

NISUS AND EURYALUS:
EXPLOITING THE CONTRADICTIONS IN
VIRGIL'S DOLONEIA *

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IN the ninth book of the *Aeneid*, the Trojans are in trouble. In the absence of Aeneas, who has gone to forge an alliance with Evander and the Etruscans, the Italians under Turnus attack the Trojan camp. At nightfall two young Trojans, Nisus and Euryalus, volunteer for an impossible mission, to cross the encircling enemy lines and carry a message to Aeneas. The two execute their nocturnal sortie and succeed in massacring a number of the enemy in their sleep, but finally are discovered and killed. Virgil addresses them in an extraordinary apostrophe, calling them both fortunate; while on the following day the mother of Euryalus makes her heartbreaking lament.

The episode of Nisus and Euryalus is one of the most celebrated and closely studied in the *Aeneid*.¹ Together with the death of Turnus at the end of the final book, this part of the *Aeneid* has given rise to a sharp division in the bibliography between two opposing critical camps, a "right wing" and a "left," the "optimists" and the "pessimists," to use their traditional names, or the Augustan and the non-Augustan readers, to borrow Richard Thomas' terminological proposal.² In this paper I intend to consider the contradiction in the reception of the episode of

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¹ The best surveys of the episode (both with full bibliography) are those by P. Hardie, *Virgil: Book IX* (Cambridge 1994) 23–34, and by N. Horsfall, *A Companion to the Study of Virgil* (Leiden 1995) 170–178.

² R. Thomas, *Virgil and the Augustan Reception* (Cambridge 2001).

Nisus and Euryalus as arising not from misunderstandings or distortions of the episode by one party or the other, but as a contradiction contained in the text. The division of the critical bibliography into two irreconcilably opposed camps is deliberately provided for, and determined by, the text.

These are some representative passages from an Augustan approach to the episode of Nisus and Euryalus, which I select, from among many that might be cited, for what one might call their special clarity:

In evaluating the Virgilian characters of Nisus and Euryalus, a recent interpretive trend appears to have missed the meaning of the ancient maxim, honored through the centuries: *respice finem*. The final apostrophe, which Virgil addresses to them and introduces by calling them *fortunati ambo*, has always represented the ultimate consecration of their courage and has conclusively set a seal upon Virgil's predilection that is difficult to dispute. And yet, an interpretive trend that is probably colored by tones of protest and pacifism belonging to a recent ideological season, has found a way to challenge the traditional understanding.³

Let us also read the same author's comments on Fitzgerald's article, "Nisus and Euryalus: A Paradigm of Futile Behavior and the Tragedy of Youth," which, as the title suggests, portrays the two young Trojans as victims of the seduction of groundless patriotic values.⁴ So our critic views Fitzgerald's markedly non-Augustan reading of the episode:

This interpretation appears to be strongly marked by an anachronistic projection of a pacifist utopia on Virgil. If it is true that the wisdom of the two youths is not adequate to support their love of glory, for Virgil military glory is always a securely positive value, even if war remains a dramatic affair. Such a deformation of the common ethic is foreign to Virgil's sensibility and it is absurd to attribute to him irony so subtle and disguised that runs deceptively against the intentions of his powerful patron and friend.⁵

³ L. F. Pizzolato, "Fortunati ambo: per Niso ed Eurialo," in *Studia classica Iohanni Tarditi oblata* (Milan 1995) 1.265–283.

⁴ G. J. Fitzgerald, "Nisus and Euryalus: A Paradigm of Futile Behavior and the Tragedy of Youth," in J. R. C. Martyn, ed., *Cicero and Virgil: Studies in Honour of Harold Hunt* (Amsterdam 1972) 114–137.

⁵ Pizzolato (above, n. 3) 270.

These are arguments typical of Augustan critics. In particular, we should note the insistence on the idea of anachronism: "the anachronistic projection of a pacifist utopia on Virgil," the "tones of protest and pacifism belonging to a recent ideological season."⁶

In this paper I propose to demonstrate that these antithetical readings of the episode are not the result of external ideological factors. Virgilian scholars do not simply impose on the text projections of a pacifist utopia and see contradictions and problems that do not exist in the text. On the contrary, these antithetical readings of the episode are a reflection of the ambivalence of the text.

Fitzgerald's conclusions on the Euryalus and Nisus episode are based (as he points out) on an assessment of the "connotations created by Virgil's choice of language, by the meaning of certain crucial symbolic motifs, and by strongly ironic nuances that underlie a large part of the episode, in particular in the final assessment of their valor."⁷ We can go even further. Non-Augustan interpretations are not only created by Virgil's choice of language, as suggested by Fitzgerald. The present paper will show that the partial and irreconcilable readings of the text are also created by the intertextual nexus which the *Aeneid* establishes with Homer, Lucretius, and other literary texts.

THE PARTICULARITY OF THE DOLONEIA

The episode of Nisus and Euryalus is clearly modeled on Book 10 of the *Iliad*, the so-called Doloneia.⁸ After the failed embassy to Achilles, two volunteers, the heroes Diomedes and Odysseus, make a nocturnal sortie to gather intelligence, while the base and cowardly Dolon attempts a similar enterprise from the Trojan camp. The outcome of both expeditions is well-known. The two Greeks capture (and later kill) Dolon and with his aid they are also able to steal Rhesus' splendid horses and slaughter a conspicuous number of Thracians in their sleep. With such booty they return to the Greek camp raising the morale of their comrades.

⁶ On this kind of rhetorical ploy, see now Thomas (above, n. 2) *passim*, and esp. 222-226.

⁷ Fitzgerald (above, n. 4) 117.

⁸ Even before Macrobius (5.2.15) and Servius (on *Aen.* 9.1), the parallel is noticed by Ovid, *Ibis* 625-630.

To start with, I would like to emphasize a feature of the episode of Nisus and Euryalus in its relationship to the Doloneia that best illustrates my approach to the text. It is a commonplace of Virgilian criticism to highlight the special nature of the episode of Nisus and Euryalus in the *Aeneid*. The episode seems so special that once scholars had seriously entertained the idea that the episode was composed by Virgil at a different point in time than the rest of the *Aeneid*, as a free-standing epyllion, and only subsequently inserted into the poem.⁹

Even without going to such extremes, its peculiar nature is constantly underlined by Virgilian scholars. For example, R. D. Williams states: "The episode is made to depend on its immediacy and its content: it is less sophisticated than any other part of the poem. It does not really fit the style and method of the *Aeneid*; consequently critics have singled it out, either for praise or (much more rarely) for blame."¹⁰

Now this type of critical observation is presented precisely as a critical observation, as a problem. On the contrary, it is not a problem, but a "problem." The peculiarity of the episode of Nisus and Euryalus is an allusion, an allusion to the peculiarity of the Homeric Doloneia and, moreover, to the interpretative tradition of the Doloneia. And, still better, an allusion to the Doloneia in its interpretative tradition. Virgil, that is, models his episode on the Homeric Doloneia; but he also keeps an eye on the Homeric exegetical tradition. That the Doloneia is extraneous to the original design of the *Iliad* is not only the virtually unanimous opinion of modern Homerists; the tenth book of the *Iliad* is the only one for which an analytical position is already attested in antiquity. The scholion T on *Iliad* 10.1 remarks: "It is said that this book was prepared separately by Homer and that it was not part of the *Iliad*, but was introduced into the poem by Pisistratus."¹¹ The observations made

⁹ See references in Hardie (above, n. 1) 24; D. Fowler, "Epic in the Middle of the Wood: Mise en Abyme in the Nisus and Euryalus Episode," in A. Sharrock and H. Morales, eds., *Intratextuality: Greek and Roman Textual Relations* (Oxford 2000) 89–113, at 91 n. 6.

¹⁰ R. D. Williams, *Virgil: The Aeneid, Books 7–12* (London 1973) 291.

¹¹ There are two monographs on the influence of Homeric scholia on the *Aeneid*: R. R. Schlunk, *The Homeric Scholia and the Aeneid* (Ann Arbor 1974), and now T. Schmit-Neuerburg, *Vergils Aeneis und die antike Homerexegese: Untersuchungen zum Einfluss ethischer und kritischer Homerrezeption auf imitatio und aemulatio Vergils* (Berlin and New York 1999). On the subject, cf. also A. Barchiesi, *La traccia del modello. Effetti omerici nella tradizione virgiliana* (Pisa 1984) 43–52; F. Montanari, "Aristarco," *Enc. Virg.* 1 (Rome 1984) 318; A. Barchiesi, "Scolii omerici," *Enc. Virg.* 4 (1988) 732–733; N. Horsfall, *Virgilio: l'epopea in alambiccio* (Naples 1991) 42 (with further references).

by Homeric critics on the Doloneia are the same as those made by Virgilian critics on the episode of Nisus and Euryalus. And yet, no critic of Virgil (so far as I can tell) realizes that s/he is not discovering anything, but simply making explicit something that is already present in the text.¹² The *Aeneid*, by recognizing the critical reception of its model, provides for its own. Virgil constructs an episode that is the Doloneia of the *Aeneid*, even in the comments of the critics who study it.

THE TENDENTIOUSNESS OF THE DOLONEIA

There is another trait of the Doloneia that distinguishes it from the rest of the *Iliad*, and it is of essential import for the design of the *Aeneid*. Recall the famous (or infamous) remark of Servius in his introductory note to the commentary on the *Aeneid*: *intentio Virgilii haec est, Homerum imitari et Augustum laudare a parentibus*. The particularity of the Doloneia is such that in it can be found a point of contact between the two goals of *imitari* and *laudare*. The Doloneia is, in fact, distinguished from the rest of the *Iliad* by its tendentiousness—by its open partiality, by its siding with the Greeks. This is another point on which Homeric criticism is in agreement. The Homeric Doloneia is constructed as an opposition of two sides: “The closures [of Book 8 and Book 9] send both sides [Greeks and Trojans] to bed to be refreshed before the demands of the dawn [. . .]. The Doloneia reawakes both sides for assembly to send out a spy. The two volunteer with the same line: ἔμ’ ὀτρύνει κραδίη καὶ θυμὸς ἀγήνωρ (“my heart and proud spirit urge me . . .”) (10.220 = 319). There the similarities cease, and a pro-Greek chauvinism enters which is not characteristic of the *Iliad* as a whole [. . .]. Our daring Greek ‘heroes’ are presented as stars: their opponents are stupid and cowardly.”¹³

Greek chauvinism is present and obvious in the text of the Doloneia, but it is further accentuated and emphasized in the ancient exegetical tradition. Prejudice against the Trojans is made to emerge right at the

On the influence of Homeric scholia on Servian commentary, see now J. Farrell, “Servius and the Homeric Scholia,” in S. Casali and F. Stok, eds., *Servius: Exegetical Stratifications and Cultural Models* (forthcoming).

¹² But see now Fowler (above, n. 9) 91 and n. 5.

¹³ O. Taplin, *Homeric Soundings: The Shaping of the Iliad* (Oxford 1992) 152–153. Cf. also E. Hall, *Inventing the Barbarian* (Oxford 1989) 31–32.

beginning of the book. In 10.12–13 Agamemnon looks toward Troy and stands “stunned by the many fires that blazed before Ilium, by the sound of flutes and pipes, by the uproar of men.” “This allusion to Trojan jollifications is the first of a series that give a characteristic colour to this Book, Trojan arrogance in victory set in contrast with the prudence and piety of the Achaeans. The contrast between the two sides, to the detriment of the Trojans, is more strongly marked than elsewhere in the *Iliad*” (Hainsworth *ad loc.*). Scholia A, which go back to Aristonicus, remark that flutes and pipes do not occur in an Achaean context, except on the Shield, 18.495. The exegetical scholia (bT) declare that the poet is a “philhellen”: ἀεὶ γὰρ φιλέλληνα ὁ ποιητής.¹⁴

We will see later how Virgil’s interest in the Doloneia is not limited to the new elaboration of Book 9, but that it frames the whole poem. This interest is really explained by the tendentious nature of this text, which has special relevance for the author of a poem that is tendentious by definition, as is the *Aeneid*.

NISUS AND EURYALUS AND THEIR HOMERIC MODELS

Now what is the relevance of the tendentiousness of the Doloneia to an assessment of the episode of Nisus and Euryalus? The fundamental problem of the episode is really a problem of bias. The text seemingly praises its two heroes (and the Trojan side), and above all participates positively in the motivations that drive them and that are identified with the Roman ideology of war and glory. Yet consistently there are some interpreters who “feel” that Virgil’s attitude towards the two heroes, the Trojan side and their motives is ambiguous—or rather, contradictory. Seeming praise, concealed criticism—irony. Modern contradictions? Let us see what the Homeric intertext can suggest to us.

There is a commonplace that appears in almost all the analyses of the episode of Nisus and Euryalus, a commonplace that, in a surprisingly large number of instances, resolves and exhausts the question of the episode’s relationship with the Doloneia. This commonplace has it that Nisus and Euryalus are modeled on Diomedes and Odysseus. The history of this interpretation begins with Servius’ note on 9.1: *sancti pro-*

¹⁴ The scholia bT on *Iliad* 10 find fault with the Trojans on a great number of points. For a selective list, see Hainsworth on *Il.* 10.13–14; H. Erbse, index s.v. “Sardan”

matus est iste liber ad illum Homeri, ubi dicit per noctem egressos esse Diomedem et Ulixen, cum capto Dolone castra penetrarunt. Now this assertion is seriously imprecise. For Nisus and Euryalus are indeed modeled on Odysseus and Diomedes, but at the same time on Dolon.¹⁵ In the *Aeneid*, the two nocturnal expeditions of the *Iliad* are conflated into one, and hence Nisus and Euryalus are not only modeled on Diomedes and Odysseus, but also on Dolon.

Those critics who do notice the conflation of both Diomedes-Odysseus and Dolon in Nisus-Euryalus tend to limit themselves to saying that "Virgil has used the material from the Doloneia so that he merged the role of the unlucky Dolon, as far as the external development is concerned, with that of the winners."¹⁶ The fact that Nisus and Euryalus share the fate of Dolon, i.e., they are defeated, is indeed of fundamental importance for the structure of the *Aeneid*, and is framed in the general articulation of the second half of the poem: in its first three books the Trojans appear to repeat their destiny of defeat, a repetition that cannot be overcome; in the last three books this will be reversed. But what interests us here is that while Dolon functions as an important structural model for Nisus and Euryalus (Dolon and the Trojans, with Hector, that is, in so far as they are defeated), he also functions as a model for assessment: Dolon and the Trojans, with Hector, inasmuch as they are criticized and opposed by the bias of the text and offered up to the hostility of the reader.

In *Aeneid* 9 we do not have an Italian "Dolon" to juxtapose to the Trojan "Diomedes and Odysseus." Within the Trojan side in the *Aeneid*

¹⁵ See G. N. Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer* (Göttingen 1964) 268 n. 1; 269 nn. 1, 3; and especially Hardie (above, n. 1) 29, and his excellent commentary. Notice also how Nisus' exclamation at 9.428 *mea fraus omnis* sounds like an implicit confession of his role as Δόλων. For an explicit comment on the etymology of the name Dolon, see [Eur.] *Rh.* 158–159. Ironically, with these same words Nisus is again trying to deceive (to be "Dolon"), since it is not true that Euryalus did not take part in the slaughter (*nihil iste nec ausus / nec potuit*, 428–429). On the theme of deception in the Nisus episode, cf. M. Petrini, *The Child and the Hero: Coming of Age in Catullus and Vergil* (Ann Arbor 1997) 29–32.

¹⁶ F. Klingner, *Virgil: Bucolica Georgica Aeneis* (Zürich and Stuttgart 1967) 563: "Virgil hat dabei das Material der Dolonie so benutzt, dass er die Rolle des unglücklichen Dolon, was den äusseren Verlauf betrifft, mit denen der Sieger in eins zusammenschloß." Cf. also W. S. Anderson, "Virgil's Second *Iliad*," *TAPA* 88 (1957) 17–30, at 25 = S. J. Harrison, ed., *Oxford Readings in Vergil's Aeneid* (Oxford 1990) 239–252, at 247.

and its expedition are concentrated elements of both sides and both expeditions of the *Iliad*, and this fact has as a consequence that the Trojan expedition in the *Aeneid* brings with it from the Doloneia a bias that cannot be anything but contradictory. Hence Nisus and Euryalus become, in Freudian terms, a sort of “*Kompromissbildung*,” a semiotic manifestation which makes room, simultaneously, for two opposite meanings, which stand in an irreconcilable relationship to one another.¹⁷

Nisus and Euryalus are a pair, like Diomedes and Odysseus, and they slaughter a group of sleeping men, like Diomedes and Odysseus. But, unlike Diomedes and Odysseus, they are discovered, like Dolon, and fail miserably, like Dolon, ending up by being beheaded, like Dolon. The outcome of the mission in the *Aeneid* repeats the outcome of Dolon’s mission, admittedly with significant differences. When they are discovered, they do not conduct themselves in the disgraceful manner of Dolon, who in his terror is ready to betray his companions in exchange for his life. Euryalus is discovered because of his greed (an explicit criticism by Virgil that repeats one of the traits of Dolon), and Nisus sacrifices his life (and his mission), first in an attempt to save, then simply to avenge his friend and die together with him.

We are interested in seeing whether elements of the Doloneia that characterize the Trojans and the “Dolonian” side of *Iliad* 10 in a negative manner are repeated in the *Aeneid* and applied to the Trojan side, especially whether we can know with certainty that these elements are used to characterize the Trojans negatively in the interpretative tradition of the *Iliad*.

Nisus and Euryalus are not equated with Dolon in selfishness and treachery, even if, in the final failure of their mission, Dolon’s selfishness becomes somehow the selfishness of a pair. But the analysis of the behavior of the Trojan side in its entirety is instructive in other respects. Ancient commentators criticized the Trojan behavior in the Doloneia on two accounts. On the one hand, they noticed Dolon’s foolishness and disgraceful conduct when captured. On the other, they blamed the Trojan conduct during the assembly which they contrasted with that of the Achaeans. Arrogance, greed, and stupidity emerge in

¹⁷ For this concept, see Francesco Orlando, *Per una teoria freudiana della letteratura* (Turin 1987²) esp. 210–218. Of course, this is true for the whole *Aeneid* and becomes just another way of expressing ambivalence.

the Trojan assembly: "The Achaian assembly is courageous and chivalrous (194–271): the shorter Trojan meeting verges on stupidity."¹⁸

THE TROJAN ASSEMBLY

In *Il.* 10.198–298 the Achaean assembly opens. Nestor asks whether anyone is willing to volunteer to go into the midst of the Trojans to capture an enemy or better to spy on their projects (211–217):

All this he might learn, and then come back again to us unhurt: great would his glory be under heaven among all people, and an excellent gift would befall him; for all those who hold by the ships high power as princes, of all these each one of them will give him a black sheep, female, with a lamb beneath; there shall be no gift like this one, one that will be forever by at the feasts and festivals.

Far different is the scene that opens the Trojan assembly (*Il.* 10.299–337). Hector gathers the Trojan chiefs and makes his proposal as follows (303–309):

Who would take upon him this work and bring it to fulfillment for a huge price? The reward will be one that will suffice him; for I will give a chariot and two strong-necked horses who are the finest of all beside the fast ships of the Achaians to him who has the daring, winning honour for himself also, to go close to the swift-running ships and find out for us whether the swift ships are guarded, as they were before this . . .

Dolon answers and offers himself as a volunteer, but asks Hector to swear that he will give him "the horses and the chariot of bronze that now carry the great son of Peleus" (322–323). Hector takes the staff in his hand, and swears to him "an empty oath" (332): "Let Zeus, loud-thundering lord of Hera, now be my witness himself, that no other man of the Trojans shall mount these horses, since I say they shall be utterly yours, and your glory" (329–331).

¹⁸ Taplin (above, n. 13) 152.

Let us consider what Scholia bT have to say on the two juxtaposed assemblies:

Schol. bT on 10.204–206 express admiration for the way Nestor expresses himself.

Schol. bT on 10.303–308: “Hector calls to their own duty the men who must obey him, while Nestor makes a proposal (cf. 10.204–210). They, the Achaeans that is, promise something that they possess (ἄ ἔχουσιν), while Hector promises something he does not have (ἄ οὐκ ἔχει); and they offer a gift, while he offers ignominiously a prize.”

Schol. bT on 10.323: “Hector had promised to give the best horses, but he (Dolon) asks for those of Achilles, because he knows they are the best. So the poet showed their inappropriate behavior and foolishness” (cf. also bT on 324).

Schol. bT on 10.328: “the man (Hector) who promises and swears as if he were already dividing the booty is even more foolish than the one who asks for these prizes.”

The negative assessment of the Trojan assembly centers on Hector’s promise of Achilles’ horses. On behalf of each of the Achaean chieftains Nestor promises to Odysseus and Diomedes only a sheep and a lamb; by contrast, Hector promises the horses of Achilles to a non-entity like Dolon.

This is how Ascanius conducts himself in the Trojan assembly in *Aen.* 9.257–274:

“Immo ego vos, cui sola salus genitore reducto,”
 excipit Ascanius, “per magnos, Nise, penatis
 Assaracique larem et canae penetralia Vestae
 obtestor; quaecumque mihi fortuna fidesque est,
 in vestris pono gremiis; revocate parentem,
 reddite conspectum: nihil illo triste recepto.
 Bina dabo argento perfecta atque aspera signis
 pocula, devicta genitor quae cepit Arisba,
 et tripodas geminos, auri duo magna talenta,
 cratera antiquum, quem dat Sidonia Dido.
 Si vero capere Italiam sceptrisque potiri
 contigerit victori et praedae dicere sortem,
 vidisti quo Turnus equo, quibus ibat in armis
 aureus? ipsum illum, clipeum cristasque rubentis
 excipiam sorti, iam nunc tua praemia, Nise.

Praterea, bis sex genitor lectissima matrum
 corpora captivosque dabit suaque omnibus arma.
 Insuper his campi quod rex habet ipse Latinus."

Ancient commentators already found themselves trying to square accounts on this potentially embarrassing passage, in which Ascanius makes such an extravagant list of prizes. Servius Danielis tries to neutralize the tension in this way: "*vidisti quo Turnus equo*": *melior oeconomia: Nisum noluit inducere postulantem equum Turni premii loco, sed honestius facit ultro offerri, cum Homerus fecerit Dolonem Achillis currus improbe postulantem.*¹⁹ Now, while this is a fair comment, it clearly serves only to diminish Nisus' responsibility; it does not diminish the embarrassing situation in which Ascanius places himself.

Schlunk, in his chapter on the influence of the Homeric scholia on the Nisus episode,²⁰ refers to Servius and tries to play down Ascanius' responsibility, saying that "in another departure from the unqualified terms of Hector's promises, Ascanius prefaces a condition: *si vero capere Italiam sceptrisque potiri / contigerit victori et praedae dicere sortem . . .*" (267–268).²¹ At this point Schlunk interrupts the quotation. Now the proposition "if it falls to me to take Italy . . ." is first and foremost a contamination of this passage with the offer of gifts to Achilles by Agamemnon in *Il.* 9.135–136 (= 277–278); but if Virgil had wanted us to understand that Ascanius differs from Hector in avoiding making a promise ἄ οὐκ ἔχει (the criticism in the scholia), he could have done it more effectively. When Ascanius goes so far as to say to Nisus *iam nunc tua praemia*, it seems to be an inflation suggested precisely by the criticism in the scholion, a criticism that, far from being diminished, is heightened.

In the bibliography on the Nisus and Euryalus episode, besides Schlunk, the horse of Turnus as a negative signal to be connected with the horses of Achilles promised by Hector is duly considered only by Horsfall—in this case too only to be neutralized. Horsfall remarks: "on 267 Servius well notes that Ascanius offers Turnus' horse, as yet unavailable, as he knows (267–268). Hector offers Dolon (*Il.* 10.306)

¹⁹ On Servius' ideological strategies, see Thomas (above, n. 2) 93–121.

²⁰ Schlunk (above, n. 11) 59–81.

²¹ Schlunk (above, n. 11) 67

the best pair and chariot at the Achaean ships, ἃ οὐκ ἔχει (schol. T)."²² Actually, as mentioned, Servius Danielis' note concerns only the behavior of Nisus compared with that of Dolon: one asks for the chariot of Achilles, the other is promised Turnus' horse. There is no reference here to Ascanius' behavior and responsibility; the observation referred to by Horsfall is in fact an observation made by Schlunk, not by Servius Danielis (see above). But by attributing this view to Servius, Horsfall is able to defend the behavior of Ascanius: Ascanius knows that Turnus' horse is not yet available, by contrast Hector promises "what he does not have." This is hardly a tenable defense. Unlike Hector, Ascanius makes clear the obvious—Turnus' horse is clearly not available yet—but it is difficult to maintain that because Hector does not make this explicit, he does not know that Achilles' chariot is not yet available. And this is not what the scholia bT reproach Hector with: his fault is to promise "what he does not have," while Nestor promises "what he has" (the sheep and the lamb).²³ Hector's error consists in promising things that are not yet his, and this is precisely what Ascanius does: he not only promises Turnus' horse (*iam nunc tua praemia*), but slaves too and furthermore (*insuper*) *campi quod rex habet ipse Latinus* (9.274).

Servius Danielis attempts to de-problematize the passage with a different strategy. At 267 he states that Virgil "has not presented Nisus as asking for Turnus' horse as a prize; instead he has it offered it to him; the gift is more honorable for being spontaneous. Homer, instead, presented Dolon as shamefully demanding the chariot of Achilles." And yet, Servius Danielis's reading raises another set of problems. The Doloneia in *Aeneid* 9 is an intertextual repetition, but in the narrative world of the poem it is also a real repetition of the past. By offering to Nisus Turnus' horse as a prize, Ascanius implicitly casts Nisus in the role of Dolon. For Ascanius this is the appropriate prize for Nisus—the prize previously requested by Dolon.

Recently, Schmit-Neuerburg has re-examined the relationship between the Trojan assembly in *Aeneid* 9 and the Trojan assembly in *Iliad* 10. He reports the Homeric scholia's criticism of Hector's behavior and promise and draws the following conclusions: "But also Vergil's indirect reference to this Homeric theme, his reworking of the theme 'a property of the strongest enemy as a prize' in the Nisus and Euryalus

²² Horsfall (above, n. 1) 172.

²³ Cf. also schol. T on 306b: οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες ἃ ἔχουσι διδόασιν, οἷν ὑπάρνον (cf. 10.215–216), ὁ δὲ Ἑκτώρ οὐδὲ οὐκ ἔχει ἵππους.

episode shows a clear reflection of the interpretation quoted above, since the negative aspects of the Homeric dialogue, which were emphasized by the scholia, are avoided: Ascanius promises Nisus the horse, weapons and armament of Turnus, which he owns as little as Hector owned the chariot and horses of Achilles; the Homeric model was evident to Virgil's ancient interpreters, as Servius (on 267) shows. Ascanius, however, explicitly refers to the Trojan victory over the Latins as a necessary condition: *si vero capere Italiam sceptrisque potiri / contigerit victori et praedae dicere sortem . . .*; the other part of the reward (263 ff.) is already in Ascanius' possession. The theme of the especially violently criticized oath, to which Dolon obliges Hector and that he swears, is *totally cancelled*.²⁴ Overall this is very similar to Horsfall's "defense" of Ascanius' behavior. But Schmit-Neuerburg goes even farther. He denies any relationship between Hector's oath at *Il.* 10.328–332 (Hector swears that no one else will have Achilles' chariot), and Ascanius' at *Aen.* 9.299–301 (Ascanius swears that Euryalus' mother will be a second Creusa to him and will inherit her son's prizes, were he to die in the expedition).

Hector's oath is harshly criticized by the scholia (cf. bT on 323 and 324; T on 328: "the man [Hector] who promises and swears as if he were already dividing the booty is even more foolish than the one who asks for these prizes"), and the poet himself states quite explicitly "He spoke, and swore an empty oath, and stirred the man onward" (332). By contrast, Nestor does not need to do that and the Homeric scholia were ready to see in Hector's swearing a sign of Trojans' untrustworthiness.²⁵ Ascanius' oath is clearly modeled on Hector's and hence it carries with it all these negative evaluations associated with it. Not surprisingly, some non-Augustan readers feel uneasy enough to suspect it to be a "false oath."²⁶

²⁴ Schmit-Neuerburg (above, n. 11) 52 (my emphasis).

²⁵ Scholia bT on 321c: εἰς τὸ ἄπιστον δηλοῖ τῶν βαρβάρων ὅτι τὰς πίστεϊς ὄρκους, οὐ τρόποις ἀγαθοῖς βεβαιοῦσιν. ὁ δὲ Διομήδης οὐδὲ μέμνηται τῆς δόσεως (sc. 10.220–226). Admittedly Nisus and Euryalus behave in a better way than Dolon: like Diomedes, they do not ask for a reward from Ascanius and the Trojan chiefs. Nevertheless, let us remember that from the very beginning, Nisus thinks about a reward for his mission in a very Dolon-like fashion: 9.194 *si tibi quae posco promittunt . . .* (i.e., if they will do with me what they did with Dolon). In this moment Nisus thinks that he needs some promise from the Trojan chiefs in order to undertake his mission. Ascanius is so ready to cast himself in the role of the discredited Hector of *Iliad* 10 that Nisus no longer needs Ascanius' pledge.

²⁶ Cf. K. Quinn, *Virgil's Aeneid: A Critical Description* (London 1968) 203 n. 1: "Has

In sum, we face a rather paradoxical situation: the critics who take into consideration the Homeric intertextuality and the ancient exegetical tradition of the Doloneia are Augustan readers who try to Augustanize the text (to use Richard Thomas' expression). By contrast, the tradition of antagonistic, non-Augustan reading of the Nisus and Euryalus episode, which is highly critical of Ascanius' behavior, fails to acknowledge it is repeating the Homeric scholia's criticism of Hector.

For instance, Pavlock's treatment of the episode is typical. She detects a negative undertone in Ascanius' offer of prizes, but she connects it to the influence of Euripides' *Rhesus*:²⁷ "(Ascanius) enumerates a list of very valuable objects, some belonging to his father (*pocula, deuicta genitor quae cepit Arisba* [264]; *cratera antiquum quem dat Sidonia Dido* [266]) and others not even in the Trojans' possession (e.g., Turnus' horse, captive women) [. . .]. While scholars often note that the lavish offer of gifts reflects Ascanius' youthful enthusiasm, the poet may expect the reader to perceive a more somber note beneath the humorous depiction of character. For this extravagant promise perhaps only encourages the materialistic desires that lead Euryalus to the disastrous events later in the episode." This pessimistic critic "perceives a more somber note," but fails to cite the Homeric intertext to support her "perception."²⁸

Virgil blundered, perhaps, with his promise? Or does he intend us to understand that the promise is valid only if Nisus and Euryalus get word to Aeneas: trying and failing would not be enough?"; M. A. Di Cesare, *The Altar and the City. A Reading of Vergil's Aeneid* (New York and London 1972) 162: "In Book 12, Aeneas's arrangements with Latinus totally ignore the commitments made here. Aeneas may have been, probably was, unaware of them" (with good remarks on 9.312–313 *sed aurae / omnia discernunt et nubibus inrita donant*).

²⁷ On the influence of the *Rhesus* on the Nisus and Euryalus episode, see B. Fenik, *The Influence of Euripides on Vergil's Aeneid* (Diss. Princeton, 1960) 54–96; A. König, *Die Aeneis und die griechische Tragödie. Studien zur imitatio-Technik Vergils* (Diss. Berlin, 1970) 89–108. The *Rhesus*' reworking of the Trojan assembly in *Iliad* 10 further confirms the negative reception of Hector's promise of Achilles' horses in the post-Homeric tradition. Significantly, in this tragedy, Aeneas is the one who suggests to a very discredited Hector to send a spy to the Greek camp, precisely the action which Euryalus and Nisus will undertake with the consent of Ascanius, Aeneas' son.

²⁸ B. Pavlock "Epic and Tragedy in Vergil's Nisus and Euryalus Episode," *TAPA* 115 (1985) 207–224 (= Pavlock, *Eros, Imitation and the Epic Tradition* [Ithaca, NY 1990] 87–112), at 212, who misses the connection between the offer of Turnus' horses by Ascanius and that of Achilles' chariot by Hector. Cf. also Di Cesare (above, n. 26) 162–163,

Pavlock is not alone. Albert Forbiger (1852, *ad loc.*), for all that he appears to be completely uninterested in the intertextual relationship with *Iliad* 10, provides a note on 9.269 that is the exact equivalent of the note in scholia bT on *Il.* 10.303: *Paullo imprudentiorem hic esse Ascanium, qui promittat, quae nondum habeat, neque tam facile sibi parare queat, nemo potest infitias ire.*²⁹ Here Forbiger, like Pavlock, criticizes Ascanius' behavior independently from the Homeric scholia, but fails to recognize that this type of narrative does not allow for independent criticism. Virgil does not confront the reader with a conduct to be criticized; he confronts us with a behavior that is modeled on or alludes to one that has already been criticized.³⁰

ONCE MORE ON THE GIFTS PROMISED BY ASCANIUS

We have now seen the dangers entailed in promising gifts that one does not possess. But let us now see what gifts Ascanius does possess.

Tripodas geminos and *auri duo magna talenta* (265) come from the list of gifts that Agamemnon promises Achilles at *Iliad* 9.122: "seven tripods that have not yet known the hearth and ten talents of gold."³¹

In addition, Ascanius promises objects that are owned by his father, namely, a crater given by Dido (*cratera antiquum, quem dat Sidonia Dido* [266]). Now, even a reader like Horsfall, not particularly "anti-

and S. Ford Wiltshire, "The Man Who Was Not There: Aeneas and Absence in *Aeneid* 9," in C. Perkell, ed., *Reading Vergil's Aeneid: An Interpretive Guide* (Norman, OK 1999) 162–177, at 168 and 327 n. 18, who seems to imply that the promise of Achilles' chariot to Dolon by Hector is an element of the *Rhesus*, not present in the *Iliad*. On the inappropriateness of Ascanius' catalogue of gifts, see also Petrini (above, n. 15) 27–29.

²⁹ Cf. also John Conington (vol. 3 [London 1883] on 269): "Imitated from *Il.* 10.322, where Dolon asks for the horses of Achilles [. . .]. Gossrau (G. G. Gossrau, ed., *P. Virgilii Maronis Aeneis* [Quedlinburg 1876, vol. 2] *ad loc.*), who thinks Ascanius far too forward and extravagant in his promises, complains of his undertaking here what is not in his power." Conington apparently misses the point of Gossrau's criticism (again coincident with that of the Homeric scholia, i.e., Ascanius promises ἄ οὐκ ἔχει), since he goes on saying: "But he [Ascanius] obviously makes the engagement in his father's name, in his character of *rex*, v. 223."

³⁰ For an Augustan reading, see P. G. Lennox, "Virgil's Night-Episode Re-Examined (*Aeneid* 9.176–449)," *Hermes* 105 (1977) 331–342, at 341–342. He does not mention Hector's promises and finds faults with Nestor's: "If anything it is these puny promises which appear inappropriate" (342 n. 59).

³¹ Cf. also *Aen.* 9.272–273 and *Il.* 9.9.128–131, 139–140.

Augustan," admits that a gift by Dido is "arguably ill-omened" and evokes embarrassing suggestions.³²

But there is another gift that is worth mentioning: *bina dabo argento perfecta atque aspera signis / pocula devicta genitor quae cepit Arisba* (263–264). Arisba is a city of the Troad on the Hellespont, which in the *Iliad* is allied with the Trojans. From Arisba come Assilos (*Il.* 6.12) and Asios, the son of Hyrtacos (*Il.* 2.837, 12.96). Now Ascanius says that he will give to Nisus, the son of Hyrtacus, two engraved silver cups that Aeneas took when he conquered Arisba: *devicta genitor quae cepit Arisba*. The fact that the city was allied with Troy has created problems: why would Aeneas have had to fight against it? Servius suggests two possible explanations: (i) the city had been conquered by the Trojans before the war; (ii) the cups promised to Nisus came from gifts that Helenus had given to Aeneas in Book 3. This explanation is completely implausible, contradicting the sense of the Latin; (iii) Servius Danielis relates that in his *Troica*, the historian Abas (*FGrHist* 46 F 17) had told how, with the departure of the Greeks, Astyanax ruled at Troy and an alliance of neighboring cities made war against him. Among them was Arisba, under the leadership of Antenor. Aeneas aided Astyanax and restored the kingdom to him. This was the occasion when he could have captured Arisba. Stephanus of Byzantium (*s.v.* Ἀρίσβη) attributes the foundation of Arisba to Astyanax and associates him with Ascanius. It is probable that Virgil alludes to this legend (or another of this type), without actually accepting it in his poem. But there is one more thing to note. Virgil called Nisus *Hyrtacides*, recovering the patronymic of Asios Hyrtacides in *Iliad* 2.837, a character coming from Arisba. Now Ascanius offers Nisus two cups coming from the booty of Arisba.

We do not need to believe that Nisus is really the son of this Hyrtacus of Arisba in order to find it possible that the strident effect on the reader who is constrained to puzzle out these exotic names is intentional. Ascanius promises as a gift part of the loot coming from the conquest of a city that is associated with the homeland of the person to whom the gift has been promised.

Commentators do not usually confront this issue; but in the *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*, we find quite a good example of neutralizing interpre-

³² Horsfall (above, n. 1) 172. For a different interpretation see J. Dingel ed., *Kommentar zum 9. Buch der Aeneis Vergils* (Heidelberg 1997) *ad loc.* See also Petrini (above, n. 15) 35–37.

tation: "if this circumstance is not a simple coincidence [...], Ascanius' offer might plausibly signify an homage to Nisus that is the more dear for coming from his homeland."³³

NISUS' AND EURYALUS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE GODS AND THE HOMERIC SCHOLIA

In *Il.* 10.274–276, as Odysseus and Diomedes are about to embark on their nocturnal mission, Athena sends them an omen in the form of a heron; they are not able to see the bird because of the darkness of the night, but can hear it crying. Odysseus rejoices at the bird-sign and prays to Athena (*Il.* 10.278–282). So does Diomedes. In addition, the latter recalls the help previously granted by the goddess to his own father Tydeus, and promises the sacrifice of a heifer. At *Il.* 10.295 we are told that Athena accepts the prayers favorably ("so they spoke in prayer, and Pallas Athena heard them").

Later on, at *Il.* 10.462–464, Odysseus prays to Athena for a second time. This time he promises the goddess Dolon's spoils and solicits her help to find the place where the Thracians (and their horses) are sleeping. By contrast, Dolon's departure from the Achaean camp is marked by his failure to pray to a god. Moreover, while the Achaean heroes undertake their mission with divine favor, Dolon's leaving his camp is framed by the narrator's remark, which foreshadows Dolon's unhappy fate: ". . . and went on his way toward the ships from his own camp, nor was he ever to come again from the ships, and carry his word to Hector" (336–337).

Nisus' and Euryalus' departure follows Dolon's very closely. They too leave the Trojan camp without seeking divine assistance, and their departure, too, is framed by the narrator's remark, anticipatory of their unhappy fate: *pulcher Iulus / . . . / multa patri mandata dabat portanda, sed aurae / omnia discernunt et nubibus inrita donant* (*Aen.* 9.310–312).

True, Nisus will utter a prayer to the moon, but only when it is too late (9.401–409); at this point, Euryalus is already surrounded by the knights of Volcens, and their mission has utterly failed. Ironically, Euryalus is betrayed precisely by the ray of that moon, whose help

³³ M. Malavolta, "Arisba," *Enc. Virg.* 1 (Rome 1984) 317.

Nisus is about to seek (373–374). Nisus' prayer to the moon echoes Diomedes' prayer to Athena, but there is an obvious difference. In the case of Diomedes, the prayer precedes the mission; by contrast, Nisus prays to a divinity only when everything is lost, and his prayer is not fulfilled.

The problematic relationship between Nisus and Euryalus and the gods has been duly noticed by Virgilian scholars, especially those belonging to the "pessimistic" school. Barbara Pavlock, points out how Nisus' prayer at 9.401–409 echoes Diomedes' prayer at *Il.* 10.284–294 and that of Odysseus' at *Il.* 10.284–295, but she does not fail to underline some crucial differences: "Significantly, however, Nisus invokes the goddess Diana only at a moment of crisis, not at the outset of his mission nor at a point of preliminary success, as the Greeks do" (218).³⁴

Hence, the pessimistic reader sees a contrast between the behavior of the two Greek heroes in the Doloneia and that of Euryalus and Nisus: Diomedes and Odysseus pray before their departure; the two Trojans do not. This intertextual contrast with the Iliadic model, in turn, problematizes the reader's ability to interpret unequivocally the *pietas* of Nisus and Euryalus. This reading is certainly correct. To this point we may further add that (i) the behavior of Nisus and Euryalus closely resembles that of Dolon; (ii) the juxtaposition between the *pietas* of Diomedes and Odysseus and Dolon's foolish impiety had already attracted the attention of Homeric scholia:

schol. T *Il.* 10.277 οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες θεὸν ἡγεμόνα πρὸ τῶν ἔργων ἐπικαλοῦνται, ὁ δὲ βάρβαρος Δόλων οὐκ ἔτι εὔχεται.

The Greeks call upon a goddess to guide their mission; Dolon the barbarian does not pray.

schol. b *Il.* 10.277 καλῶς οἱ μὲν Ἕλληνες θεὸν ἡγεμόνα ἐπικαλοῦνται καὶ ἀκούονται, ὁ δὲ βάρβαρος Δόλων μὴ εὐχόμενος ἀποτυγχάνει.

Rightly so the Greeks call upon a goddess to lead their mission and their prayer is fulfilled; by contrast the barbarian Dolon fails to do so and his mission fails.

³⁴ Pavlock (above, n. 28) 217–218.

schol. T *Il.* 10.336 βῆ δ' ἰέναι· οὐκ εὐξάτο, ὡς ὁ Διομήδης· διὸ καὶ ἀποτυγχάνει.

“and he left: without a prayer to a divinity as Diomedes had done; also because of this he fails.”

As Virgil has Nisus and Euryalus leaving the Trojan camp without a prayer, he knows that his commentators will be likely to make an observation similar to that made by the Alexandrian scholars on the Homeric text. Nisus and Euryalus not only fail to pray as Diomedes and Odysseus had done; their behavior closely resembles that of the barbarian Dolon. Once again the behavior of Virgil's characters is not only open to criticism—the behavior of Virgil's characters presents itself as the repetition of a behavior that has already been criticized, and Virgil knows that most likely the commentators of his text will repeat the same criticism.

THE MOTIVATION OF NISUS AND EURYALUS

Virgil's intertextual approach to Nisus and Euryalus is therefore ambivalent. They represent Dolon, but they also represent Odysseus and Diomedes, and Dolon's traits are softened. Virgil's attitude toward the Trojan assembly, on the other hand, is much less ambivalent: it is modeled on the Trojan assembly in the Doloneia, an assembly that can be faulted, and, above all, *is* faulted. Rather than mitigate the negative aspects of the Homeric account, Virgil accentuates them. The central motif of the horses of Achilles is literally resumed and the list of prizes is further inflated.

This brings us to the fundamental theme of the episode of Nisus and Euryalus, the theme of motivation. Dolon is presented as blinded by greed and also as fooled by Hector. Condemnation of Hector's exaggerated promises is present not only in the scholia, but is also explicitly present in the course of the Doloneia itself and appears in an interesting light, since the discourse is centered on the theme of motivation which is fundamental for the episode of Nisus and Euryalus.

To some degree Dolon himself is also a victim: of himself, of his own greed and thoughtlessness, but also of the Trojan chieftans and Hector. When he is captured by Diomedes and Odysseus, Dolon will say that he is a victim of Hector, who (*Il.* 10.391–395):

... has led my mind astray with many deceptions. He promised me the single-foot horses of proud Achilleus, Peleus' son and the chariot bright with bronze, for my gift, and gave me an order, to go through the running black night and get close to the enemy men . . .

In the end Dolon assigns the responsibility for his mission to Hector. Dolon's explanation of the motivation of his actions comes in response to a question from Odysseus (*Il.* 10.385–389):

where is it that you walk alone to the ships from the army through the darkness of night when other mortals are sleeping? Is it to strip some one of the perished corpses, or is it that Hector sent you out to spy with care upon each thing beside our hollow ships? Or did your own spirit drive you?

Was it Hector who sent Dolon on his mission, or was it Dolon's own decision? The question is not trivial. On the one hand, Dolon did volunteer saying "my own heart and my proud spirit rouse me . . ." (10.319). On the other, Dolon volunteers in response to Hector's offer of compensation consisting of a chariot and the best horses of the Achaean fleet. Thinking back later on this scene Dolon will assign the responsibility for his mission to Hector's solicitation. This is clearly a means of diminishing his own responsibility (as the exegetical scholia note *ad loc.*), but it is not pure invention. After all, it is Hector's oath that "rouses" Dolon: "He spoke, and swore an empty oath, and stirred the man onward" (10.332; τὸν δ' ὀρόθουνεν, where scholia T remark that in fact it is the desire of the horses of Achilles that stirred Dolon onward: φαίνεται γὰρ ἀναπτερούμενος τῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ τῶν ἵππων). In the end the trickster is tricked, by Hector first, and immediately thereafter by Odysseus and Diomedes.

The problem of motivation plays a vital role in the episode of Euryalus and Nisus as well (9.184–185):

Nisus ait: "dine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt,
Euryale, an sua cuique deus fit dira cupido?"

Scholars have attempted to address the issue in various ways,³⁵ but have ignored that motivation had already been problematized in the Doloneia, in a way similar to the Virgilian passage. There, too, alternative motivations had been proposed, namely, an external force (the higher-ranking Hector) or the independent will of the individual; and a response too (even if not unambiguously) had been suggested: it was an external force.

The Homeric intertext therefore suggests a reading of the episode in which Nisus and Euryalus are victims of an external will. Nisus and Euryalus are moved not only by the prizes promised by Ascanius, but also by glory. What the text suggests is that the prospect of material prizes and glory are the *ate* that blinds the two youths. Nisus and Euryalus are victims of an ideology that is precisely Rome's military ideology.

Let us return to Nisus' question: is it the gods or his own individual will that inspires the suicide mission? Everyone observes that the gods are absent from this episode. So is it each one's *dira cupido* that inspires him to the attempt? The role of Dolon that Nisus and Euryalus reprise in terms of their motivation suggests that the response to this question is, neither the gods nor individual will. It is the dominant ideology that blinds men and inspires them to face a useless death. The Virgilian gods are none other than the *populusque patresque* of 9.192, none other than the Trojan assembly led by Ascanius and Aletes.

While Nisus and Euryalus share the contradictory roles of Diomedes and Odysseus on the one hand and Dolon on the other, Ascanius repeats only the role of Hector as the discredited deceiver of *Iliad* 10. Let us not forget that the modeling of this scene on the Doloneia corresponds in the world of narrative to a true repetition of the past: Ascanius, meeting the exhortation of Andromache (*et avunculus excitet Hector*, 3.440), chooses to reenact one of the worst actions of his uncle's career. When Nisus replicates Dolon's attempt and attributes to himself responsibility for Euryalus, the Homeric model suggests that by analogy responsibility for Nisus has to be shifted to others—to a consolidated system of values, to obedience to superiors, to false illusions.

³⁵ The verbally closer model is *Od.* 4.712–714. Cf. Hardie (above, n. 1) 109; Fowler (above, n. 9) 95–101.

LUCRETIAN INTERTEXTUALITY

Let us turn once more to the Trojan assembly, which is at the center of the contradictions in the episode. The opening scene of the assembly, as Knauer notes, is modeled directly on the corresponding opening scene of the Trojan assembly in the *Doloneia*.³⁶ Knauer views the opening of the Achaean assembly (10.194–197) as another important model for the passage in the *Aeneid*. This is correct, but we should note that Virgil repeats almost verbatim the expressions of praise that had introduced specifically the Trojan assembly (“all of their best men, those who were the leaders of Troy and their men of deliberation” ~ *ductores Teucrum primi, delecta iuventus*) and that in Homer these words have a clearly sarcastic tone, in as much as, from among all the best of the Trojans, only the contemptible Dolon offers himself for the enterprise.³⁷

But in this introduction there is something more (9.226):

ductores Teucrum primi, delecta iuventus.

Let us remember what we have previously suggested, namely, that Nisus and Euryalus can be viewed as victims sacrificed on the altar of an ideology at the service of the leaders. And let us see what this verse suggests, for in fact it does suggest something. It is an allusion to Lucretius 1.86:

ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum.

³⁶ 9.226–228 *ductores Teucrum primi, delecta iuventus, / consilium summis regni de rebus habebant, / quid facerent quisve Aeneae iam nuntius esset* ~ Il. 10.299–302 “Nor did Hector either permit the high-hearted Trojans to sleep, but had called together in a group all of their best men, those who were the leaders of Troy and their men of deliberation. Summoning these he compacted before them his close counsel.”

³⁷ It should also be noticed that at 192–193 Nisus asserts that the Trojan chiefs are looking for volunteers (*Aenean acciri omnes, populusque patresque, / exposcunt mittique viros, qui certa reportent*); the same is stated by the narrator at 228. Here, Virgil is clearly alluding to the embarrassing situation of the Trojan assembly in the *Iliad*, when Hector’s request for volunteers is met only by Dolon’s response: οἱ δ’ ἄρα πάντες ἄκην ἐπέγοντο σιωπῇ (313, “they all remained silent”). Although the first reaction to Nestor’s proposal is similar, it suddenly changes when Diomedes volunteers. Then everybody is ready to accompany him on his mission (227–231).

If we look at Hardie's commentary at 9.226, we find this note: "Cf. Lucr. 1.86 *ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum*, a line echoed also at 2.14." The "echo" is not interpreted. And yet Hardie is one of the critics who has paid a great deal of attention to Virgil's intertextual dialogue with Lucretius. Significantly he does elsewhere interpret the other echo to Lucretius 1.86 in the *Aeneid* in the following way: "Virgil's use, in the context of the wooden horse, of the phrase *ductores Danaum* (*Aen.* 2.14) and *delecta virum* (18), both echoes of Lucr. 1.86, possibly hints at the wicked deceitfulness of the Greek generals."³⁸

In *Aen.* 2.14 *ductores Danaum* was used by Aeneas of the Greeks who built the Horse, and in this case Virgil's critics have had no problem interpreting the allusion and asserting that it resumes the negative tone of the Lucretian model. Consider also the note of the arch-conservative Austin *ad loc.*: "(the word *ductor*) was used in poetry before him by Lucretius only (1.86), in the terrifying passage describing the sacrifice of Iphigenia, a supreme example of the evil brought by *religio*: here Virgil is about to describe another calamity that *religio* caused (cf. 151, 188), and he borrows Lucretius' phrase of the Greeks, perhaps unconsciously, perhaps a deliberate reminiscence."

The verse comes from the description of the sacrifice of Iphigenia, and in Lucretius it has an aggressively sarcastic resonance. Lucretius will tell "how the chosen leaders of the Danaans, the first among men, foully defile the altar of Trivia at Aulis with the blood of the virgin Iphigenia."³⁹ A casual echo, or an example of subversive intertextuality?⁴⁰ The sacrifice of the virgin Iphigenia for reasons of state is superimposed on the sacrifice of Nisus and Euryalus. The expression

³⁸ P. Hardie, "The Sacrifice of Iphigeneia: An Example of 'Distribution' of a Lucretian Theme in Virgil," *CQ* 34 (1984) 406–412, at 407 n. 7.

³⁹ There is a passing but excellent reference to the "sacrificial" implications of Lucretian intertextuality in M. Wigodsky, "The Arming of Aeneas," *C&M* 26 (1965) 192–221, at 209 n. 47. See also J. Farrell, "The Virgilian Intertext," in C. Martindale, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge 1997) 222–238, at 234–235, who considers the Lucretian echo at 9.226 as implying the following: "Virgil's 'sons of Aeneas' are in Lucretian terms blinded by their desire for material gain and worldly power, subject to the superstition that is Roman state religion, and badly in need of the cure that comes only with a bracing draught of Epicurean *ratio*." Cf. also J. T. Dyson, "*Caesi Iuvenci* and *Pietas Impia* in Virgil," *CJ* 91 (1996) 277–286, at 282–283.

⁴⁰ For the concept, see R. O. A. M. Lyne, "Vergil's *Aeneid*: Subversion by Intertextuality. Catullus 66.39–40 and Other Examples," *G&R* 41 (1994) 187–204.

“useless sacrifice” is one that recurs most often in pessimistic criticism on the episode of Nisus and Euryalus.

If in *Aeneid* 2, in the case of an echo that satisfies far fewer of the requirements of an allusion, interpretation is authorized, maybe here too we can be authorized to interpret the intertextuality. We have seen that the main Homeric model for these verses contained a reference to the “best of the Trojans” that was loaded with sarcasm. The Lucretian model (brought into play by a virtually literal citation) contains a reference to *ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum* that is just as sarcastic and aggressive: the “first among the heroes” know no better than to send an innocent girl to her death. Worse, it is her own father who sends his daughter to her death.

The interpretation of intertextuality never involves only one voice. Whether we say that Nisus and Euryalus are like Iphigenia, sacrificed in the name of false ideals, or we say that Nisus and Euryalus are *not* like Iphigenia, the reader of the *Aeneid* is called to confront a contradiction.⁴¹

One last point: the Trojan assembly to which reference is made by *ductores Teucrum* . . . is presented at 226 as a call to hold counsel on urgent affairs of state when the rest of the world, men and animals alike, enjoys the peace of sleep: *cetera per terras omnis animalia somno / laxabant curas et corda oblita laborum* (224–225). This description clearly evokes the topos: *nox erat*. But its immediate model is obviously the opening of the Doloneia; cf. Hardie at 224–225: “of the various Homeric models particularly important is *Il.* 10.1–2 contrasting the sleep of the other Achaean leaders with Agamemnon’s anxious insomnia.” While everyone sleeps, Agamemnon is tormented by anxiety: “Now beside their ships the other great men of the Achaians slept the night long, with the soft bondage of slumber upon them; but the son of Atreus, Agamemnon, shepherd of the people, was held by no sweet sleep as he pondered deeply within him” (*Il.* 10.1–4). But this passage of the *Iliad* had already been reworked in the opening of Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Aulis*. There too we encounter Agamemnon, alone and awake, overcome by remorse for having deceived his own daughter and in doubt whether to send her an old servant with a letter to revoke his previous order. Summoned by Agamemnon, the old servant addresses

⁴¹ Nothing really changes if we think that Lucretius is adapting a verse of Ennius. Lucretius’ mediation would be sufficient to impose a definite negative overtone on this

the king in the following way: Eur. *IA* 9–11 “There is no sound of birds or of the sea. The winds are silent around Euripus. Why are you outside your tent, Lord Agamemnon? In Aulis all is silence and the guards on the walls do not stir.”⁴² The prologue of Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Aulis*, was, in turn, an important model for Ennius’ *Iphigenia*; of the diverse fragments that belong to the dialogue between Agamemnon and the old Man, one specifically mentions the silence of the cocks at night (219–221V²). In this passage therefore, Virgil is not simply reworking Homer; he is also alluding to Euripides’ reworking of Homer.

The notion of the mission of Nisus and Euryalus as “a paradigm of futile conduct and the tragedy of youth” (to take up the title of the much criticized article by G. J. Fitzgerald) is therefore not something extraneous to the text, anachronistic, modern, something that we want foist upon the *Aeneid* without justification; it is something that the text puts before the reader for reflection.

COUNCIL OF THE GODS?

Let us return again to the representation of the Trojan assembly. Perhaps we can still find other valuable intertexts. Following the Lucretian allusion *ductores Teucrum*, we find another verse, which is virtually a citation (9.227):

consilium summis regni de rebus habebant.

Servius cites Lucilius (fr. 4 Marx = 6 Krenkel = 1.4 Charpin):

consilium summis hominum de rebus habebant.

Is there anything to interpret? Lucilius’ hexameter clearly introduces a council of the gods and probably echoes a verse of Ennius’ council of the gods in *Annales* 1 (fr. xx–xxiv Sk.), which decided the fate of Ilia and the twins.⁴³ As in the case of the Lucretian verse, Virgil (again per-

⁴² Euripides’ allusion to *Iliad* 10 is noticed by R. A. Brooks, *Ennius and Roman Tragedy* (Diss. Harvard University, 1949 = New York 1981) 207 (“The reminiscence must be intentional”).

⁴³ Cf. E. Norden, *Ennius und Vergilius: Kriegsbilder aus Roms grosser Zeit* (Leipzig and Berlin 1915) 44 n. 1.

haps) alludes to Ennius, but mediates his allusion by way of Lucilius, a mediation that is again degraded. The uncertainty surrounding the Ennian context does not allow us to determine the relationship between the assembly that decided the fate of Romulus and Remus and the Trojan assembly that spurs Nisus and Euryalus to their untimely death. Similarly, we can only speculate about the "Romulean" character of Nisus' and Euryalus' slaughter of sleeping men. Nevertheless, we can assert with relative certainty that the assembly of the Trojan chieftains is indeed associated with a divine assembly. Below *regni de rebus* there is *hominum de rebus*. Again we can provide a positive interpretation. One could rightfully claim that there is a sort of encomiastic intent in this passage, for here the Trojan assembly is compared to a divine one and Ascanius, the ancestor of the Julian family, is here invested with a divine role. But if we recall our earlier reflections on the "divine" inspiration of Nisus' military ardor, we realize that in this context the divine intertext can have negative connotations. Just as Hector was the external will that roused Dolon to his suicide mission with false illusions, so too the Trojan chieftains, who are playing the role that was Hector's in *Iliad* 10, are the "gods" who inspire military ardor in Nisus. The gods are absent from the episode of Nisus and Euryalus. The moon invoked by Nisus is really the hostile force that betrayed Euryalus with its rays, causing his discovery. The only gods in their company, present by way of intertextuality, are the military leaders.

PATHOS AND INTERPRETATION: THE DOLONEIA IN THE PAINTINGS OF THE TEMPLE OF JUNO

Up to this point we have seen the implications of the influence of Dolon on the construction and appraisal of the characters of Nisus and Euryalus. The contradiction in the bibliography between positive and negative assessments is reflected in the text in the contradiction between the positive model (Odysseus and Diomedes) and the negative one (Dolon). The discomfort that scholars feel in evaluating the drift of the episode and that causes—in spite of the apparent approval that the poet's voice gives to Nisus and Euryalus—many to "sense" a concealed criticism, has a foundation in the construction of the text. The contradiction is not external; it is internal.

Let us consider now another aspect, namely, the assessment of that part of the action of Nisus and Euryalus that is directly modeled on Diomedes and Odysseus.

Another point on which the optimists tend to reject a negative assessment is the massacre of the sleeping men performed by Nisus and Euryalus. The question is this: are we authorized—authorized by the text—to interpret the pathos of the massacre performed by Nisus and Euryalus as a criticism of their characters; or is this sense of discomfort that we feel when confronted with the massacre of unarmed men rather a modern, anachronistic projection of a pacifist sensibility foreign to the *Aeneid*? Virgil applauds the action by the two of them. Can we go beyond the apparent bias of the text? Can we resist the bias of the text? Not according to Horsfall:

Is the massacre necessary, we might want to ask? Could not the Trojans have slipped through their enemies' camp without disturbing the drunkards and sleepers, instead of indulging in unsportsmanlike (!) [exclamation mark by Horsfall]⁴⁴ slaughter? No, first because the Doloneia contains the exact model for such a massacre (10.479 ff.). Second, because, however little he (or we) may like it, Virgil is a poet of war and slaughter. Thirdly, because such scenes are not governed by philosophical theories of clemency, or by the Geneva convention.⁴⁵

The Geneva convention is a modern thing, and also our pity for the dead and our discomfort at the behavior of Nisus and Euryalus are out of place. "Virgil [. . .] has his own unmistakable way of saying 'too much.'" We are authorized only to say that Euryalus overdoes it, and

⁴⁴ Horsfall touches upon an important issue: his definition of the behavior of Nisus and Euryalus in Book 9 as "unsportsmanlike" aptly reminds the reader of the episode of the footrace in *Aeneid* 5, in which Nisus and Euryalus behave *literally* in an "unsportsmanlike" way (Nisus trips Salius in order to let Euryalus win the race, 5.315–339). The unsportsmanlike attitude of the two Trojans during the footrace foreshadows their similar behavior during their mission. For the metaphorical value of an unsportsmanlike behavior, see Chrysippus ap. Cic. *De Off.* 3.42; cf., e.g., Pavlock (above, n. 27) 212–213. Furthermore, Nisus' falling in a pool of blood, a detail not explicit in the model of *Il.* 23.773–777, foreshadows the tragic outcome of his mission in Book 9; note that the blood in 5.332–333 appropriately comes from the *sacrifice* of oxens. See P. Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil* (Cambridge 1993) 51–52.

⁴⁵ Horsfall (above, n. 1) 174.

we are authorized to say that only because Virgil provides specific indications: *suadet enim vesana fames . . . fremit ore cruento* (9.340), *neq minor Euryali caedes; incensus et ipse / perfurit* (342), so much so that Nisus calls him back (9.354, 356).

We have already seen that a characteristic of the Doloneia is its pronounced bias. Perhaps the text of *Iliad* 10 does not suggest criticism of the two heroes. They are the “stars,” as Taplin says. But all the same, Homer’s critics do not share the scruples of Virgil’s and they do not have a reverential fear of criticizing the conduct of Diomedes and Odysseus as anti-heroic. But that is not the point. The point is whether the *Aeneid* can foresee a reader who resists the bias of the text. We are quite far from being able to say that Virgil makes us approve of the massacre of unarmed men by Nisus and Euryalus. But let us concede that it is so. If a biased text approves a massacre of unarmed men, should the reader submit to the bias of the text or is s/he rather authorized to resist it?

Beyond ordinary citizens without name, Nisus kills ten persons in 324–338 and five of them are named: the king and augur Rhamnes, Remus with his three slaves, his squire, and his charioteer, Lamyrus, Lamus, and Serranus. The first couple of names is especially suggestive. The name *Rhamnes* is related to the name of one of the three tribes of archaic Rome, the *Ramnes* or *Ramnenses*. The name *Ramnenses* was derived from Romulus,⁴⁶ and *rex et augur* is the “traditional definition of Romulus.”⁴⁷ Immediately after Rhamnes/Romulus, Nisus kills a character called *Remus*. As Dumézil says, “Le lecteur latin ne pouvait pas ne pas penser au couple *Romulus-Remus*. Le poète accentue le caractère italiote de l’armée que les Troyens avaient devant eux par des noms de la fable romaine.”⁴⁸ It is worth noting that the murder of “Romulus” and Remus by Nisus will be reprised and “reversed” in 422–423, when Volcens kills Euryalus saying: *tu tamen interea calido mihi sanguine poenas / persolves amborum*—that is, quoting the

⁴⁶ e.g., Varro *LL* 5.55 *Ramnenses ab Romulo* (= *Enn. Ann.* I lix Sk.); Cic. *Rep.* 2.14; Liv. 1.13.8; cf. J. J. O’Hara, *True Names: Vergil and the Alexandrian Tradition of Etymological Wordplay* (Ann Arbor 1996) 218.

⁴⁷ G. Dumézil, *Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus* (Paris 1941) 142.

⁴⁸ G. Dumézil, *Horace et le Curiaces* (Paris 1942) 69. See also E. Bréguet, “Virgile et les augures. À propos d’Énéide IX 324–328,” *MH* 13 (1956) 54–62, esp. 60: “S’il en est ainsi, Ramnès a les mêmes fonctions qu’Énée, fondateur de ville et chef religieux (12.189 sqq.); que Romulus et Auguste, à qui il est impossible que Virgile ne pense pas.”

words of Romulus about to kill Remus in Ennius, *Ann.* 95 Sk., . . . *nam mi calido dabis sanguine poenas*.⁴⁹

As for the other Italians killed by Nisus, Lamus was considered the progenitor of the *gens Aelia*, also called *Lamia* (cf. Hor. C. 3.17.1–5); and Serranus is an agnomen of the Atilii, in particular C. Atilius Regulus, consul in 257, who is mentioned in 6.844.

Were a Roman reader to read of a massacre of the ancestors of the Roman race, should s/he submit to the bias of the text, or could s/he think it legitimate to offer resistance?

In the text of the *Aeneid*, we have an example of the reaction—an emotional interpretation—by a reader offering resistance when confronted by a biased text and reacting with an emotional participation that goes against the bias of the text. The text in question, reproduced within the *Aeneid*, is precisely the massacre performed by Diomedes and Odysseus, and the reader, or rather the spectator, is Aeneas himself. At the Temple of Juno in Carthage Aeneas weeps before the representation of scenes from the Trojan War and discerns in this representation a sign of the benevolence of the authors of the pictures. The first scene to provoke his tears of pity is the massacre of the Doloneia (*Aen.* 1.469–473):

nec procul hinc Rhesi niveis tentoria velis
agnoscit lacrimans, primo quae prodita somno
Tydides multa vastabat caede cruentus,
ardentisque avertit equos in castra prius quam
pabula gustassent Troiae Xanthumque bibissent.

Now it is actually Horsfall who has demonstrated the true bias of the paintings viewed by Aeneas.⁵⁰ In the Temple of Juno at Carthage the bias of the representations of the scenes of the Trojan War would have certainly been philhellene. Not by chance, the first scene is taken from the Doloneia, the most markedly philhellenic episode of the *Iliad*, in which the Trojans were depicted as unethical and arrogant barbarians.

⁴⁹ This is by far “the closest of several echoes of Enn. *Ann.* 95” (Hardie *ad loc.*), and not by chance the Ennian verse is quoted here both by Macrobius (6.1.15) and Serv. Dan.: cf. 7.595 *ipsi has sacrilego pendetis sanguine poenas*, 7.766 *patriasque explerit sanguine poenas*, 10.617 *pio det sanguine poenas*, 11.592 *mihi pariter det sanguine poenas*.

⁵⁰ N. Horsfall, “Dido in the Light of History,” *PVS* 13 (1973–74) 1–13 = Harrison (above, n. 16) 127–144.

One last point: Virgil follows a variant of the myth of Rhesus. In Virgil's version of the myth, the horses of Rhesus were to be captured before they could eat the grass of Troy and drink at the water of the river Xanthus; had that happened, Troy would have never fallen. Now, this variant of the myth, unknown to *Iliad* 10 and to the *Rhesus*, is attested only by Scholia A on *Il.* 10.435 and by Servius and can be considered a pro-Greek version. It could have been invented by someone who wanted to provide a justification for the theft of Rhesus' horses by Diomedes and Odysseus. Whether this is really the case, the aim of the variant is rather clear: to soften the blame of the two Greek heroes.

But the representation of the massacre involves the sympathies of the spectator, independent of the intentions of the text. The philhellenic bias of the paintings does not prevent Aeneas from arriving at a negative interpretation of the conduct of Diomedes: *proditā, multa vastabat caede cruentus*. The spectator's interest overwhelms the bias of the text; the representation is pathos. To be sure, Aeneas was the interested party, but what about the Roman public? Would they not feel that they were involved in the killing of Rhamnes and Remus?

In the figure of Aeneas, weeping before the representation of the Doloneia in the paintings of the Temple of Juno, we have a model for the negative reader who resists the bias of the text. Virgil, while writing a biased poem, knew that there would be readers who, like Aeneas, would offer resistance. The pessimistic criticism of the *Aeneid* is foreseen by the *Aeneid*.

DOLON IN AENEID 12

Thus the Doloneia enters the *Aeneid* in Book 1 as an example of a biased text. The representation of Aeneas weeping because he is moved by the massacre perpetrated by Diomedes causes the reader of the *Aeneid* to reflect on the problems of a biased text. We know that the scenes represented on the Temple of Juno foreshadow events in the second half of the poem. The massacre that moves Aeneas (*lacrimans*) is repeated in Latium and this time the Trojans will perpetrate it at Ascanius' bidding. (Tears mark the end of this episode too; this time, though, they are Ascanius': *multum lacrimantis Iuli* [*Aen.* 9.501].) The massacre that affects Aeneas now affects the reader of the *Aeneid*: in both cases the bias of the text is resisted.

Virgil's reflection on the Doloneia and on the problems of bias do not end with the tears of Ascanius in Book 9: there is an epilogue. The Doloneia returns again in the *Aeneid* and again brings with it, this time in a positively sensational manner, problems of bias.

In Book 12, after the agreements are broken, the battle rages. Aeneas is wounded by an arrow shot by an unknown hand and Turnus is the protagonist in a bloody aristeia. Among the Trojan warriors killed by him, much space is devoted to Eumedes, the son of Dolon (12.346–352):

Parte alia media Eumedes in proelia fertur,
antiqui proles bello praeclara Dolonis,
nomine avum referens, animo manibusque parentem,
qui quondam, castra ut Danaum speculator adiret,
ausus Pelidae pretium sibi poscere currus:
illud Tydides alio pro talibus ausis
adfecit pretio nec equis adspirat Achilli.

Turnus kills him and addresses to him these words (12.359–361):

“en agros et, quam bello, Troiane, petisti,
Hesperiam metire iacens: haec praemia, qui me
ferro ausi temptare, ferunt, sic moenia condunt.”

We have here a Vergilian version of the Doloneia which, at first sight, would seem to share the harshly negative view of Dolon present both in *Iliad* 10 and in the Homeric exegetical tradition.

Nevertheless, the representation of Eumedes, son of Dolon, is not so straightforward as it seems.⁵¹ Virgil represents Eumedes as a famous warrior (*proles bello praeclara*), worthy of the valor of his father Dolon. Doubtless, in the *Iliad*, Dolon is the paradigm of cowardice and stupidity. Virgil's representation of Dolon is therefore a spectacular distortion of the Homeric text, as already noted by Macrobius (*cum apud Homerum Dolon imbellis sit* [5.16.9]).

⁵¹ In Homer Dolon is the son of a certain Eumedes: *Il.* 10.314 “Eumedes' son, the sacred herald's, a man of much gold and much bronze.” Then, there is an apt suggestion of endless repetition (Eumedes, Dolon, Eumedes . . .).

In the *Aeneid* we are presented with the unexpected appearance of a valorous Dolon and this in a passage which seems to follow closely the traditionally negative assessment of Dolon (*ausus Pelidae . . .*). It seems to be an inescapable conclusion that the presentation of Dolon as *bello praeclarus* is ironic, as la Cerda realized.⁵² In this case, it is not necessary to be a particularly antagonistic reader to oppose the apparent bias of the text. Here it is quite obvious that there are two meanings, one surface meaning and a deeper one, as it is always the case when irony is involved. I take it as a kind of invitation by Virgil to do the same elsewhere, when things are less clear, and, for example, we are presented with the Hectorean behavior of the son of Aeneas or with the eulogy of a couple of Dolon-role players such as Nisus and Euryalus. The bias of the text is there to be contrasted.

I wonder whether Virgil could foresee that his Augustan readers would have been so collaborative with the apparent bias of his text as to refuse to contrast it even in a case like this. Virgil puts on display the reference to the *Iliad*: he does not follow another version, nor does he refer to other eventual exploits by Dolon. He describes with evident sarcasm Dolon's unreasonable claims and he is clearly sympathetic to Turnus' words against Dolon's son. But for the majority of interpreters it is just too unacceptable that Virgil could use irony against a Trojan killed by Turnus. So, they prefer to reject la Cerda's note and take the praise of Dolon here at face value.⁵³ There is no room for irony when it is directed against a Trojan, even if he is the most despicable and despised character of the *Iliad*.

⁵² Cf. la Cerda (Lugduni 1619) *ad loc.*: "Eumedis mortem multis dilatat. Erat hic filius Dolonis, nepos Eumedis. Inde nomine avum referebat, patrem animo ac manibus id est, imbecillitate et ignavia. Inde illud 'bello proles praeclara Dolonis' accipio irrisorie et ironice. Etenim qui legat timorem Dolonis apud Hom. 10 *Iliad.* et mortem satis ingloriam, et deinde consideret mortem filii in hoc loco plena etiam ignominiae, videbit nihil de patre et filio dici praeclarum posse."

⁵³ For this view cf., e.g., Heyne, Nettleship, Paratore, Williams, and also A. Traina, *L'utopia e la storia. Il libro xii dell'Eneide e antologia delle opere* (Turin 1997) 133-134, who admits his puzzlement, but justifies the representation of Dolon's military valor in light of Virgil's need to present an adversary not unworthy of Turnus.

IRONY: THE HOUSE OF AENEAS
AND THE STEADINESS OF THE CAPITOL

Fortunati ambo! si quid mea carmina possunt,
nulla dies umquam memori vos eximet aevo,
dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum
accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit. (9.446–449)

“Commentators worry over the precise reference of *domus Aeneae* (*gens Iulia* or *populus Romanus*?) and *pater Romanus* (Augustus, the *princeps* of the day, father Jupiter, the Senate?); it may be preferable not to confine the resonance of these phrases.”⁵⁴

“Also at 3.97 in the same meaning of ‘family’ or ‘lineage of Aeneas’; cf. 5.121 *domus . . . Sergia*. As an alternative to this explanation (already supplied by Servius [*domus familia*]), modern critics propose the meaning *populus Romanus*. This explanation is preferred by, among others, Heyne, without argument; by Henry 896, because he wants to protect Virgil from the reproach of continual servility to Augustus; by Marmorale, because the poet ‘could not mix the destiny of Rome with the destiny of a family.’ But, on the contrary, Virgil the panegyrist could do it. And could there have been a possibility that an ancient reader would not understand *domus Aeneae* as *gens Iulia*?—After Ovid, it is called *domus Augusta*: cf. Bömer on *Fast.* 1.701.”⁵⁵

In a sense, Dingel is right: no ancient reader could have read *domus Aeneae* without thinking of the *gens Iulia* and Augustus, the descendant of Aeneas. For Dingel, this means “Virgil the panegyrist, who was entirely capable of wanting to connect the destiny of Rome with the fate of Augustus’ family.”

But let us consider the implications of the Virgilian formulation. “Nisus and Euryalus will be famous so long as the *gens Iulia* dwells upon the Capitol.” No ancient reader could have read this assertion without thinking of the obvious fact that the *gens Iulia* did not actually dwell on the Capitol. On the contrary, what Augustus had accomplished, as everyone knows, was a deliberate, progressive, programmatic divestiture of the political significance of the Capitol, in favor of promoting the Palatine, the hill where Romulus founded Rome, where

⁵⁴ Hardie (above, n. 1) on 448–449.

⁵⁵ Dingel (above, n. 32) 180, on 448.

Augustus was born, and where he established his residence. The *gens Iulia* dwelt on the Palatine, not the *immobile saxum* of the Capitol. And so *domus Aenea* does not signify only the “family of Aeneas,” that is of Augustus, but suggests also precisely the *domus Augusti*, the house of Augustus—on the Palatine.

The designation of the Capitol as *immobile saxum* in this context is ironic. What Augustus with his politics of urban propaganda continually demonstrated to the Romans was that there was nothing *immobile* in the city of Rome and, if the emperor wanted it, the Capitol could be moved to the Palatine.⁵⁶ Perhaps only the *saxum* could be *immobile*. The Sibylline Books, on the other hand, could be removed from the Capitol to the Palatine (probably already in 19–18 B.C.) without too many problems: “[T]he placing of the Sibylline Books in the Temple of Apollo Palatinus formed part of Augustus’ efforts to strip Jupiter of his supreme authority [...] The *removal* of the Sibylline Books from [Jupiter Capitolinus’] temple effectively ended his control of augury, and marked the consummation of Apollo’s augural authority.”⁵⁷ The propagandizing poet could also count on the mobility of the hills of Rome. On the Shield of Aeneas, Virgil could very well remove the triumph of Augustus in 29 B.C. from the Capitol to the Palatine, contrary to historical reality: “Now the heir of Romulus, the new protector of Rome, celebrates its supreme achievement at the Palatine Temple of Apollo. For Caesar’s victory the site of Rome’s greatest honor has been *moved* from the city’s greatest sanctuary.”⁵⁸

THE FINAL APOSTROPHE

In truth, to stabilize the “end” of the episode of Nisus and Euryalus to coincide with the apostrophe of 446–449 already constitutes a “strategy.” We have to decide if the episode concludes on the promise of

⁵⁶ On Augustus’ policy in favor of the Palatine to the detriment of the Capitolium, see, e.g., J. P. Small, *Cacus and Marsyas in Etrusco-Roman Legend* (Princeton 1982) esp. 98–102; A. Balland, “La casa Romuli au Palatin et au Capitolin,” *REL* 62 (1984) 57–80, esp. 76–77. Suetonius (*Aug.* 91.2) significantly says that once Augustus “dreamed that Jupiter Capitolinus complained that his worshippers were being taken from him.”

⁵⁷ Small (above, n. 56) 100 (my emphasis).

⁵⁸ J. F. Miller, “Triumphus in Palatio,” *AJP* 121 (2000) 409–422, at 412 (my emphasis).

glory or with the hopeless lament of Euryalus' mother, a lament in which not only the courage of the two youths, but also the Italian mission of Aeneas is explicitly up for debate. Euryalus' mother was proudly said to be the only one among the Trojan women to have followed Aeneas to Italy, abandoning the safety of Sicily. Now the mission is demystified: *hoc sum terraque marique secuta?* (9.492), "is this what I have pursued on land and sea?" The decision to mark the end of the episode of Nisus and Euryalus after the apostrophe, cutting off the lament of Euryalus' mother, is a political gesture.⁵⁹

In reading the excerpt from an optimist with which we opened this discussion, we have seen that the appeal to the openly eulogistic apostrophe, which as he said, "closes" the episode (moderns forget the old call to *respice finem*), is seen as decisive proof of the bias of the text. What we have tried to show in our discussion is that a reading that opposes the explicit bias of the text is in turn a justifiable approach to the text, a text that contains within itself irreconcilable contradictions.

But the same final apostrophe, *fortunati ambo*, that ought to be the guarantee of a positive reading is in reality contradictory. Quite apart from the hidden irony of the steadiness of the "house of Aeneas," that there is something problematic in this final apostrophe is clear. Even if we remain at the most immediate level of reading, we cannot but notice that it is at the very least remarkable that Virgil declares two soldiers *fortunati* and promises them undying glory when they have failed spectacularly in their mission and both of them die without delivering any advantage to their side; on the contrary, they bring harm to it, because their disaster weakens the morale of their own comrades in arms.⁶⁰

Indeed, on the subject of the final apostrophe we have the most strident contradiction in the critical bibliography. From one point of view, the apostrophe is clearly ironic;⁶¹ from another, it is "the ultimate con-

⁵⁹ On the closure of the episode, see now Fowler (above, n. 9) esp. 107–113. In light of the representation of Nisus and Euryalus as simultaneously executioners and victims, we may note that the lament of Euryalus' mother recalls that of the mother of Rhesus in the homonymous tragedy, in which Rhesus is lamented as a victim of that nocturnal massacre that Euryalus and Nisus have attempted to replicate.

⁶⁰ Serv. Dan. on 446 *mire horum mortem non luctu aut misericordia, sed felicitatis testimonio prosequitur*.

⁶¹ Cf., e.g., for an explicit statement, A. J. Boyle, *The Chaonian Dove. Studies in the Eclogues, Georgics, and Aeneid of Virgil* (Leiden 1986) 91. We must keep in mind that an apparently eulogistic apostrophe can be ironic: Lucan's apostrophe to Caesar in *BC* 9 clearly alludes to the Virgilian apostrophe to Nisus and Euryalus and is manifestly ironic (*BC* 9.980–986). Possibly Lucan is here interpreting, rather than simply perverting, Vir-

secration of their courage": "Virgil is presenting in another form the optimism for the future of Rome which he elsewhere divulges through prophecy and ecphrasis. Here is an example of what might be hoped for from Augustus' own perceptive youth policy. Whilst Rome can produce young men ready to assume the responsibilities of their elders we must [. . .] trust with the poet: *nulla dies umquam. . .*"⁶²

Once more, this contradiction is foreseen by the text.

We have said that Virgil foresees the pessimistic interpretation of the *Aeneid* and the resistance to the bias of his text. But Virgil foresees also the optimistic interpretation and the political uses of his text. Taken literally, the apostrophe to Nisus and Euryalus says this: so long as there will be a house of Aeneas to hold power, so long as there will be a *pater Romanus* to exercise his authority, the sacrifice of the youths will not only be justified, but glorified. The mystification of history (the "family of Aeneas") and the authoritarian patriarchy (the Roman father with his power to sacrifice his sons as Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia)—so long as these are in vogue, the memory of Nisus and Euryalus will be positive. Unfortunately, Virgil was right.

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gil. If this were the case, Lucan's interpretation presents itself as a very and early non-Augustan reading of the Virgilian episode.

⁶² The final peroration of Lennox (above, n. 30), 324.