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THE DEATH OF PRIAM: ALLEGORY AND HISTORY IN THE *AENEID*

The true relation between these scenes and historic fact is more mysterious and less simple. The metamorphosis takes place on a higher plane. Historic events and the poet's inner experience are stripped of everything accidental and actual. They are removed from time and transported into the large and distant land of Myth. There, on a higher plane of life, they are developed in symbolic and poetic shapes having a right to an existence of their own. The fact, therefore, that the subjection of the storm is described in a simile for a moment highlighting a very important sphere of the poem (namely that of the historical world) is more decisive than a possible allusion to the younger Cato.

So wrote Pöschl on the opening simile of the *Aeneid*.[1] In this article, however, I wish to consider a passage in the *Aeneid* where an awareness of actual historical events is essential to a fuller understanding of the passage – the death of Priam in 2.506ff. That it is an important scene not least for Virgilian allegory has not, of course, gone unremarked,[2] but a fuller discussion of the passage will illuminate not only its function in the epic, but also something of Virgil's allegorical techniques.

Heinze argued that Virgil was the first to make the death of Priam the climax of the fall of Troy: 'der Fall Trojas gipfelt in König Priams' Tod... Wir wissen von keiner Tradition, die den Tod des Priam als Abschluss der Iliupersis berichtet hätte.'[3] This is true, but Austin's note on the passage reveals a slight problem:[4]

> ... he is alone in making Priam's death the climax of the Sack of Troy: Aeneas' direct narrative passes – after the digression containing the 'Helen-episode' and his vision of Venus, none of which is connected with the action of the story – from the murder of the king to the utter collapse of Troy in the flames (624f.).

In order to make Priam's death the climax, Austin thus feels the need to suppress the intervening eighty lines so that the narrative may pass straight from it to the fall of the city.[5] Fortunately, there is no need for such a strategy. Priam's death does not have to be contemporaneous with the fall, but can be read as symbolic of it: Virgil uses a variety of devices to mark Priam's death as an end-point and, more specifically, as an emblem of the end of the city.

The principal device that Virgil uses is, as has been noticed,[6] to describe Priam's death in terms which recall that of Hector in the *Iliad*. There, the fall of Troy is not

[1] V. Pöschl, *The Art of Vergil: Image and Symbol in the Aeneid* (tr. G. Seligson, Ann Arbor, 1962), p. 22. On allegory in Virgil, see now P. R. Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford, 1986); also D. L. Drew, *The Allegory of the Aeneid* (Oxford, 1927).

[2] W. A. Camps, *An Introduction to Virgil's Aeneid* (Oxford, 1969), pp. 97f.; on Priam in general, F. Caviglia, 'Priamo 1' in *Enciclopedia Virgiliana*, vol. 4 (Rome, 1988), pp. 264–8.

[3] R. Heinze, *Virgils epische Technik*[3] (Leipzig, 1915), p. 39.

[4] R. G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis: Aeneidos Liber Secundus* (Oxford, 1964), pp. 196f.

[5] For a bibliography on the Helen-episode and the question of its authenticity, see Austin (n. 4), p. 219; W. Suerbaum, 'Hundert Jahre Vergil-Forschung', *ANRW* 2.31.1 (1980), pp. 215f.; G. B. Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation: Genre and Poetic Memory in Virgil and Other Latin Poets* (Ithaca & London, 1986), pp. 196–207.

[6] Cf. e.g. G. N. Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer* (Göttingen, 1964), pp. 380f.

depicted, but that Hector's demise symbolises it is made clear, for when he dies the cries of grief from the city are such as might have been heard 'if the whole of beetling Troy were being consumed by fire from top to bottom'.[7] Towards the very end of the epic, Andromache says of Astyanax that he will not reach maturity because Hector, Troy's guardian, is dead.[8]

The *Aeneid* passage is replete with quotations from the death of Hector. In the *Iliad*, Priam watches the events from a tower[9] as Aeneas watches from the roof. Achilles is characterised by light-imagery, regularly used to indicate a future victor:[10] Priam sees him as the star Sirius; the flash of his armour is like a blazing fire of the rising sun; he is like the evening star; the phrase χαλκὸς ἐλάμπ(ετο) is twice used of him.[11] So, when Pyrrhus breaks into the palace, he is 'luce coruscus aena' (470) and like a snake, whose brightness is stressed;[12] the snake is taken from the simile applied to Hector awaiting Achilles.[13] Later, Achilles will pursue Hector as a hawk pursues a dove,[14] while Hecuba and her daughters huddle round the altar like doves in a storm (515–17). When he sees Achilles, Priam addresses a long plea to Hector stressing the inequality of the struggle and describing what will happen when Troy is sacked; he ends with a picture of an old man's corpse mutilated by dogs, 'the most piteous thing that can happen to wretched mortals'.[15] In Virgil, Hecuba tells Priam that he is not equal to the struggle (521f.; note the reference to Hector).[16] Virgil thus echoes the description of Troy's fall and we see Priam killed in a horrible manner. After Priam's plea to Hector, Hecuba adds her voice, fearing that Hector may lie by the Greek ships being eaten by dogs;[17] the idea of the body on the shore is picked up in Priam's end (557f.).

Both Priam and Hector are moved to fight at least in part by a sense of their duty to others, Hector because of his error and sense of *aidos*,[18] Priam at the sight of his son's death (533f.), which, occurring before a father's eyes, recalls Hector's similar fate. Their spear-casts are described in similar language: both spears strike the middle of the shield (290 μέσον σάκος; 546 'summo clipei umbone'), both rebound away (291 τῆλε δ' ἀπεπλάγχθη σάκεος; 545 'aere repulsum') in vain (292 ἐτώσιον; 546 'nequiquam'). There is an oddity in Virgil, in that though the spear was 'aere repulsum', it still hung (546 'pependit') from the middle of the shield. Does this oddity arise from the imitation of Homer? Before they are killed, Hector and Priam

[7] *Il.* 22.410f.
[8] Ibid. 24.727ff.
[9] Ibid. 21.526.
[10] C. H. Whitman, *Homer and the Heroic Tradition* (Cambridge, Mass., 1958), pp. 128–53.
[11] *Il.* 22.26–32; 134f.; cf. 317f.
[12] 471–5: note 'lucem', 'nitidus', 'arduus', 'ad solem', 'micat'.
[13] *Il.* 22.93–5. The snake simile is transferred from victim to victor for reasons that have not been discussed by the commentators. Since, as B. M. W. Knox says, the snake is an image of the 'merciless and unthinking violence which was typical of Achilles at his worst' ('The serpent and the flame: the imagery of the second book of the *Aeneid*', *AJPh* 71 [1950], 379–400, p. 394), this transfer may make Pyrrhus all the more potent; this idea would be supported by the fact that Virgil has added the brightness and youthfulness that is absent from Homer's Hector. Knox (p. 395) suggests that, since the snake is a symbol of regeneration, this simile looks forward to the regeneration of Troy in Italy, but it is hard to see how this meaning can be transferred from the destroyer of Troy's king, whose end stands for that of the city, to his victims.
[14] Ibid. 139–42.
[15] Ibid. 38–76.
[16] 519f. also echo *Il.* 24.201ff., where Priam last confronted one of the tribe of Aeacus.
[17] *Il.* 22.82–9.
[18] Ibid. 22.99–130.

address their killers, Hector pleading for his life, Priam with defiant taunts. Their adversaries are both implacable: compare 365 *τέθναθι* and 550 'nunc morere'. In the *Aeneid*, Priam refers to the return of Hector's body by Achilles, but he is to receive no such magnanimity from Pyrrhus. His maltreatment by Pyrrhus and the Greeks parallels the mutilation of Hector's corpse by Achilles and the Greeks (557f.).[19]

The wealth of parallels between the *Aeneid* and *Iliad* passages securely establishes Priam's death as the equivalent of that of Hector:[20] it is the sign of the end of Troy. As Pomathios notes, 'son nom demeure étroitement associé à celui d'une cité que l'on devine prospère', in such expressions as 'Priami regna' (2.22, 12.545).[21] Other echoes of the *Iliad* help to deepen the audience's response to Priam's death, through a technique of 'nostalgic recollection' also found in the *Iliad*.[22] The description of the Greeks breaching the palace wall as they are pelted by the Trojans (442–52, 460–8) recalls the moment of greatest triumph for the Trojans in the *Iliad*, when first Sarpedon and then Hector broke through the wall.[23] Recollection of happier times throws contemporary events into grim relief.

There are other passages too that emphasis the final nature of Priam's death. Lines 499–505 are modelled on a speech of Andromache from Ennius' play of that name, in which she described the fall of Troy.[24] In 486ff., according to Servius, Virgil quotes from Ennius' description of the fall of Alba Longa, another famous city whose destruction forms part of the inevitable rise of Rome.[25] After Priam has been killed, Virgil supplies a coda which is, as Austin shows, much in the manner of historians, who regularly summarise the life of a dead man with formulae such as 'hic exitus...' and often accompany this with 'moralizing on a notable *περιπέτεια*'.[26] Finally, one

[19] Ibid. 22.395–404.

[20] On the question of this technique in Virgil and for further bibliography, cf. J. Griffin, *Latin Poets and Roman Life* (London, 1985), pp. 183–97, who rightly argues that any simple application of the typology used in biblical criticism does no justice to the complexity of Virgil's narrative.

[21] J.-L. Pomathios, *Le pouvoir politique et sa représentation dans l'Éneide de Virgile* (Brussels, 1987), p. 35: cf. also 'Priami arx alta' (2.56), 'Priami imperio Phrygibusque' (2.191), 'patriae Priamoque' (2.291), 'res Asiae Priamique... gentem' (3.1), 'Priami tecta' (4.343); cf. 2.581, 8.398f. G. Williams, *Technique and Ideas in the Aeneid* (New Haven and London, 1983), pp. 249f. writes of Priam's epitaph, 'unlike the epitaph on Troy (195–8), the solemnity of this statement contains no irony, and so serves as an epitaph on the whole of the Trojan past for which Priam is the symbol'.

[22] E.g. *Il.* 22.153–6, the wash-pots; cf. in the passage under discussion, Aeneas' memory of Andromache's use of the passage to take Astyanax to his grandfather (453–7).

[23] Ibid. 12.251ff. The anonymous reader points out that this breaching of the palace wall stands, like the death of Priam, as a metonymy for the destruction of the city, since the breaching of the city wall, the usual climactic moment, is in this story ruled out: he compares 2.438–9.

[24] Cf. M. Wigodsky, *Vergil and Early Latin Poetry*, (*Hermes Einzelschr.* 24 [Wiesbaden, 1972]), p. 78.

[25] 'De Albano excidio translatus est locus' (Serv. *ad* 486). Cf. E. Norden, *Ennius und Vergilius* (Leipzig, 1912), pp. 154ff.; Wigodsky (n. 24), p. 70; 'whatever was the nature of the resemblance between Vergil's story of Troy's last night and the earlier description of Rome's first conquest, the echoes may have been meant to lighten the gloom of Troy's fall with a hint of Rome's rise'; Hardie (n. 1), p. 348 (on the Shield): 'It is a recurrent theme of the *Aeneid* that the greatness of Rome is ensured only by the destruction of other potentially powerful cities.' Livy (1.23.1) describes this conflict as 'civili simillimum bello, prope inter parentes natosque, Troianam utramque prolem, cum Lavinium ab Troia, ab Lavinio Alba, ab Albanorum stirpe regum oriundi Romani essent'. In Book 8, the revelation that Greeks and Trojans alike are descended from Atlas (127–42) means that the Trojan War, like that between the Trojans and Latins, was in effect a civil conflict.

[26] He quotes Livy 39.51.12; Plut. *Pomp.* 80.5; Tac. *Hist.* 3.34.1; Appian, *BC* 4.20; Vell. Pat. 2.53.3; F. W. Walbank, *A Historical Commentary on Polybius*, i (Oxford, 1957), pp. 19ff. This

may note a passage from the *Aeneid* itself: in the light of the destruction, just before his death, of the tower that Turnus built (12.672–5), the destruction of the Trojan tower in 2.460–8 shortly before Priam's death also points to the end of Troy.

Such closural techniques from history therefore, along with descriptions of the fall of cities from tragedy and epic all serve to mark the finality of Priam's death. It is the last individual death in the sack of Troy, and the fact that it is also the nastiest in Book 2 (if not in the whole *Aeneid*) also gives it an element of finality; we may compare the death of Turnus.

There is one other text, in the broadest sense, which is referred to and which has considerable implications for the meaning of the passage, but which has not received the attention it deserves.[27] This is the death of Pompey. Commenting on lines 557f., Servius says 'Pompei tangit historiam, cum "ingens" dicit non "magnus"'. In addition to this pun, the idea of a headless corpse on the shore also evokes Pompey's end. What is particularly striking about line 557, however, is that it contains a remarkable example of narrative dislocation. At the main caesura of the line, Priam is dead by the altar in the centre of the palace; after it, he is lying headless on the shore, a removal in place and time of some distance. If this is a device not unknown in Silver Latin epic, it is not a feature of Virgil. There are two possible but not very satisfactory explanations of this dislocation. The first is that to be found in Servius: '"litus" pro solo ut ostendat litus iam esse, ubi fuerat Troia.' Though 'litus' can be used 'vaguely or loosely to imply the country bounded by a coast', it does not seem to be used to mean 'ground' in the sense required in this passage.[28] When Vergil wants to describe what Servius attributes to him there, he does not use 'litus' in this way (3.10f.):

> litora cum patriae lacrimans portusque relinquo
> et campos ubi Troia fuit.

Servius' interpretation makes for a fine picture but 'shore' is a more natural reading, which would receive support from the fact that there was a tradition, found in Pacuvius according to Servius, in which 'a Pyrrho in domo quidem sua captus est, sed ad tumulum Achillis occisus tractusque est iuxta Sigeum promuntorium ... tunc eius caput conto fixum circumtulit'.[29] If Pompey is also present here, then the meaning 'shore' is made all the more likely. A second possibility is that this version and the one in which Priam is killed in his palace have simply been awkwardly combined, but

was especially true of Pompey's death: 'neither before or since has the defeat of any general been surrounded with as much pathos as that of Pompey' (V. L. Holliday, *Pompey in Cicero's Correspondence and Lucan's Civil War* [The Hague & Paris, 1969], p. 74): see L. Alfonsi, 'Pompeo in Manilio' *Latomus* 6 (1947), 345–51 who quotes for instance Livy 9.17.5–7; Vell. Pat. 2.40.4, 48.2, 53.3; Prop. 3.11.33–8; Ov. *Pont.* 4.3.41; Sen. *Cons. Marc.* 20.4, *Ep.* 94.64 Pliny, *NH* 7.95; Juv. 10.283–6. For Pompey as an example *e contrario* of the topos 'opportunitas mortis', see A. J. Woodman, *Velleius Paterculus: the Caesarian and Augustan narrative (2.41–93)* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 78 (on 48.2) and 148 (on 66.4); cf. pp. 172f. (on 72.1) for further bibliography on the 'hic exitus' formula. Add now H. MacL. Currie, 'An obituary formula in the historians (with a Platonic connection?)', *Latomus* 48 (1989), 346–53.

[27] The fullest treatment is E. Narducci, *La provvidenza crudele: Lucano e la distruzione dei miti augustei* (Pisa, 1979), pp. 43–8; cf. his earlier 'Il tronco di Pompeo (Troia e Roma nella Pharsalia)', *Maia* 25 (1973), 317–25.

[28] *OLD* s.v. 2: *Aen.* 3.161 'non haec tibi litora suasit ... Apollo'. Cf. Serv. *ad* 1.3 for another discussion of 'litus'.

[29] Servius *ad Aen.* 2.506 and 507; cf. Wigodsky (n. 24), p. 83; Sen. *Tro.* 141 'Sigea premis litora truncus.'

Virgil's general bear-like care for his narrative is against this.[30] I prefer to see this dislocation as drawing attention to the sudden irruption of the historical Pompey into the mythical narrative, the significance of which will emerge later; this irruption is further marked by a notable shift in tense to the present, which brings us at the same time to the moment of Aeneas' narration.[31] To Pompey himself I now turn.

It might be argued that 'ingens' and the headless body, especially given the problem of the meaning of 'litus', are not sufficient to justify talking of Pompey here, and indeed some commentators note his possible presence without particular enthusiasm.[32] On the other hand, in order to reconstruct something of the way Roman readers might have reacted to such passages, one can point to the way that audiences in the theatre were notoriously keen to relate remarks made by actors to the contemporary political scene. In *pro Sestio*, Cicero says: 'et quoniam facta mentio est ludorum, ne illud quidem praetermittam, in magna varietate sententiarum numquam ullum fuisse locum, in quo aliquid a poeta dictum cadere in tempus nostrum videretur, quod aut populum universum fugeret aut non exprimeret ipse actor.'[33] He goes on to illustrate his point at length, and Suetonius notes a number of examples concerning the emperors.[34] In a letter to Atticus, Cicero tells the famous story of the way Diphilus' line 'nostra miseria tu es magnus' was taken to refer to Pompey.[35] In the light of this habit of the Romans, it does not seem unreasonable to argue that Pompey is indicated in the death of Priam: after all, Servius' comment is proof that he was recognised here by some readers.

Furthermore, Pompey and Priam are found together in a number of places as *exempla* of the fates great men can suffer. This conjunction appears first in Cicero, who lists them as men who might have wished to die before their fate changed,[36] and they stand close together in a similar passage in Juvenal.[37] Manilius lists Pompey, Caesar, Croesus and Priam as examples of how fate can change a man's life.[38] Finally,

[30] Cf. Donatus, *P. Virgili Maronis Vita* 34: 'Aeneida prosa prius oratione formatam, digestamque in XII libros, particulatim componere instituit', and Augustus' lines on Virgil's desire for the *Aeneid* to be burned (*ap.* ibid. 58): 'frangatur potius legum veneranda potestas / quam tot congestos noctesque diesque labores / hauserit una dies.'

[31] On the narrative techniques of this passage, cf. Williams (n. 21), pp. 246–62, who shows how Virgil is concerned 'to cancel the gap between the actual events and their narration; Aeneas, and his audience, are reliving the actuality of his experiences' (p. 247; cf. p. 259 on the similes of the book: 'Aeneas as narrator does his best to avoid coming between his audience and the events he narrates'). On tenses in Virgil, cf. K. Quinn, *Latin Explorations: Critical Studies in Latin Literature* (London, 1963), pp. 220–9. The vivid use of the present here after a run of perfects is in contrast to the more usual use of the perfect for such effects; Quinn suggests that 'the present tense also stands outside time, as though, when Aeneas tells his story to Dido years later, the corpse lay there still upon the deserted beach' (p. 238).

[32] One might note here that the Servian commentaries are not given to finding Pompey in the text irresponsibly. He is mentioned as defeated by Caesar on 1.286, and is used as an example of how wives were not normally taken on campaign (on 8.688), of placing trophies on high places (on 11.6), and of biting the dust in death (on 11.418, with a quotation from Lucan [8.616]); on 1.287 ('a magno demissum nomen Iulo') there is the comment 'sicut Alexander, sicut Pompeius' (references from R. F. Rossi in *Enciclopedia Virgiliana* [n. 2], p. 198). By contrast, where Pomathios (n. 21), p. 97 sees a reference to the decorating of Pompey's house with the beaks of ships in 7.186 (cf. Cic. *Phil.* 2.28.68), Servius does not.

[33] *Sest.* 118.

[34] *Aug.* 53, 68; *Tib.* 45; *Galba* 13.

[35] *Att.* 2.19.3 = 39.3 S.-B.

[36] *Tusc.* 1.85f.; *Div.* 2.22.

[37] 10.258–72 and 283–6.

[38] 4.50–65; note especially 50 'quis te Niliaco periturum litore, Magne' and 64 'Priamumque in litore truncum'.

Lucan makes much play with Virgil's lines on Priam when he describes Pompey's end in 8.698–710.[39] Closer study of the text, too, can remove reasonable doubts about Pompey's presence.

First, there is the phrase 'regnatorem Asiae'.[40] It was in the east that Pompey gained his earliest and most spectacular successes. At the triumph which he celebrated in 65, there were lists and tableaux that catalogued the colossal number of forts, towns, peoples, treasures, etc. which he had captured. These are impressively summarised by Pliny, Plutarch, Appian and Diodorus.[41] According to Pliny, Pompey himself saw this capture of Asia as his finest achievement: 'summa summarum in illa gloria fuit (ut ipse in contione dixit, cum de rebus suis dissereret) Asiam ultimam provinciarum accepisse eandemque mediam patriae reddidisse.'[42] One might note here too that one of the jibes levelled at him towards the end was that he acted like 'the king of kings', a reference presumably to the Great King of Persia.[43] When the war with Caesar broke out, it is no surprise to find that he looked to the east in which his earlier victories had brought him vast *clientelae*.[44] After his defeat at Pharsalia, he thought of taking refuge in Parthia, before allowing himself to be persuaded to go to Egypt. Looking forward to this conflict, Anchises finds it sufficient to refer to Pompey as 'gener adversis instructus Eois'.[45]

The next word to note is 'superbum'. Pride is one of the criticisms constantly levelled at Pompey: as well as calling him 'king of kings', his subordinates also called him 'Agamemnon'.[46] Pompey gave notice of his *superbia* early in his career, in his arrogant demand to Sulla for a triumph though he was not a senator, and in his attempt to claim all the credit for the crushing of a slave revolt for which Crassus had done most of the work.[47] Lucan summed matters up as follows:[48]

> nec quemquam iam ferre potest Caesarve priorem
> Pompeiusve parem,

and his opponent wrote discreetly 'neminem dignitate secum exaequari volebat'.[49] Seneca analysed him similarly: 'quid in Mithridaten et Armeniam et omnis Asiae angulos traxit? infinita scilicet cupido crescendi, cum sibi uni parum magnus videretur.'[50]

[39] Cf. Narducci, 'Il tronco' (n. 27).

[40] Cf. also Camps (n. 2), p. 98.

[41] Pliny, *NH* 7.97f.; Plut. *Pomp.* 45; Appian, *BM* 116–17; Diod. 40.4.1.

[42] 7.99.

[43] Appian, *BC* 2.67; Dio 42.5.5. Pomathios (n. 21), p. 35 notes that elsewhere in the *Aeneid* 'regnator' is used only of Jupiter (2.779, 4.269, 7.558, 10.437; in each case his will is stressed) and of Tiber (8.77).

[44] Cf. R. J. Seager, *Pompey: a Political Biography* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 44–55: 'not merely individuals and cities but provinces and kingdoms acknowledged him as their patron. When the civil war with Caesar finally came, it could be taken for granted... that the resources of the East... would be at Pompeius' beck and call' (p. 55).

[45] *Aen.* 6.831.

[46] Appian, *BC* 2.67. 'Superbus' is not always a negative word in the *Aeneid*: beside 6.853 'debellare superbos', cf. 3.475 'coniugio, Anchisa, Veneris dignate, superbo', 12.877f. 'nec fallunt iussa superba magnanimi Iovis'.

[47] Plut. *Pomp.* 14, *Mor.* 203e–f, 804f.

[48] 1.125f.

[49] *BC* 1.4.4. Cf. Ps.-Sall. *Ep.* 1.2.3 'nam particeps dominationis neque fuit quisquam neque, si pati potuisset, orbis terrarum bello concussus foret.'

[50] *Ep.* 94.65.

The whole phrase 'tot quondam populis terrisque superbum regnatorem Asiae' can thus be seen to point to Pompey as well as echoing the standard view of Priam and his wealth and power. Furthermore, Pompey's curiously dispirited performance in his final flight from the much more dynamic Caesar is mirrored in Priam's physical decrepitude in the face of the Greek assault (cf. 509–11, 518, 544–6). This parallelism in their description suggests one might be able go further and make a comparison between the circumstances surrounding their two deaths.

Pompey was murdered at Pelusium in Egypt, whither he had fled in the hope that Ptolemy XIV Dionysius would offer him help and protection. Pompey had been involved in Rome's recognition as king of Ptolemy's father, Ptolemy Auletes, and also in his restoration when the Alexandrians had thrown him out. His hopes were cruelly deceived. Ptolemy's advisers, to be on the winning side, recommended supporting Caesar. Despite the absence of a proper welcoming-party, and the warnings of his wife Cornelia and his friends, Pompey insisted on going ashore in a small boat, and was murdered in it by the Roman Septimius and the Egyptian Achillas. His head was cut off and sent to Caesar.[51]

There are clear parallels here with Priam. He too refused to listen to his wife's pleas and went to a certain death before the eyes of his family; he too was left headless on the shore. Furthermore, the relationships between Pompey and those who killed him throw some light on what might be seen as an 'anomaly' in Virgil's text. It is at least mildly curious (even allowing for the reconciliation in *Iliad* 24) that Priam should make such magnanimous reference to Achilles' treatment of himself in the past and should accuse Pyrrhus of behaving in a much more barbaric manner. Achilles killed Hector before Priam's eyes, mutilated the body along with the other Greeks, dragged it round the walls of Troy and refused it burial; Pyrrhus has chased Polites who, untouched by him at least before his father's eyes, collapses dead in front of his parents.[52] The latter might seem somewhat of a lesser crime than the former. Why does Priam refer only to the bond created between himself and Achilles through the handing over of Hector's body and his own safe return to Troy? Pompey's relationship with the Ptolemies will explain this.

Auletes owed his throne to Pompey.[53] The circumstances were as follows. In 59, in return for a large sum, Pompey and Caesar arranged for Ptolemy to be recognised as king of Egypt. When in 57 the Alexandrians found him not to their taste and threw him out, he looked to Rome for help. The Senate decreed that Lentulus Spinther should restore him, but Auletes said he wanted to be restored by Pompey, who was clearly in favour of his return but claimed that he was not interested, although his associates worked hard to get him the position: Pompey also entertained Auletes in his Alban Villa and enlisted the backing of Rabirius Postumus. As things transpired, Auletes was actually restored by Pompey's ally, A. Gabinius, acting on his own initiative, but in later sources Pompey is named as the prime mover, as in Dio:[54] τοῦ

[51] The main accounts of Pompey's death are to be found in Seager (n. 44), p. 184.

[52] The significance of this name is not clear: the 'citizen' dies before the king whose end marks the fall of the whole city? In Homer, Iris disguises herself as Polites, a fast runner and look-out who is sitting on the tomb of Aesyetes, to bring the message to the Trojans that they should line up for battle (*Il.* 2.790–5). This might mean that we are to see a ring here: Polites is involved in the preparations for the first battle in the *Iliad* and in the final battle of Troy in the *Aeneid*. It is also noteworthy that in the only other place where he appears in Homer he kills Echion (*Il.* 15.339), a man whose name, in the light of the *Aeneid* passage, ironically recalls the viper to which Pyrrhus is compared in *Aen.* 2.471ff.

[53] For the ancient sources and a narrative of these events, see Seager (n. 44), pp. 115–20.

[54] 42.2.4 and 5.3; cf. Cic. *Pis.* 48ff. (Seager [n. 44], p. 132).

τε γὰρ Πτολεμαίου τοῦ διὰ τοῦ Γαβινίου τὴν βασιλείαν παρ' αὐτοῦ ἀπολαβόντος ... τὸν πατέρα ... ἐς τὴν βασιλείαν κατήγαγε [sc. Pompey]. Furthermore, it is a constant theme in writers on Pompey's death that in killing Pompey Ptolemy Dionysius had scandalously violated the bond of *philia* that had existed between his father and Pompey; it was this bond that led him to choose Egypt in his search for sanctuary.[55] So Caesar: 'ad eum [*sc.* Ptolemaeum] Pompeius misit, ut pro hospitio atque amicitia patris Alexandria reciperetur'.[56] He is echoed by Plutarch,[57] who describes Ptolemy as φιλίας δὲ καὶ χάριτος πατρῴας ὑπόχρεων, Dio,[58] who has Pompey τῆς τε πατρῴας αὐτὸν εὐεργεσίας ἀναμιμνήσκων and Appian,[59] who says πέμψας τε ἔφραζε περὶ ἑαυτοῦ καὶ τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς φιλίας.

Thus when Priam contrasts a son's murderous behaviour with his father's maintenance of the 'iura fidemque supplicis', it evokes Pompey's relations with the Ptolemies, in which a son destroys a bond existing between his father and the man he kills. The relationships in each story are not absolutely parallel, in that Ptolemy kills Pompey the benefactor of his father, whilst Pyrrhus kills Priam who was benefited by his father; but the important point is that in each case a son overturns a happier relationship created by his father. It is not being argued that Priam 'is' Pompey at every point (any more than he 'is' Hector at every point), merely that the description of his death evokes in various ways the death of Pompey.

These historical events may also explain another slightly unusual expression that Virgil has used. Reminding Pyrrhus of his father's kindness, Priam concludes his speech with the words 'meque in mea regna remisit': why does he say 'regna' when he is 'regnator Asiae' and has only been down to the beach? Is it perhaps because Virgil wishes to remind his readers that Pompey returned Auletes to his kingdom?

Pyrrhus' description of himself as 'degenerem' also corresponds with the Roman attitude to the Ptolemy family. In a number of sources, the debauched nature of the Ptolemies is recorded, as in Strabo:[60] ἅπαντες μὲν οὖν οἱ μετὰ τὸν τρίτον Πτολεμαῖον ὑπὸ τρυφῆς διεφθαρμένοι χεῖρον ἐπολιτεύσαντο, χείρισται δ' ὁ τέταρτος καὶ ὁ ἕβδομος καὶ ὁ ὕστατος ὁ Αὐλητής. Lucan makes the same point and uses the same word of Ptolemy:[61]

> ... ultima Lageae stirpis perituraque proles,
> *degener*, incestae sceptris cessure sorori,
> cum tibi sacrato Macedon servetur in antro
> et regum cineres extructo monte quiescant,
> cum Ptolemaeorum manes seriemque pudendam
> pyramides claudant indignaque Mausolea ...

This unworthy nature of Pompey's killer is regularly referred to by historians, as, for instance, Velleius Paterculus: 'princeps Romani nominis imperio arbitrioque Aegyptii mancipii ... iugulatus est',[62] and, in a splendidly orotund passage, Valerius Maximus,

[55] Cf. Woodman (n. 26), pp. 99f. for the topos 'cum fortuna statque caditque fides.'
[56] *BC* 3.103.3.
[57] *Pomp.* 76.5.
[58] 42.3.2.
[59] *BC* 2.84; cf. 83.
[60] 17.1.11.
[61] 8.692–7.
[62] Vell. Pat. 2.53.2. Cf. Woodman (n. 26), pp. 100f. for the blend of 'commutatio fortunae' and 'conquestio'.

'eius caput tribus coronis triumphalibus spoliatum in suo modo terrarum orbe nusquam sepulturae locum habuit, sed abscisum a corpore inops rogi nefarium Aegyptiae perfidiae munus portatum est etiam ipsi victori miserabile'.[63]

In the *Aeneid*, the son of Achilles is usually called Pyrrhus, as has been the case throughout this episode. In 549, however, Pyrrhus refers to himself by his other name, Neoptolemus.[64] If we are right to see Priam's death as an evocation of Pompey's, then Pyrrhus really is a 'new Ptolemy': the change to the less usual name (for the *Aeneid*) thus has the function of underlining the other echoes of the death of Pompey. This kind of play on names is far from uncommon in Virgil; in the passage under discussion, Pyrrhus is 'coruscus' (470) and Neoptolemus 'nitidus iuventa' (473).[65] There is indeed another such in the passage: one of the actual murderers of Pompey was called Achillas; this Egyptian councillor thus links the Homeric and historical texts.[66] Finally, according to Plutarch, Cornelia took the remains of her husband and buried them in the Alban villa. That Pompey lived on the site of Alba Longa gives further poignancy to the quotation from the sack of that city at the death of Priam.[67]

It remains to ask what the significance for the *Aeneid* as a whole might be of Pompey's rushing, as it were unbidden, into the narrative. Its significance lies in the fact that this is the first time in the epic that we have an episode where the allegorical nature of the work is strikingly and explicitly made plain. Allegorical reading of epic and other genres was a long established tradition,[68] and there have already been a number of indications that the *Aeneid* is broadly allegorical of the process of Roman history. The storm and its quelling near the start of the whole work are described by Pöschl as follows:[69]

> the initial sequences of scenes in the *Aeneid* contain in essence all forces which constitute the whole. The opening storm is a wave breaking against Roman destiny. Many waves will follow and Augustus will subdue them all, thus limiting the *Imperium* with the ocean and its glory with the stars.

There is a Roman element in the famous first simile in its reference to Cato's

[63] Val. Max. 5.1.10.

[64] For this pair of names, cf. P. Vidal-Naquet, 'The Black Hunter Revisited', *PCPS* 32 (1986), 136. Virgil thus wins a new pun from the name; Neoptolemus, according to Servius, was so called 'quia ad bellum ductus est puer' (on 263). 'Pyrrhus' is found in 469, 491, 526, 529, 547, 662 (also 3.296, 319), 'Neoptolemus' when he is first introduced (263) and in 500, 549 (also 3.333, 469, 11.264).

[65] Cf. G. Wijdeveld, 'De Vergilii *Aen.* II, 469 sqq.', *Mnem.* 10 (1942), 238–40.

[66] One might note that Achilles' charioteer, Automedon, followed Pyrrhus (476f.).

[67] That Virgil should have chosen the detail of the severed head, in order that the deaths of Priam and Pompey should each enhance the pathos of the other, might suggest to the reader with a good historical memory the first victim of Pompey, Cn. Papirius Carbo. An opponent of Sulla, he was chased by Pompey to Africa and then Sicily, where he was executed and his head was sent to Sulla (Appian, *BC* 1.96; cf. Plut. *Pomp.* 10.3f.; Liv. *per.* 89). He had defended Pompey in 86, so that Ptolemy Dionysius was not the only one to find it expedient to forget past alliances. This circularity in Pompey's career is mirrored by a similar one in that of Pyrrhus. Having slaughtered Priam at an ancestral altar, shaded by a laurel, he perished in a comparable manner: 'scelerum furiis agitatus Orestes / excipit incautum patriasque obtruncat ad aras' (*Aen.* 3.331f.; the verb too echoes Priam's end, cf. 2.557, 663). The place is Delphi, where Pyrrhus was buried near the temple of Apollo with its laurel (the parallel is noted by R. D. Williams, *P. Vergili Maronis: Aeneidos liber tertius* [Oxford, 1962], p. 125; cf. G. Nagy, *The Best of the Achaeans* [Baltimore and London, 1979], pp. 118–41). It is also ironic that Hector, the analogue of Priam and Pompey, should have thought of cutting off Patroclus' head and throwing his body to the dogs (*Il.* 17.125–7).

[68] Hardie (n. 1), *passim*, esp. pp. 26ff., 95ff., 248ff. 340ff.

[69] Pöschl (n. 1), p. 24.

performance in his praetorship of a similar act.[70] Camps notes that Augustus appears as Neptune in art after Actium.[71] Aeneas' conflict with Dido prefigures the Punic Wars, which are evoked at the very start of the *Aeneid*'s narrative (1.12ff.). Jupiter promises that Aeneas' success will inaugurate the process that leads to the Eternal city of Rome, a concept which appears to be a product of the Augustan period.[72] But none of these involves the close identification of literary and historical character which is found in the case of Priam and Pompey. Cato's assimilation to Neptune has no further function in the story (and this comparison of turbulent people to the sea was a rhetorical topos).[73] Augustus may be given a role in history comparable to Neptune's in the poem, but the significance of the comparison does not seem at this point to go beyond a rather general eulogy. The references to the Punic Wars and Jupiter's prophecy again show the broad allegorical nature of the poem, but not the degree to which such a reading should be pressed. It is when we reach Priam and Pompey that we see that the narrative is to admit of close allegorical interpretation.

It is Pompey's connection with the east which makes for his particular importance in the *Aeneid*. The poem tends to present its conflicts in schematic, geographical terms.[74] Thus Anchises describes how Pompey from the east is opposed by Caesar whose power base was in the west (6.828–31):

> heu quantum inter se bellum, si lumina vitae
> attigerint, quantas acies stragemque ciebunt,
> aggeribus socer Alpinis atque arce Monoeci
> descendens, gener adversis instructus Eois!

Again, the 'western' Greeks defeat the Trojans, representatives of the east and the luxury characteristic of it.[75] The whole world knows, says Ilioneus (7.222–4)[76]

> quanta per Idaeos saevis effusa Mycenis
> tempestas ierit campos, quibus actus uterque
> Europae atque Asiae fatis concurrerit orbis...

In their turn, the Trojans defeat the western Latins. Eastern Priam sees his empire fall

[70] Plut. *Cato Minor* 44.3f.

[71] Camps (n. 2), p. 8, n. 17.

[72] On this concept, see R. M. Ogilvie, *A Commentary on Livy Books 1–5* (Oxford, 1965), p. 536 on Liv. 4.4.4.

[73] To the passages in R. G. Austin, *P. Vergili Maronis Aeneidos Liber Primus* (Oxford, 1971), p. 68 (Hom. *Il.* 2.144ff.; Cic. *Cluent.* 138; Liv. 28.27.11; Polybius 11.29.9f) S. Harrison, 'Vergil on Kingship: the First Simile of the *Aeneid*', *PCPS* 34 (1988), 55–9, adds Hsd. *Theog.* 81–93, a much-quoted passage in works on kingship. Cf. Pöschl (n. 1), p. 21 'for the very reason that I am willing to accept the possibility of a connection between an event in the political career of Cato Uticensis and the first simile of the *Aeneid*, I must emphatically declare that it means very little'.

[74] As will be seen 'east' and 'west' do not carry with them any inherent moral qualities, but take them from the context. The Trojans/Romans, as easterners *and* westerners, might be said to mediate the opposition in a significant way: this point is now argued at length by F. Cairns, *Virgil's Augustan Epic* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 123–6, who should be consulted for earlier discussions.

[75] In the *Aeneid*, cf. for instance 4.215f. (Iarbas on Aeneas): 'at nunc ille Paris cum semiviro comitatu, / Maeonia mentum mitra crinemque madentem / subnexus'; also 9.141f., 9.614ff., 12.99.

[76] Cf. 217f. of the 'regna' of Troy, 'quae maxima quondam / extremo veniens sol aspiciebat Olympo.'

and dies, western Latinus gives way to a younger ruler: Pompey suffered both when Ptolemy broke faith.[77] There is then another 'easterner' who was subdued by one whose power again resided in the west (8.678–9, 685–8):[78]

> hinc Augustus agens Italos in proelia Caesar
> cum patribus populoque, penatibus et magnis dis...
> hinc ope barbarica variisque Antonius armis,
> victor ab Aurorae populis et litore rubro,
> Aegyptum virisque Orientis et ultima secum
> Bactra vehit, sequiturque (nefas) Aegyptia coniunx.

Caesar's defeat of Pompey is thus a prelude to Octavian's of Antony[79] and a repetition of the mythological conflicts. Juno's command at 7.317

> hac gener atque socer coeant mercede suorum

links by its ambiguity Aeneas' fight against the people of Latinus, Turnus' dispute with Latinus and Caesar's with Pompey.[80] That the mythical conflicts were also civil ones is shown by Aeneas' words to Evander which reveal that Greeks and Trojans are related through descent from Atlas (8.127ff.) and remind that the Trojans were brought from Italy by Dardanus.[81] Octavian's conquest can thus, like Aeneas', be read as a final reuniting of East and West, which parallels the divine reconciliation between Jupiter and Juno (12.791ff.).[82]

Pompey therefore takes his place in that chain of men, women and cities over whom the juggernaut of history rolled on its way to what was essentially the triumph of the west: the 'Trojans' sojourn at Troy was a mere abnormal interlude in their 'eternal' dwelling in Italy. Troy, Hector, Priam, Dido,[83] Latinus, Turnus, Alba Longa, Pompey, Caesar, Antony, Cleopatra and their like all achieve greatness or

[77] Because history has not literature's symmetries, Pompey married a daughter of Caesar.

[78] Cf. also 8.705f. '... omnes eo terrore Aegyptus et Indi, / omnis Arabs, omnes vertebant terga Sabaei', 722ff. The Roman victory over the Greeks in the second and first centuries B.C. is also a repetition of the Trojan War, in which west now defeats east; compare Prop. 4.1.53f. and Lycophron's *Alexandra*. In the latter work, the passage on the movement from Troy to Rome (1226–80) is followed by a description of the conflict of Europe and Asia, which the 'blazing lion' (1439–41), descendant of Cassandra, will stop (1283–1450). Momigliano, who accepts the authenticity of the disputed passages, writes that 'Lycophron accepted the Herodotean philosophy of the contrast between Asia and Europe and included in this scheme the great power of the West as a representative of Asia. It is the first attempt known to us to introduce Rome into a design of universal history' (A. Momigliano, *Secondo contributo alla storia degli studi classici* [Rome, 1960], p. 442, who should be consulted for earlier treatments of the problem). For Romans as men of the west and east, cf. the Sibylline oracle in Paus. 7.8.9, where the younger Philip will be δμηθεὶς ἑσπερίοισιν ὑπ' ἀνδράσι ἠῴοις τε.

[79] Note the way that Caesar and Augustus are 'blended' in Jupiter's prophesy at 1.286ff. (E. J. Kenney, *CR* 18 [1968], 106) and that in 8.685 'ope barbarica' of Antony's forces quotes from the same Ennian passage as used in 2.499–505 for the prelude to Priam's death (Wigodsky [n. 24], p. 78).

[80] The ambiguity in the lines is illustrated (but then rejected through a claim to knowledge of what was in Virgil's mind) by C. J. Fordyce, *P. Vergili Maronis: Aeneidos libri VII–VIII* (Oxford, 1977), p. 122. For the expression 'socer ... gener', cf. Cat. 29.24, and for the *Aeneid*, cf. Cairns (n. 74), pp. 97f.

[81] See the discussion of K. W. Gransden, *Virgil: Aeneid Book VIII* (Cambridge, 1976), pp. 11–14.

[82] On the importance of 'concordia', as opposed to simple peace, in the *Aeneid*, cf. Cairns (n. 74), pp. 85–108.

[83] For parallels between the deaths of Priam and Dido, cf. B. Fenik, 'Parallelism of Theme and Imagery in *Aeneid* II and IV', *AJPh* 80 (1959), 19–21.

even 'world domination',[84] but are passed over. The climax of the series is Augustus, as is shown by the triumphant conclusion to book 8, which contrasts sharply with the ambiguous ending of the other parade of Roman history, in Book 6,[85] where the concluding figure is the tragic, latter-day Aeneas, Marcellus: in his case 'pietas ... prisca fides invictaque bello / dextera' (878f.) are not enough to overcome fate. His early death suggests that though Augustus too may be another Aeneas, as the whole epic has suggested, there is no guarantee (at least in 19 B.C.) that, as a ruler, he will be an Aeneas who will found a golden age rather than a short-lived Marcellus. By the logic of the very poem that contains his praises, Augustus could be another Pompey, Caesar or Antony (he has already dallied with Cleopatra, married another man's wife). Even if he is another Aeneas, there is the awkwardness that, in one tradition at any rate, Aeneas lasted but three years from his triumph.[86] Augustus has already lasted longer than this, but at the time of his death Virgil could not know that Augustus, far from being 'sine nomine truncus', would go on for a further period longer than Ascanius' rule at Alba Longa, and give his name to Rome's new start after the Civil Wars.[87]

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[84] For this concept applied to Pompey, cf. Cic. *Cat.* 3.26 'unoque tempore in hac republica duos cives extitisse, quorum alter fines vestri imperi non terrae sed caeli regionibus terminaret'; for Pompey, cf. also his inscription describing himself as τὰ ὅρια τῆς ἡγεμονίας τοῖς ὅροις τῆς γῆς προσβιβάσας (Diod. Sic. 40.4) and O. Weippert, *Alexander-imitatio und römische Politik in republikanischer Zeit* (Augsberg, 1972), pp. 90f; for Caesar, S. Weinstock, *Divus Julius* (Oxford, 1971), index s.vv. 'dominus terrarum' and 'mastery of the world'; D. Michel, *Alexander als Vorbild für Pompeius, Caesar und Marcus Antonius* (Brussels, 1967), pp. 81ff. (all quoted by Hardie [n. 1] pp. 377 n. 3, 378 n. 10).

[85] On this see D. C. Feeney, 'History and Revelation in Vergil's Underworld', *PCPS* 32 (1986), 1–24.

[86] So 1.265f. 'tertia dum Latio regnantem viderit aestas, / ternaque transierint Rutulis hiberna subactis.' Livy does not give an exact timing, but Aeneas' death clearly follows soon after his victory (1.2.5f.): 'fretusque his animis coalescentium in dies magis duorum populorum Aeneas ... in aciem copias eduxit. Secundum inde proelium Latinis, Aeneae etiam ultimum operum mortalium fuit.' However, in *Aen.* 6.764f. 'quem tibi longaevo serum Lavinia coniunx / educet', there is apparently reference to a different and contradictory tradition.

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