**Document No. 3**

**Virgil, *Aeneid*** 2.544-558

sic fatus senior telumque imbelle[[1]](#footnote-1) sine ictu

coniecit, rauco quod protinus aere repulsum, 545

et summo clipei nequiquam umbone pependit.

So spoke the old man and hurled his weak/unwarlike spear without effect, which at once bounced off the clanging brass and hung uselessly from the top of the shield's boss.[[2]](#footnote-2)

cui Pyrrhus:[[3]](#footnote-3) 'referes ergo haec et nuntius ibis[[4]](#footnote-4)

Pelidae genitori. illi mea tristia facta[[5]](#footnote-5)

degeneremque[[6]](#footnote-6) Neoptolemum narrare memento.[[7]](#footnote-7)

nunc morere.'[[8]](#footnote-8)

To him Pyrrhus said: 'Then you shall bear this news and go as messenger to my father, Peleus' son. Be sure to tell him of my sorry deeds and of his degenerate/ unworthy (son) Neoptolemus! Now die!'

hoc dicens[[9]](#footnote-9) altaria ad ipsa[[10]](#footnote-10) trementem 550

traxit[[11]](#footnote-11) et in multo lapsantem sanguine nati,[[12]](#footnote-12)

implicuitque comam laeva, dextraque coruscum[[13]](#footnote-13)

extulit ac lateri capulo tenus abdidit ensem.

So saying, he dragged him, trembling to the actual altar and slipping in his son's streaming blood, and wound his hair in his left hand,[[14]](#footnote-14) while with the right he unsheathes his flashing sword and buried it to the hilt in his side.

haec finis Priami fatorum, hic exitus illum

sorte tulit Troiam incensam et prolapsa videntem 555

Pergama, tot quondam populis terrisque superbum

regnatorem Asiae.

This was the end of Priam's fortunes; this the doom that by fate carried him off — to see Troy burned and the citadel laid low, he who was once proud lord of so many tribes and lands, the monarch of Asia.

iacet ingens litore truncus,

avulsumque umeris caput et sine nomine corpus.

He lies, a huge trunk upon the shore, a head severed from the neck, a corpse without a name!

1. The weapon is old or not thrown in a war-like way. Possibly also *hypallage* (=transferred epithet): Priam is unwarlike. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. “If Priam’s spear is repulsed but hangs, that surely confirms that V. thinks of the shield as layered; the spear penetrates enough into the outermost layer to secure the point, but fails to pierce it, and is therefore ‘repulsed’.” [HORSFALLp.413] [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. The verb of speaking/replying omitted. (Hints that the speech will be ‘curt, contemptuous, and off-hand’.) A speech of heavy sarcasm; this is even how the ancients read it. Servius says = *sarcasmos est, iocus cum amaritudine*: ‘it is sarcasm, a bitter joke’. (Maurus Servius Honoratus was an early fifth-century AD grammarian, with the contemporary reputation of being the most learned man of his generation in Italy; he was the author of a set of commentaries on the works of Virgil, which constituted the first **incunable** to be printed at Florence, by Bernardo Cennini, 1471.) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Roland G. Austin suggests Pyrrhus’ here shows contempt for Priam’s role as errand boy. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. A sense both of ‘grim’ towards Priam, and—ironically—‘unhappy, deplorable’, to his father Achilles. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. *Degenerem* is used to show that N’s morals do not corresponded to those of his father. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Cheeky. ‘Another gibe; the messenger must be sure not to forget his lines.’ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Abrupt command closes the speech after 1st metrical foot. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. The full force of a present participle: as he is speaking the last words he is dragging Priam. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. ‘The seeker after sanctuary at last, as seemed inevitable for some time, becomes victim.’ HORSFALL Priam is treated as a sacrificial victim at an altar where he should have been safe. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Alliteration of T. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. A most horrible image of the king slithering around in the blood of his son Polites. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Hyperbaton of “flashing/glittering”: the sword has just been taken out from the scabbard and this is a menacing adjective. [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Here, Pyrrhus’ actions are not altogether easy to follow, for he grasps Priam’s hair – as if about to behead him - only to plunge his sword into the king’s side. No beheading in the narrative. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)