

first warning of the advent of the Harpies is an opposite olfactory sensation, a *taetrum* . . . *odorem* (3.228) that descends from the bodies of the birds to the Trojans below.

Furthermore, both the prophecies that Aeneas receives from these immortals are deceiving, though technically true. Venus, parading her skill in augury, predicts the recovery of Aeneas' missing ships, comparing them to twelve swans who chance to fly overhead and dramatically escape the clutches of an eagle. Ostensibly, the prophecy is favourable, implying that all the ships will return safely, since no mention is made to the contrary. But, as O'Hara points out,²⁰ memory and simple arithmetic indicate otherwise: the ship of Orontes has already sunk and seven plus twelve equals nineteen, not twenty.

While Venus' prophecy appears completely optimistic, that of Celaeno sounds relentlessly pessimistic as she concocts a causal link between the killing of her cattle and Aeneas' subsequent hunger in Italy. She predicts that Aeneas will suffer so severely that he and his Trojans will be forced to eat their tables. To be sure, the Trojans are hungry in Italy, but the prophecy of Celaeno is harmlessly, even humorously fulfilled when the Trojans eat the bread that substitutes for 'tables' during a picnic in Italy.²¹

Why does Virgil invite comparison between these two scenes? They reinforce the same message through opposite examples: immortals and their prophecies, whether good or bad, are not necessarily what they seem and are often intentionally misleading. Surely parallels between these two episodes are discernible to any astute reader, even to one unaware of the malevolent Harpalyce's lurking presence. She can provide, however, a more thought-provoking route to the same conclusion.

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²⁰ For a detailed discussion of this passage see J. O'Hara, *Death and the Optimistic Prophecy in Vergil's Aeneid* (Princeton, 1990), 9–19.

²¹ For a full discussion of Celaeno's prophecy see Horsfall on 7.107–47; for the misleading nature of this prophecy see S. Mack, *Patterns of Time in Vergil* (Hamden, 1978), 59–61.

AENEID 12.391–2: *IAMQUE ADERAT PHOEBO ANTE ALIOS DILECTUS IAPYX / IASIDES*

Ausonius and Servius were surely not the first to recognize that the doctor Iapyx had a significant name.¹ Most commentators on the *Aeneid* note that both the name Iapyx and the patronymic Iasides call our attention to *ἰασηται*. Recently, Paschalis has suggested that 'the name "Iapyx" provides the semantic component of Wind, which anticipates Aeneas' windlike return to battle'.² This would be more convincing if 'Aeneas' windlike return to battle' were more Virgil and less Paschalis.

But I do think there is more to Iapyx than has been observed. The Roman audience would have associated 'pyx' with only one common word, 'pyxis'.³ This word, in both

¹ Auson. *Epig.* 41.7 (Prete, 304) = *Epig.* 21.7 (Green, 72); Servius ad loc.

² M. Paschalis, *Virgil's Aeneid: Semantic Relations and Proper Names* (Oxford, 1997), 388.

³ Association with *πίξ* ('with the fist') would have been unlikely in the context.

Greek and Latin, is routinely used for a medicine-box (medicines including poisons).⁴ Thus, Iapyx is a name that signifies the healer together with his drugs.

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⁴ See, e.g., Philo Mech. 77.28–9, ed. R. Schoene (Berlin, 1891); Cic. *Cael.* 61; Plin. *N.H.* 21.137, 28.245; Juv. 2.140–1, 13.25 (where the contents is not specified but taken for granted).

ETYMOLOGICAL WORDPLAY IN OVID'S 'PYRAMUS AND THISBE' (*MET.* 4.55–166)*

A wide range of readers and artists has enjoyed Ovid's 'Pyramus and Thisbe',¹ but the tale has provoked critical attention on two counts: Ovid's source(s) cannot be identified² and the simile applied to Pyramus' death agonies ruptures the sentimental tone of the narrative (4.121–4).³ In classical Greek literature, Pyramus is the name of a Cilician river mentioned by geographical writers and historians in geographical contexts,⁴ while Thisbe is the name of a famous Boeotian city⁵ and an obscure Cilician spring.⁶ Late antique Greek mythographers give these names to human figures, young lovers who die tragically and are metamorphosed into the Cilician river and spring.⁷ No extant Latin versions of the tale are earlier than Ovid, and all later Latin accounts are clearly derived from *Met.* 4.55–166.⁸ Scholars have suggested that Ovid found the tale in a Hellenistic collection of 'Babyloniaka',⁹ but, given the state of our evidence, that must remain speculative. The second difficulty critics have had with the episode is different in kind from the first, and is related to scholarly discomfort with Ovid's general tendency to shift tone in mid-narrative.¹⁰

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¹ See P. Perdrizet, 'Légendes babyloniennes dans les Métamorphoses d'Ovide', *RHR* 105 (1932), 221–2; C. Martindale (ed.), *Ovid Renewed: Ovidian Influences on Literature and Art from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge, 1988), index s.v. 'Pyramus and Thisbe'.

² On the sources, see Perdrizet (n. 1), 193ff.; T. T. Duke, 'Ovid's Pyramus and Thisbe', *CJ* 66 (1971), 320–7; F. Bömer, *P. Ovidius Naso Metamorphosen: Kommentar, Buch IV–V* (Heidelberg, 1976), 33–6; P. E. Knox, 'Pyramus and Thisbe in Cyprus', *HSCPh* 92 (1989), 315–28.

³ C. P. Segal, *Landscape in Ovid's Metamorphoses* (Wiesbaden, 1969), 50; O. S. Due, *Changing Forms: Studies in the Metamorphoses of Ovid* (Copenhagen, 1974), 123; Bömer (n. 2), 56; C. E. Newlands, 'The simile of the fractured pipe in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 4', *Ramus* 15 (1986), 143–53, with further bibliography.

⁴ Xen. *Anab.* 1.4.1; Strabo 1.195, 5.353–5, 6.353; Ael. *Nat. An.* 12.29; Arrian, *An.* 2.5.8. Cf. Mela 1.70; Pliny, *N.H.* 5.91; Curt. 3.4.8, 3.7.6; and see further, H. Treidler, 'Pyramos 1', *RE* 24 (1963), cols 1–10.

⁵ Paus. 9.32.2, and elsewhere: see K. Fiehn, 'Thisbe 2', *RE* 6A 1 (1936), cols. 287–91.

⁶ See G. Türk, 'Thisbe 1', *RE* 6A 1 (1936), cols. 286–7.

⁷ Nonn. *Dion.* 6.344–55, 12.84–5; Himerius, *Or.* 1.11; Nikolaos progymn. *Rhet. Gr.* 1.271 Nr. 9 Walz; Ps.-Clemens, *Recogn.* 10.26.

⁸ Hyg. *Fab.* 242; Serv. Auct. *ad Virg. Buc.* 6.22; *Anth. Lat.* 61 Shackleton Bailey; *Poetae Latini Minores* 3.132 Baehrens; *PLM* 4.105–6 Nr. 117.7–8 Baehrens; *PLM* 4.266 Nr. 261 Baehrens.

⁹ Perdrizet (n. 1), 193–5; Duke (n. 2); Bömer (n. 2), 33. On the tale's play with the conventions of the ancient novel, see Due (n. 3), 124–7; Newlands (n. 3); and N. Holzberg, 'Ovids "Babyloniaka" (*Met.* 4.55–166)', *WS* 101 (1988), 265–77.

¹⁰ For recent discussion with examples and bibliography, see I. Gildenhard and A. Zissos, "'Somatic Economies': tragic bodies and poetic design in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*", in P. Hardie, A. Barchiesi, and S. Hinds (eds), *Ovidian Transformations* (Cambridge, 1999), 162–81.