

CHRISTOPHER P. JONES

TWO LATE ANTIQUE INSCRIPTIONS FROM APHRODISIAS

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## TWO LATE ANTIQUE INSCRIPTIONS FROM APHRODISIAS

### I. Acclamation for a Pantomime

A inscription, almost a graffito, is roughly scratched into a stone on the stage of the *bouleuterion* of Aphrodisias; it appears to have been cut some time after the stone had been repaired, and later covered over with plaster (Plate 1). The script is obviously late, and the content suggests the fourth, fifth or even sixth century. Charlotte Roueché gave the first formal publication in 1993, and Joyce Reynolds republished it in 2008.<sup>1</sup> Their text is as follows:

αὕξι Οὐ<sup>vac</sup>ρανία ἡ μεγάλη  
τύχη τοῦ δούλου σου  
αὕξι ὁ Χρυσόμαλλος  
ὁ πῆξας τὸ μάρμαρον.

Roueché translates her text: “Power to Ourania the great fortune of your servant! Power to Chrysomallos, who fixed the marble!” or alternatively, taking Οὐρανία as a vocative, “Power, Ourania, to the great fortune of your servant.” I discuss each line individually, since each raises questions of its own.

Line 1. Although some inscriptions of the Aphrodisian theater list the nine Muses, with Ourania, the Muse of astronomy, in eighth place, Roueché rightly infers that the Ourania invoked here is Aphrodite, the patron goddess of the city. A partial parallel is provided by a painted inscription from the theater in which the words Οὐρανία and βοήθι τῷ δούλῳ σ[ου] Νικηφόρῳ are visible.<sup>2</sup>

Line 2. Expressions such as “slave of the god/goddess” (δούλος θεοῦ/θεᾶς) appear to have entered the Greek world from eastern cults such as that of the *dea Syria*.<sup>3</sup> The present text leaves it unclear whether Chrysomallos or the anonymous author of the inscription was the “slave” of Aphrodite, but Roueché, taking Chrysomallos to be some kind of performer, assumes the former, and also notes that “Chrysomallos” is a name favored by pantomimes. It can hardly be doubted that the present Chrysomallos was also a pantomime. There was a natural link between such artists and Aphrodite. Martial’s epigram for the pantomime Paris ends: *ars et gratia, lusus et uoluptas, / Romani decus et dolor theatri, / atque omnes Veneres Cupidinesque / hoc sunt condita, quo Paris, sepulchro*.<sup>4</sup> A metrical inscription from Heracleia Pontica commemorates a pantomime named Crispos (“Curly”): in his grave is laid “form that confers beauty” (τὸ κάλλος ἰσφέρουσα μορφή), he is the “golden flower” (ἄνθος χρύσεον) of the world’s theaters, and death has extinguished his “glowing grace” (λαμπομένην τὴν χάριν). So also the pantomime Sphy-

<sup>1</sup> Roueché, *Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias* (1993) 42–43 no. 12 = *Inscriptions of Aphrodisias* 2007, 2.2 (I have corrected her πῆξας in line 4); J. M. Reynolds, in C. Ratté and R. R. R. Smith, eds., *Aphrodisias Papers 4, Journal of Roman Archaeology, Suppl. Series 70* (2008) 175–176 no. 7 (*SEG* 58, 1163). As always, I am grateful to Glen Bowersock for his helpful criticism. My thanks are also due to Charlotte Roueché for generously supplying images of the two inscriptions discussed here.

<sup>2</sup> *Performers and Partisans* no. 2.

<sup>3</sup> On this and related terms, H. W. Pleket, in H. S. Versnel, ed., *Faith, Hope and Worship* (Leiden, 1981) 152–192, especially 170–171.

<sup>4</sup> Mart. 11, 13 lines 4–7, on which see O. Weinreich, *Martials Grabepigramm auf den Pantomimen Paris*, *SB Heidelberg* 1940/41, 1; id., *Epigrammstudien*, 68–73 no. 6.

ridas, so named for his supple ankles, inscribes a prayer for “grace, beauty, victory” (χάριν, μορφήν, νίκην).<sup>5</sup> “Victory” presumably refers to victory over rivals, since in Late Antiquity pantomimes were attached to circus factions, and clashes between rival fans led to several violent outbreaks.<sup>6</sup> So also in the present inscription the likely implication of τύχη is that Aphrodite’s favor had brought Chrysomallos “good fortune” in competition with rivals.

Line 3. The professional name “Chrysomallos” (“Golden-Curls”, “Goldilocks”, rather than simply “golden-haired”, as Roueché) clearly refers to the bearer’s blond curls. Malalas mentions a pantomime, Rhodos also called Chrysomallos (Ῥόδος ὁ λεγόμενος Χρυσόμαλλος), active in Constantinople about 470; Procopius mentions a female pantomime (*orchēstris*) called Chrysomallo under Justinian.<sup>7</sup> In the same reign, Paulus Silentarius mourns the death of a pantomime in an epigram justly admired by Otto Weinreich; I translate, though no translation can bring out the subtlety of the Greek:<sup>8</sup>

Σιγᾶς, Χρυσεόμαλλε, τὸ χάλκεον, οὐκέτι δ’ ἡμῖν  
εἰκόνας ἀρχηγόνων ἐκτελέεις μερόπων  
νεύμασιν ἀφθόγοισι τεῖ δ’ ὄλβιστε, σιωπῇ  
νῦν στυγερῇ τελέθει, τῇ πρὶν ἐθελγόμεθα.

“You are silent as bronze, Chrysomallos, and no longer do you  
draw for us the images of men of old  
by your voiceless nods;<sup>9</sup> and your silence, blessed one,  
is now hateful, yet charmed us in times past.”

Line 4. Roueché comments: “If my reading [of πήξας] is correct, the man concerned appears to have ‘fixed the marble’, that is, been responsible for the insertion of the piece of marble, repairing the lip of the Odeon stage ... There would seem to be a direct conflict here between the identification of Chrysomallos as a performer, and as the man who ‘fixed’ the marble.” She goes on to discuss the evidence for performers taking responsibility for putting on shows, and suggested that the same had happened here, since “it is quite likely that it was not always easy to get minor repairs done”. Yet while πήγνυμι does have among its various meanings “to assemble”, “put together” of ploughs, tents, and so on,<sup>10</sup> it seems oddly applied to “fixing” a broken slab of

<sup>5</sup> Crispos: S. Şahin, *ZPE* 18 (1975) 293–297 (*Bull. ép.* 1976, 687; *SEG* 31,1072; Merkelbach–Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* II 260–61, 09/1/02). Sphyridas: Robert, *OMS* 7, 497–506 (*Journ. Sav.* 1981; *Bull. ép.* 1982, 102; *SEG* 31, 1595).

<sup>6</sup> Robert, *Études épigraphiques et philologiques* (1938) 102, “On sait combien les spectacles de pantomimes excitaient l’enthousiasme, et que, comme pour les cours de chars, les partisans des rivaux en venaient à une extrême agitation”; Alan Cameron, *Circus Factions* (1976) 226–228; below, on the pantomime Sphyridas. On pantomimes in general, the classic study is by L. Robert, “Pantomimen im griechischen Orient”, *OMS* 1, 654–670 (*Hermes* 1930); later ones include O. Weinreich, *Epigrammstudien I: Epigramm und Pantomimus*, SB Heidelberg 1944/1948, 1 (henceforth “*Epigrammstudien*”) and E. Hall and R. Wyles, eds., *New Directions in Ancient Pantomime* (2008).

<sup>7</sup> Malal. 15.12, p. 311 Thurn (Rhodos), Procop. *Anec.* 17.34 (Chrysomallo). On female pantomimes at Constantinople, Weinreich, *Epigrammstudien* 97–114; on names ending in *-mallos*, Weinreich, *Epigrammstudien* 81 n. 1.

<sup>8</sup> *Anth. Pal.* 7, 563; “bronze” refers to the Homeric image of death, “brazen sleep” (*Il.* 11, 241); Weinreich, *Epigrammstudien* (77–82 no. 8, especially 79).

<sup>9</sup> Though hand-movements are the pantomime’s most commented-upon feature, he or she also used movements of the head: Weinreich, *Epigrammstudien* 140–145, citing *inter alia* Claudian, *Paneg. Cons. Manl.* 313, *nutu manibusque loquax*.

<sup>10</sup> Stephanus-Dindorf s.v., “compingendo struo et fabricor”; LSJ<sup>9</sup> s.v. II.

marble. Both in her original publication and more recently in her online catalog of Aphrodisian inscriptions (IAph 2.2), Roueché observes that the pi of the supposed πήζας in line 4 is “roughly cut”: opinions will differ, but the published photograph suggests that what she seems to see as the left-hand vertical of the pi is a short, accidental scratch “hanging” from the left end of the horizontal of tau, yielding τήζας, “he who melted the marble”. This reading seemed obvious to Glen Bowersock and myself when visiting Aphrodisias in 1984, and we communicated it to Alan Cameron, who published it soon afterwards.<sup>11</sup> That is, Chrysollos’ performance was so entrancing that it “melted” even the marble of the building. “Melting” probably refers to his acting roles from tragedy: Lucian in his defense of pantomime says that the performer will draw his subjects “above all from tragedy”, and that “the audience often weeps when something sad and pitiful is shown”. An epigram on a pantomime, contrasting his impassive mask and passionate acting, praises him for “feeling with the characters/masks in which he moved” (συνπάσχων κείνοις <οἷσ>περ κεινέιτο προσώποις).<sup>12</sup> An admirer might well hit on the idea of praising his favorite pantomime for melting marble, a proverbially cold stone which was used for the revetments of buildings as well as for statues. Dido in the underworld is no more moved by Aeneas’ confession of love *quam si dura silex aut stet Marpesia cautes*; ancient commentators note that Mount Marpeessos on Paros was famous as a source of marble.<sup>13</sup> Irving Berlin expresses a similar idea in “I love a Piano” (1915): “When a green Tetrazine starts to warble, / I grow cold as an old piece of marble.” Glen Bowersock draws my attention to *Anth. Pal.* 16, 80 (Agathias), on a prostitute admired by a painter in encaustic, though here the melting is due to the flame of passion, not to pathos:

Μαχλάς ἐγὼ γενόμην Βυζαντίδος ἔνδοθι Ῥώμης  
 ὠνητὴν φιλίην πᾶσι χαριζομένη  
 εἰμὶ δὲ Καλλιρόη πολυδαίδαλος, ἦν ὑπ’ ἔρωτος  
 οἰστρηθεὶς Θωμάς τῆδ’ ἔθετο γραφίδι  
 δεικνύς, ὅσον ἔχει πόθον ἐν φρεσίν· ἴσα γὰρ αὐτῷ  
 κηρῷ τηκομένῳ τήκεται ἡ κραδίη.

“I was promiscuous in Byzantine Rome,  
 granting venal love to all comers.  
 I am the artful Callirhoe, whom Thomas, frenzied  
 with love, placed in this portrait,  
 showing how much love he has in his mind, for as much  
 as the wax itself melts, so does his heart.”

<sup>11</sup> Cameron, *Bull. Amer. Soc. Pap.* 20 (1983) 84 n. 17; Reynolds upholds Roueché’s reading in *Aphrodisias Papers* 4 (n. 1), 176.

<sup>12</sup> Luc. *Salt.* 61, 79. Cf. the circumlocution τραγικῆς ἐνρῦθμου κινήσεως ὑποκριτῆς in imperial-period inscriptions (Robert, “Pantomimen” [n. 6] 658–659; G. W. Bowersock, in W. V. Harris and Brooke Holmes, eds., *Aelius Aristides between Greece, Rome, and the Gods* [2008] 73–74). Epitaph: *IG* 14, 2124.

<sup>13</sup> *Aen.* 6, 471; O. Rubensohn, *RE* 18 (1949) 1790.

## II. Epitaph for a Young Woman

An Aphrodisian inscription, broken on the right, commemorates a young woman by means of an epitaph in dactylic hexameters, with a probable pentameter in line 4 (Plate 2). Charlotte Roueché, the first editor, suggests a date of the fourth century or later. Her online version, slightly changed from the printed one, is as follows:<sup>14</sup>

- Ψυχὴ σῶμα λιποῦσα ΤΟ[—]  
 εὐλύτος ἐς μακάρων ἱερὸν ΓΕ[—]  
 ὀκτωκαιδεκάτῳ τετρατο[—]  
 4 παντάπαν ἦν ἀμενη(ν)ῆ Θεα[—]  
 Ῥώμης καὶ Φαρίης ξυνὸν γένο[ς —]  
 καλήν, μιλιχίην, ἐρατήν, πιτυ[τήν —]  
 ἔρμα σαοφροσύνης κούρην ΚΡ[—]  
 8 ψυχὴ ἀθαν(ά)τοισιν ὀμέστιος ΟΥ[—]  
 ἐδομένη φορέειν βρότεον *vacat* [—]

Roueché translates: “(The) soul, leaving the body [... has gone], released from care, to the holy [place *or* gathering] of the blessed ones [... in the] eighteenth [?year and] fourth [?month ...]. Entirely fleeting was ?Thea- (*or* the glimpse we had of her) [...] (Her) descent was from both Rome and Alexandria [...] Beautiful, gentle, loveable, discreet, [...] a bastion of prudence (was) the girl whom [...] (Her) soul is living with the immortals [...] being ashamed to bear a mortal [body].”

After citing parallels from Nonnus and Damascius, Roueché observes (in her online commentary): “These parallels may indicate, firstly, a late fifth- or sixth-century date for this text and, secondly, that it may have originated in pagan circles. Ῥώμης καὶ Φαρίης (in line 5) recurs in a poem of Agathias (*AP* 7. 612). The phrase was perhaps already in circulation among the writers of epigrams, but an origin from Rome and Alexandria might suit someone in the pagan circles of Aphrodisias, with their strong connections with Alexandria. ἔρμα σαοφροσύνης (line 7) recurs in an epigram at Athens honouring the pagan philosopher Plutarchus [*IG* II/III<sup>2</sup> 13281]; and it is worth noting the expression of similar ideas of immortality in *ALA* 54, the epitaph of the philosopher Asclepiodotus, and *ALA* 250, the epitaph of Pytheas, a member of the same circle.”

The inscription is not only “pagan”, but shows strong signs of Neoplatonism. Here I comment on some particular points before giving a somewhat revised text and translation.

Line 1: ΤΟ might well represent the article followed by some adjective such as γήϊνον or πῆλι-  
 νον: thus a funerary inscription for a citizen of Pisidian Antioch who was both a physician and a Platonist describes him thus:<sup>15</sup>

γενόμενον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἔτη τριάκοντα καὶ ἡμ[έρας — —],  
 θεοῦ προνοίᾳ καὶ ἱερῶν ἀγγέλων συνοδίᾳ με[τοικήσαντα e.g.]  
 εἰς [ο]ὐρανὸν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, θάπτον ἢ ἔδει τοὺς γ[ονέας e.g.]  
 καταλιπόντα, τὸν π[ῆ]λινο[v] χιτῶνα ἐνταυθοῖ περι[δύσαντα e.g.]

<sup>14</sup> Ch. Roueché, *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* (1989) no. 154; second edition in online site of the same name.

<sup>15</sup> *SEG* 32, 1302; E. Samama, *Recherches sur les médecins et la médecine à partir des inscriptions grecques* (1993) 432–434 no. 334.

The last word of the line could well have contained the name of the deceased in the genitive, for instance Ἀρτεμιδώρας or -ρης.

Line 2: εὐλutos is “easily-released” (LSJ s.v. 4), rather than “released from care”. The idea of the body as a prison in which the soul is entrapped, like that of the body as “earthy” or “muddy”, goes back to Plato, and is found in poems that have a Neoplatonic tinge: thus an oracle allegedly given to Julian before his invasion of the Persian empire:<sup>16</sup>

Ἄλλ' ὀπόταν σκήπτροισι τεοῖς Περσῆϊον αἶμα  
 ἄχρι Σελευκείης κλονέων ξιφέεσσι δαμάσσης,  
 δὴ τότε σὲ πρὸς Ὀλυμπον ἄγει πυριλαμπὲς ὄχημα  
 ἀμφὶ θυελλίησι κυκώμενον ἐν στροφάλιγξι,  
 ῥίψαντα βροτέων ῥεθέων πολύτλητον ἀνίην.  
 ἦξεις δ' αἰθερίου φάεος πατρώϊον αὐλήν,  
 ἔνθεν ἀποπλαγχθεὶς μεροπήϊον ἐς δέμας ἦλθες.

At the end of the line, γέ[νος] is a tempting supplement.

Line 3: Roueché is surely right that the text gave the woman's age in years and months (or possibly days, like the philosopher from Antioch), but any supplement would be guesswork.

Line 4: Roueché's reading is impossible, since the supposed παντάπαν, “entirely”, does not exist (I do not understand her suggestion in the online edition, ἀμενὴ ἢ θεά [sic]). LSJ s.v. ἀπαναίνομαι cite ἀπανηνάμενος from Aesch. *Eumen.* 972, and the correct division for the first hemiepes must be πάντ' ἀπανηναμένη, “disowning”, “rejecting”. There was a hiatus at the penthemimeral caesura, as there is after ψυχῆ in the first foot of line 8, and if ΗΘΕΑ represents ἦθεα the whole line must have formed a pentameter; both of these irregularities are possible in late epigram.<sup>17</sup> “Abjuring all ways (or haunts)” [of mortals, θνητογενῶν, e.g.] would give satisfactory sense in such a context.

Line 5. At this date “Rome” is surely the new Rome on the Bosphorus. So also in the epigram of Agathias on Joanna, “the lyre-player of Rome and Pharia” (τὴν λυραιοιδὸν Ῥώμης καὶ Φαρίης), “Rome” can only be the eastern city.<sup>18</sup> On this joint reference to Constantinople and Alexandria, see below. ζυνὸν γένος is presumably in apposition with κούρη in line 7 rather than with ψυχῆ in line 1.

Line 6. πιτυ[τήν —] would give a “masculine” caesura in the fourth foot, and πιτυ[τόφρονα —] is preferable.

Line 7. The letters KP suggest a part of κρύπτειν, with some noun meaning “tomb” or “earth” as the subject. After listing κρύφω as an independent verb, LSJ later treated it as a form of κρύπτω, citing ἔκρυφεν from *Anth. Pal.* 7, 700 (= Gow–Page, *Garland of Philip*, Diodoros 9) and other texts. The form κρύφω is favored by Nonnus, in whom all the instances have the augment except for *Dionys.* 40, 122, Δηριάδην κρύφε κῶμα.

<sup>16</sup> Preserved with variants both in *Exc. de Sent.* 29 and in Suda s.v. Ἰουλιανός (I 437 Adler: *FHG* 4, 25, Eunap. fr. 26 and R. C. Blockley, *Fragments of the Classicising Historians of the Later Roman Empire* 2, 45, Eunap. fr. 28, 6).

<sup>17</sup> F. Allen, *Pap. Am. Sch. Cl. Stud. Athens* 4 (1885–1886) 42–43 (irregularly placed pentameters), 107 (hiatus: “most frequent in the masculine caesura of the third foot of the hexameter”): Allen's study covers only the centuries BCE.

<sup>18</sup> *Anth. Pal.* 7, 612; thus G. W. Bowersock, in *Transformations of Late Antiquity: Essays for Peter Brown* (2009) 44.

Line 8. ΑΘΑΝΤΟΙΣΙΝ the stone, where alpha has been omitted before tau by syncope.<sup>19</sup> At the end of the line, the letters OY suggest some form of οὐρανός followed by a finite verb, for instance οὐ[ρανὸν ἦκει]. The contrast between heaven, air, or ether as the soul's destination and its previous abode on earth occurs from the classical period onwards.

Line 9. The expression ἔδομένη (αἰδομένη) φορέειν, “ashamed to wear”, makes it almost certain that the following βρότεον qualifies δέμας. Porphyry famously begins his *Life of Plotinus* with the words, Πλωτίνος ὁ καθ' ἡμᾶς γεγωνὸς φιλόσοφος ἐφκει μὲν αἰσχυνομένῳ ὅτι ἐν σώματι εἴη. The contrast between heaven and the earthly body recurs in the epitaph for the philosopher from Antioch, με[τοικήσαντα e.g.] εἰς [ο]ὐρανὸν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, ... τὸν π[ή]λινον[ν] χιτῶνα ἐνταυθοῖ περι[δύσαντα e.g.].

Roueché has given an excellent account of the philosophical activity of Late Antique Aphrodisias, and both Severus of Antioch in his *Life of Zacharias* and Damascius in his *Philosophical History* illustrate the close relations between Aphrodisias and Alexandria, especially as represented by the wealthy Asclepiodotus, whose daughter married a younger Asclepiodotus from Alexandria.<sup>20</sup> But Constantinople was another center of Neoplatonism, where several of the philosophers described by Damascius taught, so that a woman philosopher at Aphrodisias could well have both Alexandrian and Constantinopolitan ancestors.<sup>21</sup>

I propose the following text and translation:

- Ψυχὴ σῶμα λιποῦσα τὸ [πήλινον e.g. ---]  
 εὐλύτος ἐς μακάρων ἱερὸν γένος [---]  
 ὀκτωκαιδεκάτῳ τετρατο[ν ---]  
 4 πάντ' ἀπανηναμένη ἦθεα [---]  
 Ῥώμης καὶ Φαρίης ξυὸν γένο[ς ---]  
 καλήν, μιλιχίην, ἐρατήν, πινυ[τόφρονα, --]  
 ἔρμα σαοφροσύνης, κούρην κρ[ύφην οὗτος ὁ τύμβος· e.g.]  
 8 ψυχὴ ἀθαν(ά)τοισιν ὁμέστιος οὐ[ρανὸν ἦκει, e.g.]  
 ἔδομένη φορέειν βρότεον *vacat* [δέμας ---]

“The soul (of ---?), leaving her (earthly?) body, (went?) easily released to the holy race of the gods ... eighteenth (year), fourth (month) ... renouncing all ways (of mortals?). The joint stock of Rome and Pharia [Alexandria], a maiden beautiful, mild, lovely, wise-minded, --, a pillar of prudence, (this tomb) has (hidden?). Her soul (has gone) to heaven to consort with the immortals, ashamed to wear a mortal (body ...).

<sup>19</sup> F. T. Gignac, *Grammar of the Greek Papyri* 1 (1976) 306.

<sup>20</sup> *Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity* 85–93; P. Athanassiadi-Fowden, ed., *Damascius: The Philosophical History* (1999) fragments 80–81 and Index s.v. Asclepiodotus.

<sup>21</sup> Athanassiadi-Fowden, *Damascius* fragments 45B (Hierocles), 77 D (Pamprepius), 78 E (Ammonius), 107, 127 A (Agapius, an Alexandrian by birth who studied at Athens and then founded a school at Constantinople), 120 A (Horapollon). On the philosophical links of Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity, G. W. Bowersock, in *Ἀρχαιολογία* 14 (2006) 169–182. Note also Attikia, a woman of great piety who had lived in Athens but was buried “with her Carian ancestors” (Καρσὶ παρὰ προγόνοισι: *SEG* 58, 229).



## Özet

Makalede, önceden farklı bilim adamları tarafından yayınlanmış olan 2 Aphrodisias yazıtı yeniden incelenmekte ve farklı bir şekilde yorumlanmaktadır. Yazıtlardan biri bir *graffito* olup, burada Chrysomallos adındaki bir pantomim sanatçısının sahnede gösterdiği üstün performansla *mermeri bile erittiği* belirtilmektedir. Makalede yeniden incelenen ikinci buluntu ise, 18 yaşında ölen bir kadın için yazılmış bir mezar şiiri olup, Neoplatonizm'e (Yeni Platonculuk) özgü düşünceler içermektedir.

Harvard University

Christopher P. Jones



Plate 1. Acclamation for a Pantomime



Plate 2. Epitaph for a Young Woman