

THE MURDER OF PRIAM IN A TRAGEDY BY PACUVIUS*

It is well known that Servius' commentary on the *Aeneid* offers some useful (but not always perspicuous and unambiguous) evidence about Roman tragedy,¹ especially as it is not unusual for Virgil to imitate scenes, phrases or combinations of words from this source.² Indeed more than fifty fragments from Ennius are quoted by Servius and as many by 'Seruius auctus',³ while eight fragments from Pacuvius are reported by the former and ten by the latter.⁴ With Pacuvius, the plot of the *Pentheus*, for example, is given summarily by Servius on *Aen.* 4.469;⁵ the existence of a tragedy entitled *Orestes* has been inferred on the grounds of Servius on *Aen.* 4.473.⁶ This study will discuss the attribution of Servius' evidence about Priam's death to an unspecified tragedy by Pacuvius, beginning with a passage from the *Aeneid*.

In *Aen.* 2.506–58 Aeneas relates the murder of Priam by Neoptolemus.⁷ The old king, seeing the Achaeans invading Troy, puts on his armour, despite his old age, and sets out to confront the enemy army, but his wife Hecuba holds him back in the sanctuary of the royal palace (a roofless sanctuary, described as the *compluium* of a Roman *domus*), where she and her daughters have sought shelter (lines 506–25). There Neoptolemus murders Priam, after killing his son Polites before his very eyes: as the boy falls dead at his feet, the old king hurls his spear at the enemy warrior in a vain effort to avenge the murder of his son. But Priam's cast is too weak to be effective: it is no more than a pathetic gesture of defiance (lines 526–46). Neoptolemus replies ironically to Priam's speech (to which we will return), drags him to the altar and slaughters him (lines 547–53). Then the poet

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¹ Cf. R.B. Lloyd, 'Republican authors in Servius and the *Scholia Danielis*', *HSPH* 65 (1961), 291–341, esp. 294–302; M. Wigodsky, *Virgil and Early Latin Poetry* (Wiesbaden, 1972), 76–97.

² See S. Stabryła, *Latin Tragedy in Virgil's Poetry* (Wrocław, Warsaw and Cracow, 1970), 51–72, 91–103, 119–23; Wigodsky (n. 1), 76–97. For a reassessment of Greek and Roman tragedy in the *Aeneid* (with reference to Pacuvius and further bibliography) see P. Hardie, 'Virgil and tragedy', in C. Martindale (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Virgil* (Cambridge, 1997), 312–26.

³ See I. Vahlen, *Ennianae poesis reliquiae* (Leipzig, 1928²), ciii–cxi and *passim*; H.D. Jocelyn, *The Tragedies of Ennius* (Cambridge, 1969), *passim*.

⁴ Accius' fragments are almost absent from Servius' commentary (with one exception), while at least thirteen are quoted by 'Seruius auctus'. Cf. among others G. Scafolgio, 'Tragica. Accio, vv. 651–652 Ribbeck–Klotz = 702–703 Dangel *ex incertis fabulis*', *MD* 63 (2009), 91–105.

⁵ See F. Leo, *De tragoedia Romana* (Göttingen, 1910), 17; H. Haffter, 'Zum Pentheus des Pacuvius', *WS* 79 (1966), 290–3; G. D'Anna, *M. Pacuvi fragmenta* (Rome, 1967), 135–8.

⁶ Cf. G. D'Anna, 'L'edizione di un autore frammentario: Pacuvio. Problemi particolari', in E. Flores (ed.), *La critica testuale greco-latina, oggi. Metodi e problemi*, Atti del convegno internazionale (Rome, 1981), 223–40, esp. 226–8.

⁷ Cf. R.G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos liber secundus* (Oxford, 1964), 206–15; N. Horsfall, *Virgil, Aeneid 2. A Commentary* (Leiden and Boston, 2008), 389–423.

adds some lines as an epilogue, a lament for Priam's death or an epitaph (lines 554–8):

haec finis Priami fatorum, hic exitus illum
 sorte tulit Troiam incensam et prolapsa uidentem
 Pergama, tot quondam populis terrisque superbum
 regnatorem Asiae. iacet ingens litore truncus,
 aulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus.⁸

Here Virgil seems to follow another mythological version on the death of Priam: his headless corpse is abandoned on the Trojan shore, as if he was murdered and beheaded there, maybe as a sacrifice on Achilles' tomb.⁹ It is likely that Virgil had in mind the death of Pompey, as Servius on *Aen.* 2.557 says: *Pompei tangit historiam*.¹⁰ In my opinion, however, this reference holds only a secondary, marginal meaning in the episode, which should be evaluated independently from any historic allegory.

Virgil appears to combine, in his own way,¹¹ two versions of Priam's death, the one set at the altar, in the sanctuary of the royal palace, the other on the shore, where he is killed and beheaded as a human sacrifice on Achilles' tomb.¹² Servius on *Aen.* 2.506 comments:

de morte autem Priami uarie lectum est. Alii dicunt quod a Pyrrho in domo quidem sua captus est, sed ad tumulum Achillis tractus occisusque est iuxta Sigeum promunturium: nam in Rhoeteo Ajax sepultus est: tunc eius caput conto fixum circumtulit. alii uero quod iuxta Hercei Iouis aram extinctus sit dicunt [...] et hanc opinionem plene Vergilius sequitur: licet etiam illam praelibet, ut suo indicabimus loco.¹³

Servius seems to know both versions and talks about them as if they were both familiar to ancient authors as well as to the readers; but no source earlier than the *Aeneid* testifies to the story of the beheading of Priam on the Trojan shore.

⁸ R. Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik* (Leipzig and Berlin, 1915³), 39–41, feels that the lines could be dispensed with, though he concedes that they are a part of poetic convention. *Contra*, Austin (n. 7), 213: 'Virgil has visualized the end of an epoch in world history, and has written a colophon'; moreover 'the lines point the climax of the Sack of Troy as Virgil conceived it, and they give a respite to the direct narrative at a moment of unbearable tension'.

⁹ On the different accounts of Priam's death: J. Neils, *LIMC* 7.1.507–22; W.F. Jackson Knight, *Vergil's Troy* (Oxford, 1932), 95–7; F. Caviglia, 'Priamo', *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*, vol. 4 (Rome, 1988), 264–8; note especially M.J. Anderson, *The Fall of Troy in Early Greek Poetry and Art* (Oxford, 1997), 28–48.

¹⁰ Cf. E. Narducci, 'Il tronco di Pompeo (Troia e Roma nella *Pharsalia*)', *Maia* 25 (1973), 317–25; id., *La provvidenza crudele. Lucano e la distruzione dei miti augustei* (Pisa, 1979), 43–8; D.H. Mills, 'Vergil's tragic vision: the death of Priam', *CW* 72 (1978), 159–66; F.R. Berno, 'Un *truncus*, molti re. Priamo, Agamennone, Pompeo (Virgilio, Seneca, Lucano)', *Maia* 56 (2004), 81–7. On the relation between Virgil's account of Priam's death and historic events: A.M. Bowie, 'The death of Priam: allegory and history in the *Aeneid*', *CQ* 40 (1990), 470–81.

¹¹ Something very similar seems to happen e.g. at *Aen.* 1.382 (*matre dea monstrante uiam*) and 2.632 (*ducente deo*): cf. G. Scafoglio, '*Ducente deo*. Una nota ad *Aen.* II, 632', *Latomus* 64 (2005), 631–40; id., *Noctes Vergilianae. Ricerche di filologia e critica letteraria sull'Eneide* (Hildesheim and New York, 2011), 127 n. 238.

¹² On Priam's death as human sacrifice: P. Heuzé, *L'image du corps dans l'oeuvre de Virgile* (Rome, 1985), 142–51. *Contra*, Horsfall (n. 7), 390: 'human sacrifice correctly understood does not resemble, significantly or helpfully, what happens here.'

¹³ For Servius' text here and *infra* I follow the Harvard edition by E.K. Rand et al., vol. 2 (Lancaster, PA, 1946); cf. also the edition by G. Thilo and H. Hagen, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1881).

The oldest evidence on the subject can be found in the surviving fragments of the Greek epic cycle and in the summaries of Proclus.¹⁴ Arctinus reported that Priam was killed at the altar of Zeus Herceius; Lesches on the other hand said that he was dragged from the altar and killed at his own door: in both poets he died in the royal palace.¹⁵ Euripides follows Arctinus,¹⁶ and so does Virgil, but the latter is alone in placing the death of Priam at the climax of the sack of Troy.¹⁷ Moreover, in the epilogue of the episode he adds the detail of the beheaded corpse abandoned on the shore. This detail can be found also in Manilius' poem and in Seneca's tragedy;¹⁸ both authors are likely to have followed Virgil.

The decapitation of Priam on the shore, however, is not Virgil's invention. Servius himself on *Aen.* 2.557 refutes an elaborate and implausible explanation given by Donatus about the word *litus* and invokes an unspecified tragedy by Pacuvius:

IACET INGENS LITORE TRVNCVS: quod autem dicit 'litore', illud ut supra diximus [sc. on *Aen.* 2.506] respicit, quod in Pacuuii tragoedia continetur. quod autem Donatus dicit, 'litus' locum esse ante aras, a litando dictum, ratione caret: nam a litando 'li' brevis est, et stare non potest uersus.

Servius does not draw this evidence from the best of his sources, i.e. Donatus; but his statement can still be considered reliable. If Virgil himself had created that innovative version of the legend, he would not have introduced it with such a brief and allusive reference, which presupposes a literary model where the story was developed broadly. This was Pacuvius' tragedy. But which tragedy?

Otto Ribbeck printed Servius' items among Pacuvius' fragments *incertae sedis*, but he conjectured it belonged to the *Iliona*, where a messenger reported the sack of Troy.¹⁹ The plot of this tragedy was set after the fall of the city: after the conquest of Troy the Achaeans sent a messenger to Polymestor to induce him to kill Priam's son Polydorus (but he killed his own son Deiphilus instead by mistake, because of his wife's deceit).²⁰ According to Ribbeck, the messenger himself 'schilderte unter

¹⁴ Cf. A. Bernabé, *Poetarum epicorum Graecorum testimonia et fragmenta*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, 1987), 71–92; M. Davies, *Epicorum Graecorum fragmenta* (Göttingen, 1988), 49–66; id., *The Greek Epic Cycle* (Bristol, 1989), 60–76; M. West, *Greek Epic Fragments* (London and Cambridge, MA, 2003), 118–52.

¹⁵ On Arctinus' account: Proclus, *Chrest.* 257–8, ed. Severyns (Paris, 1963), 92. For Lesches, cf. Pausanias 10.27.2 = fr. 16 (II) ed. Bernabé (n. 14), 80 = fr. 17 ed. Davies (n. 14), 58.

¹⁶ Cf. Hecuba's words in Euripides, *Tro.* 481–483: καὶ τὸν φυτοουργὸν Πριάμον οὐκ ἄλλων πάρα | κλύουσ' ἔκλαυσα, τοῖσδε δ' εἶδον ὄμμασιν | αὐτὴ κατασφαγέντ' ἐφ' ἑρκείῳ πυρᾷ.

¹⁷ Not least because the death of Priam is, in a very sense, the death of Troy: Horsfall (n. 7), 389 and 420. Cf. Austin (n. 7), 196–7; G.W. Williams, *Technique and Ideas in the Aeneid* (New Haven, 1983), 249–50.

¹⁸ Cf. Manilius, 4.64, *Priamumque in litore truncum*; Sen. *Hec.* 54–6, *ille tot regum parens | caret sepulcro Priamus et flamma indiget | ardente Troia*; note esp. 139–41, *postrema pater funera cludis | magnoque Ioui uictima caesus* | *Sigea premis litora truncus* and cf. in particular *Aen.* 2.57, *iacet ingens litore truncus*.

¹⁹ Cf. O. Ribbeck, *Die Römische Tragödie im Zeitalter der Republik* (Leipzig, 1875), 237–8; id., *Scaenicae Romanorum Poesis Fragmenta*, vol. 1, *Tragicorum Romanorum fragmenta*, (Leipzig, 1897³), 149–50.

²⁰ On this play cf. Ribbeck, *Die Römische Tragödie* (n. 19), 232–9; E.H. Warmington, *Remains of Old Latin*, vol. 2 (London and Cambridge MA, 1967²), 236–49; D'Anna (n. 5), 109–15; G. Manuwald, 'Pacuvius' *Iliona*. Eine römische Version des Polydorus-Mythos', in ead. (ed.), *Identität und Alterität in der frühromischen Tragödie* (Würzburg, 2000), 301–14; P. Schierl,

Anderem, wie der grimme Pyrrus den Priamus im eigenen Hause ergriffen, aber zum Grabhügel des Achill am Sigeischen Vorgebirge geschleppt und dort getötet, dann das Haupt des Erschlagenen auf einer Stange befestigt umhergetragen habe'.²¹

Alfred Klotz put Servius' two items among Pacuvius' fragments *ex incertis fabulis* without comment.²² Both passages were printed as 'unassigned fragments' by Eric Warmington, who also hypothesized that they come from the *Iliona*, or possibly from the *Hermiona*: in this play Neoptolemus bragged about his military exploits in the Trojan War.²³ Nevertheless, Giovanni D'Anna excluded the latter hypothesis and assigned Servius' items (but 'forse', with some doubts) to the *Iliona*.²⁴

Gesine Manuwald has recently taken into account the attribution of Servius' items to the *Hermiona*, but hastily and without any explanation.²⁵ Indeed, according to the latest editor of Pacuvius' fragments, Petra Schierl, 'die Testimonien zu Priamos' Ermordung sind vielleicht der *Iliona* zuzuordnen, da für die Handlung dieses Stückes der Untergang Trojas von zentraler Bedeutung ist'.²⁶ Finally, in her Catalan edition of Pacuvius' tragedy, Esther Artigas proposed to refer both items to the *Teucer*, in particular to a retrospective narration of the conquest of Troy.²⁷ There is thus no self-evident proof nor any decisive argument for the attribution of Servius' evidence to the *Iliona* (or to any other play of Pacuvius). In what follows, I propose to connect these passages with the *Hermiona*.²⁸

The models followed by Pacuvius in this tragedy were the *Andromache* of Euripides²⁹ and (maybe chiefly) the lost *Hermione* of Sophocles,³⁰ but the Latin poet might also have imitated a post-classical or Hellenistic play like the *Andromache* of Antiphon.³¹ Hyginus' *Fable* 123, as scholars commonly believe, contains a fairly accurate summary of the plot of Pacuvius' tragedy:

Neoptolemus Achillis et Deidamiae filius ex Andromacha Eetionis filia captiva procreavit Amphialum. sed postquam audiuit Hermionen sponsam suam Oresti esse datam in coniugium, Lacedaemonem uenit et a Menelao sponsam suam petit. cui ille fidem suam infirmare noluit, Hermionenque ab Oreste abduxit et Neoptolemo dedit. Orestes iniuria accepta

Die Tragödien des Pacuvius. Ein Kommentar zu den Fragmenten (Berlin and New York, 2006), 312–41; E. Artigas, *Marc Pacuvi: Tragédies. Fragments* (Barcelona, 2009), 142–7.

²¹ Ribbeck, *Die Römische Tragödie* (n. 19), 237.

²² Cf. A. Klotz, *Scaeniorum Romanorum fragmenta*, vol. 1, *Tragicorum fragmenta* (Munich, 1953), 181.

²³ Cf. Warmington (n. 20), 306–9.

²⁴ Cf. D'Anna (n. 5), 110 and 174.

²⁵ Cf. G. Manuwald, *Pacuvius. Summus tragicus poeta. Zum dramatischen Profil seiner Tragödien* (Munich and Leipzig, 2003), 31 n. 7.

²⁶ Cf. Schierl (n. 20), 529–30.

²⁷ Cf. Artigas (n. 20), 221.

²⁸ On this play: Ribbeck, *Die Römische Tragödie* (n. 19), 261–301; Warmington (n. 20), 224–35; D'Anna (n. 5), 97–107; Schierl (n. 20), 280–311; Artigas (n. 20), 131–41.

²⁹ Cf. W. Allan, *The Andromache and Euripidean Tragedy* (Oxford, 2000), 4–39 and *passim*; G. Scafoglio, *L'Asyanax di Accio. Saggio sul background mitografico, testo critico e commento dei frammenti*. Collection Latomus, vol. 295 (Brussels, 2006), 36–8.

³⁰ Cf. Eustath. *Hom. Od.* 1479.10; F.G. Welcker, *Die griechischen Tragödien mit Rücksicht auf den epischen Zyklus geordnet*, vol. 1 (Bonn, 1839), 220–1; A.C. Pearson, *The Fragments of Sophocles* (Cambridge, 1917), 141–2.

³¹ On this mysterious lost play, see Scafoglio (n. 29), 45–7.

Neoptolemus Delphis sacrificantem occidit et Hermionen recuperavit; cuius ossa per fines Ambraciae sparsa sunt, quae est in Epiri regionibus.³²

The murder of Neoptolemus was perpetrated by Orestes in the Delphian temple of Apollo, close to the altar (*Delphis sacrificantem*), with the help of the god himself.³³ The murder was probably reported in a messenger's speech (as in the *Andromache* of Euripides)³⁴ because it could not be represented on the stage. I would suggest that this speech may have contained a reference to the murder of Priam, which according to the mythological tradition had been perpetrated by Neoptolemus previously (on the night of the fall of Troy) in a somewhat similar way, i.e. close to an altar.

This is what Virgil narrates at *Aen.* 2.506–58; but Pacuvius' messenger told a different story, the murder of Priam being committed on the Trojan shore, as a human sacrifice in honour of Achilles, enacted next to his tomb but close to an altar, as required by the ritual of sacrifice.³⁵ The messenger, while recounting the killing of Neoptolemus by Orestes, is thus likely to have made a reference to the murder of Priam by Neoptolemus himself, comparing the latter event with the former, or rather interpreting the former as a consequence of the latter (as a kind of divine vengeance).³⁶ This seems to me to be suggested by Virgil in his own account of the death of Priam, precisely in the last words of the old king (lines 535–9):

‘at tibi pro scelere’, exclamat, ‘pro talibus ausis
di, si qua est caelo pietas quae talia curet,
persoluant grates dignas et praemia reddant
debita, qui nati coram me cernere letum
fecisti et patrios foedasti funere uultus’.

Priam invokes the divine justice (*si qua est caelo pietas quae talia curet*) and cries for vengeance on the impious murderer of his son (*di ... persoluant grates dignas* etc.). Some time later, the killing of the king and Polites is remembered by Aeneas talking to his father Anchises with these words (lines 662–3):

iamque aderit multo Priami de sanguine Pyrrhus,
natum ante ora patris, patrem qui obruncat ad aras.

It is revealing that when Aeneas meets Andromache in Epirus, near the little Troy founded by Helenus and other Trojan survivors at Buthrotum, she will relate the murder of Neoptolemus by Orestes in this way (*Aen.* 3.330–2):

ast illum ereptae magno flammatus amore
coniugis et scelerum furiis agitatus Orestes
excipit incautum patriasque obruncat ad aras.

³² Cf. H.I. Rose, *Hygini fabulae* (Leiden, 1933), 88.

³³ This was the revenge of Apollo against him for denouncing the god as the murderer of his father. The role of Apollo in the murder of Neoptolemus is well attested in Euripides, *Andromache*, 1147–9 and especially 1161–5.

³⁴ Cf. Eur. *Andr.* 1085–165.

³⁵ Cf. the sacrifice of Polyxena on Achilles' tomb, as described in Eur. *Hec.* 518–82.

³⁶ The messenger should be an attendant of Neoptolemus, who had previously witnessed the killing of Priam by his master.

It is quite clear that the *scelerum furiiis agitatus Orestes* is a tragic character (just like the *Agamemnonius scaenis agitatus Orestes* who will be mentioned later in the famous simile evoking tragic drama at *Aen.* 4.471–3).³⁷ Neoptolemus, who killed Priam close to the altar (*patrem qui obtruncat ad aras*, as Aeneas says at *Aen.* 2.663), dies in a similar way, his murder being described by the same words: *obtruncat ad aras* (3.332). So Virgil wants to show that (at least sometimes) there is a divine justice, a delayed but appropriate punishment for the impious offender.³⁸ Maybe he has in mind Pacuvius' tragedy, the *Hermiona*, where a messenger narrated Neoptolemus' death recalling the murder of Priam, the one being in some way the consequence of the other. Maybe the messenger introduced the hint to the old king with these words, which scholars publish commonly among Pacuvius' fragments *incertae sedis* (294 Schierl = 10 Warmington = 391 Ribbeck–Klotz):

Priamus si adesset, ipse eius commiserescet.³⁹

Virgil knows the tragedy, whatever it was, to which this fragment belonged, because he seems to imitate that point (as Servius ad loc. testifies) by calling the Achaeans *Priamo miseranda manus*, with reference to their unlucky return journey from Troy (*Aen.* 11.259).⁴⁰ This fragment is believed to come from the *Teucer*, where there was a messenger's tale about the shipwreck of the Greeks; but, in this case too, there is no self-evident proof, no decisive argument.⁴¹ The only sure inference is that it referred to the cruel destiny of many Achaeans after the conquest of Troy (as in the imitation by Virgil just mentioned).⁴² This point seems the exact opposite (like a mirror image) of Aeneas' famous words at the beginning of his tale about the fall of Troy and the past pains of his people (*Aen.* 2.3–8):

Infandum, regina, iubes renouare dolorem,
Troianas ut opes et lamentabile regnum
eruerint Danaï, quaeque ipse miserrima uidi
et quorum pars magna fui. quis talia fando
Myrmidonum Dolopumue aut duri miles Vlxi
temperet a lacrimis?

³⁷ Cf. Servius on *Aen.* 4.471 and (mainly) 473; R.A. Hornsby, *Patterns of Action in the Aeneid. An Interpretation of Virgil's Epic Similes* (Iowa City, 1970), 94–5; A. Wlosok, 'Virgils Didotragödie. Ein Beitrag zum Problem des Tragischen in der Aeneis', in H. Görgemanns and E.A. Schmidt (edd.), *Studien zum antiken Epos* (Meisenheim am Glan, 1976), 228–50 = ead., *Res humanae – res divinae. Kleine Schriften*, ed. E. Heck and E.A. Schmidt (Heidelberg, 1990), 320–43, in particular 337–8; F. Stok, 'Didone fra Penteo e Oreste', in *Iucundi acti labores. Estudios en homenaje a Dulce Estefanía Álvarez* (Santiago de Compostela, 2004), 427–34.

³⁸ The death of Neoptolemus is interpreted as divine vengeance for his murder of Priam already in Greek literature, from Pind. *Pae.* 6.112–17 Snell onwards: cf. Paus. 4.17.4. On the problem of divine justice in the *Aeneid*, cf., among others, J.E.G. Zetzel, 'Romane memento: justice and judgement in *Aeneid* 6', *TAPhA* 119 (1989), 263–84; A. La Penna, *L'impossibile giustificazione della storia. Un'interpretazione di Virgilio* (Rome and Bari, 2005), 283–320.

³⁹ The fragment is quoted by Servius on *Aen.* 11.259 (*est autem Pacuuii qui ait ...*).

⁴⁰ The speaker is Diomedes, who gives a negative response to the embassy of Venulus sent by the Latins to seek military aid: he talks about himself and the other Achaeans coming back from Troy, *quicumque Iliacos ferro uiolauimus agros* (255), as victims of divine vengeance. Cf. K.W. Gransden, *Virgil, Aeneid, Book XI* (Cambridge, 1991), 91–8.

⁴¹ Cf. Warmington (n. 20), 308–9; Schierl (n. 20), 561; Artigas (n. 20), 221–2. D'Anna (n. 5), 102 and 106 is alone in attributing the fragment to the *Hermiona*, 'sia pur con qualche dubbio'.

⁴² This is already in Greek literature, from Homer's *Odyssey* onwards: cf. especially the prologue of Euripides' *Troades*, where Poseidon and Athena agree to destroy the Achaean fleet.

Here *Myrmidones* and *Dolopes* represent a metonym for their king Achilles, the strongest of the Achaeans; the most cunning and insidious among them, Ulysses, is named as well. Pacuvius' fragment expresses almost the same point from the opposite perspective, suggesting that the Trojans should feel pity for the sufferings of the Achaeans. But why is the name of Priam himself mentioned in Pacuvius? In my opinion the fragment comes from the speech of the messenger who narrated the killing of Neoptolemus by Orestes in the *Hermiona*: he lamented his cruel death and mentioned Priam as a hyperbole, because the old king had been murdered by Neoptolemus in a similar way, and still would have felt pity for fate of his killer. The spectator, hearing the name of Priam, would have remembered his death and have compared it with Neoptolemus' end, making a connection of cause and effect *sub specie dei* between the two murders, both being committed close to an altar, as a kind of human sacrifice.

Therefore, in the light of Virgil's imitation, Servius' comments (on *Aen.* 2.506 and 557) and fr. 294 Schierl can be referred back to Pacuvius' *Hermiona*, in particular to the messenger's speech about Neoptolemus' death, which is, indeed, the divine vengeance invoked by Virgil's Priam, *si qua est caelo pietas quae talia curet*.

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