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ORCHESTOPALA

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Orchestopala

Werner Eck has published with commentary in this journal¹ an interesting epitaph from the Vatican necropolis, in which the wife of Aurelius Nemesius celebrates her late husband's accomplishments as a music director.

...qui cum summa laude artis suae / musicae magister chori orchestopa/lae
et pantomimorum deservit.

I take the words to mean: "served as director of an orchestopala-chorus and [its accompanying] pantomimes". The pantomimi clearly have some connection with the chorus, and are not a completely separate group, especially since ὀρχησταί are practically synonymous with pantomimes.² The other occurrences of the rare word *orchestopala* are not too helpful in clarifying its sense. At Ephesus we have read τοῦτο τὸ ἡρ[ῶν ἐ]στιν ὀρχηστοπαλαρίων πρακίων (*Inscr. Eph.* VI 2949). This is further confirmation of what we already knew: that pantomimes were connected with the factions.³ At Beneventum, to quote Eck's summary, the Roman knight C. Concordius Syrianus, who had given a gladiatorial contest in his home town, and been crowned as *poeta Latinus*, was the first to found a *studium orchestopales* (*CIL IX* 1663b; *ILS* 5179).

From both of these inscriptions we can imagine that this is a well known type of pantomime activity connected at least sometimes with the theatre factions. The solitary literary references in Firmicus Maternus and the Glossaria do not advance our understanding.⁴ All these secondary passages have been cited by Eck and L. Robert, who drew attention to the word several times over the years.⁵ Robert concluded: "De toute façon, pour l'orchestopale il s'agit d'exercices d'agilité et de force, d'une combinaison de danse pantomimique et de lutte." This is clearly true: perhaps we can go further. The context of Firmicus Maternus⁶ —*pet-*

¹ *ZPE* 65 (1986) 248-251 and in *Römische Gräberstraßen*, Abh. Bay. Ak. Wiss., Phil.-hist. Kl. 96 (München 1987) 75.

² e.g. Artemid. 1.76. But the rare Greek word παντόμιμος may have meant something different originally. There are only two earlier literary and two inscriptional references in Greek to παντόμιμος before the first latin use of the word. References in E.J. Jory, "The literary evidence for the beginnings of imperial pantomime", *BICS* 28 (1981) p. 158 n. 5. *P. Flor.* 14 (M. Vandoni, *Feste pubbliche e private nei documenté greci*, Testi e Documenti VII [Milano - Varese 1964] 17) from 181 A.D. names two παντόμιμοι and their *symphonia* from Hermoupolis.

³ A pantomime of the blue faction on an *defixio* from Jordan [Audollent, *Defixionum tabellae* 15, 26] is cited at *IGLS* 1349, and L. Robert, *Études épigraphiques et philologiques* (Paris 1938) 102 gave parallels; in "Amulettes Grecques", *JS* (1981) 37-44 Robert adds more.

⁴ *Math.* 8.15.2 and *Gloss. Lat.* 3.302,46, with the comments of Wil. Heraeus, *Kleine Schriften* (Heidelberg 1937) 108 note 2, who speaks of "eine Kombination von Springen und Ringen".

⁵ L.R., *Études épigraphiques et philologiques* 88; "Epigraphica III", *REG* (1927) 436 n. 2 = *OMS* 1, 224; *REG* (104 1981) 446 = *Bull. Ép.* 1981 no. 479, from which I cite.

⁶ II 309.20 Kroll-Skutsch with much variation in the manuscripts.

*minarios*⁷ *efelmatores orchestopalarios petauristarios aut certe nautas cursus agilitate perspicuos* —certainly suggests acrobats and acrobatics, but on the other hand these other performers were not pantomimes nor were they accompanied by a musical chorus that evidently required prolonged training. The chorus must have formed the background, singing an accompaniment which explained action by the *pantomimi* who were the principals of these *orchestopalarii*. Presumably these libretti were called *fabulae salticae*, of the type composed by Lucan.⁸

Robert⁹ had earlier drawn attention to the related form παραπαλάριος, which is found in an astrological work; probably it refers to those who in some sense perhaps musically or gymnastically assisted the principal pantomimes. This was in turn noted by *LSJ* in its *Supplement*: "mentioned among entertainers of various kinds, perhaps to be connected with Lat. *palaria*." The Latin Word is defined by Charisius as: "cum milites ad palos exercentur."¹⁰ It is a place where soldiers or gladiators practised with the *palus*, "a wooden stump on which the gladiator practises his cuts and thrusts", as Courtney says,¹¹ or it is the exercise itself. Even if Statius calls it a *palaris lusio* (*Silv.* 4 praef.), it has nothing to do with our Greek *orchestopale*, which is obviously to be connected with professional pantomime. It is only a coincidence that in some varieties of pantomime spectacle there were mock fights.

Pollux refers to a κωμαστικὴ ὄρχησις μάχας καὶ πλήγας ἔχουσα (4.100), and various references to *skiamachia* prove that boxing and athletic exercises could be imitated in a dance form. According to Athenaeus, Aristoxenus (fr. 135 W² from Athen. 1,19F) affirmed that Eudicus the clown enjoyed a great reputation for his imitation of wrestlers and boxers; and Athenaeus tells us this in a musical context. At the other end of antiquity the *Historia Augusta* (Gall. 8.3) tells us that in the victory procession of Gallienus there were: *carpenta cum mimis et omni genere histrionum, pugiles flacculis non veritate pugillantes*. Sidonius¹² specifically refers to *pale* as a comic entertainment in the same kind of context:

"Quid dicam citharistrias choraulas
mimos schoenobatas gelasianos
cannas plectra iocos palen rudentem
coram te trepidanter explicare?"

where athletic wrestling is not in question, but the choraulas could suggest *orchestopale*. Similarly *pugnat* is used of a pantomime in a late epigram (*Anth. Lat.* 111R = 100,7SB). Weinreich¹³ saw in the description of a performance of two pantomimes called *saltator* and

⁷ This rare word occurs again in a similar context at Salvianus, *de gubern. Dei* 6.3: "athletis, petaminariis, pantomimis".

⁸ *R.E.* s.v. *Salticae fabulae* col. 2014; Friedländer, *Sittengeschichte*¹⁰, II 126 n. 5.

⁹ "très obscur", *Études Epigraphiques* 88 n. 2.

¹⁰ 37.11 Barwick; cf. *ThLL* XI, fasc. 1 p. 109. This usage is not listed in the Oxford Latin Dictionary (neither s.v. *palaria* nor s.v. *palaris*), probably because Flavius Sospater Charisius is not covered by this dictionary, although the grammarian appears in the author list (p. XI).

¹¹ E. Courtney on Juvenal 6.247, with many references.

¹² Sidonius Ap., poem 23.300 to Consentius, after a long list of pantomimes at the games.

¹³ O. Weinreich, *Epigrammstudien I: Epigramm und Pantomimus* (Tübingen 1948) 144 note 1.

interpellator a kind of *Zeichendisput*, which is recorded later in folk literature. Obviously imitation fights could have been an entertainment at any time in antiquity.¹⁴ Already about 167 B.C., as Polybius¹⁵ repeated by Athenaeus, records, L. Anicius held an extraordinary display. There was a pseudo-battle of flute players on stage, and in his description there is a great deal of military language. The *parataxis* i.e. the battle order, is interrupted by two *orchestai* and two *pyktai*.¹⁶ Much later and in a different context Athenaeus comes to explain the phrase ὁ κυρβηνέων χορός, where a similarly chaotic flute contest is to be understood.¹⁷ It seems as if Anicius' impresario combined the chaotic flute contest with mimic "fighters". But this too perhaps does not smack of the organization and discipline that *orchestopale* requires.

Heraeus¹⁸ adduced the words ὀρθοπάλη, [ἐπι]κλινοπάλη, which do not take us further; nor does διαπάλη or other compounds. We get closer I believe to the reality in an interesting description of a dance called ἀναπάλη in Athenaeus¹⁹ quoting a late hellenistic or early imperial source: "The gymnopaedic dance is like what is called the *anapale* among the ancients. For all the boys who dance it are naked, performing certain rythmical movements and describing certain positions with the arms gently, so as to represent certain scenes in the wrestling school during a wrestling and boxing match, but moving the feet in time to the music. Variations of it are the Oschophoric and the Bacchic, so that this also is traceable to the worship of Dionysus. Aristoxenus says that the ancient practising first the gymnopaedic dance, proceeded into the *pyrrhiche* before entering the arena." The only other appearance of the word *anapale* is that recorded in *LSJ* from the medical writer Rufus, meaning arm exercises, which tends to confirm that cheironomy has become a major part of the significance of the word. The mention of the *pyrrhiche* and the Dionysiac theme suggests of course the mass spectacle into which the Roman theatre industry eventually converted that ancient Greek dance; but Latte's²⁰ disapproving: "mox tamen pyrricha in convivia ludosque descendit" was true of a much earlier period; and satyrs with pyrrhichists are found on Attic vases²¹ showing an early connection with Dionysus. Did the same thing happen with the originally Spartan *anapale* which had at one time accompanied it? Some varieties of the old *hyporchemata* would

¹⁴ E.L. Wheeler, "Hoplomachia and Greek dances in arms", *GRBS* 23 (1982) 223-233 esp. 231ff., with further literature.

¹⁵ Polybius 30.22.1-12, from Athenaeus xiv, 615B-D, with commentary by Walbank 3.445-7. E.J. Jory, in a very useful article: "Continuity and Change in the Roman Theatre" in: *Studies in honour of T.B.L. Webster* I, ed. J.H. Betts, J.T. Hooker and J.R. Green (Bristol 1986) 143-152, on p. 145 interprets this passage as: "a mock battle with real boxers"; I believe he would be prepared to alter the word "real" to "mock" as well.

¹⁶ But we should note that πύκτης can mean a gladiator by imperial times: L. Robert, *OMS* 1.694, and may therefore have a technically different sense earlier.

¹⁷ Athen. xv, 695F; Clearchus fr. 15W²; Cratinus fr. 89 K-A with commentary.

¹⁸ See above n. 4. On κλινοπάλη, ἐπικλινοπάλη see M.B. Poliakoff, *Studies in the Terminology of the Greek Combat Sports*, Beitr. z. Klass. Philologie 146² (Frankfurt 1986) 34-39.

¹⁹ xiv. 631B, mostly from Aristoxenus: translation adapted from Gulick's Loeb text.

²⁰ K. Latte, *De saltationibus Graecorum*: = *RGVV* 13.3 (Giessen 1913, reprint 1967 with addenda) 40, cf. F. Weege, *Der Tanz in der Antike* (Halle 1926) 52.

²¹ e.g. K. Latte, *op. cit.* 57; E.K. Borthwick, "P. Oxy. 2738 Athena and the Pyrrhic dance", *Hermes* 98 (1970) 321; female entertainers are already commonly performing it in the fifth century, J-C. Poursat, *BCH*. 92 (1968) 550ff. The Roman managed to get elephants to do it.

be early forerunners of later *pyrrhichai*, as the ancients realized (sch. Pindar, *Pyth.* 2.127); and wrestling exercises in the gymnasium are connected with dancing.²²

The *pyrrhiche* was a war dance of young men in ancient Greece, and remained a dance exercise (*pyrricha militaris*) for the military until the end of antiquity,²³ sometimes performed in the theatre as well as for self-amusement. But Athenaeus (xiv 629C-631) records that it had become a Dionysiac dance with thyrsos instead of spears in his time, and Apuleius gives us a notable example of what a pantomime spectacle could become in the theatre preceded by mass dancing.²⁴ It did of course encompass other mythical themes²⁵ besides the popular Dionysiac ones: and Robert describes them accurately as "les ballets mythologiques à nombreux personnages richement costumés" (*Bull. Ép.* 1981 p. 448). I would suggest that the *anapale* followed the same route, and became part of the spectacle-industry, varying between the individual *pale*-comics of Sidonius to the acrobatic quasi-ballet kung-fu presentations of numbers of so called "fighters" with their assistant "parapalarii" and musical orchestration as a background.²⁶ The difference between *anapale* and *pyrrhiche* could not be that there were sham fights or leaps, since these occurred in the *pyrrhiche* as well²⁷ and leaps are common enough in pantomime.²⁸ One guess is that the protean pyrrhic always required some armament, partly because the noise made by clashing metal was a feature of it, but the term became very vague in imperial times.

It is not proposed here that *anapale* was the only or even the principal source of *orchestopale*. The history of the pyrrhic or even of the pantomime shows how these simple dances became complex spectacles by the addition of ever larger ensembles and elements from other disciplines. The "theatrocracy" of which Plato complained (*Leg.* 700) continued to demand innovation. We have seen the solo wrestling imitation of Eudicus and the comic *pale* of Sidonius many centuries later, and also mass dancing based on wrestling movements; Cicero and others (above, n. 22) imply that the palaestra wrestling exercise continued to be a constant source of dancing and pantomimic training. But in addition the classical satyrplay loved to depict satyrs performing the activities of the palaestra including wrestling,²⁹ so that the development of the wrestling pantomime of *anapale* towards Bacchic dancing, attested by Athenaeus, has its parallel not only in the development of the pyrrhic but also in the history of the satyrplay. There is obviously no evidence for the pantomimic themes of the rare *orchestopale*, but since Bacchic themes were so popular in pantomime, it may not be thought unreasonable

²² Cic., *de orat.* 3.83; Plutarch *Mor.* 747B; Plato, *Leg.* 795E, 814D; J.-R. Jannot, *AC* 54 (1985) 66-75.

²³ Ammianus 16.5.10 and 18.7.7 with de Jonge's commentary.

²⁴ *Met.* x, 30-34; *Sittengeschichte*¹⁰ II 136.

²⁵ The principal treatment is still in *Sittengeschichte*¹⁰ II 137, to which can be added Wheeler (*supra* n. 14; P. Scarpi, "La pyrriche o le armi della persuasione", *DArch* n.s. I, 1 (1979) 78-97; and most especially J. and L. Robert, *Bull. Ép.* 1981 no. 481 pp. 448-9.

²⁶ L. Robert on the solo *pyrrhichistes*: *Hellenica* (Paris 1940) 1.152.

²⁷ Anth. Lat. 115R = 104 SB, cited e.g. by Daremberg-Saglio s.v. Saltatio.

²⁸ Galen VI 155 K.; Lucian, *de salt.* 71.

²⁹ E. Simon, "Satyrspielbilder aus der Zeit des Aischylos" in: *Satyrspiel*, ed. B. Seidensticker (Darmstadt 1989) 362-403, esp. 373-77: Aeschylus wrote a satyrplay "Palaestae".

to believe that Bacchic themes being already connected with wrestling could figure in it, and I therefore append a note on Bacchic dancing at Rome.

The long and complex history of the satyrplay at Rome has been the object of much discussion and controversy, especially because of possible Etruscan influence³⁰ and the presence of satyrs in Republican processions. There is no need to go over this material. But there was another powerful influence to stimulate dancing and especially Dionysiac dancing at Rome, which made itself felt at about the same time as pantomime underwent basic changes³¹ and began to dominate the theatre. A sidelight on Dionysiac dancing at Rome may now be derived from a recent inscription from Amastris (*SEG XXXV 1327*) which records the death of a young man Aimilianos in 155 A.D. who had distinguished himself in athletic activities including *pale* and in Dionysiac processions. But his chief claim to fame is that he had won in satyric dancing at Cyzicus and Pergamum before an untimely death overtook him.³² Another imperial inscription from Claudiopolis celebrates a Bacchic ὀρχηστής.³³ These inscriptions fit perfectly with Lucian's well known claim that the inhabitants of Pontus are obsessed with Bacchic dancing, even if it is "satyric"; and that even those of noble birth perform it (*de salt.* 79). But precisely "the children of the princes of Asia and Bithynia danced a *pyrrhicham*"³⁴ at the triumph of Caesar, and youths from these areas were summoned frequently to entertain Caligula and other emperors.³⁵ Dio however does say they were "from Greece and Ionia" and what evidence there is suggests that the pyrrhic was popular in the Laodicea/Aphrodisias area.³⁶ Suetonius (*Nero* 12.1) also says that the pyrrhic dances were performed by Greek youths, but adds that scenes of Pasiphae and Icarus were part of the *argumenta*, which must mean that pantomime, not necessarily Bacchic, was attached. It does look as if dancing of the pyrrhic was a speciality in areas of Asia Minor in various degrees, but that the free population in the north were specialists in mass and solo dancing of Bacchic themes. Lucian (*de salt.* 64) in fact suggests that precisely the population of the northern provinces were extremely sophisticated in the interpretation of gestures. Weinreich (*op. cit.* [see n. 13] 139) astutely sug-

³⁰ T.P. Wiseman, "Satyrs in Rome? The background to Horace's *Ars Poetica*", *JHS* 78 (1988) 1-13.

³¹ E.J. Jory, *art. cit.* (above n. 22) and his previous article in *BICS* 28 (1981) cited there at n. 35.

³² After I had finished this article, C.P. Jones with his usual kindness sent me a copy of his detailed and valuable commentary on this inscription ["The Bacchants of Pontus", *Echos du Monde Classique* 34 (1990) 53-63] and an unpublished paper on imperial Greek drama. These allow me to be brief, since I am in almost complete agreement with his conclusions. But he does interpret the victory as one in composing satyrplays, which seems to me to contradict the tenor of the inscription, which emphasizes the physical skills acquired in the gymnasium. This certainly means he was not a slave, who would have been excluded from the gymnasium; the two exceptions cited by Moretti, *RFIC* 110 (1982) 51 are both uncertain. The pantomime child Paridion at Side was, like Aimilianos, a *threptos* (Robert, *OMS* 5.191), but was presumably a *verna*.

³³ Fr. Becker-Bertau, *Die Inschriften von Klaudiupolis: Inschriften Gr. Städte aus Kleinasien* 31 (Bonn 1986) no. 83 with extensive commentary: add *SEG XXVIII 522*; and Robert's comments on *SEG XXXI 1072* (epitaph of a professional pantomime at Heraclea Pontica with the stage name Crispus) at *JS* (1981) 40-42.

³⁴ Daremberg-Saglio, s.v. *Saltatio* 1053, Latte, *de Saltationibus* 59; *Sittengeschichte*¹⁰ II 135 collect the evidence.

³⁵ Suet., *Caligula* 58; *Caesar* 39.1; *Nero* 12.1; Cassius Dio 60.7.2; 60.23.5; Josephus, *AJ* 19.104.

³⁶ Dio Cassius 59.25; Robert, *Hellenica* I (Paris 1940) 152. In the list of prizes at the games donated by Flavius Lysimachus of Aphrodisias at the end of the 2nd century (*CIG* 2758) πυρρίχη (not πυρρική) is followed by *κατύρω* (not *κατύρωις*); O. Liermann, *Analecta epigraphica et agonistica* (Halle 1889) 171; *MAMA* 8.420. The satyr is the lowest paid of all the contests.

gested that as early as the 4th century B.C. Heracleides Ponticus probably danced a pantomime at a symposium in such a manner as to become a butt of Antiphanes' jokes precisely because he came from Pontus. He could also have noted that another Herakleides from Heraclea Pontica who wrote *pyrrichae* i.e. *fabulae salticae*³⁷ is listed by Diogenes Laertius, and it may have been this authorship, whether we identify the two Heracleides or not, that gave rise to the comic distortion. At the other end of antiquity Bacchic ritual with masks, transvestism and obscenity was still being anathematized at Byzantium in the seventh century.³⁸ Obviously this area was a fertile source for importation of Bacchic dancing and pantomime, and it may be that one of the homes it sometimes found was in *orchestopale*.

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³⁷ Diog. Laert. 5.93; Latte, *de saltationibus* 34, but oddly missed by Weinreich. The pyrrhic had been accompanied by choral song since Kinesias in the 5th century, at least: Latte 33, 61.

³⁸ L. Radermacher, *Beiträge zur Volkskunde aus dem Gebiet der Antike* (Wien 1918) 109-110. For similar Dionysiac activities at Smyrna at an earlier period see C.P. Jones, *art. cit.* (n. 32 above) 61.