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A block discovered in 2002 is inscribed with two epigrams (henceforth epigrams A and B). It was uncovered during the cleaning of the mid-fourth-century AD City Wall, reused right side up and face out in the outer face of a bastion in the northwestern stretch of the wall. After recording it was reburied. The outer face of the block (H. 1.80 m; W. 0.47 m; D. 0.30 m; lett. 0.022–0.035) is framed within a drafted border. Cuttings for pi-clamps on each side of the upper surface indicate that in the block’s original context further blocks were attached to its right and left.

The block is inscribed with two epigrams (A; B). Only the left hand portion of each text is preserved, and presumably it continued onto the adjacent block to the right. This is also suggested by the prosody: the preserved text consists of verse-beginnings. If the blocks of the monument were symmetrical, and if the texts were placed centrally in the front face, the monument would have been at least 1.5 m wide, and possibly wider. The block was probably a central element of a wide statue base for the honorand, probably a governor, together with members of his family.

Date: The letter-forms suggest a date in the second half of the third century AD. As a t.p.q., the date is supported by the practice of using verse for a honorific inscription and by the elaborate wording of the epigrams. The lettering is consistent, neat, and fully in the tradition of Aphrodisian letter-cutters of the Middle-Empire, and of the style used in Aphrodisian honorific inscriptions of the second half of the third century. Cf. Θ with a detached crossbar; Σ of the pre mid-fourth-century type, i.e. pre-lunate/pre-square form, Η with a detached crossbar of the second to third-century type, all of these corresponding to those of e.g. ALA 6. Noticeable also are dots to the sides of the iotas (see line B 1).

1 The authors express their gratitude to Angelos Chaniotis, Christopher Hallett, and R. R. R. Smith for support and comments. The authors are also very much indebted to Georg Petzl who has supplied a number of corrections and suggestions. The abbreviations follow SEG; we have frequently referred to the following works:

ALA = Roueché, Ch., Aphrodisias in Late Antiquity. The Late Roman and Byzantine Inscriptions Including Texts from the Excavations at Aphrodisias Conducted by Kenan T. Erim, London 1989.


3 Cf. ALA 4–6.
Text

The edition of the text is based on the complete photo and the transcription made by Angelos Chaniotis.

Epigram A

1 [ ]
2 [ca. 2]ΕΟ[ ]
3 [Π][ωλλιών]φορέει [ca. 5 ]Ο[ ]ΕΦ[ ]
4 [2?]ΓΕΝΕ[ ]
5 [α][ύ][τος δ' εμ μέσσοις [ ]
6 καὶ τῇ μὲν φορέει ΣΤ[ ]
7 εὐφροσύνης λήθης [ ]
8 ζόικε μὲν γάρ ἐνήρ[ ]
9 καὶ φθίμενος λήθην [ ]

vacat

Epigram B

1 Πωλλίωνος τόδε [− − − − − − − x ]
2 δέρκεο δ' εἰκόνε vac. [− − − − − − − x ]
3 λαίνειον θηρίων [− or − − − − − − x ]
4 δεξιτερῇ στέφος [− or − − − − − − − x ]
5 ἐσθλὰ σαφροσύνης [− − − − − − − x ]
6 πάντα δ' ἑκὼν πα [− − − − − − − x ]
7 ἱθύδικος καὶ πᾶσι [− or (or vice versa) − − − − − − − x ]
8 σὺν πάσῃ γενε[− or − − − − − − − x ]
9 οὔτε φίλων παίδ[− or − − − − − − − x ]

vacat

Commentary

The meter of the epigrams:
The meter of epigram A is uncertain: it is probably in hexameters, possibly in elegiac disticha; in the latter case plus at least one additional verse. Epigram B is most likely composed in hexameters.

Epigram A

II. 1–2: We are not certain whether one or two lines are missing. It is possible that both poems were the same length, i.e. nine verses. If this is the case, identical metrical structure of the epigrams A and B is somewhat likelier.

I. 3: Metrical anomalies often occur within personal names,[4] in particular with Roman names such as Pollio. However, this does not have to be the case here, since in an epigram from 3rd c. AD Tralleis, the same personal name is mentioned in a nominative (SGO 1, 203, no. 02/02/03): Εὐβούλου Πωλλίων θερωξιμαι ἔσται δὲ πάτῃ / Νῦσα μοι εὐκλειής and Merkelbach and Stauber explain the metrical structure by stating: “Das -i gilt als konsonantisch.” Naming the honorand only in I. 3 (or perhaps even I. 4) is a rather eccentric feature (cf. B I. 1). Conceivably, some kind of a prose honorific text or a general statement in meter may have introduced the epigrams, possibly on an upper block of the base, and consequently A I. 3 could be the first line of the epigram which would then consist of seven verses.

I. 4: E.g. some form of εὐγενήτης or of εὐγενής or of γενε[ή]. It seems that either Pollion himself, his father, or, most likely, his children are praised (cf. A I. 5 and B I. 9). The position of the compound at the beginning of a verse is attested.[5]

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[5] Cf. IG XII 8, 442, 5–6: δέομορος, ὁ [δ][δ][ό][σ][ο][ς] μὲν ἐλάττειν πάθας ἐν οἴκοις / εὐγενήτας, ἄγαθὴν ἄρσενα συνζυγίην; SEG 39:972; SGO 1, 107, no. 01/19/35:7; also a honorary epigram, Didyma, late imperial period.
1. 5: ἐμένος: An exact parallel for ἐμένος is provided by A. Pl. 11.316.5, in the same position in the verse. The formulation is reminiscent of the Athenian hymn to Demetrios Poliorcetes. The verse must contain some form of ἱστημι; cf. e.g. SGO 1, 242, no. 02/09/17, v. 3–4 (= ALA 31): τῇ δ’ Ὀικουμένιον τὸν ἄοιδμον ἤγεμων ἱ/ στήσα μὴ ἄλλη τῶν Ἀφροδισιατῶν.

1. 6: One should restore στι[έφος] or στι[έφων]. τῇ is probably to be construed with [χειρ] in line six. Perhaps we can supplement the beginning of the colon: καὶ τῇ μὲν φορέει στι[έφος] ... τῇ δέ]. It is tempting to imagine the statue holding a wreath in one hand, and a book in the other,9 representing his oμοφροσύνη or excellence in jurisprudence. τῇ μὲν φορέει στι[έφων] might also allude to the honorific crown Pollion had received, or to the office of the stephanephoros which he may have occupied.

1. 7: εὐφροσύνης λήθης. See below on A 1. 9. The idea expressed in this verse might be that it was Pollion’s good cheer and hospitality which will secure him a long-lasting remembrance, i.e. prevent Lethe from overcoming him: because of his εὐφροσύνη, Pollion will not end up in the harbour of λήθη,11 or will never drink her water. If we are right in assuming that Pollion was a governor (see below on B 1. 7, ιοθόδικος), the mention of his εὐφροσύνη would not be misplaced or odd in praise of a governor in Aphrodisias: we know of another governor who was praised precisely for this virtue (4th c. AD, ALA 32 = SGO 1, 231, no. 02/09/02, with corrections):

εἰςόνα λαϊνέν μὲν Ἀλεξάνδρου δικαίου

ἡ Φουσίης μήτηρ μετέρ τῇ Καρίης

τῆς ζωθῆς ὃχης τέμαυρ ἐμβρυοτον ἐνθάδ’ ἐπεμφάνι

πάς δὲ λόγοι μείουν τάνδρος ἐνεφροσύνης.13

1. 8: The form ζώς is attested in Homer (cf. e.g. Od. 2.132; 4.110 etc.). For a parallel in epigrams, cf. A.Pl. 7.673.1. Both epigrams A and B express the same idea: the deceased lives on in the memory of his contemporaries and the following generations. In fine, ἄνηγ̣ρ [ἠγαθὸς ?]. See A.Pl. 7.61.4 for the phrase in a similar context.

1. 9: καὶ φθίμενος λήθης. The sense of this verse seems clear: even though Pollion has died, he will not be forgotten. For a parallel from Aphrodisias, see ALA 85 (= SGO 1, 245, no. 02/09/23). Another possibility worth considering is that the verse stated that Pollion will not drink of Lethe’s water (see above, A 1. 7 and SGO 5, 340, s.v. Lethe).

Epigram B

1. 1: On the metrical structure of Πωλλίωνος, see above on A 1. 3. Perhaps μνῆμα should be restored, if both the monument and the epigram are meant. If that is so, an elegant antithesis between the last words of the epigram A (λήθη) and the first words of the epigram B (μνῆμα) results.

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7 Athen. VI 253d, ed. Kaibel, v. 10: ἐν μέσον δ’ αὐτός.
8 For a honorand holding a wreath in his hand cf. e.g. Rumscheid, J., Kranz und Krone. Zu Insignien, Siegespreisen und Ehrenzeichen der römischen Kaiserzeit, Tübingen 2000, on a lamp: 173, no. 125, pl. no. 54/1 (3rd c. AD); on sarcophagus: 176, no. 129, pl. no. 54/2 (2nd half 3rd c. AD); on a sarcophagus: 186, no. 152, pl. no. 59/2 (3rd/4th c. AD, Italy?).
11 For this idea in an epigram from 1st c. BC Cyzicus cf. SGO 2, 45, no. 08/01/33.2.
12 Cf. e.g. SGO 1, 10, no. 01/01/07.11; SGO 1, 148, no. 01/20/27.10; SGO 1, 644, no. 07/08/02.16.
13 Cf. Charlotte Roueché’s commentary, ALA 2004, on 32.4: “[Alexander] is also praised for his good cheer; although this might seem a surprising attribute for an imperial official, it recurs in an epigram at Ephesus in praise of a proconsul of Asia, Stephanus. As well as the general sense of delight, εὐφροσύνη has a specific sense of banquet and the joy of a festive occasion, a meaning which continues into the late empire. This suggests that the εὐφροσύνη of Stephanus and Alexander was manifested in their generous and hospitable entertainment, which must have formed an important part of a governor’s duties.”
1. 2: We are inclined to read the dual form here, ἐικόνε (acc.). We imagine the statue of Pollion placed on the base, perhaps surrounded by two other statues or groups of statues (ἐικόνε). In the vicinity of this base, possibly to either side, there should have been two further statues or groups showing his father and son or ancestors and children. This would explain the formulation (A l. 5) [αὖτος δ׳ ἐμ μέσας, as well as B l. 8–9 (see below). δέρκεο at the beginning of a hexameter is frequent.14

1. 3: λαῖνεν θηρίτον: σῆμα would be attractive, if μήμα in B l. 1 is incorrect; the presence of both in a single monument is possible, but unlikely. ἄγαλμα (marble statue) and ὀνόμα (bronze statue) are conceivable. For λαῖνεν describing statues, see AP 9.593.3, 16.58.1, and 16.245.2. For parallels from Aphrodisias see the above-mentioned epigram for the governor Alexandros (ALA 32 = SGO 1, 231, no. 02/09/02) and the epigram for governor Eupeithios (ALA 33 = SGO 1, 239, no. 02/09/11.2: λαῖνεν ἐικόνα).

1. 4: δεξίερ αὐτός: description of a statue’s form is a common ekphrastic element in late epigrams. For δεξίερ cf. AR 2.1.9–10; 2.1.86–87; 16.105.4.

1. 5: ἐσθλὰ ἀρχὴν [ἐγχω]: The mention of the “deeds of wisdom” probably serves to explain the deixis of the object held with the left hand (book ?). The attribute ιθύδικος in B l. 7 probably picks up on ἐσθλὰ ἀρχὴν [ἐγχω ...

1. 6: πάντα δ’ ἐκὼν παῖ: a supplement πάτη) or πατίδιδι) is possible. The fact that Pollion willingly undertook public offices is stressed here. The formulation reflects the language of honorific texts; cf. e.g. SEG 29.1087: ἀνέδεξετο ἐκοινωνίον τὴν αὐτὴν πάλαι λείτουργίαν δαςάνης δε ωδεμάς λόγον ποιομένου (Telmessos, 2nd c. BC).15

1. 7: ἱθύδικος: The attribute “righteous” implies that Pollion was a magistrate with judicial competence. ἱθύδικος is often used in late epigrams to describe governors;16 cf. ιθυδίκης in a further Aphrodisian epigram for a governor: ALA 63.2 (= SGO 1, 243, no. 02/09/18.2).17 In the mid-third century, if Pollion were based at Aphrodisias, he would have been a governor of Caria-Phrygia; the province of Caria is founded only during the reign of Diocletian. If shown with his family (see on B l. 8), Pollion is probably a governor of Caria who are also Aphrodisians, though there is no explicit record of men from Aphrodisias who served as governor elsewhere.

1. 8: σὺν παῖ την γενεῖ: A reference to Pollion’s descendants, perhaps represented in a statutory group, as implied in A l. 6.

1. 9: οὖτε φιλόν παίδιον: If we are dealing with a statutory group, as we are inclined to believe, then this group might have consisted of Pollion’s father or parents (γενεῖ) and his son or offspring (παιδίον).18 Such generational representations in local portrait statuary are known at Aphrodisias from the first to fifth centuries AD.19

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14 Cf. e.g. GVI 1253.2; GVI 1254.1–2 (δέρκεο ... εἰκόνα); SGO 1, 310, no. 03/02/22; SGO 2, 79, no. 08/04/04 (δέρκεο πάντος); SGO 4, 465, no. 23/09 = no. 06/02/35 (δέρκεο ... τριδι ... ἔργα).


16 Cf. GVI 1253.2; GVI 1254.1–2 (δέρκεο ... εἰκόνα); SGO 1, 310, no. 03/02/22; SGO 2, 79, no. 08/04/04 (δέρκεο πάντος); SGO 4, 465, no. 23/09 = no. 06/02/35 (δέρκεο ... τριδι ... ἔργα). On this see Lewis, N., The Metropolitan Gymnasiarchy, Heritable and Salable. A Reexamination of CPR VII 4, ZPE 51, 1983, 85–91, esp. 85; Quass, F., Die Honoratiorenschicht in den Städten des griechischen Ostens: Untersuchungen zur politischen und sozialen Entwicklung in hellenistischer und römischer Zeit, Stuttgart 1993, 344 and Kleijwegt, M., ‘Voluntarily, but under Pressure’. Voluntariness and Constraint in Greek Municipal Politics, Mnemosyne 47, 1994, 64–78. For further parallels see Robert, L., OMS 1, 288 n. 2 (especially I. Magnesia 163, 15–17: πάσαν τε λείτουργίαν καὶ ἀρχήν ἀπὸ πρωτῆς ἡμᾶς τελέσαν τῇ πατρῷῳ αὐθαιρετώ).
General remarks
The honorand, Pollion (cf. A l. 3; B l. 1), is not known from the extant Aphrodisian material. The fragmentary condition of the stone allows no further inferences regarding prosopographical information. The attributes, however, strongly imply that he held a high magistracy (stephanephorate is possible, cf. commentary, A l. 6), but it is more likely, judging from the type of the base, from his Roman name, and his judicial authority, that Pollion was a governor, since representation of this type (governor surrounded by his children) is attested in Aphrodisias, and that he was a member of an illustrious family belonging to the ruling elite. Since Pollion was shown holding a wreath in his right hand, and his hospitality (A l. 7: εὐφροσύνη), his achievements for the community (B l. 5: ἐσθλὰ θαυμασμα [ἐργα ?]), as well as his good services in jurisdiction (B l. 7 ιθύδικος) were all praised, we are dealing with two posthumous (A l. 9 καὶ φθίμενος λήθην) honorific epigrams.

The language of the epigrams is lofty in style, aware of “classical” prosody (cf. ιθύδικος and λαϊνεος), and has clear literary pretensions (cf. the use of Homerisms φορέει in A l. 6; δέρκεο in B l. 2; λαϊνεον θηητόν in B l. 3; αοφυσυσνη in B l. 5). It is especially interesting that two epigrams were incised, apparently referring to the same person and on the same monument. The reason for this may have been the wish to praise two different aspects of Pollion’s personality (and perhaps of the monument; cf. B l. 2 εἰκόνε). This kind of epigrammatic habit (a variation on a theme in inscribed epigrams) is attested in the 4th and 3rd c. BC and experiences a revival from the 3rd c. AD onwards.20

The use of epigrams or verses in general is common in Aphrodisian funerary inscriptions in all periods, but from the later 3rd century “honours for imperial officers and civic benefactors are expressed in verse at least as often as in prose”.21 The practice of setting up a pair of posthumous honorific epigrams for a citizen whose achievements for the polis are praised is attested in Aphrodisias also in the 5th c. AD.22

Translation
Epigram A
[---] (of ?) Pollion [---] these (?) [---] and he in their (?) midst [---] whereas in his hand he is holding the wreath (?) [---] good cheer, of the Oblivion [---] because a (noble?) man lives […] and even after his death Oblivion (does not overcome him?)

Epigram B
This is a statue (?) of Pollion [...], Look at these (two flanking / groups of ?) images [passer-by?, ...], behold (?) the conspicuous agalma (?) made of stone [...]. His right hand holds a wreath (?) [...] noble deeds of wisdom [...] all for his fatherland (?) readily [...] righteous and towards all (citizens ?) [...] with all (his) descendants [...] neither did his beloved children ...

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21 ALA xxi.

22 Cf. the pair for Dulcitius (ALA 39 and 40); the pair for Asklepiodotos, SGO 1, 234, no. 02/09/05; see also SGO 1, 250, no. 02/09/28; SGO 3, 140–141, no. 15/02/07 (note ἄλλως in a line separating the poems).