

Leading from Within: Choral Incorporation in the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*

1. *HhA* 1–13

μνήσομαι οὐδὲ λάθωμαι Ἀπόλλωνος ἐκάτοιο,
ὄντε θεοὶ κατὰ δῶμα Διὸς τρομέουσιν ἰόντα:
καὶ ῥά τ' ἀναΐσσουσιν ἐπὶ σχεδὸν ἐρχομένοιο
πάντες ἀφ' ἐδράων, ὅτε φαίδιμα τόξα τιταίνει.
Λητώ δ' οἷη μίμνε παρὰ Διὶ τερπικεραύνῳ,
ἧ ῥα βίον τ' ἐχάλασσε καὶ ἐκλήισσε φαρέτρην,
καὶ οἱ ἀπ' ἰφθίμων ὤμων χεῖρεςσιν ἐλοῦσα
τόξα κατεκρέμασε πρὸς κίονα πατρὸς ἐοῖο
πασσάλου ἐκ χρυσοῦ: τὸν δ' ἐς θρόνον εἶσεν
ἄγουσα.
τῷ δ' ἄρα νέκταρ ἔδωκε πατὴρ δέπαϊ χρυσεῖῳ
δεικνύμενος φίλον υἱόν: ἔπειτα δὲ δαίμονες ἄλλοι
ἔνθα καθίζουσιν: χαίρει δέ τε πότνια Λητώ,
οὔνεκα τοξοφόρον καὶ καρτερὸν υἱὸν ἔτικτε.

I will remember and not forget Apollo the far-shooter,
At whose arrival the gods in the house of Zeus tremble:
And they dart up at his approach,
Everyone up from their seats, when he stretches his shining bow.
But Leto alone remains alongside Zeus, who delights in the
thunderbolt;
For she unstrings the bow and puts away the quiver,
And taking the bow from his strong shoulders with her hands
She hangs it on a pillar in the house of his father,
From a golden peg: and leading him she sets him at his seat.
And his father gives him nectar in a golden cup,
Setting it before his son: and then the other gods
Sit there; and queenly Leto rejoices
That she bore a strong, bow-bearing son.

2. *HhA* 45–49

τόσσον ἔπ' ὠδίνουσα Ἐκηβόλον ἴκετο Λητώ,
εἴ τις οἱ γαιέων υἱεῖ θέλοι οἰκία θέσθαι.
αἶ δὲ μάλ' ἐτρόμεον καὶ ἐδείδισαν, οὐδέ τις ἔτλη
Φοῖβον δέξασθαι, καὶ πιωτέρη περ ἐοῦσα:
πρὶν γ' ὅτε δὴ ῥ' ἐπὶ Δήλου ἐβήσατο πότνια
Λητώ...

So many places did Leto approach while in labor with the
Far-Shooter,
To see if any of these lands might let her make a home for
her son.
But they trembled greatly and were afraid, and none of them
dared
To receive Phoebus, even the ones that were more fertile:
Until, that is, queenly Leto came to Delos...

3. *HhA* 92–100

θεαὶ δ' ἔσαν ἔνδοθι πᾶσαι,
ὄσσαι ἄρισται ἕασι, Διώνη τε Ῥεῖη τε
Ἴχναίη τε Θέμις καὶ ἀγαστονος Ἀμφιτρίτη
ἄλλαι τ' ἀθάναται νόσφιν λευκωλένου Ἥρης:
ἦστο γὰρ ἐν μεγάροισι Διὸς νεφεληγερέταο:
μόνη δ' οὐκ ἐπέπυστο μογοστόκος Εἰλειθία:
ἦστο γὰρ ἄκρω Ὀλύμπῳ ὑπὸ χρυσεοῖσι νέφεσσιν,
Ἥρης φραδομοσύνης λευκωλένου, ἧ μιν ἔρυκε
ζηλοσύνη...

And the goddesses were all there,
As many as are the best ones, Dione and Rhea,
Ichnaea and Themis and much-groaning Amphitrite,
And all the other goddesses—except for white-armed Hera:
For she stayed in the halls of cloud-gathering Zeus;
And only Eileithuia, bringer of the birth-pangs, was unaware;
For she stayed beneath the golden clouds at the peak of
Olympus,
Because of shrewd, white-armed Hera, who held her back
Out of jealousy...

4. *HhA* 156–78

πρὸς δὲ τόδε μέγα θαῦμα, ὄου κλέος οὔποτ'
ὀλεῖται,
κοῦραι Δηλιάδες, ἑκατηβελέταο θεράπναι:
αἶ τ' ἐπεὶ ἄρ' πρῶτον μὲν Ἀπόλλων' ὑμνήσωσιν,
αὐτίς δ' αὖ Λητώ τε καὶ Ἄρτεμιν ἰοχέαιραν,
μνησάμεναι ἀνδρῶν τε παλαιῶν ἠδὲ γυναικῶν
ὑμνον αἰίδουσιν, θέλγουσι δὲ φύλ' ἀνθρώπων.
πάντων δ' ἀνθρώπων φωνὰς καὶ κρεμβαλιαστὸν
μιμεῖσθ' ἴσασιν: φαίη δέ κεν αὐτὸς ἕκαστος
φθέγγεσθ': οὕτω σφιν καλῆ συνάρηρεν ἀοιδή.
ἀλλ' ἄγεθ' ἰλήκοι μὲν Ἀπόλλων Ἀρτέμιδιζύν,
χαίρετε δ' ὑμεῖς πᾶσαι: ἐμεῖο δὲ καὶ μετόπισθεν
μνήσασθ', ὅππότε κέν τις ἐπιχθονίων ἀνθρώπων
ἐθάδ' ἀνείρηται ξεῖνος ταλαπεῖριος ἐλθών:
ὦ κοῦραι, τίς δ' ὑμῖν ἀνήρ ἠδιστος ἀοιδῶν
ἐνθάδε πωλεῖται, καὶ τέω τέρπεσθε μάλιστα;
ὑμεῖς δ' εὖ μάλα πᾶσαι ὑποκρίνασθαι ἀφήμως:
τυφλὸς ἀνὴρ, οἰκεῖ δὲ Χίῳ ἐνι παιπαλοέσση
τοῦ μᾶσαι μετόπισθεν ἀριστεύουσιν ἀοιδαί.
ἡμεῖς δ' ὑμέτερον κλέος οἴσομεν, ὅσσον ἐπ' αἴαν
ἀνθρώπων στρεφόμεσθα πόλεις εὖ ναιεταώσας:
οἱ δ' ἐπὶ δὴ πείσονται, ἐπεὶ καὶ ἐτήτυμόν ἐστιν.
αὐτὰρ ἐγὼν οὐ λήξω ἐκηβόλον Ἀπόλλωνα
ὑμνέων ἀργυρότοξον, ὃν ἠύκομος τέκε Λητώ.

5. *HhA* 182–206

εἴσι δὲ φορμίζων Λητοῦς ἐρικυδέος υἱὸς
φόρμιγγι γλαφυρῇ πρὸς Πυθῶ πετρήεσαν,
ἄμβροτα εἶματ' ἔχων τεθυωμένα: τοῖο δὲ φόρμιγγ
χρυσέου ὑπὸ πλήκτρου καναχὴν ἔχει ἱμερόεσσαν.
ἐνθεν δὲ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ἀπὸ χθονός, ὥστε νόημα,
εἴσι Διὸς πρὸς δῶμα θεῶν μεθ' ὀμήγυριν ἄλλων.
αὐτίκα δ' ἀθανάτοισι μέλει κίθαρις καὶ ἀοιδή:
Μοῦσαι μὲν θ' ἅμα πᾶσαι ἀμειβόμεναι ὅπι καλῇ
ὑμνεῦσιν ῥα θεῶν δῶρ' ἄμβροτα ἠδ' ἀνθρώπων
τλημοσύνας, ὅσ' ἔχοντες ὑπ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι
ζώουσ' ἀφραδέες καὶ ἀμήχανοι, οὐδὲ δύνανται
εὐρέμεναι θανάτοιο τ' ἄκος καὶ γήραος ἄλκαρ:
αὐτὰρ εὐπλόκαμοι Χάριτες καὶ εὐφρονες Ὕραι
Ἀρμονίη θ' Ἥβη τε Διὸς θυγάτηρ τ' Ἀφροδίτη
ὀρχεῦντ' ἀλλήλων ἐπὶ καρπῶ χεῖρας ἔχουσαι:

And in addition, this great wonder, the fame of which will
never be destroyed—

The Delian maidens, servants of the far-shooter:
Whenever they have first celebrated Apollo,
And then Leto and arrow-pouring Artemis,
Then, remembering men and women of old,
They sing a hymn and enchant the tribes of people.
They know how to imitate the voices and rattles
Of all people—every man would say that he himself
Was speaking—so well is the beautiful song fitted together
by them.

But come on, let Apollo and Artemis be favorable,
And hello to you all! But remember me in the future,
Whenever someone of earth-dwelling men,
A much-suffering stranger, should ask, coming here:
“Oh, maidens, in your opinion, which man is the sweetest of
The bards that come here—who delights you most of all?”

But may you all answer him readily with one voice:
“A blind man, and he lives in rugged Chios,
And all of his songs are the best once he has sung them.”

I will bring your fame, however far upon the earth
I roam, among the well-inhabited cities:
And they, too, will believe, since it is indeed true.
But I will not leave off from praising far-shooting Apollo,
Silver-bowed, whom lovely-haired Leto bore.

The glorious son of Leto goes, strumming
On his hollow lyre, to rocky Pytho,
Wearing his ambrosial, fragrant garments: and his lyre
Holds a lovely ringing beneath the golden pick.
From there, to Olympus from the earth, like a thought,
He goes to the home of Zeus with the company of other gods.
Straightaway the kithara and the song are a care to the gods:
And all the Muses in unison, answering with a lovely voice,
Hymn the ambrosial gifts of the gods and the sufferings of
Humanity, as many as they have from the deathless gods,
And how they live recklessly and without resource, nor are
they able
To find the remedy for death or the defense against old age:
But Harmonia and Hebe and Aphrodite the daughter of Zeus
Dance, holding their hands on one another's wrists:

τῆσι μὲν οὐτ' αἰσχρὴ μεταμέλεται οὐτ' ἐλάχεια,
ἀλλὰ μάλα μεγάλη τε ἰδεῖν καὶ εἶδος ἀγητή,
Ἄρτεμις ἰοχέαιρα ὁμότροφος Ἀπόλλωνι.
ἐν δ' αὖ τῆσιν Ἄρης καὶ εὐσκοπὸς Ἀργειφόντης
παίζουσ': αὐτὰρ ὁ Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων ἐγκιθαρίζει
καλὰ καὶ ὕψι βιβάς: αἴγλη δέ μιν ἀμφιφαίνει
μαρμαρυγαί τε ποδῶν καὶ ἐκλώστοιο χιτῶνος.
οἱ δ' ἐπιτέρπονται θυμὸν μέγαν εἰσορόωντες
Λητώ τε χρυσοπλόκαμος καὶ μητίετα Ζεὺς
ὕια φίλον παίζοντα μετ' ἀθανάτοισι θεοῖσι.

And one dances among them, neither ugly nor small in
stature,
But especially tall and wonderful in form to look at,
Artemis, arrow-pouring, twin to Apollo.
And among them, Ares and sharp-sighted Argeiphontes
Dance: but Phoebus Apollo plays his lyre beautifully
And steps high: and the light of the sun shines around him,
Gleaming from his feet and his well-spun tunic.
They delight in their great hearts,
Golden-haired Leto and wise Zeus,
Seeing him, their beloved son, dancing with the other gods.