

Augustus says in the *Res Gestae* and gives a clear idea of what he meant by the simple and old-fashioned term *auctoritas*. We are dealing here with a ruler portrait, but of a novel type, whose language only the more cultivated would have grasped. But even the ordinary citizen would have inferred such concepts as beautiful, ageless, thoughtful, and remote.

The tokens of honor from 27 B.C. and the new portrait type illustrate how a new set of imagery arose to meet the needs of changed circumstances after Augustus had won sole power and "restored the Republic." A subtle web of associations replaced the mindless self-glorification of the earlier rivals for power. The princeps of course determined the themes and general tenor of this imagery, and in fact his political style was in some respects no less important than what he actually did. The "rescued" citizenry responded to him with all manner of honors, whether as individuals or through their various organizations and chosen representatives. These honors might be either simple traditional tokens, in accord with the changed political situation, or ones uniquely suited to the princeps, such as the title Augustus. The honorand himself was utterly restrained, but of course did not do anything to prevent this general outpouring of honors. He was able to identify fully with the imagery created by others to glorify him, including the new portrait, and let others propagate the image. The "restoration of the Republic" was not simply a sham intended to fool the Roman public, as is often maintained. Even before 27 B.C. it was clear that Augustus's new political style did not represent a departure from the sense of mission that had always motivated him. It was simply that as sole ruler he conceived of his role somewhat differently from before.

But we have gotten a little ahead of ourselves. The enthusiastic reception given the new symbols of victory, of the worship of Apollo, and of the restoration of the state were rooted in a general feeling of approval for the new regime. This was, however, not something that could be taken for granted after the defeat of Antony, at least not in Rome. It had to be earned.

Chapter 4

The Augustan Program of Cultural Renewal

The mood in Rome, even in the first years after Actium, remained pessimistic, especially among the upper class. They were not hopeful for the future, primarily because they saw the civil war and all the other calamities as a consequence of a complete moral collapse. Apparently they had internalized all the political sloganeering to this effect that they had been hearing for years. Even Livy, who was so enthusiastic about the new regime, takes a rather dim view of the present at the start of his history: ". . . up to our own time, when we can no longer tolerate either our own ills or the cure for them [. . . *donec ad haec tempora, quibus nec vitia nostra nec remedia pati possumus, perventum est*]."

But at the same time there were also hopes of a utopian sort. Sibyls, prophets, and politicians had all promised a new age of peace and prosperity. As often in times of transition, grave doubts and wild optimism existed side by side. The new princeps was confronted simultaneously with deep mistrust and high expectations. He had to demonstrate that he was concerned not simply with securing his own power, but with actually rebuilding the state and Roman society. He needed to create the impression that he was in a position to address the real causes of the ills that plagued Rome. Then he had to show proof.

At the same time as his "restoration of the Republic" and the creation of his new political style, Augustus also set in motion a program to "heal" Roman society. The principal themes were renewal of religion and custom, *virtus*, and the honor of the Roman people. Never before had a new ruler implemented such a far-reaching cultural program, so effectively embodied in visual imagery; and it has seldom happened since. A completely new pictorial vocabulary was created in the course of the next twenty years. This meant a change not only in political imagery in the narrow sense, but in the whole outward appearance of the city of Rome, in interior decoration and furniture, even in clothing. It is astonishing how every kind of visual communication came to reflect the new order, how every theme and slogan became interwoven. Again, however, there was no master plan outlining some sort of a propaganda campaign for the revival of Rome. As in the development of imagery after Actium, much happened as if of its own accord, once the princeps had shown the way and taken the first steps.

Augustus did not need to formulate a new program himself; it had already been done for him. For generations the ills of state and society had been proclaimed, described, and lamented as incurable evils. The surprising thing, for many people virtually a miracle, was that the new ruler actually took the lament seriously and decided to do something about it. He was utterly irrepensible as he set about addressing, in terms of concrete policies, all the problems that he had himself decried back in the 30s B.C., immediately creating the foundation on which he would build his programs. In the next sections we shall observe the remarkable confidence—one might almost say naïveté—with which he went about building on that framework, step by step, going through the whole catalog of ills left over from the Late Republic, until in 17 B.C. he could sail the rebuilt ship of state into a safe harbor called the Golden Age.

It started with the program of religious revival in 29 B.C. There followed efforts toward *publica magnificentia* and the restoration of Roman *virtus* in the Parthian campaign of 20 B.C. Two years later, in 18, with the Romans' confidence in their ability to rule an empire now bolstered, a legally imposed moral renewal was required. This completed the internal overhaul of Rome, and nothing now stood in the way of the new Golden Age. Nothing could be simpler!

At first, of course, each of these points in the Augustan program amounted to little more than one of the old slogans. They were statements of intention, which then had to be realized in action and in architecture and the visual arts. The princeps would need the help and cooperation of many. Since no written source gives us a picture of how the complex machinery of this cultural program actually worked, we must try to infer from the results themselves an idea of the collaboration and the mutual influence on one another of princeps, political cronies, creative poets, architects, and artistic ateliers.

PIETAS

Pietas was more than just one of the virtues of the princeps recorded on the honorary shield. It was to become one of the most important leitmotifs of the Augustan era. Ever since Cato the Elder, the dissolution of tradition and of the state, the self-destructiveness that threatened to destroy Rome, had all been ascribed to a neglect of the gods. "You will remain sullied with the guilt of your fathers, Roman, until you have rebuilt the temples and restored all the ruined sanctuaries with their dark images of the gods, befouled with smoke" (Horace *Carmen* 3.6).

In this regard the "savior" had to lead the way, and he acted swiftly and

decisively. As early as 29 B.C. a program of religious rebuilding was proclaimed. Octavian had himself commissioned by the Senate to bring the old priesthoods up to their full complement. Cults, many of which existed in name only, were newly constituted, with statutes, rituals, priestly garb, and chants all revived or, if need be, recreated in archaic style. From now on all religious texts would be followed to the letter. A year later came the dedication of the Temple of Apollo and, with it, the beginning of the great program to rebuild the ruined temples. "During my sixth consulate, by order of the Senate I restored 82 temples of the gods in Rome and did not omit a single one which was at that time in need of renewal" (*Res Gestae* 20).

The necessity for such measures had long been recognized. The identity crisis of the Late Republic is nowhere so clearly expressed as in its interest in traditional religion. The best example is the polymath and writer M. Terentius Varro (116–27 B.C.; praetor in 68 B.C.), who composed a sixteen-volume work, *Antiquitates rerum divinarum*, in which he gathered all that was then still known of the ancient cults and tried to reconstruct what had already been utterly forgotten. Augustus's program of restoration could not have been carried out so extensively without Varro's work. He undertook his research with patriotic zeal and great enthusiasm. In a fragment quoted by Augustine in the *City of God*, Varro says he

feared that the gods would be driven out, not by enemy attack but by the indifference of the Roman people. He would save them from destruction with his books and preserve them in the memory of good men. This he considered more worthy than Metellus's rescuing of the *sanctissima* from the Temple of Vesta or Aeneas's saving the Penates in the sack of Troy.

These were images of great emotional power, which had a profound impact on Augustus. Varro had dedicated his work to Julius Caesar, in the hope that it would spur him on to action. But no matter how vigorously the idea of religious revival may have been discussed in those years—one thinks of all the temples planned in the 30s B.C.—a systematic program was only possible in the changed circumstances after Actium.

In 32 B.C. the impulse for temple building still had to come from outside. In that year Atticus, the cultivated and wealthy friend of Cicero and father-in-law of Agrippa, had inspired Octavian to rebuild the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius, arguing that then the *dux Italiae* could liken himself to the heroic founder of Rome. Clearly Octavian liked this sort of display. For his declaration of war on Antony and Cleopatra he went to the Circus Flaminius, dressed in the traditional garb of the *fetialis*, to cast the ritual wooden lance into the symbolic enemy territory and utter a magic formula. This kind of performance was at first probably off-putting or was interpreted by the

more educated as an affected archaism. But soon such gestures multiplied: in 29 B.C., as a symbol of peace, the doors of the Temple of Janus were solemnly closed, an archaic ritual which no one in Rome had ever seen before; the old *augurium salutatis* was restored and consecrated to the healing of the state; and in the next year the actual restoration of “all” the old temples was ostentatiously begun. By now no one could doubt that Augustus was serious about this return to the old gods. He was evidently determined that, with himself as “founder and restorer of all sanctuaries” (Livy 4.20.7), “the temples would no longer show signs of age” (Ovid *Fasti* 2.61).

Aurea Tempia

Such an extensive program demanded careful planning and organization. This began with the apportioning of the various building activities, which would in the future be more strictly separated into sacred and secular. Even the residence of the ruler did not take precedence over the building of sanctuaries, which Augustus considered his most important mission. Among Agrippa’s many building projects, by contrast, there are no temples, apart from one special case, the Pantheon, intended for the ruler cult. Tiberius,

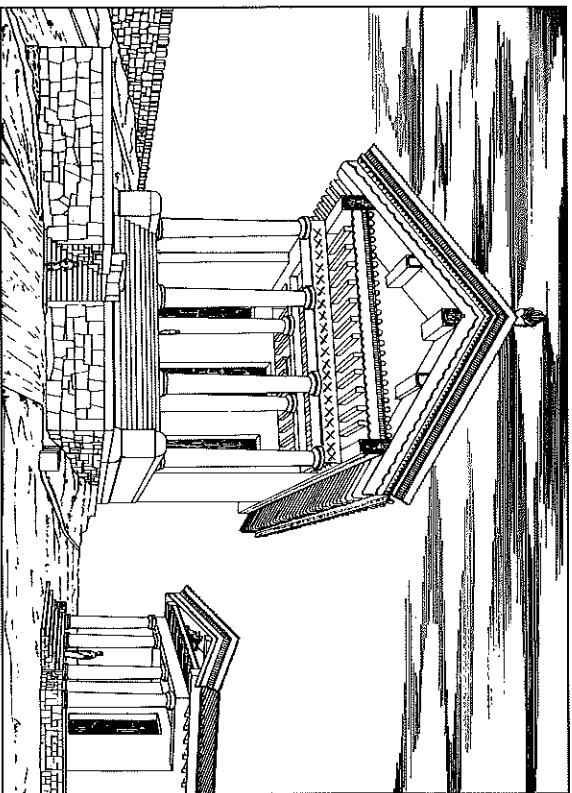


Fig. 85. Cosa, Capitolium, third to second century B.C. The old-fashioned temples, with their wooden roofs and terra-cotta sculpture were in striking contrast to the new marble temples.



Fig. 86. Sacrificial scene in front of the Temple of Mars Ultor. Relief from an altar of Claudian date similar to the Ara Pacis (cf. fig. 126).

however, as designated successor of Augustus, could rebuild in marble two hallowed old temples in the Forum, those of the Dioscuri and Concordia, and officially dedicate them in A.D. 6 and 10, respectively (cf. fig. 62).

“Nothing is too good for the gods” was now the slogan. The gleaming white temple facades, built of marble from the new quarries near Luni (Carrara), with their dazzling ornament, sometimes of real gold, became hallmarks of the new age. The best architects and artists of the East flocked to Rome, drawn by the prospect of large and lucrative commissions.

The chief among these will no doubt have received explicit directives concerning the purpose of these projects and the basic concept of the program for religious renewal. There would be no more temples built in the old style, out of tufa, with heavy wooden roofs and terra-cotta decoration (fig. 85). Instead, the idea was to imitate the finest and most impressive elements of Greek temples, even to surpass them, but also to combine them with certain traditional elements of the Italic/Roman temple: the high podium, deep pronaos, and the steeply sloping, exuberantly decorated pediment.

The temple facades depicted on the reliefs of the so-called Ara Pietatis (fig. 86) give us a better idea than the actual remains of the original effect of

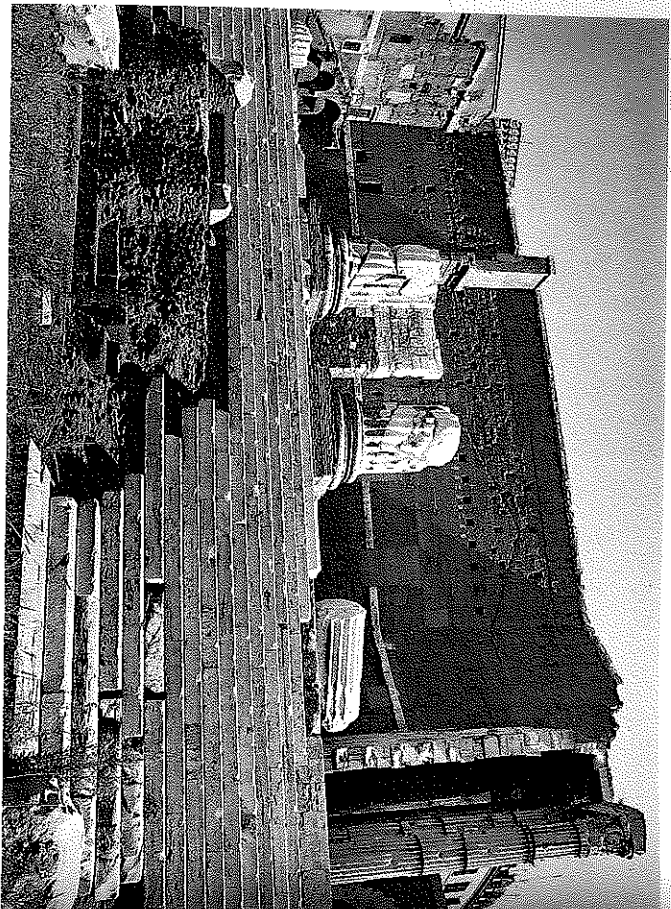


Fig. 87. Rome, Temple of Mars Ultor. Marble steps with built-in altar (only the core preserved).

these marble temples, which were designed specifically to set off the impressive facade. A steep, free-standing staircase, often with the altar incorporated in it, was placed in front of the podium (fig. 87). The altar thus seemed to form part of the facade, and the facade itself could serve as a backdrop for rituals at the altar. Behind rises a dense row of extremely tall columns, almost always in the Corinthian order. This type of capital (fig. 88) was no doubt chosen for its highly elaborate quality, and as a result, the other orders soon disappeared from religious architecture. Not only are the column capitals richly decorated, but also the bases, cornices, simas, and friezes. Then came the extravagant sculptural decoration, in the pediments, along the staircase, and for the acroteria. The tendency toward excessive ornamentation, which in the 30s had been the result of competition among patrons, was now simply a form of serving the gods, of living up to the motto “nothing is too good for the gods.”

The skillful mixture of such varied architectural elements presupposes that it had all been well thought out in advance. In particular, the magnificent facades suggest that the religious revival, as the pious princeps conceived it, was nothing like that envisioned by the antiquarian Varro. These

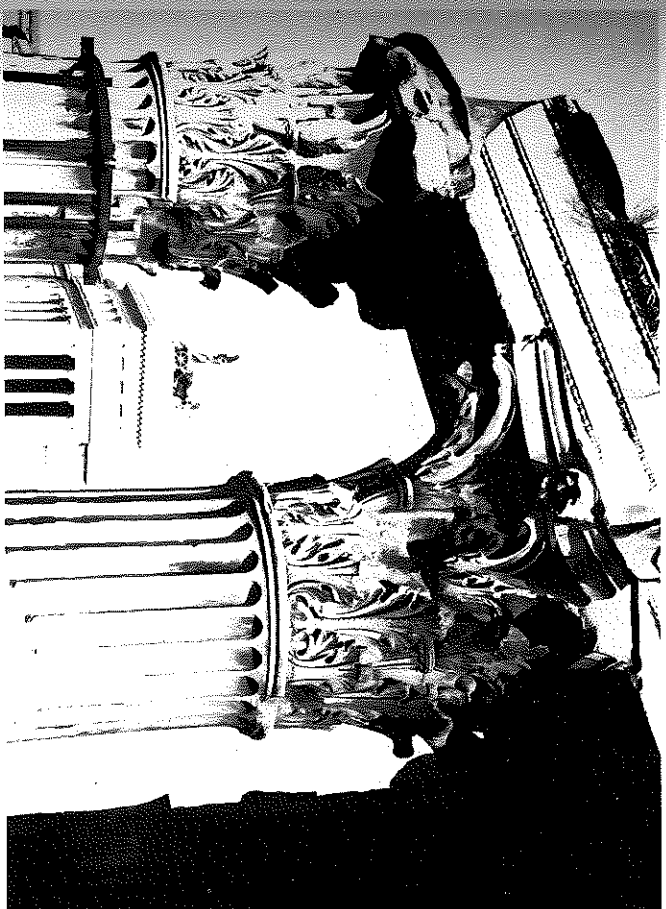


Fig. 88. Rome, Forum of Augustus. Capitals with entablature. Before 2 B.C.

marble temples were not simply a stately setting for newly revived rituals, but were in themselves an expression of the new mood of self-confidence. The worship of the gods and *publica magnificentia* could go hand in hand.

All this had to be made clear to the leading artists of the day, so that their artistic talents could be properly channeled. There had to be on-going discussion, a continuous give-and-take of ideas from all sides. Perhaps the few top artists and architects had access to those elite circles, the sort we hear about from the poets, which would meet at the house of a Maecenas and sometimes even had direct access to the princeps. Certainly there was a commission to oversee each of the major projects and issue guidelines. Since the artistic and the poetic expressions which grew out of certain key events, like the victory over the Parthians or the Secular Games, share to a great extent the same themes and slogans, we must assume that leading artists very quickly got wind of the new imagery formulated by the poets. In this whole process, however, the role of the visual artist was somewhat different from that of the poet. While the latter was essentially free to express his praise for the ruler and his deeds in any way he liked—or not at all, as, for example, in the case of Tibullus’s elegies—the architects, sculptors’ workshops, and those in charge of staging festivals and religious rituals were all

directly answerable to their patrons. It was their job to fulfill someone else's desires, not their own. In this sense, the concept of the artist making "art for art's sake" was unknown in antiquity.

In the case of the renewal and new construction of temples, the princeps himself set the guidelines by determining the location and the level of expenditure for raw materials and building costs. In principle all the old temples were to be restored, but in practice the expenditure allotted for the worship of each divinity varied considerably. The most lavish structures were not those in the oldest sanctuaries or for the principal gods of the old Republic, but rather for those most closely associated with Augustus: Apollo on the Palatine and Mars Ultor in the new Forum of Augustus. These new temples could even rival that of Jupiter Capitolinus, thanks to their surrounding porticoes and ancillary buildings, their rich decoration and votive offerings, and not least the rituals and state ceremonies for which they provided the setting. Despite the ostentatious dedications with which Augustus constantly honored Jupiter, the god was supposed to have complained that his worshippers were being diminished (Suetonius *Augustus* 91.2). And in fact under Augustus he was no longer the chief focal point of the state religion. He lost the Sybilline books to the Palatine Apollo (17 or 12 B.C.), and the ceremonies before and after a military campaign were transferred to Mars Ultor, whose temple became the center for the staging of activities relating to war and peace (p. 113). But the Temples of Venus, Apollo and Mars were not the only ones directly linked with the princeps. The cult of Jupiter on the Capitol, with its new temple, was also brought into close association with him.

In the campaign against the Cantabri, Augustus had been miraculously spared when a lightning bolt grazed him and struck the slave lighting the way for him. Was this not a sign that he was the chosen of Jupiter, on intimate terms with the thundering sky god? Immediately he built an exquisite small marble temple to Jupiter Tonans, right in the vicinity of the great Temple of Jupiter, and called attention to it by his frequent visits. On a series of coins issued after the "victory over the Parthians," the hexastyle temple appears, its cult statue a Zeus by the Late Classical sculptor Leochares (fig. 89*a*), significantly associated with Mars, the recaptured standards, and the honorary tokens of 27 B.C. (fig. 89*b*).

The rebuilding of temples for the old state gods, such as Castor and Pollux or Concordia, required no less an expenditure, but in these and other instances the location and sometimes even the plan were fixed by the dictates of *religio*, now so strictly observed. This meant severe restrictions in the overall plan, no matter how lavish the individual elements. Much further down the scale were the eighty-two temples and shrines of the old gods which had been restored in 28 B.C. They were for the most part only

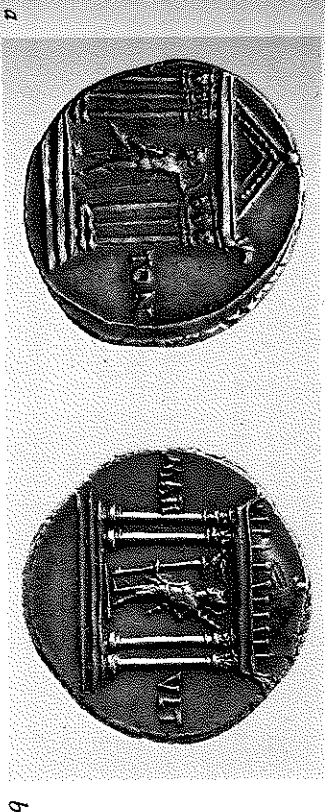


Fig. 89. Denarii, Spain, 19/18 B.C. *a*) Temple of Jupiter Tonans on the Capitol. A statue of Zeus by the Classical sculptor Leochares served as the cult image. *b*) Small round temple of Mars Ultor on the Capitol. Mars holds the *signa* returned by the Parthians. Cf. fig. 148*b*.

spruced up, and the tufa columns got a new coating of stucco, but the old-fashioned wooden roofs and terra-cotta roof tiles were retained. This of course made painfully obvious their status vis-à-vis the new marble buildings for the gods of the imperial house.

The princeps had no use for the Oriental and Egyptian gods which were at this time extremely popular in Rome, especially Isis. She was not included in the official calendar of the state religion, and periodically her cult was even banned. For Augustus, as he proceeded to expand and reshape the traditional Roman religion and associate the venerable cults with himself and his house, the Oriental cults presented a problem. These ecstatic cults promising salvation appealed to people as private individuals, not as Roman citizens, and were thus incompatible with the principles of the Roman state religion. The new regime, just as had the Senate much earlier, saw in these cults a danger of alienation, the dissolution of society, and the creation of secret sects. An exception was made only for those foreign cults that had long been rooted in Rome and thanks to their services to the state had been accepted into the state religion. But here again the hierarchy was clear.

The Temple of Magna Mater (Cybele) on the Palatine, which had been erected in 205 B.C. in response to a command from the Sybilline Books, burned down in A.D. 3. Even though the poets emphasized Magna Mater's position as a state divinity, her link with the ancient Trojans, and her role as protectress of cities and city walls, Augustus did not rebuild the temple, which lay near his house, in marble, but only in tufa (peperino) and relegated the exotic cult, with its ecstatic dances and long-haired priests (*galli*), to freedmen. Apparently Augustus had not actually repaired all the old temples in 28 B.C., as he claims in the *Res Gestae*. Some projects were more pressing than others. Among the less pressing was, significantly, the popular

Temple of the Dionysiac Triad (Liber [Bacchus], Libera, and Ceres) on the Aventine, which was suddenly destroyed by fire in the year after the Battle of Actium. It was not rededicated until A.D. 17, under the Emperor Tiberius (Dio 50.10; Tacitus *Annals* 2.49).

The varying levels of expenditure in the building of so many temples created in the popular mind a vivid impression of the different status of each divinity. The dominant ones were clearly those to which Augustus felt closest.

The grandeur of each temple corresponded with that of the divinity (Ovid *Fasts* 5.553). But the multiplicity of small Archaic cults which now sprang up with renewed attention between the great sanctuaries were clear testimony that this religious revival was closely bound to the traditions of the old Republic. The new *pietas* was the equivalent of the primitive religiosity of early times, but of course on a much grander scale.

“Simplicitas rudis ante fuit nunc aurea Roma est
et domiti magnas possidet orbis opes”

[There was a rude simplicity before, now Rome has turned to gold,
For she possesses the great treasures of a conquered world.]

Ovid *Ars Amatoria* 3.113f.

A New Kind of Imagery

The vast program of temple building, carried out over a period of forty years, created for the leading artists and architects problems of organization and execution on a scale which the Greco-Roman world had only rarely witnessed before, as for example in the great building program of the kings of Pergamum. The wealth of architectural decoration required by those who handed out the commissions, the sometimes great expanses that had to be decorated within a limited space of time, demanded not only a coherent overall plan, but the creation of carefully thought-out decorative schemes. How, for example, could the long porticoes of the sanctuaries of Apollo and Mars be filled with the kind of meaningful and didactic ornamentation that the princes required, at least for the buildings he personally commissioned? How would the many temple facades be decorated, so as to bring out equally their ancient traditions and their relevance to the present? How should the temple cella and interior rooms and the cult statue be thematically linked with the rest of the decorative program? The occasion for the new temple, the relation of other divinities to the one worshipped there, and the association of all of them to the restored Republic and of course the princeps himself—all this had to be taken into consideration.

Fig. 90. Sestercius, Rome, A.D. 36. Temple of Concordia in the Forum Romanum. The new temples were adorned with many programmatically arranged sculptures.



The Temple of Concordia, as it appears on a coin (fig. 90), gives a good idea of the web of imagery in the facade of a typical Augustan temple. Above the central axis of the pediment stood three closely overlapping figures, probably Concordia with two divinities linked with her in meaning and in cult, such as Pax and Salus or Securitas and Fortuna. The side of the three divinities embracing was of course a meaningful symbol. The side acroteria, figures carrying armor and trophies, made the connection with the patron and his triumph, which was the occasion for the new temple. In addition there would have been the pedimental sculpture, not shown on the coin but no doubt containing a carefully chosen grouping of divinities, as illustrated by the pediment of the Temple of Mars Ultor (cf. fig. 150). Even on the staircases there were two suggestive figures, Hercules and Mercury. The former stood for the security, the latter for the prosperity that the new regime, symbolized by Concordia, had brought.

But in this whole process the artists had very little freedom of choice. As we shall see, relatively few mythological figures and stories fitted into the new official mythology of the state. In addition, the princeps's modesty and the simplified tokens of honor set further limits. Furthermore, an artistic vocabulary was imposed on them that would be quiet and static, at the beginning at least restricted to Archaic and Classical styles (cf. p. 239). Many areas of traditional ruler iconography were apparently off-limits, because they were considered to be in the “Asiatic” style. Augustan art has virtually no battle scenes or glorification of the ruler in the form of animated, heavily populated narrative scenes. Compared with the extraordinary possibilities open, for example, to the designer of the Pergamum Altar, Augustan artists had extremely narrow scope within which they could create new imagery. What they *could* do was to combine the various symbols or deliberately



Fig. 91. So-called Ara Grimani. Augustan decorative base with Dionysiac motifs. The extensive and carefully worked ornament is characteristic.

exaggerate them, invent noble personifications and outfit them with appropriate attributes, and design sacred memorials and divine statuary in archaic or classicistic style. The only aspect of a public building in the design of which they had a free hand was the decorative ornament. The richness of the ornament they evolved had never been seen before and was not constrained by any traditional canon. This was true not only for the ornamental borders of architectural members (cf. fig. 203), but for every part of the figural decoration. For example, the bases of statues and votive dedications overflow with virtual cascades of decorative bands (fig. 91).

In these new sanctuaries the viewer was confronted with something he had never experienced. Never before had he encountered such an extensive, fully integrated set of images. Through didactic arrangements and constant repetition and combination of the limited number of new symbols, along with the dramatic highlighting of facades, statues, and paintings, even the uneducated viewer was indoctrinated in the new visual program. The key

messages were quite simple, and they were reiterated on every possible occasion, from festivals of the gods to the theater, in both words and pictures. Even the rich decorative program of the Forum of Augustus was built around very few images (fig. 92; cf. fig. 149).

Ovid's description provides a synopsis and selection of images which conveys some idea of the effect they would have had on the average visitor.

Mighty is Mars and mighty his temple. He could not reside in the city of his son Romulus in any other way. The building itself would have been a worthy monument to the victory of the gods over the Giants. Mars [Gradius] may unleash savage war from here, when an evil-doer in the East incites us or one in the West tries to bend us to his yoke [a reference to the state ceremonies that took place in the Forum at the *profectio* of a general]. Mars strong in armor looks upon the temple pediment and rejoices that unvanquished gods occupy the places of honor [cf. fig. 150]. At the entranceways he sees arms of all sorts from all the lands conquered by his soldier [Augustus]. On one side he sees Aeneas with his precious burden and about him the many ancestors of the Julian house; on the other, Romulus, son of Ilia, with the arms of the enemy chief he conquered with his own hand and statues of distinguished Romans with the names of their great deeds. He gazes upon the temple and reads the name Augustus. Then the monument seems to him even greater. (*Fasti* 5.533 ff.)

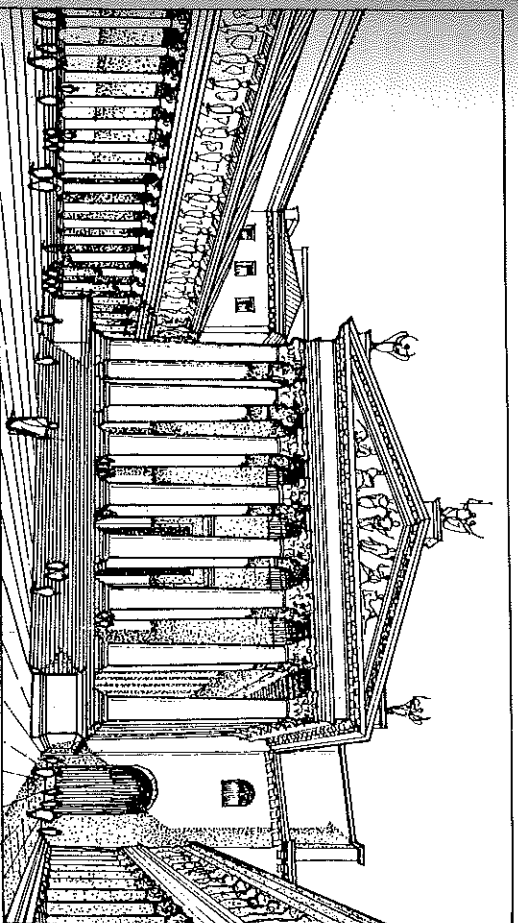


Fig. 92. Rome, Forum of Augustus. Reconstruction drawing (cf. fig. 166).

The text shows how intimately architecture and imagery were linked to corresponding ceremonies, while particular images were linked to widespread expectations and slogans. No matter how multifaceted and complex the individual symbols, or how elitist the archaizing or classicizing style of the images, the message was comprehensible to all. That the monumental devotion of the ruler was in the end seen as a sign of his own greatness is not just Ovid's panegyric of the princeps.

Festival and Ritual

This account of the Temple of Mars Ultor is equally applicable to all Augustan temples. These were no mute stones, but monuments that came alive in the festivals connected with them, especially on the *dies natales*. Increasingly, these festivals to celebrate an *ex-voto* or the foundation of a sanctuary were made to fall on commemorative days for the princeps or to coincide with important events in the life of his family. New sanctuaries were dedicated only on festival days of the imperial house and gradually many of the old foundation days were moved onto these as well. On the basis of marble calendar inscriptions found in various Italian cities and from the *Fasti* of Ovid we can ascertain a fairly full picture of the schedule of festivals in a typical year during the early Empire, both in Rome and in the western provinces. It was filled with memorial days and festivals of supplication and thanksgiving for the imperial house. The days of Augustus's personal celebrations were particularly crowded with feasts of the gods; on his birthday, for example, there were no fewer than seven. Several feast days clustered around a major one and were turned into holidays by the addition of theatrical and circus games. For the contemporary Roman each year unfolded in a continuously repeating pattern of religious/dynastic festivals filled with spectacle. On every feast day rituals took place, in which priests and sacrificial animals moved in procession to the appropriate temple.

Artistic depictions of such events had always emphasized the prescribed number, type, and appearance of the sacrificial animals (cf. fig. 10*a*). On one of the reliefs of the so-called Ara Pietatis, the splendid bull is being readied for sacrifice (cf. fig. 86). And on one of the silver bowls from Boscoreale we see an attendant (*popa*) delivering a mighty coup-de-grace (fig. 93). The new iconography conveys the dramatic experience of the ritual slaughter, which was able to unleash powerful emotional forces every time. Artists heightened the effect by representing the moment of the final blow and by pushing this scene into the foreground of an image. The imagined temple facade set immediately adjacent to the ritual scene thus takes on a deeper symbolic meaning and is spotlighted by the accomplishment of the

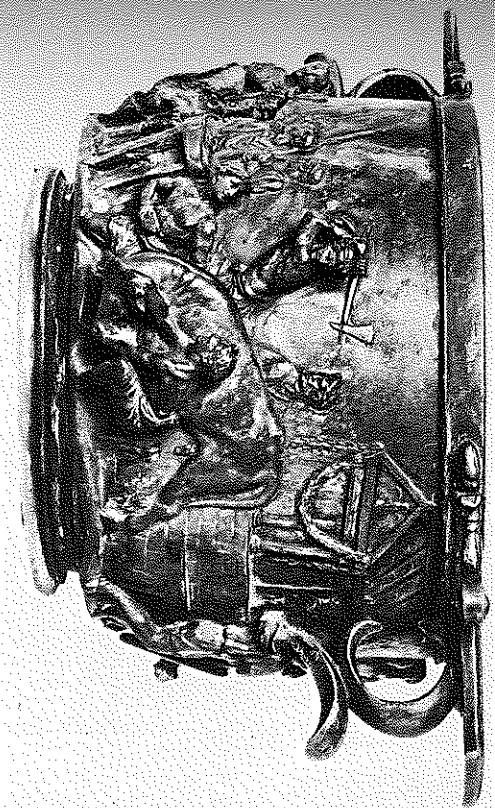


Fig. 93. Silver cup (scyphus). Late Augustan. Sacrificial scene at the departure of Tiberius (cf. fig. 181). From Boscoreale, near Pompeii.

sacrifice. The close association of ritual with its architectural setting created the indispensable prerequisite for the *aurae templa* to achieve their full effect.

This was also true of the interior rooms of temples, which were lavishly decorated in the most expensive materials (fig. 94). Because of the valuable dedications displayed here, these rooms were usually closed off. But on *dies natales* and on days of especially important sacrifices (*supplicationes*) the temple doors were wide open, sometimes even in every sanctuary in the city. The cult statue could then be glimpsed through the open doors (cf. fig. 90). Upon entering, the visitor was immediately surrounded by a plethora of images, not only the cult statue, but the precious votives and souvenirs filled with historical associations. The Temple of Concord, for example, housed a whole collection of sculpture which Tiberius had put together. The recovered battle standards once lost by Crassus to the Parthians were set up in the Temple of Mars, next to colossal statues of the gods in the apse. Because the temples were open so rarely, curiosity to see what was inside was naturally all the more intense.

In an earlier age, before the superabundance of new imagery, religious rituals were real experiences. Special occasions, such as the celebrations in connection with the initiation of the *saculum aureum* in 17 B. C., when the princeps himself uttered magic formulas and carried out arcane rituals, were remembered and retold for years. Otherwise the mint masters would not have put such scenes on the coins they issued (cf. fig. 134). Since ritual and sacrifice played such a central role in everyday life, it is not surprising

that this type of imagery gradually came to dominate the new pictorial vocabulary. There is hardly a single monument or building that does not include in its decorative scheme the skulls of sacrificial animals, offering bowls, priestly tokens, or garlands wound with fillets, even when the structure itself is purely secular. These images recalling sacrifice, which had in

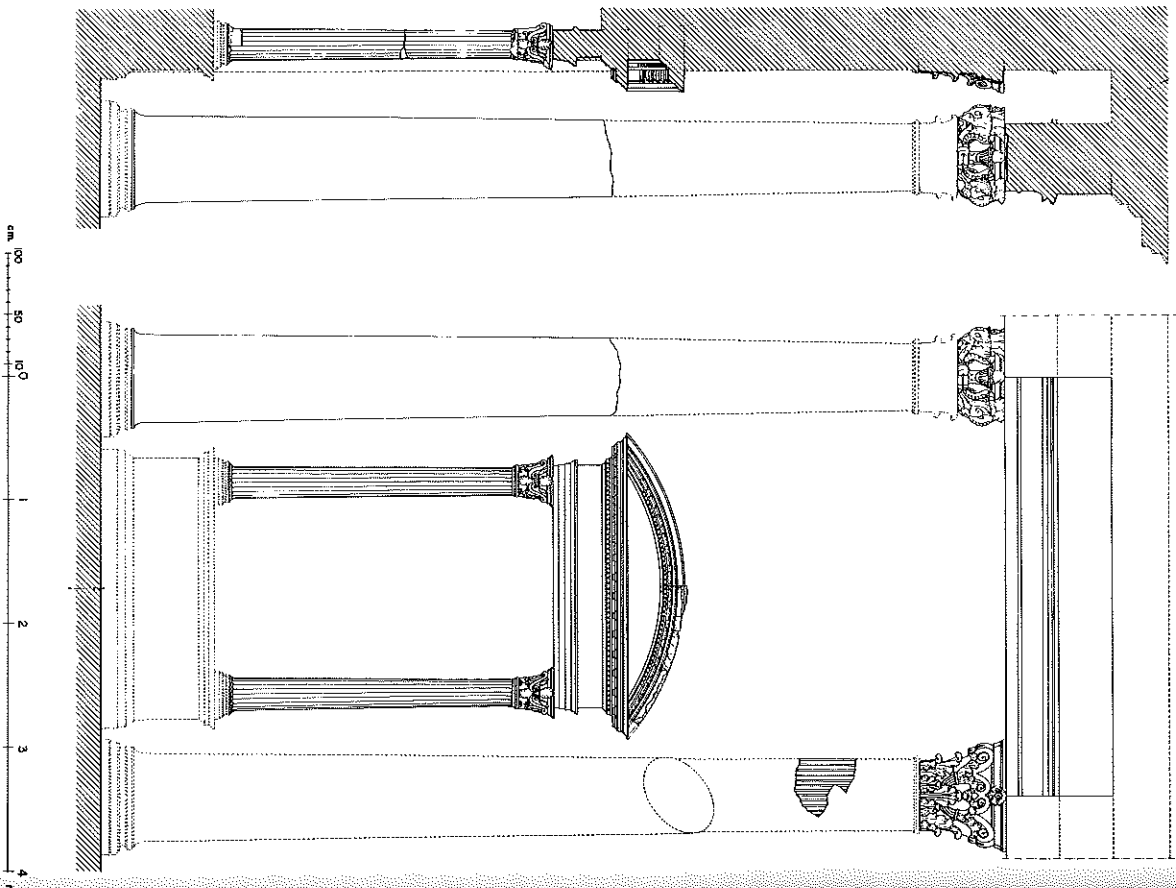


Fig. 94. Rome, Apollo Temple of C. Sosius. Reconstruction of the lavish interior architecture.



Fig. 95. Metope with bucranium, from the Porticus Gai et Luci Caesaris (?) in the Forum Romanum. Symbols of *pietas* in suggestive arrangements were now ubiquitous.

the past served merely as conventional ornament, now became meaningful symbols. Artists were at pains to intensify their effect even further by expressing them in new ways.

This is particularly evident with bucrania. Previously the whole animal's head was usually depicted, while now artists show only the much more suggestive pale bones of the ox skull. So, for example, in the antechamber of the Basilica Iulia (perhaps known as the Porticus Gaii et Luci Caesaris) the bucrania are remarkable for their subtly layered arrangements of bones, clever ornamentation, and the dark hollows of the eye sockets. An oversized fillet emphasizes the religious character (fig. 95).

On the interior of the Ara Pacis, a sacred precinct is suggested by a construction of planks and scaffold (fig. 96). But the illusion of reality is then transformed into fantasy, to the point where the symbolic bucrania seem to hover in midair, although they carry heavy garlands. These bucrania are also associated with the idea of sacrifice through the addition of fillets and emblematic libation bowls. As elsewhere, the garlands here take on their own particular significance. The many different fruits express thanks to the god and at the same time convey the notion of blessings and abundance.

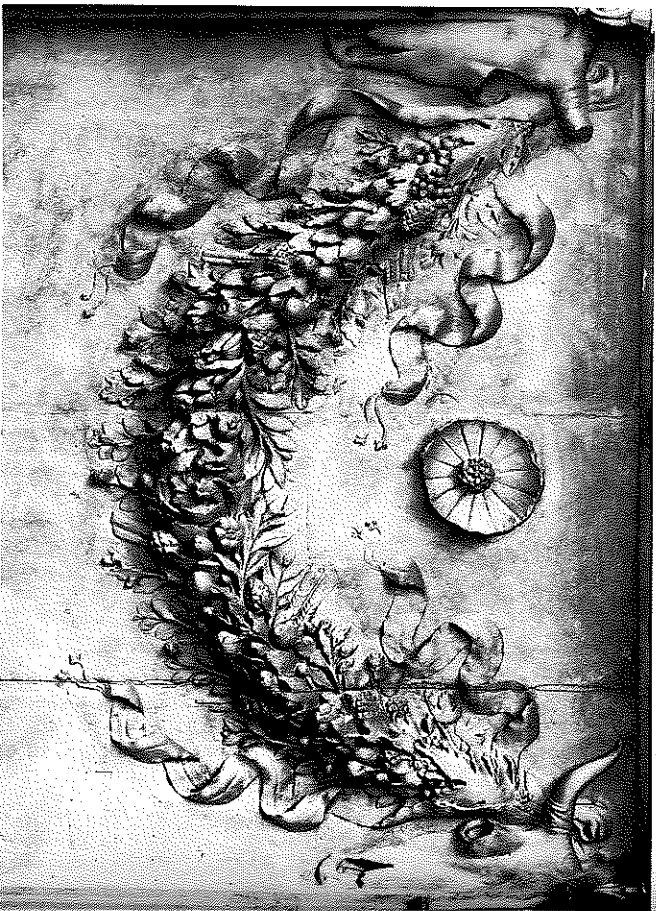


Fig. 96. Rome, Ara Pacis Augustae, 13–9 B.C. Interior side of the marble altar enclosure, with garlands, bucrania, fillers, and phialae (cf. fig. 126).

The particular trees and plants sacred to each of the gods were continually incorporated into this imagery, whether playfully or reverentially. An example are the branches of white poplar on a base of superb quality (possibly for a statue) from a small sanctuary of Hercules. Here too the bucranium appears significantly in the middle of the picture, like a divine epiphany (fig. 97).

The effectiveness of such symbols of piety derived from their infinite repetition and from the close association of image and ritual experience. What seems to us now merely ornamental or decorative was then something new and exciting in the emotional mood of the “new age.”

The Chief Priests

The priesthoods founded or reorganized by Augustus starting in 29 B.C. naturally played an important part in all festivals and sacrifices to the gods. Priests wore traditional garb, and each could be recognized by his special attribute: the leather cap with metal point (*apex*) and long-haired woolen cloak for the *flamines* (fig. 98), or the cloak with bared shoulder for the *XV viri sacris facinunds*, who were principally responsible for the cult of Apollo



Fig. 97. Marble statue base from a small sanctuary of Hercules on the Tiber, Augustan. Rome, Museun delle Terme. Foliage and animals' skulls evoke a sacrificial ritual.

(fig. 99). It seems, however, to judge from the few extant representations, that the dress of important priests was subject to only modest archaism in the religious revival, likewise the detailed regulations governing their behavior. These were sufficient to reflect the high antiquity of the priesthoods, without becoming too burdensome for the priest himself (cf. Tacitus *Annals* 4.16). Still, the old ritual dances had to be performed, the ancient songs, now largely incomprehensible, still sung.

We are most fully informed about the rites of the Arval Brethren. This priesthood, revived by Augustus and once restricted to patrician families, was originally concerned with the worship of the simple fertility goddess called *Dea Dia*. Now the Brethren reenacted primitive ceremonies a few times a year, by distributing fruit and grain at a public feast, uttering solemn formulas, and assembling in a sacred grove of the goddess far outside the city. But their primary activity consisted of prayers and sacrifices on behalf of the imperial family. At all gatherings a specific protocol was observed, which governed with strictest precision even the most routine aspects of the ritual. According to ancient belief, this insured the religious validity of the proceedings, while at the same time it showed that prayers on behalf of the emperor were bound up with the most ancient traditions. On certain



Fig. 98. Rome, Ara Pacis Augustae. Chief priesthood of *flamines*. Detail from the processional frieze on the south side (cf. fig. 100).

occasions the Arval Brethren apparently wore simple wreaths of grain, a reference to the fertility of the fields, for which these aristocrats prayed. But when Augustus himself was represented wearing this wreath, his contemporaries will have been reminded rather of his efforts to insure the grain supply in Rome. Thus it made sense that the prayers of the Arval Brethren were primarily for his benefit.

Membership in a given priesthood was allotted to a specific social class, in accordance with the ranking of each *collegium*. The highest priesthoods and fraternities were naturally reserved for the upper class, particularly for patricians. (The emperor could, however, elevate men of his choice to patrician status.) Since the total membership of the highest priesthoods was far smaller than the number of seats in the Senate, holding one or more priesthoods was a sign of extremely high status. Some felt driven to suicide when they were removed from one of these covered priesthoods. The frequent public appearances of the priests and the special privileges attached to their office, such as places of honor in the theater, were constant reminders to the general public of their status in society.

We must bear all this in mind when studying the Ara Pacis Augustae, which was erected by the Senate from 13 to 9 B.C., in honor of Augustus's

safe return from campaigns in Gaul and Spain. A solemn procession is depicted on two long relief panels on the exterior of the marble structure enclosing the altar (fig. 100a, b). Two-thirds of these scenes are occupied by members of the four principal colleges of priests (*pontifex, augures, XV viri sacris faciendis, VII viri epulonium*) and the four chief priests (*flamines*). At first glance these figures seem scarcely distinguished from the dense rows of others. But while most of the participants in the sacrificial procession are merely wreathed, the priests, like the two *togati* on the north side, have their togas pulled up over their heads, signifying that they will actually perform the sacrifice. On careful examination we notice that most of the lictors stand beside Augustus and that the procession is gathering about him, his companions forming a kind of circle around him. Is he starting the sacrifice?

It was typical of the innovations brought about by Augustan state religion that the annual sacrifice to the Pax Augusta at the Ara Pacis was entrusted not to a single college, but to officials of all the major priesthoods, including the Vestal Virgins (*Res Gestae* 12). Previously the individual priesthoods had performed only those functions specifically assigned to them, sometimes in so doing also enjoying considerable political influence (especially through the interpretation of omens and consultation of the Sibylline Books in critical situations). Under Augustus, however, the various colleges acted more often in conjunction, creating an impressive outward appearance but obscuring the fact that their common responsibilities now consisted only in prayers and otherwise allowed them hardly any influence. Bad omens were eliminated, the purified Sibylline Books remained well hidden beneath the cult statue of Palatine Apollo, and before military campaigns the princeps himself took the (always positive) auspices (fig. 101). In his hand was the augur's staff (*lituus*), which he may also have carried on the Ara Pacis, simply as a sign of priestly office, marking him as a kind of mediator between men and gods (cf. fig. 182).

The veiled heads of the officiating priests on the Ara Pacis show that the ceremonies have already begun. A woman in the foreground gives the command for silence. The dense rows of figures all similarly veiled in their togas give the impression of unity and uniformity. The sculptural style and composition, inspired by Classical reliefs, elevates the scene beyond the historical occasion into a timeless sphere. Not all the figures depicted were actually in Rome on the day of the dedication. The Senate, which commissioned the monument, was concerned not that every figure be recognizable, but with the correct grouping of each of the priesthoods. Significantly, only the most important men have portrait features, while the rest have idealized faces that conceal their individual identity. The figure embodies the office, not the man who happened to hold it at the time. Self-glorification and rivalry between office holders have given way to the common cause. In the service of



Fig. 99. Augustan tripod-base. a) *Quindecemvir sacris faciendis* at a sacrifice, framed by young laurel trees. In the narrow interstices, plantlike can- delabra associated with the motif of drinking birds. b) Apolline tripod with raven and vines. c) Wreath of grain with eagle. On the base, sphinxes.

the newly revived *pietas* all problems of status and power disappear. The historical moment becomes emblematic of an eternal order.

On both sides of the altar enclosure the procession of priests is followed by the family of the princeps, also wreathed and carrying laurel branches. The safety of the state did indeed depend on them: "that the house which insures peace may last forever," was the priests' prayer (Ovid *Fasti* 1.719). The women wear simple garments, sometimes draped in the manner of Classical statues. In their midst appears Drusus, distinguished by his general's garb, then on campaign in the North. And of course children occupy the foreground, the promise of the future, clinging to their parents. The seemingly casual arrangement of figures actually conceals a significant ordering.



Children and parents belonging to the imperial family, as far as we can identify them, are disposed according to their proximity to the throne (cf. figs. 169, 170).

The sacrificial procession on the Ara Pacis is a carefully planned, idealized reflection of the renewed Republic, designed not by order of Augustus himself, it is important to remember, but of the Senate, to honor itself and the state. In essence we are seeing here the newly constituted leading aristocracy of Rome as it wished to be represented and as it wished, at least outwardly, to be closely identified with the new order. To what extent this spectacle suppresses certain things or passes over others in silence, to what extent the artificialities of the style betray a deeper deception; in short, how much of this ideal vision consists of wishful thinking—all this is another matter. But even if the image presented here seems to us to go far beyond political realities, to Augustus's contemporaries it would not have seemed so far removed from reality. For they had experienced many such ritual processions and over the years had come to realize that power and public office, the Senate, or even military conquest were not what mattered most, but the worship of the gods and the well-being of the imperial house.

The same notion lies behind a relief frieze with still-life that must come from a public building at or near the Porticus Octaviae (fig. 102a, b). In place of the members of the highest priesthoods, as on the Ara Pacis, here only their attributes and implements refer to them symbolically: the *lituus* (curved staff) of the augurs, the *apex* (headgear) of the *flamines*, the *acerra* (incense box) and libation jug with laurel branches of the *XV viri sacris faciendis*, the *simpulvium* (ladle) of the *pontifices*, the *patena* (offering

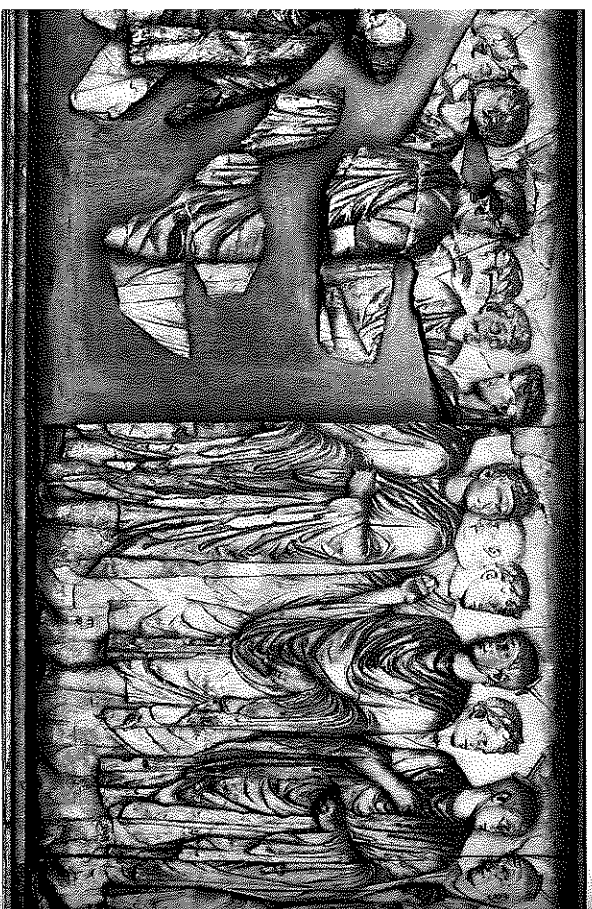


Fig. 101. Alcar of the Lares. In the center, Augustus as *augur* with the *lituus*; at left, Gaius or Lucius Caesar; at right, a female member of the imperial family, probably Julia as Venus. She wears a *torques*, like the princes on the Ara Pacis (cf. figs. 169, 170).



Fig. 100. Rome, Ara Pacis Augustae, south side. a) Procession of priests; left, the group around Augustus; right, the *flamines*. b) As figure 102a: *flamines*. Agrippa with veiled head; behind him, members of the imperial house.



bowls) of the *VII viri epulonium*. Along with these are implements belonging to the ritual, hand towel and *aspergillum* (sprinkler), sacrificial instruments for the attendants (axe, dagger, and knife), and—again especially emphasized—bucrania and candelabra. Not only is this systematic arrangement of sacred objects new, but they are mixed in with parts of ships: prow and stern, rudder and anchor. These surely refer to the victory at Actium, and among them are some that are clearly marked as belonging to the victors by the addition of busts of gods, the Roman she-wolf, and perhaps even portraits. The meaning of this artful arrangement is apparent: the superiority of the victors at Actium resulted from their respect for the gods. Sacred fillets flutter over all the arms and cult instruments, indicating that *pietas* and *virtus* are the twin pillars of the renewed Republic.

This frieze is a good demonstration of how skilled composition and high quality of execution could engage the viewer and alleviate the monotony of the message. Repetition and an accessible aesthetic norm were essential to the spread and acceptance of the new imagery and constituted a not inconsiderable part of their power.



Priesthoods and Social Status

The princeps offered himself as the most impressive paradigm of piety. He was a member of the four most important colleges of priests and was *de facto* chief priest long before he was able officially to assume the office of *pontifex maximus*. Coins celebrate this role (fig. 103a), and Augustus himself described it thus: "I was *pontifex maximus*, *augur*, belonged to the



Fig. 102. a) Part of a frieze (?), probably from the Porticus Octaviae. Sacred objects between bucrania with fillers. b) Detail. Anchor, ship's bow with *rostra*, rudder. The mixture of sacrificial implements and arms alludes to the association of *religio* with victory.

colleges of the *XV viri sacris faciundis* and the *VII viri epulonum*, was an Arval Brother, *sodalis Titius*, and *fetialis*" (*Res Gestae* 67). Certainly from the time of the Secular Games in 17 B.C., and probably much earlier, in the 20s, the princeps must have made it known that henceforth he preferred that statues put up in his honor show him togate at sacrifice or prayer. His piety was put on display for every Roman to see, making it clear that he considered the performance of his religious duties his greatest responsibility and highest honor. It is astonishing how many portraits of Augustus made during his lifetime, both on coins (fig. 103b, c) and as honorific statues, show him veiled in a toga (fig. 104). Many such statues were even exhibited in Greece and Asia Minor, where this type of ruler portrait was surely quite alien. The pious princeps got what he wanted or, looking at it from the position of the dedicators, many eagerly seized the opportunity to honor him in this modest form. This new type of honorary statue was a brilliant choice. It obviated entirely the delicate question of Augustus's political power and the problem of its visual expression. It was the most striking



Fig. 103. a) Denarius of C. Antistius Vetus, Rome, 16 B.C. The sacred utensils designate the four major priesthoods to which Augustus belonged. b-c) Denarius of C. Marsius, Rome, 13 B.C. Portrait of Augustus with *lituus*. Augustus with veiled head and *simpulium*.

contrast possible to the emphatic nude statues of the period before the “restoration of the Republic” and symbolized most explicitly the princeps’s view of himself.

The humble image of Augustus as the *togatus* making a sacrifice, however, does nothing to conceal the notion that he enjoyed divine powers. This is evident in the statuettes of his Genius, which were worshipped all over in public and private shrines (cf. fig. 110). The Genius of Augustus was also



Fig. 104. Statue of Augustus in *toga* with veiled head. The voluminous style of the imperial *toga* set the fashion

represented as a *togatus capite velato*. In earlier times the Genius of the *pater familias* had been thus worshipped in family shrines, so it was natural that this paternalistic ruler should be honored in the same form. In 2 B.C. the Senate and people officially conferred on Augustus, now over sixty, the title *pater patriae*, at the dedication of the Forum of Augustus. His example set a precedent: princes, aristocrats, worthies in the provincial cities of Italy, freedmen, even outstanding slaves all adopted the image in the pose of sacrificer as a standard type of honorary statue. In the future, the emperor and his family were always the model that inspired imitation.

The new style of Augustan rule was beginning to prevail. The pyramid that was Roman society had a clear and undisputed pinnacle. The emperor and his family set the standard in every aspect of life, from moral values to hairstyles. And this was true not only for the upper classes, but for the whole of society.

The most ambitious from all classes began actively to pursue religious offices. In the new or revived cult activities there were ample opportunities for self-promotion and, at the same time, for showing solidarity with the new state. The princeps need only distribute and regulate the various religious responsibilities. To the equites, for example, he assigned the ancient but now meaningless cult of the Lupercales.

In this ritual, which was originally meant to insure the protection and fertility of the flocks, a dog was slaughtered and priests, dressed only in a short skirt, ran a course around the Palatine, incidentally beating women with a whip made of goatskin. It is easy to see how this archaic fertility ritual might have seemed ridiculous in a cosmopolitan environment, and, understandably, Augustus forbade adolescents from being present at this event. Here too a priesthood brought with it social recognition. Only recently have honorific statues of *luperci* from the early Imperial period been identified, combining a classical seminuity, the short skirt, and goatskin whip into a public image that conforms to classicizing aesthetic standards (fig. 105).

Leading freedmen (*liberti*) found an opportunity for recognition through religious responsibilities in the cultic shrines of their various guilds, but even more importantly as *magistri* in the cults of the Compitals in the 265 *vici* (city districts) created by Augustus in 7 B.C. as new administrative units. Earlier, worship at cultic shrines in the individual *vici* was centered around the Lares, old agricultural tutelary spirits, which were now depicted dancing and holding a cornucopia and were worshipped in pairs as the Lares of the district. Between the two, however, was soon added a togate statue of the Genius Augusti, to which the cult was now primarily directed. Indeed he was the actual preserver and protector of the state. It was not only through his administrative reforms that Augustus was able to revive and



Fig. 105. Statue of a *lupercus*. These priests conducted an archaic ritual clad only in a short skirt and holding a whip made of goat's hide.

Lares on the Velia as a model and probably then encouraged the introduction of new cults of the Lares at the central crossroads of the new *vici*. But the actual construction was undertaken by the inhabitants of each district, particularly by the four *magistri* and four *ministri* who were each elected to a one-year term.

The extraordinary achievements of some of the *magistri* of individual *compita* in this regard are illustrated by the lavishly decorated marble fragments of a building found in 1932 during construction of the Via dei Fori Imperiali (fig. 106). Built in 5 B.C. as the *Comptium Acili*, as the *magistratus* who dedicated it proudly refer to themselves, the sanctuary has a dedicatory inscription on which Augustus is named as consul. On the architrave the *magistri* proudly record their sponsorship of the building (fig. 107).

In the years just after the founding of these small sanctuaries the *magistri*

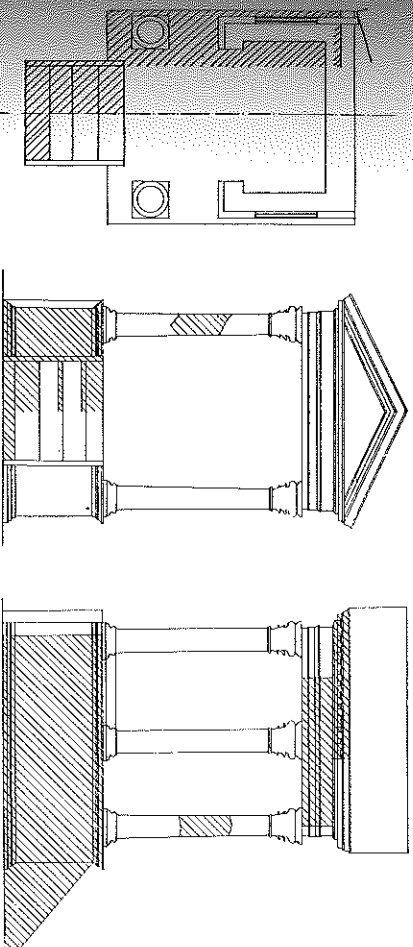


Fig. 106. *Comptium Acili*. Example of a shrine of the Lares. Reconstruction of the small aedicula.

seem often to have endowed altars as well and to have used the occasion to include pious images of themselves performing sacrifice. On the Lares altar of the Vicus Aesclerius (A.D. 2), now in the Conservatory Palace, the four *magistri* are represented on the most prominent side, at the moment of sacrifice (fig. 108). To the accompaniment of flute players they pour their libations simultaneously over the altar. Bull and boar stand ready for sacrifice, made absurdly small by the sculptor to emphasize the *magistri*. A licitor alludes to the pseudomagisterial rank of these local *magistri*. At cultic ceremonies they were entitled to be attended by one licitor; consuls were accompanied by twelve, the praetors by six.

Worthy slaves also served at the same shrines as *ministri*. They too won thereby the status of holding public office within the community of their local district, and could show off their status on such occasions as public processions on imperial feast days (fig. 110). They too dedicated offerings and altars in their capacity as public officials. On one such altar are depicted three *ministri*, modest in scale and wearing slave dress (a shirtlike garment), receiving reverentially the statuettes of two Lares from the hands of a much larger togate figure (fig. 109).

Probably the togatus is none other than Augustus himself, accompanied by the two princes Gaius and Lucius. The fact that the two Lares alone are depicted, but not the Genius of Augustus, also supports this interpretation, since Augustus could not be handing over the statue of his own Genius.

Thus even slaves could contribute to the *pietas* of the new age, and even their humble dress received official recognition in the service of the gods. Augustus's relations with his fellow Romans revolved to a great extent around this exemplary and didactic *pietas*, as is most evident in the worship

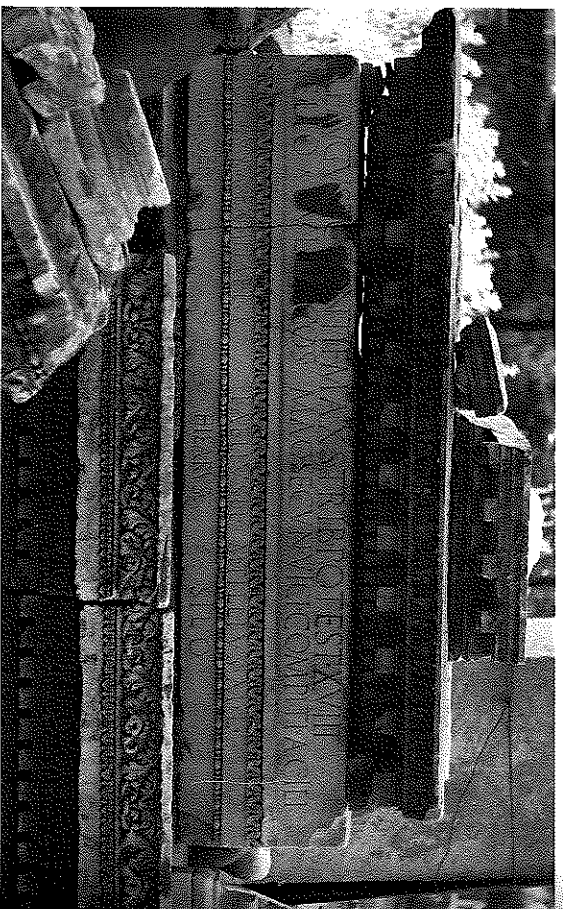


Fig. 107. *Comptium Acili*. Marble entablature. On the architrave, the names of the dedicators.

of his *Genius* in the *Lares* shrines and in his reaction to the honors accorded him. His response always took the form of more new ceremonies and forms of devotion. Ever since 28 B.C., when he had all the silver statues of himself melted down and with the proceeds dedicated golden tripods to Apollo, he surpassed all others in his dedication of offerings and cult images. There developed a rather charmingly old-fashioned system of gift and counter-gift, which was expressed exclusively in visual imagery. A good example are the New Year's gifts:

All classes (*ordines*) threw a gold piece every year into the *Lacus Curtius* (in Augustan times a dried-up sacred pond in the Forum). In so doing they renewed and fulfilled a vow on behalf of his [Augustus's] health. They also presented him with a New Year's gift on January 1, even when he was away. He always used these gifts to purchase the most expensive images of the gods and set them up in the various districts of the city (*vicatim*), for example an Apollo Sandalaris and a Jupiter Tragoedus. (Suetonius *Augustus* 57)

This account is confirmed by several inscriptions, for example on bases from statues of Mercury, Vulcan, or *Lares Publici* dedicated by Augustus. We may suppose that such statues of divinities were about equally divided between public sanctuaries, district shrines, and the shrines of individual guilds.



Fig. 108. Altar of the *Lares* from the *vicus Aescleris*, representing the four *vicomagistri* at a joint sacrifice.



Fig. 109. Altar of the *Lares*. Cultic setting; Augustus (?) handing over the two statues of the *Lares* to the *ministri* of a *compitium*. Behind Augustus are probably the two princes.

An Augustan votive altar in the Capitoline Museum (fig. 111) probably depicts Augustus himself handing over a statue of Minerva to the *ministri* of the cult of the woodworkers' guild. The princeps towers above the *ministri* as they approach in their slave garments. On the other long side of the altar one of the *magistri* is shown making an offering to the same statue. On the narrow end we see the woodworkers' tools, saws and axes, as well as helmets, because the members of this guild also served as fire fighters. Mixed in with these professional tools, but larger and more prominent, are various cult objects: *lituus*, *galerus* with *apex*, and a large sacrificial knife. As on the relief discussed above (cf. fig. 102), these are not related to a specific religious ritual, nor do they have anything to do with the guild's cult of Minerva. Rather, they are to be understood as generalized symbols of *pietas*. Even craftsmen and their activities assume their real worth only in the context of religion.

The pattern is typical: a guild of craftsmen, caught up in the general mood of *pietas*, organizes a new cult, the princeps contributes the cult



Fig. 110. Excerpt from a large sacrificial procession. *Ministri* of a sanctuary of the Lares carry the statuettes of both Lares and of the *genius Augusti*. Early Imperial.

statue or a votive statue in the little sanctuary, and the *magistri* or *ministri* respond with the dedication of a votive altar or yet another statue of a god or goddess. The latter is frequently a personification of political significance, such as Concordia, Pax, or Securitas. Inevitably these are combined with the epithet *Augustus* or *Augusta*, as an explicit way of honoring the princeps. We have, for example, no fewer than three dedicatory statues—to Venus Augusta (fig. 112), Mercurius Augustus, and Hercules—erected by one N. Lucius Hermeros Aequitas, during his several terms as *magister* of a sanctuary of the Lares. This religious give-and-take created a direct link between ruler and *plebs*, one in which the more ambitious of the lower classes, even slaves, could participate.

In earlier times the district and guild cults had sometimes degenerated into unruly mobs. As late as 22 B.C. Augustus had issued a ban on them, but by 7 B.C. the reconstituted religious associations had become the focal point of communication, along lines of cult, between the ruler and his people. The cults of the compital, at the busiest intersections and squares of the various districts, became the centers of social activity for the local pop-



Fig. 111. Votive altar from the sanctuary of a *collegium* of woodworkers. Augustus hands over a statue of Minerva to the *magistri* of the *collegium*.

ulation. The effectiveness of the new visual imagery found its principal outlet here in the many rituals and public festivals.

PUBLICA MAGNIFICENTIA

But I observed that you cared not only about the common life of all men, and the constitution of the state, but also about the provision³ of suitable public buildings; so that the state was not only made greater through you by its new provinces, but the majesty of the empire also was expressed through the eminent dignity of its public buildings. . . .

Since, then, I was indebted to you for such benefits that to the end of life I had no fear of poverty, I set about the composition of this work for you. For I perceived that you have built, and are now building, on a large scale. Furthermore, with respect to the future, you have such regard to public and private buildings, that they will correspond to the grandeur of our history, and will be a memorial to future ages.

Vitruvius *On Architecture*

"The Roman people hate private luxury, but love richness and splendor in their public buildings (*publica magnificentia*)."⁴ This is how Cicero once

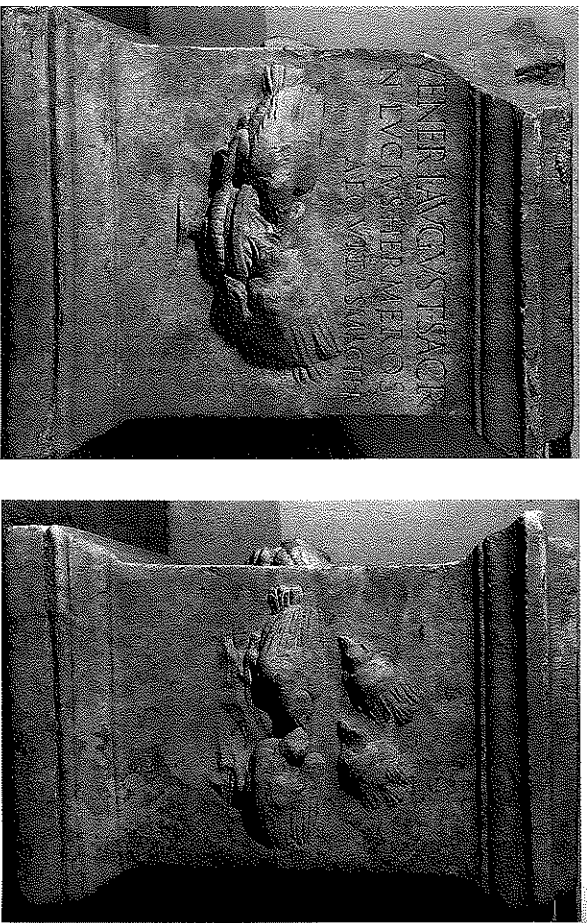


Fig. 112. Base from a votive of the *magister* N. Lucius Hermeros to Venus Augusta (cf. figs. 99, 220b).

described an ideal of the old Roman way of life, but in his own time exactly the reverse obtained, the state projecting an image of impoverishment, while private wealth was all too ostentatiously displayed (cf. pp. 15ff.). Fierce criticism of Late Republican society was further sharpened by emotional sloganeering. Clearly the princeps would have to take a stand. It was obvious that in the “restored Republic” the mansions with enormous atria and extensive *horti* (i.e., gardens—an archaizing and euphemistic name for the luxurious villas on the outskirts of the city) still dotted the hillsides of Rome. Only the names of their owners had changed, to those of Augustus’s principal supporters, who amassed vast fortunes in his service and lived like princes in Rome, their wives decked out in millions of sesterces worth of jewelry. A major change in the distribution of wealth was unthinkable, but the princeps could put up splendid recreational buildings for the Roman people and at the same time make statements as to the immorality of *privata luxuria*. The tentative sumptuary legislation, with which he tried to curb the extravagance of banquets and even women’s clothing, naturally had no real effect, but only served to improve his image. Yet certain other actions and types of visual symbolism in the city of Rome do seem to have had a profound impact.

The Princeps Sets an Example

In the year 15 B.C. Vedius Pollio, a man from a family of freedmen who was later promoted to equestrian status, died and, as was a common practice, bequeathed to Augustus a portion of his vast estate (including his mansion in Rome), with the wish that he use it to erect a splendid building for the people of Rome. Vedius had served Augustus well as financial adviser in the economic reorganization of Asia Minor, but in ethical matters he had a dubious reputation. It was even rumored that he punished slaves by feeding them to his man-eating pet fish. His city mansion, in the crowded *Subura* (Esquiline), described by Ovid as “larger than many a small city,” was a conspicuous example of private *luxuria*. Here was a perfect opportunity for a significant and visible gesture. The entire palace was leveled to the ground then “returned to the people,” and in 7 B.C. Livia and Tiberius built on the site the spectacular Porticus Liviae. Even the onerous association with Vedius Pollio would be consigned to oblivion. “Thus is the office of censor carried out, thus are *exempla* created,” commented Ovid (*Fasti* 6.642). Not far from the new porticus were the extensive Gardens of Maecenas, whose exquisite refinement and taste for luxury no longer suited the princeps’s new image. The contrast helped heighten the effectiveness of Augustus’s gesture.

The Porticus Liviae is represented on a fragment of the Forma Urbis, the marble plan of Rome from the time of the emperor Septimius Severus (fig. 113). The huge structure, measuring about 115 by 75 meters, lay in the midst of a warren of irregular streets in the old quarter. Here we can gain a clear impression of the size and conspicuous location of Vedius’s palace, how recklessly he built over the old streets, even setting one corner of it on a main thoroughfare.

The Porticus Liviae occupies the entire site of Vedius’s palace, but the imperial architect did not interfere with the existing network of streets. The district retained its old character, and the ostentation of *publica magnificentia* was here limited to the building itself.

Augustus’s reuse of the four columns from the atrium of M. Aemilius Scaurus’s luxurious palace was a gesture of a different sort, but no less effective. The columns, unusually large and expensive, had been brought from Greece for Scaurus when he was aedile in 58 B.C. Together with other works of art they once filled the *scenae frons* in his famous wooden theater, as advertisements for his reelection campaign, though later he had them incorporated into his private palace. Again the princeps had part of the palace torn down and returned the offending columns to the Roman people by setting them up in the central arch of the *scenae frons* in the Theater of Marcellus (cf. fig. 154), where they were both impressive and a constant reminder to the people of Augustus’s benefaction.



Fig. 113. Rome, Porticus Liviae. Ground plan, on fragments of the Forma Urbis (third century A.D.). This huge structure arose on the site of the palace of Vedius Pollio, torn down by Augustus, in the midst of the mazelike ancient city.

The Porticus Liviae must have been a most welcome landmark for the residents of the Subura, who could leave behind their dark houses and the chaos of the narrow little alleys to enjoy the glorious colonnades, filled with works of art, the light and fresh air, fountains and grape arbors. Other such complexes had always been in the Campus Martius, near the Circus Flaminius, but now the imperial house had made the pleasures of the aristocracy available to the common man. Like all earlier porticoes this one was also a reflection of the patron, but the style of this one had a new element, exemplary and didactic. In this otherwise secular structure Livia dedicated a sanctuary of Concordia, deliberately initiated on the feast day of the mother goddess Mater Matura (June 11). Unlike in her cult in the Forum, Concordia was to be worshipped here as a goddess of family happiness, and the imperial family as the model of marital harmony. In later years young married couples would make an offering before a statue group of the emperor and his wife in the guise of Mars and Venus (cf. fig. 154).

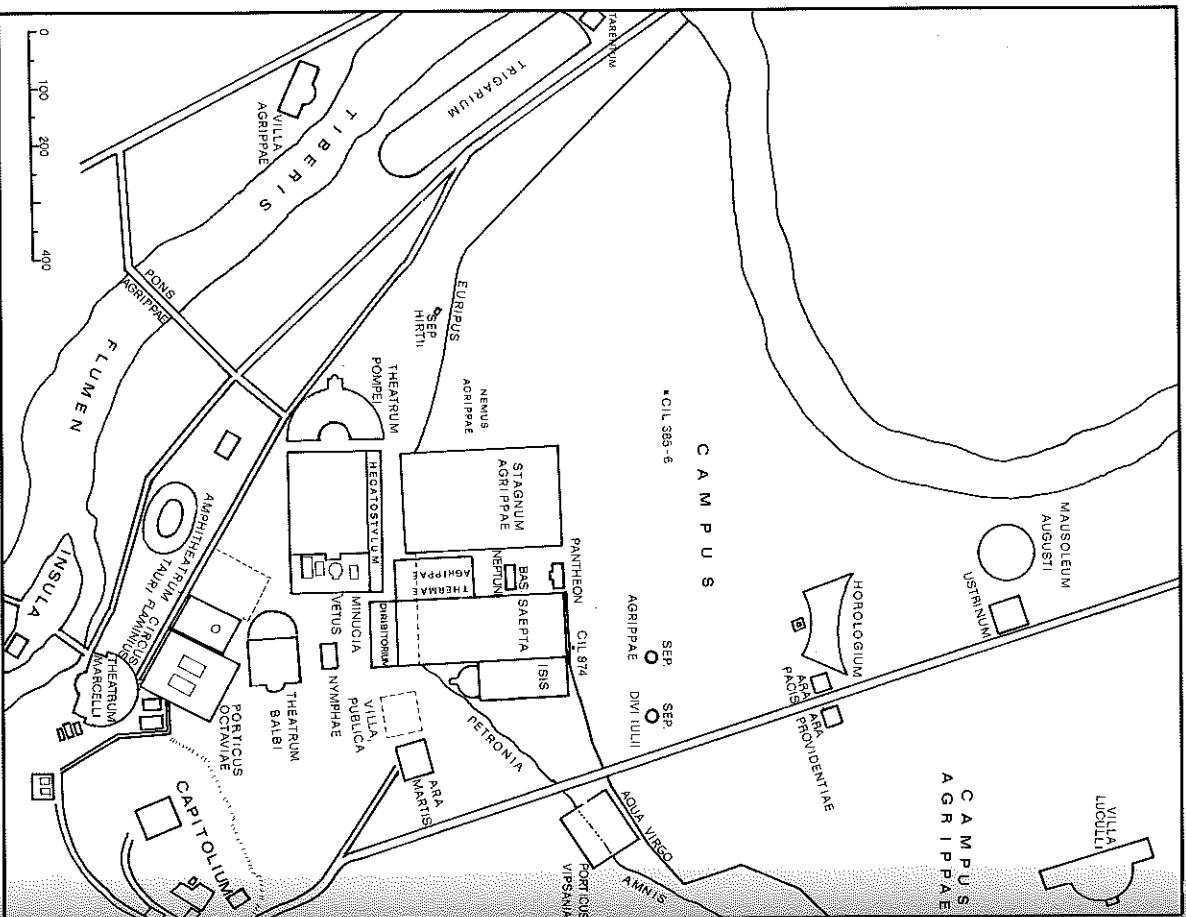
Agrippa's Building Program: A Villa for the Masses

Augustus beautified the city, whose appearance had in no way reflected its greatness and glory and was besides constantly plagued by floods and fires, and so utterly remade it, that he could justly boast that he found Rome a city of brick and left it a city of marble. (Suetonius *Augustus* 28)

Along with the new temples, it was primarily the buildings for entertainment and recreation that transformed the face of Rome. But whereas Augustus personally took charge of building the sanctuaries, for secular projects he let himself be assisted by both family members and by friends, among whom the most important was Agrippa. In his unwavering loyalty Agrippa was again ready to be Augustus's right-hand man. He dedicated both his organizational talent and his huge fortune to the rebuilding of the city. In the years after Actium he fulfilled, one by one, all the extravagant promises made in 33 B.C. His first project was the complete reorganization of the water supply. Soon fresh water flowed into the city in abundance through repaired or newly built aqueducts, into 130 reservoirs and hundreds of water basins (*lacus*; according to Pliny 700 new ones were built). The mighty arches of the aqueducts helped shape the image of the city and, together with the hundreds of new fountains, proclaimed the blessings of fresh water to every dank corner of the metropolis.

The new Aqua Virgo, dedicated in 19 B.C., fed the baths built by Agrippa on the west side of the Campus Martius, near the Pantheon, the first public

baths in Rome (fig. 114). Compared with those of later imperial baths, the sauna rooms and warm-water baths here look rather modest. With its extensive gardens, artificial lake (Stagnum Agrippae) serving as a *natio*, and athletic facilities, the whole complex recalls the gymnasium of Greek cities. This was deliberate, even if the name itself was not borrowed, as is apparent from the Apoxyomenos of Lysippus (Pliny N.H. 34.62), which Agrippa set



up in the main building. In the creation of the new Rome, one more important gap had been filled.

The baths lay in the middle of the *monimenta Agrippae*. To the east were the Saeptra Julia, to the north the Pantheon. Further east, beyond the Via Lata (the present-day Via del Corso), lay the Campus Agrippae, a park renowned for its beautiful laurel trees, and the Porticus Vipsaniae, named for Agrippa's sister. To the west was Agrippa's villa, together with race courses and a training ground for the horses. There was plenty of room for all this on Agrippa's personal property—most of which had previously belonged to Marc Antony and, before that, to Pompey.

The huge recreational area before the walls served as a kind of villa for the common people. At any rate, they could enjoy here all the pleasures traditionally associated with aristocratic villas: parks, promenades alongside flowing streams (*euripus*), warm baths, exercise areas, and, scattered throughout, masterpieces of Greek art. Agrippa decorated his springs and fountain houses with Greek columns and statues, including the famous "Hydria" in the Forum (Pliny 36.121). This accorded with his programmatic address of 33 B.C. "on the need to display publicly all Greek statues and works of art." Pliny, who knew the speech, called it "magnificent and worthy of the finest citizen," clearly contrasting its vision with the *exilia* of works of art in the villas of the rich that had been the rule up to then (Pliny 35.26). The term *exilia* (exile) had often been employed in attacks on the Late Republican aristocracy, and the princeps and his friends were conspicuous in their opposition to it. There was of course no question of a systematic appropriation of art works in private hands; only a few significant gestures needed to be made. It was not so important that more art actually be made available to the public than ever before, but only that this seem to be a matter of policy. The "policy" apparently worked, for the people really did feel as if they owned these great works. This was made clear in the (successful) outcry of the *plebs* when Tiberius tried to move the Apoxyomenos of Lysippus into his own palace (Pliny 34.62).

The centerpiece of Agrippa's building program, the predecessor of the Hadrianic Pantheon, was another reminder of the ruler even here in this recreational area. Originally a statue of Augustus was meant to be displayed among those of his patron deities in the temple cella, for in keeping with Hellenistic tradition the Pantheon was conceived for the cult of the ruler and his gods. But after the constitutional watershed of 27 B.C. Augustus required a change of plan to accord with his new image. His statue could not stand beside the gods, but would have to be moved into the pronaos, alongside that of Agrippa himself. But in the end this gesture did not alter the purpose of the building. The pediment was probably decorated, like that of the later Pantheon, with Jupiter's eagle holding the *corona civica* (cf.

The building which underwent the greatest expansion in Rome was the *Saepta*, a voting place for the *plebs* which had been planned already by Julius Caesar and was carried out by Agrippa along with his other projects (fig. 114). The actual voting area was now paved in marble and was framed by two marble colonnades 300 meters long and a 95-meter-wide building for the tallying of the votes (*diribitorium*). In 26 B.C. Agrippa dedicated the building as the “*Saepta Iulia*.”

The structure became a vast monument to the dignity of the Roman people, although in fact they were summoned to the balloting urns increasingly seldom and soon not at all. Indeed, the *Saepta* was later used as a setting for games (gladiatorial combats and mock sea battles are attested). But the imperial house also enjoyed inviting the people here for grand ceremonial events. So, for example, Tiberius received an enthusiastic reception here after his victory in Illyria.

Like many other colonnades, the *Saepta* was also taken over as a bazaar by all sorts of merchants and was frequented all day long by those with nothing better to do, who could take in the famous works of art. Among others, Agrippa set up here two Hellenistic statue groups that are known in multiple copies: the centaur Chiron instructing his pupil Achilles and Pan teaching the young Olympos to play the syrinx (Pliny *HN* 36.29). Perhaps



Fig. 115. Pan with Olympos or Daphnis. Marble copy of Imperial date after the Hellenistic original once exhibited in the *Saepta Iulia*. Here in a drawing of Poussin (ca. 1620).

the two pairs of teacher and pupil allude to the lessons which surely also took place in the area of the *Saepta*. That Agrippa's taste in art was not constrained by moral strictures in the choice of subject matter is evident from the homoerotic nature of the Pan and Olympos group (fig. 115).

Agrippa modestly referred to his own achievements only rarely. The fresco cycle of the *Voyage of Argo* in one of the long colonnades and the name *Basilica Neptuni* probably contain an allusion to his service as admiral, for which Augustus had already bestowed on him a *corona rostrata* adorned with ships' prows (cf. fig. 168d) after the *Battle of Naulochoi*. But it is significant that Agrippa did not give the building his own name, but instead named it *Saepta Iulia*.

Those with time on their hands could also contemplate the map of the world which was commissioned by Agrippa and later transferred to the *Porticus Vipsaniae*. It was intended to give the Roman people an idea of “their” empire and heighten their awareness of being *princeps terrarum* (*populus* (Livy *Præf.*). We need only think of the impressive marble plan of the *Imperium Romanum* which Mussolini had placed on the ancient ruins along the *Via del Impero*. In 20 B.C., as part of his program of road building, Augustus had placed a gilded milestone (*Milliarium aureum*) near the time-honored monuments of the *Forum Romanum*, symbolizing Rome's position as the center of the world.

It was Agrippa's wish that even the import of grain into Rome serve to remind her people of their position of power. The *Horrea Agrippiana* behind the *Forum*, only recently fully studied and reconstructed, was built only of travertine, but with strikingly impressive decoration, even including Corinthian columns. No one implemented the idea of *publica magnificentia* more fully or consistently than Agrippa (Seneca *De ben.* 3.32.4). After his death a well-organized force of 240 men was put to work by the state just for the maintenance of the water supply system he created (Frontinus *De Aquis* 116).

Augustus's Family: A Ubiquitous Presence in Rome

Some buildings he put up in the name of others, for example his grandchildren, his wife, or his sister, such as the *Porticus Gaii et Luci Caesaris* (in the *Forum*), the *Porticus of Livia* and that of *Octavia*, and the *Theater of Marcellus*. (Suetonius *Augustus* 29)

Augustus himself was the only rival to Agrippa in matters of *publica magnificentia*. But his secular buildings served a more immediate political purpose. He completed Caesar's major projects (the *Basilica Iulia* and *Forum*

lulum), restored at great expense the Theater of Pompey and such smaller buildings as the Porticus Octavia, laid out the park around his Mausoleum, created an artificial lake for *naumachiae* in the midst of the Nemus Caesarium (in present-day Trastevere), paid for the new markets on the Esquiline (Macellum Liviae), and much more.

The gigantic Solarium Augusti, dedicated in 10 B.C., lay north of Agrippa's building projects, perhaps within the park surrounding the Mausoleum (fig. 116). It was the largest sundial ever built. A 30-meter-tall Egyptian obelisk served as pointer (*gnomon*), casting its shadow on a distant network of markings which probably functioned equally as clock and calendar (fig. 117). The inscription on the base of the obelisk contains a reference to the "victory over Egypt" twenty years earlier. Interestingly, the obelisk was also a dedication to the sun god Sol. It was so contrived that on Augustus's birthday the *gnomon* pointed to the nearby Ara Pacis Augustae, recalling that at his birth the constellation of stars had already determined his reign of peace: *natus ad pacem*. The sundial was an incredible monument, and one can easily imagine what fun it must have been to stroll around its huge network of markers. The inscriptions were also given in Greek, apparently as a gesture to the many residents and visitors to Rome from the East.

South of the buildings put up by Agrippa, above the Circus Flaminius, were the temples and porticoes erected by triumphators of the second century B.C. (fig. 118). These were taken over and restored as monuments to the imperial house, the memory of their original Republican patrons largely disappearing in the process. The Porticus Octavia, for example, had been erected in 168 B.C. by Cn. Octavius after his naval victory over the Macedonian king Perseus. It was especially famous for its lavish bronze capitals. Augustus restored the building at his own expense, and this was one case where the "modest" refusal to rename the building after himself was no hardship (Suetonius *Augustus* 31; *Res Gestae* 19), since it already bore his name. In the restored colonnade he displayed the standards he had recaptured from the Dalmati and in the Illyrian Wars.

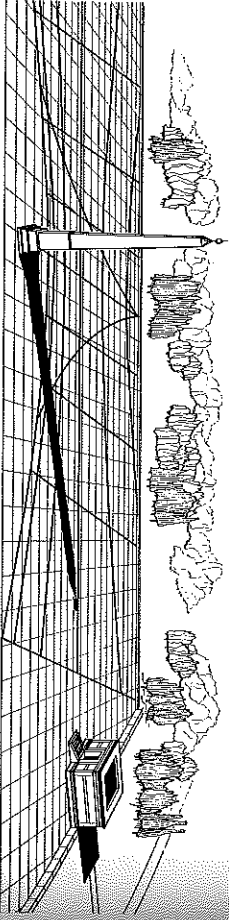


Fig. 116. Rome, Solarium Augusti, ca. 10 B.C. Reconstruction by E. Buchner. On Augustus's birthday, the obelisk cast its shadow toward the Ara Pacis Augustae.

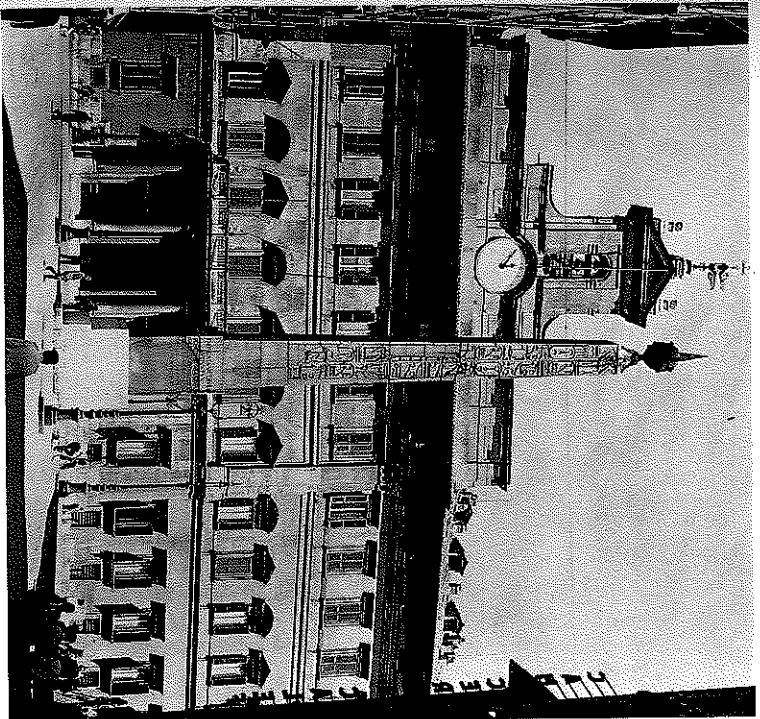


Fig. 117. Obelisk in front of the Palazzo Montecitorio in Rome. The obelisk was carried off by Augustus from Egypt and used as the pointer for the monumental sundial.

Similarly, the Porticus Metelli, built in 147 B.C. by Q. Caecilius Metellus, another victor over the Macedonians, had to make way for the Porticus Octaviae. Augustus financed the rebuilding in honor of his sister, who later endowed here a *schola* and library in memory of her son Marcellus, after his death in 23 B.C. (Augustus had married his only daughter Julia to Marcellus and from 29 B.C. on treated him as his successor.) In the changeover, the famous works of art also dedicated by Metellus automatically adjusted themselves to the new Augustan program. Statues of Venus and Eros, as well as a multifigure equestrian monument by Lysippos depicting Alexander and his twenty-five companions at the Granicus, could all be seen as references to Augustus. After all, he adorned many of his own monuments with images and reminders of the great Macedonian and even used Alexander's likeness as his seal.

The Porticus Metelli was surely only one example among many. Augustus called the tune, and all Rome now danced to it.

Status and Applause: The Theater as Meeting Place of Princes and People

Two new theaters went up in the immediate vicinity of the porticoes: the Theater of Marcellus, built by Augustus (fig. 119), with about twelve to fifteen thousand seats, and the somewhat smaller theater of the Younger Balbus. With the renovated Theater of Pompey, a total of at least forty thousand people could be accommodated at one time, on special occasions when all three theaters were in use. In addition there were two other theatrical areas nearby, the Saepta and the Amphitheater of Statilius Taurus. In the course of fifteen years a virtual entertainment center had arisen in the Campus Martius (cf. figs. 114, 118).

The prospect of the Roman populace sitting in the theater did not worry Augustus as it had the Senate. On the contrary, he welcomed this opportunity for contact. The greetings and applause he received expressed the general mood of support and were a vivid confirmation of his power. Even the occasional protests against specific measures—the Equestrians opposing the financial restrictions of the marriage law of A.D. 9 or the people protesting the removal of Lysippus's Apoxyomenos—were regarded as a healthy way of blowing off steam. They gave the appearance of a real "dialogue" between the ruler and his people. It has been rightly observed that such political statements in the theater during the Empire to a great extent took the place of popular assemblies or elections and in a symbolic way expressed the popular consensus in support of the Principate. The masses were delighted when Augustus shared their entertainment and watched even the most tedious routines with evident interest, or made apologies when he could not attend (Caesar, on the other hand, had answered his mail during these shows).

The games themselves were a major part of Augustan *publica magnificentia*. "He surpassed all his predecessors in the number, variety, and splendor (*magnificentia*) of his games" (Suetonius *Augustus* 43). A distinction was drawn between the annually repeated games, which formed part of the religious calendar, and the extraordinary ones. In the time of Augustus the days with regularly scheduled games numbered sixty-seven. These were the responsibility of certain officials, who could add up to three times the publicly budgeted sum from their private funds. Not infrequently Augustus himself made up the difference for those who were not so wealthy. In his autobiography he claims to have given gladiatorial games eight times, with a total of ten thousand combatants, and animal games twenty-six times, with thirty-five hundred animals killed in all (*Res Gestae* 22f.). Together with horse races in the Circus these were the most popular games. The figures, however, belie the fact that in reality Augustus was not that enthusiastic about such mass entertainment. Trajan by contrast sponsored more

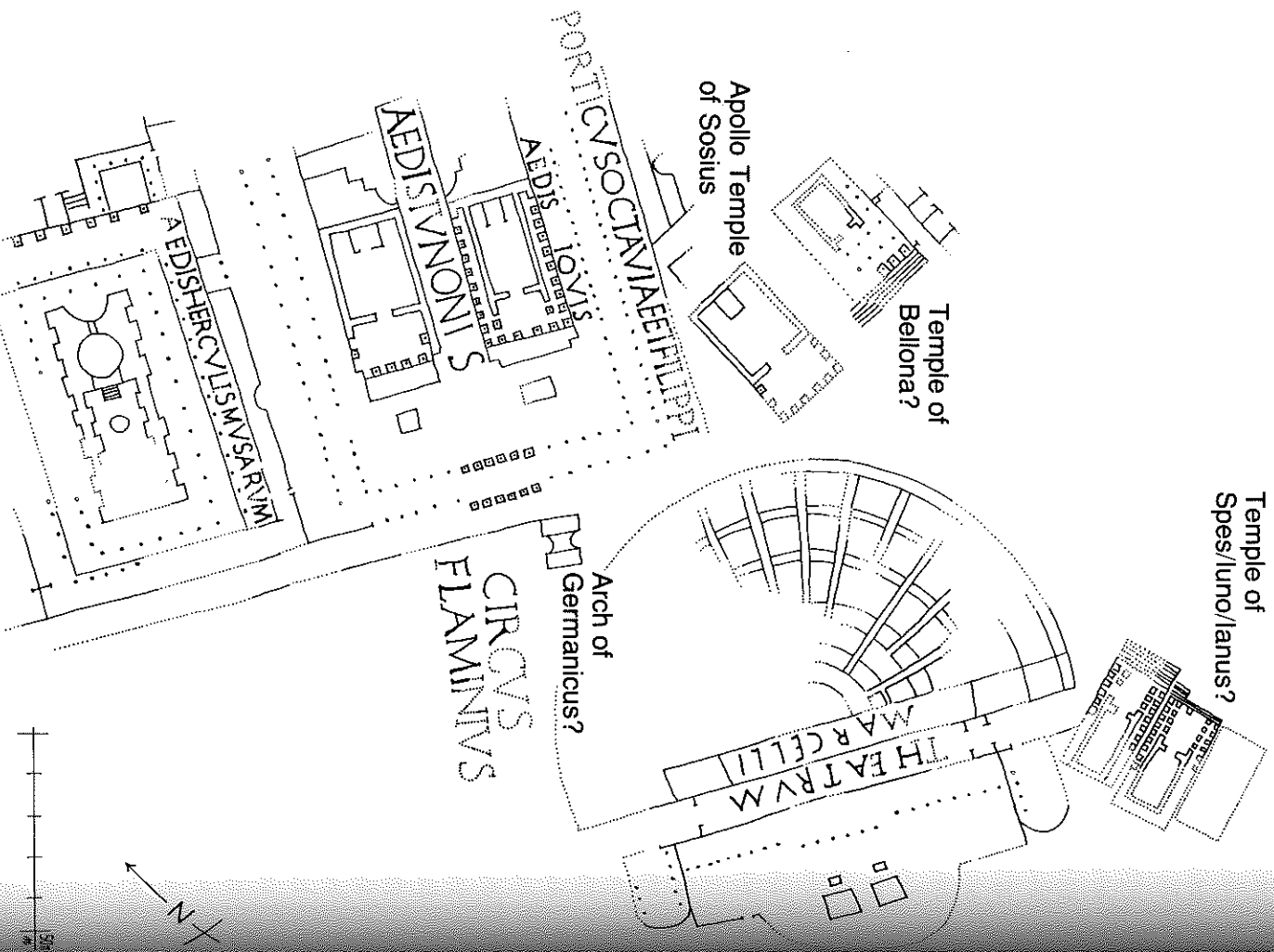


Fig. 118. Rome, porticoes and temples at the Theater of Marcellus. After fragments of the Forma Urbis

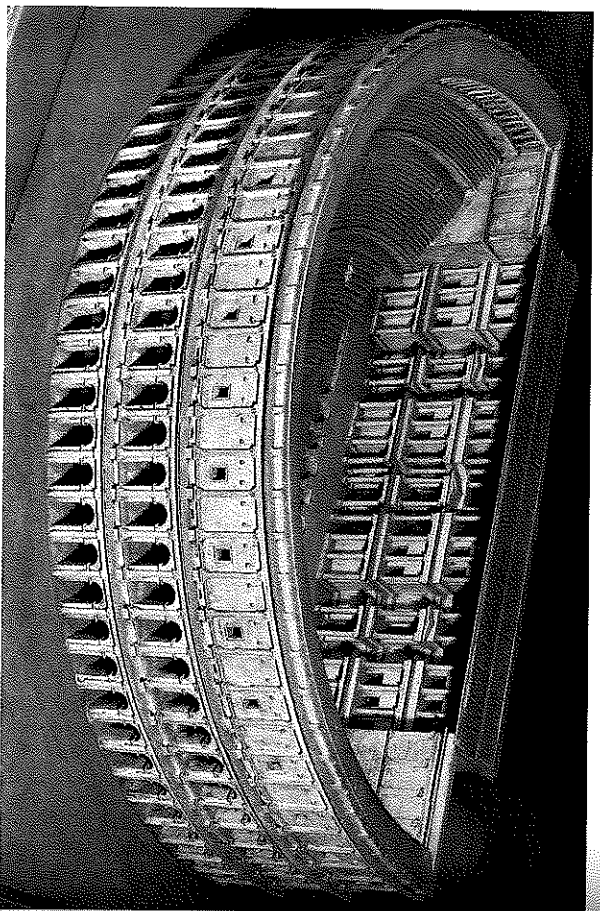


Fig. 119. Rome, Theater of Marcellus. Model. In the center of the stage backdrop Augustus had the Greek columns from the house of Scaurus set up.

games on his own initiative than took place during the entire forty years of Augustan rule. A large stone amphitheater is conspicuous by its absence from the many public buildings erected by Augustus (the small Amphitheater of Statilius Taurus is earlier and apparently not part of the Augustan building program). It was not until the reign of the otherwise parsimonious Vespasian that the Colosseum was built to house mass entertainment in the form of gladiatorial and animal games. This cautiousness, however, seems to have been due to the special status of Rome itself. In the planning of Augustan *coloniae*, as at Emerita Augusta (Merida, in Spain), an amphitheater was included from the very beginning.

But there were certain occasions when the princeps did pull out all the stops. For the dedication of the Forum of Augustus and the Temple of Mars Ultor, for example, he put on circus games in which 260 lions were killed, as well as the Trojan Games in the Forum, in which the prince Agrippa Postumus participated, gladiatorial combats in the Saepia, and a hunt featuring thirty-six crocodiles in the Circus Flaminius. For the same occasion he also created a huge *naumachia* on the other side of the Tiber and staged a reenactment of the Battle of Salamis between Athenians and Persians, with a total of three thousand combatants, thirty large ships and many smaller ones, all to commemorate his own naval victory at Actium. For such ideologically important public events the princeps spared no expense "to fill the

hearts and eyes of the Roman people with unforgettable images" (Velleius Paterculus 2.100.2).

In general Augustus gave most support to the theater, which besides serving as a point of contact between princeps and people also had an important cultural and didactic function. The new Rome had to have impressive theatrical performances above all because the dramatic stage had been such an important element in the Greek cities, especially in Classical Athens. Without theater, Rome's claim to being the cultural center of the Empire would carry little conviction. Behind the lavish support for the theater surely lay the desire to equal the Greeks, and the great athletic games in Greek style staged three times by Augustus could be similarly understood. Augustus boasts of these in the *Res Gestae* (22), although they were even less compatible than the theater with the traditions of his Roman forefathers.

We know that the works of patriotic Roman poets were performed in public theaters, that Augustus awarded prizes to certain favorite plays, such as the "Thyestes" of Varius, and that Vergil was especially honored. It would be fascinating to know what other plays were performed, in order to see to what extent the dramatic reworkings of Greek myth were politicized. But this aspect of Augustan imagery is almost entirely lost to us. We may be sure, however, that the pretensions of "high culture" did not last long in the theater and that burlesque and pantomime soon took over.

The new theaters also contributed significantly to the consolidation of the new social order. Here the Roman was made aware of the organization by rank of his entire society, and on each visit he saw clearly his own place in it. As early as the second century the Senate had reserved for itself the front rows (i.e., the orchestra), then later allotted the next section to the Equestrians. Segregation of undesirables in the theater was already practiced in the Late Republic, for Cicero (*Phil.* 2.44) reports that there was one section where all who were broke had to sit. Augustus then expanded this principle in his *lex Iulia theatralis*. This apparently designated all the rows and seats, giving preferential seating to some and discriminating against others. Senators sat in the orchestra, among these priests and magistrates in places of honor. Then followed Equestrians with a net worth of over 400,000 sesterces. Then came free Roman citizens in the broad middle section, arranged by tribe, as in the distribution of grain: *panem et circenses*. At the rear sat noncitizens, women, and slaves, when they were permitted to attend the theater at all. Unfortunately the details are not fully and unambiguously recorded, but we do know, for example, that soldiers and civilians sat separately and that adolescent boys had rows set aside for them and their guardians. Thanks to Augustus's laws on marriage, those who were married with many children were entitled to better seats, while recal-

citrant bachelors were sometimes banned from the theater altogether. The various guilds also seem to have had their own sections.

Given the tremendous social importance of the games, these forms of favor or discrimination, of mingling or separation, were crucial in defining how every Roman citizen saw himself. The clear differentiation of seats, which was recognized by everyone in the audience and enforced by a kind of mutual surveillance, insured that the system worked smoothly. Outside the theater as well, the *princeps* carefully observed distinctions of social

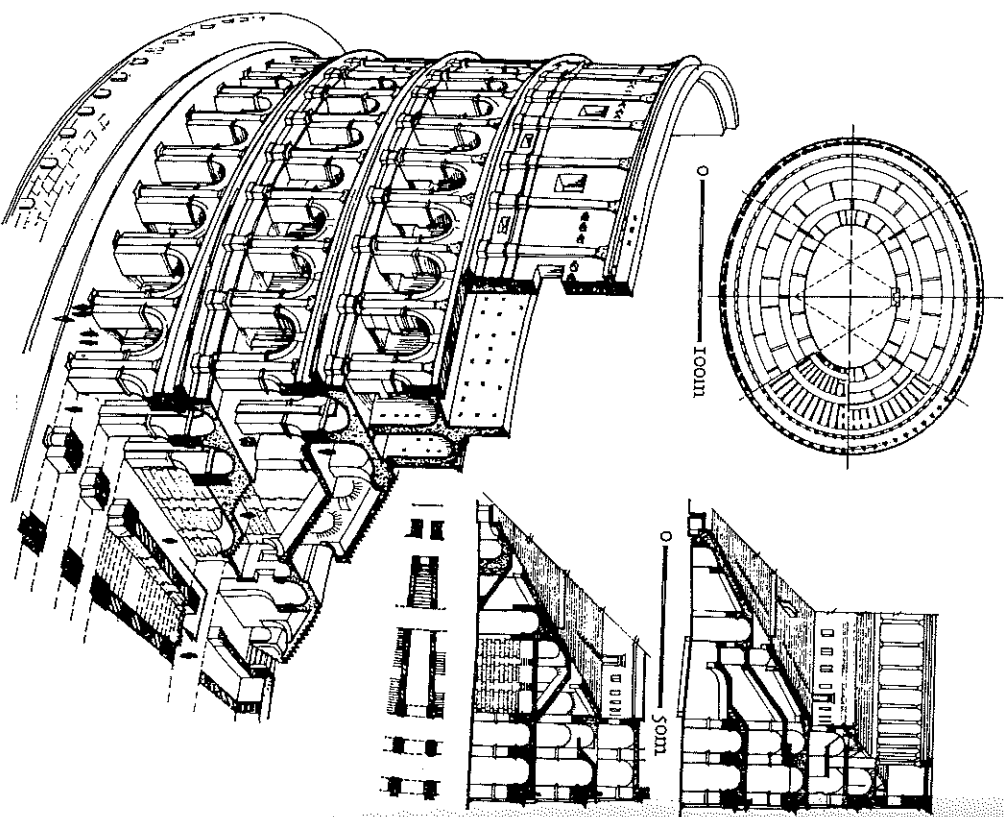


Fig. 120. Rome, Colosseum. Begun after A.D. 70. By a complex system of aisles and stairways the visitors to a Roman theater or amphitheater were conducted to seats assigned according to social standing.

rank, as for example in his invitations to dine with him (freedmen were never included). But at the same time, he made sure that every social class had its particular responsibilities and honors, so that upward mobility was always possible. For this reason the rigid pyramidal structure of Roman society was to a great extent accepted by its members. The common experience of rituals and festivals, which brought all Romans together, was essential in imbuing each individual with a sense of the social order.

Even the architecture of the theater helped to inculcate and make visible the principles of social stratification (cf. fig. 255). In the course of renovation and new construction the different sections were demarcated more clearly than before, and this was not just a visual effect. The cleverly contrived substructure beneath the semicircular *cavea* (auditorium) became an instrument of social classification. The network of arched passageways and staircases served not only to insure an easy flow of traffic in and out of the theater, but to separate the audience according to rank. Thus the "better" sort needed to have no contact at all with the common folk, whose seats were at the very top, just as in the opera houses of the nineteenth-century bourgeoisie. In Vespasian's Colosseum this system can be observed in its most perfected form (fig. 120).

As the seating arrangement in the Augustan theater shows, the creation of a monarchy in Rome did nothing to alter the pyramidal stratification of society (fig. 121). Indeed, class distinctions became even more rigid under Augustus. The economic basis upon which an individual's wealth was measured was, as it always had been, land, together with agricultural produce. The prerequisite for membership in the three *ordines* that constituted the upper class—Senators, Equestrians, and the local aristocracy of cities outside Rome (*decuriones*)—was a fortune of a certain size. Occasionally Augustus would even help out a Senator by making up the difference, to insure the continuity of the highest class. But wealth was not the sole ingredient in determining social status; family background and respect (*dignitas*) were equally important. The aristocratic principle was thus maintained, and the Roman "revolution" kept its conservative stripe.

The boundaries between upper and lower class, between those in the top three *ordines* and the rest of the population, were essential to upholding social *dignitas*, even more than economic prosperity. So, for example, a man who was not freeborn, no matter how wealthy, was excluded from certain state and local offices and thus from one of the *ordines*. In the theater, even the wealthy freedmen sat in the back rows. It was virtually impossible to make the transition from lower to upper class in a single generation, but for the sons and grandsons of a prosperous slave it was different. Here wealth was the principal determinant.

If the monarchy served to consolidate the old class distinctions, it never-

theless created new outlets to ease social tensions and opened new paths to social advancement, thus bringing about a gradual transformation of society.

The distribution of old and new priesthoods, usually associated in some way with the ruler cult, illustrates how a bond was created between the emperor and all social classes. Of course this meant primarily the most outstanding members of each class. Their services to the emperor led to social recognition and thus to the opportunity for advancement. Equestrians had major responsibilities in the administration of the provinces and in the army, which could ultimately gain them admission to the Senate. The local *Decuriones*, through similar service in their own communities, could rise to positions in provincial administration and to the Senate, whose composition shifted first in favor of Italians, then of provincials. Imperial slaves and freedmen naturally enjoyed a status far above that of other members of their class. These were roughly comparable to the wealthy freedmen in the cities of Italy, known as “Augustales” (again in the service of the ruler cult), who succeeded in creating for themselves a new social class, between *decuriones* and *populus*. We shall see how these groups striving for social ad-

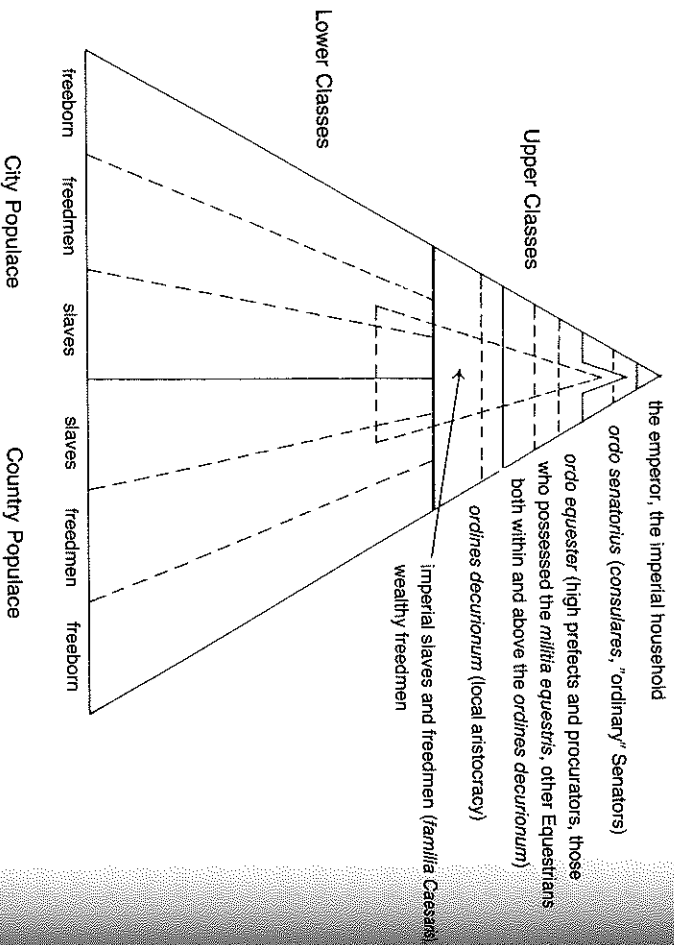


Fig. 121. The pyramidal structure of Roman society in the Imperial age. Model, G. Alföldy (1984), showing the fully developed society of the High Empire.

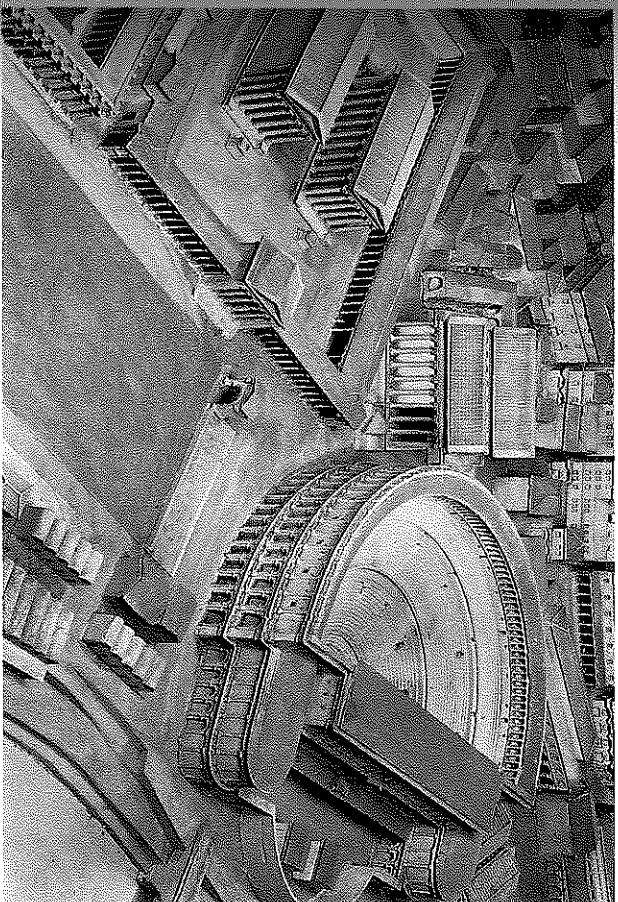


Fig. 122. Rome, southern part of the Campus Martius. Temples with porticoes next to the Theater of Marcellus. In front lay the Circus Flaminius (cf. fig. 118).

vancement are reflected in the visual arts and how they too helped spread the new pictorial imagery.

Ideology and the Image of the City

The large theaters were conspicuous hallmarks of Augustan Rome, and for the theatergoer both the Theater of Marcellus and that of Balbus evoked most impressively the *pietas* and *publica magnificentia* of the renewed city. The two semicircular auditoria were so situated that those who strolled through the outer walkways during intermission, or looked out the windows on the second floor, enjoyed a view out over an extraordinary cityscape, composed entirely of marble sanctuaries and lavish secular buildings (fig. 122). From the Theater of Marcellus one could see the renovated porticoes of the second century B. C., with their temples and gardens, the Circus Flaminius, with its honorific monuments, Sostius's new Temple of Apollo, and the Temple of Bellona, so close that from the arcades one could almost reach out and touch it, and, when one moved farther along, towering in the distance, the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. From the passageways of the Theater of Balbus could be seen the temples in the “Area Sacra” (the

present-day Largo Argentina). These were views to warm the heart of the princeps.

Interestingly, fully a third of Strabo's description of Late Augustan Rome is devoted to the Campus Martius. This eyewitness observer from the Greek East was more impressed by the marble pleasure palaces than by the fora, the new temples, the Capitol, or the Palatine.

The size of the Campus Martius alone [he means the northern part] is astonishing. It is spacious enough to allow chariot races and at the same time all other equestrian sports without any interference. Nearby are hordes of wrestlers and others playing ball or with hoops. Works of art adorn all the paths, and the lush gardens are in bloom at every season. The hilltops, which stretch to the Tiber, create a remarkable cityscape, a pleasure of which the eye never tires. Nearby is a second field [the southern part of the Campus Martius], in which the many porticoes, sacred groves, lavish temples, three theaters, and one amphitheater are all laid out in a semicircle. Here everything is so crowded, one upon another, that the rest of the city seems only incidental. (Strabo 5.3.8)

Strabo saw Augustan Rome when most of the building program was already finished, but contemporary Romans watched it being built. Vergil's description of the building activity in Dido's royal city of Carthage (*Aeneid* 1.418ff.) mirrors the feeling of excitement and optimism that must have permeated Rome in the 20s B.C., with new buildings going up all over. It was a community effort, as in a beehive, industrious craftsmen everywhere at work. The essential mandate, that the majesty of the Roman Empire must be reflected in public architecture (Vitruvius *Præf.*), was realized before one's very eyes. The emotional impact of this experience can hardly be overestimated.

But in spite of its marble temples and extravagant recreational buildings, the new Rome did not look like a Hellenistic city. This had been Julius Caesar's intention. If his plans had been carried out, the course of the Tiber would have been altered, and on the thus enlarged Campus Martius a pre-planned city constructed, with a network of streets all at right angles and carefully proportioned *insulae*. From a huge theater on the slope of the Capitol one would have looked out on this perfectly organized new city. Later Nero would have a similar dream, but this was not Augustus's way. A radical remaking of the city would have contradicted the principal themes of his program. *Pietas* required that the old cult places be respected, his political style precluded interfering with private property, and the *mos maiorum* dictated the simplicity of residential neighborhoods.

The result was that the street system remained unchanged in many

places. Tiny streets and alleys, which had grown haphazardly over centuries, are still quite evident in the Forma Urbis (third century A.D.), especially in the densely populated old residential quarters, as we have already seen in the area of the Porticus Liviae (cf. fig. 113).

The princeps did, however, reorganize the city, though on a different level. Rome was divided into fourteen *regiones* and 265 *vici* (districts). Each *vicius* elected its own "administration," made up of the *magistri* and *ministri* whom we discussed in connection with the Lares cults and the worship of the emperor. They also were in charge of other modest security measures, helped in fighting fires, insured peace and quiet, and supervised the building codes formulated by the princeps. Houses could be no higher than seventy Roman feet (about twenty-one meters), and probably such requirements as the thickness of supporting walls were also specified. The principal dangers in the old residential quarters were fire and flood. The princeps tried to alleviate these problems by creating his own fire department organized along military lines—seven cohorts of one thousand men each—and by attempting to shore up the banks of the Tiber. Order and security, also in the matter of insuring the regular supply of grain, did much to improve the "quality of life" in the various districts. The Compital cults of the *vici*, with their New Year's and Summer festivals, developed into social centers and true neighborhoods, which in turn facilitated a kind of mutual sense of protectiveness.

All these measures no doubt contributed to a better life for the inhabitants of Rome, but they did nothing to alter the essentially primitive appearance of the residential districts. Strabo was in fact right, that from an aesthetic viewpoint the old-fashioned residential Rome seemed like a mere appendage of the new marble city. And this was exactly in keeping with the ideology of Augustus's regime, as is illustrated, for example, by the great wall surrounding the Forum of Augustus, a remarkable monument which has justifiably continued to astonish ever since it was built (fig. 123).

Today one can still observe how this enormous wall, made of finely carved and ingeniously layered blocks of tufa and in places reaching a height of thirty-three meters, towered even above the roof of the Temple of Mars Ultor. From the streets and houses of the nearby Subura one could see nothing whatever of the spectacular marble buildings in the Forum. Although from inside the Forum one scarcely noticed the wall, its monumental barrier blotted out all the residential houses. Of course the wall also served a practical purpose, to protect the precious sanctuary from the frequent outbreaks of fire in the Subura. But its very form, both monumental and old-fashioned in character, took on an unmistakable symbolic importance within the plan of the entire city.

The wall was like a dividing line between the simplicity of residential

neighborhoods and the *maiestas* and *magnificentia* of temples and other public buildings. In another way it also made visible one of Augustus's tenets: its irregular course, with many twists and turns, is evidence of the painful precision with which he avoided trespassing on private property. "He built his Forum somewhat smaller than originally planned, because he did not dare encroach on the property of neighboring houses" (Suetonius *Augustus* 52.2). Naturally the princeps could easily have acquired the pieces of property in question. But he was more concerned to set an example and to show that Augustus himself was bound by the same laws that he required his "fellow citizens" to obey. If we look back to the Rome of the Late Republic, the transformation of the city within the span of a single generation is almost incredible. Perhaps nothing had so powerful and positive an impact on the Roman people as what was accomplished here. Following this example, the creation of hundreds of Roman cities in the Western half of the Empire gave visible form to the spread of Roman culture (p. 307).

MORES MAIORUM

Simplicity and self-sufficiency, a strict upbringing and moral code, order and subservience within the family, diligence, bravery, and self-sacrifice: these were the virtues that had continually been evoked in Rome with the slogan "mores maiorum," ever since the process of Hellenization began. Yet in reality this archaic society and its values were receding ever more rapidly. Nevertheless, the belief in the necessity of a moral renewal was firmly rooted. Without a return to the ancestral virtues there could be no internal healing of the body politic.

Such dramatic appeals had surely been heard many times before, and, inevitably, they are vague, short-lived, and out of touch with reality. But despite this, their emotional impact can often be amazingly deep. They are an indispensable element in the eternal longing for a "brave new world."

Augustus's Legislation on Morals

"O most immoral age! First you tainted marriage, the house, and the family. Now from the same source flows pollution over fatherland and people," lamented Horace (*carmen* 3.6) in 29 B.C. Along with godlessness, immorality was regarded as the greatest evil of the past and the reason for the collapse of Rome. Augustus believed that he could bring about a fundamental change in this area as well, and through rewards and punishment even improve sexual ethics and inspire upper-class Romans to produce more chil-

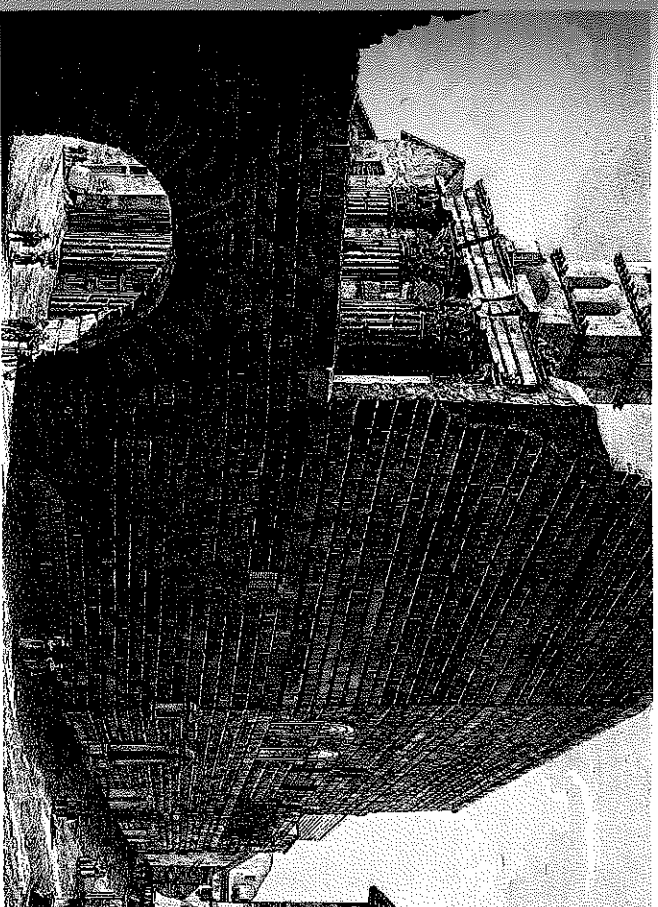


Fig. 123. Rome, Forum of Augustus. The enclosure wall (H: ca. 30 m) protected the building from fire and at the same time marked a symbolic boundary. L. Rossini, ca. 1810.

dren. His first, unsuccessful attempt at such legislation was, significantly, directly linked with the program for *pietas* in 29/28 B.C. The famous laws on marriage and morals of 18 B.C. were to serve as ideological preparation for the Secular Festival of the following year, and were accompanied by a rigorous purge of the Senate. The *Leges Iuliae*, which prescribed criminal prosecution for adultery, major penalties for those who remained unmarried (e.g., in the disposition of their inheritance), as well as rewards and privileges for parents of several children, were conceived by Augustus as a key aspect of his program of renewal.

It was difficult to give visual expression to this campaign, but the princeps did what he could. Up to the end of his life he continued to search out effective *exempla*.

He did not hesitate to read to the Senate a speech of the censor Q. Metellus from the year 131 B.C., "On Increasing the Birthrate," "as if it had just been written" (Livy *Per.* 59; Suetonius *Augustus* 89). An especially fertile slave woman received a statue. An old codger from Faesulae, together with all sixty-one of his descendants, was officially received on the Capitol, made a sacrifice there, and the whole event was even recorded in the *acta*, the

official records (Pliny N.H. 7.60). In A.D. 9, when the Equestrians protested in the theater against the (already modified) marriage laws, especially the tax disadvantages linked with them, "he [Augustus] had the children of Germanicus brought in, held one in his arms, and had the others sit in their father's lap, and by his expression and gesture demonstrated that they should take the young man as their model" (Suetonius *Augustus* 34).

Poets in Augustus's circle were also asked to contribute to the campaign. They were meant to show how closely the dawning of the new age was bound up with and necessitated improved moral conduct. Horace's dry verses on the subject reveal how unwillingly he must have chummed them out.

Now the bull pastures safely in the fields.
Ceres nourishes the soil and gives blessed harvest.
Ships fly over the peaceful sea,
And marital fidelity shrinks from guilt.

The pure house is no longer sullied by adultery.
Law and custom have tamed unclean lust.
Mothers are proud of legitimate children.
Punishment follows on the heels of guilt.

carmen 4.5

Unlike the programs of religious renewal and *publica magnificentia*, the social legislation, with its penalties and pressure, was of course misguided. In particular, the call for more children, no matter how positively received, was a failure. Those whom Augustus particularly had in mind—the upper classes—simply shook their heads. There was much sarcastic comment, and people like Ovid could not resist the temptation of a little wicked parody. Basically, this attempt at regimentation and meddling in private affairs did not fit the style of the new regime. Augustus was trapped in his own sense of mission and in his vision of an inner renewal. It is a peculiar image: the cool, calculating realist turned indefatigable moral preacher, who at every opportunity recited *exempla* to be followed, which he had pulled out of ancient writers, then circulated them to his provincial governors (Suetonius *Augustus* 89). It was because he identified himself so fully with this program, which was nevertheless an utter failure, that he behaved so monotonously toward his daughter and granddaughter, the two Julias. Their loose living hit him where he was most vulnerable.

Those same artists who had so enthusiastically taken up the motifs of religious renewal apparently came up with nothing appropriate to this theme. Naturally on the Ara Pacis the children of the imperial family (un-



Fig. 124. Rome, Ara Pacis. Antonia minor with Drusus maior and their children; behind, other members of the Imperial house.

fortunately there were not many) were placed in the foreground (fig. 124), and later glass medallions with images of the imperial princes and their children were distributed in the army (fig. 125). But even this is deceptive. Themes like "the moral marriage" or "the blessings of children" could not be directly translated into visual terms. But, as we shall see, they did reappear in subliminal form in the imagery of the Golden Age, which would soon become so pervasive.

The Princes as Model

Augustus offered himself as the greatest *exemplum* and tried in his private life and public appearance to be a constant advertisement for the *mores maiorum*. If the reality did not match the image in *him*, then where else? His public style had a winning simplicity and dignity, from his gait to his manner of speech, from his friendly intercourse with the humblest people to his deference toward the Senators, and especially his discipline and self-

control. Visitors reported on the simplicity and old-fashioned modesty of his private rooms at home. It was said that he had himself melted down the last gold dinner plate, and it was well known that he had no use for luxury villas (though he did, however, retain all of Capri as his private refuge). He also let it be known that his toga, simply tailored and reserved in its tokens of high rank, was woven by hand by his wife and granddaughter (amid hundreds of imperial slaves).

The modesty and simplicity of the princeps's style are most evident with respect to the honors he continually received. We have already noticed how from ca. 20 B.C. virtually all monuments erected in his honor had a votive or religious character. The new style is especially striking in architecture. The modest proportions of the Ara Pacis Augustae (fig. 126) reproduce those of the Altar of the Twelve Gods in the Athenian Agora, of the fifth century B.C. The Ara Fortuna Reducis (19 B.C.) was probably smaller (fig. 127*a*), and other altars, erected later on, were certainly no larger. Yet these altars are the largest monuments erected by the Senate and people to honor Augustus after the "turning point." What a contrast to the Altar of Zeus in Pergamum, or to the emphatic self-aggrandizement of the *divi filius* in the 30s B.C.

Augustus's modesty and his continual references to the *mores maiorum* may have offered some reassurance to a few Senators, especially as there was no lack of indications that they would still have opportunities for fame and self-fulfillment beside the princeps in the *res publica restituta*. From 19 B.C. young aristocrats serving as mint master could again put the name and insignia of their families on coins. The praetor C. Naevius Sardinus could erect a huge inscription in the midst of the Forum recording that he had paid for the new pavement (ca. 10 B.C.). The impoverished M. Aemilius Lepidus was able, with financial help from the princeps, to restore the old



Fig. 126. Rome, Ara Pacis Augustae, 13–9 B.C. The actual altar is located in the interior of the marble enclosure.

Basilica of the Aemilii in the Forum, and Balbus the Younger was even permitted to celebrate a triumph and with the spoils build a theater, just like the princeps himself. (A Spaniard of undistinguished family, Balbus was clearly no competition.) Little wonder that men so privileged by Augustus reciprocated with appropriate acknowledgments. Lepidus decorated his basilica with decorated barbarians in expensive colored marbles, and most coins honored Augustus on both obverse and reverse.

One mint official even celebrated the new social legislation by depicting the unchaste Vestal Tarpeia, who betrayed Rome out of love for the enemy Sabine king, buried beneath the enemy's shields (fig. 127*b*). The mint master did not, however, invent the motif, for it seems to have been known to the poets in the circle of Maecenas. At any rate, Propertius surprisingly dedicated an entire elegy to the story of the unhappy Vestal (4.4) and interpreted it in this way, as an explicit example of what happens when religion and morality are despised.

A new portrait of Augustus was probably created around the time of the Secular Games (fig. 128). The changes appear minor, but convey an interesting message. In place of the artfully constructed countenance and deliberately classicistic forms of the years around 27 B.C. (cf. fig. 83), there now appear more marked physiognomic traits, recalling the early portraits (cf.



Fig. 125. Glass medallion for metal setting. Tiberius or Drusus minor with two princes. This military insignia refers explicitly to the next generation of the Imperial family.

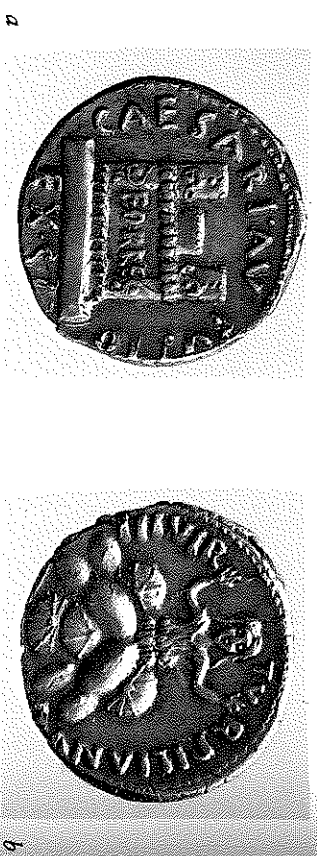


Fig. 127. a.) Denarius of Q. Rustius, 19 B.C. Altar of Fortuna Redux, set up on the occasion of Augustus's successful return from the East. b) Denarius of P. Petronius Turpilianus, Rome, 16 B.C. The unchaste Vestal Tarpeia is buried alive with shields. The image, in the context of Augustus's moral legislation, alludes to the *mores maiorum*.

fig. 39). In particular, the severe Polyclitan arrangement of the hair with forks and tongs is given up in favor of a more realistic coiffure. The beauty and agelessness of the face are preserved, but it is no longer that of an aloof, eternally youthful hero. The revised portrait was, however, only sporadically copied. Workshops continued to use the familiar type, for by then the aesthetically unsurpassed image of the eternal youth had precluded depictions of an aging and often sickly man.

The desire for a more modest portrait must also be understood in the context of Augustus's rejection of the old-style honorific statue in favor of one showing him veiled and togate. Even the handwoven toga was an acknowledgment of tradition, a promise to respect the *res publica*. For those who endowed such statues, it was a fulfillment of these expectations.

Toga and Stola

Augustus succeeded in making the toga a kind of unofficial Roman state dress and a symbol of the proper attitude, a reminder of their own worth to those who wore it on specific occasions. Horace goes so far as to mention the toga in the same breath with the sacred guarantors of the Empire (*Odes* 3.5.10f.).

In the Late Republic, the cut and design of the toga were essentially the same as those of a Greek himation (cf. fig. 10a). But now, probably due to the example of Augustus and his advisers (cf. fig. 10d), more elaborate models became fashionable, which had to be worn differently, in a more complicated arrangement with *sinus* and *balteus*. This produced a much more impressive effect, but putting it on and wearing it correctly were rather la-



Fig. 128. Portrait of Augustus, after a proto-type probably created about 17 B.C.

borious. Over the years artists evolved explanatory models of the proper way to wear such a toga. The voluminous material was shaped into an aesthetic structure, the play of folds entirely concealing the body beneath (figs. 129, 130). The symbolic meaning of the garment became more important than its functional aspect or outward appearance.

Freedmen were among the earliest exponents of the new fashion, as their grave reliefs show. For them the toga was a sign of the citizenship they had struggled so hard for, the symbol of their success in life. But in general people were reluctant to wear this uncomfortable and easily soiled white outfit. Augustus had to give them a push.

He took pains to revive the dress and the form of public appearance of Rome's forefathers and to honor them. When he saw a group of people at a public assembly wearing dark everyday clothes, he rose and cried out, "Look, the Romans, masters of the world, people of the toga" (*Ver-gil Aeneid* 1.282). He commanded the aediles to allow no one into the Forum or its vicinity unless he had removed his cloak and wore a toga. (Suetonius *Augustus* 40)

The same rule obtained in the theater (Suetonius *Augustus* 44). But at least on certain official occasions the princeps was anxious that the actual

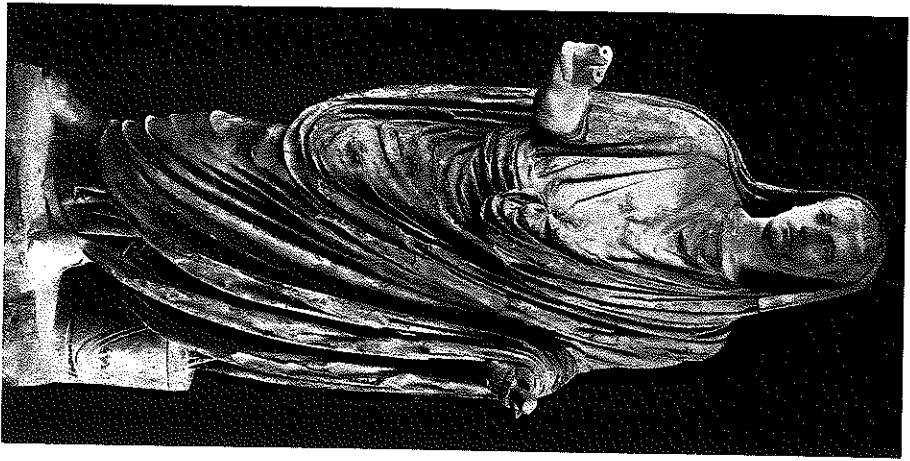


Fig. 129. Statue of one of the leading men of *Fortinae*. A new, more voluminous toga is now in fashion.



Fig. 130. Statue of a man with "Senator's shoes." He displays two wax ancestor portraits. He is most likely a *novus homo*.

appearance of the Roman people approximate the vision of the poets. As a result, the sight of the white *togati* in the theater and in the popular assembly must have been a proud one. And this in turn will surely have had an effect on the individual participants. The regulations on the wearing of the toga were only part of many similar measures. At the same time "true Romans" with full citizen rights received various privileges—in the theater, when there were handouts of money, and at the distribution of grain (membership in the *plebs frumentaria* was limited and strictly controlled)—which bolstered their pride in belonging to the *populus Romanus*.

In any event, the case of the toga offers a particularly instructive example of the varieties of interaction that gave rise to the rich vocabulary of the new nictorial language. First the poet evoked a nictorial image of the



Fig. 131. Statue with *stola*, the long overgarment with shoulder straps that designates married Roman women and was supposed to "protect" them (cf. fig. 253).

tional epic. This led to a disturbing comparison with real life and in this instance provoked a political response from Augustus himself. In general, however, the process will have been more complex, the inspiration less poetic, and the intermediary stages more numerous.

Married women also had a special form of dress that was meant to reflect the new spirit of morality in Rome. This was the *stola*, a long, sleeveless overgarment with narrow shoulders, which probably carried woven stripes indicating the matron's social status, as on the *toga praetexta*.

This garment is frequently found on honorary statues and portrait busts of the Early Imperial period (fig. 131), sometimes in combination with a woolen fillet (*vitta*) wound in the hair. Originally the *stola* would have stood out from the *tunica* and mantle through the application of paint. In the context of the social legislation the *stola* became a symbol of female virtue and modesty. For the dignified matron, wearing the *stola* was not only an honor but a "protection from unwanted attentions." Ovid, who would later ruefully acknowledge himself the "teacher of hideous adultery" (*obsceni doctor adulteri* [*Tristia* 2.212]), wittily makes fun of this tacit significance of the garment. The first few verses of his "Art of Love" are full of ironic allusions to official morality as made manifest in the *vitta* and *stola*:

Away with you, fillets (*vittae*), you sweet tokens of shame;
 Away with you, *stola*, trailing down to the feet.
 I sing of carefree love, of legal thievery.

It must have been hard enough for upper-class women to exchange their elegant gowns of transparent fabric for the plain, shirtlike *stola*. Now too, as Ovid would have them say, with the new legislation of morality they must stay outside the bounds of the “art of love.” The young man after an amorous adventure, according to Ovid, had to limit himself to lower-class women not legally married, young freedwomen, slave girls, or foreigners. Ovid was surely not the only one who drew the inevitable consequences of the morality laws.

Chapter 5

The Mythical Foundations of the New Rome

AUREA AETAS

After ten years of religious and moral renewal, the festivals and sacrifices, buildings and images, now visible everywhere in Rome, began to take effect. Confidence in the ability of the restored Republic to stand firm and faith in its leader grew apace. Attempts to overthrow him had failed, his military prowess had been tested against the Cantabri and Parthians, and the peace within Rome had proved itself a stable one. The successes of the new regime had had an impact on every individual. It was now time to give permanent expression to this mood of optimism, to create a new imagery that would transcend reality and eternalize the happiness of the present moment. The state needed a myth, and here again Augustus was able to latch onto something that was already in the air before he came along. For years people had fantasized about the imminent dawning of a new “Saturnian” age of happiness. Another comet was expected in the year 17 B.C., so what better time simply to proclaim that the long awaited new *saeculum* had arrived? From May 30 to June 3 the great Secular Games took place, heralding the beginning of the new age.

The Golden Age Is Proclaimed

It is fascinating to consider how systematically the public was prepared for the event. First the disgrace with the Parthians was made good, then the Senate purged, finally the laws on morals passed in 18 B.C. *Virtus, mos maiorum*, and the blessings of children became the key leitmotifs of the festival and of the new imagery arising from it. From the official records of the festival, happily preserved in an inscription, and from Horace’s poem for the occasion, the *carmen saeculare*, we get a good idea of the planning and the activities of the various participants. The *XV viri sacris facinndis* formulated the guidelines under the direction of Augustus and Agrippa, who had had themselves elected *magistri* of the *collegium* for the year 17 B.C. C. Ateius Capito, a specialist in sacred law, translated these guidelines into a complicated ritual, undoubtedly making extensive use of Varro’s writ-