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A TEMPLE OF MATER MATUTA IN THE *REGIO SEXTA* OF ROME

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1.

A little known verse inscription from Rome, which presents a number of unusual features,¹ also contains information that is not generally known to students of Roman topography:²

*Delicius Matris Matutae / VI reg.
Eucerus hic situs est / Auletio cantor ubique /
[--ti]tulum fecit Iulius / [--]ilius papati suo³.*

(*Suppl. Papers of the American School of Class. Studies in Rome* 2 (1908) 270 = Dessau, *ILS* 9346 = Bücheler, *CLE* 1961.⁴ The inscription was found outside the Porta Salaria and is now affixed to the wall of the inner courtyard of the American Academy in Rome.)

Our inscription was erected by someone called Iulius [-]ilius for his *papas* (father, tutor) Euc(a)erus⁵ the fluteplayer (*auletius*), who is given the epithet *delicius* (a term of endearment, see below section 5) and is qualified as *Matris Matutae VI reg.* The only interpretation of “*VI reg.*” that makes sense is to understand it as the genitive (*sextae*) *reg(ionis)*, which would give us a person characterized as “of Mater Matuta of the sixth region”. This again ought to mean that Mater Matuta, or rather a temple or a shrine of that goddess, was in the *VI regio*.

The existence of a temple of Mater Matuta in the sixth region of the city will presumably be a novelty to most readers.⁶ The only generally known temple of Mater Matuta in Rome is the famous one situated in the Forum Boarium,⁷ to which reference cannot be made in our text. The temple of the Forum Boarium was situated in the Augustan *regio octava*.⁸

* I wish to thank T. D. Barnes, W. Eck, and E. M. Steinby for their comments, and likewise Jonathan Burgess who also corrected my English. I am most indebted to the Department of Classics at the University of Toronto for awarding me the Norwood Travel Grant, which enabled me to carry out research work in Rome on this subject, among others. The origin of this paper lies in research on the entry “Mater Matuta (Reg. VI)”, which is to appear in the *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* III (ed. E. M. Steinby).

¹ Some features, which have no direct bearing on the topographical matter to be discussed here, will be commented upon in section 4 at the end of this paper. For still other aspects, the fullest treatment is by the first publisher, J. C. Egbert, “Inscriptions from Rome and Central Italy”, *Supplementary Papers of the American School of Classical Studies in Rome* 2, 1908, 263–290, esp. 270–273.

² The presentation of the inscription here reflects its metric structure. The slant lines indicate end of line in the original inscription, which consists of five lines.

³ “Eucerus, a favourite of Mater Matuta in the sixth region, is buried here. The singer (offers) to the fluteplayer (a greeting here and) everywhere. Iulius [-]ilius made (this) inscription for his tutor.” For a discussion of the translation, see section 4. At the beginning of lines 4 and 5 between five and six letters seem to be missing. I am grateful to Prof. Eck for pointing out that another possible restoration of l. 5 would be to assume a short cognomen such as Leo, followed by *filius*.

⁴ See F. Bücheler, A. Riese, E. Lommatzsch, *Anthologia Latina* II.3, Lipsiae 1926, 37 no. 1961.

⁵ For “Iulius [-]ilius”, cf. n. 3. For the name Euc(a)erus, see H. Solin, *Die griechischen Personennamen in Rom* II, Berlin – New York 1982, 905f., who registers nine persons (including our man) by that name. Our inscription is dated to the I/III centuries. Note that there was a famous Alexandrine flute-player Euc(a)erus under Nero, mentioned in Tac. *ann.* 14,60 (cf. PIR E² 107), who perhaps influenced the choice of name in our case.

⁶ It is, for instance, absent from L. R. Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, Baltimore – London 1992. See p. 246 for the more famous temple of Mater Matuta.

⁷ For convenient references, see S. Platner – Th. Ashby, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, Oxford 1927, 330f.; Richardson (above n. 6), 246 (with some recent bibliography).

Our text, on the contrary, refers to Rome's *regio sexta (Alta Semita)*, which "included the Quirinal from the imperial fora to the Servian wall between the porta Viminalis and the porta Collina, and extended far enough west to take in the horti Sallustiani, and north beyond the line of the Aurelian wall".⁹

2.

Possible further doubts as to the proposed interpretation of the inscription are easily disposed of by an examination of the content of epigraphic parallels, and by a closer look at the content of the inscription itself.

Firstly, it must be stressed that the expression *VI regio* in this inscription must refer to the Augustan division of the city, and not to the ecclesiastical one. The ecclesiastical division of Rome in seven regions was apparently introduced by Pope Fabianus (A.D. 236–250),¹⁰ but for several centuries its impact on administration and the everyday life of the city's inhabitants was very limited,¹¹ and the Augustan regions continued to be referred to in medieval sources for over half a millennium after the Fall of Rome.¹² It would moreover be odd to find a reference to the ecclesiastical division of Rome in an inscription where the pagan goddess Mater Matuta is mentioned.

A fundamental question is whether *VI reg.* should not be taken as a topographical indication of the residence of Eucerus, instead of the location of the temple of Mater Matuta where he was employed.¹³ If this were so, no new information about a temple of Mater Matuta in the sixth Augustan region would accrue from the inscription.

Epigraphic parallels provide sufficient proof that the expression *VI reg(ionis)* used to identify Eucerus ought to refer to the location where he was professionally engaged. As is well known, numerous inscriptions mentioning commoners from Rome engaged in various professions include a topographical epithet added to the term that indicates the occupation, as in *argentarius Macelli Magni*

That we are dealing with a different temple here was however tentatively suggested by Egbert (above n. 1), 271. Egbert's suggestion was confirmed by Dessau in his commentary *ad loc.*: "Ceterum templum Matris Matutae urbanum, situm in foro boario, a sexta regione urbis longe aberat." Giuseppe Lugli in his collection of sources on Roman topography included the present inscription among his references to buildings in the sixth region, but without any discussion of its content, which is warranted and will be the main task of this paper; see G. Lugli, *Fontes ad topographiam veteris urbis Romae pertinentes* IV, Romae 1957, 181. 214.

⁸ Platner – Ashby (above n. 7), 224: "It (= the Forum Boarium) seems to have lain for the most part within the eleventh region of Augustus, but to have also included a small portion of the eighth." The division of the area between the Capitol and the Tiber between the Augustan regions VIII, IX and XI is a difficult topographical problem, but at least it has been fairly well established that the twin temples of Mater Matuta and Fortuna belonged to the *regio VIII*. Thus e.g. F. Coarelli, *Il Foro Boario dalle origini alla fine della repubblica*, Roma 1988, 12 with a map on p. 8. See also the recent survey of various opinions by M. P. Muzzioli, "Fonti per la topografia della IX regione di Roma: alcune osservazioni", *PBSR* 60, 1992, 179–211, esp. 181f.

⁹ Thus Platner – Ashby (above n. 7), 446 with a somewhat unclear map on p. 394.

¹⁰ See L. Duchesne (ed.), *Le Liber Pontificalis* I, Paris 1886, p. 148: *Hic [scil. Fabianus] regiones dividit diaconibus et fecit VII subdiaconos . . .*; cf. Ch. Pietri, *Roma Christiana*, BEFAR 224, Rome 1976, 650 with sources. The *Liber Pontificalis* actually states that Rome's fourth pope, Clemens (68–76 A.D.) was the one who created the ecclesiastical regions: *hic fecit VII regiones, dividit notariis fidelibus ecclesiae . . . (ibid., p. 123)*, but this information does not seem to have received much credence or attention from scholars.

¹¹ Pietri (above n. 10), 650–657.

¹² See C. Re, "Le regioni di Roma nel medioevo", *Studi e documenti di storia e diritto* 10, 1889, 349–381, esp. 353–359 for unequivocal medieval references to the Augustan regions; thus also U. Gnoli, *Topografia e toponomastica di Roma medioevale e moderna*, Roma 1984 (reprint of 1939 orig.), 252–256.

¹³ A third interpretation was mentioned by Egbert (above n. 1), 271, although he thought it less likely: "an alternative construction might be to regard the phrase VI REG. (*sextae regionis*) not as belonging to *Matris Matutae* but to *delicius*, and interpret, 'Eucerus, the favourite devotee of the Sixth Region, of Mater Matuta'". Although it is not unheard of to find a *delicius* of a collective body such as the *regio sexta* (see the evidence for *deliciae populi Romani* in section 4 below), the phrasing of the inscription makes this rather unlikely.

(CIL VI 9183), *aurifex de Sacra Via* (CIL VI 9207), or *pigmentarius Vici Lorari* (CIL VI 9796). The topographical expression is often formed with the help of a preposition (such as *ab, de, extra*), but also a genitive construction (like we have for Eucerus) is possible, as shown by two of the cases above. While in principle one cannot exclude that craftsmen like those mentioned here might have been living on the same premises where they exercised their craft, surely the primary purpose of such topographical designations was to indicate their place of business.¹⁴

Even more relevant for the present purpose is that there are some Roman musicians who use topographical indications in connection with their name, as can be seen in *CIL VI 9475 D. m. Ti. Claudio Glypto hymnologo de Campo Caelemontano vixit . . .*; *CIL VI 9935 P. Curius Eupor tibiarius de sacra via*; and *CIL VI 10133 D. m. Cn. Vergilius Epaphroditus magister odariarius a Minerva medica vixit . . .*¹⁵

In these cases too it makes sense to take the topographical indication as referring to the locality where these musicians exercised their talent. Of special interest is the inscription of Vergilius Epaphroditus who was a song-instructor (*odariarius*) at the Temple of Minerva Medica on the Esquiline. This points to the importance of music in the context of Roman religion. That the Romans were very keen on employing musicians in connection with religious ceremonies is well-established and can be verified in numerous literary, pictorial, and epigraphic sources.¹⁶

Among the inscriptions mentioning cult-musicians we have *CIL VI 32444 Ti. Claudio Veloci hymnologo[o] primo M(atris) D(eum) I(daeae) e[t] Atti[d]is publico Amerimnus lib. patrono . . .*, where the *hymnologus* (singer of Greek cultic hymns) Claudius Velox is described, using the genitive as in the case of our Eucerus, as being “of Mater Deum Ideae (= Kybele) and of Attis”.¹⁷ While this description might be said primarily to indicate his occupation, the wording also firmly places Claudius Velox at the site of a temple or shrine of Kybele in Rome.¹⁸ (Except for occasional processions, where else would he practice singing hymns in honour of Kybele but at her cultic site?)

In the case of our Eucerus, the indication *Matris Matutae reg. VI* is even more helpful than in the case of Claudius Velox, because for Eucerus also the approximate location of the cultic site is indicated: the sixth region. Although references to urban regions are rarely used in Roman inscriptions when people indicate the locality where they exercised their profession,¹⁹ one could argue that a particular reason existed for doing so in Eucerus’ case: the necessity to avoid confusion with the famous temple of Mater Matuta in the eighth region.

3.

Previous scholars commenting on our inscription have devoted most of their attention to the question of Eucerus’ status as a musician. Was he in fact a cult musician employed at the cultic site, or was he

¹⁴ Thus R. MacMullen, *Roman Social Relations 50 B.C. to A.D. 284*, New Haven – London 1974, 133f. for these and other cases (“In describing themselves for posterity, people often specified both their craft and where in the city they practised it”).

¹⁵ For a survey of musicians from Rome based on the epigraphic evidence, see G. Wille, ‘Musica romana’. *Die Bedeutung der Musik im Leben der Römer*, Amsterdam 1967, 315–324.

¹⁶ See above all Wille (above n. 15), 26–74; cf. A. Baudot, *Musiciens romains de l’antiquité*, Montreal 1973, 36–46.

¹⁷ On cult-music of Kybele and Attis in Rome, see Wille (above n. 15), 56–62; on this inscription esp. 60.

¹⁸ On temples of Kybele in Rome, see Platner – Ashby (above n. 7), 323–326 s.v. Magna Mater.

¹⁹ The following list does not aspire to completeness: *Barnaesus de familia publica reg. VIII* (CIL VI 2342 = D 1964), for which see Chr. Bruun, *The Water Supply of Ancient Rome. A Study of Roman Imperial Administration*, Helsinki 1991, 192; *P. Cornelius Trophimus pistor Romaniensis ex reg. XIII* (CIL XIV 2213 = D 3243) – it is not clear to me why Dessau *ad loc.* and other commentators read *ex reg(ionibus) quattuordecim*, instead of taking *reg. XIII* as a reference to the fourteenth region only; *Laurenti v.c. regione VII* (D 8701 = NSA 1902, p. 627, a lead pipe inscription from the neighbourhood of Piazza Venezia); *Ianuarius dicor, servus sum Dextri exceptoris senatus qui manet in regione quinta in area Macari* (CIL XV 7174 = D 8726, a slave-collar). The last two cases clearly denote residences.

perhaps merely a street musician who had taken up his abode in the immediate vicinity of a temple of Mater Matuta?²⁰ The first alternative is definitely more attractive, but for us it is not even necessary to get involved in that debate.

What matters is that we have established that Eucerus was engaged in musical activities connected with a temple of Mater Matuta in the sixth Augustan region. Once the existence of such a temple in Rome has been demonstrated, this paper has fulfilled its purpose.

4.

In some respects our inscription presents features unusual in Latin epigraphy. These features are worth commenting upon, not least because their elucidation might assist in the understanding of the inscription.

On line 1 Eucerus is styled a *delicius* of Mater Matuta.²¹ The use of the words *delicium*, *delicatus* (and variations) in Latin inscriptions seems to differ considerably from the pejorative use it mostly has in Latin literature. In fact it is used as a “term of endearment” in inscriptions, without any connotation of sexual pleasures or abuse as in literary sources.²² In a recent detailed study, Hanne Sigismund Nielsen concluded that “a *delicium/delicatus/a* was normally a child of slave status, probably more frequently a girl than a boy, brought up in the house of his or her master; the relationship existing between master and *delicium* was normally parent/child-like but quite informal, only based on affection and love”.²³

In the material known to Sigismund Nielsen, for no person styled *delicius* (or similar) was an age above 23 years given (while of course in some cases no age at all was mentioned).²⁴ It therefore might seem odd that such a term should be used for our Eucerus, who, as being the *papas* of the man who put up the inscription, must be at least middle-aged. The explanation in our case is that *delicius* is used in a slightly different context, for a favourite not of any individual in particular, but in relation to a larger group or a general concept. In this category we find expressions such as *delicius pop(u)li* (Plaut. Most. 15); a freedman Cn. Pompeius Astiga called *daeliciae populi Ro(mani)* (*CIL* VI 10151a = D 5222); and one Sex. Vetulenus Lavicanus designated as *delicium populi*.²⁵ Eucerus was a *delicius* of the goddess Mater Matuta, a flattering epithet surely based on the fact that he had performed music in her temple.

Line 3 presents some intricate problems. Firstly, the word *auletio* is a *hapax legomenon*. It is clearly derived from Greek ἀυλητής “fluteplayer”, but no other instance of a Latin word *auletius* seems to exist.²⁶ It has been suggested that it might be a second cognomen of Eucerus (i.e. an *agnomen* acquired

²⁰ On street musicians in ancient Rome see Wille (above n. 15), 125. Wille (op. cit.) favoured the view that Eucerus was a properly employed musician: “Von einem Tempelmusiker der Mater Matuta kündigt eine Inschrift” (p. 36) and “Der Sklave Eucerus stand als Tibiabläser im Dienst der Mater Matuta” (p. 321). Thus also H. Leppin, *Histrionen. Untersuchungen zur sozialen Stellung von Bühnenkünstlern im Westen des Römischen Reiches zur Zeit der Republik und des Prinzipats*, Bonn 1992, 316. However, in Wille (op. cit.), 205 there is also a reference to a different opinion, that Eucerus played “am Tempeleingang zum Ergötzen der Besucher”. Similarly Dessau, *ad loc.*

²¹ But cf. another, less likely, interpretation mentioned in n. 13 above.

²² See H. Sigismund Nielsen, “On *delicium* as a term of endearment in Rome”, *ARID* 19, 1990, 79–88. For epigraphic material outside of Rome, see the old collection by S. Aurigemma, *DE* II.2, 1910, 1594–1603 s.v. *delicium*.

²³ Sigismund Nielsen (above n. 22), 85.

²⁴ Sigismund Nielsen (above n. 22), 83f.

²⁵ The last case presented by S. Panciera, “Tra epigrafia e topografia I”, *ArchClass* 22, 1970, 131–163, esp. 152.

²⁶ See the *ThLL* and the *OLD*. Bücheler (above n. 4), 37 tentatively joins two words to form another previously unknown word *auletiocantor* “is qui tibiis canit”.

during his lifetime),²⁷ while others have taken *auletius* to denote his art.²⁸ In fact, even if it were an *agnomen*, in Eucerus' case it is most likely that the name had been derived from his profession.

Secondly, Egbert suggested that the line read *auletio cantor(um) ubique*, followed by *noto* (or something similar) in the damaged beginning of line 4. This suggestion has not been taken up by later editors of the text,²⁹ and indeed the nominative *cantor* is clearly preferable. Egbert does not indicate that he was aware that the inscription is metric (dactylic hexameter), and although theoretically it would be possible to accommodate Egbert's reading through elision, one surely would need the word written out in whole in order to know that elision was required.³⁰ This is what we have in *hic situs est* on line 2.

Thirdly, the function of the word *ubique* on line 3 might seem somewhat puzzling (could it refer to the activity of the *cantor* Iulius, or to that of the fluteplayer?).³¹ In fact, it should be part of the greeting formula *hic et ubique (vale)!*, which although absent from Latin literature, is known in a large number of Italian early imperial graffiti, found both on the Palatine in Rome, and on the walls of Pompeii.³² As noted by Castrén, this formula "always more or less clearly connected with greetings or wishes of good luck" is often abbreviated to a mere *ubique*,³³ and in our inscription we even have *hic*, although in a different formula (*hic situs est*) in the previous line. The use of this greeting in a funerary inscription has not been recorded previously, but there is nothing odd about it.

The text makes good sense if it is divided in three sentences: *Delicius Matris Matutae . . . hic situs est. | Auletio cantor ubique. | [- ti]tulum fecit Iulius [-]ilius papati suo*. According to such a structure, the short second sentence would contain the meaning *Auletio cantor (salutem hic et) ubique* – "the singer (offers) to the (his?) fluteplayer (a greeting here and) everywhere".³⁴

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²⁷ See Dessau, *ad loc.* No name Auletius or anything similar was registered by I. Kajanto, *The Latin Cognomina*, Helsinki 1965.

²⁸ See above n. 20.

²⁹ Egbert (above n. 1), 272. Wille (above n. 15), 321 n. 205 prints "*cantor.*", possibly indicating agreement.

³⁰ There would have been space available for writing out *cantorum* in full. Line 3 of the inscription (*Auletio cantor ubique*) has some empty space at the end, as can be seen from the photograph in Egbert (above n. 1), 270.

³¹ See e.g. H. Armini, "Ad carminum epigraphicorum tertium volumen adnotatiunculae", *Eranos* 34, 1936, 104–141, esp. 112: "Videtur *ubique* hic quasi ad explendum versum positum, nisi forte credas cantorem illum *ubique* cantasse".

³² See P. Castrén, "*Hic et ubique*: Survival of a Formula", *Arctos* 16, 1982, 7–9.

³³ Castrén (above n. 32), 8.

³⁴ Compare the suggestion by Armini (above n. 31), 112f. that *ubique* should be given a temporal meaning ("*semper*").