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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 2008.1 Their text is as follows:

\[
\alphaὔξι \ Οὐρανία \ η \ μεγάλη \\
\tauύχη \ τοῦ \ δούλου \ σου
\]
\[
\alphaὔξι \ ό \ Χρυσόμαλλος \\
\ο \ πήξες \ το \ μάρμαρον.
\]

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 σου Νικηφόρῳ are visible.2

Line 2. Expressions such as “slave of the god/goddess” (δοῦλος θεοῦ/θεᾶς) appear to have entered the Greek world from eastern cults such as that of the dea Syria.3 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 voluptas, / Romani decus et dolor theatri, / atque omnes Veneres Cupidinesque / hoc sunt condita, quo Paris, sepulchro.4 A metrical inscription from Heracleia Pontica commemorates a pantomime named Crispos (“Curly”): in his grave is laid “form that confers beauty” (τὸ κάλλος ἱσφέρουσα μορφή), he is the “golden flower” (ἀνθὸς χρύσεον) of the world’s theaters, and death has extinguished his “glowing grace” (λαμπομένην τὴν χάριν). So also the pantomime Sphy-

1 Roueché, Performers and Partisans at Aphrodisias (1993) 42–43 no. 12 = Inscriptions of Aphrodisias 2007, 2.2 (I have corrected her πηξες 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.

2 Performers and Partisans no. 2.


4 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). 5 “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. 6 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 (orchéstris) called Chrysomallos under Justinian. 7 In the same reign, Paulus Silentiarius 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:

Σιγᾷς, Χρυσεόμαλλε, τὸ χάλκεον, οὐκέτι δ’ ἕμιν εἰκόνας ἐρχετόνων ἐκτελέσεις μερόσων νεώμασιν ὀφθόγγοις τε δ’, ἀλβοῦτε, σιωπῆ νῦν στυγερή τελέθει, τῇ πρὶν ἐθελγομέθα.

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

Line 4. Roueché comments: “If my reading [of πήγας] 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 πήγας does have among its various meanings “to assemble”, “put together” of ploughs, tents, and so on, 10 it seems oddly applied to “fixing” a broken slab of

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

8 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).

9 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, nata manibusque loquax.

10 Stephanus-Dindorf s.v., “compiungendo struo et fabricor”; LSJ 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 πήξας 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 τήξας, “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.11 That is, Chrysomallos’ 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” (συνπάσχον κείνων <οἶσ>περ κενετὸ προσώπως).12 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 Marpessia cautes; ancient commentators note that Mount Marpessos on Paros was famous as a source of marble.13 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:

Μαχλὰς ἐγὼ γενόμην Βυζαντίδος ἐνδοθὶ Ρώμης
οἰνητὴν φιλίν πᾶσι χαριζομένη
εἰμὶ δὲ Καλλιρώπη πολυδαίδαλος, ἢν ὑπ’ ἔρωτος
οἰστηθεῖς Θωμᾶς τῇδ’ ἐθέτο γραφίδι
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.”


13 Aen. 6, 471; O. Rubensohn, RE 18 (1949) 1790.
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:14

ψυχή σῶμα λιποῦσα ΤΟ[—]  καὶ αὐτήν ἐκ ἡμῶν ἐνυπάρχοντα ἀληθοῦς
εὐλυτὸς ἐς μακάρων εἰρήν ΣΕ[—] ἐκ ταὐτοκαὶ δεκάτῳ τετρατο[—]

4 παντόπαν ἦν ἀμενή Θεά[—] ἡ Ρώμης καὶ Φαρίῆς
εὐλυτός ἐς μακάρων ΠΕ[—] καὶ Φαρίῆς, μιλιχήν, ἑρατήν, πινυτήν —

ἐν ἀμενή σωφροσύνης κούρην ΚΡ[—]
ροκ[—]

8 ψυχὴ ἡθανατῶσὺν ὀμέστιος ΩΥ[—] ἕρμα σαοφροσύνης
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 Φαρίῆς (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. ἔρωμα σωφροσύνης (line 7) recurs in an epigram at Athens honouring the pagan philosopher Plutarchus [IG II/III 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: TO might well represent the article followed by some adjective such as γήϊνον or πήλινον: thus a funerary inscription for a citizen of Pisidian Antioch who was both a physician and a Platonist describes him thus:15

γενόμενον ἐν ἀνθρώποις ἔτη τριάκοντα καὶ ήμ[ερας — — —],
θεοῦ προοίμιον καὶ ἱερῶν ἀνέγεραν συνοδίας με[τοικήσαντα e.g.]
εἰς [ο][φ]ρονὸν ἐξ ἀνθρώπων, θάττειν ἢ ἐδεί τοὺς γ[ονέας e.g.]
καταλιπόντα, τὸν π[ή][λινον] χιτῶνα ἐνταυθοῖ περὶ[δύσαντα e.g.]

14 Ch. Roueché, Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity (1989) no. 154; second edition in online site of the same name.
The last word of the line could well have contained the name of the deceased in the genitive, for instance Ἀρτεμίδωρος or ῥης.

Line 2: εὔλυτος 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:16

At the end of the line, γένος 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 ἡ θέα [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 pent-hemimeral caesura, as there is after ψυχή in the first foot of line 8, and if θΕΑ represents θήξα the whole line must have formed a pentameter; both of these irregularities are possible in late epigram.17 “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 Bosporus. So also in the epigram of Agathias on Joanna, “the lyre-player of Rome and Pharia” (τὴν λυραοιδὸν ῥώμης καὶ Φαρίης), “Rome” can only be the eastern city.18 On this joint reference to Constantinople and Alexandria, see below. ξυνὸν γένος is presumably in apposition with κούρην in line 7 rather than with ψυχή in line 1.

Line 6. πινυ[τήν —] would give a “masculine” caesura in the fourth foot, and πινυ[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, Δημιοδήν κρύφε κύμα.

16 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).

17 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.

Line 8. ΑΘΑΝΤΟΙΣΙΝ the stone, where alpha has been omitted before tau by syncope. At the end of the line, the letters Υ suggest some form of οὐρανὸς followed by a finite verb, for instance οὐ[ρανὸν ἤκει]. 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 ἐδομένη (ἀδομένη) φορέειν, “ashamed to wear”, makes it almost certain that the following βρότεον qualifies δέμας. Porphyry famously begins his Life of Plotinus with the words, Πλοτῖνος ὁ καθ᾿ ἡμᾶς γεγονὼς φιλόσοφος ἐῴκει 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 ἤ ἀνθρώποιν, ... τὸν π[ή][λινον]  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. 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.

I propose the following text and translation:

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Ψυχή σώμα λιποῦσα τὸ [πήλινον e.g. ~~~~
εὐλυτος εξ μικάρων ierὸν γένος ~~~~
ὀκτωκαιδεκάτῳ τετρατὸν vacat ~~~~~
πάντ' ἐπανηθηκέναι ἑθεα [-~~~]
Ῥώμης καὶ Φαρίης ξυνὸν γένος ~~~~
καλὴν, μιλιχίην, ἐρατὴν, πινυ[τόφρονα, ~~~]
ψυχή ἔθανατοίσιν ομέστιος οὐ[ρανὸν ἤκει, e.g.]
듯으려워 섣은 옷을 찾아석 되었nuts. 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 …).
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21 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 (Horapollo). On the philosophical links of Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity, G. W. Bowersock, in Ἀρχαιογνωσία 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 yazısı yeniden incelenmektede ve farklı bir şekilde yorumlanmaktadır. Yazıtardan biri bir graffito olup, buralarda Chrysomallos adındaki bir pantomim sanatçısının sahnedeki gösterdiği üstün performansla mermeri bile erittiği belirtilmektedir. Makalede yeniden incelenen ikinci buluntu ise, 18 yaşında ölen bir kadın için yazılmış bir mezar şiir olup, Neoplatonism’e (Yeni Platonculuk) özgü düşünceler içermektedir.

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