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Augustan Rome and the Body of Christ: A Comparison of the Social Vision of the *Res Gestae* and Paul's Letter to the Romans

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A surprising omission in New Testament studies of the imperial world is a comparison of Augustus's conception of rule in the *Res Gestae* (*RG*) with Paul's eschatological gospel of grace in his letter to the Romans. Even though each document has been foundational in the history of Western civilization, a comparison of their vastly different social outcomes has not been undertaken.¹ Neil Elliott has made an outstanding contribution in laying the foundations for such a study, offering a scintillating analysis of Paul's letter to the Romans in terms of *iustitia* (justice), *clementia* (mercy), *pietas* (piety), and *virtus* (valor), the four virtues of Augustus inscribed on the Golden Shield erected in the Julian senate house (*RG*

¹ Two studies investigate the intersection of 2 Corinthians and Galatians with the *RG*: Anton Friedrichsen, "Peristasenenkatalog und *Res Gestae*," *SO* 8 (1929) 78–82; Davina C. Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered: Reimagining Paul's Mission* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2008) 86–113. Justin Hardin discusses the Latin monument of the *Res Gestae* at Pisidian Antioch, but he does not investigate the evidence of the *RG* in relation to Galatians (*Galatians and the Imperial Cult: A Critical Analysis of the First-Century Social Context of Paul's Letter* [WUNT II/237; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008]). On the *RG* at Ancyra and Galatians, see Brigitte Kahl, *Galatians Re-Imagined: Reading with the Eyes of the Vanquished* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2010) 192–95. In this article I will discuss the Latin text of the *RG* rather than its Greek counterpart, because it was the text available to literate Romans at Augustus's mausoleum in Rome. Alison E. Cooley's English translation is used throughout, incorporating the latest textual restoration of *RG* 34.1 (Cooley, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: Text, Translation, and Commentary* [Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2009])—as does John Scheid's translation (*Res Gestae divi Augusti. Hauts faits du divin Auguste* [Paris: Belles Lettres, 2007]). The use of square brackets means that the editor restored the missing Latin letter(s) of the inscription.

34.2).² However, a full-scale investigation of the Augustan conception of rule in the *RG* would open up new perspectives on Paul's engagement with the imperial world in Romans, given that Augustus became the iconic *exemplum* of virtue for his Julio-Claudian successors. Nonetheless, the difference in genre and aims of each document makes such a comparison daunting for New Testament scholars, as does the controversy that each document continues to generate in its own discipline. Further, we are unsure about the extent of the exposure that Paul might have had to the *RG*, directly or indirectly. Possibly Paul saw a Greek version of the *RG* text at Pisidian Antioch, along with the Latin text that still survives there, during his first missionary journey (Acts 13:14–50), even though there are no archaeological remains of the Greek text at Antioch today.³ Presumably Paul would have been aware that the original Latin copy of the *RG* was inscribed in bronze at Augustus's mausoleum at Rome.⁴ This article will argue that Paul, in planning to move his missionary outreach from the Greek East to the Latin West (Rom 15:19a–24), thought strategically about how he was going to communicate the reign of the crucified, risen, and ascended Son of God to inhabitants of the capital who had lived through the “Golden Age” of grace under Augustus and who were experiencing its renewal under Nero. What social and theological vision did Paul want to communicate to the city of Rome in which Augustus was the yardstick of virtue to which future leaders of Rome should aspire?

Although Augustus composed the *RG* in the last year of his life, its ideological legacy continued to impact Augustus's Julio-Claudian successors.⁵ Many of the

² Neil Elliott, *The Arrogance of Nations: Reading Romans in the Shadow of Empire* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2008) 59–161.

³ See James R. Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities at Thessalonica and Rome: A Study in the Collision of Ideology* (WUNT 273; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011) 24–25.

⁴ On the *Res Gestae*, see Theodor Mommsen, *Res Gestae divi Augustae ex monumentis Ancyrano et Apolloniensi* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1883); Jean Gagé, *Res Gestae divi Augustae ex Monumentis Ancyrano et Antiocheno. Latinis Ancyrano et Apolloniensi Graecis* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1935); Peter A. Brunt and John M. Moore, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti: The Achievements of the Divine Augustus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967); Hans Volkmann, *Res Gestae Divi AVGUSTI: Das Monumentum Ancyranum* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1969); Frederick W. Danker, *Benefactor: Epigraphic Study of a Graeco-Roman and New Testament Semantic Field* (St. Louis: Clayton, 1982) 256–80; Edwin S. Ramage, *The Nature and Purpose of Augustus' "Res Gestae"* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag Wiesbaden, 1987); Zvi Yavetz, “The *Res Gestae* and Augustus' Public Image,” in *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects* (ed. Fergus Millar and Erich Segal; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) 1–36; Cynthia Damon, *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* (Bryn Mawr, Pa.: Bryn Mawr College, 1995); Ronald Ridley, *The Emperor's Retrospect: Augustus' Res Gestae in Epigraphy, Historiography and Commentary* (Louvain: Peeters, 2003); Scheid, *Res Gestae*; Edwin A. Judge, “Augustus in the *Res Gestae*,” in idem, *The First Christians in the Roman World: Augustan and New Testament Essays* (ed. James R. Harrison; WUNT 229; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 182–223; idem, “On Judging the Merits of Augustus,” in idem, *The First Christians*, 224–313, at 239–45; Cooley, *Res Gestae*.

⁵ The Julio-Claudian successors to Augustus's principate appealed to Augustan precedent during their rule. See Barbara Levick, *Tiberius the Politician* (London: Routledge, 1999) 82; Anthony A. Barrett, *Caligula: The Corruption of Power* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1989) 250; Thomas E. J. Wiedemann, “Tiberius to Nero,” in *The Cambridge Ancient History: Vol. 10. The Augustan Empire*,

motifs of the *RG* were still being rendered in the inscriptions, coins, and iconography of the Greek East and Latin West in the mid-fifties. Paul would have been aware of the messages that they conveyed about the social, religious, and political values of the Julio-Claudian state, its ruler, and its provincial clients. In writing to the Romans, the apostle decided to highlight the triumph of Christ's grace over sin and death in a manner that intersected with the Roman boasting culture, its quest for glory, and the Augustan age of grace. In so doing, Paul unfolded for his Gentile auditors the privilege of their incorporation as a "wild olive shoot" into the "olive root" of covenantal Israel (Rom 11:24; 15:7–11), as well as their liberation from the mortality of the Adamic age (5:12–21; 8:18–25).

Pauline scholars employ a range of methodologies to analyze how a conquered people responds to imperial power, either by strategies of resistance, accommodation, or mimicry. These include postcolonial theory,⁶ public and hidden transcripts,⁷ colonial mimicry,⁸ ideological critical readings,⁹ feminist and queer readings of texts,¹⁰ and the ideology of visual representation (or critical reimagination).¹¹ While such methodologies provide rich insights into how oppressed minorities might have construed Paul's teaching in Romans over against Augustan ideology, our approach will be historical, focusing on the social ideology underpinning Augustus's self-eulogy.¹² I will argue for a nuanced understanding of Paul's response to Augustan ideology. Paul's gospel critiqued imperial values in their providential, prophetic, triumphal, and beneficent expressions. It provided a distinctive approach to social relations in the body of Christ that inverted the hierarchical and boastful culture of Julio-Claudian society, with the result that the Western intellectual tradition would ultimately be transformed (§3, below).¹³ This

43 B.C.–A.D. 69 (ed. Alan K. Bowman, Edward Champlin, and Andrew Lintott; Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1996) 198–255, at 232; Miriam T. Griffin, *Nero: The End of a Dynasty* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1984) s.v. Index of Persons, Human & Divine, "Augustus the Emperor"; Edward Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003) 139–44. For Flavian commitment to Augustan precedent, see David C. A. Shotter, *Augustus Caesar* (2d ed.; New York: Routledge, 2005) Plates 16, 103–4.

⁶ Jeremy Punt, "Paul and Postcolonial Hermeneutics: Marginality and/in Early Biblical Interpretation," in *As It is Written: Studying Paul's Use of Scripture* (ed. Stanley P. Porter and Christopher D. Stanley; Atlanta, Ga.: SBL, 2008) 261–90.

⁷ Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 28–33, 304–8.

⁸ Joseph A. Marchal, *The Politics of Heaven: Women, Gender, and Empire in the Study of Paul* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2008) 59–90.

⁹ Elliott, *Arrogance of Nations*, 11–13.

¹⁰ Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered*, 11–17, 19–22, 66–71, 108–10, 124–37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 11; Kahl, *Galatians Re-Imagined*, 27–29; James R. Harrison, "'More Than Conquerors'" (Rom 8:37): Paul's Gospel and the Augustan Triumphal Arches of the Greek East and Latin West," *Buried History* 47 (2011) 3–20.

¹² On my methodology, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 19–44.

¹³ The historical truthfulness of Augustus's self-eulogy will not be addressed in this article. I am more interested in how the *public* presentation of Augustus's rule in the *RG* expressed his social vision for Rome and, concomitantly, the extent to which its ideology intersected with Paul's eschatological

article will assess the social significance, in Paul's thought, of important imperial leitmotifs by comparing the *RG* with Romans: namely, the centrality of ancestral tradition, the culture of self-advertisement, the accumulation and rendering of honor, the conquest of the nations, the extension of beneficence, the authority of the leader, and the achievement of virtue. Initially, I will discuss the aims and audience of Augustus's *RG* and the degree to which the text reflects motifs of Romans, as the apostle began to shift his missionary focus from the Greek East to Rome and Spain.

■ 1. Preliminary Considerations

1.1 *The Aims and Audience of Augustus's Res Gestae*

Upon the death of Augustus in 14 C.E., the Younger Drusus, Tiberius's son, read out the will of the deceased princeps at a meeting of the Roman senate, along with three other documents. The three documents had been entrusted, along with his will, to the Vestal virgins for their protection in April 13 C.E. The first document gave Augustus's instructions regarding his funeral; the second document was "a summary of his achievements" (*index rerum a se gestarum*); the third document provided "a brief account of the whole empire" (Suetonius, *Aug.* 101.4). The second document, better known to us as the *RG*, was to be inscribed on bronze tablets and displayed in the front of Augustus's mausoleum, which stood prominently on the Campus Martius (Field of Mars), its construction having been finalized by 28 B.C.E. The *RG* was composed in the final year of Augustus's life, when he was seventy-six years old and in the thirty-seventh year of his tribunician power (4.4; 35.2). Somewhere between his birthday on 23 September 13 C.E. and his death on 19 August 14 C.E., the work was completed, perhaps provoked by two omens in his final year presaging his imminent death (Suetonius, *Aug.* 90–92), though it is possible that the work had been in progress much earlier.¹⁴ The *RG* is a self-eulogy in which Augustus sets out his achievements and accolades: his honors (1–7) and special tributes achieved during his principate (9–13); the honors for his sons (14); his *impensae* (expenses) incurred on behalf of the state and the Roman people (15–24); his *res gestae* ([military] achievements) by which he subdued the

gospel of grace. On the veracity of the *RG*, see Ridley, *Emperor's Retrospect*, passim. It must be realized, however, that the genre of eulogistic literature, to which the *RG* belongs, is political and triumphal. Objectivity cannot be expected (Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 35; see Arnold H. M. Jones, *Augustus* [New York: Norton, 1970] 168–69). On the ideology of Augustus and his successors, see Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999); Clifford Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty in the Roman Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Ittai Gradel, *Emperor Worship and Roman Religion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2002); Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*.

¹⁴ See the different conclusion of Brunt and Moore, *Res Gestae*, 6; Scheid, *Res Gestae*, xxii–xxvi; Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 42–43.

world to the power of Rome (25–33); and, last, his pre-eminence as an example of virtue to all (34–35).

Scholars have suggested a variety of purposes for the *RG*. It is either

- a) “a rendering of accounts” (Theodor Mommsen);¹⁵
- b) a statement “that his rule was not arbitrary, but founded on law” (Zvi Yavetz);¹⁶
- c) a document, though having multiple purposes, which was “aimed at justifying his deification and . . . encouraging the senate to expedite the process” (Alison E. Cooley; also Brian Bosworth);¹⁷
- d) an account of Augustus’s philosophy of government, aimed at establishing a stable state (Suetonius, *Aug.* 28.2) and instructing his successor, Tiberius (Edwin S. Ramage; John Scheid);¹⁸
- e) a document leaving Augustus’s “own version of events to guide the assessment of . . . posterity” (Ronald Ridley; also Jean Gag e);¹⁹ or
- f) “an apologia, containing the things which Augustus wished to be remembered about his life, and omitting things which were inconsistent with the picture he was drawing” (Peter A. Brunt and John M. Moore).²⁰

It is beyond the scope of this article to assess the viability of these interpretations, though, from what follows, I consider suggestions e) and f) to capture best Augustus’s intentions. I will focus on the apologetic purpose of the *RG* against the backdrop of the contemporary attacks made against the princeps. The aims of the document should also be situated within the traditional quest for ancestral glory among the Roman nobles and within the Roman literature of *exempla*. This can be discerned from Augustus’s statement in the *RG* that he would uphold the ancestral *exempla* and provide *exempla* for the imitation of posterity though his statue program in the *forum Augustum* (§1.1.2, below).²¹ Only recently have

¹⁵ Theodor Mommsen, “Der Rechenschaftsbericht des Augustus,” *Historische Zeitschrift* 57 (1887) 385–97; repr., idem, *Gesammelte Schriften* IV (Berlin: Weidmann, 1906) 247–58.

¹⁶ Yavetz, “*Res Gestae*,” 26.

¹⁷ Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 41; Brian Bosworth, “Augustus, the *Res Gestae* and Hellenistic Theories of Apotheosis,” *JRS* 89 (1999) 1–18. However, Scheid (*Res Gestae*, xlvii–xlviii) argues against Ulrich von Wilamowitz’s proposal—and Weber’s appropriation of his argument—that Augustus’s *RG* was “une justification de son apoth ose prochaine par un Auguste vieillissant” (ibid., xlvii).

¹⁸ Ramage, *Augustus*’ “*Res Gestae*,” 111–16; Scheid, *Res Gestae*, lxi.

¹⁹ Ridley, *Emperor’s Retrospect*, 240; Gag e, *Res Gestae*, 34.

²⁰ Brunt and Moore, *Res Gestae*, 4.

²¹ On Roman nobles, new men, and the quest for ancestral glory, see James R. Harrison, “Paul and the Roman Ideal of Glory in the Epistle to the Romans,” in *The Letter to the Romans* (ed. Udo Schnelle; BETL 226; Walpole, Mass.: Peeters, 2009) 329–69, esp. 334–56. On *novi homines*, see Timothy P. Wiseman, *New Men in the Roman Senate 139 B.C.–A.D. 14* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971) and David R. Shackleton Bailey, “*Nobiles* and *Novi* Reconsidered,” *AJP* 107(1986) 255–60.

scholars sufficiently appreciated this Augustan emphasis. Before we investigate this further, we have to discuss how the purpose of the *RG* related to Augustus's earlier memoirs.

1.1.1 THE *RES GESTAE*: AUGUSTUS'S DEFENSE OF HIS PRINCIPATE

From 26 B.C.E. Augustus began writing his memoirs (Plutarch, *Comp. Dem. Cic.* 3), a work dedicated to Agrippa, his co-regent and heir in 17 B.C.E., and to Maecenas, his confidant and political advisor. The memoirs survived until late antiquity, but they are now lost to us, apart from fragments cited in the works of ancient authors.²² The memoirs were written for his peers rather than the public. They discussed "his actions in terms of *Realpolitik*,"²³ in contrast to the meticulously crafted self-eulogy of the *RG*, which was probably written with the help of his friends and imperial secretaries during the last year of his life.²⁴ The focus of Augustus's memoirs, comprising thirteen volumes, was the triumviral period of his rise to power (43–30 B.C.E.), as opposed to his later rule as *princeps* (30 B.C.E.–14 C.E.). The work was discontinued, Suetonius informs us (*Aug.* 85.1), after the end of the Cantabrian War (26–25 B.C.E.).²⁵ But Augustus was only too aware that controversy over the nature of his principate would break out upon his death. Thus the *RG* represents Augustus's preemptive strike at setting the public record straight before his death and conditioning the view of posterity regarding his principate.²⁶

The hand of Augustus had already been ideologically forced by his opponents' misrepresentation of his rise to power during the triumviral years. As Zvi Yavetz notes, Augustus in his memoirs was "reacting to slander and vituperation."²⁷ The first charge against which Augustus defended himself was that his family origins were ignoble.²⁸ In response, Augustus emphasizes the wealthy background of his equestrian family (the Octavii) and the senatorial status of his biological father (Gaius Octavius),²⁹ who, according to our sources,³⁰ was a man of integrity. Augustus also underscores his divine ancestry acquired through his adoption into the Julian family. Cicero had recognized, the memoirs point out, that the stripling

²² For the fragments, see Hermann Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae* (2 vols.; Stuttgart: Teubner, 1967) 2:54–64; R. William Dolley, Ian E. Grady, and Tom W. Hillard, "The Memoirs of Augustus: The Fragments in Translation," *Ancient Society: Resources for Teachers* 3 (1975) 163–81.

²³ Dolley, Grady, and Hillard, "The Memoirs of Augustus," 164.

²⁴ Scheid, *Res Gestae*, xxvi–xxviii.

²⁵ Yavetz argues that it was after 23 B.C.E. that Augustus abandoned his memoirs because "further justification of his earlier career was unnecessary, and might be even counterproductive" ("*Res Gestae*," 3–4).

²⁶ Judge, "Augustus in the *Res Gestae*," 183.

²⁷ Yavetz, "*Res Gestae*," 6.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 1–2.

²⁹ Suetonius, *Aug.* 2.3 (Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, vol. 2, frg. 1).

³⁰ Velleius Paterculus 2.59.2; Nicolaus of Damascus, *Vit. Caes.* 2.

Octavian was fated to be recognized as “Augustus,”³¹ and that his adoptive father,³² Julius Caesar, had been apotheosized.³³

The second charge highlighted Augustus’s inconsistent and treacherous behavior towards his allies,³⁴ as well as his cruelty—an accusation designed to counter his reputation for clemency—during the civil wars.³⁵ In response, Augustus in his memoirs emphasizes the role that divine favor played in his battles.³⁶ Moreover, Augustus’s lenient treatment of Lucius Antonius, the younger brother of Marcus Antonius, underscored his *clementia*, even though the general had accused Augustus of unconstitutional behavior as a triumvir and of subterfuge in waging the civil war.³⁷

The third charge was that Augustus had acted in a cowardly manner on the battlefield, fleeing from danger at Philippi,³⁸ having suffered the ignominy of losing his camp. Again, in response, Augustus claims that it was divine guidance in a dream that precipitated the decision to abandon the camp.³⁹ Further, as Cooley notes,⁴⁰ Augustus avoids the implication of being an unsuccessful general by focusing on his victory over the barbarian peoples in the Illyrian Wars,⁴¹ a victory presaging the theme of world conquest spotlighted in the Latin heading of the *Res Gestae*,⁴² as well as his encounters with barbarian peoples (*RG* 26–33).

What is clear from Yavetz’s analysis is that the *RG* was intended to counter the invective of Augustus’s critics regarding his ruthless rise to power and to set the glory of his principate in proper perspective for posterity. The *RG* provided a more nuanced and holistic response to his critics than his memoirs. So successful was Augustus in this endeavor that the counter-propaganda of a later generation sought to dismantle the ideological edifice that Augustus had built in the *RG*.⁴³

³¹ Tertullian, *An.* 46 (Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, vol. 2, frg. 2).

³² Dio 44.35.2 (Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, vol. 2, frg. 3).

³³ Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 2.93–94; Servius, *Commentary on Virgil’s Bucolics* 9.46 (Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, vol. 2, frgs. 4, 5).

³⁴ Yavetz, “*Res Gestae*,” 2; Plutarch, *Cic.* 45.5; idem, *Brut.* 27 (Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, vol. 2, frgs. 7, 8).

³⁵ Suetonius, *Aug.* 27.4 (Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, vol. 2, frg. 9).

³⁶ Plutarch, *Cic.* 45.5; idem, *Brutus* 41.5–8 (Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, vol. 2, frgs. 7, 10).

³⁷ Appian, *Bell. Civ.* 5.42 (Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, vol. 2, frg. 11).

³⁸ Yavetz, “*Res Gestae*,” 2. The same charge is made against Augustus in the anti-Augustan propaganda (Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 7.45.147–150). See Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 178.

³⁹ Plutarch, *Brut.* 41.5–8 (Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, vol. 2, frg. 10).

⁴⁰ Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 38.

⁴¹ Appian, *The Illyrian Wars* 14–16, 28 (Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Reliquiae*, vol. 2, frg. 13).

⁴² The Latin heading is: “The achievements of the Divine Augustus, by which he brought the world under the empire of the Roman people, and of the expenses which he bore for the state and the people of Rome.”

⁴³ Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 101–4.

Thus Augustus's *RG* addresses powerful contemporaries among the *principes* (leaders) of Rome, with a view to conditioning the estimate of posterity regarding his principate.⁴⁴ The view of Theodor Mommsen that the *RG* was pitched at the plebs of Rome has been rightly criticized for its naïve assumption that the illiterate masses would have had the perseverance to muddle their way through such a complex document. Rather Augustus's message to the masses was conveyed through his benefactions, coinage, the statue program of the *forum Augustum*, and the *Ara Pacis*.⁴⁵ How, then, does Augustus establish himself as an *exemplum* for posterity in the *RG*?

1.1.2 THE *RES GESTAE*: AUGUSTUS AS THE ICONIC EXEMPLUM FOR POSTERITY

The *RG* belongs to the eulogistic culture of the Roman nobility, but it moves its focus from the parochial concerns of family fame to the unprecedented place that Augustus had assumed in Roman history. It was intended to demonstrate how Augustus, as the leading man of the Julian house, had not only replicated the glory of his ancestors, but had also surpassed their accumulated glory by becoming the supreme *exemplum* of *virtus* (courage), *clementia* (clemency), *iustitia* (justice), and *pietas* (piety) for the future leaders of Rome (*RG* 9.5; 34.2). It was because of this virtue that Augustus was given the title of *pater patriae* (35.1: father of the country).

Commentators have charted the literary and documentary precedents of the *Res Gestae*.⁴⁶ Ancient Near Eastern potentates had traditionally erected monuments eulogizing their military conquests and the expansion of their empires.⁴⁷ While some of these monuments approximate the *RG* in length, it is unlikely that Romans, with their strong distaste for monarchy, found their inspiration in these public monuments, notwithstanding parallels of genre.⁴⁸ More influential were the Roman

⁴⁴ Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 39.

⁴⁵ Yavetz notes that Augustus "had to appeal to the more educated citizens, and it was they whom he told how he wished to be remembered" ("*Res Gestae*," 10–12, 13). This aligns with Augustus's desire not to be leader of one stratum of the population (i.e., the plebs) but of the whole nation as *pater patriae* (ibid.). The architectural intersections of sacred space created by the Augustan building program at Rome also highlighted for the illiterate Augustus's providential status in Roman history (James R. Harrison, "Paul Among the Romans," in *All Things to All Cultures: Paul Among Jews, Greeks and Romans* [ed. Mark Harding and Alanna Nobbs; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, forthcoming] §1).

⁴⁶ See Scheid, *Res Gestae*, xliii–liii; Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 30–34.

⁴⁷ Examples are the inscriptions of the Egyptian pharaoh Tuthmosis III (*ANET*, 234–41), the Persian King Darius (Leonard W. King and R. Campbell Thompson, *The Sculptures and Inscription of Darius the Great on the Rock of Behistûn in Persia* [London: British Museum, 1907]), and Antiochus I of Kommagene (Danker, *Benefactor*, 237–55). Hittite documents such as those of Suppiluliumas could also be cited (*ANET*, 318). For discussion, see Gag , *Res Gestae*, 31–34; Ridley, *Emperor's Retrospect*, 51–55; Benjamin B. Rubin, "(Re)presenting Empire: The Roman Imperial Cult in Asia Minor, 31 BC–AD 68" (Ph.D. diss., University of Michigan, 2008) 72–116.

⁴⁸ However, Rubin proposes Persian precedents for the sculptural program at Aphrodisias ("(Re)presenting Empire," 72–116). He claims that Persian influences were part of the cultural context informing the erection of the *RG* at Pisidian Antioch (ibid., 121; see also 123–29). Paul Rehak asserts

eulogistic precedents for the *Res Gestae*: funeral epitaphs (e.g., the Scipionic *elogia* honoring the famous members of their house);⁴⁹ laudations honoring the deceased at funerals;⁵⁰ monuments recounting the deeds of public figures and the triumphal inscriptions of victorious generals;⁵¹ and, last, the *elogia* praising the Julian and republican luminaries in the statue program in the forum of Augustus (*forum Augustum*).⁵² The evidence above illuminates many aspects of the *RG*: Augustus's use of the first person;⁵³ his stress on primacy ("the first and only": 16.1; "the first": 22.2; see also 10.2; 12.1; 13; 26.4; 30.1; 31.1; 32.3; 34.3); his emphasis on numbers throughout; and, last, his use of catalogues (beneficence given, money spent, buildings built, magistracies held, victories won, cities and peoples conquered, colonies founded, diplomatic embassies met, etc.).⁵⁴ Cooley concludes that, notwithstanding the documentary and literary precedents, the *RG* is "a composition that was *sui generis*."⁵⁵ But, as insightful as this analysis has been, it has been confined to the question of genre as opposed to the purpose of the *RG*. A more holistic approach is required.

What has been overlooked in this discussion of genre is the rhetorical role that *exempla* played in the late republican and early imperial period and how that not only informed the genre of the *RG* but also determined its purpose.⁵⁶ Indeed, the role of Augustus as an *exemplum* is central to his self-presentation in the *RG* and to the conception of his place in history. Speaking of his new legislation in *RG* 8.5, Augustus says:

that the Northern Campus Martius is a type of "Augustan" theme park, in which the monuments reveal imperial and monarchic themes (*Imperium and Cosmos: Augustus and the Northern Campus Martius* [ed. John C. Younger; Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2006]). The problem with these proposals is that not only do they overlook the historic Roman rejection of monarchy (510–509 B.C.E.) and Augustus's avoidance of monarchic perceptions (Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 34), but also they impose upon Augustus's principate the monarchical model of the late source Dio Cassius (150–235 C.E.: Dio 52.1.1; 53.11.4).

⁴⁹ On the Scipionic *elogia*, see Ridley, *Emperor's Retrospect*, 55–56; Mario Erasmio, *Reading Death in Ancient Rome* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 2008) 168–70; Harrison, "Paul and the Roman Ideal of Glory," 350–52. For funerary inscriptions relevant to the genre of the *Res Gestae*, see Gagé, *Res Gestae*, 28–29.

⁵⁰ Ridley, *Emperor's Retrospect*, 56–58.

⁵¹ Gagé, *Res Gestae*, 29–31; Ridley, *Emperor's Retrospect*, 58–61.

⁵² Edwin A. Judge, "The Eulogistic Inscriptions of the Augustan Forum: Augustus on Roman History," in idem, *The First Christians*, 165–81; Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 170–77.

⁵³ Ridley notes that Caesar uses the third person in his autobiographical works, *Civil War* and *Gallie War* (*Emperor's Retrospect*, 49).

⁵⁴ See Ramage, *Augustus' "Res Gestae,"* 21–32.

⁵⁵ Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 34.

⁵⁶ Michèle Lowrie, "Making an Exemplum of Yourself: Cicero and Augustus," in *Classical Constructions: Papers in Memory of Don Fowler, Classicist and Epicurean* (ed. Stephen J. Heyworth; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007) 91–112; John A. Lobur, *Consensus, Concordia, and the Formation of Roman Imperial Ideology* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

By means of new laws (*legibus novi[s]*) brought in under my sponsorship I revived many exemplary ancestral practises (*m[ulta e]xempla maiorum*) which were by then dying out in our generation, and I myself handed down to later generations exemplary practices for them to imitate (*rer[um exem]pla imitanda pos[teris]*).⁵⁷

Although Romans disliked novelty, the “newness” of Augustus’s principate was its return to traditional Roman morality and religious practices (6.2, 13; 19.1, 2; 20.4), with a view to transmitting them with reinvigorated potency to later generations for imitation.⁵⁸ Suetonius (*Aug.* 89.2) reveals that Augustus impressed the value of *exempla* for admonition upon the members of his household, his generals, provincial governors, and the senate. Thus Augustus’s principate was intended to be transformative for future generations by virtue of its commitment to and imitation of the past.

Suetonius (*Aug.* 31.5) also provides us insight into Augustus’s motive in dedicating statues, depicting the members of the Julian house and the republican leaders of Rome, in triumphal garb in the two porticoes of the *forum Augustum*. Augustus had declared in an edict that

I have contrived this to lead the citizens to require me, while I live, and the rulers of later times as well, to attain the standard (*ad exemplar*) set by those worthies of old.⁵⁹

Augustus’s two lines of statues of Roman leaders of exemplary virtue, who had steered the state through extraordinary crises,⁶⁰ culminated in himself as the *pater patriae* (father of the country). Consequently Augustus is depicted riding in a chariot in the middle of the *forum Augustum* (*RG* 35.1). Augustus, along with the leaders after him, had to replicate the virtue of the “worthies of old,” even though paradoxically Augustus as the *pater patriae* had excelled the leaders of the past by ending more than a century of civil war and by becoming the *exemplum* par excellence for the future.⁶¹

⁵⁷ In *RG* 27.1 Augustus speaks of handing over the province of Greater Armenia to Tigranes “in accordance with the example set by our ancestors” (*maiorum nostrorum exemplo*).

⁵⁸ See Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, passim.

⁵⁹ Alison Cooley gives further insight into Augustus’s personal motives in building the *forum Augustum*: “This new forum displayed statues of famous Romans. . . . Augustus’s own ancestors were somewhat lacking in splendour compared with other families at Rome, such as the noble Claudii Marcelli (“Inscribing History at Rome,” in *The Afterlife of Inscriptions: Reusing, Rediscovering, Reinventing & Revitalizing Ancient Inscriptions* [ed. Alison E. Cooley; London: Institute of Classical Studies, 2000] 7–20, at 16–17). By associating himself with all of Rome’s most notable individuals, Augustus basked in their reflected glory.

⁶⁰ Judge, “The Eulogistic Inscriptions,” 169.

⁶¹ Lobur points to other Julio-Claudian family members, cited in the Roman literature, as *exempla*: Germanicus, Livia, and Tiberius (*Consensus*, 173–74). Cooley (*Res Gestae*, 40) cites a senatorial decree that asserts that the senate models its behavior on Augustus and Tiberius (*Das senatus consultum de Cn. Pisone patre* [ed. Werner Eck, Antonio Caballos, and Fernando Fernández; Munich: Beck, 1996]

In situating his conception of his place in history within the rhetoric of *exempla*, Augustus frames his understanding of leadership within the conventions of the replication of ancestral glory on the part of the old republican noble houses and their more recent competitors, the *novi homines* (new men).⁶² A few examples from the Scipionic *elogia* and Cicero will suffice.⁶³ The quest for glory of the Roman noble is unveiled in “programmatic” statements on the Scipionic *elogia* on the sarcophagi of each man eulogized: “By my good conduct I heaped virtues on the virtues of my clan”,⁶⁴ “. . . an easy thing it would have been for you to surpass by great deeds the glory of your ancestors.”⁶⁵

Cicero, a *novus homo* (new man), advised Lucius Murena of the importance of the *exemplum* of his great-grandfather Cato (*Mur.* 66):

Do you think that there was any man more courteous, more agreeable, anyone whose conduct was more completely regulated by every principle of virtue and politeness, than Cato, your great-grandfather? And when you were speaking with truth and dignity of his virtue, you said that you had a domestic example to imitate (*exemplum ad imitandum*). That indeed is an example (*exemplum*) set up for your imitation in your own family; and the similarity of nature ought rather to influence you who are descended from him than any one of us; but still that example (*exemplar*) is as much an object for my imitation (*ad imitandum*) as for yours.⁶⁶

Cicero strengthens the motif of the replication of ancestral glory by linking it to the language of “imitation.” He sums up the republican quest for ancestral glory by reference to the celebrated military *exempla* of the leading Roman noble houses:

44). Yavetz observes regarding Augustus: “His intention was to revive a traditional society in which the *exempla maiorum* would not only be respected but not even questioned. He wanted to set an example for future generations, and was not satisfied with being *imperio maximus*. His goal was to become *exemplo maior*” (“*Res Gestae*,” 20).

⁶² Cicero encourages both groups to seek glory: “You, young Romans, who are nobles by birth, I rouse you to imitate the example of your ancestors (*ad maiorum vestrorum imitationem excitabo*); and you who can win nobility by your talents and virtue, I will exhort to follow that career in which many ‘new men’ (*novi homines*) have covered themselves with honour and glory” (*Sest.* 64.136).

⁶³ On *exemplum*, see Lobur, *Consensus*, 171–76; James R. Harrison, “The Imitation of the Great Man in Antiquity: Paul’s Inversion of a Cultural Icon,” in *Christian Origins and Greco-Roman Culture: Social and Literary Contexts for the New Testament* (ed. Stanley E. Porter and Andrew W. Pitts; Leiden: Brill, 2013) 213–54.

⁶⁴ Eric H. Warmington, “Epitaphs,” in *Remains of Old Latin: Archaic Inscriptions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1953) § 10, p. 9.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, §5, p. 5; Harrison, “Paul and the Roman Ideal of Glory,” 350–52.

⁶⁶ Note Cicero (*Prov.* 20): “I have at all times thought that I ought to seek for the models (*exempla*) for all my intentions and for all my actions in the conduct of the most illustrious men.” Quintilian speaks of the *rhetorical* use of *exempla* in this manner: “what we properly call an exemplum, that is, the recalling to mind of something done, or as if done, that is useful for persuading what you intend” (5.11.6). On Cicero’s failure to meet his own *exempla*, see Lowrie, “Making an Exemplum of Yourself,” 92–102.

[I]t is almost an instinct in the human race that members of a family which has won credit in some particular line ardently pursue distinction, seeing that the virtues of their fathers are perpetuated by the speech and recollection of the world; so did Scipio emulate the military renown of Paulus; so also did his son emulate Maximus; so also Publius Decius was imitated (*imitatus est*) by his son in the sacrificing of his life and in the very manner of his death.⁶⁷

Augustus's aims in the *RG*, therefore, are deeply traditional. He presents himself as being devoted to ancestral custom and appeals to himself and the other leading men of the republic as a paradigm of social transformation for a generation whose commitment to exemplary practice had been sullied by the bloody civil wars. The novelty of the *RG* is that Augustus had out-competed all others—past and present—in his enhancement of ancestral fame and his achievement of personal glory, even though his commitment to the *exempla* of the past was intended to produce a new generation of *principes* (leaders).⁶⁸ Augustus senses that he had brought Roman history to such a culmination of exemplary practice that it would continue to replenish the future generation of leaders. This consciousness of the culmination and replication of virtue, evinced in the *RG*, sets Augustus's principate apart.⁶⁹

But at what audience did Augustus aim the *RG*? We have seen that Mommsen's argument that the work was directed to the Roman plebs is unlikely (§1.1.1, above). Given the focus of the *RG* on the transformation of the next generation, Yavetz's argument—endorsed by Cooley and Scheid⁷⁰—that Augustus wrote the work for the educated *iuventus* (youth) of senatorial and equestrian extraction, has cogency.⁷¹ From this group a new generation of leaders for Rome would rise, upon whom the Julian house could depend for political support. Considering the vastly different social outcomes of Augustus's *RG* and Paul's epistle to the Romans, why would we think that there might be an ideological intersection between both documents or, even more inconceivably, that Paul may have had Augustan motifs in view when he wrote to Roman believers living under the Neronian age of grace?

⁶⁷ Cicero, *Rab. Post.* 1.2. See also idem, *Cael.* 30.72; *Div. Caec.* 8.25. See Tacitus, *Hist.* 2.68: "Keep and preserve, Conscript Fathers, a man of such ready counsels, that every age may be furnished with its teacher, and that our young men may imitate Regulus, just as our old men imitate (*imitentur*) Marcellus and Crispus."

⁶⁸ On Augustus's and Tiberius's encouragement of a plurality of leadership in the state, see Edwin A. Judge, "The Augustan Republic: Tiberius and Claudius on Roman History," in idem, *The First Christians*, 127–39; James R. Harrison, "Diplomacy over Tiberius' Succession," in *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (ed. Stephen R. Llewelyn and James R. Harrison; 10 vols.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2012) vol. 10 §12, pp. 64–75.

⁶⁹ Judge writes: "Although no leaders of the past, nor contemporary rivals, are named, the *Res Gestae* is meant to be read by people thoroughly familiar with the score cards of the Roman noble houses. As with cricket, the applause would be inspired by the crowd's familiarity with the records of the past" ("The Eulogistic Inscriptions," 166).

⁷⁰ Scheid, *Res Gestae*, xxxiv–xxxvi; Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 40–41.

⁷¹ Yavetz, "*Res Gestae*," 12–19.

1.2 *The Epistle to the Romans: Paul's Counterblast to Augustus's Res Gestae?*

Paul, a versatile and strategic thinker, would have been aware that a change in the geographic focus of his mission necessitated a change in its political and evangelistic apologetic, as he moved from the Greek East to Rome and Spain in the Latin West (Rom 15:19a–24). The apostle would have had to consider the pastoral and social implications of his apocalyptic gospel for auditors now living under the so-called “Golden Age” of Nero at Rome.⁷² Among the pastoral issues that Paul had faced in the Greek East, the spiritual dangers posed by the idolatry of ruler worship was a clear emphasis in the apostle’s teaching (1 Thess 1:9; 5:2–3; 1 Cor 2:6–8; 8:5–6, 10; 10:14–22; Gal 4:8–10).⁷³ The imperial cult was ubiquitous among the indigenous cults in the eastern Mediterranean basin. Precisely because of the unprecedented benefits that it dispensed to the Greek city-states, it had become the most influential cult in securing clients across the Roman empire.⁷⁴

In writing to believers living at mid-fifties Rome in the Latin West, however, Paul was engaging a city that had been enthralled for generations by a heated quest for ancestral glory. The leading men of Rome had striven to outdo each other by achieving glory for their houses through the acquisition of magistracies, the distribution of beneficence, and the establishment of *virtus* (manliness) on the battlefield. This quest for glory from republican times through to the early imperial age had produced a boastful and hierarchical society (cf. Rom 1:30; 3:27; 4:2–3; 5:11; 12:3, 10b). The leaders of Rome evinced hatred for their political *inimici* (enemies: cf. Rom 5:6–8; 12:14–21), offered *clementia* (mercy) to those worthy of pardon (cf. 11:31–32; 12:1, 8b), and maintained the barrier between the conqueror and the conquered (cf. 1:14). This quest for ancestral glory had eventuated in the triumph of the Julian house and its idolatrous cult (cf. Rom 1:22), with the result that glory had become the preserve of the ruler and his family (cf. 11:36; 16:27; 1 Cor 2:8; 2 Cor 3:18).⁷⁵ Consequently, Augustus as princeps was the embodiment of all virtue (cf. Rom 5:18–19), the father of his country (cf. 4:11–12, 16, 18; 8:15; 9:10), and the iconic *exemplum* for those aspiring to leadership (cf. 8:29).

Undoubtedly, the apostle was sensitive to the importance of the quest for glory for the Roman nobility and their imperial successors from the victories of their

⁷² See Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 101–4.

⁷³ On imperial idolatry in 1 Corinthians, see Derek Newton, *Deity and Diet: The Dilemma of Sacrificial Food in Corinth* (Sheffield, U.K.: Sheffield Academic, 1998) passim; Bruce W. Winter, *After Paul Left Corinth: The Influence of Secular Ethics and Social Change* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001) 269–86. On Galatians, see Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered*; Hardin, *Galatians*; Kahl, *Galatians Re-Imagined*. On 1 and 2 Thessalonians, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 45–95.

⁷⁴ Gradel argues that Augustus was also worshipped as a *living ruler outside of Rome* in the Italian municipal cults (*Emperor Worship*, 72–108, 261–371). On Gradel’s contribution to imperial cult studies, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 18.

⁷⁵ See Harrison, “Paul and the Roman Ideal of Glory,” 323–63; idem, “The Brothers as ‘The Glory of Christ’ (2 Cor 8:23): Paul’s *Doxa* Terminology in Its Ancient Benefaction Context,” *NovT* 52 (2010) 165–88.

generals over the nations of the Greek East. Such conquests had acquired their own momentum in oral culture. The famous houses of the Scipios and the Metelli reinforced this popular adulation when their generals received or assumed a second cognomen in commemoration of their victories (e.g., Africanus, Asiaticus, Macedonicus, Numidicus, Delmaticus, Creticus, etc.). Monuments to the achievements of the generals, republican and imperial, were also present in the Greek East. These included the Greek and Latin copies of Augustus's *RG* in the province of Galatia, as well as the honorific monument to the Roman general Gaius Memmius at Ephesus,⁷⁶ the Sebasteion (i.e., imperial sanctuary) of Claudius and Nero at Aphrodisias,⁷⁷ and the Augustan triumphal arches throughout the empire and the Sebasteion at Pisidian Antioch.⁷⁸

It is likely that the relentless boasting of imperial monuments in the Greek East, including the *RG* at Pisidian Antioch (§1.2, above), provoked Paul to consider how he might challenge the Roman quest for glory with the gospel of divine grace revealed in the crucified and risen Christ. This decision would have had profound theological and social consequences for Roman believers if, as Thomas R. Schreiner has argued,⁷⁹ the center of Paul's theology was God's glory in Christ. Paul's gospel would have grabbed the attention of his Roman auditors and challenged their fascination with ancestral glory and its culmination in the Julian house, given the widespread use of the language of glory in Romans.⁸⁰ Paul expected that the Spirit would continue to transform Roman believers in Christ when they put to death in their lives the values of the status-obsessed and boastful society of Rome (Rom 6:12–14, 19; 7:4–6; 12:1–3, 10b). The social consequences of this transformation would have been initially imperceptible to the Roman rulers and their representatives, but the cruciform outworking of Paul's gospel brought a distinctive newness to the social relations and beneficence of the house churches that were appearing across the Roman empire.⁸¹ Although this aim was not Paul's only purpose in writing Romans, or indeed his primary purpose, nevertheless Paul highlighted the social and ethical application of God's eschatological glory revealed in Christ for believers living under the Julio-Claudian ruler in the first century.

⁷⁶ For details, see Harrison, "Paul and the Roman Ideal of Glory," 332 n. 14.

⁷⁷ See Kenan T. Erim, *Aphrodisias: City of Venus Aphrodite* (London: Muller, Blond & White, 1986); R. R. R. Smith, "The Imperial Reliefs from the Sebasteion at Aphrodisias," *JRS* 77 (1987) 88–138; Angelos Chaniotis, "Myths and Contexts in Aphrodisias," in *Antike Mythen. Medien, Transformationen und Konstruktionen* (ed. Ueli Dill and Christine Walde; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2009) 313–38.

⁷⁸ See respectively, Harrison, "More Than Conquerors"; Stephen Mitchell and Marc Waelkens, *Pisidian Antioch: The Site and Its Monuments* (London: Duckworth, 1988); Rubin, "(Re)presenting Empire," 27–71.

⁷⁹ Thomas R. Schreiner, *Paul, Apostle of God's Glory in Christ: A Pauline Theology* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP, 2001) passim.

⁸⁰ See Harrison, "Paul and the Roman Ideal of Glory."

⁸¹ See Bruce W. Winter, "Roman Law and Society in Romans 12–15," in *Rome in the Bible and the Early Church* (ed. Peter Oakes; Carlisle, U.K.: Paternoster, 2002) 67–102.

■ 2. A Collision of Ideology: The Social Outcomes of Romans and the *Res Gestae*

2.1 *The Centrality of Ancestral Tradition*

Although Augustus does not highlight ancestral tradition as prominently as other motifs in the *RG*, its importance remains undiminished for the establishment of consensus in his principate. First, Augustus records that he had rejected the post of guardian of laws and customs without colleague as unconstitutional (6.1; see §2.6, below, for other examples) because it was inconsistent with ancestral custom (*contra morem maiorum*). Second, Augustus explains that his legislation was designed to restore “many ancient customs (*multa exempla maiorum*) that were already becoming obsolete” (8.5). Third, the temple of Janus was closed three times in Augustus’s principate, in accordance with ancestral wishes (13: [*maiores nostri voluerunt*]). Fourth, in his annexation of Greater Armenia in 20 B.C.E., Augustus acted in accordance with ancestral example (27.1: *maiorum nostrorum exemplo*) by handing over the kingdom to Tigranes, following Pompey’s precedent of 66 B.C.E. What is fascinating about these references to custom is the scope of their reference. The traditions of the ancestors informed Augustus’s approach to legislation, his acceptance of magistracies, the performance of religious ritual, and diplomatic relations within the Roman empire. Finally, Augustus’s meticulous attention in the *RG* to the Roman gods (8.1; 19.1–2; 20.1, 3–4; 24.1–2) and to the great priestly colleges (7.3) represents another example of his devotion to ancestral tradition.

In Romans, Paul displays a positive attitude to ancestral honor, although Paul’s discussion operates in a Jewish context. Paul’s rhetorical purpose in writing in this manner to Roman Gentiles living in the capital needs to be understood (Rom 1:13; 11:13; 15:15–16).⁸² Paul depicts Christ as the fulfillment of world history (Rom 5:14: Ἀδάμ ὃς ἐστὶν τύπος τοῦ μέλλοντος) and Jewish covenantal history (10:4: τέλος γὰρ νόμου Χριστὸς) in a rhetorical strategy designed, among other purposes, to dismantle the ideology of rule articulated through the Roman “founder” narratives (i.e., Romulus and Remus, Aeneas). Augustus, as the new “Romulus” and “Aeneas” of Rome,⁸³ restored to the capital its *mos maiorum*, with the result that the Roman gods and customs were properly honored once again. Paul dismantles this construct by articulating the Jewish “founder” narrative of humanity (Rom 5:12–21) that for Paul, as a believer, found its culmination in Christ as opposed to Augustus.

Significantly, Paul does not reject his Jewish ancestry and the soteriological privileges flowing from it (Rom 3:1–2; 9:4–5; 11:2; Phil 3:4b–6). He affirms that Abraham was the forefather of the Jewish nation (4:1). Moreover, Christ

⁸² See James R. Harrison, “Excels Ancestral Honours,” in *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity* (ed. Stephen R. Llewelyn; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2002) vol. 9 §9, pp. 20–21.

⁸³ On Abraham as Aeneas’s rival in Romans, see Elliott, *Arrogance of the Nations*, 125–41.

was descended from David (Rom 1:3; 10:5), confirming the promises given to the patriarchs (15:8b). The ancestral privileges of Israel were given continuing recognition through the gospel being extended to the Jews first because of their salvation priority (first: Rom 1:17b; 2:10b; first fruits: 11:16a). Disobedient Israel would still experience soteriological blessing when her Messiah returned as the eschatological Deliverer from heavenly Zion (Rom 11:25–27; see vv. 12, 15b). The reason for this continuing mercy was Israel’s divine election and her beloved status because of her ancestors (Rom 11:28; 15:8b). Even though Israel was currently stumbling (Rom 9:22, 27, 31–33; 10:2–3; 11:17a, 20a, 21a, 25b), an elect remnant was being called out by divine grace in the present age (11:1–6, 11a, 13, 23).

In retelling Israel’s story in light of its fulfillment in Christ, Paul was introducing the Gentile Romans to a different ancestral tradition, whose antiquity eclipsed the ancestors of Rome, and by which God would save the nations. According to Paul, Roman Gentiles, by divine grace, had been grafted into an even more venerable ancestry as a “wild olive shoot” (Rom 11:17). This was necessary because the founding ancestor of all humanity, Adam, had plunged Jew and Gentile—including the Roman ruler—into the reign of sin and death (Rom 5:12–21). In this regard, the Augustan attachment to ancestral tradition, with its focus on the revival of Roman religion, was another expression of Gentile idolatry (Rom 1:22–23) and faced God’s judgment (1:18–31).

Consequently, Paul argues that the pursuit of ancestral advantage in order to outstrip competitors and, particularly in Israel’s case, to establish her own ethnic righteousness, was based on misguided zeal and a deficient knowledge of God (Rom 10:2; Gal 1:14). The claim to ancestral advantage over others (Rom 9:6b–7) overlooked the impartiality of God’s judgment (2:5, 11).⁸⁴ Moreover, such a quest supplanted Christ’s honor as the universal soteriological benefactor and replaced it with one’s own (Rom 10:3–4; see 2 Cor 11:21b–23a; Phil 3:7–11 [see 2:5–11]). Instead, God had mercifully incorporated the Gentiles from all nations into the ancestry of Abraham through the same electing grace and justifying faith that Abraham and Isaac, as the “fathers” of a new humanity (πατήρ: Rom 4:12, 16, 17; 9:10), had experienced themselves.⁸⁵ The culmination of this new ancestry for Roman Gentiles occurred in Christ as τέλος and κύριος as opposed to Augustus as *pater patriae* (Rom 10:4, 9; cf. Acts 17:6–7). In the late republic, the heated competition for ancestral glory had plunged Rome into a century of civil war, but the fortunes of Rome had revived again with the blood-stained advent of the Augustan principate, a feature of Augustus’s rise to power that his critics relentlessly highlighted.⁸⁶ But now the nations of the world, including Rome, had

⁸⁴ Jouette M. Bassler, *Divine Impartiality: Paul and a Theological Axiom* (Chico, Calif.: Scholars, 1982).

⁸⁵ See James R. Harrison, “Paul, Theologian of Electing Grace,” in *Paul and His Theology* (ed. Stanley E. Porter; Pauline Studies 3; Leiden: Brill, 2006) 77–108.

⁸⁶ See Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 313–16; see also 111–14.

found an infinitely more merciful ruler in Christ (Rom 15:12), who had freely extended his eternal glory and grace to his unworthy dependents (3:23; 8:18–21, 30b) by calling them to the “obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5; 16:26). The contrast between the Julian and the early Christian fulfillment of ancestral custom could not have been starker.

2.2 *The Culture of Self-Advertisement*

We have already touched on the boasting techniques (§1.1.2, above) that Augustus employed to keep his pre-eminence at the forefront in the *RG*. Another technique that Augustus used was to emphasize implicitly how his achievements superseded the luminaries of the past: Romulus, Hercules, Alexander, Scipio Africanus, Pompey, Caesar, Antony and Cleopatra.⁸⁷ Augustus also engaged in (what might be called) “typology” by presenting the battle of Salamis, in a public spectacle for the Roman people (*RG* 23), as a forerunner of his battle of Actium.⁸⁸ Moreover, the mausoleum of Augustus, with its Latin copy of the *RG*, might also be seen as rivaling the mausoleum of King Mausolos of Caria at Halicarnassos.⁸⁹

Further, as noted (§1.1, above), scholars have suggested that an aim of the *RG* was the justification of Augustus’s apotheosis.⁹⁰ The evidence for this is persuasive. Q. Ennius’s epigram about the apotheosis of Scipio Africanus (Cicero, *Tusc.* 5.49; Seneca, *Ep. Mor.* 108.34) and Euhemerus’s portrait of Zeus in the *Sacred Record* are cited as parallels to the *RG* in this regard.⁹¹ The conferral of the name “Augustus” (34.2) and the insertion of his name in the hymn of the Salii (10.1) confirm Augustus’s “god-like” status as a benefactor and military conqueror.⁹² The spatial relationship between Augustus’s mausoleum and the Agrippan Pantheon in the Campus Martius also points symbolically to the possibility of apotheosis.⁹³

⁸⁷ Romulus: *RG* 4.1. Hercules: 10.1. Alexander: 21.1; 24.1; 26–33 (esp. 26.2; 31.1). Scipio Africanus: 1.1. Pompey: 1.1; 5.2; 20.1; 25.1; 26–33 (esp. 27.2; 31.2). Caesar: 4.1. Antony and Cleopatra 4.2; 27.2; 28.1–2. See Cooley, *Res Gestae*, passim.

⁸⁸ Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 209–10.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁹⁰ Bosworth, “Augustus,” passim; Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 41.

⁹¹ Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 41.

⁹² Brunt and Moore, *Res Gestae*, 52, 77–78; Ramage, *Augustus’ “Res Gestae,”* 100–4; Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 147, 261–62. Dio Cassius (51.20.1) says that Augustus’s “name should be included in their hymns equally with those of the gods” (Volkman, *Res Gestae*, 23). Volkman notes the inclusion of Germanicus’s name in the hymns of the Salii upon his death in 19 C.E. (Tacitus, *Ann.* 2.83.1), arguing that the names of Lucius and Gaius, Augustus’s adopted sons, would also have been included after their deaths (2 and 4 C.E., respectively). Damon observes of the name “Augustus”: “‘Augustus’ set him [Octavian] at the apex of mankind, but not quite in the realm of the immortals (Suetonius, *Life of Augustus* 7.2)” (*Res Gestae*, 45). Of the incorporation of Augustus’s name in the hymn of the Salii, Damon writes: “Augustus was not deified at Rome until after his death, but this honor puts him on a par with the ancestral gods in at least this respect” (*Res Gestae*, 23).

⁹³ On the symbolic connection between the two circular buildings in the Campus Martius, Augustus’s mausoleum and the Agrippan Pantheon, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 115 n.

Caution needs to be exercised here. We need to distinguish these popular honors from Augustus's *own* self-perception in the *RG*. Augustus's removal of eighty silver statues of himself from Rome (24.2) shows his discomfort with excessive accolades, silver and gold having been reserved for the statues of deities.⁹⁴ Whatever might have been the symbolic message implied by the spatial relationship between Augustus's mausoleum and Agrippa's Pantheon, or by the location of his house in the Palatine, Augustus ensured that at his own mausoleum the *RG* did not assert his personal claim to divinity in advance of his death. As was the case with the apotheosis of his adoptive father, that decision was the senate's prerogative.

Paul's "boasting" terminology (καυχάομαι: Rom 2:17, 23; 5:2, 3, 11; καύχημα: 4:2; καύχησις: 3:27; 15:17) is significant in Romans, given the centrality of boasting in the eulogistic culture of republican and Augustan Rome.⁹⁵ Paul jettisons any idea that Jews, on the basis of their nomistic heritage, could boast in their performance before God (Rom 2:17, 23). But, in an equally radical critique, Paul argues that the "works" of the Gentile Abraham (Rom 4:9–11) were disqualified as a boast before God (4:2), as much as the "works" of the Jewish Abraham (4:12). Since Abraham was an uncircumcised Gentile when he was justified (Gen 15:6; 17:1–14), he became a potent symbol for the Gentile Romans who, facing God's wrath because of the idolatry of their ancestral gods (Rom 1:21–23), would experience God's justification in Christ.

Here Paul targets the merit-based culture of the Greco-Roman world with its hierarchies of wealth, status, and performance. Auditors familiar with the boasting of the *RG* would have seen the point. Boasting was excluded for all believers, whether Jew or Gentile, because of justifying faith (Rom 3:27). Instead of striving to excel the ancestral luminaries of the past, believers were now to boast in God because of Christ's reconciling work as mediator (Rom 5:11: καυχώμενοι ἐν τῷ θεῷ διὰ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ; see also v. 10a). Further, the eschaton was a stimulus for humility: believers were to boast in "the hope of the glory of God" (Rom 5:2). In the present, however, the believer's boasting was to be focused on the cruciform nature of Christian existence (Rom 5:3a: καυχώμεθα ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν). Suffering, Paul argues, produces the character transformation that would give reality to the hope to come (5:3b–5). Last, Christian ministry, including Paul's outreach to the Gentiles (Rom 15:18), occasioned boasting in Christ for God's work through his apostle (15:17: [τὴν] καύχησιν ἐν Χριστῷ). In

69. Augustus's modest house on the Palatine was also placed adjacent to the temple of Apollo and near to the temple of Romulus on the same hill, aligning the *princeps* with the gods and the birth of the city. See Catharine Edwards, *The Politics of Immorality in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1993) 167–68; Anthony Everitt, *Augustus: The Life of Rome's First Emperor* (New York: Random House, 2006) 200–1.

⁹⁴ Danker, *Benefactor*, 277; Judge, "Augustus in the *Res Gestae*," 211.

⁹⁵ On boasting in imperial context, see Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2007) 295–96; Kahl, *Galatians Re-Imagined*, s.v. Index of Subjects, "boasting."

sum, Paul had realized that the location of all boasting and future transformation resided in the work of God, experienced paradoxically in suffering for Christ. This different perspective pinpricked the Roman culture of self-advertisement.

Additionally, Paul employs “glory” terminology, with its Jewish base, throughout the epistle to debunk the Roman quest for ancestral glory and to challenge its idolatrous concentration in the Julian house.⁹⁶ It is also significant that Paul in his letter to believers at Rome—where rulers were not divinized in the state cult until after their death—attributed to Christ his boldest accolade in his epistles: θεὸς εὐλογητὸς εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας (Rom 9:5: God blessed forever; 1 Tim 2:5).⁹⁷ Last, the theocentric emphasis of Romans deflates the self-promoting culture of Rome at its self-sufficient core, emphasizing where true glory was found and directed (Rom 11:36; 16:27).⁹⁸

2.3 *The Accumulation and Rendering of Honor*

The accumulation of honor and its rendering to others is another intriguing dimension of Augustus’s self-eulogy in the *RG*. In 1–7 Augustus focuses on the honors that he had received and follows these up with other special tributes paid to him (9–14).⁹⁹ As Edwin A. Judge notes, they demonstrate “the scale of the Roman people’s trust in Augustus.”¹⁰⁰ In particular, Augustus highlights the special honors given to him by the senate and Roman people (1.2: *decretis honorif[i]cis*; 11: *[pro] red[itu me]o*; 12.1: *honos*; 12.2: *[pro] redi[t]u meo*; 14.1: *honoris mei*; 34.2; 35.1: *quae mihi ex s.c. pos[ita]e [sunt censuit]*).¹⁰¹

Two cases are particularly interesting because they show Augustus taking care that his honor did not infringe upon the honors conferred on others in the past. In *RG* 20.1 Augustus states that he restored the Capitoline temple and the theater of Pompey, “without inscribing my name anywhere on them.” Public works represented a prized form of competition for glory among the Roman nobility because of their “lasting impact.”¹⁰² What had been essentially private monuments became public monuments on a grand scale with the erection of the theater of Pompey and the forum of Caesar in the mid-first century B.C.E.¹⁰³ Therefore Augustus

⁹⁶ See Carey C. Newman, *Paul’s Glory-Christology: Tradition and Rhetoric* (NovTSup 69; Leiden: Brill, 1992); Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 201–69.

⁹⁷ For a defense of θεός as referring to Christ in Rom 9:5, see Murray J. Harris, *Jesus as God: The New Testament Use of Theos in Reference to Jesus* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1992) 143–72.

⁹⁸ On the theocentric emphasis of Romans, see Leon Morris, “The Theme of Romans,” in *Apostolic History and the Gospel: Biblical and Historical Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce on His 60th Birthday* (ed. W. Ward Gasque and Ralph P. Martin; Exeter, U.K.: Paternoster, 1970) 249–63.

⁹⁹ The final group of honors, the climax to the *RG* 34–35, is discussed in §2.6, below.

¹⁰⁰ Judge, “Augustus in the *Res Gestae*,” 184.

¹⁰¹ Walter K. Lacey states: “Honours seem to have been thrust upon Augustus rather than sought” (*Augustus and the Principate: The Evolution of the System* [Leeds, U.K.: Francis Cairns, 1996] 212).

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁰³ Zanker, *Power of Images*, 11–31.

demonstrates his restraint by refusing to monopolize the honor of another, especially given the fact that Pompey and his son Pompeius Sextus became vigorous opponents of the Julian family in the late republic (*RG* 25.1).¹⁰⁴

Augustus had already made the same claim in *RG* 19.1 (cf. Suetonius, *Aug.* 31). In this instance, Augustus permitted the portico at the Flaminian circus to retain the name of the portico of Cn. Octavius, the praetor who had built it some time between 167–163 B.C.E. in commemoration of his naval victory and triumph over King Perseus of Macedonia (Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 34.7.13).¹⁰⁵ This restraint on Augustus's part is significant in view of the fact that he had personally dedicated so many public works at Rome to members of his family.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, as the victor in (what was probably) the most significant naval battle of Roman history (31 B.C.E.), Augustus would have understood well the personal significance of Octavius's honor as far as the quest for honor was concerned. Sensitive to traditional values, Augustus let Cn. Octavius's portico stand unadorned by any additional claim to glory on his own part,¹⁰⁷ though Augustus displayed in the restored portico the standards he had recaptured from the Dalmati and Illyrian wars. However, Paul Zanker is correct in observing that "this was one case where the 'modest' refusal to rename the building after himself was no hardship . . . since it already bore his name."¹⁰⁸

Additionally, it is worth remembering that in the *forum Augustum* Augustus depicts himself as the *pater patriae* who has brought republican history to a glorious culmination (*RG* 21.1; 35.1; Dio Cassius 56.34.2–3).¹⁰⁹ Notwithstanding, Augustus still highlights the honors of famous leaders of the republic with inscriptions—which he had composed (Pliny, *Nat.* 22.6.13)—celebrating their management of state crises, as well as the achievements of his Julian forbears. Although this is not strictly "humility" in the modern sense, Augustus was careful not to diminish the legitimate claims to honor of those who, in popular opinion, had contributed to the welfare of the *res publica*. How does Paul's understanding of honor relate to the Augustan interplay of accepting personal honors and honoring others worthy of honor?

Paul's language of "honor" in Romans (τιμή: Rom 2:7, 10; 9:21; 12:10; 13:7; ἀτιμάζω: 1:24; 26; 2:23; ἀτιμία: 1:26; 9:21) has theological and social reference.

¹⁰⁴ Of *RG* 25.1, Brunt and Moore state that "it is implied that Sextus Pompeius is a pirate" (*Res Gestae*, 3). Mommsen was the first to point out that, notwithstanding Augustus's good intentions, Pompey's theater still came to be known as *theatrum Aug(ustum) Pompeianum* (*CIL* VI 9404) (*Res Gestae*, 83).

¹⁰⁵ Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 187.

¹⁰⁶ On the public works, see Mommsen, *Res Gestae*, 79.

¹⁰⁷ Augustus's removal of eighty silver statues of himself from Rome (*RG* 24.2) is another case of the preservation of the honor of others.

¹⁰⁸ Zanker, *Power of Images*, 144.

¹⁰⁹ See Cooley for discussion of predecessors (Camillus, Marius, Cicero) who had been acclaimed *pater patriae* (*Res Gestae*, 273–74).

In terms of the former, Paul speaks of God being dishonored through acts of sin (Rom 1:24, 26; 2:23), his election being displayed in vessels of honor and dishonor (9:21), and his honoring those who persevere in doing good (2:7, 10). However, only two honorific texts in Romans have social reference (Rom 12:10b; 13:7b), though their implications are intriguing.

First, the precise meaning of Romans 12:10b is disputed. There Paul either exhorts believers to “outdo one another in showing honor” (RSV, NRSV, ESV: τῆ τιμῆ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι), or to “honor one another above yourselves” (NIV), or to “give preference to one another in honor” (KJV, NASB),¹¹⁰ or to “take the lead in showing honor to another.”¹¹¹ However we translate the verse, we are seeing here a different dynamic from Augustus’s refusal to impinge on the honor of others. Undoubtedly, Augustus recognized the rights of his competitors to maintain remembrance of honors already allocated, and honored the great men from the republican past as paradigms of leadership to be imitated in the future. Nevertheless, it is true that Augustus possessed extraordinary honors (*RG* 34.2–3a) as the victor of Actium (34.1: *potens rerum omnium* [I had power over everything]), even though it was the case that public consensus had pressed acceptance upon him (34.1: *per consensum universorum* [although by everyone’s agreement]; 34.2 *quo pro merito* [in return for this desert of mine; trans. Edwin A. Judge]). Moreover, Augustus’s divestment of various formal powers in 27 and 23 B.C.E. (*RG* 34:3b) spawned further extravagant public honors being pressed upon him, which he vaunted in the climax to the *RG* (35.1).

For Paul, however, the honoring of one another is an expression of love without pretense (Rom 12:9a: ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος; 12:10). This motif links together all the plural participles in verses 9–13, each possessing imperatival force,¹¹² including προηγούμενοι.¹¹³ By means of this leitmotif uniting the pericope (Rom 12:9–13), culminating in the imperatives inculcating love for the enemy (12:14–21), the apostle pinpricks the hierarchal social relationships of antiquity and the dynamic of the reciprocation of honor animating the Greco-Roman honor system. Paul’s emphasis on *mutual* honoring (Rom 12:10b: ἀλλήλους), as an expression of

¹¹⁰ On the difficulty of the translation of ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι (Rom 12:10b), see Douglas Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (NICNT; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1996) 777–78. Thomas R. Schreiner argues “prefer one another in honor” on the basis of the parallel in Philippians 2:3 (*Romans* [Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament 6; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1998] 664). The modern “psychologizing” translation of Romans 12:10b in the NEB (“Give pride of place to one another in esteem”) divorces the verse from the backdrop of the ancient reciprocity system and the Roman quest for ancestral glory. Note, too, the interesting “parallel” in Cicero (*Prov. cons.* 11.27) to Romans 12:10b: “I admired the strength of mind and magnanimity of Gnaeus Pompeius, because, while he had been himself preferred to distinctions (*honore*) beyond all other men, he was for granting greater distinction (*ampliorum honorem*) to another than he himself had obtained.”

¹¹¹ Jewett, *Romans*, 754, 762.

¹¹² Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans* (AB 33; New York: Doubleday, 1993) 653.

¹¹³ Philip F. Esler, *Conflict and Identity in Romans: The Social Setting of Paul’s Letter* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2003) 316–30.

corporate love within the body of Christ, posed an alternative to the status-riddled operation of honorific rituals in Greco-Roman society.¹¹⁴ There is little doubt that the Jesus tradition (Matt 23:12; Luke 14:11) has impacted Paul's teaching here.¹¹⁵ But, ultimately, only the social dishonor of the cross (Rom 5:6–8; cf. Gal 3:13; 2 Cor 8:9; Phil 2:5–8) experienced by the divinely vindicated Lord of all (Phil 2:9–11) can explain why Paul adopted this counter-cultural stance.

Second, Paul states that honor should be rendered to whom honor is due (Rom 13:7b: τῷ τὴν τιμὴν τὴν τιμῆν), including the imperial authorities (Rom 13:1–6). But Paul's argument is subtler than it first appears. He insists that while the demands of the Greco-Roman reciprocity system had to be met (Rom 13:8a), love now was to be the transforming dynamic that upended a dominant cultural convention (13:8b–10). Here we are reminded again of the leitmotif of "genuine love" (Rom 12:9a: ἀνυπόκριτος) that undergirded the pericope of 12:9–13, discussed above. To be sure, Paul is acknowledging in verse 7 the importance of *officium* (obligation) at Rome, with its rituals of gratitude and indebtedness to the gods, one's family, the state and patrons, imperial and local.¹¹⁶ Contextually, Paul's emphasis is clearly upon honor to the Roman ruler (13:7b: τῷ τὸν φόρον τὸν φόρον), though he is also probably endorsing a wide array of honorific rituals to benefactors necessary for the smooth operation of the benefaction system in antiquity.¹¹⁷ The believers from the two households within the imperial bureaucracy (Rom 16:10–11), as well as in the imperial house itself (Phil 4:22), would have understood well the conflicting tensions of "indebtedness" posed for them as members of the body of Christ and as members of the household of Caesar and his freedmen.¹¹⁸ But the believer, including believers inside the imperial house, owed the debt of love to everyone (Rom 13:8b–10), without trace of favoritism, in Paul's reformulation of the honor system (13:8a).¹¹⁹ Moreover, in Romans 13:1–6 Paul stripped the Roman ruler of his providential, prophetic, and teleological status in the imperial propaganda, reducing him, in agreement with the LXX, to "servant" status before God

¹¹⁴ Jewett confines the social reference of the text to the competition of Roman believers for precedence at the love feasts (*Romans*, 760–62), whereas I believe that Paul, to some degree, is inverting the modus operandi of the Greco-Roman honor system per se.

¹¹⁵ On the latter, see Esler, *Conflict and Identity*, 325.

¹¹⁶ For Cicero and Seneca on "obligation," see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 316–17.

¹¹⁷ See James R. Harrison, *Paul's Language of Grace in Its Graeco-Roman Context* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003) passim.

¹¹⁸ Robert Jewett, "Response: Exegetical Support from Romans and Other Letters," in *Paul and Politics: Ekklēsia—Israel—Imperium—Interpretation: Essays in Honor of Krister Stendahl* (ed. Richard A. Horsley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2000) 58–71, at 65. On patronal obligation in the Roman imperial order, see Efrain Agosto, "Patronage and Commendation, Imperial and Anti-imperial," in *Paul and the Roman Imperial Order* (ed. Richard A. Horsley; Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2004) 103–23, esp. 104–7. See also Richard Saller, *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

¹¹⁹ For Roman sources on "indebtedness," see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 316–17.

(13:4–6).¹²⁰ Paul thereby ensured that the honoring of Christ had priority for believers, no matter how legitimate the ruler’s claims upon his subjects, clients, and the *familia Caesaris* might be.¹²¹ Thus Romans 13:7b, when considered against the sophisticated rhetorical strategies of 13:1–10, articulates a different understanding of honorific rituals than is found in the *Res Gestae*.

2.4 *The Conquest of the Nations*

The motif of the “conquest of the nations” is central to the *Res Gestae*.¹²² Announced first in the preface to the *RG* (note 42, above), the motif is handled with great skill as far as its ideological impact in the *RG*. In terms of Augustus’s strategy of conquest, Augustus waged wars by land and sea against foreign nations (3.1; 4.3), pardoning only those whom he “could safely pardon” (3.2). His preferred policy, rather, was “to preserve than to destroy” the peoples of the nations (3.2; see 13). The most extensive discussion of the nations occurs in 25–33. The passage is a masterful example of Augustus’s geopolitical categorization of the Roman empire by which he spotlights his exemplary virtue.¹²³

After securing victory over Rome’s internal enemies at Actium and Sicily (*RG* 25), Augustus pursued world conquest (26–27). Simultaneously, Augustus stabilized the Roman empire by establishing military colonies (28), reversing the humiliating losses to the Parthians (29), and pushing into the territory of the Pannonian peoples in order to create a buffer against barbarian invasion (30). In contrast to the militarism of 26–30, 31–33 presents the diplomatic strategies by which Augustus secured the loyalty of conquered peoples to Rome: engaging royal embassies, protecting suppliants seeking refuge, and meeting noble ambassadors. Importantly, Augustus emphasizes twice the unprecedented nature of these diplomatic contacts with the peoples (31.1; 32.3). Indeed, the highly exotic names of these peoples and their rulers would have dazzled Augustus’s Roman audience with the extent of the empire (27, 32–33).

By means of this rich portrait of the military and diplomatic pacification of the peoples, the *RG* draws attention to two of the pivotal Augustan virtues—*virtus* (25–30) and *clementia* (31–33)—upon which the expansion of the Roman empire depended (34.2). This “grand narrative” of empire is a story about the virtuous Augustus ensuring the dominance of his house by victory on the battlefield (30.1; see 1.1; 2).¹²⁴ How, then, does the Augustan understanding of the nations intersect with Paul’s salvation narrative of the “nations” in Romans?

¹²⁰ On the anti-Augustan and anti-Neronian propaganda and the possibility that believers at Rome would have had divided political perspectives, see *ibid.*, 113–14, 141, 165–85, 313–16.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 271–323.

¹²² See Lopez, *Apostle to the Conquered*, 86–113.

¹²³ Judge, “On Judging the Merits,” 241.

¹²⁴ Horace refers to the “god-like” triumphs of Augustus: “To achieve great deeds and to display captive ‘foemen’ to one’s fellow-citizens is to touch the throne of Jove and scale the skies” (*Ep.* 1.17.33–34).

We have already discussed the rhetorical role that Paul assigned to Abraham, as the father of the nations, in arguing for the justification of the Gentiles (§2.1, above). What is interesting is Paul's language of "obedience" in describing his mission to the Gentile nations (Rom 1:5; 15:18; 16:26). How does this relate to the rule of the "root of Jesse" over the Gentiles in Rom 15:12? Does Paul's mission to the Gentiles carry imperialist overtones similar to the *RG*?

Paul's typological use of LXX texts in Rom 15:3 (LXX Ps 68:10a; ET 69:9a), 15:9 (LXX Ps 17:50; ET 18:49; 2 Sam 22:50), 15:10 (LXX/ET Deut 32:43), and 15:11 (LXX Ps 116:1; ET 117:1) is a pivotal part of his rhetorical strategy in persuading his Roman auditors regarding God's messianic grace towards the Gentile nations.¹²⁵ This was necessary not only because of the Jewish and Gentile tensions over boundary markers at Rome (Rom 14:1–15:13), but also because Paul had to ensure that any potential political divisions over the ruler, accompanied by attitudes of ethnic superiority (Rom 11:17–24), did not split believers living in the capital. The Gentile airs of superiority towards their Jewish brethren were probably attributable as much to the arrogance aroused by the Roman conquest of the nations as the anti-Semitism infecting the Roman intelligentsia in the mid-fifties.¹²⁶ How, then, does Paul underscore by a typological exegesis of the LXX the need for his Gentile auditors at Rome to regain a renewed sense of humility before God and their fellow believers?

It is clear from the link between Rom 15:3a and 15:3b that the Messiah is the speaker in the LXX text cited in verse 3b. The messianic leitmotif is also present in the LXX texts cited in verses 9, 10, and 11.¹²⁷ The Messiah, as Paul depicts him, addresses the Gentile nations in verses 9–11 in a winsome and celebratory manner. The Son of David praises God before the Gentiles for his salvation and Davidic descendants (v. 9), invites the Gentiles to rejoice in God's salvation from their enemies (v. 10), and summons them to praise God for his steadfast love and faithfulness (v. 11).¹²⁸ A messianic proof-text from Isaiah (LXX Isa 11:10) brings Paul's typological use of the LXX to a resounding conclusion in verse 12. There the risen and reigning Messiah unites the nations under his personal rule and affirms their present incorporation into the body of Christ through the summons of divine grace. Here we have a conquest of the nations vastly different from that which we find in the *RG* or in the iconography of the Augustan triumphal arches and monuments (note 11, above). The Gentiles who formerly were neither God's

¹²⁵ Mark A. Siefred, "Romans," in *Commentary on the New Testament Use of the Old Testament* (ed. Greg K. Beale and Donald A. Carson; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2007) 607–94, esp. 686–91.

¹²⁶ On anti-Semitism among the Roman intelligentsia, see Walter Wiefel, "The Jewish Community in Ancient Rome and the Origins of Roman Christianity," in *The Romans Debate* (ed. Karl P. Donfried; rev. and exp. ed.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1991) 85–101.

¹²⁷ Siefred, "Romans," 688.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 688–90; see Matthew V. Novenson, "The Jewish Messiahs, the Pauline Christ, and the Gentile Question," *JBL* 128 (2009) 357–73.

people nor his loved one (Rom 9:25–26; see Hos 2:23; 1:10) had now become God’s beloved people in Christ.

Consequently, Paul unfolds the social implications of this dramatic reversal of status for the Gentile nations. The soteriological “welcome” that the Messiah had extended to Jew and Gentile would resonate to the glory of God (Rom 15:7b: εἰς δόξαν τοῦ θεοῦ) when each group unreservedly welcomed each other in love (15:7a), setting aside divisions over the maintenance of Jewish boundary markers (14:5–6, 13–21).¹²⁹ For Paul, unity in worship between both ethnic groups glorifies God (Rom 15:6: ἵνα ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐν ἑνὶ στόματι δοξάζητε τὸν θεὸν καὶ πατέρα τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ). Paul’s focus on ethnic reconciliation, culminating in the corporate magnification of God’s glory, stood opposed to the hatred of the Romans articulated in the Jewish apocalyptic literature and in the Qumran writings.¹³⁰ It also undermined the racial stereotyping of the Jews by the Roman intelligentsia in mid-fifties Rome (note 126, above). The hope of glory, realized in the messianic community of Christ, reconciled and unified diverse ethnic groups whose tortured history, until then, had made them implacable enemies. Whereas Augustus spared only those nations worth sparing (*RG* 3.2), God’s impartial grace towards the nations brought about an ethnic and social leveling between the “foolish” barbarian (Rom 1:14a, 14b) and the “wise” Greek (Rom 1:14a, 14b). A different social dynamic led Paul, a former Pharisee (Gal 1:14–16; Phil 3:5–11), to be a debtor to Greeks and to barbarians in the Greek East and Latin West (Rom 1:14).

2.5 *The Extension of Beneficence*

In *RG* 15–24 Augustus sets out “the expenses (*impensae*) which he incurred for the state and the people of Rome” (Latin heading of the *RG*). The focus of Augustus’s beneficence, apart from 24.1, is entirely on the city of Rome. The benefits are dispensed during the period spanning 40–2 B.C.E.¹³¹ What is remarkable about this distribution of money is that it is derived from Augustus’s private wealth: “out of my patrimony” (15.1; 17.2; [trans. Edwin A. Judge]), “with my own money” (17.1), “from my own granary and patrimony” (18), and “from the spoils of war” (15.1; 21.1, 2). Augustus sets out to whom donations were given, with the amounts in sesterces tabulated throughout the section: the urban plebs (15); soldiers and military colonists (16); the treasury (17–18); new buildings on existing public sites, buildings and installations restored, and new buildings erected on land donated by Augustus (19–21); games and spectacles (22–23); and, last, gifts to the gods (24).

¹²⁹ Siefriid observes: “The reality of love is an essential dimension of glory that the believing community renders to ‘the God and father of Jesus Christ’ (15:6). There is no true worship without love, and no true love without worship. Both are given by the hope found in the Messiah” (“Romans,” 687).

¹³⁰ E.g., 4Q504 IV, ll.1–12; *Pss. Sol.* 17:30–32.

¹³¹ See Brunt and Moore, *Res Gestae*, 57–58.

Several observations are apposite. First, Augustus had inaugurated an age of grace that would be regarded by his successors as the watershed of beneficence in Roman history.¹³² Second, Augustus latched onto the popular yearning for a “new age” through his establishment of the “centennial games” (22.2: *ludfos s/aeculares*).¹³³ Third, the magnitude of the gifts underscored the magnitude of his virtue as a “god-like” benefactor. Fourth, the piety of Augustus towards the gods is underscored in the *RG* (20.4; 21.1–2; 22.2; 24.1–2; see 4.1–2; 7.3; 10.2; 13; 29.2; 34.2), as is his piety towards his father (2; 15.1; 20.3; 21.2) and his family (20.3; 21.1; 22.3). Augustus’s piety towards the Roman state is demonstrated in every section of the *RG*.¹³⁴ Fifth, as noted (§2.3, above), the building of public works was a traditional avenue of self-advertisement for the Roman noble in the republic. Once again, Augustus would have been perceived to be an upholder of ancestral tradition.

Since I have discussed this motif elsewhere,¹³⁵ I will only briefly comment on the evidence of Romans. In Rom 5:12–21 the familiar idea of *aeons* from Jewish apocalyptic underlies Paul’s “regnal” imagery (βασιλεύω: Rom 5:14a, 17a, 17b, 21a, 21b). However, the reign of Christ’s grace (Rom 5:21) would have also recalled for Paul’s auditors the Augustan “reign of grace” which had acquired iconic status as the age of unparalleled beneficence at Rome, establishing thereby a yardstick of generosity against which the subsequent Roman rulers would be measured. But the “Golden Age” inaugurated by Augustus’s benefactions paled in comparison to Christ’s grace displayed in his obedience unto death for his enemies (Rom 5:6–8, 18b, 19b), resulting in the liberation and transformation of his dependents (Rom 5:15–21). The language of “overflow” (περισσεύω: Rom 5:15, 17, 20) and “grace” (χάρις; 5:15b, 17b, 20b, 21b; χάρισμα: 5:15a, 16b) is found in the imperial propaganda—including the Augustan inscriptions—and would have resonated with first-century auditors familiar with the *RG*. Undoubtedly, the motif of God’s overflowing generosity towards sinners, articulated in the Psalms, is at the core of Paul’s theological thought in this passage.¹³⁶ But that does not disqualify the resonances that would have been evoked by the Augustan age of grace for his auditors and its implied contrast with Christ’s reign of grace.

¹³² See Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 228.

¹³³ Danker, *Benefactor*, 277. On the centennial games and Paul’s eschatology, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 97–101.

¹³⁴ Ramage, *Augustus’ “Res Gestae,”* 93. The intersection of Augustan *pietas* and ancestral lineage in Romans (cf. Rom 4:1–25; 9:6–18; 15:11; Elliott, *Arrogance of the Nations*, 121–41; Harrison, “Paul, Theologian of Electing Grace,” esp. 90–107; Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, s.v. Index of Subjects, “Familia Caesaris”) will not be discussed because in the *RG* Augustus’s focus is mainly on piety towards the traditional gods (cf. Rom 1:18–32; Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 257, 263–64) and the Roman state (Rom 13:1–7; Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 271–323).

¹³⁵ James R. Harrison, “Paul, Eschatology, and the Augustan Age of Grace,” *TynBul* 50 (1999) 79–91; idem, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 226–34.

¹³⁶ See Cilliers Breytenbach’s correction to my arguments in idem, “‘Charis’ and ‘eleos’ in Paul’s Letter to the Romans,” in *The Letter to the Romans*, 323–63.

2.6 *The Authority of the Leader*

We have already seen how, in terms of the ideology of leadership, Augustus's principate transformed the present and future generation of leaders by virtue of its commitment to and imitation of republican *exempla* (§1.1.2, above). In this process, Augustus had become the iconic *exemplum* of virtue—along with the republican luminaries who prefigured him—for those who aspired to leadership of the state. We must now look at Augustus's understanding of the nature of his rule in *RG* 34.1–35.1 and explore the role of consensus in the development of his unparalleled *auctoritas* (influence).

Until the recent discovery of a new fragment from Pisidian Antioch,¹³⁷ the Latin text of *RG* 34.1 was reconstructed and translated as follows:

In my sixth and seventh consulships, when I had extinguished the flames of civil war, after receiving by universal consent the absolute control of affairs (*per consensum universonum [potitus reru]m om[n]ium*), I transferred the republic (*rem publicam*) from my own control (*ex mea potestate*) to the will of the senate and people of Rome (Volkmann's 1969 Latin edition).¹³⁸

Traditionally, this has been interpreted as describing the manner by which Augustus came to acquire supreme power in the state. The consensus concerning his absolute control of affairs was achieved sometime after the second triumvirate in 32 B.C.E., but before the time when Augustus handed back the *res publica* in his sixth and seventh consulships (28–27 B.C.E.).¹³⁹

However, the new fragment has revealed that the words *[potitus reru]m (RG 34.1)* are in reality *[po]tens re[r]um*. Thus the text should be translated:

In my sixth and seventh consulships, after I had put an end to civil wars, although by everyone's agreement I had power over everything (*per consensum universonum [po]tens re[r]um om[n]ium*), I transferred the state (*rem publicam*) from my power (*ex mea potestate*) into the control of the Roman senate and people.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ On the history of scholarship, see Scheid, *Res Gestae*, 82–86. The restoration of *[potitus rerum om[n]ium]* in *RG* 34.1 was Mommsen's suggestion (*Res Gestae*, lxxxiv, 144).

¹³⁸ *Res gestae divi Augusti* (trans. Frederick W. Shipley; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1924). Brunt and Moore (*Res Gestae*, 35) translate the important clause thus: "at a time when with universal consent I was in complete control of affairs."

¹³⁹ Gagé, *Res Gestae*, 144–45. Volkmann (*Res Gestae*, 56) suggests this happened from 30 B.C.E., whereas Frank E. Adcock ("The Interpretation of *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, 34.1," *CQ* 1 [1951] 130–35) posits the date of 28 B.C.E. because of the renewed threat of civil war posed by Marcus Crassus's attainment of the *spolia opima* (Judge, "Augustus in the *Res Gestae*," 221).

¹⁴⁰ The translation is that of Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 98. The aorist form (γενόμενος) of the Greek text of the *RG* (34.1: ἐνκρατῆς γενόμενος πάντων τῶν πραγμάτων ["although I was in control of all affairs"]) correctly translates the intention of the newly discovered fragment of the Latin text (34.1: *[po]tens re[r]um*). For discussion, see Edwin A. Judge, "The Crux of *RG* 34.1 Resolved?: Augustus on 28 BC," in *New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity*, vol. 10 §10, pp. 55–58.

This means that Augustus was *already* in total control, by universal consent, from the time of the end of the civil wars in 31 B.C.E. This was because of his spectacular victory over Antony and Cleopatra at the battle of Actium. The imperial poets who singled out Actium as the providentially defining event in Augustus's rise to power, inaugurating a "new age" of blessing for Rome, were correct in their propaganda.¹⁴¹ This makes Augustus's return of the *res publica*—properly translated as "the public property" rather than "the state" or "the republic"¹⁴²—to the senate and the Roman people all the more significant. The honors given to Augustus in *RG* 34.2–35 celebrate the end of the civil war and the reestablishment of constitutional propriety through Augustus's divestment of his powers.¹⁴³ In Augustus's estimation (34.2), the honors represent Rome's recognition of his preeminent merit (*quo pro merito*: in return for this desert of mine [trans. Edwin A. Judge]).¹⁴⁴ The most singular honor for Augustus is his acclamation as *pater patriae* (35: father of the fatherland). As Judge observes, the new title "subjects everyone to a form of dependence, and elevates Augustus to a form of control . . . founded upon personal and community relations rather than legal ones."¹⁴⁵

How, then, did the authority of Augustus work out in everyday affairs? First, in the view of Augustus (*RG* 34.2), there was a distinction between his formal powers (*potestas*) and his authority (*auctoritas*): "After this time I excelled everyone in influence (*[a]uctoritate*), but I had no more power (*[potest]atis*) than the others who were my colleagues in each magistracy." Although Augustus was equal to the other consuls and tribunes after the 27 B.C.E. settlement—his fellow magistrates possessing the same *potestas*—his "influence" was based on moral esteem. This gave Augustus supremacy in taking the lead and having priority of consultation as far as state affairs were concerned. Second, this moral esteem was strengthened by the "consensus" that Augustus was the undisputed ruler (34.1: *per consensum*). Further, Augustus forged consensus by acting within the republican mores, promoting traditional *exempla* and iconography, and exercising moderation and clemency.¹⁴⁶ Augustus's refusal of magistracies and honors inconsistent with

¹⁴¹ Harrison, "Paul, Theologian of Electing Grace," 77–108, esp. 101–6. Cooley points to Augustus's consciousness in the *RG* that a "new age" for Rome had begun with his accession to rule, referring to the revealing phrases "before I was born" (13) and "my era" (16.1: ὥν in the Greek version) (*Res Gestae*, 34, 158). On providentially defining events in the reign of the Julio-Claudians and in Paul's eschatology in Romans, see Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 128–33.

¹⁴² See Edwin A. Judge, "'Res Publica Restituta': A Modern Illusion?," in idem, *The First Christians*, 140–63; Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 258.

¹⁴³ On *virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, and *pietas*, mentioned in *RG* 34.2, see Ramage, *Augustus' "Res Gestae,"* 73–99.

¹⁴⁴ Cooley, *Res Gestae*, 260–61. Danker observes that there was no need to say anything extra regarding Augustus's merit other than the simple phrase *pro merito meo* because "his performance was the measure of his merit" (*Benefactor*, 279).

¹⁴⁵ Judge, "Augustus in the *Res Gestae*," 223.

¹⁴⁶ See Lobur, *Consensus*, 12–46. Clifford Ando argues that, in a provincial context, the imperial rulers "sought expressions of consensus, realized through religious and political rituals whose

republican and ancestral tradition also fostered an aura of consensus (4.2; 5.1, 3; 6.1; 10.2; see 5.2). Third, the senate is depicted as actively working with Augustus in the *RG*: Augustus accedes to its directives (1.2–3; 4.2; 5.2; 9.1; 10.1; 11; 12.1, 2; 14.1; 34.2; 35.1), declines its honors (4.1; 5.2; 6.1), endorses its legislation (6.2; 8.1; 22.2), asks the senate for colleagues in power (6.2), and transfers his powers back to it (34.1). There is clear evidence of mutuality and a benevolent reciprocity in this relationship, notwithstanding Augustus’s precedence in the senate as *princeps senatus* (7.2). As Edwin S. Ramage observes, “even though Augustus clearly dominates, there is a harmony and unity, a *concordia*, that makes this new form of government successful.”¹⁴⁷

In comparing Paul’s understanding of leadership with the *RG*, we face the difficulty that there is no real discussion of the issue in Romans, unlike the Corinthian epistles (1 Cor 3:1–4:21; 9:1–27; 12:1–13:13; 2 Cor 2:12–7:4; 10:1–13:13). Nor does Paul, as we will see (§2.7, below), use the language of “imitation” in order to present himself as an *exemplum* for his converts (§1.1.2, above). This would have been an obvious point of comparison between Paul and Augustus. The problem is compounded by the fact that Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, did not found the church at Rome. This explains Paul’s delicately phrased language of “mutuality” and “reciprocity” in Rom 1:11–13 (esp. 1:12: συμπαρακληθῆναι; ἐν ἀλλήλοις; ὑμῶν τε καὶ ἐμοῦ) and 15:24 (θεάσασθαι ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑφ’ ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι ἐκεῖ), even though Paul highlights his status as the apostle to the Gentiles (1:1, 5–6, 13b; 15:15–16). Paul unfolds the variegated ministry of the body of Christ (Rom 12:4–8), pointing to a diversity of leadership in the house churches: but even here a comparison with Nero’s “body of state” is more easily made (Seneca, *Clem.* 1.4.1–1.5.2) than with the *RG*.¹⁴⁸

However, there is a similarity of situation between Paul and Augustus at an unexpected level. Augustus distinguishes between his formal powers (*potestas*) and his influence (*auctoritas*) for a harmonious running of the state.¹⁴⁹ To some degree, Paul’s situation in writing to the Romans poses a similar conundrum. Paul has “apostolic authority” over the Gentile churches, being divinely appointed and affirmed by the “consensus” of the “pillar” apostles of Jerusalem (Rom 1:1, 5–6, 13b; 15:15–16; cf. Gal 1:15–16; 2:7–9), and has the “power of God” at his disposal through the gospel (Rom 1:16; 15:19). However, Paul cannot wield his authority

content could be preserved in documentary form. . . . Rome’s desire for consensus thus opened a conceptual and discursive space for provincials and Romans alike to negotiate the veracity of Roman propaganda and the rationality of Roman administration” (Ando, *Imperial Ideology and Provincial Loyalty*, 7).

¹⁴⁷ Ramage, *Augustus’ “Res Gestae,”* 52. See also Dietmar Kienast, *Augustus: Prinzeps und Monarch* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1982) 126–51; Peter A. Brunt, “The Role of the Senate in the Augustan Regime,” *CQ* 34 (1984) 423–44; Jochen Bleicken, *Augustus: Eine Biographie* (Berlin: Alexander Fest, 1998) s.v. Register, “Senat/Senatoren.”

¹⁴⁸ See Harrison, *Paul and the Imperial Authorities*, 292–99.

¹⁴⁹ On Augustus’s *auctoritas*, see Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, 10–41.

insensitively over the Roman church because he is not its founder. How then does Paul establish consensus with the Roman believers regarding his projected visit and what type of leadership pattern emerges in this process? And how does it compare with the *exemplum* of Augustus in the *RG*?

First, like Augustus (§2.4, above), Paul has a strong geopolitical grasp of the Roman empire in his strategy of bringing the nations to the “obedience of faith” (Rom 1:5; 16:26). He has moved from Jerusalem (Rom 15:19b; Gal 2:1–10) to the Greek East, commencing with Asia (16:5), and from there traveling into Europe during his second and third missionary journeys (Macedonia: 15:26; Illyricum: 15:19; Achaia: 15:26). Currently, Paul is writing his epistle at the Isthmus, residing at Corinth (16:23; see 1 Cor 1:14), but also with patronage in nearby Cenchrea (Rom 16:1–2). Afterwards, Paul planned to travel from Corinth to Jerusalem with the collection for the poor saints (Rom 15:26, 31). Thus, having now traveled as a missionary across the Greek East in a circle from Jerusalem as far as Illyricum on the Adriatic coast (Rom 15:19b),¹⁵⁰ Paul’s intention was to move into the Latin West and visit the believers at Rome (1:10–13; 15:22a, 24b, 29, 32). His aim was to establish a mission to the most westerly point of the Roman empire in Europe (Spain: Rom 15:24a).¹⁵¹ Although the “geopolitical” sweep is not as extensive as Augustus’s catalogue (*RG* 25–33), it is no less impressive in its far-flung vision for the nations living in the provinces.

However, a clear difference in the conception of leadership emerges between Paul and Augustus. Augustus spared only those foreign peoples “whom (he) could safely pardon” (*RG* 3.2), either subduing them militarily (29–30) or by extending *clementia* to their officials and kings in diplomatic contexts (31–33). The princeps boasts about the result of these encounters (*RG* 32.3): “And while I have been leader (*me princepe*; ἐπὶ ἐμοῦ ἡγεμόνος) very many other peoples have experienced the good faith (*fidem*; πίστεως) of the Roman people.”¹⁵² The imperial iconography

¹⁵⁰ On the expression καὶ κύκλῳ μέχρι τοῦ Ἰλλυρικοῦ (and around unto Illyricum) and how that relates to ancient cartography (including the map of the world of Marcus Agrippa, Augustus’s friend and co-regent), see Jewett, *Romans*, 911–13. On the Jewish background, see James M. Scott, *Paul and the Nations: The Old Testament and Jewish Background of Paul’s Mission to the Nations with Special Reference to the Destination of Galatians* (WUNT 84; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1995) 135–48. Agrippa’s monumental map at Rome displaying the extent of the Roman empire and its peoples was only a few hundred meters away from the site of the *Res Gestae*, which, as noted, highlighted Augustus’s domination of the nations (3.1–2; 4.3; 13; 25–33).

¹⁵¹ On Spain, note Jewett: “Spain lies at the conclusion of the northern circuit of the Mediterranean on the strip maps of antiquity, thus completing the arc from Jerusalem through Illyricum and Rome, and on to the end of the earth” (*Romans*, 924).

¹⁵² Ramage (*Augustus’ “Res Gestae,”* 45–46, 89–90) discusses the interrelation of *fides* (faith) and *iustitia* (justice), citing the evidence of Livy and Cicero (*ibid.*, 90). He observes that Romans “viewed *fides* as the foundation of *iustitia*” (*ibid.*, 46). In the case of international diplomacy in the *Res Gestae*, “Augustus’ sense of justice is triggering the *fides* (32.3) that attracts legations from the ends of the world” (*ibid.*, 46). What is intriguing here for Pauline scholars is the link in Romans between “justice” (δικαιοσύνη), “justification” language (δικαιώω) and faith (πίστις; 3:22, 26, 28, 30; 4:5, 9, 11, 13; 5:1; 9:30; 10:4, 6, 10), and the incorporation of the “nations” into the people of God. Is this overlap of

confirms the militarism of *RG* 29–30, emphasizing the military subjugation of the nations.¹⁵³ Indeed, Paul himself may well have seen reliefs of bound captives during his visit to Pisidian Antioch.¹⁵⁴

By contrast, Paul sought to win the nations to the “obedience of faith” for Christ (εἰς ὑπακοὴν πίστεως: Rom 1:5; 16:26). Whereas Augustus as *Pontifex Maximus* mediated between the gods and the Roman people (*RG* 7.3; 10.2), Paul made a priestly offering of the Gentiles in the service of the gospel of God (Rom 15:16). Christ himself was the God-given ἱλαστήριον that had propitiated the righteous demands of God’s wrathful judgement, present and future, against sinners (Rom 1:18–3:20), irrespective of whether they were Jews or Gentiles (Rom 3:25; 10:12).¹⁵⁵ Consequently, Paul jettisoned the Roman division between Greek and barbarian (Rom 1:14) since he was indebted to both groups (1:14b: ὀφειλέτης εἰμί),¹⁵⁶ owing them the debt of divine love (13:8b–10). In Paul’s “geopolitical” organization of the Roman Empire for outreach to the nations, indebtedness to the love of Christ had become the dynamic for bringing about the obedience of the nations, as opposed to the militarism and diplomacy of the Roman ruler.

Second, in Rom 16:1–16 and 16:21–23 we gain insight into how Paul, as the apostle to the Gentiles, establishes “consensus,” to borrow “Augustan” language, among believers in the Greek East and in the Latin West.¹⁵⁷ At the most fundamental level, God had already established unity (one body: Rom 12:4a, 5a; see 10:12; 16:17) through the incorporation of believers from different nations into the body of Christ at Rome (Rom 16:1–16a) and in the provinces (e.g., Achaia: 16:1–2, 21–23; Asia: 16:5b; elsewhere: 16:4b, 16b). Paul’s “in Christ” and “in the

motifs between Augustus and Paul merely the collision of different “symbolic universes”? Or is Paul implicitly highlighting for his Roman auditors how the God of Israel graciously summons the nations to himself in comparison to the justice attracting the barbarian tribes to be loyal to Rome and Augustus? The question is difficult to answer with certainty, but it again underscores the rich intersection of motifs in Romans and the *Res Gestae*.

¹⁵³ For the Augustan visual evidence, see Harrison, “More Than Conquerors.” New Testament scholars, however, have overemphasized the military subjugation of the barbarians in the iconographic evidence. There were messages to the contrary in the Augustan propaganda, such as those found on the triumphal arches at Susa and Glanum (*ibid.*, 11–13).

¹⁵⁴ For Pisidian Antioch, see Mitchell and Waelkens, *Pisidian Antioch*, 161–62, Plate 113; Harrison, “More Than Conquerors,” 5–7. Cornelius C. Vermeule points to captive “barbarian” motifs on reliefs at Corinth (*Roman Imperial Art in Greece and Asia Minor* [Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1963] figs. 29, 30). But they postdate Paul (*ibid.*, 83, 87). However, there is also an undated statue of a bound barbarian captive—possibly first-century C.E.—at the museum of Corinth (Harrison, “More Than Conquerors,” 4 [fig. 2], 17 n. 1).

¹⁵⁵ Jewett challenges both the propitiatory and expiatory understandings of the text (*Romans*, 285–86). Contra, see Schreiner (*Romans*, 197–98) and Leon Morris (*The Epistle to the Romans* [Pillar New Testament Commentary; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1988] 179–83).

¹⁵⁶ See Jewett, *Romans*, 130–33. For the Roman perception of barbarians, see I. M. Ferris, *Enemies of Rome: Barbarians through Roman Eyes* (Stroud, U.K.: Sutton, 2000).

¹⁵⁷ See Carl N. Toney, *Paul’s Inclusive Ethic: Resolving Community Conflicts and Promoting Mission in Romans 14–15* (WUNT II/252; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2008) 54–55.

Lord” language underscores the organic unity of the house churches in fellowship, ministry, and mission across the Roman empire (Rom 16:2, 3, 7–13, 22).

Paul uses a series of rhetorical strategies to facilitate interdependence and collegiality among the house churches of the Greek East and Latin West. His “kinship” (Rom 16:1: our sister; 16:8, 11, 21b: kinsmen; 16:13: a mother to me also; 16:14: brothers) and “household” language (16:5, 10b, 23a) establishes that believers now belong to a different family than the family of which Augustus was *pater patriae*. Beneficence within the house churches offers an alternative to the imperial networks of grace.¹⁵⁸ However, this is not to be at the expense of socially prominent believers continuing to act responsibly as civic officials and benefactors within their own cities (Rom 16:23b). Traditional honorific motifs such as the “endangered” benefactor (Rom 16:4a) are echoed in Paul’s description of the personal risk that Prisca and Aquila undertook on his behalf.¹⁵⁹ Paul’s expressions of affection¹⁶⁰ and his honorific rituals and accolades¹⁶¹ throughout Romans 16 provide the impetus to unity in visible and powerful ways. Last, the language of collegiality, in ministry and suffering,¹⁶² has the same effect. This sense of cohesion established by Paul between the churches of the Latin West and Greek East would have provided further impetus for his mission to the nations across the Roman empire (Rom 15:23–24).¹⁶³

2.7 *The Achievement of Virtue*

On two occasions in the *RG* (8.5; 34.2) Augustus is held up as an *exemplum* of virtue. Both of these texts have already been discussed (§1.1.2; §2.6, above). We have seen that Augustus had become the supreme *exemplum* of virtue for the future leaders of Rome. His four “cardinal” virtues—*virtus*, *clementia*, *iustitia*, and *pietas*—were awarded because of his meritorious action on behalf of the state. We have also seen that at various stages in the *RG* these same virtues are illustrated by what Augustus does in service of the state (e.g., *virtus* and *clementia*: §2.4, above;

¹⁵⁸ Rom 16:2b: προστάτις πολλῶν; Rom 16:23a: ὁ ξένος μου καὶ ὅλης τῆς ἐκκλησίας.

¹⁵⁹ On the endangered benefactor, see Danker, *Benefactor*, 417–35.

¹⁶⁰ Rom 16:8, 9: τὸν ἀγαπητόν; Rom 16:12: τὴν ἀγαπητήν; Rom 16:16a: ἐν φιλήματι ἀγίῳ.

¹⁶¹ For the honorific ritual of commendation, see Rom 16:1: Συνίστημι δὲ ὑμῖν Φοίβην. For the honorific ritual of welcoming, see Rom 16:2a: ἵνα αὐτὴν προσδέξησθε ἐν κυρίῳ ἀξίως τῶν ἁγίων. For the honorific ritual of public greeting, see Rom 16:3, 5–16, 21–23: ἀσπάσασθε. For the honorific ritual of thanksgiving, see Rom 16:4b: οἷς οὐκ ἐγὼ μόνος εὐχαριστῶ ἀλλὰ καὶ πᾶσαι αἱ ἐκκλησίαι τῶν ἔθνῶν. For honorific accolades, see Rom 16:7: ἐπίσμητοι ἐν τοῖς ἀποστόλοις; Rom: 16:10: τὸν δόκιμον ἐν Χριστῷ; Rom 16:12a: τὰς κοπιώσας ἐν κυρίῳ; Rom 16:12b: ἦτις πολλὰ ἐκοπίασεν ἐν κυρίῳ; Rom 16:13: τὸν ἐκλεκτὸν ἐν κυρίῳ

¹⁶² Rom 16:3, 9: ὁ συνεργός; Rom 16:7: συναιχμαλώτους μου.

¹⁶³ Leander E. Keck observes: “The fact of the greeting is an aperture through which we glimpse the solidarity that marked the early Christians who, though unacquainted with each other, understood themselves to be part of a reality neither confined nor confinable to the little house church where they gathered. However much they disagreed, these people were becoming a people” (*Romans* [ANTC; Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 2005] 374–75).

pietas: §2.5, above; *iustitia*: 2; 6.1; 10.1; 26.3). Last, precisely because Augustus as an *exemplum* embodied the republican virtues, he was able to establish consensus with the state, as much as the senate and Roman people had established consensus by recognizing Augustus's supremacy by the time of Actium.

In the case of Paul, however, it is clear that virtue is the preserve of the entire believing community in Christ. This stands in contrast to the *RG* where the virtues are attributed to Augustus as honorific accolades because he is the savior of the *res publica* and the benefactor of the world (34.2). Two examples will be sufficient. First, in regards to the Augustan virtue of *iustitia* (34.2: *iustitiae*; [δ]ικαιοσύνην), Paul states that through the righteous act of Christ (Rom 5:18b: δι' ἐνός δικαιοματός), many will be made righteous (5:19b: δίκαιοι κατασταθήσονται οἱ πολλοί). As we have seen (note 152, above), Paul's use of "justification by faith" language unveils how God graciously summons the Jews and the nations into the body of Christ, whereas Augustus's sense of justice triggers the *fides* (faith) that drew the nations to Rome and to himself (*RG* 32.3). The Spirit, too, brings to fulfillment in the believer's life the righteous requirements of the law (Rom 8:4a: τὸ δικαίωμα τοῦ νόμου). The righteousness operative in the life of the Christian community does not reinvigorate the nomistic righteousness of the old covenant (7:6b: οὐ παλαιότητι γράμματος), but rather unleashes the dynamic newness of the Spirit (7:6b: ἐν καινότητι πνεύματος). Set free from the self-serving behavior that characterized Greco-Roman society, the Roman believers had become "instruments" and "slaves" of righteousness (Rom 6:13: ὄπλα δικαιοσύνης τῷ θεῷ; 6:18: ἐδουλώθητε τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ). It is interesting that Paul avoids the language of "imitation" in Romans,¹⁶⁴ opting instead for the idea of conformity to righteousness and to the image of Christ (Rom 8:29: συμμόρφους τῆς εἰκόνης τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ).¹⁶⁵ Did the ubiquity of the Augustan *exemplum* motif at Rome (§1.1.2, above) cause Paul to speak of the dynamics of ethical transformation in a different way for Roman believers? This corporate understanding of conformity to "righteousness," energized by the Spirit because of the obedience of Christ, is vastly different from the vision of justice centralized in the princeps in the *RG*.

Second, in regards to the Augustan virtue of *clementia* (*RG* 34.2: *clement[iae]*; ἐπέκειαν), Paul demonstrates in Romans that the Christian community was founded on the abounding mercy of God (ἐλεέω: Rom 9:15, 16, 18; 11:30–32; ἔλεος: 9:23; 11:31; 15:9; οἰκτιρμός: 12:1). The welcome of Christ and the mercy of God had established a unity between Jew and Gentile in the body of Christ (Rom 15:7–13) that transcended the Augustan consensus and gave believers the capacity to overcome internal divisions (Rom 14:1–15:6). However, divine mercy also translated into the extension of mercy to others as part of the variegated ministry

¹⁶⁴ On imitation in Paul, see Harrison, "The Imitation of the Great Man."

¹⁶⁵ Schreiner states: "[T]he use of the term 'image' signifies that Jesus as the second Adam succeeded where the first Adam failed. . . . The word that all nations would be blessed in Abraham has been fulfilled in the gospel of Jesus Christ and in the Roman community to whom Paul was writing" (*Romans*, 454).

of the body of Christ (Rom 12:8b: ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἰλαρότητι). This social vision was expressed in meeting the needs of the saints (Rom 12:13a)—seen particularly in the Jerusalem collection for the poor (Rom 15:24–29)¹⁶⁶—and in extending hospitality to strangers (Rom 12:13b). Contextually, this must have also included the extension of mercy to those who were the enemies of the Christian community (Rom 12:14–21). Paul’s creation of small house churches, of mixed ethnicity and culture, which extended beneficence not only to their own communities but also to their enemies, creating thereby a network of mercy that criss-crossed the provinces of the Roman Empire, was an ethical and social novelty in the first century.

■ 3. Conclusion

The *RG* was written to rebut the contemporary critics who had attacked Augustus’s rise to power in the triumviral years and had blackened his rule in the early principate. Whereas Augustus’s memoirs had countered many of these political slurs, only a full exposition of the glory of Augustus’s principate in the *RG* would overcome his critics and secure his place in the estimate of posterity. The legacy of Augustus continued to impact his successors, with the result that the propaganda of the *RG* still shaped the lives, values, and society of Rome. Thus Paul, in strategizing over his shift of missionary focus from the Greek East to the Latin West, had to consider how he would communicate the eschatological gospel of Christ crucified and glorified to believers living in the city of Augustus.

Paul instructed the Roman house churches about their covenantal identity in Christ and its social consequences. This meant accepting rather than assimilating the “other” in the Roman empire (Rom 12:14–21; 14:1–15:13),¹⁶⁷ obeying and honoring the ruler (13:1–7), rejecting the idolatry of Julio-Claudian society (1:18–32; 6:12–14, 19–21; 8:12–13; 13:11–14), engaging as a “benefactor” community in civic munificence (13:3–4: τὸ ἀγαθὸν ποίει [v. 3]), sponsoring mission into the Latin West (15:22–24: ὑφ’ ὑμῶν προπεμφθῆναι [v. 24]), and exercising munificence towards believers and strangers across the ethnic and geographic divide (12:8b, 13a, 13b; 15:25–31). In examining the motifs in Romans that intersected with the *RG*, we have seen that Paul proceeds in a nuanced manner in his response to Augustan social ideology. The apostle critiques its emphases (§§2.2, 2.4, 2.7), affirms its importance but redirects its rationale (§§2.1, 2.3), offers alternatives to the Augustan model (§2.6), or points to how it had been eclipsed in Christ (§2.5). As invisible as this social transformation might have been to Romans (Rom 12:1–2), Western civilization turned in a direction that Augustus never envisaged.

A final question remains to be answered. Why does the epistle to the Romans continue to be at the center of debate throughout history (e.g., Augustine, Luther, Barth), whereas the *RG* disappeared from the historical stage, unnoticed for years

¹⁶⁶ See Harrison, *Paul’s Language of Grace*, 294–313.

¹⁶⁷ On Roman attitudes toward the “other,” see Erich S. Gruen, *Rethinking the Other in Antiquity* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2011) 115–96.

by historians in collections of inscriptions?¹⁶⁸ The question is an important one, opening up a comparison of Paul's gospel with the Roman ideal of leadership in antiquity, an area of research insufficiently pursued by New Testament scholars. The answer is partially found in the inability of the Augustan social ideal to effect a holistic transformation that would withstand the test of time.¹⁶⁹ First, Augustus's revivification of traditional religion only served the interests of the state as opposed to the religious needs of individuals.¹⁷⁰ Second, Augustus's revitalization of the moral fabric of Rome did not sufficiently bridge the credibility gap between ancestral values and contemporary social ethics.¹⁷¹ Horace recognized the gravity of the moral dissolution in Roman society with which Augustus struggled,¹⁷² as well as its preoccupation with status and wealth.¹⁷³ The later excesses of Caligula and Nero would only underscore the problem. Third, the Augustan program to subdue the nations and assimilate them to Rome meant the subjugation of the cultural identity of the conquered.¹⁷⁴ Fourth, the extravagant resources of Augustus as a patron stymied the ability of other leading men to compete with the princeps. The monopolization of public space for the Augustan building programs brought to an end the self-advertisement of the old noble houses.¹⁷⁵ The traditional right of the noble to a military triumph was reserved exclusively for Augustus and members of his immediate family after 19 B.C.E. Thus the new governing and administrative class only knew the Augustan system and, crucially, indebtedness to and dependence on his patronage.¹⁷⁶ In sum, the Augustan ideal—based on republican *exempla* culminating in the princeps—failed to effect a lasting revitalization of Roman society, notwithstanding the stabilizing influence that Augustus's principate exercised on his less competent and corrupt heirs (note 5, above).¹⁷⁷ The static focus of the Augustan social construct, with its appeal to iconic precedent, would be its undoing.

¹⁶⁸ Ridley, *The Emperor's Retrospect*, 3–50.

¹⁶⁹ In saying this, I am not denying Augustus's profound social and cultural revolution (Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*).

¹⁷⁰ Shotter, *Augustus Caesar*, 71.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁷² Horace, *Carm.* 3.6.44–48: "Iniquitous time! What does it not impair? Our fathers' age, worse than our grandfathers', gave birth to us, an inferior breed, who will in due course produce still more degenerate offspring."

¹⁷³ Horace, *Sat.* 1.1 (see also *idem*, *Carm.* 2.18; 3.24).

¹⁷⁴ Andrew Lintott cites Statius (45–ca. 96 C.E.): "Neither your accent, your dress, nor your way of thinking is Carthaginian; it is Italian, Italian. The foster-children who can give glory to Libya are from the city and the squadrons of Romans" (*Silvae* 4.5.45–48) (*The Romans in the Age of Augustus* [Chichester, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010] 104). See also Pliny the Elder, *Nat.* 3.39. Horace emphasizes Augustus's subjugation of the nations on behalf of Rome (*Carm.* 1.2.50–53; 1.12.33–60; 1.35.25–40; 1.37; 3.3.37–48; 3.5; 3.14; 4.2.33–36; 4.5.25–36; 4.14; 4.15; *Saec.* 54–60; *Epod.* 9).

¹⁷⁵ Werner Eck, *The Age of Augustus* (2nd ed.: Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2007) 146–47.

¹⁷⁶ On Augustus and the nobility, see Donald C. Earl, *The Age of Augustus* (London: Eleck Books, 1968) 85–87; Jones, *Augustus*, 83–84.

¹⁷⁷ Earl, *Age of Augustus*, 190.

By contrast, Paul emphasized the newness of the Spirit and the coming eschatological glory over against the ethnocentrism of the past (Rom 7:6a; 8:3–5, 18–23), alerting believers to the extraordinary privilege of being adopted into God’s family (8:14–17, 22–23). Having been brought to the obedience of faith along with the other nations (Rom 1:5–6; 15:18; 16:26), Roman believers could begin to experience the social implications of submitting to the root of Jesse (15:11). Competition for precedence would give way to mutual honoring (Rom 12:10b) and association with the lowly (12:16b). Attitudes of ethnic superiority would be undermined by the acceptance of the “other” and by unity in the body of Christ (Rom 3:29–30; 10:12; 11:18–20; 12:14–21; 14:1–15:7). This new understanding of social relations would loosen the grip of Augustan values in the hearts of Roman believers.

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