

## EURYDICE AND PROSERPINA IN THE GEORGICS

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Near the close of the *Georgics*, Proteus tells the haunting tale of Orpheus' failure to bring Eurydice back to life. Vergil's version of this story is a striking reversal of the tale known to his predecessors. In earlier versions, Orpheus' song is particularly remarkable not only because it enables Orpheus temporarily to control the world of the dead, as in Vergil's account, but because it enables Orpheus to succeed in his attempt to bring Eurydice back to life. Thus, Euripides' Admetus longs for Orpheus' ability to bring the dead back to life, and Isocrates characterizes Orpheus as one who brought the dead back from Hades. The story of Orpheus and Eurydice becomes a tragic tale in the *Georgics*, for here, for the first time, Orpheus' bold attempt fails.<sup>1</sup> The placement of the story at the close of the poem suggests, moreover, that the meaning of this version has particular significance for the poem as a whole.

If we turn back to the beginning of the first *Georgic*, we find Vergil contradicting another traditional myth about resurrection. At the close of the poem of this book, Vergil makes the surprising statement that Proserpina refused to return to her mother when she was summoned: *nec repetita sequi curet Proserpina matrem* (1.39).<sup>2</sup> Proserpina

<sup>1</sup> *Alcestis* 357-62; Isoc. 11.7 ff. (cf. Plato, *Symp.* 179d, where Orpheus is given a phantom in place of his wife). I. M. Linforth, *The Arts of Orpheus* (Berkeley 1941) 16-21, rightly observes that Admetus' reference to Orpheus would have been unseemly if Orpheus had failed in his mission.

<sup>2</sup> Ancient commentators recognized that Proserpina's refusal to return was *contra historiam* (Probus, *ad* 1.39). Servius (*ad* 1.39) says it is Vergil's invention. The anonymous *Brevis Expositio* (p. 213 Thilo, v. III) adds that Ceres made a vain assault upon the Underworld in the attempt to retrieve her daughter, who refused to return *pro loci amore*. Plutarch has a euhemeristic treatment of the myth (*Thes.* 31.4-5; 35.1). G. Zuntz, *Persephone* (Oxford 1971) 400-01, rejects euhemeristic sources for Vergil, but in this regard, see my article, "Vergil's Conception of Saturnus," *CSCA* 10 (1977).

appears one other time in the *Georgics*—in the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. It is she who imposes the stricture that Orpheus not look back, a stricture which apparently was not imposed in the earlier versions of the tale.

The return of Proserpina is an essential part of her myth, as first recounted in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. This Hymn tells of the origins of the Eleusinian ritual, which in turn was thought to be a celebration of the first sowing of wheat, on the Rharian plain of Eleusis.<sup>3</sup> In Vergil's treatment of this myth, Proserpina fails to return to life, but mortals nonetheless learn a method for regularly regenerating a new crop of grain. Eurydice, too, in Vergil's treatment of her myth, fails to return. In her place, not only does Aristaeus receive a new hive of bees, but a method for generating a new hive is revealed to mortals, a method which will thereafter be handed down from one generation of farmers to the next. Thus Vergil has modified the two myths in the same way, with the result that his Eurydice is a doublet for his Proserpina. Let us examine these similarities more closely, and then consider what they imply about the art and purposes of the *Georgics*.

<sup>3</sup> G. E. Mylonas, *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Princeton 1961) 3, 14, *et passim*. The Eleusinian cult was one of the few mystery religions which Romans not only tolerated, but openly endorsed. Those who could, like Cicero and Atticus (*ad Att.* 6.1.26; 6.2), voyaged to Eleusis for initiation. Even Octavian was an initiate (Dio 54.9.10). He went to Eleusis and was initiated shortly after his victory at Actium (and hence shortly before Vergil completed and read the *Georgics* to him), when, according to Dio, he took part (*μετέλαβεν*) in the mysteries of the two goddesses (Dio 51.4.1). Although these Mysteries could only be celebrated at Athens and Eleusis (jointly), other cities adopted their own versions of the ritual. At Rome the cult triad Ceres, Liber and Libera (equivalent to Demeter, Dionysus and Kore) was worshipped; the rites were sometimes simply referred to as *sacra Cereris* (Dion. Hal. 6.17.94; G. Wissowa, *Rel. und Kultus* [Munich 1902], s.v. "Ceres, Liber, und Libera," pp. 242 ff.; H. Le Bonniec, *Le Culte de Cérès à Rome* [Paris 1958]). Roman poets make particular reference to the secrecy surrounding the cult (Hor. *Od.* 3.11.26; Tib. 1.7.48; Ovid, *A.A.* 2.60), the civilizing effect of these Mysteries (Juv. 15.140–42; cf. Cic. *Leg.* 2.14.36), and the chastity imposed upon the priestesses and upon the participants (e.g., Juv. 6.50). F. Klingner, *Virgils Georgica* (Stuttgart 1963) 166–67, compares Callimachus' *melissae* (priestesses of Eleusis) who draw water only from the surface of a stream (*ἄκρον ἄωτον*) to Vergil's bees, who drink only *summa flumina* (G. 4.54–55). The celibacy of Vergil's bees (G. 4.198–99) would thus be a reflection of the requirement that priestesses of these rites abstain from sexual intercourse (Tertull. *de monag.* 17), although this may only have applied for the duration of the celebration of the Mysteries. Cf. K. Clinton, *The Sacred Officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries* (Trans. Amer. Philos. Soc., v. 64 pt. 3 [Philadelphia 1974]).

Proserpina, although far less conspicuous in the *Georgics* than Eurydice, is strategically placed in the poem. She appears at the beginning, where she surprisingly refuses to return to life, and at the end, where she imposes the stricture which ultimately prevents Eurydice's return to life. These are also the positions which she occupies in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. In the Homeric Hymn, Demeter prevents grain from growing again until after her daughter is returned to her. She then not only allows fruit and leaves and flowers to grow, but also instructs "kings who deal justice" (473)<sup>4</sup> in the conduct of her rites and mysteries. Persephone appears at the beginning of the Hymn, where she is abducted, and at the end, where she is returned to her mother, but never in the middle of the poem, which is concerned with Demeter and her sorrow.

The return of Proserpina was frequently interpreted as representing the sprouting of the new crop of grain, and Proserpina herself was thought to be the symbol of the seed of grain.<sup>5</sup> Her "burial" corresponded to the barren months of the year, and her return to the time of year when the fields were green.<sup>6</sup> Good crops, which brought wealth to farmers, were attributed to her spouse, who had control over whether these crops grew out of the earth, and thus the etymology of his name, both Latin and Greek, was thought to derive from the word signifying wealth.<sup>7</sup>

In the traditional myth, Proserpina's return is crucial to the survival of the mortal race, since Demeter would not allow vegetation to grow until her daughter was returned to her. In Vergil's account, however, even though Proserpina does not return, Ceres instructs the farmer in the art of ploughing (1.147-49) as well as in the Eleusinian ritual.

<sup>4</sup> One of these kings is Triptolemus, who in subsequent versions of the myth journeys to many lands, including Italy, sowing the seed given him by Demeter (Soph. fr. 541 Nauck, quoted by Dion. Hal. 1.12.2). Cf. G. 1.18, *uncique puer monstrator aratri*, whom Servius *ad loc.* explains is either Triptolemus or Osiris.

<sup>5</sup> <Diti> *nuptam dicunt Proserpinam . . . quam frugum semen esse volunt absconditamque quaeri a matre fingunt* (Cic. *N.D.* 2.26.66).

<sup>6</sup> M. Nilsson, *Greek Popular Religion* (New York 1940) 24, 51-53, shows that in Greece Persephone is absent not during the winter months, but during the summer months, when the seed is stored underground. Cf. W. C. Greene, "The Return of Persephone," *CP* 41 (1946) 105-07, for further support of this view.

<sup>7</sup> *terrena autem vis omnis atque natura Diti patri dedicata est (qui Dives, ut apud Graecos Πλούτων), quia et recidunt omnia in terras et oriuntur e terris* (Cic. *N.D.* 2.26.66). Cf. *Hymn Dem.* 489, where Plutus is said to give wealth to mortal men.

A description of the Eleusinian procession (I.160–66) is set at the heart of a chiasmic structure which begins and ends with a picture of decline:

- a decline: end of the golden age (118–35)
- b skills: the first development (136 ff.)
  - c particular skills, especially ploughing (taught by Ceres) (147–59)
    - Eleusinian Procession (160–66)
  - c instruction on making a plough (167–75)
- b skills: their application (176–96)
- a decline: rower simile (197–203)

The chiasmus begins with the decline which accompanied the end of the Hesiodic golden age (118 ff.). Then human beings are forced of necessity to invent and develop skills (136 ff.). The art of ploughing and the cultivation of grain (taught by Ceres) is one of the first specific skills to be acquired by mortals (147–59). This leads to a list of farmer's tools, which in turn prove to be Eleusinian implements:

Dicendum et quae sint duris agrestibus arma,  
 quis sine nec potuere seri nec surgere messes:  
 vomis et inflexi primum grave robur aratri,  
 tardaue Eleusinae matris volventia plaustra,  
 tribulaue traehaeaeque et iniquo pondere rastri;  
 virgea praeterea Celei vilisque supellex,  
 arbuteae crates et mystica vannus Iacchi. (G. I.160–66)

What begins as a list of the farmer's "weapons" becomes a procession, as the slow-moving wagons of the Eleusinian mother come rolling by. At the close of this procession, two items are mentioned which are standard items in this part of the ritual. *Supellex* could be an ordinary basket, but the association with Celeus indicates that it is probably the *kistê*, the mysterious cylindrical receptacle in which the sacred objects (*hiera*) of the Eleusinian rites were concealed from the uninitiated.<sup>8</sup> The reference to Iacchus confirms the suggestion that the Eleusinian procession, or at least the epiphany of one, has been passing, for this reference is placed at the end of what might otherwise be

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Ovid, *F.* 4.507–08: *quod nunc Cerealis Eleusin / dicitur, hoc Celei rura fuere senis*. Celeus is the father of Demophoon, whom Demeter nurses in the Homeric Hymn, as well as one of the five kings to whom Demeter teaches her mysteries (*Hymn Dem.* 475–76). Regarding the *kistê*, cf. Tib. 1.7.48: *levis occultis conscia cista sacris*, and Mylonas 319.

merely a list of implements and allusions associated with the rites. In Eleusinian ritual, the last day of the activities which were made public was known as the *Iacchos* or *pompê*. On this day, there was a magnificent procession from Athens to Eleusis, headed by a special priest known as the *Iacchagôgos*. As the participants proceeded along the road to Eleusis, the hills about would echo with their enthusiastic cries. *Iacchos* is the personification of the enthusiasm and shouting of this procession.<sup>9</sup>

In this passage, then, what begins as a mere list of "weapons" for the farmer subtly develops into a procession of initiates. The reference to Celeus makes the reader aware that the association of the *plaustra* with the Eleusinian mother was not merely an allusive embellishment. The procession itself has been passing, and cries of "*Iacchos*" conclude this epiphany.

In the first half of the chiasmus, the emphasis is on the initial absence of skills and their gradual acquisition, culminating in the Eleusinian procession. In the second half, the skills have developed to a much higher level, as the detail concerning the construction of a plough shows. Whereas Ceres taught mortals simply to turn the soil—presumably with a relatively crude tool—here the art of constructing a plough reflects what appears to be the cumulative experience of many generations of farmers: the elm tree is best for the main shape of the plough itself, but for the yoke the wood of a linden-tree is best, while beech is the best wood for the handle (170–74). Vergil then expands his instruction to include the preparation of the threshing floor, the danger of too much shade for the growing seeds and plants, and the method of preparing seeds for maximum production. His instruction in the second half of this chiasmus continues to reflect a more advanced state of the agricultural art. These two phases of agriculture, the primitive and the advanced states, structurally embrace what appears to be a procession of initiates celebrating the rites of Eleusis, while the two phases of agriculture are themselves structurally embraced by the theme of decline.

The theme of decline at the close of this chiasmus focuses on the fate of the seed which has been improved over the years through careful

<sup>9</sup> Mylonas 252–58. For the size of the crowd, cf. Plut. *Them.* 15. For the enthusiastic cries of the participants, cf. Arist. *Frogs* 240–50.

treatment and selection procedures. The improvement of the seed, however, is not wholly consistent with the natural tendency of the seed, nor indeed are the other agricultural arts. All these arts involve a rechannelling of natural tendencies in a direction which will prove beneficial to the farmer. The farmer must be consistent in his efforts, or the seed will decline to its original, uncultivated condition. The enormous *labor* of the farmer in cultivating the seed to a high degree of productivity is wasted by a brief lapse in that effort:

Vidi lecta diu et multo spectata labore  
degenerare tamen, ni vis humana quotannis  
maxima quaeque manu legeret: sic omnia fatis  
in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri,  
non aliter quam qui adverso vix flumine lembum  
remigiis subigit, si brachia forte remisit,  
atque illum in praeceps prono rapit alveus amni. (G. 1.197–203)

When he becomes remiss in his task of selecting the best seeds, the farmer is like a rower who has been driving his boat upstream, against the natural flow of the river, and who pauses in his rowing. The moment he stops plying the oars, the boat is swept downstream by the current, and all his toil is rendered useless.

Orpheus' failure to lead Eurydice back to the light of day is, as Norwood has shown,<sup>10</sup> also part of a chiasitic structure. There, however, the "decline"—Eurydice's slipping back into the underworld—forms the core of the structure, rather than the frame, as in the first *Georgic*. Like the farmer's long toil in improving his seeds, and like the rower's struggle against the flow of the stream, all Orpheus' toil is rendered useless (*omnis effusus labor*, G. 4.491–92) by a brief lapse of self-control. He becomes *immemor* of the *lex* and looks back at Eurydice. When the seed begins to decline, Vergil observes, *sic omnia fatis in peius ruere ac retro sublapsa referri* (G. 1.199–200). As Eurydice fades away, she cries out that she, too, is being carried backwards by the fates: *en iterum crudelia retro fata vocant: feror ingenti circumdata nocte* (G. 4.495–96). The fates summon her back into a world of shadow, like a seed that fails to come to fruition.

<sup>10</sup> G. Norwood, "Vergil, *Georgics* IV, 453–527," *CJ* 36 (1940–41) 354–55.

Orpheus forgets the *lex*, it is true, because he is seized by a sudden *dementia*. His *dementia*—an overwhelming desire to see if Eurydice is following him—is a very natural response in one whose love was sufficiently strong to drive him to his audacious attempt in the first place. So, too, a very natural response of one who has been working hard physically is to pause and rest. The story of Orpheus and the simile of the rower are, each in its own way, vivid examples of the danger of yielding to a very natural desire when that desire interferes with a longer-range objective. Orpheus has no choice, since he is *victus animi* by the sudden *dementia*. He and Eurydice are both undone by that brief lapse. It is a lapse which is, admittedly, worthy of forgiveness—*ignoscenda quidem*—if such a lapse could ever be forgiven. The harsh fact, however, is that the *Manes* are incapable of forgiveness. *Scirent si ignoscere Manes* (G. 4.489): the futility of any excuse is made all too clear by the contrary-to-fact condition.

Orpheus is thus doomed to fail in his mission, as the farmer (and the rower), too, will be if he does not persist in his task: *vidi lecta diu et multo spectata labore / degenerare tamen, ni vis humana quotannis / maxima quaeque manu legeret* (G. 1.197–99). The farmer, however, is not doomed to fail, as Orpheus proves to be. The difference between them seems to be based on Vergil's distinction between resurrection and regeneration.<sup>11</sup> While the farmer is attempting to channel natural forces in order to achieve results in keeping with nature, Orpheus seeks to achieve what for Vergil is a totally unnatural phenomenon. Throughout the poem Vergil emphasizes a course which is consistent with nature, not, it may be noted, in order to overcome nature, but in order to achieve harmony with nature and thus to benefit from that harmonious course of activity.<sup>12</sup> When Vergil says, at the close of the

<sup>11</sup> D. M. Wender, "Resurrection in the Fourth *Georgic*," *AJP* 90 (1969) 424–36, treats the two terms as synonymous. B. Otis, *Vergil: A Study in Civilized Poetry* (Oxford 1964) 212, interprets the *bougonia* as "the successful resurrection of the bees," but in fact there is nothing to indicate that a dead hive has been brought back to life—this is a new hive. The whole point of the Aristaeus episode is to tell how this method of acquiring a new hive was first revealed to human beings.

<sup>12</sup> Compare C. Segal, "Orpheus and the Fourth *Georgic*," *AJP* 87 (1966) 307: "The fundamental theme of Vergil's *Georgics* is the relation between man and nature." The need to understand the natural tendencies of all things and to harness those tendencies to one's advantage is a basic tenet throughout the poem. Thus, since the farmer is naturally

second *Georgic*, that the earth pours forth an easy livelihood (*facile victum*, G. 2.460) for the farmer, we can see from the context that he means that the farmer has guided the natural tendency of the soil by ploughing, planting, watering, etc., so that, once the initial (large) effort has been made, the soil continues to produce as directed with a minimum amount of maintenance. Degeneration sets in, however, if the necessary effort is not applied consistently and when appropriate.

Harmony with nature cannot be achieved until the pattern of nature is understood. That pattern is roughly cyclical, whether it be a seasonal cycle, or a cycle of birth, life, death, and new life. In neither case is there a pure cycle, in the sense of a total repetition of a time or of an individual creature. Each year is new, and each life is new. One cannot reverse this sequence, moreover, for that would be *contra naturam*. That is why Eurydice cannot be brought to life, once she has died. Orpheus may temporarily confound nature with his song, but ultimately he will fail because he works against rather than with nature.

Vergil alludes twice to another mythical attempt to bring the dead back to life. In *Aeneid* 7 Vergil introduces the strange tale of Virbius, a pseudonym for the resurrected Hippolytus. Hippolytus, we are told, was successfully resurrected, but had to be hidden away and to live his life in obscurity and isolation (*secretis . . . sedibus . . . solus . . . ignobilis aevum exigeret*, A. 7.774–77). Jupiter (*pater omnipotens*), outraged that a mortal should return to life, punished with death the inventor of medicine and the person who brought Hippolytus back to life, namely Aesculapius (*repertorem medicinae talis et artis . . . Phoebigenam*, A. 7.772–773). The third *Georgic* opens with an invocation to Apollo as *pastor ab Amphryso*, an allusion to the aftermath of the death of Aesculapius. In his anger and grief over his son's death, Apollo killed the Cyclopes, and was himself punished by being forced into servitude to Admetus. Amphrysus is the river beside which Apollo cared for the sheep of Admetus. The allusion at this point in the *Georgics* to Aesculapius' death, when matched with the fate of Orpheus at the close of the poem,

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*avarus* (1.47), Vergil initiates his instruction by promising that the farmer's granaries will be filled to bursting if he will take the trouble to plough the field sufficiently before planting his crop (1.48–49). The peculiarities of every land must be understood so that the most appropriate crops can be planted there (1.51 ff.). Plants are motivated by *amor terrae* (2.301), horses by *amor laudum* (3.112; cf. 184), and bees by *amor habendi, amor florum*, etc. (4.177; 205).



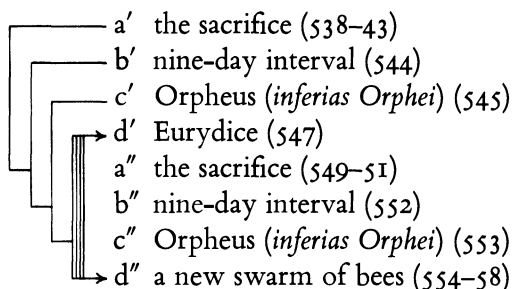
subtly encloses these two books with a common theme: both Aesculapius and Orpheus attempt to bring the dead back to life, and both are destroyed as a result of that attempt.<sup>13</sup> Another objection to the idea of resurrection is thus raised: a mortal was once successfully brought back to life, but only at a great cost to the resurrector. Thereafter not only is the attempt doomed to fail, but the resurrector pays the same penalty as Aesculapius did.

After he loses Eurydice for a second time, Orpheus laments *raptam Eurydicen atque inrita Ditis dona* (G. 4.519-20). When she is first returned to Orpheus, Eurydice is a gift of Dis, but the gift has been given in vain because of the impossible stipulation imposed by Proserpina (4.487). Proserpina, however, in Vergil's version, could also be called *dona Ditis inrita* since she refuses to return. Although Eurydice is called *rapta* three times, the term is probably more descriptive of what actually happened to Persephone than to Eurydice. Eurydice's death by poison, however virulent that poison may have been, would have been somewhat more gradual than the way in which Persephone suddenly disappeared from the face of the earth. The word also suggests that she has been ravished. This was Aristaeus' purpose in pursuing her, but she escapes him, only to be fatally bitten by the poisonous viper. Persephone, too, although carried off by Hades to be his wife, in the Homeric Hymn returns unravished to her mother (subsequently, of course, she becomes his wife). The point here is that Vergil may intend, by his use of these terms, to draw our attention to other parallels between Eurydice and Proserpina.

Just as Proserpina symbolizes or is linked with the seed of grain, Eurydice seems to be linked with the honey-bees. The link between Eurydice and the bees emerges in the structure at the close of the Aristaeus epyllion. After Aristaeus wrestles with Proteus, he returns to his mother, Cyrene, who instructs him in the proper ritual for the expiation of his guilt. The sequential as well as verbal repetition of

<sup>13</sup> Another indirect allusion to Aesculapius may be seen in G. 3.44 (*domitrix Epidaurus equorum*): Epidaurus is the site of the famous sanctuary of Aesculapius. Heraclitus (*de Incredilibus* 26) interprets the detail that Aesculapius was struck by lightning as meaning that he broke out in a burning fever and died; cf. Vergil's final description of the plague, with which none of the medical arts can deal (3.549-51), as a *sacer ignis* (3.566). Cf. E. J. and Ludwig Edelstein, *Asclepius: A Collection and Interpretation of the Testimonies* II (Baltimore 1945) 56.

Cyrene's instructions in Aristaeus' execution of those instructions shows that Vergil intended some sort of parallel between Eurydice and the new swarm of bees:



Out of context, Eurydice and the new swarm of bees may not form an obvious pair. The other three pairs, however, are quite conspicuous, with the second half of each pair an abbreviated version of the first. In the first pair, Vergil repeats almost two entire lines of verse:

- a' *quattuor eximios praestanti corpore tauros*  
*qui tibi nunc viridis depascunt summa Lycae,*  
*delige, et intacta totidem cervice iuvenças.*  
*quattuor his aras alta ad delubra dearum*  
*constitue, et sacrum iugulis demitte cruorem,*  
*corporaque ipsa boum frondoso desere luco. (538-43)*
- a'' *ad delubra venit, monstratas excitat aras,*  
*quattuor eximios praestanti corpore tauros*  
*ducit et intacta totidem cervice iuvenças. (549-51)*

In the second pair, only the verb is changed:

- b' *post, ubi nona suos Aurora ostenderit ortus, (544)*  
 b'' *post, ubi nona suos Aurora induxerat ortus, (552)*

The second half of the third pair repeats the beginning of 545 and the conclusion of 546, thus clearly defining the extent of the first half:

- c' *inferias Orphei Lethaea papavera mittes*  
*et nigram mactabis ovem, lucumque revises. (545-46)*  
 c'' *inferias Orphei mittit, lucumque revisit. (553)*

We are left with 547. Eurydice and the heifer offered to her should be expected to function as the first half of the final pair. In the second half, however, there is no repetition at all:

d' placatam Eurydicen vitula venerabere caesa. (547)

d" hic vero subitum ac dictu mirabile monstrum

aspiciunt, liquefacta boum per viscera toto

stridere apes utero et ruptis effervere costis,

immensasque trahi nubes, iamque arbore summa

confluere et lentis uvam demittere ramis. (554-58)

Eurydice and the new swarm of bees are either meant to form a pair, or else they are inexplicably left dangling precisely where one would expect some kind of parallel. The lack of repetition may in itself be significant. In lines 554-58 new life has come into being. The bees spring from the womb (*utero*) of the dead cattle, replacing the dead Eurydice. After Orpheus has lost Eurydice for a second time, he is compared to a nightingale mourning *amissos fetus*, whom the *durus arator* has cruelly destroyed. Just as the terms *rapta* and *dona Ditis* apply equally well or better to Proserpina than to Eurydice, so the nightingale simile may be even more appropriate for Ceres, who has lost her child (*fetus*), than for Orpheus, who has lost not his child but his spouse. While Eurydice (*placatam*) and Proserpina (in refusing to return) are, in Vergil's account, reconciled to their fates, Ceres and Orpheus are not so easily assuaged. Only an opiate can dull Ceres' sorrow, and so she consumes poppies, which, along with wheat, become an emblem of her cult.<sup>14</sup> Orpheus is equally distraught, and so his sorrow must be dulled with poppies (*Lethaea papavera*, 4.545).

On the other hand, Orpheus' suffering is not completely fruitless, any more than is the suffering of Ceres, for in each case an important advance in human life is achieved through that suffering. Eurydice, in Vergil's scheme, cannot return to life any more than Proserpina can, but in her place comes a reliable method for obtaining a new hive of bees. Before her death, the acquisition of a new hive was as random an event as was the harvesting of a new crop of grain before Proserpina's death.

<sup>14</sup> Mylonas 159. Cf. Servius *ad* 1.212: *CEREALE PAPAVER vel quod est esui, sicut frumentum; vel quod Ceres eo usa ad oblivionem doloris.*

The tales of Eurydice and Proserpina, then, are modified in such a way that Eurydice becomes a doublet for Proserpina. By presenting parallel versions of these two myths, both of which differ markedly from the more usual versions, Vergil also underscores a harsh truth: past disasters cannot be reversed. The dead cannot be restored to life. Implacable sorrow, such as that of Ceres and Orpheus, can be dulled. Those who are not so undone by sorrow, meanwhile, must not only initiate the healing process—like the farmer ploughing the fields of Philippi and Pharsalia (*G.* 1.493 ff.) when the wars have ended—but they should also recognize that some benefit can be derived from past disasters. Proserpina's abduction occurred at a time when the art of cultivating grain was not yet known. As a result of her loss, mortals learned the art of cultivating grain. Eurydice's death leads ultimately to instruction in the art of acquiring a new hive of bees.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> A shorter version of this paper was presented at the annual meeting of the A.P.A. in New York, December 30, 1976. I wish to express my appreciation to Professor W. S. Anderson, who directed the dissertation out of which this paper developed, and also to Professor J. Van Sickle, for his suggestions concerning the final version of the manuscript.