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THE NEW HELLENISM OF AUGUSTAN ATHENS

Augustan Athens has attracted an increasing number of scholars in recent time, and deservedly so. The conjunction of one of the greatest of all cities in the classical world with the age that created and shaped a surprisingly enduring empire of Rome surely constitutes one of the irresistible themes of ancient history. But it has not always proved appealing. Athens, weakened and submissive to an alien power, was uncongenial to traditional philhellenes. Yet in this post-colonial era the culture of Roman, and especially Augustan Athens, has much to tell us about the tenacity of Hellenism. It may be appropriate to begin by saluting those pioneers, often forgotten, who brilliantly illuminated Augustan Athens before the current wave of archaeological and historical studies. We still have much to learn from Gustav Hertzberg's survey from 1866 and Paul Graindor's study of Augustan Athens from 1927¹. Rostovtzeff's highly original paper of 1903 on Athens under Augustus exploited, as only he could do, the lead *tesserae* depicting a nude hellenistic hero with the legend *Sebastos* (Augustus)². Even if we now have considerably more documentation, these scholars posed problems that we are still addressing today.

The last decades of the Roman Republic and the fourteen years of war that followed the assassination of Julius Caesar sorely tried the Greeks and, in particular, the proud city of Athens. The Romans fought three of the great battles of their civil wars among the Greeks and their neighbours – at Pharsalus, Philippi, and Actium, and the Athenians had the misfortune of twice supporting the losing side. Their espousal of Mithridates of Pontus in the eighties had brought upon them a severe reprisal at the hands of Sulla. The welcome they later accorded to Antony might have seemed like prudence, since he was the Roman commander to whom their nation had been assigned in the agreement of the Triumvirs. Besides they found his Hellenic tastes and his flamboyant style an exhilarating change from the faceless administrators that had controlled

¹ G. HERTZBERG, *Die Geschichte Griechenlands unter der Herrschaft der Römer*, Halle 1866; P. GRAINDOR, *Athènes sous Auguste*, Cairo 1927.

² M. ROSTOVITZEFF, *Augustus und Athen*, in *Festschrift für Otto Hirschfeld*, Berlin 1903, 303-311.

their territory for a century. Antony, who must have seemed a Roman Alcibiades, led the Athenians into a burst of enthusiasm for their classical past. He was acclaimed a new Dionysus, and the divine prototype emerged prominently on the new bronze coinage that replaced Athens' wreath-bearing silver, the *stephanephoroi*, when Antony took over³.

The gorgon was dredged up from centuries earlier to play an apotropaic and programmatic role on the new bronzes. The archaic statue of Apollo of Delos on other Antonian issues of Athens proclaims the city's connection with an ancient cult of the Greeks⁴. If the Athenians had reason to think that they had chosen more wisely in the thirties than they had in the eighties, no one could have blamed them. After all, Rome had sent them Antony.

Athens' accommodation of the exuberant triumvir is fundamental to understanding its response to his conqueror. The city had folded Antony into its traditions, its pantheon, its festivals, and its constitution. It did something remarkably similar with Augustus, and the development of Athens in his principate should be seen as a reworking of its Hellenic heritage rather than a form of Romanization. Scholars and writers have tended to cling to the concept of Romanization as the only useful tool for interpreting the acculturation of the Greeks under Roman rule. But the outcome of a colloquium held six years ago in Lincoln, Nebraska, on the Romanization of Athens proved to be that the city was not much romanized. Emperors were acknowledged in cult, but not on coinage. Imperial games came late⁵.

Few Athenians appear to have received the citizenship from Augustus. Yet the city changed dramatically on the ground, and the Augustan Romans, like Antony, moved the Athenians to innovations on their own terms. What matters is not Romanization, however it may be defined, but the anatomy of a new kind of Hellenism that emerged in response to Rome.

Such a new Hellenism can be observed at close range in another important site where Rome confronted an ancient tradition of Greek lan-

³ J.H. KROLL, *Coinage as an Index of Romanization*, in M.C. HOFF, S.I. ROTROFF (eds.), *The Romanization of Athens*, Oxford 1997 (Oxbow Monographs 94), 135-150.

⁴ J.H. KROLL, *The Athenian Agora*, XXVI, *The Greek Coins*, Princeton 1993, 103, n. 143 (81 coins from the thirties B.C. with an archaic image of Delian Apollo); cfr. T. MAVROJANNIS, *Apollo Delio, Atene e Augusto*, in «Ostraka», IV, 1995, 85-102.

⁵ See HOFF, ROTROFF (eds.), *op. cit.*, especially S. WALKER, *Athens under Augustus*, 67-80; K. CLINTON, *Eleusis and the Romans: Late Republic to Marcus Aurelius*, 161-181; A.J. SPAWFORTH, *The Early Reception of the Imperial Cult in Athens*, 183-201.

guage and culture. This is Naples, south of Rome, where Greek remained the language of the city and the Greek pantheon supplied its gods. But the cult of Dionysus at Naples was absolutely unique⁶. It was a cult of an adolescent Dionysus (*hebon*) with a beard.

The conjunction of youth and beard, which was alien to the iconography of the god in the Greek East, was a part of Neapolitan Hellenism within the orbit of Roman custom, where fashionable youths were expected to wear beards and older men did not. In a similar spirit the Neapolitans inaugurated an altogether new quinquennial festival of quasi-olympic games in honor of Augustus under the name of *Sebasta Isolympia*. The institutional structure and titulature was entirely Greek and designed to compete with the great competitions of Greece and Asia, but the inspiration was the new Roman *princeps*.

Such hellenizing of Roman culture was altogether different from the barbarization to which Strabo referred in the Augustan age. That had been the elimination of Greek culture and its replacement by Roman. For Strabo, perhaps reflecting earlier sources on which he was drawing, barbarization (*ekbebararothai*), or what we probably mean by Romanization, had overtaken all but a few cities in south Italy⁷. Naples was particularly conspicuous for not suffering this fate. So it is legitimate, in ancient terms as well as modern, to think of an altered Greek culture that nonetheless remained true to its cultural roots. What happened in Athens in the days of Antony prefigured what happened under Augustus. It was the formation of a new Hellenism that invoked the classical heritage of the Greeks at the same time as accommodating it to the ideology and customs of the Romans.

We can observe the process from the moment when Augustus defeated Antony at Actium. He consecrated a memorial at his campsite in Epirus, and he renamed Actium Nicopolis, to celebrate his victory by a Greek name in the manner of the Hellenistic kings. By a massive *synoikismos* that brought together residents of the whole region he created a city worthy of the new name. The inscriptions of Nicopolis show that Greek was its sole language, even though on the memorial itself, with its trophies from the defeated ships, a Latin inscription proclaimed a dedication to Neptune and Mars⁸. Rumor had it that after the battle of Philippi

⁶ G.W. BOWERSOCK, *The Barbarism of the Greeks*, in *HSCP* 97 (1995, published 1998), 3-14. A French version of this article appeared earlier as *Les grecs 'barbarisés'*, in «Ktema», XVII, 1992, published 1996, 247-257.

⁷ STRABO, 6.1, 253 (ἐκβεβαρώσθαι).

⁸ For a full account, see W.M. MURRAY, P.M. PETSAS, *Octavian's Campsite Memorial for the Actian War*, Philadelphia 1989 (Transactions of the American Philosophical Society 79.4).

in 42 B.C. Augustus had vowed to Mars that if he proved victorious in the civil wars he would ultimately build a temple to Mars the Avenger (*Ultor*)⁹. The story may represent propaganda of a later date, but there is no doubt that this representation of Mars as Avenger, which was entirely new to the Roman pantheon, was publicly advertised on coinage of 19 B.C.¹⁰. If, as now seems likely, the epithet *Ultor* did not appear on the Nicopolis monument, the real historical date of its appearance may have been later, perhaps in connection with Augustus' retrieval of the Roman standards lost to the Parthians by Crassus decades earlier¹¹. But Nicopolis shows that Mars himself was already important before Octavian assumed the title of Augustus in 27 B.C.

The Hellenization of the Actian victory can be observed not only in the completely Greek culture of the *synoikismos* but also in the proximity of the memorial to a temple of Apollo, which represented the authentically Greek sanctification of the area. Apollo had been important for Augustus since he took a vow to him after the defeat of Sextus Pompeius at Naulochus. In preserving the local cult of Apollo in the foundation of Nicopolis he paid tribute to the god in Greece as he did in 28 B.C. through the consecration of a temple of Apollo on the Palatine at Rome. The image of Apollo in the group of Athenian lead tokens that also display Augustus as a hellenistic hero looks like a continuation of the Hellenization of the Actian victory after 27 B.C.¹². The legend on the Apollo token names Caesar rather than Augustus, and the inclusion of the Julian star (*sidus Iulium*) on the token shows this to be an allusion to the deified Julius Caesar in the form of Apollo. He is a new Apollo, as Antony was a new Dionysus, and as such he symbolizes the triumph of his adopted son at Actium.

The significance of the Actian war for the Greeks appears strikingly in two poems from the Garland of Philip in the *Greek Anthology* and therefore

⁹ Suet., *Aug.*, 29: «Aedem Martis bello Philippensi, pro ultione paterna suscepto, voverat».

¹⁰ MATTINGLY-SYDENHAM, *Roman Imperial Coinage*, I, London 1923, 85-86; BMC, R. Emp. I. 65, 114. These early coins depicted the small temple of Mars Ultor on the Capitol that preceded the one in the Forum that was dedicated in 2 B.C.

¹¹ Cass. Dio, 54.8 on the decision to build a temple to Mars Ultor in which to dedicate the standards πρὸς τὴν τῶν σημείων ἀνάθεσιν. Cfr. Ovid., *Fasti*, 5.580: persequitur Parthi signa retenta manu. Note also *Res Gest.*, 21.1: «in privato solo Martis Ultoris templum [...] feci». The epithet *Ultor* is rendered as Τιμωρὸς in Cassius Dio's Greek, but Ἀμύντωρ in the Greek of the *Res Gestae*.

¹² See ROSTOVITZ, *art. cit.*

from a time not far removed from the victory itself. A poem by Philip himself refers to the sweet honey of the bees who have built nests in the spoils of Actium on the monument¹³. He sees this as emblematic of the transformation of the enemy's armor (ὄπλα ἐχθρῶν) into the good order (εὐνομία) of Augustus, here called simply Caesar: Καίσαρος εὐνομίης χρηστὴ χάρις. The language of this poem seems to me to place it among the earliest of Philip's epigrams, from a time when one could still speak publicly of Antony as an enemy. But it is equally possible that the name Caesar is simply meant to indicate Octavian as he was known at the time of Actium. In any case, the resonant invocation of *eunomie* would have suggested to any educated Athenian the cherished poem ἡμετέρα δὲ πόλις of Solon, from six centuries earlier, which Demosthenes (19. 254-255) had famously invoked and quoted at length in his speech on the false embassy¹⁴. *Eunomie*, wrote Solon, puts everything in order, restrains the wicked, smooths the rough places, stops excess, blots out *hybris*, and withers the blossoms of *ate*. Philip's tribute to Augustus was more profound than might at first appear.

Another epigram from the Garland of Philip, by a certain Erucius of Cyzicus, commemorates a Greek woman who was carried off to Rome by a soldier in the civil wars¹⁵. The agent of her fate is called Ἄρης Ἰταλῶν, which translators have normally seen as a periphrasis for the Roman military. But it is far more likely that this is simply the poet's way of Hellenizing the god Mars. The sense would remain the same, but the specificity would be heightened. Mars is not simply Ares. He is comparable to the Greek god but different. The language mediates two worlds without assimilating them. In exactly the same way the Augustan inscriptions at Athens that mention priestesses of the goddess Vesta describe her as Ἑστία Ῥωμαίων¹⁶. The pattern shows recognition of a foreign deity but again without assimilation.

Octavian went immediately to Athens after his victory in Epirus and, as is well known, was promptly initiated into the Eleusinian mysteries. Since Athens had been clearly Antonian during the triumvirate, Octavian's move must surely have carried a political message. The Athenians on Delos, the sacred island of Apollo, were quick to recognize the supremacy of Octavian, as we can see from two Delian dedications set up before he took

¹³ *Anth. Pal.*, 6.236 (Philippus).

¹⁴ SOLON, *Anth. Graec.*, 3 Diehl (*Eunomia*), and DEM., *De Falsa Leg.* (Or. 19), 254-255.

¹⁵ *Anth. Pal.*, 7.368 (Erucius).

¹⁶ *IG II²*, 5102, 5145.

the title of Augustus¹⁷. It was the eminent Athenian Zeno of Marathon who appears to have held the lifelong priesthood of Delian Apollo at this moment, and it was his son whose name is associated with the later cult of the emperor in Athens itself. Yet this same Zeno was evidently a partisan of Antony in the thirties, as bronze coins of the period imply with their image of the archaic Apollo. The transfer of allegiance was obviously prudent, but it would not have been surprising if some Athenian supporters of Antony, and of Julius Caesar before him, found the transition rather abrupt. The well documented instance of Augustus' anger towards Athens in 21 B.C. would tend to bear this out¹⁸. Opposition inside the city had doubtless provoked the ill-omened miracle in which a statue of Athena on the acropolis turned round on its base to face Rome and spat out blood. (It is hard to grasp why Geoffrey Schmalz judged the miracle an expression of support for Rome¹⁹). Augustus refused to enter the city and took up his winter residence outside on the island of Aegina. But when he returned from the Near East in 19 B.C., bearing the legionary standards of Crassus, the situation appears to have stabilized and Augustus came into Athens itself. This was the year in which Mars Ultor first appears in surviving documentation, and, as we have already noted, the recovery of the standards may have given the impulse to create an avenging Mars.

In the decade or so that followed Augustus' visit in 19 B.C. the new Hellenism that he inspired clearly took root. There are three major initiatives that show this: the completion of the so-called Roman *agora*, the construction of a small monopteros temple of Rome and Augustus on the acropolis at the eastern end of the Parthenon, and the removal of a fifth-century temple of Ares from the countryside into the principal *agora* of Athens. The exact dates of all three of these initiatives cannot be determined, and in an effort to clarify developments scholars have repeatedly subjected them to close attention in recent years. Two articles on the monopteros alone have appeared recently almost simultaneously, regrettably each in ignorance of the other²⁰. But the main outlines of what happened are sufficient for illuminating the altered Hellenism of the age.

¹⁷ For a full discussion of this material see MAVROJANNIS, *art. cit.*

¹⁸ G.W. BOWERSOCK, *Augustus on Aegina*, in «Classical Quarterly», XIV, 1964, 120-121.

¹⁹ G. SCHMALZ, *Athens, Augustus and the Settlement of 21 B.C.*, in «Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies», XXXVII, 1996, 381-399, reinterprets Athena's spitting blood on the acropolis.

²⁰ M. KAJAVA, *Vesta and Athens*, in O. SALOMIES (ed.), *The Greek East in the Roman Context*. Proceedings of a colloquium organised by the Finnish Institute at Athens

Completion of the Roman *agora*, perhaps sometime in or soon after 10 B.C., is documented on an important inscription at the western entrance, dedicated to the thoroughly Greek goddess Athena Archêgetis²¹. The gate itself was built of Pentelic marble and in the Doric order, thereby evoking the great monuments of the classical age. But the Romans' role in this visual affirmation of ancient Hellenism emerges clearly through the sources of funding, which are publicly proclaimed on the inscription that adorns the architrave. It reveals that Julius Caesar himself had already made a gift for construction here, and that Augustus had supplemented it. An important member of the local Athenian aristocracy, Eucles' son of Herodes, is said to have gone on an embassy in support of this project. Since he was hoplite general at the time of its completion, his embassy was presumably to Augustus himself.

The Roman character of this classical gate was even more dramatically asserted through the placement of a statue, presumably equestrian, of Lucius Caesar as an akroterion on top of the pediment. Graindor observed long ago that this unique imposition of a statue on top of a traditional propylon effectively turned the classical Athenian gate into something like a Roman triumphal arch²². It is impossible to say with confidence whether the akroterion with Lucius Caesar was placed on top of the gate as part of its original conception or put there a few years later. But the idea is so innovative that it would be tempting to see in it a visualization of the Roman contribution that is proclaimed in the inscription. The actual purpose of the Roman *agora* remains unclear. A formal dedication to Athena on a Doric gate is hardly likely to have led visitors into a shrine of the imperial cult, as some have supposed. Inscriptions at *sebasteia*, such as the one at Aphrodisias, manage to conjoin dedications to the imperial house with those to local divinities. A statue of Lucius Caesar is manifestly not the same as a dedication to Augustus and his family. In Athens this space was an *agora* of the Greeks without parallel. It acknowledged the presence and the munificence of the Romans within a formal structure that evoked the grandeur of the classical age. It was something altogether new.

May 21 and 22, 1999, Helsinki 2001, 71-93; H. WHITTAKER, *Some Reflections on the Temple to the Goddess Roma and Augustus on the Acropolis at Athens*, in E.N. OSTENFELD (ed.), *Greek Romans and Roman Greeks. Studies in Cultural Interaction*, Aarhus 2002, 25-39. Neither work cites the other.

²¹ IG II², 3175.

²² GRAINDOR, *Athènes sous Auguste* cit., 189: «C'est le plus ancien exemple, en Grèce, d'une porte monumentale surmontée d'une statue honorifique qui la transforme en une sorte d'arc de triomphe». See now M.C. HOFF, *An Equestrian Statue of Lucius Caesar in Athens Reconsidered*, in «Archäologischer Anzeiger», 2001 (2002), 583-599.

The monopteros behind the Parthenon on the acropolis is more problematic. Its dedicatory inscription leaves no doubt that the building was indeed consecrated to Rome and Augustus Caesar²³. The dating, unfortunately inconclusive for modern scholars, is provided by the names of three persons with four titles. One of these is Pammenes, the son of Zeno, who assumed under Augustus the lifelong priesthood of Delian Apollo, held by his father before him. He is commemorated on the monopteros inscription as both hoplite general and «priest of Rome and Augustus Soter on the acropolis». Others named are the priestess of Athena Polias and the archon of the unknown year. The natural implication of the information on the inscription is that this is indeed a temple of the imperial cult, but if so the qualification «on the acropolis» would imply, as many scholars have observed, that somewhere else there was either another cult or another imperial priest²⁴. The name of the archon does not appear among the archons between 17 and 12 B.C., all of whom are now known, and therefore this building must be assigned either before or after those dates. Although the cult must certainly postdate 27 B.C. in view of the inclusion of the name Augustus, the epithet *soter* might suggest, without requiring, an early date in the Augustan peace. Curiously the stonecutter had incised the word *soteri* in the opening line of the dedication and then erased the first four letters so as to put in *Kaisari* after *Sebastoi*²⁵.

I suspect that an earlier and simple cult of Augustus *soter* on the acropolis had been replaced with the grand monopteros dedicated to Rome and Augustus Caesar. The architecture of the temple evokes the Temple of Vesta at Rome, and, as Mika Kajava has argued, this may have been a deliberate attempt to provide the *Estia* of the Romans with a recognizable home of her own²⁶. If he is right, as I think he may be, then the monopteros may mirror the emperor's cooptation of the Vesta cult when he introduced it into his house on the Palatine in April of 12 B.C. This is an audacious hypothesis but no less so than Helène Whittaker's independent and simultaneous case for taking the Athenian building all the way down to 2 B.C.²⁷. Whatever its date and whatever the connection with Vesta, the fundamentally Hellenic form of the dedication is not in doubt, even on an overtly Roman building. Perhaps most telling of all is

²³ *IG* II², 3173.

²⁴ See SPAWFORTH, *art. cit.*

²⁵ *IG* II², 3173: in line 1 *Καίσα*, after *Σ[εβασ]τῶ*, is incised over an erasure of the first four letters of *Σωτήρι*. Line 3 shows *Σεβαστοῦ Σωτήρος*.

²⁶ KAJAVA, *art. cit.*

²⁷ WHITTAKER, *art. cit.*

the deliberate archaism of several of the letters on the temple's dedicatory inscription²⁸. The stonecutter carefully incised the letter *pi* with the right leg shorter than the left, and his *thetas* were circles with a dot in the middle. This newest of cults was given a inscription that linked it with the fifth-century glory of Athens. The stonecutter of the Augustan age may be forgiven a lapse in the last line of the inscription when he accidentally cut a *pi* with legs of equal length.

The Ares temple in the great *agora* of Athens is at once the most arresting and the most puzzling of all the architectural problems of the Augustan city. It is a classical temple, probably from Acharnae, that was moved, stone by stone, into the *agora* and re-erected at a right angle to the Odeion of Agrippa, itself the most Roman of all the Augustan buildings in Athens²⁹. It presumably reflects the tour of Agrippa in the region in the middle teens, and there is some reason to believe that it was actually built with the help of craftsmen imported from Rome. The careful emplacement of a fifth-century temple alongside not only implies a date subsequent to the Odeion, but another deliberate linkage of the Roman presence with the fifth-century past of the city. Although the temple of Ares was the only classical building to be removed in its entirety to the center of Athens, parts of other outlying temples, at Sounion and Thorikos, were also exploited in the rebuilding. And at least one important inscription from the middle of the fifth century was apparently recut twice in this period in archaic letters. One of the Augustan reproductions even executed the letters *stoichedon*, just as in the old days³⁰.

I argued twenty years ago that the Ares temple should be brought into conjunction with an Athenian inscription on a statue base honoring Augustus' adopted grandson and heir, Gaius Caesar³¹. The stone, from

²⁸ On early imperial epigraphic archaism A. WILHELM, *Beiträge zur griechischen Inschriftenkunde*, Vienna 1909, 29; also L. JEFFREY, A. RAUBITSCHKE, *Dedications from the Athenian Acropolis*, Cambridge, MA 1949, 147-149. The most recent discussion, also including Hadrianic archaizing, is the posthumous paper by S.B. ALESHIRE, *The Identification of Archaizing Inscriptions from Roman Attica*, in Atti XI Congresso Internazionale di Epigrafia Greca e Latina II, Roma 1999, 153-161. I am grateful to Christopher Jones for alerting me to this paper. Aleshire notes the archaism of the monopteros dedication but not its inconsistency.

²⁹ For the Ares temple and parts of other buildings moved to Athens, see H.A. THOMPSON, *Activities in the Athenian Agora: 1959*, in «Hesperia», XXIX, 1960, 350-351 and *Itinerant Temples of Attica*, in «American Journal of Archaeology», LXVI, 1962, 200.

³⁰ IG II², 400: a mid-fifth century B.C. inscription, reinscribed twice (400 II *stoichedon*).

³¹ IG II², 3250. Cfr. G.W. BOWERSOCK, *Augustus and the East: the Problem of the Succession*, in F. MILLAR, E. SEGAL (eds.), *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects*, Oxford 1984, 169-188.

the Theater of Dionysus, calls him the new Ares. His arrival in the East came soon after the dedication in 2 B.C. of the temple of Mars Ultor at Rome³², and the correlation of the honors at Athens seemed obvious. It is another matter altogether whether the temple was actually moved with Gaius in mind, since its transplantation had to have been conceived and carried out well before the festivities of 2 B.C. I had never imagined that a vast crew of laborers dismantled it and re-erected it all in 2 B.C. But Augustus' commitment to Mars was nothing new in that year. It had already been plain in the teens, and probably well before that. The installation of a temple of Ares in the *agora* has surely to be a reflection of that commitment. Its relevance to the building of a temple of Mars Ultor in Rome and the proclamation of a new Ares in Athens is therefore inescapable. We need to remember that there is no reason to think Gaius became the new Ares only in 2 B.C. But at that time the significance of the Italian Ares (Mars), which had extended back for a decade or more at Athens, reached its apogee with the dedication of the temple in Rome and the dispatch of Gaius.

In fact a convergence of dates for the two statues of Augustus' grandsons at Athens and the plan to move the Ares temple now becomes apparent. The statue to Gaius as New Ares at Athens must have been designed to match the statue of his brother Lucius on top of the new gate of Athena Archegetis at the western entrance of the Roman *agora*³³. One grandson is unlikely to have been honored without the other. If the statue of Lucius belongs, as I believe, to the original concept of the western gate of the Roman *agora*, the statue of Gaius ought to be of the same date. And that would lead us to about 10 B.C., which, on current estimates, provides the most plausible date for initiating the meticulous removal of the Ares temple to Athens. Hence, within an impressive architectural context of traditional Hellenism Athens honored the two imperial heirs, one on a Greek gate that had become a triumphal arch and the other by a classical temple of the Mars of the Greeks.

Honors in the form of «new Dionysus» or «new Ares», or the implied «new Apollo» for Caesar on the lead token of Augustus, were an essential ingredient of this new Hellenism at Athens. They served to integrate eminent Romans within the traditional pantheon without turning them into classical deities. They emphasized both the traditional cults, as

³² VELL. PAT., 2.100.2: «se et Gallo Caninio consulibus dedicato Martis templo», The dedication in August was introduced prematurely in May by Ovid in his *Fasti* 5.550-580. Cfr. R. SYME, *History in Ovid*, Oxford 1978, 31.

³³ For the base of the statue of Lucius, *IG* II², 3251. Cfr. HOFF, *art. cit.*

represented by a classical building such as the Ares temple, and the hellenized world of the Romans. This phenomenon did not pass unnoticed by critics, and we have seen that there must have been criticism of the Romans in Athens. A famous epigram of Automedon, who was a near contemporary of these events, parodies the honors given by the Greeks, but what is immensely important about his lines is the total absence of any suggestion that the honors were inspired or dictated by the Romans. They were a totally Greek folly.

Here are Automedon's lines about the Athenians: «Bring ten measures of charcoal, and you shall be a citizen. If you can bring a pig as well, you shall be Triptolemos himself. To your agent Heraclides you must give cabbage-stalks, lentils, or snails. Possess yourself of these, and you may call yourself Erechtheus, Cecrops, Codrus, whomever you will; nobody cares at all»³⁴.

In this context, therefore, we must consider the titles of New Themistocles and New Homer that the Athenians bestowed upon one of their immigrant citizens, Julius Nicanor, who was a Syrian by origin. Nicanor was an important figure at Athens, named on seven inscriptions and remembered, through a famous passage in Dio Chrysostom³⁵, as the benefactor who bought back the island of Salamis for Athens. Until recently he has been seen as a major personality in Athenian society of the Augustan age, and his titles looked very much of a piece with the honor to Gaius Caesar. Only two other local aristocrats of the time can be compared with him, Eucles, the son of Herodes, who succeeded in securing funds to complete the Roman *agora*, and Pammenes, the son of Zeno, who served as priest of Delian Apollo as well as hoplite general and priest of Rome and Augustus on the acropolis. The families of both men appear to have been supporters of Antony earlier, according to Jack Kroll's attractive ascription of images of Pythian Apollo and Delian Apollo to Eucles and Pammenes' father respectively on Athens' triumviral coinage³⁶. The role of these families under Augustus would have been a straightforward transfer of allegiance, not unlike the conduct that Augustus found so admirable in the former Antonian, Herod of Judaea³⁷. With the help of such highly placed citizens Athens forged a policy that would allow it to refuse to put

³⁴ *Anth. Pal.*, 11.219 (Automedon).

³⁵ *IG II²*, 1069, 1723 (cfr. note 37 below), 3786-3789; B.D. MERITT, *Greek Inscriptions*, in «Hesperia», XXXVI, 1967, 68-71, n. 13. DIO CHRYS. 31.116 (Rhodian): τὸ ἐπίγραμμα τὸ ἐπὶ τῆς Νικάνορος εἰκόνος, ὃς αὐτοῖς καὶ τὴν Σαλαμίνα ἐωνήσατο.

³⁶ Cfr. KROLL, *Coinage* cit.

³⁷ G.W. BOWERSOCK, *Augustus and the Greek World*, Oxford 1965, 55.

the emperor's image on its coinage but effectively recognize his power. Julius Nicanor seemed to have been a major player in this process.

But nearly thirty years ago, and several times subsequently, Elias Kapetanopoulos tried to prove on epigraphic grounds that this famous man belonged to the age of Claudius and Nero rather than Augustus³⁸. Only a few scholars believed him. Christopher Jones was able to strike a deadly blow at his principal epigraphic argument³⁹. Recently, however, in a discussion of references to Greek and Cypriote Salamis in first-century B.C. Greek inscriptions, my colleague, Christian Habicht, chose to espouse Kapetanopoulos' view about the date of Nicanor⁴⁰. As a result, recent work, sheltering under his indubitable authority, has tended to place Nicanor later than the Augustan age and even to accept a date as late as Claudius for the introduction of imperial games at Athens, the *Sebasta*, for which we know that Nicanor served as *agonothete*. This revisionism has done serious damage to our understanding of Augustan Athens. The case for a later Nicanor remains as indefensible now as it was before Habicht annexed it to his study of Salamis.

The details need to be exposed. Kapetanopoulos had supplied the name Ti. Claudius Theogenes as herald of the Areopagus in an inscription naming Nicanor as hoplite general and Thrasyllos as archon⁴¹:

στρατηγὸς [ἐπὶ τὰ] ὄπλα Ἰούλιος
Νικάνωρ νέος [᾽Ομηρο]ς καὶ νέος Θεμισ[τοκλῆ]ς
κῆρυξ τῆς ἐξ Ἀ[ρ]είου π[ά]γου βουλῆς Τ
Θε[.....]νης Παιανιεύς

He thereby dated the inscription and Nicanor himself to A.D. 61/62 on the basis of another inscription naming Thrasyllos as archon⁴². Habicht acknowledged that Jones irreparably destroyed this argument by pointing out that someone other than Nicanor was hoplite general at the time when Thrasyllos was archon. But Habicht tried to salvage the case by

³⁸ E. KAPETANOPOULOS, *Gaius Julius Nicanor, Neos Homeros kai Neos Themistokles*, in «Rivista di filologia e di istruzione classica», CIV, 1976, 375-377; ID., *Salamis and Julius Nicanor*, in «Hellenika», XXXIII, 1981, 217-237; cfr. ID., *The Iliad Epigram from the Agora of Athens*, in «Prometheus», XIII, 1987, 1-10.

³⁹ C.P. JONES, *Three Foreigners in Attica: I. Julius Nicanor*, in «Phoenix», XXXII, 1978, 222-228.

⁴⁰ Chr. HABICHT, *Salamis in der Zeit nach Sulla*, in «Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik», CXI, 1996, 79-87.

⁴¹ *IG* II², 1723 + *EM* 13215 (M. MITSOS, in «Archaiologikē Ephēmeris», 1972, 55-57 with pl. 13, reproduced here as an accompanying plate); *SEG* 26.166. I have checked the text by reference to squeezes held at the Institute for Advanced Study.

⁴² *IG* II², 1990.

claiming that any Tiberius Claudius, even if not Theogenes, would have to postdate the emperor Claudius, and he insisted that Tiberius Claudius had to precede the lacunose name in the text. This argument cannot stand in any event, since the emperor Tiberius made citizenship grants before his adoption as a Julius. But it is most unlikely that a Roman *praenomen* and *nomen* were ever there at all.

The inscription consists of two fragments from a list of ephebic magistrates. The first had been included by Kirchner in the *editio minor* of *IG*. Mitsos was able to prove in 1972 that a fragment in the Epigraphical Museum provided the right side of the stone at the same point in the text⁴³. The arrangement of the names in the lines is not uniform, although this feature is concealed in Habicht's publication, which shows the relevant lines as beginning consistently at the left margin. Yet the mysterious person whose name begins with THE and ends in GE]NES, from Paiania, is situated in the middle of the line, slightly to the right of center. There is a large vacant space before his name. Such a layout calls into question any conjunction of the name with the surviving letter T at the end of the previous line. (Mitsos, Habicht, and others print dotted TI, but an Institute squeeze and Mitsos's own photograph show no trace of the iota). The T is problematic, but, whatever it is, it can hardly be the *praenomen* of a name which follows in the next line after a large *vacat*. Mitsos had proposed Titos, which could certainly be accommodated, but it is unlikely on its own and impossible with an additional word as *nomen*. Furthermore, the inevitable restoration of the name Themistocles in the line above is manifestly too long for the available space. Mitsos allowed for the possibility that it was abbreviated. But perhaps, as Simone Follet suggested⁴⁴, the T and the lost letters that followed it in the line immediately below Nicanor's titles may represent the stonecutter's attempt to accommodate the end of the name Themistocles in the open space at the end of the line. But even that would take the line well beyond the right margin of all the other extant lines in the fragment. Another puzzle occurs later in the inscription, where the stonecutter has deliberately left space after the name of the flute player Nicias, then put in a word beginning LY after the *vacat*, but here the stone is broken off farther to the left than in the preceding lines and there would be space for Mitsos' λυρῳδης or something of that kind. The T after the herald of the Areopagus is a different matter.

⁴³ See note 41.

⁴⁴ S. FOLLET, apud JONES, *art. cit.*, 228. For Follet's most recent views on Nicanor (early date), see her article, *Julius Nicanor et le statut de Salamine*, in S. FOLLET (ed.), *L'hellénisme d'époque romaine*, Paris 2004, 139-170.

Habicht also thought that when Tib. Claudius Novius was named on an inscription of A.D. 41 as first *agonothete* of the *Sebastoi agones*⁴⁵ this must be the first year that any such competition was ever held. Since Nicanor was also an *agonothete* of the *Sebastoi agones*⁴⁶, his holding of the office would have had to come later than A.D. 41. But this fails to take account of a second attestation of Novius' office in which he is explicitly said to be *agonothete* of the games of Tib. Claudius Caesar⁴⁷. This led Graindor, Kirchner, and Geagan all to conclude reasonably that the adjective 'first' in the other inscription simply meant first *agonothete* of the Claudian cycle of games⁴⁸. That this must indeed be the case is apparent from the inscription that mentions Nicanor's *agonothesia*.

Habicht alludes to it merely to observe that it must come from a time later than 9 B.C. in view of a reference to a priest of the deceased Drusus. But he omits to cite the first line of the text, which is decisive: ἀγαθὴ τύχη τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ Καίσαρος⁴⁹. The *kappa* which was reported in the nineteenth century to follow Καίσαρος cannot be verified, since the fragment is lost and no squeeze exists, but, as has long been recognized, it is probably a copula (καί) leading to a mention of the imperial house. The inscription, naming Augustus Caesar without further qualification in the form of family names or imperial titles, cannot conceivably postdate the Augustan principate. There are at least 16 other inscriptions from Athens in Augustus' lifetime with this nomenclature, as well as two from the Athenians at Delos in the same period⁵⁰. Observe, for example, the group of statue bases near the Parthenon with Sebastos Kaisar for Augustus, then later Tiberios Kaisar and Germanikos Kaisar⁵¹. Or recall the

⁴⁵ IG II², 3270: [...] τοῦ καὶ ἀγωνοθέτου πρώτου τῶν Σεβαστῶν ἀγώνων [...].

⁴⁶ IG II², 1069: ἀγαθὴ τύχη τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ Καίσαρος κ[...]. Cfr. D.J. GEAGAN, *The Athenian Constitution after Sulla*, in «Hesperia», Supplement XII (Princeton 1967), 23, n. 43.

⁴⁷ IG II², 4174: καὶ ἀγωνοθέτης τῶν Τιβερίου Κλαυδίου Καίσαρος Σεβαστοῦ ἀγώνων.

⁴⁸ GRAINDOR, *Athènes de Tibère à Trajan*, Cairo 1931, 11-12, n. 7; Kirchner apud IG II², 3270; GEAGAN, *art. cit.*, 134-135.

⁴⁹ IG II², 1069. Cfr. HABICHT, *art. cit.*, 82: «Der Beschluß ist jedenfalls später als das Jahr 9 v. Chr., denn der eponyme Archon Lakon war zugleich Priester des in jenem Jahr als Konsul verstorbenen Drusus».

⁵⁰ Attestations (apart from IG II², 1069) of Σεβαστὸς Καῖσαρ or Καῖσαρ Σεβαστός for Augustus in Athenian inscriptions during his lifetime: IG II², 1071, 3173, 3175, 3176, 3179, 3224/25, 3226, 3227, 3228, 3229, 3230, 3251, 3253, 3524, 4119, 5034. Likewise in dedications of the *demos* of the Athenians on Delos, *Inscr. Del.*, 1590, 1592.

⁵¹ IG II², 3251, 3253, 3254, 3255.

Athenian references to Augustus as Sebastos Kaisar on the inscriptions of both the monopteros and the Roman *agora*⁵². Or look again at the front-row seat in the Theater of Dionysus reserved for the holder of what Tony Spawforth reasonably describes as the earliest priesthood of Augustus at Athens. It designates the priest and high priest of Sebastos Kaisar⁵³. No later emperor would be styled that way.

Accordingly the case for a Claudian and Neronian Nicanor has, to borrow Habicht's own words, «no solid foundation»⁵⁴. There is simply no evidence for it. The neglected first line of the text recording Nicanor's *agonothesia* anchors him firmly in the Augustan age. It also proves that Augustan Athens had established a competition known as *Sebasta*, which there is no reason to believe, as Jones and Geagan have both pointed out, were necessarily continued on a recurrent basis. They may even have been resurrected in the first year of Claudius after a lapse. Their institution at Athens under Augustus may well have been correlated with the inauguration of the *Sebasta Isolympia* at Naples, which took place at about the same time as the dedication of the temple of Mars Ultor. Augustus' interest in Greek games had started early. When he founded Nicopolis as a thoroughly Greek city, he had also instituted games there under the name of Aktia. They would have provided a suitably Greek model for the *Sebasta* at Athens.

Nicanor's role as benefactor and magistrate in Augustan Athens must not only be reinstated but reassessed. That his notorious purchase of Salamis lies behind the title of new Themistocles, as Karl Keil argued almost 150 years ago⁵⁵, would be hard to deny, but when and how the sale occurred remains a mystery. When Strabo wrote about the island, it belonged to Athens, but since the composition of his Geography spans more than fifty years this is not much help for dating. On the other hand, the new fragments of an inscription concerning Nicanor that Benjamin Meritt published in 1967 certify the veracity of Dio Chrysostom. These fragments not only explicitly name Nicanor himself but also Salamis⁵⁶. The context would appear to be contracts for purchase of land. Since Antony's restoration of various islands to Athens in 42/41 B.C. did not include Salamis (App., *BC* 5.30), it would be reasonable to think, as Habicht proposes, that Salamis was not alienated from Athens at that

⁵² *IG* II², 3173, 3175.

⁵³ *IG* II², 5034, with SPAWFORTH, *art. cit.*

⁵⁴ HABICHT, *art. cit.*, 86: «Allen diesen Hypothesen [...] fehlt ein solides Fundament».

⁵⁵ K. KEIL, *Zum Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum II*, pt. II, in «Rheinisches Museum», n.s., XVIII, 1863, 56-70.

⁵⁶ MERITT, *art. cit.*

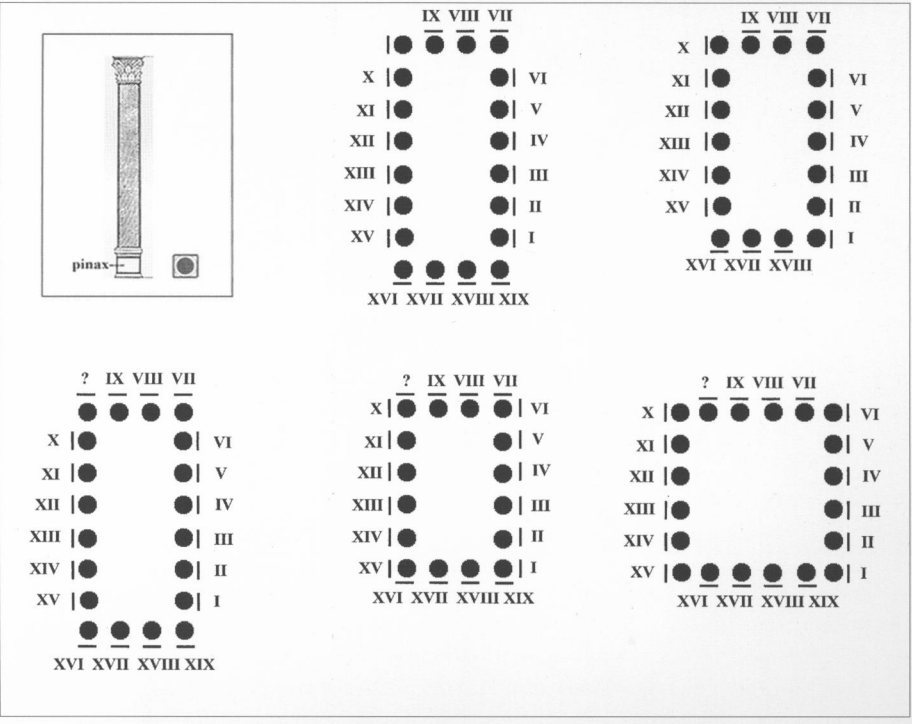
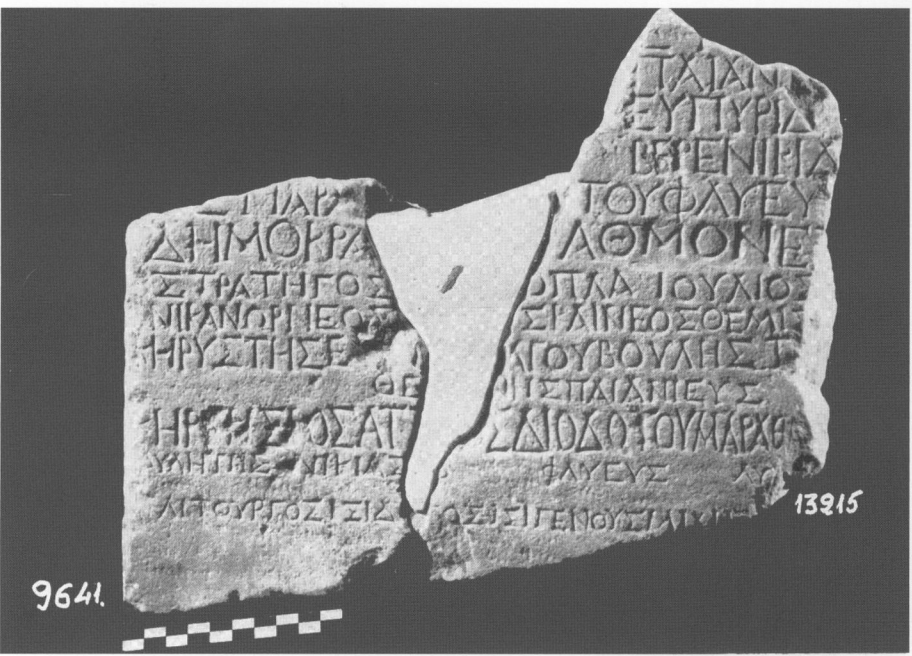
time. We do not know when the city lost the island, but 21 B.C., the year of Augustus' anger and his residence on Aegina, might be a suitable time. The repurchase by Nicanor might, as many have observed, have fallen in the period of the great *naumachia* in 2 B.C. at Rome, where the Battle of Salamis was re-enacted. Whatever the details, he cannot have become a new Themistocles without something to do with his purchase of Salamis.

Nicanor was also honored as a new Homer, for reasons that are beyond divining. But an epic of his composition would be the most obvious explanation, and presumably, a new Homer, like a new Themistocles, contributed something relevant to the city of his own day. Hence perhaps an epic about Augustus or Augustan Athens. Automedon would certainly have known about these titles, and his parody cannot not have reflected well on Nicanor or on Athenian complicity in bestowing them. A turning of the tide against honors of this kind and the recipients of them evidently led to the systematic erasure of both Nicanor's titles on the majority of inscriptions that mention him. It may equally have led to a suspension of the *Sebasta*, to be renewed again only under Claudius.

Any explanation beyond the one that Automedon provides must inevitably be speculative, but it is hard to resist invoking the revolt at Athens that several late antique sources (Orosius, Jerome, Syncellus) ascribe to the end of the reign of Augustus. We know nothing of this revolt, if indeed it happened. But so virulent a public repudiation of Nicanor's service to the city implies a strong reaction to the new Hellenism, and a disturbance that is characterized as both *stasis* and *sedition* would explain it. Such people as Nicanor, Eucles, and Pammenes had strengthened Augustan Athens by fostering a distinctively Greek structure to accommodate Roman power. This Hellenism had a long life before it, as the revival of the *Sebasta* games and a resurgence of new embodiments of gods and great figures of the classical past were soon to demonstrate. In about A.D. 20 the younger Drusus received a statue in Athens with a base proclaiming him «Drusus Caesar, son of a god, the new god Ares»⁵⁷. The wheel had come full circle. The young Drusus was the Gaius Caesar of the reign of Tiberius.

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⁵⁷ *IG* II², 3257 (*Drusus Caesar*).



1. *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, 26.166.
2. Ipotesi di ricostruzione del tempio di Apollonios a Cizico.