

THE NOMENCLATURE OF THE ATHENIAN
ARTISTS OF DIONYSUS IN *IG II² 1132-3*



In the inscription attesting for the first time the Athenian association of Dionysiac artists, the *technitai* are granted specifically immunity (*ἀσυλία*), security (*ἀσφάλεια*) and exemption from military taxes (*ἀτέλεια*) and other sorts of taxes (*εἰσφορᾶς πάσας*)¹ by the Amphictyons, so that the Athenian artists can co-arrange² some³ Delphic festivals for the gods on the appointed dates (*ἐν*] *τοῖς καθήκουσιν χρόνοις*).⁴ Such privileges were not uncommon;⁵ what is uncommon however, are the following three passages from the same dossier explaining the nature of the Athenian artists in a way unique among the epigraphic evidence on the associations of artists available to us:⁶

1. 13-9:

εἶναι]

δὲ τοῦς τεχνίτας ἀτελεῖς στρατε[ίας πεζικᾶς]
καὶ ναυτικᾶς, ὅπως τοῖς θεοῖς αἱ τιμ[αὶ καὶ αἱ θυσίαι ἐ]-
φ' ἅς εἰσι τεταγμένοι οἱ τεχνῖται συντ[ελῶνται ἐν]

1. This particular exemption is only mentioned in the Delphic inscription, not in the Athenian exemplars.
2. On the organisation of musical contests, see Aneziri (2007).
3. The plural *αἱ τιμ[αὶ καὶ αἱ θυσίαι* indicates that the Athenian association was appointed (*τεταγμένοι*) to assist and/or arrange more events at Delphi.
4. That is, as appointed by the main organiser, the Delphic Amphictyony.
5. e.g. *FD III. 2. 48: 7-8; IG II²: 1330: 60-1*. The phrase *ἡ συνκεχωρημένη ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων βεβαία* indicates that the privileges were thought to be a traditional part of artists' social position. However, we must be aware that this claim could be part of the propaganda of the dossier as well.
6. I present here the Athenian inscription; *IG II² 1132-3*, see Aneziri A5A-C. For commentaries on the Delphic version, see Le Guen (2001: I) 59-61 and Lefèvre (2002) 276-8.

τοῖς καθήκουσιν χρόνοις ὄντων αὐτῶ[ν ἀπολυπρα]-
 [γ]μονήτων καὶ ἱεροῶν πρὸς ταῖς τῶν θεῶ[ν λειτουργί]-
 αῖς

and l. 25-8:

εἶμεν δὲ τὰν ἀτέλειαν καὶ τὰ[ν ἀσφάλειαν τὰν]
 δεδομένην ὑπὸ Ἀμφικτιόνων τ[οῖς ἐν Ἀθήναις τε]-
 χνίταις εἰς τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον οὔσι[ν ἀπολυπραγμογή]-
 τοις·

In the renewal of the privileges (*CID* 4:114),⁷ the nomenclature from the first paragraph is confirmed by the Amphictiony (at 40-48: εἶναι αὐτοὺς ἱεροὺς καὶ [ἀπολυπραγμο]-νήτους). I will however, concentrate on the first inscription.

Why did the Amphictyons and the ambassadors from the Athenian association (Ἀστυδάμας ποιητῆς τραγωιδιῶν.⁸ Νεοπτόλεμος τραγωιδός⁹) describe the members of the Athenian association as ἀπολυπραγμόνητοι and ἱεροί – such clause is not found in the contemporary decree to the Isthmian association¹⁰ or in any other parallel inscription for that matter – and what is the exact meaning of the adjective ἀπολυπραγμόνητος?¹¹ What meaning (time, cause, condition, etc.) do the genitive absolute (17-8) and the dative participle (27-8) express?

An examination of ἀπολυπραγμόνητος will help us to establish the meaning of the genitive absolute (ὄντων αὐτῶ[ν ἀπολυπραγ]μονήτων) and the da-

7. 35-40: ἀνανενέων[ται] τὴν δεδομένην τοῖς τεχνί[ταις] τοῖς ἐν Ἀθήναις πρότερον ὑπὸ [τῶν Ἀ]μφικτιόνων[ν ἀσυλίαν καὶ ἀσ]φάλειαν κατὰ τὸ δόγμα καὶ παρακ[αλοῦ]σιν τοὺς Ἀμφ[ικτιόνας ἀκόλου]θα πράττοντας τῆ[ι] τ[ῶν] προγόνων αἰρέσει συντηρηῆσα[ι τὰ ψη]-φισθέν[τα] ἑαυτοῖς φιλόνητοια·

8. It is likely that the Astydamos here is Astydamos III (Snell 96) and not the better known namesake Astydamos II (Snell 60), cf. Le Guen (2001)1: 59.

9. Neoptolemos could be the famous actor (Stephanes n° 1797), thus Csapo & Slater (1995) 243-4, but he must have been extremely old. It is perhaps safest to assume that this is a yet another namesake (Stephanes n° 1796), cf. Le Guen (2001)1: 59. Both Astydamos and Neoptolemos could be relatives to their famous namesakes, and chosen rather for their famous relatives than for their own merits, but that is purely speculative, though such enterprise is not wholly unknown, viz. Demosthenes' nephew Demochares; Plut. *Mor.* 851e.

10. *FD* III 1. 85.

11. Since the subject (αὐτῶ[ν]) of the absolute genitive (ὄντων) must be the *technitai* mentioned in the relative clause (ἐφ' ἧς εἰσι τεταγμένοι οἱ τεχνίται), the translation in CSIS "indiscutible de los privilegios concedidos a los artistas dionisiacos" is wrong.

tive participle (οἷσι[ν ἀπολυπραγμοσύνη]τοις). Therefore, I will begin with the question of this particular and peculiar word. However, establishing the meaning of ἀπολυπραγμοσύνητος is not an easy task; this is testified by the numerous explanations and translations of this passage: Foucart translated the word “omni negotio vacuus”,¹² in which he was followed by Poland “von sonstigen Geschäften befreit sind”.¹³ Sifakis, it seems — though more vaguely expressed — thought likewise and translated it “without impediment”¹⁴ which in turn was appreciated by Ghiron-Bistagne in her translation “en toute tranquillité”.¹⁵ Lefèvre translates “ils sont ... libres de toute activité autre que professionnelle”¹⁶ which in turn was followed by Le Guen in her monograph on the *technitai*, “étant donné qu’ils seront libérés de toute autre activité”¹⁷ and explains the adjective thus: “ainsi dégagés des soucis et obligations de la vie quotidienne”.¹⁸ Lately, however, Lefèvre has resumed Ghiron-Bistagne’s understanding of the word and explains it simply with “jouissent de la tranquillité”.¹⁹ And finally, Aneziri seems to agree with Sifakis in that the word simply denotes that “Sie schützten die Techniten bei Ausübung ihres Berufs und ermöglichten damit die Durchführung der festlich-agonistischen Veranstaltungen in der stürmischen hellenistischen Zeit”.²⁰

All these translations indicate that most scholars, including the LSJ, see the action understood in ἀπολυπραγμοσύνητος as having a passive meaning *viz* not to be meddled with; left in peace etc. However, Csapo and Slater²¹ translated the paragraph as follows: “seeing that they are apolitical”. Thus, they understand the word as synonymous with ἀπράγμων, *viz.* not being meddlesome. Unfortunately, they offer no explanation for their choice or what is intended by stating that the *technitai* from the Athenian association are “apolitical”. Thus, we need to investigate the meaning of the word.

Unfortunately, ἀπολυπραγμοσύνητος is a rather rare word. In fact, outside this decree and the renewal of it a hundred and fifty years later, we have to turn to post-classical Christian literature to find it. In these writings, the adjective ἀπολυπραγμοσύνητος does indeed obtain a passive meaning, though

12. (1873) 39.

13. (1934) 2489.

14. (1967) 100.

15. (1976) 170.

16. (1998) 228.

17. (2001) I: 59.

18. *ibid.* 61, I wonder if this is not rather part of the semantics of the adjective *ιερός*.

19. (2002) 275.

20. (2003) 249.

21. (1995) 244.

by then, it has an extended sense, namely “free from curious questioning, hence unquestioned”, mostly of God and high Christian principles.²² This development in later Greek literature is surely dependent on the philosophical (and positive) rendering of *πολυπραγμοσύνη*.²³ However, if the Christian rendering of *ἀπολυπραγμόνητος* as “unquestioned, or the like” was the meaning of it five centuries before, and in epigraphic texts, it would clearly have a more political edge, like words as *ἀνεύθυνος* and *ἀνυπεύθυνος* that are securely attested in inscriptions.²⁴

Due to the prominent position of the adjective *ἀπολυπραγμόνητος* on the inscriptions we must acknowledge that its semantics is of great consequence to our understanding of the socio-political nature of the Athenian association in the first decades of its existence, its importance being further underscored through its appearance on the renewal decree more than a century later (CID 4:114, 43: *τὸν ἀεὶ χρόνον καθὰ καὶ ἐξ ἀρχῆς ὑπῆρχεν*).

In order to reach a more secure construal of the meaning of *ἀπολυπραγμόνητος*, I will have to examine first the morphology of the word, next the semantics of it. The stem *πολυπραγμον-* is easily recognizable in the adjective *πολυπράγμων*, the noun *πολυπραγμοσύνη* and the verb *πολυπραγμονέω*, words deeply embedded in the history of Athens and the view of the Athenians held by the wider Greek world.²⁵ The verbal adjective *ἀπολυπραγμόνητος* is a compound formed by privative *ἀ-*, the aorist stem of the denominative (from *πολυπράγμων*) contracted verb *πολυπραγμονεῖν* (*ἐπολυπραγμόνησα*), and the common ending of verbal adjectives in *-τος*. Thus it belongs to a series of adjectives stemming from contracted verbs, as *ἀκίνητος*, *δυσκίνητος*, *ἀεικίνητος* (*κινεῖν*); *ἀκλόνητος* (*κλονεῖν*), *ἀφθόνητος* (*φθονεῖν*), *ἀκαταπόνητος* (*καταπονεῖν*), *ἀκοινώνητος* (*κοινωνεῖν*), *ἀνεξερένητος* (*ἐξερευνᾶν*), *πορφυρογέννητος* (*-γεννᾶν*), and so forth. What we need to establish now, is whether the meaning of the action expressed by such adjectives is active or passive. The suffix *-τος*, as Chantraine has shown,²⁶ does not necessarily carry a passive meaning though it may have the force of a perfect passive, e.g. *γνωτός*.

22. e.g. Gregorius Nyssenus *Contra Eunomium* 2.1.97: *Καὶ ἄλλως δ' ἂν τις ἀσφαλὲς εἶναι φήσειεν ἀπολυπραγμόνητον ἔαν τὴν θεϊαν οὐσίαν ὡς ἀπόρητον καὶ ἀνέπαρον λογισμοῖς ἀνθρωπίνους*. Likewise, the adverb *ἀπολυπραγμονήτως* is found as an explanation of *ἀπεριέργως* in Hesychios (*A* 6009 Latte).

23. e.g. Plut. *Mor.* 517 C-D.

24. e.g. *IG IX² 1229*; *FD III²: 120*.

25. For a detailed study of this concept and its meaning in Athenian history, see Ehrenberg (1947) and now Leigh (2013) e.g. 16-53, especially 35-45. For the antonym, *ἀπραγμοσύνη*, see Carter (1986).

26. Chantraine (1933) 306.

However, ἀπολυπραγμόνητος shows a distinct similarity with two other adjectives; ἀλησμόνητος, again in an inscription (IG 3: 3446), and one found in a literary source (ἀσυγγνωμόνητος: Phint. ap. Stob. 4.23.61a, Sch. A. *Pr.* 34.). But none of the two other instances of (ἀ+stem+ητος) adjectives could be rendered as having a passive meaning: τῆς ἀλησμονήτου (μ)νήμης, should be translated actively “the not-forgetting memory”, and ἀσυγγνωμόνητος clearly expresses an active meaning, “being merciless”, and is simply synonymous with ἀσυγγνώμων.²⁷ Consequently, it is reasonable to suppose that ἀπολυπραγμόνητος also has an active meaning and is synonymous with ἀπράγμων and ἀπολυπράγμων; the latter, however, is only attested in a neuter form in the writings of Marcus Aurelius (1.5.1) and in adverbial form (ἀπολυπραγμόνως) in later Byzantine authors. Thus it is remarkable that the active meaning of ἀπολυπραγμόνητος is attested only with reference to the Athenian *technitai*, and the passive one occurs only in Christian authors, though not always in religious contexts.

Furthermore, if we (as most of the editors have done so far) retain the passive meaning of the adjective ἀπολυπραγμόνητος in these inscriptions, we have to answer from what troubles does the state of being ἀπολυπραγμόνητος grant release? The decree grants the *technitai* economical freedom and exemption from civic duties, e.g. military service, as long as they (and in order to) arrange the appointed religious activities on schedule. It is the purpose of the privileges of *ateleia*, *asylia* and *asphaleia* to establish a secure context for the *technitai* to work in, not to make them ἀπολυπραγμόνητος and ἱερός.

This leads me to the question of the participial construction of which ἀπολυπραγμόνητος and ἱερός are part. The participial construction ὄντων αὐτῶ[ν ἀπολυπραγ]μονήτων καὶ ἱερῶν cannot be rendered, as Le Guen does (qu’ils seront, and also in the subjunctive “soient” 59), as a purpose (?) clause referring to the future: First, a future sense would normally demand a future participle, and second, if the participial constructions of the two first passages carried a sense of purpose, the individual artists would only be sacred in so far they were granted the privileges (*ateleia*, *asylia*, *asphaleia*); this however is meaningless in the first, and original, inscription, where the privileged status is claimed to be *συνκεχωρημένη ὑπὸ πάντων τῶν Ἑλλήνων*. Furthermore, adhering to ἱερῶν, the prepositional phrase πρὸς ταῖς τῶν θεῶ[ν λειτουργί]αις defines (and delimits) the nature of the artist’s sacred character: his/her sanctity is effective merely during engagement in cultic/cultural activities. The wording seems to imply the artists’ (ταῖς having a possessive sense rather than being purely demonstrative) services to the gods in a gen-

27. e.g. D. 21. 100.

eral sense. While the privileges are valid forever (line 9, 12, 27), they are effective only when activated by the direct engagement of the artists with the organization of the festival. Thus, it is rather *because* the Athenian *technitai* profess to be (and are apparently recognized as) *ἀπολυπραγμόνητοι* and *ἱεροί* whenever they perform the liturgies, that they are granted the privileges by the Amphictyons. To conclude then, the text of the inscriptions demands an active sense of the adjective *ἀπολυπραγμόνητος*, since if, indeed, the word meant inviolable or the like, the participial constructions would suggest that the *technitai* were inviolable and sacred even before the privileges of the Amphictyons were bestowed on them, which in turn would render the privileges meaningless.

Having established that the adjective carries an active meaning, an *ἀπολυπραγμόνητος* association must be one that does not meddle with external affairs.²⁸ Consequently, though the evidence is uncomfortably slight, it seems that in epigraphic records *πολυπραγμοσύνη* and its antonym retained their distinctively political meaning even beyond the democracy of classical Athens, while in literature this meaning became obsolete.

This takes me to the question of the particular nomenclature used on these inscriptions: Why did the Amphictyons and the Athenian artists dwell on this particular adjective, and why is it paired with *ἱεροί*? The Athenian association had, it would seem, a particular purpose when insisting on these precise attributes of its members, and the city of Athens was clearly supporting these.²⁹ This is evident from the fact that the sealed copy of the decree was sent to the Athenian council (l. 30: *ποτὶ Ἀθηναίους*), not to the association of artists there. Consequently it was not through the authority of the Athenian association, but through the authority of the Athenian *polis*, that the inscriptions were placed in particularly conspicuous spots:³⁰ the Athenian Treasury at Delphi, and at Athens, in the Agora and the Theatre of Dionysus.

Furthermore, it will be necessary to discuss the term *ἱερός* applied to the individual members of the association. There is no evidence that individual members of other associations of *technitai* were classified as such.³¹ In fact within this aspect of Hellenistic religious and cultural life, it is normally

28. E.g. *SEG* 1244 col. II. 4-5: *τῆς ἐπαρχείας ἐκτὸς οὔτε κρίνειν οὔτε πολυπραγμονεῖν τῶν στρατηγῶν καθήκει*; see also *IG* II²: 1365-66.

29. It is nowhere in these inscriptions stated that they were to be placed in conspicuous places, as e.g. *SEG* II: 58021-3; *FD* III 1: 351[2] + p. 402: 16-7, but nevertheless the copies of this decree were placed on such.

30. An issuing authority may demand that a decree should be placed in a conspicuous place (e.g. *Aneziri* A7: 14), though this is not the case in this instance.

31. On *IG* VII 2727, see Stephanes (1982).

places, competitions and prizes that are *ἱεροί*.³² Nonetheless, Foucart argued that, due to the religious origins of drama and the religious roles played by the artists, “ipsi homines consecrantur” and therefore the “commune Graeciae consilium artifices *sacros* appellet”.³³ But, as far as the evidence goes, it is at this point in time only that the Athenian members are called *ἱεροί*.³⁴ Furthermore, as I have argued above, it is *not* the “commune Graeciae consilium, viz. the Delphic Amphictyony” that labels the Athenian artists thus, namely as “sacred”: it is apparently their own claim. The Delphic Amphictyony simply acknowledges this claim. Thirdly, the artist is only sacred when he performs his appointed liturgies, not because drama may have arisen from a sacred ritual in a distant time, a fact not acknowledged by the artists themselves on *CID* IV, 117. 13-20, where Athens is praised as the metropolis of drama, but nothing is said about ritual beginnings.

Furthermore, in the inscriptions, the emphasis on the label *ἱερός* here is highly conspicuous, especially if we compare them with the complex Euboean decree; though a vast amount of *technitai* are needed for the local festivals there, there is no mentioning of *leitourgiai*,³⁵ their work or themselves as sacred. The same goes for a large inscription from Corfu (*IG* IX 694, dated to the last half of the third century B.C.), which records a private economical venture to pay for *technitai* to come and perform at the city’s Dionysia, or for the *lex sacra* from Laconia (*IG* V, 1 1390, dated 92/1 B.C.), where the *technitai* are conspicuously *not* *ἱεροί* as compared to the individuals related to the cult in question.³⁶ In these inscriptions, the *technitai* are but hirelings. A reason may be that these inscriptions are not concerned with *technitai* united in associations, but that seems rather dubious to me, since the *lex sacra* and the Corfu decree are both dated to the period when such associations existed. The question still stands: why are the Athenian artists called *ἱεροί* here?

32. Places, e.g. *ID* 503; *IK* Kyme 17; *Aphrodisias* 16-18. Competitions, *FD* III 1.466. Prize, *Syll.* III 1058.

33. Foucart (1873) 33. There is no doubt that the Athenian association used this argument to enhance their influence, cf. *SIG*³ 711, but this is more than a century later.

34. In the Roman imperial times, there is evidence for associations called *ἱεραί*, but not the individual members, e.g. *Aphrodisias* 9; *Iv. Smyrna* 639; *IG* XII 183; VII 192.

35. In the sense of service, not liturgy, since exemption from this is a privileged obtention by *technitai* in other inscriptions, e.g. *RDGE* 49 = *Le Guen* TE 56; *Aneziri* D18a-b. In *FD* III 2: 47 = *Le Guen* TE 10; *Aneziri* A6, the Amphictyons specifically honour those individual artists, who had been present for the festivals and had taken part in them.

36. Here the priest and the initiates are all called “sacred”, and this seems to be relatively normal for this type of cults.

Why then did Athenian artists claim to be *ἱεροί*, and how come this claim was being taken seriously not only by the Athenian state, but also, and in particular, by the Delphic Amphictyony? Was it due to a larger cultural movement incited by the Athenian polis? The close relationship between the Athens and its *technitai* has since long been acknowledged,³⁷ and that the embassy of 278/7 could have been part of a larger scheme, seems probable not only due to the specific location of the inscriptions but also due to the curious fact that the decree was kept in the Athenian state archives, at the *metreon*.³⁸ After the victory over the Gauls, the tension between the Aetolian League and Athens was even more eased (getting rid of Demetrius Poliorketes probably also helped a great deal)³⁹ and since the Aetolian League held Delphi, Athens now for the first time in many years had the opportunity to establish an international presence; nationally, the Athenians were arranging and rearranging their festivals, after years of cultural decline.⁴⁰ The Athenian emphasis on their own artists' sacred role in festivals may be an extension of the liturgical system of *khoregia* abolished under Demetrius of Phaleron, and thus in these early years of the unified association, the Athenian *technitai* were apparently not only thought of as cultural ambassadors, but also as inherently "sacred" in the manner of *khoregoi* of the generations before (as in Dem. 21.51). By trying to gain a foothold within the Delphic festivals (Pan-hellenic, in which Athens at that moment did not excel), Athens tried with all its might, not so much to regain its political status in the Greek world, as to renew its cultural influence, and in this endeavor the association of artists was a major player. According to the evidence available to us, the nomenclature *ἱεροί* for its individual members and for their association as such was unique in Hellenistic times and established a precedent for artists' associations in the Roman world.

If *πολυπραγμοσύνη* was still in the third century (as it had been for two centuries already) ideologically connected with Athens and its politics, other states could use this against her, and the recent recovery of the *polis* and her participation in the Amphictyony could have been seen by other states as a potential threat. Therefore, I propose that the reasons for the Athenian association to explicitly use these two labels for the association were either to refute potential accusations or simply to advertise the non-athenocentrism of

37. e.g. Perrin (1997).

38. *pace* Sickinger (1999) 120, the fact that this "non-Athenian" document was kept in the archives evinces the close relationship between the polis and its association, not that many such documents must have been kept there.

39. Habicht (1999) 130, 134.

40. See Mikalson (1998) 105-36.

the Athenian association. Although Athens was not strong enough to defend herself without the help of Ptolemaeus II and later his son,⁴¹ the Athenians were in inter-state relations always *πολυπράγμονες*, and thus liable of the accusation of meddlesomeness. Therefore, it would have been important for the Athenian artists, not to mention the Athenian state, to show that even though the association was consistently backed up by its state, the artists were explicitly apolitical, *viz.* they were not sent by Athens to meddle in others' business, but to mediate between the religious sphere of Athens and the outside world, and thus the Athenian artists were individually "sacred". Nonetheless, by having to emphasize the sacred role of the artists at the expense of their political engagement, these texts imply that even at the birth of the Dionysiac associations, the Athenian in particular, their political potential had already been recognized by other authorities in the Greek world.

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Abstract

In this article, I discuss the earliest nomenclature of the Athenian artists of Dionysus, which I will argue is not only unique among the overall evidence on Dionysiac artists available to us at this point, but also evinces a recognized political potential in the newly-organized association of the Athenian artists. First, I argue that the adjective *ἀπολυπραγμόνητος* carries an active meaning, i.e. not being meddling; second, that this adjective has retained its political meaning from the earlier centuries in inscriptions connected with Athenian politics; third, I discuss the possible reasons why this adjective has been coupled with the adjective *ἱερός*, an equally unique appellation for individual Dionysiac artists so far. Finally, I hypothesize about reasons for this unique nomenclature of the Athenian artists at this particular historical period.