

The *laudes Galli* at the end of Virgil's *Georgics*: an endless debate

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Abstract. The age-old controversy as to the *laudes Galli* at the end of Virgil's *Georgics* is examined in the light of a recent paper: putting the elimination of verses dedicated by Virgil to his friend in the context of the events which caused Gallus' downfall and the emotional reactions to his death, my paper affords a different perspective and allows a fresh discussion of some of the more complex and delicate aspects of the question.

Key words: *laudes Galli*; Servian notices; Orpheus; ending of the *Georgics*; trial and death of Gallus.

Inevitably, in the life of every Virgilian scholar, there comes a time when one must confront the difficult question of the *laudes Galli* at the end of the *Georgics* and all the ramifications of Servius' testimony. The argument turns only on the competing reconstructions of modern scholars and is hampered by a lack of reliable evidence and testimony. For this reason it will never have a unique and definitive solution: the whirl of hypotheses, proposals, speculations – all (or almost all) having some degree of plausibility, but none being fully satisfactory – gives the impression of a merry-go-round that circles around and around and gets nowhere.² Servius' 'defenders' and 'detractors'³ show a polemical but misguided need to occupy one camp or the other, which creates the illusion of a sharp and well-defined debate. Moreover, like all such old controversies where the evidence is slight, the debate is constrained by a tendency to repeat, as if they were truths, hypotheses and arguments formulated several times, proposing now and then solutions discussed and refuted long since.

Such constraints from time to time bring the debate to a halt and discourage a fresh appraisal, as awareness of not being able to reach a definitive result prevails over the hope of being able to say something new. Then, however, thanks to a new proposal or new arguments, interest is rekindled and discussion starts again. Now

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² Extensive, though not exhaustive, bibliographic reviews on the question in Jacobson 1984, 271–272, notes 1 and 4, and 278, notes 24 and 25; Nosarti 1996, 209–214; Setaioli 1998, 108–110 and 192; Gagliardi 2003, 61–66 and notes; Baier 2007, 315–318.

³ Among those who deny the value of Servian notices, cf. Voss 1800, 838; Keightley 1846, XVII; Tittler 1857, 20; Wang 1883, 11–14; van Wageningen 1888, 22; Pulvermacher 1890, 34–41; Skutsch 1901, 140; Giri 1919, 398; Ramain 1924, 121–122; Seel 1938, 110; Anderson 1933, 36 ff. and 73; Norden 1934; Klotz 1947, 142; Duckworth 1959, 225; Handel 1962, 87–91; Otis 1964, 408–413; Perret 1965², 49–52; Goold 1970, 137; Wankenne 1970, 27–28; Cova 1973, 290–294; Austin 1977, 129; Naumann 1978; Oksala 1978, 48–49; Crabbe 1978–1980, 18; Griffin 1979, 74–76; Briggs 1980, 23–25; Hermes 1980, 298; Pridik 1980, 547–548; Bettini 1981, 71, note 1; Moskalew 1982, 12 and note 19; Erren 1985, 21–22; Griffin 1985, 180–182; Nisbet 1987, 188–189; Briggs 1988, 506; Thomas 2003⁶, 13–16; Courtney 1993, 262; Horsfall 1994, 21–23; Horsfall 1995, 86–89; Lee 1996, 123–124.

it is the turn of Heinz Hofmann,⁴ who in a recent article tries to answer all the questions posed by the Servian testimony by re-examining the whole question of the *laudes Galli* in connection with Gallus' poetry, with the story of his fall from favour with Augustus, and with his trial and death. His reconstruction, which is not entirely new, favours the Servian comment on *ecl.* 10.1,⁵ considering the second formulation, on *geo.* 4.1⁶ to be no more than a repetition and summary of the first one.⁷ Hofmann attributes the allegation that the whole epyllion has replaced the *laudes Galli* to the presence of Gallan allusions and quotations contained within the text as we have it.⁸ As Hofmann argues, not only is the Orpheus' narrative, with its unmistakably 'elegiac' flavour,⁹ influenced by imitation of Gallus, but the story of Aristaeus also contains various elements that can be traced back to what we know of Gallus' poetry. In Hofmann's view, these elements are the actual *laudes Galli*, that is, an homage to the poet and his verse. Further, it is Hofmann's opinion that Gallus' poetry comprised both elegy and hexameter,¹⁰ just as the passage at *ecl.* 6. 64–73 and all of *ecl.* 10 may also be considered as *laudes*.¹¹ Servius' comment that *laudes Galli* extending *a medio usque ad finem* of b. 4¹² were replaced cannot, he argues, be accepted, but is rather to be explained by the imitation of his verses

⁴ Cfr. Hofmann 2020.

⁵ *Gallus, ante omnes primus Aegypti praefectus, fuit poeta eximius; nam Euphorionem, ut supra diximus, transtulit in Latinum sermonem, et amorum suorum de Cytheride scripsit libros quattuor. Hic primo in amicitia Augusti Caesaris fuit; postea, cum venisset in suspicionem, quod contra eum coniuraret, occisus est. Fuit autem amicus Vergilii adeo, ut quartus Georgicorum a medio usque ad finem eius laudes teneret, quas postea iubente Augusto in Aristaei fabulam commutavit.*

⁶ *Sane sciendum, ut supra diximus, ultimam partem huius libri esse mutatam: nam laudes Galli habuit locus ille, qui nunc Orphei continet fabulam, quae inserta est, postquam irato Augusto Gallus occisus est.*

⁷ So Hofmann 2020, 86–87, but already Jocelyn 1984, 432. Contra, according to Jacobson (1984, 274), and Paratore (1984, 251) the formulation at *geo.* 4.1 is more reliable, as well as more accurately expressed. Indeed, the mention of the history of the *laudes* makes more sense at *geo.* 4.1, within the poem and the book to which it is related, than at *ecl.* 10.1, where it is justified only by the presence of Gallus. Jocelyn (1984, 432), however, affirms that the comment appears more naturally at *ecl.* 10.1, when Servius is describing Gallus and his biography, while the comment at *geo.* 4.1 is a bare reference to a text in which Gallus does not appear directly.

⁸ So Hofmann 2020, *passim*, especially 121–123.

⁹ On the aspects of the poem certainly borrowed from neoteric-elegiac poetry (asymmetry between parts, elimination of logical passages from the narrative, highly subjective style, apostrophes directed at the characters) see Otis 1964, 199–208, and Domenicucci 1985, in the title and 243.

¹⁰ Hofmann (2020, 107–109 and notes).

¹¹ Hofmann 2020, 110 and 112. See Erren 1985, 21; Gall 1999, 200–202; Thomas 2003⁶, 15–16. Even Coleman (1962, 62) affirms that the tributes to Gallan poetry in *ecl.* 6 and 10 can be defined as *laudes Galli*.

¹² There are in fact different ways to explain the Servian expression. Particularly intriguing is the proposal of Delvigo 1995, 27–29, who conceives of two passages of praise for Gallus, one at the beginning of the section on Egypt, the other at the end of the book. This would then give rise to the misunderstanding recorded by Servius.

throughout the *Aristaeus / Orpheus* epyllion as an homage to the elegist's tastes.¹³ On the other hand, he argues, the details of the account of the court proceedings against Gallus exclude not only the possibility of a *damnatio memoriae*, but also that Augustus was angered against him and so ordered Virgil to delete the *laudes Galli*. This would follow from the tears said to have been shed by the *princeps* at the news of the poet's death according to Suet. *Aug.* 66.¹⁴ Gallus' downfall was, in fact, not caused by defaults in his administration of Egypt as *praefectus*, but rather by a personal offense vis-à-vis Octavian, committed after the termination of his office and his return to Rome. His fate would then have been determined not by the *princeps* but by his accusers' actual prosecution combined with the senate's hostility towards him, as Suetonius relates.¹⁵

A tentative reconstruction

Such is Hofmann's reconstruction, which offers many interesting insights; but some parts cannot be sustained, in my view. My own opinion is in fact quite different, and this, I believe, can make discussion stimulating. In my opinion, the total rejection of Servius' notices is just as methodologically unsound as their unconditional (and impossible) acceptance: rejecting *in toto* Servian comments, the genesis of the facts alleged remains to be justified, since a credible origin has not yet been proposed for them¹⁶ (nor will this ever be possible, since every attempt can only be based on arbitrary and unprovable hypotheses and conjectures¹⁷). On the other hand, the two versions of Servius cannot both be accepted in the terms in which

¹³ In more or less recent years this argument has been repropounded by Erren 1985, 21–22; Nelis 1992, 4, note 8; Gall 1999, 200–202.

¹⁴ Hofmann 2020, 105 and 117. Cfr. Suet. *Aug.* 66: *Neque enim temere ex omni numero in amicitia eius afflicti reperientur, praeter Salvidienum Rufum [...] et Cornelium Gallum, quem ad praefecturam Aegypti ex infima fortuna provexerat. Quorum [...] alteri (sc. Gallo) ob ingratum et malivolum animum domo et provinciis suis interdixit. Sed Gallo quoque et accusatorum denuntiationibus et senatus consultis ad necem compulso, laudavit quidem pietatem tantopere pro se indignantium, ceterum et inlacrimavit et vicem suam conquestus est, quod sibi soli non liceret amicus quatenus vellet irasci.*

¹⁵ Hofmann 2020, 99–100.

¹⁶ Pulvermacher 1(890, 42), hypothesized the error of a copyist (see also Anderson 1933, 73; Wilkinson 1969, 111; Griffin 1979, 75; Griffin 1985, 180; Nisbet 1987, 189); Klotz (1947, 140), thought of an oversight by Servius; Havelock (1946, 5), argued that it could be an imprecision of the title and that the words *fabula Orphei* could refer to the whole epyllion, of which Orpheus episode represents the artistic peak (Haaroff 1960, 101; Wilkinson 1969, 75; Griffin 1979, 73; Griffin (1985, 176), admit this possibility; Boucher (1966, 61), underlines the frequency of double titles in antiquity. Anderson (1933, 73) followed by Thomas 2003⁶, 15, imagined a mistake in the tradition that would have led Servius (or his source) to write that the *laudes Galli* were at the end of the *Georgics*, where originally the ending of the *Bucolics* was indicated. Naumann (1978, 10–16), argued that the whole story may have been invented after Virgil's death to defend the poet from the criticisms of detractors and justify the insertion of an epyllion within a didactic poem. For other scholars, the notices are an invention of the scholiasts: see Klotz 1947, 142; Hermes 1980, 298; Courtney 1993, 262; Horsfall 1994, 22; contra, Büchner 1986², 386. Acute discussion and refutations of these and other hypotheses, in all their variations, in Jacobson 1984, 275–276, and in Jocelyn 1984, 436–438.

¹⁷ See Jacobson 1984, 273, on the alleged proofs of Servius's falsehood.

they are expressed, but must at least be kept distinct and analyzed separately,¹⁸ even if this does not necessarily mean that they contradict each other, or that one is more truthful than the other.¹⁹ In my view, scholars have too often regarded the elements of the Servian claims (the order of Augustus, the deletion of the *laudes* and the substitution with one or the other of the two epyllia) as an indissoluble block, to be accepted or rejected *in toto*.²⁰ Instead we should distinguish that which has a basis of truth (or verisimilitude) from that which may have been superimposed upon it, confusing the terms of the question. In particular, it seems to me that the original presence of praise of Gallus in the ending of the *Georgics*, perhaps where reference to Egypt justified it,²¹ is credible, designed to create – among other reasons – an explicit parallel with the end of the *Bucolics*, where the name of Gallus is also prominent.²²

The theme of these praises could not be other than the military and political activity of the first elegist in his military campaign in Egypt,²³ as I believe we can deduce from a series of considerations that I will advance below. This does not exclude, however, the possibility that both epyllia contained echos and imitations of Gallus' poetry,²⁴ which obviously has remained in the version of the poem that has come down to us, and which we still manage to recognize, especially in the Orpheus episode.²⁵ At the time of the condemnation and death of Gallus, Virgil him-

¹⁸ It is no coincidence that the 'supporters' of Servius are divided among those who give credit to the version at *eccl.* 10.1 (replacement of the *laudes* with the entire epyllion on Aristaeus: Shaper 1873, 2; Sabbadini 1901, 19–21; Skutsch 1901, 143–147; Galletier 1926, 21–29; Burk 1928, 20; Drew 1929; Opheim 1936, 40–43; de Saint Denis 1956, XXVI–XL; Coleman 1962, 69; Salvatore 1970, 107–115; Wankenne 1970; Coleiro 1971; Berres 1982, 110–128 and 303–314; Gagé 1982, 612; Bianco 1983, 273, note 1; Jocelyn 1984; Büchner 1986², 381; Michel 1990, 66; Berres 1992, 228–230 and notes 59–60) and those who accept the passage at *geo.* 4.1 (replacement only with the Orpheus' episode: see van Wageningen 1888, 102; Cartault 1926, 19; Pichon 1926², 105; Schmidt 1930, 165–180; Schanz–Hosius 1935, 51; Richter 1957, 107–114; Haarhoff 1960, 103; Terzaghi 1960, 139–140; Tschiedel 1973, 78–80; Leach 1977, 15, note 16; Paratore 1977, 15–28; D'Anna 1984, 895; Jacobson 1984; Paratore 1984; Léfèvre 1986). Paratore (1977, 12 ff.) has decisively refuted the unique position of Della Corte 1960, XXVI–XXVII (resumed in Della Corte 1986², 102–103), according to which the added part would be the Aristaeus' narrative, while that of Orpheus would have been included from the beginning in the poem.

¹⁹ Rightly Jacobson (1984, 274), underlines that the differences between them are not necessarily the proof of their unlikelihood (so also Setaioli 1998, 108, note 15), and Nosarti (1996, 215), judges the contradictions to be not irreconcilable. See also Delvigo 1995, 18 and 24, who proposes several possible explanations for the discrepancies.

²⁰ So, rightly, Delvigo 1995, 27.

²¹ The link with Egypt has always been underlined by critics; cf. Voss 1800, 839; Keightley 1846, XVII; Cartault 1897, 19; Sabbadini 1901, 20; Skutsch 1901, 146; Ramain 1924, 122; Galletier 1926, 14; Witte 1927, 156; Czech 1936, 67; Richter 1957, 108; Handel 1962, 87; Otis 1964, 412–413; Boucher 1966, 62–64; Paratore 1977, 16; Delvigo 1995, 26.

²² Conversely, Virgil also linked the *Georgics* to the *Eclogues* by echoing in the poem's final line the *incipit* of *eccl.* 1.

²³ Cfr. *infra*, 68–70.

²⁴ Similarly D'Anna 1984, 895.

²⁵ The relationship between Orpheus and Gallus, as both real poet and Virgilian character, is undeniable but impossible to delineate fully: cf. Desport 1952, 212–213; Haarhoff 1960, 101–108; Coleman

self, understanding that praise of his friend's career, which finished so badly, was no longer appropriate (and even would have been unintentionally ironic), decided to eliminate it himself,²⁶ without any pressure from Augustus. Any such pressure would have been irreconcilable with the version that the official propaganda was giving of the facts and of the role played in them by the *princeps*, in order to exonerate him from the criticisms of public opinion.²⁷ It is a widely debated question whether Virgil undertook this removal from a text that had not yet been published, or whether it constituted a 'second edition' of a work already in circulation.²⁸ We must return to this question, because it also involves the thorny matter of parallel passages in the *Aeneid*.²⁹ On this nucleus of truth, which I regard as credible, the tradition recorded by Servius could have formed, based on misunderstandings and exaggerations, and on conclusions and mistakes accumulated over time by scholars who no longer checked the Virgilian texts and so could not verify the facts.³⁰ This reconstruction of the whole question of the *laudes Galli* seems to me the most reasonable and the one that most respects historical verisimilitude. In light of this, it therefore appears appropriate to review the individual points of the problem, taking into account Hofmann's recent proposals and dwelling on its most interesting details.

1962; Brisson 1966, 314; Barra 1968, 49–57, in particular 57; Paratore 1977; Davis 1979, 31; Salvatore 1982, 154–155; Jacobson 1984; Domenicucci 1985, 241–245; Bauzà 1994, 149.

²⁶ The elimination of the *laudes Galli* as a choice of Virgil dates back to Tittler 1857, 20 and was proposed again by Wang 1883, 12, and more recently by Della Corte 1960, XXVI; Otis 1964, 412–413; Barra 1968, 56; Paratore 1977, 16, note 20; Jacobson 1984, 291. Naumann (1978, 9–10), notes that Ovid refers favourably to Gallus in the *Tristia*, aimed *ad captandam benevolentiam* towards Augustus: one would hardly expect Ovid to risk provoking the irritation of the *princeps* by repeating a gaffe already committed by Virgil.

²⁷ On this point cf. *infra*, 66–67.

²⁸ See Terzaghi 1960, 132; Gagé 1982, 612; Horsfall 1995, 74. Duckworth (1959, 236), and Nosarti (1996, 232), argue against the hypothesis of a second edition.

²⁹ On the much debated problem of the chronology between *loci similes* and hemistichs common to *Georgics* and *Aeneid* see Della Corte 1960, 99; Otis 1964, 408–413; Coleiro 1971, 113; Crabbe 1978–1980, 10 ff.; Knauer 1981, 910; Berres 1982, 110–128 and 282–314; Jacobson 1984, 293–294; Setaioli 1998, 105–120; Setaioli 1999; Setaioli 2014. As Nosarti (1996, 213) rightly notes, (but already Jacobson 1984, 293–294, and Delvigo 1995, 25), all the arguments usually adduced to support the priority of the *Aeneid* or the epyllion have proved to be subjective and reversible.

³⁰ More or less similar remarks in Nosarti 1996, 214–215 and 224–225. See also Delvigo 1995, 19. Coleman (1962, 67–70) proposed a similar reconstruction: according to him, however, after the death of Gallus, the entire section on Aristaeus would have been added in a second edition of the *Georgics*; or, if it was present in the original design as ἀῖτιον of the bugonia, it would have been extensively reworked. Jacobson (1984, 279) hypothesizes the initial presence of the Orpheus story as praise for Gallus; after his death Virgil, partly spontaneously, partly at the request of Augustus, would have decided to eliminate only the political praise of his friend, thus modifying the content and the message of the episode (which in the first draft had to have a positive ending) and inevitably altering its relationship with Aristaeus' frame. Traces of retouching would remain in the inconsistencies always noticed by critics, as to which Jacobson gives accurate analysis and explanations.

Iubente Augusto?

To begin with those aspects most related to Gallus' biography, it seems correct to reject the hypothesis of a *damnatio memoriae*³¹ for many reasons,³² but that does not in itself constitute decisive evidence to deny Servius' credibility. Strictly speaking, in fact, the immediate result of the wrath of the *princeps* (*irato Augusto*) was a *renuntiatio amicitiae* towards Gallus (*domo et provinciis suis interdixit*), which preceded the charges laid against him by other accusers in the Senate. Therefore, the *princeps* may have asked Virgil to eliminate the *laudes* at any point after that initial falling out, even though Serv. at *geo* 4.1 specifies *postquam irato Augusto Gallus occisus est* (but Servius himself is more vague at *ecl.* 10.1, which is also the more detailed of the two passages). I believe, however, other arguments demonstrate that Servius' account of the intervention of Augustus cannot be sustained. Such a hard and explicit stance by Octavian would in fact contradict the official image he wanted to give of himself in the Gallus affair, that of the afflicted friend, which materialized in an outward display of grief over the death of Gallus, according to Suet. *Aug.* 66 (*inlacrimavit*).³³ In his *renuntiatio amicitiae*, Augustus had exposed Gallus to the retaliation and excesses of his opponents. In spite of this, he chose to show regret for the death of his former friend. In my view, this was less a sincere expression of genuine grief than a political strategy aimed at sparing the *princeps* any responsibility for Gallus' suicide.³⁴ Gallus' death provoked indignation and grief, especially among the intellectuals and Octavian's closest friends. From a series of *testimonia*³⁵ it follows that a section of the Roman public also held that it was Octavian's

³¹ Cfr. Hofmann 2020, 101–102 and 105.

³² On this subject, cf. Skutsch 1901, 142, and Skutsch 1906, 137–138, followed by Galletier 1926, 17; Jacobson 1894, 297; Cresci Marrone 1993, 143 and 152–153; Manzoni 1995, 53–54. Contra, Boucher 1966, 56–57 and 63–65 (who gives an effective summary of the history of criticism on the problem and of the arguments traditionally put forward pro and against *damnatio*); Volkman 1967, 504–505; Barra 1968, 54 and 56; Coleiro 1971, 113–123, and, more recently, Naumann 1978, 9–10; Nisbet 1979, 155; Domenicucci 1985, 241; Salvaterra 1987; Eisenhut 1989, 117–124; Alföldy 1990, 79–80; Nosarti 1996, 217, note 33; Hoffmann, Minas-Nerpel, Pfeiffer 2009, 40, 44 and 176; Gagliardi 2017. The hypothesis of a *damnatio* is still affirmed by Cresci Marrone 1993, 143; Capponi 2005, 180; Flower 2006, 126; Arcaria 2009, 104–106; Rohr Vio 2009, 73; Rohr Vio 2011, 50 and 54; Raymond 2013, 61; Arcaria 2015, 139–142, who again cites the removal of the *laudes Galli* as proof of the *damnatio* (141–142 and note 150); Rohr Vio 2015, 24; Gantar 2018.

³³ The irreconcilability of an alleged order of Augustus with the grief he showed at the death of Gallus is underlined by Griffin 1979, 76.

³⁴ Among the scholars who do not believe in the sincerity of Augustus' tears, in view of the *renuntiatio amicitiae* with which he had in fact condemned Gallus, see Nosarti 1996, 222, and the discussion in Gagliardi 2011, 363–368, and Gagliardi "Klio" 2015, 643–647.

³⁵ After the death of Gallus, according to Dio 53.24.2–3, Procleius, Gallus' former comrade in arms and intimate *amicus* of the *princeps*, publicly manifested his contempt for Valerius Largus, who was first a friend and then an accuser of the poet. So did also an anonymous man. According to Dio's account, Procleius held his nose and mouth at the sight of Largus, and an unnamed person asked Largus if he knew him. After receiving a negative reply, he ordered that it be recorded on a tablet in front of eyewitnesses, so as to assure that Largus would not falsely accuse him one day.

renuntiatio amicitiae that had made Gallus vulnerable and caused the downfall of the former *praefectus*.³⁶

Apart from any actual role that Augustus had in the trial, the details of which cannot now be recovered, his moral responsibility for having abandoned Gallus to the revenge and envy of the senate had not escaped his contemporaries, who, along with their expressions of grief, also proclaimed his innocence and contempt for his accusers.³⁷ Faced with these judgments, which more or less explicitly called Augustus' actions into question, the *princeps* defended himself by the reaction reported by Suetonius, with a show of tears and a claim that Gallus, despite the *renuntiatio*, was his friend (*vicem suam conquestus est, quod sibi soli non liceret amicis quatenus vellet irasci*), and attributing all responsibility to the senate and the *accusatores*. So much care taken in saving his position would create an open contrast not only with a possible (and unsustainable) *damnatio memoriae*,³⁸ but also with any imposition on Virgil to cancel the *laudes* of Gallus. Of course, this would have had to take place through a public and official act if it was to be known and remembered and ultimately bequeathed to Servius. If it had been a private request, it would certainly not have been known, nor would the record of it have survived. On the other hand, an outright order from Augustus to Virgil would certainly not have gone unnoticed at that delicate moment. Further, public opinion, accusing the *princeps* of far less blatant faults such as the falsity of his accusations against Gallus, certainly would have denounced such abuse of Virgil and decried the hypocrisy of Augustus' tears. Therefore, the only hypothesis that is consistent with Augustus' emotional reaction and his strategy at the time to dissociate himself from the charges brought against Gallus is that it was Virgil's own initiative to expunge the *laudes Galli* from the *Georgics*, following his friend's downfall.

³⁶ Particularly explicit in this regard is *Ov. amor.* 3.9.63–64 (*tu quoque, si falsum est temerati crimen amici, / sanguinis et animae prodige, Galle, tuae*), who, under cover of a cautious expression, actually advances the contention that the accusation brought against Gallus was false, and the death of the poet therefore unjust. Rightly Boucher (1966, 49) says: “La forme hypothétique est une politesse et une prudence d’Ovide à l’égard d’Auguste: Ovide cherche à ne pas l’heurter, mais en fait c’est une façon courtoise de dire qu’il ne croit pas à l’accusation”. *Si* with the indicative mood in hypothetical sentences has a declarative-causal meaning (Traina 1986², 163). On the Ovidian couplet see Rohr 1994, 315–316; Rohr *Vio* 2000, 92–93; Stickler 2002, 16; Gagliardi 2003, 173, note 43; Rohr *Vio* 2009, 72; Gagliardi 2011, 349–352; Arcaria 2013, 49–50. From the fact that Ovid assigns to Gallus a place in the Elysian fields, Hollis (2007, 229) rightly deduces Ovid’s conviction that Gallus was innocent.

³⁷ The Ovidian couplet at *amor.* 3.9.63–64 and the episodes recorded by Dio. 53.24.2–3 are explicit in this regard. In particular, the gesture of Procleius was alternatively interpreted as a sign of the will of the Augustan *entourage* to distance themselves from the accusers of Gallus and from the senate that had supported them (Rohr *Vio* 2000, 156; Rohr *Vio* 2009, 73 and note 70), or, within the same circle, as a manifestation of discontent towards the *princeps* for abandoning a friend (Stickler 2002, 19, 50, 65).

³⁸ Alongside other considerations, in the case of Gallus the legal basis of the *hostis iudicatio*, required for a *damnatio*, was also missing, as Hofmann (2020, 102, with bibliography at note 82) rightly points out.

The nature of the *laudes*

A key question as to the *laudes Galli* is related to the scenario outlined above, namely their nature.³⁹ Scholars often subordinate the nature of the *laudes Galli* to the needs of their reconstructions. Thus, those who do not believe that verses were actually removed and identify the *laudes* as an homage to Gallus' poetry by presumed imitation of it, obviously exclude the possibility that the *laudes* referred to the military and political career of the poet. In their view, if the *laudes* concerned Gallus' military and political career, this would have offended Augustus from the outset, since he would have insisted that the conquest of Egypt was the occasion for his own glory.⁴⁰ On the other hand, the critics who believe that Virgil changed his text to some extent and erased the *laudes Galli* can only imagine them connected to the military and political successes of the future *praefectus* in the campaign to conquer Egypt. They usually adduce as support the fact that Virgil failed to eliminate *ecl.* 6.64–73 and the entirety of *ecl.* 10, which also contain poetic praise of Gallus. This last argument, however, is valid only if one posits an actual *damnatio memoriae*, which would have resulted in the poet's name itself disappearing (in point of fact, the naming of the poet in *ecll.* 6 and 10 is precisely one of the proofs that such a *damnatio* did not take place). Otherwise it has no weight: as many scholars have in fact rightly repeatedly stated, a reworking of these two eclogues would have been unimaginable, since both the passage in *ecl.* 6 and the whole of *ecl.* 10 are concerned

³⁹ There is a wide debate on the nature of the *laudes*: Jacobson (1984, 286 and 290) asserts that they involved Gallus' political career, and so also Paratore 1977, 16; both scholars believe that all of the praise of Gallus and Egypt was not where vv. 287–293 now appear, but rather in Proteus' speech (see also Nosarti 1996, 227). In a subsequent article Paratore (1984, 247) hypothesized that in the *laudes*, notwithstanding the presence of allusions to the *Amores* for Lycoris, Gallus was celebrated as *praefectus Aegypti* (see also Crump 1978², 180). As for the presumptive theme of the *laudes*, some scholars prefer to think of a military and political context (Boucher 1966, 63; Otis 1964, 412–413; Crump 1978², 180; Delvigo 1995, 26) and other believe that they would have concerned only the poetic activity of Gallus (Coleman 1962, 69, and Büchner 1986², 386–387, but also Haaroff 1960, 101 and 105; Nosarti 1996, 229–231; obviously Hofmann 2020, *passim*, and especially 121; some counter-arguments in Paratore 1977, 27–28). In that case, however, why would Virgil have eliminated them? They would only have been a natural continuation of those of the *Bucolics* and would have given no more trouble than those (so for example Boucher 1966, 63 and note 8; contra, Nosarti 1996, 230). On the other hand, references in Propertius and Ovid provide the proof that it was not praise of Gallus qua poet that created embarrassment and difficulty: only a few years later, they have no qualms in celebrating the artistic greatness of their deceased predecessor. To the chronological arguments with which Büchner (1986², 381) rejects the possibility of 'political-military' praises of Gallus Manzoni (1995, 64) replies assuming that the *laudes* could concern the successful Egyptian campaign of Gallus in 31 / 30 B. C. Boucher (1966, 63) indicates the same period. This circumstance is denied, however, by Nosarti 1996, 229–230, who also thinks that the praise was not referable to the military actions of Gallus, due to Virgil's aversion to war, and imagines it was at most related to the rank of *praefectus* and to Gallus' work of pacification in Egypt.

⁴⁰ The last of this group is Hofmann 2020, *passim*, and especially 121, but before him cf. the discussion on the point in Wilkinson 1969, 110–111, and Jacobson 1984, 273–275. By contrast, Jocelyn (1984, 434) argues that in 29, when Gallus was at the climax of his success, Octavian would not have been displeased even with extended praise of a man whom he had elevated.

with Gallus: it would have been impossible to eliminate these, because they were already powerfully fixed in the public memory, many years after their publication.⁴¹ I think that other arguments can be advanced to prefer the view that the *laudes* concerned political-military matters, starting from the consideration that homage to Gallus' poetry would not have bothered Augustus,⁴² and, above all, would not have appeared inappropriate or anachronistic to Virgil after Gallus' fall from grace. Indeed, the references to Gallus' poetry that scholars have recognized, especially in the Orpheus episode, have survived even in our version of the poem.⁴³ These cannot be considered a veiled homage replacing deleted praise of Gallus' verse, because contemporaries would have recognized them easily. Similarly, homage to Gallus for his verse remains in several places in Ovid⁴⁴ and in Prop. 2.34.91–92 (*et modo formosa quam multa Lycoride Gallus / mortuus inferna vulnere lavit aqua*: the couplet is particularly important for its extreme closeness in time to the events: *modo ... mortuus*⁴⁵). Therefore I do not think that one should accuse Virgil of being more fastidious than the two elegists, in erasing mention of Gallus qua poet, while they kept it.⁴⁶ On the contrary, the Propertian couplet probably provides indirect confirmation of the political-military nature of Virgilian *laudes*: when Propertius de-

⁴¹ Nosarti 1996, 230. I take the date of *eccl.* 10, the last of the book, to be 39–38 B. C., and that of *eccl.* 8 to around 39 B. C. I do not believe that the anonymous dedicatee of *eccl.* 8 can be Octavian, as has been proposed several times (see Garrod 1916, 216–217; Bowersock 1971, 73, and Schmidt 1974, 31; Ross 1975, 18 and note 1; Bowersock 1978, 201–202; Mankin 1988, 63; Clausen 1996, 233–237): in this case the expedition mentioned in vv. 6–7 would be that of the future *princeps* in Dalmatia (35 B. C.), and the composition of the eclogue should be dated to this period. Consequently, *eccl.* 10 would have to have been written after that date. In my opinion, *eccl.* 8 is dedicated to Pollio, and the reference at vv. 6–7 concerns his expedition against the Parthini in 39 B. C. (see Farrell 1991, 204–211, and Thibodeau 2006, 618–623). Whatever the date when the *Eclogues* were published would allow them sufficient circulation to eliminate the possibility that Virgil revisited the text seven or eight years later, after the death of Gallus.

⁴² See also Delvigo 1995, 22. By contrast, Haaroff (1960, 102) and Jacobson (1984, 291) believe that after his fall from grace, Augustus would not have tolerated any kind of praise of Gallus, even if it was poetic, especially in a contemporary work such as the *Georgics*, even if he could not prevent the *laudes* in the *Bucolics* from continuing to circulate.

⁴³ See for example vv. 465–466, considered to be 'elegiac' for many reasons: see Brugnoli 1983, Traina 1998, 77–90, and Wills 1996, 358–361, on the fourfold anaphora as possibly being a schema used by Gallus: cf. particularly *eccl.* 10.29–30; *eccl.* 10.42–43.

⁴⁴ Ovid mentions Gallus and his poetry on several occasions: cf. *amor.* 1.15.29–30 and 3.9.63–64; *ars* 3.334 and 3.537; *rem.* 765; *Trist.* 2.445–446; 4.10.53–54; 5.1.17. Among these, the closest reference to the poet's trial and death (and also the most explicit about it) is *amor.* 3.9.63–64: indeed, Gallus is mentioned even in the works written from exile. As is well known, not only does this constitute evidence against the hypothesis of a *damnatio memoriae* (see especially Naumann 1978, pp. 9–10), but it also proves that Augustus did not take offense, at least officially, at finding his former *amicus* mentioned years after his death.

⁴⁵ It seems to me out of the question that *modo* refers only to *mortuus* and not to the wounds of love, as D'Anna (1984, 895) proposes, by contrast.

⁴⁶ The absence of Gallus' name in the poetic homage of the Orpheus episode, unlike the mentions of Propertius and Ovid, could be explained in my opinion by the genre of the mythological epyllion, in which a reference to a contemporary character would be out of place: on the other hand, the allusions

cides to express the bewilderment caused by the bloody end of Gallus in his friends and in the poets, he presents him in Hades and focuses on his mortal wounds (a detail also present in Ovid's fantasy in *amor.* 3.9.63–64 with the detail of the blood shed). Poetically, however, he transforms the political causes of Gallus' death into suffering caused by love, thus avoiding any allusion to the thorny affair from which the *princeps* himself was trying to escape by saving his own image.⁴⁷ from which the *princeps* himself was trying to escape by saving his own image. Conversely, the eulogistic memory of Gallus' verses can remain: indeed Propertius makes it the center of his representation, blending life and poetry in an elegiac manner and leaving for Gallus only the image of the unhappy lover.⁴⁸

This way of proceeding does not seem to me different from that of Virgil:⁴⁹ by echoing a situation, a tone, a language, and perhaps even a character that were found in Gallus' work,⁵⁰ Virgil could keep his celebration of Gallus prominent and clearly recognizable in the last part of the *Georgics*, just as it was in the *Bucolics*.⁵¹ It was praise of Gallus' brilliant political-military career which would have appeared in bad taste, following the ruinous fate of the elegist. Such praise obviously could not occupy more than a few verses⁵² and, therefore, could easily be eliminated without altering the structure of the poem, or even that of the ending.

and perhaps even the quotations of Gallan verses would have been widely recognizable to the contemporaries who had read the works of Gallus.

⁴⁷ Rightly Hollis (2007, 229) notes that "Propertius may be observing political correctness in attributing Gallus' death to his painful love for Lycoris rather than wrath of Augustus". O'Hara (1993, 23, note 32) hypothesizes that the Ovidian couplet can trace back to a Gallan model.

⁴⁸ Instead Ov. *amor.* 3.9.63–64 tends to underline, in polemic with Augustus, the political reasons for Gallus' death. Therefore, he presents him alone in the Elysian fields. There is no sign of Lycoris, who figures in all of the other passages in which Ovid mentions Gallus. Ovid, however, is writing years later, while Propertius is still too close to the incendiary events in question.

⁴⁹ Paratore 1977, 17, cannot be accepted: he sees the Propertian couplet as a polemical response to *geo.* 4. In his view, whereas Virgil eliminated the *laudes* from the last book of the *Georgics*, Propertius celebrated Gallus.

⁵⁰ I believe that Gallus wrote about Orpheus, probably narrating his catabasis to recover Eurydice, perhaps as an *exemplum* of love or of poetry overcoming death. The possible presence of Orpheus in Gallus' poetry has been affirmed by Boucher 1966, 65, note 10; Kennedy 1982, 387–388, note 91; Jacobson 1984, 288–289; Domenicucci 1985; Manzoni 1995, 65–69; Gagliardi 2013 and 2016.

⁵¹ For many scholars, Gallus should be seen in the figure of Orpheus: see Desport 1952, 212–213; Haaroff 1960, 101; Coleman 1962; Brisson 1966, 314; Barra 1968, *passim*, in particular 57; Paratore 1977; Davis 1979, 31; Salvatore 1982, 154–155; Jacobson 1984; Domenicucci 1985, 241–245; Bauzà 1994, 149. Less credibly Manzoni 1995, 66 (but see already Coleiro 1971, 117), who sees even Aristaeus as an "ipostasi mitologica di Cornelio Gallo".

⁵² On the extent of the *laudes* see the discussion in Jacobson 1984, 274, who rightly notes that Servius' statements concern only the position of the *laudes*, i.e. either in the Aristaeus episode or in the Orpheus passage specifically, not their extent (even if the *laudes* were only as long as the 74 lines of the Orpheus episode, such a length is improbable). Richter (1957, 13); Coleman (1962, 69); Händel (1962); Otis (1964, 412–413); Wilkinson (1969, 111–112); Parry (1972, 45); Cova (1973); Salvatore (1982, 151); Wilkinson (1982, 330); Léfèvre (1986, 184); Delvigo (1995, 26) believe that the *laudes* consisted of a few verses; so also Segal 1966, 309 (about 20) and Nosarti 1996, 237. According to Paratore 1977, on the

The dates

Of course, there is a possible chronological objection to the hypothesis of *laudes* for military and, above all, political merits linked to Gallus' *praefectura Aegypti*. The *Georgics* is said to have been read to Octavian at Atella,⁵³ in the summer of 29 B.C. If one assumes that the first edition, or a first draft, of the poem was complete by that date, too little time will have passed for the *laudes* to have been composed after Gallus' appointment as *praefectus Aegypti*. The appointment probably took place by November of the previous year, when Octavian had left Egypt after having arranged the institutional settlement of the region.⁵⁴ However, this is an illusory problem, not only because some scholars doubt that such a reading took place,⁵⁵ but also because, even if it did, the *Georgics* need not have been in final form at that point in time.⁵⁶ Indeed, some hints suggest that Virgil continued to retouch some parts until 28 B.C.⁵⁷ On the other hand, if the praise of Gallus consisted of a few verses, as the similar passages addressed to Maecenas and Octavian would lead one to believe,⁵⁸ it would not have been difficult for Virgil to compose it in a short time, even after the assumption of the prefecture by Gallus, when his deeds were already completed and his situation was defined, and before the reading in the presence of the future Augustus. Furthermore, if the praise referred only to the military exploits of Gallus in the conquest of Egypt, these were concluded in the summer of 30 B.C. In sum, I imagine something similar to the passage at *geo.* 4.559–566, concerning Octavian's military campaigns in the East, which are mentioned in such vague terms that the poet was able to leave them in their place even when they

other hand, the eulogy was part of a large passage on Egypt, eliminated and replaced by the epyllion on Orpheus. It was a good number of verses also for Gag e 1982, 612, and Setaioli 1998, 193.

⁵³ Cfr. VSD 27: *Georgica reverso post Actiacam victoriam Augusto atque Atellae reficiendarum faucium causa commoranti per continuum quadriduum legit, suscipiente Maecenate legendi vicem, quotiens interpellaretur ipse vocis offensione.*

⁵⁴ Gallus defines himself as Octavian's *praefectus fabrum* at the time of the erection of the Vatican obelisk in the *forum Iulium*, which must necessarily be dated after the capture of Alexandria, at the end of August 30 B. C.; in April 29 the stele of Philae certifies that he had the title of *praefectus Alexandriae et Aegypti*.

⁵⁵ Martin 1985, 664; Nosarti 1996, 232 ff. See the sensible questions of Jacobson 1984, 298 and note 73.

⁵⁶ Cf. Nosarti 1996, 232.

⁵⁷ See Martin 1982, 72–76; Martin 1985, 664–665; Hardie 1986, 33; Horsfall 1995, 96; Nosarti 1996, 233–235. Thomas (2003⁶, at *geo.* 3.29) sees in the verse references to a period subsequent to the battle of Actium, a sign of a late composition at least of the preface to b. 3.

⁵⁸ The objection to this hypothesis is well known: if they were a few verses, their elimination would have gone unnoticed and would not have been considered worth remembering until Servius wrote. It is likely that it was the sensational story of Gallus' downfall, which his contemporaries would have keenly felt, rather than the significance of the passage deleted that caused the account of the revision to the *Georgics* to be preserved. Moreover, it does not seem to me methodologically correct to start with Servius, who represents the final stage in the history of his comments, and to work backwards in time, reconstructing this history in the light of his comments. Rather, we should try to reconstruct how this narrative took shape, starting with the facts on which it was based. But on this see *infra*, 74–75 and 79–81.

were no longer current.⁵⁹ Indeed, it is precisely because of this vagueness that their importance as evidence of the publication of the poem in 29 B.C. weakens: it is by no means certain that the sphragis was written immediately before the poem was released to the public, and Virgil was not interested in complete historical accuracy in any case.⁶⁰ The possible allusions to Octavian's triple triumph in the preface of b. 3 could imply that the composition of the poem was still in progress,⁶¹ as of August 29 B.C., since such slight references to current events could easily be inserted even at the last moment. On the contrary, I would not exclude the possibility that praise of Gallus, both as a military commander and as governor of Egypt, could have been associated with that of Octavian,⁶² perhaps at the actual end of b. 4.⁶³ In this case, a passage praising Gallus would have created a precise parallel with the *laudes vitae rusticae* concluding the first half of the poem. It would also have paralleled the ending of the *Bucolics*—not to mention the *laudes Caesaris* at the beginning of *Georgics* 1 and 3—concluding the second half and the entire poem in the name of Octavian. So I think that one should infer from the account of the reading in Atella only that the poem was substantially complete, while Virgil continued to work on it with small additions and changes as contemporary events unfolded.⁶⁴ The elimination of the *laudes Galli* could have been part of this operation.

In such a scenario, the delicate problem of the publication of the *Georgics* and of a possible 'second edition'⁶⁵ may be overcome: it is clear that the notices of Servius lead us to think of Virgil's slight revision of a work already in circulation, since the deletion of parts of an unpublished text would not be remembered and would not have become public knowledge. It therefore appears legitimate, if one takes Servius' words literally, to pose the question which scholars have so often asked as to the

⁵⁹ Jocelyn (1984, 431) deduces from the σφραγίς that Virgil intended the poem to be viewed as complete when Augustus departed for the East towards the end of 30 B. C. However, Virgil's wording—with *ad altum fulminat Euphraten* at *geo.* 4.460–461—seems to imply a military campaign by Octavian, and this defies easy reconciliation with the historical record. The likelihood is that Virgil is treating historical events with poetic licence.

⁶⁰ These are the right arguments of Jacobson 1984, 298 and note 73.

⁶¹ At vv. 32–33 Thomas 2003⁶, 45, indicates a reference to Octavian's triple triumph.

⁶² See Delvigo 1995, 27–28; also Léfèvre (1986, 185) believes that there was praise of Gallus and Octavian combined. In this case it would have been all the more embarrassing, after the fall of Gallus, to maintain *laudes* that associated him with Octavian: see Jocelyn 1984, 435.

⁶³ Delvigo (1995, 27–29; see also Delvigo 2016, 220–221) hypothesizes other praises to Gallus in the final frame, as in *ecl.* 10. This would justify the misunderstanding of Serv. at *ecl.* 10.1 and his expression *a medio usque ad finem*.

⁶⁴ See also Nosarti 1966, 236. That this is a usual procedure in Virgil is shown, for example, by the addition of the episode of Marcellus at the end of *Aen.* 6, certainly after the composition of the book, and, in my opinion, also by the dedication of the *ecl.* 6 to Varus, which I believe was added somewhat later than the composition of the poem.

⁶⁵ On the date of publication, see Sabbadini 1901, 16, who thought of a first draft in 29 and the definitive edition only in 20/19 (see also Martin 1985, 664–669). Otis (1964, 408) indicates 26/25 or a later date; for Pridik (1980, 547–548) the poem would be completed in 26; Jacobson (1984, 296–300) thinks about 28/27.

fate of the deleted verses: if they were already circulating in a completed version, how could they disappear without leaving any trace?⁶⁶ Several answers are possible, particularly by comparison with the ‘second edition’ of Ovid’s *Amores*, which completely supplanted the first one;⁶⁷ so also for Virgil – it can be said – once the definitive version of the poem was put into circulation, the previous verses would have fallen into oblivion,⁶⁸ or were not handed down because the contemporaries knew that the final version, the one Virgil wanted, did not contain them.⁶⁹ Or instead, the loss may be due to a blind chance.⁷⁰

But that is not necessarily the case. If the deletion was only of a few lines, one can easily believe that it did not leave a trace, especially if this happened in a work which was not yet definitively completed.⁷¹ In fact, the key aspect which the comments preserve was not the extent of what was deleted: was this an entire epyllion? If so, which one? The almost 300 verses of the Aristaetus narrative, or only the 74 of the Orpheus episode? Neither do Servius’ comments address the poetic quality of the deleted lines. Was this comparable to the beauty of the Orpheus episode? Rather, what we find in Servius is the simple fact that Virgil was forced to eliminate Gallus’ *laudes* from the ending of the *Georgics*. It was this, which in my view must be linked with the disquiet of friends and intellectuals associated with Gallus and Virgil, which caused the story to become sufficiently known so as to reach us through Servius. Thus, Virgil’s actions were certainly not due to fear or the imposition of the *princeps* on him – Augustus, indeed, for his part tried to escape public blame and to associate himself with the collective grief. Rather, Virgil recognized that a celebration of Gallus’ achievements would by now seem out of place, if not downright ironic. The Servian testimony should be considered in this context, and be evaluated in the light of the other accounts of reactions to Gallus’ dramatic death. The particular moment also explains, in my opinion, the complete disappearance of the *laudes*: if in fact, in the surge of emotion for Gallus, it could have been foreseen that the deleted verses would have tended to be remembered, the very fact that this did not happen can be interpreted as proof of Virgil’s reason for canceling them. Namely, they must have been so sadly linked to Gallus’ lost success that contemporaries did not consider it appropriate to continue to pass them on, out of respect not only for Virgil’s choice, but perhaps also for the memory of Gallus.

⁶⁶ The objection has been advanced and repeated several times: see Voss 1800, 839; Tittler 1857, 20; van Wageningen 1888, 10–11; Cartault 1893, 20; Galletier 1926, 11–12; Burck 1929, 229–230; Klotz 1947, 141; Richter 1957, 12; Griffin 1979, 75.

⁶⁷ See Nosarti 1996, 212, note 16; Jacobson (1984, 297) also invokes the lack of popularity of the *Georgics*, which would have allowed the elimination of the *laudes* without any memory of them remaining. On the double editions in antiquity, cf. Luck 1981.

⁶⁸ Nosarti 1996, 223, with bibliography at note 57.

⁶⁹ Jocelyn (1984, 436) cites in this regard, in addition to the case of Ovid’s *Amores*, also that of the published version of Cicero’s *pro Milone*, different from the version actually delivered.

⁷⁰ Jocelyn 1984, 435.

⁷¹ So Tittler 1857, 21; van Wageningen 1888, 9–10; Richter 1957, 13.

Speculating as to a more precise date when the *laudes Galli* were deleted does not make much sense. The deletion is linked to the disgrace and death of the poet and so must have occurred in the period between Augustus' *renuntiatio amicitiae* and the suicide, but that was an extended process.⁷² Sources disagree as to the date of Gallus' death, ranging from year 27 B.C., recorded by Jerome, to 26 B.C. in Dio Cassius, and modern scholars are also divided on this.⁷³ Personally, I tend to prefer 27, given that the criterion followed by Dio in recording the story of Gallus is somewhat inaccurate and he dates to that year events that certainly occurred at different times.⁷⁴ It seems to me entirely plausible that Gallus' fate may have been sealed in 27, after his reconfirmation as prefect in January: the definitive settling of the situation in Egypt, enshrined by the reconfirmation of Gallus as prefect, must have set into motion the hostility of the Senate and the complex chain of reactions and events that led to the *renuntiatio amicitiae* by Augustus and the proceedings in the Senate. Augustus left for Spain in July 27 B.C.,⁷⁵ which suggests that Gallus' recall from Egypt and the *renuntiatio* had occurred by that date, since one can scarcely believe that this would have happened at a distance and without a face-to-face meeting between the two men. The subsequent months will have been occupied by the trial, which may have ended by the end of the year with the sentence and death of Gallus; Virgil could therefore have eliminated the *laudes* during that period, either during the trial or early in 26 B.C. at the latest. Whether or not the *Georgics* were already in wide circulation by that time, the cancellation (and any small adjustments to the Orpheus episode) would not have substantially changed the structure of the poem,⁷⁶ and perhaps Virgil's intention in cancelling them, to respect Gallus' memory, was shared by his contemporaries, who did not feel they had to keep what the author had eliminated. The act itself lingered in the collective memory, that Virgil felt the need to delete a eulogy which had become bitterly anachronistic: this would have linked his choice to the traumatic events of Gallus' suicide, and therefore only a trace of his choice, like the other indignant or melancholy reactions to that tragic outcome, was imprinted in the collective memory and was recorded.⁷⁷

⁷² On the timing of the trial, which could not be too short, cf. Arcaria 2009, 101–102 and note 363.

⁷³ See St. Jerome, who in the *Chronicon* fixes it to the year 1990 ab Abraham (= Ol. 188, 2 = 27 B.C.), and Dio 53.23.5 – 24.3. The contradiction is well explained by Boucher 1966, 5–6. The date of 26 is usually preferred, but influential scholars prefer 27: see Stickler 2002, 63; Syme 2002⁵, 309 and note 2; Hoffmann – Minas-Nerpel – Pfeiffer 2009, 6. A discussion of the question, with the declared preference for 27, in Daly – Reiter 1979, 290–295.

⁷⁴ Daly – Reiter 1979, 292–293.

⁷⁵ See Schmitthenner 1962, 425–440 and Stickler 2002, 48.

⁷⁶ Paratore (1977, 21) believes (in the wake of Richter 1957, 12 and 107–114) that the poem, revised after the 29 B. C., would never have circulated publicly before the retouching after Gallus' death. Nosarti (1996, p. 223) on the other hand, hypothesizes that, even if it had already been completed, the poem would have initially been distributed in a few copies, and therefore the text of the first version could easily have been lost; on 234 and 237, the scholar tends to the elimination before publication.

⁷⁷ On the reactions provoked by the sudden and bloody death of Gallus see Gagliardi "Klio" 2015, 638–643. Moreover, the story must have left a lasting memory, even beyond the facts, so that debate

On such a foundation, on the enduring memory of Virgil's act, the edifice of elaboration must have been constructed over time, reaching us in its final form with Servius' comments: over time, this would naturally have been due as well to recognition of the influence of Gallus' poetry, and of the Orpheus episode in particular. In a period now far from the facts, when Gallan works were no longer read and, therefore, the debt of Virgil toward his fellow poet could no longer be verified, the association of the two circumstances (the elimination of the *laudes* and the relationship of Gallus with Orpheus) suggested that the deletion of the *laudes* would have entailed the replacement by one or both of the two parts of the epyllion.

The *laudes* of Gallus' military and / or political achievements could have been connected to, or motivated by, the section on Egypt;⁷⁸ this, in turn, was linked to the *bugonia*, and perhaps also to the figure of Proteus.⁷⁹ On this assumption, the *laudes* must also have occupied a position close to the Aristaeus epyllion, and this could have led to the misunderstanding that the *laudes* were eliminated and replaced by this *entire* episode, and, therefore, that they extended *a medio usque ad finem* of *geo.* 4. In this case, the allusions to Gallus' poetry, which in some ways can still be recognized today even in the Aristaeus episode,⁸⁰ could have increased the confusion and given rise to the conflicting versions of the substitution in Servius. If a second edition never existed, and if the *laudes* occupied only a few lines, their elimination would not have required structural changes in b. 4 or additions to restore it to an acceptable length. This would imply, therefore, that the Orpheus narrative, whose integral links with the Aristaeus episode and with the overall meaning of the poem have been widely elucidated,⁸¹ was already included in the general design of the work and was not a belated and rushed addition: its well-known relationship with the *loci similes* of the *Aeneid* may be simply due to the chronological proximity of the composition, since it is quite credible that, while he was revising

about it probably became a case study in the schools of rhetoric: so Rohr Vio 2009, 76–77; Rohr Vio 2011, 55.

⁷⁸ So also Delvigo 1995, 26; Nosarti 1996, 226. The very very complicated situation of the manuscript tradition (concerning in particular v. 293, the only one in the ending of *Georgics*' book 4 where Aegyptus is explicitly mentioned) could be a clue in this sense. On vv. 290–293 see Conte 2013, *ad loc.*, 203.

⁷⁹ It is indeed strange that Virgil does not connect Proteus to Egypt, his traditional homeland (see Klingner 1967, 327; Otis 1964, 413, and Nosarti 1996, 226–227): it is legitimate to assume that an initial connection may have been later eliminated at the time of the cancellation of the *laudes*, when the poet would also have reworked the verses on Egypt that remained in the finale version of the book.

⁸⁰ For these affinities see Gall 1999, 203–208; Gagliardi 2003, 68–71. Examples include the names *Lycorias* (Manzoni 1995, 70–71) and *Arethusa* (Coleman 1962, 67) among the Nymph sisters of Cyrene; also the mention in *geo.* 4. 370 of the Hypanis, referred to by Gallus in the only pentameter known before the discovery of the papyrus of Qaşr İbrîm (fr. 1. Morel), on which see Manzoni 1995, 69. Particularly striking are the similarities between Proteus and Silenus, on which see Ninck 1940², 175; Della Corte 1983–1984.

⁸¹ Essential Norden 1934; see also Otis 1964, 408; Klingner 1967, 323; Bettini 1981; Conte 1984, 43–53; Nosarti 1996, 131–208; Conte 2002, 65–89.

the *Georgics*, Virgil had already begun his new poem.⁸² It is also possible that, in the *Aeneid*, he reused the ideas, images, and verses that he found compelling in the Orpheus narrative, obviously with the different extent required by the short scene set in Hades in the episode of Orpheus and the much more extensive description in *Aeneid* 6.

Orpheus and Gallus

Among many hypotheses, the idea has been advanced that the changes made by Virgil to the end of the poem mainly concerned the episode of Orpheus, the outcome and tone of which were modified after the death of Gallus, to represent the fate of the unfortunate elegist and covertly to express Virgil's grief for him.⁸³ Here, too, we are dealing with modern conjectures, which find no support either in Virgil's text or in other ancient *testimonia*. The only argument put forward in support, in fact, is the prevalence, in Virgil's time, of a positive ending of the Orpheus' story,⁸⁴ with respect to which Virgil may have opted for the tragic conclusion we know.⁸⁵ The hypothesis is undoubtedly suggestive, particularly when one compares other texts, from which a clear answer certainly does not emerge, but rather only a series of clues connecting Orpheus to the death of Gallus. From Propertius and Ovid, in fact, I think we can deduce that Gallus had introduced Orpheus into his poetry:⁸⁶ if this were the case, the very figure of the mythical lover / poet already in the initial draft of the *Georgics* could have been a literary homage that Virgil wanted to pay to his fellow poet, alongside the more explicit praise for his military and political successes. The imitation of a Gallan text would fully explain the 'elegiac' flavour of

⁸² Reasonable in this regard are the remarks of Nosarti 1996, 213; 232 and 237, note 107. See also Paratore 1977, 9. According to Jacobson (1984, 299–300) the epic poem may have been started no earlier than 26 B. C., while the *Georgics* would have been published in 27.

⁸³ Orpheus would represent the expression of Virgil's grief over the death of his friend according to Coleman 1962, 65–70. Also for Brisson 1966, 321, the Orpheus episode would replace direct mention of Gallus, prohibited to Virgil after the fall. See also Nosarti 1996, 233.

⁸⁴ Judging from a number of sources on the earliest Orphic tradition, it is possible that originally the myth had a happy ending, with the return of Eurydice on earth: cf. Eur. *Alc.* 357 (but on the ambiguity of the Euripidean reference see Segal 1995, 24); Isocr. II.8; Ps. Mosch. *Ep. Bion.* 123–125; Hermesian. fr. 2.1–4 in Powell 1925. See Heurgon 1932, 6; Bowra 1952, 113; Dronke 1962, 198; Lee 1965, 402; Guthrie 1966², 29; Klingner 1967, 351–352; Paduano 1982, 178; Samson 1985, 53–64. For Jacobson (1984, 281, 284–285 and 292) even in the first draft of the *Georgics* there would have been this positive version of the myth (which would establish a parallel between the stories of Orpheus and Aristaeus, both concluding with a rebirth). Only after the death of Gallus – Jacobson claims – would Virgil have transformed the poem, giving it the sad tone and the tragic epilogue we know. See also Bianco 1983, 277. For studies of the literary sources for the descent of Orpheus into Hades see Henry 1992, 30 and 36; Robbins 1982, 9, 13 and 16. Both Graf (1987, 15–16) and Heat (1994, 123–196) are unsure how to interpret the ancient sources concerning Orpheus' success or failure.

⁸⁵ The tragic outcome of the story of Orpheus, with the definitive loss of Eurydice and his renunciation of every pleasure in life, has been considered by some an innovation of Virgil, perhaps modifying the original ending of the *Georgics* to express his suffering after the death of Gallus: so Coleman 1962, 67–70; Johnston 1977, 161; Williams 1980, 262; contra, Jacobson 1984, 285, note 58.

⁸⁶ Cf. *supra*, note 50.

the protagonist and the tone of the story, which, being extraneous to the genre and style of the didactic poem,⁸⁷ would have highlighted even more Virgil's intent to celebrate his friend who had become *praefectus Aegypti*.

The two passages where I find possible clues of Orpheus being treated by Gallus are Prop. 2.34.91–92 and Ov. *amor.* 3.9.63–64, both concerning the death of the first elegist and both focusing on his presence in Hades in a catalogue of erotic poets: the impression that they could have a common source in a text by Gallus is strong, since it seems unlikely, for generic reasons (and in Propertius' case also for chronological reasons⁸⁸), that the two elegists were referring to the Virgilian epyllion. The hypothesis that Ov. *amor.* 3.9.63–64 is imitating the Propertian couplet of 2.34.91–92 seems to me implausible too, since, apart from the similarity of the situation (Gallus in Hades and the catalog of love poets) there are no formal elements that unite the two texts: whereas Propertius has Gallus washing his wounds,⁸⁹ Ovid only mentions him by name without ascribing to him any action of any sort. Instead, he devotes the entire couplet to Gallus' unjust death and to Octavian's false accusation. Of course, it is not possible to know in what form Gallus treated Orpheus: did he narrate the story in full or use it as an *exemplum* related to himself and his love? This could have dealt with the theme of attachment to the beloved lasting beyond death, or with the immortality of song, or with the relationship between unhappy love and the beauty of poetry. This question, however, cannot be answered. Similarly, it is not possible to know whether Gallus gave to the story of Orpheus a positive or a negative ending. In any case, to judge from his epigones, the basic feature had to be the presence of a love poet in Hades, which Propertius and Ovid may have reworked when Gallus' actual death had strengthened the parallel between him and Orpheus. This is an elegant form of intertextuality employed by the two poets (and by Virgil himself) in relation to Gallus on other occasions as well.⁹⁰

That Virgil could have done something similar in the *Georgics*, modifying the ending after Gallus' death, is possible, but it cannot be demonstrated: I believe in any case that Orpheus was present in the *Georgics* from the beginning,⁹¹ and that –as in our version– he represented the counterpoint of Aristaeus, in the typical form of an epyllion, consisting of a frame (Aristaeus) within which a contrasting

⁸⁷ This conspicuous extraneousness with respect to the poem was considered an element able to explain the notices of Servius according to Naumann 1978, 10–16.

⁸⁸ The Propertian elegy, as we can see from the text (*modo mortuus*), must be dated immediately after the death of Gallus (27 or 26 B. C.), that is, to a time very close to the composition and circulation of the *Georgics*.

⁸⁹ There may be in this image an allusion to Adonis, perhaps the protagonist of a similar scene in Gallan poetry. On this possibility (perhaps inherited from Euphorion by Gallus) see Boucher 1966, 91, note 63; Stroh 1971, 229 and note 7; Du Quesnay 1979, 62 and 220, note 215; Fedeli 2005, 1008; Cairns 2006, 144; Hollis 2007, 232; Gagliardi "REA" 2015.

⁹⁰ See Gagliardi 2021.

⁹¹ See also Nosarti 1996, 229.

narrative (Orpheus) is set,⁹² according to the refined Hellenistic technique already experimented with Catull. 64.⁹³ Moreover, the painful end of Orpheus would have justified the death of Aristaeus' bees and the subsequent bugonia much better than if his story had had a happy outcome. In any case, the situation of the abandoned lover who, in a cold and desolate landscape, expresses his suffering with a painful and substantially futile song is consistent with elegiac ideology and remarkably similar to the situation of Gallus in *ecl.* 10. It is not difficult to imagine that this situation could have been a *τόπος* in Gallus' poetry.⁹⁴ The death of Gallus could have suggested to Virgil, as to Propertius and Ovid as well, that he make more evident the relationship between the elegist's personal fate and the story of Orpheus. He could have intensified the pathos of the narrative or added some details,⁹⁵ but I do not believe that any adjustments will have affected the overall structure of the Aristaeus epyllion. On the other hand, I do not think that the canceled or modified *laudes* were part of the Orpheus episode, or even were in place of it: in the mythological narrative there would have been no place for mention of Gallus by name, which would more probably have been reserved for the direct mention of his military and political exploits. The homage represented by the epyllion consisted of imitating, alluding to, and perhaps quoting Gallan verses. The death of Gallus inevitably had to give a different meaning to all this and made the Orpheus narrative now feel as if it were a metaphor for the fate of the first elegist.⁹⁶

It is that in Propertius and Ovid, and perhaps another trace along these lines can be found in Horace, who, in *carm.* 1.24, consoling Virgil for the loss of his friend Quintilius, employs the unusual *exemplum* of Orpheus to demonstrate that not even the wonderful art of the Thracian singer could defeat death.⁹⁷ By addressing to Virgil a poem which links the death of a friend to the Orpheus myth, Horace seems to me to be engaging in a refined and allusive literary dialogue with the epyllion of *geo.* 4,⁹⁸ thus providing a significant piece of evidence of a link between Orpheus and the death of another Virgil's friend, Gallus, which perhaps the story of

⁹² Nosarti (1996, 212) rightly notes that the coherence of the epyllion with the meaning and message of the *Georgics* cannot be taken as an argument to prove the falsity of the Servian claims, since Virgil's well-known perfectionism would not have failed in any case in perfectly adapting a modified ending to the context.

⁹³ Correctly Jacobson (1984, 281), however, warns against the indiscriminate assimilation of the ending of the *Georgics* with Catull. 64, indicating the structural differences between the two texts.

⁹⁴ Nor should we forget Prop. 1.18, whose allusions to *ecl.* 10 seem to refer to a shared Gallan model: see Ross 1975, 71–74; Nicastrì 1984, 20–21, note 9; Thomas 2003⁶, at *geo.* 4.465–466, 227–228.

⁹⁵ See Nosarti 1996, 229, who, however, imagines that the figure of the mythical singer was initially linked to telluric myths and to Egypt. It was transformed in relation to the Aristaeus episode, Nosarti argues, only after the death of Gallus.

⁹⁶ See Jacobson 1984, 291–292, who, however, deduces that Virgil changed the ending of the Orpheus' story from positive to negative.

⁹⁷ Gagliardi 2013, 115–117, and Gagliardi 2016, 72–74.

⁹⁸ The Horatian ode is dated at 24 or 23 B.C. (Della Corte 1988, 52–53), a time when the Virgilian poem had long since circulated in its definitive version.

the Thracian poet in Virgil's text had reflected. Along the same lines, I think, can be read a brief note in the *Scholia Bernensia*, which, albeit in a corrupt and confused text, links Orpheus' entry into Hades at *geo.* 4.468, and in particular the term *lucus*, with the name of Gallus and mention of his death: *Lucum: propter Gallum, Luciscum poetam, qui novis studere volens ab Augusto occisus est.*⁹⁹ The fact that the note in the *Scholia Bernensia* does not seem to depend on Servius, who does not report anything similar on this point, heightens its interest:¹⁰⁰ we must therefore think of some different source, from which Servius too could have drawn, since, for example, Servius shares with the *Scholia* the erroneous version of Gallus' death by order of Augustus, following the crime of conspiracy.

Some final thoughts

The scenario just outlined is certainly confusing and illuminated only at times by isolated elements. These, however, make it difficult to imagine that Virgil's contemporaries could have failed to notice the relationship between the poetry of Gallus and the character of Orpheus as Virgil represents him. It seems equally unlikely that Virgil could have conceived of the Orpheus episode as a substitute for the deleted *laudes*. In fact, not only would the poetic homage contained in the epyllion not have disturbed Augustus, as the tribute in the *Bucolics* did not, but neither would it have seemed inappropriate even after Gallus' downfall. It would only have preserved his fame as a poet, as Propertius did in 2.34.91–92, and so it would not have needed retouching or disguising. Even when Gallus' trial and fall from grace had clouded his military and political glory, making the celebration of it tragically ironic, the memory of his fame as a poet, comparable to the mythical Orpheus, and perhaps celebrated in Gallus' own words, would have continued to keep alive the memory of his artistic merits and the originality of his production. With the passage of time this was not fully realized: the disappearance of Gallus' poetry occluded the relationship of his verses with the Virgilian epyllion (which was perhaps indicated in the most ancient commentaries on the *Georgics*), and the references were misunderstood. Speculation took the place of certainty, the real circumstances of Gallus' death and of the *crimina* brought against him were distorted; thus the story recorded by Servius took shape, and he repeated it without being able to verify his information or to see the errors and contradictions in his sources.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ The reference of the *Schol. Bern.* has usually gone unnoticed by scholars, perhaps due to the condition of the text: it has been given particular emphasis by Setaioli 1998, 195; Setaioli 1999, 180; Setaioli 2014, 178. Hofmann 2020 mentions it at 85–86.

¹⁰⁰ Setaioli 1998, 195; Setaioli 1999, 180; Setaioli 2014, 178.

¹⁰¹ *Ut supra diximus* indicates that for Servius the two notices refer to the same information (so rightly Hofmann 2020, 86; but already Haaroff 1960, 101, saw in the proof of Servius' confidence in what he affirmed) and that, by *fabula Aristaei* and *fabula Orphei*, he means the same text, though there remains the problem of identifying which text this is. According to Setaioli 1999, 179, the phrase *ut supra diximus* indicates that Servius is quoting the previous note from memory. In the opinion of Nosarti 1996, 214, on the other hand, the sentence excludes the possibility that the passages of Servius

This attempt to reconstruct the history of the *laudes Galli* obviously does not claim to resolve all the questions raised by the Servian notices, much less to say a definitive word about their genesis and value. What seems important to me, however, is the need to get out of close dependence on Servius, remembering that his statements are a point of arrival, not a starting point, even if for us they represent the only source for this account. In their extant form, certainly the Servian notices, vitiated moreover by their internal contradictions, are not credible: this is not a sufficient reason, however, for rejecting them *en bloc*. Similarly, I find little utility in dissecting them or in feeling compelled to prefer one over the other. I believe that the original basis on which they were formed was a genuine elimination by Virgil of some verses in praise of Gallus, after the disgrace and death of his friend and fellow poet. The reason for this choice had to lie in the tragic personal story of Gallus having made such *laudes* inappropriate, because they concerned Gallus' successes in Egypt. But a poetic homage, which was perhaps also an opportunity for Virgil to enter into 'dialogue' once again with love elegy,¹⁰² remained present (and for a certain period recognizable), especially in the Orpheus episode. The verses which were deleted did not require alteration of the original structure: they will have been modest in extent and presumably extraneous to the mythical events of the Aristaeus / Orpheus epyllion, whose masterful coherence with the organization and the message of the *Georgics* had evidently been part of Virgil's conception from the outset, and whose poetic beauty cannot have been the result of a last-minute refurbishment. The importance of the deletion was not in the verses that were eliminated, but in the gesture itself, whose resonance must have been great when it occurred, just after Gallus' death; it was this which made the event memorable and made it survive, among other reactions that have come down to us, as evidence of the deep impression aroused by Gallus' death.

In my opinion, the oldest and truest part of Servius' claims is the information about the deletion of the *laudes*. The rest came later and belongs to the history of the text of the *Georgics*, to the tradition of commentaries, to the distortions due to time and to the loss of Gallus' poetry. Ancient scholars needed to make sense of the confused testimony about Gallus and his end¹⁰³ that they could have found in the earliest commentaries. This gave life to the versions we know, enriched with

could be false, otherwise the commentator would not have recalled them; Nosarti rather believes (see also 224–225) that he may have reported two different versions of the same information in the two passages, without being able to choose between them.

¹⁰² Nosarti (1996, 179), for example, judges the attachment of Orpheus to his unhappy love, which he makes the only theme of his song, to be a sign of the sterility of erotic poetry, and for Domenicucci 1985, 248, Virgil is hostile toward love poetry, affirming an Epicurean ideal. Otis (1964, 205) attaches this meaning to the name of Eurydice repeated by the severed head of Orpheus. Instead, Coleman 1962, 68, sees in this detail the symbol of poetry that lives beyond death.

¹⁰³ For example, Amm. Marc. 17.4.5, reporting an interesting version of the trial, doubtfully (*si recte existimo*) identifies Gallus as the poet friend of Virgil and protagonist of *ecl.* 10: *is est, si recte existimo, Gallus poeta, quem flens quodam modo in postrema Bucolicorum parte Vergilius carmine leni decantat.*

details such as Augustus imposing on Virgil and the replacement of one or both parts of the epyllion. Modern critics therefore err in making Servius the starting point of a reconstruction of the original facts, and in attempting to try to make their reconstructions coincide exactly with all the details of his comments; they often do not take into account that Servius' notices are the ultimate outcome of a long tradition, in which the original account has accumulated misunderstandings, errors and inaccuracies, too many to be isolated and set aside.¹⁰⁴ Only by looking at the history of the cancellation of the *laudes Galli* and tracing it back to the context in which it was born can we still give the question a plausible interpretation and, excluding embarrassing interference by Augustus, we can understand the reasons for Virgil's action. This was certainly not due to a petty servility or to the despicable opportunism of one who abandons a friend in a crisis. Indeed, he had to act in a way not unlike the other poets (Propertius *in primis*), and like them he wanted to give to Gallus further testimony of his affection and admiration for his work, keeping silent about his personal tragedy in order to preserve only the bright image of the great artist and his poetry.

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¹⁰⁴ Something similar has happened when modern scholars allege the *damnatio memoriae* of Gallus. This they assume on the basis of different elements, arbitrarily connected, but without any ancient evidence backing them up. Indeed, ancient evidence tends to contradict a *damnatio memoriae*, which is nevertheless repeated over time as truth, with no checking of sources or assessment of their validity. See *supra*, note 32.

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