



Summary :

Apaturius was a painter who was active during the 1st cent. BC. He was born in Alabanda of Caria and specialized in theatre scene-painting.

Date and Place of Birth

1st cent. BC, Alabanda of Caria

Main Role

Painter

1. Biography - Work

The available evidence on Apaturius' life and work is scanty. We know that he was born in [Alabanda](#) of [Caria](#) and lived during the 1st cent. BC. The only source that mentions the artist is Vitruvius, who preserved the following incident.¹ Apaturius, who specialized in theatre scene-painting, had produced the scenery for a small theatre in [Tralles](#), the so-called **ecclesiasterion**; after its completion, his work was very positively received by the citizens. The mathematician Licymnius was an exception; he confronted those that extolled his work, arguing that if the citizens accepted this over-elaborate decoration they would not be different from the inhabitants of Alabanda, infamous for their imprudence, or those of Abdera, who led a sybaritic life. Apaturius did not have the courage to defend his creation and preferred to replace the scenery with another, more conventional one, which was finally accepted by all the citizens.

2. Assessment

This incident, preserved by Vitruvius, is indicative of the impression Apaturius' work made on his contemporaries. According to the description, it appears that the artist consciously employed an unrealistic style in his decoration of the Tralles theatre. According to Vitruvius, this choice was incompatible with the building's double function: it did not only serve as a place of recreation, but also as a locus of political gatherings, as indicated by its name *ecclesiasterion*. Among else, the scenery incorporated architectural elements and were defined by an illusionist approach to representing reality, aimed at creating false impressions on the viewer. The detail in which this event was reported and the specific emphasis on the artist's shift towards more conservative choices probably echoes Vitruvius' personal views; he was a classicist and apparently did not approve of such -extreme in his view- tendencies in the contemporary art of the time.

1. Vitr. 7.5.5.

Bibliography :

	Rouveret A. , <i>Histoire et Imaginaire de la Peinture Ancienne. Ve siècle av. J.-C.-Ier siècle ap. J.-C.</i> , Rome 1989, Bibliothèque des Ecoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 274
	Marabini Moevs M.T. , "Apatourios", <i>EAA I</i> , 456

Webliography :



On Architecture

http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Vitruvius/7*.html

Glossary :



ecclesiasterion, the

Special building used to host the assemblies of demos. Small theatre.

Sources

Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, 7, 5, 5