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## Four inscriptions from Marina el-Alamein

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Adam Łajtar

## FOUR INSCRIPTIONS FROM MARINA/EL-ALAMEIN\*

RECENT EXCAVATIONS CARRIED OUT by the Polish Archaeological Mission and the Polish-Egyptian Conservation Mission on the site of Marina/el-Alamein, ca. 100 kilometres west of Alexandria,<sup>1</sup> brought to light interesting epigraphic material.<sup>2</sup> It includes three fragmentarily preserved

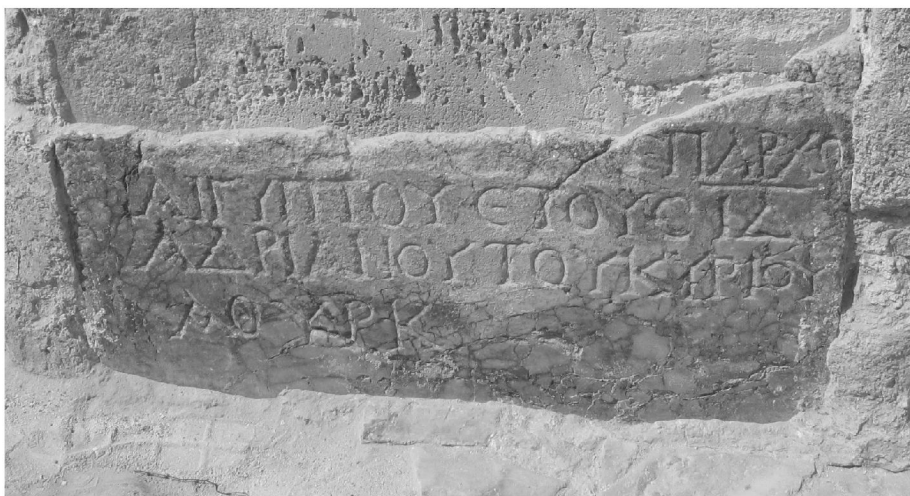
\* The present publication was prepared on the basis of photos of inscriptions and field documentation. I would like to thank Prof. Wiktor Andrzej DASZEWSKI, the Director of the Polish Archaeological Mission and Prof. Stanisław MEDEKSZA, the Director of the Polish-Egyptian Conservation Mission, for their invitation to publish the epigraphic finds from the site and for providing me with all necessary data. For information I thank two members of the Missions Ms. Grażyna BAKOWSKA and Ms. Iwona ZYCH. I also thank Ms. Dorota DZIERZBICKA for correcting my English.

<sup>1</sup> For the work of the Polish Archaeological Mission and the Polish-Egyptian Conservation Mission on the site of Marina/el-Alamein, see annual reports in the periodical *Polish Archaeology in the Mediterranean*. The work brought to light an urban settlement with the central city square (agora) and an adjoining 'basilica', private houses, and monumental graves. The identification of the site is not clear. Perhaps it should be identified with ancient Antiphræe.

<sup>2</sup> For earlier epigraphic discoveries on the site of Marina/el-Alamein, see A. ŁAJTAR, 'Two Architectural Terms: σκούτλωσις and στιβάς in an Inscription from Marina/el-Alamein (with an Appendix: Inscription on a Frying-pan),' *JfP* 31 (2001), pp. 59–66; IDEM, 'The Inscription from Marina/el-Alamein Commemorating the σκούτλωσις of στιβάδες. An Addendum,' *JfP* 33 (2003), pp. 177–179.

inscriptions on marble plaques found in the city centre (1–3) and an epigraph written on two blocks which originally belonged to a funerary pillar standing on a grave (4).

1. The inscription was found by the Polish Archaeological Mission during the 2005 season of excavations. The text was inscribed on a plaque of grey marble used as revetment of the frontal side of a pedestal which stood near the northern wall of a room adjoining the so-called basilica from the west. This ‘basilica’ is a building situated near the south-eastern corner of the agora, along the western side of a street running S–N. It is rectangular in plan with the apse at its northern end. Its interior was divided by two rows of columns. A door in the middle of its western wall led into a smaller room which has been excavated only in its northern part. The room was 1.70 m wide. Its floor was laid with irregular slabs of grey marble and the walls were carefully plastered. The pedestal was situated in the middle of the northern side of this room. It was built of blocks of limestone bound with lime mortar, which also covered the eastern and the western sides of the pedestal and affixed the plaque to the front. The pedestal measured 1 m in height, 64 cm in width, and 45 cm in thickness. The marble plaque adorning the front of the pedestal measured 52 cm in width, its height is unknown. It might have equalled the whole height of the pedestal (1 m) or reached only 1/2 of its height (ca. 50 cm) as is suggested by the traces in the lime mortar with which the plaque was affixed. It was preserved only in its lower part, 26 cm high, its thickness being 1.5 cm. The inscription was carved without guidelines, the carving is deep and quite careful. The letters form even rows. The height of letters varies from 2.1 cm (*omikron* at the end of line 3) to 4.5 cm (*kappa* at the end of line 4). Palaeographically the letters represent round epigraphic majuscules. However, the *omega* has a classical shape. The *alpha* is ‘à barres brisées’. The letters are marked with *apices*. The part of the text preceding the word ἐπάρχῳ was most probably chiselled out. Traces of erasing are clearly visible along the edge of the break both in line 2 from the beginning till the word ἐπάρχῳ, and at the end of line 1 above the word ἐπάρχῳ. The object of this erasing was surely the name of the Praefect of Egypt.



Inscription 1 (photo Wiktor A. DASZEWSKI)

[ - - - ἐπὶ [[T(ίτω) Φλ(αουίῳ)]]]

[[[Tιτιανῶ]]] ἐπάρχῳ

Αἰγύπτου, ἔτους ιδ΄

- 4 Ἀδριανοῦ τοῦ κυρίου,  
Ἀθὺρ κ΄.

[ - - - ]. *Under Titus Flavius*

*Titianus, Praefect*

*of Egypt, in the 14th year*

- 4 *of the Lord Hadrian,*  
*Hathyr 20.*

Inscription 1 *in situ*  
(photo Wiktor A. DASZEWSKI)

Due to the fragmentary state of preservation of the inscription its character is unknown. It most probably was an honorific inscription accompanying the erection of a statue, but other possibilities, such as a religious dedication, also come into question. What has been preserved from the inscription is the dating formula.

- 1–2. Though the name of the praefect was not preserved, there is no doubt that it was Titus Flavius Titianus. Titus Flavius Titianus was *Praefectus Aegypti* for an unusually long time in the middle part of Hadrian's reign. The earliest attestation of him in office is his inscription on the Memnon Colossus, *IColosse* 24, from 20 March, AD 126 (10th year of Hadrian), the latest one – P. Berol. 11664, from 27 March, AD 133 (17th year of Hadrian). For Titus Flavius Titianus see A. Stein, *Die Präfekten von Ägypten in der römischen Kaiserzeit* [= *Dissertationes Bernenses*, Ser. I, Fasc. 1], Bern 1950, pp. 65–68; O. W. Reinmuth, *BASP* 4 (1967), p. 94; G. Bastianini, *ZPE* 17 (1975), pp. 285–286.

What is the most striking about this mention of the praefect is the erasing of his name. It must have resulted from his *damnatio memoriae*. This inscription is the only source indicating the ill fate of Titus Flavius Titianus. Indirect evidence for this may be the complete silence he meets with in written records of non-Egyptian provenance. A. Stein, *op. cit.*, p. 65, has observed that the name Titus Flavius Titianus does not occur in any ancient work, literary or historical, a phenomenon all the more astonishing that he was *Praefectus Aegypti* during Hadrian's visit to Egypt. Titus Flavius Titianus is also absent from inscriptions elaborated outside Egypt. Stein, *loc. cit.*, interpreted this silence as a sign of 'Lückenhaftigkeit und die Zufälligkeit unserer Tradition.' Our inscription shows that it may be due to a successful *damnatio memoriae*. The name Titus Flavius Titianus is extant only in Egyptian documents of a more or less private nature, while it disappeared from the more official ones, like the inscription from Marina/el-Alamein, and from literary works. The reasons for the *damnatio memoriae* of Titus Flavius Titianus are completely unknown. However, we can easily imagine that there must have been enough occasions to provoke Hadrian's discontent during such a long (and apparently successful) governorship over Egypt.

It should be observed that Titus Flavius Titianus is not the only praefect of Egypt to undergo *damnatio memoriae*. Such was the end of Cornelius Gallus, the first praefect of Egypt (for him, see Stein, *op. cit.*, pp. 14–15; T. Stickler, 'Gallus amore peribat'? *Cornelius Gallus und die Anfänge der augustäischen Herrschaft in Ägypten* [= *Althistorische Studien der Universität Würzburg* 2], Rahden 2002, *passim*, especially, p. 58), and perhaps also Aurelius Septimius Heraclitus, who was apparently beheaded upon Caracalla's order during the turmoil accompanying the emperor's visit to Alexandria in 215/216 (cf. Stein, *op. cit.*, pp. 117–120; A. Łukaszewicz, *Aegyptiaca Antoniniana. Działalność Karakalli w Egipcie* (215–216), Warszawa 1993, *passim*). *Damnatio memoriae* was also proclaimed on several governors of proconsular provinces. This was the case of an unknown proconsul of Asia in 210/211, whose name had been erased from an inscription recently found in Sardeis; cf. P. M. M. Leunissen, *Konsuln und*

*Konsulare in der Zeit von Commodus bis Severus Alexander (180–235 n. Chr.). Prosopographische Untersuchungen zur senatorischen Elite im römischen Kaiserreich* [= *Dutch Monographs on Ancient History and Archaeology* 6], Amsterdam 1989, p. 224. Another example is Iasidus Domitianus, proconsul of Dacia under Severus Alexander (cf. Launissen *op. cit.*, p. 239; the name of Iasidus Domitianus was erased from two inscriptions: *AE* 1912, 5 and *AE* 1950, 16), and Lucius Cornelius Felix Plotianus, proconsul of Pannonia Inferior in ca. 183–185 (Launissen, *op. cit.*, p. 277).

Due to the fragmentary state of preservation of the inscription it is not entirely certain what the dative ἐπάρχῳ depends on. As we are near (or within) the dating formula, we may presume that it is connected with the preposition ἐπί. ἐπὶ τῷ δεῖνι ἐπάρχῳ Αἰγύπτου (instead of the more correct ἐπὶ τοῦ δεῖνος ἐπάρχου Αἰγύπτου) is attested several times in Greek inscriptions, mainly religious dedications from Egypt dated, significantly, to the 2nd/3rd century AD. It is primarily comparable to the dedication to Dioscuri found in Theadelphia in the Fayum oasis (*IFayoum* II 123): ἐπὶ Τίτω[ι] Φλαουίῳ Τ[ι]ταῖν[ῳ] ἐπάρχῳ Αἰγύπτου (AD 127/128); see further *IFayoum* II 124: ἐπὶ Σενπρωνίῳ Λιβελάρῳ ἐπάρχῳ Αἰγύπτου (AD 156); *IPortes* 82: ἐπὶ Σ[ουβατιανῷ] Ἀκύλῳ ἐπάρχῳ Αἰγύπ[του] (Coptos, AD 210); *IPortes* 86: ἐπὶ Γεμνίῳ Χρηστῷ ἐπάρχῳ Αἰγύπτου (Coptos, AD 219); *IPan* 21 ἐπὶ Παμμίῳ Μαρτιάλῳ ἐπάρχῳ Αἰγύπτου (AD 117–119); *SB* V 8269: ἐπὶ Μάρκῳ Αὐρηλίῳ Οὐρηριανῷ ἐπάρχῳ Αἰγύπτου (AD 187/188). It is theoretically possible that ἐπάρχῳ Αἰγύπτου designates the receiver of the dedication. Dedications to governors are attested for Roman Egypt; cf. for example *IAlexImp* 21: Τίτῳ Φουρίῳ Οὐικτωρείῳ ἐπάρχῳ Αἰγύπτου κτλ. (AD 160). For this inscription such an interpretation seems less probable than the first one.

- 2–4. 14th year of Hadrian, Hathyr 20, corresponds to 15 November, AD 129. This date is not without interest. It falls one year before Hadrian's visit to Egypt. Perhaps the erection of the statue with an accompanying inscription was connected with the preparations for the visit which must have already been announced at that time.

2. Two fragments of an oblong rectangular plaque of grey-creamish marble were unearthed during the work of the Polish Archaeological Mission. Fragment (a) – left-hand side of the plaque – was discovered in 2001 in the southern portico of the main city square. Fragment (b) – right-hand side – was found in 2004 on the surface of the mound formed during the building of a tourist village (Marina) by Chinese workmen. Fragment (a),



Inscription 2 (photo Wiktor A. DASZEWSKI)

composed of five smaller adhering pieces, is 33 cm wide, fragment (b) – 13 cm wide. The fragments are not congruent. A ca. 7 cm-wide portion of the plaque extending through its whole height is lacking, which means that the complete width of the plaque was equal to ca. 50 cm. The plaque was 22 cm high and 1.4–1.7 cm thick. Two holes for nailing the plaque are visible at  $3/4$  of its height. The inscription occupies the space under the holes. It was carved without guidelines, not very carefully. The executor of the inscription poorly spaced out the text within the area to his disposal and was forced to tighten the letters near the right-hand edge in both lines. The height of letters varies from 4.4 cm (*omikron* in *Kαίσαρος*) to 5.8 cm (*iota* in *Kαίσαρος*). Paleographically the letters represent round epigraphic majuscules. *Alpha* ‘à barres brisées’, *apices*.

ὑπὲρ αὐτο[κρ]άτορος  
Καίσαρος [ . . . ]ιανοῦ.

*For (the well-being of) Imperator Caesar [---]an.*

The holes for nailing the plaque indicate that it was originally placed on a vertical surface. This might have been a base of a statue erected for the well-being of the emperor or, less probably, the wall of a building. The



Inscription 3 (photo Piotr ZAMBRZYCKI)

original placement of the inscription could have been the southern portico of the agora where fragment (a) was discovered.

- 2 The internal criteria of the inscription do not allow for the decision whether we should supplement  $[T\rho\alpha]\iota\nu\omicron\upsilon$  or  $[A\delta\rho]\iota\nu\omicron\upsilon$ , the letters  $TPA$  and  $A\Delta P$  having almost the same width. The context of the previous inscription, however, makes the second possibility more probable. This inscription, like the previous one, might have come into existence in connection with the preparations for Hadrian's visit to Egypt.

3. Found on the surface during the 2004 season of the work of the Polish-Egyptian Conservation Mission, in the central part of the ancient town. Field inventory number 82/S/04.

Fragment of a plaque of grey marble with the left-hand edge preserved. H. 7 cm, w. 19 cm, th. 1.8 cm; h. of letters: 2.1–2.5 cm. Epigraphic majuscules, not very nice. Light guidelines are visible.

.. [ - - - - - ]  
 κατα[σκευάσας τὸ]  
 βαλαν[εῖον - - - ]

[ - - - ] *who erected the bath* [ - - - ].

- 2 The word βαλαν[εῖον immediately following κατα[ indicates that the latter should be part of a verb meaning 'to build, erect,' most probably κατα-



σκευάζω, and not the preposition κατά. The lack of augment makes it clear that we are dealing either with a form of the present tense or with a non-indicative form of a historical tense (imperfect or aorist). The latter supposition is certainly correct and the male participle of the aorist active is the best solution in the given context. It should be remarked that a *casus obliquus* is possible instead of the nominative κατασκεύασας, e.g. [- - - τὸν] κατα[σκεύασαντα τὸ] βάλαυ[εῖον - - - ].

4. The inscription is written on two neighbouring blocks of the third course on the eastern face of the pillar of tomb 112. The tomb was discovered in 1994 by the Polish Archaeological Mission; cf. W. A. Daszewski, *PAM* 6 (1994), pp. 31–33; see also idem, *PAM* 7 (1995), pp. 40–41 (project of the reconstruction of the pillar by J. Dobrowolski). The inscription came to light during conservation work carried out by the Polish-Egyptian Conservation Mission in the 2005 season. The text is carved rather carelessly. Note a particular form of *tau* resembling *upsilon* in lines 2 and 3. Shapes of letters – see especially *alpha* which has two forms: ‘à barres brisées’ and with a horizontal bar, *kappa* with short oblique strokes, and a small *omega* written at the top of the line – suggest a dating to the second half of the Hellenistic period (2nd–1st cent. BC).

Πρώτα καὶ Ἀρχω-  
νίδη ἀμφότεροι  
χρηστοί, χαίρετε.

*Prota and Archonides,*  
*both good ones,*  
*farewell.*

The persons mentioned in the inscription – Prota and Archonides – were most probably a married couple. They were buried in the family grave surmounted by the pillar which the two inscribed blocks were part of.

- 1 The name Πρώτα has a Doric overtone. This is strange as we would expect the common Greek Πρώτη in this part of the *oikumene* and at that time.



Inscription 4  
(photo and drawing by Stanisław MEDEKSZA)

Note further that the name of Prota's husband has the common Greek form Ἀρχωνίδης and not the Doric Ἀρχωνίδας. One can suppose that Prota originated from a Doric area like Rhodes or Cyrenaica and Archonides was native to a non-Doric area. The name Πρώτη is not very common and Πρώτα is still rarer. I was able to find only two attestations of it, namely *IG* XII 2, 260 (from Lesbos) and *SEG* XXIX 1007 (from Rome; the inscription is Christian).

- 1–2 The reading Ἀρχωνίδης is near to certain. The name Ἀρχωνίδης (Ἀρχωνίδας) is well attested, especially in Attica, on Rhodes and the Doric Sporades. It is also on record in Egypt; cf. *I Philae* II 319; *OBodl.* 1761.1; *P. Corn.* 23, Fr. A 2.37; *P. Lond.* II 257 v 175 (p. 19). The last two attestations refer to the same person.

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