ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΜΕΙΖΟΝΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΣΜΟΥ

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Summary :

In 9 BC the Koinon of Asia resolved to modify the local calendar. The lunar calendar of the Macedonian type, until then in effect, would be transformed into a solar calendar of the Roman type. The year in Asia Minor would start on September 23 so that it could coincide with Augustus' birthday.

Date

9 BC

Geographical Location

Asia Minor

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1. Calendar of the Province of Asia

In 9 BC the Koinon of Asia decided and voted for the modification of the local calendar so that it could start on Augustus' birthday, September 23.

The modification, which became known due to a number of fragmentary inscriptions –Greek and Latin– found in five cities of Asia Minor (Priene, Apameia, Eumeneia and Dorylaeum of Phrygia, and Maeonia of Lydia), was carried out as follows: the proconsul of the province of Asia, Paulus Fabius Maximus, issued an edict concerning the Greek cities (δελτογρά φημα), which included a long praise for Augustus, explaining the reasons that led to the modification, mainly that the emperor's birthday inaugurated a new era towards the salvation of the world, and encouraging the cities to prepare a resolution that would approve the new calendar. In this way, the Roman official tried to, even formally, respect the autonomy of the cities and did not impose his will through an edict. Instead, he invited the Koinon of Asia Minor to approve the particular proposition, which was going to consolidate the imperial cult in the area. In response, the Greeks prepared two successive resolutions, through which, among others, they decided to honour the emperor and the Roman proconsul, while they also clarified the new form of the local calendar.[1]

The modifications concerned the transformation of the lunar calendar of the Macedonian type (12 months of 30 or 29 days, to which an additional month was periodically added), until then in effect, into a solar calendar of the Roman type (12 months, 7 of which with 31 days, 4 of which with 30 days and 1 month with 28 or, periodically, 29 days).[2] The only difference with the calendar of Rome was that the year in Asia Minor would start on September 23, instead of January 1, so that it could coincide with Augustus' birthday, while each month would start on the 23rd day.[3]

Copies of the resolution were put up in public places all over Asia Minor, particularly in Caesarea and the temples of Rome and Augustus. The inscriptions of the five aforementioned cities are the only testimonies preserved to date.

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1. The most comprehensive publication of these inscriptions is by Laffi, U., "Le iscrizioni relative all'introduzione nel 9 a.C. del nuovo calendario della provincia d'Asia", *SCO* 16 (1967), pp. 5-98, on which the present entry is mainly based. See also Sherk, R.K., *Roman Documents from the Greek East. Senatus Consulta and Epistulae to the Age of Augustus* (Baltimore 1969), pp. 328-337, no. 65, including extensive bibliography.

2. The Roman calendar is still in effect in the western world.

3. The names of the months included in the new calendar of the Koinon of Asia Minor were: Caesar, Apellaios, Audnaios, Peritios, Dystros, Xandikos, Artemisios, Daisios, Panemos, Loios, Gorpiaios, Hyperberetaios Embolimos (Sherk, R.K., *Roman Documents from the Greek East. Senatus Consulta and Epistulae to the Age of Augustus* (Baltimore 1969), pp. 328-337, nos 65, l. 67-72).

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Bibliography :

Sherk R.K., *Roman Documents from the Greek East. Senatus Consulta and Epistulae to the Age of Augustus*, Baltimore 1969

Laffi U., "Le iscrizioni relative all'introduzione nel 9 a.C. del nuovo calendario della provincia d'Asia", *SCO*, 16, 1967, 5-98

Glossary :

proconsul, -lis

A quite high ranking official, vir spectabilis according to the rank of the senate, who was inequable only to the Domestikos of the Scholae and to the Magister Militum per Orientem. The proconsul usually served as a governor of the Imperial provinces (i.e. in Asia Minor the provinces of Asia and Cappadocia). The office was demoted from the 9th century onwards and the term was in use until the 12th century meaning a dignity.

Quotations

Excerpt from the resolution of the Koinon of Asia by which the local calendar was modified:

…διό τύχῃ ἀγαθῇ καὶ ἐπί σωτηρίᾳ δεδόχθαι τοῖς ἐπί τῆς Ἀσίας Ἕλλησι, ἄρχειν τὴν νέαν νουμηνίαν πάσα[ις] ταῖς πόλεσιν τῇ προ ἐννέα καλανδῶν Ὀκτωβρίων, ἥτις ἔστιν γενέθλιος ἡμέρα τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ...

Sherk, R.K., *Roman Documents from the Greek East. Senatus Consulta and Epistulae to the Age of Augustus* (Baltimore 1969), pp. 328-337, no. 65.