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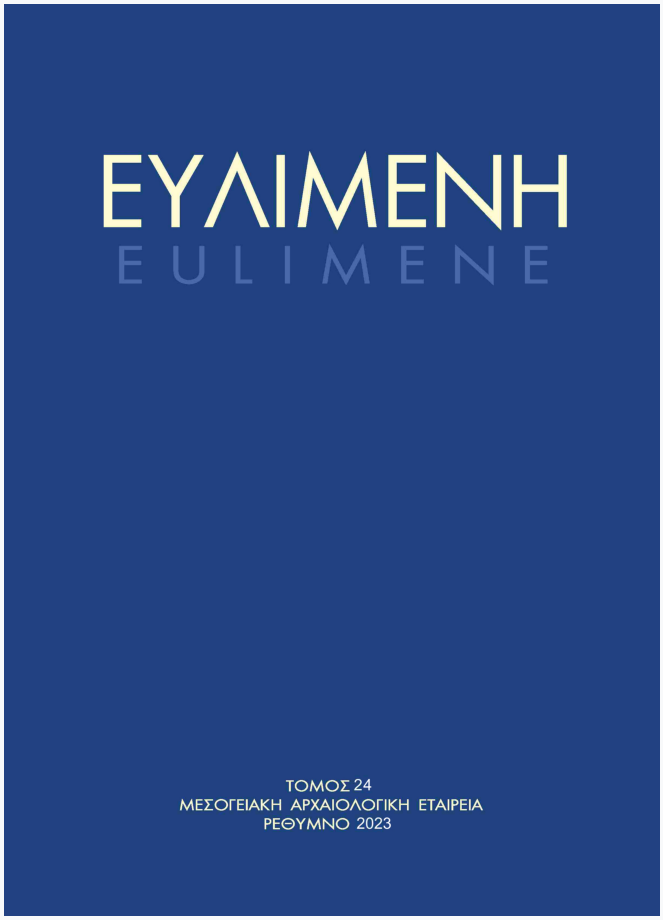

In defence of the Aeneid physician Iapyx Iasides in honour and pietas

Anagnostis P. Agelarakis

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Περιλήψεις / Summaries / Zusammenfassungen / Sommaires / Riassunti

Αγγελική Λεμπέση, Ο γλυπτός διάκοσμος του Ναού Α στον Πρινιά. Μία ερμηνευτική πρόταση, *ΕΥΛΙΜΕΝΗ* 24 (2023), 1-12.

The interpretation proposed herein for the sculptural decoration of the so-called Temple A at Prinias takes into consideration its connection with the traditional architectural type of the *oikos-naos*, as well as the representational data of votives from Cretan sanctuaries. The correlation of the above data indicates that the theory whereby the three different types of female figures portrayed in the sculptural decoration reflect the honored Mistress of animals is precarious.

The position which the three types of figures have in the structural type of the *oikos-naos* is subject to the principle of ranking sequence; the higher position of the seated Mistress of Animals is prominent when compared both to the downgraded position of the clothed and the nude female figures who are portrayed standing and also to the procession of the armed charioteers.

This is the way in which the ruling class of the second half of the 7th c. BC notes the necessary subjection of the inhabitants of Prinias who had full political rights to the transcendental world of the honored Mistress of Animals.

Konstantinos Kalogeropoulos – Manolis I. Stefanakis, Natural and anthropogenic damage in the archaeological sites of Kymissala, Rhodes, *ΕΥΛΙΜΕΝΗ* 24 (2023), 13-41.

Ο αρχαίος Δήμος των Κυμισαλέων βρίσκεται στην περιοχή της Κυμισάλας και εκτείνεται ανάμεσα στις κτηματικές γαίες των χωριών Σιάννα και Μονόλιθος της Ρόδου. Είναι ένας εκτενής γεωγραφικός αρχαιολογικός χώρος, με πολλαπλές αρχαιολογικές θέσεις που διασυνδέονται μεταξύ τους και με διάρκεια ζωής από την Ύστερη Μυκηναϊκή περίοδο έως την Ύστερη Αρχαιότητα. Το αρχαιολογικό τοπίο της Κυμισάλας έχει πληγεί από διάφορες φυσικές και ανθρωπογενείς καταστροφές στο πέρασμα των αιώνων. Ο σεισμός και η βλάστηση είναι οι κυριότεροι φυσικοί παράγοντες καταστροφής της περιοχής, ενώ ως προς τους ανθρωπογενείς παράγοντες η λεηλασία αρχαιοτήτων, η χρήση γης μέσω εντατικής καλλιέργειας, η μελισσοκομία και η κτηνοτροφία, οι οικοδομικές δραστηριότητες και η επαναχρησιμοποίηση οικοδομικών υλικών έχουν μεταβάλει ή έχουν καταστρέψει σε μεγάλο βαθμό τις αρχαιολογικές θέσεις. Τα τελευταία 18 χρόνια, η Αρχαιολογική Έρευνα Κυμισάλας έχει λάβει συγκεκριμένα μέτρα για την πρόληψη της πολιτιστικής και οικολογικής καταστροφής της περιοχής.

The ancient Deme of the Kymissaleis is located in the area of Kymissala, Rhodes, and extends between Mount Akramitis and the shore, along the estate districts of the modern villages of Sianna and Monolithos. It is an extensive geographical archaeological

site, which covers an area of about 10,000 acres, with multiple interconnected fields including rural settlements and urban planning, fortresses, an acropolis, graveyards and burial monuments that reflect social stratifications and establishments, as well as a variety of other sites and monuments in a vast chronological period, starting from the late Mycenaean period until Late Antiquity.

The archaeological landscape of Kymissala has been affected by various natural and man-made disasters over the centuries. Earthquakes and vegetation are the main natural factors of destruction of the area, while, in terms of anthropogenic factors, the looting of antiquities, the use of land through intensive cultivation, beekeeping and animal husbandry, construction activities and the reuse of building materials have altered or destroyed largely the archaeological sites. During the past 18 years or work, the Kymissala Archaeological Research Project has taken various measures to prevent the cultural and ecological destruction of the area.

Anagnostis Agelarakis, In defence of the *Aeneid* physician *Iapyx Iasides* in honour and *pietas*, *ΕΥΛΙΜΕΝΗ* 24 (2023), 43-55.

Αυτό το άρθρο ανταποκρίνεται στους επικριτικούς χαρακτηρισμούς σύγχρονων σχολιαστών για τον χαρακτήρα και τη συμπεριφορά του Ιάπυξ Ιασίδη, αλλά και των ικανοτήτων του ως ιατρού κατά την χειρουργική αγωγή του τραυματισμένου με αιχμή βέλους Αινεία, όπως περιγράφεται στο 12ο βιβλίο της *Αινειάδας*. Στο συγκεκριμένο πλαίσιο του έπους, αφενός εμπλέκεται στη δυναμική του ως παράμετρος ο θεός Απόλλωνας και αφετέρου ως ενδιάμεσος παράγοντας η θεά Αφροδίτη στην πιο κρίσιμη στιγμή της μάχης των προσφύγων Τρώων υπό την αρχηγία του Αινεία, για τον απώτερο σκοπό μιας νέας πατρίδας για τον λαό του και για να εδραιώσει τα θεμέλια για αυτό που τελικά θα γίνει η Ρώμη, εναντίον των Λατίνων και του ηγέτη τους Τούρνου.

Εκτός από τη διακειμενικότητα, αυτή η εργασία προσφέρει μέσω μιας διαθεματικής προσέγγισης ένα φάσμα πληροφοριών και επεξηγηματικών στοιχείων που δεν είχαν ληφθεί υπόψη στην εξήγηση της συμπεριφοράς και του επαγγελματισμού του αρχαίου ιατρού. Διευκρινίζονται επίσης, εκτός των ζητημάτων σχετικών της ιατρικής κατάρτισης του Ιασίδη, της επάρκειας της επεμβατικής του επιδεξιότητας και της θεραπευτικής του ικανότητας, εξίσου σημαντικά δεδομένα που αφορούν τα εύσημα του ενάρετου και ευσεβή χαρακτήρα του.

This paper is written in response to modern commentator comments and characterizations on *Iapyx Iasides*' character, behavior, and abilities as a physician and surgeon to treat the wounded Aeneas by an arrowhead, recorded in book XII of the *Aeneid*, a context that also implicates the intermediary agencies of Apollo and Venus. In addition to intertextuality, this paper offers a missing interdisciplinary spectrum of explanatory conditions and arguments in support of the conduct and performance of the ancient physician in honor and *pietas*.

Βασιλική Ζαπατίνα, Κλεοπάτρα Ζ' – Venus Genetrix, *ΕΥΛΙΜΕΝΗ* 24 (2023), 57-79.

In the second half of the 1st c. BC, the mint of Paphos issued a series of bronze coins in the name of Cleopatra VII. The coins bear the bust of a *Kourotrophos* figure, which has been identified either as Aphrodite-Eros, Cleopatra-Caesarion or Isis-Horus. After 44 BC, Cleopatra VII celebrated the occasion of Cyprus's annexation to the Ptolemaic kingdom, with a bronze issue. In Paphos, Aphrodite's significant cult center and birthplace, Cleopatra imported a new iconography of the goddess. *Genetrix* was a title given to Venus by Julius Caesar, who spent his life as *Venere Prognatus*, and considered himself descendant of the goddess. Caesar founded the temple of Venus *Genetrix* in his new Forum in 46 BC. There, he dedicated a statue of Venus which represented the goddess as a mother holding her infant, little Cupid. His second dedication was a gold or gilded statue of Cleopatra, resembling in posture and figure with Venus *Genetrix*. The two statues were depicted on the series of denarii, issued by Caesar during his military expedition in Spain in 45 BC. After his assassination in 44 BC, Cleopatra, as the mother of Caesar's only son, probably dedicated a statue of Venus *Genetrix* to the sanctuary of Paphos. This article discusses the possibility that the bronze Cypriot issue bears this specific kourotrophic figure.

IN DEFENCE OF THE *AENEID* PHYSICIAN *IAPYX IASIDES* IN HONOUR AND *PIETAS**

A. Retracing the operative procedure of a surgeon in the treatment of a wound by a barbed arrow

Evaluating bioarchaeologically, with a focal interest in the treatment of war wounds in Classical antiquity, a spectacular palaeopathological case of *intra vitam* trauma involved a bronze arrowhead that had been lodged for a long period in the left ulna of a purported fourth century BCE warrior from Greece, wounded for life.

It was fascinating to forensically decipher in retrospect aspects of the medical challenges that would have been faced during the surgical intervention, most probably carried out by a field surgeon, unable to extract the trilobed and barbed arrowhead. The projectile had pierced with severity through the soft tissues of the forearm, cutting muscles, injuring nerves, rupturing major blood vessels, and causing extravasation and hematoma. The tip and two of the arrowhead's sharp lobes having caused a compressed fracture were deeply embedded at a zero angle into the cortical component of the ulnar diaphysis while the barbed point had transfixed a superficial foothold into the bone. The surgeon unable to remove the lodged projectile succeeded nevertheless in blunting by scraping off the sharp edges of the remaining two lobes (Fig. 1) that would have laid otherwise dangerously bare among the fibres of the deeper muscles, branches of blood vessels, and nerves of the forearm. Apparently, it was reckoned prudent for the survivorship of the warrior instead of continuing to endeavour for the dislodging and extraction of the arrowhead to strive for haemostasis, the cleaning, and dressing of the wound[1] under the perilous context that could have pertained in the proximity of the battlefield, and most importantly considering the grievous condition of the wounded, who had been suffering from agonizing pain, shock, and life-threatening haemorrhaging for an unknown length of time before medical aid could be available. Such critical decisions to be made by field physicians on medico-surgical approaches in wound treatments would not have been uncommon to their tangible actuality on the battlefield. Thus, having an accomplished, veteran, surgeon in the field could make the difference between lifesaving treatment and death.

Under the field circumstances, prolonging the surgical intervention by further opening the wound, cutting with a sharp instrument to widen and deepen the gauge in a continued effort to better grip from its base to attempt to dislodge and pull out the

* Many thanks are extended to Panayotis G. Agelarakis, MA., and Antonio Ruiz for reading and making comments on the text.

[1] Agelarakis *et al.* 2020.

arrowhead impaled into the bone would alone have been a dangerous procedure[2]. It would have worsened the wound with additional severity to soft tissue injury compounded by unavoidable lacerations to innervation and vascularization, the possibility of an excessive artery tear causing profuse bleeding, while if able to force out the projectile, and with excisional debridement, the danger would be looming of further unsettling the structural integrity of the ulnar diaphysis, the cortical bone component having already been undermined, pierced by the arrowhead[3]. These conditions would imminently threaten the life prospect of the warrior, already under serious physiological duress[4], while in the case of post-operational survivorship, it would have profoundly increased by intravasation the probabilities of life-threatening infection, through the process of blunt dissection in the enlarged and deepened incision to the bone surface[5].

B. The wounding of Aeneas by an arrow in *Aeneid* XII, and the Pompeii fresco depiction

Such tantalizing conditions in surgically treating a war wound by an embedded arrowhead was reminiscent of the epic narrative in *Aeneid* 12, describing the circumstances that related to the traumatism of Aeneas by an arrow, and the daunting efforts of surgeon Iapyx Iasides (*Aeneid* 12.400-405) to remove the deeply embedded arrowhead from the wound, until the miraculous intervention of Venus (*Aeneid* 12.411-419); the essence and dynamics of which are splendidly depicted in the Pompeii fresco of the second half of the 1st c. CE[6] (Fig. 2).

Although Virgil's literary narrative may not offer the occasion for forensic diagnostic evaluations applicable in the tangible bioarchaeological record permitting the retrieval of lines of evidence on the complexity of the injury and of the surgeon's actions, as presented above, it provides nevertheless favourable opportunities in the context of this inquiry for the careful examination of indelible tesserae, components of a panorama of events, describing details on the nature and effect of Aeneas' traumatism, and importantly on aspects of the status, function, and behaviour, as well as the surgical efficaciousness of physician Iapyx in treating the wound[7].

Hence, in the section of the *Aeneid* (12.311-440), it appears that there is no anatomic mention made of the arrow piercing the leg, nor with specificity to the thigh,

---

[2] Modern medical studies verify and warn of much-increased risk factors and complications for the patient in prolonged operative duration, cf. Cheng *et al.* 2018.

[3] Its depth toward the intramedullary region of the ulna, or of the existence of any cracks or fissures radiating on the diaphysis from the locus of the compressed fracture would have been unknown to the surgeon at that juncture.

[4] The possibility could not be nullified that there could have been additional wounds that weren't traced skeletally.

[5] Further, the particular bone locus would have to be denuded of attached muscle fibers and their innervation within the origin region of M. *flexor digitorum profundus*, hence preemptively minimally compromising kinesiological flexion functions of the right wrist and fingers.

[6] Of the house of triclinium 8 (Insula 1 or Region VII, 25.47) Pompeii, dated between 45 to 79 CE, National Archaeological Museum of Napoli, Sala LXXIII, Catalogue of the Museo Archeologico di Napoli, Pompeian collection, Frescos catalog, inventory No. 9009, photographic reproduction-Wikimedia Commons.

[7] Elements of epic poetry as these may be, they arguably aim to reflect on facets of the historical background they are plotted to describe, yet also of cultural perceptions and concepts, as well as understandings of Virgil himself.

compared to what was illustrated in the Pompeii fresco. Nevertheless, because of the fresco's close chronological proximity (by circa a century) to the composition of the Aeneid (30-19 BCE), it may be a more reliable record of Virgil's work compared to repetitively copied editions (*manu scripta*)[8], or commentators that significantly postdate[9] the publication of the Aeneid; unless the injury placed at the thigh would have been depicted in the fresco as a "preferred reconstruction". Even in that case, however, it would not have been anatomically ectopic based on what may be derived from what is alluded to in *Aeneid* 12. Aeneas although not wearing his helmet when addressing his troops, while gesturing with an unarmed stretched-out right hand (*Aeneid* 12.311-312)[10], would have otherwise been protected as an active combatant by wearing the corselet, apron[11], and greaves (*Aeneid* 12.430-432)[12], except possibly of thigh guards[13], of interest particularly to the wounding of the right thigh as depicted in the Pompeii fresco[14]. The text clearly indicates that the arrowhead had penetrated in depth where it pierced Aeneas' body, not unlike what could have happened had it pierced in the thigh region, which proportionally comprises the anatomic location in the human body with the greatest ensemble of muscle weight and volume.

That the arrow was transfixed in a principally ventral anatomic location which could be accessible to Aeneas' hands[15] is derived from the narrative describing his action in struggling to remove "the head of the broken shaft" (*Aeneid* 12.385-388). That the arrow had pierced deep is similarly derived by Aeneas urging his comrades to further cut with a broad sword the area of the wound to reach the base footing of the lodged arrowhead to remove it before returning to battle (*Aeneid* 12.388-390), but also of Iapyx's efforts, both with "his (right) hand", and with "gripping tong tugs" to reach, clasp, and attempt although unsuccessfully to extract the arrowhead (*Aeneid* 12.400-

[8] For the papyri preserving Virgil see Scappaticcio 2013. Cf. *Humanities Core* 2017.

[9] For example, the commentaries of Maurus Servius Honoratus, despite the unique nature of their exegetical value of Virgil's *Aeneid* were composed in the beginning of the 5th c. CE, cf. Savage 1934; Mastronarde 2019.

[10] There is no mention in that excerpt of the *Aeneid* that he was holding the shield with his left hand. In that case the shield could have been steadied upright on the ground while leaning on (and thus protecting) his left leg; given that, by his gesturing to his troops, he was described as righthanded. The shield and the spear were indispensable components of his defensive-offensive panoply when he ventured out again to the battlefield once healed (*Aeneid* 12.430-432).

[11] The apron, or groin flaps, is not mentioned specifically in the *Aeneid* section, however, it was an important panoply attire known as μίτρη, attached immediately below the corselet. It had saved the life of Menelaus from a poisoned arrow in the Trojan War, *Iliad* 4.137.

[12] Elements of the panoply are derived by the description of his rearming to venture to the battlefield once healed. However, it remains unclear if when rearming the sheathing of his legs with "gold" involved only the wearing of greaves (leg guards) or of thigh guards as well, and if the particular sheathing of the legs with "gold" may just have related to the reflection the leg guards being of polished copper alloy, and/or to the emphasis placed in the narrative to indicate of the extra protection allotted to that locus of the anatomy following its traumatism and healing intervention by Iapyx through Venus; for gold was associated with Venus as she was adorning her garments, i.e. when preparing to meet with Anchises (*Hymn. Hom. Ven.* 65).

[13] The unprotected thighs along with the neck region comprised most vulnerable anatomic areas for life threatening wounds sustained chiefly by thrusting spear in close encounter combat, and by projected missiles.

[14] Cf. note 9, supra, for the probability of the right thigh having been unprotected.

[15] Thus, not in a posterior (dorsal) body location, particularly while clad with his panoply and especially with the corselet that would have hindered sharp-angled dorsolateral flexion.

404). Lending support to the argument that the arrow had wounded Aeneas' leg may also be derived from his inability to walk but with an antalgic gait, avoiding putting pressure on the affected leg, allocating instead, as much as possible the weight distribution, that would have been apportioned to the painful leg, to his spear (*Aeneid* 12.385-388).

Apropos, the Pompeii fresco justly depicts Aeneas supporting his body weight while standing on the unaffected left leg, whereas the trajectory forces of pressure on the right leg are partially distributed to the long spear. On the spot, Iapyx is depicted in a rather unstable, kneeling, and squatting position on the ground[16] carrying out a challenging surgical procedure with "gripping tong tugs" held by the fingertips of the right hand while the left arm stretched behind the patient most probably aimed to stabilize the right thigh of Aeneas[17]. Nonetheless, the placement of Aeneas in a standing posture would have in praxis engendered a disadvantage in margin and scope for the surgeon, in performing a diagnostic evaluation before attempting to operate, instead of having the wounded in a reclined or seated position with the body and thigh muscles in a somewhat more relaxed state, assisting the surgeon[18], and for better controlling the haemorrhagic effects. Understandably, the fresco rendering of Virgil's work emphasizes aspects of the heroization of Aeneas, communicating his valour, astuteness, and resilience, defying pain[19], fearless and ready to return to the battlefield where greater issues were at stake than to have any care of the severity and potential complications that could arise from the traumatism. Further, that the wounded is turned to face the sun may not just be explained as an artistic license per se, as this would have provided a necessary illumination of the wound for the surgeon in the field[20], while the sunrays would have offered the benefits of antiseptic prophylaxis during the intervention.

C. On Iapyx Iasides, servant of the "silent arts", the non-appearance of Apollo, and the consequences of Venus' intervention in the healing of Aeneas's wound

The epic poem introduces Iapyx Iasides, dearest beyond others to Apollo (*Aeneid* 12.391-392), when wounded Aeneas draws close to him for treatment. It appears he is the camp physician, trusted to treat Aeneas' wound. There is no mention of another medical practitioner in the camp who would or could potentially have treated Aeneas but Iapyx. Under field circumstances, Iapyx operates with the tenacity to remove the embedded arrowhead. It does not seem, however, that it involves a simple surgical procedure. The arrowhead barbs[21] are deeply transfixed and should it have been at the

[16] He is placing the weight of his body on the right foot at the same side as the hand to operate. This was a compromising posture to be avoided by the surgeon according to the Hippocratic Corpus recommendation when surgically treating a standing patient, although as right-handed, Iapyx could not have had for the body posture depicted an easier choice. Nonetheless, and although for the left leg, the left knee is flexed at the angle and height as recommended by Hippocrates, *In the Surgery*, III 35-39.

[17] While gaining some body stability himself.

[18] As recommended in Hippocrates, *In the Surgery*, III 40-46.

[19] While no analgetic treatment is given to Aeneas, showing determined courage in trauma pain sustained in battle was the expected reaction of a valorous Roman soldier, cf. Cicero, *Tusc.* 4.16, 38.

[20] Conditions recommended to physicians since the compilation of the Hippocratic Corpus, cf. Hippocrates, *In the Surgery*, III 1-7; *Physician*, 206.2.

[21] The careful explanation from the Latin text of the plurality of the barbs, I owe to Prof. Edward Reno, Ph.D.

anatomic locus of the right thigh as assessed above and as depicted in the Pompeii fresco, it would have been a puncture wound very close to the femoral artery[22], a lesion or puncture of which, chanced or accidental in the procedure of manoeuvring to dislodge the sharp edges and barbs of the arrowhead, beyond the margins of a proper safety technique, would prove fatal for Aeneas in a matter of a few minutes. Further, the possibility could not be excluded that the arrowhead could have also pierced into the cortical bone component of the femoral diaphysis. It would therefore be prudent to consider the benefit to the patient by Iapyx's cautious decision not to cut wider and deeper into the wound to remove the arrowhead at any cost[23], which would have endangered Aeneas' survivorship and thus for the plot of the epic the ultimate goal of Rome, but instead to continue, as described by Virgil, unfazed, with extreme care and caution to aim to untangle and dislodge the dangerously transfixed barbed arrowhead. To the eye of the unaware observer of the period, the duration of Iapyx's operative efforts[24] could have been perceived and accordingly judged as inability, lack of skilfulness of an ageing surgeon, and even a lack of Fortune[25]. However, in their naiveté, they would not have been farther from the truth regarding esoteric precepts[26] of the "silent arts", and for the surgeon's decision to operate on the complicated wound with a focused determination and without haste to save Aeneas, despite the grievous conditions in the battlefield (*Aeneid* 12.406-410). Iapyx's courageous determination to carry out the surgical operation based on the directives of proper medical practice and in favour of the patient's well-being, disregarding Aeneas' disposition to speed up the duration of the operation and to cut deeper into the wound with a broad sword (*Aeneid* 12.388-390), exemplifies aspects of the clarity and focus of his critical thinking in times of acute professional responsibility and respect to the epistemology of the "silent arts"[27], which

[22] It would have pierced through M. *sartorius* and pending on the entry's directional angle if more medially into M. *adductor longus*, if more ventrally into M. *Vastus medialis*, presenting to the operating field surgeon (particularly in Classical antiquity and in treating a standing patient) a *nightmare* of complications for not puncturing with the arrowhead's sharp edges and barbed extensions, by an error of even a millimeter, the subsartorial (distal segment) of the femoral artery and/or its first perforating branch, embedded beneath M. *Sartorius*, and nestled between Ms. *Vastus medialis* and *Adductor longus*. Apropos, running immediately below the length of the subsartorial (distal segment) of the femoral artery is the femoral vein, while at the lateral extend of the subsartorial arterial distal segment is the location of the saphenous nerve, a significant sensory component of femoral innervation; it would have been the nerve branch to send signals for a painful reaction caused by the injurious event (12.386-389).

[23] Unlike the "savage use of the knife and cautery" that is claimed was used by wound specialist Archagathus, who practiced in Rome (since 219 BCE), eventually earning the epithet *carnificem* ("executioner"), as reported by Pliny, *HN* vi.12-13.

[24] The surgeon's operation speed, where possible, was critical particularly in achieving hemostasis in the field and in the possible absence of analgetic substances.

[25] Erudite Virgil was presenting in the plot of the epic circumstances and dynamics of personae at a camp and battlefield centuries before his own time. However, should the case of Hawkins (2004) argument be considered, that Virgil wrote to buttress Augustus' intention to denigrate Greek medical knowledge and effectiveness in comparison to the Roman, in that case, Virgil would have inadvertently recorded in the epic more than adequate traces to medically endorse in retrospect the actions of the Greek surgeon.

[26] Hippocrates, *Oath*, 11-15.

[27] Cf. Celsus, *De medicina, Prooemium* 4, "Now a surgeon should be… with vision sharp and clear, and spirit undaunted; filled with pity, so that he wishes to cure the patient, yet is not moved by his cries, to go too fast, or cut less than is necessary; but he does everything just as if the cries of pain cause him no emotion" (transl. Spencer 1935).

should be considered as evidence for a veritable case of *pietas*. His overall behavioural conduct further unveils aspects of a principled and dependable character unwilling to be influenced by authoritative personae and to drift away from what he knows is right within his capabilities and responsibilities as a surgeon. Therefore, what is recorded in the *Aeneid* (12.400-404), perceived by some modern commentators as an inability of the veteran surgeon to extract the arrowhead under the precarious field circumstances should not be necessarily deciphered as evidence of Iapyx's decreasing skilfulness commensurate to ageing, or caused by a lack of love, care, and divine support by Apollo. For the former, his ageing is a testament to his long career and considerable experience in the medical arts. His diligent practice, described in the epic poem as "inglorious", and of "the silent arts" (12.397), conforms otherwise in an exemplary way to what ought to be the proper demeanour, ethic, and conduct prescribed as an important recommendation for the physician since the Hippocratic Corpus[28]. Regarding the latter, it served as the plot of the epic for Venus' concealed intervention into Iapyx's uninterrupted operative efforts by her provisioning a preparation of dittany[29], panacea, and ambrosia into the vessel with water Iapyx was using to wash the wound, converting it to a lenitive and curative embrocation. Applied onto Aeneas' wound caused the arrowhead to fall out following Iapyx's operating hands, and to induce instant healing[30]. Unknown as it may have been the kind and effect of the wondrous botanical resources the Apollonian medical healing involved through Iapyx's efforts, Venus' remedy in addition to dittany and panacea included the exceptional element of ambrosia, the unique intake of the Olympians that equated to immortality[31] or otherwise conferred longevity, that was to be administered to Aeneas' wound[32].

Regarding Venus' involvement, the plot of the poem introduces and explains her appearance[33] and intervention –alleging the absence of Fortune and Apollo's aid– in Iapyx's ongoing difficult surgical procedure (*Aeneid* 12.405-406). This has generated strong, (perhaps excessive) criticism[34], and scepticism[35] by some modern commentators[36]

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[28] Hippocrates, *Physician*, 1.

[29] A rare plant from the precipitous areas of the high mountains of Crete, with colorful hermaphroditic flowers, aromatic, magical, with healing qualities, and a sign of affection among lovers, falls directly into the domain and affairs of Venus. For a comprehensive review cf. Kouremenos 2022.

[30] Ostensibly a prelude of the fame for the effectiveness of the antisepticising acetum-based wound-washes used by the Roman military physicians. For a concise account on the antiseptic qualities of wine and acetic fermentation see Manjo (1975, 186-188).

[31] Ἀμβροσία, the feminine form of the noun *ἄμβροτος* [(ά = not) + (βροτός=mortal)] meaning "immortality".

[32] Not unlike the kind of nourishment he was to receive, as Venus conferred to Anchises, during his developmental growth from birth to his fifth year of life, nursed by the long-living and ambrosial food-eating "mountain-couching nymphs", *Hymn. Hom. Ven.*, 256-260. This would have been one of the reasons, in addition to his unique genealogy, that he would appear to Anchises at first sight as quite godlike (μάλα γὰρ θεοείκελος ἔσται), ibid. 279. We are also reminded of the miraculous potency of ambrosia in the case of Demeter's effort to offer immortality to Demophon, Keleos' and Metaneira's resplendent son, in Eleusis, by a process that included anointing him with ambrosia, *Hymn. Hom. Dem.*, 233-241.

[33] Indeed, Virgil is offering the forum to Venus, but not just to amend Aphrodite's failure to save Aeneas in the Trojan War (*Iliad* 5) wounded by Diomedes as purported by Harrison 1981. Venus does not just intervene cloaked but brings unique *pharmaka* with specific potencies and effects to take place for the healing of Aeneas destined for Rome as she had foretold to Anchises, see n. 41, *infra*.

[34] Nicol 2001.

on Iapyx's character, behaviour, and standing as a physician, inquiring if ever Apollo gave the unoffered gift of healing to Iapyx and thus if he could have just been an ordinary healer if Apollo did not consider anymore Iapyx as his "dearest beyond others" if the god was upset with Iapyx for possibly aiming to prolong the life of his old father, or for having asked for the unoffered gift for medical knowledge (*Aeneid* 12.392-397).

In the possibility of offering a response to the above[37], we may be reminded of the inheritable connections that should be considered between the Greek and Latin literary sources on this matter, and of the consanguineous relation of Venus and Aeneas. Hence, Venus has a maternal affection and responsibility to her son Aeneas, the offspring of a divinely instilled, by the will of Zeus, uncontrollable, sexual desire for Trojan Anchises[38]. Through her son Aeneas she is to become the ancestral, divine, mother of the Romans (Venus Genetrix[39]). Further, a goddess in the Roman pantheon, she was to rule the spheres of desire, love, fertility, prosperity, purification, and victory (Venus Victrix[40]), to mention some of her functions and cult aspects. Therefore, Venus should not be considered an outlier in appearing in the plot of the epic instead of Apollo to attend to and salvage her son's dire situation, safeguarding his destiny. Venus, with divine prescience, had foretold Anchises that their son, who was to be named Aeneas, would rule among the Trojans as would his children born to his children continually[41]. Not only does Venus rush to intervene out of maternal love and care[42], but not only is she capable of healing with her divine ability and reigning powers of love, but in addition she selectively samples and subsequently gracefully introduces for the healing purpose a triadic of gifts, tangible elements with superlative medical-curative potency: dittany, panacea[43], and ambrosia. Her triadic medical gifts offered unknowingly bestowed Iapyx the miraculous ability to wash and heal Aeneas' wound. To Iapyx, even if unknowingly at the moment of treating the wound, the triadic gift of Venus was to serve in the particular context of the epic the purpose and effect of what he had initially asked from Apollo, instead of the triadic of gifts amorous Apollo had offered him. Thereupon, with

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[35] Perkell 2018, 144-146.

[36] Missing (?) underlying symbolisms that pertain between the lines of the epic, and some of the intertextual record of ancient sources, beyond the Aeneid, that could be elucidating to the matters addressed.

[37] Per Perkell's n. 3 statement: "…Ambiguities in the text are to be provocative. Responsibility for interpretation should, in these instances, be given to the reader, not the text.", ibid. 141.

[38] *Hymn. Hom. Ven.*, 45-55.

[39] Cf. Rivers 1994.

[40] Cf. Burkert 1983, 80, n. 33, referring to C. Koch, on "Venus Victrix", in *RE* VIII, A 860-64, with additional references on Pausanias and Plutarch for the armed Aphrodite among the Greeks; her Lokroian cult established after war victory.

[41] *Hymn. Hom. Ven.*, 196-198.

[42] Herewith Venus' action to appear and intervene, although cloaking her face and identity (*Aeneid* 12.416), could possibly be argued would have an exculpation effect of what she had said to Anchises about their unborn son, to be named Aeneas, meaning that she had a horrible sorrow (αἰνὸν ἔσχεν ἄχος) for having laid with a mortal man (*Hymn. Hom. Ven.*, 198-199), she would suffer a great reproach among the gods because of him (*Hymn. Hom. Ven.*, 247-248), and by the threat of being struck by a lightning bolt of Zeus should never speak about the affair but have respect for the wrath of the gods (*Hymn. Hom. Ven.*, 286-290).

[43] A spectacular potion or substance to remedy all illness, to cure all diseases. Its name was initially derived from Panacea (*Πανάκεια*), the healer daughter of Asclepius.

Apollo's non-appearance[44], Venus intervening at that juncture out of unceasing maternal love to save her son became through the mortal hands of aging Iapyx a healer. Following Mother Venus' interventional effort in healing Aeneas[45], it may be considered that Aeneas' triumph in battle and thus for the goal of Rome, a fulfilment of his destiny, would have been consequential to her divine sphere of powers, bringing victory in warfare as Venus Victrix. This could not have necessarily been anticipated or achieved as a sequel to an Apollonian aid to Iapyx's surgical procedure compared to the prospects thereto of Venus' intervention. Furthermore, Virgil in what was to become the national epic of Rome, sets in the particular segment of *Aeneid* unuttered yet decipherable echoes of formative values, chartering norms and responsibilities of respect and obligations for Romans to bear toward their founding ancestor and his maternal relation to divine Venus. Thereupon, Virgil would have provided a unique exegesis to the issue of *pietas* towards the gods that had been raised by his contemporary, Marcus Tullius Cicero (*Nat.D.* xli 116): "Piety is justice towards the gods; but how can any claims of justice exist between us and them, if god and man have nothing in common? Holiness is the science of divine worship, but I fail to see why the gods should be worshipped if we neither have received nor hope to receive benefit from them" (transl. Rackham 1951).

Indeed, Virgil's epic splendidly revealed through the case of Aeneas' genealogy not only of the "common" element shared through his consanguinity with the "goddess", but as importantly of the cardinal "benefit" that had been "received" through her intervention at a most critical juncture of her son's life and destiny for the triumphant fate of the war for Rome; appropriately she was to be conferred as Venus Genetrix.

D. On Iapyx Iasides' persona

In reference to "justice towards the gods" (see Cicero's text above), Iapyx presents a paradigmatic case of *pietas* by not appropriating as his surgical achievement the extraction of the arrow and the healing of Aeneas, recognizing the involvement of divine powers[46] and respectful to the god[47] appropriately declared to the entourage of his perception and the providential meaning of the event. The next lines of the narrative reveal Iapyx's true charisma. Assuming a leadership role as the herald of the divine intervention, and in a complete reversal of what one would have expected from a member of the "silent arts", with a loud and commanding voice he reanimates the psychology of those present, directing them with elation to rearm Aeneas, encouraging him and his comrades to return to battle for mightier things to be achieved, backed up as

[44] This to underline that any amorous tendencies the immortals were to show to their mortal "dearest beyond others", would cease with "the first scatter of grey hair" (*Hymn. Hom. Ven.*, 228-232) and the creeping of accursed old age which the gods abhor, as explained to Anchises by Venus herself (ibid, or *Hymn. Hom. Ven.*, 243-246). Correspondingly, Iapyx was already older. In the case of Apollo as patron to Iapyx, his non-appearance served the important matters explained in the following paragraph lines in the text.

[45] I agree with relative arguments made in support of Venus' ability to heal by Hawkins 2004, and Skinner 2007.

[46] The involvement of aromatic dittany from Crete in the triad of the medical remedy contributed by Venus, in addition to its healing potency, may have provided a recognizable olfactory trace of Venus's presence given she was well-known, for the indispensable use of perfumed oils for herself, but also of her scented altar, and her fragrant temple (*Hymn. Hom. Ven.*, 58-64).

[47] Also, in accordance to the Delphi maxim: Respect the gods (θεοὺς σέβου).

he insists by the divine powers of the god (*Aeneid* 12.426-429)[48]. Was his behaviour in that case just a circumstantial event plotted in the *Aeneid*, or were there any comparable cases that could reflect on Iapyx's rather unexpected capability to rise to the situation, undaunted, and in taking a measure of control? Indeed, a similar facet of his conscientious and courageous character may be perceived when unawed and unwilling to be lured by the triad of ostentatious gifts offered by amorous Apollo, with mettle and bravery standing with the god in a negotiation of sorts, counter-proposed "rather to know for the virtues of herbs and the practice of healing" (*Aeneid* 12.391-397). Independently of the outcome, his determination, earnestness, and frankness of opinion were virtuous in having made such an appeal to the god.

It may not be serendipitous, but of symbolic meaning that Virgil in the heroization of Aeneas has the prince of the Trojans, following their defeat by the Hellenes in the *Iliad*, as the leader of the Trojan army toward the ultimate goal of Rome, medically treated and subsequently to his clandestine healing encouraged for victorious battle by Iapyx, a surgeon of Hellenic extraction[49] as clearly provided by his patronym *Iasides*[50]. Would Iapyx have had an iota of Hellenic heritage and upbringing which would have obliged him, as the son of Iasus, to dutifully follow the family legacy in the arts of healing,[51] it should not be surprising that he dared to ask Apollo for the unoffered gift of the botanical knowledge to heal, rather than alternative self-serving choices for glory. Unlike the disproving assessments by Nicol[52], and assumptions made by Perkell[53] on Iapyx's character, behaviour and motivation to save his father by asking the god for the unoffered gift and doubts of his surgical abilities as indications of lack of *pietas*, his request to Apollo wasn't a spell of insanity, capricious behaviour, or disrespect to the god, but a plea, with self-denial, for healing knowledge instead for more glorious things, indeed at a critical juncture to avert the morbidity and prolong the life of his father, to fulfil in obedience his obligation to the family legacy as a healer, but to also have the power to heal others in need. Further, in agreement with Skinner[54], and Tarant[55], Iapyx's intention to show unpretentious respect and commitment in dutifully wishing to save his father from death is a clear case of *pietas*.[56] Perkell[57] questions Iapyx's *short-lived gains* "But, is it reasonable, even for one to whom 'inglorious' is thoroughly

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[48] This, unlike comments by Perkell (2018, 148), clearly reflects on his ability to be authoritative at the camp site, where appropriate, and when with insight and according to the Delphic maxim: Tell when you know (λέγε εἰδώς).

[49] Although even at the period of Virgil's life most physicians practicing in Rome were Hellenes (free or enslaved), or of Hellenic origin.

[50] An identifier of a family professionally associated with the medical arts. The noun (feminine) Iasis (Ἴασις) means healing. The ending "-ides" (*-ίδης*) of Iasides (*Ἰασίδης*) means the son of Iasus, hence the son of the healer.

[51] Annotated as a most important component of the physicians' oath, Hippocrates, *Oath*, 9-15.

[52] Nicol 2001, 193-194.

[53] Perkell 2018, 148-149.

[54] Skinner 2007.

[55] Tarrant 2012.

[56] Scrupulousness towards one's parents, conformed to Roman norms of ethics and obligations, but also to the Hellenic concept on this matter, abbreviated in the Delphic maxim as: "Respect your parents" (γονεῖς αἰδοῦ).

[57] Perkell 2018, 148.

acceptable to decline incalculable opportunities for the future (at least for oneself if not for others) to postpone the death of an elderly father, already at the point of death? Is this an appropriate valuing of the father's life? Or an excessive valuing of the father's life?"[58] The answer may clearly rely on Iapyx's sound ethical base, self-denial, obedience, respect, and duty to save the elder parent without weighing a parameter of "valuing" gains, not unlike, although under different circumstances, of Aeneas' honourable conduct of *pietas* in saving his father. Yet, Iapyx is presented as a weak, unheroic, un-epic figure with character defects, completely lacking in high aspirations by both Nicoll[59], and Perkell[60] and with failures and incompetence in surgery by Harrison[61], Nicoll[62], and Perkell[63], and according to the latter of "narrow and regressive" actions and motives, a "surprising failure" when compared with Aeneas' in *pietas* toward the gods, *patria*, family, and a purpose for the future.

E. Aeneas and Iapyx juxtaposed

Granted that Aeneas and Iapyx are neither equal nor comparable in many respects, the former is the son of a goddess, the second is a mortal. Aeneas is a hero, a seasoned warrior, and a military commander and leader of the Trojans. Iapyx is a persona that devoted his life, with or without the blessings of Apollo, to medical healing and saving lives as a practitioner of the "silent arts". Although there are stark differences between them, they represent personae in the panorama of the epic where their pathways merge at a very critical, life-threatening juncture in the valorous hero's quest toward Rome, saved by the hands of the courageous and determined practitioner of the "silent arts", even though involving the intermediate agency of divine Venus.

It is rather incongruous that some modern commentators interpret Iapyx's doughty surgical effort as proof of his inability as a physician and his "failure"[64] to save

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[58] Immediately following the quoted excerpt by Perkell (2018, 148), she continues, to suggest that "Possibly consequential for interpretation (of those matters) are hints that Iapyx is retiring and unassertive by nature." Firstly, this involves an anachronistic error, for Iapyx would have asked from the amorous god the unoffered gift in his youth, and thus irrelevant to "hints" of "retiring" decades later, in his older age. Secondly, as addressed above, to rise to the occasion, being courageous about firmly asking a god instead of the offered an unoffered gift is strong evidence of assertiveness.

[59] Nicoll 2001.

[60] Perkell 2018.

[61] Harrison 1981.

[62] Nicoll (2001, 194) in explaining the passage in the *Aeneid* that no Fortune guides his (Iapyx's surgical) path (12.405), quotes: "The art of medicine, like that of the helmsman (Palinurus), is seen by Virgil as dependent upon the wind of Fortune." This trivializes Virgil's poetic composition as it does not consider at all that it encompasses a number of pragmatic, multifarious, variables that could have pertained, based on "Fortune" regarding the wounding and wound of Aeneas, i.e. the type of bow-arrow-arrowhead, the distance and angle of the archer to target, the relative humidity of the air, the wind effect on the flight trajectory, and velocity of the arrow, the possible unsteadiness of the target [Aeneas' leg posture/movement], and thus the relatively unfixed anatomic locus the arrow could have pierced and thus to an undetermined soft tissue depth, next to-slightly above-or puncturing for example a femoral artery, and hence a predicament based on "Fortune" of either a superficial, moderate, or severe, life-threatening wound and accordingly the level of difficulty and duration of operation by the field surgeon to remove the "iron", or in some critical cases not to remove it and bandage the wound.

[63] Perkell 2018.

[64] Perkel, 2018, 148.

Aeneas had that not been for Venus' miraculous intervention, while Venus' intervention in helping and supporting her son Aeneas to be victorious in battle may otherwise be considered as an expected condition without considering the possible outcomes of war had she not intervened.

Hence, in the rather brief encounter of two personae in the epic, Aeneas and Iapyx, each representing very different domains of heritage, experiences, conceptions, and life roles, both were to be affected and changed, although for different reasons, in different circumstances and different capacities, by divine powers. Similarly, in their inherent variance and divergence of futures and destinies, both were obliged to selflessly fulfil with commitment duties and missions, which marked their respective lives with reverence toward the gods, devotion to *patria*[65], and unpretentious respect toward their family - true performances in honour and *pietas*.

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[65] Iapyx, by striving to save Aeneas life is clear proof that he was working in synergy toward the goal of Rome.

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Figure 1. Technical drawing of wounded warrior's left ulnar diaphyseal component (manuscript in preparation) showing the embedded trilobed and barbed arrowhead along with evidence of osteo-reparative process with ossification of tendino-muscular fibers of M. *flexor digitorum profundus* (© Agelarakis-Arias).

Figure 2. Field surgeon Iapyx in his professional garment, kneeling, carefully carries out the surgical process aiming to remove the dangerously embedded arrowhead from the right thigh of Aeneas. The latter, standing patiently in a heroic posture, showing no fear, no pain, embracing and thus encouraging his crying son Ascanius, averts part of the upper body weight from his wounded leg resting and seeking auxiliary stability on his long spear. His mother Aphrodite (Venus), just reaching the scene from Crete, unveiled at that moment, with agony in her eyes for her son's wellbeing, brings dittany she holds in her left hand, part of the potent medicine for the miraculous extraction of the arrowhead. In the background nervous but with determination Trojan warriors pace under arms, confidants to Aeneas. The one closest to Aeneas instead of the protection offered by the helmet wears only a type of under-helmet "felt cap", indicative of their interim distance from battle action with Aeneas' traumatism (source: Wikipedia Commons).