

ORGANIC MONUMENTS: THE CHANGING LANDSCAPES OF AUGUSTAN
ROME

by

Alexandra Endres
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Committee:

_____ Director

_____ Department Chairperson

_____ Dean, College of Humanities and Social
Sciences

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by

Alexandra Endres
Bachelor of Arts
The College of William & Mary, 2012

Director: Christopher A. Gregg, Professor
Department of History and Art History

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mom and dad, who have always encouraged me to study what I love.

And of course, to Moe as well.

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I would like to thank my friends and family, who encouraged me throughout this entire process. I am especially indebted to my roommate Emily, who had to listen to me talk about Roman gardens from across the hall. Dr. Gregg, I would not have been able to complete this thesis without your help and guidance, for which I am incredibly grateful. And thank you Dr. DeCaroli for providing me with additional insight to improve my writing and further my research.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i>	<i>AJA</i>
<i>The American Journal of Philology</i>	<i>AJP</i>
<i>The Art Bulletin</i>	<i>ArtB</i>
<i>Classical Journal</i>	<i>CJ</i>
<i>Greece and Rome</i>	<i>GaR</i>
<i>Journal of Garden History</i>	<i>JGH</i>
<i>Journal of Roman Archaeology</i>	<i>JRA</i>
<i>Mélanges de L'École française de Rome, Antiquité</i>	<i>MÉFRA</i>
<i>A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome</i>	<i>NTDAR</i>
<i>Oxford Latin Dictionary</i>	<i>OLD</i>
<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>	<i>TAPA</i>

ABSTRACT

ORGANIC MONUMENTS: THE CHANGING LANDSCAPES OF AUGUSTAN ROME

Alexandra Endres, M.A.

George Mason University, 2015

Thesis Director: Dr. Christopher A. Gregg

This thesis explores the manner in which the shrinking landscape of an early Imperial Rome led to an increased utilization of vegetal motifs in Roman art. Beginning in the late first century BCE, Augustus attempted to emphasize the natural world within the city by introducing actual green space through gardens, groves, and parks while also associating himself with various forms of arboreal mythology. Augustus compensated for the transient nature of these public gardens and groves by providing permanent monuments upon which the imagery of a verdant, prosperous earth could flourish, instilling within the viewer a sense of wonder and appreciation for the abundance brought forth by the emperor and the beginning of a new Golden Age in Rome.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores the manner in which the shrinking landscape of an early Imperial Rome led to an increased utilization of vegetal motifs in Roman art. Beginning in the late first century BCE, Augustus attempted to emphasize the natural world by introducing actual green space through gardens, groves, and parks while also replicating the concept in a more permanent way through the design and decoration of both public monuments and private residences.

Chapter 1 serves as a compilation and analysis of ancient authors and their two diametrically opposed views of green space that existed during the Late Republic and the Early Empire. The ancient authors considered include Cato, Varro, Suetonius, Plutarch, Tacitus, Horace, Cicero, Propertius, Ovid, Cassius Dio, Pliny, Vergil, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Plutarch's *Life of Lucullus* and Tacitus's *Annals* provide much of the information surrounding the luxury and desirability of the *Horti Luculliani* on the Pincian Hill, while additional evidence attests to the location and political significance of other prominent Roman gardens, specifically the *Horti Sallustiani* and the *Horti Maecenatiani*. Pliny's *Natural History* provides a different view of garden space, emphasizing the Roman reverence for nature rather than the frivolity of its owners. The chapter ends with a reference to Seneca's *Epistles*, emphasizing the manner in which Romans perceived the divine in the natural landscape.

Chapter 2 consists of a discussion regarding the disappearance of gardens and sacred groves within Rome and the subsequent creation of Augustan monuments and constructed garden spaces, specifically the Mausoleum of Augustus. Inscriptions from the *Anthologia Palatina* provide evidence for the heightened anxiety surrounding the threatened green space, and Cassius Dio and Suetonius discuss the specific disappearance of the Grove of Gaius and Lucius while Dionysius of Halicarnassus laments the loss of a sacred grove that had once been dedicated to Pan. Varro complains about the narrow streets within the city whose names derived from the ancient sanctuaries that they replaced. The concept of this Roman reverence for nature carries from chapter 1 to chapter 2, which concludes with a discussion regarding the Augustan appropriation of arboreal mythology and an introduction to the concurrent emergence of garden and landscape scenes upon the walls of public monuments as well as relatively private homes.

Chapter 3 culminates in an analysis of the villas and monuments that attest to an increased utilization of vegetal motifs in response to the disappearing landscape of an early Imperial Rome. The paintings of the Garden Room at the Villa *ad Gallinas* depict various trees and flowers, each of which carries its own association with the emperor and the new Golden Age of Rome. The *Ara Pacis Augustae*, decorated with scrolling vines of ivy, acanthus, and methodically placed laurel, conveys a message of natural abundance and fertility, but one of a highly ordered, constructed nature. The four panel reliefs of the *Ara Pacis* work in conjunction with the acanthus relief, perpetuating the arboreal and archaic associations of Augustus.

The research surrounding the physical evidence of gardens and horticulture in ancient Rome and Pompeii begins with the work of Wilhelmina Jashemski and *The Gardens of Pompeii* (1979). In *The Natural History of Pompeii* (2002), she combines visual evidence from wall paintings and sculptures with literary evidence from ancient authors to create a better understanding of the plant life in ancient Rome. As for the proposed locations of prominent Roman gardens within Rome, Lawrence Richardson's *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (1992) and the *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* (1993) provide encyclopedic entries with supporting citations of ancient authors.

Other sources concerning the general history of Roman gardens include Patrick Bowe (2004), Linda Farrar (1998), Nicholas Purcell (1996, 2001), and A. L. Giesecke (2007), the latter of whose work figures prominently in the chapter 3 discussion of the Garden Room at the Villa *ad Gallinas*. In chapter 1, the essays of Mary T. Boatwright, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, and John D'Arms from the 1995 conference on *Horti Romani* provide much of the analysis surrounding the imperial gardens of the late Republic and the manner in which their reception by the Roman people ultimately affected Augustan ideology.

The works of Bettina Bergmann (1992) and K. T. von Stackelberg (1994) were crucial to the development of chapter 2. Bergmann provides much of the evidence surrounding the Roman nostalgia for disappearing gardens and groves, while von Stackelberg, through her fascinating combination of literary evidence and space theory,

aids in the analysis of Roman gardens, their inherent connotations, and the exploitation by Augustus.

In regards to the garden imagery of Augustan monuments to be discussed in chapter 3, Paul Zanker (1990) provides an influential analysis of the Golden Age connotations of natural abundance and fertility that emerged in Augustan art, highlighting specific imagery that appeared in artworks across the empire. Significant sources include David Castriota (1995) and Barbara Kellum (1994), who address the vegetal imagery in the *Ara Pacis* and the Garden Room at the Villa *ad Gallinas*, respectively.

CHAPTER ONE

“As an encyclopedist, Pliny’s focus is on the minutiae of garden content, but his interest in the cultural value of the *hortus*, as a symbol of Rome’s agrarian innocence for example (NH 19.52), demonstrates the conceptual evolution of the *hortus* from a simple space of rural production to a complex space of social meaning.”¹

We find two diametrically opposed views of green space that prevailed during the Late Republic and the Early Empire. The general commentary surrounding the significance of nature and its functionality in Roman society must be considered in conjunction with the actual garden spaces and the corresponding literary opinions in regards to the gardens’ formations and gradual transformations over time. The selected works of Cato, Varro, Vergil, Ovid, Propertius, Pliny the Elder, and Seneca evoke the positive, archaic associations of farms, gardens, and green spaces while the primary texts of Suetonius, Plutarch, Tacitus, Cassius Dio, and Juvenal reflect a growing animosity towards these cultivated landscapes and their wealthy, powerful owners.

The first discussion regarding the merits of farming and the positive role of vegetable gardens within the city of Rome begins with Cato’s *De agricultura* in the second century BCE. The text reads like a manual, a practical guide to farming and the profitability of various crops. The introduction states: “it is from the farming class that the bravest men and the sturdiest soldiers come, their calling is most highly respected, their livelihood is most assured and is looked on with the least hostility, and those who

¹ Von Stackelberg 2009, 12.

are engaged in that pursuit are least inclined to be disaffected” (Cato, *Agri. Orig.*).² In 37 BCE, Varro wrote a more literary book on agriculture entitled *De re rustica*.³ In praise of “nature and civilization intertwined,” he writes:

Not without reason did they call that same earth Ceres and mother and believe that those who cultivated her led a pious and useful life and that they alone were the descendents surviving from the stock of King Saturn (Varro, *Rust.* 3.1.5).⁴

The moral undertones of Cato and Varro, who both laud the lifestyle of the Roman farmer, arise directly from their observations of the increased influence of Greek art and leisurely customs on the traditional values of Rome.⁵ Plutarch describes the reaction of Cato, who lived “in a contracted way in order to correct and moderate the extravagance of others” (Plut. *Cat.* 5.16.18).⁶ Even the first-century BCE historian Sallust characterized the late Republic as “a state corrupted by *luxus* and sloth” (Sall. *Cat.* 53.5).⁷ Much to Cato’s dismay, the increasing interaction of Roman culture with that of the Greeks and their foreign luxuries led to a more relaxed lifestyle that began to reveal itself in the management and decoration of lavish garden estates, otherwise known as *Horti*.⁸

The term *Horti* derives from the singular Latin word *hortus*, meaning “garden.”⁹ *Hortus* originally designated a small garden that was defined by the intensive labor and cultivation that took place within. With a desire for private leisure and relaxation away

² Transl. Hooper (Cambridge, MA, 1934); Castriota 1995, 144-45, 148.

³ Meiggs 1982, 267.

⁴ Cited from Leach 1981, 40-43.

⁵ Meiggs 1982, 261.

⁶ Cited in Lapatin 2008, 32.

⁷ Ibid., 31.

⁸ Castriota 1995, 144-45; Meiggs 1982, 264.

⁹ Hartswick 2004, 16.

from the confines of the city, the singular *hortus* developed into *Horti*, the nominal, capitalized designation of a peri-urban estate.¹⁰ In his research on Roman gardens, Purcell clarifies the evolution of the term *Horti*:

[d]eriving from the ordinary word for market-gardens, it identifies a certain sort of property on the edge of cities, and certainly involves an elaborate cultural deformation or appropriation of that term when used to embrace a huge range of meanings within the domain of élite property-management, from the practical to the highly aesthetic.¹¹

In the context of Richardson's *A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, the term *Horti* designates a garden estate: a *villa* surrounded by beautifully developed luxury gardens. In his enumeration of Rome's known garden estates, Lawrence specifies the most significant: the *Horti Luculliani*, the *Horti Sallustiani*, and the *Horti Maecenatiani*, among others.¹² The ancient commentary surrounding these three *Horti* varies in tone, but several authors, including Plutarch, Tacitus, and Juvenal, describe the gardens in the context of luxury and greed.

The Romans were not the first to cultivate parks and garden estates. Meiggs references the influence of Hellenistic kingdoms, the Persian Empire, and Eastern gardens upon the Roman imagination, citing an instance described by Quintus Curtius Rufus in which Alexander the Great discovered a park in Asia that was used as a hunting reserve: "There are no greater indications of the wealth of the barbarians in those regions than their herds of noble beasts, confined in great woods and parks [...] made attractive

¹⁰ Pagán, 2006, 8-9.

¹¹ Purcell 2001, 549.

¹² Richardson 1992, s.v. "Horti Luculliani" and "Horti Maecenatiani," 200-01.

by perennial springs” (Quintus Curtius 8.1.11).¹³ The creators of the aforementioned *Horti* would have found inspiration in the notoriety of several other ancient gardens, as indicated by Pliny in his *Natural History*: “for we find that in remote antiquity, even, there was nothing looked upon with a greater degree of admiration than the gardens of the Hesperides, those of the kings Adonis and Alcinoüs, and the Hanging Gardens [of Babylon]” (Plin. *HN* 19.19).¹⁴ Following the second-century BCE Roman triumphs over the Hellenistic kingdoms of the east, these Greek and Babylonian precedents engendered a cultural appreciation in Italy that was reflected in these garden estates—the *Horti*. The *Horti* first perpetuated the legacy of their wealthy Republican owners before the imperial families claimed the designated landscapes for themselves.

Plutarch and Tacitus provide much of the information surrounding the desirability and associated luxury of these garden estates as they changed ownership during the transition from Republic to Empire. The *Horti Luculliani*, located on the Pincian Hill, was created by L. Licinius Lucullus from the spoils of his conquests in 63 BCE.¹⁵ In his *Life of Lucullus*, Plutarch offers criticism of the politician’s lifestyle and his lavish estate:

And it is true that in the life of Lucullus, as in an ancient comedy, one reads in the first part of political measures and military commands, and in the latter part of drinking bouts, and banquets, and what might pass for revel-routs, and torch-races, and all manner of frivolity. For I must count as frivolity his costly edifices, his ambulatories and baths, and still more his paintings and statues (not to speak of his devotion to these arts), which he collected at enormous outlays, pouring out into such channels the vast

¹³ Transl. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA, 1946); Meiggs 1982, 271-72. See Thacker 1979, 27-41 for a broad overview of eastern pleasure gardens.

¹⁴ Transl. Bostock (London, 1855).

¹⁵ Richardson 1992, s.v. “*Horti Luculliani*,” 200.

and splendid wealth which he accumulated from his campaigns (Plut. *Luc.* 39.2).¹⁶

For Plutarch, writing in the late first century CE, the *Horti Luculliani* embodied Lucullus's life of "frivolity," serving as a venue for his wild parties set amongst the conspicuous display of his material possessions.

Described as "the first great [*Horti*] of Rome," the *Horti Luculliani* was subject to multiple changes in ownership.¹⁷ In her research on the role of women and their associations with these luxurious gardens, Boatwright provides an analysis of this aristocratic *Horti* that was subsumed by the imperial family, citing, in particular, the story of Messalina, the third wife of the emperor Claudius.¹⁸ In 46 CE, the garden estate was owned by a man named Valerius Asiaticus. Tacitus describes the actions of Messalina in her desperate attempt to attain the gardens for herself:

[Messalina] was looking greedily at the gardens which Lucullus had begun and which Asiaticus was now adorning with singular magnificence, and so she suborned Suilius to accuse both him and Poppaea [of treason] (Tac. *Ann.* 11.1).¹⁹

Messalina was so consumed with greed for the gardens that she had Asiaticus arrested, married her lover C. Silius within the gardens themselves, and hid herself away upon Claudius's discovery of her sacrilegious acts (Tac. *Ann.* 11.31). Claudius sent his freedman Narcissus to deal with the transgressions of his wife, and he subsequently "[hurried] on before with all speed to the gardens, [where] he found Messalina stretched

¹⁶ Transl. Perrin (Cambridge, MA, 1914)

¹⁷ Richardson 1992, s.v. "Horti Luculliani," 200.

¹⁸ Boatwright 1998.

¹⁹ Transl. Church (New York, 1942).

upon the ground” before driving a dagger into her heart (Tac. *Ann.*, 11.37-38).²⁰ For Boatwright, “Tacitus makes Messalina’s desire for [*Horti*] embody abusive imperial acquisition of private property in Rome,” and the ancient author continues this criticism of imperial procurement through the mention of Claudius’s fourth wife Agrippina.²¹ According to Tacitus, Agrippina “ruined Statilius Taurus, who was famous for his wealth, and at whose gardens she cast a greedy eye” before orchestrating the murder of Claudius so that her son, Nero, could succeed as emperor (Tac. *Ann.* 12.59.1; 12.66-69).²²

Nero continued this imperial obsession with *Horti* and their connotations of wealth and power through his decision to connect his *Domus Transitoria* on the Palatine to the *Horti Maecenatiani* on the Esquiline.²³ This particular *Horti* had become imperial property following the death of Maecenas, a political advisor and friend of Augustus, in 8 BCE.²⁴ In his *Annals*, Tacitus describes the devastation following the Great Fire in 64 CE as it relates to Nero’s house on the periphery of Rome and its intended gardens. He mentions that Nero “did not return to Rome until the fire approached his house, which he had built to connect the palace with the gardens of Maecenas” (Tac. *Ann.* 15.39).²⁵ As a result of the fire’s destruction and in an attempt “to relieve the people,” Nero “threw open to [the Roman populace] the Campus Martius and the public buildings of Agrippa, and

²⁰ Transl. Church (New York, 1942).

²¹ Boatwright 1998, 78.

²² Transl. Church (New York, 1942); cited in Boatwright 1998, 78. For more information regarding Messalina and the *Horti Luculliani*, see Joshel 1995 and Pagán 2006, 66-87.

²³ Richardson 1992, s.v. “*Horti Maecenatiani*,” 200-01.

²⁴ Häuber 1990, 57.

²⁵ Transl. Church (New York, 1942).

even his own gardens” (Tac. *Ann.* 15.39).²⁶ But as Tacitus explains, Nero’s benevolent intentions “produced no effect, since a rumor had gone forth everywhere that, at the very time when the city was in flames, the emperor [...] sang of the destruction of Troy, comparing present misfortunes with the calamities of antiquity” (Tac. *Ann.* 15.39).²⁷ These passages from Tacitus reveal Nero’s preoccupation with his estate and its connection to the *Horti Maecenatiani* as well as the emperor’s assumptions regarding the persuasive effects that publically opened gardens would have on the Roman populace.

In the subsequent chapters of the *Annals*, Tacitus offers a description of Nero’s new house, the *Domus Aurea*, which the emperor built upon the ruins of the city:

Nero meanwhile availed himself of his country’s desolation, and erected a mansion in which the jewels and gold, long familiar objects, quite vulgarized by our extravagance, were not so marvelous as the fields and lakes, with woods on one side to resemble a wilderness, and, on the other, open spaces and extensive views (Tac. *Ann.* 15.42.).²⁸

Though the displays of material wealth are heavily criticized, the ancient author praises the carefully articulated grandeur of the surrounding natural elements. While clearly impressive in their appearance, the gardens make a more unfortunate setting as the location of deadly Christian persecutions. Tacitus expresses sympathy in response to the cruelty of their treatment:

Nero offered his gardens for the spectacle, and was exhibiting a show in the circus, while he mingled with the people in the dress of a charioteer or stood aloft on a car. Hence, even for criminals who deserved extreme and

²⁶ Transl. Church (New York, 1942).

²⁷ Ibid.; Suetonius also makes mention of the Nero’s actions during the Great Fire: “Nero watched the fire from the tower of Maecenas, delighted with what he termed ‘the beauty of the flames’ and, dressed in his stage attire, he sang ‘the Fall of Troy’” (Suet. *Nero* 38.2). Transl. Edwards (Oxford, 2000), 217.

²⁸ Transl. Church (New York, 1942).

exemplary punishment, there arose a feeling of compassion; for it was not, as it seemed, for the public good, but to glut one man's cruelty, that they were being destroyed (Tac. *Ann.* 15.44).²⁹

Nero's actions within the *Domus Aurea* are representative of the garden's function as a statement of the emperor's imperial power, albeit ill received. While the extent of the estate remains uncertain, Nero nonetheless used previously public land for a private estate in preservation of his own self-aggrandizement.³⁰ As Boatwright elucidates, "Nero's [*Horti*] are emblematic of the young emperor's vices, particularly his substitution of private desires for the public good, the proper aim of an emperor."³¹ Tacitus provides the reader with descriptions of Nero's house and the beautiful gardens encompassed within, but the author's clear dismay at the use of this particular *Horti* for private, malicious intentions reignites and perpetuates the negative connotations that had originated with the *Horti Luculliani*.

In this chapter that serves as an overview of the primary sources that account for the attitudes surrounding the green space and gardens of an early imperial Rome, we must differentiate between the previously discussed *Horti* and the related garden spaces that were given to the Roman public in the early first century CE. Though the *Horti* incorporated a few public amenities—specifically the aforementioned libraries of the *Horti Luculliani* and a promenade along the edge of the *Horti Maecenatiani*—they were privately owned (Plut. *Luc.* 42.1-4).³² In his regarding the effects of Hellenization on the

²⁹ Transl. Church (New York, 1942).

³⁰ In regards to the uncertainty surrounding the extent of the *Domus Aurea*, see Champlin 1998, 333-334 and MacDonald 1982, 20-25.

³¹ Boatwright 1998, 80.

³² Richardson 1992, s.v. "Horti Luculliani" and "Horti Maecenatiani," 200-01.

Horti of Rome, Wallace-Hadrill discusses the ideological similarities between the private gardens of Lucullus, Maecenas, and Sallust, proclaiming: “if one message implicit in the [*Horti*] was wealth, another was withdrawal.”³³ In Wallace-Hadrill’s view, the construction of these gardens originated from a desire to retreat from political life, a longing to construct a physically and socially distinct space outside the urban center of Rome, yet still visually prominent. The gardens served as a “denial of the forum” while simultaneously existing as a “powerful advertisement of wealth.”³⁴ In contrast to these originally private, secluded properties on the periphery hills of Rome, Pompey and Caesar adapted their *Horti* for the public’s benefit in more readily accessible locations, thus exploiting the propagandistic potential of cultivated landscapes.³⁵ Cicero elucidates the people’s reception of these publically offered lands in contrast to the ones held in private luxury: “The Roman people hate private luxury, they love public magnificence (Cic. *Mur.* 76).³⁶ In her discussion of gardens in the late Republic, von Stackelberg explains the benefits of these publically designated lands: “[u]nlike the Forum and other assembly areas where generations of monuments competed against each other, everything that a visitor to the garden saw and experienced focused on one man, the owner.”³⁷

The perception of gardens as markers of pure self-interest began to change in the waning years of the Republic. Pompey would be one of the first to capitalize on the potential of these publically designated garden spaces, though he was initially criticized

³³ Wallace-Hadrill 1998, 4.

³⁴ Ibid., 6.

³⁵ Boatwright 1998, 74.

³⁶ Transl. Lord (Cambridge, MA, 1937); Boatwright 1998, 74.

³⁷ Von Stackelberg 2009, 76.

by Plutarch in 58 BCE for his withdrawal from public life: “Pompey [...] soon gave way weakly to his passion for his young wife, devoted himself for the most part to her, spent his time with her in villas and gardens, and neglected what was going on in the forum...” (Plut. *Pomp.* 48.5).³⁸ Pompey would return to his political duties and allowed for the construction of the *Porticus Pompeiana*, adjacent to his *Horti Pompeiani* in the Campus Martius. Within the complex built in 55 BCE, Pompey provided Rome with its first permanent theater as well as an accompanying Temple to Venus Victrix.³⁹ The *porticus* contained a grove that had been adorned with “artistic plunder” and “horticultural plunder” from his most recent campaign, as well as foreign artworks and planted trees from Asia Minor (Plin. *HN* 36.41; Plin. *HN* 12.111).⁴⁰ Propertius provides a description of the trees within the structure, as well as the accompanying streams and fountains:

I suppose the Portico of Pompey, with its columns of shade
And tapestries of threaded gold, seems squalid to you,
With its solid rows of plane trees shaped to an even height,
The streams of flowing water that slide off the Slumbering Satyr,
And the liquid sounds of splashing around the entire basin
When Triton suddenly blows the water from his mouth (Prop. 2.32.11-16).⁴¹

In a similar vein, Ovid describes the structure as a relaxing retreat: “Only walk leisurely beneath the Pompeian shade, when the sun draws nigh to Hercules’ shaggy lion...” (Ov. *Ars am.* 1.67-68).⁴²

³⁸ Transl. Perrin (Cambridge, MA, 1917); cited in Boatwright 1998, 74.

³⁹ Gleason 1994, 24.

⁴⁰ Von Stackelberg 2009, 81.

⁴¹ Aicher 2004, s.v. “Theater of Pompey,” 87.8.

⁴² Transl. Mozley (Cambridge, MA, 1929).

In response to Pompey's transformation of the Campus Martius and his luxuriant garden landscape, Caesar opened his *Horti Caesaris Transtiberim* to the people of Rome for a feast following his triumph in Spain (Val. Max. 9.15.1).⁴³ Through the public feast, D'Arms concludes: "Caesar thereby demonstrated how private Roman *horti* could bring benefit to the *plebs Romana* and thereby also serve his larger political aims."⁴⁴ Caesar subsequently willed his gardens to the people of Rome, thus solidifying the memory of his benevolence and his willingness to welcome the *plebs Romana* into the privacy of his garden estate (Suet. *Iul.* 83).⁴⁵ Cassius Dio describes the reaction of the public: "...and, furthermore, that he not only had made various bequests to individuals but had also given his gardens along the Tiber to the city and one hundred and twenty sesterces [...] to each citizen—at this people became excited" (Cass. Dio 44.35.3).⁴⁶ Caesar and Pompey thus capitalized on the new ideology of Rome, that a ruler should use their power to improve the lives of their citizens through the cultivation of these public landscapes.⁴⁷

As the adopted heir of Julius Caesar, Augustus recognized the correlation between these horticultural offerings and popular political support. In emulation of Caesar's posthumous gesture, Augustus was quick to implement Agrippa's own wishes to bequeath his gardens and baths in the Campus Martius to the Roman people upon his death in 12 BCE (Cass. Dio 54.29.4). Tacitus also mentions the Augustan addition of the *nemus Caesarum*, a grove to Gaius and Lucius, in the gardens surrounding the

⁴³ D'Arms 1998, 41.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁵ Purcell 1996, 132.

⁴⁶ Transl. Cary (London, 1914).

⁴⁷ Boatwright 1998, 74. See Favro 2005, 235 for an introduction to Caesar's building projects in Rome.

Naumachia Augusti, a large water basin for aquatic games located *trans Tiberim*: “[...] and in the grove, with which Augustus had surrounded the lake for the naval fight, there were erected places for meeting and refreshment, and every incentive to excess was offered for sale” (Tac. *Ann.* 14.15).⁴⁸ Further analysis of these Augustan additions to the Roman landscape, as well as correlating monuments, will be discussed in chapter two.

Before transitioning into a discussion regarding the green space within Rome and the politically infused, imperial monuments that bespoke the power of the landscape, we must consider Pliny’s *Natural History*. Though written after the events associated with the aforementioned garden spaces, Pliny’s text demonstrates a Roman reverence for nature and its encompassing trees, plants, and flowers.⁴⁹ In Book XII entitled “The Natural History of Trees,” Pliny declares: “the trees and forests [are] regarded as the most valuable benefits conferred by Nature upon mankind” (Plin. *HN* 12.1).⁵⁰ He continues, noting that “[t]rees used to be the temples of deities, and in accordance with ancient practice simple country places even now dedicate any outstanding tree to a god” (Plin. *HN* 12.3).⁵¹ Pliny introduces Chapter 19 of Book XIX, “The Pleasure of the Garden,” as follows: “it now remains for us to return to the cultivation of the garden, a subject

⁴⁸ Transl. Church (New York, 1942). Suetonius provides evidence for the existence of gardens surrounding the *Naumachia Augusti*: “Once, travelling by trireme, [Tiberius] came as far as the gardens just by the artificial lake for sea-battles and stationed a guard on the banks of the Tiber to turn away those who came to meet him” (Suet. *Tib.* 72). Transl. Edwards (Oxford, 2000), 132-133. For more information regarding the topography of the area surrounding the *Naumachia Augusti*, see Palmer 1981, 369.

⁴⁹ Pollard 2009, 326. For further information regarding Pliny and the divinity of nature, see Beagon 1992 and Wallace-Hadrill 1998.

⁵⁰ Transl. Bostock (London, 1855).

⁵¹ Cited from Rives 2007, 91.

recommended by its own intrinsic merits to our notice” (Plin. *HN* 19.19).⁵² He does invoke the garden as a place of pleasure and entertainment, for he specifies that “indeed under the name of gardens they possess within the city itself fields and villas for their delectation” (Plin. *HN* 19.50), but he imbues the notion of these garden spaces with a sense of religious devotion: “[t]here are certain religious impressions, too, that have been attached to this species of property, and we find that it is in the garden and the Forum only that statues of satyrs are consecrated, as a protection against the evil effects of spells and sorcery” (Plin. *HN* 19.19).⁵³

Rives elucidates the extent to which the Romans perceived the divine in nature. In regards to the rivers, groves, and sacred trees of the Roman world, he explains: “[t]he tendency to sacralize such features of the landscape arose not only from the sense of the uncanny [...], but also from their role in shaping people’s mental map of their environment.”⁵⁴ These natural features not only defined the space in which the Romans lived, they served as a connection between the tangible world of man and the ethereal world of the divine. Rives quotes an excerpt from Seneca’s *Epistles* that expresses the power of these natural forces, and the manner in which trees, mountains, and streams would often elicit a pious response:

If ever you have come upon a dense grove of ancient trees rising to an unusual height and blocking the sight of the sky with the shade of branch upon branch, the loftiness of the forest, the solitude of the place, and the marvel of such thick and unbroken shadow out in the open generate belief in a divine presence. And any cave where the rocks have been eaten away deep into the mountain it supports, not made by human hands but

⁵² Transl. Bostock (London, 1855).

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Rives 2007, 92.

hollowed out into a vast expanse by natural forces, will suggest to your spirit some need for religious observance. We venerate the sources of great rivers: the sudden eruption of a tremendous stream from its concealment causes altars to be built. Hot springs are worshipped, and the darkness and immeasurable depth renders certain pools sacred (Sen. *Ep.* 41.3).⁵⁵

Pliny furthers this discussion of the venerable grove in Book XII, insisting that “[i]ndeed, we feel ourselves inspired to adoration, not less by the sacred groves and their very stillness, than by the statues of the gods, resplendent as they are with gold and ivory” (Plin. *HN* 12.2).⁵⁶ The varying range in appreciation, then, for these gardens, forests, and groves, derives from the purpose, the defining boundaries, of the nature that they encompassed. Vergil writes words of praise regarding the humble cultivation of a vegetable garden and the bounty, albeit modest, reaped from within (Verg. *G.* 4.125).⁵⁷ In diametric opposition, authors like Plutarch, Tacitus, and Juvenal contribute scathing comments that go as far as to “list gardens among the many ill-gotten gains of the wealthy” (Juv. 1.75-6).⁵⁸ But these gardens, these aristocratic-turned- imperial *Horti* described by ancient authors, elicit negative responses due to the unproductive nature of their existence. When prominent Romans like Caesar and Augustus reclaimed the function of nature for their own propagandistic purposes, thus distancing themselves from

⁵⁵ Cited from Rives 2007, 90.

⁵⁶ Transl. Bostock (London, 1855).

⁵⁷ “...I set my eyes on an old man, a Cilician who had a few forsaken roods that wouldn’t feed a calf, not to mention fatten cattle, and no way fit for vines. Still, he scattered in the thickset his vegetables and a lily border, vervain and poppies that you’d eat—in his mind the match of anything a king might have, and when he came home late at night he’d pile the table high with feasts no one had paid money for.” Transl. Fallon (Oxford, 2006); cited in Lawson 1950, 100.

⁵⁸ Cited from Pagán 2006, 38.

the luxury and greed of their *Hortis*'s past associations, the connotations attributed to parks and gardens changed significantly.⁵⁹

⁵⁹ See Carey 2003, 102 for this discussion of nature and Pliny's reverence for *simplicitas* [simplicity] and *rusticitas* [rusticity].

CHAPTER TWO

Ancient authors began to mention the disappearing green space within Rome in the later years of the Republic amidst gradual but drastic changes to the built environment. This chapter will consist of an analysis and discussion regarding the disappearing green space within Rome and the subsequent creation of specific monuments and constructed garden spaces that attempted to serve as visually prominent and politically infused replacements during the early years of the Augustan principate. Through the revitalization of archaic Roman religion and its accompanying groves and sanctuaries, an appropriation of Apollonian symbolism, and a subsequent conquest of the natural landscape, Augustus recalled the Golden Age of Saturn, a time when “mankind lived an innocent and primarily pastoral existence in harmony with nature.”⁶⁰

In the poem entitled “Erysichthon and Mestra,” Ovid alludes to the emotion felt by visitors amidst the remains of a destroyed grove: “Terrified and shocked, the sister-dryads, grieving for the grove and what they lost, put on their sable robes and hastened unto Ceres, whom they prayed, might rightly punish Erysichthon’s crime” (Ov. *Met.* 8.745-98).⁶¹ Although Ovid’s narrative is set in the realm of myth, it seems to reflect a genuine concern that the author and his contemporaries had for the loss of sacred landscapes in the early years of the empire. Ancient authors mention the disappearance of

⁶⁰ Brundrett 2011, 57.

⁶¹ Transl. More (Boston, 1922); cited in Bergamm 1992, 32, n. 18.

these sacred groves during a time when construction within Rome endangered the natural remains of the archaic religion. In his survey of Roman history, Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentions the disappearance of a grove that had once been dedicated to Pan: “Now there was not far off a holy place, arched over by a dense wood, and a hollow rock from which springs issued; the wood was said to be consecrated to Pan, and there was an altar there to that god. [...] The grove, to be sure, no longer remains...” (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.79.8).⁶² In his *Elegies*, Propertius laments the abandonment of ancient groves and their accompanying shrines: “But now the shrines lie neglected in deserted groves: piety is vanquished and all men worship gold” (Prop. 3.13.47).⁶³ With the gradual disappearance of sacred landscapes—specifically gardens and groves that were dedicated to various deities—there arose a certain nostalgia for these “vanishing sites of ancient tradition.”⁶⁴

Warning inscriptions would accompany surviving groves, gardens, and forests, imploring the passersby to leave the sacred landscapes unharmed. Bergmann declares that these “messages intensified in the late republic and early empire, when a new wave of building increasingly threatened groves in Italy,” and thus cites three inscriptions from the *Anthologia Palatina* as evidence for this heightened anxiety.⁶⁵ One particular inscription pleads:

Strangers, I, whom you take for a tree, am a maiden. Bid the slaves’ hands that are prepared to cut me spare the laurel. Instead of me, let travelers cut to strew as a couch boughs of arbutus or terebinth, for they are not far

⁶² Transl. Cary (Cambridge, MA, 1960), 267.

⁶³ Transl. Butler (London, 1929); cited in Bergmann 1992, 33, n. 19.

⁶⁴ Bergmann 1992, 41.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 32.

away. The brook is about a hundred yards away from me, and from its springs a wood containing every kind of tree is distant about seventy yards (*Anth. Pal.* 9.282).⁶⁶

Another inscription emphasizes the significance of the oak tree:

Refrain, sirrah, from cutting the oak, the mother of acorns; refrain, and lay low the old stone-pine, or the sea-pine, or this rhamus with many stems, or the holly-oak, or the dry arbutus. Only keep thy axe far from the oak, for our grannies tell us that oaks were the first mothers (*Anth. Pal.* 9.312).⁶⁷

While this third inscription reveals the sacred nature of these trees set within cultivated groves:

I am a holy tree. Beware of injuring me as thou passest by, stranger, for I suffer pain if I am mutilated. Remember that my bark is still virginal, not like that of savage wild pear-trees. Who does not know what the race of poplars is like? If though dost bark me, as I stand here by the road, thou shalt weep for it. Though I am but wood, the Sun cares for me (*Anth. Pal.* 9.706).⁶⁸

Confronted by the connotations of these trees and their associations with various deities, visitors to these sacred locations could have participated in a “highly charged religious experience,”⁶⁹ recalling the passage from Seneca’s *Epistles* (*Sen. Ep.* 41.3) in which the ancient author alludes to the spiritual force of these forests and groves and their natural settings.⁷⁰

Though these inscriptions attempted to ward off undesirable alterations to sacred groves, the “rapid but haphazard” construction of self-aggrandizing monuments by wealthy aristocrats in the late Republic resulted in the demolition of these venerable

⁶⁶ Transl. Loeb; cited in Bergmann 1992, 32, n. 16.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Transl. Loeb; cited in Bergmann 1992, 32, n. 16. See also Rehak 2006, 34.

⁶⁹ Bergmann 1992, 32.

⁷⁰ Cited from Rives 2007, 90. As mentioned in chapter 1, Seneca describes how a “dense grove of ancient trees [...] will suggest to your spirit some need for religious observance.”

sites.⁷¹ Writing in the 40s BCE, Varro complains about the disappearance of these sanctuaries while explaining how they had been replaced by narrow streets that bore the names of the sacred groves: “Beech Grove” and “the chapel of the Oak-Grove Lares” (Varro, *Ling.* 5.49).⁷² He continues his lamentations in *De lingua latina*:

On the Aventine is the *Laurentum* ‘Laurel-Grove,’ [...] from the *laurea* ‘laurel’ wood, because there was one there which was cut down and a street run through with houses on both sides: just as between the Sacred Way and the higher part of the Macellum are the *Corneta* ‘Cornel-Cherry Groves,’ from *corni* ‘cornel-cherry trees,’ which though cut away left their name to the place... (Varro, *Ling.* 5.152).⁷³

For Varro, little remained of the old Roman religion, of which he felt groves were its most genuine expression.⁷⁴ He compiled his *Antiquitates rerum divinarum* in the hopes of persuading Julius Caesar to enact a religious revival, but according to Zanker, “a systematic program was only possible in the changed circumstances after Actium.”⁷⁵

Following his victory in the Battle of Actium and the death of Marc Antony, Augustus implemented a program of cultural renewal that “presented itself explicitly through the language and imagery of cultivation, including the care and cultivation of the *hortus*.”⁷⁶ Writing in 20 CE, Strabo describes Augustus’s creation of several new groves and accompanying shrines outside the city of Rome in Actium and Nicopolis. At Actium, Strabo declares: “near the mouth, is the sacred precinct of the Actian Apollo—a hill on

⁷¹ Zanker 1990, 20. See Zanker 1990, 18-25 for an introduction to the state of Rome’s constructed environment during the late Republic.

⁷² Bergmann 1992, 33, n. 20.

⁷³ Trans. Kent (Cambridge, MA, 1938), 143; cited in Cancik 1985, 259, n. 76.

⁷⁴ Cancik 1985, 258.

⁷⁵ Zanker 1990, 103.

⁷⁶ Von Stackelberg 2009, 89. For a discussion of the Augustan religious reforms and the revival of archaic festivals and rituals, see Zanker 2009, 102-35.

which the temple stands; and at the foot of the hill is a plain which contains a sacred grove and a naval station [...] where Caesar dedicated as first fruits of his victory the squadron of ten ships...” (Strab. 7.7.6).⁷⁷ In regards to Augustus’s establishment of Nicopolis, the “city of victory,” Strabo describes the city’s rising population and cultivation of surrounding lands: “in its suburbs, the thoroughly equipped sacred precinct—one part of it being a sacred grove that contains a gymnasium [...], the other part being on the hill that is sacred to Apollo and lies above the grove” (Strab. 7.7.6).⁷⁸

Bergman elaborates:

The sacred sites were seen not just as relics of the past but also as playing an important role in defining Rome’s new religious identity. Thus in his *periplus* written in the Augustan period Strabo saw the few surviving groves, like the trees dedicated to Apollo at Actium and at Nicopolis, as landmarks of the new political structure.⁷⁹

In accordance with his military victories and the establishment of these sacred groves outside of Rome, Augustus adopted the persona of a “soldier/farmer, the embodiment of civic responsibility.”⁸⁰ Indeed, Vergil perpetuates this identity in the *Georgics*, depicting Augustus as a conqueror, a cultivator of the land:

...O Caesar, although none knows the gathering of gods
in which you soon will be accommodated, or whether you would choose
to oversee the city or be in charge of countryside, nor knows if the wide
world
will come to honor you as begetter of the harvest or as master of the
seasons
(around your brow already a garland of your mother’s myrtle)...
(Verg. *Geor.* 1.24-30).⁸¹

⁷⁷ Transl. Jones (Cambridge, MA, 1924); cited in Bergmann 1992, 32, n. 17.

⁷⁸ Ibid. For a survey of Nicopolis, see Wiseman and Zachos 2003.

⁷⁹ Bergmann 1992, 32.

⁸⁰ Von Stackelberg 2009, 89.

⁸¹ Transl. Fallon (Oxford, 2006); cited in Von Stackelberg 2009, 89.

According to Bergmann, “[t]he shepherd, like the grove, was a poetic and topical symbol, bringing the value of the ancient and the rural into a modern milieu.”⁸² And thus the impending alterations to the landscape of Rome and its surrounding cities perpetuated this image of Augustus as a farmer, a shepherd who led the Roman populace into the era of a new Golden Age. Augustus strengthened these agrarian associations through the incorporation of arboreal myths and omens in his family propaganda, most notably with the omen of the *gallina alba*.⁸³ Suetonius recounts the *miraculum* that occurred in late 39 or early 38 BCE at the home of Augustus’s future wife Livia: “an eagle flew by and snatched a white hen, which was clutching a sprig of laurel in its beak, and at once dropped the bird into [Livia’s] lap” (Suet. *Galb.* 1.1).⁸⁴ After resolving to raise the hen, which eventually produced “a great brood of chickens,” Livia planted the sprig of laurel in the gardens outside her villa at Prima Porta. Suetonius describes the divine nature of the resulting grove, which was tended with “religious care” (Plin. *HN* 15.40):⁸⁵

...whenever the Caesars were about to celebrate a triumph, they would gather their laurels from [the grove]. It was also their practice when they held a triumph to plant other laurel branches in the same spot and it was noted that when each one’s death was near the tree he had planted would droop (Suet. *Galb.* 1.1).⁸⁶

⁸² Bergmann 1992, 33.

⁸³ Flory 1989, 347 discusses the use of the omen as propaganda.

⁸⁴ Kellum 1994a, 222. Transl. Edwards (Oxford, 2000), 228. Cassius Dio (Cass. Dio 48.52.3-4) and Pliny (Plin. 15.40) also discuss the omen of the *gallina alba*.

⁸⁵ Transl. Bostock (London, 1855).

⁸⁶ Transl. Edwards (Oxford, 2000), 228. For a more in-depth discussion of the omen of the *gallina alba*, see Flory 1989. For a discussion of the laurel grove as it relates to the paintings in the garden room at the Villa *ad Gallinas*, see Kellum 1994a.

The flourishing laurel grove mirrored the success of the Julio-Claudian emperors until “the final year of Nero’s reign, [when] the entire grove withered away completely” (Suet. *Galb.* 1.1).⁸⁷ By embracing the omen of the *gallina alba*, Augustus established and subsequently exploited his association with the laurel tree—a symbol of victory—and perpetuated this notion of a fertile, prosperous Rome.⁸⁸

Suetonius elaborates on additional stories involving Augustus and his interactions with various trees, mentioning an instance in which a palm tree “sprang up between the joints in the paving in front of [Augustus’s] house” (Suet. *Aug.* 92).⁸⁹ After moving the tree “to the inner court of his household gods,” Augustus “took great care to ensure its flourishing” (Suet. *Aug.* 92).⁹⁰ Strengthening the emperor’s arboreal associations, Suetonius continues: “When a most ancient oak tree on the island of Capri, whose branches had withered and drooped to the ground, recovered at [Augustus’s] arrival, he was so delighted that he handed over Aenaria to the city of Naples in exchange for the island” (Suet. *Aug.* 92).⁹¹ This “Augustan proprietorship of nature,”⁹² seen through the appropriation of the laurel and other meaningful trees, represented a conquest of the landscape, but a “far safer campaign and one unlikely to attract [the] unwelcome attention”⁹³ that so often accompanied the gardens of L. Licinius Lucullus and other various owners of extravagant aristocratic *Horti*. Augustus’s poetic subjugation of nature

⁸⁷ Transl. Edwards (Oxford, 2000), 228.

⁸⁸ Kellum 1994a, 222.

⁸⁹ Transl. Edwards (Oxford, 2000), 89.

⁹⁰ Kellum 1994a, 211. Transl. Edwards (Oxford, 2000), 89.

⁹¹ Transl. Edwards (Oxford, 2000), 89.

⁹² Gleason 1994, 213.

⁹³ Von Stackelberg 2009, 80.

was a demonstration of power in its own right, a conquest brought about through the implementation of the new Golden Age.⁹⁴ Even prior to obtaining sole power within the empire in 27 BCE, Augustus began solidifying his associations with nature through significant building projects in the city of Rome itself, beginning most notably in the Campus Martius.

In one of his earliest alterations to the landscape of the Campus Martius, Augustus altered the political connotations of the *Porticus Pompeiana*, Pompey's 55 BCE theater and garden complex, by removing Pompey's prominent self-representational statue from the *curia* (Dio. Cass. 47.19.1).⁹⁵ In 32 BCE, Augustus also ordered the construction of a stone *scaena*, a type of stage divide that interrupted the visual unity between the garden and the theater complex.⁹⁶ Gleason elaborates on the resulting effects of the *scaena*, concluding: "the construction [...] of a permanent *scaena* would obscure the temple [to Venus Victrix] and destroy the sense of a theater garden."⁹⁷ Though the individual structures still carried Pompey's name, Augustus severely undermined the significance of the "garden theater" as the Republican leader's gift to the Roman populace.⁹⁸ Rather than persisting as a politically charged theater and garden complex, Augustus separated the collaborating elements, and Pompey's garden became "a pleasure ground, a public park,

⁹⁴ For a discussion of the intentions of the aristocratic elite and their extravagant *Horti*, see Brundrette 2011, 55. In regards to this Augustan conquest of nature, see Von Stackelberg 2009, 80.

⁹⁵ Gleason 1994, 24.

⁹⁶ Von Stackelberg 2009, 82.

⁹⁷ Gleason 1994, 24.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

to become one of many that Augustus himself and his successors would build throughout the Campus Martius.”⁹⁹

As mentioned in chapter one, the *Porticus Pompeiana* had contained spoils, both artistic and horticultural, that served as a physical manifestation of Pompey’s past martial victories. Gleason cites a passage from Pliny in which the ancient author proclaims: “it is a remarkable fact that ever since the time of Pompey the Great even trees have figured among the captives in our triumphal procession” (Plin. *HN* 12.111).¹⁰⁰ Augustus soon adapted the connotations associated with Pompey’s display of militaristic imagery to correlate with his own impending reign of peace, focusing more intentionally on the subjugation of nature rather than the spoils of defeated enemies. To symbolize Augustus’s victory in the Battle of Actium, the Senate placed an oak crown upon the door of his Palatine home, which was flanked by laurel trees on either side (Aug. *RG.* 34-5).¹⁰¹ Bodel describes this act by which the emperor “subordinat[ed] the gaudy spoils of war to the venerable but simple Roman military honors of the laurel (symbolizing victory) and the crown of oak,” thus imbuing his residence with “an almost religious aura by linking his personal valor with that of the divine guardians of the new order, Apollo and Jupiter.”¹⁰² The presence of oak—a tree that had been consistently associated with Romulus—in the leaves of the commemorative crown also reinforced a connection to

⁹⁹ Gleason 1994, 26.

¹⁰⁰ Cited in Gleason 1994, 19.

¹⁰¹ For the primary source, see Aicher 2004, s.v. “The House of Augustus,” 158.

¹⁰² Bodel 1997, 19.

archaic Roman religion through the proximity of the hut of Romulus, located nearby on the Palatine Hill.¹⁰³

Numismatic evidence attests to these laurel trees that the Senate planted outside Augustus's house on the Palatine, working in accordance with the omen of the *gallina alba* to further designate the plant as a symbol for the emperor and his divine associations (Fig. 1).¹⁰⁴ Zanker elucidates: "Since Archaic times such pairs of trees had flanked the headquarters of the oldest priesthoods [...]. Thus the laurel trees conferred on the entry to Augustus's house a sacred aura and invoked the powers of primordial religion."¹⁰⁵ Zanker also focuses on the emperor's "restrained use of color" within the painted rooms of his Palatine home, describing how this new method of expression "avoid[ed] the impression of a conscious display of luxury and great expense, which must [...] have been perceived as undesirable and tasteless."¹⁰⁶ Suetonius elaborates on the emperor's disposition: "[Augustus] was angered by the extensive and luxurious places in the country [...] [and his] own country palaces, modest as they were, he furnished not with statues or painted panels but rather with [open walks and woods] [*xystis et nemoribus*]" (Suet. *Aug.* 72).¹⁰⁷ It seems that for the emperor, the conscious display and cultivation of nature was the preferred method of self-promotion.

¹⁰³ Von Stackelberg 2009, 90. For an interesting discussion regarding the spatial arrangement of the hut of Romulus, the House of Augustus, and the Lupercal cave, see Wiseman 2004, 543.

¹⁰⁴ Kellum 1994a, 213, fig. 4; Zanker 1990, 92-93, fig. 75.

¹⁰⁵ Zanker 1990, 93.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 281.

¹⁰⁷ Transl. Edwards (Oxford, 2000), 81; cited from Pollitt 1978, 165. From the Latin *xystis et nemoribus*, Edwards translates "terraces and plantations," while Pollitt provides

Augustus encouraged and exploited his arboreal associations through the politically motivated construction and decoration of his monumental Mausoleum in the Campus Martius.¹⁰⁸ Cassius Dio provides a description of Mausoleum's exterior, constructed in 28 BCE:

[There exist] fragments of marble blocks carved in relief with laurel branches and leaves, suggesting that the walls flanking the doorway were sculpted to represent a pair of laurel trees. If so, they are petrified versions of the living laurel trees that Augustus had planted on either side of the door of his residence on the Palatine Hill early in 27, when he adopted the title of Augustus (Cass. Dio. 53.16.4).¹⁰⁹

In conjunction with the Mausoleum's representational decoration, its sloping exterior was decorated with evergreen trees that created a continuation between the natural landscape and the man-made funerary structure. In his description of the Campus Martius, Strabo confirms: "[the Mausoleum is] planted thickly up to the summit with evergreens" (Strabo 5.3.8).¹¹⁰ Furthermore, he includes: "on top is a bronze image of Augustus Caesar; beneath the mound are the tombs of himself and his kinsmen and intimates; behind is a great grove with wonderful promenades" (Strabo 5.3.8).¹¹¹ For Brundrette, Strabo's description suggests that "this landscaped park, which also seemed to imitate the sacred groves previously associated with deities in Rome, was an appropriate place to house the tomb of Octavian, perhaps because he himself was also the son of a god," the divine

"open walks and woods," a translation that more closely aligns with the desired ancient terminology. *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, s.v. "xystus."

¹⁰⁸ Harmanşah 2002, s.v. "Mausoleum: Augustus," 163.

¹⁰⁹ Rehak 2008, 39.

¹¹⁰ Transl. Loeb; cited from Rehak 2006, 63 and Zanker 1990, 75.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

Julius Caesar.¹¹² Suetonius also describes the embellishment of the landscape surrounding the structure: “[t]his monument he had had built between the Flaminian Way and the Tiber bank [...] and had planted around it trees and walkways [*silvae et ambulationes*] which he had then made available for public use” (Suet. *Aug.* 100.4).¹¹³

Augustus provided additional lands available for public use through the creation of the *nemus Caesarum*, a grove dedicated to his grandsons Gaius and Lucius, in the land previously designated as the *Horti Caesaris Transtiberim* (Tac. *Ann.* 15.15).¹¹⁴ The *Naumachia Augusti* accompanied the shrine, thus solidifying the location’s connection to the emperor and a reminder of his multiple gifts to the Roman people.¹¹⁵ Augustus combined elements of the Republican *Horti* through his extensive use of land, though rather than existing as private property that was redefined by continual changes in ownership, the presence of the Mausoleum with its *silvae et ambulationes* and the *Naumachia Augusti* with the *nemus Caesarum* ensured the lands’ prolonged association with the emperor—a manifestation of his legacy in Rome.¹¹⁶ In land that existed under imperial control rather than aristocratic possession, Augustus shifted the emphasis from private luxury to public benefaction, completing a process that had been begun by his

¹¹² Brundrett 2011, 58.

¹¹³ Transl. Edwards (Oxford, 2000), 97.

¹¹⁴ Suetonius (Suet. *Aug.* 43.1) and Cassius Dio (Cass. Dio, 66.25.3) also discuss the addition of the *nemus Caesarum*.

¹¹⁵ Von Stackelberg 2009, 78 and Dyson 2010, 147.

¹¹⁶ Rehak 2008, 61. See also Brundrett 2011, 58-59 for a similar discussion regarding Augustus’s adaptation of sacral landscapes, “combining elements of both the aristocratic *horti* and the sacred groves of the gods to suit his own needs.” Brundrett also draws attention to the difference between Pompey and Caesar’s posthumous public gardens, characterized as “exclusionary,” and Augustus’s “accessible” land surrounding his Mausoleum.

adoptive father with the *Horti Caesaris Transtiberim*.¹¹⁷ Beard highlights the immediacy of Augustus's endowment of public lands, for he did not wait to bequeath gardens upon his death in the manner of Caesar and Agrippa, but rather used the cultivated landscape as a means of securing public support at the outset of his imperial reign.¹¹⁸

Through the cultivation of gardens and groves surrounding politically motivated structures, Augustus exploited—and denied—a multitude of complex horticultural associations amid the preceding loss of traditional, archaic groves within the city. Distancing himself from the aristocratic gardens' connotations of luxury and greed, Augustus's gifts of the *silvae et ambulationes* and the *nemus Caesarum* worked in accordance with his program of religious renewal, a "restoration of the Republic" that focused on *pietas* and Roman morality.¹¹⁹ This consideration bestowed upon the refurbishment of the landscape "parallel[ed] the original essence of Roman religion which, as we understand it, was bound around agricultural deities and natural spirits."¹²⁰ In reference to the concurrent emergence of sacro-idyllic landscape paintings, to be discussed in chapter 3, Bergmann elucidates the significance behind the revival of these sacred groves:

At a time when its old meaning was in danger of being lost, the grove was one aspect of the visual world to be singled out by Romans and invested with new meaning. Its representation registers an aesthetic response to dramatic changes in the ownership and structure of the land. Seen in

¹¹⁷ Von Stackelberg 2009, 78. See chapter 1, 15 for a discussion regarding Caesar's bequest of the *Horti Caesaris Transtiberim* to the *plebs Romana*.

¹¹⁸ Beard 1998, 25.

¹¹⁹ Zanker 1990, 101. See also fn. 76.

¹²⁰ Brundrett 2011, 57.

isolation, the pious scene recalls a previous existence, stirring recognition of the inner meanings of Roman culture and its religious core values.¹²¹

¹²¹ Bergmann 1992, 42.

CHAPTER THREE

Ovid's *Metamorphosis*, written during the age of Augustus, reveals the convergence of nature and mythology through the former's revitalized sacralization. As previously discussed in chapter 2, Ovid's poem entitled "Erysichthon and Mestra" portrays visitors as "terrified and shocked" at the destruction of a sacred grove (Ov. *Met.* 8.745-98).¹²² Ovid's stories are set in the realm of myth, but they seem to reflect the attitude of the author and his contemporaries—including Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Propertius—in regards to the inherently religious nature of these gardens and groves in the early first century CE, and the emotional devastation that accompanied their destruction.¹²³ In addition to these literary expressions of sorrow caused by nature's destruction, there also arose pictorial expressions—*artificial* representations of nature—during a time when the city itself was transforming from past to present, from Republic to Empire.¹²⁴ Coinciding with the Augustan alterations to the landscape that were discussed in chapter 2, the pictorial arts also began to evoke this nostalgia for the natural wonders of Rome's more simple, archaic past through the development of landscape painting.

¹²² Transl. More (Boston, 1922); cited in Bergmann 1992, 32, n. 18. See chapter 2, 20-23 for a discussion of ancient authors and their literary responses to the disappearance of sacred groves.

¹²³ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.79.8 and Prop. 3.13.47 lament the loss of sacred groves. See chapter 2, 21 for further discussion.

¹²⁴ See Kellum 1994a, 221 for further development of these ideas of transformation and metamorphosis in regards to the early years of the Augustan principate.

Pliny credits the painter Studius with the “invention” of landscape painting:

Studius too, of the period of the Divine Augustus, must not be cheated of his due. He first introduced the most attractive fashion of painting walls with villas, porticoes, and landscape gardens, groves, woods, hills, fish-pools, canals, rivers, coasts—whatever one could wish [...] (Plin. *NH* 35.37).¹²⁵

Scholars divide landscape painting of this period into two closely linked genres: sacro-idyllic landscapes and garden scenes.¹²⁶ While both serve as visual representations of Roman values, sacro-idyllic scenes more intentionally concern these human interactions with the sacred, constructed landscape through the abbreviation of the landscape to simplistic trees and rocks. In contrast, garden paintings are composed of more detailed plants and animals that exist as “pictorial expression[s] of a rustic sensibility”¹²⁷ through the absence of human figures. In focusing on the flora and fauna rather than the human figure, the garden paintings reflect an increasing reverence for the garden itself as a location of virtue and its resulting prosperity. They served more intentionally as stable, visual replacements for the receding landscape of Rome and the absence of the virtuous farmer.¹²⁸ In this chapter, I will focus more specifically on these fictive representations of garden scenes as they emerge in response to the previously discussed disappearance of real, sacred groves.

The earliest known example of a garden painting of this type appears in the so-called Garden Room at the Villa *ad Gallinas*.¹²⁹ Located underground, the room

¹²⁵ Cited from Giesecke 2001, 22.

¹²⁶ Bergmann 1992, 34 and Von Stackelberg 2009, 33.

¹²⁷ Von Stackelberg 2009, 33.

¹²⁸ See chapter 1, 5-6 for the virtues attributed to this notion of the archaic Roman farmer.

¹²⁹ Giesecke 2001, 22.

measures 11.70 meters in length and 5.90 meters in width with a single door serving as the only access to the illusionistic garden painting that have since been installed in the Palazzo Massimo of the Museo Nazionale Romano.¹³⁰ The prominence of the laurel works in conjunction with the villa's accompanying laurel grove, recalling the omen of the *gallina alba*, the miraculous nature of the grove's formation, and the divinely preordained prosperity of Augustus's rule, all of which were discussed in chapter 2.¹³¹ The convincing rendition of an outdoor garden upon the walls of this underground complex is defined and contained by the illusion of two short fences: one wickerwork, the other stone (Fig. 2). The artist juxtaposed tame, methodical plantings with lush tangles of flowers, bushes, and trees that lay just beyond the fences (Fig. 3).¹³² As evidenced by the delicate floral details, "everything is in bloom simultaneously,"¹³³ becoming an amalgamation of accurately rendered trees, flowers, and various garden creatures that exist in an idealized, highly constructed landscape. Individual trees of oak and pine occupy the center of the north and south walls within the room while the longer walls along the east and west consist of central spruces surrounded by laurels and palms.¹³⁴ The centrality of the evergreens helps emphasize the perpetual abundance and continued growth of the empire, and the presence of the oak and palm associates this

¹³⁰ Gabriel 1955, 3.

¹³¹ See Plin. *NH.* 15.40 and Suet. *Galb.* 1.1 for the omen of the *gallina alba*. See chapter 2, 25-26 for a discussion regarding Augustus's exploitation of the omen and the resulting associations with triumph and victory. For further analysis of the laurel grove and the omen of the *gallina alba*, see Klynne 2005, Klynne and Liljenstolpe 2000, and Reeder 1997.

¹³² Kellum 1994a, 215.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹³⁴ Kellum 1994a, 217.

verdant landscape with additional forms of Augustan arboreal mythology, as recounted in chapter 2.¹³⁵

In regards to the public accessibility of the Garden Room and comparable garden paintings within the homes of less imperial residences, Clarke argues an important point:

These were not “talking walls,” their imagery preaching religious or moral lessons to the men, women, and children who looked at them. Rather, their allusions to the sacred grove, Roman landscape, and the picture gallery, if anything, reminded their viewers of themes from high art that clever wall painters had learned to integrate into the new taste [...] in interior design.¹³⁶

It seems that these fictive representations of gardens and groves became popularized by the Garden Room and associated Augustan imagery, and pictorial expressions of the natural landscape and its religious, pious evocations were subsequently diffused throughout Roman society. Bergmann cites several examples of landscape paintings from Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome that attest to this propagation.¹³⁷ In a significant departure from the Second Style of Pompeian wall painting, the Third Style of the late first century BCE and the early first century CE saw the addition of “shadowy figures of farmers, shepherds, goatherds, wayfarers, and a variety of “rustics” who represented the morality, courage, and religiosity that modern Rome had lost.”¹³⁸ One scene, taken from the Villa of Agrippa Postumus at Boscotrecase, depicts shepherds, worshippers, and

¹³⁵ Suetonius (*Aug.* 92) tells two arboreal stories: once in which a palm tree spontaneously sprouted between the paving in front of Augustus’s house, and another in which Augustus revived an ancient oak tree on the island of Capri. See chapter 2, 26.

¹³⁶ Clarke 2005, 278. See also Wallace-Hadrill 1994.

¹³⁷ Bergmann 1992, 28. See Bergmann 1992, figs. 1-20 for more examples of landscape paintings in early imperial Rome.

¹³⁸ Giesecke 2001, 21-22. See Ling 1991, 52 for a chronology regarding the development of the Third Style.

travelers gazing upon a monumental tree whose organic nature is juxtaposed against the verticality of the converging column (Fig. 4). An enthroned deity sits beneath the tree, announcing the sacred nature of the grove and its surrounding elements. While the deity remains central to the scene, “the message of the painted groves does not concern a god but the human acts and gestures of piety toward the *numen*, or wilderness, of nature.”¹³⁹

Another scene from the House of Wounded Adonis in Pompeii reflects this careful observation of nature paired with mythological scenarios: the divine figures evoke the religious force of nature through their proximity to the various flora and fauna (Fig. 5).¹⁴⁰ This painted concept of nature and divine intertwined that was displayed more privately in these Roman and Pompeian homes emerged in a public, sculptural form through the decoration of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*.¹⁴¹ Flowing, fertile imagery permeated the details of the *Ara Pacis* and associated public monuments, suggesting a sense of abundance and prosperity brought about by the rule of Augustus himself. The scrolling vine detail that occupies the lower panels of the Alter of Augustan Peace alludes to this notion of a structured growth: a verdant, organic order that characterized the new age of Augustus (Fig. 6).¹⁴² Constructed between 13 and 9 BCE, the monument worked in conjunction with Augustus’s public gardens and his nearby Mausoleum, whose sloping terrain was decorated with evergreen trees that fragmented the brick frame of the man-made funerary structure. The *Ara Pacis* embodied a similar continuation between nature

¹³⁹ Bergmann 1992, 28.

¹⁴⁰ Bergmann 2008, 69.

¹⁴¹ See Caneva 2010 for an extensive analysis of the specific flora and fauna depicted on the *Ara Pacis*.

¹⁴² Zanker 1990, 181. See also Castriota 1995, 124-44.

and artifice through its sculpted details of garden animals set amongst the vivid, vegetative imagery. In a detail from the northern acanthus frieze, a lizard scales up the wall of the monument rather than the sculpted vegetation, further emphasizing the monument's interaction with the surrounding landscape and the creatures set within (Fig. 7).¹⁴³ Dispersed amongst the scrolling vines, the wide variety of depicted plants would have recalled the actual acanthus and laurel that were planted around the Mausoleum, uniting the two monuments within a verdant, fertile landscape.¹⁴⁴

At nearly two meters high, the acanthus friezes dominate the lower section of the monument's exterior walls (Fig. 6).¹⁴⁵ In his research on the vegetal frieze, Rossini enumerates some contrasting colors that would have enhanced the viewer's experience of the monument in the vast expanse of the Campus Martius: "the different shades of green, the pink hues of the acanthus flowers, the white of the lotus, the red of the berries and of the roses, the violet of the irises and a "cosmic" blue, or perhaps gold, used for the background."¹⁴⁶ As a visual allusion to Augustan arboreal mythology, Apollo, and natural abundance, the image of the laurel permeates the entirety of the structure, appearing both amongst the scrolling vines of the lower friezes as well as the upper panels depicting the imperial procession of Augustus, his family, and his closest allies.¹⁴⁷ In a detail from the

¹⁴³ For a greater discussion of the animals depicted in the acanthus frieze, see Kellum 1994b, 34-39.

¹⁴⁴ Kellum 1994b, 32.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 28.

¹⁴⁶ Rossini 2006, 80.

¹⁴⁷ See Rose 1990, 455, fn. 8 for an analysis regarding the laurel details of the imperial procession. Rose identifies the procession as a *supplicatio*, a ritual in which participants carried laurel branches in their hands. For a discussion of the processional friezes and their reflection of the Augustan social program, see Kleiner 1978, 772-76.

northern processional frieze, a woman holding a sprig of laurel—which would have been painted green in dramatic contrast to the presumed red and neutral colors of the processional robes—attests to the unifying concept of nature seen throughout the monument’s composition (Fig. 8).¹⁴⁸ The pose of the woman’s hands, which flow into the heavy, cascading folds of her drapery, mirror the undulation of the vines in the lower relief. From the scrolling vines of ivy and acanthus to the methodical placement of the processional figures topped by laurel wreaths, the *Ara Pacis* conveys a message of natural abundance, victory, and piety, but all of a highly ordered, constructed nature (Fig. 9).

Castriota argues that the floral friezes must have carried a multitude of associations. The acanthus could have served as an allusion to fertile, productive Roman land, as previously discussed, or it could have recalled the grapevine that grew from the Porticus of Livia (Plin. *HN* 14.11).¹⁴⁹ Pollini suggests “that the entire acanthus matrix of the friezes was redolent of Apollo’s role [as herald of the returning Golden Age], and that even the split palmettes atop the tendrils were understood as an ornamental avatar of Apollo’s sacred tree, the palm.”¹⁵⁰ These concurrent associations are representative of Augustus’s program of cultural renewal and the resulting manipulation of visual language, for “it is this process of selection and resynthesis that typifies the development

¹⁴⁸ For a color projection image of the *Ara Pacis* façades, see Charles Rhyne, *Ara Pacis Augustae*, <http://cdm.reed.edu/ara-pacis/altar/back-entrance-east/front-facade-1/>.

¹⁴⁹ Castriota 1995, 166, fn. 157; Kellum 1994b, 30.

¹⁵⁰ Castriota 1995, 35 and Pollini 1978. See Suet. *Aug.* 92 for this Augustan arboreal mythology that specifically refers to the palm tree.

of all Augustan arts and institutions.”¹⁵¹ In his research regarding the additional visual precedent behind this constructed nature of the *Ara Pacis*, Castriota examines how Greek artistic conceptions, specifically the tendril ornament and its symbolic connotations of divine blessing and agricultural bounty, “were adapted in the service of a new, nationally charged ideology of prosperity linked to moral excellence.”¹⁵² This moral excellence, embodied by the Augustan moral reforms of 29 BCE, emphasized a return to ancestral virtues while working in conjunction with the Augustan alterations to the natural landscape, echoing nature’s own inherent evocation of Rome’s sacred, archaic religion.

Augustus attempted to perpetuate a belief that the arrival of the Golden Age was directly linked to the implementation of his moral reforms and the resulting “moral excellence” of the Roman people.¹⁵³ According to Zanker, the virtues of the Augustan reforms—based on the *mores maiorum*, or “customs of the ancestors”—included “[s]implicity, self-sufficiency, a strict upbringing and moral code, order and subservience within the family, diligence, bravery, and self-sacrifice.”¹⁵⁴ This emphasis on self-sufficiency recalls the moral undertones of Cato and Varro and their insistence that those who cultivated the land led a pious life (Varro, *Rust.* 3.1.5), for “the rigors of farming were supposed to cultivate not only crops, but manly fortitude, strength, and courage.”¹⁵⁵ With this increased fixation on the virtues bestowed upon farmers and their rural way of

¹⁵¹ Castriota 1995, 9.

¹⁵² Ibid., 11. For a greater discussion of this Greek precedent, see Castriota 1995, 13-57.

¹⁵³ Castriota 1995, 164.

¹⁵⁴ Zanker 1990, 156.

¹⁵⁵ Castriota 1995, 148. See Leach 1981, 40-43 for the comments regarding Varro. See Cato, *Agri. Orig.* 1.1-2 and Varro, *Rust.* 3.1.4-5, cited from Castriota 1995, 145, for additional quotes regarding the ancient authors’ opinions of the pious life of the farmer. See chapter 1, 5-6 for a reference to these moral undertones of Cato and Varro.

life came a corresponding demand for increased fertility amongst moral Roman families, exemplified by the Lex Iuliae and the penalties imposed upon those who remained unmarried.¹⁵⁶

The evidence for this Augustan insistence on procreation became manifest in the northern and southern processional friezes of the *Ara Pacis*. While Zanker alludes to a lack of visual evidence reflecting the implementation of Augustus's moral reforms, he argues that themes like "the moral of marriage" and "the blessings of children" appeared in "subliminal form in the imagery of the Golden Age, which would soon be so pervasive."¹⁵⁷ In the southern frieze of the imperial procession, children are placed closest to the viewer, becoming a central component of the ritualistic aspects of Roman life while reinforcing Augustus's desire for increased procreation (Fig. 10). In her research regarding the sculptural reliefs of the *Ara Pacis*, Kleiner concludes that the prominent arrangement of children in the context of the procession worked in accordance with the newly implemented social policies of Augustus, reminding the viewer of the resulting benefits, both social and political, awaiting families with more children.¹⁵⁸ While Zanker admits that the Augustan campaign for increased procreation had failed amongst Roman citizens, the imagery in the processional friezes as well as the corresponding acanthus friezes reflects an internalization of the moral restructuring of Roman society whereby man and nature were fertile, abundant, and orderly.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ Zanker 1990, 156-57.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 159.

¹⁵⁸ Kleiner 1978, 772, 776. See Zanker 1990, 156-59 for a discussion regarding the rewards and privileges awarded to parents who produced multiple children.

¹⁵⁹ Zanker 1990, 172.

While the processional friezes are the most evident visual allusions to Augustus's social reforms, the relief panels of the *Ara Pacis* embody a specific reverence for archaic Roman religion and this Augustan emphasis on tradition. Through the chosen imagery, Augustus manipulated the archaic associations of sacred trees, rustic altars, and flowing vegetation, capitalizing on their inherent evocations of prosperity and success as the result of pious dedication. In the Mars relief of the west façade, the she-wolf cares for a young Romulus and Remus (Fig. 11). The she-wolf becomes an embodiment of dutiful cultivation, ensuring the success of the forthcoming ruler, Romulus, who will in turn establish the agricultural success of his namesake city.¹⁶⁰ A fig tree, imbued with sacred connotations, divides the scene, solidifying its centrality in the founding myth of Rome.¹⁶¹ The tree's inclusion on the monument establishes the arboreal traditions of the archaic city while perpetuating the mythology of Augustus that was discussed in chapter 2.¹⁶²

In conjunction with the archaic connotations of the Romulus relief, Rehak makes a convincing argument for the identification of the main male figure in the second west façade relief to be that of Numa, the second king of Rome, rather than the traditionally identified Aeneas (Fig. 12).¹⁶³ Numa, who was born on the day that Romulus founded

¹⁶⁰ Fragments of the wolf and twins no longer exist, but due to the irrefutable presence of Mars and the branch of the tree, scholars have confidently reconstructed the scene at the Lupercal cave. The identification of the second male figure as Faustulus remains less certain. See Castriota 1995, 154.

¹⁶¹ Mazzoni 2010, 190.

¹⁶² See Plut. *Rom.* 4.1 for this reference to a wild fig tree where Faustulus found Romulus and Remus. See chapter 2, 25-26 for the arboreal mythology of Augustus.

¹⁶³ See Zanker 1990, 203 for this traditional identification and see Rehak 2001 for the identification of Numa.

Rome, “instituted peace and promoted agriculture, the rearing of children and the proper worship of the gods,” ideal goals that greatly aligned with those of Augustus.¹⁶⁴ In contrast to the Romulus relief, much of the original relief survives and consists of a central rustic altar draped in laurel leaves and flanked by four figures whose bare feet allude to a simpler, pastoral past.¹⁶⁵ An oak tree rises behind the altar, embodying the sacred landscape within the scene as well as that which surrounds the *Ara Pacis* and the nearby Mausoleum. Similar to the fig tree in the Romulus relief, the oak tree occupies the center of the composition, recalling, once again, these arboreal associations of Augustus.¹⁶⁶ Rehak suggests that the scene represents Numa sacrificing a sow in order to guarantee peace between Rome and Gabii, and the effects of this peace, as well as the *Pax Augusta*, can be seen in the bounty of the scrolling acanthus reliefs.¹⁶⁷

The effects of Augustan Peace become increasingly evident in the Pax relief of the east façade. Central to the composition, the matronly goddess Pax, wearing a wreath of vegetation, sits atop a throne of rocks and earth (Fig. 13). She carries two lively infants, one resting against her right side while the other, balanced delicately on her left knee, gestures towards her with an offering of fruit. Surrounded by stalks of grain, poppies, and peaceful, resting animals, the entire scene suggests the notion of the land’s

¹⁶⁴ Rehak 2001, 199; Plut. *Num.* 3.4, 19.3.

¹⁶⁵ Rehak 2001, 190, 196-97.

¹⁶⁶ As mentioned in chapter 2, Suetonius tells various stories involving Augustus and his interactions with various trees. In reference to the oak tree, Suetonius proclaims: “When a most ancient oak tree on the island of Capri, whose branches had withered and drooped to the ground, recovered at [Augustus’s] arrival, he was so delighted that he handed over Aenaria to the city of Naples in exchange for the island” (Suet. *Aug.* 92). Transl. Edwards (Oxford, 2000), 89.

¹⁶⁷ Rehak 2001, 197.

assured growth and the resulting prosperity for the future citizens of Rome, only now in their infancy.¹⁶⁸ For just as the virtuous farmer tends to his land, so too does the mother tend to her offspring. A passage from Tibullus, cited by de Grummond in her research on the Pax relief, associates the imagery of Pax with the actions of the farmer: “Let Peace tend the fields. Shining Peace first led the steer to plow beneath the curved yoke; Peace nourished the vines [...] Come, nurturing Peace! Hold out the ear of grain and may your shining lap pour forth its fruits” (Tib. 1.10.45-48, 67-68)!¹⁶⁹ Pax becomes a representation of virtue reflected in the flourishing vegetation, an amalgamation of associations that embody the abundance and fruitfulness of the Augustan Age.¹⁷⁰

Zanker addresses the intentions behind Pax’s bountiful surroundings, explaining that “[t]his artistic landscape is not mere scenery, but rather a symbolic setting, whose various elements could be read one by one, the scale of any one of them altered by the artist to suit his purpose.”¹⁷¹ The Pax relief, in conjunction with the structured scroll of the acanthus vines, embodies the notion behind all Augustan cultivated landscapes, whether real or depicted. As discussed in chapter 2, Augustus artfully orchestrated the development of groves and parklands within the city of Rome to “suit his purpose,” responding to the inclinations of the Roman public in order to gain their support. These gardens and their visual representations become a construction of nature, arranged by the ideology of Augustus, and imbued with the symbolism of a prosperous Golden Age.

¹⁶⁸ See de Grummond 1990, 667 for the attributes associated with Pax.

¹⁶⁹ Cited from de Grummond 1990, 668.

¹⁷⁰ See Zanker 1990, 172-7 for an introduction to the various identifications of the female figure on the Pax relief.

¹⁷¹ Zanker 1990, 175.

CONCLUSION

The concept of garden spaces and associated imagery entered Roman imperial ideology with Augustus and continued to evolve in the decades that followed. Nero, the last of the Julio-Claudian emperors, incorporated marvelous parks, gardens, and woods into the constructed landscape of his *Domus Aurea*, which was built following the Great Fire of Rome in 64 CE (Tac. *Ann.* 15.42).¹⁷² Though criticized for his egregious displays of wealth and luxury, Nero appealed to the Roman people by providing “controlled accessibility” to his extravagant gardens, recalling the comparable actions of Caesar, Pompey, and Augustus that were discussed in chapter 1.¹⁷³

The Flavian *Templum Pacis* of 75 CE serves as another manifestation of the evolving propagandistic utilization of constructed garden spaces. In her research on botanical imperialism, Pollard suggests that Pliny wrote his *Natural History* as a dedicatory offering following the completion of the *Templum Pacis*, a structure which contained various plantings that allegedly flourished as a result of Vespasian’s victories and the ensuing peace of the Roman Empire.¹⁷⁴ Pollard also uses the Severan Marble Plan to support her argument surrounding the significant combination of nature and architecture in the *Templum Pacis*: the depiction of garden spaces on the Marble Plan and

¹⁷² Dyson 2010, 164-67.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 168. See chapter 1, 12-16 for the actions of Caesar, Pompey, and Augustus in regards to the public accessibility of their gardens.

¹⁷⁴ Pollard 2009, 336.

their meticulous alignment with the temple's architectural features reveals the significance of the plantings to the building's overall design.¹⁷⁵ Packer provides similar evidence in support of the integral nature of garden features to the architectural design of imperial monuments, for his research suggests the presence of an avenue of trees within the Forum of Trajan, constructed in 112 CE.¹⁷⁶

The Augustan ideology surrounding gardens, trees, and the exploitation of the landscape transcended both time and place in the creation of Hadrian's Villa at Tivoli. Located about 18 miles outside of Rome, the Villa served as an official residence of the emperor, thus becoming a location for administrative activity and a manifestation of political power outside of Rome but set in a lavish parkland, representing the ultimate unification of imperial landscape ideology.¹⁷⁷ The dissemination of this passion for nature and bucolic imagery emerged in various mediums as well, as seen on a silver krater from the Hildesheim Treasure (Fig. 14).¹⁷⁸

Augustus compensated for the transient nature of his public gardens and groves by providing permanent structures upon which the imagery of a verdant, prosperous earth could flourish, instilling within the viewer a sense of wonder and appreciation for the abundance brought forth by the emperor and the beginning of a new Golden Age in Rome. In direct contrast to the mutable nature of aristocratic *Horti* and their exploitation of Roman land as recounted in chapter 1, the visual manifestation of garden imagery on and within the public and private buildings of Augustan Rome granted a certain

¹⁷⁵ Pollard 2009, 318. See also Lloyd 1982, 100.

¹⁷⁶ Packer 1983.

¹⁷⁷ Dyson 2010, 321.

¹⁷⁸ Zanker 1990, 185.

permanence to the ephemeral nature of the early Empire and its associated ideologies, perpetuating the arboreal traditions of an archaic city whose very own founding legend began beneath the shade of a wild fig tree (Plut. *Rom.* 4.1).

FIGURES



Figure 1: Two laurel trees, denarius of Augustus, reverse type, ca. 18 BCE. (After Barbara Kellum, "Construction of Landscape: The Garden Room at the Villa ad Gallinas," *The Art Bulletin* 76.2, 1994, fig. 4)



Figure 2: Livia's Garden Room *ad Gallinas*, detail of a spruce tree, eastern wall (Photo: ARTstor)



Figure 3: Livia's Garden Room *ad Gallinas*, Panel II (from *Antike Denkmäler*, I, Berlin, 1891, engraving) (after Gabriel, *Livia's Garden Room*, p. 5)

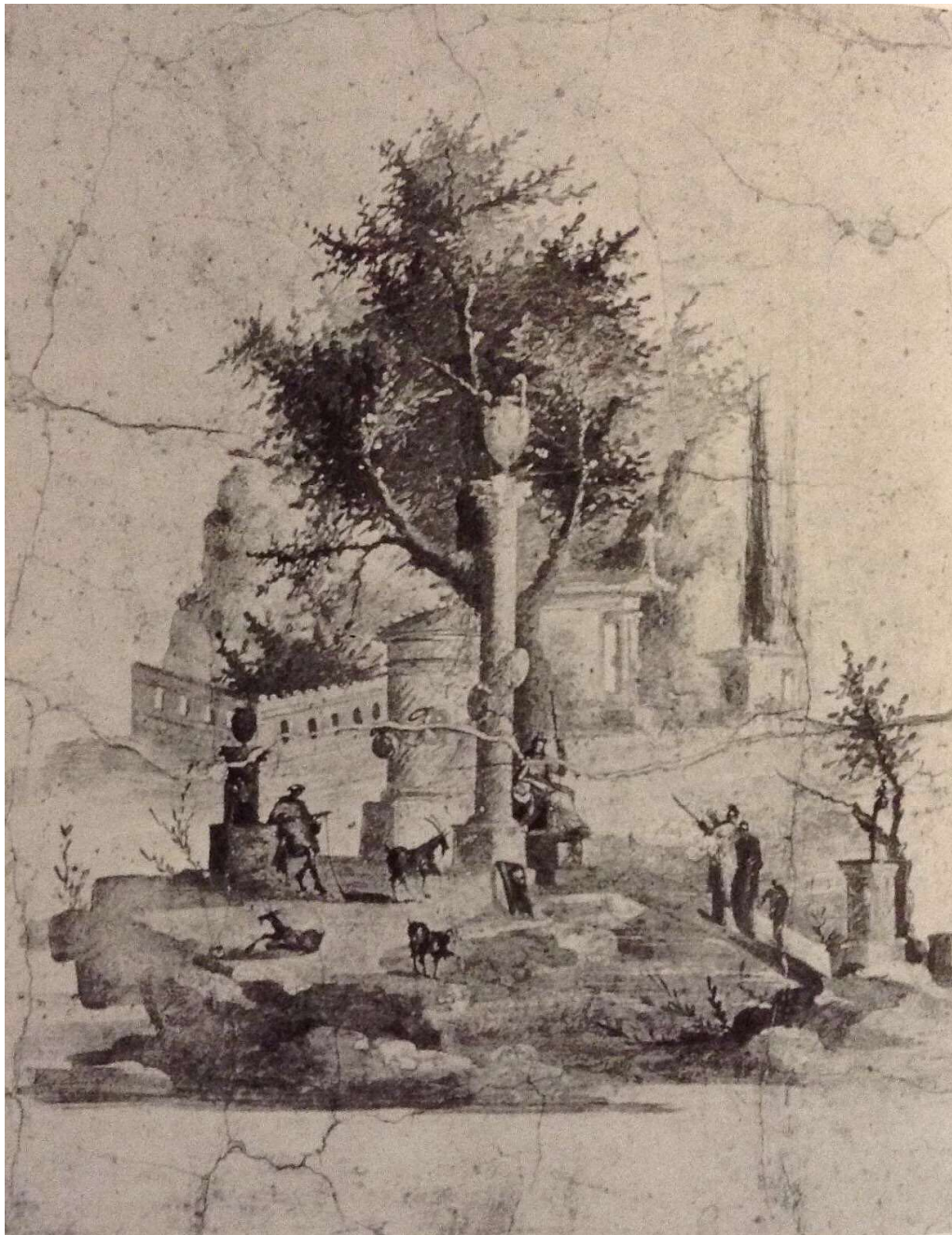


Figure 4: Landscape in vertical white panel from central section, north wall of Red Room, Villa of Agrippa Postumus, Boscotrecase, third style, last decade of first century BCE. (After Bettina Bergmann, "Exploring the Grove: Pastoral Space on Roman Walls," *The Pastoral Landscape*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 1992, fig. 1)



Figure 5: View of fresco from the House of the Wounded Adonis. (After Bettina Bergmann, “Interior Gardens of Pompeian Houses,” *Pompeii and the Roman Villa: Art and Culture Around the Bay of Naples*, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, 2008, fig. 16)



Figure 6: Acanthus frieze, relief from the northern side of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, 13-9 BCE. (Photo: Charles Rhyne, <http://cdm.reed.edu/ara-pacis/altar/left-side-north/5-acanthus-frieze-entire/>)



Figure 7: Detail of a lizard, relief from the northern acanthus frieze of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, 13-9 BCE. (Photo: Charles Rhyne, <https://cdm.reed.edu/ara-pacis/altar/left-side-north/7-acanthus-frieze-birds/>)



Figure 8: Detail of a woman holding a sprig of laurel, relief from the northern processional frieze of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, 13-9 BCE. (Photo: Charles Rhyne, <http://cdm.reed.edu/ara-pacis/altar/left-side-north/2-processional-frieze-1/>)



Figure 9: Detail of men wearing laurel wreaths, relief from the northern processional frieze of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, 13-9 BCE. (Photo: Charles Rhyne, <http://cdm.reed.edu/ara-pacis/altar/left-side-north/3-early-drgs/>)



Figure 10: Detail of children, relief from the southern processional frieze of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, 13-9 BCE. (Photo: Charles Rhyne, <http://cdm.reed.edu/ara-pacis/altar/right-side-south/far-right-1/>)



Figure 11: Romulus and Remus at the Lupercal, relief from the northwest corner of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, 13-9 BCE. (Photo: Charles Rhyne, <http://cdm.reed.edu/ara-pacis/altar/front-entrance-west/romulous-remus-1/>)

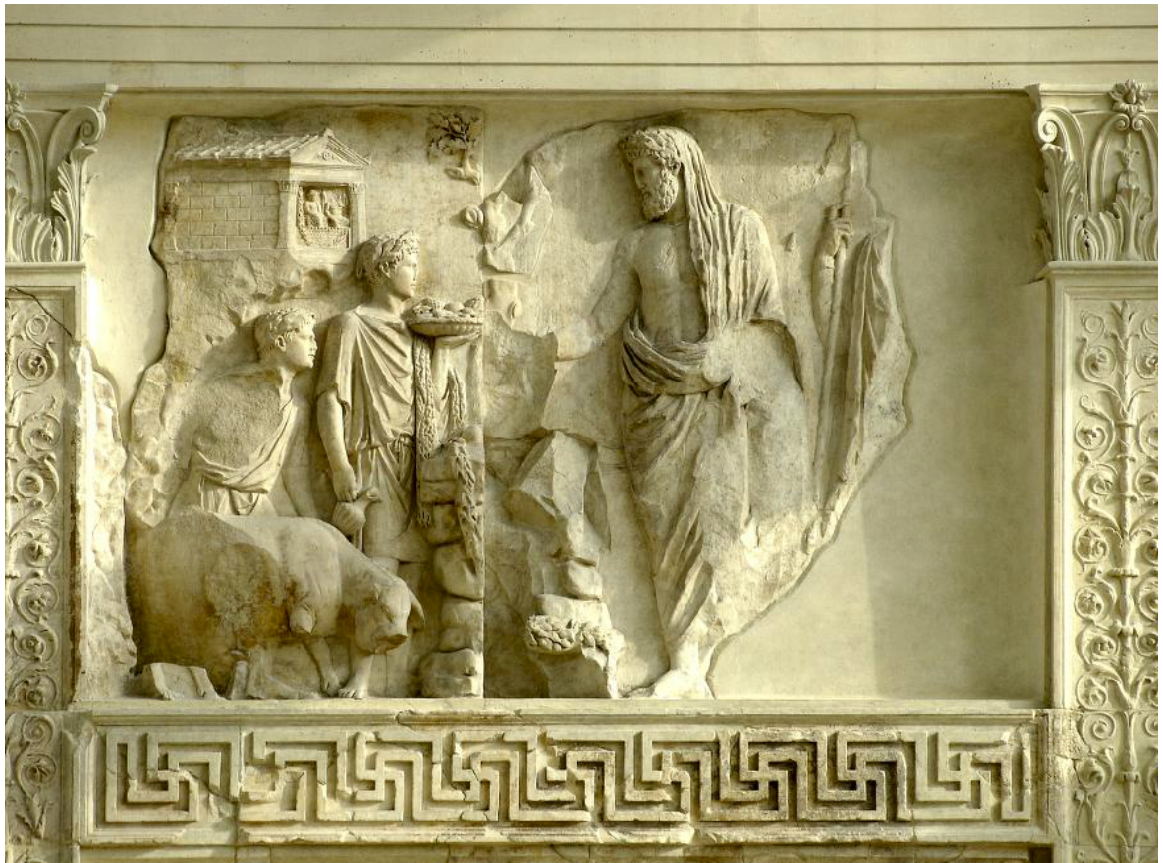


Figure 12: Numa sacrificing at the altar, relief from the southwest corner of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, 13-9 BCE. (Photo: Charles Rhyne, <http://cdm.reed.edu/ara-pacis/altar/front-entrance-west/numa-aeneas-1/>)



Figure 13: Pax Augusta, relief from the southeast corner of the *Ara Pacis Augustae*, 13-9 BCE. (Photo: Charles Rhyne, <http://cdm.reed.edu/ara-pacis/altar/back-entrance-east/pax-tellus-venus-1/>)



Figure 14: Augustan silver krater from the Hildesheim Treasure (After Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1990, fig. 144)

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BIOGRAPHY

Alexandra Endres graduated from Potomac Falls High School, Sterling, Virginia, in 2008. She received her Bachelor of Arts in Art History and Classical Civilization from the College of William & Mary in 2012. She currently teaches pre-kindergarten in Washington, DC.