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XVI.—Orchêsis Kallinikos

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The word *kallinikos* can denote a song, a dance, or a type of flute-music. Obviously, the three elements combined to make a harmonious whole. A study of all the ancient evidence shows that the *kallinikos* dance can be performed by men alone, by women alone, or by men and women dancing side by side. Its choreography can be freely processional, or rectangular, or in the *geranos* formation, with the dancers side by side in a line. It can be brief, or it may last all night. It can be in honor of Heracles, of some other divinity, of an athletic victor, of a dramatic victor or prospective victor, of some great hero, or of a military or tactical victory. It has a place in both tragedy and comedy. It has connections with the *kômos* and the *tetrakômos*; indeed, the latter may have been one type of *kallinikos*. In the cult of Heracles as Victor and as Serpent-Slayer there seems to have been a type of *kallinikos* dance performed by a chorus of young men in women's dress. It may have been performed by initiates, or by a thiasos attached to the shrine. I believe that this dance is portrayed on a famous cylix found at Corneto.

In this year when the modern version of the great Olympic Games has just been celebrated, and young victors have returned to their several homelands wreathed in glory, it is more than ever a pleasure to browse in the stately verse of Pindar, and, here and there, to ponder anew upon his meaning.

In the ninth Olympian Ode, lines 1-4, Pindar mentions the famous *kallinikos*, or victory song in honor of Heracles, attributed to Archilochus (fragment 119), in which the twanging of the strings of a lyre was imitated by the word *tênella*, and in which Heracles was himself addressed three times as *Kallinikos*. It is evident from Pindar's lines that this song was often sung in honor of a victor in the Olympic Games, before a formal ode could be prepared in his honor. It was sung by friends welcoming or escorting a victor, or on their way to, or standing near, a victor's home, a shrine, or some other place of importance in connection with the victory. It was not itself an epinician ode, but rather a hymn to Heracles. As we recall, Heracles was believed to have founded the Olympic Games, and to have been, in a sense, the prototype of the Olympic victor.

The word *kallinikos* is used frequently in Euripides' play *Hercules Furens*. Early in that play, as Amphitryon is appealing to Zeus

for aid against Lycus, he reminds Zeus particularly of how Heracles had assisted him in subduing the Giants: “. . . when, with the gods, he celebrated the *kallinikos*” — τὸν καλλίνικον μετὰ θεῶν ἐκώμασε (180). This usage is metaphorical; but in lines 673–681, the chorus, old men of Thebes, say that, aged as they are, they will continue to sing (and presumably dance) the *kallinikos* in honor of Heracles; and still later (785–8) they call on the Nymphs to join them in singing of the *kallinikos.agôn* of Heracles. The adjective *kallinikos* is applied to Heracles or his possessions in lines 570, 582, 961, and 1046.

In lines 205–24 of the *Trachiniae* of Sophocles there is a song of joy and, apparently, a brief dance, by the chorus of women of Trachis, after news has come of the victory of Heracles. The messenger has spoken of Heracles as κρατοῦντα and as bringing the spoils of battle to the gods of his homeland (182–3); and later (186) as φανέντα σὺν κράτει νικηφόρῳ. The response of the chorus is obviously a victory song and dance; the word *kallinikos*, however, is not used specifically. The chorus call upon men and women of the household to join in their song and dance — which then is likened to a Bacchic rout. Some lines farther along in the same play (633–62), just before one might look for the entrance of the victorious Heracles, the chorus sing and dance once more in celebration of his victory. Again they do not use the word *kallinikos*, but they do speak of the spoils of war which the hero has won by his valor (644–6); and to all appearances the ode is really a *kallinikos*, performed, according to tradition, in honor of Heracles. It is, of course, profoundly ironic in view of the pathos of the actual entry of the hero, later in the play.

In Pollux (4.100), *kallinikos* appears in a list of characteristic dance forms — “. . . and the fair victor, in honor of Heracles.” The same word is used by Athenaeus (14.618c), quoting Tryphon, as the name of a kind of flute-music; and Athenaeus and Tryphon add that all the types of flute-music which they have listed are accompanied by the dance. Hesychius (s.v.) defines *kallinikos* as “a form of dance in commemoration of the bringing up of Cerberus; or ‘the victor.’”

The word *kallinikos*, then, can serve as substantive or as adjective. In the field of the arts, the word would seem to have a three-fold meaning — a song, a dance, and a type of flute-music. Quite evidently, as was often the case among the Greeks, the song,

the dance, and the music were closely associated one with the other, and together made a harmonious whole.

We have seen that the *kallinikos* has a definite connection with Heracles. However, if we look further in Greek literature, particularly that of the fifth century, we shall find the word in other connections as well.

In the *Electra* of Euripides, for example, we find an association of *kallinikos* with Orestes. After the death of Aegisthus, the chorus of Mycenaean women prepare to dance in joy (859–65), and bid Electra to sing the victory song (*kallinikos ôda*) as they dance (864–5). She does so, and the dance proceeds. When Orestes enters, Electra gives him the garland of a victor, and greets him as *Kallinikos* (880–1). In the *Bacchae* of Euripides, Dionysus is called *Kallinikos* after his victory over Pentheus (1147); and the song and dance in honor of that same victory are spoken of together as the *kallinikos* (1161).

In the *Medea* of Euripides, line 45, the *kallinikos* is mentioned in a context which has proved puzzling to editors and translators. In the passage, Medea's nurse is speaking of her mistress's temper. "Not easily," she says, "if one incurs her enmity, καλλίνικον οὔσεται." Various emendations have been proposed for the line. However, it seems to me that the reading of the manuscripts is entirely comprehensible. Pindar (*Nem.* 3.18) uses τὸ καλλίνικον φέρει to mean "wins the *kallinikos*" — i.e., acquires the reward of the ceremonial song, dance, and flute-music known collectively as the *kallinikos*. The Greek lexicons present many instances of φέρειν, φέρεσθαι in this sense of "win" (e.g., Plat. *Rep.* 468c; *Laws* 657E; *Ilias* 13.486). I should translate the vexed words in the *Medea*, then, as simply "will win a *kallinikos*." The expression is, of course, metaphorical for "will win a victory."

In Old Comedy, some form of the *kallinikos* seems to have been a commonplace, either as a parody, or as a form of *kômos*, or as an anticipation of a dramatic victory — or as all three. The *Acharnians* of Aristophanes, for instance, concludes (1227–34) with a victory song which is a direct parody of the song of Archilochus, and indeed reiterates the words *tênella kallinikos* several times. Sung by Dicaeopolis and the chorus in alternation, it is avowedly a song of rejoicing over the former's victory in a drinking contest; but actually it is staged as "wishful thinking," shall we say, in the hope of victory in the dramatic competition. The dance accom-

panying the victory song is here clearly a processional one, with the members of the chorus following Dicaeopolis out (1231-4).

Somewhat similarly, the *Birds* of Aristophanes ends (1763-5) with a song of victory in which appear the words *tênella kallinikos*. The accompanying dance is again processional; in this case it is both a nuptial and a victory dance, as the chorus follow the victorious Peisthetaerus and his newly-won bride. The *Peace* also ends with a combined nuptial and victory dance (1316-57), but with no specific use of the word *kallinikos*. Trygaeus (1355-7), bidding the chorus follow him, promises cakes to one and all.

The *Knights* ends with an invitation to the chorus to follow Demos to a feast in the Prytaneum. However, in two other parts of the play there are echoes of our *kallinikos*. In line 1254, Demosthenes hails the Sausage-Seller as *Kallinikos*. Also, in lines 276 and 277, the chorus of Knights tell the Sausage-Seller that if he is victorious in the attempt to out-shout Cleon, "you are *tênellos*." "And if," they continue, "you surpass him in shamelessness, then indeed the cake is ours." The strange parallel to the modern expression, "You take the cake" (cf. *Thesmo*. 94) is probably a reference to the cake which was given at nocturnal festivals to worshippers who succeeded in dancing until morning (Athenaeus 14.647c; 15.668d; Plut. *Conv. Probl.* 9.747A). Such cakes were often called *nîkêtêria*, "victory cakes."

The *Ecclesiazusae* ends (1168-83) with a joyous dance of the women who have won their victory in the Ecclesia, and put their "new order" into effect. Instead of the word *kallinikos*, they use in their dance-song the phrase *ὡς ἐπὶ νίκη* (1182). The celebration is clearly twofold — a jollification over the victory already attained, and an attempt by a sort of "sympathetic magic" to bring about a dramatic victory for the author. The members of the chorus specifically state (1165) that they are dancing "in the Cretan manner." As in the case of many other plays, they dance out to a feast.

Almost the same words are found in a dance-song in the *Lysistrata* (1279-94), although not precisely at the end of the play. The chorus of Athenian men and women sing and dance *ὡς ἐπὶ νίκη* (1293). Again there are two victories involved — the tactical victory won by Lysistrata in the play, and the desired victory of Aristophanes in the comic contest. It is interesting to note that for both the Athenian and the Spartan dance in this play Lysistrata

carefully arranges the dancers *anamix* — i.e., a man and a woman, alternating, side by side (1271–78), and apparently holding hands. This mingling of men and women in the dance was not common in the classical period. The arrangement gives us a choreography very different from that of the processional victory dances we have been observing in other plays. The dance of the Athenians is definitely a victory dance; that of the Spartan men and women, however, with which the play closes (1296–1320), would seem to be not a dance of victory, but rather the traditional Laconian *dipodia*.¹

In the parabasis of the *Wasps*, there is a hint of a *kallinikos* song in reverse, as it were (1029–50). There Aristophanes himself is compared to Heracles. He has battled the sharp-toothed Cleon, snaky-tongued sycophants, and other monsters; and although he is truly *alexikakos*, like Heracles, the judges had failed to stamp him as a real victor, in his *Clouds* of the year before!

There are, of course, references in Greek literature to dances of victory that are not specifically connected with the *kallinikos*. Such a dance is that called for by the chorus in Sophocles' *Antigone*, 147–54, a dance to be participated in by all the people of Thebes, near the temples of their gods, and led by Bacchus as Eleichthon. This particular dance is one of communal joy after the conclusion of a war; it is to last all night long (153). In the *Orestes* (1691–3), the *Iphigenia in Tauris* (1497–9), and the *Phoenissae* (1764–6) of Euripides, the chorus marches out on a hymn to Victory (the lines are identical in the three plays) — an exodos reminiscent of comedy. In prose, we have such references as that in Pausanias 4.16.6, where Messenian women honor the victorious Aristomenes; here, although the author does not mention a dance specifically, we may infer it from the fact that the women sing a song, a portion of which Pausanias even quotes. The Messenian celebration, indeed, looks very much like a *kallinikos*.

We have no specific descriptions of the *kallinikos* dance as such; writers of Greek literature assume that it is entirely familiar to their readers, and the lexicographers volunteer no detailed information. However, I believe that it is possible, by looking carefully at certain passages in ancient literature, and by making use of some archaeological and epigraphical evidence as well, to learn more of

¹ Lillian B. Lawler, "Διπλή, διποδία, διποδισμός in the Greek Dance," *TAPhA* 76 (1945) 59–73, esp. 66 ff.

the nature of this "dance of the fair victor," and of its place in Greek religion and life.

In the passage of Euripides' *Hercules Furens* in which Heracles is spoken of as engaging in the *kallinikos* with the gods (180), the verb used is ἐκώμασε. Although the passage is metaphorical, the implication is obviously that the *kallinikos* was a form of *kômos*. That this was indeed the case is rendered highly probable by the fact that Pindar, who frequently uses the adjective *kallinikos* of his victorious athletes, habitually calls the processional dance in their honor, and also the chorus of dancers, a *kômos*; and the verb which he applies to that dance and chorus is almost invariably κωμάζω or one of its compounds. The same thing is true of Bacchylides. To be sure, the epinician ode and the *kallinikos* song are not of the same literary genre, as we have already noted; but it is abundantly clear from the works of Pindar that the dance accompanying the two types of song must have been very much alike (cf. especially *Ol.* 9).

The *kômos*, as we know from other sources, was essentially a processional dance through the streets, with music, song, laughter, and shouting. It was in general of two sorts — the noisy, drunken revel, at night, to torchlight, usually impromptu, and characterized by much raillery and practical joking; and the more dignified, but still joyous procession, by daylight, in honor of a deity or a very popular human being. In the former type, the participants, often nude or lightly clad, or even wearing the garments of the other sex (Philostr. 1.3.5), engaged in a variety of extreme steps and postures, with much kicking, whirling, and mock (or real) fighting.² In the latter type, the dancing seems to have consisted mainly of walking or running, with gestures appropriate to the song being sung. In this connection we recall that the Greeks thought of any rhythmical movement, even simple marching, as a dance.

In Athenaeus (14.618c) — in the same sentence, indeed, in which the *kallinikos* is mentioned — the *kômos* is listed as a type of flute music accompanied by a dance. In this list there is another significant word — *tetrakômos*. Hesychius (s.v.) says that the *tetrakômos* was sacred to Heracles Epinikios; he adds that an alternate name for it is "four *kômoi*." Pollux (4.99) couples *kômos* and *tetrakômos*, and seems to imply that both were sacred to Heracles: ἦν δὲ καὶ κῶμος εἶδος ὀρχήσεως καὶ τετρακῶμος, Ἡρακλέους ἱερά. . . . In

² Lamer, in *RE* s.v. "Κῶμος."

another passage (4.105), Pollux mentions the *tetrakômos* immediately after, and probably as an addition to, his list of figures of the dance of tragedy (i.e., of drama in general); he says, "I do not know whether it had any connection with the Athenian *tetrakômoi*, which were performed at the Piraeus, at Phaleron, at Xypete, and at Thymoetidae." Stephanus of Byzantium (s.v. "Echelidai") speaks of τοῦ τετρακώμου Ἡρακλείου, ἐν ᾧ τοὺς γυμνικοὺς ἀγῶνας ἐτίθεισαν τοῖς Παναθηναίοις. Some modern writers associate the *tetrakômos* with the songs and dances of the Athenian *tetradistai* (Hesychius, s.v.) — young men who met and feasted in a sort of club, on the fourth day of each month. There was some connection between the *tetradistai* and Heracles — perhaps because he appealed particularly to young men, perhaps because he was said to have been born on the fourth of the month. However, this connection was not too close; Hermes, too, was favored by the *tetradistai*, as a patron of youth.

It seems highly probable that the word *tetrakômos* was applied to several types of song and dance — that used by the *tetradistai*, that featured at the Panathenaea and other festivals, that used in the drama, and that performed in honor of Heracles as a victor. In some of these cases, "four *kômoi*" evidently were performed at once, perhaps in four different parts of the city, or in connection with different "events" in the games. In other cases, notably in the theater, the *tetra-* in the name of the dance must have referred to choreography. We recall that in the drama the basic alignment of the chorus was what was called a *tetragônon schêma* — arrangement in a solid rectangle. Similarly, Athenaeus tells us (5.181c) that persons who imitated the Laconians customarily sang ἐν τετραγώνοις χοροῖς. On some occasions, then, the *tetrakômos* was presumably a *kômos* in which the participants walked or danced not in single file or in a random arrangement, but in a regular alignment, with the same number of persons abreast in each line, as in tragic and other choruses. It may well be that the *tetrakômos* in this sense was one type of *kallinikos* — the type used, for example, in the tragedies already cited, and perhaps even more fittingly in the chorus of comedy, with its customary arrangement of six ranks and four files, or four ranks and six files.

Thus, we have noted for the *kallinikos* two general types of choreography, both processional — the one a freely-moving line of singers and dancers, the other a tetragonal or rectangular body of

marchers. We recall, also, evidence for choreography of an entirely different nature, in the *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes (1271–78) — if, as seems likely, the dance there referred to is also of the *kallinikos* group. *Lysistrata* bids the dancers stand side by side, a man and a woman alternating, presumably with hands joined, and to dance in that manner. It is interesting in this connection to examine a passage in Latin literature — in the *Hercules Furens* of Seneca (827–94). There Theseus, heralding the return of Hercules after the capture of Cerberus, announces the approach of a great crowd of Theban citizens, with laurel wreaths on their heads, who are coming along, shouting and singing in praise of the victorious hero (827–9). The chorus of Thebans enter at that point (830); and from all indications their song and procession is a *kallinikos*. After forty-four lines, the meter changes to a shorter line, and the chorus bid “the wives, mingling with their husbands,” to begin the festal dance — *permixtae maribus nurus sollemnes agitent choros* (878–9). They do so; and this particular dance continues until the entrance of Hercules (895). His first words are “*Victrice dextra*”; and a few lines later (898) he calls himself “victor.” Throughout the rest of the play, and also throughout the *Hercules Oetaeus* of the same poet, there is much emphasis upon Hercules as a victor.

The dance in Seneca is not identical with anything in the *Hercules Furens* of Euripides. It is highly possible, however, that it is not an invention of Seneca's, but is drawn from some Greek source. It is apparently very like the dance in the *Lysistrata*: The dance in Seneca lasts twenty lines, that in Aristophanes fifteen; both are danced to short lines of verse, by husbands and wives, alternating, side by side. The formation, essentially alien to the Greek dance of the classical period, and often commented upon by the Greeks as something exceptional, is that of the famous and very ancient *geranos* dance of Delos, which was also a dance of victory. As I have shown elsewhere,³ the *geranos* was a winding, wandering dance, imitative of the crawling of a snake, and perhaps ultimately of Cretan origin. Victory dances of this type survived from antiquity down through the centuries, and are seen even today in such forms as the “Furry Dance” in British Helston, and in the “snake dances” in honor of American football victories.

³Lillian B. Lawler, “The Geranos Dance — A New Interpretation,” *TAPhA* 77 (1946) 112–130.

The *kallinikos* dance, then, can be performed by men alone, by women alone (as in the *Electra* of Euripides), or by men and women together. Apparently it can be freely processional, or rectangular, or in the *geranos* formation, with dancers side by side in a line. It can be brief (as in the snatches performed in the drama), or, presumably, can last all night. It can be in honor of Heracles himself, of some other divinity, of an athletic victor, of a dramatic victor or prospective victor, of some great hero, or of a military or tactical victory. It is always accompanied with flute-music and song, and is quite obviously joyous.

But we can go even further in our quest for information on the *kallinikos* type of dance.

The adjective *kallinikos* is actually a cult title of Heracles, from earliest times.⁴ The name of the hero, with the epithet *Kallinikos*, was often inscribed over doorways to avert evil.⁵ Similar epithets given to him, in inscriptions and in literature, are *Aniketos*, *Epinikios*, and *Nikephoros*. In particular, there was a very old cult of Heracles as *Kallinikos* at Erythrae (Pausanias 7.5.5-8); from the shrine there all women except those of Thracian origin were debarred. Women were regularly excluded from shrines of the Greek Heracles and the Roman Hercules; in fact, the saying, "A woman does not frequent the shrine of Heracles" was proverbial.⁶ As Farnell has conjectured,⁷ the reason for the exclusion of women was probably a fear that their presence might "impair the warrior's energy." Evidently the Thracian women, being mostly slaves, were looked upon merely as chattels.

There was another famous shrine of Heracles at Antimachia, in Cos. Plutarch, in his *Greek Questions* (58), asks why it is that the priest of Heracles in that town wears a woman's robe and a woman's headdress (*mitra*) when he begins the sacrifices, and why the bridegrooms of Cos wear women's garb. He answers his own query by recounting the legend of an attack upon Heracles here, his flight, and his hiding in the home of a Thracian woman, disguised in her clothing. After a subsequent victory over his enemies, Plutarch

⁴ Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 2.6.4; *IG* 12.5.234; Lewis R. Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States* (New York, 1896) I, "Zeus," Ref. 137 b, and IV, "Apollo," Ref. 4; Adler, in *RE* s.v. "Kallinikos" (6).

⁵ Lewis R. Farnell, *Greek Hero Cults and Ideas of Immortality* (Oxford, 1921) 147-9.

⁶ *Paroemiographi Graeci*, ed. Leutsch and Schneidewin, 1.392 and 2.154; ed. Gaisford, 130; Aulus Gellius 11.6.2; Macrobius, *Saturn.* 1.12.28; Silius Ital. 3.21.

⁷ *Op. cit.* (above, note 5) 163.

continues, Heracles married Chalcioppe, princess of Cos, and for the wedding donned a woman's robe "adorned with flowers," that is, decorated with floral designs, woven or embroidered. The significance of the Thracian woman is probably the same as in the story of Erythrae. The legend is evidently aetiological; and the other elements in it evidently point to established cult usage in the wearing of woman's garb by the priest of Heracles and by local bridegrooms.⁸

In commenting upon the Antimachia story, scholars have referred repeatedly to the Omphale episode in the canonical story of Heracles — the story that, as punishment for the slaying of Iphitus, the hero was sold to the Lydian queen Omphale, and that for three years he served as her slave, clad in woman's garb. Some writers see in both cases evidence for effeminate priests in the cult of Heracles — probably a cult usage borrowed from Lydia. However, it has been pointed out frequently that the wearing of women's clothing by men is by no means uncommon in ancient rituals. We have already noted that this practice is attested for the *kômos* (Philostr. 1.3.5); so is its corollary — the wearing of men's clothing by women. There are many reasons for such transvestism.⁹ It may be fertility magic, or a device to avert the evil eye, or a means of deceiving demons and ghosts — or something quite different.

The Byzantine writer Ioannes Lydus (*De Mensibus* 4.46) speaks of Heracles as *Epinikios*, and giver of health and fertility. "In his mysteries," he goes on, "men wear women's dress." He continues with a reference to Heracles' bringing of Cerberus up from Tartarus, and, in the fashion of his day, with much elaborate allegorizing about the hero. We cannot be sure whether Lydus is speaking of a Roman mystery cult of Hercules, or of the cult of Heracles "the Fair Victor" in general. The context rather favors the latter view.

We have, then, a strong possibility that in the cult of Heracles "the Fair Victor," in Erythrae, Antimachia, and elsewhere, there were "mysteries" of some sort; and that in these "mysteries" both votaries and priests wore female garb of great magnificence.

⁸ W. R. Halliday, *The Greek Questions of Plutarch* (Oxford, 1928) 213-9; Farnell, *op. cit.* (above, note 5) 160-6.

⁹ M. P. Nilsson, *Griechische Feste* (Leipzig, 1906) 369-74; Sir James Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (London, 1907-18) 6.253-64 and 9.389-90; Farnell, *op. cit.* (above, note 5) 141; Halliday, *op. cit.* (above, note 8) 216-9.

The adventures of Heracles are favorite themes of Greek vase painters; and scenes from his cult, also, are not uncommon in ceramic art.¹⁰ Frequently he is depicted on the same vase with *ephêboi*, who are engaged in characteristic athletic sports or training activities. One vase in particular is of great interest in the light of our discussion. It is a large, fine cylix, black-figured, with touches of purple and white. It is of the "Kleinmeister" type, and dates from about 500 B.C. The cylix was found in one of the painted tombs of Corneto; it is now in the Museum at Corneto. The cup was published by W. Helbig,¹¹ and was commented upon soon thereafter by E. Petersen.¹² An excellent reproduction, in color, of approximately actual size, appears in the *Monumenti Inediti dell' Istituto* (XI, 1879-83, Plate 41); and a good black-and-white reproduction can be seen in the Harrison-MacColl collection.¹³

The outside of the cylix depicts a charioteer and chariot in rapid motion (twice), two pairs of winged sphinxes, and the words, "Greetings, and drink well" (twice). The "tondo" of the interior of the cup bears a fine representation of Heracles struggling with Nereus or the "Old Man of the Sea,"¹⁴ who is shown with a great, coiling, serpent-like tail. Around the inside of the main part of the cylix there is portrayed a dance, in a style somewhat reminiscent of that upon the famous François vase. Seventeen long-haired figures, wearing fillets, and clad in elaborately-decorated dresses, move in a rapid circle dance around to the spectator's right, holding one another by the hand. They are tightly girdled, in a manner suggestive almost of Minoan Crete. At first glance they seem to be women — and some commentators have so designated them. However, the lack of white paint to indicate their skin, and the circular form of their eyes — both artistic conventions in Greek vase painting — mark them indisputably as men. No two of them are exactly alike; subtle variations in the weaving and embroidery of their rich garments differentiate them clearly. They are all young, however. They move with obvious vigor and lightness, on

¹⁰ H. B. Walters, *A History of Ancient Pottery* (London, 1905) 2.101-5.

¹¹ W. Helbig, "Scavi di Corneto," *Bull. dell' Inst.* 1881, 39-50.

¹² E. Petersen, "Ercole e Tritone," *Annal. dell' Inst.* 54 (1882) 73-89.

¹³ J. E. Harrison and D. S. MacColl, *Greek Vase Paintings* (London, 1894) Plate V; reproduced in *Archaeology* 1 (June, 1948) 113. See also Salomon Reinach, *Répertoire des Vases Peints Grecs et Étrusques* (Paris, 1923-24) 1.227, Nos. 2, 3, 4, 5.

¹⁴ Stephen B. Luce, "Heracles and the Old Man of the Sea," *AJA* 26 (1922) 174-92.

the balls of their long, slender feet; and as they step out briskly, they draw their dresses tight against their legs — as men will do, under the unaccustomed restraint of a skirt. The dancers lean forward markedly. Each one seems to pull along the dancer behind him; and the right arms are all sharply bent at the elbow. Most of the figures have open mouths, as if shouting or laughing or singing. The general atmosphere of the scene is one of great activity and enjoyment. A row of black dots, slanting along under each pair of arms, furnishes a problem; however, the cup may be a copy of an earlier, and perhaps larger, cylix, or even of a wall-painting, in which garlands or fillets were indicated as suspended from the dancers' arms.

We have, then, on the Corneto cylix, seventeen dancing men, in the garb of women, in a Heracleian setting, and, in fact, in connection with a portrayal of one of Heracles' great victories. In my opinion, the cylix portrays another type of *kallinikos* dance. I believe the cup is evidence that, in the cult of Heracles, in shrines from which women were excluded and in which priests or votaries wore female garb, there was featured a performance of the *kallinikos* by a chorus of young men in women's dress. It may be significant that in the *Hercules Furens* of Euripides, the chorus of men, avowedly singing and dancing the *kallinikos*, liken themselves to the "Delian maidens" who dance in honor of Apollo (687–90). The dance as portrayed on the cylix may well have been a feature of the "mysteries" of Heracles.

Various isolated bits of information which we possess tend to corroborate this hypothesis. Farnell¹⁵ devotes some attention to an inscription of Mesogaea, referring to the cult of Heracles, on which an official is called a *koragôgos*. Farnell translates this title as "escorter of the girl," and believes that it points to a consecration of a Greek maiden as the mystic bride of Heracles. I should not be surprised, however, if its real significance were something like "leader of the girls." The element *-agôgos* (as in *mystagôgos*) is often used in mystery cults and elsewhere to designate the leader or instructor of a group of votaries. Here, in my opinion, it designates the leader of just such a group of "girls," that is, men costumed as women, as the one pictured on the Corneto cylix. It is possible that on certain occasions the dancers in the Heracles cult may have been initiates into the "mysteries." Another possibility, of course,

¹⁵ Farnell, *op. cit.* (above, note 5) 166.

is that the cult of Heracles "the Fair Victor" boasted of a thiasos of dancers — just as in Rome and Tibur the cult of Hercules Victor was distinguished by the presence of Salii, singing and dancing priests.¹⁶

The *kallinikos* was surely a dance of joy, performed with the cult purpose of celebrating the hero's triumph over one or more of the many monsters which he subdued during his full and adventurous life. Hesychius, we recall, mentions particularly the capture of Cerberus in connection with the dance. It is very interesting that Cerberus, the three-headed dog which guarded the entrance to the Lower World, had a snake for a tail (it bit Heracles!), and bore on his back "the heads of all sorts of snakes" (Apollodorus 2.5.12; cf. Seneca, *Herc. Fur.* 794–5). Heracles, indeed, is one of the many snake-subduing gods and heroes of the Mediterranean region. His adventures with serpents are told with much lurid detail in Greek and Roman literature. As a baby in the cradle, he strangled two snakes with his bare hands. As a man, he slew many huge snakes — Ladon, which guarded the Apples of the Hesperides; the serpent associated with the river Sygaris; the sea-serpent which menaced Hesione; and others. He defeated the river-god Achelous, who took the forms of a bull and a serpent, successively. He wrestled with the "Old Man of the Sea," who assumed many forms, among them that of a sea-serpent; this is the adventure depicted on our cylix. Above all, he helped the gods defeat the Giants, usually thought of as huge creatures with great, writhing serpents in place of legs (Apollodorus, *Bibl.* 1.6.1–2; but cf. Pausanias 8.29.3). The defeat of the Giants was, in fact, regarded by many ancient writers as his crowning achievement, the very deed which raised him to the status of a god (Pindar, *Nem.* 1.60–72B); and we remember the association of this victory with the word *kallinikos* in the *Hercules Furens* of Euripides (180).

Amusingly enough, Heracles was sometimes worshipped at Erythrae under the cult title of Ipoktonos, "Worm-Killer." This title is explained (Strabo 13.613) by the story that Heracles exterminated in that town a type of worm which ruined wine-grapes — a worm which infested all other Greek lands. However, the epithet may have a wider significance, and really be equivalent to, and an understatement for, "Serpent-Slayer." In similar fashion, Apollo,

¹⁶ Vergil, *Aeneid* 8.285–305; also, Robert Schilling, "L'Hercule Romain en face de la Réforme Religieuse d'Auguste," *RPh* 16 (1942) 31–57.

slayer of the great Python, was portrayed by the sculptor Praxiteles as Sauroktonos, "Lizard-Slayer."

Around the Mediterranean, from early times, serpent-slaying gods and heroes were honored with festivals and with commemorative dances.¹⁷ Apollo's slaying of the Python was celebrated at Delphi with a mimetic dance portraying the struggle.¹⁸ Elsewhere I have discussed these dances in some detail.¹⁹ On the Corneto cylix the formation of the dance is a closed circle. It hems in a representation of Heracles' struggle with the snaky "Old Man of the Sea," and thus mystically honors and glorifies his victory over that monster. The circle may have been but one figure of the dance, and others, including the "snake-line," may have ensued. We have already remarked that the alignment of what is probably one type of *kallinikos* dance — that in the *Lysistrata* (1271–78) and in the *Hercules Furens* of Seneca (878–94) — resembles the distinctive alignment of the *geranos*, a Delian victory dance with serpentine choreography.

An acquaintance tells me that she has seen, in a motion picture travelogue, an ancient ritual dance of India, performed by a group of men wearing women's dress. She says that the men moved in a circle dance, rapidly, vigorously, and with sharply-angled arms; and that, in fact, my photograph of the Corneto cylix reminded her at once of the motion picture. I have been unable to identify the dance of India to which she refers.

¹⁷ Frazer, *op. cit.* (above, note 9) 8.316; T. H. Gaster, "Ritual Drama in the Ancient Near East," paper read at a meeting of the American Oriental Society at Columbia University, April 25, 1946.

¹⁸ Plutarch, *Greek Questions* 12; *De defect. orac.* 417F and schol. *ad loc.*; Strabo 9.3.10; Schol. Paris. Clem. Alex. p. 92, Klotz; Pollux 4.84.

¹⁹ Lawler, *op. cit.* (above, note 3); also, "Snake Dances," *Archaeology* 1 (1948) 110–13.