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## Expressiveness of numbers in the Deeds of the Divine Augustus

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**Abstract.** The article examines the nature and significance of various numerical and statistical data used in the Deeds of the Divine Augustus (*Res gestae Divi Augusti*), and seeks to demonstrate what kind of reality the figures describe and in what manner, as well as what impression they are intended to make. It is concluded that the numerical data of the *Deeds* contain important, in many cases unique and adequately credible information, showing the grandeur of the princes' achievements. The text makes a conscious emphasis on the exceptionally abundant use of numerals, all of which from dating formulas to statistical data give the narrative a businesslike, precise character, allowing to avoid excessive and unsubstantiated pathos, while showcasing with compelling clarity Augustus' unequivocal superiority as a philanthropist, military and state leader in comparison with both his contemporaries and predecessors, which transforms an autobiographical report into Augustus' political testament, addressed *urbi et orbi* and establishing key ideological parameters of an ideal ruler.

**Keywords:** Emperor Augustus, “*Res gestae Divi Augusti*”, Roman Empire, Principate, quantitative data, numerals

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## Экспрессия чисел в «Деяниях Божественного Августа»

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**Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются характер и значение использованных в «Деяниях Божественного Августа» разнообразных числовых и статистических данных, показывается, какую реальность и как они описывают, на какое впечатление рассчитаны. Делается вывод, что числовые данные «Деяний» несут важную, во многих случаях уникальную и вполне достоверную информацию, показывающую грандиозность свершений принцепса. Очевидна сознательная установка автора «Деяний» на исключительно обильное использование числительных, которые и в датировочных формулах, и в собственно статистических сведениях придают нарративу деловой, конкретный характер, позволяя избежать чрезмерного и голословного пафоса, но в то же время с неотразимой очевидностью показывают безоговорочное превосходство Августа как благотворителя, военного и государственного лидера в сравнении как с современниками, так и предшественниками, превращая автобиографический отчет в политическое завещание, обращенное к «Городу и миру» и устанавливающее ключевые идеологические параметры идеального правителя.

**Ключевые слова:** император Август, “Res gestae Divi Augusti”, Римская империя, Принципат, количественные данные

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## Introduction

From historical perspective whatever happens to people, any historical facts that make up historical events (be it production of material goods or dissemination of beliefs, military campaigns and battles, public buildings or state ceremonies)

obviously have a quantitative, numeric expression, and, in one way or another, can be calculated or even summarized as statistical data. Ancient authors were no stranger to that kind of information either, as evidenced by numerous monuments of ancient literature, above all, historical writings, which often provide various quantitative information of diverse degrees of credibility. In this regard, one of outstanding example is the *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (hereinafter — RG) or the “Deeds of the Divine Augustus” — a kind of a first-person record of his life and accomplishments, whose carved copy survived thanks to the famous Ancyra “Queen of Inscriptions” (*Regina Inscriptionum*, according to T. Mommsen’s definition [1]) together with other epigraphic copies from Antioch of Pisidia and Apollonia. This short text (a little over than 6 typewritten pages), compiled by one of the greatest figures of world history, utters, as V. Gardthausen famously put it, “not a word too much and not a word too little” (“kein Wort zu viel und kein Wort zu wenig” [2. S. 1284]). It has been known for almost 500 years and is still an object of scrupulous studies in current scholarship<sup>1</sup>, but nevertheless, in many respects it remains a work of “puzzling, elusive, baffling and inscrutable” nature [7. P. V]), although it appears to be “a factual exposé of great sobriety” [8. P. 17].

Indeed, the vast literature on RG, where the inscription has been analyzed almost to a letter, still lacks sufficient coverage of certain issues. This, for one, concerns the use of numerals and quantitative information. In fact, there has been no special study (at least, to the best of my knowledge) that would systematize numerical and statistical data as one of the essential elements of RG’s narrative structure and strategy in due detail and depth. Notably, J. Scheid’s word index [9] features no numerals at all, in a stark contrast to other parts of speech. Apart from a number of works analyzing individual numerical data<sup>2</sup>, coupled with some comments in existing publications with reflections on this or that figure primarily from the viewpoint of their credibility<sup>3</sup>, there are almost nothing but general remarks and casual judgments on the matter in question<sup>4</sup>. Thus, E. Ramage notes that, along with the use of the 1st person singular, an important RG’s distinction is the use of numerals as part of its rhetorical strategy

<sup>1</sup> On modern trends and problems of RG studies, see [3–4]. On earlier studies and commentaries, see [5–6].

<sup>2</sup> See [10–13]

<sup>3</sup> Of particular interest are recent publications with commentaries [9; 14]. See also commentaries in [6].

<sup>4</sup> E.g. [15. P. 185]

that produce a profound effect on a reader. While their appearance seems quite natural in the record of heroic accomplishments, their very abundance and magnitude suggest that they serve a special purpose and create a cumulative effect that reflects an all-encompassing personality of *RG*'s author [16. P. 28–29]. M. Stöckinger, who examined the *RG* among other Roman historiographic texts that included various kinds of listings, points out that, despite the perceived precision of given numbers, they paradoxically escape any clear calculation, making a purely mathematical evaluation insufficient. Although in terms of strategy the text claims to be dry and completely rational, in fact it overwhelms its readers, revealing an unparalleled array of high-profile achievements [17. P. 37–39].

Perhaps the best description of numerical material in the *Res Gestae* is given by Johanna Maria Klaassen in her recent article [18], where she titles the respective section as “Dazzling ‘statistical pyrotechnics’”, since the inscription uses statistics primarily to impress the readers with the scope of Augustus’ enterprises and to arouse their astonishment, while creating the impression of objectivity and infinity of the princeps’ labors for the good of his people. Directly related to this statistical game is the use of ordinal numerals to denote the number of years of Augustus’ tribunal powers or his consulships as an alternative or auxiliary method of dating. In general however, as Klaassen concludes, “What matters is the whole picture of Augustus’ generosity, not its individual parts. This is a typically populist move.”

Taking all the above-mentioned into account, this paper endeavors to answer several interrelated questions — what goal all these numerals pursue in terms of narrative and discourse; what picture they help create; what impression they are meant to make, how devious some of the numerals are; whether it is possible to paraphrase Gardthausen, that the *RG* uses “not a numeral too much and not a numeral too little.”

### **Predilection for Numbers and Its Origins**

The *RG* unquestionably represent one of the most numeral-rich texts in all of ancient literature. In its title, 35 chapters, and a small Appendix, in almost 2500 words there are over 100 diverse numerals, both ordinal and cardinal (the majority of them) as well as distributive numerals and adverbial numerals such as *bis*, *ter* (8. 2, 13.1, 22.1), *quarter* (17.1, 22.2), *quinqüiens* (22.1). Besides,

the text features adverbial numerals that denote cardinal and ordinal numbers along the Latin way of expressing larger numerals. This, however, does not include the words that have numerals as part of their stems, as, for instance, the names of offices — *triumvir*, *septemvir*, *quindecimvir*; proper names like Quintus or Sextus, or naval terms such as *trireme*, periods of time, such as *quinquennium*; there is also a verb with a numerical meaning — *duplicare* (20.2). Thus, out of 35 chapters, numeralia are not found in only 10 (or with only the cardinal ones considered, they are found in 14 chapters); in some chapters there are eight (chapters 4 and 8) to ten (ch. 22) numerals; the richest in them is chapter 15, which accounts on distributions to Roman people — here 21 numeralia (25 words and one figure) are found in a text of 128 words. Most of these numerals (including some very impressive ones) are written in words, fewer in numerals (7 in all, with numbers ranging from 12 to 890). At the same time, a significant part of them can be regarded with good reason as purely statistical data, given with such superb meticulousness, that some passages of the *RG* resemble the pages of the Guinness Book of Records. For instance, chapter 23 provides the exact dimensions of an artificial water reservoir — 1,800 feet long and 1,200 feet wide<sup>5</sup> — dug by the Tiber for *navmachia*, a staged naval battle (*navalis proeli spectaculum*, as Augustus puts it, deliberately avoiding a borrowed Greek term) to celebrate the consecration of Mars the Avenger Temple in the year 2 B.C.

Numerals proper are complemented by frequently used adjectives with quantitative implications such as *omnis* (11 times), *universus* (5 times), *totus* (3 times), *multus* (2 times in ch. 8.5), as well as *cunctus* (10.2), *numquam minus* (15.1), *pluribus multo* (18), *grandis* (20.1), *plurimae* (32.3), *frequentissimae* (28.2), etc. [16. P. 29]. Noticeably, numerical data are often modified by the adverb *ciriter* (approximately, about) — the *RG* text features 7 such cases — which clearly testifies to the author's accuracy in handling numbers, together with some numbers given with the accuracy of tens or even unities.

<sup>5</sup> Other reports on the event do not give such figures. See: Ovid. *Ars am.* I.171–174; Suet. *Aug.* 43.1; Vell. *Pat.* II.100.2; Tac. *Ann.* XII.56.1; Eus.-Hier. *Chron. ab Abr.* 2014, 168 Helm. Cassius Dio, however, probably out of his love for the extraordinary, adds interesting figures: the games in honor of the consecration of Mars the Avenger temple took the lives of 260 lions, together with 36 crocodiles killed in the water-filled Flaminus Circus after *navmachia* (Cass. Dio LV.10.7). Augustus too mentions animal slaughter in the games (specifically of African animals), but only gives a total figure of 3,500 during his time in power in the course of 26 shows (22.3).

On the one hand, such a richness in numerals comes as no surprise if the *RG* genre distinctions<sup>6</sup> are viewed through the prism of Augustus' personal qualities of a man known to be very scrupulous about his state duties and to care very much for the effects of his speeches and actions in the eye of contemporaries and descendants [19]. At the same time, the first princeps's primary concern was, as directly indicated by the sources, that all the necessary data be complete and systematized as well as that all the measures he was undertaking be accurately calculated. Indicative in this respect is the testimony of Cassius Dio (LIV.25.5), that on his return to Rome in 13 B.C. after he had dealt with Gallic, Germanic and Spanish provinces, being unable to make a speech himself because of a hoarse throat, Augustus entrusted its reading in the Senate to the quaestor. He gave him "a scroll of his speech, in which he listed his achievements and established rules on the duration of military service for citizens and the amount of money they should receive upon retirement in lieu of land they had always demanded".

Notably, the three documents read in the Senate upon the emperor's death were the directions for his funeral, the *Res Gestae*, and, as Suetonius writes, "a summary of the conditions of the whole empire (*breviarium totius imperii*); how many soldiers there were in active service in all parts of it, how much money there was in the public treasury and in the privy-purse, and what revenues were in arrears" (Suet. Aug. 101.4. tr. by J.C. Rolfe in the Loeb Classical Library; cf. Cass. Dio LVI.33.1–2). Tacitus calls it simply *libellus* (a document), indicating, in addition to what Suetonius said, that it "contained a statement of the national resources — the strength of the citizens and allies under arms; the number of the fleets, protectorates, and provinces; the taxes direct and indirect; the needful disbursements and customary bounties", with an emphasis on the fact that all this was written by Augustus in his own hand — *sua manu* (Tac. Ann. I.11.6–7. tr. by J. Jackson in the Loeb Classical Library, slightly modified). This detail is very indicative and agrees well with the famous testimony of Suetonius (Aug. 84.1–2) that Augustus always carefully thought over and wrote down his speeches and spoke on a recorded text before the Senate, people and soldiers, and even in private conversations with his wife Livia used pre-written notes. We can probably say that the princeps tracked and delved with great care into quantitative characteristics of public and financial affairs, personally tracking allocations of various resources

<sup>6</sup>T. Mommsen once defined *Res Gestae* as *Rechenschaftsbericht* — an accounting report.

and funds, which partially explains why he filled the *RG* with extensive numerical information, giving ground to some researchers to refer to his inherent “account-holder mentality” [17. P. 37]. It would not be a great exaggeration to draw an analogy with Tiberius Julius as described by Papinius Statius in his *Silvae*. Tiberius was the father of his friend Claudius Etruscus, made a freedman by emperor Tiberius. He served under the emperor and under his successors up to Domitian as financial office holder, was elevated to the equestrian dignity by Vespasian, who appointed him *a rationibus*, i.e. the head of the financial department<sup>7</sup>. This financial official, according to the poet, was:

Watchful, too, is he and prudent of heart;  
Shrewdly, he reasons out what sum the Roman armies in every clime,  
What the tribes and the temples, what the watercourses demand,  
What the forts that guard our havens,  
And the far reaching chain of roads;  
The gold that must gleam upon the Emperor's panelled ceilings;  
The lumps of ore that must be melted in the fire  
To counterfeit the features of the gods...  
(Stat. *Silvae*. III.3.98–105; translated by D.A. Slater;  
The *Silvae* of Statius. Oxford: The Clarendon Press; 1908. p. 121–131)

It is quite possible that Augustus, under whom there was not established a special financial department, watched the expenditures and revenues of his *patrimonium* and public funds with about the same care. In any case, undoubtedly the first princeps' personality was definitive in the selection and presentation of *RG* material.

Putting aside ongoing discussions on the genre, possible prototypes, messages, goals and addressees of the *Res Gestae*<sup>8</sup>, it should be noted that in terms of abundant numerical data that accompany listings of glorious deeds, the *RG* goes back to epigraphic eulogues of triumphators, known in both inscriptions and literary tradition,

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<sup>7</sup> See [20]

<sup>8</sup> See inter alia [21. P. 23–34; 9. P. xliii–liii; 14. P. 30–43]. Whatever *RG* prototypes are suggested (e.g., large inscriptions of ancient Eastern rulers from Mesopotamian and Egyptian kings to Darius as foundations for further deification), it seems clear that Augustus did not follow any single model, but created a work sui generis [14. P. 34], typically Roman in its outlook, the one that links together *res gestae* (military achievements) and *impensae* (expenditures financed from spoils of war, *ex manubiis*) [21. P. 31], and is virtually an autobiography of a special type [9. P. li].



as well as to some inscriptions of another kind, quite close to the *elogues* in their character. Among the former we may in particular mention the well-known inscription of Gaius Duilius, a consul of 260 B.C. (CIL XII, 25 = ILS 65 = ILRRP 319), where he reports his victory in the famous Battle of Milae against the Carthaginians in the First Punic War. The inscription goes on to say that Gaius Duilius further stormed an enemy city and was the first Roman to oversee the construction of a combat-ready fleet. It also provides a list of trophies and booty with exact figures — the number of captured ships of different classes, the quantity of gold and silver<sup>9</sup>, etc. Another example is an inscription of Pompey the Great mentioned by Diodorus of Sicily (Diod. XL.4) and Pliny the Elder (Plin. HN. VII.26.97–98) that reports a donation of the spoils of war to the temple of Venus, made in 61 B.C. on the day of his triumph. In addition to a detailed description of the outcomes of his victorious campaigns in Asia (expressed in precise figures: 12,183,000 men conquered, 846 ships, 1,538 cities and fortresses captured), it mentions sums of money and other valuables from the booty sacrificed to the goddess, in particular, 1,260 gold objects and 307 talents of silver<sup>10</sup>. A direct analogy to the list of *impensae* in the *Res Gestae* is the statement of Pompey noted by Diodorus on the increase in the income of the Roman people [14. P. 33]. A remarkable example of epigraphic monuments of the second kind is the famous trilingual inscription (In Latin, Greek and Egyptian) of 27–26 B.C. found on the island of Philae. It extols the deeds of Gaius Cornelius Gallus, the first prefect of Egypt after it became a Roman province, who ultimately fell into disfavor with Augustus and committed suicide<sup>11</sup>. In this inscription, the prefect proudly reports that he defeated the enemy in 15 days, won two battles, took five cities, captured rebel leaders, led the army beyond the Nile cataract where no armed forces of either Roman people or kings had been before, accepted the king of Ethiopians under the patronage of Rome, appointed a tyrant in one its regions (ILS 8995; Russian translation: [24. P. 218]). Similar to the *Res Gestae*, this text provides statistical information to give an objective, factual appearance to what is actually a subjective opinion [14. P. 32]. It can be stated that in all these texts feature “the same density of text, the same anxiety to impress the reader ... the same accounting mentality (ships, money, even time), but most importantly, the same stress on the extraordinary actions of the leader” as in the *RG* [25. P. 271].

<sup>9</sup> See [22].

<sup>10</sup> See: [9. P. 31–33; 23. P. 72–75; 6. P. 60–61].

<sup>11</sup> For more on Gallus, see Suet. Aug. 66.2; Cass. Dio LIII.23.5–24.1.



It is also worth noting that other genres of Roman epigraphy (epitaphs, decrees in honor of city *evergetes* and noble patrons, construction inscriptions, etc.) similarly feature an abundance of quantitative data on career stages, age, expenditures on public needs and donations to fellow citizens, costs of dedications, sizes of funerary monuments or public buildings, etc. In this respect, the *RG* is quite in line with Roman epigraphic (and business)<sup>12</sup> culture with its special emphasis on and interest in numerical data on the part of both the compilers and addressees, which as might be suggested manifests typical Roman mentality with its inherent thinking in concrete terms and predilection for visual grandiosity.

### Scrupulousness, Greatness, and Slyness of Numbers

One way or another, the *Res Gestae* certainly stand out by the amount and variety of numerical data, and we may suggest the following groups as the basis for their conventional classification.

1) *Autobiographical information*. This may include indications of the author's age at a given point, stages in his career, positions and honors like 21 imperial acclamations (4.1)<sup>13</sup>, 2 ovations and 3 triumphs, 9 kings or royal children led as captives in the procession of his triumph (4.3)<sup>14</sup>, 55 Senate-decreed thanksgivings, held for a total of 890 days (4.2), 13 consulates<sup>15</sup>, 37 years of tribunician power (4.4; cf. Tac. Ann. I.9.2), three times relinquished office of supervisor of laws and morals with supreme authority (6.1), five times having the senate appoint a colleague with that power (6.2); 10 years as triumvir<sup>16</sup>, *princeps senatus* “for 40 years up to the

<sup>12</sup> Similar to books of income and expenditure (*tabula accepti et expensi*) kept by the head of a household. However, attempts to classify the *RG* as a document of this kind [26. S. 280–281] were not generally supported.

<sup>13</sup> See Tac. Ann. I.9.2: *nomen imperatoris semel atque uiciens partum*.

<sup>14</sup> This refers to a triple triumph celebrated in 29 B.C. Those led in in the procession before Augustus' chariot were Alexander Helios and Cleopatra Selene, the children of Cleopatra and Antony (Cass. Dio LI.21.8), Alexander of Emesa (Cass. Dio LI.2.2), and prince Adiorix of Galatia with his wife and children (Strab. XII.543–558). Augustus probably includes Cleopatra, whose image was carried in the procession, among the nine.

<sup>15</sup> As Tacitus notes, Roman public following Augustus' death (Ann. I.9.2) recalled that the princeps, “held as many consulates ... as Valerius Corvus and Gaius Marius together” (6 and 7 respectively). This passage explicitly expresses a historical comparison that the author of *RG* seems himself to have hoped for when citing such figures.

<sup>16</sup> Compare Suet. Aug. 27.1. Augustus “forgets” a one-year period until the triumvirate was restored in 37 BC, when his position in power was not formalized by law. He also leaves out a gap in official powers in 32 B.C., a year before his third consulate, which began on January 1, 31 B.C. [14. P. 134].

day of writing” (7.1–2); 3 revisions of the membership of senate (8.2). This list might be extended by the honors given to Augustus’s adopted grandsons, Gaius and Lucius Caesars, who were appointed as consuls “when they were fourteen years old, as a way honouring me, on the understanding that they should enter upon the magistracy five years later” (14.1; transl. by A. Cooley). All these figures clearly show Augustus’ prominence and merits, marked by unprecedented honours.

Remarkably, the text of *Res Gestae* begins and ends with an indication of the author’s age, thus setting its general framework that covers 55 years — from the first steps of a 19-year-old youth to a 75-year-old elder summarizing his long life in a report (35.2: *cum scripsi haec, annum agebam septuagenum sextum*). Right at the start (1.1), Augustus emphasizes his young age of 19 (*annos undeviginti natus*)<sup>17</sup>, when, as a private person (*privatus*), he entered political struggle at a critical for the Republic moment in history. Here, a perceptive reader would not only see an obvious reference to Romulus, who became king at the age of 18, but also an implicit claim to superiority over other outstanding heroes of the times of the Republic like Scipio Aemilianus or Pompey [28. P. 256 ff.]<sup>18</sup>, who at a young age bypassed the usual *cursus honorum* and proved to be outstanding military leaders and saviors of the state.

2) *Dates*. The system of dating used by Augustus is, on the one hand, quite traditional for Roman chronology — by the names of the consuls (1.2; 5.1; 6.1; 8.3; 8.4; 10; 11; 12.2, etc.) or if necessary, by indicating sequence numbers of his own consulship (8.1; 15.1; 15.4; 20.4; 20.5; 22.2; 34.1; 35. 1). Besides, in three cases Augustus uses a new method of dating, which would later establish as such under his successors — by years of tribunician power. In the first case, the total number of Augustus’ consulships to date (13) and the 37th year of his *tribunicia potestas* indicates the time when the *RG* was written (4.4). In the second, the 12th year of *tribunicia potestas* marks yet another distribution of money to the people (15.1), while the third case features a combination of the two dating systems — by the year of *tribunicia potestas* (18<sup>th</sup>) and by the sequence numbers of his consulship (12<sup>th</sup>) (15.2). Thus, while gradually

<sup>17</sup> His young age was also inscribed on a statue erected in January 43 B.C. by senate decree in honor of Octavian (Vell. Pat. II.61.3), who was also proud of becoming consul at earlier age than anyone before him (Cass. Dio XLVI.46.2). See [27].

<sup>18</sup> That Pompey is referred to in the *RG* initial phrase is also pointed out in [29]. On this passage, see also [30]. Based on this passage, M. Spanagel suggests that the events described in Chapter 1 might be seen as a starting point of the principate, since it makes it clear that he reached the position of princeps long before he became a sole ruler.

introducing an important innovation in the dating system, Augustus keeps the previous one in place, which still gives him an opportunity to further emphasize the exceptional nature of his public career and the importance of tribunical powers as one of the crucial pillars of his position as head of state (cf. [32. R. 167]).

3) *Demographics*. This is primarily represented by the data gathered in censuses cited in Ch. 8.2–4, which show a significant increase in the population during the reign of Augustus: from 4,063,000<sup>19</sup> in 28 B.C. to 4,233,000 in 8 B.C. and 4,937,000 in 14 A.D. Another constituent of this group is the numbers of people who received money and food donations in distributions in Rome (*plebs frumentaria*) and the colonies: at least 250,000, just over 200,000, and 320,000 metropolitan plebeians<sup>20</sup> in various events, 120,000 receiving the triumphal *congiarium* in the veteran colonies (15.1–4). These figures overlap directly with those from Group 4.

4) *Expenditures (impensae) on various kinds of favors*, i.e. quantitative display of *princeps*' personal generosity<sup>21</sup>. These include colossal sums of money spent on distributions to plebs (indicating the size of payments apiece: 300 sesterii, twice 60 denarii and twice 400 sesterii) and veterans, on the replenishment of treasury, etc., which in total amounts to more than 1 billion sesterii (Ch. 15–24). This group features the largest figures, such as almost 600 million sesterii to the inhabitants of Italy for their land property, about 260 million to people in the provinces for their plots of land, about 400 million in rewards for the service for soldiers<sup>22</sup> who had served their term and returned to their municipalities (16.1–2), 150 million to the *aerarium* and 170 million to the military treasury (17.1–2). Augustus also notes his help

<sup>19</sup> The Greek translation mistakenly puts this figure at 4,603,000. Augustus emphasizes that he conducted the census for the first time following a 42-year hiatus, but says nothing on the fact that he changed the rules of the census to include women and at least some children, which explains the significant increase in the number of citizens between 70/69 B.C. (910,000 males) and 28 B.C. On the debate on these figures, see [33–34].

<sup>20</sup> On various categories and changes in the number of recipients of handouts in Rome, see [35. P. 186–189, 192–196].

<sup>21</sup> It is quite indicative of the *RG* general tone that all the expenses mentioned, in one way or another, relate personally to Augustus: they are either made from Caesar's inheritance, or military booty or Augustus' own funds, and are in no way connected with the payments made from regular revenues of the state [36. P. 191].

<sup>22</sup> Curiously, unlike the Latin text, which simply states the payment of a reward for service (*praemia numerato persolvi*), the Greek text uses the expression *φιανθρώπου ὀνόματι ἔδωκα* ("I gave out of [my] goodness"), which emphasizes Augustus' personal generosity.

to taxpayers: in case of lack of tax revenues, he “made distributions of grain and money” from his own “granary and patrimony, sometimes to 100,000 persons, sometimes to many more” (18). The emperor’s generosity (as well as his piety and modesty) became particularly apparent when he ordered to melt down 80 silver statues depicting him on foot, on horseback or in chariots, sell the silver and with the proceeds set golden offerings in the temple of Apollo (24.2)<sup>23</sup>. Besides, his generosity is also evidenced by his donation of 100 million sesterii from the spoils of war to the Capitol, the temples of the divine Julius, Apollo, Vesta, and Mars the Avenger (21.2). He even ordered to return 35,000 pounds of crown gold (= 147 million sesterii) that he got for his triumphs (21. 3) from the municipia and colonies of Italy, which was certainly meant to emphasize his special attitude to Italy in contrast to provinces, where such offerings to Roman generals actually turned into a hidden tax and clearly expressed the subordinate position of the ruled rather than their sincere gratitude [37].

5) *Quantitative indicators of civil, political and military achievements, construction works and organized entertainments*. These indicators are equally numerous, diverse and formidable. The author does not miss the opportunity to report that some 500,000 Roman citizens took the military oath of obedience to him, and of these over 300,000, on having served their military service, settled in colonies or went back to their home towns (3.3). The text also mentions two victorious battles against those who killed Julius Caesar (2), 600 captured ships<sup>24</sup> (3.4), the gateway of Janus Quirinus shut on three occasions to celebrate peace secured through victories (13), 82 temples restored in Rome<sup>25</sup> (20.4), 30,000 runaway slaves handed over to the masters for punishment after they had raised arms against the state (25.1), 28 colonies in Italy founded by Augustus’s authority

<sup>23</sup> This may have happened in 28 B.C., when Octavian was executing the duties of censor [14. P. 212]. Suetonius, discussing Augustus’ rejection of cultic veneration, adds that the proceeds were used to make gold tripods for the temple of Apollo of Palatine (Suet. Aug. 52). Cassius Dio (LIII.22.3), however, claims that Augustus used the money to finance the construction of roads, stating that he paid for the work out of his personal funds.

<sup>24</sup> This number apparently includes more than 300 ships lost by Sextus Pompey in 36 B.C., at the battles of Milae and of Navloch (App. BC. V.108, 118, 121) and 300 ships lost by Antony at Actium (Plut. Ant. 68.2, citing Augustus’ autobiography).

<sup>25</sup> Livy (IV.20.7) calls Augustus *templorum omnium conditorem ac restitutorem* (“founder and restorer of all temples”). Apparently, Augustus succeeded in presenting himself as such to his people, and the *RG* indication of the number of restored temples is one of the means to do so. Neither Suetonius (Aug. 30.2) nor Cassius Dio (LIII.2.4) give any figures, while reporting on the restoration of temples.

(28.2), the return of spoils and standards of three Roman armies (29.2). Chapters 22–23, devoted to entertainments, mention not only their number (three gladiatorial games in his own name and 5 games in the name of his sons and grandsons, other shows — 4 spectacles organized in his own name and 23 games in place of other magistrates, 26 beast-hunts), but also the number of participants involved (10,000 gladiators and 3,000 fighters in the *navmachia*) and of animals killed (3,500). Augustus also mentions that he revised the list of senators three times, that in the war against Antony and Cleopatra he gathered more than 700 senators under his standards, 83 of which were appointed consuls previously or afterwards, and about 170 were appointed priests (25.3).

Most of the above-mentioned figures are undoubtedly intended to emphasize a unique scale of Augustus' achievements, as well as his undeniable superiority over his predecessors in almost every respect. At the same time, their presence in the document, which might be seen as a political testament, sets certain benchmarks for both his successors in Rome, many of whom would strive if not to surpass his achievements, then at least to come close (for example, in the number of imperial acclamations, the scope of entertainments, the generosity of distributions, etc.), and other groups, who were embracing the idea of an emperor as general benefactor and zealot of state interests.

At the same time, stating the significance and adequate reliability of the *RG* numerical information, we should keep in mind a certain degree of trickery of what is reported by Augustus. In some cases, he cites certain figures, while avoiding others although related to the same situation, as in the case of the slaves captured after Sextus Pompey's defeat: he reports only 30,000 slaves sent back to their masters for punishment (25.1), while 6,000 others crucified (Oros. VI.18.33) are not mentioned [38. P. 66], probably out of desire not to appear in an unfavorable light. When he mentions the support of "more than seven hundred senators" (25.3) concealing the fact that by the end of the 30s B.C. the Senate included more than 1,000 people, it gives the impression that almost the entire Senate sided with him, although in fact up to 300 senators supported Antony<sup>26</sup> [18]. The *RG* author also allows other

<sup>26</sup> *sub signis meis tum militaverint*. This sounds like a evident exaggeration, since most of these senators probably remained in Rome. Another question also arises: where exactly Augustus could have got the figures on the number of consulars and priests among those senators. Perhaps, he kept a detailed dossier on the highest nobility [16. P. 289].

implicit exaggerations. Thus, according to him, “kings from India often (*saepe*) sent embassies to me” (31.1), but other reliable sources report only two such missions: one visited Augustus in Spanish Tarracona in 25 B.C. (Oros. VI.21.19–20), and the other — on Samos in 20 B.C. (Cass. Dio LIV.9.8–10; Strab. XV.1.4; 1.72–73)<sup>27</sup>.

### Conclusion

One way or another, the *RG* figures taken as a whole represent important, in many cases unique information with adequate credibility, mirroring the magnificence of Augustus’ accomplishments. The author opts for an exceptionally abundant use of numerals, all of which from dating formulas to statistical data give the narrative a businesslike, precise character, allowing to avoid excessive and unsubstantiated pathos, while showcasing with compelling clarity Augustus’ unequivocal superiority as a philanthropist, military and state leader in comparison with both his contemporaries and predecessors (up to Alexander the Great), which transforms an autobiographical report into Augustus’ political testament, addressed *urbi et orbi* and establishing key ideological parameters of an ideal ruler. In this regard, it is worth paying attention to the *RG* Appendix, written in the third person singular and most likely composed in the Greek East for the people in provinces [14. P. 19]. It first indicates the sum total allocated by Augustus to the treasury, to Roman plebs and retired soldiers, which amounts to 600,000,000 denarii, i.e. 2.4 billion sestertii. The sum is followed by a list of a wide variety of expenses — on the construction and repair of temples, other buildings and facilities, on entertainments and relief for cities affected by natural disasters, as well as on allowances to individual friends and senators to replenish their fortunes to the census level. It is noteworthy that for all the afore-mentioned expenses no specific sum is given, the text just states that they were incalculable: *impensa... innumerabilis* (App. 4). It seems that such a statement is not so much connected with the fact that the appendix compiler was unable to calculate them due to the absence of relevant data in the *Res Gestae* itself. The word *innumerabilis* that closes the text may be intended

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<sup>27</sup> J. Scheid [9. P. 79] mentions four known embassies, while the other two are doubtful, so it is more correct to say that in this case Augustus still exaggerates [14. P. 249–250]. It is important to mention that the very reference to those embassies hints at an underlying rivalry with Alexander the Great that the *RG* reflects [39. P. 296–298].



to make an impression that the author himself wanted the whole of the text to convey, despite its dense saturation with a solid mass of numerical data. Statistical accuracy and multitude of figures related to key spheres of state life had to put in the spotlight the immense generosity and selfless service of *Pater Patriae* to his state, fellow citizens and subjects.

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