ADDENDA

The *CLAP addendum* (2007) contains many entries which are indicated as “*addenda*” to the previous volumes of the *Corpus*. There are a few inscriptions from Ashqelon and Caesarea that were discovered in the last few years. Only one (Add. Ashqelon 2a) bears relation to the squeezes from the van Berchem collection to which the *Addendum* of 2007 was dedicated. The number and the letter attached to the inscriptions presented below refer to the number of the inscriptions in the original volume of the *CLAP*. Thus Ashqelon Nos. 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d come after Ashqelon No. 2 in the Ashqelon entries in *CLAP* I, and Ashqelon No. 14a comes after Ashqelon No. 14. The same applies to the one inscription added to Caesarea in *CLAP* 2.

ADDENDA TO CIAP I

TO ASHQELON No. 2a

Epitaph of a Muslim

c.259/872-73

Ustinow collection. MvB Coll. squeeze No. 13, 0.33x0.32m. Top fragment, almost half of which is filled with a decoration of stylized trees, and two branches, one on each side, forming the frame of the decorative element. 4 visible lines, provincial, angular script, letters decorated with barbs and some endings curl-up in the style of the period, no points, no vowels; shallowly incised. Pl. Add. Ashqelon 2a. (In the margin there is a note by van Berchem: “Ustinow Caesarea(?)” I shall show that the origin of this inscription was Ashqelon. Publication: Pedersen, 1928:69, No. 26469; *CLAP, Addendum*, No. 4. The following is a fresh reading, correcting Pedersen’s mistakes.

Pl. Add. Ashqelon 2a
Allah hath testified that there is no God but He, likewise the angels and the people of knowledge. Dispensing justice, there is no God but He, (the Sublime the Wise…) (Q. 3:18 Trans. Bell 3:16).

L.3: The word wa-‘ilā was defectively incised; the two letters lam and wāw were left out. In such a word, where similar letters appear one after the other, mistakes of this kind can occur.

This inscription, which contains only the first four lines of the original, would have remained a curiosity with the stylized “trees” at its top and with its peculiar script which made its dating somewhat problematic. However, an unusual coincidence of events, which has rarely happened in the entire history of Arabic epigraphic research, made it possible not only to determine the exact site of the inscription, but also to date it and learn much about the methods of production of such epitaphs. In February 2006, while I was working in the archives of Max van Berchem in Geneva on the fragment squeeze, a full, identical inscription was discovered in the excavations carried out by the IAA near the ruins of the medieval city of Ashqelon, buried in the sand together with a few other inscriptions that had been hoarded by someone in one stockpile.

The inscriptions, as can be seen in the attached photographs, are so similar that at the beginning I was sure that they were two identical copies, one of which reached the Ustinow collection. However, on close examination, the inscription recently discovered is not only a complete one, but is also different in a few, very minute details from the fragment in the Ustinow collection. The latter has two branches on both sides of the “trees” decoration on top, and the new inscription has only “trees.” There are even smaller differences in the distribution of the text according to lines. Other than that, since the inscription is complete, it supplies the name of the deceased and the full date of his death.

The squeeze which represents only the top four lines out of the original ten lines of the inscription can therefore be accurately dated to the same year or thereabouts. It was produced by the same engraver, who must have had a workshop and repeated the same decorative elements, and the same script, on the epitaphs that he produced. He was not too sophisticated, neither too talented as far as the production of the decoration was concerned. Here we have an example of a provincial workshop turning out its peculiar tombstones with its typical decoration, which I described as “trees.” To another eye, they might appear to be something else.

What follows is the full inscription that puts the fragment in Ustinow collection in its historical and artistic context.