A PENIS MALFORMATION IN ETRUSCO-ROMAN ART, CONDYLOMA, HAEMANGIOMA OR A SEXUAL ENHANCEMENT?

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Ex-votos in the form of a penis were known since since prehistoric and their manufacture flourished until historical times, mainly in ancient Greek \textsuperscript{(1,2)} and Etrusco-Roman art \textsuperscript{(3)}. The great majority of these penises were constructed as healthy examples, probably in order to express the believers’ gratitude towards the healing gods, usually after the restoration of their health, or as pray in order the religionist to receive by the gods a healthy limb as presented by the ex-votos. In some very rare cases, probably when the believer has not received the expected therapy, a second penis ex-voto could have been made in such a way to depict the signs of his disease, to strictly provoke the favor of the gods \textsuperscript{(4)}.

Figure 1. Penis ex-voto, Museo Archeologico, Civitá Castellana.

Among the limited number of penises depicting the signs of a disease, is the etrusco-roman ex-voto or ancient dildo, exposed now in the Museo Archeologico, Civitá Castellana (5). This specific votive offering, preserves only the glans and a part of the penis, presenting unique peculiar characteristics. There can be found two round protuberances one on the glans and one on the horizontal line running from the ventral to the dorsal side of the penis (Figure 1).

Grmek and Gourevitch pointed out the intention of the constructor to create a penis in this form. The possibility for a codyloma to be presented is strong, as condylomatosis could have been presented in the past as a dazzling phenomenon of the germination of “mushrooms” in a previously healthy penis. On the other hand an artificial decoration could have been manufactured, either to ameliorate sexual intercourse or for an unknown reason to depict a magical effigy (6).

According our opinion, this bizarre and rare image, illustrated a penis with the characteristics of a haemangioma. Haemangiomas of the urinary tract are rare and those of the glans penis are even more rare lesions. Very few cases have been described in the world literature (7). Our interpretation, could have been explained by the round and linear decoration on the penis as a whole plus the similarity towards a modern picture (Figure 2). It must be highlighted that this ex-voto is a unique representation in ancient Etrusco-Roman or Greek art.

**BIBLIOGRAFÍA**


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