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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 birthday 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) 288-293; *OGI* 458; *Priene* 105; *SEG* IV, 490; *MAMA* VI, 174 and 175; Ehrenberg-Jones, no. 98; Umberto Laffi, "Le iscrizioni relative all'introduzione nel 9 a.C. del nuovo calendario della Provincia d'Asia," *SCO* 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, 3902b); Dorylaion (*CIL* III, 13651); and Maioneia (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.
- - -] It is subject to question whether the birthday of
5 our most divine Caesar spells more of joy or blessing, [this
being a date that we could probably without fear of contradiction
equate with the beginning of all things, if not in terms of nature,
certainly in terms of utility, seeing 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
10 that his birthday] spells the beginning of 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
15 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 requite
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
20 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 connected with the existing celebration, the birthday
25 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 aretai, so that our
recognition of what redounds to the honor of Augustus might abide
for all time. And I shall order 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 Aizanoi: **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
35 she has filled with arete for the benefit of humanity, [and has
in her beneficence 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 expectations of [all 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
40 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 the proconsul]
Lucius Volcacius Tullus, when Papion, [son of Diosierites], 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
Paul Fabius Maximus, benefactor of the province, who
45 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
50 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, in

accordance with the decree, be observed as the Month
 55 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
 59 Pergamon in honor of the Roman Augusti it shall be proclaimed:

Asia Crowns Paullus Fabius Maximus

For His Most Pious Proposal of Honors For Caesar

60 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 Roma and
 Augustus, and the public advocates who serve annually
 65 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 stelai themselves to be placed in the temples of
 Caesar. The months shall be observed as follows:

Caesar	31 days;
Apellaios,	30 days;
Audnaios,	31 days;
Peritios,	31 days;
Dystros,	28 days;
Xandikos,	31 days;
Artemisios,	30 days;
Daisios,	31 days;
Panemos,	30 days;
Loos,	31 days;
Gorpiaios,	31 days;
Hyperberetaios,	30 days;

70 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 Peritios shall
 be observed through the fourteenth and we shall observe
 75 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
 Aizanoi. WHEREAS, in accordance with the orders of Pro-
 consul 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 magistracies ought to be the

80 same for all cities, yet local election procedures conflict
 with this temporal arrangement, be it resolved that the
 elections be held within the first ten days of the tenth
 month as is also written in the Cornelian Law.

COMMENTARY

1-4. These lines are so fragmentary that only the conventional greeting can be conjectured.

1. "[Paulus Fabius Maximus]". See lines 57 and 59. On this Fabius see Groag, *RE* 6:1780-1789, no. 102, esp. cols. 1782-1783; *PIR*², 3:103-105, no. 47.

5. "beginning of all things": The idea of a birthday of the universe was very popular in the ancient world. Jean R. Bram, *Ancient Astrology: Theory and Practice: Matheseos Libri VIII by Firmicus Maternus* (Park Ridge, N.J.; 1975), p. 310, note 48 on Book 3. 11, shares the view that the conception be associated with the New Year's festivals of Egypt and Babylon.

10. "his birthday spells the beginning of life and real living" (*archēn tou biou kai tēs zōēs gegonenai*). The formulation is similar to that of *OGI* 56.26, in commemoration of the birthday of Ptolemy III: "whose birthday proved to be the beginning of many good things for all people" (*hē kai pollōn agathōn archē gegonen pasin anthrōpois*). Compare *OGI* 493. 24-25. Through ready association the term *archēgos* may be used, as in No. 31. 47, where Ptolemy's birthday and assumption of the reign are evaluated as the source of all good things for everyone *hai de pollōn agathōn archēgoi (p)asin eisin*. The powerful initiator of benefactions may of course himself be termed *archēgos*, as in Acts 3:15, where the emphasis, as in our inscription, is on the origination of life (*ton de archēgon tēs zōēs apekteinate*), see also Hebrews 2:10 (*ton archēgon tēs sōtērias autōn*, the founder of their salvation); see Paul Wendland, "SOTER," *ZNW* 5 (1904) 350.

10-11. "marks the end and boundary of any regret": the benefactor restores happiness to depressed humanity. Later, in the year 37, the people of Assos declare that the world's prayers are answered in the reign of Gaius (begun 16 March 37) and it might as well give up hope of finding an instrument that will adequately measure humanity's joy: *ouden de metron charas heurek[e]n ho kosmos* (*SIG* 797.7 = *IGR* IV, 251). Similarly, Luke 2:10 associates joy with the birth of Jesus (*euaggelizomai hymin charan megalēn*). The focus on Augustus and the absence of any mention of Goddess Roma is in harmony with the preference accorded him in cultic observances elsewhere: see Walter Otto, "Augustus Soter," *Hermes* 45 (1910) 448-460. Suetonius *Augustus* 52 states, however, that Augustus would not accept a temple in a province, but he does not say what Augustus proposed

to do if they insisted on the honor. With the fulsome praise in this inscription compare the adulation expressed in Kai-bel, *Epigrammata* 978.

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

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

35. "[a Savior]": [sōtēra]. The qualifications that follow make this conjectural restoration certain. On the theme see Wendland (cited above, line 10), pp. 335-353. Compare *IGR* III, 719. 3-5, which describes Augustus as "Benefactor and Savior of the entire world" (ton euerget[ēn] kai sōtēra tou sympanto[s] kosmou). Quite evidently calendaric matters relate to proper provincial observance of the imperial cult; see Abbott-Johnson, p. 168.

36. "everything [in peaceful] order": kosmēsonta [de eirēnēn]. 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 III); 116. 8 (of Ptolemy VI). Luke 2:14 emphasizes eirēnē 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 well 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]": [epiphaneis], participle. The verb epiphainomai and the noun epiphaneia are standard terms for expressing the manifestation of deities; see Pfister, *RE* Suppl. 4 (1924) 277-323.

37-39. The theme of unsurpassable beneficence generates the declaration in Acts 4:12 that salvation cannot be associated with any other benefactor who has appeared in human form except Jesus Christ. For a detailed comparison of the Augustus legend and New Testament themes see W. Deonna, "La Légende d'Octave-Auguste: Dieu, Sauveur et Maître du Monde," *RevHR* 83 (1921), 32-58, 163-195; 84 (1921) 77-107.

40. "Good News": euangeli[ōn]. 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), heōrtazen euaggelia, a reference to Vespasian's accession. On euaggelion and cognates see Deissmann, *LO*, pp. 312-314 (*LAE*, pp. 366-367); A. Dieterich, "Euaggelistēs," *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 thirteen lines of the Apamene copy of the decree corresponding to lines 40-51 of our inscription. A Mr. W.H.C. Frend photographed the stone, whose owner, at Dinar (Apameia), 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 Volcaci Tullus": 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. Volcaci Tullus, 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.

"Papion": The name Papion is found on coins of the little city of Dioshieron minted in the reign of Augustus (Jones, p. 145).

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 Heilungswunder*, 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": epi sōtēriai.

77. "with two years always intervening," duo etōn mesōn geinomenōn. Under the old lunar pre-Julian calendar of 355 days, the months failed to align with the seasons. Julius Caesar abandoned this calendaric 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.

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 first 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 cliché.

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 (Plond 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

5 the twenty-sixth, Father of his Country, by Eratophanes, son of Chareinos, 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 10 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 15 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 20 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 Phantias, Chareinos, Artemo, 25 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.

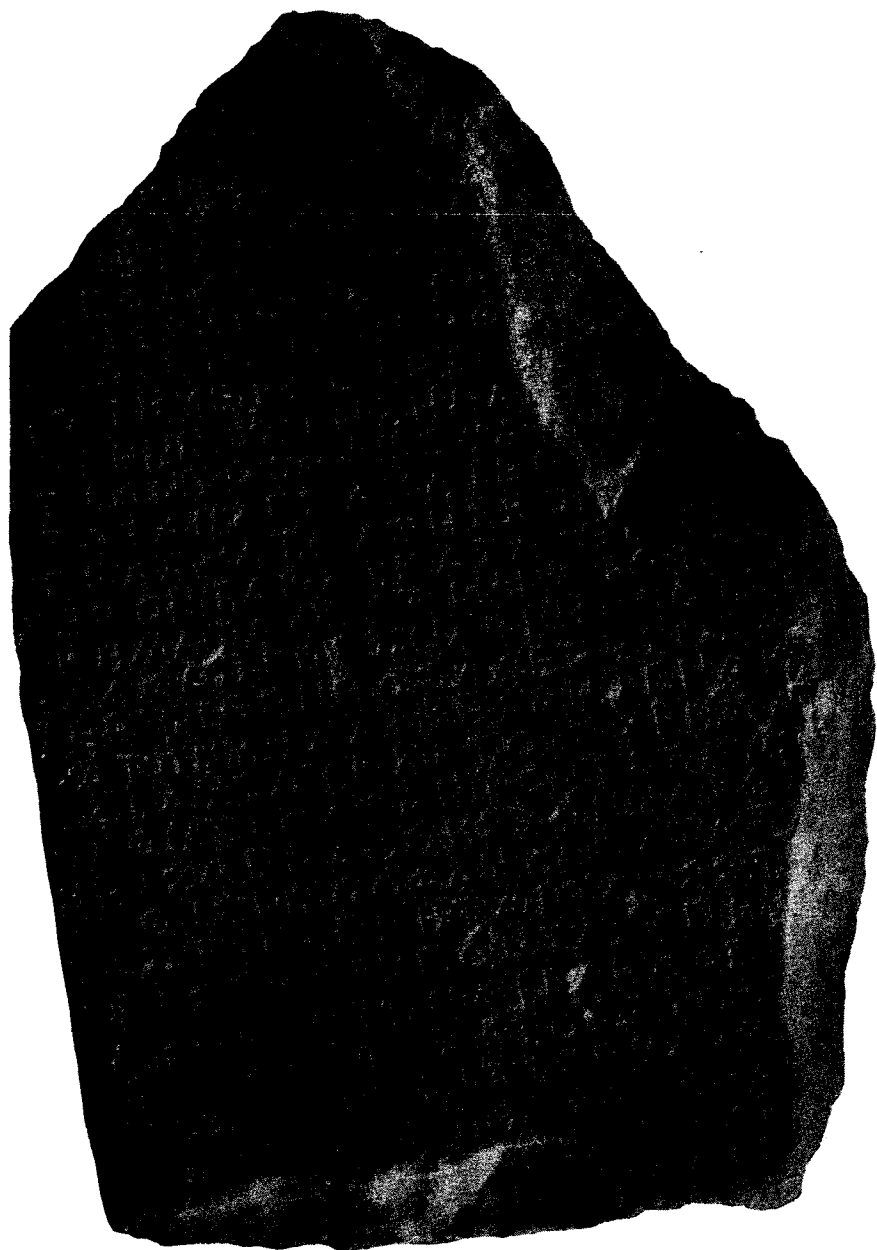
5-6. "'wearer of the wreath'": stepha|nēphoros, a magistrate who had the right to wear a crown in office. See Stier, "Stephanephoria," RE 3A: 2343-2344; Liebenam, pp. 347-348, 556-558; Magie, 2:836-839, note 23; Busolt-Swoboda, 1:499.

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

9. On the "market commissioner," or agronomos, Liebenam, pp. 363-366, 539-542; Magie, 1:645-646; 2:1511-1512, note 41 (with numerous references to inscriptions and secondary sources).

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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ERRATA

- P. 18, 2d last line, read 'Bibliography'
- P. 30, 5th last line, read 'two-and-a-half'
- P. 209, 5th line, read 'type of ordinance'
- 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 philanthrōpia