"From Brick to Marble"

Title from Suetonius (ch. 28): “[Augustus] so beautified [Rome] that he could justly boast that he had found it built of brick and left it in marble.” Physical transformation of Rome one of Augustus’ most lasting achievements, prominently celebrated in Res Gestae (chs. 19-21). Significant that this topic comes in the section dealing with A.’s liberality; reflects a traditional Roman view of building as a form of public benefaction.

Augustus continues a thriving late-Republican practice of public works as form of self-promotion, patronage on a grand scale, providing public amenities in return for gratitude, support, recognition by community. (Compare modern practice of endowing buildings, professorships, etc.)

As in politics, Pompey and Julius Caesar mark a new phase in public benefaction. Pompey's theater complex (55 BC) the first permanent theater in Rome; a sign of the increased wealth and ambitions of leaders. Similarly the Forum begun by Julius Caesar, the first complement to the original Forum (now called the Forum Romanum to distinguish it from the fora built by emperors).

–Several Augustan buildings stress continuity with previous generation: renovation of Pompey's theatre, construction of Theater of Marcellus (ca. 20 BC) similar in plan to Pompey’s; A. also completed Julius Caesar's forum and sited his own forum next to that of Julius.

Augustus' building program larger, more comprehensive, more integrated than anything seen earlier. Recent availability of high-quality marble from Carrara allows for new level of magnificence.

Augustan buildings both religious (temples, altars, shrines) and secular (theater, forum, markets, porticoes, baths). A. personally controlled major projects, delegated others to associates, esp. Agrippa in early years. Other members of imperial family also involved, e.g., Livia and Octavia both sponsor porticoes; buildings an acceptable way for women of imperial family to take on a public role.

Unlike major works of literature, several leading Augustan buildings not well preserved, can be only partially reconstructed, sometimes from references in literary texts or appearances on coins. Some important discoveries made in last 100 years: largest pieces of Ara Pacis found in 1930s, fragments of Sundial inscription in late 1970s. More could still be found, e.g., in Forum of Augustus, largely buried under a Mussolini-era boulevard. Artists and architects largely anonymous; many probably Greek. Use of Greek cultural idioms for Augustan purposes a pervasive theme. Assimilation of Greek culture changes the image of Rome as a city.

A few of the main projects:

–**Temple of Apollo on Palatine** (mid-20s BC). Noteworthy for location, in heart of the old city and linked to Augustus' own new residence (Palatine the source of the term "palace"; recall Ovid's mischievous reference to Jupiter’s dwelling on Mt. Olympus as the “Palatine Hill” of heaven, p. 8 Humphries.)

  –Also notable for blending of elements from classical Greek architecture and archaic Greek art; creative and eclectic use of past styles typical of Augustan approach.

  –Temple complex included a library of Greek and Latin literary classics: as building's architecture links Rome to Greek classical past, union of the two literatures implies Rome's equality with Greece and full assimilation of Greek culture.

  –Library also asserts Rome's status as a center of learning alongside Hellenistic centers such as Alexandria and Pergamum. Linking the Library to Apollo’s temple avoids a "royal" connection.

  –Perhaps because of its literary importance, opening of temple complex prominently mentioned by poets at time: Horace *Odes* 1.31, Propertius *Elegies* 2.31. Latter gives some details of decorative program, with reproductions of classical Greek statues and choice of ideologically suggestive myths. Specifically, the daughters of Danaus—implying the punishment of impiety and/or the consequences of fraternal conflict and/or the clash of Greece vs. Egypt.

–**Temple of Mars Ultor (Mars the Avenger) and Forum of Augustus.** Vowed in 42 BC, not completed until 2 BC; cf. Res Gestae 21. Originally meant to proclaim A.’s avenging of Julius' death, its
message much expanded as project developed, especially after recovery of lost legionary standards from Parthia in 20. Final form includes a panorama of Roman history culminating in Augustus. Compare the speech of Anchises in Aeneid 6.

–Appearance of Temple partially recoverable through coins and allusions in later monuments, e.g., grouping of Mars, Venus, Caesar in interior.
–Side "halls of fame" with statues of Roman worthies. Romulus and Aeneas prominently placed in matching semicircular exedrae.
–Eclectic use of Greek decorative elements: classically-styled caryatids, Corinthian column-capitals, copies of famous Hellenistic paintings associated with Alexander.

Another important Augustan building project to the north of the traditional center, in the Campus Martius, eventually a complex of three interrelated structures:

–**Mausoleum** of Augustus; the earliest of all buildings in this district, perhaps a relic of Octavian's more extravagant self-presentation before Actium.
–Bigger than the original "Mausoleum" built by Mausolus in 4th c. BC (one of the traditional "seven wonders of world"): 130 ft. high, 280 ft. across—outdoing the pomp of Hellenistic monarchs.
–A symbol of Octavian's loyalty to Rome and a counter to Antony's wish to be buried in Egypt.
–During A.'s life becomes a family resting-place, taking on a clear dynastic significance.
–Given additional meaning in conjunction with two other monuments:

–**Sundial** with Egyptian obelisk 100 ft. high as its gnomon (i.e., pointer). Dedicated 10/9 B.C., recalling A.'s victory over Egypt. Theory mentioned by Zanker that gnomon pointed to Ara Pacis on Augustus' birthday has been called into question. Significance triumphal but also scientific, claiming for Rome a traditionally Greek skill.

–Close study of scenes and their interrelationships the subject of next section meetings: today give overview of layout and main components.

*Reading assignment for Lecture XIX:* Review excerpts from Virgil's Eclogues and Georgics (123-136) and Horace's Odes 1.1, 1.4, 3.1, 3.6, 3.13, 4.7 (141-152) in *Sourcebook.*

