

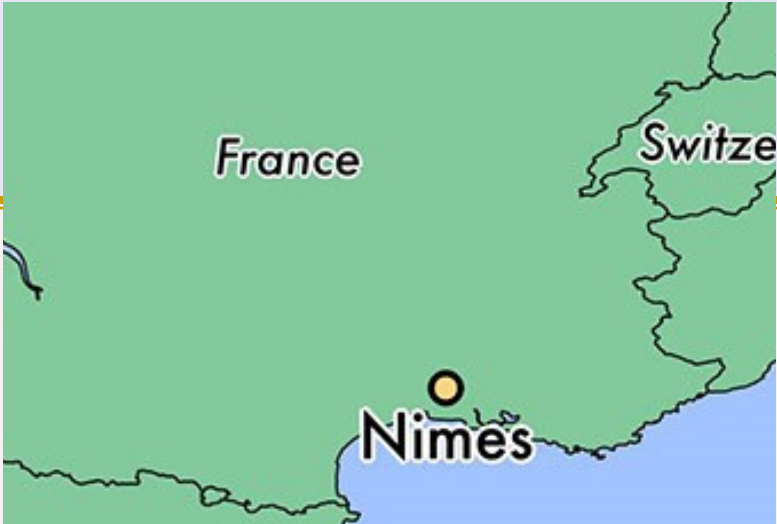


Figure 2 - Map of France- <https://www.worldatlas.com/eu/fr/k/where-is-nimes.html>

Introduction

The Maison Carrée in Nîmes is one of the best preserved Roman temples which may be because it has been used almost constantly since the Roman Period (Anderson, 2001, p. 68). One of the main problems with the Maison Carrée is that we cannot be sure who the temple was dedicated to because the inscription was removed in the Medieval period (Becker, 2016). This has led to scholars (such as Segueir and Esperandieu) attempting to decipher what the dedication might have said. There has also been a debate about the dating of the temple because, as the inscription has been removed, it is difficult to date exactly when the temple was built. And besides, the inscription could have been added any time after the temple was built.

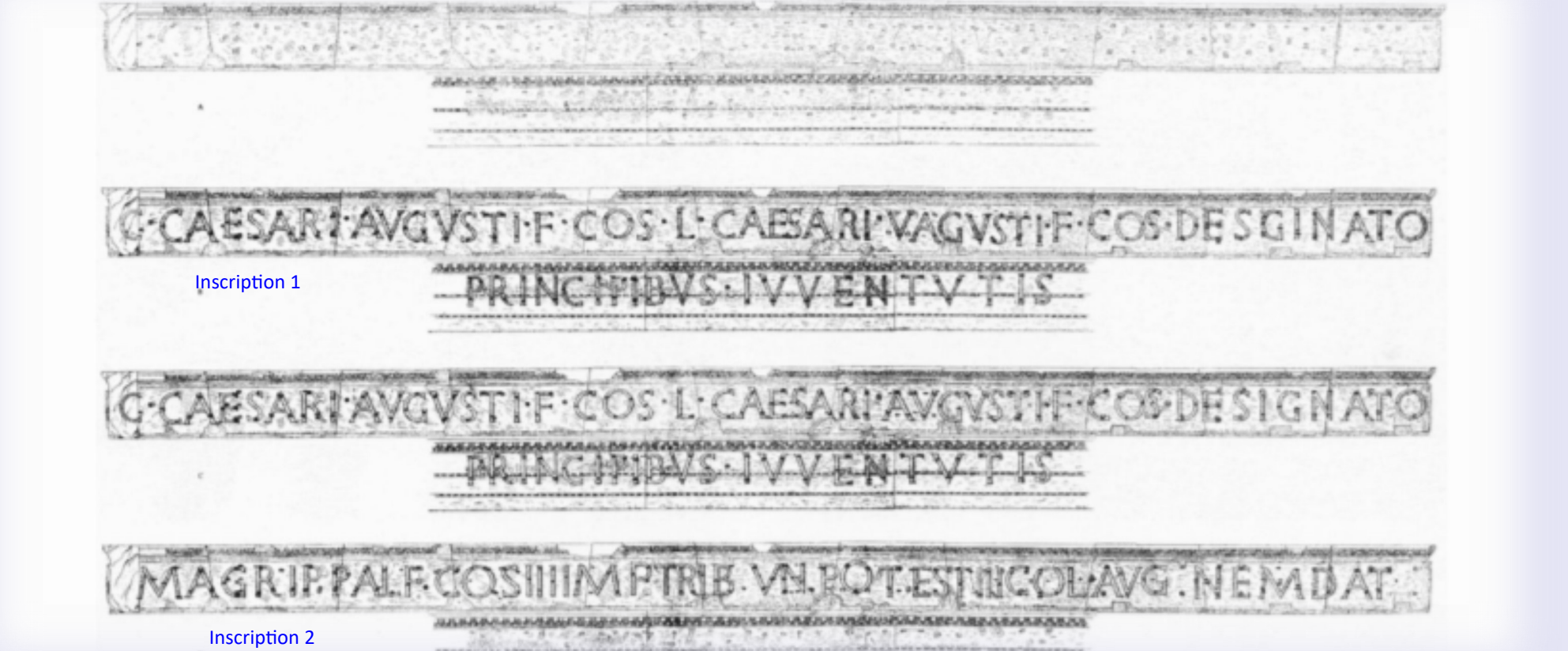


Figure 1-The dedicatory inscription of the Maison Carrée variously restored– L’inscription de la Maison Carrée de Nîmes– Robert Amy



Figure 3 —inscription holes- <http://www.maisoncarree.eu/monument/architecture/facade-principale/dedicate>

Inscription

The problem with the inscription on the Maison Carrée a large number of hypothetical inscriptions could have fitted into the holes where the bronze letters would have been (Anderson, 2001 ,p. 69). Segulier tried to date the temple to the Augustan period (Anderson, 2001, p. 68) which can be seen through the way that in Inscription 1 the temple is dedicated to Augustus’ grandsons Gaius and Lucius. Esperandieu tried to show that there might have been a previous inscription (see inscription 2 below) before Segulier’s about Agrippa because Esperandieu believed that Segulier had not used all of the available holes (Amy, 1970,p 671). When Amy re-examined Esperandieu’s hypothetical inscription, he discovered that it never could have existed (Kleiner, Kleiner pg. 56). Amy proved that Esperandieu’s interpretation of the inscription was impossible because only one section of Esperandieu’s inscription ‘COL’ could have actually fit into the holes (Amy, 1970).

Latin Inscriptions (Figure 1)

Inscription 1—*C(aio) CEASARI AUGUSTI F(ilio) CO(n)S(uli) [et] L(ucio) CEASARI AUGUT F(ilio) CO(n)S(uli) DESIGNATO*

Inscription 2—*M(arcus) AGRIPPA L(uci) F(ilius) CO(n)S(uli) III IMP(erator) TRIBUN(ucia) POTEST(as) III COL(onia) AUG(ustus) NEM(ausus) DAT (Figure 1 Inscription 2)*

English Translations

Inscription 1- To Gaius Julius Caesar, son of Augustus Consul [and] to Lucius Caesar, son of Augustus Consul Designate

Inscription 2- Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucius, Consul for the third time, emperor power of the tribune for the third time, gives to Nemausus colony of Augustus

The Maison Carrée at Nîmes

Dating

Anderson raises the question of when the Maison Carrée was built. The Maison Carrée is generally thought to have been built at some point during the reign of Augustus (Anderson , 2001 ,p. 68). But when Harston studied the measurements of the building, he believed that the Pes Dresenae measurement may have been used when building the Maison Carrée (Anderson, 2001 ,p. 72). But this unit of measurement was not used in Roman Gaul until after the 2nd century, so why would the Pes Dresenae appear in an Augustan temple (Anderson, 2001 ,p. 73)? In an excavation between 1990 -1 it was discovered that there was a similar building beneath the Maison Carrée, that possibly dates from the early half of the first century BC (Anderson, 2001 ,p. 74-5). Due to this finding and the use of the Pes Dresenae, it is plausible that the Maison Carrée was rebuilt in the 2nd century. The temple could have been renovated during the 2nd century because Nîmes’ prestige would have risen in the during that period due to Nîmes being “ the probable birthplace of the empress Pompeia Plotina” (Anderson, 2001 ,p. 75). This would have meant that Nîmes was closely connected to the imperial family early on in the second century (Anderson, 2001, p. 75). Although the temple may have been rebuilt in the 2nd century, the Maison Carrée may still have been of Augustan origin (Anderson, 2001 ,p.76). Even the hypothetical inscription offered by Segueir could still be a possibility if when renovating they had kept the inscription from the original Augustan temple (Anderson, 2001, p. 76)

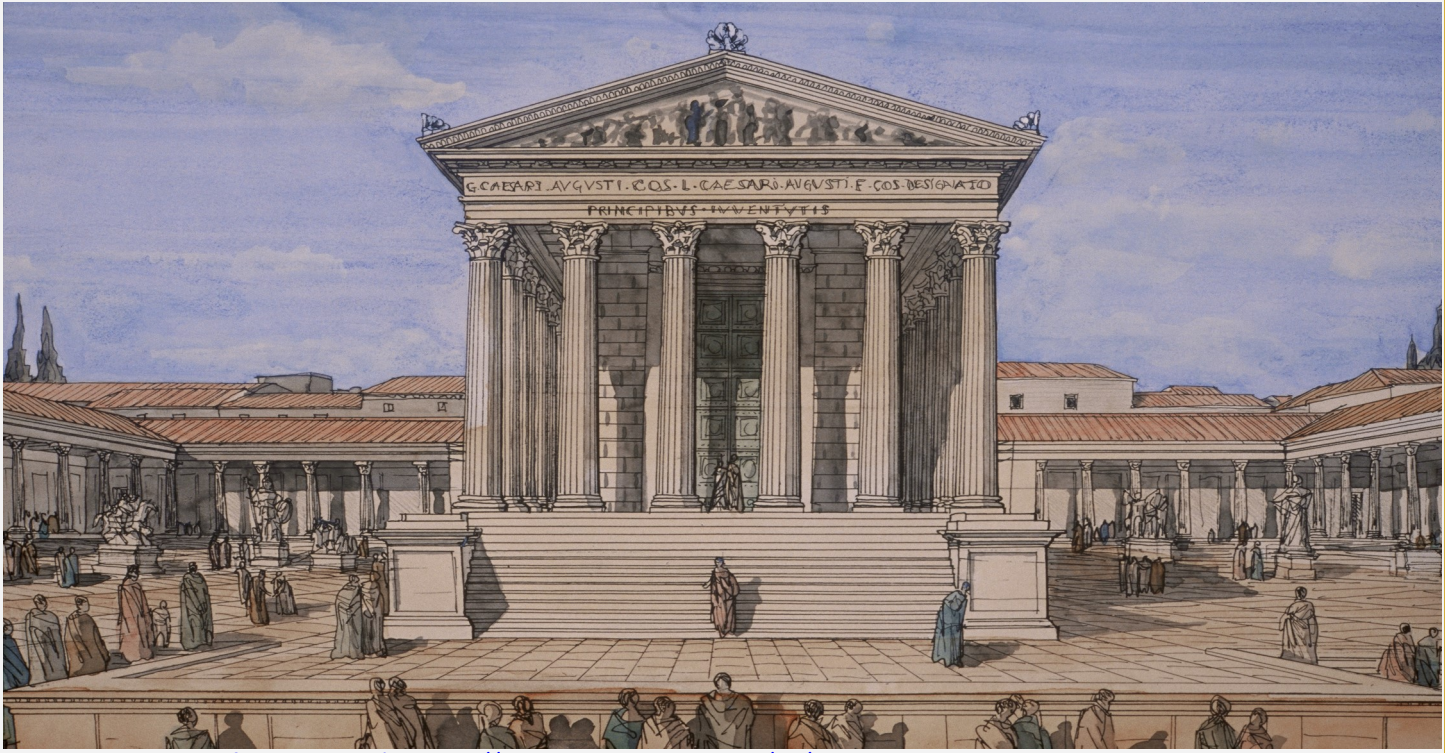


Figure 4—drawing of Maison Carrée- <https://www.arenis-nimes.com/en/construction-begins-maison-carree>

Restorations

Maison Carrée has had a number of restorations including one recently from 2006 -10 (MaisonCarrée, 2011)

- Statistics on the new restoration (MaisonCarrée, 2011, p. 19) – 44,000 hours of work, 95 blocks of cut stone, a variety of different craftsmen– stonecutters, sculptors, painters. When restoring the temple, techniques such as laser cleaning were used for trying not to damage the original stone, and varnish was applied to the stones to prevent further damage (MaisonCarrée, 2011, p. 20-21) .



Figure 5- Temple of Maison Carrée- <http://www.MaisonCarrée.eu/en/monument-2/architecture/an-exceptional-building/>



Figure 8– example of Pseudoperipteral columns from the Maison Carrée- <http://mon-blog-de-voyage.over-blog.com/article-un-jour-pour-faire-revivre-nimes-la-romaine-109335524.html>

Architecture

The Maison Carrée is “a nearly textbook example of a Roman temple as described by architectural writer Vitruvius” (Becker, 2016).

- Temple measures 26.42 meters by 13.54 meters
- 6 columns at the front and back and 10 on each side (Becker, 2016) (see Figure 5).Pseudoperipteral hexastyle like the Mars Ultor in Rome (MaisonCarrée, 2011 ,p. 22). Pseudoperipteral means that the front columns are free standing whilst the side and back columns are attached to the wall (Becker, 2016).
- The temple is of Corinthian order which is shown by the Acanthus leaves on the capitals (see Figure 4) (Becker, 2016)



Figure 6-Example of Acanthus leaves capital- <https://smarthistory.org/Maison-Carrée/>

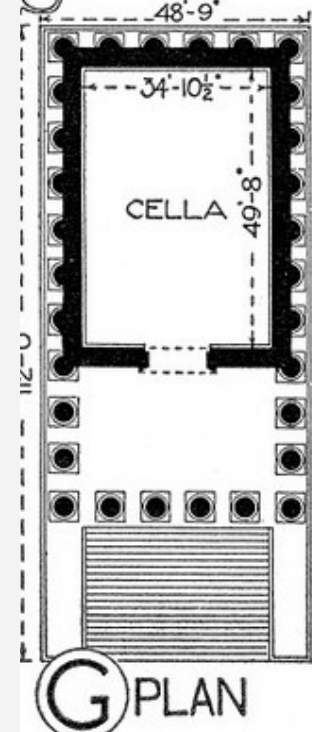


Figure 7– Temple plan—<https://smarthistory.org/Maison-Carrée/>

What was the temple used for after the Roman Period?

The Maison Carrée’s excellent state of preservation could be because of, or in spite of “a chequered history of use” (Anderson, 2001, p. 68). Here are a few examples of what the temple has been used for:

- A convent in 1670 (MaisonCarrée, 2011, p.11)
- Private home (Anderson, 2001 ,p. 68)
- A stable for government horses (Anderson, 2001 ,p. 68)
- Finally became a public museum in 1824 (MaisonCarrée, 2011, p.11)

Dedication

There is uncertainty as to which god the temple was dedicated to. The inscription may show that the temple was dedicated to Gaius and Lucius Caesar and therefore the Imperial Cult (Strong ,1961, p.261). Although worship of the imperial family was not frequent in Italy at this time, it was “more commonplace in the provinces of the Roman Empire” (Becker, 2016).

Conclusions

- Segulier’s hypothesis that the temple was dedicated to Gaius and Lucius Caesar is highly possible but there are a limitless number of inscriptions that could fit into the holes.
- The Maison Carrée could have been dedicated to the Imperial cult but this is based on a hypothetical inscription.
- The temple may have been Augustan in origin but there is also evidence of it being rebuilt during the 2nd century.

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