXX, this was specifically the bottle-gourd vine, the plant which grew up rapidly and provided grateful shade for Jonah, only to be withered through the agency of a worm at God’s bidding. But in his new translation from the Hebrew text, St. Jerome had substituted the word *hedera*, at the same time declaring that the plant was not really the broad-leaved ivy but a different shrub, called *ciceion* in the Hebrew, which grew frequently in Palestine and could rise upward without external support. Various people had protested vigorously against the substitution of something else for *cucurbita*, which they thought was most appropriate to the performance of the plant in the traditional story. St. Augustine had not been convinced (1.18 above) by Jerome’s explanation, and Rufinus had ridiculed it (1.19), pointing to the importance of the plant *cucurbita* as a symbol in sepulchral iconography. I have stated reasons (1.12–13) for doubting certain points in Jerome’s explanation—not that he was wrong about the reading of the Hebrew text or the nature of the plant *ciceion*—and I have voiced a suspicion that he had some other reason for rejecting the traditional *cucurbita*. This would be, I now think, that the gourd was one of the garden-products which were sought out by luxury-loving clerics who should have been content with ordinary bread (*cibarius panis*) and plain drinking water instead of delicate cococotions like *contrita holera betarumque sucus*; see the passage (*Epist.* 52. 12) from the letter to Nepotianus which Wiessen (above, note 21) cites (p. 79) as an example of true satire for a Christian purpose, the reformation of the clergy. Jerome does not mention *cucurbitae* here in his list of delicacies (*caricae, piper, nuces . . . simila, mel, pistatia, tota hortorum cultura*), but they are prominent in Arnobius’ lists (*Nat.* IV. 10 and VII. 16) of strange foods favored by pagan superstition. It is also possible that Jerome knew about and
recoiled from the purgative property of Pliny’s *cucurbita silvestris* or *colocynthis* (above, 1.02). If so, there is irony in his recommendation of the plant *Ricinus communis*, the oil from whose seeds was used at the time (see Pliny above, 1.12) mainly for burning in lamps but now as a purgative. (And Galen among ancient physicians knew and extolled this cathartic use of the plant called *kiki*; see Kühn [Galeni *Opera*, xii, p. 26], who translates: *Ricini fructus quemadmodum purgat,* *d derogit ac digerit*!). But we cannot know about this, and our object here has been merely to show that all the connotations of the word *cucurbita* in Jerome were known also to Pliny and others in the time of Seneca, and that very few of them were pejorative. It can be said that the plant which Linnaeus called *Cucurbita lagenaria* was regarded then—as it still is—as a provider of goods and services for man.

II. Athenaeus on *κολοκύντη*

[2.01] Candolle had said (see above, 0.12) that Greek authors do not mention the plant *Lagenaria vulgaris*, though he recognized this plant in Roman descriptions of *cucurbita* which stressed the woody nature of the matured fruits’ rinds and their use for homemade utensils. But we have just seen that the word *cucurbita* in the Old Latin versions of the book of Jonah translates *κολόκυνθα* in the LXX, that Jerome himself invented the term *φιλοκολόκυνθος* referring to a lover of *cucurbitae*, that Lucian (Vera Hist. II. 37; see above, 1.27) shows how the *Kolokynthopeiratai* made their *κολοκύνθινα πλοία* from the dried and emptied rinds of fruits which are evidently identical with the *cucurbitae* described by Pliny and Columella, and that the Latin translation of Irenaeus’ work (above, 1.27) uses the successive terms *cucurbita, perinane, cucumis*, and *pepo*, presumably rendering the terms of the original Greek parody of Valentine’s tetrad, which would be *κολοκύνθη, διάκενον* (or a new coinage *περιδιάκενον*), *σίκνος* and *πέτων*.

And here we can add the Greek names of the fruits whose prices were set by Diocletian’s Edict (6. 26–32, see note 28 and above, 1.15): *cucurbitae: κολοκύνθαι; cucumeres: σίκνοι; meloperandes: μηλοπέπονες; pepones: πέτωνες*. And the glosses (references in the *TLL*) regularly have *cucurbita* for *κολοκύνθη* or *κολοκύνθα* and, vice versa, *κολοκύνθη* or *κολόκυντα* for *cucurbita* (or *cucurbita*), except that there are a few traces of the Scholium on Iuven. 14. 58: *cucurbita σικά—*which is quite correct: see 1.01 and note 14.

[2.02] Clearly, then, *κολοκύνθη* and *cucurbita* were lexical equivalents at least from the second century on. But we can trace their equivalence
much farther back through various passages in Athenaeus. He made a critical distinction (II, 59 a), which we have noted (above, 0.11) was the basis for the definition in the *Thesaurus* of Stephanus and thence in the successive editions of Liddell and Scott until it was changed in the new edition (*LSJ*). "The people of the Hellespont," he said, "distinguish long gourds, which they call σικώα, from the round ones, which they call κολοκύνται." This is supported by a sentence in Aristotle, who says (*Hist. An*. IX. 14, 616 a 22) that the (supposed) floating nest of the (mythical) halcyon is shaped approximately like the sikyai which have long necks. For, although the generic word for gourds in the Attic dialect was κολοκύντη (Athen. II, 59 c; compare the heading κολοκύνται at 58 f) there were exceptions, as in Aristotle, in various authors quoted by Athenaeus,\(^\text{46}\) and in a third-century papyrus from El Fayûm preserved at the Sorbonne.\(^\text{47}\) Here, in lines 18–21, an agent reports to his superior that the oil-dealer Mares had brought to him a certain person who had two sikyai and . . . a lēkythos, in which . . . (the rest is illegible). Hombert translated σικόως β' as "deux calabasses"; *LSJ* explain the word as "gourd used as a calabash," quite reasonably in view of Pliny's and Columella's containers (*cucurbitae*, above, 1.25; note Columella's Alexandrian *cucurbitae*) for water and wine. Thus we now have documentary evidence from the pre-Christian era that gourds of a certain shape were in fact bottle-gourds, fruits of *Lagenaria vulgaris*. And referring back to the nickname Σικώας in Athenaeus VI, 257 a (above 1.04), citing the third-century historian Clearchus and to the discussion of *cucurbita* when applied to the cupping-instrument (1.02–03), we cannot doubt that the word sikya, in this application, was also a linguistic transfer or Übertrag from its use as applied to a bottle-gourd of a certain shape. If we suppose that the critical shape was similar to that of a cucumber, then it is likely that σικώα is an arbitrary feminine variant of the older word σίκνος (or σικνός) or σίκνας (attested

\(^{46}\) Futhydemus of Athens (Athen. II, 58 f) called kolokynthē an "Indian sikya" because the seed was imported from India; Menodorus, a student of Erasistratus and friend of Hikesius (Athen. II, 59 a), said that among kolokynthai there was the Indian kind, also called sikya, which was usually boiled, and the kolokynthē proper, which was also baked (καὶ ὑπάρκναι), and in a significant passage from the poet Nicander of Colophon (to be discussed a little later), Athenaeus (IX, 372 c) assures us that Nicander referred to kolokynthai though he called them sikyai.

for Alcaeus, Athen. III, 73 e); Frisk places the three words side by side in his etymological dictionary.

[2.03] Thanks to a papyrus published in 1931 and not noticed in LSJ until its 1968 Supplement, we now have documentary evidence that the gourd called κολοκύνθη (or κολόκυνθα) could also provide a homemade utensil and therefore should be identified as the fruit of Lagenaria vulgaris. It comes in a new compound, κολοκύνθαρτανα, defined in the Supplement as "scoop or dipper made of a gourd," which stands in line 7 of No. 78 in the Papyri Ilandanae (in fasc. 5, 1931). The word is clearly anapaestic, like some other words for rare objects in earlier and later lines of the papyrus, and the Nachträge of the editors suggest that the versifier was Parthenius rather than Callimachus, in whose works such doubled words are rare. Frisk and Chantraine both give this new compound prominence in their discussion of kolokyntē as Lagenaria vulgaris; see above, 0.05 and note 8.

[2.04] Another passage in Athenaeus, also headed κολοκύντη (IX, 372 b), can be connected with Pliny’s cucurbita, i.e. Lagenaria. Here Athenaeus tells of the party’s wonderment when fresh kolokyntai were served to them in wintertime. There follows an extended passage from the Horae of Aristophanes (Kock 1, 536–38) which notes the appearance in midwinter markets of many kinds of comestibles and flowers out of season, including σικυόι, βότρυς and, later on, κολοκύνται and γογγυλίδες, to the amazement—or disapproval—of moralizing gods, one of whom comments sarcastically that Athens has been made over into Egypt. Again the guests wonder (Athenaeus resumes, 372 d) how they could be eating kolokyntai in the middle of January, for they were fresh (χλωραί) and retained their natural flavor. Then they remembered that cooks knew of tricks to preserve such vegetables, and Ulpian, when pressed by Larensis to recall the practices of the ancients, quotes some lines from the Georgica of Nicander of Colophon (frg. 72 Schneider), telling how sikyai (he really means kolokyntai, Athenaeus makes Ulpian say) should be cut into strips, sewed together on a string, dried in the open air and then hung over smoke, so that in winter the servants may have enough to eat, filling their capacious pot with strings of well-washed σικύη and other vegetables.

48 See note 8 above. In the same way, the κολοκύνθης of Dioscorides (IV. 176, see 1.02 and 0.03 above) is to be considered an arbitrary variant of κολόκυνθα.
49 My paraphrase owes less to Gulick’s translation (see above, 1.04; Gulick was confused also in his notes on the heading kolokyntē) than to Gow’s (Nicander, ed. A. S. F. Gow and A. F. Scholfield; Cambridge 1953), where the fragment is also no. 72. Gow uses “gourds” to translate both kolokyntai and sikyai and in his first index identifies both words botanically as Cucurbita maxima, following (see his Introduction, p. 25)
method of preserving kolokyntai for later consumption can be compared with a sentence in Pliny (XIX. 74) which follows directly after his sentence (quoted above, 1.26) about the smoking and drying of the gourds destined for seed-containers and rustica supellex. "A means of preserving them (i.e. cucurbitae) for food has been discovered," and he goes on to describe two methods, the first of which, in brine (muria), can also be applied to cucumis; compare the Geoponica, XII. 19. 15 on σίκνοι and 17 on κολοκύνται. For the second method I give Rackham's translation (Loeb Pliny, 5, 1950) of Mayhoff's Teubner text (1892):

but it is reported that gourds also can be kept green in a trench dug in a shady place and floored with dry hay and then with earth.

This is not exactly Nicander's method, but what matters is that the successive authors, Nicander, Pliny, and Athenaeus, were all referring to methods of preserving the young edible gourds in a dry state for eating at a later date: usque ad alios paene proventus, says Pliny, and his preceding sentence was one of those by which Candolle recognized the fruit of Lagenaria vulgaris. We can add that a contemporary of Athenaeus, the physician Galen of Pergamum, also commended the dried flesh of kolokynthai, the seeds having been removed, for pleasurable eating in winter: see his essay, De alimentorum facultatiibus, in Kühn's edition, vol. 6, p. 559; also in another essay (Kühn 6, p. 785), after the flesh had been cut into small pieces and dried so that it would not rot.

[2.05] In defense of Candolle's failure to recognize Lagenaria vulgaris in any Greek source that was available in his time, it can be said that the statements of Theophrastus in his De historia plantarum (Loeb edition by Hort, 1916) and De causis plantarum (Loeb edition by Einarson and Link in 1976) have been more baffling than illuminating on the botanical identity of his plants, especially those for which he uses the names sikyos, sikya, and kolokyntē (-nīthē once, at C.P. II. 8. 4). Kolokyntē is paired frequently with sikyos but sometimes with sikya, and on two occasions (H.P. I. 13. 3 and VII. 2. 9) all three words occur together: ὁ σίκνος καὶ ἡ κολοκύντη καὶ ἡ σικύα. Thus there was some reason for Dyer (see note 9) to make a distinction between kolokyntē and sikya and for Hort to adopt it in his botanical index for the three words, respectively "Cucumber (Cucumis sativus), Gourd (Cucurbita maxima), and Bottle-gourd (Lagenaria vulgaris)." Previous scholars

Thiselton-Dyer in LSJ, not without expressing some doubt in general and in the index under kolokyntē adding Emmanuel's guess: Citrullus colocynthis, i.e. the Bitter Apple!
indeed had diverged widely in their identifications, as may be seen in the index of Wimmer's Didot edition (1866). For the three names above the index gives the interpretations of K. Sprengel (as deduced from his translation of and commentary on the *H.P.*, Altona, 1822) and of C. Fraas (*Synopsis plantarum florae classicae* . . . München, 1845). In tabular form they read:

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th><em>sikyos</em></th>
<th><em>kolokyntē</em></th>
<th><em>sikya</em></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spr.</td>
<td>Melone, i.e.</td>
<td>Gurke, i.e.</td>
<td>Kürbiss, i.e.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Cucumis Melo</em> L.</td>
<td><em>Cucumis sativus</em> L.</td>
<td><em>Cucurbita Pepo</em> L.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr.</td>
<td><em>Cucumis sativus</em> L.</td>
<td><em>Cucurbita Pepo</em> L.</td>
<td><em>Cucumis Melo</em> L.</td>
</tr>
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Here we may note the comment of Sprengel in his Altona edition on *H.P.* VII. 1. 2 (which is echoed, more emphatically, in Hehn's *Kulturpflanze* [7th edn., 1902], p. 310; see above, 0.08) and even by Schiemann (above, 0.06, p. 237):

Indessen ist es sehr schwer, mit Bestimmheit sich über diese Bedeutungen [i.e. of *sikyos* and *kolokyntē*, also *sikyos pepīn* (see above, 0.10 and 1.27)] zu erklären, da die Alten die Namen häufig verwechseln.

This was in 1822, and Sprengel went on to cite passages from Athenaeus, Dioscorides, Galen, and the *Geoponica*. Then, a century later, even as Schiemann was writing in 1932, the changes of name, apparent in quotations in Athenaeus and Galen from Diocles of Carystus and Speusippus, and in Theophrastus himself, were being exploited by Steier in the article “Melone” in the *RE*, bd. 29 (1931), cols. 562–67, in order to suggest that the *sikya* of Theophrastus might indeed be the Melon, *Cucumis Melo*, as in Fraas above. This is, of course, possible, but Steier nowhere refers to the still earlier and usual meaning of *sikya* as cupping-instrument (see above, 1.02) and in fact at col. 563 he is quite mistaken when he thinks that the phrase *αἱ μεγάλαι σικύαι* in the Hippocratican Corpus (Art. 48, Littré 4, p. 214) refers to a plant or the product of a plant (melon). He has failed to notice that the next word in the phrase is *προσβαλλόμεναι*, the regular term (see above, 1.02) for the attachment of a cupping-instrument. The truth seems to be (above 2.02) that the word *sikya* in the sense “cupping-instrument” was transferred from an arbitrary variant of *sikyos* which indicated a bottle-gourd of a certain shape, and that Theophrastus was careless in applying it, apparently, to a plant distinct from *Lagenaria*. For at C. P. 10. 4 he speaks of the weakness in climbing of “the so-called *sikya*” (*τῆς σικύας καλολυμένης*), and here Einarson and Link, who follow Hort and *LSJ* in relating *sikya* to the bottle-gourd, comment on the oddity of the “so-called”: 
perhaps, they say, it was thought to be named from sikya, a cupping iron, although the cupping iron was actually named from the gourd. [2.06] All this was slippery business, but now that we have documentary evidence from the papyri that the gourds called sikya (see 2.02) and those called kolokyntai (2.03) were slightly different products of essentially the same plant (i.e. Lagenaria), I think it is safe to say that nothing in the prose writers before Athenaeus indicates that either of these names must refer to something else. With this in mind we can proceed to examine some of the contexts in Athenaeus which draw from the comic poets. We begin with one of the two which became proverbial (see above, 0.02). In his second book, p. 59 c, Athenaeus cites a line from Epicharmus (frg. 154, Kaibel): ὑγιώτερον θήν ἐστὶ κολοκύντας πολύ. This is cited as a proverb by Zenobius (VI. 27), and we know from Demetrius On Style (De eloc. 127 and 162) that Sophron (frg. 34, Kaibel) had also used the expression in a comic exaggeration (hyperbole). Manuscripts vary with respect to the form of the comparative (ὑγιώτερ-, ὑγιώτατ-, or ὑγιεῖστ-) but the gender is regularly neuter, and we can probably set aside as too late and somehow confused the masculine form in which the Suda (Adler 3, 1945) under kolokyntē gives the proverb: κολοκύντης ὑγιεῖστερός. Lexicographers have attempted explanations based on Epicharmus, usually joining his expression with the other proverb. Thus Liddell and Scott (6th edn., 1869) say, under kolokyntē defined as the round gourd or pumpkin (see above, 0.10): “proverbially of health, from its fresh juicy nature (citing Epicharmus), as a lily was of death . . . (citing Diphilus).” LSJ, however, place the two proverbs under the κολοκύνθα ἀγρία of Dioscorides (IV. 76), which it rightly defines (see above, 1.02) as colocynth, Citrullus Colocynthis, explaining it as “symbolic of health, from its juicy nature, ὑγιώτερον κολοκύντας Epich. 154, Sophr. 34; as a lily was of death, ἡ κολοκύντης ἡ κρίνου living or dead, Diph. 98, cf. Men. 934.” The assignment of both proverbs under Colocynthis or Bitter Apple seems very strange, and in my next paragraph I will try to show that the second expression (from Diphilus and Menander) belongs under Lagenaria as usual, but I think the assignment of the first proverb is correct, though not exactly as a symbol of health. The Sicilian dramatists, especially Sophron who mimed everyday life, may have shown a mother urging a reluctant child to take a purgative or some bitter potion, and saying, “Drink this. It’s good for you, healthier than the plant kolokyntē.”50 This would be an exaggeration.

50 This of course would be long before Dioscorides, using the new form in short alpha, separated the species called ἀγρία from κολοκύνθα ἀνδρομάχος (II. 134, Wellmann). See again my Figure 6 (Fuchs 212) for the small globular fruits of Coloquint or Bitter Apple.
indeed, first because it was not the plant but the juice of the fruit of *Citrullus Colocynthis* which was so promotive of health, and secondly because the comparative degree of the adjective ἥγεσις “healthy in all respects” is substituted for the comparative degree of ἥγειως “healthy for you, wholesome.” But this substitution evidently took hold in the speech of comedy, for *LSJ* cite the expressions ἥγειστερος δεύτερος *Com. Adesp.* 910 and ἥγειστερος κροτῶνος, *Men.* 318 (where Strabo, VI. 1. 12, had Κρότωνος). Here δεύτερος is the unripe, bitter-tasting grape, and κροτῶν is the bush or tree, *Ricinus communis*, from whose seeds our castor oil is prepared (see above, 1.12 and 1.31). But then *Aelian, Rust. Epist.* 10, combines the expressions of Menander and Sophron, using the proper adjective: ἥγειωντερος ἔσται κροτῶνος δήπον καὶ κολοκύντης. Hercher (*Epist. Graeci*, p. 19) renders the first noun correctly as *ricinus* and the second as *cucurbita*, which is correct if we add Pliny’s *silvestris* (see 1.02 above); and the reference is clearly to the wholesome purgatives derived from the two plants. But we end this paragraph by noting that Aelian’s fictional farmer has been advising a friend to castrate an oversexed boar which has been a nuisance on his farm, and then, after explaining in some detail how he would treat the wounded animal and restore it to health and better behavior in the future, he inserts the comic expressions as above. But in this context ἥγειστερος would have been the proper word! It would seem that Aelian was more interested in correcting the style of his predecessors than in the consistency of his own style.

[2.07] For the other proverb we have two full lines (Diphilus, frg. 98, Kock) preserved by Zenobius (IV. 18):

ἐν ἡμέραις αὐτῶν ἐπτὰ σοι, γέρων, 
θέλω παρασχεῖν ἡ κολοκύντην ἡ κρίνον.

The same contrast, ἤτοι κρίνον ἡ κολοκύντην, is said (*Prov. Coisl.* 253) to have been used by Menander and is counted by Kock as his frg. 934; compare Meineke’s frg. 1033. The speaker in Diphilus appears to be a trusted servant or friend who had undertaken to accompany the elderly man’s son on some dangerous mission and now promises to bring him back within seven days as (figuratively) either a *kolokyntē* or a *krinon*. Since the paroemiographers (see also Diogenian. V. 10 and *Apostol.* VIII. 45) all refer to the ancient practice of arranging lilies over the dead (see, e.g., *Vergil, Aen.* VI. 883), so that the usually white lily (*Theophr.*, *H.P.* VI. 6. 8, *Theocr.* 11. 56) would symbolize death, it is reasonable to suppose that somehow the flower of the plant *kolokyntē* here symbolizes life, and the expression means (see
LSJ above) “living or dead.”51 I cannot explain how the symbolism arose, but it is pertinent to remember that the flower of the Lagenaria, alone among the cucurbits, was white. See above, note 42; and note that Whitaker and Davis (above, note 11), who use the name “White-Flowered Gourd” rather than the traditional “Bottle-Gourd,” describe its flowers (p. 17) as “white, showy, and borne singly on very long peduncles that rise above the foliage.” The long stem, which can be seen clearly in Fuchs’ woodcut (his p. 211, my Figure 5), and the pretty white flower would invite comparison with the lily and make some sort of symbolic contrast almost inevitable.

[2.08] A few other passages in Greek literature make some positive contribution towards our conclusion that kolokyntē usually denotes the “White-Flowered Gourd” known in Latin as cucurbita. Aristotle (Hist. animal. II, 591 a 16) says that among fish only the saupe or salp (ἡ σάλπη) is captured with a gourd (θηρεύεται κολοκύνθη). D’Arcy Thompson in the Oxford Aristotle (4, 1910) suggests in his note that the gourd was not the bait, but a float used to support the line until the fish was exhausted. He refers to a modern authority on fishing, but he might have compared Columella’s line (X. 388, cited above, 1.25) about the floats which help boys learn to swim. Martial’s epigram about Atreus cucurbitarum (XI. 31, see above, 1.16) reveals the aristocratic Roman disdain for what they regarded as cheap food. The same attitude is expressed much later in an epigram (A. P. XI. 371) by Palladas, the gloomy schoolmaster of Alexandria and pagan contemporary of Jerome, who, I suspected (see above, 1.31), felt otherwise: cucurbitae were among the luxury foods which the plain clergy should avoid. But Palladas derides a wealthy host who desires to display his silver plate at a banquet but serves on it only poor fare, for which he uses a novel expression, βροτίν τὴν κολοκυνθιάδα. Patton in the Loeb Anthology (1926) translated it “pumpkin pie,” perhaps following Dyer’s guidance in Hort’s Theophrastus (1916) but also reflecting a similar disdain, which was affected, formerly at least, by the British in general, for a favorite American dish.

[2.09] Returning to the contexts in Athenaeus, we note some others which can be interpreted in terms of Lagenaria vulgaris (for nothing

51 The ancient tradition (see the paroemiographers) focused primarily on τὸ τῆς κολοκύντης ἑθος, but rather as symbolizing τὰ ἀδηλα, since (they say) it was uncertain whether it would come up as far as a lily or would bear fruit. Only afterward do they continue with the arrangement of lilies over the dead, adding the quite unsupported assertion that the ancients also arranged the flowers of kolokyntē over the healthy. This may be an inference from the other proverb, which has certainly influenced modern lexicographers.
prevents us; see above 2.06) rather than *Cucurbita maxima*; and in
them we will find nothing very surprising or derogatory about the
fruits that are indicated. The first of these is from the comic poet
Hermippus (frg. 79, Kock): τὴν κεφαλὴν ὅσην ἔχει, ὅσην κολοκύντην.
This was the first of several quotations by which Athenaeus showed
(II, 59 c) that Attic writers used only the one word (*kolokyntē*) for all
the varieties of gourd, some of which others called *sikya* (above 2.02).
Many have seen in the notable size of this person’s head a reference
to the large globular fruit which we call *pumpkin* and the Germans
*Kürbis* (see, e.g., Weinreich cited in note 1 above), but of course the
large pyriform bottle-gourd (see my Figure 4), viewed upside down,
would fit the verbal picture here equally well and even better the
famous picture of Pericles sketched by Cratinus (frg. 71, Kock, from
Plut. *Peric. 13*), “the squill-headed Zeus with the Odeum on his
head.” In neither passage, moreover, is there any hint of ridicule for
a large-headed man as being thereby empty-headed or stupid.

[2.10] Next after Hermippus, Athenaeus cites (59 c) a line from
the comic poet Phrynichus (frg. 61, Kock): ἡ μαξύνω τι μικρῶν ἡ κολοκύντιον,
noting that he uses the diminutive hypocoristically. In fact the context
shows rather more affection for *kolokyntē*, as being a favorite comestible
like *maza*, than any indication of size. Gulick translates “pumpkin,”
but this could be a small fresh gourd52 or, perhaps, a slice of one,
dried and smoked as described by Nicander (above, 2.04). The
diminutive form *Kolokynthion* was also applied as a nickname (*epiklesis*)
to a certain Theodotus who held high office in the court of Justinian
(Procop. *Anecd. IX. 37*). This was cited by Weinreich among the
passages in which there was a connotation of stupidity, but the
diminutive may well have been affectionate and need mean no more
than in Phrynichus—something as good as a barley-cake. There is
another possibility, which I pass over quickly, that the long neck of
the bottle-gourd (see Aristotle cited above, 2.02, and the smaller
dangling gourd seen in the center of my Figure 8) was perceived as
phallic in shape and may have led to the colloquial and obscene
meaning which the word *colocynthia* evidently has in the sixth line of
the Oxford fragment of Juvenal’s sixth satire, that is, a *vir membrosus*
or *moechus*, according to Todd.53 But if this was the source of

52 Compare the smaller grade (20 to a bundle) of *cucurbita* = *kolokwthia* in Diocletian’s
Edict, 6. 27 (above, 1.15). Lauffer in his notes cites a true diminutive from an account
53 In the third part of his article on the *Cucurbitaceae*, *Class. Quart*. 37 (1943),
108–11. Todd rejects the evidence on certain ancient medical implements, made
from the emptied necks of small dried gourds and certainly phallic in shape, which
Theodotus' nickname, it is not unknown for diminutives to be applied κατ’ ἀντίφασι (compare Robin Hood's Little John) or for subordinates to boast, affectionately and proudly, of their leader's sexual prowess (compare the word of Caesar's soldiers for him, Suet. 51). And in any case, this has nothing to do with pumpkins.

[2.11] Lastly, we may examine the Aristophanic taunt (Nub. 327 λημός κολοκύντας, since Kilpatrick (above, note 2) has brought it up, interpreting the noun in the usual way as "pumpkins" and connecting it with Seneca's word apocolocyntosis. The phrase is colloquial exaggeration, like our "to weep buckets," since λημη in the Hippocratic Corpus (Vet. med. 19, Progr. 2) denotes the humor or rheum that gathers in the corner of the eye (so LSJ, translating the phrase "to have one's eyes running pumpkins"). But the large pyriform bottle-gourds would fit the exaggeration just as well, and if we think of the urcei made from Pliny's cucurbitae (above, 1.26) or the κολοκύνθαραχνα of the papyrus (above, 2.03), then they would fit perfectly both with our expression and with a proverb cited by Heschius (Δ 862, Latte, 2, p. 593), which combines Lucian's phrase (C. Indoct. 23) χύτρας λημάν (cf. Diogenian. V. 63) with this of Aristophanes.

III. Apocolocyntosis Reconsidered

[3.01] The conclusion which we may draw from all these references in Greek literature from the fifth century B.C. through the fourth Christian century (and beyond) is that the fruits of the White-Flowered Gourd, whether called kolokynthai or sikyai, were very well known both as edible fruits and as the source from which various kinds of utensils could be made. No literary evidence shows that the fruits were what we call pumpkins or squashes,\(^{54}\) and only one proverbial expression (see 2.06) suggests that the word kolokynth∫ sometimes referred to the Bitter-Apple, classed by modern systematists as one of the Cucurbitaceae and containing in its juice a drastic purgative.

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Housman drew from Hippocrates in support of his comment on the passage in his 1905 edition of Juvenal, and works (I think quite rightly, though he need not have rejected the douche-like implements as unfamiliar) to show that the Quintio of certain Pompeian inscriptions was not a cognomen but a term of abuse, and further, that it was a shortened form of colocyntha, comparing French coloquine.

\(^{54}\) The rebuke given to the future emperor Hadrian (Dio, Epit. LXIX. 4: δηλοίτε καὶ τὰς κολοκύντας γραφή), has been understood (see Coffey, Lustrum, 6, 248) as referring to pumpkins, but nothing shows that it must be so interpreted, and it has been translated as "gourds." The same is to be said of the appearance of kolokynthoi among other vegetables with swelling body (δῆκος) whose meaning, when seen in dreams, is discussed by Artemidorus (I. 67).
The Bothwells (0.10 above) were led astray by the botanical definition in *LSJ* and by the equivalence in England of the words *pumpkin* and *gourd*. And Wasson was quite right (0.05) in asserting the view held by botanists of the American origin of the pumpkins and squashes.

[3.02] A few papyri from Egypt will bring the plant called κολόκυντα (or κολοκύντη) a little closer to Rome and the time of Seneca. In this respect the Zenon papyri, all of the third century B.C., are especially notable. At this time a plant called *kolokynta* was much cultivated in Egypt for its edible fruit, regarded as a vegetable (λάχανον): e.g. κολοκύντας (*PSI* 6, 553.14), last in a long line of comestibles owned by Zenon in Arsinoë, preceded just above line 14 by a heading, λάχανα παυτοδατά. Others of the Zenon papyri are brought to our notice by the article in *LSJ*: *PCair. Zen.* 292. 132 and 139 (seeds of *kolokynid* handed out to Zenon’s peasants), 300. 3 (I am to report τοὺς πεφυτευκότας σίκους ἡ κολοκυνταν ἡ κρόμμων), and especially 33. 14 (ἀμπέλου . . . κολοκυνθίνης] in a list of fruit-trees and vines taken as a gift from the orchard of Lysimachus). While none of these is indicated specifically as *Lagenaria*, as the sikhai of the Sorbonne papyrus (above, 2.02) and the *kolokynthartytaina* of the *Pap. Iandanae* certainly are, they are at least significant in that the colocynthine vine would hardly produce a pumpkin (*Cucurbita maxima*), as *LSJ* would have it.

[3.03] And now, thanks to the great kindness of Professor Wilhelmina Jashemski of the University of Maryland, I can report positive evidence from the area of Naples, a region which, like Egypt, was familiar to Seneca, that the plant which botanists now call *Lagenaria siceraaria* (Molina) Standley (see above, 0.08) was cultivated there in antiquity and that its fruits, which are still grown there and are popular as food, are depicted in at least two paintings on the walls of houses excavated at Herculaneum. Mrs. Jashemski, whose twenty years of research as historian and archaeologist on *The Gardens of Pompeii, Herculaneum, and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius* have recently been crowned by the publication (New Rochelle, N. Y. [Caratsas Bros.], 1980) of a magnificently planned and illustrated book titled as above, has allowed me to see and copy a color photograph taken by her husband Stanley in the summer of 1971. It is not included in the illustrations of her book, and cannot be satisfactorily reproduced here, but I can give a verbal description which has been checked both by Dr. Jashemski and her botanical assistant, Dr. F. G. Meyer of the National Arboretum in Washington, who for some years has been trying to help her identify all of the plants in carbonized material, wall-paintings, mosaics, and sculpture. Before doing this, it will be well to note that an earlier report on the plants seen in the paintings,
published by Dr. Orazio Comes in the 1879 commemorative volume, had mentioned some other Cucurbitaceae, including Cucurbita Pepo alongside several of Cucurbita lagenaria. Drs. Jashemski and Meyer have not been able to locate any of these paintings either in the Museo Nazionale or in situ on the walls of houses, or in the many published collections of paintings and mosaics from that source. Dr. Meyer believes that all of them, called by Comes Zucca and described as yellow or yellowish in color and in varying shapes which nevertheless agree well with those known from modern specimens, were varieties of Lagenaria. In other words, none of the pictures listed by Comes can be used as evidence for the pre-Columbian existence in the Old World of Cucurbita Pepo or Cucurbita maxima.

[3.04] Both of the paintings still visible on walls at Herculaneum show small gourds, brownish or yellowish in color, standing in glass bowls, in company with other objects, as if ready for eating or cooking. The one of which I have a photograph is a panel on the south wall of the portico in the Casa di Cervi (IV. 21). Inside the glass bowl, vividly portrayed in three curving and high-lighted zones, which seems to stand on the lower shelf of a two-tiered open cabinet seen in illusory perspective as if fixed to the wall, there can be seen an elongated gourd with curved, narrow neck (which extends outside the wide mouth of the bowl) and slightly bulbous lower end, and another vegetable object, fully bulbous in shape, which props up the lower end of the gourd. To the left of the bowl are seen two more gourds apparently resting flat on the shelf, though deterioration of the wall and painting has obscured the lower left corner of the cabinet. Similar deterioration at the lower right corner makes it uncertain whether or not another globular object is to be seen there. A leaf is visible but unidentifiable. Drs. Jashemski and Meyer think that the globular object inside the bowl may be a pear, but they are sure that the two globular fruits shown on the upper shelf are cherries

55 See pp. 177–250 in Pompeii e la regione sotterrata del Vesuvio nell’ anno LXXIX (Napoli 1879). The article was also issued as a separate in 1879 and was noticed (not without some doubts as to the accuracy of its findings) by Candolle, Fischer-Benzon, and others; later a German translation, Darstellung der Pflanzen in den Malereien von Pompeji, was published at Stuttgart in 1895 and was summarized by the expert botanist L. Wittmack in an article, pp. 38–66 in a Beiblatt, no. 73 (1903), to the Botanische Jahrbücher, preceding his own report on the carbonized seeds and other remains of plants found at Pompeii and stored in the Museo Nazionale at Naples. Wittmack did not recognize any seeds of Cucurbitaceae.

56 Dr. Jashemski locates the other one (in a letter dated Oct. 2, 1977) on a wall of the Samnite house (V 1–2). It “shows two gourds in a glass bowl. The gourds are brownish in color, but Fred agrees that they are Lagenaria.”
(because their stems are joined in this and similar paintings elsewhere),
despite the fact that they appear to be as large as the (?) pear below
them (since cherries are disproportionately large in numerous other
paintings). Dr. Meyer assured me in a letter dated March 17, 1976:

The plant [i.e. Lagenaria siceraria] is most certainly still cultivated in
Italy. In fact, it is a widely eaten vegetable in the Naples area. I saw
it grown in the environs of Pompeii, I have photographs of it, and
we had it served to us in our restaurant one day. The same plant is
cultivated in the U.S.A., but only as a curiosity.

He went on to tell of a snake-gourd six feet long which he was asked
to identify and later saw covering the lady's back fence; with this we
can compare Pliny's 9-foot cucurbita (see above, 1.07). And, he added,
"It is the only white-flowered gourd I know of, and on this character
alone, it is easily identified."

[3.05] It is well to be reminded here of the varied and sometimes
fantastic shapes of the gourds (fruits) of this plant, which must have
been familiar to Seneca and the Romans of his time, whether they
called it kolokyntē, as likely in the Greek-speaking areas of southern
Italy and Egypt, or cucurbita as elsewhere. According to Heiser in his
article, "Variation in the Bottle-Gourd" (see above, 1.20, and note
33), the largest fruit produced in his experimental fields, which used
seeds procured from companies located in various parts of the world,
was of the pyriform type (from Ghana, but see Fuchs' cut p. 209 and
my Figure 4) and weighed 150 pounds (this from a letter to me
dated June 7, 1976), but there were snake types ("Variation," p.
123), cylindrical forms (see Fuchs' cut p. 211 and my Figure 5),
bottle types and others whose use as containers was known to
Columella, Pliny, and St. Jerome (above, 1.25) but is now dwindling
("Variation," p. 121) with the coming of tin cans, glass, and plastic.57
The gourds that can be seen in the paintings at Herculaneum resemble
in shape the gourds that hang over Jonah's shoulder in my Figure
8, except that there is a more pronounced curve to the neck of the
one in the glass jar, but in size they must be considerably smaller,

57 Whitaker and Davis (above, note 11) describe (p. 5) the archaeological materials
found at Huca Prieta on the coast of northern Peru and dated to the fourth
millennium B.C., as having been "used for containers of various sorts, e.g. work
baskets, water bottles, dippers, jars, dishes, etc. Many fragments were found that had
evidently been used as scoops or ladles. Some of the forms with long necks were
used as fish-net floats. Others were used as rattles for ceremonial purposes, and still
others were made into whistles." If one asks how the modern investigators knew
what the prehistoric gourds were for, the answer must be from the uses to
which contemporary people put similar objects.
representing edible fruits whose rinds were still soft (see Pliny, Nat. XIX. 71, cited above, 1.26). And this shape and size may well have been responsible for the phallic impression which Todd (above, 2.10 and note 53) thought led to the obscenity of colocyntha in the Oxford fragment of Juvenal. It would also fit well with Wagenvoort’s specification (see above, 0.04) of the implement which in his theory replaced the radish in the traditional punishment of adulterers. And it would not be very different from the critical shape which we supposed (above, 2.02) led to the arbitrary variant of sikyos (i.e. cucumber) which was transferred to the implement called sikya in Greek; though it was the bulbous end of a small bottle-gourd (see Fuchs p. 209 and my Figure 4) which we compared (1.02) to the bronze cupping-instruments which Pliny and St. Jerome called medicinales cucurbitae because of their resemblance to the fruits of the plant (above, 1.03).

[3.06] Returning at last to Seneca’s coinage, I think we have shown that the word kolokyntē would mean to him and his readers, not the product of any plant, such as a pumpkin or Riesenkürbis or Cucurbita maxima, but primarily the plant itself, a species of Lagenaria which was very well known to them as an annual plant grown from seeds and cultivated in Italy as well as Greece for its food, for the medicinal value of the fruits and other parts of the plant, for the usefulness of the containers and other household goods which could be made from the dried and woody rinds of the fruit, for the aesthetic pleasure, even to the populus minutus of the city (see especially the moralizing passage in Pliny, Nat. XIX. 51–59), of watching a seed develop rapidly into a trailing or climbing plant with beautiful white flowers, and which, if it reached the top of a fence or trellis, would provide the further service of welcome shade in the summer. It was the manifold utility of this familiar plant, coupled with its very humble and ordinary status, which in my former essay I thought would apply, metaphorically at least, to the whole of the satire and especially to its end, the final degradation suffered by Claudius. Rejected by decree of the Olympian senate, he is escorted by Mercury back to Rome and then, eventfully, to the underworld. At length he is brought to the infernal bar and condemned by Aeacus to play at dice with a perforated

58 “Some points of Natural History in Seneca’s Apocolocyntosis,” pp. 181–92 in Homenaje a Antonio Tovar (Madrid 1972). Reviewing other hypotheses about the title, I had rejected Todd’s theory (in the second part of his article [pp. 103–08] in Class. Quart. 37, 1943) that Claudius was represented as a dice-box (fritillus) incarnate, on the grounds that this figure, though quite possible if we think with Todd of a small husk of Lagenaria vulgaris, is forgotten at the very end of the satire.
fritillus—a novel penalty obviously suggested by the myth of the Danaids but peculiarly fitting for Claudius. But Claudius has just begun to serve this sentence when in rapid succession (the point emphasized by Athanassakis, see above, 0.03) he is claimed by Caligula as a former imperial slave but then disowned and donated like a hot potato (as we would say) back to Aeacus, who gives him in turn to his freedman Menander (the Athenian dramatist?) to serve as his secretary for hearing lawsuits. This ending, I suggested, could symbolize the opinion held of Claudius during his lifetime by the senatorial aristocracy. He was industrious, learned (in a dull way) and decorative if somewhat undignified, and though capricious (like the fantastic shape of some of the gourds) still useful—but to the wrong people, the un-Roman rabble in the provinces, the newcomers in the city who were displacing the old aristocrats, and above all to the freedmen who were really his masters. Here Claudius was being made over, not really into a god (apotheosis) but into something like a bottle-gourd vine (apocolocyntosis), immortalized and perennial.

[3.07] This interpretation of the word as a figurative designation (i.e. the deified Claudius is like an immortal gourd-vine) will seem a bit feeble and lacking in satiric bite to those who believe, I think rightly, that Seneca’s motive for his merciless exposure of the physical peculiarities, as well as the weaknesses of the deceased emperor’s character, was quite personal. No doubt he desired to be avenged for the painful exile which Claudius had inflicted on him. This was well expressed in Wagenvoort’s interpretation (above, 0.04) of the title. But once we accept Dio’s word ὄνομάσας (0.01) as indicating a formal, written title for a work in which there is no actual transformation, it becomes necessary to look for something satiric or derogatory in the underlying κολοκύντη = cucurbita, as Eisenberg has done (0.02), and to set aside both the normal meanings of these words and the titles which are actually found in the manuscripts. I therefore suggest that apocolocyntosis was not the formal title, but an off-hand characterization uttered by Seneca somewhat later and in answer to a question (see above, 0.13), at a time when he was beginning to regret his flattery of Nero and to feel, once his old grudge had been satisfied, that Claudius had not been so bad after all. Seneca was soon to extol clementia as a moral virtue and he might have been transferring from books to men that quality which the younger Pliny (Epist. III. 5. 10) admired in his uncle: dicere etiam solebat nullum esse librum tam malum ut non aliqua parte prodesset.

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
Editor's Note: The following items should be added to the list of Professor Heller's publications printed in ICS VIII (1983), pp. 168–72:

Figure 1. Bronze *cucurbitula* from Pompeii. Milne, *Surgical Implements*, Plate 35.

Figure 2. "Ancient cupping-glass made from a pumpkin." Rich, *Dictionary of Antiquities* under "Cucurbita and Cucurbitula."
Figures 4 and 5. *Lagenaria vulgaris* Seringe. Fuchs, *Vivae Imagines* (1549), pages 209 and 211.
Figure 6. *Citrullus Colocynthis* (L.) Schrader. Fuchs, page 212.
Figure 7. *Cucumis Melo* L. Fuchs, page 405.
Figure 8. Jonah resting under the gourd-vine. Detail from an ivory book-cover in Ravenna. Rice, *Art of the Byzantine Era*, Figure 8; by permission of Hirmer Fotoarchiv, München.