

Joseph Geiger, *The First Hall of Fame: A Study of the Statues in the Forum Augustum. Mnemosyne Supplements, History and Archaeology of Classical Antiquity 295*, Brill: Leiden, 2008. 225 pp. ISBN 978 90 04 16869 5.

J. Geiger's (henceforth G.) book seeks to reconstruct and decipher Augustus' "Hall of Fame" — the statues of *summi viri* and of members of the Julian family that adorned the Augustan Forum.) G. asks how Augustus is likely to have conceived this idea, describing the cultural and historical background and suggesting possible models and influences; he analyses in detail the educational (or propagandistic, as some would have it) message of the "Hall of Fame" and Augustus' choice of heroes honoured in it, as well as its probable effects on the viewers.

The statues in the Augustan forum of 'men who had made the commonwealth great', with short inscriptions describing their accomplishments, created the first officially-sanctioned canon of Roman national heroes. In a certain sense, this was an official vision ('an authorised version', 71) of Roman history as a whole, visibly culminating in the first Princeps (whose *quadriga* dominated the piazza in front of the Temple of Mars) and clearly indicating that his rule started a new era, as the statues of future heroes were to be set in bronze in contrast to the original ones, in marble. As the author stresses, Augustus' attempt to shape, by the ruler's *fiat*, the historical memory of the Roman people and the lessons that were to be drawn from history, was a wholly unprecedented one; it was unthinkable under the Republic. This, as the author notes, 'was the first time in the history of Rome that a planned educational programme was initiated from above, and it was the first time that the widest sectors of the population were taken into consideration' (35) that is — all those who would frequent the Augustan Forum. The "Hall of Fame" in its setting is thus a testimony of the highest importance to the ideology of the Augustan principate; it is well worth examining closely, as the book indeed does.

After the introduction in Chapter 1, in which the main themes of the study are set out, Chapter 2, 'The Greek Background', suggests a possible influence of victor's statues at Olympia. G. stresses that Greek monuments celebrated various cultural achievements, while Roman ones honoured men of state (first and foremost, military heroes and conquerors). Chapter 3, 'Roman Background' examines the traditional aspects of Roman commemoration: family *imagines* of nobles, funerary orations and honorific statues. G. suggests, however, that 'recent developments in the literature of his own times' — the biographic trend that focused on personalities, represented by the writings of Varro (to whose *De imaginibus* particular importance is attached), Atticus and Nepos — 'had far greater effect on the mind of Augustus' (34).

Chapter 4, 'A Marble Gallery for a City of Marble', is dedicated to the Augustan Forum itself, with a detailed reconstruction of the "Hall of Fame" — both its Julian part and that of the *summi viri*. Varro's *imagines*, with portraits of 700 famous personalities (Greek poets and philosophers and Roman statesmen) arranged in groups of seven and accompanied by short texts, were 'a major source of Augustus' inspiration' for both the arrangement of the statues and the *elogia* attached to them (96). Various reasons are urged in support of the author's thesis that statues of women were included among those of the Julians: the paucity of significant male candidates from the Julian family; the Roman precedents for honouring women with public statues; the high importance of women in the imperial family; as well as some specific archaeological findings, both in the Forum and in other sites that may have followed its lead (112-115). The chapter discusses at length the project's educational message and Augustus' choice of heroes. The author's assumption that the decision would lie with the Princeps himself is surely correct. While conquests and triumphs 'were not the only criteria for inclusion in the list, they were certainly fundamental to it' (97). Both Marius and Sulla are known to have been represented in the Forum; 'clearly, the dissensions of their age were not an issue any more' (98). The gallery of heroes was thus "bipartisan" as far as the turbulent history of the late-Republic was concerned; so was the Augustan regime in general, with its propagandistic emphasis on overcoming the divisive legacy of the civil wars under the

unifying leadership of the Princeps. The inclusion of Pompey, for which there are ‘credible arguments’ (98), makes perfect sense in this context. On the other hand, Caesar’s assassins, whose memory was still condemned by the regime even after the “restoration of the Republic”, could not have found their way to the Forum of Augustus, and the same must surely apply to Antony (98). According to the author, ‘certain facts concerning the attitude of the Princeps to ... Cato and Cicero may at least leave the question of their inclusion open’ (98). In my view the inclusion of Cato, at least, is very unlikely. Cato the Younger could boast no military achievements, nor did he ‘make the commonwealth greater’ in any civilian field; he was (at the official height of his career), a mere *praetor* whose greatness lay entirely in his implacable, consistent and selfless opposition to Caesar and all he stood for, as well as to other *populares*. Cicero could conceivably have been celebrated for his contribution to Roman culture. Whether this would be considered by Augustus as sufficient to make one a *summus vir* must unfortunately remain a matter for pure speculation; as is the exact nature of the feelings that the memory of Cicero evoked in him. Plutarch relates that once when Augustus visited one of his grandsons, ‘the boy, since he had in his hands a book of Cicero’s, was terrified and sought to hide it in his gown; but Caesar saw it, and took the book and read a great part of it as he stood, and then gave it back to the youth, saying: “A learned man, my child, a learned man and a lover of his country.”’ (Cic. 49). The memory of Cicero, while certainly not suppressed, was apparently known to be a rather delicate matter for the Princeps even at a relatively late stage of his rule. A statue in the “gallery of heroes” seems out of place — though the incident with Augustus’ grandson told by Plutarch may well have happened before the Augustan Forum was inaugurated and hence, before the decision on whether to include Cicero had to be made.

Chapter 5, ‘The Heroes’, assembles the available evidence for the individual *summi viri* and their *elogia* under Augustus, while Chapter 6, ‘After Augustus; The Age of Bronze’, deals with post-Augustan additions (mainly, though not exclusively, those who received *ornamenta triumphalia*), until the forum of Trajan superseded that of the first Princeps. The “Gracchus” whose statue is attested is ‘universally identified as Ti. Sempronius Gracchus ... the father of the tribunes’ (123). ‘It would be intriguing to learn about Augustus’ interpretation of Roman history and to know whether the two tribunes, though hardly fitting the definition of enlarging the *imperium* of the Roman people, were included’ (124). I think it is highly unlikely that they were. The two “seditious” tribunes’ entire claim to fame was (under the bipartisan, or rather post-partisan, view of Republican history evidently adopted by Augustus) the civil strife and bloodshed associated with their names — hardly a valid entrance ticket to Augustus’ gallery of heroes. The inclusion of the tribunes’ father, twice consul and censor (123-124), who was not quite in the highest category of the Republic’s heroes (cf. 78 n. 86), may even have been meant to imply that it was he — who famously used his powers as tribune to save a personal *inimicus* from imprisonment — rather than his turbulent sons who was the “politically correct” sort of Gracchus. The themes of *concordia*, magnanimity to rivals, and putting the public interest above personal enmities, are certainly well-attested in the *elogia* (138; 146; 147-8). Finally, Chapter 7 deals with ‘The Impact of the Gallery of Heroes’ both on later writers (including Plutarch) and on various monuments (mostly in honour of the imperial family) throughout the empire.

This is a fine and meticulous study on a fascinating subject with wide and important implications. There is one substantive point on which I would like to take issue with the author — the question of the “restoration of the Republic”. G. suggests that the inauguration of the Augustan Forum in 2 BC was the first occasion on which ‘the general claim for the Restoration of the Republic [was] given wide currency’ (67). It is certainly true, as he notes, that the mere fact that ‘in retrospect [*Res Gestae* 34] Augustus assigned the transfer of his powers to Senate and People to the years 28 and 27 BCE’ does not necessarily prove that this is how ‘the events were seen ... by contemporaries or ... were presented to them at the time’ (66-67). Nevertheless, I believe that this claim was indeed first made during “the First Settlement” — if only because

Augustus could not wait for almost thirty years after the end of the civil wars before first making it. The restoration of the Republic had been repeatedly promised by all sides during the period of the civil wars, and on the eve of Actium Antony had accused Octavian of preventing it. According to Suetonius, Octavian was so stung by this charge that he considered 'giving back' the Republic '*statim*' after Actium (*Aug.* 28). We need not believe that Augustus ever seriously contemplated giving up power, as opposed to pretending that he has done so. But this master of propaganda, as he is so impressively presented in this book, would not have left such a promise openly unfulfilled and such a charge unanswered, for most of what he never openly admitted was his reign.

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John Richardson, *The Language of Empire: Rome and the Idea of Empire from the Third Century BC to the Second Century AD*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. IX + 220 pp. ISBN 978-0-81501-7.

As an undergraduate student, John Richardson (henceforth J.R.) was intrigued by the question: 'What did the Romans think they were doing when they created the Roman Empire?' (vii). A worthy but unattainable goal, if taken literally, and not only for the reasons frankly admitted and explained by J.R.; hence, as a second best, he decided to investigate the meanings of two key-words, *imperium* and *provincia*, from the late third and second centuries BC to the second century AD, assuming that the changes or development of the meanings reflect the notions and ideas the Romans, particularly those of the ruling class, had of their empire. The object of the investigation is 'to understand Roman imperialism and the Roman Empire'; more specifically, to grasp 'the notion of empire as a territorial entity, and whether (and when) the Romans saw the extension of their power in terms of acquiring and controlling landmasses' (6-8). In a paper J.R. published five years ago ('Indexing Roman Imperialism', *The Indexer* 24 [2005], 138-40), he argues that thanks to modern technology (electronic texts of the Latin and Greek sources of the period under discussion, the search program Musaios, the database program Idealist, and the Excel spreadsheet) he was able to assemble all the passages containing the two key-words and to create a 'specialized lexicon, with comments on the usage and context of every occasion on which the word concerned is used'. Altogether it contains 2,665 passages with the word *imperium* and 2,115 passages with the word *provincia*, from Plautus to Juvenal (139). It is then this lexicon that enabled the researcher to follow the semantic development of *imperium* and *provincia*, and the present book is the outcome of the research.

Following the first, introductory chapter ('Ideas of empire', 1-9), J.R. surveys in a chronological order the 'biographies' of the two key-words in four chapters. For the second chapter ('The beginnings: Hannibal to Sulla', 10-62) he has assembled ninety-eight instances of the use of *imperium* and twenty-six of *provincia*, a relatively limited sample (and it should be noted that the context of forty of the *imperium* instances and ten of the *provincia* instances, all from Plautus, is irrelevant to Roman foreign relations). Therefore, in this chapter, J.R. relies not only on his lexicon but also, and to a great extent, on an examination of Livy's accounts of the senatorial proceedings concerning the yearly allocation of *provinciae* to holders of *imperium*, maintaining that the general outline of the accounts goes back to official reports from the Senate. It is argued that all the available evidence indicates that throughout this period *provincia* was a task or sphere of command assigned by the senate to a Roman holder of *imperium*; in no case did it mean a defined territory annexed and administered by Rome. The meanings of *imperium* in this period included an order by a superior to an inferior and power or authority of individuals (masters, officials etc.) in private and public spheres, as well as of states, peoples and rulers. In the Roman constitutional context it mainly meant the power of magistrates, or pro-magistrates, and of