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PILATE'S *TIBERIÉUM*: A NEW APPROACH

Summary: The exact meaning of *Tiberiëum* in the first line of Pontius Pilate's inscription has been studied since 1961. Epigraphists have generally explained it as "a building dedicated to Tiberius", although in view of the *-iëum* ending it could also be interpreted as "a festival dedicated to Tiberius". Imperial games called *Tiberion* and *Tibereon* are also known from other sources. If *Tiberiëum* is identified with games or festivals held in honour of Tiberius, the first word of the inscription can perhaps be the one – *munus* – proposed by Labbé. The occasion for holding these imperial games was most likely the fall of Seianus (October 18, 31) that became an official holiday throughout the Imperium.

Key words: *Tiberiëum*, Pontius Pilate, inscription, imperial games, *munus*, Seianus.

I. PRESENT STATE OF RESEARCH

The explanation of Pilate's world famous inscription is one of the most controversial issues in the history of Roman epigraphy. Since 1961, when fortunate Italian archaeologists found this limestone block containing name and rank of Pontius Pilatus – the most famous governor of Judea and the history of Roman Empire as a whole –, more than twenty scholars, mostly distinguished experts of Roman epigraphy, tried to fill the lacunas of the text and set it into its historical context.

1. (4–5) - - -]S TIBERIÉVM
2. (2–3) - Po]NTIVS PILATVS
3. praef]ECTVS IVDA[ea]E
4. - - - - -]É [- - - - -

1. *Q(uod) f(austum) b(onum) f(elixque) or felix f(ortunatumque)]s(it)* Betz, [*Tib(erio) Aug(usto) co(n)]s(ule)* or [*Ti(berio) Aug(usto) V co(n)]s(ule)* Lifshitz, [*Nemu]s Burr, Opu]s Bartina, [Caesarien]s(ibus)* Frova, Calderini, Brusa Gerra, [*Dis Augusti]s* Degrassi, Frova, Levine, Ringel, [*Kal(endis) Iulii]s* Weber, [*clupei]s* Prandi, *munu]s* Labbé, [*Iudaei]s* Gatti, [*a fundamenti]s* or [*porticu]s* Di Stefano, [*nauti]s* Alföldy – 2. [*- - Po]ntius* Degrassi, [*Sex(tus)? Po]ntius* Degrassi, [*M(ar-cus)? Po]ntius* Weber – 3. *proc(urator) Aug(usti) praef]ectus* Lifshitz, *Iuda[ea]e* Lifshitz, Lémonon, Labbé, *Iudae[ae]* Alföldy – 4. [*d]é[dit]* Frova, Calderini, [*f]écit,*

d]é[dicavit] Degrassi, Brusa Gerra, Levine, Gatti, [*dedicávit*] Weber, [*ornávit*] Prandi, [- - -? *dedicavit*] Betz, [*ded(it), ded(icavit)*] Lifshitz, [*de suo ffé[ci]t*] Di Stefano, [*ffé[ci]t*] or [*fecit dedicá[vit]que*] Labbé, [*fécit*] Lémonon, [*ref]é[ci]t*] Gatti, Alföldy

As it can be seen, only two words of the four lines are clearly legible: *Tiberiëum* and *Pilatus*. Three words can be completed without difficulty: [*Pon]tius*, [*praef]ectus* and *Iuda[ea]e*. From the other words only two letters remained (a final -s and an -é-). Ever since A. Frova published the text,¹ many suggestions were made to fill the lacunas of the 1st and 4th line, though none of them proved to be the final and indisputable solution.² This can be clearly seen from the great number of varied, sometimes contradictory suggestions, the unsatisfactory explanations of the meaning of *Tiberiëum*; as well as the unresolved questions of the original place, date and genre of the inscription. Unfortunately, L. Vidman's rather sceptic statement is still valid: "*Versum primum huius tituli, ubi Tiberieum memoratur, alius alio modo supplere conatus est, sed omnia supplementa prorsus incerta sunt*".³ This study does not claim to have found the philosopher's stone, but a new approach might be fruitful for future research.

The key to the explanation of the Pilate inscription is the way we interpret *Tiberiëum* and complete the word that stands before. Tentamens published in the last forty years explain the *Tiberiëum* unanimously as a building and they deduce its

¹ FROVA, A.: L'iscrizione di Ponzio Pilato a Caesarea. *RIL* 95, 1961, 419–434, Figs 1–3 = *AE* 1971, 477; FROVA, A.: Ponzio Pilato e il Tiberiëum di Caesarea. In: *La Veneranda Anticaglia*. In Memoria di Aristide Calderini. Pavia 16–17, 1969–70, 216–227.

² The following studies are quoted in the notes (in alphabetical order): ALFÖLDY, G.: Pontius Pilatus und das Tiberieum von Caesarea Maritima. *SCI* 18, 1999, 85–108, Taf. 1 and Abb. 1–4; BARTINA, S.: Pilato en una inscripción monumentalista palestinese. *Cultura Bíblica* 19, 1962, 170–175; BETZ, A.: Zur Pontius Pilatus-Inschrift von Caesarea Maritima. *Pro arte antiqua. Festschrift für Hedwig Kenner* Bd. I. Edited by W. Alzinger, Ch. Schwanzar, Ch. Neeb Gudrun. Österr. Archäol. Inst. Sonderchr., Series 1, Vol. XVIII. Wien 1982, I.33–36; BRUSA GERRA, C. in *Scavi di Caesarea Maritima*. Edited by G. Dell'Amore. Milano 1965, 217 ff; BURR, V.: Rom und Judäa im 1. Jahrhundert v. Chr. *ANRW* I. 1, 1972, 886. n. 24; BURR, V. (Hrsg.): *Vergangenheit, Gegenwart, Zukunft*. Würzburg 1972, 37 ff; CALDERINI, A.: Die Inschrift Pontius Pilatus in Cäsarea. *Das heilige Land* 92–96, 1960–64, 56–58; DEGRASSI, A.: Sull'Iscrizione di Ponzio Pilato. *RAL* ser. VIII. 19, 1964, 59–65 = DEGRASSI, A.: *Scritti Vari di Antichità* III. Venezia–Trieste 1967, 269–275 = *AE* 1964, 39; DI STEFANO, I.: *Le iscrizioni dei cristiani in Vaticano. Materiali e contributi scientifici per una mostra epigrafica*. Città del Vaticano 1997, 209–215, Nr. 3.1.2; fig. 3.1.2; A. FROVA, *op. cit.* (note 1); GATTI, G.: A proposito di una rilettura dell'epigrafe di Ponzio Pilato. *Aevum* 55, 1981, 13–21 = *AE* 1981, 850; LABBÉ, G.: Ponce Pilate et la munificence de Tibère. *REA* 93, 1991, 277–297 = *AE* 1991, 1578; LÉMONON, J.–P.: *Pilate et le Gouvernement de la Judée, Textes et monuments*. Paris 1981, 23–32; LÉMONON, J.–P.: Ponce Pilate: documents profanes, Nouveau Testament et traditions ecclésiastiques. *ANRW* II. 26. 1, 741–778; LEVINE, L. I.: *Roman Caesarea. An Archaeological-Topographical Study*. Qedem 2. Jerusalem 1975; LIFSHITZ, B.: Inscriptions latines de Césarée (Caesarea Palaestinae), 1. Le Tiberieum. *Latomus* 22, 1963, 783. Nr. 1, Pl. 63. 1; LIFSHITZ, B.: Césarée de Palestine, son histoire et ses institutions. *ANRW* II. 8, 1977, 490–518; PRANDI, L.: Una nuova ipotesi sull'iscrizione di Ponzio Pilato. *CCC* 2, 1981, 25–35 = *AE* 1981, 850; RINGEL, J.: *Césarée de Palestine*. Paris 1975, 97 ff; VOLKMANN, H.: Die Pilatusinschrift von Caesarea Maritima. *Gymnasium* 75, 1968, 124–135 = *AE* 1971, 477; WEBER, E.: Zur Inschrift des Pontius Pilatus. *BJb* 171, 1971, 194–200, Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 = *AE* 1971, 477.

³ *PIR* P 815.

origin, function, date, place, etc. from the preceding expression. Some scholars claim that it was a sacral building dedicated to the emperor or the emperor's family; others insist that it was a profane structure dedicated to or built by Tiberius, such as a porticus, a library or a lighthouse. The only epigraphist who – to my knowledge – contradicted this *opinio communis* is V. Burr, who suggested that this puzzling word was a sacred grove (*nemus*) dedicated to Tiberius.⁴

In spite of this relative consensus, the identification of the *Tiberiëum* as a building is controversial because neither the relatively rich archaeological evidence, nor the literary documents have revealed any information about this proposed edifice so far. Neither Josephus Flavius, who gave a detailed description of Caesarea in about 90 CE, nor Origen, who founded a school in the town after 230 CE, nor Eusebius, who was bishop of Caesarea from 345 CE, mention a *Tiberiëum*. This lack of both literary and archaeological evidence has been variously explained by scholars. Some suggested that Pilate began the construction of a *Tiberiëum* in 31 CE, but was not able to finish it because of his fall in 36/37. Others believe that the edifice was demolished during the First Jewish War, or later by an earthquake or some other catastrophe.

The most remarkable suggestion by the proponents of the building theory is the one recently published by G. Alföldy.⁵ His starting point is also the common preconception: “ein Tiberieum nichts anderes als ein Bauwerk, das seinen Namen nach dem des Tiberius erhielt.” Alföldy notes that Roman building names such as *Caesareum* and *Augusteum* did not necessarily and exclusively denote sacral edifices, but could designate profane buildings as well. A famous example of the latter is the Caesarean lighthouse *Druseion*, mentioned by Josephus (*Bell.* 1.21.6 [412]). The *Druseion* was named after Tiberius' brother Drusus. On the basis of archaeological excavations in the port of Caesarea we may assume that opposite Drusus' lighthouse there was another lighthouse that – according to Alföldy – could have been Pilate's *Tiberiëum*. The structure of the inscription makes it plausible that the first word stood in the dative, and may have been *nautis*, i.e. ‘to the sailors’.

However, strong objections may be raised against this theory. Firstly, let us quote the testimony of Josephus who described the mole of Caesarea as follows: “When the haven was filled up to that depth, he enlarged that wall which was thus already extant above the sea, till it was two hundred feet wide; one hundred of which had buildings before it, in order to break the force of the waves, whence it was called *procumatia*, or the first breaker of the waves; but the rest of the space was under a stone wall that ran round it. On this wall were large towers, the principal and most beautiful of which was called *Druseion*, from Drusus, who was son-in-law to Caesar” (*Bell.* 1.21.6 [412], transl. by W. Whiston). But if Pilate had built or even restored a lighthouse between 31 and 36 CE, how would he have dared to name that building after the Emperor, seeing that it was less significant than the one which bore the name of the Emperor's brother? Secondly, if there was another lighthouse named after Tiberius opposite the *Druseion*, why is Josephus silent about it? If it was a double

⁴ BURR, *op. cit.* (note 2).

⁵ ALFÖLDY, *op. cit.* (note 2).

construction dedicated to the *concordia sidera* (Tiberius and Drusus), such a scrupulous historian would have mentioned it. Thirdly, how and why was this limestone block transported to the theatre, lying roughly one kilometre away from the port?⁶

II. THE THEATRE OF CAESAREA

The theatre of Herod at Caesarea was excavated in five seasons between 1959–1963 by the Missione Archeologica Italiana, headed by A. Frova.⁷ The theatre was built of local aeolanite, a rock that is not noted for durability and quality. One part of its *cavea* was set on the natural slope of a small hill, the other part on an artificial incline. Its dimensions put it in the category of the large theatres, though Scythopolis and Philadelphia surpass it with their 5000 and 6000 seats.⁸ Its diameter is ca. 62 m (if one also includes the plaza behind the stage building this would be about 88 m⁹). The length of the stage building is ca. 67 m and its width ca. 9 m. The *pulpitum* itself is ca. 33 m long and ca. 4.5 m wide. The theatre's *cavea*, semicircular in shape, consists of two horizontal sections: the *ima cavea* has survived completely intact, with thirteen rows of seats divided by five *scalaria* into six *cunei*. A rectangular area, 2 m x 3.4 m paved with stone slabs and facing the centre of the stage, may have been used for distinguished guests. The *praecinctio*, which separates the *ima cavea* from the *summa cavea*, is 2 m wide and paved with stone slabs. The *summa cavea* is much less well preserved than the *ima cavea*, which makes it impossible to know exactly how many rows of seats there were, though it may be assumed that there were at least more than twenty. Thus, the *cavea*'s more than thirty rows of seats could hold 3,500–4,000 spectators. The *summa cavea* was apparently divided by six *scalaria* into seven *cunei*. Six pairs of *vomitoria* with barrel-vaulted roofs ran under the *summa cavea* and gave spectators access from outside the theatre to the *praecinctio*. The *summa cavea* was supported by two semicircular walls enclosing a barrel-vaulted *ambulacrum*. In the outer, i.e. the exterior wall of the theatre, arches formed the entrances to the *vomitoria*. Thus, looking towards the theatre's *cavea* from the outside one was offered the characteristic sight of many Roman theatres and amphitheatres, namely a series of solid supporting pillars set in a semicircle and connected by vaults, their faces decorated with pilasters.

The semicircular *orchestra* (ca. 17 m. in diameter) underwent numerous changes during the four centuries it was in use. As the excavators have noted, the

⁶ The measurements of the limestone block are 82 x 68 x 21 cm, i.e. 0.117096 m³. The average density of limestone is 2400 kg/m³, hence the total weight of the block is ca. 280 kgs. It must have been a heavy load even for three ordinary workers.

⁷ FROVA, A. et al.: *Scavi di Cesarea Maritima*. Cassa di Risparmio delle Provincie Lombarde. Istituto Lombardo, Accademia di Scienze e Lettere. Milano 1965, 57–234.

⁸ SEGAL, A.: *Theatres in Roman Palestine and Provincia Arabia*. Leiden 1995, 65 (Mnemosyne Suppl.)

⁹ This "piazza" was called the *porticus post scaenam* by Vitruvius and was used as a refuge for the spectators in case of rainfall (*De arch.* V.9). This impressive semicircular square with the colonnade was built as late as the 3rd century and paralleled the theatre of Dhugga.

area of the orchestra was made out of plaster with painted geometric forms (*opus pavonaceum*). Over the years, this plaster was refurbished, repaired, and repainted many times. Only at a later stage, apparently in the later 2nd or the early 3rd century CE, was the *orchestra* paved with marble slabs of different colours. In the end, apparently during the 4th century, it was encircled with a 1.2 m high wall and adapted to serve as a pool (*kolymbethron*).¹⁰ The new walls were decorated with reliefs showing sacrificial scenes from which only slight fragments have been preserved. It is important to note that Pilate's inscription was found on the platform of this wall erected between the northern rim of the cavea and the *kolymbethron*.¹¹ Arrangements were made to make the *orchestra* waterproof and water was brought in by pipes from a pool built north of the stage building near the northern *aditus maximus*. In my opinion it is highly debatable that for this internal reconstruction the builders would have transported the building material from the distant port. To the contrary, it seems quite obvious that the workers 'mined' the stones from the theatre itself.

III. LOCATION AND GENRE OF THE INSCRIPTION: A NEW APPROACH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

Epigraphists studying the Pilate inscription interpreted the *Tiberiéum* on the basis of Greek -εἶον, Latin -*e(i)um* suffix which in most cases refers to a building named after a god, a king, a hero or an emperor (e.g. *Serapeion*, *Caesareion*, *Augusteion*, *Herodion*, *Druseion*, etc.). It is quite obvious that the stone block bearing Pilate's inscription may have been part of a monumental structure, placed approximately 2.5–3 meters high,¹² but we must also take into consideration that this block is a rather roughly inscribed limestone which could hardly have served as a dedicatory inscription of a representative monumental building.

Since *Tiberiéum* has not been found in the epigraphic material up today, scholars considered it a *hapax legomenon*.¹³ Nevertheless, *Tiberiéum* can be interpreted not only as 'a building dedicated to Tiberius', but also as 'a festival dedicated to Tiberius'. Such meaning of this term is known from two other inscriptions, both of which were found in Greece; one is written in Greek and the other in Latin. Amidst the local competitions held at Ialysos (*Halieia*, *Rhomaia*, *Kaisareia*) we find the expression *Tiberifa* or *Tiberifon* (conjecture by L. Robert) which was certainly an *agon* held in the Roman age.¹⁴ On a Corinthian inscription also find a *Tibereon* beside the

¹⁰ This kind of alteration could be quite common in the 3rd–4th century. In the theatre of Sabratha and Leptis (Africa) the frieze inscription on the *scenae frons* contains the verb *lacuna* which refers to *kolymbethra*. Cp. TRAVERSARI, G.: *Gli Spettacoli in acqua nel teatro tardo-antico*. Rome 1960, with further examples (p. 140 ff).

¹¹ FROVA, *op. cit.* (note 7), 92, Fig. 77, 78.

¹² ALFÖLDY, *op. cit.* (note 2), 103–104.

¹³ VOLKMANN, *op. cit.* (note 2), 125, 133; LABBÉ, *op. cit.* (note 2), 282.

¹⁴ PUGLIESE CARRATELLI, G.: Supplemento epigrafico Rodio. *ASAA* 30–32 (N.S. 14–16), 1952–54, 291, Nr. 66/b.

following game names: *Claudieon*, *Caesareon*, *Sebasteon*.¹⁵ Consequently, if we identify *Tiberieum* with a game or festival celebrated in honour of Tiberius, we can also suggest that the first word of the inscription may be *munus*, a possibility already suggested by G. Labbé.¹⁶ G. Alföldy's objection against this interpretation of *munus* may be accepted on the basis of the statement that it is "mit dem Vokabular der Bauinschriften unvereinbar",¹⁷ but we suppose that *munus* means 'festival' or 'game'. Two questions, however, still remain to be answered: the original location of the inscription and whether such genre of inscriptions existed at all.¹⁸

IV.1. ROMAN THEATRE INSCRIPTIONS

If the stone, as I stated above, comes directly from the theatre, its genre can be determined as a 'theatrical inscription' in a broad sense. M. Fuchs, who compiled a typology of theatre inscriptions from the western part of the Roman Empire,¹⁹ distinguished four main types: (1) building inscriptions; (2) honorary inscriptions; (3) inscriptions on the statues of gods; (4) inscriptions on seats. As regards the location of the *Bauinschriften*, two types are common: the text is either written on the frieze of the architrave or on a *tabula* that is edged on all four sides with a rim. It is also important to note that Pilate's inscription does not have such rims that clearly shows that its block was a part of a wall. But where? M. Fuchs gives the following possible locations of theatre inscriptions: *scaenae frons*; *summa cavea*; *porticus post scaenam*; *ima cavea*; *orchestra*; *pulpitum*. Inscribed *tabulae* with rims (Herculaneum, Ostia, Pompeii: great and small theatre, Iguvium, Tergeste, Leptis Magna) are common at the mouth of the *versurae* in the orchestra (a *tabula ansata* in Leptis); over the gate leading to the orchestra,²⁰ and on both sides of the *aditus* (Pompeii). These building inscriptions generally emphasize the merits of the builder or restorer,²¹ so

¹⁵ *C(aio) Rutilio L(uci) f(ilio) / Aem(ilia tribu) Fusco isagogi / Tibereon Claudieon / Caesa[reon Seba]steon / [agonothetae L(uci)] Rutili / L(uci) f(ili) [- - -] p[atris] / [-?]*. BROWN WEST, A.: *Corinth. VIII.2. Latin Inscriptions 1896–1926*. Cambridge, Mass. 1931, 66–69, no. 82 = AE 1932, 88.

¹⁶ "Il est légitime de penser aussi au sens de spectacle offert au public: la proximité du théâtre y invite" and "dans le contexte matériel de la découverte, *munus* a encore une autre acception qu'il est impossible de négliger: celle de spectacle ou de jeux publics, et, le cas échéant, de combats de gladiateurs". LABBÉ, *op. cit.* (note 2), 285, 287; the author finally rejected this solution because of the assumed secondary use of the stone.

¹⁷ ALFÖLDY, *op. cit.* (note 2), 92.

¹⁸ See section IV.2, below.

¹⁹ FUCHS, M.: *Untersuchungen zur Ausstattung römischer Theater*. Mainz am Rhein 1987, 150–166 (Deutsches Archäologisches Institut); LE GLAY, M.: *Épigraphie et théâtres. Spectacula II. Le théâtre antique et ses spectacles: actes du colloque tenu au Musée archéologique Henri Prades de Lattes les 27, 28, 29 et 30 avril 1989*. Edited by Ch. Landes. Lattes Musée archéologique Henri Prades, 1992, 209–221. (This paper was not available to me.)

²⁰ *M(arcus) Agrippa L(uci) f(ilius) cos. III. / trib(unicia) pot(estate) III*, *CIL* II 474 (Emerita, 16 CE, found at the theatre).

²¹ E.g. Cn. Satrius Rufus, *CIL* XI 5829 Iguvium, 27 BCE.–17 CE; M. Agrippa in Emerita, see above; App. Claudius Pulcher, *CIL* X 1423 Herculaneum, 32 BCE, inscription on the architrave over the *scaenae*; L. Annius Mammianus Rufus, *CIL* X 1443, 1444, 1445. Herculaneum, 1st century CE, both sides of the *aditus*; C. Fufius Geminus, *AE* 1958, 44. Urbs Salvia, first half of the 1st century CE, two

the general word order in these texts is the following: Nom. (the builder's name), Acc. (name of the building), Dat. (for whom the theatre is built), Abl. (financial source) and finally the predicate.

It was quite common that wealthy people restored only a part of a theatre. In this case their inscriptions mention the restorer's name and the restored parts of the building, where the inscription itself was located. An inscription of the Pompeian duumvir M. Oculatius Verus found at the orchestra of the Odeion boasts of the restoration of the pavement for the games.²² In Italica, where in the 2nd century CE a certain L. Blattius Traianus financed the *proscenium*, *itineria* and *arae*, an inscription placed on the wall of the pulpitum mentions his benefaction.²³ In Leptis Magna L. Caninius Gallus proconsul Africae and *patronus* of the town financed the *tribunalia* of the theatre.²⁴

The cult of the Emperors was displayed in the theatres by the cult statues erected at the *scaenae frons*, small shrines (*sacella*, *aedicula* or *exedrae*) usually placed on the *summa cavea*, as well as temples in the *porticus post scaenam* (Minturnae, Leptis, Emerita). At the theatre of Leptis Magna, the founder's daughter erected a *sacellum* at the *summa cavea* in honour of Ceres Augusta, who was identified with Livia and worshipped as Ceres-Fortuna in this small shrine.²⁵ According to J. A. Hanson some twenty examples, certain or probable, of the *cavea* shrine are known from the Roman world subsequent to the construction of the theatre of Pompey in Rome. These small, shallow temples stand at the top of the theatre *cavea* on the central axis and they can in almost every case be connected with the cult of the Caesars.²⁶

Consequently, the *munus* mentioned in Pilate's inscription might refer to a structure inside the theatre as well, although this seems very unlikely because of the rather poor quality of the inscription and the stone. In all probability a dedicatory inscription of a building named after the Caesar would have been more representative.

tablets one of which is inscribed with monumental letters; C. Salvius Liberalis Nonius Bassus, ed. in 1886, Herculaneum, end of the 1st century CE, marble tablet; Ummidia Quadratilla, *CIL* X 5183 Casinum etc.

²² M. Oculat[ius] M(arci) f(ilius) Verus II [vi]r p[ro] ludis, *CIL* X 845 Pompeii, on the pavement of the minor theatre, coloured marble plate with inlaid bronze letters, probably Augustean.

²³ J. M. LUZÓN, *MM* 19, 1978, 272 f. tab. 58a.

²⁴ *IRT* 521; also *InscrIt* III 1. 26. Volcei, limestone inscription found in 1970.

²⁵ *Cereri Augustae sacrum / C. Rubellius Blandus co(n)s(ul) proco(n)s(ul) dedic(avit) / Suphuni-bal ornatric pa[triae] Annobalis Rusonis [f(ecit) d(edicavitque)] / s(uis) p(ecuniis) f(aciendum) c(uraverunt)*, *IRT* 269, dedicatory inscription from the architrave of the theatre shrine, 35/36 CE (the theatre was built in 1/2 CE); for the cult statue of the shrine, cp. TRAVERSARI, G.: *Le sculture del teatro di Leptis Magna*. Roma 1976, 76 ff, no. 58, tav. 54. f; HANSON, J. A.: *Roman Theatre-Temples*. Princeton, N.J. 1959, 59.

²⁶ E. FIUMI, *Volaterra* 1977, 20. Abb. 3. Heads of Augustus, Tiberius and Livia could have been placed at the exedra-shrine on the *summa cavea*; in Herculaneum there was a shrine dedicated to Tiberius and Livia: WALDSTEIN, CH.-SHOBRIDGE, L.: *Herculaneum*. Napoli 1908, 69 ff. (three aedicula with bronze statues).

IV.2. INSCRIPTIONS RECORDING *MUNERA*

Other types of inscriptions found in ancient Roman theatres and amphitheatres record the memory of *munera gladiatoria* and *ludi scaenici*.²⁷ The ordinary *ludi* have been recorded in the theatres of Emerita, Dhugga, Rusicade and Amaedara.²⁸ There were extraordinary *ludi* which also have been recorded on inscriptions: e.g. in Pisa 44 BCE (after Caesar's murder), at Amiternum on a *tabulae patronatus*, and in Iguvium, where two marble and one limestone plates commemorated the games "in honour of the Caesar's (i.e. Augustus') victories".²⁹ The memory of the *ludi* has also been recorded on bases of statues situated in public places at Ostia, Privernum, Corfinium, Hispellum, Veii and Iulia Concordia.³⁰

It is evident that there were many occasions to hold a *munus gladiatorium* in the Roman theatres and amphitheatres. Another inscription from Beneventum – in spite of its fragmentary state – obviously refers to the recording method of the public games. The text of the inscription has been preserved in a 15th century manuscript: - - -] / *idem basilicam in qua tabul(ae) muneris ab eo editi posit(ae) / sunt, consummavit, ludos palmares ob dedicati/onem earum nomine Euploae suae exhibuit...*³¹ This inscription raises two questions at least: what was the *basilica* and what were the *tabulae muneris*? There is literary and archaeological evidence for theatre-basilicas. Pliny the younger wrote to Traian about the troubles during the construction of the Nicaean theatre to which a basilica and a colonnade in the *summa cavea* also belonged: *Huic theatro ex privatorum pollicitationibus multa debentur, ut basilicae circa, ut porticus supra caveam* (*Epist.* X.39.3). In the western part of the Roman Empire there are two theatres where *basilicae* can be identified. In Iguvium H. Brunn tentatively identified two chambers on both sides of the *scenae* as *basilicae*. This identification was indisputably proved by inscriptions located in the same place in the theatre of Dhugga.³² The above quoted inscription from Beneventum refers to this theatre building in which the *magistri* and *munerarii* recorded memories of their *munera*. It would be also important to know whether such *tabulae muneris* have ever been discovered. Unfortunately, the provenance of the extant theatre inscriptions is so uncertain that we cannot claim with absolute certainty that one or another inscription comes from the *basilica* of a theatre. It is also conceivable that many of these *tabulae* were *graffiti* or *dipinti* that disappeared without any trace.

To my knowledge, no theatrical inscription beginning with the word *munus* has been discovered to date. While examining the extant *munus* inscriptions it becomes obvious that most of them are epitaphs. The general structure of their text is the

²⁷ FUCHS, *op. cit.* (note 19), 161.

²⁸ *CIL* II 478; *ILTun* 1434; *ILAlg* 2,37; *ILTun* 1404/5, 1434.

²⁹ *InscrIt* VI. 1. 7; *AE* 1937, 119; *CIL* XI 5820.

³⁰ *CIL* XIV 4642, 353, 375; *AE* 1974, 228; *AE* 1961, 109; *CIL* XI, 5383, 5265; *CIL* XI 3811; *CIL* X 8664.

³¹ *CIL* IX 1666 = *ILS* 5068; BUONCORE, M.: *Epigrafia anfiteatrale dell' occidente romano III*. Roma 1992, nr. 50, 78 ff.

³² FUCHS, *op. cit.* (note 19), 155; *ILTun* 1404/5, 1434, 1435.

following: (1) name and title of the *munerarius*; (2) the object of the *munus* (e.g. *ludus circensis*, *munus gladiatorium*, *ludi scaenici*, *spectacula* etc.); (3) the occasion of the *munus*, or the name of an individual or a group of people, in honour of whom the *munus* was delivered; (4) other circumstances (most often the price of the *munera*); (5) and finally the predicate (most often *munus ... edidit* or *dedit*). There are also a few examples that differ significantly from the word order mentioned above, where the *munus* stands on the edge of the text, e.g. *Munus Nolae de / quadriduo / M(arci) Comini / Heredi(s)*.³³

IV.3. INSCRIPTIONS IN THE THEATRE OF CAESAREA³⁴

Let us now take a closer look at the inscriptions found in the theatre of Caesarea. According to C. Lehmann's research six inscriptions certainly come from the theatre; specific find spots are known only for Pilate's inscription and another one found in the orchestra. Both of these were published in the excavation report by C. Brusa Gerra.³⁵ Gerra also describes another four that were found in the theatre. She gives no provenance for the rest of her nineteen inscriptions; they could come from the theatre or from the other Italian excavation areas to the north and northeast of the city centre. Aside from the inscriptions excavated by Italian archaeologists, Lehmann mentions two other inscriptions that were found near the theatre; one was published by Lifshitz in 1959;³⁶ the other published by himself in 1984³⁷ – this is a column that the director of the Caesarea Museum found in the Italian's dump just south of the theatre and presumably came to the surface during the Italian excavation in the theatre. We know two athletes by name who won a prize in the games of Caesarea: one of them is Aelius Aurelius Menander, who was honoured on a monument in Aphrodisias,³⁸ the other is a certain Aurelius Septimius Eirenaios.³⁹ Apart from them, the inscription of Q. Caecilius, a κωμῳδῶς [πρῶ]τολόγος was also found here.⁴⁰ If we accept that Pilate's inscription records an imperial game called *Tiberieum* and it comes from the theatre itself, we can assume that its stone was originally a part of the colonnade in the *summa cavea*, or it was placed in the wall of the possible *basilica* beside the *scenae*, or the wall of the *aditus* leading to the orchestra. In all

³³ *AE* 1985, 280 (a graffito from Pompeii, Necropoli Porta Nocera, tomb nr. 13); GIORDANO, C.: La gens Cominia in Nola e il suo contributo alla colonizzazione dell'Africa romana. *Torre del Greco* 1979, 31; M. DELLA CORTE: *NSA* 1958, 152, Nr. 382 (fig.). One other example: *Muner(e) C. Pomp(ei) Mart(i)alis / esse(darius) lib(eratus) / Faustus (coronarum) XXXVII / natione Arabus / Euche contubern(alis) de suo*, *CIL* XII 3323 = *ILS* 5096 (Nemausus/Nîmes).

³⁴ I am greatly indebted to Prof. CLAYTON LEHMANN (University of South Dakota) for sharing this information with me.

³⁵ *Scavi di Caesarea Maritima*, 217–28.

³⁶ *Latomus* 21, 1962, 149–50.

³⁷ LEHMANN, C. M.: *Epigraphica Caesariensia*. *CPh* 79, 1984, 45–52 (inscriptions of 3rd century officials excavated SE of the theatre in 1968–70).

³⁸ LEBAS, PH.–WADDINGTON, W. H.: *Inscriptions grecques et latines recueillies en Asie Mineure. Voyage archéologique en Grèce et Asie Mineure, III.5*. Paris 1870 (repr. Hildesheim 1972, 1620b).

³⁹ LIFSHITZ, *op. cit.* (1977, note 2), 510.

⁴⁰ LIFSHITZ, *RBi* 74, 1967, 57, note 3; corrected by J. et L. ROBERT, *REG* 80, 1967, 645.

probable cases the regular hole on the right side of the inscription can be easily explained as a trace of the beam supporting *velum* (in the upper cavea) or another architectural detail of the building.

V. IMPERIAL GAMES IN CAESAREA

The main purpose of the provincial games was to celebrate the cult of the emperor.⁴¹ The theatre, amphitheatre and hippodrome of Caesarea were built by Herod also in order that games and festivals in honour of Augustus may be held there.⁴² The Caesareans were passionate spectators and players, a custom that was severely criticised by the Talmud and other rabbinic writings. Rabbi Yossi ben Chanina, who was also an inhabitant of the town, prophesized that “Once a day sages of Juda will teach the Torah in the theatres and circuses of Caesarea” (bMeg. 6a).⁴³

The next step is to determine the date and occasion of the “games held in honour of Tiberius”. Most historians would agree that the emperor’s official attitude was to forbid the worship of himself during his lifetime (cf. Cass. Dio 58.8.4). Suetonius notes that he behaved almost like a private citizen, for on the occasion of his birthday he allowed only one additional double-horse coach on the *ludi plebei*.⁴⁴ His busts, statues and portraits were not situated among the *simulacra* of gods, but among the other *ornamenta* of the temples.⁴⁵ In his letter to the Gytheians he gave permission to honour him with pictures, statues, theatrical plays and processions.⁴⁶ The decennial of his accession to the throne (August of 24 CE) was celebrated with festivals.⁴⁷ Tiberius’ relative temperance concerning the cult of his person changed radically after the fall of Seianus (October 18, 31); Cassius Dio (58.12.5–6) mentions that “on the forum a statue was erected in honour of Libertas, the senators and the priests celebrated a feast which has never occurred yet [sc. under Tiberius], and the day of his [sc. Seianus’] death was celebrated annually by chariot races and beast huntings.”

Inscriptions also reveal that the day of Seianus’ fall was celebrated throughout the Empire. The *fasti* of Brundisium speaks about “public high days” (*laetitiae pub-*

⁴¹ CLAVEL-LÉVÊQUE, M.: L’espace des jeux dans le monde romain: hégémonie, symbolique et pratique sociale. *ANRW* II.16.3, 1986, 2405–2563.

⁴² Jos. *Bell.* I.21.7 [415]; VI.9.2 [418]; *Ant.* XV.9.6 [341]; LIFSHITZ, *op. cit.* (1977, note 2), 490–518; LÄMMER, M.: Die Kaiserspiele von Caesarea im Dienste der Politik des Königs Herodes. *Kölner Beiträge zur Sportwissenschaft* 3. *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Sportschule Köln* 1974 [1975], 95–164. (This book was not available to me.)

⁴³ *Tosephta Oholoth*, XVIII.16. Ed. by Zuckermann, p. 617, 1.16–19; *Midrash Echa Rabba* (Petichta) XVII. Ed. by S. Buber, 1899, 14; *Jer. Taanit* I.4. 147; *Bab. Megilla* 6a. Cp. LIEBERMANN, S.: *Greek in Jewish Palestine*. New York 1942, 31–33.

⁴⁴ *Natalem ... vix unius bigae adiectione honorari passus est*, Suet. *Tib.* 26.1, cf. Cass. Dio 58.8.4.

⁴⁵ Suet. *Tib.* 26.1; Cass. Dio 57.9.1; Tac. *Ann.* 4.37.5.

⁴⁶ *SEG* XI, 922, between 14 and 19 CE. Cf. FISHWICK, D.: The Development of Provincial Ruler Worship in the Western Roman Empire. *ANRW* II.16.2, 1978, 1201–1253 (esp. 1210–1215.)

⁴⁷ *Decennalia*, Cass. Dio 57.24.1.

licae) in connection with this event, provided that Degrassi's conjecture is correct.⁴⁸ A *sevir Augustalis* of the Umbrian Terni erected an inscription celebrating the "fall of the most dangerous enemy of the Roman people";⁴⁹ P. Viriasius Naso, governor of Crete erected an altar on the same occasion "to the Numen and Providence of Tiberius Caesar Augustus and the senate".⁵⁰ Later, this day became more important because of the death of Agrippina which also fell on *a.d. XV Kal. Nov.* Beside the above mentioned solemnities, the senate presented a gift to Juppiter every year (Tac. *Ann.* 6.25.3). P. Herz was probably right in claiming that "der Tag der Hinrichtung zu einem offiziellen Festtag wurde, der u. a. von römischen Statthaltern in den Provinzen gefeiert wurde".⁵¹

VI. A POSSIBLE RECONSTRUCTION

Finally let us try to reconstruct the whole text of the inscription. In the first line *munus* fits the empty space perfectly.⁵² The second line contains the entire name of Pilate, except for his *praenomen*. I agree with Labbé who suggested that Pilate's first name might consist only of one or two letters. Degrassi's suggestion *Sex(tus)* is too long, while Weber's *M(arcus)* seems to be acceptable, considering that Marcus was the most commonly used *praenomen* of the gens *Pontia*. The third line also has two words. Although the reading of *praef]ectus Iud[ae]ae* is clear, I am not quite certain about the right spelling of the name of the province. On the one hand, I am sure that the A after the D, and the upper transversal line of the last E are discernible even on high resolution photos, consequently Lifshitz, Lémonon and Labbé correctly transcribed the word as *Iuda[ea]e*. On the other hand, I believe that the sculptor used ligatured letters, therefore the line can also be correctly transcribed as *PRÆFECTUS IVDÆÆ*. In the fourth line it is impossible to accept the reading *dédit* (Frova's suggestion) because *é* sounds short in present perfect. The expression *munus ... fécit* is not likely if we accept that the word *munus* refers not to a building, but a game. Degrassi's and Weber's *dedicávit* is also unacceptable because the *apex* undoubtedly belongs to an *É*. The most acceptable solution in my view is *édidit* which most often occurs in the *munus* inscriptions. While the text of the inscription is adjusted to the centre, thus the *é* is situated almost in the middle of the 4th line, it is also likely that

⁴⁸ [Ti. Caesa]ri divi Aug[usti] f.] / [Augusto c]onservatori p[atriae] / [libertate res]tituta public[ae] laetit[ia] / [ob honore]m Augustalit[atis] (*InscrIt* XIII/2, p. 523); cf. DEGRASSI, A.: *Unda dedica degli Augustali Brindisini a Tiberio. Athenaeum* 42, 1964, 299–306. It must here be noted that in his commentary Degrassi connected Pilate's inscription with Seian's fall.

⁴⁹ *Saluti perpetuae Augustae / libertatique publicae / populi Romani (...) Providentiae Ti. Caesaris Augusti nati ad aeternitatem / Romani nominis, sublato hoste perniciosissimo p(opuli) R(omani), / Faustus Titius Liberalis VIvir Aug(ustalis) iter(um) / p(ecunia) s(ua) f(aciundum) c(uravit).* (*CIL* XI, 4170 = *ILS* 157)

⁵⁰ [Num]ini ac Providentiae / [Ti. Ca]esar(is) Aug(usti) et senatus, / [in mem(oriam)] eius die qui fuit XV k. Novemb., / [P.] Viriasius Naso, pro cos. tertio, sua pecunia / consecravit. (*ICret* IV, 272 = *CIL* III, 12036 = *ILS* 158, Gortyn, Crete, 32 CE).

⁵¹ HERZ, P.: Kaiserfeste der Prinzipatszeit. *ANRW* II.16.2, 1978, 1135–1200 (esp. 1155–1158.)

⁵² LABBÉ, *op. cit.* (note 2), 285.

an adverbial phrase may have completed the text, e.g. the frequently used *de s(ua) p(ecunia)* or *de suo*. This latter version is more probable because the text does not use any abbreviations.

On the basis of the above suggestions, we can conclude that the Pilate inscription could well be reconstructed as follows:

1. *Munu]s Tiberi[um*
2. *M. (?) Po]ntius Pilatus*
3. *praef]ectus Iuda[ea]e*
4. *de suo] é[didit.*

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