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CHARIS AND CHARITES.

I.

ON inquiring into the nature of the Charites one may be astonished at the disagreement of their compounding elements. On the one hand, they appear as the very representatives and even personification of gracefulness and charm, brightness, and joy; their name itself seems to testify this, closely allied as it is with the verb *χαίρειν*, besides the particular names of the most renowned Hesiodic trinity—Aglaiā, Euphrosyne, and Thalia—that is to say, brilliancy, mirth, and florescence. Hence arose the Roman conception of the *Gratiae decentes*; hence also the widespread neo-humanistic idea, clothed by Goethe in the well-known verse of the Classical Walpurgis Night: 'Grace we are bringing into life. . . .' But, on the other hand, we discover the incontestable kinship of Charis with Charon, the ugly and sullen ferryman of the lower world, the still more amazing relation between Eurynome, the mother of the Hesiodic trinity, and Eurynomos, the horrid demon of decay, the vulture-skinned devourer of putrefying corpses in the Delphic Nekyia of Polygnotos.

I must insist upon their relation, which, so far as I am aware, has passed almost unnoticed by former inquirers. Certainly such comparisons of similar names, fetched from distant spheres of the far-reaching Greek mythology, are generally rather dazzling than conclusive. But here the spheres are as closely connected as possible. The Charites were the major goddesses of the Minyan Orchomenos; and Charon was first and foremost brought before the larger Greek public precisely by the author of the 'Minyad.' On the same poem also depends the Delphic picture of Polygnotos; and if Hesiod was not an Orchomenian, he was certainly a neighbour of this celebrated city, being a native of the Heliconian Askra. Besides, the Orchomenian cult of the Charites was doubtless a mystical one; this is in itself sufficient evidence of its relation with the lower world.

Thus the contradiction can by no means be contested. And it would be hopeless to try to explain it by deriving the opposite branches from one common root—the questionable way of Lehrs and his followers. The coexistence of nonconformities is of frequent occurrence in religious matters; and the sound way of explaining them is that of evolution, not that of reconciliation.

II.

If so, the main question is simply the following: from the two appearances of the Charites, the dark, so to say, and the bright, which is to be considered as the earlier, the primordial, and which as the later, the derivative? No doubtful answer is possible, the evolution from darkness to light being the usual way of growth in Greek religion—apart from the fact that the oldest, the most original and authoritative cult of the Charites, as has already been shown, is properly connected with their dark aspect, whereas the bright conception seems to be owing chiefly to the poetical or rather prophetic activity of individuals like Hesiod and others. We must therefore not be deceived by the cheerful aspect of their name: it is an euphemistic one like Eumenides, Euphrone, Meilichios, and others.

Unfortunately we are but very scantily informed about the Orchomenian cult, for it was a mystical one and, moreover, lay outside the centres of historical Greek culture. But a branch establishment of it was the likewise mystical Attic cult of the Akropolis, and there at least the names of the two or three Charites—the number is not quite certain—have come down to us: the names of Auxo (with Thallo) and Hegemone.

The latter can be easily explained as a parallel to *psychopompos* or *diaktoros*, epithets of Hermes the 'leader' of souls, with whom the Charites are often associated—likewise a sign of their originally and chiefly chthonial nature. *Charis hegemone* is thus not far off from Charon the ferryman of Hades.

As to Auxo and Thallo, they embody another side of the power of chthonial deities.

III.

For this is a characteristic feature of the Greek religion: even its dark side is not altogether dark. The bowels of the earth are doubtless the seat of the dead and consequently the mansion of fright; but they are likewise the spring of all forces producing life in the upper world, and foremost of the forces of vegetable growth. Hades, the ruler of the dead, is identical with Pluto, the dispenser of riches; and in the Eleusinian cult the two sides are closely connected with one another, the return of the seed being the symbol and the pledge of the immortality of the soul. This is the 'mystery of regenerated bread,' as it has been conveniently called by d'Annunzio. Hence the prayer to the demons and souls of the lower world, that they may 'send up blessings from below' (*ἀνίεναι, ἀναπέμπειν τὰγαθά*). And looked at practically, it seems quite certain that this second aspect of the things beyond the grave was thoroughly fitted to soothe the dread they naturally called forth among simple-minded people.

Thus this ambiguity in the nature of the Charis is easily accounted for: the same divine being that as Hegemone leads the souls of the deceased to their eternal abode, or perhaps to the throne Unutterable, becomes as Auxo the thriving force of the upper-world nature. Its further evolution shows nothing that could amaze us. As a trinity it decomposes itself into three distinct natural forces, the thriving (Auxo), the flourishing (Thallo), and the fructifying (Karpo); and thus the centre of gravity being shifted to the upper-world function of Charis, Hegemone herself turned into an upper-world deity, being identified with Aphrodite. The result of this development was settled in the oath of the Athenian epheboi: they swore upon Auxo, Thallo, and Hegemone—obviously as the goddesses of Youth.

IV.

Here, however, we have in the natural growth of the upper-world aspect of Charis a point of lovely rest. Thriving, flourishing, fructifying, these forces are ruling also in human life agreeing with the life of vegetable and animal nature, and the major point of their efficiency is exactly the moment, when the former being conveys the spark of life into another—the moment of sexual *love*. No wonder therefore that Charis has also become the deity of Love and in this function to a certain extent a rival of Aphrodite and even of Eros.

This last convergence, however, has led rather to a differentiation of the two forces than to a complete identification; that was due, as it seems, to the different gender of the respective words. 'Ο *ἔρως* became naturally the masculine, the active, craving love; ἡ *χάρις*, on the contrary, the feminine, the passive, the yielding. 'Charis has been called by the ancients the woman giving herself up to the man,' says Plutarch (*Amat.* 5). Hence the particular spell of the verb *χαρίζεσθαι*, one of the most charming in the charming Greek tongue for anyone who can enjoy it in the original form without letting it lose its native flavour by translation into a modern

language; hence also the touching figure of the Sophoclean Tekmessa, the very heroine of χάρις in this sense, especially when she asks her lord to live for her sake, since χάρις χάριν γάρ ἔστιν ἢ τίκτουσ' ἀέι.

Thus the kinship of Charis and Aphrodite is quite comprehensible, and also the conveyance of the epithet *hegemone* to the latter.¹ And since according to Greek feeling τίκτειν ἐν μὲν αἰσχρῷ οὐ δύναται ἢ φύσις, ἐν δὲ τῷ καλῷ (Plato, *Symp.* 206 c), Charis became at last the goddess of *Beauty*, and this meaning gained gradually in importance, the more Greek religion itself, thanks to the poets, was losing its physical as well as its ethical essence in the favour of the merely aesthetical. This was finally the way to the Charites of Goethe 'bringing grace into life.'

But the Athenian public knew moreover their couple associated with the embodied people itself: in the very market of the town there was a district sacred to Demos and Charites. Are we bound to acknowledge here the goddesses of beauty and charm? There would obviously be no rhyme or reason in that. No; the well-known altar, with the inscription ΑΦΡΟΔΙΤΕΙ ΗΓΕΜΟΝΕΙ ΤΟΥ ΔΗΜΟΥ ΚΑΙ ΧΑΡΙΤΙΝ, leads us into the right way. They were doubtless the same as the Charites of the Athenian epheboi, the goddesses of growth, florescence, and fruitfulness of human harvest; and the symbol of Charis Hegemone, turned to Aphrodite 'leader of the people,' is quite the same as that of Aphrodite Pandemos—I mean, of course, the true, not the mistaken. And the whole dedication looks like an epigraphical counterpart to the verses of Euripides (*Suppl.* 442):

καὶ μὴν ὅπου γε δῆμος αὐθέντης χθονὸς,
ὑποῦσιν ἀστοῖς ἦδεται νεανίας.

V.

I am piecing here bits of disconnected evidence gathered from various parts of Greek literature and epigraphy; as most of them are easily to be found in well-known manuals and dictionaries, I did not feel bound to interrupt the course of my reasoning by giving philological references to every one. Nor will I lay claim to novelty, for all has been developed in the former chapters; my aim was to present in a brief sketch as simply as possible the evolution of the Charites, as has been said above, from their dark aspect to the bright, from the dreaded leaders of the souls in the infernal chasm to the smiling dispensers of grace on the sunlit surface of the earth. A rapid glance—no more; nevertheless, I want the eye of the reader to dwell as long as possible upon the process unfolded. It would enable him to agree with what I am about to show him far more than discursive evidence could do.

For the chief thing is the following:

If Charis is closely connected with the nether regions in their terrifying as well as beneficent aspect, she must be considered as specially bound up with those glorified spirits, who were the object of communal rather than individual worship—the so-called heroes. Their cult seems to be unknown to Homer just as much as the cult of the souls in general; as to the latter, however, Erw. Rohde has already pointed out a strange inconsequence—the vow of Odysseus (κ 521 sqq.)—showing that Homer has rather disregarded than really ignored it. We may observe a similar inconsequence concerning the cult of heroes. Homer does not use this word in its sacral sense; nevertheless, we may assert that the thing itself is not quite foreign to him. The evidence of it is given in the famous prophecy of Tiresias regarding the death of Odysseus (λ 134):

¹ I would not lay too much stress on the fact that Charis, the wife of Hephaestos in the *Iliad*, has yielded up her place to Aphrodite in the *Odyssey*. The parallelism is really striking, but I would rather consider it as merely casual,

since it can be proved otherwise, that the cult of Charis was imported into Lemnos, the island of Hephaestos, by the Minoans, and afterwards the cult of Aphrodite by the Kadmeans of Thebes.

θάνατος δέ τοι ἐξ ἄλδος αὐτῷ
 ἀβληχρὸς μάλα τοῖος ἐλεύσεται . . . ἀμφὶ δὲ λαοὶ
 ὄλβιοι ἔσσονται.

If 'the people around' (his grave, of course) 'are to be happy,' it is clear that their happiness depends strictly on their getting possession of his grave; and if so, Odysseus is the very 'hero' of his folk, whose blessed ghost from his dark abode 'sends good things up,' ἀνίησι τὰγαθά, to his true worshippers.

VI.

And now let me ask: should we be astonished on finding the notion of Charis, or more especially that of the nether-world Charis, χάρις ἢ χθονία, closely connected with the virtue and power of such a hero? As to Odysseus we have no evidence; but the case of Oedipus in the posthumous tragedy of Sophocles was quite similar. His body is also a pledge of happiness for the people around his grave: the lords of his destiny send him into the wide world (O.C. 92)—

κέρδη μὲν οἰκήσαντα τοῖς δεδεγμένοις

No wonder that the blessed death of such a hero, the spring of luck for the whole community, is not considered a matter for ordinary lamentation; that is why Theseus in the last scene soothes the mourning daughters of the deceased (v. 1751):

παύετε θρήνων, παῖδες· ἐν οἷς γὰρ
 χάρις ἢ χθονία ξύν' ἀπόκειται,
 πενθεῖν οὐ χροί· νέμεσις γάρ.

. . . These verses have been hitherto one of the *crucis Sophocleae*. The scholiasts themselves were the first to misunderstand them: unaware of the religious character of the thought and knowing but the last stage in the evolution of Charis, which as entirely irreligious we have omitted above, they paraphrased them thus: ϕ τὰ τῆς τελευτῆς κατὰ χάριν ἀπέβη. As to the moderns, Nauck thinks of the thanks the χθόνιοι θεοὶ deserved by hospitably receiving Oedipus; Radermacher returns, though hesitatingly, to the obviously impossible explanation of the scholiasts; Jebb agrees to a certain extent with Nauck, and his translation of the quoted passage runs as follows: *Weep no more, maidens; for where the kindness of the Dark Powers is an abiding grace to the quick and to the dead, there is no room for mourning: divine anger would follow.* It would hardly be worth while to go through the other explanations (without counting the conjectures) proposed by expounders and translators, even if I could gather them all; I think, however, if the right interpretation had been found already, it ought to have come to light. And that one which agrees with the religious evolution of Charis is to be acknowledged as the right one.

It would be worth while to consider how fairly the other terms of the passage quoted suit the settled signification of the main word. 'Subterranean grace'—we can even say 'subterranean mercy'—has consecrated the deceased sufferer, it lies with (ξυνά) him in his hidden grave; thus his supposed father τὰ παρόντα ξυλλαβὼν θεσπίσματα κέεται παρ' Αἰδῆ Πόλυβος (O.T. 971). This is quite comprehensible, whereas by accepting the explanation of Jebb we presume that Theseus proposes a riddle exceedingly difficult to solve. But not only this: the grave has become, so to say, a store-room for that grace or mercy, ἀποθήκη—hence the term ἀπόκειται, quite well explained by Jebb in his commentary, which is far more weighty than the simple κέεται. And now it is obvious that such blessed departed have not to be bewailed—I may point out that the verb χροί is not always synonymous with δεῖ, since it has often an implication of religious duty. So the most scrupulous analysis does but confirm our conception of the *chthonia charis*.

VII.

And this conception can help us to interpret another passage belonging to a poet, who still more than Sophocles himself was endowed with religious feeling and religious thought—viz., Aeschylus.

The passage I refer to is the fierce answer of Eteokles to the warning advice of the Chorus; he must not despair of propitiating the gods by large oblations (*Sept.* 702):

θεοῖς μὲν ἤδη πως παρημελήμεθα,
 χάρις δ' ἀφ' ἡμῶν ὀλομένων θαυμάζεται·
 τί οὖν εἴτ' ἂν σαίνουμεν ὀλέθριον μῦρον;

The most recent editor and translator of the play, M. Paul Mazon (*Eschyle*, I. 134), gives an elegant rendering of the common interpretation of these verses: *Les dieux ! ils n'ont désormais plus souci de moi. L'offrande de ma mort, seule, a du prix pour eux. Ai-je encore une raison de flatter un trépas qui me fait disparaître ?* As to the grammar the translation is blameless; but it is easy to see that the peculiar religious signification of *charis* is drowned here in a misleading and prosy periphrasis.

First of all we must recognize that according to the tragic phraseology ἡ χάρις θαυμάζεται is to be reduced to *θανυμαστὴ χάρις ἐστίν*; in the same way Soph. *Trach.* 638 Ἑλλάνων ἀγοραὶ Πυλάτιδες κλέονται means αἱ κλειναὶ εἰσὶν Πυλάτιδες Ἑλλάνων ἀγοραί. It is then 'a wonderful grace' that is emanating from the dead Eteokles; the less reason has he, as he adds with bitterness, to avoid so happy a fate. We have once more to recognize the activity of the *chthonia Charis*.

For the sentiment we may quote Eur. *Herac.* 1026 sqq. The captive and almost doomed Eurystheus tells the Athenians of the grace that will beam forth from his corpse, if buried in Attic earth:

καὶ σοὶ μὲν εὖνους καὶ πόλει σωτήριος
 μέτοικος ἀεὶ κείσομαι κατὰ χθονός,

—a new manifestation of *chthonia charis*, as nobody can deny. But the revengeful Alcmena, here distinctly characterized as the ancestress of the hated Spartans, draws a sacrilegious inference from this prophecy: if so, why not kill him at once? The sooner will you enjoy the wholesome effect of his power: ἐχθρὸς μὲν ἀνὴρ, ὠφελεῖ δὲ κατθανόν. Instead of the last three words she may as well have said in an Aeschylean style: *χάρις δὲ τάνδρως ὀλομένω θαυμάζεται*.

Returning to Eteokles and his posthumous *χάρις*, it may be remembered that the Charites of Orchomenos with their *chthonial* nature were considered properly as the Charites of Eteokles (*Theokr.* XVI. 104 with Schol. and Paus. IX. 35, 1); but their relation to him wants itself an explanation. As to his canonization, no doubt about it is possible, though we have no witness, since he was in the true legend the very upholder of his invaded country.

As to his answer to the Chorus, no reader should fail to recognize the bitterness of its tragic irony; but setting it aside and considering the sentence alone, we discover here almost the same meaning as in the well-known outcry of the dying emperor Vespasianus, the good-humoured future *diuus*: 'I am becoming a god.'

VIII.

This holy power granted by the gods to the 'heroes'—the power of getting the pledge of welfare for the keepers of their graves—is for them the main point of contact with the saints of the Christian Church; thus the *charis*, as a mystical gift of god to the mortal for his future life, becomes somewhat kindred with the Christian *gratia*, the *gratia gratis data* of St. Augustine. Yes, of St. Augustine; after a long roundabout way through the ranges of physic and aesthetic the term itself, *charis*—

gratia, returns to its original root. Not wholly, to be sure; but the way to a closer anticipation even of the Christian *gratia cooperans* was nevertheless marked out.

And we are able to assert that the religious thought of the sixth century, so immensely fruitful in religious matter, has been influenced by this idea, although our knowledge of this period is extremely scanty. Fortunately fate has preserved us a fragment of an elegy of Xenophanes, where the higher aim of prayer, exactly the *gratia cooperans*, is clearly indicated (I. 15 B.): εὐξαμένους τὰ δίκαια δύνασθαι πρήσσειν. Here the term of *charis* is not yet applied; but we find it in a similar connexion in the lofty prayer to Zeus of Aeschylus. The poet speaks about the imploring power of remorse, which knocking at the heart of the sleeping sinner teaches him in spite of his own desire to be honest, and calls it the *grace* of the gods strongly sitting at the holy helm of the world (*Ag.* 182): δαιμόνων δέ που χάρις βιαίως σέλμα σεμνὸν ἡμένων.

We are greatly indebted to Dr. Farnell for having thoroughly pointed out the *higher aspects of Greek religion*; I think, however, the aspect I have displayed just now deserves a place amongst the highest of them.

T. ZIELINSKI.

AESCHYLUS, *AGAMEMNON* 1-8.

Θεοὺς μὲν αἰτῶ τῶνδ' ἀπαλλαγὴν πόνων,
 φρουρᾶς ἐτείας μῆκος, ἦν κοιμώμενος
 στέγαις Ἀτρειδῶν ἄγκαθεν, κύνδς δίκην,
 ἄστρον κάτοιδα νυκτέρων ὀμήγυριν,
 καὶ τοὺς φέροντας χεῖμα καὶ θέρος βροτοῖς
 λαμπροὺς δυνάστας ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι·
 [ἀστέρας ὅταν φθίνωσιν, ἀντολάς τε τῶν·]
 καὶ νῦν φυλάσσω λαμπάδος τὸ συμβόλον.

As is well known, many editors, following Valckenaer, reject the bracketed line altogether; but the omission leaves the opening clause with a very unsatisfactory ending. Ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι, heavily stressed by its position, seems to form little less than an anticlimax, unless we assume that the stars could hardly be expected to shine in the sky. On the other hand, when line 7 is added, ἐμπρέποντας αἰθέρι ἀστέρας brings out clearly the fact that only certain conspicuous stars or constellations are meant—those which serve as guides to the operations of agriculture and navigation, such as the Pleiades, Arcturus, and Orion, as we may see from Hesiod, *Op.* 609 onwards.

Accordingly line 7 should certainly be retained, but not exactly in the form universally accepted as the tradition. No violent alteration is needed, not even ἀντέλλωσί τε, which would certainly have been preferred to ἀντολάς τε τῶν, if that had been all Aeschylus intended to say. He said something more, and yet managed to do so with the very letters printed in our texts:

ἀστέρας ὅταν φθίνωσιν ἀντολάς τ' ἐτῶν

The watchman says he knows full well (κάτοιδα) these stars, because he has been for a full year 'investigating,' or rather 'verifying,' when they set and their risings.

This has long been his employment or resource, and is placed in immediate contrast with what he is doing at the moment :

καὶ νῦν φυλάσσω λαμπάδος τὸ σύμβολον.

Both poetically and logically the introduction of ἐτῶν is a manifest improvement, nor can it be said that this participle is altogether a new form or *ad hoc* invention. The familiar ἐξετάζω, 'to examine,' 'test' (cf. ἐτέος, ἔτυμος), has a future participle ἐξετῶν in Isocr. 9, 34; and in Arist. *Eccles.* 729 Cobet would read ἐξετῶ for ἐξετάσω: nor is the simple form ἐτάζω a rarity at all periods, or perhaps at any period, of the Greek language. In the *Anthology* it occurs rather frequently. In Pind. *Ol.* VI. 15 (23) ἐτασθέντων is probably right for the meaningless τελεσθέντων; and I have given some reason (*v. Homericæ*, p. 316 sqq.) for reading ὅπως ἐτάσειε for ὅπως πετάσειε in σ 160. In τ 44 it seems quite possible that some form of this verb lies hidden under the traditional absurdity ἐρεθίζω, e.g. ἄρ' ἐτάζω (?), *v. Homericæ* ad loc.

In any case there can be little doubt as to the validity of the form ἐτῶν. The only question is whether this participle may be an archaic present as well as a future, and the possibility of this becomes almost a certainty from what is known of the epic use of ἐλάω, the archaic form of ἐλαύνω.

The case may be briefly stated. We have in N 315, η 319 ἐλώσι, the musical diectasis of ἐλώσι = ἐλάουσι, and ε 290 ἐλάαν, as futures (παρελάσεις Ψ 427); but Ψ 334 ἐλάαν, *Hymn. Herm.* 342 ἐλάων, *id.* 355 ἐλώντα unquestionably presents: Ω 696, δ 2 ἔλων third plural imperfect, Apoll. Rhod. III. 872 ἔλαεν. Again κ 83 εἰσελάων and ἐξελάων both present participles.

I will only add A 31 ἀντιώσαν (present) as compared with Y 125 ἀντιώοντας (future). This verb ἀντιάω has also a present form ἀντιάζω like ἐτάζω.

T. L. AGAR.

MANCHESTER.