33
Letter of Paulus Fabius Maximus and Decrees by Asians Concerning the Provincial Calendar

The first part of this document (lines 1-30) is a letter directed by Paulus Fabius Maximus, the proconsul of Asia, to the Provincial Assembly. He suggests that, in view of the distinctiveness of Augustus' birthdate as the beginning of a new era for humanity, it would be appropriate to adopt the natal day of Augustus as the beginning of the official year in the province. He recommends that the solar reckoning of the Julian calendar, developed in 46 B.C.E., replace the local lunar method, but with retention of the Macedonian names of the months, except that the first month, beginning on 23 September, be called "Caesar" instead of "Dios."

Impressed by the originality displayed by their governor, the Asians respond with two decrees (lines 30-84). In the first (30-76), they echo Fabius' fulsome rhetoric in praise of Augustus' benefactions and resolve to honor the proconsul with a crown for his unique proposal that the inaugural ceremonies for local magistrates coincide with the birth of Augustus. This arrangement would ensure maximum cognition of the imperial presence. In his sagacity Fabius undoubtedly perceived that by having the local magistrates enter office on Caesar's birthday their own political fortunes would more readily be aligned with the interests of Rome. The second resolution (lines 77-84) decrees that elections are to be held in ample time before Caesar's birthday, so that all winning candidates may assume office on the first day of the new year.

The date of the document cannot be determined with certainty, and the customary association with 9 C.E. is to be considered only approximate (see note on line 77).

Editions:  Sherk, no. 65; Th. Mommsen-U. von Wilamowitz
Möllendorf, "Die Einführung des Asianischen Kalenders," AthMitt 24 (1899) 298-293; OGi 458; Priene 105; SEG IV, 490; MAMA VI, 174 and 175; Ehrenberg-Jones, no. 98; Umberto Laffi, "Le iscrizione relativa all'introduzione nel 9 a.C. del nuovo calendario della Provincia d'Asia," SCO TI 16 (1967), 5-98: a comprehensive presentation of the texts, with detailed comment.

The letter and accompanying documents were published in numerous cities of Asia. The most complete copy is from Priene. Fragments have been recovered notably at Apameia (CIG III, 3957; CIL III, 12240); Eumeneia (CIG III, 39023); Dorylaion (CIL III, 13651); and Maionela (see Laffi above). Further bibliographical data in Sherk, pp. 328-329.

TRANSLATION

I. Letter of the Proconsul in Praise of Caesar
(Lines 1-30)

Paulus Fabius Maximus to the Asian League, greeting.

[lines cut] It is subject to question whether the birthday of our most divine Caesar spells more of joy or blessing. Is it being a date that we could probably without fear of contradiction equate with the beginning of all times, if not in terms of nature, certainly in terms of utility, setting that he restored stability, when everything was collapsing and falling into disarray, and gave a new look to the entire world that would have been most happy to accept its own ruin had not the good and common fortune of all been born: CAESAR. Therefore people might justly assume that his birthday spells the beginning of a life and real living and marks the end and boundary of any regret that they had themselves been born. And since no other day affords more promise of blessing for engagement in public or private enterprise than this one which is so fraught with good fortune for everyone; and since this day practically coincides with the inaugural day for local magistrates in all the cities of Asia, and quite apparently through divine intention, and in such a way that the (provincial) observance seems to have provided a model for the others so that there might be a starting point for rendering appropriate honors to Augustus; and whereas on the one hand it is difficult to render thanks in proportion to the many benefits he has conferred - unless, of course, we pondered carefully how we might in some way require them one by one; and whereas on the other hand it may be presumed that people will more readily celebrate as a birthday a day that is already observed in common by all, especially if it offers them a measure of leisure because it coincides with the (local) inaugural observance, it is my judgment that the one and the same day observed by all the citizens as New Year's Day be celebrated as the birthday of Most Divine Caesar, and on that day, September 23, all elected officials shall assume office, with the prospect that through association with observances coinciding with the existing celebration, the birthday observance might attract all the more esteem and prove to be even more widely known and thereby confer no small benefit on the province. Therefore it would behoove the Asian League to pass a resolution that puts into writing all his aratea, so that our recognition of what redounds to the honor of Augustus might abide for all time. And I shall order that the decree to be inscribed in (Greek and Latin) on a stele and set up in the temple.

II. First Decree of the Asian League
(Lines 30-76)

30 Decree of the Greek Assembly in the province of Asia, on motion of the High Priest Apollonios, son of Menophilos, of Alzanoi: WHEREAS Providence that orders all our lives has in her display of concern and generosity in our behalf adorned our lives with the highest good: Augustus, whom she has filled with arate for the benefit of humanity, and has in her benefice granted us and those who will come after us [a Savior] who has made war to cease and who shall put everything [in peaceful] order; and whereas Caesar, [when he was manifest], transcended the expectation of the people who had anticipated the good news, not only by surpassing the benefits conferred by his predecessors but by leaving no expectation of surpassing him to those who would come after him, with the result that the birthday of Our God signalled the beginning of Good News for the world because of him; and whereas, after the assembly of Asia decreed in Smyrna [during the administration of a proconsul] Lucius Volciatus Tullus, when Papion, [son of Dioscurites], was clerk - that a crown he awarded to the person who came up with the best proposal for honoring our God; (and whereas) the proconsul Paulus Fabius Maximus, benefactor of the province, who had been dispatched for its security by (Caesar's) authority and decision, besides all the other benefits that he had already conferred on the province, so many in fact that no one would be able to calculate them, has contributed yet one more, and so has discovered a way to honor Augustus that was hitherto unknown among the Greeks, namely to reckon time from the date of his nativity; therefore, with the blessings of Good Fortune and for their own welfare, the Greeks in Asia Decreed that the New Year begin for all the cities on September 23, which is the birthday of Augustus; and, to ensure that the dates coincide in every city, all documents are to carry both the Roman and the Greek date, and the first month shall...
accordance with the decree, be observed as the Month of Caesar, beginning with 23 September, the birthday of Caesar, and that the crown be awarded to Maximus the proconsul for his proposal of the best way to honor Caesar, and at each celebration of the Contest held in Pergamon in honor of the Roman Augustus, it shall be proclaimed:

Asia Crowns Paullus Fabius Maximus
For His Most Pious Proposal of Honors For Caesar

And the same announcement shall be made in all the cities where the Contests are held in honor of the Caesars, and the rescript of the proconsul is to be inscribed together with the Asian decree on a stele of white marble, which is to be placed in the temple precincts of Rome and Augustus, and the public advocates who serve annually shall make provision that both the rescript of Maximus and the Asian decree be inscribed on a white-marble stele in the cities designated as centers for adjudication, with the stele itself to be placed in the temple of Caesar. The months shall be observed as follows:

Caesar: 31 days;
Apellaios: 30 days;
Audaiai: 31 days;
Periios: 31 days;
Dystros: 28 days;
Xandikos: 31 days;
Artemision: 30 days;
Daisios: 31 days;
Panemos: 30 days;
Loos: 31 days;
Gorgias: 31 days;
Hyperberetai: 30 days;

A total of 365 days; but in leap years Xandikos shall be observed as 32 days. And in order that the months and days might start now, the current month Periios shall be observed through the fourteenth and we shall observe January 24 as the first day of Dystros, and each month thereafter the beginning of the new moon will fall on the ninth day before the kalends, and the intercalation shall always take place when Xandikos falls in a leap year, with two years always intervening.

III. Second Decree of the Asian League:
Date of Elections

(Lines 77-84)

Decree of the Greeks in charge of Asia, by motion of the chief priest Apollonios, the son of Menophilos of Alizanoi. WHEREAS, in accordance with the orders of Proconsul Paullus Fabius Maximus as well as the decree of the province of Asia, the first day of the month that marks the entry into the magistrates ought to be the
to do if they insisted on the honor. With the fulsome praise in this inscription compare the adulation expressed in Kienel, Epigrammata 978.

30. "it is my judgment": dokei moi. The proconsul is quite diplomatic in presenting his unique proposal.

32. "Providence": prōnōia. This theme and others in the preambles recall BMI 894, which also emanates from Asia Minor; see Martin P. Charlesworth, "Providentia and Aeternitas," HTR 29 (1936) 107-132.

33. [Tavor]: [sōtēra]. The qualifications that follow make this conjectural restoration certain. For the theme see Wendland (cited above, line 10), pp. 355-353. Compare IGR III, 719, 3-5, which describes Augustus as "Benefactor and Savior of the entire world" (ton euergetēn] kal sōtēra tou sympanto[s]kosmou). Quite evidently calendric matters relate to proper provincial observance of the imperial cult; see Abbott-Johnson, p. 168.

36. "everything [in peaceful order]": kosmēsonta [de eirenen]. In No. 43. 2. 13 (Res Gestae) Augustus boasts that during his principate the gates of the Temple of Janus Quirinus were closed three times. Compare OGI 56, 12 (of Ptolemy II); 116, 8 (of Ptolemy VI). Luke 2:14 emphasizes eirene as a promised feature of the New Age begun with the birth of Jesus. And the Evangelist's association of this birth with the name of Augustus (verse 2) was calculated to capture the imagination of Luke's public, who were already familiar with the contributions of that Caesar to the welfare of humanity. See Wilhelm Nestle, "Der Friedensgedanke in der Antiken Welt," Philologus Suppl. 31/1 (1938) 1-79, esp. pp. 60-61.

[manifest]: [epiphanēs], participle. The verb epiphanein and the noun epiphaneia are standard terms for expressing the manifestation of deities; see Priester, RE Suppl. 4 (1924) 277-323.


40. "Good News": euangelion. See BAGD for ancient usage of the term euaggelion, which is found surprisingly seldom in non-literary texts. The plural is used in 2 Kingdoms 4:10 in the sense of "reward for good tidings," and not, as LSJ indicate, "good tidings, good news." LSJ Suppl. p. 54, appropriately cites Josephus, Wars 4. 10. 6 (618), heōntazēn euaggelia, a reference to Vespasian's accession. On euaggelion and cognates see Deissmann, LO, pp. 312-314 (LAE, pp. 366-367); A. Dieterich, "Euaggelistes," ZNW 1 (1900) 336-338; O. Michel, "Evangelium," RAC 6 (1966) 1107-1160, see esp. 1110.

40-49. The reading of these lines is based on restorations made possible by A.H.M. Jones' discovery of the right-hand half of the block that carried the thirteenth lines of the Apamea copy of the decree corresponding to lines 40-51 of our inscription. A Mr. W.H.C. Fried photographed the stone, whose owner, at Dinar (Apamea), informed Frend that he had recently dug it out of his garden. Jones ("An Epigraphic Contribution to Letters," CR 41 [1927] 119-121) used the publication of this fragment as an opportunity to exhort the scholarly community concerning the high percentage of error inherent in attempted restoration of fragmentary texts, even when undertaken by so expert an epigraphist as W. H. Buckler.

42. "Lucius Volcacius Tulius": The precise identity of this official remains in question. It is not certain, concludes Sherck (pp. 334-345, note 1), that he is to be identified as A.H.M. Jones thought ("L. Volcacius Tulius, Proconsul of Asia," CR n.s. 5 [1955] 245), with the uncle of the friend mentioned by Propertius (Elegies 1.6). This uncle was consul in 33 B.C.E. and shortly after Actium became proconsul of Asia.

43. "Papion": The name Papion is found on coins of the little city of Dioshiion minted in the reign of Augustus (Jones, 165). See p. 165.

45. "authority": apo tēs ekeinou dexias (from his right hand). The right hand represents power and at the same time a benefactor's prerogative to confer salvation; see Weinreich, Antike Heiilungswunder, pp. 40-45. For New Testament usage see Acts 3:7 and the references, passim, to God's right hand.

49. "for their own welfare": epitō sōtērāi.

77. "with two years always intervening," duo etōn mesēn geiōmenōn. Under the old lunar pre-Julian calendar of 355 days, the months failed to align with the seasons. Julius Caesar abandoned this calendric system and instituted the solar calendar of 365-1/4 days. To get the months aligned once more with the seasons, he had to insert 90 days in 46 B.C.

46. Beginning with 1 January 45, the common year consisted of 365 days. The ten extra days from the old 355-day cycle were placed at the end of different months. Every fourth year an extra day was inserted after 24 February. This added day was called bis sextum Cal. Mart.; that is, it was added after VI Cal. Mart. The figure 6 derives from the fact that the day from which one counts, in this case the last of March, and the day to be designated were included in the figure. Bis sextum Cal. Mart. would therefore give February 25. Unfortunately the priests (pontifices) erroneously inserted the extra day every three years: in 42, 39, 36, 33, 30, 27, 24, 21, 18, 15, 12, and 9. This produced twelve intercalated days, whereas only nine were...
needed. Augustus corrected the error by ordering the intercalation to be stopped until the year 8 C.E., after which it was inserted every fourth year. Since line 77 must refer to the erroneous system of intercalation every three years, one must assume either that the inscription was formulated in the year 9 B.C.E. or that the old error continued for a time even after its discovery by Augustus. If the latter is true, the date of the inscription is quite uncertain. See Sherk, pp. 35-36, who draws heavily on Bickerman, Chronology, pp. 43-47; Magie, 1:480-487; 2:1342-1343, notes 39 and 40; and the detailed study by Laffi, cited above under "Editions."

34

Dedication by Eratophanes of Rhodes to Tiberius Claudius Caesar Germanicus

Claudius, the nephew of Emperor Tiberius and brother of the popular Germanicus, became head of state after the assassination of Gaius (Caligula). According to the majority witness of ancient sources, the Praetorian Guard prevailed on Claudius to accept the reins of power (see Magie, 2:1397, note 1).

The new emperor (41-54) endeavored to maintain the goodwill of the provinces by improving the quality of administrative control and by curbing extortion and the commandeering of vehicles for the imperial post (see CIL III, 7251, restored in ILS 214). It is probable therefore that the attribution "Savior and Benefactor" (lines 21-22) is more than a political cliche.

Despite Claudius' apparent reluctance to receive divine honors - he had issued an edict to the Alexandrians forbidding them to consecrate a priest or dedicate a temple to him (Piond 1912), the provinces insisted on instituting the worship of Claudius, and the cult at Kys is one of many in the eastern part of the empire. Eratophanes is one of a number of priests in the Mediterranean world who were in charge of the worship of the emperor (details in Magie, 2:1402, note 13).

Besides his cultic obligations, Eratophanes served as head of gymnastic training and administered the department of weights and measures. These public liturgies naturally involved him in munificent expenditures, which are duly recognized in the inscription. Date: 52-53 at Kys in Karia.

Editions: BCH 11 (1887) 306-308, no. 1; Smallwood, DGCN, no. 135.

TRANSLATION

Sacred dedication to Tiberius Claudius Caesar Germanicus
Imperator God Augustus Pontifex Maximus, Tribune for the twelfth time, Consul for the fifth, and Imperator for
the twenty-sixth, Father of his Country, by Eratophanes, son of Chareiinos, Rhodian, current 'wearer of the wreath' and priest of God Augustus and of Zeus Liberator, Founder of the city. As superintendent of athletics (Eratophanes) donated the oil and underwrote the cleaning of the baths and in the same year served as market commissioner and brought down prices in the market by selling below cost; and besides all this performed sacrifices to the Gods and to the Augusti with prayers that their house might continue in good health forever; he also made many other expenditures out of his own funds, and promised to make money available for public aid to the citizenry; he was rewarded by the Council of the Rhodians for his piety towards the Emperor with a golden crown, a statue, and dedication of a silver bust; he was honored by the People of Kys with the highest honors granted by law both for his piety towards the Emperor and for his extraordinary concern for the people; and he made this dedication to the Savior and Benefactor of all humanity out of his own funds, in concert with his wife Ammias, a Rhodian and daughter of Jason, and their children Phantas, Chareiinos, Artemo, and Menias Eratophanes, all Rhodians, out of piety toward the Gods and the People of Kys.

COMMENTARY

1. On the numerous dedications to Claudius see Vincent M. Scramuzza, "Claudius Soter Euergetes," HSCP 51 (1940) 261-266.


6. "priest of God Augustus": He was a priest or flamen of Divus Augustus (Magie, 2:1402, note 13, with bibliographical data).


11-12. "Augusti": From the time of Claudius and perhaps also of Nero there was in many a city of Greece and Asia a priest who served as priest or flamen of the Caesars collectively. (Magie, 1:544; 2:1402-1403, note 14).

12-13. Similar petitions are encouraged in 2 Timothy 2:2.
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Contents

Acknowledgements ........................................... 7
Abbreviations and Selected Bibliography ............... 9
Introduction ................................................ 26

Benefactors – Documents 1-53 .............................. 56
1. In honor of the physician Philistos ............... 57
2. In honor of the physician Anaxippos .......... 59
3. In honor of the physician Hippokrates ....... 61
4. In honor of an unknown physician .......... 62
5. In honor of the veterinarian Metrodorus ..... 63
6. In honor of two benefactors from Tarentum ... 65
7. In honor of Eudamos, a youth ............... 67
8. Emperor Pius commends a benefactor of Ephesos 69
9. In honor of the citharist Hermonikes ......... 71
10. Dedication to Goddess Aphrodite ............... 73
11. In honor of Python, slayer of the Caesars .. 75
12. In honor of Akornion, priest and envoy .... 77
13. In honor of Simon son of Mattathias ....... 80
14. The Patriarchate recognizes the monk Arsenios 84
15. In honor of Menelaos of Pelagonia .......... 87
16. Gratitude expressed by Iasos to Priene .... 89
17. In honor of Menas ................................. 92
18. Imperial recognition of Seleukos, naval officer 96
20. In honor of Hermias, treasurer .............. 152
21. The Sarapiastai honor their officers ......... 154
22. Minutes of the lobakchoi ............... 156
23. In honor of the flutist Kraton ............... 167
24. In honor of Gerrenus, of Gerasa ......... 170
25. Nebuchadrezzar acknowledges Yahweh's benefactions 173
26. In praise of Isis, at Maroneia .......... 186
27. In praise of Sarapis, at Delos .............. 186
28. In recognition of Asklepios ............... 192
29. Autobiographical retalogy of Isis, at Kyme 197
30. In honor of Demetrius the Great ......... 202
31. The Rosetta Stone ............................... 206
32. In honor of Julius Caesar ............... 213
33. In honor of Augustus, at Priene .......... 215
34. Dedication in honor of Tiberius Claudius Caesar 223
35. In honor of Prefect Tiberius Claudius Balbillus 225
36. Dedication to Domitian, by Arete ........ 227
37. Dedication to Domitian, by Lucius Valerius Niger 228
38. Letter of Domitian to Procurator Athenodoros 230
39. In honor of Emperor Nerva ............. 233
40. In gratitude to President Truman ......... 234
## CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Antiochos I of Kommagene provides for his memory.</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Antiochos I of Kommagene provides for his father's memory</td>
<td>247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Res Gestae Divi Augusti</td>
<td>256</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>Nero liberates Helias</td>
<td>281</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Request to celebrate the mysteries at Ephesus</td>
<td>287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Death penalty for sacrilege against Artemis</td>
<td>289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Testamentary instructions of Praxias</td>
<td>291</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Hierapolis condemns oppressive police action</td>
<td>294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>King Artaxerxes and the Jews</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50</td>
<td>Concerning greedy officials</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51</td>
<td>Tiberius Julius Alexander promises relief to Egypt</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52</td>
<td>Letter of a partisan Jewish leadership</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>A Cypriot oath of allegiance to Tiberius</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Profile of Benefactors                                           317
Benefits Conferred by Benefactors                                  393
Endangered Benefactor                                              417
Responses to Benefactors                                           436
Summation and the Future                                          487
Comparative Table                                                  494
Index of Passages                                                  499
ERRATA

P. 18, 2d last line, read 'Bibilography'

P. 30, 5th last line, read 'two-and-a-half'

P. 209, 5th line, read 'type of ordnance'

P. 210, in the line before the marginal number 42, read 'of King Ptolemy (IV) and Queen Arsinoe — the Gods Philopatores — a wooden statue' etc.

P. 217, beginning of 16th last line read 'be awarded'

P. 287, 2d paragraph, 3d line, read 'potential for subversion'

P. 337, 11th last line, read *charis* instead of *philanthropia*