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Adam Łajtar

**THE INSCRIPTION FROM MARINA-EL ALAMEIN
COMMEMORATING THE ΣΚΟΥΤΛΩΣΙΣ OF ΣΤΙΒΑΔΕΣ**

AN ADDENDUM

MY ARTICLE ENTITLED “Two Architectural Terms: σκούτλωσις and στιβάς in an Inscription from Marina-el Alamein (with an Appendix: Inscription of a Frying-pan)” published in this *Journal* 21 (2001), pp. 59–66, discusses a Greek inscription found in 2000 by the Polish-Egyptian Preservation Mission in Marina/el-Alamein some 90 kilometres west of Alexandria.¹ The inscription is on the narrow side of two large fragments of marble slabs (or a slab). It commemorates the laying of the chequered-work (σκούτλωσις) of some dining beds (στιβάδες) during the reign of Commodus, most probably between 180 and 183. I argued that the slabs in question may be parts of this works, which was intended to adorn a gathering place of members of an association.

During the 2003 season, my friend Ms. Iwona Zych “discovered” in the store-room of the Mission yet another small fragment of a similar slab.² Its find spot is unknown. The fragment is 14.5 cm long, 5 cm wide, and 5 cm

¹ For the recent work of the Mission, see W. A. DASZEWSKI, “Marina el-Alamein. Season 2001”, *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 13 (2001), pp. 73–86; S. MEDEKSZA, “Marina el-Alamein. Conservation work, 2001”, *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean* 13 (2001), pp. 87–104.

² She is also the author of the copy and the photo of the inscription reproduced here. I would like to thank Iwona Zych for all her friendly collaboration.

thick. It comes from the left-hand corner of a rectangular slab and contains the beginning and, to the right angles on the left, the end of the inscription. This shows that the inscription ran around an object which apparently was rectangular or square in shape. The distribution of the text on the sides is largely unknown. It is even uncertain whether the fragments (a) and (b) published by me previously come from the same side or from different ones. An average height of letters in the new fragment varies from 2.0 to 2.5 cm. The sign for (ἐτους) at the beginning of the inscription is 3.2 cm high. Two last letters of the inscription are considerably smaller. Evidently, the stonemason was running out of space here. The regnal year is separated from the word αὐτ[οκράτορος] by a free space. It should be noted that the siglum (ἐτους) has an unusual form, its reading is, however, secured by the context.

Thanks to the new fragment the inscription may be reconstructed as follows:

(ἐτους) κγ' αὐτ[οκράτορος Καίσαρος Μάρκ]ου Ἀντωνείνου Κομμό[δου
 - - - κ]αὶ τῆν σ[κ]ούτλωσιν τῶν στιβάδων [- - - | - - - ἐπ' ἀγ]αθῶ.

Year 23 of Emperor Caesar Marcus Antoninus Commodus [- - -] and the chequered-work of stibades [- - -] for the good.

Year 23 of Commodus corresponds to the period: 29 August 182–28 August 183. This is in agreement with the nomenclature of the emperor which suggests a date between 180 and 183; cf. a detailed discussion in *JJP* 31 (2001), pp. 61–62.

After στιβάδων the stone has a horizontal incurved line surmounted by a point; cf. the facsimile of the inscription in *JJP* 31 (2001), pl. 3c after p. 66. In the *editio princeps*, I expressed the opinion that these two signs mark the end of the inscription, however, this cannot be true in the light of the new fragment. Possibly they indicate a stop or are but a “Platzfüller”. The reading ἐπ' ἀγ]αθῶ seems to be certain. The width of the lacuna between στιβάδων and ἐπ' ἀγ]αθῶ and its content cannot be established with certainty. Possibly, after Κομμό[δου] the text gave information about the acting person or the acting body while before ἐπ' ἀγ]αθῶ a verb indicating the action was placed.

Ms. Zych, Prof. Wiktor A. Daszewski and Prof. Stanisław Medeksza who know the inscription from autopsy call my attention to the fact that the marble in all fragments is of the same kind. Thus, it is possible that what we are dealing with was in fact one slab of considerable dimensions resembling a table and not several plaques set up together in form of a chequer. If so, the inscription would not have been part of the *σκούτλωσις* mentioned in it, but would have commemorated the completion of the work exclusively.

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