CHAPTER SEVEN

THE USE OF ΟΡΓΙΑ UP TO ALEXANDER

The so-called Law of Solon, mentioned by Gaius, Dīg. 47.22.4, but apparently originating from the time before Cleisthenes, may be regarded as the oldest place where we find ὄργια. In this law, legal force is given to various regulations and decrees made by private persons, ἐὰν μὴ ἀπαγορεύσῃ τὰ δημόσια γοάμματα (“if the public laws do not forbid it”). All kinds of communities are mentioned in a motley variety, among other things, ἱερῶν ὁμοίων ὁμοίων (κοινωνοί). So ὄργια here apparently refers to a cult of a special, private nature, alongside the public religion.

We do not find ὄργια in Homer, but the word appears twice in the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, referring to the Eleusinian mysteries. In verse 273, Demeter has just revealed herself as a goddess to Metanira and has ordered a temple to be built for her at Eleusis:

οὐχὶ εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν οὐκ ἐπείτα ἐρέττει ἡ γῆ ὡς ἄν ἐπείτα ἐρέττει ἡ γῆ ὡς ἄν ἐπείτα εὑρεθεί τὸ νόον ἡ λάκονοι ὡς ἀντὶ.

And I myself will teach my mysteries, so that hereafter by performing them righteously you may placate my heart.

The combination of ὄργια and ἔρειν is noteworthy.

So the Eleusinian mysteries are meant here, as in verse 476, where Demeter gives the necessary instructions for her worship:

δεῖ ἔμπληκτον τὸν Τριπτόλεμον τὸν Διοκλείν Τὸν πλήρησαν,
Εὐμόλπου τὸν Βίον Κέλεών Θήρντο τὸ λαὸν
ὄργιαν ἔρειν καὶ ἐπέφυλαν ὅργια πάσιν
σεμνά, τὰ τὰ πίστι παρεξέθημεν οὔτε παρεξέθημεν
οὔτε ἄγεσθαι μέγα γὰρ οὐκ ἔσκι αὐτὴν σέβης ἑκάστην

Το Τριπτόλεμον καὶ Διοκλέα, τὸν διόντα καὶ τὸν ἔμπληκτον Ευμόλπον καὶ Κέλευς, τὸν διόντα τοὺς θεοὺς, ἀκούειν ἑκάστην σεβής ἑκάστην σεβής.

2 We supplement κοινωνοί after P.J.T. Endenburg, Koinoonia en gemeenschap van zaken bij de Grieken (1937) 164 ff.
taught her mysteries (orgia) to them all, solemn mysteries, which no-one may in any way transgress or inquire into or utter, for great awe of the goddesses checks the voice.

We again see an interesting combination: δρησμοφοινή (: δράν) and ὀργία.\(^3\)

In the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, we find a unique occurrence of the noun ὀργιῶν (gen. ὀργιόνος), apparently used to designate priests (verse 389):

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και τότε δή κατὰ θυμὸν ἐφοράζετο Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων ὃς τινας ἀνθρώπους ὀργίωνας εἰσαγάγειτο οἰ θεοπεπλέονται Πυθοὶ ἕνεπεμήνῃ.
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Then Phoebus Apollo pondered which people he could take there as priests to worship him in rocky Pytho.

The word ὀργία occurs several times in lyric poetry. In the fragments of Pindar we find ὀργίοις: fr. 140a Maehler, verse 78. Unfortunately, the context is insufficient to determine with certainty what ὀργία are meant there. Philodamus, the author of the Paean to Dionysus (340/39 BC), used the word: see below, Chapter XII, no. 69.

We also find the word in two anonymous, undated fragments in Page, PMG. Fr. 975c (fr. adesp. 57) mentions the ὀργία of white-armed Cytherea. So here, the word is used in a metaphorical sense for the rites of love. Fr. 985b (fr. adesp. 67) the word ὀργιασμοῖ shows a special, secret rites:

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Lemnos, blessed with beautiful children, produced Cabirus through secret rites.

Aeschylus, Sept. 179, gives us an example of the use of ὀργία for religious rites in general. The chorus is praying to the tutelary deities of Thebes:

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\[\text{Zijdeveld rightly observed that δεῖξεν \ldots δημοσιοσύνην ἱερών is the prototype of the often used τελετὴν καταδεικνύναι “to reveal the sacred rite” (see above, p. 78). That he considered δημοσιοσύνη a synonym of τὰ δρόμενα is less accurate.}\]