

PREFACE



Any study of Vergil is in constant peril of being smothered with too much citation; accordingly, I have tried to limit myself to citing work crucial to my own argument, and I am conscious of having omitted much. My general debts to other scholars are set out in the Introduction; in the notes I have mostly signaled specific debts or disagreements that might be useful to readers. The nature of the present study would also have allowed constant citation not only of primary sources for the period from 48 to 27 BCE but also of numerous authoritative and worthwhile modern discussions of all aspects of the political, social, military, and cultural history of the time. This would have made the book less readable and perhaps no more useful, and I have tried to give details on historical events in notes only when they seemed particularly necessary or helpful. In general, however, I have relied, sometimes tacitly, on the narrative histories and biographies by Jones, Pelling, Southern, and Syme; I have not always reproduced the citations of the sources that they cite. All dates are BCE unless otherwise indicated.

For the most part, I have followed the 1969 Oxford text of Vergil by R. A. B. Mynors; differences are signaled in the notes. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. I have borrowed some of the language, especially in translations, from three of my previously published articles: “Cold-Blooded Virgil: Bilingual Wordplay at *Georgics* 2.483–9,” originally published in *Classical Quarterly* 52 (2002): 617–20; “*Experiens laborum*: Ovid Reads the *Georgics*,” originally published in *Vergilius* 48 (2002): 71–87; and “Fire and

Human Error in Vergil's Second *Georgic*," originally published in *American Journal of Philology* 124 (2003): 39–56.

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I've left my two greatest debts for last. For both book and author, Stephen Smith has taken on as much relentless *labor* as any of Vergil's farmers; he deserves more than gratitude for this and everything else. Jenny Strauss Clay, to whom this book is dedicated, has been a constant source of encouragement, criticism, and advice. She has played Hesiod to my Perses more often than I have deserved.

Whatever merits this book has owe a great deal to those named above; its flaws are mine alone.