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Tafeln 1–31

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CHRISTER BRUUN

A Dedication in 173 CE at Roman Ostia, carried out on the  
Emperor Antoninus Pius' *dies natalis*

Plate 17

At Ostia, the so-called Piazzale delle Corporazioni is famous for the mosaic floors which show the presence, in ancient times, of stalls used by ship-owners (*navicularii*) from many Mediterranean ports. This large open space behind the theatre of Ostia currently also houses a series of inscribed statue bases.<sup>1</sup>

On the east side of the Piazzale delle Corporazioni close to the northern corner there can today be found an honorific base for a prominent local person, M. Iunius M. f. Faustus (pl. 17, fig. 1). The monument was erected by the ship-owners from North Africa and Sardinia for the patron of the *corpus curatorum navium marinarum* (the association of superintendents of seagoing ships), as the inscription on the front side states. The local *decuriones* had allotted space for the monument at public expense (*CIL* XIV 4142 = *ILS* 6140).<sup>2</sup>

A short notice recording the inauguration of the monument appears on the left side of the same base and constitutes the reason for the present study. Standard epigraphic corpora reproduce this text in very similar ways. The version printed here, including the restorations of the text, follows the second entry in *CIL* XIV (*CIL* XIV 459 = 4142 = *ILS* 6140).<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On the site, see R. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*, Oxford <sup>2</sup>1973, 283–289; C. Pavolini, *Ostia. Guida archeologica Laterza*, Roma, Bari <sup>2</sup>2006, 67–69; B. van der Meer, *Ostia Speaks. Inscriptions, Buildings and Spaces in Rome's Main Port*, Leuven, Paris, Walpole, MA 2012, 31–37; T. T. Terpstra, *Trading Communities in the Roman World: A Micro-Economic and Institutional Perspective*, Leiden, Boston 2013, 100–112. *CIL* XIV 4549 gives the mosaic inscriptions from the Piazzale delle Corporazioni.

<sup>2</sup> The inscription reads: *M. Iunio M. f. Pal(atina tribu) / Fausto / decurioni adlecto / flamini divi Titi duumviro / mercatori frumentario / q(uaestori) aerari(i) flamini Romae / et Aug(ustorum) patrono cor[p(or)is] / curatorum navium marinar[um] / domini navium Afrarum / univ[er]sarum item / Sardorum / l(ocus) d(at)us d(ecreto) d(ecurionum) p(ublice)*. There is a brief reference to the text in Meiggs, *Roman Ostia* (above n. 1) 288–289, who translates *curatores navium marinarum* as “curators of sea-shipment”. The expression *domini navium Afrarum univ[er]sarum item Sardorum* is awkward from a grammatical point of view (as *naves Afrae* are combined with *naves Sardorum*), but this matter needs not concern us here.

<sup>3</sup> The text was first published based on a report by R. Lanciani in *NSA* 1880, 427. When Dessau saw the inscription in preparation of *CIL* XIV 459, the front side could not be read as it

[dedic(ata)] XII Kal(endas) Octobres  
 [Severo II e]t Pompeiano II co(n)[s(ulibus)]  
 [curam a]gentibus P. Aufidio  
 [---]o M. Clodio Fortuna-  
 [tiano P]udente L. Tadio Fel(---)  
 [---] [[---]] XV

“Dedicated on the twelfth day before the Kalends of October (= 20 September) in the year when (Cn. Claudius) Severus and (Ti. Claudius) Pompeianus both were consuls for the second time. In charge of the action were P. Aufidius [---]us, M. Clodius Fortunatianus Pudens, and L. Tadius Fel[ix/icio/icissimus].”

Dessau in *CIL* XIV 459 restored the last line, although only tentatively (“etiam quae extant rasura temptata sunt”), as [*mag. qq.*] *lustr. I XV*. This version of the text is still sometimes cited, and although it has the merit of making sense of what seems to be a number at the end of the line, there is really no foundation for Dessau’s tentative restoration. Clearly, the three men, P. Aufidius, M. Clodius, and L. Tadius, held positions entailing certain responsibilities among the *domini* of the ships from North Africa, but nothing further is known about them.

A recent personal inspection of the monument reveals that while on most lines the first letter observed by previous scholars is now difficult to see, at the beginning of line 1 the number *III* can clearly be read, not *XII* as is commonly claimed (pl. 17, fig. 2). What is not clear is whether the number is complete or whether the stonecutter instead originally wrote *III*, *VIII* or *XIII*.

As will become clear, it is of a certain significance how this number might be restored. The Roman practice of choosing significant dates for public dedications constitutes the necessary context here. Walter Snyder and — more recently and on a large scale — Peter Herz have shown how such dedications tended to occur on days of a particular festive or solemn nature. The purpose was undoubtedly to attribute more dignity to the event and to attract a larger crowd from among people who were not tending to their regular work and business on that day. Such days were the *Kalendae* and *Idus* of every month, days of religious festivals, and days which celebrated the reigning emperor, the *domus Augusta*, and the *Divi* and *Divae* of the current or past dynasties. Attention was paid especially to the *dies natalis* and sometimes also to the *dies imperii*.<sup>4</sup>

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was included in a wall. The restoration of the last line does not appear in *CIL* XIV 4142. Dessau dotted the number on that line as a sign of uncertainty both in *CIL* XIV 459 and 4142; that line is in any case irrelevant for the present discussion.

<sup>4</sup> See W. F. Snyder, *Public Anniversaries in the Roman World. The Epigraphical Evidence for Their Observance during the First Three Centuries*, *Yale Classical Studies* 7 (1940) 223–317; P. Herz, *Untersuchungen zum Festkalender der römischen Kaiserzeit nach datierten Weih-*

Herz's collection of precisely dated inscriptions shows that of the dates *XIII Kal. Octobres*, *VIII Kal. Octobres*, *III Kal. Octobres*, and *III Kal. Octobres*, only the first and the last dates appear to have been particular in any way.<sup>5</sup> Regarding 29 September (*III Kal. Oct.*), Herz suggests the existence of a "Fest des 3. Jh.," based on the fact that in the period from 211 to 240 CE three inscriptions (from Raetia, Rome, and Pannonia Superior) register the solution of a *votum* on this day.<sup>6</sup> This is possible, but if the date was significant, the particular reason may have to be sought north of the Alps. The provincial connection may be present also in the inscription from Rome, which was erected by a group of *equites singulares* who characterize themselves as *cives Batavi sive Thracēs adlecti ex provincia Germania inferiori* (*CIL* VI 31162). For the Ostian inscription a better restoration of the date readily presents itself.

The day of *XIII Kalendas Octobres* or 19 September was the *dies natalis* of the emperor Pius.<sup>7</sup> Antoninus Pius died in 161 CE, twelve years before the inauguration of the statue of M. Iunius Faustus, but regardless of this interval the hypothesis that the emperor's *dies natalis* was chosen for the dedication of the statue is an attractive one. The Romans remembered and venerated their emperors long after their death, as can be seen also in the fact that the man whose statue the base supported, M. Iunius Faustus, was *flamen Divi Titi* (see n. 2). The emperor Titus, who reigned for only two years, had died some ninety years earlier, in 81 CE.

Herz cites another dedication made on the same day, also dating to after Pius' death and incidentally addressed *Divo Antonino Augusto Pio*, from 167 CE (*CIL* II 5232 = *ILS* 6898, from Collippo in Lusitania). The evidence for imperial days of significance being recognized and celebrated by posterity decades and even centuries later is massive. The so-called *Feriale Duranum* calendar, found in the camp of the *cohors XX Palmyrenorum* at Dura Europos, is the most famous example of this practice.<sup>8</sup> In the

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*und Ehreninschriften* (Inaugural-Diss. Johannes-Gutenberg-Universität), Mainz 1975; P. Herz, *Kaiserfeste der Prinzipatszeit*, ANRW II 16.2 (1978) 1135–1200.

<sup>5</sup> See Herz, *Untersuchungen* (above n. 4) 273–275, 277–279.

<sup>6</sup> Herz, *Untersuchungen* (above n. 4) 279; see *CIL* III 5773; VI 31162; *ILJug* 330.

<sup>7</sup> Herz, *Untersuchungen* (above n. 4) 273, 531. Herz, *Untersuchungen* (above n. 4) 274 registers this inscription under 20 September (*XII Kal. Oct.*), a day on which no celebrations are known to have occurred. Recently, Giuseppe Camodeca has argued, based on new epigraphic evidence from Misenum which has inspired contributions by other scholars as well, that *XIII Kal. Oct.* was Nerva's *dies imperii* (instead of *XIV Kal. Oct.*, as is commonly assumed); see G. Camodeca, *Sul dies imperii e sul giorno della tribunicia potestas di Nerva: un riesame*, in: S. Cagnazzi et al. (eds.), *Scritti di storia per Mario Pani*, Bari 2011, 55–65. While I am not fully persuaded by Camodeca, the present argument actually benefits if it were the case that more than one imperial celebration occurred on 19 September.

<sup>8</sup> On the *Feriale Duranum* calendar from Dura Europos, dating to the mid-220s CE, see R. O. Fink, A. S. Hoey, W. F. Snyder, *The Feriale Duranum*, Yale Classical Studies 7 (1940) 1–222, with part of the text in English translation in M. Beard, J. North, S. Price, *Religions of Rome*, Cambridge 1998, 2.71–74. It celebrates and retains the memory of events which date back as far as 100 BCE (the year in which Julius Caesar was born).

present case, the dedication was carried out by individuals who quite likely had experienced the reign of the emperor Pius, and one can also assume that as Ostians they had in various ways been directly affected by imperial decisions and actions in a positive way. So, for instance, to judge from the inscriptions on lead water pipes found at Ostia, the imperial government invested actively in the town's water distribution during the reign of Antoninus Pius. The evidence consists of inscribed lead pipes carrying the name of the emperor and of various imperial officials. Recent scholarship has shown that these conduits delivered water for public use.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, Antoninus Pius is known to have completed the great Baths of Neptune begun under Hadrian (*CIL* XIV 98 = *ILS* 334).<sup>10</sup>

In sum, there is a compelling reason for restoring the date of the dedication to read [*dedicata X*]III Kal(endas) Oct(obres).<sup>11</sup> This text can therefore be added to the exceptionally large number of Ostian inscriptions that record how dedications and other public events were scheduled for a day of public celebration (a *dies ferialis* or *dies festus*).<sup>12</sup> When such events took place on days that celebrated the *domus Augusta* in some way, they are simultaneously proof of imperial loyalty.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> C. Bruun, *L'amministrazione imperiale di Ostia e Portus*, in: C. Bruun, A. Gallina Zevi (eds.), *Ostia e Portus nelle loro relazioni con Roma* (Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae 27), Roma 2002, 161–192, esp. 170, 173. In addition, there are numerous lead pipes carrying the stamp *T. Aeli Aug. lib. Proculi a rat(ionibus)* (*CIL* XIV 5309.23, 28, and more recent discoveries). These conduits too were public and the inscription is to be understood as (*sub cura*) *T. Aeli Aug. lib. Proculi a rat(ionibus)* (as argued in Bruun, *art. cit.*, 170–171 and 190). Also this official may have been active under Antoninus Pius, although a later date cannot be excluded.

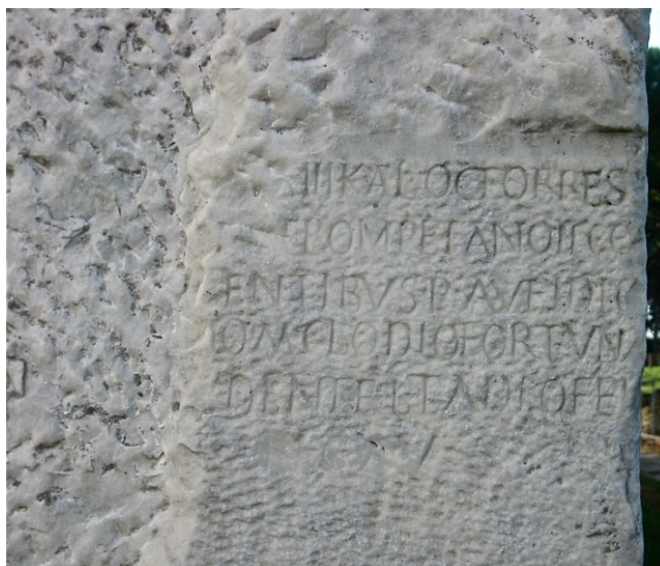
<sup>10</sup> In general, see Meiggs, *Roman Ostia* (above n. 1) 76–77, 306, 325–326, 360 for government activities in Ostia-Portus under Antoninus Pius.

<sup>11</sup> The available space in line 1 may require the word *dedicata* to be written out in full.

<sup>12</sup> At Ostia, we know the precise date for some seventy dedications, inaugurations, and other collective events. Well over half of them took place on a significant day; see my *Celebrazioni ad Ostia: la scelta del giorno per le dediche pubbliche, le inaugurazioni, e altri eventi collettivi*, forthcoming in MEFRA 129 (2017).

<sup>13</sup> This work was made possible by a Standard Research Grant awarded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRCC), which is gratefully acknowledged, as is the permission of the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo – Soprintendenza Speciale per il Colosseo, il Museo Nazionale Romano e l'Area Archeologica di Roma to publish the photographs in Figs. 1–2. I wish to thank Caitlin Hines for improving my English style and Paola Germoni for useful advice. Remaining errors are my own.





zu C. Bruun, S. 47, fig. 1 und 2: *CIL* XIV 4142 = *ILS* 6140