The idea of athletic contests may well go back to Mycenaean times. The Parian Marble puts the beginning of games at Isthmia and Nemea in the Peloponnesian middle of the 13th century BCE. The ancient Olympic Games began much later in 776 BCE, at the time when Homer may well have been composing his two epics. Our earliest pictorial representation of games comes from the Minoan Period in the form of the fresco from Akrotiri of two young boys boxing, which probably dates to the 17th century BCE. From two centuries later in Crete we have the famous bull-leaping fresco and a steatite rhyton, which depicts boxing, wrestling and bull-leaping. The mythology of Crete also includes games: Androgeos, the son of Minos, went to Athens to compete in games. When he beat the locals in all events, Aegaeus, king of Athens, sent him to deal with the bull of Marathon with fatal results. Minos demanded Athenian youths and maidens, who were sacrificed to the Minotaur, as a penalty for his son's death. In due course, Theseus killed the Minotaur.

Other early representations of games can be found on Greek vases of the sixth century BCE onwards and in Etruscan tomb paintings from Tarquinia, such as the Tombs of the Augurs, the Chariot and the Olympic Games, which date to the period from 530-480 BCE. The Tarquinian paintings have a clear link to funeral practice, as they decorated the walls of the tombs of the wealthy dead. At Paestum in southern Italy Lucanian tombs dating to the middle of the fourth century BCE also are painted with representations from games.

So both books begin with celebration for a dead person. In Iliad 23 we have the ritual of the funeral of Patroclus: in Aeneid 5 the celebration is to commemorate Anchises who had died in Sicily a year before. Each of these celebrations culminates in games. The rituals of Patroclus’ funeral involve displays of reverence, the shedding of tears, ritual chanting, a funeral feast, mistreatment of the body of his killer, Hector, the collection of wood and the building of the funeral pyre, the offering of locks of hair from his companions, the preparation of the corpse for cremation, the burning of the body and the collection and storing of the ashes. There is much that we can learn about their rituals from this passage. The commemoration of Anchises’ death is only a sixth of the length of the funeral of Patroclus. Aeneas leads a procession of his people to Anchises’ tomb where he pours libations of wine, milk and sacrificial blood of animals, which will provide the meat for a celebratory feast. During the ceremony a snake slithers out from the shrine and tastes the
offerings. Aeneas is not sure whether it is the genius of the shrine or represents his father’s spirit. The ceremonies begin a period of remembrance which ends with games on the ninth day.

Let us consider Homer’s funeral in greater detail. It follows what we must assume are the rituals of high class funerals in Homer’s time. Inhumation rather than cremation seems to have been the norm for the Mycenaean Age. The length of the passage allows Homer to go through these rituals in some detail and to concentrate on the emotional nature of a funeral. The men weep so much that ‘the sands grew wet and the armour of fighting men grew wet with tears’ (16-7). As he touches Patroclus’ corpse, Achilles tells the corpse that he has avenged his death by killing Hector, whose corpse will be left for the dogs to eat. Hector’s corpse is flung face down in the dust in front of the bier. Achilles vows to sacrifice twelve young Trojans to his dead companion. Notice how Homer subtly concentrates on the egotistical nature of Achilles by using the words ‘so he triumphed’ (27). There follows a short section (30-40) describing the funeral feast which Achilles provides for his many followers (exaggerated here to ‘thousands’). The blood of the victims is used as an offering to Patroclus.

Achilles is then led to Agamemnon’s tent where he is offered hot water to wash in. He refuses to wash the blood off himself until after the funeral (51f.). He eats again reluctantly: ‘the feasting that I loathe’ (55), before directing Agamemnon to tell his men to collect wood for the funeral pyre. After the feast, the men withdraw to their tents to sleep, but Achilles goes to sleep on the seashore. In his sleep the ghost of Patroclus appears to chide Achilles for not burying him sooner (81). He says that he has been waiting too long to enter Hades (83-91). Remember that funerals usually took place very soon after death, partly for sanitary reasons. Patroclus foretells Achilles’ death (96-8) and begs that their bones may be placed in a single urn. Achilles says that he will perform the funeral.

Rosy-fingered dawn heralds the new day and the collection of timber begins (130-148). Patroclus’ corpse is escorted to the place of cremation and burial. The men cut locks from their hair to offer the corpse, Achilles last of all (155-176). Most are sent away to eat, but the captains remain. The huge pyre is built (187-9) and animals are sacrificed (190-1). Achilles wraps animal fat round the corpse to help it to burn. He places the sacrificed animals next to the corpse, together with jars of honey and oil. He adds four stallions (presumably those which pulled Patroclus’ chariot), two of his nine dogs and then hacks twelve Trojan sons to pieces (a very brutal act) (201-2). Achilles farewells Patroclus (204-11) by saying that he has offered his corpse all that he promised, but he adds that Hector’s body will not be burnt and will be left to be eaten by the dogs. Lines 211-220 describe the way in which Aphrodite and Apollo protect Hector’s body. The pyre does not burn well when it is lit. Achilles prays to the winds with the promise of offerings. Iris conveys his prayer to the winds (221-242). The winds answer the prayer and the pyre burns fiercely, while Achilles mourns his friend.

Another day dawns (259-61) and the winds die down. An exhausted Achilles falls asleep, but is woken by the noise of his men. He tells Agamemnon and Menelaus to put out the flames so that Patroclus’ bones can be collected and be put in an urn where Achilles’ bones will also be placed in due course (274-80). His egotistical nature emerges again when he tells them not to build a large barrow, as it can be made broad and lofty for him later on (281-5). The bones are collected and a tomb is built on the spot of the cremation (286-295). So ends the funeral of Patroclus. It is, however, a passage which concentrates on the character and emotions of Achilles and says much more about him than it does about Patroclus.

Let us now consider the events of the games. Homer has four events which are not in Virgil’s games: wrestling, the fight in armour, throwing a lump of iron and spear throwing. The wrestling (780-822) is between the greater Ajax and the cunning Odysseus, brawn versus brain. Homer vividly describes the wrestlers as they enter the ring and the sound of creaking bones, the sweat, the scratches that bleed
as they are locked together. Interestingly Homer describes the crowd as bored, for neither man is able to get on top. The contest is to be decided by who can lift the other. Ajax is strong enough to lift Odysseus, but Odysseus uses his cunning to bring Ajax down with him on top. Odysseus cannot lift Ajax, but again causes him to fall. Achilles stops the fight and tells them to share the prizes. The fight in armour (886-916) between the greater Ajax and Diomedes has hardly begun, when the alarm of the spectators causes Achilles to abandon the fight. He gives Diomedes first prize. Next is the iron-throwing competition; the lump of iron (remember that it is the Bronze Age and the iron would be rare) is said to be enough to last the winner five years. There are four contestants (917-941): Epeus’ throw is so poor that it causes laughter; Leonteus throws second, but his throw is surpassed by the giant greater Ajax with his rippling brawny arms. The last contestant, Polypoetes, outdoes them all to carry off the prize. The spear throwing (979-995) between Agamemnon and Meriones does not eventuate, as Achilles gives first prize to Agamemnon, whom he acknowledges as the best spear thrower of the Greeks.

Virgil includes one event which is not in Homer: the equestrian display (545-603). It is a highly descriptive passage. Three squadrons of twelve horsemen are led by Priam (grandson of Priam, king of Troy), Atys and Iulus, son of Aeneas. Iulus rides a horse given to him by Dido. They parade in front of the elders and then perform an intricate mock battle, illustrated by the similes of the labyrinth and dolphins. This equestrian display develops into the lusus Troiae which was performed in Rome in the time of Virgil.

There are four events which are common, among which I include the chariot race and the boat race. Homer has a chariot race, but, as Aeneas does not have chariots, Virgil replaces it with a boat race. I shall consider the similarities and differences in those two events in due course. The other three events in common are boxing, the footrace and archery. Let us begin with a comparison of the footraces. In Iliad 23 (823-885) Homer begins with a lengthy description of the history of the bowl which will be first prize. There are three contestants: the lesser Ajax, Odysseus and Antilochus. Ajax races ahead with Odysseus on his heels as illustrated by the simile (844-8) and the crowd roars. The race is decided, however, by divine intervention. Odysseus prays to Athena, who helps him to speed up and trips Ajax, who falls into the dung of sacrificial animals. Odysseus wins, but Ajax complains about Athena’s interference. The crowd laughs at his dung-covered appearance (871). Antilochus who is third jokes about Odysseus being very old, but with a green old age. He also flatters Achilles, who gives him more gold. In Aeneid 5 (286-361) there are seven named contestants and many more who are unnamed. We are introduced here to Nisus and Euryalus, the young friends who will be a major focus in the night expedition in Book 9. All competitors will receive prizes of arrows and an axe, but there are special prizes for the first three. In Virgil’s race there is no divine intervention. When the race begins (315), Nisus sprints ahead of Salius, Euryalus, Helymus and Diros. As he approaches the finishing line, he slips in the blood and dung from the sacrificial animals. His love for Euryalus causes him to lift himself up into the path of Salius, who also falls (327-336). Euryalus wins followed by Helymus and Diros (337-9). Salius justifiably protests. Virgil says that Euryalus has many qualities in his favour (343-5). Diros also protests. Aeneas says that the prizes should stay, but awards a special prize to Salius. Nisus asks why he is not being given a prize too. Aeneas responds with a prize.

There are many similarities and differences in the two archery contests. Homer (942-78) specifies that iron axes will be the prizes, Virgil (485-544) does not specify what the prizes will be. Both Achilles and Aeneas put up the mast of a ship with a dove tied to it. In Iliad 23 there are two competitors, Teucer and Meriones; in Aeneid 5 there are four, Hippochoon, Mnestheus, Eurytion and Acestes. In each case lots are drawn for the order in which to shoot. In Iliad 23 there is one bow which both contestants have to use; in Aeneid 5 each competitor has his own bow. Teucer shoots first in Iliad 23, but forgets to promise offerings to Apollo. His arrow cuts the cord and the dove flies off (956-63). The spectators applaud.
Meriones grabs the bow from Teucer, promises to sacrifice victims to Apollo and fires. His arrow goes through the dove and comes back to earth at his feet (964-71). The dove settles on the mast and then falls dead to the ground (972-5). The army is struck with wonder. The arrow of Hippocoon in Aeneid 5 hits the mast and causes the dove to flutter in alarm (502-6). Mnestheus cuts the cord (507-12). Eurytion (unlike Teucer) prays to his brother Pandarus before he fires. He hits the dove which falls to earth with the arrow (513-8). There is no target left for Acestes, but he fires his arrow so that the spectators would see his skill and hear the sound of his bow. His arrow miraculously bursts into flame like a shooting star (519-28). The amazed spectators pray to the gods, but Aeneas welcomes the omen and heaps praise and honours on Acestes, declaring him the winner. Eurytion does not begrudge him his prize (would a Homeric hero be so polite?) (529-542). The others claim their prizes (543-4).

Homer’s boxing match is much shorter (23.728-779: 52 lines) than Virgil’s (5.362-484: 123 lines). In each contest there will be two contestants only. In Homer the first prize is a mule, the second a double-handled cup; in Virgil a bullock is first prize, a sword and helmet the second. In Iliad 23 Epeus, son of Panopeus, the famous boxing champion, comes forward, boasts about his ability (‘I am the greatest’ (746) is reminiscent of Muhammad Ali) and threatens to beat any challenger, who may even lose his life in the process (742-52). There is dead silence (752), but Euryalus, whose father won all events at Oedipus’ funeral games, heroically accepts the challenge (753). Diomedes helps him to put on a belt and oxhide thongs (758-762). The fight begins and Homer describes the efforts required (762-6). Euryalus drops his guard. His carelessness allows Epeus to knock him out. His fall is likened to a leaping fish falling back into the water (770-2). Epeus picks him up so that his followers can drag him away spitting blood. The fight is short and brutal. Although Virgil’s description is very similar in outline, he extends the preliminaries, the fight itself and the aftermath. Dares, a giant of a man, comes forward. We are given his fighting history (368-375). As no-one dares to face him, he claims first prize, to which the Trojans murmur assent. At this point Acestes challenges Entellus to fight (387-393). Entellus replies that it is the slowness of old age which prevented him from challenging at once (394-400). He throws Eryx's gloves, which are weighted with iron and lead, into the ring (Eryx was a son of Venus and had used the gloves in a fight against Heracles which he lost.) They are said to be still caked with blood and brains. Originally boxing gloves used in the ancient Olympics were as Homer described them. In Hellenistic and Roman times they were reinforced with metal to make them more destructive. Entellus offers to give up these gloves, if Dares takes off his Trojan ones. They put on equal gloves. Just as Dares had impressed everyone with his physique and some shadow-boxing, Entellus takes off his cloak so that everyone can admire his physique. The fight begins and each blocks the other’s blows. Dares is relying on youth and speed, Entellus his reach and weight, but he is out of training and finds everything an effort (426-603). Virgil says that there are many blows which can be heard. Entellus holds his stance, keeping an eye on Dares; for Dares it is like attacking a fortress and all his attacks are in vain (437-442). Entellus aims a big right, but Dares sees it coming and steps back. Entellus misses and his momentum makes him fall like a pine tree (443-449). The spectators leap to their feet with shouts. Acestes helps Entellus back to his feet. Entellus fights with renewed fury because of fear of shame and his sense of pride. He drives Dares before him with a shower of blows like hail (453-460). Aeneas stops the fight to save Dares from further harm. His companions lead him back to his ship spitting blood and teeth. Entellus says that Aeneas has rescued Dares from death. He strikes the bullock and kills it (476-481). The original Latin here is very dramatic (procumbit humi bos – ‘fell to the ground the ox’), as it ends with an emphatic monosyllable like the bang of the bullock falling. Entellus says that the life of the bullock is worth more than that of Dares, and dedicates it to Eryx, before announcing his retirement (483-484). The boastful youth has been beaten by the champion of the past. It seems to me that Virgil, while copying the main features of Homer’s fight, has described a boxing-match much more vividly than Homer.
The similarities can easily be seen, so too can the differences, both obvious and subtle.

We come finally to Homer’s chariot race (302-600) and Virgil’s boat race (114-285). In this instance Homer’s event is roughly one hundred lines longer. It is the key event of his games. Virgil cannot ignore it, but, as Aeneas does not have chariots, he hits on the idea of a boat race instead. Boat races were common in antiquity at places like Athens. Virgil cleverly links his boat race to the chariot race by the simile (139-147) which describes how the boats leap forward from the start like two-horse chariots. The prizes are laid out for the chariot race before it begins (301-11) and for the boat race they are enumerated as they are awarded to the competitors after the race (244-285). In *Iliad* 23 the boastful Achilles claims that he would win, if he entered, but he cannot do so as his horses have been saddened by the death of Patroclus. Five competitors come forward, Eumelus, Diomedes, Menelaus, Antilochus and Meriones (329-398). In this part of the description we are given the lineage of some of the horses and a long piece of advice on chariot-racing from the aged Nestor to his son Antilochus (348-394). In his advice Nestor includes a description of the turning point (371-7). Lots are drawn for positions. In *Aeneid* 5 there are four boats, three of whose captains are linked to famous Roman families by their names (114-123). They are Mnestheus on Pritis, Gyas (not given a Roman family) on Chimaera, Sergestus on Centaur and Cloanthus on Scylla. The ships are an anachronism, of course, as Virgil envisages them as triremes of his day rather than the very much smaller ships of the Mycenaean Age. The turning point is described and lots are drawn.

In *Iliad* 23 the race begins. Homer ignores the journey out to the turning post. After the turn Eumelus takes the lead with Diomedes hot on his heels (410-431). At this point divine intervention affects the race. Apollo knocks Diomedes’ whip from his hand (432-3). Athena responds by giving him it back and breaking the yoke of Eumelus’ chariot, causing him to crash (437-446). Diomedes avoids the crash and surges into the lead. Menelaus is second and Antilochus third. This begins the vivid and splendid passage where they vie for the lead (450-498). Antilochus urges on his horses and threatens that Nestor will kill them if they do not speed up. He promises to overtake Menelaus by using his skill, as instructed by his father. In fact, he makes for a place where the track is too narrow for two abreast and plays chicken with Menelaus, who gives way for fear of a crash. Menelaus berates Antilochus and urges his horses to speed up. In the crowd Idomeneus sees the chariots first. He thinks that Eumelus must have crashed as Diomedes is in the lead. The lesser Ajax violently disagrees and thinks that Eumelus is in front. Idomeneus insults Ajax and offers a bet to see who is right. He and Ajax nearly come to blows before Achilles tells them both to behave (498-555). Diomedes comes in first and claims his prizes (556-71). Antilochus comes second with Menelaus very close behind (572-586). Meriones, described as the poorest racing-driver, comes fourth (587-590). Eumelus comes in last dragging the remains of his chariot. Achilles takes pity on him and suggests giving him second prize (591-8). Antilochus is furious at the thought that he might be deprived of second prize and angrily tells Achilles to find a suitable prize from the vast store of spoils in his tent. Achilles concurs and does so. Menelaus then attacks Antilochus for beating him by foul tactics. He tells him to swear by the gods that he did not win by foul tactics. This brings Antilochus to his senses. He blames his youthful exuberance for driving as he did and promises to give up his prize, because he does not want to be out of favour with Menelaus, or to swear a false oath. Menelaus’ anger dissipates as he accepts the apology, but he warns Antilochus to avoid such behaviour towards his elders in the future. He does, however, let Antilochus keep second prize. Meriones accepts fourth prize (600-684). This leaves fifth prize unclaimed as Eumelus has been given a special one. Achilles gives this prize to Nestor, acknowledging that he is too old to compete (684-694). As he accepts the prize, Nestor boasts about his athletic feats in his youth (695-726). Thus the chariot race comes to an end. It is a race which has concentrated on the behaviour of leading warriors, and especially the way in which they value their ‘honour’ (timé). The race has also been decided to some extent by the intervention of the gods.
Before the race begins in *Aeneid* 5, Virgil gives a description of the captains and their crews and concentrates on the nervous energy as they await the signal to go (137-138). When they surge forward, Virgil turns to the noise of the spectators. For Virgil the first half of the race is not important, although he says that Cloanthus’ rowers are better, but, because their ship is slower, Gyas takes the lead as they approach the turn. The events at the turn form the first focal point of his story. Homer had not made anything of the turn, but Virgil, perhaps influenced by chariot races in the Circus Maximus, where crashes often occurred at the turns, concentrates on that point of the race. Gyas tells his helmsman, Menoetes, to hug the rocks, but he fears the rocks and seeks deeper water (159-165). When Gyas sees Cloanthus sneak through the gap nearer the rocks, he is enraged, hurls Menoetes overboard and takes over the helm. There is loud laughter from the Trojan spectators when Menoetes eventually surfaces and clambers on to the rock (167-182). Behind them Sergestus leads Mnestheus to the turn. Mnestheus urges on the rowers to avoid last place, if winning is beyond them (188-197). Virgil describes the physical effort of the rowers (197-200). He says that chance came to Mnestheus’ aid, as Sergestus ran aground, which he describes in graphic detail (201-209). Mnestheus is encouraged as he heads for home (210-219), leaving behind Sergestus struggling to row with broken oars (220-226). He overtakes Gyas’ boat, which lacks a helmsman, and only has Cloanthus to beat. Virgil again emphasizes the noise of the crowd, as Mnestheus draws level with Cloanthus (remember his boat was said to be slow), and the state of mind of the two crews – Cloanthus’ crew would rather die than lose the victory they felt they had earned, Mnestheus’ crew is buoyed by success (227-231). Cloanthus prays to the gods of the sea with promises of offerings. They hear his prayer and Portunus pushes the ship home to victory (232-243). The prizes are awarded (244-269). There are equal prizes for each ship, but special prizes for the captains. The cloak given to Cloanthus is embroidered with the story of Ganymede, the breastplate given to Mnestheus has a history too. At this point Sergestus brings his crippled boat home with the aid of sails (270-281). Its arrival is likened in a long simile to a snake which has been run over on a road (273-279). Aeneas is delighted that Sergestus has made it safely to the shore and awards him his prize. As in the chariot race, divine intervention has had a hand in the outcome, but this time it is in response to a prayer, rather than the direct uninvited action of Apollo and Athena. Virgil brings more humour to his race and concentrates on the mental aspect of the competitors and the reactions of the spectators. The loss of honour is important here too, but the concentration is more on the race than the behaviour of the charioteers/captains.

The games involve competitors. In *Iliad* 23 the competitors are almost all the heroes who have taken a leading part in the epic – Menelaus, Diomedes, Ajax et al. Although these are games not warfare, Homer still concentrates on the behaviour of these heroes as they strive to maintain their sense of worth. In *Aeneid* 5, since the games come earlier in the epic, few of the competitors have been named before or have developed a personality. Sergestus and Cloanthus are named among the Trojans who first meet Dido in Book 1. The relationship of Nisus and Euryalus in the foot race prepares the reader for the major role which they will play in Book 9. For the most part they are simply competitors and Virgil’s concentration is on the events and the way in which they compete rather than their behaviour in terms of a heroic code.

One of the major techniques used by epic poets is the use of similes. In *Iliad* 23 there are eleven similes covering a total of 26 lines; in *Aeneid* 5 there are ten covering 41 lines. This illustrates the fact that Virgil’s similes are generally more developed than those of Homer. In *Iliad* 23 Patroclus’ ghost is likened to a wisp of smoke (119); Achilles weeps like a father for his son on his wedding day (254-6); dust is like clouds or swirling gales (413); Antilochus is like a stone-deaf man (480); Menelaus is as close as the gap between horse and chariot (575-80); Menelaus’ heart melts like dew (664-5); Euryalus falls like a leaping fish (770-2); the arms of Ajax and Odysseus are like rafters bolted together (793-4); Ajax and Odysseus are as close as a weaver’s rod (844-7);
Leonteus is as intense as a god (929); Polypoetes throws the lump of iron as far as a herdsman flings his staff (937-8). In Aeneid 5 the snake’s colours are like a rainbow (84-90); Chimaera is like a city (119); the boats are like chariots (144-147); Mnesterheus’ boat is like a dove (213-217); Sergestus’ boat is like an injured snake (273-280); Dares is like a general attacking a city (439-442); Entellus falls like a pine (446-603); the blows are thick as hail (459-460); Acestes’ arrow is like a shooting star (525-528); boys interweave like a labyrinth or dolphins (588-599).

There are basic differences in the style of composition, as the Iliad is oral poetry and relies upon epithets and patronymics, and thematic (repeated) phrases, lines and passages. The Aeneid is written composition and does not need to rely on these devices, although Virgil does use epithets (all-powerful Jupiter, Saturnian Juno, father Neptune, Trojan-born Acestes, the dutiful Aeneas for example) and some repeated phrases and lines. Divine intervention is more direct and less easily explained in the Iliad. The divine intervention of Portunus in Aeneid 5 in the boat race can be explained as a way for describing a boat being thrust to the shore by the surf. The prayer of Cloanthus, however, maintains the importance of due respect for the gods. Speeches, which are used to break up the narrative, are a common feature of the two epics. The speeches also help to define the character of the person speaking as well as that of the person being addressed.

Finally we come to the purpose for the inclusion of these two books in the narratives of the epics. There is a common thread – reconciliation and rehabilitation. Achilles needs to reconnect with the Greek leaders, especially Agamemnon. The major theme of the Iliad is the anger of Achilles which is aroused in Book 1 when he considers that he has been insulted and belittled by Agamemnon. He withdraws from the fighting with disastrous results for the Greeks and only reappears to avenge the death of his companion Patroclus at the hands of Hector. Now that Hector is dead and Patroclus has been avenged, Achilles can think about reconciliation. In Aeneid 4 Aeneas’ leadership qualities have been seriously challenged by the affair with Dido. The events of Aeneid 5 serve to rebuild Aeneas’ credentials as a dutiful (pius) leader. They also allow his companions to enjoy some much needed rest and recreation after their escape from Carthage and a chance to bond together under their leader.

It is worth considering the way in which Homer portrays Achilles and Virgil Aeneas to look for similarities and differences in their representations as heroes and leaders. Both are generous hosts of the games. The prizes given are impressive, although we should bear in mind that Achilles in Book 1 complained that he never received his fair share of the spoils, and we should wonder how Aeneas is able to offer such prizes, when he escaped with the Penates, his family, and little more than the clothes they were wearing. Achilles clearly has a considerable store of spoils acquired during the ten years of war and the defeat of neighbouring cities, where he claims to have borne the brunt of the fighting; Aeneas’ prizes include gifts which he has acquired during his stay with Dido in Carthage. Aeneas shows concern for harm which may result to the competitors, as he stops the boxing to prevent further injury to Dares. Entellus (470) claims that Aeneas has rescued Dares from death. Achilles brings the wrestling to an end (‘don’t kill yourselves in sport!’, 818) and tells Ajax and Odysseus to share the prizes. Achilles is prepared, however, to offer prizes for an armed fight in which the winner will be the first to wound the other. It is the alarm of the spectators which stops the fight. Both show good humour. Each has to settle a dispute, Achilles after the chariot race, Aeneas after the foot race. Achilles takes pity on Eumelus who comes home dragging the remains of his chariot. He settles the resulting dispute, as has been discussed above, although the dispute is of his own making, when he offers Eumeus second prize. Aeneas, on the other hand, deals with the protests after the foot race by saying that the prizes should stay as they are. When he deals with the dispute, we are reminded of a father settling a squabble between two of his children. He decides to make a special award to Salius, who had been brought down by Nisus. When Nisus also claims to have deserved a prize, Aeneas laughs at the sight of
his dung-covered face and rewards him too.

Achilles remains the boastful hero obsessed with a sense of honour and self-worth in the Homeric mould (before the chariot race he states that he would easily win, if he were to enter); Aeneas, as I argued in my M.A. thesis, is constantly referred to as father (pater) in Book 5. The word is used 31 times in the Aeneid to refer to Aeneas and nearly a third of these (9) occur in Book 5. Virgil is clearly determined to remind the reader that this is one of the key characteristics of Aeneas. He has taken over the role of his father Anchises and is now the father-figure to the Trojans. In the Iliad the games and the way in which he presides over them help to bring Achilles back into the fold. The final event is to be a contest for spear-throwing, but Achilles acknowledges Agamemnon as the greatest spear-thrower and awards him the prize. This is an important conciliatory gesture and helps to heal the wounds of the quarrel in Book 1. Achilles’ anger at Agamemnon is gone and his wrath can be brought to a conclusion by the events of Book 24, where he meets Priam and allows him to ransom Hector’s body. Book 23 ends in a conciliatory, gentle way. By the end of the Trojan games Aeneas has been restored as a generous and caring leader of his followers. This leadership is immediately challenged in the last third of the book. Just when all seems to be right with the world, Juno strikes again and Aeneas has to face another crisis. The dutiful (pius) Aeneas (685) prays to Jupiter, asking him either to save the remnants of the Trojan race or to destroy them now. Jupiter’s thunderstorm saves all but four of the ships. Although Aeneas is referred to as pater in line 700, this latest disaster has unsettled him. He considers the possibility of abandoning his mission. He no longer has a father to rely on for advice. Instead he seeks advice from the elderly Nautes who suggests that those who do not want to go on should stay with Acestes in Sicily while the rest complete the mission imposed by the fates. Although Aeneas is clearly inspired by these words, he goes to sleep full of concern. In his sleep his father Anchises appears to tell him to follow Nautes’ advice. He points out that Aeneas will need his best warriors to face the threat that lies in wait in Latium. He also instructs him to visit him in the Underworld before he reaches Latium. Aeneas awakes full of enthusiasm and determined to follow the advice. He shows true leadership qualities as the ships are repaired and a city is founded for Acestes, his followers and those of Aeneas’ followers who decide to stay in Sicily. A temple is built for Venus and there is a nine day period of celebration and religious observance before Aeneas sets sail. As they sail, Venus complains to Neptune about Juno’s opposition and asks that the Trojans be allowed to reach Italy safely. Neptune agrees to this, but demands a sacrifice for the safe journey. The life demanded is that of Palinurus, Aeneas’ main helmsman, who falls asleep and then falls overboard. Significantly, Aeneas takes over the helm. He is now restored as leader and is capable of guiding his followers. Each of the texts in its own way brings about reconciliation and rehabilitation.

Iliad 23 and Aeneid 5 are wonderful books for studying the narrative styles of Homer and Virgil and their superb use of language to draw vivid pictures. They are perhaps ignored because they are asides from the main narrative, yet, as I have argued above, they play a very important role in the rehabilitation and reconciliation of Achilles and Aeneas and the development of the two epics.

### Bibliography


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