



Summary :

Dionysiac Technites were the people involved in staging musical and dramatic performances inside and outside the contests. They were under the protection of the god of drama, Dionysus. Their first guilds date from the 3rd c. BC, while a similar guild was established in Asia Minor in the second half of the century. Dionysiac Technites cooperated with Asia Minor cities and were protected originally by the Hellenistic kings and later by Rome.

Date

Hellenistic and Roman period

Geographical Location

Asia Minor

1. Dionysiac Technites in Asia Minor in the Hellenistic Years

1.1. The Hellenistic Years: Political and Social Conditions

From the 4th century onwards, the dramatic contests and, generally, scenic performances were spread outside Athens, while the overall number of religious and other contests followed by thymelic and scenic contests¹ and relative performances increased. The contests became an important part of the propaganda and policy of the Macedonian kings Philip II and [Alexander](#),² as well as their successors: [Ptolemies](#), [Seleucids](#), Antigonids and [Attalids](#). Moreover, the cities, which during the Macedonian occupation as well as later, in the framework of the Hellenistic kingdoms, lost a significant part of their political autonomy, constantly established new and reorganised older contests aiming to promote their cults and history, foster their contacts with the other cities and enhance their prestige.³ Professional actors, dancers and musicians from other cities activated in those contests. The chorus gradually was detached from the drama and became a sort of interval, which reduced the time necessary for the common preparation of actors and chorus for putting up a performance and facilitated the coordination of geographically miscellaneous dramatic groups.⁴ According to inscriptions, the first guilds of Dionysiac Technites appeared in Greece (Athens, Boeotia and the Peloponnese) and the Ptolemaic Egypt⁵ in the early 3rd century BC. The first evidence about the existence of a similar guild in Asia Minor comes from the second half of the 3rd century BC.⁶ The guilds included the Dionysiac Technites⁷ whose specialties appeared in the official card of the thymelic and scenic contests. The guilds provided lots of professionals from several cities, who took part in the contests, thus contributing to the successful organisation and serving the policies of their hosts (rulers, cities). In reward, they claimed special privileges, such as the asylum and tax-exemption of their members.

1.2. The Guilds of Dionysiac Technites in Asia Minor

1.2.1. The 'Koinon of Dionysiac Technites from Ionia and the Hellespont'

The exact date and conditions of establishment of the 'Koinon of Dionysiac Technites from [Ionia](#) and the Hellespont' remain unknown. It certainly existed in the second half of the 3rd century BC.⁸ The name shows that it activated in the regions of the Hellespont and Ionia; it was based in the Ionian city of [Teos](#). The settlement of the Technites in Teos may be connected to the revival of the cult of the patron god of the city, [Dionysus](#): towards the late 3rd century BC, the entire city was dedicated to Dionysus and was proclaimed a sacred city and asylum, thus enjoying privileges similar to those of the Dionysiac Technites.⁹ When Teos, like several other cities of Asia Minor, was under the domination of the Seleucid king [Antiochus III](#) (204/203-191/190 BC), a new guild of technites must have been established in [Pergamon](#), the capital of the kingdom of the Attalids: the 'Koinon of the Technites around Sovereign Dionysus',¹⁰ the guild was closely connected to the Attalid court and the contests held there. When Antiochus III was defeated and the [Peace of Apamea](#) prevailed (188 BC), Teos came again under the Attalids and the two guilds were united.¹¹ According to a large inscription from Teos,¹² the relations between the city and the Koinon deteriorated shortly before the mid-2nd



century BC. The reasons were mainly economic. Although the Attalid king [Eumenes II](#) tried to intervene and reconcile them, he was unsuccessful. The Technites were finally turned out from Teos and found shelter successively in [Ephesus](#), Myonessos and [Lebedos](#).¹³ The guild was last mentioned on a 1st century BC inscription from Samothrace under the name the 'Koinon of Dionysiac Technites from Ionia and the Hellespont'.¹⁴ The branch of the *Technites around Sovereign Dionysus* had probably suspended its operation.

1.2.2. The Koinon of Synagonistes

The technites who were indispensable for staging musical and dramatic performances during the contests, although their specialties were not expected to be paid, (dancers, instructors and musicians in dramatic dances, deuteragonists and tritagonists and imatiomisthes),¹⁵ formed their own guild in Asia Minor called the Koinon of Synagonistes.¹⁶ This particular guild probably owed its existence to the interests of the synagonistes, which were partially differentiated from those of the rest of the technites: the synagonistes participated in the thymelic and scenic contests, although their reward was not connected to the prize and, as a result, the victory, but was restricted to the fee they were given by either the [agonothetes](#) or –in case of deuteragonists– their associate protagonist. Like the technites, the guild of the synagonistes was based in Teos, held its own assembly and had its own rulers.¹⁷ However, its members belonged to the Koinon of the technites as well, as evidenced by their participation in a delegation of the Koinon of technites to [Iassos](#).¹⁸

1.2.3. Activity of the Dionysiac Technites of Asia Minor

The Asia Minor guild of the Dionysiac Technites collaborated with the Asia Minor cities that hosted contests by sending theoroi,¹⁹ apart from technites-synagonistes.²⁰ It developed relations with Antiochus III,²¹ when the latter had control over a large part of Asia Minor (204/203-191/190 BC), while when the political situation changed (188 BC), the guild came under the control of the royal house of the Attalids, staffed their contests and consolidated their cult.²² The Koinon of Asia Minor appears outside Asia Minor as well: in the eastern Aegean (Kos, Rhodes) as well as in regions of the Greek mainland (Boeotia, Delos, Delphi). Although the information provided by relative inscriptions is not clear, it can be concluded that members of the guild participated in contests held in the above regions. When the Romans finally occupied Greece (146 BC) and later on, when they expanded in Asia Minor (133-130 BC), the Koinon of the technites of Asia Minor achieved the recognition of their privileges by the Romans.²³ In this way, it originally combined and later replaced the royal protection with the protection of the new rulers. The Roman response to the requests of the technites may be understood, since contests appeared and contests honouring both the Romans and Rome (e.g. [Ρωμαία](#) of Magnesia) were established by Romans in Asia Minor, as it happened in the rest of the regions that gradually came under Roman domination. Finally, there were several cases when individual Dionysiac Technites from Asia Minor were honoured –usually at Delphi and Delos– for their artistic activity.²⁴ Moreover, there is evidence about technites who exercised diplomacy through their artistic activity for the benefit of the Asia Minor cities they came from.²⁵

2. Dionysiac Technites in Asia Minor in the Imperial Years

2.1. Ecumenical Council, Hieronikes Stephanites and Local Guilds

Under the unifying Roman authority, the technites formed a single guild (council), whose activities extended all over the Roman Empire.²⁶ Because the empire was the 'oikoumene' (the inhabited world) of the time, the council is described as ecumenical. According to the title, it was under the protection of Dionysus and the each time Roman emperor, while its technites-members were described as hieronikes stephanites.²⁷ In this way, the guild stated that its members belonged to the specialties that had access to the sacred stephanites contests and, as a result, protected their image, given the Roman view that it was degrading for someone to be paid in order to perform or participate in contests.²⁸ Considerable evidence about the ecumenical council comes from various areas of Asia Minor,²⁹ while among the distinguished members of the council were several technites from Asia Minor.³⁰ Numerous inscriptions mentioning the hieronikes stephanites have been found in Asia Minor as well. It was a guild earlier than the ecumenical council of the technites hieronikes stephanites and synagonistes, which continued to exist together with the ecumenical council and seems to have



also included athletes in some cases.³¹ As it happened in the Hellenistic years, the relationship of the technites with the political authority in the imperial period consisted in their contribution to the successful organisation of the contests –particularly those held in the framework of the imperial cult– and the recognition and continuity of their privileges. Finally, a local guild of technites activated in Asia Minor in the imperial period, according to evidence from Teos, Ephesus and [Tralles](#); the guild was probably a dwindled continuation of the Hellenistic Koinon.³²

2.2. Honours and Privileges of Individual Technites

In the imperial period, Dionysiac Technites from Asia Minor were honoured individually with privileges, statues and chaplets inside and outside Asia Minor. There are impressive cases of technites whose names are accompanied by numerous different ethnic epithets,³³ thus indicating that several cities had honoured them and granted them citizenship.³⁴ Lots of inscriptions recount the victories of honoured Technites in contests in Asia Minor³⁵ and other remote regions of the Roman Empire,³⁶ which shows that the technites activated over large regions. The honoured technites were often musicians³⁷ or poets.³⁸ Among them there were technites of lighter shows, such as the mimer and the pantomimist,³⁹ who were particularly dear to the public in the imperial period, and gave performances both in the theatre and the hippodrome.⁴⁰ There were also quite a few cases of children-technites that had already pursued a brilliant career in drama, music or even rhetoric at an early age.⁴¹

1. The thymelic contest took place around the thymele (altar), at the orchestra of the theatre; thus, it was a musical contest. The scenic contest was held on the stage and the proscenium of the theatre; it was a dramatic contest.

2. About technites from Asia Minor serving the Macedonian kings, see Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στην προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988), nos 1526, 2446.

3. Chaniotis, A., 'Sich selbst feiern? Stadtische Feste des Hellenismus im Spannungsfeld von Religion und Politik', in Worrle M. – Zanker P. (ed.), *Stadt und Bürgerbild im Hellenismus*, Kolloquium, München, 24.-26. Juni 1993 (Vestigia 47, München 1995), pp. 147-172; Kohler, J., *Pompai. Untersuchungen zur hellenistischen Festkultur* (Europäische Hochschulschriften 38, Reihe 61, Frankfurt – Bern – New York – Paris 1996), pp. 89-90; Le Guen, B., 'Theatre et cites a l'epoque hellenistique. 'Mort de la cite' – 'Mort du theatre'?', *REG* 108 (1995), pp. 59-90.

4. Ghiron-Bistagne P., *Recherches sur les acteurs dans la Grèce antique* (Paris 1976).

5. Le Guen, B., *Les associations des technites dionysiaques à l'époque hellénistique*, vol. 2 (Paris 2001); Aneziri, S., *Die Vereine der Dionysischen Techniten im Kontext der hellenistischen Gesellschaft. Untersuchungen zur Geschichte, Organisation und Wirkung der hellenistischen Technitenvereine* (Historiaeinzelschriften 163, Stuttgart 2002).

6. *IG IX 1*², 175.

7. The Technites around Dionysus or Dionysiac Technites were musicians, poets, actors, dancers, directors, mimers, pantomimists, and, generally, everybody activating, either individually or in groups, in staging musical and dramatic performances inside and outside the contests. The term expresses the professionalism of the artists (technites), while, at the same time, they are clearly under the protection of the god of drama, Dionysus. They probably appeared in the 4th c. and remained active in the 5th c. BC.

8. *IG IX 1*², 175; Csapo, E. – Slater, W.J., *The Context of the Ancient Drama* (Ann Arbor – Michigan 1995), from p. 246 onwards, no. 42.

9. Rigsby, K.J., *Asyilia. Territorial Inviolability in the Hellenistic World* (*Hellenistic Culture and Society* 22, Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 1996), from p. 281 onwards.

10. Rigsby, K.J., 'Provincia Asia', *TAPhA* 118, p. 146.

11. Pickard-Cambridge, A., *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (2nd ed. rev. Gould, J. – Lewis, D.M., Oxford 1988), from p. 314 onwards, no.



10a.

12. Welles, C.B., *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period. A Study in Greek Epigraphy* (New Haven 1934), no. 53.

13. Strabo, XIV 1, 29

14. IG XII 8, 163.

15. The deuteragonist and the tritagonist were the second and third, respectively, actor of a drama, in order of importance, who along with the protagonist formed the basic dramatic group. The ἱματιομίσθης (imatiomisthes) was the professional who provided the actors with the clothes of their roles.

16. Aneziri, S., 'Les synagonistes du théâtre grec aux époques hellénistique et romaine: une question de terminologie et de fonction', in Le Guen, B. (ed.), 'De la scène aux gradins'. *Théâtre et représentations dramatiques après Alexandre le Grand* (Pallas 47, Toulouse 1997), from p. 53 onwards.

17. CIG 3068B lines 13-16, 20-22.

18. Csapo, E. – Slater, W.J., *The Context of the Ancient Drama* (Ann Arbor – Michigan 1995), from p. 252 onwards, no. 45, lines 35-37.

19. The Theoros (Θεωρός) was the sacred envoy of a city, a king or a Koinon to a contest hosted by another city, kingdom or Koinon. I. Magn. 54, lines 19-21, 34-40.

20. Csapo, E. – Slater, W.J., *The Context of the Ancient Drama* (Ann Arbor – Michigan 1995), from p. 252 onwards, no. 45, lines 12-19.

21. SEG 41 (1991) 1005.

22. The Koinon of the technites had a priest - agonothetes of King Eumenes II (CIG 3068A lines 1-2, 24-25), while some of its members definitely participated in the Attalists, a guild dedicated to the Attalids (Klimov, O., 'Attalists' Association in the Kingdom of Pergamum', VDI 1986 (4), 102-109) established by Kraton, son of Zotichos from Calchedon, a piper and eminent member of the Koinon of the technites. See Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στην προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988), no. 1501.

23. Roesch, P., *Études béotiennes* (Paris 1982), p. 199, no. 44; Sherk, R.K., *Roman Documents from the Greek East. Senatus consulta and epistulae to the age of Augustus* (Baltimore 1969), no. 49.

24. Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στην προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988) nos 120, 200, 326, 384, 475, 1115, 1120, 1167, 1414, 1415, 1811, 1871, 1979, 1954, 2065, 2169, 2268, 2649, 2658, 2815.

25. Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians*. I 293 (see also Liban., *Orations*, LXIX 119). Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στην προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988), nos 1650, 2363.

26. Pickard-Cambridge, A., *The Dramatic Festivals of Athens* (2nd ed. rev. Gould, J. – Lewis, D.M., Oxford 1988), from p. 297 onwards; Roueché, Ch., *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias in the Roman and Late Roman Periods. JRS Monographs 6* (London 1993), from p. 223 onwards.

27. The hieronikes was the technite or athlete winning a sacred or stephanites contest. The term stephanites means a) a contest whose prize is a chaplet – also called 'sacred', b) a technite or athlete winning a sacred or stephanites contest.

28. Leppin, H., *Histrionen. Untersuchungen zur sozialen Stellung von Bühnenkünstlern im Westen des römischen Reiches zur Zeit der Republik und des Principats* (Antiquitas 41, Bonn 1992), from p. 71 onwards, from p. 78 onwards; Csapo, E. – Slater, W.J., *The Context of the Ancient Drama* (Ann Arbor – Michigan 1995), from p. 275 onwards.



29. SEG 6 (1932) 58 – 59; IK 11 I, 22.
30. Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στον προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988), nos 15, 84, 120, 200, 231, 317, 501, 555, 990, 1191, 1979, 2132, 2929.
31. Poland, F., *Geschichte des griechischen Vereinswesens* (Leipzig 1909), from p. 150 onwards; Pleket, H.W., 'Some Aspects of the History of the Athletic Guilds', *ZPE* 10 (1973), from p. 197 onwards.
32. IK 36, 1, 50; IK 15, 1618; CIG 3082.
33. The epithet that accompanied the name of a person and suggested the city (or the cities) or the wider geographical region he came from.
34. Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στην προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988), nos 825, 856, 1147, 2121, 2255, 2622, 2679.
35. Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στην προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988), nos 2459, 2479.
36. Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στην προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988), nos 236, 480, 825, 1132, 1147, 1345, 2121, 2255, 2542, 2622.
37. Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στην προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988), nos 173, 850, 1132.
38. Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στην προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988), nos 1097.
39. Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στην προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988), nos 236, 475, 1759, 1956, 2180.
40. Πλωρίτης, Μ., *Μίμος και μίμοι* (Athens 1990), from p. 51 onwards, from p. 69 onwards.
41. Στεφανής, Ι., *Διονυσιακοί Τεχνίται. Συμβολές στην προσωπογραφία του θεάτρου και της μουσικής των αρχαίων Ελλήνων* (Herakleion 1988), nos 1061, 1779, 2224, 2624; Prosperi-Valenti, G., 'Attori-Bambini del mondo romano attraverso le testimonianze epigrafiche', *Epigraphica* 47 (1985), from p. 71 onwards.

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Glossary :



agonothetes, the

Official assigned with the task of organising and hosting the contest in the framework of a contest.

Quotations