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Religion and Identity in Pacuvius's *Chryses*[1]

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Themes of identity and otherness are obviously fundamental to any play in which discovery of true parentage plays a role – particularly when that discovery changes an individual's sense of ethnic identity. Pacuvius's *Chryses* is just such a play. The emotional affect of its narrative appeals profoundly to modern sentiments; if some scholars are right in attributing to this play a scene recalled vividly in performance by Cicero, we have testimony to its great emotional impact on the contemporary audience as well.[2] I shall further suggest, however, that this emotional power is deployed toward the creation of a new identity and community of values intended to unite its Roman audience with a particular view of Greeks and Greek culture in the play which subserves the new imperial vision of the second century BC, in large part through the play's use of highly Romanized religious language.

The story of Chryses is sufficiently unfamiliar to warrant summary here. First, a few points about the sources for that reconstruction: for the narrative we rely largely on Hyginus 120–121. Sophocles wrote the first tragedy on Chryses of which we have a record. Many have argued that the summary in Hyginus accurately reflects the plot of the Sophoclean tragedy, but in fact the five surviving fragments of that play are too little to assure us of this.[3] Wilamowitz rejected any close adaptation of Sophocles, suggesting either a Hellenistic tragedy or quite free Pacuvian composition shaped the Roman play; he found the philosophical discussions in the Pacuvian *Chryses* „undenkbar" in Sophocles and the plot dependent on Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*.[4] I have nothing new to add to the controversy over the source of Pacuvius's material and propose here simply to focus on the

1 For the benefit of Anglophone readers I have cited the fragments of Pacuvius from Warmington 1936 but give Ribbeck's numbers as well. The text and commentary of D'Anna 1967 are the most useful but not widely available in North America.

2 Cicero, *fin.* 5.22.63 testifies to Pacuvius's authorship of fr. 163–166 W. (= 365[1]–365[3] R.[3]), where both comrades claim to be Orestes, then ask to die together, but not to the specific play. Warmington attributes them to *Doulorestes*, D'Anna 1967 to *Chryses* (fr. 118–121), while Ribbeck opts for caution. I incline to the *Chryses*, but as this fragment forms no essential part of either my argument or my reconstruction of the play, I leave the issue here.

3 For the essential bibliography, see Pearson 1917, 327–330; Radt 1977, 494–496; Lloyd-Jones 1996, 340–343.

4 Wilamowitz 1883, 257–258; 1932, 400 and n. 1 (commenting particularly on fr. 107–114 W. [= 86–92 R.[3]]).

meanings implicit in the *reception* of Pacuvius's play by the Roman audience. I will note, however, that Sophocles was not so prominent in the repertoire of the Hellenistic Artists of Dionysus as was Euripides, and the evidence from comedy at least suggests a significant correlation between the Artists' performance repertoire and the plays chosen for adaptation on the Roman stage, making Pacuvian imitation of Euripidean plot perhaps more likely.[5]

Narratively, the action of the *Chryses* follows directly on that of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*. After Orestes, Pylades, and Iphigenia escape from King Thoas and the land of the Taurians, they come to the island of Sminthe. Hyginus says they were brought by a "favorable wind" (*vento secundo*), although nothing suggests why they might have wanted to sail there, and they may in fact have been shipwrecked.[6] On the island live the elder Chryses, priest of Apollo, his daughter Chryseis, and his grandson, also named Chryses. Chryseis had been carried off by Achilles during the Trojan War and given to Agamemnon. Her father unsuccessfully sought her return until Agamemnon was forced to do so by famine.[7] She said that Agamemnon had not molested her but after her return gave birth to a son, who was named Chryses for his grandfather. Chryseis then asserted that Apollo had been the father of her child. Arriving on the island, Orestes and company appeal to this younger Chryses for protection against Thoas, who is still pursuing them. At first he refuses, but when he learns from his mother that Agamemnon was in fact his father (and Orestes and Iphigenia thus his brother and sister), he makes common cause with the Greeks, helps them kill Thoas, and returns with his siblings to Mycenae.

At first glance, the plot seems a virtual remake of the *Iphigenia in Tauris*.[8] Orestes and Pylades, now joined by Iphigenia, confront a religious figure and a ruler hostile to them. We have no direct knowledge as to who rules Sminthe, but it is tempting to imagine the younger Chryses as a Pentheus figure, the man really in charge politically although his grandfather still functions as a religious authority; compare the situation of Cadmus in

5 Cf. Wilamowitz 1932, 400 n. 1: „Freie Bearbeitung traue ich dem Pacuvius zu."

6 The setting seems to be the seashore, near the promontory of Ida, rather than in a town. Castagna 1991, 214–215 points out Pacuvius's liking for unusual settings, perhaps related to his interests as a painter. Some attribute fr. inc. 37–46 W. (= 366–375 R.^{3}), the longest surviving fragment of Pacuvius, to this play. Its text is disputed, but if we follow D'Anna 1967, fr. 114–115, we have explicit testimony of the shipwreck: *velut Orestes modo fuit rex, factust mendicus modo / naufragio.*

7 And perhaps plague: Hyginus, *fab.* 121: *ob id Apollo exercitum eius* (i.e. Agamemnon) *partim fame <partim peste> prope totum consumpsit.*

8 In a forthcoming paper, "Pacuvius: Melodrama, Reversals and Recognitions", Elaine Fantham suggests a pattern in his tragedies of reworking better known Greek myths as sequels or spin-offs. The *Chryses* is a prime example.

the *Bacchae*. The refugees are first threatened, then helped when one part of the local power structure changes sides, and finally defeat the forces of barbarism and sail home to Greece – thus far the parallels between the *Iphigenia in Tauris* and the *Chryses*. The latter, however, is arguably more complex, as emerges from a comparison of the roles of Iphigenia in her play and the younger Chryses in this play. Iphigenia has always known who she is. Once she recognizes her brother, her course of action is plain. The dividing line between Greek and barbarian is quite sharp in Euripides' play. Not so in the *Chryses:* although his grandfather is the priest of Apollo, the younger Chryses and all his fellow islanders distinguish the Greeks from themselves. The younger Chryses is the likely speaker here:

id quod nostri caelum memorant,
Grai perhibent aethera. (110–111 W. = 89 R.^{3})

Note the linguistic sleight of hand here: by contrasting the perfectly intelligible though distinctly Greek word *aether* with *caelum,* the speaker also subtly identifies himself with the Roman point of view.

Fr. 94–96 W. (= 104–106 R.^{3}) also identify the *Graii* as something apart from the speaker:

promerenda gratia
simul cum videam Graios nihil mediocriter
redamptruare opibusque summis persequi.

Presumably the Sminthians allied themselves with the Trojans in the war, thus accounting for Achilles' raid on the island, but neither do the islanders identify themselves as Trojans. Fr. inc. 14 W. (= 364 R.^{3}) identifies someone as Greek by his speech: *Graiugena; de istoc aperit ipsa oratio.* Warmington notes that the grammatical form here is consistent either with the speaker saying this about himself or another remarking about him. Cicero, who preserves this fragment, has just quoted from Pacuvius's *Chryses,* so it seems likely that this fragment too stems from the same play, presumably spoken by – or about – Orestes.

None of the fragments bears directly on the younger Chryses' discovery of his parentage, but his situation is obviously different from Iphigenia's in the *Iphigenia in Tauris.* The discovery changes his ethnic as well as his personal identity. It not only transforms his view of these Greek visitors, but it also moves him to war-like action, the killing of Thoas, as well as motivating him to leave the only home he has known and follow his siblings westwards.

Some 25 or 30 fragments have been attributed to this play with more or less plausibility. While only a few speak directly to issues of identity and otherness, and a few more raise related points, together they offer an in-

triguing picture of the problems of identity in this play. Let us now turn to individual fragments, mostly in Warmington's order.

Nonius cites fr. 93 W. (= 111 R.^{3}) to show that *integrare* can mean the same as *redintegrare*. The elder Chryses is the obvious speaker, since he has an old hatred of the Greeks which he can now renew. The language he uses, *inimicitia* as the opposite of *amicitia*, is very Roman and identifies him with Roman values and views.

Festus cites fr. 94–96 W. (= 104–106 R.^{3}) to illustrate the word *redamptruare*, noting that the term is used to describe the dancing of the Salii. The significance of this association is considerable, although the identity of the speaker is disputed. Warmington gives these lines to the younger Chryses, while D'Anna suggests the grandfather or the mother speaks them.[9] In any case, it must be one of the Sminthians who acknowledges the Greeks' merits in such specifically Roman religious language. Even within Pacuvius's notably rich style,[10] the image is striking.

Although there is no certainty that they come from a single speaker, fr. 101–103 W. (= 80–82 R.^{3}) are probably spoken by the elder Chryses to the chorus. The appeal to ancestral friendship here, *antiqui amici maiorum meum*, is very Roman, as is the mention of auguries and interpretation of entrails. The speaker has seen something profoundly disturbing – most likely portents of what will happen if the Sminthians do not shelter and protect Orestes and his companions.[11]

These portents may well be a Pacuvian innovation, even if other elements of the plot follow a lost Sophoclean original. Portents were not a normal part of ordinary Greek cult; prophetic shrines such as Delphi were few and famous, and we have no reason to assume that cult of Apollo on Sminthe (unknown outside this play, in any case) dealt in prophecy. Rather, such portents seem a much more Roman, and indeed specifically Pacuvian, interest. Gesine Manuwald's discussion of Pacuvius's *Iliona* points out a possible parallel.[12] In that play the real Polydorus begins to unravel the mystery of his identity and of the murder of Deipylus as the result of an oracle about his parents and home he cannot understand. Manuwald notes that no Greek precedent exists for the oracle in the Polydorus myth. The narratives in Pacuvian tragedy thus seem to bolster the case for the truth of prophecy.[13]

By contrast, the speaker of fr. 104–106 W. (= 83–85 R.^{3}), the first of a complex of fragments preserved for us in Cicero's *de divinatione*, rejects augury and auspices as a source of true knowledge:

... nam isti qui linguam avium intellegunt
plusque ex alieno iecore sapiunt quam ex suo,
magis audiendum quam auscultandum censeo.

Warmington suggests the speaker is Thoas, and this makes excellent sense.[14] If the elder Chryses has seen portents, King Thoas will have to argue against these in his attempt to gain (or retain?) possession of the fugitives. While there is sarcasm in the phrase *quam ex suo*, the impersonal phrasing of *magis audiendum quam auscultandum* seems gentler and more polite. This suggests that the speaker is making his appeal to the younger Chryses who must decide between the warnings of his priestly grandfather and the demands of the importunate Thoas.[15]

It is not always noted that Cicero explicitly attributes fr. 112–114 W. (= 90–92 R.^{3}) to the same speaker as the preceding fragments:

quidquid est hoc, omnia animat format alit auget creat
sepelit recipitque in sese omnia, omniumque idem est pater,
indidemque eadem aeque oriuntur deintegro atque eodem occidunt.

The passage is well-known and seems to adapt ideas about nature preserved in a fragment of Euripides' *Chrysippus* (fr. 839 N.^{2}). On our reconstruction this speaker must be Thoas, who makes a strong and by no means ridiculous case for a purely natural world order, with no room for the supernatural. Thoas is no typical barbarian, then. He may reject the insights of traditional religion, but he does so, not with crude disdain but with arguments that sound very much like Greek naturalistic philosophy.[16]

9 D'Anna 1967, fr. 123–124, p. 201 *ad loc.*

10 Cicero, *orat.* 36 speaks of his *versi ornati atque elaborati*; cf. Traglia 1982, 229.

11 For further on the reconstruction of this scene, see Sutton 1984, 187–188. Mariotti 1960, 31 imagines that these portents appear when Orestes is about to be killed later in the play, but foreshadowing seems more dramatically effective.

12 G. Manuwald, this volume.

13 We might note in passing Pacuvius, *Periboea*, fr. 334 W. (= 308 R.^{3}), which defends Delphic prophecy as *flexa non falsa*.

14 Valsa 1957, 19 n. 45 attributes to this scene a further Pacuvian fragment which deals with seers from an unknown tragedy: *nam si qui quae eventura sunt provideant, aequiperent Iovi* (fr. inc. 36 W. = 407 R.^{3}). The fragment would not be out of place in the mouth of Thoas here, perhaps after the argument intensifies, but the attribution is far from certain.

15 There is no evidence for the view of Sutton 1984, 189 that Chryses is already "firmly on the side of the fugitives" at this point. It is likely that the elder Chryses speaks fr. 116 W. (= 117 R.^{3}) during this scene: *di monerint melior atque amentiam averruncassint tuam.*

16 The discussion in Cicero concludes with a denunciation of mercenary soothsayers, quoted from Ennius's *Telamo* (CXXXIV, 266–269 Jocelyn = 273–276 R.^{3}). The tone in Ennius is far more violent, and we should beware confusing the situation in that tragedy with the one in Pacuvius's play. I believe this conjunction has misled Mandolfo 1975, 43, into her curious judgement that fr. 104–106 W. are «espressa ... in modo violento».

We may now return to fr. 97 W. (= 78 R.^{3}), where the speaker's mind augurs about another's wanderings: *propemodum animus coniectura de errore eius augurat.* The wanderer must be Orestes, so at first glance the assumption of Warmington, followed by Sutton,[17] that the speaker is Thoas, may not seem unreasonable. In light of fr. 104–106 and their rejection of augury, however, it seems to me a character inconsistency for Thoas to use such a verb here. The speaker is more likely to be the elder or the younger Chryses, either of whom could speak positively in the language of augury.

Finally we must look at the evidence for a scene famous in performance in antiquity, although we cannot with certainty attribute it to this play. Cicero in *de finibus* 5.27.63 records the powerful reaction from the audience to a scene in Pacuvius in which two individuals both claim to be Orestes and then beg for the king to kill them both.[18] It is tempting to assign this scene to the *Chryses* because of fr. 100 W. (= 101 R.^{3}), in which someone claims to have found out which of two individuals was Orestes: *inveni, opino, Orestes uter esset tamen.* The speaker might be the "king" in question or another observer. It is in fact the word "king" in Cicero's account which causes the most concern – and this word is part of his framing of the tragic quotations, not part of what he quotes directly from Pacuvius. We know Thoas was a king. If we assign these fragments to the *Chryses,* the word may imply that Thoas has at least temporarily captured Orestes and Pylades. If so, however, would Thoas be in doubt as to which one was Orestes? At this point in the plot, would he care? Both men are in his eyes guilty of sacrilege for stealing the image of Artemis and both therefore deserve death. One solution is to assign the fragments to Pacuvius's *Doulorestes* (*Orestes in Thrall*). On the other hand we may wonder how loosely Cicero may be using the term *rex.* Could it refer to the younger Chryses, as *de facto* ruler of the island, who might wish to punish Orestes for Agamemnon's enslavement of his mother? The younger Chryses has no direct quarrel with Pylades and might see justice in punishing only Orestes. Certainty is not possible, but circumstantial confusion about Orestes' identity would nicely anticipate the much more fundamental confusion about the younger Chryses' identity in this play.

The time has come to offer some synthesis of the impression these fragments make. While much remains uncertain, it is striking that positive or neutral uses of religious language in this play are associated with Chryses and the Sminthians, while Thoas is simultaneously portrayed as rejecting augury and haruspicy and embracing Greek naturalistic philosophy. The

17 Sutton 1984, 188.

18 Cf. the discussions in Traglia 1982, 231, Ruiz de Elvira 1977, 48–50.

anagnorisis of the play thus has fascinating ideological as well as personal implications. Chryses discovers he is the son of Agamemnon and therefore Greek. He throws his lot in with his newly discovered siblings, Orestes and Iphigenia, a course of action which has apparently been endorsed by the prodigies his grandfather witnessed. Their enemy King Thoas is not, however, the ignorant and crude barbarian of Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris,* but more himself a Greek philosopher. His defeat and death represent a rejection of one aspect of Greek culture, while the "true" Greeks, Orestes, Iphigenia, and now Chryses, with whom the audience identifies emotionally, return safely home to Greece with the blessings of the gods and traditional religion. The implications for the contemporary Roman audience are clear: a rapprochement with traditional Greek culture is not only possible but desirable.

One final fragment offers even more – although its meaning is disputed. Nonius cites fr. 118 W. (= 79 R.^{3}) for the notion that *populare* can have the meaning "win over the love of the people":

> Nonius 39,31–33: *'populare' significat populi amorem conciliare ...*
> *atque ut promeruit pater mihi patriam populavit meam.*

There is no other evidence for this curious notion, and both Naevius and Accius attest to its standard meaning of "devastate, lay waste, destroy" in early Latin as well as later.[19] Warmington therefore translates it accordingly in the Loeb, and with this meaning it is certainly a startling statement:

> And, as it well deserved,
> my father laid my country waste.

Note the speaker's emphasis on himself: *pater mihi, patriam ... meam.* How could it be right for a father to wreak this devastation? I suggest the younger Chryses speaks this line, reflecting back on the actions of Agamemnon and the Greeks on Sminthe, after he learns of his true parentage and his new identity as a Greek.

No fragment clearly comes from the ending of the *Chryses,* and for the action we rely on Hyginus again, who tells us:

> *tum Chryses ... cum Oreste fratre Thoantem interfecit et inde Mycenas cum signo Dianae incolumes pervenerunt. (fab.* 121)

19 Naevius, *Bellum Poenicum,* fr. 31–32 W. [=39 (37).3 R.]: *insulam integram / urit populatur, vastat;* Accius, *Astyanax,* fr. 133 W. (= 164 R.^{3}): *qui nostra per vim patria populavit bona.* D'Anna 1967, fr. 125, p. 201 *ad loc.* accepts this meaning for *populavit* but distances the speaker from the sentiment by punctuating thus: *atque ut promeruit! pater mihi patriam populavit meam.* He therefore sees the line as «un'obiezione di Crise iunior». This punctuation seems driven by an assumption that the line must occur early, rather than late, in the play, but no reasons are given.

Yet for the educated Roman spectator, the story did not end at Mycenae. The myths of Orestes in the west, so ably discussed by Maria Raffaella Petaccia,[20] related how Orestes eventually brought the cult image of Diana to Aricia, founding there the notorious cult over which the *rex Nemorensis* presided, the starting point of Frazer's *Golden Bough*. Most Roman versions of the myth know of no intermediate stop on Sminthe and suggest, despite Euripides' version in the *Iphigenia in Tauris*, that Orestes killed Thoas in the land of the Taurians.[21] While it can only be speculation, it is certainly tempting to think that Pacuvius chose the story of Chryses to dramatize in part because it quite literally connected the world of Greeks and Trojans to the Roman west through the movement of the cult image. The presence of the elder Chryses, the probable witness of the troubling portents early in the play, invites further speculation: might he have predicted at the end of the play the eventual western destination of Orestes and the foundation of the cult at Aricia?

A cult aetiology must remain speculative, but the significance of Roman religious language in the play is certain. Pacuvius vindicates the truth of portents against the doubts of naturalistic philosophy while simultaneously connecting Greek and (apparent) Trojan through the mutual recognition and reunification of the children of Agamemnon. The story of the far more famous Orestes continues, but the figure of the younger Chryses in this play still embodies a powerful message. When he acknowledges the justice of the sack of Sminthe by his father Agamemnon in fr. 118 W. (= 79 R.^{3}), the younger Chryses becomes the former subject now identifying with the justice of the imperial project while simultaneously becoming a member of the new ruling order. Otherness becomes Identity, conquered and conqueror one. One could hardly ask for a more potent statement of the new political order of the second century BC.

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20 M.R. Petaccia, this volume, with ample citations. I am most grateful to her for sharing a copy of her talk with me. Note also Solinus 2.10, cited by Stefan Faller (this volume), on Orestes' dedication of the Taurian image of Diana.

21 Hyg. *fab.* 261; Servius *Aen.* 6,136: *Orestes, post occisum regem Thoantem in regione Taurica ...* .

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IDENTITÄTEN UND ALTERITÄTEN

Herausgegeben
von

Hans-Joachim Gehrke Monika Fludernik
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