

Notes on Some Documents from Aphrodisias Concerning Octavian

E. Badian

WHEN NEW DOCUMENTS of major importance, connected with famous figures of antiquity, are discovered, they inevitably invite a great deal of discussion before their proper place within the range of our evidence can be settled and their precise contribution to knowledge assessed. We have recently been fortunate enough to have a series of such documents presented to us, edited with scholarly care and with useful historical comments.¹ These notes, on some of the documents that bear on Octavian's relations with M. Antonius, merely want to set the stage for the discussion that is undoubtedly going to develop. In particular, an implausible dating ought to be questioned, and the germ of a tendency, barely noticeable in the editor's comments, of antedating rivalry between the two dynasts in Asia should be suppressed before it develops into extravagant hypotheses.

I. Document 10: Octavian and Stephanus

The text is short enough to quote in full:²

Καῖσαρ Στεφάνῳ χαίρειν. ὡς Ζώιλον τὸν ἐμὸν φιλῶ ἐπίστασαι τὴν πατρίδα αὐτοῦ ἠλευθέρωσα καὶ Ἀντωνίῳ συνέστησα. ὡς Ἀντωνίος ἄπεστιν δὸς ἐργασίαν μὴ τις αὐτοῖς ἐπιβάρησις γένηται. μίαν πόλιν ταύτην ἐξ ὅλης τῆς Ἀσίας ἐμαντῶ εἴληπφα. τούτους οὕτω θέλω φυλαχθῆναι ὡς ἐμοῦς πολεΐτας. ὄψομαι ὡς τὴν ἐμὴν σύνστασιν ἐπὶ πέρας ἀγάγῃς.

This letter receives an excellent assessment from the editor. It shows what we may call the typically Roman genre of patronal epistolography (best known from Book 13 of Cicero's *Ad Familiares*) at its best:

¹ Joyce REYNOLDS, *Aphrodisias and Rome* (JRS Monographs 1 [1982]). I shall give no further page numbers for Documents 10 (96–99), 11 (99–101), 12 (101–03), 13 (104–06); the passages are short enough for citations to be easily found.

² I omit purely epigraphical indications. The state of preservation appears to be perfect.

concise, but bearing many implications, it is addressed to several audiences at once. One, of course, Aphrodisias, where, as Reynolds points out, it has the function of not only apprising the city of the patron's care, but making it clear that Octavian's freedman Zoilus (*Zoilus meus*) is a citizen specially close to him—a fact totally irrelevant, on any interpretation, to the actual addressee Stephanus. As Reynolds notes (97), the letter was intended for publication at Aphrodisias, and Zoilus no doubt saw to it, just as (*e.g.*) Seleucus would see to the publication of the last letter to Rhosus, cited by Reynolds. However, we must note that it is neither stated nor implied that the freedom given to Aphrodisias by Octavian (as he claims) was given on account of Zoilus. This has to be made clear as the contrary impression has already been stated as fact (see Reynolds 103 [“the main cause of his generosity to Plarasa/Aphrodisias”!], 157). We must note not only the similarity, but the contrast, with the case of Rhosus, which is told that Octavian was doing all he could for the city *διὰ Σέλευκον*. In this instance, the reference to Zoilus was presumably put in at the man's personal request, in order (as Reynolds rightly sees, in principle) to further his career. We see patronage operating at more than one level. But there are limits to how far a patron can go.

Next, relations with Antonius. Reynolds has rightly stressed the crucial phrase that shows the uniqueness of Aphrodisias' position, within Antonius' sphere of Asia, as an enclave (as it were) of Octavian, owing to patronage inherited from the Dictator.³ She also rightly compares the status of Bononia in its relationship to Antonius within Italy (Suet. *Aug.* 17.2), though we do not know how that came about. We may conjecture that this rested on a formal bargain, struck (perhaps) only at the treaty of Brundisium, though I do not think this can be deduced (as suggested by Reynolds 98) from the fact that the agreement is mentioned by Octavian (hence, she suggests, not yet known to Stephanus in 39–38). Despite its informal style, this is, as we have noted, a public document, intended for display. I think we see Octavian taking great care to stress that he is not arbitrarily interfering in the political sphere of M. Antonius and has no intention of extending such intervention beyond the unique case provided for. In the case of such a document, this was surely necessary. It merely shows how carefully Octavian was avoiding any appearance of giving

³ *μίαν πόλιν . . . εἵληπτα*. For Caesar's connection see Reynolds 103. K. J. Rigsby has pointed out (*Phoenix* 38 [1984] 104) that the phrase used by Octavian reminds us of phrases used by gods to show special interest in a favoured city. But the resemblance is presumably fortuitous, due to the actual situation. This text predates the parallels he cites.

offence. However, as Reynolds notices, there is no positive reason to think that Octavian took up his inherited patronage before 40 B.C., and we may perhaps connect the renewed interest with the destruction of the city in Labienus' invasion, which forms the background of several of these documents. The city no doubt decided to see what profit could be derived, in its emergency, from the late Dictator's favour, especially since it was no doubt known that his adopted son, *omnia nomini debens*, would be eager to do his duty towards a city that helped demonstrate his attachment (by adoption) to the progeny of Venus (see Reynolds 98). Hence the ambassador Solon was sent to Octavian, not to Antonius: if any embassy went to Antonius, we do not know of it.⁴ This, of course, should not be taken as meaning that no such embassy was sent: on the contrary, the references to *beneficia* by Antonius as well as Octavian in Document 8 (lines 26 and especially 48ff) show that Antonius' interest was also enlisted. Unfortunately, in view of events not foreseeable at the time, the public record of this was no doubt destroyed a decade later, hence the fact can easily escape notice. But the city, needing all the help it could get, did not limit itself to its new overlord, deciding to try its hereditary patron as well. In this, as the record now shows, it succeeded (probably) beyond its expectations.

It does therefore appear plausible that, in the negotiations at Brundisium, M. Antonius, who obviously wanted to retain a foothold in Italy (which, although officially common to both, was clearly slipping from his grasp), and who did not much care about a small city of no great fame in Asia Minor,⁵ agreed to the bargain that gave each man a chance of showing his particular care as a patron, as an example to others in the area; and, presumably, a base and a listening-post in the other's territory, though here (as in all other respects) Antonius clearly got much the better bargain. Again, it is unfortunate that well-known developments have deprived us of the chance of comparing Antonius' letters to Bononia: it is only too easy to assume that they never existed, or were never displayed. Had he won at Actium, our record would probably look very different, in Asia as in Italy. We must not forget that M. Antonius, and indeed even his homonymous ancestors, became unpersons.⁶

⁴ On Solon see Documents 6 and 12, with Reynolds's comments (44, 102).

⁵ Thus acutely Reynolds (98): "it was, of course, a small place, remote from (Antonius') route and of minor significance by comparison with those to whom he paid attention."

⁶ For the erasure even of the name of Antonius' grandfather, the orator (*cos.* 99), see Degrassi, *ILLRP* 342 (with n.2 giving further references).

Caesar's letter is described as "curt and authoritative." This is certainly true in the sense that it is a letter written, purely on business, by a social superior to his inferior: there is no personal element, no social amenities. The writer is conscious of his *dignitas* and makes it clear that the addressee, though he has *potentia*, lacks this quality. Orders are bluntly given, without the courtesies taken for granted between peers. Again: we must not forget that the letter was intended for publication. The locally powerful boss (see Document 11) had to be firmly assigned his station: the patron, watching over his client city, towered above him.

As we have seen, the attitude displayed towards Antonius, despite the brevity of the reference to him, is quite different. Octavian has recommended his city to Antonius and, were Antonius present, would presumably not need to write this letter: Antonius could be trusted to act within the conventions of the Roman aristocracy. There may even be an implication (but we cannot tell) that Antonius has authorized the letter.⁷

What Stephanus' status—social and official—was, we are not told: Reynolds thinks either a freedman or a local man of little importance whom Antonius has made his agent. The former suggestion (as well as her idea that he may have been Antonius' *procurator*) can be supported by reference to the notorious Licinus, powerful and unscrupulous, who held that post for Augustus in Gaul and whose extravagant tomb called the existence of the gods into question.⁸ Yet it ought probably to be excluded. Reynolds duly notes and explains the informality of the salutation in Document 10, but she does not comment on the salutation in Document 11, perhaps worth investigating. Document 11 is a formal letter by Stephanus to the city of Plarasa-Aphrodisias. However, the formal salutation is notable for bearing the writer's name in the simple form which is all we know: he does not give a Roman name, which would have been an obvious asset in a letter of this sort: compare, *e.g.*, the use by Zoilus, at Aphrodisias, of his Roman name in all his texts (Documents 33–40). On the other hand, had he been a local Greek citizen, one would expect him (although perhaps with less certainty) to have given his patronymic in formal correspondence (even if not his origin, which he possibly did not want to stress). The fact that he does neither, that he does not plainly reveal himself to be either a Roman or a

⁷ I do not see how Reynolds can say (98) that "it must be supposed that Antony was absent from Asia Minor": the letter clearly says so.

⁸ See Dio 54.21.2ff (*ἐπίτροπος*); Probus *ap. schol. Juv. 1.109 (curationi praepositus)*. The epigram in *Anth.Lat.* (ed. Shackleton Bailey) no. 411.

Greek citizen, cannot help alerting suspicion. Reynolds (100) in fact mentions the possible appointment of a slave by Antonius at Corinth. It seems to me most likely that Stephanus also is a slave.

We do not know whether Octavian had actually met Stephanus, though it is not unlikely. But the informality of the salutation would certainly be inappropriate to a free Greek unless he knew him well. Not only that, but we note that Antonius is not even given the title of colleague, but mentioned merely by his name. This does seem more suitable in communicating with one who knows at least *him* well; yet I doubt if we can posit Stephanus' being of a class to be regarded as a personal friend. It seems easiest to regard him as a member of Antonius' *familia*. And since (as we have seen) clearly not a freedman, he ought to be a slave. The writer of this letter, as Reynolds properly remarks, shows all the social consciousness of a Roman aristocrat and would meticulously observe the proprieties.⁹

Finally, although the point about Stephanus' low standing is rightly noted, it is inappropriate to refer to the letter as "peremptory" and, above all, to describe the last line as a "threat." What sanctions could Octavian, sitting in Rome, be threatening against Antonius' man in Asia? The sentence cannot have been thus intended or understood by any contemporary. As I see it, it has two functions. First it states Octavian's intention of maintaining his interest in Aphrodisias. This is no *pro forma* recommendation, such as must have been very common in the day-to-day working of the overly burdensome relationships of *fides* that constricted the Roman aristocracy. (We suspect there is more than one example of this in Book 13 of Cicero's *Ad Familiares*.) Octavian makes it clear that he will watch how his recommendation is in fact carried out. This aspect is obviously intended for the citizens of Aphrodisias, who, as we saw, would not only receive the letter, but were expected to publish it.

But it naturally also carries a specific message to the actual recipient, and this is in principle well characterized by Reynolds (97) as being the message of a social superior to a man of low standing. But it is not a threat. Octavian, who has already made it clear that Antonius, Stephanus' master (perhaps in more senses than one), is supporting his (Octavian's) special interest in Aphrodisias, now clearly implies that he will ultimately report to Antonius on how diligently

⁹ Needless to say, we have no letters written by a Roman aristocrat of the Republic to another's slave. The closest we come (not very close!) is Cicero's and his family's letters to his own freedman Tiro. There (for what it is worth) informality in reference to well-known men (Pompey, Caesar, etc.) is conspicuous, and only minor characters whom Tiro might not know are fully identified.

the task entrusted to him by Octavian, with the consent of Antonius himself, has been performed. Antonius could then be expected to take notice, for either reward or punishment. There seems to be no other obvious way of interpreting the sentence, as far as the message conveyed by the writer to the recipient is concerned. Stephanus is firmly put in his place, and his future treatment by his master will depend, at least in part, on the recommendation of one powerful Roman to another. As we well know, this was a common and indeed expected prospect for all who had dealings with Roman gentlemen, in the Roman world.

To judge by Document 11, Stephanus understood, and tried to please. It is to be hoped that he lived to enjoy his reward.

As we see, relations between the two dynasts are at this point conspicuously good. However, it is odd (as Reynolds rightly notes) that Octavian, who is so careful to eschew any appearance of interfering in Antonius' *provincia*, appears to claim sole responsibility for the complex process by which Parasa-Aphrodisias received its freedom (and the alliance connected with it) and which we have attested in Document 8 (see below). There, the recommendation for the *senatus consultum* comes (in this order) from M. Antonius and C. Caesar (line 26), and the imperial *beneficia* ratified are conferred (in this order) by C. Caesar or M. Antonius, acting individually (line 48). We may add that the actual law embodying the treaty must surely, as supplemented by the editor, have been passed by the consuls.

The Latin idiom by which the mover or main supporter of a *senatus consultum* or a law can be said to have 'done' what the legal instrument he brought about ordered to be done is common enough and in itself causes no difficulty.¹⁰ But I have not found a case that would be parallel to the more complex situation we have here, and that would illustrate whether, where more than one *lator* or *auctor* is concerned (and this must have been quite common, e.g. in laws passed by both consuls or by more than one tribune), the idiom can be used of one of them individually. The possibility cannot be excluded that this was a proper way of speech when a Roman aristocrat wanted to stress his achievements. However, it is very likely that Octavian was here making rather too much of his personal part in what had in fact, on a

¹⁰ I cite a few representative instances from the *Philippics*: 1.3 *dictaturam . . . funditus ex re publica sustulit* (Antonius, by moving a *senatus consultum*); 11.20 (a fuller form) *C. Caesari adulescentulo imperium extraordinarium mea sententia dedi*; compare 11.25 *clarissimo uiro priuato imperium extraordinarium non dedi*; 11.36 *quos ego orno?* (again, by moving a *senatus consultum*). In the case of laws this is very common indeed; see the numerous references to the legislation of P. Clodius.

strict view, been a joint *beneficium*. But as we have seen, he was not cheating Antonius of anything. It is very likely that Antonius did not greatly care about his relations with that little city, and it is certain that he had officially recognized Octavian's special connection with it (and special rights regarding it), in return for what may have seemed a more important benefit for himself. It should be added that—whatever linguistic custom may have permitted—as far as gratitude for a *beneficium* and the obligation to corresponding *officia* were concerned, they were not diminished by the fact that the one who had conferred it had not done so alone: we need only remember the very common situation where an accused was defended and assisted by several of his friends, who were, every one of them, his *patroni*. That part of this multi-faceted letter was again addressed to the city that would display it, rather than to the actual recipient, to whom this point would not matter.

II. Document 12: Octavian and Ephesus

This very formal letter, of about the same date, informs the Ephesians that Octavian has given his colleague Antonius *mandata* to recover as much as possible of Aphrodisian property lost in the war against Labienus. He asks them to co-operate in this (as Reynolds points out, there was a good chance that looted property would pass through Ephesus) and, in particular, politely asks them to return to Aphrodisias a golden Eros set up in the temple of Aphrodite there by his father (Divus Julius), which he hears has come into their possession and has been set up as an offering in the Artemisium—a very unsuitable offering for Artemis.¹¹ A difficult final sentence explains why he is writing this to them:¹² ἀνάγκη γάρ μοι Ἀφροδεισιέων ποιέισθαι πρόνοιαν οὗς τηλικαῦτα εὐεργέτηκα, ἣν καὶ ὑμᾶς ἀκούειν νομίζω.

Reynolds rightly points out that he refers to Antonius as an equal (*collega*) and that there is nothing wrong with giving *mandata* to an equal. Yet she tries to see in the letter “a suggestion of (Octavian's) superior or more active benevolence” (than Antonius'). This is not a plausible interpretation. The final sentence, whatever precisely it means, certainly stresses the Roman patron's obligations to his cli-

¹¹ Rigsby (*supra* n.3) suggests religious scruples represented as serious (which would certainly help in the justification of the request and add urgency to it); Reynolds sees Octavian's well-attested “wry humour” here. Both are probably right.

¹² I omit the indication of the erasure of the name of the Aphrodisians, characteristic (to a greater or lesser degree: see Reynolds xv–xvii) of these texts.

ents, and the fact that this patron is taking them seriously. But it also, again, makes clear that the obligation is limited to Aphrodisias (and there is no implication that Antonius has any obligation at all towards that city): the very fact that he is asking the Ephesians to give up something in their possession surely shows the limitations of his *pronoia*. The last sentence, in fact, explains and justifies: he must, and is entitled to, make this demand upon the Ephesians because of his special relationship with Aphrodisias. The sentence corresponds in intention to the justificatory statement (much more clearly put there) in the letter to Stephanus. If the word ἀνάγκη is a correct translation, representing *nesesse est*, Octavian is stressing the inescapable compulsion of patronage.

However, the Greek of the last sentence is anything but clear in construction, as Reynolds notes; we might add that it does not seem to be saying exactly what would be expected. First, *nesesse est* would be *too* strong (it seems) for a patron's obligation: a more normal verb of obligation (*oportet?*), correspondingly translated by a weaker Greek verb (δεῖ), would surely meet the case without strain. Moreover, it is odd that the sentence, explaining and, in a way, justifying Octavian's request to the Ephesians, does not in fact tell them *why* he is thus "constrained" to watch over the interests of Aphrodisias. This becomes all the more odd when we note that he appears only to *think* that they have heard of whatever the relative ἧν refers to (his *pronoia?* the *ananke* under which he acts?): he is not even sure of it. Thus suspicion arises that there may be something wrong with the translation from the original Latin into Greek.

It is always a highly speculative business to posit mistranslation and to try to correct it. I shall certainly not attempt to reconstruct, even *exempli gratia*, the whole of a sentence that might, in detail, have taken many different forms. But I do want to suggest that our problems would be lessened if we posited that the ἀνάγκη arises out of a misunderstanding of Latin *necessitudo*. I would suggest that what Octavian wrote may have been that he thought the Ephesians had heard *nam pro necessitudine me Aphrodisiensibus . . . prouidere* (or some such verb).¹³ Misunderstanding, by someone about as familiar with Latin as many of our own translators of books are with the language

¹³ The phrase *pro necessitudine* in Cicero always seems to be defined, e.g. by *nostra*, by *communi*, by a phrase (*quae mihi cum . . . est*). But see Caesar *BC* 1.4.3. In Cicero, *propter necessitudinem* does occur on its own, probably because of its fuller sound. It may be assumed that these details of rhetoric would not bother Octavian in this instance, any more than they bothered the writer of *commentarii*. *Necessitudo* as a patron's motive occurs frequently in *Ad Familiares* 13; e.g. 39.1, 44, 65.2, 70, 74, 76.1.

from which they are translating, would be easy and almost excusable: *necessitudo* can mean *necessitas* (it does so, *e.g.*, always in the language of technical rhetoric, as a glance at its occurrences in Cicero's *Rhetorica* and the *Ad Herennium* will show), so that *pro necessitudine* might be taken to mean "according to necessity"—which the Greek we have would fairly render. In fact, however, Octavian would then be saying what sense and idiom require: that his care for the Aphrodisians is due to their *necessitudo* (client relationship or even, through Aphrodite-Venus, family relationship?) towards him, of which (for Latin *quam* would be quite unambiguous here) he thinks they too (like everyone else) will know. If this speculation, which seems at least worth advancing, is correct, then the final sentence of this letter would correspond even more closely to the sentence in which Octavian provides Stephanus with justification for his interference: although Antonius' permission would not be noted (and, in writing to Ephesus, it hardly needed to be), the special relationship on which it, no less than his actual request to the Ephesians, was based would at least be intelligibly set out, instead of the limping and (in another sense) lame excuse provided by the text on our stone. Needless to say, neither Ephesus nor Aphrodisias would care, or dare, to ask for clarification if they were puzzled.

III. Document 13: Octavian and Samos

Reynolds's careful annotation makes it very clear that the title *Αὐγουστος* must have been added late: as her discussion shows, probably *very* late. Although we know nothing about the physical history of these documents before the second or third century when they were inscribed on the stones and attached to the wall where they were found, it is reasonable to suggest that this document, particularly since it only very indirectly concerns Aphrodisias, is not likely to have been copied between its first showing (no doubt soon after it was received) and this display. The *cognomen*, in the form in which we have it, cannot possibly be original; hence it will have been added for the purpose of this display. It further follows that the original stone gave no *cognomen*; for an original *Σεβαστός* would not have been changed to the form we here have, as its retention in Document 7 (where it was evidently added at a much earlier stage) demonstrates. Obviously, the earlier form was perfectly well understood as being Augustus' name, even if the later was taken (as it possibly was) to be his title.

So far the implications of Reynolds's brief note. On the other hand, her case against a date after Actium is not persuasive. It rests on the one argument that the phrase ἐν τῷ πολέμῳ, here applied to the war (against Labienus) in which Aphrodisias was destroyed, would "surely be referred to the War of Actium" after that battle.¹⁴ The trouble with this is that it probably applies more in the context of the scholar's foreshortening of history than in the experience of contemporaries. The destruction of Aphrodisias, even though *we* knew nothing about it for a long time, was obviously a well-known and therefore well-remembered event in its own day. No one at Samos (it seems safe to say), by 27 or even a bit later, could have thought that a reference to "the war" in which it took place applied to the war of Actium. References to World War II as "the war" are still intelligible, forty years and at least two wars later, to all who remember it and to many who do not. Certainly, a reference to the capture of Berlin "in the war" would not be taken as applying to the war in Vietnam. I do not see how a reference to "the war" in which Aphrodisias was destroyed, a decade or so after the event and in the area where it took place, could be judged at all misleading. Of course, Octavian might have specified had he chosen to: he could well specify the war against Labienus within months of the event itself (see Document 12 lines 5–6), when there was no question of any positive need for it. My point is simply that, since he chose not to do so, it was not necessary; and that it would not be necessary for some time after 31, which thus cannot be taken as giving us a *terminus post quem non* for this subscript.

We may therefore confidently abandon the early date (39–38) suggested, with some misgivings but on the whole with confidence, by the editor. The positive arguments for it are almost non-existent. That the Samians would immediately seize the occasion of the marriage of their patroness Livia to Octavian to make this request is pure guesswork: it may just as well not have occurred to them, or they may not have thought that Octavian had any say over their area. That it would be more likely for Octavian to mention Aphrodisias as a precedent around 38 than later is simply false: it would be mentioned as long as the fact that it was the only city to which he had given freedom was true. And that the document may have reached Aphrodisias "in the hands of the ambassador Solon" is precisely as likely (no more so and no less) as that it reached the city through one of

¹⁴ In fact she uses this as an argument against a date 27–20, which is in any case excluded by the form of the name. She does not discuss a possible dating 31–28, I do not know why. But I presume she would wish the same argument to apply.

the numerous other envoys who must have constantly passed between it and Rome; that is, if indeed the copy came from Rome.

Though there is therefore nothing to support the date suggested, there is much against. First, an argument that deserves some stress. Octavian refers to the people of Aphrodisias as having, in the war, taken *his* side (τὰ ἐμὰ φρονήσας). At a time when (as we have seen) he was careful to avoid giving offence to Antonius, he would hardly thus conspicuously claim that Aphrodisias' loyalty had been to him alone, where the non-committal ἡμέτερα (which one might interpret as one chose) would have been tactfully in place. It would be a slap in the face for Antonius over a matter of no real importance, and rather silly into the bargain, for anyone who remembered the facts of power and the Triumviral arrangements. This point alone seems to date the subscript either at a time when Octavian no longer cared whether he offended Antonius or not, or after Antonius had disappeared from the scene (and preferably the latter).

Next, against Reynolds's date and helpful in our search for an alternative: as she in fact recognizes, the subscript throughout implies that the gift of freedom to a city is at the free disposal of Octavian himself—in his *arbitrium*, as the Romans would see it. Reynolds's attempted answer is that “it does not seem to me to go beyond the implications of doc. 10.” In view of her own comments on that document (see above), it is difficult to understand what she can mean by this. In Document 10 Octavian did claim to have “freed” Aphrodisias; but he hedged this about by carefully specifying his special relationship with that city, unique and recognized by Antonius; and he did so (as we saw) in a manner that was even technically quite acceptable, though perhaps a little exaggerated. Here there is simply no reference to anyone else, or to any restrictions on his power. The state of affairs as it appears from the two documents could not easily be more different, and a major change of some kind will have to be postulated between them.

Let us now remove another red herring before looking for a positive date. Reynolds's treatment throughout implies (though it never actually states) that the Samian request was sent to Rome. Although this is certainly possible, nothing in the text we have requires it. Nor, above all, is it implied that Livia, who interceded on Samos' behalf, was with him at the time. She was often with him on his travels, of course, as well as in Rome (see Tac. *Ann.* 3.34.6). But we need not assume that her requests on Samos' behalf were made in the bedroom. Even when Octavian was away on campaign and Livia had stayed in Rome, we cannot doubt that they were in regular touch

through couriers. Her support of Samos could as easily have taken that form as the form of a personal appeal.

Having cleared away some of the obstacles, expressed or implied in the editor's treatment, to a successful search for a plausible date, we are now free to suggest one that is surely as plausible as any one might think of: 31 B.C., after the battle of Actium. At this time Octavian stayed at Samos over the winter,¹⁵ beginning the reorganization of the East which he was to complete after the miserable business in Egypt was finished off. He must have received dozens of letters—of congratulation, exculpation, and supplication—from dozens of cities, as his ultimate total victory began to look certain. What more obvious than for the Samians to send to Rome to beg for Livia's support and, after obtaining it, to present their own application for special favour to the victor on the spot? In fact, they had every reason to fear the worst, and no doubt waited until it became clear that Octavian was not holding them accountable for what immediately preceded: Samos had been the headquarters of Antonius' and Cleopatra's fleet before the campaign of Actium and had seen feasting and celebrations worthy of a victory already won, which have lost nothing in the telling.¹⁶ That this must have imposed a strain on the city is obvious: it could claim to have been occupied and to have suffered, and there can be little doubt that the Samians, on the occasion of Octavian's arrival after Actium, presented their case in that way. Fortunately, "he proved merciful and helpful rather than vindictive and cruel"¹⁷—and that may well be when they conceived the idea of taking further advantage of the ready acceptance of their version of their story. He was, after all, the husband of a member of one of their leading patronal families (however the patronage had been established—perhaps by the Claudii, to whose *clientelae* the daughter of Drusus Claudianus succeeded).¹⁸

At this point, Octavian's reply would fit in very well. He could now claim full responsibility for the loyalty of Aphrodisias, and there was indeed no longer much doubt that he could dispense favours (including freedom) as he saw fit. If this reconstruction is accepted, it

¹⁵ See (conveniently) R. Sherk, *Roman Documents* p.311.

¹⁶ Plut. *Ant.* 56.6ff. Some of the details given, however, seem authentic. We might perhaps compare, on a smaller scale, the famous party on the eve of the battle of Waterloo, for which see Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* canto 3 stanzas 11f.

¹⁷ So Sherk (*supra* n.15). He adds: "a policy adopted, perhaps, from a mixture of sympathy and expediency." Presumably, even at that stage and perhaps even without specific intervention, the consciousness of his wife's patronage over the island imposed obligations.

¹⁸ Cf. G. W. Bowersock, *Augustus and the Greek World* (Oxford 1965) 28.

will be seen that the brief document shows considerable diplomatic subtlety. The Samians' objective case (*i.e.*, apart from Livia's patronal efforts) must have rested on their claim that they had suffered as an occupied city; and, had that claim not been in principle accepted by the victor, he would undoubtedly have punished them severely for eager collaboration with the enemy. But to ask for positive rewards was too much. The reply tactfully makes it clear that, by comparison with Aphrodisias, they had no case at all, even though he was willing to be well disposed towards them: ἐγὼ ὑμῶν εὐνοῶ (lines 4–5).

Livia was almost certainly not with him on this occasion. He cannot have taken her with him on the actual campaign, and we do not hear of her joining him after, on Samos itself (though this cannot be excluded). The well-known scene of Cleopatra's alleged hope for her intercession implies that she did not go to Egypt with him.¹⁹ But we have seen that her presence is not required by the document. It was certainly important for Octavian, as Reynolds observes, to show that she took her patronal duties seriously. It is perhaps worth adding that the official image of Livia, as built up and maintained by Augustus, presented her as a regular advocate of kindness and mercy, as in the case of Cleopatra and, most strikingly of all, in connection with the conspiracy of Cornelius Cinna.²⁰ But he also liked to insist that he was master in his own household: there was no danger of a gynaeocracy. That he was not entirely successful in establishing this image, either of Livia or of himself, in his immediate surroundings was only to be expected.²¹

Finally, the document is important by its relevance to the status of free cities. It has been claimed by R. Bernhardt (cited and accepted by Reynolds) that it proves that immunity was normally included in *libertas*, despite the evidence to the contrary collected by Mommsen,

¹⁹ At least as told by Plutarch (*Ant.* 83.6), who mentions Octavia as well. Dio's parallel account (51.13.3) does not, but certainly gives no indication that Dio thought of Livia as present.

²⁰ This is one of Dio's well-known rhetorical showpieces (55.14–22). But although the oratory is undoubtedly his own, the fact that Livia was credited with the plea for mercy and generosity must have been in the tradition. We must remember Dio's statement (54.15.3) that, since no balancing information was available, he would tell stories of conspiracies strictly according to the official version.

²¹ For his insistence on his control over his wife (and also some senators' patent disbelief) see Dio 54.16.4f. Presumably they knew more about his household than the Samians did. In Tacitus and the parallel tradition, of course, Livia appears as an intriguer and poisoner. The tenacity of the official image is demonstrated by M. P. Charlesworth in *CAH* X 633–34: "She had undoubtedly exercised a great influence upon her husband, and always for mildness and clemency"; the charges against her are called "a farrago of nonsense."

who thought that they were normally separated. I think it goes too far to use the document in this way. As Reynolds in fact notes, the phrase used by Octavian implies (strictly speaking) that Samos, if free, would no longer be included in the provincial tribute allocation:²² (τὰ χρήματα) ἃ εἰς τὸν φόρον τελεῖτε. It is obviously possible that Samos would not have paid anything if freed: Aphrodisias certainly was in that happy position (see Document 8 lines 30ff, 58ff). But we must note that the various constituent parts of that most favoured free status are spelled out in immense and careful detail. They are obviously in principle separable. The full formal phraseology of the *senatus consultum* must override the brief diplomatic subscript to the extent that the latter cannot (as indeed it need not) be taken to imply that immunities such as are specified in the former would automatically be part of freedom. It is more likely that Octavian implies that, by attaining freedom, Samos would not officially be part of the province (for tribute collection as for other purposes) and that the details of the extent of that freedom, which *might* include total immunity like that of Aphrodisias, would be subject to negotiation and specification. It is worth noting that, although he claims that the reduction in the provincial tribute income if Samos were excluded from it does not worry him, he does not offer Samos immunity *without* the “most highly prized privileges” he refers to. The parallel cited by Reynolds, of the Gaul for whom Livia asked the citizenship but obtained only *immunitas* (Suet. *Aug.* 40.3), is more illuminating than she seems to realize: Octavian, in this subtle diplomatic document, reveals every intention of giving Samos nothing at all.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY
 June, 1984

²² As she points out, the phrase for (simply) ‘to pay tribute’ is φόρον τελεῖν.