



eCOMMONS

Loyola University Chicago
Loyola eCommons

Classical Studies: Faculty Publications and
Other Works

Faculty Publications and Other Works by
Department

1985

P.Laur. IV 169: Fragmentary Constitution of Constantine?

James G. Keenan

Loyola University Chicago, jkeen@luc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/classicalstudies_facpubs

 Part of the [Byzantine and Modern Greek Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Keenan, J.G. (1985). P.Laur. IV 169: Fragmentary Constitution of Constantine? *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd. 59, (1985), 89-90.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Publications and Other Works by Department at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Classical Studies: Faculty Publications and Other Works by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](#).
© Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn, 1985.



P.Laur. IV 169: Fragmentary Constitution of Constantine?

Author(s): James G. Keenan

Source: *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Bd. 59 (1985), pp. 89-90

Published by: [Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn \(Germany\)](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20184226>

Accessed: 22/09/2014 15:27

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Dr. Rudolf Habelt GmbH, Bonn (Germany) is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

P,LAUR, IV 169: FRAGMENTARY CONSTITUTION OF CONSTANTINE?

1

P.Laur. IV 169, as recently published, reads:

→ -----
] . αλθειναι .. ε νδω .. σελ . []
]εντων αὐτῶν β . νωσιν απ . []
 πρὸ X καλα]νδῶν Ὀκτοβρίων ἐν Νικομηθε[εῖα]
 4 ὑπάτοις Κωνσταντίνῳ Σεβαστῶ τῷ [" καὶ Κωνσταντίνῳ Καίσαρι τ[ὸ α"

The editor in introducing the text points out the interest of its consular dating (A.D. 326) and the difficulty of making much out of the first two lines. It appears that the fragment's third and fourth lines are being construed as the dating clause from an otherwise ordinary Arsinoite document (intro. with nn. to lines 3 and 4); but there are some oddities that suggest that this is not so, and, further, that there is more to the fragment than first meets the eye. First, it should be noted that the dating clause concludes rather than opens the document. Second, the Roman month-name (line 3) is unexpected in a run-of-the-mill Arsinoite document. Third, an Arsinoite village Nicomedia makes only one other appearance in the papyri.¹⁾ On the other hand, the format of lines 3-4, once ἐδόθη²⁾ or προετέθη³⁾ is restored in the first part of line 3, parallels that of most of the *subscriptions* found appended to *constitutiones* throughout the Theodosian and Justinianic codes, in Latin even for laws published in Greek or in Greek translation.⁴⁾ For an example, close in time to *P.Laur.* 169, and issuing from the same place — that is, Bithynian Nicomedia, the imperial residence,⁵⁾ not Arsinoite Nicomedia, a Fayum village — cf. *CTh* 12.5.1: *DAT. NICOMEDIAE III KAL. AUG. CONSTANTINO A. VII ET CONSTANTIO CAES. CONSS.*⁶⁾ In short, it seems likely that *P.Laur.* 169, written all in one hand,

1) *P.Tebt.* II 400.25 (cf. *P.Tebt.* II, p. 392; *Diz. dei nomi geogr.* III 360).

2) Cf. editor's suggestion, line 3 n.; in the constitutional context, equivalent to the Latin *data*.

3) Cf., from the papyri, *BGU* I 267 (= *Sel.Pap.* II 214), line 13; *M. Chr.* 376.6, 11; 378.12 — all three "posted" in Alexandria, προετέθη. The Latin equivalent is *praeposita*. For the terminology, cf. J.D. Thomas, *Stud. Hell.* 27 (1983) 377ff.; *idem*, *BICS* 19 (1972) 103-12, for a *constitutio* on papyrus that had been "given" or "posted" at Rome (line 7).

4) Format: 1. DAT./P(RAE)P(OSITA). 2. Day + month, Roman style. 3. Place of issue/posting. 4. Consular dating. Items 2 and 3 are reversible.

5) Also from Nicomedia near this time: *CTh* 1.15.1 ("given" 25 Feb. 325) and 9.7.2 ("posted" 25 April 326). See J.D. Thomas, *Ancient Society* 7 (1976) 306-07, on *P.Oxy.* VI 889.10 (Alexandria is proven wrong; perhaps restore Nicomedia), and cf. summarizing an order ultimately issuing from Nicomedia: *P.Oxy.* XVII 2106.

6) The date, 30 July 326, has been doubted since Constantine is believed to have been in Rome at this time, conducting the celebration of his *vicennalia*. Cf. *RE* IV 1, 1021 (Benjamin).

is the end of a Greek copy in translation of a *constitutio* issued by Constantine in Nicomedia between 14 and 30 September, A.D. 326.⁷⁾

2

This different view of the typology of *P.Laur.* 169 and another close look at its plate (*P.Laur.* IV, Tav. CXIII) are the occasion for suggesting three small revisions in its readings.

1] αλθειναι: read προ]ταχθη̅ναι. The crossing stroke of the chi (the letter first read as lambda) though fainter than the rest of the letter is still clear enough.

2 β. .νωειν απ.[: read εις γνω̅ειν ἀπα[(or ἀνα[or ἀγγα[).

3 Ὀκτοβρι̅ων: probably read instead: -βρι̅ου. The scribe's -ων endings are carefully written; here there seems rather to be -ου, written with much *Verschleifung*.

3

If *P.Laur.* 169 is now correctly labeled and its reading slightly advanced, its date, place of issue (or posting), and remains still do not permit identification with any constitution in the standard collections or with any separate survivors in the papyri.⁸⁾ It can, nevertheless, at least be said that in a year when Constantine was much on the move — from East to West to celebrate the *vicennalia*, and then back East again⁹⁾ — *P.Laur.* 169 dates to a time when Constantine could have been in Nicomedia, two months or so in advance of laying the foundation stone for his new imperial capital and name-sake on 26 November 326 (*RE* IV 1,1021 [Benjamin]).

Loyola University of Chicago

James G. Keenan

7) Presumably, the imperial *constitutio*, written with the fibers of the papyrus, was written before the text that occupies the other side. It is not, therefore, strictly speaking, written on the papyrus *verso*, and the text on the other side (what the editor terms the *recto*) must belong, not to the third century, but to the fourth (after 326). It is seemingly a document, perhaps a letter of some sort, though more formal than the usual in that it makes use of the status designation Aurelius in lines 1 and 2.

8) R. Taubenschlag, "The Imperial Constitutions in the Papyri," *Opera Minora* (Warsaw 1959) II 3-28; J.D. Thomas, *BICS* 19 (1972) 103-12, and *Ancient Society* 7 (1976) 301-08.

9) Early in the year, the emperor refers to his travels, *nostris itineribus*, *CTh* 8.5.3 (15 Feb. 326; date disputed, possibly 339). For the emperor's travels in 326, and for problems attaching to the *CTh* subscriptions for this year: O. Seeck, *Regesten der Kaiser und Päpste für die Jahre 311 bis 476 n.Chr.* (Stuttgart 1919) 63-65, 176-77.