INFLUENCES ON THE *GEORGICS*

L. CADILI: *Viamque adfectat Olympo. Memoria ellenistica nelle 'Georgiche' di Virgilio.* Pp. 236. Milan: Edizioni Universitarie di Lettere Economia Diritto, 2001. Paper, €22. ISBN: 88-7916-172-5.

Luca Cadili sets out in this book, a revised version of his doctoral thesis, to explore the influence of Hellenistic poetry, in particular encomiastic poetry, on Virgil's *Georgics*, and in so doing to identify a 'key' to the reading and interpretation of Virgil's text. By thus arguing for a single and unified interpretation of the poem, C. takes an approach to the *Georgics* rather different from that adopted by Monica Gale in her recent work, *Virgil on the Nature of Things: the* Georgics, *Lucretius, and the Didactic Tradition* (Cambridge, 2000), to which C.'s book offers an interesting counterpart in the field of Virgilian scholarship.

C.'s introduction consists of a brief survey of ancient and modern perspectives on imitation, allusion, and intertextuality, followed by a similarly brief statement of the aims of the book, as delimited by the problems of distinguishing and defining allusions.

In the first chapter C. describes Virgil's 'appropriation' of the poetics of Hellenistic encomia in the so-called *sphragis* of *Georgic* 4 (559–66). Comparing it to Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus*, and Theocritus' sixteenth and seventeenth *Idylls*, C. argues that the *sphragis* sets forth a 'contiguity' between the protagonists of an encomiastic discourse in the *Georgics*—Virgil, Octavian, and Jupiter—present throughout the work as a whole.

The second chapter is intended to demonstrate Virgil's adaptation of Hellenistic encomiastic devices to the didactic plan of the *Georgics.* However, C. goes on to suggest that, while the Hellenistic period had seen the affirmation of the centrality of divine grace in human destiny, linked directly with the deification of the sovereign, Virgil at the end of *Georgic* 2 parallels the scheme of justice represented in Hesiod's *Works and Days* in presenting a model according to which 'the acquisition of a state of order and justice is firmly tied to a constant and conscious exercise of *labor*' (p. 81) on the part of the farmer. Similarly, according to C., the invocation to Octavian at the beginning of *Georgic* 1, to come to the aid of the farmer, parallels Hesiod's invocation to Zeus (*Works and Days* 9–10), and asserts the didactic nature of the poem. C. thus seems to succeed in showing that the *Georgics* have as much in common with the *Works and Days* as they do with Hellenistic encomia.

In the third and longest chapter C. analyses what he had called in the Introduction the 'reinstatement of the epic voice and its function' (p. 14) in the narration of the story of Aristaeus (*Georgic* 4.315–558). His argument is discursive and somewhat lacking in coherency, the chapter being divided into sections and subsections on such topics as the genre of the epyllion and 'poetic truth'. Fourteen pages are dedicated to Catullus 64 and the question of why Virgil did not choose to tell the story of Aristaeus in a similar form.

C. treats the function of the Aristaeus episode as a whole in the fourth and final chapter, and returns to the subject of Virgil's articulation of his own relationship to Octavian. He argues that a constant shifting of the teacher–pupil relationship in the narrative of the myth of Aristaeus parallels the multifaceted nature of the relationship between the general and the poet: 'Il futuro *princeps* è dunque al contempo *magister* e *discipulus*, insegnante del poeta, che ne riconosce e ne omaggia il 'magistero' di azione, ma anche attento allievo, in quel centrifugo slittamento dei ruoli che fonda la dinamica

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stessa dell'atto di insegnamento' (p. 172). However, essentially, for C. the *Georgics* constitute an encomium to honour and at the same time offer guidance to Octavian, and in his conclusion he attempts to define the goals set for encomiastic poetry by Virgil's didactic poem.

As is perhaps already clear, this is not a book for the faint-hearted. It is learned and dense, with references and quotations in the original Greek, Latin, French, German, and English (although these are peppered with mistakes, e.g. etimology [p. 160], omniscent [168], shephard [p. 182]), but C.'s tendency to place terms such as *modo* and *discorso* in inverted commas serves to suggest that he himself is often unsure of his footing. His approach is none the less thought-provoking. Ultimately, however, C.'s attempt to find a single 'key' to the interpretation of the *Georgics* raises more questions than it answers.

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TRANSLATING THE *ODES*

J. D. McClatchy (ed.): *Horace: The* Odes. *New Translations by Contemporary Poets*. Pp. 312. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2002. Cased, £17.95. ISBN: 0-691-04919-X.

How would you visualize 'solvitur hiems'? What exactly is dancing 'libero pede'? Does 'visendus ater' contain some notion of trying to see in the dark? Is there something odd and even amateurish about the sequence '[laudate] Tempe et Delon et umerum'? And are these questions that Horace's first readers would have had in their minds as they turned their scrolls, saying the words out loud? Perhaps any new translation of Horace would produce such questions of detailed meaning, but certainly this book of McClatchy's does make one think again about these inexhaustible poems.

Translating a poem, though, is not just a matter of keeping on the slalom course and going through all the gates. The gates are important ('Art and Science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars'—Blake) but there is something else: not the points on the route but the point, the sweep, the drift, of the whole trajectory. It is possible, as Anthony Hecht does here with *Odes* I.21, to get the details right and leave one feeling that this not particularly good poem is pointless, whereas Branwell Bronte, infinitely less experienced, made a satisfying patriotic blast of it. On the other hand, a purpose or drift can be forced on a poem, as in Ellen Bryant Voigt's version of I.17, where Horace has an unexplained Cyrus being violent to a girl (and to her garland immeritamque vestem; end of poem), but Voigt turns Cyrus into a 'rash, possessive husband, his hot breath in her hair, his groping hands'. It seems Horace's half-suggestion that Tyndaris might have been more worried about her dress than her body was unacceptable.

What must there be in a translation of Horace? Surely, above all, some sense of his neatness, that phrasing (*credulus aurea, uda/ mobilibus pomaria rivis*), so often combined with those throwaway endings that translators have been struggling with for millennia (*aut Lacedaemonium Tarentum*). In English, neatness has to be represented by rhyme and/or metre. Paul Muldoon (in three poems) translates with his usual masterful rhymes, but here loquacity blurs his neatness. Daryl Hine puts II.1 excellently into Latin metre (Alcaics) and I.3 into English abab quatrains, with a satisfying final click: 'Our folly scales the sky;/ Our naughtiness will not allow/ Jove to

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