

## XIII.—Octavia's Deification at Athens

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The available evidence concerning divine honors paid to Antony during his visit in Athens in the winter of 39/8 B.C. may be supplemented by an unpublished inscription found in the Agora Excavations (Inv. no. 3071). It shows that Antony and Octavia were worshipped as *Θεοὶ Ἐβερύεραι*. A new interpretation of a passage in the Elder Seneca's *Suasoriae* (1.6–7) suggests that Octavia was identified with Athena Polias.

A significant interpretation of the marriage between Antony and Octavia has been given by W. W. Tarn who observed:<sup>1</sup> "We are then, in the *Eclogue* [the fourth *Eclogue* of Virgil] as published, dealing with a human child, to be born to Antony and Octavia. . . . About August–September, 39, Octavia's child was born, and it was a girl. . . . Antony at once turned elsewhere, to the thought of Asiatic conquest; on reaching Athens he proclaimed himself Dionysus, conqueror of Asia, put Dionysiac types on his coins, and did his best for his wife (Antony could show chivalry upon occasion) by associating her with this also and putting her head on all his Dionysus coins. That is why his assumption of divinity as Dionysus is connected with Octavia, not with Cleopatra; it was because Octavia's child, which should have been the child of the *Eclogue*, was born a girl and not a boy." R. Syme accepted this view when he remarked:<sup>2</sup> "It is a fair surmise that the fourth *Eclogue* was composed to announce the peace, to anticipate the natural and desired consequences of the wedding of Antonius and Octavia."

The literary tradition pertaining to Antony as *Νέος Διόνυσος* in Athens, in 39/8 B.C., is based on Seneca's *Suasoriae* 1.6–7.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *JRS* 22 (1932) 157, 157; see also D. A. Slater, *CR* 26 (1912) 114–119.

<sup>2</sup> *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, 1939) 219.

<sup>3</sup> Neither Appian (*Civil War* 5.76) nor Plutarch (*Antony* 33.4–34.1; see *Hesperia* 12 [1943] 242–243) mentions this incident, and Plutarch's later reference (*Antony* 60.2–3) may apply to the visit of Antony and Cleopatra in May 32 B.C. The account of Cassius Dio (48.39.2) is based, perhaps indirectly, on Seneca; Zonaras (10.23) apparently copied Cassius Dio, as the verbal agreement shows. The story told by Socrates of Rhodes (*FGrH* 2.927–928) has often been thought to refer to this period (39/8 B.C.); see G. Hinstin, *Les Romains à Athènes* (Paris, 1877) 196; E. Curtius, *Stadtgeschichte von Athen* (Berlin, 1891) 253; W. W. Tarn, *loc. cit.* (see note 1) 149–150; O. Immisch, *Aus Roms Zeitwende* (Leipzig, 1931) 19. It is evident, however, that it illustrates the later visit of Antony in the company of Cleopatra; see M. Thompson, *Hesperia* 10 (1941) 227, note 89.

Nam cum Antonius vellet se Liberum patrem dici et hoc nomen statuis suis subscribi juberet, habitu quoque et comitatu Liberum imitaretur, occurrerunt venienti ei Athenienses cum conjugibus et liberis et Διόνυσον salutaverunt. Belle illis cesserat, si nasus Atticus ibi substitisset; sed dixerunt despondere ipsos in matrimonium illi Minervam suam et rogaverunt ut duceret; Antonius ait ducturum, sed dotis nomine imperare se illis mille talenta. Tum ex Graeculis quidam ait: "Κύριε, ὁ Ζεὺς τὴν μητέρα σου Σεμέλην ἄπροικον εἶχεν." Huic quidem impune fuit ausum. sed Atheniensium sponsalia mille talentis aestimata sunt; quae cum exigenterentur, complures contumeliosi libelli proponebantur, quidam etiam ipsi Antonio tradebantur: sicut ille, qui subscriptus statuae ejus fuit, cum eodem tempore et Octaviam uxorem haberet et Cleopatram: "Ὀκταονία καὶ Ἀθηναῖ Ἀντωνίῳ· res tuas tibi habe." . . . Cum Athenienses tempus peterent ad pecuniam conferendam nec exorarent, Dellius ait: "At tamen dicito illos tibi annua, bienni, trienni die debere."

This story is probably based on the eyewitness account of Qu. Dellius, and it should not have been questioned.<sup>4</sup> We learn from Seneca that Antony was called Dionysos in Athens, and that his divine surname was mentioned also on pedestals of statues set up to him. He was married to the Goddess Athena at a time when he was in Athens with his legal wife Octavia.<sup>5</sup> Nobody, apparently, took offense at this bigamy, and when Antony later attached himself to Cleopatra, a witty Athenian suggested that Octavia *and* Athena should divorce him.<sup>6</sup> A keen student might have deduced from this passage alone that the Athenians identified Octavia with their *custos urbis* Athena Polias.

Seneca's account would have been accepted as reliable had it been confirmed by epigraphical evidence; this evidence is now at

<sup>4</sup> The doubts first tentatively expressed by A. D. Nock, *HSPH* 41 (1930) 4, have been repeated with increasing confidence by W. W. Tarn, *CAH* 10 (Cambridge, 1934) 53; J. A. O. Larsen, *Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* 4 (Baltimore, 1938) 434 (compare, however, M. I. Rostovtzeff, *Social and Economic History of the Hellenistic World* 2 [Oxford, 1941] 1012-1013); J. Day, *Economic History of Athens* (New York, 1942) 132-133.

<sup>5</sup> M. Thompson erroneously assumed (*loc. cit.* [see note 3]) that the episode told by Seneca refers to Antony's sojourn at Athens in 32 B.C.

<sup>6</sup> For various discussions of this incident, see also V. Gardthausen, *Augustus* 1.1 (Leipzig, 1891) 235; Groebe, *RE* s. v. "Antonius" 2606, lines 34-43; H. Heinen, *Klio* 11 (1911) 138, note 6; W. E. Edwards, *The Suasoriae of Seneca the Elder* (Cambridge, 1928) 92-93; H. Jeanmaire, *RA* 19 (1924) 249; K. Scott, *AJPh* 49 (1928) 219; P. Graindor, *Athènes sous Auguste* (Caire, 1927) 57; W. Judeich, *Topographie*<sup>2</sup> (München, 1931) 97-98; L. R. Taylor, *The Divinity of the Roman Emperor* (Middletown, 1931) 122; K. Scott, *CPh* 27 (1932) 322; id. *MAAR* 11 (1933) 37, note 1; A. Weigall, *Life and Times of Marc Antony* (London, 1934) 324; O. Immisch, *op. cit.* (see note 3) 19; G. Grether, *AJPh* 67 (1946) 223-224.

hand.<sup>7</sup> There are three Attic inscriptions which may be brought into connection with Antony's visit to Athens, but they add nothing to our knowledge of his identification with Dionysos.<sup>8</sup> There is, however, an honorary decree for the Athenian ephebes of 39/8 B.C. which states (*IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.1043, lines 22–23) that the ephebes participated in some way ἐν τοῖς Ἀντωνίῃ τοῖς Παναθηναϊκοῖς Ἀντωνίου Θεοῦ Νέου Διονύσο[υ —].<sup>9</sup> Instead of Παναθηναϊκοῖς one may also restore Παναθηναίους, and one cannot be sure, therefore, whether the Panathenaic Games of 39/8 B.C. were called after Antony (as many have assumed), because he functioned as gymnasiarch, or whether special games were established in his honor, which received the name

<sup>7</sup> L. R. Taylor (*op. cit.* [see note 6] 269) was able to list only three documents, one from Athens (*IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.1043) and one from Egypt (*IGRP* 1.1054). The third, from Prusias, mentioning a φυλὴ Ἀντωνιανή, has now been republished by J. H. Oliver (*Hesperia* Suppl. 6 [1941] 159–160, no. 48, line 56) who also republished another document mentioning this tribe (*op. cit.* 102–104, no. 18, lines 22–23). Yet in both texts one should read φυλὴ Ἀντωνι<νι>ανή, and one should assume that the tribe was created in honor of the Antonines rather than of Antony.

<sup>8</sup> (1) *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.3889, base of a statue of Marcus Antonius Aristocrates, son of Anaxion, who probably received Roman citizenship through Antony. A new reading may be given here.

[Ο] ῥῆμα[ος]  
Μάρκον Ἀντώνιον [Ἀρι]στοκράτ[ην]  
Ἀναξίωνος υἱὸν ἀρετῆς ἕνεκα.

(2) *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.4113, base of a statue of Lucius Marcius Censorinus, which may have been erected between 42 and 39 B.C. A new reading may be given here.

Ἡ βουλὴ ἡ ἐ[ξ] Ἀρχοῦ Πάτου [Λεύ]  
κιον Μάρκιον Κησωρεῖνον [ἀρ]  
[ετ]ῆς ἕνεκα καὶ εὐνοίας τῆς εἰς τ[ὸν]  
δῆμον.

The stone cutter (who wrote Πάτου instead of Πάγου) apparently jumped from the epsilon of ἀρετῆς to the first epsilon of ἕνεκα and had to inscribe the omitted letters ΕΤΗΣ at the beginning of the third line. Censorinus served as Antony's legate in Greece; see E. Groag, *Die Römischen Reichsbeamten von Achaia* (Wien, 1939) 7, note 21.

(3) *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.7091, tombstone of Marcus Antonius Tertius, member of the Attic deme Paiania, freedman of Antonia daughter of Antony and wife of Drusus. From a parallel document found in the family cemetery in Rome (*CIL* 6.4488; compare S. L. Finch, *CPh* 24 [1929] 404) we learn that Tertius was *decurio*, presumably in the family household.

<sup>9</sup> The restoration and the date of the inscription have been discussed by A. Mommsen, *Feste der Stadt Athen* (Leipzig, 1898) 406; W. Kolbe, *Die Attischen Archonten* (Berlin, 1908) 142; W. B. Dinsmoor, *Archons of Athens* (Cambridge, 1931) 285–286; M. Thompson, *loc. cit.* (see note 3) 227. See also W. S. Ferguson, *AHR* 18 (1912) 41; W. B. Dinsmoor, *AJA* 24 (1920) 83; L. R. Taylor, *op. cit.* (see note 6) 121–122; L. Deubner, *Attische Feste* (Berlin, 1932) 236; W. W. Tarn, *op. cit.* (see note 4) 52.



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Agora Inv. no. 3071

PLATE I

Panathenaic Antoniea.<sup>10</sup> It is clear, therefore, that Antony officially received in Athens the designation Θεὸς Νέος Διόνυσος; he was, moreover, connected with Athena, as indicated by the inscription.<sup>11</sup> Yet the position occupied by Octavia<sup>12</sup> still remains uncertain.<sup>13</sup> The answer to this problem can be found in the assumption that Octavia was identified with Athena Polias and, therefore, also received divine honors. The account given by Seneca suggested this assumption, and it is supported by the text of an inscription which was found in the Agora Excavations and is published here for the first time.<sup>14</sup>

[Ἄ]γρωνίου καὶ Ὁ  
[κτ]άλας δυνὼν Θε  
[ῶν Ε]ὐεργετῶν.

<sup>10</sup> I believe that the first alternative should be accepted. Thus the date Ἐνθρονησίῳ τῇ ἑπτακαίδεκάτῃ in line 23 of the inscription would have nothing to do with the games under discussion, as A. Mommsen and M. Thompson assumed (see note 9).

<sup>11</sup> Much has been written on the identification of rulers with the God Dionysos, and the case of Antony is mentioned in most of these studies. The following list of references, admittedly incomplete, may offer an introduction to the problem: E. Kornemann, *Klio* 1 (1901) 84, note 1; P. Foucart, *Le culte de Dionysos en Attique* (Paris, 1904) 201; F. Poland, *Gesch. des Griech. Vereinswesens* (Leipzig, 1909) 233, 529; H. Heinen, *loc. cit.* (see note 6) 138; P. Riewald, *Diss. Philol. Halenses* 20 (Halle, 1912) 319–320; J. S. Reid, *JRS* 6 (1916) 182; H. J. Rose, *AAL* 11 (1924) 27; A. D. Nock, *JHS* 48 (1928) 33; R. A. Anderson, *HSPH* 39 (1928) 43; K. Scott, *AJPh* 49 (1928) 139–140, 143, 217–222, 225–239; id., *CPh* 24 (1929) 133; id. *TAPhA* 60 (1929) 118; L. Craven, *Antony's Oriental Policy* (Columbia, 1929) 57; A. D. Nock, *loc. cit.* (see note 4) 4; L. R. Taylor, *op. cit.* (see note 6) 108–109, 121–122, 138; W. W. Tarn, *loc. cit.* (see note 1) 149–150, 155–157; K. Scott, *CPh* 27 (1932) 322; M. P. Charlesworth, *HTHR* 28 (1935) 8–16 [without mentioning Antony]; F. Poland, *RE* s. v. "Technitai" 2515–2516; J. Lindsay, *Marc Antony* (London, 1936) 223, 252; O. Immisch, *op. cit.* (see note 3) 12, 17–19. J. H. Oliver restored (*AJA* 46 [1942] 383–384, no. 4, fig. 1) in an inscription, which he himself had published for the first time (*Hesperia* 4 [1935] 60, no. 23), the designation [τὸν νέον] Διόνυσον as referring to C. Sulpicius Galba; but L. Robert pointed out (*REG* 57 [1946] 185, no. 38) that this restoration is unacceptable. There is a better restoration of the first two lines, which Oliver considered but rejected. One may restore (following *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.1330, lines 71–72; 2955): [τὸ κοινὸν τῶν περὶ τὸν Διόνυσον] | [τεχνητῶν ἀνέτηκ]εν. The last three lines may be restored: [Σέβριον Σ]ολπικίων | [Κοίντου ἰὸν (or ἀνθύπατον) τ]ὸν | [ἑαυτοῦ εὐεργέ]την.

<sup>12</sup> I have not seen M. W. Singer's dissertation, *Octavia Minor*, Ph.D. thesis, Duke, 1944 (unpublished), but Mrs. Singer was kind enough to read the manuscript of this paper and to make some valuable suggestions.

<sup>13</sup> For honors paid to Octavia, see U. Kahrstedt, *Klio* 10 (1910) 291–292; H. A. Grueber, *Coins of the Roman Republic* 2 (London, 1910) 502–503, note 2; L. R. Taylor, *op. cit.* (see note 6) 121–122; W. W. Tarn, *loc. cit.* (see note 1) 145–150; id., *op. cit.* (see note 4) 69; M. Hammond, *RE* s. v. "Octavius (Octavia)" 1860–1861; C. Hanson and F. P. Johnson, *AJA* 50 (1946) 389, 393, 399–400.

<sup>14</sup> Agora Inv. no. 3071. Found on November 6, 1935, in Section Σ. Height, 0.210 m.; width, 0.252 m.; thickness, 0.102 m. Right side and top preserved. Traces of a moulding running around the top edge. Professor B. D. Meritt kindly permitted

For the use of the genitive case, one may refer either to similar inscriptions honoring Roman Emperors, primarily Augustus (*IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.3224–3234, 3279, 3281), or to altar dedications of the Roman period (*IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.4992–4995, 4998, 5001–5005).<sup>15</sup> A few words may be added about the phrase *Θεοὶ Εὐεργέται*.<sup>16</sup> In Athens, the recollection of the honors granted to Diogenes and to Demetrios must still have been vivid in the time of Antony.<sup>17</sup> Most important, however, was the example of the Ptolemies, many of whom were celebrated as *Θεοὶ Εὐεργέται*.<sup>18</sup> The epithet *εὐεργέτης* was, moreover, particularly suitable for Dionysos, as the note of Hesychios indicates: *Εὐεργέτης· ἀγαθοποιὸς ἢ Διονύσου ἐπιθετον*.

The preceding account suggests that Antony and Octavia were celebrated in Athens as Dionysos and Athena. The link between these two deities, as applied to mortals identified with them, already appeared in the deification of Demetrios Poliorketes. Plutarch may have had this parallel in mind when he compared the lives of Demetrios and Antony.

me to publish the text of the inscription and to illustrate (Plate I) a photograph of the back of a squeeze in his collection.

<sup>15</sup> Compare G. L. A. Gerlach, *Griech. Ehreninschriften* (Halle, 1908) 31. For the form *δυν* = *δυν*, see K. Meisterhans, *Grammatik*<sup>3</sup> (Berlin, 1900) 157, note 1337; E. Schwyzer, *Griech. Grammatik* (München, 1939) 588, note 9.

<sup>16</sup> The political character of *εὐεργεσία* has recently been discussed by A. Wilhelm, *Attische Urkunden* 5 (Wien, 1942) 11–86.

<sup>17</sup> See E. Kornemann, *loc. cit.* (see note 11) 84, note 1; A. Rostagni, *Atti della R. Acc. di Torino* 50 (1915) 989–1013; K. Scott, *AJPh* 49 (1928) 139–140; A. D. Nock, *loc. cit.* (see note 4) 53, note 3 (on p. 54); *IG* 2<sup>2</sup>.5080; O. Immisch, *op. cit.* (see note 3) 12.

<sup>18</sup> See E. Kornemann, *loc. cit.* (see note 11) 72–75; W. Dittenberger, *OGIS* 1 (Leipzig, 1903) 93, note 5.