

The Delphi / Gallio Inscription

While excavating the ruins of the Temple of Apollo at Delphi 1885-1905, French archaeologists recovered limestone fragments with ancient Greek inscriptions. With a thorough process, archaeologists were able to separate and group together similar inscribed fragments, and assemble, like a jigsaw, the pieces together.

Nine limestone fragments shared similar surfaces, thickness, and grain. They also shared the same letter height, spacing and script style of the stonemason's hand.

Recognizing that the fragments composed a letter (or copy) from Emperor Claudius, researchers knew there was a pattern to Roman administrative texts in their titles, opening, decrees, and closing. This enabled researchers to order the fragments, determine the likely wording of damaged inscriptions, and hypothesize about missing sections.

This resulted in the partially restored letter now housed at the Archaeological Museum of Delphi in Delphi, Greece. The translation of the text follows with brackets filling in hypothesized missing text:

Tiber[ius Claudius Cae]sar Augustus Ge[rmanicus], invested with tribunician power [for the 12th time, acclaimed Imperator for t]he 26th time, F[ather of the Fa]ther[land...]. For a l[ong time have I been not on]ly [well-disposed towards t]he ci[ty] of Delph[i], but also solicitous for its pro]sperity, and I have always guard[ed th]e cul[t of t]he [Pythian] Apol[lo]. But] now [since] it is said to be desti[tu]te of [citi]zens, as [L. Jun]ius Gallio, my fri[end] an[d procon]sul, [recently reported to me, and being desirous that Delphi] should retain [inta]ct its for[mer rank, I] ord[er you (pl.) to in]vite well-born people also from [ot]her cities [to Delphi as new inhabitants....]

By naming the proconsul Gallio in an official document, Gallio's term as proconsul of Achaia is dated firmly to 51-52 B.C. This dates Paul's second missionary stay in Corinth to the same period, and the correct official's name and office attests to the accuracy

of Luke's historical record of the book of Acts.



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1) After these things he departed Athens and went to Corinth. 2) And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, and his wife Priscilla, who recently came from Italy because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome. He came to them, 3) and because he was of the same trade, he was staying with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. 4) And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade both Jews and Greeks.

5) But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly bearing witness to the Jews that Jesus is the Christ. 6) But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

7) Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a God-fearer, whose house was next to the synagogue. 8) And Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized. 9) And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but go on speaking and do not be silent; 10) for I am with you, and no man will lay a hand on you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city." 11) And he stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

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12) But while **Gallio was proconsul of Achaia**, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat, 13) saying, "This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law." 14) But when Paul was about to open his mouth, **Gallio** said to the Jews, "If it were a wrongdoing or vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you; 15) but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I am not willing to be a judge of these matters."

16) And he drove them away from the judgment seat. 17) And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and began beating him in front of the judgment seat. But **Gallio** was not concerned about any of these things. (Acts 18:1-17)

There are a variety of extrabiblical historical accounts that mention Gallio such as Roman historian Tacitus and the poet Statius. There are also letters recovered between Gallio and his younger brother Seneca. Seneca the Younger was notable as Stoic Philosopher and tutor of the future Emperor Nero.

Born as Lucius Annaeus Novatus, he changed his name, when adopted by Roman senator Junius Gallio, to Lucius Junius Gallio Annaeanus.

Gallio was characterized as a man of integrity who was a fair and amiable leader; he was not known to be swayed by flattery.

The Bible records Gallio in a manner consistent with extrabiblical characterizations of him. In his role governing the province and maintaining order, Gallio meets the apostle Paul who the Jews accused of leading people astray in worshiping God contrary to the Law.

By making the distinction between Jewish religious law from Roman civil law, Gallio upholds the Roman policy of religious tolerance and maintains social order.

By making the Jewish dispute as a matter for the Jews to work out themselves, Gallio implies Paul's work does not violate Roman law, and Christianity grew largely unhindered by Roman interference in its infancy.

References:

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2. From the website of Dr. K. C. Hanson: The Gallio Inscription (<https://kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/greek/gallio.html>).
3. From the website of Wikipedia: Lucius Junius Gallio Annaeanus (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucius_Junius_Gallio_Annaeanus#Life).