THE VICTORY MONUMENT OF AUGUSTUS AT NICOPOLIS

THE TROPAEUM OF THE SEA BATTLE OF ACTIUM

I

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I

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CHAPTER 3

THE LITERARY TESTIMONIA

The ancient literary testimonia for the Augustan Victory Monument at Nicopolis are few in comparison to the impact the Actian victory and the subsequent conquest of Egypt had not only in Roman history, as the *dies natalis* of the Principate, but also in literature as a pivotal spur for literary production across genres, the so-called Gold and Silver period of Latin Literature. This is not the place for discussion of all ancient testimonia referring to Actium and Nicopolis, the new city established by Octavian,[1] but only those few passages that specifically relate to the Monument and its landscape,[2] in order to contextualize the Monument's new finds.

Quite astonishingly and unexpectedly, the Monument's few testimonia do not include Augustus' biography and achievements, published some time before 14 C.E., where Augustus himself mentions Actium only incidentally (*Res Gestae* 25.1–2, tr. Brunt & Moore 1969):[3]

> Mare pacavi a praedonibus. Eo bello servorum qui fugerant a dominis suis et arma contra rem publicam ceperant triginta fere millia capta dominis ad supplicium sumendum tradidi. Iuravit in mea verba tota Italia sponte sua, et me belli quo vici ad Actium ducem depoposcit; iuraverunt in eadem verba provinciae Galliae, Hispaniae, Africa, Sicilia, Sardinia.
>
> I made the sea peaceful and freed it of pirates. In that war I captured about 30,000 slaves who had escaped from their masters and taken up arms against the republic, and I handed them over to their masters for punishment. (2) The whole of Italy of its own free will swore allegiance to me and demanded me as the leader in the war in which I was victorious at Actium. The Gallic and Spanish provinces, Africa, Sicily and Sardinia swore the same oath of allegiance.

As Augustus looks back at his victory after an interval of more than 40 years, Actium appears to have lost the memorable significance it held in the years immediately following 31 B.C.E. In the *Res Gestae* the Actian victory is simply the necessary beginning for Augustus' subsequent and more definitive achievements which he records. This kind of restraint by Augustus in reference to Actium is also evident in his contemporary and later narratives,[4] and undoubtedly it owes much to the Roman uneasiness and mixed feelings for the place and the Monument commemorating the end of a civil war.[5] Nonetheless, all

[1] The testimonia for Actium and Augustan Nicopolis have been collected and discussed by Gardthausen 1891, I, 369–86; II, 189–201; Gagé 1936; Gurval 1995; Miller 2009; Lange 2009. All have produced solid contributions in which they take into account the extensive previous literature, but only Gagé, Miller, and Lange also take into account the findings from the area and the site's topography. For the history of research of the Augustan era see Edmondson 2009a, 14–26.

[2] The few texts in relation to the Monument have been collected and discussed in detail by Gagé (1936), which remains indispensable; see also Murray & Petsas 1989, 9–12, 87–93. References to the few testimonia for the Monument may also be found in Hoepfner 1987; Jones 1987; Krinzinger 1987; Gurval 1995; Zachos 2001a; 2003b; Yavenditti 2004; Hölscher 2009; Lange 2009; Lorenzo 2011; Tsakoumis 2017.

[3] Lange (2009, 95–123) discusses the connection of the Monument's inscription with Augustus' later memorials (*Res Gestae*) and the related ideology they betray, although Augustus in his *Res Gestae* notes the Actian achievement in a rather typical manner.

[4] Gurval (1995) is a prominent advocate that Actium did not play a pivotal role in literature, but cf. esp. Miller 2009 and Lange 2009. The evidence presented in this volume strongly suggests that the Monument and the entire area of the battle bespeak an organized plan and a nascent ideology for the aftermath of Actium which in Rome was modified and further elaborated.

[5] Pandey 2018 discusses convincingly this tension and the Roman mixed feelings about the civil war, evident in the Augustan literature, esp. in

the sources which relate Actium and its aftermath bespeak, *in nascenti*, the Augustan ideology, consolidated sooner rather than later in Rome and evident in the *Res Gestae*, even if as an aside. Through Octavian's drastic intervention which transformed and monumentalized both site and landscape,[6] Actium and Nicopolis together with the victory in Egypt become an important topos in Latin literature:[7] a literary memorial of Octavian's final victory for the Pax Romana that ensued and his far-reaching decisions as to the future of Rome and its *res publica*.

And yet, in spite of its memorable significance, the Monument itself and its site are mentioned in only nine texts – the longest and most detailed by Dio Cassius more than two hundred years after the events, the other eight in summary form. This shortcoming has puzzled students of the Monument who fail to notice that even Octavian, in composing his *Res Gestae* as Augustus, overlooks to mention his own Victory City, Nicopolis. The Monument however with bronze rams and altars and Nicopolis are a testament to Octavian's victory against his fellow Roman Antony at Actium, but the testament of Augustus in Rome is the Altar of Peace (Ara Pacis) and Apollo on the Palatine. In other words, what Octavian began at Actium, Augustus modified in Rome with a decisive blow, so as to consolidate his power and transform forever the *res publica* into the *imperium romanum*. Thus, the remains of the Monument testify to a volatile and transitional period during which Augustan ideology was in the making and only beginning to take shape by trial and error.[8]

The few passages of ancient authors with their translations (some slightly modified) and commentary, for which different interpretations have been proposed both for the topography and the Monument itself, are quoted below in descending chronological order. This by no means implies that later authors knew what their predecessors recorded, even though the case of Suetonius' text and that of the restored monumental inscription suggest otherwise.

Dedicatory inscription on the Monument, 11 January 29 – 16 January 27 B.C.E.
(see Chapter 7 in this volume, tr. Murray, modified)

> *ansa (vacat)* IMP(erator) • C[AESA]R • DIV[I] • F(ilius) • VICTOR • BEL[L]O • QVOD • PRO [• REPV]BLICA • GES[SI]T • IN • HAC • REGION[E • CONS]VL[• QVINTVM • I]MPERAT[OR •] SEPTIMVM • PACE [•] PARTA • TERRA[MA]RI[QVE • MAR]TINEPTVNO[QVE • C]ASTRA [• EX •] QVIBV[S • AD •] REM • PR[OGR] ESSV[S • EST • NAVALIB]VS [• SPOLI]IS [• EXORNATA • CON]SEC[RAVIT (*vacat*) *ansa*]
>
> Imperator Caesar, son of the Divine (Julius), victor in the war which he waged on behalf of the Republic in this region, when he was consul for the 5th time and imperator for the 7th, after peace had been secured on land and sea, consecrated to Mars and Neptune the camp, from which he set forth to battle, after he decorated it with naval spoils.

The wording of the text on the Monument, according to Murray's edition,[9] follows Suetonius' text and Augustus' *Res Gestae*. Inscribed in monumental letters almost at the formal beginning of the Principate the text presents a glimpse of the basic themes of an evolving Augustan ideology to be elaborated by later authors. Apparently, during the construction of the Monument even Octavian's name was not as yet the official one, as Murray has also read the string of letters not visible in antiquity: *Gaius Iu[lius Caesar]*;[10] this is the name used by Octavian after Caesar's death, before he finally adopted the one in the dedicatory inscription: *Imperator Caesar, Divi filius*, to which *Augustus* was added on 16 January 27 B.C.E.[11] It seems inescapable

Vergil and Ovid; and Giusti argues that in Horace's *Epode* 9, composed after receiving the news of victory at Actium, the "confusion of generals depends on a general confusion of friend-enemy roles which is inherent in the very concept of civil war," a confusion and blurring of boundaries facilitated in the poem by Bacchus, see Giusti 2016, 133.

[6] For the site of the military headquarters and the location of the two camps see Carter 1970, 205–14; and also Chapter 1 in this volume. For the connection of the Monument with the Ara Pacis in Rome as an early form of the Augustan ideology, see Zachos 2007b. Gagé (1936), Yébenes (2013), and Murray (Chapter 7 in this volume) discuss the appropriation of Poseidon by Augustus also because Poseidon was Pompey's patron deity. Lange (2016, 125–53 and 263–70) discusses all the previous arguments on the interpretation of the Monument and Augustan ideology.

[7] Reitz-Joosse 2016 with earlier bibliography.

[8] Almost all the contributions to the volume *Augustus*, edited by Edmondson 2009b, suggest that Augustus' achievements were made possible by "trial and error" and constant experimentation, also evident in the literary production of his time and the monumental inscription of the Monument (see infra and Chapter 7 in this volume).

[9] See Chapter 7 in this volume.

[10] See Chapter 7, Appendix II, in this volume. Pandey (2018, 299 n. 91) cites Nicoll's note (1980, 181 n. 37) about the inscription *Octavius Caesar Actius* on a bowl which "illustrates Apollo's victories over Python and the Giants, along with Propertius' linkage of Actian Apollo with the Pythian victory (4.6.33)."

[11] Murray (Chapter 7 in this volume) has tentatively suggested that a number of blocks on which the text was carved may have been transferred from Magoula near Vonitsa, as most of the Monument's

that in the text, carved on the blocks supporting the captured bronze rams, Mars and Neptune alone, and not Apollo, should be credited. And indeed they are: victory was secured by the decisive role of Mars on land and Neptune at sea.[12] For the text refers to this particular offering of the bronze rams and not to the entire Monument. As the excavations have shown, the more commanding spot is located above the structure for the rams which also served as its Retaining Wall, on a terrace where the remains of the Porticus Triplex enclose the Altar with its magnificent fragmentary sculpture that most probably would have been related to Apollo.[13] Another semicircular Altar (rather than a pedestal), found to the south of the terrace whence it was probably moved, is decorated with a relief sculpture of ten divinities in an archaic style procession: prominent among them is the triad Apollo, Leto and Artemis, followed by Hermes and the three Graces, and Hebe, Heracles and Athena.[14] Thus, the consecration of the rams to Mars and Neptune is only one, even if impressive, of the Monument's offerings, the prerequisite for the victory, for which the terrace above with altars and probably more dedications commemorated in all probability Apollo. For in terms of topography, the higher place for the Altar may indicate not only Apollo's overall importance in the victory at Actium, with the assistance of other divinities, but more importantly Apollo's directorship of a divine orchestra in favor of the land and naval battle's outcome.[15]

Sextus Propertius (ca. 50 – ca. 15/12 B.C.E.),
4.6 ("The Actian Elegy," dated to ca. 16 B.C.E.), lines 11–12, 15–18, 57–58, 67–70
Text/Translation: Cairns 1984, 129–68 and 229–41; Goold 1990; Hutchinson 2006, ad loc.

. . . . . .
Musa, Palatini referemus Apollinis aedem: 11
res est, Calliope, digna fauore tuo.
. . . . . .
est Phoebi fugiens Athamana ad litora portus, 15
qua sinus Ioniae murmura condit aquae,
†Actia Iuleae pelagus monumenta carinae,
nautarum uotis non operosa uia.
. . . . . .
uincit Roma fide Phoebi: dat femina poenas: 57
sceptra per Ionias fracta uehuntur aquas.
. . . . . .
Actius hinc traxit Phoebus monumenta, quod eius
una decem uicit missa sagitta ratis.
bella satis cecini: citharam iam poscit Apollo
uictor et ad placidos exuit arma choros. 70

… Muse, we will speak of the Temple of Palatine Apollo: Calliope, the subject is worthy of your favor … There is a harbor-retreat in Phoebus' Athamanian coast, whose bay silences the murmur of the Ionian waters; an open sea, the Actian *monumenta* of the Iulean ships, a route of easy access to the sailors' prayers … Rome won, through Apollo's faithfulness; the woman was punished; broken sceptres floated on the Ionian Sea … From here Apollo of Actium draws his *monumenta*, as each one of his arrows destroyed ten ships … But of war enough I have sung: Apollo the victor now demands the lyre, and casts off his weapons for peaceful dances. (tr. Goold 1990, modified)

The tour de force of Propertius' Hymn to Actium, as the elegy 4.6 is aptly called, is exactly what Augustus inscribed on the Monument. Although an array of divinities parades throughout the elegy, Apollo's epiphany and his role are unmistakable, in a manner similar to the treatment of Actium by Vergil, Horace, and Ovid.[16] Although their Actium is more abstract and does not relate the Monument per se whereas Propertius' is more concrete and refers to the *monumenta*, all four may be interpreted as presenting in their own uniquely distinct but complementary way the Augustan ideology *in nascenti*. In a sense, Propertius visualizes and monumentalizes the kind of transformation the Actian landscape and its god underwent: from a serene, secluded bay inside the harbor and from Actian or Leucadian Apollo to a tumultuous scenery of conflict of cosmic proportions to Palatine and new Actian

building material was brought in from surrounding cities and towns. For the Hellenistic material see Chapter 1 in this volume; for inscriptions earlier than the Monument see Chapter 14 in volume II.

[12] For the expression *terra marique* see Momigliano 1942 and Chapter 7 in this volume, with n. 81.

[13] Zachos 2001a, 59–62; 2003b, 83; 2007b, I, 417.

[14] In all probability, the procession is related to the wedding of Heracles and Hebe, which somehow seemed relevant in the area of the Monument, where a small statue of Asclepius has also been unearthed. Pieces of two more similar altars have also been unearthed; see Zachos 2003b, 89–90; 2007b, 414–17.

[15] For a nuanced and balanced discussion of Apollo and Augustus see Miller 2009.

[16] Gurval (1995, 249–78) downplays the significance of Actium, but cf. in particular Cairns 1984; Isager 1998; Hölscher 2009; Miller 2009; Lowrie 2009, esp. 188–95; and Nelis-Clément & Nelis 2013, esp. 326–27, all with previous bibliography; and next note.

Apollo of the lyre and the new games. Apollo's dual nature well known since the Homeric Hymn as the god of the lyre and the bow, capable of both warlike and peaceful dances, served well Augustus and the Augustan poets.[17] Propertius' Actian *monumenta* are not only his own hymnic elegy, but also the temple of Apollo on the Palatine at Rome, the temple of Actian Apollo near Antony's campsite, and the sanctuary of Apollo in Octavian's campsite comprising the Monument, the Altar with its reliefs, the Porticus Triplex, all supported below by the inscribed blocks for the bronze rams dedicated to Mars and Neptune.[18] In Propertian terms, the Palatine Apollo becomes the mirror of the previous Actian/Leucadian Apollo, now incorporated into the new identity of the Actian/Palatine Apollo in the serene and secluded bay of the harbor, on the site where Augustus pitched his own camp.

Strabo of Amaseia (ca. 64 B.C.E. – 20 C.E.),
Geography (*Geographica*) 7.7.5–6
Text/Translation: Radt 2002–2011; Jones 1917–1932

> 7.7.5: Μετὰ δὲ Γλυκὺν λιμένα ἐφεξῆς εἰσι δύο ἄλλοι λιμένες, ὁ μὲν ἐγγυτέρω καὶ ἐλάττων Κόμαρος, ἰσθμὸν ποιῶν ἑξήκοντα σταδίων πρὸς τὸν Ἀμβρακικὸν κόλπον καὶ τὸ τοῦ Σεβαστοῦ Καίσαρος κτίσμα, τὴν Νικόπολιν· ὁ δὲ ἀπωτέρω καὶ μείζων καὶ ἀμείνων πλησίον τοῦ στόματος τοῦ κόλπου, διέχων τῆς Νικοπόλεως ὅσον δώδεκα σταδίους. (7.7.6) […] Οἰκοῦσι δὲ τὰ μὲν ἐν δεξιᾶι εἰσπλέουσι τῶν Ἑλλήνων Ἀκαρνᾶνες, καὶ ἱερὸν τοῦ Ἀκτίου Ἀπόλλωνος ἐνταῦθά ἐστι πλησίον τοῦ στόματος, λόφος τις, ἐφ᾽ ᾧι ὁ νεώς, καὶ ὑπ᾽ αὐτῶι πεδίον ἄλσος ἔχον καὶ νεώρια, ἐν οἷς ἀνέθηκε Καῖσαρ τὴν δεκαναίαν ἀκροθίνιον, ἀπὸ μονοκρότου μέχρι δεκήρους· ὑπὸ πυρὸς δ᾽ ἠφανίσθαι καὶ οἱ νεώσοικοι λέγονται καὶ τὰ πλοῖα· ἐν ἀριστερᾶι δὲ ἡ Νικόπολις καὶ τῶν Ἠπειρωτῶν οἱ Κασσωπαῖοι μέχρι τοῦ μυχοῦ τοῦ κατὰ Ἀμβρακίαν […] ὁ Σεβαστὸς ὁρῶν ἐκλελειμμένας τελέως τὰς πόλεις εἰς μίαν συνώικισε τὴν ὑπ᾽ αὐτοῦ κληθεῖσαν Νικόπολιν ἐν τῶι κόλπωι τούτωι, ἐκάλεσε δ᾽ ἐπώνυμον τῆς νίκης, ἐν ᾗι κατεναυμάχησεν Ἀντώνιον πρὸ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ κόλπου καὶ τὴν Αἰγυπτίων βασίλισσαν Κλεοπάτραν, παροῦσαν ἐν τῶι ἀγῶνι καὶ αὐτήν. ἡ μὲν οὖν Νικόπολις εὐανδρεῖ καὶ λαμβάνει καθ᾽ ἡμέραν ἐπίδοσιν, χώραν τε ἔχουσα πολλὴν καὶ τὸν ἐκ τῶν λαφύρων κόσμον, τό τε κατασκευασθὲν τέμενος ἐν τῶι προαστείωι τὸ μὲν εἰς τὸν ἀγῶνα τὸν πεντετηρικὸν ἐν ἄλσει ἔχοντι γυμνάσιόν τε καὶ στάδιον, τὸ δ᾽ ἐν τῶι ὑπερκειμένωι τοῦ ἄλσους ἱερῶι λόφωι τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος.

> 7.7.5: Next in order after Glykys Limen come two other harbors: Comarus, the nearer and smaller of the two, which forms an isthmus of sixty stadia with the Ambracian Gulf and Nicopolis, the city founded by Augustus Caesar; and the other, the more distant and larger and better of the two, which is near the mouth of the gulf, a distance of about twelve stadia from Nicopolis. (7.7.6) […] That part of the country which is on the right as one sails in [sc. the gulf] is inhabited by the Greek Acarnanians. Here too, near the mouth, is the sacred precinct of the Actian Apollo on some hill where the temple stands; and at the foot of the hill is a plain which contains a sacred grove and the naval dry-docks, where Caesar dedicated as first fruits of his victory the squadron of ten ships – from *monokrotos* to *dekeres*; however, it is said that not only the boats but also the naval dry-docks have been wiped out by fire. On the left of the mouth [sc. of the gulf] are Nicopolis and the country of the Epeirote Cassopaeans, which extends as far as the recess of the gulf near Ambracia […] finally Augustus, seeing that the cities had utterly failed, settled their inhabitants in one city of the gulf which he called Nicopolis – so named after the victory which he won in the naval battle before the mouth of the gulf over Antonius and Cleopatra the queen of the Egyptians, who was also present at the fight. Nicopolis is populous, and its numbers are increasing daily, since it has not only a considerable territory and the adornment taken from the spoils of the battle, but also, in its Proasteion, the *temenos*: one part of it is built in a sacred grove and contains both a gymnasium and a stadium for the celebration of the quinquennial games;

[17] On Apollo see in particular Graf 2009, 72, 102–3 and passim. For the Homeric Hymn to Apollo see Clay 1989, 17–94. On Actian/Palatine Apollo see also Jucker 1982; and Miller 2009, esp. for Apollonian and Augustan poetics. In particular, Pandey (2018) convincingly argues that Vergil's *Aeneid* 2.469–558 and Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 1.490–567 through their rich intertextual resonances present just two instances in which the past constantly and in different ways (re)constructs the present and the future, and symbols are transformed and vested with new meaning.
[18] Tzouvara-Souli (1987) discusses the cults of Apollo in Nicopolis and Apollo on coins. Tsakoumis (2017, 504–7 with n. 84) records at least three attested cults of Apollo in the Monument's wider area (Actium/Anactorium, Leucas and Ambracia, colonies of Corinth whose patron diety was Apollo). Propertius however and the other Augustan literature suggest that the Apollo that emerged after the victory was a new Augustan Apollo who combines or fuses all previous distinct and local characteristics even those of the Palatine Apollo (see also the previous note).

> and the other [part of the *temenos*] is above the sacred grove on the sacred hill of Apollo. (tr. Jones 1917–1932, modified)

The awkwardness of the syntax in Strabo's passage has been noted, but the meaning is rather straightforward.[19] After the geographical orientation and a catalogue of harbors on the western coast, Strabo mentions the sanctuary of Actian Apollo and the dedication of the ten ships, as well as the new city and the Proasteion founded by Octavian on account of his victory. Interestingly, unlike Dio (infra), Strabo relates the story (λέγονται) that the ten ships and the docks that housed them were consumed by fire and do not exist anymore, but no comment as regards damages to other dedications.[20]

From early on, so it seems, Nicopolis was an increasingly populous city not only on account of its large territory which yielded revenues and produce or because the city was adorned with the war booty left behind, instead of being transported to Rome. Nicopolis appears to have been an attraction to visitors and new inhabitants, also because of its impressive Proasteion with the *temenos*, which Strabo notes.[21] It seems clear that Augustus modeled this part of his new city on the famous sanctuaries in Olympia and Delphi, where games were also held and where more divinities than the patron god were worshipped. The sacred enclosure (*temenos*) dominated in the Proasteion and comprised: in the lower level (τὸ μὲν) a sacred grove (ἄλσος) with the Gymnasium and the Stadium, the constructions necessary for the Actian Games;[22] and above the sacred grove on higher ground (τὸ δὲ) the hill sacred to Apollo without further details of any noteworthy construction or monument. The last sentence about the hill sacred to Apollo may imply that this hill was sacred to Apollo well before Augustus pitched his camp there, and not because of Augustus' construction of the *temenos* on the site.[23] It is not improbable that there were other places for Octavian to pitch camp, equally or better suited in terms of military topography, and the advantages and disadvantages of this particular hill are spelled out in Dio Cassius' extensive narrative.[24] Perhaps, somehow the hill was already sacred to Apollo,[25] but evidence so far is lacking as most of the building material unearthed appears to have been transferred from nearby cities. Be that as it may, even if there were an open-air grove sacred to Apollo, the decisive factor must have been the choice of Augustus to set up his tent there. Thus, after the foundation of the new Victory City (Nicopolis), the city planners set the entire area apart, literally the area before the city proper (the *astu*), to form what Strabo calls the Proasteion, where the *temenos* with a grove within which the Gymnasium and the Stadium (and the Theater), and above it the sacred hill to Apollo. Unfortunately, the boundaries of the Proasteion and even the *temenos*' limits, if such there were, are not known. Only future research may clarify further Strabo's details and the site's topography.

***Anthologia Palatina* 6.236, Philip of Thessalonica** (Φίλιππος Θεσσαλονικεύς, ca. 41–100), *Garland* (*Στέφανος*, dated post ca. 53 C.E.)
Text/Translation: Gow & Page 1968, I, 298–9; II, 331

> ἔμβολα χαλκογένεια, φιλόπλοα τεύχεα νηῶν,
> Ἀκτιακοῦ πολέμου κείμενα μαρτύρια,
> ἠνίδε σιμβλεύει κηρότροφα δῶρα μελισσῶν,
> ἐσμῷ βομβητῇ κυκλόσε βριθόμενα.
> Καίσαρος εὐνομίης χρηστὴ χάρις. ὅπλα γὰρ ἐχθρῶν
> καρποὺς εἰρήνης ἀντεδίδαξε τρέφειν.
>
> Bronze-jaw beaks, ships' voyage-loving armor, we lie here as witnesses to the war at Actium. Behold, the bees' wax-fed gifts are hived in us, weighted all around with a humming swarm. So good is the grace of Caesar's law and order; he has taught the enemy's arms to bear the fruits of peace instead. (tr. Gow & Page 1968, modified)

Even if in cryptic and puzzling terms, the significance attached to the *temenos* with the Monument by Strabo and

[19] Hammond (1967, 443–69) discusses the sources behind Strabo's narrative and the problems arising from them.
[20] This has been understood by Hammond (1967, 443) as an indication that Strabo seldom traveled, if at all (but differently on p. 457); see also Chapter 1 in this volume.
[21] Gagé (1936, 53–5) suggests that two τεμένη in the Greek text would make more sense.
[22] For the buildings see Zachos 1994; 2015; 2016; 2018b; for the Actian Games see Sarikakis 1965; Zachos 2008; and Chapter 14 in volume II, no. 8. Strabo does not mention the Theater, perhaps because it was not directly associated with the Actian Games, even though some of the contests may have taken place there; or because he never visited Nicopolis, see Sarikakis 1965; Zachos 2018b.
[23] See the discussion in Murray & Petsas 1989, 11–2 with n. 9, and Tsakoumis 2017, 504–7.
[24] See infra and Chapter 1 in this volume.
[25] So Tsakoumis 2017, 505–7, who associates the Hellenistic finds found scattered in the Monument's area with previous activities in this site, perhaps in relation to Apollo. The evidence however unearthed so far, except for a stepped altar (see Chapter 6 in this volume), suggests that most of the material for the constructions in the Proasteion has been brought from neighboring cities and towns. See also supra n. 11.

the Propertian summation of the Actium-topos reappear in Philip's epigram. The epigrammatist employs an elaborate metaphor in order to suggest that after the victory, thanks to Caesar's good government (*charis chreste*) and the rule of law and order (*eunomie*), even the enemy's weapons of war, the bronze rams, formerly the testimony of the Actian War, have learnt by now to work for peace and have become nesting places for bees.[26] The dual nature of Apollo and Augustus, emphasized in Propertius' elegy and evident in the bow and the lyre, and in works of both war and peace, has the capacity and power to transform everything: site, landscape, topography, the *res publica*, literature, even bronze rams, all epitomes of the new era of the Pax Romana.

Publius (or Gaius) Cornelius Tacitus (ca. 55–120),
Annals from the passing of Augustus (*Annales libri ab excessu divi Augusti*, dated to ca. 115–120) 2.53.1–2
Text/Translation: Heubner 1994; Yardley & Barrett 2008

> Sequens annus Tiberium tertio, Germanicum iterum consules habuit. sed eum honorem Germanicus iniit apud urbem Achaiae Nicopolim, quo venerat per Illyricam oram viso fratre Druso in Dalmatia agente, Hadriatici ac mox Ionii maris adversam navigationem perpessus. (2) igitur paucos dies insumpsit reficiendae classi; simul sinus Actiaca victoria inclutos et sacratas ab Augusto manubias castraque Antonii cum recordatione maiorum suorum adiit. namque ei, ut memoravi, avunculus Augustus, avus Antonius erant, magnaque illic imago tristium laetorumque.
>
> The following year [i.e. 18 C.E.] saw Tiberius consul for the third time and Germanicus for the second. Germanicus, however, entered the office in the Achaean city of Nicopolis. He had reached there by journeying along the Illyrian coastline after visiting his brother Drusus, who was then in Dalmatia, and after a stormy passage in the Adriatic and then the Ionian Sea. (2) He therefore spent a few days on repairs to the fleet, and at the same time he visited the gulf made famous by the victory at Actium, the spoils consecrated by Augustus, and the camp of Antonius – all of them reminders of his own ancestors. For, as I noted, Augustus was Germanicus' great-uncle and Antonius his grandfather, and in that place there were images evoking for him much sadness and pleasure. (tr. Yardley & Barrett 2008, modified)

The implications of Strabo's narrative about the topographical arrangement of the site are evident in Tacitus' *Annals* during Germanicus' visit in 18 C.E. On his way to the East from Dalmatia where he visited his brother Drusus, Germanicus entered the office of the consul for a second time in Nicopolis. He was forced by a sea storm to stay there for a few days and repair his fleet, which suggests that Nicopolis (and nearby Actium) already possessed facilities appropriate for such repairs.[27] During this brief stay, Germanicus to his pleasure and sadness visited the consecrated Monument of Augustus' victory with spoils from the war (*sacratas ab Augusto manubias*), but also Antony's camp (*castraque Antonii*) which lay to the south of the gulf near the temple of Actian Apollo. Thus, by 18 C.E. the site had already been an attraction of visitors, as Strabo's text implies, and among them some of the prominent close relatives of the protagonists, Germanicus in 18 C.E. and after him Nero in 66 or 67, as the unearthed inscriptions testify.[28] Even so, the *imago* of Actium and Nicopolis was not that of Rome, an impression that prevailed since Augustus' *Res Gestae* as memories must have been traumatic; and this may very well explain the fact that, as far as we know, only one Roman emperor chose to visit Actium/Nicopolis in the 1st century C.E.

Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (ca. 70–126),
The Lives of the Caesars (*De vita Caesarum*, dated to 121), *Augustus* 18.2 and 96.2
Text/Translation: Rolfe 1913; Edwards 2000

> 18.2: Quoque Actiacae victoriae memoria celebratior et in posterum esset, urbem Nicopolim apud Actium condidit ludosque illic quinquennales constituit et ampliato vetere Apollinis templo locum castrorum, quibus fuerat usus, exornatum navalibus spoliis Neptuno ac Marti consecravit.
>
> 96.2: Apud Actium descendenti in aciem asellus cum asinario occurrit, homini Eutychus, bestiae Nicon erat

[26] In addition to Gow & Page 1968, I, 298–99; II, 33, see also Cameron 1993, 33–3 and Spawforth 2012, 33–6; on the Garland of Meleager and Philip see Argentieri 2007.

[27] See also Dio Cassius infra and Chapter 1 in this volume.

[28] Griffin 2001, 162; Malitz 2005, 89–90; Barrett et al. 2016, 186, 254–56; and for the new fragmentary inscriptions, Chapter 14 in volume II, no. 7.

nomen; utriusque simulacrum aeneum victor posuit in templo, in quod castrorum suorum locum vertit.

So that the victory at Actium would be even more celebrated in the memory of future generations, he founded the city of Nicopolis nearby Actium and established games there to take place every five years. After he enlarged the ancient temple (*vetere templo*) of Apollo (i.e. the one at Actium), he adorned the place where his camp had been with spoils from the enemy ships and consecrated it to Neptune and Mars.
When at Actium he was going to join the fray, he met an ass with his driver. The man's name was Eutychos ("fortunate") and the donkey that of Nikon ("victor"). After his victory, he placed bronze images of them both in the sacred enclosure (*templo*) into which he turned the site of his camp. (tr. Edwards 2000, modified)

Suetonius is recording information that seems contradictory,[29] but in fact contains the Actian highlights of Augustus' intervention in the area north and south of the gulf. In order to memorialize his victory forever and make it unforgettable, Augustus' actions were, according to Suetonius, fourfold: 1) near Actium, i.e. on the opposite north side of the gulf, he founded the new victory city; 2) in that city he instituted the new games; 3) he enlarged the old temple of Apollo, i.e. at Actium where Antony's campsite lay, the one that Germanicus visited; and 4) he transformed his campsite into a sacred enclosure (*templum*), adorned with naval trophies and consecrated to Mars and Neptune. Suetonius also relates the anecdote that Octavian, on his way to inspect the troops and the fleet before dawn, met a man driving a donkey who introduced himself as Eutychos and his donkey as Nikon. This anecdotal incident was also commemorated inside the sacred enclosure (*templum*) with the bronze images of a man and a donkey,[30] who memorialized Octavian's purported encounter with a favorable omen and a herald of his victory. It is astonishing that Suetonius' text is almost a verbatim repetition of the monumental inscription – the only Latin text so far known from the Monument's site. And yet, the entire campsite of Augustus as Suetonius implies was not consecrated only to Mars and Neptune,[31] not even the statues of Eutychos and Nikon which, albeit not naval spoils, stood as he states within the sanctuary (*templum*). Suetonius' reference to the consecration of Mars and Neptune need be none other than the one that has been attested by the excavations: i.e. the construction for the support of the bronze rams dedicated to Mars and Neptune as the monumental inscription makes clear. This dedication of the naval spoils according to Suetonius was apparently only one, perhaps the most impressive, of the many offerings and constructions within the campsite turned into *templum / temenos*.

Plutarch (Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus) of Chaeronea (ca. 46–120),
Parallel Lives (*Βίοι παράλληλοι*, dated to 96–120), Antony (*Αντώνιος*) 65.3
Text/Translation: Perrin 1920

65.3: Καίσαρι δὲ λέγεται μὲν ἔτι σκότους ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς κύκλῳ περιόντι πρὸς τὰς ναῦς ἄνθρωπος ἐλαύνων ὄνον ἀπαντῆσαι, πυθομένῳ δὲ τοὔνομα γνωρίσας αὐτὸν εἰπεῖν· "ἐμοὶ μὲν Εὔτυχος ὄνομα, τῷ δ' ὄνῳ Νίκων." διὸ καὶ τοῖς ἐμβόλοις τὸν τόπον κοσμῶν ὕστερον, ἔστησε χαλκοῦν ὄνον καὶ ἄνθρωπον.

As the story goes, Caesar had left his tent while it was still dark in order to make his round inspecting the ships and he met a man driving an ass. Being asked his name, the man recognized Caesar and replied: "My name is Eutychus ('fortunate') and my ass's name is Nicon ('victor')." For this reason, when afterwards Caesar decided to adorn the place with the rams of ships, he set up bronze figures of an ass and a man. (tr. Perrin 1920, modified)

[29] Murray & Petsas (1989, 11 with nn. 8, 87, 90–93) discuss the absence of Apollo from the text, but conclude, as did Gagé 1936, that in the site more gods were present than one. Tsakoumis (2017, 490–91 with nn. 6–7) argues that the enlargement of the temple referred to (*ampliato vetere Apollinis templo*) is not the ancient one at Actium, but some as yet unidentified ancient temple at the site of the Monument. Perhaps relevant to this topographical misunderstanding is Servius' comment (ad loc. *Aeneid* 3.274), which is similarly confusing to Suetonius' account, who notes: Vergil's reference to Apollo and the Games is because he wanted to honor Augustus who build a marble *templum* there and instituted the Actian Games. What Servius' comment implies is what Suetonius is narrating: Apollo's marble temple is none other than the one at Actium, where fragments of the god's statue as *kitharoidos* (the type of Apollo also on the Palatine) have been unearthed, whereas the Games were held in Apollo's *temenos* within Nicopolis' Proasteion, cf. Trianti 2007; Trianti et al. 2013.

[30] The foundation of three bases for statues have been found in front of the monumental Altar on which may have stood the two bronze images (see Chapter 1 and 6 in this volume), until they were transported to Constantinople's Hippodrome according to Zonaras (see infra).
[31] Tsakoumis 2017, 492 with n. 23. Cf. Murray & Petsas 1989, esp. 92–3.

The anecdote recorded by Suetonius is repeated almost verbatim in Plutarch, as is Augustus' decision to memorialize this purported incident; except that the latter adds an ironic aside, namely that the man gave as names of himself and his donkey the telling words Eutychos and Nikon (undoubtedly not the real ones), because albeit still dark he had recognized Octavian. In all likelihood, Plutarch makes this brief comment so as to emphasize how an anecdotal encounter was turned into a dedication, but his comment is less complicated than Suetonius': Augustus adorned the place with the rams and also set up bronze images of a man and a donkey (and supposedly other dedications and offerings as well).

Dio Cassius Cocceianus (Δίων Κάσσιος Κοκκηιανός, ca. 155–235),
Roman History (*Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία, Historia Romana*) 50.12.1–8 and 51.1–4
Text/Translation: Boissevain 1901; Cary & Foster 1914–1929

50.12.1: ἦγε δὲ αὐτοὺς οὐκ ἐς τὴν Πελοπόννησον οὐδ' ἐπὶ τὸν Ἀντώνιον, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ Ἄκτιον, ἐν ᾧ τὸ πλεῖον αὐτῷ τοῦ ναυτικοῦ ὥρμει, εἴ πώς σφας ἐθελοντὰς ἢ καὶ ἄκοντας προπαραστήσαιτο. καὶ διὰ τοῦτο τόν τε πεζὸν ὑπὸ τὰ ὄρη τὰ Κεραύνια ἐκβιβάσας (2) ἐκεῖσε ἔπεμψε, καὶ αὐτὸς ταῖς ναυσὶ τὴν Κέρκυραν ἐκλειφθεῖσαν ὑπὸ τῶν ἐμφρουρούντων λαβὼν ἐς τὸν λιμένα τὸν Γλυκὺν ὠνομασμένον κατέσχε (καλεῖται δὲ οὕτως ὅτι πρὸς τοῦ ποταμοῦ τοῦ ἐς αὐτὸν ἐσβάλλοντος γλυκαίνεται), καὶ ναύσταθμόν τε ἐν αὐτῷ ἐποιήσατο καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ὁρμώμενος ἐπὶ τὸ Ἄκτιον ἐπέπλει. (3) ὡς δ' οὐδείς οἱ οὔτ' ἀντανήγετο οὔτ' ἐς λόγους ἦλθε, καίτοι δυοῖν αὐτοῦ θάτερον ἢ πρὸς ὁμολογίαν σφᾶς ἢ πρὸς μάχην προκαλουμένου (τὴν μὲν γὰρ τῇ πίστει τὴν δὲ τῷ δέει οὐκ ἐδέχοντο), κατέλαβε τὸ χωρίον τοῦτο ἐν ᾧ νῦν ἡ Νικόπολίς ἐστι, (4) καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐπὶ μετεώρου, ὅθεν ἐπὶ πάντα ὁμοίως τῆς τε ἔξω τῆς πρὸς Πάξοις θαλάσσης καὶ τῆς εἴσω τῆς Ἀμπρακικῆς τῆς τε ἐν τῷ μέσῳ αὐτῶν, ἐν ᾧ οἱ λιμένες οἱ πρὸς τῇ Νικοπόλει εἰσίν, ἄποπτόν ἐστιν, ἱδρύθη. καὶ αὐτό τε ἐκρατύνατο καὶ τείχη ἀπ' αὐτοῦ ἐς τὸν λιμένα τὸν ἔξω τὸν Κόμαρον καθῆκε, (5) κἀκ τούτου καὶ ἐφήδρευε καὶ ἐφώρμει τῷ Ἀκτίῳ καὶ κατὰ γῆν καὶ κατὰ θάλασσαν. ἤδη μὲν γὰρ ἤκουσα ὅτι καὶ τριήρεις ἐκ τῆς ἔξω θαλάσσης ἐς τὸν κόλπον διὰ τοῦ τειχίσματος ὑπερήνεγκε, βύρσαις νεοδάρτοις ἀντὶ ὁλκῶν ἐλαίῳ ἐπαληλιμμέναις χρησάμενος· (6) ἔχω δ' οὐδὲν ἔργον τῶν νεῶν τούτων ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ γενόμενον εἰπεῖν, καὶ διὰ τοῦτο οὐδὲ πιστεῦσαι τῷ μυθολογήματι δύναμαι· οὐδὲ γὰρ οὐδὲ σμικρὸν τὸ πρᾶγμα ἦν, διὰ χωρίου οὕτως ὀλίγου καὶ ἀνωμάλου τριήρεις ἐπὶ βυρσῶν διαγαγεῖν. (7) τοῦτο μὲν οὖν οὕτω λέγεται γενέσθαι· τὸ δ' Ἄκτιον Ἀπόλλωνος ἱερόν ἐστι, καὶ πρὸ τοῦ στόματος τοῦ πορθμοῦ τοῦ κόλπου τοῦ Ἀμπρακικοῦ κατ' ἀντιπέρας τῶν πρὸς τῇ Νικοπόλει λιμένων κεῖται. ὅ τε πορθμὸς ἴσος ἐπὶ πολὺ διὰ στενοῦ τείνει, καὶ ἔστι καὶ αὐτὸς καὶ τὰ πρὸ αὐτοῦ πάντα καὶ ἐνορμίσασθαι καὶ ἐνναυλοχήσασθαι. (8) ταῦτ' οὖν προκατασχόντες οἱ Ἀντωνίειοι ἐπί τε τοῦ στόματος πύργους ἑκατέρωθεν ἐπῳκοδόμησαν καὶ τὸ μέσον ναυσὶ διέλαβον, ὥστε σφίσι καὶ τοὺς ἔκπλους καὶ τὰς ἀναχωρήσεις ἀσφαλεῖς εἶναι· αὐτοί τε ἐπὶ θάτερα τοῦ πορθμοῦ κατὰ τὸ ἱερόν, ἐν χωρίῳ ὁμαλῷ μὲν καὶ πλατεῖ, ἐμμαχέσασθαι δὲ ἢ ἐνστρατοπεδεύσασθαι ἐπιτηδειοτέρῳ, ἐνηυλίζοντο· ἐξ οὗπερ οὐχ ἥκιστα τῇ νόσῳ καὶ ἐν τῷ χειμῶνι, καὶ ἐν τῷ θέρει πολὺ μᾶλλον, ἐπιέσθησαν.

51.1: τοιαύτη τις ἡ ναυμαχία αὐτῶν τῇ δευτέρᾳ τοῦ Σεπτεμβρίου ἐγένετο. τοῦτο δὲ οὐκ ἄλλως εἶπον (οὐδὲ γὰρ εἴωθα αὐτὸ ποιεῖν) (2) ἀλλ' ὅτι τότε πρῶτον ὁ Καῖσαρ τὸ κράτος πᾶν μόνος ἔσχεν, ὥστε καὶ τὴν ἀπαρίθμησιν τῶν τῆς μοναρχίας αὐτοῦ ἐτῶν ἀπ' ἐκείνης τῆς ἡμέρας ἀκριβοῦσθαι. καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῇ τῷ τε Ἀπόλλωνι τῷ Ἀκτίῳ τριήρη τε καὶ τετρήρη, τά τε ἄλλα τὰ ἐξῆς μέχρι δεκήρους, ἐκ τῶν αἰχμαλώτων νεῶν ἀνέθηκε, καὶ ναὸν μείζω ᾠκοδόμησεν, ἀγῶνά τέ τινα καὶ γυμνικὸν καὶ μουσικῆς ἱπποδρομίας τε πεντετηρικὸν ἱερόν (οὕτω γὰρ τοὺς τὴν σίτησιν ἔχοντας ὀνομάζουσι) κατέδειξεν, Ἄκτια αὐτὸν προσαγορεύσας. (3) πόλιν τέ τινα ἐν τῷ τοῦ στρατοπέδου τόπῳ, τοὺς μὲν συναγείρας τοὺς δ' ἀναστήσας τῶν πλησιοχώρων, συνῴκισε, Νικόπολιν ὄνομα αὐτῇ δούς. τό τε χωρίον ἐν ᾧ ἐσκήνησε, λίθοις τε τετραπέδοις ἐκρηπίδωσε καὶ τοῖς ἁλοῦσιν ἐμβόλοις ἐκόσμησεν, ἕδος τι ἐν αὐτῷ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ὑπαίθριον ἱδρυσάμενος. (4) ταῦτα μὲν ὕστερον ἐγένετο.

50.12.1: He was leading them, not to the Peloponnesus or against Antony, but toward Actium, where the greater part of his rival's fleet was at anchor, to see if he could forestall Antony by gaining possession of it, willing or unwilling. With this object in view Caesar disembarked the army at the foot of the Ceraunian mountains (2) and sent them to the point mentioned, while he himself with his ships seized Corcyra, which had been deserted by the garrisons there, and came to anchor in the Sweet (*Glykus*) harbor (modern Phanari), so named because it

is made fresh by the river which empties into it. There he established a naval station, and with that as his base made excursions to Actium. (3) But no one came out to meet him or would hold parley with him, though he challenged them to do one of two things: either come to terms or give battle; but they would accept neither the first alternative because of their confidence, nor the second, because of their fear. So, he occupied the site where Nicopolis now stands, (4) and took up a position and pitched his camp on high ground there, from which there is a bird's eye view over all the outer sea around the Paxos islands and over the inner, Ambracian gulf, as well as over the intervening waters, in which are the harbors of Nicopolis. This spot he fortified, and he constructed walls from it down to Comarus, the outer harbor, (5) and consequently commanded Actium by land and sea, watching it from above with his army and blockading it with his fleet. I have even heard the report that he actually transported triremes from the outer sea to the gulf by way of the fortifications, using newly flayed hides smeared with olive oil instead of runways; (6) yet I am unable to name any exploit of these ships inside the gulf and therefore cannot believe this hearsay tradition; for it certainly would have been no small task to draw triremes over so narrow and uneven a tract of land on hides. (7) Nevertheless, this feat is said to have been accomplished in the manner described. Now Actium is a place sacred to Apollo and is situated in front of the mouth of the strait leading into the Ambracian gulf opposite the harbors of Nicopolis. This strait extends for a long distance in a narrow course of uniform breadth, and both it and all the waters in front of it furnish an excellent place in which to anchor and lie in wait. (8) The forces of Antony had occupied these positions in advance, had built towers on each side of the mouth, and had stationed ships in the intervening waters at intervals so that they could both sail out and return in safety. The men were encamped on the farther side of the narrows, beside the sanctuary, in a level and broad space, which, however, was more suitable as a place for fighting than for encamping; it was because of this fact more than any other that they suffered severely from disease, not only during the winter, but much more during the summer.

51.1: Such was the naval battle in which they engaged on the second of September. I do not mention this date without a particular reason, nor am I, in fact, accustomed to do so; (2) but Caesar now for the first time held all the power alone, and consequently he reckoned properly the years of his reign from that day. In honor of this day he dedicated to Apollo of Actium from the total number of the captured vessels a trireme, a quadrireme, and the other ships in order up to a deceres; and he built a larger temple. He also instituted a quinquennial gymnastic, musical, and horse-racing contest, a "sacred" festival (as all festivals are called where there is distribution of food) and named them Actia. (3) He also founded a city on the site of his camp by gathering together some of the neighboring peoples and by dispossessing others and he named it Nicopolis. In the area where he had had his tent, he laid a foundation of square stones and adorned it with the captured rams of ships, and he founded in it a kind of an open-air shrine of Apollo. (4) But these things were done later […] (tr. Cary & Foster 1914–1929, modified)

Dio Cassius Cocceianus, *Roman History* (*Historia Romana, Xiphilini epitome, Ῥωμαϊκὴ Ἱστορία, ἐπιτομὴ Ξιφιλίνου*, ca. 1050–1100), Dindorf – Stephanus p. 75, lines 15–18
Text: Boissevain 1901

ὁ δὲ Καῖσαρ πόλιν τε ᾠκοδόμησεν ἐν τῷ τόπῳ καθ᾽ ὃν ἐνίκησε, Νικόπολιν αὐτὴν ὀνομάσας, τό τε χωρίον ἐν ᾧ ἐσκήνωσε, λίθοις τετραπέδοις ἐκρηπίδωσε καὶ τοῖς ἁλοῦσιν ἐμβόλοις ἐκόσμησεν, ἕδος τι ἐν αὐτῷ τοῦ Ἀπόλλωνος ὑπαίθριον ἱδρυσάμενος.

Caesar also built a city on the site of his victory, and he named it Nicopolis. On the spot where he had set up his tent, he laid a foundation of square stones, adorned it with the captured rams of ships, and erected on it a kind of an open-air shrine of Apollo.

Ioannis Zonaras (Ἰωάννης Ζωναρᾶς, ca. 1074–1159), *Epitome historiarum* (*Ἐπιτομὴ ἱστοριῶν*), vol. 2, pp. 427–28
Text: Dindorf 1869

πόλιν δ᾽ ἐν τῷ τοῦ στρατοπέδου τόπῳ συνώκισε, Νικόπολιν καλέσας αὐτήν. ἔστησε δὲ καὶ στήλας χαλκᾶς ἀνθρώπου καὶ ὄνου. λέγεται γὰρ νυκτὸς ἔτι οὔσης, καθ᾽ ἣν ἡμέραν ἡ ναυμαχία συνέστη, ἀπὸ τῆς σκηνῆς αὐτῷ προελθόντι καὶ περιιόντι τὰς ναῦς ἄνθρωπος συναντῆσαι ὄνον ἐλαύνων, πυθομένῳ δὲ τοὔνομα εἰπεῖν· "ἐμοὶ μὲν Εὔτυχος ὄνομα, τῷ δ᾽ ὄνῳ Νίκων."

αἱ στῆλαι δ' αὖται ὕστερον ἀνακομισθεῖσαι εἰς τὸ Βυζάντιον ἔστησαν ἐν τῷ τῆς ἱππηλασίας θεάτρῳ.

He also founded a city by synoecism on the site of his camp and named it Nicopolis. And he also set up bronze *stelai* of a man and a donkey. For, as the story goes, in the day of the naval battle and while it was still dark, upon leaving his tent and making the round to inspect the ships, he met a man driving a donkey; when he asked him his name, the man replied: "My name is Eutychos ('fortunate') and the donkey's Nikon ('victor')." These *stelai* were later transported to Byzantium and were set up in the Hippodrome.

Nicetas Choniates (Νικήτας Χωνιάτης, ca. 1155–1216), *Historia* (*Χρονικὴ Διήγησις*), p. 650, lines 10–20 (dated post 1207)
Text/Translation: Dieten 1975; Magoulias 1984, 359

τούτῳ δὲ συγκαθεῖλον καὶ τὸν σεσαγμένον καὶ σὺν ὀγκηθμῷ στελλόμενον ὄνον καὶ τὸν τούτῳ ἐφεπόμενον ὀνηγόν, οὓς ἐν Ἀκτίῳ ἔστησε Καῖσαρ ὁ Αὔγουστος, ὅ ἐστιν ἡ καθ' Ἑλλάδα Νικόπολις, ἡνίκα νυκτὸς ἐξιὼν τὸ τοῦ Ἀντωνίου κατασκέψασθαι στράτευμα ἀνδρὶ ἐνέτυχεν ὄνον ἐλαύνοντι καὶ πυθόμενος, ὅστις εἴη καὶ ἔνθα πορεύεται, ἤκουσεν ὡς "καλοῦμαι Νίκων καὶ ὁ ἐμὸς ὄνος Νίκανδρος, ἀφικνοῦμαι δὲ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ Καίσαρος στρατιάν" … καὶ καθῆκαν αὐτὰς ἐς τὸ χωνευτήριον.

Together with it they pulled down the ass, heavy-laden and braying as it moved along, and the ass driver following behind. These figures had been set up by Caesar Augustus at Actium (which is Nicopolis in Hellas) because when going out at night to reconnoiter Antony's troops, he met up with a man driving an ass, and on inquiring who he was and where he was going, he was told, "I am Nikon and my ass is Nikandros, and I am proceeding to the camp of Caesar." … and [they] cast these into the smelting furnace. (tr. Magoulias 1984)

Dio Cassius' narrative is the most elaborate of all ancient sources as regards the Monument and the wider area outside Nicopolis, whose essence (actually Dio's paragraph 51) is later summarized verbatim by Xiphilinus.

Zonaras mentions the foundation of Nicopolis in passing, since he wants to inform his readers that the bronze images (which he calls *stelai*) of the man and donkey,[32] supposedly Eutychos and Nikon, as in Suetonius and Plutarch, are no longer in the Monument but the emperor Constantine transported them to Byzantium to adorn the Hippodrome of his new city.[33] Likewise, in his description of events in Constantinople after the Crusade in 1204, Nicetas Choniates records the same anecdote but with different names (Nikon for the driver and Nikandros for the ass), only to inform about the fate of Augustus' dedication, i.e. both bronzes together with a host of other metal objects were thrown into the furnace for smelting.

Composing his *Roman History* in the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries, Dio provides a detailed narrative of military events at Actium, most of which were apparently overlooked in previous narratives as these had a different focus. And yet, in retrospect, his narrative clarifies certain problematic references to Actian events and the wider topography.

In his description of the two extensive campsites, Dio brings to the fore advantages and disadvantages of the topography:[34] Antony's campsite at the south of the gulf, near the old temple of Apollo and by the seashore, provided control of the entire gulf, but the lowland and proximity to the sea made living conditions unbearable and diseases broke out; Octavian's campsite was pitched of necessity on the north side of the gulf, in hilly terrain at some distance from the sea, a choice that offered better living conditions with abundant water and supplies, but at a considerable distance of the fleet from the harbor, as it was anchored outside the gulf, in the western harbors of the Ionian Sea (in fact, Dio expresses disbelief at the hearsay report that triremes were brought overland from the Ionian harbor inside the gulf in Augustus' harbor).[35]

What Dio's narrative offers, almost two-hundred years after Actium, is an unequivocal and categorical assessment of how crucial the victory was and how far-reaching its results. Because of the victory and in order to honor that day, Octavian, as the sole power in Rome, took the following measures for the site where it all began:[36] 1) he began count-

[32] At first sight, it is not clear what Zonaras means by *stelai* (Tsakoumis 2017, 491 n. 8); but in Byzantine literature its meaning "monument," "statue," "image" and metaphorically "memorial," "record" is attested (Lampe 1961, s.v.; cf. also Montanari 2013, s.v.); and Nicetas Choniates' narrative clearly relates to (bronze) statues.

[33] See Basset 1991, 90, 94–5; Roueché 2006.

[34] Reinhold 1988. For the topography and landscape of southern Epirus see Oberhummer 1887; and esp. the studies in Wiseman & Zachos 2003; see also Chapter 1 in this volume; and the discussion of Strabo's narrative supra.

[35] For the feasibility of this enterprise see Chapter 1 in this volume.

[36] Usually, only the last paragraph of chapter 51 (i.e. the summary by

ing his years in power from that day; 2) he enlarged the old temple of Actian Apollo; 3) he dedicated from the captured warships an example from each of the ship classifications that fought in the battle, from "ones" to "tens";[37] 4) he instituted the quinquennial sacred festival of the Actian Games, which comprised gymnastic, musical and horse-racing contests;[38] 5) he founded the city of Nicopolis by synoecism either gathering or forcing neighboring peoples to move to the new city;[39] and finally 6) by building a foundation with squared blocks, he turned the site where he had pitched his tent into a kind of an open-air sanctuary of Apollo, which he adorned below with the captured bronze rams.

Dio's detailed narrative clarifies the concise information found in both Strabo and Suetonius. It matters little whether the dominating hill above the sacred grove was sacred to Apollo before Octavian chose to establish his headquarters there (as Strabo seems to imply), or if it became sacred only after Octavian's intervention (as Dio may imply),[40] the fact remains that Apollo is the main divinity, as all the sources except Suetonius attest. Either way, Augustus was responsible for the (re)foundation of Apollo's open-air sanctuary (ἕδος) on the hill's western slope,[41] where the monumental Altar and other findings are encircled by the Porticus Triplex, below which the dedication of the naval spoils also held a prominent place. Therefore, it may not be mere coincidence that Dio mentions the Actia right after the enlargement of Apollo's Actian temple, where they used to be held, and right before the foundation of the new city, where their celebration was moved. For the organization of the games at the sanctuary of Apollo by Anactorium faced serious economic problems at least from 216 B.C.E. on, as a treaty from that year relates,[42] and their organization was handed over to the Acarnanian federation.[43] The new Actian/Palatine Apollo of the lyre and the bow did not only demand a new place for worship and celebration but also a reorganization and enrichment of the former Acarnanian Games, with gymnastic, musical and other contests. And in this way, it acquired Panhellenic and Roman status, just as "prophesied" in the *Aeneid* (3.278–288 with Servius' comment ad loc.). Augustus' new "some kind of an open-air shrine" of Apollo at his campsite dominated the new city and appropriated all previous manifestations of Apollo (whether Actian or Leucadian).

Claudius Mamertinus (mid to late 4th century),
"Gratiarum Actio Juliano Augusto," in *Panegyrici Latini* XI/3.9.2–3 Galletier (1 January 362)
Text/Translation: Galletier 1955; Lieu 1989; Nixon & Saylor Rogers 1995

> Urbs Nicopolis, quam diuus Augustus in monumentum Actiacae uictoriae trophaei instar extruxerat, in ruinas lacrimabiles prope tota conciderat: lacerae nobilium domus, sine tectis fora, iamdudum aquarum ductibus pessumdatis plena cuncta squaloris et pulueris. (3) certamen ludicrum lustris omnibus solitum frequentari intermiserat temporis maesti deforme justitium.
>
> The city of Nicopolis, which the divine Augustus had had built in the likeness of a *tropaeum*, as a monument to the victory of Actium, had almost totally collapsed into dismal ruins: the houses of the nobility were crumbling, the public buildings with no roofs, and since the aqueducts had been destroyed a long time ago the whole place was full of filth and dust. The public games which

Xiphilinus) appears in discussions about the Monument; see e.g. Gagé 1936; Murray & Petsas 1989, 9–12, 87–93; Lange 2009, 95; Tsakoumis 2017, 490–93, 504–7.

[37] See Chapter 7 in this volume.

[38] Although Dio's reference to horse-racing contests has been questioned as no Hippodrome has been located (Sarikakis 1965, 152; Zachos 2008, 32, 45–6), the plain to the west-northwest of Nicopolis may very well have served for such contests, not unlike in Delphi and Olympia.

[39] For this synoecism see Kirsten 1987; Purcell 1987; Gravani 2007; and also the epigraphical evidence in Chapter 14 in volume II.

[40] So Tsakoumis 2017, 491 with nn. 8–13. Murray & Petsas (1989, 90) state that Dio is simply mistaken that the Monument's site was sacred to Apollo and credit Suetonius' version; and yet, they accept the presence on the hill of the triad: Apollo, Mars, Neptune (perhaps even more divinities).

[41] Much weight has been placed on Dio's use of ἕδος (Murray & Petsas 1989, 11 with n. 7, 90 with the previous bibliography; Tsakoumis 2017, 491–92 with nn. 13 and 19 with the previous bibliography, who identifies the Porticus Triplex as such an *hedos*), without much attention to Dio's cautious expression ἕδος τι ὑπαίθριον: some sort of an outdoor or open-air shrine (literally seat or statue or shrine, sanctuary; see Montanari 2013, s.v. from ἕζομαι). What this rare word signifies, especially during the Second Sophistic when Dio is writing, is simply an aura of antique sanctity for reverence, similar to the one at Delphi or Olympia or the like, as Zachos (2001a, 60–1) had suspected. This expression refers to the monumental open-air Altar on the terrace above the rams which must have been dedicated to Apollo. Although the shrine's foundation is not lost in mythical times as in Olympia and Delphi, nevertheless, Augustus' drastic intervention in the site had an impact similar to the one in Olympia and Delphi.

[42] The treaty was found during excavations at Olympia; Habicht 1957; *SEG* 51.534, 52.481; Siewert & Taeuber 2013, 50–6, no. 13.

[43] Stavropoulou-Gatsi & Alexopoulou 2002; Trianti 2007; Zachos 2008, 1–23.

> used to be celebrated regularly every five years had been suspended at this sad time of decline and collapse of public life. (tr. Marna Morgan in Lieu 1989, modified)

It comes as no surprise that the new victory city with its Actian memorials lasted at least until the middle of the 4th century. In his inaugural panegyric to the emperor Julian delivered on 1 January 362 C.E., Claudius Mamertinus describes Nicopolis as a place of filth and dust. After an interval of more than 300 years, it had lost its former grandeur as "a monument in the likeness of a *tropaeum*," where the Actia were celebrated and public life was vibrant.

All these narratives relating Octavian's actions at the site of his victory describe tangible *monumenta*, evident even today, that transformed forever the region's landscape. The process of this intervention was, as Werner Eck has cogently argued about his administrative reforms, by way of an ongoing experimentation,[44] clearly traceable both in the few narratives that single out the Actian Monument of Nicopolis as well as in the remains unearthed so far which corroborate them. After his victory, Augustus followed precedents known from Olympia and Delphi and the foundation of new cities since Philip and Alexander. And by combing the two into one, a new city and a new *temenos*, he totally redesigned the landscape to the south and the north of the gulf. Because the general region where both he and Antony had established their military headquarters was at a safe distance from Rome, experimentation was more feasible there. Such a grandiose project to commemorate the end of the Roman civil war could not be undertaken in Rome. Germanicus' mixed feelings, which are hard to miss in Tacitus' narrative, would have been shared by many others.

As a result, Octavian renovated the old temple of Apollo on Cape Actium, but he found a more suitable site for his synoecism project on the peninsula opposite the cape, in the plain beneath his old camp. And between the city and his camp on the hill, was the Proasteion, or suburb, which comprised a sacred enclosure (*temenos*) with a Gymnasium, a Stadium, a Theater, a sacred grove and facilities for the athletic activities of the new Panhellenic Actia. In all probability, the sacred enclosure extended further up Apollo's hill to Octavian's campsite, the site for: the monumental inscription, the bronze rams dedicated as naval spoils to Mars and Neptune, a kind of open-air sanctuary of Apollo with a monumental Altar, the bronze statues of a man and a donkey and other offerings enclosed by the Porticus Triplex. Octavian (soon to become Augustus) indelibly marked the entire area around the gulf. As it turned out, after a bloody civil war the pivotal victory on September 31 B.C.E. determined not only Octavian's own future and the future of Republican Rome but also the future of the site of victory. And this drastic intervention bringing grandeur and monumental transformation to both site and landscape bespeaks, *in nascenti*, the Augustan ideology, which will soon be consolidated in Rome, after it underwent its Nicopolitan/Actian experimentation by trial and error and necessary adjustments.

After all, the Monument at Nicopolis was a constant reminder of a victory that ended civil strife but haunted the Romans for years to come. This unprecedented vision of creating a monument of victory by fusing into one a new victory city and a victory trophy was Octavian's intended goal, even if he never returned to the place. And according to Claudius Mamertinus (*Pan. Lat.* 3.9.2), it met with total success: *monumentum Actiacae victoriae trophaei instar*, a monument of the Actian victory in the likeness of a trophy. All in all, Actian Nicopolis has been (and still is) quite a remarkable and admirable achievement of Octavian on the eve of his becoming Augustus, literally and figuratively, a *monumentum aere perennius*.

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[44] See Eck 2009; Edmondson 2009a, 8; and supra n. 8.