

A DANCER IN SYRIA

Chr. Habicht χοριστήριον

At Syrian Apamea in the time of Hadrian, the theatrical guild, the Technitai of Dionysus, honored a dancer with a statue:¹

- [ή] ἱερὰ σύνοδος τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς
οἰκουμένης περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον καὶ αὐτο-
κράτορα Καίσαρα Τραιανοῦ υἱὸν θε-
4 οῦ Νερούα υἱωνὸν Τραιανὸν Ἀδρι-
ανὸν Σεβαστὸ<ν> τεχνειτῶν ἱερωνει-
κῶν στεφανειτῶν καὶ τ<ῶ>ν τοῦ-
των συναγωνιστῶν Ἰούλιον
8 Πάριν Κλαυδιέα τὸν καὶ Ἀπα-
μέα καὶ Ἀντιοχέα καὶ πάσης πό-
λεως πολεῖτην καὶ ἐν κολωνεί-
α Βηρύτῳ τετειμημένον σεξ-
12 βερᾶτι, τραγικῆς κεινήσεως ὑπο-
κριτὴν, τὸν διὰ βίου καὶ κατὰ τὸν
[τόπο]ν ἀρχιερέα καὶ στεμματη-
[φόρον] τοῦ ἀρχαγέτου
16 Ἀπόλλωνος, [ἀρετῆ]ς καὶ
εὐνοίας ἔνεκ[α].

5 ΣΕΒΑΣΤΟΥ, 6 ΤΟΥΝ lap.

The sacred guild of worldwide sacred-victor crowned Technitai of Dionysus and Hadrian, and their fellow-competitors, (dedicated) Julius Paris, Claudian-Apamean and Antiochene and citizen of every city² and honored in Colonia Beirut with the sevirate, actor of tragic movement, the high priest for life and in the place and fillet-bearer of Apollo the Founder, because of his excellence and goodwill.

¹ Rey-Coquais 1973, 47–48, 63–65, no. 10, with photograph of lines 4–13 [*AE* 1976, 686]; cf. J. and L. Robert, *Bull. épigr.* 1976, 721; Garelli 2007, 244–245. On the *pantomimoi* see now Webb 2011, 221–260.

² Apparently an enthusiastic exaggeration of the frequent ἅλλων πολλῶν πόλεων (most recently *P. Oxy.* LXXIX 5210₃).

Paris³ of Apamea was a *pantomimos*, a professional dancer – and a prominent man, to judge from his several dignities. To look only to the region, his honors in other cities are comparable to those of the Jewish dancer M. Aurelius P[ylades?] of Scythopolis a century later, a decurion of Ascalon and Damascus.⁴ Rey-Coquais (64) took Paris to be the high priest and *stemmatephoros* of the Apamean Technitai, the local branch of the theatrical guild. The Roberts revised this in part: at this date *pantomimoi* were not yet competitors in the major competitions (their performances being adjunct), but they perhaps could be members of the Technitai under the heading συναγωνισταί. Remarking that the actors' god was not Apollo but Dionysus, and noting the dialectic ἀρχαγέτας, they concluded that this was Apamea's civic cult of the Seleucids' ancestor Apollo and that the Doric reflected some Dorian element in the foundation of the Hellenistic colony.⁵ Hence Paris was high priest for life of both the world-wide Technitai (headquartered in Rome) and the branch in Apamea ("in the place"), but *stemmatephoros* in Apamea's cult of Apollo the Founder.

N. A. Almazova has urged instead that Paris was a member not of the Technitai but of a guild of dancers, whose god was Apollo. As I believe that her case is substantial, and as it was rejected in the more accessible *SEG*, some further comment on the matter is in order.⁶

The proposal of a survival of a cult of the Seleucids' divine parent, and in Doric, should be rejected. It is true that Roman Dura had a cult of the *progonoi* and a cult of King Seleucus Nicator (*P. Dura* 25 and 37), a continuation or revival of royal cult in the Antonine age. But in neither Hellenistic times nor Roman, in civic or royal practice, is there evidence of a cult of Apollo as *archegetes* of the Seleucids; their claim of descent from Apollo⁷ was a talking point in diplomacy, not a cult. An Apollo Archegetes is conspicuously absent from the several cult rosters of Seleucid cities like *IGLSyrie* III 1184; no dedications or altars for him are

³ Dancers favored the name: see Leppin 1992, 270–276; Strasser 2004, 198–199. Cf. *TAM* V 1016, τὸν καὶ Πάριν. *Paridiani* at Pompeii, *CIL* IV 7919, with Franklin 1987, 103–104. Α Παριδίων ὀρχηστής, aged five, in *I. Side* II 200, with Robert 1969–1990, V 191–192.

⁴ *CIL* XIV 4624 (honored by the Augustales of Ostia); cf. Leppin 1992, 288; Strasser 2004, 197–202.

⁵ Followed by Leppin 1992, 99 n. 44; Roueché 1993, 52; Garelli 2007, 244–245. Aneziri 2003, 332 n. 79, suggested instead that both high priesthood and *stemmatephoros* could be civic priesthoods of Apamea.

⁶ Almazova 1998 [Н. А. Алмазова, “Артист Диониса или сотрапезник Аполлона?”], 113–121; *SEG* XLVIII 1844 with the comments of H. Pleket.

⁷ For the testimonies for this claim see J. and L. Robert, *Bull. épigr.* 1955, 122 (p. 229).

extant.⁸ Furthermore, Apollo the progenitor of the Seleucids was not said to be Dorian; and we should doubt that a hypothetical Dorian element of the first colonists were able to impose their vowel on a civic cult of the royal ancestor. A different explanation of Apollo Archagetas is needed.

Almazova convincingly found the right Apollo, in the Latin West. For Apollo was the god of the guild of the *pantomimoi*, the *synhodus Apollinis*. To illustrate more fully:

pantomimo temporis sui primo, hieronicae coronato IIII, patrono parasitorum Apollinis, sacerdoti synhodi (ILS 5186 = I. Puteoli 6 = Caldelli 2007, 443–447, no. 6)

pantomimo sui temporis primo, hieronicae (...) parasito Apollinis, archieri synodi (ILS 5194; cf. Strasser 2001, 127–131)

parasito et sacerdoti Apollinis (ILS 5189)

Apollinis sacerdoti soli vittato, archieri synhodi (5190)

vittato Augg., sacerdoti Apollinis (5191 = I. Ital. IV.1 254; cf. Strasser 2006, 300–302, 318–319; Leppin 1992, 206–211)

sacerdoti synhodi Apollinis parasito (ILS 5193)

None of these texts need be earlier than the late second century and the inclusion of dance in the major competitions. But the relationship of the *pantomimoi* and Apollo is attested earlier than any inscription: Martial praises a dancer, *dulce decus scaenae, ludorum fama (...) laurigeri parasitum Phoebi* (9. 28), compelling evidence for Apollo's patronage of the dancers already in the first century, though not for the existence of their guild. The dancers' art was old, Hellenistic in origin, but we do not know when the guild came into being.⁹ But with or without a guild, Apollo Archagetas in our inscription, as Almazova saw, was the dancers' god, not Apamea's or the Seleucids'.

Almazova urged that the exclusion of dancers from Greek *agones* implies that they were not members of the Technitai of Dionysus.¹⁰ She

⁸ The Ilians twice voted honors for Seleucid kings, which included sacrifice and prayer to Apollo, which they did, they explained, because Apollo was *archegos* of the dynasty (I. Ilion 31₁₃, 32_{27 ff.}). That reasoning for the occasion is not evidence of an established civic cult of Apollo Archegos; and at 32₂₉ he is simply Apollo, whom all Greeks worshipped.

⁹ A fragment of Festus (436–438 L.) would associate the *parasiti* with the Ludi Apollinares founded in 212 BC; but the testimony is doubtful, see Ziehen 1949, 1377; Leppin 1992, 95; Caldelli 2011, 141–146. Explicit testimony of a guild in the West, a *synodus* as distinct from dancers described collectively, is not found before the late second century AD.

¹⁰ Texts on the Technitai commonly attribute a specialty to an individual – *komodos*, *auletes*, etc.: on present record, none is called a dancer, *orchestes* or synonyms.

took the Apamea inscription to show instead that the dancers' guild existed already by the time of Hadrian and that Paris was a member of that guild, not of the Technitai.¹¹ This is a more delicate question. One fact is crucial: as Almazova observed, the decree does not say that Paris was a member of the Technitai, only that they honored him with a decree and a statue, as they did other rich and famous persons. The point can be further developed.

First, it is rare for the Technitai to choose one of their own as high priest.¹² We have several petitions to city councils seeking the entitlements of guild-membership for individuals elected by the Technitai to serve as high priests:¹³ they never ascribe a specialty (*tragodos*, *kitharodos*, etc.) to those appointed, in contrast to the guild magistrates and witnesses named in the same documents; and indeed, if these newly-elected high priests had already been theatrical performers, there would be no need of these petitions – they would already be Technitai. The rosters of magistrates that head the petitions (*ἄρχων*, *ἀντάρχων*, etc.) never include an *archiereus*. Two high priests are on record as female (*I. Ephesos* 1618, *P. Oxy.* LXXIX 5208) – these could not have been performers. I find only two clear instances of a performer who also served as high priest: *I. Ankara* 141.51 *κίθαρωδοῦ* (...) *τρίς ἀρχιερέως*, and *Milet* VI.3 1140 *α προκίθαριστής* as high priest *τῆς τοπικῆς συνόδου*.¹⁴

Thus the usual practice of the Technitai was to select a non-member to serve as high priest at a festival. This honorary membership was not legally idle, as it gave the honorand the same immunities as regular Technitai. The Technitai used these opportunities to cultivate distinguished persons in local society. Such was Paris.

Second, a textual matter. The logic in line 14 is obscure: high priest (of an unnamed group) for life and in the place (unidentified). Almazova

¹¹ Almazova's further argument (in addition to the dancers' Apollo), that a freedman would be ineligible for membership in the Technitai (119), was rightly rejected by Pleket, who noted that Paris may have been a descendant of a freedman as the Roberts suggested. The point is moot, however. That the Technitai in the Hellenistic period were freeborn seems clear (see Le Guen 2001, II 43). But that this exclusion persisted in the Roman Empire should be doubted; already the earliest Imperial confirmation of their privileges (AD 43) shows a delegation of Technitai to Claudius, most of them Greek Claudii (Oliver 1989, no. 24) – very likely his freedmen.

¹² This emerges from a corpus of the texts on the guild in Imperial times, in preparation. Leppin 1992, 100 n. 45, cites Alcibiades of Nysa (*I. Ephesos* 22) as an exceptional case of a non-performer in the Technitai. Rather, this was usual of such honorees; the distinguished Alcibiades, who was no actor, served only as their *archiereus*.

¹³ Frisch, *Pap. Agon.* 1, 3, 4, 5; *P. Oxy.* LXXIX 5208.

¹⁴ A high priest is restored doubtfully at *MAMA* VIII 418₄₁.

(120 n. 49), arguing for a dancers' guild, judged the restoration κατὰ τὸν [τόπον] still "possible" but saw that the one parallel adduced (*Milet* VI.3 1140, the "local synod" of the Technitai as contrasted with Rome headquarters) is irrelevant if Paris was instead a member of the dancers' guild. But "the place" is a surprising way to refer to a city,¹⁵ especially the home of the honorand (we expect e.g. καὶ τῆς πατρίδος αὐτοῦ or τῶν Ἀπαμέων). How is "for life" the companion or opposite of "in the place"?¹⁶

A different possibility: κατὰ τὸν [καιρὸν]: high priest "for life and on the occasion".¹⁷ Such a pairing, though in different terms, is found in the praise of Epaminondas of Acraephia and his benefactions παρὰ πάντα τὸν βίον καὶ ἐν τῷ παρόντι, "through all his life and on the present occasion" (*IG* VII 2711₅₈).¹⁸ The occasion, without further definition, would be the dramatic performances staged by the Technitai, at the end of which they had reason to vote a statue for Paris.

Of what group was Paris high priest for life? For this implies the existence of a corporate body. The possibilities are: the city of Apamea, the Technitai, and a dancers' guild.

A civic high priest – i.e. a magistrate of Apamea – seems the least likely: in a decree of the Technitai, to avoid ambiguity the city ought to be named here if the Technitai meant not their own high priest but Apamea's (of the emperors, often unexpressed).

The Roberts' view, high priest of both the world and the Apamean Technitai, reflects the restoration [τόπον]; but it seems improbable that a Syrian *pantomimos* would be life-long high priest at the headquarters of the Technitai in Rome. Only twice elsewhere do we hear of a high priest of the Technitai serving for life rather than on one occasion: a rich patron in Rome and an Alexandrian philosopher (location uncertain).¹⁹

¹⁵ In the Beroea gymnasiarchal law (Hatzopoulos 1996, II no. 60), men elected to serve at festivals are to be "from the place" (B₄₈ τῶν ἐκ τοῦ τόπου ἄνδρας ἐπτά, cf. 72). But the perspective of the law is globally Macedonian, cf. A₆ ἐν αἷς πόλεσιν γυμνάσιά ἐστιν, and to write ἐκ τῆς πόλεως might have been taken to require men who held public office. Austin 1981, 205, renders it convincingly, "those on the spot".

¹⁶ Garelli 2007, 245, had to omit καὶ to convey a logical meaning: "grand-prêtre de l'association de Technites dans sa ville (localement) à vie". Cf. Roueché 1993, 52, "in his own city".

¹⁷ On κατὰ τὸν καιρὸν as applied to magistrates see Robert 1969–1990, I 610 n. 6.

¹⁸ For παρόν "present" in the Acraephia inscription and elsewhere (usually contrasted with the future rather than the past) see Robert 1969–1990, VI 270.

¹⁹ *I. Ephesos* Ia 22₂₆ and *IGR* IV 468 (with Merkelbach 1985, 136–138). διὰ βίου is restored in *I. Napoli* I 47₃. By contrast, in the Athletes' guild high priests for life are

That Paris was high priest for life of a dancers' guild: Almazova deduced one corporate body – a single τὸν introduces Paris as Apollo's high priest (for life and here/now) and στεμματηφόρος. The western *archiereus* and *vittatus* are reflected in ἀρχιερεὺς and στεμματηφόρος at Apamea – high priest and 'wearing a fillet' are repeatedly found together in the Latin inscriptions.²⁰ The inscription would show that dancers' guilds existed in the Greek East half a century before they are on record in Italy. For an art form of Hellenistic origin (as Robert emphasized in 1930), that priority should not be surprising.

That Paris was high priest for the Apamean branch of the Technitai (both for life and on this occasion), and (secondly) a dancer, *stemmatephoros* of Apollo: if the high priest is unqualified (Apollo modifying only *stemmatephoros*), then the implication in a decree of the Technitai is that Paris was their high priest. The second descriptor, that he wore or carried the fillet of the dancers' Apollo, need not imply that he held an office in a dancers' guild; it might represent some earlier victory or honor as a dancer. It would be improbable for a guild of dancers to be attested only once in our Greek evidence. But the Greek is clumsy, and (to repeat) the Technitai rarely made anyone high priest for life.

A further possibility, a sort of middle ground: Paris was high priest of the dancers for life and their *stemmatephoros* of Apollo, and was elected by the Technitai to serve as their high priest on this occasion – by a decree of the sort we know only from the papyri. Hence the unusual pairing "life-long" and "here/now": Paris was high priest for life of one group, the dancers, and on this occasion served as high priest for another, the Actors' guild. The travels of a professional dancer may be relevant: Paris would often have been unavailable in Apamea. The Technitai of Apamea were grateful that he would serve at this festival. But the objection remains that this stone would be our only evidence for a dancers' guild in the East.

It is not obvious how to choose among these options. The question of a guild of dancers in the East in the time of Hadrian should be left open.

In any case, if on that day Paris served as high priest for the Apamean Technitai, he served not because dancers were members of the Technitai but because he was a celebrity worth cultivating. His office was honorific and *ad hominem*, and in carrying out his priestly duties, he was not

abundantly attested (e.g. *I. Sardis* 79₂₄; *I. Napoli* 51₅, with Wallner 2001, 96–108). One can suspect that athlete high priests were retired and of advanced age – a burden that weighs more heavily on athletes than on actors (cf. *PSI* XIV 1422_{19 ff.}).

²⁰ In Greek, the phrase pairing these offices was known to Vettius Valens: καὶ στεμματηφορίαν καὶ ἀρχιερωσύνην προσεδόκησεν (7. 6. 381), στεμματηφορίας καὶ ἀρχιερωσύνας καὶ προκοπὰς καὶ ἀρχὰς ἐπάγει (4. 23. 13).

performing his art.²¹ The high priests elected by the Technitai to serve at a festival were usually prominent dignitaries, and likely generous ones. We can guess that being high priest entailed paying for the sacrifices to the emperor and the other gods – hence the gratitude of the Technitai to Paris the *pantomimos*.²² He was in any case a star, whose visible presence added luster to the event, as when a famous athlete served as xystarch.²³

Finally, Apollo *Archagetas*. The Apamea inscription tells us something that the Latin inscriptions and Martial do not: the dancers reckoned their founder and patron to be Dorian.²⁴ Every profession needed a patron god. What led the dancers to Dorian Apollo? This must be a question of mythography rather than of Seleucid or Apamean history.

The Athenian guild of poets was said by the Delphians to honor Apollo as τὸν μου[σαγέτα]ν καὶ ἀρχα[γέταν] τᾶς ποιητικᾶς θεόν (FD III.2 250₁, ca. 100 BC). It would be natural for some to see in Apollo the author of the ὀρχηστικὴ τέχνη as well, for the common ground of poetry and dance was obvious (ὀρχηστικῇ δὲ καὶ ποιητικῇ κοινωνία πᾶσα καὶ μέθεξις ἀλλήλων ἐστί, Plut. *Mor.* 748 A, who goes on to cite the mimetic *hyporchema* as fusing the two arts).²⁵ There were famous dances in Apollo's honor – at Sparta, Delos, etc. Dorians danced at Apollo's Carneia (Callim. *Hymn.* 2. 85–87).²⁶ The *hyporchema*, attributed to Cretan Thaletas (*schol. Pind. Pyth.* 2. 127),

²¹ Garelli's unease about *pantomimoi* being active members of the Technitai is worth quoting (2007, 245 n. 144): “La difficulté est de déterminer quelle était la place d'un pantomime, danseur soliste et par conséquent vedette, dans un concours où il participait simplement en tant que membre du groupe de Technites. Le pantomime représentait-il des ballets en intermèdes auxquels on aurait donné une importance aussi grande qu'à des épreuves agonistiques traditionnelles? Dansait-il toujours dans le cadre de son association et dans le groupe des Technites ou pouvait-il signer des contrats à l'extérieur, en dehors de l'association, pour donner des représentations hors-concours dans des fêtes?”

²² At a contest in Ephesus the high priests of the imperial cult (a brother and sister) paid for the prizes: *I. Ephesos* 1618.

²³ Cf. Rigsby 1977, 153.

²⁴ The view that traced the dancers' guild and their god to Republican Rome's Ludi Apollinares was already undermined by Robert's demonstration of the Hellenistic origin of the art form, and further now by the Dorian god.

²⁵ Cf. Ath. 631 C associating the *hyporchema* with Sparta; on the *hyporchema* see Garelli 2007, 65–68, 329–335.

²⁶ Cf. *Lex. Seg.* s.v. Σταφυλοδρόμοι· κατὰ τὴν τῶν Καρνείων ἑορτὴν στέμματά τις περιθέμενος τρέχει; Paus. 3. 20. 9 “the *stematias*”; *Epigr. Gr.* 465 [GVI 973] τὰ θεῖα ?στέμματα Καρ[ν]ε[ί]αις δερκομέ[ν]ων θυσίαις. See Robertson 2002, 47–49, 61–62.

was assigned to Apollo by Menander Rhetor (331), and Pindar had called Apollo himself a dancer, ὀρχήστ' ἀγλαΐας ἀνάσσω, εὐρυφάρετ' Ἀπόλλων (fr. 148). Cretan expertise in dance was praised, Κρήσσαι νύ ποτ' ᾧδ' ἐμμελῶς πόδεσσιν ὄρχηντ' ἀπάλοισ',²⁷ and the dance in arms was reputedly Cretan.²⁸

Crete in turn points again to the most famous Dorian Apollo, Apollo of Delphi, and the Cretan origin of his priests (*Hymn. Hom.* 3. 388 ff.). Leading these new recruits in procession from the shore to his temple, Apollo played the cithara and “stepped high” while the Cretans sang their song (514–517):

ἦρχε δ' ἄρα σφιν ἄναξ Διὸς υἱὸς Ἀπόλλων
 φόρμιγγ' ἐν χεῖρεσσιν ἔχων ἐρατὸν κιθαρίζων,
 καλὰ καὶ ὕψι βιβάς· οἱ δὲ ῥήσσοντες ἔποντο
 Κρήτες πρὸς Πυθῶ καὶ ἰηπαίηον' αἰεῖδον.

The *pantomimoi* may well have remembered this scene; and one can image that they would take ὕψι βιβάς to evoke the Spartan dance called *bibasis* (Poll. 4. 102).

These stories about a Dorian Apollo and the origins of dance seem sufficient reason for the dancers' Doric conception of their god, Ἀρχαγέτας.

Kent J. Rigsby
 Chicago

krigsby@duke.edu

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²⁷ Lobel/Page, *Poet. Lesb.* fr. 16. Cf. Pind. fr. 107, ἐλαφρὸν ὄρχηνμ' οἶδα ποδῶν μειγνόμεν· Κρήτα μὲν καλέοντι τρόπον, τὸ δ' ὄργανον Μολοσσόν.

²⁸ Lucian *Salt.* 8 (but prompted by Rhea); ἀρετὴ Κρητῶν ἢ κατὰ πόλεμον ὀρχηστική, Eustath. on *Od.* 19. 178.

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A decree of the Technitai of Dionysus, of Hadrianic date, to honor a *pantomimos* who was a high priest is not evidence that these performers were members of the Actors’ guild, which honored many people. His priesthood may well be proof of a guild of dancers at this early date (so N. A. Almazova), and if he also served thus for the Technitai on this occasion, that would be via their *ad hominem* grant.

Декрет Союза артистов Диониса эпохи Адриана в честь пантомима, исполнявшего обязанности верховного жреца, не доказывает, что пантомимы являлись членами этого союза: ведь почести воздавались и посторонним лицам. Однако его жреческую должность можно рассматривать как доказательство существования уже в это время союза пантомимов (согласно предложению Н. А. Алмазовой). Если он и оказал услуги артистам Диониса в этом качестве, речь идет о почести, оказанной ими частному лицу.

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