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APOLLONIA: AN EARLY TESTIMONY FOR CHRISTIANITY IN ANATOLIA

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Aurelius Asclepiades was descended from a family which had once been the most distinguished in Apollonia. This was Apollonia (Mordiaem), the Apollonia ‘in Phrygia or Pisidia’ – but at Asclepiades’ time in the third century AD there was no Roman province known by either of those names. Pisidia was an administrative subregion of the province of Galatia. Asclepiades, his mother, and his sister dedicated a gravestone commemorating Asclepiades’ father Alexandros, also known as Artemon.

MAMA 4.222

Uluborlu (Apollonia), in the fortress wall. Limestone stele with pediment, in which is incised a cross within a circle. Picture: MAMA 4 Plate 48.

Αὐρ. Ἀσκληπιάδης Ἀλε- ξάνδρου τοῦ καὶ Ἀρ- τέμωνος δ’ Ὀλυμπίχου	Aurelius Asclepiades, son of Alexandros also known as Artemon, grandson of Alexandros, great-grandson of Alexandros, great-great-grandson of Alexandros, great-great-great- grandson of Olympichos,
4 καὶ Αὐρ. Κοσμία Ἀσκληπι(ά)- δου β’ Μεννέου τῷ ἰδίῳ	and Aurelia Kosmia, daughter of Asclepiades, granddaughter of Asclepiades, great-granddaughter of Menneas, (set up this memorial) to her own
ἀνδρί, καὶ Αὐρ. Ἀρτεμωνίς πατρὶ Ἀλεξάνδρω	husband, and so did Aurelia Artemonis to her father Alexandros,
8 μνήμης χάριν. (leaf)	<i>in memoriam.</i>

Asclepiades, his mother Kosmia, and his sister Artemonis were entitled to the *nomen Aurelii*. W. H. Buckler, W. M. Calder and W. K. C. Guthrie, in MAMA 4,¹ date this gravestone to the latter half of the third century, and draw attention to a connection between Asclepiades’ ancestry, as laid out in 222, and the family attested in MAMA 4.142.

MAMA 4.142 (= IGRRP 3.322)

Uluborlu (Apollonia), in the wall of the secondary school. Limestone block, cut away at top, bottom and on right; left side original. Picture: MAMA 4 Plate 34.

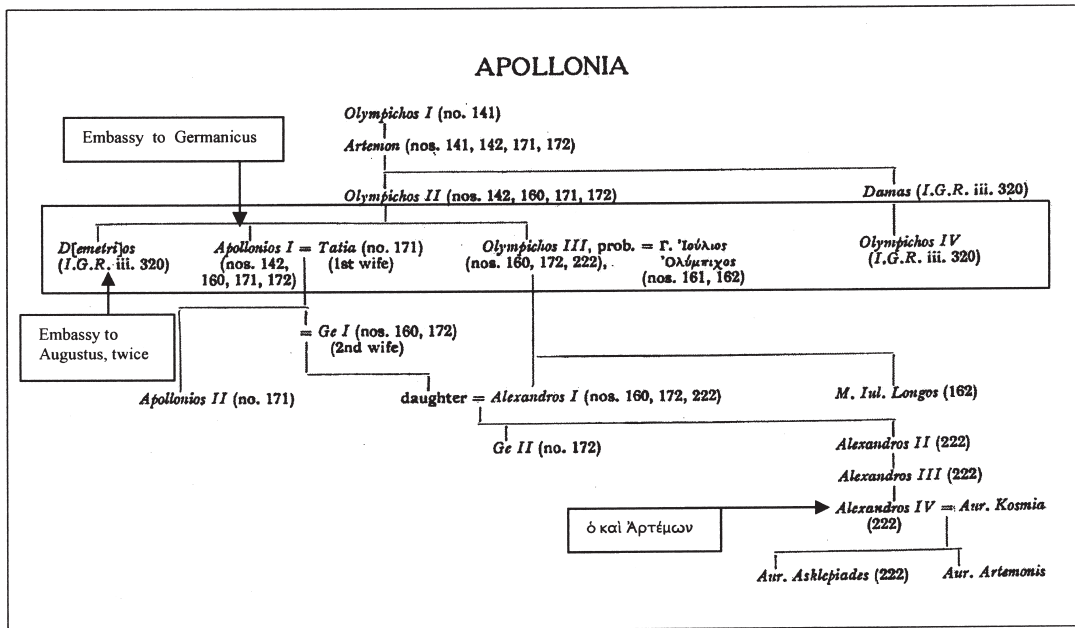
ἡ βουλὴ καὶ ὁ δῆμος ἐτείμησεν Ἀ[πολλώνι]- ον Ὀλυμπίχ[ου τοῦ Ἀρ]-	The council and the people honoured Apollonius son of Olympichos grandson of Artemon,
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* I wish to thank Dr. R. A. Kearsley, Dr. Lea Beness and Dr. Georg Petzl for discussing the matter of this article with me. They should not be assumed to agree with the arguments put forward here.

¹ W. H. Buckler, W. M. Calder and W. K. C. Guthrie, *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* vol. 4 (Manchester, 1933), p. 80.

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|---|--|
| <p>4 τέμωνος φι[λοσέβασ]-
τον καὶ φιλό[πατριν, ἄ]-
ναστήσαντ[α εἰκόνας ἐφίπ]-
πους τρεῖς ἐ[ν τῷ τεμένει]</p> <p>8 τῶν Σεβαστώ[ν, καὶ πρὸς τὴν]
πόλιν ἐκ προγ[όνων κατὰ βίον ὅ]-
λον εὐεργετικῶ[ς διακείμενον]</p> <p>καὶ πρεσβεύσαν[τα πρὸς Γερμα]-</p> <p>12 νικὸν Καίσαρα κ[αὶ γυμνασιαρ]-
χήσαντα λαμπρ[ῶς καὶ ἱερέα θε]-
ᾶς Ῥώμης γενόμε[νον καὶ ἐπι]-
δόσεις δόντα [καὶ ἐστιάσεις]</p> <p>16 πολυτελεῖς π[αρασχόμενον]
καὶ συμφερόντ[ως ἀναστρε]-
[φόμενον]</p> | <p>lover of Augustus
and lover of his fatherland,
who set up three equestrian statues
in the enclosure
of the Augusti,
and who together with his ancestors has all his
life been disposed to be a benefactor towards the
city,
who went on a diplomatic mission to Germanicus
Caesar, and who served as gymnasiarch
with distinction, and priest of the goddess
Rome, and gave voluntary contributions
and provided costly entertainments,
and who conducted himself appropriately ...</p> |
|---|--|

Buckler, Calder and Guthrie draw in data from several other inscriptions² and propose a stemma for the Olympichos family, as follows:³



I take this composite stemma to be in substance correctly constructed. In this article I will argue that the Asclepiades memorial dates from decades earlier than the ‘latter half of the third century’, to which Buckler, Calder and Guthrie assigned it, and therefore that some socially prominent

² MAMA 4.141, 160, 161, 162, 171, 172 and IGRRP 3.320 (MAMA 4, p. 48).

³ MAMA 4, p. 49. Boxes added.

people in Apollonia in the early third century were Christian, and prepared to show off their Christian allegiance in a gravestone.

In the generation recorded in the box which reaches across the stemma, members of the Olympichos family undertook civic duties including two diplomatic missions to Augustus, carried out by D[emetri]os⁴ (evidently before Augustus' death on 19 August AD 14), and a diplomatic mission to Germanicus Caesar, carried out by Apollonios. The latter mission probably took place in 18, when Germanicus was in Asia,⁵ and cannot have happened later than 19, the year of Germanicus' death.⁶ It is likely that the agenda at the meeting with Germanicus included news of the *Monumentum Apolloniense*, the Apollonia copy (in Greek only) of the *Res gestae divi Augusti*,⁷ engraved on a pedestal which had on it statues of Augustus, Tiberius, Livia, Germanicus and Drusus. This work was constructed between 14 and 19.

If it is correct to identify Olympichos III with Gaios Ioulios Olympichos, as Buckler, Calder and Guthrie did (though with the reservation implied by 'prob. ='), the brother of D[emetri]os and Apollonios, Olympichos, received the Roman citizenship scrupulously recorded in *MAMA* 4.161.⁸ He may have been a younger man, and his citizenship may have been granted as late as the reign of Tiberius or Gaius. A question arises about the circumstances in which, before the reign of Claudius, a Roman citizen might have sons one of whom was a citizen (Markos Ioulios Longos) and one of whom (Alexandros I) was not.

In *The Roman Citizenship*, A. N. Sherwin-White notes that 'there is no known institution by which the eastern gentry could acquire Roman status automatically, like the annual magistrates of Latin municipalities in the West',⁹ but records that provincials with the right sponsors might request citizenship in a written petition to the emperor. 'From the principate of Augustus onwards it was fully acceptable to both sides that the gentry of Greek cities should combine an active career in local politics with the personal acquisition of Roman citizenship.'¹⁰ An early Augustan instance of a grant of citizenship is the letter issued by Octavian as triumvir in 41 BC to Seleukos of Rhosus.¹¹ In this grant, which envisages that Seleukos is unmarried at the time of enfranchisement, citizenship is given to his parents as well as himself and his descendants. Later, in military *diplomata* issued on discharge to auxiliary soldiers from the early fifties AD to the early fourth century, soldiers receive in addition to citizenship a grant of *conubium*, that

⁴ *IGRRP* 3.320 lines 6–8.

⁵ Tacitus *Annals* 2.54: *tum extrema Asiae ... intrat* ('He then came ... to the remotest parts of Asia') – but not, apparently, Galatia, so that some travel was needed on the diplomats' part.

⁶ Tacitus *Annals* 2.69–73.

⁷ Recently reedited at John Scheid, *Res gestae divi Augusti: hauts faits du divin Auguste* (Paris, 2007), pp. ccxxiv–ccxxxiv.

⁸ *MAMA* 4.161: [ὁ δῆμος ἐτείμησεν | ?Γάϊον Ἰούλιον Ὀλυμπίχου υἱὸν | Κορ]νηλία Ὀλύμπιχον φιλο[σέβασ]το]ν. Buckler, Calder and Guthrie say that the tribe might also be '[Αἰ]μιλία or [Κα]μιλία etc.' (p. 62). Any doubt over the *tria nomina* is removed by *MAMA* 4.162: [ὁ δῆμος] ἐτείμησεν [Μάρ]κον Ἰούλιον Γα[ίου] | Ἰουλίου Ὀλυμπ[ίχου] | υἱὸν Λόνγον.

⁹ A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*² (Oxford, 1973), 310.

¹⁰ Sherwin-White, *Roman Citizenship* (as in n. 9), 311.

¹¹ S. Riccobono, *Fontes iuris Romani antejustiniani*² vol. 1 (Florence, 1940), no. 55: *illi et parentibus, filiis nepotibusque eius, et uxori eius quae cum eo posthac (erit) civitatem et immunitatem bonorum ita damus, sicuti quibus optima lege optimoque iure cives immunes sunt; et militiae et publici muneris cuiuscumque vacatio esto* ('We grant citizenship and immunity of property to him and his parents, his children and grandchildren, and to the wife who will in future be with him, on the same terms as it is held by citizens who are immune on the best legal terms and with full legal rights; and let there be exemption from any military service or public obligation').

is, the right to form a *iustum matrimonium* (a Roman civil-law marriage, from which legitimate citizen children might be born) with the first Latin or peregrine woman whom they marry after discharge,¹² or in the alternative with the woman with whom they lived during their military service (*uxores quas tunc habuissent, cum est iis civitas data*).¹³ In these cases children born during the father's military service remained non-citizens, and illegitimate except insofar as special arrangements for military wills existed allowing soldiers to make Latins and peregrines (including their own non-Roman and illegitimate children) their heirs.¹⁴ A soldier honourably discharged from the auxiliaries during or after the reign of Claudius, then, would be likely to have a mixture of (older) non-Roman and (younger) Roman children, if his wife were still of childbearing age at the time of his discharge.

It is not straightforward to determine how these data may be used to draw inferences about Gaios Ioulios Olympichos/Olympichos III, and his children Alexandros son of Olympichos and Markos Ioulios Longos. The possibility that Longos was the primary grantee and that Olympichos became a Roman together with his son, as the parents of Gaios Ioulios Seleukos did, could indeed account for Olympichos' other son being a peregrine – but seems to draw a long bow, especially in view of Longos' Latin-derived *cognomen*, which seems better suited to someone who was born a citizen, a child of a father who was known for being *philosebastos*, and for his religious sentiment (*eusebeia*) towards the imperial family.¹⁵ A second possibility, which I think more likely, is that Olympichos was granted citizenship, and *conubium* (whether with his existing wife or, if he was unmarried at the time of the grant, with the next Latin or peregrine woman he married), and that as a result Longos was born a citizen, but that Olympichos' grant did not enfranchise his existing child[ren], in particular Alexandros.

A third scenario would be one in which Longos was the older child, the son of the wife who was enfranchised with Olympichos, or with whom he formed a *iustum matrimonium* after he got his citizenship – but that she then died, or there was a divorce, and Olympichos had no *conubium* with the lady whom he married afterwards (since there were not many Roman citizens in Apollonia), with the result that her and his son, Alexandros, did not inherit his father's Roman citizenship. Alexandros son of Olympichos was the great-grandfather of Asclepiades' father, Alexandros also known as Artemon. He was born probably but not certainly before 41 (because his father was named Gaios Ioulios, instead of which after 41 he would have been named Tiberios Klaudios).¹⁶

If the mean length of a generation (birth of father to birth of son) were forty years, one might infer that Alexandros II was born before approximately 81, Alexandros III before approximately 121, Alexandros IV Artemon before approximately 161. He might then have been fifty-three

¹² Since no special grant was needed to enable a discharged auxiliary soldier, who was a Roman citizen, to marry a woman who was already a Roman citizen.

¹³ Sara Elise Phang, *The Marriage of Roman Soldiers (13 BC – AD 235): Law and Family in the Imperial Army* (Leiden, 2001), 59.

¹⁴ Gaius *Institutes* 2.110. Phang (*Marriage of Roman Soldiers* [as in n. 13], 217) argues that the military will may have been instituted by Augustus.

¹⁵ *MAMA* 161 lines 1–3.

¹⁶ The possibility that he may have been born after 41 and as the younger brother of Markos Ioulios Longos is not strong, in view of Alexandros' having married his cousin Ge, daughter of his uncle Apollonios, who had served as ambassador to Germanicus – she was probably younger than Alexandros rather than older. Three generations later, the date of death of Alexandros a.k.a. Artemon may be inferred, though not with precision, from generation-length. The calculations which follow are approximate.

years old or more in 214, with the result that his wife and son, enfranchised by the *Constitutio Antoniniana*, would use the *nomen Aurelii* on his gravestone in whichever year (214 or later) he died. But a forty-year generation is unrealistically long.¹⁷ On the more realistic basis of a thirty-five year generation, one might surmise that with Alexandros I born in or before 41, the sequence might proceed approximately as follows: Alexandros II born in or before 76, Alexandros III in or before 111, Alexandros IV Artemon in or before 146. On the basis of this calculation Alexandros IV Artemon would have been approximately sixty-eight years old when the *Constitutio Antoniniana* was legislated.

All this shows that the Aurelius Asclepiades stone, with a cross incised in the pediment, cannot date to the second half of the third century – unless, for instance, the dedicators somehow missed a generation. But these people were as proud of their family as Sir Walter Elliot,¹⁸ and their place in the world derived from pedigree as well as wealth. To assume that they forgot an ancestor would be hazardous. A more plausible speculation, and one not liable to disproof, would be that the cross was added to the pediment at a later date for a now-unfathomable reason.¹⁹

Both these stratagems operate, however, on the assumption that it is desirable to explain the Asclepiades stone *away*, rather than to try to understand it in the context of the early third century. I propose that it is possible and desirable to understand the inscription without explaining it away.²⁰ I conclude, while admitting that this conclusion is based on a balance of probabilities and not on proof beyond reasonable doubt, that the earlier *MAMA* 4.222 is dated, after 214, the better.

A striking and informative parallel to the Asclepiades stone is the Alexandros son of Antonios grave-altar, dated 215/6, from Hierapolis in Phrygia – a place not too distant, in comparison with the distances of which the Roman empire was composed, from Apollonia: about fifty kilometres

¹⁷ Mean intergenerational intervals of as little as twenty or twenty-five years have been posited in some human population-genetics studies. If Alexandros I were born in 41, with a mean generation-length of twenty-five years, Alexandros II would have been born about 66, Alexandros III about 91, Alexandros IV Artemon about 116: he would then have had to live to be about ninety-eight in order to see the *Constitutio Antoniniana* come in. Marc Tremblay and H el ene V ezina, however, not satisfied that twenty or twenty-five years was the correct interval, concluded in 2000 that the mean value which should be used for intergenerational time-intervals in studies focusing on Y-chromosome loci (i.e. studies of father-son intergenerational time intervals) is thirty-five years. Their study was based on the ascending genealogies of one hundred randomly chosen individuals (fifty couples) married in the Saguenay region of Quebec between 1900 and 1974, whose records were accessed through the BALSAC population register (Marc Tremblay and H el ene V ezina, *New Estimates of Intergenerational Time-Intervals for the Calculation of Age and Origins of Mutations*, *American Journal of Human Genetics* 66 [2000], 651–8). It is hard to say how different conditions in the upper class of ancient Apollonia would have affected generation-length, or in which direction.

¹⁸ ‘Sir Walter Elliot, of Kellynch-hall, in Somersetshire, was a man who, for his own amusement, never took up any book but the *Baronetage*’, Jane Austen, *Persuasion*.

¹⁹ *MAMA* 4.222 does not feature in Gary J. Johnson, *Early-Christian Epitaphs from Anatolia* (Atlanta, 1995). No explanation is offered for the inscription’s exclusion, but its wording makes no reference to Christianity, which may have been the decisive point. It may also or alternatively have been assumed that the cross in the pediment was a later addition.

²⁰ In the calculations which suggest that Alexandros IV Artemon might have been sixty-eight in 214, I have placed the birth of Alexandros I at the latest plausible date, even though it remains possible that his father Olympichos III gained his Roman citizenship nearer in time to the decade when his brothers were active as diplomats. The implication of this approach is that while it is possible that Alexandros IV Artemon was older than sixty-eight in 214 – up to a couple of decades older – it is not likely that he was much younger, unless one of the first three Alexandroi had a life of the kind which would upset calculations from mean values (having married at sixty instead of thirty, or something).

as the crow flies, more like seventy to someone who used the road through Apamea (Kelainai).²¹ The Alexandros son of Antonios grave-altar is informative as well as striking because the verse-inscription carved on it echoes the precedent which led to its creation – the Aberkios gravestone, earliest known openly Christian epitaph, dating from before 200.²² I suggest that when Aurelius Asclepiades son of Alexandros, Kosmia and Artemonis had a gravestone made for Asclepiades' father Alexandros also known as Artemon (soon after 214), instead of using text to communicate the family's Christian commitment, they had a cross added in the pediment of the stone.

Özet

Makalede, alınlığında bir haç motifi yer alan ve *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua* (MAMA) adlı eserin IV. cildinde 222 no. ile yayınlanmış olan bir mezar yazıtı yeniden ele alınmakta ve Apollonia'da bulunmuş olan ilgili yazıtlar ışığında bu yazıtın MAMA IV yazarlarının düşündüğünden daha erken bir tarihe ait olduğu ileri sürülmektedir. MAMA IV yazarları bu yazıtı İ.S. 3. yüzyılın ikinci yarısına tarihlenmişlerdi; oysa bu makalede, mezarda yatan kişinin bazı akrabalarının bu tarihten dört nesil önce Apollonia kenti adına İ.S. 14 yılında ölen İmparator Augustus'a ve İ.S. 19 yılında ölen Germanicus Caesar'a elçi olarak gittiklerine ilişkin bulgular sıralanmaktadır. Buna göre MAMA IV, 222'de yayınlanmış olan bu yazıtın İ.S. 3. yüzyılın başlarına (ama 214'den sonraya) tarihlenmesi gerektiği sonucuna varılmaktadır.

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²¹ See W. M. Ramsay, *Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia* 1.2 p. 720, no. 656; Johnson, *Early-Christian Epitaphs from Anatolia* (as in n. 19), 2.13; R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* 3 (Munich and Leipzig, 2001), no. 16/07/02.

²² Johnson, *Early-Christian Epitaphs from Anatolia*, 2.15; R. A. Kearsley, The Epitaph of Aberkios: the Earliest Christian Inscription?, *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* 6 (1992), 177–81; R. Merkelbach and J. Stauber, *Steinepigramme aus dem griechischen Osten* 3 (Munich and Leipzig, 2001), no. 16/07/01.