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SOME NOTES ON THE GREEK TERMINOLOGY FOR PANTOMIME DANCERS AND ON ATHENAEUS 1,20d-e

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Pantomime, a highly specialized, dramatic dance form, attained great popularity in the Roman Empire.[1] It dominated the theatrical stage, along with mime performances, until the sixth century AD, and the status of the best performers was publicly recognized, although they were sometimes criticized by the ancient learned audience. The ancient authors connected the early phases of this dance form and its coming to Rome with two names, Pylades of Cilicia and Bathyllos of Alexandria. This article focuses on what Athenaeus says about these men and especially about the "styles" of pantomime performances which they were alleged to have developed (Ath. 1,20d–e).

Scholars commonly tend to use Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistai* as a source either for other literature or for cultural matters, not regarding it as a work in its own right.[2] The way the text itself is read and interpreted reflects this attitude; i.e., the author, his context and aims seem to be ignored. I argue that the way Athenaeus writes about the famous pantomime dancers is not meaningless. His special attention to the Alexandrian Bathyllos as the introducer of pantomime dancing to Rome is an interesting detail, whether a true claim or not, and may be seen partly as a reflection of Athenaeus' own background.

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[1] For a general account of pantomime, see, e.g., E. Wüst, "Pantomimus," *RE* XVIII 3, 833–69 (still the basic modern source with abundant references to ancient sources). I wish to thank Prof. M. Kajava for his valuable remarks.

[2] This tendency is noted by G. Bowersock in the foreword of D. Braund, J. Wilkins (eds.), *Athenaeus and his World. Reading Greek Culture in the Roman Empire*, Exeter 2000.

The Greek terminology for pantomime

Pantomime was essentially dancing, without which no pantomime performance would have been possible. The essential nature of dancing in pantomime performance is shown in the Greek vocabulary. The most common word for a pantomime dancer was ὀρχηστής, a word generally used for dancers, except when a choral dancer (χορευτής) was meant.[3] On the other hand, in inscriptions, the phrase ὁ τραγικῆς ἐνρύθμου κινήσεως ὑποκριτής ("actor of rhythmical tragic movement") is used[4], emphasizing the close link of pantomime with drama. Likewise, pantomime dancing was sometimes called ἡ τραγικὴ ὄρχησις ("tragic dancing") instead of just ὄρχησις ("dancing"). "Tragic dancing" does not need to be understood literally, referring to the relation of pantomime with tragedy alone, but as a kind of a reminder that it was question of dramatic dancing having its roots in Greek drama in all its forms. This term, "tragic dancing," and its reference to the somewhat different styles of pantomime appears in Athenaeus (1,20d).

The word παντόμιμος rarely occurs in Greek sources, being more frequent in its Latin form (*pantomimus*).[5] Lucian, writing in the mid-2nd century AD[6], ascribes the word to Ἰταλιῶται[7] who, according to him, not

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[3] There is need for a study with a thorough analysis of the use of the various words referring to pantomime dancers. The earliest use(s) of *orchestes* as firmly identified with a pantomime dancer has not been pointed out in any study, and this would be a very difficult, if not even an impossible task. This is also related to the question of the last references to a pantomime dancer with the word *orchestes*, a question which, in fact, is closely related with the use of the word *orchestes* in general: the word *choreutes* became the general word denoting a dancer at some point.

[4] E.g., *Fouilles de Delphes* III 1, 155; *I. Magnesia* 165 (late Roman). These texts, among others, are discussed in L. Robert, "Pantomimen im griechischen Orient," *Hermes* 65 (1930) 106–114 = *OMS* I 654–662.

[5] E.g., E. J. Jory, "The drama of the dance: Prolegomena to the iconography of Imperial pantomime," in W. J. Slater (ed.), *Roman Theatre and Society*, Ann Arbor 1996, 2 n. 2. In Latin, *histrio* was also used for a pantomime dancer. Cf., e.g., H. Leppin, *Histrionen. Untersuchungen zur sozialen Stellung von Bühnenkünstlern im Westen des Römischen Reiches zur Zeit der Republik und des Principats*, Bonn 1992, 8–10. The first occurrence of Latin *pantomimus* is dated around 20 BC (*CIL* X 1074; Pompeii).

[6] Luc. *Salt.* was written perhaps in the 160s, cf. M. Kokolakis, "Pantomimus and the treatise περὶ ὀρχήσεως (de Saltatione)," *ΠΛΑΤΩΝ* 11 (1959) 4–7.

[7] The term refers to the inhabitants of Magna Graecia. Kokolakis suggests that *italiotai*

unreasonably, call the dancer *pantomimos* because of what the dancer does: οὐκ ἀπεικότως δὲ καὶ οἱ Ἰταλιῶται τὸν ὀρχηστὴν παντόμιμον καλοῦσιν, ἀπὸ τοῦ δρωμένου σχεδόν[8]. By this, Lucian refers to the practice that the dancer dances all the central dramatic roles, and in this way, he is "a mime of everything," i.e., *pantomimos*. The Greek word *pantomimos* was used in some rare cases elsewhere as well. It occurs in only two inscriptions: one coming from Priene and dated to the 80s BC[9], and the other, although a restored reading, from Delphoi, dated to 84–60 BC.[10] Jory suggests that these occurrences may refer to these dancers being *italiotai*.[11]

In papyrological evidence, *pantomimos* occurs once in a contract of performers and is of a considerably later date than these two inscriptions (*P. Flor*. I 74, dated to AD 181). Grassi, ignoring the occurrences of *orchestai* in the Egyptian sources, has stated that there seems to be little trace of pantomime dancers performing in Egypt at all, because the word *pantomimos* occurs only once.[12] Even without the documents with either

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refers to Romans and not to Greeks in Italy (Kokolakis (above n. 6) 4 n. 5). It is no wonder that many representatives of the itinerant τεχνῖται with Ἰταλιώτης as the *ethnikon* occur in Hellenistic inscriptions, cf., e.g., M. Nocita, "Italikoi e italiotai in Oriente, alcune considerazioni," in M. L. Lazzarini, P. Lombardi (a cura di), *L'Italia centro-meridionale tra repubblica e primo impero. Alcuni aspetti culturali e istituzionali* (Opuscula epigraphica 11) 2003, 102–103.

[8] Luc. *Salt.* 67.

[9] *I. Priene* 113, 66 (παντόμιμος Πλουτογένης). The text is discussed in Robert (above n. 4) 114–117 = *OMS* I 662–665.

[10] *Klio* 17 (1922) 177, n. 161 (ed. pr. in *BCH* 5 (1881) 388, no. 6): παντόμιμος (?) Φιλιστίων Δυρραχῖνος. For a discussion, see L. Robert, *Etudes épigraphiques et philologiques*, Paris 1938, 11–13.

[11] J. Jory, "The masks of the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias," in P. Easterling, E. Hall (eds.), *Greek and Roman Actors: Aspects of an Ancient Profession*, Cambridge 2002, 240 n. 8.

[12] T. Grassi, "Musica, mimica e danza," *Studi della Scuola Papirologica* 3 (1920) 132. She also suggests that the word μῖμος, when used in the papyri, is a synonym of *pantomimos*. The word *orchestes* occurs in six published documents from Egypt, all except one are papyri and dated to the Roman period: *OGIS* I 51 (3rd century BC), *P. Stras*. V 341 (AD 85), *P. Oxy*. III 519 (2nd century AD), *P. Oxy*. III 526 (2nd century AD), *P. Oxy*. XIV 1676 (3rd century AD), *SB* IV 7336 (3rd century AD). One document from the 2nd century AD with an *orchestes* will appear in the *P. Oxy.* –series published by myself. Some of these occurrences clearly point to a theatrical context and thus strongly suggest that pantomime dancers are meant. The earliest occurrence of *orchestes* in the above-mentioned cases (*OGIS* I 51) is an honorary inscription of the Artists of Dionysos listing various theatrical performers, among them an *orchestes*.

pantomimos or *orchestes* used, I would consider it self-evident that pantomime performances were as common in the Egyptian *metropoleis* as they were elsewhere in the Empire. It is of interest that the two pantomime dancers of *P. Flor.* I 74 were hired to perform in a village and probably at a private festivity as opposed to a large scale (theatrical) festival, which was the common context for pantomime performances, although pantomime dancers were known to perform at symposia.[13] But why use the term *pantomimos* when clearly the most common Greek word for a pantomime dancer at that time in Egypt, as anywhere else, was *orchestes*? There seems to be no explicit answer. The connection of these performers with *italiotai* does not sound convincing, or at least is very difficult to prove either way. Perhaps *pantomimos* was simply more suitable in that circumstance because of its unambiguousness – we have to remember that *orchestes* was a general word for dancers, not only for pantomimes. However, it is possible that the use of *pantomimos* in Greek – in other instances as well, not only in P. Flor. – shows Roman influences, i.e., that παντόμιμος was a "translation" of the Latin *pantomimus*, which of course, originated from the Greek.

Athenaeus and the dance styles

The Greek terminology for referring to pantomime dancers varied in antiquity, as just discussed. A kind of confusion can also be detected in the statements about the division of pantomime into two "original" dance styles: the authors describe one style as more serious, and the other as more "light-minded," at least when it comes to the themes of the performances. The two styles of pantomime go back to the two famous dancers, Pylades of Cilicia and Bathyllos of Alexandria, who were said to have introduced pantomime to Rome around 22 BC.[14] Of these men, Pylades was mentioned more often

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[13] As discussed, e.g., in Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 7,8 = *Mor*. 711a–713f.

[14] Ath. 1,20d–e is the earliest literary text which suggests an Augustan date for the dance genre. In the 4th century, Jerome, in his translation of and annotation to Euseb. *Chron.* recording the year 22 BC, gives a precise date when Pylades introduced pantomime dancing to Rome. In the much later *Suda*, s.vv. ὄρχησις παντόμιμος and Πυλάδης Κίλιξ, the coming of pantomime is placed in the reign of Augustus, and Pylades is named as the inventor of the dance form (εὑρέθη). If we want to speak in precise years, Jory suggests 23 BC as the year of pantomime entering Rome, rather than 22 BC, when life in Rome was not easy with famine, flood, fever, and when the official attitudes to

than Bathyllos, perhaps simply because Pylades wrote a treatise on (pantomime) dancing,[15] thus securing the better survival of his name.

Athenaeus concentrates on the division of pantomime dancing into two styles ascribed to these famous dancers. He describes Pylades' style as lofty or solemn (ὀγκώδης), full of emotion (παθητική) and requiring many roles (πολυπρόσωπος). Bathyllos' style is only compared to this as being lighter in mood (ἱλαρωτέρα) and resembling the ὑπόρχημα:

> τῆς δὲ κατὰ τοῦτον ὀρχήσεως τῆς τραγικῆς καλουμένης πρῶτος εἰσηγητὴς γέγονε Βάθυλλος ὁ Ἀλεξανδρεύς, ὅν φησι νομίμως[16] ὀρχήσασθαι Σέλευκος. τοῦτον τὸν Βάθυλλόν φησιν Ἀριστόνικος καὶ Πυλάδην, οὗ ἐστι καὶ σύγγραμμα περὶ ὀρχήσεως, τὴν Ἰταλικὴν ὄρχησιν συστήσασθαι ἐκ τῆς κωμικῆς, ἣ ἐκαλεῖτο κόρδαξ, καὶ τῆς τραγικῆς, ἣ ἐκαλεῖτο ἐμμέλεια, καὶ τῆς σατυρικῆς, ἣ ἐκαλεῖτο σίκιννις ... ἦν δὲ ἡ Πυλάδου ὄρχησις ὀγκώδης παθητική τε καὶ πολυπρόσωπος, ἡ δὲ Βαθύλλειος ἱλαρωτέρα· καὶ γὰρ ὑπόρχημά τι τοῦτον διατίθεσθαι. (Ath. 1,20d–e.)

> Now the first to introduce this "tragic dancing," as it was called, was Bathyllos of Alexandria, who, as Seleukos says, danced professionally. Aristonikos says that this Bathyllos, together with Pylades, who wrote a treatise on dancing, developed the Italian style of dance out of the dance of the comedy called *kordax*, of the tragedy called *emmeleia* and of the satyr-play called *sikinnis* … Now Pylades' dancing was solemn, expressing passion and variety of character, whereas Bathyllos' was more jolly; in fact he composed a kind of *hyporchema*. (Transl. after C. B. Gulick, slightly modified, in Loeb.)

Athenaeus' account echoes, at points even word for word, what

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theatrical shows were not favorable. See E. J. Jory, "The literary evidence for the beginnings of imperial pantomime," *BICS* 28 (1981) 148–149. For the impact of Pylades and Bathyllos on pantomime dancing in general, see E. J. Jory, "The achievement of Pylades and Bathyllus," in J. Davidson, A. Pomeroy (eds.), *Theatres of Action. Papers for Chris Dearden*, Prudentia Suppl. 2003, 187–193. For the names of pantomime dancers and their occurrences, see H. Solin, "Zum Problem der sog. nomina artis im antiken Rom," in *Onomastik, Akten des 18. Internationalen Kongresses für Namenforschung, Trier, 12.–17. April 1993, Band III Namensoziologie*, hrsg. D. Kremer (Sonderdruck aus Patronymica Romanica Band 16), Tübingen 1999, 15–23 (esp. 15–18, on Pylades and Bathyllos). I wish to thank Prof. Jory and Prof. Solin for kindly providing me with the copies of their articles.

[15] Ath, 1,20e; *Suda*, s.v. Πυλάδης Κίλιξ.

[16] Thus, in the manuscripts. Herwerden's emendation, παντομίμους, is discussed in Jory, "The literary evidence" (above n. 14) 159 n. 22.

Plutarch had written earlier on these two dance styles.[17] As the citation shows, Athenaeus speaks of both dance styles under the heading ἡ Ἰταλικὴ ὄρχησις, which, according to him, both Pylades and Bathyllos put together from dramatic dances, i.e., the *kordax* of the comedy (ἐκ τῆς κωμικῆς), the *emmeleia* of the tragedy (ἐκ τῆς τραγικῆς) and the *sikinnis* of the satyr-play (ἐκ τῆς σατυρικῆς).[18] Thus, in contrast to Plutarch, Athenaeus does not mention *kordax* explicitly in connection with Bathyllos,[19] although the close relationship of Bathyllos with *kordax* is made by Athenaeus as well when he calls the dancing of Bathyllos *hyporchema*; elsewhere Athenaeus states that the *hyporchema* was related to *kordax*.[20]

The term "tragic dancing" is used by Athenaeus in two slightly different meanings. First, it comprises the whole genre of pantomimic dancing, which – according to him – was first introduced by Bathyllos and which he also seems to call "Italian dancing" (ἡ Ἰταλικὴ ὄρχησις). Athenaeus explicitly states that the "Italian dancing" was put together from all the Greek dramatic dance-forms by these two men. I suggest that, by using τραγικὴ ὄρχησις as a synonym for "Italian dancing," a mixture of the three Greek dramatic dance-forms, Athenaeus wanted to stress that the "Italian/tragic dancing" was closely related to traditional Greek drama, and thus was good and valuable. As Bathyllos' relation to "tragic dancing" in this meaning is highlighted, Athenaeus simultaneously emphasized the good quality of Bathyllos' dancing – otherwise characterized by its light mood and perhaps not as highly-esteemed as the more "serious" dancing of Pylades. Second, the term "tragic dancing" is used specifically in its traditional meaning as the dance of tragedy, i.e., as a synonym for *emmeleia*: [ἡ τραγικὴ ὄρχησις], ἢ ἐκαλεῖτο ἐμμέλεια.

One may notice a slight contradiction in Athenaeus' meanings. If we maintain that *tragike orchesis* equates with *emmeleia*, as it normally does

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[17] In Plutarch (*Quaest. conv.* 8.3 = *Mor.* 711e–f), the styles are called "Pyladic" (ἡ Πυλάδειος ὄρχησις) and "Bathyllic" (ἡ Βαθύλλειος ὄρχησις). Both authors describe the dancing ascribed to Pylades with identical adjectives (ὀγκώδη, παθητική and πολυπρόσωπος). It is likely that Plutarch and Athenaeus relied on a common source, perhaps on Aristonikos. Cf. Jory, "The literary evidence" (above n. 14) 150.

[18] Note that, in the *Suda*, s.v. Πυλάδης Κίλιξ, only *kordax* and *emmeleia* are mentioned and the latter is erroneously identified with the satyr-play.

[19] Plut. *Mor.* 711e stating that the Bathyllic dancing is close to *kordax* (ἀπτομένη τοῦ κόρδακος).

[20] Ath. 14,630e. Cf. Jory, "The literary evidence" (above n. 14) 150.

and as Athenaeus clearly expresses in his second usage of *tragike orchesis*, then this term would not be very suitable for referring to the light dancing of Bathyllos. However, Athenaeus first uses *tragike orchesis* when discussing the dancing of Bathyllos. It has been suggested that Bathyllos' comic style no longer existed in Athenaeus' time, and thus his use of "tragic dancing" in connection with Bathyllos is anachronistic.[21]

Perhaps, however, Athenaeus was more conscious of the words he used for these dancers than scholars have believed, i.e., the connection of "tragic dancing" and Bathyllos was not haphazard, "a slip of the pen." Athenaeus' concentration on Bathyllos is noteworthy since Pylades was perhaps a more successful dancer and whose career and influence in Rome was notorious.[22] Athenaeus explicitly mentions the place of origin of Bathyllos, his fellow-countryman, whereas Pylades' roots are left out.[23] He also presents Bathyllos in a slightly more favorable light than Pylades, by crediting Bathyllos with the introduction of pantomime dancing to Rome. Interpreting Athenaeus presents challenges, though, because he cites earlier authors (perhaps a reason to justify the neglect of the author himself by modern scholars). The authors to whom he refers in this connection, Seleukos and Aristonikos, were both Alexandrian grammarians and probably contemporaries of the dancers,[24] and it is possible that the emphasis on Bathyllos was originally expressed by these grammarians, or by Seleukos especially. This, however, is highly speculative since Athenaeus is the only source for Seleukos on this matter and Athenaeus writes how Seleukos simply states that Bathyllos danced professionally. We also have to remember that Athenaeus chose his sources, thus providing himself opportunities to emphasize those aspects he thought were important.

Keeping in mind that Athenaeus, a learned man with a Greek education originating from the Greek city of Naukratis, came to Rome and made a career there, the presentation of Bathyllos may have been a

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[21] Jory, "The literary evidence" (above n. 14) 149. See also Robert (above n. 4) 111 = *OMS* I 659.

[22] Pylades' fame is reflected in the common use of *Pylades* as a stage name by pantomime dancers. E.g., Robert (above n. 4) 111–112 = *OMS* I 659–660; Solin (above n. 14) 15–17.

[23] It is also possible that Pylades was so well known that this information would have been superfluous.

[24] See Jory, "The literary evidence" (above n. 14) 149.

conscious choice and a noteworthy detail in Athenaeus' passage. It is a reminder that these two men, Bathyllos and Athenaeus, are representatives of good, Greek education in their respective fields: Bathyllos with his "tragic dancing" and Athenaeus with his literary output. With these skills, they both left Egypt for Rome to entertain the Romans in an esteemed manner. In general, despite the fact that Athenaeus comes from Egypt, he refers to his native country in a quite limited and even arrogant way when it comes to the non-Greek levels of society. Athenaeus praises the great Hellenistic city, Alexandria, his own hometown Naukratis and the rich flora and fauna of the country, but his Egypt is limited to the Greeks and their past, in accordance with the Second Sophistic.[25] Bathyllos is one more representative of the Greek character of Egypt presented in a favorable light by Athenaeus.

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[25] For a discussion of Athenaeus and Egypt, see D. Thompson, "Athenaeus in his Egyptian context," in Braund, Wilkins (above n. 2) 77–84. The whole *Deipnosophistai* has, however, an ahistorical touch as if Athenaeus had created "the perfect (because timeless) sympotic world," as described by M. Henry, "Athenaeus the ur-pornographer," in Braund, Wilkins (above n. 2) 504. The Second Sophistic is detectable in other aspects of the *Deipnosophistai* as well: the book seems to focus on presenting the authorized literary corpus detected in its huge number of quotations from ancient authors, its overall subject matter (*symposion*) as well as its reflections on especially Plato's *Symposion* (cf. J. Wilkins, "Dialogue and comedy: the structure of the *Deipnosophistae*," in Braund, Wilkins (above n. 2) 23–24).