As observed at the end of Chapter 4, focus in the *Posthomerica* gradually shifts towards the Sack of Troy after Neoptolemus’ first performances, especially after Philoctetes’ arrival (Book 9) and Paris’ death (Book 10). A final battle in Book 11, the closest thing to a ‘battle book’ in the epic, has as its most obvious goal to break through or defend the city walls, certainly from Q.S. 11.330 onwards, as the final *teichomachia* starts. Odysseus comes up with a clever turtle formation, which is, however, broken by a constant rain of stones and missiles, courtesy of Aeneas (Q.S. 11.358–414). This failed attempt to destroy the gates with axes is followed by Alcimedon’s equally vain effort to climb the walls (Q.S. 11.447–473). At the end of the day, the city’s enclosure has definitively proved to be impregnable by force. Although the fighting carries on for a while, with many heroes sharing the spotlight, the final half verse of the book fatalistically concludes: πόνος δ᾽ ἀπρῆκτος ὀρώρει (Q.S. 11.501). “All their work was useless”. The conclusion to Book 11 marks the end of several years of open battle around Troy and creates an onset for Calchas to build upon as he opens the debate about the future in *Posthomerica* 12. Even if Book 11 has never been the most popular book in Quintus research, it has thus sown vital seeds to make the

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1 “My Hero”—Foo Fighters.
2 Triphiodorus starts his epyllion with a similarly fatalistic onset: “And still all Ilios stood, by reason of her god-built towers, established upon unshaken foundations, and at the tedious delay the people of the Achaeans chaed. And now Athena, unwearying though she be, would have shrunk from her latest labour and all her sweat had been in vain (…)” (*Sack of Ilion* 40–44). In Triphiodorus, the turning point is caused by Helenus’ prophecy (for the contrast between Helenus and Calchas in Triphiodorus, see Miguélez-Cavero 2013, 203). For my treatment of Triphiodorus in this and the next chapter, see the excursus to section 5.2, and section 5.3.2.
3 With its primary focus on battle, it is hard to grasp the central theme—if there is any other than just ‘open battle’—of the book. Vian entitles it “les exploits d’Énée” (1969 13, 37), James more generally “the Defense of Troy” (2004, 176). Gärtner considers it part of “die Eroberung
transition to the ruse of the Trojan Horse acceptable. For example, in a book that is, according to Vian, largely inspired by Iliadic battles, the unheroic tactic of the turtle formation may seem somewhat out of place. 4 However, the image of an Achaean construction, invented by Odysseus to covertly approach the Trojan walls and breach its invincible protection, may sound familiar in the light of what is to follow. Failing because it mainly relies on force and is averted by the same, the turtle formation is one more example of how normal battle does not work. The Trojan Horse will form a more successful counterpart, using ruse to successfully conquer the walls that the turtle formation could not break. Thus, it forms the perfect transition to Book 12 (Nastasi in Lelli ed. 2013, 833), at the beginning of which the Achaeans reach the same fatalistic conclusion, and decide to act:

'Αλλ᾽ ὅτε δὴ μάλα πολλὰ κάμον περὶ τείχεα Τροίης
αἰχμηταὶ Δαναοί, πολέμου δ᾽ οὐ γίνετο τέκμωρ,
δὴ τότ᾽ ἀριστήων ἄγυριν ποιήσατο Κάλχας
Q.S. 12.1–3

Despite their endless efforts round the walls of Troy
The Danaan spearmen failed to achieve their goal in the war
So then a meeting of the leaders was called by Calchas.

The opening verses of Posthomerica 12 immediately indicate what this book will be about. As has been feared throughout many failed attempts and made explicit in the final verses of the previous book, open battle will not sack Troy. More specifically, it will not achieve the πολέμου τέκμωρ. Τέκμωρ, always in the same expression combined with πολέμου, is found only four times in Quintus’ epic, and only once before Book 12: Agamemnon complains that after Achilles’ death, they will never achieve their goal (“οὐ γὰρ ὀίω | εὑρέμεναι πολέμοιο τέκμωρ