

XXIX.—Athletic Contests in the Epic

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This article is summarized at the end.

I. INTRODUCTION

In all the classical epics extant from Homer downwards the narrative is interrupted, usually for the space of a whole book, to accommodate the account of some athletic contest. If the games for Patroclus in *Iliad* 23 were clearly the first of these, and the games in the remaining epics were obviously modelled on them, the development of this literary tradition could be easily outlined. But Homer himself knew accounts of other earlier games; and many elements not traceable to Homer appear in the later epics. One contest at least, that in the *Posthomericæ* of Quintus Smyrnaeus, bears little or no resemblance to the games for Patroclus.

Homer alludes to several heroic funeral games which occurred outside the bounds of his own epic story. While the games for Patroclus were in progress, Nestor (630–642), boasting of the exploits of his youth, recalled at some length this prowess in the funeral games for Amarynceus. Some early rhapsodic poem, written or unwritten, may have offered him the suggestion. Homer introduces Euryalus in his boxing match (679–680) as the victor at the funeral games for Oedipus at Thebes: a contest which other evidence as well places in the Thebaid cycle, of which our remnants are incredibly scanty. In the *Odyssey*, 24.85–92, when Agamemnon in the underworld is made to inform Achilles of the splendor of the latter's funeral games, Homer must be drawing on some full account well known in the Trojan legend which served as a source of the *Aethiopis* as well. Funeral games held by Priam in honor of Hector are mentioned by Vergil, whose boxer, Dares, was a victor in that contest.¹ Homer makes no mention of games in connection with the funeral of Hector in *Iliad* 24. A later epic of the Cycle doubtless introduced them, on the analogy of the games for Achilles.

Perhaps the oldest funeral games of which we have any record

¹ *Aen.* 5.371–4; Dares Phrygius, *De Excidio Troiae Historia* 25.7.

are those for Pelias, described by Pausanias ² as he saw them depicted on the Chest of Cypselus at Olympia; they are also the subject of an early sixth century Corinthian vase.³ Of these games we have no epic account, yet the tremendous influence they exercised not only on the Corinthian vase painters but even on Homer and the popular account of the first Olympic games would assuredly point to some early epic source—an epic considerably antedating the Argonaut story where Pelias appears in evil guise,⁴ and totally lost before the classical period. Our fragments of Stesichorus' Ἀθλα ἐπὶ Πελλίῳ are too few and brief to indicate how the story was there treated, save that Amphiarus was first in the leap, and Meleager won the javelin cast.

In a seldom noticed passage (*Fab.* 273) Hyginus throws light on the Pelias contests in presenting a list of fifteen famous games held in antiquity. The first four in his account are lost in a lacuna. The fifth was a musical contest held by Danaus at the marriage of his daughters. The sixth was the ἀσπὶς ἐν Ἀργεῖ held by Lynceus, for which a shield was the prize. The seventh was the funeral games for Polydectes in Seriphus held by Perseus.⁵ The eighth told of the original Olympic contest in honor of Pelops, over which Hercules presided; the ninth, the first Nemean games, for Archemorus (or Opheltus); and the tenth, the first Isthmian games, for Melicertes, "held by Eratocles, or, as other poets say, by Theseus." The eleventh contest was held in the Propontis for Cyzicus and his son, by Jason and the Argonauts: the games specified are the leap, the wrestling match, and the javelin cast. In the twelfth we find the games for Pelias, eighteen of them, specifying in each case the names of the victors—the largest number of events of which we have any record. The thirteenth contest was that held by Priam, citing only the chariot race in which Paris was victor and was discovered to Priam as his son.

² Paus. 5.17.9-10. Cf. H. Stuart Jones, "The Chest of Kypselos," *JHS* 14 (1894) 30-80.

³ Pfuhl, *Malerei und Zeichnung der Griechen* (Munich, 1923) 3.42, fig. 179; Wilamowitz, *Die Ilias und Homer* (Berlin, 1920) 69.

⁴ Wilamowitz, *Textgeschichte der Griechischen Bukoliker* (Berlin, 1906) 196-7, note. Wilamowitz believes that Heracles as the host of the games and Polydeuces as a participant are transferred from the games for Pelias to the Olympic games in honor of Pelops.

⁵ Cf. also Hyg. *Fab.* (ed. Rose, Leyden, 1934) 63.5-6; Schol. Isid. 18.11, 12 (*ALMA* 2 [1925] 161).

The fourteenth is a cursory reference to Achilles' games for Patroclus. Yet, strangely enough, it in no wise agrees with Homer. Ajax is represented as *winning* the wrestling match; in the *Iliad* the contest is a tie. Furthermore the prize is a golden cauldron; in Homer, a tripod and a female slave. The only other event mentioned is hurling the javelin, in which Menelaus is victor and wins a golden lance. In Homer Agamemnon and Meriones are the only contestants; for prizes first a cauldron, second a spear; and the contest is not held in deference to the rank of Agamemnon. Hyginus, wherever he got his story, certainly shows no knowledge of the Homeric account, which one might have expected him to present. As Ajax wins over Odysseus, who opposes him in Homer, one would expect this version to be the older of the two, since the later epics of the Cycle magnify Odysseus and are hostile toward Ajax.

Finally, in his fullest account, Hyginus, in telling of the games for Anchises, agrees in all respects with Vergil. There is no evidence, of course, that any games were ever held in his honor in ancient legend; they are presumably a fiction of Vergil. Hyginus, then, seems to have done rather exhaustive research on the games in earlier literature, and may be credited with having here represented versions from the Cycle, for some of which we have no other source.

All these games and perhaps many more were celebrated in epic legend, from which Homer and the Cyclic poets drew their own appropriate episodes. Homer's games for Patroclus in *Iliad* 23, then, are by no means the prototype of the funeral games described in the other epics of the Cycle, but rather the culmination of a long tradition of the treatment of ἀθλα in epic or rhapsodic literature.

What we know as the Epic Cycle, of which we possess only scattered fragments and the epitomes of Proclus, was an Alexandrian canon selected from numerous epics written from the time of Homer to the sixth century. They were not concerted artificial attempts to "complete Homer," but, by analogy to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (the popularity of which gave stimulus to further productions on that order), "modern" attempts to record as much as was possible of the tremendous ocean of unwritten rhapsodic literature from which Homer himself had led the way in making excerpts. To the substantiation of this hypothesis Wilamowitz pointed the way in discussing the significance of the funeral games for Pelias

mentioned above. In them he saw the model of *Iliad* 23.⁶ At the same time, in seeking evidence of Homeric models, he pursues the contrary implication of finding the direct sources in the (eighth and seventh century) written epics of our Cycle, and hence is forced to date Book 23 in the seventh century. It is surely not necessary to seek models both in these later productions and in the unwritten prototypes common both to them and to the *Iliad*.

Wilamowitz suggests that the poet of the Funeral of Patroclus had before him not only the whole *Iliad* but also the other, later poems of the Cycle. True, an air of hostility hovers over Ajax, as in the *Iliupersis* and the *Telemachia*. In the footrace Ajax and Odysseus are opponents as in the *Aethiopis*. Epeius, noticed in the *Little Iliad*, is here brought into prominence. But these elements may have existed in the source of the *Aethiopis* and the *Little Iliad*; and the remainder of his evidence does not confirm his view. For the mention of Arion by Nestor (346) harks back to a Thebaid; furthermore, Eumelus, the grandson of Pelias whose games were renowned, is made to win the chariot race. The roots of these stories reach far back into the epic past and do not first appear in the Cyclic poems as we know them. This much is frankly hypothetical.

Whether *Iliad* 23 is Homeric or not it is here not necessary to decide. But that it in any case had many antecedents, and made an abundant, even a confused, use of sources seems very probable. Without appealing, as Wilamowitz does, to esthetic grounds (for they never carry conviction), one cannot fail to be impressed by the discrepancies noted in the procedure of the archery contest (850-883). A dove, tied by a cord to the top of a mast, is the mark. The first prize is naturally awarded to him who hits the dove; but a second prize falls to the man *who severs the cord*!—surely a more difficult shot, so difficult that no president of the games short of a prophet could foresee it. The prior announcement of these prizes is justified by the outcome, since the first shot accidentally severs the cord, while the second kills the bird in midair, admittedly the better marksmanship. Not only one predecessor must be presupposed for this development, as Wilamowitz thought, but two. In the parent source only one prize was offered, to the shot that slew the dove. As we shall see later, one prize for the victor alone represents an earlier stage than the practice of naming prizes for

⁶ *Ilias und Homer* 68-79.

all comers. But in the working out of the contest, to inject the element of *surprise*, the poet has the first shot sever the string by accident, and the second archer display still greater skill by hitting the dove on the wing. And though the latter can rightfully claim the first prize, the first shot was still too skilful to be ignored, and a second prize is awarded him. The element of surprise is a device employed by a later poet to vary and improve the story found in his model: Vergil, for example, employed it frequently. This parent model for Homer must have thus improved a still older grandparent, in which the contestants would have fared more in accordance with our expectations of reality.⁷

One may find still further bits of evidence of borrowing scattered through the Homeric account. The very prizes offered to the victor in this archery contest, the ten double and ten single axes, remind us strongly of the trial of Odysseus' bow in the *Odyssey* 21. There the feat required is a shot "through" the iron heads of twelve axes lined up in a row: perhaps through the crescent-shaped space above and between the two blades of a double axe⁸—a difficult feat requiring great accuracy of aim if the axes were spaced at any considerable intervals. The account in the *Odyssey* is so far from explicit that Homer must have assumed that his audience was quite familiar with the feat, or else had no clear idea of it himself. The latter is quite possibly true, if one may assume that this form of the archery contest was very old, was found in Homer's source and not clearly understood by him. He does not employ it for the archery contest in the *Iliad*, which probably represents the current (and

⁷ This need not mean that Book 23 is later or by a different hand than the rest of the *Iliad*, but simply that Homer, however early he wrote, was preceded by much (probably unwritten) epic literature he could and did draw on.

⁸ *Od.* 21.421–3:

. . . πελέκεων δ' οὐκ ἤμβροτε πάντων
πρώτης στείλειῃς, διὰ δ' ἄμπερὲς ἦλθε θύραζε
ὡς χαλκοβαρῆς.

For axes of the type required, see Tsountas-Manatt, *The Mycenaean Age* (Boston, 1897) fig. 65 (Great signet of Mycenae); fig. 118 (Inlaid sword of Thera); and (pp. 90, 207) the small gold model of an axe found in Grave IV at Mycenae. This, then, is the Mycenaean type, older than the wedge-shaped axes found at Troy, and offering confirmation of the antiquity of the type of contest of *Odyssey* 21. Though A. D. Fraser, *CW* 26 (1932) 25–9, makes a strong case for pierced axes of the Vaphio type (Tsountas, fig. 94; cf. p. 208), his arguments force the text of the *Odyssey* (οὐκ ἤμβροτε . . . πρώτης στείλειῃς) by defining the words in terms of an *a priori* interpretation, a case of logical *hysteron proteron*.

later) feat required of skilled bowmen. Perhaps the axes are named as prizes by way of reminiscence of an obsolete and obscure custom.⁹

II. THE EPIC TRADITION OF FUNERAL GAMES

Considering then the number and variety of the early funeral games of which we find traces, one would suspect that Homer included funeral games for Patroclus not simply by way of appropriating such an episode from a unique heroic legend,¹⁰ but because the prevalence of games in early unwritten rhapsodic literature had established a tradition which it was natural for Homer himself and the Cyclic poets to follow. Deaths of heroes called for funeral games; every extant epic which allows the death of one of its staff of heroes describes funeral games in his honor.

Four of the later epics bear a marked resemblance to Homer: the *Dionysiaca* of Nonnus, whose use of Homer is nothing short of slavish, and the Latin epics of Vergil, Statius and Silius Italicus. Quintus stands apart. With the loss of the Epic Cycle we cannot trace his sources: they were certainly not Homer himself. His account of the funeral games of Achilles betrays little similarity to the games for Patroclus.¹¹ He must have had sources which we no longer possess: various epics of the Cycle which did not survive even in epitome, and which may not have belonged to the Canon. That there were such whose names we do not even know we may infer from Proclus.¹²

The funeral games for Achilles occurred in the *Aethiopis*, and are briefly described in *Odyssey* 24. So brief is the summary in Proclus that it offers little opportunity for comparison: but even so one point of difference is to be noted. In the *Odyssey* Thetis presides at the games, but in the *Aethiopis* she departs before the games take place.¹³ There may have been some divergence in the

⁹ Gardiner (*Greek Athletic Sports and Festivals* [London, 1910] 22) thinks the archery contest in *Iliad* 23 is "simply ludicrous," and the prizes offered "suspicious," and so rejects the contest as un-Homeric.

¹⁰ Wilamowitz (*Ilias und Homer* 69) would name the funeral games for Pelias to this office. But there is nothing in them or in Homer to suggest an appropriation of one by the other: indeed, the archery contest, from which Wilamowitz most strongly infers a direct model, is not even represented on the Cypselus chest, and so far as we know did not occur in the games for Pelias.

¹¹ 4.180-end.

¹² Phot. *Bibl.* 239 (p. 319a Bekker).

¹³ Proclus, *EGF* s. *Aethiopis*, p. 34. Cf. Dares Phrygius, *De Excidio Troiae Historia* 34 end.

archetypes. Quintus, it would appear, followed here the archetype represented by the *Odyssey*, for Thetis presides over the games in the *Posthomerica* (4.115–117). Yet Homer states that the prizes she offered had come from the gods;¹⁴ no such prizes are mentioned in Quintus, though such a motif ought to have proved very tempting to a late poet, had he found it in his original. It is possible that Quintus deliberately chose for his model an epic or epics which were not canonized in the Cycle.

The most obvious point of divergence between the games of Achilles and the games of Patroclus is the very order in which the contests occur. In Homer there are eight contests,¹⁵ which occur in the following order: 1. chariot race, 2. boxing match, 3. wrestling match, 4. footrace, 5. *ὀπλομαχία*, 6. discus, 7. archery, 8. hurling the javelin. Because of the authority of Homer, and the fact that all the later poets but Quintus follow this scheme in the main, it has come to seem the classic and accepted order of the events. The order in Quintus however is quite different: 1. footrace, 2. wrestling match, 3. boxing match, 4. archery, 5. discus, 6. leaping, 7. hurling the javelin, 8. pancration,¹⁶ 9. chariot race, 10. horse race. Homer begins with the chief event, to which he devotes more space than to all the other contests together, and each successive contest is less important than the preceding. Quintus on the contrary develops a crescendo which culminates in the chariot race and horse race at the end. His least important contests he buries in the middle. The Olympic games offer a parallel. As Pausanias informs us,¹⁷ after Ol. 77 (472 B.C.) the chariot (and horse) races came last, being preceded by the lesser games. The games had always been inaugurated by the footrace from the very beginning. Presumably the other national games in general followed suit, since they are supposed to have been modelled on the Olympic festival.

¹⁴ *Od.* 24.85–6.

¹⁵ Wilamowitz, *Ilias u. Homer* 68, believes that all eight of the contests are "original," in the sense that, whenever written or by whatever poet they were added to the *Iliad*, all are from the same hand. His point seems well founded.

¹⁶ 4.479–80: *πονέεσθαι χερσὶν ὁμῶς καὶ ποσσίν.*

¹⁷ Paus. 5.9.3. Cf. Xenoph. 2 (Bergk), which in referring to the Olympic games lists the contests in this order: footrace, pentathlon, wrestling, boxing, pancration, horse (and/or chariot) races. Cf. Pi. O. 10.64ff. Xenophanes remarks that "swiftness of foot is most honored in all contests of human strength,"—an importance it must have yielded to the chariot races at a later date. Perhaps here is added evidence that games commencing with the footrace stem from an earlier tradition than those inaugurated by the chariot race.

Our clearest evidence is afforded by Sophocles' *Electra* (680–760), from a scene in which the paedagogus deceives Clytemnestra by a fictitious account of the death of Orestes in the Pythian games. To have been at all convincing it is elementary that the account must have been in complete accord with the actual well-known games.¹⁸ First the paedagogus tells us that Orestes was victor in the footrace, then in *all* the other contests; but finally, at the close of the games, in a tremendously exciting race, Orestes is killed when his chariot is wrecked.

Three of Quintus' contests we have not previously met: 6. leaping, 8. the pancration, and 10. the horse race. The leap was a very old contest, and took place among the games of the Phaeacians (*Odyssey* 8.103, 128). The pancration, comprising both wrestling and boxing, is generally thought to be a later type of contest, which was not introduced into the Olympic games until Ol. 33 (648 B.C.),¹⁹ along with the horse race—our earliest documentary evidence of their existence. Hyginus' description of the first Olympic games (the eighth in his list) expressly mentions Heracles' participation in the pancration;²⁰ and the pancration also takes its place (with Heracles again as victor) in the games for Pelias (Hyginus' twelfth festival). Both occurrences are suspect and bespeak a late epic source, since Heracles seems alone identified with the character of this contest. The horse race is mentioned in the same games, and was won by Bellerophon—an added reason for suspicion. No other evidence for the horse race as a part of the epic games comes to light.²¹ Quintus may have had in hand the late epic which served as Hyginus' source, or he may have drawn these particular events from the tradition of the national games.

No doubt he used a written source wherever one could be found. And in these, the testimony regarding the order of contests is uni-

¹⁸ Not, as Martin states (DS *s.v.* Hippodromos), a literary borrowing from *Iliad* 23. Not only the order of the contests, but the individual details of the narrative bear no resemblance to Homer.

¹⁹ Paus. 5.8.8; Eus. *Chron.* 1.198, ed. Schöne *s.* Ol. 33; Philostr. *Gym.* 12. The earliest literary evidence for the pancration is Xenoph. 2, 5 (Bergk).

²⁰ *Fab.* 273.5; cf. schol. Isid. 18.11, 12 (p. 161). Pi. O. 10.64ff. gives a different, and more circumstantial account of the first Olympic games; the pancration is omitted.

²¹ Despite A. Martin in DS *s.v.* Hippodromos, who attributes the source of the horse race in Quintus to the *Amazonis* of Arctinus, since the Amazons there appear fighting on horseback. But the history of riding and fighting on horseback, as traced in Welcker, *Der epische Cyclus* (Bonn, 1849) 2.217–219, is a different matter altogether, and Welcker could adduce no evidence for this horse race other than Hyginus.

form. The Chest of Cypselus depicted the funeral games for Pelias in the following order: ²² 1. footrace, 2. discus, 3. wrestling match, 4. boxing match, and 5. the chariot race. It is worth noting that these contests, as far as they go, are in the precise order of those in Quintus. Of course, representations of epic themes in art must be judged cautiously, as Luckenbach has well pointed out. ²³ But one might expect more care in the artist of the chest than in a vase painter; and the Corinthian vase (see note 3) corroborates several details in the case of the chariot race: that Euphemus was victor, and that Admetus and one of the Dioscuri came next.

With these details the Hyginus account of the Pelian games fails to correspond. An incredible number of games are there presented, eighteen in all. The list, with the victors in each, is as follows: 1. *δολιχόδρομος*, Zetes, 2. *δίαυλος*, Calais, 3. *στάδιον*, Castor, 4. boxing, Pollux, 5. discus, Telamon, 6. wrestling, Peleus, 7. pancration, Heracles, 8. javelin, Meleager, 9. *όπλομαχία*, Cygnus over Pilus, 10. horse race, Bellerophon, 11. four-horse chariot race, Iolaus over Glaucus, 13. archery, Eurytus, 14. sling, Cephalus, 15. flute, Olympus, 16. lyre, Orpheus, 17. song, Linus, and 18. song to accompaniment of flute, Eumolpus. The list is preposterous. The poet had apparently included all the contests of which he had ever heard, most of them of late origin. The *δίαυλος*, for example, is first heard of at the Olympic Games in Ol. 14, ²⁴ the *δολιχόδρομος* in Ol. 15; both were late developments of the *στάδιον*. The pancration and horse race are later still (Ol. 33); and the musical contests seem to be drawn from the Pythian games, and to be totally out of place here. One suspects that the author has arbitrarily assigned, to a list of games compiled from the Olympic and Pythian festivals, early heroes each of whom was associated with and typical of the individual race to which he was assigned: for example, Calais and Zetes to footraces, Pollux to boxing, Heracles to the pancration, Meleager to the javelin cast, Cygnus to the murderous fight in full armor, Bellerophon to the horse race, Iolaus, who won the chariot

²² Paus. 5.17.9-10. Pausanias describes the games in reverse order, but this is made clear by his announcing as victor the last named of each group, and the appearance of Acastus at the very end offering a wreath to Iphiclus, victor in the footrace.

²³ H. Luckenbach, "Das Verhältniss der griechischen Vasenbilder zu den Gedichten des epischen Kyklos," *Jahrb. für class. Philol.*, Supplb. 11 (1880) 495-499. He calls attention to the fact that the only accuracy in the representation of the games for Patroclus on the François vase is the appearance of Achilles as the host of the games.

²⁴ Paus. 5.8.6.

race at the Heracleean Olympic games,²⁵ to the chariot race, and Olympus, Orpheus, Linus, and Eumolpus to the music contests. It sounds like a crude attempt made in the spirit of the Alexandrian writers of *aetia*. In only one detail, or possibly two, does the picture coincide with the Corinthian vase and the Cypselus chest: Peleus takes part in the wrestling match; and on the Cypselus chest Iolaus is represented near, though not in the games, as having won a victory with his chariot. One is astonished not at the paucity of parallels, but at the existence of any. Certainly the chest and vase are of the greater authority and far closer to the original story. The only value the Hyginus account has for our purposes is a further confirmation of the traditional order of the contests. They begin with the footraces, and end with the chariot.

Still another interesting parallel is found in Homer himself, when Nestor speaks of the games for Amarynceus (*Il.* 23.630ff.). The order was as follows: 1. boxing match, 2. wrestling match, 3. footrace, 4. spear cast, and finally 5. chariot race. The games of the Phaeacians in the *Odyssey* (8.118–130) are of little help because they omit the chariot race, or, what would probably have taken its place, the boat race. In any case, however, the games are started with the footrace, and the rest follow in this order: 2. wrestling, 3. leaping, 4. boxing, and 5. hurling the discus. The games are apparently felt to be complete; no omission seems to be felt in beginning the games there, and no mention is made of any other type of contest, until a little later Alcinous boasts of the Phaeacian prowess at the oar (247). If we may take this statement with Gardner²⁶ as a reference to boat racing, as seems likely, then Alcinous *at the end of the games* seemed to feel it necessary to apologize for the absence of proof of this skill.

In the *Shield of Heracles* (301–13) Hesiod describes a series of games depicted on the shield in much the same order. First there were men boxing and wrestling; then a chase; finally a vividly sketched chariot race. All the evidence for the order of games, outside of Homer and the epics which use him as a model, therefore, is unanimous: though the order of contests is not fixed, nevertheless, in the Cyclic Epics, as well as in the great national festivals, the footrace commonly began the series, followed by the gymnastic events, and finally by the chariot race.

²⁵ Paus. 5.8.3, 4.

²⁶ Percy Gardner, "Boat Races among the Greeks," *JHS* 2 (1881) 90–91.

Instead of preserving the normal epic tradition in the order of the contests, therefore, Homer is unique in offering the scheme in reverse. No reason for this innovation immediately appears. Few editors have thought it worth commenting on. The suggestion by Paley and some others that the chariot race appropriately occurs first, since Patroclus was a *ἱππεύς*,²⁷ is far from convincing. In the absence of any apparent reason for the change, it is possible that Homer may here be following a source in which some special fitness for it might have been sought.

That Nonnus, who, because of his subject, might have been expected to follow the Thebaid epics, nevertheless followed the Homeric games for Patroclus almost exclusively, can be conclusively demonstrated by a point by point comparison of his text with Homer's.²⁸ Nowhere is the identity more striking than in the order of the contests. Homer's eight contests were 1. chariot race, 2. boxing, 3. wrestling, 4. footrace, 5. *δπλομαχία* or spear cast, 6. discus, 7. archery, and 8. javelin cast. In Nonnus there are but seven: 1. chariot, 2. boxing, 3. wrestling, 4. footrace, 5. discus, 6. archery, and 7. spear cast. As in Homer, the chariot race is longer than all the other contests combined. In each event he presents the same number of contestants as the corresponding event in Homer: between no two other epics are such exact parallels to be found. The one divergence is the omission of Homer's javelin cast, with the transposition of the spear cast to take its place at the end. Observation of the text will clearly indicate the reason for this change. In Homer the javelin cast, in which the distance of the throw is the object, is abortive. Because Agamemnon enters the lists, Achilles, out of deference to his rank, calls off the performance and awards him the prize. Quite different was the *spear* cast in which the object was a mimic duel between two warriors in full armor. Nonnus evidently confuses the two; and, because Homer has failed to describe the contest of hurling the javelin, Nonnus seems to have assumed that it would have followed the same course, between Agamemnon and Meriones, as had the spear cast between Ajax and Diomedes. That he has no clear idea of a javelin cast is indicated by his use of the word *ἀκοντιστήρας*,²⁹ "javelin-men," light-armed

²⁷ See Paley's note on 23.262, *The Iliad of Homer* (London, 1882) 2.404.

²⁸ *D.* 37.103 to end.

²⁹ *Ibid.* 37.750, 756, 771.

warriors, to apply to Asterius and Aeacus, who forthwith appear in heavy arms, and enact precisely the same drama as Ajax and Diomedes in Homer. The game is even stopped at the same point, when the host in each case observes the danger of death to the lesser warrior:³⁰ Achilles because he sees the battle waxing too hot, and Diomedes taking it too seriously, but Dionysus, apparently gifted with prophetic vision, because he perceives that Aeacus has aimed his spear at his opponent's throat, and that if he lets it fly Asterius is doomed! If they were always so sure of their mark, one wonders why the ancient heroes did not always aim at their opponent's throat.

Nonnus, then, deceived as to the nature of the undescribed Homeric javelin cast, believed the two contests to be identical in nature, and doubtless felt that he had improved on Homer by avoiding the repetition. So complete is the parallelism throughout that we need seek no other source or model.

The order of the games, as well as other points, indicates that the Latin epics, too, stemmed from Homer, but in no such direct fashion. An entirely different problem lay before the Roman poets. They could not draw as freely on Greek epic tradition as the Greek poets had done, since this tradition was strictly not their own. They were writing for Roman audiences, and their content had to be palatable to Roman tastes. The very nature of their subjects, the glorification of early Roman heroes, enforced this requirement on Vergil and Silius. Statius, though he chose a Greek theme in his *Thebaid*, nevertheless presented it wherever possible in Roman garb, and injected into it a strong Roman flavor. To introduce the funeral games for Opheltes, which formed a traditional part of the *Thebaid* story and which served as the legendary origin of the Nemean Games, Statius described a Roman funeral, complete in all its details, with the customary Roman procession of the *imagines* of ancestors (6.268-94).

The majority of the contests celebrated by all three are of course Greek. But these were carefully adjusted to Roman custom, and were no innovations. The national and traditional Roman games were not gymnastic like the Greek, but rather gladiatorial and spectacular. Livy frequently describes them. But even in the time of the early republic an attempt was made to transplant

³⁰ Compare *D.* 37.767-771 with *Il.* 23.820-823.

gymnastic contests to Rome.³¹ The first on record were imported in 186 B.C. by Marcus Fulvius Nobilior.³² Sulla, in 81 B.C., so depleted Greece of athletes in order to celebrate his triumph, that the Olympic games of the 175th Olympiad were reduced to a solitary race.³³ Marcus Aemilius Scaurus introduced Greek contests into the regular Roman games in 58 B.C.³⁴ Pompey held similar games at the dedication of his theatre in 55. Gladiatorial exhibitions had long formed a common element in Roman funeral customs; but Gaius Scribonius Curio was apparently the first to introduce Greek contests when commemorating his father in 53.³⁵ To celebrate his triumph in 46 Caesar held a three day festival of athletic contests.³⁶ Augustus, fortified by his natural leanings toward Greek culture, set himself to encourage athletic contests of the Greek type at the expense of the more brutal Roman games, and himself held such games three times.³⁷

Most important were the Actian games. Long before the battle of Actium, the Greek inhabitants of the neighborhood had celebrated a local festival, termed an ἀγών στεφανίτης.³⁸ On this old stock Augustus grafted his foundation of the great new Actian Games in honor of Apollo, to take their place as a fifth beside the four great national games of Greece.³⁹ That the games were accepted as such is attested by inscriptions from numerous Greek cities commemorating victories in the games.⁴⁰ From these inscriptions we learn that the games included the following contests in three classes for men, youths, and boys: footraces (δίαυλος, ὀπλίτης δρόμος, and δολιχόδρομος), wrestling, boxing, pancration, pentathlon, and contests for heralds, musicians and poets. Horse (chariot?) racing also found its place in the games.⁴¹ The most interesting

³¹ L. Friedländer in *Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms* (Leipzig, 1921-23) 2.147ff. has collected the evidence.

³² Liv. 39.22.2.

³³ App. *BC* 1.99.

³⁴ Val. Max. 2.4.7.

³⁵ Plin. *Nat.* 36.120.

³⁶ Suet. *Caes.* 39.3.

³⁷ D.C. 51.22; Plin. *Nat.* 7.159; Suet. *Aug.* 43; *Mon. Ancyr.* 4, 45-47.

³⁸ Str. 7.7.6. Harpocration *s.v.* "Ἀκτια quotes Callimachus (ἐν τῷ περὶ ἀγώνων) as an authority for these early games.

³⁹ Str. *loc. cit.*; D.C. 51.1; Dittenberger-Purgold, *Inschr. Olymp.* 230, 231; *CIG* 4472, 10.

⁴⁰ Cf. Reisch, *RE s.v.* "Aktion."

⁴¹ Stephanus of Byzantium, *s.v.* "Ἀκτιον refers to an ἀγών ἵππικός, though his statement is usually referred to the earlier games. But Dio Cassius (51.1) expressly

speculation has arisen over the interpretation of a passage in Stephanus of Byzantium in regard to the existence and nature of a boat race in the Actian games. Stephanus (*s.v.* "Ακτιον) reads: ἐν ταύτῃ 'Απόλλωνος γυμνικός ἀγὼν καὶ ἵππικὸς καὶ πλοίων ἄμιλλα διὰ τριετηρίδος ἦν. Because of τριετηρίδος the passage is generally taken to describe the earlier local games at Actium. The πλοίων ἄμιλλα can only mean a boat race.⁴² As if the point stood in need of proof, Gardner, adducing a parallel from the Isthmian Games, and coins of Corcyra, Leucas and Nicopolis from the fourth to the first century, places the question beyond doubt in his excellent article,⁴³ much quoted but little read. For both Gardthausen and Reisch⁴⁴ quote Gardner as establishing the existence of a ναυμαχία (which they understand by πλοίων ἄμιλλα) at Actium—the point he was at such labor to disprove! By a decree of the Senate in 30 B.C., quinquennial Actian games were founded at Rome, and the first festival took place at the consecration of the temple of Apollo on the Palatine, in 28 B.C.⁴⁵

Thus the stage was set for Vergil to follow the Greek epic tradition in introducing games in the *Aeneid*, as part of his contribution to the ideology of the new regime. He also had the very best of literary authority, for Ennius in the *Annales* had described the games held by Romulus at the consecration of the temple of Jupiter Feretrius; they appear to have included a boxing match and a chariot race.⁴⁶

That Vergil was acquainted with the Cycle has already been noted, and is witnessed by the argument of the first six books of the *Aeneid*. But as a model for his games he turned to Homer.

The games for Anchises run as follows: ⁴⁷ 1. boat race, 2. footrace,

mentions a horse race, in a passage apparently ignored by Reisch in Pauly-Wissowa, who consequently is assailed by doubts of its existence: ἀγῶνά τέ τινα καὶ μουσικὸν καὶ γυμνικὸν ἵπποδρομίας τε πεντετηρικὸν ἱερὸν . . . κατέδειξεν.

⁴² Cf. Th. 6.32.12. Boat races were a familiar part of athletic festivals at Athens. See A. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen* (Leipzig, 1898) 145–8, 463–4; and E. N. Gardner, *op. cit.* 229–30, 240–1.

⁴³ Percy Gardner, "Boat races among the Greeks," *JHS* 2 (1881) 90–97.

⁴⁴ Gardthausen, *Augustus und seine Zeit* (Leipzig, 1891–1904) 2.206, note 18; Reisch *op. cit.*

⁴⁵ D.C. 51.19.2; 53.1.4ff.

⁴⁶ Enn. (ed. Vahlen, Leipzig, 1903), *Ann.* 1. fr. 51 (Bern. Sch. Georg. 2.384): Romulus cum aedificasset templum Iovi Feretrio, pelles unctas stravit et sic ludos edidit ut caestibus (caelibus, Burmann) dimicaret et curru (cursu, Bernens.) contenderent, quam rem Ennius in annalibus testatur.

⁴⁷ Much of the following material on Vergil's games I owe to the admirable treatment by Heinze, *Virgils Epische Technik* (Leipzig, 1903) 140–166; and Cartault *L'Art de Vergile* (Paris, 1926) 1.367–387, 406–419.

3. boxing match, 4. archery, and 5. the Ludus Troiae. Aeneas' first announcement of the games (5.64-70) had specified a boat race, a footrace, a javelin cast, archery and boxing. The javelin cast is however omitted, and the order modified. Perhaps this indicates a lack of final revision of the poem. The introduction of the boat race needs no further comment. Significantly, in working out the narrative of the contest, Vergil borrows many of the details directly from Homer's chariot race; he even compares the ships as they start out with two-horse chariots bursting forth from their stalls and racing over the plain (5.144-7). The footrace, boxing match, and contest of archers in incident and detail borrow heavily from Homer. But the Ludus Troiae, an equestrian exhibition for boys (more an exercise of maneuvers than a contest), is an innovation. Augustus, we are told,⁴⁸ was especially fond of this game and had it performed often until an accident befell the grandson of Asinius Pollio, who insisted that the senate place it under ban. By folk etymology the old Italic game *truia*⁴⁹ was assimilated to *troia* and mistakenly associated with Troy. Hence it was natural for Vergil to include in his games the prototype of the "Troy Game" which found such favor with his patron; indeed his readers would assuredly expect to find it described in the authoritative book on the Trojan origin of Rome.

Vergil, then, is very eclectic in his selection of games for the *Aeneid*. Primarily he follows Homer, by commencing with the boat race, his equivalent for the chariot race. He rescues the latter games from the gradual diminuendo of interest in Homer, however, by highly developing them. Where Homer had injected an element of surprise in the footrace by having an accident occur, Vergil adds an additional surprise, and with a second accident eliminates two contestants instead of one. For the boxing match he employs two sources besides Homer, Apollonius and Theocritus,⁵⁰ and gives the development a psychological turn of his own. A divine portent enhances the archery contest; a novelty, the Troy game, is kept for the end. Nor are the games so disproportionate

⁴⁸ Suet. *Aug.* 43; D.C. 51.22.

⁴⁹ Cf. K. Schneider, *RE s.v.* "Lusus Troiae," 2059; Walde-Hofmann, *Lateinisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg, 1938) *s.v.* *amptuare*, cites as a gloss *truant* = *moventur*. The word *truia* is connected with *turma*, which is used of the game in Suet. *Caes.* 39.

⁵⁰ A.R. 2.1-98; Theoc. 22; cf. Heinze, *op. cit.*, 158-9.

in length as in Homer: the first and third events are both told at length (boat race 181 lines, boxing match 122), the second, fourth and fifth more briefly (footrace 70, archery 59, Ludus Troiae 58). The contestants in the games are cleverly varied: in the first appear the Trojan leaders and heroes, in the second, youths, in the third, older men, in the fourth, the Sicilian hero Acestes, who was to play a historical part in the founding of Egesta, in the fifth, boys. With this compare the contests for separate age classes at the Actia: games for *παῖδες*, for *ἀγένητοι*, and for *ἄνδρες*.⁵¹ Such distinctions, probably stemming from Vergil, who may here have found a source, exist only in the Latin epics. In these and in many other details Vergil skilfully avoids repetition and monotony; the method of presentation of each contest differs from every other. In his principle of conscious variation, and carefully balanced organization, Vergil stands alone. None of the other epics gives any such evidence of having been so carefully planned in advance.

The order of the contests in Statius' funeral games for Opheltes (*Thebaid* 6) is in the main Vergilian: 1. chariot race, 2. footrace, 3. discus, 4. boxing, 5. wrestling, 6. sword fight, 7. archery, which as in Vergil serves as the vehicle of a divine portent. Further, like the last event in Vergil's series, the Ludus Troiae, it is not strictly speaking a contest, but rather an exhibition of prowess in honor of the dead. The events they both describe occur in precisely the same order; while the three not in Vergil, the discus, the wrestling match, and the sword fight, are simply interpolated in the series. This use of Vergil is the more remarkable because Statius drew his story from the Greek Thebaid cycle, and may possibly have used Antimachus' *Thebaid* as a model. That these epics contained games is attested by the accounts of funeral games for Oedipus, and for Opheltes elsewhere. One would therefore assume that the three non-Vergilian contests occurred in the Greek epics; and of course there are many parallels. None of the Greek epics omits wrestling and hurling the discus. The announcement of a sword fight reminds one perhaps of the Greek *ὀπλομαχία*, examples of which were no doubt to be found in the earlier Thebaid; but far more convincingly of the Roman gladiatorial combat. It is not unlike Statius to read Roman customs into his Greek story, as evidenced by the procession of the *imagines* already alluded to. But this contest

⁵¹ See above p. 404, and note 40.

does not take place, though the prince Polynices and Agreus volunteer. One is reminded of the javelin cast in the *Iliad*, in which the king Agamemnon wins an uncontested victory over Meriones. But since Adrastus prohibits the contest on the grounds of aversion to bloodshed, Statius may here be expressing his disapproval of the Roman gladiatorial games, in favor of the more humane Greek gymnastic contests.

Silius Italicus (*Punica* 16) preserves but two of the Vergilian games; they occur, however, in the Vergilian order: 1. chariot race, 2. footrace, 3. swordfight, 4. javelin, 5. spear cast. Note that the number of events is reduced to five, doubtless a lesson from Vergil. The swordfight is an intrusive element borrowed directly from Livy (28.21), who has supplied Silius with the text of his epic. There, commemorative funeral games of the usual Roman gladiatorial variety were held by Scipio Africanus in Spain in honor of his father and uncle, who six years previously had been killed in the Spanish wars.⁵² Roman soldiers and Spaniards of every rank and variety volunteered for the combat. Two in particular are named, the native princes Corbis and Orsua, first cousins, who fought out a disputed claim to an inherited throne; Orsua, the younger, apparently was killed and the claim settled. Silius (16.527-556), among other combats not described, tells of a duel to the death of two brothers who had the same business in hand as Corbis and Orsua. Both were killed, and burned on the same pyre; but even in death their flames and ashes fell apart. Silius has obviously modified the story he found in Livy to conform to the Thebaid episode of the precisely similar death and funeral of Eteocles and Polynices.⁵³ The remainder of the combats, since he did not find them described in detail in his source, Silius leaves undeveloped.

The javelin cast apparently replaces the Vergilian archery contest, since the javelins are thrown not for distance but at a mark. But the divine portent is retained for the last contest, as in Vergil; here it is the undeveloped spear cast which, unlike the Greek spear casting, apparently aimed only for distance. Like the Ludus Troiae in Vergil, and the arrow shot in Statius, it too is only an exhibition of the might of the chief heroes present, in honor of the dead. The portent described, namely that Scipio's spear upon

⁵² Livy 25.34, 36.

⁵³ Ov. *Trist.* 5.5.33-6; cf. *Ib.* 35-6. The story is told in Hyg. *Fab.* 68, and especially in Stat. *Theb.* 12.429-446.

striking the ground took root and sprang into a tree, is a story found in Ovid,⁵⁴ who probably took it from Ennius.⁵⁵

The significant thing is that, however the details of the games of Statius and Silius differ from Vergil, and from whatever sources the incidents are drawn, the plan and arrangement in both is essentially Vergilian. Vergil, following Homer, had established a tradition in the order and handling of the contests. While in the Greek epic games the contestants were uniformly heroes, participation in the Latin epic games is divided between boys, youths and men. The number of the contests is limited, and their scope selected to accord with Roman tastes. The chariot race occurs first in each, the footrace second. The games all include divine portents, found in none of the Greek epic contests, and occurring in the final contest in each series⁵⁶ as the culminating point.

III. PRIZES

A comparative examination of the prizes offered in the six extant epics may afford valuable evidence of the method and sources of their authors. All the established national games of Greece and many of the minor ones were *ἀγῶνες στεφανίται*, carrying no material prizes for the victors; and this tradition was kept in the later games, such as the Actia founded by Augustus. All the contests in the epic, however, award material prizes, and stem from an earlier tradition—*ἀγῶνες χρηματῖται* they were called.

Those of the minor local games of Greece which offered as prizes objects of value, instead of a crown to the victor, announced a single object, which became typical of that festival: for example, a bronze shield at the Heraia and Hecatombaia in Argos; a silver cup at the Marathonian games; oil at the Panathenaia; and a cloak at the Hermaia at Pellene.⁵⁷ Prize amphoras for the same purpose are well known. The significant fact is that only one prize, that to the victor, was awarded at such a contest. Contestants winning second and lower places went unrewarded and unsung.

This fashion of awarding prizes was well known in the early epic. Traces of it may be glimpsed in Homer. Neleus had sent a quadriga to

⁵⁴ *Met.* 15.560–4, which attributes the prodigy to the spear of Romulus. Cf. *Aen.* 3.45–6, where the spears which slew Polydorus have taken root; Serv. *ad loc.* repeats the story of Romulus' spear.

⁵⁵ Silius' relations with Ennius have been much discussed. Cf. John Nicol, *The Historical and Geographical Sources used by Silius Italicus* (Oxford, 1936) 124–5.

⁵⁶ The Ludus Troiae in Vergil is strictly speaking outside the bounds of the regular games.

⁵⁷ Sch. Pi. *O.* 13.148 (Boeckh); cf. Nonn. *D.* 37.146–51. For the shield in the Argive games, cf. Hyg. *Fab.* 273.2.

Elis, to race for a tripod.⁵⁸ In Achilles' pursuit of Hector around Troy, the heroes are racing for Hector's life, not for a beast of sacrifice or a bull's hide; and they are as swift as chariots in a course, when "some great prize is set forth, a tripod or a woman."⁵⁹ Clearly a single prize for the victor is meant. On the Hesiodic Shield of Heracles, horsemen were represented "contending for a prize"; "a great tripod of gold, the splendid work of cunning Hephaestus"⁶⁰ was set out for them. As Hyginus reports his version at the games for Patroclus,⁶¹ Ajax as victor in wrestling receives a golden cauldron; Menelaus, conquering at the javelin, takes a golden lance. Homer and Hesiod constitute our earliest literary evidence, and in these passages seem to have drawn from sources still earlier than themselves. It was the custom, it would appear, that the contestants should strive for a single prize.

It seems natural, therefore, that Quintus, if he is following an early source, should name but one prize in each of his contests. In one contest only is a second prize awarded, in the horse race, which, as we have seen, is a later intrusion. In this respect, Quintus' evidence belongs to a very early date.

But in Homer a quite different principle is in highly developed operation. Virtually all the contestants receive prizes. Before each contest Achilles announces not only a first prize for the victor, but second, third and fourth as well, implying in the number of prizes offered the number of contestants expected to take part. Even those who come in last, or suffer accidents, and clearly deserve no prize, nevertheless receive them by special dispensation. Perhaps the general distribution of prizes accords with the nature of the bounteous funeral games. Or perhaps a later period is suggested, when the contestants need more incentive to enter the lists. But the agreement of the number of contestants with the number of prizes would indicate that the poet first found a stated number of rivals in his model, and then offered in his own work a sufficient quantity of prizes to cover these contestants. The fallacy lies in announcing the right number beforehand. All these considerations lead to the conclusion that the funeral games of Patroclus represent a later stage of development than the sources of Quintus.

The Homeric archery contest, discussed above,⁶² may offer a clue to this development. The earliest prototype probably specified a single prize to the archer who shot the dove. When complications set in in his successor (perhaps the immediate source of *Iliad* 23), who introduced two first-class shots, one which severed the cord, and another which transfixes the dove in mid flight, a second or consolation prize was awarded to the cord-severer. The poet of *Iliad* 23 then, following his model right out of the window, *announces* both these prizes in advance, and foretells the conclusion.

⁵⁸ *Il.* 11.699-701.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* 22.159-164.

⁶⁰ *Hes. Sc.* 305ff.

⁶¹ *Hyg. Fab.* 273.

⁶² See pp. 395-396.

In one case only do the games for Patroclus preserve the original principle of the solitary prize. Homer offers to the winner of the discus cast the very mass of iron (σόλον αὐτοχόωνον, 826) which is to be hurled in the contest. Such a prize is reminiscent of more primitive days when the heroes were feudal lords of the soil, and would deem such a prize of great value. The antiquity of the prize then corroborates our interpretation of the single prize as the earlier motif; and incidentally militates against those critics who would like to consider the discus contest as a late interpolation. A later poet, following such a model, would be apt to do as Quintus did. Quintus indeed presented the σόλος to the victor, but only to play with;⁶³ as a substantial prize he received the arms of Memnon.

The remainder of our epics, as they followed Homer in their general plan and arrangement, so also follow him in awarding many prizes. Vergil has Aeneas state expressly that all who enter the lists will receive prizes (5.305). Silius in this follows Vergil,⁶⁴ and Nonnus, Homer. Statius seems to make an effort to compromise between the two principles. In the boxing match he offers only one prize; only in the wrestling match and perhaps the discus, does he grant prizes to all participants, though in the footrace all who fail to receive first or second place receive Lycian quivers. In the chariot race, three prizes are awarded among seven entrants. Possibly Statius found the single prize system or a modification of it in his Thebaid models; but he tried to accommodate his own games to the Vergilian pattern.

The earliest prizes on record, commonly associated with the chariot race, were tripods. So Neleus' quadriga (*Iliad* 11.700) was to race for a tripod. Homer (*Iliad* 22.159ff.) mentions a tripod or a woman as prizes typical of the chariot race; and a sacrificial animal or a bull's hide, of the footrace. On the shield of Heracles a golden tripod was set as prize for the victor. In early art tripods appear on the Cypselus chest and the Corinthian vase as prizes in the chariot race of the Pelian games; so also on the François vase in the chariot race for Patroclus. These prizes, together with golden cups, are mentioned as contemporary with Pindar.⁶⁵ In addition Homer (*Odyssey* 8.403-405, 430-431) has the Phaeacians after their games present Odysseus with a bronze sword of silver hilt, with an ivory sheath, and a cup of gold. A shield was the prize of the ἀσπίς ἐν Ἀργεῖ; a golden cauldron and a golden lance are prizes given in the games for Patroclus (Hyginus, *Fab.* 273). These prizes of gold would seem to replace earlier more useful articles with precious metal by embellishment of a late poet, after the bronze or iron object had lost its original value.

Homer's woman and tripod for the victor of the chariot race, and as separate prizes offered to the wrestlers (though both by a tie receive equal prizes, presumably tripods), are reminiscent of the passage quoted

⁶³ 4.463-4:

αὐτὸς δ' αὖτ' ἀνάειρε μέγαν σόλον ὄφρα οἱ εἴη
τερπωλὴ μένος ἧῦ λιλαιομένῳ πονέεσθαι.

⁶⁴ 16.301.

⁶⁵ *I.* 1.18ff.

above from *Iliad* 22. Animals are common: a mare in foal, a mule and an ox in the footrace (cf. *Iliad* 22.159). The ox, the tripod and the woman may be evidences of familiarity with the *Iliad* in the author of Book 23. The silver studded sword may hark back to the sword given to Odysseus by the Phaeacian Euryalus. The axes given to the archers are discussed above.⁶⁶ The rest of the prizes consist simply of arms, cups and bowls, and talents of gold.

Vergil's use of prizes follows closely the Homeric tradition: in fact, many prizes which Vergil awards to his victors are borrowed from the *Iliad*. Out of the seventeen different sorts of prizes named in each poet, nine are common to both, and the remainder are much of the same sort.

Yet Vergil uses his Homeric borrowings with originality. When Nonnus borrows prizes from Homer, as often, he usually awards them in the same contests, if not in the same order, as Homer does. Vergil, however, never takes over a Homeric prize to employ in precisely the same situation. Homer, for example, offers the κρητήρ of Patroclus as first prize in the footrace; Vergil, the crater of Anchises as first prize in archery. Or again, Homer awards a cauldron as third prize in the chariot race; Vergil for the same prize in the boat race, gives not one cauldron but two, and with them silver cymbia. This is typical of the general devaluation of Homeric prizes; they have to be improved or added to to serve the purposes of Vergil and the later poets. So the woman in the Homeric chariot race, even though she has twin children in Vergil, is demoted to fourth place. In terms of oxen, though a female slave is evaluated at four oxen in Homer,⁶⁷ the woman with twins in Vergil's scheme replaces the two talents of gold as Homer's fourth prize, which are worth less than two oxen.⁶⁸ Nowhere else are articles common to Vergil and Homer used in the same contests.

Though in Homer woman, tripod, cauldron, spear and gold talent are used each as prizes on two different occasions, repeated prizes occur once only in Vergil: a helmet is given as third prize in the boxing match, a helmet and a sword as second in wrestling. But combination prizes (perhaps an evidence of lateness), employed only twice in Homer, occur six times in the *Aeneid*. Prizes common to all contestants, of which there is one example in Homer (in the ὀπλομαχία), are granted twice in Vergil (in the boat race and footrace), and once in Silius (in the chariot race). The motif does not occur elsewhere. Special or consolation prizes stem from Homer, who gives us two examples;⁶⁹ so Vergil awards two.⁷⁰ This motif is found elsewhere only in Statius.⁷¹

⁶⁶ See pp. 396-397.

⁶⁷ Value as quoted in the Homeric wrestling match: *Il.* 23.705.

⁶⁸ A talent of gold in Homer's footrace is granted as third prize, an ox as second: *Il.* 23.751, 796.

⁶⁹ Eumelus in the chariot race receives a consolation prize; Antilochus in the footrace a bonus for good behavior.

⁷⁰ Both occur in the footrace, as consolation to the two runners who met with accident and foul.

⁷¹ A woman is given to Polyneices, whose driverless chariot came in first; cf. the prize of a woman in Homer's chariot race and Vergil's boat race.

Several prizes occur in Vergil of which Homer offers us no suggestions: for example, the lorica of chain mail.⁷² The quiver occurs also in Statius,⁷³ and in Nonnus with a bow; Gnosian arrows appear with a bow in Statius⁷⁴ though the bow does not occur in Vergil. In giving an embroidered cloak Vergil is followed by both Statius and Silius,⁷⁵—an exclusively Latin epic motif. Description of the elaborately embroidered scenes may bespeak Hellenistic influence. The lion skin with golden claws in Vergil remains the same in Silius, but becomes a tiger's skin with gold claws in Statius, and a fawn skin with golden clasp in Nonnus.⁷⁶ Vergil's silver talent probably stems from Homer's gold ones; and gold talents are in fact mentioned in the introduction to the Vergilian games but never actually awarded.⁷⁷ Wreaths and palms of victory appear for the first time in Vergil, and only in the Latin epics. They are mingled freely with objects of value. Apparently the distinction between the ἀγῶνες στεφανῖται and the ἀγῶνες χρηματῖται was not as vivid to the Roman writers as to the Greek.⁷⁸

In *Aeneid* 9 (263–280, 303–307) Vergil has Ascanius and the Trojan heroes award generous prizes to Nisus and Euryalus, whom we met in the footrace, for volunteering at a time of dire peril to carry a message to Aeneas who is away from the Trojan camp on a diplomatic mission. The prizes include two engraved cups of silver, two tripods, two talents of gold, a crater (the gift of Dido), the horse of Turnus with his shield and helmet (if and when captured), twelve female slaves and (as many) males, a gilded sword with an ivory sheath, a lion skin, and a helmet. These gifts resemble strongly prizes of victory in the games, and most are traceable to Homer. They enter the tradition, and are drawn on later, especially by Silius for the prizes at the games.

Statius on the whole utilized Vergil as his model. From Vergil come many of his prizes. In some cases their prizes in common occur in the same contests: in both poets, the horse is the first prize of the footrace, while the shield (second in Statius, consolation in Vergil), and quiver (second in Vergil, general in Statius) occur in the same contest.⁷⁹ The embroidered cloak and the woman both poets consign to their first contest. Crater, animal skin, Gnosian arrows, and sword are to be found in both. The *aurata casside* of the ὀπλομαχία is borrowed from

⁷² Boat race, second prize.

⁷³ Vergil, footrace, second prize; Statius, footrace, second prize.

⁷⁴ Vergil, footrace, general prize with axe (cf. Thracian arrows and Amazonian quiver, second prize); Statius, Gnosian bow and arrows, discus, second prize.

⁷⁵ Vergil, boat race, first prize; Statius, chariot race, second (customary devaluation); Silius, sword fight. Cf. the prize of the Hermaia at Pellene mentioned above.

⁷⁶ Vergil, footrace, special prize; Silius, chariot race, third; Statius, discus, first; Nonnus, discus, fourth.

⁷⁷ *Aen.* 5.112.

⁷⁸ *Aen.* 5.110–111, 246, 309, 346, 494, 539; *Stat. Theb.* 6.810, 818, 905, 921–3; *Sil.* 16.299, 525. For the origin of the palm as the reward of victory, see F. B. Tarbell, "The Palm of Victory," *CPh* 3 (1908) 264–72.

⁷⁹ Statius awards a Lycian quiver, Vergil an Amazonian; but cf. *Aen.* 7.816: Lyciam . . . pharetram.

Vergil's *aurea cassida*⁸⁰ elsewhere in the *Aeneid*. So the *thorax* of the boxing and wrestling matches, though not in the games for Anchises, occurs often elsewhere in Vergil.⁸¹

Silius exercises a free hand in his selection of prizes, which he found not only in the games of Anchises, but, to a greater extent than Statius, in other parts of the *Aeneid*. Virtually all of his prizes were apparently suggested by Vergil; the evidence is clinched by many close verbal parallels.⁸² In some cases identical or similar prizes are used in the same contests. More striking is the wholesale transfer of prizes from one contest in Vergil to a different one in Silius: the horse, first prize in the chariot race, is the first prize in Vergil's footrace; the lion skin and helmet, third prize, chariot race, are Vergil's consolation and third prize, respectively, in the footrace;⁸³ the solid-silver battle axe, general prize in the chariot race, is a ridiculous embellishment of Vergil's silver-chased axe, general prize in the footrace. So the ox, sword and helmet of Vergil's boxing match are transferred in reverse order to Silius' footrace! The golden chain mail is borrowed from the boat race, for the spear cast; and from the same source, the woman for the javelin cast. Four of the prizes come from passages of the *Aeneid* outside the games for Anchises.⁸⁴

More closely than Silius follows Vergil, Nonnus for his prizes returns to Homer. The parallelism, as in the order of the games, is almost exact throughout.⁸⁵ Homeric prizes are generally not even shifted from

⁸⁰ Adrastus presents Agreus and Polyneices, though the swordfight is not held, with an *aurata cassis*, *Theb.* 6.920; *Aen.* 11.774-5 *aurea . . . cassida*. *Cassis* or *cassida* is rare in both poets. The *galea* is found twice in Vergil as a prize (footrace, third, boxing match, second).

⁸¹ Cf. especially *Aen.* 11.9.

⁸² Compare Silius, 16.447 with Vergil, *Aen.* 5.310; S. 450-1 with V. 351-2; S. 445 with V. 307; S. 582 with V. 259.

⁸³ Cf. *Aen.* 9.303-7, where lion skin and helmet occur together as gifts to Nisus.

⁸⁴ Compare Sil. 16.449-50 with Verg. *Aen.* 9.263; S. 456 with V. 7.688; S. 526 with V. 5.557 and 1.313 = 12.165; S. 573-4 with V. 12.751 and 10.707.

⁸⁵ I. Chariot race: 1. first prize, woman as part of a combination prize, from Homer's first prize in chariot race, woman and tripod; 2. mare in foal for second prize as in Homer; 3. breastplate for third prize as in Homer's consolation prize to Eumelus; 4. two gold talents for fifth prize, as in Homer's fourth.

II. Boxing match: 1. the ox as first prize is probably transferred from Homer's footrace, first prize.

III. Wrestling match: 1. tripod as first prize, as in Homer; 2. The cauldron as second, is Homer's third in the chariot race.

IV. Footrace: 1. the first prize, woman and silver bowl, is derived from Homer's woman and tripod, first prize in the chariot race, and from the first prize of his footrace, a silver bowl as here. 2. The sword and silver belt, third prize, probably come from the silver-studded sword given to Agamemnon.

V. Discus: The shot is a *σόλος* as in Homer; 1. helmet and two spears perhaps from the helmet, shield and spear of Homer's javelin cast. 2. *ἀμφίβητος φιάλη*, third prize, as Homer's fifth in chariot race.

VI. Archery: 1. mule, first prize, as first prize in Homeric boxing match. 2. *δέπας*, cup, second prize, as second prize in Homer's boxing match.

VII. Nonnus' only deviation from the Homeric games, to combine the spear fight and the javelin cast, introduces non-Homeric prizes.

their place. Yet Nonnus was acquainted with many other athletic contests,⁸⁶ and elsewhere drew material from the Thebaid epic, which must have celebrated games. Perhaps from these sources are derived the few divergences from Homer: as, for example, the fawn skin, which might also suggest Vergil's lion skin and Statius' tiger skin. Statius used the Thebaid epics even more than Nonnus, and Vergil no doubt knew them; possibly here was their common source. The parallelism between Vergil's *Amazoniam pharetram* and Nonnus' 'Ἀμαζονίην τε φάρετρον, and the occurrence of an ox as first prize in the boxing matches of both, are probably due to mere coincidence. Only the *μίτρη*, the golden greaves, and the "Indian stone" are left to be accounted for: *μίτρη* and *κημίς* are common enough in Homer, though never as prizes.

At the very end of Greek epic literature, in the Fifth Century of our era, Quintus plunges us back into the earliest tradition. As in the order and the whole structure of his games, so the prizes he makes use of are apparently all non-Homeric, and no doubt belonged to earlier epic tradition, from which they were passed on to the later cyclic epics which served as Quintus' models. In awarding the prizes Quintus conforms to earlier tradition in naming only one prize, that for the victor, in each contest. The only exception, the two prizes of the horse race, was shown to be an innovation of later origin. Homer plays up the prizes to the fullest extent by having Achilles announce them before each contest, as incentives to contend. Quintus follows a different tradition, by mentioning the prize only after each contest, when it is being awarded. Vergil and Nonnus follow the Homeric practice. Statius, oddly enough, departs here from Vergil, and names the prizes last, doubtless in pursuance of his Thebaid model. Silius adopts a combination of the two methods, sometimes announcing the prizes first, sometimes not;⁸⁷ influence from Statius perhaps contaminated his Vergilian tendencies.

The actual prizes offered in Quintus are most un-Homeric, and preserve an air of antiquity. Two are not found elsewhere: the ten cattle of the footrace, and the chariot and horses to the uncontested victor of the first boxing match. Full panoplies of armor of great heroes, without parallel in Homer, are three times awarded as prizes. The tied prizes of two women each (wrestling match) and two silver craters (boxing), and the silver *φιάλη* (javelin cast), are common enough articles in early epic. So the two silver talents of the pancration may have no connection with the two Homeric talents of gold. The gold *ἄλεισον* as first prize in the chariot race reminds us of Antinous' gift to Odysseus (*Odyssey* 8.430), but probably has no direct connection.⁸⁸ Perhaps the only traceable parallel among any of Quintus' prizes occurs in the late horse race. As second prize are given a helmet, two spears, and a *μίτρη*; Nonnus in his shot-put awards a helmet, two spears, as first prize, *μίτρη* as second. This coincidence may point to Quintus' acquaintance with the *Dionysiaca*.

⁸⁶ *D.* 37.136-153.

⁸⁷ In the footrace (16.458-464), the prizes are announced first; elsewhere they are cited only at the close of each contest.

⁸⁸ Cf. also *Il.* 11.774; the article was no doubt common enough.

Though Homer represents a later and more developed tradition than Quintus, *Iliad* 23 is nevertheless the oldest narrative account we possess of athletic contests, and preserves much of the earlier flavor of the Greek zest for games which the later poets ignored or lost. Only Homer has a genuine feeling and understanding of the ancient value of the prizes. Nowhere else do we find the objects which constitute the awards equated with standards of value in terms of oxen. A tripod is valued at twelve oxen, a woman at four,⁸⁹ a cauldron at one.⁹⁰ Since the same prizes occur in other contests, it is possible to prepare a scale of prizes according to their value. Thus a spear, a talent of gold, and a *φιάλη* are worth less than an ox, in descending order; a silver *κρητήρ* and a mare were worth more than one, in ascending order. In the later poets it is difficult, if not impossible, to deduce such a scale. In so far as Nonnus has copied Homer, his values present no divergence. It is easiest to calculate in the case of Quintus, who, though he gives us no ox as a basis for deduction, nevertheless seems to have preserved some trace of original values: the gold cup (*ἄλειςον*), the chariot and team, and the ten oxen appear to top the list; the arms of a hero, a silver *φιάλη*, and two silver talents apparently come next; and a silver breast plate is more valuable than a helmet, two spears, and a *μίτρη*. This scale cannot be accurately determined, since there are too many imponderables, such as the association value of a hero.

Vergil so carefully avoids repeated prizes, that but one relative value can be established for him; a sword and helmet are worth less than one ox. Of course, the incorporation of stated equations with oxen would have been a pointless archaism on the part of the Roman and later Greek poets. For Statius there is insufficient evidence. But it is quite clear from Silius that all idea of values had been lost. A breastplate is worth more than two horses; and both prizes are offered in the spear cast, while only a single horse is awarded as first prize in the chariot race, the most important contest. In Vergil we found that a sword and helmet together were worth less than an ox. But in arbitrarily reversing the order of these prizes in his footrace, Silius makes a helmet worth more than a sword, and a sword worth more than an ox!

Homer's most valuable prizes are offered in his chariot race (1),⁹¹ his next in the wrestling match (3), his third in the boxing match (2), his fourth in the footrace (4), his fifth in the javelin cast (8). In Vergil the games are evaluated in the order of boat race (1), footrace (2), archery (4), and boxing (3); in Statius chariot race (1), footrace (2), wrestling (5), boxing (4), and discus (3); in Silius spear cast (5), chariot race (1), javelin cast (4), and footrace (2). He is most out of line. Nonnus varies from Homer to some extent, probably by accident or ignorance: chariot race (1), wrestling (3), footrace (4), archery (6), boxing (2).

⁸⁹ *Il.* 23.703, 705.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 23.885.

⁹¹ The figures in parentheses denote the order in which the contests occur in the narrative.

We have no real standard of comparison for Quintus. The evaluation of each contest fails to explain its position in the series, but succeeds most nearly in Homer and, considering his scheme of organization, in Vergil. In others, evaluation of the prizes has been more or less overlooked.

IV. CONCLUSION

The selection and disposition of prizes in the six epics with funeral games confirms the picture of the epic tradition of games presented by the evidence drawn from the selection and order of the contests themselves. Even in the oldest strata of unwritten rhapsodic literature, the narration of funeral games must have been a common theme. Our earliest evidence is to be found in references in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to well-known games of the past—games which were indubitably celebrated in previous lays. From the collection of these passages relating to the nature and order of contests and prizes in these games, one must conclude that the normal order of games ran from footrace to chariot race, and that a single prize for the victor was awarded in each contest. In comparison with these principles, and from the corroboration of many minor details, the games for Achilles in Quintus' *Posthomerica* 4 seem to represent an earlier stage of tradition than the games for Patroclus in *Iliad* 23, and correspond rather with the tradition echoed in many other passages of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in the Hesiodic *Shield of Heracles*, in early art, and in the actual national games of Greece, which tradition informs us began as funeral games.

The remainder of our epics are a study in the development of the special Homeric tradition. Homer or his sources individually varied the order and technique of reporting the contests, and established a tradition which governed such later Greek epics as Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* 37, and served as a model for Vergil's *Aeneid* 5. Vergil, in turn, by a highly original and eclectic method of narrating the funeral games for Anchises, established a Latin tradition, which Statius' *Thebaid* 6 and Silius' *Punica* 16 used as their basis, and into which they interpolated material from other sources which one would have thought it more natural for them to follow.