

profit or malice. We must not press analogies too far;¹⁸ it suffices to see the broad outline. If our initial premises are correct, then Pholoe's escape may be viewed both as a specific reflection of Melior's personal experience at some period before the composition of the poem and as a universal parallel for those in a position akin to his. That the path of *quies* was the safest is the central idea. The myth is an allegorical validation of Melior's chosen way of life.

The reason for the invention of the myth of Pholoe was contemplation of his plane tree; the *platanus* may in itself be seen as a symbol of the *vita umbratilis* devoted to hospitality and the arts. As noted above, the plane was notable for having no practical use save the provision of shade from the sun. Its bizarre pattern of growth is attributed to Pan's final action: the tree is said to be a lasting memorial of events long ago, when tragedy was averted at the critical moment. But it may also be interpreted as a visible reminder of the life of a man who, after coming close to destruction, was saved and found peace in seclusion. After his retreat into *quies*, his "new life," springing from it, provided peace, protection and tranquillity also to his friends and associates like Statius. From this, it is easy to see the unity that underlies the three sections of the poem. The tree inspires an aetiology. This is given in the myth, which, under the veil of allegory, serves to illustrate graver themes. Finally, the owner of the pool and the tree is presented as a living example of the truth of the allegory in the myth and the course of his life given visible objectification in the shape of the tree: tree, pool, and Melior are intimately bound together in a complex but interlocking nexus of responsions. The *jeu d'esprit* has, like the pool itself, a hidden depth, a cautionary moral for the wise. History denies us the chance to unravel subtler facets of the secondary level of meaning in the poem. But enough remains for us to detect its presence. It is a telling instance of Statius' ability in the *Silvae* not to regard the immediate purpose of his compositions as a limitation on their scope and his refusal to be trammelled by the restraints imposed by individual circumstances. Writing for *placidus* Melior on his birthday, Statius uses a plane tree and a fantasy in the tradition of Ovid to demonstrate the dangers of involvement in the world and the contrasting blessings of *quies*.

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18. At 8-10, Statius lays stress on the fact that on this occasion it is Pholoe in particular, out of the "Nympharum tenerae catervae," that Pan wishes to make his prey. Allegorically, this may suggest that Melior was but one of many men of his type in Rome but that the recent threat had been directed solely at him for reasons that we of course cannot divine. But there were other *nymphae* left to serve Pan's lusts.

A SUGGESTED READING OF THE WORD *FORTAX*

The word *fortax* occurs only once in the whole of surviving Latin literature. Its usage in that chapter of Cato's farming manual describing the construction and operation of the lime kiln shows it to have had a technical meaning: "...fornacemque bene struito; facito fortax totam fornacem infimam complectatur" (*Agr.* 38).

The term has previously been translated as "grate"¹ and "carrier,"² and its Greek original, *φόραξ*, certainly indicates that some sort of support for carrying loads is implicit in its meaning.³ It is therefore surprising that R. Goujard, the Budé editor and translator of Cato, has chosen to link the Latin with *φόρτος*, meaning "charge," and his translation is incorrect in identifying *fortax* with the arched material load placed in the kiln for firing.⁴ A better understanding of the term comes from study of the archaeology of lime-burning kilns.⁵

In plan, Roman lime kilns were generally either circular or oval and often squat and squarish in section. A ledge usually ran round the interior either as a freestanding feature against the kiln side or as a recess in the wall. The charge would be bedded from this and thereby kept away from direct association with the fire. Experimental firings in a restored kiln at Iversheim, West Germany, indicate this might have been best facilitated by forming a dome of the limestone or other material to be calcined over a wooden framework which rested on the ledge. More stone would then be added to fill the space above with the result that as the frame burnt away during firing, the charge would settle and become self-supporting.⁶

Cato's use of the term *fortax* occurs in that section of his chapter dealing with the design of the lime kiln and ahead of his directions for loading and firing, so it would appear to refer to a permanent structural feature. We might therefore translate the relevant passage as "Build the kiln well, ensuring that a ledge (*fortax*) goes round the entire kiln chamber at the bottom."

BRIAN DIX

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1. W. D. Hooper and H. B. Ash, *Marcus Porcius Cato on Agriculture and Marcus Terentius Varro on Agriculture*, Loeb Classical Library (London and Cambridge, Mass., 1934), p. 55. I. A. Richmond also translated *fortax* as meaning grate; see F. G. Simpson (ed. G. Simpson), *Watermills and Military Works on Hadrian's Wall* (Kendal, 1976), p. 154, n. 86.

2. N. Davey, *A History of Building Materials* (London, 1961), p. 100.

3. As *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, s.v. "fortax," which gives the English equivalent as "a support, base."

4. Caton, "De l'Agriculture" (Paris, 1975), p. 42 and p. 212, n. 3.

5. B. Dix, *The Production of Lime and Its Applications in the Roman World* (B.A. diss., University of London, 1973), abstracted as "Roman Limeburning," *Bull. Inst. Archaeol. Univ. London* 12 (1975): 214; idem, "Roman Lime-Burning," *Britannia* 10 (1979): 261-62.

6. W. Sölter, *Römische Kalkbrenner im Rheinland* (Düsseldorf, 1970), pp. 20-22 and p. 17, fig. 4.

COLUMELLA DE RE RUSTICA 3. 2. 24

Inerticula [sc. uitis] tamen nigra, quam quidam Graeci amargion appellant, potest in secunda quasi tribu esse, quod et boni uini est et innoxia, quoniam nomen traxit, quod iners habetur in tentandis neruis, quamuis gustu non sit hebes.

So S. Hedberg.¹ As F. R. D. Goodyear pointed out recently,² *quoniam*, which is the primary MSS reading,³ gives no satisfactory sense and must be corrupt. The editio princeps (1472) has *etiam*, which is no better. The celebrated Veronese architect G. Giocondo (Iucundus), who was entrusted with preparing the Aldine

1. *L. Iuni Moderati Columellae "Rei rusticae" libri III-V* (Uppsala, 1968).

2. "Notes on Columella, RR 2-3," *LCM* 3 (1978): 192.

3. As usual, some of the R MSS write *quom* (or *cum*) instead of *quoniam*; cf. Hedberg, *Columellae . . . libri III-V*, p. 9.