Arden

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Please remember this story contains graphic and non-graphic sex between boys and boys and men. If this is offensive or illegal for you to read, perhaps you should not. I would imagine that if are this deep into Nifty and this story you already are aware of this or don't care.

31: Earth Quakes and Other Happenings

Four days ago we had a good shaking of the earth, from the earth itself, an earthquake. Nikias and I were laying on the bed kissing when the bed started to shake and jump around. His kisses are most wonderful, powerful and welcome but this shaking wasn't the result of our passion. I immediately pressed my body to him, covering my precious, beloved, to the bed.

None of our major government buildings were badly damaged. Many homes and smaller structures made of stone and bricks were. My concern was toward our boys and the staff. Things toppled and objects placed high up fell down. In some rooms parts of the roof came down and many ceilings lost parts. Remarkably no one was killed, many were hit by things and sustained injuries.

Karyakos immediately sent the Argoanuts, palace boys and all of Arden's boys to the city, where they assisted the army and castle guards. Many citizens were trapped in partly collapsed homes and under fallen objects. The pages were sent to help lkaros, Drakon the Steward and Dysme. We 10 went into the city to help. It was fortunate that it happened in the late morning, most people were outside.

I could see many water and sewer lines were disrupted but only in some spicific places. Many neighbors were helping each other and the women were gathering up the children, trying to keep them out of the way. The ground shook several more times but with much less force. Each time this happened, everyone cleared away from the damaged buildings. We worked in teams of two and three, helping the injured and old to safe places. When I came to the old man, we called grandfather, he refused to leave without his two sabers. Sometimes we helped to move rubble to free the trapped and unfortunately the dead. In one house, Volos and I worked long and hard moving rubble, to free a small girl trapped beneath. We found her in a little space, without even a scratch. She was very frightened, which I could understand. Her mother was in a state of near panic, that only made the child even more frightened.

Just as we moved the last, a large wooden beam, someone called, "Prince Arden, Prince Arden," I called back and pulled the child into my arms. Volos assisted the lady and we moved outside, meeting Dios in the street. It took some doing to get her to release me. I guess she is another Prince Arden admirer.

"Prince Arden, Captain Hermogenes wants you on his ship, as soon as possible." He reported this in a most military like fashion. I set the girl down and instructed Volos to take her and the mother to the Army's shelters, which she would allow, only after I kissed her several times. Political office caries little weight with small children and we Princes are not shy to indulge them.

The Army had already begun setting up tents in open spaces, all around the city. I assume some kind of plan must have been in place.

Dios had run all the way from the castle. I motioned to Volos and ran off with Dios. We were half the way to the Prince Arden, when I realized this was the first time in years, I was not accompanied by one of my guardians. We saw Kleitos and his stable boys, tending the frightened animals, some showing signs of wounds.

When we got to the dock, the Prince Arden and Prince Kastor were being loaded with food. A long line of carts from the castle were delivering the cargo.

"Prince, we sail north and Kastor south. King lason wants to see that our neighbors have food," an officer said.

"He wants you and Kastor to go along, representing Parga," Dios informed me. Just then I saw Kastor and Panther loaded down with wine, struggling under its burden. Dios and I ran to assist them. Apparently, while Panther was fetching Kastor, he found a wine shop and knowing the shortage on the ship...

Just as we were about to cast off our moorings, Pyrros and Silas came running along the quay. I asked Pyrros how he knew where I was. "I saw the note Panther and Kastor left at the wine merchant's shop. You didn't think they would steal it, did you?" We laughed much over it. We knew they would not steal but their method of acquisition was unorthodox.

No sooner had my ensign been raised, we begun to move, Panther was insisting we bath and put on fresh, clean clothing. I had no idea just how dirty we had become.

Our first port of call was Sarakiniko. They suffered some damage but no one was injured and everyone had shelter. I asked the mayor if Polykarpos could come with us, as a local water guide. He agreed. Polykarpos was delighted to sail again on the Prince Arden and this time as our guide. Our next stop was Karavostasi where he visited his parents, while we unloaded some grain and dried beans. They had suffered more, a few were killed, many injured but most had some shelter or a place to stay. Polykarpos wanted to stay and assist his parents but they insisted he continue with us.

The next morning, we called at several more villages that were badly damaged and the people were in great need. Many had been killed and injured and they had little food. Later that day we made our last delivery, at the eleventh village.

At each stop Pyrros and I went on shore and talked to the mayor or head man. Having left in such haste we could only offer grain, dried fruit and beans, cheese and olives. I absolutely refused any form of payment, making sure they understood, no obligation was being placed or asked. We only stayed long enough to unload and departed.

Our reputations had proceeded us and at every place my name was recognized. I am sure if we called under better conditions, many new friends would result. This was not the time for that.

On the way back we kept a close eye for pirates, they tend to rush into areas under stress, to make advantage of it. Hermogenes told me, except for the Prince Kastor and Prince Arden, all of our ships would be at sea, to make sure they could find no advantage to take. Having left in such haste, we only had about half of the usual marine complement and of course Pyrros and myself. I was just as happy not to encounter any.

Pyrros told me that Panther was not only a man of talents in bed but he was becoming first rate at "getting things done". Like the wine, you just let him know what you want or need and he makes it appear. He is quick of wit and very cleaver.

Polykarpos was a valuable guide. He knew the waters and hazards all along this part. I am glad he came with us. He was sad that we would not be able to attend his wedding, because of our tour. I mollified him be promising to attend the birth of his first child, unless he had to great a lead. He smiled and replied, "a lead but not to great.

Upon return we could see much progress had been made at putting the city and castle back in order. Small, non damaging earthquakes are common here. Ones that damage our buildings like this, are not. I take it, things like this are considered in the design and construction. I will ask the ingegneres about it.

One thing I figured out for myself, is why the fresh water and sewer conduits are made as they are. They are, in effect, truncated cones and when fitted together and pointing down hill, no mortar is needed so they can be removed if needed and easily be replaced. I also think it might be interesting to study fluid actions, when we return to school in the fall. (TN: I think Arden means fluid machines, a discipline not yet invented in 1318. He is correct, it is an interesting subject, even for us non engineering, math challenged types.)

I was proud to sail on my named ship, as was Kastor. I know the crew of the Prince Arden were glad to have me along and I am sure the same can be said for the Prince Kastor. I take it Uncle Iason choose us for that reason and had other ships of the Prince Class been in port, Iason or Polydeukus would have been sent instead of Kastor and I. It must be comforting for them, to have four princes, all equally able and capable of doing what ever job we are set too. We are all different and each brings his own self to the task but the results are all of equal value.

Volos told me, the little girl we rescued, was well and talks of nothing else but how she was saved by two princes. "I kept trying to tell her I am not a prince but she would not believe me." But you are a prince in her eyes and that Volos, is all that matters when you are five years old. Think of it this way friend, the title prince is about as common in this family as Captain in the Royal Guard and less difficult to obtain. He then kissed me with as much passion as I have ever been kissed before. Except for Poly and Kastor, I think brothers by choice must be even stronger then brothers by birth.

I had not noticed, until I returned, that all of the temples and houses of worship were badly damaged, more so than the other public buildings. Were I one to believe in such things, I would say the gods were sending a message. I am not, so I will not draw that conclusion. Even I have a few privet thoughts. Some of them need be kept to myself, since my position here is more political than I am always comfortable with. Perhaps it is less a message than just neglect.

I know some philosophers believe nothing happens without a reason or cause. That may be true, however in the case of earthquakes, we do not know the cause and no reason seams apparent. Any proposed causes, I have heard of, seam a bit far fetched. Like volcanos, which sometimes have earthquakes associated with eruptions, the earth does

what the earth does and we men living on it, do not know or understand how or why; we do know very well, what the results are.

As to purpose, I think it folly that we men attributive emotions, reason and feelings to inanimate objects. Dispite the ideas of Democrats and others; even if things are made of small unseen particles, do they reason? I think not. Do animals or plants have objectives, other than the most basic? Plants grow and produce seeds to propagate. Animals may show limited purpose but always directed toward food, water, shelter or procreation. Some show limited emotions; do they reason other than to achieve some limited objective? Having the ability to solve specific problems is not the same as reasoning through a philosophical text. The shepherd's dog does its job and is rewarded for it. Some of that reward is the companionship and affection of the shepherd.

Horse and rider are a team and they depend on each other. Zephyros is intelligent but he does not reason as I do. He is powerful but his power can not be sent through the rocks or air. I am too, in a different way, but mine can not either. The truly faithful, substitute their faith for reason. It must give them comfort to attribute that which they neither understand or can control, to a power beyond themselves. For me I get comfort only from reasoning and experiment to gain understanding. My understanding is often limited or incomplete.

Like Socrates, I know what I know, for what it is worth, at least I have that much, which is more than blind faith, which places all completely outside of ones self. A convenience for those to shy to take responsibility for anything. If all is predetermined and controlled beyond ourselves, then we may as well be those sheep and do nothing but eat, sleep and procreate. As to offending the gods, what this apparently means, is offending the general society and specifically those in power or charge of it.

I think it easy to make laws dictating the rules of conduct, in this or that situation. These are hard to enforce and require much effort and structure to uniformly apply. It is much simpler to say, this or that offends the gods and your punishment is from the divine. We man, who would punish you, are only doing the divine's will. That view absolves us of responsibility. I can not accept it, for justice is almost never the result.

It is true, all societies need some kind of code, rules or customs, to function. We have our share here in Parga. From what I know, all places have three general kinds of rules: state, religious and custom. (TN: I think he means culture when he uses custom. I have translated this in other places as such. The concept of culture as understood by modern readers of English, was not well articulated in Arden's time. A set of customs alone does not equate to a culture but it certainly is a part of what we think of or call culture. A concept of Arden's time that we do not apply or think of much today, is shame. We know what it is and what it means, of course.

In Arden's time and place, shame was a powerful social force. Today is has lost much of that power. Perhaps in reality it never had all that much. The powerful have always been more or less shameless. Shame was always that social force that kept the masses in check, not the powerful. He mentions shame from time to time but does not discuss it in any way. For him it was obvious and self evident. He sometimes mentions honor in the same context. Shame brings on or is a part of honor lost or diminished. I think he views this differently than we do and perhaps differently then others of his time. To be shamed, is to be dishonored that is clear but the transfer of that shame or dishonor from self to others, seams to be beyond his understanding. Not that it did not happen, he just seams not to fully understand it. He does seam to recognize it and to some extent, live with it. The Panther incident is a good example of this.

He would never do anything to dishonor his family but his family is often referred to as the people of Parga and his immediate circle and his birth/adoption relationships. Since Parga is different from most of the other places, in Arden's time, it may partly explain this. Most places viewed women and children as the property of men, slaves of course were property and the sovereign viewed his subjects as property. Shame then was something that reflected both ways from the owner to the owned or from the owned to the owner. It meant the owner was not in control of his property, if a women or child brought shame on the family or group.

Parga is somewhat different, slavery is outlawed. It is a patriarchal society that did not give ownership of women or children to the patriarch. Embarrassment for sure but not dishonoring shame. Some of this may have to do with the realization, in Parga every person is needed and important. As Arden has pointed out, the carrying capacity of the place has known limits. It is like an island, to many people and all suffer, to few and all suffer as well.

Arden seams to have a keen understanding of "face" or perception. From my reading of his text so did his contemporaries, his culture.)

1318, 3rd month, 9th day:

Today I became so angry in the council I was not able to contain myself and had to leave the chamber for a time. All I could do to contain myself, was run and run more. I ran for over 15 stadion at my fastest pace, until a could move no

more. I wanted to cry, I wanted to shout, I wanted to do harm to others. I was so disappointed and so angry at some of my clansmen, if I had stayed in the chamber, I swear I would have personally dispatched the lot of them. Pyrros and Volos caught up to me with houses. Kleitos personally saddled Zephyros. It was not until I had exhausted my anger and energy, that Volos was able to talk any sense to me. I would not listen before that and they both knew it.

General Zokitos was making his report to the council. He had been in charge of keeping order and rescue operations, after the earthquake. He reported on how many men he deployed, what they did and how many people they were able to help. How many were killed and wounded and so on. This was all quite factual and in no way emotional. He then reported on the number of looters his men had apprehended and killed. He said that 50 were now in the dungeon, having been apprehended steeling from their neighbors or public buildings. He added that his men had killed 15 and wounded another 10. This was in the city. He was still receiving reports from the rural areas.

What pushed me over the edge, was when he said that five Argoanuts were trapped and injured and that the looters proceeded to steal from that place, ignoring their cries for help, leaving them to die. It was only luck that the looters were discovered, which lead to the rescue of the trapped Argoanuts. Iason was angry, I was that but hurt too.

I was devastated that my fellow clansmen would do such a thing. To steel from your neighbors is bad enough but to not assist our boys, whose whole purpose is service to the people, is unthinkable. It is to me anyway. I could not stand it and just rose and left the room. No sooner was I out the door, I started running. I had to run away from the castle, from the dungeon. Not to do so would have seen me do that which I would regret.

I ran until my legs would no longer work and collapsed under an Acacia tree. It was in bloom and the sweet smell combined with my exhaustion overwhelmed me. Pyrros and Volos were gentle and supportive as they always are. They held me in their arms and I cried like a small child. They kissed me too and stroked my body, trying to reassure me

Once my emotions had sufficiently been spent I was willing to talk. Not explain, just talk. They knew or at least thought they knew what this was all about.

They made me return to the council. I did not want to go. Volos admonished me to do my duty. "but I want to kill them Volos, I want to take my sword and run them through," I shouted.

"Why Arden, because they acted from greed and selfishness or because they disappointed you?" I did not answer. He was correct and we both knew it.

I reentered the council chamber, looking like a man that just ran 15 stadion, as I had. Every face in the room turned toward me. I was prepared to prostrate myself and beg forgiveness but all I saw were smiles. The room had fallen completely silent. I could hear my footsteps as I approached the King and Consort. I was about to kneel before them when King lason stopped me. "No Prince Arden, do not seek our forgiveness, you have done nothing to forgive. Turn and face your council so they may recognize your courage and strength of character." I was shocked. I must have offended them by leaving unannounced, had I not? I turned, they all began clapping their hands together.

Zokitos spoke for them, "Thank you Prince, for reminding us that passions when raised, cloud good judgment. We were all as angry and disappointed as you. You are the only one with the courage to show it. We all let our mouths run ahead of our heads. Only you had the inner strength to work off his passion before speaking." I now had to say something and I had no clear idea what that was to be.

I thanked them for their support and for their confidence in me. I was about to babble on when Karyakos saved me. "Prince Arden son, the council, in your absence, has decided to delegate the job of Chief Judge to you, your panel with be Princes: lason, Kastor and Polydeukus. Sir Zokitos will be the Inquisitor. King lason and I will entertain appeals of your judgments, should any be made." I guess the meeting had officially ended some time before my return and everyone was just waiting for me.

The next thing I am aware of was lason telling me I smelled of sweet and horse, and with Kastor's help, pulling me toward the bath. It was true, I did smell.

Now that I am clean, fed and rested, I can think more clearly. It is a wise mover to make us judges. That alone prevents us from visiting the dungeon or even talking about it. It will keep us all from saying or doing anything we had best not. It also means we must set aside our emotions, fairness is both expected and demanded. I think this is one big test for us. This will give the council a good measure of how we conduct ourselves.

1318, 3rd month, 10th day:

Justice in Parga is not slow and the next morning, which is today, we are called to the bench. Instead of the Council

Chamber, our court was held in the main dining hall. It has more room, if nothing else.

The four of us were to be seated behind a large table that was elevated on a platform, about one foot, so we would look down on everyone and everything but not to high. We were all dressed in our finest tunics of office, with our laurel wreaths. Several scribes and two scholars sat at a large table to our left. Two pages sat just behind us and to our right side, in the event they were needed. Three of our guardians sat with them and the other three were positioned in the back of the room. Along the right wall, a number of tables had been arranged for Uncle lason, Uncle Tertius, Father and a number of councilors. The palace guards were spaced along both sides of the room and along the back. Several were in control of the entry way. I saw a number of Argoanuts, solders, palace boys and so on, along with many citizens. I assumed they were available to provide information should it be necessary. The inured Argoanuts were seated close to us on the left side. The mayor and several other civic officials sat with Father. The other pages, including our younger brothers, were seated with many of our friends and acquaintances.

The Stentorian (TN: town crier in Arden's terminology) announced that court would now begin and asked for the guards to bring the accused forward. A long line marched into the room and took seats in a special area, directly in front of us. We were given a scroll that contained all the names of the accused and what the charges were. They had been divided into 5 groups. Group one, were those who plundered public buildings including churches, temples and inns. Group two: businesses, shops, stalls and so on. Group three: homes. Group four those plunders that caused injury to others, in the process. Group 5: those who failed to assist others in need, when plundering.

General Zokitos' men had escorted them in and took up positions off to the side. The General had 5 scrolls. Each group was named and specific information was against each name. The Stentorian called the court to order and identified us as the judicial panel. "Each judge can ask specific questions of any defendant. The defendant should answer those questions directly to the questioner. If anyone wished to address the court, not in a response to a question, he should do so to the panel as a whole, not to a specific panel member. The inquisitor will call the accused, state the offense and the evidence. The accused will be asked to state his guilt or innocence. Further questions will be asked depending on the response given.

Zokitos addressed the first name on the list. The man stood and listened but did not choose to make a statement, except "nolo contendere". (TN: The term means literally 'I do not which to contend', it is Latin and not used in most judicial systems other than the United States. I doubt that it is being used here in the same sense but it is what Arden wrote, in Latin as part of a sentence written in Greek.)

Zokitos was not getting any answers or cooperation. We discussed it among ourselves. I asked the man if he understood the implications contained in that Latin phrase. He said yes. Poly said, "you are then saying I am guilty, now the court must prove it."

"No, he answered."

"If you do not contest the charge or facts presented, you leave us with little choice," lason added, "but more perhaps than you barged for." I could see where he was going and picked up the thought.

Justice will be done here today and it will be seen to be done, as well. Since you do not contest the charge or facts, we find you guilty. That is not justice, it is only a statement of the situation. This court does not believe that exacting some punishment for a misdeed, is justice. Justice repairs and restores. Punishment is little more than retribution. You will spend the next week in isolation and given only leavened bread and water. During that time, it is hoped you will come to a willingness to take ownership of your deeds and form some idea of what would constitute atonement. He sat down. We moved to the next and the next through the first 4 groups. Some contested, most did not. Those that contested were allowed to explain themselves. Zokitos presented his evidence which was, in all but one case, compelling. In the one non compelling case, we ruled not guilty, an incident of mistaken identity. We asked for various acts of atonement, from restoration, through and mostly, rendering assistance in repairing the aggrieves property. The last group were the four that failed to assist the trapped Argoanuts.

They quickly admitted to taking things from the house, expecting us to just give them the same level of atonement as the others. That is not quite what happened.

lason stood and declared himself bias, being the Patron Prince of the Argonaut organization. "They cary my name in theirs, my brothers sit as directors, as do others, they can be objective, I can not." He stepped down. "Inquisitor, may I fill your place for this set of defendants?" Zokitos bowed with a sweeping gesture, to indicate the way clear for my beloved lason. He was on stage and he was planning to make this into some kind of statement. He asked the five injured Argoanuts to come forward. He asked them to tell what they saw, knew and said at the time. They did. He asked the solders what they knew and what they did. He asked the physicians, if having gotten them out sooner would have lessened their injuries. They thought so but were not sure.

"Prince lason," Kastor asked, "what is the crime here?" All you have done, is illustrate that the accused are of lesser

character then your Argoanuts, who were injured while they performed service to strangers.

"That is just the point. No crime as such has been committed." He turned to the accused. Was leaving my trapped brothers to die, by refusing them aid, a crime or a failure of character?"

"Neither," Their spokesman replied.

"If not a crime or a character failure, than pray tell what is it?"

"It is nothing."

"No you can't have it both ways. We all accept no law or code of the state was broken here. I for one do not accept no moral, ethical, religious or civilized code was broken. Let me recast the question, was it the right thing to do in leaving those men die?"

"Since we would have revealed ourselves to be braking the law, by doing so, it was not wrong."

"If the circumstances were different, what would you say?"

"If the circumstances were different, it would have been wrong."

"Then it is acceptable to not assist, if that would expose a crime but not acceptable to just refuse, if no other crime were involved?" He knew he was had and said nothing.

"Is it not a crime to actively conceal a crime?" lason looked at the scholars.

"Yes, Prince lason that is called conspiratorial, however one can not conspire to hid his own crime, with one's self."

"So then not doing the right thing, in an attempt to cover ones crime, is not a separate crime. This kind of action or lack of it, in this instance, must by necessity, add weight to the original crime or is it to be completely ignored? I submit it must add weight, it must make a minor crime all the more argues. Had those Argoanuts perish, as a result and not been rescued, we would be calling this murder would we not? Of course we would!"

lason was on stage and he was making the most of it. He turned to the accused again.

"Do you still say you have only one crime to atone for?"

"Yes, one crime but we would agree, the atonement is greater because of our actions or lack of them."

The three of us talked briefly and I gave the verdict. "This court finds you guilty of looting in an elevated degree. Your atonement will be one day of labor each week, for the next 12 weeks, in service to the city." That is what most of them got; if not civil service, than restorative service to the property owners. "In addition and to be served before the 12 weeks are to start, you will replace the injured Argoanuts at their normal labors, until they are recovered and can resume them for themselves."

I thanked Zokitos, the witnesses and Prince lason. The heart of justice in Parga is atonement. We do not seek to be punitive. The heart of citizenship is acceptance of responsibility for our actions, ownership of the results and atonement, when something is shown to be contrary to the public good. Laws are, or should be, nothing more than rules to keep order between citizens or with the state. In Parga, the citizens are the state. Justice results from the fair application of those rules and when necessary, appropriate atonement for transgressions.

The fact that it was necessary to constitute this special court, for this extraordinary happening, is significant and we citizens of Parga have much cause to be proud. We four believe justice was served here today; it was done and seen to be done. The innocent were identified. The guilty for the most part accepted their responsibility and the atonement specified, seamed reasonable and fair. Like it or not, we are all a part of this place. We all take much and we are all asked to contribute much. We all hope, tomorrow Parga will be a better place for us and our children, than it is today. We all work toward that end. We Princes would like to think that is the result of our leadership. In our hearts, we know it is only the result of representing the best citizens any Prince could dream of. Kastor touched my arm, I was beginning to go on longer than necessary. I adjourned the court and ask all here to go in peace.

Just as we were about to leave, Prince Helladios came swinging down on a thick rope, from the balcony, landing just at our feet. He gave a loud warning call, like that of some animal, as he came. He smiled, gave us a quick wave and ran off with a small pack of young boys, followed by Alexandros and one of his new female guard/trainees. I looked over at Uncle lason and Karyakos. They were facing the wall, trying very hard to conceal their laughter. At some point the boy will be getting his bottom warmed by Uncle lason. I guess he did not believe Nikias or maybe he forgot.

Perhaps he figured a few slaps on the butt a reasonable price to pay.

Just as we were entering our quarters, Solon informed us Helladios was hiding under our bed and that, "he does not think I saw him." With that he ran off giggling. This was going to be fun for us. It will be at poor Helladios' expense but we will not extract to high a price.

I grabbed Nikias, Dios and Iason, we four flopped on the bed, placing much strain on it. After kissing and rolling around, we started speculating on what punishment Father would meat out to our little brother. We all reminded each other of our various punishments, from cleaning stables to having our butts warmed. We knew Helladios was listening and that his anticipation was growing greatly.

After a time Ikaros went to fetch Helladios' father. Karyakos and Uncle Iason came into the room and we pointed to alert them to his presence. "Have you seen Helladios," Uncle asked? No Sir, we have not seen him since he ran out of the dining hall. "That is to bad," Karyakos added. "If he comes forward on his own, I think his father will be quite lenient but if we need search him out of hiding..." Uncle gestured for someone to say something.

Nikias burst in, "you mean if I hadn't hidden under your bed you would not have let lason paddle me so hard?"

"Probably not but you must also remember the difference between, doing things in the belief that your are above the rules and doing things to just get attention of the adults."

"I'll bet Helladios is hiding because he just wants us to find him, its a game." Dios suggested.

"No it is because he is afraid," Nikias added, "Helladios is afraid, Helladios is afraid," he sang.

"I am not, afraid." A little muffled voice, said.

"Yes you are, yes you are, Helladios is afraid," Nikias chided. In an instant Helladios was out from under the bed and attacking Nikias. He came flying onto the bed pinning the laughing Nikias to it and trying to punch him. Iason and I did not let that happen. We tickled him instead.

Uncle lason swept the lad up and carried him away. This brother will be a delight and I'm sure a few problems for us. Nikias had the twins but Helladios has only himself. He already shows great musical and artistic talent and love of adventure. His creative mind need some direction. I will talk to Eudoxia about this, perhaps as she tutors Lyuben, something can be done for Helladios.