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The Behistun Inscription and the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*

Intertextuality between Greek and Latin texts is well known and – in recent decades – has been well studied. It seems though that common elements also appear in earlier texts, from other, mostly oriental countries, such as Egypt, Persia or Israel. In this article we intend to demonstrate the case of a Persian and a Latin text, in order to support the hypothesis of a common Indo-European literature (in addition to an Indo-European mythology and language).

The Behistun Inscription,[1] whose name comes from the anglicized version of Bistun or Bisutun (Bagastana in Old Persian), meaning "the place or land of gods", is a multi-lingual inscription (being thus an equivalent of the Rosetta stone) written in three different cuneiform script extinct languages: Old Persian, Elamite (Susian), and Babylonian (Accadian).[2] A fourth version is an Aramaic translation found on the

[1] For the text see Adkins L., Empires of the Plain: Henry Rawlinson and the Lost Languages of Babylon, New York 2003; Rawlinson H. C., Archaeologia, 1853, vol. xxxiv, 74; Campbell Thompson R., The Rock of Behistun, In Sir J. A. Hammerton (ed.), Wonders of the Past, New York 1937, II, 760–767; Cameron G. G., Darius Carved History on Ageless Rock, National Geographic Magazine, 98 (6), December 1950, 825–844; Rubio G., Writing in Another Tongue: Alloglottography in the Ancient Near East, in: S. Sanders (ed.), Margins of Writing, Origins of Cultures, Chicago 2007², 33–70 (= *OIS*, 2); Hinz W., Die Behistan-Inschrift des Darius, AMI, 7, 1974, 121-134 (translation).

[2] For the different versions of the text, see Kent R. G., Old Persian, Grammar, Texts, Lexicon, New Haven 1953 (= *AOS*, 33); von Voigtlander E. W., The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great, Babylonian Version, London 1978 (= Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum II); Greenfeld J. C., Porten B., The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great, Aramaic Version, London 1982 (= CII V); Schmitt R., The Bisitun Inscription of Darius the Great. Old Persian Text, London 1991 (= *CII*, Part I, vol. I, texts I), to mention just a few.

island of Elephantine in Egypt, which follows the Babylonian text almost word for word.

The inscription, located on Mount Behistun in the Kermanshah Province of Iran, is approximately 15 metres high by 25 metres wide and is located 100 metres up a limestone cliff above an ancient road connecting the capitals of Babylonia and Media (Babylon and Ecbatana, respectively). The Old Persian text contains 414 lines in five columns; the Elamite text includes 593 lines in eight columns, and the Babylonian text has 112 lines. The inscription was illustrated with a life-sized bas-relief of Darius I, the Great, holding a bow as a sign of kingship, with his left foot on the chest of the pretender Gaumata. The River Faravahar floats above, giving its blessing to the king, an iconography repeated later in several Roman emperors' triumphs. After many misinterpretations of the figures that accompany the inscription it is now accepted that it mainly depicts Darius the Great, attended to the left by two servants, and ten one-metre figures to the right, with hands tied and rope around their necks, representing conquered peoples.

A similar piece of art is found at Taqwasân or Taq-e Bostan or Taq-i-Bustan. It consists of large rock relief from the era of the Sassanid Empire of Persia, the Iranian dynasty which ruled western Asia from 226 to 650 AD. It is located in the heart of the Zagros Mountains. The carvings include representations of the investitures of Ardashir II (379-383) and Shapur III (383–388) and are the most impressive of the 30 surviving Sassanid relics of the Zagros Mountains.

Naqsh-e Rajab is an archaeological site east of Istakhr and about 12 km north of Persepolis. It contains four limestone rockface inscriptions and bas-reliefs that date from the early Sassanid era. Two of the carvings are the investiture inscriptions of Ardeshir I (ca. 226-241), the founder of the dynasty and of Ardeshir's successor, Shapur I (ca. 241-272). A third bas-relief, known as "Shapur's Parade" celebrates the king's military victory in 244 BC over the Roman emperor Valerian I and Philip the Arab. The fourth and last bas-relief and inscription is attributed to Kartir, high priest under Shapur I and his sons Hormizd I (ca. 272-273) and Bahram I (ca. 273-276). Seven more oversized rock reliefs depicting monarchs of the Sassanid period (Ardashir I, Shapur I, Bahram II in two reliefs, Narseh, Hormizd II) have been found at Naqsh-e Rustam, together with four inscriptions, which we shall deal with after the presentation of the two basic texts.

Authored by Darius the Great between 522 BC (the date of his coronation as king of the Persian Empire) and 486 (his death), the Behistun

Inscription begins with his brief autobiography, including his ancestry and lineage. Later on, he provides details of a sequence of events following the deaths of Cyrus the Great and Cambyses II in which he fought nineteen battles in a period of one year (ending in the December of 521 BC) to stamp out multiple rebellions throughout the Persian Empire. His military success was attributed to Ahura Mazda, the supreme divinity of the Zoroastrian faith.

Many scholars worked for several years in a multi-national effort to translate the Old Persian version, using the Zoroastrian book Avesta as a key, followed by the Elamite and Babylonian texts, which are translations of the Old Persian one. The first translation based on all three versions was made in 1911 by F. H. Weissbach, trying to fill in the lacunary state of every text, but this masked their originality.[3]

The Res Gestae Divi Augusti[4] (= The acts/deeds/achievements/successes of the Divine Augustus) is the funerary inscription of Augustus, giving a first-person record of his life and deeds. The text consists of a short introduction, 35 body paragraphs, and a posthumous addendum. There are four main sections: political career, public works, military accomplishments and a political statement. According to the text it was written just before Augustus' death in AD 14, but it was probably written years earlier and is likely to have undergone many revisions. The original, which has not survived, was placed in front of Augustus' mausoleum. Many copies of the text were made, three of which have survived in Turkey[5]: *The Monumentum Ancyranum*, almost a full copy, written in the

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[3] See Grillot-Susini F., Herrenschmidt C., Malbran-Labat F., La version élamite de la trilingue de Behistun: une nouvelle lecture, Journal Asiatique, 281, 1-2, 1993, 19-59, who briefly explains the history of the text and provides a transcription and translation of it in French. We based our work on this translation, which we also compared with the one by King L. W. and Thompson R. C., The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistun in Persia: A New Collation of the Persian, Susian and Babylonian Texts, with English translations, London 1907. The editions do not agree on the division of the text into paragraphs and there are discrepancies between the three versions which complicate matters. For the division into paragraphs, we used the King & Thompson proposal.

[4] The bibliography concerning the text is extensive. It can be found in the most recent editions by Cooley A., *Res Gestae Divi Augusti:* Text, Translation and Commentary, Cambridge 2009 and Scheid J., *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: hauts faits du divin Auguste*, Paris 2007, which replaced the momentous old edition of Gagé J., *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* ex monumentis Ancyrano et Antiocheno latinis, Paris 1935, but not its *apparatus criticus*.

[5] See Thonemann P., A Copy of Augustus' *Res Gestae* at Sardis, Historia, 61, 3, 2012, 282-8, who identifies a fragmentary Greek inscription (Sardis, VII.1 no 201) as a fragment (chapters 21-2) of a hitherto unknown copy of the *Res Gestae*, thus being the

original Latin with its Greek paraphrase, the *Monumentum Apolloniense*, with fragments of the Greek text, found at Apollonia and the *Monumentum Antiochenum*, with fragments of the Latin text, found at Antioch.

Both of the ruling writers write in the first person declaring who they are and what they have achieved during their lives. They are both the rulers of the world (RG pref; B 1), Augustus being a god and Darius the king of kings. In the *Behistun inscription* there follows a detailed reference to the royal dynasty of Darius (B 2-4) and the attribution of the achievements to a single deity (passim), a part which has no equivalent in the *Res Gestae*. The description of the countries and nations conquered (some of the countries are common to both texts, such as Armenia, Egypt, Arabia, Parthia, Media and Syria) is more detailed in Augustus' declaration (25-33), which also includes countries not mentioned by name but described in geographical terms). He gave more emphasis to the alliances he created, unlike Darius (6-9), whose titles (1) are limited to those conferring political power, while Augustus had also religious power (1, 7). Thus the *Res Gestae* offers an insight into Augustus' political career, the offices and political honours that he held. Augustus also lists numerous offices he refused to take and privileges he refused to be awarded, something which has no equivalent in the *Behistun inscription.*

The first column of the Persian text ends with the murder of Smerdis by his brother Cambyses (the predecessor of Darius, 10-12), the coup of Gaumata the Magian and the restoration of the kingdom (13-5) and the rebellions of Assina of Elam and Nidintu-Bel of Babylon (16-9), a theme which continues on column two (20-1). The text continues with details of a series of revolts: Martiya of Elam (22-3), Phraortes of Media (24-5), the Armenians (26-30), the Medes (31-4), the Parthians (35-7, extending onto column three), Frada of Margiana (38-9), Vahyazdata of Persia (40-8), the second Babylonian revolt of Arakha (49-51, expanding to the beginning of column four). At the end of this list, Darius offers a summary of his military achievements (52-4) and calls on Ahuramazda to be his witness (55-7). A strange part of the inscription contains blessings and curses respectively for those who accept the content of it and preserve the text from damages and for those who deny or raise doubts about it and try to damage the sculptures (56-67). Darius then mentions his helpers (68-9), whose families he wanted protected by the next king. The text was inscribed and read out before him (a procedure probably followed for

first to be recorded outside the province of Galatia. Ancient Galatia was an area in Central Anatolia in modern Turkey.

Augustus too) and sent to all the provinces of the Persian Empire (just like the *Res Gestae* was sent to all the Roman Empire). It was accompanied by a figure of Darius and his lineage, while Augustus put it on the walls of his own Mausoleum. Column five deals with a new rebellion of Elam (71-3) and the war against the Scythians (74-6), returning to the king's achievements, a part that could have been integrated with his other achievements rather than being separated from them.

One difference between the two texts lies in the fact that Augustus avoids, out of abomination, to mentioning either the murderers of his father (after adoption) Caesar or his enemies during the civil wars, while Darius, names all his enemies, in order to blacken their name throughout history. They both conceal obscure aspects of their reign and present the assassinations they ordered as an inextricable part of their effort to impose "peace" and internal coherence in their kingdom or empire. This is the reason why the reliability of these texts is under research; nonetheless, despite their 'omissions', they are important documents, which reflect the notion of the powerful leader, father of his nation, who was responsible for conquering new nations and thus adding them to his empire or kingdom. In summary, they are a fragmentary representation of historical reality.[6]

There is no mention of Darius' acts of charity for his people; his description is limited to his external victories. On the contrary, Augustus, who also underlines his military triumphs (3 sq.), devotes a large part of his *Res Gestae* to his deeds in the public domain (census, organization of games and various spectacles, distribution and donations of money, land and grain to the plebs, the soldiers, the mercenaries and the municipal towns, 15-8). Having a triple connection to the Roman religion (being himself a god, a priest and a devotee), he spent time and money on the revival of obsolete deities and the restoration of their temples (19-21) as part of a general plan to construct impressive buildings in Rome and in the provinces. After a declaration of the Romans' approval of the reign and deeds of Augustus (34-5), the work ends with a small appendix, a summary written post mortem in the third person.

By their very nature both texts, whose literary genre is still the subject of research (autobiography, *encomion*, *apotheosis*, *res gestae*, *elogium*, *cursus honorum*, formal report, memoir, testament, resume, mini-history and so on), are less objective history and more propaganda, self-congratulation,

6 Grenade P., Essai sur les origins du principat, Paris 1961, 354.

self-advertisement and pride.[7] We think of each one of them as an autocommemorative self-encomion, dictated by the king or emperor to his scribes in praise to himself, in order to preserve his memory for the future. Both of the rulers attempt to influence how future generations will perceive (and judge) not only their achievements, but also their ideology, auctoritas and virtues, all of which were in line with the mentality of the people they ruled.

The *Behistun Inscription* and the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* seem to have a common (oriental?) background, as the presence of analogous texts indicates.[8] Earlier texts which display common elements are Babylonian. The first one is found at Pasargadae, the capital of Cyrus the Great (559-530 BC) and also his last resting place (and the resting place also of Cambyses II, his son and successor, who moved the Persian capital to Susa; both kings are mentioned in Darius' inscription as well), which lies in ruins 43 kilometers from Persepolis. No trace of any inscription survives, and there is considerable disagreement as to the exact wording of the text. Strabo reports that it spoke of Cyrus, who gave the Persians an empire, and was king of Asia. Later on, during the Arab hegemony, the inscription in the tomb was replaced by a verse of the Qur'an, and the tomb became known as Qabr-e Madar-e Sulaiman, or the tomb of the mother of Solomon.

The second comparable text is carved into the Ka'ba-ye Zartosht, meaning the "Cube of Zoroaster". This is an Achaemenid-era tower-like construction at Naqsh-e Rustam, an archaeological site just northwest of Persepolis, about one kilometer away from Naqsh-e Rajab (see above). The

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7 For the nature and genre of *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, see Scheid, XLIII-LIII; Bosworth B., Augustus, the *Res Gestae* and Hellenistic Theories of Apotheosis, JRS, 89, 1999, 1-18; Levi M. A., La composizione delle *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, RFIC, 25, 1947, 187-210.

8 The genre of the *Res Gestae*, a subdivision of historiography, is represented in Latin literature by one more work, written by Ammianus Marcellinus, who composed a history of the Roman empire from the accession of Nerva (96 AD) to the death of Valens at the Battle of Adrianople (378 AD), in effect writing a continuation of the history of Tacitus. It was originally in thirty-one books, but the first thirteen are lost. The surviving eighteen books cover the period from 353 to 378. Thus it is not an account of the achievements of a person, but a description of events by a contemporary. For more details, see two recent contributions: Kelly G., Ammianus Marcellinus: The Allusive Historian, Cambridge University Press 2008; Barnes T. A., Ammianus Marcellinus and the Representation of Historical Reality, Ithaca 1998 (= Cornell Studies in Classical Philology). A later imitation is *Res gestae saxonicae sive annalium libri tres*, a chronicle of 10th century Germany written in Latin by Widukind of Corvey, who wrote as a Saxon, proud of his people and history, beginning his annals, not with Rome, but with a brief synopsis derived from the orally-transmitted history of the Saxons.

structure, which is a copy of the building at Pasargadae, was built by Darius I (ca. 521-486 BCE) when he moved to Persepolis, or by Artaxerxes II (r. 404-358 BCE) or possibly by Artaxerxes III (ca. 358-338 BCE). According to older theories, the structure was once alternatively a fire altar, an eternal-flame memorial to the emperors whose tombs are located a few meters away or a safety box for the "paraphernalia of rule". Today, most scholars consider the structure to be an Achaemenid royal tomb.

The Sassanid-era wall surrounding the structure has four inscriptions dating to the 3rd century. The trilingual inscription[9] of Shapur I (who ruled from 241 to 260 AD) is on the eastern (Middle Persian text), western (Parthian text) and southern (Greek text) walls. It was given the name the *Res Gestae Divi Saporis.*[10] In 29 paragraphs (stretching on 70 lines), we learn about Shapur, king of kings of Iran and non-Iran, whose lineage is from the Gods, son of the Mazda. It gives a meticulous account of his genealogy, and lists the countries that form his empire (some of which also appear in other texts, e. g. Armenia, Parthia, Media, Assyria, Cilicia, Messopotamia, Arabia etc.). His empire even included an area captured from the Roman Empire. He also gives a detailed list of influential rulers and persons who had lived under Papak, his father, and then lived under his own rule (20-9). This part reminds us of the –shorter- list found in the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (31-3). He refers –in exhaustive detail- to his three military campaigns, the innumerable battles he fought and all the towns he defeated, giving special emphasis to the victory over Gordian III,

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[9] For this specific inscription, the philological problems that arise and the suggestions made by the scholars over the years, see Boyce M., On the Zoroastrian Temple Cult of Fire, JAOS, 95, 3, 1975, 454-465; Frye R. N., Persepolis Again, JNES, 33, 4, 1974, 383–386; Gropp G., Ka'ba-ye Zardošt, Encyclopaedia Iranica, OT, 7, New York 2004; Goldman B., Persian Fire Temples or Tombs?, JNES, 24, 4, 1965, 305–308; Herzfeld E., Archaeological History of Iran, London 1935.

[10] The first edition of the text in three languages was by Sprengling M., Shahpuhr I, the Great on the Kaabah of Zoroaster (KZ), AJSI, 57, 1940, 341-420, followed by his Third Century Iran, Sapor and Kartir, Chicago 1953, with photographs. The Greek text formed the basis of the translation by Maricq A., *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, Syria, 35, 1958, 295-360 (= Classica et Orientalia, 5), with his detailed study together with Honigmann E., Recherches sur les *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, Brussels 1953 (= Mémoires de l'Académie royale de Belgique, Classe des lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, 47. 4) reviewed by Guey J., in REA, 57, 1953, 113-122, who himself wrote "Autour des *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*: I. Deniers (d'or) et deniers d'or (de compte) anciens", Syria, 38, 1961, 261-274; see also Gagé J., La montée des Sassanides, Paris 1964; MacDonald D. J., The Genesis of the *Res Gestae Divi Saporis,* Berytus, 27, 1979, 77-83; Mazzarino S., La tradizione sulle guerre tra Shapur I e l'Impero romano, AAntHung, 19, 1971, 59.82.

Valerian I and Philip the Arab. Two major differences between this text and others of the same kind are the use of the first person plural and the attribution of Shapur's achievements to all the gods.

There is a Middle Persian inscription of the high priest Kartir below Shapur's on the eastern wall of the "Cube of Zoroaster". Kartir, the Magi-master, describes, in 19 paragraphs, his loyalty to the King of the Kings (an expression found also in the *Behistun inscription* and in the *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*), namely Shapur (or Shalpuhr), who gave him authority and power in matters of divine services throughout the whole empire in the magus-estate. Ahura Mazda (also mentionned in the *Behistun Inscription*) reappears here as well, as Kartir functions as the magus-master of the deity. After the king's death, the priest continued working with his son and successor Hormizd and later, when Hormizd died, with Varahran, his brother and lastly with the second Varahran, named after his late father. Over the years, Kartir established his divine power throughout the kingdom and augmented his titles and honors. The text is written in the first person. A large part of the inscription is repeated almost word for word, every time the priest finds himself in the service of a new King of the Kings. At the end he confirms that he has written this inscription so that future readers would know who he was. An important difference, at first sight, is that the narrator is a religious and not a political leader, even though, it is quite obvious that he also had strong political influence.

Antiochus I of Commagene (ca 86-38 BC), half Armenian and half Greek, was a loyal Roman ally and friend (Philoromaios) who managed to keep Commagene independent from the Romans. On his tomb-sanctuary at Mount Nemrut (Nemroud-Dagh or Nemrut Dağı) but also at the royal palace (Eski Vale) he built at Arsameia several inscriptions in Greek were found commemorating his public works program and how he glorified the city and enumerating the deities of the dynastic pantheon who received both Greek and Iranian names,[11] adding a religious dimension to the political deeds, since Antiochus I was worshipped as a living god, the same way that was Augustus.[12]

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[11] The most important inscription can be found in W. Dittenberger (ed.), Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones Selectae, Leipzig 1903, repr. Hildesheim, 1960, I, 383, 1. 54 f.; cf. also Arsameia inscr., 1. 8 f.

[12] As Gagé J., 1935, 32, n. 1, points out, the *Res Gestae* have been compared to several religious texts, such as the πράξεις of Osiris and Isis found at their steles at Nysa, the *gesta* attributed to Jupiter himself (see Lact., *Div. Inst*., I. 11. 33), Hadrian's inscription in the Pantheon of Athens (Pausan., I. 5. 5). The same scholar rejected any direct connection (suggested by M. Wilcken) concerning the formula *primus et solus feci* (RG,

Leaving Asia and returning to Rome, we find the epitaph of Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus, who died around 280 BC. He was one of the two elected Roman consuls in 298 BC, who led the Roman army to victory against the Etruscans near Volterra. Moreover, he was the father of Lucius Cornelius Scipio and Gnaeus Cornelius Scipio Asina and great-grandfather of Scipio Africanus about whom Cicero wrote the famous *Somnium Scipionis* between 54 and 51 BC.[13] His sarcophagus was discovered in the Tomb of the Scipios (the only one to survive intact there), and is now in the Vatican Museum. It preserves his epitaph, in four lines, written in Old Latin Saturnian meter. It seems that some text from the first part of the epitaph (two Saturnian verses) has been roughly erased, probably by a later family member, who found this text controversial or unsatisfactory from the family's point of view, a philological problem that has not been solved yet.[14] It is written in the third person and refers briefly to his genealogy, his *virtus* in relation to his appearance, the offices he held and the provinces he captured. It is possible that the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* included some elements (receptions) taken from this text, although the intertextuality with other texts outside the Roman Empire is more than obvious, as we have already shown.

A final text can be found in the *New Testament*, proving one more time that the Greco-Roman and the Biblical tradition have common background at various levels, from somewhat similar legends and elements, to the depiction of characters and situations. It is a list of nations in Acts written in Greek (Πράξεις), which closely resembles that of the regions and peoples of the *Behistun inscription*[15] (and of the *Res Gestae*, we would like to add; Πράξεις is also one of the Greek equivalents for *Res*

16), between the Roman text and the inscription of the founder of Axoum at Adoulis in Ethiopia (see Dittenberger, I, 199, 30), because the formula also exists in several Greek orators such as Demosthenes or Isocrates

[13] *Somnium Scipionis* is a part of the sixth book of the philosophical treatise *De Re Publica*; see Mantzilas D., Cicero, *Somnium Scipionis*, Athens 2005 (in Greek).

[14] See Flower H. I., Ancestor Masks and Aristocratic Power in Roman Culture, Oxford 1996, 173-177; Id. The Art of Forgetting: Disgrace and Oblivion in Roman Political Culture, Chapel Hill 2003, 55–57.

[15] See the interesting article by Taylor J., The List of the Nations in Acts 2: 9-11, RB, 106, 3, 1999, 408-420, who provides earlier scholarship and interpretations. He is the second (after Görg M., Apg 2, 9-11 in außerbiblischer Sicht, Biblische Notizen, 1, 1976, 15-8) to observe the similarities with the list of countries in the *Behistun inscription* (where there are 13 regional or ethnic names referring to the central and western parts of the Persian Empire), eight of which appear in both texts). We would like to expand this line of thinking to include the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* as well.

Gestae). It contains a description of the feast of Pentecost, where "men from every nation under heaven" [sic] were present. Among them we find Parthians, Medes, Elamites, Romans, Jews and Arabs together with inhabitants of Mesopotamia, Asia, Phrygia, Egypt, Libya, and Armenia or Syria (the last two countries do not appear clearly and have been included on the basis of reconstruction of the text by experts).

Equivalent lists appear in the Table of Nations descended from the sons of Noah found in Genesis 10 or in Philo's account of the distribution of Jews throughout the world,[16] both descriptions of the Jewish Diaspora. In addition, Paulus Alexandrinus[17] offers a list of countries matched with the signs of the zodiac and Curtius Rufus[18] describes the kingdoms conquered by Alexander the Great, the number of which coincides with that of the Persian (and the Latin) text.[19] From a later date there are examples from the Meroitic kingdom (ca. 252/3 AD), attested by a series of Demotic and Greek inscriptions from the island of Philae on the Nile, most notably one in which a king of Axum, Ezana (maybe around 325 AD), describes his deeds against various people he had conquered, always with divine intervention.[20]

400 years separate the two main texts we examined here. In summary we may conclude that their main goal is to immortalize the ruler's deeds, to make him an example, a role model for future kings or emperors and to act as powerful propaganda in support of the two rulers in question. The texts could also serve as a manual for their successors or other aspiring leaders and may also act as a severe warning to any provinces that may dare to declare their independence in the future.

In addition, from a philological point of view, we can observe that the two translations (or versions) of the *Behistun inscription*, apart from the difficulties in language, reveal two literary monuments which are not just mechanical copies of the original but, rather, texts with their own characteristics, especially the Babylonian one.[21] The same is true of the *Res*

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16 Phil., *Leg. ad Gaium.*, 281-282.

17 Paul. Alex., *Elementa Apotelesmatica*, 2.

18 Curt. Ruf., 6. 3. 3.

19 Taylor, 418, thinks that there must have been a literary tradition, possibly in Greek, which conveyed this list to Luke. He cites the partial list of Persian lands found in Xen., *Cyr.*, 6. 2. 10 and the complete inventory of Herodotus (3. 89-97), but suggests at the end that the source was probably the Aramaic translation of Darius' inscription, although this translation lacked the paragraph which contained the list of countries.

20 See Raschke M. G., New Studies in Roman Commerce with the East, ANRW, II, 9, 2, 1978, 604-1378, especially 1063.

21 Grillot-Susini et. al., 39, n. 93.

Gestae Divi Augusti, the Greek version of which is a paraphrase and not a strict translation of the Latin original text. These versions reveal the desire and aim of the central mechanism of administration to take the texts to each and every corner of the Empire in languages that could be easily understood by the largest possible number of speakers. This is why their language is simple (in the *Behistun Inscription* all the paragraphs begin with the declaration "King Darius says…"); basic vocabulary is used, resulting as a consequence in the texts only having a limited literary value.

They are challenging to philologists due to the problems of text transmission and restoration they pose, but they are also intriguing to historians and even sociologists, as they offer a direct or indirect view of the ancient societies they refer to, societies which formed part of a greater imperialistic Empire or Kingdom. They are primarily significant because they give an insight into the image Darius and Augustus portrayed to their people. They are, perhaps, the most comprehensible and authoritative legacy of these leaders preserved for posterity.

In this article we have tried to illuminate the similarities and differences between the *Behistun Inscription* and the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* and to underline their common background, as revealed by the existence of other equivalent texts, such as the "phantom" inscription of Pasargadae, the *Res Gestae Divi Saporis*, Kartir's inscription, several inscriptions of Antiochus I of Commagene, the funeral inscription of Lucius Cornelius Scipio Barbatus, the inscription of Ezana's, and the List of Nations in the New *Testament Acts* and similar minor texts.