

of *Orpheus* (40-42):

ἄλλα δέ σοι κατέλεξ' ἅ περ εἴσιδον ἠδ' ἐνόησα,
 Ταινάρου ἠνίκ' ἔβην σκοτίνην ὁδὸν Ἄϊδος εἴσω,
 ἡμετέρη πίσυνος κιθάρη δι' ἔρωτ' ἀλόχοιο.

Although referring to a different catabasis, the 'Orphic' passage may well be based on the Apollonian one (note that both mention Taenarus)⁷. If so, it may not just provide a parallel for, but also be an indirect witness to, Apollonius' use of that phrase at 1.103.

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ABSTRACT:

At A.R. 1.103 the epithet defining ὁδὸν is variously transmitted as κοινήν, κεινήν or κείνην; rather than choosing from these variants, none of which is compelling, I propose to restore σκοτίνην on the basis of [Orph.] *Arg.* 41 σκοτίνην ὁδὸν.

KEYWORDS:

Apollonius Rhodius, *Argonautica of Orpheus*, textual criticism.

MORETVM 20: AN EMENDATION

After rekindling the hearth (8-12) and lighting the lamp (13-14), Simulus fetches grain from the storeroom (15-18), goes to the quern and places the lamp on a shelf hung on the wall:

*inde abit adsistitque molae parvae tabella,
 quam fixam paries illos servabat in usus, 20
 lumina fida locat.*

Although scholars are usually unconcerned by it, the verb *servabat* is patently inappropriate in this context: one does not 'preserve' a shelf on the wall, it is simply there. It is true that there is no lack of parallels for *servare in aliquos usus*, which commentators duly note; but these only emphasise the

⁷ On the use of Apollonius in the *Argonautica of Orpheus*, see in general H. Venzke, *Die orphische Argonautika in ihrem Verhältnis zu Apollonios Rhodios*, Berlin 1941; cf. also O. Schelske, *Orpheus in der Spätantike: Studien und Kommentar zu den Ardonautika des Orpheus*, Berlin 2011, *passim*.

awkwardness of the expression here¹. In Lucan, eaglets, who could look straight at the sun, *caeli servantur in usus* (9.909) by their parents, “are kept alive for heavenly purposes” (whereas those who could not are left to die). Valerius may be echoing Lucan when he writes of a bull whom *Thessalis in seros Ditis servaverat usus* (1.780), “the Thessalian witch had kept for hellish purposes” (rather than slaughtering him at an earlier moment). Elsewhere in Valerius, the expression is used to draw contrast between Idas, who serves as an ordinary oarsman, and his brother Lynceus, who *magnos... servatur in usus* (1.462), “is kept for greater purposes” (that is, instead of likewise becoming an oarsman).

In his translation Kenney plays down the verb’s awkwardness: “a small shelf kept fixed to the wall for such purposes”². Perutelli stays closer to the Latin in that he keeps the word for ‘wall’ as the grammatical subject, but he still renders the verb rather vaguely: “piccola mensola, che la parete teneva conficcata per quell’uso”³. In his commentary he aptly cites Hor. *Carm.* 1.5.13-16 *me tabula sacer / votiva paries indicat uvida / suspendisse potenti / vestimenta maris deo* and 3.26.3-6 *nunc arma defunctumque bello / barbiton hic paries habebit, / laevum marinae qui Veneris latus / custodit*, suggesting that in the *Moretum* the wall may likewise be intended as a personification⁴. However, this does not solve the problem: while the wall of Venus’ temple can reasonably be said to protect the goddess’s side, it makes little sense to say that a wall guards a shelf hung on it. The absurdity of the image is brought out by Laudani, who translates: “una piccola tavola, custodita a questo scopo dalla parete cui era infissa”, adding in the commentary: “Soggetto del verso è nientemeno che un *paries*, geloso custode di un piccola mensola”⁵. The problem in our passage is not that *servare* cannot have *paries* as its subject, but that it cannot have *tabellam* as its object, since it is impossible to imagine from what the shelf is ‘preserved’ by the wall: surely the point cannot be that the wall kept the shelf ‘nailed’ to itself (*fixam*), that is preserved it from falling off?

The most straightforward verb for our context would be *habere* (cf. Hor. *C.* 3.26.4 *paries habebit*), but *habebat* will not fit the metre. I propose

¹ See E. J. Kenney, *The Ploughman’s Lunch. Moretum: A Poem Ascribed to Virgil*, Bristol 1984, 20; A. Perutelli, [*P. Vergili Maronis*] *Moretum*, Pisa 1983, 86.

² Kenney (n. 1), 3. H. R. Fairclough, *Virgil, Aeneid VII-XII; Appendix Vergiliana*, rev. by G. P. Goold, Cambridge MA 2000, 519 offers a paraphrase: “a tiny shelf, firmly fastened on the wall for such needs”.

³ Perutelli (n. 1), 61. Cf. the translation by M. Dolç, *Elegies a Mecenas, l’Agró, Minúcies, l’Almadroc*, Barcelona 1984, 207: “una petita cartela, que una paret sostenia fixa per a aquells usos”.

⁴ Perutelli (n. 1), 86.

⁵ C. Laudani, *Moretum*, Naples 2004, 51 and 67.

praebibat. Although apparently *praebere in/ad aliquos usus* can only be paralleled in a late text (Paul. Nol. *Carm.* 27.368 *area vilis holus nullos praebibat ad usus*), this should not be considered an obstacle, since *in/ad aliquos usus*, “for (some) purposes”, is a syntactically self-sufficient idiom that can be used with more or less any verbs⁶. The required sense of *praebere* is a standard one too (“to put forward, offer, provide”), but here are some parallels for the verb being applied to an inanimate object ‘offering’ something of use: Hor. *Sat.* 1.5.45-46 *villula tectum | praebuit*; Ov. *Pont.* 3.3.91 *faciles aditus praebet venerabile templum*; Luc. 3.556-557 *at Romana ratis stabilem praebere carinam | certior*; Juv. 6.3 *praeberet spelunca domos ignemque laremque*; Sen. *Thy.* 652-653 *nulla qua laetos solet | praebere ramos arbor*.

The corruption of *servabat* to *praebibat* is not the most straightforward one, but it arguably finds a parallel later in the poem at 94 *servatum gramine bulbum*, where *servatum* is likewise almost certainly corrupt and should probably be emended to *privatum* (Skutsch)⁷. Possibly the minuscule script in which an ancestor of the archetype was written invited the misreading of *pr-* as *fer-*. Be that as it may, 94 *servatum* in any case suggests that *servare* was in the scribe’s mind and ready to be substituted for a word he had difficulty deciphering.

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ABSTRACT:

I argue that *servabat* at *Moretum* 20 *quam* [sc. *tabellam*] *fixam paries illos servabat in usus* cannot be correct and propose to restore *praebibat* instead.

KEYWORDS:

Appendix Vergiliana, Latin poetry, textual criticism.

⁶ Note e.g. Verg. *Georg.* 4.295-296 *ipsos contractus in usus | eligitur locus*; *Aen.* 4.647 *non hos quaesitum munus in usus*; Ov. *Am.* 1.6.5 *longus amor tales corpus tenuavit in usus*; *Met.* 5.111 *non hos adhibendus ad usus*; Luc. 6.578 *carmenque novos fingebat in usus*; Juv. 11.118 *hos lignum stabat ad usus*.

⁷ Cf. Kenney (n. 1), 45-46, who, however, objects that “*privatus* will hardly bear this physical sense” and offers *viduatum* instead. In view of Col. 5.9.10 *omni fronde privare truncum*, Kenney’s objection appears groundless, and Skutsch’s *privatum* is slightly closer to the *paradosis*.