

## CHAPTER 1

# Introduction: On Vergilian Intertextuality

### The Problem

**I**N *GEORGICS* 1, when Vergil gives a lengthy account of the signs by which farmers may predict the weather, he borrows abundantly from an earlier poem, the *Phaenomena* of Aratus. When in the second book he reflects upon his own activity in composing the *Georgics*, he calls the poem an “Ascrean song,” alluding to the works of Hesiod. Both of the remaining books conclude with elaborate imitations, Book 3 of a passage from Lucretius’ *De Rerum Natura*, Book 4 of several episodes drawn from Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. At other points Vergil imitates, borrows from, and alludes or refers to a wealth of other sources, both at length and in passing. Few passages of any extent fail to disclose a noticeable debt to some particular model. From beginning to end of the four books of *Georgics*, in Vergil’s words we catch the echo of another’s voice.

While it may be an exaggeration to cite the *Georgics* as the most allusive poem of antiquity, such a claim would not be essentially misleading. All three of Vergil’s uncontested works are imitative, allusive, referential in the extreme. We know this in part, of course, because the long and hazardous road by which classical literature has reached us failed to destroy either Vergil or most of his favorite sources and models. While we can only guess or surmise the extent of the debt owed by the lyric poetry of Horace to that of Alcaeus, presumably his chief model in *Odes* 1–3, we can map the *Aeneid* in detail against the archaic and Hellenistic epics that were its chief models. Nor is this all. Even where the tradition has begrudged us, for instance, the complete texts of Ennius and Naevius, we have the means to assess with some confidence their general influence on Vergil. The reason is that even in antiquity imitation was

seen as an unusually important element of Vergilian poetics. Ancient scholars devoted a large part of their time and energy to demonstrating this belief by collating texts, collecting parallel passages, and inventing anecdotes to illustrate Vergil's compulsively imitative working methods. Thus to some extent the *Georgics* appears to us outstandingly imitative simply because it is a Vergilian poem. Even in the context of Vergil's *oeuvre*, though, the *Georgics* is exceptional. The *Eclogues*, despite their mysteries, have in at least one respect always been quite clear: they are a deliberate effort to recreate in contemporary Roman terms the *Idylls* of Theocritus. In the same way, the *Aeneid* resurrects and unites both the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad* into a single line of action. The *Georgics* is different. Here there is no main model, no possibility of explaining the entire poem even superficially as an updated revision of Hesiod or of Lucretius: no one source eclipses all the others, as Homer does Apollonius in the *Aeneid* and as Theocritus does everyone in the *Eclogues*. Uniquely among Vergil's works, the *Georgics* ranges broadly over the traditions of ancient poetry, using allusion to draw together various strands of these traditions into a seamlessly unified and convincing whole. If not the most allusive poem that antiquity produced, it must be one of the most creatively and ambitiously imitative that literature has yet seen.

The aim of this book is to address these issues in an attempt to define more clearly the place of the *Georgics* in literary history. In order to do so, we shall draw on a number of critical approaches, old and new, often employed in unusual combinations. This is a point that calls for further elaboration.

## Methods

Critical assessment of Vergil's allusiveness has had an extremely long history, beginning shortly after the poet's death and the posthumous publication of the *Aeneid*.<sup>1</sup> But the passage of time has produced no real consensus about how the reader should view this essential quality of Vergilian poetry. Nevertheless, certain useful generalizations can be made. From antiquity until about the middle of the nineteenth century,

1. In its main outlines the history of Vergil criticism is the history of *Aeneid* criticism. While it is not always possible to understand critical issues in the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics* in terms proper to the *Aeneid*, it is an essential part of my thesis that Vergil's allusive technique remains basically the same throughout his career. I hope to demonstrate this point with respect to the *Eclogues* on another occasion; its truth with respect to the *Georgics* will become clear in the course of my argument.

the identification and discussion of Vergilian allusions was conducted within the parameters of classical theory. This theory recognizes two aspects of allusion, *μίμησις* or *imitatio* and *ζήλωσις* or *aemulatio*.<sup>2</sup> Imitation is in a sense the more basic aspect, the process by which one takes the first steps towards Parnassus, selecting a model and attempting to copy its best features. It is by the second step, emulation, that the poet proves himself. He does so by attempting to surpass his model in some way.<sup>3</sup> This might involve exercising his critical faculty to identify the model's imperfections and to purge them from his imitation, or relying on his *inventio* to endow his own version with a quality that his model had overlooked. A good example is provided by Horace in his attempt to rival Catullus' mastery of the Sapphic meter. Catullus' memorable *Carmen* 11 begins:

Furi et Aureli, comites Catulli,  
sive in extremos penetrabit Indos,  
litus ut longe resonante Eoa  
**tunditur unda**

Horace makes use of this effect in a similar context:

Septimi, Gadis aditure mecum et  
Cantabrum indoctum iuga ferre nostra et  
barbaras Syrtis, ubi Maura semper  
**aestuat unda**

*Carmen* 2.6.1-4

The allusion is obvious, both in its imitative and its emulative aspects. Horace copies Catullus' formal treatment of waves sounding upon the shore, and we may even say that he follows his model by choosing an impressively onomatopoeic verb to connote the waves' sound. But he also asserts his independence in a contest of *inventio*: where Catullus' waves pound the beach, Horace's seethe against it. By the terms of classical theory, the reader will judge whether Horace has not only challenged, but surpassed his model. (In my own view, the cost of Horace's independence, the loss of Catullus' exquisite assonance *tunditur unda*, was too high.)

2. On these and similar terms in ancient usage see Reiff 1959.

3. Russell (1979.10), however, quite properly cautions against too rigid a distinction between these terms, which on the one hand are complementary, but on the other are often nearly synonymous.

It is clear that the poets themselves played this game, which was the cornerstone of their training. In ancient criticism, however, the idea that each poem must be measured against its models is taken to extremes. Books were written to castigate Vergil for his thefts, and stories told to illustrate the poet's confidence in his own artistic superiority.<sup>4</sup> The critical habit of umpiring the contest between poet and model gained new life in the Renaissance, when the rigid canons of ancient and medieval Latin culture were challenged by the rediscovery of Greek. Throughout the commentaries and literary criticism of the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries we see scholars engaged in the twin tasks of identifying Vergil's Greek models and judging the poet's success in surpassing them. At first Vergil held his own. By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the tide had begun to turn. Led by the enthusiastic celebration of Homer's "original genius," nineteenth-century scholars and laymen, especially in Germany, had come to denigrate virtually all of Latin literature, and particularly Vergil, as derivative and unimaginative. This anachronistic judgment, which was also misguided given what we now know about Homeric originality, represents an extreme reaction from the position of earlier critics, who, if they were apt to focus too narrowly on the twin concepts of *imitatio* and *aemulatio*, at least played within the established rules. Instead, the romantic criticism of the nineteenth century refused to recognize that all classical Latin poetry was written by poets whose most basic literary assumptions included these concepts; or, if they did recognize this fact, they nevertheless arbitrarily faulted the poets for sacrificing their genius to such an artificial scheme.

Despite a general critical distaste for the derivative nature of Latin poetry, nineteenth-century *Quellenforschung* ransacked the earlier commentaries for parallel passages in the relentless pursuit of all possible sources or models from which that poetry derived. The result was a quantity of dissertations and *Programmschriften* listing passages in which Roman poets adapted their (primarily Greek) models. At the center of this effort was Vergil. Anyone interested will have no trouble in quickly locating a series of monographs on Vergil's borrowings from Homer,

4. Vergil is portrayed as defending his Homeric *furta* with the observation that *facilius esse Herculi clavem quam Homero versum subripere* (Donatus *Vita Vergilii* 46 [Hardie 1966.18]; cf. Macrobius *Sat.* 5.3.16). Conversely, he is made to apologize for borrowing from Ennius by telling someone, while reading that author, *aurum in stercore quaero* (Cassiodorus *Inst.* 1.1.8; cf. John of Salisbury *Policraticus* 281.4. The story is also alluded to in an interpolated passage of the Donatus *Vita*: see Brummer 1912.31).

Hesiod, Apollonius, Aratus, Lucretius, Ennius, and others. The shortcomings of such studies are well known. Their very real value consists in the fact that they do collect a good deal of the material relevant to the study of Vergilian allusion, at least where the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* are concerned. Indeed, the student of these poems in particular has been well served by the labors of Paul Jahn, who over a number of years carried out a thorough investigation of Vergil's sources in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*.<sup>5</sup> His results were largely incorporated into his revision of the Ladewig-Schaper-Deuticke commentary.<sup>6</sup> His critical assumptions are straightforward, and his analysis sheds little light on the poetry of the *Georgics*.<sup>7</sup> But Jahn's merit is to have summed up the positivistic aspect of research into the sources of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* since antiquity, and his collection of material remains basic to all those interested in the subject.

Traditional *Quellenforschung*, then, in spite of its critical limitations, has left us with an ample collection of material on which to base the study of Vergilian allusion. What is needed is a suitable means of dealing with this mass of data. The twentieth century has seen a variety of approaches, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. A judicious combination of the best elements found in the available methods will, in my opinion, provide the best means of addressing the questions that I have posed.

### *Systematic Allusion*

Jahn's limited view of the *Georgics* as a mere compilation tends to support the popular nineteenth-century notion that Vergil was a poet of limited imagination and originality. Other scholars, however, while using a method similar to Jahn's have produced a much more complex and interesting picture of Vergilian allusion. One of the most frequently cited books on Vergil to appear in the past fifty years is G. N. Knauer's *Die Aeneis und Homer*. This book is used primarily for its valuable lists of parallels between the *Aeneid* and the Homeric poems. No one, however, really seems to have understood or come to terms with the book's

5. Jahn 1897-1899 covers the *Eclogues*; Jahn 1903a deals with G. 1.1-350, 1903b with all of Book 2, 1905a with G. 3.49-170, 1904 with G. 4.1-280, and 1905b with G. 4.281-558.

6. 9th edition = Jahn 1915.

7. He assumes that Vergil composed each section of the poem with a different model (*Muster*) in mind, and that various other, less important sources (*Quellen*) contributed secondary details throughout these passages.

most important implications.<sup>8</sup> In my view, Knauer's main contribution has been to disclose fully three facets of Vergil's Homeric imitation in the *Aeneid*, namely, its extent, its systematic nature, and its analytical basis. Formerly one supposed that in writing the poem Vergil simply availed himself of the standard conventional elements of epic in general, looking for inspiration and guidance to Homer as the "founder" of the genre. This approach remains familiar to students of later European epic: because Milton wished to compose an epic for his time in the manner of Homer and Vergil, *Paradise Lost* is fully equipped with the standard elements of the genre—scenes of celestial deliberation, invocations of the Muse, and so forth—some of them virtual translations of the poet's ancient models. This critical approach is thus valid as far as it goes; but that is not very far. With the *Aeneid*, thanks to Knauer, it is now necessary to think in terms of a very close relationship between individual lines or passages and one or more Homeric models, not just in the case of a few scenes, but from one end of the poem to the other. In a matter of such scope, different scholars may reasonably disagree on specific points of interpretation; but it may be regarded as proven, I think, that Vergil offered the *Aeneid* to the world as an imitation of both Homeric epics *in toto*; that individual points of contact between the *Aeneid* and one or both of Homer's epics, far from being isolated occurrences or decorative generic references, are integral parts of a tightly woven fabric of intertextuality; and that Vergil created this new fabric only after carefully and painstakingly unravelling the tapestries of both Homeric epics, strand by strand, becoming in the process intimately familiar with the peculiarities of each as well as with their similarities to one another.

One might be tempted to say that the *Aeneid* is, in the magnitude and quality of its allusiveness, unique in literature. Other highly allusive works, such as Joyce's *Ulysses*, approach the *Aeneid* in sophistication and extent of allusion; but in fact the close metrical relationship between the *Aeneid* and the Homeric poems makes possible a range of allusiveness unavailable either to the prose novelist or to the poet (e.g. Dante) who uses a different metrical scheme. At the same time, one realizes that such a tour de force can hardly have been altogether unprecedented, that the mastery of allusive technique so evident in the *Aeneid* argues for prior experience on Vergil's part—particularly as each of Vergil's previous major works had an explicit "model." It is this aspect of Knauer's

8. This point has recently been made by Cairns 1989.ix.

work that I shall adopt as the foundation of the method employed in this study: the concept of an extensive, systematic program of allusion based on an analytical reading of major sources. In the chapters that follow, I shall argue that we find in the *Georgics* an approach similar both in kind and in scope, to the system of Homeric allusion that Knauer has uncovered in the *Aeneid*.

At the same time, I must acknowledge the limitations that I have found in Knauer's approach. In a subsequent study of Homeric influence on the *Georgics*, Knauer applied the same basic method that he had first followed in studying the *Aeneid*.<sup>9</sup> Finding allusion to Homer largely confined to the poem's final episode, the "Aristaeus," he concluded that it was only as Vergil finished the poem that he realized the possibilities contained in this kind of allusion, and that the realization derived in some way from the fact that Homer was involved. There is no question of what this ambitious Homeric allusion means or why Vergil made it the conclusion of the *Georgics*. For Knauer, it is the very contact with Homer that produced in Vergil the ability to create a masterpiece like the *Aeneid*. The evidence, in spite of the imagination that he brings to bear on the analysis of specific parallels, is basically quantitative. Like Jahn, but even more so, Knauer combed the work of his great predecessors, the major Vergil commentators since antiquity, especially those of the Renaissance, to determine where and in what way Vergil followed his master.

The critical judgment that Knauer brings to bear on specific passages is something Jahn lacks; in this, Knauer is more the follower of Richard Heinze. But here too there are limitations. Knauer tends to treat Vergil's imitation of Homer as if it were a self-evident imperative: "If, *without requiring the reasons*, we assume that Vergil really wanted from the very beginning to incorporate both Greek epics into his poem...."<sup>10</sup> It is not quite fair to say that Knauer's reasoning is circular, but it is obvious that his working hypothesis colors his analysis and then becomes an important element of his conclusion.

The contrast that Knauer sees between the *Georgics*, in which he believes Vergil only gradually became aware of the allusive methods that Homer called for, and the *Aeneid*, which exploits these methods to the full, is instructive. The more completely Vergil imbibed the inspiration of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the more "Homeric" his poetry became;

9. Knauer 1981.890-918.

10. Knauer 1964b.64-65; emphasis mine.

consequently, the more capable he himself became of consummate poetic expression. But while we may agree that the meeting of two great poetic minds can be the decisive factor in the genesis of great literature, we must also admit that Knauer does not explain how the magnitude of Vergil's achievement is related to his astonishing Homeric *agon*, except in a purely technical sense. Indeed, Knauer's critics have complained that his approach reduces Vergilian allusiveness to a matter of technique and nothing more, that his *Aeneid* comes to resemble those centos of later antiquity that were created out of Vergil's own text.

For the most part, these criticisms strike me as misplaced: essentially, they attack Knauer for not having done something that he never intended to do. A more serious criticism, in my view, is that Knauer exaggerates the similarities between Vergil and Homer, often explaining differences between the *Aeneid* and its models by referring to the exigencies of Vergil's allusive program: in order to include this or that element of the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*, he was forced to represent it in this or that unusual way. The implicit goal of such reasoning is to make even pointed differences seem like similarities. One comes away with the impression that Knauer wants his technical analysis of Vergil's imitative program to determine critical reaction to the *Aeneid* as a poem of ideas, and to outline a reading of the *Aeneid* that differs little from a fairly straightforward reading of the Homeric poems. This of course is not possible. It is permissible to observe that, on one level, Aeneas must kill Turnus because Achilles slays Hector, and that, on another level, these acts of vengeance are demanded by the deaths of Pallas and Patroclus respectively. It does not follow, however, that the actions of Aeneas and Achilles at this point are in every way morally equivalent, or, more important, that both deaths call for similar reactions on the part of the reader. The interpreter who addresses these questions will want all the information he can get concerning literary antecedents of the death of Turnus. But while this information will inform his reaction to the scene, it must not control it. To have it otherwise is simply to close one's eyes to the ironic element made possible by allusion.

This is what many have missed in Knauer's book. Inevitably, therefore, alongside his more positivist approach there has grown up a much suppler critical method. In fact, it is not quite proper to speak of this reaction to the critical techniques of traditional philology as a single method; in the more recent work on allusion in classical literature, there has been a notable and healthy diversity of theory and practice, some of it essentially compatible with work like Knauer's, and some deliberately



distinguished from it. Despite this diversity, however, the most important work of the past quarter century—and the tendency has accelerated in the past few years—aligns itself with an approach first promulgated by Giorgio Pasquali.

*The Art of Allusion*

In his brief but seminal article on what he called the “art of allusion” (*arte allusiva*),<sup>11</sup> Pasquali showed that allusion is an essential component of all Latin poetry, that, far from indicating a failure of imagination, allusive artistry is actually an important affective element in the poet’s repertoire, and that the reader who does not allow it to play upon his imagination misses an important part of the poetry’s effect. First of all, Pasquali distinguishes allusion from reminiscences, which may be unconscious, or from imitations, which the poet may hope will go unnoticed: allusions, he argues, do not produce the desired effect except upon a reader who clearly recalls the texts to which they refer. He illustrates this view of allusion with examples from Horace and Vergil in particular—the *Georgics* itself is mentioned a number of times—as well as from Italian literature of the *Ottocento*. Pasquali focuses on passages in which allusion contributes a very specific effect, passages in which something is left unsaid, something that the reader will not perceive unless he or she recognizes the allusion as such and correctly interprets its relevance in context. As an example, he cites a pair of lines from the *Aeneid* concerning the punishment of a corrupt and venal politician in the pit of Tartarus:

**vendidit hic auro patriam dominumque potentem  
imposuit, fixit leges pretio atque refixit**

*Aeneid* 6.621–622

This passage, as we know from Macrobius (*Sat.* 6.1.39), alludes to Varius’ *De Morte*:

**vendidit hic Latium populis agrosque Quiritum  
eripuit, fixit leges pretio atque refixit**

Varius *De Morte* fr. 1  
(Morel–Büchner 1982.130)

11. Pasquali 1942.

In Vergil, the referent of *hic* is not clear; the exemplum is evidently offered not specifically, but as a type of damnable behavior. Pasquali agrees with most scholars that Varius, on the other hand, has someone very specific in mind, namely, M. Antonius.<sup>12</sup> He therefore argues that Vergil, too, is referring to Antonius, declining to name openly Augustus' most hated foe<sup>13</sup> but, in the mind of the reader who knows Varius' poem, unmistakably indicting him in particular. Because the passage of Varius has come down to us without context, we cannot be sure that Pasquali is right. Nevertheless, his point is well taken: we have noticed such passages throughout Augustan poetry. Their point, I might add, is not just to convey information, but also, and perhaps even more commonly, to contribute rather subtler poetic effects. If we consider Ovid's lines about Narcissus, for example,

**multi illum *iuvenes*, multae cupiere puellae,**  
sed—fuit in tenera tam dura superbia forma—  
**nulli illum *iuvenes*, nullae tetigere puellae.**

*Metamorphoses* 3.353–355

it will be a dull reader indeed who fails to see in them an allusion to Catullus' hexameter wedding hymn:

ut flos in saeptis secretus nascitur hortis,  
ignotus pecori, nullo convulsus aratro,  
quem mulcent aerae, firmat sol, educat imber:  
**multi illum *pueri*, multae optavere puellae;**  
idem cum tenui carptus defloruit ungui,  
**nulli illum *pueri*, nullae optavere puellae.**

*Carmen* 62.39–44

It will be an equally dull reader who needs this allusion, or any other means, to inform him of Narcissus' fate. The point of the allusion is not to impart information. Rather, recognizing these lines as an allusion to Catullus' flower simile, and knowing the metamorphosis that awaits Ovid's hero, the reader experiences the pleasure of ironic recognition, pleasantly aware that he may count himself an initiate of the literary mysteries that Ovid celebrates.

12. Servius *ad loc.* (Thilo 1881–1884.2.87–88) argues that Vergil has C. Scribonius Curio (*tribunus plebis* 50: see *RE* s.v. "Scribonius [11]") in mind; on Antonius see Norden 1957.291–292 and Austin 1977.198.

13. In conformity with the sentence of *damnatio memoriae*?

*Allusion and Literary History*

Pasquali's elegant paper is more suggestive than definitive; consequently, its influence has been felt not just widely but in various ways. Crucial to Vergilian criticism and to recent literary history of the Augustan period in general has been the study of allusion in Hellenistic and Neoteric poetry. The most vocal and influential champion of this approach is Giuseppe Giangrande, who cites Pasquali as his guide. Together with his students, however, Giangrande has taken the study of learned poetic allusion much farther than Pasquali's essay seems to call for, and in a quite different direction as well. The primary, perhaps the only interest of the *Giangrandisti* is not in affective allusion, but in lexical matters, i.e. in how the Hellenistic poets used Homer as a source of poetic language. Following Pfeiffer, they envision a world of scholar-poets for whom poetry was simply a direct, practical, and entertaining medium of scholarly debate on points of mythology, geography, history, astronomy, all branches of learning—and, in particular, grammar.<sup>14</sup> Thus Giangrande has written on Hellenistic allusions that point to textual variants in the Homeric poems,<sup>15</sup> on the creation of new forms and extended meanings based on Homeric usage,<sup>16</sup> and so forth. By the same token, the commentaries on Hellenistic poetry produced by his students routinely focus on the use of *hapax legomena*, formulaic language, and other notable features of Homeric style.<sup>17</sup>

Besides concentrating on lexical data, the most characteristic feature of Giangrande's approach is his emphasis on the allusive technique that he calls *oppositio in imitando*.<sup>18</sup> In Giangrande's view, Hellenistic poetry was written for connoisseurs of an aesthetic that valued close familiarity with the details of classic texts and expected modern poets to imitate these details in unexpected ways. Thus, to cite some of Giangrande's own examples, "If Homer says ἐς ἥλιον καταδύντα (formula), Apollonius will say (*Arg.* 1.725) ἐς ἥλιον ἀιόντα; if Homer has the verb ἐκκυλίνδω, Callimachus will use εἰσκυλίνδω (*Hymn.* 4.33)," and so on.<sup>19</sup> This activity became a frequent vehicle for learned debate: scholar-poets, by imitating, say, specific textual variants uncovered in their Homeric research, would

14. Giangrande 1967.85 uses the "Pasqualian term" *arte allusiva*, while citing Herter 1929 as "the best methodological introduction to this literary feature."

15. Giangrande 1970.

16. Giangrande 1967.

17. See, for instance, Williams 1978 and Bulloch 1985.

18. E.g. Giangrande 1967.85, citing Kuiper 1896.114.

19. Giangrande 1967.85.

express their opinions about the original readings, sometimes referring with pointed contrast to the readings favored by others.<sup>20</sup>

Giangrande and his school focus rather narrowly on one specific aspect of learned allusion, and, as a rule, do not treat of allusion as would a literary critic. This approach in its pure form can and has been applied directly to Vergil; indeed, we shall learn of one or two examples in the following pages. In general, however, it is not in itself a technique of the first importance for understanding Vergil's allusive style. More important is the work of other scholars who use rigorous philological methods approximating those of Giangrande, but who are willing to take the further step of reading allusion as literary-historical evidence, and who have thus had a major impact on the study of Latin poetry. The original manifesto of this group was Wendell Clausen's paper "Callimachus and Latin Poetry."<sup>21</sup>

Clausen's article exemplifies the aesthetic that it celebrates. Brief and suggestive, like Pasquali's paper, it contains no new information or labored argument; rather it succinctly and gracefully states an important idea. Traditional literary history had seen Augustan literature as the product of a politically and aesthetically conservative movement inspired by the masterpieces of archaic and classical Greek literature in preference to the more modernist aesthetic of the Hellenistic world that was adopted by the Roman Neoteric poets of the mid-first century B.C. Clausen, on the other hand, stresses the element of continuity between Neoteric and Augustan poetry, and suggests that the aesthetic similarity between these successive generations of Roman poets stems from their devotion to an individual teacher, himself a recognized Hellenistic poet. It was Pärthenius of Nicaea, Clausen asserts, who, after coming to Rome as a prisoner of war sometime between 73 and 65 B.C. introduced the Neoteric poets—Cinna, Calvus, and Catullus—and those of the next generation—Gallus and Vergil—to Callimachus; and it was this encounter that both produced the so-called "Catullan revolution" and gave Augustan poetry its essential character. It is an idea that Clausen has long held, and time has produced many opportunities for restatement and development.<sup>22</sup>

Where allusion is concerned, Clausen sees more than Giangrande. He accepts the notion that allusive artistry is a vital part of Hellenistic

20. See, in general, Giangrande 1973.

21. Clausen 1964.

22. See, for example, Clausen 1982.178–187.

Greek and Latin poetry; but, for Latin poetry at least, he finds in it a significance that goes well beyond the scholarly formation of a highly artificial *Dichtersprache*. For Clausen, allusion in Latin poetry is laden with artistic ideology. For Catullus or Vergil to quote Callimachus or Theocritus, or to allude to Hesiod or Aratus with the learning, wit, and delicacy that they had learned from these poets, was to declare independence from an archaizing native tradition that aimed mainly at the glorification of some patron's military exploits in verse modeled on the most obvious passages in Homer. Not that these poets considered allusion to Homer or to of the other archaic poets reactionary per se. What counted was the manner of the allusion—learned, subtle, *recherché*. Thus Vergil's and Horace's imitation of archaic models such as Hesiod, Homer, Sappho, and Alcaeus cannot be taken as evidence of a traditionalist reaction to Neotericism on the part of the leading Augustan poets; rather the manner in which these allusions are fashioned demonstrates, in Clausen's view, the essentially Callimachean and Neoteric basis of Augustan poetics.

The development of certain implications inherent in Clausen's ideas has been carried out largely by his followers. The most ambitious exponent of the literary-historical notions inherent in Clausen's approach is his student D. O. Ross, Jr. In his dissertation,<sup>23</sup> which was later published in revised form,<sup>24</sup> Ross defined the essential characteristics of Neoteric poetry more rigorously than had been done before by using the stylometric method of Bertil Axelson<sup>25</sup> to identify two distinct poetic styles used by Catullus, that of the polymetrics (*Carmina* 1–60) and the longer poems (*Carmina* 61–68), and that of the epigrams (*Carmina* 69–116). The former he identifies as a Neoteric innovation based on Alexandrian ideals, the latter as deriving from an older, well established Latin tradition. Ross's findings can be and have been challenged on some points;<sup>26</sup> but by bringing out the contrast between these styles, Ross establishes the essential characteristics of Neoteric poetry on a sound philological basis. In a subsequent and closely related investigation, Ross investigated Neoteric language and thematic motifs in the works of the Augustan poets, particularly in Vergil's *Eclogues* and Propertius' *Monobiblos*, to illustrate the impact that the Neoteric tradition had upon

23. Ross 1966.

24. Ross 1969.

25. Axelson 1945.

26. Some cogent individual objections are made by Benediktson 1977, but the main lines of Ross's argument remains intact.

the next generation of Roman poets.<sup>27</sup> This work on the Latin *Dichtersprache* parallels the activity of Giangrande and his school by revealing the philological basis of poetic artistry in Neoteric and Augustan Rome. But Ross, following Clausen, expands his approach to include ideological allusion; and he has done more than any other scholar to show how allusion can become the instrument of literary history.

In his most recent book, a study of the *Georgics*, Ross largely turns his attention to issues other than those that had concerned him in the past.<sup>28</sup> But the application of his literary-historical views to the *Georgics* has been carried out chiefly by his student, Richard Thomas. Thomas' commentary on the poem contains a wealth of sophisticated discussion in which Vergilian allusion discloses a consistent attitude towards the literary past.<sup>29</sup> The attitude expressed is essentially identical to that elaborated by Clausen and Ross, i.e. Callimachean and Neoteric in the extreme.<sup>30</sup> As a preliminary to the commentary, Thomas had already published a paper in which he uses the *Georgics* as a basis for establishing a typology of allusion—or, as he prefers to call it, reference—for Latin poetry in general.<sup>31</sup> The paper proceeds from relatively simple to quite complex forms of allusion, and in the process manages to indicate some of the thematic richness that allusion can create.<sup>32</sup> In general, though, Thomas' interest is in allusion as an illustration by the poet of his mastery over the literary past. In discussing what he calls "conflation" or "multiple reference," he observes that in one particular passage (G. 1.231–246)

Virgil has overlaid a primary "translation" of technical Hellenistic sources with reference to the Homeric original as well as to previous Roman translations of that technical material. Archaic, Hellenistic, and Roman are...conflated into a single version, not just as an exercise in cleverness or erudition (and this is perhaps what, apart from its greater complexity, distinguishes Virgilian from Alexandrian reference), but rather as a demonstration of the eclectic and comprehensive.

27. Ross 1975.

28. Ross 1987.

29. Thomas 1988.

30. See also Thomas 1985 for his observations on the Callimacheanism of the *Aeneid*, and cf. Clausen 1987.14.

31. Thomas 1986.

32. The discussion of "self-reference" (pp. 182–186) is especially suggestive.

nature, and perhaps of the superiority, of the new version: the tradition has become incorporated into a new version.<sup>33</sup>

Thomas is making a fine distinction, and one that is difficult to illustrate; but, in my experience of Vergil, it is absolutely true. Vergil does match and surpass the Alexandrians in the complexity of his allusion, but never does learned display seem to be the point, as it so often does in Callimachus, Apollonius, and the rest. Where they are concerned with using their formidable learning to control the classic texts of the past, and thereby to carve themselves a niche in literary history, Vergil uses allusion to create his own vision of that history, to make the past anew, to call into being the tradition to which he wishes to be heir.

In this study, I shall adopt the basic working assumption of these three scholars, that allusion in Vergil (and the other poets of his age) frequently serves ideological purposes, and therefore offers useful literary-historical evidence. One closely related assumption that these scholars share, however, I cannot accept without modification. All three of them argue that the Callimachean and Neoteric outlook was the decisive factor in the development of Latin poetry in the first century, and that it remained the dominant source of inspiration until the end of the Augustan period. The allusive style that they find in Latin poetry from Catullus to Ovid, and many other features as well, they consistently trace to the poets' adherence to Callimachean principles. My view differs from theirs in two respects. First, many features of Augustan poetry, particularly the decisions of Vergil and Ovid to attempt epic poetry on a grand scale, seem to me fundamentally incompatible with the premise of an exclusively or even predominantly Callimachean ideology. Second, I believe that in the allusive program of the *Georgics* it is possible to discover a literary-historical outlook that derives from a rich diversity of sources, one that greatly helps to explain the character of subsequent Latin poetry. What I hope to show, then, is that their approach can be further expanded so as to enrich and advance our understanding of Augustan poetry.

### *Allusion and Poetic Memory*

Despite the fact that they claim methodological descent from Pasquali, both Giangrande and his followers and Clausen et al. tend to ignore the

33. Thomas 1986.197-198.

affective quality of allusion. This is especially true of Giangrande's school, for whom allusion remains more or less exclusively a vehicle for scholarly debate. Clausen, Ross, and Thomas do consider the aesthetics of allusion; but their primary interest is in an aesthetic response, difficult to define, that is closely tied to the excitement of philological discovery and thus accessible only to those who revel in such abstract joys. This attitude is clearly exemplified by Thomas' paper on allusion in Catullus' "Peleus and Thetis" (*Carmen* 64).<sup>34</sup> Thomas concludes this paper by asking a very basic question: "Why does Catullus begin a poem on the wedding of Peleus and Thetis with an account of the Argo's voyage?"<sup>35</sup> His answer: "It does not seem preposterous to suggest that Catullus found the story of the Argo, in the appropriate range of its previous treatments, an irresistible starting point for a poem with whose central themes it traditionally had little in common."<sup>36</sup> The restricted focus of Thomas' paper was addressed by J. E. G. Zetzel in a subsequent study of the same poem.<sup>37</sup> Zetzel quotes Thomas' paper to the effect that "a great deal of the intent of the New Poetry is to modify, conflate, and incorporate prior treatments. Through this method the poet rejects, corrects or pays homage to his antecedents and—the ultimate purpose—presents his own and superior version."<sup>38</sup> "In other words," Zetzel retorts,

the purpose of literary allusions in Catullus is, quite simply, to make literary allusions. The goal of the learned poet is no more than to demonstrate his learning.

No one would deny that the *poeta doctus* was interested in displaying his erudition, or that at least a part of the pleasure of writing and reading such poetry was to feel the warm glow of superiority to less learned poets and readers. But a poetry that existed primarily for the purpose of displaying learning would be remarkably sterile; and while it may be an apt characterization of, for example, Lycophron or Nicander, it seems scarcely adequate to Catullus 64 or to Callimachus himself. While some poets were, to an extraordinary degree, self-conscious in their deliberate manipulation of the details of language and meter, this

34. Thomas 1982a.

35. Thomas 1982a.163

36. Thomas 1982a.164.

37. Zetzel 1983a.

38. Thomas 1982a.163.



technical mastery was not an end in itself, for either the Alexandrians or their Roman imitators.<sup>39</sup>

Zetzel's paper goes on to consider allusion to Ennius in Catullus. Where Thomas sees "polemical" reference to Ennius as the anti-type of the New Poet, Zetzel sees a creative engagement with Rome's literary past, one that informs his own poetry, particularly *Carmen* 64, at the level of theme as well as that of diction, style, and general erudition. Well acquainted with the more philologically oriented approaches employed by Giangrande and Clausen, Zetzel nevertheless sees the need to consider allusion as a poetic device, and not simply as a vehicle of scholarly controversy.

Other scholars, too, have taken an approach similar to Zetzel's and have applied it to Vergil in particular.<sup>40</sup> Undoubtedly the most ambitious attempt to define the poetic value of allusion in Latin poetry, especially that of Vergil, is the work of G. B. Conte and his school. Conte proceeds from a carefully developed theory that regards imitation as, on the one hand, analogous to the class of rhetorical figures known as tropes and, on the other, as an overt form of cultural memory encoded in texts. His analyses show a fine feel for the affective element in allusion. While Conte himself has made the fullest theoretical defense of the critical methods employed by the members of this school, Alessandro Barchiesi has also directly confronted the issues that concern us here. In his illuminating and suggestive study of Homeric imitation in the *Aeneid*, Barchiesi explicitly cites the theoretical work of Conte for his general approach.<sup>41</sup> In particular, he raises the question of how to proceed in light of Knauer's research. Citing Knauer's "monumental work" as "the conclusion, as well as the definitive assessment, of a learned activity that extends from the ancient investigations into Vergilian plagiarism down to the great commentaries of the modern era," Barchiesi goes on to state his belief that an opportunity remains for anyone who wishes to study the functions that the Homeric poems assume as models for the *Aeneid*.<sup>42</sup> He recognizes that the massive amount of philological evidence that Knauer has adduced "seems to have definitively established

39. Zetzel 1983a.253.

40. Lyne 1987 deserves special mention in this regard: see his stimulating, if not uniformly convincing, chapter on "Allusion" (pp. 100-144).

41. Barchiesi 1984.9 n.1.

42. Barchiesi 1984.9.

the constitutive character of Homeric imitation in the *Aeneid*," but he nevertheless insists with justice on the need to examine this aspect of the poem from other perspectives, asserting that "the price would be too high if we therefore had to accept *en bloc* Knauer's method and critical ideology."<sup>43</sup>

The main value of Conte's and Barchiesi's work, in my opinion, lies in the careful, sensitive analysis of individual passages. This point is illustrated by Conte's discussion of the relationship among three passages of Homer, Catullus, and Vergil:<sup>44</sup>

ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ  
 πλάγχθη, ἐπεὶ Τροίης ἱερὸν πτολίεθρον ἔπερσε.  
 πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστυα καὶ νόον ἔγνω,  
 πολλὰ δ' ὄ γ' ἐν πόντῳ πάθει ἄλγεα ὄν κατὰ θυμόν.

*Odyssey* 1.1–4

*Multas per gentes et multa per aequora vectus*

*Carmen* 101.1

*Quas* ego te terras et *quanta* per aequora vectum  
 accipio, *quantis* iactatum, nate, periclis!

*Aeneid* 6.692–693

Conte writes affectingly of the "hidden reserve of literary energy whose full potential is released" only when these texts are brought together.<sup>45</sup> Homer, of course, establishes the pattern of Odysseus, the much-traveled, long-suffering hero. Catullus then casts himself in such a role, and does so in a context—a funeral epigram for his brother—that allows the reader to draw further connections between Catullus' experience and other Homeric themes, such as the general tragedy of the Trojan war, Odysseus' "*Nekyia*," etc.<sup>46</sup> Finally, Vergil's Anchises casts his son as both Odysseus and Catullus—at once a storm-tossed survivor and a pious kinsman come to honor his dead.

Conte's analysis is, in my opinion, a convincing, sensitive reading of the relationship among these passages. His work and that of his followers should serve as a useful protreptic to those who favor more traditionally

43. Barchiesi 1984.16 n. 9.

44. Conte 1986.32–39.

45. Conte 1986.33.

46. Conte 1986.32.

philological approaches. On the other hand, I cannot accept their work as a model without the following qualifications:

1. Both Conte and Barchiesi evidently regard the general theory of allusion that Conte has worked out as the essential basis of their practical criticism. I, however, find a certain gap between Conte's theoretical framework, which in any event leaves certain questions unanswered, and his practice. Conte writes that

Pasquali's approach reveals a privileging of the moment of *intentionality* in the "poetic memory." His method creates a substantial opposition between inert material and intentional elements. These latter, precisely because of their intentionality, enter the realm of creativity.... Within an approach of this kind, the position of the author becomes predominant and the notion of the centrality of the text as a unified, complete, and interlocking system is inevitably weakened. In the philological tradition this imbalance in favor of the author is decidedly unfruitful.... If one concentrates on the text rather than on the author, on the relation between texts (intertextuality) rather than on imitation, then one will be less likely to fall into the common philological trap of seeing all textual resemblances as produced by the intentionality of a literary subject whose only desire is to emulate. The philologist who seeks at all costs to read intention into imitation will inevitably fall into a psychological reconstruction of motive, whether it is homage, admiring compliment, parody, or the attempt to improve on the original. If poetic memory is reduced to the impulse to emulate, the production of the text will be devoted to the relationship between two subjectivities, and the literary process will center more on the personal will of two opposing authors than on the structural reality of the text.<sup>47</sup>

The problem of authorial intention can never be far from the thoughts of those who study allusion. In a general way, the concept of the "intentional fallacy" as conceived by W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley, who coined the term, seems unarguable. Their main point, in the celebrated essay of the same title, is that an author's intention remains inaccessible, and that it makes no sense to fault a poet for not achieving goals that the critic has imputed to him.<sup>48</sup> This point, however novel it may once have appeared, with the added perspective of some forty-five years has come

47. Conte 1986.26-27.

48. Wimsatt-Beardsley 1946.

to seem self-evident. In that intervening time, however, the concept has extended itself to the point that many regard the issue of authorial intention as beyond the scope of literary criticism. They believe that the author's opinion about the meaning of his work is merely one among many possible competing readings, and thus should not be held as privileged. Even the author's role in composing his work is now viewed by many as incidental, paling in significance beside the claims of other factors, such as the immanent influence of form, genre, metrical tradition, etc. Conte's theory of poetic memory clearly owes a lot to these ideas. And yet, like others who have studied allusion, he seems to ask himself certain questions: Is this an allusion, and not merely a chance parallelism or reminiscence? Did the poet intend the reader to notice it as such? If so, precisely how did he expect the reader to take it? One realizes, of course, that in many cases these questions can receive no definitive answer, and not just for lack of evidence: often the very indeterminacy seems intended. But at other times, a reader simply wonders if he is really in tune with his author.

Conte is no exception to this rule. Consider the following statement:

Before the allusion can have the desired effect on the reader, it must first exert that effect on the poet. The more easily the original can be recognized—the more “quotable” (because memorable) it is—the more intense and immediate its effect will be. The reader's collaboration is indispensable to the poet if the active phase of allusion is to take effect. Thus allusion will occur as a literary act if a sympathetic vibration can be set up between the poet's and the reader's memories when these are directed to a source already stored in both.<sup>49</sup>

What sort of a process does Conte envision? One in which allusion has a *desired* effect. Desired by whom? Evidently by the poet, whose experience of poetic memory the reader, if he reads correctly, shares. Thus in the discussion of Homer, Catullus, and Vergil cited above, Conte ascribes to Catullus a specific purpose in alluding to Homer (“to make Odysseus' mythical journey well up through his words”) while at the same time denying him another (“He certainly has no intention of competing with Homer”).<sup>50</sup> Similarly, Conte speaks of Vergil's “motive” in alluding to Catullus as “not emulation but a *desire* to pay tribute to the

49. Conte 1986.35.

50. Conte 1986.36.

methods of a poetic he values and *wishes* to be identified with.”<sup>51</sup> Barchiesi, too, invokes the notion of authorial intention.<sup>52</sup> This procedure is at odds with the theory to which both scholars adhere; but it is, as I have said, perfectly understandable. Literary theorists have not yet worked out this complex issue; but the student of allusion, even if he cannot adequately define its place in criticism, cannot simply wish the notion of authorial intention away.<sup>53</sup> I raise the issue only because I recognize the practical value of the work done by Conte and his school and wish to adopt some of their key aims without accepting the theoretical underpinnings of their approach. My own position, which is at odds with Conte’s theory if not his practice, is that the student of allusion is on some level concerned with a poet’s intentions.<sup>54</sup>

2. Conte elsewhere states that “the reader must be poetically knowledgeable. At some point in its development...poetry seems to start joking and playing with its readers, offering them participation ‘in aenigmatē’ (in mystery). But readers can attain to that source of pleasure only if they have acquired sufficient poetic ‘doctrine.’”<sup>55</sup> I believe that Conte touches here on one of the essential pleasures of reading allusive poetry, the initiate’s sense of privileged belonging. But he leaves utterly open the question of how a reader becomes qualified. He seems to me to be operating, like Pasquali, with a cultural ideal in mind, someone who has read widely and remembers well, who is quick to recognize the similarities between texts. But how much can we expect of this reader? In the second passage quoted above, Conte invokes the notion of memorability: the more memorable an allusion is, the more forceful and immediate its effect will be. He supports this statement with observations on the titular aspect of first lines in ancient poetry; and in the example that he adduces, Catullus and Vergil both imitate just such highly memorable passages. But a very important characteristic of “learned” allusion, as

51. Conte 1986.37; the emphasis is mine.

52. See, e.g., Barchiesi 1984.16.

53. See the useful remarks of Hirsch 1967.11–12 *et passim*. For a clear-headed statement about the place of authorial intention in criticism of the visual arts, with obvious parallels to literary criticism, see Summers 1989.400–401.

54. At the same time, I am unwilling to equate intention with other aspects of the author’s psyche, in the manner of Harold Bloom. Such an approach can of course yield fascinating and valuable results, as in the case of Greene 1982; but the state of mind in which the author confronts the literary past will not be the focus of this study.

55. Conte 1986.57

Giangrande, Clausen, and others have shown, is precisely the tendency to avoid such obvious models, or at least to seek out less obvious ones in addition to the better known. There are, indeed, allusions in Vergil, not to mention the Alexandrians, that go to great lengths to conceal themselves from the reader who is acquainted only with the most memorable passages of the literary past, allusions that are accessible only to readers who control a considerable scholarly apparatus, but which, once identified, are unmistakably there. It is, therefore, misleading to limit the discussion of allusion in these poets only to those passages that conform to a concept of literary decorum demonstrably alien to the practice of the ancient poets. We must, in other words, become readers who are sensitive to and appreciative of, not only allusions to the opening lines of the *Odyssey*, but to Apollonius' variations on Homeric *hapax legomena* as well.

3. This brings me to my final point. Conte and his followers, not unlike Giangrande, Clausen, and most of the others whose work I have discussed, focus on allusions as individual points of contact between two texts. Thomas, who has done so much to plumb the complexity of Vergilian allusions as literary-historical artifacts, is an exception, but only a partial one, because he too concentrates on individual passages within Vergil's text. I believe that a more synthetic approach is called for. In the first place, the very nature of the evidence cries out for synthesis. On the one hand, there are those passages that interest Conte in which Vergil recalls some famous literary antecedent. On the other are the many much less obvious, some almost surreptitious ones involving obscure aspects not only of Homer, but of poets like Callimachus and Aratus, which interest Giangrande, Clausen, and the rest. Should not a general theory of allusion address both classes of evidence? It is, I believe, a shortcoming of both these approaches that they do not take a truly synoptic view of Vergilian allusion in its systematic aspect. Vergil alludes both to famous and to obscure passages; a few authors in particular repeatedly contribute both obvious and not so obvious material to his allusions. Is it not necessary to consider whether all of this material conforms to some general plan? I have already discussed Knauer's study of the *Aeneid*, citing this as its great contribution to Vergilian studies. In this study I will try to analyze the *Georgics* on a similar basis, *mutatis mutandis* and without losing sight of the important contributions made by the other scholars whose work I have discussed.

## Conclusion

I am fully aware that these observations do not amount to a rigorous theoretical statement about method. The work of Thomas and Conte is particularly important in this regard. These scholars have challenged all students of Latin poetry by their efforts to establish a theoretical foundation for the study of allusion. This is a laudable aim, but, perhaps, a utopian one, not unlike what Rudolph Pfeiffer called for years ago: a complete typological study of Hellenistic allusion.<sup>56</sup> Whether such a study would be feasible is very doubtful. My own inability to subscribe wholeheartedly to either Thomas' or Conte's theory is due mainly to a belief that no single theory can be sufficient to account for the fascinating multiplicity of allusion that one finds in Hellenistic Greek and Latin poetry. Accordingly, this study is presented as a seriatim encounter with a number of particular cases, one which aims at a coherent reading of the *Georgics* alone. Interpretations are supported by analogy and general conclusions are drawn, but the actual basis of the work is empirical, and no attempt has been made to construct a universal or transferable theoretical approach.

The foregoing survey of criticism should also make clear the necessity of going beyond technical questions to explore the affective nature of allusion. The focus of this study, as its subtitle suggests, will be on the literary-historical nature of Vergilian allusion as it seeks to read in the allusive program of the *Georgics* a Vergilian essay in literary history; but it will not ignore, particularly as it draws to its conclusion, more purely aesthetic concerns. I am aware that I have left much to be said particularly under this last heading; but can anyone write on Vergil and not feel that way?

There are many points at which we might begin, but one seems especially appropriate. Having finished with these preliminaries, let us turn to examine a very special allusion—perhaps the most famous in the *Georgics*—the passage in which Vergil all but names the poet traditionally regarded as the model of his poem.

56. Pfeiffer 1955.72.

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and the Traditions of  
Ancient Epic

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Joseph Farrell

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