

HOMER IN THE PERFECT TENSE

The *Posthomerica* of Quintus Smyrnaeus and the
Poetics of Impersonation

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Abstract

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The thesis has been written as part of the AHRC collaborative research project Greek Epic of the Roman Empire: A Cultural History. This project seeks to give the first cultural-historical analysis of the large, underexploited corpus of Greek epic poetry composed in the transformative period between the 1st and the 6th centuries C.E.

The thesis focuses on questions of literary identity in one of the most challenging texts from this corpus, the *Posthomerica* by Quintus of Smyrna (c. 3rd century C.E.). My central contention is that Quintus' mimicry of Homer represents a radically new formative poetics, suggesting a cultural movement towards mimesis, necromancy and close encounters with the past. After a detailed study of what I term the reanimating culture of imperial Greece (chapter 1), and a comprehensive reanalysis of the compositional techniques of the text (chapter 2), I identify a number of tropes of poetic identity from different ancient literary modes: programmatic proems (chapter 3), memory (4), filiation (5) and temporality (6). I show how Quintus co-opts these themes for his new poetics, to turn the symbolic toolkit of contrast imitation into a defence of writing inter-Homeric epic.

This analysis insists on rethinking the nature of the relationship between the poetry of this era and that of previous aesthetic traditions: particularly, I argue against a view of the *Posthomerica* as Alexandrian, and see it instead pushing back against the Callimachus school of small, new poetry.

Ultimately, the thesis aims to show how the *Posthomerica* could be pivotal for unpinning current critical assumptions about imperial Greek poetry; revealing a palpable shift in tone in the construct of the literary self.

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Preface

This dissertation is the result of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text. It is not substantially the same as any that I have submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for a degree or diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution except as declared in the Preface and specified in the text. I further state that no substantial part of my dissertation has already been submitted, or, is being concurrently submitted for any such degree, diploma or other qualification at the University of Cambridge or any other University or similar institution. It does not exceed the word limit prescribed by the Faculty of Classics.

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This thesis is the result of three years of work on the Imperial Greek Epic project at the University of Cambridge. I am indebted to the AHRC for funding the project and to the team of researchers who brought it to life. Pavlos Avlamis, Emily Kneebone, Laura Miguélez-Cávero and Leyla Ozbek have offered insights, intellectual encouragement and copious amounts of fun along the way. I can think of no better environment in which to have completed this research, and I hope that our collaboration may long continue.

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INTRODUCTION

THE POETICS OF IMPERSONATION

At an unknown place and time in the imperial Greek third century,¹ an epic picks up from the last line of the *Iliad*. It begins without a proem, Muse call or stated subject, but with a temporal conjunction – a ‘when’ – which implies not so much a start but a continuation:

Εὗθ' ὑπὸ Πηλείωνι δάμη θεοείκελος Ἐκτωρ
καὶ ἐ πυρὴ κατέδαψε καὶ ὀστέα γαῖα κεκεύθει,
δὴ τότε Τρῶες ἔμιμνον ἀνὰ Πριάμοιο πόληα
δειδιότες μένος ἡゅ θρασύφρονος Αἰακίδαο... (Q.S.1.1–4)

It proceeds to tell in fourteen books the events of the Trojan War which took place between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, and ends with a proleptic gloss to *Od.1.11–12*, the first lines after the proem:

...οἱ δ' ἐνὶ νησὶν
Ἄργειοι πλώεσκον, ὅσους διὰ χεῖμα κέδασσεν.
ἄλλῃ δ' ἄλλος ἵκανεν, ὅπῃ θεὸς ἥγεν ἕκαστον,
ὅσσοι ὑπὲρ πόντοιο λυγρὰς ὑπάλυξαν ἀέλλας. (Q.S.14.665–8)

The poem, which has become known to posterity as the *Posthomerica*,² uses strongly Homeric language and formulae, but also alludes to Hellenistic and imperial literature. Then, in a delayed proem and the only first-person pronouncement, the poet seems to claim to be the Homeric bard himself:³

¹ On this dating and its controversies see section IV.

² On the name, see Bär and Baumbach (2007):1–2.

³ I analyse this claim in Chapter Three.

In this thesis, I put forward a new framework for understanding this remarkable epic; its poetics, agenda and literary identity. I begin with three interrelated questions. What kind of work does the poem aim to be? How does Quintus see his work against pre-existing literary genres, and understand his poetic role in relation to Homer? And what are the cultural politics driving this epic and the particular, peculiar claims that it makes? To answer these questions, I argue, requires a departure from the critical and theoretical discourse in which the poem, and imperial Greek epic more broadly, is currently situated. By making this departure, my second major intention is to demonstrate how Quintus' poetics could be pivotal for rethinking prevailing scholarly understandings of this poetry, suggesting what it meant to resurrect the Homeric idiolect in the later Roman empire.

I. OPPOSITION IN IMITATION

‘One useful approach to great ‘imitative’ texts is to see them as re-readings of the works imitated.’

– Martindale, *Redeeming the Text*, 35

‘Roman literary-historical self-fashioning operated through a revision of previous Hellenising revolutions, a revision which can simultaneously

be an appropriation and a denial... these poets carved out cultural space for themselves by consigning their predecessors to the dustbin.'

– Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext*, 10

'The poet is always challenged to be supreme in the supreme genre... the ever-present desire and its attendant anxiety.'

– Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil*, 119

'Opposition in imitation' or 'contrast imitation' has long been considered an important type of literary response in antiquity, becoming increasingly self-conscious with the Alexandrian poets. In a now seminal series launched at the end of the twentieth century, the authors of *Roman Literature and its Contexts* sought to demonstrate how this adversarial style of imitation was specifically harnessed by Augustan and post-Augustan Latin literature. Focusing on theories of hermeneutics, supplementarity, reader reception, historical contingency and the Anxiety of Influence, the project presented the principles of a creative emulation to characterise the poets of the Latin tradition, and used it to cast new insights on both the emulating poets and their original models.

Martindale borrows from Harold Bloom and Derridean deconstructionism to sketch the details of his particular way of conceptualising the interpretative process, namely that 'any interpretation, unless it is mere tautology, must be a re-stating, and thus *different* from whatever is interpreted.'⁴ The notion of supplementarity, that 'a signifier is so charged with an excess of energy that it generates further fictions, which serve to answer unanswered questions, fill "gaps", explain perceived contradictions, provide sequels and allow for appropriations in view of new circumstances'⁵ helps to account for the process of continued interpretative revision

⁴ Martindale (1993):37. I return to Bloom in Chapter Five.

⁵ Martindale (1993):37.

that Martindale reads in the Latin tradition and its inheritors: the constant striving for, but refusal of, textual closure.

Hinds applies many of these tenets to his study of allusion in Roman poets.⁶ Following Conte's conception of allusion as an analogical figure,⁷ Hinds characterises the patterns of reference in Ovid, Statius and Lucan as 'tendentious re-readings' of their literary models, expressed through a range of 'tropes', which he defines as figural symbols (words, images, characters) used to characterise authorial engagement.⁸ From Ennius onwards, and no doubt before, Roman writers create old poets in order to proclaim their newness, and thus concepts such as 'new', 'old', 'secondary' or even 'decline' are not just modern labels, but inherent to their literary self-conceptions.

The work of Philip Hardie anchored this model most firmly to the epic tradition. In his incisive readings of post-Augustan epic, Hardie shows how the successors of Vergil 'at once respectful and rebellious, constructed a space for themselves through a creative imitation that exploited the energies and tensions called up but not finally expended or resolved in the *Aeneid*.'⁹ Theories of supplementarity and Oedipal struggles also loom large for Hardie, but he goes one step further by demonstrating the epic genre's innate hospitality to these processes. Epic, by its very nature, must be rivalrous, because of the fundamental ambition of its undertaking, a power game played for the highest of stakes.¹⁰

As Hardie's study also shows, the process of contrast imitation has a strong political potential. As writers responding to the problems and contradictions of the principate, poets such as Ovid, Lucan, Statius and Silius Italicus reveal 'anxiety' about imperial as much as poetic succession: their re-readings of the *Aeneid* bring to the fore its questions about the viability of a lasting age

⁶ Cf. Hinds (1998):47–51.

⁷ Conte (1986):23–4; 52–69. Hinds (1998):120–1.

⁸ This definition will be crucial for my use of the term for the *Posthomerica*. See section VI.

⁹ Hardie (1993):xii.

¹⁰ Hardie (1993):118–9. Cf. Steiner (1989):13: the successor poet is always 'answerable to the original' because it 'puts at eminent risk the stature, the fortunes of his own work.'

of peace, the relationship between power and the sacred, and the chaos caused when an empire turns in on itself. This political dimension has been explored most searingly by Quint, in *Epic and Empire*.¹¹ In his account of how the epics of the western tradition responded to the two narrative modes offered by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*,¹² Quint centralises the idea of ‘continuity’, and the creativity triggered by the desire for its avoidance. Thus Lucan, in his anti-Vergilian, anti-imperial epic, mounts a critique on ‘the conservative tendency of the epic genre to perpetuate, though imitation, its own formal structures of narrative and diction, the same story told over and over.’¹³

I have rehearsed such examples to stress above all the momentous impact that this framework has had on readings of ancient epic: the critical rewards associated with contrast imitation. The model has provided a particularly positive stimulus for studies in silver Latin,¹⁴ doing much to increase interest in these once neglected works by revealing their complex literary-political textures. Since the turn of the century, it has found a further epic test site, to which I now turn.

II. SILVER LATIN, IMPERIAL GREEK?

A surge in interest in the Greek literature of the Roman empire has seen scholars gradually direct attention towards the epic composed during this period. Imperial Greek poetry was for a long time almost entirely neglected by scholarship in comparison to prose.¹⁵ The situation is

¹¹ Quint (1993).

¹² Cf. Chapter Six.

¹³ Quint (1993):8 using Greene (1963).

¹⁴ I use this term in a non-pejorative sense as a shorthand for the post-Augustan poets of the first two centuries C.E.

¹⁵ Bowie (1989a):98 cites *The Short History of Greek Literature* (‘only two names deserve mention – Quintus and Nonnus’), *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature*, which stops in the middle of the third century and has only two pages on imperial Greek poetry, and Habicht’s verdict (1985) that in imperial Greece, ‘poetry was dead.’

now very different. Bowie's series of articles,¹⁶ the first serious attempt at a broader account of imperial Greek verse, was bolstered by a conference on this poetry in 2007 which resulted in the aptly-titled volume *Signs of Life?*¹⁷ The imperial Greek Epic project at Cambridge has further raised the profile of this material, through the compilation of a complete database of the poetry,¹⁸ the first comprehensive set of translations¹⁹ and a public-facing website.²⁰ Verse is increasingly recognised as having offered a living medium of expression in imperial Greek culture; and epic in particular, the continued apex in the hierarchy of genres during this period, is emerging as a powerful vehicle through which traditional language and themes were renegotiated.²¹

If the lamentation of scholarly neglect has thus become a genuinely outdated trope for imperial Greek epic, then I have resurrected it here because it is worth considering not just why this material was understudied for so long,²² but what the study of it now has uncovered: what themes have emerged which make it matter so much. On the one hand, the themes of imperial hexameter were no less varied than that composed in any other period.²³ We have examples of works on topics as diverse as imperial lion hunts,²⁴ hymnic prayers²⁵ and world history – Dionysius of Alexandria's *Periegesis* describes the globe in 1187 hexameters. Didactic topics

¹⁶ Bowie (1989a), (1989b), (1990).

¹⁷ Hunter and Carvounis (2008).

¹⁸ Which has collated c. 1000 poems, fragments and references in the literary, papyrological and epigraphic records.

¹⁹ Forthcoming by the University of California Press.

²⁰ <https://www.imperialepeios.wordpress.com>.

²¹ See the bibliography compiled by Cuypers for an overview of the volume of work done on these Greek poets: <https://sites.google.com/site/hellenisticbibliography/empire>.

²² This question has been amply addressed and answered. See particularly Hunter and Carvounis (2008):1–2.

²³ For this brief survey I draw from Bowie (1989a)/(1989b)/(1990) and the Cambridge database, which has uncovered material to add to his picture.

²⁴ Pancrates wrote a hexameter poem on the lion hunt of Hadrian and Antinous.

²⁵ Macellus of Side wrote hexameters encouraging Roman women to offer cult to Regilla's statue and praying to Athena and the Nemesis of Rhamnous to punish anyone who encroaches on Herodes' estate.

were also common – manuals on hunting, fishing²⁶ and medicine –²⁷ which Bowie suggests constituted the most dominant type of poetry at least in the Antonine age.²⁸

However, within this diversity we may detect a particular thematic penchant: the explicit engagement with Homer, and the return to the narrative world of Troy. ‘Engagement with Homer’ is, of course, a notion which could be applied to almost any ancient Greek poem; and Trojan mythology was also likely to have been a popular theme at all times in antiquity,²⁹ including in the lost Hellenistic epics against which Callimachus allegedly railed.³⁰ But the *combination* of these features – the close recapitulation of Homeric language and forms,³¹ and the direct return to his mythological subject-matter – does seem to unite a number of texts from the imperial Greek period specifically.

The *Posthomerica*, if dated to the third century,³² represents the earliest surviving imperial example of this penchant. It is accompanied in the later centuries by Triphiodorus’ epyllion³³ on the sack of Troy (c. late third century);³⁴ Nonnus’ sprawling *Dionysiaca* (fifth century); and Colluthus’ account of the rape of Helen (sixth century). References to non-surviving texts also testify that the production of mythological epic was continuous in the centuries preceding the *Posthomerica*. Triphiodorus’ other works, according to the *Suda*, included a lipogrammatic *Odyssey* and *Paraphrase of Homer’s Similes*. In the second century Areios composed a cento on Memnon using Homeric phrases, signed by ‘the Homeric poet from the Museum.’³⁵ And

²⁶ Most extensively the works of the Oppians.

²⁷ Marcellus of Side wrote a 42-book *Iatrika*, of which 101 lines survive; and Heraclitus (see Bowie 1990:69) was dubbed the ‘Homer of medical poetry.’

²⁸ Bowie (1990).

²⁹ Cf. e.g. Miguélez-Cavero (2013):5.

³⁰ For the relevance of Callimachus’ accusations to imperial Greek poetry, see Chapter Three.

³¹ See Chapter Two.

³² Further discussion of these dating parameters in section IV.

³³ On this poetic type in antiquity, see Bär and Baumbach (edd.) (2012), Fernandelli (2012).

³⁴ On the direction of influence between Triphiodorus and Quintus, and the argument (which this thesis will accept) that Triphiodorus’ poem is later, see Miguélez-Cavero’s summary (2013):4-6.

³⁵ See Bernard (1960):111–3; Bowie (1990):65.

the poets of Laranda, the Homeric-named Nestor and his son Pisander (both third century C.E.) both wrote large-scale mythological works; the former a lipogrammatic *Iliad*, the latter the largest poem of antiquity, the *Heroic Marriages of the Gods*, sixty books in length. By the time the *Posthomerica* was composed, we may thus rightly speak of a distinctive trend of Homeric-imitative, mythological epic.³⁶

Returning to the connection with which I began between contrast imitation and critical redemption, it is not difficult to comprehend how these imperial ‘Trojan epics’ have become the great new beneficiaries of this style of reading. Due to their direct appropriation of a canonical source, and claims to innovation in the face of such dependence, the self-conscious allusivity of Alexandrian poetics and the belatedness associated with silver Latin have become the two main paradigms used for redeeming these texts. Shorrock’s study of the *Dionysiaca* shows how closely the analogies have been drawn.³⁷ In his account of ‘the poet of Dionysus’, Shorrock draws explicitly on ‘recent work on Latin epic poetry which has done much to focus attention on the figure of the epic poet’; and decries the fact that ‘this approach has [as of yet] been little explored with regard to the Greek poets of the later Roman empire.’³⁸

The *Posthomerica* – which has, so far, received the most attention in the turn towards this poetry –³⁹ has gained much critical traction from being placed in this framework. Methodological statements from the two most influential recent studies will serve as examples. Maciver aims to defend the epic against its traditional detractors⁴⁰ by revealing its Alexandrian qualities,⁴¹ demonstrating how ‘Quintus imitates, manipulates, comments on, differs from, and

³⁶ Further discussion of this trend in Maciver (2017 forthcoming).

³⁷ Shorrock (2001).

³⁸ Shorrock (2001):ch.3, quotations at 113.

³⁹ For a summary of scholarship see Bär and Baumbach (2007):15-26.

⁴⁰ Of which Lloyd-Jones’ famous condemnation – ‘an anaemic pastiche ...utterly devoid of life’ (1969):101 – has become emblematic. The thesis will not follow the now-conventional model of first narrating and then refuting the negative twentieth century reception of the poem: hence my relegation of the Lloyd Jones-ism to a footnote.

⁴¹ I challenge this reading in Chapter Three.

revises Homer'; an appropriation which, 'in Hardie's terms', is also a rejection.⁴² The 2007 volume *Quintus Smyrnaeus: Transforming Homer in Second Sophistic Epic*⁴³ (a title which itself implies the Bloomian misreading process) is also underpinned by this reckoning. Most explicitly, Schmitz argues that Quintus' use of anachrony draws attention to his belatedness in the epic tradition; the *Posthomerica* becomes 'a text that reflects upon the poetical situation of a literary latecomer who has to navigate through the masses of prior treatment of his subject matter.'⁴⁴ Under the care of this interpretative treatment, the *Posthomerica* is emerging as the example *par excellence* of the antagonistic, creative capabilities of imperial Greek epic, helping to usher-in these texts from the canonical wilderness which they once inhabited.

There are, however, problems with this critical cross-application. There is first an issue of heterogeneity. As Carvounis and Hunter rightly stress,⁴⁵ whereas Vergil's silver successors all composed within a few generations of one another and of Vergil himself, producing epics of comparable size and style, the timespan between the earliest and latest texts which we call 'imperial Greek epic' is more than four hundred years, and they encompass a number of styles and forms: from the epyllion to the longest surviving epic.⁴⁶ There is then the related issue of context. Whilst the epics analysed by Hardie and Quint are tied to specific and often directly-articulated ideological backgrounds,⁴⁷ the chronological diversity and contextual uncertainties⁴⁸ surrounding many of the imperial Greek poems make it harder to capture their 'political dimensions' in anything like the same way.⁴⁹

⁴² Maciver (2012b):9

⁴³ Bär and Baumbach (edd.) (2007).

⁴⁴ Schmitz (2007):65-85, quotation at 67.

⁴⁵ Hunter and Carvounis (2008):2-3.

⁴⁶ See Chapter Two.

⁴⁷ Cf. e.g. Quint (1993):8: 'Vergil's epic is tied to a specific national history, to the idea of world domination, to a monarchical system, even to a particular dynasty.'

⁴⁸ See, generally, Hunter and Carvounis (2008):3-8, with discussion for the *Posthomerica* in my section IV.

⁴⁹ I return to this point in Chapters Five and Six.

The thesis will focus attention on these problems, and suggest that the *Posthomerica* offers a uniquely important vehicle to redress them. It is my central contestation that Quintus' epic does not fit the paradigm of Alexandrian-derived contrast imitation, and rejects the belated self-labelling of silver Latin. The poet reveals himself to be highly alert to the techniques and ‘tropes’ – which I use in Hinds’ sense of the word –⁵⁰ associated with these traditions. But he employs them deviantly, to affirm rather than reject continuity with his Homeric source. This type of response should be characterised instead, I shall suggest, as a poetics of the interval, concerned with inserting oneself *within* fixed, pre-existing literary boundaries. And I shall argue that this interval – the drive to find a space within what is already there, to revivify Homer and reanimate the past – offers meditation on a specific strand of cultural politics in the third century,⁵¹ involved in the shaping of Greek erudite identity in the East. In the course of this analysis, I shall therefore reconsider how the *Posthomerica* ‘fits’ in relation to the other mythological epics of the era, which take on similar Trojan themes and Homerising language, but use these elements to achieve their own effects and agenda, and which must be approached on their own terms.

Before turning to the context of this poem of the interval, let us first examine its features in more detail. That the *Posthomerica* is ‘Homerising’ is commonly accepted. What is less understood is what exactly this means, and what impact it has for the poem and its reader.

III. (NON) PARALLELS: POETIC IMPERSONATION

There is one obvious, and yet fundamental, and yet consistently underestimated feature of the *Posthomerica* which renders ideas about adversarial imitation especially inappropriate for

⁵⁰ I.e. ‘Figural symbols (words, images, characters) used to metaphorise authorial engagement,’ as defined in section I.

⁵¹ On the relationship between this ‘third century’ reading and the unknown date of the poem, see section IV.

assessing its poetics: its proclaimed connection to Homeric epic itself.⁵² This claim may at first seem far from exceptional, and thus needs to be comprehended within the long tradition of ancient pseudographic and apocryphal writing. As Graziosi has demonstrated, until the Homeric corpus was reduced in the fifth century, a number of works were attributed to the famous poet: the Epic Cycle,⁵³ the Homeric Hymns, the *Margites* and even the parodic *Batrachomyomachia* were all at one stage deemed to be the product of Homer.⁵⁴ These texts, however, for the most part make no discrete claims to Homeric identity *of their own*:⁵⁵ the association is a phase of their reception history, a reading imposed upon them, and in many cases their original anonymity is highly unlikely.⁵⁶

The same notion applies, albeit differently, to the *Anacreontea*, commonly hailed as impersonation poetry *par excellence*. In her analysis of these lyric pretenders, Rosenmeyer argues we find in them a *modus scribendi* quite alien to the ancient literary norm of antagonism, as multiple authors submerge their personalities to a selective vision of Anacreon, whose persona, attitudes, and verse they openly imitate. Through this ‘unique’ aesthetic, which centres on an eschewal of independence, embrace of conformity, and absorption into the Anacreontic voice, the new poet aims at something ‘more valuable than the individual, namely tradition’, to achieve ‘a timeless and universal literary status.’⁵⁷

⁵² Established primarily through the three passages discussed in the opening to this Introduction.

⁵³ For Quintus’ relationship to the Epic Cycle, see section VI.

⁵⁴ Graziosi (2002).

⁵⁵ The *Hymn to Apollo* may be argued to prove an exception: ‘whenever anyone on earth, a stranger who has seen and suffered much, comes here and asks of you: “Whom do you think, girls, is the sweetest singer that comes here, and in whom do you most delight?” Then answer, each and all, with one voice: “He is a blind man, and dwells in rocky Chios: his lays are evermore supreme.”’(165–70). This does not, however, imply an identification with Homer, but rather a desire to be considered as ‘a’ Homer: the singer is cementing his claims to superlative greatness by evoking the prestige of the blind bard.

⁵⁶ This is particularly true for the Epic Cycle poems: see Davis (1989); West (2013); Fantuzzi and Tsagalis (edd.) (2015).

⁵⁷ Rosenmeyer (1992):69. For broader accounts of ancient pseudographia, see Martínez (ed.) (2014); Peirano (2012).

However, whilst relentlessly anonymous, the *Anacreontea* in fact resist the move of appropriating Anacreon's identity. What was originally the first poem in the collection – moved to the twenty third by West to suggest a more genuine affinity with the real Anacreon –⁵⁸ contains instead a strong statement of *independent* identity, describing a dream where Eros led Anacreon by the hand. In this dream – a well-known symbol of literary handover, from one poet to another –⁵⁹ Anacreon is conceived as a separate figure, the product of the current singer's imagination, not an extension of him.

What differentiates the *Posthomerica* from these literary imposters is thus the explicit contradiction of its claims. If the *Anacreontea* are entirely subordinating in their aesthetic but make no assertions to be Anacreon, then the reverse is true for our epic. Quintus *does* lay claim to Homeric identity, but he does not subordinate his sense of difference completely. To take two examples, which I shall later consider in depth, he uses Homeric lexica extensively, but almost always reworks the words into different formulae;⁶⁰ and within a strongly Homeric style, also alludes to Hesiod and Callimachus.⁶¹ The poem is thus centred on an unapologetic doubleness: a stark juxtaposition of traits.

IV. HOMER AND THE PERFORMANCE OF THE PAST

We have seen how those analysing silver Latin epic have linked its adversarial response to the cultural and political concerns which drove the projects. Thus to attempt a better understanding of the paradoxical stance of the *Posthomerica*, we must similarly turn to the question of the environment which might have informed it.

⁵⁸ West (1993).

⁵⁹ Further discussion of poetic dreams in Chapter Five.

⁶⁰ See Chapter Two.

⁶¹ See Chapter Three.

This is, of course, not an easy task. The question of Quintus' date and biography, the subject of much detailed and, at times, tenuous scholarship, remains unresolved.⁶² Despite its otherwise confident tone, much of the recent critical output on the poem is tentative regarding its cultural positioning. Bär and Baumbach's volume, for instance, poses the question of whether Quintus could have been a member of the second sophistic 'phenomenon', a declaimer and *pepaideumenos* who turned his attention to composing epic poetry. However, they concede pre-emptively that 'the observations made are not clear enough to prove (this) link either.'⁶³ Maciver strongly contests such a second sophistic context for the poem,⁶⁴ but is hesitant to supply an alternative. He instead roots his conclusions in the terms of reader reception: 'my Quintus is only a reading.'⁶⁵

Yet the accepted dating parameters of the *Posthomerica* in the approximate period between 200 and 300 C.E.⁶⁶ do give some strands of information about our mysterious poet. Firstly, he was a literate Greek speaker alive during the third century. Secondly, he was – we can assert to within a small degree of doubt – a Roman citizen.⁶⁷ And thirdly, he was a well-educated member of society, highly familiar with the staple classroom exercises of rhetorical training, with an intimate knowledge of Homer. This story does not make for the densest *Vita Poetae*. It does however provide the impetus to attempt to think less 'anonymously' about the *Posthomerica*, and to approach the question of its context in terms less restrictive than those posed by the current scholarship on the poem.

If we are prepared to take this bolder approach, we may turn to two areas of imperial Greek culture which have recently received vast scholarly attention, and seem particularly relevant to

⁶² Summarised in Bär and Baumbach (2007):1–8.

⁶³ Bär and Baumbach (2007):15.

⁶⁴ See discussion in Chapter One.

⁶⁵ Maciver (2012b): 12.

⁶⁶ For a survey of the evidence in favour of this dating, see Bär and Baumbach (2007):2–8, and Maciver (2012b):4–6. This thesis will accept these dating parameters, and aims to offer some new material to support them.

⁶⁷ The Constitutio Antoniniana, issued in 212 C.E., predates Quintus' poem according to most estimations.

Quintus' endeavour. The first is the centrality and authority of Homer. Throughout antiquity the influence of Homer upon Greek literature and culture was so tremendous that scholars have eschewed any large-scale attempt to chart his ancient reception.⁶⁸ However, the particularly special position which Homer occupied in the Roman empire has been well demonstrated. Kindstrand examines Dio, Aristides and Maximus of Tyre;⁶⁹ Lamberton considers the appropriation of Homer by Neoplatonist writers;⁷⁰ and Buffière treats mainly the allegorical tradition.⁷¹ Zeitlin's account of Homer's place in imperial visual culture,⁷² and Kim's analysis of attitudes towards the poet in revisionist prose works⁷³ both give a broader sense of the irreducible significance of Homer for the assertion of Hellenic affiliation under Rome, however slippery that term may be, and of the variety of responses offered to him: a full spectrum ranging from sacralising to satirising. That the *Posthomerica* is saturated in the Homeric style clearly reflects this imperial obsession with the figure of Homer; and also offers a response to it. There was clearly appetite for this type of hyper-Homeric poetry, and for the well-trained and ambitious writer, penning an epic which joins itself to the seams of Homer's works provides a significant opportunity – to give a learned readership some more Homer to play with.⁷⁴

The second sphere is what may be called the ‘performance of the past.’ A number of studies have revealed the emphasis placed on roleplaying and play-acting in second sophistic declamations: the re-enactment of scenes from history and the close ‘immediate’ representation of figures from the mythological and historical past.⁷⁵ The school exercises of the

⁶⁸ Cf. Kim (2010):4-5.

⁶⁹ Kindstrand (1973).

⁷⁰ Lamberton (1986).

⁷¹ Buffière (1956).

⁷² Zeitlin (2001).

⁷³ Kim (2010).

⁷⁴ Cf. Tomasso (diss.) (2010).

⁷⁵ See Anderson (1993); Zeitlin (2001); Schmitz (1997)/(1999):71–92; Connolly (2001a):339–72; Konstan and Säid (edd.) (2006).

progymnasmata also involved creative tasks centred on this kind of representation: in prosopopeia or ethopoeia the student had to construct a speech in the words of a character in a certain situation (Ajax losing the arms contest, Niobe after the loss of her children); and in eidolopoeia, a sub-set of this exercise, the aim was a dramatic personification of an abstract notion or a character who was absent, far-away or dead – a ‘verbal necromancy’⁷⁶ of classical themes or celebrated figures. Nor was roleplaying restricted to rhetorical spaces. The Atticising tendencies of the prose works of this era demonstrate what Anderson calls a ‘communing with the classics’ – a textual mimesis of canonical texts.⁷⁷ Surviving works also bear witness to ‘close encounters’⁷⁸ with resurrected figures from the past. Homer or Socrates was available to be consulted in speeches, famous figures would appear in dreams, and even in the less fleeting, waking world via epiphany.⁷⁹ For a term which encompasses all of these forms we might consider ‘reanimation’: a desire to resuscitate into the present figures from bygone temporal realities.

More significant still is how this output reflects critically on the very possibility of its endeavour. In Schmitz’ radical formulation of declamatory mimesis, for example, the personality of the sophist completely disappears behind the figure he is embodying; an articulation of the crushing weight of the past felt by elite performers in second century Greek cities.⁸⁰ Webb augments this model by borrowing from the vocabulary of acting – in which an actor is ‘not and not not’ the character he is playing –⁸¹ to suggest that in these speeches imitation intersects with a consciousness of difference: ‘on the one hand, the audience were Athenians listening to Demosthenes or Pericles. On the other hand, they were the audience of

⁷⁶ Zeitlin (2001):208 n.26 and Anderson (1993):138–9.

⁷⁷ Anderson (1993):ch.3.

⁷⁸ A term used productively in Late Antique contexts by Lane Fox (1986).

⁷⁹ E.g. Philostratus’ *Heroicus* and *Vita Apollonii*. Further discussion in Chapters Four and Five.

⁸⁰ Schmitz (1999):78.

⁸¹ Webb (2006) from Schechner (1985). It is also a near-direct quotation of Dicaeopolis in Aristophanes’ *Acharnians* (440–1), a link to which I return in the next chapter.

the contemporary sophist judging his skill.’⁸² Connolly considers the internal conflicts in Greek imperial educational writings that bespeak a ‘profound ambivalence’ about the classicising tendencies of *paideia*. Putting democratic Athenian texts to work inculcating an imperial elite habitus, she argues, could only happen through a process of selection, revision and censorship. If classical texts were thus divorced from their original context and subject to strict ideological controls, then recapturing the past was not always what it seemed.⁸³

Not all epochs are equally given to this reflexive relationship with their past. Different conditions elicit different styles of self-representation, and moments of crisis in particular evoke a tendency to imitate one’s forebears. After the *Pax Romana*, the Greek east was involved in just such a crisis – of cultural as well as political identity.⁸⁴ As a result, this was an age intensely self-conscious about its relation to history, which manifested itself in both a reverence for antique models and also (simultaneously) new constructions: ethnic identities, educational and religious institutions, and political interactions with, even among, the Romans.⁸⁵ Konstan and Säid deftly summarise these effects: ‘continuities were perceived and invented, differences were grafted onto the past to create new figures, in the way that grids on two superimposed transparencies produce elaborate and unexpected moiré patterns.’⁸⁶

By reading the *Posthomerica* in light of these conditions, this thesis will propose that the connection between ‘performance’ and poetics in the epic should be explored at a deeper level than it has been by scholars so far, specifically through its engagement with the various forms

⁸² Webb (2006):39.

⁸³ Connolly (2001a).

⁸⁴ This crisis has been well delineated by a number of studies: particularly, for my purposes, Alcock (1993)/(ed.) (1997); Hekster (2008); Ando (2012).

⁸⁵ Konstan and Säid (2006):ix–xii.

⁸⁶ Konstan and Säid (2006):x.

of mimesis on display in areas including *but not limited to* second sophistic declamation: the politically-inflected reanimation at large in the Greek third century.⁸⁷

V. (POST) LATOURIAN QUINTUS

There is a counter-argument to this model. In the ‘doubleness’ which has here been outlined, the reader cannot truly accept both parts. As Hinds puts it, ‘a case can be made that full dialogue is always an unattainable ideal – that it is *impossible*. A privileging of one text/side/interpretation over another is *required* by the minimal linearity of response necessary to define reading as reading.’⁸⁸ In other words, because, as Maciver states, ‘the reader *knows* that the *Posthomerica* is not the *Iliad*, and its poet is not Homer, but a much later writer of a different cultural and literary background’,⁸⁹ then whatever claims it makes to Homeric affiliation are ultimately irrelevant to our real experience of the text.

There are, however, grounds to challenge the idea that such a ‘full dialogue’ is impossible. The attempt to formulate a break with the past is characteristic of much postmodern thought on temporality. Such theories have in turn triggered responses which seek instead of a rupture with the past entrenched lines of continuity. Latour’s *We Have Never Been Modern* offers a drastic example of this counter-position. Latour argues that we are not moving into a radically new age, because *the very notion that time passes* is a deluded construct of modern thought. Anthropology reminds us that the passage of time can be interpreted in several ways – as a

⁸⁷ Chapter One is devoted to this argument. This broader approach will also attempt to circumvent the potential problems arising from a reading of the *Posthomerica* as connected both to the particular identity conflicts of the third century *and* the penchants of the second sophistic, which is usually associated tightly with the two centuries before this time (see e.g. Swain (1996):1–6)

⁸⁸ Hinds (1998):102.

⁸⁹ Maciver (2012b):33, my italics.

cycle or a decadence, as a fall or as instability, as a return or a continuous presence – in a way that is incomprehensible to the moderns, for whom ‘time’s forward arrow is unambiguous.’⁹⁰

There is a typically Latourian irony that this theory is based precisely on drawing a contrast between ‘modern’ and ‘premodern’ ways of conceptualising time. This contrast is no doubt a peculiar vision of history; and ideas about the succession of distinct eras are readily found in ancient literature. Hesiod’s *Works and Days* takes as its *raison d'être* the exposition of the difference between ages.⁹¹ When Latour writes that ‘the moderns have a peculiar propensity for understanding that time passes abolishing the past behind it; they take themselves for Attila, in whose footsteps no grass grows back’⁹² he may as well be quoting the famous line from Vergil’s *Georgics*: ‘time flies, never to be recovered’ (3.284). And his notion of the ‘false’ dichotomy of moving forwards versus going back is exactly what is interrogated in Vergil’s Fourth Eclogue, which heralds the return of the Golden Age under Augustus, a newness achieved by repetition, but also makes clear that this return is to be past-effacing, as is visualised in the opening poem of the collection in the farmers who are forced to pack up and leave their fields behind.

‘Ancient literature’, therefore, can offer profound deliberation on the forward arrow of time. If we return to the reanimating culture of imperial Greece, we may see how these works interrogate this arrow particularly intensely: confronting the conflict at the heart of this not-so-modern idea about temporality:

‘One can go forward, but then one must break with the past; one can choose to go backward, but then one has to break with the modernising avant-gardes.’⁹³

⁹⁰ Latour (1993):69.

⁹¹ Cf. Vernant (1980):ch.8 who argues that Hesiod has a circular view of time. Further discussion of different shapes of epic temporality in my Chapter Six.

⁹² Latour (1993):68.

⁹³ Latour (1993):68–9.

If the *Posthomerica* can be read as a product of this culture, then the simultaneous presence of Homeric and later elements in the poem represents Quintus' own meditation on this past-present divide; a divide whose limits must lie at the core of his poetics of the interval. The paradoxical doubleness of the text suggests that this poet too sought a way to integrate his work into the traditional past without sacrificing his contemporaneity; and rather than using one to cancel out the other, he aims at a positive cooperation between the Homeric 'then' and his own *hic et nunc*. The thesis will therefore place this twofold temporal model at its centre. The title, *Homer in the Perfect Tense*, expresses the nature of my reading. The Greek perfect tense captures the simultaneity of old and new that I view as characterising this project of literary resurrection.

VI. STRUCTURE AND SCOPE

The thesis has two strands. Part I, *Quintus as Homer: Illusion and Imitation*, expands the notion of the interval established in this Introduction. Chapter One analyses in greater depth the reanimating penchants of imperial Greece, focusing on sophistic declamations, ethopoetic exercises, 'close encounter' descriptions and Homeric performance. By reading these modes alongside depictions of performance from within the *Posthomerica*, I suggest the direct influence that they exerted on Quintus' composition: providing models for how to expand creatively within the boundaries of a canonical, traditional text. Chapter Two assesses how this process of expansion is revealed in the compositional components of the poem. Analysing the formal aspects of the *Posthomerica* which are conventionally read as most strongly deviating from Homeric practice (vocabulary, formulae, similes and *gnomai*), I argue that rather than constituting *imitatio cum variazione*, these features offer the reader a series of lenses through which to view the poet's conception of the Homeric text and his understanding of his role in creating more of it.

Part II, *Quintus as Quintus: Antagonism and Assimilation*, considers four metapoetic⁹⁴ vehicles which Quintus co-opts from a range of genres and texts to advance his incorporative style of poetics. Chapter Three addresses the most intense programmatic section of the poem, the in-proem of Book 12. Rather than reading it as an indication of Alexandrian indebtedness, I show how Quintus reconfigures symbolic imagery from Callimachus' *Aetia* to create a pointedly un-Callimachean programme, and emphasises the Homeric core of the ‘anti-epic’ voice.

Chapter Four examines Quintus’ use of memory as a device for literary recapitulation. I consider what happens when Quintus’ characters, who are ‘still in the *Iliad*’, remember the *Iliad* incorrectly. It is argued that rather than offering a correction of Homer’s version of events, Quintus uses the pliability of memory as a retrospective figure to defend and continue the act of poetic selectivity, providing Homer’s response to charges of lying prevalent in revisionist strands of his imperial reception.

In Chapter Five I consider how Quintus captures his stance towards Homer through the representation of actual familial relationships. Harnessing the frequent collusion between generational and poetic succession, the poem first reveals a series of failed rivalrous filial relationships, and then portrays the two most successful examples of succession as characterised by impersonation, embodiment and necromantic possession. Becoming the poetic father thus emerges as the surest way to achieving lasting renown.

The final chapter confronts the synchronic model of time which underpins Quintus’ whole Homerising system. Analysing the poem’s presentation of temporality – pacing, counterfactuals, anachronies and motifs of closure – I propose that Quintus draws on the two different narrative forms offered by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but suggests their fundamental

⁹⁴ Here seems a pertinent moment to pause on the term ‘metapoetic.’ Readings of ‘the poet in the poem’ have become so prevalent in classical studies as to become conventionalised and potentially meaningless; ‘the dreariest of contemporary approaches to ancient verse’ (Leigh (2006):238, as discussed in Chapter Five). Whilst I shall use ‘metapoetic’ as a shorthand for self-reflexive moves, my account will focus on the most pointed programmatic moments in the text, and define them accordingly. The in-proem as discussed in Chapter Three will be central to this definition.

consistency by combining them into one. Given the political dimensions attached to these forms,⁹⁵ I end by suggesting the ideological implications of Quintus' techniques. By merging the teleological and the open styles of narrative, he creates a positive reading of the 'inevitability' and 'continuity' associated with the advance of empire, celebrating the open-ended potential of the closed Homeric text.

Any such reading of the *Posthomerica* must address the contentious question of its sources. Identifying Quintus' literary models beyond Homer is a task which continues to provoke and frustrate scholars. It is not my intention to re-enter these old arguments.⁹⁶ I shall instead adopt a broadly maximalist approach to Quintus' sources. I shall make the case for the epic's engagement with trends, styles and 'schools' of literature, particularly those which are openly antagonistic to Homeric epic, against whom Quintus launches his response. Interactions will be considered positively rather than rejected *a priori*. But I shall also posit instances where I believe a specific intertextual connection is likely, and has not before been suggested. To provide grounding for this approach I shall here set out my position regarding the two most problematic areas of Quintus' literary background, which are also most relevant to my arguments: his familiarity with the Epic Cycle, and use of Latin material.

If Quintus positions his poem in the Homeric middle, an obvious question arises regarding his relationship to the Cyclic poems, another group of texts which may be considered as doing the same. The *Aethiopis* also begins straight after the end of the *Iliad*, and led to an alternative final line for the poem (ὦς οἵ γ' ἀμφίεπον τάφον "Εκτορος· ἥλθε δ' Άμαζών,/Αρηος θυγάτηρ μεγαλήτορος ἀνδροφόνοιο, fr.1 W). A persistent line of scholarly thought thus runs that Quintus chose to write an epic on this theme to replace the Epic Cycle; which, it is argued mainly on the basis of the *Posthomerica*'s numerous divergences from its stories, was by his

⁹⁵ Quint (1993) will be central.

⁹⁶ For Quintan *Quellenforschung* see Vian (1959); Bär and Baumbach (2007).

time no longer extant.⁹⁷ My stance on the matter aligns with that of Maciver, who offers surely the most common-sense take on this rather illogical argumentation:

‘Quintus, as a creative poet, need not follow the traditional version of events, just as Euripides felt that he could manipulate traditional myths for the purposes of his plays. A poet does not need an excuse to write a poem.’⁹⁸

Whereas for Maciver the availability of the Cycle is important for qualitative reasons – invalidating suggestions that the poem only survived through the Middle Ages as a guide to what happened after the *Iliad*, and affirming that it was appreciated for its literary merits too – what is crucial for me is that Quintus’ manoeuvres of completing Homer’s story reflect the poetological aims of the poem, not any ‘supply and demand’ replacement job.

The so-called Latin question, whether Quintus made creative use of Latin poetry, especially Vergil’s *Aeneid*,⁹⁹ also has important implications for my reading. As I define the poem’s techniques against the methods of response mainly (but not exclusively) identified with Roman writers, the possibility of Quintus’ direct engagement with these poets must be considered. The level of Latin knowledge among erudite imperial Greeks has been the subject of much recent scholarship.¹⁰⁰ Based on existing evidence, my position is as follows: the existence of Greek translations of Latin works¹⁰¹ does not by any logic preclude knowledge of the original versions (modern readers honed in Latin still enjoy English translations...); recent suggestions about the connections between other imperial Greek epics – particularly Nonnus – and the works of Ovid and Vergil are increasingly convincing;¹⁰² and in the case of Quintus, his divergence from

⁹⁷ Gärtner (2005):28 n.10 lists the scholars for and against. See also Bär and Baumbach (2015).

⁹⁸ Maciver (2012b):8-9. I also agree with Maciver that it is likely, on balance, that the Epic Cycle was in Quintus’ time still ‘around’ at least in portions (*ibid*: 9).

⁹⁹ See principally now Gärtner (2005) and James (2007) with full references to earlier scholarly discussion.

¹⁰⁰ Particularly instructive are Fisher (1982); Sánchez-Ostiz (2013).

¹⁰¹ See Fisher (1982), who shows that many of these are dated to the fourth century.

¹⁰² E.g. D’Ippolito (1994), with many more studies included in Verhelst and Scheijnen (edd.) (2018 forthcoming). For a negative view, see Knox (1988). Shorrock (2001):110-11/(2008):105 is more ambivalent.

the *Aeneid* in certain key passages¹⁰³ should be read, as is the case with the Cycle, as indicative of creative independence, not ignorance. I shall therefore work on the premise that Quintus did in likelihood know Latin literature, and suggest how the *Posthomerica* engages with themes recognisable from this tradition, and reworks the tropes used in many individual poems within it.

I shall have succeeded in this approach if the (potential) reader of Quintus gets a sense of the breadth of literary-cultural references on display in this poem, and emerges more attuned to the nature of its engagement with them: participatory rather than reflective, reactionary and even radical in its treatment of Homer and positioning of itself. In this way, the elusiveness of the *Posthomerica* does not fail to signify. Quintus' slippery identity, his refusal to be contained by one or other existing critical paradigm, his lingering status 'in the middle' is a way of understanding his poetics. Exceptions can destabilise the rule, and to the modern scholar of ancient epic, the *Posthomerica* should prompt some important self-reflections. Two decades on from its launch into mainstream classical criticism, the model of adversarial re-reading has become the blueprint for studying creative imitation in epic. In a poem previously taken as a serene conformer to this model, Quintus' rejection of antagonism towards Homer, his (re)-embrace of continuity, and culturally-informed criticism of Homeric criticism contains a pertinent warning against its universal applicability – a timely reminder that there are other ways of dealing with poetic rivalry than the Oedipal.¹⁰⁴ In creating a picture of epic succession which repeats, to varying degrees and combinations, the same moves of competition and change, and in translating this theory, such a successful fit for silver Latin, directly onto imperial Greece, have we thus really struck interpretative gold, identifying a system of unifying characteristics which are 'always' 'ever present' for 'all',¹⁰⁵ or are we in danger of subscribing

¹⁰³ On which see Gärtner (2005); James (2007).

¹⁰⁴ As Hardie also concedes, (1993):118. But cf. 119.

¹⁰⁵ Quotations based on the epigraphs to section I.

to another breed of unambiguous thinking,¹⁰⁶ in our own anxiety to quench that ever-present desire for exegetical closure?

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Latour (1993):68.

CHAPTER 1

ENLARGING THE SPACE

IMPERIAL DOUBLENESS, FIXITY, EXPANSION

The Introduction described the need to rethink Quintus' literary position – to move away from the posthomeric to the inter-homeric. It outlined the framework for the cultural narrative which could be driving this shift: the imperial Greek interest, evident particularly in the turbulent third century, in creative reanimation, carving out new space within fixed boundaries of language, convention or tradition. The aim of this chapter is to reconstruct that narrative, and explore discrete spheres of imperial Greek culture which offer crucial perspectives on the *Posthomerica*'s project.

In the first part, I consider three areas of particular relevance to Quintus' epic: sophistic declamation, the creative exercises in the progymnasmata and new imperial styles of Homeric performance. I focus on how these modes combine ideas of mimesis with self-conscious adherence to their source texts: re-enacting their models, they expand from within clearly demarcated limits. They provide, it is argued, examples of and inspiration for what the *Posthomerica* attempts on the boldest of scales: a full-scale epic inserted within a Homeric frame.

The second part develops this link. In order to demonstrate the points of contact between these spheres and the *Posthomerica*, I consider not, as per the conventional approach, speculative biographical possibilities (was this poem performed? Does it show the influence of ethopoeiae? Is it the work of a sophist?) but instead turn to the text's own portrayal of Homeric song. By analysing the internal performances in the poem, I suggest that these scenes contain in

miniature Quintus' approach to expanding Homeric epic. The poet displays in his songs within the song a version of the interstitial worldview in which the *Posthomeric* is claiming a part.

I. BEING AND NOT BEING

We have considered the heightened interest in play-acting in the Greek culture of the early empire,¹ and seen how concepts of ‘doubleness’ were crucial to such acts: being and not being the subject impersonated. My first aim is to interrogate this concept more fully, and to suggest its particular manifestations in the period under question.

The idea of doubling has a long history in ancient modes of performance and concepts of imitation. It lies at the core of Plato’s complex, multiform definitions of mimesis.² In the dangerous act of impersonation of *Republic* 3, the illusionistic copy-making from *Republic* 10 and the fraudulent mimicry of the sorcerer sophist (*Soph.*235a) the falseness of representation, the genuine but ambiguous gap between imitated character and imitating artist connect all three taxonomies.³ Such notions remain just as central to modern terminology. In his attempt to provide a general definition of ‘performance’, Bauman describes it as a ‘consciousness of doubleness’, in which ‘the actual execution of an action is placed in mental comparison with a potential, an ideal, or a remembered original model of that action.’⁴

¹ Introduction, section IV.

² The discussions to follow will often take ‘performance’ and ‘mimesis’ as a double-act. For these purposes, ‘mimesis’ will be defined primarily as ‘imitation’; with the acknowledgement that it such a definition does not cover all possible aspects of what mimesis does. Further helpful discussion in Sörbom (1966).

³ By emphasising this link, I am consciously bypassing the contentious issues surrounding the other points of convergence and divergence in Platonic definitions. Bibliography on this topic is voluminous. See especially the clear summary of the proposals in Naddaff (2002), and more extensively, Belfiore (1984); Halliwell (1988); Nehamas (1982); Lear (2011).

⁴ s.v. ‘performance’ in Barnouw (ed.) (1989).

This definition is meant to cover a wide territory, from theatre to everyday life. Recent analyses of ancient performative culture have confirmed this broad applicability. Lada-Richards shows how classical Athenian theatre was a domain well-aware of the borderline between being the self and the clouding or submerging of oneself into a separate performed identity. ‘Dramatists’ such as Aristophanes’ Dicaeopolis, Agathon⁵ and Euripides’ Helen, who take on various metatheatrical roles in their plays, ‘reflect self-consciously upon the twofold way in which the elements of “actor” and of “character” can co-exist in a performer’s stage presence.’⁶ Other scholars have suggested how this duality inherent in ancient acting acquired a symbolic authority which could be drawn upon in other intellectual spheres such as rhetoric⁷ and philosophy.⁸ In the *Helios* volume on ‘unmasked performance’⁹ Stehle argues that doubleness also offers a special opportunity to performers *in propria persona* and their spectators, because ‘on the one hand, since the performer acts as himself or herself, such “unmasked” performances are public performances of identity, (but) on the other hand, the identity projected is an “ideal” or “potential” one...constructed, rather than natural.’¹⁰

Whilst the concept of doubleness thus finds expression across a range of ancient spaces, the sense of split identity acquired a particular valence in the performative output of imperial Greece. This sharpening of interest can be observed through three avenues. First, the period saw the development of new genres focused directly on such conceits. Mime and pantomime, the new and highly popular entertainment forms which emerged during the Hellenistic and Roman periods, derived their power from their unnerving mimetic manipulations, as actors

⁵ The meta-theatrical player *par excellence*, who explains how he, as a tragic poet, constructs stage characters, all the while being a character himself in a play (*Thesm.* 146–72).

⁶ Lada-Richards (2002):396.

⁷ Fantham (2002) explores the self-conscious way in which Roman orators discussed the common element of performance which bound them to their theatrical counterparts.

⁸ See Edwards (2002) on Stoic philosophy’s use of personae theory and theatrical analogies.

⁹ *Helios* 28 (2001). Stehle (3) defines ‘unmasked performance; as ‘more or less formal performances conducted by performers who are not disguised or standing in for fictional figures’ – although acknowledges that such a categorisation is ‘slippery.’

¹⁰ Stehle (2001):4.

simultaneously appeared as characters in a role and performers displaying their virtuoso technique – a paradox which lay at the heart of the anxiety that they produced.¹¹ Libanius for instance fixates upon how dancers' individual bodies can act as an index of a successive series of characters (*On Behalf of Dancers* 113); and in Lucian's famous account of a disastrous performance of the story of Ajax, the actor's madness spills out into reality as he attacks the audience, a *faux pas* described as mimesis gone too far (ἐκ τῆς ἄγαν μιμήσεως, *On Dance* 83–4).

Secondly, many imperial performances focused directly on the imitation of personas from the distant past: mythical figures in the rhetorical exercises, Demosthenes or Solon in the speeches of the declaimers, Homeric heroes in 'close encounters'.¹² And thirdly, the era is marked by an increased slippage between literary texts and theatrical performance. Poems were recited at agonistic contests which became increasingly institutionalised under the empire, and many new works were specifically composed for performance at such events.¹³ Traditional poetry was put to use at various theatrical occasions: either as background songs for pantomime displays or in rhapsodic shows which continued into the third century C.E.¹⁴ Poetry was also read out at community reader gatherings: both private, in a house, or public, in a library or auditorium such as those recently excavated in Kom el-Dikka in Alexandria.¹⁵ School exercises, particularly at the level of the progymnasmata, involved the composition of prose texts or epic hexameters and the performance of them to a classroom audience. And in shows of sophistic oratory, declaimers, for all their pretences of spontaneity, would incorporate frequent quotations or paraphrases of classical texts and even original verses.¹⁶

¹¹ On this point see Webb (2008).

¹² Cf. Lane Fox (1986) as discussed in the Introduction, section IV.

¹³ Cf. especially González (2013).

¹⁴ Collins (2004); González (2013). Further discussion in section IV of this chapter.

¹⁵ See overview in Cavallo (2007).

¹⁶ Bowie (1989a). I return to these spheres of literary performance in the sections below below.

How then do we account for this heightened interest in ‘being both’? We have seen how performances of impersonation can take on new meaning in the context of political hegemonies: how in the gradual shaping of Greek identity under Roman rule, such acts were profoundly influenced by the vital and authoritative role that literature and history played in defining the elite sense of self-worth and social position.¹⁷ Such mimetic enactments could thus become sites for more general questions about the validity and authority of ancient tradition in imperial culture. What is at stake in a movement backwards? What is the place of the past in the culture of the present? What role, if any, should Homer and the mythological age play in the definition of ‘Greekness’? One of the central reasons that such efforts intensified in this period can be thus argued to be precisely because they provide possibilities for raising these broader issues. Doubleness became a way of testing the limits of the imperial Greek obsession with the past.

To demonstrate this intensity, and discuss its particular characteristics, I shall now focus on three case-studies of imperial impersonation, which will be argued to form a setting against which the *Posthomerica* ought to be comprehended: declamation, the progymnasmata, and Homeric performance on stage and page. Chronologically, these works span the first three centuries C.E. They all provide examples of the imperial move towards enacting the past. However what marks them as a coherent group within this larger field¹⁸ is their distinctive combination of two interests: self-conscious doubleness and a strong *textual* focus. That is, all three of these areas continue the heightened trend of being and not being one’s mimetic subject. But crucially, this double-being intersects with a close adherence to the source material which they are impersonating; an expression of the boundaries created by this adherence; and a delight in displaying creative effects within the constricts imposed by these models. The forms thus display their own narrative of the interval; with techniques closely aligned to Quintus’ poetics.

¹⁷ Introduction section IV.

¹⁸ Mime, pantomime and other forms of theatrical and literary mimesis will remain in the background in the subsequent sections of this chapter, but will cease to be the main focus.

II. DECLAMATION: WHAT DEMOSTHENES WOULD HAVE SAID

The Greek sophists of the imperial period were ‘walking exemplars of elite Greek culture’,¹⁹ whose epideictic displays were central to their cultural capital. As has been much discussed in recent scholarship, these speeches achieved their power by employing a particular sense of cultural conservation: not only do the exercises (particularly the *suasoriae*) arise from a centuries-old pedagogical tradition, but they are also bound by strict rules of linguistics and subject matter; a fidelity to classical theme, historical scenario and archaic Attic dialect.²⁰ Within this ring-fenced repertoire, the sophist would showcase his skills of elaboration through methods such as rephrasing, prosification of verse material and, most distinctively, the insertion of ethopoetic sections: block speeches in the voice of a fictional character, or, more commonly, a figure from the mythological or historical past.

Philostratus provides numerous examples of this process. His praise of Lollianus of Ephesus (*V S* 527) includes a speech which rephrases Demosthenes’ *Against Leptines* 30:²¹

κέκλεισται τὸ στόμα τοῦ Πόντου νόμω καὶ τὰς Ἀθηναίων τροφὰς ὀλίγαι κωλύουσι
συλλαβαί, καὶ ταύτὸν δύναται Λύσανδρος ναυμαχῶν καὶ Λεπτίνης νομομαχῶν·

Philostratus’ Lollianus preserves key details from the original oration: both the overall theme of the problematic law, and finer details such as the use of τοῦ Πόντου in the genitive (*Lept.* 20.30–1: ἐκ τοῦ Πόντου σῖτος εἰσπλέων ἔστιν). This is ‘still Demosthenes.’ Having established this frame, the sophist expands: adding metaphors (the mouth of the Pontus locked up), metonymy (the συλλαβαί of the law) and poetic compound doublets (ναυμαχῶν καὶ Λεπτίνης

¹⁹ Connolly (2001b):76.

²⁰ On this aspect of second sophistic declamation, see especially Anderson (1993):chs.2–5; Whitmarsh (ed.) (2005); Enos (2008):164–200; Connolly (2001b); Schmidt and Fleury (edd.) (2011); Eshleman (2012):ch. 4.

²¹ Whilst the following discussion relies on Philostratus’ depiction of such techniques – stylised, fictitious and the product of a reporter with his own intellectual and cultural agenda – this should not disqualify his account from consideration in a study of the dynamics of imperial Greek culture. On the credibility of Philostratus’ depictions of the sophists, see particularly Eshleman (2012):135–9, and brief but pertinent comments in Connolly (2001b):89–90.

νομομαχῶν). Lollianus also enlarges his source material via a deft temporal shift: his version imagines that the law of Leptines was now in force, and the evils predicted by Demosthenes had come about. His speech thus becomes both an impersonation of Demosthenes and a continuation of him.

Philostratus similarly recalls how Polemo gave voice to Xenophon's imagined plea to be executed alongside Socrates (*V S* 542). Such a speech would have entailed the close appropriation of a well-known story – the trial of Socrates – and the creation of new material set within this narrative range. The same technique is central to Dio Chrysostom's ethopoetic orations (*Or.2, 3, 4*). These, respectively, conjoin the structure of a Platonic dialogue with a conversation between the young Alexander and his father (2); mimic the Xenophontic Socrates' speech on the happy man (3); and re-enact an imagined exchange between Alexander and the Cynic Diogenes (4). Dio frequently emphasises the conceit behind these impersonations: in introducing the Socratic speech he remarks that ‘in discussing this subject I shall endeavour to set forth the view of Socrates’ (3.29), a sign-posted announcement of doubleness. In *Or.4*, he also displays in a more extensive manner the techniques of temporal expansion found in Philostratus’ examples. The meeting between Alexander and Diogenes is described as a widely-reported event, with a place in collective memory (Φασί ποτε, ταῦτα δὲ λέγουσι καὶ γράφουσι πολλοί, 4.1). Diogenes then meets his interlocutor ‘with an abundance of time on his hands’ (οὐ πάνυ τι σχολάζοντα πολλὴν ἄγοντι σχολήν, 4.1), and before they begin their discussion, ‘there was a pause’ (όλιγον ἐπισχών, 4.16). Within the frame of this well-known event, space for imaginative supplementation is created by the drawing-out of time itself: a means of stretching a narrative which, as we shall see, also forms a significant characteristic of Quintus’ epic.²²

²² See Chapter Six.

III. THE PROGYMNASMATA: PRACTISING EXPANSION

Ethopoeia is thus a technique whose success insists on the insertion of new material within the lines of what pre-exists – imagining, and then actually creating, what an ancestral or mythological figure *would have said*. Nowhere is this process more discernible than in the progymnasmata exercises which comprised the final phase of imperial education and provided transferable techniques and material for declamatory performance.²³ The ethopoetics of the classroom, however, also offer more than the backstory to sophistic orations. They provide in their own right significant and at times sophisticated examples of the enlarging of conventional models at this earlier level of literary society – a level through which Quintus would undeniably have passed.

Classical themes provide the raw material for composition across the progymnasmata. As Webb puts it, ‘mythological stories from the classical canon are elements of a common cultural property, to be manipulated and exploited as a demonstration of the art of argumentation. Their utility for this purpose lies precisely in the fact that they are well known.’²⁴ The exercises were based on extremely close reading of source texts, ploughed for the minutest signs which could be used as ammunition for or against a point of view. The famous encomium of Thersites offered by Libanius,²⁵ for example, an instance of adoxography (the praise of things which are bad or ugly),²⁶ directly establishes itself as working from inside Homer’s account: ‘begging Homer’s pardon’, it will ‘attempt to praise this man of whom the poet wished to speak badly...offering Homer himself as witness to certain points.’ These points include both the broad components of the Iliadic episode – the fact that Thersites was not expelled from the assembly is redeployed as evidence that the Greeks agreed with him – and even its very words. The encomium keeps the Homeric hapax φολκός (*Il.2.216*) used to describe Thersites’ bandy

²³ See particularly Morgan (1998); Cribiore (2001); Amato and Schamp (edd.) (2005); Webb (2001)/(2006).

²⁴ Webb (2001):302.

²⁵ Libanius *Encomium 4* (ed. and trans. Gibson (2008)).

²⁶ On this sub-genre, see Billerbeck and Zuber (edd.) (2000).

legs; and when arguing that Thersites found fault with Odysseus and Achilles due to their shirking of military service, not through envy of their speaking skills, for in that case he would surely vie with Nestor, it uses the well-known phrase from *Iliad* 1 which describes Nestor's words as 'sweeter than honey' (μέλιτος γλυκίων ρέεν αύδή, *Il.*1.249).

It is, again, within this frame that Libanius moves out, incorporating details drawn from external mythological accounts. To prove Thersites' noble parentage, he cites his kinship with Diomedes, as is attested in the Iliadic scholia and in Apollodorus (*Bibl.* 1.8.6, 1.7.10), and which also finds a place in Quintus' continuation of Thersites' story (Q.S.1.716–824). The encomium moulds these extra-Homeric details back into Iliadic genealogy – Argius as Diomedes' paternal grandfather comes from *Il.*14.118 – and even Iliadic quotation: in imagining that Thersites might have proclaimed how 'to Portheus were born three glorious sons' (τρεῖς παῖδες ἀμύμονες ἔξεγένοντο) the writer turns the *Iliad*'s description of Diomedes' family tree (*Il.*14.115) into a line available to his cousin – what Thersites *could* have said. The composition thus 'corrects' Homer's account of his villain, not by writing over him, but by reconfiguring the narrative and linguistic points already on his textual map.

The exercise of ethopoeia specifically, the later and more complex task in the progymnasmata, offers numerous examples of this type of reconfiguration. The subjects of Libanius' ethopoeiae include tragic themes, like Ajax or Medea, which weave quotations from the source text into a new speech, and feature variations of mythological subjects like the words of Chiron on hearing that Achilles was hidden among girls on Skyros. The process of composing an ethopoeia, as we have seen, involved a combination of listening to models (drawn from classical literature or written by the teacher), reading out loud, and active imitation: students had to think themselves into their mythological role and situation. This is thus the educational task most directly centred on ideas of 'doubling' and performance; and also with the closest affinity to

literature.²⁷ The student composing such texts participates in ‘a literary continuum’,²⁸ with classical models; moving alongside, rather than against, the words of the sources.

A particularly instructive case-study is found among the collection of verse ethopoeiae from Roman Egypt.²⁹ Many of the hexameter pieces start from Homeric scenes. Others, like the Thersites encomium, treat a situation with which Homer deals at length.³⁰ One example establishes an even closer link with the Homeric original:

εἰ μὲν [έ]πὶ Τρώεσσι κορύσσεο χε[τρό]ας, Ἀχιλλεῦ,
καὶ ξίφ[ο]ς, ἀστυφέλκιτον ἐρυσσ[ά]μενος κοτέεσκες,
προφρονέως κεν ἔγωγε συνείρυσ[σ]α φασγανον αύτή·
εἰ δὲ τεοῖς Δαναοῖς θωρήσσεα[ι, ο]ύκέτ’ Ἀθήνη
πείθεται ούδ’ “Ηρη βασιλήιος · ἵσχεο θᾶσσον,
ἵσχεο καὶ μῆνιν πολυπήμον[α π]αῦσον, Ἀχιλλεῦ·
μηκέτι δ’ ἀργυρέης ἐπιμάσσεο χ[είρ]εσι κώπης,
μιμνέτω ἐν κολεῶι σέο φάσγαν[ον]· ούκ ἐπ’ Ἀχαιοῖς
ἀνδροφόνον σε πατήρ μενεδή[ιος] ἔτρ[[ε]]αφε Πηλεύς,
οὕ σε Θέτις προέηκε θεὰ βασιλῆι [φ]ονῆα·
μᾶλλον δυσμενέεσσι κορύσσε[ο], μὴ Δαναο[ι]σι[ν]
σοῖς ἑτάροις Πριάμῳ δὲ καὶ υἱάσ[ι] πέμψον. . [.] . . ην·
μήνιδος ἀργαλέης πλῆσον μένος, εὗτε νοήσης
“Εκτορα καὶ Τρώων κρατερὸν στρατόν· ούκ ἐπ’ Ἀχαιοὺς
φάσγανον ἐν κλισίησιν ἐθήξαο· θυμὸν ἀχεύεις
σοῖς ἑτάροις; ἐπέεσσι κορύσσεο · ἀντὶ δ’ ἀκωκῆς

²⁷ Cf. Webb (2001):306: ‘Ovid’s *Heroides* are essentially exercises in what a certain heroine would say in certain circumstances.’

²⁸ Webb (2001):306.

²⁹ On these texts see particularly Fournet (1992).

³⁰ E.g. H.21 ed. Parsons.

κ]αὶ ξιφέων μύθοισιν ἐριδμαίνουσιν ἔταιροι,
δῆσμενέας κτείνουσιν ὄρινομένους περὶ χαλκῶι·
φ]είδεό μοι Βασιλῆος, ἵνα Τροίην ἀλαπάξῃ
σὺν σοὶ μαρνάμενος καὶ ὑποδρήσσων σεθεν ἀλκῆι· (20)
μῆνιν ἀποσκεδασον πολυπήμ[ο]να, μή σέ τις ἀνηρ
Αἰα]κίδην βαρύμηνιν ἐν ὄψιγό[νοις]ιν ἀείσηι·
οὐ]χ ἐτάροις κρατερόν σ[ε] γέρων [έδιδά]ξατο Χείρων,
ἀ]λκήεντα δ' ἔτευξεν .[.].αντ.[.....].λεμι. . . []
ἡ]θείηισι θεῆις ἐπιπείθεο· σοὶ δ[έ] κεν α]ύτὸς (25)
λισσόμενος καὶ δῶρα πόροι βα[σιλεὺς] Ἀγαμέμνων.
(P. Oxy. 3002 ed. Parsons)³¹

In the *Iliad*, Athena restrains Achilles against Agamemnon in a speech of eight lines (*Il.1.207–14*). This text elongates that moment into a twenty-six-verse intervention. It first fixes itself to its Iliadic source: lines 1–24 treat the first six lines of Athena’s Homeric speech, and her parting two verses in Homer are rendered by 25–6. For Parsons, the text ‘makes no substantive additions’ to the *Iliad* scene, and thus ‘comes close to the alternative exercise of the paraphrase’, although, he concedes, all examples of those are in prose.³² In fact, we may discern three striking modes of addition in this composition – wholly substantive – which render its techniques much more constructive.

The writer laces, but does not saturate, Athena's words with extra-Homeric vocabulary.³³ ἀστυφέλικτος is found first in Callimachus;³⁴ and the compound βαρύμηνις is another

³¹ In this and subsequent papyri examples, I am following the reconstruction of Parsons. I have omitted subscript markers from my transcription.

³² Parsons (ed.) (1974) (*P. Oxy.* vol. XLII):13.

³³ On this idea of moderation in innovation, see Chapter Two.

³⁴ Cf. e.g. Θεός Call. Del. 26: "Αιδηνς Epigr. Gr. 540.3.

Alexandrian coinage, becoming popular only in imperial poetry:³⁵ by using it, the author updates the Iliadic μῆνις, which he elsewhere echoes twice (v.6 and 21), with an expanded form of the concept drawn from a later literary time. He also amends genuine Homeric terms: κρατερός is never used for the army in Homer; συνείρυσα, active here, for Homer is always in the middle; and ἀχεύεις is formed as a main verb, when Homer only uses the participle.³⁶ The composition also reconfigures Homer's narrative time. 'Later' in Homeric epic, Athena in the *Odyssey* advises Telemachus that he will be praised by many men who are yet to be born: ἵνα τίς σε καὶ ὄψιγόνων ἐù εἴπῃ *Od.*1.302. In line 22 of our text, this statement is adapted forwards so that it refers to Homer himself; who becomes the later man who will sing of Achilles and his μῆνις.

This piece of imperial schoolwork, far from being 'a piece of threadbare sub-Homer',³⁷ strikingly demonstrates the specific methods of manipulation afforded by the ethopoetic mode: simultaneously remaining inside a Homeric scene and gesturing outside of it. It moreover provides an example of this process in *poetic* form: verse which self-consciously attaches itself to Homer to become inter-Homeric, not sub.

IV. HOMERIC PERFORMANCE: SCRIPTS AND SPOOFS

As the papyrus shows, many of these examples of expansion focus their energies on Homer: using his language, speaking on behalf or in the persona of his characters. The third and final set of works to be considered deal with the bard specifically and exclusively: performances or compositions in the poet's own voice, they comprise perhaps the most important set of interlocutors for Quintus' project.

³⁵ Cf. LSJ s.v. βαρύμηνις. The noun occurs most frequently in Nonnus.

³⁶ Cf. e.g. *I.I.5.869*.

³⁷ Parsons (ed.) (1974) (*P. Oxy.* vol. XLII):13.

The Homeric text, as has been amply discussed by scholars, was by the imperial period largely fixed. With the completion of Aristarchus' editorial work in 150 B.C.E. and the disappearance of fluid, orally-derived alternatives, Homeric epic had 'evolved', in Nagy's terms, from 'song' to 'script' to 'scripture'.³⁸ And yet in this post-fixation period Homeric epic also continued to be performed and recited.³⁹ These performances found new ways to achieve expansion, now within the confines of a text otherwise immovable and predetermined.

Analyses of rhapsodes throughout their long history have stressed the strong mimetic connection that they claimed to the 'original' Homeric bard or bards. In Pindar *Nemean 2*, the *locus classicus* for the mechanisms of rhapsodic performance, the name *Homeridai* applies to a lineage of rhapsodes in Chios who traced themselves back to an ancestor called *Homeros*. In Pindar's poem, it is these *Homeridai* who first perform the songs of Homer, and yet they are not Homer himself. Instead, they represent a continuum of descendants who keep on restarting his song; of which Pindar himself is now part, as the first word of the ode, ὥθεν, reveals.⁴⁰ Plato's *Ion* adds a further nuance to this relationship by accounting for the role of the audience, and the rhapsode's keen self-reflexivity as a performer to a crowd. On the one hand, Ion is fully possessed by the 'divine power' of the Muses (Θεία δὲ δύναμις, *Ion* 533 D); but on the other, he possesses sufficient self-control to keep an eye on his spectators, scrupulously observing their reactions. Rhapsodic performance thus provides a key instance of Homeric 'doubleness.' Alongside this mimetic connectivity, modern studies have emphasised the aspects of skilled improvisation in rhapsodic displays. Building on Nagy's challenge of the 'reduplicative' rhapsode model,⁴¹ Collins has argued convincingly for the creative elements inherent to the art. Rhapsodes, he shows, could competitively recite memorised verses, spontaneously improvise

³⁸ I am using the term 'fixation' in line with the Nagian scheme (summarised at Nagy (1996):110). This is not the place to debate the merits and shortcomings of Nagy's system (its criticisms are well documented). Its general conception of the points of movement towards a fixed text is both reconcilable with and important for my argument.

³⁹ Cf. section I.

⁴⁰ Cf. Nagy (1996):62.

⁴¹ Nagy (1990):42/(1996):113. Cf. also Pavese (1998).

verses anew for elaboration or embellishment, and take up and leave off the narrative of Homer wherever they saw fit.⁴²

In the imperial era, it is traditionally considered that these creative elements withered and died. According to this narrative, the skilled, improvising rhapsodes dwindled in significance, and were replaced by the raucous *homēristai*: costumed, histrionic enactors of Homeric battle scenes, for whom we have very scanty evidence, but who feature most famously in Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis* (*Sat.*59.2–7) where they entertain the party with a performance from the *Iliad*, ham-fistedly misinterpreted by the host.⁴³

There are grounds to question this story. What the *homēristai* in fact reveal is another, different, instance of creativity in performance. On the one hand, they continue the rhapsodic tradition of imitating facets of the bard's identity: the very verb connected to their name, ὄμηρίζω, which the *Suda* defines as 'to act Homer or use Homeric verses', contains connotations of pretence and otherness.⁴⁴ But they also, in the vein of the declaimers and classroom composers, focus their impersonation on the text of the Homeric source. The material used by the *homēristai*, the Greek verses which they recited in their shows, was drawn from the post-Aristarchan, standardised Homeric text, from which they would select excerpts, memorise them in advance, and perform in stylised format.⁴⁵ However whilst most scholars maintain that the result was nothing more than a recitation, in which the Homeric script was followed word for word without variation,⁴⁶ closer analysis suggests that the *homēristai* recombined and elaborated this

⁴² Collins (2001)/(2004).

⁴³ On the *homēristai*, see: Robert (1936); Husson (1993), with catalogue; Nagy (1996):157f; Hillgruber (2000); Starr (1987); González (2013):447f. Husson and Hillgruber view them as a type of mime artist who specialised in Homeric material: a conception which my reading will contest.

⁴⁴ As is the case for βαρβαρίζω, Ἐλληνίζω (cf. LSJ s.v. Ἐλληνίζω, II). In Achilles Tatius 8.9.2–3 ὄμηρίζων is explicitly linked to duplicity: playing Homer becomes a metonym for *faux paidea*.

⁴⁵ A process well-demonstrated by Nagy (1996) and González (2013):447f.

⁴⁶ Cf. Nagy 1996:170: the *homēristai* fit into his schema of textual fixation by confirming that 'what was already "scripture" for Aristarchus may have continued to be a "script" for the later Homeric performer'. They treat Homer as an obviously excerpted 'script' which was memorised in advance to be performed in a stylised

textual base, creating ‘more Homer’ through supplementations inserted within the script. They thus offer a remarkable, proactive, example of the imperial process of expansion: performing the Homeric interval.

Let us briefly consider the examples even within the limited surviving evidence which can highlight these creative techniques. The performance at Petronius’ dinner party, usually cited as the testimony *par excellence* for the conventional picture of the *homēristēs*⁴⁷ as an unsophisticated battle mime, provides some strong indications of their Homeric expansion, if read another way. The scene is characteristically opaque and disorientating – difficult to interpret on many levels. And yet the description of the start of the show is revealing:

*cum Homeristae Graecis versibus colloquerentur, ut insolenter solent, ille canora voce
Latine legebat librum.* (Sat.59.3)

The statement makes clear first that declamation remains a component of the *homēristai*’s set: this is no silent mime act. The note that they performed ‘in Greek verses’ is a striking detail: the actors are not only speaking, but speaking Homeric Greek. Trimalchio’s *liber* also implies adherence to a written text: this could be a Latin transcription of Homer from which he can at least attempt to follow along.⁴⁸ Trimalchio’s own description the show is then suggestive of what the *homēristai* did with this text:

*Diomedes et Ganymedes duo fratres fuerunt. Horum soror erat Helena. Agamemnon
illam rapuit et Diana cervam subiecit. Ita nunc Homeros dicit, quemadmodum inter*

mimetic format, and thus represent ‘the final, terminal stage in the history of Homeric performance’. This stance is followed by Parsons (2012):23 (‘these performers have learned their lines by heart, from a written text more or less marked up for comprehension’), and González (2013):415: ‘the average *homēristēs* [uses] slavish memorisation and reproduction—and hence strict adherence to a performance script.’

⁴⁷ For the purpose of consistency, I continue to use the Greek term for the performers, despite the Roman context. For the methodology of drawing on Latin material in my analysis, see section II of the Introduction.

⁴⁸ For the possible contents of this book, see Hillgruber (2000):64f and González (2013):453. Whether or not this book closely followed the Greek spoken by *homēristai*, what is important here is that Trimalchio attributes the words to Homer, and must have expected his guests to *consider* them as a Latin equivalent.

se pugnant Troiani et Parentini. Vicit scilicet et Iphigeniam, filiam suam, Achilli dedit uxorem. Ob eam rem Ajax insanit et statim argumentum explicabit. (Sat.59.4–5)

The hapless host is, of course, wrong in his conflated interpretations: but we may wonder just how wrong. The very order of events that he gives suggests that the performance has significantly readjusted the shape of the Homeric text; cutting and pasting different scenes from the narrative and combining speeches from a range of characters. Trimalchio's account also allows for the possibility that the show has deviated more fundamentally from the *content* of the Homeric poems. In the final line of the speech, he describes the madness of Ajax, which *statim explicabit*. Once the show is over, a slave brings in a boiled calf for the feast, and ‘Ajax’, still in character, attacks the meal with his sword:

Secutus est Ajax strictoque gladio, tanquam insaniret, concidit, ac modo versa modo supina gesticulatus mucrone frusta collegit mirantibusque vitulum partitus est.
(Sat.59.7)

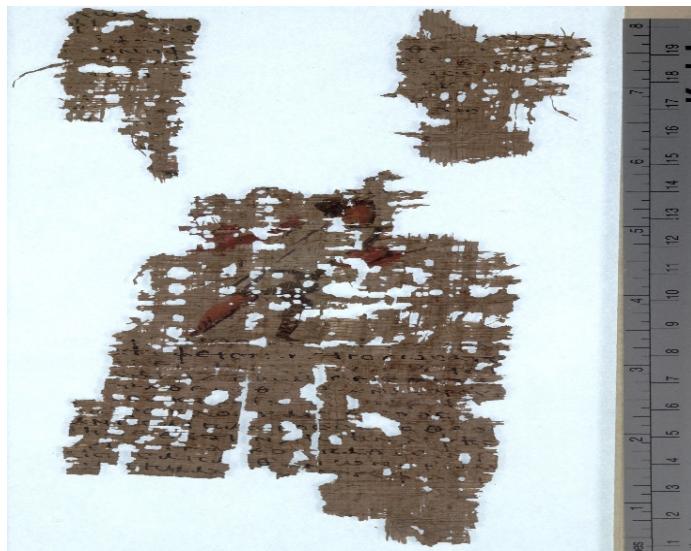
The spilling over of mimesis beyond the realm of performance is akin to Lucian's account of the pantomime gone wrong. The slippage suggests that we are to imagine the madness of Ajax as a component of the *homēristai*'s routine: the joke only works if we maintain the connection between the madness ‘on stage’ and what unfolds beyond it. If we accept that Ajax’ downfall was indeed a part of the show, we have an instance where this type of performer, whose very existence is based on an exclusive commitment to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*,⁴⁹ includes an episode that is emphatically extra-Homeric.⁵⁰ If Lollianus’ extension of Demosthenes’ law, and the ethopoeia’s embellishment of Athena, grafted extra lines onto pre-existing textual moments,

⁴⁹ See Husson (1993) and González (2013):449, with references at n.57.

⁵⁰ Hillgruber (2000):65 notes this expansion, and suggests that Petronius’ account must therefore imply that the *homēristai* of later times adopted a broader repertoire than the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. This would however contradict all other evidence (including that dated later than the *Satyricon*) that part of what defined *homēristai* was their sole focus on the Homeric oeuvre.

then we have here an example of an entire scene inserted into the Homeric middle; construed so as to form an extended part of what *Homeros dicit*.

A little-known papyrus fragment offers further justification for viewing these performers as inter-Homeric expanders:



(*P. Oxy.* 3001 ed. Parsons)

...] ιδευλ . [.] . [.] . η. . ε. . ροκ[

ψυ]χή ἐφε{ι}στήκει γοόωσά τε [μυρομένη τε

Il.23.106

(5) Πηλεϊδην . . . ουσα κατατ[

όσ]σάκι δ' ὄρμήσειε πυλάω[ν

..]σελεθειν θυ[ρ]έων μ αρου . [

τοσσάκι μιν προπάροιθ[εν ἀποστρεψασκε παραφθὰς

Il.22.197

Πάτροκλος και . [.] . . ρος . . . [

(10) 'μνῆσαι πατρὸς σε[ι]ο, θεοῖ[ς] ἐπείκελ' Αχιλλεῦ

Il.24.486

μηδὲ Θέτιν χή[ρ]ην λ<ε>ίψης [

πρίν τι κακὸν παθέειν· ἡ[χθὲν δέ τε νήπιος ἔγνω

Il. 17.32, 20.198

μή τις ἀπ' ἀθαν~~άτ~~ων .ριαμ[

ἐμβῆη· μάλ[α] τ[ού]ς γε φιλεῖ [έκάεργος Ἀπόλλων

Il. 16.94⁵¹

The papyrus, dated to the second century⁵² shows a figure in armour, perhaps Achilles, above hexameter verses. West first suggested a connection with the *homēristai*,⁵³ but the document has not found its way into any of the recent surveys of the performers.⁵⁴ And yet there is much to support such a connection. The costume, the arms (stage-props?) and the staging of a specific Homeric scene all accord with what we can reconstruct from other sources about the craft.⁵⁵ If the figure is a *homēristēs*, then the text beneath him can correlate to what he would have performed. The scene takes off from *Iliad* 23.65, where the ghost of Patroclus appears to Achilles, discussing his funeral and prophesising his death. Here Achilles tries to set out, and each time the ghost turns him back and gives a speech of warning. This sequence thus provides a further example of the techniques adopted in the Athena ethopoeia; as new lines and narrative developments are fused directly into a famous Iliadic exchange. The process also works on the level of language: as indicated on the transcription, half the lines are taken verbatim from different contexts of *Iliad* 16–24, but reconstructed into this new amalgamation.

Parsons is baffled by this ‘odd confection’, and explains it as a ‘half-cento’.⁵⁶ Half-cento however, is oxymoronic, or at least imprecise. Just as his likening of the Athena ethopoeia to a paraphrase failed to account for the specific techniques of that text, so too does a cento label insufficiently capture the effects on display here. Verses 6–8 best illustrate them. The section

⁵¹ Transcription by Parsons (1974) (*P. Oxy* vol. XLII).

⁵² Parsons (1974) (*P. Oxy.* vol. XLII):8 thus assigns it, based on the hand.

⁵³ As discussed by Parsons (1974) (*P. Oxy.* vol. XLII):9.

⁵⁴ González (2013) does not include this papyrus in his prosopography.

⁵⁵ That the scene depicted here is not a battle episode could thus be a further suggestion that the *homēristai*'s oeuvre was not limited to Iliadic battle scenes.

⁵⁶ Parsons (1974) (*P. Oxy.* vol. XLII):8–9.

begins with *Iliad* 22.194 and ends with 197; but between these points the writer replaces Homer's intervening lines with three of his own creation. Centos recombine the lines of their sources: they tell, for instance, stories from the Bible using lines of Homer.⁵⁷ This text stretches its source out, and creates more Homer whilst remaining thematically within his remit.⁵⁸ If we accept West's *homēristēs* hypothesis, then this papyrus provides further evidence of what is implied in Petronius' slippery fiction: that these Homeric actors align with the approach to Homeric epic palpable in other outputs of this era, a form of textual experimentation set within a shared understanding of what was and was not Homer.⁵⁹

This experimentation is also on display in the more 'literary'⁶⁰ Homeric compositions from the period. In the *True Histories*, during Lucian's meeting with Homer on the Island of Dreams, the bard twice composes new material. Lucian first teases us with the premise of another book of Homer, which never made it back to the real world:

συλλαβόντες οὖν τοὺς νενικημένους καὶ δήσαντες ἀπέπεμψαν ἔτι μᾶλλον κολασθησομένους. ἔγραψεν δὲ καὶ ταύτην τὴν μάχην Ὀμηρος καὶ ἀπιόντι μοι ἔδωκεν τὰ βιβλία κομίζειν τοῖς παρ' ἡμῖν ἀνθρώποις· ἀλλ' ὕστερον καὶ ταῦτα μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἀπωλέσαμεν. ἦν δέ ἡ ἀρχὴ τοῦ ποιήματος αὕτη,
νῦν δέ μοι ἔννεπε, Μοῦσα, μάχην νεκύων ἡρώων. (*Ver. Hist.* 2.23–4)

With ἔγραψεν, Homer becomes a writer, who composes τὰ βιβλία; a nod to the fixed, bookish, nature of Homeric verse as it was received thanks to the work of Aristarchus and company – the 'pedants' whom Lucian corrects earlier in his interview (*Ver. Hist.* 2.20). The ἀρχή of this

⁵⁷ On imperial centos, see particularly Usher (1998).

⁵⁸ Parson (1974) (*P. Oxy.* vol. XLII):11) implicitly acknowledges this difference. In his rejection of εἰ]σεθ in line 6, he remarks that it 'hardly suits the context.' He is correct, but this comment confirms that an Iliadic context is there to be maintained.

⁵⁹ In emphasising this new type of creative technique in the *homēristai*, I am thus not positing any imperial version of the 'Ptolemaic papyri' argument (cf. Collins (2004):ch.20) – that there was any long term textual variation or destabilisation caused by their additions.

⁶⁰ I.e., in this context, texts composed to be read, not primarily performed.

new tome starts by recycling the opening of the *Odyssey*; but its first words replace the metonymic ἄνδρα with νῦν δε: this would have been an epic which started with a temporal conjunction, the same signal of continuation as we find in the *Posthomerica*. And ‘now’, we are told, it is the battle of dead heroes that is being sung – with the shades like those at the *end* of the *Odyssey*, and a new noun in the feminine accusative (from Iliadic μῆνιν to post-Odyssean μάχην) taking up the narrative mantle.

As Lucian prepares to leave, he begs Homer to compose once more:

Τότε μὲν οὗν τὰ περὶ τὸν πλοῦν παρεσκευασάμην, καὶ ἐπεὶ καιρὸς ἦν, συνειστιώμην αὐτοῖς. τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ ἐλθὼν πρὸς “Ομηρον τὸν ποιητὴν ἐδεήθην αὐτοῦ ποιῆσαί μοι δίστιχον ἐπίγραμμα· καὶ ἐπειδὴ ἐποίησεν, στήλην βηρύλλου λίθου ἀναστήσας ἐπέγραψα πρὸς τῷ λιμένι. τὸ δὲ ἐπίγραμμα ἦν τοιόνδε·
Λουκιανὸς τάδε πάντα φίλος μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν
εἶδε τε καὶ πάλιν ἥλθε φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν. (*Ver. Hist.* 2.28)

Here it is Lucian who fixes this new Homeric poem into writing (ἐπέγραψα now in the first person). And once again, the composed piece sticks closely to Homer’s originals: in its metre – from ἐπίγραμμα we might expect elegiacs, but instead we get hexameters – and in its language: μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν is a frequent Homeric formulae;⁶¹ and φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν occurs twenty-nine times across the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.⁶² Within these parameters the new composition displays its humorous creativity: with linguistic re-orientations – the verse, for instance, only uses the augmented aorist, which just may be a nod towards the completed nature

⁶¹ *Il.* 1.599, 5.340, 14.72, 15.38, *Od.* 1.82, 5.186, 8.326. Cf. also its occurrence in Q.S.14.186, a line discussed in Chapter Five.

⁶² *Il.* 2.140; 2.158; 2. 174; 2.454; 4.180; 5.687; 7.460; 9.27; 9.47; 9.414; 11.14; 15.499; 16.832; 18.101; 23.145; 23.150. *Od.* 1.290; 2.221; 5.37; 5.204; 10.562; 11.455; 14.333; 15.65; 18.148; 19.258; 19.290; 19.298; 23.340.

of Homer, who is now posthumously composing again – and the glaring neologism of Λουκιανός, our new heroic subject.

Homer versifies again in a group of epigrams from the same generation as the *True Histories*, inscribed on a pair of herms of Homer and Menander found in Rome outside the *Porta Trigemina*. Of the three Homeric poems, the first and third address Homer.⁶³ The second speaks in his voice:

Οὐκ ἔθος ἐστιν ἐμοὶ φράζειν γένος οὐδ' ὄνομ' αὐτό,
νῦν δ' ἔνεχ' Αἰλιανου πάντα σοφῶς ἐρέω·
πατρίς μοι χθὼν πᾶσα, τὸ δ' οὔνομά φασιν "Ομηρον,
ἐστι δὲ Μουσάων, οὐκ ἐμὸν οὐδὲν ἔπος.

The epigrammist evokes a typical Homeric scene – question-and-answer sessions about name and lineage – and engages an Iliadic topos: the notion of poetry belonging to the Muses, not the poet, echoes Homer's deferral in *Il.2.484–93*. He then expands on this material using ideas drawn from Homer's biography; elaborating the Iliadic Muse call to have the poet, finally, self-naming.⁶⁴ In this careful blend of impersonation and extension, the poem creates, as Bowie puts it 'just the sort of verse one might expect a disclaimer to produce.'⁶⁵ He is right, but the connections go further.⁶⁶ Although these verses, like Lucian's, could be dismissed as little more than potted Homeric 'spoofs', such snippets – the epic that could have been, the valedictory sphragis, what Homer would have said if asked about his lineage – bear witness to the same sorts of games with Homeric temporality and language as found in sophistic and educational texts.

⁶³ The first is an adaptation of a poem known from the Anthology originally by Antipater of Sidon; the third discusses the view that Homer is divine. See Bowie (1989a):244f.

⁶⁴ For Quintus' Muse Call see Chapter Three.

⁶⁵ Bowie (1989a):245.

⁶⁶ For Bowie, the point is primarily that sophists were interested in composing poetry.

The first and central aim of this chapter has been to suggest that whilst the question of how ‘second sophistic’ Quintus is has continued to divide scholars,⁶⁷ the precise nature of this relationship has been consistently underexplored. It is not (and cannot be) a question of whether the poet of the *Posthomerica* ‘was’ a sophist, or whether the poem was performed in any contemporary setting. It is rather the *conceptual* links – in persona, technique and effects – that place Quintus in conversation with these spheres. The *Posthomerica* too insists on carving the closest relationship to its source text, and works to expand it into a new composition which speaks in the poet’s voice. If ‘second sophistic epic’ is a contradictory term,⁶⁸ then it is because of this combination of interests that Quintus can be aligned with the declaimers, rhetorical training and wider spheres of performance. He is a member of this ‘group.’

The following chapters of the thesis, insofar as they aim to delineate Quintus’ own methods of expanding Homer from within, will make frequent recourse to this group. In analysing how Quintus reformulates Homeric language, literary tropes, and notions of temporality, I shall suggest the significant contribution that the epic makes to the imperial discourse of doubleness. In the final section of this chapter, however, I want first to consider some internal evidence for this connection.

V. QUINTUS’ HOMERIC PERFORMANCE: SONGS WITHIN THE SONG

The interface between imperial Greek epic and the performative culture of the Roman empire has been increasingly probed in recent scholarship. Links have been suggested between the shows depicted in many of the poems and contemporary poetic contests, although conclusions regarding actual performative contexts remain limited. In Quintus’ case, Bär and Baumbach

⁶⁷ See the Introduction section IV.

⁶⁸ Cf. Bär and Baumbach (edd.) (2007). It is ‘contradictory’ in the sense that we do not have any concrete surviving examples of full-scale epic poems composed by practising sophists. See chiefly Bowie (1989a) on this point.

consider the possibility that the *Posthomerica* could have been performed ‘by a sophist on stage in the third century’, reading its *agon* scenes as reflective of declamatory shows.⁶⁹ Carvounis has suggested a connection between the poem’s internal songs and imperial poetic contests, and has read its presentation of character speech as defined by the rhetorical tradition.⁷⁰ Stimulating as such suggestions may be, the tentative nature of their conclusions ultimately affirms that, given the contextual lacunae surrounding the epic, biographically-based readings are unlikely to get us far. This section takes a different route. Turning away from probably unanswerable questions of original context, I shall read the poem’s performance scenes as displaying not a mirror-image of its setting, but a metaphor for its techniques of enlarging the Homeric text.

The first such performance takes place at the funeral games of Achilles, which begin with a verbal rather than physical display of prowess. Nestor, who cannot compete in strength but excels in verbosity, sings an extended song in honour of Thetis (Q.S.4.128–80). This song, in indirect speech, clearly evokes the tradition of the Homeric *aoidos*, and the performances of Phemius and Demodocus in the *Odyssey*. This immediate comparison with the Homeric singers creates an interpretative opportunity when any differences exist. Quintus' Nestor shows himself to be a different type of performer to his Odyssean counterparts, both in terms of what he sings, and how he sings it.

We may first note the increased emphasis on spectacle:

οι μὲν ἀεθλεύσοντες ἀπειρεσίω ἐν ἀγῶνι,
οι δὲ φρένας καὶ θυμὸν ἀεθλητῆρσιν ἴηναι. (Q.S.4.113-4)

⁶⁹ Bär and Baumbach (2007):13. See also Appel (1994a):9–13.

⁷⁰ Carvounis (diss.) (2005).

Nestor's participation is introduced in the language of competition: ούδέ τις ἄλλος ἐριδμαίνεσκεν Ἀχαιῶν/κείνω, ὅτ' εἰν ἀγορῇ ἐπέων πέρι δῆρις ἔτέχθη, 123–4.⁷¹ And whereas the Odyssean bards gain such control of their narratives that the external audience can forget that this is not the voice of the primary narrator, Nestor's account is punctuated with reminders of its secondary, performative mode: verbal cues (ἔνισπε, 131; μέλπε μέσω ἐν ἀγῶνι, 147; καὶ τὰ μὲν Ἀργείοισιν...μέλπε, 161–2) and audience reactions (ἢ δ' ἀῖουσα τέρπεθ', 130; πολὺς δ' ἀμφίαχε λαός/ἀσπασίως, 147–8). The integration of traditional epic funeral games with competitions of dramatic or melic skill is also a notable feature of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca*, where the funeral of Staphylus includes contests in singing and pantomime (*Dion.*19.59–348). Quintus' version, whilst less explicitly 'contemporary',⁷² can also be read in this light: an updating of the Homeric games with signs of the imperial penchant for dramatic spectacle and agonistic song.

This imperial Nestor then sings ἐνθεν ἐλών...ἀρηραμένοις ἐπέεσσι (148–9). This performance style appears to be in-keeping with the practice of the Homeric *aoidos*, and the wording precisely echoes the phrase used to describe Demodocus' technique (ἐνθεν ἐλών, *Od.*8.500).⁷³ However what follows undermines this purely 'archaic' style:

καὶ τὰ μὲν Ἀργείοισιν ἐπισταμένοισι καὶ αὐτοῖς
μέλπε... (Q.S.4.162–3)

Nestor is not performing *qua* Homeric *aoidos*, who provokes joy, sorrow or *thauma* by giving new information to his hearers.⁷⁴ He is instead, like Dio in his Alexander-Diogenes account,

⁷¹ Whilst such a description also echoes the assertion of Nestor's superlative speaking-skill before his first speech in the *Iliad* (*Il.*1.248f), in combination with the other 'agonistic' features of these Quintan funeral games, it can also be read as evoking a more contemporary festival context.

⁷² A subtly in-keeping with the Homerising scheme of the poem.

⁷³ Collins (1994):167–75 reads this technique as an embedded reflection of the strategies of the archaic rhapsode.

⁷⁴ See the interesting discussion of Gonzálaz (2013):365f on this aspect of the Homeric singer's craft, which is particularly true for Phemius' song, but arguably more problematic for Demodocus'.

reciting well-known and much-loved stories, instantly recognisable to the audience gathered to hear them. The choice of the verb μέλπε, with its strong associations with lyric,⁷⁵ adds to this impression: Nestor is aligned with the poetic performers most renowned for their self-conscious techniques and reflexive appropriation of traditional song. ἔνθεν ἐλών takes on new meaning once refracted through this statement. Rather than the spontaneous (re)composition of a Homeric singer, Nestor selects excerpts from a pre-conceived oeuvre of mythical material to fashion a song sufficiently well-known to his audience so that they, like the guests at Trimalchio's dinner, can easily follow along.

In terms of content, the middle of this song (154–60) is Homeric: Nestor recounts Achilles' killing of Polydorus and Asteropaius, his *aristeia* at the Xanthus and the slaughter of Lykaon, and finally the death of Hector.⁷⁶ Framing this section are excerpts of extra-Homeric mythology: the wedding of Thetis (130–45), a story, which, from the point of view of the listeners, is in the distant plu-past;⁷⁷ the deeds of Achilles, much more recent 'history' (161–2); and Achilles' killing of Penthesilea and Memnon – events experienced first-hand by the audience, and the content of the first two books of the *Posthomerica*. The song thus combines an Iliadic core with earlier and later mythological stories to create a potted epic cycle; and these different layers of material are not separated into discrete sections, but merged seamlessly so that the Homeric and the post-Homeric even share a line:

"Εκτορά θ' ὡς ἐδάμασσε, καὶ ὡς ἔλε Πενθεσίλειαν,
ἡδὲ καὶ υἱ<έ>α δῖον ἐϋθρόνου Ἡριγενείης. (Q.S.4.160–1)

In the language of this song, Nestor uses a mixture of Homeric phrases and new linguistic combinations in a Homerising style. His reported speech contains distinctive terms from the Homeric corpus: ἐνί χρυσέοισι κυπέλλοις (139) occurs only in the ninth book of the *Iliad*

⁷⁵ Cf. LSJ s.v. μέλπε.

⁷⁶ Also included in these lines is the death of Troilus, not narrated in the *Iliad*'s primary narrative but mentioned by Priam at *Il.24.257*: another instance of Homeric and extra-Homeric blending.

⁷⁷ On this term see Grethlein and Krebs (edd.) (2012).

(*Il.*9.670); and ποταμοῖο ρέεθρα (156, describing the Xanthus) is used only once in the *Iliad* (*Il.*14.425) and once in the *Odyssey* (*Od.*6.317). “Εκτορά θ’ ώς ἐδάμασσε (160) is another type of ‘quotation’ – a variation on the opening line of this current poem (Q.S.1.1: Εὖθ’ ὑπὸ Πηλείωνι δάμη θεοείκελος “Εκτωρ): Nestor quotes from the start of ‘the *Iliad* part two.’

Homer’s *Odyssey* provides the model for incorporating wider cyclic events into the frame of a single poem. Demodocus’ song and, more elaborately, Menelaus’ tale (*Od.*4.332–592) merge episodes from the sack of Troy and the *nostoi* into the narrative present.⁷⁸ Quintus’ Nestor does not only mimic this process; he adds a further layer to it. Now Homeric epic itself becomes part of the ‘cycle’; the storytelling tradition to be told and retold in song. In its structural, thematic and linguistic techniques, the song thus bears signs of an approach similar to the interval compositions discussed in this chapter: selecting from a well-known repertoire and embellishing Homeric episodes with new lines and scenes. The contemporary flavour of the games, with their echoes of festivals familiar to Quintus’ own era, cements this ‘imperial’ reading. The internal bard expands Homeric narrative in the same way as Quintus himself inserts the death and funeral of Achilles into his Iliadic continuation.

After the sack of Troy, a band of Greek bards performs another epic song:

τοῖς δέ τις ἐν μέσσοισιν ἐπιστάμενος
.....ού γὰρ ἔτ’ αὐτοῖς
δεῖμα πέλεν πολέμοιο δυσηχέος, ἀλλ’ ἐπὶ ἔργα
εύνομίης ἐτράποντο καὶ εὔφροσύνης ἐρατεινῆς.
ὅς δ’ ἡτοι πρῶτον μὲν ἐελδομένοισιν ἄειδεν, (125)
λαοὶ ὅπως συνάγερθεν ἐς Αύλίδος ἱερὸν οῦδας,
ἡδ’ ώς Πηλείδαο μέγα σθένος ἀκαμάτοιο
δώδεκα μὲν κατὰ πόντον ίών διέπερσε πόληας,

⁷⁸

Further discussion in Chapter Six.

ἔνδεκα δ' αὖ κατὰ γαῖαν ἀπείριτον, ὅσσα τ' ἔρεξε
 Τήλεφον ἀμφὶς ἄνακτα καὶ ὅβριμον Ἡετίωνα, (130)
 ως <τε> Κύκνον κατέπεφνεν ὑπέρβιον, ἡδ' ὅσ' Ἀχαιοὶ⁷⁹
 μαρνάμενοι κατὰ μῆνιν Ἀχιλλέος ἔργα κάμοντο,
 "Εκτορα δ' ως εἴρυσσεν ἐῆς περὶ τείχεα πάτρης,
 ως τ' ἔλε Πενθεσίλειαν ἀνὰ μόθον, ως τ' ἐδάμασσεν
 υἱέα Τιθωνοῖο, καὶ ως κτάνε καρτερὸς Αἴας (135)
 Γλαῦκον ἐϋμμελίην, ἡδ' ως ἐρικυδέα φῶτα
 Εύρυπυλον κατέπεφνε θοοῦ πάϊς Αἰακίδαο,
 ως δὲ Πάριν δαμάσαντο Φιλοκτήταο βέλεμνα,
 ἡδ' ὄπόσοι δολόεντος ἐσήλυθον ἔνδοθεν ὕπου
 ἀνέρες, ως τε πόληα θεηγενέος Πριάμοιο (140)
 πέρσαντες δαίνυντο κακῶν ἀπὸ νόσφι κυδοιμῶν.

ἄλλα δ' ἄρ' ἄλλος ἄειδεν, ὃ τι φρεσὶν ἥσι μενοίνα. (Q.S.14.121–42)⁷⁹

As in Nestor's song, this miniaturised account of the events at Troy combines pre-Iliadic, Iliadic and post-Iliadic material into one composition. The post-Iliadic portion (136–41) contains even more material from the *Posthomerica* itself: the killing of Glaucus by Ajax, and Eurypylus by Neoptolemus, the death of Paris and the sack of the city, and the current celebrations which followed. In line with its later chronological position in the poem, the song's mythological range comes into closer contact with the internal audience's present-tense. This section also contains quotations and paraphrases from earlier in *this* epic. ὄπόσοι δολόεντος ἐσήλυθον ἔνδοθεν ὕπου (139) echoes Quintus' request to the Muses (ἔσπεθ', ὅσοι

⁷⁹

The text here contains a considerable lacuna, on which see Vian (1969):181.

κατέβησαν ἄσω πολυχανδέος ὥπου, 12.307)⁸⁰ and the bards' reported words borrow concepts and even an entire phrase (ἢλε Πενθεσίλειαν) from Nestor's earlier song.⁸¹

Preceding this post-Homeric excursus is another central Homeric section (131–3). The bard's reported language here lifts creatively from its Iliadic antecedents. When describing how Achilles killed Hector and dragged his body ('Εκτόρα δ' ὡς εἴρυσσεν ἐῆς περὶ τείχεα πάτρης, 133) the song follows Quintus' own practice at the start of the *Posthomerica* in altering a locational detail from *Iliad* – where Hector is dragged not around the city walls, but behind Achilles' chariot and around Patroclus' tomb.⁸² He also sings, remarkably, of μῆνιν Ἀχιλλέος (132). Mobilising the incipit title of the *Iliad*, this phrase gives it a morphological twist (Ἀχιλλέος for Ἀχιλῆος) to fit the metrical requirements of the new line, and a thematic suppression, as the wrath is speedily elided into new scenes and events. Like the writer of the ethopoeia on Athena, this composer uses μῆνιν and its immediate Iliadic associations to locate his shift in Homeric temporality: as Achilles' anger becomes not *the* subject of the song, but one part of its extension.

Our final performative episode concerns not a song but a show. After the funeral games for Achilles, Odysseus and Ajax embark upon a lengthy verbal contest for his arms. Quintus' version of this famous scene accentuates many features of an *agon*: the two contenders compete in front of an audience (175–9), and spar off one another by performing set 'chunks' of speech in turn. This performance is one of Bär and Baumbach's major examples of how the poem reflects imperial declamation: 'like two sophists competing on stage with μελέται about the same topic, the two heroes use their rhetorical skill in order to persuade the audience of their claims.'⁸³ Their reading has been strongly resisted by Maciver, who stresses instead the scene's

⁸⁰ On this line see Chapter Three.

⁸¹ Q.S.4.160.

⁸² Q.S.1.12. Cf. *Il.*22.395–404; 463–5; 24.14–21. I return to this altered detail in Chapter Four.

⁸³ Bär and Baumbach (2007):13.

continuity with Iliadic flying contests.⁸⁴ The episode has become the crux of the *Posthomerica*'s 'second sophistic' debate.

Perhaps however the division between 'Homeric' and 'post-homeric' has been drawn too bluntly. We have seen how sophistic ethopoetic declamations were themselves obsessed with forging links with ancient textual models, and that their innovations occur within this particular form of conservatism. Odysseus and Ajax here compete using highly Homeric techniques and formulations, and this fact in itself can align them with more contemporary modes of performance: *through* its commitment to Homer, the show becomes 'sophistic.'

The heroes recount their achievements in a rhetorical tone infused with poetic touches like similes and epithets,⁸⁵ and intertwine details from Homeric epic with new additional material:

...έπει νύ σε γείνατο μήτηρ
δείλαιον καὶ ἄναλκιν, ἀφαυρότερόν περ ἐμεῖο,
ὅσσον τίς τε κύων μεγαλοβρύχοι λέοντος·
οὐ γάρ τοι στέρνοισι πέλει μενεδήιον ἥτορ, (186–8)

ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀντιθέω Παλαμήδεϊ θῆκας ὅλεθρον,
ὅς σέο φέρτερος ἔσκε βίῃ καὶ ἔϋφρονι βουλῇ. (198–99)

...ὅς σ' ἐνὶ χάρμῃ
ἐξεσάωσα πάροιθεν ὑποτρομέοντα κυδοιμὸν
δυσμενέων, ὅτε σ' ἄλλοι ἀνὰ μόθον οἰωθέντα
κάλλιπον ἐν δηίων ὄμάδῳ φεύγοντα καὶ αύτόν (202–5)

...οὐκ ἀλεγεινῶν

⁸⁴ Maciver (2012c).

⁸⁵ It may be added that if this debate does reflect a sophistic performance, it is one conducted in verse...

Θῆκεν ἐνὶ μέσσοισιν ἐπέων Θέτις ἀργυρόπεζα (232–3)

όππότε δὴ περὶ σῆμα δαικταμένου Πατρόκλοιο

Πηλείδης ἐρίθυμος ἀγακλυτὰ θῆκεν ἄεθλα. (315–6)

As they debate, recognisably Homeric themes and language (the retention of Thetis' famous epithet ἀργυρόπεζα, for instance)⁸⁶ are interspersed with extra-Homeric moments, here of a particularly explicit kind:

οὐκ οἴω δ' ἄρα τῷ γε λυγρήν ἐπεμήσαο λώβην,
ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀντιθέω Παλαμήδει θῆκας ὅλεθρον,
ὅς σέο φέρτερος ἔσκε βίη καὶ ἔϋφρονι βουλῇ. (Q.S.5.196–8)

In mentioning Palamedes, Ajax insults Odysseus by evoking the hero whom the poet famously forgot.⁸⁷ Like Trimalchio's *homēristai*, who include in their performance, fittingly enough, this very *krisis* story, in this *apodeixis* the contenders expand their Iliadic excerpts with stories known unequivocally to lie outside of the bounds of their source text: splitting open the Homeric and inserting the paradigmatically non-Homeric within.

CONCLUSIONS

The device of the performed song within epic is a moment where poetics are programmatically on display: internal singers can function as emblems for the activities of the composing poet.⁸⁸ Without demanding a direct biographical reading, Quintus capitalises on this collusive potential to present through these performers the *type* of poet that he aims to be. His shows

⁸⁶ On Quintus' use of epithets, see Chapter Two.

⁸⁷ I defer detailed discussion of this Palamedes reference, and its importance to Quintus' strategy, to Chapter Four.

⁸⁸ Cf. e.g. Goldhill (1991); Hardie (1993): ch.4.

embody in summary form the Homerising tendencies of the *Posthomerica*, by demonstrating above all its integrative relationship to its primary source. The analogies in technique between Quintus' composers and the imperial declaimers, classroom ethopoeiasts and Homeric enactors confirm his poem's status as a product of this deeply reflexive performative culture – a culture in which the notion of 'still being' a figure from the past was not just a parody, but a genuine and complexly articulated mode of actualisation. The *Posthomerica* does not merely reflect this context, but literalises it into a new form; creating not just a speech, excerpt or διστιχον ἐπίγραμμα, but a full epic of the interval, which expands not only between Homer's lines but between his whole poems.

How Quintus creates this composition – his methods of enlarging the space, beyond the prototypes in the emblematic songs – is the question to which we must now turn. To locate these methods, we must ask: what is Quintus' inter-Homeric text?

CHAPTER 2

WRITING HOMER LANGUAGE, COMPOSITION AND STYLE

INTRODUCTION: *OMERICO MA (NON) TROPPO?*

We have seen how the question of what imperial Greek epic ‘is’ has become a central issue concerning the texts from this period.¹ A related question is: what does this epic look like? The formal aspect of imperial Greek hexameter poetry is an area to which scholars are increasingly devoting attention. The last two decades have seen a number of studies on individual works focused on compositional features.² In the desire to characterise this epic as a ‘corpus’, a spectrum of stylistics has also begun to emerge, which places on one end the tradition of imperial, Homeric-imitative epics – exemplified above all by the large-scale works of Nestor and his son Pisander from Laranda –³ and on the other the bold metrical and stylistic innovations of Nonnus and his successors.⁴ As transitional points on this spectrum, the surviving works from the third century have been analysed for the ways in which they bridge this gap: between the conservative, ‘Homeric’ cyclical epics and the self-proclaimed originality which marks the *Dionysiaca* as so new.

¹ Introduction section II.

² Which will be here defined as lexematic, morphological, dialectical, formulaic, metrical and stylistic features.

³ See discussion in the Introduction, section II.

⁴ On Nonnus’ stylistic reforms, see particularly Hopkinson (1994a); Whitby (1994), who suggests at 118–9 this idea of a spectrum; Miguélez-Cavero (2008).

Triphiodorus has particularly benefited from this treatment. Recent studies of his epyllion have shown how the text is both a continuation of the imperial trend of traditional epic construction and a diversion from that trend. Miguélez-Cavero's commentary focuses on how Triphiodorus 'preferred a Homer with fewer repetitions than the vulgate text, and shunned any element that had been overused by Homer: his Homer was a master craftsman of the language, whose use of literary σχήματα was worth studying and imitating.'⁵ Within a predominantly Homeric lexical range (Gerlaud calculated that about 80% of his words are Homeric)⁶ Triphiodorus displays his innovation through creative use of Homeric vocabulary, by using non-Homeric words and introducing his own neologisms.⁷

This type of practice has been strongly linked to Alexandrian aesthetics; aligned with the *imitatio cum variatione* and *Selbstvariation* so prevalent in the philological games of Hellenistic poets.⁸ Maciver has recently pursued this connection. In his account of Triphiodoran poetics, he argues that it is through the use of Alexandrian techniques that the poet states his claim for independence: 'Triphiodorus carefully entwines within his overwhelmingly Homeric fabric an aesthetic which proclaims its poetics of difference.'⁹ The *Sack of Troy* is read as updating its Homeric tenor with the sorts of differentiating moves later undertaken on a vast scale by Nonnus, thus representing a pivotal point in the development of Greek epic in the imperial period.

As the Homerising epic *par excellence*, the *Posthomerica* may seem another highly suitable candidate for this kind of analysis. Its chronological proximity to Triphiodorus –¹⁰ both works were written after the Laranda epics but before Nonnus' – similarly Homeric vocabulary (79%

⁵ Miguélez-Cavero (2013):48. Hence her assessment that he can be governed by the motto 'omerico, ma non troppo'.

⁶ Gerlaud (1982):51-2, =1061 out of 1556 words.

⁷ For examples and analysis, see Miguélez-Cavero (2013): 42-6.

⁸ Compare Rengakos (1993)/(1994) on the use of glosses by the Hellenistic poets.

⁹ Maciver (2017 forthcoming).

¹⁰ For the direction of influence see the Introduction, section II.

of Quintus' words are Homeric)¹¹ and traditional Trojan theme all suggest that it too could be tested for points of innovation which work against a dominant Homeric style. In response to nineteenth-century criticism of the poem's style, which saw it as a flattened Homeric *koine*, recent work has indeed stressed how the *Posthomerica* shows its innovation by means of stylistic deviations. These deviations for Quintus have been traced through two main strands. First, in a manner similar to Triphiodorus, studies have emphasised his 'intense' reconfiguration of Homeric language: specifically, the tendency to vary Homeric formulae, using Homeric elements but rarely repeating them exactly, and avoiding common Homeric adjectives in favour of rare ones.¹² Second, other scholars have stressed his amplified use of poetic devices, particularly ekphrases, similes and *gnomai*, which appear in far greater number in the *Posthomerica* than in either of the Homeric texts. In this respect, the epic has been read as 'a poem of extremes',¹³ displaying an aesthetic of excess which aligns it with Late Antique literary fashion,¹⁴ refracted through Alexandrian philological practices.

The contradictions in these readings should give pause. It appears that on the one hand Quintus is being read as a bedfellow of Triphiodorus,¹⁵ another innovative precursor of Nonnus. And yet on the other, he is considered 'too Homeric', saturating his poem with rare Homeric words and Homeric devices. He is somehow both *omerico, ma non troppo* and *omerico troppo*, depending on the features upon which scholars chose to focus. These paradoxes show the problems with trying to fit the *Posthomerica* in to a linear, developmental epic chronology: conservative in some respects and 'radical' in others, it needs to be comprehended on its own terms.

¹¹ Paschal (1904). He also argues that 'many of the remaining [words] are compounds formed on Homeric analogy' (22), which would make the total even higher.

¹² Examples and analysis in section I.

¹³ Maciver (2012b): 13.

¹⁴ For the idea of a Late Antique aesthetic, see Roberts (1989); Cameron (2004); Elsner (2004).

¹⁵ This is of course despite the major difference between Quintus and Triphiodorus (and all the other imperial epic poets) that Quintus implicitly claims Homeric identity. I return to this central claim in the following chapter.

It is my contestation in this chapter that the *Posthomerica* does not fit the picture of stylistic contrast imitation in the same way as Triphiodorus; that the case for linguistic innovation in the poem has been greatly overstated; and that its refusal to fit this mould is important. Reanalysing the compositional features which are said to show the greatest deviation from Homer, I shall argue that the *Posthomerica* does not display a poetics of excess, but instead reveals a pointed *moderation* in its techniques of change. This moderation, I suggest, offers Quintus' way of communicating through his compositional choices the interval poetics that his epic seeks to create: a critically-informed impersonation of Homer, not a correction of him.

The chapter will treat in two parts the main areas of ‘innovation’ usually cited by scholars. The first section will consider language and formulae; the second, similes and *gnomai*.¹⁶ Addressing the above contradictions, I shall attempt to show how these aspects work as parts of a coherent poetic strategy. In his use of Homeric language and formulae, I shall focus on how Quintus avoids filling his poem with linguistic novelties and adapted versions of Homeric terms: he resists the poetics of excess with which his poem has now become associated. This restraint, I argue, focuses attention on the interpretative significance of any change that does occur; and invites reflection upon the way in which words and formulae have come to acquire new meaning within Homeric epic itself.

In the case of similes and *gnomai*, which in terms of their numbers do represent a case for poetic saturation, I shall demonstrate that Quintus favours these features not to create a sense of hyperbole, but because of their highlighted interpretative function in imperial Greek literature and education. Drawing on recent work on the reflexive potential of the devices as they are used in other imperial genres, I suggest that Quintus capitalises upon this potential to express his agenda of literary conservation: his examples become a means of communicating

¹⁶ I have decided to focus on these devices rather than ekphrasis for two main reasons. Firstly, their sheer number makes for a more expansive analysis addressing the question of a poetics of excess. Secondly, the issues raised by the use of ekphrasis in the *Posthomerica* – of visuality, personification, representation – whilst connected to the topic of this chapter, require full study in their own right, and I have done so elsewhere (Greensmith 2018 forthcoming), as has, from a different perspective, Maciver (2012b):ch.2.

ideas of likeness, markers of his assimilation into Homer. Taken together, these features construct Quintus' ‘inter-Homeric’ text: a stylistic expression of the Homeric middle way.¹⁷

I. LANGUAGE AND FORMULAE

Language

Quintus’ close replication of Homeric language is one of the most well-known features of his epic. It has been remarked that ‘no other poem on a comparable scale reproduces the language of its models as closely as does the *Posthomeric* that of the Homeric epics.’¹⁸ We have noted the tendency of nineteenth-century commentators to view this lexicon as a flattened Homeric *koine*, which avoids rare or controversial words almost entirely;¹⁹ and how, in response to such readings, recent work has emphasised instead the elements of adaptation and innovation in Quintus’ lexical choices. Stemming from the exhaustive data provided by Vian and Battegay²⁰ and the analyses of Vian in his *Recherches*,²¹ a number of features of change have been identified. These are mainly associated with the use of Homeric rarities, variants and neologisms; many of which, Vian has demonstrated, had been previously suppressed by the over-correction of manuscript editors, based on recourse to Homeric precedents.²²

¹⁷ For further discussion of this ‘middle way’ see Chapter Three.

¹⁸ James and Lee (2000):21. Although the lexica of Triphiodorus is marginally even more Homeric (cf. the statistics in Tomasso (2012):290) it is scale that renders Quintus’ lexical imitation so distinctive.

¹⁹ Köchly (1853) with discussion in Vian (1959):145–6.

²⁰ Vian and Battegay (1984).

²¹ Vian (1959):chs. 5–6.

²² For a full survey, see Vian (1959):ch. 5. The recent commentary of Ferreccio (2014), drawing on the work of Bär (2009) offers pertinent discussion of Quintus’ ‘Lieblingswörter’ (see esp. xxxii–xxxiii).

Homeric rarities occur particularly in the form of *hapax legomena*. Vian (following Paschal) counted 150 Homeric hapaxes in the poem.²³ Appel calculated that approximately one in ten Quintan words is a Homeric hapax, but that they are often ‘unexceptional’ compounds, with ‘glosses’ far less frequent,²⁴ and almost always used in different syntactical and grammatical contexts to Homer.²⁵ Homeric variants are also employed, including some *variae lectiones* which correspond to Aristarchan and (in one case, Zenodotean)²⁶ readings. Certain neologisms have also been identified, which display the influence of tragedy and Hellenistic literature on the poem.²⁷

These linguistic deviations, which ‘d’une manière plus ou moins consciente se sont glissés dans la frame Homérique’,²⁸ have been associated with an Alexandrian style of poetics: Quintus is deemed to show his learnedness and self-differentiation by means of clever philological twists and ‘corrections’ derived from the tradition of Homeric scholarship.²⁹ Such innovations certainly stand in contrast to Quintus’ metrical system, which is conservative and largely avoids irregularities: he is not among the later epic poets who significantly show the influence of Callimachus’ metrical reforms.³⁰ However, in emphasising these points of change, scholars have tended to go too far. Although Vian and his successors are undoubtedly correct in their identification of *some* rarities, variations and neologisms in the epic, the total amount of such

²³ Vian (1963a):xli.

²⁴ Appel (1993) and (1994a). This distinction is intended to mark the difference between the sorts of ‘standard’ Homeric compounds, but which count as *hapaxes* because they are used only once; and the more striking singularly-occurring words on which the Hellenistic scholars focused their critical attention.

²⁵ Appel (1994a).

²⁶ Q.S.4.522: ἔκθοπον; cf. Zen. *Il*.23.759. Due to space constraints, I shall not analyse these variants in detail; as the most provocative examples of Quintus’ ‘pointed moderation’ that I have found occur in the form of rarities and neologisms. On these aspects see Vian (1959):161–2.

²⁷ Vian (1959):168. List of terms provided in Köchly (1853):xlix; Paschal (1904):22–7. Further examples in Vian (1959):168–74.

²⁸ Vian (1959):268.

²⁹ Appel (1994a) takes this view. See also Bär (2009):62f; Maciver (2012b):15; Ferreccio (2014).

³⁰ For the Quintan metre, see Köchly (1850); Vian (1959):212–49; James and Lee (2000):30–1. This section will not focus in detail on it, since it aims to analyse the features which most deviate from Homeric practice.

material is comparatively low: far less prevalent, for instance, than in the multifarious, compound-heavy vocabulary of Nonnus, or the lexical adaptations of Triphiodorus. For instance, Triphiodorus uses proportionally far more *hapax legomena* (115 for Quintus' 150), and Nonnus saturates the *Dionysiaca* with glosses, using for example καλαῦροψ (*Il.*23.485) no fewer than nineteen times.³¹

Rather than applying sweeping labels to Quintus' lexical system – ‘Homeric *koine*’ or ‘Alexandrian *varatio*’ – it seems that the ‘middle ground’ that it represents should be taken seriously. That Quintus includes rarities and neologisms, but does not overwhelm his poem with them, suggests that there is a specificity to his individual choices: his adaptations are exceptional and pointed, rather than working in aggregate to signify an agenda of innovation. Given their infrequent occurrence, the specific narrative *context* of Quintus' Homeric deviations becomes more important than has hitherto been suggested. I shall now focus on some examples which are particularly suggestive of this point.

Homeric Rarities

Appel has demonstrated that Quintus' Homeric *hapaxes* tend to occur in different syntactical or grammatical contexts than in the Homeric poems. There are however a number of instances where the narrative context seems equally worthy of attention. A number of the more distinctive Homeric *hapaxes*³² used by Quintus are found in passages of prolepsis: moments which look forward either to the end of the poem, or to events beyond it.

During the battle with Eurypylus, the narrator remarks that Locrian Ajax did not meet his end because his day of doom was already fixed:

³¹ Cf. A.R. 2.33, 4.974. A full study of Homeric *hapaxes* in Nonnus remains to be undertaken. For a starting point, see Ojeda (2002); Spanoudakis (2014):5-6; Bannert and Kröll (2016):485.

³² These proleptic passages either coincide with the rare occasions where Quintus does use a ‘gloss’ rather than a conventional once-occurring compound; or else they feature Homeric *hapaxes* which did not themselves receive attention in Alexandrian criticism, but are given a more significant meaning in Quintus' poem.

Σὺν δέ οἱ ἥλθε Πάρις τε καὶ Αίνείας ἐρίθυμος,
 ὃς ὁ α θοῶς Αἴαντα βάλεν περιμήκει πέτρη
 κὰκ κόρυθα κρατερήν· ὃ δ' ἄρ' ἐν κονίησι τανυσθεὶς
 ψυχὴν οὕ τι κάπυσσεν, ἐπεὶ νύ οἱ αἰσιμον ἥμαρ
 ἐν νόστῳ ἐτέτυκτο Καφηρίσιν ἀμφὶ πέτρησι. (Q.S.6.520–5)

This prediction is fulfilled at the end of the *Posthomerica*: at Q.S.14.558–89 Ajax is mangled by the storm and dashed upon the Capherean rocks. As he foreshadows that moment here, Quintus uses the verb κάπυσσεν. In accordance with Appel’s theory, καπύω in Homer is found in a different morphological compound form. But the context of its Iliadic occurrence also suggests a thematic relevance to Quintus’ choice:

τὴν δὲ κατ’ ὄφθαλμῶν ἐρεβεννὴ νὺξ ἐκάλυψεν,
 ἥριπε δ’ ἔξοπίσω, ἀπὸ δὲ ψυχὴν ἐκάπυσσε. (Il.22.466–7)

As Andromache reacts to the death of Hector, καπύω, in the augmented aorist and in *tmesis*, describes how she gasps out her ψυχή. Whilst we may expect this phrase to apply to Hector, who really has now breathed out his last,³³ it denotes instead the visceral reaction of one who is still living. Quintus capitalises on the hinge that the word offered in the Homeric passage between the living and the dead, and transfers it to describe a death that has not happened *yet*. The term thus helps to emphasise the analeptic and proleptic forces at work in his statement.

A second example makes even clearer this connection between *hapax* and narrative temporality. Still during Eurypylus’ *aristeia*, the hero hurls a rock at the Achaeans, and the narrator describes the fear that took hold of them:

...δέος δ’ ἔλε πάντας Ἀχαιούς,
 τείχεος ὡς ἥδη συνοχωκότος ἐν κονίησιν. (Q.S.7.501–2)

³³ As James (2004):111 translates the phrase.

Neither of the English translations of line 502 acknowledge the full force of ἥδη. Way ignores the word entirely,³⁴ and James construes the phrase ‘they thought that the wall had completely collapsed in the dust’.³⁵ But ἥδη of course also means ‘at this point’, ‘now’, or ‘already’.³⁶ ως has similarly pliant potential: the phrase could mean ‘as if the wall had collapsed’ or ‘given that the wall had (actually) collapsed’: indicating either a fact or a counterfactual. These double meanings are particularly relevant given how closely these lines replay an earlier episode from the Iliadic *Teichomachy*, where Hector hurls a stone and succeeds in mounting the walls and shattering the Achaean gates (*Il.*10.445–62). Quintus’ Greeks thus think that their wall had been compromised, as indeed it once already had been. As well as pointing back to that Iliadic scene, ἥδη and ως can also look proleptically toward the other, *Trojan* walls which have not yet ‘already’ fallen, but are destined to crumble into the dust.³⁷ This is therefore another moment where analepsis and prolepsis work together. And once again it is in this sort of moment that a Homeric *hapax* – συνοχωκότος – is used. συνοχωκώς occurs in the *Iliad* in a particularly salient context, to describe the appearance of Thersites:

...τῷ δέ οἱ ὥμω
κυρτῷ ἐπὶ στῆθος συνοχωκότε· αὐτὰρ ὑπερθε (*Il.*2.217–8)

The discussions in the scholia testify to the interest in Homer’s vocabulary choices for Thersites: the commentators pause over every term in the description, and offer lengthy exegeses of what sort of physical shape ἐπὶ στῆθος συνοχωκότε should evoke.³⁸ We saw in Libanius’ encomium how distinctive words from this famous scene can be taken up by authors who wish to demonstrate their simultaneous adherence to and development of the Homeric

³⁴ Way (1913):333: ‘Terror gripped the Greeks, as though that wall had crumbled down in dust.’

³⁵ James (2004):128.

³⁶ Vian’s translation is more accurate (1966):125: ‘comme si le mur avait déjà croulé dans la poussière.’

³⁷ Whilst ἥδη is, of course, a common word in ancient Greek, and may seem to have little place in a discussion of specifically Homeric lexemes, its loaded use here to denote ideas of—specifically Homeric—temporality, justify its inclusion.

³⁸ Σ bT. *ad loc.*

model. τείχεος...συνοχωκότος shows Quintus' version of this practice. Lexical allusion to the stooping shoulders of a character who voiced with such forcefulness the difficulties of the Greek campaign and the inability to sack Troy points in this new context both to the present-tense moment of Greek distress and to the real drooping wall of the losing side once the balance of the war has tilted.

The interpretative force of these individual examples suggests how quantitative-based analyses of *hapaxes* in Quintus can miss the specific role of the words in context. By definition both recognisably Homeric and distinctive and unusual, *hapaxes* help to focalise the central tension at work in this poem, between looking back and recognising the Homeric, and looking forward to the story which follows the end of the *Iliad*.³⁹

Neologisms

Vian's research on Quintus' neologisms uncovered an interesting pattern: they are concentrated in the final books of the poem.⁴⁰ This concentration suggests a further connection between Quintus' use of language and his take on Homeric temporality, here by creating a link between the Homeric and post-Homeric literary worlds. As we leave the story which continues the *Iliad*, an accumulation of 'new' terms helps to express the venture into Homeric 'unknowns'.⁴¹

In Book 12, Sinon responds to Odysseus' request for a volunteer to help with the Wooden Horse plan, and his commitment attracts the wonder of the other Greeks:

καὶ τις ἔφη· Ως τῷδε θεὸς μέγα θάρσος ἔδωκε

³⁹ For further discussion of Quintus' reconfiguration of Homeric time, see Chapter Six.

⁴⁰ Vian (1959):268f. Many of the examples that Vian discusses occur in Books 9–12 and, particularly, Book 14. The following analysis does not seek to suggest that *all* 'new words' in the *Posthomérica* are concentrated in the final books, merely that those uncovered by Vian (and which had previously been concealed by recourse to Homeric precedents) seem to be so, and that neologisms in the later books of the poem provide a particularly interesting test-case for the proleptic connotations of this type of word choice.

⁴¹ On these unknowns, see Chapter Six.

σήμερον· οὐ γὰρ πρόσθεν ἔην θρασύς· ἀλλά ἐ δαιίμων
 ὅτρύνει πάντεσσι κακὸν Τρώεσσι γενέσθαι
 ἦ νῶιν· νῦν γὰρ <καὶ> ὄιομαι ἐσσυμένως περ
 ἀργαλέου πολέμοιο τέκμωρ εὔδηλον ἔσεσθαι. (Q.S.12.254–8)

The adjective *εὔδηλος* ('quite clear, abundantly manifest'⁴²) is un-Homeric, but is found frequently in tragedy,⁴³ and in Aristotelian and Platonic discourses.⁴⁴ Whilst many editors print *ἀίδηλον*,⁴⁵ as Vian notes, *εὔδηλον* is contextually apt in this scenario, as it aims to express the Greeks' uncertainty now, against their hope for clarity in the future.⁴⁶ The mixing of familiar Homeric vocabulary with a 'new' word for clarity helps to underline this juxtaposition of perspectives: between the internal expectation of the characters within the story, and the external knowledge of the reader, for whom the *telos* of this story *is* already 'clear.' It is apposite in this light that the noun which the neologism describes, *τέκμωρ*, is 'particularly' Homeric – the spelling with *omega* occurs only in the Homeric morphology –⁴⁷ furthering the mixture of familiarity and newness as the end of the war approaches.

The final book of the poem contains an even greater concentration of neologisms. During the sacrifice of Polyxena, Quintus describes Hecuba's lamentation of her family's fate (14.271–303). This scene of post-Iliadic aftermath had by Quintus' time acquired a long tragic history: it is dramatised in Euripides' *Troades*, and Hecuba's reflections resemble those which she voices in *Hecuba* (154–61; 585). In his version of this story, Quintus repeats the same neologism twice:

ὦ μοι ἐγώ, τί νυ πρῶτα, τί δ' ὕστατον ἀχνυμένη κῆρ

⁴² Cf. LSJ s.v. *εὔδηλος*.

⁴³ Cf. e.g. Aesch. *Pers.* 1009.

⁴⁴ Cf. e.g. Arist. [Pr.] 882b9; *εὔδηλα γράμματα* ('plainly legible'); Pl. *Plt.* 308d.: *εὔδηλόν* [ἐστιν] ὅτι....

⁴⁵ E.g. Köchly (1853) *ad loc*; adopted by Way (1913):504.

⁴⁶ Vian (1959):170.

⁴⁷ It is unequivocally with *alpha* in later Greek.

κωκύσω πολέεσσι περιπλήθουσα κακοῖσιν,
υἱέας ἢ πόσιν αἰνὰ καὶ οὐκ ἐπίολπα παθόντας,
ἢ πόλιν ἡὲ Θύγατρας ἀεικέας, ἢ ἐμὸν αὐτῆς
ἥμαρ ἀναγκαῖον καὶ δούλιον; οὕνεκα Κῆρες
σμερδαλέαι πολέεσσί μ' ἐνειλήσαντο κακοῖσι.
τέκνον ἐμόν, σοὶ δ' αἰνὰ καὶ οὐκ ἐπίολπα καὶ αὐτῇ
ἄλγε' ἐπεκλώσαντο... (Q.S.14.289–96)

'Επίολπα is nowhere else attested in surviving literature. Many older editions of the *Posthomeric* thus correct it to the Homeric ἐπίελπτα.⁴⁸ However, the manuscripts unanimously give the former adjective,⁴⁹ and Vian has convincingly argued that this reading should be preserved. He connects the meaning of ἐπίολπα to the concept of ἐλπίς,⁵⁰ and suggests that Quintus must have borrowed the word from lost authors. In this case, Hecuba expresses the unanticipated traumas which her family have suffered using a word which morphologically distinguishes itself from Homeric expressions of emotions of this kind. Despite its elusive origins, the repeated term can thus work to create meaning in this passage. The Iliadic past (the suffering of Hecuba's sons), the Quintan present (the death of Priam) and the post-Homeric future (Hecuba's bondage and new ἄλγεα) are all combined in this speech. Hecuba therefore uses language which goes beyond the Homeric repertoire to describe sufferings which are no longer confined to those she voiced at the end of the *Iliad*.⁵¹

We saw in the previous chapter how sophistic declamations, educational exercises and Homeric performance scripts achieved their effects by including carefully-chosen post-Homeric words and through clever plays with Homer's narrative time. In his selective linguistic deviations,

48 After Dausque (1614).

⁴⁹ Vian (1959):171.

⁵⁰ Cf. *Theog.* 660 ἀνάελπτα παθόντες.

51 Cf. *JL* 24, 747–59.

Quintus does the same, establishing his position as both working within and moving outside Homer's text.

Formulae and Epithets

If Quintus' divergences from Homeric language are remarkable chiefly for their sparsity, a different mode of *imitatio* occurs in his use of the formulaic system. The *Posthomerica* employs noun and epithet formulae so extensively that, as Hoekstra noted in a passing remark enthusiastically quoted by Quintan commentators ever since, it goes some way to disprove Milman Parry's conclusions about the essentially oral nature of the Homeric hexameter.⁵² However Quintus also extensively adapts this system, varying the formulae of Homer in three main ways. Firstly, he does not consistently use exact Homeric formulae.⁵³ According to Vian's calculations, of 180 formulae involving adjectives in the *Posthomerica*, 76 are Homeric, and the noun-adjective combinations are almost always different from the Homeric examples.⁵⁴ Secondly, he rarely employs his own formulae in the Homeric fashion; that is, in exactly repeated phrases multiple times.⁵⁵ Thirdly, Quintus uses a far greater variety of epithets than Homer. Mansur's study of heroic epithets in the *Posthomerica* revealed how the poem uses many more epithets per hero; epithets which are commonly used for certain heroes in Homer are hardly ever applied to the same hero in Quintus; and very few epithets are applied by Homer

⁵² Hoekstra (1965):17: 'if the *Posthomerica* were the oldest surviving piece of poetry, the argument put forth [by Parry] would necessarily lead to the conclusion that this poem was an oral composition.' Discussion in James and Lee (2000):25f and James (2004):xxiii-xxiv.

⁵³ For the sake of consistency, I shall define 'formula' in the *Posthomerica* using the criteria proposed by James and Lee (2000):25: 'any expression of two or more words used two or more times in the poem.' I shall also include noun and epithet combinations which appear only once in the *Posthomerica*, where these combinations include epithets which are frequently employed in the Homeric poems.'

⁵⁴ Vian (1959):ch.6.

⁵⁵ There are only nine cases of a single line repeated once, and one pair of lines repeated once (3.465-6 = 5.538-9, the longest verbatim repetition in Q.S.), and one line repeated four times (7.219 = 7.700 = 8.146 = 12.66 = 13.237).

and Quintus to the same characters.⁵⁶ To this analysis James and Lee have added the observation that Quintus' epithets are like Homer's only in the respect that they are largely ornamental and not invested with any contextual significance.⁵⁷

This treatment of formulae has been considered one of strongest indicators of Quintus' *imitatio cum variatione*.⁵⁸ Such a verdict, however, leaves unresolved some fundamental questions about the interpretative effects of this variation, particularly in a poem which claims to be a Homeric continuation. In other words, in contrast to his metrical conservatism and close adherence to Homeric lexica, why should Quintus choose formulae – a feature whose close imitation would most overtly affirm his work's ostensible claim to Homeric authorship – to showcase his difference? What is the significance of this break as an authorial methodology, and what readerly reactions could it produce?

The key to answering these questions lies in the issue of 'ornamentality.' In their assertion that Quintan epithets are, 'like Homer's, predominantly ornamental', James and Lee under-emphasise the obvious fact that, for all the proto-Parryian claims that one can make about Quintus, as a literate and literary poet his composition was not constrained by the same principles of formula economy in the same way.⁵⁹

When Quintus came to create his formulae, he inherited an intricate tradition of reading and manipulating Homeric epithets. The scholia on πολύτροπον in the first verse of the *Odyssey* offer an extreme example of the debates, defence, categorisations and re-categorisations that could be put to Homeric adjectives in their context. Taking off from Antisthenes' remark (οὐκ ἐπαινεῖν..."Ομηρον τὸν Ὀδυσσέα μᾶλλον ἢ ψέγειν, λέγοντα αὐτὸν πολύτροπον), the

⁵⁶ Mansur (1940):Tables 1-3.

⁵⁷ James and Lee (2000):26-30.

⁵⁸ Vian (1959):ch.6; Chrysafis (1984); James and Lee (2000):25-30; Bär (2009); Ferreccio (2014):xxiv-xxvii.

⁵⁹ James and Lees' under-emphasis may be rhetorical, but it is nonetheless counter-productive. Visser (1987):266–898 comes closest to appreciating this point, in a thesis which they dismiss (2000):26.

commentators ponder the fact that none of Ajax, Achilles, Agamemnon or even Nestor was given the term, and thus begin their lengthy excursus on what it does and does not mean.⁶⁰ Lexicographical works such as the Homeric dictionary of Apollonius the Sophist, which exercised great influence on imperial reading patterns of Homer,⁶¹ also pause and prevaricate on many Homeric epithets, discussing ambiguities of meaning, contradictory passages and polysemantic interpretations. For Quintus and his imperial readership, some Homeric epithets were always already contextually significant. In his persistent adaptation of Homeric formulae, Quintus mobilises this significance to launch a critically-informed discussion of what epithets ‘mean’ in Homeric epic itself. His formulaic system thus offers a key indication of his reception of the Homeric text as final and fixed and yet open for constant reinterpretation: a product of the culture of expansion-from-within at large in imperial Greece.

Variety of Epithets

To demonstrate the interpretative significance of Quintus’ formulae, I shall take as a case-study the epithets applied to one Homeric/Quintan hero. Achilles receives the largest number of epithets in both Quintus and Homer,⁶² and in the *Posthomerica* his epithets conform to the pattern noted by Mansur for all major characters: Quintus uses a proportionally greater variety of terms than Homer does (32 compared to 36 in Homer),⁶³ he does not have a ‘favourite’ epithet for him, and he avoids using Homer’s own favourites. Achilles is also one of the Homeric characters with the largest and most diverse literary receptions. Whilst it would be beyond my scope to summarise that reception here,⁶⁴ let it suffice to recall that this is a figure

⁶⁰ Σ *Od. ad loc.*

⁶¹ See especially Haslam (1994).

⁶² Achilles is mentioned 196 times with an epithet in Homer (the only higher number is for the obviously exceptional case of Odysseus in the *Odyssey*), and 183 times without. In Quintus, he gets an epithet 66 times, and does not 105 times. Cf. Mansur (1940):Tables 1-3.

⁶³ Given the relative sizes of their poems and the number of references to Achilles.

⁶⁴ See particularly Fantuzzi (2012).

who, by time of Quintus' writing, had raged and reconciled with enemies, fallen in love, died at the hands of a man or a god, argued in the underworld or ascended to the Isle of the Blessed, been heroised and vilified, ridiculed and satirised, and whose words and character were studied intensely by scholar and student alike.⁶⁵ I do not wish to return directly to the issue of Achilles' 'characterisation' in the *Posthomerica* in light of this tradition.⁶⁶ Instead, I want to look at how Quintus uses formulae to inscribe his relationship with this tradition *as a tradition*; and to demonstrate its impact on his process of composition. To describe Achilles with a formula is to tap a wealth of received ideas. In his variation of epithets, Quintus shows his awareness of this weight of literary inheritance, and makes clear his methods of responding to it.

Let us begin by considering the rare occasions where Quintus does apply Homer's 'favourite' epithets for Achilles to his own version of the character: Mansur's assertion that this hardly ever happens obscures some potentially significant exceptions. Three common Achillean epithets from Homer are used by Quintus for Achilles, each only once: ποδαρκής, πελώριος and ποδώκης. The first occurs during Penthesilea's dream as she prepares to enter battle:

...Μόλε δ' αἰθέροις ἐξ ὑπάτοιο
Παλλάδοις ἐννεσίησι μένος δολόεντος Ὄνείρου, (125)
ὅππως μιν λεύσσουσα κακὸν Τρώεσσι γένηται
οἵ τ' αὐτῇ, μεμαυῖα ποτὶ πτολέμοιο φάλαγγας.
Καὶ τὰ μὲν ὡς ὥρμαινε δαῖφρων Τριτογένεια·
τῇ δ' ἄρα λυγρὸς Ὄνειρος ἐφίστατο πατρὶ ἔοικώς,
καὶ μιν ἐποτρύνεσκε ποδάρκεος ἄντ' Ἀχιλῆος (130)
Θαρσαλέως μάρνασθαι ἐναντίον. "Η δ' ἀίουσα
γήθεεν ἐν φρεσὶ πάμπαν· ὀίσατο γὰρ μέγα ἔργον

⁶⁵ He was a favourite for the character-exercises undertaken by school pupils. See e.g. Cribiore (2001):223; Webb (2001):301.

⁶⁶ This topic has received attention in Quintan scholarship. See e.g. Carvounis (2005); Boyten (2010).

έκτελέειν αύτῆμαρ ἀνὰ μόθον ὄκρυσόεντα,
 νηπίη, ἦ δὲ ἐπίθησεν ὁ Ιζυρῶ περ Ὀνείρω
 ἐσπερίω, ὃς φῦλα πολυτλήτων ἀνθρώπων (135)
 θέλγει ἐνὶ λεχέεσσιν ἄδην ἐπικέρτομα βάζων,
 ὃς μιν ἄρε παράφησεν ἐποτρύνων πονέεσθαι. (Q.S.1.124–37)

The falseness of the vision – modelled on Agamemnon's οὐλος ὅνειρος in the second book of the *Iliad* – is clearly emphasised in this description. Agamemnon's dream was οὐλος (*Il.2.6*), so here it is δολόεντος and λυγρός; this one is sent by Athena as Agamemnon's was by Zeus; and Penthesilea's dream is disguised in the likeness of her father, as in the *Iliad* it was Νηληΐω υἱὸς ἔοικώς (*Il.2.20*). And as with Agamemnon, Penthesilea's belief in the message makes her νηπίη, and leads to a false optimism about her future (cf. *Il.2.48*). It is within this context that we find Achilles described with a characteristic Homeric epithet, its only occurrence in the poem, as part of a vision filtered through layers of non-reality.

πελώριος occurs later in the epic to describe the Trojan reaction to Neoptolemus as he arrives on the battlefield:

Οἵ δέ ἄρε παράφησεν τοιούτοις ἔνδοθεν
 Τρῶες ἔφαντ' Ἀχιλῆα πελώριον εἰσοράασθαι
 αύτὸν ὄμῶς τεύχεσσι·... (Q.S.7.537–9)

The description of Achilles with one of his common Iliadic epithet is again in the context of a fictional sighting: the Trojans only think that they see Ἀχιλῆα πελώριον before them, and the following line dismantles this false attribution. Achilles, the reader knows, is no longer living, and the real αὐτός here is his son, dressed in the arms of his father.⁶⁷

⁶⁷

Further analysis of this scene in Chapter Five.

ποδώκης occurs immediately after this battle-scene, as Phoenix reacts to seeing Neoptolemus before him:

Τῷ δ' αἴψα γέρων σχεδὸν ἥλυθε Φοῖνιξ,
καὶ μιν ἴδων θάμβησεν ἐοικότα Πηλείωνι·
ἀμφὶ δέ οἱ μέγα χάρμα καὶ ἀσπετον ἄλγος ἵκανεν,
ἄλγος μὲν μνησθέντι ποδώκεος ἀμφ' Ἀχιλῆος,
χάρμα δ' ἄρ', οὕνεκά οἱ κρατερὸν παῖδ' εἰσενόησε. (Q.S.7.630-4)

Once more, the Homeric epithet for Achilles forms part of the language of likeness: ἔοικότα suggests the strong similarity between father and son, but also stresses the fact that this is a comparison of two independent entities – to be alike is not to be the same.⁶⁸

On all three occasions, Homeric terms for Achilles are used in fantasy visions of the past: the sighting of something that is not there, or no longer there. In these epithets, the reader can recognise on a linguistic level the ‘real’ Iliadic Achilles, and perceive his on-going presence in this epic – as its inheritance, its ghost, and its unavoidable memory. But this recognition is only a fleeting glimpse, re-focalised and set at a distance. The terms establish Homer’s Achilles as something which can be momentarily captured, but never regained in its entirety.

In place of these Homeric epithets, now consigned to the sphere of the remembered past, the *Posthomerica* employs a wide range of adjectives. Achilles is described four times as ἀμείλικτος (Q.S.2.25; 8.335; 9.247; 14.268), the only individual human character in the poem to receive the epithet.⁶⁹ Homer uses this adjective in the singular only twice, in the formula ἀμείλικτον δ' ὅπ' ἄκουσεν, which is cited in Apollonius the Sophist's entry for the word

⁶⁸ For further discussion of this scene, see Chapter Four.

⁶⁹ The other uses are for the Κῆρες (8.139); χέρες (3.83); ὄιστοι (6.290); the Argives (14.514) and twice πότμος (10.229 and 14.521). Quintus uses the (related but not fully synonymous) ἀμείλιχος (cf. LSJ s.v. ἀμείλιχος) much more frequently in his poem (39 times), but I am focusing on the former adjective due to its specific relationship to these Iliadic usages.

(ἀμείλικτον πικρὰν καὶ οὐ προσηνῆ· ἀμείλικτον δ' ὅπ' ἄκουσεν).⁷⁰ The two passages in question both concern heroes' harsh responses to beseeching opponents: Agamemnon to the sons of Antimachus (*Il.*11.137) and Achilles to the entreaties of Lykaon:

ὦς ἄρα μιν Πριάμοιο προσηύδα φαίδιμος υἱὸς
λισσόμενος ἐπέεσσιν, ἀμείλικτον δ' ὅπ' ἄκουσε·
νήπιε μή μοι ἄποινα πιφαύσκεο μηδ' ἀγόρευε·
πρὶν μὲν γὰρ Πάτροκλον ἐπισπεῖν αἴσιμον ἥμαρ
τόφρά τί μοι πεφιδέσθαι... (*Il.*21.97–101)

The Lykaon episode is important in the *Posthomerica*. It is mentioned on three separate occasions,⁷¹ including in Nestor's song, which, as we have seen, selectively recapitulates Achilles' feats from the war (Q.S.4.158). Quintus here transfers an epithet used in this original Iliadic scene onto a description of Achilles himself. By so doing, he can demonstrate the effects of such famous moments in the *Iliad* on subsequent conceptions of the hero: his behaviour towards Lykaon has now become a facet of his 'personality', as it is described by later singers of tales.

This sort of commentary on Achilles is suggested most provocatively in Quintus' use of 'divine' epithets for him. Recent scholarship has shown an interest in Achilles' 'non-Homeric' afterlife in the *Posthomerica*: his apotheosis, home on the Elysian Plains, and ghostly final appearance.⁷² What is important for my purposes, and has not yet received comment, is how Quintus constructs this aspect of Achilles in his formulaic descriptions of him. Δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς is one of Homer's favourite noun-epithet pairings, occurring 36 times in various metrical formulations. By Quintus' era, the meaning of the Homeric δῖος had been the subject of much discussion and debate.⁷³ Apollonius defines it as referring either to divine descent or to quality

⁷⁰ Ap. Soph. *Lexicon Homericum*. s.v. ἀμείλικτον (Bekker (ed.) 1833 p.25.10).

⁷¹ The other two: Q.S.4.384 and 4.393.

⁷² See especially Carvounis (2005); Maciver (2017).

⁷³ On these discussions, see e.g. Vivante (1982) on epithets in context; and Nagy (1997) on the scholia.

of character (*δῖος* (>) ἀπὸ Διὸς τὸ γένος ἔχων, ἢ ἀγαθός, ἢ γενναῖος, ἀπὸ τῆς τοῦ Διὸς ὑπεροχῆς).⁷⁴ The scholia gloss it as ὁ ἐνδοξὸς ἀπὸ τῆς Διὸς ὑπεροχῆς,⁷⁵ and then list the many ways in which one could qualify for the term: Odysseus for wisdom, Paris and Clytemnestra for beauty, Eumaeus for good-will (*εὔνοία*) and Achilles πάντων χάριν.⁷⁶

Quintus does not use *δῖος Αχιλλεύς* at all. He employs *δῖος* for other heroes,⁷⁷ and in the (Homeric) formula *δῖος ἀνήρ*,⁷⁸ but never in direct pairing with Achilles' name or patronymic. He does however use far more epithets for Achilles which have divine connotations – more than are used for him in Homer, or for any other character in the *Posthomerica*. Quintus' Achilles is θεοειδής (7.686; 11.234), ισόθεος (14.180) ζάθεος (14.304)⁷⁹ and ἀντίθεος.⁸⁰ It may be tempting to read this multiplicity as a reflection of debates about epithets like *δῖος*: the post-Homeric Achilles of Quintus' epic is now 'godlike' in a greater range of ways, reflecting the many reasons (πάντων χάριν) for which he is *δῖος* in Homer. Again, however, rather than just 'reflecting' this tradition of critical exegesis, Quintus' formulae work to *incorporate* such readings into the Achilles of his continuation poem. These epithets play out for the reader, attuned to such semantic slipperiness, the contradictions of Achilles' post-homeric status in a still-Homeric world: illustrious and/or godlike, an actual god, or even, as we shall discover, an anti-god.

⁷⁴ Ap. Soph. *Lexicon Homericum*. s.v. *δῖος* (Bekker ed. p.59.8).

⁷⁵ Cf. also the comment after the descriptions of qualities: τὸν δὲ Αχιλλέα καὶ διογενῆ δίχα τοῦ κυρίου· 'αὐτὰρ ὁ διογενῆς' (Φ 17). These opinions are often reflected in Apollonius' definitions.

⁷⁶ Σ. bT *Il.1.7b*. 2.

⁷⁷ Epeius (4.329; 12.151 and 12.329); Agenor (6.624); Odysseus (7.182); Neoptolemus (7.484) and Aegeus (13.510).

⁷⁸ 2.404 (re. Memnon), 10.236 (re. Philoctetes) and once (3.162) about Achilles himself, alluding to the original Homeric epithet combination, but still not using it directly with Achilles' name.

⁷⁹ An adjective which Quintus otherwise uses only for localities favoured by the gods, adhering to Homeric usage.

⁸⁰ See case-study below for references.

ἀντίθεος serves as an example. In Homer, the epithet means ‘equal to the gods’ or ‘godlike’, and only in later Greek did it come to denote ‘contrary to the gods.’⁸¹ Homer never applies the term to Achilles, nor usually to women, with the exception of once for Penelope;⁸² but he does use it for a range of other characters, including the suitors (e.g. *Od.*14.18) and even Polyphemus (*Od.*1.70). These subjects suggested to some commentators an ambivalence in the word’s meaning:

ἀντίθεον. τὸν ἴσοθεον. ἐπὶ δὲ τοῦ Κύκλωπος τὸν ἐναντιούμενον τοῖς θεοῖς.

(Ap. Soph. *Lexicon Homericum*)⁸³

Quintus, like Homer, uses ἀντίθεος for a variety of characters.⁸⁴ He uses it more frequently for women, and particularly for one woman: it is thrice an epithet for Helen, occurring almost every time she appears in the poem (Q.S.2.97; 13.595; 6.152).⁸⁵ And he does use it – multiple times – for Achilles (4.385; 5.305; 12.288; 14.276). This particular combination of subjects encourages the reader to focus on the term’s semantic ambivalences: firstly, its applicability to Troy’s famously problematic woman, the offspring of Zeus and the contestable cause of the suffering of the war; and then for Achilles, in a contrasting set of contexts – sometimes when he is being praised by other characters (5.305, by Ajax; 12.288 by Nestor), and others when he is the object of their loathing:

καὶ τότε λευγαλέοις ἐπὶ πένθεσι κύντερον ἄλγος
τλήμονος ἐς κραδίην Ἐκάβης πέσεν: ἐν δέ οἱ ἥτορ
μνήσατ’ ὄιζυροῦ καὶ ἀλγινόεντος ὄνείρου,
τόν ρ’ ἵδεν ὑπνώουσα παροιχομένη ἐνὶ νυκτὶ·
ἥ γὰρ ὅτετο τύμβον ἔπ’ ἀντιθέου Ἀχιλῆος

⁸¹ Cf. e.g. Ph.1566; LSJ s.v. ἀντίθεος.

⁸² *Od.*11.117.

⁸³ Bekker (ed.) 1833 p.33.15.

⁸⁴ Most commonly Memnon, Odysseus and Diomedes.

⁸⁵ Other female recipients of the epithet in Q.S are Kloinie (1.235) and Aithra (Q.S.13.503).

If we take ἀντίθεος to mean ‘godlike’ in the Homeric sense, there is a disjuncture in this example. In the preceding narrative, Achilles has just been depicted as immortal as he appears to his son (Q.S.14.185–7 and 225–6): he is a god, not ‘like’ one.⁸⁶ The occurrence of the epithet so soon after this divinised appearance may invite a comparison between the two descriptions. In this passage, whilst spoken by the narrative voice, it is used in a scene focused on the vivid and emotional thoughts of Hecuba. If we take the epithet as a neat example of ‘embedded focalisation’, then we may detect a negative connotation to it: Achilles, now a god, is ‘contrary to the gods’ through the brutality of the action that he has just ordered, in the perception of those who suffer as a result of it. On this reading, Quintus does not only acknowledge the ambivalence of word – meaning both like a god and/or opposite to god, as later authors used it, and as Apollonius read it for the Homeric Cyclops – he also uses this ambivalence to augment our perception of Achilles’ divine status: he becomes one of the gods in the narrative, but in the focalisation of its characters, he is still (just) like the gods, or even acting against them.

It thus appears that whilst Mansur’s conclusion that Quintus had no ‘favourite’ epithets might hold up statistically, it is far less accurate as an assessment of the individual significance of the terms which the poem employs. The multiple epithets which Quintus gives to Achilles are often finely attuned to their previous Homeric connotations and alert to their subsequent tensions of meaning. They thus offer the reader a focal point through which to understand the changes that they are witnessing in the narrative. An expanded catalogue of epithets becomes a method of communicating what it means to continue Homer as a process of composition; how to ‘formulate’ these Homeric characters in light of the varied and conflicting strands of their reception.

⁸⁶ A disparity which we are perhaps further encouraged to notice by the use of ισοθέος immediately before Achilles’ deified speech ($\delta\eta\tau\ot\alpha\chi\iota\lambda\tilde{\eta}\iota\sigma$ κρατερὸν κῆρισοθέου...Q.S.14.180).

'Generic' Epithets

In this light, we may briefly consider whether a similar interpretative function is possible for the converse feature of the *Posthomerica*'s formulaic system – the high proportion of ‘generic epithets’, when a single adjective is applied to a number of different nouns with, apparently, no contextual significance. Given that so many Homeric epithets were invested with significance due to their philological and exegetical reception, Quintus’ broad application of a given term may also mark his participation in this reading process, inviting critical re-evaluation of some ‘original’ Homeric pairings. This may certainly be the case when Quintus, in a Homeric continuation, redeployed ‘generically’ an epithet which in Homer had – or came to have – very precise connotations.

As a final test-case, let us here return to the ‘epithet’ which in Homer is famously particularised, but for Quintus would, under the current terminology, qualify for the label ‘generic.’ As we have seen, *πολύτροπος* became one of the most loaded descriptive markers for Odysseus in ancient Homeric reception. The scholia already felt obliged to defend the hero against its potentially distasteful implications. Plato, by contrast, saw no problem in assigning it as his defining characteristic: whilst Achilles is truthful and simple (*ἀληθής τε καὶ ἀπλοῦς*), Odysseus is ‘polytropic and lying’ (*πολύπροπός τε καὶ ψευδής*).⁸⁷ Such discussions demonstrate how exceptional this epithet was perceived to be. Parry himself cited it as the first example of a ‘particularised epithet’, in that ‘Homer’s audience realised straightaway that the poet had special reasons for putting it into his song.’⁸⁸ But this almost unique⁸⁹ tag can also be connected to the broader scheme of epithets relating to Odysseus’ mental versatility: *πολύμητις*, *πολύφρων*, *πολυμήχανος* and *πολυκερδής*.⁹⁰ These epithets in the *Odyssey* – all of which under James and Lee’s definition would come under the heading ‘generic’, in that

⁸⁷ *Hp. mi.*365b. See Strauss-Clay (1983):29; Marontis (1973):81-5.

⁸⁸ A. Parry (ed.) (1971):154.

⁸⁹ Occurring at *Od.1.1.* and 10.330.

⁹⁰ See Stanford (1950) and Strauss-Clay (1983):31f on grouping these epithets together.

they are applied to more than one character – are inextricably linked to Odysseus: connected to the Greek term *metis*, they drive at a central component of his ethos, which he shares in complex ways with the other characters who receive the terms.⁹¹ The very concept of *metis* suggests a web of ambiguities. As Detienne and Vernant put it, ‘depending on the context, [metis] can arouse contrary reactions. At times, one will consider it to be the result of deception in which the rules of the game have not been respected. In other occasions, it will excite all the greater admiration.’⁹²

Such considerations make this epithet group particularly productive for analysis in Quintus. Tracing the instances in the *Posthomerica* of *poly-* compounds related to mental dexterity will firstly enable us to see how unproductive are labels such as ‘ornamental’ and ‘generic’ for wide-ranging epithets in this poem. Secondly, it will allow us to consider how Quintus engages ‘proleptically’ with the particular themes of the *Odyssey*: the epithets constitute a final example of language being used to move forward and back across Homeric time.

The *Posthomerica* features a large number of *poly-* compounds. The vast majority of these are connected to suffering and endurance: πολύστονος,⁹³ πολύκλαυτος,⁹⁴ πολύκμητος⁹⁵ and πολύτλητος⁹⁶ are most frequent. Compounds related to the mind are comparatively rarer – used proportionally far less than in both Homeric poems and in Triphiodorus or Nonnus, who sprinkles his works with πολύτροπος: it appears twenty-one times in the *Dionysiaca* (including to describe the programmatically slippery Proteus, *Dion.*1.14) and a further seven times in the *Paraphrase*.

⁹¹ Especially Athena, Hephaestus and Hermes. See Strauss-Clay (1983):32; Rüter (1969).

⁹² Detienne and Vernant (1974):19.

⁹³ Q.S.1.300, 1.689, 2.361, 2.608, 5.535, 5.582, 6.412, 7.32, 7.82, 7.385, 11.272, 14.644.

⁹⁴ Q.S.1.806, 3.380, 6.263, 10.141, 11.315.

⁹⁵ Q.S.3.203, 5.649, 7.20, 7.424, 8.397, 9.173, 9.476, 11.310.

⁹⁶ Q.S.1.135, 1.182, 2.341, 5.45, 5.361, 8.411, 10.369, 11.25, 13.319, 13.477, 13.544, 14.557.

Quintus uses *poly-* epithets to describe mental characteristics only four times;⁹⁷ but on each occasion, these ‘generic’ terms⁹⁸ are specifically applied and loaded with significance. The first is voiced by Thersites during his rebuke to Achilles for desiring Penthesilea:

Καί τοι ἐνὶ φρεσὶ σῆσι γυναιμανὲς ἥτορ ἔχοντι
μέμβλεται ὡς ἀλόχοιο πολύφρονος ἢν τ' ἐπὶ ἔδνοις
κουριδίην μνήστευσας ἐελδόμενος γαμέεσθαι.
“Ως <σ’> ὄφελον κατὰ δῆριν ὑποφθαμένη βάλε δουρί,
οὕνεκα θηλυτέρησιν ἄδην ἐπιτέρπεαι ἥτορ,
οὐδέ νυ σοί τι μέμηλεν ἐνὶ φρεσὶν οὐλομένησιν
άμφ’ ἀρετῆς κλυτὸν ἔργον, ἐπὴν ἐσίδησθα γυναῖκα. (Q.S.1.726–32)

Thersites' reproach clearly replays his outburst during the Iliadic assembly; an incident to which Achilles makes explicit reference in his response (Q.S.1.757–65). But his use of πολύφρων – the only recorded instance of the epithet for a wife –⁹⁹ points towards another Homeric exchange, between Odysseus and Agamemnon in the underworld (*Od.*11.404–53), where the topic is the wisdom and trustworthiness of women. In the Odyssean scene, a related epithet to πολύφρων is used about Penelope: περίφρων Πηνελόπεια (*Od.*11.446). On the one hand, this wisdom is presented positively, set in contrast to the evil cunning of Κλυταιμνήστρη δολόμητις (*Od.*11.444–6).¹⁰⁰ But on the other, this complement is qualified when Agamemnon asserts the contriving potential of *all* women (ώς οὐκ αἰνότερον καὶ κύντερον ἄλλο γυναικός, /ἢ τις δὴ τοιαῦτα μετὰ φρεσὸν ἔργα βάληται, *Od.*11.427– 8), and warns Odysseus always to be on guard (442–3).

⁹⁷ Quintus does employ other adjectives without the *poly-* prefix to denote mental dexterity. I am however focusing on this group due to its particular connections with the *Odyssey* and its ancient scholarly reception.

⁹⁸ In that they are not distinctively applied to one hero.

⁹⁹ Cf. LSJ s.v. πολύφρων.

¹⁰⁰ As she is called at *Qd* 11.422.

Not one word of Thersites' speech echoes this exchange directly.¹⁰¹ But by using a related term to περίφρων, in such a distinctive female context, his insult becomes a reading of just how ambivalent the Homeric 'wise wife' always was. Alluding to the Penelopean περίφρων, and activating the negative connotations of this sort of term, Quintus makes Thersites' comment a proleptic rehearsal of the 'later' warnings in the *Odyssey*; as the notion of female prudence becomes a sneering insult, refracted through the cunning Clytemnestra, *and* the prudent Penelope, *and* all women capable of such dangerous thinking.

πολύμητις is also used just once in the *Posthomerica*, for Athena during the Wooden Horse ruse:

"Ως φάτο· τοῦ δ' ἐσάκουσε θεὰ πολύμητις Ἀθήνη,
καὶ ὥρα οἱ ἔργον ἔτευξεν ἐπιχθονίοισιν ἀγητὸν
πᾶσιν ὅσοι μιν ἴδοντο καὶ οὖ μετόπισθε πύθοντο. (Q.S.12.154–6)

Book 12 is the point where the notion of μῆτις becomes central to the plot. Calchas' prophecy announces the need for δόλος καὶ μῆτις (12.20), and Odysseus' plan answers that call. The description of Athena here, and only here, using πολύμητις works as a fitting parallel to the shifting themes of the poem, highlighting the movement from military might to craft and deceit. However, the one-off nature of this epithet must affect how we interpret such a shift. (πολύ)μητις does not, like πολύτροπος in Nonnus, become a recurring term in the rest of Quintus' poem. Its singularity suggests a theme acknowledged but not obsessively pursued. Read as a marker of an Odyssean poetics of craftiness, the specific use of πολύμητις reveals Quintus' awareness of the epithet's potential to signify this poetics, and to denote a particular type of epic; but its exceptionality shows his reluctance to pursue this marker to excess. As this

¹⁰¹ The epithets in question are not identical; περίφρων versus Thersites' πολύφρονος. However, the contextual similarities of the speeches lead me to believe that Quintus is activating this Odyssean scene.

Iliadic sequel moves closer to the *Odyssey*, it is significant that this discourse of μῆτις makes its way into the poem's story, but its terms are not fully absorbed.¹⁰²

πολύτροπος itself receives a tightly controlled range of uses in Quintus' poem. It is applied first in the context of Odysseus; not however directly to his name or patronymic, but rather to describe the contents of his mind:

ώς φάτο· τὸν δ' ἀλεγεινὰ παραβλήδην ἐνένιπεν
υἱὸς Λαέρταο πολύτροπα μῆδεα νωμῶν· (Q.S.5.236-

During the *hoplon krisis*, Odysseus' mental dexterity is one of the central points of contestation: ridiculed by Ajax as useless compared to the more tangible achievements on the battlefield, Odysseus defends it as an essential counterpart to physical action. It is fitting that Quintus uses a term whose mental-physical connotations were so fiercely contested to apply here unequivocally to Odysseus' mental and *rhetorical* wiles: he is performing as the man of many 'tropes' in this sophistic contest of words.¹⁰³ The word and its ambiguities thus reflect the debates on thought-versus-action being staged in the wider narrative.

The term occurs twice again, both times in Book 12. Despite his central role as architect of the horse trick, Odysseus does not receive the epithet in these scenes. Instead, it is given to Sinon, to describe the Trojans' split reaction after his deceitful speech:

“Ως φάτο κερδοσύνησι καὶ οὐ κάμεν ἄλγεσι θυμόν·
ἀνδρὸς γὰρ κρατεροῖο κακὴν ὑποτλῆναι ἀνάγκην.
Τῷ δ' οἱ μὲν πεπίθοντο κατὰ στρατόν, οἱ δ' ἄρ' ἔφαντο
ἔμμεναι ἡπεροπῆα πολύτροπον, οἵς ἄρα βουλὴ

¹⁰² The speech of Neoptolemus arguing against the use of this stratagem (Q.S.12.67–72), and his eventual capitulation (Q.S.12.93–103) is another way in which we can observe this idea: this is a poetics which is *persuaded into* accepting the need for *dolos*. Further discussion of this movement from *Iliad* to *Odyssey* in Chapter Six.

103 See Chapter One.

The connections between Sinon and Odysseus were frequently emphasised by poets interested in the story of the sack of Troy. Vergil makes clear their shared skills in loquacity (*Aen.* 2.57–144); and Triphiodorus stresses their matching deceptiveness in a way ostensibly similar to Quintus; giving Sinon two Odyssean epithets, ἀπατήλιος (Triph. 220) and πολυμήχανος (Triph. 291). Triphiodorus does not, however, use *this* epithet – so singularly connected to Odysseus – and nor does he do so in a poem which purports to precede the opening verse of the *Odyssey*. For Quintus, in this narrative and poetic context, πολύτροπος works as a playful anticipation of Odysseus’ signature trait: Sinon was πολύτροπος ‘first.’¹⁰⁴

The final instance of the epithet occurs after the construction of the horse. The narrator declares that the gods were prevented from destroying the contraption, or razing the city themselves, because their minds were turned to mutual conflict:

Καί ρ' οὖ μὲν δολόεντα κοτεσσάμενοι μενέαινον
 ὕπον ἀμαλδῦναι σὺν νήεσιν, οὖ δ' ἐρατεινὴν
 "Ιλιον· Αἴσα δ' ἔρυκε πολύτροπος, ἐς δὲ κυδοιμὸν
 τρέψε νόον μακάρεσσιν. ... (Q.S.12.169–72)

Here πολύτροπος is applied to neither man nor god, but to Αἴσα.¹⁰⁵ The ‘theological’ role of Fate in the *Posthomerica* has received much recent scholarly comment.¹⁰⁶ However, its unbreakable will can also function as a marker of restrictive narrative determinism; the predetermined imperatives of the cyclic plot. At this point in the narrative, where the gods are prevented from taking an action whose completion would irrevocably change the course of the

¹⁰⁴ I am not counting Q.S.5.237 as an ‘early’ use of the epithet for Odysseus, because, as discussed above, there it is transferred from Odysseus onto his thoughts, set at a degree of separation from the hero and his name.

¹⁰⁵ Nonnus also uses the epithet (*Dion.* 41.317), to describe the threads woven by the *Moirai*: but only in Quintus is the adjective applied directly to the personified character of Fate herself.

¹⁰⁶ See especially Gärtner (2009)/(2014).

story, Αἴσα acts as a narratological border-control, preventing the plot from derailing and allowing it to continue as it should: the horse cannot be destroyed, and the gods cannot sack Troy without it, because that is not how the story goes. Describing her as πολύτροπος thus opens up a contradiction: between the iron-grip of the fatalistic plot-controller and the indeterminacy suggested by this twisty Homeric word. The pairing helps to tease out the wider contradictions of this kind, on which the whole poem is based: the inter-Homeric story has to stay on its preordained course, so that we can get to the *Odyssey* and ‘meet’ the ἀνὴρ πολύτροπος himself, but is also wandering in its details before arriving at this final destination.¹⁰⁷

Quintus uses πολύτροπος and its related epithets to express the fundamental ambivalence of the Trojan story: in its individual scenes, its characters and as a choice of poetic material. It may be countered that not all Quintan language produces such marked effects. However, what these case-studies have attempted to show is that by speaking only of tabulated totals and statistics, we risk overlooking the ways in which Quintus’ lexica and formulae *do* invite programmatic readings, operating as part of a dialogue between the authorial voice and the literary expectations of his readership.

II. GNOMAI AND SIMILES

Gnomai

We now turn to the two literary devices in the poem which have most strongly contributed to ideas about its non-Homeric ‘poetics of excess.’ The density of *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica* – 132 examples, compared to 154 in the *Iliad* –¹⁰⁸ is a palpable feature of the text.¹⁰⁹ Of these

¹⁰⁷ I return to this idea of plot control in the discussion of counterfactuals in Chapter Six.

¹⁰⁸ Lardonis (1997):215.

¹⁰⁹ See the summary of scholarship on *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica* in Maciver (2007):269n.41 with discussion at Maciver (2012b):87.

gnomai, 33 are in the words of the primary narrator, compared to only 3 in the *Iliad*¹¹⁰ and 2 in the *Odyssey*.¹¹¹ And whereas the narrator-*gnomai* in Homer are all concerned with the topic of man's inferiority to the gods, those in the *Posthomerica* cover a much greater range of themes: the gods, Fate, bravery and cowardice, social status, age, *kudos* through *ponos*.¹¹²

For Maciver, this abundance of *gnomai* represents 'the aspect of the work that amounts to the greatest degree of modernisation of Homeric epic'.¹¹³ In his analysis of the poem's gnomic material, the most substantial treatment of the topic, he has attempted to define this modernisation in terms of the Stoic tenor of the sentiments.¹¹⁴ Through them we gain insight, he argues, 'into the philosophical and ethical assumptions of the poet'.¹¹⁵ Insufficient attention, however, has been paid to the choice of the *gnome* as a poetic device – the vehicle employed to communicate these 'assumptions.'

In its broadest sense, a *gnome* is a general statement (Arist. *Rh.*1394a21–2), a *vox universalis* (Quint. *Inst.*8.5.3), whether literary or in the form of traditional spoken sayings or quotations.¹¹⁶

In epic, they function primarily as 'a wisdom saying, mostly found in the climax of exhortatory speeches, spoken by those famous for wisdom or oratory, whose content is designed to add force to the main argument or add reason for action'.¹¹⁷ Because of this generality, a literary *gnome* has two types of application. On the one hand, it operates on a direct context-specific level: it functions within its textual setting and affects comprehension of that setting. On the other hand, it operates on the reader's perspectival level, its meaning interpreted through his or

¹¹⁰ *I.I.6.688–90, 20.265–66 and 21.264.*

¹¹¹ *Od.5.79–80 and 16.161.*

¹¹² These categories are adapted from Maciver (2012b):92n.28.

¹¹³ Maciver (2012b): 84–124. Quotation from James (2004):xxvii.

¹¹⁴ Maciver (2012b):87–124.

¹¹⁵ Maciver (2012b):93.

¹¹⁶ See Morgan (2007):84–121 and especially 84–90 on these sub-types of *gnomai*, and the different ancient and modern ways of categorising them.

¹¹⁷ Maciver (2012b):89. This section will accept his 'working definition' of the epic *gnome*, in Homer and Quintus.

her literary-cultural background. It thus offers a fundamentally integrative mode of communication, which ‘persuade(s) the reader to concretise the fictional world, to accept and engage with it as real.’¹¹⁸

In the imperial era, *gnomai* received an even more highlighted cultural function. Gnomic material appeared in school-texts at all levels (Homer and Menander were firm favourites as sources), was the subject of numerous anthologies and became embedded in almost all kinds of literature.¹¹⁹ Morgan points to the prevalent gnomic character of ancient education, and shows that more texts of this nature survive among the school papyri than fragments of any other types of exercises.¹²⁰ These uses suggest that their popularity was linked to their ability to be excerpted: these were parts of, for example, the Homeric poems which could be easily extracted, cut from their original context, and collected and re-applied to suit a wide range of new contexts. Given this potential, *gnomai* were also harnessed by imperial writers outside of these educational and anthological spheres as a means of communicating the different layers of meaning in their works. In her discussion of *gnomai* in the Greek novels, which also occur in large numbers, Morales has shown that far from merely showing off the author’s rhetorical wares or personal philosophies, such material operates more profoundly by displaying relations between different textual parts.¹²¹ *Gnomai* in the novels act as intensely self-conscious moments, ‘where the structure and texture of the texts are illuminated and the surface of the narrative is drawn attention to, defamiliarised.’¹²²

¹¹⁸ Morales (2004): 108, discussing Jordanova (1989):47f. See also Lardonis (1997); Strenger (2004); Boeke (2007).

¹¹⁹ See Morgan (1998):120–51, (2007):84ff.

¹²⁰ Morgan (1998):ch.4. She adds the caveat that an overwhelming quantity of school papyri containing gnomic sayings exists not necessarily because other themes were considered unimportant but also because this kind of material was used particularly – if not exclusively – in primary education, a level at which school papyri can be identified comparatively certainly. See also Cribiore’s review (1999).

¹²¹ Morales (2000).

¹²² Ibid:70.

These particular functions of *gnomai* in an imperial Greek context are crucial for comprehending their frequency in the *Posthomerica*. Quintus reveals himself to be deeply aware of these functions – their pliant and ‘excerptable’ nature, and their meta-literary potential. Reading his *gnomai* not as indices of a specific philosophical programme but rather as a self-conscious compositional choice, I shall consider that Quintus uses them in such large numbers because they can highlight his conception of the Homeric text itself, as able to be recomposed precisely through the creative mixture of its many different textual parts.

I begin with an example of a *gnome* spoken not by the omniscient narrator, but by a character with his own perspective and agenda. After the death of Penthesilea, Priam seeks to alleviate the Trojans’ despair, and rejects Thymoetes’ suggestion (Q.S.2.10–25) that they should give up and flee:

αύτὰρ ὅ γ' ἀσπασίως μοι ὑπέσχετο πάντα τελέσσαι
ἐλθών ἐς Τροίην· καὶ μιν σχεδὸν ἔλπομαι εῖναι.
Ἄλλ' ἄγε τλῆτ' ἔτι βαιόν, ἐπεὶ πολὺ λώιόν ἔστι
θαρσαλέως ἀπολέσθαι ἀνὰ κλόνον ἡὲ φυγόντας
ζώειν ἀλλοδαποῖσι παρ' ἀνδράσιν αἴσχε' ἔχοντας. (Q.S.2.36–40)¹²³

On the one hand, Priam’s *gnome*, that is better to perish bravely than to live a life of shame among foreign men, is rooted to its immediate narrative context: it aims to add force to his persuasion of the Trojans and is triggered by the hope (*ἔλπομαι*) of Memnon’s imminent arrival. However, the statement simultaneously reaches to other ‘parts’ of the reader’s textual experience, making connections of an intra- and inter-narrative kind.

Immediately after Priam’s exhortation, Polydamas’ reply undermines the simple dichotomy that the statement presented:

¹²³ This *gnome* is analysed under different terms by Maciver (2012b):89–90, and thus provides a useful case to begin my dialogue with his findings.

Ἄλλ’ ἄγε μήτε πόληος ἐῆς ἀπὸ τῆλε φυγόντες
αἴσχεα πολλὰ φέρωμεν ἀναλκείη ὑπὸ λυγρῆ
ἀλλοδαπὴν περόωντες ἐπὶ χθόνα, μηδ’ ἐνὶ πάτρῃ
μίμνοντες κτεινώμεθ’ ὑπ’ Ἀργείων ὁρυμαγδοῦ·
ἀλλ’ ἥδη Δαναοῖσι, καὶ εἰ βραδύ, λώιον εἴη
εἰσέτι κυδαλίμην Ἐλένην καὶ κτήματα κείνης, (Q.S.2.49–55)

The presentation of a different course of action qualifies the universality of Priam's earlier utterance, by acknowledging the alternatives that often remain un-vocalised in the face of this sort of gnomic ‘truth.’ The same undermining is later voiced by the narrator himself. After the sack of Troy, the Trojan captives – those who did not perish (bravely or otherwise) – are forced to depart to ‘die on foreign lands’ (cf. Q.S.2.40); and the description focuses on the shame that this brings:

...“Ετερος δ’ ἐτέρην γούωσαν
ἥγετο Τρωιάδων σφετέρας ἐπὶ νῆας ἀνάγκη·
αἱ δ’ ἀδινὸν γούωσαι ἀνίαχον ἄλλοθεν... (Q.S.14.29–31)

”Ω μοι ἐγώ,...
...πόλιν ἡὲ θύγατρας ἀδευκέας ἦ ἐμὸν αὐτῆς
ἥμαρ ἀναγκαῖον ἦ δούλιον;... (Q.S.14.289–93)

After the Trojan defeat, we may reflect back on Priam's exhortation and realise just how empty and inconsequential it always was. The demand for courage from Troy's King, who in Quintus' account dies without being θαρσαλέος or putting up a fight,¹²⁴ becomes darkly funny, a proleptic jibe at his naivety, which undermines rather than underpins his authority in the assembly, as his wisdom saying turns out to be a prediction of defeat rather than a prescription

¹²⁴ Q.S.14.221–50.

for success. The excerptable *gnome* thus takes on a different meaning depending on when in the narrative we apply it; exposed by Quintus as being both universal and cross-applicable, and yet also precarious and context-specific.

In the *gnomai* of the primary narrator this double function is particularly pronounced. That so many *gnomai* in the *Posthomerica* are spoken by the narrator signals an obvious didactic element: as Maciver remarks, ‘the primary narrator points to his understanding of the way the world of the story works.’¹²⁵ But through the range of themes expressed within these *gnomai*, Quintus signals that his poem contains, and merges, many different ‘story worlds’; and pushes their points of connectivity to the limits.

Towards the end of Book One, the Greeks allow the Trojans to bury Penthesilea and the other Amazons. Quintus gives the reason that Οὐ γάρ ἐπὶ φθιμένοισι πέλει κότος, ἀλλ' ἔλεεινοὶ/δήιοι οὐκέτ' ἔόντες, ἐπὴν ἀπὸ θυμὸς ὅληται (Q.S.1.809–10). The *gnome* reflects a specific Homeric wisdom-saying: at *Il.*7.409–10 Agamemnon allows the Trojans to bury their dead by expressing the same sentiment:

οὐ γάρ τις φειδὼ νεκύων κατατεθνηώτων
γίγνετ' ἐπεί κε θάνωσι πυρὸς μειλισσέμεν ὥκα.

The burying of a Trojan warrior killed by Achilles, however, also evokes the most famous Iliadic depiction of this sequence: the death and delayed burial of Hector, and the *lack* of pity shown by Achilles towards the dead there. Quintus activates this association specifically. The term *κότος*, not found in Agamemnon’s statement, promotes a type of anger more inveterate than *χόλος*; an opposition which was frequently evoked in ancient discussions of Achilles’

¹²⁵

Maciver (2012b):93.

types of rage in the *Iliad*.¹²⁶ The verb ἐρύσασθαι (808) also echoes the belligerent action of Achilles towards Hector, as he dragged his body through the dust:

ἀλλ’ ὅ γ’ ἐπεὶ ζεύξιεν ὑφ’ ἄρμασιν ὥκέας ὑπουργός,
“Ἐκτορα δ’ ἔλκεσθαι δησάσκετο δίφρου ὅπισθεν,
τρὶς δ’ ἐρύσας περὶ σῆμα Μενοιτιάδαο θανόντος (Il.24.14–16)

Achilles' anger, the Quintan reader knows well, was not 'sated' by the end of the *Iliad*. He does not initially respect the dead in his treatment of Hector, and even when ultimately showing pity, he still rises up in rage (*Il.*24.559–71). The Homeric universality of the plea for peace is thus challenged by the echoes of these more belligerent moments. Quintus points to the *Iliad* as a collection of such contradictory moments; and signals how, in creating a narrative which reconfigures them, the inter-Homeric poet must acknowledge that these parts do not always fit seamlessly together.

A similar contradiction occurs in a *gnome* spoken during Achilles' funeral games. After Epeius and Acamas clash in the boxing contest, their comrades tell them to lay aside their anger and make amends. As they do so, the narrator explains their compliance:

άλλ' οἱ μὲν πεπίθοντο παραιφασίησιν ἑταίρων
(ἀνδράσι γὰρ πινυτοῖσι πέλει νόος ἥπιος αἰεί). (Q.S.4.378–9)

This is the only *gnome* in the *Posthomerica* on the topic of gentleness: whilst it is marked as a generalising statement (with the explanatory γάρ and universalising αἰτεῖ) it is also exceptional in terms of its content. Gentleness is, however, expressed elsewhere in the poem; most extensively during the ghostly advice of Achilles to his son Neoptolemus:¹²⁷

τεις δ' ἀμύμονας ἄνδρας, ὅσοις νόος ἔμπεδός ἐστιν·

¹²⁶ Cf. Σ II.13.516–7: αἰεί καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἐλαχίστου χρόνου τίθεται, ὡς “αἰεὶ δ’ ἡνίοχον” (Ψ 502). κότος δὲ οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀποκειμένου χόλου. II.1.81–3 cross-compares χόλος and κότος.

¹²⁷ Other occurrences of the theme: Q.S.3.424; 7.89-90; 9.522; 13.448-9.

ἐσθλῷ γὰρ φίλος ἐσθλὸς ἀνήρ, χαλεπῷ δάλεγεινός.

ἢν δ' ἀγαθὸν φρονέης, ἀγαθῶν καὶ τεύξεαι ἔργων....

... νόος δέ τοι ἥπιος ἔστω

ἔς τε φίλους ἑτάρους ἔς θ' υἱέας ἔς τε γυναικα. (Q.S.14.192–4;203–4)¹²⁸

The disjuncture between Achilles' advice to be gentle and his harsh conduct throughout the poem has puzzled scholars.¹²⁹ Re-reading this passage through the *gnome* of the boxing match offers a route through these contradictions. πινυτός (4.379) is the pivotal word for this reading. Meaning ‘prudent’ or ‘discreet’, the adjective is used far more frequently in Quintus than Homer. In the Homeric poems, it usually describes Penelope in the *Odyssey*:¹³⁰ a specific, feminised use with which Quintus’ ἀνδράσι immediately contrasts. There are only two occasions where the term is used for men in Homeric epic, both in distinctively *un-gentle* contexts.¹³¹ In the first book of the *Odyssey*, Athena tells Telemachus that anyone who is πινυτός would be enraged upon seeing αἴσχεα like that of the suitors; with the fiery verb νεμεσσήσαιτο advocating an active, angry response (*Od.1.229*). In Telemachus’ visit to Sparta, he hears the adjective again, as Menelaus describes Nestor’s sons as πινυτούς τε καὶ ἔγχεσιν εῖναι ἀρίστους (*Od.4.211*), again pairing belligerence with wisdom.¹³² And during Agamemnon’s advice in the Odyssean νέκυια we find the word used in its ‘conventional’ Homeric sense (to describe Penelope); but, as we have seen, in the context of the exhortation *not* to be gentle at all:

¹²⁸ I return to this passage in Chapter Five.

¹²⁹ Cf. e.g. James (2004):285 and 342; Carvounis (2005) and (2007).

¹³⁰ *Od.11.445; 20.131;21.103; 23.361.*

¹³¹ The possible exception of *Od.20.228*, where Odysseus’ describes Eumeus as ὁ τοι πινυτὴ φρένας ἵκει, uses the noun form of the term, with an accusative of respect, rather than an adjective.

¹³² πινυτὴ in the *Iliad* gives a similar pairing; as Hector addresses Ajax as bestowed with μέγεθός τε βίην τε καὶ πινυτήν (*Il.7.289*).

τῷ νῦν μή ποτε καὶ σὺ γυναικί περ ἥπιος εῖναι.
...ἀλλ' οὐ σοί γ', Ὄδυσσε, φόνος ἔσσεται ἐκ γε γυναικός.
λίγην γὰρ πινυτή τε καὶ εὖ φρεσὶ μήδεα οἴδε
κούρη Ἰκαρίοι, περίφρων Πηνελόπεια. (Od.11.441;444–6)

In the combination of ἥπιος and πινυτός in the boxing *gnome*, Quintus evokes these hostile Homeric precedents. When read against them, Quintus' gnomic αἰεί becomes destabilised and insecure, as this universal statement of deference works simultaneously to remind us that Homeric epic, and Quintus' continuation of it, is also filled with 'wise' men who are anything but gentle.

The final case-study addresses what happens when a *gnome* includes not just Homeric but 'post-Homeric' sentiments, such as the philosophical tenets on which Maciver focuses his discussion. In Book 12, as the Trojans mutilate Sinon, the narrator comments on his ability to endure under torture:

"Ως φάτο κερδοσύνησι καὶ οὐ κάμεν ἄλγεσι θυμόν·
ἀνδρὸς γὰρ κρατεροῖο κακὴν ὑποτλῆναι ἀνάγκην. (Q.S.12.367–8)

Maciver has read this *gnome* in light of the poem's Stoic discourse, aligning it with the gnomic sayings of Nestor which promote similar ideas. Just as Nestor does not grieve excessively upon the loss of a loved one (Q.S.7.44–55) so Sinon is able to withstand and withhold his emotion in the face of hardship. '[They] do not grieve because Stoic prudent men do not grieve. This sentiment echoes one of the basic tenets of Stoicism that the Stoic sage is able to withhold emotions, that he fulfils the ideal of *apatheia*.'¹³³ And yet to read *only* the Stoic aspects of such a *gnome* is to underplay the plurality of this type of utterance: its ability to inscribe multiple, often contradictory, layers of meaning, not just a single 'text' or some notional 'reality'.¹³⁴ Another *Homeric* layer in this passage, neglected in Maciver's discussion, should affect our

¹³³ Maciver (2012b):109.

¹³⁴ Cf. Morales (2000):70 on the idea of a notional 'reality.'

interpretation. We have seen in the previous section how Quintus makes use of the long-standing connection between Sinon and Odysseus. In this *gnome* he activates the connection again, and by so doing brings the *Odyssey* into this ‘Stoic’ statement. Immediately before this scene, a mini-simile describes Sinon’s endurance of blows:

...ἀμφὶ δὲ μύθοις
μειλιχίοις εἴροντο πάρος, μετέπειτα δ' ὁμοκλῆ
σμερδαλέη, καὶ πολλὰ δολόφρονα φῶτα δάιζον
πολλὸν ἐπὶ χρόνον αἰέν. “Ο δ' ἔμπεδον ἡὗτε πέτρη
μίμνεν ἀτειρέα γυῖ” ἐπιειμένος.... (Q.S.12.363–6)

The phrase *ἡὕτε πέτρη/ἔμπεδον* occurs in only one other place in extant Greek literature: to describe Odysseus’ tolerance of abuse by the suitor Antinous:

ώς ἄρ' ἔφη, καὶ θρῆνυν ἐλῶν βάλε δεξιὸν ὕμον,
πρυμνότατον κατὰ νῶτον· ο δ' ἐστάθη ἡὕτε πέτρη
ἔμπεδον, οὐδ' ἄρα μιν σφῆλεν βέλος Ἀντινόοιο,
ἀλλ' ἀκέων κίνησε κάρη, κακὰ βυσσοδομεύων. (Od.17.463–5)

Quintus’ echo of this scene firstly adds a deflating, almost comic, note to Sinon’s gruesome mutilation – his withstanding of violent blows is described in the same way as Odysseus coped with a footstool lobbed in the air. Secondly, it undermines the possibility of an exclusively Stoic reading of the *gnome*. By infusing this statement with an example of a Homeric character’s ability to endure, Quintus insists on a multiplicity of models for this universal truth: if the Posthomeric Sinon is a Stoic, so too is the Homeric Odysseus, as the wisdom of *apatheia* is blended with a different type of ‘lesson’ from Homer.¹³⁵

¹³⁵ It is ‘different’ also in the sense that the original Odyssean passage is not a *gnome* but part of the main narrative.

The Quintan *gnome* thus constructs the image of the *Posthomerica* as a sum of different textual parts. Their prevalence in this poem opens up reflection on how its own components can fit together; exemplifying the efforts, and even the strains, involved in blending the Homeric and the post-Homeric into a coherent new poem.

Similes

As with *gnomai*, the high volume of similes is a salient feature of the *Posthomerica*. With 226 long similes and 79 short, Quintus' text contains proportionally more similes than the *Iliad*,¹³⁶ and actually more long similes.¹³⁷ Book One contains the highest number (35 long and 5 short), and in general Quintus follows the *Iliad* by having similes clustered around battle narratives.¹³⁸ Their subject matter also generally aligns with the similes of Homer:¹³⁹ James estimates that only ten percent of the *Posthomerica*'s examples can be deemed 'thematically original'; and these include topics such as the partial recovery from blindness (1.76–82); children frightened by thunder (7.530–2); the manufacture of charcoal (9.162–6) and movement of sows to different sties (14.33–6).¹⁴⁰ Quintus also has a tendency to conflate elements from two or more thematically-related Homeric similes.¹⁴¹ In terms of structure, he shows a fondness for 'clusters' of similes – piling up multiple comparisons and including similes within similes –¹⁴²

¹³⁶ Which itself has far more similes than the *Odyssey*. See the summary in James (2004):xxv.

¹³⁷ According to Lee (1964):3–4 and Edwards' (1991):24 statistics, the *Iliad* has 197 long and 153 short similes.

¹³⁸ Cf. Moulton (1977):50, and for the *Posthomerica* Maciver (2012b):128.

¹³⁹ Way (1913):627–8 provides an Appendix listing the similes in the *Posthomerica* organised by subject-matter. Maciver (2012b):127–8 adds to these (incomplete) lists.

¹⁴⁰ James (2004):xxvi.

¹⁴¹ A process of variation similar to his merging of different nouns and epithets in his formulae, for which see Part I of this chapter.

¹⁴² There are seven clusters of four similes (1.147ff; 1.516ff; 1.613ff; 3.170ff; 7.455ff; 7.530ff; 13.44ff); Two of five similes (11.362ff; 14.33ff); six of six similes (1.37ff; 3.353ff; 5.364ff; 8.28ff; 8.167ff; 8.36ff); and one of 8 similes (= 2.194ff). For similes within similes see below. Cf. also James (2004):xxvi.

and for parallelism, both between simile and narrative and between similes that occur successively.

Quintan similes, given their intrinsically Homeric nature, demand to be read against their Homeric templates: Quintus' use of similes in itself bespeaks his emulation of Homeric poetic practice. But like formulae and *gnomai* (and perhaps even more so) Homeric similes were by the time of Quintus' writing steeped in a tradition of exegesis and literary reception. The ancient testimony preserved in Eustathius cites four functions for similes: αὐξήσις, to supply details and amplify the narrative; ἐνάργεια, to make things more vivid and ‘actual’; σαφήνεια, to clarify; and ποικιλία, to vary the monotony.¹⁴³ Precisely because of their separation from the main narrative, similes are always self-conscious in their uniting properties. They show the seams in the links that they draw.¹⁴⁴ This self-consciousness has been detected particularly in the attitude towards similes shown by Alexandrian writers – the scholars who dissected and analysed Homeric examples, and the poets who allusively manipulated the device. Hunter, for instance, has shown how Apollonius gives his similes multiple overt correspondences with the subjects that they are being used to illustrate in a way that seems ‘non-Homeric’, and demonstrates how this tendency reflects the practices of the Homeric scholia, who were obsessed with finding narrative correspondences in the similes which they discuss.¹⁴⁵

If their functions were long-enshrined in literary practice, similes came to occupy a particularly prominent position in the poetry composed during the imperial period. Oppian, for instance, crams his *Halieutica* with similes: with one every 36.9 lines, his epic exceeds Quintus' in terms of its concentration of such material. The Oppianic similes also exhibit on an even larger scale the mannered parallelism between tenor and vehicle that Hunter identified in Apollonius; often

¹⁴³ Eustathius 176.20ff; 253.26ff; 1065.29ff van der Valk. Translations from Snipes (1988):208–9. See also Nünlist (2009a):290–1.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. Maciver (2012b):166: ‘Simile, by its very nature, functions on a narratological plain that shows seams.’ I agree with Maciver (2012b):166f that, contrary to Lyne (1989):68, the simile should be viewed as separate from the narrative.

¹⁴⁵ Hunter (1993):129f; Frankel (1997):103.

comparing highly similar items, such as blood described like mud which looks like blood (5.727–8), or a turtle likened to a tortoise (5.403–9). Imperial Latin poetry shows a similar penchant: Claudian packs 145 similes into his 8,468-line corpus, compared to 105 similes in the whole of the *Aeneid*.¹⁴⁶

Later hexameter poetry was thus particularly alert to the functions and capabilities of the epic simile. Recurring in such high numbers, the comparisons work in these texts to push at the boundaries between what things are and what they resemble, constantly opening up and closing again the gap between signifier and signified. It is in light of these interests and tastes that we must place the Quintan examples. In a text which so closely adheres to its Homeric source,¹⁴⁷ similes offer the ideal medium to communicate the stylistic and conceptual dilemmas involved in the *Posthomerica*'s task: exploring the ideas and implications of likeness. As Maciver puts it, ‘the *Posthomerica*, through its extensive use of “Homeric” similes, behaves as a simile of Homer.’¹⁴⁸ This section will now argue that this comment is not only true in that ‘it suggests that similes were a vital element in Homer to the constructor of the imitating text’,¹⁴⁹ but that Quintus uses this element as a symbol for expressing his entire relationship to Homeric epic. If *gnomai*, through their claims to universality and excerptable status, demonstrate the poem's incorporation of competing literary-cultural parts, then through their function as devices of (dis)connectivity, similes help to communicate the nature of Quintus' Homeric verisimilitude. They thus provide a significant final example of how compositional features work to construct the impersonation claims inherent to this epic.

Let us begin with the most ‘extreme’ set of similes: the largest cluster in the poem, used to describe the Greeks and Trojans entering the battlefield after the arrival of Memnon:

¹⁴⁶ Which at 9,898 lines is longer than Claudian's corpus.

¹⁴⁷ Cf. discussion in the Introduction of the three pivots around which this similarity is established.

¹⁴⁸ Maciver (2012b):127. This section will draw from Maciver's lucid analysis of the poem's similes; which, along with the narratological comments of Bär (2007):97f, has done much to dispel the negative judgments of Quintus' use of the device.

¹⁴⁹ Maciver (2012b):127.

...μάλα δ' ὥκα πρὸ τείχεος ἐσσεύοντο
κυανέοις νεφέεσσιν ἔοικότες, οἴα Κρονίων
χείματος ὄρνυμένοι κατ' ἡέρα πουλὺν ἀγείρει.
αἰψα δ' ἄρ' ἐπλήσθη πεδίον πᾶν· οἱ δ' ἐκέχυντο
ἀκρίσι πυροβόροισιν ἀλίγκιον, αἱ τε φέρονται.

ώς νέφος ἡ πολὺς ὅμβρος ὑπὲρ χθονὸς εύρυπέδοιο
ἄπλητοι μερόπεσσιν ἀεικέα λιμὸν ἄγουσαι·
ώς οἱ ἵσαν πολλοί τε καὶ ὅβριμοι, ἀμφὶ δ' ἀγυιαὶ
στείνοντ' ἐσσυμένων, ὑπὸ δ' ἔγρετο ποσσὶ κονίῃ.

Ἄργεῖοι δ' ἀπάνευθεν ἐθάμβεον, εὗτ' ἐσίδοντο
ἐσσυμένους· εἴθαρ δὲ περὶ χροῦ χαλκὸν ἔσαντο
κάρτεϊ Πηλείδαο πεποιθότες· ὃς δ' ἐνὶ μέσσοις
ἢιε Τιτήνεσσι πολυσθενέεσσιν ἔοικὼς

κυδιόων ἵπποισι καὶ ἄρμασι· τοῦ δ' ἄρα τεύχη

πάντη μαρμαίρεσκον ἀλίγκιον ἀστεροπῆσιν.
οἶς δ' ἐκ περάτων γαιηόχου ὡκεανοῦ
ἔρχεται ἡέλιος φαεσίμβροτος οὐρανὸν εἴσω

παμφανώων, τραφερὴ δὲ γελᾶ περὶ γαῖα καὶ αἰθήρ·
τοῖος ἐν Ἀργείοισι τότ' ἐσσυτο Πηλέος υἱός.

ώς δὲ καὶ ἐν Τρώεσσιν ἀρήιος ἢιε Μέμνων

Ἄρεϊ μαιμώωντι πανείκελος, ἀμφὶ δὲ λαοὶ
προφρονέως ἐφέποντο παρεσσύμενοι βασιλῆι.

αἰψα δ' ἄρ' ἀμφοτέρων δολιχαὶ πονέοντο φάλαγγες
Τρώων καὶ Δαναῶν, μετὰ δ' ἐπρεπον Αἰθιοπῆες·

σὺν δ' ἔπεσον καναχηδὸν ὄμῶς, ἄτε κύματα πόντου
πάντοθεν ἐγρομένων ἀνέμων ὑπὸ χείματος ὥρη·
ἀλλήλους δ' ἐδάïζον ἐϋξέστης μελίησι
βάλλοντες, μετὰ δέ σφι γόος καναχή τε δεδήει· (220)
ώς δ' ὅτ' ἐρίγδουποι ποταμοὶ μεγάλα στενάχωσιν
εἰς ἄλα χευόμενοι, ὅτε λαβρότατος πέλει ὅμβρος
ἐκ Διός, εὗτ' ἀλίαστον ἐπὶ νέφεα κτυπέωσι
θηγόμεν' ἀλλήλοισι, πυρὸς δ' ἐξέσσυτ' ἀϋτμή·
ώς τῶν μαρναμένων μέγ' ὑπαὶ ποσὶ γαῖα πελώρη (225)
ἔβραχε, θεσπεσίου δὲ δι' ἡέρος ἔσσυτ' ἀϋτὴ
σμερδαλέη· δεινὸν γὰρ ἔүτεον ἀμφοτέρωθεν.

A string of related similes creates a series of individual impressions; but when taken together, it also enlarges upon or varies the overall picture to which the images contribute. In his analysis of a different cluster in the *Posthomerica* (Q.S.1.5–81) Maciver demonstrates the close connectivity between the different points of comparison, and suggests that ‘by a series of related similes (we don’t get anything as measured or precise in Homer) the series also unifies the narrative on account of its tightly controlled thematic progression.¹⁵⁰ The images in this

150 Maciver (2012b):139.

accumulation also appear to be strongly internally motivated: gathering clouds prompt the image of a swarm of locusts, which itself prompts another image of an amassing cloud; Achilles' armour flashing like lightening produces ideas about the sun 'that lightens all the world from the furthest bounds of the Ocean', which relates to the comparison of the sound of the armies colliding to the crash of waves of sea, triggering similarly watery ideas of rivers roaring; before we move to the man-made realms of knives and toppling buildings.

On closer inspection, however, the connections are more precarious than this initial movement suggests. The serene progression from one comparison to the next is first undermined by competing points of reference, creating a layered and overlapping effect. The Trojans descend like a cloud *or* like a rainstorm (ώς νέφος ἢ πολὺς ὅμβρος ὑπὲρ χθονὸς εύρυπέδοιο, 198); and miniature sub-comparisons are embedded into the fully elaborated similes (...τοῦ δ' ἄρα τεύχη/πάντῃ μαρμαίρεσκον ἀλίγκιον ἀστεροπῆσιν, 207–8). Some of the similes are also split between different characters, switching tenor as the perspective of the scene changes. For instance, after the series centred on Achilles, the object of comparison then becomes Memnon (211–2). Memnon, however, does not receive similes of his own. Instead with the parallel τοῦ οὐ Πηλέος υἱός...“Ως δὲ καὶ Μέμνων (211) he is made to share Achilles' imagery, as the same comparison serves heroes fighting on opposite sides of the war.

These clustering techniques are not exceptional to the *Posthomerica*.¹⁵¹ What is distinctive, however, is the contrast that emerges between the explicit 'closeness' of the similes – revealed in their structural density (occurring one after the other in close proximity), and straightforward thematic links – and the distance implied by the competing perspectives and differences in scale. The reader is thus simultaneously propelled forwards by the cluster's onward movement, and pulled back by the momentary difficulty in ascertaining who or what is being compared to whom. This tension provides a structural parallel for the contradictory forces underpinning the whole Quintan text, which from its outset is both intent on pressing forwards (ώς ἥδη στονόεντι

¹⁵¹ Cf. e.g. Moulton (1977):27-33 and Edwards (1991):31 on the effects of cluster similes in the *Iliad*.

καταιθομένης πυρὶ Τροίης, Q.S.1.17) and obsessed with looking back to its relationship with the Iliadic past (Εὔθ' ὑπὸ Πηλείωνι δάμη θεοείκελος"Έκτωρ, Q.S.1.1).

Quintus also encourages a more reflexive reading of similes which overtly blend different Homeric models. The most frequently-occurring example of this kind is that of a rocky spring fed by melting snow, which occurs four times in the *Posthomerica*. It is first used to describe Briseis' mourning for Achilles:

οῦ ποτε τέρσετο δάκρυ, κατείβετο δ' ἄχρις ἐπ' οὗδας
ἐκ βλεφάρων, ώς εἴ τε μέλαν κατὰ πίδακος ὕδωρ
πετραίης, ἵς πουλὺς ὑπὲρ παγετός τε χιών τε
ἐκκέχυται στυφελοῖο κατ' οὕδεος, ἀμφὶ δὲ πάχνη
τήκεθ' ὁμῶς Εὔρω τε καὶ ἡελίοιο βολῆσι. (Q.S.3.577–81)

Then, Deidameia's sadness for her long-lost husband:

εῦρον Δηιδάμειαν ἀκηχεμένην ἐνὶ θυμῷ
τηκομένην θ', ὡς εἴ τε χιῶν κατατήκετ' ὄρεσφιν
Εὔρου ύπὸ λιγέος καὶ ἀτειρέος ἡελίοιο·
ῶς ἢ γε φθινύθεσκε δεδουπότος ἀνδρὸς ἀγαυοῦ. (Q.S.7.228-31)

Thirdly, Oinone's weeping for Paris:

Οῖη δ' ἐν ξυλόχοισι περιτρέφεται κρύσταλλος
αἰπυτάτων ὄρέων, ἥ τ' ἄγκεα πολλὰ παλύνει
χευαμένη Ζεφύροιο καταιγίσιν, ἀμφὶ δὲ μακραὶ¹
ἄκριες ύδρηλῆσι κατειβόμεναι λιβάδεσσι
δεύονθ', ἥ δὲ νάπησιν ἀπειρεσίη περ ἐοῦσα
πίδακος ἐσσυμένης κρυερὸν περιτήκεται ύδωρ· (Q.S.10.415–20)

Lastly, and differently, during the blinding of Laocoön for the oozing discharge from his eyes:

Τοῦ δ' ὄτε μὲν φαίνοντο μεμιγμένοι αἴματι πολλῷ
όφθαλμοί, ὄτε δ' αὗτε δυσαλθέα γλαυκιώντες·
πολλάκι δ' ἔρρεον, οἷον ὅτε στυφελῆς ἀπὸ πέτρης
εἰβεται ἐξ ὄρέων νιφετῷ πεπαλαγμένον ὕδωρ. (Q.S.12.407–10)

The image in all four variations combines elements from three well-known Homeric similes.

ἴστατο δάκρυ χέων ὡς τε κρήνη μελάνυδρος
ἢ τε κατ' αἰγίλιπος πέτρης δνοφερὸν χέει ὕδωρ·
ὡς ὁ βαρὺ στενάχων ἐπε' Ἀργείοισι μετηύδα. (Il.9.14–16)

Πάτροκλος δ' Ἀχιλῆι παρίστατο ποιμένι λαῶν
δάκρυα θερμὰ χέων ὡς τε κρήνη μελάνυδρος,
ἢ τε κατ' αἰγίλιπος πέτρης δνοφερὸν χέει ὕδωρ. (Il.16.2–4)

ώς δὲ χιῶν κατατήκετ' ἐν ἀκροπόλοισιν ὅρεσσιν,
ἢν τ' Εὔρος κατέτηξεν, ἐπὴν Ζέφυρος καταχεύῃ·
τηκομένης δ' ἄρα τῆς ποταμοὶ πλήθουσι ρέοντες·
ώς τῆς τήκετο καλὰ παρήϊα δάκρυ χεούσης,
κλαιούσης ἐὸν ἄνδρα παρήμενον. (Od.19.205–9)

Quintus' use of these models has been noted.¹⁵² But the way that he blends them requires further consideration. In the first three Posthomeric versions, the correspondences between vehicle and tenor are strongly emphasised. In the Briseis example, the totality of her grief (*οὕ ποτε τέρσετο*) corresponds to the abundance of ice and snow (*πουλὺς...χιών*); and the *οὔδας* of 577 is picked up by the same word in the simile (*κατ' οὔδεος*, 580). For Deidameia, the use of the same verb (*τήκω*) in the space of the single verse which joins narrative to simile (7.229)

¹⁵² See especially James (2004):286.

inscribes the close connection between the two contexts. Oinone's grief is described using a more 'systematic' description of melting ice. This elaboration must be related to the context of the particular lamentation – her harshness towards Paris, also lengthily depicted, which has now thawed far too late (Q.S.10.306–26).

However, in all three cases, this close correspondence on the level of narrative is disrupted on the level of intertext. The snow simile is unique in Homer's *Odyssey*, and firmly connected to its particular tenor: Penelope weeping for the husband who sits beside her. Quintus acknowledges this context in these female versions of the simile: Briseis, Deidameia and Oinone all mourn for their own lost 'partners.' However, the additional details of the icy river are drawn from an Iliadic simile which, by contrast, depicts male grief, triggered by the obstinate actions of Achilles. Quintus encourages a focus on this disparity in Homeric contexts through the wording of his amalgamations. In Briseis' lamentation, the word στυφελός (3.580), used here to describe the hard ground, can have two senses; either literal (hard, rough) or metaphorical (harsh, severe, cruel). These two meanings are reflected in the different uses of the term across Homeric epic. Only found as a verb in Homer (στυφελίζω),¹⁵³ in the *Iliad* it invariably describes a physical strike,¹⁵⁴ but in the *Odyssey*, it is always refers to the harsh treatment administered by the suitors to a ξεῦνος.¹⁵⁵ Employing this word of mixed Homeric meaning in a mixed Homeric simile, Quintus invites a reading of the term beyond its literal application, and a reflection on what kind of hardness is being evoked: the physical condition of the ground, and/or the emotional harshness of the Iliadic Achilles, as is continued in Quintus' version of the character.

¹⁵³ The adjectival form is found only from lyric and tragedy onwards.

¹⁵⁴ *Il.* 1.581 Hephaestus warning to the Olympians lest Zeus strike them from their seats; 21.380 Hera's reprimand to Hephaestus that it is not right to strike a god; 7.261 and 12.405 Ajax striking in battle; 21.512 Hera to Zeus about Artemis' attack; 11.305 about the west wind striking a cloud of south wind.

¹⁵⁵ *Od.* 16.108; 18.416; 20.324; 20.318.

Likewise, in the depiction of Deidameia's grief (7.229–31), the obvious Penelopean allusions (*ἀνδρός* in 231 provides a clear anchor to the Odyssean *ἄνδρα*)¹⁵⁶ are complicated by competing Homeric reference points. The overt similarities between Deidameia and Penelope underscore the contrasts in their real narrative situations: the Odyssean irony of Penelope mourning the husband who is sitting right beside her is replaced in Quintus by φθινύθεσκε δεδουπότος *ἀνδρὸς ἀγαυοῦ* (7.231). Achilles is dead, and so unlike Penelope, Deidameia will always, in the iterative, keep wasting away.

The Laocoön simile (Q.S.12.407–10), however, mixes its Homeric models to produce the opposite effect: not a sense of difference from Homer through superficial likeness, but likeness in the face of overwhelming difference.¹⁵⁷ Transforming material from two pathetic, emotional Homeric similes to describe the gory discharge of a disfigured socket is a substantial reconfiguration of the source material. But Quintus also includes some surprising points of similarity to the original models. These hinge on *ἔρρεον* (12.409). Many modern translators have embellished the verb so as to make it describe explicitly the discharge seeping from Laocoön's eyes. James construes it 'from them came a frequent discharge'; for Way, 'with rheum they ran.'¹⁵⁸ In the Greek, however, the verb has no accompanying noun: in terms of what is doing the running, the image remains implicit. *ἔρρεον* is used most frequently in poetry to describe not eyes but rivers,¹⁵⁹ and is employed in precisely this way in the *Odyssey* 19 model: τηκομένης δ' *ἄρα τῆς ποταμοὶ πλήθουσι ρέοντες* (*Od.*19.207). In his retention of the term in this new simile, Quintus shows how, for all their horror and gore, Laocoön's running eyes are still 'like' the snowy weeping of Penelope.

¹⁵⁶ Other similarities include the comparability of the contexts: a mother mourning imminent loss of her son echoes that of Penelope in the early books of the *Odyssey* once she discovers that Telemachus has departed.

¹⁵⁷ This simile lacks the usual heavy correspondences between simile and narrative, which could perhaps further flag its 'dissimilar' nature to its Homeric points of reference.

¹⁵⁸ Vian (1969):103 is characteristically subtler: 'souvent, ils se mettent à couler...'

¹⁵⁹ Cf. LSJ s.v. *ρέω* (1) (b) and (e).

The Laocoön simile thus offers in reverse the interpretative process in the similes of weeping women. In the female versions of the comparison, the contexts in the *Posthomerica* are very similar to their Homeric models, but the language suggests a divergence, a shift of associations. In the blinding scene, the context is altogether different, but the precision of the wording provides a connection to the Homeric source. Taken together, this group provides in miniature a version of the processes of Homeric similarity and difference operating within the *Posthomerica*; which remains entirely ‘like’ Homer, but also blends competing ideas from the Homeric texts, and continues a Homeric essence using different formulaic combinations.¹⁶⁰

This same process occurs even when Quintus breaks from his usual practice and includes a simile not derived from Homeric material. The comparison in Book 7 has been considered the most original in the poem:

΄Ως δ' ὅτε νηπίαχοι περὶ γούνασι πατρὸς ἔοῖο
πτώσσουσι<ν> βροντὴν μεγάλου Διὸς ἀμφὶ νέφεσσι
ρήγνυμένην, ὅτε δεινὸν ἐπιστεναχίζεται ἀήρ· (Q.S.7.530-2)

This simile, describing the Trojans huddling round Eurypylus out of fear of Neoptolemus, has no obvious antecedent, and is argued by James to be Quintus' own invention.¹⁶¹ And yet the image of a child cowering near their father does evoke a famous Iliadic scene, but one in the main narrative, not a simile; where the baby Astyanax cowers under his nurse, afraid of his father's gleaming helmet:

ώς εἰπὼν οὐ παιδὸς ὥρεξατο φαίδιμος"Εκτωρ·
ἄψ δ' ὁ πάϊς πρὸς κόλπον ἐϋζώνοιο τιθήνης
ἐκλίνθη ἱάχων πατρὸς φίλου ὅψιν ἀτυχθεὶς

¹⁶⁰ I.e. the practices outlined in the first part of this chapter.

¹⁶¹ James (2004):310. If he is correct about the similarity here to three lines of a hexameter poem about an autumn day attributed to Pamprepius of Panopolis (fifth century C.E.) then the image may have had some literary influence.

ταρβήσας χαλκόν τε ἵδε λόφον ἵππιοχαίτην,
 δεινὸν ἀπ' ἀκροτάτης κόρυθος νεύοντα νοήσας.
 ἐκ δ' ἐγέλασσε πατήρ τε φίλος καὶ πότνια μήτηρ·
 αὐτίκ' ἀπὸ κρατὸς κόρυθ' εἴλετο φαίδιμος"Εκτωρ,
 καὶ τὴν μὲν κατέθηκεν ἐπὶ χθονὶ παμφανώσαν· (Il.6.466–71)

The simile echoes Homer's accumulation of paternal and filial terms: *πατρὸς ἔοῖο* picks up the twice-repeated *πατήρ φίλος* in the Iliadic scene; the infantilising terms *νηπίαχοι* reflects the *παῖς* of Il.6.466 and 467; and the *φίλον υἱόν* of Il.6.474 is captured in Quintus' reference to the Trojans (*Τρώιοι υἱεῖς*) as he resumes the main narrative (Q.S.753). The mention of Zeus, as the cause of the storm which triggers the children's fear, also nods to Hector's prayer immediately after the meeting: *εἶπε δ' ἐπευξάμενος Διύ τ' ἄλλοισιν τε θεοῖσι, Il.6.475.*

The reunion of Hector and his family was renowned for its transferral of military imagery into a domestic setting. The scholia preserve Aristonicus' remark on the hero laying his helmet aside: *σημειοῦνται τινες τοῦτον διὰ τὸ τὸν τραγικὸν Ἀστυδάμαντα παράγειν τὸν "Ἐκτορα λέγοντα ("δέξαι τκοινήν μοι πρὸς πόλεμον δὲ καὶ φοβηθῆ παῖς")*.¹⁶² And *ἀτυχθεῖς* (Il.6.468) describes Astyanax's human fear in a term usually preserved in Homer for horses affrighted in battle. By evoking this scene, Quintus' simile reverses this pattern of transferral: bringing childlike imagery *into* the space of the battle, rather than using it to move outside of it.¹⁶³ He therefore highlights simultaneously the similarities *and* differences between Homeric similes and episodes as they recombine in his poem.

¹⁶² Σ A. Il.6.422a Ariston.

¹⁶³ This transferral is similar to that discussed in the previous section regarding Quintus' use of *καπύω*.

CONCLUSIONS

Maciver's comment that the *Posthomerica* 'behaves like a simile of Homer' is true in more ways than he intended it. This chapter has focused on identifying features of Quintus' Homeric 'similarity': how the poet expresses what his text is like in relation to Homer. These aspects, usually cited as examples of un-Homeric contrast imitation, reveal how Quintus constructs his distinctive *Homeric* poetics: the choice of language, use of formulae and favoured literary devices operate as indicators of the Homerising intentions of the poem.

In the attempt to place the *Posthomerica* on a spectrum of imperial Greek stylistics, Quintus has been identified with characteristics which do not fit him. His means of updating Homer requires a different critical vocabulary than that used for the poets with whom he is too readily aligned. The *Posthomerica* certainly does show an awareness of trends in Homeric criticism and the influence of literary reforms: Quintus' Homer too was 'a master craftsman of the language, worth studying and imitating.'¹⁶⁴ However, he works this knowledge into his poem in a radically different way. Unlike Nonnus, and even unlike Triphiodorus, Quintus uses language not to correct or oppose his model, but to set forth a response more assimilatory in tone, in which the prevailing concern becomes not how Homeric is the poet, but rather *how the poet is Homeric*.

¹⁶⁴ Cf. Miguélez-Cavero (2013):48.

CHAPTER 3

WHEN HOMER QUOTES CALLIMACHUS: THE PROEM IN THE ‘MIDDLE’

The first part of the thesis has considered how Quintus’ interstitial position is expressed in the compositional techniques of the text, and intersects with an environment of mimetic reanimation across imperial Greek literature and performance. Through these aspects, the poem’s relationship with Alexandrian aesthetics was called into question. The second part will now consider how this position is expressed in poetics. Turning to the ways in which Quintus captures through metaphor ideas about allusion, identity and succession, I shall also re-examine his attitude towards another aspect of Alexandrianism: the programmatic techniques which have come to be strongly associated with those poets.

We have seen how recent work on Latin poetry has focused attention on the ways in which Roman writers adopt the self-conscious allusivity of the Alexandrians, and how these readings have now been transferred onto the Greek epic of the empire.¹ I shall now address directly the question of the *Posthomerica*’s place in this discourse. Focusing on the most pronounced reflexive moments in the poem, I shall argue that Quintus does not just continue Alexandrian metaphorical techniques: he re-drafts the markers of this shared tradition to serve his new integrative poetics, and emphasises the Homeric origins of the programmatic mode. I shall

¹ Introduction, section I-II.

consider first the most intensely programmatic section of the poem: the in-proem of Book 12, where the poet's interaction with Alexandrian poetry is also most strikingly on display.

INTRODUCTION: QUINTUS' *QUALE*

We have seen how through the unexpected absence of a Muse invocation at the beginning of the poem, Quintus establishes continuity with the *Iliad*: dramatising the status of his narrative as a Homeric connection. In Book 12, this continuity appears to be undermined. After the construction of the horse, Quintus prepares to list the heroes who entered it before the sack of Troy. Before he begins, he breaks off to ask for help:

τούς μοι νῦν καθ' ἔκαστον ἀνειρομένω σάφα Μοῦσαι
ἔσπειθ', ὅσοι κατέβησαν ἐσω πολυχανδέος ὑπου·
ἡμεῖς γὰρ πᾶσάν μοι ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θήκατ' ἀοιδήν,
πρίν μοι <ἔτ> ἀμφὶ παρειὰ κατασκίδνασθαι ἴουλον,
Σμύρνης ἐν δαπέδοισι περικλυτὰ μῆλα νέμοντι
τρὶς τόσον Ἐρμοῦ ἄπωθεν, ὅσον βούρωντος ἀκοῦσαι,
Ἄρτέμιδος περὶ νηὸν Ἐλευθερίᾳ ἐνὶ κήπῳ,
οὕρεῖς οὕτε λίην χθαμαλῶ οὕθ' ὑψόθι πολλῶ.

The programmatic significance of this invocation is suggested by its position in the poem's architecture. Termed by Conte 'proems in the middle', such embedded invocations offer a specific declaration of poetics, dealing with the programmatic as opposed to the thematic, the *quale* instead of the *quid*.² Recent treatments of the passage have focused on this metapoetic potential. Maciver and Bär, whose studies constitute the most in-depth readings of the proem,

² Conte (1992):147–59.

have found its poetic declaration in its intertextual patterning.³ As well as echoing the Iliadic address before the catalogue of ships (*Il.*2.484–92), Quintus’ image of the inspired poet tending sheep recalls the invocation of Hesiod’s *Theogony* (22–8). A further reference affects this relationship with the Homeric and Hesiodic proems: the allusion to the *Somnium* of the *Aetia*, where Callimachus re-presents Hesiod’s meeting with the Muses:⁴

ποιμένι μῆλα νέμοντι παρ' ἔχνιον ὀξέος ὥππου
Ἡσιόδῳ Μουσέων ἐσμὸς ὅτ' ἡντίασεν (...) (*Aet.*fr.2.1–2)

These three intertextual strands have been read as emblems of the main literary models of the *Posthomerica*. Whilst never naming any poets,⁵ by alluding to the figures of Homer, Hesiod and Callimachus Quintus finds a coded way to chart his inheritance: introducing a catalogue of heroes, he also catalogues the names of his predecessors, or several identities of himself. The proem has thus emerged as a programmatic template for the allusive poetics of the poem; each reference read as part of a well-directed, emulative discourse on the nature and function of its imitation.

Such readings, however, focus on Quintus’ integration of Alexandrian poetics into a predominantly Homeric-Hesiodic framework. The presence of Callimachus, it is argued, points to the Alexandrian influences (here Callimachean aesthetics)⁶ in the poem, signalling the poet’s aim to enrich his traditional epic by including Alexandrian intricacies among the generic Homeric elements.⁷

³ Bär (2007); Maciver (2012a):53–69 and (2012b):33–8. See also Boyten (2010):276–81.

⁴ Cf. Vian (1969):101; Campbell (1981):100–5; Gärtner, (2005):23; Bär (2007):40–52.

⁵ Quintus never names poets. Imperial Greek poets tend not to, unlike Late Antique Latin poets. See Maciver (2016):529–48. Further discussion in Chapter Five.

⁶ For the use of Callimachus as a metonym for Alexandrian poetics in this case in the *Posthomerica*, see section I of this chapter.

⁷ For this view see Bär (2007):47–51; Maciver (2012a):64–8; Maciver (2012b):33–38.

This chapter will put forward a different interpretation. Taking the passage as the most intense site for the fundamental paradox of the *Posthomerica* – that Quintus both claims Homeric identity and engages with later poetics – I shall read it as a self-conscious commentary on this clashing use of models. By demonstrating the proem’s more systematic engagement with Callimachus’ programme, I shall suggest that Quintus co-opts symbolic imagery from the *Aetia* to make a highly anti-Callimachean point about poetic assimilation and integration. Under this treatment, Alexandrian techniques are deployed to defend a defiantly non-Alexandrian poem, and Callimachean tropes transformed into markers of the Homeric.

I. IMPERIAL GREEK EPIC AND CALLIMACHUS: LOCATING THE SLENDER MUSE

The epigrammist Pollianus (first/second century C.E.) provides a scathing synthesis of the charges which could be levied against the imitation of traditional epic by imperial poets. Disparaging Homerising narrative epic as derivative and mundane, he enrolls himself in the freer tradition of elegy, and expresses his critique in Callimachean terms:

Τοὺς κυκλίους τούτους, τοὺς αὐτὰρ ἔπειτα λεγοντας,
μισῶ, λωποδύτας ἀλλοτρίων ἐπέων.
καὶ διὰ τοῦτ' ἐλέγοις προσέχω πλέον· οὐδὲν ἔχω γὰρ
Παρθενίου κλέπτειν ἢ πάλι Καλλιμάχου.
Θηρὶ μὲν ούατόεντι γενοίμην, εἴ ποτε γράψω,
εἴκελος, ἐκ ποταμῶν χλωρὰ χελιδόνια.
οἱ δ' οὗτως τὸν "Ομηρον ἀναιδῶς λωποδυτοῦσιν,
ῶστε γράφειν ἡδη μῆνιν ἄειδε, θεά. (Anth. Pal. 11.130)

Surviving evidence from the opening centuries C.E. suggests that Pollianus was swimming with the tide: Greek hexameter poets seem mainly to have followed, and fewer to have flouted,

Callimachean precepts.⁸ We have seen in the previous chapter how those who did take on Trojan themes and adopt the Homeric style often disassociated their works from notions of mindless plundering through lexical innovation. These sorts of moves have also been closely associated with Callimachus' school of new, small, scholarly-minded poetry. Gerlaud, for instance, has emphasised the Callimachean influence on Triphiodorus: he reads the *Aetia* as an important model for the *Sack of Troy*, expressed particularly in the poet's choice of epyllion and attendant short, compressed aesthetics.⁹ Other scholars have highlighted the sustained presence of Callimachean phraseology in both Triphiodorus and Colluthus, suggesting an intertextual interest which stretches beyond the poetics of brevity.¹⁰

Another important strand emerging in this discussion of imperial Greek epic and Callimachus is these later poets' use of the programmatic aspects of his *oeuvre*: particularly the symbolic imagery of the *Aetia*, and its central, but contentious, rejection of the long epics represented by 'one continuous song'.¹¹ Maciver's analysis of Triphiodorus also discusses how Triphiodorus appropriates Callimachus in his most programmatic passages to indicate that his reception of Homer marks a shift from the epics which precede the *Sack of Troy*, thus articulating his literary programme 'through the polemics and poetics' of Callimachean Alexandria.¹² Beginning, for instance, with the word τέρμα – meaning both the 'end' and the turning post in a chariot race – Triphiodorus makes extensive use of the *Aetia*'s metaphor of chariot-as-poetry. The driving of the horse/poem – ἵππήλατον, line 2 – specifically recalls Callimachus' double use of the same verb:¹³

⁸ See Bowie (1989):198–205.

⁹ Gerlaud (1982).

¹⁰ See de Stefani and Magnelli (2011):553; Miguélez-Cavero (2013):62 on Triphiodorus; and Cadau (2015) on Colluthus. For a less convincing stance on Callimachus and Triphiodorus, see Tomasso (2012):383–4, for whom '[Callimachus is relevant] only in terms of length.'

¹¹ fr.1.3. Further discussion in section II.

¹² Maciver (2017 forthcoming) as discussed in Chapter Two.

¹³ This chariot imagery is traceable back to Pindar but given a specifically Callimachean flavour in Triphiodorus.

...έτέρων ἔχνια μὴ καθ' ὄμά
δίφρον ἐλ]ᾶν μηδ' οἶμον ἀνὰ πλατύν, ἀλλὰ κελεύθους
ἀτρίπτο]υς, εἰ καὶ στειγοτέρην ἐλάσεις. (*Aet.* 1 fr.26–8)

Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* also draws on ideas and images from Callimachus to set the tone of its polymorphic poetics.¹⁴ Particularly striking is the figure of Typhon, who in the first two books attempts to overthrow world order by appropriating the thunderbolts of Zeus. Shorrock has read this assault as a metaphor for Nonnus' undertaking in his poem, and his challenge to the existing order of Homeric epic. The thunderbolt is crucial to this image, as Nonnus taps the connection between thunder and epic poetry from Callimachus' famous dictum:

μηδ' ἀπ' ἐμεῦ διφᾶτε μέγα ψοφέουσαν ἀοιδήν
τίκτεσθαι· βροντᾶν οὐκ ἐμόν, ἀλλὰ Διός. (*Aet.* 1 fr.19–20)

The poet even literalises this connection – laying bare, in typical Nonnian fashion, the terms of his metaphorical language – when he compares the stolen weapons to musical instruments: πηκτίδα σὴν ἔχε μοῦνος, ἐπεὶ λάχεν ἄλλο Τυφωεὺς/ὅργανον αὔτοβόητον Ὄλύμπιον... *Dion.* 1.431–2.¹⁵

As such examples make clear, despite the unresolved modern debates about the level of ‘anti-epic’ sentiment in Callimachus’ programme,¹⁶ in terms of reception rather than conception, the stylistic proclamations of the *Aetia* could be activated as critiques of writing traditional epic poetry, forming the implicit – and sometimes explicit – backdrop to charges of bland imitation and their responses.

¹⁴ Despite exhibiting, of course, far from a poetics of brevity. See Shorrock (2001); Lasek (2016); Acosta-Hughes (2016).

¹⁵ Nonnus also makes use of the Callimachean imagery of the chariot: at *Dion.* 1.310–14 Typhon becomes a novice driver trying to control a bit-shy horse.

¹⁶ Among the most strident arguments against an anti-epic agenda remain those of Hutchinson (1988) and Cameron (1995). Relevant discussion for the *Posthomeric* in Maciver (2012a):67. The most relevant points of contention will be addressed in the discussions below.

In terms of discerning Quintus' engagement with these principles, however, a problem arises in the lack of categorisation. Compared to the fundamentally Alexandrian epic of Apollonius, the epyllia's poetics of brevity, or Nonnus' multifarious redrafting, the *Posthomerica*'s compatibility with Callimachean aesthetics is difficult to pin down.¹⁷ At fourteen books, the poem could fall into the category of τὸ μέγα βιβλίον against which Callimachus railed. Its subject matter could also be described as 'cyclic' in, potentially, the sense that incurred Callimachus' anger (ἐχθαίρω τὸ ποίημα τὸ κυκλικόν).¹⁸ Vian thus makes clear where he believes Quintus lies in relation to Callimachus: 'on a dit qu'il ne goûte pas la poésie savante et artiste de l'école callimachéene; sa conception de l'épopée est celle-là même que combattait Callimaque.'¹⁹

Recent work has begun to question this conclusion. We have seen how recent accounts have connected the *Posthomerica*'s philological techniques with the practices of Alexandrian poets.²⁰ Other scholars have drawn attention to further Alexandrian aspects of the poem: references to Hellenistic authors, self-conscious techniques of allusion and learned intertextual intricacies.²¹ Through the integration of such features, Quintus is seen to put forward his response to the charge of 'Homeric plundering'; augmenting his hyper-Homeric style and subject matter with elements aligned with the allusive techniques and slender Muse of Callimachus.

This line of reading, however, leaves unresolved one of the most fundamental aspects of the *Posthomerica*: its implicit claim to Homeric authorship, and self-presentation as the middle part of Homer's epic canon. The thesis has already discussed the importance and implications

¹⁷ I am adhering to Maciver's (2012a):67–8) conception of Apollonius as 'typically Alexandrian' in this chronological sense at least.

¹⁸ On the meaning of κυκλικόν in the epigram, see e.g. Hopkinson (1998):86; Goldhill (1991):223–34; and Cameron (1995):387–402

¹⁹ Vian (1969):xl.

²⁰ See Chapter Two.

²¹ Vian himself, (1959):101-110, suggests many Hellenistic models and sources for the poem. On the use of Apollonian material in Quintus, see Maciver (2012a), which focuses particularly on similes.

of this claim.²² I return to now it from an intertextual perspective, since Quintus' self-depiction as 'still Homer' must affect the tone in which we take his engagement with any later literature. If all intertextuality is paradoxical, in that an author signals the inclusion of a literary voice that is within and yet separate from their own, then in Quintus this paradox is all-engulfing, and overwhelming.

The proem of Book 12 represents the most intense locus of this paradox. On the one hand, the passage exhibits multiple 'Alexandrian' characteristics. Its very status as an embedded programmatic proem is a reflection of a mode of expression derived largely from the Alexandrian poets.²³ Its literary nexus – referring to multiple sources, requiring a breadth of reading to unlock a culminating incorporation of texts – also suggests an Alexandrian-style intricacy of intertextual play.²⁴ And it contains the poem's most explicit 'quotation' of Callimachus; evoking a pre-existing intertextual relationship by alluding to a passage where Callimachus comments on his own place in the chain of literary reception.

Yet this is also the moment where Quintus comes closest to making a direct claim to Homeric identity. The mention of Smyrna (310) has long been recognised as an allusion to one of Homer's most celebrated mythological birthplaces.²⁵ The surrounding details add intensity to this Homeric self-indexing.²⁶ The Hermus (311) was a river closely associated in antiquity with Smyrna.²⁷ The reference to the Temple of Artemis (312) could also hint at the link between the

²² See the Introduction sections II-V.

²³ Conte (1992):157: 'under the terms of the post-Alexandrian code of literary conduct, poets could no longer ignore their self-reflective consciousness.'

²⁴ So Maciver (2012b):67-8.

²⁵ Cf. Pseudo-Herodotus *Vit. Hom.*19–21; Pseudo-Plutarch *Vit. Hom.*17–20; A.P.9.672;11.422;16.295–298; 16.320. It was also an important culture centre in the second sophistic. Further discussion in Bär (2007):52–55.

²⁶ The fact that the epic 'I' remains cryptic and unnamed is in-keeping with Homer's famous anonymity.

²⁷ Cf. *Il.*20.392 and *Theog.*343. For later references to the river in antique geographical writings, see Kaletsch (1998):452–453.

goddess and Homer's birthplace on the river Meles, as is established in archaic poetry in the *Homeric Hymn to Artemis*:²⁸

ἢθ' ἵππους ἄρσασα βαθυσχοίνοιο Μέλητος

ρίμφα διὰ Σμύρνης... *Hom. Hymn Art.* 9.3–4

This simultaneous Homeric ventriloquism and Callimachean allusion crystallises for the reader the problems with placing the two influences side by side. As Bär remarks, 'Zu fragen wäre hierbei, was es zu bedeuten hat, dass Quintus auf ein Vorbild rekuriert, welches der traditionellen epischen Dichtung derart kritisch gegenübersteht.'²⁹

Quintus uses the in-proem to pose and answer this question. In order to access this answer, it must be perceived that the interaction with Callimachus goes beyond the near-quotation of a *Somnium* line. Here we must return to the type of literary interplay coined by Hinds as 'tendentious annotation'.³⁰ This process, by which poets forfeit direct citation of a source model in favour of more embedded ways of metaphorising their engagement,³¹ is particularly relevant for Quintus' proem. In readings to follow, I shall apply it to the *Posthomerica* and its relationship with Callimachus, but with an important difference. Like Triphiodorus and Nonnus, Quintus will be shown to evoke a range of tropes from Callimachus' poetry, specifically those pertaining to his poetic programme. But rather than merely annotating his engagement, he hijacks and subverts this imagery so as to use it against its originating source. So unlike Triphiodorus and Nonnus, the metaphorical 'assault' in the *Posthomerica* is not on

²⁸ Scholars remain divided about the reasons for Quintus' choice of Artemis. For speculation about the temple's location, see Vian (1959):131 and (1969):x. Bär (2007):55–9 gives a metapoetic interpretation: that the goddess' occasional association with fertility enables Quintus to intimate that the Wooden Horse is the 'mother of evil', pregnant with soldiers. Artemis' early connection with Smyrna must surely also affect her function in this passage, and has not been considered as the explanation for her presence; bar passing comment in Graziosi (2002):77; noted by Boyten (2010):280.

²⁹ Bär (2007):50.

³⁰ See discussion in the Introduction, section I.

³¹ Hinds (1998):3–16.

Homer via Callimachus, but on Callimachus, via Homer. This technique – the most tendentious form of tendentious troping – enables the poet to define and defend his Homerising endeavour using the tools of its most ardent detractor.

II. ONE CONTINUOUS SONG

Quintus begins his invocation by asking the Muses for clear and precise information about the identity of each hero, and explains this request by asserting their status as the source of all of his song (12.306–8). The most important phrase here in terms of allusion and self-reflection upon allusion is πᾶσαν...άοιδήν. Various interpretations have been offered. Ambiguity centres on whether to render πᾶσαν as ‘all’ or ‘the whole’, and hence whether άοιδήν refers to the *Posthomerica* specifically or the act of poetic composition in general. It has not been considered that this very ambivalence could allow the reader to unlock a range of symbolic associations.

One such association is with the idea of ‘the whole song’; with πᾶσαν a totalising adjective describing the size, coherence and completeness of the present poem under composition. Vian’s translation reflects this meaning: ‘est-ce vous qui avez mis en mon âme tout ce poème.’³² This is a perfectly sensible rendering. Quintus uses the singular πᾶς to mean ‘the whole’ on ten other occasions in his poem, often when describing an area or space, such as the whole river bursting its banks, or the whole of Greece once covered by a flood.³³ In all references to song in the poem’s primary narrative, the verb or noun of singing relates to a

³² Vian (1969):100.

³³ Q.S.2.641, 3.602, 9.266, 11.125 (the whole ground or plain); 12.97 (the whole of Dardania); 12.181 (the whole of lofty Ida); 13.437 (the whole city); 14.406 (the whole Dardanian coast).

specific ‘composition’ being performed: Nestor’s song at the funeral of Achilles, the bards’ tune after the sack of Troy, and the Achaeans’ victory ode as they return from razing the city.³⁴

On the level of tendentious annotation, taken in this sense Quintus’ ‘whole song’ triggers associations with the *Aetia*’s famous and frequently-quoted³⁵ ἐν ἄεισμα διηνεκές (fr.1.3); that one continuous poem which Callimachus declined to write. Beyond the ἀοιδή/ἄεισμα similarity, stemming from the same verbal root, the use of the surprisingly flat verb θήκατ’, where we might expect a stronger notion such as ‘breathed’ or ‘filled’, given the inspiratory context,³⁶ could nod to the more literal handover of Callimachus’ first initiation, when Apollo ‘placed the tablet on (his) knees’ (πρώτιστον ἔμοῖς ἐπὶ δέλτον ἔθηκα/γούνασιν, fr.1.21–2).

The meaning of ἐν ἄεισμα διηνεκές in Callimachus has been the subject of great debate.³⁷ The most relevant potential definitions for our purposes are those which relate it specifically to epic. Callimachus could be interpreted as speaking of a long (ἐν πολλαῖς ἥνυσα χλιάσιν, fr.1.4) continuous narrative, an uninterrupted epic poem, with ἐν signifying the unity for which Aristotle admired Homer, and Callimachus rejected imitation of him.³⁸ Those who argue

³⁴ Q.S.4.117–70; 14.121–42 and 14.85–93 respectively. A possible exception is the nightingale’s song (Q.S.12.489–96), which could refer to the act of singing in general.

³⁵ Cf. Cameron (1995):104–32.

³⁶ A useful comparison can perhaps be made with the *Vision of Dorotheos*, a Greek Christian hexameter poem by an author who names himself ‘the son of Quintus.’ Editors have noted similarities in poetic diction with the *Posthomerica*, including a potential conscious echo of Q.S.12.308 in Dorotheos’ statement of his poetic inspiration (340–1: καὶ ἐν στή[θεσσιν ἀ]οιδῇ/παντοίην ἐνέηκε). The echo is contentious – see Camplani and Cacciari (edd.) (2015) – but possible. If we accept it, we may note particularly the difference in verb choice: for ‘son’ the more emotive ἐνίημι; for ‘father’, the more generalising τίθημι.

³⁷ Detailed discussion of the possible definitions in Cameron (1995):342–45.

³⁸ E.g. Pfeiffer (1968):13: ‘the new poetical school of Callimachus and his followers was ostentatiously anti-Aristotelian. Rejecting unity, completeness and magnitude, it consciously aimed at a discontinuous form.’ To these readings should now be added the excellent discussion by Harder (2012 [vol. 2]):18–22, who argues that whilst ἐν for Aristotle signified a unity of plot, and for Callimachus is probably numerical (‘one single’), the *Aetia* phrase engages with the Aristotelian definition in that it presents a means by which the poet circumvents its charge.

against this meaning of the phrase have pointed out that out that not all epics do consist of uninterrupted, continuous narrative: most conspicuously, the two longest and most famous, the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, do not fit this mould.³⁹ But now, with Quintus' ἀοιδή, they do. Taken as an embedded antithesis of ἐν ἄεισμα διηνεκές as Quintus reads it, πᾶσαν...ἀοιδήν presents a vision of exactly what the *Posthomerica* is doing: creating one unified narrative which joins the two Homeric poems into one narrative. And the conceit stretches further. Within the frame of the poem's claim to Homeric identity, the *μοι* of this line refers to Homer himself. In the comment that the Muses inspired this poet with one 'entire' song, Quintus thus performs a preposterous restructuring of the original Homeric corpus,⁴⁰ turning it *into* one continuous poem; moving still further away from Callimachean concepts of disunity and affirming the structural cohesiveness of the Homeric epic narrative by actually creating it.

And yet this rendering of πᾶσαν ἀοιδήν is only part of its possible significance. πᾶς can also, of course, mean 'all' or 'every'; and although singing in the *Posthomerica* usually has a context-specific application, the particular choice of ἀοιδήν – the only occurrence of the noun in the poem – in the accusative, at the end of its line, also points to the Theogonic invocation (*Theog.*22), where it refers more unequivocally to the art of song in general.⁴¹ Under this system of meaning the phrase insinuates that 'all song' was originally placed in Homer's breast. πᾶσαν underscores the notion of each and every song that he has written – the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the current poem-in-the-middle – and also encompasses everything in between.

This notion is in itself no polemical rallying cry. A number of works and traditions in Late Antiquity cite Homer as the container for all cultural and intellectual production. Pseudo-Plutarch's *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer* presents the poet as ἡ ἀρχή of all things,

³⁹ See particularly Cameron (1995):342.

⁴⁰ On 'preposterous' see Chapter Six.

⁴¹ Cf. *Theog.*32: τά τ' ἔσσόμενα πρό τ' ἔόντα. Hence the translation of the Quintan phrase by Campbell (1981):103 'all song', accepted by Maciver (2012b):34 n.124.

from politics to medicine, drama and literature. The writers of Neoplatonist allegoresis sought to reconcile the views of their two heroes, Homer and Plato, by conceiving of Homer as a divine sage privy to the most fundamental forms of philosophical truth.⁴² Callimachus himself, whose poetics is based on the premise that it is artistic death to attempt direct imitation of Homer precisely because of his insurmountable authority, would have been unperturbed by a presentation of him as figurehead of all later song.

In this second meaning of the phrase, Quintus places his poem within this all-encompassing tradition. However, in the combination of these claims – the two senses of πᾶσαν ἀοιδήν – he also takes it a step further. Acknowledging Homer as the benefactor of all subsequent poetry, he does not deviate deferentially from this almighty source. Rather, he channels this authority into his own attempt at writing traditional epic: presenting an all-encompassing vision of Homer's poetry at the same time as composing a work which claims to be continuing it. It is apposite that the very word ἀοιδήν combines all three alluded-to poets: taken from the Hesiodic proem, also found in Callimachus' prologue (fr.1.19–20: μηδ' ἀπ' ἐμεῦ διφάτε μέγα ψοφέουσαν ἀοιδήν/τίκτεσθαι...) now refracted into this Homeric-Quintan song.

A further hint in these lines could encourage this image of the poetic whole. The adjective πολυχανδής (307), an Alexandrian neologism, is used with unprecedented frequency in the *Posthomerica*,⁴³ often to describe a huge space containing smaller composite parts: lions' stomach crammed with prey (1.527); a coffin containing the scorched bones of Achilles (3.731); the cave housing all the gore of Philoctetes' seeping wound (9.390); and twice the hollow stomach of the Wooden Horse ready to be filled with heroes (also at 13.138).⁴⁴ This

⁴² For Pseudo-Plutarch, see Keaney and Lamberton (edd.) (1986); Pontani (2005). On the Neoplatonic Homer, see Lamberton (1986) as discussed in the Introduction, section IV.

⁴³ Cf. Bär (2007):57–58.

⁴⁴ Compare the similar ‘pregnant’ connotations of the adjective in Oppian *Halieutica* 5.331–2, describing the cavernous belly of the whale; and Triphiodorus, also of the Wooden Horse at 412 (δέμας πολυχανδέος ὕπου), and 536.

sense of πολυχανδής is stressed and stretched in the present horse-description. The separateness of 306 gives way to an image of conglomeration: καθ' ἔκαστον yields to ὄσοι, and the preposition κατά, which in the phrase καθ' ἔκαστον stressed the individuality of each hero, is redeployed as a prefix to a verb which they perform all together (κατέβησαν).

In contrast to the other reflexive terms in this proem, πολυχανδής does *not* have a rich metaphorical tradition. In the majority of its uses in imperial poetry it has a very literal, spatial sense, and does not convey statements of poetics.⁴⁵ And yet Quintus attaches the word to an object which is steeped in just such a history of double meaning. The inherent duplicity of the Wooden Horse – benign offering and hidden disaster, artificial yet seemingly alive –⁴⁶ lends it great symbolic potency, and it often stands for the art of heroic storytelling itself. When Menelaus recalls in the *Odyssey* how Helen circled the horse and named each of the Greeks hiding inside, through this act she becomes a creative participant in the Trojan War tradition, moulding our judgements on the characters contained within the device (*Od.*4.274–8).⁴⁷ By merging the usually-literal πολυχανδής with the slippery and multidimensional horse, Quintus may thus be introducing a metaphorical reading for the term: his πολυχανδής ἵππος can symbolise *his* chosen method of (re)telling this heroic tale.⁴⁸ If so, then as a picture of his poetry, it provides a fitting visualisation of the πᾶσα ἀοιδή that the *Posthomerica* seeks to create: one amassed work which contains within it many aspects and influences. An Alexandrian neologism is thus made to contribute to the defence of traditional, Homerising epic.

⁴⁵ This is true both for the uses of the compound in imperial poetry, and in Theocritus and Nicander, the only two known Hellenistic occurrences (κρωσσός Theoc.13.46; ὄλμος Nic. *Th.*951). Cf. the discussions by Livrea (2000) and Franchi (2013) on the term in Nonnus' Paraphrase.

⁴⁶ Cf. the ekphrasis at Q.S.12.122–56. Triphiodorus' version (57–98) is even more playful with the competing claims of artifice and *enargeia*.

⁴⁷ See Worman (2001):19–37.

⁴⁸ This potential thus also applies to Triphiodorus in that he also uses the adjective for the Wooden Horse.

III. MUSES AND KNOWLEDGE

The symbolic weight of πᾶσαν ἀοιδήν also vitalises the meaning of the lines which precede it: the allusion to Callimachus heightens expectation of further Callimachean allusion. In Quintus' instructions to the Muses (12.306–7), beyond the similarities to the Iliadic call⁴⁹ lies a significant difference in tone; a shift of emphasis away from the Muses and their power onto the poet's own desire for knowledge and clarity of information. This shift has been read as a nod to the Hesiodic influence on these lines.⁵⁰ And yet the infiltration of the archaic concept of the Muses with the personal curiosity of the narrator is also a distinctive marker of Callimachean poetics. Fragments of the dialogue which frames Books 1–2, though scanty, show how in extending the single question-and-answer into a two-way conversation, the *Aetia* challenges the convention of the Muses as the source of all knowledge, as the goddesses encounter an eager and erudite human interlocutor who adds his own insight into the mix.⁵¹ This new emphasis is taken up in many imperial Muse calls. Triphiodorus' bossy demand for Calliope to hurry up (1–5) is a far cry from Homeric or Hesiodic demurral and wonder. The author of an ethopoeia fragment from third/fourth century C.E. Egypt – ‘What Hesiod would have said when inspired by the Muses’ – goes so far as to rewrite the original Hesiodic call to emphasise these narrator-centred elements (*P. Oxy.*3537). In this creative expansion of the *Theogony*,⁵² Hesiod speaks, feels the presence of the Muse, and asks her in person to inspire him with his poems. Bidding farewell to the rustic verse and bucolic pipe – both of which were traditionally the hallowed gifts of the Muses –⁵³ he presents himself not as a humbled peasant enraptured by his inspirers, but a grand poet unfolding the facts of his own song.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ Detailed discussion of these echoes in Bär (2007):41–5.

⁵⁰ Campbell (1981):103–4; Bär (2007):43 and 45–7.

⁵¹ Cf. e.g. fr.7c; fr.43.18ff.

⁵² Cf. the discussion of ethopoeiae as expansions in Chapter One.

⁵³ Cf. e.g. Vergil *Ecl.*6.69f.

⁵⁴ The author also rejects the Augustan *recusatio* at 25ff, and in its hexameter techniques shows close familiarity with Callimachean practice.

Quintus' invocation also reveals its close affinity with this Callimachean brand of curiosity. The sense of awe at the Muses and their power is eroded in line 306 and replaced by a more 'secular' search for knowledge. The Μοῦσαι are deprived of any elaborating formula, such as the *Iliad*'s 'Ολύμπια δώματ' ἔχουσαι, or Hesiod's laudations at the opening of the *Theogony*; and in the place of such archaic complements is a strident emphasis on the manner in which they should convey their information: immediately (νῦν), specifically (καθ' ἔκαστον) and clearly (σάφα).⁵⁵ ἀνειρομένω (306) may also hint at a dialogue. The construction μοι ἀνειρομένω usually occurs during the inquiry section of a two-way exchange; as in the Platonic dialogues⁵⁶ or the *Odyssey*'s question and answer games.⁵⁷ That such an exchange is only faintly implied in Quintus' invocation may make a connection with the extended conversations of the *Aetia* seem unlikely. However, the possibility is strengthened by the line's similarity to an epigram describing these discussions:

ἄ μέγα Βαττιάδαο σοφοῦ περίπυστον ὄνειαρ,
 ῥὶς δὲ ἐτεὸν κεράων οὐδὲ ἐλέφαντος ἔης;
 τοῖα γὰρ ἄμμιν ἔφηνας, αἵτινας οὐ πάρος ἀνέρες ἴδμεν,
 ἀμφὶ τε ἀθανάτους ἀμφὶ τε ἡμιθέους,
 εὔτε μιν ἐκ Λιβύης ἀναείρας εἰς Ἐλικῶνα
 ἥγαγες ἐν μέσσαις Πιερίδεσσι φέρων·
αἱ δέ οἱ εἰρομένωι ἀμφὶ ὡγυγίων ἡρώων

Αἴτια καὶ μακάρων εἴρον ἀμειβόμεναι. (Adesp. Anth. Pal. 7.42)⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Maciver (2012b):34 also suggests that this desire for precision indicates rivalry with previous catalogues on this topic – Quintus wants *this* version to be the right one.

⁵⁶ Cf. L.S.J. s.v. ἀνέρομαι: acc. pers., inquire of, question. E.g. *Od*.4.420; S.*OC*.210, cf. *Aj*.314, Pl.*Ap*.20a.

⁵⁷ Cf. e.g. *Od*.15.293.

⁵⁸ Harder T 6 = *test*. 27 et 1, p.11 Pfeiffer.

If, as Harder suggests, these lines owe something to the *Aetia* itself,⁵⁹ then Quintus' phrasing may recall these sections of the poem, imparting a specifically Callimachean flavour to his request.

This use of Callimachus' techniques, however, refuses to be read as a reflection of his aesthetics. For Quintus embeds this confident emphasis on inquiry into the lines of the proem which most closely repeat the second Iliadic call (*Il.2.484-7*); with matching imperative (ἔσπεθ'), immediacy (νῦν) and catalogue-style subject (ὅσοι for the Homeric οἵ τινες). The invocation is at its least Homeric whilst at its most. The Iliadic catalogue itself contains the rare narratorial 'ego', who famously could not name the mass of men 'even if I had ten tongues and ten mouths, an unbreakable voice and a heart of bronze' (*Il.2.488–90*). So in imitating *this* invocation,⁶⁰ Quintus also echoes the moment where Homer himself comes closest to voicing a poetic I, as Hesiod and Callimachus would later do so expansively. As a symbol for the tradition of poetic initiation, the call thus eradicates the divide between archaic and Alexandrian approaches; taking their contrasting facets of distance and closeness, deferral and authority and transforming them into a composite whole.

IV. YOUTH

Quintus then describes the timing of his inspiration, which occurred during his youth (309). Youth and childhood have long been recognised as running themes in the *Aetia*.⁶¹ The Telchines accuse Callimachus of writing παῖς ἄτε (fr.1.6), and he refutes them with the claim that Μοῦσαι γὰρ ὕσους ἵδον ὅθματι παῖδας/μὴ λοξῷ, πολιοὺς οὐκ ἀπέθεντο φίλους, fr.1.37–

⁵⁹ Beckby (1965) [vol 2] and Harder (2012 [vol. 2]):4–5 and 93 support Pfeiffer's suggestion of a Byzantine date for the epigram. The epigram entered also The Database of Byzantine Book Epigrams (DBBE), compiled at the Universiteit Gent, (<http://www.dbbe.ugent.be/type/view/id/2604/9>).

⁶⁰ Also thematically relevant because he is doing a catalogue of his own.

⁶¹ Cf. e.g. Cameron (1995):129–32.

8. The old poet then falls asleep⁶² and his young counterpart meets the Muses in a dream, where, a scholion relates, he is ἀρτιγένειος, ‘sprouting his first beard.’⁶³ This imagery has often been connected to the innovating intentions of Callimachus’ poetry: to traverse paths yet untrodden and create something fresh and new.⁶⁴

In Quintus’ image of down spreading on the young shepherd’s cheeks, there can be little doubt of the presence of Callimachus’ youthful inspiration.⁶⁵ Again, however, as soon as we notice the Callimachean intensity of this line, it is simultaneously re-asserted that Homer is supposedly speaking it. In Book 11 of the *Odyssey*, Odysseus describes his sighting in the underworld of Otus and Ephialtes, who were slain by Apollo ‘before down covered their cheeks with a beard’ (...πρίν σφωιν ύπὸ κροτάφοισιν ιούλους/ἀνθῆσαι πυκάσαι τε γένυς ἐυανθέι λάχνη, *Od.*11.319–20).⁶⁶ This verse was well-known in antiquity and gave rise to a host of imitations.⁶⁷ By evoking it here, Quintus again collides Homeric quotation and Callimachean theme, and connects the latter to Homer’s voice; imagined as using elements from his formulaic repertoire to describe his initial inspiration.

But Quintus does not just reclaim a Callimachean topos: he competes with his youthful reminiscence. Whereas the poet of the *Aetia* is old as he dreams of his inspiration,⁶⁸ Homer here is no such geriatric. Although Quintus states that he was young when he received his first

⁶² For this intervening narrative see Kerkhecker (1988):16–24; Harder, Regtuit and Wakker (edd.) (1993):96; Cameron (1995):129–31.

⁶³ Fr.2d = Σ Flor.15-20. For further discussion of this adjective and its subsequent imitation – suggesting that the scholion phrasing may owe something to the text of Callimachus – see e.g. Cameron (1995):131 and Harder (2012 [vol. 2]):144. Harder’s translation, however, ‘while he was still a young man’ (2012 [vol. 1]): 128 does not capture the specificity of the word.

⁶⁴ Cf. Bär (2007):48 n.66.

⁶⁵ The connection has been noted: Campbell (1981):104; Bär (2007):48; Boyten (2010):278; Carvounis (2014):183. It is how Quintus uses it that requires reconsideration.

⁶⁶ On this scene, see further discussion in Chapter Five.

⁶⁷ Examples listed by Campbell (1981):104.

⁶⁸ A contrast to be drawn with the caution advised by Cameron (1995):174–84 in his discussion of the flexibility of ancient ideas about age and ageing.

initiation, he does not specify how old he is now.⁶⁹ This ambiguity is particularly pointed if read against the ancient tradition that the *Odyssey* was the work of Homer's old age. Pseudo-Longinus evinces this idea most spiritedly, comparing Homer's second poem to the setting sun, since 'as great inspiration fades away old age naturally leans towards the fantastical' (ἴδιόν ἔστιν ἐν γήρᾳ τὸ φιλόμυθον) (*De. Sub.* 9.11–13). Quintus' self-portrayal as no longer young, but not specifically old, can thus reflect the position of his composition in the Homeric *oeuvre* – a post-Iliadic, pre-Odyssean, middle age. His stage of beardedness is also one phase earlier than Callimachus' ἀρτιγένειος (πρίν ἔτ...κατασκίδνασθαι): Homer gains literal as well as literary earliness. Youth is thus not merely evoked as a Callimachean nod. It is transformed into a competitive symbol; a reminder that in Quintus' hands, the founding source of the poetic tradition is also revitalised and ever-new.

V. TOPOGRAPHY AND GRANDEUR

The final section of the proem depicts where this inspiration took place (310–13). As we have seen, the impression of locational precision anchors this description to Homeric (auto)biography. Yet in a passage so charged with self-consciousness, the specific place names also have a role in the proem's symbolic system.

Quintus describes his location as τρὶς τόσον Ἐρμοῦ ἄπωθεν, ὅσον βούωντος ἀκοῦσαι (311). Wherever this formula-type is found in Homer, it stresses one or both of two points: a great distance, and a loud volume and amplitude.⁷⁰ Quintus activates both senses of the expression. The adverb ἄπωθεν – not found in any of the Homeric examples – intensifies the sense of vastness. The Hermus provides another distance marker. Achilles names the river in the *Iliad*

⁶⁹ Boyten's suggestion, (2010):277, that by implying that he is not beardless anymore, Quintus insinuates that he is an old man, is not supported by the text, and neglects the possibility of a connection with Homer's supposed stages of composition.

⁷⁰ E.g. *Od.* 5.400-3; *Od.* 6.293-4.

as he kills Iphition, citing his birthplace ‘by the eddying Hermus’ to emphasise sneeringly how far away from this homeland he will perish (*Il.*20.392). Equal emphasis is thrown on noise and clamour through the juxtaposition of βούωντος ἀκοῦσαι and the substitution of γέγωνε, common in the Homeric formula, for a more explicit verb of hearing.

We have seen how Callimachus’ imagery of noisy thunder could be adopted by imperial poets to advance their aesthetic statements, articulating an anxious or competitive stance towards the powerful hexameters of Homer. In his doublet of vastness and volume, Quintus provides his own version of this image. Harnessing the Callimachean connection between length and bombastic style⁷¹ he asserts that this is precisely the type of ἀοιδή that he *will* write. As a poet composing in the style, subject and *persona* of Homer, his work will be vast, and it will be loud and booming.

We then zoom in further on this setting: near the Temple of Artemis, in the Garden of Liberty (312). Many attempts have been made to identify these features. West’s conjecture for the garden – “Ελευθερίος (*sc.* Δίος) – is recorded in Vian’s apparatus and accepted by many scholars.⁷² Elsewhere in the literary tradition, however, the garden is frequently employed as a metaphor for poetic art.⁷³ Taken in a symbolic rather than geographical sense, Quintus’ κῆπος of Liberty – of free spirit, free speaking, or free thinking –⁷⁴ builds on this potential. It serenely accommodates both the terrestrial and the lofty (by virtue of its proximity to the temple) and advocates freedom from rigidity or restraint.⁷⁵ But set within these sites of size and grandeur – the noise and distance and temple – the garden asserts that for Quintus, this is a freedom not to deviate from Homeric epic, but to continue it.

⁷¹ Harder (2012 [vol. 2]):53–4 demonstrates how Callimachus evokes the literary-critical connotations of ψόφος, and makes μέγα mean both ‘loudly’ and echo the μεγάλη γυνή of fr.1.12.

⁷² See e.g. Carvounis (2014):182 n.11. On Artemis, see n.26 above.

⁷³ E.g. Pindar *Olympian* 9.27; Plato *Ion* 534a.

⁷⁴ Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐλευθέριος.

⁷⁵ Bär (2007):61 considers the garden as a symbol for poetic art, but not in relation to Quintus’ Homeric imitation.

The hill with which the proem concludes, ‘neither excessively high nor too low’ (313), has already been interpreted as an aesthetic symbol. Hopkinson has taken it as a reference to the middle style of the *Posthomerica* within the *genera dicendi*: ‘neither sublime nor pedestrian...[Quintus’] motto here and elsewhere is μηδὲν ἄγαν.’⁷⁶ It has been countered that the type of traditional heroic epic which Quintus is writing belongs by nature to the *genus grande*, precluding a reading of humble self-deprecation.⁷⁷ If, however, we read the hill within the poem’s framing conceit, its claims become more reconcilable. That is, if this οὐρανός is a comment on poetic style, then it is a comment on Homer’s poetic style, which Quintus seeks to appropriate.

In ancient discussions of aesthetics, the concept of the middle style was often evoked in relation to Homer’s mode of expression. Quintilian pits the Homeric style – which represents a model for language, characterisation, organisation and speech techniques – against that of Hesiod, who by contrast is a model for the middle style, with ‘a well-structured composition (*compositione aptus*) and sweetness of *sententiae*; like a gentle river translucent but shaded on both sides by verdant river banks’ (*Inst.12.10.60*). Dionysius of Halicarnassus also contrasts Homer to Hesiod stylistically: but for him, it is Homer who is crowned with holding the middle or ‘mixed’ ground (εὔκρατος), in that his epics lie somewhere in between the ‘austere’ (αὐστηρά) and the ‘smooth’ style (γλαφυρὰ σύνθεσις) modelled by Hesiod (*Comp.23.2–7*).

Quintus’ portrait of the hill has much in common with these rhetorical configurations. He shares in the metaphorical language of Quintilian, in which a feature of nature functions as an image of style. And by crowning this style neither excessively high nor low, he concurs with Dionysius that Homer occupies the privileged middle ground. But whilst these treatises pit Homer against the aesthetic traditions which came after him, Quintus avoids such diachronic dichotomies. Not conforming to a rigid set of criteria, his version of the Homer’s style blends

⁷⁶ Hopkinson (1994b):106-7. Related discussion by Bär (2007):59–6; Maciver (2012b):36. For my take on Quintus’ ‘middle style’, see Chapter Two.

⁷⁷ James (2004):xviii.

within it a number of different parts – including the proto-Hesiodic, and even the proto-Alexandrian – perfectly represented by a hill which defies precise categorisation.⁷⁸

However, whilst ὕψος was a common metaphor for the grand style in antiquity,⁷⁹ χθαμαλός is not its usual antithesis.⁸⁰ Why then should Quintus use it, forfeiting a more recognisable doublet?⁸¹ The answer may lie in the frequent associations of χθαμαλός with Ithaca.⁸² When Odysseus describes his homeland to the Phaeacians, the adjective creates a difficult juxtaposition:

αύτὴ δὲ χθαμαλὴ πανυπερτάτη εἰν ἀλὶ κεῖται

πρὸς ζόφον... (Od.9.25–6)

Ithaca's simultaneous status as χθαμαλή and πανυπερτάτη perplexed ancient commentators. The scholia ask πῶς χθαμαλή; πῶς πανυπερτάτη; and make various attempts to reconcile the concepts.⁸³ Employing the word in his own description of a space that is at once high and low, Quintus invites an association with the simultaneous height and lowness of Ithaca – and, by transferral, the well-known stylistic highs and lows within the *Odyssey* itself.⁸⁴ ὕψος, conversely, in its adverbial and compound forms, is often used to describe the *Iliad*'s spatial setting and subject matter: the lofty towers of Troy, and the fighting that takes place beneath

⁷⁸ In contrast to the specificity of the rest of the proem, the hill's lack of name and pin-pointed location heightens its ability to stand for something which precludes compartmentalisation.

⁷⁹ Cf. LSJ s.v. τό ὕψος, (4); and the Περὶ ὕψους of Pseudo-Longinus. Further discussion by Bär (2007):59.

⁸⁰ The more common metaphorical terminology for the *genus humile* was ισχνότης. Cf. LSJ s.v. ισχνός, (5).

⁸¹ Bär's suggestion (2007):59 n.122, that with χθαμαλός Quintus aims at a translation of the Latin *humilis* is possible, but would be an unusual move for Quintus; and seems less likely to me than his interaction with the Odyssean connotations of the word, and at any rate does not preclude it.

⁸² Cf. *Od* 10.96; Strabo 10.2.12.

⁸³ Cf. Σ *Odyssey ad loc.* For the persistence of such uncertainty, cf. LSJ s.v. χθαμαλός, (2).

⁸⁴ On 'low' material in the *Odyssey* see, for example, Hutchinson (1988):12–13.

them.⁸⁵ It is a word connected to Iliadic heights. Read against these precedents, Quintus' doublet makes the literal, thematic and stylistic possibilities of the words combine into a reading of the Homeric canon itself.

Ὕψοθι is also frequently applied in poetry to describe Zeus and the gods; as in the Homeric phrase ὑψόθι ἔόντι Διύ⁸⁶ and Callimachus' *Hymn to Zeus* (εἴπε καὶ ἀντανύσασα θεὴ μέγαν ὕψοθι πῆχυνπλῆξεν ὅρος σκήπτρω... [30]). If, by leaving thundering to Zeus, Callimachus in the *Aetia* links his rejection of the high, grand style to a prudent avoidance of *hubris*, and if Nonnus flirts with this danger through Typhon's kleptomaniac usurpation, then by juxtaposing such loftiness with tokens of Homeric 'humility', Quintus removes the sting from such associations. Homeric epic itself, as Quintus reads and presents it, successfully incorporates both the high and the low. Therefore, to imitate and to continue this epic is not an arrogant attempt at greatness, but the logical harnessing of a style which will always best encapsulate the middle way.

VI. TENDING FAMOUS SHEEP

In our final self-reflexive marker, set within these topographical details, Quintus depicts his former self tending περικλυτὰ μῆλα (310). Through its double allusion to Hesiod's *Theogony* and Callimachus' Hesiod in the *Somnium*, this phrase more than any other emphasises its multiple strands of intertextuality. Maciver has shown how the adjective κλυτά, which has a double meaning 'excellent/of quality' and 'famous/renowned,'⁸⁷ is elsewhere used by Quintus

⁸⁵ ὕψιπυλος is twice used as an epithet for Troy (*Illiad* 21.544 and 16.698); and after the *Teichoscopia* Aphrodite finds Helen πύργῳ ἐφ' ὕψηλῷ (*Illiad* 3.384). The related adverbs ὕψι and ὕψοῦ are most frequently employed in the *Iliad* to describe battle tactics, positions or situations: the striking of a blow (e.g. *Illiad* 13.140), the mooring of Achaean ships (*Illiad* 1.486; *Illiad* 14.77), a dust cloud rising from the battlefield (*Illiad* 16.374) or the Achaeans lifting the corpse of Patroclus (*Illiad* 17.723).

⁸⁶ E.g. *Illiad* 10.16.

⁸⁷ Cf. *Lexikon des Frühgriechischen Epos* s.v. κλυτός (A) and (B); LSJ s.v. κλυτός (1)/(2).

to comment on his poetry and its place in the chain of literary forerunners; a ‘footnote’ suggesting the sort of subtle and learned use of his models akin to Alexandrian poets.⁸⁸ περικλυτά, he argues, replays this significance on a more intensive level, pointing to a perceived superiority in comparison:

‘The shepherd of the passage has sheep which are of superior quality to other sheep. Quintus’ poetry is of eminently superior quality to other poetry, and, by implication, the poetry of the three he embeds in this passage: Homer, Hesiod and Callimachus.’⁸⁹

However, there is another flock of sheep (of κλυτά μῆλα), neglected in Maciver’s discussion, which significantly affects the symbolism of this image. During his *Apologoi*, Odysseus describes the rams of Polyphemus, under whose fleeces he and his crew make their escape:

ἥμος δ’ ἡριγένεια φάνη ρόδοδάκτυλος Ἡώς,
καὶ τότε πῦρ ἀνέκαιε καὶ ἥμελγε κλυτά μῆλα,
πάντα κατὰ μοῖραν, καὶ ὑπ’ ἔμβρυον ἦκεν ἐκάστη. (*Od.*9.307–9)

It is generally considered that of the two possible meanings of κλυτός, fine or famous, the former is employed in this passage: the sheep are splendid and fine-looking in appearance, a miniature focalisation of Polyphemus’ admiration for them.⁹⁰ And yet this visual sense of the adjective in Homer is usually restricted to inanimate objects like armour or houses;⁹¹ and nowhere else is κλυτά used of animals except here.⁹² This all suggests that ‘fine-looking’ is only part of the meaning in Odysseus’ phrase. Polyphemus is surrounded by his sheep during his daily routine, and is particularly fond of his large ram, to whom he will later speak with

⁸⁸ Maciver (2012a):54–5 and 66; (2012b):35–8.

⁸⁹ Maciver (2012b):37.

⁹⁰ Cf. the translations by Campbell (1981):104 ‘of outstanding quality,’ and Murray (1999) *ad loc.*: ‘goodly.’

⁹¹ References in Maciver (2012a):54 n.6.

⁹² When Maciver (2012a): 54 states that ‘nowhere in either Homer or Quintus is κλυτά used of animals or insects, except at Q.S.6.324 [μελισσάων κλυτά φῦλα]’ he omits this important instance.

affection, unaware that Odysseus is hiding beneath (*Od.* 9.447–60). The sheep are thus ‘fine’ at *Od.* 9.308 from an internal perspective, but they are *famous* from an external one, thanks to their role in the adventure being narrated. Their true significance unfolds as the tale progresses, revealed in the crew’s spectacular exit. Odysseus thus mobilises the second meaning of κλυτά as a nod to his retroactive self-awareness as a narrator; a reminder of his privileged knowledge and position as the teller of this epic tale.⁹³

This doubleness of the Odyssean sheep has important implications for Quintus’ allusion. Referring to an episode so centred on identity, anonymity and self-articulation (Οὗτις ἔμοί γ’ ὄνομα, *Od.* 9.366, ‘φάσθαι Όδυσσηα πτολιπόρθιον ἔξαλαῶσαι’, *Od.* 9.504) Quintus does, as Maciver suggests, ‘name’ his poetic self in light of his literary predecessors. But by taking up Odysseus’ expression, and harnessing its ironic double-meaning, he does so from a *Homeric* perspective. In a dizzying proleptic game, Quintus’ sheep are actually Homer’s sheep: they are the sheep in the *Odyssey*, which, within the conceit of the poem, has not yet been written, described in same way as Homer’s most loquacious character will ‘later’ depict them. The subsequent poetic traditions acknowledged by the intertextuality of this line do not diminish the importance of the Homeric original. Rather, Quintus employs the same retroactive foresight as Odysseus to write them into this superlative fame. It is thanks to the efforts of these later poets that Homer’s ‘sheep’ (his poetry) have become κλυτά, even περικλυτά.⁹⁴ So through the act of continuing this poetry, Quintus himself is now able to tend this most celebrated flock. Posing as Homer grants him access to material of the highest quality and renown.

⁹³ κλυτός is frequently used in the *Odyssey* as an epithet of a bard: cf. *Od.* 1.325, 8.83, 8.367, 8.521 (so Bär (2007):51), strengthening the possibility that its use here is indicative of Odysseus’ status as internal teller of this tale.

⁹⁴ The prefix περι-, which may have been selected by the poet for metrical reasons, could nonetheless also carry connotations of a ‘perceived superiority’, as Maciver suggests. But what is crucial is that the superiority belongs to Homer, and is not set against him.

CONCLUSIONS: DECLASSIFYING QUINTUS

In these duplicitous sheep, we find encapsulated the approach to Alexandrian programmatic in the proem's encoded statements. Claiming – or better, reclaiming – the retrojecting anachronistic moves so typical of Alexandrian poetry, Quintus adopts the games of the *Aetia* to validate the Homeric nature of his undertaking; his own literary game. The *Posthomerica* thus establishes its Homeric-ness both against, but also by means of, Alexandrian, Callimachean poetics.

I began by suggesting that the proem functions as a template for the imitative strategies of the poem. We have already seen how many of these strategies – the formulaic switches, stylistic preferences, and range of literary interactions – are so often polarised in discussions of this epic; read as either Homeric or un-Homeric, Alexandrian or non-Alexandrian, in the persistent desire to categorise Quintus. The invocation as this chapter has understood it provides perhaps the strongest incentive to rethink this mode of rethinking. Acutely aware of the literary manoeuvres available to him and the innovative pressures of his time, Quintus advocates here a different answer to charges of bland imitation; a symbolic discourse which declares the value of a poetic endeavour not in terms of deviation from traditional epic, but through explicit dependence upon it. In this *post* post-Homeric proem, the polarising statements of the *Aetia* become the new Telchines, against whose charges the voices of Homer, and Hesiod, and Callimachus can chime in the polyphony of the Quintan song.

CHAPTER 4

SELECTIVE MEMORY AND ILIADIC REVISION

Homer knew the truth but changed much of it to suit the subject he had chosen.

– Philostratus, *Heroicus*, 43.16

Truth? What is that? – John 18:38

INTRODUCTION

We move now from the poem’s direct engagement with Alexandrianism to its use of tropes, derived from this self-consciousness, which bring it into dialogue with other posthomeric genres. This chapter will consider Quintus’ use of memory as such a device. The heroes of the *Posthomerica* frequently remember events from earlier stages of the Trojan War. A number of these memories correspond to episodes from the primary narrative of the *Iliad*: in narratological terms, they are ‘analepses’ to that poem.¹ Seven times, these analepses are expressed through the narrator reporting the memories of characters.² On twelve occasions, a character recalls in direct speech an Iliadic event from his or her past.³ In each of these cases, the relationship to the relevant Homeric passage is signalled by close verbal recapitulations:

¹ On analepsis, see the summary of scholarship in de Jong (1987a):81–90.

² Q.S.1.9–15; 1.710–12; 9.24–5; 5.400–3; 7.378–81; 13.267–9; 14.121–42.

³ Q.S.1.574–95; 1.759–65; 2.431–46; 3.48–9; 3.80–2; 3.253–62; 5.201–9; 5.211–14; 5.270–5; 5.275–7; 5.311–6; 13.276.

memory meets with allusion. And yet the Iliadic material is often changed as it is recalled: new details are added, other aspects are omitted, or emphases are skewed.

In the particular poetics of this epic, these changes are particularly jarring. What does it mean when characters who are ‘still in the *Iliad*’ remember their Homer incorrectly? Scholars have read such moments as Quintus’ method of ‘correcting’ the Homeric account of the Trojan War.⁴ I here take a different stance. Rather than offering a correction of the *Iliad*’s version of events, I suggest that Quintus uses the pliability of memory as a retrospective allusive device to defend and continue Homer’s famous practice of poetic selectivity. By demonstrating the partiality of any poetic account of events at Troy, he thereby provides a response to charges of Homer’s lying and deceit prevalent in the imperial era.

This reading first seeks to demonstrate that memory offers another significant example of how Quintus reconfigures inherited literary tropes. Secondly and relatedly, by showing how Quintus uses it to counter specific arguments about Homer’s historical reliability, it serves to emphasise the range of literary interlocutors in this epic;⁵ which include not only earlier poetry but also contemporary *prose*. It is an argument levied against reading the *Posthomerica* as a ‘second sophistic’ text that ‘[this] is an epic indebted to Homer and the post-Homeric poetic tradition, rather than...prose writings.’⁶ My argument here intends once more to reframe the terms of this debate.⁷ Quintus harnesses the device of memory to provide poetry’s answer to, as he presents it, a prosaic mode of reading Homer. Pitting new Homeric poetry against these criticisms, the *Posthomerica* makes a case for the superiority of responding to Homer in verse.

⁴ That is, an approach to the ‘facts’ of Homer’s narrative akin to the process of amendment that has been read in his use of Homeric language (see Chapter Two).

⁵ Cf. Introduction, section VI.

⁶ Maciver (2012b):18. For the important arguments against any categorisation of the second sophistic as an exclusively prose-based era, see Bowie (1989a).

⁷ Cf. also Chapter One, section V.

I. SELECTIVE MEMORY AND POETIC SELECTIVITY

There are two frameworks which are central to this approach: first, the modern theoretical discourse on memory and literary allusion; and second, the ancient historicist method of reading and correcting Homer.

The power of memory as a vehicle for reflexive annotation has been well-documented in recent literary studies. Characters' recollections of events from their past can reveal the textual 'memories' of the literary layers which inform them. In Conte's famous reading of Ovid's *Fasti* 3.469–75, the word *memini* in the mouth of Ariadne tropes the intertexts of Catullus 64 which lie behind her speech:⁸ 'Ovid's Ariadne has "lived" her experience as a poetic self, in Catullus' poem, and she remembers the tears she wept there.'⁹ The emphasis in this model is on the gap between fiction and reality, revealed through the space between 'then' (distant past) and 'now.' Ovid temporarily extracts Ariadne from his world of narrative events, giving her an allusive power which extends beyond his narrative convention, and by so doing attracts attention to the artifice of his own poetic world, 'unmask[ing] its basically imaginative nature.'¹⁰ Memory thus articulates Ovid's characteristic self-consciousness; the drive, as Hardie puts it, 'to realise a maximum of immediate presence in his poetry at the same time as he self-consciously unmasks the reality effects.'¹¹

Imperial Greek epic was well alert to this allusive potential in the act of remembering. In the mythological poems focused on events before Homer's segment of the Trojan War, memory provides a particularly useful tool for emphasising the simultaneous earliness and lateness at play. To take a pronounced example, in Colluthus' Homeric prequel, Eris disrupts the happy nuptials of Peleus and Thetis by 'remembering' her golden apples. As she hurls them into the

⁸ Conte (1986):60-3. Related discussion in Barchiesi (1986)/(1993); Miller (1993); Hinds (1998):3-4.

⁹ Conte (1986):61.

¹⁰ Conte (1986):62.

¹¹ Hardie (2002):15.

story, there begins the chain of destruction which from the point of view of the reader had long ‘already’ occurred:¹²

ἢδη δ' Ἐσπερίδων χρυσέων ἐμνήσατο μήλων.
ἐνθεν"Ερις, πολέμοιο προάγγελον ἔρνος ἐλοῦσα
μῆλον, ἀριζήλων ἐφράσσατο δήνεα μόχθων. *Rape of Helen* 59–61

Later in the poem, when Helen first encounters Paris she enquires about his lineage by listing the heroes of whom she has already heard. With repeated verbs of knowing and learning, she unfolds this literary as well as literal memory, which she ‘later’ articulates again in the *teichoscopia* of *Iliad* 3:¹³

ἀλλὰ τεὴν οὐκ οἶδα παρ' Ἀργείοισι γενέθλην.
πᾶσαν Δευκαλίωνος ἀμύμονος οἶδα γενέθλην.
οὐ Πύλον ἡμαθόεσσαν ἔχεις, Νηλήιον οῦδας,
—Ἀντίλοχον δεδάηκα, τεὴν δ' οὐκ εἴδον ὄπωπὴν
οὐ Φθίην χαρίεσσαν, ἀριστήων τροφὸν ἀνδρῶν·
οἶδα περικλήιστον ὅλον γένος Αἰακιδάων,
ἀγλαῖην Πηλῆος, ἐυκλείην Τελαμῶνος,
ἥθεα Πατρόκλοιο καὶ ἡνορέην Ἄχιλῆος. *Rape of Helen* 270–7

The *Posthomerica* too makes frequent appeals to memory. Recollections are found 47 times in the narrative, and 57 times in character speech,¹⁴ and are used for a range of functions:¹⁵

¹² Cf. the discussion of ἢδη in Q.S.7.502 in Chapter Two.

¹³ *Il.3.121-44.* Colluthus’ scene makes many intertextual links to this Iliadic episode, confirming how memory is used to configure allusion.

¹⁴ In determining what constitutes a memory, I have relied on the presence of certain verbal markers within the text: words denoting cognitive faculties (*μιμνήσκω* and *λανθάνω*, and also certain uses of *οἶδα*, *ἀκούω*, *νομίζω*, *ἐπίσταμαι* etc.); and other terms which, when read in context, denote reference to the characters’ past (e.g. *όππότε*, *πάρος*). These aim to cover the broadest possible range of reminiscences.

¹⁵ I am adapting the definitions of Bakker (2008) in his analysis of the functions of memory in Homer.

exhortations in a battlefield context (in formulae such as ὁ δ' οὕπω λήθετο θυμοῦ or ἀλκῆς μνησώμεσθα);¹⁶ appeals to paternal *menos*;¹⁷ recollections of a person;¹⁸ evocations of a generalised past;¹⁹ memories of events from within the narrative (internal analepses);²⁰ and those outside of it (external analepses).²¹ Quintus is a poet intensely interested in the act of remembering, and sensitive to its multiple capabilities.

When memory is used to express allusion, however, the Conteian model needs to be augmented for the *Posthomerica*; or, perhaps better, its emphasis reversed. Whilst a system of exposed artifice undoubtedly holds true for poets such as Ovid, who delight in saying *me specta*²² and revealing the skill behind their literary hand, memory can also produce the opposite effect: to conceal rather than expose authorial artifice. After all, if a literary reference is encased within a character's recollection, then it is not the allusion which is ostentatiously 'marked' but the mythological *illusion*:²³ the poetic quotation of a text is subsumed in to the image of a character recalling a genuine experience, like 'the tears she wept.'²⁴ In the *Posthomerica* it is this sense of illusion that is foregrounded: the heroes remain in the same mythological world as they

¹⁶ Q.S.3.139; 4.380; 5.353–4; 13.119–20; 1.218; 9.86: 1.413; 6.607; 8.266: 9.86; 12.223; 14.67–8; 14.345,

¹⁷ Q.S.6.304; 9.50; 14.227.

¹⁸ Q.S.1.116; 1.379; 2.293–4; 3.404; 3.517; 4.498–9; 7.725–7; 7.633; 7.695–7; 10.319; 10.408–10; 10.454–5; 13.454–5; 13.518; 13.522–3; 14.408.

¹⁹ Q.S.1.332; 1.361–2; 1.734–5; 2.661; 5.163–4; 7.243–4; 10.298; 10.406–7; 12.255; 14.166–8; 14.235–45.

²⁰ Q.S.4.118–68; 5.135–6; 5.288–9; 5.292–305; 5.362; 7.46–50; 7. 207–9; 7.378–83; 9.315–6; 10.157; 12.11–18; 13.267–9; 14.125–421; 14.274–5; 14.435–9.

²¹ Q.S.1.9–15; 1.574–95; 1.711–2; 1.759–63; 2.62; 2.94; 2.431–46; 3.48–9; 3.80–2; 3.98–117; 3.253–62; 3.463–89; 3.628–30; 4.118–68; 4.306–12; 4.313–22; 5.191–4; 5.195–6; 5.198–9; 5.201–9; 5.211–14; 5.267–75; 5.275–8; 5.278–81; 5.311–16; 5.338–9; 5.400–3; 5.538–43; 6.61–2; 7.59–61; 7. 642–52; 9.400–1; 7.378–83; 9.226–7; 9.491–2; 10.365–6; 10.396; 13.267–9; 13.275–6; 13.294–5; 13.519–22; 14.125–42; 14.152–3; 14.174; 14.210–12.

²² *Am.*1.4.17.

²³ For discussion of the theory and practice of illusion in literary, dramatic and rhetorical contexts, see Chapter One on 'doubleness.'

²⁴ As Hinds points out, (1998):4, even in the case of Ariadne the memory is spoken "in character", and its suspension of the artistic illusion is covert rather than overt.'

occupied in Homer's poem, they are 'waiting' (ἔμπορον, 1.3), trapped within its narrative space, and in remembering the *Iliad* they are recalling events from their *recent* past, which continue to influence their present.²⁵ And whereas Conte's Ovid reveals his poetic persona as 'not Catullus' by marking out the gap between fiction and reality, Quintus' interest, as I have continued to argue, is in eroding this gap, subsuming his poetic persona into Homer. His characters' allusive memories, therefore, cannot be comprehended in the same way as those of Ovid or Colluthus.

This is particularly the case when Quintus appears to allow his characters to remember the *Iliad* in an *un-homeric* way. On the one hand, these additions, suppressions or changes represent purposeful amendments on the characters' part: drawing from their lived experience, they reconfigure an event in the way that best befits their current situation. They display, in other words, a selective memory of their Iliadic past: adapting it as part of a rhetorical strategy. But the reader, of course, also knows that this is a poem; and that it is really the poet who gives the characters their material to recall. By impersonating the Homeric poet, Quintus thus transfers the notion of selective memory from the characters onto Homer himself. That new details are now added, and other aspects taken away, opens up the possibility that Homer knew more, or different, information about the Trojan War than that which appears in the *Iliad*: and only now, in this narrative continuation, is he choosing to commit this material to verse.²⁶

The tradition of correcting Homer's narrative of the Trojan War, as old as Stesichorus, Herodotus and Euripides, found new advocates in the satirising Homeric revisionists at work in imperial Greece. The so-called 'Homeric Games' – prose accounts like those of Dictys of Crete and Dares of Phrygia – purported to give the 'true story' of the war based on newly uncovered or more reliable evidence predating the Homeric poems.²⁷ There also survive a

²⁵ Cf. Maciver (2012b):31.

²⁶ My interest here is not in exploring whether Quintus perceives any actual historical accuracy in Homer's poetry, but in the ancient responses to this question of historical accuracy with which the *Posthomeric* engages.

²⁷ See Merkle (1994):183–96; Cameron (2004):136–7; Kim (2010):15–16 and 175–81.

number of texts which construct a more direct dialogue with Homer.²⁸ In *Homer Between History and Fiction*, Kim identifies three works from the second sophistic as distinctive in their efforts to argue against the poet. Dio's *Trojan Oration*, Lucian's *True Histories* and Philostratus' *Heroicus* (alongside which is discussed the *Vita Apollonii*), he argues, form a distinct group within the field of Homeric rewritings owing to their shared interest in the historical 'truth' of Homer's account, explicit and detailed discussion of Homeric poetry, and centralisation of the figure of Homer himself.²⁹

In these texts, therefore, concern with Homer's historical veracity is redeployed to articulate an interest in the *poetic* process driving the so-called lies: Homer's sources, his allegiances, and his agenda in turning this story to song.³⁰ This emphasis, which has been rightly understood against the background of ancient critical discussions such as those in Book 1 of Strabo,³¹ sets forward a vision of myth as based on a core truth, and a corresponding image of Homer as a tendentious, selective poet, who knew more about this truth than he put in his verses; transforming it in, and therefore *by*, his poetry.

The central part of this chapter will focus on how these two concepts – the literary trope of memory and second sophistic criticism of Homer on the basis of historical truth – are combined in Quintus' poem. Under the pretence of 'still being Homer', by adding new details to Iliadic recollections, the poet is able to disarm criticism regarding some of Homer's most severe omissions. Such a defence, in one sense, is not exceptional. We have seen how treatises such

²⁸ Dictys and Dares, of course, do not mention Homer explicitly, as they purport to pre-date the Homeric poems.

²⁹ Kim (2010): esp. 17–18. Artificial as this grouping is – needless to say, there is no indication that any contemporary reader would have approached the texts in such terms – Kim is right to highlight the specific combination of Homeric interests on display, and this combination offers a fruitful test-site for Quintus' approach.

³⁰ That is, as opposed to the older tradition of Stesichorus and Euripides, which offer alternative accounts to Homer in poetry. For poetic versions of this sort of criticism in the imperial era, cf. *Sibylline Oracles* 3.419–2, and *Dion*.42.181, where Homer is deemed a liar (έψεύσατο βίβλος Όμήρου).

³¹ See Kim (2010):47–84; Hunter (2009):44–6.

as Pseudo Plutarch's *Life of Homer* and the allegorical writings of the Neoplatonists put forward their own rationalisations for Homer's exaggerations and inconsistencies.³² Those solutions, however, are in prose: they belong, as do the critiques of Dio, Lucian and Philostratus, to the second-order tradition of Homeric exegesis and commentary. By engaging with Homeric criticisms in a poem, and one which claims to be by Homer himself, Quintus by contrast gives *poetry*'s response to the charges levied against it. Here is Homer answering back.

II. REPORTED MEMORIES: HOMER ET CETERA

The question of why Homer started the *Iliad* with the *menis* of Achilles instead of narrating the entirety of the Trojan War was a prevalent discussion point in antiquity (in, for example, Arist. *Poet.*1459a 30–7, and Horace's famous phrase *medias in res*). The answer found was that, unlike his competitors, Homer selected the climactic phase for his subject matter and incorporated the antecedents by way of analepsis.³³ This much-praised feature of Homeric narrative could also be deftly reframed. Dio's *Trojan Oration* tilts the concept of Homeric anastrophe so that it becomes a total subversion of events rather than a particular order of telling (11.24),³⁴ and in Lucian's *True Histories* Homer admits that he began with the wrath of Achilles simply because he felt like it (*Ver. Hist.*2.20). When Quintus recapitulates the *Iliad* by reporting the memories of his characters, he shows his awareness of these sorts of discussions. However rather than augmenting his narrative to incorporate them, he refuses to bow to their pressure. He revels in the fact that there is more to this Trojan story than a poet commits to tell; nodding to more material than has been included, and at the same time justifying the process of selection that Homer originally undertook.

³² See Chapter Three.

³³ See e.g. Σ. β. II.2.494–877 ex. Erbse (1969):288. Cf. Nünlist (2009a)/(2009b).

³⁴ On the ancient concept of *anastrophe* see e.g. Nünlist (2009a):67–9. On this aspect of Dio's *Trojan Oration*, see the excellent discussion by Hunter (2009):51–3.

The ‘non-opening’ of the poem contains the first example of this technique.³⁵ Quintus gives an analepsis of the final books of the *Iliad* by describing memories of those inside Troy’s walls:

Εῦθ' ὑπὸ Πηλείωνι δάμη θεοείκελος Ἔκτωρ
καὶ ἐ πυρὴ κατέδαψε καὶ ὀστέα γαῖα κεκεύθει,
δὴ τότε Τρῶες ἔμιμνον ἀνὰ Πριάμοιο πόληα
δειδιότες μένος ἡū θρασύφρονος Αἰακίδαο·
ἡῦτ' ἐνὶ ξυλοχοισι βόες βλοσυροῖ λέοντος (5)
ἐλθέμεν οὐκ ἐθέλουσιν ἐναντίαι, ἀλλὰ φέβονται
ιληδὸν πτώσσουσαι ἀνὰ ῥωπήια πυκνά·
ῶς οἱ ἀνὰ πτολίεθρον ὑπέτρεσαν ὅβριμου ἄνδρα
μνησάμενοι προτέρων, ὁπόσων ἀπὸ θυμὸν ἵαψεν
θύων ἴδαιοιο περὶ προχοῇσι Σκαμάνδρου, (10)
ἥδ' <όπ>όσους φεύγοντας ὑπὸ μέγα τεῖχος ὅλεσσεν,
“Ἐκτορά θ’ ὡς ἐδάμασσε καὶ ἀμφείρυσσε πόληι,
ἄλλους θ’ ὡς ἐδάϊξε δι’ ἀκαμάτοιο θαλάσσης
ὅππότε δὴ τὰ πρῶτα φέρε Τρώεσσιν ὅλεθρον.
τῶν οἵ γε μνησθέντες ἀνὰ πτολίεθρον ἔμιμνον. (15)
ἀμφὶ δ’ ἄρα σφίσι πένθος ἀνιηρὸν πεπότητο
ῶς ἥδη στονόεντι καταιθομένης πυρὶ Τροίης. (Q.S.1.1–17)

Maciver’s analysis of these lines dwells on their intertextual links with the *Iliad*.³⁶ He notes, for instance, the balancing of θεοείκελος Ἔκτωρ with the name of Achilles and his epithet in *Il.1.1*, and the echo which Πηλείωνι δάμη creates with both the final line of the *Iliad* (Ἐκτορος ἵπποδάμοιο, *Il.24.780–4*), and with Priam’s Πηλεῖωνι δαμείς at *Il.22.40*. For Maciver, however, these intertexts denote a severance with the Iliadic past to which they refer:

³⁵ Cf. the discussion of the opening in the Introduction and Chapter Three.

³⁶ Maciver (2012b):29–33. See also Bär (2007)/(2009); Schenk (1998):377.

‘The situation and place on the mythological timescale is not the *Iliad*’s plot: that is signalled as past, and thus the *Posthomerica* begins with the past, the passive aorist δάμη denotes this.’³⁷

However, the ‘past’ is not so complete. At the correlative δὴ τότε (3), the opening shifts across the sequence of tenses, and moves the *Iliad*’s narrative situation back closer to the present. With ἔμιμνον in line 3, the aorist gives way to the imperfect, and the verb’s meaning mirrors its move to the past continuous: an indication of the poem’s position, in which the characters ‘remain’ in the *Iliad*. With δειδιότες (4) the aorist is further overturned, and the past now becomes perfect: the Trojans were scared and are scared – their fear is in an active state.

The description then yields to a simile (Q.S.1.5–7), the first instance of the feature which we have seen Quintus to use so persistently.³⁸ But why start with *this* simile? Why put it precisely here? There is a heavy denseness to these lines, not only in the image (the huddling and the thickets), but also in its construction: the subject (βόες) is conjoined with the aggressor (βλοσυροῖ λέοντος, 5); the verbs run together, a mass of *etas* and *thetas* (έλθέμεν οὐκ ἐθέλουσιν ἐναντίαι, 6); the bushy thickets shrink into themselves (πτώσσουσαι ἀνὰ ρωπήια πυκνά, 7); everything is squashed. This emphasis on proximity, set at odds with the desire to ‘go out’ or stand opposed (ἐναντίαι), could offer an opening indication of the poem’s relationship to the *Iliad*: they will not be set apart, but joined together closely. When the aorist is reasserted (ύπέτρεσαν, 8) its sense of a past completed has thus been destabilised by the presentism of the intervening lines. This antagonism between past and still-present also operates on the level of memory: the aorist μνησάμενοι (9) yields to the perfect μνησθέντες (15). This is an act of remembering which, the repeated ἔμιμνον stresses, is set to ‘remain.’

³⁷ Maciver (2012b):31.

³⁸ See Chapter Two.

It is in this context, in which the *Iliad* is stressed as being the continuous present, that the content of the Trojans' memories here must be understood. The events which the Trojans are described as recalling do indeed echo the end of the *Iliad*, but they are not confined to it. As he describes the Trojans remembering ὅπόσων ἀπὸ θυμὸν ἵαψεν...ἡδ' <ὅπ>όσους³⁹ φεύγοντας/ὑπὸ μέγα τεῖχος ὅλεσσεν (9–11), Quintus first augments the direct links to the *Iliad* with a note of unspecified vastness: are these casualties just the ones that we heard about in Homer? ὅπόσος, it could be countered, is a simple poetic shorthand, not a pointed note of expansion. But it is less easy to explain away the temporal tilt which accompanies it:

ἄλλους θ' ὡς ἐδάϊξε δι' ἀκαμάτοι θαλάσσης
ὅππότε δὴ τὰ πρῶτα φέρε Τρώεσσιν ὅλεθρον. (Q.S.1.13–14)

The Trojans recall when Achilles 'first' brought death to people of Troy. In the *Iliad*, of course, we do not witness these initial feats: when in *Il.*9.328–9 Achilles boasts of how he sacked twelve cities by sea, he voices what Genette would call a 'completing external analepsis', referring back to an event which took place before the narrative timeframe.⁴⁰

The opening memories also, as we have seen, contain a slight factual variation on the Iliadic version of events.⁴¹ The statement at 1.12 that Hector's body was dragged around the city does not quite accord with Homer's descriptions (*Il.*22.395–404; 463–5; 24.14–21).⁴² This 'change', it has been suggested, offers the first example of how Quintus seeks to correct Homer's account, exemplifying his 'willingness to depart from Homeric authority'.⁴³ And yet in all three relevant Iliadic passages, Achilles is described as moving the corpse in a slightly different place: before the city, towards the ships, and around Patroclus' mound.⁴⁴ Quintus'

³⁹ Some manuscripts preserve ὄσους here; see Vian (1963):12.

⁴⁰ Genette (1980):51–61.

⁴¹ See Chapter Two.

⁴² Cf. James (2004):269. This change is also attested in earlier literature. Cf. e.g. Euripides *Andromache* 107–8.

⁴³ James (2004):269. See also Bär (2010).

⁴⁴ Respectively *Il.*22.395–404 and 24.16

ἀμφείρυσσε πόληι can just as easily be taken as an encapsulation of these different locations. If he wished to signal the start of a programme of Homeric correction, why opt for something so understated, so unspecific?

We should therefore consider another agenda behind these opening recollections. Rather than correcting Homer's account, the Trojan's reported memories constitute an initial, instigative example of Quintus' process of Homeric expansion: an incorporative re-reading of the material already contained within his model poems.⁴⁵ By using the device of memory, Quintus makes this incorporation even stronger: the *Iliad* becomes part of the characters' lived experience as well as the readers' literary one. Whereas Maciver speaks of a distinction between the past of the *Iliad* and the present of Quintus, he neglects the fact that so much of the *Iliad*'s plot was itself already past; its anastrophic tendencies famed in ancient critical discussions. In a few neat verses, Quintus thus deftly sets out the parameters of his pretence. This poet, 'still Homer', is continuing the Iliadic practice of using analepsis to give his story a wider perspective, and he is about to tell more of this story now.

We may observe the same process at work when Quintus describes the recollection of a different Iliadic episode. After the death of Penthesilea, Ares' rage is abated when he recalls that Zeus too had failed to save his own children when they were slain in battle:

πολλὰ δέ πορφύροντα θοὸς νόος ὀτρύνεσκεν
ἄλλοτε μέν Κρονίδαο μέγ' ἀσχαλόωντος ἐνιπήν
σμερδαλέην τρομέοντα πρὸς οὐρανὸν ἀπονέεσθαι,
ἄλλοτε δ' οὐκ ἀλέγειν σφετέρου πατρός, ἀλλ' Ἀχιλῆι
μῖξαι ἐν αἷματι χεῖρας ἀτειρέας. όψε δέ οἱ κῆρ
μνήσαθ', ὅσοι καὶ Ζηνὸς ἐνὶ πτολέμοισι δάμησαν
սιέες οἵς οὐδ' αὐτὸς ἐπήρκεσεν ὄλλυμένοισιν·
τοῦνεκ' ἀπ' Ἀργείων ἐκάς ἦιεν· ἥ γὰρ ἔμελλε

⁴⁵

As outlined in Chapter One.

κεῖσθαι ὁμῶς Τιτῆσι δαμεὶς στονόεντι κεραυνῷ,
εἰ Δ<ι>ὸς ἀθανάτοι παρὲκ νόον ἄλλα μενοίνα. (Q.S.1.706–15)

To any reader who knows their Homer, Ares' reminiscence evokes *Il.16.431–61*, where Zeus accepts Hera's advice to allow Sarpedon to be killed by Patroclus in accordance with the will of Fate. Quintus on the one hand steers the reader carefully towards that scene. Ares' fluctuation over two courses of action (πολλὰ δέ πορφύροντα θοὸς νόος ὀτρύνεσκεν, 706) re-enacts Zeus' own deliberation (διχθὰ δέ μοι κραδίη μέμονε φρεσὶν ὄρμαίνοντι, *Il.16.435*), and the choice and position of the verb δάμησαν (711) balances the prediction of Sarpedon's death, first by Zeus (μοῖρ' ὑπὸ Πατρόκλοιο Μενοιτιάδαο δαμῆναι., *Il.16.434*)⁴⁶, and then by Hera (χέρσ' ὑπὸ Πατρόκλοιο Μενοιτιάδαο δαμῆναι, *Il.16.452*). As was the case in the opening sequence, memory is used to encase an Iliadic allusion.

On the other hand, however, the *Iliad* is stretched as it is remembered. There is a delay in Ares' thought process: his mind darts to many different places (πολλὰ...ἄλλοτε...ἄλλοτε) before arriving at this detail. ὄψε (710) acknowledges the postponement: this Iliadic analepsis is an afterthought, extracted 'at last' from his mass of memories. In terms of the content of the memory, although the reader may well think of Sarpedon and recognise the intertexts, the wording is not in fact explicit. Ares recalls ὅσοι υἱέες of Zeus have perished. Sarpedon's name is not mentioned, and he is subsumed into the more generic group of 'the sons of Zeus.' This is, of course, a group of which Ares himself can also claim membership. This episode is the only place in the poem where the narrative refers to him as Zeus' son (ώς Διὸς ὅβριμος υἱὸς Ἀρης ἀέκοντί γε θυμῷ, Q.S.1.702)⁴⁷: Zeus' list of children is stressed as being so long that it includes even the one who rails against him now.

Like the Trojans' broad opening recollections (Q.S.1.9–11), Ares remembers (an undefined amount) more than was disclosed in the *Iliad*. However, the temptation to read this expansion

⁴⁶ Cf. also the final line of Zeus' speech, ἦ δη ὑπὸ χερσὶ Μενοιτιάδαο δαμάσσω, *Il.16.438*.

⁴⁷ The only other instance occurs in character speech, Q.S.1.189.

as an extra-Homeric amendment is again precluded by the framing conceit of the poem. If Zeus' fatherly sadness, as Ares recounts it, encompasses more than just the death of Sarpedon, then it is the Homeric narrator who acknowledges that now. Ares' recollection 'at last' thus doubles as an image of the poet's own delayed recall of material from his repertoire: Homer now – ὀψέ – adds more.

III. MEMORIES IN SPEECH: SELF-MOTIVATED SELECTIONS

These examples suggest how Quintus uses reported memories of Iliadic events to justify the notion of poetic selectivity: no narrator, be it the poet of the *Iliad*, the (still Homeric) poet of this continuation, or an internal singer of deeds⁴⁸ includes all of the material which is available to them; they must select from it and present only a snapshot. When characters are permitted to speak Homeric memories in their own voice, the potential for this defensive discourse is heightened. Epic characters are both doers and speakers of deeds: they participate in as well as comment on the action of the plot. When a character remembers, therefore, they often activate their prior involvement in the event which they are recalling. Yet such character speech is equally motivated by a speaker's *current* concerns. A memory is evoked with an agenda; to persuade, provoke, self-aggrandise, or comfort. In a number of speeches in the *Posthomerica*, in order to achieve such effects, an Iliadic event is manipulated, and changed as the speaker recalls it.

The differences from the *Iliad* are usually subtle, a matter of tone or of emphasis. For example, as Achilles vaunts to Penthesilea (Q.S.1.575–91) he asserts the limitless size of his exploits at the Xanthus with another indeterminate ὅσος ($\ddot{\eta}$ οὕπω τόδ' ἄκουσας, ὅσων ὑποκάππεσε γυῖα...Q.S.1.588). As he kills Thersites, he reminds him of Odysseus' previous castigation of

⁴⁸ I argued in Chapter One how the cyclic songs of Nestor and the bards after the sack of Troy (Q.S.4.118–168; Q.S.14.121–142) offer internal examples of the process of poetic selection and expansion, from material already entered into the audience's collective memory.

his babbling (Q.S.1.759–63),⁴⁹ but readjusts the focus to suggest Odysseus' lightness of touch (Οδυσσῆος ταλαὸν κῆρ...καὶ οὐκέτι χειρὶ βαρείη/πληξάμενος...759; 762–3). Then, when struck by Apollo's shaft, he recalls Thetis' premonitions about his death (Q.S.3.78–82), which he also related in *Il.21.276–8*, but now includes the detail of the setting by Scaean gates, which he learned in the *Iliad* from Hector, not his mother (*Il.22.359–60*).⁵⁰ In the final section of this chapter, I want to examine some cases when the adaptations seem more distortive: when Quintus' characters recall events as they did *not* happen in the *Iliad*, and the poet appears to break with the practice established in the opening lines, of including nothing incompatible with Homer's account.

Achilles, as the above examples suggest, voices the largest number of Homeric memories of all Quintan characters. Whilst at the end of the *Iliad* he was the central doer of deeds – and his is the μένος from which the Trojans at the start of this poem still shrink in fear – his status as this narrative continues begins to wane. Delayed into action (Q.S.1.376–9), soon to meet his death (Q.S.3.1–185), he is confined thereafter to a spectral half-presence; and his former self, as we have seen, is available only in fleeting glimpses, reconjured through original Homeric formulae.⁵¹ As a hero moving into the past tense, Achilles is thus forced into a position more familiar to the likes of Nestor, in which he must increasingly rely on evoking the memory of his former accomplishments to assert his authority. When his ghost entreats Neoptolemus to make the Greeks do his bidding (Q.S.14.185–222), he does so precisely by reminding them of his exploits during the war (14.210–1): let them do as he says, if they still (μέμνηθεν – perfect tense) remember.⁵²

The adaptations which Achilles makes to these recalled Iliadic feats can be read as driven by this desire for self-perpetuation: he edits his Homeric memories so that they continue – and

⁴⁹ Cf. *Il.2.243–69*.

⁵⁰ For the absence of Paris, one of Achilles' killers in Hector's prophecy, see discussion in Chapter Six.

⁵¹ See Chapter Two.

⁵² Further analysis of this passage in Chapter Five.

through them, he continues – to matter. The majority of these adaptations, as we have seen, are subtle: he reorients an episode to create an even more Achilles-centred version of the *Iliad*. On one occasion, however, he attempts something more drastic. In a flying speech to Memnon (Q.S.2.429–50), Achilles asserts the reasons why Thetis is held in the greatest honour among the gods:

ὅς σέο φέρτερός είμι βίη γενεῆ τε φυῆ τε
Ζηνὸς ὑπερθύμοιο λαχών ἀριδείκετον αἷμα
καὶ σθεναροῦ Νηρῆος, ὃς εἰναλίας τέκε καύρας
Νηρεῖδας, τὰς δή ῥα θεοὶ τίουσ' ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ,
πασάων δὲ μάλιστα Θέτιν κλυτὰ μητιόωσαν,
οὕνεκά που Διόνυσον ἐοῖς ὑπέδεκτο μελάθροις,
ὅππότε δειμαίνεσκε βίην ὄλοοῖ Λυκούργου,
ἡδὲ καὶ ὡς Ἡφαιστον ἐϋφρονα χαλκεοτέχνην
δέξατο οἶσι δόμοισιν ἀπ' Οὐλύμποιο πεσόντα,
αὐτὸν τ' Ἀργικέραυνον ὅπως ὑπελύσατο δεσμῶν·
τῶν μιμνησκόμενοι πανδερκέες Ούρανίωνες
μητέρ' ἐμὴν τίουσι Θέτιν ζαθέω ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ.

The examples are instantly recognisable from the *Iliad*, and the links are once again cemented by verbal recapitulations. Dionysus' escape from Lycurgus (Q.S.2.438–9) was narrated by Glaucus to Diomedes at *Iliad* 6.130–7; with ὑπέδεκτο μελάθροις (Q.S.2.437) reflecting ὑπεδέξατο κόλπω (Il.6.137), the verbs in symmetrical penultimate position. Thetis' aid to Hephaestus (Q.S.2.440–1) was recalled by Hephaestus himself at Il.18.394– 405; and Quintus' χαλκεοτέχνην (Q.S.2.440) offers a variant of the Iliadic compound-epithet in that scene (“Ηφαιστον κλυτοτέχνην, Il.18.391).⁵³ And the story of Thetis releasing Zeus from bondage

⁵³ Achilles includes no mention of Eurynome, Hephaestus' co-saviour in the Iliadic version: a deft omission, given his desire to present Thetis as μάλιστα...κλυτά (Q.S.2.437).

(Q.S.2.442) was recounted to Thetis by Achilles at *Il.*1.396–406; and Quintus here, breaking from his usual practice, preserves a near-precise Homeric formula from that passage (ὑπελύσατο δεσμῶν, Q.S.2.442; ὑπελύσαο δεσμῶν *Il.*1.401).

However by *merging* these different Iliadic stories, Achilles ‘remembers’ deeds of Thetis which according to his speech in *Iliad* 1 his mother had not told him about.⁵⁴ In his new version of this recollection, Achilles also condenses the tale told by his Homeric character over ten frantic lines into one neat verse, missing out all but the most essential details.⁵⁵ If we were to explore this speech using the concept of allusion as conventionally understood,⁵⁶ Achilles, invested with extra-narrative power, would function as a kind of Homeric editor; collating all of the deeds of Thetis from the *Iliad* and refashioning them into something new. Again, however, this is not quite the system at play in Quintus. For these Iliadic memories are not in fact Achilles’ own: deeds in which he participated and is now tendentiously recalling to boost his renown. These are the *gods’* memories which he is citing (μιμησκόμενοι πανδερκέες Οὐρανίωνες); and events which, even when they were discussed in the *Iliad*, were already ‘completing external analepses’ belonging to a more distant past.

Achilles, however, is not a god.⁵⁷ His description of divine memory cannot be so authoritative. Despite his boasts about his parentage from Thetis, his mortal status is foregrounded in this speech. His choice of epithet for the gods, πανδερκέες (443) provides an unwitting prolepsis

⁵⁴ Cf. *Il.*1.396-8: ἀκουσα εύχομένης ὅτ' ἔφησθα κελαινεφέῃ Κρονίωνι/οἴη ἐν ἀθανάτοισιν ἀεικέα λοιγὸν ἀμῦναι. In other words, in his Iliadic speech, Achilles based his knowledge on Thetis’ own testimony to him. No such testimonies are given now.

⁵⁵ There is no mention, for instance, of Hera, Poseidon and Athena’s role (cf. *Il.*1.399-400), nor of the part played by Briareus/Aegaeon (*Il.*1.404-5).

⁵⁶ I.e. that discussed in the Introduction (section I) and, in terms of memory, in section I of this chapter.

⁵⁷ Not at this stage of the *Posthomeric*. For Achilles ‘divine’ afterlife later in the poem, see Chapters Two and Five.

to his death in the next book of the poem, where it is his lack of superhuman vision which leads to his downfall:⁵⁸

ἀμφὶ δὲ παπτήνας ὄλοὸν καὶ τὸ ἀκρατὸν τὸ ὄμόκλα·

‘τίς νῦ μοι αἰνὸν ὄστὸν ἐπιπροέηκε κρυφηδόν;’ (Q.S.3.67–8)

In the implicit contrast between the all-seeing gods and the unseeing Achilles, Quintus points over his character’s head to the gap between mortal and divine, which Achilles’ bold assertions attempt to deny. In the image of Achilles *appropriating* divine memory, assuming the position of one who knows for certain much more than his narrative experience would permit him to, Quintus offers another model for poetic selectivity. It is part of the claim of revisionists like Dio that Homer, because of his exceptional place in Greek education and culture, is also exceptional in his distortion of the true events at Troy: the start of the chain of deception and inaccuracy that has led to such stories being mistaken for truth.⁵⁹ By presenting Achilles – a character operating within the events at Troy, famed for his honesty and straightness –⁶⁰ as distorting his stories too, Quintus removes the *ad hominem* sting from this charge. As the reader recognises the slippage between what Achilles can know and what he purports to, we must acquiesce with the potential unreliability of *any* descriptive recollection, even one which asserts itself so confidently, and accept the ubiquity of self-motivated adaptation.

Quintus also depicts his characters manipulating the memory of events in which they *did* participate. In Phoenix’s lament for Achilles (Q.S.3.463–89) his account of how he came to be the protégé of Peleus and was entrusted with rearing his son is based on his speech in *Iliad* 9 (444–95). But an important part of that account is omitted, namely that Phoenix left home condemned to childlessness by his father’s curse, so that he came to regard Achilles as a

⁵⁸ The epithet is not strictly true of the gods either, who frequently miss things throughout the epic tradition, but Achilles’ use of it in this context seems intended to provoke the divine/mortal contrast.

⁵⁹ See particularly Kim (2010):6–10; 17–8; 219–20.

⁶⁰ Cf. e.g. *Hippias Minor* 365b, as discussed in Chapter Two.

surrogate son. For James, this omission ‘exemplifies Quintus’ readiness to simplify a story.⁶¹ But this explanation fails to acknowledge that we are in character speech, and Phoenix is activating a personal memory. From this perspective, the recollection is not simplified; it is selective.

In contrast to the situation in *Iliad* 9, Phoenix is not seeking to persuade Achilles; he is mourning him. The background of being condemned to childlessness, which at the embassy heightened the pathos of his cause and created affinity with his primary addressee, is no longer what is critically at stake. Instead, Phoenix focuses on the bond that had existed between himself and the fallen hero; a key feature of lamentation.⁶² The part of the story as it was told in the *Iliad* which is most relevant for *this* purpose is the memorable image of Achilles as a spluttering infant:

πρίν γ' ὅτε δή σ' ἐπ' ἔμοισιν ἐγὼ γούνεσσι καθίσσας
ὅψου τ' ἄσαιμι προταμών καὶ οῖνον ἐπισχών.
πολλάκι μοι κατέδευσας ἐπὶ στήθεσσι χιτῶνα
οῖνου ἀποβλύζων ἐν νηπιέῃ ἀλεγεινῇ'... (*Il.9.488–91*)

Phoenix first homes in on this image – describing Peleus first placing Achilles in his lap (κόλπῳ ἐμῷ κατέθηκε, Q.S.3.471), and Achilles wetting his tunic (πολλάκι... δίηνας στήθεά τ' ἡδὲ χιτῶνας, Q.S.3.470;476). Then he expands it:

πολλάκι παππάζεσκες ἔτ' ἄκριτα χείλεσι βάζων,
καὶ μευ νηπιέησιν ἄδην ἐνὶ σῆσι δίηνας
στήθεά τ' ἡδὲ χιτῶνας· ἔχον δέ σε χερσὸν ἐμῆσι
πολλὸν καγχαλόων, ἐπεὶ ἦ νύ μοι ἥτορ ἐώλπει

⁶¹ James (2004):285.

⁶² An emphasis readily perceptible in, for instance, the equivalent heroic lamentation scene in the *Iliad* – those for Hector: especially Hecuba at *Il.24.746–9* and Helen at *Il.24.765–75*. On lamentation more broadly, See Alexiou (1974).

Θρέψειν κηδεμονῆα βίου καὶ γήραος ἄλκαρ. (Q.S.3.474–78)

That Achilles often used to call Phoenix ‘father’ (πολλάκι παππάζεσκες, Q.S.3.474)⁶³ and his own laughter as he held the child (πολλὸν καγχαλόων, Q.S.3.477) are details not found in the *Iliad*. And yet in this new context such additions have great rhetorical force. The power of evoking Achilles’ infancy at the embassy lay in the intense intimacy which it engendered. Phoenix aimed not to usurp the role of Peleus, but to create an entirely unique relationship, paternal in spirit but not actually father-son.⁶⁴ Mourning Achilles now, the old man cements this special role. ἄκριτα...βάζων, two words which usually denote negative, polemicised speech acts,⁶⁵ are now redeployed to become the defining image of young innocence. The transferral of belligerence away from the phrase matches the neutralising force of the whole scene: Phoenix no longer needs to abate Achilles’ anger, and so can now focus solely on his childhood charm.

Phoenix recalls his relationship with Achilles a second time in the *Posthomerica*, this time to Neoptolemus as he arrives at Troy (Q.S.7.642–52). The motivations behind his extra-Homeric inclusions here are even more transparent: there is now a new youth who needs persuading. In relating his bond with Achilles to Achilles’ own son, Phoenix places an even greater emphasis on the paternal nature of his role: ἔγωγε τυτθὸν...ἴσον δέ ἐ παιδὶ τίεσκον...ἴσον ἐῷ πατρὶ τίεν ἐμὸν κῆρ (Q.S.7.643–8). When the reader encounters another non-Iliadic detail, the addition can be understood as material well-selected by Phoenix to support this emphasis:

ἔσκεν, ὅπως φήσασκεν ίδών ‘ἐνὸς αἴματός εἰμεν

⁶³ The verb παππάζω has only two occurrences in the ‘real’ Homeric epics: Dione to Aphrodite regarding Diomedes’ ill-fated homecoming (*Il.5.408*) and Nausicaa to her father Alcinous (*Od.6.57*).

⁶⁴ Alden (2000):222 deems the embassy scene ‘unpleasant’ due to Phoenix’s appropriation of Peleus’ position, surely missing this point.

⁶⁵ Cf. *Il.4.355; Il.16.207; Od.4.837; Od.11.464*. At *Od.4.32* Menelaus, censuring Eteoneus, uses βάζω to refer to childlike speech (ἀτὰρ μὲν νῦν γε πάϊς ὡς νήπια βάζεις), but with an insulting rather than a tender force. The Quintan Achilles employs βάζω in this derogatory sense against Thersites: ἀργαλέως ὥρινας ἐλέγχεα μυρία βάζων, Q.S.1.760.

No trace of this conversation appeared in Phoenix's speech in the *Iliad*. And yet it is presented as an exchange which happened in the iterative, over and again.⁶⁶ Phoenix's inclusion of it has clear relevance to *this* rhetorical context. In stressing a connection achieved by an affiliation in spirit, Phoenix seeks to inflame the filial *thumos* of a young man whose motivation to fight is driven principally by his desire to emulate his father; to achieve, as it were, what Phoenix had with Achilles in reverse – a deep connection with a man with whom he shares a blood bond, but has never met. As a discourse on allusion, Phoenix's process of Iliadic self-amendment functions as a further model for selective poetic composition, and defence of the rationale behind it. A different setting will call for different facets of a story; new narrative scenarios will permit previously undisclosed aspects to be revealed. Playing at Homer, Quintus looks out over his mask to stake this claim: Homer is not a liar, he is a poet.

My final example of this selective memory is by far the most explosive; and returns to the performative passage first analysed in Chapter One. As Ajax and Odysseus clash over the arms of Achilles, they attempt to surpass one another by brandishing memories of events from their past. The rivals also trade different versions of the same memory: an event is recalled and counter-recalled to suit the designs of the speaker. Ajax begins by reminding Odysseus of his inferiority and indebtedness to him. He includes two Iliadic analepses: in recalling how ὅς σ' ἐνὶ χάρμῃ/ἔξεσάωσα πάροιθεν ὑποτρομέοντα κυδοιμὸν... (Q.S.5.202–3) he recapitulates the rescue of *Il.*11.411–88; and when discussing how Odysseus kept his ships 'in the middle' (Q.S.5.212), he evokes the statement in the *Iliad* that Odysseus' ships had been beached in the centre of the camp, whilst those of Ajax and Achilles took the most dangerous positions at either end (*Il.*8.222–6 = *Il.*11.5–9). Commingled with this type of recollection are events not found in the *Iliad* at all. Ajax recounts Odysseus' attempt to duck out of the Trojan mission (Q.S.5.191–4), which was neither a part of the Iliadic primary narrative nor referenced in

⁶⁶ Cf. also ἔσκε δέ μοι μέγ' ὄνειαρ...ἔσκε νόω (646) and πολλάκι παππάζεσκες. (3.474).

Homer at any point: it is found instead, in extant sources, in the *Cypria* (Proclus *Chrest.5* West) and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (13.34–42).⁶⁷ Odysseus' role in the abandonment of Philoctetes (Q.S.195–6) is also absent from the brief reference to the hero in the Iliadic catalogue (*Illiad* 2.718–24).⁶⁸ These extra-Iliadic references pave the way for the boldest new recollection:

οὐκ οἴω δ' ἄρα τῷ γε λυγρὴν ἐπεμήσαο λώβην,
ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀντιθέω Παλαμήδει θῆκας ὅλεθρον,
ὅς σέο φέρτερος ἔσκε βίη καὶ ἔϋφρονι βουλῇ. (Q.S.5.197–9)

The mention of Palamedes, introduced by the deceptively casual ἀλλὰ καὶ, would have been electric. Already in fifth century Athens, Palamedes had acquired prominence as an emblematically extra-Homeric figure. All three tragic poets composed a drama about him, and Gorgias' speech in his defence is still preserved.⁶⁹ For the sophists of imperial Greece, invoking the hero became a favoured trick to augment, or fully correct, Homer's account of the war. Dictys of Crete reasserts Palamedes' place in the saga.⁷⁰ In Philostratus' *Vita Apollonii*, Apollonius meets a gifted unruly boy who is the reincarnated spirit of Palamedes, and has no interest in learning because 'he found his bitterest enemies in Odysseus and Homer; because Odysseus laid ambush against him, and Homer denied him any place in his epic, while bestowing renown on lesser people' (3.22). When Apollonius then encounters Achilles in an epiphany, he questions him on this omission, and visits Palamedes' grave immediately after the interview (4.11–13). The *Heroicus* takes the palm for pro-Palamedes ploys. The vinedresser, armed with the knowledge of his hero-guru Protesilaus, reveals to the Phoenician merchant that Homer ignored Palamedes on purpose, so that he would not have to record

⁶⁷ Whether Quintus is drawing on Ovid or the *Cypria* – or both, or neither – is not the critical issue here, but rather how this material which is not in the *Iliad* is presented in the ‘still *Iliad*’ illusion. For Quintus’ relationship to the Epic Cycle, see section VI of the Introduction.

⁶⁸ See Chapter Five for further on the Philoctetes episode.

⁶⁹ See Gantz (1993):603–8; Zeitlin (2001):250–1.

⁷⁰ See Dictys of Crete 1.1, 1.4, 1.6, 1.16, 1.19 and 2.14–15 on Palamedes, and 2.29 on his murder.

Odysseus' shameful role in his murder; as the result of a necromantic bargain struck with the ghost of Odysseus himself (24.2).⁷¹

By including a reference to this hero, Quintus is participating in this supplementary tradition. However, this participation must be considered in light of the presentation of this reference as a memory. Palamedes is a part of these characters' mythological past. Odysseus seeks to block him out, selectively to 'forget' him (*tόδ'* ἔξελάθ(ε), Q.S.5.191), and Ajax provides the reminder because it helps his rhetorical strategy to do so: he aims to discredit Odysseus by evoking the darker details of his past, and what better example of his ἀτάσθαλα ἔργα (Q.S.5.190) than this? Palamedes, for Ajax, is the φέρτερος hero (Q.S.5.199)⁷² – and his superiority is in strength *and* intelligence (βίη καὶ ἔυφρονι βουλῆ). Anticipating Odysseus' self-presentation in his counter-argument,⁷³ Ajax hails Palamedes as the true embodiment of epic heroism, the brain and the brawn. In this single reference, he thus both draws attention to his opponent's ignominy and offer an alternative contender for his heroic identity.

On another level, however, the level on which Philostratus plays, it was really the *Iliad* which 'forgot' Palamedes. In having Ajax mention him, Quintus thus also issues a reminder of his own, erasing Homer's paradigmatic omission by including Palamedes, and drawing attention (albeit briefly) to Odysseus' fault. The exclusion of Palamedes from the *Iliad* is thus transformed from an insidious 'cover-up job' to a more neutral act of selectivity, driven by the compulsions of narrative. The *Iliad* did not discuss Palamedes, but its characters do remember him, and in this continued poetic portrayal of their experiences, 'Homer' now allows him a place in his epic.

⁷¹ For full discussion of for Philostratean precedents for the Palamedes story, which Quintus may also have known, see Grossardt (2006).

⁷² Cf. *Il.1.280–1*. Compare Achilles' use of the adjective against Memnon in the agon about Thetis (Q.S.2.432).

⁷³ Odysseus focuses on the mutual necessity of strength and wisdom in his counter-speech (Q.S.5.239–316), and even uses the same term ἔυφροσύνη (Q.S.5.263).

Odysseus soon bites back. He combats Ajax's defamations with some Homeric memories of his own (Q.S.5.268–90). He first counter-interprets the Iliadic analepses (268–78): he was not rescued from battle, but withstood alone (268–75); and his ships were not placed ἐς μέσον (275) out of cowardice, but due to strategy. These are *re*-interpretations of Iliadic events. Although he states that what Ajax says is untrue (*σὺ δ' οὐκ ἄρ' ἐτήτυμα βάζεις*,⁷⁴ 272), Odysseus does not claim that these things did not happen. Rather, he contends that they happened for different reasons to those which Ajax proposes – it is Ajax's emphasis which is οὐκ ἄρ' ἐτήτυμα. In staging the argument over these specific Homeric memories, Quintus selects two incidents about which the *Iliad* is conspicuously inconclusive. In the simile which describes how Menelaus and Ajax found him, Odysseus the wounded stag is, as Ajax suggests, fearful and fleeing:

εὔρον ἔπειτ' Ὄδυσσηα Διῖ φίλον· ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' αὐτὸν
Τρῶες ἔπονθ' ὡς εἴ τε δαφοινοὶ θῶες ὅρεσφιν
ἀμφ' ἔλαφον κεραὸν βεβλημένον, ὃν τ' ἔβαλ' ἀνὴρ
ἰῷ ἀπὸ νευρῆς· τὸν μέν τ' ἥλυξε πόδεσσι
φεύγων, ὅφερ' αἷμα λιαρὸν καὶ γούνατ' ὄρώρῃ... (*Il.11.473–7*)⁷⁵

But in the narrative outside of the simile, an equally strong case could be made for Odysseus' version of events. Beset on all sides, he valiantly defends himself and exhibits a leonine strength of his own:

ὦς ἡρα τότ' ἀμφ' Ὄδυσσηα δαιφρονα ποικιλομήτην
Τρῶες ἔπον πολλοί τε καὶ ἄλκιμοι, αὐτὰρ ὅ γ' ἥρως
ἀῖσσων ᾗ ἔγχει ἀμύνετο νηλεὲς ἥμαρ.... (*Il.11.482–4*)

⁷⁴ Note how here *βάζω* regains its usual, derogatory sense, unlike at Q.S.3.474.

⁷⁵ This simile is arguably focalised from Ajax and Menelaus' perspective (*εὔρον ἔπειτ' Ὄδυσσηα Διῖ φίλον...*). But compare the similar tone in the narrator's description of Odysseus' move to withdraw: *αὐτὰρ ὅ γ' ἔξοπίσω ἀνεχάζετο, αὖς δ' ἐταίρους*, *Il.11.461*.

Likewise, in the Iliadic description of the location of the ships, both contenders' interpretations are possible. The middle position of Odysseus' fleet is certainly described as strategic, not explicitly cowardly: στῆ δ' ἐπ' Ὀδυσσῆος μεγακήτεϊ νηΐ μελαίνῃ/ἢ ὁ ἐν μεσσάτῳ ἔσκε γεγωνέμεν ἀμφοτέρωσε, *Il.*8.222–3 = *Il.*11.5–6). And yet the reasons given for Ajax and Achilles drawing up their ships at the outer ends – ἡνορέη πίσυνοι καὶ κάρτεϊ χειρῶν (*Il.*8.226 = *Il.*11.9) – could allow for an implicit contrast with Odysseus' choice, to suggest that he selfishly opted for safety. Just as we saw in the opening description of the dragging of Hector, Quintus draws attention to the ambiguity inherent within certain Homeric statements; and rather than trying to settle these questions, he opens them up further. This commitment to Iliadic uncertainty serves to highlight the deep connection between poetry and subjectivity. If the same events can be redeployed to support such diametrically opposed conclusions, then being told 'what happened' may bring us no closer to the truth.⁷⁶

Homer's poetic spin, as we have seen, could be corrected by appealing to the superior witness of those who were 'actually there.' Autopsy, however, comes with its own problems. As Thucydides states – a notion on which Dio's *Trojan Oration* self-deprecatingly plays –⁷⁷ the reports which an eyewitness offers are themselves susceptible to distortion, determined by each person's 'prejudice or memory' (*Thuc.*1.22.3). As characters participating in the Trojan War – who were, and still are, there – Ajax and Odysseus competitively trade recollections in a manner which highlights the potential for this kind of distortion. As the poet who compiles this *agon*, Quintus thus suggests that if poetry is the carapace for conceit, eyewitness accounts would be little better.

The *Posthomerica*, finally, does not only justify this concept of poetic selectivity: it ensures that it continues. Towards the end of his first speech, Odysseus claims that he slaughtered many

⁷⁶ Further examples of distortions of Iliadic memories in this exchange are found at Q.S.5.279–81, on the timing of Odysseus' self-disfigurement and entry into Troy; and Q.S.5.310–11, where Odysseus claims to have won the wrestling match with Ajax at Patroclus' funeral games, when according to the *Iliad* (23.735–739), the outcome was judged a tie.

⁷⁷ See Hunter (2009):49–51; Kim (2010):108–112.

more Trojans than Ajax in the battle for Achilles' corpse (Q.S.5.285). This event happened 'just now' ($\nu\tilde{\nu}\nu\delta\acute{e}$, 285). The members of the internal audience watching this debate ($\tau\tilde{\omega}\nu\delta\acute{a}p'$ ἀναινομένων Τρώων ἐρικυδέες υἱες/ἔζοντ' ἐν μέσσοισι δορύκτητοι περ ἔόντες, 5.177–8) should, therefore, be able to judge via 'independent checks'⁷⁸ whether Odysseus' claims about it are true. The external audience – we the readers – who have 'just now' encountered this part of the narrative, should also be able to verify the story for ourselves. But in poetry, Quintus shows, that is not how it has to work. In the description of their verdict (Q.S.5.317–32), we are not told what the internal audience makes of this claim: the eyewitnesses do not help us. And as we 'recall' the narrative account of the battle, conclusive proof for believing or disbelieving Odysseus eludes us there too:

Αἴας δ' αἰὲν ἐμάρνατ' ἀλίγκιος ἀστεροπῆσι,

κτείνων ἄλλοθεν ἄλλον, ... (Q.S.3.293–4)

ἀλλ’ ἐδάμη παλάμησιν Ὀδυσσέος, ὃς τε καὶ ἄλλων πολλῶν θυμὸν ἔλυσεν ὑπ’ ἔλχεῖ μαιμώωντι (Q.S.3.306–7)

Ajax killed ‘another from elsewhere.’ Odysseus killed ‘many others.’ Like the Iliadic ambiguity over the dragging, Odysseus’ rescue, and the positioning of the ships, this poetic account refuses to confirm or deny the more positivist claims made by Odysseus in his speech. Acknowledging that there is more behind an epic verse – more kills in *aristeiai*, more heroes to be mentioned, or ‘facts’ to be disclosed – Quintus does not set out to fill in all of Homer’s gaps. Rather, impersonating Homer the selective poet, he continues unapologetically to flaunt the choices of his poetry, and reclaims these choices as a strength. Alluding to additional points

⁷⁸ I borrow this phrase from Crotty (1994):126 on what makes a storyteller *epistamenos* in Homer: ‘in the unusual instance where a member of the audience happens to have participated in the narrated event, there is an independent check on the accuracy of the poet’s song.’

in his repertoire of knowledge, he asserts that poetry is about more than fact: it cannot, and should not, give an answer to those wishing to know it all.

CONCLUSIONS

Quintus' presentation of Homeric memories reflects a number of facets of the revisionist tradition in the prose works of the second sophistic, and sheds light upon how Homerising poetry might seek to incorporate their clever deconstructions. Direct links between the *Posthomerica* and such works must remain, on one level, speculative: Quintus certainly knew of the Palamedes tradition, but whether he knew of what the *Heroicus* did with it is difficult to determine for certain.⁷⁹ But I hope to have demonstrated that the poem displays a profound engagement with this *style* of Homeric response, and participates in the imperial Greek fascination with the nature of Homeric truth, lies and fiction.

That this participation has not before been systematically considered may be due to ostensible differences in tone. There is after all an obvious humour shared by the corrections in Dio's *Trojan Oration*, Lucian's *True Histories*, Philostratus' two Homeric epiphanies, and the aptly nicknamed 'Homeric Games': a self-irony which pervades each text, in different ways, on every level. Quintus' poem has generally been characterised as straight and austere, often to its detriment, and devoid of any such parody or play. If, however, this chapter has succeeded in suggesting that Quintus aims to display, and to continue, Homeric selectivity from mythological material, then the *Posthomerica* goes some way to pervert the perverters, and reveals an ironic reflexivity of its own. It may be clever, and funny, to point out Homer's omissions, to hijack the story behind his poetry and to reassemble it as the 'truth', but in the end, it is precisely this poetry – aware of more, expertly selecting to fit the context, editing to persuade and delight – which has the last laugh.

⁷⁹ In Chapter Five I discuss different examples which point to a direct intertextual engagement between Quintus and Philostratus' *Vita Apollonii*.

The trope of memory thus provides another significant example of how Quintus' position as still Homer paradoxically affirms his own confident identity. It also, more broadly, shows how the *Posthomerica* contributes to a discussion about the role of poetry in the literary culture of its time; a powerful reminder that this period was not 'arrogated by prose'.⁸⁰ Asserting poetry's voice in these Homeric debates, Quintus carves out its, and by extension his, irreducible place in the playground – or battleground – of imperial literary criticism. If Homeric verse is to have the last laugh, it will be a Quintan achievement.

⁸⁰

Cf. Bowie (1989a):209.

CHAPTER 5

PRODIGAL POETICS

FILIATION AND SUCCESSION

My concern is only with strong poets, major figures with the persistence to wrestle with their strong precursors, even to the death. Weaker talents idealise; figures capable of imagination appropriate for themselves.

– Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence*: 5

The imagery of filiation – children and parents, generational continuation or conflict – has long been recognised as a salient metaphor for poets’ struggles against their literary predecessors. Quintus’ poem is filled with family relationships, and it is to these that I now turn. Recent work has shown how father-son symbolism was dominant in the Latin epic of the Augustan and post-Augustan period, where it was used to express anxieties about dynastic as well as poetic succession. But how do we account for the re-emergence¹ of the trope in the poetry of imperial Greece? The presence of successionist poetics in the *Posthomerica* raises this question sharply. If, as I have argued, Quintus seeks to eschew the distance between himself and his primary model Homer, how can his epic accommodate imagery whose power conventionally *insists* on a gap between old and new, predecessor and inheritor?

¹ On the absence of strong filial imagery in the poetry from intervening literary periods, see section I below.

In this chapter, I shall argue that the *Posthomerica* makes extensive use of the symbolism of filiation; but that this is a new and expanded version of this symbolism, reworked to accord with the aims of Homeric impersonation. I shall first show how the poem's enlarged heroic environment decentralises linear, antagonistic modes of succession, and explores alternative models of continuation and different types of relationship. I shall then analyse these models, outlining the ways through which Quintus deftly sidesteps the idea that the only kind of succession is the replacement of one generational figure by the next. The poem's most successful successors, I shall demonstrate, adopt impersonating approaches to their predecessors reflective of the text's own mimetic ambitions. What will emerge from this reading is a poet acutely aware of the pliant potential of filiation as a literary symbol, and who offers a compendium of different ways to reconfigure it, in which positive and assimilatory systems co-exist with the anxious and disruptive. Filial imagery is thereby reclaimed for a different era of poetics, and impersonation revealed as a valid, creative response to the age-old predicament of 'coming after.'

I. THE EVER-PRESENT ANXIETY?

In order to focus on the use of filiation in the *Posthomerica*, we must first consider its background: the occurrence of the imagery in earlier poetry and its discussion in modern literary criticism. By way of this consideration, this section will return directly to one of the central questions of the thesis, concerning the critical assumptions at stake in drawing analogies between the poetics of imperial Latin and those of imperial Greek.

Whilst often particularly associated with Latin poetry, the motif of generational continuity and conflict can of course be traced to much earlier in the epic tradition.² Homeric epic is centred on the family. The Iliadic *menis* is released by a father weeping for a son, and a son weeping for a father,³ and famous scenes such as the *agon* of Agamemnon and Diomedes make clear the theme of generational decline: few men are greater than their fathers, most are worse. The *Odyssey* is replete with family imagery. Beginning with the paradigm of ancestral crime and filial revenge, its plot is as much about the reunion of father and son as husband and wife, in which tensions of power are negotiated through filial aggression and its avoidance: the son who almost shoots the bow, the precarious authority of the father who holds him back.⁴

The political-cultural dimension of filiation is also perceptible in this early phase. In a literary-generic sense, the theme of succession helps to articulate the demands of an oral tradition based self-consciously on notions of repetition and self-perpetuation.⁵ As has been noted, the *Homeridai* of Pindar's *Nemean* 2 make explicit the sense of generational replacement in the rhapsodic art: called the sons of Homer, the members of this guild see themselves as the guardians and successors of Homeric epic, a chain reaction, as we have seen, continued by the Pindaric singer himself.⁶ More broadly still, the fact that the plots of both the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* concern 'the restoration of order within the small-scale structure of the family'⁷ reflects upon how, in this patriarchal society, the crucial relationship in social and political structures is that of father to son. Issues of individualism and loyalty, duty to the collective versus private pride

² Bowlby's concept of 'Freudian mythologies' (2007) excellently captures this point. See also Hardie (1993):88–91.

³ I use the word 'release' to capture both the dissolution of Achilles' rage during this exchange (see discussion of *lusis* in a related sense in Chapter 6) and its continued unleashing, shown in his fiery response to Priam at *Il.24.559–71*.

⁴ Cf. Goldhill (1984):191 and Hardie (1993): 119. Bibliography is vast on paternity in Homeric epic. See particularly Redfield (1975); Finlay (1980); Griffin (1980); Lynn George (1996); Felson (1999)/(2002); Mills (2000); Pratt (2007).

⁵ Further discussion in the Introduction and Chapter One.

⁶ See especially Hardie (1993):14–8 and 99; and Nagy (1996):62. Cf. Chapter One.

⁷ Hardie (1993):88.

and vengeance which the family scenarios in the poems so powerfully convey can thus have deep political consequences, even though they are not tightly connected with a given regime.

Filiation therefore was an image particularly able to express multiple types of power relation. It is this potential which Latin poetry appropriated and extended. The poetics of the *Aeneid* and its successors gave generational imagery a specific, created-for-purpose political context. As has been discussed extensively in the scholarship on these epics of the past three decades, generational themes become a principal means for exploring the issues arising from the coming of the principate and the driving necessity for dynastic succession; as poets such as Statius, Lucan and Valerius Flaccus all focus attention critically on the *problems* of succession, using the family as the symbolic place within which political conflicts of power develop.⁸

The literary aspect of filiation also assumes a new importance in post-Vergilian Latin epic: it becomes closely connected to these poets' desire to prove themselves worthy of succeeding the *Aeneid*, the epic predecessor in whose footsteps they follow so closely. If Telemachus' lurking potency already exemplifies 'the essential mode of human growth in [Freud's] Oedipal triad'⁹, then Harold Bloom's literary model of this family rivalry rings particularly true for silver Latin epic. 'The Anxiety of Influence', Bloom's famous psychoanalytical concept of the literary tradition, also expresses itself in terms of family imagery – 'Laius and Oedipus at the crossroads...father and son as mighty opposites'¹⁰ – describing the antithesis central to later Latin poetics in symbolic language with which it was wholly familiar.

'The Anxiety of Influence' has become inseparable from literary analysis of Roman epic – for some scholars of this material, it is now a critical cliché in itself. In his second edition of *A Theory of Poetry*, Bloom himself vented his frustration with Bloomian rhetoric; lamenting that

⁸ Hardie (1993) remains seminal. Owen Lee (1979) is a book-length study of fathers and sons in the *Aeneid*. See also Chaudhuri (2014) and Rosati (2005). I shall not recapitulate the detailed case-studies in these accounts, but shall draw on relevant details in my analyses.

⁹ Goldhill (1984):191.

¹⁰ Bloom (1997):11.

he ‘never meant by “the Anxiety of Influence” a Freudian Oedipal rivalry, despite a rhetorical flourish or two’;¹¹ and the same bent towards self-misreading is found in some recent silver Latin scholarship. Leigh dubs metapoetic readings ‘the dreariest of all contemporary responses to ancient verse’;¹² and Chaudhuri’s discussion of filiation decries the ‘overfamiliarity of [this] model’ which ‘works against the thrill of the silver Latin poets’ gambit.¹³ Such protestations serve, no doubt, to underscore the ubiquity of such imagery: as Leigh and Chaudhuri’s own readings show,¹⁴ it continues to prove an effective model for analysing the negotiations of power on display in this poetry, where adversarial imitation is practiced on a vast scale.

What is less certain, however, is the applicability of this model to the *Greek* epic of the Roman empire. And yet of all the critical apparatus borrowed from silver Latin,¹⁵ the concept of filial anxiety has been the most consistently cross-applied, read as metaphorising the concerns of poets who seek directly to take on Homer himself – returning to Troy, and adopting Homeric themes, style and subject. The imperial mythological epics are indeed full of generational material, continuing the focus on the family already established in Homer. Triphiodorus opens with a series of elderly laments for fallen sons – a generational stagnation reflective of the ‘old’ war which his epic aims to rejuvenate – and throughout his poem makes ample use of the imagery of childbirth, particularly in the Wooden Horse, depicted as a pregnant mother filled with heroic offspring.¹⁶ Colluthus begins with one wedding (to Thetis), and narrates the contest won by the promise of another (to Helen), and centres his story on the interactions between parents and children: Aphrodite and the Loves (86, 99–100); Hyacinthus (241) and Hermione, the deserted daughter of Helen (327–86).¹⁷

¹¹ Bloom (1997): xxii.

¹² Leigh (2006):238.

¹³ Chaudhuri (2014):2. For my approach to the metapoetic model, see the Introduction, section VI.

¹⁴ Silver Latin scholars experience their own anxieties of influence, of course...

¹⁵ Cf. Introduction, section II.

¹⁶ E.g. Triphiodorus 200, 415, 533–4, 389–90.

¹⁷ See Morales (2016).

Nonnus is the most overt Greek practitioner of filial poetics. The *Dionysiaca* is filled with multiform and multifarious births: Ampelus reborn from vine (*Dion.*12), baby Zagreus climbing to Zeus' throne (*Dion.*5.155–205), Achilles' grandfather contrasted anachronistically with his more famous grandson (*Dion.*22.354–90).¹⁸ The word νόθος, a key term in the poem, works as a tag for this generational waywardness, all set within the driving discourse of Dionysus' own competitive emulation of his father Zeus.¹⁹ In the second proem Nonnus glosses this filial metaphor,²⁰ dramatising in the most direct terms his relationship with his literary predecessor:

εἴμπνοον ἔγχος ἔχοντα καὶ ἀσπίδα πατρὸς Ὄμήρου,
μαρνάμενον Μορρῆι καὶ ἄφρονι Δηριαδῆι
σὺν Διὶ καὶ Βρομίῳ κεκορυθμένον... (*Dion.*25.265–7)²¹

I have argued in the Introduction that the stylistic and chronological diversity of imperial Greek epics makes alignment with silver Latin dubious and even misleading.²² In the case of generational poetics, the problems which I discussed there ought to urge particular caution. Whereas, as we have seen, Vergil's silver successors all wrote within a short time period of one another and of Vergil, and reworked directly the issues that the *Aeneid* dramatised, for these poets of Troy, Homer was a distant ancestor, a (great) grand-father, a monument and a mystery.²³ Given the contextual uncertainties surrounding many of these epics, an overt

¹⁸ I return to this scene in section III below.

¹⁹ This competition is crystallised during the visit to the court of King Staphylus, when after hearing stories of Zeus' mythological achievements, Dionysus' ‘ears bewitched, and he wished for a third and greater victory to rival Cronides’ (*Dion.*18.309–13).

²⁰ Cf. discussion of *Dion.*1.431–2 in Chapter Three.

²¹ Shorrock's reading of Nonnus–Homer/Dionysus–Zeus, (2001):152–6, demonstrates how strongly the links between silver Latin and imperial Greek poetics have been drawn in discussions of filiation.

²² Introduction, section II.

²³ Cf. Porter (2002). Vergil, of course, also acquired a form of monumentality in his imperial reception (cf. e.g. Rosati (2005) on how Statius ‘turns the *Aeneid* into a museum piece’). But the ‘deep antiquity’ of Homer, and his status the avatar of Greek education and culture, makes such conceptions of him operate on an altogether different scale.

politicisation of their family narratives is also far more difficult to assert: in many cases, we simply do not have the information to construct a ‘specific, created-for-purpose, political context.’ Finally, even based on the limited information available about these poets, the era in which they wrote was simply not characterised by the linear dynastic succession which preoccupied the post-Augustan Roman poets. The Greek empire in the opening five centuries C.E. was dominated instead by *shifting* modalities of power: new political centres,²⁴ oscillating leadership, contested *loci* of authority.²⁵ Given these fundamental differences, a silver Latin model for Greek filiation will only ever offer a weaker reading. To understand the continued – or revived –²⁶ relevance of filial poetics, these examples must be approached on their own terms.

The *Posthomerica* is a particularly productive starting point for this re-evaluation. The poem is replete with filial imagery. Heroic fathers killed in conflict are succeeded by heroic sons; younger warriors are described with elaborate genealogies; and gods argue in dramatic family stand-offs. The ‘Anxiety of Influence’ has seemed to be the overwhelmingly obvious model for characterising the poem as a whole: neatly, if drearily,²⁷ encapsulating Quintus’ relationship to Homer. ‘It hardly needs a Bloom to articulate Quintus’ literary vision’,²⁸ suggests Kneebone; and Schmitz asks whether this particular Oedipus at the crossroads ‘was particularly brave and

²⁴ The centrality of Greece was contested, or at least relativised, by Rome of course, but also Alexandria and (in Jewish and Christian traditions) Jerusalem, in the imagination at least.

²⁵ Greek culture was never centralised in the way that Roman was (i.e. there was no single ‘Greek capital’), and had less investment in narratives of empire and control. This fundamental difference was thus sharpened, rather than created, in the imperial phase of Greek history.

²⁶ It is noteworthy that, to judge from the surviving texts, filial meta-poetics does not seem to have preoccupied the writers of Hellenistic epic in the same way; despite the clear programmatic significance of themes like youth and childhood in the *Aetia*’s symbolic system (for which see discussion in Chapter Three). For an anti-Bloomian reading of Hellenistic epic and Homer, see Hutchinson (1988) and Cameron (1995).

²⁷ Qua Leigh (2006):238.

²⁸ Kneebone (2007):289

clever or particularly stupid and ingenuous to pick this fight against an adversary so much greater than himself.²⁹

The main section of this chapter will reconsider this position. The generational poetics of the *Posthomerica*, I shall argue, rejects rather than affirms the Bloomian correlation between ‘strong’ creative poets and filial anxiety.³⁰ In terms of the contextual narrative to explain this change, my reading will also make clear the rewards of approaching these imperial Greek works individually, removed from the misprision³¹ of silver Latin conclusions. We have seen how the *Posthomerica* is a politically evasive text.³² And yet the trope of filiation which it inherits and employs is an inherently politicised symbol. Quintus, I shall suggest, is fully attuned to this potential: he harnesses the conventional associations between familial, political and poetic succession and reworks them to make sense for his contemporary space.

I have discussed in Chapter One how certain aspects of Greek culture in the third century were characterised by an interest in ‘doubleness’: a mimetic environment which aimed not to compete with the figures of its literary-historical past, but to revivify them via the most intense forms of imitation. This removal of linearity, we may now consider, finds a parallel on the political stage. In this so-called ‘era of crisis’, no fewer than 25 different emperors ruled between 235 and 284 C.E.; a situation characterised by ‘a bewildering list of pretenders, usurpers and short-lived emperors; break-away kingdoms in both the west and the east; porous and threatened frontiers; and widely different regional histories and economies.’³³ A far cry from direct, dynastic succession, the relationship between participants in this era was much

²⁹ Schmitz (2007):65.

³⁰ For the methodology which will be used to construct this argument, see the Introduction to this chapter.

³¹ To borrow a Bloomian term: (1997) *passim*.

³² See the Introduction, section IV.

³³ Clarke (2012). The sense of diversity that these emperors represent in terms of their relationships to their predecessors can be seen from an overview of the different ‘types’ of emperor as they are commonly categorised: Barrack, Gallic, Illyrian, Britannic. Scholarship on the third century crisis is vast, and this summary does not seek to resurvey it. Among the most lucid recent synoptic accounts are those of Hekster (2008) and Ando (2012), as discussed in the Introduction, section V.

messier and more overlapping. In both a cultural and a political sense, paradigms of linear succession do not fit well with the Greek third century. The rejection of such paradigms in the *Posthomerica* therefore provides another route through which to perceive the poem's engagement with the concerns of this time.³⁴

The *Homeridai*, in fact, already offer a model for this rejection. Descendants of Homer who continue the real Homeric song, in competition not with their founding source but with one another, theirs is filiation based on impersonation, in which succession becomes possible without the attendant process of supersession. By exploring such a possibility on a vast scale, Quintus' approach to filiation rewrites this literary imagery for his own mimetic agenda; reconciling ideas about succession with claims to embody Homer, and offering a poetic image of his expanded, pluralistic imperial environment.

II. EPIC ECOLOGY: QUINTUS' SUCCESSIONAL SPACE

Quintan Troy is a sterile space, filled with geriatric decay and impotence. Old men take up narrative room but are refused narrative action,³⁵ and the reverse side of the generational spectrum is eerily empty. In contrast to the fecundity of many other imperial Greek mythological epics, no one is born in Quintus' poem, and young children only ever appear at the moment of their deaths.³⁶ This stagnation creates a youthful void, ostensibly ready to be

³⁴ Further discussion in section II of this chapter.

³⁵ Quintus, like Triphiodorus, frequently focuses on aged characters, who get involved in martial action even less than Homer's elderly generation at Troy. These characters are prone to discussing their limitations (particularly Nestor, who decries his enforced passivity on three occasions: Q.S.2.301–18; 4.118–26; 12.260–73) and suffer and die throughout the course of the narrative: Illioneus at the hands of Diomedes (13.181–205) and Priam by Neoptolemus (Q.S.13.213–50). For further observations on the older characters in the poem, see Boyten (2010):ch. 3.

³⁶ Notably Laocoön's sons (12.444–99); the Trojan infants killed during the sack (13.123–30; 443–56), and Astyanax hurled from the tower (13.251–66), without any accompanying living role akin to the touching exchange of *I.I.6.466–82*. Boyten (2010):166–70 focuses on the pathos of these infant deaths, but overemphasises the role played by young children in the poem as a whole. The only other passages featuring young children are Q.S.9.115–

filled. Throughout the course of the poem, a series of new heroic contenders arrive to fill the gap left by Hector and Achilles; to lift the poem's sagging demographic and reinvigorate heroic life. These heroes come already fully formed. They are not born in the war, nor do they grow up in Troy, but are superimposed ready-made onto the narrative. The symbolism of this type of character lies close to the surface. I have argued that in the delayed proem Quintus aligns himself with a Homeric 'middle age', presenting himself as a poet who is neither young and immature or old and 'over-the-hill.'³⁷ In this portrait of young but developed heroes we may thus see the poet's own musings on the correct route to successful literary arrival.

The striking feature of all of these newcomers, however, is their substitutability: their *lack* of centrality to the plot. The Trojan allies Penthesilea, Memnon and Eurypylus are all marked by transience. Their doomed fates are underscored as soon as they come to Troy, and they die soon after their arrival. The new participants on the winning side, Neoptolemus and Philoctetes, are also subjected to forms of narrative displacement. Their summoning, arrivals and *aristeiai* occur sequentially to one another – they have to share the narrative space –³⁸ and neither new victor takes on *the* central role in the sack.³⁹

This sense of heroic impermanence is underscored by the poem's structure. Each book is centred around a different character or event, with minor themes interwoven accordingly.⁴⁰ As the chronological sequence of the story progresses, it becomes clear that there is no single character unifying the whole construction of this epic plot. This structure has been frequently cited as 'episodic', and a 'non-Homeric' feature of the poem. Certainly, the contrast with the plots of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, which concentrate on a central section of the Trojan story⁴¹ and

44 and the escape of Ascanius (Q.S.13.300–32). In general, children's presence in the *Posthomerica* is a prelude to their absence.

³⁷ See Chapter Three.

³⁸ Neoptolemus in Q.S.7–8; Philoctetes in Q.S.9–10.

³⁹ Calchas' prophecy about Philoctetes' pivotal importance to the sack (Q.S.7.323–32) is not reflected by any major role in the event itself.

⁴⁰ I return to the structure of the poem from a different perspective in Chapter Six.

⁴¹ Cf. Chapter Four.

are shaped around the actions of a central hero,⁴² is stark. Nor is the *Posthomerica* akin to post-Vergilian Latin epic, where the theme of heroic substitution is also extensively explored.⁴³ In those epics, even if character supremacy is challenged, or switched (Pompey versus Caesar, Hannibal versus Scipio) the fight *for* supremacy still unifies the plots, which remain organised around the notion of heroic centrality, however problematised it becomes.

The structure of Quintus' poem, by contrast, has traditionally been catalogued amongst its many failings as an epic: in the same way that Aristotle criticised the cyclic poems for their piecemeal plot arrangements (*Poet.* 1459a–b), the *Posthomerica* has been accused of ploddingly narrating one event, time and hero after another.⁴⁴ In the redemptive turn that characterises recent scholarship on the poem,⁴⁵ various moves have subsequently been made to counter this criticism. Scholars have proposed concentric plot-structure designs,⁴⁶ or promoted certain heroes to the dominant position in the narrative,⁴⁷ thus making the poem conform more closely to the (Homeric) epic norm. It should be considered instead that the difficulty in selecting a central figure for the poem is significant. Taken seriously, the absence of an overarching, unifying character can be understood as a discourse *on* heroic substitutability, in its most insistent form.

The process of centralisation in epic (of a segment of a story, or a hero in a plot), after all, is always geared towards producing certain effects. In the case of the Homeric poems, the focus on one part of the whole has been connected as far back as Aristotle to notions of economy and amplitude.⁴⁸ In the *Iliad* in particular, the technique of exploring large-scale issues in a tight

⁴² The concentration on a central hero is not the same as structuring an epic around one character's life story, which Aristotle warns against (*Poetics* 1451a).

⁴³ See particularly Hardie (1993):37.

⁴⁴ See James (2004):239–65 and Maciver (2012b):20–1 on this negative reception.

⁴⁵ On which see the Introduction and Chapter Two.

⁴⁶ E.g. those of Maciver (2012b):20–4.

⁴⁷ E.g. James (2004):xxx. Further discussion in section IV of this chapter.

⁴⁸ See especially Lowe (2000).

narrative space allows its poetics of ‘aestheticised, concentrated power’ to take shape.⁴⁹ It remains therefore to find a means of conceptualising Quintus’ alternative, un-centralised structure, and the effects that it in turn can produce.

Ideas about relationality may provide this means. Recent theories of distributed agency, prevalent in fields as wide-ranging as art criticism,⁵⁰ social anthropology⁵¹ and object-orientated ontology, take as their starting point the move away from ‘the centre’ towards a more holistic view of interactions between humans, objects or spaces. To take as an example one recent and particularly bold contribution, Kohn’s account of a ‘posthuman ecology of living things’ in the Ecuadorian Amazon, entitled *How Forests Think*, aims not to do away with the human but to open it up, by focusing on the relationships between human and non-human forms as communicators and representors of the world.⁵² To comprehend these relationships, he argues, linear thinking may no longer be adequate.

These sorts of ideas are by no means confined to post-modern theory. In the early centuries C.E. of the Roman empire – a world which, as we have seen, was by the third century characterised by the substitutability of its own leading figures – many commentators reveal an acute interest in the alternative options available to a centralised conception of the world. Pausanias, for example,⁵³ when discussing the building programme of Hadrian, subtly engages with the fact that the emperor himself was not singularly responsible for all of the monuments attributed to him. In his account of the Temple of Olympian Zeus (1.18.6–9), as Whitmarsh has productively explored, he gestures towards the multiple chronological strata underlying the

⁴⁹ For this phrasing, see Quint (1993):3–4.

⁵⁰ Gell (1998) remains seminal, and has stimulated much productive counter-criticism (e.g. Layton (2003) with further references).

⁵¹ Two areas which have made particular advances in this area are actor-network theory (pioneered by Latour (2005)) and posthumanism, for an overview of which see Braidotti (2013):ch.1.

⁵² Kohn (2013). He terms this system an ‘anthropology beyond the human.’

⁵³ The presence of these ideas in Pausanias’ writings suggests that relationality has important resonances in discussions which pre-date the ‘third century crisis’, and which are not unrelated to those which emerge during it.

present-tense building, and thereby evokes the imperial project⁵⁴ ‘to distinguish prior and present time using spatial demarcation, merging temporality and space into a single symbolic expression.’⁵⁵ In the deceptively simple remark that Hadrian ‘dedicated’ (ἀνέθηκε) the Temple, Pausanias also both masks and draws attention to the whole question of where the agency lies in the construction of imperial architecture: who orders the buildings, who pays for them, the crude mechanics of supply, craft and design.⁵⁶ In the third century more specifically, the examples of reanimation which I have elsewhere discussed can also be understood as displaying an interest in relationality. Sophistic ethopoetics, Homeric performances and the ‘close encounters’ in Philostratus and Lucian all put forward the possibility of a more substitutable relationship between figures from different temporal layers, in which a new performer, writer or text could stand in for an old one, operating in a continuum which allows room for both.

Much can be brought to bear on Quintus’ heroic structure by considering it as a meditation on these ideas. For if epic’s conventional plot is articulated through one central man, and if through this ‘one-manthropocentrism’ the expectations of linear succession arise (the hero departs, and must return, or be removed, or be replaced), then the *Posthomerica*’s structure is different precisely because it does not fit *this mould*.⁵⁷ Whilst still amply anthropocentric, Quintan Troy is a post-*one*-human environment. By constructing this environment, a forceful obfuscation of his genre’s conventional structure, Quintus offers a more capacious way to think about epic’s

⁵⁴ Institutionalised by Hadrian by his arch, which Pausanias does not mention: a telling omission, as Whitmarsh (2015):53 remarks.

⁵⁵ Whitmarsh (2015):53.

⁵⁶ Mitchell (1987), discussed by Whitmarsh (2015):53–4.

⁵⁷ This is not to whitewash the other significant non-conformers to this mould: not only examples like the non-Aristotelian cyclic epic, but also texts such as Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, which is built on a pattern of oscillating, colliding episodes and characters, and, as Hardie notes, (1993):94, ‘largely avoids putting the theme of generational continuity at [its] centre.’ I am approaching Quintus’ structure in terms of the Aristotelian plot model because it is Homeric epic, the archetype of this model, that the *Posthomerica* most explicitly engages.

human relationships. There is no longer a straightforward answer to the question of who succeeds from whom, and how.

In this way, the symbolism of the heroic successors which I suggested lies close to the surface can also be adjusted and expanded. As representations and representors⁵⁸ of the possible routes of succession, the poem's multiple heroic newcomers enact Quintus' *de-centralisation* of the singular poetic self, and thus symbolise the plurality of ways in which the literary past can be conjoined with its later inheritors.

III. ANTAGONISING ANTAGONISM

The opening books present a number of portraits of rivalrous succession. Quintus frequently draws attention to the metaphorical potential of these relationships, exploring their themes of anxiety and competition in a literary as well as literal sense. But these examples are not offered without irony, and are increasingly identified with an older, out-dated set of literary conventions; better suited to the type of epic space from which Quintus' decentralised vision seeks to move away.

OPENING CONTENDERS: PENTHESILEA, ACHILLES, AJAX

Penthesilea is the first of these failed successors. Frequently characterised by her genealogy, she is described multiple times as the daughter of Ares.⁵⁹ During her first encounter with Achilles and Ajax, she boasts about this divine lineage (Q.S.1.560–2). Their response is

⁵⁸ Kohn's focus on representation – which he terms 'pansemiotics' – will also inform my discussion. I shall examine how these heroes explain, in direct character speech, the narratives of succession in which they participate.

⁵⁹ Q.S.1.206; 1.318; 1.461 and the examples in character speech discussed above.

derisive: *οἱ δὲ ἐγέλασσαν* (563).⁶⁰ Achilles responds with his own ancestral self-promotion, which focuses on Zeus:

οἱ μέγα φέρτατοι εἰμεν ἐπιχθονίων ἡρώων·
ἐκ γὰρ δὴ Κρονίωνος ἐριγδούποιο γενέθλης
εύχόμεθ' ἐκγεγάμεν.... (Q.S.1.577–9)

ούδε γὰρ οὐδ' αὐτός σε πατήρ ἔτι ρύσεται" Ἀρης
έξ ἐμέθεν... (Q.S.1.585–6)

Shortly before this exchange, Ajax rouses Achilles into action using the same sort of rhetoric: οὐ γὰρ ἔοικε Διὸς μεγάλοιο γεγῶτας/αἰσχύνειν πατέρων ιερὸν γένος, (1.502–3). However, as the heroes charge into battle, the narrative complicates this positive relationship to Zeus:

Αργεῖοι δ' ἔχάρησαν, ἐπεὶ ᾧδον ἄνδρε κραταὶώ
εἰδομένω παίδεσσιν Ἀλωῆος μεγάλοιο,
οἵ ποτ' ἐπ' εὔρὺν"Ολυμπὸν ἔφαν θέμεν οὕρεα μακρά
Οσσαν <τ> αἴπεινήν καὶ Πήλιον ὑψικάρηνον,
ὅππως δὴ μεμαῶτε καὶ οὐρανὸν εἰσαφίκωνται·
τοῖοι ἄρ' ἀντέστησαν ἀταρτηροῦ πολέμοιο
Αἰακίδαι, μέγα χάρμα λιλαιομένοισιν Ἀχαιοῖς,
ἄμφω ἐπειγόμενοι δηίων ἀπὸ λαὸν ὀλέσσαι.
πολλοὺς δ' ἐγχείησιν ἀμαιμακέτησι δάμασσαν·
ώς δ' ὅτε πίονα μῆλα βοοδμητῆρε λέοντε
εύροντ' ἐν ξυλόχοισι φίλων ἀπάνευθε νομήων
πανσυδίῃ κτείνωσιν, ἄχρις μέλαν αἷμα πιόντες

⁶⁰ Way's addition of a verse which would make Penthesilea laugh first ((1913) ad.1.563-4: ἦ, μέγα καγχαλώσα κατὰ φρένας) is unconvincing and unnecessary. Hence the text retained by Vian (1963):34.

σπλάγχνων ἐμπλήσωνται ἐὴν πολυχανδέα νηδύν· (Q.S.1.515–27)

Achilles' ambivalent kinship to Zeus has a lengthy mythico-literary tradition. Spurred by the prophecy that Thetis would bear a son greater than his father, Zeus' arrangement of her marriage to Peleus sought to prevent this threat to his power. Despite their consequently distant relationship (great-great grandfather and grandson), Achilles' connection to Zeus became a central part of his literary identity, as the threat-and-aversion narrative was often replaced by an emphasis on Zeus' unfulfilled *intention* to engender a son by Thetis, and how the hero was thus 'almost' parented by this most powerful father. For Statius' young Achilles, for instance, the self-description as *genitum...paene Iovi* (*Ach.*1.650–1) is both a boast and a wistful glance at the family tree that could have been.

Quintus' scene reflects Achilles' desire to emphasise his biological closeness to Zeus. However, it also reasserts the anxiety which led to their more distant relationship. In comparing him and Ajax to παῖδες Ἀλωῆος (516) Quintus aligns them with the monsters who really did threaten to debase Zeus' authority.⁶¹ Odysseus' account of the gigantomachy in the *Odyssey* describes Otus and Ephialtes wandering despondently in the underworld, having been slain by Apollo for their botched attempt to usurp the gods (*Od.*11.305–20). I have argued that Quintus makes close use of this passage in his in-proem.⁶² It is also echoed in this scene: the use of dual (cf. ἀλλ' ὅλεσεν Διὸς υἱός, ὃν ἡύκομος τέκε Λητώ,/ἀμφοτέρω, *Od.*11.318–9); the aorist infinitive θέμεν (517; as per *Od.*11.315: "Οσσαν ἐπ' Οὐλύμπῳ μέμασαν θέμεν"); and the language of boasting (cf. οἵ ῥα καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἀπειλήτην ἐν Ὄλύμπῳ/φυλόπιδα στήσειν πολυάικος πολέμοιο, *Od.*11.313–4) all connect Achilles and Ajax with this particular gigantomachic duo. The readers' pre-stored mythic knowledge confirms that both Achilles and Ajax soon meet their ends in this section of the Trojan story: like the Odyssean giants, they will be destroyed by their ego and arrogance. Quintus stresses this connection: the sheep in the

⁶¹ Gigantomachic comparisons recur elsewhere in the epic, at Q.S.5.641–9; 14.582–5, both involving the named giant Enceladus.

⁶² See Chapter Three.

simile of 524–7 foreshadow Ajax’ frenzied stabbing of the flock before his suicide (Q.S.5.433–50).

We are thus encouraged to read Achilles’ boasts to Penthesilea in light of this darker para-narrative of attempted takeover. His own use of a lion simile (1.587–8) now evokes for the reader, via 1.524, the ambivalent threat that he and Ajax posed as giants. And his use of Zeus’ patronymic Κρονίων (578) provides a passing reminder of Zeus’ own parricidal history: this magnificent ancestor posed and actually carried out the threat to his father which, in the gigantomachic comparison, Achilles threatened to represent to him.

In this reminder of the latent danger lurking behind claims of filial admiration, Quintus activates the theme of poetic ambition. I have argued that in the in-proem Quintus uses topographical features as metaphors for poetic style: the hill neither too high nor too low, the river Hermus, and the spacious garden of liberty all represent the ‘grand style’ that Callimachus claimed to be avoiding.⁶³ In these earlier scenes he uses the same web of associations.⁶⁴ The οὐρεα μακρά (517) which the giants attempted to scale suggests the connection between height and literary arrogance.⁶⁵ ὑψικάρηνον (518) is a rare word found in Callimachus meaning high-topped or lofty,⁶⁶ and provides a further image of largeness which can be equated with poetic size. Whilst the in-proem strived to accommodate these poetic heights, the negative portrayal of such grandeur here may seem to signal on the contrary a Bloomian moment of anxiety – Quintus stepping away from the dangers of ‘picking a fight with an adversary so much greater than himself.’⁶⁷ However the way in which this ambitious language is shown to be both applicable and futile *to both sides*, as Achilles and Ajax mock Penthesilea unaware of their

⁶³ See Chapter Three.

⁶⁴ The passage has close lexical connections with the in-proem. As well as the shared allusions to the Odyssean underworld scene, the words μῆλα (1.524) and πολυχανδέα (1.527) in this passage also offer proleptic links to the proem (the words occur respectively in 12.308 and 310), where the terms play central symbolic roles.

⁶⁵ Cf. οὐρεῖ οὔτε λίνη χθαμαλῷ οὕθ’ ὑψόθι πολλῷ (Q.S.12.313).

⁶⁶ Cf. LSJ s.v. ὑψικάρηνος.

⁶⁷ Cf. Schmitz (2007):65.

own equally precarious filial ambitions, suggests that this portrait of competitiveness is contemplated by Quintus at a critical distance. Activated but not venerated, confined to the realm of mythological giants and similes, anxiety is only the start, not the end, of the poet's story.

MEMNON AND ACHILLES: FLYTING AGAINST FILIATION

Memnon, Penthesilea's heroic substitute, engages in his own generational flying match with Achilles (Q.S.2.411–51). As I have argued in Chapter Four, this stand-off becomes a battle of literary quotation, as the contenders scour the *Iliad* for material to affirm their superiority. But the scene also offers an example of successionist poetics; as the tropes of memory and filiation work together to produce the symbolism of the passage.

The gendered aspect of this *agon* is immediately striking. Although patronymics frame the speech-introduction formulae (*μόλε σχεδὸν Αἰακίδαο*, 389; *πάϊς Αἰακίδαο*, 430), its content, as we have seen, is concerned with the female side of the family: Dawn versus Thetis. Both speeches contain many maternal tags, and the word 'mother' is repeated like a mantra (*μητρός*, 416; *μητέρα δῖαν*, 421; *μητέρ'* ἐμήν 444). In contrast to the emphasis on Zeus in Book One, here Achilles passes over this Olympian ancestor quickly (2.434),⁶⁸ in order to assert instead his mother's side, and he exemplifies her prowess not with exempla of military might, but by recounting her pacifying achievements.

This 'mother-off' destabilises traditional epic battle rhetoric, which usually focuses on the father,⁶⁹ and adds another note of alternativism to Quintus' building portrayal of filiation. The mother's role in successionist poetics has been consistently undervalued: Bloom's parricidal model of the *Wunderkind* completely ignores the female. In this *agon*, Quintus does not. In the

⁶⁸ A wise move, given that Memnon too can claim descent from Zeus (c.f. Q.S.2.524). Comparing and contrasting their mothers is a better way of 'splitting hairs' in this contest.

⁶⁹ As is found, for instance, in the flying match with Penthesilea discussed above.

epic without one man, an otherwise conventional passage of ancestral flaunting eschews the normal paradigms of masculinity, and allows influence to be configured in a different way.⁷⁰

Achilles' closing remarks make explicit the self-consciously different nature of this generational conflict:

ἀλλὰ τί νηπιάχοισιν ἔοικότες ἀφραδέεσσιν
ἔσταμεν ἡμετέρων μυθεύμενοι ἔργα τοκήων
ἡδ' αὐτῶν; ἐγγὺς καὶ Ἀρης, ἐγγὺς <δὲ> καὶ ἀλκή. (Q.S.2.449–51)

Achilles reflexively characterises the act of epic flying in which he is participating. The image of standing around and talking about one's genealogies particularly evokes the famous Iliadic *tête-à-tête* between Glaucus and Diomedes. Beyond the explicit echo of the Lycurgus story (Q.S.2.448–9) Achilles' scornful *ἔσταμεν* is also suggestive of the pause created in Homer's narrative as the two warriors incongruously stop to talk in middle of a raging battle (*Il.6.119–20*). The repeated *ἐγγὺς* also rewrites the *σχεδὸν ἥσαν* of *Il.6.121* – standing next to one another is pointless when battle itself is near.

This self-deprecation, however, can also function as a comment on literary *agones*: the poetic prattling on about inheritance. The explicit citation of literary predecessors became increasingly popular in post-Alexandrian epic: a genre that was famously reluctant to name began to confront its poetic heritage openly and directly. Whilst this naming of poets is particularly associated with Late Antique Latin hexameters,⁷¹ as early as the first century B.C.E. Statius also names his political and poetical models in the epilogue to the *Thebaid* (12.810–19), and on the Greek side, Nonnus four centuries later catalogues his plethora of

⁷⁰ Colluthus' emphasis on the relationship between Hermione and Helen offers another example of maternal successionist poetics. This aspect of imperial Greek epic would benefit from further detailed study.

⁷¹ For example, in the preface to his *Iohannis* (7–16), Corippus puts himself into the tradition of epic poets by alluding to Homer covertly (via Smyrna, as Quintus does) but also by naming Vergil directly. Juvencus also compares his epic to those of Homer and Vergil (Iuvenc.1–27). Venantius Fortunatus lists his poetic models (including Sedulius, Prudentius and Iuvencus) in *Mart.1.14–25*.

sources in the second proem, where he references Homer and Pindar (*Dion.25.21*), the lyric poet who himself loved to name.⁷² This explicitness has no place in Quintus' poetics. Committed to his Homeric conceit, he opts instead, as we continue to see, for more covert ways of charting his literary inheritance. Achilles' speech acknowledges this deviation. First indulging and then dismissing a direct citation of influence, it aims to move past the trend for such overt statements of debt.

EURYPYLUS: GRANDPATERNAL POETICS

In the figure of Eurypylus, the final failed heroic candidate on the Trojan side, Quintus focuses on another problematic aspect of linear generational succession: the temporal distance involved in engaging with a predecessor from the distant literary past. The son of Telephus and grandson of Heracles, Eurypylus is introduced via a tangled web of family connections:

τὸν δὲ Πάρις δείδεκτο, τίεν δέ μιν Ἐκτορι ἵσον·
τοῦ γὰρ ἀνεψιὸς ἔσκεν, ἵης τ' ἐτέτυκτο γενέθλης·
τὸν γὰρ δὴ τέκε δῖα κασιγνήτη Πριάμοιο (135)
Ἄστυόχη κρατερῆσιν ὑπ' ἀγκοίνησι μιγεῖσα
Τηλέφου, ὃν ῥά καὶ αὐτὸν ἀταρβέι Ήρακλῆι
λάθρη ἔοιο τοκῆος ἐϋπλόκαμος τέκεν Αὔγη·
καὶ μιν τυτθὸν ἔόντα καὶ ἰσχανόωντα γάλακτος
Θρέψε θοή ποτε κεμμάς, ἐῷ δ' ἵσα φίλατο νεβρῷ (140)
μαζὸν ὑποσχομένη βουλῇ Διός· οὐ γὰρ ἐώκει
ἐκγονον Ἁρακλῆος ὥιζυρῶς ἀπολέσθαι. (Q.S.6.133–42)

Paris later draws upon the pride in this illustrious family tree to motivate Eurypylus into battle (Q.S.6.298–307). However, this introduction also makes clear the differences between the generations: particularly, between Eurypylus' father and his even more mighty grandfather.

72 Cf. Chapter Three.

Telephus' birth is recounted with heavy proleptic irony: he was saved as a baby because it was not fitting that Heracles' offspring should die a miserable death, which is exactly what *does* happen to Eurypylus soon.⁷³ The Trojans, unaware of these future failings as an ἔκγονος Ἡρακλῆος, then continue to obsess over Eurypylus' genealogical prowess; but to them, it is his connection to his grandfather that counts. Eurypylus' shield is covered in the feats of Heracles (Q.S.6.191–293); the ekphrastic images emphasise his superlative strength and fearlessness even as a baby (202–3), and the ease with which he defeated seemingly indefatigable enemies (265). After seeing Eurypylus in this armour, Paris says nothing of Telephus, and instead stresses the parallels with Heracles. Like an interpreter of a painting, he looks at the images on the shield and meticulously matches them with the qualities of its new bearer:

Ἄλλὰ σύ, πρὸς μεγάλοιο καὶ ὄβριμου Ἡρακλῆος
τῷ μέγεθός τε βίην τε καὶ ἀγλαὸν εἴδος ἔστικας,
κείνου μνωόμενος φρονέων τ' ἀντάξια ἔργα. (Q.S.6.302–4)

If the welcoming sequence implicitly focused on the differences in fortune between father and son, these scenes aim to create a more positive picture of Eurypylus by moving one step further back in the generations. Although his success in the war is short-lived, it is in his ability to echo his grandfather, whose image and memory have already entered into the mythological, ekphrastic tradition, and not his more recent relation, that Eurypylus achieves his most tangible if temporary success.

The evocation of distant lineage is a commonplace in the epic tradition. Just as the Homeric Achilles is frequently connected to Zeus, so too do Vergil and his successors lace their heroes' backstories with far-stretching genealogies.⁷⁴ But this sense of generational retrospect received

⁷³ The feats of Eurypylus at Troy were narrated in the *Little Iliad*, and his death at the hands of Neoptolemus is relayed by Odysseus at *Od.11.517–21*. The loaded βουλῇ Διός (Q.S.6.141) makes clear the inevitability of this outcome.

⁷⁴ Even the isolated figure of Lucan's Caesar, for example, is given a debased version of this lineage. His visit to Troy is presented as a dark homage to his ancestral gods, a distant inheritance for him to trample over.

sharpened emphasis in the later Greek poetry which returned directly to the mythological deep past. Nonnus again provides a stark demonstration. Halfway through the Indian campaign, he introduces Aeacus, the Iliadic grandfather *par excellence*, imagined as serving as a solider in Dionysus' army. As he describes his fight with the Scamander, a competitive rehearsal of Achilles' later performance in the *Iliad*, Nonnus gives a burst of topsy-turvy anachronism:

οῖα προθεσπίζων ποταμοῦ περὶ χεῦμα Καμάνδρου
φύλοπιν ἡμιτέλεστον ἐπεσσομένην Ἀχιλῆι·
καὶ μόθον υἱωνοῖο μόθος μαντεύσατο πάππου. (*Dion.* 22.387–9)

In his own re-staging of Troy, Quintus more obliquely centralises this theme of grandpaternity. We have seen how the narrative space of the *Posthomerica* is filled with elderly characters, and the poem's language also often favours the older generation. In terms of epithets – a key marker, I have argued, of Quintus' creative reconstruction of the Homeric text –⁷⁵ the grand-patronymic Αἰακίδης is used thirty-eight times,⁷⁶ more than it occurs in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* combined.⁷⁷

This focus on the age gap has obvious relevance to these epics, which evoke Homer closely in subject and style,⁷⁸ but write at such a distance in literary chronology. Grandpaternity helps to capture the tension between closeness and remoteness inherent to this Homeric re-engagement. But if Nonnus' episode revels in this tension, Quintus offers a more critical account of its effects. As a temporary heroic success-case, Eurypylus demonstrates the benefits of stretching further back for one's emulative material. But his ultimate failure also hints at the limitations of this kind of grasping. By showing how glibly Paris and the Trojans ignore the crucial

⁷⁵ See Chapter Two.

⁷⁶ Q.S.1.4, 392, 496, 508, 520–1, 825; 2.99, 388–9, 409, 430; 3.16, 34, 66, 119, 212, 244, 418, 461, 522–3, 602, 697, 701, 743; 4.476, 595; 5.5, 225, 423; 7.403, 727, 8.37; 9.236–7.

⁷⁷ It occurs twenty-six times in total in Homer, and only twice in the *Odyssey*, both in the underworld scene (*Od.* 11.471 and 11.538), when Achilles is already dead.

⁷⁸ On Nonnus' style, see discussion and references in Chapter Two.

differences between older and younger generations,⁷⁹ Quintus lays bare the sense of distance that such linear ancestral approximations are not able to overcome. It no longer suffices simply to reach for the same famous models again and again. If his epic is to engage with Homer directly *and* successfully, Quintus' own ἀντάξια ἔργα need to find a way to eschew the divide between himself and his model more permanently: to bridge, not just display, the poetic generation gap.

Taking their place within the episodic environment of the *Posthomerica*, these contenders provide three different ways of modelling linear succession. As figures standing for Quintus' poetic response, they thus offer options that he could have taken to achieve his takeover of Homer: competitiveness, antagonism and overtly expressing the desire to emulate or to rebel. In his *critical* exploration of these characters, however, Quintus shows that his epic will not be limited to these approaches: adversarial succession becomes the route that his poem does not take. As we shall see, the narrative now moves away from these violent models and suggests what else can be put forward in their place.

IV. ALTERNATIVE RELATIONS: SUCCESSION THROUGH IMPERSONATION

Neoptolemus plays a crucial role in this alternative vision of succession. For those commentators who wish to see a more unified, traditional plot structure in the *Posthomerica*, Achilles' son is often hailed as the epic's 'main character': its late but central hero, whose arrival finally breaks the heroic stagnation and provides a successful replacement for Achilles. 'Thus the second half of the poem, despite the episodic nature of its parts, is unified by a central character, in a similar way to the original Homeric poems.'⁸⁰ Neoptolemus has also been centrally identified with the poet figure Quintus, his takeover from Achilles read as a

⁷⁹ Differences suggested by the proleptic hints at Eurypylus' downfall in Q.S.6.131–42.

⁸⁰ Maciver (2012b):21.

consummation of the epic's Bloomian poetics, as Quintus too aims to take the place of his literary forebear, diverging from him and creating himself anew.⁸¹ An identification between character and poet is indeed suggested from Neoptolemus' earliest appearances. The description of him at Skyros as ἔτι παιδνός, ἔτι ἄχνοος (Q.S.7.358) associates him with the age poetics troped by Quintus in the proem, with the repeated ἔτι perhaps another pre-echo of that passage (cf. πρίν μοι ἔτι ἀμφὶ παρειὰ κατασκίδνασθαι ἰουλον, Q.S.12.309). We may thus see in this young hero an image of Quintus the Homeric poet, naïve and beardless when he first received his inspiration, now growing up into post-Iliadic maturity.

As an image of Quintan poetics, however, Achilles' son cuts a more complex emblematic figure if he is not promoted to 'the' dominant character in the epic,⁸² centralised at the expense of the other heroes, but rather if he is considered symbiotically alongside them. Read as the latest in the poem's relentless series of comers-next, his symbolic significance lies not in his singularity, but in his relationship to the other models of succession offered in the preceding books.

The most distinctive feature of Neoptolemus as such a successor is his connection to Achilles. Despite the fact that they never meet, Neoptolemus' relationship to his father is the most dominant aspect of his character. He is called the son of Achilles sixty-one times, and is frequently compared with, mistaken for or identified as him. Hera swiftly substitutes him at the moment of Achilles' death (Q.S.3.118–22); Achilles' famous horses are compelled to wait for his arrival, static and motionless until he releases them (3.743–65); and in Skyros, Odysseus and Diomedes are immediately struck by his likeness to his father's image (7.176–7). This persistent comparison might be presumed to foster a sense of competition – the young newcomer aims to better the one whose footsteps he follows so closely. However, when Neoptolemus arrives at Troy, entering the stagnant space and confronting the ghost of his

⁸¹ Cf. Kneebone (2007); Boyten (2010).

⁸² I have argued in section II of this chapter that the *Posthomerica* lacks any such unifying figure at all.

father's legacy, any assumed notions of competitiveness are displaced. His similarity to Achilles instead increases in intensity, to become a form of *embodiment*.

Neoptolemus' heroic succession is profoundly rooted in imitation: he does not aim to break away from his heroic or paternal inheritance, but his newness is achieved precisely by *repetition*. The depiction of Neoptolemus slips knowingly throughout the poem between two ontological states: that of being closely identified with Achilles and being the actual incarnation of him. This slippage, we shall see, maps closely on to Quintus' own techniques of poetic impersonation, and so it is rather in this respect that Neoptolemus should be identified with the poet's voice. The question of where to locate the difference between 'being like' and 'being' is actively interrogated through Neoptolemus:⁸³ he emerges as a figure through which Quintus explores the potential fuzziness between the two positions, so important to a work which claims to be both Homeric and non-Homeric in its essence.

ARMOUR AND THE MIMETIC DOUBLE

Once Neoptolemus lands in Troy, he puts on his father's famous arms (Q.S.7.435–51). As he does so, he seems to become a version of Achilles. When he lifts the spear that only Achilles could lift, we see 'a sword-in-the-stone type moment of pre-ordained potential fulfilled.'⁸⁴ This likeness appears wholly convincing: as he enters battle, the Trojans freeze with terror, assuming that they are seeing Achilles himself (Q.S.7.526–41). Arming, however, is an inherently duplicitous act, as much a vehicle for concealment as for identification, with a long literary history of enshrining difficult questions of identity. In this sequence Quintus alludes to this potential for falseness. The entire scene has echoes of the Iliadic Patroclus, who also dressed in Achilles' arms to confront the Trojans, and confounded them in terms similar to

⁸³ In this interrogation, the following section will argue, Quintus draws on the sorts of contemporary ideas about mimetic reanimation outlined in Chapter One, in contrast to the emphasis on distant mythology in the earlier failed successors.

⁸⁴ Maciver (2012b):182.

Neoptolemus here (*Il.*16.278–83). Patroclus of course is famously and fatally *not* Achilles, and his dress-up game directly leads to his death. Quintus evokes these darker connotations of arming in order to subvert them. He presents Neoptolemus as the antidote to Patroclus’ false mimetic ambitions – one who *is* successful in his attempts at Achillean imitation, able to harness the transformative power of arming to greater and more lasting effect.

The details of the scene make clear how Neoptolemus reverses this failure:

πολλὰ δ' ἄρ' ἐξημοιβὰ παρ' αυτόθι τεύχεα κεῖτο,
ἡμὲν Ὄδυσσος πυκιμήδεος ἡδὲ καὶ ἄλλων
ἀντιθέων ἑτάρων, ὅπόσα κταμένων ἀφέλοντο.
ἔνθ' ἐσθλὸς μὲν ἔδυ καλὰ τεύχεα, τοὶ δὲ χέρεια (440)

δῦσαν ὅσοις ἀλαπαδνὸν ὑπὸ κραδίη πέλεν ἥτορ·
αὐτὰρ Ὄδυσσεὺς δύσαθ' <ἄ> οἱ Ίθάκηθεν ἔποντο·
δῶκε δὲ Τυδείδη Διομήδεϊ κάλλιμα τεύχη
κεῖνα τὰ δὴ Σώκοιο βίην εἴρυσσε πάροιθεν.
υἱὸς δ' αὗτ' Ἀχιλῆος ἐδύσατο τεύχεα πατρός, (445)

καὶ οἱ φαίνετο πάμπαν ἀλίγκιος· ἀμφὶ δ' ἐλαφρὰ
Ἡφαίστου παλάμησι περὶ μελέεσσιν ἀρήρει,
καὶ περ ἐόνθ' ἐτέροισι πελώρια· τῷ δ' ἄμα πάντα
φαίνετο τεύχεα κοῦφα· κάρη γε μὲν οὕτι βάρυνε
πήληξ <οὐ παλάμησιν ἐπέβρισεν δόρυ μακρὸν
Πηλιάς>, ἀλλά ἐχερσὶ καὶ ἡλίβατόν περ ἐοῦσαν (450)

ρήιδίως ἀνάειρεν ἔθ' αἷματος ἰσχανόωσαν. (Q.S.7.437–51)⁸⁵

⁸⁵ The text here has a double fault. See Vian (1963):223; (1966):122–3. I have used Zimmerman’s conjecture for the lacuna at 449–50, also adopted by Way (1913) *ad loc.*

Neoptolemus' ‘sword in the stone moment’ corrects the one crucial failing of Patroclus’: he takes the spear which Patroclus had to leave behind because he could not lift it (*Il.*16.141–4). ‘Ρηιδίως (Q.S.7.451) thus works as a provocative aside: what was impossible for Patroclus is now *easily* achievable.⁸⁶ Even before entering battle, Neoptolemus has come one step closer to assuming Achilles’ military totality.

In the detail that ἐνθ' ἐσθλὸς μὲν ἔδυ καλὰ τεύχεα, τοὶ δὲ χέρεια/δῦσαν, ὅσοις ἀλαπαδνὸν ὑπὸ κραδίῃ πέλεν ἥτορ (440–1), Quintus engages another salient Iliadic passage; where on Poseidon’s orders the Greeks are commanded to switch armour, so that ἐσθλὰ μὲν ἐσθλὸς <ἔδυνε>, χέρεια δὲ χείρονι δόσκεν (*Il.*14.382). This incident struck the Hellenistic scholars as curious. The scholiasts opt for pragmatic explanations: it befits battle preparations to hand over weapons in this chain-formation,⁸⁷ or it makes sense for the *aristoi* to have the safest weapons, so that they can face the danger more boldly.⁸⁸ There is, however, the possibility that the swap could also have prompted less literal interpretations. As we have seen, imperial Greek performance culture was often fascinated by the ability of costume to signify the ethos of the character being portrayed. The series of masks donned by pantomime actors enabled the same performer to play a number of different parts.⁸⁹ And the increased use of costumes and stage props by the *homēristai* meant that performing Homer involved looking like the bard or his characters. The stage-door inscription at Aphrodisias which describes how a *homēristēs* ‘became Alexander’ also refers to the equipment (διασκεύη) used to achieve this transformation:⁹⁰ an example of how armour did make the Homeric man.

⁸⁶ As ‘easily’ as Odysseus strings the bow (*Od.*21.407). Further discussion of ρηιδίως in Chapter Six.

⁸⁷ Σ A *ad loc.*

⁸⁸ Σ bT *ad loc.* This commentator is perturbed by why the warriors would attempt the dangerous task of changing weapons in midst of battle.

⁸⁹ Cf. e.g. Libanius *On Behalf of Dancers* 113 as discussed in Chapter One.

⁹⁰ On this inscription see Roueché (1993):18.

Read against this background, Quintus' scene reworks the Iliadic passage to enhance its status as a meditation on costume and character. In his version, the match up of the best arms for the best men, and the worst for the feebler, is not presented as an order, but a pre-established fact (note the almost casual tone struck by ἔνθ', 440) inherent in the epic process of arming. Taking up an idea already found in Homer, Quintus emphasises armour's power to provide a genuine index to the self in order to encourage us to believe in the possibility of the true mimetic transformation of Neoptolemus once he appropriates this outfit.

The Trojans' reaction reveals how this transformation was received: they function as readers of the filial impersonation.

Οἳ δ' ἄρ' ἀμηχανίῃ βεβολημένοι ἔνδοθεν ἦτορ
Τρῶες ἔφαντ' Αχιλῆα πελώριον εἰσοράασθαι
αύτὸν ὄμῶς τεύχεσσι· καὶ ἀμφασίην ἀλεγεινὴν
κεῦθον ὑπὸ κραδίη, ἵνα μὴ δέος αἰνὸν ἵκηται
ἐξ φρένα Κητείων μηδ' Εύρυπύλοιο ἄνακτος. (Q.S.7.537–41)

As I have argued in Chapter Two, the Trojans 'see' Achilles in his original Homeric form, emphasised through the retention of his traditional epithet *πελώριος*. The use of the same epithet in the previous arming scene (*πελώρια*, 7.448 referring to *τεύχεα*) also suggests how the word works as a note of cohesion between father and son. The weapons are huge to others, but Neoptolemus serenely puts them on; and through them, he absorbs this Achillean adjective as a part of himself.

Unlike their sighting of Patroclus, this Trojan reading of Neoptolemus-as-Achilles is not violently proven wrong. Rather, as the war carries on, despite some attempts at disentanglement,⁹¹ the identity collusion continues:

Τρῶες δ' οὐκέτ' ἔφαντο πρὸ τείχεος αἴπεινοῖο

⁹¹ Cf. the speech of Deiphobus at Q.S.9.97–9.

στήμεναι ἐν πολέμῳ μάλα γὰρ δέος ἔλλαβε πάντας
ζώειν ἐλπομένους ἐρικυδέα Πηλείωνα· (Q.S.9.6–7a)

The arming sequence thus begins to develop an alternative ‘vision of Quintus’ literary ambition.⁹² His text will not be a Patroclus, a false pretender thwarted by failed attempts at identity deception. Instead it will both ‘appear to be’ and actually ‘be’ the model in whose clothing it dresses.

FILIAL SPEECH: AGAINST ‘SOURCE CITATION’

Neoptolemus also provides his own discussions of the type of succession he represents. When he meets with Phoenix, the old man’s appeal (7.642–61), as we have seen, is filled with language of pseudo-paternity.⁹³ In these exhortations for Neoptolemus to live up to his father (7.661–6) Phoenix provides another version of the generational perorations favoured by the early heroes of the poem.⁹⁴ Neoptolemus’ response, however, cuts short this conventional rhetorical circuit:

‘ὦ γέρον, ἡμετέρην ἀρετὴν ἀνὰ δηιοτῆτα
Αἴσα διακρινέει κρατερὴ καὶ ὑπέρβιος Ἀρης.’
Ὦς εἰπὼν αὐτῆμαρ ἐέλδετο τείχεος ἐκτὸς
σεύεσθ’ ἐν τεύχεσσιν ἐοῦ πατρός... (Q.S.7.668–71)

Neoptolemus replies only briefly, and despite Phoenix’s laboured comparisons,⁹⁵ does not mention Achilles at all. Instead, in ἡμετέρην ἀρετὴν, the first-person *plural*,⁹⁶ he echoes

⁹² Kneebone (2007):289.

⁹³ Cf. Chapter Four.

⁹⁴ Such as Ajax to Achilles (Q.S.1.502–3) or Paris to Eurypylus (Q.S.6.298–307), as discussed above.

⁹⁵ At Q.S.7.653–4 and 665–6.

⁹⁶ The plural could be simply poetic, but given the wider assimilatory impression that Quintus creates for Neoptolemus, it seems to me that it could have a more interpretative function, as an indication of his unity with

lexically the assimilation into his father that he has achieved by putting on his arms. His unspoken thoughts (670–1) then return directly to the theme of armament. It is as if Neoptolemus is trying to get out of the clichéd world of generational oratory, to erase the need for comparisons with Achilles, and to get on with simply being him. After this moment, Neoptolemus hardly ever evokes Achilles or voices his desire to live up to him.⁹⁷

During the final confrontation with Eurypylus, this alternative filial rhetoric is put to the test, as Neoptolemus' sense of paternal embodiment is pitted against Eurypylus' more traditional boastings (Q.S.8.133–61). When questioned about his lineage, Neoptolemus again puts a blunt end to this competitive discourse:

τίπτε μ' ἐπισπεύσοντα ποτὶ κλόνον αἰματόεντα
έχθρὸς ἐὼν ώς εἴ τε φίλα φρονέων ἐρεείνεις
εἰπέμεναι γενεήν, ἦν περ μάλα πολλοὶ ἵσασιν·
υἱὸς Ἀχιλλῆος κρατερόφρονος, ὃς τε τοκῆα (150)
σεῖο πάροιθ' ἐφόβησε βαλῶν περιμήκει δουρί·
καὶ νύ κέ μιν θανάτοιο κακαὶ περὶ Κῆρες ἔμαρψαν,
εἰ μή οἱ στονόεντα θοῶς ἱήσατ' ὅλεθρον.
Ὕποι δ' οἱ φορέουσιν ἐμοῦ πατρὸς ἀντιθέοιο,
οὓς τέκεθ' Ἄρπυια Ζεφύρω πάρος εύνηθεῖσα, (155)
οἵ τε καὶ ἀτρύγετον πέλαγος διὰ ποσσὸν θέουσιν
ἀκρονύχως ψαύοντες, ἵσον δ' ἀνέμοισι φέρονται.
νῦν δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν γενεὴν ἐδάης ὕππων τε καὶ αύτοῦ,
καὶ δόρατος πείρησαι ἀτειρέος ἡμετέροιο

Achilles. I make the broader case for Quintus' tendency to invest 'decorative' poetic words with this sort of interpretative potential in Chapter Two.

⁹⁷ The only occasion on which Neoptolemus compares *himself* to Achilles is to Agamemnon immediately after this exchange (Q.S.7.700–4).

γνώμεναι ἄντιβίην· γενεὴ δέ οἱ ἐν κορυφῆσι (160)

Πηλίου αἰπεινοῖο, τομὴν ὅθι λεῖπε καὶ εύνην. (Q.S.8.147–61)

This *praeteritio* has much in common with Achilles' earlier critique of conventional genealogical flyting (Q.S.2.449–51). Like his father's remark that he and Memnon were 'prattling like silly children about the deeds of their parents', Neoptolemus derides this game of generational question-and-answer as pointless and inappropriate. However, despite his moment of clarity, Achilles – the obsessive almost-son of Zeus, the flyter in spite of himself – remained stuck in the old epic world of anxious rivalry. Neoptolemus' self-identification as his father offers a way to circumvent this process more permanently. As he speedily dispatches the details of his paternity – 'known to very many', already so deeply embedded in the heroic tradition that we, like Eurypylus, do not need to ask about it – he focuses instead on the features that he and his father now share: the horses and the spear, once again in the not-just-poetic plural (*δόρατος ἡμετέροιο*).

For Bloom, poetic anxiety may or may not be externalised by the later writer, because either way, 'the strong poem *is* the achieved anxiety.'⁹⁸ As his characters trade and, in Neoptolemus' case, reject traditional boasts about their predecessors, Quintus suggests how impersonation can take anxiety's place in this sort of formulation: forgoing spuels about rivalry or similarity with Homer, his poem *is* the achieved assimilation. In a text without an opening proem, which closely emulates a revered model without ever naming him directly, Neoptolemus' speech provides a fitting statement of a poetics which seeks to eschew earlier Statian, or later Nonnian-style proclamations of an 'external' relationship to the literary father.

NECROMANCY AND FILIAL POSSESSION

Through the act of arming and his self-presentation in speech, Neoptolemus thus reflects and reflects upon the methods for successful impersonation. His final scene in the poem provides

⁹⁸ Bloom (1997):xxiii.

the most radical of these methods; one which aims not to bridge the gap between model and inheritor like arming did, but to remove this gap altogether. In the closing book of the epic, the linearity inherent to literal and literary succession is most provocatively overturned, and Neoptolemus' assimilatory stance towards Achilles comes closest to total possession.

As the Greeks prepare to leave Troy, Neoptolemus comes face-to-face with the ghost of his father. Achilles appears in a dream, giving a hortatory speech to his son about how to conduct himself, and ends by telling him what to command the Argives to do: sacrifice Polyxena, or incur his anger (Q.S.14.179–256).⁹⁹ This ghostly encounter, the only moment of direct interaction between father and son, functions on multiple levels as a scene of transmission and instruction. Achilles' advice, it has been noted, echoes the extended allegory of the Mountain of *Arete* on his shield (Q.S.5.49–56). As Maciver has demonstrated, the close correlation between the Ἀρετῆς...ἔρνος here (14.200) and the mountain in the ekphrasis suggests that Achilles is expounding the allegory on the shield, both to his son and to us as readers.¹⁰⁰

Scant attention, however, has been paid to Neoptolemus as the recipient of this message. And yet the whole encounter is highly unusual from the *dreamer's* perspective. Dreams in the *Posthomerica*, as in Homer, are usually based on disguise, distance and intangibility. To take two examples, the deceitful dream sent to Penthesilea (Q.S.1.125–37), discussed in Chapter Two, takes the shape of her father, and its message is reported to the reader indirectly. In Athena's dream visit to Epeius (Q.S.12.106–121) she is disguised as a tender maiden, and her instructions are again described in indirect speech. Here instead Achilles appears to Neoptolemus οὗτος ἔην περ ζωὸς ἐών (Q.S.14.181) and speaks to him directly and at length. His lack of disguise closely resembles the way in which Patroclus appeared to Achilles in the *Iliad* (πάντ' αὐτῷ μέγεθός τε καὶ ὅμματα κάλ' ἔικυῖα/καὶ φωνήν, καὶ τοῖα περὶ χροῦ εἴματα ἔστο·, *Il.*23.66–7). In that scene, however, Achilles reaches out to touch Patroclus, but, in a

⁹⁹ Cf. Chapter Two for this passage in relation to *gnomai*.

¹⁰⁰ Maciver (2012b):79-83.

move widely imitated in the later epic tradition,¹⁰¹ is not able to grasp anything (‘Ως ἄρα φωνήσας ὠρέξατο χερσὶ φίλησιν/ούδ’ ἔλαβε· ψυχὴ δὲ κατὰ χθονὸς ἡὕτε καπνὸς/ῶχετο τετριγυῖα·...’, *Il.*23.99–101). There is by contrast a remarkable physicality to the Quintan ghost. He does not merely touch Neoptolemus, but kisses him on the neck and eyes (Κύσσε δέ οἱ δειρὴν καὶ φάεα μαρμαίροντα/ἀσπασίως,... Q.S.14.183–4). Neoptolemus is often kissed by his elders in the *Posthomerica*:¹⁰² but to be kissed by a ghost, the chilly insubstantial form traditionally incapable of touch, is a debased version of this act of affection. This intensity of physical contact is in fact almost unique to Quintus’ epic dream. Even Ovid’s Morpheus, the phantom most skilled in human imitation, appears to Alcyone exactly like Ceyx in terms of image and movements, but stops short of any physical engagement. Alcyone, like Achilles, Odysseus and Aeneas before her, can only embrace the thin air (*Met.*11.650–80).

Neoptolemus’ vision thus seems less like a shady epic sleep, and more a spiritual encounter – ‘a kind of mystical communion, halfway between a dream reverie and an epiphany.’¹⁰³ We have seen how such uncanny encounters were a prevalent feature of imperial Greek reanimating culture.¹⁰⁴ Testimonies from the period suggest how dreams could provide a vehicle for this sort of intimate experience. Artemidorus records his clients’ dreams of kissing complete with his analogical interpretations, and in more extreme cases, discusses what to do if someone dreams about having sexual intercourse with gods and goddesses (*Oneir.*1.80).¹⁰⁵ Whilst there is no implication (or at least, no indication...) of sexualisation in Quintus’ episode,

¹⁰¹ Most famously Odysseus’ meeting with Anticlea in *Od.*11.150–224, and Aeneas’ encounters at *Aen.*2.730–95 and 6.700–3.

¹⁰² Boyten (2010):187–8.

¹⁰³ Zeitlin (2001):235. My point is not that these ‘close encounters’ which Zeitlin and others discuss necessarily involve physical interaction, but rather that Quintus uses physical interaction to add a sense of closeness to his dream scene; making clear that this is no usual epic version of this sequence.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. Introduction, section IV and Chapter One.

¹⁰⁵ See Lane Fox (1986):ch. 4 on divine dreams in Late Antiquity. For ancient love dreams see Plastira-Valkanou (1999).

the kiss between dream and dreamer is a pointedly non-epic/heroic element, and is more akin to contemporary dream accounts.¹⁰⁶

Quintus further stresses the closeness of this transmission by appealing to contemporary ideas about *waking* encounters of an otherworldly kind. I have discussed how a number of works from the second sophistic describe necromantic resurrections of figures from heroic cults, and explore the possibilities for intense, time-transcendent interactions that such rituals could provide.¹⁰⁷ The two most extensive surviving accounts come from Philostratus' *Heroicus* and the *Vita Apollonii*.¹⁰⁸ The second of these texts includes details which are tellingly close to Quintus' dream sequence here. In the fourth book of the *Vita*, Apollonius spends a night at Troy by Achilles' tomb and summons the hero with a prayer. Achilles duly rises from the dead, laments the neglect of his cult and gives the philosopher advice. Quintus' Neoptolemus also visits Achilles' tomb (at Q.S.9.46–62 he weeps beside it and kisses it); and when he and the Greeks approach it to sacrifice Polyxena, offers prayer to Achilles' shade (Q.S.14.309–12).

Achilles' dream-speech also has strong similarities to his conversation in Philostratus with Apollonius (*V A* 4.16.3). Offering alternative versions of the same myth,¹⁰⁹ both exchanges discuss the possibility of new Achillean anger which will surpass the Iliadic *menis*: Quintus' Achilles warns that he is angrier than he was over Briseis (μᾶλλον ἔτ' ἡ τὸ πάρος Βρισηίδος, Q.S.14.216), and in Philostratus he threatens that his anger would cause the Thessalians to perish more than the Greeks did (καὶ μηνίειν μὲν οὕπω ἀξιῶ, μηνίσαντος γὰρ ἀπολοῦνται μᾶλλον ἡ οἱ ἐνταῦθά ποτε "Ελληνες, *V A* 4.16.3). Both speeches combine this anger with paradoxically gentle advice (ξυμβουλίᾳ δὲ ἐπιεικεῖ χρῶμαι, *V A* 4.16.3). They also share an

¹⁰⁶ Quintus here also eschews the distance inherent to another conventional setting for a son receiving advice from his deceased parent – the *katabasis* to the underworld, as per the scenes of *Od.11* and *Aen. 6*.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. Introduction, section IV and Chapter One.

¹⁰⁸ Also discussed in Chapter Four.

¹⁰⁹ Philostratus' 'romantic' version maintains that Polyxena was not sacrificed at Achilles' tomb but killed herself there out of love for him.

emphasis on Achilles' distinctive egotism: he boasts to Apollonius that the Trojans lost many noble men by his hands, and yet the Thessalians do not pay sacrifice to him (*Τρώων, οἵ τοσούσδε ἄνδρας ὑπ’ ἐμοῦ ἀφαιρεθέντες δημοσίᾳ τε θύουσι μοι καὶ ὥραιών ἀπάρχονται καὶ ικετηρίαν τιθέμενοι σπονδὰς αἰτοῦσιν*, *V A* 4.16.3), which chimes with his demand to Neoptolemus that the Greeks must offer sacrifice, if they remember *ὅσσ’ ἐμόγησα περὶ Πριάμοιο πόληα,/ἡδ’ ὅσα ληισάμην πρὸν Τρώιον οὔδας ικέσθαι*, (Q.S.14.211–12).

Quintus' engagement with the *Vita Apollonii* has not been considered by the scholars who have pondered over this puzzling scene.¹¹⁰ And yet I have argued in the previous chapter that Quintus covertly polemicises this type of sophistic prose account for its penchant for rewriting Homer's version of the Trojan war.¹¹¹ The similarities with Philostratus in this dream scene suggest that Quintus could be harnessing the theme of close necromantic interaction as pursued in such works to make Neoptolemus' encounter even 'closer': establishing, in a way that his contemporary readership would recognise, the idea of a direct, epiphanic ritual connecting father to son.¹¹²

Quintus' scene thus throws focus on the connective potential of the dream experience, setting it up as a device that can 'align the situated points of view of beings that inhabited different

¹¹⁰ For such interaction to be plausible Quintus would have to have written after the 220s C.E; a likelihood which this thesis broadly accepts (see Introduction, section IV). If Quintus is indeed deliberately reworking the Philostratean passage, the intertext would have implications for affirming these dating parameters too.

¹¹¹ Philostratus' Apollonius poses a series of 'Homeric questions' similar to those of Lucian in *Ver.Hist.2*. See Zeitlin (2001):242–55.

¹¹² Another way to test the strength of these similarities is to consider other treatments of Achilles' appearance to the Greeks before Polyxena's sacrifice: Euripides' *Hecuba* 37–9 and 109–15, and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 13.439–41. In both of these versions, Achilles expresses a similar indignation at the lack of honour paid by the Greeks to his services during the war. However, Quintus' version is different in that it turns this command into an extended direct speech to just one listener rather than to all the Greeks, and it adds the indications of a necromantic summoning via prayer: Ovid's Achilles, for instance just 'suddenly springs from the ground', *Met.13.441–2*.

worlds.¹¹³ Now, the *poetic* tradition, as far back as Hesiod, used dreams symbolically to describe poetic inspiration and explain authorial choices. In silver Latin epic, necromantic encounters are also used for such purposes. Both Silius and Lucan express their belatedness through otherworldly meetings with dead poets or their societies. In Book 13 of the *Punica* (778–97) Scipio encounters the shade of Homer transformed back into a youth,¹¹⁴ and the *Pharsalia* stages its confrontation of traditional epic on the actual site of Troy, featuring real spirits of the dead. It is the start of the Latin tradition which provides the most radical version of this symbolism, and uses the image of the dream encounter in a way particularly relevant to Quintus' claims.

Ennius' *Annals* famously begins with the account of a dream in which the ghost of Homer tells the poet that his soul has transmigrated into his body.¹¹⁵ As scholars have rightly emphasised, this Pythagorean conceit, an *elevatio ad absurdum* of the association between dreams and poetic inspiration, is an extremely bold means of authorising the poet's ambitions: 'in place of a literary dependence on earlier ancestors, (this is) a Homer *redivivus*...a direct transmission from Greek to Latin through the physical mechanism of a rebirth into another's body'¹¹⁶, in which 'there is no sense of a struggle required to take over the old and make it one's own and new, nor even the distance involved in the natural succession of poetic son to father, but instead the limiting case of poetic identity: Ennius is Homer.'¹¹⁷ Pythagorean concepts of metempsychosis remained popular in the literary output of Quintus' era. The *Vita Apollonii* again provides an example. Before his meeting with Achilles, Apollonius discusses with the seer Iarchus the possibility of becoming the Homeric heroes through transmigration, a belief

¹¹³ Kohn (2013):141 discusses why dreams and their interpretation are such an important feature of the daily lives of native people in Amazonian Ecuador.

¹¹⁴ See Hardie (1993):115; Tipping (2010):194–6.

¹¹⁵ *An.1.5–10* (Skutsch ed. 1985).

¹¹⁶ Zeitlin (2001):236.

¹¹⁷ Hardie (1993):103.

which they both share.¹¹⁸ In the closeness of his dream encounter, I suggest that Quintus offers his version of this process; denoting in very Ennian,¹¹⁹ but very covert, manner that the son is now possessed by the spirit of his father – a metaphorical account of the poet’s own move towards complete Homeric embodiment.

This sense of possession, first suggested by the emphasis on closeness between dream and dreamer, is most strongly asserted during Neoptolemus’ interpretation of the meeting. After Achilles leaves, he conveys his father’s message to the troops in what appears to be a shortened précis of the dream-speech, omitting the personal advice and all mention of the allegory of virtue.

‘κέκλυτέ μευ, φίλα τέκνα μενεπτολέμων Ἀργείων,
πατρὸς ἐφημοσύνην ἐρικυδέος, ἦν μοι ἔνισπε
χθιζός ἐνὶ λεχέεσσι διὰ κνέφας ὑπνώοντι·
φῆ γὰρ ἀειγενέεσσι μετέμμεναι ἀθανάτοισιν·
ἡνῶγει δ’ ὑμέας τε καὶ Ἀτρείδην βασιλῆα,
ὅφρα οἱ ἐκ πολέμοιο γέρας περικαλλὲς ἄροιτε (240)
τύμβον ἐπ’ εύρώεντα Πολυξείνην εὕπεπλον·
καὶ μιν ἔφη ρέξαντας ἀπόπροθι ταρχύσασθαι·
εἰ δέ οἱ οὐκ ἀλέγοντες ἐπιπλώοιτε θάλασσαν,
ἡπείλει κατὰ πόντον ἐναντία κύματ’ ἀείρας
λαὸν ὄμῶς νήεσσι πολὺν χρόνον ἐνθάδ’ ἐρύξειν.’ (245)

¹¹⁸ On the topic cf. also Lucian’s *Gallus*.

¹¹⁹ It is worth repeating here that, whilst there is no direct evidence that Quintus knew Ennius, (Vergilian intertextuality has proven contentious enough, before factoring in Vergil’s earlier fragmentary model), in line with the maximalist approach that this thesis adopts to Quintus’ literary-cultural engagement, his activation of this theme in a specifically Ennian form is a possibility worth pursuing.

ώς φαμένου πείθοντο,¹²⁰ καὶ ὡς θεῶ εύχετόωντο. (Q.S.14.235–46)

Neoptolemus ostensibly maintains a sense of separation from his father, by designating his message as reported speech, but the audience's reaction makes no such distinction. The compressed wording of line 246 does not specify by whose speech the army was persuaded: that of Neoptolemus, or that of Achilles, which he has related to them. Nor is it stated to whom the Greeks are praying: the father, who is now among the gods, and thus deserving (and demanding) of prayer; or the son, who is like a god but mortal? The ώς leaves room for both readings.¹²¹ The first-person plural in Neoptolemus' earlier speeches is here transformed into a striking singularity: with father and son sharing the same syntax and engendering an identical response.

In this light, we can reinterpret Neoptolemus' synopsis of his father's words. His seemingly simple speech describes Achilles' message in terms reminiscent of poetic inspiration: μοι ἔνισπε (236) is a phrase often found in the imperative form in pleas for information from the Muse.¹²² Then in his account of the revealed knowledge, he maintains the essence of Achilles' words, but substitutes the language and formulae in which he presents it. He turns Achilles' ἐπεὶ μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν (14.186) into ἀειγενέεσσι μετέμμεναι ἀθανάτοισιν (14.238); and reconfigures his description of the storm threat (14.216–18 vs. 243–5). He also employs some recognisable Homeric epithets (μενεπτολέμων Ἀργείων, Πολυξείνην εὔπεπλον) but applies them to different characters than those for whom they are used in the Homeric poems. Through these techniques, Neoptolemus offers a miniature, emblematic version of Quintus' own re-composition of Homeric epic; in which he is inspired, like the rhapsode or *homēristēs*, to become the primary bard, but selects which Homeric elements to emphasise, and conveys a

¹²⁰ Vian (1969):186 prints ώς φαμένοιο πίθοντο, following Zimmerman.

¹²¹ Cf. τείχεος ώς ἥδη συνοχωκότος ἐν κονίσιν (Q.S.7.502) as discussed in Chapter Two. A further example of an ambiguous ώς is discussed in the next sub-section of this chapter.

¹²² Cf. e.g. *Od*.1.1; *Il*.2.761.

Homeric impression using different formulaic combinations – a creative reanimation of the original poet's voice.

If Ennius committed the boldest conceit by suggesting that his Latin hexameters could be taken as still the work of Homer, then through Neoptolemus Quintus offers a realignment of this claim. Embedded hints at literary possession rather than overt metempsychosis, coming at the end of the epic rather than the start, and concerning a poem which does not transmit Greek into Latin but closely continues Homer's subject matter and uses many of his original words, the theme of possession for Quintus does not *announce* poetic authority, or justify the poem that is to come. Rather, it represents the most extreme, totalising version of a Homeric closeness that is already there; troped in different ways throughout the poem in its extensive exploration of succession.

In his own discussion of necromancy, Bloom claims another victory for the strong adversarial poets:

‘In ways that need not be doctrinal, strong poems are always omens of resurrection. The dead may or may not return, but their voice comes alive, paradoxically *never by mere imitation*, but in the agonistic misprision performed upon powerful forerunners by only the most gifted of their successors.’¹²³

Neoptolemus' paternal reincarnation helps to overturn this dichotomy. Rather than through rebellion, this dead father comes alive precisely *by imitation*. Possession becomes a way for the new Homeric writer to bypass the straight chronology of competitive succession, presenting instead a simultaneous view of literary reception in which the old poet never stopped composing.

¹²³ Bloom (1997):xxiv, my italics.

WAYWARD ATHENA: CONCLUDING SUCCESSION

The closing scene of the whole epic contains a compendious overview of successionist tropes; as Quintus takes his new vision of filiation away from the human plane and recasts it on a cosmic, universal scale.

As the Greeks set sail, Athena petitions Zeus to allow her to exact revenge for the offence committed by Locrian Ajax. Zeus agrees, and lends her his thunderbolt with which she unleashes the storm, stirring into motion the shipwreck which will cause the Greeks all of their Odyssean troubles (Q.S.14.419–65). Athena and Zeus are two of the most active gods in the *Posthomerica*: Zeus appears eighteen times and Athena seventeen, the highest role calls of the poem's divinities. Yet it is only here that they interact specifically as πατήρ and τέκος.¹²⁴ The image of Zeus handing over his weapons to his daughter has obvious metapoetic potential, based around the Callimachean imagery of thunder as a symbol for traditional epic poetry and its authority; imagery which, as we have seen in Chapter Three, remained prevalent in later Greek poetics.¹²⁵ This symbol – the adversarial trope *par excellence* – provides the perfect material for Quintus' closing statement of succession. Alluding to the traditional connotations of conflict with dominant authority, his Athena reveals how such rivalrous images can be rebranded as symbols of unity.

Athena's petition (Q.S.14.426–48) reads like an anthology of antagonistic motifs.¹²⁶ She connects Ajax's offense to the wider assault on the sanctity and authority of the gods by all mankind (Q.S.14.427–33), and presents him as a type of theomach:

υἱὸς Ὄιλῆος μέγ' ἐνήλιτεν, οὐδ' ἐλέαιρε

¹²⁴ Cf. Q.S.14.427 (*Ζεῦ πάτερ...*) and 444-5 (*προσέειπε πατήρ ...ῶ τέκος*). This is the longest divine exchange in the *Posthomerica*, and represents the only (extant) dramatisation of the gestation of the storm, as is alluded to in *Od.4. 499-511* and the opening of Euripides' *Troades*.

¹²⁵ Cf. Chapter Three for discussion of Callimachus' famous statement (*βροντᾶν οὐκ ἔμόν, ἀλλὰ Διός*, fr.1.20) and its reception in Quintus and Nonnus.

¹²⁶ That is, the speech combines the overarching thunder imagery with other tropes of poetic adversity.

Κασσάνδρην ὄρέγουσαν ἀκηδέας εἰς ἐμὲ χεῖρας
πολλάκις, ούδ’ ἔδεισεν ἐμὸν μένος, ούδέ τι θυμῷ
ἡδέσατ’ ἀθανάτην, ἀλλ’ ἄσχετον ἔργον ἔρεξε. (Q.S.14.436–9)

In the assertion that Ajax had no respect for her divinity, Athena echoes Quintus' earlier presentation of Achilles, whose arrogance towards Apollo is explained in similar terms (τοῦνεκ' ἄρ' οὐκ ἀλέγιζε θεοῦ, Q.S.3.45). King has compared Quintus' Achilles to the famous silver Latin theomach, Statius' Capaneus;¹²⁷ and Carvounis has likened the description of Locrian Ajax at his death (Q.S.14.559–89) to Statius' and Aeschylus' gigantomachic depictions of the character.¹²⁸ In her presentation of Ajax, Athena takes up these literary conventions to present him as just this sort of threat – a usurper representing a violent attack against the whole divine order.

In these attempts at manipulation, however, Athena also becomes a type of ‘theomachic’ rival herself: she has the potential to carry out the violence and disruption to Zeus’ authority that she ostensibly warns him against:

...ἔγωγε μὲν οὔτ’ ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ
ἔσσομαι, οὔτ’ ἔτι σεῖο κεκλήσομαι, εἰ μὴ Ἀχαιῶν
τίσομ’ ἀτασθαλίην... (Q.S.14.433–5)

Theomachy, as has been finely analysed by Chaudhuri, was often used in ancient poetry to articulate the struggle against various types of authority.¹²⁹ Part of the metaphorical language of thundering and weapon theft, it can symbolise poets’ attempts to challenge their powerful literary predecessors. Quintus offered an oblique version of this image in his opening description of Achilles and Ajax as the giants who threatened Zeus (Q.S.1.515–27). Here he returns to the theme more directly. In the layering of different versions of this challenge,

¹²⁷ King (1987):133-7.

¹²⁸ Carvounis (2007):251.

¹²⁹ Chaudhuri (2014).

Quintus' Athena merges the theomachic threat with a filial one,¹³⁰ offering multiple examples of the dangers posed to the superiority of the father.

As soon as Zeus responds, however, all of these threats become unfulfilled and counterfactual – the routes that could have been taken but were not:

ώς φαμένην προσέειπε <πατήρ> ἀγανοῖς ἐπέεσσιν·
'ῶ τέκος, οὕτι ἔγωγ' ἀνθίσταμαι εἴνεκ' Ἀχαιῶν,
ἀλλὰ καὶ ἔντεα πάντα, τά μοι πάρος ἥρα φέροντες
χερσὶν ὑπ' ἀκαμάτησιν ἐτεκτήναντο Κύκλωπες
δώσω ἐέλδομένη· σὺ δὲ σῷ κρατερόφρονι θυμῷ
αύτὴ χεῖμ' ἀλεγεινὸν ἐπ' Ἀργείοισιν ὅρινον.' (Q.S.14.443–8)

Zeus' gentle words quash each of Athena's challenges to his authority: by agreeing to punish Ajax's rebellion, he also prevents his daughter from ever attempting hers.¹³¹ Far from a Nonnian-style thunder theft, the handover of the weapons is then presented as Zeus' own idea. The *καὶ* in 445 turns the donation into an inspired piece of improvisation on Zeus' part ('I shall even give you all my weapons ...'). Rather than succumbing to his daughter's manipulation, he voluntarily improves upon her original plan.

As he pledges these weapons, Zeus breaks off into a story about their gestation (445–7). Hesiod's *Theogony* describes how the Cyclopes were the personifications of thunder and lightning, and also gave these elements to Zeus when they manufactured his thunderbolt:

γείνατο δ' αὖ Κύκλωπας ὑπέρβιον ἥτορ ἔχοντας,
Βρόντην τε Στερόπην τε καὶ Ἀργην ὄβριμόθυμον,
οἵ Ζηνὶ βροντήν τε δόσαν τεῦξάν τε κεραυνόν.

¹³⁰ Athena, unlike Achilles, is a real child of Zeus.

¹³¹ The injustice felt by mankind at collective suffering, of course, is a mythological ellipsis, which, as the prologue of the *Odyssey* makes clear, soon finds new outlets through which to unleash itself.

οἵ δή τοι τὰ μὲν ἄλλα θεοῖς ἐναλίγκιοι ἥσαν,
μοῦνος δ' ὄφθαλμὸς μέσσω ἐνέκειτο μετώπῳ.
Κύκλωπες δ' ὄνομ' ἥσαν ἐπώνυμον, οὕνεκ' ἄρα σφέων
κυκλοτερής ὄφθαλμὸς ἔεις ἐνέκειτο μετώπῳ·
ἰσχὺς δ' ἡδὲ βίη καὶ μηχανὴ ἥσαν ἐπ' ἔργοις. (*Theog.* 139–46)

Hesiod makes clear the threatening potential of these creatures. He centralises the Cyclopes' might and craftiness, and also suggests just how like the gods they were, in all respects apart from the physical aberration. Quintus' Zeus removes all of these menacing hints, and focuses instead only on the Cyclopes' desire to win his favour. If Athena turned literary-scholar to present Ajax as an epic theomach, her father performs some source adaptations of his own in order to neutralise such claims. Rewriting the Hesiodic myth, Zeus turns the monsters who were once his rivals into figures of peace and providers of a service to him.

Quintus as narrator continues this Hesiodic rewriting. When Athena takes the weapons and crashes in the sky, her aegis is described in a mini-ekphrasis:

ἐν γάρ οἱ πεπόνητο κάρη βλοσυροῦ Μεδούσης
σμερδαλέον· κρατεροὶ δὲ καὶ ἀκαμάτου πυρὸς ὄρμὴν
λάβρον ἀποπνείοντες ἔσαν καθύπερθε δράκοντες·
ἔβραχε δ' αἰγὶς ἅπασα περὶ στήθεσσιν ἀνάσσης,
οἶον ὅτε στεροπῆσιν ἐπιβρέμει ἄσπετος αἰθήρ. (Q.S.14.454–8)

The choice of fire-breathing snakes accords with the usual portrayal of Gorgon Medusa.¹³² But the specific combination of power (κρατεροί), fire (πυρός) and serpents (δράκοντες) once again evokes the *Theogony*, this time its dramatic description of the monster Typhon:

ἢν ἐκατὸν κεφαλαὶ ὄφιος, δεινοῦ δράκοντος,
γλώσσησιν δνοφερῆσι λελιχμότες, ἐκ δέ οἱ ὕσσων

¹³²

Cf. James (2004):345.

Θεσπεσίης κεφαλῆσιν ὑπ' ὄφρύσι πῦρ ἀμάρυσσεν. (Theog. 825–8)

In Hesiod's account, Typhon is explicitly figured as a terrible threat to Zeus. Predicting the scenario which was later dramatised by Nonnus,¹³³ Hesiod describes what would have happened if Zeus had not been able to conquer this threat:

καί νύ κεν ἐπλετο ἔργον ἀμήχανον ἡματι κείνω

καὶ κεν ὅ γε θνητοῖσι καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἄναξεν,

εἰ μὴ ἄρ' ὁξὺ νόησε πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε Θεῶν τε. (Theog. 836–8)

Quintus' depiction of Athena at first gestures towards this situation. As in Hesiod, we witness a supernatural force gilded with serpents and breathing out fire, rising up to wield its power, as natural and cosmic confusion ensues:

...τίναξε δὲ μακρὸν"Ολυμπον,

σὺν δ' ἔχεεν νεφέλας τε καὶ ἡέρα πᾶσαν ὑπερθε·

νὺξ <δ> ἔχύθη περὶ γαῖαν, ἐπήχλυσεν δὲ θάλασσα. (Q.S.14.460-2)

This time, however, Zeus smiles at the sight (*Ζεὺς δὲ μέγ' εἰσορόων ἐπετέρπετο*, 463), a reminder of his endorsement of the handover, and he maintains control by colluding with his impersonator:

λάζετο δ' ἔντεα πατρός ἢ περ θεὸς οὐ τις ἀείρει

νόσφι Διὸς μεγάλοιο·...

... κίνυτο δ' εύρὺς

ούρανὸς ἀμφὶ πόδεσσι θεῆς· περὶ δὲ ἔβραχεν αἰθέρο,

ώς Διὸς ἀκαμάτοι ποτὶ κλόνον ἐμμεμαῶτος. (Q.S.14.459–60; 463–5)

As Athena grasps the weapons which no god other than Zeus can carry, Quintus shows in this divine father and child the same assimilatory mimesis as Neoptolemus achieved when he put

¹³³ See Chapter Three, section I.

on the arms of Achilles. The effects on the audience are equally convincing:¹³⁴ it is ‘as though [ώς] invincible Zeus himself rushes into battle’ (465). On the one hand, the ώς points to its own fictive function: it may *seem as though* Zeus is taking part in the storm, but in fact he is sitting and watching, one step removed from the action. On the other, however, we have seen how similes in the *Posthomerica* tend to favour closeness over contrast between vehicle and tenor.¹³⁵ And so it is here, as the link between daughter and father is closely reflected in the final narrative scenes, where Athena no longer just acts ‘like’ Zeus but acts with him, and they do charge into the sky together:

ἢ ἡ αὶ καὶ αὐτὴ ὑπερθεν ἀμείλιχα μαιμώσα

Θῦνε μετ' ἀστεροπῆσιν· ἐπέκτυπε δ' οὐρανόθεν Ζεὺς

κυδαίνων ἀνὰ θυμὸν ἐὸν τέκος, ...

(Q.S.14.509–11)

ἡ δ' ἄρ' Οὐλύμπιο βαρύκτυπος Ἀτρυτώνη

οῦ τι καταισχύνεσκε βίην πατρός· ἀμφὶ δ' ἄρ' αἰθὴρ

ταχεν... (Q.S.14.530-2)

What began as potential conflict ends in the most powerful portrait of family co-operation.

CONCLUSIONS

I began by suggesting that imperial Greek filiation must be separated from the poetics of silver Latin, because it cannot be telling the same story. This chapter has attempted to locate Quintus' story: not a tale of a struggle against dynastic or literary succession, but a world narrative in

¹³⁴ As Neoptolemus merged into Achilles in the perception of the Trojans (Q.S.7.526–41) so here does Athena merge into Zeus in the ‘perception’ of the reader.

¹³⁵ See Chapter Two.

which the relationship between old and new is more entangled, and multiple actors operate as ‘interrelated but not interchangeable’¹³⁶ parts.

We may now ask how unique is this account to the *Posthomerica*; and what relationship it has to the other imperial Greek epics which also use filial imagery so extensively.¹³⁷ We have seen, for instance, how Nonnus rejects Quintus’ rejection of naming, but seems to share in his abandonment of direct succession in favour of anachronistic, upside-down relationships. For all their differences in approach, there are connections which can be drawn. For these later Greek poets, filiation was a living image, and a pliant one, appropriated with a brazenness and irony which has not yet been fully appreciated. If, for Bloom, ‘authentic high literature relies upon a turning away not only from the literal but from prior tropes’,¹³⁸ then these epics all turn back *towards* the prior trope of succession, and reauthenticate it for their own literary-cultural purposes. Handled with dexterity, the imagery in the *Posthomerica* strikes at the core of the relationality between Quintus and Homer inherent in its impersonating claims. Above all, this is a poetics defined by closeness. As we navigate through the epic which continues the *Iliad* and approaches the *Odyssey*,¹³⁹ we are made to appreciate the intensity of this relationship. Father and son are so close that they touch.

¹³⁶ Qua Kohn (2013) *passim*.

¹³⁷ A question which this chapter, and this thesis, poses throughout. See e.g. Introduction, section II
¹³⁸ Bloom (1997):xix.

¹³⁹ The poem’s temporal relationship to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6

TEMPORALITY AND THE HOMERIC NOT YET

A story has no beginning or end; arbitrarily one chooses that moment of experience from which to look back or from which to look ahead.

— Graham Greene, *The End of the Affair*

We have not yet come to the end of our trials, but still hereafter there is to be measureless toil, long and hard, which I must fulfil to the end.

— *Odyssey* 23.247–250

This account of the *Posthomerica* has been centrally concerned with time: ‘nature’s time, the time of writing, reading’s time’,¹ and its flexible possibilities. It first argued that Quintus’ process of ‘enlarging the space’ is based on exploiting the premise that Homeric epic was to the imperial Greek reader both fixed and final and open for expansion within demarcated limits. The readings of the following chapters – Homer quoting Callimachus; the *Iliad* misremembered; necromantic encounters where the poetic father becomes the poetic son – then focused on defining how Quintus creates this open relationship between the Homeric past and his literary present. To end this account, the final chapter will address directly the nature and function of time in the *Posthomerica*. Examining specific aspects of time as it is thematised in the poem – changes of pace, counterfactuals, anachrony and motifs of closure – I shall argue that Quintus attempts a bold reconfiguration of linear models of epic temporality; combining and collapsing different forms (the teleological and the cyclical, the closed and the open-ended)

¹ McMillin (2000):138, to which I was drawn for his discussion of the ‘preposterous.’ See section I.

and refracting them back into Homeric epic itself. By bringing to the surface the temporal flexibility already available in the fixed Homeric poems, Quintus reconceptualises the time as well as the space in between his model texts, moving the whole Trojan cycle into his new πᾶσα ἀοιδή.²

I. IMPERIAL TIMING

The shape of time in epic can be outlined in a number of ways. It may be seen as foundational or genealogical, centripetal or centrifugal, the clock in a game of chess³ or the contours on a map.⁴ Central to all these conceptions are two related ideas: the notion of boundedness and the issue of closure. Thus the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, as many ancient and modern scholars have noted, are considered paradigmatically strong teleological narratives, whose central components are linearity, causal connection, boundedness and closure.⁵ The *Iliad* is seen as marking its end by the topos of the burial of Hector and the formal device of ring composition of a father coming to hostile territory to reclaim his child, while closure is effected through the conversation between Achilles and Priam, sworn enemies who for a brief moment are reunited by being mortal.⁶ The *Odyssey*, very differently, delights first in ‘aimless’ episodes of wandering and digression whilst still ultimately organised by a quest that, however much it may be deferred by adventure, will finally achieve its goal.⁷ It therefore demonstrates for all time, as Lowe

² Q.S.12.308. Given the culminating nature of the topic for my argument, this chapter will also function as a conclusion to the thesis.

³ Lowe (2000): esp. 36–41.

⁴ Purves (2010) who uses the distinction of ‘protocartographic’ versus ‘countercartographic’ modes of narrative time.

⁵ So for Aristotle (*Poet.* 7–14). See particularly Lowe (2000) and Fowler (1997). On how the *Odyssey*, with its wandering first half, fits this model in its second half, see discussion below.

⁶ See also de Jong (2014):90.

⁷ On this way of conceptualising the *Odyssey*’s temporality, see Quint (1993):9 (from whence comes ‘aimless’), and Lowe (2000):151.

remarks, ‘that an arbitrarily open story universe can accommodate a narrative world-structure that is fully and classically closed.’⁸

We have seen in the previous chapter how the unspecified political dimension of the Homeric poems could be manipulated by the more explicitly political epics which responded to it.⁹ This manipulation is at its strongest and most evident in the treatment of Homeric time. I here return directly to Quint’s study,¹⁰ which provides a major account of how Homer’s modes of temporality were adopted and reappropriated in the later epic tradition.¹¹ Dividing, as we have seen, the history of the genre in the western tradition into two political strands – the Vergilian epics of conquest and empire that take the victors’ side¹² and the countervailing epics of the defeated and of republican liberty –¹³ Quint shows how the works within these strands draw on the narrative models offered by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* to produce opposing ideas of historical narrative: a linear, teleological narrative that belongs to the imperial conquerors, and an episodic and open-ended narrative identified with the defeated:

‘The victors experience history as a coherent, end-directed story told by their own power; the losers experience a contingency that they are powerless to shape their own ends.’¹⁴

⁸ Lowe (2000):130.

⁹ Introduction and Chapter Five.

¹⁰ Cf. Introduction (section II) and Chapter Five.

¹¹ Whilst the following analysis will focus on the epic tradition as treated in Quint’s account, it does not seek to disregard the ways in which Homeric time was also manipulated in other strands the genre. On, for instance, Apollonius’ shaping of temporality, see particularly Goldhill (1991):ch.5. I have chosen this focus primarily because, in line with the argument outlined in the previous chapter, my aim is to delineate the ways in which these different and chronologically close *imperial* epic traditions – Greek and Latin – diverge in their treatment of the same themes.

¹² Quint focuses on the *Aeneid* itself, Camoes’s *Lusíadas*, Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata*.

¹³ Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, Ercilla’s *Araucana*, and d’Aubigné’s *Les tragiques*. On politicised time in Lucan, see also Masters (1992).

¹⁴ Quint (1993):9.

This binary between the closed and the open epic has long been challenged by scholars concerned with the literary-criticism of closure; most successfully in Fowler's second thoughts on the subject, which warn against subscribing too uncritically to the 'big myths' surrounding closure, which posit an oversimplifying contrast between determined and ambiguous narratives.¹⁵ However, such caveats also confirm that a sense of contrast *is* there to be deconstructed, and was a particularly strong aspect of the epic tradition. Fowler himself acknowledges the importance of the epic teleology that plays itself out in the *Aeneid* and its silver-age successors, and concedes that real linkages exist in these texts between closure and the imposition of power. Hardie's study of closure in Latin epic affirms this point, showing how the classic instance of ambiguous closure in the ending of the *Aeneid* has its issues taken up again in the ostensibly 'rounded-off' conclusions of the *Thebaid* and the *Punica*.¹⁶ The split between open and closed temporal narratives is thus established and explored in such works, proving meaningful Martindale's formulation that the 'refusal of closure is a discourse on closure';¹⁷ and such readings are right to stress the cultural contingencies on which this split is based.¹⁸

I have dedicated time to recapitulating this model of dichotomised, politicised time because whilst it has proven durable for the study of the western phases of the epic tradition, it has not in any detail been considered against the epic of imperial Greece. And yet the mythological works from this era present an important test-case for such 'thoughts on closure.' These works too are intensely concerned with issues of temporality; and thematise their concern in ways akin to the subjects of the above studies. As 'epics of empire', they are also, as we have seen, written on the cusp of an imperial world in various stages of transition:¹⁹ for these poets too there is the possibility of a 'real linkage' between textual closure and imperial power.

¹⁵ Fowler (1997).

¹⁶ Hardie (1997), expanding on Hardie (1993).

¹⁷ Martindale (1993):38.

¹⁸ Fowler (1997) uses the phrase 'cultural segmentation.'

¹⁹ See discussion in the Introduction.

To consider briefly some contrasting examples, Triphiodorus' epyllion is programmatically teleological: he cannot end his poem fast enough. The very first word, amusingly and paradoxically, is τέρμα: meaning both the 'end' and a turning point – *qua* the post in a chariot race.²⁰ The request that follows, that Calliope πολὺν διὰ μῦθον ἀνεῖσα (3) can be taken to acknowledge the many *muthoi*, or the single long one,²¹ previously expounded on the topic of the Trojan war: as belated adopter of this theme, the poet is determined not to linger. And in asking the Muse to release her theme in swift song – ταχείη λύσον ἀοιδῇ (5) – Triphiodorus points more technically to the swift resolution of a plot: *lusis* since Aristotle denoted a term for literary closure.²²

Other later Greek epics are less temporally straight- (or fast-) forward. The swirling, convoluted timeframe of Nonnus' *Dionysiaca* resolutely defies a linear chronology. The hugely extended battle narrative between Dionysus and the Indians winds its way forwards and back through Dionysiac pre-births,²³ analepses within prolepses within analepses,²⁴ delays and double proems, and then suddenly ends in a flash. Goldhill has recently identified this style of narrative with a form of typological texturing, 'the redrafting of linear time into a swirl of mythic and literary paradigms...a wilful playfulness with temporal order', which he aptly terms, with due attention to etymology, a 'preposterous poetics.'²⁵

Colluthus' *The Abduction of Helen*, heavily indebted to Nonnus, may be seen as equally, if differently 'preposterous.' In its pre-Homeric focus on the gestation of the Trojan conflict, the poem foregrounds concepts of primordiality and inception – asking ὡγυγίη δὲ τίς ἔπλετο

²⁰ Cf. Chapter Three.

²¹ Depending on whether one takes πολύς here more literally, to mean 'many', or more conceptually, meaning 'great'. Cf. the discussion of Quintus' use of πᾶς along these lines in Chapter Three.

²² Arist. *Poet.* 18.

²³ Namely Zagreus in *Dion.* 6.155–204.

²⁴ Examples include the inset tale of Aphrodite's weaving contest with Athena recalled in song by Leucus at the end of *Dion.* 24; the two omens foretelling Dionysus' victory (38); and Heracles' account of the founding of Tyre (40).

²⁵ Goldhill (2015):158.

νείκεος ἀρχή; (10) – and unfolds its events in a series of expanded and contracted episodes. In the opening scene, for instance, Colluthus gives very few details about the wedding of Peleus, but instead treats his reader to a mythically learned rollcall of famous attendees (17–40). When Paris travels to Sparta, many lines are dedicated to describing the famous sights that he sees during his journey (211–30), but we hear nothing of his impressions when he first looks at Helen, Greek literature’s most famously beautiful woman (253–8).²⁶ This tendency to condense and suppress major moments, and shift perspective instead onto ‘off-piste’ details, can be read as Colluthus’ method of recalibrating a story whose trajectory is predetermined and well-known, creating alternative techniques of a suspense in a plot that has already worked itself out.²⁷

Oppian’s *Halieutica* – though neither mythological nor narrative epic – destabilises time in another drastic way.²⁸ The sea is established at the start of the poem as a counter-genealogical space, unknowable and unending:

μυρία μὲν δὴ φῦλα καὶ ἄκριτα βένθεσι πόντου
 ἐμφέρεται πλώοντα· τὰ δ’ οὐ κέ τις ἔξονομήναι
 ἀτρεκέως· οὐ γάρ τις ἐφίκετο τέρμα θαλάσσης·
 ἀλλὰ τριηκοσίων ὄργυιῶν ἄχρι μάλιστα
 ἀνέρες ἵσασίν τε καὶ ἔδρακον Ἀμφιτρίτην.
 πολλὰ δ’ (ἀπειρεσίη γὰρ ἀμετροβαθής τε θάλασσα)

²⁶ Helen ‘suddenly’ (ἐξαπίνης, 255) appears, and she is described as gazing at Paris (κόρον δ’ ούκ εῖχεν ὀπωπῆς, 259), not the other way around.

²⁷ For my arguments in favour of taking the details of the judgement story as still extremely well-known in Late Antiquity, despite the contentions over how extant the ‘base text’ of these stories, the Epic Cycle, remained in this era, see discussion in the Introduction.

²⁸ I have included the *Halieutica* in this survey despite the fact that it is not mythological narrative epic (cf. e.g. Bowie (1988) and (1989b)), firstly due to its close engagement with Homeric mythological and literary themes, and secondly and most importantly because of the strong intertextual relationship between Oppian and Quintus, which I discuss in detail in below. It represents, I shall argue, an important model for certain aspects of the *Posthomeric*’s treatment of epic time.

κέκρυπται, τά κεν οῦ τις ἀείδελα μυθήσαιτο

Θνητὸς ἐών· ὄλιγος δὲ νόος μερόπεσσι καὶ ἀλκῇ. (*Halieutica* 1.80–7)

As it expounds this unexpoundable topic, the didactic voice repeatedly establishes teleologies, taxonomies and structures only to deconstruct them once again. The fish have individual end-points – each species from the tiny prawn to the mighty sea-monster gets its own ‘life cycle’ – but the poem which contains them does not end so neatly. The death of the κῆτος (5.71–349), is crammed with teleological language,²⁹ set up clearly to be the poem’s grand finale, only for this expectation to be undermined as we find that there are still more fish-cycles to come.³⁰

These examples serve to show how in and across these epics, the relationship between the teleological and the episodic and the opposition between open and closed narratives is not so easy to map. These poets seem, extremely self-consciously, to make use of multiple, competing models of time. The Trojan poems in particular revel in the contradictions of their ‘ante-Homeric’ positions, bringing to the fore the clash between chronological earliness and literary lateness that such a position entails.

The previous chapters have argued that the *Posthomerica* provides a critical focus-point for comprehending the significance of certain themes in this imperial Greek material. It will be my central claim in this chapter that this is particularly true for issues of temporality. Quintus shows a strong awareness of the different models of epic time available to him, derived specifically from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Thematising delay, acceleration, beginnings and ends as a self-reflexive commentary³¹ he merges cyclic³² and teleological frameworks in ways directly comparable with the other imperial Greek texts discussed here. However, once again,

²⁹ Further discussion of the passage in section V.

³⁰ The poem continues for another 331 lines after this episode.

³¹ As Fowler (1997) argues for the texts on which his volume focuses.

³² It must be stressed here, and will be stressed throughout this chapter, that ‘cyclic’ in relation to the *Posthomerica* does not mean the open-ended *oral* nature of the Homeric poems in their pre-fixation form: rather, it will be taken to refer to the possibilities for expansion and repetition as they are found in the fixed, final and written forms of the Homeric poems, in light of the framework outlined in Chapter One.

the Homeric impersonation – the defining feature of the *Posthomerica*, whose importance this thesis has focused on exploring – profoundly affects how we interpret these manoeuvres. Through his narrative position in the *middle* of the two Homeric plots³³ Quintus too takes up the different modes of narrative offered via the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*: but rather than contrasting them,³⁴ he suggests their fundamental consistency by making them operate within one, unified text. The poem thus removes the dichotomy between linear and open-ended models by re-reading time as it appears in Homeric epic itself.³⁵ The effects of this process, I shall ultimately suggest, provide the strongest indication of how the *Posthomerica* represents a different, more positive response to the challenges of this particular imperial period of identity-negotiation. If, for Quint, closed epic belongs to the victors, and open-ended narratives to the conquered, then considered as a product of ‘Greek culture under Rome’, the *Posthomerica*’s unified view of Homeric time unsettles the sides of this equation, to reclaim an open *and* closed narrative for so-called *Graecia capta*.³⁶

³³ That is, he is not ante-Homeric like Colluthus or Nonnus.

³⁴ Cf. e.g. Quint’s account of the *Aeneid* in this respect, (1993):50, a poem which also makes use of both the narrative forms in one text but in a contrastive way: ‘the poem falls into two halves... the first, modelled on the *Odyssey*, recounts the romance wanderings that detain Aeneas. The second, modelled on the *Iliad*, tells of the epic warfare from which they emerge victorious and will eventually lead to the foundation and history of Rome [i.e. *imperium...sine fine*]. The process by which the Trojans go from being losers to winners thus matches the movement in the poem from one narrative form to another, from romance to epic.’

³⁵ It is not my suggestion that we are to think of Quintus as subscribing wholly to the idea of epic time as outlined in Quint. I shall rather aim to show that the *Posthomerica* itself suggests the ways in which the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* can be read as contrasting models of time, and works to bring these models together.

³⁶ For the relevance of considering the relationship between Greece and Rome in this way, despite the recent shifts away from the clichéd accounts so often instigated by this Horatian line, see discussion in the Introduction and Chapter One. On how Quintus incorporates Rome into his Homeric-Greek cultural aetiology, see section IV of this chapter.

II. PACING: ACCELERATION AND DELAY

An acute preoccupation with time as a structural and thematic feature is revealed from the outset of the poem. We have seen how its first word is, unusually and programmatically, a temporal connective (*εὗτε*).³⁷ From here on in, pivotal moments in the narrative are accompanied by both discussions and images of time. Before the arrival of Philoctetes, a key turning point in the narrative trajectory,³⁸ Deiphobus remarks how everything changes in time (*τὰ δὲ πάντα χρόνῳ μεταμείβεται ἔργα*, Q.S.9.109). During the construction of the Wooden Horse, the narrator reflects on how the contraption will be an object of wonder, both for those who see it now, and those who will learn of it later (*μετόπισθε*, Q.S.12.155–6). In the same scene, Zeus puts an end to divine conflict by arriving on his chariot, made by ἄμβροτος Αἰών (Q.S.12.193). *Aion*, a word which means ‘age’, ‘epoch’, ‘space of time’, stands for a universal figure of *endless* time, and spans archaic Greek, astrological, Orphic and Christian traditions. It is heavily personified in Nonnus’ *Dionysiaca*, and plays a role as a character in the poem.³⁹ It appears far more infrequently in the *Posthomerica*, and is never fully personified.⁴⁰ By making a rare reference to it here, at the moment that the famous Homeric theomachy is replayed, Quintus encases universal time into a singular literary moment. The scene provides a neat example of how he merges different ways of envisaging time: Homeric back-reference, Olympian plot-determination⁴¹ and cyclical temporality come together in one sweeping allusion.

³⁷ Discussion and references in Chapter Four.

³⁸ Further discussion of this episode in section III.

³⁹ *Dion*.6.371–2; 7.9ff; 24.265–7; 12.25; 25.23–4; 38.90–5.

⁴⁰ It is used fourteen times (Q.S.2.206, 544; 3.319, 569; 5.477, 555; 6.586; 8.433; 10.341, 440; 11.485; 12.194; 14.256, 2.506), compared to eighteen instances of *χρόνος* (Q.S.2.344, 256; 3.479; 6.426; 7.458, 612, 630; 9.22, 109, 281; 10.23, 29, 32; 12.14, 59, 365; 14.219, 245).

⁴¹ Zeus acts here to prevent the plot from losing focus on the momentum of the sack, in the way described for divine counterfactuals in Chapter Five.

This merging is paralleled on a larger scale in the poem's structure. We have seen in the previous chapter how the narrative is constructed around a particular form of episodicity. Thus, with the exception of two simultaneously-occurring scenes⁴² and analepses flashing back to past events,⁴³ the action unfolds in a linear, straightforward manner: from hero to hero, battle to battle, the story moves with each book closer to the pre-determined fall – to achieving the closure which, we are at this stage to assume, will come with the capture of Troy (ώς ἥδη στονόεντι καταιθομένης πυρὶ Τροίης, Q.S.1.10). This sense of linearity, however, is set in stark contrast with a competing vector of time: the emphasis on delay and exhaustion which is also pursued extensively in the narrative, as the pace constantly shifts between acute acceleration and lethargic slowing down; pausing over the inconsequential, almost grinding to a halt.

On the one hand, such variation of speed is standard prospect in all good storytelling. The opposition of *diegesis* and *ekphrasis*, the advance of the storyline versus delay through description, is a hallmark of structuralist literary criticism; and, as we have seen, is used extensively in ancient epic. And yet as the examples of Triphiodorus, Oppian, Nonnus and Colluthus make clear, an interest in matters of pace became sharpened in later Greek mythological poetics, where it can be viewed as a means of adumbrating a storyline whose central components and ultimate outcome are anticipated and accepted. Quintus' poem offers a distinctive example of this trend. Acceleration and delay become central narrative strategies in the *Posthomerica*, contraposed relentlessly. There are three areas of the poem in which this tug between speed and sluggishness is at its most insistent, and which also best suggest the interpretative effects of this contrast: battle scenes, prophesies and descriptions of disembodiment. In such moments, Quintus uses pace variation to establish his epic as both strictly linear (with the sack as telos) and 'wandering and random' (with the sack not the telos at all). In an epic which begins with the assertion that Troy has already fallen, the blending of

⁴² The voyages to Skyros and Lemnos, in Q.S.7.169–345 and 9.353–445.

⁴³ On which see Chapter Four.

speed and delay works to undermine this foregone sense of closure; as the poem radically interrogates both sides of the ‘dichotomy’ of epic time.

The heroic battle becomes the stage for the dramatisation of pacing. In the successive series of duels, Quintus centralises competing notions of balance and unevenness: the warriors seem at certain points to be completely matched in their prowess, and at others to be entirely uneven – with one destined to triumph over the other. This oscillation is of course a common feature of epic battle descriptions,⁴⁴ but it becomes especially pronounced in the *Posthomerica*, where it also maps closely onto ideas of narrative speed. Each fight can be read as both swift and quickly resolved, with a pre-determined endpoint shown by the obviously superior fighter, and, in the moments where things seem to be evenly-matched and static, as elongated and capable of dragging on interminably. In this sense, the individual battles can provide miniature visions of the Trojan War itself: the epic subject which, as Quintus’ opening shows, has always already been won, but is also continually reiterated and stretched back out.

The extended standoff between Achilles and Memnon once again⁴⁵ provides a clear example of this technique. Memnon’s arrival includes a proleptic reference to his impending defeat:

ώς φάθ’· ο δ’ ἐκ δόρποιο μεθίστατο· βῆ δὲ πρὸς εύνήν
ὑστατίην... (Q.S.2.161–2)

This type of fatalistic forward-glance is also common in epic.⁴⁶ But here it is used specifically to mark as ‘pointless’ the drawn-out battle to come. In the confrontation itself (Q.S.2.458–513) terms for evenness, balance and equality abound: ἀμφοτέροισι, ἀκαμάτους..., πολλάκις..., ἄμφω...; ἀπειρέσιον πονέεσθαι/δῆριν ἀνὰ στονόεσσαν· “Ἄρης δ’ οὐ λῆγε φόνοιο (483–5), set in contrast with competing words for speed (e.g. θοῶς, 509). This contrast is continued through

⁴⁴ The dizzying chases between Achilles and Hector (*Il.*22.130–305) and Aeneas and Turnus (*Aen.*12.697–918) are among the most famous examples.

⁴⁵ Cf. the discussions of this passage in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

⁴⁶ Cf. e.g. the prolepses of this sort discussed for Penthesilea, Memnon and Eurypylus in Chapter Five.

digression. Whilst the Olympians look on and take sides (another manifestation of balance), the narrative breaks off into a vista of zodiac constellations:

δείδιε δ' Ἡριγένεια φίλω περὶ παιδὶ καὶ αὐτὴ
ἴπποις ἐμβεβαῦα δι' αἰθέρος· αἱ δέ οἱ ἄγχι
Ἡελίοιο θύγατρες ἐθάμβεον ἐστηυῖαι
θεσπεσιὸν περὶ κύκλον, ὃν ἡελίῳ ἀκάμαντι
Ζεὺς πόρεν εἰς ἐνιαυτὸν ἐϋν δρόμον, ὡς περὶ πάντα
ζώει τε φθινύθει τε περιπλομένοιο κατ' ἵμαρ
νωλεμέως αἰῶνος ἐλισσομένων ἐνιαυτῶν. (Q.S.2.500–6)⁴⁷

As the stalemate is finally broken, and the ‘endless’ fight is about to come to an end (cf. Q.S.2.507–13), our attention is focused on an image which offers a parallel expression of the competing types of time in this scene: unstoppable linearity (everything lives and dies, $\zeta\omegaι\tau\epsilon$ $\phi\thetaινύθει$)⁴⁸ versus unending, universal cyclicality (the image of the κύκλος, the rolling years, and another appearance of *Aion*). This battle thus encapsulates many of the linear and non-linear qualities of Quintan poetics, and drives these features into explicit textual contact.⁴⁹

Heroic death provides another means of visualising pace in the poem; most notably the death of Achilles – the thematically drastic but mythically inevitable removal of the *Iliad*'s central

⁴⁷ This circle of the sun occupied by the Heliades is outlined in Aratus' *Pheanomena* (544–52) and occurs again later on in this book of Quintus (2.594–62) where the seasons are described in terms of their association with the circle. See James (2004):279.

⁴⁸ This sentiment, in its reminiscence of the opening of Glaucus' speech to Diomedes (*Il.6.145–9*), may be argued in fact to be cyclical—as one race of men passes away, another springs up in its place. However, my reading is that the mention of death, and the lack of the explicitly replenishing imagery such as Glaucus' nature simile, provides a form of teleology here; a human life will inevitably pass into death.

⁴⁹ Other passages usefully to be cross compared in this regard include Q.S.8.133–220 – where Neoptolemus and Euryalus fight with an evenness similar to that found here (see discussion of this passage in Chapter Five) – and the boxing match at Q.S.4.215–83, which offers a ‘comic’ miniature of the same dynamics.

hero (Q.S.3.60–177). Shot by Apollo’s arrow, Achilles falls at once, with framing adverbs for swiftness, aorist verbs of completion, and a simile denoting total collapse:

καὶ ἐ θιῶς οὕτησε κατὰ σφυρόν· αἴψα δ' ἀνῖαι
δῦσαν ὑπὸ κραδίην· ὁ δ' ἀνετράπετ' ἡὕτε πύργος,
ὅν τε βίη τυφῶνος ὑποχθονίῃ στροφάλιγγι
ρήξῃ ὑπέρ δαπέδοιο κραδαινομένης βαθὺ γαίης·
ώς ἐκλίθη δέμας ἡὺ κατ' οῦδεος Αἰακίδαο. (Q.S.3.62-6)

The simile (ἥϋτε πύργος...63) also contains a prolepsis – the reference to a tower points forwards to the ultimate destruction of Troy ⁵⁰ which encourages a connection between the categorical death of this hero and the finality of the fall.

This is, however, a false telos. Immediately after he is struck, Achilles speaks (68–83) and refers back to the Iliadic prophecy at the Scaean gates.⁵¹ This recollection on the one hand serves as a reminder of the inevitability of the hero’s early death, prescribed and predicted in the earlier literary tradition (a tradition here marked as τὸ πάροιθε, 80). However, on the other hand, it paradoxically provides a means of delaying this death, through the very narrative time taken up by giving this speech. Though dying, Achilles still finds time to allude to the *Iliad*, pausing to resurrect conversations from the literary ‘before.’ What is more, the Iliadic prophecy to which he refers predicted that he would be killed ‘by Paris *and* Phoebus Apollo.’ In the surprise created by the absence of Paris here, the forward onslaught of the plot is derailed by this disorientating literary misdirection.

The sense of suspension continues in the second recollection of the episode (Q.S.3.91–138). Hera’s rebuke of Apollo also suspends Achilles’ death to look further backwards – to the

⁵⁰ For Troy's frequent association with towers, see discussion in Chapter Three.

⁵¹ *Il.22.359–60.* For further discussion of this reference, see Chapter Four.

wedding of Peleus – and to propel everything forwards, in that her speech also foretells the imminent arrival of Neoptolemus (υἱὸς ἀπὸ Σκύροιο θοῶς ἐς ἀπηνέα δῆριν/Ἄργείοις ἐπαρωγός ἐλεύσεται εἴκελος ἀλκήν/πατρὶ ἔῷ... 120–2). She thereby predicts the next phase of the Quintan process of heroic substitution;⁵² but by discussing this arrival, she also delays the reader from reaching the point in the narrative where this process is fulfilled.

Achilles then steals narrative space back from Hera: in the half-line at 138 he reasserts himself into the very syntax of the poem:

κρύβδ' Ἡρης· πάντες γὰρ ἐναντίον Ούρανίωνες
ἄζοντ' ἀσχαλόωσαν. ὁ δ' οὐ πω λήθετο θυμοῦ
Πηλεΐδης.... (Q.S.3.137–9)

As he rages on, a simile compares him to a lion struck by a shaft (...εὗτε λέοντος ἀγρόται ἐν ξυλόχοισι τεθηπότες...Q.S.3.142–3). Lions, of course, are one of the most frequent Homeric comparanda for Achilles, used in the *Iliad* to emphasise both his fearsome violence and his swift-footed speed. The simile during the interview with Priam links these two characteristics directly. As his *menis* is momentarily reignited, Achilles is described as lionlike in his leap:

ώς ἔφατ', ἔδεισεν δ' ὃ γέρων καὶ ἐπείθετο μύθῳ.
Πηλεΐδης δ' οἴκοιο λέων ὡς ὅλτο θύραζε... (*Il*.24.571–2)

In Quintus' comparison, Achilles has shifted from the hunted lion to the wounded prey, but as the main narrative resumes, we find reminders of his former agility: the lion in the vehicle and the language in the tenor come together to evoke the Achilles of *Iliad* 24:⁵³

⁵² Cf. Chapter Five.

⁵³ This provides another example of Quintus' techniques of refocusing Homeric similes as outlined in Chapter Two.

ώς ἄρα Πηλείδαο χόλος καὶ λοίγιον ἔλκος
θυμὸν ἄδην ὄροθυνε· θεοῦ δέ μιν ίὸς ἐδάμνα.
ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς ἀνόρουσε καὶ ἐνθορε δυσμενέεσσι... (Q.S.3.147–9)

As his limbs finally grow cold, still Achilles lingers on (164–9). His *thumos* ebbs away (ἀπήιε θυμός, 164), a slow, eked-out withdrawal in the imperfect, in contrast to the aorists in the crashing fall of the opening of this scene. He also speaks even more (167–9); threatening the Trojans and continuing the fear which caused their paralysis at the poem’s opening.

In his own poetics of delay, Oppian extends the death of the κῆτος so as to undercut the episode’s status as the telos of his epic:

...ἀλλ’ ὅτε χέρσω
ἐμπελάσῃ, τότε δή μιν ἐτήτυμος ὕρσεν ὄλεθρος
λοίσθιος ἀσπαίρει τε διαξαίνει τε θάλασσαν
σμερδαλέαις πτερύγεσσιν, ἃτ’ εύτύκτῳ περὶ βωμῷ
ὅρνις ἐλισσομένη θανάτου στροφάλιγγι κελαινῇ, (Halieutica 5.304–8)

πλῆσεν δ’ ἡόνα πᾶσαν ὑπ’ ἀπλάτοις μελέεσσι
κεκλιμένοις, τέταται δὲ νέκυς ρίγιστος ιδέσθαι.
τοῦ μέν τις φθιμένοιο καὶ ἐν χθονὶ πεπταμένοιο
εἰσέτι δειμαίνει πελάσαι δυσδερκέῃ νεκρῷ
ταρβεῖ τ’ οὐκέτ’ ἔόντα καὶ οἰχομένοιό περ ἔμπης... (Halieutica 5.317–21)

The parallels with Quintus’ dying Achilles are striking. The monster also rails against a death which has been categorically dispensed to it (described as a μόρου τέλος, *Halieutica* 5.293). And the fear induced by its corpse mirrors the Trojan’s reaction: οἱ δ’ ἔτι θυμῷ/δήιοι εἰσορόωντες ἀπειρέσιον τρομέεσκον, Q.S.3.179–80. If, as is suggested by such parallels, the Oppianic sequence was a model for the Achilles scene, then it provides an apt example of Quintus’ re-appropriation of imperial Greek techniques of delay. Reading the Oppianic κῆτος

as a symbol for protracted epic death, Quintus elevates these techniques to central poetic importance; using them for a character whose death most strongly indicates a move away from the *Iliad* into a new heroic space. The Homeric hero of speed, and also the paradigmatic figure of delay,⁵⁴ is in his final moments transformed by Quintus into an expression of both of these forces at once, revealing how they are put to work together in this epic.

Against this sense of delay, Quintus sets the equal and opposite force: an acute acceleration past events of potentially pivotal importance to the plot. After the death of Paris, the narrative shifts to another celestial vista (Q.S.10.334–443). The maidens of Hera discuss events which are to take place in the near-future, conveyed to the reader via reported speech (343–60): the marriage of Helen to Deiphobus; Helenus’ jealous rage; how the Achaeans will capture Helenus, and Diomedes and Odysseus will scale the walls of Troy; the subsequent death of Alcathus, and finally the theft of the Palladium, the image ‘which had protected the city and the people’ (354).⁵⁵

These events are later marked by Quintus as highly significant to the story which the *Posthomerica* is telling. As Menelaus hacks his way through Troy, he encounters Deiphobus in bed with Helen, and takes revenge on the marriage predicted by these prophecies (Q.S.13.354–73). The Palladium’s importance for the capture of Troy is confirmed when Odysseus sets out his plan for the *dolos* of the horse (Q.S.12.25–45). He suggests that the appeasement of Athena’s anger will provide the excuse for offering the gift to the Trojans; an implicit allusion, as is stated directly in Vergil’s *Aeneid* (2.162–88), to the theft of the Palladium which triggered her rage in the first place. The gap, however, between the maidens’

⁵⁴ Achilles spends eighteen books of the *Iliad* refusing to fight, and his absence suspends the fulfilment of the ‘telos’ of Greek victory over Troy.

⁵⁵ As James (2004):321 notes, all of these events, except the killing of Alcathus which is not otherwise attested, were included in the *Little Iliad*, but not in the same order, nor (so far as we can tell) as a connected sequence. What interests me here is not that Quintus includes these well-known events, but how he includes them, as part of his poetics of pacing.

prophecies and their narrative fulfilment is in this poem left open. The events are subjected to a leap in time: foretold in the future during this celestial conversation, they move immediately into the past tense. Athena has been made angry by the time Odysseus gives his speech, and when Menelaus enters Troy, Deiphobus and Helen are already married, happily consummating as revenge is taken. Quintus denies these turning points a place in his primary narration.

The poetics of acceleration in later Greek epic, as we have seen,⁵⁶ is usually associated with the epyllion. As is revealed in Colluthus' compression of the major facts of the Paris myth, or Triphiodorus' amusingly explicit sense of haste, the 'little epic' form well-accommodates discussions of speed, methods of condensing and shifting perspectives.⁵⁷ This prophecy sequence in Quintus – a scene which has received surprisingly little attention among scholars – suggests that these ideas also find voice in his larger-scale project. Whilst for Triphiodorus speed is *the* programmatic statement of authorial agenda, in the *Posthomerica* the concept of rushing is worked to achieve a different, more contrastive effect. The fact that the narrative zooms past such major events throws even more emphasis on how drawn-out other moments are (the pointless battle, the slow death of swift Achilles). Working together, these alternative impulses help to create the varied temporal texture of the poem; where speed *and* delay, linearity and circumvention both claim a driving role.

The final area to be discussed shows how these two types of pace can be more jarringly juxtaposed. Immediately before the turning point of the horse ruse, Quintus dedicates an entire book to the continued fighting between the Trojans and Greeks (Q.S.11). This is a section of the epic where, in one sense, many things happen. The Trojans are roused by Apollo (139), one of only two times a god talks directly to mortals in the poem.⁵⁸ Aeneas is snatched away from harm (289–97). Odysseus attempts to break the stalemate by inventing a new weapon formation

⁵⁶ Cf. Section I.

⁵⁷ See Tomasso (2012) on the relationship between speed and form in Triphiodorus.

⁵⁸ The only other instance is the hubristic exchange with Achilles of Q.S.3.40–59.

(358–414).⁵⁹ And the Greek soldier Alcimedon climbs the Trojan wall and gets within peeping distance of the city (446–73). In another sense, however, nothing happens at all. These points of action are foiled by equal, and stagnating reactions. Neoptolemus is kept away from Aeneas; Odysseus' plan is foiled; and Alcimedon is killed before completing his climb.⁶⁰

This is a book based on stasis: the action stands us still. We know that the sack is coming, that the *dolos* is around the narrative corner; a fact stressed at the opening of the following book, as Calchas cries μηκέτι πάρ τείχεσσιν ἐφεζόμενοι πονέεσθε,/ἀλλ’ ἄλλην τινὰ μῆτιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μητιάασθε/καὶ δόλον, Q.S.12.8–10. And yet despite such assertions of momentum, in this sequence we indulge the feeling of endlessness, as delay is promoted to the central component of the narrative. The language is filled with terms for both stoppage and acceleration. The battle is repeatedly described as endless (μάχη δ’ οὐ λῆγε φόνοιο, (4); ...οἱ δ’ οὕτι κακοῦ παύοντο μόθοιο, (162); ἐκάτερθε ἵσην ἐτάνυσσεν Ἐνυώ ὑσμίνην...(237-8); ἀλλὰ καὶ ὡς μάρναντο (251)); but Aeneas is also snatched away quickly (ἥρπασεν ἐσσυμένως, 291), the Argives leap with fast fury (ἐν γάρ σφιν θήρεσσιν ἐοικότες ὥμοβόροισιν/ἐνθορον Ἀργεῖοι μέγα μαιμώντες”Ἄρηι 300–1) and slaughtered warriors die at once (ταχὺς δ’ ἅμ’ ἀπέπτατο θυμός, 59). This contrast concentrates the lexical tensions between speed and lethargy found in the earlier scenes of the poem, and enacts on the level of language the characters' thwarted attempts to break the stalemate, as the narrative resists its own attempts to hurry on.

Delay is also expressed in this book through the image of disembodiment. On four occasions, Quintus describes body parts bluntly severed from their owners, but which retain signs of life. Nirus' tongue is cut clean from his jaw (πέρησε, 28, another aorist completed verb),⁶¹ but it still ‘speaks with a human voice’ (γλῶσσάν τ’ αὐδήσσαν, 29). A Trojan soldier Pyrasos is deprived of his head, and rolls away still eager to talk (κάρη δ’ ἀπάτερθε κυλινδομένη πεφόρητο/φωνῆς ἰεμένοιο...58–9). The arm of Hellos is sliced off, but wants to carry on

⁵⁹ I return to the details of this trick in section IV.

⁶⁰ Akin to Patroclus' failed attempts to scale the wall at *Il.*16.698–712.

⁶¹ Cf. Q.S.3.62–6.

working (70–8). And most elaborately, an anonymous Argive (τις Ἀργείων, 184) is killed by Agenor, but when his body falls over his horse, a hand remains attached to the reins:

όστέον ούταμένοιο βραχίονος· ἀμφὶ δὲ νεῦρα
ρηιδίως ἥμησε· φλέβες δ' ὑπερέβλυσαν αἷμα·
ἀμφεχύθη δ' ἵπποιο κατ' αὐχένος, αἴψα δ' ἄρ' αὐτὸς
κάππεσεν ἀμφὶ νέκυς<σι>· λίπε<ν> δ' ἄρα χεῖρα κραταιήν
στερρὸν ἔτ εμπεφυσῖαν ἐυγνάμπτοιο χαλινοῦ,
οἵη ἔτι ζώοντος ἔην· μέγα δ' ἔπλετο θαῦμα,
οὕνεκα δὴ ρυτῆρος ἀπεκρέμαθ' αἰματόεσσα
Ἄρεος ἐννεσίησι φόβον δηίοισι φέρουσα·
φαίης κεν χατέουσαν ἔθ' ἵππασίης πονέεσθαι·
σῆμα δέ μιν φέρεν ἵππος ἀποκταμένοιο ἄνακτος. (Q.S.11.191–200)

Here again the agency of anatomical parts is emphasised: but this is agency of a different sort to the eager tongue and severed arm. The Argive's hand only *seems* to be living still (οἵη ἔτι ζώοντος ἔην), it is the object of analogy and comparison (φαίης κεν), and its real destiny is to become a cause of wonderment and a σῆμα of its master.⁶² The gruesome relic of the hand thus commemorates an otherwise insignificant character, and grants him space in this book of inaction.

Such disembodied imagery has clear epic precedent. Heads roll on the point of speaking in Iliadic *aristeiai*;⁶³ and during the Odyssean battle in the banquet-hall, the suitor Antinous is shot ‘on the point of raising the wine goblet to his lips’ (*Od.22.8–12*). It was also a popular subject in imperial rhetorical culture: Polemo for example gives an extended, gruesome description of the hand of a Greek soldier which remains attached to a ship after it has been cut

⁶² Cf. the conception of the Wooden Horse as such a commemorative monument, as discussed in section II.

⁶³ Particularly those of *Iliad 5* (e.g. Aeneas' sliced hip-skin at *Il.5.304–10*).

off.⁶⁴ However even as versions of such topoi, Quintus' severed parts focus particularly acutely on the paradoxes of detachment and remaining, and this duality can help to express the pace that his epic is concerned with establishing. The immediacy of instant dismemberment is set against the expansion of time produced by the parts' continued half-life, which forms an index of the competing drives towards closure which characterise the wider plotting.

The final lines of the book encapsulate these drives:

νωλεμέως· οὐ γάρ τι κακοῦ παύοντο μόθοιο·
οὐδέ σφιν μάλα δηρὸν ὑπ' Ἀρεῖ τειρομένοισιν
ἔσκε λύσις καμάτοιο· πόνος δ' ἄπρηκτος ὄρώρει. (Q.S.11.499–501)

Lusis, as we have seen, can evoke the Aristotelian term for the resolution of plot, and was used thus by Triphiodorus to kick-start the accelerative tone of his epic. By ending this sequence by *denying* such a *lusis*, Quintus makes a rival claim for the benefits of slowing down. This book without resolution thereby asserts an agenda which will reincorporate moments of haste into a more expansive, meandering vision.

This section has shown the means by which Quintus charts his preoccupation with issues of time, and merges two different methods of shaping it. Acceleration is used to gesture towards the teleological and linear style of his story – the closure of the sack that has already happened, the move towards the *Odyssey* which must follow this poem – and delay works to gesture away from it – towards the wandering, cyclic, or interminable nature of some of the moments within this story pattern. These two vectors thus establish the wide-ranging temporal perspective of the poem. In a self-declared Iliadic continuation (*εὗτε...1.1*) which both serves as a prequel to and post-dates the *Odyssey*, this is a narrative texture which insists on the confrontation of what

⁶⁴ Polemo, *Declamation* 1:10–11, in Reader (ed.) (1996):104–5. On Quintus' relationship to this rhetorical culture, see Chapter One.

it means to put off the inevitable, a question essential for expanding a literary space whose boundaries are strictly established.⁶⁵

Given this relationship between narrative time and poetic position, the next part of this chapter will consider how these techniques are related by Quintus to Homeric epic itself. If, as I began this chapter by discussing, the *Iliad* is seen as the characteristic ‘tightly controlled’ plot, which marks its end-game strongly, and the *Odyssey* is viewed as its alternative narrative form, whose end-game (also definitely present) is delayed by the seemingly ‘aimless’ deferrals of adventure; and if many epics expressed their ideological positions by drawing on these epics *as* contrasting ways of figuring time, then Quintus must work to establish both forms as a constitutive part of *the same* Homeric text. The next three sections will each consider a specific marker which Quintus uses to combine the temporality found in the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, affirming his own narrative as a connective between the two story-worlds.

III. STRAINING: PLOT CONTROL AND THE COUNTERFACTUAL

The device of hypothetical narration has long been recognised as a key technique for analysing alternatives in epic; of exploring different options within teleological story-types. When Homer describes how, if Patroclus had scaled the wall of Troy and had not been stopped by Apollo, the Greeks might have taken the city there and then (*Il.16.698–712*), he flirts with a feat which the audience knows would have short-circuited both Achilles’ glory and the canonical mythology surrounding the sack. The counterfactual thus reveals a delicate balance between the glimpse of an opportunity to revolutionise the epic world – by fundamentally changing the plot – and the inevitable prevention of such change by the gods.⁶⁶ It articulates, above all, ‘a past that has not happened.’⁶⁷

⁶⁵ As I have argued in Chapter One.

⁶⁶ On this process, see the excellent discussion by Chaudhuri (2014):25.

⁶⁷ Wohl (ed.) (2014): introduction.

Quintus makes ample use of the counterfactual. There are 37 counterfactual scenarios in total,⁶⁸ almost all marked with the specific lexical tag *εἰ μή*. These involve a wide range of ‘control agents’⁶⁹ – forces which intervene to prevent the alternative scenario from being actualised: the gods, fate, night, mist, and even human characters. This range and density suggests a particular significance. Through the opportunity to display the seams of a plot decision, to mark the alternative routes that the narrative has not taken, the counterfactual provides the perfect prism for Quintus to gesture towards a more aggressive uprooting of the poetic tradition, all the while maintaining the dictates of that tradition, by pointing to his ultimate adherence to the ‘rules’ laid down by the two parts of Homer’s canon.

In the lead up to his suicide, Ajax contemplates charging at the Argives and taking revenge on Odysseus. The fulfilment of this plan is prevented by Athena:

καὶ τὰ μὲν ὥς ὄρμαινε, τὰ δὴ τάχα πάντ' ἐτέλεσσεν,
εἰ μή οἱ Τριτωνὶς ἀάσχετον ἔμβαλε λύσσαν. (Q.S.5.359–60)

The alternative telos to this story, in which Ajax kills Greeks, not sheep, is forestalled by the intervention of a god. This passage, however, also articulates the literary motivation behind this forestalling – and shows how it takes place to ensure continuity of a specifically *Homeric* plot:

κήδετο γὰρ φρεσὶν ἦσι πολυτλήτου Ὄδυσσος
ἰρῶν μνωομένη τά οἱ ἔμπεδα κεῦνος ἔρεξε·
τοῦνεκα δὴ μεγάλοιο μένος Τελαμωνιάδαο

⁶⁸ Q.S.1.447–9; 2.689–91; 2.775–81; 2.305–7; 3.25–30; 3.366–8; 3.752–5; 4.563–6; 5.353–64; 5.500–2; 6.422–4; 6.503–6; 6.542–4; 6.570–3; 6.644–8; 7.28–30; 7.142–4; 7.626–30; 8.237–41; 8.340–58; 8.427–30; 9.151–5; 9.255–9; 9.304–23; 9.398–45; 10.103–6; 11.238–42; 11.255–60; 11.273–82; 11.293–5; 11.457–61; 12.93–102; 12.394–8; 13.385–415; 14.419–21; 14.580–1. All marked with *εἰ μή* except 6.422–4 (=οὐδ' εἴ τοι); 9.304–23; 11.238–42; 11.273–82; 11.293–5.

⁶⁹ Phrase from Lowe (2000):54.

τρέψεν ἀπ' Ἀργείων... (Q.S.5.361–4)

Athena diverts Ajax's *menos* from all of the Greeks due to her concern for one of them, πολυτλήτος Ὀδυσσεύς – with the paradigmatic *poly*-compound evoking his characterisation in the *Odyssey* –⁷⁰ because she recalls his ‘constant’ sacrifices to her. Odysseus does not make ‘constant’ or even frequent sacrifice in the *Iliad*, or during the *Posthomerica*: but the ‘future’ Odysseus of the *Odyssey* is characterised by his commitment to divine offerings, as Athena makes clear in her opening petition, which Quintus’ description (362) echoes closely:

...οῦ νύ τ' Ὀδυσσεὺς
Ἀργείων παρὰ νησὶ χαρίζετο ἱερὰ βέζων
Τροίη ἐν εύρειῃ; τί νύ οἱ τόσον ὀδύσσαο, Ζεῦ; (*Od.*1.60–2)

Athena thus acts against Ajax not just on behalf of Odysseus, but also on behalf of the *Odyssey*. She ensures that the points of the mythic plot are maintained which will get us to that poem: to the situation where her special relationship with this hero is actualised, and where this concern and favouritism come to make sense. The counterfactual thus enforces the process of moving across the *Iliad-Odyssey* interval.

Athena is the most prevalent counterfactual deity in the *Posthomerica*: she controls five εἰ μή scenarios, all of which occur at pivotal moments in the story.⁷¹ Her particular status across Homer’s epics explains why. The patron deity of the *Odyssey* who famously and self-consciously changes sides,⁷² who acts quasi-unilaterally in the *Iliad*, but whose special relationship with one hero forms the heart of the Odyssean narrative, Athena is the goddess *par*

⁷⁰ See the discussion of Quintus’ use of *poly*- compounds to mark his Odyssean inheritance in Chapter Two.

⁷¹ Other cases: the arrival of Neoptolemus (Q.S.7.142–4); a double counterfactual in Q.S.8.340–58 in which Athena is first the agent and then the victim of the reining in of the alternative; the silencing of Laocoön to allow the horse to enter Troy (Q.S.12.394–8) and the prevention of the Greeks sailing home from Troy (Q.S.14.419–21) which I discuss next in this chapter.

⁷² Cf. e.g. Q.S.14.629–33, discussed in section V below; and Euripides’ *Troades* 59–75.

excellence of the Homeric in between. Quintus thus uses her in his counterfactuals to assert his commitment to progressing from one side of this interval to the other.

Athena, and the poem's, final counterfactual further emphasises this drive towards the *Odyssey*:

καὶ νῦ κεν Ἀργεῖοι κίον Ἐλλάδος ἱερὸν οὐδας
πάντες ἀλὸς κατὰ βένθος ἀκηδέες, εἰ μὴ ἄρα σφι
κούρη ἐριγδούποιο Διὸς νεμέσησεν Ἀθήνη. (Q.S.14.419–21)⁷³

These lines have a rich Odyssean texture. The image of Athena petitioning Zeus evokes the opening assembly of *Od.1.22–95*; her speech is loaded with thematic language from that poem (ἐπιμηχανόωνται, 428;⁷⁴ ἀτασθαλίν, 435); and Zeus' response, as we have seen, unleashes the storm with which the *Odyssey* begins.⁷⁵ Such echoes remind us that the counterfactual achieves the continuation of the HomERICALLY-orientated plot: Athena's complaint moves us to the *Odyssey*. But in this example, the move is acknowledged even more reflexively. ἐπιμηχανόωνται (428) is not only an Odyssean compound, but evocative, like *lusis*, of ancient critical vocabulary. Aristotle famously despised inorganic inputs into the plot which he termed as working ἀπὸ μηχανῆς. As Lowe argues, in this critique Aristotle seems to be fusing a broad and a narrow sense of the word μηχανή: meaning 'contrivance' but also the technical name used in tragedy for end-of-play divine epiphanies.⁷⁶ Functioning here as a sort of *dea ex machina* herself, appearing in order to move the plot on towards its 'correct' form of continuation, Quintus' Athena uses a word with these embedded connotations of construction. If we hear this type of μηχανή in her ἐπιμηχανόωνται, then Quintus makes the goddess point to her own role as Homeric plot-facilitator.

⁷³ This scene is discussed at length in the final section of Chapter Five.

⁷⁴ A rare word itself, but related to the compounds which litter the *Odyssey* (cf. my discussion in Chapter Two).

⁷⁵ Cf. Chapter Five.

⁷⁶ See Lowe (2000):76.

The same reflexive awareness informs a further counterfactual scene. After slaying Deiphobus, Menelaus discovers Helen in hiding, terrified that she is next to face his sword (Q.S.13.385–415). Her fears are almost realised; but Menelaus’ violence is checked by the intervention of Aphrodite:

ώρμηνε κτανέειν ζηλημοσύνησι νόοιο,
εἰ μή οἱ κατέρυξε βίην ἐρόεσσ' Ἀφροδίτη,
ἢ ρά οἱ ἐκ χειρῶν ἔβαλε ξίφος, ἔσχε δ' ἐρωήν.
τοῦ γὰρ ζῆλον ἐρεμνὸν ἀπώσατο, καὶ οἱ ἔνερθεν
ἡδὺν ὑφ' ἵμερον ὥρσε κατὰ φρενὸς ἡδὲ ὄσσων.
τῷ δ' ἄρα θάμβος ἀελπτον ἐπήλυθεν· οὐδ' ἄρ' <ἢ τέ> ἔτλη
κάλλος ιδὼν ἀρίδηλον ἐπὶ ξίφος αὐχένι κῦρσαι. (Q.S.13.388–94)

In traditional accounts of this meeting, emphasis is placed firmly on Helen, and how she harnesses the disorientating effect of her beauty to save her own skin. In Aristophanes’ *Lysistrata*, she bears her breasts in order to preserve herself from Menelaus’ anger:

οἱ γῶν Μενέλαος τᾶς Ἐλένας τὰ μᾶλά πα
γυμνᾶς παραϊδὼν ἐξέβαλ', οἰῶ, τὸ ξίφος. (*Lys.*155–6)

A scholion on the passage reveals that the same version occurred both in the *Little Iliad* and in Ibycus.⁷⁷ The story is also mentioned in Euripides’ *Andromache* (627–31), where Peleus rebukes Menelaus for being seduced after seeing Helen’s breast. And in depictions of the encounter in visual art in the sixth and fifth centuries, Helen is often portrayed as unveiling herself, in an alternative act of seduction. In an adapted version of this scene in Stesichorus’ *Sack of Troy* (Σ Eur.Or.1287) she appears instead in front of the whole Greek army, and somehow prevents them from stoning her. In all of these versions Helen thus becomes the

⁷⁷

Σ Ar. *Lys.*155a.

dominant force in her own survival scene: she actively counters the threat to her life by manipulating the male gaze of which she might otherwise be thought to be the victim.

Quintus' account holds the conventional line regarding Helen's beauty; but it removes any agency from Helen, and bestows all power onto Aphrodite. It is only thanks to the goddess that Menelaus is suddenly and unexpectedly (*ἄελπτον*, 393) enraptured: and even once this happens, he gazes not specifically at Helen's breasts, but at her *κάλλος* (394), as an abstract concept takes the place of more explicit anatomical attraction. Menelaus' desire for his wife is thus, sequentially and causally, secondary to this divine intervention.⁷⁸ Quintus repeats Aphrodite's centrality later in this scene (401–2), where the gnomic statement *πάντα γὰρ ἡμάλδυνε θεὴ Κύπρις, ἣ περ ἀπάντων/ἀθανάτων δάμνησι νόον θνητῶν τ' ἀνθρώπων* asserts the universal inescapability of her power. Thanks to this power, the outcome of the meeting was inevitable.

The passage, however, then moves to test the limits of this inevitability:

Once Menelaus has been checked by Aphrodite, he makes a second attempt to charge at his wife. This is not a genuine release from the unbreakable grip of the goddess, but ‘in order to beguile the Achaeans’, and he is restrained now by Agamemnon. This is an odd detail. Whom exactly is Menelaus deceiving, and why? The scenario of a son of Atreus testing the Greeks at

⁷⁸ Despite Aphrodite's potentially metonymic connections (i.e. she could function as an outward manifestation of Menelaus' desire), she is depicted quite clearly as acting as an embodied goddess in this scene; a character, not just an extension of Helen's beauty.

a pivotal point in the war can evoke Agamemnon's famous test of the Greeks in *Il.2.53–75*.⁷⁹ There are hints to support this connection. The very presence of Agamemnon, as the naysayer of Menelaus' plan, reminds us of his central role in the original test. And the detail that he checked Menelaus 'with words' (*ἐπέεσσι*, 407) echoes his plan in the *Iliad* to test the Achaeans, and for the elders to try to restrain them, in the same way (*ἐγὼν ἔπεσιν πειρήσομαι,...ύμεῖς δ'* *ἄλλοθεν ἄλλος ἐρητύειν ἔπεεσσιν*. *Il.2.72–5*).

Read against the Iliadic trick, these lines alter the tone of the entire passage. On the one hand, this meeting between Menelaus and Helen, well-known in the literary tradition, moves us forwards in the Trojan story: the 'abduction of Helen' is almost over, original husband and wife move closer towards reunion, and the way is paved for the way for the 'future' of *Odyssey* 4 and the Helen of tragedy. But on the other, the scene is now *pulled back* by the re-performance of rage, of an episode from the Iliadic past, and one which reminds us precisely of how a 'hoped for' telos is *not* always fulfilled. The deceitful dream which prompted Agamemnon's test, after all, made him a 'fool' (*νήπιος*, *Il.2.38*) for believing that he would take the city of Priam on that day, 'when really Zeus was to bring many more woes before that' (*Il.2.35–40*). In Quintus' narrative now, Troy *has* been sacked, and Menelaus has quickly forgotten – or rather, been made to forget – his rage at Helen. He has not, however, forgotten how to enact it. As he conducts his pretence, Menelaus performs the effects of the pivotal counterfactual. We know that Helen will not be killed at this point in the story. Myth dictates that she does not die at Troy, and she has to play her role in further accounts of the war's aftermath; where she will, as she predicts in the *Iliad*, be the subject of songs to come.⁸⁰ As an internal player in this myth, Menelaus knows this too. By playing with the alternative, in which she *is* rushed at and killed, Quintus thus focuses attention on the transient nature of such attempts to rewrite the story; as

⁷⁹ It also perhaps has resonances of Odysseus' charge at Circe in *Od.10.322*, where he rushes 'as though desiring to kill her' (*ὦς τε κτάμεναι μενεαίνων*).

⁸⁰ *Il.6.357–8.*

the move towards the *Odyssey* is achieved by the repetition of an Iliadic scene, and Menelaus' attempts to undo his own conversion are always already false.

Nowhere are these inter-Homeric connotations of the counterfactual more clearly on display than during the return of Philoctetes to Troy (Q.S.9.333–546). This is, as we have seen, stressed as an essential moment for achieving the ‘closure’ of the sack.⁸¹ But the intercessions on Lemnos required to get the hero back had a long literary history of being painful, difficult and above all *prolonged*: Sophocles’ surviving version is most familiar to us, but we know from Dio Chrysostom (*Or.52*) that Euripides and Aeschylus also wrote plays on the subject. In Quintus, after Odysseus and Diomedes find Philoctetes suffering in agony from his wound (Q.S.9.354-97) – described in ghoulish terms reminiscent of Sophocles’ version – Athena simply melts his anger away:

καὶ νῦ κεν αῖψ' ἐτέλεσσεν, ἀ οἱ θρασὺς ἥθελε θυμός,
εἰ μή οἱ στονόεντα χόλον διέχευεν Ἀθήνη... (Q.S.9.403-4)

...ό δ' είσαΐων Ὄδυσσηος
ήδε καὶ ἀντιθέου Διομήδεος αὐτίκα θυμὸν
ρήιδίως κατέπαυσεν ἀνιηροῖο χόλοιο,
ἔκπαγλον τὸ πάροιθε χολούμενος, ὅσσ' ἐπεπόνθει. (Q.S.9.422-5)

In lines 403–4, a single couplet whitewashes Philoctetes’ paradigmatically turbulent anger, and transfers the responsibility for changing his mind, as in the Helen and Menelaus scene, entirely onto a goddess. The word ρηιδίως (424) makes explicit the ease of this conversion. James reads this streamlined sequence as ‘a rather facile way of overcoming the resentment of Philoctetes.’⁸² The shift becomes more complex if understood less as a removal of the usual histrionics of this moment than a reversal of them. Through the counterfactual, Quintus moves

⁸¹ Cf. Calchas' prophecy discussed in section II.

82 James (2004):318.

the emotion and subterfuge of the tragic accounts back into an alternative past (marked again as $\tau\ddot{o}\pi\acute{a}poi\theta\epsilon$) – a past which now ‘did not happen’ – and he does so to return us to a specifically Homeric plot purchase in the present.

The importance of Philoctetes' arrival for the successful capture of Troy is also described in the *Iliad*. The brief reference to the hero in the catalogue of ships makes clear his decisive role in the future course of action:

τῶν δὲ Φιλοκτήτης ἥρχεν τόξων ἐϋ εἰδὼς
έπτὰ νεῶν· ἐρέται δ' ἐν ἑκάστῃ πεντήκοντα
ἐμβέβασαν τόξων εὗ εἰδότες ἵφι μάχεσθαι.
ἄλλ' ὁ μὲν ἐν νήσῳ κεῖτο κρατέρ' ἄλγεα πάσχων
Λήμνῳ ἐν ἡγαθέῃ, ὅθι μιν λίπον υἱες Ἀχαιῶν
ἔλκει μοχθίζοντα κακῷ ὄλοόφρονος ὕδρου.
ἐνθ' ὁ γε κεῖτ' ἀχέων· τάχα δὲ μνήσεσθαι ἔμελλον
Ἀργεῖοι παρὰ νηυσὶ Φιλοκτήταο ἄνακτος. (Il.2.717-25)

The Homeric account rushes through Philoctetes' story in analepsis and prolepsis, and emphasises above all the certainty of his involvement in the later stages of the war. The adverb τάχα, the verb of remembering in the future tense (*μνήσεσθαι*: a key term, as I have argued earlier, marking poetic referentiality)⁸³ and the fatalistic ἔμελλον all help to inscribe this sense of preordained importance. A scholion on these lines records Zenodotus' athetisation of 724–5, but also notes the ‘necessity’ of the event as the catalogue records it:

ὅτι Ζηνόδοτος τοῦτον καὶ τὸν ἔξῆς ἡθέτηκεν. ἀναγκαῖον δέ ἐστι γνῶναι ὅτι ὕστερον ἀνεκομίσθη ἐκ Λήμνου ὁ Φιλοκτήτης. (Σ A. II.2.724a)

83 See Chapter Four

As he was depicted and read in the *Iliad*, therefore, Philoctetes is a figure of urgency rather than deliberation. A pivot required to move the plot towards the fall of Troy, the details of how and why he returns are left elliptical. This sense of necessity, based on the story in its opaque Homeric form, is crucial to Quintus' account. Homer's two poems frame his depiction. Upon arriving at Lemnos, Odysseus' and Diomedes' attempts at persuasion are reported in extended indirect speech (Q.S.9.410–22). This type of speech, aimed to cheer its recipient (*οι δέ εἰ θαρσύνεσκον*, 410), recalls the bardic method of storytelling as characterised in the *Odyssey*'s narrative (cf. *Od.* 1.340; 347). Then, after the three serenely sail to Troy – in the unnerving image of Odysseus enjoying a stress-free sea journey – the reunion with the Greeks (Q.S.9.480–523) replays an Iliadic scene. The meeting with Agamemnon evokes the embassy of *Iliad* 9, with Philoctetes reperforming the role of Achilles. He hears Agamemnon's apology for his error (*βλαφθέντε νόημα*, 492), and exculpatory excuses;⁸⁴ he is promised gifts in recompense (510–11), and even ventriloquises Achilles' original speech-greeting when the embassy arrived:

ὦ φίλος, οὐ τοι ἐγών ἔτι χώομαι, ούδε μὲν ἄλλω
Ἄργειων, τῶν εἴ <καί> τις ἔτ’ ἥλιτεν εῖνεκ’ ἐμεῖο... (Q.S.9.518–9)

χαίρετον· ἦ φίλοι ἀνδρες ικάνετον ἦ τι μάλα χρεώ. (*Il.9.197*)

Unlike Achilles, Philoctetes again immediately ‘converts’, and accepts Agamemnon's apology (Q.S.9.520–1). The inverse Homeric framing of this episode – first the echoes of the *Odyssey*, and then the replaying of the *Iliad* – suggests why, for Quintus, his acceptance can be so quick. Philoctetes' arrival in Troy is the route by which the poetic trajectory can move on from the *Iliad*, and achieve the events necessary for the sack, and therefore for the *Odyssey*, which the Lemnos scene already foreshadows. It is the event, not the nature, of his return, which is stressed as all-important to this narrative agenda. Quintus thus uses his technique of pace

⁸⁴ Agamemnon blames first the gods (Q.S.9.491–8) and then Fate (500–8).

variation to rush past the emotional twists of the Philoctetes story, to achieve the inevitability of the return as it is inscribed in the original Homeric reference. The Quintan ρητδίως achieves the Homeric τάχα. Athena's role as 'control agent' in the Lemnos scene emphasises this connection: as she did with Ajax, and as she will do again in the storm, the goddess of the *Odyssey* acts to allow the story to continue on its unstoppable Homeric progression.

IV. BENDING: ANACHRONY AND PROLEPSIS

If the grammar of the counterfactual provides a means of joining the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* temporally, Quintus also explores ways of extending Homeric time by moving it into the future. Once again, this expansion is achieved using a combination of techniques drawn from both of Homer's epics. As was noted by ancient as well as modern scholarship, there are ways in which both of Homer's poems attempt to protrude outwards past the confines of the primary narrative frame. The scholia note the *Iliad*'s notorious use of anachronism; transplanting into the tenth year of the war episodes which would more naturally fit in the first.⁸⁵ The *Odyssey* does not use such anachronism, but opts instead for more drastic forms of self-extension; most memorably in Tiresias' prophecy (*Od.*11.90–137) which relates events that will take place in Odysseus' life after the 'telos' of his return. As has been often noted, this forward-focus of the prophecy is in-keeping with certain other resistances to closure in the poem. In Odysseus' recapitulation of his story to Penelope (*Od.*23.239–50), the first thing that he tells her is that they have not yet reached the endpoint, or boundary (*πείρατα*), of their trials (247–8). Then as the suitors' families and Odysseus' household are about to meet in battle, in the last lines of Book 24 we are told that 'everyone would have died and not returned home' (literally, been made *nostoi*-less – ἔθηκαν ἀνόστους) if not for the sudden involvement of Athena (*Od.*

⁸⁵ The scholia focus particularly on the *teichoscopia* (why wait until the tenth year to have the soldiers identified?). Aristotle adds the catalogue of ships (*Poet.*1459a30–b2) as discussed productively by Sammons (2010):140–8, who shows how in his praise of the catalogue, 'Aristotle almost certainly thought, as do modern scholars, that the catalogue evoked an event at the beginning of the war' (140).

24.528): a counterfactual which momentarily derails the poem's celebration of Odysseus' homecoming and looks at how it could not have been completed.⁸⁶

In these ways, Homeric epic itself could be read as unstable in its temporality: the rules of epic time, 'made' in Homer, were in Homer already being broken. On a number of occasions Quintus shows himself to be sharply attuned to these ideas. He mobilises them in his own proleptic moments to provide a further means of creating a joined-up vision of Homeric time, stressing its ability to incorporate moments which stretch beyond its otherwise tightly-controlled frame.

This process is clearly perceived in the two episodes of the *Posthomerica* conventionally considered by scholars to be the most explicit moments of 'anachrony', where the poem breaks with its Homeric conceit and alludes to events which are incompatible with it. Such moments offer, so it seems, Quintus' own version of the 'preposterous', as he includes events mythically prior to but chronologically posterior to the timeframe of his inter-Homeric poem.⁸⁷ On the first of these occasions, the Greek soldier Antiphus is attacked by Eurypylus, but he escapes because of what is fated in the literary *ὕστερον*:

ἐς πληθὺν ἑτάρων· κρατερὸν δέ μιν οὖ τι δάμασσεν
ἔγχος Τηλεφίδαο δαῖφρονος, οῦνεκ' ἔμελλεν
ἀργαλέως ὀλέ<ε>σθαι ὑπ' ἀνδροφόνοιο Κύκλωπος
ὕστερον· ὡς γάρ που στυγερῆ ἐπιήνδανε Μοίρῃ. (Q.S.8.124–7)

This reference is the poem's clearest allusion to the narrative of the *Odyssey*: both to Polyphemus' devouring of the Odyssean crew (*Od.9.287–98*) and to the grief of Aegyptus, whose presence at the Ithacan assembly is explained by his son's death in the Cyclops' cave

⁸⁶ See Purves (2010):74.

⁸⁷ The in-proem as analysed in Chapter Three provides another example of how Quintus breaks this Homeric conceit. However, the focus there was on intertextual 'lateness', whereas these two examples are anachronistic more specifically because of their *narrative* posterity to the events depicted in the poem.

(*Od*.2.15–20). The scene is filled with the language of inevitability. οὐνεκ' ἔμελλεν (125) presents Antiphus' Odyssean experience as something fated (dictated by Μοῖρα).⁸⁸ In the narratorial aside ὡς γάρ που (127), we can perceive a verbal eyebrow raise to the process of maintaining literary-mythic convention. The particle που often marks an authorial comment on the narrative choices being made:⁸⁹ this, says Quintus, is how the story has to go. The delayed ὅτερον enshrines this sense of pre-ordination: we have to wait for this destiny to be realised. Such glances to the future thus both set up the absolute expectation that the *Odyssey* is yet to come, and work against the literary chronology – the earliness of the *Odyssey* – required make the allusion work.

This clash between the early and the late may indeed, in one sense, be considered in terms of the ‘preposterous.’ Quintus here plays on the idea of a source text coming both before and after its poetic inheritor: a technique, we may note, which is much more widespread than is suggested by Goldhill's application of the term exclusively to Nonnus. It finds strong expression for instance in Ovid's treatment of the *Aeneid* in *Metamorphoses* 13–14, where, in Hinds' words, ‘rather than constructing himself as an epigonal reader of the *Aeneid*, Ovid makes Vergil a hesitant precursor of the *Metamorphoses*.’⁹⁰ In his Odyssean pre-echo Quintus is thus writing himself into this long tradition of literary pre- and post-dating. However, he also, very differently to Ovid or to Nonnus, turns this manoeuvre into a fundamentally Homeric move. He does so by not only alluding to this specific episode from the *Odyssey*, but also by referring to proleptic passages from Homer which *themselves* look forwards in temporally ‘unusual’ ways.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Cf. the above discussion of ἔμελλον in *Il*.2.724.

⁸⁹ See particularly Cuypers (2005) for an excellent discussion of this and other ‘interactional’ particles in Apollonius.

⁹⁰ Hinds (1998):106.

⁹¹ I use ‘unusual’ in the sense outlined in the opening discussion of this section, as exemplified most broadly by Tiresias' prophecy and the ‘non-closure’ moments of the final books of the *Odyssey*.

The reference to the comrades (έτάρων, Q.S.8.124), and the choice of verb ὀλέεσθαι refers to the paradigmatic opening of the *Odyssey*:

ἀλλ’ οὐδ’ ὡς ἐτάρους ἐρρύσατο, ιέμενός περ·
αὐτῶν γὰρ σφετέρησιν ἀτασθαλίησιν ὅλοντο. (*Od.*1.6–7)

The inevitable demise of the comrades and the self-induced nature of their downfall is of course as much as a question as a statement in the *Odyssey*. How far Odysseus could have saved his companions is a live issue throughout the poem, interrogated in the gap between his self-serving narration to the Phaeacians and the unspoken alternatives known only by the muted poetic voice.⁹² Quintus exposes these gaps here. Odysseus is notably missing from the scene:

...ἀμφὶ δ’ ἄρα σφὸν
Ἄρπαλον, ὃς ἢ’ Ὀδυσῆος ἐύφρονος ἔσκεν ἐταῖρος·
ἀλλ’ ὃ μὲν οὖν ἀπάτερθεν ἔχεν πόνον, οὐδ’ ἐπαμύνειν
ἔσθενεν ς θεράποντι δεδουπότι.... (Q.S.8.112–5)

The hero’s absence from this point of danger aligns with his strategic self-distancing as he recounts his comrades’ catalogue of errors to the Phaeacians: asleep when they let out Aeolus’ winds (*Od.*10.31–55), on a separate mission as they stumble into Circe’s lair (*Od.*10.145–213), and otherwise engaged as they fatally steal the sacred cattle (*Od.*12.327–73).

The choice of Antiphus further evokes this exculpatory rhetoric. Of all the comrades eaten by Polyphemus in the *Odyssey*, it is only Antiphus who is named. But the naming comes not from Odysseus as secondary narrator, but from Homer the primary one: it is in the narrative of the assembly that he is given a genealogy, a back-story and an epithet (αἰχμητής *Od.*2.19). In Odysseus’ *Apologoi* – later in the narrative, earlier in the story – he is reduced to a number, re-anonymised completely (τοὺς δὲ διὰ μελεῖστὶ ταμῶν ὠπλίσσατο δόρπον, *Od.*9.291), with the use of the same phrase ὠπλίσσατο δόρπον as in the Aegyptus scene (*Od.*2.20) reminding the

⁹² See e.g. Goldhill (1991):ch.1; de Jong (2001).

audience of the more personal previous account. By giving him back his name, and, via the weapon that almost kills him (*ἔγχος Τηλεφίδαο δαῖφρονος*, Q.S.8.125), re-evoking his spearman epithet, Quintus brings to the surface the difference between these two *Odyssey* accounts, and shows how the same event can be manipulated across different levels of Odyssean time. In this respect, to return once more to Goldhill's not-only-Nonnian phrase, Quintus' use of the Antiphus scene works to show how Homeric epic itself can be read as already preposterous:⁹³ his 'anachrony' is in-keeping with Homer's, and breaks the rules of time according to the rules that he has resolved to follow.

This process becomes even more effective when Quintus alludes not just to the literary but to the political 'future.' During the sack of Troy, Aeneas is led from the burning city by Aphrodite, clutching his father and son. Calchas stops the Greeks in their pursuit of the family by foretelling Aeneas' Roman destiny:

καὶ τότε δὴ Κάλχας μεγάλ’ ἵαχε λαὸν ἐέργων·
“ἰσχεσθ’ Αἴνείαο κατ’ οὐθίμοιο καρήνου
βάλλοντες στονόεντα βέλη καὶ λοιγια δοῦρα.
τὸν γὰρ θέσφατόν ἔστι θεῶν ἐρικυδέῃ βουλῆ
θύμβριν ἐπ’ εύρυρέεθρον ἀπὸ Ξάνθοιο μολόντα
τευξέμεν ιερὸν ἄστυ καὶ ἐσσομένοισιν ἀγητὸν
ἀνθρώποις, αὐτὸν δὲ πολυσπερέεσσι βροτοῖσι
κοιρανέειν· ἐκ τοῦ δὲ γένος μετόπισθεν ἀνάξειν (340)
ἄχρις ἐπ’ ἀντολίην τε καὶ ἀκαμάτον δύσιν ἐλθεῖν·
καὶ γάρ οἱ θέμις ἔστι μετέμμεναι ἀθανάτοισιν,
οὕνεκα δὴ πάϊς ἔστιν ἐϋπολοκάμου Ἀφροδίτης.’ (Q.S.13.333–43)

⁹³ On the more literal ways in which Homeric epic could be considered 'preposterous' (through its use for instance of *hysteron proteron*) see Bassett (1921); Bergen (1983).

This speech has been hailed as one of the clearest indications of the poem's imperial context.⁹⁴ However once again, and perhaps here more than anywhere, we can see how the obsessive search for contemporary signs in the *Posthomerica* downplays the significance of two types of *Homeric* texturing at work.⁹⁵ The first is the close engagement with the *Iliad*'s own prophecy regarding Aeneas, in which Poseidon prevents Achilles from killing him because of his future role as the salvation of Priam's race:

ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ἡμεῖς πέρ μιν ὑπὲκ Θανάτου ἀγάγωμεν,
μή πως καὶ Κρονίδης κεχολώσεται, αἴ κεν Ἄχιλλεὺς
τόνδε κατακτείνῃ· μόριμον δέ οὖ ἐστ' ἀλέασθαι,
ὅφρα μὴ ἄσπερμος γενεὴ καὶ ἄφαντος ὅληται
Δαρδάνου, ὃν Κρονίδης περὶ πάντων φίλατο παίδων
οἵ ἔθεν ἐξεγένοντο γυναικῶν τε θνητάων.
ἢδη γὰρ Πριάμου γενεὴν ἔχθηρε Κρονίων.
νῦν δὲ δὴ Αἰνείαο βίη Τρώεσσιν ἀνάξει
καὶ παίδων παῖδες, τοί κεν μετόπισθε γένωνται. (Il.20.300–8)

This prophecy – brief, vague, and of course, ‘un-Roman’ – may seem an unlikely primary model for the *Posthomerica*'s account.⁹⁶ Yet Quintus anchors his version structurally, thematically and lexically to this Iliadic moment of prolepsis. He uses the form of an intervention speech by a divinely-connected figure⁹⁷ in the midst of a heated battle. His emphasis on *γένος* suggests Poseidon's repeated *γενεὴ*, *γενεήν*; and *Θέσφατόν ἐστι* reworks the god's fatalistic *μόριμον δέ οὖ εστ'*. The mention of the Xanthus (Q.S.13.337), with its strong

⁹⁴ The two others are the description of the use of wild beasts for executions in the amphitheatre in the simile at Q.S.6.532–6; and Odysseus' testudo trick (Q.S.11. 358–414), on which see discussion below.

⁹⁵ Cf. the similar argument made for Quintus' formal techniques in Chapter Two.

⁹⁶ Or at least, a model which Quintus updates entirely. Other versions which may also lie behind the prophecy include the prophecies in *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* and Lycophron's *Alexandra*. See James (2004):337.

⁹⁷ This time an inspired prophet rather than an Olympian.

associations with Achilles' *aristeia*⁹⁸ also evokes by transferral the hero's role in Poseidon's prophecy; where it is from his rage specifically that Aeneas is saved.

Calchas then adds a second reason why Aeneas must be allowed to escape:

καὶ δ' ἄλλως τοῦδ' ἀνδρὸς ἐάς ἀπεχώμεθα χεῖρας,
οὕνεκά οἱ χρυσοῖο καὶ ἄλλοις ἐν κτεάτεσσιν
.....
ἄνδρα σαοῖ φεύγοντα καὶ ἀλλοδαπὴν ἐπὶ γαῖαν,
τῶν πάντων προβέβουλεν ἐὸν πατέρος ἡδὲ καὶ υἱα·
νὺξ δὲ μί’ ἦμιν ἔφηνε καὶ υἱέα πατρὶ γέροντι
ἥπιον ἐκπάγλως καὶ ἀμεμφέα παιδὶ τοκῆα. (Q.S.13.344–9)

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On the one hand, this praise of Aeneas' paternal and filial piety is in-keeping with the Roman context of the scene: it aligns with Augustan politics and rhetoric, which was, as we have seen, so often centred on the family.¹⁰⁰ But this family-centredness as specifically expressed in these lines is reminiscent not just of Augustan Rome, but also of the Homeric Greek world.¹⁰¹ The image of a hero who is simultaneously a father and a son finds an earlier parallel in the figure of Odysseus, whose story starts with a son's anguished search for his father and ends with anguished father's reunion with his son; a filial triad instantiated in the final book, which provides the first and only scene where the three generations act together (*Od.24.359–64*).¹⁰²

Calchas' speech alludes strongly to this Odyssean paradigm: turning the Roman image of Aeneas as a father-and-son back into a Homeric one. The theme of fleeing and entering a

⁹⁸ A connection also made much of in Nonnus during Aeacus' fight with the river (*Dion.22*, particularly 384–9).

⁹⁹ On the probable lacuna here see Vian (1969):142.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. Chapter Five.

¹⁰¹ On the reformulation of the myth of Troy in Greece and Rome more broadly, see Erskine (2001), whose ideas influenced my reading of this passage.

¹⁰² See Chapter Five for further discussion of filiation in the *Odyssey*.

foreign land is, we are reminded linguistically, an original *topos* of Odysseus' wandering: ἀλλοδαπός (Q.S.13.346) is most often used in the *Odyssey* in the context of his travelling.¹⁰³ The reference to gold also evokes Odysseus' interaction with Laertes, where he discusses the prospect of gifts whilst testing him (χρυσοῦ μέν οἱ δῶκ' εὔεργέος ἐπτὰ τάλαντα, *Od.*24.274). And in the mention of Ascanius as a παῖς (Q.S.13.349) we may hear Odysseus' recollection of himself as a child during this conversation with his father (παιδνὸς ἔών, *Od.*24.338). By making such connections, Quintus establishes Aeneas as proto-Odyssean figure, whose father-son duties find literary precedent, but mythic fulfilment, in the workings of the *Odyssey*.

Odysseus and Aeneas are also combined during the standstill of Book 11. During this fighting, as we have seen, Odysseus devises a trick which tries – and ultimately fails – to break the stalemate. Considering now the specificities of this trick, his plan involves the soldiers arranging their shields in an interlocking formation, ‘placing them above their heads to overlap with each other, all joined in a single movement’ (Q.S.11.358–61). This description echoes Apollonius’ account of how the Argonauts used shields and helmets to protect themselves from the birds on the Island of Ares (*Argon.*2.1047–89). However, the exact formation as described here is also quintessentially Roman: Quintus is depicting the *testudo*, the device whereby a body of soldiers covered themselves with shields interlocked above their heads. The description is analogous with the two mentions of this tactic in the *Aeneid*: in Book 2 (438–44) the Greeks attack Priam’s palace in such a configuration, and in Book 9 (505–18), the Trojan defenders first fail and then succeed against a Volscian *testudo*.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰³ Odysseus uses the adjective in direct speech (to describe himself or others he has met) at *Od.*8.211; 9.36 and 14.231; and it is used about him at *Od.*9.255 and 17.485. The only other occurrences are at *Od.*3.74; 20.220 and 23.219.

¹⁰⁴ On the relationship between Quintus and Vergil see discussion and references in the Introduction, with additional points in Chapter Five.

The passage therefore does appear to act as a straightforward ‘contemporary nod’: a deliberately out of place detail, inserted to remind the reader of the imperial context underlying the superficial Homeric tenor. Then, however, Quintus moves the scene in a different way:

ώρμηναν δὲ πύλησι θεηγενέος Πριάμοιο
ἀθρόοι ἐγχριμφθέντες ὑπ’ ἀμφιτόμοις πελέκεσσι
ρῆξαι τείχεα μακρά, πύλας δ’ εἰς οῦδας ἐρεῖσαι
θαιρῶν ἔξερύσαντες. ἔχεν δ’ ἄρα μῆτις ἀγαυὴ
ἐλπωρήν· ἀλλ’ οὕ σφιν ἐπήρκεσαν οὔτε βόειαι
οὔτε θοοὶ βουπλῆγες, ἐπεὶ μένος Αἰνείαο
ὅβριμον ἀμφοτέρησιν αρηρότα χείρεσι λᾶαν
ἐμμεμαώς ἐφέηκε, δάμασσε δὲ τλήμονι πότμω, (Q.S.11.388–95)

The *testudo* is now given vocabulary of an Odyssean flavour.¹⁰⁵ With μῆτις Quintus uses another paradigmatic noun associated with Homer’s cunning hero,¹⁰⁶ and the epithet ἀγαυός is often used in the *Odyssey* for the suitors, who are also destroyed by Odysseus’ wiles.¹⁰⁷ The device is also linked via foreshadowing to Odysseus’ later, successful weapon-trick at Troy: the Wooden Horse itself, the subject of the next book of the *Posthomerica*. This link is forged firstly through the symmetry of the image produced by the devices – the individual heroes are joined in the *testudo* into one (361), just like, the in-proem and catalogue will soon tell us, they will be in the horse –¹⁰⁸ and secondly by that loaded word μῆτις. After its use in this passage, the noun next occurs to describe the plan that results in the horse: τῷ νῦν μῆτι βίῃ πειρώμεθα Τρώιον ἄστυ/περσέμεν, ἀλλ’ εἴ πού τι δόλος καὶ μῆτις ἀνύσση, Q.S.12.19–20.

¹⁰⁵ The storm scene of Q.S.14, as discussed in section V below, is also given Odyssean language; but with that scene, the thematic connection with the *Odyssey* is more apparent, and so such echoes are more expected.

¹⁰⁶ In the carefully selective way that Quintus redeploys Homeric epithets of this kind outlined in Chapter Two. Cf. also the discussion in section III of this chapter of πολυτλήτος in Q.S.5.361.

¹⁰⁷ *Od.2.209, 247; 4.681; 14.180; 17.325; 18.99; 19.488, 496; 21.58, 174, 213, 232; 22.171; 23.63.*

¹⁰⁸ Cf. the discussion in Chapter Three of Q.S.12.307 (ὅσοι κατέβησαν ἔσω πολυχανδέος ἵπου).

This deep association between Roman stratagem and Homeric Odysseus makes starker the fact that Quintus attributes the *failure* of this plan to Aeneas. The founder of Rome and the hero of the *Aeneid* discovers this trick, and learns how to counter it, by watching Odysseus create it. A definitive Roman military invention is thus retrojected into an instance of Odyssean *dolos*; and it is through this context that it enters into Aeneas' proto-Roman ideology. The forces of foreshadowing and retrospection are most defiantly collapsed into one another, as Aeneas learns how to be Roman through copying Homer's hero at Troy.

This interplay between Odysseus and Aeneas provides perhaps the strongest indication of Quintus' engagement with teleology in an imperial, ideological form. If, according to Quint, myth could be co-opted to serve either an *Aeneid*-based or an *Odyssey*-derived framework, then by colliding their two representative heroes, the *Posthomerica* juxtaposes these two different forms of inevitability and ultimately reconciles them; emphasising the Aeneas story as the thread connecting Greek and Roman cultural aetiologies. This collision reaches its climax in the epic's final scenes, as the poem of the interval is forced to confront directly the issues associated with its own closure.

V. UNRAVELLING... OR UN-ENDING

We have seen how Quintus seems to signals the end-game of his epic as early as in its opening lines; foreshadowing the fire of Troy which is soon really to occur. As the text does draw to its close, this signal is revealed to be false. The *Posthomerica* does not end with the sack of Troy. The city falls, but the poem continues: the Greeks celebrate, Achilles necromantically returns, the Greeks plan their *nostos*, and their serene homecoming is thwarted by the storm with which the poem actually concludes (the final word is ἀέλλας).

Quintus makes clear in his account of the sack its status as a false climax. As the city burns, the lens shifts to the perspective of an anonymous onlooker, who watches the destruction from afar:

φλόξ δ' ἄρ' ἐς ἡέρα δῖαν ἀνέγρετο, πέπτατο δ' αἴγλη
 ἄσπετος· ἀμφὶ δὲ φῦλα περικτιόνων ὥρόωντο
 μέχρις ἐπ' Ἰδαίων ὥρέων ύψηλὰ κάρηνα
 Θρηικίης τε Σάμοιο καὶ ἀγχιάλου Τενέδοιο·
 καὶ τις ἀλὸς κατὰ βένθος ἔσω νεὸς ἔκφατο μῆθον·
 ‘ἥνυσαν Ἀργεῖοι κρατερόφρονες ἄσπετον ἔργον
 πολλὰ μάλ’ ἀμφ’ Ἐλένης ἐλικοβλεφάροιο καμόντες,
 πᾶσα δ’ ἄρ’ ἡ τὸ πάροιθε πανόλβιος ἐν πυρὶ Τροίη
 καίεται· οὐδὲ θεῶν τις ἐελδομένοισιν ἄμυνε.
 πάντα γὰρ ἄσχετος Αἴσα βροτῶν ἐπιδέρκεται ἔργα·
 καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀκλέα πολλὰ καὶ οὐκ ἀρίδηλα γεγῶτα
 κυδήνεντα τίθησι, τὰ δ’ ύψόθι μείονα θῆκε·
 πολλάκι δ’ ἐξ ἀγαθοῦ πέλει κακόν, ἐκ δὲ κακοῦ
 ἐσθλὸν ἀμειβομένοιο πολυτλήτου βιότοιο.’ (Q.S.13.464–77)

This episode looks back closely to the poem's opening. *φλόξ* actualises in glowing colour the prophetic *καταιθομένης πῦρ Τροίης* (Q.S.1.17). *πέπτατο* repeats the early grief which winged its way around Troy (Q.S.1.16); a despair now given new gravity by the downfall which at that stage was only predicted. Such echoes create a tight ring composition between the start of the poem and the close of this book; setting up this image as a neat point on which the story could end.¹⁰⁹ Such symmetry makes more emphatic the ‘surprise’ that this is not the end at all. The narrative instead pushes us outwards, with *ἔσω* in line 471 denoting a movement in time as well as space. The onlooker's gnomic remarks (469–79) move Troy already into the past tense, marked with a final *τὸ πάροιθε* tag, and the subsequent scene-change hurries, with Quintus'

¹⁰⁹ Consider by contrast the final scenes of Triphiodorus (681–3) and Colluthus (391–4) which do use the motif of a detached perspective or onlooker to mark the end of their poems.

characteristic blending of speed and delay, onto a new episode (*καὶ τότε*, 496), another book and a further story.¹¹⁰

This extension of his epic past the false closure of the sack seems to fit perfectly with Quintus' agenda as a poet in the Homeric middle: the narrative continues past the fall to bring the reader up to the start of *Odyssey*, achieving the final stage of the linear Homeric progression which the epic has signalled its obsession with achieving. The book as a whole is marked by an increase in Odyssean allusions: *poly-compounds*,¹¹¹ ἀτασθαλίη (Q.S.14.435) and terms for cunning and contrivance.¹¹² The last lines, as we have seen, also read as a preparatory gloss on the start of the *Odyssey* (*Od.1.11–2*).¹¹³

However, Quintus also makes another, competing claim with this final book: that his poem does *not* end with the *Odyssey* at all. In terms of plot, the *nostoi* still have to happen before we get to the start of the *Odyssey*: this Iliadic continuation requires another continuation in order to fill the Homeric gap. Quintus emphasises this point in the competing imagery and language of his final scenes.¹¹⁴ The closing image of the storm creates a sense of transition, not completion. Tempests in epic are most often used to turn the narrative, or mark a point of changed direction: Odysseus, Aeneas, Jason, even Paris are all blown onto new heroic courses by them.¹¹⁵ Here, however, we do not get to this new heroic course: the storm just rages on as we wait for the *Odyssey* still. Quintus also includes more of his signifying words for pluralisation and endlessness: πάντας (592) πᾶσαν (610) ἀπείρονος (598). And in the final *tis* speech, the specific catastrophe of the storm which triggers the *Odyssey* is refracted back into the wider history of myth:

¹¹⁰ In this instance, the meeting of Aithra and her grandsons (Q.S.13.496–563).

¹¹¹ Discussion and statistics in Chapter Two.

¹¹² ἐπιμηχανώνται (Q.S.14.428); ἐμήδετο (559); πινυτόφρονος (631).

¹¹³ See the opening of the Introduction.

¹¹⁴ For the purposes of this discussion, I am taking the ‘final scenes’ of the poem to be the events in 419–658: that is, all those which occur after the pivotal counterfactual at Q.S.14.419–21.

¹¹⁵ For Paris as a storm-tossed voyager, cf. Colluthus 206–10.

καὶ τις ἔφη· ‘τάχα τοῖον ἐπέχραεν ἀνδράσι χεῖμα,
οὐπότε Δευκαλίωνος ἀθέσφατος ὑετὸς ἥλθε,
ποντώθη δ’ ἄρα γαῖα, βυθὸς δ’ ἐπεχεύατο πάντῃ.’ (Q.S.14.602–4)

The reference to Deucalion marks a deep sense of antiquity,¹¹⁶ and removes some of the directness of the recourse to the *Odyssey* in this elemental turn of events: this has happened before and will happen again.

In the final mention of Athena, we are told of her profound ambivalence at the havoc which she has caused:

ἢ θεὸς ἢ δαίμων τις ἐπίρροθος. αὐτὰρ Ἀθήνη
ἄλλοτε μὲν <θυμῷ> μέγ' ἐγήθεεν, ἄλλοτε δ' αὔτε
ἄχνυτ' Ὁδυσσῆος πινυτόφρονος, οὕνεκ' ἔμελλε
πάσχειν ἄλγεα πολλὰ Ποσειδάωνος ὄμοκλῇ. (Q.S.14.628–31)

The patron goddess of the *Odyssey* and the deity of Homeric transition ends the poem completely torn. She both rejoices in the present, pre-Odyssean Greek turmoil and expresses concern for the hero whom in the future she is destined to help; with πάσχειν ἄλγεα πολλά echoing line 4 of the *Odyssey*'s proem, and the loaded ἔμελλε marking again the sense of literary inevitability.¹¹⁷ Her split emotion mirrors our own sense of stasis as we end the poem as readers: we are left suspended in the aftermath of the climax, hanging between the end of the sack and the next turning point in the cyclic story.

So in one sense the *Posthomerica* ends with a self-contradiction, in that it seems to undermine the notion of tight Homeric interstitiality upon which it has built its poetics: Quintus now both is and is not the poet in the middle.¹¹⁸ However, the final scenes also show how these two

¹¹⁶ For such stories of Deucalion, cf. e.g. Hesiod *Cat.* fr.2–7 and 234; *Argon.*3.1086; *Georg.*1.62; *Met.* 1.318ff.; 7.356; Strabo, *Geog.*9.4 and *Dion.*3.211; 6.367.

¹¹⁷ Cf. the discussion of this verb in the Antiphus episode in section IV.

¹¹⁸ On the *Posthomerica* and paradoxes see discussion in the Introduction.

competing ideas can be reconciled – of bridging Homer’s poems in a linear, teleological sense and leaving them open in a more elliptical way. Quintus achieves this reconciliation once again by using material drawn from Homer himself: the final storm becomes the most intense site for Homeric epic’s tropes of resisting *its own* closure.

Quintus’ ending harnesses two major moments of closure-resistance from the *Odyssey*: yet again engaging the temporality of the epic which it does not yet reach. When Telemachus visits Menelaus’ palace, he hears stories of the Greek returns which the king acquired from Proteus (*Od.4.332–592*). Quintus draws closely on the ‘facts’ of this reported tale. His account of the death of Locrian Ajax (Q.S.14.559–89) for instance maintains Poseidon’s role in the episode, his anger at Ajax’s scornful boasting, and even smaller details such as the location of the Gyrae rock (cf. *Od.4.500–1*). Menelaus’ speech marks the point where the *Odyssey* incorporates the *nostoi* into its own narrative. By using it, Quintus thus announces how he can continue his continuation using material within the Homeric source.

The closing scenes also contain an echo of *Odyssey*’s own problematic final book:

....ἀλλὰ τὰ μέν που
ἀθανάτων ἐτέλεσσε κακὸς νόος· οἱ δὲ ἐνὶ νησοῖν
Ἄργειοι πλώεσκον ὅσους διὰ χεῖμα κέδασσεν. (Q.S.14.654–6)

This statement evokes Athena’s attempts to enact closure on the *Odyssey*’s last battle: the goddess’ appeal to Zeus’ νόος, lamentation about the πόλεμον κακόν (*Od.24.473*), and intervention to bring about a peaceful telos (*Od.24.502*) are all signalled in Quintus’ ἀθανάτων ἐτέλεσσε κακὸς νόος.¹¹⁹ As we have seen, this resolution in the *Odyssey* is not neatly achieved. The counterfactual at *Od.24.528* suggested how things could have gone another way; and in

¹¹⁹ These echoes suggest that despite the famous protestations of Aristarchus and Aristophanes, Quintus is engaging with *Od.24* as the ‘real’ final book of the *Odyssey*, and is mobilising many of the ways in which this book problematises ideas about ending.

Odysseus' final act in the poem, the danger that his rage will continue is at least partially fulfilled:

σμερδαλέον δ' ἐβόησε πολύτλας δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,
οἴμησεν δὲ ἀλείς ὥς τ' αἰετὸς ὑψιπετήεις. (*Od.*24.537–8)

The closing speech of Homer's most silver-tongued speaker is an inarticulate roar. This outburst jars with the narrative's attempts to reassure us of a final peace (*Od.*24.545–8), and provides a parting reminder of what was stressed in Tiresias' prophecy: that the *nostos* is not the end of Odysseus' turbulent adventures. By ending his own narrative with an allusion to these upheavals, Quintus asserts that in disrupting the closure of his epic he is doing something entirely Homeric: not ending properly with the *Odyssey* is, paradoxically, an Odyssean form of ellipsis.

The *Posthomerica* thus affirms its status as a poem of the Homeric interval, and at the same time radically redefines what this interval is. Beginning where the *Iliad* leaves off, it finishes not with the start of the *Odyssey*, but with the end: and where this ending is, even in the written Homeric texts, is presented as continually open for negotiation. The space between Homer's poems is thus not just expanded, but revealed to *already be expansive*; as Quintus brings to the fore his model's own lack of containment, and expands his conclusion using the plurality of Homeric ends.

CODA: CONCLUDING THE CONTINUOUS SONG

To end this journey through post-Homeric time, let us return once more to the πᾶσα ἀοιδή of the Muse call: Quintus' most direct statement of literary principle, and a symbol of text's incorporative poetics:

ὑμεῖς γὰρ πᾶσάν μοι ἐνὶ φρεσὶ θήκατ’ ἀοιδήν... (Q.S.12.308)

Temporality provides the final means by which Quintus tests the limits of this statement, and ultimately fulfils it. Read alongside the poem's reconfiguration of language and song, of memory and allusion, it shows how the *Posthomerica* offers a vision of what the 'entire work of Homer' could mean: defined as the closed texts of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but *through* these texts, open to everything before, afterwards and in between.

If the thesis has shown how Quintus constructs this vision, it has also attempted to suggest why. Read within the culture of 'doubleness' which, I have argued, characterised certain aspects of Greek culture in the third century, the poem's celebration of both linear and non-linear models of time represents a poetic participation in this affirmative style of self-definition, as a series of dichotomies between open and closed, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Homer and Rome are established and then dissolved.

I began by suggesting that the *Posthomerica* thus understood could be pivotal for a critical re-evaluation of imperial Greek epic. Throughout the course of this analysis, I have emphasised the significant connections – and equally significant disconnections – between Quintus' approach to Homer and those of his earlier or later hexameter siblings, so as to better assess the place of this epic on the landscape of imperial Greek poetics. There are questions which remain. The issue of periodisation continues to pose challenges. We must continue to resist, I hope to have shown, the temptation to talk uncritically about these poets as a homogenous group *or* as serene points on a chronological, developmental spectrum; wilfully ignoring the historical, cultural and aesthetic changes which affect how Homer was received between the

second century and the sixth. Suggesting that there could be any one-size-fits-all model to ‘solve’ these hexameter works would be reductive, and respecting differences is still one of the principal responsibilities for those working on this epic.

What Quintus can represent, however, is a palpable shift in tone as to how these questions of poetic identity are negotiated. An early (surviving), extensive and uniquely bold example of the trend of returning to Troy, the *Posthomerica* does not interpret Homer at a textual and critical distance, but assumes his original literary mode, and refracts aspects of the accumulating, evolving traditions of interpretation into the creation of Homeric verse itself. The epic both epitomises and paves the way for a new brand of Homeric response, itself to be taken up, adapted or rejected in turn, which confronts affiliation with Homer openly and without apology or fear. In assessing this response, we can perceive most clearly the timely ramifications of this whole Homerising project; as the Greek poet under Rome offers, in a written, bounded text, an *Ilias sine fine*.

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