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#### **IV.- The Dance of the Ancient Mariners**

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There is specific evidence for a mariners' dance performed on Delos by all merchant sailors whose course lay near that sacred island. The sailors' dances were certainly performed for the safety of their ships and were probably accompanied by offerings of *σκάφαι* full of "good things". The dances not associate with any particular festival. They were of remote antiquity. The mariners seem to have done not one dance, but two, or even three. One, performed around the horned altars, is confused with the *γέρανος* by Greek writers. I believe that it was a form of the original Cretan "labyrinth" dance or "wandering" dance of men, as it was before fusion with a "crane" dance to form the *γέρανος*. A second of the mariners' dances was performed "under blows". This would obviously be a ritual beating dance, of a well-known primitive type, used to induce fertility or to ward off evil. It may have been associated with the ritual theft of fruit from a sacred tree. Prehistoric rings from Isopata, Vaphio, Mycenae, etc., are significant in the interpretation of this dance. A third of the mariners' hands held behind the back. This is a familiar rite among ancient and modern peoples; its purpose is to transfer evil influences to the tree and so secure protection from it. There are Minoan elements in all these dances. Other known mariners' dances are then considered briefly. Of these the *μόθων* seems to have been a descendant of an old mariners' dance which the ancestors of the Helots had learned from the Cretans. It may originally have been identical with the being dance performed on Delos.

The little island of Delos, in the middle of the Aegean Sea, was throughout antiquity a very sacred spot. During the classical period it was noted for its magnificent festivals; and as Lucian tells us (Salt. 16) there was no sacrifice there that was not accompanied with dancing. Nor did this splendor necessarily begin with the Greeks; for there is some evidence that even in the pre-Greek period Delos was noted for distinctive cult observances and for spectacular dances.

Prominent among our sources for the Delian ceremonies and dances are the Homeric *Hymn to the Delian Apollo* (146-64), Callimachus' *Hymn IV, To Delos* (270, 304-24) and Thucydides (3. 104). (1) In a previous paper (2) I classified the dances mentioned in the two hymns, as follows: (1) dances of mariners; (2) the *γέρανος* or crane dance; (3) the dance of the Delian maidens; and (4) the dances of the Ionian people assembled on Delos for various festivals. In the same paper I discussed the dances of the second, third and fourth groups. In this paper I should like to consider those of the first group, which we may call "dances of the ancient mariners".

Callimachus says (Del. 316-24):

*Ἀστερίη πολύβωμε, πολύλλιτε, τις δέ σε ναύτης*

έμπορος Αίγαιόιο παρήλυθε νηί θεούση;  
Ούχ ούτω μεγάλοι μιν ἐπιπνεύουσιν ἀηται,  
χρειώ δ' ὅττι τάχιστον ἀγει πλόον, ἀλλά τὰ λαίφη  
ωκεες ἐστείλαντο καί οὐ πάλιν αὐτίς ἐβησαν,  
πρὶν μέγαν ἠ σέο βωμόν ὑπὸ πληγῆς ἐλελίξαι  
ῥησσομένους καί πρέμνον ὀδακτάσαι ἀγνον ἐλαίης  
χείρας ἀποστρέψαντας α Δηλιάς εὔρετο νύμφη  
παίγνια κουρίζοντι καί ἄ Απόλλωνι γελαστών.

There are many corruptions in this passage, and it has aroused much discussion. (3) I have followed Schneider in reading ὑπὸ πληγῆς ἐλελίξαι in line 321, and Ernesti in reading ῥησσομένους in line 322.

I should translate the lines as follows:

“Asteria, abounding in altars and in suppliants, what merchant mariner of the Aegean has passed thee by in his speeding ship? No matter how great gales blow upon it, even when necessity urges the speediest voyage possible, yet they quickly furl their sails, and do not go aboard again until, buffeted with blows, they have whirled in adance around thine altar, and bitten the sacred trunk of the olive, holding their hands behind their backs; these ceremonies the Deliad nymph invented (to furnish) amusement and laughter to the youngg Apollo.”

Along with this must be considered a gloss of Hesychius:

\*Δηλικακός βωμός τό περιτρέχειν κύκλω τὸν ἐν Δήλῳ βωμόν καί τύπτεσθαι ἤρξατο τοῦτο Θησεύς, \* χαριστητής ἀπάτης λαβύρινθος.

Various emendations for the obvious corruptions have been suggested, notably those of M. Schmidt's *editio maior*: Δηλικακός for Δηλιακός, τὸν...βωμόν for τῶν... βωμόν, τούτου for τούτου, and χάριτι (or χαριστήρια) τῆς ἀπὸ τοῦ λαβυρίνθου φυγῆς for the concluding words. These emendations seem entirely satisfying; but, not stopping there, Schmidt changed τύπτεσθαι to ὑπτειν. In this he was influenced by a scholium on Callimachus' line 321:

Ἐν Δήλῳ περρὶ τὸν βωμόν τοῦ Απόλλωνος ἔθος ἦν τρέχειν καί τύπτειν τὸν βωμόν τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος μάστιγι καί ἀποδάκνειν ἐξηγκωνισμένους ἐκ τῆς ἐλαίας.

Evidently the scholiast, following some of the Callimachus manuscripts, had read ῥησσομένον in line 322, and had referred it to βωμόν in line 321. This has led several commentators to posit a beating of the altar or its base—an apparently unparalleled rite. (4)

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Το κείμενο δεν το έχω κοιτάξει γιατί δεν το βρήκα στις φωτοτυπίες.

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