



Ladles, Tubs, and the Greek Dance

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time Umbrian has no examples of accusative of extent which might conflict with the construction here suggested for *anderoomu*. The whole sentence then would be translated: "He shall sit during the interval until he shall have prayed when (the grain) has been ground."

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LADLES, TUBS, AND THE GREEK DANCE.

There is in Athenaeus, IV, 157 A, a *ἄπαξ λεγόμενον* which has furnished some trouble to readers and editors. The passage in question mentions the entrance of two courtesans, Melissa and Nicion. Athenaeus calls Nicion a "dog-fly," *κυνάμνια*, and Melissa a *θεατροτορύνη*. It is the latter epithet to which I should like to direct attention in this note.

The epithets are evidently bestowed in jest, and they have been translated in similar vein by various editors. Gulick, for instance, renders *θεατροτορύνη* as "stage-thumper," and comments to the effect that the reference is to Melissa's clumsy dancing.¹ Yonge² renders the word "spoon of the theater," without comment. The new Liddell-Scott Greek lexicon, *s. v.*, translates the epithet as "stage-pounder."

A *τορύνη* is a ladle (Aristophanes, *Birds*, 78, 79). The word is related to *τορύνω*, *τορνάω*, "stir," as of liquids in a pot. There are in the technical terminology of the Greek dance a great many words of similar significance. Recently³ I discussed the dance known as the *ἴγδης*, *ἴγδης*, or *ἴγδισμα*, the "grinding, pounding" or "mortar" dance, the names of which are derived from **ἴγδίζω*. This was a dance of a lascivious nature, common to courtesans. In it the performer rotated the hips and jerked the body in a manner reminiscent of the motion of a pestle being used to grind food in a trough or mortar. Often coupled with

¹ Charles Burton Gulick, *Athenaeus, the Deipnosophists* (Harvard University Press, 1927-41), II, p. 215.

² C. D. Yonge, *The Deipnosophists, or Banquet of the Learned* (Bohn, 1853-4), I, p. 253.

³ "A 'Mortar' Dance," *C. J.*, XLIII (1947-48), p. 34.

this dance is a figure called the *λύγισμα*, *λυγισμός*, *λυγιστικόν*, or *λυγίζευ*,⁴ "writhing, twisting, as a willow wand."

Another dance or figure sometimes performed by women of low repute is called *μακτήρ* (Hesychius, *s. v.*) or *μακτρισιμός*. The name is derived from *μάκτρα*, a "kneading-trough, tub." (Cf. Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 1159.) But the figure is by no means a "folk dance" using "work rhythms," as some present-day writers on the history of the dance have remarked innocently! Nor is there any kinship with our idiom in "tub-thumping." Pollux (IV, 101) specifically groups the *μακτρισιμός* with the *ἰγδῖς* and other dances of a lewd nature—notably the *ἀπόκινος* and *ἀπόσεισις*—and says it was characterized by a swaying rotation of the hips.

We might note here a passage in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius (II, 117), in which the girl Fotis, stirring a pot on the fire, and attracting a young man's attention at the same time, sways her shoulders and hips rhythmically: ". . . illud cibarium vasculum floridis palmulis rotabat in circulum; et in orbis flexibus crebra succutiens, et simul membra sua leniter illubricans, lumbis sensim vibrantibus, spinam mobilem quatiens placide, decenter undabat." (Cf. *Priapea* XVIII, ed. Buecheler.)

I should like to suggest, then, that the epithet in Athenaeus should not be translated "stage-thumper." There is implicit in the epithet no reference to clumsiness on the part of the dancer. Rather, the skilled dancer Melissa, with her lewd contortions, resembles a ladle "stirring" something in a pot. There may also be a *double entendre* in the word—some metaphorical connotation of "stirring up" the spectators (*θέατρον*) with the wantonness of the dancer's movements. The dance implied might or might not be performed in an actual theater. I should translate the epithet *θεατροτορύνη* either as "skilled in the stirring-dance of the theater," or as "stirrer-up of the spectators."

Closely associated with the dances which we have been considering is, I believe, another dance, usually classed as one of the "unknowns." In Hesychius appears a lemma *δροίτη*, universally emended to *δροίτη*, and glossed *πέλος*, *σκάφη*, and "a kind of dance." The word *δροίτη* denotes a wooden tub, bath-tub, cradle.

⁴ Suidas, *s. vv.* *ἰγδη*, *ἰγδισμα*; Schol. Aristoph. *Wasps* 1487; *Et. Mag.*, *s. v.* *ἰγδη*.

Similarly, *πέλος* is a trough, vat, tub, bath-tub. One of Hesychius' glosses of the word *μακτήρ*, which we have already noted as the name of a lewd dance, is *πυελίς*—certainly to be emended *πέλος*. The word *σκάφη* denotes a tub, bowl, trough, kneading-trough, boat. Pollux (X, 102, 114) lists *μάκτρα* and *σκάφη* together as cooking and baking utensils. It is evident that all these words form a cluster, as it were, of terms denoting wooden utensils of one sort or another, in each of which, under certain conditions, a ladle or pestle may be used with a revolving, stirring motion. Accordingly, it seems clear that we may see in *δροίτη*, when it is the name of a dance, another example of the *ἔγδη—μακτρισμός* group, in which the characteristic motion is a rhythmical and voluptuous rotation of the hips, suggestive of “stirring” or “grinding.”

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