

PRODELIDED *EST*: A NOTE ON ORTHOGRAPHY

Poma dat autumnus; formosast messibus aestas;  
Ver praebebat flores; igne leuatur hiems.

Ovid, *Remedia Amoris* 187–8

Of recent editors only Ehwald, I think, prints *formosast* rather than *formosa est*. This orthography is supported by that of the capital MSS of Virgil (O. Ribbeck, *Prolegomena critica ad P. Vergili Maronis Opera Maiora* [1867], 419); the inscriptions offer no consistent guidance. Here, however, the intentions of the writer himself are evident: Ovid must have written *formosast* to give three words to each season. He can be seen, as so often, improving on his model, here the Virgilian ‘mini-catalogues’ (A. A. R. Henderson, ad loc.) of the *Eclogues*, exploiting the couplet form to produce a completely symmetrical effect. In his magisterial note on the orthography of prodelision at *D.R.N.* 1.993 Lachmann confined his remarks on the elegists to the last word of the pentameter, and his conclusion is asserted rather than argued. Here we have contemporary evidence that by Ovid at least the syncopated form was written as well as spoken.

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## STRABO 816: A NOTE

Strabo’s account of Egyptian Thebes ends with a surprising detail to which he is our only witness (816 (17.1.46)):

τῷ δὲ Δίῃ, ὃν μάλιστα τιμῶσιν, εὐειδεστάτῃ καὶ γένους λαμπροτάτου παρθένος ἱερᾶται, ὥς καλοῦσιν οἱ Ἕλληνες παλλάδας· αὕτη δὲ καὶ παλλακεύη καὶ σύνεστιν οἷς βούλεται, μέχρις ἂν ἡ φυσικὴ γένηται κάθαρσις τοῦ σώματος· μετὰ δὲ τὴν κάθαρσιν δίδονται πρὸς ἄνδρα· πρὶν δὲ δοθῆναι, πένης αὐτῆς ἄγεται μετὰ τὸν τῆς παλλακείας καιρόν.

This note is not concerned with the reliability of this information,<sup>1</sup> but with the lexical singularity *παλλάς*, which has won widespread acceptance as an ancient sacral term, though our lexica display an uncommon, and indeed misleading, prudishness as to its meaning: ‘maiden-priestess’ (LSJ s.v. *Παλλάς* II); ‘bei den Griechen in ägypt. Theben noch als sakraler Ausdruck = *παρθένος*’ (Frisk, *GEW* s.v. *παλλακή*); ‘A Thèbes d’Égypte pour désigner une prêtresse = *παρθένος*’ (Chantraine, *Dictionnaire* s.v. *παλλακή*).

Pubescent temple-prostitutes had no place in Hellenic religious life, and it might be thought surprising that there was a Greek word for them; yet Strabo offers the term without explanation or speculation as to derivation or dialectal provenance, apparently confident that it is indeed Greek and not a foreign loan-word. The Greeks who frequented Upper Egypt were not a group of largely homogeneous origin, who might have preserved in quasi-colonial isolation an archaism obsolete elsewhere in the Hellenic world.<sup>2</sup> No such usage is mentioned in ancient discussions of the derivation of Pallas, wide though the etymological net is cast in the attempt to explain Athene’s title: see, e.g., sch. *Il.* 1.199–200 (with Erbse’s note), sch. *Od.* 1.252, *P. Oxy.* 2260 (early second century A.D.). Admittedly Eustathius refers to the term in this

<sup>1</sup> It is certainly hard to reconcile with our other evidence for the part played by women in Egyptian cult: see further *Lexikon der Ägyptologie* II (Wiesbaden, 1977), s.vv. Gottesgemahlin, Gottesharim, H. Bonnet, *Reallexikon der ägyptischen Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1952), s.v. Pallakide. The woman who, according to Herodotus (1.182), spent the night in the temple of Amun performed a quite different function.

<sup>2</sup> As Frisk and Chantraine might be taken to imply.