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AŚOKA'S INSCRIPTIONS AND PERSIAN, GREEK AND LATIN EPIGRAPHY

By

FRANCISCO R. ADRADOS

I

Despite the genuinely Indian message transmitted by King Aśoka through the edicts of his inscriptions to his contemporaries and, indeed, to all posterity, the form of this message has clearly received external influences. Indian epigraphy began with Aśoka's inscriptions and it is commonly thought that this did not take place without a direct influence from Persian epigraphy, specifically from the inscriptions of the Achaemenid kings, above all, Darius's great inscription on the Behistun Rock (or Bīsutūn, as its present name is).[1] Whilst this is undeniable, I nevertheless believe that it is insufficient.

Upon preparing a Spanish translation of Aśoka (the first in this language) and my attention once more being drawn therefore to that great document of Indian religion and thought which his inscriptions are, I believed that I had discovered a series of points which link it to the Greek and Graeco-Roman world in general: the influence of Greek epigraphy on the external form of Aśoka's epigraphs and the influence of these latter in turn on certain royal inscriptions of the Graeco-Roman world. If this is so – and I shall offer certain arguments to this effect in the following pages – we should once more be faced with another example of the reciprocal cultural influence between India and Greece as from the time of Alexander, a subject to which I have previously devoted several studies.[2]

I shall begin with the first point, that is, how far Iranian and Persian models were decisive in causing King Aśoka to inscribe his Edicts of Sacred

1. Cf., for example, J. BLOCH, *Les inscriptions d' Aśoka*, Paris 1960, p. 41.

2. Cf. "Greek and Indian Philosophy", in *Diamond Jubilee Volume of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona, 1978, pp. 1–8; "Elementos cínicos en las Vidas de Esopo y Secundo y en el diálogo de Alejandro y los Deipnosofistas", in *Homenaje al P. Elorduy*, Bilbao 1978, pp. 309–329; *Historia de la Fabula Greco-Latina* I, Madrid, 1979, pp. 301 ff., and 680 ff.; "The influence of Mesopotamia and Greece on the Pañcatantra", *Dr. Shastri Felicitation Volume*, Delhi 1980; "The life of Aesop and Origins of the Greek Novel", *Cuaderni Urbinati di Cultura Classica*, N. S. 1, 1979, pp. 93–112; *Ātmā y Brahma; Upaniṣad del Gran Āraṇyaka y Bhagavadgītā* (in collaboration with F. VILLAR), Madrid, 1977, p. 40 ff. Several papers of mine on this subject are forthcoming.

Law – to give a rough translation of the term *dhammalipi* – on rocks and pillars. And, although the Iranian models were indeed decisive, to what extent are they insufficient to explain certain features of same which may on the other hand be explained on the basis of Greek epigraphy, as I stated above.

Of course, the influence of Persian epigraphy should be set within the wider context of the Persian influences on India from the moment when Darius arrived at the Indus with his armies (515–516 B. C.), thus creating several satrapies in Western India; perhaps from before this time. Among other things, Persian influences on architecture and art in general belong within this context;[3] the use of Aramaic (from which, as is well-known, Indian *kharoṣṭhī* writing comes), the administrative language of the Persian empire in the Indian satrapies and later under the Mauryas;[4] and, I believe, literary influences, too.[5]

To keep to our subject, I shall now discuss the influence of Persian inscriptions on the creation of Aśoka's own. I shall not discuss precedents to these inscriptions in oriental tradition from remote time: it is precisely the monumental inscriptions of the Persian kings which must have been known in India; even a precedent which was also Persian, Cyrus's cylinder, lies outside the possible influences.

As is well-known, the Persian inscriptions are of several types. There is the great funeral inscription of Darius himself in Nakš-i-Rustam; there are this king's and his successors' inscriptions at Persepolis in which an account is given of the building of the palaces (and Darius's own which give an account of the construction of a canal in Suez); there are small instructions in which Darius and his successors explain their life and deeds, as in the great Bisutūn inscription.[6] In any case, they all display things in common which are to be re-encountered

3. Cf. in the volume *Acta Iranica* II, Leiden, 1974, the following articles: S. M. WHEELER, "The transformation of Persepolis architectural motifs into sculpture under the Indian Mauryan dynasties", pp. 249–261, and J. AUBOYER, "Less achémenides et l'art de l'Inde ancienne", pp. 263–267.

4. Cf. in the above-mentioned volume, J. A. DELAUNAY, "L'araméen d'empire et les débuts de l'écriture en Asie Centrale", pp. 219–236. He gives the data on Aramaic writing in India, apart from Aśoka's inscription at Kandahar.

5. The Mesopotamian influences on the composition of the *Pañcatantra* (and previously, on the *Tantrākhyāyika*) mentioned in publications listed in note 2, must have come from Persia where the *Ahikar* was known (we have fragments of an Aramaic translation of the 5th century B. C., discovered at Elephantina, Egypt).

6. For the ensemble of the text of the Persian, Elamite and Babylonian inscriptions, reference should still be made to F. H. WEISSBACH, *Die Keilinschriften der Achämeniden*, Leipzig, 1911. The Persian texts have been re-printed and translated several times, cf. above all, R. G. KENT, *Old Persian, Grammar, Texts, Lexicon*, New Haven 1950.

in Aśoka's inscriptions : the heading of the type " King Darius (Xerxes, etc.) says... " and the account of the king's deeds, either in war or in peacetime or building projects. I have no doubt that Aśoka, as is generally acknowledged, drew inspiration from them. On the other hand, the introduction of the " the king says... " type is usual in letters and diverse communications of oriental kings and potentates within the sphere of the Persian empire.[7] On the other hand, I should point out that in the inscriptions of the Achaemenids the phrase " the king says... " is preceded by a paragraph in which the king introduces himself and gives his genealogy, and sometimes by another in which praise is given to the god Ahuramazda who had offered him both throne and victory ; this is omitted by the Indian king.

The use of translations of the texts of the inscriptions is also a common feature (a feature inherited from antiquity and then passed on to the Graeco-Roman world). Three texts are usually engraved, Persian, Elamite and Babylonian, with the aim that the inscriptions be understood by the diverse peoples who made up the empire. Aśoka likewise adopted the language of his inscriptions to the local dialects in the place in which they are situated[8] and set up a bilingual inscription in Kandahar in both Greek and Aramaic which was meant for these subjected peoples. On the other hand, although we do not know if the Achaemenids set up one and the same inscription in several places of their empire as Aśoka did, it is nevertheless clear that they, like Aśoka,[9] attempted to give the greatest possible diffusion to same : in the great Bīsutūn inscription, Darius offers prizes or threatens with punishment, respectively, to those who spread or conceal the text of his inscription (60-61) ; he likewise threatens whosoever might destroy it (67) and expressly states that he has sent it (that is, his text) to all peoples (70). Aśoka does no more than go even further by having the inscriptions engraved in the most remote places in India.

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7. Cf. W. DITTENBERGER in his *Sylloge Inscriptionum Graecarum*, I, Leipzig, 1917, (in the comment to Darius's letter in Greek discovered at Magnesia on the Macander, which begins precisely "Darius, the king of kings says this to his servant Gadatas ").

8. Cf. A. C. WOOLNER, *Aśoka Text and Glossary* I, Calcutta 1924, p. XX ff.

9. Apart from what is to be deduced from the placing itself of the inscriptions in several parts of the empire, the sending of messengers – or rather missionaries – should be remembered, as likewise the fact that they were even sent to foreign countries (*Rock Edicts*, XIII 16 ff), Aśoka's instructions to ministers, the sending out of inspectors (*Rock Edicts*, III 3, *Sep. Rock Edicts*, 127), the indication that the edicts should be read on the days specified (*Sep. Rock Edicts* I 24 and II 15, *Bud. Serip. Edict* 7 ff.), the "travels of the *dhamma* " (*Rock Edicts* VIII 4), the recommendation that the edicts should be engraved in any place where there were pillars (*Pill. Edicts* VII 43), etc.

However, among the Persian inscriptions we refer to the most important is obviously the Bīsutūn one; it is in this type of inscription that the king gives an account of his life and deeds whilst still alive and which was taken as a model, not the type of funeral inscription like the one in Nakš-i-Rustam which rather more recalls Augustus's *Res Gestae*, however much, as I say, there may be in common between both these types.

Now, apart from features common to other Persian inscriptions, we find a series of things in the great Bīsutūn inscription which are re-encountered in Aśoka's inscriptions :

a) Date [occasional] of the facts narrated, counted as from the king's succession to the throne (71).

b) The king not only boasts of his battles, but also of his good deeds (14). Data on buildings in the other inscriptions should be added.

c) The king is benevolent, truthful, non-violent and acts in accordance with justice, this being why Ahuramazda has helped him (63).

d) The king boasts that everything has changed with his reign, and of the difference to past times (59).

e) He even gives orders and recommendations, although to a very limited extent, for successive kings after him to punish the unjust (64) and that nobody is to destroy his inscription (65).

f) In some of the versions of Aśoka's Edicts, the Iranian words *dipi-* " inscription " (elsewhere adapted as *lipi-*) and *nipis-* " to write ", are preserved.

A quick reading of Aśoka's inscriptions is enough to realise that these subjects are fully dealt with in same. On the other hand, it is true that the nucleus of them is not to be found here but in the account of the king's succession to the throne and of his victories over his enemies – all of this thanks to the help of Ahuramazda. Now, I consider that Aśoka resorted to a process which I shall term inversion, for he offers texts with a reverse intent to those of Darius, although his dependence on same is no less for this.

Aśoka does not present himself as being protected by any god, although the traditional epithet is given of *devānaṃpiya*, or beloved of the gods. His activity consists of fulfilling and propagating the *dhaṃma*, or Sacred Law : among his successes this is the one he boasts of and it is on this that he pins his hope of glory (*Rock Edicts* X 1). On the other hand, the only victory in war he speaks of is the conquest of Kaliṅga and it is narrated (*Rock Edicts* XIII) precisely to curse it and to tell of his repentance for the deaths and disasters it

brought about. Aśoka discovered in this victory the roots of his conversion and his new policy with regard to his neighbours, including the primitive forest tribes. What he now desires is the victory of the *dhaṃma* (*Rock Edicts*, XII 15). In sum, the *dhaṃma* somehow takes the place of the personal god, that of warfare and that of hunting and feasts, too. This is a new programme, consciously opposed to that of the Achaemenid kings and, of course, to that of the Indian kings before him. However, it is the inscriptions of the former that are thus corrected. The engravings which accompany some of Aśoka's Edicts support the interpretation : instead of Ahuramazda, the white elephant (perhaps a symbol of Buddha) is represented on the rocks of Girnār, Kālsī and Dhauli ; in Sañci, King Aśoka is represented rendering cult to the Tree of Enlightenment.

II

Having come to this point, we must now take up the original thread of this paper once more, and point out that, together with the Persian influences, another should be postulated : that of Greek inscriptions. To this end, one should note that there are features in Aśoka's which can only be explained by these latter. Moreover, the historical circumstances of the epoque make it quite feasible that the facts could have taken place in this way.

To begin with, I should say that the subject has not been investigated. I could of course refer to papers by G. Pugliese Carratelli and A. J. Festugière,[10] in which they point out connections between Aśoka's ethics and the Hellenistic one, as likewise the closeness of his ideal of a king to that of the Hellenistic king. But these are parallels which, although important, are in keeping with the parallels between the religious and ethical ideals of both peoples at that time and which I have discussed elsewhere. The two authors do not centre their argument on the question of influences. And, above all, their study is concerned with content and has no reference to the formal elements of the inscriptions.

On the other hand, I do not think that there can be any objection to accepting Greek influence in Indian in the middle of the 3rd century B. C. It is true that this influence was much stronger in the 2nd century B. C., as from the Graeco-Indian reigns ; I have attributed to this epoque the Greek influence on the birth of the *Tantrākhyāyika* ; neither can the origins of the *Milindapanha* be dated any earlier, for obvious reasons, Graeco-Indian sculpture of the school of Gāndhāra and Mathurā is even later. But this Graeco-Indian cultural koiné

10. Cf. G. Pugliese CARRATELLI, *La Parola del Passato* "Asoka e i re ellenistici" 8, 1953, pp. 449-454 and J. A. FESTUGIERE, "Les inscriptions d'Aśoka et l'idéal du roi hellénistique ", *Recherches de sciences religieuses* 39, 1951, pp. 31–46.

evidently developed as from Alexander's conquest. The Persian architecture imported by Aśoka is really a semi-Hellenized architecture.[11] Moreover, the data regarding relations between Indians and Greeks as from the Macedonian conquest are well-known: the Treaty between Candragupta and Seleucus, the Greek embassies of Megasthenes and Daimachus to the courts of Candragupta and Bindusāra, the embassies sent by Aśoka to the Greeks according to his own account in the *Rock Edict* XIII, etc.

The books on India by Megasthenes and Daimachus (among others) brought a knowledge of this country to the West. One should think, then, that in the 3rd century B. C., as from the conquest, the Greeks began to attain knowledge on Indian culture and religion, a knowledge which later led to the flowering of a Graeco-Indian literature, partly in Indian languages and partly in Greek (the dialogue of Alexander and the Gymnosophists, in the work of the pseudo-Calisthenes, among other things). One should likewise think that, apart from sending ambassadors to the kings of Greece, Aśoka had Greeks within his own domains, whom he repeatedly mentions and for whose use he wrote the Kandahar inscription in Greek.[12] He therefore had more than sufficient means of access to Greek culture.

Now, a glance at Greek cultural data, above all those reflected in the epigraphy, will help us to understand certain things in Aśoka's inscriptions which cannot be explained by earlier Indian or Persian precedents.

In the first place, the headings to the inscriptions lack the genealogies of those of the Achaemenids, whilst they give fixed epithets to Aśoka that are lacking in these latter. The king is *Piyadasi* "the one with the benevolent look", he is *devānaṃpiya* "beloved of the gods", this latter epithet also being assigned to his son Dasalatha. It may even be that the name Aśoka (which only appears once in a certain version of *The Minor Rock and Pillar Edicts* I) could also be an epithet: its meaning – "he who causes no pain" – is explained by the legend regarding his birth, but he may also have taken on the epithet himself to denote his pacific nature. This is not only an inversion of the names and epithets of epic heroes, but also of his own father's, Bindusāra's, title, whom Greek sources call *Amitrokhatēs*, that is, *amitraghāta* "the killer of enemies".

Now, the use of epithets or names of this type is typical of the Hellenistic kings: *sōter* "saviour", *theophilos* "friend of the gods", *euergétes* "well-doer", *philopater* "lover of his father" (and corresponding forms regarding

11. Cf. J. AUBOYER, art. cit. in no. 3.

12. On this last point, cf. Vol. II *The Age of Imperial Unity*, of *The History and Culture of the Indian People*, ed. R. C. MAJUMDAR, Bombay 1960, p. 78 ff.

mother and brothers), *dikaios* " just ". One should recall the *Augustuses* and *Piuses* of Rome, Ptolomy V's epithet as *ēgapémenos hupò toũ Phthâ* " beloved of Phtha ", etc. These names were to be found alongside other such as *epiphanés* " illustrious ", or *nikator* " victorious ". It is not unlikely that the fashion for fixed epithets, at times turned into a name, and above all, the use of the epithets which I have termed " converted " ones, was in keeping with contemporary Greek usage : we know from his own testimony that Aśoka was familiar with the names of their kings. The supposed practice of the *dhaṃma* among the Greeks, which Aśoka speaks of, may have something to do with these names of their kings and with the concept of royalty reflected in them : Father Festugière has written some important pages on this subject in a paper quoted in n. 10.

I shall now go on to a second, more decisive point. Just as the rock inscriptions have a precedent in those of the Achaeménids (albeit discarding the glorifying reliefs of these kings), the pillar inscriptions have none. Certain small Persian inscriptions on the bases of columns, above all in Persepolis, bear no comparison, for they are inscriptions which give the name of the king who built the palace in question. On the other hand, the pillar inscriptions are edicts, just like the rock inscriptions. It was really Aśoka who took the initiative of using pre-existing pillars, just as he did with rock surfaces, for engraving his edicts. He himself tells us this (*Pillar Edicts* VII, 43). These pillars are exactly called *dhaṃmathambhāni* (*Pillar Edicts* VII, 14), " pillars of the Law "; they are, as I said, old cult pillars which he takes over, or else new pillars built by the king. The problem is to find out where he got his inspiration to write his edicts on them.

I believe the answer to this is from the Greeks, among whom the inscription of laws on stones, walls and pillars of diverse types was an ancient custom. Consider that the Indian *dhaṃma* is both religious and civil law, or as we might put it, there is no difference. Aśoka did not only concern himself with preaching purity, respect for life, veneration of one's parents, etc.; he also gives laws on prison sentences, and diverse instructions to his ministers. The distinction is not always quite clear in Greece either; the Greek *nómos* sometimes covers religious aspects. But there are in Greek inscriptions, above all, the sacred laws[13] which governed the temple cult, feasts, and so forth. Neither is this aspect lacking in Aśoka's inscriptions : he recommends the reading of the inscriptions on certain feast-days, speaks of the new religious festivals and pilgrimages, the abolishing of sacrifices (*Rock Edicts* IV, VIII, IX).

13. Cf. F. SOKOLOWSKI's collection, *Lois sacrées des cités grecques*, Paris 1962.

Aśoka could only have drawn inspiration from the Greek inspirations to introduce the mandates of the Law, the *dhaṃma*, in his own inscriptions. Nothing of this is to be found in Persia. We could of course go back to Hammurabi's code and other documents, but it is unlikely that this could have come down to Aśoka ; neither should we seek the model in laws written on tablets, such as so many Mesopotamian and Hittite ones.

In fact, one should point out that Aśoka's inscriptions are of a mixed nature, which as far as I know, has not received attention. There is much account of the king's deeds, as in Persian inscriptions, albeit in the form of the "conversion" which I mentioned above. But on the other hand, they are true edicts, predecessors of the edicts of the Hellenistic monarchs and Roman emperors, which I shall discuss below. We know of nothing like this in Persia, except for Darius's letter in Greek mentioned above : to this end, he must have used clay tablets or other perishable material.

On the other hand, the sacred places of Greece – agoras, Accropolis, temples – were full of stone inscriptions which contained imperative laws for magistrates, citizens, functionaries of the cult. Sometimes they prescribed a certain type of behaviour fitting to certain occasions or places. This was the model that Aśoka took for his edicts, likewise in places of the cult – rocks or pillars. But naturally, Aśoka was an absolute monarch, his laws were not passed by an assembly or by magistrates : he imparted them in accordance with the eternal *dhaṃma*. The combination of the great inscriptions in which the Persian monarchs glorified themselves and the laws of the Greek cities created Aśoka's edicts.

Another element could quite easily have been influential : the preaching of Hellenistic philosophers. I do not agree in this with Festugiere's excellent study : this type of philosophy (Cynical, Epicurean and Stoic) carried out veritable proselytism. It is quite clear that these philosophers must have seemed the nearest equivalent to their own Brahmins and ascetes to the Indian emissaries, and that the Greeks in turn saw a counterpart in the Indian ascetes to their Cynics and other philosophers, is a well-known fact. We shall see later how an Epicurean, Diogenes of Oenoanda, resorted to an inscription for his preaching. In any case, these schools created a whole proselytic literature, to one of the components of which, the Cynic, I believe one should attribute an influence on Graeco-Indian literature.[14] In sum, the influence of Greek epigraphy on India should be connected to the fact that both in the ideals as to the good king and in moral philosophy in general, elements were found in Hellenistic Greece which justified

14. See several papers quoted in no. 2.

Aśoka's initiative to adapt the type of inscription favoured by the Achaemenids to his own ideals, with the aid of Greek epigraphic tradition.

The influence of this tradition may be further confirmed by another fact which I have not mentioned so far. I said that Aśoka's procedure of reproducing one and the same inscription in several places with minor adaptations, is not to be found in Persia. Here, there were, indeed, multilingual inscriptions, and these latter were widely diffused; this, however, was doubtless with the aid of perishable materials, or otherwise, the contents of the inscriptions were passed on orally. There was no "edition" of one single inscription in multiple copies.

Now, we find examples of this procedure in Greece, which later porliferated in Rome. To be precise, we find it in cult inscriptions: in liturgical hymns which became fashionable in the 4th century B. C., and which were engraved on stone in the different places of the god's cult. Thus is the case of Erythrai's poean, of which copies have also been found in Ptolemais (in Egypt) and in Dione (in Thessalia). In other cases, cult hymns have come down to us in remote spots far from the respective god's cult centre (thus, for example, in the case of the hymn to the dactyls of the Ida found in Erythrai): it must be assumed that these are copies.[15]

On the other hand, apart from what took place in the epigraphic field, the concept of edition – the systematic multiplication of a text, for its diffusion – is to be found for the first time in Greece. It is in the Hellenistic East that the Indians must have known of it.

Of course, this does not mean that the genre of Aśoka's inscriptions was the result of a Greek-Persian syncretism. No, certain Persian and Greek inscriptions lent formal elements which Aśoka borrowed to create his own new genre. This was possible because there were also elements of content on these inscriptions which coincided with what Aśoka's intention was when writing out his inscriptions. But, from here on, the content is fundamentally Indian. I am not going to describe it here; as is well-known, it represents a syncretic type of thought, not strictly Buddhist, a thought which is otherwise generally religious and human and centred on both the attaining of heaven and on seeking peace and prosperity on earth. This very syncretism is what has made possible the use of Persian and Greek elements at the same time, in the cause of a decidedly unitary intention.

15. Cf. my *Lirica griega arcaica*, Madrid, 1980, pp. 57 ff. For other examples cf. LARFELD (cit. in note 18) I, pp. 180, 187, 194 and II, p. 696.

III

I now come to the third point in this paper : to attempt to give a few indications as to the success of Aśoka's new formula in the western world.

The new political règimes of the Hellenistic age and, as from a certain moment, of Rome, were either monarchic or imperial. An important element in their system of government were the edicts (*prostágmata*, *edicta*) of kings, emperors and important functionaries, as likewise their letters.[16] The form is different but the meaning is very often the same : decisions to be respected by cities or individuals. And they are given either spontaneously or as answers to letters or requests.

The edicts above all are generally considered, and rightly too, to have been derived from the oriental tradition. Although the truth is that the details are little known to us (we have said something about it above), we can find the clearest derivation of Darius's inscriptions in inscriptions such as those of diverse kings of the dynasties of Nubia and Ethiopia written in Greek and in which they narrate their conquests.[17] In any case, the initial formulae of the edicts, with the name of the king or of the person who writes and the verb " says " (*légei*, also in the first person " I order ", " I permit ", etc.),[18] derive from the old tradition. I have already stated that Darius's letter in Greek which has come down to us begins thus.

It is not in any case my intention to go into depth here about the problem of the origin and evolution of the edict and related forms. I shall merely recall two aspects of these documents which repeat things already known to us : the existence of several epigraphic copies of the same document and the habitual use of a Greek translation of the edicts destined for the Greek Orient.[19]

I shall, on the other hand, deal with a few documents which, if I am not mistaken, represent a derivation of the tradition begun by Aśoka.

In the first place, I should like to mention the great inscription by Antiochus of Commagene in his funeral sanctuary on the Nemrud Dag peak.[20]

16. Cf. above all C. BRADFORD WELLS, *Royal Correspondence in the Hellenistic Period*, Rome, 1966.

17. See these inscriptions in the *Orientis Graeci Inscriptiones selectae* by W. DITTENBERGER, I, Leipzig, 1903, p. 284 ff.

18. Cf. W. LARFELD, *Griechische Epigraphik*, 3rd ed., Munich, 1914, p. 427 ff.

19. Cf. F. MARTIN, *La documentación griega de la cancilleria de Adriano*, Pamplona, 1982 pp. 261 ff, 323 ff.

20. This may be seen in *Orientis Graeci*.... cit., p. 511 ff. The smaller inscriptions are also to be found there.

Next to the great tumulus of this Hellenistic king, who was a friend of Rome and who ruled this extreme confine of Anatolia between 62 and 34 B. C., five gigantic statues of seated gods were found, himself among them ; the heads of these statues are still preserved. On both sides there is an eagle and a lion ; and on a small wall not far away, steles were placed with the images of Antiochus's Greek and Persian ancestors, evoked in inscriptions on the steles themselves. Finally, the great inscription we are concerned with here is on the backs of the god's seats.

Antiochus gives his titles and genealogy in it and the inscription alludes to the events of his reign, ending with a sacred Law that regulates the cult in the sanctuary. There is no doubt that this is a Graeco-Persian syncretism : the double genealogy, both Greek and Persian, of Antiochus, the gods represented (among them Zeus-Oromasdes, that is, Ahuramazda, and Heracles-Artagnes, that is, Varathragna) and details of the sacred law (Persian costume for the priest in the anniversary celebrations), all leave this quite clear without a shade of a doubt.

The Persian model in this case is Darius's funeral sanctuary at Nakš-i-Rustam, the inscription of which I have already mentioned (and which, for the rest, is not unlike that at Bīsutūn). The tomb is excavated in a hillside and there is a large relief on its façade surrounded by the inscription. In the relief, we see the king on his throne, the god Ahuramazda, an altar and the moon ; there are also the king's soldiers. It is worth noting that the tomb did not go unnoticed to posterity ; there are seven large Sassanian reliefs on the same rock.

Antiochus, therefore, attempted to surpass Darius's tomb and, perhaps, other ancient Persian tombs ; he doubtless also knew the other inscriptions of his supposed or real Persian ancestors. On the contrary to Aśoka, he took from all of them the custom of putting his own genealogy at the top, which is given in greater details in the smaller inscriptions on the steles. The Sacred Law included in the inscription is, on the other hand, of Greek origin, as the description he gives of the sanctuary he built may also possibly be : although it might also make one think of the Persian inscriptions related to the building of the palaces of Persepolis and elsewhere.

However, I do not believe that this completes the study of the influences. For, right from the beginning Antiochus introduces elements which I would unhesitatingly connect with the Indian model :

a) The king, before giving his genealogy, gives a list of the epithets by which he is called : " The Great King Antiochus, god, just, illustrious, friend of the Romans, friend of the Greeks ".

b) After the genealogy, he says, like Aśoka in so many Edicts, that he has had the inscription engraved.

c) Nevertheless, a key element of Darius's funeral inscription (and of other inscriptions) is missing: an initial paragraph in honour of Ahuramazda.

d) But above all, an explicit account of Antiochus's life and triumphs is missing, whilst he on the other hand from the start praises his own *eusébeia* (usually translated as "piety"), to which he attributed the prosperity of his reign, as likewise his own *hosiótes* or "saintliness", "my most faithful guardian and my most unequalled pleasure".

At first glance, it would seem clear that this is Indian, inspired by Aśoka's inscriptions (cf. *Rock Edict* XIII 15 and 20), but it becomes quite certain when one checks that the term *dhaṃma*, Sacred Law, is translated exactly as *eusébeia* in Aśoka's Greek inscription found in Kandahar. Let us compare the following:

Aśoka	**Antiochus**
.....King Piyadasi taught men the Sacred Law (*eusébeia*) and thus made them more faithful to the Law and everything prospers in the whole country, etc.	The Great King Antiochus ... Among all my wordly goods, I considered that the Sacred Law (*eusébeia*) is for all men not only the safest possession but also the most pleasurable enjoyment and I have held this choice as the cause of a lucky power and happy usage; and during the whole of my reign, I have considered saintliness (*hosiótes*) to be my most faithful guardian and my most unequalled pleasure, etc.

Antiochus had doubtless seen Aśoka's inscriptions such as the one at Kandahar and took over some of its subjects, enlarging them in his florid Greek with its Asianic oratory; *hosiótes* turns out to be a simple duplicate of *eusébeia*, to which he attributes his salvation in desperate situations. He certainly omits Indian subjects such as the respect for life and the prohibition on killing animals. Yet he returns to the theme of *eusébeia* time and again. And, however much he may have had statues of Greek and Persian gods sculpted, when he comes to speak of his victories, he does not attribute them to Ahuramazda or to any other god among these, but to the "divine mind, which was often contemplated as a

visible companion to help me in my royal battles". On the other hand, Antiochus's piety is expressed in his founding of the sanctuary and his regulation of the cult in same : the Sacred Law (*hierós nómos*) he includes is the expression of it.

However, I believe that this original document is not unique in the Graeco-Roman world. I shall now briefly discuss another well-known and illustrious one : the *Res gestae divi Augusti*, or the great inscription Augustus wrote to be engraved on his mausoleum in Rome, copies of which, as is known, have come down to us, or fragments of copies from Ancyra (Latin and Greek), Antiochia of Pisidia (Latin) and Apollonia of Pisidia (Greek). The very fact of multilingual texts and copies brings well-known things to mind.

I cannot discuss in detail here the opinions given on the models for this inscription. They range from R. Syme's in the sense that the *Res Gestae* " cannot be explained by analogies or precedents "[21] to those of the authors who stress the oriental parallels and those who, whilst not denying these latter, insist on the persistence in the inscription of the Roman tradition.[22]

The original models mentioned are those we already know, but usually they are only given in general terms ; Antiochus's inscription is, of course, among them, but Aśoka's are not mentioned at all. Yet I believe that India, which did active trade with Rome in Augustus's time, did, indeed, continue to exert its influence in this field.

It is quite clear that we are faced with a funeral inscription that therefore goes back to that of Darius in Nakši-Rustam and that of Antiochus. However, unlike the latter and like the former (and other non-funeral oriental inscriptions), Augustus explains his campaigns, his constructions and his favours to the people in great detail.

I believe that the most convincing analysis of the inscription is Mario Attilio Levi's in a paper quoted in note 22. He insists that the inscription has no Roman precedent and criticizes certain mechanical analyses. For him, what comes to light throughout the whole inscription is Augustus's *pietas*, which

21. *The Roman Revolution*, Oxford, 1939, p. 254.

22. Among other bibliography, Cf. M. A. LEVI "La composizione delle Res Gestae divi Augusti ", *Riv. di Filologia Classica*, N. S. 25, 1947, pp. 189–210; A Magariños, *Res Gestae divi Augusti*, Introduction, translation and notes, Suplementos de Estudios Clásicos 1, Madrid, 1951; M. GUARDUCCI, *Epigrafia greca* II, Roma, 1970, p. 315 ff.; J. GAVÉ, *Res gestae divi Augusti*, Paris, 1977, p. 25 ff.

punishes the murderers of his father, the god Caesar. Together with his public functions, he expounds the religious honours he has received, the prayers for his health from the people, the founding of the Ara Pacis and the closing of the doors of the temple of Janus. Augustus is merciful (chapt. III) and not merely victorious; he gives an account of his public works in favour of the people (chapts. XIX-XXI); he discusses the embassies sent by the eastern people (including India) in homage to him (chapt. XXX). The intention behind the inscription is to present the reign of Augustus as opposed to that of his predecessor; he inaugurates an era of virtue, peace and prosperity, as likewise one of piety to the gods, too.

It is possible to illustrate all these concepts, one by one, with passages from Aśoka. It is true that all this is syncretized with oriental elements in general and with other Roman ones, but I think that the general content of the inscription cannot be understood without the Indian models. This syncretism evidently responds to the religious syncretism of the epoque. It is above all expressed in chapt. XXXIV 2, where there is an account of how the Senate proclaimed Octavianus Augustus (Gr. *sebastós*) and dedicated a gold *clupeus* to him, the inscription of which spoke of his "virtue, mercy, justice and piety" (Gr. *eusébeia*). Aśoka's motto echoes here once again. His model was evidently easily accessible to Rome at this time. And the fact that copies of the *Res Gestae* were sent to the cities of Asia may have been inspired by him.

Finally, I should like to point to the possibility that a fresh echo of Aśoka's inscriptions is to be found in the Greek one of Diogenes of Oenoanda, in which this Epicurean philosopher expounded his philosophy on a large wall as a remedy to the evils of humanity.[23] It is in the above mentioned city on the wall of a *stoa* or porch. That this could be connected to the author's burial is merely a hypothesis; and, on the other hand, the beginning is missing which might perhaps have offered us certain data. More than an inscription, this is really a miscellany of Epicurean philosophy. And there are no precedents for its being placed in an inscription, if one disregards the maxims in Apollo's temple at Delphi.

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23. This inscription, which is currently being recovered fragment by fragment among the ruins of the city of Oenoanda in Asia Minor, poses many problems. It is usually dated in the 2nd century A. D., but one should perhaps distinguish between the date of the inscription and that of its author (as, for example, in the case of another literary inscription, that of the *heroon* in Paros in honour of Archilochus, of the 1st century B. C., which includes a text from Demeas, of the 3rd century B. C.). See V. W. CHILTON, *Diogenis Oenoandensis Fragmenta*, Leipzig, 1967; but there are numerous fragments discovered at a later date, cf. the reference in my *Diccionario Griego-Español* I, Madrid, 1980, p. LXXIV.

I have spoken above of the proselytism of the Hellenistic philosophers and one should interpret the inscription within this context. Diogenes speaks of his compassion towards men and states that he places his inscription where it is in order to dispel the empty fear of death from men. It is, then, a moral exhortation to men, although within an atheistic philosophy and with added autobiographical data. That Diogenes should have had the idea of putting all this in an inscription in his city may not be alien to the oriental model I discussed above and others derived from same. For we have seen that in one way or another, their echo reached Asia Minor and even the whole of the Graeco-Roman world.