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A STUDY OF THE TEXT, LANGUAGE AND
IMAGERY OF VERGIL'S *AENEID* 9. 176-502

BY

SARAH JANE DONALDSON

Submitted for the qualification of M. Litt

1992

ABSTRACT

This thesis consists of a Commentary on Vergil's *Aeneid* 9. 176-502, using the OCT, edited by R.A.B. Mynors (Oxford, 1972 reprint). It is made up of two parts: **Introduction** and **Commentary**. The **Introduction** comprises sections on the characters of Nisus and Euryalus (as they appear in the text and the literary precedents that influenced their depiction); the relationship between them and its ramifications; their position in the *Aeneid*; their 'type' in the Classical Tradition (with particular attention to their characterisation as warriors); the response of a Roman audience to them and what Vergil's own perception of them might have been in the light of his own supposed homosexuality.

The Commentary is divided into five Sections:

- 1: 176-313 — Planning and preparation
- 2: 314-366 — The Ἀπιστεΐα of Nisus and Euryalus
- 3: 367-449 — The deaths of Nisus and Euryalus
- 4: 450-472 — Interlude
- 5: 473-503 — Epilogue: the lament of Euryalus's mother.

Each section consists of a brief introduction and commentary on the text contained in it. As a whole, the **Commentary** deals with textual criticism, the text's relation to the rest of the *Aeneid* and the works of other Classical authors and the significance of these allusions (with particular attention paid to the close parallels with the Homeric *Doloneia: Iliad* 10). It also deals with the underlying imagery of the homoerotic, elegiac and Platonic ethos of what is essentially an epic and martial setting, and of the influence of divine and external forces on the action of the characters.

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AND IMAGERY OF VERGIL'S
AENEID 9. 176–502**

**BY
SARAH JANE DONALDSON**

Submitted for the qualification of M. Litt.
to the University of Durham, Department of Classics

Year of submission: 1992



22 DEC 1992

Declaration of authorship

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INTRODUCTION — THE CHARACTERS

The narrative of *Aeneid* 9. 176–502 concerns the fortunes of two young warriors, Nisus and Euryalus, their ὀφιστεΐαι and deaths. This introduction examines the characters from several aspects: each one as a separate character, their relationship with one another, the part they play in the *Aeneid*, their ‘type’ in the classical tradition and what expectation this would raise in Vergil’s audience, and what Vergil’s attitude might have been to them (on the basis of his description of, and comments on, them in the text). This last topic is particularly hazardous. There is considerable risk of confusing the poetic *persona* with the real poet (if indeed the latter can be extrapolated from the text at all). Great caution must also be exercised before accepting in full the details in the later *Lives* of Vergil, most of which were written some considerable time after his death, by which time an extensive legend would have grown up around so famous a poet. These details particularly concern Vergil’s possible homosexuality, as inferred by Donatus from *Eclogue* 2, and the question of how this aspect of Vergil’s character might affect his framing of his literary characters.

NISUS

We must envisage Nisus as being somewhere between the age of eighteen and his early twenties if the standard Greek scenario set forth by K.J. Dover can be taken to apply in this case (Dover, 1978, p.171):

... in general the pursuit of eromenoi was characteristic of the years before marriage.



The relationship between the two men seems to have this kind of flavour, an impression reinforced by the Platonic allusions (see Makowski, 1989 *passim*). There is a set group of standard elements to such a friendship, such as the ἐρώμενος being in the flower of his youth, and the ἐραστής being older and more experienced, and these are all referred to within the first eight lines of the episode (176–183). Nisus, the ἐραστής, has already gained a reputation for his skill and prowess (176 *acerrimus armis*). He is clearly older than Euryalus, to whom he says (212) *tua vita dignior aetas*, but still young enough to feel that he must justify his youth to the council of Trojan warriors (235 *neve haec nostris spectentur ab annis/ quae ferimus*).

Vergil does not give any physical description of him, but this is typical, or at least very characteristic. He will paint a character by allusion in such a way that a picture is built up in the imagination of the reader without any definite physical detail being given. Vergil does, however, give a clear psychological portrayal: Nisus is, first and foremost, warlike by nature (176 *acerrimus armis*). While being besieged, his strongest desire is to do something to relieve the tedium as he cannot bear to be still and passive. Doing sentry-duty is not enough for him, as he himself states (186):

*aut pugnam aut aliquid iamdudum invadere magnum
mens agitat mihi, nec placida contenta quiete est.*

However, despite his essentially dynamic character, he is neither unreasoning nor imprudent. He may wish to expose himself to great danger, but he is initially unwilling to allow Euryalus to accompany him. This unwillingness arises both from the practical reasoning that he would like someone to avenge him and to ransom his

body should he fail, and from the ‘moral’ reasoning that he is unwilling to cause grief to Euryalus’s mother should anything happen to Euryalus (211–218). He also calls a halt to the slaughter as he feels that they are losing sight of their goal (354–355).

Nisus is also capable of rational speculation on the nature of the gods and their influence on men. However, it is this speculation that causes him to overreach himself and indulge the thought of his independence of the gods (185 *an sua cuique deus fit dira cupido*), thus in effect provoking divine φθόρος as can be seen from his ultimate fate (see also Dodds, 1951, esp. pp. 29ff). There is even a hint of daemonic manipulation behind his uttering of these words because, although his thoughts are not, of themselves, impious, he is simply not aware of the inherent danger of seeking freedom from the jealous gods and so in his musings he leaves himself vulnerable to external influences (see **Commentary** 185 for the implications of *dira cupido*). As soon as the *cupido* which leads to the formulation of his plan is identified as *dira*, it casts a shadow over the subsequent story: this δυσφημία before a dangerous undertaking courts disaster. This is what makes the dénouement of the episode so poignant: throughout there is an uneasy feeling that all will not be well.

As J. P. Vernant and P. Vidal-Naquet express it (p. 27):

The particular domain of tragedy lies in (the) . . . border zone where human actions hinge on divine powers and where their true meaning, unsuspected by even those who initiated them and take responsibility for them, is only revealed when it becomes a part of an order that is beyond man and escapes him.

However, Nisus does not rush headlong into warlike madness, but has a plan of action which he explains to Euryalus and then to the council. In this he is unlike Turnus, although Turnus also is a victim of external influences which seem to work upon his own inherent traits of character (7. 460–474). Turnus is instantly active as a result of his influences; he does not lay out a plan of any sort.

Vergil creates an atmosphere of ill-omened impiety around Nisus by showing him failing to perform the expected prayers and sacrifice before embarking on his mission. In this, he is unlike Odysseus and Diomedes who promise Athena spoils and sacrifice if she will aid them (*Il.* 10. 278–294) and also unlike Aeneas who is punctilious in such observances (e.g. 6. 235 and 12. 195). Indeed, he is altogether too casual, only praying and offering vows when he is in trouble (403).

It seems that Nisus is punished for the μίᾶσμα he has called into existence (by his impious folly) by Euryalus's death, rather than by his own: this punishment takes the form of his being forced to witness Euryalus's helplessness and destruction before he goes to his own death. Nisus's 'guilt' is taken over and embodied in Euryalus, the 'hero' of the 'tragedy'. Indeed, it is Euryalus who is really the central character of the entire episode: it is the effect that events have on him and the way in which other characters act towards him that make him so. Nisus introduces the atmosphere of rash speculation, but it is Euryalus who actually develops the fundamental impiety of the episode by working on the material that Nisus has given him. (For the actual workings of this 'pollution', see the grammatical and stylistic structure in Section 3 of the **Commentary**, esp. 391 *perplexum iter*).

Nisus is also portrayed as an 'Achilles-figure'. He has great martial prowess and employs this to the full to avenge his friend. Nisus, however, dies in the attempt whereas Achilles does not, although he knows that his own death is not far off. The whole question of whether Nisus was right to avenge Euryalus and so jeopardise his mission is difficult to answer and must be considered in the light of the actions and fates of other characters. Aeneas gets over his initial death-wish (1. 94–101), and so is able to begin the new order; Nisus, like Turnus and Mezentius, gives way to his and so wastes himself in 'heroic' self-immolation.

The initial emotional response to the question of whether *pietas* due to the individual should override the *pietas* due to the group (here the other Trojans) would surely be that Nisus did right in seeking to avenge Euryalus, as Achilles did in killing Hector to avenge Patroclus. However, Achilles and Nisus must be judged in something other than an emotional context before a balanced evaluation can be made of their actions. The greatest argument in Achilles's favour is that, whatever his own feelings may have been on the matter, he was fulfilling the will of Zeus. Apollo, Hector's protector, deserted him in obedience to the decree of Fate (*Il.* 22. 209–213) and Achilles could fulfil his own desire and kill Hector.

In similar fashion Jupiter weighs the fates of Aeneas and Turnus and the balance favours Aeneas (*Aen.* 12. 725–727). Thus, in killing Turnus, Aeneas really is obeying the will of Jupiter and the decree of Fate, but it is coincidental. It is true that Achilles does not consider the will of Zeus as his prime reason for killing Hector, and that Aeneas does not act solely on the dictates of Jupiter in killing Turnus: both

act primarily of their own volition. Achilles tells Hector why he is so anxious to kill him (*Il.* 22. 271–272):

... νῦν δ' ἀθρόα πάντ' ἀποτείσεις
κῆδ' ἐμῶν ἐτάρων, οὓς ἔκτανες ἔγχει θύων.

Aeneas tells Turnus why he is killing him (*Aen.* 12. 947):

... *tunc hinc spoliis indute meorum
eripiare mihi?*

Nevertheless, both are, to some extent, justified by the outcome of their killings because they have caused divine will to be fulfilled. Neither of them mentions divine will as a reason for their action, but both in fact fulfil it almost in spite of themselves.

What, then, is the difference between the circumstances of Aeneas and Nisus? It could be that Aeneas is able to fulfil his own desire by performing an act which will also benefit his people. Thus he can kill Turnus who would have remained very dangerous if he had been left alive. (See G. B. Townend, who suggests that the recurrence of the simile in the *Aeneid* [12. 715–722] of the two fighting bulls of *Geo.* 3. 219–223, means that Turnus would never be content to remain in obscurity, but would always pose a threat to Aeneas:

... Virgil appears to have provided a hint of a matter-of-fact consideration . . . that a defeated Turnus, even after an act of supplication, would never have been reconciled to life as a subject of the elderly imported Trojan invader.)

Aeneas is thus able to satisfy his own personal desire for revenge and fulfil his duty to Evander for the killing of his son.

Even though Achilles and Aeneas act for personal reasons the end result is still for their people's benefit, and therefore their actual motives for the killing of a personal adversary are not too closely scrutinised. Indeed, because the outcome is beneficial, the fact that their personal desires were deeply involved as well gives a certain degree of approval to their acting in this way. They are both, to some extent, exonerated and any misgivings caused by their actions at the time are lessened with the benefit of hindsight. Neither is ultimately condemned for their action. Both kill their worthy enemy in a fair fight. The acts that they commit subsequent to the killing of their opponents, such as Achilles dishonouring Hector's corpse, are not to be considered in this study. The immediate results of their respective deeds are all that are of importance when constructing a paradigm against which the actions of Nisus can be judged.

Nisus has no such divine sanction as have Achilles and Aeneas. Indeed the gods are against him as is shown by the circumstances in which he and Euryalus are later discovered by the Rutuli (see **Commentary**, Section 3: introduction). The abandonment of his mission in order to avenge Euryalus has nothing but disastrous consequences for his fellow Trojans with no mitigation offered by hindsight, except by Vergil's own apostrophe (see **Commentary**, 446–449).

On a 'heroic' level, centred on the individual warrior, it might be allowed that revenge should be taken there and then. On a 'political', and therefore impersonal,

level, Nisus's first duty was to the other Trojans for whom he should have kept himself safe in order to deliver his message to Aeneas and thus relieve them from the siege. For political reasons, therefore, he should have delayed his taking of revenge until his 'political' duty had been performed. This would have left him free from pressing obligations and so able to fulfil his personal wish: to avenge Euryalus. It is fundamentally a question of whether egocentric acts (such as the taking of personal revenge immediately and without any thought for the impact that this might have on the wider state) take precedence over the duty owed to the society as a whole. This tension can best be characterised by contrasting the 'political' with the 'idealistic/heroic' ethos. The idealistic view is strongly influenced by Plato, or at least by Phaedrus's speech in the *Symposium* (178a–180c). Under the precepts set out in this speech, Nisus cannot leave Euryalus in danger without being utterly disgraced.

How far the desire for revenge on a personal level can be justified is a question that must be considered. Vergil lived through a time of great political upheaval during the civil wars and must have been influenced by his own observations. Concerning these troubled times, Augustus himself mentioned his own achievements with pride, where he says (*Res Gestae* 2):

*qui parentem meum trucidaverunt, eos in exilium expuli iudiciis
legitimis ultos eorum facinus, et postea bellum inferentis rei publicae
vici bis acie.*

It should, however, be noted that Augustus stresses that his own exaction of personal vengeance is sanctioned by, and is of benefit to, the state. Perhaps Vergil had a desire to show in the way he portrayed Nisus and Euryalus that such egocentric characters

must pass away so that civilisation can develop and be kept secure. This is not to say that he was without sympathy for the actions of his characters. He was aware that there was at heart something noble about Nisus dying to avenge Euryalus, otherwise he would not have considered them eligible for a eulogy, but he did not care to dwell on what might have been the result if such things had been allowed outside the framework of a story set in the distant past. It is this aspect that must be contrasted with the ethos of the Platonic ideal outlined earlier. Nisus is, in fact, faced with the dilemma of whether to abide by Stoic or Platonic precepts (Cato v Plato!)

There is a pointer in the Footrace that Nisus will not act in accordance with the 'rules' governing 'political' behaviour (5. 286–359): because of his love for Euryalus, he commits a foul so that Euryalus can win. It should not be taken, however, that he is so selfless in his devotion to the boy that he will let him win from the start. If he had not tripped, Nisus would himself have won thus beating Euryalus in a fair race. It is only in adverse circumstances that he lapses. Nisus is not the besotted lover, but he is devoted even at the cost of his 'political' honour. This element of Nisus's nature is of great importance in Book 9, when he is forced to make a choice between Euryalus and everything else.

EURYALUS

From the description that Vergil gives of him, we are to imagine that Euryalus is younger than Nisus, who says to him (212) *tua vita dignior aetas*, and perhaps about the same age as Ascanius, who says (275):

*. . . mea quem spatiis propioribus aetas
insequitur.*

Euryalus must be about fourteen or so, or at any rate not more than about sixteen, by which time he would have entered his adolescence properly and so would no longer have been at the age when *pueritia* merged with *iuventa* (see 181 *ora puer prima signans intonsa iuventa*).

The character that Vergil portrays seems to be rather out of place in the world of grim warriors. Euryalus gets his own way more by playing on the emotional responses of his elders to his youth and beauty and by bursting into tears (see 5. 343–344) than he does by a recognition of his prowess. Lack of prowess can be forgiven in one so young, but it is the emotional response to Euryalus, both of the other characters and of the reader, that is central both to the narrative details, and to the ethos, of the episode. There is also the latent idea that because of his youth and extreme beauty (179–180 *quo pulchrior alter! non fuit Aeneadam*), he is marked out by the gods and so comes to grief owing to their jealousy. As J. W. Hunt says (p. 56):

The union of youth and beauty frequently implies death for the figure so described: Coroebus (Book 2), Nisus and Euryalus (Book 9), Pallas and Lausus (Book 10) and the warrior-maiden Camilla (Book 11).

Even the beautiful Ascanius is also marked by his frequent weeping, despite his privileged position as Aeneas's son.

However, an important fact to note about Euryalus is that he is not an entirely innocent victim contaminated by contact with Nisus's sin of impiety, nor is he struck down by divine φθόρος merely because he is outstandingly beautiful. He utters impious words of his own (205 *lucis contemptor*; and see also **Commentary 205**) and kills indiscriminately in his own right as well. He thus shares with Nisus some of the responsibility for his fate.

While Nisus can be seen as a keen warrior who is carried away by his warlike zeal, how should Euryalus be seen? What he is and where he is make him an incongruous figure in the military context in which Vergil has set him. He is, after all, only a boy, and yet he takes on the role of a warrior. He kills indiscriminately, but this can possibly be explained as a desire for self-aggrandisement through emulation of Nisus, and thus justification in the presence of one's lover. It should, however, be noted that he disobeys Nisus's instructions to keep watch and begins his own slaughtering, so that Nisus has to call a halt and he also encumbers himself with spoils, thus putting himself in the situation where Nisus has to come back to help him. It must be said that Euryalus is a wilful character: he persuades Nisus to take him with him in the face of Nisus's initial objection, and once out of camp he again acts on his own account without following Nisus's instructions. There can be no denying that Vergil has drawn a skilful picture of a young boy carried away by the situation and not mature enough to realise the consequences of his actions. Events in Book 5 must also be taken into account for what they reveal of Euryalus. He is prepared to use the effect that he has on those around him to secure his own ends: whether it be keeping his disputed prize in a race in Book 5, or persuading Nisus to take him with him in Book 9.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NISUS AND EURYALUS

It must now be asked what relationship existed between Euryalus and Nisus. Nowhere else in the *Aeneid* is such a relationship found, or at any rate described in such terms. Cydon's love for Clytius (10.324–327):

*tu quoque, flaventem prima lanugine malas
dum sequeris Clytium infelix, nova gaudia, Cydon,
Dardania stratus dextra, securus amorum
qui iuvenum tibi semper erant, miserande iaceres)*

is described in the language of an infatuation: there is not the same emotional link as between Nisus and Euryalus. The episode in Book 10 is described in such a way as to stress the fact that Clytius is only physically pleasing to Cydon. As the word *nova* is used of the attraction, it is clear that Cydon, tiring of an old object of attraction, sought distraction elsewhere.

When considering other pairs of characters of the same sex where deep emotion is involved, it should be remembered that Lausus and Mezentius are son and father, and that Pallas and Aeneas have the same sort of emotional link although, in this case, care must be taken not to rule out other elements. The only possible parallel to the relationship between Nisus and Euryalus is that portrayed in the friendship of Camilla and Acca. However, not even here is there an erotic relationship mentioned or even implied. There is no mention of *amor* and no narrative, following the death of Camilla, of Acca seeking revenge on Arruns for the killing or dying in the ensuing *mêlée*.

The question of whether such an emotionally exclusive attachment as existed between Nisus and Euryalus can be seen as a good thing or as a distracting and harmful attachment, must be considered in the light of other characters specifically in epic. In the *Odyssey*, Odysseus has affairs, but refuses to be distracted from his purpose and his devotion to Penelope, and return to her is seen as an eventual reward for all his toils. This love for her does not prevent him functioning as a warrior and king. In the *Argonautica*, the love of Medea for Jason is necessary to ensure his survival. The attachment of Heracles to Hylas, as found in the *Argonautica*, is not portrayed as sexual by nature. When Heracles discovers that Hylas is lost, Apollonius describes him as *χωόμενος* (1.1263). However, Theocritus (13.65) is innovative in describing this relationship as an erotic attachment (see Dover 1978, p. 199). He uses such phrases as *παῖδα ποθῶν*, *σχέτλιοι οἱ φιλέοντες* and *μαινόμενος* and shows that for Heracles the relationship is not conducive to military prowess. According to Theocritus, Heracles does not rejoin the Argonauts because he is distraught with grief at Hylas's loss, whereas Apollonius sees the desertion as the fulfilment of a prophecy. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas is fundamentally a solitary figure once he has left behind the dangerous attachment to Dido, which is seen as highly detrimental to his mission and harmful by its distracting exclusivity, and regained his 'pious' status; but, then again, Achilles is not censured because of his great and exclusive love for Patroclus. Emotionally exclusive relationships do not, in themselves, seem to be a reason for criticism. It is the 'unsociable' effects that such exclusive friendships might have that is the cause for concern.

However, a somewhat suspicious perception of physical love does seem to be typical of Vergil. As W. F. Jackson Knight (1966, p. 146) says:

For Vergil, passionate attachments have associations of tragic failure. The calmer, deeply moral affections of the family and the home are creative, and endure. Love demands abnegation before it comes into its rightful power.

In the light of this idea, one should note that Vergil says that if Cydon had been killed (10. 324–327, *vide supra*) he would have been *securus amorum* as if death would have been a blessed relief.

It should be remembered that devotion to family and home is closer to that owed to the wider state than is a personal relationship with another individual. It is therefore not so ‘unsociable’ and not so potentially dangerous.

The line of verse that encapsulates the relationship between Nisus and Euryalus is 182:

his amor unus erat pariterque in bella ruebant.

The epic parallel to such a description that springs to mind is the friendship between Achilles and Patroclus in the *Iliad*. As a purely verbal parallel to the Vergilian line, however, there is *Il.* 16. 219-220:

Πάτροκλός τε καὶ Αὐτομέδων, ἕνα θυμὸν ἔχοντες,
πρόσθεν Μυρμιδόνων πολεμιζέμεν . . .

The fact that Patroclus is thus paired with Automedon in a line that is so closely echoed by Vergil might seem to take some of the emotional heat out of the relationship of Nisus and Euryalus, since Patroclus and Automedon are nowhere

described as being emotionally attached, except at the most general level of friendship, and even Achilles and Patroclus are not so verbally linked. However, it is typical of Vergil to take a Homeric idea and completely change its character so that the contrast is made more pointed by drawing the attention to something familiar but in a changed setting. It is not unlikely that Vergil meant to show how strong a bond there was between Nisus and Euryalus by expressing it in words that Homer had used to describe the casual joining of two men to fight the enemy.

If Nisus is an 'Achilles-figure', then Euryalus should have some resemblance to Patroclus, as indeed he does. Both Patroclus and Euryalus come to ruin partly through their own fault. Patroclus is too keen to rout the Trojans and so oversteps the parameters set for him by Fate, and executed by Zeus (*Il.* 15. 64–66):

... ὁ (sc. Achilles) δ' ἀνστήσει δὴν ἑταῖρον
 Πάτροκλον· τὸν δὲ κτενεῖ ἔγχει φαίδιμος Ἐκτωρ
 Ἰλίου προπάραιθε...

See also *Il.* 16. 685–688:

... καὶ μέγ' ἀάσθη
 γήπιος· εἰ δὲ ἔπος Πηληϊάδαο φύλαξεν,
 ἦ τ' ἂν ὑπέκφυγε κῆρα κακὴν μέλανος θανάτοιο.
 ἄλλ' αἰεὶ τε Διὸς κρείσσων νόος ἢ ἐπερ ἀνδρῶν·

Similarly, Euryalus does not stop to consider the possible results of his actions. He does not follow Nisus's instructions, gives way to a desire to kill which even Nisus recognises as excessive (354 *sensit enim nimia caede atque cupidine ferri*), and overburdens himself with loot so that he is hampered in his flight, and Nisus is forced

to turn back to try to rescue him. A further parallel between Patroclus and Euryalus is that both are avenged by their special friends, who are stronger than they but cannot prevent their deaths.

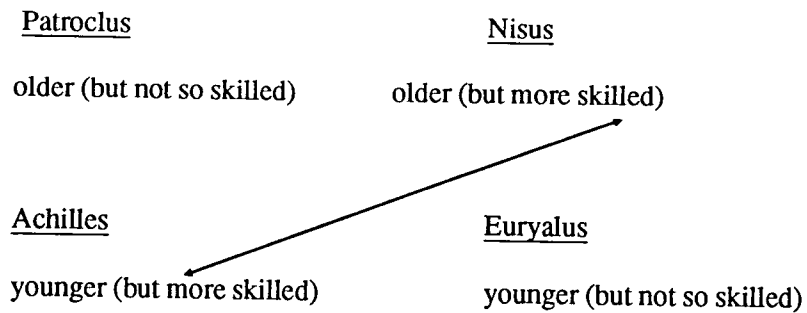
As against these parallels, Homer says that Patroclus was older than Achilles (*Il.* 11, 786–787):

... γενεῇ μὲν ὑπέρτερός ἐστιν Ἀχιλλεύς,
πρεσβύτερος δὲ σὺ ἔσσι·

whereas Euryalus is younger than Nisus.

Despite this important detail, the Homeric idea of the love between Achilles and Patroclus must be echoed in the Vergilian portrayal of that between Nisus and Euryalus. The only other possible role-model in the *Iliad* is the friendship of Odysseus and Diomedes, who chooses Odysseus to accompany him on his mission (a mission which, of course, forms the main narrative inspiration for the mission of Nisus and Euryalus in the *Aeneid*). This friendship is, however, entirely different from that of Nisus and Euryalus. The Homeric story is of one warrior recognising the worth of another and choosing him as the best man for the job. There is no mention of love of any sort between the two and no other reference to their being a recognised pair, unlike Achilles and Patroclus.

It cannot simply be that Vergil inverted the age and type of his characters as compared with Homer's merely for the sake of it:



It would have been equally easy for Vergil to write about a brilliant and warlike young man (Euryalus), who died while trying to save his older, less skilled friend (Nisus), who had overreached himself. Instead Vergil has chosen to write of a young man dying to avenge his still younger friend. It must be asked why Vergil made such a point of stressing Euryalus's extreme youth and also whether perhaps there is a model other than Homer's from which Vergil is drawing the detail of age. Could it be that Vergil was particularly anxious to stress his independence of Homer precisely because he was describing a scenario of such definite Homeric extraction? And might this be achieved by changing the relative ages and prowess of his characters, rather as G. Williams (1968, p. 304) feels that Vergil avoids too complete a dependence on Theocritus by making the beloved object of *Eclogue 2* male, whereas *Idyll 3* and *11* both portray heterosexual love? There seems to be more to be said on this subject, however, (*vide infra*). There is another possible reason for the inversion of the ages of Nisus and Euryalus in relation to Achilles and Patroclus: this is the 'Platonic' element which is brought more strongly to the fore and has profound implications for the way in which Nisus and Euryalus view their love. As Nisus is the elder of the two, one of his main functions as ἑραστής is to inspire and protect Euryalus (see 320 *audendum dextra* and Nisus's attempts to distract the Rutuli so that Euryalus can escape in the confusion). Euryalus conforms

to all the canons of 'ἐρώμενος-hood' and is young, beautiful and inspired by his ἐραστής to acts of valour.

A consideration of the nature of the friendship of Nisus and Euryalus leads to all sorts of speculation as to the degree of intimacy between the two. There is no explicit mention of active homosexuality in Homer's portrayal of the friendship between Patroclus and Achilles, although it was very often assumed to be so by ancient commentators, and the way in which Homer describes the reactions of his characters lends strength to this assumption (cf. Clarke, 1978, on Achilles's reaction to the news of Patroclus's death). The emotional bond between the two is not based solely on a deep friendship, tied up with the customs of guest-friendship and shared aims but, in the *Iliad* at least, it seems to be based more on an emotional attachment which, by its intensity, can probably be construed as homoerotic. This intensity is revealed in the despair that Achilles feels on hearing of the death of Patroclus. Later poets, however, particularly Aeschylus, seem to have taken the friendship as having a strong homosexual character. Cf. the following fragments from *The Myrmidons* (LCL Aeschylus Vol.2 pp. 424 and 426):

(fr. 135)

σέβας δὲ μηρῶν ἄγνόν οὐκ ἐπηδέσω,
ὦ δυσχάριστε τῶν πυκνῶν φιλημάτων

(fr. 136)

μηρῶν τε τῶν σῶν εὐσεβῆς ὁμιλία

(fr. 138)

Ἀντίλοχ', ἀποιμῶξόν με τοῦ τεθνηκότος
τὸν ζῶντα μᾶλλον· τὰμὰ γὰρ διοίχεται.

The ideas expressed by Aeschylus are less ambiguous than those found in Homer. Although grief unlocks the deepest feelings, the desolate outpourings of Achilles in the *Iliad* are hardly compatible with the feelings felt at the loss of a dear friend and comrade-in-arms. In the fragments of Aeschylus, despite the apparent implications of σέβας, εὐσεβῆς and ἄγνόν, the mood is clearly not one of awe. Frs. 135 and 136 are said to be spoken by Achilles 'in the presence of the corpse of Patroclus, who had been slain by Hector and lay with his lower limbs uncovered' (Lloyd-Jones). The emphasis that Achilles places on the number of kisses that he had given Patroclus (πυκνός implies a close-packed host and gives a feeling of intensity as well as frequency to the statement), and on the effect that Patroclus's thighs (μηροί) have on him (see Dover, 1978, p. 70; cf. also Anacreon (LCL Greek Lyric Vol. 2, p. 86):

ἀλλὰ πρόπινε
ῥαδινούς ὧ φίλε μηρούς.)

as well as the implications of ὁμιλία (cf. Eur. *Hel.* 1400: νυμφικός θ' ὁμιλίας) are clearly symptomatic of the physical relationship but one that arises from a profound emotional source.

As Vergil draws heavily on the tragedians for the ethos of the *Aeneid*, much of this later interpretation of the love of Achilles for Patroclus may well have been infused into the love of Nisus and Euryalus.

It might even be possible to interpret the relationship between Nisus and Euryalus simply and unambiguously as a friendship based on shared interests although this is rather difficult to argue as it ignores many other elements of the story. The idea seems to be that 182 (*his amor unus erat pariterque in bella ruebant*) should be taken in the same way as the linking of Patroclus and Automedon at *Il.* 16.219–220. However, the line in the *Aeneid* has two separate elements. These cover two aspects of the love of Nisus and Euryalus and the former (*his amor unus erat*) is not dependent solely on the latter (*pariterque in bella ruebant*) but is an example of it. The fact that they join battle together is only one facet of their love; this love stands by itself as the central concept and applies in all circumstances, but particularly to their actions in a martial field and this fits in well with the Platonic ethos of their love (cf. Plato *Sym.* 178d–179b).

But surely if it had solely been a case of common pursuits then Nisus would not have made such a point of stressing that Euryalus came with him out of love and for no other reason (430 *tantum infelicem nimium dilexit amicum*). Although it would have been inappropriate for Nisus to try and excuse the presence of Euryalus to the Rutuli by saying that his chief delight was in warfare and slaughter, still it is noticeable that Nisus makes a point of stressing that this was not the reason, because Euryalus had not the skill or prowess: as he says (428):

. . . *nihil iste nec ausus
nec potuit.*

Bearing in mind the age of the protagonists and the intensity of the bond between them something more than the comradeship of arms must be assumed. Euryalus cannot bear to be parted from Nisus even in extreme danger (199 *mene igitur socium adiungere rebus/ Nise fugis? solum te in tanta pericula mittam?*) and Nisus cannot bear to see Euryalus killed without exacting revenge at what he must know will be the cost of his own life, indeed the tragic denouement is foreshadowed by Euryalus's choice of words (cf. Dido 4. 314 and **Commentary** 199–200, *mene igitur . . .* and *mene*). However chaste the love may or may not be, its existence (in this case) must be recognised.

It cannot, however, be taken as proof that there is no sexual element to the relationship to say that (5. 296) *Nisus amore pio pueri* means that they were friends, with no other connotations: this is to impose Christian ethics on a pagan poet who had the example before him of such units as the Sacred Band. One has also to consider the idea set out by Phaedrus (Plato *Sym.* 178e–179d) that an army composed entirely of lovers and their ἐρώμενοι would be invincible. With these examples before him it is easy to see how Vergil could have meant that the *pius amor* mentioned in Book 5 was the duty owed to a comrade-in-arms, as well as that owed to a lover, and that there be no conflict in this. Indeed, the presence of one's ἐραστής or ἐρώμενος actually fostered the keen fighting spirit rather than detracted from it.

Vergil's description of their *amor* as *pius* calls to mind two of the Aeschylean fragments quoted earlier (135 and 136) where such words as σέβας and εὐσεβῆς are used not of the concept of love, but in relation to the thighs of Patroclus and are uttered by his ἐρώμενος, Achilles. Aeschylus's use of the words in such an apparently carnal setting (to describe one young man's evaluation of the body of another) cannot be entirely discounted when considering Vergil's use of the word *pius* to describe Nisus's love for Euryalus.

On the other hand, a distinction might be made between an active physical involvement and an idealistic, but none the less erotic, attachment. Even in the fragments of Aeschylus, σέβας, ἄγνός and εὐσεβῆς still have religious connotations, as, obviously, does *pius* in the *Aeneid*. This strong religious undercurrent heightens the emotional element of the love but does not, necessarily, imply 'purity' and chasteness in a literal sense, it could equally mean exclusivity as opposed to promiscuity. It does, however, mean that the emotion did not arise solely from physical desire.

THEIR POSITION IN THE *AENEID*

At this stage the positions of the two characters in the framework of the *Aeneid* must be examined. Within the poem as a whole the two are very minor characters: if the episode had been omitted completely it would not have altered the structure of the narrative but much would have been lost in the construction of the ethos. Nisus and Euryalus act as foils to many other characters both by what they are and by what they do and say. The most satisfactory way to illustrate this is to compare Vergil's treatment and portrayal of Nisus and Euryalus with that of other characters particularly Lausus and Pallas. This is by no means an exhaustive list: much can also be

gained from comparison with Camilla, who exhibits a 'certain athletic boyishness' (Jackson Knight, 1966, p. 146) and so can appear in the same category as these male warriors, and also by comparison with Dido, whose influence on Aeneas has a profound effect on the structure of the *Aeneid*.

On a rather superficial level, Vergil's portrayal of Nisus, Lausus and Pallas is much the same in regard to their actions, but not in his perception of them or their actual circumstances. All three die by the hands of adversaries stronger (whether in number or prowess) than they, during an act of *pietas* of some kind: Nisus in seeking to avenge Euryalus, Lausus in defending Mezentius, Pallas, after praying to Hercules, while attempting to put some spirit into his followers. All three are lamented: Nisus by the Trojans, Lausus by Mezentius and later by Aeneas, and Pallas by Aeneas and later by Evander. Their actions could all be considered rash, but perhaps forgivable because of the keenness of youth and the fact that they all act under great emotional pressure. Perhaps all three, like Turnus, are rash, heroic spirits who must die to ensure the future safety of a state in which such volatile warriors could be dangerous. As Brooks Otis says (1969, p.36):

The mission of Rome is peace: the driving spirit of Turnus, Camilla, Nisus, Mezentius, Amata, as well as Dido, is passion, and through passion, violence. Only the civilised man — who has already put down the violence — can afford to admire it, to take the romantic view of it.

But how would Rome have become the mistress of the world if not for the keen, competitive fighting spirit of her people?

In what way, then, is Nisus different? It cannot solely be that he fails in the martial field because of personal attraction to Euryalus: Lausus is ultimately praised for his loyalty even to such a one as Mezentius, who is *contemptor divum*, and therefore not the most obvious object of *pietas*. It seems to be that it is Nisus's lack of honour to the gods which marks him out. As he has started his mission inauspiciously, whatever he does thereafter only compounds the effect because he does nothing definite to rectify his initial 'fall from grace'. This is the vital difference between Nisus and Lausus and Pallas. It is not solely the fact that Nisus acts on his personal feelings of *pietas* that is wrong, but that this attitude is linked with a lack of commitment to the gods and the state. This failure to encompass all aspects of *pietas* is not found in Lausus or Pallas. The honour and concern Lausus shows for his father is part of the regard due to family, and therefore state, even when that father has been driven out of his family home. The prayers that Pallas offers to Hercules are also part of this same piety, as Pallas mentions the estate and piety of Evander. The prayers that Nisus offers, however, are of a different sort: he prays not for the honour of his family, despite mentioning his father in passing, but that he may rescue Euryalus, his beloved, who does not fall within the category of 'family' or 'state'.

It is, however, hard to judge Nisus and Euryalus harshly. They may not act from the best possible motives (they are bored and want excitement), but it is a brave attempt none the less and whereas it might be possible to say that they, like Lausus and Pallas, should have realised their limitations and not wasted themselves in such a situation, the pressure of war makes the young act in a way beyond their years, while they are often unable to bear the strain of actions which, ideally, should have been performed by their elders and more experienced betters. It is, after all, not the fault of Nisus

and Euryalus that they are young and relatively inexperienced; it is merely a shame that such prowess as they have should be tried too early. The tragedy of the situation is that the Trojan elders are in such fear and confusion that they are unable to dissuade two young warriors from a plan of which they thought themselves capable, when in fact they are not.

A consideration of Nisus, Euryalus, Pallas, Lausus and Camilla will show that they all have two things in common: their youth and death. All of them die in battle, a warrior's death described in suitable language: all except Euryalus. What makes Euryalus so different? It is the description of his death that marks him out as a special case. It is not the actual 'mechanics' of his death (being stabbed by Volcens) that holds the attention, but the way in which this is subsumed by the 'flower simile'. The lasting impression of Euryalus's fate is of him fainting languidly into death (see **Commentary** 433–437). It is surely not merely his beauty that causes the reader to expect some special treatment of his death. All the others have that aspect of beauty found in youth and prowess: it is after all part of the ἀρετή expected of a young warrior. This same ideal is often found in the *Iliad* in such young warriors as Gorgythion, who shares the imagery of Euryalus's death (*Il.* 8. 302–308):

... ὁ (sc. Teucer) δ' ἀμύμονα Γοργυθίωνα
 υἱὸν ἔνν Πριάμοιο κατὰ στήθος βάλεν ἰῶ,
 τὸν ῥ' ἐξ Αἰσύμηθεν ὀπυιομένη τέκε μήτηρ
 καλὴ Καστιάνειρα δέμας εἰκυῖα θεῆσι.
 μήκων δ' ὡς ἐτέρωσε κάρη βάλεν, ἢ τ' ἐνὶ κήπῳ,
 καρπῷ βριθομένη νοτίησί τε εἰαρινῆσιν,
 ὡς ἐτέρωσ' ἤμυσε κάρη πῆληκι βαρυνθέν.

However, the similarity only goes so far as the subject of the simile is concerned, the ethos is entirely different (see *Commentary* on 431–437). Why, then, is Euryalus so different? It may be due to the fact that he is younger than the rest, who would appear to be much of an age; and conceivably his relationship with Nisus has something to do with it. Nisus is the more dynamic of the two and so Euryalus assumes a far more subordinate role, more marked than it would be were he not connected with so skilled a warrior. The model for this disparity seems to be Homer's portrayal of Patroclus as a good warrior in his own right, as illustrated by his ἀριστεία, but a poor one in comparison to his friend Achilles. Apollo himself points this out as Patroclus overreaches himself by trying to attack Troy itself (*Il.* 16. 707–709):

‘ χάζεο, διογενὲς Πατρόκλεες· οὐ νύ τοι αἶσα
 σῶ ὑπὸ δουρὶ πόλιν πέρθει Τρώων ἀγερώχων,
 οὐδ’ ὑπ’ Ἀχιλλῆος, ὅς περ σέο πολλὸν ἀμείνων. ’

It should also be noted that the deaths of the others are presented as happening solely before the eyes of other characters. With the death of Euryalus, despite its happening literally before the eyes of Nisus, it seems as if it is more the poet who is lingering over the dying moments of his character, and not other characters, for Nisus was in no position to stay and watch. (See *Commentary* 438, 438–439 at *Nisus ruit . . . Volcente moratur*).

THEIR 'TYPE' IN THE CLASSICAL TRADITION:

(a) Nisus as a warrior

How are Nisus and Euryalus to be regarded? They must surely be judged and viewed in comparison to other characters in similar situations to their own. They are placed in a martial context by Vergil and can best be evaluated by comparison with other warriors, both in the *Aeneid* and in other literature (particularly the *Iliad*) which had an influence on Vergil.

Firstly, Homer's conception of the young warrior. To get a fully rounded picture it is necessary to examine the treatment of both the famous and the obscure. The most famous exemplar of the first type is Achilles, 'the Best of the Achaeans'. His similarities with Nisus have already been examined, but it should be remembered that Achilles, by killing Hector for whatever reason, is acting in a way that is beneficial to his fellow Greeks: Nisus, by avenging Euryalus and getting himself killed before he can deliver his message to Aeneas, is doing precisely the opposite (see **Introduction: Nisus**). Nisus faces a far more complex dilemma than does Achilles in a similar position. Although in the heat of the moment Nisus does not himself recognise its existence, the poet and audience, who are able to evaluate his actions, have this question before them: does personal loyalty in such extremities, or indeed at any other time, supersede loyalty and duty to the wider State? This is a question deeply embedded in the ethos of the *Aeneid* (e.g. in the 'Dido and Aeneas Episode'), and indeed much of Augustan poetry. One should think of the intensely personal nature of much of the poetry of Propertius and Tibullus and the way this is regarded in relation to the *mores* expected by the State. However, it is more profitable

to compare martial epic with its like. In the case of Achilles, as Homer relates in the *Iliad*, Achilles's actions, performed because of his own desires, coincide with the wishes of his comrades, and so he does not act in a way prejudicial to his 'State', if the result is taken as the only criterion.

But how far can the individual express himself at the expense of the State? The question is examined by Commager (p. 11) who says:

To the bees in the fourth *Georgic* the state was a labor of love, but in the *Aeneid* duty and inclination are constantly opposed.

In such a situation as this, Vergil clearly, if allusively, poses the question, but does not impose an answer.

Hector is perhaps the most obvious exemplar of patriotism. It should be noted, however, that the course of action expected of him is also very clearly what he himself wants: all he must do is drive off the invader, thus in the process protecting his own wife and family. The fact that this brings him enormous κῦδος and respect among his fellow citizens is an inescapable part of the actions. Although he fights for his family, this does not detract from his prowess and stature as guardian of the city, and also it does not harm his honour by forcing him to neglect one for the sake of the other. Nisus's position is different and unenviable: he must choose between his duty to Euryalus, his beloved, and the other Trojans, who are relying on him to reach Aeneas. To slight either of these claims would be dishonourable, but it is quite impossible to fulfil both. It is in the attempted division of the concept of *pietas* as it relates to one's fellow men and to the State that Nisus comes to grief: he cannot

act entirely honourably whatever he does. There is, however, the question of priority: Nisus, in putting personal *pietas* to one individual above his patriotic duty gets his priorities wrong.

The main reason for this comparison of Nisus with warriors of the *Iliad* is to establish what makes a Homeric hero and what a Vergilian one. To do this it is even more profitable to compare Nisus to one of the lesser Homeric warriors. Such a warrior would be of similar station to Nisus and, to some extent, in similar circumstances. Nisus's presence in Italy was forced on him by the Greek destruction of Troy, and such a minor Homeric warrior would be compelled to go to Troy by the authority of his chieftain and king. Such a hypothetical warrior would similarly face a conflict of interests between showing loyalty to his lord and preserving his own life and interests: but this is not a division of *pietas* itself. If a reader of the *Aeneid* were to accept Nisus in the guise of a Homeric warrior (and he is clearly modelled on such an example) without recognising that a more serious moral dilemma faces him than faces any of Homer's minor characters, then something fundamental would be lost from the picture that Vergil paints. The real circumstances of Nisus and some hypothetical minor Homeric warrior are so different that it is impossible to apply the same martial code of conduct to both: for the Homeric hero the avenging of a friend and the taking of spoils in a battle would greatly have added to his γέρας, and in the more human-centred, heroic, culture, personal honour came first, so that even Achilles gave up the fight and retired to his tent because his honour had been slighted, and Agamemnon was ready to slight his most valuable chieftain so that he himself might not appear dishonoured before the rest. This is not what Nisus faces. The augmentation of his γέρας depended on his reaching Aeneas. It seems unlikely that

he would have been rewarded if he had failed to break through the enemy lines but had nevertheless returned having extricated Euryalus (*pace* Servius on 299 *casus factum quicumque sequetur*:

satis congrue; praemia enim non debentur eventui, sed voluntati: hoc est quidquid evenit, praemia dabo

(however, see **Commentary 299** for the possible implausibility of this interpretation).

Another aspect can be seen to this question if one considers the awarding of the *Corona Civica* to a soldier who saved another citizen's life in battle. Was this action honoured because it was an act of personal *pietas* to a comrade-in-arms and thus fostered *esprit de corps* or was it rather that the state was spared the loss of one of its guardians? But again, in the *Iliad* at a point such as at the relief of the beleaguered Aias, it is not the case that the act of *pietas* to a comrade endangers the whole state. It is all a question of the degree of responsibility placed on the individual performing the *pius* act. What is more important is that the *Corona Civica*, which had been 'the reward of a citizen who had saved the life of another in battle, and was originally given by the saved man . . .' (Weinstock, p. 163) was awarded to Julius Caesar in 45 BC 'because he saved a great number of the citizens, not just one, and not by personal bravery on the battlefield' (*op. cit.* p. 164). This clearly shows that Vergil could have had the example before him of the saving of the state being of more importance than the saving of the individual.

Vergil also recognises this idea in the *Georgics* (Book 4) where he speaks of the Bees sacrificing themselves willingly for the safety of the 'King' who embodies the spirit of the state (*Geo.* 4. 217-218):

*et saepe attollunt in umeris et corpora bello
obiectant pulchramque petunt per vulnera mortem.*

Thus he shows that for a Roman at least, the safety of the state took precedence over the wishes of its individual citizens. On the other hand, although Achilles and Agamemnon do both incur some opprobrium for excessive regard of their own honour, in a society that judged its members by the tangible recognition paid to that honour, it is hardly surprising that it should be so carefully guarded. But this care could be taken to excess. Achilles only really re-establishes his former honourable status after he has accepted a ransom for Hector's body, thus to a sufficient extent re-integrating himself into the society in which Homer has placed him by conforming to its accepted practice once more whatever his reasons for doing so might have been. All the time of his abstention from battle and refusal to be reconciled to Agamemnon and then during his insane pursuit of Hector both living and dead, he is acting in a way that puts him outside the 'political' sphere, and therefore on a morally insupportable footing.

(b) Euryalus as a warrior

It is more difficult to form an evaluation of Euryalus as a warrior. Nisus is a far more martial figure than Euryalus who seems strangely out of place in a military exercise because of his age and character. This incongruity is clearly shown when he is compared to such Homeric figures as Gorgythion or Vergilian ones as Pallas.

All three share the 'flower simile' at death, but only Euryalus stands out by dying without mention of armour or fighting. The description and ethos of Euryalus's death remove him from the welter and grime of the immediate battle as if this were somehow not actually connected with him, and as if his dying were not the reason for the mêlée, but that the uproar were incidental.

It is only possible to talk of Euryalus simply as a warrior in the early part of the action (342–355): before and after these few lines he is something different (particularly after them). Before he starts on his period of carnage, Euryalus is cast more in the role of the beloved of Nisus than as a comrade-in-arms. Special attention is drawn to his youth and beauty, whereas the attention is drawn to Nisus's skill and prowess. Another pointer to this view of Euryalus is the fact that Nisus does not originally think of taking Euryalus with him. The idea that Nisus did not imagine Euryalus as a possible companion in danger is shown in the extensive reply that Nisus makes, denying that he ever considered Euryalus as not capable enough (207–209):

*Nisus ad haec: 'equidem de te nil tale verebar,
nec fas; non ita me referet tibi magnus ovantem
Iuppiter aut quiquam oculis haec aspicit aequis.'*

This denial is excessive, as if Nisus had indeed had such an opinion of Euryalus, but when Euryalus, his beloved, taxed him about it he had to indulge in hyperbolic language to assure him that he had never had such an unworthy thought about him. The fact that Nisus's high-flown language does not quite ring true does not seem to have been lost on Euryalus, and this is perhaps why he indulges in such carnage (cf. 342ff *nec minor Euryali caedes*) — to prove Nisus wrong in his estimation of him.

After acting in a more warlike fashion, by slaughtering the sleeping Rutuli, Euryalus again becomes something other than a martial figure. He cannot resist taking spoils. Admittedly for a Homeric hero, or in other circumstances, this would have been quite acceptable. Here it is not so because it disables him for his mission.

It is not actually the taking of spoils that is wrong, it is the wearing of them that 'infringed what seems to have been some kind of rather hazy taboo' (Lyne, 1983. Cf. also Cleary and also introduction to Section 2). Such spoils should be dedicated, not worn. The wearing of them causes a degree of uneasiness among more pious mortals, as if such a show of arrogance could only be the result of an infatuation, which by its very nature would be as ritually infectious as madness. The man who acts in a sacrilegious manner is overshadowed by the ἄτη he has called into being to such an extent that he becomes identified with it. Even the gods are not immune from this feeling of horror. It is as if, on the most numinous level, the laws of Fate had been infringed as well as divine law. There is even an account of Zeus looking anxiously down at Hector who is wearing the armour of Achilles which he has just stripped from Patroclus's body (*Il.* 17. 201–208). Just as Mezentius clothes his son Lausus in spoils which, but for his gratuitous impiety, should have been dedicated to the gods, and so condemns Lausus to die as the substitute for the sacrificial victim killed at such an offering, so Euryalus, putting on spoils that he himself has taken, condemns himself to a similar fate.

Euryalus also gets lost and frightened in the dark woods. This is not the usual state of mind for a skilled warrior, who would no doubt have been more resourceful and more careful not to get into such a position by heedlessly encumbering himself. The

most significant pointer to Euryalus's lack of martial standing again comes from Nisus. Nisus feels that he has to come back and rescue Euryalus, and in the process takes all the blame on himself, thus finally showing that Euryalus is ineffective as a warrior in his own right. It is not by his attempt to rescue Euryalus that Nisus shows him in his true character; even redoubtable chieftains in the *Iliad* rescue one another when hard-pressed, for example in the rally to Aias and Menelaus (*Il.* 17. 256–261); it is Nisus's describing him as young, inexperienced and too much in love that finally shows him as being out of place in a field of war: he has gone on the expedition not to reach Aeneas but rather so as not to be parted from Nisus. The fact that Nisus feels so emotionally protective towards him also detracts from Euryalus's martial stature, as it shows that Nisus did not consider him capable of looking after himself in any circumstances.

It is finally in his dying and death that Euryalus is farthest removed from the 'epic' scene of battle and warfare. It is as if he were removed from the scene of his death to another sphere where his dying takes on a character similar to that of Adonis (see **Commentary** 433–437). Because the attention is focused intensely on his actual dying, the surrounding noise and battle fade into the distance and are momentarily forgotten.

A ROMAN PERSPECTIVE

It is difficult to gauge the reaction of a Roman audience to the idea that personal *pietas* might override duty to the state. It should be remembered that Brutus was praised for saving the Republic, and thus acting for the good of the state, embodied in that most emotive of Latin words: *patria* (6. 823). If the actions of Brutus are

taken as a paradigm of how a good citizen should act, and this is applied to the case of Nisus and Euryalus, then the *patria* of Nisus would be represented by the whole mass of Trojans under the leadership of Aeneas: the Fatherland thus being represented by its people, wherever they might happen to be. Brutus saved his *patria* at great personal cost, having his own sons executed for sedition (6. 820–821):

*... natosque pater nova bella moventis
ad poenam pulchra pro libertate vocabit.*

This might seem to imply that Nisus should have done his duty to his countrymen by finding Aeneas, and leaving Euryalus to his death without trying to avenge him at that moment. It should be remembered that the shade of Brutus is among those in the Fields of the Blessed, whereas the heroes of the Trojan War wander around in the shadows of Hades (6. 477–493). These are vain shades: the idea of reincarnation is not applied to them, as if their order had passed away and would not be renewed on earth. By his actions, Nisus links himself to these warriors, with their narrow heroic code, not to the new breed of men who would submerge themselves and their own wishes and feelings for the good of the state. After being purified, and having drunk the waters of Lethe, the souls in the Fields of the Blessed return to the world of men (6. 739–751).

However, even in the case of Brutus, Vergil is not entirely in his favour as is seen by the next line (6. 822):

infelix, utcumque ferent ea facta minores,

as if he himself felt that this went too far, and that although this was a vice more akin to virtue, he, Vergil, did not hold entirely with this code of conduct either (cf. Feeney, p. 10). There is also the fact of Vergil's transferring the epithet of *superbus* from Tarquin, whose usual sobriquet it is, to Brutus, thus casting some of the odium of the tyrant on to the consul (see Lloyd, p. 129; see also Feeney, *loc. cit.*).

Perhaps a slightly less controversial case of state *pietas* taking precedence over personal *pietas* would be that found in the 'Story of Dido and Aeneas'. Aeneas is quite clearly blamed, even by Jupiter, for the lapse that leads him to forget his duty to the Trojans and become involved in a dangerous liason. Whatever it may cost him, and indeed it does cost him a lot (see 4. 438–449), Aeneas gives up Dido and continues on his journey. What seems to give added support to Aeneas's decision to leave is that thereafter any mention of Dido seems to exert a baneful influence or to have tragic overtones, as do any gifts of hers, such as the mixing bowl that Ascanius offers as part of the reward to Nisus (9. 266), or the robes in which the body of Pallas is wrapped (11. 72–75). These cases would seem to show how dangerous was the association with Dido, and that Aeneas was right to leave her, thus putting aside personal *pietas* for the sake of his people, and thus fulfilling his 'political' *pietas*. In leaving Dido he also acts in accordance with the will of the gods and thus fulfils his duty to family/state and gods. This is exemplified by his regaining his usual sobriquet, *pius* (4. 393) after he has not been so described since Book 1 (305). (See Moles 1987, p. 158.)

A pointer that this selflessness was generally an admired characteristic is again taken from *Georgics* 4. The bees die so that the hive can go on, but the sexless nature of

bees should be borne in mind: they do not die because of personal desires, as does Nisus, but for the good of their community. (See Wilkinson, 1982, p. 120):

Bees have *mores*, he (sc. Vergil) alleges, unique in the animal kingdom, given them by Jupiter as a reward (*Geo* 4. 149-152): communism, even of children, loyalty to home, laws and leaders. . . . Finally in a class by themselves, they are non-sexual. Since these *mores* are spoken of as a reward, we must assume that Vergil thinks them advantageous.

This state ethic, portrayed as a paradigm for human affairs in *Geo.* 4 and put into practice by Brutus in *Aen.* 6, should be taken into consideration when judging the conduct of Nisus, but so should the vaguely uneasy feeling that Vergil evokes by describing so anti-personal a state.

What, then, would a Roman audience have expected Nisus to do? It is a dangerous thing to assume that the same response could come out of such different social situations as are found in Augustan Rome and the present day, but it would be safe to assume that even then there would have been several responses as not everyone thinks the same thing at a given time. One side would have considered that Nisus should have gone alone, and that if not, he should have abandoned Euryalus to his fate and bided his time for avenging him. The other, that he did right because the personal aspect of *pietas* overshadows and also underpins civil *pietas*. But where is the dividing line, and where do Nisus's actions fall along its opposed axis? It is all very well to say that the state is made up of individuals, but does the individual citizen have rights other than as a member of the group? This is the problem that faces Nisus although he himself might not have recognised it in the heat of the moment.

To Vergil the individual was important. One has merely to consider the poignant vignettes of some characters (such as Umbro, 7. 759–760) as they die, to realise that Vergil was not solely advocating the sterile world of Stoicism followed by such as Cato and acted upon by Brutus as Vergil portrays him in Book 6. Commager, (p. 11) says:

If, then, the *Aeneid* is a story of success, it is also a story of what success costs: . . . and it is characteristic of Virgil that we should remember not the victors but the defeated . . .

VERGIL'S PERCEPTION OF NISUS AND EURYALUS

When examining the 'Nisus and Euryalus Episode', it is necessary to exercise caution in assigning quasi-erotic language and description to the deaths of the two characters. This does not necessarily prove that they were lovers, but might in fact be a reflection of Vergil's own psyche in his depiction of them: there is, after all, the tradition, in the *Life* of Donatus, that Vergil had homosexual tendencies, and that this would therefore cause him to view a certain situation, such as the death of a young boy in such circumstances, in a particular light. When asking how Vergil felt towards Nisus and Euryalus, much care should be taken in distinguishing what Vergil himself says in his own poetry, and what others have inferred from this. Such confusion of the poet and the poetic *persona* may be seen in the *Life* of Aelius Donatus, who quite clearly says that Vergil was attracted to young boys (*Vita Donati* 29):

*maxime dilexit Cebetem et Alexandrum, quem secunda
Bucolicorum ecloga Alexim appellat.*

It could be that Donatus was only interested in trying to find autobiographical ‘facts’ in Vergil’s poetry, and so took for fact what might only have been poetic invention on Vergil’s part. It could also be that Vergil is taking the ethos of his characters from Homer’s implied view of Achilles and Patroclus if one does, indeed, take them to be lovers (see Clarke, esp. pp. 384–385). It must be asked, however, why there is the change of sex of the object of love between Theocritus *Idyll* 11. 72, which is clearly Vergil’s model, and *Eclogue* 2. 69, if not because influenced by some aspect of the poet’s character. But, even this could be due to a wish to show independence of his source like the inversion of age and prowess of the characters in the *Aeneid* in relation to the way in which Homer portrays Achilles and Patroclus (*vide supra*, p. 17). On the one hand it could be that Donatus is taking the contents of a poem as autobiographical detail, which view then colours the reader’s perception of other works by the same poet. But on the other hand, there do seem to be more homoerotic overtones to the ‘Nisus and Euryalus Episode’ (see **Commentary** *passim*) than can be put down to chance or imitation of a Homeric ethos (which is unlikely when considering the care with which Vergil avoids such imitation). This may therefore show something of the way in which Vergil viewed Nisus and Euryalus himself, and thus how they should be viewed by the reader, as a part of the whole picture.

This, however, is not really the place for an exposition of Vergil’s sexuality, but rather for his general perception of his own characters. It is easy to see the overt picture that Vergil paints of two young warriors who want adventure and fame and who, for whatever reason, come to a sad end. However, more revealing are the asides such as in 340 (*suadet enim vesana fames*); 354 (*sensit enim nimia caede atque cupidine ferri*); 465 (*visu miserabile*); and perhaps most importantly 446–449

(*Fortunati ambo! . . . Romanus habebit*). In these four places, Vergil encapsulates all the ethos of the episode and thus shows how the characters should be viewed by the way in which he evaluates their actions. Starting with 340, Vergil shows up the episode as being due to some mad (*vesana*) desire, whether for slaughter, honour, or love's compulsion he does not say explicitly, not does he imply that the motivation is simple and unmixed, but by the use of the word *vesana* he casts a shadow over its possible outcome because its initial motivation stemmed from irrationality. The fact that the word is used only in a simile does not detract from its force. Such an atmospheric word is very unlikely to be used purely fortuitously or exclusively to its location in the poetry of Vergil. After all, a simile is used to give a new shade of meaning to a recognised characteristic, it does not operate in a vacuum. The same word is used, again in a simile, to describe Mezentius's pursuit and killing of Acron (10. 724), and so it is likely that some of the odium attached to Mezentius for his cruelty and impiety would become attached to Nisus in retrospect, because of the sharing of this imagery. The idea that Vergil thinks that the mission cannot succeed because of the very characters themselves is carried on in 354, where although at first reading the thoughts seem to be attributed to Nisus, Vergil looks through him and sees that they are acting to excess, hybristically, and are bound to come to ruin.

Despite any misgivings that Vergil may have, he shows that there are still some noble aspects to Nisus and Euryalus. Even if they cannot be commemorated for their deeds in war, they can at least be celebrated for their devotion. For a more detailed study of the 'mechanics' of *Fortunati ambo* see **Commentary 446–449**; but as a comment by Vergil himself on the episode, it shows that he had some sympathy for his characters, despite all their faults, or perhaps even because of them, because by their

love and death, Nisus and Euryalus showed the triumph not of heroes or kings, but of the 'small people' who are caught up in the meshes of greatness. In this respect they are of similar type to the shepherds of the *Eclogues* and the farmers of the *Georgics*. They are not born great, but achieve greatness in song and 'folk-memory', so that what they ideally embody lives on as a foil to Rome, magnificent and impersonal. As Adam Parry says (see Commager, pp. 107–123):

The *Aeneid* enforces the fine paradox that all the wonders of the most powerful institution the world has ever known are not necessarily of greater importance than the emptiness of human suffering.

Vergil shows that this is indeed an intentional overtone with his comment at 465. Ostensibly it is applied to the sight of the impaled heads of Nisus and Euryalus, but really it applies to their tragic death. He may forever record them in song, but at the time he can only feel regret for their passing.

COMMENTARY

SECTION 1: (176–313): PLANNING AND PREPARATION

Introduction

Nisus is on sentry duty at night in the besieged Trojan camp with Euryalus as his companion (176). Nisus is keen to distinguish himself through some heroic act, but Euryalus is unwilling for him to go alone into such danger and tries to persuade Nisus to take him as well. Euryalus discounts (219) Nisus's argument that he should stay behind because Nisus is unwilling to be responsible for causing grief to Euryalus's mother if anything should happen to Euryalus. Nisus then agrees to take him to warn Aeneas that the camp is under siege. This is the ostensible goal of their mission. They call up other sentries to take their place and go in search of Ascanius to lay the plan before him (223).

The Trojan leaders are in council when Nisus and Euryalus appear and propose their plan. They say that they will not lose their way as they know the area well from hunting trips (243 *nec nos via fallit euntis . . . cognovimus amnem*). Aletes gives thanks to the gods for such martial spirit among the Trojan young, and says that their bravery will not be forgotten by Ascanius. Ascanius takes his cue from this and promises lavish rewards to Nisus (258-274) and honour to Euryalus (275–280). Euryalus begs Ascanius to take care of his aged mother should anything happen to him, and this Ascanius promises (297 *erit ista mihi genetrix nomenque Creusal solum defuerit*).

Nisus and Euryalus exchange armour with the leaders and set out on their expedition followed by the prayers of their countrymen (310). However, even at this early stage there is a note of foreboding in 312–313 (*sed aerae omnia discerpunt et nubibus inrita donant*). This is the first time that the natural order takes over from the works of men. This element of the narrative will be of great importance to the subsequent story.

This section is based largely on the early stages of the Homeric *Doloneia* (*Iliad* 10). The most striking difference is, however, the status of the characters involved. In the *Iliad*, the plan is mooted by Agamemnon, discussed among his chieftains and then acted upon by the most redoubtable warriors. In the *Aeneid*, the whole plan is made by young men who wish to win glory for themselves, and also to relieve the tedium of being trapped by the enemy forces. They lay their ideas before a council which is in such a state of depression that it will clutch at any hope of relieving the situation without really considering whether the youths can fulfill their aim. This desperation is shown by the lavish, indeed excessive, rewards offered by Ascanius to Nisus. In the *Iliad*, the main reward would have been κῦδος and an increase in γέρας (*Il.* 10. 212–217):

... μέγα κέν οἱ ὑπουράνιον κλέος εἶη
 πάντας ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους, καί οἱ δόσις ἔσσεται ἐσθλή·
 ὅσσοι γάρ νήεσσιν ἐπικρατέουσιν ἄριστοι,
 τῶν πάντων οἱ ἕκαστος οἷν δώσουσι μέλαιναν
 θῆλυν ὑπόρρηνον· τῇ μὲν κτέρας οὐδὲν ὁμοῖον,
 αἰεὶ δ' ἐν δαίτησι καὶ εἰλαπίνῃσι παρέσται.

It is the honour conveyed by the giving of this reward, rather than its monetary value, that is important to Homer's warriors and it is a recognition of worth rather than a reward for action.

This section (*Aen.* 9. 176–313) consists mostly of dialogue. The tempo is very slow and measured as Vergil lays the foundations of the whole story. It is at this stage that he 'sketches' the characters using their speech to show attitudes and natures. Nisus cannot bear the enforced inactivity of being besieged (186–187) and longs to do something active, but he has clearly been thinking for a while about his plan before he starts to discuss it with Euryalus. This is shown by the fact that he begins his speech with *hunc ardorem* (184), and says later that he has been keen to do something for a long time (186 *iamdudum*). While he may be restless by temperament, he is not rash or unthinking in his actions. It is also significant that he assumes that Euryalus will instantly know what he means by *hunc ardorem*. Although he quickly makes clear what it is that he has been thinking (186–187), it is introduced in such a manner as to cause uncertainty. It is unclear at the start (to the reader) whether he is speculating on the sphere of the gods or proposing a plan for immediate action. This shows the strength of the bond between the two as Vergil implies that they will be thinking along the same lines. But it is unfortunate that they also share a certain disregard for the gods: Nisus may not be technically impious in his speculation (of 185) but he is ill advised to voice such an opinion in a world of jealous gods. Euryalus is more outspoken, openly speaking of himself as *lucis contemptor* (205). Nisus thus belittles the executive power of the gods and begins the downward spiral of impiety and its consequences, Euryalus despises them by scorning a light whose source is divine.

Euryalus is obviously very attached to Nisus, and so cannot bear the idea of being parted from him even in such a dangerous escapade (199f. *mene igitur socium summis adiungere rebus,/ Nise fugis?*). In the two books where he mentions him (Books 5 and 9), Vergil has drawn a very detailed picture of Euryalus. In Book 5, he won the sympathy of the Trojans by his good looks and tears, here he is similarly effective in winning Nisus over despite the arguments that Nisus puts forward, both on his own behalf (211–215) and on behalf of Euryalus's mother (216 *neu matri miserae tanti sim causa doloris*).

Commentary

176–178 Nisus erat . . . sagittis Vergil draws a brief sketch of Nisus, giving in a few lines his name, patronymic, status and prowess and also something of his character and history. In this brief vignette, Nisus is introduced abruptly and prominently, as if he were an unknown figure, despite the fact that he appears in the Funeral Games in Book 5 (294–361). Sparrow (p. 33) notes that Juturna is similarly introduced ‘. . . as for the first time at 12.138, after having been casually mentioned at 10. 439’, and suggests that:

It looks therefore as if Virgil composed at least the beginning of the Nisus and Euryalus episode in that Book (9) before he decided that the two heroes were to appear earlier in the poem.

However, it is more plausible to argue that, as Vergil treats Juturna in a similar way, introducing the character formally only at the second mention, the device is deliberate. Its function is to highlight a character at its most important appearance in the

narrative, which may not necessarily be the first mention. This is part of the epic technique, and is extensively paralleled in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

portae custos This appears (so Henry) to be a direct descendent of Homer's πυλαωρός (*Il.* 21. 530; 24. 681). In these cases the adjectives used to describe the watchmen are complimentary: ἀγακλειτοὺς πυλαωρούς (21. 530), and ἱεροὺς πυλαωρούς (24. 681). The fact that Nisus is *portae custos* and not just *vigil* shows his worth by linking him with these noble literary forbears. The mention of ἱεροὺς πυλαωρούς by Homer could be significant when considering Vergil's echo of them in the function and nature of Nisus. He fails in his duty as a watchman (see **Commentary 221–223 vigiles**.) Moreover, Nisus is not at all holy: he casts doubt on the executive power of the gods (184–185 and 208–211) and does not make the prescribed prayers and vows before setting out. Nowhere does Vergil describe Nisus as *pious* or any equivalent word, except in his description of his love for Euryalus (5.296). This love is a private matter and the lack of such an epithet when describing his duty as watchman, in comparison with Homer's watchmen, makes the contrast particularly marked.

acerrimus armis Is *acerrimus* synonymous with *fortissimus*, or should something more be read into the choice of this word? Just before he is about to kill Turnus, Aeneas is described as *acer in armis* (12. 938). Whereas it cannot be doubted, on one level, that Aeneas is a redoubtable warrior and therefore suits this description of him, on the other hand it should be remembered that he is just about to kill a suppliant. Nisus does not escape from the taint of ὕβρις either, in that in

order to perform his ostensible task of finding Aeneas he clears a way through the enemy by slaughtering them while they sleep. The fact that Nisus's epithet is in the superlative, *acerrimus*, gives some slight worry as regards excessive force. That Nisus should vent his frustration at having been confined on enemies who are incapacitated and therefore not able to harm him, and also see them despoiled, must be considered as excessive. Whereas *acer* is quite a common word for describing various aspects of character and action, *acerrimus* is only used three times in the *Aeneid*, at 2. 424 (*acerrimus Ajax*), 9. 176 (*acerrimus armis*), and at 12. 226 (*et ipse [sc. Camers] acerrimus armis*). At 2. 414 and 12. 226 there are ominous overtones. In the first instance, the word is applied to Ajax while he is dragging Cassandra from the statue in the temple of Minerva, in the second it is seemingly applied to Camers. In fact it is applied to Juturna (in the shape of Camers), just before she rouses the Rutuli to break the truce with the Trojans. Both characters are clearly engaged in acts of impiety, and so what is implied about the third occurrence, Nisus's? As the word is only used these three times, a shadow must be cast by association over the character so described even while it seems to praise him for his valour.

There is some tension between the dynamic aspect of Nisus's character, embodied in *acerrimus armis*, and his present static role as *portae custos*. These disparate elements, present in the one man simultaneously, exemplify Nisus's character: he is a fierce and ruthless warrior, and yet his stationary position as watchman symbolises his capacity for considered argument and planning. In the end, however, his emotional, dynamic, self rather than his rational self wins through and he has to throw over all restraint to try and save Euryalus. This is foreshadowed symbolically by the

fact that his martial prowess is given far more prominence than his function as watchman.

177 Hyrtacides Nisus's patronymic is finally given, equally prominent in its positioning as his name, but delayed. This delaying of the patronymic is important, as will be seen below. In effect, we have so far been told that 'Nisus is guardian of the gate, and a keen warrior', but then we are told exactly which Nisus it is. The fact that Nisus is introduced without any patronymic in Book 5, but with one here, has been used as an argument that the latter episode was composed before the one placed earlier in the poem (cf. Sparrow) as is suggested by Suetonius (*Vita Vergili*, 23):

*Aeneida prosa prius oratione formatam digestamque in XII libros
particulatim componere instituit, prout liberat quidque, et nihil in
ordinem arripiens.*

Even if this really is the reason for the patronymic appearing here and not earlier (rather than a wish to 'spotlight' a character at his most important appearance, as would seem more likely, *vide supra* and **Commentary 176–178 Nisus erat**), the mention of Nisus as 'Hyrtacus's son' at this stage brings to mind not only Hyrtacus, but also Hippocoon, seemingly Nisus's brother, who distinguished himself in the Funeral Games in which Nisus committed a foul. Despite having our hopes raised by mention of Nisus's parentage and family, we are also perhaps supposed to make a comparison between Nisus and his brother in the matter of fair play (from Book 5), and his father in piety (from Book 9. 406–407, *si qua tuis umquam pro me pater Hyrtacus aris/ dona tulit*). The fact that Nisus is here dislocated from his patronymic stylistically sets him apart from his father and therefore from the rest of his family.

In addition to this, the words in between, Nisus's actual name and his patronymic, apply only to Nisus, thus adding to his isolation.

A complication is introduced by the fact that Homer mentions one Asius, son of Hyrtacus, from Arisbe (*Il.* 2. 837–838):

τῶν αὐθ' Ἰρτακίδης ἦρχ' Ἄσιος, ὄρχαμος ἀνδρῶν,
Ἄσιος Ἰρτακίδης, ὃν Ἀρίσβηθεν . . .

Later (*Aen.* 9. 264) Ascanius promises silver cups taken by Aeneas *devicta Arisba*. There is no need to assume that Vergil made a mistake in his choice of patronymic for Nisus. After all, it is an almost universal practice to take over elements of a conquered enemy's soldiery into one's own army: the Romans did so with captured barbarians and so there is no reason to assume that the Trojans did not; one has merely to witness the fact that Nisus, sharing a patronymic with Asius, is of Aeneas's company to see that the detail is not an error. This could well be another example of Vergilian anachronism, transferring contemporary details back to the distant past. However, when all is said and done, a discordant note is struck for the reader when Ascanius promises such rewards. Indeed, the very inappropriateness of these items may be indicative that the mission is inauspicious, involving the wrong people and things from the start. (See **Commentary** 201–204 *bellis adsuetus Opheltes* and also 264 *devicta Arisba*.)

comitem Aeneae quem miserat Ida/ venatrix iaculo celerem levibusque sagittis Servius notes that:

Ida — plerisque mater Nisi accipitur.

However, it seems much more likely that Ida was the name of the mountain in the Troad, in which case Nisus could well have hunted over it before the destruction of Troy. Homer calls Ida μητέρα θηρῶν (*Il.* 14. 283) and so this location would be quite natural for a keen huntsman such as Nisus. The mention here of hunting in relation to a fine warrior accords well with the tradition that hunting is good practice for warfare (cf. the speech of Numanus Regulus *Aen.* 9. 598–620). However, it is somewhat ironic that Nisus gained this practice on Mount Ida. Ida was also the seat of the worship of Cybele, the Magna Mater, whose devotees (according to Numanus, 9. 614–620) were unfit for war and only skilled in dancing and revelry, indeed not true men at all (617). There is thus some tension between the Homeric view of Ida, which was the haunt of shepherds and huntsmen, and the Latin view, that it was the source of an enervating influence on the martial spirit and therefore viewed with much suspicion. In this instance, Vergil only makes use of the picture given in Homer, but on reading the speech of Numanus, some retrospective ‘colouring’ is given to the picture Vergil paints of Nisus.

Ida The fact that Ida sends Nisus (in the accusative) to be a companion of Aeneas, rather than that Nisus (in the nominative) leaves behind Ida, the place where he used to hunt, clearly amplifies the importance of Nisus’s past status and draws a sharp contrast with his present state. He used to be recognised as a fine hunter, at one with his surroundings, and so much a part of the natural order that he lost his separate identity in it. This is in contrast with his present circumstances where he now stands on his own merits in the field of war (*acerrimus* being in the nominative) and may therefore be judged on his own actions. It is also significant that ‘nature’ seems to

tum against him, thus finally demonstrating his estrangement from it (see **Commentary** 391 *perplexum iter*).

178 venatrix Here the epithet is transferred from Nisus himself to Mount Ida, thus underlining more fully Nisus's affinity with the scenes of his former life. This reference to Nisus's skill as a hunter is an important detail when considering his prayer to Diana (esp. 407, see **Commentary ad loc.**) The fact that Homer also personifies Ida, calling her μητέρα θηρῶν (*Il.* 14. 283) may be relevant. There is a similar occurrence of a personified mountain, sending a warrior to war, in *Aen.* 7. 762:

... *quem* (sc. Virbius) *mater Aricia misit.*

Servius draws a comparison with *domitrix Epidaurus equorum* (*Geo.* 3. 44). It is interesting to note that while Nisus's father, Hyrtacus, is mentioned within the introduction of Nisus, it is his 'mother', Ida, who actually sends him to war. This has a similar effect to Euryalus's being mourned by his mother, unlike Pallas and Lausus who are both mourned by their fathers. The idea draws the attention to the youth and vulnerability of the subject (cf. also **Commentary** 179–181) and in Nisus's case draws a sharp contrast with his skill as a warrior (176).

iaculo celerem levibusque sagittis Servius points out that Vergil

bene inducit Nisum optimum esse iaculatorem, et hanc praemittit armorum peritiam, qua plurimum poterit in Euryali defensione.

It is therefore no surprise that Nisus is so skilled a spear-thrower when he tries to distract the Rutuli from killing Euryalus.

179 comes (see Commentary 180 *Aeneadum*).

179–181 Euryalus Euryalus is given no patronymic at all. (It is only later that we find that his father was Opheltus, 201). The reason for this could be a wish for variation in the style of introduction, but it could also be that Euryalus was too young to be of serious note in the martial field and so did not yet need the distinguishing patronymic. It is also possible that Vergil wished to increase the pathos surrounding this young boy thrown into the horrors of war, by implying that he is without the protection of a father, and that he is the last support of an aged mother. It is also a fact that by omitting the usual form of introduction, Vergil concentrates the attention on Euryalus himself, as it were in a vacuum, without setting him in the context of the poem's *dramatis personae*. This ploy of keeping Euryalus separate from his surroundings is particularly important when Vergil comes to the nature of his death. (Cf. also Commentary 178 *venatrix*.)

179 quo pulchrior alter There is one view, found in the early poets, such as Homer, that:

According to the ancient idea . . . beauty is the flower of arete.

(Pöschl, p. 93).

And that in Homer:

. . . beauty, courage, and physical strength are complementary manifestations of the same heroic Arete.

(Moskalew, p. 101, note 59).

However, such perfection has often been known to anger the gods, provoking divine φθόρος, and there is always the risk of the taint of ὕβρις.

As Moskalew goes on to say (*loc. cit.*):

Vergil perceives beauty as either tragic or flawed . . . Extraordinary beauty is invariably connected with suffering and death. It is a recurring pattern, and one that even Iulus seems to follow. In the initial scenes he is distinguished from his companions by surpassing beauty, but as he grows older he is further characterised by tears beyond the ordinary: e.g. 9. 293.

Cf. also Lausus (7. 647):

. . . *quo pulchrior alter
non fuit excepto Laurentis corpore Turni.*

In this comparison not only Lausus but also Turnus is killed before his time, in the flower of his youth and beauty.

A shadow is cast over Euryalus who is marked for his beauty in the same way as Nireus is in the *Iliad*. Knauer considers 9. 179 and the Homeric lines to be parallel passages, and so it must be asked what a Roman audience would have thought of a

character who is described in terms so similar to those used by Homer (*Il.* 2. 673-675):

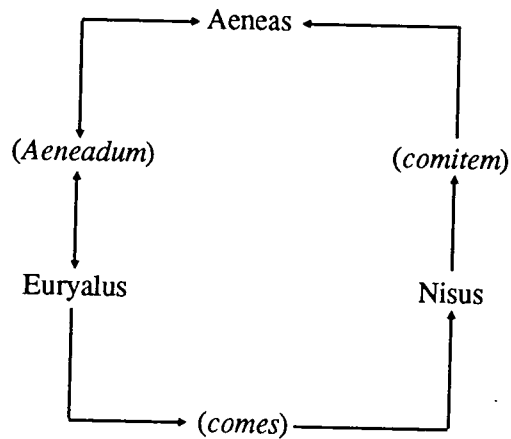
Νιρεύς, ὃς κάλλιστος ἀνὴρ ὑπὸ Ἴλιον ἦλθε
 τῶν ἄλλων Δαναῶν μετ' ἀμύμονα Πηλεΐωνα·
 ἄλλ' ἄλαπαδνὸς ἔην, παῦρος δέ οἱ εἶπετο λαός.

It could be that Vergil's apparent praise of Euryalus is qualified by allusive comparison as is also the case with Nisus (see **Commentary** 176 *acerrimus armis*), whereas in Homer the description of Nireus seems to refer only to his circumstances, without any moral judgement being implied. This separateness of Euryalus is all part of the ethos that Vergil creates around him. Euryalus may be strongly linked to Nisus by their love and shared interests, but he is still essentially an isolated character. This is epitomised by his beauty, which is above that of all the other Trojans, and by the fact that he is introduced without an integrating patronymic.

It is also significant that the Euryalus mentioned by Homer, Diomedes's cousin, is described as ἰσόθεος φώς (*Il.* 2. 565) but still he is soundly beaten in the boxing match at Patroclus's Funeral Games by Epeius. This does not bode well for his namesake in the *Aeneid*. Both 'Euryali' are outstanding, but from the fate of the Homeric Euryalus, it can be inferred that the Vergilian Euryalus is likely to come to grief.

180 non fuit Aeneadum Troiana neque induit arma The allusion to Aeneas at this stage of the narrative casts a shadow over Euryalus's future actions since he is about to act in direct opposition to Aeneas's orders.

Aeneadum (cf. *comitem* 177 and *comes* 179). This word completes the sequence, whereby Nisus is a companion of Aeneas (177), Euryalus of Nisus (179) and, by implication, Aeneas to Euryalus (180), because Euryalus is one of his followers.



The use of the patronymic, to describe the followers of Aeneas as his 'sons', is particularly important in the case of Euryalus. Euryalus does not take a patronymic from Opheltus and so the role of his father is more easily assumed by Aeneas. The idea of Aeneas's 'paternity' is strengthened when it is realised that he and Euryalus are actually related (see **Commentary 284**). The whole emphasis further reinforces the idea that Euryalus is acting against Aeneas's wishes (*vide supra*).

181 ora puer prima signans intonsa iuventa Euryalus's extreme youth is brought strongly to the fore. Most young warriors who are noted for their beauty are said to have the first down on their cheeks, and indeed in Greek erotic verse, this is the age at which young men are thought to be at their most attractive (cf. also

Theocritus *Idyll* 15. 84–86; *Odyssey* 10. 278–279 and *Iliad* 24. 348–349). In the same vein is *Aen.* 10. 324:

*. . . flaventem prima lanugine malas
dum sequeris Clytium infelix, nova gaudia, Cydon.*

There are other examples of this opinion, such as Plato, *Sym.* 181d, where Socrates says:

. . . they do not fall in love with mere boys, but wait until they reach the age at which they begin to show some intelligence, that is to say, until they are near growing a beard (τοῦτο δὲ πλησιάζει τῷ γενειάσκειν).

Servius considers Vergil to be guilty of an anachronism in this line, because, as he says:

Intonsa — hoc ad sua tempora rettulit; alioquin heroes non tondebantur.

However, this is surely an obtuse objection to the words, because Vergil can thus highlight Euryalus's vulnerability, shown by his youth, as well as his beauty. The highlighting of these two aspects of Euryalus comes into play in the subsequent narrative, when all the attention is drawn to a character thus marked at an early stage.

182–183 his amor unus erat Unfortunately it seems that Nisus allowed Euryalus to persuade him, against his better judgement, to take him with him on his expedition, because of the great love he (Nisus) bore him, rather than because he thought he was the best man for the job. Nisus is thus unfavourably compared by

allusion to Diomedes, who takes Odysseus with him because he is renowned for his wits.

The fact that Nisus and Euryalus love one another has been the topic of much discussion. Henry thinks that it is *amor venandi et pugnandi* that is being suggested, as does Servius, who says *eodem studio flagrabat*. Page and Williams disagree and perceive it as *amor* in its usual sense. In view of the events in Book 5, theirs seems to be the most logical interpretation: Nisus is, after all, prepared to cheat and risk dishonour because of his *amor* for Euryalus.

It is said that love is blind, and that it blinds those who encounter it. Also, as Plato says, the man who is in love is also mad (*Phaedrus* 231d):

καὶ γὰρ αὐτοὶ ὁμολογοῦσι νοσεῖν μᾶλλον ἢ σωφρονεῖν,
καὶ εἰδέναι ὅτι κακῶς φρονοῦσιν ἀλλ' οὐ δύνασθαι αὐτῶν
κρατεῖν.

This does not augur well for Nisus and Euryalus, for whom *amor unus erat*, in a mission demanding clearness of judgement. In fact Nisus's greatest 'fault' is committed because of his love for Euryalus: he fails in his mission because he cannot bear to leave Euryalus to his fate without trying to avenge him (see **Introduction: A Roman perspective**).

unus Vergil shows the strength of the love of Nisus and Euryalus by the use of this word. Despite there being two of them, and despite the disparity in their ages

and experience, they are united as one in their love and this unity makes them equal: *pariter* (see also **Commentary 230** *tum Nisus*).

pariterque in bella ruebant (See **Introduction**: The relationship between Nisus and Euryalus). There is every reason to suppose that Nisus and Euryalus would go into battle together as that would be the paradigm for their love and martial ideal. However, it is interesting to see how Vergil isolates the two of them (*vide infra*) even though the ethos he has drawn around them is that of the Sacred Band. This is a common Vergilian effect: he will evoke an image which consists of a large number of people, and then focus on perhaps one or two individuals, so that the scrutiny is sharpened by the presence of a large crowd as a 'backdrop' who are, as it were, 'out of focus'.

Servius says of this phrase:

aut simul, aut similiter et pari virtute, id est aequae fortis erant.

On reflection this latter comment is misleading as Nisus is the more warlike of the two, and he feels that he must come back and try to rescue Euryalus. In doing so, he lays great stress on Euryalus's lack of prowess (see 428–429 *nihil iste nec ausus/ nec potuit*). The first part of the interpretation, that they act *aut simul*, shows that they cannot bear to be separated. The second, *aut similiter*, brings in a quasi-philosophical element (see **Commentary 282** *dissimilem*). On the other hand it is this portraying of them as being equal, because united, that creates the ethos of the main part of the story: they are made one in love and also act as one in battle.

pariter The fact that they go into war together, without the rest of their countrymen being mentioned, adds to the isolation of these two characters, even in such a 'communal' activity as waging war.

ruebant This very strong word shows the ferocity with which they fight. This idea is later recalled in their progress through the Rutuli, in such words as *vasta dabo* (323) and *nec minor Euryali caedes* (342).

183 *tum quoque communi portam statione tenebant* Having been told that they are one in love (picked up here by *communi*) and in war it is not surprising that they are on sentry duty together (*quoque* picks up *pariter* from the previous line). These also show that they were a recognised couple. The mention of *tum quoque* would also imply that a similar arrangement had happened before in the assigning of duty.

tenebant This word completes the couplet which sums up the whole nature of the friendship of Nisus and Euryalus. This is achieved by the use of similar endings to each line:

his amor unus erat pariterque in bella ruebant;
tum quoque communi portam statione tenebant.

The first line gives the history of their friendship, the second shows how this manifests itself in the present. The contrast in meaning between *ruebant* and *tenebant* also underlines their present position, which is in contrast with their

preferred position: at the moment they are in the static position of guarding a gateway, whereas ideally they would be distinguishing themselves in battle.

The ring is completed: *portae custos* (176) is paired with *portam statione* (183). By the use of this device, Vergil finishes off the setting of the scene before Nisus speaks and starts the active narrative. If one may look at it in a modern setting, 176-183 forms the action-shots during the titles, or the 'voice-over', the 'action' starts with *Nisus ait* (184).

184–185 Nisus ait . . . dira cupido? After the passage of description (176–183), the words *Nisus ait* suddenly start the actual story in motion. It is interesting that Vergil does not elaborate on how Nisus spoke, as if the words that followed were so important that no delay could be brooked. The full impression of them also falls on the mind's ear without its being distracted by the details of the way in which he spoke or his actions as he did so.

dine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt,/ . . . an sua cuique deus fit dira cupido? This is a very ancient and much discussed question, having many implications in the matter of free will and self-justification. In the *Odyssey* (4.712–713) Medon has no trouble in accepting that there is a dichotomy between the god-sent and the self-generated when he says:

... οὐ οἶδ' ἢ τίς μιν θεὸς ὤρορεν, ἦε καὶ αὐτοῦ
θυμὸς ἐφωρμήθη . . .

There is, for him, either divine or human motivation, neither one influencing or claiming influence from the other. Medon's comment concerns Telemachus's setting sail for Pylos to get news about his father. This possibly god-sent idea leads to a pious action on Telemachus's part, whereas with Nisus, speculation leads to impiety. Euripides (esp. *Troades*, 988–990) takes a more cynical view in his plays and thinks that man attributes his own desires to the gods, when he has Hecuba say in reply to Helen's plea of divine coercion:

ὁ σὸς δ' ἰδὼν νιν νοῦς ἐποιήθη Κύπρις ·
τὰ μῶρα γὰρ πάντ' ἐστὶν Ἀφροδίτη βροτοῖς,
καὶ τοῦνομ' ὀρθῶς ἀφροσύνης ἄρχει θεᾶς.

Hecuba considers that Helen uses Aphrodite merely as an excuse to act as she desired, since, as she says (987):

ἦν οὐμὸς υἱὸς κάλλος ἐκπρεπέστατος.

There is no definite code expounded by the poets, but each one tries to make sense, or show his characters trying to make sense, of the world and the gods as he sees them. These attempts form a sphere of influence. This is not to say that Vergil had exactly the idea as exemplified by Euripides in mind when writing of Nisus, but its existence adds a new element to the background of Nisus's thoughts. As Euripides's works form part of Vergil's literary background, this would add a humanly motivated element to Nisus's thoughts.

On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that there has been much debate about whether Vergil in fact felt that 'divine promptings' only worked on innate

characteristics. For example, did Allecto really send Turnus mad 'from scratch', or did she work on the unstable and rash part of his character? But then again, if Allecto had not intervened then perhaps Turnus would have acted differently. Even when 'divine prompting' acts on an innate characteristic there is still a degree of coercion caused by the divine presence, and so man is perhaps not entirely free, although he must take some responsibility for how he interprets the desires put in him.

Is Nisus asking solely from whence his sudden idea comes? This is to underrate the significance of *dira cupido*. It seems very probable that Vergil had in mind the passage in the *Iliad* (19. 88–89) where Agamemnon partially exculpated his earlier treatment of Achilles by saying that:

... Ζεὺς καὶ Μοῖρα καὶ ... Ἐρινύς,
... φρεσὶν ἔμβολον ἄγριον ἄτην.

Agamemnon, however, does take responsibility for his actions and offers lavish compensation to Achilles. If this is the direct ancestor of the Latin, then the correlation of *dira cupido* with ἄγριον ἄτην is not direct. *Dira* parallels ἄγριος in so far as it is the adjective, but it also takes some sense from ἄτη in that both carry some religious significance being that which in itself is fearful or has terrible consequences and which is also sometimes personified as a fury or curse. The direct parallel of *cupido* with ἄτη is also sinister. *Cupido* is not necessarily an evil desire, and neither are its results guaranteed to be bad, but ἄτη is (necessarily) that desire or infatuation sent by the gods in order to lead a man to his ruin.

The gods may send a 'burning ambition', but in receiving it, man converts it into an 'awe-ful desire'. If Nisus accepts that the *dira cupido* is sent from the gods, then that acts as some sort of exculpation for what he does later; after all the gods have been known to send men mad as Sophocles recognised (*Ant.* 620–625):

σοφία γὰρ ἔκ του
 κλεινὸν ἔπος πέφανται,
 τὸ κακὸν δοκεῖν ποτ' ἔσθλόν
 τῷδ' ἔμμεν ὅτω φρένας
 θεὸς ἄγει πρὸς ἄταν·
 πράσσει δ' ὀλίγος τὸν χρόνον ἔκτος ἄτας.

Aeschylus also expressed similar feelings in *Niobe* (Select Papyri, Vol. 3, p.8):

... θεὸς μὲν αἰτίαν φύει β[ροτοῖς,
 ὅταν κα]κῶσαι δῶμα παμπήδη[ν θέλη.

This much is quoted in Plato *Rep.* 380a; however, the quotation continues:

τεως δ]ὲ θνητὸν ὄντα χρῆ τὸν ἐκ θεῶν
 ὄλβον περιπέλλοντα μὴ θρασυστομ[εῖν.

It is quite possible that Vergil had this qualification in mind and therefore did not actually allow Nisus to be vindicated. He has still called into being his own *dira cupido* by interpreting his *ardor* as he does.

There seem to be two possible answers to Nisus's speculation: (i) either strong desires are sent by the gods and are therefore unavoidably acted out; or (ii) they are created within man, but are so strong that they seem to be divinely inspired and are able to transcend the control of their original source, thus almost achieving a

quasi-autonomous state. Nisus seems to feel that the 'direness' of his wish comes from himself, and he is keen to implement it.

T.E. Page thinks that Nisus calls his desire *dira* because he recognises that 'fierce passion may urge us to destruction'. This seems to concur with Servius, who glosses *dira* as *magna*. This is not, however, the full force of *dira*. Turnus's Fury (7.445–457) is tangible, Nisus's is far more subtle and while appearing to be a desire subject to his thought processes has in fact gained sufficient strength to influence him from outside, as if it were a daemon. If, however, its power has increased to this extent and he is actually being deluded by something over which he no longer has control, then he could be led on to say more than he realises, by which stage it would be too late. This accords well with his otherwise impulsive character which causes such quasi-daemons to appear, or perhaps his impulsive inclinations leave space for a genuinely external agent to infiltrate and then direct him. Nisus is either being deluded, or he realises what he is saying and later pays for it, when the Moon-Goddess causes their betrayal to the enemy.

The effect of the presence of the gods on the minds of men should not be underrated, and nor should man's perception of his own subconscious.

hunc ardorem This has not been previously mentioned, and what it refers to only gets explained later (186ff). Vergil represents Nisus as suddenly giving voice to a thought on which he has been musing for some time, to which *hunc* refers, but to

which the reader has had no access as it is only in Nisus's mind. (See also **Commentary 342** *incensus*).

addunt Although this word does not necessarily imply that the gods are building on Nisus's own innate characteristics, it does seem to mean that he is amenable to them, and that they are not uncharacteristic.

dira cupido *Dirus* is taken to be a contraction of *deorum/dei ira* (see Maltby *sub dirus*. See also Paul. *Fest.* 69: *dirus dei ira natus*. Cf. also Serv. Auct. *ad Aen.* 4. 453 *dira enim deorum ira est*) so that *dira cupido* would be a wish put in a man's mind by the gods, so that he worked for his own destruction because the gods were angry and wished to see him destroyed. However, this interpretation does not rule out the idea that a man's own psyche can create an obsession which becomes for him a quasi-daemon (*vide supra*). What is even more sinister is that while working for his own destruction, Nisus appears quite sane and aware, to some extent, of what he is doing. This would seem to concur with the idea that the 'god' in question emanates from his own psyche. Nisus is indeed in the 'twilight zone' of his own subconscious and in trying to make sense of how he feels he lays himself open to forces that can work on his confusion (see Donaldson, pp. 100–101).

The phrase *dira cupido* is used three times in the *Aeneid*; twice in Book 6. Palinurus's prayer for burial is called *dira cupido* (373) because by pleading with Aeneas to bury him he tries to thwart the fate meted out to him. At 721, Aeneas sees the Souls' desire for re-birth as a *dira cupido*, probably because at this stage he

himself still desires only death and therefore oblivion. It is ironic that while the Souls desire life in Book 6, Nisus seems to have a death-wish in Book 9, which he himself recognises by calling his plan *dira*. By mis-calling his plan in advance, he seems to be tempting fate to do its worst.

186–187 aut pugnam . . . quiete est This couplet explains the reason for the idea expressed in the previous one. In the previous couplet, Nisus had been speculating as to the theoretical origin of his idea (whether it was sent from the gods, or whether it emanated from his own psyche). Here he shows what his *ardor* entails: he wants to win fame (194 *mihi . . . / fama sat est*) and is bored with his enforced inactivity.

aut pugnam . . . aut aliquid . . . invadere magnum Since Nisus has become so attuned to warfare as to win the description of *acerrimus armis*, his first, practical, thought is for battle. His initial answer may be to fight his way to fame, but he is not unaware of other possibilities for achieving it, as seen by his mention of *aliquid . . . magnum*. It is interesting to note, however, that he does not specify what this might be. His mind is clearly on warlike pursuits, so that even his other, unspecified, idea is couched in the military mode, by the use of *invadere*. This word also gives some idea of Nisus's rather precipitate nature.

186 iam dudum This reinforces the idea that *hunc ardorem* is retrospective (and shows that Nisus has been brooding for some time before abruptly speaking).

187 mens agitat mihi Nisus is clearly under the impression that the idea comes from within himself (see **Commentary** 184–185). This interpretation is strengthened by the echo in *mens* of *mentibus* (184). Nisus has effectively excluded the intervention of the gods.

nec placida contenta quiete est This phrase will be shown to be ironic as it is in death alone that he achieves peace. It is also interesting to note the language in which Palinurus pleads for burial, where he says (6. 371):

... *placidis in morte quiescam.*

The verbal parallel is interesting as Nisus does indeed come to find peace in death (445 *placidique ibi demum morte quievit*). Perhaps the present line, taken in conjunction with that in Book 6, is a pointer to his eventual fate by the poetic device of dramatic inversion: Palinurus prays for peace now that he is dead, Nisus achieves both death and peace, but asks for neither. It is an interesting conceit that Nisus is not contented with his task as watchman (which should be to him *negotium*) but instead sees it as unfulfilling passivity (which is thus made to be *otium*, as he sees it, without honour). He therefore proposes to do something more active, thus making that his *negotium*, but by doing so finds only death, the final *otium*.

188–190 cernis quae . . . percipe porro Unlike the Trojans in the *Iliad* (Book 10) and in Eur. *Rhesus* (527–544), the Rutuli are not watchful, but have let many of their watch-fires go out through neglect, and have spent the night in carousel thus leaving themselves unfit for action. This idea of the enemy losing their initiative because of

their arrogant assumption of victory seems to be a common τόπος. It is mentioned by Sallust (*Bell. Iug.* 98.1–100.4 see esp. *barbari more suo laetari*), where the Numidians and Moors are revelling before they have secured final victory (having only surrounded the Romans) and are surprised out of their sleep by an attack (cf. also Liv. 5. 378 and Tac. *Ann.* 1. 65). The idea expressed by Sallust, that it is the usual practice of barbarians to behave in such an abandoned fashion, is echoed in the barbaric richness of the Rutulian camp, and contrasts strongly with the martial rigour attributed to them by Remulus Numanus (see **Commentary** 324–328). It must be asked what happened to the Rutulian sentries mentioned at 161:

*bis septem Rutuli muros qui milite servant
delecti*

These should have kept watch while the others slept. Perhaps Vergil meant to stress the helplessness of the Rutuli during the attack by Nisus and Euryalus by implying that even their sentries had succumbed to wine and sleep. Surely the progress of Nisus and Euryalus could not have been so silent as not to alert vigilant sentries. There is no mention of the Rutuli being in any state other than the general one of stupor.

quae Rutulos habeat fiducia rerum It is significant that the Rutuli are at this stage grammatically subordinated to their *fiducia*. This exemplifies their state of helplessness. It is also ironic that this faith in their circumstances should immediately be shown as false: their watchfires are failing them. This metaphorically shows that their vital force is at a low ebb and that their faith is misplaced.

189 *lumina rara micant* Cf. *Il.* 10. 12:

θαύμαζεν πυρὰ πολλά . . .

Vergil makes a deliberate contrast between the two prospects seen by the characters in both epics (Agamemnon sees the Trojans in the *Iliad*, Nisus the Rutuli in the *Aeneid*). This is done by mentioning fire both at the beginning of the episode in the *Aeneid* and at the beginning of the *Doloneia*. What makes the comparison more pointed is that in each epic the description is equally prominent and terse, and yet the respective sense is exactly opposed.

Vergil continues by contrasting the silence of the Rutulian camp with Homer's description of the noise arising from Troy:

. . . *silent late loca*

is put in direct opposition to *Il.* 10.13

αὐλῶν συρίγγων τ' ἔνοπὴν ὄμαδόν τ' ἀνθρώπων.

This careful comparison and contrast is, however, itself misleading and there is a great difference between the outcomes of these scenes. In the *Aeneid*, Nisus looks out over the silent enemy camp that he goes on to attack; in the *Iliad*, Agamemnon is struck by the noise coming from Troy (and this leads him to send out Odysseus and Diomedes) but this is not the camp they attack, but rather that of the Thracians where all are asleep like the Rutuli (but see previous note, 188–190). This seems to

be another occurrence of Vergil changing the sense of his model and thus casting his interpretation in a different light from that of the original.

somno vinoque soluti Whereas in the *Iliad* (Book 10) the Trojans who send out Dolon as a spy are watchful and alert (see **Commentary** 189), the Thracians who are actually the ones slaughtered by Odysseus and Diomedes are all asleep (*Il.*10. 471):

οἱ δ' εὕδον καμάτῳ ἄδηκότες . . .

There is thus a similarity between both sets of victims in that they are asleep, but also a dissimilarity. The Thracians are worn out by toil and so are asleep, the Rutuli are asleep because they have drunk themselves into insensibility. This difference is highlighted by the fact that wine is mentioned in connection with the Rutuli, but not with the Thracians. This mention of wine also reminds the reader of the arrogance of the Rutuli in their temporary victory (see **Commentary** 188–190). As a close verbal parallel, there is Ennius *Ann.* 8. 292; this refers to the drunken Gauls at the battle of Metauros in 207 BC:

Nunc hostes vino domiti somnoque sepulti;

there is also Lucretius (5. 975), *somno sepulti*. There is a variant reading in the *Aeneid* of *soluti* as *sepulti* (see **Commentary** 235). This seems to arise out of the Ennian lines (*loc. cit.* and also as an echo of *Aen.* 2. 265; see **Commentary** 9. 235). *Soluti* or *sepulti* could be read with equal force: *soluti* showing that they were ‘undone by sleep and wine’ (cf. Homer’s saying a man’s limbs were loosened in

death) and *sepulti* showing that they were so stupified that they appeared dead (cf. 'dead drunk'). As Servius puts it:

Sepulti—quasi sine pulsu et nihil sentientes

The choice of *soluti* in Mynors's edition therefore has to rest on more than stylistic preference (as either word would do) and must partly rely on the frequency of its occurrence in the MSS. On balance, however, it seems that *soluti* is a better reading than *sepulti* (despite Ennius and *Aen.* 2) because the overt sense of *sepulti* would be labouring the point that the Rutuli were doomed within a passage of funereal imagery and language (the failing light and the silence). See also **Commentary** 235 and 316.

silent late loca This is the last phrase of Nisus's description of the Rutuli, and Vergil's setting of the scene is finished by a description of profound silence and peace. There is therefore a shock, at the end of the line, to find violent action ordered with *percipe porro*.

190–191 percipe porro . . . sententia surgat The setting of so deep a silence just before Nisus starts to lay out his plan, acts as the calm before the storm. There is a definite air of expectation fuelled by Nisus's earlier remarks that he longs to do something and cannot bear to be inactive. Now, after all the somnolent peace of the Rutulian camp, there is the image of the desire of Nisus and Euryalus waking up and starting on violent action. This is particularly shown by the use of *agitat* (187) and *surgat* (191) which surround the description of the camp, thus showing the way in

which this violence has power over the sleeping Rutuli by use of the stylistic device of word-placement.

animo sententia surgat Cf. *hunc adorem* (184). Nisus again shows his opinion that men create their own burning desires, and that the wishes of Euryalus, which he has not yet voiced, are of this kind.

192–193 Aenean acciri omnes . . . certa reportent In these lines, Nisus seems to be adapting the facts to his own inclinations for action. It is doubtless a noble idea that he should take it upon himself to break out of the siege, but in fact it directly contradicts Aeneas's instructions of 41–43, where he is reported as saying:

*. . . si qua interea fortuna fuisset,
neu struere auderent aciem neu credere campo;
castra modo et tutos servarent aggere muros.*

Nisus's keenness is understandable, but he is, nevertheless, disobeying direct orders. This is in marked contrast to Diomedes and Odysseus who go out at the wish of Agamemnon, who is backed by his brother and also by Nestor (*Il.* 10. 204–212).

Aenean acciri omnes It is perhaps in the last word here that some sense can be made of Nisus's personal interpretation of the facts. *Omnes* implies that there was a groundswell of opinion that Aeneas was needed to save them and that this popular feeling held sway, thus showing that all were equally lost without Aeneas.

populusque patresque Servius does not see anything strange in the order of these words, indeed he takes their order to be an inherent part of Vergil's transference of a contemporary Roman practice into the distant past. As he says:

transfert (sc. Vergil) in Troianos Romanam consuetudinem, ut solet plerumque: prius enim iubebat aliquid populus, postea confirmabat senatus.

This idea should be compared with the standard motto of *Senatus Populusque Romanus* in which it is the Senate that guides the people and therefore assumes the executive role signified by the prominent placing of the word. In Vergil's text, however, it is the people who come first. Nisus seems to be acting upon rumours current in the Trojan camp, or at least putting these forward as an excuse for his disobedience to Aeneas. It must be assumed that the people had overcome the rules imposed, by Aeneas, on their temporary leaders, and that these leaders had succumbed to the general panic and were no better than the people.

The paired words are used in their usual order at 8. 678–681 in a situation that is full of the benevolent presence of the gods, especially at 678:

cum patribus populoque, penetibus et magnis dis.

A contrast is made strongly between this occurrence of the words and the setting and circumstances of the words in their inverted order. The inverted phrase is used only twice in the *Aeneid*, here and at 4. 682. The circumstances of that occurrence are that Anna is lamenting the effect that Dido's suicide will have on Carthage, and says:

*exstincti te meque, soror, populumque patresque
Sidonios urbemque tuam.*

Perhaps the inversion of the natural order of the words is meant to signify a catastrophe, in that the leaders no longer rule, but have joined the masses and have lost their executive power.

mittique viros qui certa reportent Nisus vaguely says *viros*, which is presumably what *omnes* thought, but from what he says later (194 *nam mihi facti fama sat est*), he is clearly thinking of one man, that is, himself. It is interesting to compare this line with its narrative counterpart in the *Iliad* (10. 204): Nestor speaks of τῆς ἑνὸς ἀνδρὸς in his initial address, whereas in fact two men go, as Diomedes asks for a companion because, as he says (10. 222):

... ἄλλ' εἴ τις μοι ἀνὴρ ἅμ' ἔποιτο καὶ ἄλλος,
μᾶλλον θαλπωρὴ καὶ θαρσαλεώτερον ἔσται.

Nisus starts by speaking of more than one man, but he is clearly thinking of only one. Vergil, however, is able to echo the details of his Homeric model more closely by having Euryalus persuade Nisus to take him as well, thus making two. It is also interesting to see that whereas Diomedes asks Odysseus to go with him as a favour, Nisus has to be persuaded to take Euryalus. This highlights the difference between Odysseus and Euryalus by showing how their respective companions valued their presence on a dangerous mission. (See also **Commentary 240** for the significance of *mittique viros*).

194–196 si tibi quae posco . . . moenia Pallantea Nisus finally puts forward his actual plan after a lengthy preamble. It is not, however, so straightforward as it appears, but contains much that is not directly spoken, but only hinted at. Servius recognises that here Nisus in fact proposes to go by himself, that is, specifically without Euryalus. He takes this to be the implication of the words, where he says:

et bene quod Euryalum nolit ducere latenter ostendit: nam ideo adiecit 'mihi facti fama sat est'.

si tibi quae posco Nisus demands a reward even before he outlines his plans to the council although he plans to give it to Euryalus; Diomedes and Odysseus are offered a reward for what they will do (*Il.* 10. 212–217). However, to see that Nisus's quest for fame through action is quite acceptable in a heroic context, one has merely to compare Sarpedon's reason for going into battle and exposing himself to danger (*Il.* 12. 310–321). Nisus must mean that he will go out (without Euryalus) and win fame and a reward, which he will then give to Euryalus because of his great love for him. So he is able to elevate both himself (because of the fame he will get for his brave deeds and also for his generosity in giving his prize to his friend) and, at the same time, Euryalus (by making him conspicuous as the object of affection of a much-praised warrior — himself). At this stage, however, Euryalus is to get the reward, but not the fame. This is in fact exactly the opposite of what happens when they are before the council: Ascanius offers Nisus the tangible rewards, but Euryalus the honour of his close companionship. The irony is that they both end up famous and dead with the spoils they hoped to take as reward being left behind with the enemy.

tumulo . . . sub illo Nisus clearly does not realise the irony of these words. He takes them to have only a literal, geographical sense, without considering any other possible interpretations. Nisus assumes that he will literally make his way to the foot of the hill, and from there be able to see a way through the enemy camp. He does not realise that he has literally prophesied his own death, in that to speak of going *tumulo . . . sub illo* is to say that he will go under what is not only a hill, but also a grave mound, (*tumulus* being the word applied to both). Vergil takes the word to have the latter meaning at 6. 505, where he speaks of a *tumulum . . . inanem*, so it does not strain the sense of the word too much to see that there is an ambiguity here, in Book 9. There is a further irony in that, in fact, Nisus does not go 'under that hill' in any sense: he does not get that far in his actual quest (see also *Commentary* 375), and, in the metaphorical sense, he does not go 'under that hill' because he is mutilated and left as carrion, and his body is not buried under a grave mound.

videor This word is also prophetically ironic. By using *videor*, Nisus makes his speech ambiguous. To him it means merely that he seems to see a way to go, but the word can mean 'I am seen' as well as 'I seem'. As it happens he really is 'seen going under that hill' by the Latin cavalry (*cernunt* 372) and this leads him to death rather than Pallanteum.

ad muros et moenia Pallantea Servius points out the futility of the quest by saying:

ubi nunc credit esse Aenean.

Aeneas has in fact left Pallanteum by now, and so even if Nisus had got through the enemy camp, his mission would have been to no avail.

Perhaps the futile nature of his mission is shown by the rare use of a spondee in the fifth foot, as if the whole verse ended in gloom. Sidgwick compares this phrase (for purely lexical reasons) to 2. 234:

dividimus muros et moenia pandimus urbis.

to show that *muros* are the walls, whereas *moenia* are the buildings within a fortress or city. However, the similarity in the words brings other associations to mind. The quotation from Book 2 refers to the Trojans breaching their own walls to bring in the Trojan Horse, which would lead to their ruin. This is a further parallel, linking Aeneas's journey through the doomed city of Troy and Nisus's proposed journey through the Rutulian camp. (See also **Commentary 189.**) Nisus's act of approaching the walls of Pallanteum is an echo of the Trojans' breaching of their own walls and thereby symbolically anticipating their own end. Just as the Trojans bring ruin on themselves, they also destroy their allies. Aeneas cannot protect Pallas and so brings an end to the house of Evander and Pallanteum's ruling line. Both these facets, self and allied destruction, are bound up in the connection with walls.

197–198 *obstipuit . . . adfatur amicum* Euryalus is stunned or dazed as the thought of great fame strikes him, just as it struck Nisus.

obstipuit . . . percussus These are very strong words to describe the effect of a sudden thought: they are also rather sinister, in that Euryalus is struck (*percussus*) so hard by the love of fame, that he is 'knocked senseless' (OLD, *ob-stupesco*) and so cannot be quite in his right mind when he persuades Nisus to take him and declares his contempt for life without glory. The fact that Vergil brings to the fore the image of being metaphórically 'knocked senseless', before Euryalus's persuasion of Nisus, brings to mind the proverbial saying:

quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat,

and so there is again the element of divine interference present. (See also **Commentary 292**. Cf. also 1.613 the tragedy that follows Dido's first sight of Aeneas: *obstipuit primo aspectu Sidonia Dido*.)

There is also a sinister echo of 7.496–497:

*ipse etiam eximiae laudis succensus amore
Ascanius . . .*

There Ascanius shoots the pet stag which is the symbolic opening of the war between Latins and Trojans.

It is of note that Euryalus's feelings about fame are described as *amor*. This word forms a link with:

his amor unus erat . . .

and is all part of the ethos of the love of Nisus and Euryalus, set within a martial framework. This ring is further shown by the linking of *pariter* and *simul* and the use of fire imagery:

- (a1) his amor unus erat (182)
- (b1) pariterque in bella ruebant (182)
- (c1) hunc ardorem (184)
- (a2) magno laudum percussus amore (197)
- (b2) simul . . . adfatur (198)
- (c2) ardentem . . . amicum (198)

It is interesting to note that (a1), (b1) and (c1) are all general statements, and (a2), (b2) and (c2) all apply specifically to the case of Nisus and Euryalus and how the general statement affects them.

simul his ardentem adfatur amicum Euryalus has just been kindled if, by extension, one takes the fire imagery applied to Ascanius in Book 7 (*succensus*), to be a direct influence on the way in which Euryalus is described (*percussus*). The striking of the love of fame on Euryalus is like the striking of a spark. The strategic use of *ardor* (184 and 198) would also help to develop this aspect of the word. Nisus is already burning (*ardentem*) with the desire for fame. It is fitting that Nisus should be described as *ardentem* as he is inspired by *hunc ardorem*. (See also Commentary 342 *incensus*)

199–200 mene igitur . . . pericula mittam? Cf. 4. 314 *mene fugis?* Both instances of this phrase are pleas to a lover. Euryalus cannot believe that Nisus will leave him, of all people, behind; Dido cannot believe that Aeneas is really about to flee from her presence after they have shared such love. Due to the intensity of their feelings for the person thus addressed, both Euryalus and Dido come to grief. Because neither can bear an enforced separation, both act in such a way as to avoid it: Dido by committing suicide, Euryalus by persuading Nisus to take him as a companion.

mene Disbelief at the possibility of desertion in the cases of both Dido and Euryalus is shown by the prominent position of *mene*. It is not so much: ‘are you really leaving me?’ as ‘are you really leaving me?’ In fact the similarity of these phrases lends something to the atmosphere of the ‘Nisus and Euryalus Episode’. There can be no denying that Dido’s speech was offered in an erotic context and so perhaps the complaint of Euryalus is meant to take some shading from its literary predecessor. This is increased by the presence of a potentially erotic word such as *adiungere*. The echo is also prophetic: Dido dies soon after uttering these words, and it should be remembered that Euryalus is trying to persuade Nisus to take him on a dangerous mission. The fact that Vergil has him use these same words does not augur well for his chances of success or survival.

summis . . . rebus Some allowance must be made for Euryalus’s youthful exaggeration; he is, after all, in a somewhat emotional state. This can be seen from

the fact that he has elevated Nisus's ambitious *aliquid . . . magnum* (186) to *summis . . . rebus*, which is equally vague but more forceful.

200 *solum te in tanta pericula mittam?* Moskalew cites 1. 615,

*quis te, nate dea, per tanta pericula casus
insequitur?*

as a parallel, on verbal similarity only. However, a further link, whether it is simply a verbal echo or a similar sense, between the 'Nisus and Euryalus Episode' and the 'Story of Dido', must be taken into consideration because of the tragic outcome in all cases where Dido is mentioned in the subsequent narrative. It is interesting to note that Euryalus takes an active role upon himself by this phrase, as if he were positively sending Nisus out. (Cf. also **Commentary** 221–223 and 355.) In fact, as is obvious from the text, the plan was initiated entirely by Nisus. In Euryalus's reply, Vergil has shown again the bond between them: Euryalus has identified his own thoughts so much with those of Nisus, that he even takes on some responsibility for them by temporarily taking on the leading role. He also takes over some of the function of the council. This is shown by the ring formed by *mittique viros* (193) and *solum te . . . mittam* (200). He thus returns the emphasis to their personal sphere by subsuming the general idea. This concentration on the particular circumstances of Nisus and Euryalus is important for Vergil's isolation of them from the other characters: there is no room for anyone else in their 'world'.

201–204 *non ita me . . . fata extrema secutus* Euryalus argues that his upbringing and daily practice make him suited to join Nisus on his mission: he has,

after all, been brought up amid the Trojan War and has conducted himself well as a follower of Aeneas. This could be the modest self-recommendation of a seasoned warrior who knows his own worth, but on the other hand, there is something slightly grotesque (if true to life) about so young a boy claiming such prowess for himself.

non ita me genitor This picks up Euryalus's previous comment that he would not let Nisus go into danger alone. Opheltes taught his son not only the skills of war, but also the martial code of behaviour.

bellis adsuetus Opheltes Euryalus argues in effect that he himself is a fine warrior because his father was. As Servius says:

ipse puer est necdum probatus: unde se et a belli temporibus et a patris virtute commendat.

The choice of name for Euryalus's father seems to have echoes of the Homeric line (Il. 6. 20):

Δρῆσον δ' Εὐρύαλος καὶ Ὀφέλιον ἐξενόριξε ·

Although this Euryalus is the one related to Diomedes, and therefore not the Euryalus of Vergil, the same two names, or rather one the same and one very similar, are still linked even in such dissimilar circumstances: one Euryalus is the son of Opheltes, the other kills a man called Opheltius. However, the aural connection still exists to an extent, and all works to build up an atmosphere of tension around Nisus and Euryalus, whereby the wrong people do or promise the wrong things to the wrong people (Cf. **Commentary 177**. See further **Commentary 264** *devicta . . . Arisba*).

203 *sublatum erudiit* Page thinks that this is not pleonasm, but that the use of *sublatum* is a reminder of the formal word used of a father lifting up his new-born son to acknowledge him. Thus this explains the presence of an apparently superfluous word and shows that Opheltes acknowledged Euryalus to be his son and brought him up to be a credit to his father. The stress laid on Euryalus's upbringing is deliberate and contrasts with his lack of notable prowess despite his father's care and training. This failure seems to be implied by the fact that Homer's Euryalus kills his 'Opheltes-figure'.

nec tecum talia gessi . . . extrema secutus This is slightly odd coming from the mouth of such a young warrior, but again the building up of his own prowess is an attempt by Euryalus to persuade Nisus that he is a suitable companion. It must be doubted, however, just how much experience of actual warfare Euryalus would have had. He seems to be glossing over the fact that the Trojans have been wandering for seven years, which can only mean that he left Troy as quite a young child (as Servius implies *ad 9.200 Argolicum terrorem*) and that the fighting in Latium is the only warfare he can have experienced in any type of military context. However, this phrase forms the complementary half of Euryalus's argument: not only was he well trained as a boy, but also his subsequent activity has maintained the same standards, and the expectation of such a one as the son of Opheltes has not been disappointed.

tecum Euryalus draws particular attention to deeds done in the presence of Nisus, to reinforce his argument that even Nisus has not seen him act in an unsuitable way for a warrior. The word also stresses their exclusive 'togetherness'.

204 magnanimum Aenean et fata extrema secutus There is an inherent tension in these words. Euryalus calls his previous experiences *fata extrema* because they have been beyond anything that he could have expected. *Extrema*, however, carries a strong hint of *ultima*, which would mean something like his latest exploits. Herein lies the tension: Euryalus implies that he has acted in a similar fashion when following Aeneas and when pursuing his latest exploit. Here, instead of following Aeneas he is actively seeking him and here, ironically, his exploit is not to be the latest of many, but his last, culminating in his death.

205 est hic, est animus Euryalus is very emphatic and some of his enthusiasm is shown by his repeating himself (but see **Commentary 211 *si quis***).

est animus lucis contemptor Euryalus speaks ill-omened words by declaring that he scorns the light, and not only that he scorns it, but does so from the depth of his rational and emotional self. The fact that Euryalus says that his *animus* is *lucis contemptor* sets this attitude as a foundation of his very nature. At such a time the words are ill-omened as not only is Euryalus scorning the light (of life), by saying that he would be happy to die for honour, but he is also slighting the source of that light, the Sun, and more importantly (as it is night), the Sun's regent, the Moon. He should have remembered that Sun and Moon are both divinities and that slighting such beings is very dangerous (cf. 1. 8 *quo numine laeso*). Euryalus thus declares himself to be in effect *divum contemptor*. There is, however, a double aspect to *lucis contemptor*. On the one hand it is impious, or at least ill omened, but on the other hand it can also be 'heroic' or 'quasi-stoic', in that Euryalus despised life without

honour as Cato despised wealth and favour (Livy 39. 40. 11 *contemptor gratiae, divitiarum*). This reinforces the influence of the philosophical subtext (cf. the Platonic elements of the love of Nisus and Euryalus, Makowski, *passim*). In these circumstances, however, the feeling is somewhat incongruous: Euryalus is willing to die to further Nisus's glory, not his own, and the thing that he despises causes offence to the gods, rather than their approval.

et istum/ qui vita bene credat emi, quo tendis, honorem Servius glosses this line as:

Qui istum honorem, quo tendis, id est ad quem niteris, libenter emat vita, id est vitae pretio.

It is characteristic of Euryalus that he only grasps half of what Nisus has meant or said. This is a characteristic that is revealed more dramatically later (see **Commentary 354**).

Euryalus is only thinking of honour through battle, which picks up Nisus's suggestion *aut pugnam* (186). It is ironic that after he has expressed sentiments declaring himself willing to die if he can only win honour, his actual death, or rather its antecedents, should be so sordid.

quo tendis honorem The irony of this line is that Euryalus will pay, with his own life, for Nisus's greater glory, but that the means of Nisus's winning glory actually diminishes Euryalus in the martial field (see **Commentary 428**). Euryalus is honoured only because of the devotion that he inspires in Nisus.

207 equidem de te nil tale verebar Vergil has made Nisus very careful in his choice of words in reply to Euryalus's argument. He clearly recognises Euryalus's spirit and the link between them, but even so he is loath to have Euryalus as his companion in danger. Nisus obviously knows Euryalus's character well from his actions, and thus realises that he is not the right person for the job (see **Introduction:** Their 'type' in the classical tradition: (b) Euryalus as a warrior). There is some sense of this in Nisus's use of *equidem*. This is the only occurrence in Book 9 of a word which is otherwise quite common. Such a word always expresses strong feelings. Here it almost implies that others might have thought that Euryalus was unsuitable but, as Nisus says: 'I myself (*equidem*) never thought this of you.'

208 nec fas This is a very strong word with religious and moral implications. These implications of the word show that Nisus is aware of the sanctity of the bond between Euryalus and him. Vergil has perhaps echoed Plato in implying through Nisus that it would offend against divine law for the beloved to be voluntarily separated from his lover in dangerous circumstances. See Plato *Sym.* 178e–179b esp:

καὶ μὴν ἐγκαταλιπεῖν γε τὰ παιδικὰ ἢ μὴ βοηθῆσαι
κινδυνεύοντι — οὐδεὶς οὕτω κακὸς ὄντινα οὐκ ἂν αὐτὸς ὁ
Ἔρωσ ἔνθεον ποιήσειε πρὸς ἀρετὴν . . .

non ita me . . . Iuppiter There has been much discussion over the possible punctuation of 208 and what this would imply for the meaning: Conington proposes to punctuate after *non*, that is, *nec fas; non: ita me . . .*, taking *non* as a reflection, in isolation, on *nec fas*. Williams and Mynors have it as *nec fas; non ita me . . .*

Williams considers that *non* by itself would be colloquial and non epic. Really *non* does seem to go more easily with *ita* and what follows than it does standing by itself as a comment. The sense of 207–209 seems to be:

. . . I at least have never feared such a thing of you nor would it be right; and may great Jupiter . . . not bring me back to you in triumph (sc. if I did believe such a thing of you).

In this form, *non* followed by *ita me* is ironically ambiguous: Jupiter does not bring Nisus back safety to Euryalus, despite all his protestations. (See also Ker, pp. 40–41)

tibi Servius remarks that:

Mire iusiurandum compositum sic enumerat, quasi relicturus eum, cum de virtutibus eius optime sentiat.

Nisus is thus able to mollify Euryalus, but he still has it in mind that he will go out alone. This is brought out by the fact that he qualifies *me referat . . . ovanthem* as *me referat tibi . . . ovanthem*. This can only mean that he envisages Euryalus as being safe in camp all the time that he is out on his mission. Nisus's *tibi* and Euryalus's *tecum* (203) are linked in that they both emphasise the unity of Nisus and Euryalus. However, there is a tension between them that epitomises Nisus's and Euryalus's views of the situation. Euryalus means that they have always been and will always be together, Nisus implies a separation from Euryalus (while he is out on his mission) and then a triumphal return to him. This aspect of separation is important as it foreshadows Euryalus's isolation (from Nisus) at the time of his capture and death.

magnus . . . / Iuppiter aut quicumque oculis haec aspicit aequis In a polytheistic society there might indeed be some confusion over which god functioned in a particular area. For once, Nisus is careful to observe the correct form of address and leave room in his vow to include any other god who might help him, thus avoiding a potential slight. It is interesting that when Nisus is talking to Euryalus about such an important subject as their mutual love, he is careful that his language is in the correct form, as if the subject were too important to have a shadow of impiety cast over it, whereas in his talking about the gods themselves, without reference to Euryalus, he is somewhat offhand concerning them and their power. As he is so uncharacteristically scrupulous in his words, it almost seems as if he were trying to correct the offence caused by Euryalus's *luciscontemptor*. In this line he is very much aware that Jupiter is watching them (cf. *aspicit*).

me referat tibi . . . ovantem This is a contrast to Nisus's words of 194–195, where Nisus abnegated his claim on the prize and promised it to Euryalus. Here he seems to imply that he will hold an *ovatio* on his return, with all the trappings and riches that that would imply. The allusion to an *ovatio* is another example of the Vergilian anachronism as noted earlier by Servius (cf. **Commentary** 181).

210 sed si quis . . . casusve deusve Nisus is doubtful or does not care which is the ruling force, he only sees a force potentially opposed to him. He is trying to make out a rational argument for leaving Euryalus behind in camp while he goes out. This is reflected in his careful use of language: he lights on all possible chances: *si quis* would seem to imply human intervention and *casusve deusve* refer to direct

intervention by a god or the fulfilment of his fate. This doubt continues Nisus's uncertainty about the source of his burning desire (see 184–185).

211 si quis Vergil's making him repeat himself adds to the picture of Nisus's impetuosity, but it also shows that even in his enthusiasm he is capable of reasoned thought. He repeats himself because his mind is distracted, in his excitement, from what he was initially going to say, by his interrupting himself with *quae multa vides discrimine tali*. Despite this break, his train of thought returns to the starting point and he continues his speech, but his mood has changed as a sudden thought strikes him. It is almost possible to hear the drop in his voice as he goes from the first *si quis* which follows on from his fulsome denial of any doubts about Euryalus and is uttered in a state of optimism (cf. *ovantem*), to the second, which comes after the sudden thought that all may not come out well. After this second *si quis*, he continues in a far less confident manner. There is also an echo in Nisus's repetition of Euryalus's *est hic, est animus* (205). Both Nisus and Euryalus are inspired and excited at the thought of glory and both repeat themselves in their enthusiasm, but whereas Euryalus stays in his unthinking state and lets nothing dissuade him, Nisus seems much more thoughtful and starts to put forward serious reasons why Euryalus should stay in camp.

in adversum Nisus has consistently underplayed the possible danger to himself of his plan. He starts by calling it *aliquid . . . magnum* (186), and ends by saying that he may be brought *in adversum* (211). This is an important shade to Nisus's character: he makes light of his danger possibly to show how brave he is by this

display of sangfroid, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to reassure Euryalus. Nisus first mentions that he will come back victorious (208 *ovantem*) and only then mentions the possibility of something going wrong. Euryalus is not convinced and correctly identifies Nisus's *aliquid . . . magnum as tanta pericula*.

casusve deusve Moskalëw cites 12. 321 (*casusne deusne*) as a parallel. The Med. MS also has this later line as *casusve deusve*. This later quotation concerns the origin of the arrow that wounded Aeneas as he was trying to uphold the terms of the truce. The MS tradition clearly links these two phrases strongly and as this hardly qualifies for formulaic status, these being its only two occurrences, there must be something important in the link: both occurrences are associated with disaster, in Book 9 implied, in Book 12 actual, and both seem to be the work of some malignant deity but one which seems to act for no apparent logical reason.

212 te superesse velim, tua vita dignior aetas There would almost be some bathetic humour in this line if the situation were not so grave. Nisus cannot be that much older than Euryalus (see 235) but he is using an almost paternal form of address to Euryalus. The paternal image is highlighted by the use of *superesse*: if anything happens to him, Nisus wants Euryalus to carry on. The tone of voice is very like that of a father talking to his son before the father goes into danger (cf. also Commentary 217 and 493). There is thus a link and contrast made with Euryalus's real father, Opheltes. Opheltes brought up Euryalus to be warlike. Nisus, his quasi-father, is here trying to prevent Euryalus from engaging in military action. The incongruity of Nisus's words here is striking, as until this line he has tended to

treat his plan as an adventure where fame and fortune can be won and he speaks of it to Euryalus as to an equal. This is more in the tone of his utterances after the second *si quis* (see **Commentary 211**).

There is a ring and a contrast formed by *vita* in 206 and 212. In the first, Euryalus says that his life will be well lost in the pursuit of Nisus's honour. In the second, Nisus says that he feels that Euryalus's youth makes him worthy of life. The second implicitly abnegates the first.

213 sit qui Nisus naturally assumes that this 'someone' will be Euryalus and therefore he clearly does intend to go without him (cf. **Commentary 208 tibi**).

me raptum pugna pretiove redemptum Nisus refers to the heroic code whereby it was incumbent upon companions to regain the bodies of their dead either in a battle or by ransoming them. There are several instances in the *Iliad* where heroes are reminded of this duty and consider the odium that attaches to failure in fulfilling it (see *Il.* 17. 90–93 also 152–3). Page thinks that *raptum* should be the warrior's first thought, but failing that he must seek to ransom it with the νεκροῦ . . . ἄποινα (*Il.* 24.137).

raptum This word is linked to *rapiat* (211) and shows what the result of the earlier occurrence may be: if some ill fortune (or whatever) 'snatches' Nisus into adversity, then the result of this could well be that his body would need to be 'snatched' from the enemy.

214 solita aut si qua id Fortuna vetabit Nisus recognises the fickle nature of Fortuna. The mention of Fortuna ties in with *casusve deusve* (211) in that Fortuna is either personified as *deus* or left more impersonally as *casus*. She is nebulous in form in 211, but the naming of her (214) gives her a more pronounced executive role. In 211 it is an unknown force working its own design for unknowable reasons, in 214 it is Fortuna acting as is her wont (cf. Sallust: *Bell. Cat.* 8. 1 *sed profecto Fortuna in omni re dominatur*). It is interesting that in this instance, Nisus almost makes Fortuna have the same function as something like *Fatum*. He could as easily have said something like: 'If it is not my fate (i.e., if my fate forbids it), then . . . ' as 'If Fortune interferes with this, then . . . '. By this device, Vergil is able to create a tension whereby something as notoriously changeable as Luck acts in the same way as something as unchangeable as Fate. (For further comments on *Fortuna*, see Commentary 446 *Fortunati ambo!* . . .)

215 absenti ferat in ferias decoretque sepulcro Nisus speaks prophetically although he does not know it. There is the same irony in this line as there is in 195 where he speaks of *tumulo . . . sub illo*, but in 215 there is also the idea that Euryalus, whom he has left behind in safety, will set up his cenotaph. As it turns out, the very thing that Nisus imagines happening concerning his own body also happens to Euryalus (see 490–491). This idea is subtly foreshadowed by Nisus's saying immediately after this *neu matri miserae tanti sim causa doloris* (216). Despite the fact that this line seems to be the opening of a new train of thought, it also acts as the conclusion to Nisus's previous idea. The irony of this line is embodied in *miserae*

and *sola*. Euryalus's mother will indeed be left wretched and alone after the death of Euryalus. Nisus again speaks prophetically although he does not realise it.

217 *quae te sola . . . multis e matribus ausa /persequitur* Many of the Trojan women, who were tired by the long journey, had stayed behind at Acesta (5. 767f). This is the first mention of Euryalus's mother, and it adds to the pathos of his circumstances, in that not only was he brought up in a time of great hardship (202), but he is also the last support of an ageing mother. This pathos is also increased by Nisus's calling Euryalus *puer*, thus highlighting his youth at the same time as drawing attention to the great responsibility laid upon him. It would seem that Nisus had prepared his case well: not only has he avoided putting Euryalus in a dishonourable position by denying that he felt Euryalus lacked courage, but he has also given Euryalus an honourable task to perform, while ensuring that he remains in safety. Nisus puts before Euryalus the idea that it is positively his duty to stay behind to ensure that Nisus is honoured in death, if it should come to that, and also to fulfil his filial duty to his mother.

There is a ring formed by *solum* (200) and *sola* (217). As well as the verbal link, it is interesting that both occurrences have a bearing on Euryalus. This links Nisus and Euryalus's mother in relation to Euryalus, almost making Nisus his honorary father (see also **Commentary** 212 and 493).

218 *persequitur* (For the significance of this word see **Commentary** 310).

219 ille autem: causas nequiquam nectis inanis Euryalus uses the same imagery that occurs in Nisus's latest statement. Nisus had been talking of Euryalus's mother: this brings to mind the traditional maternal occupation of weaving to make clothes (cf. the pathos added to the death of Lausus by this idea in 10.818). Euryalus uses this same imagery of weaving in his answer. The link is confirmed when it is discovered that Euryalus's mother has indeed been weaving while her son was in danger (476 and 488). Euryalus's answer is in accordance with the picture that Vergil has drawn: Euryalus, in his youthful enthusiasm, cannot believe that anything could happen to harm Nisus. He has not the maturity to realise the possible danger. This is in contrast to Nisus himself, who although he is keen for action realises the possible danger.

nequiquam Cf. 364 *haec rapit atque umeris nequiquam fortibus aptat*. These are the only two occurrences of this word in Book 9 and it is significant that they both affect Euryalus. In the one he does not take advice and so goes into danger, in the other he puts on a sword-belt taken as plunder, but he gains no benefit and is killed.

220 nec mea iam mutata loco sententia cedit It is fitting that Euryalus should use quasi-military language at this point. But it is ironic and ominous that although his opinion has not 'left its place', he himself is just about to do so, *statione relictal ipse . . . graditur* (222).

221–223 ‘*acceleremus*’ *ait* . . . *requirunt* (see Commentary 355). With these words, Euryalus takes the initiative. This follows on from 200 (see Commentary *ad loc.*). Despite Nisus’s having first mooted the plan, Euryalus has taken it over and actually sets it in motion. Until he enters the presence of the council to speak, Nisus assumes a subordinate place and follows Euryalus’s lead. This is shown by the fact that all the action is done by Euryalus, that is: *ille autem (inquit), . . . ait . . . excitat* and more importantly *ipse comes Niso graditur*. However, at the very last, Nisus regains some of his executive power and instead of being led by Euryalus, actively goes with him in *regemque requirunt*. It is not that Euryalus thinks of going out alone (see *acceleremus*) but that he now wants Nisus to come with him, rather than trying to persuade Nisus to let him accompany him.

vigiles There is a striking contrast between these men and Nisus and Euryalus. These men are real watchmen who will do the job set them and not go off in search of adventure. After the words *portae custos* are used to describe Nisus, no mention is made of him doing this duty. These men, even though they are cast in an inferior mould by not being named, fulfil their function and they *servantque vices*. Nisus on the other hand is led away from his post and the contrast between him and the unnamed *vigiles* is pointed by *statione relicta*.

223 ipse Euryalus is not named but, even so, at this point he is in command (see Commentary 221–223).

regemque This must mean Ascanius. It is ominous that they seek his permission, as he is not actually in command, being too young and inexperienced (cf. *Commentary* 201–204 *bellis adsuetus Opheltes*). No doubt it is that being much of an age with them he could be expected to be sympathetic to them. It should therefore be borne in mind that the whole escapade was planned and sanctioned by the very young (Nisus, Euryalus and Ascanius), and the very old (*grandaevus Aletes*). Although Aletes forms a parallel with Nestor in his part in the *Doloneia* (although not in executive capacity), Nisus, Euryalus and Ascanius do not equal Agamemnon in authority. It is of some significance that they should apply to Ascanius, who is not the ‘real’ king and who is implicitly contrasted with Aeneas who is really *rex*. It somehow puts the beginning of the expedition in an inauspicious light as if it were bound to come to an end other than that expected because it began under false auspices. This idea also forms part of the ‘wrong man, wrong job’ theme (cf. *Commentary* 177, 201–204 *bellis adsuetus Opheltes* and also 264 *devicta Arisba*).

The paragraph is ringed by *comes* (223) and *comes* (179) and thus ends the introductory passage.

* * * * *

224–225 Cetera per . . . laborum This is a common formula by which, just before a scene of action or disaster, the world is described as calm and at peace from its labours. This is doubtless done to heighten the contrast between the present quiet and the expected excitement. This is clearly shown when it is remembered that these lines are an echo of 4.522–523, a description of the calm of nature at night just before

Dido plans to commit suicide and thus throw Carthage into chaos and confusion. The phrase is also possibly an echo of Lucretius (4. 908) and also Homer (*Il.* 2. 1 and 10. 2). The latter reference in Homer is the closer parallel, coming as it does at the beginning of the *Doloneia*. It is significant that although Vergil says that all living things find rest and escape from toil in sleep, the Rutuli find slaughter and death in theirs. This fact is more effectively brought out in 339 where the Rutuli are compared to sheep being mauled by a lion. This animal imagery is common to both the Homeric and the Vergilian episodes: Nisus is compared to a lion in a sheepfold (*Aen.* 9. 339) and Homer says that Diomedes falls on the Thracians like a lion (*Il.* 10. 485 ὡς δὲ λέων, κ. τ. λ.).

226 ductores Teucrum primi, delecta iuventa cf. *Lucretius* 1. 86. *ductores Danaum delecti, prima virorum*. In Lucretius, the Greek chieftains are about to sacrifice Iphigenia to Artemis; in the *Aeneid*, the council of Trojan chieftains allow two young men to go on a dangerous mission, and they are killed after the apparent intervention of the Moon Goddess. The Vergilian line is given a more ominous shade by the comparison with the Lucretian line: in Lucretius, the Greeks actively want to kill Iphigenia, in the *Aeneid*, it seems that the Trojans simply allow Nisus and Euryalus to do what they want, but it is made more sinister by the fact that they are willing to place such an onus on two relatively inexperienced warriors. They thus almost cause their deaths by an act of omission in not stopping them. It is also typical of Vergil that he will change the mood of a passage that he seems to echo: in the sacrifice of Iphigenia (in Lucretius), the Moon Goddess is tangibly present; at

the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus her actual presence is far more nebulous and yet more insidious in its effects.

227 consilium summis regni de rebus habebant, . . . nuntius esset Cf. 201 *Aenean acciri omnes . . . certa reportent*. It is the accumulation of such things that leads to the tragedy: if Nisus had not found the council thinking almost exactly the same thoughts as he, there might have been a chance that they would have dissuaded him; as it is, both Nisus and the council are thinking along the same misguided lines and so it is inevitable that Nisus will be allowed to fulfill his desire and thus his fate.

228 quisve The use of this word adds to the anticipation of the entrance of Nisus. The Trojans are still trying to think of someone to send, while the audience already knows that Nisus is on his way to offer his services for exactly this task, and so the entrance of Nisus acts as a wish fulfilment. Thus Ti. Donatus says: *opportune venerant simul Nisus et Euryalus*. This is a very common device (particularly in epic poetry) of the coincidence of wish and fulfilment, whereby the audience is given the privilege of knowing something before the characters do and apparently chance events seem to form part of a pre-ordained pattern.

229 stant longis . . . et scuta tenentes It shows the desperation of the Trojans that even in the council they should be standing and having their spears and shields in readiness in case of attack. This is perhaps an echo of *Il.* 8.493–496:

... ἐν δ' ἄρα χειρὶ
ἔγχος ἔχ' ἑνδεκάπηχυ . . .

.....
τῷ ὅ γ' ἐρεισάμενος ἔπεα Τρώεσσι μετήυδα·

The scholiast observes of this (Σb in 8.494):

καλῶς οὐ στήπτρον κατέχων δημηγορεῖ ἀλλὰ τὰ τῆς ἀνδρείας
σημεῖα προβαλλόμενος

adnixa There seems to be a pun on Nisus's name in the choice of this word, taken from the two possible meanings of *adnitor*, 'to lean upon' and 'to exert oneself' (OLD, cf. **Commentary** 410). This somehow strengthens the idea that it was Nisus who was bound to be the answer to the problem (see also **Commentary** 228 *quisve*).

230 castrorum et campi medio Vergil is either thinking of the typical Roman camp in which would be the Praetorium, or he has it in mind that the Trojans meet in a clear space, like the Greeks in the *Iliad* (10. 199: ἐν καθαρῷ, ὅθι δὴ νεκύων διεφαίνετο χώρος) or, indeed, elements of both ideas. However, although both Greeks and Trojans (respectively in the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*) meet in an open space and lean on their spears, it is some indication of the panic-stricken state of the Trojans that they have their spears to hand even in camp. It is to be expected that the Greeks would have theirs as Homer specifically said that they met outside the safety of the camp (*Il.* 10. 198–200).

tum Nisus et una Euryalus This continues the process whereby Nisus regains some of his initiative (see **Commentary** 221–223 '*acceleremus*' *ait*). Euryalus is still very much a participant in the action as is shown by *una*. There is perhaps also an echo of *his amor unus erat* and also *pariterque* (182) in the use of this word, and thus this phrase forms another ring:

- (a) iuxta comes (179)
- (b) amor unus erat (182)
- (a) ipse comes (223)
- (b) Nisus et una Euryalus (230)

231 admittier orant Servius explains the use of the archaic form of the passive infinitive where he says:

hoc verbo ostendit olim et apud reges admissionum fuisse officium.

By using an archaic form, Vergil gives the council a certain dignity which is in direct contrast to its state of leaderless anxiety even though affairs of state are being discussed.

alacres Servius glosses this as *concitati*. There is a contrast between the despondent gravity of the council and the impetuosity of Nisus and Euryalus, also between its static position and their excited movement. This is carried on into 233 with *trepidus*.

232 rem magnam pretiumque morae fore (Cf. 186 *aliquid . . . magnum*)

At 186 the subject of *magnum* was as yet vague and unformed — *aliquid*, now that Nisus comes to lay his plan before the council it has formed into a definite plan, *rem*. This is ironic in view of the fact that Nisus is still not quite clear what the prime object of his plan is: whether to collect spoils or to reach Aeneas. (See also Commentary 241–243.)

Servius considers that Nisus's words to the council mean:

... se adferre rem magnam, cuius mora pretium posset adferre, id est poenam.

This would seem to be the point of *confestim* (231). Donatus says:

dicebant enim illi res magnas se ferre et earum inaestimabile commodum labi posse, si fieret mora.

Perhaps he meant Nisus to be saying that the council would find it worthwhile waiting for what they had to say. Donatus then goes on to argue his case:

et merito fuerat properandum, dum in hostibus vinum fuit et somnus et dum paratas fraudes noctis tempus poterat adiuvere. pretium significare utilitatem et multi auctores dixerunt et ex eo fit manifestius, quia operae pretium dicitur, cum ex aliquo actu quaeritur commodum. ergo celeritatem rogabant, ne mora corrumperet parata consilia.

This latter is linked with Nisus's earlier words *si tibi quae posco promittunt* (194) and his later reference to *spolia* (242).

morae There is an inherent conflict between this word, which symbolises the Trojan council, and *confestim* and *trepidos* which describe the excited haste of Nisus and Euryalus.

primus Iulus (For the significance of the name *Iulus* see Commentary 310.) It is significant that Ascanius takes the initiative (see



Commentary 223), but it is also significant that he does not speak formally until Nisus and Aletes have done so. This accords well with the picture of a young boy who is aware of his responsibilities as the son of the absent leader, and acts as his substitute or lieutenant by admitting Nisus and giving him permission to speak. But he leaves the actual business to his 'Nestor-like' counsellor, Aletes.

234 tum sic Hyrtacides (See Commentary 319 *Hyrtacides*.)

audite o mentibus aequis/ Aeneadae (Cf. 6. 509 for an 'o' similarly misplaced.) The style of Nisus's opening words have a rhetorical ring to them, they maintain the tone begun at 231 with *admittier orant* (see Commentary *ad loc.*). The generic patronymic also adds to the resonance of Nisus's speech, as does *mentibus aequis* instead of the more usual *aequo animo*. It is again to be noticed that the style of Nisus's speech is not really in keeping for the mood of the addressee, the council.

Aeneadae It is significant that Nisus calls the Trojans by this name when he is just about to put forward a plan that directly contradicts Aeneas's orders (9. 41–43). If he had called them 'Trojans' or something similar at this stage, the tension would have been considerably lessened.

235 *neve haec nostris spectentur ab annis/ quae ferimus* Servius says of this:

bene excusat, quia scit de aetate puerorum posse dubitari, dicens non ex suggerentum persona, in qua est maior auctoritas, sed sua vi consilia ponderanda.

Nisus thus shows his age (see **Introduction**: Nisus). The irony is really that they are too young and their plan is really flawed.

Rutuli somno vinoque soluti /conticuere This is no doubt the source of Servius's interpretation of 232: that the reward for delay would be disaster, as by the time of eventual action the Rutuli would be awake and sober and therefore more apt for warfare than they would be in their present incapacitated state. There is a variant reading of *soluti* as *sepulti* here, as there is also at 189 (see **Commentary ad loc.**). Compare also 2. 265 *invadunt* (sc Danai) *urbem somno vinoque sepultam*, where there is no alternative reading. In all cases there is the image of sleep being very close to death, whether one reads *soluti* or *sepulti* (the same reason for the choice of *soluti* applies in both occurrences. See **Commentary** 189 *somno vinoque soluti*). Homer frequently speaks of a man's limbs being 'loosed in death', and in the *Aeneid* the 'loosening' of the body by wine and sleep is a premonition of death. The death-like state of the Rutuli is further described in *conticuere*: they are utterly silent (as the grave).

A comparison should be made between 189ff:

*... somno vinoque soluti
procubuere, silent late loca, percipe porro
quid dubitem' ... etc.*

and 236ff:

*... Rutuli somno vinoque soluti
conticuere. locum insidiis conspeximus ipsi.*

In the first instance Vergil gives a description of the Rutuli 'lying' in their drunken sleep, he then goes on to give the exhortation to Euryalus. In the second case, he gives the same image but in stronger language, saying that the Rutuli are 'silent' (the 'Eternal Silence') in sleep and wine, he then puts forward his plan. It is as if with the exhortation the Rutuli are merely shown as vulnerable, but once the plan is laid out they are as good as dead.

237–243 *locum insidiis conspeximus ipsi ... adfore cernetis* The formula 'I myself have seen ...' is a common τόπος, and gives added weight to what the speaker says, as he is speaking from first-hand experience. On the whole, Nisus seems to have two ideas in mind: *insidiis* is picked up in 238–241, which in turn is a reflection of 195–196, but on the other hand, 242–243 picks up *pugnam* (186). This conflation of the ideas of a spying mission and a raid reflects the two aspects of the *Doloneia*, where Odysseus and Diomedes start out with the idea of catching up with a straggler to see whether they can learn anything useful, and having gained information from Dolon, they then go on to raid the Thracian camp. In the *Iliad*, there is a logical sequence, in the *Aeneid*, lack of a coherent plan. This state of affairs

is a further reflection of the characters involved: Odysseus and Diomedes are experienced warriors who know their own limits and do not overreach themselves, Nisus and Euryalus are young, relatively inexperienced and are carried away by the idea of action and fame.

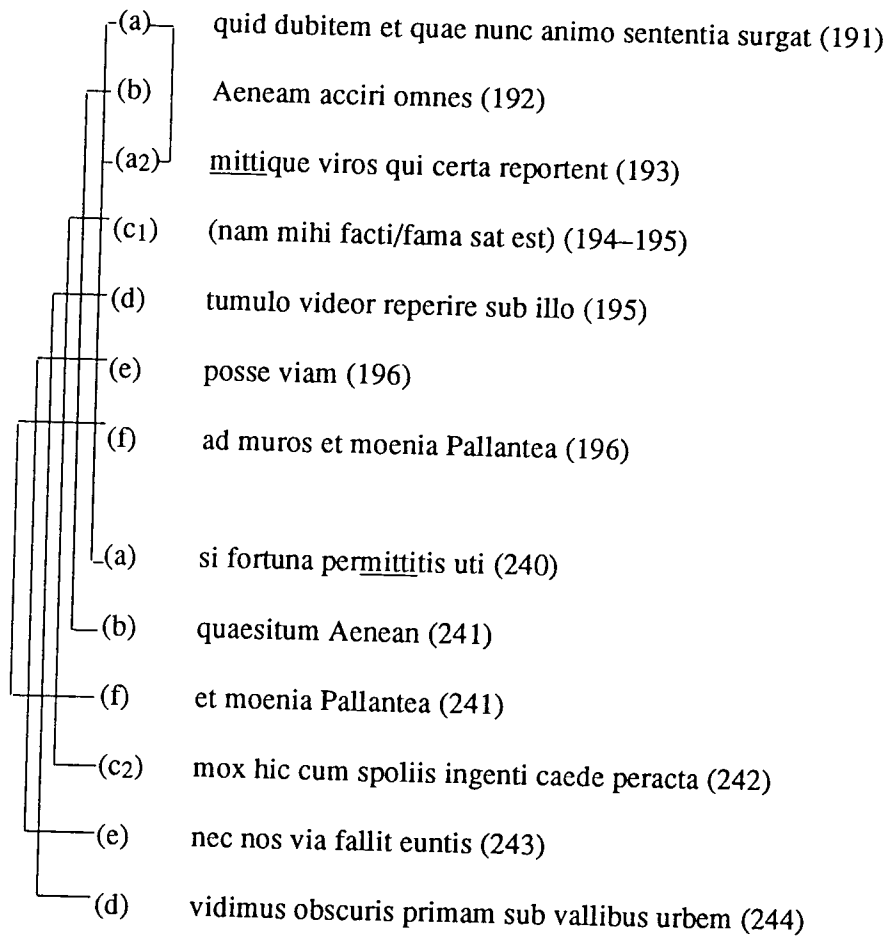
238–240 qui patet in bivio portae . . ./erigitur There are disturbing parallels between the proposed journey of Nisus and Euryalus and Aeneas's journey in the Underworld. Both journeys start at night — 6. 269 *nocte per umbram* cf 9.314 *noctisque per umbram*; both follow a road that divides — 6. 540 cf. lemma and both ways are lit by fire: Aeneas's journey by the fire of Tartarean Phlegethon (6. 549-550) that of Nisus and Euryalus by the *interrupti ignes* of the Rutulian camp (239) (cf. also **Commentary** 314 in relation to *Geo.* 1.366). The scene is set in much the same setting for both, but the mood is very different. Aeneas's journey is undertaken in a spirit of *pietas*, whereas that of Book 9 is not (*vide supra*). The outcome is also very different: Aeneas sets out on his journey in a state of depression and is taught to transcend his own cares for the sake of his people to be — his outlook is thus broadened, Nisus and Euryalus set out in a state of excitement at the prospect of fame and plunder, but as they proceed they become more introspective as fortune opposes them, so that in the end, Nisus forsakes the good of his people (his finding of Aeneas) for the sake of his own desire, to rescue Euryalus, or at least to avenge him. It is also the case that Aeneas journeys through the realms of death and then returns to the world of the living. The end of the 'Nisus and Euryalus Episode' describes their deaths.

239 interrupti ignes . . . erigitur Cf. *lumina rara micant* (189). This image functions both on the actual and the metaphorical plane. On the one hand it shows that the Rutuli are not as alert as they were, as they have let some of their watch-fires go out; on the other hand it shows that the strength of the Rutuli is at a low ebb, in that the brightness of the fires has been dimmed by the loss of some of their number, and that those that are left are producing more smoke than flame, and that this smoke intensifies even the darkness of night. Thus all is dim and obscure as Nisus and Euryalus set out on their mission, but this very dimness is partly man-made, and those who caused it are reflected by it.

ad sidera fumus /erigitur It is significant that at the start of their journey all is dark and obscure, with the darkness intensified by smoke, whereas at the end it is the brightness of the moon that betrays them to the enemy.

240 si fortuna permittitis uti (For the significance of *fortuna* see Commentary 214 and 446 *Fortunati ambo!*) Nisus's words clearly refer to the opportunity afforded by the unwatchful state of the Rutuli demonstrated by the state of their watch-fires. (Cf. Commentary 232 *rem magnam.*)

Nisus repeats several elements of his original speech to Euryalus to the council. The similarity of 189 and 236 is obvious and a direct parallel, but thereafter the link becomes more subtle:



Most of these are simply verbal echoes, but in the midst of all these there is one dissonant note. (c1) and (c2) do not coincide. In the first, Nisus says that he will effectively take no spoils and will give any reward the Trojans may offer him to Euryalus. In the second, it is quite clear that he will take spoils and that in fact this is his main aim.

241–243 quaesitum Aenean . . . adfore cernetis These lines show the ambiguous nature of Nisus's plan (cf. **Commentary** 232). Unlike Odysseus and Diomedes who kill Dolon only after they have got from him what they want to know

and so that he does not raise the alarm, Nisus and Euryalus seem to be going out with the main aim of wreaking havoc and gathering loot. Although this might be quite acceptable in pitched battle, it rather conflicts with the idea of a secret mission to escape through the enemy lines without being detected. Despite what Quinn says about 242 ('Nisus's original intention was to complete his mission and then worry about loot afterwards'), this is neither what happens in the end, nor is it strongly suggested in Nisus's initial speech. Nisus's real purpose at this stage seems to be the taking of loot and his mention of going in search of Aeneas appears only a pretext for obtaining permission to leave the camp. (See previous lemma.) The mention of spoils is an echo of 208 (see *Commentary ad loc.*).

243 nec nos via fallit euntis This is irony indeed. If this clause is taken with the rest of the sentence it makes perfect sense: they know the territory well because they have hunted all over it and so should not lose their way even in the dark. However, it also has a more ominous side to it when taken in isolation. They do, and indeed have already, 'lost their way'. They have put themselves forward for a very dangerous mission (of which they are not in fact capable), ostensibly for the preservation of their fellow Trojans, and yet they seem to have embarked on it solely for self-aggrandisement and for the gathering of plunder to the detriment of their supposed aim. They have been consistently off-hand in their references to the gods at a time when vows and prayers should have been in their minds. The real irony is, however, that as well as losing their way morally, they also do so in reality (or at least Euryalus does), and this finally leads to their total destruction as Nisus again deviates from his stated path of finding Aeneas and returns to try and save Euryalus,

or at least to avenge him, even at the cost of his own life. This is the first occurrence of the natural world taking over. It is significant that Nisus says that the way will not deceive them rather than that they will not lose their way (see also *Commentary passim* for this subordination of Nisus and Euryalus to their circumstances by either grammatical device or imagery).

242 vidimus cf. 237 *conspeximus*. Nisus claims that they are suitable for the task in hand because they have first-hand knowledge of the terrain. However, the irony of this claim is brought out by the description of the walls and Nisus's perception of them: they are *obscuris . . . vallibus*. This symbolises his dimness of perception (see previous lemma).

245 venatu adsiduo Cf. 178 *venatrix iaculo celerem*. Nisus also draws attention to his well-known skills as a hunter and, in so doing, portrays himself as fit and warlike (see *Commentary* 177).

totum cognovimus amnem It should be remembered that the Trojans have been in Italy for only a very short time when considering Nisus's claim to know the whole course of the Tiber. This claim by Nisus is another aspect of his reckless nature and also his youthful self-confidence.

246 annis gravis atque animi maturus Aletes Cf. *grandaevus*, Aletes's usual sobriquet. Vergil makes great play of the age and experience of Aletes thus clearly strengthening the parallel between his role and that of Nestor in the *Doloneia*. But

there the similarity ends. In the *Doloneia*, Nestor appeals for an experienced warrior to go out and spy, knowing that such a warrior would be not only aware of the possible dangers, but also able to take care of himself should anything untoward happen. Aletes, on the other hand, falls in with the plan of a young and rash warrior who does not seem to be fully aware of the dangers inherent in his plan. It is thus the case that Aletes is as misguided as Nisus, Euryalus and Ascanius. Nisus's plan is thus sanctioned by those who are not really qualified to do so: Ascanius who lacks maturity and Aletes, who despite his age and experience is equally misguided.

247–248 *di patrii, . . . / non tamen omnino Teucros delere paratis* It is a strange juxtaposition whereby Trojan gods might wish to destroy the Trojan people. These lines strongly echo Anchises's words on the night of the Sack of Troy (2. 702–703):

*di patrii; servate domum, servate nepotem.
vestrum hoc augurium, vestroque in numine Troia est.*

Both occurrences of these words are in response to an omen or sign of the gods' apparent favour: in the case of Anchises it was the sight of portentous fire playing round Ascanius's head, in that of Aletes, the courage and resourcefulness of the youth of Troy suddenly appearing in a desperate situation. There is, however, a fundamental difference between the two occasions. In Book 2, the gods are very much present and make their views and wishes clear, but it is typical that in this episode in Book 9 gods are notable by their absence. In this episode the fortunes of the Trojans are at the lowest ebb; Aletes grasps at any sign that might be sent from the gods and it is significant that the very gods to whom he prays are those of the

destroyed city of Troy. Aletes's desperate hope is brought out in *omnino*: the Trojans are in great danger but he sees a sign of possible salvation. It is tragic that such hope should be placed on Nisus and Euryalus who are ultimately found to be completely unworthy of it. The situation is in stark contrast to its parallel passage in the *Iliad*: Diomedes asks to take Odysseus as his companion because it has been proved that Athene loves him and will therefore look after him (*Il.* 10. 245)

... φιλεῖ δέ ἑ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη.

Aletes has no such assurance about Nisus and Euryalus.

249 cum talis animos iuvenum et tam certa tulistis / pectora There are two ideas expressed here: one that Nisus and Euryalus show youthful courage and boldness (*animos*), and two, that their resolve is firm to carry out their plan. To an extent the two ideas are in conflict. Youthful ardour is not really conducive to firm resolve, which is more the product of experience. See **Commentary** 399–400 *iuvenem*. In this instance, Aletes's calling Nisus and Euryalus *iuvenes* is ironic as they are unable to ease the plight of the Trojans: i.e. *iuvo/iuvenis*.

250–251 sic memorans umeros dextrasque tenebant / amborum et vultum lacrimis atque ora rigabat Cf. 6. 699–701:

*sic memorans largo fletu simul ora rigabat.
ter conatus ibi collo dare bracchia circum;
ter frustra comprehensa manus effugit imago.*

There are two important aspects to this parallel. In Book 6, Aeneas sheds tears of grief, therefore perhaps the tears shed in Book 9 are prophetically those of mourning, thus showing that the fate of Nisus and Euryalus is not joyful. The second point provokes much the same conclusion, but is concerned with its antecedents, particularly the clasping of hands and embracing. In Book 6, Aeneas attempts to embrace the shade of his father, Anchises and sheds tears of grief when he is unable to do so. In Book 9, Aletes is able to embrace Nisus and Euryalus before they go on their mission, and the tears he sheds are supposedly those of joy and relief at their courage. It seems to be that that which follows real grief (Aeneas's view of his descendents and their future glory) is good and lasting, but that which follows on joy and wishes achieved easily is false and transient. This view is supported by the similarity of wording between Aeneas's meeting of Anchises in Book 6 and his meeting with Creusa in Book 2 (790–793):

... lacrimantem et multa volentem

ter conatus ibi collo dare bracchia circum;
ter frustra comprehensa manus effugit imago,

After this unfulfilled attempt at contact with the dead, Aeneas is told of his fate, and this prediction proves true. Another point is that truth proceeds from those who are already dead (Anchises and Creusa), whereas Nisus and Euryalus are still alive.

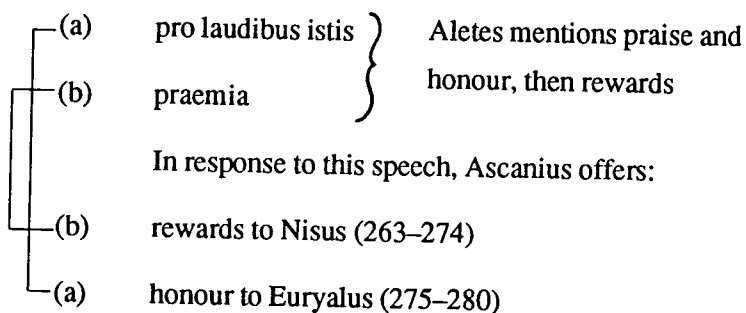
tulistis There is in this word a hint of bringing to birth, or generation. This is an aspect of the perversion of the natural world (cf. **Commentary 334**): whereas birth leads to life, the courage that the gods of Troy have borne leads directly to the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus.

252–253 *quae vobis, quae digna, viri, pro laudibus istis/praemia . . . solvi?*

Cf. 10. 825 *quid tibi nunc, miserande puer, pro laudibus istis*. The similarity of wording between Aeneas's eulogy of the dead Pallas and Aletes's eulogy of the living Nisus and Euryalus forms a link between the two, which is further strengthened by the use of the same imagery at the death of Euryalus and of Pallas (see **Commentary** 431–437).

Aletes repeats *quae* in his relief in the same way as Euryalus repeats himself at 205.

There is a chiasmus thus formed in the speech of Aletes and what follows it:



viri It is significant that this is what Aletes calls Nisus and Euryalus. The word implies a degree of experience and prowess and Aletes has elevated them so that they supposedly match the stature needed of them. It is tragically ironic that they fail to live up to this expectation.

253 *pulcherrima primam /di moresque dabunt vestri* Cf. Cicero, 2 *Phil.* 44:

satis in ipsa conscientia pulcherrimi facti fructus.

These words of Aletes are ironic as it is indeed the gods who reward Nisus and Euryalus for the actions that their characters lead them to perform, but not in the way that Aletes suggests.

254 tum cetera reddet /actutum pius Aeneas The fact that Nisus and Euryalus have been promised such lavish rewards before they start on their expedition makes their stopping to plunder the sleeping and dead Rutuli even more unfitting in this context. This is in contrast to the heroes in the *Doloneia*: their promised reward is really an increase in their κῦδος. In the Homeric world, κῦδος was substantiated by gifts, but not entirely dependent upon their actual monetary value. In comparison to the rewards offered to Nisus and Euryalus those promised to Odysseus and Diomedes are slight.

atque integer aevi/Ascanius . . . non immemor umquam Because Ascanius is so young the length of time during which he will remember their brave deeds will be greater than it would have been had they been performed when he was older.

257 genitore reducto Ascanius has remembered what their real mission is, even if Nisus and Euryalus have forgotten it in their excitement.

258 excipit Ascanius This means something like 'to take up in succession' (so Page *ad loc.*) and so here it means 'he takes up the words of Aletes'. It is a variant of the Homeric ὑπολαβὼν ἔφη.

**per magnos . . . penatis /Assaracique Larem et canae penetralia Vestae /
obtestor** Cf. 5. 744 *Pergameumque Larem et canae penetralis Vestae*. The *penetralia* are the innermost part of a shrine or building, often applied to the shrine of the *Penates*. As Paulus Diaconus (*Fest.* 208M) says:

Penetralia sunt penatium deorum sacra.

All the gods named in this oath are Trojan above all else. Ascanius swears by the soul of his ancestor Assaracus, and by invoking his *Lar*, he addresses him as a deified ancestor. (Paul. *op. cit.* 121M: *Lares . . . animae putabantur esse hominum redactae in numerum deorum*). Assaracus is thus seen as the *Lar Familiaris* (i.e., the divine progenitor of the race of Trojans, because he was an ancestor of the family of Aeneas, the leader). If the *Lar* of Assaracus represents the Trojan people, then the shrine of Vesta represents Troy itself. In her capacity as the incarnation of the Sacred Hearth, it is right that Vergil should describe Vesta as *cana*. This word describes two aspects of her: (1) she is the goddess of the hearth and therefore associated with ash (see OLD *canus* 1; and also Ovid *Ars Amat.* 440 *canet in igne cinis*), and (2) she is the seat of the original race, therefore ancient and venerable (Cf. Var. *Men.* 141 *cana Veritas*). The shrine of Vesta was strongly associated with Aeneas and therefore also with his son. Lemprière says that:

Aeneas was the first who introduced her (sc. Vesta's) mysteries in Italy . . . the *Palladium* of Troy was supposed to be preserved within her sanctuary.

This *Palladium* was the image of Pallas Athene sent down from heaven by Zeus (see Arctinus *ap.* Dion. Hal. 1. 69), and on its safe keeping depended the protection of

Troy. Aeneas rescued it from the flames (Dion. Hal. *loc. cit.*) Aeneas's family is therefore closely associated with the *Lar* of Assaracus and the shrine of Vesta and thus Ascanius binds himself by the strongest oath that one of his *gens* can swear. The strong link with the family of Aeneas is also important in the future city of Rome. The power of the *gens Iulia* is reflected in the eulogy that Vergil gives Nisus and Euryalus (446–449) esp. 448 and 449:

*dum domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum
accolet imperiumque pater Romanus habebit.*

Ascanius thus swears by all that is sacred to his past and future.

260 quaecumque mihi fortuna fidesque est There is a conflict inherent in these words, similar to that found in 214 (see *Commentary ad loc.*), whereby *fortuna* is made to behave in a steadfast fashion (to be *fides*) and not change course. (Cf. also *Commentary* 446 *Fortunati ambo!*)

in vestris pono gremiis By the allusion to this act, Ascanius almost elevates Nisus and Euryalus to the stature of gods, in whose laps petitions and offerings were often placed. Cf. the modern expression: 'in the laps of the Gods'; also Suet. *Vesp.* 5. 3:

*. . . non defuerunt qui interpretarentur, quandoque proculcatam
desertamque rem publicam . . . in tutelam eius (sc. Vespasiani) ac
velut in gremium deventuram.*

revocate parentem / reddite conspectum . . . triste recepto Ascanius shows by his style of speech that he is in an emotional state: he starts with an alliterative appeal to Nisus and Euryalus to find Aeneas, his *sola salus*; then swears an oath of the most binding kind (*vide supra*). Particular stress is laid on Ascanius's appeal for Aeneas's return by the repetition in *revocate . . . /reddite . . . recepto*. Finally, as if time were running out, Ascanius finishes with two imperatives and hyperbole. The impassioned opening of his speech contrasts with the more measured tones of what follows (starting at 263), as if he had remembered his position as Aeneas's son and recollected his duty to his absent father.

263–274 bina dabo . . . ipse Latinus The richness of these rewards are contrasted with that offered in the *Doloneia* (*Il.* 10. 212–217). They are also not quite suitable for the giver or the receiver. (Lee, 1979, p. 185, Note 27):

The rewards Ascanius promises strike a discordant note. What he offers Nisus — captive women and warriors — are savage gifts and surely beyond his power to give.

Ascanius seems to be rather unsure of the person to whom he is actually offering the rewards: he starts by swearing an oath to Nisus, then goes on to use the plural form of the imperative (*revocate* and *reddite*), and finally addresses Nisus and Euryalus separately (271 and 275). Perhaps it is significant that he does not address Euryalus by name at 275. In fact the general idea seems to be that the bulk of the reward is to be shared, given the plural nature of many of its elements, but that each one is to get something specifically for himself.

264 pocula, devicta genitor quae cepit Arisba This line has caused much confusion to commentators. Williams says that nothing is known of this exploit of Aeneas, but that Arisbe, a town in the Troad, is mentioned by Homer (*Il.* 2. 836). Page thinks that Vergil has chosen the name by chance without being aware of the awkwardness of promising cups to 'Nisus . . . Hyrtacides' that had been captured from the town of one who was, by chance, Ἄσσιος Ὑρτακίδης. The incident is akin to Agamemnon's capturing of 'Thebe, Eetion's sacred city' (*Il.* 1. 366), which is never mentioned again in the *Iliad* but clearly forms part of the Epic Cycle. In fact it is possible that Arisba was captured by Troy and then integrated (see *Commentary* 177). It is, however, still rather tactless of Ascanius to offer Nisus rewards in the shape of spoils taken from Arisbe. Perhaps it is a measure of his agitation that he does not consider the implication of his words; or perhaps Vergil thus shows Ascanius's youth and inexperience in making him speak ingenuously. It is also a fact that this is another example of the 'wrong man, wrong gift' element of the story (cf. *Commentary*, 201–204, *bellis adsuetus Opheltes*), and as well as being an unfortunate choice of reward, it is positively ominous for the success of the mission.

266 cratera antiquum The use of the Greek accusative adds to the feeling of exotic luxury of this item.

quem dat Sidonia Dido Cf. 11. 74 (the funeral of Pallas). Gifts from Dido seem to be ill-fated and are frequently linked with the deaths of young warriors. (See also *Introduction: A Roman perspective*.) The ill-omened presence of Dido, in her gifts, is made even stronger and more immediate by the use of the present tense.

267–268 si vero capere Italiam . . . praedae dicere sortem Ascanius is clearly not aware of the destiny of his father to rule a united people: he still thinks of conquest as the means to gain power and is viewing the situation in a ‘heroic’ context, rather than seeing it as the foundation of a new era. This carries on the ideas that Nisus expressed earlier (208 and 241–242).

sceptrisque Ascanius uses metonymy by implying that the sphere of the king is centred on his sceptre (cf. *Il.* 9. 97–99):

... οὐνεκα πολλῶν
λαῶν ἔσσι ἀναξ καί τοι Ζεὺς ἐγγυάλιξε
σκῆπτρόν τ' ἠδὲ θέμιστας . . .

victori Ostensibly, this should mean Aeneas but in fact it seems that Ascanius is usurping his father’s prerogative (cf. *dabo*, 263, and *excipiam sorti*, 271, and *Commentary ad loc.*)

269 vidisti This clearly refers to the sight of Turnus marshalling his troops on the previous day. That Ascanius points out Nisus’s trophy, rather than Nisus asking for something specific, is in marked contrast to the actions of Dolon. As Servius says of this:

melior oeconomia: Nisum noluit (sc. Vergil) inducere postulantem equum Turni praemii loco, sed honestius facit ultro offerri, cum Homerus fecerit Dolonem Achillis currus improbe postulantem [Il. 10. 321–323].

quo Turnus equo . . . cristisque rubentis These are additions to the reward promised in the *Iliad*: there Dolon only asked for the horses and chariot of Achilles, Nisus is promised Turnus's armour as well. Strictly speaking the captured arms of an enemy were meant to be set up as a trophy, but it seems unlikely that this would have been the ultimate fate of Turnus's armour: Nisus would probably have given it to Euryalus, as he implies in 194, and judging by later events, Euryalus would be unlikely to set up a trophy, but would have used the spoils to adorn himself. (See also **Introduction: Their 'type' in the Classical Tradition (b) Euryalus as a warrior.**)

271 excipiam sorti, iam nunc tua praemia, Nise Not only does Ascanius offer excessive rewards that even in his capacity as *rex* he cannot fulfill, he also displays a degree of ὑβρις. The ultimate victory has not yet been won and, considering the perilous state of the Trojans, is by no means certain, and yet he speaks as if the horses as good as belonged to Nisus already. This is the force of *iam nunc*. These words of Ascanius add to the body of δυσφημία uttered before the beginning of the mission, and begun by Nisus. Cf. 268 *praedae dicere sortem*. Ascanius is usurping his father's prerogative and is promising something that he cannot perform and specifically behaving like a victorious general himself.

272–273 praeterea . . . genitor . . . / . . . dabit Conington thinks that Ascanius makes the previous promises in the name of his father, but the words of the lemma surely cast some doubt on this. It seems that Ascanius had in fact taken it upon himself initially to offer rewards in his own person, only realising that he has overstepped himself and then mentioning his father at 272: *dabit* replaces *excipiam*.

This realisation is perhaps the reason for Ascanius's high-flown language to Euryalus (275–280) as it could be that he is trying to cover his embarrassment in the presence of his peers (Nisus and Euryalus) and his elders.

274 *insuper his campi quod rex habet ipse Latinus* Page says of this that

campi (were) the royal domain (or) τέμενος, the private tenure of land in heroic times being confined to kings or those to whom public land was assigned as a special honour.

(Cf. *Il.* 6. 193-195 the estate granted to Bellerophon). These lands acquire a tragic significance later (see **Commentary 388**).

275 *te vero, mea quem spatiis propioribus aetas /insequitur* The reason for this highly poetic language of Ascanius may well be for the reason given at **Commentary 272** (*vide supra*), or perhaps it is that Ascanius feels the need to stand more on his dignity towards his coeval. The high-flown tone is continued in *venerande puer* (276). Conington says:

The comparison of life to a footrace is too common to need illustration,

but this imagery here may also contain an allusion to the part played by Euryalus in Book 5, and thus may carry sinister overtones concerning Euryalus's dishonestly-gotten gains.

276 **venerande puer** Page considers that *venerandus* is equivalent to the Homeric use of αἰδοῖτοϛ rather than carrying an equal weight with the modern word ‘venerable’. However, it is essential to see that Ascanius has already elevated Nisus and Euryalus to quasi-divine status (see **Commentary** 261) and that although he is trying out his own power in a position of command, he still puts great faith in the abilities of Nisus and Euryalus. The word *venerandus* is used only once in the *Aeneid*, in its vocative form, but the concept in other forms carries some serious overtones; for example, 5. 744–745:

*Pergameumque Larem et canae penetralia Vestae
farre pio et plena supplex veneratur acerra.*

should be compared with 9. 258–259 and 276:

*‘... per magnos, Nise, penatis
Assaracique Larem et canae penetralia Vestae
.....
... venerande puer ...’*

There is a contrast between Aeneas’s piety to his family’s gods and the shade of his father at 5. 744ff., and his son’s misguided trust and honouring of rash and inexperienced young warriors: the similarity of wording in the two passages heightens this contrast.

Cf. also 12. 220–221:

*suppliciter venerans demisso lumine Turnus
pubentesque genae et iuvenali in corpore pallor.’*

It is at this stage that Turnus is truly marked for death during an act of piety, and it is almost as if Ascanius were so marking out Euryalus by portraying him as too noble for this world. *Venerandus* seems to be one of those words whose sphere is divine and which, if applied in the human plane, has tragic consequences.

The idea of a hero being almost divine is not new: Homer speaks of Odysseus and various other illustrious warriors as δῖος or διογενής, but Pindar casts a shadow over this idea (*Isthm.* 5. 13–16):

εἴ τις εὖ πάσχων λόγον ἔσλὸν ἀκούῃ.
 μὴ μάτερε Ζεὺς γενέσθαι· πάντ' ἔχεις,
 εἴ σε τούτων μοῖρ' ἐφίκοιτο καλῶν.
 θνατὰ θνατοῖσι πρέπει.

The concept of paying divine or quasi-divine honours to a mortal is fraught with difficulty. On the one hand there are the 'god-like' heroes of Homer and Horace's picture of Augustus in the company of the gods (*Odes* 3. 3. 9. and also *Epist.* 2. 1. 15–17) and on the other hand there is Pindar's warning and the Roman custom of having a slave remind the triumphant general that he is only a man not a god, even while that general bears the attributes of Jupiter (see Livy 10. 7. 10: *qui, Iovis optimi maximi ornatu decoratus, curru aurato per urbem vectus in Capitolium ascenderit . . .*).

276–280 iam pectore toto/ accipio et comitem casus complector in omnis
 . . . verborum fides Vergil completes the echo of the reward offered in the *Doloneia*. In that episode, the increasing of κῦδος had been displayed by the presentation of gifts; until line 274 in the *Aeneid*, only rewards had been offered, By the offering of such honoured status to Euryalus, Ascanius stops the gifts being

simply 'payment for services rendered', and transforms them into a tangible proof of honour.

pectore toto/accipio . . . comitem . . . complector (Cf. Cic. *Sest.* 146: *ego . . . hos in omni fortuna . . . complectar.*) Servius says that the expression *pectore toto* is proverbial. Ascanius uses very physical language, perhaps as an expression of his deep emotion. There is also an idea of reciprocity with Nisus and especially Euryalus. Just as Ascanius entrusted all his future to Nisus and Euryalus (see 261, *in vestris pono gremiis*) so now he shares with Euryalus all his future fortune.

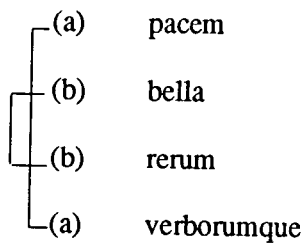
comitem This forms a link with *comes* (179) and *comes* (223). In fact, it seems unlikely that Euryalus would really appreciate this aspect of the reward as it would seem to link him too closely (emotionally, cf. the very physical language that Ascanius uses) to Ascanius, to the exclusion of Nisus (so Lee, 1979, p. 185 note 27. See also **Commentary** 263–274 *bina dabo . . . ipse Latinus.*)

278 sine te It is tragically ironic that Ascanius will indeed have to operate without Euryalus in the near future.

279–280 seu pacem seu bella geram, tibi maxima rerum/verborumque fides Ascanius is aware of his status as the future leader of the Trojans and speaks as if he were appointing a councillor to be one of his *comites* (cf. 277, *comitem*). It is a touching picture when one remembers that the appointment is made by one young boy to another, but also worrying when Ascanius, speaking in language suitable for

a *princeps*, puts all his trust (*maxima . . . fides*) in one so young and inexperienced as Euryalus.

rebus/ . . . rerum In 278, *rebus* encapsulates everything in which Ascanius will be involved; in 279, *rerum* is confined to his actions. In a way, *rerum* corresponds to *seu bella geram*, just as *verborumque* (280) corresponds to *seu pacem*, thus forming a chiasmus:



Ascanius's speech is ringed by *fidesque* (260) and *fides* (280) and in both cases, tragically, this faith is placed in Nisus and Euryalus.

281 me nulla dies . . . arguerit This can perhaps be taken retrospectively, in which case *tam fortibus ausis* refers to the faith Ascanius has put in him, and the way in which it has been publicly demonstrated; or it may be prospective, meaning that Euryalus will not disgrace the plan he is about to undertake. The latter seems to be the real meaning of his words, and thus *arguerit* is an ominous word to choose. On one level it means simply that no time in the future will ever find him unworthy (this is how he means it) because his life will be of a noble character. However, the subject of the sentence is *nulla dies*. This brings to mind the fact that no day will

see that he is acting in an unworthy fashion because he will not live to see another day as he is killed at night . Vergil makes this point quite clear by describing the rising of the sun after the description of the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus (459–461).

As seems to be his usual practice, Euryalus only grasps half of what is said to him. Ascanius spoke of *seu pacem seu bella*, but Euryalus seems to be referring only to *bella* when he speaks of *tam fortibus ausis*. There is a slight conflict of views between the two speeches: Ascanius takes the more ‘political’ approach and speaks of war or diplomacy, Euryalus thinks only of war.

It is also significant that the word *arguerit* should be used. On the one hand this word means ‘to bring a charge against’ or ‘to accuse’, but on the other hand, OLD suggests that it is cognate with ἀργής, the word used by Homer to describe a vivid light, particularly a thunderbolt (see *Il.* 8. 133: δεινὸν . . . ἀργήτα κεραυνόν). The connection of a word meaning ‘to bear witness against’ with the idea of light (cf. ‘to bring to light’) points to the circumstances of Euryalus’s death: the Moon bears witness to the fact that he is wearing a despoiled helmet by shining upon it.

dissimilem Williams says of this that it is ‘an unexpected word equivalent to *imparem*’: the Thesaurus glosses it as ἀνόμοιος, or *impar*. This gloss brings to mind Vergil’s earlier comment on Nisus and Euryalus: that they *pariterque in bella ruebant* and thus strengthens Euryalus’s claim that he will not be ‘unequal to such

brave undertakings' by bringing to mind his customary practice. This is done semantically by the fact that *pariter* cancels out *dissimilem*.

282 tantum fortuna secunda/ haud adversa cadat (Cf. *si fortuna permitis uti*, 240.) Ti. Donatus glosses this as

solum illud absit, ne fortuna in nos vultum contrarium vertat.

Vergil seems to have subverted Euryalus's self-confident utterings. Euryalus means that he will not prove unworthy of the undertaking 'given half a chance' to prove himself; but, as it stands, Vergil has him say that he will succeed only if luck favours him. It should be remembered that most people will succeed given good fortune.

283 sed te super omnia dona/ unum oro These words are, in fact, ironic (although this does not seem to be Euryalus's intended tone here.) It would appear that Ascanius has only offered honour and not tangible gifts to Euryalus (cf. 275ff).

284 Priami de gente vetusta This must mean then that Euryalus and Ascanius were related. As Servius points out:

nam Ascanius nepos est Priami per Creusam.

Ascanius's promise to look after Euryalus's mother as if she were his own mother, lacking only his own mother's name, is therefore made even more binding: not only would he be fulfilling his duty to one of his subjects, but also his *pietas* to a member of his own family. In this he would be following his family tradition and morality

(cf. *pius Aeneas*) and also, perhaps, reflecting Julian *clementia* (see **Commentary** 501 *multum lacrimantis Iulii*). This also develops Ascanius's words at 276–280. Ascanius's bond with Euryalus is elevated from a pledge of shared aims between companions to one between members of the same family, the duties of *amicitia* thus being raised to those of *pietas*.

285 quam miseram tenuit non Ilia tellus/ mecum excedentem It is not really surprising that Euryalus speaks of his mother as *miseram* when he goes on to refer to the Fall of Troy and the flight of the remnants of the people. However, his choice of word is also somewhat ominous, as she will be even more 'wretched' after he has left camp than she was when they both left Troy. It is important to note that Nisus also described Euryalus's mother as 'wretched' (216 see **Commentary ad loc.**). The tragic foreshadowing is advanced and there is an increase in intensity from Nisus's use of *misera* (216), to describe Euryalus's mother, to Euryalus's vignette of his mother's past sufferings and the picture of her being left without support if anything happens to him.

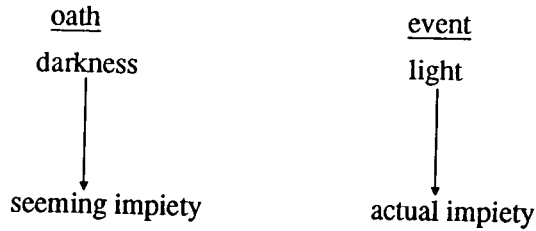
286 nec moenia regis Aestae (See also 218.) This refers to the episode in Book 5 where most of the Trojan women decided to stay in Aesta (5. 767ff).

288 inque salutam linquo Servius takes this to be tmesis of *insalutatamque* and cites 10.794 (*inutilis inque ligatus cedebat*) as similar. In fact these seem to be the only uses of tmesis using *in* in the *Aeneid*. Sidgwick thinks that it is:

a licence of Lucretius, who has a large number, both of the negative *in* and the preposition: *inque merentes, inque peditus, inque tueri, inque gredi, etc.*

When re-reading this passage, in the light of the later one, it is possible to see the mutually ominous tone and to realise that the two passages are linked by more than just a literary effect. Both concern an act of filial piety which is then followed by the death of the pious son: in Book 10, Lausus faces Aeneas in combat in order to protect his father, Mezentius, and is thus killed; in Book 9, Euryalus leaves his mother, having secured support for her in the event of his death, and goes out and gets killed. The deaths of Euryalus and Lausus are easily paired, and there is also a strong, if surprising, link between Mezentius and Euryalus's mother (see Egan, pp. 161–164). Further poignancy is given to Euryalus's words when it is realised, on looking back, that Euryalus will never greet his mother again. Even at the time there is an uneasy feeling that this might be the case, as *linquo* is very strong and sounds rather final (cf. the poetic use of *luce/vitam relinquere*).

(nox et tua testis/ dextera) Euryalus swears by what is near to hand: the night, (as Aeneas did at 7.138–140 *tum Noctem Noctisque . . . signal. . . / invocat*) and Ascanius's right hand (perhaps still clasping his from 276–277). It should be noted that the indirect cause of Euryalus's death comes out of the shadows of the night in the form of light. Euryalus swears by the darkness that he acts in a seemingly impious fashion (leaving his mother without saying his farewells) for a good reason, but it is the light from the darkness that eventually kills him because of the real impiety of adorning himself with his spoils. A parallel is made between the two situations.



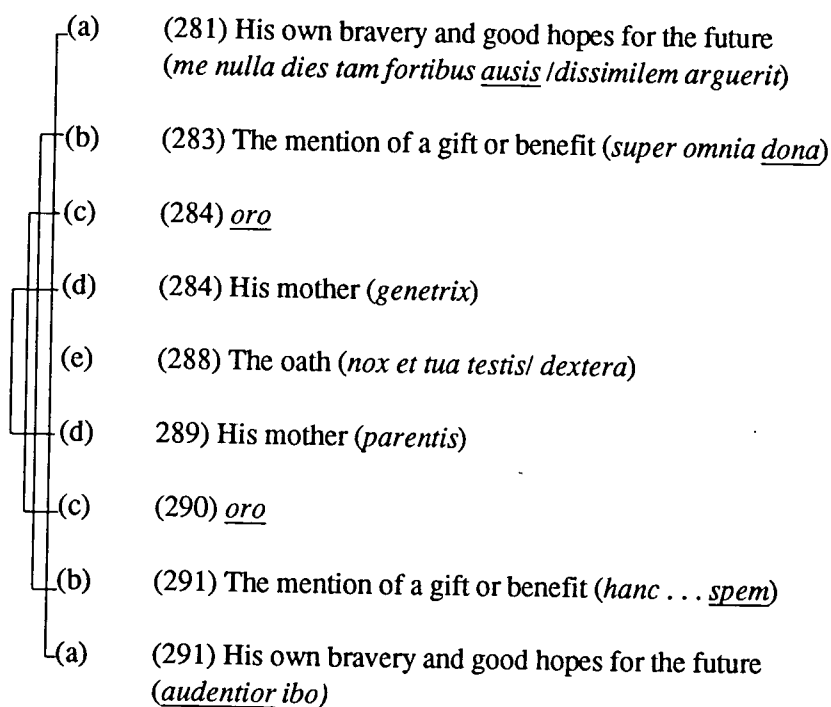
It is almost as if his seeming impiety could remain hidden, but that his actual impiety was forced into the open by a 'spotlight'.

289 quod nequeam lacrimas perferre parentis These tears seem to foretell Euryalus's mother's lamentations for him in death and they act as a reminder of the poignancy of those who are placed on their pyres before the eyes of their parents (cf. 6. 308). It is particularly pathetic here as Euryalus knows he will cause grief to his mother by his going into danger and yet still goes out, mostly for the sake of his own glory (cf. 205–206). *Nequeam . . . perferre* conflicts somewhat with *fortibus ausis*. Euryalus knows that he will not be able to bear his mother's grief, implying that it would weaken his resolve and this would not allow him to live up to his claim of 281, *ne nulla dies . . . /dissimilem arguerit*.

There is also a link with *revocate parentem* (261) and a contrast between the sons' respective views of their parents: Ascanius wants his father back and feels that he can only prosper if Aeneas is there; Euryalus thinks that he can only win fame and fortune by avoiding his mother, because her tears would demoralise him.

290 at tu, oro *At tu* is very abrupt and brings the reader's attention back to the business in hand after the touching picture of Euryalus and his mother. This second

occurrence of *oro* forms a ring with the earlier use (284). It is thus possible to see the intricate ring composition of Euryalus's speech:



It is rather worrying that this perfectly balanced speech, which supposedly deals with Euryalus's providing for his mother, should have at its centre an ill-chosen oath and, at its outer limits, the notion of Euryalus's going into danger, shown by his mentioning his courage to combat such danger.

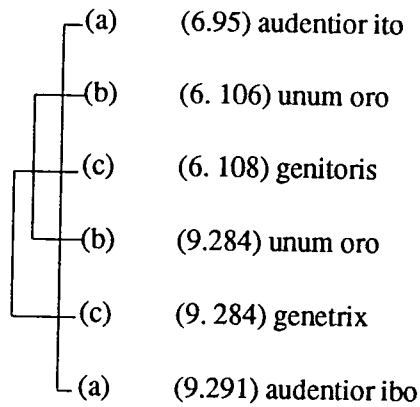
solare inopem et succurre relictæ These are ominous words in which Euryalus implies that his mother may well be left without support. He is less rashly confident than he was at 219 and at last sees the effect that his going may have on his mother. The choice of words is in itself ominous. *Solare* implies that Euryalus's mother must be comforted as if he were already dead, presumably while he is still alive (as he

sees it) and out on his mission. *Relictae* has the same connotation as *linquo* (288) but is much stronger: not only is he leaving behind his mother, but the force of *relictae* would seem to imply that this leaving will be for ever.

hanc sine me spem ferre tui, audentior ibo It should be remembered that all Ascanius's words so far have concerned the protagonists and that Euryalus has to make special provision for his mother. These words of Euryalus are very different in tone to those of their Homeric parallel, which Knauer takes to be *Il.* 10.321–324. In the Homeric lines, Dolon makes Hector swear to give him Achilles's horses and chariot and says that he will prove a good spy, the implication being that he will act bravely if only Hector will make him that promise. The Homeric lines deal in mercenary matters, the Vergilian lines deal with the concern felt by a son for his mother.

There is a link between *perferre* (289) and *ferre* (291). Both concern Euryalus's care for his mother: the first relates to Euryalus's not being able to stand her grief, the second his hope that there may be some help for her in that grief and subsequent 'lack'.

audentior ibo/in casus omnis There is a parallel between this phrase and 6.95, *audentior ito/qua tua te Fortuna sinet* (so Moskalew). The line from Book 6 is the Sibyl's instruction to Aeneas as to how he must face the hard toils that he will find in Italy. There is also a similarity between 6.106–108, *unum oro . . . conspectum cari genitoris*, and 9.284 *unum oro . . . genetrix*.



These verbal and stylistic similarities form a further link between Aeneas's journey into the Underworld and Euryalus's setting out with Nisus on his mission (cf. **Commentary** 238–240).

292 percussa mente dedere/ Dardanidae lacrimas Although it is scarcely surprising that the Trojans should be deeply affected by this speech of Euryalus and by the thought of his going into danger, leaving behind an aged mother, there is something sinister in the way in which this emotion is described. In the *Aeneid* the mention of any part of *percutere* carries a dark overtone. It is usually presented as an actual blow inflicted while in the grip of grief or some other strong emotion (e.g. 1.513, 4.589, 7.503, 8.121, 11.877 and 12.155). The fact that the Trojans shed tears because they are moved is therefore significant: it is as if they were lamenting Euryalus (even while he is still alive), as if he were soon to die (cf. also **Commentary** 290, *solare inopem*). Indeed, it is particularly relevant as he dies from a sword blow. *Percutere* only appears twice in Book 9, both times in relation to Euryalus. The first time it is he who is 'struck' by an intense desire for fame (197) which 'knocks him senseless' (see **Commentary ad loc.**). The second time it is the effect that Euryalus has on the council, where they are 'struck' by a sudden realisation of the inherent

seriousness of his proposal. The first occurrence leads to the second and the second foreshadows the outcome of the first.

293 ante omnis pulcher Iulus The possession of outstanding beauty is often linked to grief (see **Introduction: Euryalus**). (See further on the importance of the name, *Iulus* at **Commentary 310**.)

294 atque animum patriae strinxit pietatis imago Cf. 10. 824 (Aeneas's pitying of Lausus whom he has just killed). It is significant that these two passages should be so strongly linked by sense and similarity of language, thus:

<u>Book 9</u>	<u>Book 10</u>
(a) Son of Aeneas	(a) Aeneas
(b) <i>Venerande puer</i> (276)	(b) <i>Miserande puer</i> (825)
(c) Grief (<i>dedere! . . . lacrimas</i> 293)	(c) Grief (<i>ingemuit</i> 823)
(d) ?	(d) <u>Death of Lausus</u>
(e) <i>atque animum patriae strinxit pietatis imago</i> (lemma)	(e) <i>et mentem patriae subiit pietatis imago</i> (825)

The missing part of the parallel in Book 9 can only be the death of Euryalus. This can be seen, with the benefit of hindsight, on reading Book 10; and, in the case of Euryalus, the delay and his initial success merely adds to the anticipation and tragic effect. Within the 'Euryalus' passage, there is a premonition in Vergil's use of the word *strinxit* to describe the action of emotion on the minds of the councillors: it is suggestive of the word used to describe the drawing of a sword (OLD *stringo* 4) as well as the one for causing a recollection (lemma), and thus it seems retrospectively to have prefigured Euryalus's death. *Strinxit* thus performs the same function in

relation to Iulus as *percussa* does for the council (see **Commentary 292**), and both words have the same implications for Euryalus.

296 sponde This is a very strong word to use and implies the most binding of contracts. There is even a hint of a religious obligation in that the word is cognate with the Greek σπένδω (cf. σπονδᾶς σπένδειν, ‘to pour a libation’, and also ‘to make a treaty’). There is a variant reading of *spondeo*, but Conington objects to this on the grounds that it would have to be read as a dissyllable and that this contracting of the final ‘o’ in verbs is unVergilian. As *sponde*, the word seems to imply ‘promise yourself’, that is, ‘be assured’. It is a direct response to Euryalus’s pleas of 290f. that Ascanius should look after the mother who he has left behind.

297 namque This word takes up its sense from *sponde* (296) and explains it in what follows.

namque erit ista mihi genetrix nomenque Creusa/ solum defuerit Creusa was lost during the ‘Sack of Troy’ (Book 2). It is a nice (if that is quite the word) balance that Ascanius has lost his mother and that Euryalus’s mother, who is given the honorary place of Creusa, will lose her son. This promise of Ascanius rouses the reader’s sympathy for him again as there is a reminder of his losses: at present his state is almost that of an orphan as he has lost his mother and his father is missing. In such a state of mind, and because he is so young, he cannot really be blamed for being so lavish in his promised rewards for the return of his father.

It is also significant that Ascanius says she lacks the name of Creusa. It is part of the poignancy of Euryalus's mother that she completely lacks a name in the *Aeneid*. She is thus identified with all grieving mothers whose sons are killed in war without being fixed in a specific time and place by the definite identity given by a name. She also lacks the consolation conferred by the remembrance of a name (as are the men her son kills at 343 *sine nomine plebem*. See *Commentary ad loc.*). One should contrast the nameless oblivion of Euryalus's mother to the memorials offered to Misenus (6.232–235), Palinurus (6.381–383) and Caieta (7.1–4).

298 *nec partum gratia talem/ parva manet* There is something of the Spartan sentiment in this statement: that even the death of a child can be borne if that child won fame and honour in life. At this stage Euryalus's mother is honoured not for her own sake but for the sake of her 'sons', Ascanius and Euryalus. It is therefore in accordance with the idea that the glory of the child reflects on the parent; one has as an example of this the speech of Cornelia, the mother of the Gracchi. However, this is in stark contrast to the emotions expressed by Euryalus's mother herself when she sees her son's mutilated body. When she herself speaks, it is in a markedly different way from that which the reader expects. The expectation is that she will be calm and stoical in her loss but, instead, she is hysterical and inconsolable. Because she is not expected to react in this fashion (judging from the role that has been prepared for her) the shock is greater when she does than it would have been had she not been previously assigned to a different stereotype.

299 casus factum quicumque sequentur (Cf. 292 *in casus omnis*) Both Euryalus and Ascanius seem to be aware of the uncertainty involved. Servius says of this line:

*satis congrue: praemia enim non debentur eventui, sed voluntati:
hoc est quidquid evenerit, praemia dabo.*

(However, see **Introduction**: Their ‘type’ in the Classical tradition: (a) Nisus as a warrior.) This seems to be a rather strange interpretation. If Ascanius had been offering tangible rewards to Euryalus, then they could have been passed on to his mother in the event of his death, but it seems rather incongruous to think that Ascanius would act towards Euryalus’s mother in the same way that he had promised to Euryalus himself in 277–280, despite what he says about honouring her in 298.

300 per caput hoc iuro, per quod pater ante solebat Aeneas swore by Ascanius’s head, so Ascanius, in respect to his absent father, swears by his own head (so Conington). There is something particularly pathetic about Ascanius’s use of the word *ante*. It is almost as if he were preparing himself in advance for the idea that Aeneas may not return. The practice of swearing by the father on the head of his son introduces a ‘legalistic’ feeling into the speech. Conington says that Gossrau cites Demosthenes as a parallel (*In Conon*, p 1268):

φασὶ γὰρ παραστησάμενον τοὺς παῖδας αὐτὸν κατὰ τούτων
ὀμείσθαι, καὶ ὀρὰς τινὰς δεινὰς καὶ χαλεπὰς ἐπαράσσεσθαι.

301–302 quae tibi . . . generique manebunt The suppressed point behind these words is that things may not turn out well. As Servius says:

tacet adversa et magis intellectui et subauditioni relinquit.

The forensic tone of 300 is maintained in these lines which echo the idea expressed by Cicero (*Phil.* 14.13):

Qui autem ex iis, quibus illa (sc. praemia) promissa sunt, pro patria occiderunt, eorum parentibus, liberis, coniugibus, fratribus eadem tribuenda censeo.

However, in Ascanius's oath to Euryalus, there is also an echo of Hector's oath to Dolon (*Il.* 10. 329ff):

ἴστω νῦν Ζεὺς αὐτός, ἐρίγδουπος πόσις Ἥρης,
μὴ μὲν τοῖς ἵπποισιν ἀνὴρ ἐποχῆσεται ἄλλος
Τρώων, ἀλλὰ σέ φημι διαμπερὲς ἀγλαϊεῖσθαι.

It is perhaps a bad omen that this should be the final paradigm that Vergil uses for Euryalus, rather than a reward promised in the style of Nestor to Odysseus and Diomedes. Nestor does not take an oath, whereas Hector and Ascanius do, which makes the import of their words more prominent and open to investigation. Ascanius swears two oaths, one to Nisus (258–260) and one to Euryalus (300–302). The first is sworn by the family gods in a state of excitement, the second is sworn by his own life and mentions his father in connection with this. This latter oath is clearly the result of very great emotion, brought about by the circumstances in which it is sworn, and more importantly by Ascanius's longing for his father (see 294). It is this mention of the love of family and parents (his own and Euryalus's) that finally reduces him to tears in 303. There is thus a gradual build up of emotion during the course of Ascanius's speeches in the council.

303 sic ait inlacrimans Knauer cites *Il.* 1. 357 (the state of Achilles in response to the way that Agamemnon has treated him) as a parallel:

Ὡς φάτο δάκρυ χέων . . .

However, it is much more worthy of note that Vergil provides an echo himself. The phrase *sic ait inlacrimans* is used only twice in the *Aeneid*, here and at 11. 29 where Aeneas prepares to send the body of Pallas back to Evander for burial. Once again, Euryalus and Pallas are linked. This is also another instance of tears being shed on account of Euryalus while he is still alive (see *Commentary* 293).

303–307 umero simul exuit ensem/ . . . galeam fidus permutat Achates The exchanging of weapons and armour with someone about to go on a mission is a Homeric and otherwise traditional motif (cf. *Il.* 10. 255ff), but the description of this seemingly normal action in the case of Nisus and Euryalus and the Trojan council contains many ominous and lethal overtones. The sword is of Cretan make (305 *Cnosius*). Any mention of the adjective *Cnosius* in the works of Vergil, especially in the *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*, carries the taint of deception either in the word itself or in the surrounding text. Indeed, it is quite a common association in much of classical literature. As Lemprière says, the Cretans were ‘infamously noted for . . . their falsehoods, their piracies, and their robberies’. In the *Georgics* (1.222) the mention of the *Gnosiaque . . . stella* refers to the crown of Ariadne set up in the sky by Bacchus after Ariadne had been deserted by Theseus. In the *Aeneid* the word is even more closely associated with deception. In 3. 115, Aeneas reports that Anchises said *Cnosia regna petamus*. This was as a result of the misinterpretation of an oracle

which caused the Aeneidae to suffer as they were not destined to settle in Crete and so were afflicted by plague. However, perhaps the most important occurrence of the word is at 5.306 where Aeneas says:

*Cnosia bina dabo levato lucida ferro
spicula.*

This promise is given just before the start of the Footrace, therefore the parallel occurrences of something Cretan being promised or given are of particular relevance when considering the relation of the Footrace to the 'Nisus and Euryalus Episode' in Book 9. What then is the significance of Euryalus being given a Cretan sword made by a smith whose Cretan, and therefore Greek, name is particularly 'wolfish' (cf. Ahl p. 70: LYCaon // ΛΥΚΟΣ, one of the common Homeric epithets for wolves being ὠμοφάγοι, *Il.* 16.157)? Perhaps it is that the sword leads him on to commit excessive slaughter and then, when he is captured, is of no use to him. It is almost as if the sword turns against him in his time of need, indeed it should be remembered that Euryalus is actually killed with a sword (431). The untrustworthy nature of the sword is perhaps further suggested by its ivory scabbard. *Eburnus* or *elephantus* in the *Aeneid* and *Georgics* imply false expectations or hopes (see esp. *Aen.* 6. 895–898). The word is used again (*Aen.* 11. 11) to describe a scabbard, but here it is Mezentius's sword, so described as it is hung on a trophy after his death.

The lionskin that Mnestheus gives Nisus also has some significance as it makes the distinction between actuality and metaphor less concrete. When one reads the metaphor comparing Nisus to an *impastus . . . leo* (339) it should be remembered that he is actually wearing a lionskin and therefore is more closely identified with

the sub-human, bestial nature that he assumes in his blood-lust. The dread that the 'lion-Nisus' causes among the sheep (the Rutuli, if one extrapolates from the metaphor) is a reflection of the nature of the lion embodied in its skin (306 *horrentisque leonis*). There is a parallel between Nisus and Diomedes in that both wear lionskins (cf. *Aen.* 9. 306 and *Il.* 10. 177). This comparison with Diomedes is on the one hand a further echo of the *Doloneia*, but they have more in common than a similarity in dress. Diomedes acted impiously in the *Iliad* and attacked even the gods (although he learns from this and is careful not to do so again). The Homeric Diomedes is not made to suffer for this act, but the Vergilian Diomedes is (see *Aen.* 11. 271–277). This then does not bode well for the safety of Nisus who in his own way is also impious (*vide supra*).

308–313 protinus armati incedunt . . . inrita donant Cf. *Il.* 10. 272–276

Τῶ δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν ὄπλοισιν ἔνι δεινοῖσιν ἐδύτην,
 βάν ῥ' ἰέναι, λιπέτην δὲ κατ' αὐτόθι πάντας ἀρίστους.
 τοῖσι δὲ δεξιὸν ἦκεν ἔρωδιὸν ἐγγυὸς ὁδοῖο
 Παλλὰς Ἀθηναίη· τοὶ δ' οὐκ ἴδον ὀφθαλμοῖσι
 νύκτα δι' ὀρθναίην, ἀλλὰ κλάγξαντος ἄκουσαν.

The fact that Vergil echoes Homer so closely verbally at the beginning of the scene causes the very different moods and effects of the two passages to be more sharply contrasted. Both the Homeric and the Vergilian scenes begin with two armed warriors setting out on their journey leaving their companions behind them: there the similarity ends. The Homeric passage then proceeds with a favourable omen specifically sent by Odysseus's guardian deity and Odysseus's pious response to this manifestation of divine goodwill. The Vergilian passage is overshadowed by the

cares and worries of the companions of Nisus and Euryalus. The prayers and vows that form a parallel with the omen sent by Athene in the *Iliad* are scattered to the winds and have no effect. It is this last point that makes the real difference between the two passages so marked: the Homeric expedition sets out in a pious style and is assured of success, the Vergilian, despite all the efforts of the Trojans to placate the gods, comes to grief. It is also highly inauspicious that Vergil ends the paragraph with a stylistic echo of the send-off of Dolon (*Il.*10.336–337),

... οὐδ' ἄρ' ἔμελλεν
ἔλθῶν ἐκ νηῶν ἄψ' Ἐκτορι μῦθον ἀποίσειν.

The effect of this is heightened by the fact that Vergil started with such a close parallel to the send-off of Odysseus and Diomedes.

iuvenumque senumque Cf. 226 *ductoresque Teucrum primi, delecta iuventus.*

The Trojan council is ringed by its elements, given in chiasitic order.

310 nec non et pulcher Iulus The actual form of a name is an important τόπος in the *Aeneid* (see the significance of *Hyrtacides* as opposed to *Nisus* in **Commentary 319 Hyrtacides**). During the 'Nisus and Euryalus Episode' (9. 176–502), Aeneas's son is called *Iulus* four times (232, 293, 310 and 501), and *Ascanius* only twice (256 and 258). In this context, when he is called *Ascanius*, it forms a link with his Trojan past: he is called it by Aletes and then by Vergil just before he is about to offer Nisus rewards of a 'heroic' type. When he is called *Iulus*, it links him more with his future role as leader, and through this to the founding of the *gens Iulia*: there is thus an allusion to Augustus. As *Iulus* he takes the initiative and welcomes Nisus and

Euryalus to the council and gives Nisus permission to speak (232). Then he plays a leading role at 293, 310 and 501; as Ascanius, he merely responds to the suggestions of Aletes. There is also a ring, using the name *Iulus*, between 310 and 293. In each case, Iulus is pre-eminent in the general activity: in 293 his weeping is distinguished from the other Dardanidae and, at 310, his prayers are particularly poignant because he is sending Nisus and Euryalus to his absent father

311 ante annos animumque gerens curamque virilem (See also previous lemma). It is also significant that as Iulus he is shown to have grasped the seriousness of the situation and to be acting in a way that belies his years, but is nevertheless suitable for the occasion.

312–313 sed aurae/omnia discerpunt et nubibus irrita donant

Cf. Catullus 64. 142:

quae cuncta aerii discerpunt irrita venti

Cf. also Catullus 30. 9–10:

*... tua dicta omnia factaque
ventos irrita ferre ac nebulas aereas sinis.*

It is a common conceit that words are scattered to the winds, but in the lemma the emphasis is not that the winds scatter the words but that the words are given to the winds, *donant*. This word, in the present tense, makes the scene immediate and ominous and it also casts a retrospective shadow over the gifts given to Nisus at 306 (*dat Niso Mnestheus*) and also at 266 (*quem dat Sidonia Dido*).

SECTION 2 (314–366):

THE ἈΡΙΣΤΕΪΑΙ OF NISUS AND EURYALUS

Introduction

Nisus and Euryalus proceed through the sleeping Rutuli, wreaking havoc as they go, until Nisus calls a halt to the killing, realising that they are forgetting their real purpose: to get through the enemy camp and find Aeneas. At this point, Euryalus picks up spoils: a baldric and a decorated helmet. They then leave the camp behind them and reach (supposed) safety.

This part of the narrative is modelled on Homer's account of the attack by Odysseus and Diomedes on Rhesus and the Thracians (*Il.* 10). Vergil indulges in some very gruesome descriptions of men being killed in their sleep. This gives a vivid impression of the swiftness of the attack as the Rutuli did not have time to arm and defend themselves; indeed they lacked time even to wake up. It is indeed as if Nisus and Euryalus were like a plague (328 *pestem*) that is irresistible in its force and does not chose its victims, but destroys all in its path.

Up to line 353, there is a list of killings, but these are made even more horrible by the descriptions of some of Nisus's and Euryalus's victims which make them into characters, not just names, and more to the reader than simply a casualty list.

The format seems to be that casualties are grouped usually in threes and where a description is offered it applies to the third named member of the group — e.g. *Lamyrumque Lamumque et iuvenem Serranum . . . qui . . . etc.* (334) also *Fadumque*

Herbesumque subit Rhoetumque Abarimque . . . Rhoetum vigilantem . . . metuens.
 (344) (Also *vide infra*.)

By way of contrast, in *Iliad* 10, Diomedes falls on twelve men at once and kills them all in one fell swoop. Out of his victims, only Rhesus is given any real attention by the poet. However, in most other battle scenes in the *Iliad* (e.g. 4. 446–544), it is a named and famous warrior killing a named opponent who is only then described. It seems to be the case that Homer has the majority of the opponents of his chief warriors put up a fight: they thus add to that warrior's κῦδος by showing him overcoming an armed enemy. An exception to this rule is the ἀριστεία of Teucer (*Il.* 8. 274–276), but there Teucer is picking them off with arrows, not engaging in hand-to-hand combat. Here Nisus and Euryalus slaughter drunken and sleeping men. Vergil makes a point of describing the Rutuli as such a number of times (189, 236, 316, 326, 336–7) and also stresses their general helplessness. An example of this is Rhoetus hiding behind a wine-vessel, which Vergil does not even describe as having to be broken before Euryalus can reach him to kill him. It is as if there were no impediment at all in Euryalus's way; his progress is so irresistible. In thus stressing the incapacity of the Rutuli to defend themselves or even to rouse themselves to some action, Vergil does not add to the κῦδος of Nisus and Euryalus. They may be committing carnage in the best heroic style, but it is against men who do not, and indeed cannot, defend themselves and who, in the simile of 339–341, are described as being like terrified sheep before a ravenous lion.

If Homer lists more than one name at a time, it is usually a fixed pair, such as brothers, and then he goes on to describe both of them: it is not a case of 'A, B, and also C,

who . . .'. In *Iliad* 10, Homer does not dwell on his heroes' killing of sleeping men (Diomedes kills all twelve at once), except for that of Rhesus who does not wake up, but is killed by Diomedes who has become the vision in his dreams.

In style, Section 2 differs greatly from Section 1. In Section 1, the pace is slower and the language more formalised, and in it Nisus indulges in quasi-philosophical discourse to justify his planned actions. In Section 2, speech directs the action: Nisus tells Euryalus what to do (320–323 and 355–356), and he does it, even if he adds his own interpretations to the instructions. The only time that Euryalus does not receive instruction is concerning spoils. The taking of spoils is his own idea, and he is the only one to do so, despite what Nisus says in 242–243. It is even mentioned that Nisus and Euryalus leave behind many rich pickings, (357–358), but as a last thought, Euryalus picks up a baldrick and a helmet. This is his fatal error: he cannot at the last resist the lure of shining riches, and it is this love of gleaming spoils that leads to both their downfalls. In the results of this flaw in Euryalus, Vergil draws a parallel between Euryalus and Camilla. They are both young and led astray by a desire for something rich and shining, seemingly for its appearance's sake, not for its intrinsic value as property (see 11. 778–782). If this had not been the case for Euryalus at least, he would not have left behind the other rich spoils. In the comparison of Euryalus to Camilla the richness of the spoils is particularly relevant when one considers the fate of Euryalus (11. 778–779):

*. . . sive ut templis praefigeret arma
Troia, captivo sive ut se ferret in auro*

It cannot be the taking of spoils *per se* that is to be criticised; even Hector takes Achilles's armour from the dead Patroclus. Perhaps it is the manner in which they are taken that attracts censure or approbation. It could be that the taking of spoils from a sleeping enemy is bad form, but if this were so then Diomedes and Odysseus would be shamed for despoiling the Thracians. If it is not the manner of the taking that attracts blame, then there must be some other aspect of it that does, possibly the motives. If one takes the events of the *Doloneia* and Hector's despoiling of Patroclus as examples, then an underlying aspect to the taking of spoils comes to light. This can be applied to Nisus and Euryalus. In the *Doloneia*, Diomedes and Odysseus fall on the sleeping Thracians, kill them and drive off their horses, but they do this in order to make an offering to Athene (as well as augmenting their own γέρας), and this causes them to be favoured by that goddess, thus allowing them to return safely. (*Il.* 10.462–464 implies that future spoils will be added to the offering consisting of the first, the weapons of Dolon.) With Hector stripping Patroclus of his, or rather Achilles's, armour, a different and more sinister element is introduced: he puts on the armour and so denies the gods their due. As he had not actually promised the spoils to any particular deity, he is not killed for impiously breaking an oath, but there is just a vague hint that he is killed for ὕβρις. It may be argued that he is killed by Achilles to avenge the killing of Patroclus, but there is still the hint of divine retribution for infringing the divine prerogative. Zeus has some misgivings about Hector so vaunting himself (*Il.* 17. 198–208). Euryalus's taking of spoils has aspects of both these paradigms: he kills and despoils sleeping enemies, but more importantly he wears the spoils himself instead of making a pious offering of them, and so acts hybridically, setting himself above divine consideration. There is no mention

of the spoils being made into an offering (see also *Il.* 17. 130–131, Hector's treatment of his spoils):

... δίδου δ' ὅ γε τεύχεα καλὰ
 Τρωσὶ φέρειν προτὶ ἄστυ, μέγα κλέος ἔμμεναι αὐτῶ.

In this section we are given a further aspect of Nisus's character. Whereas before he was a man of words and stratagems and given to a philosophical turn of phrase, here he is shown as a man of action and of few words. He thus embodies the major characteristics of Homer's two heroes in *Iliad* 10: Odysseus is renowned for his 'many wiles', while Diomedes's prowess leads him to attack even the gods, although in the *Iliad* he learns his lesson and is not punished (unlike his Vergilian incarnation).

Commentary

314 Egressi superant fossas Cf. 308 *incedunt*. The link between these two lines adds another shade to the ὑβρις of Nisus and Euryalus. In 314 there is the idea that they move into another sphere, but they also cross a threshold. Not only to they move out (*egressi*) but they also surmount (*superant*) as if this were excessive.

noctisque per umbram Cf. 189 *lumina rara micant*. The expedition takes place at night and in the darkness, and the actual setting seems to be a reflection of the state of the protagonists. There is also a sinister echo, using exactly the same words, of *Georgics* 1.366, where the description is of a falling star.

*saepe etiam stellas vento impendente videbis
 praecipitis caelo labi, noctisque per umbram
 flammaram longos a tergo albescere tractus.*

The concept of the ill-luck that follows the sight of a falling star, or, as seems more likely from the description, a comet (note the trail it leaves behind) is too well known to need explanation. The mission of Nisus and Euryalus is prophetically shown to be ill-fated on two counts: the darkness is a reflection of their state, but even in that darkness there are ill-omened portents presented in this echo of the *Georgics*.

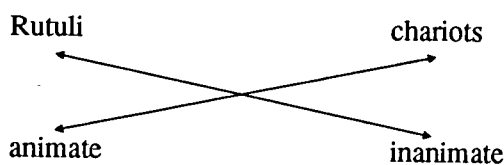
315 castra inimica Cf. 355 *lux inimica*. It is ironic that they pass unharmed through the camp that could reasonably be supposed to be *inimica*, being full of their enemies; whereas the same word, used to describe the light, in fact turns out to be true. What is potentially harmful is apparently harmless but what seems to be only a turn of phrase turns out to be lethal in a way not expected. However, the effect of *castra inimica petunt* cannot be ignored. When it is taken with *tamen . . .* it is clear that although they do not come to harm in the camp itself, they are going to their deaths. This is made even more sinister by the fact that they actively seek it out (*petunt*).

multis tamen . . . exitio Williams takes this to mean something like 'although they would die, they would first be the death of many.' This is part of the common device of Epic Foreshadowing, and shows that although they will be the death of many, they themselves are also going to die.

316 passim somno vinoque . . . vident Again there is a mention of the state of the Rutuli (see introduction to Section 2).

corpora . . . vident The scene presented already has the air of a battlefield with bodies scattered over the ground. The fact that the bodies are sprawled on the ground (*fusa*), contrasts with the scene presented in the Thracian camp (*Il.* 10. 471–475) where all is laid out in an orderly fashion. The fact that the bodies are scattered (*fusa*) helps with the reading of *soluti* rather than *sepulti* at 189 and 236 (see **Commentary ad loc.**). It is easier to understand that something that has been ‘untied’ (*soluti*) should be scattered (*fusa*). The image is more difficult to understand if the thing had originally been buried (*sepulti*).

317 arrectos ‘Set upright’. Presumably this means with the shafts in the air, ready to be lowered on to the yokes when needed. The uprightness of their chariots contrasts with the proneness of the Rutuli, who are in no way primed for action. It is as if the inanimate chariots had taken over the vigour of the animate Rutuli who had become like inanimate objects.



This is an echo of the state of the Thracian equipment which is εὖ κατὰ κόσμον, but the contrast is marked by the different states of the Thracian troops and the Rutulians (see **Commentary 316 corpora . . . vident**).

318 inter lora rotasque viros It is irony indeed that the men should be lying amidst their potential protection — flight in their chariots — but this does not avail

them. Similarly, their weapons are all around them, but they do not have the chance to use them.

iacere This word foreshadows the physical circumstance of their deaths.

inter lora . . . vina simul It is only with *vina simul* that the set of phrases are linked and make sense: this is the reason why the Rutuli cannot defend themselves, the wine has already overpowered them and has usurped the place of their weapons in the consciousness of these warriors. This point is reinforced by the fact that the initial description of the Rutulian camp is ringed by the mention of wine leading to oblivion: 316 *passim somno vinoque . . .* 319 *vina simul*.

319 prior Hyrtacides Nisus speaks before they begin their foray through the camp. He could be called by his patronymic here merely for the sake of variety, but it is interesting to note that so far he has been called *Hyrtacides* three times, all at key points in the narrative: at the very beginning (177), when he first addresses his plan to the Trojan war council (234), and here when he initiates the foray. Hereafter his patronymic is not given again. It seems to be that *Hyrtacides* is used when Nisus is in the role of instigator, but, when his executive power is taken away from him, events, rather than his own design, force him to act. The use of a patronymic implies the support of a family, or at least a father, but the use of a personal name implies no such support, and tends to isolate the character and cast the responsibility for action on him alone. It should be noted that Euryalus is never called by his patronymic, and so lacks the protection of a father, this role being assumed in effect

by his lover, Nisus. (See Nisus, as quasi-father, in relation to Euryalus's mother: **Commentary** 212, 217 and 493.)

sic ore locutus This is a very common device in epic narrative of all times, and closely follows Homer's τὸν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε . . .

320 audendum dextra Had Nisus been really committed to his supposed task of finding Aeneas, this would not have been his exhortation, as it implies the need for immediate action, and the use of force, implied by *dextra*. This is particularly the case as the lemma's closest Homeric parallel occurs at *Il.* 10. 479, where Odysseus exhorts Diomedes either to kill Rhesus or take the horses while he himself kills the Thracian king. Nisus really seems to be telling Euryalus to take his courage in both hands and follow him into the thick of the Rutuli, keeping watch on their backs while he, Nisus, clears a way through the enemy. Again Euryalus takes more on himself than Nisus suggests: he kills Rutuli himself and so does not give his whole attention to keeping watch.

nunc ipsa vocat res This would seem to imply that the drunken state of the Rutuli offered a chance to pass unnoticed. Indeed Servius takes these particular 'circumstances' to be *somnus et vinum*. However, following as it does on *audendum dextra* and the implications of those words (see **Commentary** 320) and being followed by *vasta dabo* (323), the phrase would suggest more that the state of the Rutuli invites violence. The first interpretation is that which Nisus should have meant, but the second is what he actually does mean. There is also the ubiquitous feeling that

circumstances are leading them on. Again Nisus and Euryalus are grammatically subordinated: thus, while they seem actively to be seeking action, they are actually passive before inanimate forces.

321 hac iter est Cf. 243 *nec nos via fallit euntis*. Here Nisus asserts himself as the senior and more experienced warrior, and points the way. There is a degree of epic warning inherent in Nisus's words. The implications of his words before the Council were ominous but theoretical; now there is the uncomfortable feeling that he is putting them into action and starting down the road to destruction.

tu ne qua . . . custodi et consule longe If Euryalus had followed this instruction, the expedition would have been a success as Euryalus would have seen the approaching horsemen and so they would have been able to take evasive action in time.

323 haec ego vasta dabo Nisus is unable to resist the opportunity to exalt himself in the eyes of his beloved by performing deeds of valour.

324 sic memorat Cf. Ὡς ἔφραθ' . . . This completes the ringing of the speech in the epic fashion: *sic ore locutus . . . sic memorat*. This speech, composed of brief instructions and exhortations, makes a nice contrast with the verbosity of Nisus at the planning stage and at his appearance before the council, cf. *audite o mentibus aequis/ Aeneadae* (234).

vocemque premit This is a rather violent image to use of the silencing of speech. Not only does Nisus speak and then fall silent, he actually 'suppresses his voice'. The violence implied by his mode of speaking shows not only his frame of mind as he stops speaking, but also what it is as he starts on his ἀριστεία. The mood of one action is carried on to the next. (Cf. also 330 *premit*.)

simul ense . . . adgreditur Nisus is truly the man of action, wasting little time on words and getting straight on with the task in hand. However, it should be noted at this stage that this is not the task he undertook to perform and he seems to have got carried away, not by the wish for spoils (because he specifically does not take any [356–357] despite what he says at 242), but as a result of his wish to shine in the eyes of Euryalus (323). As the elder and more experienced warrior of the two he must take the lead. Perhaps there is also a certain amount of Nisus's feeling that he must prove himself in the eyes of Euryalus, perhaps to make himself seem more worthy of emulation, thus fulfilling the primary function of the ἐραστής. As Nisus seems to be keen to assert his dominance, he must also protect Euryalus. Indeed he particularly tells him to watch his back while he, Nisus, sweeps a path of destruction through the sleeping Rutuli so that he can lead Euryalus in safety through it.

His mention of *late . . . limite* (323) emphasises not only his impression of his own prowess, in that his arm is strong and far-reaching, but also his desire to keep Euryalus well away from danger. This has been his constant concern, starting with his wish to go alone into danger, and continuing as he does with further arguments (207–218).

324–328 *superbum Rhamnetem . . . pestem* The use of the word *superbus* is generally inauspicious for the individual so described. (See Lloyd, pp. 127–128.) Lloyd points out the strong link between the word and the mention of royalty (cf. *rex idem* 327). The word is also strongly reminiscent of Tarquinius Superbus, its most famous embodiment. Also ‘the adjective regularly is the harbinger of destruction’ (Lloyd *op. cit.*). Rhamnes is described as *superbus* and so all these reflections of pride and arrogance fall to him, as does the taint of ὕβρις. As ὕβρις carries the threat of νέμεσις, this adds to the concern for the safety of an individual so described. If this is ὕβρις on Rhamnes’s part, then in this case at least Nisus seems to be its due νέμεσις. These *tapetibus altis* (325) are perhaps a reminder of the purple carpet of Agamemnon on which he walked to his death, and so perhaps Rhamnes, who has power of his own and powerful friends, pays the price for his *superbia* by his death. It should be noted that the very name *Rhamnes* carries a hint of the *Rhamnusia Virgo*, that is Νέμεσις (Rhamnus being famous for its statue of this goddess). Therefore Rhamnes is simultaneously connected with ὕβρις and νέμεσις. Rhamnes and his killer, Nisus, are thus linked by more than this act: both are tainted with ὕβρις, but each leads to the death of the other. Nisus kills Rhamnes, but Rhamnes (or rather the effect that his possessions have on Euryalus) also leads to the death of Nisus. Not only does Rhamnes cause Nisus’s death but the connotations of his own name seem to have rebounded on him.

Williams says the name *Rhamnes* is ‘connected with the ancient Roman tribes’ and thus could be an example of Vergilian aetiology. It could then be the case that the name is used to evoke an atmosphere of ancient splendour. If that is the case then

Vergil seems intent on giving another side to the glory and apparent simplicity of old Latium. He may have Remulus wax lyrical about the toughness and simple living of the Latins (9. 603–613), but here is the other side to the old order: its love of luxury, where Rhamnes is not only lying on a great pile of coverings, but also has a gold-studded baldric which Euryalus plunders (359). It is almost as if the old order, the Latins and Rutuli, has spent its strength in luxury and dissipation, here typified by Rhamnes lying in a drunken sleep, and were needing to be purged by the new order, the Trojans. Nevertheless it is ominous that the usual criticism levelled at the Trojans by their enemies is their love of finery and luxury thus making them unsuitable to carry out this task. This idea of new replacing old is also found in the last scene of the *Aeneid* where Aeneas has to kill Turnus, who represents the old order, so that the way can be cleared for the new. However, even this act is not free from darker overtones.

326 *exstructus toto proflabat pectore somnum* In this phrase, Rhamnes is made the parallel to Rhesus in *Iliad* 10, as in their respective passages they are the only two whose sleeping is described. Given this parallel, however, there is a significant difference between them: Rhesus is breathing with short gasps (*Il.*10. 496, ἀσθμαίνοντα), as he is troubled by a prophetic dream in which appears his actual killer, Diomedes. As for Rhamnes, the augur, he is totally unaware of his fast approaching death, and is sleeping soundly, untroubled by dreams. A further contrast between the two is that Rhamnes is sleeping in great luxury on a pile of cushions, and he has fine accoutrements; no mention is made of the Thracian camp in *Iliad* 10 being so luxurious and the only mention of finery is in the barbaric

splendour of the Thracian armaments. Rhamnes and Rhesus are both killed, so why the careful contrasting of their circumstances? It is possibly a reflection of the moods and ethos of each passage: in the *Iliad*, the troubled sleep of Rhesus acts as a pointer to his fate: the dream is prophetic but Rhesus is not an augur. He is killed because of the desire for spoils felt by Diomedes and Odysseus and for no other reason. The corresponding passage in the *Aeneid*, however, seems to have an underlying theme: the νέμεσις that is visited upon ὑβρις, embodied in Vergil's description of Rhamnes as *superbus*. Rhamnes is blind to his fate, he has not been forwarned by the gods of his present death. It is ironic, as Vergil points out (327), that Rhamnes is *gratissimus augur* to Turnus, but he is not so favoured by the gods, despite all his skill and rank.

There is a nice contrast drawn between the actual state of Rhamnes and the expectation raised by *exstructus*. *Exstructus* is a word with military overtones, implying troops drawn up in good order for battle, but here it describes Rhamnes propped up on cushions and rugs. The word would be suitable for a military camp in usual circumstances, but the Rutuli have failed in their duty as soldiers and so are reproached by the misapplication of this word. There is also a cause for criticism in *proflabat*. Rhamnes is specifically said to be an augur and therefore could be divinely inspired to make utterances. *Proflabat* is somewhat similar to *profatur* (cf. Lucr. 1. 739 *Pythia quae tripodi a Phoebi lauroque profatur*) so this almost makes the Vergilian scene a parody of the scene pictured by Lucretius. Rhamnes should utter prophesies, but all he does utter are snores. Servius says that Vergil uses the word *proflabat*:

ne verbo humili stertentem diceret,

but there seems to be a more sinister meaning to Vergil's choice of words: Rhamnes makes the wrong sort of utterance and so has no warning of his imminent death.

Perhaps the mention of the fate of Rhamnes is a pointer to what will happen to his killer; and perhaps this 'pointer' episode underlines the fact that not all is well fundamentally, despite apparent success. It therefore continues in the same vein as *sed aurae . . . inrita donant* (312–313).

327 rex idem et regi Turno gratissimus augur As both men are called *rex* there is clearly a link between them. However, it is rather ironic that Rhamnes is *gratissimus* to Turnus in his function as augur. It could imply that Rhamnes's predictions were generally accurate and thus Turnus's favour was won but, in that case, Rhamnes should have been able to predict his own death (cf. 328). It could also mean that Rhamnes predicted favourable events for Turnus and was thus dear to him. Turnus is, however, killed. In either case Rhamnes does not live up to this description of him.

328 sed non augurio . . . depellere pestem Cf. 2. 429 *nec te tua plurima . . . textit*. (See introduction to Section 2 for the significance of *pestem*); cf. also 7.756–758 (the death of Umbro). Cf. also *Il.* 2. 858–859:

... ἦρχε καὶ ἔννομος οἰωνιστής·
ἀλλ' οὐκ οἰωνοῖσιν ἐρύσατο κῆρα μέλαιναν.

It is a significant aspect of Vergil's sympathy for all killed in war that the description of Rhamnes should be so strongly influenced by the description of an ally of Troy.

Nisus has transcended the purely human realm and has become, as it were, an elemental force as Achilles had done before him (*Iliad* 19 onwards). (See also Callen King, p. 18ff.) This comparison of a mortal warrior with something inanimate was also noted by the scholiasts on the *Iliad*: cf. ΣBT on *Iliad* 13. 39 (the Trojan attack on the Greek camp):

(φλογὶ ἴσοι . . . ἤε θυέλλῃ) — πρὸς τὸ εὐκίνητον ἀρπακτικὸν ἠχητικόν, ἅμα δὲ καὶ πρὸς τὴν ἀλογὸν ὄρμην ὅθεν οὐδὲ ἐμψύχοις ἀπεΐκασεν, οἷον λέουσιν ἢ λύκοις: . . .

The likening of Nisus to an *impastus . . . leo* is possibly a response to, and echo of, this Σ (as R.R. Schlunk considers Vergil uses Homeric scholia: both directly as an amplification of the text itself, and indirectly, by allusion). The mention of augury, divination and plague is strongly reminiscent of *Iliad* 1, where Chryses calls on Apollo to strike the Achaeans for their impiety in refusing a suppliant. Rhamnes cannot dispel the 'plague' that falls upon him, in the shape of Nisus, despite all his powers. It is ironic that while Rhamnes is overcome by his plague (Nisus), Nisus is also overcome by his (his love for Euryalus which causes him to turn back to rescue his friend and so return to meet his own death).

329 tris . . . famulos temere inter tela *Temere* forms a link with *forte* (325). It is also linked to 318: 'three retainers, who as it happened . . .' (*temere inter tela iacentis*), cf. *inter lora . . . iacere* (318). This finishes the ring composition. In 318, a picture is given of men lying among their chariots and weapons. However, if one takes *lora* and *tela* as words connected to each other by their common function (and this connection is strengthened by the fact that both words have *inter* next to them),

then it is significant that in one MS (Vat./Rom. see Mynors, OCT), *tela* in 329 is written as *lora*. The scribe clearly had the earlier line in mind and transposed the word into the present line. There is a clear mental link between the two lines, but it is unlikely that Vergil would have written *lora* in both. It is also equally unlikely that he would have had *tela* in place of *lora* in 318, as he goes on to link it with *rotasque* and so a link with *tela* would have been rather forced. Also Vergil talks of *arma* in the same line, and in this passage of spare narrative, such a repetition would have seemed rather out of place.

With the words in the order in which they appear in the OCT (ed. Mynors) — *lora* in 318 and *tela* in 329 — a nice balance is made; but whereas the men are lying simply *inter lora* in 318, they are lying *temere inter tela* in 329. This could mean ‘as it happened they were lying . . .’, but it could also have a rather more sinister shade of meaning in that the word *temere* can also mean ‘heedlessly’. If this latter meaning is the one taken, then it adds to the pathos of the situation, as the *trisfamulos* were lying among their weapons, the source of their defence, but were unable to defend themselves. They were also unable to defend their master, despite being near to him.

famulos Williams thinks that the *famulos* are attached to Remus’s retinue, W.F. Jackson Knight (1956, p. 235) that they are retainers of Rhamnes. The latter seems the more likely as the *que . . . que . . .* of 330 seems to join these two men firmly together, and also to their named master, Remus. This deployment seems the more satisfactory in that it forms a chiasmus of those killed:

- (a) Rhamnes (named)
- (b) tris famulos (unnamed)
- (b) armigerumque . . . aurigamque (unnamed)
- (a) Remus (named)

To have the *tris famulos* attached to Remus would mean that Rhamnes was by himself and all interest in him would stop at *pestem* (328). A further point that would seem to attach the *tris famulos* to Rhamnes is the word *iuxta*. If they had been in Remus's retinue, this would be misleading, but as it stands, the sense is 'he killed Rhamnes . . . and next his three retainers . . . and also both the armour-bearer and the charioteer of Remus, and then Remus himself'.

330 Remi Vergil often uses famous names for effect (cf. 454 *Numa* and **Commentary ad loc.**). By choosing the name Remus, it is as if Vergil were, in fact, trying to show that Nisus and Euryalus are killing people to whom their people will ultimately be joined. It is almost as much fratricide as Romulus's killing of his brother, Remus.

premit Nisus acts in a similar fashion to his style of speech (see **Commentary 324 vocemque premit**).

331 nactus The use of this word, coming as it does from *nanciscor* ('to chance/happen upon'), gives some idea of darkness and a chance meeting. It is as if Nisus were not selective in his killings but simply destroyed all in his path. This idea is

also borne out by the earlier constituents of the list: with all of them there is an indication of the fortuitous nature of their position — for Rhamnes, *qui forte . . .*; for the *tris famulos, temere*; and here Nisus chances upon the armour-bearer and charioteer of Remus. He does not seek them out specifically, he slaughters indiscriminately in the nature of something ‘extra-human’ (*pestem* 328) or something ‘sub-human’ (*leo* 339). It is the indiscriminate nature of his killings that loses sympathy: revenge on an individual might inspire disgust, but at least it would be understandable. This is slaughter described in terms that are not human, and so there can be no point of contact.

ferroque secat pendentia colla Cf. Pliny Nat. 18. 172 (vomer) *acie laterum radices herbarum secans*. There is also the image of a harvester cutting a swathe. This image is strengthened by *pendentia* as if the weight of the heads of corn bowed their stalks. This picture adds to the ‘perversion of nature’ imagery in the episode. Whereas with a reaper, the gathering of the harvest ensures life, Nisus’s actions lead to the death of the Rutuli.

The contrast of *ferroque*, something hard and inexorable, with *pendentia colla*, something soft and languid, is particularly effective here. Servius says that the word *pendentia* ‘draws attention to the disorderly scene of drunken sleep’ (so Williams). It is also a possibility that it is meant to draw a contrast with the former, pre-drunken state of these warriors; then they were alert and ready to fight, now they have been overcome by wine and sleep and their heads are drooping. Vergil uses the same flower-imagery to describe the dying Euryalus (434) as he does to describe the Rutuli

here. The Rutuli are already acting as if they were dying, even before Nisus strikes. However, by using the same imagery in both cases, Vergil also calls up a similar emotional response: the Rutuli may be 'the enemy' in this case, but Vergil still grieves for their deaths as he does for that of Euryalus.

332 tum caput . . . aufert . . . truncumque reliquit This particularly brutal line has an even darker shade of meaning. It could mean that Nisus cut off Remus's head and it (the head) left the body gulping out blood; but it could also literally mean that Nisus cut off Remus's head and, taking the head with him, left behind the body. If anything, the latter entails an easier mental process as it would mean that *aufert* and *relinquit* have the same subject, i.e. Nisus. If *aufert* can imply carrying off (*ab-ferre*) as well as simply cutting off, then Nisus sinks into barbarism. Vergil uses *ab-ferre*, 'to carry off', 'steal away', in 6. 272: *et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem*. We are also reminded of Cacus hanging up heads as trophies (8. 196–197), Turnus doing the same (12. 511), and more significantly, what happens to Nisus himself (466–467). However, the line probably means simply that he cut off Remus's head and left the body to gulp out blood, but *aufert* is not synonymous with *secat* and so provokes thought. However, as no mention is made of such a grisly trophy being found when Nisus is killed, it seems reasonable to assume that Nisus 'took off' Remus's head with a sword and left it lying where it fell.

It is also of note that *secat* and *aufert* are vividly in the present tense and this air of immediacy is carried on by the alliteration (333–334) of 's' and 't'. With *sanguine singultantem*, one can hear the hiss of rushing blood, and with the onomatopoeia of

-ng-lt-nt, the gulping noise it makes. *Singultantem* is particularly vivid as literally it means 'in sobs' and so one is given the idea not merely of blood passively flowing, as from a wound, but of arterial blood being pumped out before the heart has stopped beating after decapitation. It is also the case that by using the word *singultantem*, Vergil almost has the body mourn for itself, 'sobbing out' blood instead of tears.

Cf. also 12. 382 *abstulit ense caput truncumque reliquit harenae*. These lines have an overt and a covert link. They both occur during the triumphant ὀπισθεῖα of a named warrior — Nisus (9) and Turnus (12). Both entail the decapitation of a named enemy — Remus (9) and Phegeus (12) . And both are followed in due course by the taking of heads as trophies. However, herein lies the irony: Turnus may take heads and adorn his chariot with them, coming to no harm himself at that time, but it is Nisus himself who is later decapitated (9. 466).

The mention of *truncumque reliquit* also echoes 2. 557 (the death of Priam):

... *iacet ingens litore truncus,*
avulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus.

In neither case is the identity of the body actually given by name at the time and this adds to the pathos of their fates, linking them with the *sine nomine plebem* massacred by Euryalus (9. 343).

The further mention of the blood still being warm as it dyes the earth and the bed adds to the horror of the situation, as it brings the reader into the theatre of action along with Nisus. Nisus would, after all, be the only person to experience the warmth

of Remus's blood, as he would have had to be in close proximity to inflict a mortal wound and would therefore have been spattered with it. With the mention of warm dark blood Vergil adds to Homer's usual formula, ἄμα μελαν, and in so doing reminds the reader that it is night-time and therefore dark. For this reason Nisus's other senses would be developed more than sight and so he would be particularly aware of sensation (the warmth of Remus's blood), rather than sight. The blood would seem dark both because the expression is a translation of Homer, and it would also really appear dark because in the dark the darkness of things is intensified, but it is its warmth that is particularly noticed because this is a departure from its Homeric antecedent.

334 terra torique madent This phrase carries on the harsh 't' alliteration from the previous line. It also reinforces the picture of the helpless state of the Rutuli and their allies: Remus is, after all, killed in his bed without any attempt on his part at defence. This fact also adds to the impression of the speed of passage on the part of Nisus, and also the way in which he is killing all in his path without any plan (cf. 323 *vasta dabo*). Indeed from this point he almost seems to be revelling in the carnage he is wreaking. The ethos of Remus's death is made particularly gruesome by the imagery surrounding it in the form of a 'rain-motif'. Rain usually moistens the earth and causes it to burgeon with vegetation; this moistening with blood is a perversion of this because it signifies the death of Remus. This imagery is also present at the death of Euryalus (see **Commentary 437**). (See also **Commentary 331** *ferroque secat pendentia colla*: see also Moles, 1979.)

nec non Lamyrumque Lamumque These are just two more names to add to the list of casualties, and it is only when it gets to *et iuvenem Serranum* that the eye and mind are held. Vergil is particularly careful to state that Serranus is a *iuuenis* (between the ages of 20 and 40, older than an *adulescens* and younger than a *senior*): a man at the prime age for military service. Yet again, Vergil gives a picture of someone who does not fulfil his function and therefore comes to grief (cf. 327–328 *gratissimus augur . . . non . . . potuit depellere pestem*). Serranus is clearly a soldier, but instead of being watchful and alert he spent the night gaming and carousing.

insignis facie This oblique address adds to the pathos of the line. Linked as it is with *iuvenem Serranum*, it carries much the same emotive quality as the use of ‘lads’ by Wilfred Owen: that of regret for the waste of young life. Of all the victims of the bloody progress of Nisus and Euryalus only Serranus is lamented by Vergil. Vergil specifically mentions his youth and this adds to the pathos of his death. The technique is similar to that of Homer lamenting that Simoisius will not be able to repay his parents’ care (*Il.* 4. 473–479). It could also be the case that *iuvenem Serranum*, who is asleep in the Rutulian camp, is meant to contrast with the *delecta iuventus*, who are watchful and alert in the Trojan camp. Serranus was more ‘youthful’ in his gaming than in his sleeping, and so does not fulfil the expectation of his type.

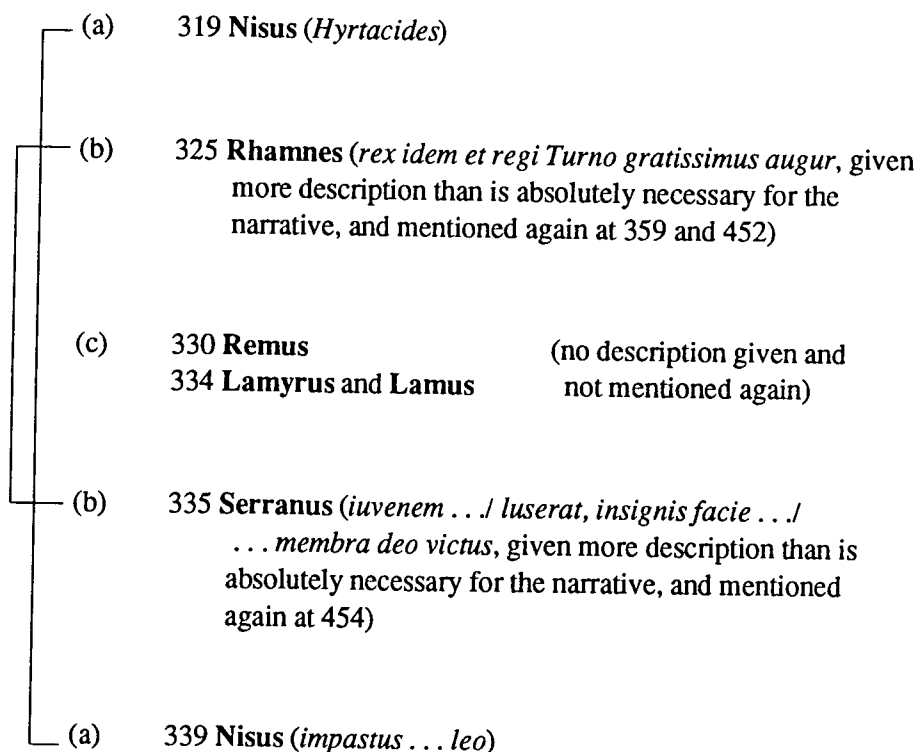
336 iacebat If the *tris famulos* act in sleep as if dying (see 331 *pendentia colla* and *Commentary ad loc.*), Serranus acts in sleep as if dead (*iacebat* cf. *hic iacet*. Cf. also *Commentary* 318 *iacere*). This then is the progression from 331–336, a

parallel with 436 *languescit moriens* and 444–445 *tum . . . sese proicit . . . / . . . confossus*.

337 membra deo victus Williams thinks that in this line *deo* = *vino* (i.e. *Baccho*), and cites as a similar example *multo fratre* (sc. *Baccho*) *madentem* (*Stat. Silv.* 3. 1. 41). Conington also thinks that *deo* = *vino*, as ‘to mention sleep as a god here would be too ambitious’. Servius is less dogmatic and says of *deo* that it is *vel vino, vel somno*. There is, however, no mention of Serranus drinking, merely that his gaming was ‘overtaken by the god’, therefore presumably ‘the god’ is Sleep, (cf. *consanguineus Leti Sopor*: quite suitable considering what happens to him). There is also the mention of *plurima nocte*, so the connection with sleep rather than wine would be more apparent. In this case, *multoque . . . deo* would imply deep sleep rather than a large amount of wine.

felix For the first time in the episode (since 176), Vergil comments on the situation. Why here? Is it for the sake of *variatio*, or is it for some other reason? A distinction should be drawn between 337 and 446–449: the lemma is an aside to the reader, not a direct address to the characters, but it is couched in language that had the person of the verbs been second not third, would have had equal force. The irony found in *felix, si . . .* is common and adds to the pathos of the situation by showing a possible way to safety and happiness and then instantly negating it by showing that that way was not taken. It is also ironic that if Serranus had been more dissolute (by gaming all night) he would have been awake at the time of the attack.

With the death of Serranus, the actual ἀριστεία of Nisus comes to an end, but it is not synchronised with the end of the section, as after all the killings comes the ‘Nisus/lion simile’. 324–328 form a whole, in that Vergil creates a ‘scene’ around Rhamnes (327–328 *rex idem . . . depellere pestem*), which extends beyond the scope of simple narrative, and he also does the same for Serranus (335–339 *illa qui . . . tulisset*). The entire episode of 319–341 forms a double ring:



Within this whole, our perception of Nisus varies. He starts at 319 *prior Hyrtacides . . .* as a man, and indeed so firmly human that his parentage is implied in the patronymic to establish him firmly in his ‘humanness’. It is also fitting at this stage that he speaks. It should be noted that he does not do so again until 355, outside the ‘ring’ of 319–341. From being human, he proceeds to something ‘extra-human’ (*pestem* 328), and then finishes as something ‘sub-human’ (*impastus . . . leo* 339).

While he is 'human' he speaks and is rational, in his 'other than human' forms he causes carnage.

339 *impastus . . . leo* Cf. *Il.* 10. 485–488 (Diomedes falling upon the Thracians).

Homer describes the sheep and goats in the simile as ἀσημάντοισιν — 'without a shepherd'. Vergil seems to have made a pun on this word in his simile, as his word *impastus*, as well as meaning 'ravenous', also has disturbing echoes of *pastor*, 'a shepherd', and so an adjective can be made whereby *impastus* also means 'without a shepherd'. (See also **Commentary** 303–307 *umero simul*, esp. the paragraph beginning 'The lionskin that Mnestheus gives Nisus'.)

per ovilia turbans Servius thinks Vergil used tmesis for *perturbans ovilia*. Williams thinks this is less likely. Indeed *perturbans* might be an amplification of *turbans*, but the phrase has more force if *per* is simply a preposition, as it then adds to the vividness of the lion's action and not the reaction of the sheep. If they are *mutumque metu* then it is more effective that they should also be huddled together rather than scattering in panic. This also concurs with the fact that the lion has got into a *plena . . . ovilia* and is running amok, rather than falling on a flock out on the open hillside.

340 (*suadet enim vesana fames*) Cf. 10. 724 (*suadet enim vesana fames*) applied to Mezentius. Perhaps there is a link in impiety, there is certainly one in that both die for the sake of someone else.

341 fremit ore cruento Cf. 1. 296 (sc. Furor Impius) *fremet ore cruento*. Is this merely a descriptive finish to a fairly common simile of a warrior being like a lion among sheep? Homeric lions do not, in fact, roar, Vergilian ones sometimes do. That this Vergilian 'lion' roars adds to the terror that he causes among his victims, it also strengthens the similarity with *Impius Furor*. The state of impiety is deliberately reached and so Nisus cannot hide behind the 'natural' nature of a lion but he acts more like one of the

... beasts with the souls of damned men, ... men
Who would damn themselves to beasts.

(Eliot, 1969, Part 2.) It is also significant that Turnus *fremet ore cruento* at 12. 8 as he decides to accept Aeneas's challenge. At the stage where Nisus and Turnus are likened to lions, they are both at the height of their powers, but both soon come to humiliation and death despite their prowess.

342 nec minor Euryali caedes Cf. 182 *pariter in bella ruebant*. Knauer has a parallel for this in *Il.* 10. 482-484, but there are two significant differences. In the *Iliad*, Diomedes responds to Odysseus's encouragement to action and is specifically said to be inspired by Athene (482):

... τῷ δ' ἔμπνευσε μένος γλαυκῶπις Ἀθήνη.

In the *Aeneid*, Euryalus is acting in direct opposition to Nisus's instructions (which were to guard his back: 322 *custodi et consule longe*), and there is no such guarantee of divine sanction.

caedes Cf. 2. 526 *Pyrrhi . . . caede* (where he kills Polites). In both these instances of the word, there is a strong note of impiety, as Pyrrhus kills Polites before the eyes of his father, Priam. This is surely an outrage even in war, and causes a similar reaction to that provoked by Turnus wishing that Evander were present to see him killing Pallas (10. 443 *cuperem ipse parens spectator adesset*). The effect of *nec minor Euryali caedes* seems to be that the greater extent of Euryalus's killings is brought out by the understatement of the introduction to them: Nisus is only said to kill on a large scale when he is in a field removed from the bare narrative in a simile which describes the ferocity of his attack, rather than its scale. Euryalus slaughters under his own name and without the blurring of the harsh lines that a simile provides. Euryalus may not have initiated the killing, but he makes up any deficiency by the brutality of his actions. He not only kills helpless men, but does so so profusely that his victims cannot be named. As Euryalus's first victims are not named the pathos surrounding their deaths is increased. It is unusual for a warrior's victims not to be named. The usual format is that to add to his κῦδος, he must kill a set figure (see introduction to Section 2). Euryalus's victims are numerous and unnamed in 343, and so are more like the lion's prey at 341. This parallel is strengthened by the repetition of 'm' alliteration from 341 to 343 and by *et ipse* (342). It almost seems that Nisus gains some κῦδος for his killing of important figures (before he degenerates into barbarism), in comparison to Euryalus's indiscriminate slaughter. The link between the lion and Euryalus is further strengthened by the use of *et ipse* (342), and also by the continued presence of words denoting madness: *vesana* applied to Nisus at 340 and *incensus* and *perfurit* applied to Euryalus's state and actions. *Caedes* is a strong word but it is not inherently critical, however, the circumstance in which it

is applied to Euryalus makes it so, because instead of killing in a martial fury, he does so more like a wild animal and yet does not have the dispensation that Nisus gains from this: Euryalus is never positively identified as a wild animal but acts like one while still definitely human, Nisus is truly 'outside himself' and can almost be considered as not responsible for his actions because at this time he is described as if he actually were an animal.

incensus Cf. 350 *fervidus* and Nisus being described as *ardentem* (198) as well as speaking of *hunc ardorem* (184). Fire imagery is common to both and so both share the violence implied by the symbolism and it is perhaps not too fanciful to think that they meet the means of destruction appropriate to this in the person of Volcens, whose name is too similar to that of Volcanus to be simply a coincidence.

This is in contrast to the idea (Thornton, p. 163) that:

When . . . Virgil says of Euryalus *incensus et ipse perfurit* . . . this in itself denotes 'fierce fighting' and is quite factual, implying no judgement . . . and could be translated by 'he fought with great zest'.

If one considers the lemma in the light of the surrounding text, then there seems to be more implied by *incensus* and *perfurit* than a description of how Euryalus fought. (Besides, the Rutuli were drunk and asleep so were not offering any resistance!)

343 perfurit (See Commentary on 341 with relation to the connection with Book 1). *Perfurit* intensifies the rabidity of his attack. Euryalus is therefore linked not only to Nisus, but also to *Impius Furor*.

in medio This also links Euryalus to the lion-simile of 339. The lion had got into a crowded sheepfold and was running amok, *plena leo per ovilia turbans* (339). As Euryalus plunges straight into indiscriminate slaughter amidst a group (*perfurit*), there is the same idea of carnage in a confined space in both passages. This idea contrasts with Nisus's instructions at 322, where the idea is of open spaces and a wide field of vision.

sine nomine plebem Euryalus kills men, Nisus the lion kills sheep. These men, thus unnamed, are deprived even of the dignity of an individual death. Calling them simply *plebem* may convey a slightly pejorative tone, possibly a reflection of Euryalus's view of them: these men are more like the sheep mentioned earlier and Euryalus's κῦδος is not augmented as he kills no-one of note.

344–345 Fadumque . . . videntem (See introduction to Section 2 for the listing of victims and the concentration on the third member of a group). These men are only names to the reader, none of them appear elsewhere in the poem, but as they are named, they become individuals and so separate from the unnamed masses. Euryalus is, however, killing everyone in his path and not choosing his victims.

subit Cf. *adgreditur* (325). Neither of these words actually describes the killing but merely the onslaught. The two words however, have different connotations. Whereas *adgreditur* implies an attack, open if brutal, *subit* implies some stealth (cf. *subitum/subito* — 'that which comes suddenly or unexpectedly'). This feeling of the stealth of Euryalus's attack is further borne out by *in medio*. It could mean simply that he

plunged into the middle and laid about him with a sword, but it could also mean that he appeared suddenly in the midst of the sleeping Rutuli and that they were not aware of his coming, either because they were asleep, or because he approached with cunning. Both words are used on other occasions, but each is mentioned only once in Book 9, thus setting them apart. They are clearly meant to imply more than simply a method of approach. The idea that Euryalus is not open in his attacks is continued in 350 with *hic furto fervidus instat* (see **Commentary ad loc.**). There is something disturbing in the fact that Euryalus can be *incensus* and *fervidus* and yet still cunning. In a strange way, Nisus can be pardoned to an extent in his killing, because he is truly taken outside his human nature and is linked to a lion. Euryalus has still maintained his human nature and although he slaughters indiscriminately, he does so with cunning. If one can so put it, this is not the straightforward, honest battle-madness of Nisus, but something more scheming and so in this context, more sinister.

345 ignaros; Rhoetum Williams thinks there must be some confusion over the two mentions of Rhoetus, as in the first it is implied that he is killed while still asleep and then is mentioned as awake and watching. There seems to be no logical explanation for this inconsistency, but perhaps it could be that a later scribe had the format of 'A, B, and C, C who . . .' in his mind (see introduction of Section 2 in relation to the grouping of names), and so transposed the name of Rhoetus to this place, possibly deleting some other name, having failed to take account of the implication of *ignaros* as it stands. However, it does seem strange that the first, and so presumably the most reliable, MSS mentioned in the Oxford Text's Apparatus

Criticus (Med. Pal. and Rom.) all read *Rhoetum* at 344 and 345 without a murmur. It would seem unlikely that if it were so obvious an error no attempt should have been made to rectify it. What possible explanation is there then for these two apparently inconsistent appearances of the same man? One possible explanation is that it is not simply that the men were asleep and therefore 'unknowing' of their imminent death (which causes a problem with the MS as it stands because of the second appearance of Rhoetus), but also perhaps that the men were unknown to Euryalus. This, however, is not a very convincing interpretation and it seems far more likely that Vergil is describing the scene in the most realistic way possible, like a story-teller, and so openly corrects himself when he makes a mistake in the exact details. This could also be the reason for the anacoluthon in . . . *subit* (i.e. Euryalus) *Rhoetumque . . . Rhoetum vigilantem . . . sed . . . metuens se . . . tegebat* (i.e. Rhoetus). The poet's aim is to produce a vivid narrative, in a way close to normal speech, rather than a casualty list.

345 *Rhoetum vigilantem et cuncta videntem* Rhoetus is the only Rutulian to be awake among all those killed, and so is in a position to do something about the slaughter going on around him, even if only to raise the alarm. *Vigilantem* is particularly ironic as it puts Rhoetus in the position of being a watchman (cf. *vigiles*) and yet failing to fulfil this function. Yet again Vergil seems to be showing the consequences of unfulfilled functions: it is like Nisus and Euryalus (by implication not real watchmen) being compared to the *vigiles* at 221 and like the weapons of Rhamnes which do not protect him but contribute to his death (see **Commentary 361**). There is also the case of Serranus who does not act in a youthful,

active fashion but sleeps too soundly and therefore does not raise the alarm (see *Commentary 336 insignis facie*).

346 sed . . . metuens There are various reasons why Rhoetus should be so afraid. No doubt the darkness and the suddenness of the attack would have made it seem as if the Trojans had broken out of camp and attacked by night and that there were hundreds of soldiers on the warpath and not just two. It is not then surprising that Rhoetus is afraid. What is interesting is that Vergil carries on the 'm' alliteration from 343 and 341, thus linking the death of Rhoetus to those of his fellows who are not named (343) and also to the victims of the lion (341) who die without a sound. It is this absence of sound that creates the most vital link between 341 and 346. If Rhoetus is indeed a watchman by implication (see *Commentary 345*), then he betrays the trust that is put in him. The idea of Rhoetus failing in the function that is imposed on him is carried from *vigilantem . . . videntem sed . . . metuens*. It all hinges on *sed*: Rhoetus (*vigilantem . . . videntem*) could be expected to act as would be fitting in these circumstances, that is to give the alarm, but (*sed*) he did not act in a responsible way because he was afraid (*metuens*) and hid.

se post cratera tegebat This carries on the idea of drunkenness being detrimental to military activity for the Rutuli (see introduction to Section 2). The wine has taken the place in the men's minds of their weapons, and here it does so literally in that Rhoetus covers himself with a wine jar as he would normally do with a shield. The fact that it is a wine jar and not a proper shield adds pathos to the action as he cannot really feel that it will offer him any protection.

346 pectore in adverso totum cui comminus ensem/ condidit adsurgenti

Cf. 12. 950-951 (Aeneas's killing of Turnus: ... *ferrum adverso sub pectore condidit fervidus*). There is a great deal of 'reciprocity' in this sentence: *pectore in adverso ... comminus ... / ... adsurgenti ... recepit*. This same idea is also carried on into 350, *refert*.

totum ... ensem/ condidit Cf. *Il.* 16. 340

... πᾶν δ' εἶσω ἔδυσίφος...

Totum adds to the brutality of the attack by showing it as excessively violent.

comminus This again shows the suddenness of Euryalus's appearance. It is as if he sprang up from under Rhoetus's feet.

condidit This is an unusual word to choose. The sense is clear enough but the implications are strange, the word is more usually applied to the founding of a city (cf. 1. 33) or laying up stores; it often has the sense of putting something in a safe place. Here it seems to imply the deliberateness of Euryalus's action: not only does he stab Rhoetus, but buries his sword up to the hilt in his chest. This seems to be the force of *condidit*. The fact that Euryalus stabbed as Rhoetus got to his feet (*cui ... adsurgenti*) and therefore, as it were, came to meet the blow, does not detract from the force of the action. It is further strengthened by being placed at the beginning of the line where the eye is drawn to it.

multa morte recepit Servius explains this as *eduxit gladium cum multo cruore*, but the picture is more vivid than that: Euryalus pulls out Rhoetus's life as he withdraws his sword.

349 purpuream By the use of this word here and *purpureus* (435) the events of the two scenes are closely linked (345–350 and 431–437). Both men are killed by a swordthrust and both die in a welter of blood, but the moods are very different. With the first of the scenes, Rhoetus dies in the course of an attack, and the graphic details of his death are the main ones brought to the reader's attention. With the death of Euryalus, the reader's attention is diverted from his actual death by the 'poppy simile' (see **Commentary** 432–437).

purpuream vomit . . . vina refert moriens Again there is the idea of the usual course of things being perverted (cf. **Commentary** 334). One tends to associate excessive drinking with vomiting, and the fact that Rhoetus has a wine jar easily accessible to hide behind implies that he had been carousing. Here there is the added touch of the grotesque in that it is not just wine he vomits up but blood as well, and not only blood, but his life-blood. There is a variant reading of *purpureum* (to agree with *ensem*, having removed the full stop after *recepit*), which Page considers worthy of note. However, this reading does cause problems. It is too far removed from *ensem* to be read comfortably, and although to say that the sword was withdrawn (*cum*) *multa morte* is a vivid image, to say that it was also *purpureus* seems unnecessary. It seems far more likely that the reading is *purpuream* to agree with

animam. This is because *anima* is life and Rhoetus's life pours out in a purple stream, his blood.

Since *anima* means the breath of life, the parallel with the Homeric formula, πορφύρεος θάνατος, is interesting: Homer implies that death is πορφύρεος because it comes with the outpouring of blood (*Il.* 5. 83), But in the *Aeneid* it is life that is mentioned, not death. The Vergilian imagery shows a clearer descent from the *Hymn to Pythian Apollo* (361–362):

... λείπε δὲ θυμὸν
φοινὸν ἄποπνεΐουσ' . . .

However, the lemma lacks the heroic sense felt in Homer and the *Hymn to Apollo* and relies more on the gruesome picture created for its effect. In Homer, death is associated with the outpouring of blood, Vergil goes one step further and has life and blood as one and the same thing. and so by implication, the outpouring of blood is that of life as well. Homer has blood flowing, and then death, which is now blood-red, descends; Vergil has the two synchronous.

hic furto fervidus instat (See Commentary 344 *subit*, for the implications of *furto*). *Moriens* and *instat* both make the scene more vivid, as the present tense makes the sense more immediate. The words also tell of the speed of Euryalus's attacking: he passes on to his next objective even before Rhoetus has time to die.

fervidus Cf. 342 *incensus*. The fire imagery in these two lines forms a ring around Euryalus's ἄριστέϊα. (For fire-imagery, see also **Commentary** 197–198 *simul his ardentem*; and **Commentary** 342 *incensus* for its significance.)

instat The use of this word raises a false expectation. It implies that Euryalus is about to continue his ἄριστέϊα through Messapus's camp, but in fact he is prevented from doing this by Nisus (see 355 '*absistamus*' *ait*). However, the check on his martial progress concentrates the attention on to what he actually does do, which is to take spoils.

351–353 iamque ad Messapi . . . gramen equos This mention of horses tethered and grazing is an echo of *Il.* 10 and the 'Stealing of the Thracian Horses'. Vergil merely alludes to the Homeric episode by its contents, and such verbal echoes as *religatos rite* to εὖ κατὰ κόσμον (*Il.* 10. 472) and in so doing highlights the differences as well as the similarities between the two episodes. The most important of these differences is the temporal one: in the *Iliad*, the 'Stealing of the Thracian Horses' is at the start of the raid, in the *Aeneid*, Nisus and Euryalus do not take the horses, and immediately after Euryalus makes the first move towards Messapus's camp, Nisus calls a halt to the action. Thus it falls at the end of their ἄριστέϊα.

351 ibi ignem deficere extremum Cf. 189 *lumina rara micant*. It is interesting to note that it is in darkness both actual (the watchfires are failing) and metaphorical (dimness of perception as to the significance of his actions) that Euryalus commits his fatal act and puts on his spoils. There is something ominous about the use of

extremum to describe the watchfires. This will be the last light that Nisus and Euryalus will see before the fatal moonlight that betrays their presence to the enemy and works as sympathetic fallacy in relation to the fire imagery that has been attached to both of them throughout the episode.

352 religatos rite This again points a contrast between the orderly positioning of the tethered horses (non-human) and the disorderly sprawling of the Rutuli (human) (see **Commentary** 317). The non-human sphere has the same function in relation to the Rutuli as the inanimate (chariots, watchfires, etc.).

videbat Cf. *instat* (350 and **Commentary ad loc.**) and *tendebat*. During 350–352 the narrative mood changes. It starts at 350 with *instat* which implies a continuation of the ἀπιστεία and goes on to *tendebat* (351) which seems to imply Euryalus's next objective, and loses none of the previous violence. *Videbat*, however, is in contrast to this as it is not part of the martial vocabulary and so focuses the attention by its incongruity (see **Commentary** 350 for the focus of the attention).

353 breviter cum talia Nisus This idea of Nisus being a man of action and few words is carried over from 324.

354 (sensit enim . . . ferri) Cf. 4. 105 *sensit enim*. (Venus realising that Juno is not being quite honest in her intentions for Dido: this is just before 'The Hunt'). It is quite unusual for Vergil to outline a speaker's emotions as an introduction to his speech, usually the speaker puts these feelings into words or they are implied by

words and actions. It is tragic that Euryalus takes to heart Nisus's spoken instructions, in that *poenarum exhaustum satis est* (which corresponds to *nimia caede*) and here the killings cease, but does not also realise that Nisus has in mind *nimia . . . cupidine*, because he then takes spoils. It could be that Nisus's thoughts imply *caedis cupido* (this is what Conington and Page think) but *cupiditas* is shown equally by Euryalus's former killings and his present despoiling, and so *nimia* applies equally to both. Euryalus thus acts on only half the instructions given him by Nisus. R.R. Schlunk (p. 73), points out that Nisus's thoughts and warning to Euryalus are 'virtually the same as the scholiast's comment on *Il.* 10. 509 (BT 509):

καὶ μὴ ἀπλήστως χρῆσθαι ταῖς εὐτυχίαις

The text in question (*Il.* 10. 509) concerns Athene's warning to Diomedes that it is time he made good his escape:

νόστου δὴ μνήσῃ, μεγαθύμου Τυδέος υἱέ,

The differences between the two passages are important. In the *Iliad*, Diomedes is directly protected by a goddess, follows her advice exactly and returns safely home. In the *Aeneid*, Euryalus is advised by Nisus, acts only on half the instruction and is killed. This again highlights the fact that Odysseus and Diomedes are protected by the gods (because of their piety) but Nisus and Euryalus, because of their impiety, are not. (See also **Commentary** 247–248.)

355 'absistamus' ait Nisus calls a halt to the killings. Cf. '*acceleremus' ait* (221): Euryalus starts the action and makes the first actual movement after the

discussion. Nisus had the original plan, Euryalus took it up and acted upon it, Nisus put a stop to the action, Euryalus prolonged it by taking spoils and being thereby seen. The outline is thus:

- (a) plan (184–196)
- (b) action signalled by 221
- (b) action ended 355
- (a) cause of rest of action, its 'plan' (being seen, running away and being killed) 359–366.

lux inimica propinquat Cf. 315 *castrainimica*. Both instances of *inimica* add another shade of meaning to that which seems to be implied on the surface. In 315, the camp is the enemy camp because it is the camp of the enemy, the Rutuli, but by transference it is also hostile to Nisus and Euryalus because it is as a result of what happens here that they meet their deaths. In 355 the light is hostile because in its presence they would easily be detected, but the light also takes on a more active role, not as daylight (which would obviously be dangerous to them), but as moonlight which shines on the plundered helmet that Euryalus is wearing and betrays them to the enemy. Servius even calls the light *proditrix* thus bringing out its active role. Cf. also 205 *lucis contemptor*. As the Moon and the Dawn are goddesses, it is to be expected that they will pay back such slights (cf. 1. 8 *quo numine laeso*). The lemma is no doubt strongly influenced by Homer, who uses the approach of dawn in a purely temporal sense (*Il.* 10. 251):

ἀλλ' ἴομεν· μάλα γὰρ νύξ ἄνεται, ἐγγύθι δ' ἠώς.

However, it must also on further reading take up an implication through hindsight of such phrases as (12. 150):

Parcarumque dies et vis inimica propinquat.

Such retrospective shadings of meaning are quite common in the *Aeneid* and lead to an enrichment of the text through borrowed sense and allusion (cf. the sense of irony given to *Ecl.* 1.73 on reading *Ecl.* 9. 50). There is an inherent tension in calling *lux* 'inimica'. It is usually darkness that is so described, both actually because harmful happenings can occur more easily in the dark, and also because darkness can be synonymous with death. *Lux* can therefore stand for 'life' as well as 'light' in this sense as well as the more literal (cf. *lucis contemptor* 205).

356 poenarum exhaustum (Literally) 'it is emptied out', or 'drained' and therefore 'at an end'. The first translation given of *exhaustum* gives an interesting insight, and is particularly effective in this context where blood is spilled so freely (see 333–334). It is as if with such an outpouring that Nisus's frustration and hatred is quenched. There is great irony that although Nisus says this is the end of the vengeance, he has no inkling of his own and Euryalus's death. This is reflected in the fact that *exhaurio* can be used to signify the end of life itself. (See Moles, 1983, esp. pp. 773–775.) He is tempting fate as they have not yet reached safety and indeed their own deaths will be in revenge for the vengeance they have just taken on the sleeping Rutuli. (Cf. Commentary 422.)

via facta per hostis Cf. 321 *hac iter est* and also 243 *nec nos via fallit euntis*. Again there is the idea of Nisus leading the way. This utterance comes at the end of a series of short phrases and is suitably abrupt for Nisus as a man of action. These words confirm that Nisus has indeed realised that they were being diverted from their more important task of getting out to find Aeneas. The short clauses imply urgency as Nisus realises that time is running out before it gets light; but there is also the nice touch that after all the carnage he has just wrought, Nisus should be somewhat out of breath, and so would speak in short bursts.

357–358 multa virum . . . tapetas In view of what happens in 359, there is much irony in the placing of these two lines. They build up a false hope that Nisus and Euryalus will first conclude their mission before stopping to pick up spoils. It is interesting to note the similarities between the reward promised to Nisus and Euryalus by Ascanius and the spoils they are specifically said to have left behind.

Cf. 263:

*bina dabo argento perfecta atque aspera signis
pocula*

with 357:

solido argento perfecta

Cf. also (266) *cratera antiquum* with (358) *craterasque*. Cf. also (270) *clipeum cristasque rubentis* with (358) *armaque*.

The only exception are the *pulchrosque tapetas* (358). It is perhaps significant that these are an echo not of the reward promised by Ascanius, but of the *tapetibus altis* (325) on which Rhamnes was lying sprawled when Nisus killed him. This acts as a pointer back to the immediate story as Euryalus is just about to despoil Rhamnes. The only other mention of such coverings in the *Aeneid* is at 7. 277 where it describes the appearance of the horses that Latinus gave to the Trojans as gifts (*pictisque tapetibus*). Each mention of these items is immediately followed by disaster: in Book 7, the episode is followed by Juno's commissioning Allecto, at 9. 325 it is followed by the death of Rhamnes which acts as a prelude to the general slaughter, and at 9. 358 it is the last item named before Euryalus stops to take spoils which lead almost directly to his own and Nisus's death.

358 armaque craterasque simul pulchrosque tapetas The choice of words and their positionings are particularly effective in this line. It starts with *arma* which gives the scene a military flavour, but this is totally ruined by the rest of the line. These are the accoutrements not of war but of revelry. The choice of *craterasque* . . . *pulchrosque tapetas* forms a chiasmus with *somno vinoque soluti* (189) as *crateras* should remind the reader of *vinoque* and *pulchrosque tapetas* of *somno*. Both *crateras* and *tapetas* are Greek accusatives, thus bringing in again the idea of luxury instead of the hard, warlike *virtus* usually ascribed to the Latins.

359 Euryalus After being told that the two are ready to set off again on their mission (after a presumably brief interlude of killing), and that they are leaving much potential plunder behind them, it comes as a shock that Euryalus suddenly does the

unexpected and picks up spoils. The fact that Euryalus alone is explicitly mentioned exonerates Nisus to an extent.

Euryalus phaleras Rhamnetis *Phalerae* are metal discs or bosses worn by men especially as military decoration (see Livy 39. 31 *equites donati phaleris*). They are also part of harness or trappings: cf. *infula* which is cognate with the Greek word (φόλος, φόλαρα) for the trappings of sacrificial victims, cf. *Georgics* 3. 487:

*saepe in honore deum medio stans hostia ad aram,
lanea dum nivea circumdatur infula vitta.*

Through the Greek, *phaleras* is cognate with *infula*, which were also the headbands worn by priests. As Rhamnes was an augur it is not surprising that such things would be associated with him, and as he is a king (327), he would no doubt be a redoubtable warrior and so it is not surprising that he would be awarded military decorations. However, *infula* also carries a more sinister meaning as the trappings of sacrificial victims. Rhamnes has already been killed with a sword, and so has in effect already been sacrificed. Now Euryalus puts on these same *phalerae* which were the possessions of Rhamnes, thus dressing himself as a sacrificial victim (like Pentheus, *Eur. Bacc.* 912–917) since the wearing of such trappings impart some of the character and attributes of their former owner. He also puts on a military decoration, which considering his recent record is inappropriate. The eye must pass over *phaleras Rhamnetis* before going to the descent of the swordbelt but the implications of these items are significant for the fate of Euryalus. Their importance is confirmed when they are mentioned again at 458.

359 *et aurea bullis/ cingula* Cf. 12. 941–942:

... *infelix uero cum apparuit alto*
balteus et notis fulserunt cingula bullis.

In these mutually reminiscent passages the deaths of Euryalus and Turnus are linked. Both are killed because of the people they have killed and the two characters are themselves very similar: both young, both handsome and both so hot-headed that their actions go beyond that *via media* that separates what is acceptable in war, and what ὕβρις, (see 10. 500ff. for the poet's comments on Turnus's despoiling of Pallas). Again there is a case of a following passage casting a further shade of meaning onto a preceding one (cf. **Commentary 355** *lux inimica*). A possible link between Rhamnes and Agamemnon is taken from Homer, since Vergil could well have in mind Agamemnon's belt at *Il.* 11. 29–31:

... ἐν δέ οἱ ἤλοι
 χρύσειοι πάμφαινον ...
 ... χρυσεῖοισιν ἄορτήρεσσιν ἄρηρός.

The richness of their accoutrements befits their royal status.

360–363 Tiburti Remulo ... potiti The descent of such weapons is common in Homer, cf. *Il.* 2. 102ff. (Agamemnon's sceptre) and *Il.* 10. 266ff (Meriones's helmet). This type of passage goes back no doubt to the same oral tradition that enjoyed the listing of troops (cf. 'Catalogue of Ships' in the *Iliad*). The giving of its history also endows Rhamnes's swordbelt with some importance, and this should be kept in mind for 458. It may be the light of the moon on the helmet that betrays Euryalus, but the wearing of the *phalerae* marks him as a sacrificial victim with no

other divine interference necessary. There is blood and death in the history of this *cingula*: it was bequeathed by Remulus to his grandson at his own death, and then at the death of that grandson in battle it was despoiled by Rhamnes, and now it has passed by violence to Euryalus. This theme of violence is overshadowed by the similarity of the name *Caedicus* (the original owner) to *caedes*.

phaleras . . . cingula There is much confusion over the exact demarcation of these words, whether they constitute two separate entities or whether the two are in some way one. Williams and Conington think they are two separate things, Heyne thinks that *phaleras et cingula* are ἐν δια̂ δυοῖν. What the matter really rests on is that there is no mention of Euryalus hanging a polished disk round his neck, but there is of his putting what is obviously a swordbelt over his shoulder in 364. But on the other hand there is no mention at 458 of a *cingula* being recovered, only *phaleras*. As the *cingula* is so ornate, such an accoutrement would surely be mentioned again unless, because of a desire for *variatio*, Vergil deliberately avoided mentioning it. This, however, as well as the plea of an unpolished poem, does not really present a convincing case in such a suggestive passage. It is quite possible that Vergil omitted to mention the *cingula* being recovered due to a wish to take for granted its presence at the time of Euryalus's death in the same way as Pallas's *balteus* is present at the death of Turnus. This parallel scene is further linked by the fact that in neither case is there a mention of the victim being despoiled of his spoils. It would seem that there is no reason why the two items should be taken as one. The detailing of the ancestry of this swordbelt also has another effect. It momentarily distracts the attention from the *phaleras Rhamnetis* immediately preceding it. Of the two items,

it is the *phalerae* that are by far the more important, but they are passed over quickly and only remain as a vague impression. Thus their eventual significance is enhanced because of the element of surprise involved (cf. **Commentary 359** *Euryalusphaleras Rhamnetis*).

361 hospitio cum iungeret absens Cf. *Il.* 10. 269:

Ἀμφιδόμας δὲ Μόλω δῶκε ξεινήϊον εἶναι.

The Homeric line refers to the boar's tusk helmet that Odysseus wore in the *Doloneia*, and to him it offers protection. It is ironic that Rhamnes should be killed for the sake of something that would normally be associated with his safety: the belt that holds the sword with which he would defend himself (see **Commentary 318**).

362 Caedicus . . . dat habere nepoti Cf. 266 *quem dat Sidonia Dido*, and 313 *nubibus donant*. The vivid present tense behind these gifts seems to cast an ill-omened shadow over them: they are all associated with death. (See also **Commentary 360–363** for the significance of the name *Caedicus*.)

363 post mortem bello Rutuli pugnaque potiti The descent of this sword-belt has been a violent one (see **Commentary 360–363**). Page thinks that although *postmortem* could mean *postmortem nepotis*, this is unlikely. However, to take *post mortem* to mean *postmortem nepotis* would not cause any serious problems. What seems to upset commentators is that this *nepos* is unnamed but surely the important point of the description is the violent history of the swordbelt, not who all its owners

were. That the grandson should be unnamed adds to the power inherent in the swordbelt: it is almost as if it had taken on a life of its own and did not need human intervention to pass from owner to owner.

364 *haec rapit* It is this phrase that leads to the confusion of whether *phaleras* and *cingula* are one and the same. It seems most likely that the object of *rapit* is what immediately precedes it, that is, *cingula*, and following as it does the descent of this particular swordbelt. Euryalus would only sling the swordbelt round his shoulders, not the *phaleras* as well.

umeris nequiquam fortibus aptat (Cf. 219 *causas nequiquam nectis inanis*, see *Commentary ad loc.*) Servius takes *nequiquam* with *aptat*, not *fortibus*, although the latter does have a precedent in *fortissima frustra pectora* (2. 348). *Nequiquam aptat*, however, ties in with the general idea of something not fulfilling its function (see *Commentary ad 361* and 329: *temere* (329) and *nequiquam* (364) are closely linked). As the sword-belt was got through violence by Rhamnes and it did not help him in the end, so with Euryalus. *Nequiquam fortibus* is also a satisfactory link because for all his strength, Euryalus is still overpowered and killed (see 398 *conantem plurima frustra*).

365 *tum galeam . . . induit* This is the last of the spoils that Euryalus takes, and it is the most significant item, because the light shining on it betrays them to the enemy. It is interesting that Euryalus picks up Messapus's helmet without killing him first. This gives some idea of the haste that he is now making in following

Nisus's instructions to hurry. It should also be compared with the taking of the swordbelt which does not save Rhamnes: the protection afforded by a helmet stays with Messapus because he is not killed, and so it is not transferred to Euryalus. Indeed in this case Euryalus cannot hope to take over the protective qualities of the helmet by killing Messapus because we have been specifically told that Messapus is invulnerable by fire or steel (7. 692).

crisisquedecoram (See Commentary 304–305). It seems to be the richness of the spoils that attracts Euryalus. He has already picked up a swordbelt that he does not need because Ascanius has already given him his own, and now his eye is caught by the looks of Messapus's helmet with no thought of the possible danger of the light shining on it.

abilem This seems an unusual word to use of a helmet, as it usually means 'easy to handle'. It is more readily applied to a sword (cf. 305) or some other such item. In the translation of the *Aeneid* by W. F. Jackson Knight (1976), it is translated as 'it fitted him well'. Heyne has it as εὖ ὀραρυῖται, which would tie in well with *decoram* and indeed it is fitting that a commander such as Messapus should have well-made, beautiful armour.

However, calling the helmet *abilem* causes a false feeling of security and there is also tension introduced by having the word placed after *neququam* (364). This sequence builds up the idea that Euryalus has escaped from a dangerous situation and has now reached safety: *neququam* gives way to *abilem*. However, with

hindsight, it can also be seen that *nequiquam* overshadows *habilis* and that the irony is in the fact that Euryalus is killed because of the actions of something that 'fitted him well'. It is almost as if the helmet were beguiling him into taking it and wearing it by being so good as to fit him.

366 induit Cf. 303–305:

. . . umero simul exuit ensem
auratam, mira quem fecerat arte Lycaon
Cnosius atque habilem vagina aptarat eburna

with 364–366:

haec rapit atque umeris nequiquam fortibus aptat
tum galeam Messapi habilem cristisque decoram
induit

The two passages correspond on all similarities:

303–305

umero
exuit
ensem
habilem
aptarat

364–366

umeris
aptat
galeam
habilem
induit

The only difference is that whereas Ascanius takes off a sword, Euryalus puts on a helmet. The ill-omened nature of this sword on Euryalus has already been noted (see **Commentary** 303–307). It should also be noted that Ascanius dissociates himself with any ill luck by giving the sword to Euryalus. At this stage, the helmet

seems harmless enough, but in the light of the similarities with the earlier passage, considerable doubt is cast on its being safe for Euryalus.

Induit is a key word at the beginning of the line as *aptat* is at the end of 364. Stress is laid on the fact that Euryalus puts on his spoils and does not dedicate them to the gods as Odysseus and Diomedes do in *Iliad* 10. Cf. *Aen.* 10. 773–776 where Mezentius says that he will make Lausus a living *tropaeum* because he will deck him in Aeneas's armour. The link in impiety (cf. 9. 205 *lucis contemptor* and 7. 648 *contemptor divum*) between Mezentius and Euryalus is again highlighted (see **Commentary** 205).

excedunt castris et tuta capessunt Cf. also 315 *castra inimica petunt, multis tamen ante futuril exitio*. The ἀπιστεΐα of Nisus and Euryalus are ringed by these two phrases. This ring apparently seals in the possible danger to Nisus and Euryalus, but, on reaching the end of the section, it seems clear that the implications of this earlier line had been false. It is ironic that while Nisus and Euryalus are in the midst of their enemies they come to no harm, and it is only when they suppose they have reached safety that they run into danger.

SECTION 3 (367–449)**THE DEATHS OF NISUS AND EURYALUS****Introduction**

While Nisus and Euryalus have been despoiling and killing, a previously unmentioned party of 300 horsemen arrive under the command of Volcens. They see the light shining on Euryalus's helmet and challenge the intruders who flee and are pursued. Euryalus is weighed down by his plunder and loses his way in the dark unfamiliar woods. Nisus escapes, but realising that he has lost Euryalus, comes back to look for him and sees him being captured. He offers up a prayer and kills Sulmo and Tagus from the shadows before Volcens kills Euryalus in revenge. Nisus attacks Volcens and kills him before dying himself on the body of Euryalus. Vergil makes the final comment and eulogy on the episode and characters in a rare instance of speaking *propria persona*.

In this section the deeds of Nisus and Euryalus come to an end and it seems that they get their just deserts. A further insight into Nisus's character is given. Whereas before he was a man of stratagems, then of action and few words, he is now portrayed as one not in control of the situation and desperate to save or at least avenge Euryalus even at the cost of his own life.

As well as adding a further shade to Nisus's character in this section, Vergil also allows his own feelings to come more into the light. A good poet should make the

reader feel that he is in sympathy with his creations, but the mood at the death of Euryalus (431–437) cannot be only Nisus's, nor entirely poetic convention on Vergil's part. Despite the fact that the imagery comes from Homer through Catullus and others and is therefore almost traditional, the pronounced erotic mood must cause some thought as to whether Aelius Donatus was in fact right in his view of Vergil's homosexuality (*Vita Vergili*).

Whereas the previous episode (314–366) was composed almost entirely of narrative, this section is dominated by speech, especially that spoken by Nisus. There is his address to the missing Euryalus, his prayer to the Moon and his frenzied appeal to the Rutulian cavalry before he rushes in to avenge Euryalus. This section, and not the ἀπιστεΐα of the two characters (Section 2), is surely the most vividly drawn of the whole 'Nisus and Euryalus Episode', because there is not only action, but reaction to it and emotion caused by it. Thus it contains all the elements needed to make narrative into dramatic story.

In this section there is another shade added to the mood of the story: a certain feeling of sentient nature (of which the goddess or genius of the moon would be a part), starting to retaliate. This idea is subtly foreshadowed at 320 (*nunc ipsa vocat res*. See *Commentary ad loc.*). All through the early part of this section there is a definite air of menace as if the goddess were coming to claim her victims, not in her role of Olympian Diana, but of Stygian Hecate. There is great play on the darkness and mystery of the woods, their silence and the flickering of the moonlight, as well as paths that meander in no clear direction and seem to change course when Nisus tries to retrace his steps.

Commentary

367–370 Interea . . . Volcente magistro *Interea* gets the narrative back to its previous tempo. There had been a considerable slowing of the pace while Vergil dwelt on the respective actions of Nisus and Euryalus, despite the fact that the slaughter itself had been carried out in haste. Beginning the passage with a word that does not usually come first in a sentence and then continuing until 370 using very simple syntax and vocabulary gives the feeling of an unpolished passage, but there is also the feeling that at this stage the preliminary narrative is to be got through as quickly as possible so that the challenge, the next important aspect, can be quickly reached. The rather prosaic style of narrative gives the passage a military tone which acts as a contrast to the ‘heroic’ exploits of Nisus and Euryalus. This idea of the lines being unpolished is strengthened by their inconsistency. There has been no previous mention of a detachment of cavalry being sent, nor of any message being carried. This must in fact be an oversight: war may be a confused affair, but the sending of 300 cavalry, all fully armed, must warrant some previous mention. On the other hand, it is just possible that only a part of the native army was besieging the Trojans, and that this detachment was carrying communications between Turnus, the Commander in Chief, who also seems to be outside the city (from his address to the besieging force), and an acting commander in the city, from which this detachment is sent. This idea that there are two sections of Rutuli helps to explain the apparent inconsistency that holds that the Rutuli are besieging the Trojans and also awaiting instructions at the same time. *Cetera legio* would thus seem to make more sense in relation to the besieging force, not the cavalry detachment.

instructa Considering the drunken state of the Rutuli, this word is somewhat ironic. It is possible to imagine that the word reflects the expectations of the *equites* as to the state in which they will find their compatriots. To the reader, however, *instructa* fulfils the same function in relation to *legio* as *exstructus* does in relation to Rhamnes (see **Commentary** 326).

ex urbe Latina Vergil is careful to avoid saying that the message comes from Latinus and so it can be assumed that it does not, but comes rather from someone else in the city, either Turnus's acting lieutenant (which seems the more likely), or perhaps even from Amata, although this seems unlikely.

367 Turno regi Servius says that:

in omnibus bonis regis dicitur inventum.

However, this can probably be discounted and it is not adopted by Williams, Conington or Mynors. It is probable that *regi* is simply an amplification of *Turno* and indeed this has already been used at 327. These two lines are linked by more than verbal similarity. In 327, the auguries that were delivered must have been false (see **Commentary ad loc.**) whereas in 369 there is nothing to suggest that this is the case. There is also a contrast between the wealth of the 'false messenger', Rhamnes, and the comparative frugality of these soldiers. This use of *rex* as a title for Turnus makes more sense than does the use of *regis* which could only apply to Latinus in this context and would not make sense as Latinus has withdrawn from the fighting. The only possible justification for *regis* would be if Latinus were sending Turnus a

message unconnected with the war that Turnus is carrying on against the Trojans. As no mention of this idea has been made previously and no explanation of it is made later (such as the message being delivered and acted upon or discarded), the idea seems rather far-fetched as an explanation and so can be discounted.

370 ter centum Conington says this was the usual number of cavalry attached to a legion and would therefore suggest Vergilian aetiology. It could also be a device by which the vast number of Rutulian cavalry are made to be of lesser importance than the two young Trojans: superiority of numbers being less important than the sufferings of individuals.

scutati omnes Servius says that *scutati* is correct in this context:

nam clipei peditum sunt, scuta equitum

However, Livy (8. 8) attributes the *scutum* to the infantry as opposed to the cavalry. Perhaps Vergil was not too concerned with the actual type of shield used at any one time but chose the simpler of the two: *scuta* were wooden shields covered in leather, the *clipeus* was a round wooden targe, presumably studded. The *scutum* is also said to have been of Samnite origin and so perhaps this is why Vergil chose it, as it gives an air of native antiquarianism, similar to his calling Rhamnes's retainers *famuli* and not *servi* or some other such term. It is also a fact that *scutum* is not a 'heroic' word, whereas *clipeus* usually is (see Lyne, 1989, p. 102):

Gladii and *scuta* belong emphatically to our world and the reality of Roman warfare. That is why Vergil sometimes prefers them. He must occasionally anchor his heroic narrative in mundane detail.

This idea also accords with Vergil's use of the prosaic word *legio* to describe the besieging force and his use of military vocabulary in relation to the cavalry detachment. A contrast is thus made between the realistic and factual world of the Rutuli and the dreamlike and fey condition of Nisus and Euryalus. Each is highlighted as a foil to the other.

Volcentemagistro (For the significance of the name as it appears in Mynor's text see **Commentary 342** *incensus*.) In Lemprière's Classical Dictionary and also in Lewis and Short, this name is written as *Volscens*, that is, 'the Volscian'. The name is amended in the Med. MS to *Volcens*, but the similarity of the two words should probably be recognised and remembered as a further element of 'local colour'.

371 iamque propinquabant castris murosque subibant There is a spatial progression in these words that gives a clear picture: the cavalry approach the walls and come to the foot of them. This must take some time to happen, but the shock of their appearance (perhaps seen through the eyes of Nisus and Euryalus) distorts the sense of time and makes it seem the action of a moment.

murosque Servius thinks these are the walls of the Trojan camp but it seems more likely that they are the ramparts of the Rutulian camp (see 161 *muros*). The idea that these are the fortifications of the Rutulian camp is strengthened by the variant reading (Pal. MS) of 375, which has *ab aggere* where all the rest have *ab agmine*. The variant reading shows that the scribe had it in mind that Volcens was shouting

from near some fortifications, but it is highly unlikely, even given their demoralised state, that the Trojans would have allowed him to get so close to their own fortifications without at least shooting at him.

subibant It is difficult to take this in the same sense as *subit* (344, see **Commentary ad loc.**). Here there is not the same idea of stealth (unless the night imparts such an aspect to a journey undertaken in darkness). The sense is more that of coming up to the foot of a wall, so that *subibant* takes up its literal and not its metaphorical meaning. However, the use of *sub-ire* in whatever form is not the only similarity between the case of Nisus and Euryalus and the Rutulian cavalry. There is also the coincidence of *lux inimica propinquat* (355) and *equites . . . / . . . propinquabant*. In both cases there is the idea of something approaching in a fashion that is not open and plain to the eye. It is almost as if Nisus and Euryalus were expecting the coming of the light to be dangerous, but that the most immediate source of danger was the Rutulian cavalry. Thus the Rutuli almost become subsumed by their natural environment and appear to act as agents of it.

372 laevo limite As *sinister* denotes ill-luck, so presumably does *laevo* (cf. Boyle p. 92, who translates *laevo* at 10. 275 as ‘sinister’, that is, ‘ominous’). Nisus and Euryalus have taken a path that by its very nature seems ill-omened (cf. Hor. *Odes* 3. 27. 15. *Teque nec laevus vetat ire picus*. This implies the Greek (or perhaps Trojan?) method of augury, not the Roman. See Cic. *Divin.* 2. 39: *Nobis sinistra videntur, Graiis et barbaris dextra, meliora*). This could be another pointer that not all is well. This is borne out by *cernunt* as they are discovered.

373–374 et galea . . . adversa refulsit This phrase starts with its subject: the helmet actively betrays Euryalus, it is not merely that the Rutuli see the helmet. This would have made it the object and so weakened the sense of deliberate action. The attention that is clearly meant to be directed at the helmet itself, not the Rutuli or Euryalus, is directed to it again in 374, with *prodidit*. There is no mention yet of their seeing the light shining on the helmet which thus betrays Euryalus. This would relegate the helmet to a relative clause. As the sense stands, the inanimate world of armour and moonlight takes over and traps Euryalus. This sudden feeling of conspiracy and encircling is also shown in the positioning of the words in 374–375:

<u>. . . galea</u> (subject in the nominative)	<u>Euryalum</u>	<u>sublustris . . . umbra</u> (relates to the moonlight)
<u>prodidit</u> (relates to <i>galea</i>)	<u>immemorem</u> (relates to <i>Euryalum</i>)	<u>radiisque adversa</u> (relates to the moonlight)

In both lines, *Euryalum* and *immemorem* (which is his ‘marker’ in the next line) are placed between words relating to the helmet and the shining of moonlight. Thus he is, as it were, both actually and verbally trapped and overpowered.

sublustris noctis in umbra The linking of *sublustris* and *umbra* is very effective. The general picture is given by *umbra*: all is in shadow, but in the shadow lurks the fatal light. That the light is somehow hiding itself is implied by *sub-lustris* (cf. *sub-it*). There is light implied by *-lustris* (cf. *illustro*, Cic, *Ver.* 4. 71 and Hor. *Odes* 4. 14.6) but it

is hiding under or within itself, *sub-*, and not revealing itself clearly. This is perhaps the first manifestation of the *lux inimica* (355) that Nisus fears and it shows itself as malevolent by seeming to hide, and thus appearing stealthy in its malfeasance. There is then the feeling of things being carried out on the half-light where they are not clearly seen. For this reason, and with the atmosphere of darkness and murk that is given, *refulsit* comes as a shock, because of the violence of its implied action. If the episode had taken place in daylight, and this were sunlight shining on a polished surface, the intensity of the light would have been easily explained. As this is moonlight, the unwonted strength of the light gives the impression of a flash of light being sent, like a flash of lightning, and not merely a casual reflection. The link between *reFULsit* and *FULmen* has already been noted (see **Commentary** 281). The idea of an active flash of light is carried on to the next line.

haud temere est visum The standard rendering is 'it (the flashing helmet) was not seen without effect' (*vel sim.*). However, as is also commonly noted, *galea* would call for *visa est*. The words should be taken together, and not in isolation, and then compared to *temere iacentis* (329). In 329, there was the idea that Nisus's victims were killed randomly and not especially chosen. This is implied by *temere*. In this instance, it is *haud* that should be noted in the lemma: it is not merely a fortuitous flash of light but a repayment in kind by the angry Moon Goddess to Euryalus, who had blatantly declared himself as *lucis contemptor*. Another possible construction may be *visum est haud temere esse* (Conington), that is, the Rutuli saw that it was not a casual thing, but important. However, a better idea connects *temere* with *visum*, that is, they did not observe it carelessly, but took note.

The word order of 373–375 is perhaps best taken as: *galea prodidit Euryalum* (quem) *immemorem sublustri in umbra noctis*, (et sublustri) *refulsit radiisque adversa*. In this case, *adversa* can be taken adverbially to imply both a reflection (light being shone back at its source, the moon) or, in a more sinister fashion, the mood in which it is reflected (deliberately and with evil intent cf. *prodidit*). There is also the interesting idea that they had trusted in the night to hide them and so keep them safe, and it had betrayed them. This idea is continued in 378 with *fidere nocti*. They may have hoped to gain safety in darkness, but Euryalus is led astray by the shadows (he is their victim), and so is captured.

immemorem He did not remember that a polished helmet with an ornate crest might attract attention. This is in marked contrast to the prudent Diomedes who chose a helmet without ornament (*Il.* 10. 258). Euryalus is now reduced to the same state as his victims (cf. 345 *ignaros*). Whereas before he inflicted this state on others, now he has suffered a reversal of his fortune and has it imposed on him.

conclamat ab agmine Volcens This highlights the vulnerability of Nisus and Euryalus as they are greatly outnumbered by the Rutulian cavalry which is drawn up in formation (*ab agmine*), whereas they are entirely alone and unprotected. For the significance of the name *Volcens* see **Commentary 342 *incensus***. It is particularly fitting that the scene describing the sighting of Nisus and Euryalus by the Rutuli is ringed by the name *Volcens* at 370 and 375. It is an indication of the fate of Nisus and Euryalus in that they are already, metaphorically, in the power of Volcens, just as they are actually surrounded by his men at 380 (*coronant*).

376 state viri . . . quove tenetis iter? In this section, Volcens takes over the role of the man of action and few words from Nisus (cf. 355–356), who later reverts to his former eloquence. After the detailed description of moonlight shining on Euryalus's helmet, the short, sharp speech of Volcens comes as a shock, as it is meant to do, beginning as it does in the imperative mood.

377 tendere . . . celerare . . . fidere With all these words in the historic infinitive, the lines are made to read much more smoothly and therefore faster, giving an idea of Nisus and Euryalus slipping away quietly and quickly.

378 fidere nocti The irony of this is that it is the night, that is the moonlight, that had already betrayed them (see 373–374). Again there is the idea of something acting contrary to its apparent nature just as the helmet which would normally be a source of protection actually brings about Euryalus's death, even if only indirectly.

378-380 obiciunt equites . . . coronant The sparseness of the narrative again hurries the pace, as in the beginning of the section, but there is something disturbing about the efficiency and speed with which the manoeuvre is carried out. It is very like a band of huntsmen who surround a wild beast with nets and then move in for the kill. It is now the hunter who is being hunted (cf. 243–245). It should be remembered while reading of Euryalus's attempted escape that this is impossible as he is already surrounded, and this adds pathos to the situation. The language is given a suitably military tone by *coronant* (cf. Prop. 4. 4. 7-8):

*hunc Tatius montem vallo praecingit acerno,
fidaque suggesta castra coronat humo.*

Here (lemma) there is no idea that the word is ironic unlike the military vocabulary when used at 317 and 226.

379 *divortia nota* These side roads and shortcuts are familiar to the Latins, but not to Euryalus without Nisus to guide him. This is in marked contrast to the impression given by Nisus at 245, *totum cognovimus amnem*.

380 *aditum* Conington and Williams have *abitum* and there is even a reading of *habitum* which Servius considers a *melior lectio*. Despite our unwillingness to abandon the suggestion of a native Latin speaker, *habitum* does present some serious difficulties. *Abitum* or *aditum* are both effective in this context, as implying that all possible escape routes or sources of help were blocked. In this context, however, *abitum* appears to be a better reading than *aditum* (*pace* Mynors) as the point at issue is that Euryalus cannot get out, rather than that aid cannot get in.

381–385 *silva fuit.../...complerant undique sentes/...rara...lucebat semita... regione viarum* Unlike in the previous descriptions and narrative passages in this section (such as 367–370), Vergil dwells on these lines as they add to the mood of the section. 381–383 are an example of the ‘*est locus*’ type of ecphrasis (see Williams 1968, 640ff.), and they augment the mood of hostile nature before going on to show how this hostility affects Euryalus.

The imagery suggests that even the bushes and trees are hostile. There is a nice contrast between things that are unambiguously harmful to Euryalus and those that

might possibly help him. The former are drawn with a smothering intensity, such as *densicomplerantundique*, as if the brambles were positively crowding round him to catch and stifle him: whereas the path, which might lead him to safety, is drawn with much fainter lines, characterised by *rara* and *occultos*. It is almost a contrast between the palpable intensity of the one and the elusive semi-presence of the other, but in fact both are equally sinister. This feeling of something praeternatural being present is continued in 385: it is not that Euryalus loses his way because of the darkness, but *timor* that leads him astray. Again there is the idea of Euryalus being the plaything of forces beyond his control (see *Commentary* 373–374). Instead of Euryalus losing his way because he is afraid, which would be: *Euryalus* (nominative) . . . *quod timet* . . ., there is *Timor* (nominative) leading Euryalus (accusative and therefore the object) astray. It is as if Euryalus has lost his place in the natural order of things and no longer has any control over what will happen to him. Cf. 7. 215:

nec sidus regione viae litusve fefellit.

Here Ilioneus gives an account of their journeyings and so he can say, as the journey is completed, that the guiding star did not lead them astray. But in this line, *fallit*, being in the present tense, instead of the perfect *fefellit*, has more of a threatening feel to it in that it gives the idea that *timor* was lying in wait all the time, waiting its chance. *Timor fallit* continues the mood of *galea . . . prodidit*. The last ‘active’ action that Euryalus did was to put on Messapus’s helmet (359). Since then he has been almost entirely passive.

383 *rara per occultos lucebat semita callis* The meaning of this seems to be that there were several tracks leading off in different directions, as one would expect in a wood, rather than one well-worn, definite track; and that where they were visible (cf. *rara*) they shone in the moonlight between the undergrowth. The route that Euryalus is trying to follow is thus confused by the fragmentary nature of the track and by the presence of other, misleading pathways. The image of the track shining in the moonlight is an echo of Ap. Rh. *Argonautica* 1. 1281:

... διαγλαύσσουσι δ' ἄταρποί.

This is an interesting parallel as the passage from Apollonius refers to paths becoming more distinct with the dawn. It is also very relevant that the passage in question concerns the realisation by the Argonauts that they have left behind Heracles and Hylas. By this time, the reader knows that Hylas, Heracles's ἐρώμενος, is already dead. The implication seems to be that as even Heracles could not save his ἐρώμενος, Nisus does not stand much chance of saving his.

There is also a reading that takes *ducebat* instead of *lucebat* (preferred by Servius), which would have equal strength but does not have such an illustrious literary ancestor and is much less suitable to the light/dark imagery prevalent in this section.

rara ... lucebat This implies that the path was more or less overgrown, and also that it was only occasionally illuminated by moonlight. This idea that the moonlight is faint is striking after 373–374: it was strong enough to shine on Euryalus's helmet,

but now, when it would have been of help to him, it only occasionally and weakly shows him the way, thus leaving him to get lost in the shadows (*vide supra*).

Since Euryalus entered the wood at 381, there has been no mention of the Rutuli. It is as if he had broken through into something beyond human control and is confronted by elemental forces. In this way, Vergil not only gives a good impression of Euryalus's fear of the human enemy, but also attaches to this natural fear something else — one has merely to consider all the folklore attached to the moon to realise that Euryalus is stricken by the actual moonlight shining on his helmet and is also led astray by the path that the moon occasionally shows him among the shadows.

The narrative structure concerning the fate of Euryalus is as follows:

1. The light betrays Euryalus by shining on his helmet (374)

therefore —

2. The night is better for him (378)

but (cf. 1) —

3. The light that might now help him find his way is too weak to do so (383) and therefore lets him down

leading to (cf. 2) —

4. He is left in a darkness that makes him lose his way and so leaves him helpless and lost.

Thus each thing, light and darkness, could be potentially helpful in its place, but neither is helpful and so both are disastrous to Euryalus.

384 Euryalum tenebrae ramorum onerosaque praeda/impediunt Again there is the idea of Euryalus being a victim and not the agent: not only can he not see his way, but presumably he is actually tripped and caught in the overhanging branches, and again, Euryalus is not the subject of the sentence (see also 373–374). Cf. 6. 238 *nemorum tenebris*, the shadowy groves that hide Lake Avernus with its noxious vapours. The same idea of threatening darkness applies in both cases.

fallitque . . . regione viarum This seems to mean something like ‘fear deceives him as to the direction of his way’.

386 Nisus abit . . . imprudens Nisus escapes, unaware of the fate of Euryalus. However, in this instance, the word probably carries much the same sense as *immemorem* as it is applied to Euryalus (374), implying a similarly confused state of mind. At this stage, while he is still separated from Euryalus, Nisus is in command of his situation and the induced confusion that has afflicted Euryalus has not yet struck him. Nisus’s executive ability is shown by his appearing in the nominative case; this is in marked contrast to Euryalus’s grammatically symbolised passivity. Euryalus is not shown in the nominative case until his actual death at 433.

387 locos There is much conjecture over this word. It was sometimes taken as a variant reading for *lacus* but it seems unlikely that Nisus would have got as far as the Alban Lake in so short a time. Despite the fact that Vergil is rather vague about his geography, it would seem unlikely that he would have been so about the area around Rome, as it would surely be too well-known to his audience, and to have introduced mis-leading directions would have confused them and diverted their attention. There is a reading of *lucos* but this would merely be a variant, without it changing the possible sense of the line. It is always possible that there was a place called *loci Albani*, which was so commonly known that it merely needed an allusion to place it, rather like 'the Black Country'. This has no definite boundaries but is a nebulous area: the term is readily understood without its having to be defined exactly.

locos qui post . . . Albani This is another piece of Vergilian aetiology, cf. 1. 109 and 6. 242. By introducing factual elements, Vergil makes his story more realistic. The subject of his story is thus made into a possible and plausible situation which can no longer be assigned to such remote places of poetical convention as Arcadia or Hyperborea. Instead it happens in an area well-known and familiar to his audience. This piece of aetiology also has an interesting etymological element. Whereas Euryalus is struggling in the darkness and making no progress, Nisus has escaped (*iamque . . . evaserat hostis* 386) and is making good progress through an area whose future name implies light or whiteness (cf. *albus*). This shows that Nisus was in the right 'position' (cf. *locos*).

388 tum rex . . . habebat Tyrrhus was the royal herdsman (7. 485) and so the area is familiar to the reader, but not to Nisus and Euryalus. All these pointers to direction add local colour to give a clear picture of the scene. It is also ironic that Nisus should be fleeing through the very places promised to him by Ascanius (274).

389 ut stetit This is linked to what happens before. The construction of *iamque . . . ut* is echoed from 372 *iamque . . . cum*, so that the sense is temporal. The tenses of verbs in 386-389 repay consideration. *Abit* appears at first to be the present tense although it could perhaps be understood as a contraction of the perfect *abiit* in the same way as (434) *it cruor* for *iit cruor*. As it stands, however, the first impression is that the verb is in the present tense, and thus it is brought more closely to the attention, adding to the dramatic effect of using a familiar locality. This sense of the vivid present carries on from *fallit* (385). With *evaserat* in the pluperfect, there is the idea that Nisus is now safe with all danger behind him. This idea is strengthened by *iamque* (386) and contrasts with the plight of Euryalus which is told in the present. Nisus goes from the present (*abit* 386), where the danger is, to the pluperfect (*evaserat* 386), showing that the danger is now behind him. Vergil uses the chronological mode to place Nisus in safety. With *stetit* and *respexit* in the perfect there is a hint that the actions are performed briefly, before Nisus does something else, that is retrace his steps. He stops short, realising that Euryalus is no longer with him, and turns round briefly — this is no leisurely scan but a sudden turning and an immediate retracing of his steps. This idea is carried on into 392 with *simul*. He does not stop while he speaks, but starts both his lament and his search at the same time.

frustra This adds to the hopelessness of the situation and as well as being a pointer to the reader of what is to happen (i.e. something harmful), it acts in the same way as *nequiquam* in 364. Thus the lines describing the attempted escape of Euryalus are ringed by words that show that it will do him no good. The word is also an indication of Nisus's mood as he reveals it in 391, *quove sequar?* He surely knows that the situation is hopeless and yet still pursues his futile action which he knows to be such.

absentem This word adds to the feeling of futility as Nisus retraces his steps to find Euryalus. Not only is Euryalus not immediately visible to Nisus, but the reader knows that he will always seem so and that Nisus will never find him. Euryalus has lost his way and so must have gone by a different path to that taken by Nisus, before running into the surrounding ring of Rutulian cavalry.

390 Euryale infelix It is possible to see some ambiguity as to the referee of *infelix*, if one takes it with the rest of Nisus's speech. In the rest of the speech, Nisus holds Euryalus to be one towards whom he has failed, thus in effect re-asserting his dominance because he is self-reliant, but Euryalus relies on him. That Nisus feels responsible for Euryalus's plight is shown by *reliqui*, rather than a question about where Euryalus has gone. This dynamism is continued in *sequar*. Nisus feels he has caused the problem and must himself try to remedy it. Thus *Euryale infelix . . . reliqui* could mean 'Euryalus, wretch that I am, where have I left you' merely by the insertion of a comma. This idea is justified by a comment of Servius, who says:

se infelicem dicit qui dolet, non illum propter quem dolet.

However, the positioning and cadence of the words would make it seem more likely that *infelix* does actually mean 'poor Euryalus . . . ', and a well-known parallel springs to mind with *infelix Dido* (6. 456), despite what Servius and Donatus thought. The fact that such an eminent scholar as Conington thinks that it is the latter (i.e. that *infelix* goes with *Euryale*) and a native Latin speaker the former (ie. that it applies to Nisus), shows there can be no definite answer, only an impression, and if one allows the impression of both to remain it adds a further depth to the speech. The idea that Nisus is applying it to himself remains as an overtone behind the idea that he applies it to Euryalus. Nisus feels wretched because he feels guilty for not protecting his friend and he also has an idea of the effects of that neglect. This disaster mainly comes about because Nisus and Euryalus have become separated in a dangerous situation. This is alien to the relationship (cf. 182) and was the very thing that Euryalus sought to avoid (cf. 199–200).

391 quave sequar? Nisus clearly wishes to retrace his steps to where he lost Euryalus, but is looking back at the confused nature of the possible paths and trying to decide which way to go. His perplexity is clearly shown by *dumisque silentibus errat*. He is not sure of his way now and so wanders about in confusion until he hears a sound and so can make towards it. This idea that on re-entering the woods Nisus is reduced to the same confusion as Euryalus is strongly brought out by *errat*. Whereas before he was making good progress, now he is lost and unsure of his way. He is also reduced to the same moral ambiguity as Euryalus (cf. Cic. *Att.* 7. 12. 2 *plena timoris et erroris omnia*. Cf. also Lucr. 6. 67 *homines errantes caeca ratione*

feruntur). This error is perhaps manifested in action prompted by his love for Euryalus (cf. *Ecl.* 8. 41 *ut vidi, ut perii, ut me malus abstulit error!*).

rursus perplexum . . . silvae Since the time of Servius it has been in doubt as to whether these words are spoken by Nisus or Vergil. Conington holds that Nisus's speech ends at *silvae*, Mynors and Williams that it ends at *sequar* and that what follows is Vergil taking up the narrative again. The latter seems the more likely because one can thus take *rursus perplexum . . . silentibus errat* as a single entity. Within this entity, if one takes a pause after *silvae*, then there is a nice balance in the moods of the two phrases that make up the whole idea: *rursus . . . silvae* refer to the state of nature, *simul et . . . errat* to Nisus's reaction to it and the action he takes. It also makes more sense this way in that *observata legit* relates to *rursus . . . silvae* and so to *dumisque . . . errat* as a result of it: he wanders about because he is trying to retrace his steps by trying to follow the tracks that he himself made. In this way, the key word is *simul*: his thoughts on the situation and the action he takes are simultaneous.

There is a marked echo in this passage of 2. 753–755 (Aeneas retracing his steps in search of Creusa):

*qua gressum extuleram, repeto et vestigia retro
observata sequor per noctem et lumine lustrō:
 horror ubique animo, simul ipsa silentia terrent.*

This is another indication of how much Euryalus means to Nisus, since the parallel passage describes the concern that a husband feels for his wife's safety. Thus it shows

the intensity of the bond between them and some idea of its nature (see **Introduction:** The relationship between Nisus and Euryalus, esp. pp. 21–22. See also **Commentary** 399–400). Just as Aeneas failed to find Creusa alive, so the echo does not bode well for Euryalus's chances of safety. In contrast to this, Aeneas survives and prospers, Nisus is killed. The fact that there is such a similarity between the two passages, both in content and vocabulary, would also seem to add weight to the idea that Nisus's actual speech ends at *sequar* and not *silvae*.

perplexum iter, *fallacissilvae* and *dumisquesilentibus* all carry an air of threat as if the path had twisted itself, with the aid of the deceiving woods, and the silent undergrowth were watching and lying in wait. There is again the same feeling that the natural order is turning against Nisus (as he tries to re-associate himself with Euryalus), as it did against Euryalus himself. From 386–388 there was no mention of anything except the works of men through which Nisus escapes; now he returns through tangibly present and threatening woods, having made up his mind to rejoin Euryalus. That Nisus is now in a similar state to Euryalus is shown by several verbal repetitions. *Fallacis* (392) echoes *fallitque* (385) and *dumisque* (393) echoes *dumis* (381). These echoes point to the similarity of their environments and also to their similar state of mind in relation to that environment: they are now both treated in the same way by the dark woods, although Nisus is slightly less passive than Euryalus, because he is still referred to in the nominative case, whereas Euryalus is relegated by other forces to the accusative case.

394 audit equos, audit strepitus After *dumisque silentibus* this comes as a shock both because it shatters the actual silence, and also because Nisus is suddenly returned to the real world.

strepitus et signa sequentum This pair of words gives a complete picture of the force pursuing Nisus and Euryalus. On the one hand there is the general hue and cry (*strepitus*) and on the other hand there is the military language embodied in *signa*. Despite the fact that a *signum* was usually visible and not audible, there is also the term *signum tuba*, thus implying that it can be an audible signal and not just a visible sign. The military overtones of this word imply that there is also some degree of order to the noise. This is not a general hubbub like *strepitus* but sound implying reason. The sounds become less confused as Nisus gets closer to them. The sequence also leads from the non-human but animate (*equos*) to general hubbub made by men (*strepitus*) to orderly instructions (*signa*) thus finally dispelling the influence of elemental forces.

395 nec longum in medio tempus Cf. Aesch. *Supp.* 735:

... μήκος δ' οὐδὲν ἐν μέσῳ χρόνου.

This parallel is particularly ominous as it occurs at a time of great fear among the Suppliants and so gives a feeling of insecurity to the Vergilian phrase that would not otherwise have been present.

This phrase can be understood as 'before long'. The temporal sense is carried into *cum*, and indeed there was an original reading in the Med. MS of *tum* (according to Conington), thus showing that the temporal sense was the one uppermost in the scribe's mind.

cum clangor ad auris/ pervenit The fact that the noise comes to him, rather than that he hears it, somehow foreshadows Nisus's future passivity: he is quite powerless to prevent Euryalus's death, and can only watch and react, not affect events. It is unlikely that Volcens would have allowed Euryalus to live (even if Nisus had not killed Sulmo and Tagus), because of the recognisable spoils Euryalus was carrying.

396–398 videt Euryalum . . . frustra Nisus would only see Euryalus struggling, but he would realise that Euryalus had become lost, before he was captured. However, by the way in which Vergil presents it, these separate elements are linked, so that Nisus almost visualises what must have happened at the same time as the reader is told what actually happened. The sense of 396–398 should be taken as *videt Euryalum, (quem) iam manus omnis rapit, oppressum (erat) fraude loci et noctis (et) subito turbante tumultu, et (eum videt) conantem plurima frustra.*

397 fraude loci et noctis Not only was the place not familiar to him, and this unfamiliarity made worse by the darkness, but it is almost as if the darkness and the woods were conspiring to lead him astray. *Fraus* reflects on that which deceives (the subject), not that which is deceived (the object, in this case Euryalus). To say

simply that 'he lost his way' loses all the directing of attention that *fraus* implies. This *fraude loci et noctis* is a further example of Euryalus's helplessness, like *fallitque timor* (385) and even *prodidit* (374).

398 frustra This *frustra* is an echo from 389, and adds pathos to the overwhelming inevitability of what is to happen. We are told from the start of the ὀριστεῖται (313) that all will not be well. Not only does the reader realise this, but it soon becomes clear that Nisus and Euryalus do as well. The reader is left watching a real tragedy: knowing what will happen, knowing that it is inevitable, and yet still having to watch the characters acting in vain to try and prevent it.

399–400 quid faciat? qua vi . . . / eripere? This might as easily be written as the actual thoughts of Nisus: *quid faciam?* However, as he puts the verb in the third person, Vergil reveals his own presence and allows himself to look at the scene through his own eyes as well as through Nisus's. The reader is also drawn into the expanded vantage point. This is the same technique by which the poet is able to look on the death of Euryalus in his own right as well as through the eyes of Nisus. *Quid faciat?* following *frustra* (398) answers itself: Nisus can do nothing that will make any difference because all is in vain. The lemma contains much military vocabulary, but it is interesting to note that this sentence is most closely echoed in a different, non military, context in *Georgics* 4. 505 where Orpheus asks:

*quid faceret? quo se rapta bis coniuge ferret?
quo fletu Manis, quae numina voce moveret?*

By bringing in an erotic theme, concerning the love of husband for wife (cf. the similarity between 391–392 [and *Commentary ad loc.*] and Aeneas's search for Creusa; cf. also **Introduction:**The relationship between Nisus and Euryalus, esp. pp. 21–22), Vergil gives Nisus's questions an extra shade. The rescue of Euryalus means rather more to him emotionally than the winning of the Trojan equivalent of the *Corona Civica* (see **Introduction:** Their 'type' in the classical tradition: (a) Nisus as a Warrior'). The verbal similarity between the two passages also casts an ominous shadow over Nisus's plight when it is remembered that soon after thinking these thoughts, Orpheus dies a violent death (*Geo.* 4. 522). It therefore comes as no surprise that this is also to be Nisus's fate.

iuvenem It is perhaps rather facetious to suggest that his sufferings have aged Euryalus (cf. *puer* 181)! It is, however, ironic that Vergil calls Euryalus *iuvenis* in his moment of extreme helplessness. The etymology of the word is thought by Varro (and copied by later writers) to derive from *iuuare*, and that *iuvenes* were so called *quod rem publicam in re militari possint iuuare*. Euryalus's reversal of fortune is highlighted by the use of this word: the one who should be the 'helper' is himself in need of help.

audeat By using this word Vergil inserts the idea of the risk involved for Nisus. He is faced with overwhelming odds against him, but does not ask himself whether he should attempt a rescue because he will be overpowered. He asks rather whether the strength he has is sufficient because he is about to use it. The use of *audeat* is also a reminder of Nisus's established fierceness (as is the mention of *quibus* . . .

armis, cf. 176 *acerrimus armis*), but now there is a note of despair introduced because for all his courage he knows really that he is powerless and yet is still willing to die fighting (see 400, *infra*).

400 an sese medios moriturus in enses/ inferat Cf. 2. 511 *densos fertur moriturus in hostis*. This line in Book 2 possibly led to an alternative reading in Book 9 (mentioned by Servius) of *hostis* for *enses* in 9. 400. *Enses* is, however, far more vivid. Nisus has gone beyond the thinking that vaguely the enemy will be the death of Euryalus and himself, but now visualises that death, on a sword point. It could also be that the swords of the enemy are brought more into his mind than the actual men themselves because their swords are flashing in the moonlight and so intrude into Nisus's consciousness more than the men, who would be hidden in the night shadows.

401 pulchram . . . mortem (See **Introduction: Their 'type' in the classical tradition: (a) Nisus as a Warrior; also Introduction: A Roman perspective.**) Cf. *Georgics* 4. 218:

pulchramque petunt (sc. apes) per vulnera mortem.

In echoing the line that describes the extent to which bees will go to protect their 'king', Vergil gives a good idea of the selfless devotion that Nisus feels for Euryalus: he is even prepared to die with him if he cannot die for him. Despite all the ferocity of Nisus's former killing, one cannot help but admire the depth of feeling that Nisus shows. He could easily have escaped. Indeed duty to his fellow Trojans would call

him to do so, so that he can deliver his message to Aeneas; but personal feelings take over from national ones.

As well as what is said in the **Introduction** (*loc. cit.*), it should also be noted that there is a marked similarity between these thoughts of Nisus and those of Aeneas before he was persuaded to leave Troy (2. 317):

. . . *pulchrumque mori succurrit in armis.*

In both cases the character involved is soon to act in a violent fashion, but whereas Aeneas is led to adopt another course of action by the gods (Venus) and so maintains his *pietas* and survives, Nisus is not thus enlightened and is eventually killed.

There is thus a paradox. The bees die for ‘patriotic’ reasons, Nisus does so for personal reasons, which conflict with his patriotic duty. The concept that it is noble to die for one’s country is common (cf. Tyrtæus quoted by Lycurgus *Leocr.* 107 and Horace *Odes* 3. 2. 13) but it is rare to be faced with these sentiments applied to an individual. There is thus a conflict between the emotions that have been evoked in support of Nisus and those in support of patriotic duty. The words of the lemma highlight the conflict between private and public *pietas*, but they also have another shade of meaning. An erotic context has already been established for this passage by its similarity to Aeneas’s search for Creusa in Book 2. However, for Nisus, the idea of dying with Euryalus is an end in itself (see 444–445). In death, Nisus finds peace because he has been reunited with Euryalus. This accords well with the Platonic ideal at the root of their love (cf. Makowski, esp. p. 5). For Aeneas, the

death of Creusa is symbolic of his severance from the past and is a pointer to his future. While the words show Nisus's view of dying with Euryalus, Vergil also views them very sympathetically. The idea, that the poet's feeling are reflected in the thoughts he gives Nisus, is suggested by Servius:

'pulchram' ex persona poetae dictum est.

402 *ocius* This word resumes the faster tempo of Nisus's actions, which lapsed at *ac videt Euryalum* (396). The lines in between these two are at a considerably slower pace, allowing all Nisus's conflicting thoughts to be examined both by himself and by the reader. The thoughts thus laid out probably took place at the very moment when Nisus lifted his spear, but by dwelling on them, Vergil is able to show Nisus's agony of mind before continuing the narrative proper. *Ocius* thus has the same function as *simul* does at 392 (see Commentary 389)

adducto torquet hastile lacerto This gives an idea of the importance of his action, he puts all his effort into it (cf. 410 *toto . . . corpore*), as it is specifically his *lacertus* (the muscular element of his arm) he draws back, not just his arm. There is so much tension in his grip that the spear turns in his hand, instead of resting lightly in his fingers; cf. 5. 141 *adductis lacertis* at the beginning of a boatrace, where sudden, powerful action is taken.

There is much argument as to whether the word is *torquet* or *torquens*. Mynors and Williams have it as the former, Conington as the latter. *Torquet* (see Williams) is Ribbeck's conjecture of *torquens* in the MSS and Williams says that if the traditional

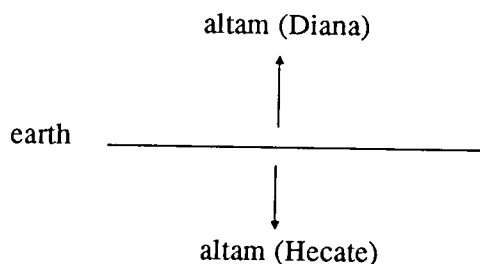
reading were retained, *et* (403) would be redundant; also the fact that there would then be two participles, *torquens* and *suspiciens*, without a finite verb would seem rather awkward. It also seems better to have it as *torquet* because if the word is taken to mean the turning of the spear in his hand, then he only draws back his arm once, while looking up at the moon as he does so, and so the spear is still while he continues his prayer.

403 *suspiciens altam Lunam et sic voce precatur* This line is quoted by Priscian (1034p) as being an example of *et* displaced, in that *suspiciens . . . et* should be taken as *et suspiciens*. Conington conjectures that the original reading was *suspiciens altam ad Lunam sic voce precatur* but that *ad* dropped out and then appeared again as *et* in the wrong place. However, there seems to be no reason why *altam Lunam* should not be taken as the direct object of *suspiciens*. In this case, and with a comma after *Lunam*, *et* attaches to *sic voce precatur* and is then merely a part of the narrative technique.

Suspiciens means 'to look up to something (here, *altam Lunam*) or 'to look up to something with honour'. However it is also important that the word is cognate with *suspectus* through *suspicio* and implies mistrust or suspicion, as if, although Nisus prays devoutly enough, it is convention and not inclination that leads him to do so. This prayer comes too late to be effective in Nisus's plight. It is a sign of his casual attitude to the gods that leads him to pray now, in his troubles, and not at the beginning of the expedition, when it would have been more pious for him to ask for divine aid,

as Odysseus and Diomedes did in *Il.* 10. 278–294, and to vow offerings to come (such as spoils!).

altam Lunam Nisus prays to the Moon as the goddess nearest to the scene as the one shining in the night sky, but it is ironic that he should pray to the moon who has already shown her anger at his impiety by shining on Euryalus's helmet. She is now surely not likely to save her intended victim: Euryalus, after all, is not Iphigenia, despite the fact that both are young and virginal. To an extent, the Moon is shown to be present in the sky and, at the same time, already nearer the earth. This ambiguity is brought out by *altam*. This word also emphasises the chthonian aspect of Diana as Hecate:



et sic voce precatur Cf. 6. 186 *et sic forte precatur*. There is a reading in the Med. MS of *forte* for *voce* here, and also one of *ore* is known. *Ore* for *voce* does not cause any trouble with the sense and mood of the line (cf. 319 *sic ore locutus*). There has been some argument over *voce* as it is felt that Nisus would be unlikely to endanger his hidden position by speaking aloud, but as it is held that the ancients read out loud, there is no real reason to believe that they prayed in silence, and besides

it is unlikely that a murmured prayer would be heard above all the shouting and struggling going on around Euryalus.

404–409 *tu dea . . . / . . . rege tela per auras* Nisus couches his prayer in the traditional way: naming the god, giving the titles, mentioning past offerings and then framing his request.

For prayers before the casting of weapons, cf. *Il.* 4. 101:

εὐχεο δ' Ἀπόλλωνι Λυκηγενεῖ κλυτοτόξῳ, κ. τ. λ.

and *Od.* 24. 518:

εὐξάμενος κούρη γλαυκώπιδι καὶ Διὶ πατρί, κ. τ. λ.

Cf. also the prayers of Odysseus and Diomedes in *Il.* 10. 278–294:

‘ κλυθί μευ, αἰγιόχοιο Διὸς τέκος, ἧ τέ μοι αἰεὶ
 ἐν πάντεσσι πόνοισι παρίστασαι, οὐδέ σε λήθω
 κινύμενος· νῦν αὖτε μάλιστα με φίλαι, Ἀθήνη,
 δὸς δὲ πάλιν ἐπὶ νῆας εὐκλείας ἀφικέσθαι,
 ῥέξαντας μέγα ἔργον, ὃ κε Τρῶεσσι μελήσῃ.’
 Δεύτερος αὐτ' ἠρᾶτο βοὴν ἀγαθὸς Διομήδης·
 ‘ κέκλυθι νῦν καὶ ἐμεῖο, Διὸς τέκος, Ἀτρυτώνη·
 σπείό μοι ὡς ὅτε πατρὶ ἄμ' ἔσπεο Τυδεΐ δίω
 ἔς Θήβας, . . .

...

... ἀτὰρ ἄψ ἄπιών μάλα μέρμερα μήσατο ἔργα
 σὺν σοί, δῖα θεά, ὅτε οἱ πρόφρασσα παρέστης.
 ὡς νῦν μοι ἐθέλουσα παρίσταο καί με φύλασσε.
 σοὶ δ' αὖ ἐγὼ ῥέξω βούν ἦνιν εὐρυμέτωπον,
 ἀδμήτην, ἦν οὐ πω ὑπὸ ζυγὸν ἤγαγεν ἀνὴρ·
 τήν τοι ἐγὼ ῥέξω χρυσὸν κέρασιν περιχεύας.’

However, here we are expressly told that Athene hears the prayer, (*ib.* 295):

Ὡς ἔφον εὐχόμενοι, τῶν δ' ἔκλυε Πολλὰς Ἀθήνη.

In the *Aeneid*, there is no such divine assurance, and so there is still the feeling that the Moon will not hear the prayer of Nisus spoken at the wrong time and in the wrong mood, when she has already revealed herself as hostile to him.

tu praesens It is ironic that Nisus takes *praesens* as implying that the Moon is present in the sky and so by her proximity is the most likely source of aid in the near future. In fact the word implies more forcibly that the goddess's epiphany has already taken place, although Nisus has not recognised this, and that she has been actively working for his ruin (cf. **Commentary** 403 *altam Lunam*).

nostro succurre labori This is a vain plea. (See **Commentary** 403 *altam Lunam*). *Succurrere* is generally used to imply aid in extreme need. The word is used only twice in Book 9, the other instance is at 290 where Euryalus asks that Ascanius look after his mother should he be killed:

at tu, oro, solare inopem et succurre relictæ.

Nisus uses the word because he himself views the situation as desperate, but there is still the echo from 290 which suggests that Euryalus will not be saved because it has already been implied that his mother will be left without him (see **Commentary** 290).

labori *Labor* is any trouble or anguish and, by extension, birthpangs. It must be remembered that Nisus is calling on the Moon, one of whose aspects was *Lucina*, goddess of childbirth (see Varro 69: [sc. Luna] *Quae ideo quoque videtur ab Latinis Iuno Lucina dicta . . . ficta ab iuvando et luce Iuno Lucina*). The title *Lucina* was usually associated with Diana or Juno. Nisus's prayer thus works on two levels. As he means it, he is calling on the Moon goddess to come to his aid to help him save Euryalus, but he is also calling on a goddess (who is also *Lucina*) to 'help bring something to birth'. This would imply life, but by a perversion of nature, Nisus's prayer causes only death, his own and Euryalus's.

405 astrorum decus Cf. Aesch. *Theb.* 390: πρέσβιστον ἄστρον. Cf. Horace *Carm. Saec.* 1–2: . . . *silvarumque potens Diana/ Lucidum caeli decus*. Cf. also Hor. *Od.* 3. 22. 1: *Montium custos nemorumque Virgo*. See also Spenser *The Faerie Queene*: ' . . . that is souveraine Queene profest/ of woods and forrests.'

nemorum Latonia custos Diana is called the daughter of Leto, as Juno is called *Saturnia*, daughter of Saturn. Juno is also associated with the moon. Bailey (1932, p. 44), concerning the title *Iuno Covella*, speaks of:

. . . an association of the moon with Juno, who in her connexion with Juppiter has certain of the functions of a sky goddess.

Juno is also associated with the Moon in her role as *Lucina*, goddess of childbirth (see **Commentary 404 labori**. Cf. also Phillips, pp. 30–33).

There is a common idea in the *Aeneid* that Juno, in whatever aspect, is implacably hostile to the Trojans. Her allusive presence here, however, works in conjunction with that of the goddess of the Moon to create an inimical force.

The mention of *Latonia* (cf. *Latium*, *lateo*) also brings to mind something hidden, as does the mention of *nemorumque* rather than *silvarumque* (see Maltby, p. 329, sub *Latona* . . . *unde et Latona dicta est Luna quod nunc superna celet, nunc inferiora, nunc uniformis latitet*). This idea of concealment fits in well with the fact that it is dark and the wood is thick, but in the darkness there is also a hint of the sinister aspect of Diana as Hecate, and this is borne out by the mention of the *fraus* of the night and the woods (mentioned in 397) which leads Euryalus astray. This idea of deceit is brought out by the fact that *lateo* is cognate with *delator* (cf. Servius's calling the Moon *proditrix*): *dictus eo quod detegit quod latebat* (see Maltby, sub *Lateo*, p. 328, and *delator*, p. 179).

It is a nice irony that Nisus, who is described as *portae custos* (176) and who does not do what is expected of him concerning this function, should call upon the Moon, *nemorum . . . custos* (405), for aid which is not given.

The way that the name *Hyrtacus* is used here is important in relation to Nisus. In giving the name of Nisus's father as a name in its own right (thus making *Hyrtacus* into a separate character rather than the base of a patronymic), Vergil shows that the family has a history of piety. Despite Nisus's claims, Vergil somehow distances him from this family tradition by having him stand separated from his father's name.

407 meis venatibus For Nisus's prowess as a hunter see 178. This no doubt also had an effect on his choice of Diana as a source of divine assistance. It is fitting that he should have offered the goddess of hunting offerings from the chase, rather than cattle or sheep.

409 hunc sine me turbare globum He makes this request in the hope that Euryalus will be able to escape in the confusion.

sine Cf. ἕασον, *Il.* 8. 242–244:

ἀλλά, Ζεῦ, τόδε πέρ μοι ἐπικρήηνον ἔελδωρ ·
αὐτοῦς δὴ περ ἕασον ὑπεκφυγέειν καὶ ἀλύξαι,
μηδ' οὕτω Τρώεσσιν ἕα δάμνασθαι Ἀχαιοῦς.

In the passage from the *Iliad*, Agamemnon prays to Zeus for deliverance and is sent a favourable omen (245–252). In the *Aeneid*, Nisus does not receive an omen after his prayer. He also fails to realise that the goddess is already present (see **Commentary 404 tu praesens**). There is also a feeling in the *Aeneid* that the goddess might not allow him to be as successful as he might have been (so Conington). Cf. the mood of *Georgics* 4.7, and also the realisation of the power of Fate felt by Juno in 1.18, *si qua fata sinant*. Servius says that it is:

*sana petitio: nam quia tot vincere impossibile fuerat, petit ut saltem
eos perturbet telorum beneficio.*

rege That is, *derige*. Cf. *Il.* 5. 290, βέλος δ' ἵθυεν Ἀθήνη. Indeed the gods, that is the Moon, grant half Nisus's prayer, guiding his weapon and thus causing

confusion among the crowd, but she disallows the outcome that he hoped for as a result of his actions (the escape of Euryalus). Indeed because of his actions, Euryalus's actual death is hastened by Volcens's desire for revenge. Cf. Zeus, fulfilling only half of Achilles's prayer that Patroclus will be successful and then return safely (*Il.* 16. 249–252).

turbare globum . . . rege tela There is an image inherent in these words of a 'straight line' (implied by *rege*) going through a 'circular' mass of people (implied by *globum*, see OLD, *globus* 1 and 4).

410 toto conixus corpore Cf. 402 *adducto*. . . *lacerto* Nisus is striving with all his power and the repetition of the idea shows that even as he prays he is increasing the strain before he casts his spear. The prayer, a pause before violent action, adds to the tension by causing a break between the beginning of the action (402) and its completion (*conicit* 411). The dynamism felt in 410 is emphasized by the spondaic nature of the line. This contrasts with the release of the weapon in 411 which is shown by a predominance of dactyls, implying the speed of the spear's flight. Vergil puns on the idea that the etymology of *conixus* is taken from *nisus* (cf. **Commentary 229** *adnixa*). This enhances the idea of dynamism in Nisus's character (cf. also **Commentary 229**). This idea of dynamism is augmented by the link of *conixus* (410), the state of Nisus as he prepares to throw the spear, and *conicit* (411) as he actually throws it.

ferrum This is metonymy for *hastam*, as it takes the iron spear head to represent the whole spear. It is however an unusual use of the word, as *ferrum* in a metonymical sense usually means 'sword' (cf. *ferrum sumere* and *ferrum et ignis/ flamma*. Cf. also Cic. *Phil.* 11. 37: *huic urbi ferro ignique minitantur*).

conicit This word comes as a relief after all the tension of Nisus's preparation. (See **Commentary** 410 *toto conixus corpore*.)

411 diverberat Cf. *dixerat* (410). The link between *verbum* and *verbero* comes from Plaut. *Aul.* 42, and is echoed by Horace (*Odes* 3.12), *verbera linguae*. (See also Maltby, *verbero*.) Thus the actions of Nisus's spear are a fulfilment of his prayer:

... *hasta* ... *diverberat umbras*

is as a direct result of the prayer

... *rege tela per auras*.

Words are echoed by deeds. This link also reflects on the outcome of Nisus's actions.

Where Nisus prays (409):

hunc sine me turbare globum,

the result is the deaths of Sulmo and Tagus and, more directly, as a result of these, *diversi circumspiciunt* (cf. *diverberat* and *diversi*). So far Nisus's prayer seems to have been exactly answered. An expectation is thus raised that all may be well even now and so the shock of Euryalus's death is made all the more striking.

The link between *diverberat* and *verbum* (cf. *dixerat*) may also have an aural element: Nisus has spoken his words (*dixerat*) and now, in response, the spear 'speaks' as it flies. This idea is given further credence by *stridens* (419).

Cf. *venit* (412). The spear is cast with force and ferocity and goes strongly on its way, scattering the shadows, but *venit* is a weak verb to use at its reaching its destination. Although the death of Sulmo is described in gruesome detail, the weakness of *venit* still remains in the memory, as if to cast some doubt as to the effective outcome of this killing (*vide supra*): Sulmo dies, as does Tagus, but the group is not scattered in confusion, it merely looks around in different directions, there is no mention of movement from the centre around Euryalus. Thus it is that although the spear may 'beat apart' the shadows, this power is not effective on the Rutuli but merely puts them more on their guard. *Diverberat* is such a strong word that it raises the expectation of a successful outcome. However, the continued alliteration of *volans . . . diverberat* into *venit aversi* highlights the ultimate ineffectiveness of Nisus's actions. If the picture were not so grim it would almost be bathetic (but see **Commentary** 413).

412–415 et venit aversi . . . praecordia ligno . . . ilia pulsat Cf. 5. 504 *et venit adversique*. This latter phrase describes the shot that Hippocoon made at the 'Funeral Games'. The fact that Euryalus and Nisus also appear in these Games is significant, as is also the fact that Hippocoon is *Hyrtacides* as well as Nisus. There

is perhaps meant to be a contrast pointed between the situations and the fates and fortunes of the two brothers.

There has been considerable debate as to the exact wording and meaning of these lines in the lemma: modern commentators read *aversi* in 412, Servius *adversi*, and because of this difference it has been claimed that *in tergum Sulmonis* means that it struck Sulmo in the back whereas Servius holds that it struck his shield, taking *tergum* to mean a hide and therefore, by metonymy, a shield. The entire perception of the line rests on the question of whether the word is *aversi* or *adversi*. In fact the latter gives a more vivid picture, even if it is only found in a few MSS, because in that case *fisso . . . ligno* would refer to the wooden backing of the shield which would be covered by the *tergum* and the force required to break a shield would probably cause a spear-shaft to shatter, but not before the head had passed through and struck the bearer. Indeed the parallel with Book 5 would argue that it should be read as *adversi* and not *aversi*. The idea that the spear struck him in the back and then shattered does not carry as much weight, as there is no reason why this should happen. Also, if the spear had passed through the shield and struck Sulmo in the midriff (*praecordia* 413) then the *calidum . . . flumen* (414) could well include *ilia* (415) which could then be seen to be throbbing with life even as he dies. There is a nice antithesis between the *frigidus* of Sulmo's death and the *calidum . . . flumen* of his hot life-blood. As the loss of blood would be so great and sudden, he would very quickly become cold, but Vergil has made his death even more vivid by the speed with which

it happens, as if the two things, bleeding and becoming cold in death, were simultaneous. *volvitur . . . vomens* carries on the alliteration found in *volans . . . diverberat* and *venit aversi* and thus adds to the feeling of speed by making the action and result a unit, linked by this stylistic device.

414 vomens calidum de pectore flumen Cf. Lucretius 2. 354:

Sanguinis expirans calidum de pectore flumen.

Here Lucretius describes the death of a sacrificial victim. Sulmo pours out his blood like the sacrificial victim. This is perhaps a further aspect of the likening of the Rutuli to beasts (see simile at 339). Sulmo dies immediately after Nisus's prayer to the goddess of the moon to be present, and his killing is described in a way that is reminiscent of Lucretius's description of a sacrifice. Thus Nisus seems to pervert the natural association of a prayer followed by an animal sacrifice by making his sacrificial victim a man. This is the second time that Nisus has been the direct cause of such a deviation (cf. **Commentary** 334). A chiasmus is completed with the death of Sulmo:

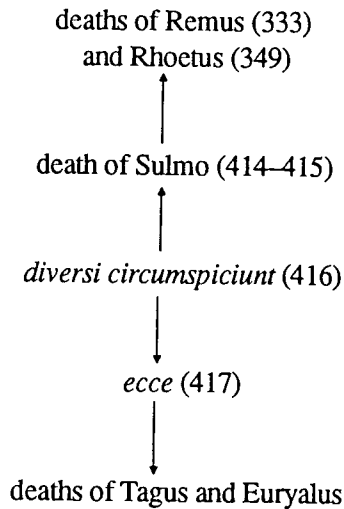
(a) 333	sanguine <u>singultantem</u> (Remus, killed by Nisus)
(b) 349	purpuream <u>vomit</u> ille animam (Rhoetus killed by Euryalus)
(b) 414	volvitur ille <u>vomens</u> calidum de pectore flumen (Sulmo)
(a) 415	longis <u>singultibus</u> ilia pulsatur (Sulmo)

In his death, Sulmo combines elements from the ἀφιστεΐα of Nisus and Euryalus. Thus it is almost as if he were fated to die as the result of the earlier actions of Nisus and Euryalus.

416 diversi circumspiciunt This gives a very clear picture of the confusion caused by the death of Sulmo, but it does not mention the Rutuli going in different directions to look. Perhaps it is more likely that they grouped together facing out and so looked in all directions. In just two words, Vergil paints a picture of confusion among a mass of soldiers which is carried on to 418, *dum trepidant*, and as it is unlikely that the Rutuli would stay long in one place to be picked off by an unseen assailant, it must be assumed that the whole episode took place very quickly. The reaction of the Rutuli is directly linked with the action of the spear: *diversi* is a result of *diverberat*.

417 ecce Vergil draws the reader's gaze to Nisus specifically after the long and fascinated look at the flight of Nisus's spear and the death of Sulmo. *Ecce* is abrupt and violent in so far as it tears the attention away from one thing to direct it forcibly to another. This word indicates Vergil's presence as narrator rather than the Rutulian reaction to the scene. This latter is shown by *circumspiciunt* (415) and *conspicit* (420). This is the only occurrence of an otherwise common word in Book 9. It clearly carries an emotional charge: perhaps it is that this is the last death before that of Euryalus, and Euryalus's death is as a direct result of it. The death of Sulmo is

linked to past details (see **Commentary 414**), but the introduction to the death of Tagus is prospective. The metaphorical dividing line between these two is *diversi circumspiciunt*:



librabat ab aure This would be the natural position for someone throwing a spear. *Librabat* has the effect of slowing the narrative tempo which is in direct opposition to what is actually happening. By the use of this word, Vergil almost implies that Nisus took his time in balancing his spear before throwing it, (there is almost a ‘freeze’) whereas in fact it must mean that he quickly adjusted his grip before casting.

418 dum trepidant This confusion actually refers to the shock at the death of Sulmo (See **Commentary 416**). Placed as it is, it seems at first glance to be connected with *it . . . hasta* and, indeed, in a temporal sense, it is, but the actual linking of the phrases has another effect in that it appears that Nisus is in the

ascendant and that his enemies are helpless waiting for him to strike, and are powerless to prevent him.

it hasta . . . tepefacta cerebro Cf. *Il.* 4. 503–504:

... ἢ δ' ἑτέροιο διὰ κροτάφοιο πέρησεν
αἶχμῃ χαλκείῃ·

Cf. also *Il.* 16. 333:

... ὑπεθερμάνθη ξίφος αἶματι ...

The present line appears to be a conflation of the other two. Sidgwick makes this comment on the line in relation to *Il.* 16. 333:

Whereas in Homer it is natural of the reeking sword held in the hand,
in Vergil it is artificial as no one felt the heat.

However, the warmth of the spear is a contrast to the coldness of death and it is linked to the warm blood (*calido* . . . *sanguine*, 422) that will be shed as a direct result.

420–421 *saevit atrox* . . . *se ardens immittere possit* The general confusion of the Rutuli, shown by *diversi circumspiciunt* (416) and *dum trepidant* (418) is now made particular in the person of Volcens. The link between Volcens and the rest of his force is shown in *circumspiciunt* (416) and *conspicit* (420). These two words ring the lines describing the Rutulian reaction to Nisus's attack.

In saying that Volcens is *ardens*, Vergil links him to Nisus, who is *ardentem* (198). The name *Volcens* also seems to be important in this context. The name in this form is linked to Vo/vulcanus, so that Volcens's name is linked with fire and he is also described as *ardens*, 'blazing' (cf. **Commentary** 342, *incensus*). This seems to be a similar punning on names and attributes as Vergil played with *Nisus/ conixus/ conicit* (see **Commentary** 410). The two men are linked by verbal echoes and also by the fact that they both have a physical link with Euryalus: Nisus because he is his lover, Volcens his killer, whose killing of Euryalus is described in quasi-erotic language (See **Commentary** 431–437). From this line until Euryalus's death there are very strong quasi-erotic overtones in all Volcens's actions towards Euryalus and also in Nisus's actions towards Euryalus and Volcens (*vide infra*).

atrox Volcens . . . ardens Cf. 1. 662, *urit atrox Iuno*. These are the only two mentions of *atrox* in the *Aeneid*. (The link is made stronger by the similarities of state embodied in *ardens* (421) and *urit* (1. 662). Is Volcens meant to be like Juno and, if so, in what way? It is perhaps that they are both implacable in their anger against the Trojans.

**422–423 tu tamen interea calido mihi sanguine poenas/ persolves
amborum** There is a sadistic note in what Volcens says and it also has a ghoulish quality about it: not only does Volcens tell Euryalus that he is going to kill him, he also makes great play of revelling in Euryalus's warm life blood.

interea Volcens means that Euryalus will be sufficient atonement until he can catch his unseen assailant, Nisus.

poenas persolves Cf. 356 *poenarum exhaustum satis est*. Both of these are meant to be final, neither is: Euryalus is killed for the Rutulian killings, as Volcens is killed for killing Euryalus. Euryalus is killed after Nisus calls a halt, and Volcens is himself killed after killing Euryalus and having said that the death Euryalus will settle the score. (Cf. Ennius *Ann.* 1. fr. 50 [1. 94 Skutsch, 99 Vahlen]):

*Nec pol homo quisquam faciet impune animatus
Hoc nec tu, nam mi calido das sanguine poenas.*

amborum There are two possible interpretations of this word. Servius thinks that it should be taken as:

'aut tuas et Nisi': nam duos eos fuisse novit, supra enim ait 'state viri'.

However, it is also possible that it refers to Volcens's exacting revenge for the killing of Sulmo and Tagus, that is, *pro caede amborum*. This seems the more probable explanation because it more easily follows the deaths of Sulmo and Tagus than Volcens's awareness of two men being sighted.

simul This underlines the ferocity and speed of Volcens's reaction: he acts on his threat even while making it. This is the same device whereby Nisus starts to retrace his steps even as he speaks (392, see also *Commentary ad loc.*)

ibat in Euryalum This is the περιπέτεια of the Episode; Euryalus is as good as dead and Nisus must act in a way that will lead to his own death. The tempo of this phrase is in marked contrast with those surrounding it. It implies sudden, decisive action, whereas the deaths of Sulmo and Tagus and Volcens's reaction (409–423) and Euryalus's death (431–437) have been told at a much slower pace, with the eye being drawn to details such as the flight of spears and the blood flowing over Euryalus's limbs.

424 tum . . . vero This word is part of the storyteller's technique, causing the audience to look and see that a character is indeed in such a situation as the narrator describes. The use of such words also emphasises the empathy of narrator and character at this point, as if the narrator were suddenly made aware of the situation in the eyes of his creation. This is the critical moment for Nisus.

amens Cf. Ter. *And.* 218:

nam inceptiost amentium, haud amantium.

Nisus is 'mad' with anguish because of his love for Euryalus. Cf. 430:

tantum infelicem nimium dilexit amicum

'Madness' has played an important part in the depiction of the love of Nisus and Euryalus, and *amens* tends to be a word used to describe extreme, irrational feelings. It is not a word that leads one to expect reasonable action (indeed, it is most commonly applied to Turnus or to Aeneas before he has gained enlightenment).

Amens is used only twice in Book 9: here and at 478. In both instances it is in relation to the sight of Euryalus. Here it is Nisus's seeing him about to be killed, at 478, it is the reaction of his mother on seeing his head impaled on a spear. The use of this word focuses the attention on Euryalus, because again he is the only one to whom certain words are applied, whether directly or indirectly (cf. 292 and **Commentary ad loc.**).

conclamat Nisus nec se celare tenebris amplius Cf. 375 *conclamat ab agmine Volcens*. The linking of these two lines by *conclamat* draws an interesting comparison between the two men: Volcens shouts from the safety of an armed escort who stay with him and act for him until Nisus's berserk charge; Nisus is alone and his only safety is in the night shadows that have already proved so injurious to Euryalus (397 *fraude loci et noctis*) and thus by implication to Nisus, because for Euryalus's sake he must give up any chance of saving himself. (See also **Commentary** 420–421 *saevit atrox*, etc.) *Conclamat Nisus* answers the questions of 399–401. Nisus has now made up his mind what to do.

nec se celare . . . aut tantum . . . dolorem The mixing of positive and negative, using *nec* and *aut*, seems to be an unusual construction. The unusual nature of the construction draws attention to itself and then it can be seen that the two halves of the phrase are inverted and that the first, *nec se . . . amplius* is dependent on the second, *aut tantum . . . dolorem*, rather than being simply an amplification of it: it is not that Nisus cannot stay in the shadows nor bear such anguish, but that he cannot bear such anguish and so must come out of the shadows and try to do something

more effective than pick off the Rutuli from the darkness. Vergil has become so empathetic with the state of his characters (see 424, *tum . . . vero*) that, in seeming to describe the situation for the benefit of the audience, he actually uses the thoughts and feelings of the characters involved and, indeed, shares in them himself. As Servius says:

Tantum potuit — hoc quamvis ad animum Nisi pertineat, tamen sympathiam etiam poeta ex sua persona fecit.

As *exterritus* (424), *conclamat* (425), *perferre* (426) and *convertite* (427) are all in the augmented form of their respective verbs, this adds to the heightened tone of Nisus's mood and speech. There is also much play made of the use of heat and cold: *calidum* (414), *frigidus* (415), *tepefacta* (419) and *calido* (422) to typify life and death, and in this way the scene is made more vivid because, in addition to describing it as it appears visually, Vergil also gives an idea of sensation as well as sight. (Cf. **Commentary 333** for the warmth of Remus's blood.).

427 me, me . . . This exclamation is to be taken by itself and not connected with *in me*. . . The reason for this inconsistency in grammar is put well by Servius:

me, me . . . — subaudis 'interficite': et est interrupta elocutio dolore turbati.

By this exclamation, Nisus takes a decisive step towards his own death: he betrays his whereabouts and so is now bound to act. This is the stage at which he determines to die with Euryalus and not to leave and carry out his stated task of seeking Aeneas. This is the critical moment for Nisus and epitomises his loving care for Euryalus.

To fulfil the Platonic ideal at the heart of this love, Nisus must avenge Euryalus. It is, however, rather worrying that, at the very moment of their love's apotheosis, Vergil describes Nisus as *amens*. This is a serious criticism by the poet and casts doubt on the value of their love. Nisus is faced with a 'clash of duties' and has to choose between Euryalus and his patriotic duty. By calling him *amens* as he chooses Euryalus, Vergil implies that his choice was the wrong one.

adsum qui feci, in me convertite ferrum, / o Rutuli Cf. 493–494:

*. . . in me omnia tela
conicite, o Rutuli, me primam absumite ferro.*

What is it that Nisus is claiming to have done? Is it that he did all the killing in the camp or that he killed Sulmo and Tagus? *Adsum qui feci* follows more naturally from the killing of Sulmo and Tagus. Nisus is, however, overwrought and so probably means both. In fact Euryalus was connected with both: he did his share of killing, and Nisus killed Sulmo and Tagus on his behalf to try and create a diversion so that he might be able to escape (409 *hunc sine me turbare globum*), but it should be remembered that he would not have been seen and therefore captured had it not been for his taking of spoils. So in a way he is responsible for the deaths of Sulmo and Tagus because his actions created the situation that necessitated their killing.

428 *fraus* What does this signify? *Culpa* would simply have implied a punishable act, but *fraus* implies a definite desire to mislead or deceive: to what act then does this *fraus* attach? Nisus seems to imply that Euryalus has no capacity for the complex devising of such slaughter (but cf. **Commentary 344 *subit*** and **350 *furto***). He is

trying to exonerate Euryalus completely, by exaggeration. His exaggeration is clearly caused by his remembrance of Euryalus's killings and despoiling. He forgets that the Rutuli cannot yet be aware of these and draws the responsibility for all the episode on his own head, as it were, before an 'accusation' can be made. Great stress is placed on *mea*. In this instance, Nisus uses the word to claim that everything was his fault and specifically to exculpate Euryalus. However, in the 'Nisus and Euryalus Episode' generally, it has been the non-human world that has exhibited *fraus* (cf. *fraude loci et noctis*, 397 and *fallacis silvae*, 392), so that while Nisus claims that he has deceived, he himself has been deceived.

nihil iste . . . nec potuit Unfortunately, Nisus's plea comes too late for the reader who knows already how Euryalus has both dared and was able to kill quite ruthlessly, and so the plea of his lack of daring and ability as a reason for mercy sounds somewhat hollow. Nisus is so overwrought that he wildly exaggerates both his own faults and Euryalus's total innocence of these same faults, but even in such a frantic frame of mind he must realise that the objection, *cur ergo venit?* (Servius *ad* 428) will be raised: Euryalus's very presence must be taken as guilt, with no necessity of looking into his actions. The fact that Nisus makes such a claim for Euryalus underlines Euryalus's present helplessness, because it contrasts his supposed inability to take part in murderous acts with his real inability to defend himself. (See also **Introduction**: Their 'type' in the Classical tradition: (b) Euryalus as a warrior).

caelum hoc . . . sidera testor In moments of great stress, the heavens and stars were often called to be witness or as the object of prayer. Cf. 3.599 (the entreaties of Achaemenides):

*. . . per sidera testor,
per superos atque hoc caeli spirabile lumen.*

Cf. also 4. 519 (Dido):

*testatur moritura deos et conscia fati
sidera . . .*

There is thus another link between the 'Nisus and Euryalus Episode' and the 'Story of Dido'. This link, in addition to the generally ominous effect of Dido on the fate of young warriors, is specifically ill-omened in this case when it is noted that Dido's oath includes (510):

*. . . Erebumque Chaosque
tergeminamque Hecaten, tria virginis ora Dianae.*

This oath is made just before Dido goes to her death. Nisus swears in the presence of the Moon who has manifested herself in her infernal aspect by betraying Euryalus (cf. *Hecate*) and been invoked as one delighting in victims of the chase (cf. *Diana*). It should also be remembered that Dido knows that she is about to die (*moritura*). Nisus's echo of this oath in his oath to the Rutuli incorporates all the ominous detail from Dido's words and does not augur well for Euryalus's safety, nor for his own.

It may be standard form to swear by the sky and stars because they represent the gods at their most elevated or because they are nearest to hand, or the last resort of the desperate, but it is very unfortunate that Nisus calls on the sky and the stars as witnesses to bear out his claim of Euryalus's innocence. Nisus says that the sky and stars are *conscia* because they can see all, but he does not realise the irony of his words: just as the reader has seen Euryalus kill, so have the heavens and stars, and so they are unlikely to prove neutral since they know the real truth and Nisus's idea of it.

430 *infelicem* This word is an ill-omened one to choose: Nisus would only be unhappy if the Rutuli kill Euryalus, or because he thinks they are about to do so. As it stands, however, it seems to be connected in a temporal sense with *dilexit*, which would cast a new shade of meaning over it and would imply that the extent (*tantum*) of Euryalus's love and esteem (*dilexit*) made Nisus unhappy in its manifestation. This idea goes back to Nisus's initial attempts at dissuasion (198 ff.), which are put aside by Euryalus who is too impetuous. It is almost as if Nisus loves Euryalus despite, or perhaps because of, his impetuosity, but nevertheless loves him so much that that very impetuosity causes him regret. Euryalus acts in a way that leads to his harm, and so causes Nisus to worry that one beloved of him will be hurt by that object's own nature.

In the earlier OCT (ed. Hirtzel), Nisus's speech was taken to end at 429 and that 430 was a comment by Vergil on the situation:

. . . *nec potuit; caelum hoc et conscia sidera testor.*
— *tantum infelicem nimium dilexit amicum.*

In that case, the ring of *tantum* (426) and *tantum* (430) around Nisus's speech is strengthened. However, it is more satisfying if his speech ends at *amicum* (430), not only because it shows that Nisus realises that the love that Euryalus showed in 197 ff. in refusing to leave him, was excessive, but also because, as Nisus's love for Euryalus is paramount, it is more likely that his final plea would concern Euryalus than the gods for whom he has had little concern.

nimum dilexit Cf. *Othello* 5. 2. 346:

... one that lov'd not wisely but too well

Nimum casts a shadow over *dilexit*: if one compares the disinterested feeling of selfless devotion expressed by Catullus (72. 4):

sed pater ut gnatos diligit et generos,

with the havoc wrought by *Amor* on Dido and in *Georgics*. 3. 209–83 then to love too well leads to madness (perhaps reflected in *perfurit*, 343. See also **Introduction** Their 'type' in the Classical tradition: (b) Euryalus as a warrior. See also *amens*, 424, and **Commentary ad loc.** for its effect on Nisus). In what sense does Euryalus love too well? There is one meaning in that Euryalus loved Nisus so well that he could not bear to be parted from him in danger (200 *solum te in tanta pericula mittam?*). What then did he do because of his excessive love? It could be that he came with Nisus because he could not bear to leave him (see 200), or that he killed ruthlessly to prove himself a worthy companion for Nisus. It is surely the former,

but merely because he could not bear to leave Nisus should not enable him to kill with impunity. K. W. Gransden (1990, p. 60) says:

Nimium goes with *dilexit* yet it also seems to reinforce the emphasis on *infelicem*.

Nisus's plea for mercy for Euryalus is somewhat incoherent, but this is only fitting for his overwrought state of being. 429 could imply 'he only did it for my sake', but what, massacre all about him? It cannot refer to anything other than this, but Nisus has forgotten that the Rutuli have not yet found their slain comrades — Volcens is in fact killing Euryalus because he has caught him, and has just seen Sulmo and Tagus killed in front of his eyes. Nisus, however, tries to get Volcens to spare Euryalus because he (Euryalus) did not kill the sleeping Rutuli (which in fact he did) whereas Volcens's motives for killing Euryalus are far less complex than Nisus seems to imply.

It is also the case that *infelicem nimium dilexit amicum* can equally be applied to Nisus concerning Euryalus, although this is only an interpretation of the sense rather than of the actual verse. Euryalus is *infelicem* because he is in the unenviable position of being stabbed, *amicum* because he is beloved of Nisus; and Nisus *nimium dilexit* because he neglects his clear duty to carry his message to Aeneas and instead tries to rescue Euryalus. Therefore he loves, *nimium*, because he neglects his duty and also because for him the price is death. (See also Commentary 446–449 and 401 *pulchram . . . mortem*).

431 talia dicta dabat, sed viribus ensis adactus/ transadigit costas The effect of *dabat* on the reader is similar to that of being told of Euryalus's frantic flight through the woods when it is clear that he is already surrounded. Before this word is used, bearing in mind Nisus's impassioned pleas, it might be possible to imagine that Volcens would at least pause and possibly even have mercy. As it is, however, it is as if Nisus had never spoken and that *ibat in Euryalum* (424) was followed immediately by *viribus ensis adactus*. Even while Nisus was speaking, Volcens struck.

431–437 sed viribus ensis adactus . . . gravantur (See Commentary 420–421.)

It is at this stage that the erotic imagery becomes prominent: the attention is drawn away from the actual 'mechanics' of Euryalus's death and focused on Euryalus himself: what is done to him and how he reacts. Narrative time stops until *at Nisus ruit* (438) and in its place there is the dreamlike death of Euryalus in which reality and metaphor are linked so closely that the demarcation line is blurred. On the one hand there is the strength and violence of Volcens, embodied in his sword, rather than attributed to him by name. Volcens's sword is driven home (*adactus*) and having been thrust through Euryalus's ribs (which is, after all, how one would expect a sword to be used), it bursts open his gleaming white breast. *Rumpit* is very violent. The same word is also used by Catullus in a rather more sinister fashion at 11. 20, (*ilia rumpens*), in a sexual context. This context is clearly envisaged in 431–437. The imagery is almost that of rape: the dynamic potency of Volcens, which is embodied in his drawn sword, is contrasted with the languishing passivity of the dying Euryalus.

Such play is made of Euryalus's beauty even as he dies that ἔρως and death seem to be inextricably linked, in that the two elements that describe him in what would normally be alluring language (*candida pectora* and *pulchrosque . . . artus* are in the erotic rather than the martial canon) surround the word *leto* (433). Cf. Gregory of Corinth on Hermogenes:

αἰσχροῶς μὲν κολακεύει τὴν ἀκοὴν ἐκεῖνα ὅσα εἰσὶν
ἔρωτικά, οἷον τὰ Ἀνακρέοντος, τὰ Σαπφούς οἷον γάλακτος
λευκοτέρα . . . , κ.τ.λ.

This eroticising of the death of a youth should be contrasted with the comparatively 'manly' death of Camilla (11. 806–831) who, despite the fact that the spear *virgineumque alte bibit acta cruorem* (11. 804) as at some macabre defloration (see Fowler pp. 185 and 187), is shown dying in the 'epic mode', with the reins falling from her hands followed by her weapons.

The death of Euryalus, however, is described both in language that has very clear erotic overtones (*vide infra*) and also in a simile whose precedent is admittedly Homeric (*Il.* 8. 302 ff, the death of Gorgythion, esp. 306–308):

μήκων δ' ὡς ἑτέρωσε κόρη βόλεν, ἢ τ' ἐνὶ κήπῳ,
καρπῶ βριθομένη νοτίησί τε εἰαρινῆσιν,
ὡς ἑτέρωσ' ἤμυσε κόρη πῆληκι βαρυνθέν.

but whose more recent relations had been Sappho, Catullus, Bion and other lyric poets. The fragment from Sappho is thought to have an erotic context, the verses of Catullus, Bion and the rest certainly do. The verses of Sappho and Catullus in question are:

Sappho fr. 151 (LCL):

οἶαν τὸν ὑάκινθον ἐν ὄρρεσι ποίμενες ἄνδρες
 πόσσι καταστειβοῖσι, χάμαι δ' ἔτι πορφύρα
 ἄνθη.

Catullus 11. 21–24:

*nec meum respectet, ut ante, amorem,
 qui illius culpa cecidit velut prati
 ultima flos, praetereunte postquam
 tactus aratro est.*

(See also Cat. 62. 39ff.) The Homeric passage mentioned describes the death of Gorythion, whose head sinks like a flower's weighed down by rain, but the reason is that it is weighed down by his helmet: he dies an 'epic' death in the same way as Camilla does, in close contact with his own weapons. Despite the fact that Euryalus is no doubt wearing a helmet, indeed that same helmet that had betrayed his presence to the enemy, no mention is made of it, and only the rain-imagery is taken from Homer, which is then added to the ὑάκινθος (*purpureos . . . flos*, Vergil?) of Sappho and the action of the plough, *tactus aratro*, (*succisus aratro*) from Catullus. By the uses of Sapphic and Catullan imagery, Vergil also links the death of Euryalus to that of Pallas (*Aen.* 11. 68–69):

*qualem virgineo demessum pollice florem
 seu mollis violae seu languentis hyacinthi.*

That simile, however, describes the beauty of Pallas even in death, but not actually in dying. Pallas dies because he draws out the weapon that Turnus has flung at him and with it his life, he does not languish on a sword point as do Euryalus and Dido

(4. 664–665). Pallas too, like Camilla, dies a warrior's death, with Turnus's spear driving through his shield and breastplate, and with the direct translation of a Homeric formula (*sonitum super arma dedere*) to add to his κῦδος. Euryalus's death is different to that of Pallas and Camilla: there is no mention of armour, and despite the fact that he is said to have been struggling with all his strength (*conantem plurima frustra* 398), there has been no mention of his being anything but passive since then and all the executive force and action has been given to Volcens and Nisus.

The similarity of mood in Vergil and Bion, of death in a non-epic style is strengthened by the fact that Euryalus's dying is recorded in words strongly reminiscent of the dying of Adonis in Bion's Lament. Cf. *Aen.* 9. 433–437 to Bion *Lament for Adonis* 9–12:

... τὸ δέ οἱ μέλαν εἵβεται αἶμα
 χιονέας κατὰ σαρκός, ὑπ' ὀφρύσι δ' ὄμματα ναρκῆι,
 καὶ τὸ ῥόδον φεύγει τῷ χεῖλεος, ἀμφὶ δὲ τήνῳ
 θνάσκει καὶ τὸ φίλημα, τὸ μήποτε Κύπρις ἀπόσει.

One should also note the shared use of the image of blood flowing over fair limbs (Bion *op. cit.* 25–27):

ἀμφὶ δέ νιν μέλαν αἶμα παρ' ὀμφαλὸν ἀιωρεῖτο,
 στήθεα δ' ἐκ μηρῶν φοινίσσετο, τοὶ δ' ὑπὸ μαζοῖ
 χιόνεοι τὸ πάροιθεν Ἀδώνιδι πορφύροντο.

433 *volvitur Euryalus leto* Cf. 414 *volvitur ille vomens*. At the death of Euryalus, there is nothing of the horror and violence that there is described at the death of Sulmo. The similarity of wording heightens the contrast between the two

scenes. All the violent dynamism is attached to Volcens and Nisus, Euryalus himself in dying is entirely the victim.

pulchrosque per artus/ it cruor . . . cervix conlapsa . . . / . . . forte gravantur

The potentially sexual interpretation of these words when applied to Euryalus, rather than to a *virgo*, emphasises the dynamism of Volcens's sword in contrast to the 'femininity' of Euryalus. This emasculation of Euryalus in death at the hand of Volcens, is continued in *cervix conlapsa* and *gravantur*. This last is particularly ironic when the etymology of the word is taken into account (*gravis* can also mean 'pregnant' cf. *Aen.* 6. 515–516). A word that is used to describe potential life (this is helped by the mention of *pluvia* which usually brings life to the earth; cf. **Commentary 344** *terra torique madent* and **Commentary 414** *vomens calidum*) is applied by extension to the imminent death of Euryalus.

436 *languescit moriens, lassove . . . collo* (See **Commentary 445** *placidaque ibi demum morte quievit.*)

recumbit This is not really to fall stricken, but to lie back, as in sleep. This idea of falling asleep in death is carried over to the death of Euryalus's lover in 445, *confossus . . . quievit*. (See also **Commentary ad loc.**)

438 *at Nisus ruit* This comes as a shock after the 'dreamy' description of Euryalus fainting into death. Speaking in the strictest temporal sense, *at Nisus ruit* should be taken to follow immediately after *candida pectora rumpit*, as the death of

Euryalus took place even while Nisus (seeing that he had been struck), sought his revenge. There is not the same feeling of Nisus watching Euryalus sink into death as Aeneas does Lausus (10. 821–830) but, as the passage stands, we are given a very moving description before the action is resumed. If the scene cannot be taken as seen through Nisus's eyes, because he was rushing to get revenge, then it must be taken as being through Vergil's eyes, if not totally, then at least significantly so. (Lyne, 1987, p. 229, thinks that the scene is seen through the eyes of Nisus, but see **Introduction: Their position in the *Aeneid***).

438–9 at Nisus ruit in medios solumque per omnis/ Volcentem petit, in solo Volcente moratur Cf. 400–401. Nisus has now begun the act that he contemplated earlier. The focus shifts to Nisus in his own right, and ends the section that described the scene enacted before him. The scene is seen through the eyes of Nisus: all other thoughts are left behind and all his attention is centred on Volcens. Nisus must know he will die, but does not care if only he can kill Volcens as well. The 'tunnelling' of vision on Volcens is effected in 439 by the repetition of his name. But, in 442, by calling him simply *Rutulus*, it is as if his name were now unnecessary, or even forgotten in the mad rush. The specific detail that Nisus buries his sword in Volcens's shouting mouth emphasises Nisus's singlemindedness, as if the act of shouting had constricted Nisus's attention even more.

moratur This implies that his sole aim was Volcens, as if 'no-one else delays him', or rather, 'that he paused for no-one else' (to kill them). Nisus does not even

notice the other Rutuli crowding around him (440 *glomerati hostes*) but focuses all his concentration on Volcens.

440 quem Conington says:

Quem is Nisus, constructed with *proturbant*. Had the meaning been that Volcens's party gather round to protect him (*quem* with *circum*) we should have had *socii* rather than *hostes*.

This is strengthened by the ring of *hostes* (440) and *hosti* (443). There are, in fact, three possibilities:

- (1) That *quem* is Nisus (so Conington).
- (2) That *quem* is Volcens, inferred from 439.
- (3) That it could be applied to both.

However, it makes more sense to apply the word to Nisus because this *quem* is clearly the object of *proturbant*.

441 instat non setius ac rotat . . . / donec . . . in ore This must imply that Nisus flourished his sword and fought his way through the crowd until he reached Volcens (see **Commentary 439 moratur**).

instat . . . ac rotat ensem/ fulmineum Cf. 4. 579, *eripit ensem/ fulmineum*.

These are the only occasions in the *Aeneid* when *fulmineus* is applied to a sword. It seems as if there were meant to be a link between the two passages, as if the sword

itself were significant because of its background and action. The sword that Aeneas used in Book 4 was, it must be presumed, the one given him by Dido in exchange for the one with which Dido stabs herself. With this sword, Aeneas, as it were, cuts the rope binding him to Dido in order to hasten his setting sail. It must be asked how this can be linked to Nisus's whirling of a *fulmineus ensis* to cut through the assembled Rutuli and reach Volcens. It is possible that both Aeneas and Nisus give themselves up to their fates, Aeneas to reach Italy, Nisus to avenge Euryalus and be killed. It is also possible that Jupiter's *fulmen* is recalled (either as the punishment for perjury or impiety) in order to heighten the contrast between the *pietas* of Aeneas who gives up love for duty and the impiety of Nisus who fails in his duty because of his love for Euryalus. (Cf. also Moles 1987, esp. p. 155.) Both must give up something dearly held for a greater end: Aeneas Dido so that he can fulfil his mission, Nisus his life so that he can avenge Euryalus and die with him as he would clearly wish, because only death gives him peace (see 445), whereas he found none in the life he was leading (see 187).

non setius Servius glosses this as *non segnius* and adds *quamquam vulneratus*. Perhaps Servius thinks that Nisus was wounded when the Rutuli *proturbant*, but *proturbant* literally means 'to drive off' and the sense seems to be that Nisus broke through the defensive wall around Volcens. There is no mention of his being wounded until *confossus* (445) and even then it is almost mentioned as an after-thought.

Rutuli clamantis in ore Cf. 375 *conclamat* (Volcens) and 425 *conclamat* (Nisus). Volcens's appearance (alive) in the Episode is ringed by his shouting. The most heightened moment of the whole Episode, the death of Euryalus, is ringed by the shouting of Nisus and Volcens. Thus these two are again linked in relation to Euryalus. (Cf. **Commentary** 420–421 *saevit atrox*.)

442 condidit Cf. *condidit* (348). This time also the word is placed at the beginning of the line in a prominent position, there is also a definite feeling of a deliberate action: Nisus meant to bury his sword in Volcens's face because that was the point to which all his attention was drawn. (See **Commentary** 348–349). There is also a degree of symmetry involved whereby Volcens should die shouting as he had lived (see previous note).

moriens animam abstulit hosti This phrase, describing the reciprocity in the deaths of Volcens and Nisus, finishes the actual action of the passage. 444–445 acts as the 'closing bars' before the 'finale' starts with *Fortunati ambo!*

444–445 tum super . . . morte quievit Nisus and Euryalus are lovers even in death. They die within moments of one another: *moriens* 443 and *exanimus* 444. This linking, even in death, is an important element in the Platonic canon of their love. However, one is reminded more of the mood of the last moments of Adonis (Bion, *Lament for Adonis*, 40–61), with emotionally charged language and the mention of the blood flowing over his thigh (41, φοίνιον ἄμα μαραινόμενοι περὶ

μηρῶν; cf. *pulchrosque per artus/ it cruor*, *Aen.* 9. 434), than of Achilles's saving the ashes of Patroclus so that his own might be mingled with them (*Il.* 23. 243–244):

καὶ τὰ μὲν ἐν χρυσῆι φιάλῃ καὶ δίπλακι δημῶ
θείομεν, εἰς ὃ κεν αὐτὸς ἐγὼν Ἄϊδι κεύθωμαι.

445 confossus Cf. *hinc . . . atque hinc* (440). *Confossus* gives the idea of his being pierced through and through from all sides, but even when he is so mortally wounded he is able to die as he would wish, in effect in his beloved's arms.

placidaque ibi demum morte quievit Cf. 187 *nec placida contenta quiete est*. Nisus at last finds peace (*demum*) after all his exertions, because at last he is reunited with Euryalus. In the midst of all the confusion going on around him, Nisus has joined Euryalus in his dreamlike actions of dying as if fainting away and languishing into death. At such a climax, narrative time again pauses on the tableau presented.

Death and ἔρωσ are frequently linked (see **Commentary** 431–437). The actual eroticising of death, however, or even the description of the climax of that ἔρωσ goes one step further. The image is not unique to Vergil but goes back as far as Sappho, who calls ἔρωσ the 'looser of limbs', just as Homer describes death (Sappho πρὸς Ἀτθίδα):

Ἔρωσ δαῦτε μ' ὀ λυσιμέλης δόνει
γλυκύπικρον ἀμάχανον ὄρπετον,
κ.τ.λ.

There is also Dioscorides (*Anth. Pal.* 5. 53) who makes the link more explicit:

Ἡ πιθανή μ' ἔτρωσεν Ἀριστονόη, φίλ' Ἄδωνι,
 κοψομένη τῇ σῆ̂ στήθεα πὰρ καλύβη.
 εἰ δώσει ταύτην καὶ ἐμοὶ χάριν, ἦν ἀποπνεύσω,
 μὴ πρόφασις, σύμπλουν σύμ με λαβῶν ἀπάγου.

Vergil's near contemporaries, Propertius and Ovid, developed the idea that the climax of ἔρωσ is like death. Cf. Prop. 1.10.5–6:

*cum te complexa morientem, Galle, puella
 vidimus et longa ducere verba mora . . .*

and Ovid *Am.* 1.5. 25 (after a description of lovemaking):

lassi requievimus ambo.

(Cf. *lassove . . . collo, Aen.* 9. 436.)

Unlike the soul of Turnus and those of the Suiters in the *Odyssey*, there is no mention of Nisus's soul complaining of lost life and youth. It is as if in being reunited with Euryalus he fulfills all his desires and so does not bewail his death.

446–449 Fortunati ambo! . . . Romanus habebit Cf. 194 ff:

*. . . o terque quaterque beati,
 quis ante ora patrum Troiae sub moenibus altis
 contigit oppetere!*

The Thesaurus glosses *fortunatus* as *felix*. It is possible to be fortunate in one's death, however ironic this may seem (cf. 11. 159 *tu . . . felix morte tua*).

It is not immediately clear what Vergil considers to be the reason for their 'good fortune'. At the end of their ἀπιστεΐα, it could be that he is praising them for their martial prowess (although this was not very praiseworthy); or it could be for their eternal memorial in his verses. The deaths of Nisus and Euryalus mark the beginning of the first phase of the Latino–Trojan War proper — they are the first Trojan casualties of the war, and so perhaps Vergil felt that these deaths committed the Trojans to fight and not just to defend themselves. Thus they are 'worthy' because their deaths in effect 'start the roll' of Roman history. But perhaps the most obvious reason for a eulogy is the way in which they died: Vergil has made great play of their love and devotion, and so their good fortune was in dying as they had lived, undivided even in death, the link between them being stressed by *ambo*. Death put the final seal on their love. This seems to be the reason for the eulogy: Vergil is so moved by the ethos of their deaths that this is what will be immortalised in his poetry. *Fortunatiambo* is a direct comment on the previous two lines. Lyne (1987, p. 235) points out that there is a corpus of similar sentiments expressed by other poets to make this an acceptable interpretation.

Apostrophe in the *Aeneid* is used at moments of heightened emotion and introduces what Lyne (loc. cit.) describes as a 'personal' rather than an 'epic' voice. In saying *Fortunatiambo!*, Vergil introduces the voice of the poet as personality and not just narrator. The fact that the eulogy is in the form of an apostrophe to the characters themselves involves the poet's own emotions by making the address more clearly

personal (see Block pp. 18–19). It may come as a shock that Vergil describes them as *fortunati* after giving a graphic description of their deaths, but in so doing he voices his own opinion on the situation. One is forced to ask whether his view would have been approved by his audience: how much can devotion even to death outweigh dereliction of duty and the wreaking of carnage in somewhat dishonourable circumstances? Surely neither can have an unmixed response, but it is the mark of a great and humane poet that he does not try and present a stark single answer to everything, but can incorporate shades of meaning and an emotional response even in such a situation. It should be noted that Vergil does not praise Nisus and Euryalus for being patriotic heroes, despite the fact that he then goes on to give a picture that could not have existed if Aeneas had not come to Italy and conquered. Nisus and Euryalus are part of this picture, but Vergil has not included them in the story of Rome for this reason: they represent something outside the necessary actions that lead to victory. Indeed if this episode had not been included in the *Aeneid*, the basic story would not have been altered at all, but the emotional tone of the poem would have been. The poem would have become a list of engagements and casualties without the poignantly human element.

While Aeneas is out of the immediate action, these two minor characters suddenly come to the fore and act in a way that is led by the heart not the head or destiny. This forms an underlying strand in Vergil's epic verse. Aeneas must 'grow out of' his humanity, indeed he is almost dehumanised after he has to give up Dido and lose Pallas. (The ominous note that the killing of Turnus (in anger) sounds cannot be examined here.) Nisus and Euryalus along with Turnus must be overwhelmed before fate can be fulfilled: it is a sad fact that great and noble aims such as the

founding of an everlasting city must have the blood of lesser, but possibly more human, men on its hands. Adam Parry, speaking of *imperium sine fine*, says:

But he [sc. Vergil] insists equally on the terrible price one must pay for this glory. More than blood, sweat and tears, something more precious is continually being lost by the necessary process; human freedom, love, personal loyalty, all the qualities which the heroes of Homer represent, are lost in the service of what is grand, monumental and impersonal: the Roman State.

In this address, Vergil uses the framework offered by the Eternal City, but does not become governed by it. It is the mark of Vergil's greatness as a poet that he can step outside the confines of his verse and make a moment of his narrative immortal and somehow symbolic of the whole essence of the poem:

The pity of war, the pity war distilled.

(Wilfred Owen, *Strange Meeting*)

446 Fortunati ambo! *Fortunatus* is not as unambiguous as the initial tone of this apostrophe might lead one to believe. Throughout the Episode, all other references to *fortuna* (214, 240, 260 and 282) have implied that she is notoriously unpredictable and has to be wooed for her favour. Here Nisus and Euryalus will be unchangingly *fortunati* for all eternity. This redefinition of *Fortuna* at such a time embodies the inherent conflict of Vergil's eulogy of Nisus and Euryalus. It should be remembered above all that Nisus and Euryalus are *fortunati* because of their love and undivided death; but then Vergil goes on to say that their praises will be as long lasting as Rome itself. In this way, Vergil reminds the audience of its own presence:

they are the Rome that still exists. However, it is almost as if Vergil confers immortality on Nisus and Euryalus rather than on Rome. They will be remembered in his verses and 'no day ever' will remove their memorial from his poem. This is his personal hope (cf. *mea carmina*) and although it is linked to the everlasting city (*dum*) it is separate and not dependent upon it.

448 *domus Aeneae Capitoli immobile saxum/ . . . habebit* This 'house of Aeneas' might refer to the *gens Iulia*, but Page thinks it stands for the whole Roman race (cf. Trojans = *Aeneadae*). Likewise, he also thinks that although *pater Romanus* might refer to Augustus, the *imperium* mentioned could be claimed by any Roman father (*patria potestas*), or it could even refer by metonymy to the Roman Senate (*patres*). The phrase is general in its application, but so phrased as to evoke the particular.

SECTION 4 (450–472): INTERLUDE

Introduction

The Rutuli collect the spoils that Nisus and Euryalus had taken and carry the body of Volcens back to camp. There they find the extent of the night's doings with the dead and dying much in evidence. Dawn breaks, Turnus musters his forces, and the Rutuli march into battle carrying the heads of Nisus and Euryalus on spears. The Trojans behind their defences see all this and are much grieved.

For all the grief and lamenting mentioned in these lines, there is very little emotion expressed through them (except at Vergil's personal comment in 465). Indeed *flentes* (451) and *luctus* (452) act more as narrative detail than as emotional colouring of the passage. The grief of the Rutuli acts as a foil to the emotion generated by and about Nisus and Euryalus but it is not so forcefully portrayed. This section forms a lull between the highly emotional passage of the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus and their eulogy by Vergil, and the hysterical utterances of Euryalus's mother. The section could even be noted for the way in which Vergil contrasts the unchanging order of the sun rising and shedding light over the world with the troubles and shifting fortunes of men. This is an interesting point to note: very often it is the night that is seen as the haven of evil, of things done in darkness (in all senses), and with the coming of dawn there is safety. Here it is the dawn that brings grief, Rutulian and Trojan, and there is no feeling of a fresh start with the new day.

Commentary

450–458 Victores praeda . . . receptas This section is really the end of the night's adventures before the breaking of dawn, but with the eulogy of 446–449 interposed between it and 445 *ibi demum morte quievit*, it acquires a different emphasis. As Vergil has already eulogised the young Trojans, and in so doing placed them outside the strict narrative time, *Victores* (450) rings somewhat hollow: it is as if although the Rutuli have conquered the immediate threat of Nisus and Euryalus, they cannot destroy the ideal of them. Nisus and Euryalus stand outside the workings of history and so cannot be touched by it. The Rutulian people will still be overcome by Trojans and be submerged into a conglomeration to become Romans, even if they are not killed by these Trojans.

praeda . . . spoliisque By using both these words, Vergil conveys the views of both sides to the events of the night. The Trojans would have seen the goods taken as spoils of war (*spolia*), whereas the Rutuli would see them as the result of the depredations of Nisus and Euryalus (*praeda*).

451 Volcentem . . . flentes . . . ferebant It is at this stage of the narrative that Vergil's feelings for the 'other side' come out. As Quinn (p. 8) says:

He [sc. Vergil] is rarely completely on the side of any character in his poem and completely against the character opposing him.

This equal perception is highlighted by that fact that Nisus (444) and Volcens (451) are both described as *exanimus*. Before, Volcens was viewed as the enemy to the

two heroes of the tale, the sadistic killer of Euryalus before the eyes of his lover; but now a different side of Volcens is shown: he was a beloved captain of the Rutuli. The cost of Nisus's heroism is shown.

452 nec minor Cf. 342 *nec minor Euryali caedes*. Is this merely a poetic device used in each case, or are the two phrases linked? It forms a nice balance that the extent of the slaughter and the subsequent grief for the dead should be made thus equal by the use of this verbal echo, but perhaps more attention should be paid to what, or rather who, precedes it in each case: Nisus and Volcens. It seems significant that by their positioning they should surround Euryalus (See **Commentary 420–421** *saevit atrox*; and also **Commentary 441** *Rutuli clamantis in ore*).

454 Serranoque Numaque It is a very common epic device to bring in a name at a time when one is needed without any necessary preceding narrative or introduction: Serranus has been mentioned before, Numa has not. Heyne (see Conington *ad loc.*) thinks that this name should be *Remo* (330), 'while Ribbeck thinks that Vergil would certainly have altered the name had he lived to revise his work' (Conington). These, however, seem to be rather unnecessary quibbles. It seems likely that Numa was one of the *sine nomine plebem* (343), but in drawing out a name from this nameless group, and such an evocatively Roman name as 'Numa', Vergil makes a challenging comment on the actions of Nisus and Euryalus: Numa Pompilius, second king of Rome, was renowned for his piety. Nisus and Euryalus, consistently implied to be impious or at least rationalistic, are responsible for the death of his namesake. In this way, Vergil again shows that he is aware of both sides' value (see also

Commentary 330, *Remi*). The reason why it should be that Vergil mentions a previously unknown warrior and why it seems likely that he is one of the nameless dead is as follows: if this were taken to be the case then, in mentioning Rhamnes, Serranus and Numa, Vergil has shown that all ranks were mourned: Rhamnes as a representative of the chieftains killed (327 *rex idem*), Serranus of the warriors named at their time of death, and Numa as the archetype of the common soldier, not necessarily dignified with a name at the time of his death. The use of such a regal name as *Numa* for a footsoldier (*vel sim.*), has a parallel in Vergil's use of the royal patronymic, *Achaemenides*, for a man in utter destitution (3. 614). The use of such names for men in such positions seems to carry the same dire message as Horace (*Odes* 4. 7):

non, Torquate, genus . . . / te restituit.

455 corpora seminecisque viros The fact that dying men are mentioned as well as corpses gives a good indication of the speed with which the whole episode takes place, as it would not take long for the wounded to bleed to death. This actual speed is hard to grasp because such a detailed picture has been drawn of Euryalus's dying and Nisus avenging him before his own death. Both of these, particularly the first, cause the narrative tempo to slow down to such an extent that it is only with the mention of the dying that it is made possible to remember the rapid pace of the actual time of the episode: Nisus and Euryalus desist from slaughter at the first hint of the coming day (see 355 *nam lux inimica propinquat*) and are both dead and despoiled before dawn actually breaks.

tepidaque recentem/ caede locum This is connected with the previous lemma in showing the speed of the attack: the blood from the dead is still warm on the ground.

pleno spumantis sanguine rivos Instead of meaning that the blood was still flowing 'in rivers', this probably means that the streams in the area were still red with blood. This image implies motion and contrasts with the static nature of the blood which was soaking into the ground (see previous lemma).

457 agnoscunt spolia inter se This must imply that the Rutuli were passing around the equipment taken from Nisus and Euryalus and recognising some of it as having been taken by Nisus and Euryalus and the rest as having belonged to them (to the Rutuli, *spolia*). This idea forms a ring with 450, *praeda* and *spoliisque*.

galeamque nitentem.../phaleras...receptas These are the particular spoils that were taken by Euryalus. It is significant that at this stage the reader is reminded of the quality of the helmet that proved fatal to Euryalus and also that the helmet belonged to Messapus, without ever really belonging to Euryalus, because he had taken it from Messapus while he slept, but did not kill him (indeed, could not as he was invulnerable). The 'protection' offered thus never really passed on to Euryalus.

With the return of the spoils to the Rutuli in general, if not to their rightful owners (as Rhamnes is now dead), Vergil finishes the episode. There is an ominous echo of 242–243 (*hic cum spoliis ingenti caede peracta/ adfore cernetis*) in 458 (*multo*

phaleras sudore receptas). There has been much slaughter and struggling over these spoils and yet they have not moved from their position and nothing has been gained.

multo . . . sudore receptas This is somewhat hyperbolic and is probably only a formulaic expression. There can, after all, not have been much of a struggle for three hundred men to overpower two. On the other hand, there has been much blood spilt over the gaining and regaining of these spoils. This is perhaps the stylistic substitution of one liquid for another to show the effort involved in their reclamation, as well as the price of it.

* * * * *

459 Et iam . . . Aurora cubile This description contains strong elements of pathetic fallacy throughout, in the use of such words as *spargebat*, *infuso* and *relectis* (see Commentary 461) following as it does a scene where much blood has been spilled. These overtones continue outside the boundaries of the formula, thus linking it in mood to the rest of the passage. Cf. 4.584, where the formula is repeated exactly. It must be significant that this 'dawn-formula' is used twice and it must mark the occasion of each as special. The earlier instance occurs after Aeneas's visitation by Mercury and after he has taken the first step towards leaving Carthage; here the Trojans are committed to war or at least to fighting because they are besieged. It could be that Aurora leaving the bed of Tithonus somehow symbolises a dramatic series of events coming after a period of inactivity — of Aeneas held in Carthage by love for Dido, and the Trojans kept penned behind their walls by the

Rutuli. A contrast is also highlighted between these two passages by the use of the shared formula: in the first, Aeneas has already reaffirmed his obedience to the decree of Fate and has hope in the future, in the second, the Trojans are utterly hopeless. It is also significant that the two passages are linked by the mention of a '*fulmineusensis*' a few lines previous (in Book 4 at 580 and in Book 9 at 442), these being the only times that this adjective is applied to a sword.

460 Tithoni Tithonus was the son of Laomedon, king of Troy, who was given immortality and therefore quasi-divine status. The mention of such a Trojan figure at such a time is as significant as is the mention of the *di patrii* at 247, as again Trojan 'gods' have no power to protect Trojans, or indeed are unconcerned about their safety and fate. The mention of Tithonus at this point also forms a contrast of tone. He is mentioned in a stylised, epic mode, whereas the Trojans are faced with grim reality.

461 iam sole infuso Here the sunlight is poured in just as blood has been liberally poured out (*vide infra*).

iam rebus luce relectis Cf. 6. 272, *et rebus nox abstulit atra colorem*. Here there is the idea that the returning light reveals all that has happened. It is, however, possible to see the image of the earth being laid bare to view as pathetic fallacy for what has happened to Nisus and Euryalus. The principal meaning of *retegere* is 'to strip or lay bare', and Nisus and Euryalus were stripped and despoiled before being

decapitated as can be gathered from the fact that the Rutuli are said to have won back the spoils (*receptis* 458).

Conington regards the previous two lines as the extreme of personification, whereas this line is the other extreme with:

the sun being regarded not as an agent but as a thing.

This seems to be part of the shift in mood within the whole episode, whereby the sentient moonlight and night are all part of the personifying to be found in 459–60, whereas 461 starts the new order, with the natural world retiring with the fading night, and the voluntary doings of men coming more to the fore.

462 *Turnus* This name comes as a shock: the whole episode has been so distant in mood and setting from the rest of the poem that the sudden entry of one of the main characters in such a prominent position sharply brings the attention back to the main narrative. It was, however, seemingly necessary to introduce Turnus in martial frame so as to rouse (*suscitat*) the Rutuli from their drunken stupor (*vide supra*) and get the story moving again. This act of rousing also signifies that the dreamlike happenings of the night are over and that, with the appearance of Turnus, a fresh start must be made of the day. Before he is mentioned, there is merely the feeling that the day was an extension of the night (see introduction to Section 4).

Turnus in arma . . . circumdatus These are the same weapons and armour that were promised to Nisus as a reward (269–271). The tragic irony of the episode

is brought out because Turnus is still wearing them and Nisus and Euryalus are now dead.

463 *aeratasque acies in proelia cogunt, / quisque suos* There is much confusion as to the correct reading of this phrase: Servius has it as *cogit / quisque suos*, whereas Conington says it is *cogit / quisque suas*. In the OCT, Mynors argues for *cogunt* . . . With such uncertainty, one can only rely on the most likely reading and say that Conington's reading seems to be the most likely, in that *cogit* relates to *quisque* and *suas* to *aeratasque acies*. It is, however necessary to comment on the possible sense of the OCT, which would somehow seem to link *cogunt* with the *viros* mentioned in 462, and would hold *cogunt* in the memory and apply it by allusion to *quisque* without repetition. This method of allusion in which the sustained use of the third person plural is possible is then carried into the next line in *acuunt*, and there seems to be no dispute over the correct reading of this word in its present form.

464 *variisque acuunt rumoribus iras* Servius takes this literally and adds:

quia duo ausi sunt per eorum castra transire.

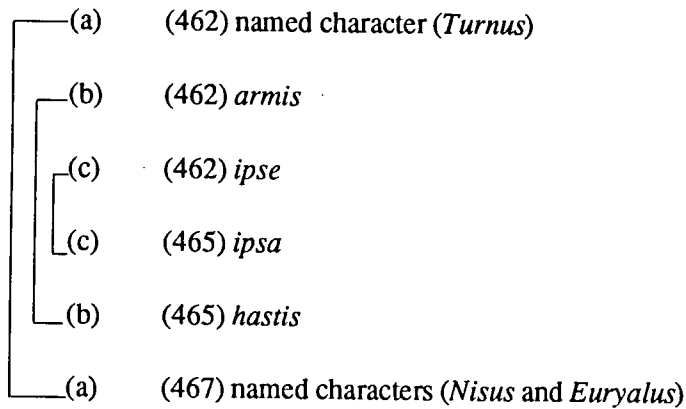
It is also possible that they simply roused their men to battle fury (cf. 12. 590):

Magnisque acuunt stridoribus iras.

465 *quin ipsa arrectis . . . in hastis* Cf. 317 *arrectos . . . currus*. In the earlier instance a contrast could be drawn between the upright, primed position of the chariots and the somnolent sprawl of the Rutuli; here the fact that Nisus and

Euryalus's heads are set on upright spears contrasts grimly with their recumbent bodies, and the stiffness and potential violence of the spears is in opposition to the dissolution of all strength that has come to the youths in death. There is also an implied contrast between the previous state of the Rutuli and their present state of preparedness now that they have been reinforced.

There is a triple ring structure within the description of the scene (462–467):



The first three elements of the ring relate to Turnus who is alive and dynamic, the second three to Nisus and Euryalus who are now dead. Thus, the περιπέτεια of Nisus and Euryalus is shown: they had been prepared for the overthrow of Turnus but now he has the upper hand over them.

(*visu miserabile*) *Miserabile* has been used in this way to describe a scene only once before, at 1. 111, when Vergil is describing the storm that falls on the Trojans as they leave Sicily. It is perhaps not too fanciful to take this occurrence of the same word as extended pathetic fallacy and say that *miserabile* is the correct reading (Med. MS has a variant reading of *mirabile*), because by transference the Rutuli are about to fall on the besieged Trojans as the storm did in Book 1.

It should be noted that, in the middle of this description of the activity among the Rutuli, Vergil's comment causes an emotional shift back to the plight of Nisus and Euryalus, thus preparing the way for the emotional effect of the lament of Euryalus's mother.

The theme of the emotional response, from both sides, to the mutilation of the bodies of Nisus and Euryalus must be considered. In the *Iliad*, the gods take great pains to ensure that Achilles should not go too far in his mutilation of Hector's corpse: it must be asked for what reason. On the one hand, as regards Hector, it is an insult to one whom the gods (or at least some of them) favoured, and as the champion of Holy Troy he should be awarded his due and given honourable burial. On the other hand, how does the mutilation of Hector's corpse affect Achilles? It is seen to reflect badly on his honour in the sight of men that he goes too far in his furious desire for revenge: he does not observe 'decent' moderation, which thus removes him from the proper sphere of human life (cf. **Introduction: Their 'type' in the Classical Tradition** (a) Nisus as a Warrior). Also it seems to have a more serious physical risk inherent, as Parker says (p. 70):

Hector warns Achilles that, if mutilated, he may 'become a wrath of the gods' against him; Elpinor issues a similar warning to Odysseus, and in the last book of the *Iliad* Achilles's conduct does stir the gods to indignation and intervention. The language used is that of divine anger and not pollution; but the significance of this distinction is easily over-emphasised: in both cases a human rule is receiving supernatural support.

It seems then that the Rutuli are damning themselves by this act, as Turnus does by his collecting of heads. Thus there is some doubt as to whether Vergil's comment

relates to the shocking scene of barbarism or whether it is an utterance of religious dread at what the Rutuli have done.

466 praefigunt capita et multo clamore sequuntur/ Euryali et Nisi Nisus and Euryalus are themselves set up as trophies. This is a grim reminder of the fact that they did not vow their spoils to the gods as *pietas* would dictate (see Introduction: Their 'type' in the Classical Tradition (b) Euryalus as a Warrior).

This scene re-introduces features of Tragedy into the epic frame. In Euripides's *Bacchae*, it is the severed head displayed as a trophy that makes the episode so barbaric in tone. The presence here of Tragic elements acts as a precursor to the style of Euryalus's mother's speech.

The fact that Nisus and Euryalus are named at this point has more significance for the Trojans than for the Rutuli, because as Servius rightly says:

nam Rutuli eorum non noverant nomina.

The Trojans not only see two severed heads being carried into battle on spears, but know whose they are and therefore that the bid to find Aeneas has failed. The picture that Vergil paints is a gruesome one, but this horror is intensified by the realisation that the scene being presented is in fact a travesty of a Roman funeral. A description of a Roman funeral is given by Polybius (6. 53) in which he mentions the eulogy, the procession, the parading of the masks (*imagines*) of the dead man's ancestors and the gathering of the civil worthies to honour the dead man. In the *Aeneid*, these

basic ideas are taken and perverted. The eulogy is spoken by the poet himself: but he does not record the noble lives of Nisus and Euryalus, lived for the good of the state, rather he honours them for the nature of their death, caused by their love for one another. The procession, which in a Roman funeral would have consisted of professional mourners and members of the family, is here translated to the clamour and shouting of the victorious Rutuli. The parading of the *imagines* is given a particularly gruesome twist, where, instead of wax masks, the actual heads of Nisus and Euryalus are carried in procession; and the gathering of notable citizens is replaced by the grieving Trojans who are bereft of their leader, Aeneas and, with the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus, of the hope of speedy deliverance. There are, perhaps, also echoes of the Civil War in this scene. Suetonius (*Div. Aug.* 13.1) says that Augustus sent Brutus's head to Rome to be thrown at the feet of Caesar's statue. Weinstock (p. 399) also says that the heads of Helvius and Cornelius Cinna were 'fixed on spears and carried round Caesar's pyre'.

468 *Aeneadae* In calling the Trojans 'the sons of Aeneas', Vergil reminds the reader how dependent upon their leader they are and how, with the failure of the search party, they are still without Aeneas and so without hope. (See *Commentary* 471). Cf. also 179–180:

... *quo pulchrior alter
non fuit Aeneadum.*

Cf. also 234–235:

... '*audite o mentibus aequis
Aeneadae ...*'

Where the Trojans are called *Aenaedae* at 180 and 235, the elements of the tragedy are shown. At 180 it is Euryalus, rash and beautiful, and at 235 it is the persuasive speech of Nisus that makes the Council agree to their mission. Now, at the third occurrence (lemma), Nisus and Euryalus are dead and the Aeneadae are desolate.

duri As the Trojans are so helpless, *duri* takes on a different emphasis than that usually expected of the word. The same word is used by Numanus (603) to describe the active toughness of the Latin race, but here the word describes the long-suffering of the Trojans without Aeneas to lead them. Here they suffer, but with resigned fortitude. This is in marked contrast to their state at 498 and 499 (see **Commentary ad loc.**).

murorum in parte sinistra . . . nam dextera cingitur amni Servius says of this line that:

praeterea et prooeconomia est, quia postea castris per fluvium Turnus evadit.

The giving of details such as the position of things is part of the narrative technique to make the story seem more plausible. It should be remembered that Vergil is describing an area that would be well-known to his audience and so, given this detail, they would be able to place the opposing forces and thus get a more vivid picture of them. Now that Nisus and Euryalus are dead, the dreamlike atmosphere has given way to reality and the Trojans must get on with defending themselves. The military style of the description here contrasts with the high-flown language used in the ἄριστοί of Nisus and Euryalus and is linked to the description of the Rutulian

cavalry. Both sets of soldiers are joined in conflict by the language used to describe them.

470 ingentique tenent fossas et turribus altis/ stant maesti The first line gives a picture of the Trojans secure behind their defences and therefore safe from anything that the Rutuli can do, but *stant maesti* throws all this into doubt: no doubt they are grieved initially because they have seen what has happened to Nisus and Euryalus, but the words even casts a shadow over the apparent safety of such extensive defence works in that even behind these the Trojans are not to be comforted. This adds more to the interpretation of *duri* (468) as resistance that is firm but ultimately hopeless. 468–470 describe the military preparations of the Trojans for the impending battle but, at 471, the emotional reaction sets in as the loss of Nisus and Euryalus and the implications of this begin to work on their morale, if not actually their military effectiveness.

471 simul As well as being besieged and deprived of the leadership of Aeneas, the Trojans are also grieved at the fate of Nisus and Euryalus and what this means to them (apart from the loss of two young warriors): the message has not reached Aeneas and so they have no prospect of aid.

ora virum . . . fluentia tabo Cf. 8. 197 *ora virum tristi pendebant pallida tabo*. These lines are very descriptive if perhaps a little melodramatic. The Rutuli seem to have been fond of collecting heads as trophies (cf. Turnus attaching such trophies to his chariot), but in using the same image to describe the entrance of Cacus's cave (8. 196–197),

Vergil also gives some idea of the punishment to come to the Rutuli for this hybriatic outrage.

movebant Several MSS have *videbant* but this would not continue the emotional picture started by *stant maestis*, and it deprives the Trojans of too much by implying that they cannot be moved by such a sight, but merely observe it. After all, they recognise whose heads they are (*nota*) and realise the implications for themselves of the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus. Another reason why *movebant* is likely to be the correct reading is that then there would be a suitable tension between *movebant* and *stant*.

472 nimis miseris This gives some idea of the state of desolation into which the Trojans have fallen with the absence of Aeneas. They are totally overwhelmed by this latest catastrophe and despite their strong fortifications, seem to be in a state of incapacity to defend themselves against attack.

atroque fluentia tabo Cf. 456 *pleno spumantis sanguine rivos*. The Trojans are again linked with the Rutuli by the similarity of their circumstances.

**SECTION 5 (473–503): EPILOGUE –
THE LAMENT OF EURYALUS’S MOTHER**

Introduction

As the Rutuli march into battle, *Fama* flies to Euryalus’s mother and she rushes to the walls of the encampment to be confronted by his severed head. She wildly laments him and also herself before being taken back to her shelter by Idaeus and Actor, lest her uncontrolled grief should demoralise the Trojans.

This section forms the Epilogue to the ‘Nisus and Euryalus Episode’, and in it the final human cost is assessed. The lament of Euryalus’s mother is traditional in form, and has close parallels in Homer (the reaction of Andromache to the premonition of Hector’s death, *Il.* 22. 437–515), as well as Greek Tragedy (the lament of Hecuba over the body of Astyanax in Euripides’s *Troades* 1156–1250). The speech is also highly rhetorical. As Servius says:

et est conquestio matris Euryali plena artis rhetoricae: nam paene omnes partes habet de misericordia commovenda a Cicerone in rhetoricis positas.

The speech of Euryalus’s mother falls roughly into two parts: the address to the mutilated body of Euryalus, and the despairing plea for the Rutuli or Jupiter to end her life. In this highly rhetorical pattern, some of the intimacy of the Greek antecedents is lost: Hecuba in *Troades* turns from her reviling of the Greeks for their cowardice in fearing Astyanax to the thought of the loss of youth and everlasting fame, and then she forgets her audience and addresses Astyanax as her little grandson, and not as a prince. She then pronounces a final curse on the Greeks before

beginning the formal obsequies for Astyanax and Troy together. Andromache in the *Iliad* starts by lamenting her ill-fortune which is equal to Hector's. She then visualises the effect that the loss of a father will have on Astyanax by contrasting it with the happy life that he used to lead. She then mentions all the fine clothes that might have been used for the wrapping of Hector's body but which she will now burn in his honour.

The situation of Euryalus's mother is different: she is not even given a name and thus she embodies all the grieving mothers of the war whose sons were part of the *sine nomine plebem* (343) and all other unnamed warriors who were killed. She is also essentially alone in her grief. The Trojans grieve for the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus because it means that the mission to find Aeneas has failed, they do not grieve for the death of Euryalus as his mother does. Hecuba and Andromache are supported in their laments — Hecuba by the play's Chorus, Andromache by the other Trojan women (*Il. 22. 515*):

‘Ὡς ἔφατο κλαίουσ’, ἐπὶ δὲ στενάχοντο γυναῖκες.

Euryalus's mother is physically taken away from all support, indeed almost forcibly removed (see 503 *corripunt interque manus*), so that she does not demoralise the troops. In circumstance, Euryalus's mother is closer to Hecuba than to Andromache. Hecuba has lost everything, children and city, and faces slavery, Euryalus's mother has already suffered from seven years' wandering and has now lost the final prop of her old age, her son — Andromache may have lost Hector but she still has Astyanax, and Troy is still unconquered, although Hector's death is a premonition of its fall.

Vergil has not, however, drawn another Hecuba: Euryalus's mother loses control completely, unlike Hecuba who retains her dignity even in utter desolation and remembers her place among her followers. Euryalus's mother does not see beyond her own grief but only addresses her dead son and then the Rutuli in relation to herself. Hers is a far more personal grief: it is not the final lament for a whole city.

As a type within the *Aeneid*, the lament of Euryalus's mother can be compared with Mezentius's lament for Lausus (10. 846–856, 861–866), and Evander's for Pallas (11. 152–181), and perhaps with Aeneas's lament for Pallas, as he was *in loco parentis* to the youth (11. 24–28, 42–58). Indeed the striking similarities between the situations and reactions of Euryalus's mother and Mezentius have been dealt with in some depth by Egan (*art. cit.*), who also considers that the lament forms part of the 'Nisus and Euryalus Episode' and is not merely a self-contained, though related, vignette. He argues this because Euryalus's mother was in effect introduced at 216 (*neu matri miserae tanti sim causa doloris*) and also because at her introduction Nisus says he is unwilling to cause any more grief to Euryalus's mother, and when she actually appears she is indeed grieving for Euryalus's death.

This lament for a young warrior by his mother is unique in the *Aeneid*: all other such laments of sons who have died in battle are performed by their fathers who are themselves, or have been, warriors. This fact draws the present passage closer to its antecedents of Hecuba and Andromache, and so highlights Euryalus's extreme youth and vulnerability and reinforces the idea that the speech is written in the tragic rather than the epic style (see **Commentary 466**). The fact that Euryalus's extreme youth is highlighted adds poignancy to the situation: such a young boy died a death that

would not have been forced on him but for the horrors of war. Thus the death of such a one as Euryalus epitomises a central theme of the *Aeneid*.

Commentary

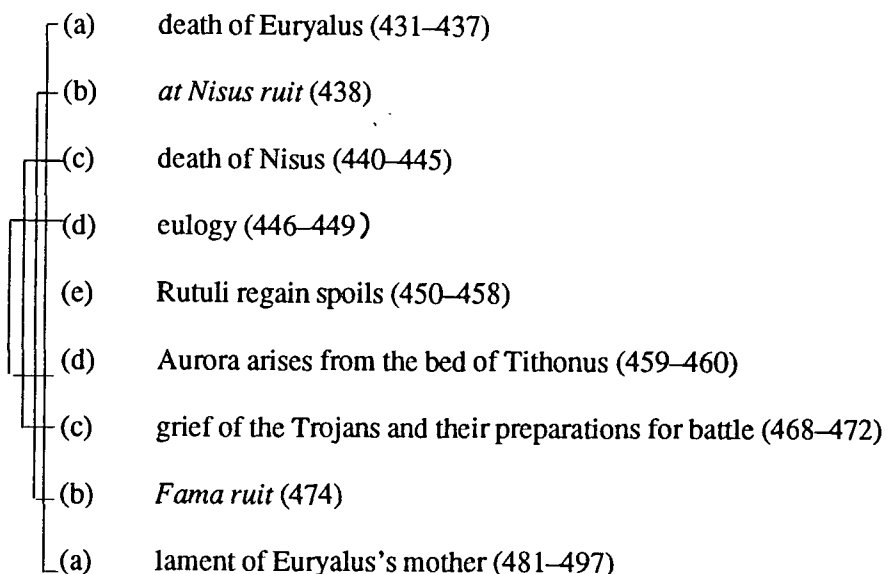
473 Interea Vergil again causes the narrative tempo to pick up after the slowing of pace caused by *stantmaesti* (471), and the description of the Trojans gazing down from their walls at the scene below them. This ‘speed’ is also reflected in the highly dactylic rhythm of the whole line.

pavidam . . . urbem In transferring the epithet to the encampment, Vergil shows the effect that the death and failure of Nisus and Euryalus will have. Seeing them dead, the Trojans are deeply moved and are unable to proceed without Aeneas to guide them: they are only able to defend themselves. Vergil strengthens this effect by showing the encampment (*urbem*) itself stricken. The use of *urbem* is itself significant. Although it is only an encampment under seige, this is the only ‘city’ that the Trojan refugees have. This ‘city’ is described as having huge ramparts and high towers (470). This description is incongruous in the present situation and brings to mind Homer’s descriptions of Troy. Thus the Trojans’ present poverty is superimposed on their former wealth and security.

volitans pennata . . . Fama *Fama* personified appears six times in the *Aeneid* (so Mynors). At 4. 173–197 she tells Iarbas of the ‘marriage’ of Dido and Aeneas; at 4. 298 she tells Dido of Aeneas’s plans to leave, and at 4. 666, the news of Dido’s

suicide to the city of Carthage; at 7.104 she spreads the report of Faunus's dictum to Latinus that he should marry Lavinia to a foreigner; at 9. 474 (lemma) she tells Euryalus's mother of his death and mutilation; and at 11. 139 she tells Evander of Pallas's death. She thus appears at moments of extreme emotional tension. As she is personified, this removes her from the immediate surroundings of the characters she afflicts: she is somehow connected with the characters, perhaps rising from their heightened emotion, but she then supersedes all influence they may have had and increases in power autonomously. She is thus beyond the reach of man, but has a profound influence because of her humanly inspired generation.

474 *Fama ruit* Cf. *at Nisus ruit* (438). These two occurrences of *ruit* highlight the ring around a narrative section, which is further ringed by two sections removed from the flow of narrative: the death of Euryalus, and his mother's lament for him.



The two sections (a) are removed from the epic mode and have more in common with the tragic mode. For (b) *vide supra*. The two sections (c) are Trojan in perspective and concern the reason for the Trojans' grief and their reaction to it. Sections (d) are removed from the epic sphere and are seen from a timeless perspective. For (e) *vide supra*.

Both outer elements (a) add a more personal touch to the rather cold epic grandeur of the battle narrative: these are the fact that Euryalus faints into death like a flower weighed down by rain and that his mother's shuttle falls from her hand.

The fact that there are women so close to the scene of battle, and women of such a kind (not such as Hecuba, by reason of her royal station, or Camilla, by reason of her prowess in battle, but such as Euryalus's mother who is just one of the exiles) does nothing to heighten the tone of the piece, rather her function is to add a domestic dimension, thus epitomising the small resources and scant hopes of the Trojans — they may be destined to rule the world as Romans, but they start from very humble beginnings, and only succeed after great losses and sacrifices.

adlabitur This typifies the insidious nature of rumour, which insinuates itself into the consciousness of the hearer. There is thus a tension with *ruit* (474) which implies an open attack. This conflict has a similar effect on the reader as the description of Euryalus's attack on the sleeping Rutuli (see Commentary 344 *subit*).

subitus This gives some idea of Euryalus's mother's horror suddenly crystallising into certainty after the unconfirmed premonition sent her by Fama.

calor ossa reliquit Cf. 3. 308 *calor ossa reliquit*. This concerns Andromache's shock at seeing Aeneas, while she is pouring a libation to Hector. Both of these involve great emotional shock concerning someone believed dead — Euryalus actually is, Andromache thought Aeneas had fallen at the Sack of Troy. Both are concerned with vain obsequies: Andromache sacrifices at Hector's cenotaph, Euryalus's mother addresses what is left of Euryalus.

Cf. *Il.* 22. 448:

τῆς δ' ἐλελίχθη γυῖα . . .

The Homeric line gives a description of Andromache's fear due to her uncertainty, about the reason for the wailing, the Vergilian line has shock, as if the truth were known. Euryalus's mother does not yet know that he is dead, she has only a premonition, but her doubt and certainty are so close to each other, that fear is made into knowledge and Euryalus's mother faints dead away, thus copying what had happened to her son even before she sees him dead.

476 excussi manibus radii revolutaque pensa Cf. *Il.* 22. 448:

. . . χαμοῖ δέ οἱ ἔκπεσε κερκίς.

Homer just has the shuttle falling from Andromache's fingers to the ground, Vergil adds the detail that as Euryalus's mother dropped hers, the thread unwound. This unwinding of the thread somehow symbolises the destruction of all the hopes that Euryalus's mother had built up around her son: it is the outward, tangible manifestation of her emotions. In continuation of the allegorical line of sight, the wool (which is *pensa*), has been weighed out for spinning (so Sidgwick), it can therefore be taken in the same way as Zeus weighing the fates of Achilles and Hector in the balance. The fact that the wool unwinds shows that Euryalus's luck has run out and that his life has been cut short. As the Fates are traditionally shown spinning, the imagery is particularly apt when considering the reaction to Euryalus's death. The numb state of shock is embodied in *excussi*. Servius seems to take the word as meaning 'to let fall', as he says:

bene 'excussi', quasi nescienti: melius quam si diceret 'proiecti'.

However, *excussi* is also linked with *percussus* (197), and *percussa* (292) (see Commentary 292) and so there is the image of the realisation falling as a sudden blow on Euryalus's mother. Euryalus's influence on those around him lasts even after his death.

477 femineo ululatu Cf. 4. 667 (Anna for Dido). This is yet another link between the 'Story of Dido' and the 'Nisus and Euryalus Episode'. In both cases it is a lament for those who are dead, but uttered while they are thought to be still living. Hightet (p. 153) says:

Seeing it [sc. Euryalus's impaled head], she shrieks, her shrieks can be heard in the unusual rhythm and vowel-spread of *femineo ululatu* in which the hiatus comes like a gasp of agony.

478 scissa comam Euryalus's mother acts in the traditional manner of mourners, even before she knows for sure that he is dead.

amens This word is used only twice in Book 9, here and at 424, where it applies to Nisus's reaction to seeing Euryalus threatened. This fact adds to the link between the two elements of the story (see introduction to Section 5), and also highlights the importance of Euryalus, in that it describes two characters in their relation to him. This is another instance of the attention being focused by stylistic means through the main characters onto Euryalus.

amens atque agmina is almost onomatopoeic in effect. Despite the elision, it echoes the cries of Euryalus's mother as she rushes to the wall.

479 non illa virum, non illa pericli/ telorumque memor Servius puts this rather tersely as:

unum pudoris est, aliud salutis.

This must surely be the correct interpretation as Statius also takes it as such by imitating the passage in *Theb.* 11. 318 and having Jocasta rush onto the scene:

non sexus decorisve memor.

It is interesting that Camilla is generally taken to be, as it were, an honorary man and is not only a redoubtable warrior in her own right, but is recognised as such by her fellow captains, even Turnus, and so there is no real upset at her presence on the field of battle and she is not subject to the same demands of modesty.

non illa . . . non illa The repetition has the usual function of strengthening both elements. The second occurrence is grammatically superfluous but underlines the fact that Euryalus's mother has abandoned all the restraint that could be expected of a woman and of a non-combatant.

480 caelum dehinc questibus implet It is ironic that Euryalus's mother should fill the heavens with her lament, as if to gain relief since her reason for grief came from this quarter — the Moon, shining on Euryalus's helmet and getting him killed. It is also the case that in 'filling the heavens' with her lament, her grief becomes cosmic and universal. This adds to the idea that the lament of Euryalus's mother encompasses the lament of all mothers whose sons are killed in war and strengthens the picture of her as 'Universal grieving mother'.

481 hunc ego te, Euryale, aspicio? This can either be taken to be a rhetorical question, or it could even imply that the mutilation was so bad that even his mother had difficulty recognising him — perhaps something like Aeneas's reaction to Deiphobus (6. 494). This interpretation is not hindered by *ora . . . I nota* (471), because the Trojans knew that Nisus and Euryalus had gone out and would therefore (rightly) guess whose heads were being paraded even if they could not actually

recognise them. Euryalus's mother had no idea that he was not in camp and so there could be some doubt in her mind as to whether the head was her son's, or someone else's even though she has a strong premonition that it is Euryalus's.

tune ille senectae/ sera meae requies Cf. Evander (8. 581) *mea sera et sola voluptas*. This links Euryalus and Pallas during their lives as well as in their deaths.

Servius comments:

et 'requies' hic pro 'solacio'.

It is significant that *requies* and not *solacium* is used: *requies* implies the rest of a peaceful death, (cf. *requiescat in pace*. Cf. also 445 *demum morte quievit*), as does the mention of *sera*. Nisus and Euryalus's mother are again linked verbally in relation to Euryalus. *Solacium* would imply active support and comfort during the life of the beneficiary (sc. Euryalus's mother). In alluding to her own death in this way, Euryalus's mother implies that now that Euryalus is dead, she is as good as dead and indeed wishes she were (see 493–497).

Cf. also 12. 57–58 *spes tu nunc una, senectae/ tu requies miserae*. At all three mentions of *requies* the death, whether actual or metaphorical, of the speaker is predicted: Euryalus's mother is carried away (like Evander at 8. 584) as if dead, Amata actually hangs herself.

482 potuisti linquere solam/ crudelis? Cf. 199–200:

*mene igitur . . . adiungere . . .
 . . . fugis? solum te in tanta pericula mittam?*

The unconscious echo of her son's words adds to the pathos of her situation. There is also a causal link: if Euryalus had not said these words initially and persuaded Nisus to take him, then his mother would not have been reduced to saying them now.

**nec te sub tanta pericula missum/ adfari extremum miserae data copia
matri?** Cf. 287–288:

*hanc ego nunc ignaram huius quodcumque pericli
inque salutatam linquo.*

The ironic ambiguity of Euryalus's words is realised (see **Commentary 288**).

484 miserae . . . matri As Servius says:

melius 'matri', quam si dixisset 'mihi'.

The emotional response of the reader to the speaker's position is strengthened considerably by the use of this word. It is also the case that in speaking of herself in the third person she adds to the idea that her lament is to be taken as common to all mothers (see **Commentary 480**).

485 terra ignota Euryalus's mother has no conception of this being the land that is to be their own. She has had no such promises as had Aeneas. In saying that the land is foreign to her, Euryalus's mother links herself with the old order, to which Nisus, Euryalus and Turnus belonged (see **Introduction: A Roman perspective**). That order must pass away before the new order, Rome, can come into being – but only at the cost of individual suffering (see **Commentary 446–449 Fortunati ambo!**).

canibus data praeda Latinis/alitibusque iaces! This is the actuality of a very common epic threat: to leave the body of a fallen adversary to be eaten by the dogs and carrion birds. Cf. *Il.* 22. 335:

... σὲ μὲν κύνες ἦδ' οἰωνοὶ
ἐλκήσουσ' αἰκῶς...

Servius glosses the phrase as:

Latinis — id est Latinorum.

This qualification, however, dispels much of the force of the original: no doubt it is meant that the bodies are given to the Latins to despoil and to the dogs and birds to eat, but as it stands, with *praeda* being in common to dogs, birds and Latins, it can almost be taken, in a grammatical sense, as if the Latins had degenerated into bestial behaviour by their actions. This ambiguous grammatical structure forms a horrific picture of the brutality of the Rutuli as Euryalus's mother sees them. This is clearly not the actual meaning of the words, but the ambiguity present in them adds another shade.

486 nec te tua funere . . ./ aut vulnera lavi There is some discussion as to whether the correct reading is *funere* or *funera*. Page and Conington consider that it should be *funera* and that *tua funera* is epexegetical of *te*. Williams and Mynors both have it as *funere* and Williams thinks that the corruption, *funera*, may have been caused by *vulnera* in the next line. Both are possible. If it is *funera* then Euryalus's mother would be correcting herself. This would not be unreasonable in the light of her questions as to whether what she sees is Euryalus at all. However, if it is *funere*,

then the sense is easier and does not necessitate any pause in the speech. The image of a funeral cortège also fits in well with the idea of closing the eyes and washing the wounds of the dead (cf. **Commentary 491**).

In consequence of the ominous interpretation of the previous line, Euryalus's mother clearly fears that the Latins are beyond the pale of humanity and that they have destroyed the body of her son without according it proper burial (cf. 490–492). There is also the feeling that her own death cannot be far away and so it is not so much that there will be nothing left of Euryalus to bury, but that there will be no-one left to bury him (see **Commentary 481** *tunc ille*). These words are also a tragic inversion of the usual state of affairs where parents would expect to be buried by their children rather than the other way round.

483 *veste tegens tibi* Cf. *Il.* 22. 510–513 for the futility of Andromache's weaving. Cf. also *Il.* 22. 440–441 Andromache was also weaving at the time when she had a premonition of Hector's death. Cf. also *Aen.* 10. 818:

et tunicam molli mater quam neverat auro.

Both quotations from the *Aeneid* emphasise the youth of the slain warriors, in that their clothes are still woven for them by their mothers, not their wives.

noctes festina diesque/urgebam The fact that night is mentioned first in the phrase is ironic, as it was the darkness of night and the revealing moonlight that led to Euryalus's death and therefore his mother's grief.

489 urgebam This is a very strong word to use. It implies not only that she was keen to finish the garment for Euryalus, but also that she drove on her days and nights by working through both — to what end? Her death, or his? It almost seems that she had some unconscious fear that she might not live to finish it or that he might not live to wear it.

490 quo sequar? Cf. 391, *quave sequar*. Again there is the link between Euryalus's mother and Nisus in relation to Euryalus.

aut quae nunc . . . tellus habet? This seems to be a continuation of her fear that the Latins have disposed of the body without burial rites. It is also a grim reminder that she is addressing the entire lament to his severed head, and this idea is continued by *hoc mihi de te*.

hoc mihi de te, / nate, refers? As Servius says:

Hoc — caput intuens ait.

This is in stark contrast with the usual expectation of a parent who would expect the son to return with spoils and honour, or, failing that, to be brought back for burial.

491 funus lacerum This can only be taken as 'the object of the burial', that is, the body. These words have a bearing on whether *funera* or *funere* is read at 486. It would seem to argue for *funere* almost by default because, if *funera* were read, then the object of burial, Euryalus's body, would have been mentioned twice in a

way too different for rhetorical effect, but not different enough to allow for *variatio*. If *funere* is read, this overcomes the problem as then the funeral and its object are mentioned only once each, but in words sufficiently similar to allow an aural link (cf. Commentary 486).

492 hoc sum terraque marique secuta? (For the significance of *hoc* see Commentary 496.) *Terraque marique* has a very military ring to it, which is particularly poignant in this most unmilitary sentence. By using military vocabulary here, Vergil underlines the actuality of the situation: for all her care and attention for her son, Euryalus's mother, although the position does not become her nature, is so overwhelmed by her circumstances that she uses the language applicable to them and not to her own feelings. Conington says:

She says *secuta* rather than *comitata* to express that this is the issue and, as it were, goal of her wanderings.

This brings to mind the fact that Euryalus's mother has no hope in anything other than him: she is not going with him to their new homeland but only following him wherever the wanderings of the Trojan refugees may take them.

493 figite me . . . in me omnia tela/ conicite, . . . me primam absumite ferro Cf. 427 (Nisus):

in me convertite ferrum.

It is interesting that two speeches which have such different emphases should have such close verbal similarities: Nisus wishes to draw all the attention to himself so as

to distract Volcens from striking, and so mentions himself more often than he does Euryalus (*me, me, adsum . . . ; in me . . . ; mea fraus*; whereas Euryalus's mother laments him and so speaks to Euryalus more than of herself.

Again there is the link between Nisus and Euryalus's mother in relation to Euryalus. There is even the idea that Nisus is *in loco parentis*, as a surrogate father, to Euryalus (as well as his lover), and that he fails him by not protecting him as Aeneas also does Pallas, his surrogate son. The idea that Nisus and Aeneas are related in relation to their 'sons' is strengthened when it is recognised that Nisus kills Sulmo for the sake of his 'son', Euryalus, and Aeneas sacrifices Sulmo's sons on the pyre of his 'son', Pallas (10. 517).

si qua est pietas It is a very striking idea that it might be an act of *pietas* to kill an old woman, This would normally be taken in a heroic culture to be not only ὕβρις but also extreme impiety (see Egan, pp. 165–166).

494 me primam absumite ferro Servius says about this:

unusquisque enim in propriae salutis desperatione credit universa etiam posse consumi, unde est quod modo dixit 'me primam': quasi mortuo Euryalo omnes Troiani perituri essent.

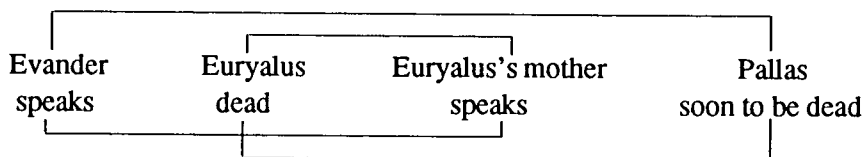
It seems more likely, however, that she means that if they have any finer qualities, they should kill her before using their weapons further, and thus release her from her misery before they do anything else. This plea adds to the eventual degree of pathos attached to Euryalus's mother, in that she has to pray to the enemy or the gods

to relieve her sufferings, because her own people cannot do so. They cannot even bear her presence, but she must be hurried away before her grief overcomes them all.

495 aut tu, magne pater divum, miserere As the highest authority she appeals to Jupiter. The irony of the prayer is embodied in the tension between *miserere* and *detrude caput*. Most prayers ask for safety, this one asks for death, as a favour. Euryalus did not pray and was killed, his mother prays but does not gain the death for which she prays.

496 invisum hoc detrude caput sub Tartara telo Cf. also 491 *hoc mihi de te* and 492 *hoc sum . . . secuta*. Euryalus's mother has so far addressed all her speech to Euryalus's severed head. Now, by metonymy, she speaks of herself as *hoc . . . caput* and prays to be killed.

497 crudelem abrumpere vitam Cf. 8.579 *nunc o liceat crudelem abrumpere vitam*. By making Evander say these words when he does, Vergil forms a double ring with the two parents and their sons:



498 hoc fletu concussi animi, maestusque per omnis it gemitus Cf. 477 *femineo ululatu*. The appearance of Euryalus's mother is ringed by cries of grief. That Euryalus's mother's grief is starting to affect the morale of the troops is

accentuated by the fact that it is not she who is now the object of attention, but her grief and its effect. This subtle shift in the focus to the position that grief affects the Trojans rather than them showing sorrow, underlines their helplessness without their leader. This state is in contrast to 468–472. There, although the Trojans grieved, they at least had the executive role. Now, because of the grief of Euryalus's mother they have lost the initiative.

499 torpent infractae ad proelia vires Cf. 468 *duri* and also 471 *stant maesti*. Previously, the Trojans had been grieving but at least they had made their proper preparations for war. Now all their military *virtus* has been damaged by the presence of a woman. They are, as it were, 'unmanned' (*infractae . . . vires*: cf. OLD, *vis* 20c) by her presence.

500 illam incendentem luctus Cf. 4. 360 *desine meque tuis incendere teque querellis*. Extreme grief is like fire in its effects and is equally contagious to those standing by. In *incendentem* there is also a poignant echo of Nisus being *ardentem* (198): this is the last link between the two — Nisus is already dead, Euryalus's mother is soon to be taken away and laid down like one dead. If, as Conington thinks, Vergil had in mind Catullus 64. 226:

Nostros ut luctus nostraeque incendia mentis,

then there is obviously a strong link with the content of the Catullan verse: it is the grief of Aegeus for his son Theseus before he set off for Crete. There is also a

possible link (taking into consideration the fire-imagery) with the words of Nisus (184):

... *dine hunc ardorem mentibus addunt*

If this link can be assumed, then Euryalus's mother's grief is by inference *dirus*. As *dirus* implies something of divine retribution meted out at the will of Fate and not when mortals expect it or on those who would seem to have necessarily courted it, but rather on their close associates (see Donaldson, p. 100), then it seems that Euryalus's mother takes up the burden of guilt for Euryalus's acts of impiety, and therefore is 'god-struck' and almost polluted, (the outward sign of this pollution being the effect that she has on the troops), and so she is quickly removed from the vicinity (see Parker esp. pp. 218–220). In support of this theory, Vergil uses two unknown warriors to remove her from the scene, as if it would not be allowed that the leaders, such as Ilioneus, become contaminated by close contact.

500–501 Idaeus et Actor/ Ilionei monitu These names are significant. *Idaeus* and *Ilioneus* are obviously 'Trojan' in colour (cf. *Ida* and *Ilion*) thus, they are more easily linked with the portrayal in Tragedy of the Fall of Troy and Euryalus's mother's relation to this (see introduction to Section 5). The 'non-Roman' nature of the names is emphasised by the presence of *Actor*. His name is ambiguous. It could be that of a character or the description of a function (like *Carpus*/'Carpe' in Petr. *Cena Trim.* 36. 5–8). The name is essentially neutral, thus allowing the grief of Euryalus's mother to be universal (cf. **Commentary** 480). The name *Actor* also has significance for the portrayal of Euryalus's mother as a character from Tragedy

(cf. OLD, *actor* 5 and also Vitr. 5. 7. 2. *tragici et comici actores*. For the implications of this see **Commentary 502**).

501 multum lacrimantis Iuli Cf. 292 *percussa mente dederet Dardanidae lacrimas, ante omnis pulcher Iulus*. This can be forgiven with regard to his weeping, because, as Servius says:

puero dat lacrimas, cui potest sine pudore.

It is also significant that Aeneas's son is called Iulus here and not Ascanius (see **Commentary 310**). *Iulus* links the boy with the *gens Iulia*, and the reference here is perhaps to Julian *clementia*. Thus this is not solely an outburst of grief by a young boy, but the sympathy shown by a future ruler to one of his subjects.

502 corripiunt interque manus sub tecta reponunt Servius says:

honorifice: quod autem dicit corripiunt, non iniuriae est, sed celeritatis, id est raptim tollunt.

This may be one interpretation, but *corripiunt* still has overtones of violence (see introduction to Section 5, and also **Commentary 500**). Cf. 8. 584 (*famuli conlapsum in tecta ferebant*) where Evander reacts to Pallas's setting out with Aeneas into great danger (see **Commentary 497 crudelem abrumpere vitam**). The similarity between these two lines casts doubt into the reader's mind as to the future safety of Pallas: Euryalus, his counterpart, is already dead when this happens to his parent.

The scene ends with Euryalus's mother being carried back into the camp. This is the final Tragic element: the stage is cleared of characters (cf. the final lines of Aesch. *Persae* and Eur. *Heracles Mainomenos*) and the dead and 'dead' (sc. Euryalus's death has a 'deathly' effect on his mother) are removed from view.

BIBLIOGRAPHY**ABBREVIATIONS USED**

AJPh	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
CJ	<i>Classical Journal</i>
CQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
Coll. Lat.	<i>Collection Latomus</i>
G and R	<i>Greece and Rome</i>
JHS	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
JRS	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
LCM	<i>Liverpool Classical Monthly</i>
OCT	Oxford Classical Text
OLD	Oxford Latin Dictionary (Ed. Glare)
PCPhS	<i>The Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Society</i>
PLLS	<i>Papers of the Liverpool Latin Seminar</i>
PVS	<i>Proceedings of the Virgil Society</i>
TAPhA	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
Verg.	<i>Vergilius</i>
YCS	<i>Yale Classical Studies</i>

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