

The emperor Augustus and the Theater of Marcellus: the representation of the theater in the Roman urban space (1st century BC)

O imperador augusto e o Teatro de Marcelo: a representação do teatro no espaço urbano romano (séc. I a.C.)

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Abstract: In the transitional period between Republic and Principate, Roman's urban image was used by Emperor Augustus as a means of legitimizing both his new government and his own image. As an heir of Julius Caesar, the *Princeps* aim was to modernize the city by building grand public monuments, particularly the southern shore of the Campus Martius, which was promoted to the experimental category and, on account of it, received various constructions. Among these is that of the Theater of Marcellus, one of the largest theaters in the Roman Empire. Despite the logical changes inherent over time and the restorations carried out, the monumental structure of the theater remains to the present day. Thus, by deepening the study of the physical space of the theater, we seek to reflect on the construction of Marcellus' Theater, highlighting the importance of its location within the *Urbs*' planning. By seeking to convey an image of power, as well as that of a good *princeps*, Augustus built the Campus Martius almost as a showcase for imperial architecture and the physical manifestation of Roman's prominence. .

Resumo: No período de transição entre República e Principado, a imagem urbana de Roma foi usada pelo imperador Augusto como um meio de legitimação de seu novo governo e sua própria imagem. Como herdeiro de Júlio César, o *princeps* objetivou modernizar a cidade construindo grandiosos monumentos públicos. Uma das maiores transformações urbanísticas centrou-se na zona oeste da cidade romana, particularmente a margem sul do Campo de Marte que, promovida à categoria experimental, recebeu variadas construções. Dentre estas, situa-se aquela do Teatro de Marcelo, um dos maiores teatros do Império Romano. Apesar das mudanças lógicas inerentes à passagem do tempo e as restaurações realizadas, a estrutura monumental do teatro permanece até os dias atuais. Assim, aprofundando no estudo do espaço físico espacial do teatral, buscaremos expor a construção do Teatro de Marcelo, indicando a importância da localização deste dentro do planejamento da *Urbs*. Buscando passar uma imagem de poder, assim como a figura de um bom *princeps*, Augusto edificou o Campo de Marte quase como uma vitrine da arquitetura imperial e da manifestação física da preeminência de Roma.

Keywords:

Principate.
Augustus.
Theatre of Marcellus.
theatrical Space.
Campus Martius.

Palavras-chave:

Principado.
Augusto.
Teatro de Marcelo.
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Introduction

In the transitional period between the Republic and the Principate, the city of Rome went through intense urban modifications. At that moment, Emperor Augustus mobilized the arts, the literature, the architecture, as well as the image of Rome to legitimize his government and his power (FAVRO, 1996, p. 5). The image of Augustus was indeed built by several craftsmen.¹ Art, architecture, and literature contributed,² through their created images, to the construction of a new mentality, as well as helped to edify Augustus' image by opposing it to that of other public figures, such as Julius Caesar and Marc Anthony.³ The power of these images evoked the emperor's triumph and greatness and escaping the goal to "hypnotize" his spectators, there was a certain demand for exposing the image of an emperor worthy of himself (VEYNE, 2009, p. 213).

Our research⁴ comes from the need to understand more deeply the issue of space usage, specifically the theatrical space, and from the urgency of understanding it, also, as an instrument of the *Princeps'* power. This space represented, at the same time, the celebrations, religious activities, and the moments of amusement among Romans, besides being significant of shared sociability among several groups. With the increase of the stone theater constructions, this space, in specific, the Theater of Marcellus, acquired both a strong political dimension and the feeling, provided by the Emperor, that various ideals of the Republic would prevail in the new form of government, the Principate.

In this article, we aim to extensively demonstrate an essential point developed throughout our research, which is the location of the Theater of Marcellus within the general context of the *Urbs*. We analyze the choice of the construction's location, its surroundings, and Emperor's Augustus perception of this place. The Theater of Marcellus still remains visible and very well situated: it was built in the southern part of Campus Martius, located near the River Tiber and other important monuments. The work was conceived by Julius Caesar, who chose the appropriate place in 46 BC to design an area intended for a large public. In order to accomplish such intent, he ordered the removal of Pietas' temple in the *Holitorium* Forum, of other sanctuaries, and of some private houses. In Cassius Dio's (43, 49, 2) words "being anxious to build a theatre, as Pompey had done, he laid the foundations, but did not finish it; it was Augustus who later completed it [in 23

¹ To read more about the subject, check out: *The Image of Augustus*, 1981, by Andrew Burnett and Susan Walker.

² *The Power of Imagens in the Age of Augustus*, 2005, by Paul Zanker.

³ To read more about the subject, check out: *Portraits of Augustus: The construction of a Roman Emperor*, 2016, by Natália Frazão José.

⁴ My master's work, whose title is: *The Emperor Augustus and the Construction of the Theater of Marcellus: physical and political space in the consecration of a Princeps* (1st century BC/1st century AD), 2020.

BC] and named it for his nephew, Marcus Marcellus.” Caesar is credited with the effort to build the foundations of the theater, but it was Augustus who (*Res Gestae*, 21) noticed that the area obtained by Caesar was insufficient. Such observation led Augustus to buy new lands from private owners. In other words, Augustus was certainly the main responsible for the building’s construction (RICHARSON, 1991, p. 382).

Thereby, we wish to highlight that the Theater of Marcellus is inserted in a wider architectural plan and that its location has a meaning. We focus on the architectural program of Emperor Augustus, specifically on the area of Campus Martius (which was widely restored), as well as on the environment and the monuments around the theater. We understand that the urban space evokes strong reactions and multifaceted and contrasting impressions since it was used both for fun and for the legitimizing of the *Princeps*.

Figure 1 – Current Theater of Marcellus



Source: Personal file, archaeological space of the Theater of Marcellus.

Augustus and the urbanistic transformation in the city of Rome: foreshadow of the Roman architecture greatness and its sociopolitical usage for the Principate

Evidently, Ancient Roman architecture presents us with magnificent and complex traces. Despite the loss of its ancient splendor in large part due to erosion on monuments by the advance of time, the marks of the great constructions endure and amaze us to the present day. As Rabun Taylor affirms, the wide constructions of these monuments fascinated the Romans themselves. We can glimpse this with the transportation of the Egyptian Obelisk from Alexandria, across the Mediterranean, promoted by Augustus in 30 BC, after his conquest of Egypt. This transference demanded an 80-meter-long vessel. The transportation and the assembly of 330 tonnes of the Obelisk must have generated enthusiasm and admiration on a similar scale.⁵

Although archaeological data and historical facts present gaps, Ancient Rome, the center of the Empire, was probably founded around the VIII century BC, by Latin settlers that came from the Alba region. According to Joseph Rykwert (2006, p. 19-20), as well as several other ancient cities, their building, houses, and streets all had their stones carved and millimetrically measured. They also brought with them strong mythological connotations, underpinned by a series of beliefs, myths, and rites. Contrary to what is reproduced by common sense, through representations of Rome spread by cinematographic productions and fascist reinventions from the 19th century, the development and formation of the monumental Roman greatness were the result of a long process. An architectural process that has spread, mainly during the Empire, through numerous regions of the Mediterranean, Asia, and Africa, thus becoming a political and cultural unit of great complexity (TAYLOR; RINNE; KOSTOF, 2016).

In the middle of the 1st century BC, the city of Rome projected an urban image that had little relation with the big Hellenic cities. The lack of attention from the Republican magistrates to the urban cares in general and a certain disorder by private actions created an urban image disconnected (FAVRO, 1992). During this transitional period between Republic and Principate, the city of Rome began to be modified, becoming the stage for great architectural development. The architectonic monumentality, which had begun in Silas, Julius Caesar, and Pompey times, went through one of its largest transformations with Augustus' actions, taking the role of *Pater Urbis*. In the words of Diane Fayro, "Using a skillful combination of carrot and stick, he intervened in all aspects of the urban environment, building and repairing structures and reshaping legal and administrative

⁵ Known as the Vatican Obelisk, it was Christianized by Pope Sixtus V in 1586. It is currently located in Saint Peter's Square.

provisions for urban care" (FAVRO, 1992, p. 63). The same train of thought is presented to us by the archaeologist Pierre Gros. He comments that, when we talk about Ancient Rome, we always think of the Imperial city's greatness at its result, without realizing that this city took a long time to develop. "Il faut attendre la fin de la République et le début du Principat pour que des responsables se donnent les moyens de remodeler le vieux centre historique, afin de lui conférer la solennité qui jusqu'alors lui avait fait cruellement défaut" (GROS, 2006, p. 211-212).

Although the foundations of Roman urban beautification were laid at the end of the Republican period, Augustus' actions boosted the urban image of the capital, which reached solidity and magnitude. Only when power was held by the hands of the *Princeps*, the concern about the Roman urban image (as a whole) began to be considered. Here, we emphasize the political importance of Julius Caesar concerning the Principate's development. We agree that Julius Caesar was responsible for implementing several social, political, and economic renovations, as well as to foreshadow, to some extent, a power put into place at the end of the Republic. However, although Julius Caesar was one of the firsts to think globally about Roman and its monumental aspects, his adopted son perpetuated and consolidated his actions (FAVRO, 1996, p. 235).

Therefore, both themes, Augustus and Rome, stimulate a recurring association among studies regarding architecture and urban topography. Studies that have been exponentially growing among historians and academics, especially due to the development of archaeological activities involving monuments, intense compendium publications related to Roman topography, and the increase and usage of digital technologies, remarkably by tridimensional reconstructions of the monuments and ancient cities. We understand that the enhancement city program by Octavian is part of a process initiated since his adoptive father's death, reaching large proportions by being used as an essential political instrument in his confrontations with Marc Anthony and also as a reinforcement of his *auctoritas*.⁶ Finally, the concern with the urban renovation was a continuity process of Augustus, the new title credit to Octavian by the Senate.

⁶ According to Norma Musco Mendes (2006, p. 24), the structuring process of the Principate involves the posture of conflicting political forces, after Julius Caesar's murder, on March 15th, 44 BC. In this period, we have mainly the actions of Octavian, Julius Caesar's adopted son, and Marc Anthony's, consul and Caesar's right-hand man. Marc Anthony's growing attachment to the East and the ruler Cleopatra strengthened Octavian's position as a defender of Roman tradition, for he stood against the threat of Eastern domination (MENDES, 2006, p. 25). The conflict between them had its decisive moment in the battle of Actium, in 31 BC, from which Octavian emerged victorious and responsible for organizing a new political and ideological system (SILVA, 2001).

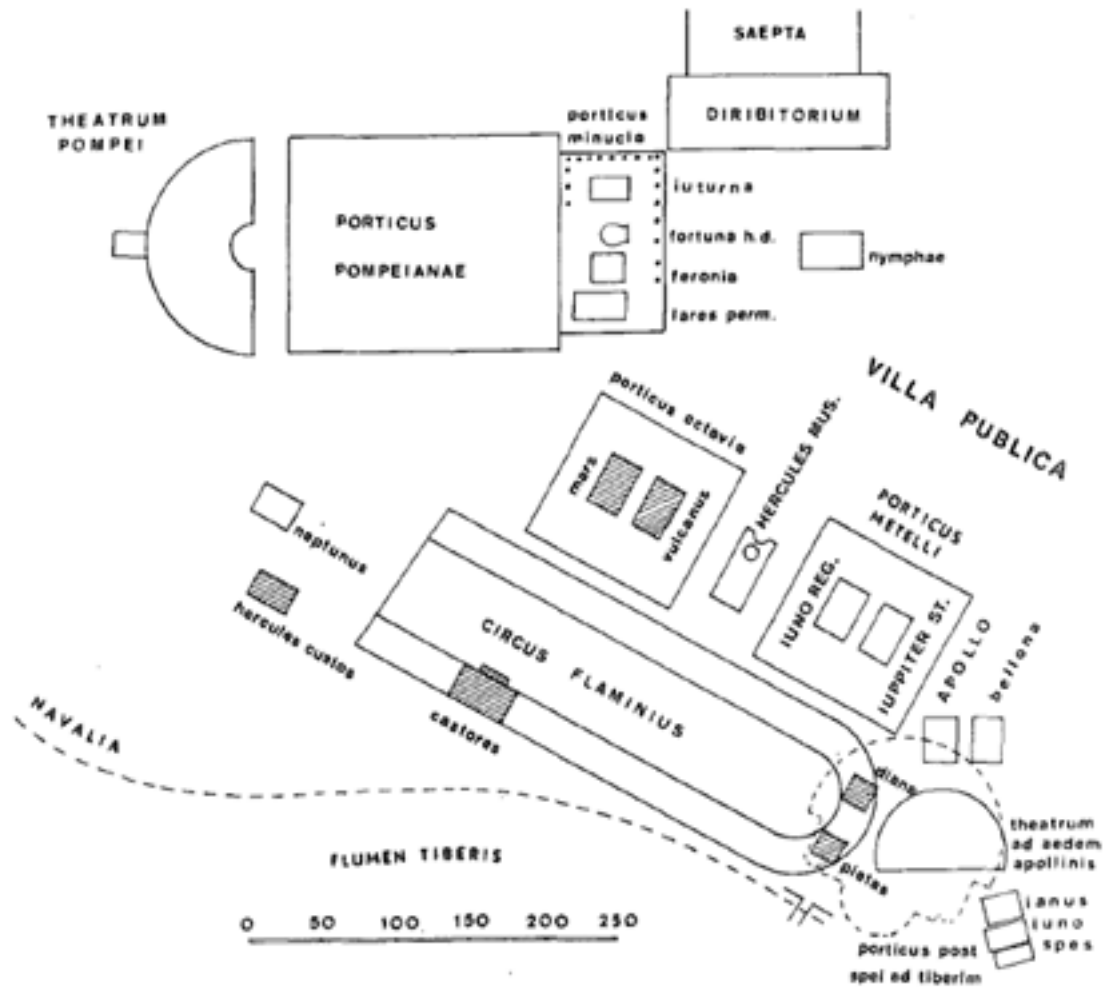
Augustus and the Theater of Marcellus: the representation of the theater within the Urbs

As we have already debated in the previous topic, at the end of the Republic and beginning of the Principate, the so-called prominent figures, such as Pompey, Julius Caesar, and mainly Augustus, became responsible for reshaping the old Roman historical center in a city rethought as a whole. However, the west area of the city and, particularly, the southern shore of Campus Martius, promoted to the category of an experimental area, were the ones that received the most the construction of magnificent buildings. Among them, there was the Theater of Marcellus, a project that influenced the reorganization of the space layout. Augustus' decision to strengthen his connection with his adoptive father through the inheritance of a monument could have been one of the main reasons for the continuity of the project, but it surely was not the only one. The location of Marcellus' Theater in the *Urbs* included numerous elements, symbolic and political aspects. Although the place's choice for its construction have been made by Julius Caesar, it was Augustus who claimed these elements to himself and cherished them in a way yet to be seen.

The Theater of Marcellus is in Campus Martius' area. As stated by Antonio Checa (2009), the new theater framed the extinct and curved side of the Circus, adjacent to the Flaminus Circus, as a monumental closure from its eastern slope. The position of Marcellus' theater framed and categorized completely this sector, giving the best possible order to all the monuments that were integrated into it; the temples of Apollo and Bellona were well-aligned behind the curved facade of the theater and Flaminus Circus Square with the two triumphal arches which might have been placed on each side in a later period. It's legitimate to affirm that Augustus had little space to build the Theater of Marcellus without having to demolish other constructions; but it was viable to build the largest theater ever known, offering the best perspective for all the buildings surrounding the new one (Fig. 2).

We can underline some elements that highlighted the symbolic importance of Campus Martius to the Romans. Among them, we emphasize the numerous ceremonies related to the foundation of the city of Rome; the construction of temporary theaters to celebrate *Ludi Apollinares*, annual games in honor of the god Apollo, and the actions connected to the triumphal procession that shared a relationship with this specific area.

Figure 2 – Marcellus' Theater Location (dotted)



Source: ZANKER (2005, p. 53).

Diane Atnally Conlin and Paul Jacobs II tell us, in *Campus Martius, The Field of Mars in The Life of Ancient Rome* (2014), that Campus Martius was used, during the Roman Republic, as a military training field and as a local for festive rituals. Campus Martius was a public area of Ancient Rome, with approximately 2 kilometers, outside the sacred border, a plain between “the city and the river Tiber”, according to Titus Livius.⁷ Its name comes from the myth of the foundation of Rome, once the brothers Romulus and Remus were thrown into the Tiber River, which ran at the western border of what was to become the Campus Martius.

With the possible exception of a small altar to Mars near the center of the field, it was not until two more centuries had passed that visible changes finally came to the marshy field north of the Capitoline. During the fifth century B.C.E., a large clearing was prepared about 300 meters beyond the hill in which citizens would

⁷ Livy, books III and IV.

congregate every five years to be counted in a census. Known as the Villa Publica, the gathering space remained free of permanent structures, although a portico and buildings were added two centuries later during a renovation. Soon after space was cleared for the Villa Publica, a temple was erected on the southern edge of the field. Dedicated in 431 B.C.E. to Apollo Medicus (Apollo the Healer), the temple was raised in response to a plague that had recently ravaged the city (CONLIN; JACOBS, 2014, p. 33).

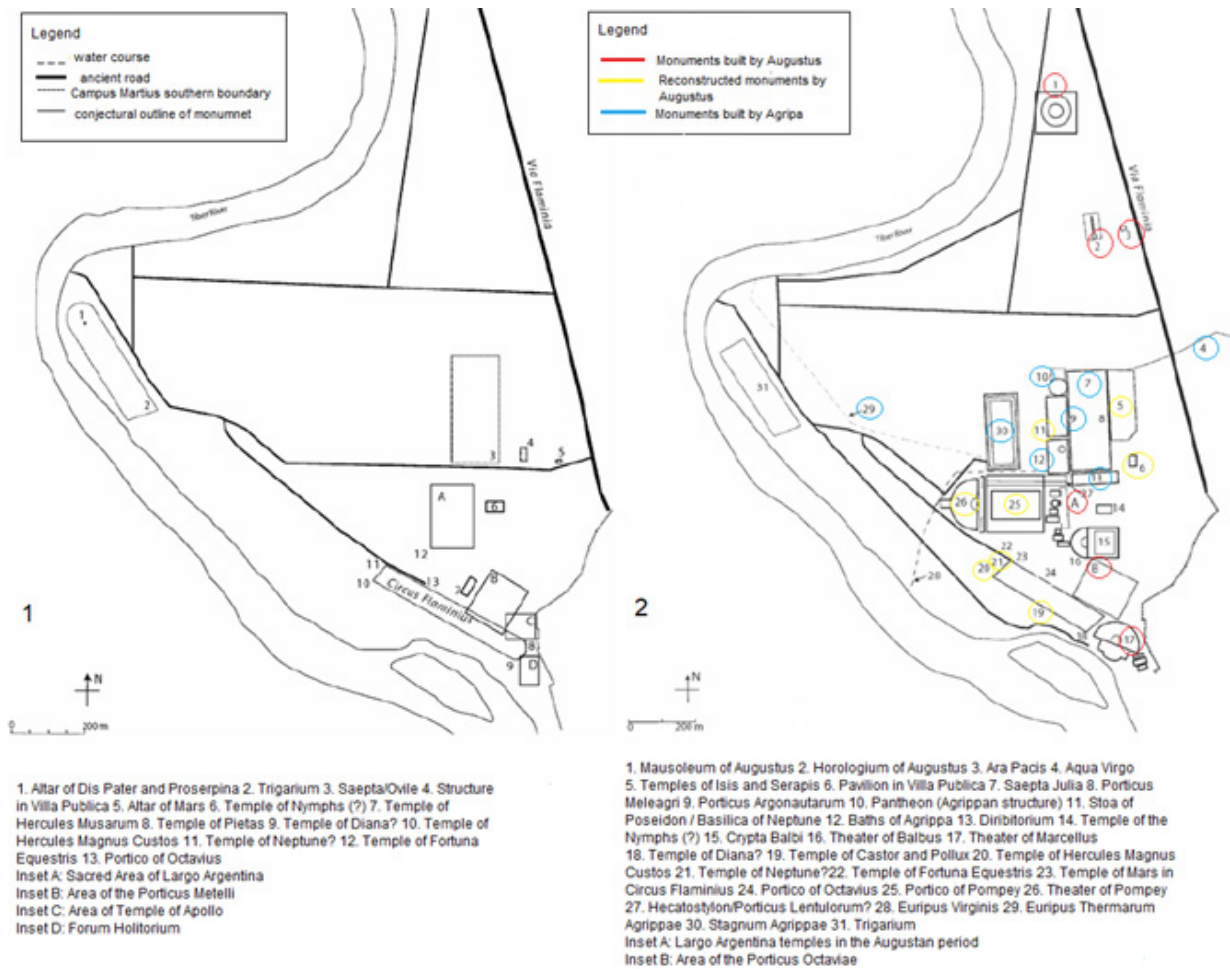
There was also the construction of the *Holitorium* Forum, which housed the temples and served as a space for temporary markets and public meetings. Over time, they would articulate the space known as Circus Flaminius in temple precincts and complex porticoes (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3.2.17). In and around the sacred zone, known nowadays as Largo Argentina (Fig. 3.1.A), temples to aquatic deities were built and at least sixteen of them (half of the temples in Rome promised during the Punic Wars) were lifted on the plain (CONLIN; JACOBS, 2014, p. 33).

The former dirt road, used by the grouping troops, was monumentalized and renamed as Via Flaminias, as it was built by the censor Gaius Flaminius in 220 BC. It became an important Roman highway: through it many soldiers heading to the distant battlefronts to the north and west passed by. There was also a shift of farmers and traders heading towards the city center, transporting agricultural products, imported items, construction materials, and domestic animals. Other temples and monuments were built over the years, such as the Temple of Hercules, the Temple of Juno Regina, the Temple Castor and Pollux, the Portico of *Metteli*, the Temple of Juno Stator, among others (CONLIN; JACOBS, 2014, p. 33-34).

The construction of Pompey's portico-theater, carried out on Campus Martius, provided a new meaning to the typology of buildings in Rome, constructions that until then were determined by the impositions of the Senate throughout the Republic. Although the first stone theater in Rome was built only in 55 BC, this did not take away the splendor of the provisional theaters in the Republic and all the commotion that this entertainment activity caused among the Romans. Temporary wooden theaters had a long history in Rome, something we can visualize in ancient authors such as the Roman architect Vitruvius, who wrote one of the most complete works on Roman architecture,⁸ and in other accounts such as Pliny, Cicero, Titus Livius and Tacitus. Theatrical performances (*ludi scaenici*) were connected with specific festivals and rites. They performed these spectacles in various places of Rome, depending on the occasion.

⁸ *The Treatise of Architecture*, written and published around the 1st century BC. *The Treatise* contains a total of ten books on the subject, explaining important conceptions about the Roman space and the monuments that make up the city.

Figure 3 – Monuments of Campus Martius



3.1. Monuments of Campus Martius in 146 BC; 3.2. Monuments of Campus Martius in 14 AD. Source: CONLIN; JACOBS (2014, p. 22-28).

An example of this was the construction of the temporary theater *theatrum et proscaenium ad Apollinis*, contracted by Emilius Lepidus in 179 BC, in Campus Martius, almost in the same space where the Theater of Marcellus is located (Fig. 2). On this subject, we find it interesting to emphasize how the performance of *Ludi Apollinares* in this area can be important for the connection between Augustus and Caesar, and consequently, it can show the relevance of the Marcellus' Theater area, as a whole, for the Principate's politics. It is known that Augustus, before becoming emperor, sought to associate his image with the god Apollo, placing himself as his protégé, defending Roman morals and discipline, in opposition to his rival, Marc Anthony. Thus, it would not be strange to suggest the *Princeps'* political interest in continuing a project placed in a prime area and with monuments linked to its image.

As claimed by Geoffrey Sumi, in his work *Ceremony and Power: Performing Politics In Rome Between Republic and Empire* (2015, p. 142), public entertainment between the

end of the Republic and the beginning of the Principate benefited from strong political connotations, as a vehicle of communication, either as a means for an aristocrat to demonstrate his *liberalitas*, or to publicize a candidate for a political office. Augustus used the July Games in 44 BC as a way of honoring Caesar's memory through the games, besides strengthening his image before the Roman people. The *Ludi Apollinares* are also related to the memory of Caesar and his victories, since it was celebrated in the month of Caesar's birth.

In a letter to Atticus, Cicero describes a *pompa* that included statues of Caesar and Victory in close proximity. This *pompa* was probably part of the *Ludi Apollinares* of 45 rather than the *Ludi Victoriae Caesaris* of that year, as has long been thought. The presence of the statue of Victory hardly proves that these games were the *Ludi Victoriae*, since all *pompa*e before circus games likely included this deity because of her importance to athletic contests. There is all the more reason for the presence of Victory at the games of Apollo since they were established, according to tradition, in order to ensure victory (*victoriae ergo*) (Liv., 25, 12, 15; Macr., 1, 17, 27).

In addition to building the Temple of Apollo on the Palatine, Augustus remodeled the temple of Apollo Medico and renamed it Apollo Sosianus (Fig. 4 and Fig. 5), alongside the future Theater of Marcellus. The three columns of the temple that are still standing today are from a reconstruction of the Augustan period, but we know that the cult of Apollo already existed in this area since at least the mid-fifth century BC when both Cicero and Titus Livius mentioned an 'Apollinarian' (a grove or sacred altar) on this spot.⁹

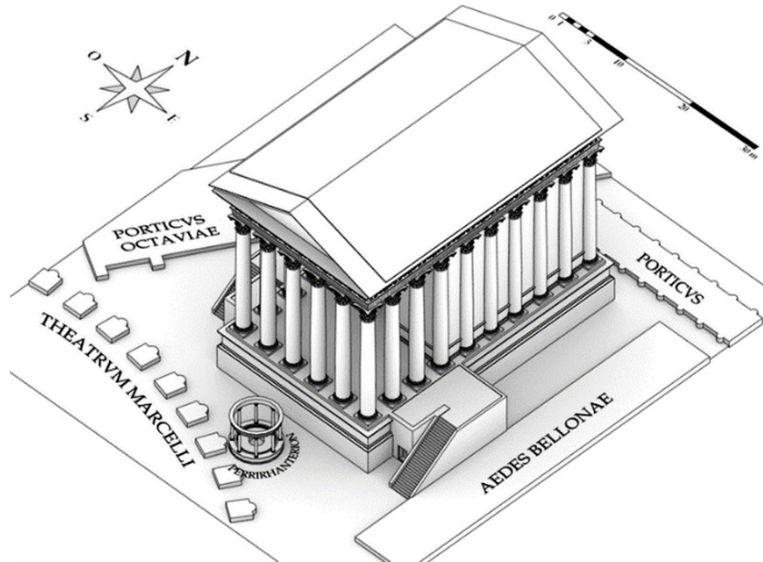
Besides Pompey, the Campus Martius region caught the attention of Julius Caesar who, in addition to planning the theater, carried out the construction of a *Saepta*, in 54 BC, a place where Roman citizens gathered in assemblies and votes, replacing the previous structure. After Caesar's death, this construction passed to Emilius Lepidus, but Agrippa completed the work later in 26 BC and renamed it *Saepta Julia*. Augustus also used the building as a space for combat among gladiators and later it served as a market (FAVRO, 1996; RICHARDSON, 1991).

Therefore, the northern part of the plain, an area indifferent during the previous century, was highly organized during the reign of Augustus with interrelated structures, reflecting the substantial impression of the Emperor's building program. His government built splendid constructions, such as the Mausoleum, along the *Via Flaminias*; the *Ara Pacis Augustae* beside the solar marker called the Clock of Augustus, composed of a reddish-gray Egyptian granite Obelisk, surmounted by a sphere, whose shadow fell on

⁹ Titus Livius, *History of Rome*, 34

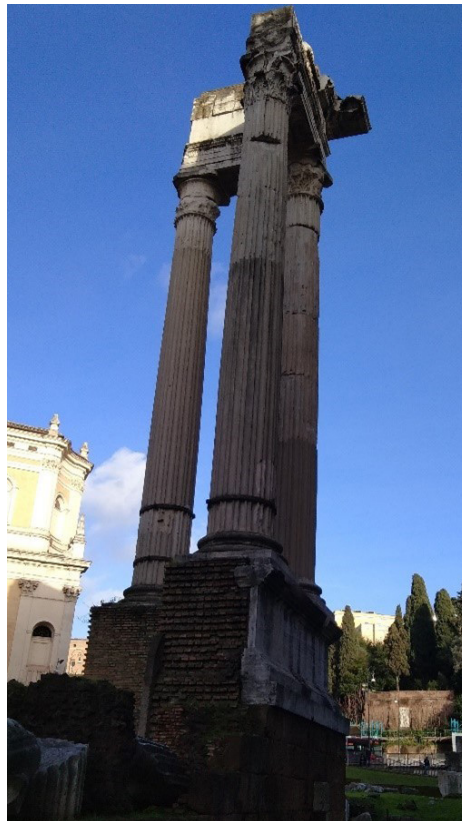
a bronze marker set in travertine; in addition to several temples having been renovated, such as the Temple of Feronia and the Temple of Neptune (Fig. 3) (CONLIN; JACOBS, 2014, p. 35).

Figure 4 – Temple of Apollo Sosianus



Source: Wikipedia. Accessed on the 7th of April 2020.

Figure 5 - Current Temple of Apollo Sosianus



Source: Personal file, archaeological space of the Theater of Marcellus.

And if Augustus was not directly responsible for the constructions, they were linked to him through his military commander, Agrippa, who was given the task of transforming the region located in the center of Campus Martius. Projects included the construction of a building to count votes (*Diribitorium*), Rome's first imperial bathhouse (The Bath of Agrippa), an artificial lake (*Stagnum*), and the Pantheon. In order to supply the baths and other structures in Campus Martius with fresh water, and to supply drinking water to the villages of the Tiber, Agrippa ordered the construction of a new aqueduct, the Aqua Virgo (CONLIN; JACOBS, 2014, p. 35).

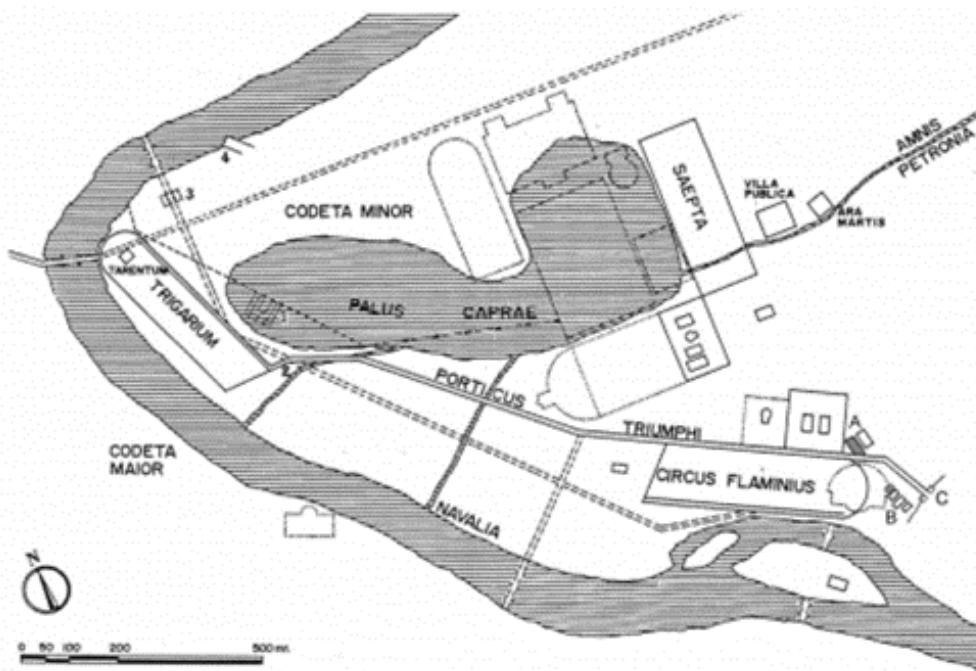
We can assume that Augustus realized the symbolic importance of the Campus Martius through the recognition of ancient religious and theatrical ceremonies, as well as the architectural actions of Pompey and Caesar in this space. Seeking to bring these elements together, linking them to himself, he built Campus Martius almost as a showcase of imperial architecture and the physical manifestation of the prominence of Rome. It is no wonder that Augustus strengthened this movement with the construction of a theater of great proportions, a construction that was, according to Karl Galinsky (2007, p. 4), a reference to be followed by the provinces, not only for its architectural and aesthetic model but also on account of the growth of spectacles and theater in Roman life during the Principate's period.

Deepening into the topographical area of Theater of Marcellus, the text *Note di Topografia sull'area del Teatro di Marcello*, by Massimo Vitti (2010), brings us more recent archaeological analyzes concerning the buildings around the Theatre, namely the Temple of Bellona and Temple of Apollo, the Portico of Octavia and a circular structure built two meters from the facade of the Temple of Apollo, called the *Perrranterion*. The focus of his text is to understand seaworthiness, paving, and sewage systems, studying the old roads of this urban sector. According to Vitti, the area of the Theater of Marcellus, despite fascinating scholars, is still little known due to the lack of archaeological studies and little information obtained from *Forma Urbis*.¹⁰ One highlight is the route/road in the area – in particular, from the *Tarentum* area, passing through the stretch between Circus Flaminius and the city gate (*Porta Carmentale*) – which, since the Republican period, has gained particular importance in public city life. Such relevance was linked to the triumph of the Roman generals in the Republican era; indeed, the road was named for a specific function, i.e., to be a Triumphal Via (VITTI, 2010, p. 549).

¹⁰ This marble map of the city of Rome, carved in the third century AD and built by Septimius Severus, shows in detail the Theater of Marcellus, measuring a total of just over eighteen meters in width and thirteen meters in height, besides highlighting others monuments of the city of Rome (TAUB, 1993).

We can also assume that the road that comes from the Circus Flaminius area, with a path parallel to the facades of the temples of Jupiter Stator and Juno Regina, and directed to *Porta Carmentale*, in the absence of Marcellus' theater, headed to the south side of the Tents of the Temple of Apollo Medico. Soon after, it turned to the south, before the Temple of Pietas, to head towards the city gate (Fig. 6). It is likely that, in this last stretch, the imperial road followed the path of the Triumphal Via of the Republican era, and, therefore, this also made the *Holitorium* Forum serve as a projection for the other four temples.

Figure 6 - Southern Campus Martius in the late Republican era

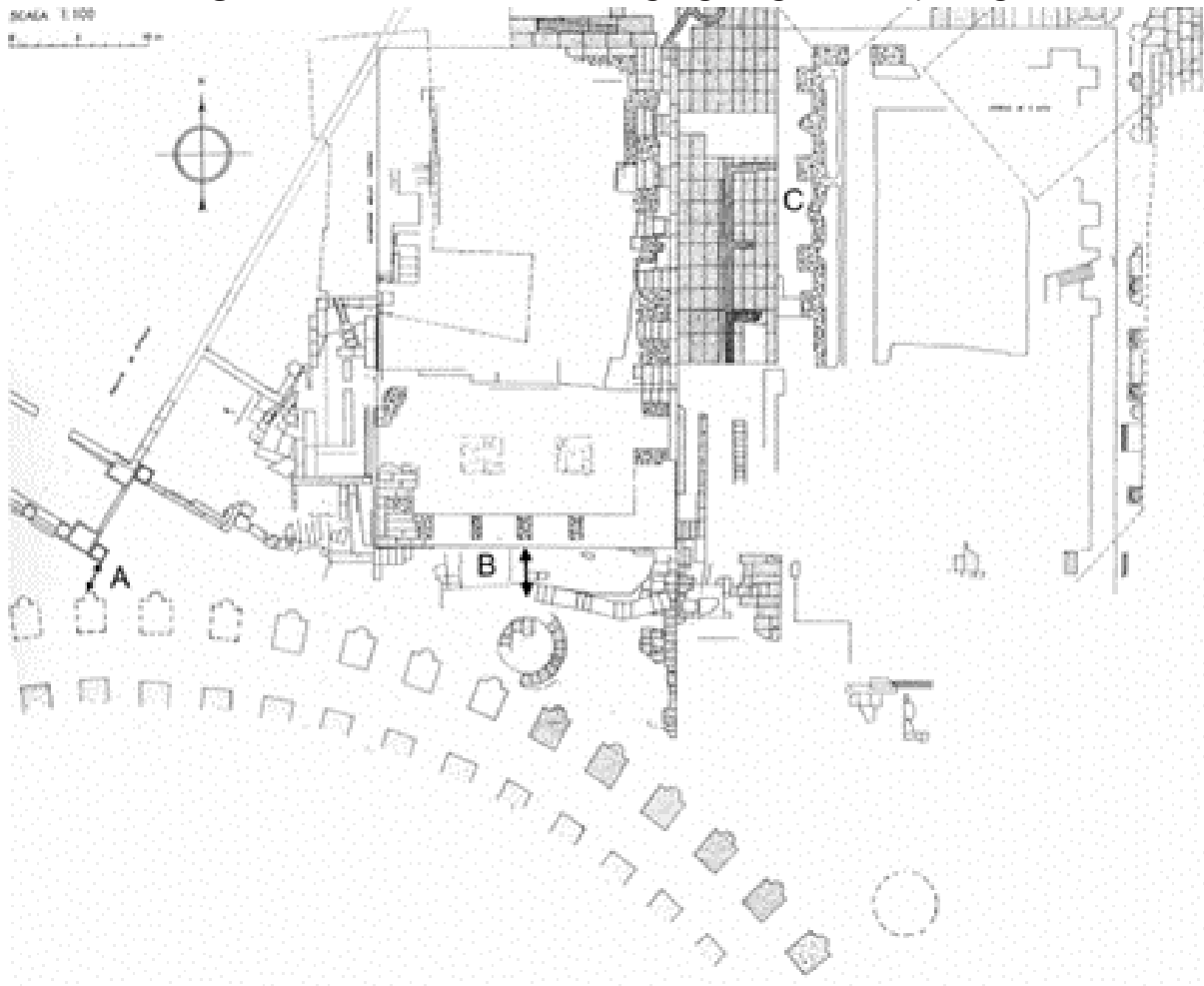


A. Apolo Medico; B. Pietas' Temple; C. *Porta Carmentale*.

Likewise, we must consider the hypothesis that changes in the path between the Republican and Imperial roads were, whenever possible, contained for obvious reasons related to the need they had not to alter the old paths of the procession, as well as to clarify that the changes, when they existed, were imposed by the construction of new buildings that interfered with the existing road system. The construction of the Theater of Marcellus and the Temple of Apollo Sosianus, by Augustus, changed the movement network in this space, and consequently, the Triumphal Via had to adapt to these new buildings, being restricted by narrower passages, such as the one between the Portico of Octavia and the Theater, a passageway that was reduced to about 2.5 meters (Fig. 7.A). Still according to Vitti (2010, p. 554):

Lo spazio per il transito diventava ancora più esiguo, pochi metri più a est dove lo scavo, ha rimesso in luce la fondazione del monoptero, evidenziando così che l'ampiezza utile per il passaggio tra questo e il tempio di Apollo superava di poco i 2 m, risultando così del tutto inadeguato per il transito del corteo trionfale (Fig. 7.B). È evidente quindi che a partire dall'epoca augustea la pompa trionfale non poteva più transitare da questa parte ma presumibilmente, come è stato già ipotizzato, passasse all'interno del teatro di Marcello.

Figure 7 – Plan of the theater, highlighting the two passages



A. Portico of Octavia; B. monoptero area, C. Passage between Apollo's and Bellona's Temples. Source: Vitti (2010, p. 556).

Other authors such as Eugenio La Rocca (2008) and Monterroso Checa (2009) discuss how Marcellus' Theater became, after its construction, a focal point of the triumphal procession. Maggie Popink (2012), when discussing the link among memory, architecture, and triumphal routes, comments on how the sumptuous scenography of the triumphal procession intensified the collective experience and emotionally involved its spectators, along with the monumental spectacle. Popink defends the idea that from Augustus and the Principate on, when triumphal processions became the prerogatives of the *Princeps*

and their heirs, the construction of permanent entertainment buildings along the triumphal route intensified. Also, according to the author, this occurred as emperors sought ways to make their triumphs more spectacular and memorable (POPINK, 2012, p. 398).

We agree that this process was seen on a large scale from Augustus onwards, mainly with the resumption of the Secular Games and the urban transformation. However, we defend that such ambitious desires, reflected in the increase in triumphal pomp, were part of an ongoing process of demonstrating personal power, a process that began with the end of the Republic (with the actions of Pompey and especially of Julius Caesar) and reached its peak in the Principate. The more visibility it had and the more ostentatious the triumph was, the greater the honor of that general for the society's memory. His representation, with theatrical components that showed the losers in chains, demonstrated pride, vainglory, and victory through the humiliation of the enemy and the wealth gained. They could and would distribute wealth during the ceremony, thus favoring the act of integration of society into these feelings (ZÉTOLA, 2006, p. 38).

With the construction of the Theater of Marcellus and the procession taking place inside the theater, Augustus crystalized his image alongside these triumphal ceremonies. In addition to renovating the Temple of Apollo, he increased this connection to space when he connected his family to the renovation of the Portico of Metelli, naming the Portico in 27 BC after his sister. The route through the interior of the theater showed several city elements connected to the *Princeps*. It composed a spatial framework that integrated the city's rituals and religious ceremonies offered to the deities, rituals that were now linked to the moral image of Augustus, and the provision of festivities and leisure to the Romans.

The performance of theatrical plays in the theater, as part of the festivities of the Secular Games of Augustus, in 17 BC, reframed the general location of the space for Roman citizens. These secular festivities celebrated the beginning of a new period and recovered the founding city's ideals with games of jubilation, something that probably fit Augustus' goals. According to the note *Saeculares ludi* by J. A. Hild, in his work *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines* (1873), Augustus' secular commemorations included ceremonial sacrifices and games offered in his name, games that included scenic and circus activities (ALMEIDA, 1994, p. 20 *apud* HILD, 1873, p. 996).

These ceremonies involved a civic community in search of celebration, the sharing of gestures and behaviors that gave meaning to those who shared them. Due to its social effectiveness, the festivity transmits the idea of order, presupposes the maintenance of *concordia* in the *urbs*, as it integrates civic community, sacred space, relationships, and articulations of power (GOMES, 2016, p. 51). The act of walking around the city, and through this space in particular, with these ceremonies and monuments, probably

composed an interesting picture related to the feeling of the Roman citizen, perhaps even a mixture of unity and love for the civic space of Rome.

As an official celebration of the Romans, a notable inscription on the games schedule was placed in marble and bronze on the banks of the River Tiber, one of the most important sites for the event. Among the locations, Augustus' new theater was part of the entertainment landscape in Campus Martius. The main events comprised a series of day and night sacrifices and ceremonies in honor of the protective gods of Rome, but Augustus added some amusements that included chariot racing, hunting, and Greek and Latin theater entertainments. Part of the detailed inscription¹¹ provides the dates, times, and locations of these events.

The quindecimviri of sacred affairs declare: We have added honorary games for seven days to the games of the festival, to be started by us on the Nones of June (June 5), the Latin (plays) in the theater of wood by the Tiber at the second hour (after daylight), the thymelic Greek plays in the Theater of Pompey at the third hour, and the Greek stage plays in the theater in the Circus Flaminius at the fourth hour (SHERK, 1988, p. 55).

The dates in question are from June 5th to 11th, 17 BC, and the possible times of entertainment in the theater were in the morning (between 7:00 am and 9:00 am), since the Romans, without artificial lighting, used daylight and woke up at dawn. So, we can imagine crowds of festival-goers moving from the grand Pompey Theater to the brand-new Theater of Marcellus, which in fact would finally be completed and dedicated four years later.

Conclusion

Finally, we perceive that the area surrounding the Theater had important symbolic elements for the politics of Augustus, which, consequently, raised its spatial significance for the Romans, both through ceremonial and festive acts. The Theater's space field within the *Urbs*, the Campus Martius, was completely redesigned by Augustus and his military commander, Agrippa, becoming a central point in the *Princeps'* urban policy. Despite the limitations of the space in which the theater was built, Augustus sought the best perspective for all the details surrounding the new building. In addition to creating an organized civic square, we noticed the architectural innovation applied in the area. As a

¹¹ Inscription, found in fragments, that establishes the daily program for the games, prepared by the priestly board in charge of details of the place, date and time of each event. Significant portions of the Games Act include senatorial discussions around preparations for the festivities, summaries of prayers, sacrifices, and other rites for each day of the celebration, and the list of Council of Fifteen (*quindecimvir*) members responsible for the Games. More recent editions and commentaries on the 17 BC Act were composed by Pighi (1965), Moretti (1985) and Schnegg-Kohler (2002).

result, a magnificent theater was built, surrounded by other monuments and noble spaces such as the Circus Flaminius, the Temple of Apollo, the Portico de Octavia, among others. One more aspect that highlighted the importance of this area for the Romans and the *Princeps* was the realization of triumphal processions in Republic's period in this specific space. The processions departed from the sacred area known as Tarentum, following the road that was called Triumphal Via to the Circus Flaminius and the *Holitorium* Forum; and later, they went on to the city gates.

Furthermore, Augustus knew how to understand the relevance of the city's scenery and the offering of religious and recreational activities to the people to exalt his image. We agree with Norberto Guarinello when he highlights in *Festa, Trabalho, Cotidiano* (2001), that performing festive acts meant a collective action of affections and emotions around something that was celebrated, whose main product was the symbolization of the unity of participants in the sphere of a given memory (GUARINELLO, 2001, p. 972-974). Thus, we conclude that the holding of the Secular Games was an instrument that reinforced the idea of stability of Republican values which Augustus wanted to display. Moreover, the *Princeps* reinforced imperial power through events essential to civic life. The construction of this public building (which, in addition to bearing the name of Augustus, the name of his family, and his ancestry with the divine Julius Caesar), represented the construction of an extremely popular space among the Romans, whether they came from the elites, or of the heterogeneous Roman mass.

We realize that these activities, followed by a sumptuous scenography, intensified the collective experience and emotionally involved its spectators, in addition to being associated with a monumental spectacle. A ceremony in which the *Princeps* could display his greatness and share his conquests with society. We understand that the Theater of Marcellus became a main point of the triumphal procession after its construction and was one of the main stages for the realization of the Secular Games. We can see how Augustus fixed his image and that of his family to these triumphant ceremonies, adding to this festive portrait the monumental aspect of the theater.

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