Re-creation and commemoration: Imperial messaging in the redefinition of the Roman landscape

Camille Victoria Delgado
Vassar College, cadelgado@vassar.edu

Follow this and additional works at: http://digitalwindow.vassar.edu/senior_capstone

Recommended Citation
RE-CREATION AND COMMEMORATION
Imperial Messaging in the Redefinition of the Roman Landscape

Camille Victoria Liboro Delgado
Greek and Roman Studies Senior Thesis
Fall Semester 2015
Vassar College
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## INTRODUCTION 1

## CHAPTER 1: Imperator 10

I. Overview 10
II. Temples 15
III. Administrative Buildings 18
IV. Public Entertainment Works 20
V. Victory Monuments 23
VI. Public Infrastructure Works 27
VII. Augustus’ Mausoleum 29
VIII. Conclusion 33
*Appendix* 36

## CHAPTER 2: Il Duce 38

I. Overview 38
II. Redesigning Roma 41
III. Foro Mussolini 50
IV. Esposizione Universale Roma 56
V. Conclusion 60
*Appendix* 63

## CONCLUSION 70

## BIBLIOGRAPHY 75

- Primary and Ancient 75
- Secondary 76
INTRODUCTION
AUGUSTUS AND MUSSOLINI

The city of Rome has a very distinct, and widely accepted architectural aesthetic. It houses the Colosseum, the Vatican—only ever represented by St. Peter's Basilica—, the Forum—usually a composite shot of the Arch of Septimius Severus, the Temple of Vespasian and Titus, and the Temple of Saturn, all in front of the Chiesa dei Santi Luca e Martina—, the Trevi fountain, and the Tiber lit up at night with St. Peter's dome in the background. These iconic images, which will immediately surface in any country's Google Image search for "Rome," define the public perception of the Roman landscape.

One of the greatest appeals of Rome is the visual and tangible presence of its long history in the midst of a modern city. The widespread amalgamation of time periods evinced by distinct building styles is an unusual reality that makes Rome so romanticized and admired. The exemplifications of Rome's architectural aesthetic only primarily represent, however, two phases of Roman history—the Imperial era, and the Renaissance. The implication of this, then, is that the city's multiphase existence is simplified into three distinct periods defining a city with 3000 years of rich history: the Rome of the Caesars, and the Rome of the Popes, both in conversation with the modern landscape. These three phases represent three distinct nations or empires—that of the ancient Romans, the Catholic Church, and the unified Italian state.

I spent half of the year 2014 in Rome. Personally, I was intrigued by the way in which history was so well integrated into daily life, and how the Italians treated the historical monuments as if they were merely a part of the modern city. By the time I had eaten in a restaurant built into the underground remains of the Teatro di Pompeo,\(^1\) I,

\(^1\) Da Pancrazio, Piazza del Biscione, 92, 00189 Roma, Italy.
too, had begun to accept and even overlook the city's characteristic hybridity. There were moments, however, when I would be considering a historical monument as the ancient site that it was, and I thought about the motivation behind the monument's creation, and deliberated over the reason for its continued existence. The ancient site, for all respects and purposes, could simply have been absorbed by history and the development of the city. It was in those moments that I began to consider the importance of the relationship between the preserved physicality of Rome and its patronage throughout history, and by extension, the relationship between the city's architecture and its character.

Why do relationships like these two matter? Well, Rome of today wouldn't look the way it does without somebody designing it as such—exposing monuments they consider important, and facilitating movement through the city in a manner that would force continual contact with historical sites. Those choices are strategic, and deliver a poignant message of a shared Roman history on shared Roman soil. Furthermore, by allowing the hybrid architecture of the city to define its character, Rome is viewed worldwide as an influential and artistically pivotal city with deep, historical roots stretching beyond those of most countries. For a city providing the home of the most important figure in worldwide Catholic faith, the Pope, delivering a universal message of historical eminence—particularly in light of the fact that Catholicism prevailed over the powerful pagan empire—is especially advantageous. The Roman Catholic Empire, however, lies beyond my scope. When considering Imperial and Modern Rome, the two crucial figures making those restructuring choices, are Augustus, first Emperor of the Roman Empire; and Mussolini, leader of the Fascist Regime in the unified Italian state.
AUGUSTUS AND MUSSOLINI: A SCHOLARLY REVIEW

In the academic world, in depth studies of Augustus and Mussolini are abundant. Both figures left so much material in their wake that numerous books, articles, and studies are dedicated to, not their complete works, but segments of their physical material. Alison E. Cooley, for example, has an incredibly thorough introduction on, and commentary and translation of, Augustus’ Res Gestae, following publication traditions of scholars like Jean Gagé, Theodore Mommsen, P.A. Brunt and J.M. Moore, and John Scheid. Paul Zanker wrote, The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus to explore the emperor’s visual language as a result of the fundamental change in the political system. Renzo de Felice, out of possible reverence or deep scholarly interest, penned an extensive four-volume political biography of Il Duce (1883-1940) in Italian. Mussolini’s building projects and their emphasis on romanità (literally translated as ‘Romanness’), is the extensive focus in Borden W. Painter, Jr’s book, Mussolini’s Rome: Rebuilding the Eternal City, and Spiro Kostof’s, “The Emperor and the Duce: The planning of Piazzale Augusto Imperatore in Rome.” Considering the major impact both rulers had on the city and history of Rome, it is understandable that many scholars have sought to contribute to a greater understanding of Rome and Augustus—of Rome and Mussolini.

On my part, I have drawn considerably from the works of Zanker, Cooley, and Painter, as well as ancient and modern primary source documents from Suetonius and Mussolini, as they all provided great insights into the physical material I sought to cover. Paul Zanker argues that the dissolution of the old Republican order was facilitated by the introduction of Hellenistic culture and the power of visual imagery, particularly in light of the “conflict and contradiction in the imagery of the dying

---

2 Paul Zanker, translated by Alan Shapiro, The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1988). This point is more clearly stated in his conclusion, on page 335.
Republic.” His book investigates Augustus’ capitalization on these contradictions through his program of cultural renewal, the reintroduction of Roman mythological foundations to public rhetoric, and the propagation of his imperial myth and cult. Alison Cooley also discusses the widespread proliferation of Augustus’ imperial cult by tracking the archaeological remains of the Res Gestae in the eastern Roman province of Galatia. She investigates the Res Gestae as an archaeological object—supporting the understanding of its use as a tool for Imperial promotion both in Augustus’ time, and Mussolini’s—, and its textual implications—subtle changes in traditionally Republican phrases and specific word choices allowed Augustus to more clearly define his reign and his intentions. Painter’s book argues that it was during the second decade of the fascist era (1932-1942) that the promotion of romanità reached its peak—Mussolini’s constructions coincided with the increase in public writings and speeches revealing seemingly crucial links with the ancient Romans and twentieth century Italians. Painter goes through Mussolini’s various building projects, emphasizing the Mostra Augustea (Augustan Exhibition of the Roman Spirit) of 1937 as Mussolini’s main tool for drawing comparisons between himself and Augustus. As for the ancient and primary source documents, Suetonius provides a biographical work from the Imperial period narrating

---

5 He detaches from the epitaph tradition by writing the Res Gestae in the first person (Cooley, 30-31). He also inserts his political position “in the traditional framework of the state” (Cooley, 25). Additionally, he includes the customary, senatus populusque Romanus (the senate and people of Rome) four times in the text (Cooley, 25) before breaking from tradition with, senatus et equester ordo populusque Romanus universus (the senate and equestrian order and people of Rome; Res Gestae Divi Augusti 35.1). Cooley postulates that this conveys the extensive restructuring of Roman society under the guidance of Augustus, the pater patriae (Father of the Country/Fatherland; Cooley, 25).
the life of Augustus. Suetonius was an ancient historian writing during the end of the first century AD, over half a century after Augustus’ death. His biography of Augustus was part of a larger biographic body of work on the twelve Caesars. He chronicled Augustus’ life as he had heard and understood it, from the history of the family, to Augustus’ death and will. It is not strictly a primary source text, as it concerns Augustus’ reign as someone living in the Flavian Dynasty understood it, but it can be considered a primary source when consulted as an example of the treatment of Augustus by an ancient historian. It is beneficial when investigating the impact of Augustus’ rule, as well as when viewing the perceptions of the emperor only truly realized through his relics and architectural legacy. The various collections of Mussolini’s works, including his speeches and autobiography (My Rise and Fall), provided valuable insight into the intentions of Il Duce, in a similar way that the Res Gestae provided insight into the intentions of Augustus Imperator. These scholars do not represent the broad range of works dealing with either Augustus or Mussolini, nor do they by any means represent the majority of the publications I consulted to draw my comparisons and conclusions. They do, however, represent an important body of sources upon which this project drew in order to examine the topics of patronage, architecture, political communication, and schematic urban transformation—specifically in the hands of Augustus and Mussolini.

7 Augustus, Res Gestae Divi Augusti 4.1.
AUGUSTUS AND MUSSOLINI: PATRONAGE AND ARCHITECTURAL PROGRAMS

Augustus’ need to maneuver a Republican society in stringent opposition to monarchical rule served as the stimulus behind the intricate messaging he used in almost all of his visible works. As historians from Tacitus to Edward Gibbon have shown—monarchy was a form of government that frequently lead to tyranny.⁸ Augustus sought to mask autocratic tendencies, while also subtly persuading the Romans to accept his de facto rule. Augustus validated his assumption of power, not only by connecting his lineage to divine sources, but also by securing his origins to Rome’s origins, thus playing off of Roman reverence of their deeper, glorious history. The commemoration and use of an esteemed, shared history of which Augustus was a part, was a theme in Augustan messaging techniques, particularly in his conscious efforts to relate his doings to various precedents. By outwardly espousing Roman traditions, Augustus remains within the context of Republican society, but through calculated deviations from tradition with innovations of his own, Augustus is able to consolidate and communicate his power.

Benito Mussolini implemented the same themes of commemoration and re-creation of history when attempting to match modern achievements with Imperial ones—particularly those of Augustus. Augustus’ approach is Rome-oriented, with his emphasis on displaying his Augustan peace and the grandeur of his city as the culmination of the Romans’ deeper, common history. Mussolini, on the other hand, manipulates Imperial tropes to present himself and fascist rule as the culmination of the grand, shared history of the Italian people beginning with, and focused on, the Roman

⁸ In his Annals, Tacitus chronicled the history of the Roman Empire under Tiberius to Nero (14 – 68 AD), a line of increasingly unsound Julian emperors. Edward Gibbon is the famed author of The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.
Empire. While both Augustus and Mussolini defined their reigns by redefining the landscape of the Roman city with buildings projects invoking the highly regarded history of Rome, Mussolini’s adoption of approach is shallower than Augustus’. Mussolini capitalizes on the success of the Augustan Empire, using it to reinforce his fascist reign and fascist ideology, as well as promote himself as *Il Duce*. Any self-promotion in Augustus’ messaging is characteristically subtle, and disguised with reminders of Republican precedents and recognizable historical or religious imagery.

The Rome of Augustus is the Rome that Mussolini uncovered. Ironically, the Rome that we conceptualize as Rome, while orchestrated by Mussolini in the interests of Mussolini, is not Mussolini’s Rome. Augustus was so grand in his constructions, so intricate in his detail and messaging, that his impact on Rome has endured over two millennia. He presents and provides history, mythology, political power, public space, impressive architecture, and personal achievement in almost all of his works, inevitably securing his place in the physical remains of the Imperial city. By choosing to entrench the fascist image in Imperial architecture, Mussolini tethered a new political system to a glorious historical era that would ultimately overshadow that system, particularly after the *damnatio memoriae* that occurred after the fall of fascists in 1943, and his own execution in 1945. In Mussolini’s haste and obsession to expose Augustus and Imperial Rome, the man himself, *Il Duce*, shallowly applied techniques similar to Augustus’—blatantly promoting his image through associations with impressive architecture without presenting a thorough, culturally understood narrative of history, mythology, and developing political power. Because of this, Augustus is unaffected by association with Mussolini, and *Il Duce* is lost to him.

---

Twenty years of trying to set himself up as the new coming of Augustus, and Mussolini indisputably affixes Augustus in the modern day rhetoric of Rome, even becoming secondary to the Roman emperor. While the irony is palpable, it is necessary to deeply analyze the ways in which both rulers go about impressing themselves in the Roman landscape. The extents to which either was ultimately successful can only be understood following a thorough examination of both.

This investigation primarily looks at Augustus and Mussolini’s architectural renovations to the Roman landscape, rather than their textual, numismatic, media-related, or otherwise non-architectural physical contributions. I argue that Augustus intended to cement his rule in the physical landscape of Rome by basing his architectural renovations within the framework of a larger sense of history. In conjunction with this, I substantiate the claim that Mussolini, while also intending to impress himself on the city of Rome, is limited by his one-dimensional method of evoking Augustus at almost every turn.

The Augustus chapter provides an overview of Augustus’ reign and a contextualization of the social and political atmosphere of Rome in his time. In this chapter I briefly cover some of Augustus’ non-architectural material culture in order to display his comprehensive messaging program, but quickly turn towards a deeper analysis of his temples, administrative buildings, public entertainment works, victory monuments, and public infrastructure works. Moreover, I include his creation of the Mausoleum—a unique example of his monumental architecture—in order to explore blatant dynastical perpetuation despite Republican concerns, and the intricate manner with which he contextualizes it.
The following chapter looks at Mussolini and his work in consideration of Imperial Rome, and in the context of Augustan messaging. The Mussolini chapter yields a general understanding of Mussolini’s fascist policies and intentions for his propagation of Roman history. I analyze the ways in which Mussolini’s reorganization of the city and presentation of its monuments diverts from Augustus’ architectural program of renewing Roman traditions. I also explain the Imperial imagery involved in his creation of the Foro Mussolini and the Esposizione Universale Roma. Through that explanation, I show that, in his preoccupation with simply displaying Augustus solely as a figure of power, Mussolini ignores his political messaging and role as a savvy politician navigating Republican society and deeply embedding a new political structure in the process.

My argument illustrates that we have inherited two models of renovating a historical Rome—one that is diligently profound, and one that is dynamically superficial. One dictator absorbs and contextualizes himself using history and historical figures; another views the two as instruments for power, not subjects of nuance. Augustus and Mussolini make the crucial choices that are instrumental in redefining the Roman landscapes in their times. It is due to their deliberate choices that the modern city of Rome has a very distinct, and widely accepted architectural aesthetic that is based in an understanding of the historical hybridity within the modern city. Through the meticulous, though not exhaustive, investigation of certain projects in Augustus and Mussolini’s respective ruling periods, I hope to further clarify the architectural ways in which the autocrats go about achieving their intentions for their rule, while navigating the historical, social, and political contexts in which they live.
CHAPTER 1

IMPERATOR

I. OVERVIEW

"I found Rome of clay; I leave it to you of marble."¹ After Augustus consolidated his power by defeating Marc Antony in the Battle of Actium in 31 BC, he systematically sought to redress the prior political organization of the Roman state.

In the Republican era, the Roman Senate occasionally granted military generals who had achieved great military victories the supreme honor of hosting a triumph. A triumph was a city-wide parade in which the successful general would be drawn in a chariot through the streets of Rome, accompanied by his acquired riches, surviving troops, and captured enemies.² The whole ceremony "became a by-word for extravagant display"³ of the military individual and imperial conquest. When Augustus came into power, he began to restrict imperium (power) and the right to a military triumph to the ruling house itself⁴— by 19 BC,⁵ the tradition of the triumph had been absorbed into Augustus' imperial cult system.

In order to promote himself whilst remaining culturally sensitive, Augustus revived and promoted Roman values of modesty while proliferating his name and presence in public rhetoric. According to Wallace-Hadrill, Roman domestic architecture

¹ Cassius Dio LVI.30.3-4: "τὴν Ῥώμην γηίνην παραλαβὼν λιθίνην ὑμῖν καταλείπω.’ ” From the Loeb edition, translated by Earnest Cary and Herbert B. Foster. Suetonius corroborates this in his biography of Augustus: "Urbem neque pro maiestate imperii ornatam et inundationibus incendiisque obnoxiam excoluit adeo, ut iure sit gloriatus marmoream se relinquere, quam latericiam accepiisset” (Suetonius, Life of Augustus 28.3).
³ Beard, The Roman Triumph, 1.
⁴ Ibid., 288.
⁵ The last triumph listed on the Fasti Triumphales (published in 12 BC) is attributed to L. Cornelius Balbus in 19 BC.
was “obsessionally [sic.] concerned with distinctions of social rank,” particularly within the social space of the house. One of the most important aspects of this is the intentional design of the line of sight from the entryway of a house—a person could look through the atrium and view a potential line of clients waiting for their turn with their patron. This would send the message that the patron was wealthy enough to have multiple clients, and promoted their societal status. Their status was further emphasized by the elaborate decorative schemes that were meant to “present [an individual] to [the public gaze] in the best light.” Although the Romans preferred to believe that they abhorred private luxury and only dedicated their resources to public splendor, their private wealth was “all too ostentatiously displayed.” In an effort to shift statewide the emphasis against ostentation within the home and back to older Roman values of modesty, Augustus introduced public games and festivals, and systematically funded the development of public buildings for both worship and re-creation. The self-aggrandizement of competing generals, particularly in the form of a triumph, was replaced by the communal veneration of a ruler related to the gods; private ostentation

---


7 Wallace-Hadrill, “The Social Structure of the Roman House,” 46. These decorative schemes would include expensive mosaics and highly detailed paintings depicting historical and mythological scenes, attesting to the education and worldliness of the owner.

8 Cicero wrote in his defense of Lucius Murena: “Odit populus Romanus privatam luxuriam, publicam magnificentiam diligat” (*Pro Murena*, Section 76). Cornelus Nepos praised Atticus as a good citizen because he was a ‘minimus aedificator,’ Pliny the Younger commends Trajan for retrenching in his buildings, Pliny the Elder maintained that expensive wall-art was insensible, and Varro detested the practice of dining in picture galleries (All examples from Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 44-45. Nepos *Atticus* 13.1; Pliny *Panegyricus* 51.2; Pliny *Natural Histories* XXXV.118; Varro *De Re Rustica* 1.59.2). This characteristic Roman viewpoint is constantly reiterated in literary works from both the Republican and Imperial Era, signifying a consistent cultural consciousness. Whether the architecture and archaeology of the periods reflect such consciousnesses—they do not, is less relevant.

by magnificent public games and festivals (*publica magnificentia*); and neglect of the gods by “a religious and spiritual renewal.”

Before Augustus came into power, Rome physically bore “no resemblance to the capital city of a vast empire”—this drastic shift from the Republican state required a new visual vocabulary, but one intricate enough that Augustus could not be condemned for restoring the monarchy so stigmatized by the Republic.

Augustus follows traditions of the imperial cult and monumentalization, while adhering to Roman beliefs and religious systems, in order to remain within the safety of a historical precedent and function in a Republican context; he deviates from those same traditions in order to cultivate the themes of Augustan triumph, peace, and power. The themes of Augustan triumph, peace, and power, may be traced through many relics and works of the Augustan era. The material of his era includes art, literature, poetry, architecture, coinage, engravings, and policy. Each of these sectors includes enough material to which a scholar could dedicate entire books. In regards to Augustan poetry, T. Woodman and D. West wrote,

> There can have been few ages in which poets were so intimately and affectionately connected with the holders of political power, few regimes with a richer iconography, few poets so profoundly moved by a political ideal so equipped to sing its praises with subtlety, humor, learning, and rapture.

Woodman and West portray the profound impact of Augustus and the importance of power and art during his reign. Other physical materials likewise carry similar themes: An *intaglio* from the late 30s BC depicting Octavian as Neptune (Appendix A), a *denarius* of Octavian addressing the troops (Appendix B), the *Imperator Augustus* from Prima

---

11 Ibid., 19.
Porta (currently in the Vatican Museums), and the *Res Gestae divi Augusti*. It is the messaging in his abundant architectural programs, however, that most reflect his agenda in restructuring the Roman state: to deeply embed the foundations of a new political structure while functioning within Republican and widely accepted historical contexts.

Augustus funded a variety of construction and repair projects during his reign. These projects can be categorized into specific architectural types: temples, administrative buildings, public entertainment works, victory monuments, and public infrastructure works. His temples demonstrate the religious revival he pursued; the administrative buildings, his political reorganization of the Roman state; his victory monuments, testimonies to his success as a general and a ruler; the public infrastructure projects, demonstrations of his patronage to the state; and his public entertainment complexes, evidence of his devotion to the Romans and Roman interests, as well as displays of his cultural understanding.

Augustus’ family likewise funded and dedicated multiple monuments during his reign. His stepson, Tiberius Julius Caesar, became more involved in the renovation of the Empire during the turn of the Common Era, rebuilding the Temple of Concordia in 7 BC and the Temple of Castor in 6 AD.\(^{13}\) One of Augustus’ most successful generals, T. Statilius Taurus, constructed the first stone amphitheater built in Rome.\(^{14}\) Augustus’ friend and son-in-law, Marcus Vispanius Agrippa, had many building programs, the most notable being his restoration of the Pantheon and other works in the Campus

---

\(^{13}\) Lawrence Richardson Jr., *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 75.

Martius, as well as his repairs of the aqueducts supplying Rome.\textsuperscript{15} Augustus had a clear agenda in his restructuring of Rome, and the heavy involvement of his familial circle in the rebuilding of Rome exhibits an establishment of dynasty and the promotion of an heir. While Augustus likely had influence over many of those building projects, it is imperative to separate and identify the works with which he wanted his own name associated. Very significantly, there are no temples among Marcus Agrippa's building projects save for the Pantheon, which was intended for the Imperial Cult.\textsuperscript{16} Having his architectural program carried out by others of his family displays a preoccupation with dynastical stability in light of the previously Republican population. It also presents a conscious distribution of work meant to reduce the demonstration of obvious power and wealth that Augustus had as an individual \textit{de facto} ruling the state. The distribution of this work presents Augustus in a position of religious importance, which further connects him to one of the most important cultural aspects of Roman society. Because of the deliberation of his messaging in the architectural undertakings attributed to him, this paper will only concern Augustus' own constructions and projects, not those of his dynasty.

Through the adoption of Roman myth as proof of divine lineage, frequent acknowledgement of Republican and Greek precedents in his architectural projects, and exhibition of an understanding of Roman cultural norms and beliefs, Augustus delicately and masterfully maneuvers the tensions involved with having a \textit{de facto} autocracy in a society vehemently opposed to the idea.

\textsuperscript{15} Richardson, \textit{A New Topographical Dictionary}, 16-19.
\textsuperscript{16} Zanker, \textit{The Power of Images}, 104. Agrippa restored a religious cult dedicated to Augustus, thus providing an example of public activity to be emulated.
II. TEMPLES

In vowing and dedicating temples, Augustus follows Republican traditions to continue being viewed as the restorer of the Republic after civil war, yet he follows Hellenistic traditions to evoke imperial power in the context of religion. Octavian vowed the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, the second temple to Apollo in Rome, while campaigning against Sextus Pompey in 36 BC. He only completed and dedicated the temple in 28 BC. Cassius Dio wrote that the land upon which the Temple was erected, which had originally been owned by Caesar for the purpose of building his residence, had been struck by lightning and was therefore consecrated ground. Augustus is able to capitalize on divine favor by claiming that his family’s land had received a sign from the gods and by subsequently consecrating the land, making that notion public. The pattern of claiming divine favor is repeated in his other works, a notable example being the deification of Caesar and the consequent Temple of Divus Iulius, completed and dedicated by Octavian in 29 BC. The commemoration and emphasis on his adoptive father’s god-status supports Octavian’s power in Roman society, as religion and politics went very much hand in hand in the Republican era. The Temple of Apollo Palatinus is particularly important, however, because of its striking proximity to Octavian’s private residence on the Palatine hill, and Octavian’s orchestrated associations with the god. Octavian had a history of invoking the god Apollo, a memorable example of which was during the Battle of Philippi (42 BC), where “Apollo” constituted the battle cry from both warring factions—the murderers and the avengers of Caesar. Octavian’s side

---

18 Cassius Dio XLIX.15.5.
won the battle, and that outcome “clearly”21 displayed Apollo’s support of Caesar’s heir. Soon after, Octavian began wearing Apollo’s wreath more frequently and often on public occasions, thus increasingly reinforcing direct identification with the god.22 By relying on the importance of religion when reinforcing the bond between deity and de facto ruler, Octavian strengthened his position and lessened the public avenues for criticism of his rule.

In his choice of living space, Augustus channels Hellenistic traditions in order to create a sense of enlightened continuity and individuality, but remains steadfastly connected to Republican precedents so as to mask the overtly imperial grandiosity. The idea of locating a residence next to a temple was widespread amongst previous Hellenistic kings, originating in the period following the Battle of Naulochoi.23 Pergamum was famed for its Great Altar, and Alexandria for the Sema—a prominent characteristic of Hellenistic palaces was that “royal space was in large part ceremonial space where the ritual performances connected with kingship and empire could be performed.”24 By following the choices of Hellenistic kings, he reinforces the theme of Augustan power with symbols associated with those eastern monarchs. The religious aspect integrated in his emulation of the Hellenistic kings also suggests that the gods supported his political standing. Additionally, Augustus also located his home25 on a site

22 Ibid., 50.
23 Ibid., 51.
25 Cassius Dio wrote that the public offered to build Octavian’s house from public funds, as he had relinquished part of his own land for the creation of the temple (Cassius Dio XLIX.15.5). This choice signaled honor, but more importantly, it drew from Republican precedents: “Houses at public expense were said to have been granted to various Valerii in the early Republic” (Olivier Hekster and John Rich, “Octavian and the Thunderbolt: The Temple of Apollo Palatinus and Roman Traditions of Temple Building,” The Classical Quarterly New Series Vol. 56 No.1, May, 2006, p. 152). Olivier Hekster
known for bearing Romulus’ hut. This was a powerful and conscious association with Rome’s earliest past, which he continues in the artistic schemes of his period. In maintaining a subtle connection with Romulus geographically, as well as modeling his property after eastern monarchs, Augustus evokes kingship and imperial power without revealing it outright.

Augustus funded the construction and dedication of the Temple to Apollo on his own, which displayed a revival of Republican customs. Multiple temples in the Republican period were built from a military commander’s spoils of war (manubiae). These manubial temples were often vowed contractually, usually in the midst of conflict as possible incentives for various divinities to assist the generals’ causes. Augustus follows the republican precedent of dedicating temples in order to maintain the guise of restoring the Republic after civil war, but locates his residence next to the temple in order to reinforce Augustan power through continued associations with a deity.

and John Rich claim that Augustus likely declined the offer of a house at public expense in order to appear modest, “while ensuring that he continued to live in proximity to the projected sanctuary” (Hekster and Rich, “Octavian and the Thunderbolt,” 152).

26 Octavian had originally thought of calling himself Romulus, but that name was far to provocative of kingship (Zanker 1988, 98). To read more in depth on the symbolic imagery of Augustus’ reign, please read Paul Zanker’s, The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1988).

27 The Temple of Bellona in the Circus Flaminius was vowed by Appius Claudius Caecus in 296 BC during a battle with the Etruscans and the Samnites (Adam Ziolkowski, The Temples of Mid-Republican Rome and Their Historical and Topographical Context, 1992, p. 18). The political structure in which the elite Romans lived provided an impetus for the development of self-promotion, resulting in the contentious use of visual media as the city became the stage on which cultural artefacts could become tools in claiming political power and prestige (Steven H. Rutledge, Ancient Rome as a Museum: Power, Identity, and the Culture of Collecting, 2012, p. 124). The Republican temples at the Largo Argentina are clustered together to make strategic, politically driven, programmatic ensembles near and around “the triumphal staging ground of the Circus Flaminius” (Ann L. Kuttner, The Roman Republic, 2004, p. 300).
III. ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDINGS

The Comitium was the earliest place of Roman public assembly, and it was located between the Curia Hostilia and the Forum Romanum. It remained closely connected with the Curia Hostilia throughout republican history, and until the second century BC, it was the location in which the Roman tribes regularly assembled to pass laws. These mandated spaces designed for the governance of the state of Rome were especially important to the Romans, as they symbolized the rejection of all aspects of monarchical rule that their history taught them to detest. Nearing the time of Augustus, the Comitium had lost most of its importance and its public assemblies had been relocated to the Saepta Julia. Although the older Republican space had lost its importance, its significance and connection with the earlier Republic had not been entirely forgotten, evinced by its continued existence in whatever dilapidated state until Augustus’ time.

In the year of his death, Julius Caesar began the construction of the Curia Julia. Augustus continued its construction and completed the building by 29 B.C. Augustus promotes his lineage by continuing the work of his adoptive father, and more importantly, he more closely aligns himself with the Roman Republic. The Curia Julia

28 Richardson, A New Topographical Dictionary, 97.
29 Ibid. 97.
30 Ibid. 98. The Saepta Julia was a republican voting precinct originally conceived by Julius Caesar, but it was ultimately completed by Marcus Vispanius Agrippa, who dedicated it to Augustus and the Julian family (Paul W. Jacobs II and Diane Atally Conlin, Campus Martius: The Field of Mars in the Life of Ancient Rome, 2014, p. 90). The Diribitorium was a building at the south end of the Saepta Julia where the votes that were cast in the Saepta were counted by the election officials (Richardson, A New Topographical Dictionary, 109). Agrippa began construction in conjunction with the Saepta, but Augustus finished construction in 7 B.C. (Richardson, A New Topographical Dictionary, 110). Agrippa likewise originally constructed the Pantheon, and placed statues of Augustus and himself on the porch. Augustus declined permission to name the building, Augusteum, but it appears that the design of the temple was in honor of Augustus’ claimed divine forbears, Mars and Venus (Richardson 1992, 283).
31 Richardson, A New Topographical Dictionary, 103.
32 Augustus, Res Gestae 19; Cassius Dio Li.22.1.
was meant to serve the same function as the *Curia Hostilia*, which—as previously mentioned—remained closely connected to the original Republican staple, the *Comitium*. Although Augustus introduces a revised political system in which he is the *de facto* head of state, he uses his public construction of administrative buildings to reinforce the idea that he is revisiting earlier Republican history and situating his rule in the context of older, traditional systems. He is trying to imply that his rule is not new and is in fact part of a tried and tested structure of government created by the Roman people in the interest of the Roman people.

One of the most impressive building projects that Augustus undertook was the creation of the *Forum Augusti*, which included the Temple of Mars Ultor. The project was funded with the spoils of war, echoing the Republican practice of manubial temples. Suetonius writes that the forum itself was meant to provide space for law courts, but Cassius Dio’s list of activities decreed to take place in the forum indicate that the forum’s primary purpose was as a foreign office for administering the provinces. Its adjacent position to the *Forum Iulium* displays a conscious association with Caesar’s work, and also provides a parallel to it. The colonnade of the *Forum Augusti* was articulated by a row of caryatids flanking panels with shields depicting heads of divinities in high relief (Fig. 1)—the caryatids were reduced scale replicas of the CARYATIDS FROM THE *ERECHTHEION* IN ATHENS. These replicas display the markedly Greek style of dress and hair design in an important Roman space, which would have made them distinctive regardless of whether or not the general population could

identify their originals. Augustus uses the manifestly Greek architectural aspects to associate the Republican Forum space with an ancient Greek temple dedicated to Poseidon and Athena, sending the message of Hellenic grandeur, and bringing to mind the Athenian rejection of monarchical government.

Through his completion of the Curia Julia and the Forum Augusti, Augustus promotes the older Republican form of governance, emphasizing his role in bringing back the preferred system following a brutal civil war.

IV. PUBLIC ENTERTAINMENT WORKS

Another aspect of Augustus’ cultural renovation was his interest in the development of public entertainment structures. Augustus emphasized a public Roman culture, and initiated public games and festivals in order to support this interest. During his reign, Augustus restored buildings like the Theater of Pompey and the Circus Maximus, and built structures like the Stadium Augusti and the Naumachia Augusti.

---

37 Augustus expended many resources to restore the building in 32 BC—without the addition of his own name—, but moved the statue of Pompey from the Curia Pompeii to a location opposite the regia, likely a marble arch—marmoreo iano superposuit (Suetonius, Augustus 31.5; Richardson, A New Topographical Dictionary, 384). The relocation of the statue from the politically and historically charged site of Caesar’s betrayal and death indicates Augustus’ measured decision to recontextualize the theater space in Julian favor.

38 Richardson, A New Topographical Dictionary, 85.

39 Ibid., 366.

40 A basin built on the bank of the Tiber, where a grand display of naval warfare was staged in conjunction with the dedication of the Temple of Mars Ultor (Suetonius, Aug. 43.1; Augustus, Res
These structures served to promote activity in the public sphere, and likewise catered to the stringent reinforcement of class that the Romans concerned themselves with. As a highly political and socially divided society, spectator spaces provided the ideal stage for the division of the classes (Fig. 2). Augustus capitalizes on the deeply ingrained Roman notions of class structure by funding the restoration and creation of public entertainment buildings. Through these spaces, Augustus can position himself in the highest ranks of Roman society, while showing his understanding of Roman values. This is particularly important, as he displays power while remaining firmly situated in a powerful class of people, and therefore doesn’t overstep bounds by claiming individual, imperial power.

The Theater of Marcellus and the Circus Maximus provide two examples of Augustus’ public infrastructure projects. Augustus completed the Theatrum Marcelli,
which was originally a project of Julius Caesar. Augustus used the dedication of the theater to offer large-scale games and festivities to the Roman people. These games included the *Lusus Troiae*—an equestrian performance—and a *venatio*—an entertainment form involving the hunting and killing of captured wild animals—in the circus. Augustus’ revival of various community games is particularly important because of their historical associations. Public entertainment was one of the chief prerogatives of the *aedile*, and by taking on the responsibilities of that role in addition to his other positions, Augustus was able to exercise more power in the workings of Roman society, while remaining within the decreed roles of the system. As a theater complex, the *Theatrum Marcelli* appealed to the Roman love of entertainment, and provided an additional venue for various public festivities orchestrated by Augustus.

The *Circus Maximus* has a longstanding history in Rome, which made it the perfect canvas for Augustan messaging. It was traditionally founded by Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome, and Augustus’ claimed ancestor. It was also widely believed to be the location for the rape of the Sabines. Augustus constructed the *Pulvinar ad Circum Maximum*—a box displaying divine regalia and providing a seat for the gods’ observation of the games—, and erected an obelisk on the *spina*, the narrow island in

---

42 Caesar received backlash when undergoing the project, as the area he cleared for the theater had included the Temple of Pietas and numerous other shrines and buildings (Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary*, 382).


44 One important role that Augustus took on was *pontifex maximus* (Augustus, *Res Gestae* 7), which was originally the most important position in Roman religion, and was a distinctly religious office during the Roman Republic (Jesse B. Carter, “The Reorganization of Roman Priesthood at the Beginning of the Republic, 1915, 9). Other roles include member of the senate, ex-consul (Augustus, *Res Gestae* 3), *triumvir, augur*, one of the Fifteen in charge of sacred rites, one of the Seven in charge of sacred rites, and an Arval brother (Augustus, *Res Gestae* 7).


the middle of the track that the chariots raced around. The *Circus Maximus*, like the *Theatrum Marcelli*, provided another venue for the display of class and power. More importantly, however, the *Circus Maximus* provided deeper historical context for Augustus’ architectural messaging. Augustus capitalizes once again on the location’s associations with Romulus and the creation of Rome to remind the population, in part, of the prior existence of an autocrat in Roman history—particularly how that autocrat developed the city and population. By adopting and renovating more locations of power, especially in relation to public entertainment, Augustus increased his influence over the governance of Roman society. In order to regulate the possible backlash of such a move, Augustus attempts to ground his actions within Roman historical context. Although he constantly shifts between identifying aspects of his reign with the anti-monarchical Republic and the autocracy of the founding father Romulus, the underlying message of his actions is simply that none of his movements are without precedent.

**V. VICTORY MONUMENTS**

In the Republican era, generals erected victory monuments to commemorate great victories, give thanks to the gods for a military success, and to promote their own names in Roman society. Augustus adopts this tradition with great zeal in the earlier half of his reign, and only ceases after constructing the ultimate monument to Augustan victory: the *Ara Pacis*. Before the creation of the *Ara Pacis*, Augustus’ primary dedications of victory monuments involved columns, arches, and obelisks. Columns were already set symbols of power in the Republic, and Augustus erected the *Columna*

---

49 Some of these include the *Columna Maenia*, which was erected in 338 BC in honor of C. Maenius’ victory over the Latins (Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary*, 94); and the *Columna Rostrata C. Duillii*, erected in celebration of C. Dulius’ naval victory over the Carthaginians in 260 BC.
Rostrata Augusti in 36 BC to commemorate his victory over Sextus Pompey. Octavian introduced the arch as a victory monument in the forum in 29 BC, in commemoration of his victory at Actium; he also imported Egyptian obelisks from Heliopolis in 10 BC to serve the same triumphant purpose. The great expense of resources necessary for the delivery of the Egyptian obelisks to Rome indicates the importance Augustus placed on having such monuments in his city. One obelisk was set up in the Campus Martius as the gnomon of the Horologium, and the other on the spina of the Circus Maximus. Both locations would allow a clear view of the structure, and the obelisk in the Circus Maximus would be exposed to the masses at every gathering. The use of Egyptian monuments was one of the ultimate displays of victory—Augustus could take a significant structure unique to Egyptian culture and repurpose it anywhere he wanted. The blatant foreignness of the object would ensure that no Roman could miss the message of victory and domination over another culture.

The Ara Pacis functioned as a representation of the Great Augustan Peace. It acted as a gate that led visitors “from the Via Flaminia along the procession depicted in

(Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Rome*, 97). The Rostrata Augusti, however, commemorated a victory over a fellow Roman general, not a foreign entity. Due to the civil unrest, victory monuments were utilized for the commemoration of civil battles. While Augustus emphasizes a unified Roman population through propagation of a shared history, he makes a clear point in distinguishing power over possible contenders.

51 Cassius Dio LL.19.1; *Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* 91 (CIL 6.702): “Imp(erator) Caesar Divi F(ilius) Augustus Pontifex Maximus Imp(erator) XII co(n)s(ul) XI trib(unicia) pot(estate) XIV aegupto in potestatem populi Romani redacta soli donum dedit.” This translates to, “The emperor Caesar Augustus, son of the deified Caesar, Pontifex Maximus, triumphing general 12 times, consul 11 times, with tribunician powers 14 times, gave this obelisk as a gift to the Sun after Egypt had been brought under the power of the Roman people.” Although this inscription was for the Horologium’s obelisk in the Campus Martius, both obelisks were brought to Rome together. Augustus specifies bringing Egypt under the power of the Roman people.
52 Pliny, *Natural Histories* 36.71;
53 *ILS* 91 = *CIL* 6.702.
the friezes,"54 to the site of Augustus’ cremation, Augustus’ burial, and to the Solarium, a giant sundial.55 The location of the Ara Pacis in relation to the other two major Augustan monuments in the Campus Martius is highly significant, and is explored in Section VI. The decorative scheme of the Ara Pacis is very elaborate, and the images create associations with the Hellenistic East, the founding myth, and Augustus’ divine lineage.

A frieze of lotus-like images and garlands of fruits crown the enclosure wall and have Hellenistic associations. The twelve garlands allude to the passage of the twelve saecula, marking the beginning of the aurea aetas, the new Golden Age.56 Through the combination of Hellenistic motifs and the Roman idea of complete renewal (the twelve saecula), Augustus sends the message of a New Empire naturally born from a great historical past. A figure panel depicting the founding of the altar following Augustus’ triumphant return to Rome commemorates Augustus,57 while also allowing the insinuation that he represents Romulus returning to the city he disappeared from hundreds of years prior. The Romulus messaging is made clearer with the north panel of the Ara Pacis, which represents Mars, and Faustulus’ discovery of Romulus and

---

55 Rehak, Imperium and Cosmos, 137.
Remus with the she-wolf. The southern wall panel depicts Aeneas’ sacrifice of the Lavinian sow upon his arrival in Italy. As Aeneas was believed to be Romulus’ ancestor, both these scenes depict Rome’s legendary foundations and Augustus’ claimed lineage. Both sides of the *Ara Pacis* display processional scenes involving both dignitaries and the Julian family (Fig. 3). They appear to be moving in the direction of the entrance, where Aeneas and Romulus are depicted. Augustus’ positioning is another significant indication of his desire to connect himself with Aeneas. His hand is outstretched, exactly mimicking Aeneas in the panel where he is depicted (Appendix C). This stresses Augustus’ role as the founder of the new order. The back panels of the *Ara Pacis* depict Tellus with twins in her lap, which could symbolize her role as Terra Mater or Venus, and parallels the twins of the Lupercal relief. The panel next to her depicts Roma, who symbolizes the city. Augustus claimed that he had found a city of clay and left a city of marble—the *Ara Pacis* is an actual marble monument claiming the “physical refoundation [sic.] and spiritual regeneration of the city.” By having both Aeneas and Romulus present on the Augustan monument to peace, Augustus ties himself to the two figures. With a processional scene in which he is involved, Augustus implies his emergence into the Golden Age as the new Aeneas and new Romulus. Through the messaging of Augustan peace as the final victory, Augustus reconciles his roles as the successful military general, and the bringer of Roman peace.

59 Ibid., p. 551.
60 Ibid., 551.
63 Ibid.
64 Ibid., 555.
VI. PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS

A large part of the governance of Rome was ensuring the smooth running of the city. This required many different kinds of public infrastructure works—the most important being the flow of water through the city—, including things like roads, bridges, and ways of telling time. The participation in evergetism was particularly important for Roman elite, as it provided a venue for public spending that would allow self-promotion in political interests. One of the largest undertakings under Augustus was the repair of the city’s major aqueducts, as well as the construction of new ones. Augustus built the *Aqua Alsietina* between 11–4 BC, and it functioned to provide water to the *Naumachia Augusti*, water gardens, and some locations outside the city. While Augustus and Agrippa’s work on the Roman aqueducts is noteworthy and was supremely important in the running of Rome, a public structure such as the *Horologium/Solarium* can generate a better view into Augustan messaging, as it is a monument that is not considered necessary to Roman survival.

The *Horologium*, henceforth called the *Solarium*, was a sundial that used an obelisk imported from Heliopolis as the gnomon. The use of the obelisk signifies Augustan victory and colonial control. The specific astrological design of the *Solarium*, however, displays the effort Augustus placed in subtle messaging. Astrology was popularized in the Hellenistic era, after a long Greek history of systematic investigations of space and the measurement of time. Even though Augustus based the *Solarium* primarily on Greek scientific advances, “the repetition of the sun’s annual

---

66 *ILS* 91; *CIL* 6.702.
cycle...meshed with Roman ideas about the cyclical nature of time and the calendar."\(^{68}\) Augustus incorporated cosmological signs into the understanding and validation of his rule, evinced by his adoption of Julius Caesar's star.\(^{69}\) The Solarium emphasizes Augustus' reorganization of the calendar, in addition to the "climacteric points of the solar year, most of which were intimately connected with Augustus' life."\(^{70}\) According to Rehak, on equinoxes, the shadow of the Solarium's gnomon would trace a direct, East-West line to the inner altar of the *Ara Pacis*.\(^{71}\) Two panels, one depicting Romulus and another depicting Aeneas, framed the inner altar of the *Ara Pacis*. This measured emphasis on the *Ara Pacis* in the Solarium also reinforces the notion of Augustan peace and the victories Augustus accumulated to reach that point. The use of the Egyptian obelisk commemorates Augustus' greatest victory—the battle at Actium. Not only did the Solarium memorialize important moments in Augustus' life—conception, birth, and rebirth (all implicated using the *Ara Pacis*), and his greatest victory—, but it also represented Augustus' ultimate power to dictate and control time. There is a definite delicacy in Augustus' incorporation of ingrained Roman notions into what could be construed as both a victory monument and a public infrastructure work. This delicacy displays the precarious position Augustus held as *de facto* autocrat, as well as his preoccupation with masking that position in all of his public works.

\(^{68}\) Rehak, *Imperium and Cosmos*, 77.

\(^{69}\) Ovid wrote that a comet appeared during Julius Caesar's funeral games, the *Ludi Victoriae Caesaris* (Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.843-51). Octavius was quick to associate the comet with Caesar and interpreting it as a sign of his own rebirth (Rehak, *Imperium and Cosmos*, 71).

\(^{70}\) Rehak, *Imperium and Cosmos*, 137.

\(^{71}\) Ibid.
VII. AUGUSTUS’ MAUSOLEUM

The monuments that were part of Augustus’ building plan on the Campus Martius include the *Ara Pacis*, the *Solarium*, and his grand Mausoleum. The Campus Martius was intrinsically connected to the foundation legends of the city, and also held a deeper imperial history. According to Livy, as Romulus was reviewing his troops on the Campus Martius, he was carried into the sky, never to be seen again upon earth. That would mark the moment that Romulus was hailed “as a god and son of a god.”72 The Campus was also known to be the property of the last Etruscan king, Tarquinius Superbus,73 but was dedicated to the god Mars following Tarquinius’ defeat and exile, and Rome’s entry into the Republic.74 In the years following Rome’s early history, the Campus remained outside the sacred city boundary, the *pomerium*, functioning as an ideal location for the construction of *manubial* temples and tombs—in other words, ideal for self-aggrandizement in political contexts. During the Republic, the Campus Martius was the location for triumphal parade formations and thus provided an essential space for a city-state that “honored success in battle as the highest societal value.”75 The field was primarily associated with Roman military, electoral, or otherwise political activities. By building on the Campus Martius, Augustus adopts and adapts the long history associated with the space, as well as its connotations of power. These connotations include nationalistic pride involved with military achievement—exhibited by the triumphal parades—, and political influence—potentially validated by successful elections.

72 Livy, *The Early History of Rome*, 1.16.
73 Livy, *Early History*, 2.5.2.
74 Ibid., 1.60.3.
The grand Mausoleum of Augustus was a powerful dynastic statement that follows in a long tradition of grandiose monumentalization, in order to immortalize his personal memory. As a personal monument, the Mausoleum is a clear deviation from the other building types in Augustus’ reign (temples, victory monuments, public infrastructure works, public entertainment works, and administrative buildings). It is a rounded tomb with an outermost wall some twelve meters high, originally faced with travertine on both sides. Rising taller than the outer wall, were the interior concentric walls connected by semicircular buttresses and covered in earth—this gave the appearance of an earthen mound. Inside the mausoleum was a narrow passageway running from the entrance to a circled, vaulted corridor. The central burial chamber was designed as a circular hall and included niches in the walls and central pillar to deposit imperial remains. An uestrinum, a structure used for cremation, was constructed nearby. The mausoleum presented a grand architectural achievement that for any other politician, may have fallen outside the realm of Republican propriety.

While the large-scale construction of the grand monument served to emphasize his power, its location and style placed it in Republican contexts. Some examples include Temple B in the Largo Argentina—built by Quintus Catulus after the Battle of Vercellae—, and the Temple of Hercules of the Muses. The two temples are of a rounded shape (the Temple to Hercules fully circular, while Temple B only partially so), and are off the ground level—two aspects that Augustus appropriates. The Mausoleum was, in part, a victory monument commemorating the Battle of Actium, and included

76 Paul W. Jacobs II and Diane Atnally Conlin, Campus Martius, 140.
77 Ibid.
78 Strabo, Geography V.III.9.
79 Rehak, Imperium and Cosmos, 14.
two obelisks taken from Egypt at the entrance.\textsuperscript{81} In building the monument in that context, and placing it in the Campus Martius—the site of Republican, manubial temples—Augustus uses tradition to mask his self-aggrandizing monument.

The style of the mausoleum was most likely to have been inspired by fourth-century\textit{ tho loi}. Paul Rehak suggests inspiration from the \textit{tholoi} at Epidaurus (Dinsmoor 1975, 235-236), Delphi (Dinsmoor 1975, 234-236), and Olympia (Dinsmoor 1975, 236).\textsuperscript{82} Though certain technical aspects are not identical—unlike the mausoleum, the \textit{tholoi} at Delphi and Epidaurus had exterior colonnades, fully defined interiors, and tiled roofs\textsuperscript{83}—the general circular shape would be recognizable to any who had heard of, or seen them. Another similar example would be the "Hellenistic round tomb with a tumulus on top constructed at Pergamum alongside the road leading to the Asklepieion,"\textsuperscript{84} which was a closer, though smaller, structural match to Augustus’ mausoleum. Augustus’ tomb greatly surpassed the Hellenistic tombs in size. In spite of the mausoleum’s air of grandeur, its associations with various Hellenistic monuments and the manubial temples of the Republican era allowed the monument to be considered both trophy and tomb—the shape and placement of the mausoleum would render it recognizable as a victory monument. There was also an existing Roman tradition of honorary tomb monuments—those of the Republican consuls Hirtius and Pansa in the Campus Martius, and that of Caecilia Metella on the Via Appia, much further south.\textsuperscript{85} Augustus follows the Republican precedents and ancient traditions of elite Greek burial constructions to mask his imperial influence with victorious

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{81} Rehak, \textit{Imperium and Cosmos}, 137.
\textsuperscript{82} Ibid., 47.
\textsuperscript{84} Rehak, \textit{Imperium and Cosmos}, 47.
\textsuperscript{85} Zanker, \textit{The Power of Images}, 74.
\end{footnotesize}
associations, but by going above and beyond those models in sheer size, he displays his
wealth, dynastical importance, worldly knowledge, and political influence—he was
secure enough in his position and messaging techniques to present such a monument to
Roman society.

His tomb implicitly rivaled "one of the Seven Wonders [of the Ancient World]."\(^{86}\) the
Mausoleum at Halicarnassos of King Mausolus of Caria. It also surpassed the
tombs of the great Numidian kings in size.\(^{87}\) Because of the earth covering the mound, Strabo connected the Mausoleum with a grave mound type
that could be connected to the "ancient graves of heroes"\(^{88}\) like those visible in the
necropoleis of Etruria. Though not entirely unique, Augustus individualizes himself with
the sheer size of his monument (Fig. 4), and the implied associations with ancient hero
graves in Etruria. Additionally, Alison Cooley suggests that it may have been intended to
"evoke the burial mounds of the Trojan princes,"\(^{89}\) the legendary ancestors of the Julian
family, and perhaps the tomb of Alexander the Great. Through his mausoleum, Augustus
partakes in an old tradition of grandiose monumentalization with the intention of
perpetuating his own memory.

---

\(^{86}\) Strabo, Geography XIV.11.16.
\(^{87}\) Zanker, The Power of Images, 73-74.
\(^{88}\) Ibid., 75.
\(^{89}\) Alison E. Cooley, Res Gestae Divi Augusti: Text, Translation, and Commentary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 4.
Augustus’ mausoleum, a monument to victory and dynasty, displays the theme of Augustan peace, victory, and power when viewed in the context of the two other monuments he erected in the Campus Martius—the Ara Pacis, and the Solarium Augusti (also known as the Horologium). The section of the Campus Martius that Augustus commanded was very carefully orchestrated to his needs. In order to remain within a Republican context to avoid another Civil War, Augustus followed long-standing traditions that, on their own, would not gather much unwanted attention. Through both subtle and less subtle deviations from those traditions, Augustus is able to send a message to the Empire and further solidify his personal and dynastic power. Separately, Augustus participates in the tradition of erecting monuments for the viewing of the public. Together, the ensemble of the Ara Pacis, Mausoleum, and the Solarium Augusti, displays the theme of Augustan peace, victory, and power.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Augustus’ reign is littered with numerous buildings that completely reshape the physical landscape of Rome, and come to define the ancient city as we think about it today. His temples demonstrate the religious revival he strove towards; the administrative buildings, his less-than-subtle, yet still masked reorganization of the Roman state; his public entertainment complexes, evidence of his cultural understanding of widespread Roman interests; his victory monuments, testimonies to his success as a general and a ruler, thus achieving Roman standards of legitimate power; the public infrastructure projects, demonstrations of his patronage to the state; and his mausoleum, a monument of victory and dynasty, as well as a symbol of the prosperous Augustan peace. Augustus shrewdly maneuvers the tension in Roman
society arising from his steady reorganization of a republican state into an autocratic one. He manages this delicate maneuvering by adopting Aeneas and Romulus as his ancestors, frequently using Republican and Greek imagery and architecture in his projects to emphasize the existence of precedents, and playing to Roman cultural preoccupations, norms, and principles.

Augustus’ treatment of his material legacy is multifaceted and rigorously thorough. By ingraining his political intentions into deeply embedded Roman values and historical considerations, he is able to transform the Roman political structure from a Republican system to an Imperial one. Almost two thousand years following Augustus’ renovation of Rome, another autocrat surfaced to impress his own mark upon the Roman landscape. This man was Benito Mussolini, and his agenda regarding Rome and its political atmosphere was designed to emulate that of Augustus.

Mussolini’s empire consisted of an extensive reconstruction of Rome in the interest of promoting a fascist system and autocratic rule. He focuses on exposing monuments from Rome’s imperial era in order to emphasize a shared Italian history, redesigning the street plans to facilitate more historically conscious courses throughout the city, and commemorating Augustus by frequently relating himself with the emperor. Through these acts and frequent associations, Mussolini attempts to match modern achievements to Imperial ones in the hopes that he would eventually be able to succeed them. He is ultimately unsuccessful.

While Augustus’ approach is focused on basing his platform on a deeper sense of Romanness, Mussolini’s approach is built on a platform designed to use notions of Romanness to elevate himself and his fascist rule. Mussolini capitalizes on the success of the Augustan Empire, using it to reinforce his fascist reign and fascist ideology. He also
uses it to support his political position as *Il Duce* in spite of the existence of an Italian monarch. Self-promotion in Augustus’ messaging is characteristically subtle, and disguised with reminders of Republican precedents and recognizable historical or religious imagery. Due to the superficiality of Mussolini’s work, Augustus’ image is not affected by association with him, and is even brought more palpably into modern day attention—so much so that Mussolini is lost to him. By choosing to entrench the fascist image in Imperial architecture, Mussolini tethered a new political system to a glorious historical era that would ultimately overshadow that system. At the end of Mussolini’s reign, Augustus is indisputably affixed in the modern day rhetoric of Rome, and *Il Duce* is executed and subsequently removed from the fascist constructions associated with his rule. Both Augustus and Mussolini alter the landscape of Rome with projects invoking the highly regarded history of the city, but Mussolini’s adoption of the same approach is much shallower than Augustus’, ultimately resulting in Mussolini’s erasure from that landscape.
APPENDIX A


APPENDIX B

APPENDIX C


_Ara Pacis Augustae, Aeneas Sacrifices to the Penates Rescued from Troy._ Image from Paul Zanker, _The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus_ (1988), 204.
CHAPTER 2

IL DUCE

I. OVERVIEW

The Roman empire of Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) is characterized by a large-scale upheaval of the city as he sought to rebuild Rome as the centerpiece of fascist identity and revolution. During his reign, Mussolini uncovered much of Imperial Rome, as well as made it widely accessible to the general population, in order to reinforce the notion of a shared, grand history. Fascism was more than just radical ideology; it embodied a new wave of thinking. One of the main, underlying premises of Mussolini’s fascism is unconditional group unity. This concern manifested in Mussolini’s espousal of the core principles of nationalism—¹ in The Doctrine of Fascism, Mussolini wrote:

Fascism is not only a system of government but also and above all a system of thought. In the Fascist conception of history, man is man only by virtue of the spiritual process to which he contributes as a member of the family, the social group, the nation, and in function of history to which all nations bring their contribution...Outside history man is a nonentity.²

Mussolini demonstrates his preoccupation with national solidarity (“spiritual process to which he contributes as a member of...the nation”), and the significance of a nation’s shared history (“Outside history man is a nonentity”). As Mussolini strove to remind the world and Italian population through various propaganda pieces and major building projects, the shared history to which he referred to was that of Imperial Rome, and more commonly, Augustan Rome and Augustus himself. In his autobiography, Mussolini

¹“A particularistic solidarity among individuals who are allegedly bonded by a historical definition (based on a cultural, religious, or biological foundation), and the prioritization of the interests of the national and of those who are seen to be part of it above everything else.” (Noga Wolff, “Exploiting nationalism in order to repudiate democracy: the case of Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany,” 2015, p. 86).

explained his preoccupation with linking his own Italy to Ancient Rome through propaganda:

I have searched, to be sure, with a spirit of analysis the whole ancient and modern history of my country. I have drawn parallels because I wanted to explore to the depths, on the basis of historical fact, the profound sources of our national life and of our character, and to compare our capacities with those of other people.³

He displays his interest, not only in the Classical world, but also in the capacity of the Italian people to be compared with the Romans of that world. More than simply invoking Classical Roman themes, Mussolini’s exploitation of Rome’s past may have served to ideologically unite both intellectuals and the Italian people.⁴ Augustus and the Imperial Era represented an age of Italian unification, which had been essentially fractured since the fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD.⁵ This places Mussolini’s emphasis on a shared, Classical history in better context: when assuming power, he was set with the task of unifying a population that had not considered itself a single nation. To accomplish this, he devised visually imposing parallels and tangible comparisons with Augustus and the Imperial Era, a period featuring a civilization that had united the Mediterranean and most of Europe for hundreds of years. By exposing

---

⁴ Denis Mack Smith, Mussolini’s Roman Empire (New York: Viking Press, 1976), 5. The term, “fascism,” provides more evidence of this unification of intellectuals and the Italian people. The name of this political ideology grew from the Latin, fasces, which was the title for a bound bundle of wooden rods, sometimes with an axe emerging from it. It was carried before the highest magistrate and thus symbolized their power and jurisdiction (William Whitaker’s Words, from the University of Notre Dame Archives, http://archives.nd.edu/words.html). The image of the fasces came to represent Italian fascism under Benito Mussolini.
⁵ Though there may be multiple dates to which the ‘fall of the Western Roman Empire’ may be attributed to, 476 AD is the date that the last Roman emperor of the west (Romulus Augustulus) was deposed by the German, Odoacer (John Julius Norwich, A Short History of Byzantium, 1999, p. 53). Il Risorgimento, Italian Unification, was not accomplished until Giuseppe Garibaldi and Victor Emmanuel II (who would be the first King of modern Italy) united all the Italian states in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. Napoleon III recalled his troops from Rome at the outbreak of the war, allowing the unified Italian forces to enter and annex the city, completing the Italian Unification (George Macaulay Trevelyan, Garibaldi and the Making of Italy, 2012, p. 292).
ancient works in the heart and capital of Italy, Mussolini is easily able to argue for Imperial Rome as a “profound [source] of [Italian] national life” and character.

Heather Hyde Minor maintains that the fascist regime in Italy deployed “the twin themes of commemoration and re-creation of the past...as statecraft. Ancient Rome's achievements were to be matched by those of modern Italy.”

Augustus’ many developments, like Mussolini’s, display an emphasis on Roman history, specifically a shared and accepted Roman history. Instead of using his works to emphasize imperial grandeur to emulate in his own period, however, Augustus uses his projects to remind the Republicans of a precedent to Imperial power, as well as to send the message that Augustus’ city is the culmination of his people’s history. Mussolini tends to communicate that his city is as grand as the shared history of the Italian people, but that the culmination of that history is himself and his fascist rule. Mussolini’s works do have links to the wider Imperial Empire, and even to Victor Emmanuelle II, first King of Unified Italy, but his projects and imagery overwhelmingly reflect an interest in Augustus, the first Roman Emperor.

While both Augustus and Mussolini accentuate their reigns with grandiose building projects that invoke the deep history of Rome, Mussolini is shallower in his adoption of historical precedent, simply using the imagery of the Augustan Empire to reinforce fascist principles of nationalism, discipline, and militarism as the paradigms

---


7 He uncovers the Imperial Fora and displays multiple marbles in the style reminiscent of Classical Rome in the *Stadio e Marmi*, Foro Mussolini.

8 The Victor Emmanuelle II monument to *Il Risorgimento* is one of the key monuments in his city reformation plans, and he sets up his office facing it in the *Piazza Venezia*. 
for ruling ideologies. Augustus’ adoption of the Romulus myth, frequent associations with different gods (e.g. Apollo, Mars, Venus), and acknowledgement of Republican and Greek precedents in his architectural projects, display both an understanding of Roman culture, and a desire to remain culturally appropriate whilst introducing a new system. The fascist use of ancient history as propaganda displays a lack of concern for historical context and a purely selective use of the symbolism and imagery of Augustus' time. Mussolini’s commemoration and re-creation of Augustan Rome evokes Imperial messaging that parallels Mussolini’s control of the new Italian Empire with Augustus’ control of the new Roman Empire. What Mussolini lacks, however, are the political subtleties and innovation prevalent in Augustan messaging, which he forgoes in favor of grand architectural and archaeological imagery.

II. REDESIGNING ROMA

Considering one of Mussolini’s chief intentions being to promulgate the idea of a shared, classical history as a primary unifying factor, it is important to understand the

---

9 See Chapter 1, Section V. Victory Monuments for a more in depth analysis of the Ara Pacis and Augustus’ connection to the Romulus myth. Also see Chapter 1, Section II. Temples and Section IV. Public Entertainment Works for other examples of the Augustan connection to Romulus.

10 See Chapter 1, Section II. Temples and Section VII. Other to read about Augustus’ use of Republican and Greek precedents in his personal home and mausoleum.

11 A major aspect of Ancient Roman culture and society was the importance of Religion. Many of Augustus’ works stayed in the context of Roman religion (e.g. his temples, his home, his forum, the Ara Pacis), displaying his sensitivity to the Roman population and his concern with invoking Romanità.

12 One example of this could be Mussolini’s declaration of April 21, Rome’s traditional birthday, as a fascist holiday and the occasion for ceremonies, speeches, building inaugurations, street openings, and monument unveilings (Borden W. Painter, Jr., Mussolini’s Rome: Rebuilding the Eternal City, 4).

13 On April 21, 1924, Mussolini spoke at the Campidoglio, “Rome…must be a city worthy of its glory and this glory must unceasingly renovate in order to hand down, as a heritage of the fascist era, to the generations to come” (Originally in Opera Omnia di Benito Mussolini; quoted and translated in Borden Painter, Jr.’s Mussolini’s Rome, 4). The glory Mussolini insisted on displaying was that of the imperial era, and in doing so he demolished many medieval and even baroque layers of Italian architectural and archaeological history. His act of handing down certain images of glory to future generations very clearly involved picking, choosing, and defining what were to be considered as images of glory, and has, to a large extent, defined classical grandeur for all of us.
ways in which he redesigned the city in order to achieve this commemoration of the past: “By isolating the monuments of ancient Rome, the relationship between the ancient Romans and the Italians is made more beautiful and suggestive.”14 While this commemoration was also accomplished with an outpouring of postcards, posters, speeches, paintings, and exhibitions that highlighted the “relationship between the ancient Romans and the Italians,”15 those materials are not within the archaeological and architectural scopes of this investigation. Mussolini made aggressive renovations to the city, especially with his creation of new streets, and thus displayed a preoccupation to create new lines of circulation and communication, all done with the needs of the modern city in mind.

An important aspect of making the historical sites accesible to the Italians, was the creation of strategically placed streets that connected monument to monument, and allowed direct lines of sight between specific points in Rome (Appendix C).16 With

14 Benito Mussolini, My Rise and Fall, 295.
15 The Romans already lived alongside the physical remnants of the Roman past, so the propagation of romanità was both easiest and clearest. Mussolini used various mediums of propaganda to emphasize romanità, the embodiment of a grand Imperial culture he hoped to mimic, and potentially even surpass. He frequently emphasizes the importance of the ancient Romans in his speeches: “It is enough to think that without the pages of Roman history, all of universal history would be terribly mutilated and a great part of the modern world would be incomprehensible” (Opera Omnia 25, p. 85.). Appendix A displays a postcard distributed in 1939 that depicts a bust of Mussolini’s head and the title, “DVX,” written in the typeface of Roman inscriptions. Similar Latin inscriptions remained on buildings and signs all throughout Italy, so the population would have been familiar enough with the script to connect it with Rome of antiquity. The bust would likewise be reminiscent of Ancient Roman artwork. Appendix B is another postcard of Mussolini in a Roman toga with the symbolic image of Laurentia, the she-wolf, nursing Romulus and Remus. The building behind him also evokes the Classical era. Here he blatantly connects himself to the classical period, and even to Ancient Roman mythology (or history) in a similar way to Augustus. On October 29, 1932, Mussolini opened the Exhibit of the Fascist Revolution (Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista), which celebrated the first decade of fascist rule and publicly proclaimed their successes, history, achievements, and future (Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, 25-6). The same site of that exhibit was used for the Exhibit of Augustus (La Mostra Augustea della Romanità) in 1937, an exhibit celebrating the two-thousandth birthday of the emperor (Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, 29). Having both exhibits in the same venue placed the celebration of Augustus in the same locational context as the celebration of Fascism, conceptually entangling the histories and ideas of both.
16 On a smaller scale, the notion of direct lines of sight was equally prevalent in the Roman era—Roman houses at the turn of the millenium were architecturally designed to allow a direct line of
traffic regulation, public health, and increased employment opportunities as the rationale behind the project,\(^{17}\) the *Via dell’Impero* (currently named the *Via dei Fori Imperiali*) was constructed. The road leads directly from the Roman Colosseum to the Piazza Venezia and the giant monument to Victor Emmanuel II. The monument to Victor Emmanuel II, aptly named the *Altare della Patria* (Altar of the Fatherland), is a large marble and limestone building featuring grand stairways, Corinthian columns, fountains, an equestrian sculpture of Victor Emmanuel II, and two statues of the goddess of Victory on quadrigas.\(^{18}\) While the pre-Mussolini state unveiled the monument in 1911,\(^{19}\) Mussolini recontextualizes it because of its effective use of classically inspired architectural elements that iconically suggest the Imperial Era. Though this monument was not actually from the Classical Roman period, it was just as imposing and grand as the ancient structures, and carried the same visual language. Because of these comparative elements, Mussolini was able to use the building to his advantage, and to assist him in his goal of displaying a modern Rome that paralleled the Rome of antiquity. The Vittorio Emmanuelle monument also functioned as a tomb and a commemoration of Italy’s 650,000 fallen soldiers in World War I.\(^{20}\) Its role as a tomb provides a parallel to Augustus’ grand mausoleum, and although it is not exactly a dynastical monument tied to a specific lineage, it is a monument to nationalism, and to

\(^{17}\) The street provided a new major artery for the via Cavour, the main road leading from Rome’s primary train station, Termini; the demolition of the neighborhood in the area was intended to alleviate the crowded and unhealthy living conditions of those living within it; and the construction process opened new jobs for the Italians (Painter, *Mussolini’s Rome*, 22).


\(^{19}\) Atkinson and Cosgrove, “Urban Rhetoric,” 28.

heroes of the same heritage—the unified Italians who had bound together and fought for their country. Additionally, Augustus used monarchical traditions of grandiose monumentalization in his mausoleum in a manner comparable to the monumentalization of King Victor Emmanuel II. Mussolini was deeply concerned with the notion of a unified Italy—his preoccupation with excavations and the display of a great Imperial past, indicate his desire for Italian awareness of their shared history. The Amphitheatrum Flavium, better known as the Colosseum, is one of the grandest testaments to Imperial Rome. The creation of the Via dell’Impero connects the ancient Colosseum to the modern Monument of Il Risorgimento, complete with access to multiple Imperial Fora. This promoted the notions of Ancient Roman architectural achievement, Imperial power, and Italian nationalism in the context of a previously unified Italy (Roman Empire). Mussolini weds the past and the present—the traditional and the modern—in a manner that was to become a trademark of his reign.

Both sides of the Via dell’Impero were excavated and display the Forum of Nerva, a more distant view of the Roman Forum, the Forum of Trajan, the Forum Julium (Forum of Caesar) and most importantly for Mussolini, the Forum of

Fig. 1. Outline of the Imperial Fora Superimposed on the Existing City. Image from Wikipedia.org, annotations by the author.
Augustus. Having the various Imperial monuments on either side of the road necessitated building the road directly on top of sections of the different forums (Fig. 1). In his paper presented before the Royal Institute of British Architects in 1934, Dr. Guido Calza reminds his audience of Mussolini’s intention to improve the flow of traffic: “It is a modern street which also endeavours to give value to the remains of the Imperial Forums and monuments...we have gained much more than we have lost.”

While Calza gives light to one of the rationales behind the street, the initial choice to “[lose]” history proves that a direct line of sight through the grandest parts of the Imperial forums was prioritized over further excavations and archaeological advancement. The only sections of the Imperia fora that were excavated were the sections that flanked a convenient new road (the *Via dell’Impero*). These exposed parts included the quintessential Roman colonnades, apses, and temples. Certain sections of the fora remained unexcavated, regardless of the fact that more may have been learned from their unearthing, showing that Mussolini had no interest in anything other than the relevant and archetypal portions of the sites, and only enough of them to generate interest. This disregard for further historical progress is at odds with the actions of Augustus, who not only strove to display his and his city’s deeper, shared history when possible, but was remarkably thorough in his projects. Mussolini’s work exposed just enough of the Imperial structures to generate awareness and a sense of shared, historical grandeur, but that remained the extent of his historical preoccupation. He did not wish to emulate Augustus’ frequent reminders of Republican or historical precedents, nor did he engage in many historical periods outside of the mythological foundations of Rome, ancient—Imperial—Rome, and on the very rare occasion, the Rome of the Popes.

---

21 Guido Calza, “The Via dell’Impero and the Imperial Fora,” *Journal of the Royal Institute of British Architects* (March 1934), 499 and 503.
Mussolini also engaged in major roadwork when widening the street running through the Arch of Constantine to the Circus Maximus—the Via di San Gregorio, renamed the Via dei Trionfi. The road connected to the Via dell’Impero at the Colosseum and provided direct access to many of the archaeological sites in the area, as well as the Capitoline, Celian, Aventine, and Palatine Hills.\footnote{Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, 31.} The project transformed the street to recall the ancient triumphal route into the city, and was one of the aspects of the master plan of 1931.\footnote{Antonio Muñoz, Via dei Trionfi: Insulazione del Campidoglio, translated by Borden W. Painter, Jr. (Rome: Governatorato di Roma, 1933): 5-6. Antonio Muñoz was the man who supervised the work to widen the street. He also designed the fountain near the Arch of Constantine, which preserved a fragment of Domitian’s aqueduct from the Palatine Hill—the aqueduct designed to bring water to the imperial palaces (Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, 31).} This new street was subsequently used as the site of many fascist parades and special events sponsored by the regime.\footnote{Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, 31.} The use of the street for fascist parades is a direct allusion to the triumphs of the Ancient Romans, particularly of those by Augustus after his monopolization of the honor. Like Augustus, Mussolini uses the aggrandizing qualities of a triumph to promote his reign and the success of his own empire. Augustus eventually absorbed the tradition of the triumph into his imperial cult system,\footnote{The last triumph listed on the Fasti Triumphales (published in 12 BC) is attributed to L. Cornelius Balbus in 19 BC. There is more discussion of this in the Introduction to my first chapter.} but Mussolini did not come from a previous Italian tradition of honorific triumphs. Due to this difference in historical origins, Mussolini’s adoption of the triumphal route does not perform the same function of further consolidation of power that Augustus’ act did, but rather displays a shallower understanding of the triumphal route as simply a path for ostentatious self-aggrandizement and celebration.

The next major road project Mussolini undertook was the creation of the Via della Conciliazione. Mussolini announced the plans for the project in 1936,\footnote{Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, 69.} which...
involved the demolition of an entire neighborhood directly in front of St. Peter’s basilica. Although the plan was credited to the fascist regime and Mussolini, the Via della Conciliazione was only finished in the Holy Jubilee Year of 1950, after the fall of the fascist empire. The street framed the grand basilica all the way from the Tiber. This job emphasized the might of the Catholic Church and the fascist government, while also served as a symbol of the new fascist relationship with the Vatican. Augustus likewise understood the importance of religion for his population, and consciously made an effort to ally himself with the gods: building and repairing multiple temples, holding the title pontifex maximus, and associating his lineage to Aeneas and a deified Caesar. Both Augustus and Mussolini propagate religion in some way in order to solidify their reigns within an already deeply embedded institution, but Augustus absorbs and revives


28 The fascists’ relationship with the Pope and the Vatican was a tenuous one. Following Italy’s decision to enter the First World War alongside the Entente powers, Pope Benedict XV (1914-22) attempted to bring the warring powers to negotiations with his Peace Note of August 1917 (J. F. Pollard, “Fascism and Catholicism,” The Oxford Handbook of Fascism, 168). Mussolini, while still only a member of the Italian Socialist Party (PSI) and not part of the government, blamed the Peace Note and the Pope for spreading pacifism and defeatism, and even called the Pope “accursed” and “Judas” (Pollard, “Fascism and Catholicism,” 168). The Vatican soon became very outspoken against the fascists and the radical fascist actions. Hence, early fascism remained “stridently anticlerical until 1921 when, following the entry of the fascists into parliament through Mussolini, Mussolini changed his tune (Pollard, “Fascism and Catholicism,” 168). In order to solidify the establishment of the new fascist regime, Mussolini inevitably sought the endorsement of deeply rooted and highly influential cultural and social forces like the Catholic Church. In his first speech to parliament in 1921, he claimed, “Fascism neither preaches nor practices antikericalism...the only universal values that radiate from Rome are those of the Vatican” (Mussolini, quoted in Pollard's “Fascism and Catholicism,” 170). The new Pope, Pius XI was concerned by the communist threat in Italy, and Mussolini acted strategically by making tangible offers of conciliation: reintroduction of religious education into state secondary schools, restoration of the crucifix in public buildings, increase in priests’ salaries, and ultimately, the Lateran Pact of 1929 (Pollard, “Fascism and Catholicism,” 170). The Lateran Pact of 1929 allied the kingdom of Italy with the Vatican, where both states recognized each other’s independence and self-governance. Renzo de Felice described the Conciliazione (the Lateran Pact) as a “marriage of convenience” between the papacy and Italian Fascism (R. De Felice, translated by J. F. Pollard, Mussolini il Fascista: l’organizzazione dello stato Fascista, 432). Though allied, the fascist relationship with the Vatican remained tenuous throughout Mussolini’s reign as ideologies and methods clashed, but Mussolini’s attempts to keep peace generally continued.

29 See Chapter 1, Section II on temples; Section IV, note 44 for an explanation of the pontifex maximus; and Section VI, note 69 for proof Augustus’ public declaration of connection to a deified Caesar.
religious practices (as well as becomes the head of state religion) in his government, and Mussolini simply chooses to ally himself with an existing institution while remaining and operating independently of it. The street also provides another example of the importance of direct lines of sight and the aesthetic considerations Mussolini made provisions for under his reign. Understanding the power of the Catholic Church, Mussolini made some form of amends using one of the most oppulent and grand gestures he had the power to make—the construction of the Via della Conciliazione.

A different way in which Mussolini manipulated Rome’s physical history was his choice to physically reassemble the Ara Pacis at the site of Augustus’ mausoleum instead of in its original and intended location. In order to emphasize the structure, Mussolini also created the vast Piazza Augusto Imperatore and a glass, rectangular box to host the Ara Pacis.30 This very blatantly shows Mussolini’s ignorance of the subtleties in Augustan messaging, as the Ara Pacis was only one piece in a three-part symbol of Augustan peace, power, and dynasty.31 The piazza embodied fascist messaging with a mix of Roman, Christian, and fascist themes. The largest building provided office space for the national social security administration,32 while a Latin inscription on the building boasted of the “extraction of the mausoleum from the shadow of the centuries”33 and was flanked by two winged victories holding fasces, the symbols of fascism. Above the description were depictions of Romulus and Remus with the she-wolf, as well as a façade including illustrations of Roman and fascist military prowess.

30 Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, 73.
31 See Chapter 1, Sections V-VII for a more in depth analysis of the Ara Pacis, the Solarium, and Augustus’ Mausoleum.
32 Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, 73.
33 Ibid.
and artefacts: helmets, shields, bows, arrows, and modern weaponry. Borden Painter Jr. claims that the *Piazza Augusto Imperatore* "served no other [purpose than to exude] fascist propaganda." This blatant exposition of fascist propaganda was inextricably linked, then, to the emperor Augustus, whose relics thus lent authority to the fascist achievement. Spiro Kostof, however, writes,

> The Fascist side of the balance is too weak...our opinion of Augustus is not affected by the association with Mussolini, and our opinion of Mussolini is not enhanced. The Duce yields to the emperor and is lost. The Piazzale, in the end remains a colossal mistake.

Augustus associates himself with historical figures like Romulus and Remus using a variety of techniques, one of which was locating his home on a site known for bearing Romulus’ hut. He also places an image of Aeneas on his *Ara Pacis*. Although he creates these associations, Augustus does not try and choose too grand a historical symbol as to be subsumed by it, and even keeps the associations subtle enough that the public could not be incited to anger at blatant self-promotion. Mussolini picks two grand monuments representing the Augustan age to associate himself and his government with and, ironically enough, is lost in them.

In his complete reorganization of the city to emphasize historical sites in the context of fascist power, Mussolini attempts to emulate Augustus, who also entrenched his buildings and rebuildings in historical themes and messaging. By using historical context for self promotion, Mussolini fails to understand the subtleties of Augustus’ use of history as a way to make his constructions palatable for a society so opposed to autocracy. In his failure, Mussolini is then lost to the grand symbolism and power emanating from the antiquities he unearthed.

---

35 Ibid.
III. FORO MUSSOLINI

Mens sana in corpore sano: a sound mind in a strong body. Ancient Rome presented a society in which physical activity was directly linked to mental fitness. Part of the fascist identity was a concern with the physical body as a representation of a strong and glorious state. Mussolini’s constructions wholly embodied this mentality, as explained by Giuseppe Prezzolini in his 1939 publication, Italy:

A new political and educational technique has been introduced, designed to mould not only the intelligence and memory, but the child’s whole being, body and soul alike, and involving not merely his scholastic record but his entire character and future.

In his emphasis on physical fitness, Mussolini re-shapes—or attempts to re-shape—a new generation of Italians: the incoming generation of fascists. Additionally, Mussolini propagandized the slogan, “Libro e Moschetto: Fascista Perfetto” (Appendix D), which translates to, “Book and Musket: The Perfect Fascist.” The transformation of Rome was done in the interest of espousing specific fascist morals in order to generate a new generation of Italians whose awareness of their own bodies and Italian grandeur was paramount. In order to demonstrate the fascist commitment to training the Italian youth, Mussolini organized the construction of a complex that provided facilities for “the spiritual and physical education of new generations of Italians.” This complex was named the Foro Mussolini, renamed the Foro Italico after the fall of fascism, and it was an entire space with multiple buildings dedicated to athleticism and group training.

The use of the title, “Forum,” recalls Mussolini’s Imperial imagery, as only Emperors built forums in their honors and in their names. At the entrance of the forum

38 Giuseppe Prezzolini, Italy (Florence: Valacchi Publisher, 1939), 95.
39 “Nuove Opere al Foro Mussolini” Translated by Borden W. Painter, Jr., Capitolium (1930), 199.
rose a fifty-four foot high obelisk dedicated to Mussolini, carved from a single block of Carrara marble, and weighing 313 tons.\textsuperscript{40} The obelisk had “Mussolini Dux” emblazoned in large letters all the way down the obelisk.\textsuperscript{41} Augustus imported Egyptian obelisks from Heliopolis in 10 BC at great cost and expense of resources.\textsuperscript{42} Mussolini adopts the visually imposing symbol of the obelisk by erecting his own, but misses the colonial messaging Augustus used the structures for. As Carrara marble comes from a city in the Tuscan region of Italy, the messaging could be connected to the notion of Italian unification—this would be secondary, however, to the message of wealth and influence that \textit{Il Duce} actually sends. Mussolini greatly publicized the marble’s journey from Tuscany as well as the resources expended to accomplish such a journey.\textsuperscript{43} He shows more interest in displaying the extent of power related to using the obelisk, taking the focus away from Augustan military, and even technical, achievement of transporting an obelisk from Egypt. While it is possible to discern his interest in Italian unification, the disproportionate level of attention directed towards the feat of delivering the obelisk to his \textit{Foro Mussolini} is an emphasis of personal achievement, without an understanding of the intricate messaging in the originator’s use of an obelisk. Unlike Augustus, who builds off of the Roman preoccupation of military conquest and victory, Mussolini takes a symbol of power from the Imperial era and repurposes it in his Forum, likening

\textsuperscript{40} “Duce Unveils Obelisk Erected in Own Honor,” \textit{Pittsburgh Post-Gazette}, November 5, 1932.
\textsuperscript{41} Paul Baxa, \textit{Roads and Ruins: The Symbolic Landscape of Fascist Rome} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 144.
\textsuperscript{42} Pliny, \textit{Natural Histories} XXXVI.71.
\textsuperscript{43} The obelisk was documented from conception to completion, with daily newspapers regularly reporting its progress from its quarrying to its perilous journey from Carrara to Rome (Valentina Follo, “The Power of Images in the Age of Mussolini,” dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2013, p. 100). See Maria Grazia D’Amelio, \textit{L’obelisco marmoreo del Foro Italico a Roma. Storia, immagini e note tecniche} (Roma: Palonbi editori, 2009), and “Mentre l’obelisco Dedicato al Duce Viaggia Verso Roma,” \textit{Capitolium} (1929), 270-276. Also described in Borden W. Painter’s \textit{Mussolini’s Rome}, on p. 41.
himself to the first Emperor and sending the message of a new Italian Empire led by the Duce.

The message of a new Italian Empire was further propagated through the use of mosaics and frescoes adorning the indoor pool and the Duce's gym in the Foro Mussolini (See Appendix E for a detailed plan with numbered mosaics). The provision of public pools hearkens back to the Roman provision of public bathing spaces, which were likewise decorated with frescoes and mosaics. Upon entering the Piazzale, the visitor is greeted by the god Mars (23), with whom Augustus identified his lineage (Mars rapes Rhea Silvia, who then gives birth to Romulus and Remus), and to whom Augustus dedicated the temple in his forum. Mars' spear is pointed at the first framed mosaic (22): an ancient map of Rome with Latin-labeled monuments that highlights where Mussolini created the Via del Mare (now the Via del Teatri di Marcello). The map depicts the twins Romulus and Remus, evoking the mythical origins of Rome. There is also a lion with its paws atop a globe highlighting Italy, Libya, and Ethiopia, thus illustrating the new Italian colonial empire under Mussolini. Mussolini's astrological sign was Leo, the lion embodying strength, power, and regality. Augustus likewise used his astrological sign to symbolize himself as emperor. While Augustus' use of his birth sign came out of a deeper reverence for astrology and his destiny, Mussolini simply used the lion to represent himself in Imperial messaging. Across from this map is the

---

44 Painter, Mussolini's Rome, 41.
47 Follo, “The Power of Images,” 143. Mussolini used the image of the lion frequently enough, that German scholar Weinreich wrote, “Lions and rulers! They also belong together for the Caesars of Rome. Mussolini with his lion, then, is copying the manners of the ancient Roman emperor” (Weinreich, translated by Kenneth Scott in “Mussolini and the Roman Empire,” The Classical Journal Vol. 27 No. 9 , June 1932, p. 655-6)
48 Suetonius, Augustus 94.12: Tantam mox fiduciam fati Augustus habuit, ut thema suum vulgaverit nummumque argenteum nota sideris Capricorni, quo natus est, percuserit.
map of the *Foro Mussolini*, as depicted in the Final Master Plan (2). By designing an entrance depicting the grand Roman Empire of old, intertwined with references to the new Empire of the fascists, Mussolini utilizes the history of Roman conquest to immediately send a message of Italian imperial power.

Sixteen mosaic panels line the entrance path to the *Piazzale*, and sixteen more panels are arranged in a circle around the *Fontana della Sfera* at the end of the path. There are also multiple, mostly animal-based decorations around the panels, as well as the phrases, “A noi Duce” and “Opera Nazionale Balilla” repeated in multiple lines. The panels of the circle are in a tripartite arrangement: eight large panels depicting sports scenes alternate with eight smaller panels. The themes of the various decorations include small scenes of human activity—hunting, harvesting, children playing, fishing, and painting—and a continuous frieze of alternating modern and ancient weapons. The sixteen panels lining the entrance are flanked by rows of blocks featuring inscriptions boasting about key events in the fascist regime's history. David Ward highlights fascist slogans embedded in the mosaics that read, “Better to live one day as a lion than a hundred as a sheep,” “Duce, we dedicate our youth to you,” and “Many enemies, much honor.” A panel from 1936 depicts the Lion of Judah bordered by fluted classical columns, and on top of it, various small groups of sporting men with shovels and the Italian flag (Appendix F). The center of the panel reads, “9 May, Year

---

50 Ibid., 167.
51 Ibid., 166.
52 Ibid., viii.
XIV, Italy finally has her empire.”54 This is a direct quote from Mussolini.55 An important aspect of this mosaic is that it displays a divergence from Augustus’ ideologies, is its emphasis on Empire. Before the Second Italo-Ethiopian War (1835-1936), Mussolini often expressed an anti-imperialistic and peaceful stance—he said on May 26, 1926, “I must declare... to the world, to the entire world, the Fascist government follows and can only follow a policy of peace.”56 It almost appears as though Mussolini follows Augustus’ example of emphasizing peace in the context of the Roman Empire. Mussolini does not, however, follow through. The inlaid quote, “Italy finally has her Empire,” was a quote from Il Duce on May 9, 1936, following the Italian victory in Ethiopia.57 Although claiming to seek peace before the war, he sought Empire following the victory. Augustus begins his reign with messages of the military success of the Roman Empire, but ultimately provides a monument to the great pax Augustana, emphasizing his success in bringing peace to the Empire. Mussolini, on the other hand, appears to have kept much of his works cloaked with the intentions for peace, but once tasting imperial victory, abandoned those values.

One mosaic displays a map of the Via del Mare with the Theater of Marcellus and the two ancient temples. Across from it lies a map of the Foro Mussolini.58 The pair of mosaics thus represents a foundation analogy, which suggests, “The new empire of 1936 celebrated by this Fascist forum is equivalent in greatness and portent to the

54 Minor, “Mapping Mussolini,” 160. The “Conquering Lion of Judah” was one of the adopted titles of the Ethiopian Emperors. It was depicted on the Ethiopian Flag from 1897-1974 (Whitney Smith, Flags Through the Ages and Across the World, 1975, p.323).
58 Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, 42.
foundation of Rome by Romulus and Remus."⁵⁹ Through the use of classical-style mosaics, the fascist regime was able to relate Ancient Roman history and victory with those of the modern Italians under Mussolini.

Two primary stadia were constructed to the north of the entrance and obelisk. These were the Olympic Stadium and the Stadio dei Marmi. The current Olympic Stadium was considerably altered in preparation for the 1960 Olympics and the 1990 World Cup,⁶⁰ and as such, bears little resemblance to the original fascist structure. The Stadio dei Marmi, however, remains in its original state and is named after the sixty marble statues of male athletes in various athletic positions surrounding the stadium.⁶¹ The statues are set above the spectators’ seats in a continuous ring around a large running track. The statues have marble supports—some intentionally designed to look like tree stumps or small pillars, but many are unspecific—and most are naked. The athletes are depicted in strong poses, and there are a number of them holding sticks, balls, rocks, boxing gloves, boomerangs, and other athletic paraphernalia. These marble statues evoke those of the Ancient Romans and merged the imperial traditions with fascist modernity in a manner specific to the fascist regime under Mussolini. Each statue originated in, and represented, a different Italian city.⁶² This is particularly significant, as it displays the importance that the Duce placed on Italian unity in conjunction with the historical might and grandeur shared by the Italian people. The periodical, Travel in Italy, published a segment on the Stadio dei Marmi in December 1934 in which the

---

⁶⁰ Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, 43. For the post-war transformation of the Olympic stadium, see Piero Ostilio Rossi’s Roma: Guida all’architettura moderna 1909-2000 (Rome-Bari: Laterza, 2000).
⁶² Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, 43.
regime boasted of the stadium’s importance: “It is justly considered as one of the most imposing and important [stadiums] in the world.”\textsuperscript{63} In addition to exposing ancient Roman monuments and grandeur, Mussolini worked hard to create structures of what he considered to be equal grandeur, with the same symbols of power. In contrast with Augustus, however, Mussolini removes the Imperial Roman decorative styles and power symbols from the historical contexts they were associated with—he links the \textit{Foro Mussolini} to Roman Imperial traditions in order to perpetuate the memory of his own fascist civilization, without the consideration of how those Imperial traditions were designed in the first place. The various Roman forums functioned as public spaces dedicated to worship and the administration of the state, the obelisks, as representations of imperial power and Roman military victory. Mussolini took the title of “Forum” and applied it to a public youth center, while creating an obelisk in honor of himself to mark the entrance to the center. Both acts display an understanding of the imposition and importance of that symbolism, but a lack of complete comprehension of the historical messaging and context of such symbols.

\textbf{IV. ESPOSIZIONE UNIVERSALE ROMA}

The key to Mussolini’s plan for Rome was the development of a new fascist city in time for the twentieth anniversary of the March on Rome (1942). This project was entitled “E’42,” and the anniversary celebration was named the “Esposizione Universale di Roma (EUR).”\textsuperscript{64} Since the conception of the project, the remains of the unfinished city have come to be known as the EUR itself. The project’s intention was to “create a new

\textsuperscript{63} \textit{Travel in Italy} (December 1934), as quoted by Borden W. Painter, Jr. in his book, \textit{Mussolini’s Rome: Rebuilding the Eternal City}, p. 43.

\textsuperscript{64} Painter, \textit{Mussolini’s Rome}, 125.
quarter of Rome consistent with fascist Rome's new status as the center of the new Italy's new fascist empire."\(^{65}\) Piacentini's monthly publication, *Architettura*, explained the conception of the new project:

The idea of holding a General International Exhibition in Rome in the year 1942 was...conceived by the Duce...in the Spring of the 1935-XIII E[ra] F[ascista] when...the future [of Italy and the Empire] was very uncertain in the minds of many. Victory in Abyssinia, the affirmation of the Italian will in the world, the Foundation of an Empire, are all certainties for [Mussolini], so that he is able to anticipate the celebration of them with mathematical security\(^{66}\)...The sensation of the renewed Italian spirit could only be given by an organism created and realized as a whole.\(^{67}\)

For Mussolini, the success of the Empire was incomplete without a grand and public celebration of the success. The exhibition was permanent in character.\(^{68}\) Augustus' Imperial Empire and the empires of the Emperors following, have survived a millenium in the physical works that the empires produced. Mussolini required the same preservation in the physical landscape of Rome.

The first building constructed was the *Palazzo della Civilità Italiana*, quickly nicknamed the “Colosseo Quadrato.”\(^{69}\) Today it is the signature building of the EUR. The inscription along the top of the building celebrates “A People of Poets, Artists, Saints, Thinkers, Scientists, Sailors, Explorers,”\(^{70}\) displaying the multifaceted blend of the ideal fascist. The EUR plan is very symmetrically gridded, and the Colosseo Quadrato stood at one end of an axis opposite the *Palazzo dei Congressi*, linking the Italian people to the fascist regime. The various open spaces and axial avenues which make up the plan of the EUR greatly contrast the organic nature of the historical centre. The very structured

---

\(^{65}\) Painter, *Mussolini's Rome*, 125.

\(^{66}\) “The 1942 Universal Exhibition,” *Architettura* (December 1938), 723.

\(^{67}\) “Town Planning and Architecture,” *Architettura* (December 1938), 728.

\(^{68}\) Ibid.


\(^{70}\) Ibid., 128.
organization exudes the notions of authority and power similar to those exuded by the inflexibly structured fascist regime.

The EUR was also meant to hold a large arch, an ampitheater, cinema, and additional museums.\(^7\) These structures were never completed, but they represent Mussolini’s adherence to the Roman construction of public entertainment projects and grand public architecture. With his plan of the EUR, Mussolini twists the Roman tradition of public spending into a form of self-promotion: by coalescing entertainment buildings, all blatantly—one can assume—attributed to Il Duce, Mussolini creates a city in his express honor, in which the masses of Italians could socialize under his symbolic gaze.

One of the most blatant examples of the fascist romanità is the large travertine marble tablet carved by Publio Morbiducci. The tablet displays Romulus and Remus at the top, followed by the Roman Empire, the papacy as symbolized by St. Peter’s basilica, Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807–1882) and scenes of the Italian unification, ultimately culminating with an image of Mussolini on a horse with his arm in a fascist salute—the Duce’s Rome (Appendix G). The image on the travertine displays Mussolini as the “triumphant embodiment of Roman and Italian history.”\(^7\) This use of historical imagery is also seen in Augustus’ Ara Pacis, with the depictions of Numa and the twins on the same structure as Augustus and his family. This marble tablet physically introduces other figures in Italian history in addition to Augustus. This is a rare example of that, however, and Mussolini only evokes their images to create an understanding of a continuous historical narrative up to his present day. While Augustus uses images from various periods of Roman foundational history to connect his lineage to a divine,
historical precedent, Mussolini uses the ancient imagery in conjunction with the subsequent development of Italy’s history in order to show a progression of grand empires, culminating in his own. Augustus’ link to divine ancestry served to validate his power and support his de facto kingship. Mussolini leaves no doubt of his sole ruling power (the Italian King who appointed him Prime Minister is not emphasized as Mussolini is), and simply uses the Romulus and Remus myth as the traditional starting point of Italian history.

Mussolini’s choice to emulate Augustus, rather than Giuseppe Garibaldi, is an important one to consider. By recontextualizing the Vittorio Emmanuelle II monument, Mussolini directs attention to Garibaldi’s important role in the unification of Italy. Mussolini also includes Garibaldi in his continuous narrative of Rome’s grand history. As a successful military general himself, and one of the main reasons of the existence of a unified Italian state, Garibaldi could have presented a more understandably modern figure with which to be associated, and a figure whose impact was felt directly by those living in Mussolini’s time. As the general who unified Italy, Garibaldi has a more substantial claim to the title of Bringer of the New Empire, or Second Coming of Augustus. As a political figure, however, Garibaldi was too chronologically close to Mussolini and too problematic to be a prudent choice for association. Garibaldi, while also heading a social and political movement, was not introducing a completely new system of government as Mussolini desired. Furthermore, Garibaldi was vehemently outspoken against the Papacy—a problematic factor should Mussolini have chosen to associate himself with the general. Another important note is that Garibaldi was only a

---

military general, while Augustus was an Emperor. Augustus provided the model for an architect of a physical, and therefore palpable, total renovation of the Roman city, as well as a reviver of dynasty and autocracy. Augustus was a figure that Mussolini could build his platform off of, but also a figure that Mussolini could strive to supersede.

V. CONCLUSION

Mussolini displays his preferred aspects of Augustan Rome in the design of his own city, the EUR. The exhibition emphasized permanence in the form of urban architecture, an administrative building to promote fascist rule, and public entertainment structures to appeal to the Italian public in the interest of encouraging the same social interactions present in Imperial Rome.

Benito Mussolini’s emulation of Augustus was a strategic decision primarily designed to elevate Mussolini’s status to Bringer of the New Empire (seeing as ‘Leader of Young Fascist Government” does not hold the same weight as Garibaldi’s, ‘Unifier of the State of Italy’), and to allow Mussolini a model that he could eventually supersede. Unlike Augustus, Mussolini does not revive old Roman values: he situates new fascist principles of power, conformity, and deference to the state over being Roman or Italian. In this he displays a desire for something new—not a better version of something old, which is what Augustus strives to communicate.

By 1943, however, Mussolini was no longer in control of the Italian state, and the social and political environment had turned against the fascist party. Following Mussolini’s execution in 1945, a citywide damnatio memoriae occurred as the new postwar Italy declared itself, “antifascist” and embarked on the task of erasing the
memory of fascism and its leader. This erasure involved the renaming of fascist sites and streets—the Via dell’Impero, Via del Mare, Foro Mussolini, Viale Adolfo Hitler, for example—, and the destruction of other physical remnants of fascism—statues of Mussolini and the omnipresent fascist symbol, the fasces. Although an effort was clearly made in denuding fascist monuments and constructions of the symbolism that associated them with fascism, the damnatio memoriae was less of a destruction of structures in favor of the new Italian government, and more of a reclaiming of structures in the context of the new Italian government.

Spiro Kostof was partially correct when concluding that “the Duce’s damnatio memoriae was halfhearted...his imprint upon the Eternal City was ineradicable.” Mussolini’s imprint was truly ineradicable, but I would not consider the damnatio memoriae halfhearted. I would rather argue that the Italian government’s treatment of the fascist streets, excavated monuments, and physical constructions, was a pragmatic one—separate from than the fact that a complete destruction and reconstruction of fascist buildings would require more resources than Italy possessed after the war, Mussolini’s exposure of Imperial Rome provided the perfect exhibition of a unified Italian history. Italy’s rejection of fascism and its leader was not necessarily a rejection of autocracy—Augustus does not receive a modern round of damnatio memoriae himself. Because of the prevalence of Imperial associations in the city, the Italian government could promulgate the Augustan values most relevant to their rule—internal peace, national stability, and national security—while leaving the associations of monarchy and corruption to be subsumed under the placating domain of history. It is

74 Painter, Mussolini’s Rome, xvi.
in this way that the Italians attempt to reclaim an Empire of their own, independent of fascism.

The success of Augustus’ constant preoccupation with historical context is evident in the way in which his constructions are able to transcend two thousand years of Roman population, fascism, and the antifascist Italian government. His works, so deeply entrenched in the intrinsic notion of shared history on shared soil, provide constant representations of the fatherland that can even now be communicated as contiguous and consistent with twenty-first century understandings of Rome. The irony in all of this is that in Mussolini’s attempts to redefine the Roman landscape like Augustus had, he has none of the emperor’s longevity—Mussolini’s name and person becomes dissociated from the very monuments that he renovated and exposed, all of which are re-credited to Augustus. Through the acceptance of Rome as being created by a historical period, and in the interest of historical continuity, Mussolini’s carefully designed political platform based on Augustus, lead to his own erasure.
Il Duce depicted on a postcard, 1925. Image from Enrico Sturani’s, Otto Milioni di Cartoline per il Duce (Torino: Centro Scientifico Editore, 1995), 290.
APPENDIX D

_Fascist Propaganda on a Notebook._ Image from Storiologia.it.

_Fascist Propaganda._ Image from Emscuola.org.

1930 _Fascist Propaganda._ Image from poster being sold on Ebay.com.

1933 _Fascist Propaganda._ Image from Wikipedia.org.
APPENDIX E

APPENDIX F

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis is to illustrate that when considering Augustus and Mussolini, we have two ways of renovating a historical Rome—one that is diligently profound, and one that is dynamically superficial. Augustus and his methods are sensitive and nuanced in their navigation of Republican society, while Mussolini’s reinterpretation of such methods is shallowly confined to using Augustus and the Emperors as symbols of power. Augustus pacifies Republican criticism by entrenching his renovations and constructions in commemorative language pertaining to the united history of the Roman people and an emphasis on precedents for almost everything he does. He subtly sets himself apart from others, however, through considerable reinterpretations or seemingly imperceptible deviations from tradition. In this dually functioning program, Augustus is able to embed an entirely new political system in the Empire. Mussolini provoked growing criticism by adopting the grandiose imagery of the Imperial era, explicitly likening himself to Augustus in many of his works, and using Roman history and traditions as unifying implements—rather than as culturally appropriate veils—to control a disjointed Italian population. By ignoring the ways in which Augustus politically maneuvered his new Empire into existence, Mussolini is unable to maintain his.

The impermanence of Mussolini’s superficial methods ensured that Il Duce’s legacy—the reorganization of the Roman landscape to accentuate its Imperial architecture—would be widely recognized as belonging to the historical figures attributed to the monument. Modern Rome is now often read as synonymous with Ancient Rome because of Mussolini’s architectural choices; it is, geographically and
visually, an echo of Mussolini’s investment in the reorganization of the city. Mussolini’s emphasis on a shared history and an Imperial one solidified the borders of the city as the Aurelian walls—the walls within which all the Imperial constructions in Rome survive. These provide the boundaries of, “Rome,” that are propagated in mainstream and tourists maps of the city. Mussolini’s own constructions, the Foro Mussolini and the Esposizione Universale Roma, are too far north and south (respectively) of “Rome” to be considered in the popularized mapping of the city. Mussolini’s investment and emphases had lead to a presentation of Rome that has so steadfastly accepted his historical associations that his primary constructions are not part of the geographic area that is currently considered Roman.

It is ironic that Mussolini’s superficially done revival of ancient Rome is the Rome that we are left with today, following his damnatio memoriae. If the ancient, historical messaging was as deeply rooted in fascist imagery as Mussolini wanted to believe, why did these ancient monuments survive? It appears as though Mussolini did too well a job emphasizing a shared Italian history to adequately equate fascism to Imperial Rome. For the post-war Italians, denuding the buildings and monuments of blatant fascist imagery was enough—they chose to simply erase his name, not his physicality. The intricacy of Augustan messaging, particularly the embedding of the monuments in a shared and understood Roman history, permeated through the monuments’ use as fascist propaganda, evincing Augustus’ success. Augustus’ Rome, Mussolini’s Augustan Rome, is claimed by the Italians and can be considered authentically Roman. The post-fascist Italian government has carried forward this identification with the shared history Augustus successfully sought to emphasize.
The various relics and remains are generally ascribed to the ancient Romans responsible for them. When considering the ancient renovation of the Roman landscape, Augustus’ many works—temples, administrative buildings, public entertainment structures, victory monuments, and public infrastructure—remain associated with Augustus himself, regardless of the effort he placed in diverting the public focus from blatant self-promotion. Whether or not this irony is welcomed, or even understood, by international society, it exists and has been subtly perpetuated worldwide in the decades following Italian fascist rule.

ROME: PRESENTATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

The city of Rome, whether ancient or modern, has generated audiences for centuries—from the Medieval Christian pilgrims, to the elites participating in the Grand Tour, and even to the viewers of the movie Spectre (2015). There are multiple post-war American films set in ancient Rome,\(^1\) revealing the persistence of classical antiquity in modern American culture following Mussolini’s reign. For decades following World War II, ancient Rome remained a consistent subject in popular films and television, even if the videos were not always set in the city of Rome itself.\(^2\) At the turn of the millennium, however, a greater interest in the contemporary city of Rome emerged—a city where the ancient and modern coexist.

---


\(^2\) Gladiator (2000) exemplifies how ancient Rome is “rediscovered and represented” (Joshel, Malamud, Wyke, Imperial Projections, 1) by filming at a seventeenth-century Spanish fort on Malta, showing classical buildings from all over Europe, and creating effects through computer generation.
On a personal note, I have found this duality to be the hook that has drawn my interests deeper into an architectural study of the city. My earliest introduction to Rome, oddly enough, was the *Lizzie McGuire Movie* (2004). The movie features Lizzie McGuire riding on the *Via dell’Impero*, past the forum, around the pantheon, and—most importantly—performing in concert in the Colosseum. The film caught my attention because of the ways in which it presented an ancient city in modern contexts, and recent films have continued this trend—2013’s *La Grande Bellezza*, and the 2015 James Bond movie, *Spectre*, for example. I discuss film here because I find it fascinating that pop culture versions of contemporary Rome frequently and exclusively return to Imperial structures, and Renaissance works. By restricting one’s view to the physical city of Rome, we see only two histories—they just happen to encompass two artistically transformative phases. For the general public, Rome—a roughly 3000 year old city—is reduced to two primary phases, with a third, modern phase acting novelly as a framework for Imperial and Renaissance constructions. While the Renaissance is beyond the scope of this particular project, the exhibition of Imperial Rome within the context of a contemporary city displays an acceptance of a shared Roman history grounded on the same soil, and an expression of continuity.

This matters because the presentation of Rome that we have is a Rome that is modern, Renaissance, and Imperial—many of the other phases of the city’s history get alighted from it. People in power—in the government or in the corporate world—have the ability to physically change the landscapes of the places we reside in. In doing so, they have the potential to redefine the ways in which we consider public space, class disparity, symbols of authority and power, general aesthetics, and even our own history. The treatment of such physical changes in the media can also influence our level of
scrutiny when regarding new constructions. Mussolini’s choices in demolishing certain sections of the city in order to expose others, and the current Italian government’s choice to retain those renovations, presents an elite Roma. The famous artists and Popes are those highlighted in the Renaissance façades and various artworks. The emperors are the primary figures displayed in the uncovered ancient monuments—as is our problem when dealing with ancient archaeological remains, the plebeian classes rarely provide investigable material. Rome in these phases, then, becomes defined as the Rome of the Emperors, and the Rome of the Popes.

Solely investigating the proliferated physical and visual expression of Rome, we have two glorious historical phases that defined western history and art, a hopeful present in conversation with such history, and ultimately, a city untouched by poverty. This reverence expressed in the presentation of the city allows the erasure of both fascism, and modern socio-economic disparity, by maintaining the stress on Augustan notions of continuity. The continued invocation of Augustus and the historical foundations of his structures represented Mussolini’s model on which to build his platform, but it also allowed Mussolini himself to be erased from the city he so dearly wished to be impressed upon. For Augustus’ part, his de-emphasis on himself in favor of emphasizing Rome ultimately resulted in his perpetuation. Ironically enough.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

THESIS SOURCES

PRIMARY AND ANCIENT


“Duce Unveils Obelisk Erected in Own Honor.” Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, November 5, 1932.


Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae Vol. 1. Edited by Hermann Dessau (Berolini Apud Weidmannos, 1892).


--------The Doctrine of Fascism. Translated by E. Cope. Firenze: Vallechi, 1936.


The Vatican State and the State of Italy. “Treaty Between the Holy See and Italy,” 11 February, 1929.


Prezzolini, Giuseppe. *Italy*. Florence: Valacchi Publisher, 1939.


