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The Classical Review

APRIL 1890.

THE GAME OF 'HARPASTUM' OR 'PHENINDA.'

So many learned writers, especially in Germany, have treated of Greek and Roman games that some apology may be needed for opening the subject at all: but authoritative as is their interpretation of most things, the games at ball are precisely what we have still left for doubt and conjecture. Krause, Bec de Fouquières, Marquardt, and even Grasberger in his admirable *Erziehung und Unterricht*, while they supply a storehouse of references, do not seem to have considered enough the practical question—what a player would be likely or able to do with a ball, or what manner of rules could or could not make a match between two sets of players. Greek and Roman games are loosely spoken of as somewhat like tennis, or are even compared to golf¹, although there is no trace of any implement such as a bat or racquet being used for any game by a Greek or Roman until a late period—none, as far as I know, earlier than the game identical with polo which Cinnamus (vi. 5) describes as played at Byzantium in the reign of Manuel Comnenus. Strangest perhaps as a failure to see essential differences in games is the suggestion of Grasberger (*op. cit.* p. 95) that harpastum may perhaps be the same as this Byzantine game, though the one is played on horseback with a long curved stick, the other on foot with nothing but the hand to propel the ball.

It will probably never be possible to lay down with certainty all the rules of any Greek and Roman game at ball, except those of *οὐρανία*, which is simply a game of 'catch';

¹ Such I conceive to be the meaning of Bec de Fouquières's statement (*Jeux des Anciens*, p. 203) that the game of *ἐπίσκυρος* is 'still played in Scotland.'

and of all the games harpastum is on the whole the hardest to determine. But a comparison of ancient authorities will limit considerably the field of discussion and will, I believe, exclude many suggestions which have been made.

The passages which form our authorities for this game are Martial, iv. 19, vii. 32, xiv. 48; Athenaeus, i. p. 15; Eustathius on *Od.* ix. 376; Pollux, ix. 32; Sidonius, v. 17, and especially the treatise of Galen *περὶ τῆς συμκρᾶς σφαίρας*. On this last an elaborate treatise has been written by Johann Marquardt (Gustroviae 1879), whose authority is accepted and quoted by Joachim Marquardt in his *Privatleben der Römer*. But I cannot help thinking that Johann Marquardt has started altogether on a wrong path from supposing that Galen speaks of three different games, and then trying by a forced interpretation to fit in *ἐπίσκυρος*, *φενίνδα* and *ἀρπαστόν* as the three in question. This idea may have originated in the use of the plural by Galen (pp. 899, 900), τὰ διὰ τῆς συμκρᾶς σφαίρας γυμνάσια, coupled with the mention of different degrees of exertion suitable for different constitutions. In reality however the wording of the treatise, as well as its most natural interpretation, should lead us to conclude that one game is described. Its title is *περὶ τοῦ διὰ τῆς συμκρᾶς σφαίρας γυμνασίου*, and the plurals are used in speaking of the different effects on various parts of the body caused by different phases of the game: e.g. on page 902 he says that he knows no other game so well calculated to exercise all the limbs, either severely or moderately as is requisite, *τοῦτο δὲ μόνον τὸ διὰ τῆς συμκρᾶς σφαίρας ὀξύτατον ἐν*

μέρει καὶ βραδύτατον γινόμενον, σφοδρότατον καὶ πρῶτατον ὡς ἂν αὐτὸς τε βουληθῆς καὶ τὸ σῶμα φαίνεται δέουσαν. Surely this passage alone would exclude Marquardt's interpretation of three different games suited for three different ages or strengths. Have we never heard in the modern game of football of a man playing 'goals' because accident or age has made him a less active runner than he once was? ¹ Briefly summarised Galen's argument in favour of the game is that it not only exercises all parts of the body and practises the eye, but also stimulates the mind by a spirit of emulation. Of this last he, as a physician, makes a great point, and his remarks are valuable for our question as showing that he is speaking of a real game to be won or lost, and not of medico-gymnastics. He proceeds to prove that this game suits all ages and constitutions, because each player can select that post or duty in it which best suits his capacity: and here again the forms of expression show that he is describing one particular game, and not three different games. The player may take ὅσον ἐν αὐτῷ σφοδρότατον, or he may choose the posts involving less exertion, οὐδὲν γὰρ οὕτω πρῶτον, εἰ πρῶτος αὐτῷ μεταχειρίζοιο: he may for instance take up a position far from the centre, where he will have chiefly to exercise his arms in throwing, or he may have a great deal of running and few long throws: or again he may take that part which involves little rapid motion but a great deal of grappling and wrestling.

It will be seen that I have taken the game which Galen calls that of the *σικκρά σφαῖρα* to be harpastum. This can, I think, be proved beyond a doubt. As the well-known games at ball in which several players are divided into two opposing sides (defined as games *κατὰ πλῆθῃ* or *sphaeromachiaē*) we gather only two from Eustathius, Pollux and Athenaeus, namely *ἐπίσκυρος* and *ἀρπαστὸν* or *φενίνδα*. Galen's game

¹ I have mentioned football as a familiar instance where players differing in activity and strength can find suitable places in one and the same game; but it may be well to guard against the idea that football of any sort was played in ancient Greece and Rome. Johann Marquardt (among others) speaks of the ball being kicked in *harpastum* as well as thrown, and cites as his authority Bec de Fouquières, who certainly makes the statement but cites no authority at all. I know of no passage in Greek or Latin literature which gives ground for this idea, which seems to have arisen from the mention of jugglers, such as Ursus Togatus (Orelli 2591), who caught and tossed balls with their feet. Galen speaks of the exercise to the arms in throwing: had kicking been allowed, he would have mentioned that as exercising the legs, but he assigns to them the exercise of running only.

is certainly not *ἐπίσκυρος*, the rules of which are laid down by the first two writers with remarkable precision, and, as we can hardly suppose that the game which Galen selects as the most complete and interesting would be passed over by these writers, it is necessary to identify it with harpastum: and this Pollux does, when, speaking of *φενίνδα*, he says *εἰκάζοιτο δ' ἂν εἶναι ἢ διὰ τοῦ μικροῦ σφαιρίου ὃ ἐκ τοῦ ἀρπάξεν ὠνόμασται*. It will be seen also that what little can be gathered from Martial about harpastum is in agreement with this view: the ball with which it was played must have been the smallest and hardest of the four balls mentioned in the *Apophoreta*, since the *paganica* (the ball stuffed with feathers) is said to come between the *pila par excellence* (i.e. the *trigon*) and the *follis* as regards size and hardness, and, as the *follis* was certainly the largest, it follows that the harpastum was the smallest. I have spoken above of the *pheninda* as merely a synonym of harpastum. It is difficult to understand how modern writers can venture to treat these two as separate games in face of the distinct statement of Athenaeus, 'τὸ δὲ καλούμενον διὰ τῆς σφαίρας ἀρπαστὸν φαινίνδα ἐκαλεῖτο.' As he adds that it was his favourite game, the flat contradiction of his statement in the 19th century seems all the more presumptuous; and there is no conflict of authorities to justify it; for no ancient writer mentions them as distinct. Pollux alone in the passage cited above goes so far as to say that they might be different, though he conjectures that they are the same. His note of uncertainty might suggest that he was more of a student than an athlete, but it must be remembered also that the name *pheninda* was, as Athenaeus tells us, generally superseded by the word harpastum, though it was still retained in some places, and is the only name applied to this game by Eustathius and Clement of Alexandria. The latter writer (*Paed.* iii. 10) in the words *σφαῖρα τῇ μικρᾷ παιζόντων τὴν φενίνδα* affords additional proof that *pheninda* and harpastum were synonyms, if the foregoing remarks upon Galen are correct: on the other hand, if it is admitted that *pheninda* = harpastum, the words of Clement will confirm the interpretation of Galen. As to the correct spelling of the word, *φενίνδα* rather than *φαινίνδα*, there can be little doubt that Meineke (whom Marquardt follows) is right in *Hermes*, iii. p. 455. Its connection in the sense of *misleading* with *φενικίζω* (see *Etym. Magn.* s.v. *φενίς* and Phot. Lex.) will be understood from the description of the game.

That there was absolutely no alteration or development in the rules of the game between the time of Antiphanes and that of Athenaeus—an interval about as long as from the battle of Bannockburn to the present day—is unlikely, but the main features of the game must have remained and justified the various names. The most characteristic feature was the player who intercepted (*ἤρπαζε*) the ball and who feigned a throw (*ἐφενάκιζε*). This player is *ὁ μεταξὺ* of Galen and the *medicurrens* of Sidonius, who is obviously describing the same game as Galen. To sum up the foregoing arguments: Athenaeus asserts that *pheninda* is the same as *harpastum*: Pollux thinks it is the game with the *μικρὰ σφαῖρα*, which = *ἀρπαστόν*: Clement of Alexandria says that it is played with *μικρὰ σφαῖρα*. Taking these together it appears clear that *pheninda* was the old name for what was afterwards generally called *harpastum*, and the older term still lingered in some places when Clement wrote; and, further, that this game was so much identified with the *μικρὰ σφαῖρα* that the name of the ball expresses the game itself.

It must be admitted that a reconstruction of the rules is in great measure guess-work, but it seems to me that the following account will explain and harmonize the fragmentary descriptions in Greek and Latin writers, and at the same time will not militate against common sense or the usual habits of balls. The players were divided into two sides, and each side had a base line, for without this we cannot explain what Galen says about *στρατηγία* and positions won and lost. We must suppose then a large rectangular ground with base lines at each end, divided into two equal camps by a line in the middle, which the 'frames' of Sidonius must express.¹ So far the ground resembles that of the *ἐπίσκυρος*, but the resemblance seems to stop here. A special feature of the game was, as has been said, the 'middle player,' *ὁ μεταξὺ* or *medicurrens*, who is probably described by 'vagus' in Martial vii. 22. One would indeed prefer to imagine two middle players, so that each side might have one, but the use of the singular in the authorities both Latin and Greek seems to preclude this and to render necessary some such explanation as is here attempted. How the 'innings' of the *medicurrens* terminated is not stated, but it may be suggested that he gave up his place to one of his opponents, whenever a point was

scored against his own side. The main object must have been to throw the ball so that it should drop finally beyond the enemy's base line, thereby scoring a point; and we may suppose that it was started from one or other base line and thrown from one player to another, the opposite side thwarting whenever they got an opportunity, and throwing it back in the contrary direction. The duty of the *medicurrens* was to catch it as it went past ('*praetervolantem aut superjectam*,' Sidon.), which would give him a better opportunity of throwing it over the enemy's line, or into some unguarded spot in their camp, where it might fall 'dead' and be started again, or of passing it on to one of his own side who was advantageously posted forward. Here would come in the manœuvres from which the names of the game arose: his intercepting the ball is expressed by *ἀρπαστόν*, the *feint* of throwing in order to make his opponents rush in a wrong direction suggested the name *φενίνδα*. One among the essential points of difference between this game and some others (*e.g.* *trigon*) was that the ball might be taken at the first bound as well as at the volley and only dropped 'dead' when it fell a second time, whereas at *trigon* the stroke was complete as soon as the ball once touched the ground (Petron. 27). This accounts for the epithet *pulverulenta* (Mart. iv. 19), and the alternative name of the ball *arenaria*, since it was naturally more often on the ground: hence also the expression 'rapit velox in pulvere' (Mart. xiv. 48).

The duties of the other players may be gathered from Galen and Sidonius. Some of them (and naturally those who were less active in running) stood near their own base line, the 'stantum locus,' and only made long throws towards the centre when they got hold of the ball: others played nearer the centre in what Sidonius calls the '*area pilae praetervolantis et superjectae*,' and ran to whatever part of their camp the ball was or seemed to be approaching, or ran forward, so as to be ready to pass on the ball from the *medicurrens* towards the enemy's base: in the event of the ball approaching their own base there would be a rush back to the rescue; and this explains the words *φνγγή*, *καταστροφή*, *catastrophā*, which we find in Eustathius, Antiphanes and Sidonius. Lastly some of the forward players, presumably the strongest in muscle, were often engaged in grappling with the *medicurrens* or with one another in the endeavour to stop him from catching and throwing the ball, or to prevent his being stopped by others, as is

¹ I strongly suspect that for '*nec intercideret tramitem nec caveret*' we should read *et intercideret &c.*

described by Galen 'ὅταν συνιστάμενοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους καὶ ἀποκωλύοντες ὑφάρπασαι τὸν μεταξύ.' Hence the use of all the wrestling terms, such as ἄμμα, ἀντίληψις, τραχηλισμός, which may suggest some phases of the 'Rugby game': and this grappling by the neck explains the otherwise obscure description of the harpastum-player in Martial 'grandia qui vano colla labore facit,' and the line of Antiphanes 'οἶμοι κακόδαιμον τὸν τράχηλον ὡς ἔχω.' Such an exposition of the game will I think harmonize with the words of Galen, which seem to me out of all harmony with the conceptions of recent writers on the subject. 'You can,' he says in effect, 'exercise *all* your muscles, legs and arms and chest, in throwing, running and wrestling, and your eye at the same time in judging the ball [*i.e.* if you are the medicurrens], or you may take wrestling alone [as those who thwart him], or running without much throwing [as in the καταστροφή, and generally in 'forward' play], or throwing without much running [as those who play on the line, the 'stantes']. We can I think also find here the explanation of the well-known lines of Antiphanes, cited by Athenaeus (i. p. 15) as descriptive of pheninda—

σφαίραν λαβὼν
τῷ μὲν διδοὺς ἔχαιρε, τὸν δ' ἔφευγ' ἄμα,
τὸν δ' ἐξέκρουσε, τὸν δ' ἀνέστησεν πάλιν
κλαγκταῖσι [αἱ. πλαγκταῖσι] φωναῖς.
ἔξω, μακρὰν, παρ' αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτὸν κάτω
ἄνω βραχεῖαν ἀπόδος, ἔγκαταστρέφου—

if we suppose the passage to describe part only of the game, the action namely of the medicurrens—having caught the ball he throws it (δίδωσι) to A, one of his own side, while he avoids B who tries to grapple with him, and misleads (ἐκκρούει) C by a feint of throwing it in some other direction, and then, as the game goes on, he shouts again to one of his own side to throw the ball, high, low, &c., as may be needed to dodge the opponent (παρ' αὐτὸν ὑπὲρ αὐτόν), or lastly to run back (ἐγκαταστρέφου) to guard his own base. Or we may take the interpretation of the last two lines (which follow Meineke's reading) to represent the shouts of those opposing the medicurrens and urging others to throw past him &c. The reading πλαγκταῖσι (which however does not seem necessary) would imply a feint, like ἐξέκρουσε.

The passage in Sidonius (*Ep.* v. 17) is not only the best description of the game after Galen, but also gives an amusing picture of what may still sometimes be seen, an

elderly player in difficulties. 'Hic vir illustris Philematius, ut est illud Mantuani poetæ, "Ausus et ipse manu juvenum tentare laborem," sphaeristarum se turmalibus constanter immiscuit: perbene enim hoc fecerat, sed quum adhuc essent anni minores.'—The end of it is that, having first stationed himself 'loco stantum' (which I take to be the line of back players, described by Galen as only throwing ἐκ διαστήματος πολλοῦ, and not running), he is next whirled by the hurrying medicurrens into the middle area, stumbles over the centre line (marked perhaps, like the σκῦρος or λατύπη, with small stones), is knocked down by a backward rush of players (*catastrophæ*), picks himself up at last and retires heated and out of breath, which is bluntly expressed by 'suspiriosus extis calescentibus.' He is more fortunate than the slave-boy in *Dig.* 9, 2, 52, § 4, who was knocked down in much the same way, and broke his leg.

As to the passages from Antyllus (*ap.* Oribas. i. p. 529) which complicate the question in Bec de Fouquières, Marquardt and others, it is to me perfectly clear that they have nothing to do with this game, or any other game properly so called; but describe a course of medico-gymnastical exercises wholly distinct from the contest between sides which Galen gives us: in some of these exercises the ball does not even leave the hand but acts as a sort of dumb-bell in extension motions.

It may be well to say a word in conclusion about the argument at the end of Johann Marquardt's excursus as to *three* games, drawn from the expressions '*datatim, expulsim, raptim* ludere.' It is, I think, a primary cause of error in many writers (though Joachim Marquardt in the main takes these words rightly) that they have confused *methods* of playing with games. 1. *Datatim ludere* means simply to play by catching the ball; throwing the ball for a catch being *dare, mittere* or *jactare*, throwing it back after a catch *reddere, remittere*: 2. *expulsim ludere* on the contrary means to play by striking the ball with the hand *without holding it*, the stroke used in our game of 'fives'; and the words *expellere, expulsare, repercutere, ἀπόρραξις* all apply to this stroke; it could be used equally by those playing together in a game, or in solitary practice against a floor or wall, as in Varro (*ap.* Non. 104, 27) '*videbis in foro ante lanienas pueros pila expulsim ludere*': 3. *raptim ludere* describes the play when the ball is *intercepted* by a third person as it flies between two others. These methods then are not *games*, but

strokes, which might be employed in various games. In *trigon*, for instance, the play might be either *datatim* or *expulsim* but not

raptim; in *harpastum* possibly all three, but usually *datatim* and *raptim*.

G. E. MARINDIN.

ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOME ECHOED PHRASES IN EURIPIDES' HIPPOLYTUS.

THE *Hippolytus* opens with the speech of Aphrodite in which she reveals to the audience her grudge against the son of Theseus, and her intended vengeance. He comes in with his followers singing the praises of Artemis: and the audience feels the irony of the situation when they know and he does not know what danger overhangs him. In the remonstrances addressed to him by his servant (107), *τιμαΐσιν, ὦ παῖ, δαιμόνων χρῆσθαι χρεών*—a door of escape seems to open. But Hippolytus in his blindness rejects his opportunity, and this in striking words (113), *τὴν σὴν δὲ Κύπριν πόλλ' ἐγὼ χαίρειν λέγω*. He has formulated his sin, he has consciously proclaimed that he adheres to it, and he leaves the stage. Without doubt those last words lingered in the mind of the audience, as the summing-up of Hippolytus' offence, and the knell of his approaching doom.

But Hippolytus is not the only sinner in the play nor the only object of divine vengeance. Before the drama ends, Theseus has played a part almost analogous to that of his son.

Prima facie Theseus acts naturally in believing the charges against Hippolytus found in the hand of his dead wife. But when without further inquiry he invokes on his son a curse and banishes him from the land, his action is over-hasty and insolent. Again a way of escape is opened. In the words of Hippolytus (1051-1055):—

οὐδὲ μνηστῆν χρόνον
δέξει καθ' ἡμῶν, ἀλλὰ μ' ἐξελᾶς χθονός;

οὐδ' ὄρκον οὐδὲ πίστιν οὐδὲ μαντέων
φήμας ἐλέγξας, ἀκριτον ἐμβαλεῖς με γῆς;

The gods have not left us without light. Will you not use it? But as Hippolytus did before, so Theseus now snaps his fingers at the Divine power:—

ἡ δέλτος ἦδε κλήρον οὐ δεδεγμένη
κατηγορεῖ σου πιστά: τοὺς δ' ὑπὲρ κᾶρα
φουτῶντας ὄρνεις πόλλ' ἐγὼ χαίρειν λέγω.

These words contain and formulate *the sin*

of *Theseus*, as is shown clearly when Artemis comes and denounces him.

1321. *ὅς οὔτε πίστιν οὔτε μαντέων ὄπα
ἔμεινας, οὐκ ἤλεγξας, οὐ χρόνον μακρῶ
σκέψιν παρέσχες, ἀλλὰ θάσσον ἢ σ'
ἐχρήην
ἄρὰς ἐφήκας παιδί καὶ κατέκτανες.*

If I am right so far, if l. 113 sums up for the poet and for the audience the sin of Hippolytus,

τὴν σὴν δὲ Κύπριν πόλλ' ἐγὼ χαίρειν λέγω,
and ll. 1058-9,

*τοὺς δ' ὑπὲρ κᾶρα
φουτῶντας ὄρνεις πόλλ' ἐγὼ χαίρειν λέγω,*

similarly sums up the sin of Theseus, can it be doubted that Euripides purposely echoed his own phrase in order to bring home to his audience the recurrence of an old situation; can it be doubted that the audience recognised the significance of the echo, and saw in it what the poet intended they should see?

It seems however to have escaped the editors (Dindorf, Monk, Paley, Mahaffy, Hadley) that we have here anything beyond a mere verbal parallelism.

But there is another equally striking instance in the same play where Euripides seems to have again marked the similarity of two situations by the use in each case of the same phrase.

When the Nurse, under the pretext of going for some drugs, is about to leave the stage in order to acquaint Hippolytus with Phaedra's passion, Phaedra suspects her intention and expresses the fear (520) *μὴ μοί τι Θεσέως τῶνδε μνησίης τόκω*. The Nurse answers *ἔασον, ὦ παῖ, ταῦτ' ἐγὼ θήσω καλῶς*. To the audience anticipating the story, the irony of those words could hardly fail to be striking. After an 'aside' only three lines long, the Nurse leaves the stage and at once works the irremediable mischief which is the source of all the tragic events that follow.

The secret has come out, and Phaedra and