

Τὸν πίνακα ξανθᾶς Καλλῷ δόμον εἰς Ἀφροδίτας  
 εἰκόνα γραψαμένα πάντ' ἀνέθηκεν ἕσαν.  
 ὥς ἀγανῶς ἔστακεν· ἴδ', ἃ χάρις ἀλίκον ἀνθεῖ.  
 χαιρέτω· οὐ τίνα γὰρ μέμψιν ἔχει βιοτᾶς.

Kallo set up her painting in the temple of blonde Aphrodite,  
 a painted image like the original in all respects.  
 How gently she stands. See how much her grace flowers.  
 Blessing on her, for she has no fault in her life.

The poem immediately preceding Nossis 8, Erinna 3 (6.352), is also about how lifelike a portrait is, using *ἐτύμως*:

Ἐξ ἀταλᾶν χειρῶν τάδε γράμματα· λῶστε Προμαθεύ,  
 ἔντι καὶ ἄνθρωποι τὴν ὁμαλοὶ σοφίαν·  
 ταύταν γοῦν ἐτύμως τὴν παρθένον ὅστις ἔγραψεν,  
 αἱ καὺδ' ἀν ποτέθηκ', ἥς κ' Ἀγαθαρχὶς ὅλα.

This painting comes from tender hands. Good Prometheus,  
 there are even humans your equal in skill.  
 At any rate, whoever painted this girl so accurately,<sup>9</sup>  
 if he had only added a voice, it would be completely Agatharchis.

So too here. Nossis uses a tidy chiasmus: A. Melinna, B. portrait, B. daughter, A. mother, and further equates the portrait with the daughter by repetition of language: ὥς ἀγανὸν τὸ πρόσωπον . . . ὥς ἐτύμως θυγάτηρ. Thus she sets up a simple set of ratios: Subject is to Painting as Original is to Copy as Parent/Mother is to Child/Daughter. This interpretation also solves the obvious problem that Gow and Page pointed out: 'For the common sentiment that it is good for children to resemble their parents see Gow on Theocr. 17.47, but, as Jacobs noted, it concerns the resemblance between father and children which is evidence of their legitimacy and has little relevance to the resemblance between daughter and mother.'<sup>10</sup>

Nossis has thus created a witty *variatio* on the common metaphor of the work as the child of the artist, and a new twist on the theme of realism in art.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Gow and Page (n. 1), II.284 gloss *ἐτύμως* 'to the life'.

<sup>10</sup> F. Jacobs, *Anthologia Graeca* (Leipzig, 1794–1814), ad loc.

<sup>11</sup> For example, *AP* 9.726 (Antipater on Myron), 16.83 (painting by Timomachus), 16.292 (*Iliad* and *Odyssey* as the daughters of Homer).

#### A GREEK INSCRIPTION ON THE MEMNON COLOSSUS: THE MYSTERIOUS 'MISTER T'

A curious series of ancient graffiti exists inscribed on the legs of one of the so-called Memnon colossi in Egypt. Roman tourists—government functionaries, professional poets, and private citizens—flocked to Egyptian Thebes to hear the famous stones speak, a phenomenon now understood to be the result of the early morning sun warming and expanding the stone base, which had cracked in an earthquake c. C.E. 29, according to Strabo (17.1.46). Visitors to the site began arriving under Tiberius, peaked in Hadrian's reign, and trailed off in the late second and early third

centuries C.E.<sup>1</sup> Many visitors inscribed their responses to the mysterious event on the statue itself: 107 legible inscriptions remain, in Greek and Latin, verse and prose.<sup>2</sup> Few scholars have paid attention to this corpus, with the notable exceptions of West and Bowie; the latter scholar discusses some of the material in his excellent survey article on Greek poetry in the Antonine age.<sup>3</sup> I would like to reconsider one inscription that I think has been misunderstood; at stake is the distinction between the act of poetic composition and that of actual carving on the rock.

The inscription in question is Bernand 19, where we meet one Funisulanus Charisius, *strategos* of the *nomes* Hermonthis and Lato, who comes with his wife Fulvia to visit the statue. Bowie translates as follows:<sup>4</sup>

Φουνεισουλανός ἐνθαδεὶ [Χα]ρείσιος,  
στρατηγὸς Ἑρμωνθίδος τε [κα.] Λάτων πάτρης,  
ἄγων δάμαρτα Φουλβίαν ἀ[κλήκ]οεν  
σοῦ, Μέμνων, ἠχήσαντος, ἡν[ίχ]’ ἡ] μήτηρ  
ἢ σὴ χυθεῖα σὸν δέμας ΑΠΩ.....ΦΕΙ.  
Θύσας δὲ καὶ σπείσας τε ΚΑΡΤ-----  
τοῦτ’ αὐτὸς ἠΰτησεν εἰς σε[ῖο κλέος].  
«λάλον μὲν Ἀργῶ παῖς ἔλων-----]  
λάλον δὲ φηγόν τὴν Διὸς[-----]  
σέ δ’ αὐτὸν ὅσσοις μούνον ἐδ[ράκην ἐμοῖς,]  
ὥς αὐτὸς ἠχέεις καὶ βοήν τιν’-----».  
Τοῦτον δέ σοι χάραξε τὸν στίχον[---  
ὅς εἶπε τ’ αὐτῷ φίλτατος Τ-----

Here Funisulanus Charisius, *strategos* of Hermonthis and the land of Lato, together with his wife Fulvia heard you calling, Memnon, when your mother spread herself [over?] your body. And after offering sacrifice and libation he uttered this himself to your glory: ‘That the Argo talked I was told as a child, and that the oak of Zeus [at Dodona] talked; but you alone have I seen with my own eyes, how you yourself called out and uttered a cry.’ This verse was inscribed for you by the dearest friend who was in his company, T[-----]

Bowie reads the last line of the poem as an acknowledgement by Funisulanus that he asked his ‘dearest friend’ to write the graffito, as if the friend were more talented, or perhaps (but admittedly conjecturally) even professionally trained in verse composition: ‘Funisulanus seems to have felt less competent to compose a poem than

<sup>1</sup> The earliest inscription (Bernand 1) is dated to the reign of Tiberius, while the last datable inscription (Bernand 60) is fixed at C.E. 205. For a chronology of the inscriptions, see the introduction to the edition of A. and E. Bernand, *Les Inscriptions grecques et latines du Colosse de Memnon* (Paris, 1960), 29–31. The colossus ceased being a tourist site when the statue was repaired sometime in the third century, accidentally but effectively silencing its mysterious voice.

<sup>2</sup> The inscriptions are collected, edited, translated, and illustrated in Bernand (n. 1).

<sup>3</sup> E. L. Bowie, ‘Greek poetry in the Antonine age’, in D. A. Russell (ed.), *Antonine Literature* (Oxford, 1990), 53–90. See also M. L. West, ‘Balbilla did not save Memnon’s soul’, *ZPE* 25 (1977), 120; and ‘Die griechischen Dichterinnen der Kaiserzeit’, in H. G. Beck, A. Kambylis, and P. Moraux (edd.), *Kyktos: Griechisches und Byzantinisches*, Festschrift für Rudolf Keydell (Berlin, 1978), 101–15. More recently, see T. Corey Brennan, ‘The poets Julia Balbilla and Damo at the colossus of Memnon’, *CW* 91 (1998), 215–34. Other brief references to the corpus include G. W. Bowersock, ‘The miracle of Memnon’, *Bulletin of the American Society of Papyrologists* 21 (1984), 21–32; A. Theodorides, ‘Pelerinage au Colosse de Memnon’, *Chronique d’Egypte* 64 (1989), 267–82; S. Fein, *Die Beziehungen der Kaiser Trajan und Hadrian zu den literati* (Stuttgart and Leipzig, 1994), 112–14.

<sup>4</sup> I will use Bowie’s (n. 3) translations for Bernand 19, but my own translations for the rest of the passages. See also Bernand 8 for one Funisulana Vettulla, writing in Latin, who may be related to the author of 19, although her inscription has been dated to Domitian’s reign (c. C.E. 82).

his friend, but that does not prove that the latter was a professional poet.<sup>5</sup> Bowie implies that the unnamed friend, rather than Funisulanus himself, composed the four verses quoted above, but his argument rests on shaky ground.

First, I suspect that the verb *χάραξε* in line 12 does not mean 'compose' here, but rather 'inscribe' (as Bowie correctly translates it), 'scratch on' the rock, referring to the act of carving rather than composition.<sup>6</sup> While the verb *graphein* and its compound *anagraphein* are used elsewhere to mean both 'compose' and 'inscribe', I think that *charattein* here, its sole occurrence in the Memnon collection, denotes the more narrowly defined act of inscribing itself. The verb, with its root *χαρακ*, emphasizes the physical act of scratching with a pointed object, rather than the mental activity implied in poetic composition. But the issue is complicated by the lacuna in line 13: the editors Bernand offer two different translations of the final two lines: either 'Et il grava pour toi ce poème . . . après t'avoir parlé et . . . tout à fait en ami', where we are meant to assume that Funisulanus himself both composed and engraved the poem (or paid to have it engraved) for Memnon, his addressee; or, 'le poème a été gravé par les soins de X . . . ami très cher de Funisulanus, qui l'accompagnait', where the letter 'T', visible at the end of the line, begins the name of the friend in question, who engraved the poem (or paid to have it engraved), in which case the Greek text must be changed from *εἶπε τ' αὐτῷ* to *εἶπετ' αὐτῷ*.<sup>7</sup> In neither case is the anonymous friend connected with the actual composition, as Bowie suggests. So, while I would hesitate to pin down the precise distinction between *charattein* and *graphein* in general epigraphic practice, and while *graphein* is certainly a flexible word in inscriptional contexts, for this specific example, the action described is clearly one of carving rather than composition. Funisulanus distinguishes between the act of poetic creation and the physical recording on stone.

The second reservation I have about Bowie's reading is his assumption of Funisulanus' literary modesty. Neither modesty nor incompetence deterred many other contributors to the site, whose verses have been called 'atrocious' and worse.<sup>8</sup> In addition, Bernand 18 preserves another inscription by the same Funisulanus, in which he presents in prose the hour and date of Memnon's utterance:

Λούκιος Φουνεισουλανὸς  
Χαρείσιος, στρατηγὸς Ἑρμῶν-  
θείτου Λατοπολείτου, ἡκου-  
σα Μέμνονος δῖς, πρὶν πρῶ-  
της ὥρας καὶ πρώτῃ, σὺν  
τῇ γυναικί μου Φουλβίᾳ,  
Θῶθ η, (ἔτους) ζ Ἀδριανοῦ τοῦ  
κυρίου.

<sup>5</sup> Bowie (n. 3), 65.

<sup>6</sup> As far as I can tell from a careful reading of the Bernand edition, this verb occurs only here, but variations of *graphein* occur more frequently (e.g. 11.4, 35.3–4, 51.9, 61.5 [where a professional poet Falernus writes the lines], 94.2; 98.2). On the Latin side, 54.2 has a certain Maximus Statilius say *audit et donat camenas*, which the brothers Bernand interpret as 'heard and offers [these] poems'; 1.3 reads *audi et egi gratias*; 41.4 elaborates *Aquila epistrategus Thebaidos fecit cum audit Memnonem*. Of interest are the implications of *donare*, *gratias agere*, and *facere* in the context of the Greek *graphein*.

<sup>7</sup> The French translations are in Bernand (n. 1), 62–5. Bowie (n. 3), 65 confuses things by printing the Greek text *εἶπε τ' αὐτῷ* but translating it 'who was in his company'.

<sup>8</sup> Bowie (n. 3), 62 of Julia Balbilla; West, 'Die griechischen Dichterinnen', 105 speaks disparagingly of Caecilia Trebulla's verses.

I, Lucius Funisulanus Charisius, *strategos* of the nomes Hermonthites and Latopolites, heard Memnon [speak] twice, before the first hour and at the first hour, together with my wife Fulvia, on the eighth [day] of Thoth in the seventh year of the reign of Hadrian our lord.

Funisulanus speaks in the first person throughout this inscription, so we may assume that he is indeed its author. Multiple graffiti by the same person are not infrequent in the collection: Caecilia Trebulla, for example, writes three sets of verses, the first two in the first person and the third purportedly in Memnon's own voice (Bernand 92–4).<sup>9</sup> Funisulanus may be trying his hand at *variatio*: the prose inscription 18 limits itself to the facts, while the verses of 19 show off his erudition with allusions to the story of the Argo and Zeus' oak at Dodona, and showcase his literary style with syntactic parallelisms and an elegant priamel (λάλον μὲν . . . λάλον δὲ . . . σέ δ').

Third, for further support for a lexical difference between 'composing' and 'inscribing', we can turn to Bernand 11, where I would argue that the verb *ἔγραψε* implies verse composition, and where we have a clear example, as Bowie points out, of a professional poet writing for a tourist who presumably has paid him for his services:

Εἰ καὶ λαβητῆρες ἐλυμήναντο δέμας σόν,  
ἀλλὰ σύ γ' αὐδήεις, ὡς κλύον αὐτὸς ἐγώ,  
Μέττιος, ὃ Μέμνον· Παῖων τὰδ' ἔγραψε Σιδήτης.

Even if vandals have defaced your body, you can still speak, Memnon, as I, Mettius, heard for myself. Paion of Side wrote these words.

Here Paion of Side writes for one Mettius, shifting easily from the first person of 'I, Mettius, have heard your voice, Memnon', to a final half-line claiming authorship in the third person: 'Paion of Side wrote these lines.'<sup>10</sup> Because we know from other sources that Paion was a professional poet involved in the Dionysiac Guild in the mid-second century C.E., we can read this last line as an explicit claim to authorship; surely a famous poet would not boast of being the actual inscriber.<sup>11</sup> Mettius commissioned the poem and Paion responded by writing first in Mettius' own voice, but then correcting any false impression that Mettius himself might have written the words. This is a clear example of one man composing verses for another, but no mention is made of the act of inscribing. Instead, both patron and poet are acknowledged, and Paion manages to praise both Mettius as the person who actually heard Memnon's voice, and himself as the one to commemorate the event. One could speculate further on this connection: did the patron gain additional honour because he chose a reputable poet to compose the dedication? Did Paion demand equal billing as part of his payment as a way to encourage further commissions? This situation may be compared to the signatures of potter and painter on archaic pots, where both signers share responsibility for the final artistic outcome.

Finally, let me point out the sole bilingual epigram recorded on the colossus (although it is dated earlier, to the reign of Domitian). This inscription (Bernand 13) is the work of Titus Petronius Secundus, prefect of Egypt in the late first century C.E., who hears the miraculous voice of Memnon and honours him with two Greek verses inserted into eight lines of Latin prose:

<sup>9</sup> Other repeat inscribers are Julia Balbilla (28–31), Paion of Side (11, 12), Marius Gemellus (51–3), Julius Fidus Aquila (41–2), Claudius Maximus (44–5), and Hermogenes (38–9).

<sup>10</sup> Cf. Bernand 12, where Paion of Side writes of his own experience of Memnon.

<sup>11</sup> See Bowie (n. 3), 66 on the identity of Paion.

Imp(eratore) Domitiano  
 Caesare Aug(usto) German(ico) XVI c(onsule)  
 T(itus) Petronius Secundus pr(aefectus) Aeg(ypti)  
 audit Memnonem hora I pr(idie) Idus Mart(ias)  
 et honoravit eum versibus Graecis  
 infra scriptis:  
 Φθέγξας Λατοῖδα, σὸν γὰρ μέρος ᾧδε κάθηται,  
 Μέμνων, ἀκτεῖσιν βαλλόμενος πυρίναις.  
 curante T(ito) Attio Musa prae[f](ecto) coh(ortis) II  
 Thebaeor(um).

In the sixteenth consulate of the emperor Domitian Caesar Augustus Germanicus, Titus Petronius Secundus, prefect of Egypt, heard Memnon in the first hour, on the day before the Ides of March, and honoured him with the Greek verses written below:

You uttered a sound, Memnon, for part of you is seated here,  
 When the son of Latona struck you with his fiery rays.

[This was done] by the care of Titus Atticus Musa, prefect of the second cohort of Thebans.

Bernand translates the last two lines of the inscription (13.9–10) as ‘par les soins de Titus Attius Musa, préfet de la deuxième cohorte de Thébains’.<sup>12</sup> He deduces that the ‘second cohort’ of Thebes must have been garrisoned in the neighbourhood, and that this officer took charge of having the verses of his superior inscribed on the monument. I suggest that Titus Attius Musa served the same function for Petronius Secundus as did the mysterious ‘Mr T . . .’ for Funisulanus; he was either the actual inscriber, or the person who paid for the inscription to be made by a professional stone-cutter on the premises, but certainly not the author of the inscription.

So I would conclude that, in the case of Funisulanus, both sets of verses were composed by the same man, but that for whatever reason his friend Mr T . . . (whose name we have lost but was surely recorded at the time) either volunteered to inscribe Bernand 19 in the rock himself and refused to take payment for his favour, or arranged to have it done, that is, to pay for the carving himself. He is named precisely because it was unusual for him to do this, and which he probably did as a personal favour to the man who called him his ‘dearest friend’. Such touristic inscribing, at least at the Memnon site, may have been performed more usually by local Egyptian stone-cutters for a set fee. Strabo (17.1.46) tells us that crowds often collected around the base of the statues, perhaps offering their professional services as engravers as well as guides or food vendors.<sup>13</sup> But in this case, one visitor was able to bypass the customary expense for the carving of his verses; Funisulanus was indeed fortunate in having such a useful and generous friend.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Bernand (n. 1), 52–3; the editors point to another inscription by Secundus on a stele in the museum at Alexandria, on which he similarly records the name of the person who arranged for the carving: *Πρώταρχος ἐγραψεν*.

<sup>13</sup> V. Foertmeyer, *Tourism in Graeco-Roman Egypt*, diss. (Princeton, 1989), 25 claims that ‘the inscriptions were not scratched into the rock, but were engraved by professional stone-cutters’. In addition, T. C. Brennan (n. 3), 216–17 argues that local priests charged a fee for the privilege of writing on the stone.

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