

THE ROLE OF DIOMEDES IN THE *AENEID* AND *METAMORPHOSES*

by

KEVIN JOSEPH SCAHILL

(Under the Direction of CHARLES PLATTER)

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the allusive roles of Diomedes as he is used in the *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses*. Chapter 1 is a general introduction to how Diomedes was used in Greek literature. Chapter 2 argues that Virgil's *Aeneid* uses Diomedes to create its own epic past that does not always agree with the 'Homeric' past that is the *Iliad*. Chapter 3 argues that Ovid 'corrects' Virgil's Diomedes by rewriting the epic past of the *Aeneid* to agree more with the *Iliad*. Chapter 4 is a general conclusion.

INDEX WORDS: Diomedes, Virgil, Latin Epic, Ovid

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO DIOMEDES

The Diomedes of the *Iliad* and the Epic Cycle is a violent man. He is a frequent companion to Odysseus, who later becomes the brains to his brawn.¹ His eagerness for violence and frequent collaboration with Odysseus are his two most outstanding characteristics in the *Iliad* and Epic Cycle. As far as can be surmised from extant accounts of Diomedes' life, he retains these characteristics in stories written about him all the way up through the Roman Republic.² When Diomedes appears in the *Aeneid*, however, he is a changed man. Instead of fighting the Trojans, he prefers peace. He is also more often associated with Achilles than Odysseus.³ The Rhesus panel in Carthage, for example, has Diomedes killing Rhesus, but Odysseus is literally no longer in the picture. The *Aeneid's* Diomedes also does not appear in the Trojan Horse.⁴ He is neither

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- 1 Neil Hopkinson, *ad* 13.245. *Metamorphoses 13*, ed. Neil Hopkinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 200): 133.
 - 2 Servius, *ad Aeneid* 4.427, for example, claims that Varro's Diomedes dug up the bones of Anchises before giving them back to Aeneas.
 - 3 For the significance of the "Achilles ethos" and "Odysseus ethos," see Everett Wheeler, *Stratagem and the Vocabulary of Military Trickery* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1988). The former represents a tendency to use direct means like face-to-face combat to deal with enemies, and the latter represents a tendency to use indirect means to deal with enemies. Similarly, Dunkle discusses "an underlying ideological opposition between μήτις and βία in the epic tradition, which is personified by Odysseus and Achilles" in "Nestor, Odysseus, and the μήτις: βία Antithesis: The Funeral Games, *Iliad* 23," *The Classical World* 81, no. 1 (1987): 1 – 17. Essentially, to Homeric heroes, there was a binary opposition between those who followed the direct, Achilles ethos and those who followed the indirect, Odysseus ethos. While to Abbot, building on Wheeler, the Homeric worldview accepted whichever ethos would be most expedient at the time, he argues that "the *Aeneid* is very much in accord with well-known Roman ideology on this point...that stratagems are less honorable than open combat." For more on this, see James C. Abbott, "The 'Aeneid' and the Concept of 'dolus bonus,'" *Vergilius* 46 (2000): 59 – 82. Sophia Papaioannou reads Diomedes' frequent association with Achilles rather than Odysseus in the *Aeneid* as a way for Virgil to exalt Diomedes into being a more honorable opponent for Aeneas in "Vergilian Diomedes Revisited: The Re-Evaluation of the 'Iliad,'" *Mnemosyne* 53 (April, 2000): 193 – 217..
 - 4 K.F.B Fletcher, "Vergil's Italian Diomedes," *The American Journal of Philology* 127, no. 2 (Summer,

eager to fight nor generally associated with Odysseus. In Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, however, Diomedes is again eager to fight and a frequent collaborator with Odysseus.⁵ If not for a lack of men, he would have fought Aeneas again in Italy, and Ajax in the judgment of arms says of Odysseus' exploits in the Trojan War that nothing could have been accomplished without the help of Diomedes (*nihil est Diomede remoto*).⁶ In post-Ovidian literature, Diomedes remains Odysseus' constant companion. In Seneca's *Troades*, for example, Diomedes is referred to as the *Ithaci comes*, and the two are even paired together in *The Divine Comedy*.⁷ The *Iliad*'s and Epic Cycle's Diomedes becomes peaceful and unlike Odysseus in the *Aeneid*, but the *Aeneid*'s peaceful Diomedes becomes eager to fight and a companion of Odysseus again in the *Metamorphoses*.

This thesis began as an attempt to explain the evolution of the Homeric Diomedes into the Virgilian one and then into the Ovidian one. The basic argument of this thesis is that Virgil and Ovid use the Diomedes intertext to engage with the Diomedes tradition before them. This thesis is mythographical in so far as it deals with a mythological subject, but it is primarily an analysis of poetic competition. Virgil rewrites Diomedes' story to suggest that he can improve on the work of preceding epic poets. The creativity and originality in his use of Diomedes suggests that he is better than the epic poets preceding him.⁸ That is, he 'improves' the Diomedes tradition by changing Diomedes.

2006): 221 – 227 provides a great discussion of this.

5 It is possible that the Diomedes of Iullus Antonius' *Diomedeia* was a violent model for Ovid's Diomedes, but there is really no way to tell. For more on Iullus Antonius' Diomedes, see Alessandra Coppola, "Diomede in eta augustea. Appunti su Iullo Antonio," *Hesperia, studi sulla grecita di occidente* (1990): 125 – 138.

6 Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 13.100

7 *Troades* 38 and *Inferno* XXVI, 90 – 142. For more discussion on Dante's Diomedes, see Mark Musa, "Virgil's Ulysses and Ulysses' Diomedes," *Dante Studies* 96 (1978): 187 - 194.

8 Originality here is not understood as merely telling a story with entirely new characters and plot. Rather, it is often an admixture of new characters, some variations in the plot, and some variations in existing characters. As Richard Heinze says in *Virgil's Epic Technique*,

In turn, the status of the *Aeneid* as an ‘instant classic’ means that for Ovid to choose a different way is not a neutral decision. His refusal to use a Diomedes like Virgil's suggests that Virgil's creativity and originality had very little impact on the Diomedes tradition. In general, Ovid's Diomedes resembles the Homeric Diomedes more than the Virgilian one. This suggests that, for Ovid, Virgil's version of Diomedes was not an improvement on the Diomedes tradition. Rather, Ovid's Diomedes is an improvement on both the Diomedes tradition and Virgil's Diomedes because it incorporates elements from both. The Homeric Diomedes changes into the Virgilian one but then seems to almost change back to the Homeric one in Ovid. It should be emphasized, however, that each poet's use of Diomedes is just one of the many ways that each poet engages with previous poets.

'Diomedes tradition' here means every pre-*Aeneid* account of Diomedes' life and career.⁹ Some examples include the *Iliad*, *Odyssey*, *Cypria*, *Little Iliad*, and Pseudo-Euripidean *Rhesus*. A conventional element of this tradition is an episode that occurs frequently in the different texts that make up this tradition.¹⁰ Diomedes' participation in

It is not the free invention of new material that constitutes originality – how few great poetic masterpieces would count as original if that were so! – but rather, to a great extent, the successful appropriation or remoulding of tradition.

To Gordon W. Williams in *Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry*, “real originality” in Roman literature of the last century of the late Republic

was a particularly complicated form of adaptation which accepted all the Greek conventions and even the scenes set in Greek cities, but felt free to add elements of Roman custom and practice so that the end-product was neither Greek nor Roman but belonged to an imaginary half-way world, an amalgam of both situations.

He goes on to discuss the blending of elements as a major characteristic of poetic originality in Roman poetry of the late republic and early empire. For Virgil and Ovid, originality was achieved by blending old elements of a story with new elements. A great example of blending the old and new in the *Aeneid* would be Achaemenides' tale of the Cyclops. It introduces a new character to retell a very traditional story.

9 There are no versions of Diomedes' story known to us that scholars do not also think were known to Virgil. Virgil, however, seems to have known more versions of Diomedes' story than we still have.

10 Visual works of art like representations of Diomedes on pottery, for example, also function as part of this tradition, but this argument will focus primarily on the interaction between texts.

the night raid on Rhesus' camp and Diomedes' coming to Italy are, for example, two conventional elements of the Diomedes tradition because they occur frequently in the different texts that make up the Diomedes tradition. The Diomedes tradition can be broken up into two useful subcategories: the Homeric tradition of Diomedes and the post-Homeric. The Homeric tradition of Diomedes is Diomedes' story according to the *Iliad* and all subsequent texts that are factually consistent with the *Iliad*.¹¹ An example of an event in the Homeric tradition of Diomedes is his wounding Aphrodite. The post-Homeric tradition of Diomedes is Diomedes' story according to sources after the *Iliad* that contain episodes of Diomedes' story that either do not appear in the *Iliad* or are factually inconsistent with it. Two examples of the post-Homeric tradition of Diomedes are his participation in the murder of Palamedes and his role in stealing the Palladium. As will be seen later, the different accounts of Diomedes' life in the post-Homeric tradition often vary, and specific versions of his story will be cited when appropriate. Overall, the Diomedes tradition is the body of texts giving various accounts of Diomedes' life that was available to Virgil when he was writing the *Aeneid*.

This thesis is primarily concerned with the intertextual effects of these changes in Diomedes. Besides this introduction, it is divided into three sections: a section on the *Aeneid*, a section on the *Metamorphoses*, and a conclusion. The Virgil section will examine every time Diomedes is mentioned in the *Aeneid* and demonstrate how comprehensively Virgil's Diomedes differs from the Diomedes in the Diomedes tradition. The Ovid section will examine every time Diomedes is mentioned in the *Metamorphoses* and demonstrate how each engages with the Diomedes tradition and the *Aeneid*. The

¹¹ By facts here I mean events as they are presented in the *Iliad* (e.g. it is a Homeric 'fact' that Diomedes kills Pandarus).

conclusion will end with a glance at how the Diomedes intertext is used by poets after Ovid. Before beginning the Virgil section, however, a few terms need to be clarified: Diomedes tradition, intertext, and poetic competition. This introduction will end by giving a brief outline of how Diomedes was portrayed in the Diomedes tradition.

While it is universally agreed that the *Aeneid's* account of Diomedes' life was influenced by the Diomedes tradition mentioned above, there exists no universally agreed upon way to discuss the influence of a text or texts on another, later text. This thesis is concerned with only one of the ways a later poet can react to the influence of an earlier poet: a type of equivalency called an intertext.¹² An equivalency is a passage or word group in a text that is somehow similar to a passage or word group in a different text. Equivalencies can contain, for example, "similarity in choice of words, position of words in the line, metrical anomalies" and "structural development of a particular passage."¹³ By their very nature as similar passages, equivalencies invite comparison with each other. Each equivalency also contains some originality.¹⁴ Otherwise an equivalency in a later poet would be just an exact copy of the earlier poet. Insofar as the original, dissimilar elements of an equivalency encourage the reader to prefer the later poet's version to the earlier poet's, equivalencies in a later poet are a form of poetic competition. For the purposes of this thesis, an equivalency being read as a form of poetic competition will be referred to as an intertext. An intertext is an equivalency in a later poet that is understood as a competition with an earlier poet or poets.¹⁵

¹² I borrow the term *equivalency* from Don Fowler's use of it in "On the Shoulders of Giants: Intertextuality and Classical Studies," *Materiali e discussion per l'analisi dei testi classici* 39 (1997): 13 – 34.

¹³ Kathleen Morgan, *Ovid's Art of Imitation: Propertius in the Amores* (Lugduni Batavorum: Brill, 1977): 3. On page 26 of *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*, Hinds also uses this as a starting point for listing the characteristics of intertexts.

¹⁴ For more discussion on originality, see n. 8 above.

¹⁵ Because I am interested in a very specific type of textual interaction, I have chosen to give the term

For the purposes of this thesis, Diomedes in Virgil and Ovid will be read as an intertext with the Diomedes tradition. The character Diomedes is an equivalency that can be found in a large number of texts in the ancient world. Virgil's inclusion of Diomedes is one way for Virgil to compete with Homer and others. In turn, Ovid's inclusion of Diomedes is a way for him to compete with both the Diomedes tradition and Virgil. Reading Diomedes as an intertext means understanding each mention of Diomedes in a poem as a form of competition with the Diomedes tradition.

Each occurrence of Diomedes in both the *Aeneid* and the *Metamorphoses* is an intertext and form of poetic competition, so it needs to be clear what poetic competition means in this thesis. Poetic competition, broadly speaking, is the attempt of one poet to be better than another, and poetic competition can take many forms. This thesis is interested in one very specific type of poetic competition: how Virgil and Ovid incorporated originality in each use of the Diomedes intertext. The general idea is that it was undesirable, as Quintilian says, to merely follow one's predecessors, so a degree of originality was required in each production.¹⁶ There was also some risk, however, in deviating from predecessors because it was always possible that readers would prefer the old version of the element that the new poet's originality had changed. There was a reason that the core elements of some stories remained the same for hundreds of years. It was difficult to produce variants that would be legitimately be regarded as 'improvements' in the story that would, in turn, become core elements of a given story from that point on. Each time Virgil's originality introduced a variant in the Diomedes

intertext here a narrower definition than it is sometimes given. I am not attempting to define intertext as it is used by other authors, nor am I attempting to make a hard and fast distinction between allusions and intertexts. For more discussion of intertextuality in Classics, see the Fowler and Hinds mentioned in n. 12 and n. 13 respectively.

¹⁶ See Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* 10.2.7–9.

tradition, each variant suggested that Virgil was improving the Diomedes tradition. Each time Ovid's originality introduced a variant in the Diomedes tradition, each of his variants also suggested that Ovid was improving the Diomedes tradition. In addition, by not incorporating many of Virgil's variants, Ovid suggested that they were not improvements at all. In the case of the Diomedes intertext, Virgil and Ovid competed by incorporating originality in each use of the Diomedes intertext.

Before looking in detail, however, at how Virgil and Ovid each used the Diomedes intertext, it is necessary to briefly outline how Diomedes is portrayed in the Diomedes tradition. After all, a good number of claims in this thesis are based on whether or not the Diomedes in Virgil or Ovid resembles the Diomedes of the Diomedes tradition. This is very difficult to discuss without some understanding of what the Diomedes of the Diomedes tradition was like. Outside of the Glaukos episode and the *Doloneia*, the most outstanding characteristic of the Diomedes of the Homeric tradition is his eagerness to fight the Trojans and even gods.¹⁷ Four examples of this eagerness stand out: his assault on Aeneas at 5.1 – 362, his refusal to accept Paris' terms of surrender at 7.398 – 404, his telling Agamemnon at 9.31 – 49 that he and Sthenelus would fight the Trojans alone if they had to, and his assault on Aphrodite and Ares at 5.331 – 345 and 857 – 861. Diomedes' *aristeia*, or killing spree, in *Iliad* 5 and the beginning of *Iliad* 6 is well-known, and Diomedes fights several more Trojans than just Aeneas in his *aristeia*. His tenacity in chasing down Aeneas is unparalleled by anyone in the *Iliad* except Achilles when he is chasing Hector. At 5.434 – 437, he yearned to kill and despoil Aeneas and tries four times to get past Apollo. While the Greeks are considering Paris' conditional surrender at 7.398 – 404, Diomedes urges them to refuse Paris' offer because

17 The Glaukos episode, *Iliad* 6.119 – 236, is anomalous enough to fall outside the scope of this thesis.

it seems clear to him that the Trojans are desperate and near their defeat. At 9.31 – 49, after the Greeks lose a battle to the Trojans and before they decide to send an embassy to Achilles, Agamemnon bemoans their fate and suggests in earnest that the Greeks leave Troy. Diomedes, however, speaks up and says that he and Sthenelus will stay to fight the Trojans even if the rest of the Greeks leave. At 5.331 – 345, Diomedes attacks and wounds Aphrodite herself, and he wounds Ares at 5.857 – 861. The only other mortal to attack a god in the *Iliad* is Patroclus, and not even Achilles attacks any of the gods. Diomedes in the Homeric tradition is outstanding in his aggression against Trojans and gods.

In the post-Homeric tradition, Diomedes is principally known as the companion and 'partner-in-crime' of Odysseus. The two are first paired up in the *Doloneia*, where Diomedes stays true to his violent form by preferring to kill the Thracians rather than steal their horses.¹⁸ From what we know from the Epic Cycle, the two of them murdered Palamedes on a fishing trip in the *Cypria*. The *Little Iliad* has Diomedes and Odysseus stealing the Palladium and then dividing up to be sent as embassies to Philoctetes and Neoptolemus, respectively.¹⁹ Later traditions put Diomedes and Odysseus in the Trojan Horse together, and it is not until the Trojan War is over that their paths diverge into their

18 Homer, *Iliad* 10.480 – 484. The second and only other time they form a pair in the *Iliad* occurs at 11.310 – 400 when they take a stand against Hector and Paris wounds Diomedes. While West and others have argued that the *Doloneia* is an interpolation, this is largely irrelevant for my purposes. Either it is an instance of the Homeric Diomedes pairing with Odysseus or it is the first example of the post-Homeric Diomedes. Virgil may have been aware that this episode was an interpolation (see Hardie's commentary on *Aeneid* 9).

19 In M.L. West, *The Epic Cycle: A Commentary on the Lost Troy Epics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) see his discussion of F 27 Paus.10.31.2 and F 11 Hesych. δ 1881 on pages 123 and 200 – 203 respectively. Sophocles' *Philoctetes* actually replaces Diomedes with Neoptolemus as the companion of Odysseus on the embassy to Philoctetes, an interesting variation on these events in the *Little Iliad*. I think that this is explained well by MacIntyre's reading of Odysseus and Neoptolemus at 131 – 133 as opposing moral and philosophical approaches to the problem of Philoctetes. For more on this, see Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981). This reading also suggests to me that Sophocles considered Diomedes too similar a character to Odysseus to form an effective contrast to him.

own respective *nostoi* narratives. Throughout the post-Homeric tradition, Diomedes remains both violent and a frequent companion of Odysseus until he arrives in Italy.

In Italy, Diomedes still generally appears to be violent, but there are no extant versions of his adventures in Italy that include Odysseus, who has his own tradition of adventures in Italy.²⁰ Fletcher summarizes the conventional elements in the different versions of Diomedes' '*nostos*' to Italy:

By the time of Lycophron's *Alexandra*, the basic details of the story had coalesced: Diomedes returned home to Argos after the Trojan war only to find that his wife was unfaithful. Chased by her and her lover, Diomedes fled to Italy, where he was credited with founding numerous cities.²¹

In addition to the Lycophron version, Gantz lists several other versions of Diomedes' *nostos*, and a few of them form interesting contrasts with the version that will appear in Virgil.²² According to the Pseudo-Aristotelian *Peri Thaumasion Akousmaton*, Diomedes is killed by a local king named Aineas. In the scholia to *Iliad* 5, Diomedes is betrayed in Italy by a king Daunus, but Athena makes him immortal and transforms his men into birds.²³ In Varro, Diomedes apparently dug up the bones of Anchises before returning them to Aeneas later.²⁴ Servius' *historarium confusio* is an apt term to describe the post-Homeric tradition, and the texts mentioned above are only a fraction of the material

20 For more detail, see Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993): 710 – 713.

21 K.F.B. Fletcher, "Vergil's Italian Diomedes," *The American Journal of Philology* 127, no. 2 (Summer, 2006): 219.

22 For more detail, see Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993): 699 – 700.

23 It seems possible that Horace at *Carmina* 1.6.15 – 16 is referring to this tradition of Diomedes' immortality when he refers to the Diomedes who, *ope Palladis*, was *superis parem*. See the Gantz in the note above for more discussion on whether or not Virgil's Daunus seemed to be the same Daunus that killed Diomedes.

24 Servius, *ad. Aeneid* 4.427

available to Virgil and Ovid. Although there was a great deal of variation in plots, most versions of Diomedes' *nostos* place him in Italy and then getting killed there.

Considering how rich and varied the Diomedes tradition was, it is suggestive that Virgil so frequently deviated from this tradition with his own Diomedes. He had inherited a Diomedes who was violent and a frequent companion of Odysseus. In the *Iliad*, he had to be talked into retreating from the Trojans, even when it was tactically advantageous.²⁵ For the Homeric Diomedes, Aeneas had been an easily dispatched opponent, and he had routed even gods. With his partner-in-crime Odysseus, he had become known for involvement in covert operations. The *Aeneid's* Diomedes, however, decides not to fight the Trojans and is portrayed more like Achilles than Odysseus. Looking closely at each mention of Diomedes in the *Aeneid* will show how thoroughly Virgil rewrites this character. Virgil's Diomedes is a very different character, and this shows one way that Virgil competed with the epics that preceded him.

²⁵ In *Iliad* 8.90 – 171, Nestor has to convince Diomedes to retreat from Hector after Diomedes rescued Nestor.

CHAPTER 2

DIOMEDES IN THE *AENEID*

Everyone has heard Keats' paradoxical claim that "heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard are sweeter." While many have written about the relationship and competition between the *Aeneid* and the epics before it, few have looked closely at the "unheard *Iliad* and Epic Cycle" that the *Aeneid* implies. This chapter argues that one of the many ways which the *Aeneid* competed with the epics before it was to create a Diomedes that was almost always inconsistent with the Diomedes tradition. Several scholars have noted inconsistencies in some of these Diomedes intertexts, but no one else has looked at how, taken together, they suggest an alternate narrative for Diomedes. Virgil's Diomedes and the Diomedes of the Diomedes tradition seem to have very different histories. When confronted with this new Diomedes in the *Aeneid*, readers were forced to choose between Virgil's version of Diomedes and the Diomedes tradition's versions. This is not to say that Virgil wrote out a clearly delineated, new story for Diomedes. Rather, the perceptive reader will notice gradually that the *Aeneid*'s Diomedes cannot have had the past which the Diomedes tradition had given him. Readers must piece his backstory together and reimagine it for themselves. With this new, "unheard" story about Diomedes, the *Aeneid* competed with and rivaled Homer and the Cyclic poets.

The idea that poets were in competition with each other was familiar to ancient readers. References to poets competing with each other can even be found as far back as both the *Odyssey* and *Works and Days*. When Penelope asks Phemius to sing a new

song, for example, Telemachus reminds her that people always give more applause to the newest song circulating.²⁶ The impetus to perform for more applause suggests a competitive environment. As Bowra points out, Phemius himself claims that his poetry was autodidactic at *Odyssey* 22.347 – 348, and it seems a desirable trait that he did not learn his poetry from any other mortal.²⁷ With the help of the god, he produced original narratives. Moving on to the *Works and Days*, Hesiod suggests that a product of good strife is that poets strive with each other.²⁸ It is not entirely clear what exactly is meant by κοτέει and φθονέει, but it seems reasonable that one way for poets to strive against each other was through poetic competition. Poetic competition is explicitly mentioned, however, toward the end of the poem. As is well-known, Hesiod claims that he had won a prize for his poetry in a poetry competition at the funeral games of Amphidamas.²⁹

Moving beyond Hesiod, both Aristotle and Horace show that it was an accepted practice to compare poets writing in the same genre to each other.³⁰ Later in Roman criticism, Quintilian gives a brief overview of the history of literature, and he does so by genre.³¹ He also discusses the importance of avoiding mere imitation. It is important for those who come after to try and surpass their predecessors:

²⁶ Homer, *Odyssey* 1.351 – 352: τὴν γὰρ ἀοιδὴν μᾶλλον ἐπικλείουσ' ἄνθρωποι, / ἢ τις ἀκούοντεςσι νεωτάτη ἀμφιπέληται. It could be argued that originality would function differently in an oral-formulaic context because of the frequency of formulae and type-scenes. It is possible, however, that a high percentage of similar material would force an oral poet to emphasize what actually was original in his poem more because there was so much shared material.

²⁷ C.M. Bowra, "The Comparative Study of Homer." *American Journal of Archaeology* 54, no. 3 (July – September 1950): 186.

²⁸ Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 162 – 165.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 654 - 657

³⁰ Aristotle refers to several plays and poems throughout the *Poetics* as good or bad examples to illustrate each point he makes. At the end of 1459A and beginning of 1459B, for instance, he argues that Homer was superior to the Cyclic poets because his plots were less episodic. Horace, at *Ars Poetica* 136 – 142, gives similar advice. The Cyclic poet (*scriptor cyclicus*) tried to include too much in his poem. A more focused poem like the *Odyssey* was better.

³¹ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.37 – 131.

turpe etiam illud est, contentum esse id consequi quod imiteris. nam rursus quid erat futurum, si nemo plus effecisset eo quem sequebatur? nihil in poetis supra Livium Andronicum, nihil in historiis supra Pontificum annales haberemus; ratibus adhuc navigaremus.

That thing is even base, to be content to follow the thing which you imitated. For, again, what would have happened, if no one had done more than the man whom he followed? We would have nothing in our poets beyond Livius Andronicus, nothing in our histories beyond the annals of the *pontifices*; we would sail even now with rafts.³²

He even explicitly compared Homer and Virgil. Quintilian seems to have preferred Virgil, but, as Anderson and others have noted, Propertius at 2.34.66 claimed that the *Aeneid*, while it was still being written, would be better than the *Iliad*.³³ The ancients would have understood the *Aeneid* as a competition with the epics before it.

A good deal of modern scholarship has discussed how ancient poets competed with each other and how Virgil, in particular, competed with the tradition before him. Several books and articles have been written on this subject. As Hardie characterizes it, for instance, there was a “literary rivalry that is practised with greater intensity in epic than in other ancient genres,” and he points out that Ennius also had challenged Homer even before Virgil had.³⁴ In Ennius’ *Annales*, he claims to literally be a reincarnation of Homer. Virgil continues the challenge to Homer and, of course, challenges Ennius as well. According to Thomas, for example, Virgil used references to “correct” his predecessors.³⁵ That is, Virgil would make a clear reference to a predecessor and then

³² Ibid., 10.2.7

³³ William S. Anderson, “Vergil’s Second Iliad,” *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association* 88 (1957): 17.

³⁴ Philip Hardie, “Epic,” *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies*. ed. Alessandro Barchiesi and Walter Scheidel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): 428. For more specifically on Virgil’s use of Ennius, start with the fourth chapter of Sander M. Goldberg, *Epic in Republican Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³⁵ Richard F. Thomas, “Georgics and the Art of Reference,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 90 (1986).

alter that earlier text by introducing some original element. About the *Aeneid*'s relationship with the Epic Cycle in particular, Kopff argues that

Virgil is challenging and re-newing [sic] not just the standard 'Homeric' epics, *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, but the entire epic tradition that surrounded the Trojan War. He is challenging and re-newing not just 'Homer' but Greek epic in general...It was not enough to suggest an alternative to only one Greek author, no matter how great, but instead to the whole Trojan tradition.³⁶

Other scholars who have written on the essentially competitive nature of allusions and references in Latin poetry include Conte, Hinds, and Fowler.³⁷ In a discussion of a possible reference that Virgil makes to Augustus' *bibliotheca*, Spence even says that the "general literary aim" of Virgil was "that his text not only end up in that library but that it *be* the library in its efforts to include and surpass all of Greek literature."³⁸

This chapter argues that the *Aeneid* uses originality, as originality was defined in the Introduction, as one of the many means at its disposal to attempt to surpass the tradition. That is, like the "correction" discussed above, Virgil used equivalent elements to refer to earlier texts and then wove original elements into these references. Virgil's originality in equivalent episodes or characters encouraged readers to choose between Virgil's version of something and the tradition's version. In particular, the changes introduced into the Diomedes tradition create a new version of Diomedes' story.

³⁶ E.C. Kopff, "Virgil and Cyclic Epics," *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*. II.31.2. (New York: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1981): 944.

³⁷ This is by no means a comprehensive list of scholars who have worked on the idea of intertextuality and competition in Latin epic. For more information on this topic, a good starting place would be Gian Biagio Conte's *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets*, Richard F. Thomas' "Georgics and the Art of Reference," Stephen Hinds' *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*, and Don Fowler's "On the Shoulders of Giants: Intertextuality and Classical Studies." There is variation between authors, but the general idea running through their theories of poetic competition is basically the same idea that I discussed in the Introduction. Equivalencies between two or more texts invite the reader to compare those texts. Insofar as this comparison results in the reader preferring one or the other, this is poetic competition.

³⁸ Sarah Spence, "Cinching the Text: The Danaids and the End of the *Aeneid*," *Vergilius* 37 (1991): 16 – 17.

Encouraging readers to prefer his own version was a way for Virgil to compete with the tradition.

The Diomedes intertexts in the *Aeneid* are examined generally in the order in which they appear in the poem, book by book, looking at how each inconsistency with the Diomedes tradition works to suggest an alternate history for the hero. The first section looks at the cluster of Diomedes intertexts in *Aeneid* 1 and shows how they suggest that Diomedes may have been mightier than Achilles and that he may not have worked that often with Odysseus, even perpetrating the night raid against Rhesus alone. In addition, this section is the first to suggest that Diomedes neither defeated Aeneas nor took his horses. The second section examines the Diomedes intertexts in books 2 – 10. They suggest that Diomedes never took the Palladium and continue to build the case that Diomedes never defeated Aeneas at Troy. The third section focuses on Diomedes in *Aeneid* 11. The Diomedes intertext in this section provides even more evidence that Diomedes never defeated Aeneas and suggests that Diomedes' exile and adventures in Italy were not at all how the post-Homeric tradition described them. The last section, the conclusion, ties these strands together and attempts to speculate on what kind of new Diomedes narrative the *Aeneid*'s Roman readers may have been encouraged to create for themselves.

Diomedes in *Aeneid* 1

The first Diomedes intertext in the *Aeneid* occurs at *Aeneid* 1.96 – 97. It rocks the boat, as it were, by suggesting that Diomedes, not Achilles, was the bravest or mightiest of the Greeks. When his ship seems about to sink, Aeneas says that it would have been better to have been killed by Diomedes at Troy than to die at sea:

O terque quaterque beati,
quis ante ora patrum Troiae sub moenibus altis
contigit oppetere! O Danaum fortissime gentis
Tydide! Mene Iliacis occumbere campis
non potuisse, tuaque animam hanc effundere dextra

Oh thrice, four times blessed, to whom it happened to fall before the faces of your fathers beneath the high walls of Troy! Oh mightiest of the race of Danaans, son of Tydides! Why was it not possible that I fall in Trojan fields, and that your right hand pour out this spirit?³⁹

On one hand, these lines clearly recall the events of *Iliad* 5.166 – 362 because Diomedes nearly did pour out Aeneas' spirit with his right hand. Diomedes had killed Pandarus and then incapacitated Aeneas by throwing a rock at him. Aphrodite fled with Aeneas until Diomedes wounded her. At this point, Apollo began protecting Aeneas and ordered Diomedes to move along. Nothing in the lines above seems to disagree with the *Iliad*'s version of these events, except that Aeneas calls Diomedes *fortissime*. As de Grummond points out, Aeneas' awarding "the palm of bravery to Tydeus' son, not Peleus', cannot but strike the reader as peculiarly meaningful."⁴⁰ While there have been rationalizations

³⁹ Virgil, *Aeneid* 1.94 – 98

⁴⁰ Will de Grummond, "Virgil's Diomedes," *Phoenix* 21 (Spring, 1967): 40. De Grummond reads this surprising comment as a special homage to Diomedes because Diomedes would have killed Aeneas without Aphrodite's intervention. I do not find this explanation satisfying, however, because Achilles also would have killed Aeneas if Poseidon had not intervened. In "Diomedes and Aeneas: A Vergilian Paradox," *CB* 58 (1982): 74, Wiltshire and Krickel argue that "the message" of Diomedes' being called mightiest here "seems to be that one's status is known by the foes one keeps. As Aeneas is the new Hector, so Diomedes is the new Achilles." I feel, however, that the same basic objection still applies. Even if we grant that Aeneas is the new Hector, there is still no reason to exalt Diomedes over Achilles. Achilles was the foe of Aeneas just as much as Diomedes was. At "A Homeric Episode in Vergil's *Aeneid*," *AJP* 92 (October 1971): 569, Nehrorn discusses this passage as a reference to the events in *Iliad* 5, but she does not note the strangeness of *fortissime* here. For Papaioannou in "Vergilian Diomedes Revisited: The Re-Evaluation of the 'Iliad,'" *Mnemosyne* 53 (Apr. 2000), the idea throughout seems to be that Diomedes must be exalted because he is a "double" of Aeneas who will eventually yield to his Roman superior. Again, I can see why it would make sense that the more powerful the "villain," the more powerful the "hero" of the story, but I do not see why this would require exalting Diomedes over Achilles. At "Vergil's Italian Diomedes," *The American Journal of Philology* 127, no. 2 (Summer, 2006): 228, Fletcher notes that "some have seen Aeneas' apostrophe of Diomedes as surprising, asserting that we are led to expect a reference to Achilles." He offers no counter-argument at all, however, but merely goes on to show that this begins the process of exalting Diomedes in the *Aeneid*. I find Diomedes' being called *fortissime* 'meaningful' in the sense that I am arguing it is part of Virgil's overall program of implying an alternate history for Diomedes.

for this at least as far back as Servius, none convinces.⁴¹ This is the first and only time anyone ever suggests that Diomedes was braver or mightier than Achilles after Achilles had returned to the fighting in Troy. This suggestion should unbalance the reader, even if just a little. The *Aeneid* may not just require a suspension of disbelief. It may require a suspension of disbelief in the *Iliad*'s version of events.

The plot thickens, however, in the next Diomedes intertext, the Diomedes panel in Carthage at 1.469 – 473.

Nec procul hinc Rhesi niveis tentoria velis
adgnoscat lacrimans, primo quae prodita somno.
Tydides multa vastabat caede cruentus,
ardentisque avertit equos in castra, prius quam
pabula gustassent Troiae Xanthumque bibissent.

Not far from here, weeping, he recognizes the tents of Rhesus with snow-white cloth, which were betrayed in the first night. Blood-stained Tydides was laying waste with much slaughter; he turns the eager horses into the camp, before they could taste the pastures of Troy or drink from the Xanthus.

At first glance, this seems very similar to the story of Rhesus told in both *Iliad* 10 and the *Rhesus*. In both of those texts, Diomedes and Odysseus kill the Thracian king Rhesus while on a spying mission. There are two original elements, however, in this panel worth examining: the fact that it is Diomedes who turns the horses and the absence of Odysseus. These two details suggest that the 'past' of the *Aeneid*'s Diomedes and Odysseus cannot be found in Homer. That is, the possibility of a different version of the *Doloneia* allows readers to choose between the traditional version and this version implied by the *Aeneid* where Diomedes worked alone.

⁴¹ Servius, *ad Aeneid* 1.96, tells us that some think Diomedes is called *fortissimus*, "because, according to Homer, he wounded Venus and Mars. Others refer to his race, because Achilles was Thessalian, Ajax Greek, and Diomedes Danaan" (*quia iuxta Homerum et Venerem vulneravit et Martem. Alii ad gentem referunt, quod Achilles Thessalus fuit, Ajax Graecus, Diomedes Danaus*).

At *Aeneid* 1.472, Diomedes' turning the horses of Rhesus contradicts the version of this story in the Diomedes tradition.⁴² In the *Doloneia* of both *Iliad* 10 and the *Rhesus*, Odysseus and Diomedes decide their roles beforehand.⁴³ In each text, it is Odysseus who turns the horses.⁴⁴ Diomedes' turning the horses also draws attention to another oddity in the panel: the absence of Odysseus. As it has already been shown, the two heroes were regularly paired together in the Diomedes tradition and afterward, even as late as Dante.⁴⁵ There were no versions of the *Doloneia* that did not include Odysseus.⁴⁶ Even Virgil's

⁴² What is interesting, however, is that there is no sign that the panel will turn away from the tradition until the *avertit* in 1.472. The word for turning away is the word used for a metapoetic turning away. Diomedes' literal turning away is also a turning away from the Diomedes tradition, and it is even possible that using a word for turning away to turn away may have been a means for Virgil to slyly draw attention to his own originality.

⁴³ Homer, *Iliad* 10.480 – 481: ...but loose the horses, or you [Diomedes], at any rate, slay the men; the horses will be my concern (...ἀλλὰ λυ' ἵππους· / ἤε σύ γ' ἄνδρας ἔναιρε, μελήσουσιν δέ μοι ἵπποι). *Rhesus* 622 – 626:

Odysseus: Diomedes, either you kill the Thracian man or, at any rate, leave him to me so that it is necessary for you to have a care for the horses.

Diomedes: I myself will kill [the men], and you will master the horses: for you are practiced and clever to apprehend such subtleties. It is necessary that a man act especially as it should always benefit him.

Ὀδυσσεύς: Διόμηδες, ἢ σὺ κτεῖνε Θρήκιον λεῶν,
ἢ 'μοὶ πάρες γε, σοὶ δὲ χρὴ πῶλους μέλειν.

Διομήδης: ἐγὼ φονεύσω, πωλοδαμνήσεις δὲ σύ:
τρίβων γὰρ εἴ τὰ κομψὰ καὶ νοεῖν σοφός.
χρὴ δ' ἄνδρα τάσσειν οὐ μάλιστ' ἂν ὠφελοῖ.

⁴⁴ It is interesting to note, in passing, that Diomedes actually *never* turns horses in any combat in the *Iliad*. Even when he rescues Nestor in *Iliad* 8.90 – 171, it is Nestor who drives the horses. There is only one scene in the *Iliad* where Diomedes drives horses: the chariot race in *Iliad* 23, and the horses he is driving there are the horses of Aeneas. Because charioteering and writing poetry are often associated with each other, it seems possible that another reason to have Diomedes turn the horses is to reinforce the idea of a poetic competition between the *Aeneid* and the *Iliad*. For more on the association with charioteering and writing poetry, a good place to start would be Monica Gale's "Poetry and the Backward Glance in Virgil's *Georgics* and *Aeneid*," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 133, no. 2 (Autumn, 2003): 329, n.17. Some of the examples she provides are Pindar at *Olympian* 9.81 and *Pythian* 10.65, Callimachus at *Aetia* fr. 1.25 – 28, and Propertius 2.10.2.

⁴⁵ Dante Alighieri, *Inferno* XXVI, 90 – 142.

⁴⁶ De Grummond, at 40 – 41, says that it "is noteworthy that the claims of another hero, here Ulysses, are purposely ignored by the poet," but he does not develop this argument. For Papaioannou, at 199, "Virgil's intention behind this omission [of Odysseus] is obvious." Because Virgil "was very much concerned with the warrior-like portrayal of Diomedes," he left out Odysseus and his associations with trickery. She also claims that the Diomedes panel's being near the Achilles panel was another way of associating the two with each other. In n. 28, Fletcher, however, claims that "the absence of a reference to Ulysses in this episode reflects the pairing of Rhesus and Diomedes in some of the mythographers." In some mythographers, Rhesus was killed by Diomedes with no reference to Odysseus. In the same note, he goes on to claim that Papaioannou's view, referred to above, was "seemingly based on a misunderstanding of *Il.* 10." In short, Fletcher does not see the absence of Odysseus here as particularly

night raid in *Aeneid* 9 has two heroes. Because Diomedes is the only hero mentioned in the panel, it is suggested that Diomedes perpetrated the killing of Rhesus by himself. One possible implication of Diomedes' working alone would be as a contrast to the devotion of Nisus and Euryalus to each other. Theirs is a touching story of men who would die for each other. In this new Virgilian version, Diomedes' night raid, however, was just a man killing others in their sleep.

These variants in the Diomedes tradition mentioned so far may seem too subtle. They are brought more into relief, however, by the third Diomedes intertext which alludes back to them. It seems more likely that they are intentional engagements with the tradition because the third Diomedes intertext draws attention to them. At 1.752, Dido asks Aeneas: *nunc quales Diomedis equi; nunc quantus Achilles*. "Now what sort were the horses of Diomedes; now how great was Achilles?" The Trojans have been invited to a banquet with Dido and she asks Aeneas a series of questions. Her question about Achilles recalls, for the reader, the uncertainty that the reader experienced during the first Diomedes intertext at *Aeneid* 1.96 – 97, Aeneas' earlier claim that Diomedes was *fortissimus*, not Achilles. That is, the reader earlier had been forced to wonder just how great each hero was, so Dido's question brings that question up again. Dido, as a character, is not conscious of the recollection, but the reader should be. Also, Dido's

significant, but, at 230, he does imply that the absence of Odysseus here has to do with the focalization through Aeneas: "In Aeneas' focus on these murals (and we must not forget that we see these through Aeneas' eyes) it is all about Achilles and Diomedes." Of course, the problem of ecphrases and focalization has its own set of difficulties. Although none of the following articles touches directly on my topic, they do provide more information on focalization and this particular ecphrasis, for anyone interested in pursuing this idea further: Michael C.J. Putnam, "Dido's Murals and Virgilian Ekphrasis," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 98 (1998); Barbara Weiden Boyd, "Non Enarrabile Textum: Ecphrastic Trespass and Narrative Ambiguity in the *Aeneid*," *Vergilius* 41 (1995); D.P. Fowler, "Narrate and Describe: The Problem of Ekphrasis," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 81 (1991); Diskin Clay, "The Archaeology of the Temple to Juno in Carthage (*Aen.* 1.446 – 93)," *Classical Philology* 83, no. 3 (July 1988); R.D. Williams, "The Pictures on Dido's Temple (*Aeneid* 1.450 – 493)," *The Classical Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (Nov. 1960).

question about the horses of Diomedes necessarily forces the reader to recall the Diomedes panel at 1.469 – 473 where Diomedes was turning the horses of Rhesus. Her questions point the reader back to the earlier intertexts and the Diomedes panel.

Dido's question also has two other effects. The first effect is that the reader is forced to wonder why Dido needs to ask Aeneas about the horses of Diomedes or greatness of Achilles when she herself commissioned a picture of them in the temple to Juno. It seems possible that Dido is not so much asking about these Homeric 'facts' as much as she is asking whether or not the version of events she was familiar with was accurate. She would not have to ask her questions if there were no chance that the version she had heard was inaccurate. A receptive reader may also wonder about the accuracy of the version that he or she has received. The second effect of Dido's question is that it suggests that the events of *Iliad* 5 did not take place because, in *Iliad* 5, Diomedes takes the horses of Aeneas. It would seem unforgivably rude to ask Aeneas about the horses of Diomedes if Diomedes had taken the horses of Aeneas. Of the many explanations given for this passage, the only plausible ones assume that this question has allusive or referential significance.⁴⁷ I suggest that Dido's question was not inappropriate

⁴⁷ This question about Diomedes' horses has puzzled readers at least as far back as Servius. To Servius, *ad Aeneid* 1.752, there seemed to be no way that Dido could have meant the horses of Aeneas:

Quales Diomedis equi: non debemus eos equos intellegere, quos Aeneae sustulit, nec enim congruit; sed de his interrogat, quos sustulit Rheso.

What sort are the horses of Diomedes: we should not understand these as the horses which he took from Aeneas, for it would not be consistent, but she asks concerning those which he took from Rhesus.

Clyde Pharr, also *ad Aeneid* 1.752 in his commentary on *Aeneid* 1 - 6, suggests that "Dido's questions indicate that her primary interest is not in the things about which she inquires but in Aeneas." De Grummond, on 41, suggests that the passage's recalling the theft of Aeneas's horses is "a contingency which Virgil appears to have overlooked." There has been a lot of scholarship since De Grummond's article that has demonstrated the care and subtlety that Virgil used in referring to his predecessors. It does not seem possible to believe any longer that Virgil had been sloppy enough to have forgotten about

at all if the *Iliad*'s version never 'really happened' to the *Aeneid*'s Aeneas. The Diomedes intertexts so far have certainly raised this possibility. Dido's questions encourage the reader to wonder what 'really happened' in the *Aeneid*'s past and to possibly wonder whether or not the *Aeneid*'s version was better.

Diomedes in *Aeneid* 2 - 10

There are four Diomedes intertexts in *Aeneid* 2 – 10: the taking of the Palladium at 2.162 – 170, Aeneas' contrasting Sinon with Diomedes and Achilles at 2.195 – 200, Venus' anxiety about Diomedes at 10.26 – 30, and Aeneas' encounter with Liger and Lucagus at 10.580 – 601.⁴⁸ Sinon claims that Diomedes and Odysseus take the Palladium, and this claim agrees with the Diomedes tradition. The problem is that Sinon

Iliad 5. Pharr's suggestion that Dido's questions are essentially meaningless, just stream-of-consciousness from Dido, also does not satisfy. Again, given the care Virgil has demonstrated with his handling of source material, it seems unconvincing that he would throw in a reference to *Iliad* 5 without it really being a reference. As R.O.A.M. Lyne says, at *Further Voices in the Aeneid* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987): 138, that if Aeneas, while looking at the Diomedes panel,

Was not reminded then [of the fate of his own horses], he must surely have been by Dido's precise and embarrassing question at 1.752... Was Aeneas reminded? Perhaps the question is inappropriate. But what is certain is that a reader of Vergil, familiar with the 'Diomedea', would be so reminded: would remember Diomedes' capture of Aeneas' fancy horses and would be alert to any further reference or allusion. Vergil is jogging our memories, wanting us to recall that inglorious and memorable event, putting us on the alert for any further reference.

He goes on to claim that calling attention to the loss of Aeneas' horses prepares the reader for one of Aeneas' symbolic victories over Diomedes: the receiving new horses from Latinus in *Aeneid* 7. That certainly may be part of what Virgil is doing here, but I would also argue that this "putting us on the alert" is part of the strategy with Diomedes that I have been discussing. Also, in "The Imagery of the 'Aeneid,'" *The Classical Journal* 67, no. 2 (Dec. 1971 - Jan. 1972): 128, n. 22 and later in "Foreshadowing in *Aeneid* 1.751 – 752?" *Vergilius* 22 (1976): 30 – 33, Nethercut suggested that the horses of Diomedes Tydeus were meant to allude to the horses of Diomedes Thrax in order to foreshadow Aeneas's association with Hercules in *Aeneid*. 8. This is intriguing, but the line's placement in book 1, seven books before Aeneas's association with Hercules in book 8 and both right after an account of the Trojan war in the temple at Carthage and right before Aeneas begins telling about the fall of Troy in book 2, makes this suggestion less convincing.

⁴⁸ A case could be made for discussing both the funeral games of Anchises here and the night raid of Nisus and Euryalus as well because of Diomedes' important roles in each corresponding episode in the *Iliad*. As winner of the chariot race, for instance, he is recalled when Cloanthus wins the boat race in *Aeneid* 5, and it is impossible to read the *Aeneid*'s night raid without recalling the *Iliad*'s, especially considering that Diomedes is close to a character named Euryalos in *Iliad* 23. Neither the funeral games of Anchises nor the *Aeneid*'s night raid, however, mention Diomedes specifically, so these episodes fall outside the scope of this paper.

is a liar. Right after Sinon's story, Aeneas claims that the lies of Sinon conquered Troy when Diomedes and Achilles could not. It is possible to read this as a suggestion that Diomedes was not involved in any shady dealings. Venus' anxiety about Diomedes seems incongruent with the Diomedes tradition's accounts of her having already punished him. Also, although she claims that she is afraid for her own safety, she never mentions that Diomedes had nearly defeated Aeneas as well. Aeneas' encounter with Liger and Lucagus refers the reader back to the Diomedes panel in Carthage. As we have seen, this panel created complications of its own. The four Diomedes intertexts in *Aeneid* 2 – 10 draw attention to the new story that the *Aeneid* is suggesting for Diomedes.

The Diomedes intertexts of *Aeneid* 2 are centered around the story of the Palladium. In two ways, the *Aeneid* suggests that Virgil's Diomedes never took the Palladium. As mentioned already, the reliability of Sinon's claim that Diomedes helped take the Palladium is severely compromised by the fact that it occurs in the middle of a very long lie. It is difficult to sort out what is and is not true in Sinon's tale.⁴⁹ Moreover, Sinon's overall goal of persuading the Trojans that the Greeks needed to appease Athena would have encouraged him to give a very embellished tale of how the Greeks had offended her. Having only Sinon, the liar, mention the Palladium is the first way that the *Aeneid* suggests that Diomedes never took the Palladium. The second way is more ambiguous, and there is certainly room for multiple interpretations. At 2.195 – 199, Aeneas claims that Diomedes and Achilles were not able to take Troy:

Talibus insidiis periurique arte Sinonis

⁴⁹ On 41, de Grummond says that "the tale of the theft of the Palladium is related in book 2 (162 – 168), but it is placed in the mouth of Sinon, and thus is to be little credited." De Grummond seems to be the only other person to suggest that Diomedes never took the Palladium, but he does not develop this any further, and it is not clear in de Grummond why Diomedes would not have been involved in this adventure.

credita res, captique dolis lacrimisque coactis,
quos neque Tydides, nec Larisaeus Achilles,
non anni domuere decem, non mille carinae.

By such plots and crafty falsehood, Sinon's cause was trusted. They were captured by tricks and forced tears, they whom neither the son of Tydeus nor Larisaeus Achilles, nor ten years, nor a thousand ships subdued.

One way to read these lines is that Aeneas was metonymically referring to the taking of the Palladium when he mentions Tydides.⁵⁰ That is, he could have meant that neither the taking of the Palladium, the might of Achilles, the ten years, nor the thousand ships were as successful as Sinon's lies and tears. Another way to read this passage, however, is that Aeneas is associating Diomedes with Achilles again, and not with the tricky Odysseus. Fletcher argues, for example, that Aeneas "directly contrasts Diomedes and the artifice of Sinon (and any such trickery), grouping him instead with Achilles."⁵¹ According to this reading, there is essentially a Sinon/Achilles binary, and Diomedes falls on the forthright, straightforward side of Achilles rather than the side of Sinon. The reader is discouraged by Aeneas from associating Diomedes with anything deceitful like donning a disguise or sneaking into the city. Because the poem has already claimed that Diomedes was *fortissimus* and never mentions the Palladium again, readings like Fletcher's and Papaioannou's seem a little more in line with the rest of the poem. Sinon's unreliability and the *Aeneid's* frequent separation of Diomedes from Odysseus suggest that Diomedes

⁵⁰ Wiltshire and Krickel seem to read it this way, but they claim, on 74, that "the reference to Diomedes' theft of the Palladium at 2.164 is of no great significance, except that it shows that Diomedes was instrumental in Troy's destruction." I find this reading difficult, however, because Aeneas says explicitly that the efforts of Diomedes *et al* were not able to take Troy. Even Sinon's story presents the theft of the Palladium as the downfall of the Greeks, not the Trojans.

⁵¹ K.F.B. Fletcher, "Vergil's Italian Diomedes," 233. Papaioannou, on 203, also claimed that these lines that attributed

the fall of Troy to the Greek treacherousness, very pointedly distinguished both Achilles and Diomedes from the rest of the Greeks. Although both heroes appeared earlier in contexts suggestive of deceit, at the closure of Aeneas' recollections of the Trojan War they both stand apart.

was not involved in taking the Palladium. This engagement with the story of the Trojan Horse is a good reminder of how the *Aeneid* was a rival to the post-Homeric tradition rather than just the directly Homeric.⁵²

The Diomedes intertexts in *Aeneid* 10 function more like the third Diomedes intertext in *Aeneid* 1. Rather than complicate the narrative by changing things, they draw attention to the other Diomedes intertexts that have more clearly demonstrated the *Aeneid*'s break with the Diomedes tradition. These intertexts are clustered around two different episodes: Venus' anxiety about Diomedes during the council of gods and Liger's taunt later in the book. Together, these two instances continue to suggest that Diomedes never defeated Aeneas.

Venus' fear for her own safety but not Aeneas' seems incongruent with the story of her being wounded in *Iliad* 5. At *Aeneid* 10.28 – 30, Venus tells Jupiter that she is afraid that Diomedes will wound her again:

atque iterum in Teucros Aetolis surgit ab Arpis
Tydides. Equidem credo, mea volnera restant
et tua progenies mortalia demoror arma.

⁵² A possible third way that the *Aeneid* suggests that the Virgilian Diomedes never took the Palladium is the fact that he does not have the Palladium with him later. That is, Diomedes' not having the Palladium when he is met in Italy is not sufficient evidence to say that he never took it. There are a number of possible storylines that would explain why he could have taken it but would no longer still have it. Rather, it would be more accurate to say that Diomedes' not giving the Palladium to Aeneas, even though he advises the Italians to send gifts to Aeneas, is merely consistent with the idea that he did not take the Palladium. Although Papaioannou and Fletcher both mention in passing that Diomedes gives Aeneas the Palladium in some versions of the story, I have only been able to find one discussion of the fact that Diomedes does not have the Palladium later in the poem: Richard Heinze, *Virgil's Epic Technique*. trans. Hazel and David Harvey and Fred Robertson (London: Bristol Classical Press, 1993): 80. There is no indication, however, that he doubted that Diomedes had taken the Palladium. He suggests a couple of reasons for the omission of it later, but he does not develop the idea in any detail: One would have thought that Virgil would have welcomed the opportunity for Aeneas to take the Palladium, and thus complete the number of *pignora imperii* [tokens of empire] in his care; as it is, the Palladium is mentioned only in Sinon's account of its theft (2.166). It is possible that he believed that this tradition was open to objections on factual grounds; it is also possible that he considered it too novelistic that Aeneas and Diomedes should meet in person.

Even the son of Tydeus rises again, from Aetolian Arpi, against the Teucrians.
Indeed, I believe my wounds remain, and your daughter awaits mortal arms.

Because it is the Trojans who have been embattled, it is strange that she has no fear for Aeneas' safety but only for her own.⁵³ Those familiar with the *Iliad* remember that she was only wounded because Aeneas needed help. That is, if Aeneas had not been defeated, then Aphrodite never would have been wounded. Venus' not being concerned about Aeneas could be easily dismissed as a slip or perhaps even a little narcissism if two of the Diomedes intertexts in *Aeneid* 1 had not made it questionable whether or not Diomedes had ever defeated Aeneas. As mentioned already, Aeneas' using *fortissimus* at *Aeneid* 1.96 – 97 to describe Diomedes instead of Achilles had made it less clear what 'really happened' at Troy. Furthermore, Dido's asking about the horses had also suggested that Diomedes had never defeated Aeneas and taken his horses. That is, if Diomedes had not stolen the horses of Aeneas, it would not have been *faux pas* to ask about Diomedes' horses. Because these two events in the poem had already made it less clear whether or not Diomedes had ever defeated Aeneas, Venus' lack of fear for Aeneas'

⁵³ At 206 and 239 respectively, Papaioannou and Fletcher note Venus' emphasis on herself here, but neither they nor de Grummond note that Venus mentions only her *own* wounding here, and not Aeneas'. De Grummond, at 41, describes this episode as Venus being worried "that Diomedes will enter the fray against her son." Papaioannou quotes de Grummond here, and Fletcher says that "Venus is afraid not only for her son's sake but also for her own (or so she would have us believe)." The 'truthfulness' of this event, however, becomes even more convoluted when Juno attempts to reply to Venus at 10.81 – 83:

Tu potes Aenean manibus subducere Graium
proque viro nebulam et ventos obtendere inanis,
tu potes in totidem classem convertere nymphas:

You are able to carry off Aeneas out from under the hands of Greeks and to stretch out empty winds and a cloud in the place of the man. You are able to change the whole fleet into nymphs.

As Nehr Korn points out at 571 – 572, Juno's claims that Venus replaced Aeneas with a phantom and changed his ships into nymphs are just not true. It was Apollo who did the former and Cybele who did the latter. Because we know that the second and third of these three accusations are false, there is less reason to believe that Venus did the first either.

sake may also have been because Diomedes had never been a threat to the mighty Aeneas.

The horses of Diomedes are also mentioned by Liger at 10.581 when he taunts Aeneas by saying that his own horses were not the horses of Diomedes and that his own chariot was not the chariot of Achilles.⁵⁴ This Diomedes intertext increases the reader's uncertainty about the events of *Iliad* 5. It is unclear what exactly Liger is trying to say. One reading is that Liger is telling Aeneas that he will not escape Liger as he had escaped Diomedes and Achilles in the tradition. Liger seems familiar with the *Iliad*'s version of these events, but the *Aeneid* has been less clear about what happened. Mentioning the horses of Diomedes yet again recalls the Diomedes panel in Carthage and Dido's questions.⁵⁵ This reference to the horses of Diomedes suggests that the *Aeneid* is trying to subtly draw attention to this uncertainty about what happened to Aeneas in Troy. References to Diomedes' encounter with Aeneas run through the poem. Whatever each character is trying to say when he or she mentions Diomedes, the reader's attention is drawn to the Virgilian Diomedes' inconsistency with the Diomedes tradition. *Aeneid* 10 introduces few inconsistencies itself, but it draws attention to the ones already created.

⁵⁴ Those who have commented on this passage generally focus on how it contrasts with the events of *Iliad* 5. It seems to have never been explored before whether or not Liger was right about what really happened at Troy. Wiltshire and Krickel, on 74, seem to read this episode as an inverted version of the events of *Iliad* 5. That is, in *Iliad* 5, Diomedes defeated two men in one chariot, Pandarus and Aeneas. In the *Aeneid*, Aeneas defeats two men in one chariot, Liger and Lucagus. Nehr Korn, on 572 – 573, sees this as a turning point for Aeneas as a character. The conquered has become the conqueror. Papaioannou, on 207, makes this reference to Diomedes sound like a kind of misdirection on Virgil's part. That is, "Liger is portrayed as an old, Homeric-type epic character, alien to the changing world of the *Aeneid*" who assumes that Diomedes has not changed. This perhaps would have encouraged the *Aeneid*'s readers to believe that Diomedes would answer the call and come fight Aeneas. Fletcher, on 243 and 244, cites Nehr Korn and Wiltshire and Krickel here and points out that this is another instance of Diomedes' being paired with Achilles.

⁵⁵ The final Diomedes intertext in the *Aeneid*, at 12.351 – 352, also points back to the panel in Carthage. In these lines, the speaker of the poem says that Diomedes killed Dolon. This agrees with the Diomedes tradition, but it also recalls the earlier suggestion that Diomedes may have perpetrated the night raid by himself.

Diomedes in *Aeneid* 11

In contrast to the Diomedes intertexts in *Aeneid* 10, the Diomedes intertext in *Aeneid* 11 veers quite unambiguously from the Diomedes tradition. Diomedes responds to the embassy sent to him, an embassy which itself seems to have been Virgil's creation.⁵⁶ As Wiltshire and Krickel say, Virgil had "all but rewritten the *Iliad*" with Diomedes' response to the embassy.⁵⁷ Although Diomedes was eager to fight Aeneas in the *Iliad*, he refuses to fight Aeneas in the *Aeneid*. His description of Aeneas does not match the Homeric Aeneas, and Diomedes' version of his own *nostos* does not match the post-Homeric tradition either. In these three ways, Virgil puts the finishing touches on his portrait of Diomedes and his new, 'unheard' *Iliad*.

The scholarly consensus about Diomedes' refusal to fight Aeneas seems to be that his refusal is not something that a reader would expect from the Diomedes of the Diomedes tradition.⁵⁸ As de Grummond says, for example, "This Diomedes is not the fierce and reck-nought warrior we had been accustomed to in Homer."⁵⁹ As Fletcher also points out, Diomedes was prepared to fight the Trojans with only Sthenelus at his side.⁶⁰ As discussed in the Introduction, his eagerness for violence was one of his most marked

⁵⁶ Richard Heinze, *Virgil's Epic Technique*, 79 – 80.

⁵⁷ Susan Wiltshire and August Krickel, "Diomedes and Aeneas: A Virgilian Paradox," 75.

⁵⁸ Besides Wiltshire and Krickel, de Grummond, and Fletcher, several others have pointed out how drastic this change is. Francis Cairns, on 74 of *Virgil's Augustan Epic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) says that the Diomedes of *Aeneid* 11 "is now a good king and lover of peace." According to K.W. Grandsen on 174 of *Virgil's Iliad: an Essay on Epic Narrative* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), "it is a typical gesture of secondary epic to introduce [Diomedes] into the *Aeneid*, and a striking piece of moral irony to introduce him as a non-combatant...but Diomedes has had enough of war." According to Papaioannou, on 209, the response that the Latins receive from "the bloodthirsty warrior of 1.469 – 73 and 2.165 – 8" is "not the one the ambassadors expected from him."

⁵⁹ Will de Grummond, "Virgil's Diomedes," 41.

⁶⁰ K.F.B. Fletcher, "Virgil's Italian Diomedes," 244.

characteristics in the Diomedes tradition. A Diomedes who is unwilling to fight Aeneas is not the same as the hero of the Diomedes tradition.

Diomedes' account of Aeneas in the Trojan War also deviates from the tradition. At *Aeneid* 11.285 – 287, Diomedes claims that if Troy had just possessed another Aeneas then it would have been Trojans invading Greece instead of the other way around. Although a few lines earlier Diomedes had reminded his audience that he had fought against Aeneas, his description of Aeneas does not match the tradition at all.⁶¹ In *Iliad* 5, Diomedes alone is able to overcome Aeneas and Pandarus together, so it seems unlikely that another Aeneas would have so drastically tilted the odds in the Trojans' favor. In addition, Aeneas himself had used *fortissimus* to describe Diomedes. The math does not add up. If Diomedes truly had been the mightiest of the Greeks, then Aeneas must have been so much mightier than any of the Greeks. Also, at *Aeneid* 11.289 – 292, Diomedes says that Hector and Aeneas were equal in arms and courage and that Aeneas was greater than Hector in *pietas*:

Hectoris Aeneaeque manu victoria Graium
haesit et in decimum vestigia rettulit annum.
Ambo animis, ambo insignes praestantibus armis
hic pietate prior.

⁶¹ Thus, Horsfall at 17 of “The Aeneas-Legend and the *Aeneid*,” *Vergilius* 32 (1986): “This testimonial bears no relation to Aeneas' comprehensive humiliation at Diomedes' hands” in the *Iliad*. In his commentary on *Aeneid* 11, *ad* 11.289, he goes even further, saying that in these lines Virgil offers an elaborate, calculated “misquotation” of Homer's sacred text...In *Il. 5*, [Aeneas] is a negligible opponent for Diomedes...now Diomedes returns to those same encounters in a tone of awed respect for his opponent's valour [sic]...here facts are rewritten in the interest of expressing a form of inner growth in [Diomedes]: he has meditated upon his glory and learned how little he has in the end won by it.

Hardie, on 139 – 140 of *Rumour and Renown: Representations of Fama in Western Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), claims that there are “features of Diomedes' speech that suggest that he is slanting his account” and that “Diomedes' recollection of Aeneas' awesome presence in battle (282 – 4) hardly matches *our* recollection of the encounter between the two men in the *Iliad* (5.297 – 317).” In Hardie's reading, this version of the events is so unlike the *Iliad*'s version that Diomedes must be lying.

By the hand of Hector and Aeneas, the victory of the Greeks wavered and stopped in its tracks for ten years. Both were notable for courage and excellence in arms, but Aeneas was greater in *pietas*.

Whether or not Aeneas had notable *pietas* in the tradition, there are certainly no extant sources that give any evidence that he had more *pietas* than Hector.⁶² Diomedes' description of Aeneas' martial prowess and *pietas* at Troy drastically rewrote the *Iliad*'s description of them.

A surprisingly new narrative also emerges in Diomedes' description of his own *nostos*.⁶³ This *nostos* can be further divided into two smaller areas: Diomedes' description of his wife and the transformation of his companions into birds. There was a long tradition that Diomedes was ultimately forced into exile after the Trojan War to escape the trap of his adulterous wife, Aigialeia, and her new lover. His *nostos* was like Agamemnon's except that instead of getting killed he escaped and made it, eventually, to Italy. It is implied by Dione in *Iliad* 5.406 – 15 that Diomedes would die in battle as punishment for wounding Aphrodite, but it is not until the post-Homeric tradition that the story of Aigialeia's unfaithfulness develops.⁶⁴ As punishment for wounding Aphrodite, she causes his wife to be unfaithful and to plot to kill him on his return. It is strange, then, that he describes his wife at 11.270 as *coniugium optatum*. As Gantz points out, this description of his wife “would seem at odds with her usual adultery.”⁶⁵ While it is not out of the question that his wife could be “longed for” after betraying him, it seems unlikely that she would be described in a much more positive light than Clytemnestra,

⁶² For more on Aeneas' *pietas* or *eusebeia* in the Greek epics, see Nicholas Horsfall, “Some Problems in the Aeneas Legend,” *The Classical Quarterly* 29, no. 2 (1979): 385 – 388.

⁶³ In fact, as Kopff points out on 942, none of the *nostoi* in Diomedes' speech seems consistent with the *Nostoi* of Proclus.

⁶⁴ For more on Diomedes' wanderings, see Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth* 2.2 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996): 699 – 700.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 700.

whose hand he mentioned a few lines earlier at 11.267 as that of a *coniugis infandae*. The proximity of *coniugis infandae* and *coniugium optatum* and the fact that both phrases are the first two words of their respective lines suggests a contrast between the two where we might have expected them to be more similar. As Horsfall says, the version that Diomedes “was betrayed by his wife as punishment for his having wounded Aphrodite” is “a version...to which [Virgil] clearly makes no reference.”⁶⁶

The *Aeneid* also adds a surprising twist to the transformation of Diomedes’ companions into birds. According to some versions of the post-Homeric tradition, Diomedes gets killed in Italy.⁶⁷ His killers vary, depending on the particular tale. A common element, however, is that after his death his companions are transformed into birds while mourning the loss of their leader. *Aeneid* 11, however, is the first time that Diomedes’ companions are transformed into birds while Diomedes is still alive.⁶⁸ Servius is very clear on this point.⁶⁹ The purpose behind this change likely has to do with the first time, in extant literature, that these birds were mentioned, the Pseudo-Aristotelian *On Marvelous Things Heard*. In this version of the story, the local king, named Aeneas, betrayed and killed Diomedes. His mourning companions were changed

⁶⁶ Nicholas Horsfall, *ad* 11.270, *Virgil, Aeneid 11: A Commentary* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2003).

⁶⁷ For more on this, see Gantz 699.

⁶⁸ While Gantz suggests that “poetic license and a bit of compression is likely at work here,” there have not been very many attempts to explain the *Aeneid*’s deviating from tradition here. Papaioannou even claims, on 214, that “no one has offered a satisfactory explanation for the reasons that led Vergil to innovate.” Excepting Horsfall’s enigmatic claim, *ad Aeneid* 11.270, that “the transformation into birds is in some way clearly associated with the representation of the souls of the dead as birds, or at least as winged,” most comments about this transformation have been restricted to noting two things: 1.) Servius tells us that Virgil deviates from tradition here and 2.) the birds are probably some kind of shearwater. It is interesting to note, in passing, that these birds of Diomedes are still an important part of the local folklore and legend. In “The Shearwaters of Diomedes,” *Seabird Report* 1971: 38, for example, Isabel Winthrop claims that, during her visit to the Tremiti islands in the Adriatic, “the word ‘diomedee’ kept cropping up. There was a café of that name and talk of elusive seabirds called diomedee that flew in from the sea after dark.” Locals later led her to a secret, wooded spot from which to view these birds.

⁶⁹ Servius, *ad Aeneid* 11.271.

into birds and said to be silent if Greeks visited but to cry out and attack any non-Greeks who landed there.⁷⁰ The fact that one version of the birds' transformation deals with Aeneas killing Diomedes draws even more attention to the strangeness of Diomedes' refusal to fight Aeneas.

Both Diomedes' longing for his wife and the transformation of his companions while he was still alive may have encouraged the reader to view him with more sympathy than they would have otherwise. That is, the *Aeneid* has portrayed him as *fortissimus*, *cruentus*, and even *impius*, in Sinon's description. He has been a battlefield force, a threat to human and even deity. At the point in the poem when some of the Latins are considering peace with the Trojans, Virgil takes extra steps to even humanize the murdering, horse-stealing monster that has been referred to throughout the poem. Diomedes may have killed many Trojans, but, like Aeneas and many others, he misses his wife when she is gone, and he misses his companions as well. The *Aeneid* comes upon Diomedes at his loneliest. He is founding a city, to be sure, but, unlike Aeneas, there is no current prospect of a new bride, and not even his new city seems to drown out the noise of the companions he lost, companions who had been forced to pay the penalty for his actions, not their own.

Conclusion

Virgil's use of Diomedes intertexts cast doubt on the Diomedes tradition's 'facts' that Achilles was greater than Diomedes and that Diomedes and Odysseus had been frequent companions. It also became unclear whether or not Diomedes took the Palladium or even ever defeated Aeneas. It was no longer clear why Diomedes went to Italy or how he died there. Virgil's Italy was a "brave new world" to Diomedes.

⁷⁰ Pseudo-Aristotle, *On Marvelous Things Heard*, 836a.

Much of the *Aeneid*'s Diomedes story is also *terra incognita* to its readers. Virgil's contemporaries could not have failed to notice many of the differences between Virgil's Diomedes and the tradition's. Virgil's seemed to have a new backstory that rarely agreed with the Diomedes tradition. It is difficult to piece together exactly what Diomedes' new backstory would have looked like from the clues the *Aeneid* provides.

It can be said, however, that in this new version, Diomedes was almost a force of nature or violence personified at Troy. He, not Achilles, was the mightiest Greek at Troy, and he both attacked Venus and killed Rhesus alone. Traditionally, he had been authorized by Athena to do the former and had been assisted by Odysseus in doing the latter. Removing Athena from the story of his wounding Venus removes any possible 'gray area' about whether or not it is wrong to attack one god if another god orders you to do so. Now the wounding of Venus comes across as mere sacrilege. Similarly, removing Odysseus from the killing of Rhesus removes all of the cunning and subtlety associated with Odysseus. Now the killing of Rhesus seems even more like merely butchering Thracians in their sleep rather than a carefully planned and executed operation. The *Aeneid*'s Diomedes raged on the Trojan battlefield. The way he tells it himself, he was almost the poster-boy for committing atrocities in war.

One would expect that such a warrior would not have balked at fighting Aeneas, but the *Aeneid*'s new Trojan narrative suggests that not even the monster Diomedes was a match for Aeneas. The two create an interesting dichotomy. Diomedes was an agent of chaos, a storm. Aeneas, however, is a bringer of civilization and *pietas*. He was the man, both literally and figuratively, whom the storm did not conquer, especially since the *Aeneid* even suggests that Diomedes never conquered Aeneas at all. This new Trojan

narrative has Diomedes and the Greeks held at bay by Aeneas until Sinon's deception. There is no need to rationalize Aeneas' defeat at the hands of Diomedes because the *Aeneid* suggests that it never happened. There was never a time when the Greeks could have defeated the Trojans, proto-Romans, in arms alone. The *Aeneid*'s Diomedes stood for all the violent foreigners who eventually would come to accept Roman superiority and, in the end, seem better off for it, as the *Aeneid* portrays it.⁷¹

After looking at the Diomedes intertexts in the *Aeneid* and trying piece together Diomedes' new backstory, it is easier to see how it would have functioned as a rival to the traditional version. Virgil's Diomedes was recognizable enough to be familiar, but he encouraged the Romans to reimagine the relationship between Trojans and the Greeks at Troy. He allowed Virgil's Roman readers to have all the excitement of Diomedes without the added complication of his having defeated Aeneas. Diomedes was still a mighty warrior, but not even the mightiest Greek was a match for the proto-Roman Aeneas. This Diomedes story provided a traditional, popular character with a more Roman-friendly past. This is not to suggest that it seemed likely a Roman would stop reading the *Iliad* because of the new Diomedes. Rather, it seems like a more realistic goal and result would be that this Roman reader, when picking his *Iliad* back up and coming across a Diomedes passage, might wish to himself that Homer's Diomedes was more like Virgil's. This was just one of the many ways that the *Aeneid* competed with the tradition.

⁷¹ Papaioannou, on 194, has a similar conclusion about Diomedes' role as showing the "Vergilian description of post-Homeric balance of power, that appoints the Romans and not the Greeks to leadership." She sees Diomedes as changed, however, and does not explore the possibility that the *Aeneid*'s Diomedes was not the same as the Diomedes tradition's.

CHAPTER 3

DIOMEDES IN THE *METAMORPHOSES*

In his *Ars Poetica*, Horace gave the following advice:

aut famam sequere aut sibi convenientia finge
scriptor. honoratum si forte reponis Achillem,
inpiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer
iura neget sibi nata, nihil non adroget armis.

Either follow tradition or craft things self-consistent, writer. If, by chance, you bring back most honored Achilles, let him be active, wrathful, unyielding, passionate, and let him deny that laws were made for him, and let him ever appeal to arms.⁷²

While there is no way to know if Ovid was consciously adopting the first of these two strategies, Horace's two paths provide a useful and contemporaneous starting point for examining the differences between Virgil's and Ovid's Diomedes. While both poets took some from column A and some from column B, the last chapter has shown that Virgil's treatment of Diomedes seems much closer to "things self-consistent" than following tradition. Ovid's Diomedes, however, comes across as generally traditional. After all, Ovid's Diomedes was clearly not in the same league as Achilles, had frequently accompanied Odysseus, had taken the Palladium, had defeated Aeneas at Troy, and seemed willing to fight Aeneas in Italy. If Ovid had written before Virgil, his Diomedes might have seemed almost unremarkable. Because Virgil had deviated so far from the tradition, however, this allowed Ovid to create a Diomedes who was both generally traditional and anti-Virgilian.⁷³ This is not to say at all that Ovid was merely following

⁷² Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 119 – 122.

⁷³ By "anti-Virgilian" I just mean that it is very clearly inconsistent with the Virgilian version of events.

tradition. Rather, being more traditional was a way for Ovid to “correct” Virgil’s lack of adherence to the tradition. This chapter argues that the *Metamorphoses*’ anti-Virgilian Diomedes demonstrated Ovid’s independence from the *Aeneid* with his Diomedes that was still close to the Diomedes of the tradition. This was just one of the many ways that the *Metamorphoses* competed with the *Aeneid*.

As discussed previously with Virgil, ancient readers would have understood the *Metamorphoses* as having to compete with the *Aeneid*. Quintilian proves this in his discussion of epic poetry by including his infamous description of Ovid’s ego: *lascivus quidem in herois quoque Ovidius et nimium amator ingenii sui, laudandus tamen in partibus*.⁷⁴ “Likewise, in epic, Ovid is self-indulgent as well and too much a lover of his own ingenuity; nevertheless, he is praiseworthy in some parts.” Earlier, Quintilian had assured readers that Virgil was second only to Homer and that all others followed far behind.⁷⁵ Ovid’s writing epic was an attempt to “enter the lists” with these poets, both literally and figuratively. That is, he was attempting to insert himself into these types of rankings, and his contemporary readers would have understood the *Metamorphoses* as a challenge to them.⁷⁶

The two Diomedes are different characters.

⁷⁴ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 10.1.88

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 10.1.87. *Ceteri omnes longe secuntur*. “All the rest follow a long way off.”

⁷⁶ None of this is to disagree with Peter E. Knox’s discussion of the importance of non-epic material in the *Metamorphoses* in *Ovid’s Metamorphoses and the Traditions of Augustan Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge Philosophical Society, 1986) 1 – 6. On page 6, for instance, he says

Ovid’s debt to the epic tradition, that is to say the *Aeneid*, is self-evident (as the poet intended), but the epic elements are not the most significant aspect of the poem. The most obvious stumbling block in treating the *Metamorphoses* as epic is the subject matter of the work. The bizarre tales of passion and violence which make up most of the poem clearly do not fit in comfortably with this characterization.

It does seem impossible that ancient readers would not have noticed just how different the *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses* were. As several scholars, including Knox, Hinds, Solodow, and Myers, have pointed out, the genre of the *Metamorphoses* has proved extremely difficult to categorize. I am not arguing that the ancients would have read the *Metamorphoses* as if it were what we might call a martial epic like the *Aeneid* or *Iliad*. I am also not arguing that Ovid was not also an heir of Callimachus, Propertius, or even

For modern critics, Ovid's intertextual relationship with Virgil has been a hotbed of activity for many years. Understanding Virgil's influence on the Romans who wrote epic poetry after him has been a cornerstone for studies of Ovid, Lucan, Statius, and others. According to Hardie, for instance,

the successors to Virgil, at once respectful and rebellious, constructed a space for themselves through a 'creative imitation' that exploited the energies and tensions called up but not finally expended or resolved in the *Aeneid*.⁷⁷

To Thomas, it would be "virtually impossible" for a poet to write about Aeneas so soon after the *Aeneid* was published, "without having some degree of engagement with that poem, and without the reader constantly reflecting on the relationship between the two."⁷⁸

For Hinds as well, the stories in the *Metamorphoses*, the "first major Roman epic to be written in the wake of the *Aeneid*," both "evoke and engage with Virgilian types."⁷⁹

Modern scholarship has discovered several different strategies Ovid used in engaging with Virgil and the tradition.⁸⁰ Ovid's use of Diomedes is a very small part of Ovid's

Lucretius, for example. Rather, I am arguing that Quintilian's example suggests that their understanding of epic was broad enough that the *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses* would have been compared with each other. This comparison, in turn, would have encouraged competition.

⁷⁷ Philip Hardie, *The Epic Successors of Virgil: A Study in the Dynamics of a Tradition* (Cambridge [England]: Cambridge University Press, 1993): xi.

⁷⁸ Richard F. Thomas, "Ovid's Reception of Virgil," in *A Companion to Ovid*, ed. Peter E. Knox (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009): 300.

⁷⁹ Stephen Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998): 104.

⁸⁰ In addition to the reading on intertextuality suggested in the last chapter, possibly the best place to start reading specifically about Ovid's intertextual relationships is Sergio Casali's "Ovidian Intertextuality" in the *A Companion to Ovid* mentioned above in n.7. He gives a good, chronological summary of the work done on Ovidian intertextuality up through 2009. For a closer look at Ovid's Diomedes, Hinds has a brief discussion in *Allusion and Intertextuality* from 116 to 122, and there is Andreas N. Michalopoulos' "The Intertextual Fate of a Great Homeric Hero: Diomedes in Vergil (*Aen.* 11.252 – 93) and Ovid (*Rem.* 151 – 67)," *Acta Ant. Hung.* 43 (2003): 77 – 86. Papaioannou first wrote about this in "Ut non [forma] cygnorum, sic albis proxima cygnis: Poetology, Epic Definition, and Swan Imagery in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*," *Phoenix* 58 (Spring – Summer, 2004) and then expanded this in the fifth chapter of *Epic Succession and Dissension Ovid, Metamorphoses 13.623-14.582, and the Reinvention of the Aeneid*, (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005). Michalopoulos' interest in Ovid's Diomedes is mostly to explain why the reference to Diomedes in the *Remedia Amoris* is followed by a reference to Aegisthus.

competition with Virgil and the tradition overall, but examining it gives us an even clearer picture of the relationship between Ovid and Virgil.

As Chapter 2 does for the *Aeneid*, this chapter examines Diomedes intertexts in the *Metamorphoses* in almost the same order in which they appear in the poem. Diomedes is mentioned in three different areas: the Judgment of Arms, the Latins' embassy to Diomedes, and the assassination of Julius Caesar. In these three sections, Ovid implies that Diomedes was not even a real contender for the arms of Achilles, that Diomedes and Odysseus frequently worked together, that Diomedes would have liked to fight Aeneas, and that he was not a friend to Rome. These areas span the distance from the end of book 12 to near the end of book 15.

The first Diomedes intertext in the *Metamorphoses* resembles the first Diomedes intertext in the *Aeneid*.⁸¹ While the *Aeneid* had suggested that Diomedes, not Achilles, was *fortissimus*, the *Metamorphoses* assures its readers that Diomedes, Menelaus, and Ajax Oileus would not dare to compete for the arms of Achilles:

Non ea Tydides, non audet Oileos Ajax,
non minor Atrides, non bello maior et aevo
poscere, non alii: solis Telamone creato
Laerteque fuit tantae fiducia laudis.⁸²

Neither the son of Tydeus, nor Ajax, son of Oileus, nor the younger son of Atreus, greater in neither war nor age, nor others dare to demand these [arms]. The

He argues that it recalls Diomedes' response to the Latins in *Aeneid* 11, but he does not really discuss the Diomedes of the *Metamorphoses*. The arguments of Hinds and Papaioannou will be looked at more closely in the discussion of the response of Ovid's Diomedes to the Latins' embassy.

⁸¹ *Aeneid* 1.96 – 97: O terque quaterque beati,
quis ante ora patrum Troiae sub moenibus altis
contigit oppetere! O Danaum fortissime gentis
Tydide! Mene Iliacis occumbere campis
non potuisse, tuaque animam hanc effundere dextra

Oh thrice, four times blessed, to whom it happened to fall before the faces of your fathers beneath
the high walls of Troy! Oh mightiest of the race of Danaans, son of Tydides! Why was it not possible
that I fall in Trojan fields, and that your right hand pour out this spirit?

⁸² Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 12.622 – 624

assurance of such great praise was for the son of Telamon and the son of Laertes alone.

If Diomedes really had been the mightiest of the Greeks, as Virgil's Aeneas claims, it seems unlikely that he would not also have been a candidate to receive the arms of Achilles. The *Metamorphoses* is not clear about Diomedes' lack of qualifications, but there was also never a tradition that we know of that allowed Diomedes to be a candidate.⁸³ Although it is possible that his not being a candidate may have been motivated by some sort of modesty, the lines above suggest that the glory accrued by his military achievements was not even close to either to that of either Ajax Telamon or Odysseus. He is referred to a few different times in the speeches of both Ajax and Odysseus, but neither refer to him as *fortissimus*.⁸⁴ While Ajax suggests that Diomedes was more worthy of the arms than Odysseus, there is absolutely no suggestion at all that Diomedes had been mightier than Achilles.⁸⁵ As will be seen when each passage is examined in more detail, Ajax essentially suggests that Odysseus was the ineffectual sidekick of Odysseus, but Odysseus suggests that Diomedes himself, rather, was the sidekick to Odysseus.

This implied denial that Diomedes was *fortissimus* at Troy contests any of the advantages that the *Aeneid* had hoped to gain by portraying Diomedes as the mightiest of the Greeks. Returning Diomedes to his place behind, at least, Ajax Telamon, makes

⁸³ I do not think we can accept Odysseus' own rationalizing at 13.354 – 369 that only a thinker could be considered the greatest of the Greeks. Ajax Telamon is a candidate, and Achilles himself did not display any notable intellectual prowess in the *Metamorphoses*.

⁸⁴ He is specifically referred to by Ajax at 13.67 – 70 and 13.98 – 102 and then by Odysseus at 13.238 – 254 and 13.350 – 356.

⁸⁵ At 13.101 – 102, Ajax says, “*Si semel ista datis meritis tam vilibus arma, / dividite, et pars sit maior Diomedis in illis!*” If, at this point, you hand over those arms for such trivial merits, divide them up and let the share of Diomedes in those things be greater!

Aeneas' defeat at his hands less acceptable, if it had happened at all.⁸⁶ That is, it is one thing to be defeated by the mightiest of the Greeks but another thing entirely to have been handily defeated by perhaps the third mightiest Greek, especially if Aeneas was the fighting equal of Hector, as Virgil's Diomedes had claimed.⁸⁷ It does not speak as well of Aeneas, and this reassertion of the traditional hierarchy among Greeks suggests to the readers of the *Metamorphoses* that they are back in familiar territory after the *terra incognita* of the *Aeneid*. While the *Aeneid* had blurred the line between Diomedes and Achilles, the *Metamorphoses* said that they were not even in the same league.⁸⁸

The next set of Diomedes intertexts in the *Metamorphoses* seems like an answer to the *Aeneid*'s suggestions that Diomedes and Odysseus did not frequently work together and that Diomedes was not involved in taking the Palladium. The next five mentions of Diomedes all occur during the Judgment of Arms with two in Ajax' speech and three in Odysseus'. At 13.67 – 70, Ajax Telamon claims that Diomedes saw Odysseus abandon Nestor. At 13.98 – 102, Ajax goes even further and claims that Odysseus would not have been able to accomplish any of his covert operations without Diomedes' help:

Conferat his Ithacus Rhesum imbellemque Dolona
Priamidenque Helenum rapta cum Pallade captum:
luce nihil gestum est, nihil est Diomede remoto.

⁸⁶ This battle between Diomedes and Aeneas occurred at *Iliad* 5.166 – 362.

⁸⁷ *Aeneid* 11.289 – 292: Hectoris Aeneaeque manu victoria Graium
haesit et in decimum vestigia rettulit annum.
Ambo animis, ambo insignes praestantibus armis
hic pietate prior.

By the hand of Hector and Aeneas, the victory of the Greeks wavered and stopped in its tracks for ten years. Both were notable for courage and excellence in arms, but Aeneas was greater in *pietas*.

⁸⁸ For a review of how the *Aeneid* associates Diomedes with Achilles rather than Odysseus, see, especially, 12 – 14 of the previous chapter.

Let the Ithacan tell about these things: Rhesus and unwarlike Dolon and Helenus, son of Priam, captured with the Palladium. Nothing was done in the light. Nothing was done without Diomedes.

While the character Ajax is merely giving a catalogue of what are, to him, trivial achievements, the poem is also saying explicitly that Diomedes worked often with Odysseus and that one of their exploits was taking the Palladium. This claim seems perfectly in line with the Diomedes tradition but contrary to the *Aeneid*'s frequent association of Diomedes with Achilles rather than Odysseus.⁸⁹

The traditional collaboration of Diomedes and Odysseus is emphasized again in Odysseus' speech, but Odysseus also makes a claim that does not agree with either the *Aeneid* or Diomedes tradition. First, at 13.239 – 242, Odysseus brags that Diomedes always chose him as a partner:

At sua Tydides mecum communicat acta,
me probat et socio semper confidit Ulixē.
Est aliquid, de tot Graiorum milibus unum
a Diomede legi...

But the son of Tydeus shares his deeds with me. He esteems me and always trusts Odysseus as his ally. It is something to be the one out of the thousands of Greeks chosen by Diomedes...

The plural of *acta* in 239 and the fact that Diomedes *semper* chooses him as an ally emphasize that they work together frequently. At 13.243 – 254, Odysseus confirms that they worked together during the *Doloneia*. Their partnership was not a one-off.

He goes on to make a claim, however, that contradicts the *Aeneid* and the Diomedes tradition on two of the only points they agreed upon. Odysseus claims that he killed both Dolon and Rhesus, but, according to the tradition and Virgil, Diomedes killed

⁸⁹ The passages from the *Aeneid* related to the Palladium are 2.162 – 170 and 2.195 – 200. See the discussion of associating Diomedes with Achilles in 12 – 14 of the previous chapter.

both of them.⁹⁰ This essentially inverts the *Aeneid*'s description of these events. That is, the *Aeneid* suggests that Odysseus and Diomedes did not frequently work together and that Diomedes killed Dolon and Rhesus, but the *Metamorphoses* suggests that Odysseus and Diomedes did frequently work together but Diomedes did not kill Dolon or Rhesus. Although this is not an example of Ovid following the tradition, it does continue to develop the poem's resistance to the idea that Diomedes was *fortissimus*. He accompanies Odysseus on a night mission but does not even do any killing.⁹¹ This would seem to diminish Diomedes' prestige even more.

While Odysseus' description of his own exploits must be understood in the context of his attempt to seem greater and thereby win the arms of Achilles, the Ovidian deflation of Diomedes' Trojan achievements in the Judgment of Arms scene is best explained as a response to Virgil's Diomedes. Diomedes' placement behind Ajax Telamon could be explained as following tradition, but having Odysseus kill Dolon and Rhesus seems to deliberately target Virgil's Diomedes. That is, Ovid could have made his Odysseus win the debate in any number of ways. He so arranged his version of this

⁹⁰ At 13.244 -245, Odysseus claims *Phrygia de gente Dolona / interimo*. "I put an end to Dolon of the Phrygian race." At 249 – 250, Odysseus says *petii tentoria Rhesi / inque suis ipsum castris comitesque peremi*. "I sought the tents of Rhesus and slew that man and his companions in their own camp." Hopkinson, *ad* 13.245, *Metamorphoses Book XIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), notes that Odysseus' account here does not agree with the Homeric account, but he offers no interpretation of these events.

⁹¹ There is, of course, always the very real possibility that Odysseus is lying here, but (*pace* Pindar) I find that hard to believe in this context. That is, Diomedes, an eye-witness, is in the audience. The Greek leaders would have already heard an account of this episode, presumably with Diomedes present, after the two returned from the night raid against Rhesus. If Odysseus' description of this episode did not match the description given in the original 'debriefing' then it seems likely that they would not have chosen to honor someone who had flagrantly lied to their faces. Ajax also would have been present at this debriefing. It is possible that Diomedes and Odysseus gave a false account of this story when they returned to the Greek camp, but I think that would require a lengthy explanation for which there would be no evidence. I also could not accept the argument that what Odysseus really means here is that Diomedes killed them but only was able to do so because Odysseus had been there. That is his claim later with both Achilles and Ajax (at 13.168 – 180 and 216 – 237, respectively), and he makes these arguments very explicitly.

debate, however, that these killings were not even necessary in Odysseus' claims to supremacy because his claims ultimately rested on his brains rather than his brawn.⁹² That is, his claim that he is valued because he is essentially a helmsman to the Greeks has nothing to do with the fact that he killed anyone. Ovid does not 'need' these kills to make the victory of his Odysseus convincing. It is hard to see what Odysseus even gained by killing Dolon, in particular, because he does not even attempt to deny Ajax' claim that Dolon was *imbellis*.⁹³ Ovid deviated from the part of the Diomedes tradition that had even made it past Virgil, and this for no apparent reason.⁹⁴ Such a drastic change, however, makes sense if Ovid had been interested in denying that Diomedes was some *fortissimus* Achilles figure. According to Ovid's version of the *Doloneia*, the picture of Diomedes in Carthage at *Aeneid* 1.469 – 473 should have portrayed Diomedes driving horses while Odysseus slew Thracians around him; Diomedes was the Iolaus to Odysseus' Hercules.

⁹² Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 13.366 – 369:
 quantoque ratem qui temperat, anteit
 remigis officium, quanto dux milite maior,
 tantum ego te supero; nec non in corpore nostro
 pectora sunt potiora manu: vigor omnis in illis.

As much as the one who steers the boat comes before the rower's station, as much as the leader is greater than the soldier, that is how superior I am to you. There is a spirit in our bodies more potent than the hand; all strength is in that spirit.

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 13.98.

⁹⁴ That is, apparently no one has seen a reason. Besides the comment in Hopkinson's commentary that I have already mentioned in n.16, I have only been able to find one, very brief discussion of this change: Sophia Papaioannou, *Redesigning Achilles "Recycling" the Epic Cycle in the "Little Iliad": (Ovid, Metamorphoses 12.1-13.622)*, (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2007): 187, n.408. While both Hopkinson and Papaioannou acknowledge that it happens, neither offers an interpretation. One could perhaps argue that Ovid's giving these achievements to Odysseus is just a reflection of the poet's preference for this particular hero. In *The Ulysses Theme*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1963):137 – 138, W.B. Stanford, for instance, that Ovid would have viewed Odysseus as something of a kindred spirit. I think Stanford may have been right, but even this very biographical approach is based on the idea that the man of words is greater than the man of action. That is, as the passage cited above in n.18 suggests, making Odysseus more a man of action and killer would not have made him greater if he was being valued precisely because he was a contrast to the heroes who only fought and killed.

The *Metamorphoses* makes a final reference to their frequent partnership at 13.350 – 351, when Odysseus tells Ajax to stop making motions toward Diomedes:

Desine Tydiden vultuque et murmure nobis
ostentare meum: pars est sua laudis in illo.

Stop pointing toward my Diomedes with your gestures and mumbling. He has his share of praise in this.

This deictic touch adds a sense of realism to the speech, but it also reinforces the frequent collaboration of Odysseus and Diomedes in the Diomedes tradition. They worked together so often that Ajax cannot even contain himself when Odysseus talks about his own accomplishments. The *Metamorphoses* takes a firm stand on the idea that Odysseus and Diomedes often worked together.

Ovid's Diomedes continues to be anti-Virgilian when he receives Venulus' embassy from the Latins. While Virgil's version of the Latins' embassy became almost a panegyric to Aeneas, Ovid's version does not discuss Aeneas' exploits in Troy. His reasons for refusing to fight and his apparent attitude toward both the Trojan War and his punishment from Venus differ sharply from the *Aeneid*'s version.⁹⁵ Diomedes is neither unwilling to fight Aeneas nor repentant for his actions against the Trojans.⁹⁶ Rather, he

⁹⁵ Even if Virgil did not invent this episode, its importance to the *Aeneid* would have forced the Ovidian reader to recall it while reading this section of the *Metamorphoses*. That is, as different as the two Diomedes may have acted, the inclusion of this episode would necessarily recall the Virgilian version.

⁹⁶ This passage is analyzed by both Hinds and Papaioannou at *Allusion and Intertextuality* (116 – 122) and *Epic Succession* (143 – 166), respectively. Both do not note some of the differences between the Ovidian and Virgilian Diomedes here. A difficulty common to both arguments is that they do not seem to take the Diomedes from *Metamorphoses* 12 and 13 into account. They match the Ovidian scene with the Virgilian one, but they do not match the character Diomedes with his appearances earlier in this poem. This is understandable because neither's primary focus is the character of Diomedes. He just forms part of each argument. As has been shown above, however, there have already been substantial changes from the Virgilian to the Ovidian Diomedes in *Metamorphoses* 12 and 13, so a reader should be more attuned to differences between the two in this scene. For both scholars, he is essentially the same character but telling a different story. On page 119, after noting a few verbal parallels, Hinds dismisses this scene as "the weakest of epigonal gestures towards the *Aeneid*, not a strong or dialogic encounter with it." Papaioannou disagrees with Hinds' assessment. On her page 149, however, she claims that "Ovid endorses Vergil's reading of Diomedes." That is, according to my reading of Virgil's Diomedes

appears to be the traditional hero who no longer has the means to keep acting in his traditional way. The embassy of the Latins is a very different scene in the *Metamorphoses*, and the Ovidian Diomedes does not use this occasion to extol the virtues of Aeneas.

As discussed in the previous chapter, de Grummond and others had felt that the Virgilian Diomedes response to Venulus had not been what one would expect from the Homeric Diomedes. The Ovidian version seems closer to what one would expect from the Homeric Diomedes because his reason for not fighting seems to just be a lack of his own troops⁹⁷:

vires Aetolius heros
excusat: nec se aut soceri committere pugnae
velle sui populos, aut quos e gente suorum
armet habere ullos

The Aetolian hero pleaded a lack of manpower as an excuse. He was neither willing to commit his father-in-law's people to battle nor had he anyone from his own people whom he might arm.⁹⁸

in the last chapter, she would have to be saying that the Ovidian Diomedes was greater than Achilles, rarely worked with Odysseus, may never have defeated Aeneas, and regretted his actions in the Trojan War. We have already seen that these first two claims do not agree with the Ovidian Diomedes, and it will be demonstrated that the second two do not either. Papaioannou's argument will be discussed in more detail shortly.

⁹⁷ It also seems possible that Ovid's use of *vires* rather than *viros* at 461 could be a very oblique reference to *Iliad* 9.31 – 49, where Diomedes tells Agamemnon that he would fight the Trojans even if he only had Sthenelus to help him. There may be some etymological play on Sthenelus' name here. The Greek σθένης, the root of Sthenelus' name, is similar to the Latin *vis*. Thus, Diomedes' lack of *vis* would also surreptitiously draw attention to his lack of Sthenelus and recall the aggressiveness of the Homeric Diomedes. Even without the etymological wordplay, readers aware of the Homeric Diomedes should wonder where his faithful companion was, and this should recall the passage from *Iliad* 9. As Myers points out, however, *ad* 14.461 – 462, the use of a lack of *vires* here also recalls the words of Evander at *Aeneid* 8:472 – 473: *nobis ad belli auxilium pro nomine tanto/ exiguae vires*. "Compared to the greatness of your name, we have a scant number of troops to aid you in war." I do not think these references, however, would be mutually exclusive. In fact, Diomedes' using Evander's excuse helps to sharpen the contrast between the Virgilian and Ovidian Diomedes. In the *Aeneid*, Evander is the 'good Greek' who understands that (proto-) Roman rule is best, and Diomedes appears to be that way as well in Virgil. The *Metamorphoses* sets up a different parallel. Because he is a Greek who would like to help the Latins more but cannot because of his lack of troops, he is more like an Evander for Turnus than an Evander for Aeneas. Put another way, the Latins could think of Diomedes as the 'good Greek' who would allegedly support the fight against the Trojans.

⁹⁸ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 14.461 – 465.

While Virgil's Diomedes had gushed with praise for Aeneas, Ovid's Diomedes *never even mentions him*. Thus, it is technically impossible to compare how each Diomedes felt about Aeneas, but this silence should speak volumes. He is not concerned about Aeneas at all. As Myers points out, Ovid's Diomedes only chooses not to fight Aeneas because Diomedes does not have any troops of his own.⁹⁹ The reader is not required to believe that Aeneas had been mightier than either Hector or Diomedes.

The reliability of both the Virgilian and Ovidian Diomedes' stories, however, get thrown into question by the Ovidian Diomedes' first words in direct speech to Venulus at 14.464.¹⁰⁰ Just as in the *Aeneid*, Venulus comes to Diomedes to ask for his help against Aeneas. As mentioned already, he says that he does not have any men of his own, and he provides evidence for this claim by narrating his story. Before recounting his history, however, Diomedes says: *neve haec commenta putetis*. "So that you do not think these things are lies..." He begins by assuring Venulus that he is not lying about a lack of troops. It is easy to see why someone who seems to have enough followers to found a city would need to explain how he does not have any men whom he could bring to the

⁹⁹ K. Sara Myers, *ad* 14.461 – 462, *Ovid: Metamorphoses Book XIV* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁰⁰ Drawing on Hardie's analysis of rhetorical twists in *Aeneid* 11 in "Fame and Defamation in the *Aeneid*: The Council of Latins," Papaioannou, on 162 of *Epic Succession*, points out that Ovid's letting Diomedes speak for himself in direct discourse gives the reader more direct access to Diomedes. That is, Ovid gives the reader the 'actual' speech as it occurred chronologically before the council of the Latins, but Virgil only reported it through Venulus in indirect discourse. To Papaioannou, Since the hero in the *Metamorphoses* emphasizes different events and substitutes the transformation of his comrades for ethics as his core theme, the audience is bound to question the credibility of Venulus' report in the *Aeneid*.

I agree that Ovid's presenting Diomedes' 'actual words' makes Ovid's version more compelling, but I do not think that there is enough evidence to suggest that Virgil's Venulus had significantly modified the message he had received. It is always possible, of course, but it is hard to see the character's logic in doing so. It just seems easier to assume that the two different Diomedes, being such different characters, tell different things. There is no need to shoot the messenger. For a response to Hardie's suggestion that Virgil's Diomedes is being dishonest, see the beginning of Elaine Fantham's "Fighting Words: Turnus at Bay in the Latin Council (*Aeneid* 11.234 – 446)," *The American Journal of Philology* 120, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 259 – 280. On page 260, for example, she claims that "despite his magnificent understand of epic, Hardie has no sympathy for rhetoric."

battle. An ironic effect of assuring someone that you are speaking the truth, however, is that it brings to their attention that you might be lying. Diomedes thus suggests to Venulus, and to the reader, that he might be lying.¹⁰¹ This encourages the reader to think critically about Diomedes' reasons for not fighting, and this, in turn, recalls the Virgilian version of this episode. In a sense, it sets up the two Diomedes as conflicting witnesses to the same events: the Trojan War and Diomedes' *nostos*. For the reader interested in connecting either epic to the Homeric 'facts' of the case, the Ovidian Diomedes' apparent lack of regard for Aeneas seems much more consistent than the Virgilian stranger who was described in the last chapter. Ovid's Diomedes suggests that he could have given a false reason for not fighting, but his story 'checked out' with the Diomedes tradition. Virgil's Diomedes, however, has no such corroboration. The Ovidian Diomedes' anxiety about being believed ends up suggesting that perhaps it is *only* the Virgilian one who was lying.

Ovid's Diomedes continues to seem more traditional than Virgil's in his description of the Trojan War and his *nostos*. That is, he does not appear to have 'had a change of heart' between his appearances in the *Iliad* and *Metamorphoses*. The Virgilian Diomedes describes his and the other Greeks' actions in the Trojan War essentially as war crimes:

Quicumque Iliacos ferro violavimus agros,
mitto ea, quae muris bellando exhausta sub altis,
quos Simois premat ille viros, infanda per orbem
supplicia et scelerum poenas expendimus omnes,

¹⁰¹ Myers, *ad* 14.463 – 464 points out that Ovid's characters are often anxious about being believed and then suggests that these lines "may be slyly drawing attention to his Virgilian source," but she does not develop this further. Following both points, it seems to me that the concern for truthfulness with the recollection of *Aeneid* 11 are connected in the argument I have set forth above.

And we who violated the Trojan fields with iron, I do not mention these things which were endured by fighting beneath the high walls: those men whom the Simois holds under, sufferings not to be spoken of, and we all have paid the penalty of our wicked deeds.¹⁰²

The Homeric Diomedes gave no impression that he felt he was doing anything wrong, so this change of heart would have had to occur between the events of the *Iliad* and the events of the *Aeneid*. As Myers points out, however, the Ovidian Diomedes shifts the blame for the Greeks later misfortunes onto Ajax Oileus' rape of Cassandra in the temple of Athena:

Postquam alta cremata est
Ilion et Danaas paverunt Pergama flammis,
Naryciusque heros, a virgine virgine rapta,
quam meruit poenam solus, digessit in omnes,

After lofty Troy was burned and the Danaans fed Pergamum to the flames, the hero from Naryx brought onto all of us the Virgin goddess' punishment which he alone deserved since he had raped one of her virgin priestesses.¹⁰³

His conscience seems as clear as his Homeric counterpart's would have been. In addition, the *omnes* at the end of line 469 seems like a direct response to (and inversion of) the *omnes* at the end of the line in *Aeneid* 11.259, and the contrast is very striking. In the Virgilian passage, it designated all of those who deserved punishment. In the Ovidian, it designated all those who did not deserve punishment. Diomedes' unrepentant attitude toward his past actions seems very consistent with how the traditional Diomedes would have acted.

Just as Diomedes blamed Ajax Oileus for the troubled returns of all the Greeks, he blames his own companion, Acmon, and not his wounding of Venus for the additional troubles he had recently received. He explains the crime of Acmon in his description of

¹⁰² Virgil, *Aeneid* 11.255 – 258.

¹⁰³ K. Sara Myers, *ad Metamorphoses* 14.466 – 469.

his *nostos* and the transformation of his companions into birds.¹⁰⁴ As in the *Aeneid*, the companions of Diomedes were changed into birds while he was still alive, but this time it is the fault of Acmon, who seems to have been Ovid's invention.¹⁰⁵ Although Venus had apparently decided to put an end to the wanderings of Diomedes, Acmon still defied Venus and dared her to punish them more. Venus did not approve: *Talibus iratam Venerem Pleuronius Acmon/ instimulat verbis stimulisque resuscitat iram*.¹⁰⁶ "With such words, Acmon of Pleuron goaded on the enraged Venus and he breathed new life into her anger with his agitations." Diomedes does not express any remorse in this passage for the wounding of Venus at Troy.

Given this lack of remorse, it seems fitting that the final image of Diomedes provided by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses* is his chasing down an Aeneas running for his life. This last Diomedes intertext in the *Metamorphoses* occurs at 15.799 – 806, and it associates Diomedes with the assassins of Caesar:

Non tamen insidias venturaque vincere fata
 praemonitus potuere deum, strictique feruntur
 in templum gladii; neque enim locus ullus in urbe
 ad facinus diramque placet nisi curia, caedem.
 Tum vero Cytherea manu percussit utraque
 pectus et Aeneaden molitur condere nube,
 qua prius infesto Paris est ereptus Atridae
 et Diomedeos Aeneas fugerat enses.

Nevertheless, the warnings of the gods were not able to overcome the plots and events fated to happen. Concealed swords are carried into the temple, for truly there was no other place in the city which seemed fit for this crime, the furious slaughter, except the *curia*. Then truly Venus struck her chest with each hand and

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 484 – 509.

¹⁰⁵ The bulk of Papaioannou's analysis on this scene is focused on Ovid's description of this transformation. She argues that their forms being like swans' but not quite swans' (*forma, requiris,/ ut non cygnorum, sic albis proxima cygnis*) was a programmatic passage for Ovid. That is, swans represent the singing of martial epic. These birds are close to swans just as the *Metamorphoses* was close to martial epic. It is a very interesting argument, and I do not think that there is any reason it cannot coexist with mine.

¹⁰⁶ Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 14.494 – 495.

tried to hide the descendant of Aeneas in a cloud, in which before Paris had been rescued from the hostile son of Atreus and Aeneas had fled the Diomedean blades.

As shown in the previous chapter, the *Aeneid* had refused to be clear about whether or not Diomedes had ever defeated Aeneas. This intertext makes it explicit that Aeneas needed to be rescued from Diomedes, and it forms a solid link with *Iliad* 5. For a poet writing under Augustus, this association with Caesar's assassins serves to reinforce the implied hostility of Diomedes in book 14 and its contrast with the passiveness of Diomedes in *Aeneid* 11. While Virgil's Diomedes had been a friend to the founding of Rome, Ovid's was always an enemy of Rome.

Conclusion

After a close reading, it becomes easier to see how his tale of Diomedes would have appeared very different from Virgil's. The extent of the changes from the Virgilian to Ovidian Diomedes should clear any charges against Ovid of merely imitating the *Aeneid*. Ovid's was the partner-in-crime of Odysseus and archenemy of Aeneas. He was not much of an Achilles figure.

Given the deviations from Virgil, it seems somewhat paradoxical that Ovid seemed to have followed the tradition more closely than Virgil. In the case of book 14 especially, he took his traditional Diomedes and placed him in the Virgilian landscape of the embassy of the Latins. He reacted to the embassy, however, much more the way one might expect the traditional Diomedes to have acted. This blending of Virgilian and traditional elements recalls the discussion of originality in the Introduction. Originality in ancient Greek and Roman literature did not necessarily mean the invention of completely new material. It often involved the reshaping of traditions that already existed by weaving innovative elements into otherwise traditional material. Ovid did not

demonstrate his independence from Virgil and mastery over the material by just inventing a new story for Diomedes. Rather, Ovid “corrected” Virgil by weaving Virgilian elements into his Diomedes story that otherwise closely resembled the Diomedes of the tradition.

As it has been said before, however, it is important to remember that Diomedes is just one of the many characters in the *Metamorphoses*, and his story was just one of the many equivalencies between the poems of Virgil and Ovid. Ovid’s use of Diomedes is not necessarily representative of his interaction with Virgil’s poetic corpus as a whole. Looking closely at their uses of Diomedes helps illuminate a particular intertextual battle between the two poets, and it follows that the more we understand about smaller engagements, the more it may help us to get a clearer picture of the whole struggle.

The end result of Ovid’s Diomedes was probably similar to that of Virgil’s. It is unlikely that Ovid was expecting his readers to throw away their copies of the *Aeneid* because of the differences in their portrayals of Diomedes. It seems possible, however, that there would have been readers who, after reading Virgil’s story of Diomedes, may have wished that Virgil had not changed quite so much. These theoretical readers may have appreciated the more Roman-friendly version, but it is certainly possible that they could have missed the “reck-nought” Diomedes of Homer, to use de Grummond’s term. While Ovid’s Diomedes does not bend the knee to Aeneas, Diomedes’ not having his own soldiers prevents him from being any kind of threat.¹⁰⁷ Like the Araxes river on Aeneas’ shield at *Aeneid* 8.728, he may seethe at Roman control, but there is no ambiguity about whether or not Diomedes can do anything about it. In this sense, Ovid’s

¹⁰⁷ Ovid could have deviated from Virgil even further by having his Diomedes agree to fight Aeneas, but I suspect that narrating this battle probably had very little appeal to Ovid. Fights without transformations are rare in the *Metamorphoses*.

Diomedes is as Roman-friendly as Virgil's, and it may have even seemed more realistic to some. In addition, those who wanted a Diomedes closer to the tradition's would have been more pleased with the *Metamorphoses*. When re-reading *Iliad* 5, for instance, they may have associated it more with Ovid's Diomedes than Virgil's. As Papaioannou points out, Ovid was an heir of Homer as well.¹⁰⁸ The *Metamorphoses* is not a moon of the *Aeneid*, orbiting a Homeric sun. Rather, it would be closer to say that the *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses* are like two binary stars, circling and pulling at the same point. In an isolated case like this, the reader may have seen the link between Ovid and Homer and even bypassed Virgil altogether.

¹⁰⁸ Sophia Papaioannou, *Redesigning Achilles "Recycling" the Epic Cycle in the "Little Iliad": (Ovid, Metamorphoses 12.1-13.622)*, (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2007): 7.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

This thesis has demonstrated how the *Aeneid* and *Metamorphoses* used the Diomedes-tradition, and it has speculated about the effects these changes may have had on each poem's readers. It can help contribute to a better understanding of Latin literature overall, however, by its emphasis on a text's use of a mythological tradition as an area of poetic competition. Horace's advice was to *aut famam sequere aut sibi convenientia finge / scriptor*. "Either follow tradition or craft things self-consistent, writer."¹⁰⁹ Quintilian later, however, would also say *turpe etiam illud est, contentum esse id consequi quod imiteris*. "That thing is even base, to be content to follow the thing which you imitated."¹¹⁰ Poets had a choice whether or not to follow the version of a myth found in one of their predecessors, and there is a story suggested by each change. This thesis has limited itself to examining just one myth and two texts in detail. It is hardly even the whole story about the Diomedes-tradition. It could easily be expanded to include visual arts, like pottery and statuary. Even in just written texts, the Diomedes-tradition could be traced much further in time, going beyond Dante and Chaucer, at least as far as Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. Glancing at a few brief examples of the Diomedes-tradition in later literature will demonstrate the possibilities that studies like this thesis could generate.

¹⁰⁹ Horace, *Ars Poetica*, 119.

¹¹⁰ Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 10.2.7.

First, the tradition of Diomedes could be examined as it appears in more Latin epics. In Silius Italicus' *Punica*, for example, he is mentioned eight times, and two references, in particular, are of interest: 13.30 – 81 and 16.369 – 371. 13.30 – 81 is too long to quote in full here, but it can be quickly summarized. It is a story of the Palladium allegedly passed down from Diomedes himself through the generations to his descendant, Dasius, the one telling the story in this passage. It details how the two Greeks stole the Palladium and then how Diomedes later returned it to Aeneas. 16.369 – 371 is a description of the horse Caucasus, who allegedly was descended from the horses which Diomedes stole from Aeneas.

exceptum Troiana ab origine equorum
 tradebant, quos Aeneae Simoentos ad undas
 victor Tydides magnis abduxerat ausis

They say that he was descended from the Trojan race of horses of Aeneas which the son of Tydeus, as victor, took by great daring at the waves of the Simoeis. Although the *Punica*'s proclivity toward the Virgilian style is well-known, someone who has read this thesis can easily see that neither of these references conforms to the Virgilian Diomedes. The *Aeneid* suggested that Diomedes never took the Palladium, and it suggested that Diomedes never took the horses of Aeneas. The *Punica*'s Diomedes, at least, does not have a Virgilian past. It would seem that the *Punica*'s use of Diomedes is a previously unnoticed way that it competes with the *Aeneid*.

Second, a glance at the Diomedes-tradition in much later literature can show the use of this mythological tradition could be an area of poetic competition. It has already been pointed out that Diomedes appears next to Odysseus in the *The Divine Comedy*. While Musa's aforementioned "Virgil's Ulysses and Ulysses' Diomedes" had some very interesting insights into Dante's description of Odysseus and Diomedes in the underworld, a more thorough understanding of the Diomedes-tradition will make the

reader pause and wonder why Diomedes and Odysseus are there together.¹¹¹ If Dante is supposed to be literally following Virgil around, then why does his Diomedes not follow the Virgilian Diomedes, who was rarely associated with Odysseus? Dante mentions the Trojan Horse here, but Virgil's Diomedes was not in the Trojan Horse. With respect to Diomedes, it seems that Dante's Virgil has not read Virgil.

The above are just two examples of how this thesis could be the beginning of a much larger story about mythology and poetic competition, and it has still only dealt with one mythical tradition. There are, of course, so many myths that have been inherited from the ancient world. Diomedes is just one example, and not even the most well-known or popular today. He was not even a character in Wolfgang Petersen's *Troy*, a 2004 adaptation of the Trojan War story. There are other characters and myths, however, which continue to capture the imaginations of readers and viewers, in the case of movies.

In fact, the modern reception of mythology seems like the best place to conclude this thesis. It is no secret that more students are likely to take a mythology class than a Latin or Greek class. Mythology is often the gateway for students into the classical world. There are countless ways to teach mythology, and pointing students to modern adaptations of ancient myths can be a great way to engage them with this material. Studies like this thesis that focus on how certain works of literature have used certain myths can be yet another way for students to approach classical literature and mythology. This look at the Diomedes-tradition may only end up being a prototype for an informative way to look at these texts and myths, but it seems possible that studies like this could

¹¹¹ Dante Alighieri, *Inferno* XXVI, 90 – 142. The article is Mark Musa, "Virgil's Ulysses and Ulysses' Diomedes," *Dante Studies* 96 (1978): 187 - 194.

increase our knowledge of the texts and even possibly help us engage with the wider audience that is interested in learning more about classical mythology.

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