

CHAPTER 4

The making of Oriental Rome: shaping the Trojan legend

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In the history of cultures claims of universalism have been inflationary for millennia, notably in the fields of religion, philosophy and politics. Looking from this perspective on imperial Rome we are faced by a plethora of claims, statements and practices such as supreme military, matchless finances and unrivalled infrastructure, power of human resources and multi-ethnic cultures, global politics and universal imagery and architecture, boundless lands, flexible ideologies and adaptable religions. For the purpose of this chapter I am interested in three issues: (1) Rome's claim to dominate the world; (2) Rome's ambivalent habit to read Roman as an equivalent of 'world' and, at the same time, to focus intensively on the non-Roman; (3) the distinctive role of Roman imagery as a high-register narrative which globally and persistently refuelled the debate about what 'Roman' was. A good starting point for embarking on concepts of universalism in (early) imperial Rome are the *fasti*, an exceptional poem about the Roman festival calendar composed by the Augustan poet Ovid (43 BC – c. AD 17/18). Significant here is what the poet tells us about the *terminalia*, a festival celebrated on 23 February to worship the god Terminus. Towards the end he writes:

Est via quae populum Laurentes ducit in agros,
quondam Dardanio regna petita duci:
illa lanigeri pecoris tibi, Termine, fibris
sacra videt fieri sextus ab Urbe lapis.
Gentiū est aliis tellus data limite certo,
Romanae spatium est urbis et orbis idem.

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There is a road that takes people to the Laurentine fields,
to the kingdom once sought by the Dardanian chieftain (Aeneas):
on that road the sixth milestone from the City bears witness
to the sacrifice of a woolly sheep's entrails to you, Terminus.
To other people land may be given with a fixed limit.
But the space of the city of Rome and the world is one.¹

With this statement Ovid addresses my first issue. Terminus was a Roman god whose name literally means "boundary stone". He was the god worshipped to protect regional boundary markers but, in a wider sense, also to keep vigil over Rome's cultivated universe, Vergil's famous *imperium sine fine*.² For Ovid the city's claim to dominate the world was, in contrast to the fixed limit of *externae gentes*, beyond debate as it followed Augustan cosmology and Roman sacrificial law. After all, the Roman Empire was never ideologically conceived by its rulers and inhabitants as a territory within fixed limits.³ But the poet extends this ideology further when he links the equation of *urbis* and *orbis* to another claim of Rome, her lineage from Troy through Aeneas.⁴ In doing so Ovid interweaves two main ideologies of imperial Rome: the Trojan descent of the city and her right to have possession of the world. Rome's purported ancestry from Troy highlights my second issue. The poet grounds the above claims in Roman religion and the city's legendary non-Roman origin. Integrating the non-Roman in Rome marked a vital point in the debate about the city's fabled past. It was a debate which commenced in Rome long ago, centuries before the period of Augustus.⁵ Here my third and key issue comes into play, the role of Rome's universal imagery. I am especially curious about its role within the global yet contradictory debate about what Roman and non-Roman essentially meant. Here I shall focus primarily on Roman portrayals of Asian strangers.⁶ I will show how they mediated and contributed to Rome's universalistic ideology of descending from Troy and ruling the world. What is the wider context of these claims?

In the aftermath of the Persian Wars a powerful rhetoric surfaced in Classical Athens and became a crucial factor in the political debate of the West – the rhetoric of Orientalism. This rhetoric provided all the

¹ Ovid, *Fasti* 2.679–84 (ed. M. Robinson, Oxford 2010; with commentary). For the wider context of this debate, see the excellent study of Whittaker 1994: 10–30.

² Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.279 (ed. R. A. B. Mynors, Oxford 1969); see below note 61.

³ Whittaker 1994; Schneider 1997 (imagery of *urbis* et *orbis*).

⁴ Horsfall 1987; Gruen 1990: 6–51; Rose 2008: 97–102; Dardenay 2010. ⁵ Flaig 1999: 84–95.

⁶ The Roman portrayals in question show only figures in Eastern Asian dress; hence, I call them 'Asians'. The more general (and loaded) notion 'Oriental' refers to all peoples of the East – inter alia also Egyptians who, when depicted in Roman imagery at all, were shown in a different iconography.

ingredients needed to articulate universalistic claims, and steadily gained in importance. By the time of Cicero the terms *oriens* and *occidens* had become two metaphors with which to describe the world.⁷ Cicero concluded that among the territorial powers of the East and the West the gods favoured Rome first, followed by Athens, Sparta and Rhodes, as all of them possessed parts of Europe, Asia and Africa. This is an unashamedly one-sided view of the world. Rome is labelled as the only superpower of both the eastern and the western parts of the world. Parthia and Egypt are not even credited with a mention. Such concentration of power in the West is based on a rhetoric of Orientalism which became, by the blessing of the gods, influential beyond the universe of ancient Rome. In recent times the challenging study of Edward Said has rekindled a wide controversy around the rhetoric of Orientalism.⁸ My interest in the visual side of this rhetoric has shown me how much supposed dichotomies such as Occident and Orient, Roman and barbarian, friend and foe have biased the perception of today's politics.⁹ It is necessary to overcome such dichotomies which have coloured the very fabric of Western thought both in writing and in imagery.¹⁰ I only give one example. Despite the disparities between ancient and modern civilisations, both cultures have used clothing to distinguish between different cultural bodies. From antiquity to the present day, dress codes have played a key role in underpinning ideological contrasts between the peoples of the East and the West.¹¹ Yet, ironically, today's formal Western dress, long trousers and a long-sleeved jacket with a V-neck opening, follows not the classical tradition of Greece and Rome but the Asian style. This is obvious if we look at the bronze statue of a Parthian chieftain from the Iranian site Shami, usually dated to the first century BC or AD (fig. 4.1).¹²

In paving the way for a more nuanced reading of Rome's universalistic claims I want to show how, in my own field of ancient Greek and Roman art, imagery addresses and transforms Eastern cultures, and, in turn, is affected by them. But what are the qualities which distinguish the image from the text? Almost every text, regardless of whether it is told, sung or written, employs and stimulates a great variety of images oscillating between

⁷ Cicero, *De natura deorum* 2.164–5 (ed. P. G. Walsh, Oxford 1997).

⁸ Said 1978; Fisch 1984; Hentsch 1988; Shichiji 1991; Mackenzie 1995; Sardar 1999; Bohrer 2003; Wiesehöfer 2006; Varisco 2007; Warraq 2007; Parker 2008.

⁹ Schneider 2007: 50–3 fig. 1.

¹⁰ For Western categories of cultural asymmetries, Koselleck 1975. More open readings able to accept (ideological) ambiguities and contradictions, Hartog 1980; Stevens 1994: 64–7 (on C. G. Jung's concept of 'shadow'); Wiesehöfer 2006; Schneider 2007; Parker 2008; Hardie 2009; Heitz 2009; Woolf 2011.

¹¹ Flügel 1930; Eicher 1995. For Greek and Roman dress codes, Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 38–57.

¹² Mathiesen 1992: 166–7 no. 80; Invernizzi 2001: 230 colour plate; Landskron 2005: 95–6.



Fig. 4.1 Parthian chieftain wearing an Asian trouser-suit. Bronze (h. 1.94 m). From Shami (Khuzestan). First century BC/AD.

mental, verbal, physical, individual, collective, religious and ideological imaginations. Vice versa, the process of designing and reading images requires the faculty of language, although exceptions are possible. But, unlike a text, an image provides different qualities with which to stimulate social communication.¹³ This is already inherent in the different ways images and texts are perceived. The reader normally needs the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to understand a text whereas the viewer can get the 'picture' without the knowledge of iconographic conventions. The Western reader is trained to read the text from left to right and line by line. The viewer, however, cannot do the same with an image. Unlike reading, viewing creates not systematic but random patterns of eye movement.¹⁴ Moreover, the reader knows, at least on a formal level, where the text starts and when it is at an end. The viewer, however, is at a loss if asked to do the same with an image. As a result, viewing an image is an infinite process despite the image's formal confines. This is one of the reasons why the viewer links with the image the quality of ambiguous subjective and collective readings. Such ambiguity, however, does not necessarily exclude the acknowledgment of intentional meaning. On the contrary, the intentional meaning of an image can be efficiently supported by a wide, even a contradictory spectrum of possible associations. The infinite process of viewing is linked to another distinctive quality of the image, its power to stimulate suggestiveness. An image can both catch the viewer's attention in a fraction of a second and stamp itself on his mind forever. Consequently, the image promotes per se more open, suggestive and diverse readings than the text. Owing to its distinct mediation of a reality, the image provides a differently coloured view on religious, social, emotional, ideological and universal issues than the text. With this in mind I return to Rome.

Imperial Rome was rife with non-Roman cultures. Rome used victories over non-Romans to legitimise imperial power. Rome claimed to rule the world. Rome integrated a wide range of different civilisations and ethnicities.¹⁵ And Rome communicated with people beyond the *orbis Romanus*.¹⁶ An empire of this diversity needed icons and rituals capable of being widely adopted.¹⁷ One way Rome took to shape such icons was to

¹³ Mitchell 1986; Smith 2002; Giuliani 2003: 9–19; 2006, 185–92; Squire 2009.

¹⁴ Giuliani 2003: 27–9 figs. 1–2b.

¹⁵ 'Foreignness' at Rome, Noy 2000. For Roman culture and the manifold debates about the notion of culture, Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 3–37.

¹⁶ Recent studies on Rome's relations with non-Romans, Mattern 1999; Ferris 2000; Burns 2003; Woolf 2011.

¹⁷ Similar Beard 1994: 185–7.

establish stereotyped images of non-Romans. The majority of these images portrayed non-Romans with two different Romanised dress codes, dividing more or less the peoples of the North and those of the East.¹⁸ The most popular portrayal of a non-Roman was the Asian. The Roman portrayal of the Asian reflects primarily the ambiguous ways used by Rome to represent herself to a global public.

Two different but interrelated Roman stereotypes of the Asian can be identified. Both were introduced into Roman imagery under Augustus. One is the portrayal of the bearded Parthian. The other is the portrayal of the handsome Asian employed to represent every figure of the Asian East, mythical and historical alike. My focus is on the latter. Above all I am interested in the early imperial portrayals of handsome Trojan princes, Rome's alleged Oriental forefathers. Their portrayals address Rome's claim to rule the world in unprecedented sophistication. This leads me to a series of questions. By whom, how and when were the portrayals of the handsome Trojan conceptualised, set up and read in Rome? And how did their portrayals contribute to the making of Oriental Rome and her claim to universal power? Before I can pursue these questions, however, I need to outline the historical context in which the Roman imagery of the Asian Oriental took shape.

THE BEARDED PARTHIAN: PORTRAYING THE ENEMY

Official relations between Rome and Parthia started late, with a treaty of *amicitia* in 96 BC.¹⁹ This situation changed when the Roman general Marcus Licinius Crassus attacked the Parthians in the winter of 55/54 BC. After the disastrous defeat of Crassus and the loss of his entire army in 53 BC, Caesar propagated the ideology of revenge on the Parthians, but did not initiate war.²⁰ In 20 BC, by exerting diplomatic and military pressure on Parthia, Augustus succeeded in recovering well over 100 Roman standards and thousands of captive Romans. Although it had been achieved through diplomacy, the so-called settlement of the Parthian question was marked in the public media of Rome as Augustus' greatest victory, as the final military legitimation of his new imperial rule.²¹ Portrayals throughout

¹⁸ For Roman imagery of (northern) non-Romans, Schneider 1992a; Zanker 2000: 410–19; Krieger 2004; Heitz 2009.

¹⁹ Sonnabend 1986: 159–227; Campbell 1993: 213–28; Wheeler 2002; Brosius 2006: 92–101.

²⁰ See below note 83.

²¹ Schneider 1986: 29–97, 114–20, 128–30; Sonnabend 1986: 197–221; Campbell 1993: 220–8; Rich 1998; Landskron 2005: 102–51; Rose 2005; Schneider 2007: 54–61, 70–5.

the Roman Empire propagated the Parthian settlement as the ultimate triumph of the Roman West over the peoples of the East, and as one of the greatest achievements of Augustan foreign policy. Consequently, Parthia constituted the only other enemy superpower next to Rome, and was perceived as such.²²

The first Roman portrayals of the Parthian emerged in the aftermath of Rome's widely adopted self-aggrandisement.²³ The most famous example is the Prima Porta statue of Augustus found north of Rome in the villa of the emperor's wife Livia (fig. 4.2).²⁴ The statue can be dated around 17 BC. The two main figures on the richly decorated cuirass are depicted in the centre: a Parthian is presenting a Roman military standard to a military representative of Rome (fig. 4.3). The two interacting figures are surrounded by a circle of non-interacting figures highlighting geographic, cosmic and divine claims of imperial Rome. The two main figures, however, are portrayed in asymmetry. On the left, and larger in size, we see the cuirassed representative of Rome from a side view (probably Mars Ultor), extending his right hand as if to demand or receive the standard. On the right, the Parthian, smaller in size and largely viewed from the front, gazes up towards the Roman eagle.²⁵ This depiction is the most detailed portrayal of a bearded Parthian in Roman imagery. The Parthian is dressed in long trousers, a belted V-neck tunic with long sleeves and soft shoes. The dress and physiognomy of the Parthian became stereotypes deployed by Roman workshops to portray people of the Asian East generically.²⁶ Distinctively Parthian is the V-neck tunic, which is widely attested in Parthian imagery (fig. 4.1).²⁷

THE HANDSOME ASIAN: PORTRAYING FRIEND AND FOE

More suggestive and ambiguous, however, is the portrayal of the handsome Asian. It was introduced into Roman imagery on the return of the Roman standards by the Parthians in 20 BC.²⁸ Initially shaped in Classical Athens around 520 BC, this image constituted the Greek stereotype of any

²² For a comparison of the two superpowers, Howard-Johnston 1995; Wiesehöfer 2003, who is also discussing the ideological preconceptions of such a comparison; Schneider 2007: 54–61, 70–5.

²³ Potential portrayals of Parthians in Rome before the age of Augustus, Schneider 1998: 95.

²⁴ Boschung 1993: 179–81 no. 171 (bibliography); Wiesehöfer 2002; McEwan 2003: 250–75; Landskron 2005: 103–6 pl. 19; Bradley 2009a: 447–50.

²⁵ Rose (2005: 25–6), however, has proposed identifying the representative of Rome not as Mars Ultor, the Avenger (*opinio communis*) but as the goddess Roma because of the Attic helmet, the 'female' tufts of hair which escape from the helmet, the 'female' anatomy of the body and the dog.

²⁶ Schneider 2007: 54–60. ²⁷ See above note 12.

²⁸ Schneider 1986; Landskron 2005: 57–92; Schneider 2007: 60–80.



Fig. 4.2 Cuirass of a statue of Augustus (detail). White marble (h. 2.06 m). From the imperial villa of Livia at Prima Porta, north of Rome. c. 17 BC.

handsome youth from the Asian East (fig. 4.4).²⁹ Taken up by workshops first in Classical Italy and then in Augustan Rome it became the most

²⁹ Vos 1963; Raeck 1981: 10–66; Miller 1997; Ivantchik 2005 (who appropriately has questioned the close traditional reading of the Easterners as ‘Scythians’ portrayed on numerous Attic pots).



Fig. 4.3 Parthian presenting a Roman military standard to a representative of Rome.
Detail of the statue of Augustus (see fig. 4.2).

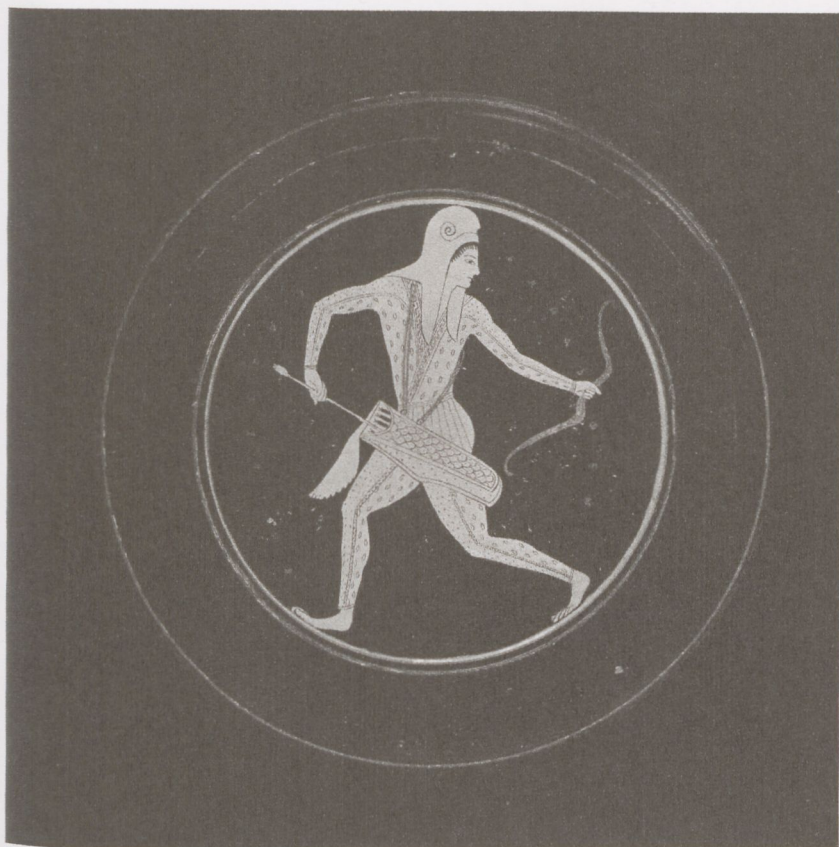


Fig. 4.4 Archer in Asian dress. Attic red-figure plate signed by the painter Epiktetos (dm. 19.4 cm). From Vulci. c. 520 BC.

successful ancient icon of the Asian.³⁰ In contrast to the stereotype of the bearded Parthian (fig. 4.3), the handsome Asian has a clean-shaven face framed by long coiffeured hair and crowned by the Phrygian cap.³¹ A typical Roman portrayal of the handsome Oriental is the painting of handsome Mithras made around AD 170 for the Mithraeum of Marino near Rome (fig. 4.5).³² The god wears a double-belted tunic with long sleeves, a flowing mantle, long trousers and soft shoes. In short, the handsome Asian is distinguished by youthful beauty, rich dress and intensive colour. His

³⁰ Italic forerunners, Kossatz-Deissmann 1994: 181, 187–8 no. 57 pl. 120; Simon 2001: 154–62.

³¹ For the Phrygian cap, see below notes 126 and 128.

³² Vermaseren 1982; Ghini 1994; Mielsch 2001: 176–7 (dating).



Fig. 4.5 Mithras in Asian dress subdues the bull. Wall painting of the Mithraeum in Marino near Rome (h. 1.80 m, w. 2.50 m). Second half of the second century AD.

historical or rather mythical identity can be revealed through attributes, clothing and/or context. Such a visual stereotype made it possible to represent all the people of the Asian East as uniform and thus essentially the same: whether past or present, personifications of cities or territories as well as cosmic, mythical or divine figures, they could all be depicted by the same portrayal.

The ambiguity of the handsome Asian is clearly seen in Roman portrayals of Oriental cup-bearers, which often decorated the legs of marble tables in Roman villas.³³ A fine example is the marble figure found in the Casa del Camillo in Pompeii, and thus made before AD 79 (fig. 4.6).³⁴ The figure portrays a luxury-class slave from the Asian East: young, beautiful,

³³ Schneider 1992b; 2007: 61–2 fig. 11 (small stone figure of a Parthian servant with jug and wine ladle, found in Palmyra).

³⁴ Dwyer 1982: 64–5 pl. 21 fig. 80; Schneider 1992b: 303–4 fig. 5; Pugliesi Carratelli 1997: 540–64 (Casa del Camillo, VII.12.22–27, room 'e').

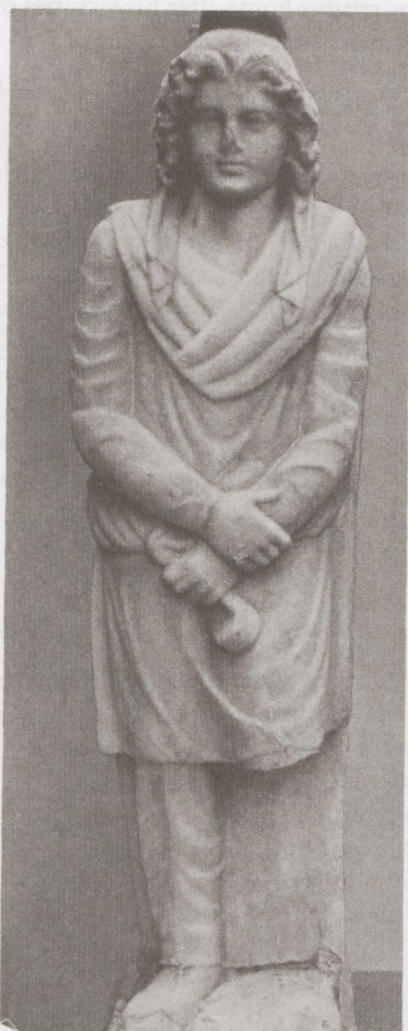


Fig. 4.6 Servant in Asian dress holding a wine ladle. Decor of a table leg. White marble (h. 0.74 m). From Pompeii, Casa del Camillo (VII.12.22–27, room “e”).
c. AD 50–70.

clean-shaven and in Asian dress. The wine ladle in his left hand identifies him as a cup-bearer who is depicted in the act of waiting for orders. In an ode dedicated to Agrippa’s steward Iccius in 25 BC, the Augustan poet Horace emphasised the appeal of exotic Asian cup-bearers to the Roman elite. The poet revels in the alluring prospect of wealth and a luxurious

life-style when Iccius returns home after his victories over the Arabs, over the Parthians and perhaps even over the Chinese:

What page from (Asian) court with scented locks
will be set to offer you wine with a ladle?³⁵

In Rome, the portrayal of the Asian cup-bearer with a wine ladle was closely related to that of the Trojan prince Ganymede, the most beautiful cup-bearer of all.³⁶ To highlight the (sexual) beauty of his body he was traditionally shown naked except for a short mantle and the Phrygian cap.³⁷ Just like the figures of Asian cup-bearers, marble sculptures of Ganymede often served in Roman villas as table legs.³⁸ The handsome Trojan prince is usually accompanied by a huge eagle, recalling his abduction to Olympus by Zeus and his eternal fate to serve wine to the gods. Zeus' Trojan cup-bearer was the mythical archetype of the historical slave cup-bearer from the Asian East. Both cup-bearers alike betoken the ability of the Roman elite to command all the resources of the empire in the endlessly enjoyable task of projecting and maintaining their rank.³⁹

HANDSOME TROJANS AT SPERLONGA

More complex issues are at stake if we look at the stately villa at Sperlonga, situated on the Campanian coast about 70 miles south of Rome (fig. 4.7).⁴⁰ Here, in the seawater pool right at the large cavern's entrance, a great number of sculptural fragments were found.⁴¹ Put together again they show an exceptional statue of Ganymede held in the clutches of Jupiter's huge eagle (fig. 4.8).⁴² Made in the age of Augustus, it is the earliest known Roman portrayal of the handsome Trojan prince.⁴³ It is also the only

³⁵ Horace, *carmen* 1.29.7–8 (ed. F. von Klingner, Leipzig 1959): *puer quis ex aula capillis / ad cyathum statuatur unctis*.

³⁶ Sichtermann 1988; Schwarzenberg 2001/2; Turnheim 2004. Genealogy of Ganymede, Scheer 1997: 318.

³⁷ For a Trojan reading of the Phrygian cap, see below notes 126 and 128.

³⁸ Neudecker 1988: 46–7; Schneider 1992b. Handsome imperial slaves and cup-bearers wearing long hair and called Ganymede, Martial, *Epigrams* 9.16, 22, 25, 36, 103 (ed. D. R. Shackleton Bailey, Leipzig 1990); Cain 1993: 86–7.

³⁹ Bourdieu 1974: 159–201.

⁴⁰ For the villa, Iacopi 1963: 1–24; Neudecker 1988: 220–3; Cassieri 2000: 12–56.

⁴¹ Iacopi 1963: 22 fig. 20; 114: 'fuori della grotta e della piscina circolare, all'imboccatura della prima'.

⁴² Iacopi 1963: 22, 114–17; Schneider 1986: 154 note 1166 pl. 24; Andreae 1995: 115–34; Cassieri 2000: 145–7.

⁴³ The style of Ganymede has been disputed. For an Augustan dating, Schneider 1992b: 301; Andreae 1995: 116–24. For the traditional dating in the later first century AD, Iacopi 1963: 117; Cassieri 2000: 146–7.

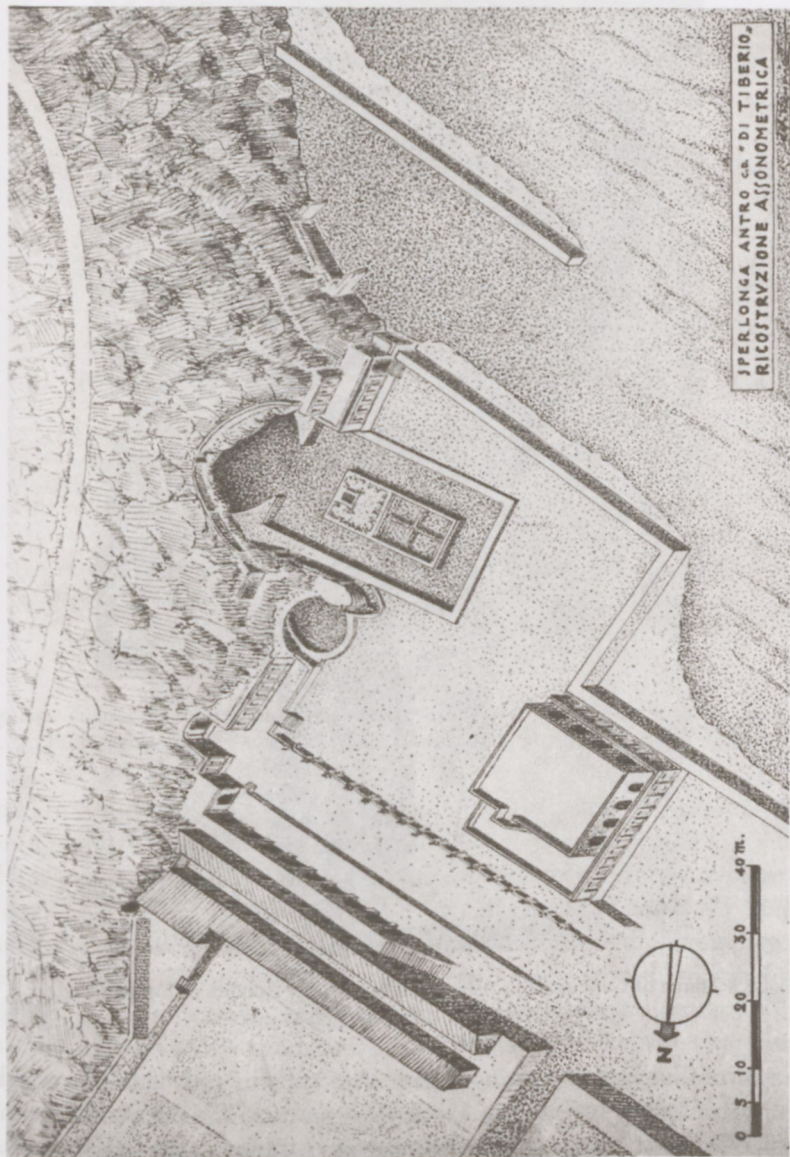


Fig. 4-7 Cavern and artificial dining island of the stately villa at Sperlonga (reconstruction). Early first century AD.



Fig. 4.8 Statue of Ganymede in Asian dress held in the clutches of Jupiter's eagle.
Phrygian marble (h. 2.25 m). c. 20 BC–AD 10.

portrayal of Ganymede wearing Asian dress and the only one portrayed larger than life and sculpted in exotic Phrygian (= Trojan) marble from Anatolia.⁴⁴ The statue was erected above the entrance to the large cavern. The latter was part of the villa's dining room set up on an artificial island and built to face the cavern's entrance. The statue's plinth was specially

⁴⁴ See below notes 124 and 126.

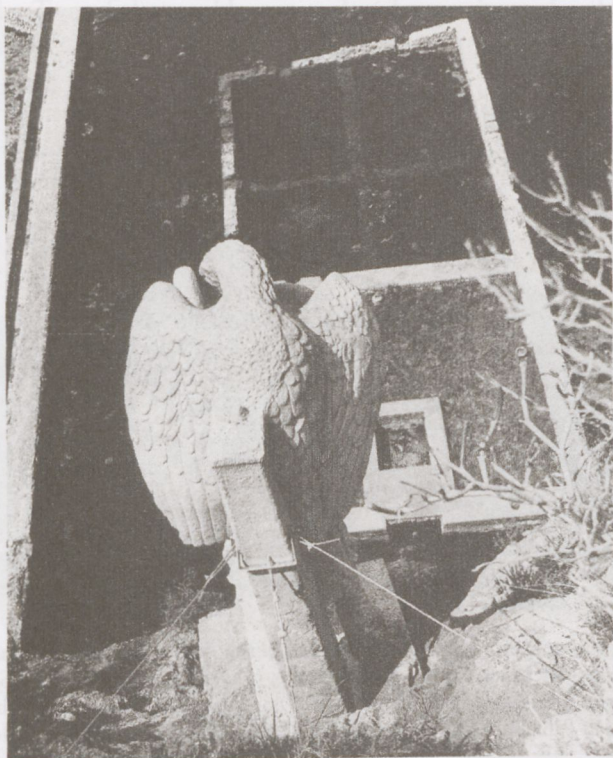


Fig. 4.9 Original setting of Ganymede at Sperlonga erected above the cavern's entrance on a plinth specially fitted into the rock (reconstruction) about 20 m above sea level.

fitted into the rock, and so occupied a spectacular setting overlooking the sea (fig. 4.9).⁴⁵ For ultimate effect the back of the statue is fixed to a pillar, which is askew. This allows Ganymede to lean forwards at an angle of 7 degrees. Placing the weighty statue of Ganymede in this lofty height alone was a powerful demonstration of what Roman elite members were able to achieve. Giving every appearance of having arrived straight from Olympus, the statue was designed to combine privileged workmanship and setting with a new interpretation of Roman Orientalism. Ganymede here is not small but larger than life, he is displayed not indoors but as a landmark outside and appears not naked but in rich Trojan dress. And Ganymede here is made not of monochrome stone but of polychrome

⁴⁵ Andreae (1995: 118–23 figs. 56–63; 126–7, 142 fig. 87) and Cassieri (2000: 52–3) pinpointed this location *contra* the formerly suggested position to the right of the cavern's entrance (Neudecker 1988: 223).

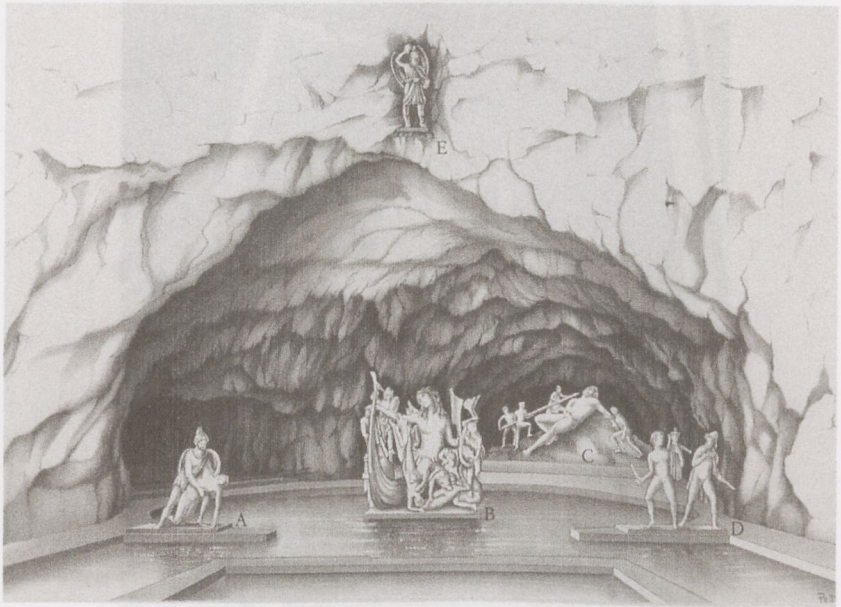


Fig. 4.10 Cavern at Sperlonga with five marbles of the Augustan period (reconstruction): (A) Homeric hero rescues his dead comrade, (B) Odysseus' fight against Scylla, (C) Odysseus' blinding of Polyphemus, (D) Diomedes and Odysseus with the taken Trojan Palladium, (E) Ganymede held in the clutches of Jupiter's eagle.

marble from his Phrygian homeland in Anatolia. In contrast the head and the left hand were carved separately in white marble and then attached to the body; originally the head may have been painted.⁴⁶

The outstanding concept and context of the statue demanded wide-ranging readings. The statue is, in fact, the only known depiction of Ganymede as distinctively Trojan.⁴⁷ Placed to be seen from far away, the Trojan prince became the Roman villa's very signature. Thus he was irrevocably linked to four over-life-sized 'Trojan' marble groups arranged, around the time of Augustus, inside the cavern (fig. 4.10).⁴⁸ Staged between rocks and seawater the four marbles portrayed incidents selected from the

⁴⁶ For unknown reasons (different workshops and/or production dates?) style and proportions of Ganymede's head differ from the body. Note two further irregularities: (1) the head's findspot does not seem to be recorded; (2) both the head and its Phrygian cap are carved in white marble although the cap would have been made of Phrygian marble as is the body (this is the case with the statues of Asians found in the Basilica Paulli, see note 104).

⁴⁷ Roman portrayals of Trojans in Oriental dress, Grassinger 1999: 57–63, 207–9 nos. 34–40; Rose 2005: 34, 44.

⁴⁸ Conticello, Andreae and Bol 1974; Kunze 1996: 159–223 (dating); Andreae 1999: 177–223; 2001: pls. 98–102; Weis 2000; Squire 2009: 202–38.

epic cycle. Two of the marbles were placed opposite each other and next to the cavern's entrance: on the north side a group showing two Homeric heroes one of whom rescues the dead body of his comrade (the question of whether these are Greeks or Trojans is disputed); on the south side Diomedes' and Odysseus' theft of the sacred Palladium, the Trojan symbol of Rome's claim to eternal power. The Trojan Palladium was a small statue of an armed Athena which Aeneas in a competing version of the legend was said to have carried out of Troy and later to have brought to Latium and Rome.⁴⁹ The two other groups are colossal in size and portray Odysseus fighting two monsters. The one group showing Odysseus' blinding of Polyphemus was displayed in the cavern's back grotto as an allusion to the giant's own cave. The other group showing Odysseus' fight against Scylla's dreadful attack on his ship was placed right in the cavern's midst and was allusively surrounded by seawater. Loaded with the Augustan ideology of Rome's Trojan descent, the four sculptural dramas associated the fall of Troy with the rise of Rome. Transformed into three-dimensional marbles, the epic sculptures stimulated endless options of entertainment. Depending on the interest and sentiment of the viewer he could read the sculptures over and over again, debating the manifold relations between image and text, myth and history, heroes and men, narrative and ideology, style and technique, and the like. As a result, the owner(s) of the villa claimed that the epic cycle was part of the very history of Rome – and that the selected narratives in marble were shaped, staged and interpreted in a way only the Roman elite was able to accomplish. Hence, in Sperlonga the stories of Rome's alleged Trojan past stimulated the production of some of the most remarkable and meaningful visual narratives of the epic cycle. As a Trojan, Ganymede was a mythic forefather of the Romans and, especially, of the imperial Julian family. As an Asian servant on Olympus, however, he embodied the debt owed by Eastern cultures to the Roman elite. The statue at Sperlonga neatly unites in one and the same portrayal the paradoxical themes of nobility and servitude, Roman and Asian. This makes the Ganymede at Sperlonga a case in point, a potent visual manifesto of the universalistic claims with which Rome's elite propagated its heritage of and supremacy over Asia.⁵⁰ These claims were later taken up by Ilium, the Roman town near Troy. The city's mint struck coins with portraits of

⁴⁹ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 1.68–69 (ed. V. Fromentin and J.-H. Sautel, Paris 1998); Pausanias, *Description of Greece* 2.23.5 (ed. D. Musti and M. Torelli, Milan 1986).

⁵⁰ The textual evidence, the intricacy of the marble narratives and their settings at Sperlonga do not support Bernhard Andreae's mono-causal reading of the villa as the property of the emperor Tiberius, and the sculptures as a mere manifesto of a supposed Tiberian ideology. To my mind the question of the ownership of the villa remains open; see Neudecker 1988: 221.



Fig. 4.11 Bust of a handsome youth in Asian dress. White marble (h. 0.93 m). Found 1898 south of the cavern's entrance at Sperlonga. Second quarter second century AD.

Hadrian, Marcus Aurelius and Commodus on the reverse but portrayals of Ganymede held by Zeus' eagle on the obverse.⁵¹

The ongoing interest in Troy at Sperlonga is shown by two almost identical marble busts of handsome Asians now in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen (figs. 4.11 and 4.12).⁵² The busts were found in 1898 immediately south of the cavern's entrance (fig. 4.7).⁵³ Next to their findspot

⁵¹ Bellinger 1961: 47–63 nos. T136 (Hadrian), T149 (Marcus Aurelius), T186–T187 (Commodus), T209, T211, T213 (without an emperor's portrayal, second century AD).

⁵² Patroni 1898; Spagnolis 1983; Fejfer 2005.

⁵³ For the findspot, Spagnolis 1983: 78: 'a Sperlonga furono rinvenuti, nel 1898, sul lato destro (guardando) della grotta di Tiberio'.



Fig. 4.12 Bust of a handsome youth in Asian dress. White marble (h. 0.95 m). Found 1898 together with the bust shown in fig. 4.11. Second quarter second century AD.

the remains of three brick columns had been unearthed, all facing the sea.⁵⁴ Originally the columns may have served as pedestals for the busts.⁵⁵ The evidence of at least three columns might indicate even a gallery of such busts. However, what are the facts? Both busts are larger than life, measuring 95 cm and 93 cm in height respectively. Both busts are unique as they show handsome Asians with beautiful long locks. Both wear a

⁵⁴ Spagnolis 1983: 78: 'poco discosto, dove furono trovati i busti, abbiamo rinvenuto le basi di tre colonne ben conservate, ma di materia laterizia. Erano, forse, dove poggiavano i busti.'

⁵⁵ (Freestanding) portrait busts, Fejfer 2008: 236–61.

Phrygian cap and a mantle only. And both busts can be dated stylistically around AD 140. Recently, Jane Fejfer recognised the implausibility of their conventional reading as Attis.⁵⁶ A more likely reading gains shape if we take the following issues into account: the specific iconography of the two Orientals, the function(s) of Roman busts, and the Trojan background of the marble groups displayed inside and on top of the cavern. Consequently, I suggest reading the two busts as portrayals of young handsome noble men in Trojan dress. Both busts are closely related to the statue of Trojan Ganymede (fig. 4.8), by their handsome faces, their beautiful locks and their Phrygian caps, and by their setting next to the cavern's entrance and their orientation towards the sea. Two different readings of the busts are equally sound, namely as Trojan princes *and* as Roman noble youths. The young sons of the highest-ranking Roman families used to present themselves in the Oriental costume of their Trojan forefathers when they participated in the Trojan games. The *lusus Troiae* was a mock battle on horseback which had been staged in the Circus Maximus throughout the Julio-Claudian period, from Augustus to Nero.⁵⁷ This reading might be supported by the dress of the two handsome youths as they are shown in a mantle but not in an Asian tunic with long sleeves. The two marble busts gave Rome's Trojan past a new Oriental face. This might also be true of a third head of a handsome Asian found in the villa, a marble herm which Bernhard Andreae believes portrays Iulus Ascanius.⁵⁸ From the mid second century onwards the viewer of the Trojan marbles at Sperlonga was confronted with a gallery of Roman busts portraying, from the retrospective point of historical narrative, young members of the Trojan-Roman elite in the dress code of the handsome Asian. As a result, his portrayal was made to coincide with the representations of both the princes of Troy and the *jeunesse dorée* of the Roman elite. Already by the time of Claudius (AD 41–54) long beautiful hair, originally a feature of handsome luxury-class slaves especially from the Asian East, can be found in portraits of young Roman males (fig. 4.13), who were for this very reason misguidedly taken for females.⁵⁹

HANDSOME TROJANS IN ROME

Classical scholars have given little attention to the extent to which the portrayal of the handsome Asian was used to represent Rome's engagement

⁵⁶ Fejfer 2005: 192. ⁵⁷ Fuchs 1990; Fortuin 1996: 80, 83, 88–91, 161–75; see below note 134.

⁵⁸ Iacopi 1963: 126–9 figs. 122–4; Andreae 1995: 124–5 figs. 64–7, 127; Spannagel 1999: 100 pl. II.

⁵⁹ Cain 1993: 80–8 pls. 43–6 (text fig. 13: 144 no. 23); Pollini 2004.



Fig. 4.13 Portrait of a handsome Roman male with a Nero-like coiffure and long locks. White marble (h. o.24 m). Of unknown provenance. Second half first century AD.

with Eastern cultures. This theme runs through the imagery of the most distinguished monuments set up in the Augustan city, e.g. the Ara Pacis Augustae, the Forum Augustum and the Basilica (Aemilia) Paulli, which adorned the north-east side of the Roman forum (fig. 4.14). A key role in representing Rome's Oriental face was given to the Trojan prince Iulus Ascanius, the son of Aeneas. According to Augustan writers, Aeneas, the son of Aphrodite, had saved his father Anchises and his son Ascanius when he abandoned burning Troy and so contributed to Rome's foundation.⁶⁰ In the first book of the *Aeneid* Vergil renamed Ascanius in order to relate him by name to Augustus and the Julian family. The wider context of Ascanius' renaming is the not yet fulfilled prophecy made by Jupiter to Venus. Here Augustus' future mission to conquer and civilise the world is ingrained in Rome's Trojan past:

⁶⁰ Rome's making of the Trojan legend, Zanker 1988: 201–10; Gruen 1992: 6–51; Spannagel 1999: 162–77; Erskine 2001; Mavrogiannis 2003: 15–83; Hölkeskamp 2004: 201–4; Burzacchini 2005; Dench 2005: 248–53; Walter 2006; Dardenay 2010; Woolf 2011: 41–3.



Fig. 4.14 Rome, model of the Augustan city (detail). AD 14.

His son Ascanius, whose surname is now Iulus,
 Iulus it was, before the realm of Ilium (= Troy) fell . . .
 He shall build Alba Longa to be strong . . .
 Until one day Ilia (Rhea Silvia), a priestess and Trojan queen,
 shall bear twin sons to Mars.
 Romulus, then, gay in the coat of the tawny she-wolf which suckled him,
 shall lead the people. He shall found the Mavortian walls (Rome)
 and call his people Romans, after his name.

To Romans I set no boundary in space or time,
 I have granted them dominion, and it has no end . . .
 From the fair seed of Troy there shall be born a Trojan Caesar (Augustus),

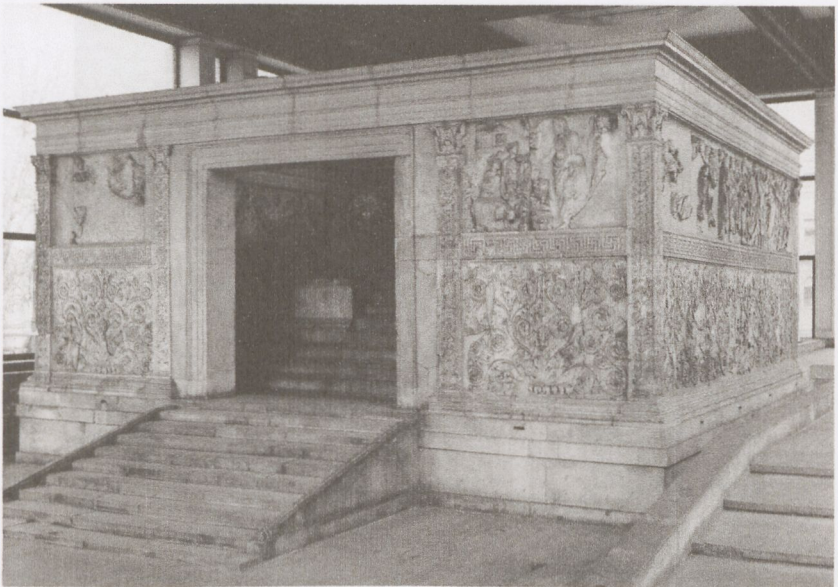


Fig. 4.15 Rome, Ara Pacis Augustae. Main entrance to the west. White marble (about 11 × 10 m). 13–9 BC.

Iulius, his name derived from great Iulus. Shall his empire reach to the ocean's limits, shall his fame end in the stars. Holding the trophies taken from the Orient anxious no more (Venus) because you once will welcome him into heaven.⁶¹

The Trojan Caesar to whom Jupiter granted *imperium sine fine* and who will hold the *spolia Orientis* is none other than Augustus. To him Iulus Ascanius had passed on the Trojan line. One of the first Roman portrayals showing Iulus Ascanius occurs on the frieze to the right of the main entrance to the Ara Pacis Augustae, which was dedicated in 9 BC (fig. 4.15).⁶² Outstanding in the richness and subtlety of its sculpted marble body, the Ara Pacis Augustae portrays the chief concerns of the Augustan order: Roman gods, sacrificial rituals, imperial processions, depictions of religious symbols and the fecundity of nature as a metaphor of Augustus'

⁶¹ Vergil, *Aeneid* 1.267–8, 271, 273–9, 286–90 (ed. Mynors): *at puer Ascanius, cui nunc cognomen Iulo / additur (Iulus erat, dum res stetit Ilia regno) / . . . et Longam multa vi munit Albam. / . . . donec regina sacerdos / Marte gravis geminam partu dabit Ilia prolem. / inde lupae fulvo nutricis tegmine laetus / Romulus excipiet gentem et Mavortia condet / moenia Romanosque suo de nomine dicet. / his ego nec metas rerum nec tempora pono / imperium sine fine dedi . . . / nascetur pulchra Troianus origine Caesar, / imperium Oceano, famam qui terminet astra, / Iulius, a magno demissum nomen Iulo. / hunc tu olim caelo spoliis Orientis onustum / accipies securus.*

⁶² Simon 1967; Castriota 1995; Torelli 1999; La Rocca 2002; Pollini 2002; Rossini 2006.



Fig. 4.16 Aeneas, behind him Iulus Ascanius (to the major part extant). Marble relief to the right of the main entrance of the Ara Pacis Augustae (see fig. 4.15). 13–9 BC.

Golden Age.⁶³ Despite the fragmentary state of the frieze and different suggestions of identification, it is clear that the person who stands to the right of (that is, behind) Aeneas is his son Iulus Ascanius (fig. 4.16).⁶⁴ On the Ara Pacis Augustae, Iulus Ascanius is portrayed smaller than Aeneas

⁶³ Wallace-Hadrill 2004.

⁶⁴ Weinstock 1960: 57; Simon 1967: 23–4 figs. 24–25, *contra* Tracy 1989 ‘Venus’ and Rose 2005 ‘Achates’.

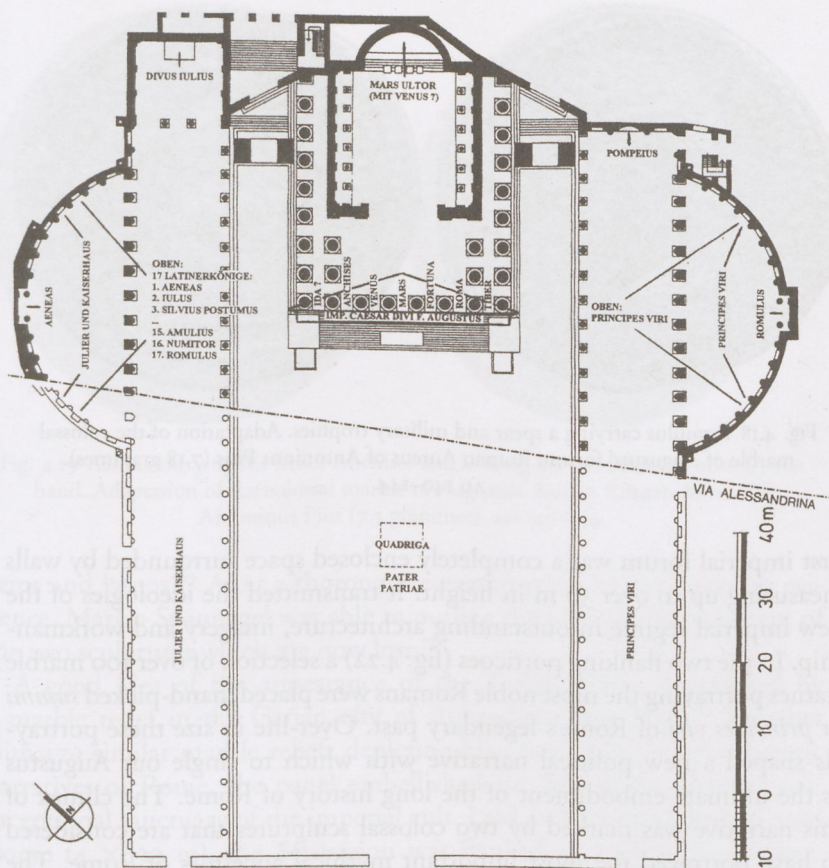


Fig. 4.17 Rome, Forum Augustum (plan). The south-western half is reconstructed hypothetically (l. about 125 m, w. about 118 m). Dedicated 2 BC.

but as an almost grown man holding a shepherd's crook. In contrast to the old-fashioned Roman toga of his father, the Trojan prince is depicted in a long-sleeved tunic, a mantle and, perhaps, long trousers.⁶⁵ His eastern origin would have been further coloured by the now lost paint of his Trojan dress.⁶⁶

However, the most influential portrayal of Iulus Ascanius was set up in Augustus' forum, officially opened to the public in 2 BC (fig. 4.17).⁶⁷ Rome's

⁶⁵ The visible remains do not clarify if Iulus Ascanius was shown in trousers or not.

⁶⁶ Colour reconstruction: www.arapacis.it/mostre_ed_eventi/eventi/i_colori_di_augusto (17 April 2011).

⁶⁷ Zanker 1969; Kockel 1995; Spannagel 1999; La Rocca 2001; Haselberger and Humphrey 2006: 127–30, 183–90; Ungaro 2007; Geiger 2008; Meneghini 2009: 59–78.



Fig. 4.18 Romulus carrying a spear and military trophies. Adaptation of the colossal marble of Augustus' forum. Roman Aureus of Antoninus Pius (7.18 grammes).

AD 140–144.

first imperial forum was a completely enclosed space surrounded by walls measuring up to over 30 m in height. It transmitted the ideologies of the new imperial regime in outstanding architecture, imagery and workmanship. In the two flanking porticoes (fig. 4.22) a selection of over 100 marble statues portraying the most noble Romans were placed, hand-picked *summi* or *principes viri* of Rome's legendary past. Over-life in size these portrayals shaped a new political narrative with which to single out Augustus as the ultimate embodiment of the long history of Rome. The climax of this narrative was marked by two colossal sculptures that are considered to have portrayed the most important mythical ancestors of Rome. The two marbles were placed facing one another in the central niches of the Forum's two flanking exedras: to the south, a statue of Romulus carrying a spear and the military trophies of Rome's glorious past, the *spolia opima* (fig. 4.18);⁶⁸ to the north, a group of three Trojans, Aeneas carrying his father Anchises (out of Troy) and leading his son Iulus Ascanius by the hand (fig. 4.19). The two marbles have not survived. Their general appearance is, however, attested by more than 160 adaptations, not only in sculpture (fig. 4.21) but also on mosaics, wall paintings, coins (figs. 4.18 and 4.19),

⁶⁸ The military trophies carried by Romulus are the *spolia opima*: armour, arms, and other effects that an ancient Roman general had stripped from the body of an opposing commander slain in single, hand-to-hand combat; after Romulus that had happened only twice in Rome's history (Spannagel 1999: 136–54, 224–55).



Fig. 4.19 Aeneas carrying his father Anchises and leading his son Iulus Ascanius by the hand. Adaptation of the colossal marble of Augustus' forum. Roman Aureus of Antoninus Pius (7.3 grammes). AD 140–144.

gems and lamps.⁶⁹ After a thorough re-examination of the surviving evidence, Martin Spannagel was able to outline the iconographic concept of the two sculptures which are now lost.⁷⁰

A good idea of the appearance of the Trojan group is provided by a marble relief in the Carian city of Aphrodisias (fig. 4.21).⁷¹ Together with 179 similar marble reliefs depicting historical, mythical and cosmic narratives of Rome, the panel embellished the Sebasteion, Aphrodisias' exceptional sanctuary of the imperial cult. Laid out as a monumental road (some 14 × 90 m), the Sebasteion was flanked on each side by three-storeyed portico buildings (fig. 4.20). The upper two storeys served as large screens to show off the relief panels, ninety on each side. The processional-cult complex of the Sebasteion was built around AD 20–60 and dedicated jointly to the city's Roman patron goddess Aphrodite and the Roman emperors. On the marble relief in Aphrodisias each of the three Trojans is given a different cultural body (fig. 4.21). Aeneas is depicted as a general in a historicised Hellenistic cuirass, only his old-fashioned beard identifying him as a mythical hero.⁷² His father Anchises is shown in a mixture of foreign and Greco-Roman dress, namely trousers, tunic and mantle. But Aeneas' son, Iulus Ascanius, is dressed entirely in the Asian fashion.⁷³ The

⁶⁹ Spannagel 1999: 365–400. ⁷⁰ Spannagel 1999: 86–161.

⁷¹ Smith 1987: 132–3 (location); Spannagel 1999: 371 no. A 17; Schneider 2007: 67–8 fig. 16.

⁷² Type of cuirass, Laube 2006: 117. ⁷³ Barchiesi 2005: 301–2.

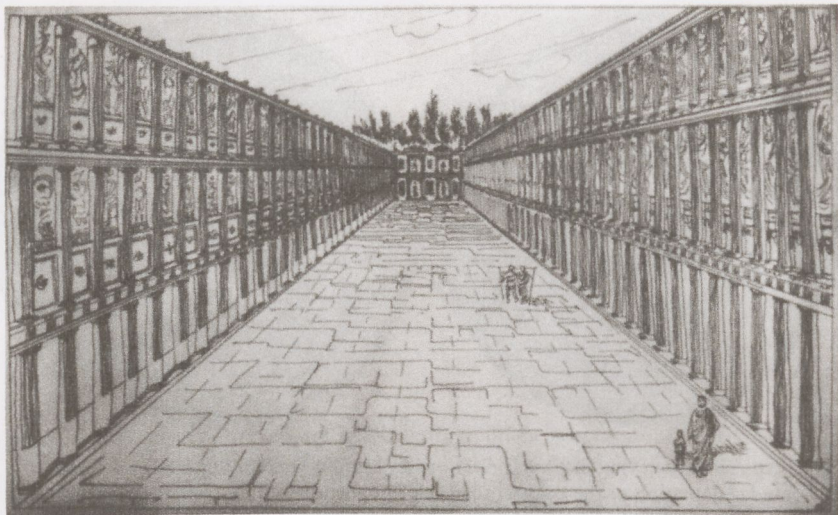


Fig. 4.20 Processional road of the imperial cult at Aphrodisias (reconstruction). The complex measures about 14 × 90 m. AD 20–60.

family group portraying the Westernised father, the Trojan grandfather and the Oriental son in dramatic action constitutes a most indicative icon of what Rome by genealogy and politics claimed to have achieved. The addition of Aeneas' mother Aphrodite serves to underline the unique bonds between Aphrodisias, Troy and Rome.⁷⁴

Members of the elite inside and outside of Rome chose the traditional stereotype of the handsome Asian to portray the youngest Trojan forefathers of Rome, Iulus Ascanius and Ganymede. The same costume was worn by Rome's noble youth when it publicly performed the equestrian mock-battle of the Trojan games which had been (re-)invented by Augustus.⁷⁵ According to Vergil, the Trojan games had been set up by Aeneas to celebrate the rescue of his father Anchises from Troy.⁷⁶ Augustus made a calculated political move when he staged the battle in Rome, especially in the world's largest arena, the Circus Maximus. He gave the old Roman custom of obligation between father and son a new Trojan foundation. Father and son, however, followed two different role models. On the one side there were the two father figures, the Trojan Aeneas and his Roman descendant Augustus, who were always shown in Westernised dress. On the other

⁷⁴ Chaisemartin 2001.

⁷⁵ Suetonius, *Divus Augustus* 43.2 (J. M. Carter, Bristol 1982); see above note 57.

⁷⁶ Vergil, *Aeneid* 5, 545–602 (ed. Mynors).



Fig. 4.21 Aeneas carrying his father Anchises and leading his son Iulus Ascanius by the hand (in the background Aphrodite). Adaptation of the colossal marble of Augustus' forum. Marble relief (h. about 1.6 m, w. about 1.6 m). From Aphrodisias, Sebasteion. AD 20–60.

side there were Trojan princes such as Iulus Ascanius, Ganymede and later Paris, as well as Rome's noble youth who were represented as handsome Asians. As a result, the Trojan East and the Roman West were brought together by the genealogical model of father and son. The new ideology of father and son culminated in Augustus' proclamation as *pater patriae* in 2 BC. In the widely distributed inscription of his *res gestae* Augustus comments:

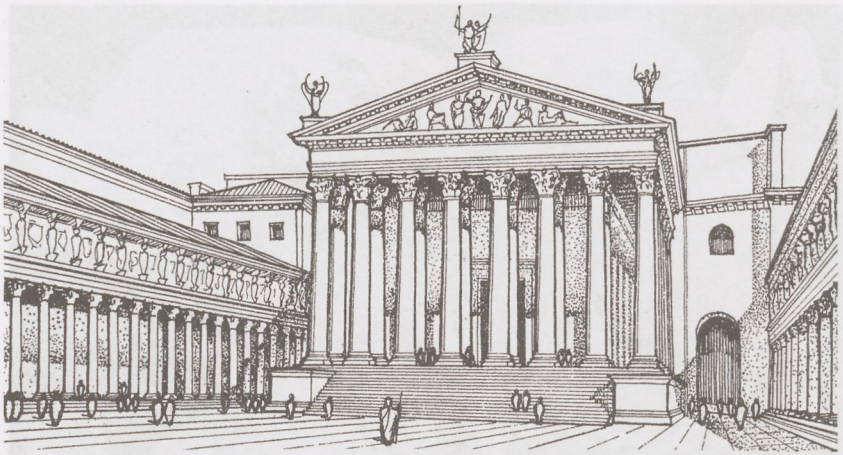


Fig. 4.22 Rome, Forum Augustum and temple of Mars Ultor (reconstruction). The temple measures about l. 52 m, w. 40 m, h. 36 m. Dedicated 2 bc.

The senate and the equestrian order and the whole people of Rome gave me the title 'Father of the Fatherland'; and they determined to place an appropriate inscription in the vestibule to my house, in the Curia Iulia (the senate house), and beneath the quadriga which the senate had erected to me in (my) forum.⁷⁷

Iulus became the Trojan prince on whom Rome's claim of imperial universalism depended. Together with his father Aeneas and later descendants of the legendary Trojan-Latin kings, Iulus was portrayed in a second marble statue set up in the northern exedra of Augustus' forum.⁷⁸ Here, Iulus was perhaps placed in the upper storey, above the colossal marble group showing Aeneas, Anchises and Iulus Ascanius (figs. 4.19 and 4.21). Although the statues of Rome's mythical ancestors are now lost, written and epigraphic evidence allows us to identify some of them, namely Aeneas, Iulus, Silvius Postumus, Amulius, Numitor and Romulus.

What is more, a third marble sculpture of Iulus Ascanius had been set up in Augustus' forum, in the pediment of the temple of Mars Ultor.⁷⁹ Here Mars was worshipped in the double role of both Avenger (*ultor*) and Rome's new father god (fig. 4.22).⁸⁰ Mars was the Roman god most closely associated with the mythical narratives of Rome's Oriental origin and her Italic pre-history. Already in Republican Rome he was supposed to

⁷⁷ *Res Gestae Divi Augusti* 35 (ed. P. A. Brunt and J. M. Moore, Oxford 1967).

⁷⁸ Spannagel 1999: 267–87 pl. 1. ⁷⁹ Ganzert 1996; 2000; Ungaro 2007.

⁸⁰ Spannagel 1999: 27 note 86 (*pater*); 60–78 (*ultor*).



Fig. 4.23 Pediment of the temple of Mars Ultor (detail). Sculptures from left to right: personification of the Palatine Hill or Mount Ida; Iulus Ascanius; Venus and Eros; Mars; Fortuna; Roma; personification of the river Tiber. Plaster cast of marble relief (h. 1.55 m, w. 1.22 m). c. AD 50. (The original relief decorates the garden façade of the Villa Medici in Rome.)

have impregnated Ilia or Rhea Silvia, a direct descendant of the House of Aeneas.⁸¹ One could thus claim of Mars that he was the father of Romulus and Remus and, hence, a forefather of all Romans. At the same time Mars was regarded as one of the oldest gods of Rome. Together with Jupiter and Quirinus, an old local god later claimed to be the deified Romulus, he made up a kind of Capitoline 'Ur'-triad said to have been established in Archaic times.⁸² The addition of Mars' Augustan cognomen *ultor* (avenger) referred to all the enemies plotting against Rome and her new emperor, with explicit reference to the murders of Caesar and to the Parthians.⁸³ The pediment of the temple to Mars provided a prominent place with which to stage another portrayal of Iulus Ascanius. It is handed down by a marble relief showing the temple's front including a detailed depiction of its pedimental sculptures (fig. 4.23).⁸⁴ The relief panel was made around AD 50 to adorn an unknown imperial monument. In the Renaissance it

⁸¹ Spannagel 1999: 162–205; Käppel 2001. Augustan ideology of father and son, Hölscher 2009: 72–9.

⁸² Scholz 1970; Beard, North and Price 1998a and b: I 14–16, II 5–7.

⁸³ Schneider 1986: 58–61; 63–7, 80–2; Spannagel 1999: 60–78; Rivière 2006: 40–2.

⁸⁴ Azevedo 1951: 37–8 no. 3; Hommel 1954: 22–30; Koeppel 1983: 98–101, 116; Siebler 1988: 173–82; Simon 1990: 140 fig. 174; Spannagel 1999: 123 note 224, 195, 203–4.

had been fixed high up in the garden façade of the Villa Medici in Rome.⁸⁵ According to this panel, seven colossal marble sculptures were arranged in the temple's pediment which created a large platform measuring more than 20 m in width.⁸⁶ The seven sculptures were composed not to interact with one another but to stand isolated, yet related to each other by their strict formal and semantic setting. Conventionally the sculptures are read from left to right: the personification of the Palatine Hill (or Mount Ida); then Romulus and Venus with Eros on her shoulder; the bearded father god, Mars Ultor, in the centre; then Fortuna (Redux), the goddess Roma and the personification of the river Tiber.⁸⁷ In my view of the seven sculptures Romulus is the one wrongly identified. This is evident if we follow the only description of the sculptures made in front of the normally inaccessible relief when it was in a much better state of preservation. About 130 years ago Friedrich von Matz described the figure later called for ideological reasons Romulus:

Anchises(?) dressed with a girded short(?)-sleeved chiton and a mantle (chlamys) [seated to the right]. He wears Phrygian trousers and the Phrygian cap. His right hand is casually rested on the shepherd's crook, with the left hand he is holding his head thoughtfully.⁸⁸

The relief portrays a figure in Asian dress, with a shepherd's crook and without a beard. This excludes the traditional identification as young Romulus, and that of old Anchises.⁸⁹ On iconographic grounds only one reading makes sense, that of the Trojan prince Iulus Ascanius. As a consequence, we can now reconstruct a more coherent reading of the sculptures within Augustus' forum. The Julians were gathered at the north of the forum. In the northern exedra the colossal marble group showing Aeneas, Anchises and Iulus Ascanius were placed and, perhaps above them, the statues of Trojan-Latin kings including Aeneas and Iulus. In the northern half of the temple's pediment Venus, her Trojan grandchild Iulus Ascanius and the personification of the Palatine Hill or the Trojan Mount Ida were set. The Romans were grouped at the south of the forum. In the southern

⁸⁵ Simon 1990: 17 fig. 8, relief panel in the upper left corner.

⁸⁶ Kockel 1995: 458 fig. 121; Ganzert 1996: 196–200, Beilage 48a. The original pediment could have taken more than seven sculptures.

⁸⁷ Hölscher 1988: 378; Beard, North and Price 1998a: 1 200–1.

⁸⁸ Matz and Duhn 1881: 29, no. 3511: 'Anchises(?) im gegürteten Chiton mit kurzen(?) Ärmeln und Chlamys, [n.r. sitzend]: er trägt phrygische Hosen und die phrygische Mütze, die R. ruht nachlässig auf dem Hirtenstab, mit der L. stützt er nachdenklich den Kopf.'

⁸⁹ Spannagel 1999: 123 note 224.



Fig. 4.24 Tiberius and Livia sitting in the centre, above them Iulus Ascanius in Asian dress and Divus Augustus. Grand Camée de France. Agate (h. 31 cm, w. 26.5 cm). AD 23–24.

exedra Romulus (fig. 4.18) was placed. In the southern half of the pediment Fortuna, Roma and the personification of the river Tiber were to be seen. Mars, in the centre, is both the lover of Venus and the forefather of the Romans.

Another portrayal of Iulus Ascanius is shown on the Grand Camée de France, the largest surviving cameo from antiquity (fig. 4.24).⁹⁰ According

⁹⁰ Bernoulli 1886: 277–99; Megow 1987: 202–7 no. A 85; Giard 1998; Giuliani 2009.



Fig. 4.25 Divus Augustus and Iulus Ascanius in Asian dress. Detail from the Grand Camée de France (see fig. 4.24).

to Luca Giuliani it was probably carved around AD 23/24. Made of exotic sardonyx, the cameo was designed for exclusive use at Rome's imperial court. It constitutes an outstanding political manifesto based on (disputed) claims of the imperial succession. The cameo's narrative is divided into three different panels arranged in vertical hierarchy. The Asian is the only figure present in all three panels. The bottom panel is the smallest, and the only one to be rigorously separated from the other two. It depicts the edge of the world populated by defeated non-Romans from the East, the West and the North. The middle panel is the largest. Clearly identifiable is the seated couple in its centre, the emperor Tiberius and his mother Livia. A handsome Asian crouches obediently at her feet. The middle panel changes seamlessly into the upper panel. It shows a selection of deceased members of the imperial family in cosmic space. The most prominent of them is the deified Augustus. Portrayed at the highest point, in the centre, he is placed above a large figure of a handsome Asian who seems to carry him. The Oriental holds with both hands a celestial sphere, the very symbol of Roman power (fig. 4.25).⁹¹ Recently Luca Giuliani has re-read

⁹¹ Schneider 1997.

the visual narrative of the cameo and re-established that the handsome Asian is no other than Iulus Ascanius. As one of the most venerated Trojan forefathers of the Julian family and Rome's people, he is the only plausible person in Asian dress to carry both the orb of the Roman emperor and Divus Augustus, the founder of imperial Rome.⁹² But like Ganymede at Sperlonga, Iulus Ascanius is portrayed here in an ambiguous double role. As an Asian he is Augustus' obedient servant; but as a Trojan he is Rome's next of Eastern kin. This double role gets an even sharper edge by the figures of handsome Asians assembled submissively in the two panels below.

In the age of Augustus the politics of Rome's Oriental origins were profoundly reshaped. This is evident if we look at the new readings of the Trojan epics and the new portrayals showing Trojan princes as handsome Asians. Both became widely adopted symbols of Rome's universalistic ideologies. Rome claimed to be the only empire genuinely rooted in *oriens* and *occidens*. As a result, Rome could claim both the East and the West as her own, and as such her indisputable property. One of the most remarkable statements of this ideology is a grave epigram probably composed by Germanicus, the step-nephew of Augustus. Germanicus may have written the poem in Ilium, the city built next to the site of ancient Troy. He visited Troy in AD 18 on his tour of inspection through the Eastern provinces that ended with his unexpected death.⁹³ The epigram is addressed to the Trojan hero, Hector, who was killed by the Greek hero, Achilles:⁹⁴

Descendant of Mars, Hector, under the deep(est) earth
(if you can but hear my words),
breathe again, since an avenger has come to you as heir,
who may forever enhance the fame of your fatherland.
Behold! Renowned Ilium rises again, a race inhabits her
inferior to you, Mars, but nevertheless a friend of Mars.
Hector, tell Achilles that all the Myrmidons have perished
and that Thessaly is under the sway of the great ancestors of Aeneas.⁹⁵

⁹² Giuliani 2009: 15–16, 26–7. Best illustration, Giard 1998: pl. vi.

⁹³ Ilium in the early empire, Rose 2002b.

⁹⁴ Hector's tomb, Erskine 2001: 109; Hertel 2003: 179–80.

⁹⁵ *Anthologia Latina* 1 2, 708 (ed. F. Bücheler and A. Riese, Leipzig 1906): *Martia progenies, Hector, tellure sub ima / (Fas audire tamen si mea verba tibi) / respira, quoniam vindex tibi contigit heres, / qui patriae fumam proferat usque tuae. / Ilios, en surgit rursus inclita, gens colit illam / te Marte inferior, Martis amica tamen. / Myrmidonas periisse omnes dic Hector Achilli, / Thessaliam et magnis esse sub Aeneadis.* Kroll 1917: 463; Pani 1975: 74–8; Braccisi 2006: 157–61. For a Greek(!) version of the epigram dedicated to either Germanicus or Hadrian, *Anthologia Graeca* 9.387 (ed. H. Beckby, Munich 1958).

Hector's avenger is none other than Rome, the city which ultimately avenges the devastation of Troy.⁹⁶ By tradition Hector was the son of the Trojan king Priam, a descendant of Tros, the mythical founder of Troy (and the father of handsome Ganymede; fig. 4.8). In the epigram, however, Hector's genealogy is radically changed. Here, he is made a direct descendant of Mars who too was worshipped as avenger in Rome, in his new temple built in Augustus' forum (figs. 4.17, 4.22).⁹⁷ Hector's newly acquired ancestry from Mars underpinned the fact that the Trojans and the Romans shared the same divine descent. Using the Augustan ideology of revenge, Rome revived the legendary power of Troy and achieved rule over Greece, Troy's arch-enemy, represented here by the descendants of Achilles: Myrmidons in Thessaly. Such claims emphasise once more the gripping quality of the portrayal of the handsome Asian that brought together two distinctive aspects of Rome's universalistic claims, her new global importance and her epic Trojan past.⁹⁸ The small *Tabula Iliaca Capitolina* made of marble in the age of Augustus highlights the Roman elite's interest in Hector's grave also in the city's imagery (fig. 4.26).⁹⁹ A large grave memorial to Hector is shown in the tablet's foreground on the lower left. It is prominently placed near another Roman icon of Troy set up in front of the city's gate, a copy of the famous marble of the three Trojans which adorned Augustus' forum.¹⁰⁰

Statues of standing Asians with handsome faces open up further discourses in Rome's debate about her Trojan descent.¹⁰¹ The first Roman sequence of these statues which follow the same compositional pattern was designed in the Augustan period and decorated the Basilica (Aemilia) Paulli.¹⁰² The basilica, a two-storey building, was situated on the north-east side of the Roman forum, opposite the Basilica Iulia, in the very political heart of the city (fig. 4.27).¹⁰³ Since c. 1900, roughly 700 fragments of at least eighteen over-life-size statues of Asians in coloured marble measuring between 2.3 and 2.4 m in height have been found inside the basilica's nave (fig. 4.28).¹⁰⁴ Additionally, fragments of eighteen heads (fig. 4.29) and some

⁹⁶ The avenger is Rome not Augustus; *contra* Hertel 2003: 281. ⁹⁷ See above note 79.

⁹⁸ Vergil let Trojans appear in both Roman and Asian dress, Dench 2005: 276–7.

⁹⁹ Valenzuela Montenegro 2004: 26–149 (Hector's grave: 134–40); Spivey and Squire 2004: 122–3 fig. 205 (best illustration); Squire 2011.

¹⁰⁰ Spannagel 1999: 372–3 no. A 22.

¹⁰¹ Schneider 1986: 98–138; Castella and Flutsch 1990: 18–30; Schneider 1998: 104–5; 2007: 72–5; Landwehr 2000: 74–83; Landskron 2005: 87–90; Bitterer 2007.

¹⁰² Bauer 1993; Haselberger and Humphrey 2006: 169–73; Freyberger and Ertel 2007; Lipps 2011.

¹⁰³ Purcell 1995; Haselberger and Humphrey 2006: 163–82 (chapter by B. Frischer *et al.*); Hölscher 2006.

¹⁰⁴ Schneider 1986: 98–125; Bitterer 2007.



Fig. 4.26 Tabula Iliaca Capitolina showing selected portrayals and texts of the epic cycle (drawing). White marble (h. 25 cm, w. 30 cm). From a Roman villa at Le Frattocchie (via Appia) near Rome.

Basilica (Aemilia) Paulli

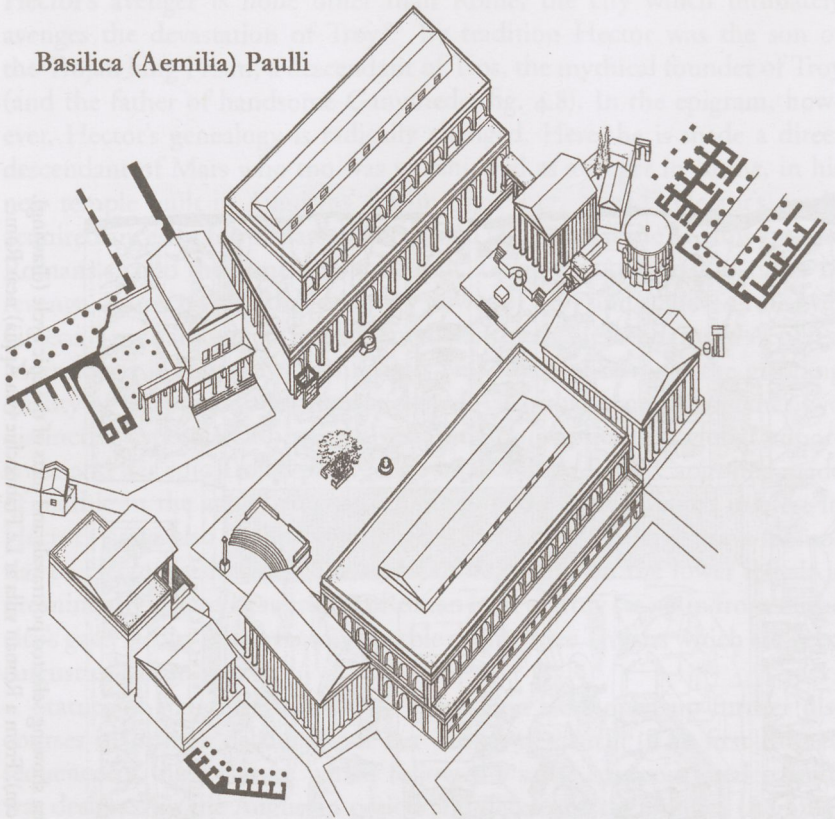


Fig. 4.27 Rome, Forum Romanum (reconstruction). Early first century AD.

hands have been unearthed.¹⁰⁵ The heads and the hands were separately carved in white marble and originally attached to the body as shown in the statue of Ganymede in Sperlonga (fig. 4.8). Hair and skin of the clean-shaven faces show intense traces of the original colouring (fig. 4.29).¹⁰⁶ The style of the statues and the heads, both worked to an exceptional finish, relates the Asians to the restoration of the Basilica Paulli after 14 BC when the building had partly burnt down. The renewed edifice stood out by design, decor, craftsmanship and coloured marble.¹⁰⁷ The statues are all shown in the same weighted stance and in an unusually rich Asian dress. The handsome faces are framed by long coiffeured hair with beautifully

¹⁰⁵ Bitterer 2007: 542–4 figs. 57–8 (heads); 545–6 fig. 62 (hand). ¹⁰⁶ Bitterer 2007: 543.

¹⁰⁷ Schneider 1986: 116–17; Bauer 1993: 185–6; Freyberger and Ertel 2007: 501–23; Lipps 2011.



Fig. 4.28 Torso of a handsome Asian (see fig. 30). Phrygian marble (h. 1.10 m). Found inside the Basilica Paulli in Rome. After 14 BC.

sculpted locks. After a thorough analysis of the basilica's architectural decoration Johannes Lipps has concluded that the statues originally stood in the upper storey inside the basilica's nave.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁸ Lipps 2011; *contra* Freyberger and Ertel 2007: 513–18 (their new reconstruction of the basilica's architecture is under critical debate).



Fig. 4.29 Head of a handsome Asian showing rich traces of original colouring. White marble (h. 0.27 m). Found inside the Basilica Paulli in Rome. After 14 BC.

The sculptural evidence and the Roman imagery of the handsome Asian give us obvious clues as to how to reconstruct the statues' original pose. All show the same compositional pattern, a close correlation between the pose of their arms and their legs (fig. 4.30).¹⁰⁹ The arm over the weighted leg was stretched out sideways, then raised straight upwards and the hand again stretched out to the side. The arm over the non-weighted leg pointed diagonally downwards and then back to the body where the hand rested on the hip bone. Hence, the Oriental statues of the Basilica Paulli are shown in a pose of architectural support although they cannot hold actual weight.¹¹⁰ The weighted stand and the purely virtual pose of acting as architectural support formed a highly ideologised portrayal of an Eastern servant: very handsome, lavishly dressed and richly coloured. It was a metaphor which soon became popular throughout Rome's empire, up to the third century

¹⁰⁹ Schneider 1986: 115–25; Schneider 1998: 108–10; Rose 2005: 62–3; Bitterer 2007: 545–50; *contra* Landwehr 2000: 75–6; Freyberger and Ertel 2007: 513–18.

¹¹⁰ Figures composed to hold (architectural) weight without being able to do so in reality became popular in Roman wall painting around 40–20 BC; Strocka 2007.

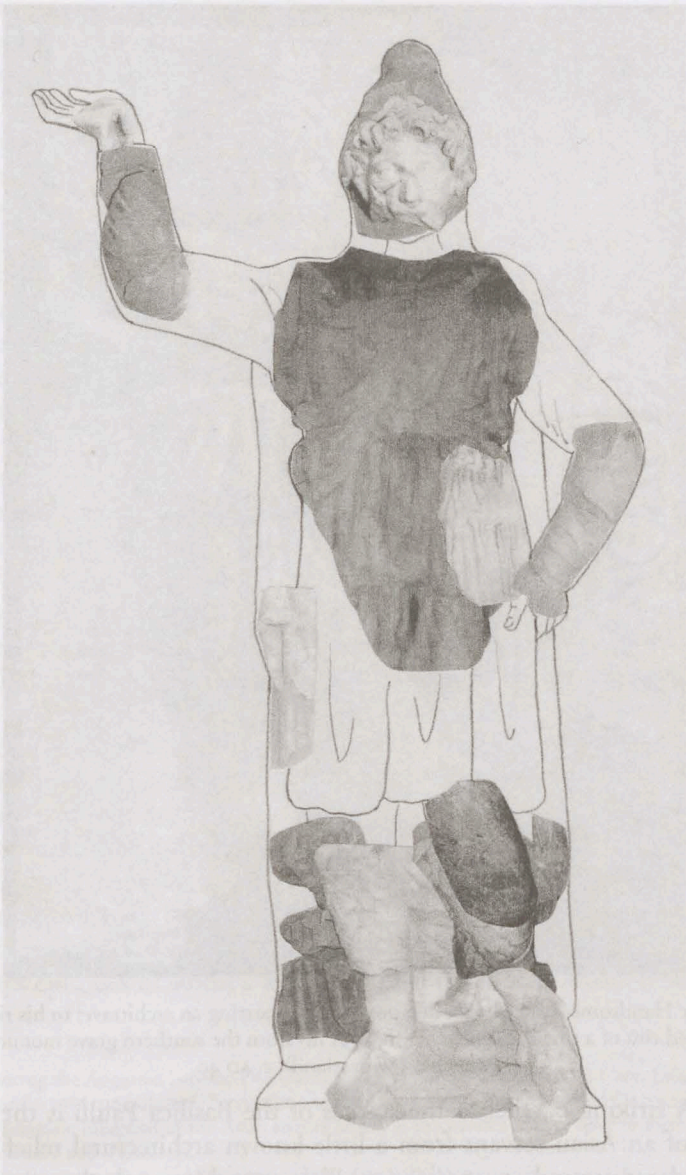


Fig. 4.30 Handsome Asian from the Basilica Paulli shown in a pose as if supporting an architrave. Reconstruction based on surviving fragments.



Fig. 4.31 Handsome Asian shown in a pose as if supporting an architrave; to his right the decorated rim of a shield. Stone relief (h. 0.93 m) from the southern grave monument at Avenches (Switzerland). *c.* AD 40.

AD.¹¹¹ A striking parallel to the statues of the Basilica Paulli is the intact figure of an Asian servant from a little-known architectural relief which can be dated around AD 40 (fig. 4.31).¹¹² It once decorated a large exedra of a grave monument near Avenches.

¹¹¹ Hellenistic forerunners of this motif and its adaptations in Roman imagery, Schneider 1986: 98–138 nos. 50 1–52; Landwehr 2000: 74–83 no. 110; Bitterer 2007: 546–9.

¹¹² Castella and Flutsch 1990: 25 fig. 9.

As the restoration of the Basilica Paulli in 14 BC was paid for by Augustus and friends of Lucius Aemilius Paullus, we may assume that the statues of the Asian servants also alluded to the so-called settlement of the Parthian question in 20 BC claimed to be Augustus' greatest foreign victory.¹¹³ From the first century BC onwards, male figures of standing Asians acting as architectural supports could be related to both the Persians and the Parthians.¹¹⁴ Following a standard set by Cicero, Augustan poets such as Vergil, Propertius, Horace and Ovid usually refer to the Parthians by the name of their historical ancestors, either Medes, Persians or Achaemenians.¹¹⁵ The architect Vitruvius, who practised under Caesar and Augustus, confirms the political topicality of the standing Asian.¹¹⁶ According to him, statues of Persians (*statuae Persicae*) in rich Persian dress and posed as if supporting architraves were widely set up in architecture for two reasons: to make the Eastern enemies tremble for fear of what Western bravery could achieve and to encourage the Western viewer to remain ready to defend freedom. Vitruvius' statement is loaded by universal claims and ideologies of Orientalism.

A further reading of the basilica's Asian statues is suggested by Pliny the Elder. Around AD 70 he listed among the most magnificent buildings of the world three edifices in Rome: the Forum Augustum, Vespasian's Templum Pacis and the Basilica Paulli. Pliny gave the Basilica Paulli special praise for its columns and Asian statues which he called *Phryges*.¹¹⁷ The ethnic term *Phryx* oscillated in early imperial texts between opposite poles such as Phrygian (Asian) slave, hero and god. Predominant among Roman authors, however, was the use of *Phryx* as synonym for *Troianus*, a reading already established in Greek texts of the fifth century BC.¹¹⁸ Thus Pliny links the famous *Phryges* of the basilica to the Trojan origin of Rome. Pliny's interpretation may be further supported by the juxtaposition with the long frieze, which decorated the nave of the Augustan basilica. The frieze portrays episodes of Rome's legendary history, namely selected narratives

¹¹³ Financing the Augustan basilica: Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 54.24.3 (ed. E. Cary, London 1917); Schneider 1986: 116 note 796. Freyberger and Ertel 2007: 513–14 misunderstood the complex formal and semantic blueprint of the Asian statues found in the basilica as they refer to them simply as 'barbarians' and 'Parthians'.

¹¹⁴ Schneider 2007: 70–5. ¹¹⁵ Schneider 2007: 70 with note 91.

¹¹⁶ Vitruvius, *De architectura* 1.1.6 (ed. C. Fensterbusch, Darmstadt 1964).

¹¹⁷ Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis historia* (ed. J. André, R. Bloch and A. Rouveret, Paris 1981) 36.102: *basilicam Pauli columnis et [sic] Phrygibus mirabilem (est)*. The traditional reading *columnis et Phrygibus* is wrong, Schneider 1986: 120–5.

¹¹⁸ Pani 1975: 74; Schneider 1986: 123; Hall 1988 (Greek tradition); Wilhelm 1988; Rose 2002a: 332; Dench 2005: 248.

regarding the city's ancestors, Aeneas and Romulus.¹¹⁹ In short, Ganymede at Sperlonga (fig. 4.8), Iulus Ascanius in Augustus' forum (figs. 4.19 and 4.21) and on the Grand Camée (figs. 4.24 and 4.25) and the *Phryges* of the Basilica Paulli, all employ the imagery of the handsome Asian to convey the same ideological paradox: Rome's universalistic claims to an Eastern descent and to unconditional servitude owed to her by the people of the East.

In this context the new staging of coloured marble acquired significant readings (figs. 4.8 and 4.28).¹²⁰ The over-life-size statues of the Asians were worked in coloured marble for the first time. Only the most expensive stones were used, mostly Phrygian marble, but occasionally also Numidian marble.¹²¹ As the quarries of the two marbles were situated in distant provinces (map 6) and required a large-scale infrastructure to be transported to Rome, the polychromes became a distinctive symbol of the city's global power, constituting a new coloured map of the Roman Empire.¹²² Additionally, their exotic colour and high polish gave the Asian body an intensity and meaning unprecedented in ancient art.¹²³ The polychrome Orientals granted the Asian East a new presence in Rome as coloured embodiments of Eastern dress, attitude and luxury. The favoured use of Phrygian marble to portray the Trojan prince Ganymede at Sperlonga and the *Phryges* of the Basilica Paulli in Rome stimulated further readings. From Augustus onwards this marble became known as either *Phryx* or *Phrygius*, i.e. after the home of both Troy and Rome.¹²⁴ The Asians were made of and represented by 'Trojan' marble which was quarried in their Phrygian homeland. This ideology of origin, colour and power increased as most of the polychrome quarries became imperial property under Augustus. Now they began to produce coloured marble on a large scale for the first time. The polychrome Asians represented spoils never before seen in Rome. The display of such spoils would have reminded the viewer of the triumphal procession.¹²⁵ Embedded in Rome's sacrificial laws, this ritual was a compelling demonstration of Rome's claim to rule the world and her manifold

¹¹⁹ Schneider 1986: 118; Kränzle 1994; Freyberger and Ertel 2007: 502–8.

¹²⁰ Schneider 1986: 139–60; 2001; 2002. Roman concepts of colour: Bradley 2009a; 2009b.

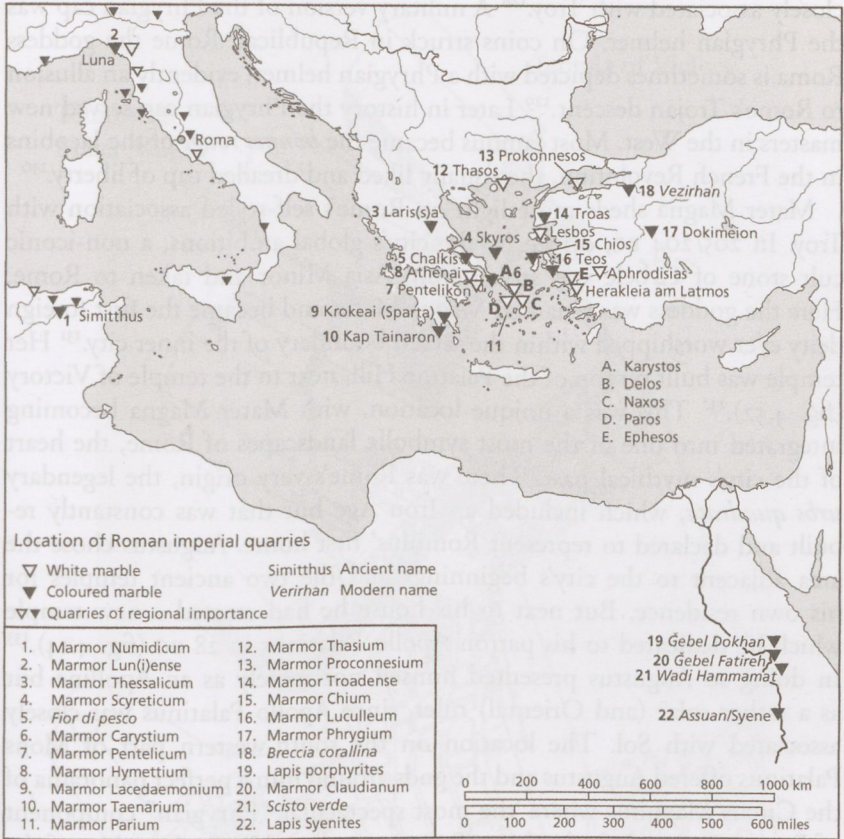
¹²¹ Schneider 1986: 115–17, 200 nos. so 1–22; Bitterer 2007. At least one of the sculptures, however, is made in Numidian marble.

¹²² Wittke, Olshausen and Szydlak 2007: 84.

¹²³ Polishing, Schneider 1999: 934. Greek sculptures of Asians coloured by paint, Wünsche 2011, 222–61.

¹²⁴ Schneider 1986: 140–1.

¹²⁵ Östenberg 2003; Irgenshorst 2005; Beard 2007; Hölkeskamp 2010. For the staging of statues of (acclaiming?) Parthians on top of the arch erected after 20 BC in the Roman forum to commemorate the settlement of the Parthian question, Rich 1998: 97–115; Rose 2005: 28–36.



Map 6 Roman imperial quarries supplying white and coloured marble

relationships to non-Roman cultures. By this ritual, foreign people and things were declared the property of Rome.

Trojan was not only the Phrygian marble but also the Phrygian cap, an essential of the Eastern dress.¹²⁶ As noted earlier, Trojan and Phrygian had been used as synonyms ever since the fifth century BC.¹²⁷ The Roman satirist Juvenal who wrote in the earlier second century AD, however, is the first to call the Asian headgear a Phrygian cap. He describes the *Phrygia bucca tiara* as part of the dress of the flamboyantly foreign Galli, the self-castrated attendants of the Mater Magna. In Rome the goddess' Asian origin was

¹²⁶ Hinz 1974: 790–2; Seiterle 1985; Schneider 1986: 123–4; Rose 2005: 34–5.

¹²⁷ Hall 1988.

closely associated with Troy.¹²⁸ A military version of the Phrygian cap was the Phrygian helmet. On coins struck in Republican Rome the goddess Roma is sometimes depicted with a Phrygian helmet, evidently an allusion to Rome's Trojan descent.¹²⁹ Later in history the Phrygian cap served new masters in the West. Most famous became the *bonnet rouge* of the Jacobins in the French Revolution, the equally liked and dreaded cap of liberty.¹³⁰

Mater Magna sheds more light on Rome's self-styled association with Troy. In 205/204 BC, driven by the city's global ambitions, a non-iconic cult stone of Cybele was stolen from Asia Minor and taken to Rome. Here the goddess was renamed Magna Mater and became the first foreign deity ever worshipped within the sacred boundary of the inner city.¹³¹ Her temple was built on top of the Palatine Hill, next to the temple of Victory (fig. 4.32).¹³² This was a unique location, with Mater Magna becoming integrated into one of the most symbolic landscapes of Rome, the heart of the city's mythical past. There was Rome's very origin, the legendary *urbs quadrata*, which included an Iron Age hut that was constantly rebuilt and declared to represent Romulus' first home. Augustus chose the area adjacent to the city's beginnings and the two ancient temples for his own residence. But next to his house he had erected a new temple which he dedicated to his patron Apollo Palatinus in 28 BC (fig. 4.14).¹³³ In doing so Augustus presented himself not merely as an Apolline but as a rather solar (and Oriental) ruler, since Apollo Palatinus was closely associated with Sol. The location on the south-western part of Mons Palatinus offered Augustus and the gods around him a perfect panorama of the Circus Maximus where 'the most spectacular "Phrygian" component of Roman spectacles', the *lusus Troiae*, was staged.¹³⁴ Such a view of the Circus from the Palatine Hill can be found on several Roman imperial coins. An extremely fine specimen is a Sestertius issued by Caracalla in AD 213

¹²⁸ Iuvenalis, *Saturae* 6.513–516 (ed. J. Willis, Stuttgart 1997): *semivir (sc. Gallus) . . . plebeia et Phrygia vestitur bucca tiara*. For the Galli, Graillot 1912: 287–319; Beard 1994: 164–5, 173–83; Roller 1998; Rose 2002a: 332–4. For *semivir*, Vergil, *Aeneid* 4.215; 9.614–20; 12.99 (ed. Mynors). Roller 1998: 129.

¹²⁹ Crawford 1974: nos. 19.2, 21.1, 22.1, 24.1, 26.4, 27.5, 41.1, 98A.3, 102.2b–c, 269.1, 288.1, 464.3b; Rose 2002a: 331–2 fig. 3.

¹³⁰ Wrigley 1997.

¹³¹ Wiseman 1984; Wilhelm 1988; Gruen 1990: 5–33; Simon 1990: 146–51; Beard 1994; Burton 1996; Takács 1996; Beard, North and Price 1998a and b: I 164–6, II 43–9; Roller 1999: 261–343; Takács 1999; Bremmer 2004: 557–66.

¹³² Pensabene 1996; 2004; Haselberger and Humphrey 2006: 34–49.

¹³³ Tomei 2004; Balensiefen 2009; Zink and Piening 2009.

¹³⁴ For an excellent analysis, Barchiesi 2009: 170–88 (quote p. 187).

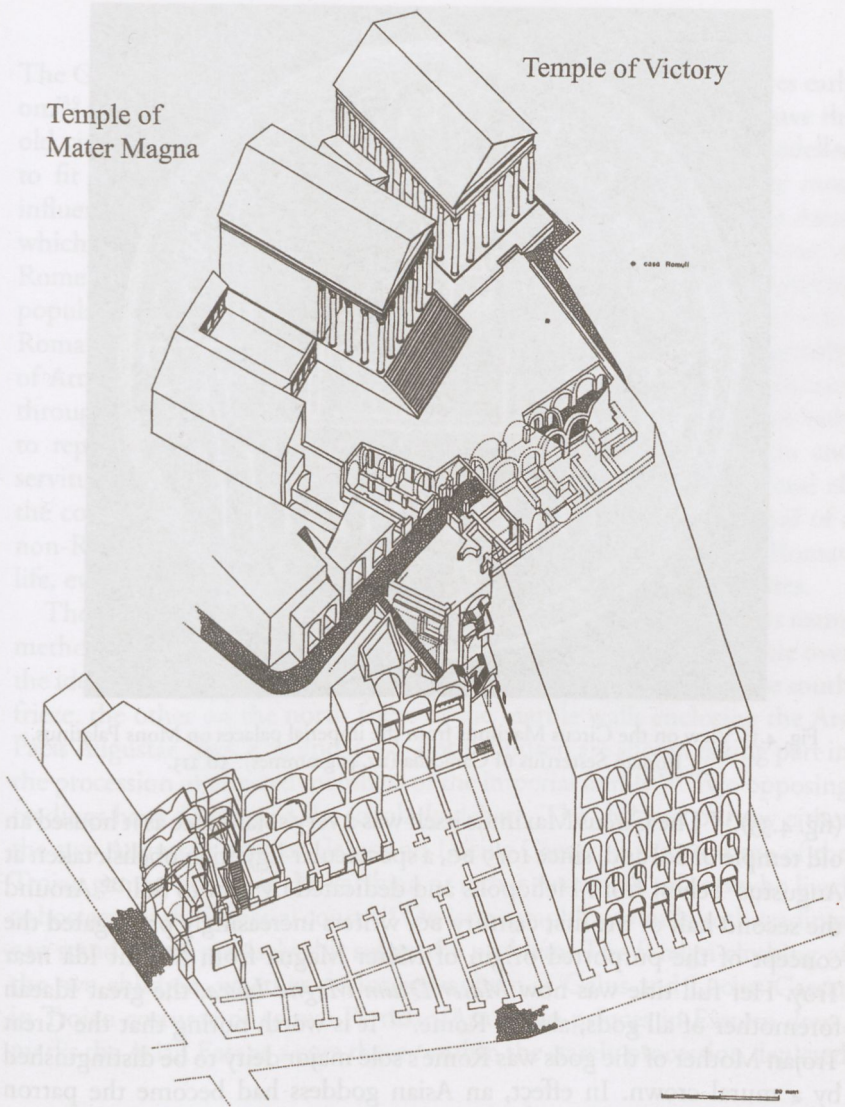


Fig. 4.32 Temple of Mater Magna and temple of Victory on Mons Palatinus. In front of Mater Magna's temple is a large terrace raised on multi-storey vaults (reconstruction). After III BC.



Fig. 4.33 View on the Circus Maximus from the imperial palaces on Mons Palatinus. Roman Sestertius of Caracalla (27.45 grammes). AD 213.

(fig. 4.33).¹³⁵ The Circus Maximus itself was a very solar space as it housed an old temple of Sol and, since 10/9 BC, a spectacular Egyptian obelisk taken at Augustus' behest from Heliopolis and dedicated by him to Sol.¹³⁶ Around the second half of the first century BC, writers increasingly propagated the concept of the purported origin of Mater Magna from Mount Ida near Troy. Her full title was now *Mater Deum Magna Idaea*, the great Idaean foremother of all gods, also of Rome.¹³⁷ It is worth noting that the Great Trojan Mother of the gods was Rome's sole major deity to be distinguished by a mural crown. In effect, an Asian goddess had become the patron goddess of Rome.¹³⁸

¹³⁵ Photo: www.acsearch.info/record.html?id=469593 (16 September 2011) [= Numismatica Ars Classica, Auction 59 lot 1053, 4 April 2011]. Beck, Bol and Bückling 2005: 723–4 no. 338 (R. M. Schneider). For pictorial narratives of the Roman circus, Bergmann 2008.

¹³⁶ Schneider 2004: 161–6; Barchiesi 2009: 183–8.

¹³⁷ Degrassi 1963: 129, 435 (Fasti Praenestini, 10 April); see also Cicero, *Cato Maior de senectute* 45 (ed. M. Winterbottom, Oxford 1994); Livy, *Ab urbe condita* 29.10.5; 29.14.5 (ed. R. S. Conway and C. F. Walters, Oxford 1934); Ovid, *Fasti* 4.263–4 (ed. E. Fantham, Cambridge 1998).

¹³⁸ Kaiser 1968. For the mural crown in Roman elite portraiture, Sande 1985.

ROMANISM — ORIENTALISM — UNIVERSALISM

The Greeks had themselves been deeply engaged in Oriental cultures early on.¹³⁹ Roman elite members, however, went a step further. They gave the old civilisations of the East a new visibility and material reality modelled to fit Rome's ideological claims of imperial universalism.¹⁴⁰ The most influential icon of this ideology was the portrayal of the handsome Asian which became, from the Augustan period onwards, a core element of Rome's globally adopted imagery.¹⁴¹ His portrayal enjoyed long-standing popularity with Roman emperors and members of the Roman and non-Roman elite, and later on also with worshippers of Eastern deities, especially of Attis and Mithras.¹⁴² The handsome Asian gained further significance through his ambiguous iconography. His portrayal was chosen not only to represent Rome's Trojan descent but also to mark subjugation and servitude; at the same time it was coloured by desirable beauty and all the connotations of 'Trojan' marble. More than any other portrayal of a non-Roman, the handsome Asian was integrated into all areas of Roman life, even into the most eminent political, religious and domestic sites.

The ambiguity of the handsome Asian has caused modern scholars many methodological headaches. A striking example is the ongoing dispute over the identity of the images of two children in foreign dress, one on the south frieze, the other on the north frieze of the marble walls enclosing the Ara Pacis Augustae (figs. 4.34 and 4.35). Both children are shown taking part in the procession of selected members of the imperial family.¹⁴³ Two opposing readings have dominated the scholarly debate. The children portray either the two Augustan princes Gaius and Lucius Caesar in the costume of the Trojan games, or two of the Parthian or rather Armenian princes who lived as hostages at the imperial court.¹⁴⁴ On iconographic grounds both readings can stand – and precisely this solves the problem. The foreign clothing of the two children, whether we interpret them as Gaius and Lucius Caesar in Trojan costume or as two Parthian/Armenian princes in Eastern dress, marks the Asian East as a core theme within the stately procession depicted

¹³⁹ Hartog 1980; Hall 1989; Burkert 1992; 2003; Dihle 1994; Miller 1997; Parker 2008.

¹⁴⁰ Ball 2000; Parker 2008. For significant differences in staging Oriental civilisations such as Egypt and Asia in Rome: Schneider 2004; 2007: 78–9; Beck, Bol and Bückling 2005: 305–450, 611–752.

¹⁴¹ Landskron 2005: 57–92.

¹⁴² Gordon 1996; 2001; Claus 2001; Lancellotti 2002; Price 2003; Bremmer 2004.

¹⁴³ Simon 1967: 18, 21 pls. 14, 17, 19–21; Rose 1990; 2005: 38–44.

¹⁴⁴ Trojan games: see above note 57. Parthian/Armenian princes in Rome: Sonnabend 1986: 221–2, 254–60; Nedergaard 1988; Spawforth 1994: 242; Rose 2005. Further engagements between Romans and Parthians, Krumeich 2001: 88–92.



Fig. 4.34 Male child with non-Roman coiffure and in foreign dress. North frieze of the Ara Pacis Augustae (see fig. 4.15). 13–9 BC.

on the Ara Pacis Augustae.¹⁴⁵ Our modern tendency to categorise neatly may prove a hindrance here. Today's scholars prefer to keep notions such as Roman and non-Roman, Occident and Orient, friend and foe distinct. These dichotomies, based as they are on a modern Hegelian reading of the bipolarity of force and counterforce, fail to fuse such supposed political and cultural opposites. The Romans, however, were not hampered by such

¹⁴⁵ Rose (2005: 38–44) argues that the two boys are portrayed as foreign princes, the one on the south frieze of Oriental, the one on the north frieze of northern descent. Together they will represent the new peace achieved under Augustus in the East and the West.



Fig. 4.35 Male child with non-Roman coiffure and in foreign dress. South frieze of the Ara Pacis Augustae (see fig. 4.15). 13–9 BC.

distinctions. On the contrary, they promoted ambiguous readings and allowed them to stand as they were.

It was this open and ambiguous reading which made the portrayal of the handsome Asian such a global success, and a ground-breaking point of reference for Rome's universalistic claims. His portrayal points to a conceptual overlap between seemingly contradictory categories such as Roman and Oriental, friend and foe.¹⁴⁶ As a result, even young Roman noblemen

¹⁴⁶ Schneider 2007. For recent discussions on Carl Schmitt's political-theological reading of friend and foe, Meier 1994; Palaver 1998.

could be portrayed as handsome Asians wearing the costume of the Trojan games (figs. 4.11 and 4.12). Concepts of such adaptability were mediated mainly in imagery, beyond the written narrative and beyond a modern concept of history predominantly structured by dates and events. Thus the portrayal of the handsome Asian helps us to identify some of the contradictory and ambivalent issues of universalistic politics which otherwise seem to escape the framework of annalistic history.¹⁴⁷ Consequently, for Rome, the Asian forefather and the Asian enemy were not, I argue, two mutually exclusive poles. On the contrary, the discourse around them was one of the contexts in which the Roman elite defined their claims of universal power. For the elite of imperial Rome, the concept of Romanism was synonymous with the world. A non-Roman could well become Roman, while at the same time retaining his own cultural affiliations.¹⁴⁸ In the constantly shifting debate on the Roman and the Foreign, Mary Beard has rightly placed the contradictory Roman representation of *Mater Magna's* Orientalised cult.¹⁴⁹ The different readings of the role of Asians in early imperial Rome, ranging from the city's venerated Trojan forefathers to the Parthians as her worst enemy, effectively amounted to different claims and conflicting counterclaims on how Romanness was to be defined.

The concept of Roman citizenship reflects a similar political practice. In contrast to modern societies, Roman citizenship characterised not primarily a specific ethnic and/or national status but a universal rank which was defined mainly in legal and political terms.¹⁵⁰ Recently, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill emphasised the ambiguity and permeability of Roman citizenship in the imperial period.¹⁵¹ The definition of what Roman was can be described as an ongoing process of absorption and disengagement, a process driven by the political, religious, social and economic interests of Rome. For the Greeks living under Roman rule, Greg Woolf has captured these dynamics in the neat phrase 'becoming Roman, staying Greek'.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁷ It would, however, be helpful to scrutinise Greek and Latin texts for similar contradictory readings (and they are plenty) when they focus on Troy and Eastern cultures.

¹⁴⁸ Recent debates about concepts of Romanisation and Romanism: Hingley 2005: 14–48; Roth 2007: 9–39; Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 9–27.

¹⁴⁹ Beard 1994: 166–7, 183–7.

¹⁵⁰ Sherwin-White 1973; Balsdon 1979; Dench 2005: 93–151; Wolff 2007; Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 41, 443–7, 451–3. Gruen (1992) offers a rather vague reading of Rome's *national* identity. He focuses mainly on notions such as origin, tradition, religion, culture, civic life, politics, ideology, values, adaptation, Trojan, Greek, (Phil-)Hellenism, etc. but there is little on a debate about how he would define a 'national' identity of Rome.

¹⁵¹ Wallace-Hadrill 2008: 445–7. ¹⁵² Woolf 1994.

Rome was the only ancient culture to make the foreigner in her imagery so popular, so political – and so universal.¹⁵³ This is especially true of the handsome Asian. He was transformed into a very Roman icon with which imperial Rome claimed Asian descent and, simultaneously, supremacy over the cultures of the East and the West. It is the pragmatic, flexible and ambivalent use of this icon that reflects significant aspects of Rome's ideology of universalism shaped by Roman elite members in the age of Augustus. I argue that conflicting readings such as those around the handsome Asian contributed to the continuation of the Roman Empire up to Late Antiquity, and ultimately to Rome's control over so many non-Roman cultures.¹⁵⁴ The appropriation, stimulation and propagation of such ambiguous readings were key features of Rome's universalistic politics.¹⁵⁵ With her universal claim to have the Asian as both forefather and enemy, Augustan Rome had reinvented for herself a new Oriental identity – and enthused a contradictory reading of Orientalism that has reached beyond the confines of popular ideologies of today. However, it was the reinterpretation of the Trojan legend in imperial Rome that has gradually become a universal point of reference. Since the Renaissance, aristocratic families of Western descent have legitimised their inflationary claims of global religious, political and imperial power by relating themselves to Rome's glorified past and, especially, her famed Asian forefathers.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Nuanced view on 'Roman identity', Hingley 2005.

¹⁵⁴ Contradictory readings of Rome's 'Oriental' imagery remained popular in Late Antiquity, especially in the Christian narrative of the Three Kings, Schneider 2006.

¹⁵⁵ Another key feature is the ambiguous reading of the Roman emperor as both man and god, Claus 1999; Gradel 2002; Hallett 2005: 223–70.

¹⁵⁶ Yates 1975; Tanner 1993.