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'In the Bosoms of Abraham': A Christian Epitaph from Nubia in the Brooklyn Museum

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### Author

Zellmann-Rohrer, Michael

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# *article/* 'In the Bosoms of Abraham': A Christian Epitaph from Nubia in the Brooklyn Museum

*author/* Michael Zellmann-Rohrer, Freie Universität, Berlin

*in issues/* Miscellanea

*abstract/* First edition of a Christian epitaph in Greek of a woman, Timothea, brought by Henry J. Anderson to the United States in 1848 and now in the Brooklyn Museum. Analysis of the form and text of the monument allows its epigraphic context to be reconstructed, as part of a dispersed funerary assemblage of northern Nubia, including a distinctive textual formula wishing the deceased repose in the “bosoms of Abraham.”

*keywords/* Christian Nubia, epigraphy, epitaph, Greek, Brooklyn Museum, Henry J. Anderson, Abraham, Timothea

## 1. Introduction: From Nubia to Brooklyn <sup>1</sup>

Among the hundreds of artifacts collected by Dr. Henry J. Anderson (1799–1875) on his travels in the eastern Mediterranean in 1847 is a small sandstone grave stele (fig. 1), now in the Brooklyn Museum (37.1827E). The rectangular stone (18.5 cm high × 15 cm wide × 8 cm deep) is inscribed with nine lines of Greek, once rubricated, on a smoothed face, chipped at lower right. The text gives the epitaph of a woman, Timothea.

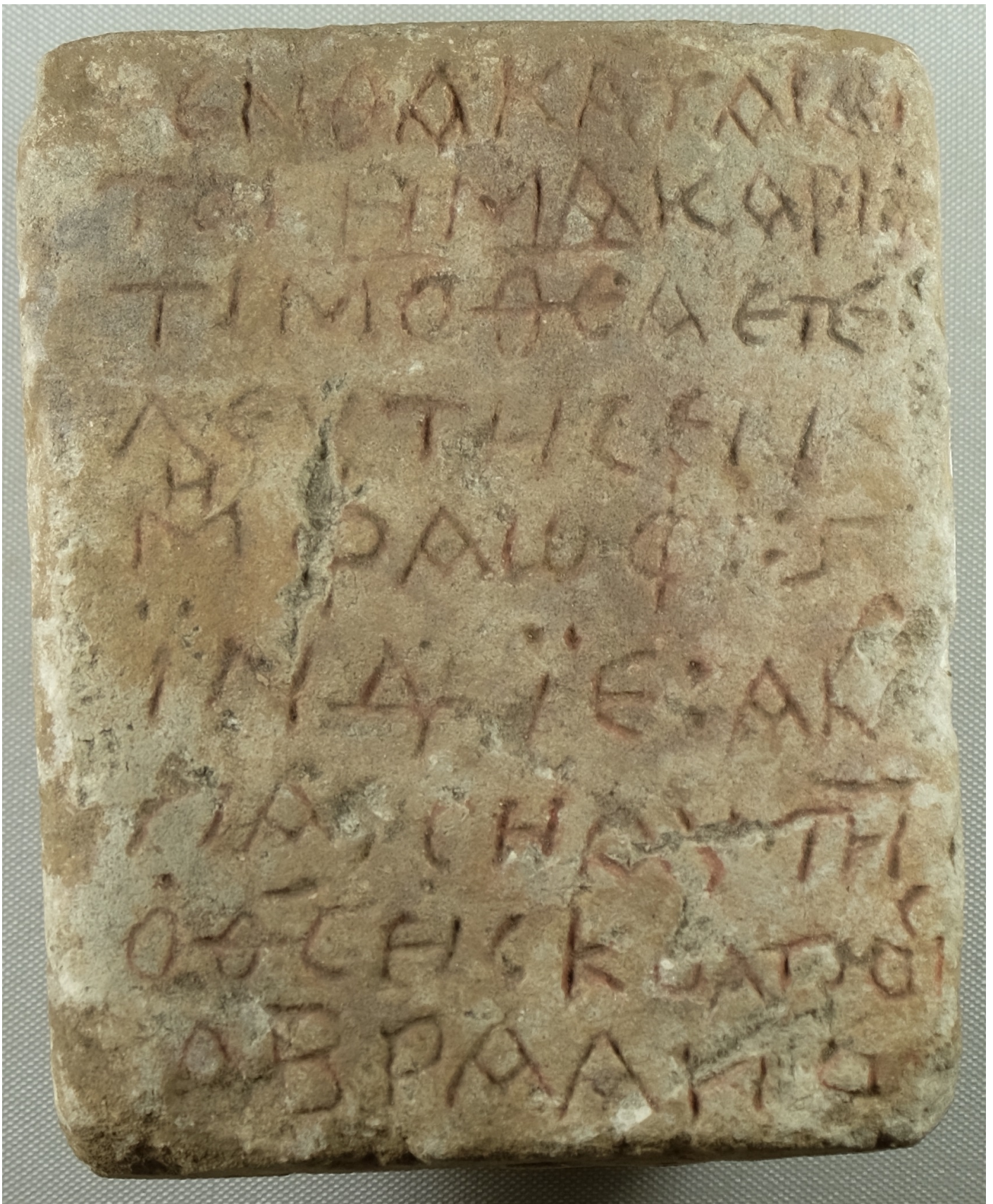


Figure 1. Epitaph of Timothea. Brooklyn Museum accession 37.1827E; ex-New-York Historical Society O.127An. Photography: the author.

The findspot is not recorded, but the dating of her death by an Egyptian month (3 Phaōphi [1 October]) points towards Egypt, where Anderson is known to have acquired other antiquities, or a nearby region within range of its cultural transmission, as the material and form of the monument and the formulary of the text, discussed in detail below, point to Egypt's southern neighbor Nubia in the early medieval period.

Comparable stelae are generally assigned to a range between the seventh and ninth centuries CE, and in the absence of an objective date, the same range must be considered for the Brooklyn epitaph.<sup>2</sup>

Anderson, professor of mathematics and astronomy at Columbia College (appointed 1825), had served as geologist to the United States Dead Sea Expedition, the occasion for his eastern travels.<sup>3</sup> Along with nearly 400 other objects, mostly from Egypt—including a mummy, whose public unwrapping was the occasion for lectures delivered by Anderson at the New-York Historical Society in December 1864 (fig. 2), reported in major newspapers at the time—,<sup>4</sup> the stone was donated by Anderson's sons E. Ellery and Edward H. Anderson to the Society in 1877.<sup>5</sup>

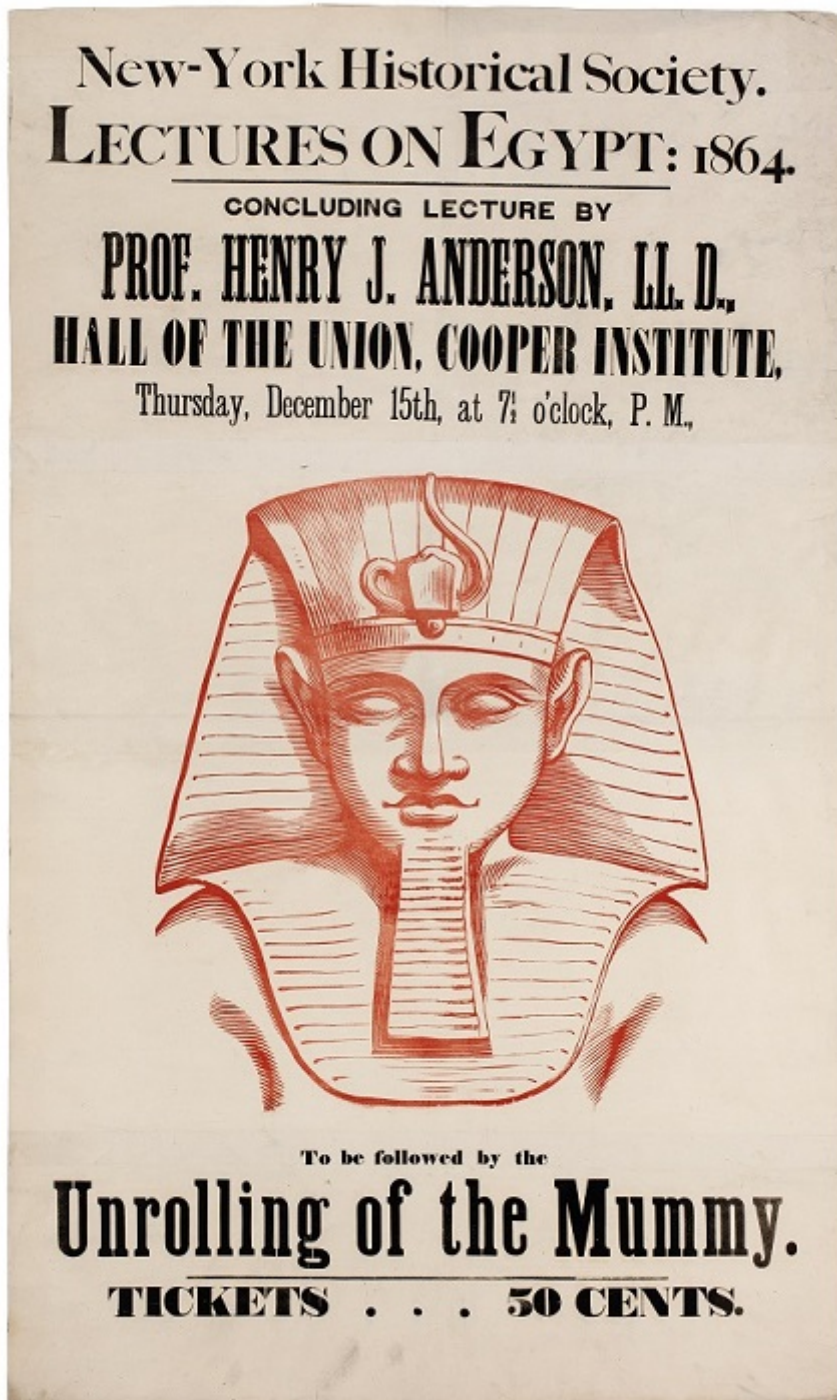


Figure 2. New-York Historical Society Lecture on Egypt, 1864: Concluding Lecture by Prof. Henry J. Anderson. Poster. New-York Historical Society Pictorial Archives, RG-5, Series IV, 2NW, Range 12A, Bay B, Drawer 10, F:1. Photography ©New-York Historical Society ([www/http://nyhistory.org](http://nyhistory.org)).

There the stele received the inventory number O.127An, reflected in a label still attached to its back (fig. 3). It may be among the “Four Stones with Greek inscriptions” mentioned in an unnumbered inventory of the Anderson gift printed in 1915.<sup>6</sup>

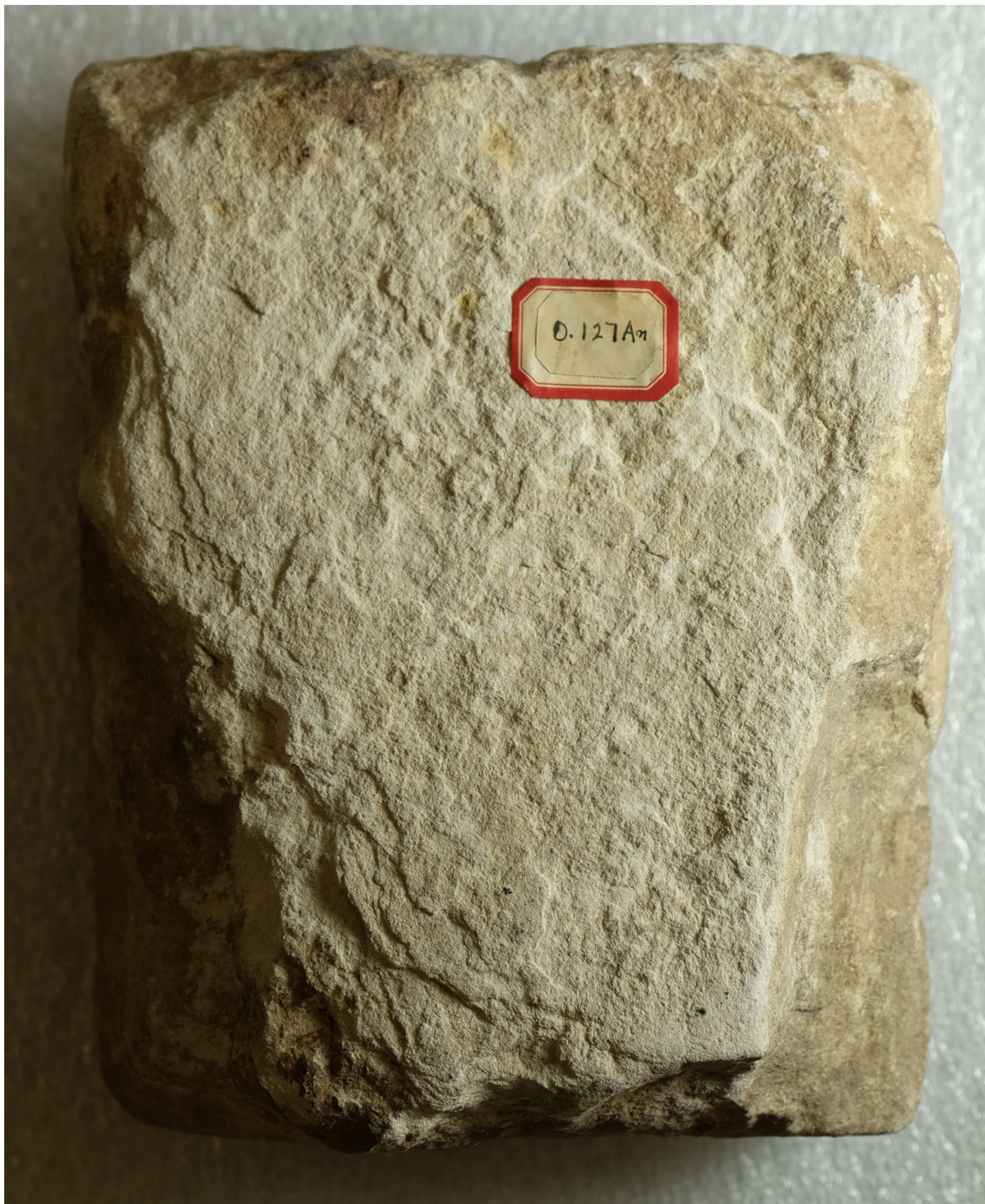


Figure 3. Epitaph of Timothea, back side. Photography: the author.

Anderson himself never published an account of how he came into possession of this stele or any other antiquities from Egypt or its vicinity. Other sources, however, firmly establish a visit in late 1847 and early 1848, apparently on the heels of his work for the Dead Sea Expedition. One is epigraphic: a graffito in his name with that date has been recorded in the temple of Amenophis III at Elkab. Another traveler, William Henry Adams Hyett, also recalled meeting an “American boat” carrying Anderson at Qasr Ibrim on 7 January, on whose “bump of destructiveness” he trained a phrenological gaze.

On Friday evening we reached Ibreem. As an American boat was there on return, we stopped and lionized the ruins with its occupants, a Mr. Anderson and son, one of Yankee Doodle’s most respectable scions, an intelligent gentleman of forty-five, or thereabouts, rather of the scientific turn; the bump of destructiveness strongly developed, I should fancy, from the huge hammer his dragoman carried, and with which he mercilessly chopped away at old stones, pillars, cornices, &c.<sup>7</sup>

The “son,” apparently E. Ellery Anderson (1833–1903), later a prominent lawyer and reformist whose political appointments included New York City School Commissioner, left graffiti of his own on ancient monuments in the same year, establishing that the party visited further Nubian sites at Abu Simbel and the temple of Kumma.<sup>8</sup>

The probable Nubian provenance of the stele may also be compared to that of the “Skull and piece of a Skull from Nubia” and “Fragments of Temple of Thothmes III. and Aboo Simbel (*sic*)” in the same inventory.<sup>9</sup> The five Greek and Coptic funerary stelae from northern Nubia in the collection of the British antiquarian William John Bankes (1786–1855), acquired during his travels in Egypt and Nubia in 1815–1819, provide both parallels for the monumental form and text of the Brooklyn Museum stele and a general parallel for how the epitaph of Timothea may have reached the United States, though in the case of the new stele, the visit of Anderson was too late for any direct involvement of the diplomat Henry Salt (1780–1827) in the acquisition, as in the case of Bankes,<sup>10</sup> and the account of Hyett supports first-hand collecting activity, whether by the dragoman’s hammer or subtler instruments. In 1937 the stele, along with a larger lot, was loaned to the Brooklyn Museum and subsequently purchased outright in 1948.

## 2. Epigraphic Context

The formula with which this epitaph opens, ἔνθα κατάκειται “Here lies,” can be found in Greek epitaphs across the ancient world. When the focus is narrowed to Egypt and its vicinity, the presence of this opening is generally restricted to northern Nubia, most often Talmis (Kalabsha) or Taphis (Tafa), sites of extensive cemeteries from which antiquities were removed in the nineteenth century.<sup>11</sup> No fewer than 56 epitaphs on sandstone stelae (Table 1), not yet systematically collected, can be assigned with certainty or high probability to northern Nubia, with a comparable sequence of formulae beginning in ἔνθα κατάκειται, followed by ὁ μακάριος or ἡ μακαρία “the blessed” and the name of the deceased, a euphemistic verb of death, the date, and a prayer for a divine grant of repose (with ἀναπαύω) in the “bosoms” (ἐν κόλποις and variants) of Abraham and, usually, his successor patriarchs Isaac and Jacob.<sup>12</sup>

## **Talmis**

<i>Epitaph of</i>	<i>References</i>
Abraam	<i>I.Chr. Egypte</i> 623 ( <i>SB V</i> 8720; <i>I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno</i> 54) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 482)
Akkendarpe	<i>I.Chr. Egypte</i> 622 ( <i>SB V</i> 8736; <i>I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno</i> 53) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 481)
Manna	<i>SEG LII</i> 1817 ( <i>I.Chr. Egypte</i> 652; <i>SB III</i> 6089; <i>V</i> 8737; <i>I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno</i> 47) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 495)
P..thia	<i>SB I</i> 1600 ( <i>I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno</i> 44) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 539)
Samsōn	<i>I.Chr. Egypte</i> 624 ( <i>SB V</i> 8722; <i>I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno</i> 55) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 483)
Thisauria	<i>I.Chr. Egypte</i> 625 ( <i>SB V</i> 8721; <i>I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno</i> 48) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 484)

## **Talmis?**

<i>Epitaph of</i>	<i>References</i>
Edra	<i>SEG LXV</i> 2010 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 3075)
Epephanios	<i>SEG XLIX</i> 2348 ( <i>LXIII</i> 1712) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 566)
Georgios	<i>SEG LXVII</i> 1472 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 4398)

## **Taphis (Ginari)<sup>13</sup>**

<i>Epitaph of</i>	<i>References</i>
Aarōn	Firth 486[a] ( <i>DBMNT</i> 429)
Abraham	Firth 486[b], with Ochała, “Nubica onomastica,” pp. 152–4 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 450)
Agathe	Firth 841 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 440)
Akousta	Firth 437 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 427) <sup>14</sup>
Amantōse	<i>SEG LIV</i> 1774 ( <i>I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno</i> 59; Firth s.n., p. 50) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 449)
Anna	Firth 269 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 416)
Archippas	Firth 483 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 428)
Arōn	Firth 374 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 424)
Aroumi <sup>15</sup>	<i>SEG XLIII</i> 1178 (Firth 807; <i>I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno</i> 49) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 436)
Axios	<i>SEG XLIII</i> 1179 (Firth 230; <i>I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno</i> 56) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 542)
Chrisantē <sup>16</sup>	Firth 372 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 423)
Christina	Firth 804 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 435)
Christophoros	Firth 246 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 412)

Erna	Firth 323 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 421)
Eustephanou	Firth 124 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 409)
Gennatios	Firth 281 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 419)
Ichilos	Firth 208, with Ochała, “Nubica onomastica,” pp. 149–50 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 411)
Iōanna	Firth 259/261 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 415)
Iōannēs	Firth 651 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 432) <sup>17</sup>
Iōseph	Firth 193 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 410)
Longinos	Firth 486[c] ( <i>DBMNT</i> 624)
Maria	Firth s.n. (p. 50) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 446)
Mariam	Firth 802 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 434)
Marou	Firth 397 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 425)
Martha	Firth 95 (Łajtar, “Epitaphs,” pp. 58–9 no. 2) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 406)
Merchani	Firth 838 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 437)
Merchō	Firth 325 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 422)
Mōuseou	Firth 122 (Łajtar, “Epitaphs,” pp. 59–60 no. 3) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 407)
Mp(e)r(e)rhote <sup>18</sup>	Firth s.n. (p. 50), with Ochała, “Nubica onomastica,” pp. 152–4 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 445)
Pelagia	Firth 434 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 426)
Petrōinia	Firth s.n. (p. 50) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 444)
Seuēros	Firth 907, with Ochała, “Nubica onomastica,” pp. 151–2 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 442)
Siōn	Firth 249, with Ochała, “Nubica onomastica,” pp. 150–1 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 413)
Sophia	Firth 270 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 418)
Staurophania	Firth s.n. (p. 50) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 447)
Taria	Firth s.n. (p. 50) ( <i>DBMNT</i> 448)
Theognōsta	Firth 840 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 439)
[..]nasilei <sup>19</sup>	Firth 412 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 623)
<b>Taphis?</b>	
<i>Epitaph of</i>	<i>References</i>
Protōkia	SEG LXV 2011 ( <i>DBMNT</i> 3074)



## Pselchis?

*Epitaph of*

*References*

Athanasios

*I.Chr. Egypte 629 (I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno 45) (DBMNT 487)*

## Northern Nubia (unknown site)

*Epitaph of*

*References*

Anna

*I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno 50 (DBMNT 541)*

Aulōse

*I.Chr. Egypte 654 (SB V 8738; I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno 52; I.Egypte Nubie Louvre 113) (DBMNT 401)*

Elisabet

*I.Chr. Egypte 660 (I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno 58) (DBMNT 498)*

Maria

*I.Chr. Egypte 655 (SB V 8739; I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno 51; I.Egypte Nubie Louvre 111) (DBMNT 402)*

Petros

*I.Chr. Egypte 649 (SB V 8734; I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno 46) (DBMNT 493)*

Theotōtē

*I.Chr. Egypte 805 (I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno 57) (DBMNT 505)*

[...] <sup>20</sup>

Liddel, "Greek Inscriptions," pp. 97–8 no. B.2

Table 1. Greek epitaphs from northern Nubia with the same formulary as the Brooklyn Museum stele, by provenance. (Names are presented without normalization.)

The theological implications of this plural expansion of the "bosom" (see further the commentary to line 8 of the edition below) remains to be explained. After the seminal passage of Luke 16, the deceased was imagined--to judge from the famous illuminated manuscript of Gregory of Nazianzus produced for the Byzantine emperor Basil I (fig. 4)--as sitting in Abraham's lap.



Figure 4. Illuminated copy of Gregory of Nazianzus, scene of Dives and Lazarus. Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, grec 510, fol. 149r. Source: gallica.bnf.fr.

The publication of the Brooklyn Museum epitaph, besides encouraging the continued commemoration of Timothea—an activity that the inclusion of a month date in the text was meant to promote—,<sup>21</sup> offers a small step towards the reconstitution of a dispersed funerary assemblage of early Christian Nubia. The general cohesion of material and (Greek) textual forms across major northern Nubian sites, substantially unique to this area in turn, casts a sidelight on inextricable nexus of the Greek language and Nubian Christianity, and the negotiation of a distinctive local variety of both, in the early medieval period. The monuments, and the names that they continue to make live, are precious testaments to society in cities like Talmis and Taphis, later ruled from elsewhere (Primis, Pakhoras) but retaining a position as urban centers.<sup>22</sup>

### 3. Edition

Epitaph of Timothea

18.5 cm (h) × 15 cm (w) × 8 cm (d)

Brooklyn Museum, accession 37.1827E

Seventh–ninth centuries CE

Northern Nubia

*Text*

+ ἔνθα κατάκει-

ται ἡ μακαρία

Τιμοθέα· ἔτε-

λεύτησεν

5 μη(νὶ) Φαῶφι : γ

ἰνδ(ικτιῶνος) ιε : ἀνα-

παύση αὐτή(ν)

ὁ θε(εὸς) εἰς κόλποις

Ἄβραάμ ς[θ]

3 τιμοθέα stone || 5 μη stone || 6 ἰνδ, ἰε stone | ανα stone || 7 αὐτῆ stone || 8 θε stone, which is pitted above the preceding *omikron* (probably a chance mark, not a diacritic) | κολποῖς stone; read ἐν κόλποις or εἰς κόλπους

*Translation*

Here lies the blessed Timothea. She met her end on the 3rd of the month of Phaophi of the 15th indiction. May God give her rest in the bosoms of Abraham, 99 (=amen).

3 Τιμοθέα (τιμῶθεα on the stone). Overlining of personal names is occasionally found in epitaphs: Nikea (Νικεα, an apparent nominative in what should be the genitive of a female name) in *I.Chr. Egypte* 627 from northern Nubia (Talmis), and Deidō (in the genitive Δειδουζ) in *I.Chr. Egypte* 525 from southern Egypt (Hermonthis?). Neither of these instances could have been conflated with a *nomen sacrum*, which might otherwise have influenced the scribal practice here (cf. θ̄ for θ(ε)ός in 8 below), that is, overlining θ̄ε as if θ(ε)έ, then extending the overline to the left.

This is the first instance of the name Timothea in published texts from Christian Nubia (so the *DBMNT*). Only three individuals listed under this name in the *Trismegistos Names* database (*TM Nam* 25628) are acceptable parallels: *SB* I 5854 (Alexandria, undated [early Ptolemaic, to judge from letterforms in ed.pr., fig. 3]); *C.Étiq.Mom.* 749 (*T.Mom.Louvre* 322), third or fourth century CE; and *P.Flor.* I 150 + *P.Louvre* III 193 i 2, 3, 6, 7, etc. (Κλαυδία Ἑρμητάριον ἢ καὶ Τιμοθέα), 269 CE. (The form in Cruz-Uribe, *Graffiti*, p. 46 no. 67 [Hibis; undated, but probably Hellenistic to judge from the drawing], read Τιμοθηι and rendered “to Timothea,” is probably rather the male name Τιμοθηζ.) Foraboschi, *Onomasticon*, p. 318, adds one instance from seventh-century Egypt (*P.Got.* 14.10).

3–4 ἔτελεύτησεν. So far nearly all other parallels for this formula from northern Nubia use either ἔτελε(ι)ώθη or ἐκοιμήθη (cf. Tibiletti Bruno, “Epigrafi funerarie cristiane della Nubia,” p. 513), a coherence that led Junker (“Die christlichen Grabsteine Nubiens,” p. 139) to the conclusion that ἔτελεύτησεν is entirely lacking in Nubia except at Bigeh (for him, not a true exception) and characteristic instead of southern Egypt (see also Tudor, *Christian Funerary Stelae*, Appendix, Table A, III.3.1.5). The situation is complicated by a closer examination, including texts published in the interim. In addition to the epitaph from Bigeh (C. M. Firth ap. Reisner, *Archaeological Survey of Nubia*, p. 104 no. 8, line 6, with an improved text by Monneret de Villard, *La Nubia medioevale*, p. 14, correcting the erroneous attribution to Ginari of the photograph printed in *Archaeological Survey of Nubia*, plate 51, no. 3), ἔτελεύτησεν does appear in some Nubian epitaphs (Adam Łajtar is thanked for the following references): those of no lesser personages than King David (of Alodia/Alwa or a united Nubian kingdom including also Makuria and Nobadia) from Soba (*I.Khartoum Greek* 79, line 19), and Joseph, bishop of Aswan, who died and was buried in Dongola (*SEG* LXI 1543, line 29); as well as that of a woman Tikete (?) from Kalabsha, which was later brought to Cairo (Monneret de Villard, *Nubia medioevale*, p. 41, lines 3–4: read Τικετη ἔτελεύτησεν in place of τικε τη ετελευτης εν); and likely a sandstone funerary cross from Ghazali (*I.Khartoum Greek* 45: [ἐ]τελεύ[τησεν] probably to be restored in line 5 with the editor [accepted also in *I.Ghazali* 210]). Corruptions, in ancient or modern copying, could also be suspected in two cases from Taphis (Ginari): of ἐπη (sic: ἐ<τελευτ>ή<σεν>?) in the corresponding place in Firth 124, and of the confused sequence TE[.]NAN[.]ΙΔΕΘ in *SEG* LIV 1774, which might conceal an error (probably of copying by the editor rather than execution by the ancient stonemason) for <ἐ>τε<λεύτησεν>. The spelling ἔτελευώθη in *I.Chr. Egypte* 622 (*SB* V 8736; *I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno* 53) (Talmis) may represent conflation of the more common ἔτελειώθη with a variant ἔτελεύτησεν.

5–6. For the use of Egyptian months and indictions in Nubia, see Ochała, *Chronological Systems*, pp. 221–4 and 99–124, respectively; writings and attestations of the month Phaōphi are listed at pp. 226 and 256–9, respectively. The presence of an indiction-year in the formula is an indication of possible provenance

from the Ginari cemetery at Taphis (cf. the following n.), but the substitution of τελευτάω (see 3–4n. above) complicates this assignment.

6–7 ἀναπαύση. The use of the subjunctive rather than imperative (ἀνάπαυσον) could be another sign (cf. the previous n.) of provenance from Taphis (van der Vliet and Worp, “Four North-Nubian Funerary Stelae,” p. 32); for prayer-formulae requesting rest for the deceased, see in general Tudor, *Christian Funerary Stelae*, pp. 152–6.

8 εἰς κόλποις. References to the figure of the bosom of Abraham (Luke 16:22–3) are collected by Staerk, “Abrahams Schoß”; for interpretative questions, see recently Yoder, “In the Bosom of Abraham,” esp. 17–19, and for the form εἰς κόλποις in place of εἰς κόλπους (or ἐν κόλποις), Tibiletti Bruno, “Epigrafi funerarie cristiane della Nubia,” p. 513 (six instances)

So far only *I.Chr. Egypte* 622 (*SB V* 8736; *I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno* 53) with εἰς κόλιπον Ἀβραάμ could be considered a secure parallel for the omission of Isaac and Jacob, but with a singular “bosom” rather than the plural as here; cf. *I.Chr. Egypte* 627 (*SB V* 8724; *I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno* 60), which ends εἰς κόλιπον Ἀβραάμ [ ] and seems unlikely to have continued with more than ἀμήν or a final cross; Firth 270, in which the stone ends (it is unclear whether due to damage or not) with ἐν κόλποις Ἀβραάμ but the editor restores [κ(αὶ) Ἰσαὰκ κ(αὶ) Ἰακώβ] in a following line; and *I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno* 59, lines 9–10, ἀναπαύση σε ἐν Ἀβραμιαίοις “may (God) give you rest in the (bosoms?) of Abraham.” Perhaps a form of the same derived adjective Ἀβρααμιαῖος “of Abraham” is to be read where [Firth]{smallcaps} copied αναπαυση ο θεος εν αβρααμ ια . . . . . in an unnumbered epitaph from “debris” at Ginari (p. 50); compare the nexus Ἀβραμιοῖς κόλποις in the grave epigram *MAMA VII* 587, line 6, and Ἀβραμί[οις] ἐ<ν> κόλποις in the epitaph *I.Mus. Catania* 187, lines 2–3. The substitution of another body part, for a presumably metonymic effect, is also found: ἀπεβίωσεν ὁ μακάριος ἐν βραχῦς (for βραχίουσιν) Ἀβραάμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ Ἰακώβ “the blessed (deceased) departed life in the arms of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob (*SB III* 6133, Hermonthis?).

Lefebvre (*I.Chr. Egypte*, p. xxx), considered the expression of hope for the rest of the deceased in the bosoms of the three patriarchs to have been “créée par les chrétiens d’Égypte,” which should also be understood to include those of northern Nubia. (It is far from limited to inscriptions of the formula-type to which the Brooklyn Museum epitaph belongs: in addition to the texts gathered by Lefebvre, note, e.g., an unpublished epitaph on a “small Coptic stele” in a private house in the modern village of Tafa [ancient Taphis] mentioned by Weigall, *Antiquities of Lower Nubia*, p. 64, with a drawing in pl. 27, which shows that the text, in fact in Greek, belongs to a distinct formula-type beginning ὑπὲρ {ε}μνήμ(ης) (καὶ) ἀναπα[ύ]σεως and eventually calling on God to give the deceased, a woman [Ἐντριε?], rest ἐν κ[όλ]π[οι]ς Ἀβραάμ (καὶ) Ἰσα[ὰκ] (καὶ) Ἰακώ[β].) The appearance of the same motif in Christian prayers for those near death, asking for their repose in Paradise, with a wider late ancient circulation including Syriac (Mateos, “Prières syriennes,” pp. 276–7 no. 5), complicates this thesis of creation. It was also incorporated in the Christian funerary liturgy in the so-called ὁ θεὸς τῶν πνευμάτων prayer (“God of spirits”), not exclusively in Nubia (*contra* Brakmann, “Defunctus adhuc loquitur,” pp. 302, 305–10) but reflected particularly in epitaphs there; see in general Ruggieri, “Preghiera funebre.” Reference to Abraham alone in this respect is reflected already in Augustine, *Confessions* 9.3.6, of a deceased friend: “Now he lives in the bosom of Abraham. Whatever it is that is meant by that bosom, that is where my Nebridius lives” (*nunc ille vivit in sinu Abraham. quidquid illud est quod illo significatur sinu, ibi Nebridius meus vivit*).

An interchangeability of singular κόλπος and plural κόλποι is established early, with the Gospel background of this motif: in Luke 16:23 Lazarus is seen in the plural “bosoms” (ἐν τοῖς κόλποις) of Abraham, though at the first appearance of Lazarus in the previous verse he is carried “to the bosom” (εἰς τὸν κόλπον) of the patriarch. The plural, in reference to Abraham alone, continued in patristic literature (e.g. Gregory of Nyssa, *Funerary Oration on the Bishop Meletios* [Spira, *Gregory Nysseni opera*, p. 452], ὁ μὲν ἐν τοῖς κόλποις τοῦ Ἀβραάμ ἀναπαύεται [“He rests in the bosoms of Abraham”]; Eriphanius, *Panarion* 2:468, τὸν μὲν ἐν κόλποις Ἀβραάμ δεικνὺς ἀναπαύεσθαι [“Showing that he rests in the bosoms of Abraham”]; John Chrysostom, *On the Blessed Abraham* 3 [PG 50:746], τὸν Ἀβραάμ μιμήσασθαι ἵνα ξενισθῶμεν ἐν τοῖς τούτου κόλποις [“To emulate Abraham, so that we may be received in his bosoms”]). Although, as noted, the plural κόλποι “bosoms” of Abraham alone is so far unique to the Brooklyn Museum stele in funerary epigraphy, the converse, a singular, collective κόλπος “bosom” of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, may be observed in three epitaphs from Taphis (Ginari) (Firth 208, 323, 412).

9 ς[θ]. The cypher stands by isopsephism, with a form of *qoppa* resembling Coptic *fai*, for ἀμήν, which it occasionally replaces as the end of the formula (e.g. Firth 95, 208, 230, where either *qoppa* or the same *fai* has been misread as Greek *gamma*; Liddel, “New Greek Inscriptions,” pp. 97–8 no. B.2 [with 7n.]). Junker, “Die christlichen Grabsteine Nubiens,” p. 128, considered this replacement exclusive to Ginari, but it is now found in three epitaphs from Ghazali (*I.Ghazali* 78, 120, 153). In *SEG LXV* 2010, from an unknown site probably in northern Nubia, it appears alongside ἀμήν in the corresponding place.

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### Abbreviations

*C.Étiq.Mom.* = Bernard Boyaval, *Corpus des étiquettes de momies grecques*. Publications de l’Université de Lille III. Villeneuve-d’Ascq: Université de Lille III, 1976.

*DBMNT* = Grzegorz Ochała (ed.), *Database of Medieval Nubian Texts* (Warsaw: University of Warsaw, 2011–) [www/http://www.dbmnt.uw.edu.pl](http://www.dbmnt.uw.edu.pl).

Firth = Cecil M. Firth, “Appendix II: Catalogue of the Greek Gravestones of the Christian Period from Ginari, Cemetery 55,” in *The Archaeological Survey of Nubia: Report for 1908–1909* (Cairo: Ministry of Finance, Egypt, Survey Department, 1912), vol. 1, pp. 45–50 (cited by grave number).

*GrEpiAbbr.* = A. Chaniotis et al., “Liste des abréviations des éditions et ouvrages de référence pour l’épigraphie grecque alphabétique” [www/https://www.aiegl.org/grepiabbr.html](https://www.aiegl.org/grepiabbr.html).

*I.Chr. Egypte* = Gustave Lefebvre, *Recueil des inscriptions grecques-chrétiennes d’Égypte*. Cairo: Institut français d’archéologie orientale, 1907.

*I.Egypte Nubie Louvre* = Étienne Bernand, *Inscriptions grecques d’Égypte et de Nubie au Musée du Louvre*. Paris: CNRS, 1992.

*I.Khartoum Greek* = Adam Łajtar, *Catalogue of the Greek Inscriptions in the Sudan National Museum at Khartoum (I. Khartoum Greek)*. *Orientalia Lovaniensia analecta* 122. Leuven: Peeters, 2003.

*I.Mus. Catania* = Kalle Korhonen, *Le iscrizioni del Museo Civico di Catania: Storia delle collezioni, cultura epigrafica, edizione*. Commentationes humanarum litterarum 121. Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 2004.

*I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno* = Maria Grazia Tibiletti Bruno, *Iscrizioni nubiane con riferimento alla nota « Di alcune caratteristiche epigrafi funerarie cristiane della Nubia » pubblicata dall'Istituto lombardo - Accademia di scienze e lettere*. Pavia: Successori Fusi, 1964.

*MAMA VII* = William M. Calder, *Monuments from Eastern Phrygia*. Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua 7. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1956.

*P.Flor. I* = Girolamo Vitelli, *Documenti pubblici e privati dell'età romana e bizantina*. Papiri greco-egizii, Papiri Fiorentini 1. Supplementi Filologico-Storici ai Monumenti Antichi. Milan: Ulrico Hoepli, 1906.

*PG* = Jacques-Paul Migne (ed.), *Patrologia cursus completus, Series Graeca*. Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857–1866.

*P.Got.* = Hjalmar Frisk, *Papyrus grecs de la Bibliothèque municipale de Gothembourg*. Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift 35.1. Gothenburg: Elanders, 1929.

*P.Louvre III* = Andrea Jördens et al., *Griechische Papyri aus der Sammlung des Louvre (P. Louvre III)*. Papyrologische Texte und Abhandlungen 47. Bonn 2022.

*SB* = Friedrich Preisigke et al., *Sammelbuch griechischer Urkunden aus Aegypten*. Various places and publishers, 1915– .

*SEG* = Jacobus J. E. Hondius et al. (eds.), *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*. Leiden: Brill, 1923– .

*TM* = *Trismegistos: An Interdisciplinary Portal of the Ancient World* [www/https://www.trismegistos.org](https://www.trismegistos.org)

*T.Mom.Louvre* = François Baratte and Bernard Boyaval, “Catalogue des étiquettes de momies du Musée du Louvre,” *Cahiers de Recherches de l'Institut de Papyrologie et d'Égyptologie de Lille* 2–6 (1975–1981).

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1. I thank Katya Barbash and Kathy Zurek-Doule for their help and hospitality during my visit to consult the stone (19 December 2022), Eleanor Gillers for assistance with archival material in the New-York Historical Society, Adam Łajtar for epigraphic and Julia Hamilton for photographic advice, respectively, and an anonymous reader of *Dotawo* for criticisms of this article. All remaining errors are my own. ↵
  2. A rare instance of an internally dated inscription of this type (with an expanded formulary) belongs to 699 CE: *I.Chr. Egypte* 661 (*I.Nubia Tibiletti Bruno* 43). (Abbreviations for epigraphic sources follow *GrEpiAbbr.* where relevant.) The letterforms of the Brooklyn epitaph are broadly comparable, as is the lettering of the parallel text (see further below) edited by Van der Vliet and Worp, "Four North-Nubian Funerary Stelae," pp. 32–3 no. 2 (*SEG LXV* 2010), tentatively assigned to the same century. ↵
  3. He contributed a report, "Geological Reconnaissance of Part of the Holy Land," on explorations from Beirut south to the Dead Sea, including its eastern shores (in Lynch [ed.], *Official Report*, pp. 75–206); see also his obituary in the *New York Times*, 18 January 1876, p. 8. ↵
  4. *New York Times*, 15 December 1864; *New York Commercial Advertiser* and *New York Evening Post*, 16 December 1864. ↵
  5. Information from copies of correspondence related to the donation kept in the Brooklyn Museum archives; Kathy Zurek-Doule is thanked for this reference. ↵
  6. *Catalogue of the Egyptian Antiquities*, p. 74. ↵

7. Graffito: De Keersmaecker, *Elkab*, p. 20 (with further bibliographical information on Anderson at pp. 21–2); Hyett, *Journal*, p. 33. ↩
8. See De Keersmaecker, *Temples of Abu Simbel*, p. 75, and *Temples of Semna and Kumma*, p. 61 (with further biographical information at pp. 62–6), respectively; the obituary in the *New York Times*, 25 February 1903, p. 2, also mentions travels in Egypt and Nubia in 1847 and 1848. ↩
9. *Catalogue of the Egyptian Antiquities*, p. 75. ↩
10. For the texts, and the proposed connection to Salt, see van der Vliet and Worp, “Four North-Nubian Funerary Stelae,” pp. 27–9, and “Fifth Nubian Funerary Stela.” ↩
11. Junker, “Die christlichen Grabsteine Nubiens,” pp. 114, 125–7 (see also pp. 122–3 on physical form); van der Vliet, “Gleanings,” pp. 180–3. ↩
12. See in general Tibiletti Bruno, “Epigrafi funerarie cristiane della Nubia,” pp. 513–15. ↩
13. Not included here is the fragmentary SEG LXV 2009 (DBMNT 1482), an epitaph of a man whose name, or whose patronym, was read as Iatouros, but the text is very uncertain, and the opening ἔνθα κατάκειται is entirely restored. ↩
14. The request for repose is omitted. ↩
15. The word *ara* following her name is probably an Egyptian title from “the domain of local law or finance”: van der Vliet, “Gleanings,” pp. 176–8 [SEG LII 1816]. ↩
16. Firth read χρῖσαῶντη; the overline in a Nubian context would be expected to represent /i/, but a misreading (or misprinting) of χρῖσανθη (Chrisanthē; cf. χρυσάνθη) is also possible. An anonymous reader of *Dotawo* is thanked for these observations. ↩
17. The request for repose is omitted. ↩
18. Ochała, to whom this reading is owed, doubts that the sequence is a name, but, although not precisely paralleled, it fits well as a “hortatory” name (for the category, see, e.g., Fischer, *Albion’s Seed*, pp. 94–7) in Coptic, “Fear-not,” drawn from the words of the angel to Mary in Luke 1:30 (in the Sahidic version, ⲙⲡⲣⲣⲟⲩⲧⲉ ⲙⲁⲣⲓⲁ). ↩
19. The formulary (ἡ μακαρία) indicates that the deceased was a woman. ↩
20. The name is lost, but the formulary (ἀϋτοῖς for ἀϋτῆς) indicates that the deceased was a woman. The stone, now in the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, was accessioned in a group that included artifacts from Elephantine and Dakkeh(?). The first editor writes of a “(modern) inscription, lightly incised, ‘KAAB’”: could Kal(a)b(sha) (Talmis) have been meant? ↩
21. For this function of the month date, see van der Vliet, “What is Man,” pp. 195–7. The stelae of the Ginari cemetery were originally affixed to the outer, western end of the tombs, in some cases accompanied by niches for the placement of commemorative lamps: [Firth]{smallcaps} p. 40; Łajtar, “Epitaphs,” p. 58. ↩

22. Cf. van der Vliet, "Gleanings," p. 175. ↩

