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AUGUSTO, *Res gestae. I miei atti*, Patrizia Arena (ed.), Bari: Edipuglia, 2014, 187 p. (*Documenti e studi* 58), ISBN 978-88-7228-737-8

The anniversary of 2000 years from the death of Augustus in 2014 has led to an explosion of publications dedicated to this emperor. In parallel, the famous epigraph *Res gestae Divi Augusti* was re-published on various historiographic areas. One of these new editions is signed by Patrizia Arena published in *Documenti e studi*, a series of the 'Dipartimento di Scienze dell'antichità e del tardoantico' of the University 'Aldo Moro' of Bari – Faculty of History. This edition contains the following chapters: *Introduzione*, pp. 5-6; I. *Le iscrizioni* (pp. 9-17), with subchapters: 1. *Roma* (p. 9-11), 2. *Ankara* (p. 11-12), 3. *Antiochia* (pp. 12-13), 4. *Apollonia* (p. 13), 4. *Sardi* (p. 14), 6. *La trasmissione del testo* (p. 14-15), 7. *Le edizioni recenti* (pp. 15-17); II. *Res gestae*, p. 19-117; III. *L'opera* (p. 119-139), with subchapters 1. *L'autore* (p. 119), 2. *Il titolo* (p. 120), 3. *La data di composizione* (p. 120-122), 4. *L'autobiografia di Augusto e le Res gestae* (pp. 122-126), 5. *La struttura del testo* (pp. 126-132), 6. *Significato e destinazione del testo* (pp. 132-137), 7. *La rappresentazione dei poteri del princeps* (p. 137-139); *Bibliografia* (pp. 141-154); *Tavole cronologiche* (p. 155-161); *Tavole iconografiche* (pp. 163-186).

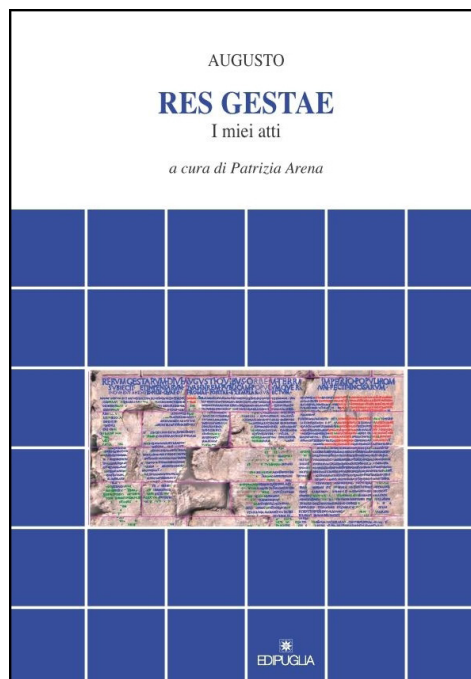
To come up with a new edition on this well-known inscription – which was a major theme for many famous epigraphists and historians of Antiquity, and a topic that still raises a high number of debates – is not an easy enterprise. The editor of this edition has fulfilled her task with honor. She is well knowledgeable on this Augustan text. Her comments are made, naturally, based on the information extracted from other contemporary or later sources of literary, epigraphic, numismatic nature (especially p. 106, comment to **34.1**), architectural or iconographic nature, etc. At the same time, it is obviously that she is well aware with the newest discovery of fragments from this epigraph in Latin (*Antiochia Pisidiae*) and Greek (*Sardis in Asia*). Fragments that have increased some of the controversial versions (especially pp. 106-108, comment to **34.1**). Although her commentary is extremely dense, still it is clear and focused on the topic, raising an abundant series of issues which have been previously debated, sometimes in divergent opinions. Her ideas stated on both the analysis, paragraph by paragraph, of the *Res gestae* and the chapter *L'opera* (pp. 119-139) resonate with other scholars' opinions. Beside old writings, still indispensable, the reference list includes also recent contributions an argument that the editor is closely following the progress on this inscription research, as well as the era of Augustus and the early Roman Empire in general¹. Therefore, it can be considered a successful edition which fully covers the aimed goal – „la migliore fruibilità di un'opera fondamentale per lo studio del Principato” (p. 5).

However, some remarks cannot be avoided. The explanations regarding the criteria that guided this edition, especially the analysis of the Latin and the Greek texts are missing. At page 5, one can read: „il testo latino e quello greco sono stati ricostruiti sulla base delle recenti edizioni di J. Scheid (2007), di A. Cooley (2009), di A. Mitchell-D. French (2012)” (our underline). One can

¹ For the commentary to **31.1**, the study of Nicola Biffi would have been more helpful, BIFFI 2004, 33-55.

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understand that the epigraph's text in the present edition is a *creation* of Patrizia Arena. How it will be possible to check how much has she relied on the previous editions she used? Therefore, a *lemma* would have been welcome to explain this aspect.

The editor came up with an original editing formula: the Latin text, the Italian translation, and the Greek text overlaid in this order. On this way the reader can easily compare the three versions. For all that, the Greek version shows numerous tones, paraphrases, adaptations, loan translations, interpretations, notable differences, etc. with high implications on multiple levels: – the cultural and political statute of the translator; messages; public; the way of understanding the Roman institutions and the specific vocabulary for the Hellenophone environment, etc. Would not a separate translation of the Greek text have been more appropriate, as A. Cooley did? Anyway, even without this solution, the comments should offer explanations requested by the above mentioned aspects, but they are extremely scarce – see pp. 43 (comment to **9.1**), 45 (comment to **10.1**), 64 (comment to **18**), 76 (comment to **22.2**), 106-107 (comment to **34.1**).

In regard to the title, Patrizia Arena tried to convince us why she preferred the translation *I miei atti* (see pp. 6-8). I respect her option although I do not share it. As the exegetes demonstrated before, and the editor entirely agrees with them, (see p. 120), it is less likely that the Augustan text had a title. Most of the editors made it up following the indication of Suetonius, *Aug.*, 101, 4, from the *praescriptio* issued during the reign of Tiberius (see p. 19), and from the 'neutral' expression *Res gestae*. On the other hand, however, it is true that Augustus explicitly used twice the mentioned formula – *ob res... prospere gestas* (**4.2**) and *rebus... prospere gestis* (**12.2**) (see pp. 28 and 30). On the same line, with the exception of the *Appendix* – where the addressing formulas uses the third person while in the rest of the chapters the verbs are in the first person (see p. 117). Still, it is hard to believe that these aspects may have led to the choice of such an emphatic 'autobiographic' title (see p. 137: *Res gestae* – „resocontro autobiografico”). First of all, one should take into account that the formula of *res gestae* comes from the political language of the Roman Republic, where it was used to describe the facts done by the Roman politicians during peace- and wartime. A good example comes from Cicero: *Rep.*, I, 8, 13: *cum superiores ali fuissent in disputationibus perpolit, quorum res gestae nullae inuenirentur*; II, 32, 56: *sed tamen omnia summa cum auctoritate a principibus cedente populo tenebantur, magnaue res temporibus illis a fortissimis uiris summo imperio praeditis, dictatoribus atque consulibus, belli gerebantur*. Therefore, it was a well-known formula. Secondly, the same syntagma is used by the contemporary literature characterizes the facts of Augustus, e.g. Quintus Horatius Flaccus: *Ep.* I, 3, 7-8: *Quis sibi res gestas Augusti scribere sumit? / Bella quis et paces longum diffundit in aeuum?*; II, 1, 250-256: *Nec sermones ego malle/ repentes per humum quam res componere gestas...* At the end, if Tiberius, himself, wanted to subsume the contents of this document left by the *princeps* under and a 'claiming' formula, respectively *Rerum gestarum divi Augusti...*, why, then, we should push the original sense of the epigraphic text in order to come up

with a title? I believe that the translations in various modern languages which stay with the idea from *praescriptio* (see pp. 6-8; to add the Romanian version *Faptele divinului Augustus* [*The Facts of the divine Augustus*]) is the right solution.

Owing to much to her predecessors on this topic, the editor has very few original opinions. Many pages contain a mere enumeration of names and opinions while the critic dialogue with historiography is totally absent (e.g., pp. 120-122, 132-137). This exaggerate obeisance simply blocked the creativity. One example is relevant. At the present stage of research, to keep asserting that the *Res gestae* have a tripartite structure as Theodor Mommsen imagine more than a century ago (see p. 5: „la sua sostanziale tripartizione”, and pp. 6, 19, 126-132) is more than obsolete.

It would have been an interesting to read the editor opinion on the Gregory Rowe's interpretation on the note to **34.3** about *auctoritas*. This scholar questioned an entire historiography dedicated to the ideological fundaments of the imperial power reflected in the *Res gestae*.² Still, no opinion, but a mere record of an opinion among other aspects (p. 113).

In the absence of real conclusions, even those pages that may be considered as the concluding ones (pp. 137-139) have no elements of a new interpretation. The idea that the *Res gestae* is „un documento politico, una costituzione generale del Principato in forma di resoconto autobiografico” (p. 137) that stipulates the powers and honors held by Octavianus/Augustus based on his exceptional *auctoritas* has been clearly demonstrated already by John Scheid: „Les *Res Gestae* ne glorifient pas seulement les hauts faits et les libéralités du prince qui sentait la mort approcher ou venait de décéder. Elles présentent également comme une constitution générale du principat, donnée sous forme de récit autobiographique, dans lequel Auguste essayait, en s'appuyant sur son *auctoritas* suprême, d'imposer à ses successeurs et aux Romains un modèle de régime politique capable de survivre à sa mort sans retomber dans les conflits politiques qui avaient déchiré Rome depuis un siècle”³.

Finally, concerning the other editions of the *Res gestae* mentioned by Patrizia Arena (see pp. 15-16, 141-142), we may be wrong to suspect her of arrogance, ignorance or both. With all due respect for a fellow scholar, I dare to point out that not only in countries such as Italy, France, Germany, United Kingdom or USA but also in countries from Eastern Europe there is a special historiographic interest for this exceptional epigraphic document. And here, I include also its publication at the highest academic standards. On this line, it will be an honor if the editor would have consulted or simply mentioned the title of the *Res gestae divi Augusti* edition published by Marius Alexianu, Roxana Curcă and Nelu Zugravu (Iași „Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University Press, 2004)⁴. This edition was placed **right from the released**

2 ROWE 2013, 1-15, mentioned by Patrizia Arena at p. 151.

3 SCHEID 2007, pp. LIII-LXII (quotation p. LXI); pp. VIII („exposé autobiographique”), XLIII-LXII („une autobiographie politique”); SCHEID 2009, 19-22. Concerning the author (p. 119), it is interesting that Patrizia Arena does not mention the entire opinion of John Scheid – which is similar to her: it was not Augustus who wrote the text but his secretaries (SCHEID 2007, p. XXVI-XXVII).

4 ALEXIANU/CURCĂ/ZUGRAVU 2004.

year in the libraries from Italy. Patrizia Arena would have discovered enough aspects that she, most likely, may not have agreed with but first she would have to read that work. If the language was considered an unbearable limit – although for a true scholar this aspect cannot serve as an excuse – it can be mentioned that Romanian is a neo-Latin and a European language. Other scholars did not have such an issue.

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