

# New Light on Gaius Caesar's Eastern Campaign

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THE MESSENIAN INSCRIPTION printed here has already been published four times since its discovery in 1960: by its excavator, A. K. Orlandos, in *Πρακτικὰ τῆς Ἀρχαιολογικῆς Ἑταιρείας* 1960 (1964) 215–17 [= Orlandos (1)]; again by Orlandos with a commentary in *Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερίς* 1965 (1967) 110–15 [= Orlandos (2)]; and in *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum* XXIII (1968) no.206 and *Année Épigraphique* for 1967, no.458. My text is that of Orlandos (2); textual errors made in the other publications are noted below.

## TEXT

Γραμματέως Συνέδρων Φιλοξενίδα τοῦ ἐπὶ Θεοδώ[ρου]  
Δόγμα

Ἐπεὶ Πόπλιος Κορνήλιος Σκειπίων ὁ ταμίας καὶ ἀντιστράταγος ἀν-  
περβλήτῳ χρώμενος εὐνοίᾳ τῆ εἰς τὸν Σεβαστὸν καὶ τὸν οἶκον αὐ-  
5 τοῦ πάντα μίαν τε μεγίσταν καὶ τιμιωτάταν εὐχὰν πεποιημένος,  
εἰς ἅπαν ἀβλαβῆ τοῦτον φυλάσσεσθαι, ὡς ἀπὸ τῶν καθ' ἕκαστον ἑαυτοῦ  
ἐπιδείκνυται ἔργων, ἐτέλεσε μὲν τὰ Καϊσάρεια μηδὲν μῆτε δαπάνας  
μῆτε φιλοτιμίας ἐνλείπων μηδὲ τὰς ὑπὲρ τῶν διὰ τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ θυσιῶν  
εὐχαριστίας ποτὶ τοὺς θεοὺς ἅμα καὶ τὰς πλείστας τῶν κατὰ τὴν ἐπαρχίαν πό-  
10 λεων σὺν ἑαυτῷ τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ποιεῖν κατασκευασάμενος. ἐπιγνοὺς δὲ καὶ Γάϊον  
τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ τὸν ὑπὲρ τὰς ἀνθρώπων πάντων σωτηρίας τοῖς βαρβάρους μα-  
χόμενον ὑγιαίνειν τε καὶ κινδύνους ἐκφυγόντα ἀντιτετιμωρῆσθαι τοὺς πολε-  
μίους, ὑπερχαρῆς ὢν ἐπὶ ταῖς ἀρίσταις ἀγγελίαις, στεφαναφορεῖν τε πάντοις δι-  
έταξε καὶ θύειν, ἀπράγμονας ὄντας καὶ ἀταράχους, αὐτὸς τε βουθυτῶν περὶ  
15 τὰς Γαῖου σωτηρίας καὶ θέαις ἐπεδαφιλεύσατο ποικίλαις, ὡς ἔριν μὲν γείνε-  
σθαι τὰ γενόμενα τῶν γεγονότων, τὸ δὲ σεμνὸν αὐτοῦ δι' ἴσου φυλαχθῆμεν, ἐφιλο-  
τιμήθη δὲ καὶ διαλιπὼν ἀπὸ τῶν Καίσαρος ἀμερῶν ἀμέρας δύο τὰν ἀρχὰν τῶν  
ὑπὲρ Γαῖου θυσιῶν ποιήσασθαι ἀπὸ τῶν ἀμέρας ἐν ἧ τὸ πρῶτον ὕπατος ἀπεδεί-  
χθη. διετάξατο δὲ ἀμῖν καὶ καθ' ἕκαστον ἑναυτὸν τὰν ἀμέραν ταύταν μετὰ

20 θυσιᾶν καὶ στεφαναφορίας διάγειν ὅσοις δυνάμεθα ἰλαρώτατα καὶ [. . . .]τατα  
ἔδοξε τοῖς συνέδροις πρὸ δέκα πέντε καλανδῶν. . . . .

I note the following errors in the published texts of this inscription:

3. ἀντιστράταγος] στραταγός Orlandos (1), corrected in (2)
13. στεφαναφορεῖν] στεφανοφορεῖν Orlandos (1)  
πάντοις] πάντας AE
15. θέαις] θείαις AE
21. Orlandos (2) wrongly prints a *vacat* at the end of his transcription.

#### TRANSLATION

When Philoxenidas was scribe of the council under the magistracy of Theodorus; it was decided:

Whereas Publius Cornelius Scipio, *quaestor pro praetore*, being endowed with unsurpassed goodwill towards Augustus and his whole house, having made one very great and highly honorific vow, to preserve him (Augustus) safe for all time, as is shown by his deeds on every occasion, has performed the Caesarea without falling short at all in respect to cost or display or gratitude to the gods for the sacrifices to Augustus, and at the same time causing most of the cities in the province to do the same with him; and later learning that Gaius the son of Augustus, who was fighting against the barbarians for the safety of all mankind, was well and had avenged himself upon the barbarians, having escaped dangers, (Scipio) being overjoyed at such good news directed everyone to wear crowns and to sacrifice, being untroubled and undisturbed, and he himself sacrificed an ox for Gaius' safety, and was lavish in varied spectacles, so that what took place then rivalled what had come before, but the solemnity remained balanced; and he made a great effort, in leaving two days off of the days of Caesar's festival, to begin the sacrifices for Gaius on the day on which he (Gaius) was first designated consul; and he instructed us to observe this day annually with sacrifices and crown-wearing as joyously and . . . as possible; therefore, the council approved on the fifteenth day before the Kalends of . . .

The Messenian inscription honoring P. Cornelius Scipio provides important evidence for a famous if poorly documented episode of Augustus' reign. According to our two main sources, Velleius and the epitomators of Dio, Augustus in 1 B.C. was forced to entrust the recurrent Armenian problem to Gaius Caesar, his eldest adopted son; Tiberius had been in retirement on Rhodes since 6 B.C., when the first stirrings of trouble had begun in Armenia, and we are told that there was no one with more experience to whom Augustus could give the command. It was therefore Gaius who reached Syria in 1 B.C. with proconsular *imperium* over the eastern provinces. There he assumed his consulate for A.D. 1.<sup>1</sup>

Remarkably little is known about the three years which followed before Gaius' death, partly due to the absence of Dio, partly to the Tiberian bias of Velleius. In A.D. 2, we know from Velleius' eyewitness account, Gaius met the Parthian king Phraataces in a summit conference on an island in the Euphrates. After that he proceeded to Armenia, where active rebellion had once more broken out.<sup>2</sup> Treacherously wounded at Artagira on 9 September A.D. 3,<sup>3</sup> Gaius captured that city, but became despondent from his wound and desired to resign his imperial powers. Augustus with difficulty convinced him to return to Italy as a private citizen, but he died en route in Lycia on 21 February A.D. 4.<sup>4</sup>

Although my primary concern is the date of the inscription and the evidence which it gives us for Gaius' campaign, there are several problems connected with the rôle and identity of the Scipio honored

<sup>1</sup> Velleius 2.101f; Dio 55.10–10a. A discussion of Armenian affairs, or of many of the events of Gaius' journey, is not germane to this inscription and will not be attempted here.

<sup>2</sup> Velleius 2.101f. On the date of the meeting in the Euphrates, see J. G. C. Anderson, *CAH X* (1934) 275 n.3.

<sup>3</sup> The date is given by the *Fasti Cuprenses* (V. Ehrenberg/A. H. M. Jones, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius*<sup>2</sup> [Oxford 1955] p.39) in the notice of Gaius' death in A.D. 4; as the year is not specified, it is quite clear that the Sept. 9 referred to can only be the most recent one, namely A.D. 3. Orlandos (2) p.113 accepts the wrong date, and is followed by the others, including, it appears, L. Robert, *REG* 79 (1966) 377. Compare also V. Gardthausen, *RE* 10 (1917) 427 s.v. C. JULIUS CAESAR 134, and *Augustus und seine Zeit* I.3 (Leipzig 1904) 1143; Anderson, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 276f, hedges, but appears to accept the wrong date. *PIR*<sup>2</sup> I 216 takes Sept. 9 to be the date for the previous item in the *Fasti*, Gaius' burial at Rome: A. Degrassi, *Inscriptiones Italiae* XIII.1 (Rome 1947) p.245, does not.

<sup>4</sup> Accounts of his death in the passages of Velleius and Dio cited *supra*, n.1. The date is given by the *Fasti Gabini* (Ehrenberg–Jones<sup>2</sup> [*supra* n.3] p.39) and the *Cenotaphium Pisanum* (Ehrenberg–Jones<sup>2</sup> no.69=*ILS*<sup>3</sup> 140) line 25. The date is given as Feb. 22 by the *Fasti Verulani* (Ehrenberg–Jones<sup>2</sup> p.47).

for which no secure solution can be given, but which Orlandos' brief discussion has not sufficiently clarified. Orlandos has commented on Scipio's identity, rightly equating him with the dedicatee of a statue on the Acropolis also honoring a P. Cornelius P.f. Scipio, *quaestor pro praetore*. The latter inscription was previously dated to ca. 25 B.C., by identifying the man honored with the consul of 16 B.C.<sup>5</sup> Since this identification is obviously impossible, and that with the proconsul of Asia of ca. 10–6 B.C. suggested by Orlandos is equally incredible,<sup>6</sup> the question remains as to what Scipio the *quaestor pro praetore* of the Messenian and Athenian inscriptions is. He is clearly not the consul of A.D. 2 nor, in all likelihood, the Scipio punished in connection with the Julia scandals.<sup>7</sup> The only known Scipio who is chronologically possible is P. Cornelius Lentulus Scipio, praetor in A.D. 15 and consul in 24.<sup>8</sup> There is a choice of either multiplying Scipios or of positing a very long interval between quaestorship and praetorship; there is not as yet sufficient evidence to choose between these alternatives.

Scipio's office represents a second problem, the existence of which seems to be ignored by Orlandos. Two varieties of *quaestor pro praetore* could exist at this period:<sup>9</sup> the late Republican extraordinary office with *imperium*, comprising command of a province, of which famous examples are those of Cn. Piso in Spain<sup>10</sup> and P. Lentulus Marcellinus in Cyrene;<sup>11</sup> or the type known under the empire and common from the first century, which is no more than the provincial quaestorship.<sup>12</sup> Either type is theoretically possible; each has problems. If Scipio is a quaestor of the earlier type, his appointment would have to be justified, and would possibly be connected with Gaius' *imperium maius* over the East; but the evidence for the provincial magistrates under Gaius and Agrippa is very scarce.<sup>13</sup> On the other

<sup>5</sup> IG II/III<sup>2</sup> 4120, 4121.

<sup>6</sup> Orlandos (2) 114f. The proconsul of Asia is presumably the same person as the consul of 16 B.C.; cf. PIR<sup>2</sup> C 1438.

<sup>7</sup> Velleius 2.100.5.

<sup>8</sup> PIR<sup>2</sup> C 1398.

<sup>9</sup> See Th. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht*<sup>3</sup> II (1887) 246f, 651.

<sup>10</sup> Dessau, ILS<sup>3</sup> 875; cf. J. P. V. D. Balsdon, "Roman History 65–50 B.C.: Five Problems," JRS 52 (1962) 134f.

<sup>11</sup> Sall. *Hist.* 2.43 M.; cf. E. Badian, "M. Porcius Cato and the Annexation and Early Administration of Cyprus," JRS 55 (1965) 118ff.

<sup>12</sup> Several examples occur under Augustus and Tiberius: P. Numicius Pica Caesianus (ILS<sup>3</sup> 911); Q. Caerellius (ILS<sup>3</sup> 943); C. Fulvius (ILS<sup>3</sup> 3783).

<sup>13</sup> It is unclear whether or not the normal magistrates continued to function under Gaius

hand, if Scipio is merely a normal provincial quaestor, we are hard put to explain either the presence of dedications to him on the Athenian Acropolis or the activities attested in this inscription. In this case too, no certain solution is at hand.

A third anomaly presented by Scipio is far the most curious: one would like very much to know why Scipio, the Roman magistrate, is performing games and sacrifices in Greece, rather than letting the natives themselves honor the emperor. Fergus Millar has remarked on the significance of this text with regard to "ceremonial and diplomatic aspects of relations between Greek cities and the emperor," but it seems to raise far more questions in this area than it supplies answers.<sup>14</sup> The only solution that presents itself, and it is not really satisfactory, is that the province of Achaëa was so disorganized, without a *κοινόν*<sup>15</sup> and stricken with *τράκις*,<sup>16</sup> that official guidance was needed for any extraordinary festivals. But this problem too awaits its solution.

It is only with regard to the date of the Scipio inscription and its historical context that significant conclusions can be drawn. Orlandos' argument for dating is very simple, and quite wrong.<sup>17</sup> He assumes that the reference to a war is to the campaign of Artagira, and that that was in A.D. 2, and that, as the inscription refers to Gaius' being healthy, it must have been inscribed before his death in A.D. 4. Therefore, he concludes, it was inscribed at the end of A.D. 2 or the beginning of 3. Aside from the fact that the date of Artagira is wrong,<sup>18</sup> and that, as we shall see below, there is no reason to assume that the war mentioned can only be Artagira, Orlandos ignores the implications

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and Agrippa; the only non-Egyptian case is that of P. Paquius Scaeva in Cyprus (cf. M. Reinhold, *Marcus Agrippa* [Geneva (N.Y.) 1933] 173ff). Orosius 7.3.4f is the only evidence for Gaius' command over Egypt, where P. Octavius is attested as prefect from 2/1 B.C. to A.D. 3 (cf. O. Reinmuth, *BASP* 4 [1967] 76f).

<sup>14</sup> F. Millar, "Two Augustan Notes," *CR* 18 (1968) 264f.

<sup>15</sup> On the irregularity of the Achaean *κοινόν*, see J. Deininger, *Die Provinziallandtage der römischen Kaiserzeit* (*Vestigia* 6, Munich 1965) 88ff.

<sup>16</sup> One may note the troubles with Eurycles in the first decade B.C.; cf. G. W. Bowersock, "Eurycles of Sparta," *JRS* 51 (1961) 112ff. There seems also to have been a revolt at the end of Augustus' reign, and Tiberius took over the administration of the province from the Senate in A.D. 15: cf. Tac. *Ann.* 1.76.2; G. W. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* (Oxford 1965) 106f.

<sup>17</sup> Orlandos (2) 114.

<sup>18</sup> See *supra* n.3.

of Gaius' being healthy after Artagira, a battle whose most notable result was the wounding of Gaius. If Gaius could be shown to have been in good health after the Armenian campaign, we would be justified in accepting Tacitus' suggestion that Gaius' death was not caused by the wound, but by Livia's machinations.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, the wording of the inscription makes it quite clear that, after the war mentioned in it, Gaius was not dying of a wound.

One can think of several objections to this view, which must be rejected. It might, in the first place, be suggested that the word *ὕγιαίνειν* is itself formulaic and meaningless. It does appear probable, from the use of the word here, that the ultimate source of these lines was a dispatch from Gaius, which would have begun with the formulaic opening attested elsewhere,<sup>20</sup> *εἰ ἔρρωσθε καλῶς ἂν ἔχοι· καὶ αὐτὸς μετὰ τοῦ στρατεύματος ὕγιαῖνον*. But it is most unlikely that the word was stripped of its basic meaning by common use in such a context; we cannot be certain, because of an understandable lack of letters from sick or wounded generals in the field. The word in any case is not so standard that it occurs in all such formal dispatches. It does, however, appear in an inscription of 117 B.C. honoring M. Annius, the quaestor of Macedonia, for relieving a desperate military situation after his commander had fallen in battle with the Gauls. The text reads in part:<sup>21</sup> *ἐλέσθαι δὲ καὶ πρεσβευτάς, οἵτινες πορευθέντες πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ ἀσπαράμενοι παρὰ τῆς πόλεως καὶ συγχαρέντες ἐπὶ τῷ ὕγιαίνειν αὐτόν τε καὶ τὸ στρατόπεδον*. Here it is clear that the word is not insignificant, but rather that the health of the army and its commander is one of the reasons for the decree itself. The evidence of *ὕγιαίνειν* in the Scipio inscription clearly leads us to believe that Gaius was not wounded at the time, and thus that the inscription was not written after Artagira.

Artagira was Gaius' last battle, and we know that he was wounded there. The only remaining way to defend a late date for this inscription (and consequently, the possibility that Gaius did not die of his wound) is to interpret the phrase *ὕγιαίνειν τε καὶ κινδύνους ἐκφυγόντα* as "is well and has recovered from his danger, i.e. the wound."<sup>22</sup> How-

<sup>19</sup> Tac. Ann. 1.3.3, *Gaium remeantem Armenia et uulnere inuolidum mors fato propera uel nouercae Liuiæ dolus abstulit*. Even Tacitus admits to the wounding.

<sup>20</sup> e.g. R. K. Sherk, *Roman Documents from the Greek East* (Baltimore 1969) nos. 58.75f, 86f; 60.4f. Slight variations also occur: cf. Sherk nos. 26 a2, b8; 28 A9ff.

<sup>21</sup> SIG<sup>3</sup> 700.40ff.

<sup>22</sup> This seems to be implied by Orlandos (2) 113.

ever, an examination of the occurrences of *κίνδυνος* in the relevant inscriptions makes this suggestion too seem highly unlikely. *κίνδυνος* almost always means danger from an external source, either specifically danger in battle or some other physical risk;<sup>23</sup> it occasionally refers to famine or financial risk,<sup>24</sup> but in the only text I have seen in which it refers to a wound, it refers to an inability to defend oneself as a result of a wound, rather than the possibility of the wound's being fatal itself.<sup>25</sup> It is odd, but not very significant, that the precise phrase *κίνδυνον ἐκφεύγειν* does not seem to occur elsewhere.<sup>26</sup> At any rate, *ὑγιαίνειν* and *κινδύνους ἐκφυγόντα* are unconnected in sense as in syntax; one refers to Gaius' physical health, the other to the end of his campaign.

We should therefore hesitate to ascribe this inscription to the period after Artagira, even if no other historical context were known. But there is one important piece of evidence which has been overlooked by Orlandos and not sufficiently appreciated in other accounts of Gaius' expedition. The Pisan Cenotaph, in its eulogy of Gaius, refers to his consulate, "*quem ultra finis extremas populi Romani bellum gerens feliciter peregerat, bene gesta re publica, deuicteis aut in fidem receptis bellicosissimis ac maxsimis gentibus . . .*"<sup>27</sup> Gardthausen, who may be taken as representing the *communis opinio* on the subject, says that this passage refers to the opening of the Armenian campaign, and that this event took place before Gaius' meeting with Phraataces.<sup>28</sup> This is impossible for two reasons: Dio-Zonaras states explicitly that the Armenian campaign began in A.D. 2, one of the very few exact dates supplied in this section of the history;<sup>29</sup> moreover, the cenotaph states clearly that Gaius fought a war beyond the Roman frontier in A.D. 1. Even if the laudatory phrases in this passage of the cenotaph are exaggerated, there is surely no reason for it to falsify details. What the campaign of A.D. 1 was is uncertain; it seems to have been in the area of the later province of Arabia.<sup>30</sup> At any rate, the campaign of

<sup>23</sup> e.g. SIG<sup>3</sup> 374.20, 731.16f.

<sup>24</sup> SIG<sup>3</sup> 495.25, 976.52.

<sup>25</sup> SIG<sup>3</sup> 528.13.

<sup>26</sup> The closest examples are SIG<sup>3</sup> 709.35f and 731.16f, with *διαφυγών* instead of *ἐκφυγών*. Examples of *κίνδυνος* referring to military danger occur in letters of Sulla, Sherk nos. 18.7, 20 c8, where it refers to the danger of the addressee rather than of Sulla.

<sup>27</sup> Ehrenberg-Jones<sup>2</sup> (*supra* n.3) no.69 (= Dessau, *ILS*<sup>3</sup> 140) lines 9ff.

<sup>28</sup> Gardthausen, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.3) *RE* 10.426 and *Augustus* II.3 p.750 n.24.

<sup>29</sup> Dio-Zonaras 55.10a.5.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Pliny, *NH* 6.141, 2.168; cf. 6.160.

Gaius' consulate provides an adequate and suitable historical context for the Scipio inscription.

Once it is recognized that the campaign referred to in the inscription is probably that of A.D. 1 rather than that of 3, a further minor piece of evidence may be adduced. *Γάϊον τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ* [10f] is an extremely odd way to refer to Gaius; with one possible exception, this is the sole inscription where *Καίσαρα* is omitted.<sup>31</sup> This anomaly must remain inexplicable at present, but the titulature does provide evidence for the date of the inscription. Dio tells us that not only Augustus but Gaius himself was hailed *Imperator* after the capture of Artagira:<sup>32</sup> if the inscription dated from late 3 or 4 it would be very strange if no mention of the title occurred. On the other hand, the campaign of A.D. 1 was waged during Gaius' consulate. Were this text set up in 1, we should expect that title to appear. Thus, a date in early 2 is likely, contemporary with the Euphrates summit conference but before the beginning of the Armenian War.

The blatant anti-Tiberian bias of our sources in matters connected with the succession to Augustus naturally leads the historian to try to correct their accounts; the description of Gaius' disillusionment and death is a logical candidate for such skepticism, and the Scipio inscription, if it could be securely dated after Artagira, would provide excellent confirmation for Tacitus' suspicions. But as we have seen, there is strong evidence that the inscription was set up before, not after, the Armenian War, and serves to draw attention to a different aspect of our sources' bias. The command of Gaius in the East is surely of more military importance than we are led to believe, and while we are still in the dark about the nature of Gaius' campaign in A.D. 1, we can no longer ignore its existence.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Among the inscriptions listed in *PIR*<sup>3</sup> I 216, the only exception is *IGRR* 4.1756, a long decree for Menogenes of Sardis, where Gaius is called by his *praenomen* only after several references to him by his full name.

<sup>32</sup> Dio-Zonaras 55.10a.7.

<sup>33</sup> I am grateful to Professor G. W. Bowersock for reading several drafts of this paper, which was originally delivered in his seminar at Harvard.