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EDWIN S. RAMAGE

The Date of Augustus' Res Gestae

From the time when MOMMSEN published his landmark second edition of the Res Gestae in 1883, the document has been the victim of constant theorizing and speculation.¹ HEUSS put it strongly, but fairly, a few years ago when he said that this queen of Latin inscriptions «ist ... im Verlauf der modernen Forschung zu einem Schutthaufen sich widersprechender Thesen und Theorien geworden, deren meiste schon, kaum daß sie das Licht des Tages erblickten, gezeichnet waren.»² Nowhere is this more evident than in matters of composition and date.

In the last sentence of the RG Augustus informs his reader that he wrote the document in his 76th year (35.2): [... *cum scri*]psi haec, annum agebam septuagen-su[mum sextum].³ In other words, he composed the RG in the last year of his life, that is, between 23 September, A.D. 13, which was his last birthday, and 19 August, A.D. 14, when he died at Nola. There are five other references in the RG that point in the same direction. His being named *imperator* 21 times (4.1) includes the 21st and last time in A.D. 13/14.⁴ In this same paragraph (4.4) he says that he had held the *tribunicia potestas* 37 times; the 37th and last time began on 26 June, A.D. 14.⁵ When he makes the point a little later that he demanded and received a colleague in the tribunician power five times (6.2), he is including the

¹ TH. MOMMSEN, *Res gestae divi Augusti*,² Berlin 1883.

² A. HEUSS, *Zeitgeschichte als Ideologie. Bemerkungen zu Komposition und Gedankenführung der Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, in *Monumentum Chiloniense. Studien zur augusteischen Zeit*, ed. E. LEFÈVRE, Amsterdam 1975, 55.

³ The text used here is that of V. EHRENBURG/A. H. M. JONES, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Augustus and Tiberius*,² Oxford 1955 (repr. 1976), 1–31. It is based on H. VOLKMANN's text in JAW 276, 1 (1942). Square brackets will be used here, as there, to indicate letters and words missing from the text, but reasonably supplied on the basis of the Greek translation.

⁴ On these *imperatoriae acclamationes*: MOMMSEN (above, note 1), 11–18, esp. 17–18. But cf. H. MATTINGLY, BMC 1, cxiv, who believes that the coins show A.D. 11 as the date of Augustus' 21st imperatorship.

⁵ On the date on which the *tribunicia potestas* was assumed: O. HIRSCHFELD, *Das Neujahr des tribunicischen Kaiserjahres*, WS 3 (1881), 97–108; on Augustus' assumption of the power: P. A. BRUNT/J. M. MOORE, *Res gestae divi Augusti. The Achievements of the Divine Augustus*, Oxford 1967, 10–11; H. VOLKMANN, *Res gestae divi Augusti. Das Monumentum Ancyranum*,³ Berlin 1969, 16; J. GAGÉ, *Res gestae divi Augusti ex monumentis Ancyrano et Antiocheno Latinis Ancyrano et Apolloniensi Graecis*,³ Paris 1977, 79.

fifth and last time in A.D. 13 when Tiberius shared the power with him.⁶ His reference in the next paragraph (7.2) to having been *princeps senatus* for 40 years at the time of writing the RG brings this honor down through A.D. 13.⁷ Finally, his third lustrum with Tiberius as his colleague (8.4) is firmly dated to A.D. 14.⁸

These references would seem to show clearly that the emperor composed the RG in A.D. 13–14, but, except for WEBER, whose ideas for the most part have been rejected out of hand, no scholar accepts this date. All of these statements are usually brushed aside as updating by another agent, often assumed to be Tiberius, after Augustus' death. When these references are disposed of, the way is wide open to theorizing about the date and composition of the document, and the many different ideas that have been proposed show that scholars have taken full advantage of the opportunity.

Though the issue is an old one, it may serve some purpose to reopen it, not to add another theory to the long list, but to ascertain whether, indeed, the references listed above should not be taken as reliable indications of when the RG were written. This will necessitate a brief review of what has been said on the subject with emphasis on the nature of the arguments brought forward and the way in which the events described in the RG have been used. Some attention must also be paid to the position which VOLKMANN distilled for himself out of all the various scholarship as he surveyed the history of the problem in 1942. This will lead naturally to the conclusion that seems inescapable: the six references to A.D. 13/14 in the RG must be taken as clear indications of its date.

The question of the date and composition of the RG was first raised, as so many issues were, by MOMMSEN in his commentary on the RG. He thought that he detected a second stage of composition in chapter 15, where the *triumphale congiarium* presented to the veterans in the colonies disrupts the chronological sequence. This suggested to him that it and the money-dole that follows may have been added to the original.⁹ He felt, too, that orthographic and linguistic variations in the text, especially in the way numbers are represented, showed more than one hand at work.¹⁰ Even though by 1924 both ideas had been clearly refuted,¹¹ theorizing about the date of the RG had gained a dizzying momentum

⁶ GAGÉ (above, note 5), 82.

⁷ MOMMSEN (above, note 1), 31–32, gives the mathematics for this date.

⁸ VOLKMANN (above, note 5), 20; GAGÉ (above, note 5), 86.

⁹ MOMMSEN (above, note 1), 59; VOLKMANN (above, note 5), 28–29, gives the various dates in the order in which they appear here: 44, 29, 24, 12, 12, 5, 29, 2. The *triumphale congiarium* is the seventh item in this list. H. VOLKMANN, *Res gestae divi Augusti*, II. Besprechung des Schrifttums der Jahre 1914–1941, JAW 279 (1942), 70–71, discusses this issue.

¹⁰ MOMMSEN (above, note 1), 2, 193–94; repeated in *Der Rechenschaftsbericht des Augustus*, HZ 57 (1887), 397 = *Ges. Schr.* 4, 1, Berlin 1906, 257.

¹¹ Cf. VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 69–70, 70–71; GAGÉ (above, note 5), 19; W. KOLBE, rev. of W. WEBER, *Principes*, GGA 201 (1939), 158.

and had gone well beyond such basic considerations. By 1942, as VOLKMANN points out, all the various theories fell roughly into three categories.¹² On the one hand, there was the position championed by KORNE MANN who in a series of articles published between 1902 and 1905 developed and defended the idea that the RG was put together in steps over a long period of time. He saw first five and then seven stages of composition which he dated to 23, 12, 4, 2 B.C. and A.D. 1, 6, and 14.¹³ WILCKEN reacted to KORNE MANN's ideas by presenting a second position in which the RG was viewed as a unit to which additions were made until A.D. 6 after which Augustus did not work on it.¹⁴ The other theorists, as VOLKMANN points out, fall at various points between these extremes. In this third position he lists twelve scholars who show little agreement on the subject.¹⁵

There is no purpose in going through all these theories in detail, but a number of points must be made to put them in the proper perspective. In the first place, with the exception of WEBER, all the scholars place the RG on or before April, A.D. 13. The result of this, as noted earlier, is that they almost routinely suppose that the references in the RG to actions and events later than that represent an updating of the document after Augustus' death. The point is not argued and it cannot be, for there is no basis in fact for Tiberius or anyone else making such additions. This supposition is quite arbitrary, then, but so effectively have the six references been removed that they are seldom mentioned or, presumably, even thought about. In fact, when WEBER in 1936 made the point that what Augustus says in the last sentence is to be respected and the RG was to be dated to the summer of A.D. 14, KOLBE in a review greeted it as a «completely new thesis.»¹⁶

A second, general criticism of the work that has been done on the date and composition has also been suggested above. It is based in all cases, except that of WEBER, on an extreme subjectivity in which firm belief, impressions, and even, as GARDTHAUSEN points out in the case of KORNE MANN, sheer obstinacy (*Hartnäckigkeit*) prevail.¹⁷ These opinions are often couched in a resounding rhetoric that is supposed to carry the day. KORNE MANN, for example, who really set the whole issue of composition and date in motion, begins from *the impression (den Eindruck)* that the RG left with him that it was not put together as a homogeneous

¹² VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 64.

¹³ KORNE MANN's articles appeared under various titles in *Klio* 2 (1902), 141–62; 3 (1903), 74–84; 4 (1904), 88–97; 5 (1905), 317–32. M. BESNIER, *Récents travaux sur les Res gestae divi Augusti*, in *Mélanges Cagnat*, Paris 1912, 131–45, deals at length with KORNE MANN's views and scholarly reaction to them; cf. VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 64–65, 69–70.

¹⁴ U. WILCKEN, *Zur Entstehung des Monumentum Ancyranum*, *Hermes* 38 (1903), 618–28.

¹⁵ VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 65–69. Cf. E. S. RAMAGE, *The Nature and Purpose of Augustus' «Res Gestae»*, Wiesbaden 1987, 132–135 (*Historia-Einzelschriften* 54).

¹⁶ KOLBE (above, note 11), 163: «tritt der Vf. mit einer ganz neuen These hervor.»

¹⁷ V. GARDTHAUSEN, rev. of E. KORNE MANN, *Mausoleum und Tatenbericht des Augustus*, *PhW* 41 (1921), 295.

whole.¹⁸ Almost 40 years later, KOLBE, in his careful review of WEBER's book, says that when dealing with the issue one cannot avoid subjectivity – an admission that presumably makes it acceptable.¹⁹ Indeed, the fact that there is so little agreement as to when the document was begun, when it was finished, and how it reached its present state is symptomatic of the strong role that personal opinion has played from the beginning.

The reason for such subjectivity, of course, is the fact that firm proof is not available to support any of this theorizing. The closest that most scholars working on the subject have come to fact is preconceptions about Augustus and his work and manipulation of what appears in the RG. It is just personal opinion, for example, that Augustus would not have waited until the end of his life to write so important a document, given his precarious health,²⁰ or that he could not have written it in a few weeks.²¹ Trying to disprove arguments like these is not very productive, since in most cases rebuttal simply consists of making the point that there is not a shred of fact to support them.

The arguments drawn from the content of the RG are a different thing and so deserve more attention. VOLKMANN has listed most of these with extensive discussion, so that it is not necessary to deal with all of them here.²² But a few of the more significant conclusions about the date of the RG that are based on its content must be considered. Scholars who differ as widely as KORNEMANN and WILCKEN about the composition of the document view A.D. 6 as a *terminus ante quem* for it.²³ This view begins from the observation that Augustus does not mention the Pannonian revolt of A.D. 6–9 and the defeat of Varus in A.D. 9. These omissions are combined with the latest datable event in the RG (other than the references to A.D. 13/14, of course), the establishment of the *aerarium militare* in A.D. 6 (17.2), to produce this *terminus*.²⁴ The omissions, however, are easily explained within the context of the RG. The inscription is not meant to be a complete, detailed survey including every event that fell between 43 B.C. and whenever Augustus wrote it. A careful reading of the RG shows that it is an account of successes in which such disasters and problems have no natural place. The only failure that is referred to is the rebellion in Armenia, and Augustus immediately turns this into a victory for Gaius (27.2: *eandem gentem postea d[e]sciscentem et rebellantem domit[a]m per Gaium*). Even here, as BRUNT/MOORE point out, «part of the chequered history of Rome's relations with Armenia after 20» is

¹⁸ Klio 2 (1902), 145; cf. Klio 4 (1904), 88. VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 66, comments on KORNEMANN's extreme subjectivity («die starke Subjektivität»).

¹⁹ KOLBE (above, note 11), 167.

²⁰ KORNEMANN, Klio 2 (1902), 144; cf. BRUNT/MOORE (above, note 5), 6.

²¹ KOLBE (above, note 11), 163.

²² VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 70–73.

²³ KORNEMANN, Klio 2 (1902), 152; WILCKEN (above, note 14), 619.

²⁴ On the *aerarium militare*: VOLKMANN (above, note 5), 31–32; GAGÉ (above, note 5), 104–105.

omitted.²⁵ And many other things of a distasteful nature do not appear: the bad treatment of Octavian by the senate as he rose to power, the proscriptions, the defeats at the hands of Sextus Pompey in 38 and 36 B.C., the circumstances in the city that eventually resulted in the establishment of the Ara Fortunae Reducis in 21 B.C. (11), the reasons for his taking over the *cura annonae* (5.2). In the last case, the problems caused by flood, epidemic, and famine are summarized in the words in *s[umma] [f]rum[enti p]enuria* which in the context are as much a justification of his taking this unusual step as they are a description of disaster. Finally, Gallus' abortive expedition into Arabia Felix (cf. 26.5) gets no direct mention and there is no reference to the conspiracies that were formed from time to time against the emperor.²⁶ Such difficulties and failures are completely out of place in the RG. Moreover, the defeat of Varus and the Pannonian revolt were not just disasters; they were traumatic experiences for Augustus and the Roman people. This was an additional reason for omitting any reminder of them from the RG.²⁷ SYME's comment on the RG is worth remembering: «The record is no less instructive for what it omits than for what it says.»²⁸

Another group of scholars has used the content of the RG to posit a *terminus post quem* of A.D. 9, and VOLKMANN himself subscribes to this theory.²⁹ It is based on what Augustus says about Germany as he describes his pacification of the western provinces (26.2: *Gallias et Hispanias provincias, i[tem Germaniam, qua inclu]dit Oceanus a Gadibus ad ostium Albis flumin[is pacavi]*). Augustus is including only the coastline of Germany as far as the Elbe. Thus the statement must have been put together after Varus' defeat in A.D. 9 which in essence meant the loss of the interior of Germany for the Romans.³⁰ The whole statement, however, is extremely vague.³¹ Indirect proof of this is surely the fact that other

²⁵ BRUNT/MOORE (above, note 5), 72. SYME, CAH 10, 278–79, speaks of «failure after failure to keep the country under Roman influence.»

²⁶ Pliny, NH 7. 147–50, gives a long list of difficulties and disasters experienced by Augustus, none of which appear in the RG.

²⁷ The traumatic effect of these experiences is brought out by Velleius (2.110–14: Pannonia; 2.119–20: Varus) and Suetonius (Aug. 23: Varus), and Pliny lists the Pannonian revolt with the events that seem to have made Augustus think of suicide (NH 7. 149). SYME, CAH 10, 369, titles his section on the revolt «The Great Rebellion» and calls it «the crisis of the Empire» (371); cf. D. KIENAST, *Augustus. Prinzeps und Monarch*, Darmstadt 1982, 304–305. Armenia, on the other hand, which is mentioned in the RG, seems not to have been viewed in this way: Velleius 2.94.4; cf. Syme, CAH 10, 263–64, 273–79.

²⁸ R. SYME, *The Roman Revolution*, Oxford 1939, 523. There are, of course, many other significant omissions from the RG that are not connected with failure and disaster.

²⁹ VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 74.

³⁰ The references are provided by VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 72–73, in his discussion of chapter 26. Cf. F. KOEPP, *Bemerkungen zum Monumentum Ancyranum*, MDAI(R) 19 (1904), 74, who says the situation in Germany after Varus' defeat is exactly that described by Augustus in RG 26.

³¹ Below, note 34.

scholars like MOMMSEN and KORNEMANN can take it in just the opposite way and have it refer to all Germany between the Rhine and the Elbe.³² The context in which the statement is made, however, suggests that the writer has a different purpose in mind. If what he says here is taken with the two sentences that follow it, a pattern seems to develop. Here Augustus first in essence draws a line of pacification across the Alps from the Adriatic to the Tyrrhenian Sea (26.3) and then has his fleet make a line up the coast of Germany from the mouth of the Rhine to the Jutland peninsula (26.4). In this sentence, too, appears the information that the Cimbri and Charydes, who lived in the north, and the Semnones, who lived up the Elbe, along with other peoples of the same region, had sought friendship with the Romans. This makes the Elbe a kind of eastern boundary of Roman influence here in the north.³³ With this, then, Augustus has drawn a line that runs up the coasts of Spain, Gaul, and Germany from Cadiz to Jutland, down the Elbe and across the Alps. While the circle is not complete, there is enough of it to suggest that the writer is providing a broad, impressionistic view of the geographical extent of the western provinces with the added implication, of course, that his pacifying and civilizing activities were at work in this area. At the same time, he does not seem to be committing himself to any specific situation in Germany. SYME's comment on this passage is to the point: «Augustus' own statement about his German policy is studiously vague; it may fit the facts – but it may also mask them.»³⁴ To use this passage to prove something about the chronology of the RG, then, is, at the very least, dangerous.³⁵

The mention of the Basilica Julia in 20.3 is another piece of internal evidence that has been used for purposes of dating the RG. The words *si vivus non perfecissem* suggested to scholars like KORNEMANN, WILCKEN, and ENSSLIN that the basilica was not finished at the time the RG was written.³⁶ Since Cassius Dio seems to say that the building was completed in A.D. 12 (56.27.5), then this date becomes a *terminus ante quem* for the document. KOLBE, however, has reinterpreted the Latin as a stipulation drawn from Augustus' will which had been deposited with the Vestals on 3 April, A.D. 13, thus showing that the building had not been completed on that date. The words, then, become less useful for purposes of dating.

³² MOMMSEN (above, note 1), 102, 103; E. KORNEMANN, *Mausoleum und Tatenbericht des Augustus*, Leipzig-Berlin 1921, 102. Cf. VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 72.

³³ These people who seek *amicitia* here are on the outskirts of empire as are the Parthians (29.2, 32.2) and the Bastarnae, Scythians, Sarmatians, Albani, Hiberi, and Medes (31.2), all of whom live on the eastern outskirts of the empire and seek *amicitia* with Rome. Cf. 32.3.

³⁴ CAH 10, 376.

³⁵ KIENAST (above, note 27), 301, says that Augustus apparently had the intention of adding Germany to the Elbe to the imperium and seems to have largely realized this.

³⁶ The references are provided by VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 71–72, as he discusses the use that has been made of this chapter.

The connection with the will is tenuous, but it is not necessary to make that association to see that the passage probably does not help with dating the RG. It should be noted that Augustus is referring to starting the new building (20.3: [... *i]ncobavi*) and to the fact that he left orders that it should be finished by his heirs if he did not finish it during his lifetime. These are the real issues. The words *si ... iussi*, then, are simply used to report the stipulation he made when he began the Basilica Julia, and there is no implication in them as to whether the building had been completed at the time they were written here in the RG. To put it another way, the statement could have been made at any time after the Basilica was begun and the stipulation made.

These are the parts of the RG that have figured most prominently in the controversy about the date of the document, and from what has been said above, it is perhaps clear that they contribute nothing to the solution of the problem. Moreover, there is nothing else in the RG that helps – except, of course, the six references to A.D. 13/14 mentioned earlier.

In 1942, after surveying the various theories, VOLKMANN, a reliable scholar who knew the RG and its scholarship well, made what turned out to be the last formal statement on the subject.³⁷ At the conclusion of his overview of the scholarship, he takes an extremely cautious position. He says that his survey shows that there is no compelling evidence («keinen zwingenden Beweis») against a unified composition. His views about the date which follow immediately are worth quoting:

«Was die Zeitfrage anbelangt, so hat nach WEBERS bestimmter Behauptung (S. 233, 155) Augustus die Rg. zwischen dem Beginn seines letzten tribunizischen Jahres (27. Juni³⁸ 14) und seiner Abreise von Rom (14. Juli 14) niedergeschrieben. Allein wie HOHL, PhW. '37, 574 bemerkt, gehören die Rg. zu den von Augustus bei den Vestalinnen niedergelegten Schriften, unter denen sich auch sein auf den 3. April 13 n. Chr. datiertes Testament befindet. Dieser Tag kann daher mit größter Wahrscheinlichkeit für die Rg. als *terminus ante quem* angesehen werden, vgl. KOLBE 163 f.; auch KORNE MANN (87, 427) erkennt diesen Termin als unumstößlich an.»

He goes on to point out that ENSSLIN, using Suetonius (Aug. 101.4) and Cassius Dio (56.33.1), says that the composition of the RG could not have fallen after the date of Augustus' will, that is, 3 April, A.D. 13. A beginning date for the document is difficult, but he sees a *terminus post quem* of A.D. 9 coming from the interpretation of RG 26.2 by KOLBE and others that has already been discussed. He follows the traditional view that a second hand updated the document in 4.4, 7.2, 8.4, and 35.2.

³⁷ VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 74.

³⁸ The date «27. Juli 14» in VOLKMANN's text seems to be a typographical error and is corrected here.

VOLKMANN leaves the clear impression in the first two sentences quoted above that he inclines toward WEBER's late date, except that («allein») he feels HOHL, KOLBE, KORNE MANN, and ENSSLIN have shown that the RG belongs with the documents described by Suetonius as deposited with the Vestals on 3 April, A.D. 13 (Aug. 101.1). This passage of Suetonius has been used in two different ways to get the *terminus ante quem* for the composition of the RG to that date. A substantial number of scholars insist without qualification that Suetonius says here that Augustus' will, the RG, and his other two documents were composed by or on 3 April, A.D. 13 and deposited with the Vestals.³⁹ HOHL, whom VOLKMANN seems to follow most closely on this issue, presents a second approach. Following a suggestion of ROSTOV TZEFF,⁴⁰ he finds a direct connection between the will which Suetonius mentions here and the RG as it is mentioned two sentences later (101.4: *indicem rerum a se gestarum, quem vellet incidi in aeneis tabulis*). He sees the *volo* clause as reflecting a formal statement taken from the will that is adapted by the biographer for his narrative. He concludes: «Mir kommt es nur auf den unwiderlegbaren Schluß an, daß im Testament vom 3. April 13 n. Chr. der Index erwähnt war.»⁴¹ He also sees the words in RG 20.3, which were discussed earlier (*si ... iussi*), as showing another connection with the will, this time through the *iubeo* formula. In a final comment on the matter, he goes a giant step further: «Ein selbständiges politisches Testament [i. e., the RG] dagegen hat es nie gegeben.»⁴² KOLBE, to whom VOLKMANN refers in the passage quoted above, apparently agrees.⁴³

In view of the key role that this passage of Suetonius has played in the debate about the date of the RG, and because it seems to be the only piece of evidence preventing VOLKMANN from accepting WEBER's late date, it perhaps deserves close scrutiny:

³⁹ E.g., KORNE MANN (above, note 32), 23, on which see GARDTHAUSEN (above, note 17), 296; KOLBE (above, note 11), 167; BRUNT/MOORE (above, note 5), 6; GAGÉ (above, note 5), 16; H. DESSAU, *Geschichte der römischen Kaiserzeit*, Berlin 1924, 1, 480; J. REHÖRK, *Tatenbericht und dichterisches Herrscherenkomion in augusteischer Zeit*, in F. ALTHEIM/R. STIEHL, *Die Araber in der alten Welt*, Berlin 1965, 2, 392, n. 145. At one point KOLBE (above, note 11), 164, hedges his bets to some extent: «Da sich unter ihnen [i. e., the documents deposited with the Vestals] auch das Testament befindet, das auf den 3. April des Jahres 13 datiert ist, ist eine beinahe an Sicherheit grenzende Wahrscheinlichkeit gegeben, daß dieser Tag für die Entstehung auch unseres Dokumentes ein Mindestdatum ist.» Cf. KORNE MANN, *Klio* 2 (1902), 141; K. SPREY, *Ad rerum gestarum Divi Augusti Cap. 34 adnotatio*, *Mnemosyne* 2 (1935), 292.

⁴⁰ H. DESSAU, *Mommsen und das Monumentum Ancyranum*, *Klio* 22 (1929), 268, n. 3; ROSTOV TZEFF's study is No. 61 in VOLKMANN's catalogue (above, note 9), 50.

⁴¹ E. HOHL, rev. of W. WEBER, *Princeps*, *PhW* 57 (1937), 576–78. The quotation is on page 578 and the rhetoric in it should not be missed. The same atmosphere surrounds KOLBE's remark on the subject (above, note 11), 167: «Es wird deutlich, daß Augustus nach dem 3. April 13 n. Chr. nicht mehr am Bericht gearbeitet hat.» Such statements should not be accepted without close scrutiny.

⁴² HOHL (above, note 41), 585.

⁴³ KOLBE (above, note 11), 163–64, 167.

Testamentum L. Planco C. Silio cons. III. Non. Apriles, ante annum et quattuor menses quam decederet, factum ab eo ac duobus codicibus partim ipsius partim libertorum Polybi et Hilarionis manu scriptum depositumque apud se virgines Vestales cum tribus signatis aequae voluminibus protulerunt. quae omnia in senatu aperta atque recitata sunt. (101.1)

The three sentences which follow this (101.2–3) contain an outline of the terms of the will. Suetonius then goes on to talk the other three *volumina*: *tribus voluminibus, uno mandata de funere suo complexus est, altero indicem rerum a se gestarum, quem vellet incidi in aeneis tabulis, quae ante Mausoleum statuerentur, tertio breviarium totius imperii, quantum militum sub signis ubique esset, quantum pecuniae in aerario et fisci et vectigaliorum residuis.* (101.4)

What Suetonius says seems to be perfectly clear. In the first sentence above, he points out that the will was made by Augustus (*factum ab eo*) three days before the Nones of April when Plancus and Silius were consuls. This puts the date of the will firmly at 3 April, A.D. 13, which was, as the biographer observes, a year and four months before the emperor's death. He goes on: The will was written (*scriptum*) in two books or copies, partly in Augustus' hand and partly in the hands of two of his freedmen; the will was deposited with the Vestal Virgins (*depositumque apud se*); they brought it forward (*Testamentum ... Vestales ... protulerunt*) along with three volumes sealed in the same way (*signatis aequae*). The second passage quoted above (101.4) makes it clear that the *index rerum a se gestarum*, or the RG, was one of the three volumes. It should be noticed that Suetonius says nothing about when the *tria volumina* were composed. It is only the will (*factum* is neuter *singular* modifying *testamentum*) that was put together on 3 April, A.D. 13.⁴⁴ Those, then, who insist that this passage of Suetonius shows that the composition of any or all of the *tria volumina* is to be connected with that date are simply wrong. They have distorted the meaning of the Latin to make it fit their theories. The complete skeptic might argue that not only does the passage show nothing about the date of the RG, but Suetonius does not even say that it and its companions were deposited with the Vestals at any time; *depositum* is a neuter *singular* also modifying *testamentum*. This has to remain at best a logical assumption.⁴⁵

The passage also does nothing to support HOHL's idea that the RG had so close a connection with the will that it virtually lost its identity. In fact, an objective reading of the three sentences quoted above shows that just the opposite is true. In the first sentence the *testamentum* and *tria volumina* clearly make four

⁴⁴ GARDTHAUSEN (above, note 17), 296, made this point many years ago, but he apparently was ignored.

⁴⁵ W. WEBER, *Principes. Studien zur Geschichte des Augustus*, Berlin 1936, 1, 45 and 2*, n. 6, manages to keep the four volumes together by suggesting that the will was composed in April, A.D. 13 and along with the other three volumes was deposited with the Vestals just before the emperor left for Campania. This is possible, but not necessary.

different documents. Their separate identities are underlined by the fact that each has its own seal from the hand of Augustus. Suetonius now deals with the four items separately. In 101.2–3 he outlines the terms of the will and then in 101.4 he clearly moves to a new topic with *tribus voluminibus* appearing abruptly as the first two words in the sentence. An identity for these completely separate from the will is further suggested by the fact that there is no word or particle that connects this sentence with the one that precedes it; the reader's attention is firmly directed away from the will to the *tria volumina*. Suetonius goes on to complete his list and, as he does so, he overtly itemizes the three volumes as *uno*, *altero*, and *tertio*. At the same time, he carefully mentions each by name, and these names, along with the brief description of the *breviarium*, make perfectly clear their very different content. The biographer, then, seems to go out of his way to make the separate identities and purposes of the four documents obvious to his reader. Nothing he says supports HOHL's idea that the *testamentum*, *mandata*, and *index* somehow blend together. These three and the *breviarium* are four different units which need not have been written at the same time.⁴⁶

Moreover, an objective reading of the last sentence above surely suggests that the words *quem ... statuerentur* constitute a request that Augustus put at the beginning or end of the volume containing the *index* rather than that Suetonius has suddenly decided to quote the will indirectly.

This chapter of Suetonius' Life of Augustus, then, has no bearing on the date or deposit of the RG. Nor does any of the other external evidence for the document, though some scholars like MOMMSEN want to leave that impression.⁴⁷ Pace MOMMSEN, chapter 23 of Suetonius' Life of Tiberius and Cassius Dio 56.33 provide no help at all. The RG is not even mentioned in the Suetonius chapter and neither are the Vestals or the deposit of anything with them. Cassius Dio apparently referred to the fact that the will had been deposited with the Vestals (56.32.1), but when he turns to the other documents (56.33.1–3), he does not say who brought them into the senate and he describes them as being read by Drusus. There is no date, no deposit, and there are no Vestals. With all of this it would appear that the last obstacle to VOLKMANN's accepting the idea that Augustus wrote the RG in the last year of his life has been removed.

Indeed, if subjective thesis, theory, and speculation have not provided a satisfactory solution, if the attempts to use the content of the document have been at best unconvincing, if the external evidence does not help, what else is there that can be used for dating the RG? There is the clear statement of date in its last sen-

⁴⁶ This is the impression left by Cassius Dio also who mentions and describes the will (56.32.1–4) and then has four other books brought into the senate and itemizes them (first, second, third, fourth) as he describes the content of each (56.33).

⁴⁷ MOMMSEN (above, note 1), 1, is quite explicit about the deposit: *Testibus Suetonio (Aug. 101. Tib. 23) et Dione (56, 33) una cum testamento suo Augustus deposuit apud virgines Vestales tria volumina aequae signata...*

tence and the other five references that help to confirm it. These must be seriously considered and when they are, they turn out to be the only reliable, irrefutable evidence that exists for the date of the document.

In the first place, it is perhaps worth making the point again that no-one has brought forward a single good argument to prove that any of the statements or anything in them is not from the hand of Augustus or, conversely, that they must be attributed to another person. In fact, each reads perfectly naturally in its context. They are all straightforward, clearly phrased, indicative statements. If the rest of the document is judged as coming from Augustus' hand, then surely the same view must be taken of these six statements. Moreover, there is something a little grotesque about the idea of changing numbers in those places where the emperor relates the statistic to the time of writing the RG (4.4, 7.2, 35.2), for doing this at the same time alters the date of the document. This is especially true of Augustus' final comment, the purpose of which is to fix the time of writing. Changing the writer's age makes the statement a palpable lie. It would surely have been just as easy and certainly more honest to omit the sentence. More might be said about this, but such arguments verge on theory and speculation and so should be avoided. The fact remains, however, that there is nothing in the statements themselves, in the rest of the RG, or in the external evidence to throw any doubt at all on their authenticity.

There is, moreover, nothing inherently impossible in the idea of Augustus' writing the RG between 26 June and 19 August. The document is hardly ponderous. It is of moderate length with the Latin taking up only a little more than eight abbreviated pages in MOMMSEN's text. Again, the content is such that the emperor could have written it relatively easily. He knew the material well, and if he needed help with writing it or with gathering the statistics that he wanted to include, he had people at his disposal.⁴⁸ Moreover, while, as MALCOVATI has shown, there is some rhetorical influence evident in the style, generally speaking, it is quite straightforward.⁴⁹ This is one of the reasons, of course, that the RG has been popular in Europe as a school text. The organization, too, is relatively uncomplicated, as GAGÉ, among others, has shown. Indeed, the few problems that scholars have had with this aspect of the RG could easily come from the fact that the document was put together in a relatively short time.⁵⁰

⁴⁸ This is shown by Suetonius, Aug. 101.1 and 101.4, where, in the one case, Polybius and Hilarion help the emperor write out his will and, in the other, the names of slaves and freedmen who can give a detailed accounting are included in the *breviarium*.

⁴⁹ E. MALCOVATI, *Il numerus nelle Res gestae di Augusto*, *Athenaeum* 14 (1936), 67–77. Other studies of the style of the Latin: A. LAUTON, *Die Sprache des Augustus im Monumentum Ancyranum*, Innsbruck 1946 (Diss.); *Zur Sprache des Augustus im Monumentum Ancyranum*, *WS* 64 (1949), 107–23; H. BARDON, *Les empereurs et les lettres latines d'Auguste à Hadrien*,² Paris 1968, 46–62; cf. VOLKMANN (above, note 9), 52–54; GAGÉ (above, note 5), 37–39.

⁵⁰ On the organization of the RG: GAGÉ (above, note 5), 13–16.

Moreover, there is no reason to think that Augustus was too old and weak to work on such a document. WEBER has offered an eloquent rebuttal of this point.⁵¹ It seems perfectly obvious that a man who could, among other things, maintain complete control of the government, hold a census, and leave the city on a trip would also be able to put together a relatively brief and uncomplicated account of his activities.

Again, there is nothing in the content of the RG that is incompatible with a date in the summer of A.D. 14. The point has already been made that the omission of Varus' defeat and Pannonian disaster was to be expected, whenever the document was written, and that the reference to the Basilica Julia (20.3) could have been made any time after Augustus had set the stipulation. Moreover, what he says about Germany in chapter 26 is so vague and impressionistic that, as KOEPP pointed out many years ago, it could easily have been written years after Varus' defeat.⁵² There is nothing else in the document that comes near to precluding a late date.

Finally, this was a logical time for Augustus to put together a document that, whatever its purpose may have been, summarized his activities. Since it was to appear only after he was dead, it makes sense that he would wait until he felt his career was complete to include all his accomplishments and honors.

Since there is no evidence to the contrary except thesis and speculation and since there is no good reason why Augustus could not have written the RG near the end of his life, these six clear, straightforward statements of fact must carry the day. Perhaps, as WEBER says, the composition of the RG should be put in the four weeks between 26 June, A.D. 14, when Augustus took the tribunician power for the 37th and last time (RG 4.4), and 24 July, when he left Rome for the last time,⁵³ but this is not necessary. The emperor could have worked on the document up to a time closer to his death on 19 August. However this may be, Augustus provides clear, unequivocal evidence that puts the RG in the last year of his life. Until firm, incontrovertible proof to the contrary is produced, surely scholarly integrity demands that the emperor's final word on the subject be accepted: [... *cum scri*]psi haec, annum agebam septuagensu[m] sextum]. The upshot of all this seems to be that scholars have discovered a problem where none exists.

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⁵¹ WEBER (above, note 45), 105–106.

⁵² KOEPP (above, note 30), 74–75.

⁵³ WEBER (above, note 45).