

Spectacles and Private Munificence in the Light of the Epigraphical Material of Cisalpine Gaul. Financial Aspects Regarding *Spectacula* and Buildings for Entertainment

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Abstract

Numerous inscriptions from Cisalpine Gaul indicate euergetic activities, especially among the local aristocratic elite. However, with regard to the maintenance of buildings for spectacles and sports, as well as the financing of games, the amount of epigraphic documentation is rather small, which is strange compared to other well-Romanized provinces such as those in North Africa. An analysis of the epigraphic evidence from the four northern Italian *regiones* can clarify why this might be the case, and how the lack of involvement of private sponsors perhaps was compensated.

Keywords: spectacles; theatre; amphitheatre; circus; athletic competition; benefactors; private munificence; Gallia Cisalpina

Izvleček

Spektakli in zasebno donatorstvo v luči epigrafskega gradiva Cisalpinske Galije. Finančni vidiki javnih predstav in gradenj, namenjenih zabavi

Številni napisi iz Cisalpinske Galije kažejo na donatorsko dejavnost (euergetizem), zlasti med lokalno aristokratsko elito. Vendar pa so glede vzdrževanja stavb za predstave in športne prireditve ter za financiranja iger epigrafski viri dokaj skromni, kar je nenavadno v primerjavi z drugimi dobro romaniziranimi provincami, na primer v severni Afriki. Analiza napisnih pričevanj iz štirih regij severne Italije morda lahko pojasni, zakaj bi temu lahko bilo tako in kako je bilo morda nadomeščeno pomanjkanje vključevanja zasebnih donatorjev.

Ključne besede: predstave; gledališče; amfiteater; cirkus; atletska tekmovanja; donatorji; zasebno donatorstvo; Cisalpinska Galija

Introduction

From the four regions of Cisalpine Gaul – *Aemilia* (*regio* VIII), *Liguria* (*regio* IX), *Venetia et Histria* (*regio* X) and *Transpadana* (*regio* XI) – there are quite a lot of known archaeological remains regarding buildings for entertainment, as well as inscriptions concerning spectacles. As far as spectacles are concerned, the terms *spectacula* or *ludi* were generally used, which meant performances in the theatre, fights in the amphitheatre, circus races and athletic competitions. Among them, theatre performances were particularly popular, as is commonly known, as the many remains of theatres, critical statements – especially by later Christian authors – and references in inscriptions show.¹ With regard to the Gallia Cisalpina, it can be said that the theatre buildings have in most cases been excavated completely, or at least partially, and can therefore be very well located and dated. Many of them can be dated back to the Republican period² or especially from the beginning of the Imperial period onwards. Today some of them are not visible any more,³ or they can only be assumed from the outlines of buildings⁴, while others are known only from inscriptions.⁵

Besides *ludi scaenici* performed in theatres, *venationes* (hunting, or the killing of wild beasts) and *munera* (gladiatorial combats) held in amphitheatres were also popular. However, amphitheatres have not been found as frequently as theatres, although some remains of arenas do exist.⁶ Some of the amphitheatres were built in the Augustan period, but usually they can be dated to later times.⁷ However, it must be taken into consideration that gladiatorial games could also have taken place on the forum or in the theatre, as will be shown below.

The situation is different with *ludi circenses*, and for circus races there is only

¹ For spectacles in general cf. Weeber 1994. For literary sources, in particular Christian authors compare, for example, Lafer 2005. Regarding the distribution of theatres in Cisalpine Gaul see Tosi 2003, 451–586; see also the solid documentation of sources regarding theatres on <https://www.theatrum.de/7.html>. Theatrum.de is a project of the Landesarchäologie Mainz, which intends to examine the theatre of Mainz by collecting and comparing information and literature about other theatres in the western part of the empire. According to this project there are about 24 theatres known in Cisalpine Gaul. For inscriptions in connection with spectacles, cf. Lafer 2009.

² For example, the theatres of Aquileia, Pola, Bononia, Mediolanum, and Verona. For details see Verzàr-Bass 1990, 414–424; Goffin 2002, 95, fn. 561.

³ Some theatres are known from documentations in earlier centuries. The theatre of Atria, for example, is known from a 17th century document, cf. Tosi 2003, 504–506.

⁴ For example the theatre of Vicetia, cf. Tosi 2003, 545.

⁵ For example Dertona, cf. Tosi 2003, 568.

⁶ For the distribution of amphitheatres in Cisalpine Gaul cf. Tosi 2003, 451–586; see also <https://amphi-theatrum.de/1366.html>. Amphitheatrum.de is another project of the Landesarchäologie Mainz. The goal is the gathering of information about several amphitheatres in the western part of the empire, although in Mainz no amphitheatre has yet been found. According to this project there are known about 16 amphitheatres in Cisalpine Gaul; for amphitheatres in general see, for example, Bomgardner 2000; Hönle, Henze 1981; Welch 2007.

⁷ Cf. Goffin 2002, 99.

sparse archaeological evidence. It is known that in Cisalpine Gaul there were *circi* in Aquileia, Mediolanum and Ravenna, although there are almost no archaeological remains of them today. As Letzner states in his monograph on circus complexes, the *circi* in Aquileia and Mediolanum, for example, date from the Late Roman period and are partly connected to tetrarchic palace complexes.⁸ The circus of Ravenna, on the other hand, is only known from later literary sources.⁹

Finally, athletic competitions are documented almost exclusively in epigraphic material, while archaeological remains such as stadiums, in which they were usually held in the eastern provinces, are not known. In the western part of the empire athletic activities were usually performed in public *thermae* or sometimes in so-called *gymnasia*, which, however, cannot be found in inscriptions of Cisalpine Gaul, although they are mentioned in inscriptions relating to the Africa Proconsularis.¹⁰

A few mentions of two kinds of facilities in the epigraphic documentation of North Italy – called *campi* and *xysti* – with great probability indicate the presence of physical training facilities in this region.¹¹ Goffin thinks that the expression *campus* was used for sports fields for young people in the cities, which were located outside of the city walls,¹² as can be seen by the archaeological situation in Albingaunum (Albenga), where an inscription mentioning a *campus* was also found.¹³ In many cases *campi* possessed a *piscina* and a *porticus*, as is mentioned for the *campus* of Verona.¹⁴ *Xysti*, which can be found in numerous inscriptions of Cisalpine Gaul,¹⁵ might have had a similar function: they apparently also served as sports venues for physical activities, possibly with covered porticos for training in winter or in rainy weather, as indicated by the Greek term *xystos*, from which the term is apparently derived.

Spectacles and private munificence in Cisalpine Gaul

As Livio Zerbini pointed out in several publications about private munificence in Cisalpine Gaul,¹⁶ aspects of euergetism can be found in numerous inscriptions. These documents inform us that wealthy individuals, mostly belonging to the local mu-

⁸ Letzner 2009, 123. For the circus of Aquileia, cf. also Tosi 2003, 500–503; for Mediolanum cf. Tosi 2003, 575–577.

⁹ Tosi 2003, 465.

¹⁰ Regarding the terminus *gymnasium* and the discussion about its distribution and meaning, cf. Lafer 2013.

¹¹ For the epigraphical documentation of *xysti* and *campi*, in North Italy see Goffin 2002, 98–101.

¹² Goffin 2002, 98.

¹³ AE 1994, 650 (Albingaunum). For the archaeological situation and the localization of the *campus* of Albenga cf. Mennella, Spadea Noviero 1994, esp. 134 ff.

¹⁴ CIL V 3408 (Verona).

¹⁵ For the inscriptions mentioning *xysti* see Goffin 2002, 99. Among others they can be found in Verona or Placentia.

¹⁶ Zerbini 1990; Zerbini 1994; Zerbini 2008.

nicipal aristocracy, sponsored the construction or restoration of public buildings like forums or public baths, or they donated statues of gods or other monuments within the sacred sphere. In any case, private munificence was an important component for the social and financial life of the cities, as a large quantity of inscriptions shows.¹⁷

Compared to the high number of documents referring to the practice of euergetism in this region, there are not many references regarding private munificence concerning spectacles. This situation seems a little strange, as from other provinces of the western part of the empire, in particular from the provinces of North Africa or those of Spain, a multitude of such inscriptions exist.¹⁸

According to the municipal statutes, emperors and magistrates were obliged to give spectacles *ob honorem* or to finance the restoration of sites used for entertainment. Wealthy individuals, aristocrats, priests and magistrates are also mentioned in several inscriptions as benefactors *sua pecunia* or *impensa sua*.¹⁹ However, sometimes it is not clear whether the *munificentia* is related to the official function of a magistrate, in particular if the inscription is very fragmented.

Spectacles were often given on festivities in order to inaugurate construction projects or erections of statues.²⁰ Sometimes a sum of money is mentioned, with which *ludi* and *epula* (official banquets) should be organized. In some cases a sum of money is donated to mark a certain occasion, such as the *dies natalis* of the person who is honoured in the inscription that states a *spectaculum* should take place. Thus the benefactors gained prestige in public, they could preserve their memory, and sometimes also received a statue because of their generosity.

Private munificence in epigraphic documentation

From all four *regiones* of Cisalpine Gaul inscriptions testify to the existence of private munificence.²¹ Most of the epigraphic documents come from the *regio Venetia et Histria* (*regio X*) and concern theatres (for details see *Table 1*, Overview of the inscriptions on private munificence in Cisalpine Gaul).

Starting with the *regio Aemilia* (*regio VIII*), there are only six inscriptions which indicate private munificence. All of them are dated very early to the beginning of the Imperial or even the end of the Republican period. A very fragmented building

¹⁷ Cf. also Engfer 2017.

¹⁸ Regarding the inscriptions from North Africa, cf. Lafer 2009.

¹⁹ Engfer 2017, 182–183.

²⁰ Engfer 2017, 183.

²¹ The inscriptions were analysed using the Clausss-Slaby database (EDCS): <http://www.manfredclausss.de/>. For all inscriptions cited here, the EDCS-number is given, which means that not all publications of the inscriptions discussed here are listed, but can be found under the EDCS-number (see also *Table 1*).

Table 1: Overview of the inscriptions on private munificence in Cisalpine Gaul

Regio	City	Source	Building of entertainment/spectacle	Status	Dating
VIII	Ariminum	AE 1961, 135 = AE 1965, 283 = EDCS-13400190	theatre (frgmt.)	?	?
	Claterna	CIL XI 683 = EDCS-20402112	...ludos fec(it); gladiatorial games?	s[e]xvir	early 1 st century AD
	Claterna	ECDS-84600049	...[l]udos fec(it); gladiatorial games?	sexvir	early 1 st century AD
	Placentia	CIL XI 1219 = EDCS-20402670	...bis xystum cu[m st]a/ tuis et ornamentis / V[3]E[3]ens(ibus?) ded(it)	IIIvir iu(re) d(icundo) / augur prae(f)ectus fabr(um) cons(ularis)	Augustan period
	San Possidonio	CIL XI 948 = EDCS-20402391	...[i]n xystos August[os(?)] / [no]vis operib[us] / [ex]struendos(?) ornand[osq(ue)]	?	first half of 1 st century AD
	Forum Popilii	AE 1987, 248 = EDCS-07400181	... decrevit et locum [3] / in campo	?	AD 79–81
IX	Dertona	CIL V 7376 = EDCS-05400625	...porticum vet[ustate] / [corruptam refecit] forum s(ua) p(ecunia) rest[ituit] / [in cuius dedi]catione epulum inter / spectacula et [3] HS col(oniae) / dedit	decur[iones] et pl[ebis] col(oniae Iuliae A) ugus(tae) Derton(ae)	22 BC
	Albingaunum	AE 1994, 650 = EDCS-00380250	...campum maceriis [saeptum(?)] / [su]a pecunia populo / [de]dit in perpetu[um]	IIIvir aed(ilicia) pot(estate)	early 1 st century AD
X	Aquileia	CIL V 1021 = EDCS-01600299	por]ticum dupl[icem 3] / [3]o sternendas [	?	end of 2 nd century BC (?)
	Augusta Taurinorum	AE 1994, 753 = EDCS-12700213	...port]icum cum [suis ornamentis et do]mus dederunt	ordo equester	middle of 1 st century AD
	Brixia	CIL V 4392 = EDCS-04203444	...ob liberalita[tem eius quod] / in opus amp[hitheatri]	libertus; ornamentis / decurion(alibus) Brixia[ae] / Veron(ae) Cremon(ae) [honor(ato)]	end of 2 nd century AD

Regio	City	Source	Building of entertainment/spectacle	Status	Dating
X	Tergeste	CIL V 534 = EDCS-04200623 Cf. CIL V 535 = EDCS-04200624; Cf. InscrIt-10-04, 00034 = EDCS-04600011	theatre – extensive restructuring ...dedit [idemque dedicavit]	<i>p(rimus) p(ilus) bis / leg(ionis) XII Fulm(inatae) et leg(ionis) I Adiu[t] ric(is) trib(unus) mil(itum) coh(ortis) V vig(ilum) / tr(ibunus) coh(ortis) XII urb(anae) tr(ibunus) coh(ortis) V pr(aetoriae) pr[oc]urator divi Nervae et Imp(eratoris) Caesaris / Nervae Traiani Aug(usti) Germ(anici) provin[c(iarum)] Hi[spaniae] citer(ioris) Asturiae et / Callaeciarum flamen divi Claud[i]</i>	AD 98–102
	Iulia Concordia	AE 1995, 586 = AE 2008, 568 = EDCS-51400946	...lu]do[s cum ve]nat(ione?) ex HS [3] /...	<i>aed(ilis) II[vir i(ure) d(icundo)]</i>	2 nd century AD
	Iulia Concordia	AE 1959, 273 = AE 1976, 240 = EDCS-13302736	Frgmt. ...scaen[am(?) Restoration of scaenae frons	?	end of 1 st century AD
	Iulia Concordia	CIL V 1897 = EDCS-04200956	... in] ludos [et] in / c[enam et i]n epulum / [HS CCC]C(milia)... dari iu[ss]it...	Augustalis	1 st /2 nd century AD
	Verona	CIL V 3348 = EDCS-04202394	...theatrum...	patronus, ordo equester	2 nd half of 1 st century AD
	Verona	CIL V 3408 = EDCS-04202453	...[id]em in porticu quae / [d]ucit at ludum public(um) / [c]olumn(as) IIII cum superfic(io) / [e]t stratura pictura / [v]olente populo dedit	...equo publico / honorib(us) omnib(us) / municip(alibus) functus	1 st century AD
	Verona	CIL V 3441 = EDCS-40200160; EDCS-40200161; EDCS-40200165; EDCS-40200166; EDCS-40200163; EDCS-40200162; EDCS-40200167; EDCS-40200171; EDCS-40200172	names on pillars in theatre	?	2 nd half of 1 st century AD
	Verona	CIL V 3863 = EDCS-04202915	...p[edes] / XXXX / [porti]cum xystu[m	?	1 st century AD (?)

Regio	City	Source	Building of entertainment/spectacle	Status	Dating
XI	Eporedia	CIL V 6798 = EDCS-05400042	theatre (fgrmt.)	patronus	early 2 nd century AD
	Augusta Taurinorum	AE 1994, 00753 = EDCS-12700213	...port]icum cum [suis ornamentis et do]mus dederunt	ordo equester	middle of 1 st century AD

inscription from **Ariminum** (Rimini)²² reports the decoration with ornaments of the rather poorly preserved theatre of Ariminum, which was built in the first decades of the 1st century AD, according to the epigraphic documentation.²³ Better preserved are two almost identical boundary stones for a burial district from **Claterna** (Ozzana dell Emilia)²⁴ in the neighbourhood of Bologna, which are also more interesting. They mention a *libertus* named P. Camurius Nicephor, who organized games (*ludi fecit*) for six days. It is difficult to say which games they were, since there is no archaeological evidence of a theatre, amphitheatre, or circus in Claterna.²⁵ Usually, however, the term *ludus* refers to performances in theatres or circus races.²⁶ As they lasted for six days and therefore would have been very expensive, circus races in my opinion can be excluded. Zaccaria²⁷ suspected *ludi scaenici*, but perhaps we can also think about gladiatorial games – in a provisionally erected amphitheatre? – as the background of the inscription is a funerary one. What is interesting in any case is the fact that Publius Camurius Nicephor seems to have been a wealthy freedman, who wanted to show off his wealth by financing games lasting several days.

Regarding athletic activities, three inscriptions exist, which mention *xysti* and perhaps a *campus*.²⁸ As stated above, they are difficult to locate, as there are no archaeological remains. However, the well-preserved inscription from **Placentia** is interesting because of the social status of the donor of a *xystus cum statu*s and further *ornamenta* – it is Sextus Petronius Lupus Marianus, a member of the local aristocracy, who held high municipal positions as *IIIvir iure dicundo* and *augur*, and even an equestrian position as *praefectus fabrum consularis*.

If we look at the **regio Liguria** (*regio IX*), we can also find two very early inscriptions on private munificence dating to the end of Republican era and beginning of the Imperial period. The first document, fragmented in the first few lines, was found

²² AE 1961, 135 = AE 1965, 283 = EDCS-13400190.

²³ Tosi 2003, 452–453.

²⁴ CIL XI 683 (p 1238) = EDCS-20402112 and ECDS-84600049; cf. also lupa 33426 and 33427.

²⁵ Tosi 2003, 458.

²⁶ Engfer 2017, 173–174.

²⁷ Zaccaria 1994, 74, 82.

²⁸ CIL XI 1219 = EDCS-20402670 (Placentia); CIL XI 948 = EDCS-20402391 (San Possidonio); AE 1987, 248 = EDCS-07400181 (Forum Popilii).

in **Dertona** (Tortona)²⁹ and mentions an unknown person, who among other things, restored the *forum sua pecunia*. On this occasion he also gave an official banquet (*epulum*) *inter spectacula* as well as an unknown sum of money. In return he received this inscription from the *decuriones* and *plebs*, and perhaps also could expect the erection of a statue with public finances. It is not clear which games are meant by the term *spectacula*, since no structural remains of buildings have been found in Dertona so far. Tosi and Zaccaria combine this inscription with the possible existence of a theatre, thus relating the mentioned *spectacula* to theatre performances.³⁰ However, the question cannot be definitively resolved.

Finally, in the second inscription coming from **Albingaunum** (Albenga)³¹ a municipal official gave a *campus sua pecunia* to the *populus*. The location of this *campus* was discussed by Menella and Spadea Noviero in connection with the discovery of the inscription in the 1990s, but still not many details are known.³²

However, most of the inscriptions on euergetism in Cisalpine Gaul come from the **regio Venetia et Histria** (regio X).

Of particular note here are theatre buildings, which underwent restorations or decorations through euergetic activities, especially in the 1st century AD. Epigraphic evidence of these remains comes from Verona, Tergeste and Iulia Concordia. However, the earliest inscription that gives us information about private munificence, and can probably be dated to the end of the 2nd century BC, is found in **Aquileia**.³³ This is a building inscription that has only been preserved in fragments, and which mentions construction measures on the *porticus duplex* and paving work by an unknown benefactor due to the poor state of preservation.³⁴

Although the famous amphitheatre, a theatre, and an odeon in **Verona** can be located based on archaeological remains,³⁵ only a few inscriptions indicate euergetic activities. This particularly applies to the theatre probably already built in the late Republican period.³⁶ Several inscriptions on pillars in the western part of the upper gallery bearing the names of leading families of the city, including the very influential *gens Gavia*, according to Goffin,³⁷ may be linked to construction work on the theatre. Furthermore, perhaps

²⁹ CIL V 7376 = EDCS-05400625 (dat. 22 BC). Dertona is sometimes located in the *regio XI*, see e.g. Tosi 2003, 568 and theatrum.de: <https://www.theatrum.de/1218.html>.

³⁰ Tosi 2003, 568; Zaccaria 1994, 74; <https://www.theatrum.de/1218.html>

³¹ AE 1994, 650 = EDCS-00380250.

³² For the discussion of the inscription and the archaeological situation regarding the *campus* of Albingaunum see also Mennella, Spadea Noviero 1994. The only remains we have in Albingaunum belong to an amphitheatre, which is dated rather late to the second or third century AD; cf. Tosi 2003, 473–474.

³³ CIL V 1021 = EDCS-01600299; cf. Goffin 2002, 96.

³⁴ Goffin 2002, 96 thinks that with *porticus duplex* the *porticus post scaenam* was meant. Tosi 2003, 499–500.

³⁵ Tosi 2003, 535–545.

³⁶ Regarding the discussion about the dating cf. Tosi 2003, 539.

³⁷ Cf. Goffin 2002, 96; CIL V 3441.

interesting is an honorary inscription, the first lines of which are missing, but it is clear from what remains that a member of the *ordo equester* probably carried out construction or restoration work on the theatre in the 1st century AD.³⁸

Finally, another two inscription fragments can also be dated to the 1st century AD. One mentions a *ludus publicus*,³⁹ which was obviously equipped, among other things, with columns by an unknown donor, and can be connected with gladiatorial games, and the other is a very fragmented inscription mentioning a *xystus*.⁴⁰

Similar to Verona, **Tergeste** also had a theatre building at an early stage, possibly since the Julio-Claudian period, on which extensive restoration work was carried out by a highly decorated *eques* at the end of the first century AD. This was the well-known Quintus Petronius Modestus, who announced his construction activities (*dedit idemque dedicavit*) above the entrances to the theatre in the form of several identical inscriptions.⁴¹

The third theatre dating from a very early period, from which there are also some indications of private munificence, is that of **Iulia Concordia**. The location of this theatre, possibly dating back to the Augustan period, of which a few architectural traces have survived, is known.⁴² The existence of an amphitheatre, which was also discussed in the literature by some scholars based on the epigraphic material, has not yet been proved.⁴³

Only a few remains of an originally monumental building inscription on the architrave of the *scaenae frons* of the theatre have survived, which mention a Lucius Minic[ius ---], but of whom nothing else is known beyond that due to the very fragmented state of the inscription.⁴⁴

Two other, more informative inscriptions, although also very fragmented, most likely refer to the financing of performances in the theatre. In the first text, an *aedilis* and *IIvir iure dicundo* donated a sum of sesterces for *lu]do[s cum ve]nat(ione?)*, the exact amount of which cannot be determined because of the bad conservation state of the inscription.⁴⁵ However, as there are many gaps in the inscription, it is difficult to determine whether this was given as part of his *summa honoraria* or perhaps as private munificence. What is interesting is the mention of apparently theatrical

³⁸ CIL V 3348 = EDCS-04202394; see also Goffin 2002, 96; Zaccaria 1990, 152, No. 122.

³⁹ CIL V 3408 = EDCS-04202453; Bomgardner 2000, 72; <https://www.amphi-theatrum.de/1369.html>

⁴⁰ CIL V 3863 = EDCS-04202915.

⁴¹ CIL V 534 = EDCS-04200623; CIL V 535 = EDCS-04200624; InscrIt-10-04, 00034 = EDCS-04600011; see also lupa 16150 and 30956. Quintus Petronius Modestus followed an equestrian career from *primus pilus* of two legions to *tribunus militum* resp. *tribunus cohortis* of the three *cohortes* in Rome: of the *vigiles*, *cohors urbana* and *praetoria*. At the top of his career he was *procurator* in Hispania Citerior under Nerva and Claudius. For the theatre of Tergeste see also Tosi 2003, 530–534.

⁴² Tosi 2003, 512–513.

⁴³ Cf. the discussion in Tosi 2003, 512.

⁴⁴ AE 1959, 273 = AE 1976, 240 = EDCS-13302736; Goffin 2002, 97.

⁴⁵ AE 1995, 00586 = EDCS-51400946.

games in connection with animal hunts. As some examples from Africa Proconsularis show, animal hunts could also take place in the theatre, although probably only in exceptional cases.⁴⁶ Therefore, we can perhaps assume that animal hunts occasionally also took place in the theatre in Iulia Concordia.

The second epigraphic document is an honorary inscription inscribed on an altar, now preserved in the Museo nazionale Concordiese di Portogruaro. The monument was reconstructed and restored in 1954.⁴⁷ On the front and back of the altar one can read almost the same inscription in different fragments: "Honoured is Marcus Acutius Noetus, Augustalis, who left 400,000 sesterces to the colonia Concordia by his will for games (*ludi*), for a dinner (*cena*) and for an official banquet (*epulum*)."⁴⁸ As already explained above when discussing the inscription from Iulia Concordia, it can be assumed that these *ludi* took place in the theatre, as Claudio Zaccaria also supposed.⁴⁹

Finally, one fragmented document from Brixia should also be briefly mentioned, in which reference is made to games in the amphitheatre. At the end of the 2nd century, the amphitheatre in Brixia, dating from the Julio-Claudian period, was restored by Publius Atilius Philippus, originally a freedman who evidently achieved extraordinary success, receiving the *ornamenta decurionalia* in Brixia as well as in Verona and Cremona. He was subsequently publicly honoured at the explicit request of the people (*ex postulatione plebis*).⁵⁰

Finally, as far as the *regio Transpadana* (*regio XI*) is concerned, there are two inscriptions which also indicate construction or restoration measures on the theatre by private activities. From **Augusta Taurinorum** (Torino), a monumental building inscription mentions Caius Iulius Donnus II, the son of the last ruler of the Alpes Cottiae, king Cottus⁵¹, and his son, Marcus Iulius Cottius II, who had the *actorum domus*

⁴⁶ ILAfr 400 = EDCS-10300728: Carthage – the inscription mentions two-day games in the theatre, which were interrupted by animal hunts and gladiator performances (*interposita venation(e) et gladiator[um]*), presumably performed also in the theatre. ILAfr 400 = EDCS-10300728: Madauros (present-day Algeria), where only a theatre is archaeologically documented, in which apparently *ludos cum venat[ione populo et sportulas(?)] decurionibus* were performed by the local *flamen perpetuus* on the occasion of the dedication of a statue to Mars.

⁴⁷ CIL V 1897 = CIL V 1898 = CIL V 1899 = CIL V 1900 = CIL V 8664 = EDCS-04200956. For details regarding the history of the monument and its fragments cf. lupa 29150; Bonfanti 2023, 18–19.

⁴⁸ Four hundred thousand sesterces is certainly a very large sum of money; according to Duncan-Jones 1982, 77, it was enough to build a theatre in Madauros (North Africa) in the early third century AD.

⁴⁹ Zaccaria 1994, 74, 82, 86–87.

⁵⁰ CIL V 4392 = EDCS-04203444.

⁵¹ It is supposed that between 9 and 8 BC he became a Roman citizen after establishing a Roman alliance with the Emperor Augustus, whereafter his name was Latinized as Marcus Iulius Cottius and he was appointed *praefectus civitatum*, a position which was also held by his son Caius Iulius Donnus II mentioned in AE 1994, 753.

and the *porticus post scaenam* of the theatre built from their own resources during the Augustan or Tiberian period.⁵² The second epigraphic document, which comes from **Eporedia** (Ivrea), is very fragmented, but according to Goffin, an unknown *patronus* seems to have carried out restoration work on the theatre in Hadrianic times.⁵³

Conclusion

Although a relatively large number of theatre and amphitheatre buildings have been archaeologically documented in Cisalpine Gaul, the number of inscriptional references to construction and restoration measures based on private munificence is quite small. Most of the references concern theatre buildings, especially in the *regio X*, but for circus events the inscriptions are completely missing. With a few exceptions, the inscriptions can mostly be dated as very early, to the beginning or within the 1st century AD, which is of course also related to the fact that the corresponding theatre buildings were built in the Republican or early Imperial period and then, accordingly, underwent repairs a few decades later. Compared to other parts of the western half of the empire, such as North Africa, which is extremely rich in inscriptions, the large amount of epigraphic evidence of private munificence as documented there can usually be dated from the 2nd century onwards.

Regarding the social status of the benefactors, it can be said that in North Italy those acting as *euergetes* were mostly members of the municipal aristocracy who also held various offices, but sometimes (rich) freedmen in their function as *seviri* or *Augustales* and people from the *ordo equester* could also be generous, as the epigraphical documents show.

The relatively small number of inscriptions with euergetic content is particularly striking if we compare the amount of epigraphic evidence with that relating to private foundations in North Italy in general. This may be due to the fact that in Italy the maintenance of buildings for entertainment and the organization of games were mainly the responsibility of magistrates, such as *aediles*, and were not based so much on private initiative, as was the case, for example, in the North African provinces. This probably also included the frequently mentioned *curatores theatri*⁵⁴ as officials responsible for everything which was connected with the theatre, and the *munerarii*,⁵⁵ responsible for the gladiatorial games.

⁵² AE 1994, 753 = EDCS-12700213; Goffin 2002, 96.

⁵³ CIL V 6798 = EDCS-05400042; Goffin 2002, 97.

⁵⁴ Cf. InscrIt-10-01, 00101 = EDCS-04300032; InscrIt-10-01, 00102 = EDCS-04300033 (Pula).

⁵⁵ Cf. CIL V 4399 = EDCS-04203451 (Brixia); CIL V 563 = EDCS-04200653 (Tergeste); CIL V 6842 = EDCS-05400088 (Aosta).

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Abbreviations

- AE = *L'Année Épigraphique*, Paris 1888 ff.
 CIL = *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, Berlin 1862 ff.
 EDCS = *Epigraphische Datenbank Clauss – Slaby* – <https://db.edcs.eu/epigr/hinweise/hinweis-de.html>
 ILAfr = *Inscriptions latines d'Afrique (Tripolitaine, Tunisie, Maroc)*, Paris 1923.
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