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THE OLDEST INSCRIPTION ON THE COLOSSUS OF MEMNON?

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As no. 84 A. and E. Bernard, *Les inscriptions grecques et latines du Colosse de Memnon*, Le Caire 1960, publish a very mutilated inscription which might have been an epigram. Only the last letters of the lines are preserved. The inscription of 14 lines of which the last one is 3 m. 20 cm. above the socle is situated at the right side of the left leg. Lines 13-14 contain the date of the inscription and are transcribed as follows:

- - - το[ῦ Κ]αίσαρος
- - - Φα[ρ]μοῦθει ιᾱ

The text was, therefore, inscribed on April 6 (not 7 as the editors state) in an unknown regnal year of an emperor whose name is lost.

The combination of the article and Καίσαρ is strange. As far as I am aware of P. Bureth, *Les titulatures impériales*, *Papyrologica Bruxellensia* 2, Bruxelles 1964, gives only one example of such a combination: SB V 8392 D,32: Τιβέριος ὁ Καίσαρ. However, in front of the tau there is still a trace of a letter which is certainly not compatible with υ¹ visible. According to me the trace in front of the tau belongs to an alpha. If this idea is correct the natural assumption is to take]ατο[υ] as the ending of a cardinal: ἐν]άτο[υ through ἐννεακαίδεκ]άτο[υ. The emperor who most commonly bears the titlature Καίσαρ is Augustus.² This would imply that the inscription under review was inscribed between April 6, 21 B.C. through April 6, 11. B.C. and it would, therefore, be the oldest inscription to be found on the Colossus of Memnon.

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¹ Neither with η (cf. P. Bureth, *op. cit.*, 38: Αὐτοκράτωρ Οὐεσπασιανὸς ἀήττητος Καίσαρ), an ι (the emperor Titus [cf. P. Bureth, *op. cit.*, 40] is, therefore, out of the question) or a σ (cf. P. Bureth, *op. cit.*, 50: Τραιανὸς Ἄριστος Καίσαρ ὁ κύριος; eundem, 90: Λούκιος Αὐρήλιος Κόμμοδος Σεβαστὸς Καίσαρ ὁ κύριος; eundem, 93: Γάιος Πεσκέννιος Νίγερ Ἰούστος Καίσαρ ὁ κύριος).

² P. Bureth, *op. cit.*, 28 lists one example of Καίσαρ Τειβέριος Σεβαστὸς (SB V 7959,5). I do not take the titlature Καίσαρ Ἀδριανὸς (P. Bureth, *op. cit.*, 57 = WO 1430,3) into consideration, since on the ostrakon there is a question of a payment ὑπ(ἐρ) ἀνδ(ριάντος) Καίσαρος Ἀδριανοῦ. SB VI 9457 is too uncertain for use. For Καίσαρ ὁ κύριος listed by P. Bureth, *op. cit.*, 77, see ZPE 40, 1980, 134f. The titlature Καί(σαρ) Κό(μμοδος) (cf. P. Bureth, *op. cit.*, 87 = SB V 8250,4) is very dubious but, since this unique ostrakon is now lost, the reading cannot be checked.