Fish in Battle?

Quintus of Smyrna and the *Halieutica* of Oppian

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when would the sails drop
from my eyes, when would I not hear the Trojan War
in two fishermen cursing?
(Walcott, *Omeros*)

If Walcott's twentieth-century *Omeros* recasts the figures of the Trojan War as fishermen, Quintus of Smyrna's *Posthomerica* features two battle-heroes compared in detail to fishermen spearing fish. Quintus has long been both loathed and admired for the similes of his fourteen-book epic – even critics far from effusive about this “schlechteste Dichter des Altertums”,¹ often accord him some merit in his similes, which are certainly varied and prodigious.² Yet all too often his similes are labelled inappropriate, or dismissed as hackneyed and derivative.³ This paper focuses on one of Quintus' more unusual similes, that of Neoptolemus as a night-fisherman (Q.S. 7.569-575). Looking first at the importance of Neoptolemus as the son of Achilles, heir to his father's greatness and newcomer to this war, the simile is then read through the lens of Oppian's *Halieutica*, that

1 Schmidt (1999), not a statement but a question.

2 James (2004) XXV-XXVI counts 222 similes in the *Posthomerica*, a total far greater than that of the *Iliad*, *Odyssey* or *Argonautica*, and matched in relative frequency only by Oppian's *Halieutica*. Way (1913) deemed Quintus' similes important enough to be appended in a catalogue at the end of his Loeb edition of the text, and on similes as roses amongst the *Posthomerica*'s thorns see Müller / Donaldson (1858) vol. 3, 366: “In this painstaking work Quintus has earned the praise of careful versification, and of a certain amount of ingenuity in his similes.” Paley (1876) 9 is more generous: “Many of them [sc. Quintus' similes] are of the finest and most felicitous description.”

3 Paschal (1904) 38-39, for instance, devises a misguided taxonomy under which Quintus' similes are divided into the imitative and the original, the “fresh” and the “artificial”. Combellack (1968) 18 speaks of “Quintus' most atrocious simile”, his legion of “inappropriate similes” and the “evil inspiration” (14) which led the poet to make inopportune comparisons: “we sometimes have a feeling that [Quintus] must have proceeded on the principle that if only he puts enough similes into a passage his narrative will be properly impressive and he need not worry about other things” (17). Even the more charitable James (2004) XXVI declares that only around 10% of Quintus' similes can be called “thematically original”.

influential didactic epic on sea-fishing from the second century A.D. Quintus, it will be shown, draws upon a long-standing discourse of fishing as trickery, using the motif to illuminate the world of Troy, and his interplays with Oppian are rich and rewarding. The model of fiery heroism must cede to a new mode of warfare, and the night-fishing of Neoptolemus contrasts with the bloody slaughter of Deiphobus, who is figured at 9.172-177 as a dispatcher of swordfish. Quintus, in the end, uses similes drawn from Oppianic material to foreground important questions about the nature of war, about the ways in which battle should be waged and cities sacked and about what it is to be an epic hero.

I

Quintus' Neoptolemus, newly arrived from Scyrus, comes in book 7 as a great boon to the fading Achaeans of the *Posthomerica*. In his fearless destruction of the enemy forces, he is compared to a night-fisherman spearing the fish he has enticed to his boat with light:

ὥς δ' ἄλιεὺς κατὰ πόντον ἀνὴρ λεληημένος ἄγρης
 τεύχων ἰχθύσι πῆμα φέρει μένος Ἥφαιστοιο 570
 νηὸς ἔης ἔντοσθε, διεγρομένη δ' ὑπ' αὐτμῇ
 μαρμαίρει περὶ νῆα πυρὸς σέλας, οἳ δὲ κελαϊνῆς
 ἐξ ἄλὸς αἰσσοῦσι μεμαότες ὕστατον αἶγλην
 εἰσιδέειν, τοὺς γάρ ῥα τανυγλώχινι τριαίνῃ
 κτείνειν ἐπεσσυμένους, γάνυται δέ οἱ ἦτορ ἐπ' ἄγρη· / (...) (Q.S. 7.569-575)⁴

As a fisherman, keen to make a catch at sea,
 Carries for the fishes' doom the fire god's power 570
 On board his boat, and when it is kindled by his breath
 The fire shines brightly round the boat; from the inky water
 The fish come darting, eager for a glimpse of the gleam
 That is their last, for with his trident's barbs the fisher
 Kills them as they rush up, gladdened by the catch; / (...) 575

The simile echoes a parallel scene in the *Halieutica*, Oppian's didactic poem on sea-fishing. Oppian had noted the three types of fishing (with trident, net and hook, a triad to which Quintus will later refer) before turning to the crepuscular fisherman:

(...) τοὺς δ' ἔσπερος εἶλε δαμέντας, 640
 εὖτ' ἂν ὑπὸ πρῶτον νυκτὸς κνέφας ἀσπαλιῆς

4 *Posthomerica*: text Vian (1963; 1966; 1969); trans. James (2004).

πυρσὸν ἀναψάμενοι γλαφυρὸν σκάφος ἰθύνοντες
 ἰχθύσιν ἀτρεμέουσιν αἰδέλον αἶσαν ἄγωσιν.
 ἔνθ' οἱ μὲν πεύκης λιπαρῇ φλογὶ καγχαλόωντες
 ἄμφ' ἀκάτῳ θύνουσι, κακὸν δ' ἴδον ἐσπέριον πῦρ,
 ῥιπῆς τριγλῶχινος ἀμειλίκτιοι τυχόντες. (Opp. *H.* 4.640-646)⁵

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(...) but other [fish] evening takes and slays, when at earliest dusk of night with lighted torch the fishers steer their hollow boat, bringing to the resting fishes a darkling doom. Then do the fishes exulting in the oily flame of pine rush about the boat and, to their sorrow seeing the fire at even, meet the stern blow of the trident.

The thematic parallels are clear: a contrast between darkness and light, the lure of fire, the fishes' joy and the mighty trident. Vian even declares that Quintus "s'est contenté de transcrire ce passage sur le mode épique".⁶ Yet what place should fish and fishing have on the epic battlefield? Oppian's *Halieutica*, a five-book fish poem dedicated to the emperor Marcus Aurelius, might at first be thought of little relevance to a narrative depicting the fall of Troy. After all, fishing is a peacetime activity far removed from the plains of Troy; fish themselves are savage creatures belonging to the peculiar and hostile sea, and are notoriously eschewed by Homer's heroes as a source of food.⁷ As James puts it, "Quintus adapts material that is germane to Oppian's subject but purely incidental in the *Trojan Epic*".⁸

Why, then? In the first place, book 7 of the *Posthomerica* is the point at which Neoptolemus must prove himself, both to the Greeks (and Trojans) and to the readers of the epic, who would necessarily have approached the work from the backdrop of a (cultural, literary and artistic) tradition less than charitable towards Neoptolemus.⁹ This is to be a probationary period for Neoptolemus, and it is significant that the Greek army does not formally welcome him until the end of the book, after he has proven his prowess on the battlefield. Quintus' Neoptolemus is a man to be respected, a man of word and deed and who even in this book displays a touching combination of dignity, diplomacy and modesty following his spectacular success on the battlefield.¹⁰ He is a man of nuanced character and

5 *Halieutica*: text Fajen (1999); trans. Mair (1928).

6 Vian (1954) 50.

7 On the sea as archetypal place of otherness, see Romm (1992); Purcell (1995) 132. The lack of Homeric fish-eating was a puzzling topic, much debated even in antiquity, and which raged furiously in classical scholarship of the early twentieth century. See Combella (1953), as well as the arguments of Scott (1917), Radin (1922) and the more anecdotal Sanford (1953). More recent studies have focused on the absence of fish from the rituals of public sacrifice in classical Athens: see Wilkins (1993) 192 and Davidson (1997) 13.

8 James (2004) XIX.

9 The cruelty of Neoptolemus was proverbial. See Boyten, this volume.

10 This is a Neoptolemus closer to that of Sophocles' *Philoctetes* than to the brute we see elsewhere in the tradition. Note that Quintus never dramatises Neoptolemus' unedifying murder of Astyanax, for instance, even if we are witness to the killing of Priam and Polyxena.

firm morals, of battle-prowess married with diplomacy; his greatest ‘flaw’ seems to be an excess sensitivity in mourning his father’s death.

Having heard so much of the son of Achilles, we finally meet him in person, and he emerges as a young man destined never again to see his father alive, valiant, yet standing in the great man’s shadow. In this epic Neoptolemus will become something of a second Achilles, pre-eminent in strength and greatness, and cast in his father’s heroic mould. Hera’s bitter rebuke to Apollo after Achilles’ death had extolled the latter’s virtues and divine stock (3.117: ἐξ ἡμέων γένος ἦεν); Neoptolemus himself, we hear, is to prove no less mighty (3.118-122). Neoptolemus, as Odysseus remarks, is the very image, or εἶδος, of his father: καὶ δ’ αὐτοὶ τεδὸν εἶδος εἰσκομεν ἀνέρι κείνῳ / πάμπαν ὃς ἀθανάτοισι πολυσθενέεσσιν ἔωκει (7.185-186).¹¹ Achilles’ death precipitates Neoptolemus’ arrival, and the one steps swiftly into the other’s shoes.¹² Neoptolemus even wears his father’s famous arms, given to him by Odysseus a hundred lines before. In his father’s armour, Neoptolemus becomes a surrogate Achilles,¹³ and not for nothing will the Trojans freeze in terror on seeing Neoptolemus in his father’s arms, assuming their bearer to be Achilles himself.¹⁴ An arming scene, replete with symbolism, draws attention to the likeness:

υἱὸς δ’ αὖτ’ Ἀχιλλῆος ἐδύσετο τεύχεα πατρός,
καὶ οἱ φαίνεται πάμπαν ἀλίγκιος· ἀμφὶ δ’ ἐλαφρά
Ἥφαίστου παλάμῃσι περὶ μελέεσσιν ἀρήρει,
καὶ περ ἐόντ’ ἑτέροισι πελώρια· τῷ δ’ ἅμα πάντα
φαίνεται τεύχεα κοῦφα. (...) (Q.S. 7.445-449)

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The son of Achilles put on the armor of his father,
Which made him look exactly like him. Very lightly,
Because of Hephaistos’ handiwork, it fitted his frame,
Though others would have found it enormous. But to him
The armor all seemed light. (...)

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11 “We ourselves can see that you are the perfect image / Of that man who rivaled the strength of the immortals.” Cf. 7.176-177, 294.

12 Even in structural terms the role of Neoptolemus is thrown into prominence by his arrival from Scyros *after* the Ajax-Odysseus dispute but *before* the arrival of Philoctetes. This allows him to single-handedly save the Achaean day and, as James (2004) XIII / 301 points out, marks a departure from the version of the tale known from the *Little Iliad*.

13 A fact of which Neoptolemus is all too keenly aware. At 7.665-666, Nestor sets up a simple equation: Neoptolemus is to Eurypylus as Achilles was to Telephus. Hearing this, Neoptolemus can hardly be restrained from carrying on his father’s role (670-671): αὐτῆμαρ ἐέλδeto τείχεος ἐκτός / σεύεσθ’ ἐν τεύχεσσιν ἐοῦ πατρός. “He wanted to sally that same day from the wall / Wearing the armor of his father.”

14 7.537-539; cf. Patroclus at *Il.* 16.278-283.

If εὐπτόλεμος Achilles (mighty warrior, 7.576) was the hero of the *Iliad*, of the past, then this νεοπτόλεμος (new warrior) is the hero of the *Posthomeric*, of the here and now.¹⁵ Quintus gives us a Neoptolemus ‘new’ not only in his role as the (in every sense) latest post-Achillean hero, but also in relation to the denigratory literary and artistic tradition in which Neoptolemus was figured as callous brute. Here is a vision of Quintus’ own literary ambition, of the ease with which he envisages himself taking up the armoury of Homeric poetics; it hardly needs a Bloom to articulate the significance of the son striding into his father’s (literary or martial) boots. If Achilles’ shield in book 5 can be read as a *mise-en-abîme* for a specifically Posthomeric Quintean poetics,¹⁶ then this easy donning of a heavy burden is a further manifestation of Quintus’ poetic programme. His is the text which models itself after Father Homer, which arrives, like Neoptolemus to Troy, when that father has passed away, leaving only memories, κλέος (glory), and a set of exacting standards. Quintus must establish himself as both like and unlike his ‘father’, and he sketches a war which both develops and diverges from its predecessor. His is a different age and a different kind of epic warfare; his Neoptolemus must also be figured anew.

Achilles in the *Posthomeric* suffers no deficit of quasi-Homeric similes. Within the first hundred lines of the hero’s appearance in the *Posthomeric*, for instance, Achilles is compared to a lion (1.524-527), forest fire (1.536-537), wild beast (1.539), hunter (1.543-544), rock (1.549) and hawk (1.572). When Neoptolemus enters battle, half-way through the epic, he is likened to a charging lion (7.464-471), to a herdsman and his dogs driving lions away (7.486-492), and finally to a fisherman using light to draw in fish at night (7.569-575). This last image seems to point to something beyond the Homeric or Achillean lion. For if the Quintean Achilles is more brutish than his Iliadic predecessor, Neoptolemus as fisherman becomes a trickster, a figure who displays both intelligence and courage and who relies on a combination of the two to outdo his opponents.¹⁷ It is in relation to this inequality that the fishing motif comes to the fore, for the very τέχνη (craft) of fishing is founded upon a sense of intellectual disparity and the gulf between man and beast.¹⁸ A mountain lion is perhaps mightier than his

15 Quintus never speaks of “Pyrrhus”, a popular moniker for Neoptolemus by this time; his hero is instead a determinedly belated *Neo-ptolemus*.

16 Baumbach, Maciver, this volume.

17 Significantly, the fisherman simile stands immediately after the arrival of Athena to Troy, as she descends to oversee the battle and aid the Achaeans (7.556-563). The goddess’ own domains, wisdom and war, are brought together in this image of the wily warrior.

18 This lack of reciprocity lies behind the fishing trope’s literary popularity. ‘Erotic fishing’, ‘fishing for a dinner-invitation’, ‘hooking a gull’, ‘fishing for old men’s wills’: all are metaphors based on the inequality of the parties involved. See e.g. Hor. *Sat.* 2.5; Juv. 4; Mart. 5.63; Lucian *Pisc.*, *Merc.Cond.*

αἰνὸν ὑπ' ἀγκίστροιο, βαλεῖν δέ τε εἰς ἄλα δῖαν
 δίκτυα καὶ παλάμησι περιφραδέως ἀπὸ νηός
 ἰθὺ καὶ αἶψα τρίαιναν ἐπ' ἰχθύσι νομήσασθαι· 65
 ἄλλ' οὐ σφιν τότε πῆμα θαλάσσια ἤρκεσαν ἔργα. (Q.S. 11.60-66)

Polydamas' spear struck Kleon and Eurymachos, 60
 Who'd come from Syme under Nireus' command,
 Both of them skilled in the art of fatally fooling fish
 By means of a hook, of casting nets in the sacred sea,
 And of wielding with expert hands from the side of a boat
 A trident with straight and speedy aim at the fish. 65
 But all their sea craft failed to save them then from ruin.

The scene is reminiscent of the death of the Trojan warrior Scamandrius in the *Iliad*, he whose skill in hunting is nevertheless useless in the face of Menelaus' spear (*Il.* 5.49-54). Yet it is also an Oppianic theme. For immediately before his instructions on fishing at night, Oppian had told of the three methods of catching fish: with hook, net or trident (Opp. *H.* 4.637-639). In Quintus, these fishermen assume the place of the Homeric huntsman: this is Homer read through Oppian. As with the fish similes in the *Posthomerica*, however, Quintus draws not upon the astonishing and imaginative array of similes in the *Halieutica*, but upon Oppian's technical discussion of fishing methods. This might sound reasonable in relation to Aratus and Nicander, whose poetry is rather less rich in simile, but Oppian is remarkable primarily for his extended similes, a style which strongly distinguished him from his didactic predecessors and which probably influenced Quintus' own poetic tendencies.²¹ In the *Halieutica* Oppian continually inverts the Homeric connection between fish and warrior; his fish are embroiled in quasi-Iliadic battles, simile after simile painting them as warriors, as citizens besieged or as victims of war. Whilst men at war are in Homer compared to fish, in the *Halieutica* fish are compared to men at war, directly reversing the epic *comparatum* and *comparandum*.²² When, for instance, spring comes to the wintry sea, Oppian's fishes rejoice like citizens of a besieged city as the enemy withdraws;²³

21 Rebuffat (2001) 241-242: "In Oppiano la similitudine ha, per quantità e per qualità, un'importanza incomparabilmente maggiore che negli altri poeti didascalici. [...] le similitudini, più di ogni altra peculiarità, collocano gli *Halieutica* in un posto particolare nella poesia didascalica greca." For Oppian's influence on Quintus' simile-practice see James (2004) XXV-XXVI.

22 An inversion perhaps familiar from Latin didactic poetry: Virgil's vines, for instance, are figured as soldiers (*Georg.* 2.372-387), and his drainage-channel likened to Achilles' fight with the Scamander (*Georg.* 1.104-110). See Schindler (2000a) 162-166, Thomas (1986) 178-179, Spinoula (2000) 65. It is perhaps important that didactic epic was traditionally aligned with, and often termed a subset of, narrative epic, although debate still rages about the importance of such genre-division in antiquity. We might do well simply to note, with Gale (2004) XIII, that "the boundary between epic and didactic is one notoriously subject to border-disputes".

23 Opp. *H.* 1.463-469.

when the muraena devours an octopus, she vaunts over him like a Homeric hero, rending him from his rock like a soldier dragging a child from its mother in war.²⁴ If, as James has suggested, poets in the Greek didactic tradition had previously tended to eschew the extended simile for fear of trespassing on Homeric territory, then Oppian's simile-practice marks a determined return of his didactic poetry to Homer, to the epic fold.²⁵ Yet whilst Quintus' dealings with Apollonius, for instance, are evident in his overt indebtedness to the vocabulary of Apollonian simile,²⁶ in the case of Oppian Quintus makes no linguistic distinction between his own turn of phrase and the didactic material of the *Halieutica*. This, as Vian points out, puts Oppian in a unique position amongst Quintus' literary forebears:

Quand Q.S. puise la matière de ses comparaisons chez ses grands devanciers (Homère, Apollonios, voire Aratos), il n'hésite pas à avouer sa dette et aime s'appropriier des expressions ou des formules de l'original. Son comportement est différent vis-à-vis d'Oppien: il ne cherche dans son livre que des sujets qu'il traite ensuite avec son style propre.²⁷

For Vian, an explanation lies in the temporal proximity of these works. Oppian is simply too recent a poet to be quoted directly in the *Posthomerica*,²⁸ Quintus "veut peut-être marquer la distance qui sépare une grande œuvre épique d'un traité didactique".²⁹ I would posit a different connection, however. Far from marking the distance between epic and didactic, between the *Halieutica* and the *Posthomerica*, Quintus quite consciously incorporates the Oppianic sphere into his own martial world, eliding the distance between the acts of fishing and warfare. Quintus delights in the technical detail;³⁰ as in the didactic tradition, such detail becomes a weapon in the armoury of epic rhetoric. Quintus' technical details, *pace* Campbell, must not be read as mere weak attempts at a quasi-

24 Opp. *H.* 2.305-318.

25 James (1969) 77. Oppian's similes have long been singled out as exceptional, held up beside those of Homer. See e.g. Eust. 3.667.12.

26 See Effe (2005). It is unfortunate that so little post-Homeric, pre-Quintean narrative epic should survive; perhaps we are led to extrapolate unduly from Apollonius.

27 Vian (1954) 51. Cf. James (1970).

28 An argument which Vian takes to substantiate Paschal's claim that the *Posthomerica* is relatively early in date.

29 Vian (1954) 51.

30 Compare the medical similes of the *Posthomerica*, whose density of technical description has long been remarked upon. Cf. Ozbek, this volume. Laocoon's divinely-inflicted blindness, for instance, is drawn by Quintus at 12.400-415 with such attention to physiological symptoms that we are able to recognise the various stages of what would now be termed 'congestive glaucoma'.

Hellenistic learnedness, but rather as a coalescence of the didactic and the martial in the epic sphere.³¹

Crucially, Quintus' depiction of Cleon and Eurymachus centres upon the essential character of fishing: that of trickery (δόλος or μῆτις). This is a notion replayed over and over in the *Halieutica*, and one which governs the concept of fishing more widely. As Detienne / Vernant have shown, fishing had long been considered insidious and full of trickery, relying upon deception for its very success in hooking a fish.³² Fish and fisherman strive to outdo each other in guile; it is no coincidence, for instance, that the word δόλος referred originally to the bait used to catch a fish, and only then to a wider notion of deceit or guileful contrivance.³³ Plato in his *Laws* inveighs against fishing (indeed, against the use of nets and traps in general) on the basis that it fosters duplicity and cunning, running counter to the straightforward behaviour of the upright moral citizen. The fisherman is a devious and suspect figure not just in epic but in classical literature more widely.³⁴ His trickery, moreover, is often mapped onto a discourse of gender and manliness: fishing, it is said, relies not upon strength but on 'effeminate' guile,³⁵ upon that same combination of deviousness and cowardly distance which is so despised by Ajax and Achilles in the 'unheroic' pursuit of archery, and to which we will so often return in this epic.³⁶

For all their piscatorial guile, however, Cleon and Eurymachus fall victim to Polydamas' spear; Quintus opposes δόλος and μῆτις in the sphere of fishing to a brute physical force which slays these men in war.³⁷ A polarity emerges between βίη and μῆτις, between the martial and the non-martial sphere, and between the force of the spear and the cunning contrivances of the fisherman. Yet what is

31 Campbell (1981) 195: "Q. is a *poeta doctus* to the extent that he treats Homer very much in the spirit of Apollonius, though obviously on a less rigorous intellectual level." Cf. *ibid.*, 136 n. 79.

32 Detienne / Vernant (1978) 45-46: "As far back as one can trace it, the terminology of *mētis* associates it with techniques whose relationship to hunting and fishing is obvious. A *mētis* or a *dolos* is woven, plaited or fitted together [...] just as a net is woven, a weel is plaited or a hunting trap is fitted together."

33 Cf. the δόλος-bait at *Od.* 12.252.

34 Pl. *Lg.* 822d-24. In Attic Comedy, fishermen are similarly presented as low-born, weaselling and untrustworthy. See Davidson (1997) *passim*.

35 Aus. *Ep.* 4.1.62, 6.1-2 advises Theon to take up fishing or poetry so as not to be scarred by the more vigorous pursuit of hunting. Even Oppian must in book 1 go to some lengths to emphasise the 'heroic' nature of his fishermen, whilst at the same time making much of their duplicity.

36 Cf. Lycus and Amphitryon at Eur. *Heracl.* 140-235, esp. 160-164. My thanks to Silvio Bär for suggesting this parallel. Quintus' Philoctetes similarly accuses Aeneas of effeminacy, fighting like a coward from the towers, ἐνθα γυναῖκες / δυσμενέσιν μάρνανται ἀνάλκιδες, "the place / Where feeble women fight their foes" (11.492-493).

37 Perhaps it is significant that the pair fall under the command of Nireus, that notoriously beautiful but ineffectual fighter at whose death Eurypylus draws a polarity between strength and beauty (6.385-389; cf. 7.7-12).

remarkable about the Neoptolemus simile is that it avoids this opposition: the fisherman catches his fish at night by a *combination* of force and trickery. Neoptolemus, unlike Eurymachus and Cleon, is the fisherman who succeeds also in war, and his success requires both force and guile, βίη and μῆτις. The fisherman's nocturnal deception, the fishes' complacent revelling, the unequivocal destruction which ensues: surely we can see in this scene a connection to the Wooden Horse, that other δόλος which is soon to become such a pressing issue for Neoptolemus.³⁸ Traditionally, after all, honest deeds (whether fighting or fishing) belong in the daylight hours, for deception rules at night. Immediately after his description of the night-fisherman in the *Halieutica*, moreover, Oppian describes what is for him an hateful exemplum of piscatorial trickery and moral acceptability: the use of poison to catch fish. This, he declares, is guile gone too far, and his pained depiction of the fishes' torment reflects upon the nature of fishing and the price of victory. The final image of this vignette, and that which starkly ends book 4, is the simile of a city at war:

ὥς δ' ὅτε δυσμενέεσσιν ἐπιστήσωνται ἼΑρηα, 685
 φροῦδον ἐελδόμενοι ῥαῖσαι πόλιν, οὐδ' ἀνιεῖσι
 πῆματα βουλεύοντες ἐπὶ σφισιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ὕδωρ
 κρηνάων φάρμαξαν ὀλέθριον· οἱ δ' ἐπὶ πύργοις
 λιμῶ τ' ἀργαλέῳ καὶ οἷζύϊ μοχθίζοντες
 ὕδατί τ' ἐχθοδοπῶ στυγερὸν καὶ ἀεικέα πότμον 690
 ὄλλυνται, νεκύων δὲ πόλις πέπληθεν ἅπασα·
 ὥς οἱ λευγαλέῳ τε μόρῳ καὶ ἀδευκέϊ πότμῳ
 ἀνδράσι φαρμάκησιν ὑποδηθέντες ὄλοντο. (Opp. *H.* 4.685-693)

As when men bring war upon their foes, eager to destroy and raze their city, and cease not to devise evil in their hearts but even poison with deadly poison the water of their wells: and the others within their towers, afflicted by grievous hunger and distress and hateful water, perish by a sorrowful and unseemly doom, and the whole city is full of dead; so by a sad death and untoward doom, overcome by the poison of men, the fishes perish.

This is the very limit-case of deception and of the war against fish; such immoral trickery crosses the bounds of the acceptable. Oppian's abhorrence at this abuse of the natural world parallels that of Neoptolemus, who at first cannot conceive of tricking the enemy in the cowardly and shameful manner suggested by Quintus'

38 On the Wooden Horse as a δόλος, see *Od.* 8.494. Detienne / Vernant (1978) 23: "Such is the 'duplicity' of *mētis* which, giving itself out to be other than it is, is like those misleading objects, the powers of deception which Homer refers to as *dolos*: the Trojan Horse, the bed of love with its magic bonds, the fishing bait are all traps which conceal their inner deceit beneath a reassuring or seductive exterior." On the implicit analogy between fishing and warfare, see further *ibid.* 44.

Calchas and Odysseus. Yet Oppian's fishermen are elsewhere masters of bait and guile (and are praised for this skill); a line can be drawn between wily, successful fishing and loathsome immorality, and this is what Neoptolemus must learn. Book 12 of the *Posthomerica* explicitly centres around this issue of treacherous guile, for the Trojan Horse provides an uncomfortable moral sticking-point in this war. Calchas prophesies that trickery, not force, is the way to win the war:

μηκέτι πὰρ τείχεσσιν ἐφεζόμενοι πονέεσθε,
 ἀλλ' ἄλλην τινὰ μῆτιν ἐνὶ φρεσὶ μητιάσθε
 ἢ δόλον ὃς νήεσσι καὶ ἡμῖν ἔσσετ' ὄνειαρ. (Q.S. 12.8-10)

Waste no more labor on besieging the city,
 But rather try to devise some different device
 Or stratagem that can benefit us and our ships.

Our old favourites μῆτις and δόλος surface anew, yet at the start of this book it seems that Neoptolemus will be utterly unable to countenance such 'cowardly' behaviour.³⁹ Previously so deferent to Calchas' prophecies, the young man now vehemently criticises his proposal, advocating instead a traditional, man-to-man combat:

ὦ Κάλχαν, δηίοισι καταντίον ἄλκιμοι ἄνδρες
 μάρνονται· τοὶ δ' ἐντὸς ἀλευάμενοι ἀπὸ πύργων
 οὐτιδανοὶ πονέονται, ὅσων φρένα δεῖμα χαλέπτει.
 τῷ νῦν μήτε δόλον φραζώμεθα, μήτέ τι μῆχος
 ἄλλο· πόνῳ γὰρ ἔοικεν ἀριστεάς ἔμμεναι ἄνδρας
 καὶ δορί· θαρσαλέοι γὰρ ἀμείνονες ἐν δαῖ φῶτες. (Q.S. 12.67-72)

Kalchas, strong men stand and fight their foes
 When they fight, while those who skulk inside and struggle
 Only on their walls are the worthless victims of fear.
 Let us not, then, look for a trick or any kind
 Of stratagem. Work with the spear is the one true test
 Of champions. Brave men always prevail in battle.

Neoptolemus, so much a neophyte that his charioteer must identify Deiphobus to him (9.224-228), has clearly misjudged the necessities of this war. Without the experience of those years of drawn-out siege which have so worn down the others, he reveals the naivety with which he approaches the combat.⁴⁰ His own father has already fallen victim to just such a 'stratagem', the bow of Apollo, and

39 Cf. Campbell (1981) 24, who cites Idas (A.R. 3.555-556) and Flaminius (Sil. 5.77-78) as parallels to this 'heroic' rejection of δόλος.

40 Philoctetes here falls into the same camp.

Ajax's lament for the dead Achilles speaks volumes about this clash between might and guile:

ὦ Ἀχιλεῦ, μέγα ἔρκος ἐυσθενέων Ἀργείων, 435
 κάτθανες ἐν Τροίῃ Φθίης ἐκὰς εὐρυπέδοιο
 ἔκποθεν ἀπροφάτοιο λυγρῷ βεβλημένος ἰῶ,
 τὸν ῥα ποτὶ κλόνον ἄνδρες ἀνάλκιδες ἰθύνουσιν·
 οὐ γάρ τις, πῖσυνός γε σάκος μέγα νωμήσασθαι
 ἡδὲ περὶ κροτάφοισιν ἐπισταμένως ἐς Ἄρηα 440
 εὖ θέσθαι πῆληκα καὶ ἐν παλάμῃ δόρυ πῆλαι
 καὶ χαλκὸν δηίοισι περὶ στέρνοισι δαΐξαι,
 ἰοῖσιν γ' ἀπάνευθεν ἐπεσσύμενος πολεμίζει·
 εἰ γάρ σευ κατέναντα τότε ἦλυθεν ὅς σ' ἔβαλέν περ,
 οὐκ ἂν ἀνουτῆτι γε τεοῦ φύγεν ἔγχεος ὁρμήν. (Q.S. 3.435-445)

Achilles, mighty bulwark of the Argive forces, 435
 You have died at Troy far from the plains of Phthia,
 Struck down by a cursed arrow from an unknown source,
 Such as are shot into the fray by feeble men.
 For no one who trusts himself to handle a bulky shield,
 Who has the skill to set a helmet on his temples 440
 Properly for battle, wield a spear in his hand
 And break the bronze upon the breasts of foes,
 Attacks and fights with arrows from a distance.
 If the man who had struck you had met you face to face,
 He wouldn't have escaped your rushing spear unwounded. 445

Ajax's lament for the hero picks up on the cry of the dying Achilles himself, a cry of impotence and despair: κρύβδα δ' ἀνάλκιδες αἰὲν ἀγαυοτέρους λοχώωσι (3.76),⁴¹ and prefigures his own vitriolic outbursts against Odysseus, his disgust that the fortunes of battle are no longer decided by strength and bravery but by cowardly guile.⁴² In refusing to allow for the possibility of trickery, then, Neoptolemus blindly advocates his own destruction and has to be cautioned by the gods themselves (12.93-98). Neoptolemus may well be the son of Achilles, like him in both form and mind,⁴³ but this, as we know, is something of a mixed blessing: Achilles' blind rage, his single-minded determination, may be ideal for hewing down Trojans but is apt to become troublesome in its lack of reason and perspec-

41 "Stealth is the weakling's way to snare a better man."

42 See esp. 5.478-479: οὐ γὰρ ἔτ' ἐσθλὸς ἔχει γέρας, ἀλλὰ χερείων / τιμήεις τε πέλει καὶ φίλτερος. "The brave are no longer rewarded; base men / Are honored now and preferred."

43 In Agamemnon's words: ἀτρεκέως πάις ἐσσί θρασύφρονος Αἰακίδαο, / ὦ τέκος, οὐνεκά οἱ κρατερὸν μένος ἡδὲ καὶ εἶδος / καὶ μέγεθος καὶ θάρσος ἰδὲ φρένας ἔνδον ἔοικας. "Truly you are the son of Aiaikos' dauntless grandson, / My child; you have his outstanding strength, appearance, and size, / As well as his courage and inward qualities of mind." (7.689-691; cf. 12.287-288).

tive. This, after all, is the premise of the *Iliad*, and Neoptolemus would do well to analyse his role-models carefully. The death of Achilles and the victory of Odysseus over Ajax both point to a new age of guileful warfare. In the end, Neoptolemus must prove less intractable than his father; in fact, he willingly plays his part in the deception, being the first to enter the Horse (12.314-315).

III

In the simile of Neoptolemus as a fisherman, the trickery is effected by means of the fisherman's flame. Indeed, the whole simile is drawn in chiaroscuro tones, and the light of the lantern illuminates the murky sea (κελαινή ἄλς). A contrast between light and darkness is already implicit in the Halieutic model, for light is the very means by which such fish are caught, yet whereas Oppian's fire is a more banal *πέυκη* (Opp. *H.* 4.644), Quintus' is the metonymical μένος Ἡφαίστοιο (7.570), an exhilaratingly powerful force. The lure is the force of fire, harnessed and contained, yet also beckoning over the murky sea (*μαρμαίρει περὶ νῆα πυρὸς σέλας*, οἱ δὲ *κελαινῆς* / ἐξ ἁλὸς αἰσσοῦσι μεμαότες ὕστατον αἶγλην / εἰσιδέειν).⁴⁴ An insistent luminosity links this simile to an elemental contrast between light and darkness, fire and water. The dichotomy between light and darkness is of prime importance for Quintus; heroic figures in the poem (Memnon, Penthesileia, Achilles) are frequently associated with dazzling light or black darkness, their polarities played out on the chromatic field.⁴⁵ Further, these fishes' foolish zeal is truly pathetic, and their innocent delight in the light merges all too quickly into the more ominous delight of the fisherman (7.575), their desire described in terms more commonly applied to a warrior's eagerness for battle.⁴⁶ For αἶγλη (7.573), that gleam of the fire which so attracts the fish, in epic more often signifies the flashing arms of a warrior; the attraction of war and armour is precisely that gleam of glory, the seductive brightness of the light and the prospect of competing in strength with a glorious hero. Penthesileia's armour gleams brightly upon her death (1.657-658); after Neoptolemus' arrival, the Argive armour shines far across the plain, Ἀργεῖοι δ' ἄρα δῶσαν ἐν ἔντεσι τῆλε δ' ἅπ' αὐτῶν / αἶγλη μαρμαίρεσκεν ἐς αἰθέρα μέχρις ἰοῦσα (9.68-69),⁴⁷

44 7.572-574: "The fire shines brightly round the boat; from the inky water / The fish come darting, eager for a glimpse of the gleam / That is their last."

45 See Gojia, this volume, on books 1-2.

46 Quintus uses μόω over twenty times in a martial context. Similarly, the Homeric *hapax* τανυγλώχης (575) which here denotes the fisherman's trident is also used at Q.S. 6.463 of Podalirius' spear. Cf. *Il.* 8.297 and Simon. 7.443.1 (arrows) vs. Opp. *H.* 5.255, 3.88 (trident).

47 "Then the Argives put on their armor, the gleam of which / Traveled so far that it lighted the sky itself."

and a fiery glow lights Neoptolemus' breastplate when he rushes like Ares against Deiphobus (9.220-221).⁴⁸ These fish desire (7.573: μεμαότες) to see the fisherman's lantern, the ὕστατος αἴγλη, and their desire is comparable to that longing for a more metaphorical αἴγλη, the warrior's desire for glory in war. This gleam is the seduction of an immediate glory, dangerous to those too close to the dazzling force; it takes the distance of a fisherman or god to perceive the fire and the trident behind the gleaming light.⁴⁹ These fishes' desire, then, is vain and misplaced, and their quest for αἴγλη brings not light and glory but death and darkness; not their hearts but that of their conqueror is "brightened" by the catch (7.575: γάννυται). Human life, as Nestor remarks, is blind: ἀλαδὸς δὲ πέλει βίος ἀνθρώποισι (7.79); appearances are deceptive, and rationality must take control of animal emotion.⁵⁰ Quintus' analogy raises questions about the desire for war: when do zeal, courage and glory become blind stupidity or frenzied blood-lust? We cannot forget the warning of Ajax, whose tale is played out at length in book 5. This is a man whose desire for glory and recognition eclipses his perceptive faculties, whose senses are clouded in frenzy.⁵¹ Just as the fish perish needlessly through their own excess of emotion, so Ajax dies by his own hand. Each is a tale of limited vision and misplaced fervour.

The simile further takes its place within a nexus of interconnected fire images in the epic. For whilst it depicts a controlled, productive fire of craftsmanship (here, the fisherman's τέχνη), the simile's fire also echoes the metaphorical fires of the hero's μένος and prefigures the blazing fires which spell the end of Troy. The torch on the fisherman's boat is the force of Hephaestus subject to a regulatory τέχνη: a small, deliberate fire allows the fisherman to impose his will upon the world of water, a controlled version of the μένος Ἡφαίστοιο. This is the 'technical' Hephaestus, the power of the craftsman who created Achilles' magnificent

48 9.220-221: καὶ θεῖα περὶ στέρνοισι θεοῖο / τεύχε' ἐπιβρομέουσιν ἴσον πυρὶ μαρμαίροντα. "The heavenly armor that covers the breast / Of the god resounds and flashes as brightly as fire."

49 A trope echoed and reversed in Quintus' aetiological tales of Niobe's rock (1.299-304) and Selene's grey spring (10.134-136), whose true composition is revealed only to those near at hand.

50 This too is the cornerstone of Oppian's moralising, for throughout the *Halieutica* it is through their excessive desires (for food, sex or death, or through a misplaced sense of comradeship) that fish are caught. The fisherman, with all his intelligence, art and τέχνη, directs the bigger picture, in contrast to his victims' frenzied emotion. Toohey (1996) 202-205, though he overstates the case, reads an opposition between τέχνη and λύσσα as the structuring polarity behind the *Halieutica* as a whole. On the fruitful link between didacticism and Quintus' *gnomai*, see Maciver, this volume, esp. p. 264: "Quintus is being didactic about an ethic."

51 This clouding reaches its climax when Ajax mistakes animals (the flock of sheep) for men (Odysseus and his comrades) at 5.404-412. The all-too-easy slippage between man and beast continues.

armour.⁵² At 571 the fisherman's breath (ἄϋτμή) kindles his fire, a word which places the simile firmly in Hephaestus' realm, for ἄϋτμή is used both to denote bellows (indeed, those very bellows with which Hephaestus made the arms Neoptolemus now wears),⁵³ and figuratively for the 'breath' of fire itself.⁵⁴ In the *Odyssey* the ἄϋτμή (here "fiery heat") of the stake burns Polyphemus' eye (*Od.* 9.389), and the resultant sound recalls the hiss of a blacksmith's axe tempered in water (9.391-394). Water lessens the ferocious heat of fire and renders it productive; it is the balance of these forces which creates a mighty weapon (τὸ γὰρ αὐτε σιδήρου γε κράτος ἐστίν, *Od.* 9.393).⁵⁵ Quintus' ἄϋτμή draws together these associations: a balance of fire and water, the power of fire and of Hephaestus, the controlled art of the blacksmith.

Even more in this epic, however, fire comes to denote a battle-lust of furious proportions.⁵⁶ In the *Iliad* Achilles was the fiery hero par excellence – "swift, short-lived, and dangerous",⁵⁷ and at the start of the *Posthomeric* countless Trojans fall before the wrath of Achilles and Ajax like trees blazing in a forest fire (1.536-537). Yet in the *Posthomeric* it is Ajax who is increasingly figured in the imagery of fire. Ajax's fiery force keys into a whole set of Homeric similes which denote fire and μένος, for once Achilles has been literally engulfed in flames it is Ajax whose spirit is enflamed, and who is notoriously ardent and impetuous, whose angry heart boils like a cauldron (5.380: λέβης) or a forest fire (5.387: πυρὸς ἀκαμάτοιο θοὸν μένος). Quintus points to a time when lust for battle has gone too far: μένος is a vital force, a strength, vitality and prowess in combat,⁵⁸ yet it can all too swiftly merge into blind rage or λύσσα (5.405, 5.466).⁵⁹ Frenzy and excessive passion cannot win this war; throughout this epic emotions run to deadly excess, and those who leap headlong into light and glory are doomed to be destroyed. Consulting Nestor once again, we are shown that

52 Note that we have been reminded only a hundred lines before (7.447) of Hephaestus' role in producing this armour, the armour which Neoptolemus now wears.

53 *Il.* 18.471.

54 *Od.* 16.290: πυρὸς (...) ἄϋτμή, and throughout the *Posthomeric* (5.33, 6.226, 8.90, 10.62, 12.503).

55 Cf. Redfield (1994) 172, who notes the connection between iron and the μένος of fire.

56 Cf. Whitman (1958) 130, on *Iliad* 11: "By this point in the poem, [...] anger and fire are inseparably associated."

57 Whitman (1958) 138. Achilles is in the *Iliad* increasingly figured in terms of fire, which becomes a symbol for the incandescent hero. Mackie (1998) 332: "it may be said that Achilles has a special association with fire in early epic, one that helps distinguish him from the other Achaean warriors at Troy." Achilles is on more than one occasion immersed in fire, as a child and in the μάχη παραποτάμιος, the battle by the Scamander in *Il.* 21.

58 For Rose (1969) 400, μένος is best summed up as "fighting spirit". As Redfield (1994) 172 puts it: "Fire has a *menos*. Or we could better say that *menos* is fire; *menos* is energy [...]"

59 Redfield (1994) 202: "The *lussa* is the heat of *menos* raised to a pitch of fever."

grief and anger should be channelled into more productive ends: too much emotion emasculates, and burdens are to be borne with stoicism.⁶⁰

IV

If fire is that internal force which brings a warrior to life but which threatens to destroy him, Neoptolemus, in the fisherman simile a temporary master of fire, must watch that he too is not burned. Whereas the αἶγλη of the fisherman's fire spells death for the fish, another αἶγλη at the end of the epic signals a more profoundly destructive fire: the ὄσπετος αἶγλη which ravages Troy (13.478). As in the *Iliad*, doom for the Trojans is encapsulated in a vision of the burning city. Flames simultaneously enact and represent the annihilation of Troy, and this fire stands as an end-point or literalisation of those psychic fires which burn throughout the epic.⁶¹ Fire brings destruction, whether in the flames breathed by the Erinyes (5.33), in the threat that Troy or the Argive ships will burn, or in those funeral pyres which swallow the dead and destroy the living.⁶² At the end of the *Posthomerica*, Trojans burn in their city like animals caught in a forest fire (13.487-493). Entrapped and powerless, they can only wait to be destroyed by the blazing force (492: βίη) of the fire-god. This is the fire of war, a symbol of Troy's downfall and of the uncompromising μένος Ἡφαίστου. The contrast between fire and water is thus mapped onto that between Trojans and Achaeans. Whilst fire signifies the end of Troy, it is water which endangers the Greek forces, for in book 14 Quintus switches focus from blazing fire to uncontrollable seas, to the Achaean ships tempest toss'd.⁶³

The fisherman simile of 7.569-575, itself a vision of fire and water productively harnessed by the fisherman, is followed by the depiction of Neoptolemus as a torrent impervious to fire:

(...) μένος δ' ἀκάμαντι εἰκώς
 ἀενάφ ποταμῷ, τὸν ἀπειρεσίη πυρὸς ὁρμή
 οὐ ποτ' ἰοῦσα φόβησε, καὶ εἰ μέγα μαίνεται ἄητης
 Ἡφαίστου κλονέων ἱερὸν μένος (ἦν γὰρ ἵκηται
 ἐγγυὺς ἐπὶ προχοῇσι, μαραίνεται οὐδέ οἱ ἀλκή
 ἄψασθ' ἀργαλέη σθένει ὕδατος ἀκαμάτοιο). (Q.S. 7.586-591) 590

60 Q.S. 7.38-55; cf. Phoenix at 7.661-663.

61 Cf. Mackie (1998) 335, of Hephaestus' fire in *Il.* 21: "The fire might be seen as an externalization of the fury that characterizes Achilles' return to the field of battle."

62 The pyres, for instance, of Penthesileia, Achilles, Paris and Oenone. Note too that the epic begins with the funeral pyre (πυρή) of Hector (1.2). See Bär, this volume, p. 34.

63 For the finality of book 14 see Carvounis, this volume.

(...) His strength was equal to that of a river
 That never fails, which the onset of an enormous fire
 Can't put to flight, not even with a raging wind
 To stir the fire god's sacred strength, for if it approaches
 Those flowing waters the fearful force of it 590
 Is quenched and cannot touch the tireless tide.

The μένος of the river and the μένος of Hephaestus stand starkly opposed, evoking and inverting the Iliadic μάχη παραποτάμιος, in which Hephaestus had come to Achilles' aid against the river-god Scamander. There Scamander had been defeated, halted by Hephaestus' flames and made to promise not to defer the fiery destruction of Troy;⁶⁴ here the symmetry is restored when the force of Hephaestus cannot prevail over the river. This elemental clash continues when in book 9 of the *Posthomerica* Neoptolemus once again takes the role of water, this time in opposition to Deiphobus' fire. The first half of book 9, before the arrival of Philoctetes, is structured around a series of parallels between the Greek and Trojan camps, and more specifically between Neoptolemus and Deiphobus. The latter, emboldened by the absence of Achilles, wreaks havoc amongst the Greeks until he is observed by Neoptolemus, who faces him with wrath. Deiphobus, awed by the son of Achilles, wavers in front of Neoptolemus like a fire before water:

ἀλλ' ὅτε δὴ ῥ' ἀφίκοντο μάλα σχεδὸν ἀλλήλοισι,
 δὴ τότε Δηϊφοβὸς μάλα περ χατέων πολέμοιο
 ἔσθη, ὥπως πῦρ αἰνόν, ὅθ' ὕδατος ἐγγὺς ἵκηται. (Q.S. 9.233-235)

When at last the two drew very close to each other,
 Deiphobos, despite his great desire for battle,
 Stood still like the dreadful fire that reaches water's edge.

Deiphobus, he whom Achilles had previously terrified (9.227-228), now quakes once more, this time at Neoptolemus' astonishing strength and likeness to his father (9.236-238). As we have noted, this is a likeness emphasised throughout the epic, but particularly in book 7 and in the first half of book 9.⁶⁵ The focus on an absent Achilles once again draws attention to the vital role of Neoptolemus in this post-Achillean world and reflects metapoetically upon the influence of Homer's absent presence, here evoked in the inverted μάχη παραποτάμιος.⁶⁶

64 See esp. *Il.* 21.373-376. Whitman (1982) 82: "The surrender of the river-god before the flames of Hephaestus is the real foretoken of the city's fall."

65 See e.g. Neoptolemus at Achilles' grave (9.46-60), or the speeches of Antenor (esp. 9.9-13) and Deiphobus (esp. 9.97-99).

66 Cf. Schmitz, this volume, p. 76.

Such inversion comes to the fore with the second of Quintus' fisherman similes, an image which links Deiphobus both to Achilles and to Neoptolemus:

ὥς δ' ὁπότε ἰχθυόεντος ἐπ' ἥοσιν Ἑλλησπόντου
 δίκτυον ἐξερύωσι πολύκμητοι ἀλιῆες
 κολπωθὲν ποτὶ γαῖαν, ἔσω δ' ἀλὸς εἰσέτ' ἐόντος
 ἐνθόρῃ αἰζιγὸς γναμπτὸν δόρυ χερσὶ μεμαρπῶς 175
 αἰνὸν ἐπὶ ξιφίῃσι φέρων μόρον, ἄλλοθι δ' ἄλλον
 δάμναται ὃν κε κίχησι, φόνῳ δ' ἐρυθαίνεται ὕδωρ·
 ὥς τοῦ ὑπαὶ παλάμῃσι περὶ Ξάνθοιο ῥέεθρα
 αἵματι φοινίχθησαν, ἐνεστείνοντο δὲ νεκροί. (Q.S. 9.172-179)

As on the shores of the fish-abounding Hellespont
 Hardworking fishermen pull a bulging net
 Up onto the land, and while it is still in the sea
 A young man jumps in with a barbed harpoon in his hand 175
 To deal a dreadful doom to the swordfish, on all sides
 Killing any he catches and reddening the water with blood;
 So by Deiphobos' hands the Xanthos' flowing water
 Was crimsoned with the blood of the corpses that crowded there.

Whilst the motif of fishing links Deiphobus and Neoptolemus within the *Posthomerica*, the weight of literary tradition takes us back to Homer, for Quintus' Deiphobus assumes the role played by Achilles in the Iliadic μάχη παραποτάμιος, reddening the Scamander with blood. At the start of *Iliad* 21, Achilles had filled the river with the bloody corpses, his victims tumbling and drowning like locusts seeking refuge from a fire (*Il.* 21.12-14), fleeing from Achilles like fish from a mighty dolphin (*Il.* 21.22-24). Quintus elsewhere uses a similar dolphin simile to depict Ajax's frightened opponents,⁶⁷ here, the simile of Deiphobus as a fisherman forms a counterpart to the Iliadic locust simile. Quintus' simile, however, is twice as long and much more detailed than either the locusts or the dolphin of *Iliad* 21, and its details are drawn from a passage in the *Halieutica* on swordfish.⁶⁸ In book 3 of the *Halieutica*, Oppian had related the three ways to catch a swordfish: in the first method, a hook is placed without trickery on a baited line; the impetuous swordfish attacks and is caught (Opp. *H.* 3.529-541).⁶⁹ The swordfish, caught up in its own foolish aggression, needs no trickery to be caught. The downfall of Oppian's swordfish is precipitated by the fishes' reckless folly (ἄτη, Opp. *H.* 3.552) and blindness to potential danger.

67 At 3.270-272, of Ajax warding off Lycians and Trojans from the body of Achilles.

68 Cf. James (2004) 316 n. 167-179.

69 Opp. *H.* 3.531-532: οὐ γὰρ ἐπ' ἀγκίστροισι κατεντύνουσιν ἐδωδὴν, / ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν γυμνὸν τε καὶ ἄκλοπον ἥωρηται. "For the fishermen do not put bait upon their hooks, but the hook hangs from the line naked and without deceit."

A second method we have already marked in Quintus' simile: a swordfish is caught in the fisherman's nets and killed, doomed by its own stupidity:

καὶ μὲν δὴ σκολιῇσιν ἐν ἀγκοίνῃσι λίνοιο
 κυκλωθεὶς ξιφίης μέγα νήπιος ἀφροσύνησιν
 ὄλλυται, ὃς θρώσκει μὲν ὑπεκδύναι μενεαίνων,
 ἐγγύθι δὲ τρομέων πλεκτὸν δόλον αὐτὶς ὀπίσσω
 χάζεται· οὐδέ οἱ ὄπλον ἐνὶ φρεσὶν, οἶον ἄρῃεν
 ἐκ γενύων, δειλὸς δὲ μένει κεκαφηότι θυμῷ,
 ὄφρα μιν ἐξερύσωσιν ἐπ' ἥονας· ἔνθα δὲ δούροις
 ἄνδρες ἐπασσύτεροισι καταίγδην ἐλόωντες
 κῶτα συνηλοίησαν, ὃ δ' ὄλλυται ἄφρονι πότημῳ. (Opp. *H.* 3.567-575)

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Moreover, when encircled in the crooked arms of the net the greatly stupid Swordfish perishes by his own folly. He leaps in his desire to escape but near at hand he is afraid of the plaited snare and shrinks back again; there is no weapon in his wits such as is set in his jaws, and like a coward he remains aghast till they hale him forth upon the beach, where with downward-sweeping blow of many spears men crush his head, and he perishes by a foolish doom.

The fishing simile which characterised Quintus' Neoptolemus (Q.S. 7.569-575) was based around the subtle deception of a night-fisherman who lures in fish with a light; that of Deiphobus, by contrast, focuses not on trickery but on the young man's violent strength. Swordfish are entangled in the fisherman's nets and are dispatched by a youth with a blunt brutality; the river runs red with blood. Nor, I think, is this contrast mere coincidence. Just as Achilles' obsessive battle-lust almost costs him his life when Scamander finally turns upon him, so Deiphobus' bloody destruction almost costs him his, for Neoptolemus, noting his attack, would have killed him on the spot had Apollo not intervened. Book 9 depicts a bloody and fruitless battle in which Greeks and Trojans are destroyed in equal measure (see e.g. 9.145-148); the fortunes of the battle waver irresolute, neither Neoptolemus nor Deiphobus is killed, and we wait helplessly for the envoy to be sent to Philoctetes. Force leads only to further bloodshed.

This contrast between craft and bloody violence is all the stronger, moreover, when we note that Oppian's final method of killing a swordfish is rather different from the stark brutality deployed by Deiphobus. Oppian shows us an approach typical of the fisherman's devious skill: the fishermen affix a spike to a boat so that it resembles a swordfish; the fish, mistaking the boat for another swordfish and failing to see the men crouching within, are lulled into indolence, whereupon the fisherman strikes with his trident (Opp. *H.* 3.547-566). Oppian compares this stratagem of disguise to that of soldiers who dress in the armour of the enemy in order to infiltrate their city:

ὥς δ' ὅτε δυσμενέεσσι δόλον τεύχοντες ἄρηος, 560
 ἰέμενοι πύργων τε καὶ ἄστεος ἔνδον ἰκέσθαι,
 ἔντεα συλήσαντες ἀρηϊφάτων ἀπὸ νεκρῶν
 αὐτοὶ θωρήξαντο καὶ ἔδραμον ἄγχι πυλάων·
 οἱ δ' ὥστε σφετέροισιν ἐπειγομένοις πολιήταις
 ἀγκλίνουσι θύρετρα καὶ οὐ γήθησαν ἐταίροις· 565
 ὥς ἄρα καὶ ξιφίην ἵκελον δέμας ἤπαφε νηῶν. (Opp. *H.* 3.560-566)

As when men devising a trick of war against their foes, being eager to come within their towers and city, strip the armour from the bodies of the slain and arm themselves therewith and rush nigh the gates; and the others fling open their gates as for their own townsmen in their haste, and have no joy of their friends; even so do boats in their own likeness deceive the swordfish.

This imagery, one of a series of martial similes in the *Halieutica*, is, as Bartley notes, highly reminiscent of the Trojan Horse conceit.⁷⁰ The connection between the two is heightened when Quintus himself later likens the Trojan Horse to a mighty ship, pulled on its rollers across the sand (12.428-432). Men may hide in the hollow belly of both ships and Horse, and it is perhaps for this reason that Epeius prays to the vast Horse, ὑπὲρ μεγακήτεος ἵππου (12.151), *μεγακήτεος* being an adjective usually reserved for ships or sea-creatures.⁷¹ The link between ship and horse, moreover, gained credence in antiquity with the rationalising notion that the Trojan Horse was originally itself a ship.⁷² With the Trojan Horse in the background, and with Quintus once again drawing his piscatorial imagery from a scene in the *Halieutica* which reflects upon martial dissimulation, it is important that unlike Neoptolemus, Deiphobus does not catch his fish with trickery, but rather with a brute force (observe too that not he, but the other fishermen, have entrapped these fish in the nets). Quintus uses the simile to contrast the bloody futility of Deiphobus' slaughter with the wily behaviour of Neoptolemus. The way to win the city of Troy, we are told time and again, is with stratagem and guile.

⁷⁰ Bartley (2003) 233.

⁷¹ In fact, *μεγακήτεα* are almost exclusively to be found in marine contexts. Thus the five occurrences in Homer (*Il.* 8.222, 11.5, 11.600, 21.22; *Od.* 3.158), as well as those in Apollonius (4.318), Dionysius the Periegete (1087) and Oppian (1.254, 3.132, 3.546). Significantly, the last of these (Opp. *H.* 3.546) refers specifically to swordfish, *ξιφίαι μεγακήτεες*.

⁷² See Austin (1964) 34-35, van Leeuwen (1901) 129-130, Bethe (1927) 36 n. 5. I should like to thank Prof. Philip Hardie for suggesting this parallel to me. For a further connection with Oppian, note Eust. 3.261.18-26.

V

In this inverted μάχη παραποτάμιος, then, Deiphobus essays to fill the gap left by Achilles. This is the continual pattern of the *Posthomerica*, as one hero after another rises and falls, as both Greeks and Trojans face the question of what to do when a great leader dies. Hector and now Achilles are dead: who, asks Quintus, can fill the breach? If Penthesileia, Memnon, Eurypylus and Deiphobus rise and fall in turn, if Ajax fails and even Neoptolemus cannot succeed alone, then how can this endless cycle of repetitive, transient heroism be broken? Deiphobus is strong and brutal, but such qualities are no longer sufficient to win this war. Blood-lust and the warrior's fiery μένος can only lead to escalating violence, to further fruitless slaughter, and to the kind of grim strife we see in the initial indecisiveness of book 9. Instead, the Trojan War must be ended with bold deception and a combination of guile, strength and wisdom. Neoptolemus emerges in this epic as a figure of prime importance, a new hero standing in the lee of his mighty Homeric father, a symbol perhaps for Quintus' own work. Yet Neoptolemus stands apart from his father. Unable to rival Achilles or to conquer the Trojans with strength alone, the young man finally turns to δόλος, to the kind of Odyssean trickery which at first seems so abhorrent to him. As the deaths of Ajax and Achilles show, a blind faith in βίη and its concomitant fiery powers can no longer suffice. Neoptolemus' distrust of 'cowardly' δόλος emerges less as virtue than as sheer naivety, and he must eventually reconcile himself to that very combination of βίη and δόλος which had previously seemed abhorrent. The *Posthomerica* is structured around the absence of Achilles, a figure for whom μῆτις played no part, in whom a fiery rage had burned; in a post-Homeric, post-Achillean world, Achaean hope now lies in the great hero's son. Foregrounding this debate through the similes of Neoptolemus and Deiphobus as fishermen, Quintus draws upon an Oppianic discourse of piscatorial and martial trickery to evoke the stratagem of the Trojan Horse. The paradigm of the fisherman's duplicity is transported to the martial sphere: only when force is married to craft, when emotion is diverted to productive ends, can the war at last be ended.