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THE COMMODUS MONUMENT FROM HOUSE H21C IN MARINA EL-ALAMEIN

Rafał Czerner, Stanisław Medeksza

The commemorative monument dedicated to Commodus, discovered in the course of archaeological and conservation work carried out on the site of Marina el-Alamein on the northwestern coast of Egypt, has undergone anastylosis and partial restoration. The present paper sums up the work that has gone in the reconstruction of this small but ornate piece of Roman-age architecture from Egypt.[1]

The monument was set up in a house marked as H21c [see ***Fig. 1*** on page 82], inside an official hall (unit 2) opening axially of the south side of a double-portico courtyard, against the west wall of the room [***Fig. 1***]. The base wall was all that was preserved *in situ*, 4.25 m long and 1.98 m wide, erected on top of the room pavement and with the two lateral sections affixed to the west wall. The wall was built of vertical limestone slabs, presenting one of the two typical sizes for Marina, that is, an average 54–60 by 30 cm and 20 cm thick. Two courses of these slabs stood in place, giving a total height of 0.71 m [***Fig. 2***]. The impression was of two small units without doorways, which were not identified at first

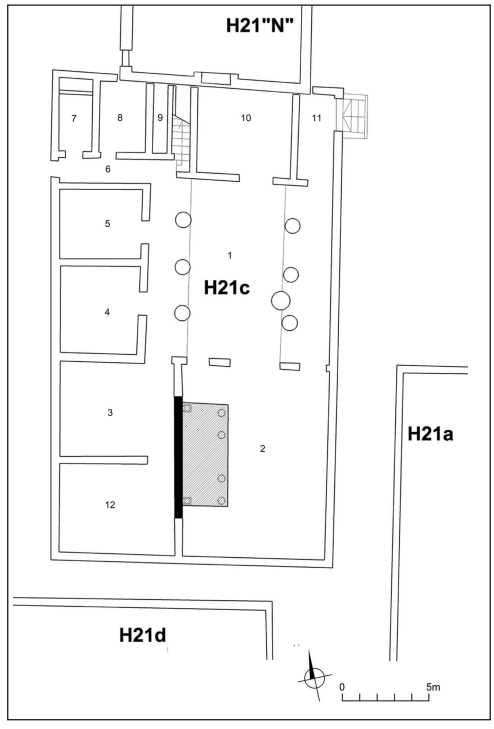

Fig. 1. Position of the Commodus monument inside House H21c (Drawing M. Krawczyk-Szczerbińska, S. Medeksza)

1 The Polish-Egyptian Restoration Mission commenced work in this area in 2000. The house was cleared originally in 1989–1992 in the course of Egyptian rescue excavations which followed the discovery of the site in 1986. Since then the following members of the PCMA conservation team have participated in the project: Rafał Czerner, architect-restorer, Wiesław Grzegorek, architect-building engineer and restorer (in charge of the work), Stanisław Medeksza, architect-restorer (Mission Director and co-author with R. Czerner of the anastylosis project), Małgorzata Ujma, artist and painting restorer, Piotr Zambrzycki, artist and stone restorer (responsible for choosing conservation technologies).

for what they were. From the beginning, however, the presence of a monument of this kind was suggested by several elements of architectural decoration, discovered successively during the various stages of exploration work inside House H21c and apparently belonging to an order of atypically small size.

The surviving elements comprised six column shafts with a diameter between 31.5 and 29 cm and no more than 0.53 m high. The one with the smallest diameter was only 0.45 m high. Some of the shafts bore the remains of two coatings of plaster and some traces of polychromy. One of the shafts, found in the fill during clearing work in 2001 in the adjacent room 12, preserved both plaster coatings, a very smooth, thinner outer one and the other with a painted vegetal scrolling ornament (Medeksza 2002: 100, Fig. 14) [***Fig. 3***]. Corresponding to the column drums were two elements: a base featuring a simplified profile, 0.28 m high together with the bottom part of the shaft, and a well-preserved stylized capital from a single block of limestone, presenting a pseudo-Corinthian order typical of Marina's architecture, characterized by geometrically shaped shields replacing acanthi leaves and simplified corner volutes (for 'Marina type' architectural decoration, cf. Daszewski 1990: 113–114; Medeksza, Czerner 2003: 21–22) [***Fig. 4***, top]. The capital with a semi-torus around the bottom edge was 0.28 m high; the abacus diagonal measured 0.65 m and the column diameter below it 0.29 m. Another less well preserved capital had the same form and the same height [***Fig. 4***, bottom]. It came from a square pilaster, which measured 0.31 m to

Fig. 2. Relics of the base of the monument, documented following salvage excavations in late 1980s (Photo PCMA archives)

the side, practically the same as the maximum column shaft diameter. This pilaster clearly projected from the wall face, being joined to it by a neck 0.26 m wide and 0.10 m long. The abacus diagonal was bigger than in the case of the column capital, equalling about 0.72 m.

Several elements of a dentil cornice, a total of 19 pieces carved of limestone with a combined length of c. 9.50 m, match the described column drums and pilaster fragments. They are of two kinds, differing slightly in dimensions and stone quality. The stronger limestone, which is less susceptible to erosion, was used for seven blocks, totalling 3.72 m in length [***Fig. 5***]. One of these elements was the end piece projecting from the wall, while another was a broken off outer corner. The poorer kind of limestone was used for 12 elements, giving a combined length of 5.75 m. The stylization and simplification are typical of Marina, missing the *ovolo* between the dentils and cornice slab and crowned with a very low geometrized *cyma*. The dentils are broad and low with very narrow spaces in between. Average dimensions of the cornice are: 15.6–18 cm (without cyma 13–14.1 cm), maximum dentil height 5.5 cm, dentil projection 5.5–6 cm, dentil width 4 or 4.8 cm, spacing between them 2 or 1.2 cm.

Fig. 3. Column from the commemorative monument with polychrome decoration on the shaft, after conservation (Photo S. Medeksza)

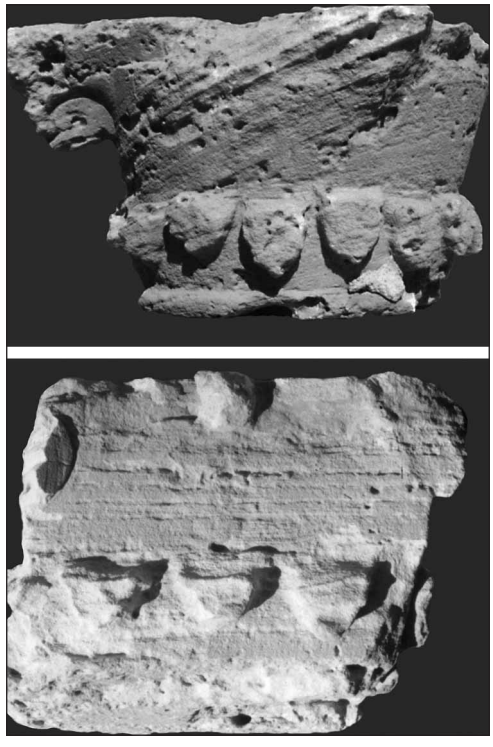

Fig. 4. Pseudo-Corinthian capital of a column (top) and square pilaster from the commemorative monument, before conservation (Photo R. Czerner)

Fig. 5. Surviving elements of the cornice from the commemorative monument (Photo R. Czerner)

Fig. 6. Fragments of a marble slab with inscription along the side edges (Photo PCMA archives)

All of the described architectural elements came from a single set, actually even from the same feature, which could be construed as a kind of portico with at least two columns and one pilaster, but much more in fact to judge by the number of cornice fragments. No parts of the architrave or frieze have been discovered, but this does not come as a surprise in the light of what is known from excavations in Marina el-Alamein. Friezes were simply not used and the architraves were of wood in all likelihood. The dimensions, compared to the reconstructed height of the room, were rather small: for the sake of comparison, the lower shaft diameter of the columns in the portico courtyard was 0.46 m and they were appropriately taller. It was clear that some kind of commemorative monument was involved, but the connection with the base in room 2 was not made until later.

The breakthrough came with the discovery of two marble slabs with a fragmentary inscription on the side edges [***Fig. 6***], discovered in 2000 while clearing room 2 (Medeksza 2001: 73–74). The pieces of reddish marble with bluish veins were recomposed into two slabs, one 34.5 cm long, 34 cm wide and 4.8 cm thick, the other 60.5 cm long, 29.5 cm wide and 4.3 cm thick (a corner fragment was registered among finds from the original Egyptian excavations — 14.5 cm long, 5 cm wide and 5 cm thick). The inscription on the long side edge of the slabs was carved in round majuscules from 1.5 to 2.2 cm high. In 2003, Iwona Zych recognized another small fragment of a similar slab. Adam Łajtar (2001: 59–65; revised in 2003: 178) has read the text as follows:

(ἔτους) κγ΄αὐτ[οκράτορος
Καίσαρος Μάρκ]ου Ἀντωνείνου
Κομμό[δου --- κ]αὶ τὴν
σ[κ]ούτλωσιν τ̣ῶν στιβάδων
[--- / --- ἐπ᾽ ἀγ]αθῷ.

Year 23 of Imperator Caesar Marcus Antoninus Commodus [--- (has laid or have laid) ---] and the chequered-work of *stibades* [---] for the good.

Of greatest importance for architectural studies is the date given in the inscription: year 23 of Commodus corresponds to the period between 29 August 182 and 28 August 183 (Łajtar 2003: 178). The inscription also hints at the possible function of the slabs bearing the text on the sides. The *stibades* is a term in the plural, which can refer among others to a masonry dining bed, possibly decorated with such marble slabs on top. Such luxurious beds (there would have been more than one in a room) would have stood not so much in a private house, as in a building dedicated to the purposes of a professional or cultic association (Łajtar 2001: 63–65).

The inscribed slabs from Marina were found in the fill of the biggest hall of the building designated as House H21c. Most of the above-described elements of architectural décor were also uncovered in this spot, immediately next to the two mysterious units standing against the west wall of the room. This prompted the original interpretation — since abandoned — of these two units as a rather large masonry bed, examples of which are known from Marina (in the aboveground mausoleums of hypogeum tombs T6, T11 and T21, although there they are characterized by richly profiled edges of each wall face). Once it was assumed that a marble top of such fineness covered the top of this bed, the other elements of the rich decoration became justifiable, and their rather small size was explained by their elevation above the floor. Thus envisaged, the feature standing against the west wall of this official room, possibly a banquet hall, started taking on the appearance of a monument with a marble-topped base and a portico of four richly painted columns and

two pilasters projecting from the wall [*Fig. 7*]. The number of four columns came from the length of the base as compared to the column diameters and possible length of intercolumnar spaces. Taking into consideration the text of the inscription, it turned out that this monument could have been dedicated to Commodus and it could have commemorated the completion of the work it describes, the said *stibades* (2003: 179).

Upon establishing the possible nature of the structure inside the main hall of the building, it proved necessary to reconsider the potential function of the building as

Fig. 7. Theoretical reconstruction of the form of the commemorative monument in room 2 of House H21c (R. Czerner)

a whole. The assumption that it could have served in a public capacity, as the meeting place of some religious association, is confirmed by both the plan and the functional arrangement of the structure, considered together with the associated complex H21"N". Indeed, the idea had already been proposed with regard to the latter structure which is a large rectangular hall with three entrances from the north and a huge aedicule, recently raised and partly restored, in the opposite wall. There was also a niche imitating yet another entrance in the southwestern corner, but it was blind from the beginning. As far as aedicules are concerned, they appear to have been a fairly typical form of decorating the main halls of houses in Marina el-Alamein, set up usually on the main axis, in the wall opposite to the main entrance to the room. To date, excavations have unearthed six examples of such niches, as well as a small aedicule carved from a single block of limestone, the latter discovered also in room 2 of House H21c (Czerner 2005).

H21"N" was exceptional, however, for the niche matched for size the hall it was in: 2.67 m high and 2.13 m wide. Moreover, the entire building consisted of just this one hall. There were no other rooms. Longitudinal streets ran outside the east and west walls. The eastern street was lined with a solid wall several dozen meters long, running northward from the northeastern corner of the hall. It may have marked out some public space like a square. Thus, from a functional point of view, the hall was an independent building serving a public, possibly cultic function. Attached to H21"N", which had been the first to be built, was the entire complex of House H21c. The commemorative monument in question was introduced at a yet later stage of construction. Consequently, it is not to be excluded that the house, while retaining many elements of a typical habitation complex, like a courtyard, cistern accessed by a well, latrine and staircase etc., could have actually served public purposes in similarity to the huge hall next door.

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE FORM OF THE MONUMENT

The theoretical reconstruction of the form of the monument in the part of the base preserved *in situ* and the columns did not raise as many questions and doubts as the cornice and indeed the entire top of the structure.

The base is a practically rectangular trapeze, measuring 4.25 m by 1.98 m, which translates into approximately 8 by 4 elbows (one elbow equals c. 52.5 cm). The back part is 6 cm longer than the front, the irregularity however being due to insufficiently precise execution. The walls were not decorated with carved elements like the profiled *klinai* from the necropolis, but they could have been plastered and possibly even painted, in similarity to the column shafts.

The top of this base would have been faced with the said marble slab, approximately 4.8 cm thick, which provided the surface for the columns and pilasters. The pieces of the two slabs that have been found come from the front edges and fragmentarily one each from the sides. Interestingly, these are at an angle, but not 45°. Thus, the term "chequered" in the inscription draws associations also with the division of the decorated field into square slabs, rather than

into two colours (no fragments of any other colour marble slab have been discovered).

The biggest doubt in relation to the base is whether a cornice existed under this slab top. The Marina site has yielded a few examples of cornices under half-columns and pilasters, mostly from the framing of the said house aedicules. A sill cornice of a small niche from the same room as the monument in question has also been preserved in fairly good condition, as well as the profile of a broken sill cornice of the niche from House H10, the cornice itself from House H9a, which was connected with the doorframe, and about half a cornice from House H10a, found together with elements of a small crowning cornice of corresponding size with attached pilaster and half-column from a niche framing. All of these cornices were quite prominent with a full cyma recta taking up at least half the profile, supporting a massive slab, in two cases carved with dentils and framed with additional profiling. The half-columns standing on these sills were very much like the supports from the commemorative monument in question, that is, identified as stylized Marina-type pseudo-Corinthian. Assuming such a sill had existed in this monument, it would have been richly carved and considering the length it would have had (a total of 8 m), it seems unlikely that not one single fragment has survived. The only possibility for its complete disappearance is that it was made of a material prized like marble and was removed and used elsewhere once the monument fell into ruin and was dismantled. Had it existed, it would have had to be c. 35 cm high counting together with the slab top (about one and a half times higher than in the case of the niche from House 10 *per analogiam*).

Two examples of a lower and more modest form of base cornice have also been discovered at Marina. They separate the bases from the higher parts of the pillar superstructures of tombs T2 and T3. As far as the structuring logic of architectural orders is concerned, these cornices serve the same purpose as the cornices under columns, despite the fact that the pillars under which they are placed have no bases. They did have, however, crowning capitals, architraves and cornices. These examples are earlier than the commemorative monument by some 300 years and they are slightly different in form despite an overall geometrization so characteristic of Marina's architectural orders (the Marina-type pseudo-Corinthian form of the order was not established until the end of the 1st and beginning of the 2nd century AD). In any case, these base cornices were low in proportion to the pillar and simple, not to be distinguished from ordinary stone blocks, especially if the bevelling, if any, was executed in plaster and not in the stone itself. The minimal value for such an element would be the thickness of a typical floor slab, that is, approximately 12 cm, which together with the almost 5 cm of the marble top would have raised the floor of the monument base that much above the height of the surviving base walls.

The third possibility is for the marble top to have rested directly on the edges of the base walls, on top of whatever filling was found inside the two units. No evidence survives for this, or any other possibility, hence the reconstruction has assumed a simplified form of considerable height, executed in a manner leaving no doubt as to the nature of this conservation intervention.

The proportions of the Marina-type pseudo-Corinthian columns, engaged columns and pilasters, between 15 and 18 modules, have been found to be proportionately smaller than in the Vitruvian version of the Corinthian order (Czerner

2005b: 283–298, Fig. 1,5; forthcoming). A continued debate concerns the slenderness of these columns as both extremes are evidenced from Marina: the most slender are the engaged columns and pilasters from wall niche framings (following Vitruvius' minimum recommendations for the Corinthian order, that is, 18 modules or nine times the shaft diameter at the base), while the least slender are the portico columns, where the value reconstructed from the scattered elements of columns collapsed in a quake equals less than 16 modules. The commemorative monument was a small form, like the aedicules in H9, H10 and H21c, which have the 18-module engaged columns, hence the supports are expected to be similarly slender. The point is that in the case of the commemorative monument the columns are freestanding.

The above comments determine only the possible proportions of the columns. Studies in this respect are facilitated by the fact that the shafts here were made of a few long elements and that a considerable number of elements of the same height have been preserved. The height of the base with attached fragment of shaft is 0.28 m, the capital is also 0.28 m, and most of the drums are 0.53 m, which is equal to one royal elbow. The diameter is from 31.5 cm, which is the same as above the base, to 29.5 cm, which is more than the shaft diameter below the capital. The module in this case is 15.75 cm, that is, half of 31.5 cm. One fragment of a lesser height (0.45 m) has an upper diameter of 29 cm, the same as the outline on the underside of the capital. This must have been therefore the top part of the column.

Two theoretical reconstructions of the arrangement of column elements are possible, the difference lying in the number of shaft drums — either two or three of the drums which measure 0.53 m, topped by the one which is 0.45 m. In one case, the reconstructed column is 214.5 cm, that is, about 4 royal elbows, in the other 267.5 cm, which adding approximately 1.5 cm for the mortar joints gives about 5 elbows. The former corresponds to 13.59 modules — not only a very small number, but not an integer as well — the latter to almost 17 modules, calculated precisely as 267.75 cm, which is only 2.5 mm more. Consequently, the 17-module height of the columns is unquestioned and both columns and pilasters were reconstructed accordingly. Column convergence is also in favour of this possibility; otherwise the columns would look excessively squat.

Considering that the square pilasters stood against the wall (as evidenced by the fragment of capital with neck/joining element), the freestanding columns had to form a line in front. Dividing the length of the base by potential intercolumnar spaces, which are a multiple of column diameter, leads to the conclusion that there was only one four-column portico. The pilasters were just two, at the extreme edges closing the U-shaped form of this portico. However, since no material evidence of the spacing of the columns has survived (no traced outlines on the base top, no dirt stains, destruction, remains of mortar etc.), some assumptions had to be made before the reconstruction could proceed. First of all, it was assumed that regardless of base diameter, about 10 cm bigger than the bottom drums and the potential width of the base cornice, the column bases should not project beyond the line of the base walls. Consequently, the maximum length encompassing four appropriately spaced columns in front is 4.25 m. The actual extreme distance could have been smaller, but its still should be a multiple of the bottom column diameter, that is, 31.5 cm or its half as the architectural module. This

would be logical from the point of view of ancient building practice and the known ways of spacing columns in porticos. Thirteen and a half diameters, equal to 4.255 m which is about 8 elbows, is a multiple value that is practically equal to the length of the base. Adding twice 5 cm, which is what the base adds to the shaft, gives the dimension increased by the projection of the cornice beyond the base walls.

An important question now is whether the intercolumnar spaces were all equal or the central one was visibly wider. In the first case, the spacing between extreme columns would have equalled three column base diameters and the central one 3.5 diameters (94.5 and 110.25 cm). In the second case, either the extreme spaces would have equalled 2.5 diameters (78.75 cm) and the central one 4.5 diameters (141.75 cm), or else the extreme ones had 2 diameters (63 cm) and the central one 5.5 diameters (173.25 cm). The last mentioned solution is the most likely from the aesthetic point of view, even if 5.5 diameters is a space exceeding that used in an *aerostylos*. On the other hand, a *distylos* of the extreme intercolumnar spaces would demand maximally slender columns, which are 18 modules high in Marina (Vitruvius, *De Architectura libri decem*, Book III, Ch. 3, already mentioned the dependence of column slenderness and intercolumnar space — the wider the space, the more slender the columns).

The commemorative character of the monument suggests some additional element, perhaps a figural one, either as a statue or perhaps a wall painting. The presence of the monolithic limestone niche of small size in the same room also merits attention. It may have very well occupied a place in the west wall, on the axis of the four-column portico, justifying to some extent the wider central intercolumnium. Thus, it was assumed in the reconstruction that the two centre columns had the space between them equal to the bigger of the two theoretical values, that is, 5.5 column diameters [*Fig. 8*].[2] Similar calculations for the space between the pilaster and corner column gave a distance of 118 cm, that is, more or less 3.75 column diameters.

The reconstruction of the monument top and the cornices continues to cause trouble despite the number of preserved elements. This is due to the state of preservation of the elements (only three of the 19 pieces of the cornice can be recomposed into a longer whole) and the limited nature of the original excavations, which permit little more than a theoretical study and analysis of analogies. The preserved 9.50 m of the cornice would be more than sufficient to line the three sides of the monument. What then of the extra meter? The most obvious interpretation is that the entablature ran from the pilaster to the corner column, then along the front of the monument, but only to the next column, after which it turned back to the west wall, ran along it for the width of the central intercolumnium, then repeated symmetrically the described arrangement at the other end. The central section thus acquired the appearance of a niche between colonnaded projections. This space could have been reserved for a statue or perhaps for the small stone niche immured in the west wall of the room, perhaps even for a

2 Moreover, for the purposes of the actual reconstruction, the calculations were made based on a column shaft diameter of 31 cm, not 31.5 cm. This was *nota bene* the width of the wall pilasters. In the effect of this modification, the extreme width of the entire portico colonnade was 4.18 m, better fitting the space above the base walls. Extreme intercolumnia equal to two diameters have 62 cm each, while the central one is equal to 5.5 diameters = 170.5 cm.

monumental wall painting. This arrangement would require a combined length of 9.50 m of the cornice.

The reconstruction becomes doubtful when it is recalled that the preserved part is only a section of a longer cornice and there is not one inner corner preserved and only one piece of an outer corner. None of the elements is cut at an angle of 45° and the only one that is different is the one starting from the wall. The number of preserved elements is difficult to fit into the presented arrangement of the entablature. Most of the back surfaces of the cornice elements look as if they had been mounted on the wall. Moreover, nothing but the dentils have been preserved. These differ slightly in size, indicating that the decoration did not form a uniform cornice, but came from different parts of the monument or its vicinity. The lack of friezes and architraves is not a decisive argument, because Roman Marina may not have had any friezes (except for the smallest monolithic aedicule) and the architraves may have been of wood. What is decisive and excluding the use of these cornice fragments in the monument is the excessive number of preserved pieces. The almost absolute absence of corner fragments and the rough dressing of the back of the cornice elements is proof that they were mounted on a wall.

It thus appears that the cornice was set in the wall, forming imposts above the pilasters and extending even beyond the monument itself [see ***Fig. 7***]. The architrave above the cornice may have even been formed in stucco. The columns remained free-standing, a monumental feature in itself. This appears to be confirmed by a detail observed on the topmost drum of one of the columns, which has rectangular slots carved in opposite sides

Fig. 8. Reconstruction of the form of the commemorative monument, front view (R. Czerner)

near the top surface. These openings are 12 by 12 cm in size and 4 cm deep, presumably intended for mounting wooden beams between neighbouring columns, directly below the capitals, in order to anchor the structure. No such element ensuring stability of the structure would have been needed, assuming there was a system of architrave blocks connecting all the columns and pilasters together.

Left with just one line of cornices along the length of the monument (about 4.50 m long), one has to deal with the excessive number of preserved pieces of this particular architectural element. It will be recalled that there were actually two varieties of dentils. A viable explanation is that cornices appeared also on the other walls of the room. The bigger ones may have crowned the entrances, either as three separate sections or one continuous line above all three doorways. An interesting point to consider is when these cornices could have been introduced. On one hand, the commemorative monument was erected already after the floor of the room had been paved and it was obviously attached to the wall. On the other hand, the undecorated parts of the cornice elements indicate that at least 24 cm of their thickness was immured in the wall. In view of the fact that all the walls in H21c are no more than 30 cm thick, it would suggest that either the room was destroyed in a quake or the project of the monument built into the room at some point required the ceiling and the tops of the walls to be dismantled first.

CONSERVATION, ANASTYLOSIS AND PARTIAL RECONSTRUCTION

Conservation and anastylosis of the monument with a partial reconstruction of some of the elements were carried out between 2001 and 2007 [***Fig. 9***]. The theoretical reconstruction did not appear all at once, but was rather a gradual development with answers being found to successive questions. The inscribed marble slab provided the breakthrough essential for the proper interpretation of this feature. Conservation of the polychromy on a column shaft was the only conservation intervention undertaken independently in 2001 (by restorer M. Ujma).

The anastylosis *in situ* started in 2002. The base wall faces were first treated and the units filled with stone chips and sand. New blocks in the typical size for Roman Marina (60 by 40 by 30 cm) were used to restore the top surface. They were laid flat, the thickness corresponding to one of the heights proposed for the theoretically reconstructed base cornice. A simplified form of the latter was introduced: a narrow upper fascia and its base, all cut from new blocks during the 2006 season. The perfect fit of these blocks regarding the top of the monument base served to confirm the modularity of Marina architecture. Only the projecting marble top was not reconstructed, thus narrowing the top of the reconstructed base with regard to the original one.

The upper parts of the monument were raised in part only, being limited by the number of available original elements: two columns and one pilaster to full height and a long section of cornice in the restored section of wall above the monument. A few elements were reconstructed, primarily the simple architrave blocks, column and pilaster shafts, but also three column and

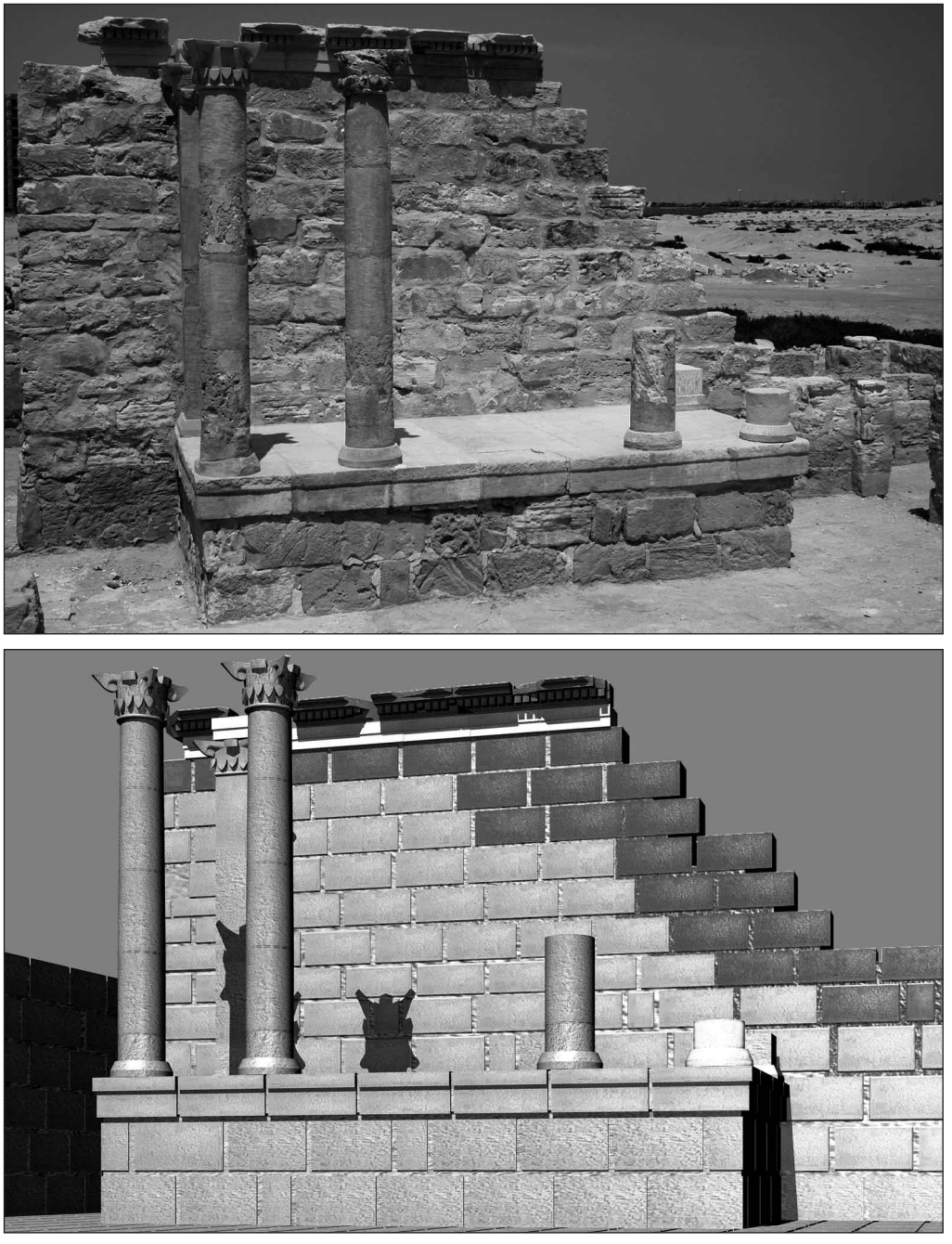

Fig. 9. The commemorative monument at the end of the season in 2007, following partial anastylosis and conservation (top). Original elements marked in dark-grey, those reconstructed in white (Photo and reconstruction drawing R. Czerner)

two pilaster bases and one full set of a column capital [*Fig. 11*]. Part of the west wall of the room was built up behind the monument to support the cornice, but also to create a good architectural backdrop. Authentic limestone blocks were used for the purpose. All the original architectural elements were conserved and completed as required before anastylosis (by restorer P. Zambrzycki). The most evident work was the recreation of the missing corner volutes of the pilaster capital [*Fig. 10*].

Two complete columns and a pilaster were erected at the southern end of the monument, balanced on the opposite end by only part of a column and a reconstructed base to suggest the position of the pilaster. The spacing of the columns in the front portico followed the theoretical reconstruction calling for a wider central(?) space (5.5 column diameters) and narrower lateral ones (2 diameters). The column and pilaster height were reconstructed as 17 modules, in keeping with the analysis presented in the analysis above, that is, about 267.75 cm, which is equal to about 5 royal elbows.

Fig. 10. Capital of the square pilaster after conservation (Photo R. Czerner)

The condition of the two pseudo-Corinthian capitals (of the pilaster and capital), while not the same, was sufficient for a satisfactory determination of both its

Fig. 11. Upper part of the commemorative monument in 2007, following partial anastylosis; note the original column capital and reconstruction patterned after the original (Photo R. Czerner)

form and details of its size. This led in effect to the reconstruction of a second capital (by restorer P. Zambrzycki in 2006) [cf. ***Fig. 11***]. A theoretical reconstruction of the form of this capital was facilitated by previous studies of similar elements (Czerner 2005a: 127) and the actual reconstruction has helped in understanding and recreating the stonecutter's methods and the technological process for making capitals of this kind (including some previously less obvious technological details).

CONCLUSION

It should be kept in mind with regard to this reconstruction and anastylosis that the degree of certainty differs depending on the part of the monument. The identification of the feature as a commemorative monument dedicated to Commodus is practically foolproof, just as foolproof is the reconstruction of the form of this monument as a wall portico standing on a platform base. The number of columns is certain as well, as is the architectural order according to which the monument was structured, especially column height and the form of most elements, such as capitals. The positioning of the columns, however, has been grounded in the logic of the architectural order and in analogies. Also the cornices and the top of the base are conjectural due to the state of preservation of the ruins.

In spite of these debatable elements, the anastylosis presented here, based on scientific assumptions and a strict analysis of preserved remains, is likely to be quite close to the truth. Parts where the reconstruction could not afford to be unambiguous were left in a way that opens the way to one's own interpretation.

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