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Odysseus the Roman: Imperial Temporality and the *Posthomeric*

Abstract: This chapter offers a reformulation of the *quaestio Latina* for Quintus of Smyrna's *Posthomeric*, centred on the contentious issue of the poem's level of engagement with Vergil's *Aeneid*. Using a re-reading of two key passages of potential Vergilian intertextuality – Calchas' prophecy about the future glory of Rome (*PH* 13.333–399), and the invention of the *testudo* battle formation (*PH* 11.358–396) – I argue that Quintus' silence with regard to the *Aeneid* is a sign of deliberate distancing, which sheds light on the broader cultural poetics of his work. By delicately evoking in these episodes not Vergil's *Aeneid* but rather Homer's *Odyssey*, Quintus, I suggest, co-opts features of Vergilian epic and re-absorbs them into a Homeric dominant model. Through this process, Greek and Roman poetics, plots, and aetiologies are combined and synchronised, in a positive statement of Quintus' position as a Homerising poet composing under Roman rule.

Keywords: Quintus/*Posthomeric*; Vergil/*Aeneid*; anachronism; intertextuality; temporality; empire.

Language failed me very often, but then, the substitute was silence, but not violence.
Elie Wiesel

To be honest, I hate silence.
Chuck Palahniuk

1 Introduction: 'Who speaks'?

The question of Quintus' engagement with Latin literature – and particularly, the influence of Vergil's *Aeneid* – is one which will not fall silent.¹ The strategies of finding an answer, as for most imperial Greek epic, have tended to fall into two opposing camps – either hard-core *Quellenforschung* (the hunt for

¹ The text of Quintus throughout is that of Vian (1963–9); and translations are adapted from Hopkinson 2018. Text and translations of the *Iliad* are taken from Murray/Wyatt 1999; of the *Odyssey* from Murray/Dimock 1998; and of the *Aeneid* from Fairclough/Goold 1999.

definitive parallels and “allusions”)² or self-abnegating reader-reception (we cannot know for sure what Quintus knew, so “our Quintus must always be a reading”).³ Needless to say, neither camp has emerged victorious. Difficulty in both cases arises not only from the obvious and perennial problems with searching for intertextual equivalences between different languages, but also, in imperial literature more specifically, from the fact that in the Greek and Latin poems which cover the same themes, divergences seem to outweigh similarities. This situation has led many scholars to conclude that these Greek poets either did not know the Latin material at all; knew it insufficiently closely to make detailed use of it — a possibility apparently ‘corroborated’ by the existence of a number of Greek translations of canonical Latin works from the 3rd and 4th centuries —⁴; or relied on now-unknown Alexandrian material to construct their narratives: the durable adage of the ‘lost Hellenistic source’ still exerts a very strong hold in this field.

So, if *Quellenforschung* “is not dead, but moribund”⁵ for most assessments of classical literary interactions, then a quirk arises in the case of the *Posthomeric* that not only does this approach still hold sway in a surprising number of scholarly quarters, but also that it is driven by a very specific attitude to the work as a poetic text. Ursula Gärtner’s *Quintus Smyrnaeus und die Aeneis* (2005) illustrates the situation. Gärtner systematically examines some 75 parallel passages of Quintus and Vergil’s epics and tests them for possible correspondences (largely single motifs: images, descriptions, character actions, and speech). For the large majority (63 cases) her verdict concerning direct influence is either uncertain or negative.⁶ Gärtner also reminds us of some rather more conclusive judgements of Quintus’ achievements as a poet. She ends by imploring her readers to free themselves from the long-standing dichotomy in which Vergil is

2 I use the German term *Quellenforschung* non-pejoratively, to refer to the process of source-criticism, due to the traction which the term continues to have in Anglophone scholarship to refer to a particular mode of reading (see Most 2016 as discussed below for one stark illustration).

3 Quotation adapted from Maciver 2012a, 12. Maciver in practice tends to pursue a productively maximalist approach to Quintus and the Latin question (see particularly Maciver 2011). In recent years Maciver seems to have changed his viewpoint on the matter; see Gärtner, this volume, p. 23 (with n. 77), and Preface, n. 5 (on p. 3).

4 See especially Fisher 1982, who shows that many of these are dated to the 4th century.

5 Most 2016, 933.

6 For earlier studies of Quintus and Vergil see Tychsen 1807, Köchly 1850, and Heinze 1915, 63–81 respectively. Keydell, in a series of publications — 1931, 1954, 1961, and 1963 — offers a positive reading of direct dependence of Quintus on Vergil. His arguments were strongly contested by Vian 1959.

brilliant, and Quintus is “a poor poet”⁷ “whose epic is like a shark’s stomach, full of undigested material.”⁸

Such pessimistic views of the *Posthomerica*’s poetic merits show above all how the Latin debate for this epic most particularly has been hampered not only by historical unknowns, but also by inherent assumptions about intertextuality and aesthetic quality. Silencing Latin influences has meant silencing Quintus, used as further evidence for his lack of originality or critical precision.⁹ Reversing the situation — appreciating more fully Quintus’ poetic capabilities and capacious allusive range — can and must lead to a reformulation of the Latin question for this epic and its agenda.

In many ways this process is already well underway. The revival of the *Posthomerica* as a text worth reading ‘in its own right’ is evidenced by the flurry of output on the poem in the past decades, with more soon to come.¹⁰ A far cry from the critical position even thirty years ago, when Christian Habicht could declare with confidence that in imperial Greece “poetry was dead,”¹¹ verse is recognised as a living medium of expression in the imperial Greek world, and Quintus is taking his place as a major witness to the literary and cultural concerns driving his period at large. In terms of the Latin question too, as this volume’s preface makes clear, a number of initiatives have already sought to reinvigorate the exploration of later Greek literature alongside Latin works, and to open up a dialogue between the two traditions. Taking our cue from such projects, and from this volume’s starting-premise — that “it is possible that the Greek poets of the Late Antiquity were indeed familiar with crucial works of Latin poetry such as Vergil’s *Aeneid* and Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*, be it in the original or in translation, and that this familiarity was used in individual, crea-

7 Gärtner takes this quotation from Keydell 1931, 75, and Bethe 1910, 327.

8 Gärtner 2005, 286. For the shark image she borrows from a letter by Robert Musil to Johannes v. Allesch dated 15.3.1931. See also the discussion by James 2006, 329.

9 Thus James 2007, 414 summarises that “the success with which [Quintus] imitated the language and style of the Homeric epics encouraged the opinion that he lacked sufficient originality to do more than simply reproduce the material from the sources” — i.e., *had* he known Vergil as well as he does Homer, he would have used him directly and non-adaptively.

10 To take just some examples from the past ten years alone: at the time of writing this chapter there has been an international conference on Quintus (Zurich, 2006) and an international workshop (Cambridge, 2016); two major edited volumes (Baumbach/Bär/Dümmeler 2007; Bär/Ozbek/Greensmith 2022) and a number of monographs and commentaries (most recently Scheijnen 2018, Carvounis 2019, and Greensmith 2020).

11 Habicht 1985. See further discussion in Bowie 1989.

tive ways” —¹² we should now pursue with confidence a model of intertextuality, in which imperial Greek poets engage with a range of models, inventively and often covertly, involving not only the ‘quotation’ of lines or borrowed material, but also the ideological and aesthetic transportation of one set of literary signs, symbols, and even whole cultural systems onto another. We can, in other words, move on: from asking not (just) whether our imperial Greek authors used Latin models, but how they used them, and why... or why *not*.

It is now rightly being perceived that this question of ‘why not’ is just as important: that *non*-engagement with Latin sources on the part of imperial Greek poets does not necessarily bespeak incompetence or ignorance, but can be read as a directed and loaded choice. In the case of Quintus specifically, as an author intent on re-writing Homeric epic for a Greek readership living under Roman rule in the 3rd century (and we shall return to this central issue of Homer later), the refusal to acknowledge the *Aeneid* — as the foundational text of Roman imperial glory — becomes significant, on a political as well as literary plain. As Simon Goldhill has recently argued, to a Greek reader familiar with the *Aeneid* in any form or medium, and aware of its role in Roman literary culture, a lack of reference to the *Aeneid* would itself be significant — “as a ghostly echo of distinctiveness if not as a strategy of cultural independence.”¹³ Fotini Hadjittofi has closely analysed such moments of “emphatic silence” in Quintus’ treatment of the *Aeneid*, which she reads as reflective of a “certain distance” from Roman ideology that Greek authors of the Second Sophistic could maintain; a contestation and re-negotiation of Roman and Greek identities which is distinctly *of its time*.¹⁴ And Silvio Bär’s chapter in this volume further reveals the successful results that such an approach can yield: considering the Sinon and Laocoon episodes of the *Posthomerica* as a “re-writing and de-Romanization of Vergil’s

12 See Preface to this volume, p. 4. That this premise is not only sensible, but correct, is surely corroborated by the evidence for widespread bilingualism in the imperial Greek period: see recently Adams 2003; Adams/Janse/Swain 2002, and Mullen/Elder 2019. As for the idea that the existence of Greek translations of Latin works suggests that Greeks could not read the original, one wonders what a historian of the future would make of any modern Classicist’s Latin and Greek abilities should they discover the hordes of Penguin translations and Loeb’s in every library, office, and personal collection...

13 Goldhill, forthcoming. See also the earlier and instructive comments along these lines by Cuypers 2005, 607, as discussed and quoted in Bär’s chapter in this volume.

14 Hadjittofi 2007, quotations from p. 360. Hadjittofi contraposes this “accentuated... Hellenism of the Second Sophistic” to the “prevalence of cultural pluralism” more demonstrative of Late Antiquity, as is revealed (she argues) in the different treatments of Roman material of Quintus in the 3rd century and Nonnus in the 5th.

Aeneid,” he reveals how Quintus’ interaction with Vergil can take the form of a bold turning away from his obvious Latin model, as Quintus removes the Roman-ness from these two famous Vergilian scenes and redrafts the sack of Troy in a new, “cleaned-up” fashion.

This chapter in one respect makes a further contribution to this style of reading. However, it also takes it in a different direction. Acknowledging that Quintus makes full and creative use of ‘weaponised silence’ in relation to the *Aeneid*, and largely removes Vergil’s poem from his narrative, I want to consider what takes its place. If the silence speaks, then what sounds do we hear instead? Taking as my starting point the most fundamental paradox of the *Posthomeric* — that Quintus both implicitly claims Homeric identity and engages subtly with his imperial context — I shall read two key passages of Vergilian (dis)engagement as a self-conscious commentary on the poem’s anachronistic technique: Calchas’ prophecy about the future glory of Rome (*PH* 13.333–349), and the invention of the *testudo* battle formation (*PH* 11.358–396). By evoking in these episodes systematically and pointedly not Vergil’s *Aeneid* but rather Homer’s *Odyssey*, Quintus co-opts symbolic Vergilian imagery and motifs and turns them (back) into Homeric tropes. Rome’s foundational poem is thus deconstructed to become a pre-Roman, yet fully imperial, Greek epic, and the story of Rome is defiantly synchronised into an aetiology of Homeric Greece.

2 (Im)perfect timing: Epigonality and empire

The idea of merging different forms of time has a long and varied history across ancient epic. In Homeric poetry itself, whereas the *Iliad* is seen as strong, teleological, and closed — 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 child¹⁵ — the *Odyssey* delights first in “aimless” episodes of wandering and digression before allowing itself to be organised by a quest that, however much it may be deferred by adventure, will finally achieve its goal.¹⁶ These different courses are directly manifest in the subsequent development of the epic genre, as hexameter texts charted their own responses to this double pull of Homeric time. Apollonius, to take what is now the most extensively discussed

¹⁵ See especially de Jong 2014, 90 and Lowe 2000.

¹⁶ On this way of conceptualising the *Odyssey*’s temporality see Quint 1993, 9 (from whence comes “aimless”) and Lowe 2000, 151.

example, shapes his entire voyaging epic around a twofold approach to the Homeric past. On the one hand, the *Argonautica* is focused on constructing distinct layers of embedded, distant time. The proem announces its epigonal subject matter — the topic of “earlier singers” (*Arg.* 18–19), and a story already old for Homer (cf. *Od.* 12.69–70), an “always already distanced model of excellence.”¹⁷ But at the same time, through the towering presence of the quasi-eternal god Apollo, from whom the narrator “begins” (*Arg.* 1.1), the proem — and, as it continues, the poem — also points to the essential *continuity* of the past, which is not hermetically sealed from the present.¹⁸ So too in the Latin epic tradition, where poets found numerous ways to reveal how earlier models were both essentially and eternally ‘old’ and also part of their on-going present. Thus to take just two major examples, Ennius’ Pythagorean treatment of Homer, moves away from a literary dependence on an earlier ancestor to create a Homer *redivivus*, which enacts the direct cultural transmission from Greek to Latin through the physical act of rebirth into another’s body.¹⁹ And Ovid’s kaleidoscopic treatment of Vergil in his own epic-rewriting of the *Aeneid* in *Metamorphoses* 13–14 produces a situation where, in Hinds’ words, “rather than constructing himself as an epigonal reader of the *Aeneid*, Ovid makes Vergil a hesitant precursor of the *Metamorphoses*.”²⁰

These various techniques of epigonality acquired a special valence in the wider literary culture of Quintus’ era, and became strongly associated with the writings and performances of the Second Sophistic: an epoch which, as many scholars have finely shown, was intent on forging a close connection with the mythological and classical past. A number of studies have revealed the emphasis placed on role-playing 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.²¹ Surviving works also bear witness to “close encounters”²² with resurrected figures from myth and history. 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. Many traditions also found ways to refract later intellectual and cultural production into an earlier origin and source, most often by citing Homer as the

¹⁷ Goldhill 1991, 284.

¹⁸ See, e.g., Klooster 2007, 64 f.

¹⁹ See Zeitlin 2001, 236 f. and Hardie 1993, 103.

²⁰ Hinds 1998, 106.

²¹ See Anderson 1993; Zeitlin 2001; Schmitz 1997 and 1999, 71–92; Konstan/Saïd 2006.

²² A term used productively in late antique contexts by Lane Fox 1986.

container of all subsequent knowledge and truth. Thus Pseudo-Plutarch's *Essay on the Life and Poetry of Homer* presents the poet as ἡ ἀρχή of all things, from politics to medicine, drama, and literature.²³ The later exponents 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.²⁴ And a number of imperial writers also drew associations between specific Homeric characters and later intellectual movements; such as the popular notion that Homer's "much enduring" Odysseus was a proto-Stoic, with authors such as Seneca, Epictetus, Musonius, and Dio Chrysostom all transmitting a Stoicising version of the hero.²⁵

All of these writers, thinkers, and works, then, practised a particularly bold form of temporal mixology: they explored different ways of colliding the distant past and the contemporary present, with seams, the methodology, and the justifications often unapologetically on show. These ideas of course have a political as well as literary significance. In the epic sphere, this political dimension has been explored most influentially by David Quint in *Epic and Empire*.²⁶ In his account of how the epics of the western tradition responded to the two different narrative modes offered by the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Quint splits the history of the epic genre into two political strands — two different forms of response to imperialism: the Vergilian epics of teleology, conquest, and empire that take the victors' side²⁷ and the countervailing, loose, wandering epics of the defeated and of republican liberty.²⁸

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.²⁹

The 'antiquarianism' of the Greek Second Sophistic has an equally imperial inflection. As David Konstan and Susan Saïd have emphasised, not all epochs are engaged in such a reflexive relationship with the past. Moments of 'crisis'

²³ See Keaney/Lamberton 1986; Pontani 2005.

²⁴ Lamberton 1986.

²⁵ This concept of a proto-Stoic Odysseus did not begin in the imperial era (see, e.g., Buffière 1956, 316–317) but it certainly increased in popularity and inventiveness. See Montiglio 2011, 66–94. For the relevance of this vision of Odysseus to Quintus' epic see Maciver 2012a and Bär's chapter in this volume.

²⁶ Quint 1993.

²⁷ Quint 1993 focuses on the *Aeneid* itself, Camoes' *Lusiadas*, Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*.

²⁸ Lucan's *Pharsalia*, Ercilla's *Araucana*, and d'Aubigné's *Les tragiques*. On politicised time in Lucan see also Masters 1992.

²⁹ Quint 1993, 9.

tend in particular to elicit a tendency to imitate one's forebears so directly.³⁰ After the *Pax Romana*, the Greek east was involved in a complex version of such a crisis, of cultural as well as political identity.³¹ As a result, this was an age intensely self-conscious about its relation to 'the before'; which manifested itself in an ironic but intense reverence for antique models.³² As they memorably put it, "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."³³

Quintus reveals himself to be fully immersed in these twin traditions of temporality (epic and Second Sophistic).³⁴ However, he moves with them in a different way. This difference is rooted in the most central aspect of the *Posthomerica*, an aspect which makes it unique among surviving imperial Greek epic: its implicit claim to Homeric authorship, and to being the missing middle part of Homer's epic canon — Iliadic sequel, Odyssean prequel.³⁵ The direct continuity with the *Iliad* is announced by the unexpected absence of a Muse invocation at the beginning of book 1, while the connection to the *Odyssey* is secured by an increase in Odyssean allusions in the final books of the poem, and a direct intertextual gloss of its opening (*PH* 14.665–668; *Od.* 1.11–12). Quintus also repeats defining Homeric set pieces, most strikingly the Shield of Achilles, stressed as being the very same artefact as that in *Iliad* 19. This self-positioning as 'still Homer' — not a transmission from one language and culture to another, *qua* Ennius, but a direct continuation of the Homeric voice; a Greek Homer 'in his own words' — must affect our interpretation of Quintus' whole intertextual programme, the tone in which we take his engagement, or non-engagement with any later literary works. This poet, in other words, cannot 'signal' his use of the *Aeneid*, he cannot flaunt his Vergilian influence in the way that Roman writers do with their Greek models, because according to the conceit of his poem, to do so would be to veer outside of the rules of time. In this poem of the Homeric

³⁰ Konstan/Saïd 2006, x.

³¹ This crisis has been well delineated by a number of studies: particularly Alcock 1993 and 1997; Hekster 2008 and Ando 2012.

³² Konstan/Saïd 2006.

³³ Konstan/Saïd 2006, x.

³⁴ For the potential relationship between the *Posthomerica* and the Second Sophistic, Baumbach/Bär/Dümmeler 2007 and Bär 2010 remain the seminal works, with critiques and challenges in Maciver 2012b and Greensmith 2020.

³⁵ This is by now the standard reading of Quintus' poetics, stretching at least as far back as Köchly 1850. See especially the recent treatments in Maciver 2012a and Greensmith 2020.

interval, Aeneas' story has not happened yet, and Vergil is long yet to be born. This is a story that Homer's characters cannot know; that Homer cannot tell.

We shall now see how Quintus uses this self-constructed position to his unique advantage — to retroject his Roman context, and (a key part of this context) his Latin literary inheritance, into a *Homeric* framework and form. This process is most clearly perceived in the two episodes of the *Posthomerica* usually considered by scholars to be the most explicit moments of 'imperialness' and 'anachrony': where the poem breaks through its Homeric veneer and alludes to events which are incompatible with it.³⁶ These are also among two of the passages of Quintus most strongly (but problematically) connected with Vergil's *Aeneid*: parts of the story of the sack of Troy where this Latin hypotext 'should' be there, but where its presence is notoriously hard to pin down. By reframing these passages as Odyssean emblems — making the connection not (just) to the Roman 'future present' but to the next part of Homer's own story which, after the final lines of this poem, is just about to unfold — Quintus profoundly changes the terms of engagement. Allusivity and anachrony become issues of fast-forward into Homeric, not Vergilian territory, and the Greek *aetion* of Roman imperial ideas (literary, military, and cultural) is inventively re-emphasised. Given the political significations of epic time, then, the effects of this process offer a powerful illustration of how the *Posthomerica* represents a different, more positive response to the challenges of this particular 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 Roman and Homeric time unsettles both sides of this equation, to reclaim an open *and* closed narrative for so-called *Graecia capta*.

3 A Family affair: Aeneas escapes Troy

In book 13 of the *Posthomerica*, amidst the fiery carnage of Troy's downfall, Aeneas makes his way to safety out of the burning city (*PH* 13.300–332). This episode has unsurprisingly become a major crux in the Vergil debate surrounding the *Posthomerica*, as scholars working from a traditional perspective have

³⁶ I analyse these two passages alongside their so-called "imperial" signals in Greensmith 2020, 328–335. This volume has provided the welcome opportunity for me to expand the arguments first made there, specifically in light of the question of Vergilian textual inheritance.

struggled to agree over specific references or allusions to Aeneas' own account of his dramatic escape (*Aen.* 2.250–804). Particularly vexing are the possible links between Aeneas' tale and Quintus' image of Aeneas carrying his aged father on his shoulders, with the young Ascanius holding his hand, barely able to keep up; and, in the lines immediately following, the description of the flames and the enemies' weapons making way for Aeneas, as he is led (in Quintus) by Venus:

...ὥς παῖς ἐσθλὸς εὐφρονος Ἀγχίσιος	315
ἄστυ λιπῶν δῆρισι καταθρόμενον πυρὶ πολλῷ	
υἷα καὶ πατέρα σφὸν ἀναρπάζας φορέεσκε,	
τὸν μὲν ἐπὶ πλατὺν ὦμον ἐφρυσσάμενος κρατερῆσι	
χερσὶ πολυτλήτῳ ὑπὸ γῆραϊ μοχθίζοντα·	
τὸν δ' ἀπαλῆς μάλα χεῖρὸς ἐπιψαύοντα πόδεσσι	320
γαίης, οὐλομένον δὲ φοβεύμενον ἔργα μόθοιο	
ἔξῃγεν πολέμοιο δυσηχέος...	

PH 13.315-322

So the noble son of wise Anchises abandoned his blazing city to the foe, seized his father and his son, and set off carrying them, lifting the old man, enfeebled by grievous age, on his broad shoulders with his mighty arms, and leading his son by his tender hand, barely touching the ground with his feet and terrified of those acts of deadly war, out of the furore and the fighting.

*Haec fatus latos umeros subiectaque colla
veste super fulvique insternor pelle leonis,
succedoque oneri; dextrae se parvus Iulus
implicuit sequiturque patrem non passibus aequis.*

Aen. 2.271–274

So I spoke, and over my broad shoulders and bowed neck I spread the cover of a tawny lion's pelt and stoop to the burden. Little Iulus clasps his hand in mine, and follows his father with steps that match not his.

...Κύπρις δ' ὁδὸν ἡγεμόνευεν
 υἱόνδ' καὶ παῖδα καὶ ἀνέρα πῆματος αἰνοῦ
 πρόφρων ῥυομένη· τοῦ δ' ἔσσυμένου ὑπὸ ποσσὶ
 πάντῃ πῦρ ὑπόεικε, περισχίζοντο δ' αὐτμαὶ
 Ἕφαιστον μαλεροῖο, καὶ ἔγχεα καὶ βέλε' ἀνδρῶν
 πύπτον ἐτώσια πάντα κατὰ χθονὸς ὁπίσσω· Ἀχαιοὶ
 κείνῳ ἐπέρριψαν πολέμῳ ἐνὶ δακρυόεντι.

PH 13.326-332

Cypris led the way, eager to protect her grandson, her son and her husband from that dreadful disaster: as he rushed along, the fire everywhere gave way beneath his feet, He-

phaestus' raging flames were parted, and all the Achaean warriors' spears and missiles thrown at him in that grievous battle missed their target and fell to the ground.

*Descendo, ac ducente deo flammam inter et hostis
expedior; dant tela locum, flammaeque recedunt.*

Aen. 2.632–633

I descend and, guided by a god, make my way amid fire and foes. Weapons give me passage and the flames retire.

Now, it is easy to see why Vergilian correspondence-hunting has proven an unsatisfying exercise for this scene: the lack of even bilingual 'quotation' and the number of divergent details (especially in the second example, where in Vergil's account Aeneas parts the enemy fire as he is returning home alone) mean that, as Alan James remarks, "this [set of passages] could hardly suffice to prove Vergil's direct influence if it were not established independently."³⁷ It is therefore crucial to approach the scene with a more capacious, Greek-and-Latin form of 'intertextuality.' The fact is that to any post-Augustan reader, it is impossible *not* to see a Vergilian footprint on this scene; but this footprint does not need to take the form of an echo — it can be a gesture, a trope, a refusal, or a *substitution*, as Aeneas' tale is turned into something else. It is equally crucial to re-read the scene through the lens of Quintus' still-Homer position. The confined parameters of the *Posthomeric*'s inter-Homeric story in which Aeneas has not yet set sail from Troy, not yet been shipwrecked, is nowhere near ready to take his seat in Carthage and beguile Dido and her banqueters with the *bella exhausta [quae] cane*bat (*Aen.* 4.14). Quintus knowingly marks this temporality in the lines immediately following this crux passage. The Greeks attempt to stop Aeneas from escaping — to overhaul the trajectory of the story after Troy's fall, and of Roman imperial glory, by cutting short Aeneas' aftermath which for Quintus and his readers, *has to happen*.

Cypris prevents this revolution. And Calchas then explains why. He stops the Greeks in their pursuit of the family by foretelling the glorious aftermath, and predicting Aeneas' Roman destiny:

καὶ τότε δὴ Κάλχας μεγάλ' ἴαχε λαὸν ἔργων·
ἴσχεσθ' Αἰνείαιο κατ' ἰφθίμοιο καρὴν οὖν
βάλλοντες στονόεντα βέλη καὶ λοῖγια δοῦρα.
τὸν γὰρ θέσφατόν ἐστι θεῶν ἐρικυδέϊ βουλῇ
Θύμβριν ἐπ' εὐρυρέεθρον ἀπὸ Ξάνθοιο μολόντα

335

37 James 2007, 150.

τευξέμεν ἱερὸν ἄστυ καὶ ἔσσομένοισιν ἀγητὸν
 ἀνθρώποις, αὐτὸν δὲ πολυσπερέεσσι βροτοῖσι
 κοιρανέειν· ἐκ τοῦ δὲ γένος μετόπισθεν ἀνάξειν
 ἄχρις ἐπ' ἀντολίην τε καὶ ἀκάματον δύσιν ἔλθεῖν·
 καὶ γάρ οἱ θέμις ἐστὶ μετέμμεναι ἀθανάτοισιν,
 οὐνεκα δὴ πάϊς ἐστὶν ἑυπολοκάμου Ἀφροδίτης.³⁸

PH 13.333–343

Then Calchas gave a loud shout restraining the army: “Stop hurling your deadly missiles and murderous spears at mighty Aeneas’ head! By the glorious will of the gods he is destined to leave Xanthus and go to Tiber’s broad streams, there to found a holy city that will be a marvel even to future men; he himself shall be ruler of a people far and wide, and his descendants shall be lords of an empire extending from the tireless sun’s eastern rising to where it sets in the west. And it is right that he should have a place among the immortals, since he is the son of Aphrodite of the beautiful tresses.

This is one of the three most ‘direct’ references to the Roman empire in Quintus’ epic. Together with the arena simile (PH 6.532–537), which describes the use of wild beasts in amphitheatre executions, and the *testudo* episode in 11.358–399 (more of which later), this passage, so the usual interpretation goes, breaks with the mythic fiction of the Trojan War and places the *Posthomerica* more firmly in the context of the imperial era.³⁸ Through the self-distancing vehicle of a prophecy, Quintus comes closest to positioning himself in the context of Roman rule: the prediction describes the lived present of the poet and his readers, and offers a near-direct expression of Roman hegemony in a political sense, by not only pointing, in general terms, to the myth of Rome’s origins, but also to the mythologised genealogy of the Julian imperial family, and its complex legacies in Quintus’ own time. Scholars have also highlighted two possible (or probable, or doubtful...) intertexts with the *Aeneid* here, both centred on the prophecy of Creusa (*Aen.* 2.776–789), which occurs in the same narrative context as Calchas’ premonition. Creusa’s speech also contains a proleptic reference to the Tiber (*Aen.* 2.781–782) and a number of phrases which may (or may not) be recognised in Quintus’ terms of description (e.g., *leni* [...] *agmine* at *Aen.* 2.782 possibly alludes to the adjective εὐρυπέεθρον, “with broad streams”, of PH 13.337; and the beginning of Creusa’s speech at *Aen.* 2.777 contains a similar proclamation to PH 13.336: θέσφατόν ἐστι θεῶν ἐρικυδέι βουλῇ, “by the glorious will of the gods”).³⁹

³⁸ See, e.g., Baumbach/Bär 2007, 3, James 2004, xviii–xix, and especially Tomasso 2010.

³⁹ See Gärtner 2005, 245. There are further possible parallels between Calchas’ prediction here and Jupiter’s famous prophecy in the first book of the *Aeneid*: for instance, the resounding

Come, let us lead him away from death, lest the son of Cronos grow angry in any way, if Achilles slays him; for it is fated for him to escape, so that the race of Dardanus will not perish without seed and be seen no more — of Dardanus whom the son of Cronos loved above all the children born to him from mortal women. For at length the son of Cronos has come to hate the race of Priam; and now truly shall the mighty Aeneas be king among the Trojans, and his sons' sons that shall be born in days to come.

This prophecy — brief, vague, and of course, 'un-Roman' — may seem an unlikely primary model for the *Posthomeric*'s account.⁴² And yet the ancient reception of this passage already paves the way for a more imperial reading of its politics. Part of the manuscript tradition records the variant 'πάντεσσιν ἀνάξει' for line 307; a reading which is also reported by Strabo (13.1.53), and which finds its most emphatic echo in yet another Vergilian prophecy — as the prophetic voice when Delos welcomes the Trojan refugees with yet more premonitions about their as-yet-uncertain future:

*'Dardanidae duri, quae vos a stirpe parentum
prima tulit tellus, eadem vos ubere laeto
accipiet reduces. Antiquam exquirite matrem:
hic domus Aeneae cunctis dominabitur oris,
et nati natorum, et qui nascentur ab illis.'*
Aen. 3.94–98

Long-suffering sons of Dardanus, the land which bore you first from your parent stock shall welcome you back to her fruitful bosom. Seek out your ancient mother. There the house of Aeneas shall lord it over all lands, even his children's children and their race that shall be born of them.

As Charles McNelis demonstrates, this Vergilian prophecy pointedly starts by addressing Aeneas' men as *Dardanidae*, evidently a nod to the emphasis in the Homeric prophecy that the line of Dardanus must not perish. However, in the following generalising phrase *cunctis orbis*, Vergil reflects the more expansive view of the Trojan line enshrined in the variant reading with πάντεσσιν.⁴³ It therefore seems likely that such a variant may have been preferred in Roman times precisely in light of Aeneas' post-Trojan career, as is celebrated in the *Aeneid*. Quintus reflects this less specific vision of Aeneas' future empire as

⁴² Or at least, a model which Quintus updates entirely. Other versions which may, in my view, less programmatically, lie behind the prophecy include the prophecies in *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite* and Lycophron's *Alexandra*. See James 2004, 337.

⁴³ McNelis 2018, especially 12–13. See also Hadjittofi 2007, 359.

moving beyond ‘just’ Troy,⁴⁴ but refracts it *back* into a distinctly Homeric-style scene, still within the timeframe of the Trojan War itself. Indeed, Quintus connects his version of this prophecy structurally, thematically, and lexically to the original Iliadic moment of prolepsis; far more tightly than to the Vergilian Creusa scene. His emphasis on γένος suggests Poseidon’s repeated γενεή, γενεήν; and θέσφατόν ἐστι reworks the god’s fatalistic warning μόριμον δέ οἱ ἐστ’. The mention of the Xanthus (*PH* 13.337) with its strong Homeric associations not just with Troy in a general sense, but also with Achilles’ *aristeia* at and with the river⁴⁵ also evokes by transferral Achilles’ own role in Poseidon’s prophecy; where it is from his rage specifically that Aeneas is saved.

This Iliadic connection paves the way for an even more pivotal Homeric allusion, as Calchas adds a second reason why Aeneas must be allowed to escape:

καὶ δ’ ἄλλως τοῦδ’ ἀνδρὸς ἕως ἀπεχώμεθα χεῖρας,
οὐνεκά οἱ χρυσοῖο καὶ ἄλλοις ἐν κτεάτεσσιν 345
.....⁴⁶
ἄνδρα σαοῖ φεύγοντα καὶ ἄλλοδαπὴν ἐπὶ γαῖαν,
τῶν πάντων προβέβουλεν ἐὼν πατέρ’ ἥδ’ ἐκαὶ υἱά·
νῦξ δὲ μὴ ἡμῖν ἔφηνε καὶ υἱέα πατρὶ γέροντι
ῥῆσιον ἐκπάγλως καὶ ἀμεμφέα παιδὶ τοκῆα.
PH 13.344–349

For another reason, too, we should offer this man no violence: instead of all his gold and other possessions <. . . > which might keep an exile safe even in a foreign land, he preferred his father and his son: this one night has shown us the extraordinary piety of a son toward his father and the blameless love of a parent toward his son.

On the one hand, this praise of Aeneas’ paternal and filial piety seems perfectly in-keeping with the ‘Roman context’ of the scene: it affiliates Quintus’ Aeneas with the idealised family figure of Augustan politics and rhetoric, which was so often centred on the promotion of generational continuity and the importance of producing and maintaining a *familia*, all embodied in the *Aeneid*’s metonymic *pater Aeneas*. But on the other hand, the family-centredness as specifically expressed in these lines is reminiscent not just of Augustan Rome, but also of

⁴⁴ For a more negative reading of Quintus’ Calchas’ precise terms of praising the empire, and a focus on what is left out and *not* praised (e.g., the eternity of the empire to match its vast spatial scope), see Hadjittofi 2007, 364–365; though she wisely veers away from terming such omissions a fully-fledged anti-Roman agenda.

⁴⁵ A connection also made much of by Nonnus during Aeacus’ fight with the river (*Dionysiaca* 22, particularly 384–389).

⁴⁶ On the probable lacuna here see Vian 1969, 142.

the Homeric Greek world.⁴⁷ The image of a hero who is simultaneously a father and a son finds earlier parallel in the figure of Odysseus, whose story starts with a son's anguished search for his father and ends with an anguished father's reunion with his son. This filial triad is instantiated in the final book of the *Odyssey*, which provides the first and only scene where the three generations act together (*Od.* 24.359–364).

Calchas' speech in fact points strikingly to this Odyssean paradigm. The theme of fleeing and entering a foreign land is, we are here reminded linguistically, an original *topos* of Odysseus' wandering. Ἀλλοδαπός (*PH* 13.346) is found most frequently in the *Odyssey* in the context of the central hero's wayward travelling.⁴⁸ The reference to gold can also evoke Odysseus' interaction with Laertes, where he discusses the prospect of gifts whilst cruelly testing him (*Od.* 24.274: χρυσοῦ μὲν οἱ δῶκ' εὐεργέος ἑπτὰ τάλαντα, "and I gave to him seven talents of finely-wrought gold"). And in the mention of Ascanius as a παῖς (*PH* 13.349) we may hear Odysseus' recollection of himself as a child during this same conversation with his father (*Od.* 24.338: παιδνός ἐών, "when I was a child") — a moment which allows us a rare glimpse at his own Telemachean anxieties: now a fully grown hero, Odysseus too was once a naïve and emergent son. More provocatively still, Calchas describes Aeneas as a υἱέα ἥπιον (*PH* 13.348–349). Now, ἥπιος as a Homeric epithet for a person is used most frequently in a specific formula about the family: πατήρ ὥς ἥπιος αἰεὶ (and similar variants) is found once in the *Iliad* (24.770, as Helen, addressing Hector in lament, describes Priam's kindness to her) and twice in the *Odyssey*, where it is on both occasions about Odysseus. In the Ithacan assembly, Telemachus remembers his father's kindness:⁴⁹

...τὸ μὲν πατέρ' ἐσθλὸν ἀπώλεσα, ὅς ποτ' ἐν ὑμῖν
τοῖσδεσσιν βασίλευε, πατήρ δ' ὥς ἥπιος ἦεν·

Od. 2.46–47

First, I have lost my noble father who was once king among you here, and was gentle as a father.

⁴⁷ On the reformulation of the myth of Troy in Greece and Rome more broadly see Erskine 2001.

⁴⁸ 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.

⁴⁹ Telemachus here arguably performs his own act of selective memory: reaching, perhaps, beyond the bounds of what he could feasibly remember from his early-year interactions with his father before he left for Troy.

In the same meeting, Mentor agrees:

μή τις ἔτι πρόφρων ἀγανὸς καὶ ἥπιος ἔστω
 σκηπτούχος βασιλεύς, μηδὲ φρεσὶν αἴσιμα εἰδώς,
 ἀλλ' αἰεὶ χαλεπὸς τ' εἶη καὶ αἴσυλα ῥέζοι·
 ὡς οὐ τις μέμνηται Ὀδυσσῆος θείοιο
 λαῶν οἷσιν ἄνασσε, πατὴρ δ' ὡς ἥπιος ἦεν.

Od. 2.230–234

Never henceforth let sceptered king of his own good will be kind and gentle, nor let him heed due measure in his heart, but let him always be harsh and do injustice, seeing that no one remembers divine Odysseus of the people whose lord he was; yet gentle was he as a father.

Vergil's Aeneas never receives a similar description: he is not termed a gentle or kind son to his father *or* father to his son.⁵⁰ The quality of paternal or filial kindness is, no doubt, dubiously accurate for either hero, but it is telling that it is only Odysseus who is internally recalled in this way — in the words of his son and his loyal supporters. *Pater Aeneas* receives no such transmitted praise. He has in fact no real personal relationship with his son at all: the only Vergilian scene which describes father and son alone together is when Aeneas is leaving for battle (*Aen.* 12.432–441), based on the famously touching moment in *Iliad* 6, where Hector removes his helmet to embrace Astyanax. But in a cold (mis)reading of his cousin's poignant paternity, Aeneas embraces his son only through his helmet!⁵¹ In this seemingly innocuous phrase, Quintus thus exploits all of the thematic, linguistic, and narratological differences between Vergil's account of the sack and his own — including the fact that Aeneas' Vergilian story is in the first person, so he could not easily describe himself in similar terms without seeming (even by his standards) excessively narcissistic — to make the *Odyssey* the dominant sequel at play. This dominance, and the comparative taciturnity about the *Aeneid*, ultimately reverses the assumed implications of the prototyping in this scene. In reframing the Trojan panorama from his still-Homeric *and* deeply imperial perspective, Quintus does not make the

⁵⁰ The closest equivalents are descriptions of Aeneas' *patrius amor* (e.g., at *Aen.* 1.643–644) and *cura parentis* (e.g. 1.646). However, these are both connected to external substantive nouns, and do not have the same force as a direct adjectival epithet. Thanks to Talitha Kearey for an interesting conversation about this point.

⁵¹ See especially Lyne 1987, 145–206.

obvious move of establishing Aeneas as a proto-Odyssean figure,⁵² but rather shows how this relationship can work both ways, giving it a renewed Greek, as well as a ‘new’ Roman, subjective effect. Aeneas’ famously Augustan father-son duties here find literary precedent, but mythic *fulfilment*, in the workings of the *Odyssey*.

4 Learning to be Roman (a Greek Class): The *Testudo*

The scene discussed above must now be read with a further instance of combination between Odysseus and Aeneas, which takes place during the deadlock battle of book 11. During the fighting, Odysseus devises a trick which tries — and ultimately fails — to break the stalemate. His plan involves the soldiers arranging their shields in a ‘familiar’ type of formation:

καὶ τότε ἄρ' ἀμφ' Ὀδυσῆα δαΐφρονα κύδιμοι ἄνδρες
 κείνου τεχνήεντι νόψ ποτὶ μῶλον Ἄρηος
 ἀσπίδας ἐντύναντο, βάλλον δ' ἐφύπερθε καρήνων 360
 θέντες ἐπ' ἀλλήλησι· μὴ δ' ἅπαν ἤρμωσεν ὀρμη·
 φαίης κεν μεγάροιο κατηρεφές ἔμμεναι ἔρκος
 πυκνὸν, ὃ οὐτ' ἀνέμοιο διέρχεται ὕγρον ἀέντος
 ῥιπὴ ἀπειρεσίη οὐτ' ἐκ Διὸς ἄσπετος ὄμβρος·
 τοῖαι ἄρ' Ἀργείων πεπυκασμέναι ἀμφὶ βοείαις 365
 καρτύναντο φάλαγγες...

PH 11.358–366

It was then that the renowned warriors around warlike Odysseus made their shields ready for Ares’ combat at his ingenious suggestion: they set them together above their heads and arranged the whole structure. You would have thought it was the tightly made, protective roof of a hall, impervious to the violent blasts of moist storm winds and to Zeus’ most torrential downpours: so strong a defence did those Argive phalanxes have with their ox-hide shields.

This description has multiple models and allusive strands. It echoes, for instance, Apollonius’ account of how the Argonauts used shields and helmets to protect themselves from the birds on the Island of Ares (Arg. 2.1047–1089); an

⁵² Cf., e.g., Squire 2011 who read the Iliac Tablet’s depiction of this same scene as “repackaged as the prequel to a distinctly Roman cultural, social and literary history” (thus Squire 2011, 148). Relevant discussion too in Petrain 2014.

association strengthened by the uncommon meaning of the noun ἔρκος in the roof simile (*PH* 11.362), which may be read as a nod to ἐρκίον at *Arg.* 2.1073.⁵³ 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. Many Latin poets and historians make reference to this technique.⁵⁴ However there is something distinctively Vergilian about this particular case. Not only does Quintus' passage appear closely analogous with the two mentions of this tactic in the *Aeneid* — in book 2 (438–444) where the Greeks attack Priam's palace in such a configuration, and in book 9 (505–518) where the Trojan defenders first fail and then succeed against a Volscian *testudo* —⁵⁵ but it also, and more profoundly, seems to take up the device's poetological function as it was established in Vergil's poem. For as many critics have noted, from the time of the *Aeneid* onwards, the *testudo* became a typical anachronism of Latin epic: it was a traditional, even old-fashioned military technique by the third century, inseparably associated with Roman martial power and the representation of empire, and as a symbol of this imperial power, it could readily be transplanted into the incongruous setting of the deep mythological past.⁵⁶ In his own use of the formation in this Homerising, Trojan timescape, Quintus is thus gesturing to the passages where the *Aeneid* was engaged in the same sort of paradoxical temporal manoeuvres as the *Posthomerica*: pointing to Vergil, as Hinds would put it of Ovid, where he was at his most Quintan.⁵⁷

For a brief moment, then, Quintus appears to break his silence: in this out of place detail and “inherited anachronism,”⁵⁸ he inserts a reminder of the later

⁵³ See Keydell 1954, 294–295 and James 2004, 32–36.

⁵⁴ List of passages in Gärtner 2005, 115.

⁵⁵ See Gärtner 2005, 243–251 and Tomasso 2010, 142–146 for further discussion of the ‘closeness’ between the passages.

⁵⁶ Cf. Vian 1969, 44–45 and Gärtner 2005, 116. The *Ilias Latina* (c. 1st cent. CE) provides ancient testimony to the significance of this anachronism in the *Aeneid*: composed as a summary of the *Iliad*, the work also references aspects of Latin literature, including anachronisms. Among these anachronisms is a *testudo* (*Ilias Latina* 766–768) that verbally alludes to several passages of the *Aeneid*, and especially to *Aen.* 2.441 and 9.505. See Reitz 2007, 350 and Scaffai 1982, 66–73, with cogent discussion in relation to the *Posthomerica* in Bärtschi 2016, 15–16.

⁵⁷ Cf. Hinds 1998, 106–109 on Ovid's synthesis and correction of the *Aeneid*'s own latent metamorphic moments (e.g., the Caieta story) in *Met.* 13–14: “what Ovid's mock-pedantic correction is really designed to do, I think, is to show his enjoyment of a very (dare I say it?) Ovidian moment in his predecessor.” (109).

⁵⁸ Phrase used by Bärtschi 2016, 15.

Vergilian inheritance underlying his overwhelmingly Homeric tenor. Then, however, he steers the scene a different way:

ὥρμηναν δὲ πύλῃσι θεηγενέος Πριάμοιο
 ἄθροοι ἐγχιρμιφθέντες ὑπ' ἀμφιτόμοις πελέκεσσι
 ῥῆξαι τείχεα μακρά, πύλας δ' εἰς οὐδας ἐρεῖσαι 390
 θαιρῶν ἐξερύσαντες, ἔχεν δ' ἄρα μήτις ἀγανὴ
 ἐλπωρὴν· ἀλλ' οὐ σφιν ἐπήρκεσαν οὔτε βόειαι
 οὔτε θοοὶ βουπλήγες, ἐπεὶ μένος Αἰνείαιο
 ὄβριμον ἀμφοτέρησιν ἀρηρότα χεῖρεσι λᾶαν
 ἐμμεμαῶς ἐφέηκε, δάμασσε δὲ τλήμονι πότμῳ, 395
 ἀνέρας οὐς κατέμαρψεν ὑπ' ἀσπίσιν....

PH 11.388–396

They meant to approach all together the gates of Priam, descendant of the gods, to smash the great walls with their double-edged axes, and to demolish the gates by tearing them from their hinges. This admirable plan held hopes of success; but neither their ox-hide shields nor their fast-moving axes availed them when the mighty Aeneas picked up a great rock in both hands and furiously flung it at them, and a wretched death befell the men whom he caught unawares beneath their shields.

The *testudo* is now given vocabulary of an Odyssean flavour. With μήτις (391) Quintus uses the paradigmatic noun associated with Homer's cunning hero. The epithet ἀγανός is most often found in the *Odyssey* to describe the suitors, who are destroyed by Odysseus' wiles.⁵⁹ The device is also linked via foreshadowing to Odysseus' later, successful weapon-trick at Troy: the Wooden Horse, the subject of the very next book of the *Posthomerica*. This link is forged firstly through the symmetry of the image which the two devices produce — the individual heroes are joined in the *testudo* into one animalistic formation (cf. 13.391) just like, Quintus will soon tell us in his delayed proem and catalogue, they will be in the Horse (PH 12.307: ὅσοι κατέβησαν ἔσω πολυχανδέος ἵππου, “those who went inside the cavernous horse”; PH 12.327–328: ἄλλοι δ' αὖ κατέβαινον ὅσοι ἔσαν ἔξοχ' ἄριστοι / ὅσους χάνδανεν ἵππος εὐξοος ἐντὸς ἐέργειν, “and went inside all those who were the best, so many as that beautifully crafted horse could hold”); and secondly by that loaded word μήτις. After its use in this passage, the noun next occurs in the poem to describe Odysseus' new plan that results in the construction of the Horse: PH 12.19–20: τῷ νῦν μήτι βίη πειρώμεθα Τρώϊον ἄστυ / περσέμεν, ἀλλ' εἴ πού τι δόλος καὶ μήτις ἀνύσῃ (“therefore let us not smite Troy by force, but let cunning stratagem avail”).

59 *Od.* 2.209, 247; 4.681; 14.180; 17.325; 18.99; 19.488, 496; 21.58, 174, 213, 232; 22.171; 23.63.

This deep association between Roman stratagem, Homeric Odysseus, and cyclic *dolos* makes all the more dramatic the fact that Quintus attributes the ultimate *failure* of the Greeks' use of this device to none other than Aeneas. Agamemnon and Menelaus had been initially optimistic about the tactic (386–387), and the bellicose description of 391–393 contains further counterfactual hints at the success that it might have been. The fact that Aeneas puts a stop to it — bypasses the possibility of Troy falling before its mythically-allotted time, and has all too often been taken as another sign of Quintus' 'defeatist' pandering to Roman imperial victory: just like the Greeks and the Volsci in the *Aeneid* examples, the Greeks ultimately cannot, and do not, win this fight.⁶⁰ However, such a reading pays insufficient attention to Odysseus' central role in this scene, as inventor, primary practitioner and main intertextual reference point. The founder of Rome and the hero of the *Aeneid* thus discovers this trick, and learns how to counter it, only by watching Odysseus create it. A definitive Roman military invention is thus retrojected into an instance of Odysseus' heroic craftiness, and the Odyssey's poetic craft; and it is through this context that it enters into Aeneas' proto-Roman ideology. The success of the *testudo*, and thus of Roman prowess, is placed into a chain of heroic learning which makes the Trojans, Greeks, Volscians, and Romans *all* inextricably connected, in spite of their various — and bilingual — professions of difference. The forces of foreshadowing and retrospection are here most defiantly collapsed into one another, as in Quintus' new epigonal vision, Aeneas *learns how to be Roman* through copying Homer's Greek hero at Troy.

5 Coda: Questioning the Latin Question...

The interplay between Odysseus and Aeneas provides the strongest indication of Quintus' engagement with teleology in an ideological form. If, to evoke for a final time Quint's enduring typology, myth could be co-opted to serve either an 'Aeneid-based' or an 'Odyssey-derived' framework of imperial response, then by co-opting these epics' two representative heroes, the *Posthomeric* juxtaposes these two different forms of inevitability, and ultimately reconciles them. By emphasising the Aeneas story as the thread connecting Greek and Roman cul-

⁶⁰ See, e.g., Bärtschi 2016, 19–20 ("In the case of the Rutuli [*Aen.* 2.516–520], who are progenitors of the future Romans just like the Trojans, this failure is particularly ironic as their descendants will know how to use a *testudo* properly") and Tomasso 2010, 145–146.

tural aetiologies, Quintus recognises and recalibrates the political implications of an open versus closed, Greek-conquered versus Roman-conqueror conception of epic time. The way in which these scenes collide the Roman-Vergilian and the Homeric-Odyssean dimensions — through characters, inventions, cultural symbols, and plots — becomes in fact not the poem's most overt 'contemporary' nod, nor its strongest indication of Latin indebtedness; but rather (or perhaps, a better understanding of 'contemporary' and 'Latin indebtedness' for Quintus) its strongest expression of the possibilities for incorporation between the imperial Greek obsession with the 'past' and the literary and political realities of the Roman present.

I shall end by returning to the more 'contemporary' exegetical politics with which I began: of *Quellenforschung*, Latin literature, and intertextuality in imperial Greek epic studies. For Quintus, as for all imperial Greek poetry, 'The Latin Question' is always in fact a series of questions: self-conscious, self-generating, at times still frustratingly elliptical, but always worth confronting, posing differently, and asking again. The answers have the potential to yield so much more than disciplinary cross-fertilisation (important as this process doubtless is). These are issues which test and pressurise the motifs surrounding cultural stand-off, assimilation, and appropriation, and which suggest the continued need to find alternative narratives to resistance in order to characterise Greek identity politics under Rome — all crucial steps in the endeavour of re-writing the story of imperial Greek history in poetry as well as prose. Silence in the *Posthomeric* is a language, but so too is substitution, as the voices of Homer and Vergil find different ways to communicate across the divides of space and time: non-violent, but no less forceful, pressing, and alive.⁶¹

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⁶¹ I am grateful to Arnold Bärtzchi and Simon Goldhill for sharing draft versions of forthcoming work with me and to Silvio Bär for his helpful comments on an earlier draft of this piece.

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