

**Jacques van der Vliet, Klaas A.
Worp**

**A Fifth Nubian Funerary Stela from
the Bankes Collection : An Addendum
to «Cien» 3, 26-29**

The Journal of Juristic Papyrology 47, 251-254

2017

Artykuł został opracowany do udostępnienia w internecie przez Muzeum Historii Polski w ramach prac podejmowanych na rzecz zapewnienia otwartego, powszechnego i trwałego dostępu do polskiego dorobku naukowego i kulturalnego. Artykuł jest umieszczony w kolekcji cyfrowej bazhum.muzhp.pl, gromadzącej zawartość polskich czasopism humanistycznych i społecznych.

Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach
dozwolonego użytku.

Jacques van der Vliet
Klaas A. Worp

**A FIFTH NUBIAN FUNERARY STELA
FROM THE BANKES COLLECTION.
AN ADDENDUM TO *CIEN* 3, 26–29**

IN 2015 WE EDITED four Nubian funerary stelae from the collection of William John Bankes (1786–1855), presently kept at the Kingston Lacy estate in Dorset (England).¹ Meanwhile a fifth stela belonging to the same collection has turned up. In order to complete the dossier, we publish this stela here, in an addendum to our earlier article, as number 5. Like the other stelae, this additional piece belongs to the collections of the British National Trust, where it bears inventory no. 1257839. An excellent photo can be freely accessed on the website of the National Trust, at the address <http://www.nationaltrustcollections.org.uk>. This photo has been the sole source of our edition. For a discussion of the earlier history of the entire lot of five funerary monuments and a full bibliography, the reader is referred to our 2015 study.²

¹ J. VAN DER VLIET & K. A. WORP, 'Four north-Nubian funerary stelae from the Bankes collection', [in:] A. ŁAJTAR, G. OCHAŁA, & J. VAN DER VLIET (eds.), *Nubian Voices II. New Texts and Studies on Christian Nubian Culture* [= *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology, Supplement* 27], Warsaw 2015, pp. 27–43.

² We once more thank Ian Barnes, MCIFA, FSA, Head of Archaeology of the National Trust, for his permission to publish the stela here and for kindly supplying its dimensions.

5. Funerary stela of a man Georgios

National Trust inv. no. 1257839.

Rectangular sandstone tablet, 21 × 14.5 × 8 cm, plain and well dressed. The stone is complete, apart from some marginal chips and the lower right-hand corner, which is partly broken away. It is inscribed in Greek with eleven lines of crudely incised uncials, slightly sloping to the right and fairly irregular in shape. A symmetric broken-bar *alpha* is used everywhere, except in the very last *alpha* of line 2. Simple crosses precede and follow the text in lines 1 and 11. Apart from a narrow bottom margin, the text takes up the entire surface of the stone. In addition to the habitual erratic spellings, partly due to iotacism, the mason made some awkward mistakes, in particular in lines 3 and 11. The letters and the crosses preserve traces of vivid red coloring.

Kalabsha/Talmis?, ca. 7th century

‡ ἔνθα κατὰ-
 κίτη ὁ μακα-
 ρίος Γεόργιος
 4 μηνὴ Μεσουρέ
 ζ' ἐνδκ(τίωνος) ἰ' ὁ θ(εὸ)ς
 ἀνάπαυσον
 τὸν δοῦλο σου
 8 Γεόργιου ἐν κόλ-
 πῖς Ἀβραὰμ
 κ(αὶ) Ἰσαὰκ κ(αὶ) Ἰακώ-
 κ. ἀμήν ‡

1-2. κατὰκείται || 3. Γεώργιος || 4. μηνὴ Μεσουρή || 5. ἰνδικτίωνος || 7. δοῦλον ||
 8. Γεώργιον || 8-9. κόλπους || 10. Ἰσαὰκ || 10-11. Ἰακώβ

† Here lies the blessed Georgios, (deceased) in the month Mesore 7, indiction 10. God, grant rest to your servant Georgios in the bosom of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Amen. †

As the formal and textual features of this small monument bring out clearly, it shares with the four Bankes stelae edited in 2015 a provenance in the former Roman Dodekaschoinos, the northernmost part of Christian Nubadia. It is perhaps possible to be more precise. The stone exhibits a formulary that is quite similar in particular to no. 2 of the same collection, the stela of a woman Edra, which we attributed tentatively to Kalabsha/Talmis.³ The same formulary and even some of the stone's odd spellings occur furthermore in *I. Lefebvre* 624 (DBMNT 483 = TM 102846), the stela of a man called Samson, one of the lot from Kalabsha, published in 1821 by Thomas Young, and *I. Lefebvre* 623 (DBMNT 482 = TM 102845), the stela of Abraam, from the same lot, the latter with a slightly expanded prayer section.⁴ In the present epitaph, however, the distinctive word for dying, introducing the date (ἐτελεύωθη in the other stelae), is lacking. In its appearance, the smooth and undecorated tablet is particularly close to the Leiden stela of Manna (*I. Lefebvre* 652 = SB III 6089 [DBMNT 495 = TM 102861]), which has a likely provenance again in Kalabsha.⁵ Even though none of these similarities are really conclusive, we are inclined to assign also the present stela to Kalabsha.

1–2. For the word final αι (ε) / η interchange in κατά|κιτη, see F. Th. Gignac, *A Grammar of the Greek Papyri of the Roman and Byzantine Periods*, I: *Phonology* [= *Testi e documenti per lo studio dell'antichità* 55], Milan 1976, pp. 242–249, in particular 248 (cf. 244). Compare the Kalabsha stelae of Samson, ll. 1–2, and Abraam, ll. 1–2, quoted above, which both spell κατά|κητη.

³ VAN DER VLIET & WORP, 'Four north-Nubian funerary stelae' (cit. n. 1), pp. 32–33.

⁴ Th. YOUNG, 'Observations on a fragment of a very ancient Greek manuscript on papyrus, together with some sepulchral inscriptions from Nubia, lately received by the Earl of Mountnorris', *Archaeologia* 19 (1821), pp. 156–160, at 158, pl. x, no. v (Samson), and 157, plate IX, no. III (Abraam). The Mountnorris stelae published by Young derive most likely from the same source as the Bankes stelae, see VAN DER VLIET & WORP, 'Four north-Nubian funerary stelae' (cit. n. 1), pp. 28–29.

⁵ For a reproduction of this stela, see P. A. A. BOESER, *Beschrijving van de Egyptische verzameling in het Rijksmuseum van Oudheden te Leiden*, VII: *De monumenten van den Saïtischen, Grieks-Romeïnschen, en Koptischen tijd*, The Hague 1915, no. 32, pl. xvii; for a discussion, see J. VAN DER VLIET, 'Gleanings from Christian northern Nubia', *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology* 32 (2002), pp. 175–194, at 178–184; on the stone's provenance, in particular 180–183.

3. The mason forgot to carve the leg of the *rho* in Γεόογιοσ.

4. The present spelling of the month name Mesore occurs more often in Nubia; see the table in G. Ochała, *Chronological Systems of Christian Nubia* [= *The Journal of Juristic Papyrology, Supplement* 16], Warsaw 2011, p. 236; cf. Gignac, *Grammar* I (cit. above), p. 244. The final *epsilon* was drawn on the very edge of the stone.

5. For ἐνδκ(τίωνος), compare ἐντεκδ(ίων)ος in the stela of Samson, l. 6 (our reading from Young's plate x, no. v) and possibly ἐδεκ(τίωνος) in the stela of Abraam, ll. 4–5 (our reading from Young's plate IX, no. III), both from Kalabsha and quoted above. Ochała, *Chronological Systems* (cit. above), pp. 112–113, notes a few more examples of the spelling with initial *epsilon* or omitting the first vowel altogether, all from Lower Nubia (Nobadia). In the Greek papyri from Egypt, it appears to be very rare; the DDBDP records only two examples, *P. Oxy.* LX 4089, l. 8, and *SPP VIII* 8444, l. 2. The present spelling and its Kalabsha variants seem to indicate that the scribe (or the mason) perceived both unaccented iotas of ἰνδικτίωνος as a shwa, which is not uncommon in Coptic (see H. Förster, *Wörterbuch der griechischen Wörter in den koptischen dokumentarischen Texten* [= *Texte und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der altchristlichen Literatur* 148], Berlin – New York 2002, pp. 347, 351–352). On this assumption, we prefer not to correct the text. The omission of the second *iota*, however, could be explained alternatively as a kind of visual haplography, by conflation with the vertical of the following *kappa*.

7. For the drop of final *nu* in the papyri, see Gignac, *Grammar* I (cit. above), pp. III–III2; an identical example from elsewhere in Nubia (Meinarti), *I. Khartoum Greek* 9 (DBMNT 8 = TM 99098), l. 19: τὸν δοῦλο σου, was quoted already in our commentary to no. 1 of the Bankes stela.

8. Γεόργιον: not a genitive, but most likely a false ending due to the influence of preceding σου.

11. In the name of Jacob, the mason erroneously wrote a *kappa* instead of the final *beta*, either by inadvertence, omitting two strokes in a squarish *beta*, or under the influence of the repeated *kappas* in line 10. The division of the name over lines 10–11 is awkward, but not without parallels in similar Nubian epitaphs, for instance in the same name in *I. Tibiletti Bruno* 49, ll. 7–8 (from Ginari [Tafa], Firth's grave 807 [DBMNT 436 = TM 102427]).

Jacques van der Vliet

Radboud University Nijmegen
Faculty of Religious Studies
Leiden University
School of Middle Eastern Studies
Postbus 9515, 2300 RA Leiden
THE NETHERLANDS
e-mail: j.van.der.vliet@bum.leidenuniv.nl

Klaas A. Worp

Leiden University
University Library
Papyrological Institute
Witte Singel 26–27
2311 RA Leiden
THE NETHERLANDS
e-mail: karworp@zonnet.nl