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A NECKLACE FOR EILEITHYIA

There is a passage in one of the Homeric Hymns which has been perplexing me for a long time. It is in the *Hymn to the Delian Apollo*, lines 102-104. The unknown poet, you will recall, is telling the story of the birth of Apollo. Many lesser goddesses have assembled on Delos to assist Leto; but Eileithyia, goddess of child-birth, is not with them, for her mother, Hera, malicious as usual to Zeus' loves, has detained her in the land of the Hyperboreans. After a long wait, the lesser goddesses send Iris to Eileithyia, promising her that, if she will come to Delos, she will be rewarded with a great *hormos* 'of nine cubits, and strung with gold threads.' Eileithyia does come then, and the infant god is born.

The word *hormos* in this passage is usually translated 'necklace.' However, a necklace of nine cubits, or approximately fourteen feet, sounds somewhat appalling to me. Even if one assumes a doubling and redoubling about the neck of the goddess, one gets a picture of a rather overdressed dowager, loaded down with a multiplicity of gold ropes, very un-Greek in her lack of restraint and good taste! Again, it is strange that there is in the poem no hint as to what sort of jewels or beads comprise the necklace; it is 'strung with gold threads'—but what is strung *on* the gold threads? I am inclined to think that in this hymn *hormos* does not mean 'necklace' at all, but probably something quite different. We might instance as a parallel a dispatch which

appeared in a New York paper this spring. It is headed 'Belt Six Miles Long.' It comes from Worcester, Mass., by Associated Press, and reads as follows: 'A six-mile-long leather belt has been rolled up in Worcester. Made from the hides of 450 steers by a leather firm, the belt is the largest in the world.' One can imagine scholars of the thirtieth century wrinkling their brows over this strange product of twentieth-century civilization, and publishing ingenious conjectures as to its use. The authoritative monograph on the subject would probably establish beyond doubt that the belt had a religious significance, and was in all probability an *ex voto*. Unfortunately for the learned theory, however, the dispatch continues: 'The great belt will soon be whirling about power shafts in a Florida lumber mill.' You see, it was a different kind of belt!

The first meaning of the word *hormos* seems to be 'cord' or 'rope.' From that there is a natural extension to the idea of a chain of any kind—including a necklace—and thence to the idea of a haven or harbor, where ships are tied up. Athenaeus (xv, 682 A) quotes a line from Aleman in which the word *hormos* is used apparently as a synonym for *stephanos*, 'garland.' 'A golden garland of dainty-petalled calcha flowers,' says Aleman. Here the word 'golden' is definitely metaphorical, a color term; for in the whole section in which it is used Athenaeus is discussing fresh flowers suitable for garlands and wreaths. Pindar, also, in a metaphorical passage (*Nem.* iv, 17), uses the combination

hormon stephanon, translated in the Loeb edition 'a wreath of crowns.'

In the cult of Eileithyia in all Greek lands, wreaths were of great importance—especially those made of her magical herb, dittany. The goddess is frequently depicted in art as wearing a wreath of dittany; and similar wreaths were placed on the heads of her statues. Wreaths of silver and gold seem to have been particularly appropriate as offerings or *ex votos* in her shrines. Both *hormos* and *stephanos* are used freely in the inscriptions of Delos referring to the cult of Eileithyia, and in the inventories of valuable objects in her shrine. One inscription¹ includes *stephanomata* among the offerings to Eileithyia upon her festival. This word, incidentally, seems to be used commonly of large garlands which were twined around altars. Similarly, the word *hormos* is used in various Delian inscriptions to denote a (golden) garland put around a *thronos*, a throne for a deity,² or a garland put around a *klismos*, an easy-chair which was a gift to a goddess.³

Eileithyia was often identified with Artemis. Although the ancient divinity had a shrine of her own on Delos, yet she also had a share in the worship in the Artemision; and in the fourth century it became the custom to list her treasures along with those of Artemis, or even of Apollo, instead of separately, as had been the earlier custom.⁴ In inscriptions listing valuable objects in the Artemision, in connection with something termed *he kaloumene geranos*, there is mention of a *hormos* described as 'the *hormos* stretched under the *geranos*,' or 'the *hormos* around the the *geranos*.'⁵ Scholars have generally regarded this *hormos* as a wreath, but have shown no agreement as to what sort of wreath it might be. In a recent study⁶ I have held that *he kaloumene geranos* refers to a thick, cablelike representation of a snake in conventionalized form, which was carried by seven youths and seven maidens in the dance known as the *geranos*; and that the *hormos* in question was a long garland made up in part of gold or silver ornaments, and fastened to the *geranos* or twisted about it, perhaps to protect the *geranos* and prolong its life. We know that in later times lesser garlands were sometimes twined around larger ones (Athenaeus xv, 679

F). The transformation of the object carried from a snake to a garland may have been facilitated by persistent references to 'Ariadne's garland'; for Ariadne is associated with the *geranos* dance from prehistoric times.

Evidently, then, in ritualistic connotations, especially on the island of Delos, the word *hormos* can denote a large garland.

In the famous Dionysiac procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus at Alexandria, described by Athenaeus (v, 196 A–203 A), several gigantic garlands made of gold and precious stones were carried, chiefly by girls. One of these garlands (v, 202 D), termed a *mystikos stephanos*, was measured at eighty cubits, approximately a hundred and twenty feet. It was (apparently later) 'put around' the shrine of Berenice. Another garland (v, 202 E), a gold *stephane*, was two cubits 'in height,' and had a 'perimeter' of sixteen cubits. It is clear in this case that the so-called 'perimeter' could not be the measurement around the stand of the garland; evidently this particular garland, at least, was carried in circular form, the closed circle having a perimeter of sixteen cubits, or twenty-four feet. If opened out and carried as one long strand, the garland would, then, have a *length* of twenty-four feet. Modern ballet dancers sometimes carry garlands of about this same size, often in closed circle form.

That the carrying of a huge garland in a procession is not merely a manifestation of Hellenistic ostentation, but is, on the contrary, a ritualistic practice of great antiquity, going back, indeed, to pre-Greek times, is amply attested by accounts of the Hellotia. The festival of the Hellotia, as Athenaeus tells us (xv, 678 A, B), quoting Seleucus, was celebrated at Corinth (among other places). In the course of the rites, a garland, *stephanos*, of myrtle, with a 'perimeter' of twenty cubits, was carried in a procession. 'And they say,' continues Athenaeus, 'that in it are carried the bones of Europa, whom they call Hellotis.'

The festival of the Hellotia or Ellotia was observed also in Crete in honor of Europa⁷—who, incidentally, is usually portrayed in Greek art as wearing or holding a garland, just as is Eileithyia. Hellotia is given in the *Etymologicum*

Magnum (p. 332, 40) as an ancient alternative (probably Cretan) name for Europa. Again, the word *ellotis* is sometimes used to denote the garland that was carried at the festival.⁸ There were ancient writers who explained the Greek words as all coming from *hellotia*, the Phoenician word for 'maiden'⁹ and various modern writers have connected them with the name of the Syro-Arabian goddess Allat, related to the Phoenician Elloti, whose name seems to mean merely 'goddess.' The Phoenician goddess Elloti is often identified with the Greek Athena.¹⁰

Pindar (*Ol.* xiii, 56) mentions the festival of the Hellotia. Scholiasts upon his passage give various accounts of the origin and nature of the festival, but agree in connecting it with Athena, whom they call Hellotia or Hellotis.

The city of Gortyn, in Crete, which also observed the Hellotia, was originally called Hellotis.¹¹ There was a shrine called a Hellotion in Marathon, and also a cult of Athena Hellotis.¹² Another Hellotion is mentioned near Argos.¹³ Curiously enough, some writers have connected the root of *Ellotia* with that of *Eilenia*, an epithet of Athena at Metapontum.¹⁴ Whether there is any connection with the root of *Eileithyia* we do not know.

We shall not undertake a detailed study of the Hellotia at this point. Suffice it to say that in all probability it was originally a Cretan festival in honor of an old chthonic and vegetative goddess. As Cook and Nilsson¹⁵ point out, the garland carried in the procession must have had a puppet inside it, perhaps 'the relic of a dead heroine.'

To the mind of the Greek, a religious procession and a dance were very closely related, and were, indeed, essentially the same thing. Accordingly, the Greek would have looked upon the carrying of the garland at the Hellotia as a ritualistic dance. Also, among primitive peoples in general there is a tendency, in a ceremonial dance in which something is carried by a line of dancers, for the thing carried to become conventionalized or to disappear entirely from the ritual, and to be symbolized thenceforth by the intermeshed or clasped hands of the dancers.

In this connection it is very interesting to observe that the Greeks had at least one dance

named from the root of the word *hormos*. Two names are preserved—*hormathos* and *hormos* itself. Hesychius (*s.v.*) defines *hormathos* as 'a group dance, a line, a cave.' Hesychius has another gloss which has a bearing on our problem. It is (*s.v.* 'choros') 'Choral dance—a circle, a wreath, (*stephanos*).' Evidently a 'dance' can be a 'wreath,' and conversely a 'wreath' or 'garland' or 'necklace' can be a 'dance.'

Whether the *hormathos* is the same as the *hormos* or not, we do not know. Lucian (*Salt.* 12), in the second century after Christ, describes the dance called the *hormos* in some detail: 'The *hormos* is a dance common to youths and maidens dancing one beside the other, and thus truly resembling a necklace. And the youth leads, dancing agile steps and using such movements as he will later use in war, and the maiden follows, dancing modestly, in womanly fashion, so that the necklace is one woven of sobriety and manliness.' The dance was certainly very old in Lucian's day; in form and tone it had probably changed considerably, and its original significance had probably become obscured. Lucian interprets the name *hormos* metaphorically and romantically as a 'necklace' of feminine beauty and masculine strength. It is more likely that the name is to be taken literally. It may well have denoted originally a cult dance in which a large garland, *hormos*, was carried in solemn procession by youths and maidens, alternating in a line. Incidentally, a dance very like the one described by Lucian is still performed in Greece, notably at Megara, on Easter Monday.¹⁶

All of this brings to mind a vexed passage in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius—towards the end of the tenth book. The author is describing, with elaborate detail, a pantomimic representation, in the theater, of the judgment of Paris. Each of the three competing goddesses dances before Paris. Minerva is in armor, and is accompanied by two young warriors named, respectively, Terror and Fear, who brandish drawn swords as they dance. Behind the three a flutist plays a stirring accompaniment, of the sort devised to rouse men to battle—upon the double flute, apparently, for the author particularly mentions an alternation of high, shrill tones and deep, sonorous notes almost like those of a trum-

pet. Minerva and her companions dance to this warlike measure. The reading of the best manuscripts at this point is *tibicen hornium canebat bellicosum*—which is, of course, unintelligible. All the early printed editions changed the troublesome *hornium* to *hornum*—a change which is thoroughly sound palaeographically, but difficult to interpret: ‘The flute-player played a warlike *hornos*.’ Practically all modern editors of Apuleius have emended, in one way or another—to *orthyum*, *orthrium*, *hortium*, *orthion*, etc. Oudendorp emended the difficult word to *Dorium*, ‘a warlike Dorian measure,’ following a passage in the *Florida* of Apuleius; and most scholars now follow him. However, it seems to me entirely possible that the *lectio difficilior* is, as usual, the *lectio potior*, and that *hornum* is probably the correct reading in the passage in the *Metamorphoses*, after all. It will be recalled that Lucian specifically mentions warlike postures and movements on the part of the young men in the *hornos* as he knows it; and both Lucian and Apuleius stress agility and vigor as characteristics of the dance which they are describing. Dances frequently change very much in the course of time. We may witness the Pyrrhic dance, mentioned in this same tenth book of Apuleius—a dance which was successively, over the centuries, apotropaic, funereal, military, Dionysiac, erotic, and, ultimately, humorous. It would be no surprise to learn that the *hornos*, too, changed in character as time went by and that vigorous, warlike motifs were introduced into it. Apuleius and Lucian were, of course, contemporaries. It should be noted further that one of the essentials of Lucian’s *hornos*, the alternation of male and female dancers, seems to be present even in the dance in Apuleius, where Minerva apparently dances between two youths.

Let us return for a moment to Eileithyia. She was a very ancient goddess—‘older than Cronus,’ according to Pausanias (viii, 21, 3). Her cult was strong in Crete; some scholars have expressed the belief that she was actually an aspect of the Great Goddess of the Minoan Cretans.¹⁷ Accordingly, the Cretan rite of the carrying of a large garland would not be alien to her cult. She had an annual festival on Delos, in the month Poseideon.¹⁸ Although we have no sur-

viving accounts of processions or dances in her honor at this festival, these certainly existed; for Lucian tells us definitely (*Salt.* 16) that on Delos there were no religious ceremonies without dances.

Especially sacred to Eileithyia in Crete was the cave near Amnisos which Dr. Marinatos excavated just before the outbreak of the war. Frequently, in the case of divinities worshipped in caves, primitive peoples of various races make use of a winding dance to the cave and through its devious passages—a ‘wandering’ dance of the same general type as the *geranos*. It is possible that dances to Eileithyia at Amnisos may sometimes have taken this form, the dancers carrying a great garland as they moved along, slowly and rhythmically.¹⁹ In this connection the word ‘cave’ in Hesychius’ definition of *hornathos* may have some significance.

It seems to me, then, that what was consecrated to Eileithyia on the island of Delos in remote prehistoric times was not a ‘necklace’ fourteen feet long, but rather a large garland, probably made of golden leaves simulating those of the dittany plant, and held together with gold thread. This ancient garland would ordinarily be kept in the sacred enclosure of the goddess, on a shelf with her other treasures, or festooned about an altar; and on festal occasions it would be carried in solemn processional, by dancers moving side by side. The effect would have been not unlike that of the ‘daisy chains’ and similar garlands carried at Commencement exercises in various colleges today. It is possible the Eileithyia’s garland, handed down, as it would have been, from prehistoric times, fell apart with age, as did the *geranos*; and that a symbolic dance formation, the formation originally used in carrying the garland, ultimately took its place, and perpetuated its name. By the second century of the Christian era this dance seems to have become one in which youths and maidens danced side by side, and in which the youths, at least, engaged in vigorous, warlike movements to the stirring notes of the double flute.

NOTES

¹ *BCH* xxix, 1905, p. 525, No. 179, 12 f.

² *IG* xi, 2, 161 B, 22.

³ *IG* xi, 2, 162 B, 17–18; 164 A, 83, etc.

⁴ Th. Homolle, 'Comptes des Hiéropes du Temple d'Apollon Délien,' *BCH* vi, 1882, 142.

⁵ *IG* xi, 2, 161 B, 7-8, 61-62, 102; 162 B, 51; and elsewhere.

⁶ Lillian B. Lawler, 'The *Geranos* Dance—A New Interpretation,' *TAPA* lxxvii, 1946, 112-30.

⁷ Hesychius, *s.v.* 'Ellotia.'

⁸ Hesychius, *s.v.* 'ellotis.'

⁹ *Et. Mag.*, p. 332, 40.

¹⁰ Lewis R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States* (New York, Oxford University Press, 1896), I, 276-8; *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, IX, 890.

¹¹ Steph. Byz., *s.v.* 'Gortyn.'

¹² *Et. Mag.*, p. 332, 42.

¹³ A. B. Cook, *Zeus* (Cambridge University Press, 1914-40), III, 1092.

¹⁴ Farnell, *op. cit.*, I, 276; *Et. Mag.*, p. 298, 35.

¹⁵ Cook, *op. cit.*, I, 525; M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipzig, Teubner, 1906), 96.

¹⁶ Lillian B. Lawler, 'The Easter Dances at Megara,' *Classical Journal* xxiii, 1927, 7-15.

¹⁷ Farnell, *op. cit.*, II, 610.

¹⁸ Th. Homolle, 'Comptes et Inventaires des Temples Déliens en l'Année 279,' *BCH* xiv, 1890, 495.

¹⁹ Spyridon N. Marinatos, 'The Cult of the Cretan Caves,' *Review of Religion* v, 1941, 129-136. Marinatos interprets the *geranos* as a rhythmic procession to a sacred cave.

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LATIN AND THE MODERN LANGUAGES—1948*

Someone has defined a pessimist as one who looks both ways before crossing a one-way street. According to that I might qualify as one, but I'm not really a pessimist at heart. I can even face the situation in which Latin finds itself today and still find room for optimism. I am convinced that if we, as Latin teachers, bend every effort to educate our public and prove by what we do with their boys and girls that what we say is true, the lost ground can gradually be gained back. Certainly it will not be done if we give way to discouragement as did the foreigner who, having struggled with English pronunciation, had learned to pronounce all the words spelled with *-ough*, only to be confronted with a newspaper headline which said: 'Oklahoma Pronounced Success!'

It was in no spirit of pessimism, but in an attempt to make an objective appraisal of our situation, that I tried to list the factors which pose

such difficulties in selling Latin to the public, and I came out with the following array:

First and foremost is the community and administrative resistance coming largely from those who do not realize what a revolution there has been in teaching methods since *they* were forced to chant whole paradigms by rote, had the subjunctive and both periphrastic conjugations rammed down their throats in the first year, and ploughed through Caesar without ever having been made aware of its drama, knowing only that he had built a bridge, and wishing fervently that the swift waters of the Rhine had engulfed him, like his bridge, two thousand years ago.

Second is the popular misconception that Latin is a 'dead' language, simply because it is not spoken by any one nation today, an idea which overlooks entirely the fact that Latin lives, whether we are conscious of it or not, in all of our environment and that a knowledge of Latin makes the every-day life of those who know even a little of it, more meaningful and more pleasurable.

Next is the traditional and persistent impression that Latin is 'hard', that only the very bright can succeed in it and that it is only for those who are going to college.

There is also the impression that Latin is merely a form of cultural veneer, all very well for the 'idle rich' but of no immediate use to the 'man in the street', hence a waste of time for practical persons. A case in point was a prominent NEA official, who, in addressing our Junior High School Teachers' Association in 1942, recommended rigid curtailment of foreign language study in war-time and said that there was certainly no place for Latin in such a curriculum. He was openminded enough to listen to the evidence and generous enough to say that if I would condense in writing what I had said to him, he would see that it was printed in the *Journal*, and he was as good as his word.

Some have the idea that, if one can't have time for both Latin and a modern language, it is more 'useful' to choose the latter.

Finally, there is the sad fact that there is still left an occasional teacher who feels that to spare the rod of reciting paradigms by rote and knowing the rule for every construction in Caesar is