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978-0-521-51726-3 - Allegories of Farming from Greece and Rome: Philosophical Satire in Xenophon, Varro, and Virgil

Leah Kronenberg

Frontmatter

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ALLEGORIES OF FARMING FROM GREECE AND ROME

In this book Professor Kronenberg shows that Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*, Varro's *De Re Rustica*, and Virgil's *Georgics* are not simply works on farming but belong to a tradition of philosophical satire which uses allegory and irony to question the meaning of morality and the right way to live. These works metaphorically connect farming and its related arts to political life; but instead of presenting farming in its traditional guise as a positive symbol, they use it to model the materialistic foundations and deficiencies of conventional morality and politics. In turn, they juxtapose a contemplative model of life that is superior to the active life in its access to knowledge and lack of hypocrisy. Although these three texts are not usually treated together, and each section can be taken as a stand-alone analysis, this book convincingly connects them with an original and provocative interpretation of their allegorical use of farming. It also fills an important gap in our understanding of the literary influences on the *Georgics* by showing that it is shaped not just by its poetic predecessors but by philosophical dialogue.

LEAH KRONENBERG is Assistant Professor of Classics at Rutgers University.

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For Chris

ἀλλὰ πιαίνειν οἷε αὐτὸν τὰ πρόβατα, καθ' ὅσον ποιμὴν ἐστίν,
 οὐ πρὸς τὸ τῶν προβάτων βέλτιστον βλέποντα ἀλλ', ὥσπερ
 δαιτυμόνα τινὰ καὶ μέλλοντα ἐστιάσεσθαι, πρὸς τὴν εὐωχίαν, ἢ
 αὖ πρὸς τὸ ἀποδόσθαι, ὥσπερ χρημαστιστὴν ἀλλ' οὐ ποιμένα.
 τῇ δὲ ποιμενικῇ οὐ δήπου ἄλλου τοῦ μέλει ἢ ἐφ' ᾧ τέτακται,
 ὅπως τούτῳ τὸ βέλτιστον ἐκποριεῖ.

But you think that the shepherd, in his capacity as shepherd, fattens
 the flock not with a view to what is best for the flock but, as if he
 were some guest about to feast, with a view to good cheer, or, in
 turn, with a view to selling them, as if he were a money-maker, not
 a shepherd. But surely the concern of the shepherding art is
 nothing other than to provide what is best for its charge.

Socrates to Thrasymachus, Plato's *Republic* 345c–d

Νῆ τοὺς θεοὺς, ἀτεχνῶς γε ἀεὶ σκυτέας τε καὶ κναφέας καὶ
 μαγεῖρους λέγων καὶ ἰατροὺς οὐδὲν παύη, ὥς περὶ τούτων ἡμῖν
 ὄντα τὸν λόγον.

By the Gods, you simply never cease talking about cobblers,
 clothes-cleaners, cooks, and doctors, as if our discussion were about
 them.

Callicles to Socrates, Plato's *Gorgias* 491a

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[More information](#)*Abbreviations and editions*

Abbreviations to ancient authors and works are based on those used in the LSJ and *OLD*. Abbreviations to classical journals are based on those used in the *L'Année Philologique*, with the customary alterations for English usage. In addition, the following abbreviations are used:

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|------------|--|
| DK | Diels, H. ed. (1952) <i>Fragmente der Vorsokratiker</i> . 6th edn., rev. W. Kranz. Berlin: Weidmann. |
| LSJ | Liddell, H. G. and R. Scott, eds. (1940) <i>A Greek-English Lexicon</i> . 9th edn., rev. H. S. Jones. Oxford: Clarendon Press. |
| <i>OCD</i> | Hornblower, S. and A. Spawforth, eds. (1996). <i>Oxford Classical Dictionary</i> . 3rd edn. New York: Oxford University Press. |
| <i>OLD</i> | Glare P. W., ed. (1968–82) <i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press. |
| <i>RE</i> | Pauly, A., G. Wissowa and W. Kroll, eds. (1894–1980) <i>Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> . Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler. |

The editions used for the major primary texts discussed are as follows. Translations are my own.

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| B. Mandeville | Kaye, F. B., ed. (1924) <i>Bernard Mandeville: The Fable of the Bees, Or Private Vices, Publick Benefits</i> . 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Note: The first numbers for the Mandeville references indicate volume and page number of Kaye's edition, and the number in brackets is Kaye's reference to the original pagination of Mandeville's text. |
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Varro	Flach, D., ed. (2006) <i>Über die Landwirtschaft</i> . Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.
Virgil	Mynors, R. A. B., ed. (1969) <i>P. Vergili Maronis Opera</i> . Oxford: Clarendon Press.
Xenophon	Marchant, E. C. (1921) <i>Xenophontis opera omnia</i> . 2nd edn. Oxford: Clarendon Press.