

The Contributions of Inscriptions to our Knowledge of the Herodian Dynasty

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A study of the Herodian dynasty makes this criticism:

Regrettably, by mainly focusing on the literary evidence, research has seldom taken into account documentary material. ... It is true that Josephus will always predominate. But without him being checked against, supplemented with, and corrected by contemporary documents and archaeology, no conclusion can claim to have been soundly based on facts.¹

Obviously, the more information we get about an historical event, the better we understand it. But a difference must be drawn between sources containing a vast amount of information and those merely supplementing our existing knowledge with minor details.

The Herods are attested in not much more than in some fifty inscriptions, including several doubtful cases.² Of course, the number of inscriptions gives only a very rough

¹ Kokkinos 1998, 26-27. This article is based on a paper read in the conference 'The World of the Herods and the Nabataeans' held at the British Museum, 17-19 April 2001. Hannah Cotton improved the paper, and particularly its English, in her usual fast, competent and generous way. After the conference I discussed the problems involved with W. Eck (Cologne), H. Flower and Ch. Habicht (Princeton). When I sent the final version of the article to Nikos Kokkinos to be published in the *Acts*, he proposed that we should both publish a corpus of all the inscriptions of the Herodian Dynasty and that this article should become part of it. I agreed, but never heard anything more about it. Rather, after some years, I read something quite different in Kokkinos 2007, 10, cf. 322. I was not the only one to be astonished: 'disappointing omission' (see A. Kerkeslager, <http://www.bmcreview.org/2008/09/20080940.html>). I think that a study, which owes so much to Hannah, should be published in a volume in her honour.

² For example, Kokkinos 1998, 329 n. 217, thinks that Iulia Beronice, mentioned in an inscription from *Apulum* in *Dacia* dating from the third century, is 'a possible freedwoman of Berenice II' (the inscription: Jung 1900, 182-86, no. 9 = *CIL* III 14468 = *ILS* 7149 = *IDR* III 5, 1, 14). But this Iulia Beronice was married to a man (*PME* I 34) who was municipal magistrate of several cities of *Dacia* and had been *tribunus militum* in the *legio IV Flavia*, a legion normally stationed in *Moesia superior*. This family apparently belonged to the leading aristocracy of the provinces of the Danube. To establish a connection between Queen Berenice and a member of the local aristocracy of another region, we need to have much more proof than just a name. As is well known, *Iulius* was the *nomen gentile* of all the families which obtained their Roman citizenship from Caesar, Augustus or Tiberius, as well as the name of all the families whose ancestors were liberated by a member of these families. At the end of the second century hundreds of thousands of persons used this *nomen*. And if parents gave the name Berenice to a little girl, they were not necessarily

idea of their contribution to our knowledge. The type of each inscription and the information we can glean from it are much more essential. To explore the potential of inscriptions as sources for the Herodian dynasty, the article will concentrate on the most important members of the Herodian family, i.e. Herod the Great, Agrippa I and Agrippa II. In the case of these best known persons, we can establish the extent to which information gleaned from the epigraphical evidence can increase the knowledge acquired from other sources.

Herod is considered one of the greatest builders in the ancient world. Allegedly Augustus and Agrippa remarked that the *megalopsychia* of Herod needed an even greater sphere of activity than his already sizable kingdom. In this kingdom he erected not only fortresses and palaces; he also established or reconstructed a whole series of cities: Sebaste (Samaria), Agrippium (Anthedon), Antipatris, Phasaelis and — last but not least — Caesarea. He constructed a theatre in Jerusalem and an amphitheatre near Jerusalem. And in Jerusalem stood the most magnificent of Herod's buildings, the temple. In the non-Jewish regions of his realm he is said to have erected many temples devoted to the worship of the emperor. Beyond the borders of his kingdom he constructed *gymnasia* for Tripolis, Damascus and Ptolemais; Byblos was given a town wall; Berytus and Tyre, *exedrai*, *stoai*, temples and *agorai*; Sidon and Damascus, theatres; Laodicea, an aqueduct; Ascalon, baths, a fountain and colonnades. In Antioch he paved the main street with marble slabs and erected colonnades on both sides. But he did not neglect the “real” Greek cities: in Rhodes he financed the construction of a temple for Pythian Apollo. In Chios he reconstructed a pillared hall and, in Nicopolis, he took care of numerous public buildings. All these building activities are known from Josephus.³

Generally building-inscriptions — inscriptions commemorating a building operation — are a well-known type of ancient sources, but almost no dedicatory inscriptions from Herodian constructions have survived. It has been proposed that three fragments, found in different places on the isle of Syros, are parts of the same epistyle. According to this reconstruction, King Herod gave something to the people of an unknown community —

thinking of Titus' lover; they could have been thinking of the well-known Ptolemaic queen, celebrated in a poem and immortalized as a constellation.

For similar reasons, there is no need to look in *CIL* VI 10588. 20394 for ‘freedwomen of a “Berenice”’ (*pace* Kokkinos 1998, 191 n. 64).

There can also be no solution in the case of the “Boundary of Gezer” inscriptions (Rosenfeld 1988 — followed with some doubts by Kokkinos 1998, 186; *contra* Reich 1990; Schwartz 1990b).

Finally the same has to be said of an inscription published by Mouterde (1957; Kokkinos 1998, 338 n. 247, is too optimistic) and of *SEG* 8, 46 (*pace* Kokkinos 1998, 148-149, 155, 365, who had to postulate ‘an intermediary relative, admittedly elsewhere unattested’, to connect this inscription with the Herodian dynasty).

³ Joseph. *AJ* XV 268; 292-298; 323-325; 327-342; 363-364; 380-425; XVI 18-19; 136; 147; *BJ* I 401-428; cf. also Suet. *Aug.* 60. For a commentary, see for example Lichtenberger 1999; Roller 1998; Roller 2007 (314: ‘little information comes from outside the Josephus tradition’); Schürer² I 304-308.

Syros or Delos.⁴ A more reliable epigraphical testimony of Herod's building activity is an inscription from Berytus, which had been discussed in another paper.⁵ This inscription mentions that Herod's great-grandchildren, i.e. Agrippa II and Berenice, reconstructed something, *[qu]od rex Herodes proavos eorum fecerat*.

But there exists no dedicatory inscription of Herod from the region where he built mostly and with the greatest energy, i.e. in his own kingdom. From all the buildings in Judaea and other parts of his realm we have only one dedicatory inscription. According to the inscription, published by Benjamin Isaac,⁶ a certain Paris or Sparis donated an amount of *drachmai* for the pavement of a building. This person was somehow connected with Rhodes. As far as we can judge from the place where the inscription was discovered, his donation was given before the destruction of the Temple. The inscription mentions the twentieth year of a reign which corresponds best to that of Herod the Great. Moreover, judging from these circumstances, it is possible that this Paris or Sparis contributed to the pavement of the Temple.⁷ Thus the only preserved dedicatory inscription from an Herodian building does not mention Herod at all!

Why are there no dedicatory inscriptions from the Herodian buildings in Judaea? The reason cannot be a lack of archaeological activity. Caesarea⁸ and the fortresses of Herod have been intensively excavated. We must, therefore, look for an explanation elsewhere. First, it seems as if in Judaea under Herod, people did not, as a rule, commemorate each construction with an inscription. They were slow in adopting this epigraphic habit from the Greco-Roman World.⁹

But was not Herod himself steeped in Greco-Roman culture? The answer can only be in the affirmative and so one would have expected him to have set an example to his people. Herod had to compete with the Hasmonaeans for whom honorific inscriptions were dedicated in the temple, as mentioned in the first book of Maccabees.¹⁰ And we read about inscriptions of Herod. Josephus mentions that the king had ordered that the name of Agrippa should be inscribed above a gate of the Temple. Herod was driven by

⁴ Mantzoulinou-Richards 1988 = *SEG* 38, 825 = *IG* XII 5, 713⁶ = *IJO* I Ach. 74: Βασιλ[εὺς Ἡ]ρώδ[η]ς τῶι δ[ί]μ[ωι ---]. See for example also Richardson 1996, 205-206.

⁵ *AE* 1928, 82 = *IGLBibbia* 41 = Haensch 2006 (= *AE* 2006, 1578. P.-L. Gatiér points correctly to the fact that in one of the last treatments of the manuscript *que* was unfortunately lost. But he misses the argument that because of the long *vacat* at the end of line 3 it is not possible to supplement the last two letters *EX* to read a form of *exornare*. And before *EX* there is space for a further letter, i. e. *[s]ex*, see Abb. 3 on p. 149).

⁶ Isaac 1983 = *SEG* 33, 1277, cf. 35, 1546 = *AE* 1984, 913 = *IGLBibbia* 33 = *IJO* II AS 10 = *CIIP* I 3, accepted for example by Richardson 1996, 205.

⁷ See for all these aspects the large and ample discussion of Boffo in *IGLBibbia* and now the *CIIP*.

⁸ No inscription from Caesarea: Lehmann – Holum 2000, 6 and now *CIIP* II.

⁹ For example, we know inscriptions from five προσευχάι, built at different places and times in Ptolemaic Egypt: *JEI* 1440-1443, 1532 A; cf. 1432, 1444 = *JIGRE* 22, 24, 25, 27, 117; cf. 13, 28. From Herod's kingdom we have only one inscription: *AE* 1922, 117 = *SEG* 8, 170 = *CIJud* 1404 = *IGLBibbia* 31. For a general overview of the epigraphical evidence from Judaea: Kant 1987; Mussies 1976, 1042-1044.

¹⁰ *Macc.* I: 14, 27, 48.

exaggerated loyalty to his friend, as the same author remarked with a critical undertone.¹¹ Also according to Josephus, Herod erected inscriptions in honour of Augustus in the theatre built in Jerusalem.¹² The disturbances and wars in Judaea in the first and second centuries surely destroyed many of these inscriptions. Others were lost as a consequence of the continuous settlement at most places. Perhaps we must also wonder whether Herod imitated Augustus¹³ and used *litterae inauratae*, i.e. gilded metal-letters, for many of his inscriptions. This kind of inscriptions could vanish without leaving much more than dowel-holes.

Although the absence of building-inscriptions mentioning Herod is astonishing, it is not surprising that we do not have many monuments from Herod's realm with inscriptions and statues honouring the king. The only example comes from Seeia in northern Auranitis.¹⁴ It is only to be expected. As Josephus already stated, such an infraction of the commandment against images would have caused an uproar in regions with a dense Jewish population.¹⁵

Beyond Judaea Herod was not obliged to show consideration for such beliefs. There he could accept without political scruples that Greek cities should wish to honour his benefactions in the same way that they had honoured their *εὐεργεταί* for centuries. Three statue bases dedicated to him are known, two from Athens, one from Cos.¹⁶ If we also take the fragmentary inscriptions into account, we have two more bases from Athens and one from Paphus:¹⁷ at most, six monuments for Herod. Is this a great

¹¹ Joseph. *BJ* I 416: τοῦ δ' αὐτοῦ φίλου δι' ὑπερβολὴν εὐνοίας καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς πόλης ἐχάραξεν τὸ ὄνομα, ἦν αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ ναῶ κατεσκεύασεν. See also Joseph. *AJ* XV 296 = *BJ* I 403: Inscriptions are not explicitly mentioned, but one is reminded of them.

¹² Joseph. *AJ* XV 272: τό γε μὴν θέατρον ἐπιγραφαὶ κύκλῳ περιεῖχον Καίσαρος. Perhaps the Jews of Berenice imitated his example when they inscribed their honorary decree in the amphitheatre of the city: *IGR* I 1024 = *CJZC* 71 (41/ 40 B.C. or — more likely — A.D. 24/ 25); for other explications see Schürer² III 104.

¹³ See generally Joseph. *AJ* XV 328-330; XVI 153, 156-157.

¹⁴ *OGIS* 415 = *IGR* III 1243 = *IGLBibbia* 17; cf. Richardson 1996, 206-207. This monument is surely not a 'Votiv der Herodianer', as Wenning 1990, 387, 389 (Stifterstatuen) puts it. And we find also two strange hypotheses in an article of Freyberger (1991, 37): 'So ließ er (=Herodes) zwar das große nabatäische Heiligtum in Sia vollenden, veranlaßte aber auch, eine Statue von sich neben denen einheimischer Honoratioren in der Vorhalle des Baalshamin-Tempels aufzustellen'. Nor do we have grounds to suppose that Herod paid for this temple (see also Lichtenberger 1999, 170 n. 889; Millar 1993, 396) or that he said anything about erecting a statue of himself.

¹⁵ Joseph. *AJ* XV 329; XVI 158; cf. also *BJ* II 195; Tac. *Hist.* V 5, 4.

¹⁶ *OGIS* 414 = *IG* II² 3440 = *IJO* Ach 38. *OGIS* 427 = *IG* II² 3441 = *CJO* Ach 39 (see also Kushnir-Stein 1995, 84). Höghammar 1993, 123 no. 13 = *Iscr. Cos* EV 247 b = *SEG* 45, 1131 = *IG* XII 4, 2, 882 (see also Jacobson 1993-94).

¹⁷ *SEG* 12, 150; cf. *IJO* Ach 39 in the commentary (but this is very uncertain because only few letters are left). *IG* II² 3600 (as Kokkinos 1998, 137 n. 195 thinks; but this is not very probable because in all other cases we find βασιλέα before the name; for another interpretation see Ameling 1983 II, 105 no. 75). *IGR* III 938 (Kokkinos 1998, 137 n. 195; but see also, for example, Ameling 1983 II, 224 no. 209). Cf. Richardson 1996, 206-208.

number? The answer must be in the negative when one considers the numerous cities to which Herod donated money for building projects. And one has also to take into account the many cities that received money from him for other purposes, for example, the financing of games or the purchase of grain. But perhaps this estimate is too low if we think of the many monuments that are lost forever. We would perhaps know more monuments if the inscriptions from the cities of the Syro-Phoenician coast were adequately collected and published.¹⁸

But even if the number of monuments is to be increased considerably, this will probably not much change the picture which we get from the known inscriptions: These monuments are in no way exceptional. The inscriptions are formulated in the same way as hundreds of others. They praise the ἀρετή, the εὐεργεσία, the εὐνοία of Herod.¹⁹ No one speaks of him as σωτήρ, or κτίστης. These monuments were quite average in dimensions: the bases from Athens, for example, are not more than 40 cm high, 80 cm wide and 50 cm deep.²⁰ Apparently these bases carried *statae pedestres*, representing Herod standing, not riding a horse or a carriage.

Herod was apparently merely one benefactor among many others for these cities.²¹ Perhaps they sensed too often that Herod pursued his own political aims in being so generous. It was not by chance that he financed so many buildings in Nicopolis – the monument of the victory of Octavian.²² ‘For the people of Rhodes he erected the Pythian temple at his own expense’ — we should ask, then, when he made the promise to do so. Perhaps when he met Octavian there in the year 30 B.C.,²³ when it was determined whether Herod would be king in the future or — at worst — decapitated. So it was very useful to be surrounded by happy local populations and recommended by grateful local dignitaries. Perhaps we should also consider whether Herod preferred not to be honoured in a way which he thought ought to be reserved for Augustus and his family,²⁴ and asked the cities not to exaggerate.

For further very hypothetical testimonies see Mantzoulinou-Richards 1988, 97-98; Roller 1998, 224, 226-227.

¹⁸ For many of these the corresponding volume of *I GLS* was never published.

¹⁹ Cf. Lichtenberger 2009, 56-57, who is influenced too much by the literary evidence.

²⁰ *IG* II² 3440: 0.36 x 0.7 x 0.5 m; 3441: 0.23 x 0.77 x 0.4 m. The cylindrical base from Cos (Höghammar 1993, 123 no. 13 = *Iscr. Cos* EV 247 b = *SEG* 45, 1131 = *IG* XII 4, 2, 882) was 0.73 m high and had a diameter of about half a metre. And in this case one had either used an already existing inscription or the monument of Herod was reused after a very short time to honour an athlete (cf. Höghammar 1993, 43, 66).

²¹ And he was not more often honoured than other client kings of the Early Principate: see for comparison Braund 1984, 78. In this context it seems problematic if the question if he was the last Hellenistic king is discussed only on the basis of literary testimonies as done, for example, in Günther 2005.

²² Joseph. *AJ* XVI 147. For a similar view see Braund 1984, 77 (but I am much more sceptical about Malalas as a source for Antioch in the first century); Lichtenberger 1999, 172-175; Roller 1998, 259-262.

²³ Joseph. *AJ* XVI 147; cf. XV 187-196. *BJI* 424; cf. I 387-393.

²⁴ In this context see Joseph. *BJI* 428.

Besides the monumental inscriptions mentioning Herod, we have some texts from the so-called *instrumentum domesticum*.²⁵ Important for our understanding of Herod as a person are the inscriptions from the *amphorae* of Masada and Herodium.²⁶ Fourteen Latin *tituli* can be assigned to him without doubt. With the phrase *regis Herodi Iudaici* they mention the destination and the prospective owner.²⁷ An *amphora* for *garum* probably also comes from Herod's property since its Greek *dipinto* mentions a *basileus* as owner.²⁸ Finally, it is probable, that all other *amphorae* with Latin inscriptions from these places belonged to Herod.²⁹ The most important conclusion from these *tituli* was already drawn by the editors:

The import of Italian wine, apples from Cumae, *garum* and *altec* from Spain — in other words all the ingredients necessary for a proper Roman *cena* — demonstrates in concrete and palpable terms Herod's desire to emulate the tastes of the Roman aristocracy.³⁰

In connection with Herod's culinary taste, one should also mention an inscription from Rome to elucidate another aspect. The emperor's slaves sometimes had been the property of others. By inheritance or gift these people became *servi Caesaris* (and could be manumitted later on by the emperor). Such people often used an additional name, an *agnomen*, to refer to their former owner. These *agnomina* were formed by adding -ianus, -anus or -inus to one of the names of the former proprietor. The epitaph of a former *praegustator*, a taster, of Augustus bearing the name (Tib. Iulius) Coetus Herodianus, dates from the year A.D. 21 or 22.³¹ In view of his *agnomen*, it is very probable that the

²⁵ I will not discuss inscriptions on weights because A. Kushnir-Stein dealt with them; see especially Kushnir-Stein 2002 (cf. Hendin 2009); for the Herodian weights integrated in the new corpora see *CIIP* I 666. 676. II 1726; for a recently published example see *SEG* 58, 1751.

²⁶ There are now twenty-two known, according to Ecker 2013, 67.

²⁷ Cotton – Geiger 1989, nos. 804-816 (cf. *AE* 1992, 1698) and Cotton – Lernau – Goren 1996, 233.

²⁸ Cotton – Geiger 1989, no. 826 = Cotton – Lernau – Goren 1996, 229-230 (= *AE* 1996, 1563 = *SEG* 46, 2019; cf. 55, 1727).

²⁹ See the convincing commentaries of Cotton – Geiger 1989, 133-177; Cotton – Lernau – Goren 1996. Cf. further Geiger 1997, 85-86; Richardson 1996, 203-4; now also Berdowski 2008; Ecker 2013.

³⁰ Cotton – Lernau – Goren 1996, 238. But one should note that most of Italian wines — *Mas(sicum) excel(lens)*, *Tarant(inum)*, *Mul(sum)*, *C(aecu)b(um)* (Cotton – Geiger 1989 nos. 818, 819, 821, 832, 836; cf. Ecker 2013, 71) only presumably belonged to Herod. They are not explicitly designed as his property. Only if one assumes that all *amphorae* with Latin inscriptions were destined for the use of the king, they have to be taken into consideration. For the *mal(a) Cum(ana)* (Cotton – Geiger 1989 no. 822) see now Ecker 2013, 72 and note 25, with serious doubts about this reading.

³¹ *CIL* VI 9005 = *ILS* 1795; for the question, in which year the *consules suffecti* M. Cocceius Nerva and C. Vibius Rufinus should be dated, see for example Syme 1981, 371-376 (= *RP* III 1430-1435); idem 1983, 195-196 (= *RP* IV 351-352); this dating is accepted by Eck 1985, 15; idem, *NP* III 49; for the older position see Degraffi 1952, 11.

former owner of this *praegustator* was Herod.³² Most likely the taster changed owners after the king's death since Herod bequeathed numerous legates to Augustus and to members of his family.³³ The fact that this *praegustator* changed owner in 4 BCE fits well with his death in A.D. 21 or 22. It has been suggested that such inherited slaves most likely continued in occupations familiar to them before becoming members of the *familia Caesaris*.³⁴ So, perhaps, Coetus Herodianus was already trained at the court of Herod.

Inscriptions generally constitute a source of information only for certain aspects of a reign. In the case of Herod, they document only some of the usual features since, apparently, many inscriptions were lost and perhaps also because the use of epigraphy was only slowly adopted by the people of Herod's kingdom.³⁵ Thus, most inscriptions mentioning Herod come from outside his kingdom, such as those describing the foodstuffs, which had to be dispatched to him (mentioned above). Necessarily these inscriptions inform us mostly about Herod's relations with the world beyond his kingdom's frontiers.

Herod's sons are no better documented by inscriptions than Herod himself. In fact, epigraphs mentioning Archelaus, the tetrarch Philipp, or Herodes Antipas are rare and not very informative.³⁶

Agrippa I presents a special problem because almost no inscriptions can be attributed to him with certainty.³⁷ But a number of inscriptions, on the contrary, can be attributed with certainty to Agrippa II. Several features of an inscription ensure that King Agrippa mentioned in such an inscription must be Agrippa II: the high number of years of government, reflecting his long reign; the reference to two different eras, resulting from the addition of new territories to his kingdom; the allusion to a royal father bearing the same name — all such elements of an inscription point to the fact that the king in

³² See especially Chantraine, 1967, 293, 350-356; idem 1980, 401-402. For another slave of the emperor who probably had been owned before by a member of the Herodian dynasty, see *AE* 1979, 33; cf. 1982, 49.

³³ Joseph. *AJ* XVII 190; cf. 323; *BJ* I 646; cf. II 100. See for example Jacobson 2001, 27; too skeptical: Braund 1984, 143.

³⁴ Chantraine 1967, 364; see also 377: If one gave such an *agnomen*, the intention was *inter alia*: 'einen Hinweis auf die Qualität der Ausbildung zu geben'.

³⁵ For the use of the different languages see Rocca 2008, 240-247.

³⁶ **Archelaus**: no inscription. **Herodes Antipas**: two monuments from Delos and Cos; apparently he was honoured by *statuae pedestres*: *OGIS* 417 = *IDélos* 1586 = *IGLBibbia* 20 = *IJO* I Ach 69 (0.8 x 0.56 x 0.53 m; Kokkinos 1998, 122, is wrong to say that this monument was 'dedicated to Apollo'; one erected monuments only at an attractive place where many people could see it; for such considerations see for example Tuchelt 1979, 66-67); Cos: *OGIS* 416 = Höghammar 1993, 126 no. 16 = *SEG* 45, 1132 = *IG* XII 4, 2, 997 (0.82 x 0.54 m; the monument was not erected by the city, but by his ξένος and φίλος). **Philipp**: *PAES* IV A 101; cf. Offord 1919 (he is mentioned as the reigning monarch); two very unsecure testimonies are discussed by Kokkinos 1998, 239-240.

³⁷ For a group of stone weights, which certainly refer to Agrippa I, see Kokkinos 1998, 292. If a graffito on a column in the palace of Jericho really mentions a king Agrippa, this inscription should refer to Agrippa I because of the place where it was found (for the graffito see Gleason 1987-88, 38 n. 45; for its interpretation: Kokkinos 1998, 296 n. 113).

question should be Agrippa II. But for many inscriptions, it cannot be determined with certainty which Agrippa is being referred to: a very fragmentary proclamation, probably against brigands, found in Kanatha; an Aramaic inscription from Seeia, which mentions a king Agrippa; a dedication — apparently of a temple — ὑπὲρ σωτηρίας <...> καὶ ἐπανόδου of a king Agrippa in al-Mushannaf; a basis for a statua pedestris from Berytus and a monument given to a *regi magno ---/ philo[romaeo — or — caesari ---]* in Apamea.³⁸

The relatively numerous inscriptions referring to Agrippa II all come, with few exceptions, from the territory of the tetrarch Philipp, i.e., Gaulanitis, Batanaea, Trachonitis, Auranitis, and from the tetrarchy of Lysanias. There are no inscriptions from the kingdom of Chalcis, which Agrippa II governed only for a short time, nor from the regions of Tiberias, Livias and Arca Caesarea, over which Agrippa reigned for decades.

There is no certain evidence that Agrippa I or Agrippa II made large-scale donations to the important cities of Greece or Asia Minor. Apparently their benefactions were mostly limited to their own kingdoms and the surrounding regions. Only Berenice, the sister of Agrippa II, was honoured in Athens.³⁹ Thus, no monuments for Agrippa II, and almost no building-inscriptions were found. In fact, we have only one dedicatory inscription from Berytus. This inscription was published in a very unsatisfactory manner in 1927.⁴⁰ It consists of six connected fragments — altogether ‘à peu près 3 mètres de longueur’⁴¹ — of a monumental architrave. The text was read as follows: [*R*]egina Berenice, regis magni A[grippae fil(ia) et rex Agrippa templum (?)/ quod rex Herodes proavos eorum fecerat ve[tustate corruptum a solo restituerunt]/ marmoribusque et columnis [*s*]ex [--- exornaverunt]. The fragments were found in the centre of Berytus between two partially excavated buildings, presumably a large *basilica* and a complex of *thermae*.⁴² It is not exactly known to which building they belonged.⁴³ Strikingly, six

³⁸ *OGIS* 424 = *IGR* III 1223; *PAES* IV A 102 (a fragment [13.5 x 22 cm; height of letters: 3.5-4.5 cm] with ‘the most beautiful and the most carefully carved Nabataean letters known so far’); *OGIS* 418 = Prentice 1908, 298 no. 380 (but El-Mushannaf should not be identified with Neila, see Sartre 1999, 200; ἐπάνοδος need not refer to the journey of Agrippa I to Rome, as for example Kokkinos 1998, 290 n. 92, and Schwartz 1990 a, 56 think; it could also mean the return of Agrippa II from the campaigns against the Jews in the great uprising); *CIL* III 14387 = *ILS* 8957 = *IGLS* VI 2759 (he is honoured as *patronus coloniae*; 1.08 x 0.8/ 0.63 x 0.91/0.65 m); Balty 1981, 203 no. 16, pl. 225 (no dimensions are given; because the inscription is in Latin — in a Greek town — the king must have been honoured by a Latin-speaking person or group of people). See finally Kokkinos 1998, 327 n. 208, for a Safaitic inscription alluding to a revolt under a ‘King Agrippa’.

³⁹ *OGIS* 428 = *IG* II² 3449 (a “basis magna”). Besides Berenice, the inscription only refers to Agrippa I, but does not mention Agrippa II. So this monument was presumably erected in the times of Claudius when only the latter was important.

⁴⁰ Cagnat 1927, 243-244 = *AE* 1928, 82 = *IGLBibbia* 41; the largest commentary (three and a half pages) for decades: Cagnat 1928, 157-160; for the best, but not perfect photo see Mouterde – Lauffray 1952, 8-9. For the new reconstruction see Haensch 2006 (= *AE* 2006, 1578).

⁴¹ Cagnat 1928, 158.

⁴² Lauffray 1944-45, 56-57.

columns are mentioned in the inscription. Apparently they were a distinctive feature of the building, most probably belonging to a monumental entrance.

For decades the first reconstruction of the inscription has been accepted without doubt and with only minor modifications. Laura Boffo was the first to point out the flaws in it. She rightly emphasized that the lines of such an accurate inscription were most probably inscribed symmetrically on the architrave. However, there is a big deliberate blank space, a *vacat*, on the right side of the third line.⁴⁴ We must assume a corresponding blank space on the left side. If we make this assumption, the space would be too large to restore only the first letters of the first preserved words, as had been done until Boffo's commentary. There are probably many more lost letters on the left side. She also pointed out that until now the supplements proposed implied that the financier was named in a shorter form than his father, who was not involved in the project — 'un formulario che sembra in ogni modo ... insoddisfacente'.

Another point was not made by Boffo. All previous reconstructions assume that Agrippa is named after Berenice. But this is impossible!⁴⁵ Agrippa was a reigning monarch and Berenice only his sister and the wife of different monarchs. Perhaps she was the stronger character and probably more fascinating — at least to Titus. But this was of no account in such an official document as a building-inscription. In such a context the official protocol was decisive, and in this case, Agrippa had priority over his sister.⁴⁶

Given these facts, a much more convincing reconstruction is possible. If we assume that many more letters than presumed are to be supplemented on the left side we have room for *rex magnus Agrippa Philocaesar* or even *rex magnus Agrippa Philocaesar et Philoromaeus*.⁴⁷ In the first case we get:

[Rex magnus Agrippa Philocaesar et r]egina Berenice, regis magni A[grippae filii/ Coloniae Iuliae Augustae Felici Beryto balneum (?) qu]od rex Herodes proavos eorum fecerat ve[tustate dilapsu]m/ (vac.) refecerunt et ornaverunt statuis] marmoribusque et columnis [s]ex (vac.).

In the second case the inscription will read as follows:

[Rex magnus Agrippa Philoromaeus et Philocaesar et r]egina Berenice, regis magni A[grippae filii/ civibus Coloniae Iuliae Augustae Felicis Beryti impensis suis balneum (?)

⁴³ Too speculative: Roller 1998, 221, 249.

⁴⁴ Apparently Cagnat did not have a photograph when he published the inscription.

⁴⁵ Cagnat 1928, 160: 'Cette inscription nous est une preuve de plus de l'association du frère et de la sœur, singulièrement intéressante; car le nom de Bérénice figure le premier, — irrégularité protocolaire qui ne peut manquer de causer quelque étonnement, même si l'on suppose qu'elle avait fait les frais de la reconstruction de l'édifice'. Apparently for him his hypothesis had become a certainty. And it was accepted as such: see, for example, Macurdy 1937, 85; Jordan 1974, 113; Jones 1984, 75 n. 102; Roller 1998, 250.

⁴⁶ Tiberius was deeply offended when Livia inscribed her name before his on a statue of Augustus which she 'privately' donated; Tac. *Ann.* III 64, 2: *cum haud procul theatro Marcelli effigiem divo Augusto Iulia dicaret, Tiberi nomen suo postscripserat, idque ille credabatur ut inferius maiestate principis gravi et dissimulata offensione abdidisse.*

⁴⁷ Approximate length of the inscription: in the first case 8.4 m; in the second 10.2 m.

qu]od rex Herodes proavos eorum fecerat ve[tustate dilapsu]m/ (vac.) a fundamentis restituendum curaverunt et ornauerunt statu[s] marmoribusque et columnis [s]ex (vac.).

Now, we are not compelled to assume that the building constructed was named only at the end of the first line. Instead, we get meaningful units for each line. In the first line the donators were named. In the second line we find the object, the recipients and the allusion to a former merit of the *proavos*. In the last line the details of the construction are explained.

The greatest epigraphical testimony of the building activities of a member of the Herodian dynasty corresponds to the detailed information given by Josephus about Herod, Agrippa I and Agrippa II as benefactors to Berytus.⁴⁸ This inscription coincides also with another comment from the same author. According to Josephus, the subjects of Agrippa II were very angry with their monarch because he transferred to Berytus ‘all the ornaments of the kingdom’ (τὸν τῆς βασιλείας κόσμον ἐκεῖ μετήνεγκεν).⁴⁹ Only one other inscription is a direct testimony of Agrippa’s activity as king. At Iabrudā, in the tetrarchy of Lysanias, an inscription was found, which contains a decision of the king.⁵⁰

In the other inscriptions, Agrippa II is only mentioned as the reigning monarch. In some cases, inscriptions are dated with reference to the current year of his reign. In other cases, Agrippa was mentioned because the dedicator had been or was at the king’s service. All these inscriptions were apparently erected by socially elevated people of his kingdom. Two commanders of large task forces⁵¹ are mentioned, several ἑπαρχοί, commanders of military units⁵², two *centuriones*, commanders of subdivisions of such units,⁵³ and two στρατηγοί, which I will discuss later on.⁵⁴ In a still unpublished epitaph from Saura we get, according to M. Sartre, an ‘officier de cavalerie de Agrippa II’.⁵⁵ As he kindly pointed out to me in a letter, the inscription was put up for a ‘*decurio*’ named Ausos Aiou.⁵⁶ Apparently a certain Ἀφαρεὺς ἀπελεύθερος⁵⁷ who erected with his son an unknown building at Seeia, was also working for Agrippa II.⁵⁸

⁴⁸ Agrippa I: *AJ* XIX 335-338; Agrippa II: *AJ* XX 211-212.

⁴⁹ Joseph. *AJ* XX 211-212.

⁵⁰ *IGLS* V 2707.

⁵¹ *AE* 1895, 78 = *IGR* III 1144 = *OGIS* 425 = *PAES* III A 797¹ (cf. *SEG* 48, 1945): στρατοπεδάρχισαντι ἰππέων Κολωνειτῶν καὶ στρατιωτῶν (for στρατοπεδάρχης as translation of *praefectus castrorum* — for example: *IGR* III 1432 — see Dobson 1974, 415; Saddington 1995, 53-54); *AE* 1967, 525 = *SEG* 33, 1266 = 40, 1449 = *AE* 1987, 950 = *IGLBibbia* 30: ἐπάρχωι στ[ρατευμάτος? τοῦ] βασιλέως μεγάλου Ἀγρίπ[πα].

⁵² *OGIS* 421 (ἑπα[ρχος ---] σπείρης Αὐ[γούστης]), 422 (similar to it, or perhaps identical with it, is Prentice 1908, 287 no. 362; for a discussion see, for example, Kokkinos 1998, 335 n. 237; cf. also Schwartz 1990 a, 113). In both cases the king Agrippa is more probably Agrippa II than Agrippa I, who reigned only for a short period. Such an ἑπαρχος we find perhaps also in *AE* 1967, 525 = *SEG* 33, 1266 = 40, 1449 = *AE* 1987, 950 = *IGLBibbia* 30.

⁵³ *AE* 1966, 493 (= *BE* 1966, 473; cf. *SEG* 48, 1876), *SEG* 7, 970 = 33, 1306 — the same also in *SEG* 7, 1100.

⁵⁴ *OGIS* 421 ([στρατηγ]ὸς Νομάδων) 425 (= *AE* 1895, 78 = *IGR* III 1144 = *PAES* III A 797¹).

⁵⁵ Sartre 1999, 213 n. 83.

⁵⁶ The inscription will be published as *IGLS* XV 107.

As in this last case, most of these inscriptions were erected in the context of building operations.⁵⁹ Those inscriptions about whose interpretation there can be no doubt concern the construction of pagan temples.⁶⁰ Three inscriptions probably pertain to tombs,⁶¹ but there is no clear example of a so-called honorific inscription.

These inscriptions show us the variety of persons through whom Agrippa II governed, at least in the northern parts of his realm. We find some Syrians from an indigenous “milieu” apparently acculturating to Greco-Roman culture. Although their fathers were named after Syrian gods, they themselves used Greek or Roman names (as for example Ἡρώδης Αὔμου).⁶² We know also some *cives Romani* in the service of Agrippa II. Besides the often discussed case of T. Mucius Marci filius Clemens, there is a *centurio* named L. Obulnius.⁶³ Most likely these Roman citizens came from the Roman colonies in the Near East and especially from the Colonia Iulia Augusta Felix Berytus. Under these circumstances it is possible that Agrippa II’s generosity to Berytus aimed at attracting people from this city to the king’s service. Finally in this context one must mention that at Qalaat Fakra, probably in the territory of Berytus,⁶⁴ a certain S[at]rabon dedicated a statue of Atargatis (or perhaps built the entire little *aedes*) ὑπὲρ τῆς σωτηρίας Μάρκου Ἰουλίου Ἀγρίππα κυρίου βασιλέως καὶ τῆς κυρίας βασιλίσσης Βερενίκης, with the help of a certain C. (Iulius) Mansuetus, ἀρχιερέυς καὶ ἐπιμελητής.⁶⁵

Inscriptions also play an important role in the discussion concerning the year in which Agrippa died. Different passages of Josephus suggest that he died before A.D. 93/94.⁶⁶ But Photius stands against this hypothesis, according to whom Iustus of Tiberias — a contemporary of Agrippa II and Josephus — ended his work by discussing

⁵⁷ *OGIS* 419. In *OGIS* 423, 426 we find only names (see also n. 58). In the case of Helbon (n. 60) apparently a group of people — the local community? — acted. Agrippa II may also have been named in *PAES* III A 785.

⁵⁸ Very uncertain testimonies are *BCH* 1897, 39-40 no. 2 (Deir-Ayûb; for a discussion see Kokkinos 1998, 329 n. 214); Clermont-Ganneau 1899 I, 499-501 (Wādî al-Kittar; see Kokkinos 1998, 333 n. 232, 338 n. 250).

⁵⁹ *OGIS* 419, 421(?), 422, 423, 426. *SEG* 7, 970 = 33, 1306, *SEG* 7, 1100.

⁶⁰ This was undoubtedly the case in *OGIS* 423, 426. *AE* 1966, 493; cf. *SEG* 48, 1876 (a representation of a goddess was apparently donated); see also the testimonies from Helbon: *SEG* 7, 216; cf. *IGR* III 1090, *IGR* III 1089 = *OGIS* 420 = *SEG* 7, 217, *SEG* 7, 218.

⁶¹ *AE* 1895, 78 = *IGR* III 1144 = *OGIS* 425 = *PAES* III A 797¹ (cf. *SEG* 48, 1945; an architrave: 2.035 x 0.44 m); *AE* 1967, 525 etc. and the unpublished inscription mentioned in n. 56.

⁶² *AE* 1895, 78 = *IGR* III 1144 = *OGIS* 425 = *PAES* III A 797¹ (cf. *SEG* 48, 1945); cf. also *OGIS* 423. This was not always the case: *OGIS* 426.

⁶³ *SEG* 7, 1100. 970 (= 33, 1306). This *civis Romanus* characteristically used the *tria nomina* of Agrippa II. This is also true for an inscription erected in the territory of the Roman colony Berytus (n. 61) and in *IGR* III 1089 = *OGIS* 420 = *SEG* 7, 217 — an inscription, in which case we do not know who erected it.

⁶⁴ Otherwise Rey-Coquais 1999, especially 646-652, cf. 641; but his arguments are not convincing.

⁶⁵ Puchstein et al. 1902, 107 no. 43 = Rey-Coquais 1999, 638-640 no. 6; for the *aedes* see Krencker – Zschietzschmann 1938, 46-47; Rey-Coquais 1999.

⁶⁶ See for example Kokkinos 1998, 396; Schürer² I 481-483 n. 47.

the third year of Trajan, i.e. A.D. 100, when Agrippa died.⁶⁷ For many years, only inscriptions compatible with the above-mentioned conclusion from Josephus were known. And the evidence from Photius could be set aside by reference to Jerome: in the latter's *De viris illustribus* the entry concerning Iustus (XIV) is followed by that about Clement which contains the words *obiit tertio Traiani anno*.

But let us take a closer look at the inscriptional evidence. Agrippa is mentioned as the reigning monarch in the years A.D. 91/92 (or 92/93) in an inscription from Aere (as-Sanamein) in Batanaea.⁶⁸ But an inscription from A.D. 96 apparently found in Auranitis is dated to the sixteenth year of Domitian.⁶⁹ An inscription from Aeritae of the Trachonitis and pertaining to the years 96/97⁷⁰ is also dated by the emperor.

From the Hauran or Djebel Druze comes an inscription, already mentioned, of a certain Archieus, who served eighteen years as *centurio* under Agrippa and ten years under Trajan as στρατηγός.⁷¹ In a recent monograph, στρατηγός has been translated as 'general'.⁷² Based on this, the following argument has been developed: 'Had Agrippa died before 93/94, Archieus would have had to remain unemployed for over five years (no mention of Domitian or Nerva) before joining Trajan who became emperor in 98. But no such reason can be found, especially since the centurion had an eighteen-year experience. Also Archieus's overall career of 28 years is close to the maximum length of service for normal auxiliary soldiers'.⁷³ This argument, however, is not convincing. It is not correct to extrapolate the length of service of simple auxiliary soldiers to their centurions,⁷⁴ and from them to centurions in the armies of client princes. Nor should we forget that another inscription from Auranitis is dated to the year 96, by the year of the Roman emperor. But above all, στρατηγός cannot mean 'general'. To translate the term thus would only be right if the Greek stands for the Latin titles *praetor* or *legatus Augusti pro praetore*. This is indeed often the case,⁷⁵ but not in this inscription. *Centuriones* and senatorial *legati pro praetore* or *praetores* were divided by a deep social inequality, impossible to bridge in one's lifetime. Therefore στρατηγός cannot stand for a function in the Roman army. It must be a civil function, somewhat similar to the *strategos* in the *nomoi* of Roman Egypt. When speaking of a 'civil function', I do not exclude the possibility that such a *strategos* had certain coercive powers in his sphere of responsibility. But he was not a member of the Roman army. If, however, this man served Agrippa in a military position and Trajan in a predominantly civilian role, we have no reason to assume that he worked continuously for the respective authorities

⁶⁷ Phot. *Bibl.* 33.

⁶⁸ *OGIS* 426 = *IGR* III 1127; to be dated 91/92 according to Kokkinos 1998, 333, 398, 400; otherwise Schürer² I 482.

⁶⁹ Dunand 1934 no. 75.

⁷⁰ *IGR* III 1176.

⁷¹ *AE* 1966, 493; cf. *SEG* 48, 1876.

⁷² Kokkinos 1998, 397.

⁷³ Kokkinos 1998, 397.

⁷⁴ Dobson 1970, 101.

⁷⁵ Magie 1905, 2, 6-9, 81, 84-89, but see 60, 65, 75, 78, 96; Mason 1974, 155-159.

in his region. So this inscription is not relevant to the question of the date of Agrippa II's death.⁷⁶

Agrippa II was the last king of the Herodian dynasty. It seems, however, that some structures created by the Herods continued for centuries.⁷⁷ Maurice Sartre has recently collected the evidence for *metrokomiai* (chief villages).⁷⁸ He was able to prove that, in the whole Roman Empire, *metrokomiai* are only typical of Southern Syria. The Batanaea and the Trachonitis in particular were organized into *metrokomiai*. But at least one *metrokome* (Borechath Sabaon) existed also in Auranitis. As Sartre tried to show, these *metrokomiai* probably fulfilled for their surroundings some of the functions, which in other regions of the Roman Empire were fulfilled by cities. *Metrokomiai* apparently functioned as economic, administrative and military centres.

According to Sartre, these *metrokomiai* were 'une création officielle de Rome'.⁷⁹ This is very improbable. Why would Rome create, only in this region, an institution whose functions were carried out by cities all over the empire? In only one other part of the Roman Empire do we have such important centres without city status — Egypt. There, the Romans inherited the *metropoleis* from the Ptolemies and it took 250 years for these *metropoleis* to become cities with full rights. The very name *metrokomiai* points to the Egyptian *metropoleis*. And in this article an attempt has been made to show that the function of the *strategos* in Agrippa II's kingdom and later under Roman rule is similar to the one of the Egyptian *strategos*.⁸⁰ Since Archieus said he served under Trajan, we can perhaps infer that he was invested by Roman authorities, as indeed was the Egyptian *strategos*. Thus the Herodian dynasty may have adopted the Ptolemaic model at least for the Batanaea, Trachonitis and Auranitis. A recent study of the administration of Judaea has attempted to show that the toparchies of Judaea were also modelled after Ptolemaic Egypt.⁸¹ So Cleopatra's charm did not seduce Herod, but the administrative efficiency of the Ptolemaic kingdom greatly interested a dynasty that was always in need of money.

To conclude: Inscriptions are not the most important source of knowledge about the Herodian dynasty. The few inscriptions extant cannot match the detailed information

⁷⁶ For a discussion of the relevance of a lead weight from Magdala to this question, see Kushnir-Stein (n. 25).

⁷⁷ For the repercussions of the dynasty in the onomastics of the region, see Sartre 1985, 200 n. 29.

⁷⁸ Sartre 1999.

⁷⁹ Sartre 1999, 218.

⁸⁰ Perhaps the distinctive feature of a *metrokome* was that it was the residence of a *strategos* (as the *metropolis* of an Egyptian *nome* surely was). Of the three inscriptions mentioning a *strategos*, AE 1895, 78 = IGR III 1144 = OGIS 425 = PAES III A 797¹ (cf. SEG 48, 1945) comes from the *metrokome* Saura. OGIS 421 was found in Eitha in northern Auranitis. We do not know much about *metrokomiai* in this region because a certain circumstance — a village was the birthplace of an emperor — resulted in the foundation of the city Philippiopolis (many of the testimonies for *metrokomiai* are to be dated to Late Antiquity). In the case of AE 1966, 493 (cf. SEG 48, 1876) we do not know exactly where the inscription was found.

⁸¹ Cotton 1999, especially 87-89.

given by Josephus. But Josephus did not write equally thoroughly about all the Herods and about all parts of their kingdoms. When he is silent or touches only upon certain matters, the inscriptional evidence becomes important. And with the epigraphical evidence comes the opportunity to get new information about the Herods. New epigraphical evidence has, for example, illuminated Herod's Roman culinary tastes and uncovered the importance of the Ptolemaic model for the Herodian administration, at least in the Hauran. There will never be new works by Josephus, but there will always be new epigraphical evidence concerning the Herods.

Appendix: Some Comments on the Inscription of T. Mucius Clemens

The inscription dedicated to [Τί]τωι Μουκίωι Μάρκ[ου υἱῶι --- Κλ]ήμεντι (*AE* 1967, 525 = *SEG* 33, 1266 = 40, 1449 = *AE* 1987, 950 = *CBI* 700 = *IGLBibbia* 30 = *SEG* 51, 2020 = *CIIP* II 2123) induced many attempts to find plausible supplements for the lost parts of the text. However, it is difficult to find a wholly convincing solution. There are no exact parallels and at least half of the text considering the last line has been lost. As a result of these problems, I do not want to propose a complete restoration, but rather to suggest some issues, which, in my opinion, can be clearly resolved.

1) The last preserved letter in line 2 is without doubt a T and not a Π. Thus, the last partially preserved word must derive from the root στρατ. If this is correct, this word is probably not part of the name of a military unit. The common word for military units in the army of Agrippa II was *σπεῖρα* and not *στράτευμα* (see for example *OGIS* 421; *SEG* 7, 1100. 970 [= 33, 1306]).

2) It is impossible to supplement β[ενεφικιαρίωι] in line 6, as it was done, for example, by the authors of the *CBI*. Such a supplement would imply an advancement of this individual from the status of a simple soldier to the socially highly elevated situation of a commanding officer, for which there is no parallel (see for example also most recently Nelis-Clément 2000, 374). On the other hand, to supplement β[οηθῶι] (= *adiutori procuratoris*) would provide a supplement for which there are a number of parallels (see Pflaum 1970, 304-305).

3) Since line 7 only reads Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου[υ ---] with no explicit mention of a Tiberius Claudius Felix, the discussion about the *nomen gentile* of the *procurator Iudaeae* Felix (see especially Kokkinos 1990) is not very helpful. For methodical reasons one should not combine two hypotheses, each uncertain in itself. Apart from this, the hypothesis that the procurator was called Ti. Claudius Felix and not Antonius Felix becomes less convincing if one tries to find inscriptions which will show this Felix during earlier steps of a "career" (as Kokkinos 1990, 137-140 has tried to show). It is simply impossible to identify such inscriptions because we know so many Tiberii Claudii Felices (see Kokkinos 1990, 141). Finally, the name Antonius Felix found twice in Tacitus (*Hist.* V 9, 3; cf. also *CIL* V 34 = *Ital.* X 1, 39) is surely the *lectio difficilior* and has thus to be preferred. Usually persons who were manumitted by Claudius would get the nomina Tiberius Claudius.

Even if one assumes — as, for example, Boffo (*IGLBibbia* p. 261) does — that Clemens could have been only the *adiutor* of a *procurator* working in the Near East there are other possibilities than the *procurator Palaestinae* or the *procurator Syriae*. There were apparently other smaller *procuraturae* in the Near East such as for example the *procuratura Iamniae*. And we have to remember that we know the existence of this

procuratura only because a very precise literary source speaks explicitly of it (Joseph. *AJ* XVIII 158; cf. Fraccaro 1940). The relevant inscription (*AE* 1948, 141) does not give us such a clear indication.

4) The two persons named in the penultimate line of the inscription have been taken to be the children of T. Mucius Clemens. But this is very improbable. A person (called Μάρκ[ου υἱῶι]) who uses the Roman *tria nomina* would not give his child a name such as Simonides.

This does not necessarily imply that the inscription in question was an honorary and not a sepulchral inscription. A sepulchral inscription is more likely because, firstly, XA in the last line makes us think of χα[ῖρε] (χα[ριστήριον] is much more unusual). Secondly, there is no honorary inscription for an officer of the army of Agrippa II, but several sepulchral inscriptions (cf. above at notes 51-56). Simonides and the other person could be clients or *vilici* of T. Mucius Clemens who had to erect his tomb because he died without leaving any close relatives behind.

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