

GNAEUS OCTAVIUS AND THE ECHINAIIOI

(PLATE 91)

IN 1958 D. G. Gardikis called attention to an inscribed base in the village of Achinos (ancient Echinus) honoring one Γναῖος Ὀκταῖος Γναίου στρατηγὸς ναυτικοῦ Ῥωμαίων.¹ The piece subsequently was noted with measurements (height 0.27, width 0.80, thickness 0.32 m.) in Δελτ., XXII, 1967, Χρον., p. 247 and then treated by J. and L. Robert (*R.E.G.*, LXXXII, 1969, pp. 470-471) who identified the Octavius on the stone as the commander of the Roman fleet in Greece in 168-167 B.C. A text of the inscription has now appeared in *S.E.G.*, XXV, 1971, p. 212, no. 642. Unfortunately the text still has not been accurately recorded and I should like to offer another text and a photograph of the stone (Pl. 91).²

a. 168-167 a.

ἀ] πόλις Ἐχινάϊων Γναῖον Ὀκταῖον Γνα[ί-
ου στρατηγὸν ναυτικοῦ Ῥωμαίων ἀρε-
τᾶς ἔνεκεν καὶ εὐνοίας τᾶς εἰς αὐτάν

The lettering of the inscription is generally careful, though with occasional crowding. Letter forms are compatible with a date in the first half of the second century B.C. Incompatible with this date are the single dots painted below each line to indicate word division and the hyphens painted at the beginning and end of lines to indicate syllabic division. These were surely added in modern times when paint was applied to emphasize the ancient letters.³

With the exception of its first line, the inscription presents no problems. But at the end of line 1 iota must be restored. The right lateral face of the stone must have been trimmed, eliminating iota and the right-hand margin. The restoration of iota causes line 1 to extend slightly beyond lines 2 and 3 on the right. This was also the case on the left side of the line where the stone is chipped. Here the definite article ἄ must be restored before πόλις. The Echinus stone belongs to a highly

¹ Phthiotis, IV, 1958, p. 52 and Ὁ Γῦρος τῆς Φθιωτίδος, Lamia, 1958, p. 23; an earlier notice by the same man occurred in a letter to the Athens newspaper *Καθημερινή*, October 12, 1956. Prior to this time it had been thought that there were no inscriptions of consequence at Echinus; cf. L. Daly, *A.J.A.*, XLVI, 1942, pp. 500-508, cf. Linda Collins Reilly, *A.J.P.*, XCII, 1971, pp. 667-676 for other recent discoveries.

² I am grateful to Prof. W. Kendrick Pritchett for permission to publish his excellent photograph, and to my colleague Colin N. Edmonson for directing my attention to the inscription and some of its attendant problems.

³ Cf. W. Larfeld, *Handbuch der Griechischen Epigraphik*, Leipzig, 1902-7, p. 574.

Hesperia, XLIV, 4

formulaic class of honorific inscriptions. With slight variations and additions, these inscriptions regularly read “*ἡ πόλις (ὁ δῆμος, τὸ κοινὸν) τῶν δέινων τὸν δέινα ἀρετῆς ἔνεκεν καὶ εὐνοίας τῆς εἰς αὐτήν.*”⁴ The absence of the article before *πόλις* would be very unusual.⁵ Finally, I note that the correct reading in line 3 is the usual *εἰς αὐτάν* and not *πρὸς αὐτάν* as printed in the *Δελτίον*, and followed by Robert and *S.E.G.*

The nomen Octavius was frequently written *Ὀκταῖος* in Greek inscriptions. In fact, *Ὀκταῖος* may have been the only spelling used originally. At the end of the second century B.C. *Ὀκταῖος* is attested⁶ and *Ὀκταούιος*, the spelling familiar in manuscripts, makes its appearance a century later.⁷ But until the end of the second century *Ὀκταῖος* is the only spelling so far attested.⁸ Consequently, I suggest that *Olympia*, V, *Die inschriften*, Amsterdam, 1966, no. 9343 (= *S.I.G.*³, 650), also a statue base honoring this same Gnaeus Octavius, should be restored *Γναῖον Ὀκτά[ῖου]* and not *Γναῖον Ὀκτα[ούιον]* in line 1.⁹

Robert is very likely correct in identifying the Octavius of the stone as the praetor in command of the Roman fleet in 168 B.C. who secured the surrender of Perseus at the end of the Third Macedonian War and celebrated a triumph, subsequently becoming consul in 165 B.C.¹⁰ However, we know something, in addition to their names, of three men under the Republic who were called Gnaeus Octavius Gn. f.: (1) the Gnaeus Octavius in question; (2) his son, consul in 128 B.C.; and (3) his grandson, son of (2), consul in 87 B.C. Except for an anecdote in Cicero, we know nothing certain of the career of (2) and associate (3) primarily with the civil dis-

⁴ Some examples: W. Dittenberger, *S.I.G.*³, 621 (186-172 B.C.) and 626 (ca. 182 B.C.), *ἡ πόλις*; 632 (ca. 182 B.C.) and 649 (169 B.C.), *τὸ κοινόν*; 639 (ca. 177 B.C.), *ὁ δῆμος*.

⁵ I know of only one such inscription within a two-hundred-year radius which omits the article. A stone from Veluchovo in Aetolia ca. 289 B.C. (*S.I.G.*³, 369) reads: [βασιλέα Πύρρον βασιλέως Αἰακ[ί]δα πόλις [Καλλιπολι]τῶν ἀρετῆς ἔνεκεν, κ. τ. λ. But it is worthwhile noting that had the inscription been inscribed to read *Αἰακ[ί]δα ἡ πόλις*, two alphas would have occurred in a row. So we may have nothing more than an instance of haplography here.

⁶ *I.G.R.R.*, IV, 262, ca. 110 B.C.; *B.C.H.*, XXXVI, 1912, pp. 57-58, end of second century B.C.

⁷ *I.G.R.R.*, I, 1117, A.D. 3; H. Dessau, *I.L.S.*, 8783, “*Ὀκταουία*,” end of the first century B.C. Other later spellings are *Ὀκταῖος* (*I.G.R.R.*, I, 1322, early first century after Christ) and *Ὀκτάβιος* (first in *I.G.*, II², 3974, 148-150 after Christ).

⁸ In addition to the Echinus stone cf. *B.C.H.*, LXXXI, 1957, p. 183, ca. 168 B.C.; *Inscr. Délos*, III, 1429, A, 11-12, ca. 163 B.C.; *I.G.*, VII, 4127, first half of second century B.C.; *B.C.H.*, LIV, 1930, pp. 10 and 39, III, after 160 B.C.; perhaps *B.C.H.*, XXXI, 1907, p. 446 (cf. note 12 below). An inscription found by Herzog on Cos also contains the name of Octavius, commander of the Roman fleet in 168 B.C. Unfortunately it has not yet been published and I have not been able to consult it.

⁹ A suggestion already advanced, though not argued, by P. Charneau, *B.C.H.*, LXXXI, 1957, p. 185, note 4.

¹⁰ For his career see F. Münzer, *R.E.*, XVII, 2, 1810-1814; T. R. S. Broughton, *Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, II, New York, 1952, p. 595; P. Charneau, *B.C.H.*, LXXXI, 1957, pp. 181-202.

orders at Rome in 87 B.C. during which he lost his life.¹¹ But in addition to (1), either (2) or (3) was also active in the Greek world as praetor, possibly in command of a fleet. A statue base discovered at Delos records honors accorded by the Posidoniasts of Beirut to a Γναῖος Ὀκταί[ος] Γναίου στρατηγὸς Ῥωμαίων and the letter forms of this stone allow it to be attributed to either (2) or (3).¹² If (2) is the recipient of the Delos base, there is a slim chance he is also the Octavius honored on the Echinus stone since its letter forms admit of a late as well as an early second-century date. But Octavius (1) is by far the most likely candidate. In contrast to (2) and (3) he is definitely known to have played an important role in Greece, both as a statesman and as a military commander. Moreover, Livy reports his activities in the area of Echinus at the nearby cities of Oreos (XLIV, 30, 1; 32, 5) and Demetrias (XLV, 28, 8) and in the territory of Magnesia (XLIV, 46, 3). While operating near Echinus in 168 B.C. Octavius was praetor in command of the fleet, “praetor, cui classis obtigisset (Livy, XLIV, 21, 3),” a direct link with the *στρατηγὸν ναυτικοῦ Ῥωμαίων* inscribed on the stone. Most likely Octavius was honored by the Echinaioi in this year or possibly in the following year when he was propraetor (*ἀντιστράτηγος*). As M. Holleaux has shown, the Greeks did not distinguish regularly between Roman magistracies and promagistracies before the end of the second century B.C.¹³

The phrase *στρατηγὸν ναυτικοῦ* is only descriptive of Octavius' role and not a translation of an official Roman title. Octavius' official title was simply praetor. Nowhere in the literary or epigraphical sources for the Republic is a praetor in command of a fleet called “praetor classis,” “praetor navium,” or the like.¹⁴

Although we do not know the exact circumstances which prompted the Echinaioi, they were not alone in honoring Octavius. Stones survive attesting similar actions on the part of Elis and Argos.¹⁵ Octavius was frequently in direct contact with the

¹¹ For their careers see Münzer, *R.E.*, XVII, 2, 1814-1818 (nos. 18 and 20); Broughton, *op. cit.*, pp. 595-596.

¹² L. Bizard and P. Roussel, *B.C.H.*, XXXI, 1907, pp. 446-447; C. Picard, *B.C.H.*, XLIV, 1920, p. 303; E. Badian, *Proceedings of the African Classical Associations*, Salisbury, Rhodesia, I, 1958, p. 18, note 162; for a photograph see *Exploration Archéologique de Délos*, VI, Paris, 1921, p. 131.

¹³ *Στρατηγὸς ὕπατος*, Paris, 1918, pp. 10-15.

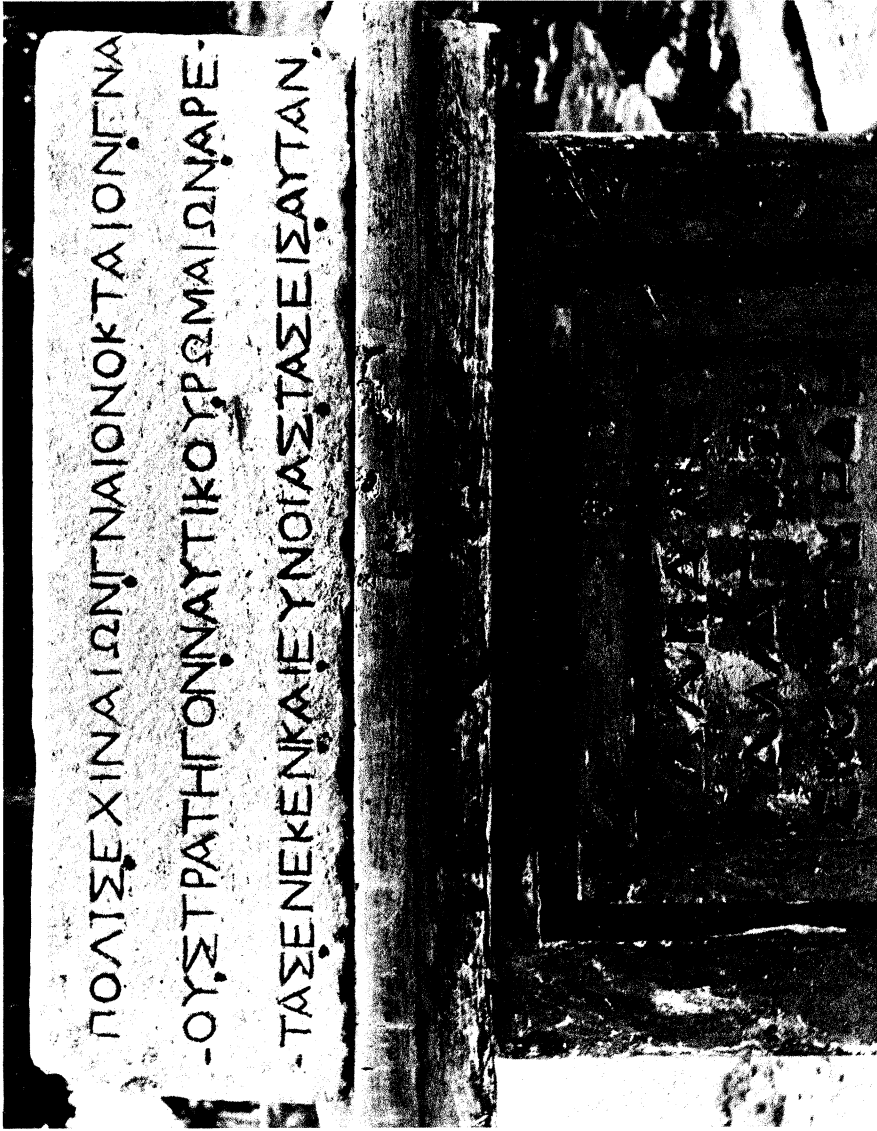
¹⁴ Cf. *S.I.G.*³, 591 for “ὁ στρατηγὸς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ὁ ἐπὶ τῶν ναυτικῶν,” a. 196 B.C. sqq. The title “praefectus classis” which appears on inscriptions in the last half of the first century B.C. (Dessau, *I.L.S.*, 891, 30 B.C.; 2675, “litteris vetustioribus”; *C.I.L.*, XI, 6058, 27 B.C.) is applied by Livy to three men during their tenure as praetor or propraetor in the second century B.C. (cf. W. Ensslin's remarks and references in *R.E.*, XXII, 2, 1294-1295). But *στρατηγὸς ναυτικοῦ* is not likely to be a translation of “praefectus classis” since the Greeks employed compounds of *-αρχ-*(*as*) for this purpose; cf. D. Magie, *De Romanorum Juris Publici Sacrique Vocabulis Solemnibus in Graecam Sermonem Conversis*, Lipsiae, 1905, p. 20 (“ναύαρχος,” “πριήραρχος”) and *I.G.R.R.*, III, 1018 (“ἐπαρχος στόλου”).

¹⁵ *S.I.G.*³, 650 (Elis); *B.C.H.*, LXXXI, 1957, pp. 181-202 (Argos).

Greek states owing to his activities as a commissioner in addition to his military role. It is significant that at Amphipolis in 167 B.C., upon conclusion of the war, he read in Greek the decisions of the senate and his commander, Aemilius Paulus, after Paulus himself had read them in Latin (Livy, XLV, 29, 3). We may conclude, therefore, that Octavius' importance and influence among the Greeks were considerable, and the new stone from Echinus further emphasizes his importance and prestige, if not his popularity.

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