



field, completing information given by Dioscorides, and the social role of the perfumer in Rome. There are other texts mentioning perfumes and their uses as well as inscriptions relating in particular to the price of perfumes (for example *IG XI/2*, 287 A, line 54 and 203, line 39), but this useful book conveniently offers students and researchers an important series of sources on the subject.

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BULLARD (P.) (ed.) *A History of English Georgic Writing*. Pp. xiv + 387. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2023. Cased, £90, US\$120. ISBN: 978-1-316-51987-5.

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It is a truth universally acknowledged that a culture in possession of agricultural change must be in want of discussions about the legacy of Virgil's *Georgics*. This seems to be our current situation in Britain. Following B. Xinyue and N. Freer (2019) and S. Edney and T. Somervell (2023), together with journal special issues (*Green Letters* 24.4 and *Ecozon@* 12.2), comes this historical survey consisting of sixteen chapters, summarised usefully in a lively introduction in the course of which Bullard claims to have solved the mystery of 'the sudden eclipse of patriot-spirited georgic poetry after 1767' by simply noting the death of its publisher, Robert Dodsley (p. 15).

In the opening chapter, 'Hesiod, Virgil and the Ambitions of Georgic', P. Thibodeau argues that 'Virgil's job – suggested to him by Maecenas, Octavian's cultured advisor – [was] to present farming as such an honourable profession that it could adequately make up for the lost pride and success that the once-free Republic used to provide' (p. 49). Subsequent chapters explore 'honourable' in a diversity of dimensions: rural calendars in various forms, 'Farm Diaries 1770–1990' and 'Twentieth Century Georgic and Technology'. There follows a series of eight chapters on time periods, some of which break new ground in georgic studies. A. McRae's ecocritical chapter on Jacobean georgics links the writers' references to enclosure, deforestation and fen drainage back to Virgil's environmental concerns. Astute essays, by J. Grande and A. Radford respectively, cast newly nuanced light on the work of William Cobbett and Thomas Hardy. Throughout the book there is renewed interest in Vita Sackville-West's *The Land* (1926), which has previously been dismissed as a pastoral in the light of her denial of having read the *Georgics*. J.C. Pellicer has a well-researched chapter establishing that Virgil is present everywhere in the final published version. T. Somervell explores a strand of georgic complaint during the Romantic period, and J. Thacker considers the georgic poetry of Ted Hughes and Alice Oswald.

The book's final four case studies of place include the editor on Fenland georgics and S. Joinson on W.H. Hudson in 'Between the Georgic and the Pastoral: the British Weald'. The brilliant penultimate chapter on 'American Georgic' by S. Wagner-McCoy illustrates the contradictory uses to which Virgil's model can be put in texts which might be pro- or anti-slavery in the American South, for example. Indeed, such is the eagerness of chapter writers in this book to associate with Virgil's *Georgics* that its final contributor,

C. Kerrigan, produces an amusing case of *plaustrum ad equum posuit*: ‘Virgil’s poem appears much closer to the georgic poetry which appeared in English throughout the eighteenth century’ (p. 345). But it is Kerrigan, in the chapter on ‘Environment and Empire’, who makes the case for ‘georgic modernity’ in that its adaptive sustainability speaks to each era of environmental crisis, even now in the face of climate change. Long overdue, this history comprehensively demonstrates Virgil’s living legacy in British writing about labour and land.

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