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## *In partibus Occidentis*. Isaac's epitaph from Lopud and the question of sovereignty over Dalmatia in the 5<sup>th</sup> century

In this paper is, for the first time, the published epigraphic inscription from the island of Lopud, which was discovered 1973 in the church of St Eliah. The paper describes the inscription, presents a typology of the Greek script used in the inscription and proposes a translated reading. This is followed by an epigraphic and antroponymic analysis as well as an explanation of the historical context and a new, precise dating of the inscription to 452.

The inscription originates from the remains of front side of the sarcophagus, rather than from the tombstone. The fragment was broken on two sides from the sarcophagus and currently has dimensions of 50 × 148 × 11 cm. On the left side is a funerary inscription, and the smaller, right side is decorated with the Latin cross. The cross is slim and elegantly made with sharp notches and triangular endings (*patée*). The inscription from Lopud represents chronological basis for the crosses of this type, which are usually dated very tentatively to the 6th century.

The inscription is in the Greek language, which is very rare outside Salona. Typically, the inscriptions in Greek are connected with immigrants. The Greek inscription implies that the deceased was not a local, but an immigrant. The translation of the inscription proposed in this paper is: *Here lies Isaac, the son of Antioch [from ...]reande, in the month of Dios, 17th day, during Herculanus' consulate, 6th indiction (17th of October, 452).*

The month mentioned on the inscription is the Syrian-Macedonian month *Dios*, which indicates that the deceased person was from the Eastern Mediterranean. This inscription is only one of two in Early Christian epigraphy of Dalmatia that does not use the Julian calendar. Macedonian calendar is also indicated by the inverted order of the month preceding the day of the month.

The use of indictions for dating in Dalmatia is frequently used from beginning of the 5th century until the end of the 6th century. It is rare outside the provincial capital of Salona. Only three such inscriptions are known: one from Trogir, one from Rider-Danilo near Šibenik (kept in Šibenik) and one from Slano, south of Ston on the Pelješac peninsula. For that reason, the find from Lopud is unique as the fourth inscription with this kind of dating in Dalmatian epigraphy outside of the provincial capital, and it is the first in Greek.

In datation is also specified the indiction (6th indiction - 1st of September 452 to 31st of August, 453) and the consulate of Flavius Bassus Herculanus (1st of January - 31st of December 452). The 6th indiction and Herculanus' consulate overlapped in September, October, November and December of 452. The event is dated by exact indiction and exact consulate. Isaac's death and burial therefore occurred between 1st of September and 31st of December 452, which is additionally confirmed by the date and month on the inscription.

The paper also solves the origins of the deceased as the suffix *-reanda* appears in the toponymes of Northern Syria or Asia Minor.

The inscription is dated by the Western Roman consul only. In this year, the Eastern and Western Roman consul did not recognise each other, so the Lopud inscription reflects the official approaches to this dispute in the province of Dalmatia, which was a part of the Western Empire. The epitaph of Isaac is a first inscription in Dalmatia that is securely dated in the year of disputed consulships and is epigraphic confirmation of the western type of consular datation.

*Translated: Graham McMaster*