NIKOLAOS GONIS

THREE CONSULAR DATES


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1. PLond III 1286 desc.: A Curious Combination

Only a description of this document has been published. This note concerns its date, said to be ‘the 9th Tybi in the consulship of Tiberius Manilius Fuscus II and [Servius Calpur]nius Domitius Dexter [= 4 Jan., A.D. 225]’ (p. lxxi). In the index of officials (p. 336), the following version of the consular formula is given: ἐπί τιμέων Τιμίεων Μανιλίου Φοίσκου τὸ Β καὶ Σερβίου Καλπουρνίου Δομιτίου Δέξτρου.2

The combination of a Roman consular dating with an Egyptian month in a text of 225 strikes one as odd. But on inspection of the original the month of Tybi disappears, and a more plausible text emerges:

ἐπι ὑπάτων Τιμίεων Μανιλίου Φοίσκου τὸ Β καὶ Σερβίου Καλπουρνίου Δομιτίου Δέξτρου πρὸ Ἡ Καλλιάνδων Ἦον

Read Ἦον/ντιόν or Ἦον/λίον; the date corresponds to 24 May or 23 June 225. I should also note that if the praenomen of the second consul, Σερβίου, was written, the end of the first line of the consular clause would have been very cramped.

2. SB IV 7444: Date and Rent

This papyrus preserves a lease of a number of rooms out of a house situated in the city of Oxyrhynchus. The text was assigned to the third/fourth century, but contains a consular date clause which was not read. The latter was presented in the following fashion (lines 17-18):

ἐπί Πέλας Φλ., τῶν λαμπροτάτων ἐπάρχου, Ὡς.

The commentary of ed. pr. (H. B. van Hoesen, A. C. Johnson, JEA 14 (1928) 121-2) on line 18 records a note by H. I. Bell: ‘This [i.e. the editors’ reading] seems to me, from a photograph sent me, almost certain, though the hand is very cursive’. Unfortunately, the photograph was not published, and the text

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* I am grateful to Prof. R. S. Bagnall and Dr K. A. Worp for their comments on an earlier draft of parts 2 and 3.

2 On these consuls see P. M. M. Leunissen, Konsuln und Konsulare in der Zeit von Commodus bis Severus Alexander (180-235 n. Chr.). Prosopographische Untersuchungen zur senatorischen Elite im römischen Kaiserreich (1989), Personenregister, under the names.

3 Physical damage has obscured the details of the object of the lease; we only hear of ὀλοκλήρου ὁλικίας (lines 6-7), τοῖς μεθομενοῖς καὶ τῷ ὕπερφον (lines 6-7), τοῖς μεθομενοῖς καὶ τῷ τόποις (l. 11), and τῷ τόποις ὁλικίας (l. 20).
does not seem to have attracted any critical attention since then. But a new photograph of the papyrus allows further progress to be made:

\[ \text{Cf. Tafel I} \]

The date converts to 3 September 327. The consuls of the year, Flavius Constantius and Valerius Maximus, were both praefecti praetorio (praepot); see R. S. Bagnall, A. Cameron, S. R. Schwartz, K. A. Worp, *Consuls of the Later Roman Empire* (1987) 188-9 [hereafter CLRE].

The amount of rent to be paid (the clause specifying the duration of the lease has not survived) also calls for attention. According to the edition, the lessee will have to pay (lines 7-8)

\[ \text{úpēr énoi[ou] kατ’ ētōc [ékax'ton] ἀργυρίου δρ[α]µ[α]c e}c’\, \text{ápeρ κτλ.} \]

A sum of 270 silver drachmas is much too small for that date; áper also does not sit comfortably with the preceding δραµ[α]c. Study of the photograph results in a different text, and yields a more plausible figure, viz. 4 talents:

\[ \text{úpēr énoi[ou] αύτ[ου] ēn[εις]υ[είως] ἀργυρίου} \ \text{tàλαντα} \ \text{téccara, áper κτλ.} \]

Some more points of detail. In lines 3-4 read μι[θ]ω[σ]θα[ω] τ[ο]ύ [όντος µ][ηνός Θ[ω]θ[ο](τού ἐνεκτότος ἔτους κβ] β δ ἐπί χρόνον ἐτή x], in place of μι[θ]ω[σ]θα[ω] [ό]το τού ἐνεκτότος ἔτους. For the supplements cf. e.g. POxy XLVIII 3384.6-8 (331); for Year 22 (Constantine I) = 12 (Constantine II) = 4 (Constantius) = 327/8, see R. S. Bagnall, K. A. Worp, *The Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt* (1978) 36-40.

3. *SB XX 14535*: Which Basilius?

This papyrus, a loan of money with repayment in kind (or ‘sale with future delivery’), bears the following consular date clause:

\[ \text{úpatei[α]ς} \ \text{Φλαου[ιίου] Βασ[ι]λ[ίου} \ \text{τού} \ \text{λαµµ[ρ]ο(τάτο)}\]

The editor dated the document to 19 October 541 (?). The reasoning behind this choice is given in the introduction, from which I quote (Pap. Flor XIX.1 p. 156):


As we see, no arguments in favour or against a date in 481 have been produced. The paleographical parallel is good, but dates from 90 years earlier than 541. Clearly, a few things need to be specified, especially since the date of this papyrus is not devoid of interest.

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6 Ed. pr. has Φλαου[ιίου, but the first omicron is clearly visible on the plate, Pap. Flor. XIX.2 tav. XV.
A date in 541 would make this text one of the earliest, if not the earliest, records for the knowledge in Egypt of the consulate of Anicius Faustus Albinus Basilius. But the hand seems to point to an earlier date, some time in the second half of the fifth century; the script of PPrag I 37, an Arsinoite contract of 465, is very similar. Nevertheless, a date in 481 may appear difficult at first sight. Caecina Decimus Maximus Basilius was the eponymous consul of 480 (CLRE pp. 495, 497, 499). On a day which, to judge from the indiction, falls more than nine months after the end of Basilius’ consular year, we would expect to find a postconsular formula, not a consular one ([ιπτετία]ς, as the editor notes, is the only possible reading). But this may be a false problem, in view of the consular date of the Hermopolite BGU XII 2155: [ιπτετίας] Φλαωίου Βασιλείου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου, Φαώφι κα, ε ἴντικ(τίωνος) (line 2; the restoration of a postconsulate is ruled out by spacing). It is worth reproducing a comment by Bagnall and Worp, BASP 17 (1980) 8, on this papyrus:

‘as late as 27.iii.481 (P.Princ. II 82) Egyptian scribes were dating by the post consulate of Zeno III, i.e. the consul of 479. BGU XII 2155, of 18 October, refers to Basilius as consul, but the editor has properly described this as an error for postconsulate, natural enough if his consulate per se had never been in use in the country. The scribe might be pardoned for believing that the newly-announced name meant the consul of the current year.’

Chances are good, it seems, that the consular date of BGU XII 2155 is not isolated; that one day after this text was written a scribe in the Fayum used the same aberrant consular clause. Although on present evidence there can be no certainty, a 481 date for SB XX 14535 seems to be preferable to a date in 541.

There are two further certain instances of a (post)consular formula of Basilius cos. 480 in the papyri: PLond III 991 (22 June 481-83, cf. ZPE 123 (1998) 197),10 and CPR X 118 (13 (?) October 482; CPR X 117 may attest a third example. PLond III 991 and CPR X 118 use the formula μετὰ τὴν ἱπτετίαν Φλαωίου Βασιλείου τοῦ λαμπροτάτου καὶ τοῦ ἀποδείχθηκομένου (restored). At this point, it may be useful to have the consular datings of the period 481-83 tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Papyri</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>P.Princ II 82</td>
<td>Lycopolis</td>
<td>27.iii.481</td>
<td>p. c. D. N. Fl. Zenonis perp. Aug. III</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLond III 991</td>
<td>Hermopolite</td>
<td>22.vi.481-83</td>
<td>[p. c.] Fl. Basili v.c. e.q.f.n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPR X 118</td>
<td>Hermopolis</td>
<td>13?.x.482</td>
<td>[p. c.] Fl. Basili v.c. e.q.f.n.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BGU XII 2156</td>
<td>Hermopolis</td>
<td>27.viii.483</td>
<td>p.c. Fl. Trocundi v.c. e.q.f.n.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 The situation is not entirely clear. As late as 4, 14, or 24.ix.541 the post consulate of Fl. Justinus was used in Hermopolis (SB XIV 12051). PStras VI 598, of 10.ix.541, has been thought to attest Basilius’ consulate (see CLRE p. 617), but the name of the consul has not survived, and much depends on letter counting. In PStras VI 597.3, dated to ix-xii.541 (cf. BL IX 328), the unread name of the month is probably not Thoth ( [...]. θυγ. pap.): ‘peut être ’Αθήναπο suivi d’un diagonal’. (Incidentally, if Αθήνα is right, the date would be 19 November 541.)

8 Note e.g. the latinate sigmas; the particular way of ligaturing ε and ν; the open-topped alphas; and the nus with the diagonals consistently starting from lower than the top of the left-hand upright, a typical fifth-century feature.

9 I should note that the absence of a regnal formula cannot be used as an argument for an early date. Likewise, it is difficult to make much out of the apparently low rate of the ταρά κεφάλα, which may seem to favour a date before 498, cf. K. Maresch, Nomisma und Nomismatia (1994) 78 (the loan involves x + 1 nomismata minus 4 carats).

10 I now realise that in my note on PLond III 991 I failed to mention a further possible, although perhaps less likely, dating, viz. 22.vi.483. The earliest Egyptian evidence for the knowledge of the consulsip of Fl. Trocundes (cos. 482) dates to 11.vii.483 (SB XX 15134, although PLond V 1896, of 25.vi-24.vii.483, could be slightly earlier), hence a 483 date for PLond 991 cannot presently be excluded. I should also note that the 481 date (BL VIII 183) now seems to me difficult, in view of the presence of the ‘e.q.f.n.’ formula, cf. the table above.

11 Ed. pr. CE 68 (1993) 160, cf. CE 71 (1996) 120. The SB XXII number has been supplied by Dr J. Hengstl.
In the event that PLond III 991 dates to 482 (or 483), we are faced with a very peculiar picture. In 480 no Eastern consul was proclaimed, and the dissemination of Basilius may have been late (cf. *CLRE* p. 495). This may be reflected in one or two consular clauses of 481. But in 482 it seems to have been generally thought that Basilius had a colleague. It appears, therefore, that all Egyptian consular dates of Basilius misrepresent the facts.\(^\text{12}\) We may observe something similar with Trocundes: two consular clauses of 483 give him a 'to-be-designated' colleague whom he never had.\(^\text{13}\) All this can hardly be an accident; in fact, a perusal of the *CLRE* entries under the years 475-90 is revealing. Sometimes it took more than a year for the news of a new consulate to reach Egypt, and sometimes no consul was proclaimed or disseminated in the East. The highest concentration of second postconsulates may also be observed in this period.\(^\text{14}\) As is well known, the reign of Zeno did not coincide with an easy time for the Empire, beleaguered by civil strife and external threats; a breakdown of the communications should not come as a great surprise.

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\(^{12}\) Dr Worp makes the following comment (letter of 30.xi.1999): ‘The use of the ‘e.q.f.n.’ [= *et qui fuerit nuntiatus*] with Basilius, a *Western* consul, is interesting. It turns up in A.D. 482 unexpected and, in a way, unwarranted (in the East this element usually follows ‘Eastern’ consuls and refers to the ‘Western’ consul still to be announced, cf. *CLRE* p. 30; for the (only two) epigraphical occurrences of the formula following a ‘Western’ consul cf. *CLRE* s.a. 439 and 452), especially after it had not been used in A.D. 481.’

\(^{13}\) Cf. Bagnall and Worp, *BASP* 17 (1980) 34. The two occurrences of the postconsulate of Trocundes in papyri of 484, viz. PRainCent 107 (?; 14.ii.484) and POxy VIII 1130 (Oxy.; 4.v.484), do not include the ‘e.q.f.n.’ formula. One may notice that the two texts attesting the ‘e.q.f.n.’ formula come from the Thebaid (Hermopolis), whereas two (or all) of the other three have their origin in the province of Arcadia. But before more evidence becomes available, one cannot speak of regional preferences. It may also be noted that the dates of the two Hermopolite texts are very close; the wrong impression could have been shortlived.

\(^{14}\) Cf. Bagnall and Worp, *The Chronological Systems of Byzantine Egypt* 50-2. Another feature of consular date clauses of this period, the frequent occurrence of the τὸς μετὸ τὴν ὑποτελείαν formula, will be discussed elsewhere.
SB IV 7444; N. Goniš, pp. 183–184