

The restoration of the wall of the *Res gestae* carried out in 2003.

edited by the Accademia dei Lincei, on 23 September 1937, the same day when the celebrations of the Augustan bimillenary were officially opened. The volume bore on the inside cover the following words: "o legionaries, raise high the ensigns, the iron and your hearts to salute, after fifteen centuries, the return of the Empire on the fatal hills of Rome." The words are taken "ex Beniti Mussolini, *Itolorum Ducis oratione*, VII Id. Ma. A. MCMXXXVI, a Fasc. restit. XIV, ab Imp. Restit. I." Thus Augustus' words were given an amplified "Roman" and official character; besides the *auctoritas* represented by their actual author, they were given the authority of the founder of fascism as well, who in this way could reinforce his *imitatio Augusti*. The making of the inscription required the casting of 15,115 bronze letters, of which 115 for the title only, for a total sum of 122,527.5 lire of the time. The appointment for the engraving of the travertine and the casting of the single letters was given only after 25 August 1938, less than a month before the inauguration day (A.S. XII Rip.). Due to this delay the Firm pledged to complete the engraving on the wall in the Via di Ripetta in time, but intended to apply the bronze letters only after the inauguration. We are informed that, notwithstanding the great commitment and the workers' night shifts to meet the deadline, on 23 September 1938 the pavilion was inaugurated with a still incomplete inscription, only engraved on the left side of the monument. The wall of the *Res gestae*, for its historical and artistic relevance, has been preserved and included in the structure of the new Museum and is all that is left of the old pavilion. In 2003 the wall was restored: this required the cleaning of the wall itself and the repair of the cracks on its surface, the replacement of the lost letters and the consolidation of the others, as well as the polishing of the bronze characters.

