Adrift toward Empire

The Lost Porticus Octavia in Rome and the Origins of the Imperial Fora

The porticus, a Roman architectural type adapted from the Greek stoa, was a building block of Republican and Imperial urbanism. An early and especially significant example of this type is the Porticus Octavia. It was built outside Rome’s sacred core (the pomerium) by Gnaeus Octavius, leader of the victorious naval fleet at the battle of Pydna which ended the Third Macedonian War in 168 BCE. The earliest colonnaded portico to be built in Rome by a victorious commander as a monument to his triumph, the Porticus Octavia initiated the development of an architectural type whose evolving form and meaning both reflected and shaped Rome’s transitions from the Middle Republic (264–133 BCE) to the height of the Empire in the second century CE. The building campaigns of this period transformed the city into a sequence of porticoed enclosures, stretching from the periphery to the Imperial fora of the urban center (Figure 1).

As a Middle Republican monument of Greek typological origin that stood at the beginning of this sea change, the Porticus Octavia offers an opportunity to reflect on how subsequent architectural developments may affect readings of intention and meaning in earlier, influential buildings. Writing not as a classicist but as a historian of the built environment, in a recent essay Dell Upton presented the ruins of Roman Baalbek in Lebanon as a monument exemplifying new possibilities for a world history of architecture. By emphasizing the variety of narratives projected upon ancient buildings since the eighteenth century, Upton identifies a problem endemic to architectural history: the reduction of monuments to representatives of cultures or periods (Hellenistic, Roman Imperial, Islamic, etc.), rather than recognizing the fluidity and improvisation inherent in historical processes. The widely held notion that a building or complex possesses an authentic meaning fixed at its origin by the cultural and individual identity of its builders may be a fallacy. While the material durability and monumentality of many historical buildings creates an illusion of permanence, this permanence is belied by physical alterations and ever-changing uses. In responding to Upton’s remarks by emphasizing historical process, however, it is not necessary to do away with questions of beginnings. On the contrary, postulating the original purposes, character, and appearance of buildings or architectural types in ways that avoid easy cultural reification may reveal the processes of their change, i.e., the flow or drift of their architectural histories.

As important as the Porticus Octavia was as a precedent for Rome’s subsequent urban changes, it defies the illusion of permanence. With no surviving visible remains or visual representations, it is a building that is lost to us. Yet its material and formal inaccessibility is arguably the least consequential sense in which it has vanished. Nor is the circumstance
of its destruction by fire and rebuilding by Augustus in the early Imperial period the most significant impediment to our retrieval of its original state. Rather, what may separate us most decisively from the Porticus Octavia is our ignorance of its patron’s intentions. As a result, one risks an anachronistic reading of these intentions as identical with those of the creators of later porticoed complexes, who built to commemorate their conquests and to convey their military prowess, thereby threatening and eventually subsuming the traditional powers of the Republican magistracies. In other words, the repetition of a building type does not ensure that earlier examples of the type anticipated, even in a nascent way, the purposes and meanings with which it was later associated. Although the Porticus Octavia clearly was a kind of triumphal architecture, the details of its symbolic function were not fixed for all times at its origin. Later victorious patrons could create new meanings for it, and even transfer these new meanings to their own buildings and complexes, thereby reinventing the Porticus Octavia as an authoritative precedent. In this way, later porticoed enclosures acquired signification in relation to one another as the architecture of victorious commanders, transforming Rome visually and ideologically into a city of porticoes built by a succession of *imperatores* in whom power was centered. Integral to this process were the monarchical Hellenistic antecedents of the Porticus Octavia, which inspired a new kind of triumphal architecture for the *imperator*. Octavius’s introduction of this foreign architectural type released a flow of meanings in Republican and Imperial Roman architecture whose future course he could not have determined.

**Urban Center and Periphery, Empire and Republic**

Julius Caesar’s decision to build the Forum Iulium as a space open to the sky and enclosed by porticoes had far-reaching consequences for the development of Rome’s city center during the Imperial period (Figure 2). Planned and constructed after his civil war victory over Pompey at the Battle of Pharsalos in 48 BCE, and completed under Augustus, Caesar’s forum established the model for the Imperial fora that followed (see Figure 1). From Caesar’s time to the height of Imperial power in the second century CE, this sequence of enclosures gradually developed into a unified complex of marble-paved courts, temples, and gardens, all framed by colonnaded porticoes. The Imperial fora were among the most celebrated and highly visible spaces in Rome, dominating the cityscape and molding its architectural, social, and ideological fabric for centuries to come.

While there is good reason to view the Forum Iulium as an updated version of the old Forum Romanum, it would be difficult to characterize it and its descendents, built by emperors from Augustus to Trajan, as a distinct architectural...
type under the rubric of **forum**. Unlike all of the Imperial fora, the Forum Romanum was an outdoor area and complex of related structures that, although highly recognizable, defies straightforward visual description. Continuously augmented and altered, it was perhaps as unclear to Romans as it is to us which major buildings (such as the Basilica Julia and Basilica Paulli) were part of the old forum and which simply stood beside it (Figure 3).

Perhaps more easily understood than the architectural origins of the Imperial fora was the identity of the institution that they embodied. As the new site of public business, the Forum Iulium took over the major administrative functions of the venerable Forum Romanum, offering its *tabernae* for governmental offices, its Curia Iulia for senatorial meetings, and a new open space for public assemblies in front of the rostrate Temple of Venus Genetrix (see Figure 1). As ceremonial spaces, furthermore, the Imperial fora reflected the roles of ritual and memory that had been and continued to be integral to the old forum. With the exception of the Forum Iulium, however, the later complexes were less conspicuously identified as places of official business in the manner of the Forum Romanum. Nor were the Imperial fora connected with commerce in the manner of the Forum Boarium or Forum Holitorium, the cattle and vegetable markets, respectively.

It may be most accurate to consider the term “forum” in its basic sense as an outdoor place adaptable to a number of administrative, legislative, judicial, economic, commercial, religious, ceremonial, and entertainment purposes. Understood in this way, the assignment of certain functions to the Forum Iulium aligns it with the Forum Romanum. Similarly, later desires to suggest institutional continuity and even to evoke something of the prestige of the Forum Romanum may have driven the application of the same term to the “fora” of Augustus and Trajan, for example.

Whatever the Imperial fora owe to the influence of the Forum Romanum, they show a combination of architectural and iconographic features that did not entirely depend upon its precedent, and in fact demonstrate connections with other
term indicating a sanctified space with no association with any particular architectural form. Nonetheless, the term “templum” was commonly given to sacred spaces delimited by porticoes. Notable among these complexes was the Templum Pacis, a sanctuary dedicated to the cult of Pax (Peace), which Vespasian built from the proceeds of his victory spoils to commemorate his triumph over Jerusalem.

This evocation of military victory is shared by a number of complexes referred to as either templum or porticus that are no longer visible or survive incompletely and which are not spatially continuous with the Imperial fora. Dated to Domitian’s reign (81–96 CE), the Flavian Templum Divorum (also known as Porticus Divorum) served as a marshaling ground in the Campus Martius, and was entered through a massive triple triumphal arch. Augustus’s Templum Apollinis on the Palatine centered on the temple that Augustus had vowed in the battle of Naulochos against Sextus Pompey in 36 BCE. In 7 BCE, Augustus dedicated the Porticus Liviae on the Oppian hill in conjunction with Tiberius’s victories over the Germans. Begun at the time of Pompey’s 61 BCE triple triumph for his major victories in the east, the Porticus Pompeianae in the southern Campus Martius accompanied Pompey’s temple of Venus Victrix (“Venus Victorious”), which was built at the summit of the auditorium of Rome’s first permanent theater (Figure 4). The earliest of all of these examples from the Late Republic to the Early Imperial period is the Porticus Minucia, built by Marcus Minucius Rufus in the southern Campus Martius to commemorate his triumph over the Scordisci in 110 BCE.

The appearance of these typological precursors to the Imperial fora is recorded on two surviving fragments of the Severan Marble Plan, a scale map of the early third century CE, inscribed on slabs of marble, which was displayed in one of the rooms opening off the Templum Pacis. The fragments show the rectangular plans of several neighboring monumental Augustan quadriporticus (spaces framed on four sides by porticoes) in the Circus Flaminius (Figure 5). These include the Porticus Philippi, which Lucius Marcius Philippus built around the temple of Hercules Musarum following a triumph in Spain in 33 BCE, and the Porticus Octaviae, which was completed by Augustus in 23 BCE to frame the temples of Juno Regina and Jupiter Stator, and funded from the spoils of his victory over the Dalmatii. The early-third-century-CE gateway of this complex along the Via del Portico di Ottavia remains and is today a well recognized monument in the Jewish Ghetto (Figure 6).

The salient connection with military victory found in this set of porticus extends to the Imperial fora. Caesar inaugurated the Forum Iulium on the day of his Gallic triumph in 46 BCE. His temple’s cult epithet Genetrix may represent an...
attempt to mask associations with civil war since, according to Appian, on the eve of his battle against Pompey at Pharsalos, he originally vowed to dedicate a temple to Pompey’s goddess Venus Victrix.26 The association with civil war becomes more explicit in the Forum Augustum with its temple of Mars Ultor (Mars the Avenger), which commemorates Augustus’s victory over the senatorial conspirators.27 In Domitian’s Forum Transitorium, the temple of the war goddess Minerva dominates the narrow space of the Argiletum, the thoroughfare connecting the Forum Romanum with the residential Subura, which is tightly bordered by the Templum Pacis and Forum Augustum.28 Finally, in the Forum Traiani, the colossal Column of Trajan and other displays of Dacian booty and suppression show little restraint in drawing the attention of visitors to Trajan’s victories.29 The prominence of porticoes and themes of conquest is a feature of all these spaces, and, although one should avoid reductive characterization, these porticoed enclosures were generally connected to the military accomplishments of the imperatores who built them.30 Alongside whatever the term “forum” connoted, the Imperial fora showed continuity with a pattern of architectural type, patronage, and meaning that came from outside the sequence of centrally located complexes commonly called “fora.”

The association between the architectural form of the porticoed enclosure and the theme of triumph was not confined to the time of the Late Republic and Empire, however. The Porticus Octaviae, located next to the Porticus Philippi in the Circus Flaminius, was not original to Augustus (see Figure 5). It was a rebuilding and rechristening of the Porticus Metelli, a complex of the Middle Republic initiated as early as the 140s BCE (Figure 7). Replacing its forebear’s porticoes of Monteverde tufa with new versions built in marble and adding a library, the Porticus Octaviae otherwise repeated the form and dimensions of its precursor while substituting the name of its original patron with that of Augustus’s sister Octavia.31

The complex had originally been associated with Quintus Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus and his triumph of 148 BCE over Andriskos of Macedon in the Fourth Macedonian War.32 Measuring about 105 by 135 meters and framing two
temples and their monumental altars, the Porticus Metelli is the earliest known *quadriporticus* in Rome. While the Temple of Juno dates to 179 BCE, Metellus likely vowed to erect the Temple of Jupiter Stator during his battles with Andriskos and built it as the first marble temple in Rome.\(^3\) Underscoring the complex’s theme of conquest was Metellus’s installation here of the Turma Alexandri, the group of monumental bronze equestrian statues by the famous fourth-century BCE Greek sculptor Lysippos that commemorated Alexander the Great’s victory at the river Granikos, which Metellus took as spoils from the Sanctuary of Zeus at Dion, Macedon.\(^4\) As a porticoed enclosure advertising the triumph of its builder, the Porticus Metelli has long been recognized as an antecedent to the Imperial fora.\(^5\)

Another porticus victory monument, which antedated that of Metellus, is essential to understanding the origins of the Imperial fora. Following his naval victory in the battle of Pydna that ended the Third Macedonian War in 168 BCE, the praetor and *triumphator* Gnaeus Octavius built the Porticus Octavia in the Circus Flaminius, a monument that is lost to us save for a relatively few textual references. The Porticus Octavia is not to be confused with the later Porticus Octaviae (previously the Porticus Metelli), named after Augustus’s sister Octavia. Incorporating spoils of war into its fabric, the Porticus Octavia was Rome’s earliest porticus built by a victorious commander.

**The Porticus Octavia**

The general location of the Porticus Octavia is known. Writing in the second century CE, Festus tells us that Augustus restored the monument after a fire, and he places it near Pompey’s famous theater in the Campus Martius.\(^6\) Based only on this evidence, the Porticus Octavia could have been anywhere in the larger area of the southern Campus Martius where Pompey built his complex, but two other sources add further clues to its location. In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus confirms his role in rebuilding the Porticus Octavia and, along with the elder Pliny, places it “in the Circus Flaminius,” a large public space south of the Campus Martius that was filled with victory monuments, and through which the triumphal processions ran.\(^7\) Therefore, it must have been in the area of the modern Jewish Ghetto, but northwest of the Porticus Philippi in the direction of the Campus Martius. No surviving Severan Marble Plan fragments depict this area. Located here, the porticus would have stood in the vicinity of the Temple of Neptune, originally of the third century BCE. This temple was recently discovered in the basement level of the Casa di Lorenzo Manlio, allowing for its restoration in plan in relation to the Porticus Philippi and Porticus Octaviae preserved on the Marble Plan (see Figure 5).\(^8\) Since Octavius had celebrated a triumph for his victory in a naval battle, the association between his porticus and this shrine dedicated to the sea god may be significant.

In addition to helping to locate the Porticus Octavia, the elder Pliny identifies its builder as Gnaeus Octavius and provides crucial though somewhat opaque evidence about its appearance.\(^9\) He ambiguously tells us that Octavius built a porticus that was “double” (*duplex*), and that it was called *porticus Corinthia* because of its bronze capitals.\(^10\) Octavius commanded the Roman fleet during the Third Macedonian War in 168, and was granted a naval triumph the following year for his defeat of Perseus at the battle of Pydna.\(^11\) The Corinthian capitals of bronze mentioned by Pliny must certainly have been *spolia* taken during his successful campaigns in the Hellenistic world, marking his porticus as monument to his triumph.\(^12\) These capitals were surely one reason why the Augustan writer Velleius Paterculus (2.1.1–2) described Octavius’s porticus as an example of “public munificence” clearly proclaiming in the same breath its superiority over the Porticus Metelli that followed it.\(^13\)
Unlike military commanders during the previous century, Octavius seems not to have vowed to build a temple during his campaigns. Instead of building a temple in Rome upon his return, he built his porticus beside the older Temple of Neptune in the Circus Flaminius, and in the vicinity of several temples built by past triumphantes. In order to understand the great consequence of Octavius’s porticus for Rome’s later architectural history, one must consider it within the context of local Roman and wider Hellenistic traditions of portico building.

The Roman Context

The significance and influence of the Porticus Octavia is complicated by the challenges to imagining what it looked like—even at a basic level—and by the degree to which it was a Middle Republican innovation that differed from earlier porticus. It was one of a group of ten porticus built in the first three decades of the second century BCE, which are known to us through the much later Augustan historian Livy. According to Livy, these earlier porticus were built by aediles, elected officials responsible for building construction and maintenance (as well as public festivals), and by censors who supervised the morality of the citizenry and carried responsibilities for governmental finances and other matters. Livy provides little specificity about the locations or urban context of these early porticus, and no information on their materials or design.

Some of the difficulty in imagining the appearance of the Porticus Octavia and its Roman precursors arises from the simple question of what Roman authors meant by the term porticus. Scholars have traditionally identified the earlier “Porticus Aemilia” of 193 BCE (known from Livy 35.10.12, 41.27.8) with the remains of a large, concrete, multiple barrel-vaulted structure near the Tiber at the southwest edge of the Aventine hill. Free of columns and featuring parallel vaulted units supported on arcaded piers, the original effect of this Roman building is best imagined through comparison with the well-preserved Venetian neoria or arsenal of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries at Heraklion, Crete (Figure 8). A waterfront facility for ship storage and repair and other warehouse functions, the Venetian building resembles the Roman structure, which has indeed recently been identified as the Navalia, a monumental shed capable of containing fifty ships. The identification of the Roman vaulted building with Livy’s reference has led to confusion about whether this arched, vaulted structure is to be included under the heading “porticus.” However, careful examination of the building’s fabric suggests a date in the Sullan period (80s BCE), which strengthens doubts about its relationship to the porticus that Livy says was built in the early second century BCE by Marcus Aemilius Lepidus and Lucius Aemilius Paullus (later to be consul and a commander in the Third Macedonian War).

A close reading of the textual evidence suggests additional cause for separating this building from the Aemilii. The only references to the porticus are those of Livy, and these must be carefully examined in context. In Livy’s first passage, referring to the year 193 BCE, he mentions not one, but two porticoes built under the Aemilian aedileship, funded by fines imposed on guilty grazers: “From these proceeds they placed golden shields on the pediment of the Temple of Jupiter, built one porticus beyond the Porta Trigemina, to which they added an emporium on the Tiber, and another from the Porta Fontinalis to the altar of Mars, leading toward the Campus Martius” (Livy 35.10.12). Livy does not provide names for these porticus, but merely states their existence, the aedileship in which they were built, and their locations: one porticus here,
another there. In the second passage, referring to the year 174 BCE, Livy states that outside the Porta Trigemina, the censors Quintus Fulvius Flaccus and Aulus Postumius Albinus contracted to restore the “porticum Aemiliam” (41.27.8). Since Livy does not specify names for either of the two porticoes in the initial passage, the designation in the later passage seems not to suggest a formal and enduring name (“the Porticus Aemilia”), but rather which of the porticus outside the Porta Trigemina the censors repaired: “the Aemilian porticus.” For according to two earlier passages in Livy, Marcus Tuccius and Publius Iunius Brutus, the aediles of 192 BCE, added another portico outside the Porta Trigemina, and the censor Marcus Fulvius Nobilior built yet another there in 179 BCE, as well as four others in the general area.50 Livy does not provide names for any of these, and there is little indication of a porticus built by Marcus Aemilius Lepidus and Lucius Aemilius Paullus that was properly or commonly known as “the Porticus Aemilia.” Furthermore, there is no mention by any other primary source of a porticus built under the Aemilian aedileship in any connection after 174 BCE. The argument for associating the arcuated and vaulted building at the southeast corner of the Aventine with the porticus built by the Aemilii is thus further undermined.

If concrete vaulted structures are removed from consideration as porticus, one may more easily envision what a Roman writer like Livy meant when he used the term. In the case of the early examples, from the first decades of the second century BCE, the lack of testimony beyond Livy’s historical account indicates that these were buildings of impermanent timber construction, perhaps of a utilitarian nature and serving commercial functions, and unable to survive numerous inundations by the Tiber.51 Like their columnar successors built in stone (the Porticus Metelli and other examples), they were Roman versions of the Greek stoa type that flourished in the coeval Hellenistic world.52

Still, these early Roman examples lacked the permanence and sumptuousness of materials that characterized the best known Hellenistic stoas, and they were built with funding from significantly different sources. Hellenistic monarchs commonly commissioned stoas as self-aggrandizing gestures of benefaction, inscribing their names on the architraves for high visibility.51 By contrast, the early porticus mentioned by Livy were constructed with censorial contracts or by aediles charged with letting out contracts using public funds.

This was the general picture of what Roman porticus were like when Gnaeus Octavius built his in the Circus Flaminius following his triumph of 168. These early porticus were probably either imitations of the most impermanent and utilitarian stoas found in the Hellenistic world, or practical structures devised independently by the Romans with the simple purpose of sheltering people and trade. Whatever the case, the term did not apply to large concrete, vaulted buildings like the one misidentified as the “Porticus Aemilia,” leaving only these simple structures as points of comparison in Rome for the new Porticus Octavia. Even if these utilitarian buildings carried inscriptions naming the magistrates responsible for them, this would have done relatively little to bolster their reputations. As a lavish columnar building in permanent materials made to glorify its patron, however, the Porticus Octavia would have made a much more impressive statement of monumentality and Hellenism. Unlike the neighboring trabeated buildings known from Livy, Octavius’s lost porticus probably possessed a spirit akin to that of the roughly contemporary Stoa of Attalos II of Pergamon (ruled 159–138 BCE) in the Athenian Agora (Figure 9).

Beyond identifying its innovation in materials and purpose, at present little can be said about the Porticus Octavia’s formal details or how it stood in relation to its surroundings in either its original or Augustan phases.54 Particularly difficult is the question of how the porticus related to the Temple of Neptune.55 One hypothesis is that the Porticus Octavia is represented by an incised line at the edge of the fragment of the Marble Plan that represents the northwest corner of the Augustan Porticus Philippi. If so, it shows that the Porticus Octavia was aligned with the Porticus Philippi and with the adjacent the Porticus Metelli (see Figure 5, where the Porticus Metelli bears its later name, Porticus Octaviae).56 There is also Pliny’s description of Octavius’s monument as duplex, although it cannot be known whether this indicates that it was double-storied, doubled-aisled, or double winged (with an L-shaped plan).57 Obviously, these possibilities are not mutually exclusive.

An aspect of Pliny’s testimony thus far overlooked may aid reconstruction of the form of the Porticus Octavia. The subject of the passage in question is not explicitly the Porticus Octavia. Rather, Pliny’s focus is “the double portico at the Circus Flaminius called ‘Corinthian’ due to the bronze capitals of its columns” (HN 34.13). Pliny’s reference to the building’s patron, location, and historical circumstances leave no doubt that he had the Porticus Octavia in mind. Given his interest in discussing the historical uses of metals, however, the purpose of the text is probably not to describe the appearance of the porticus as a whole. Instead, Pliny may here be referring to only a part of a larger complex, just as the separate parts of the large porticoed enclosure in the Campus Martius
known as the Saepta Iulia carried different names—the Porticus Meleagri and the Porticus Argonautarum—inspired by the decorations they bore. In this light, one cannot rule out the possibility that only one wing, known as the “Porticus Corinthia,” was either double-aisled or double-storied, and that this wing formed only a part of a larger Porticus Octavia that was perhaps L-shaped or something more complex, like a pi-shaped configuration. In that case, the combination of the Temple of Neptune and framing porticoes or wings would be the earliest of the many such Republican- and Imperial-era complexes, including examples in the Imperial fora.

This possibility of an integrated relationship between portico and temple in the Porticus Octavia raises additional questions about the configuration of its constituent parts. As found in some Hellenistic precursors, temples and their surrounding stoas together featured axially symmetrical arrangements. The earliest such organization of portico and temple in a Roman context is the Sanctuary of Juno in Gabii, dedicated in ca. 160 BCE (Figure 10). A similar arrangement was unlikely for the Temple of Neptune and Porticus Octavia, however. As noted, the Marble Plan may indicate that the Porticus Philippi was built flush against the Porticus Octavia, suggesting that the Porticus Octavia would have followed the orientation already established by such nearby buildings as the Temple of Juno Regina of 179 BCE. Some decades later, the Temple of Juno Regina was itself enclosed by the Porticus Metelli, which followed this orientation (see Figures 5, 7). Yet the Temple of Neptune of the prior century adopted the slightly different orientation of earlier temples of the Circus Flaminius. If the Porticus Octavia was aligned with the Porticus Philippi, the resulting oblique relationship between porticus and temple would have been unlike the arrangement of the Porticus Metelli and later Roman examples. The obliqueness of alignments would perhaps indicate the Porticus Octavia’s derivation from a Hellenistic model that did not feature strict axial symmetry, thereby conveying a different Greek heritage than that of the Sanctuary of Juno in Gabii, for example. From the Gabine complex to the Porticus Metelli to the Imperial fora, the axially symmetrical approach to planning would come to define the standard configuration of temple and porticus. In this design-related sense, it would appear that the non-orthogonal character of the layout...
introduced by the Porticus Octavia may have remained stillborn with respect to the tradition of axial symmetry common to later Roman complexes.

However limited the progeny of its design may have been, the Porticus Octavia was highly consequential in one respect. Erected after his defeat of King Perseus of Macedon, Octavius' building initiated a new kind of triumphal monument, which Metellus and other patrons would adopt throughout future centuries in Rome. In doing so, he departed from the tradition established by many earlier military commanders, who built temples upon their return to Rome. He may have drawn influence from the example of his superior, Lucius Aemilius Paullus, consul and fellow victor in the Third Macedonian War. Paullus's lavish triumph in Rome lasted three days, and more unconventional yet were his spectacles and games at Macedonian Amphipolis, which he modeled on monarchical sponsored religious festivals. In addition, Paullus completed an unorthodox victory monument in the form of a quadrangular pillar standing before the Temple of Apollo at Delphi with an inscription identifying him as “INPERATOR.” This Delphic monument suggests a limited imagination, because he simply appropriated a partially completed pillar originally intended to display a portrait of his defeated foe King Perseus. Unlike the Porticus Octavia, its example generated no imitations of its basic type. In terms of progeny, Octavius's porticus is more like the three honorific arches that Lucius Stertinus built along the Triumphal Way in 196 BCE following his victory in Spain (Livy 33.27), establishing a native, non-Hellenizing architectural expression of triumph that continued to flourish in the Imperial era.

Although its form and how it related to its surroundings cannot be precisely established, the influence of the Porticus Octavia was to be great. At the close of the third century BCE, soldiers had begun the custom of acclaiming their commanders as imperatores or “victorious commanders” following successful battles, upon which the commander could appear with the bundle of bound birch rods known as the fasces cum securibus, a sign of supreme power or imperium. This appellatio imperatoria was out of step with the traditional Republican magistracy, however, and the military-based power it connoted did not extend far beyond the battlefield. Indeed, a commander immediately lost the right to carry the title imperator following the day of his triumph. In the Imperial era, when the senate and people officially recognized real power as concentrated in the single figure of the imperator (“emperor”), the basic idea—although significantly evolved—was quite old. At that later time, the richly decorated Imperial fora, with their portico-framed spaces for temples, overtly and permanently reinforced the claims to power of the imperatores after their military victories. In the commemoration of Gnaeus Octavius's naval triumph in the form of a portico connected to the Temple of Neptune, however, the precise meaning is lost, and not just on us. Beyond Octavius's ability to conquer and build impressively, most Romans were unlikely to have read anything in particular from the monument.

The meaning of the Porticus Octavia was defined not by its patron's intention, but rather through the succession of improvisations made by subsequent builders. When Metellus built a neighboring porticus following his own triumph over Andriskos of Macedon, his emulation certainly did away with any ambiguity of message in Octavius's monument. In creating a sense of continuity, Metellus's new complex effectively helped to reshape the Porticus Octavia's general image of triumph into a more specific celebration of the Macedonian wars in particular. The natural association between these Middle Republican porticus and the larger theme of military conquest took hold as Late Republican and Imperial builders repeated the form, and through this repetition transformed Rome into an urban experience of porticoes that called attention to the achievements of imperatores past and present. Long before Sulla's 88 BCE march on Rome confirmed that real power lay in the control of a strong army, the rise of imperatores celebrated in architectural patronage had thus introduced the very possibility of imperialism. The full expression of this imperialism was to take place under Augustus, who by 38 BCE at the latest adopted the radical and ostentatious personal name (praenomen) Imperator. With Imperator Caesar Divi filius as his official name—the first such usage in Roman history—Augustus permanently appropriated and monopolized the distinctive title reserved for victorious generals of the Republic, subsuming the deeds of past and present triumphatores under his own personage as Rome's military commander without equal. He expressed this change visually and through reference to history in his Forum Augustum, in whose hemicycles and porticoes stood triumphal statues of great men of the Republic, accompanied by inscriptions characterizing their achievements in ways that established Augustus as the model by which such greatness was measured. In the lineage of expressing this military-based authority, Octavius's monument was Rome's earliest manifestation of victory expressed architecturally by the porticus.

Hellenic Antecedents

The Porticus Octavia's role as a military victory monument survived its Augustan phase, as it was in the porticus that Augustus displayed the standards of Gabinius, which he had recovered from the Illyrians. The martial purpose of the Porticus Octavia places it in close connection with the
Roman tradition of temple building by victorious generals, showcasing booty to impress viewers with their achievements. Yet it was a new kind of victory monument for Rome, and it must have created quite a sensation. Like the first triumphal arches introduced during the same era, the porticus as a victory monument had a long history ahead of it, but the reasons for Octavius’s choice are unknown.

Some motivations have been hypothesized. The rise of literary and philosophical schools in Rome during the second century BCE may have created a need for Hellenizing stoas, which were closely connected with such intellectual pursuits. Furthermore, the common origins of Octavius’s family may have prevented him from dedicating a temple in the manner of his many predecessors. The biggest factor, however, must have been the precedents set in the Greek world. The likeliest inspiration behind Octavius’s monument was the Greek tradition of erecting stoas in which the spoils of war were often displayed after victories.

Starting in the Archaic period, several such stoas are known. Writing in the second century CE, Pausanias (2.9.6) tells us that Kleisthenes, tyrant of Sikyon, built a stoa funded from the spoils of a battle among the League of Neighbors at Kirrha in the early sixth century. Pausanias (3.11.3) also describes the Stoa Persike, called the most splendid building in the Spartan agora, which was paid for with the spoils of the Persian wars. According to him (3.17.4), the Spartan commander Lysander built another stoa in Sparta in commemoration of his naval victories over the Athenians at Ephesos and Aigospotamoi during the Peloponnesian war, which was decorated with eagles carrying Nikai, the winged personifications of victory. Other victory stoas included one in Elis, one in Thebes, and another in Megalopolis. Perhaps the best known and best preserved of these early stoas is the Stoa of the Athenians in the Sanctuary of Apollo at Delphi (Figure 11). This small stoa of the Ionic order was built against a wall of Lesbian masonry that supports the terrace of the Temple of Apollo. Along this same wall runs a platform upon which the Athenians displayed bronze shields and the figure-heads of ships as spoils, and an inscription alludes to a victory, perhaps that over the Persians at the battle of Mykale in 479 BCE.

Such inscriptions commonly carried the personal names of builders, particularly in the Hellenistic period. In this way, a stoa could glorify the monarch and commemorate his achievements, as well as his role in beautifying a city or sanctuary. Known examples of royally commissioned stoas of the third century BCE include two at Delos built by the Macedonian kings Antigonos Gonatas and Philip V, as well as the stoa of Attalos I of Pergamon at Delphi. Belonging to the second century are the north stoa of the Priene agora built by one of the Cappadocian kings (Ariarathes V or Orophernes Nikephoros), the stoa of Attalos II of Pergamon in the Athenian agora (see Figure 9), and other Attalid stoas at Pessinous and Termessos.

While Greek precedents connected stoas with military victory, more generally it may have been the Greek tradition of stoas advertising a powerful patron that stood behind Octavius’s decision to build a porticus. The silence of Roman sources as to whether Octavius’s soldiers recognized him as imperator perhaps has less to do with the ephemeral nature of the title than its insignificance once he completed his triumph. Like all Republican commanders honored with the acclamatio imperatoria on the battlefield, Octavius could...
not continue to associate his name with such a pseudo-monarchical event following his triumph. While dropping the title, however, there would have been nothing to prevent him from perpetuating the association by attaching his name to a permanent and monumental form typically connected with victory and monarchical patronage. Augustus’s testimony (Res Gestae 19) that he restored the Porticus Octavia but maintained Gnaeus Octavius’s name may suggest that the original and rebuilt porticus carried a prominently displayed inscription in the manner of the stoas built by Hellenistic kings. This gesture on the part of Augustus was echoed by the well-known later act of Hadrian, who in completing the rebuilding of the Pantheon (initiated under Trajan) restored the original Augustan era inscription on the architrave without any mention of himself: “Marcus Agrippa, son of Lucius, in his third consulship made [the monument].”

In the interpretive community of well-traveled Romans in the Middle Republican period, an inscription naming Octavius on a monument that took the form of a stoa would have permanently commemorated his military achievement in the manner of a conquering Hellenistic ruler. At the same time, the absence of any Roman precedents beyond the utilitarian porticus of aediles and censores makes it impossible to be certain that this was Octavius’s intended message. Such Hellenizing associations may, however, be more safely assumed to have taken place in the minds of knowledgeable viewers, whose perceptions were bolstered by later Roman builders who repeated the architectural type in the context of triumphal commemoration.

One might ask whether Octavius’s choice of a stoa reflected the general influence of the Greek world or a more specific historical circumstance that resonated in Rome. Over the course of the previous decade, much of Rome’s interaction with the larger Hellenistic world took place in the context of its conflicts with the Antigonid dynasty of Macedon, and Rome’s role in these conflicts was largely determined by its relationship with a single figure, the Attalid monarch Eumenes II (r. 197–159 BCE). From 187 to 183, Eumenes went to war against Prousias I of Bithynia over a dispute of claims for a part of Phrygia that had belonged to Eumenes’s predecessor, Attalos I. Philip V of Macedon, who was himself involved in a bitter dispute with Eumenes over the cities of Ainos and Maroneia in Thrace at the time, sided with Prousias, thereby placing Macedon directly at war with Pergamon. Rome came to Eumenes’ aid in 183, determining the outcome of the war in Pergamon’s favor. In response to the threat posed by Philip V’s Antigonid successor Perseus and by his new alliances with the Bithynian and Seleucid Kingdoms, Eumenes convinced the Roman Senate to declare war on Macedon in 172, initiating the Third Macedonian War in which Roman and Pergamene corps fought together right down to the battle of Pydna in 168.

This historical context, connecting Rome with Eumenes in opposition to their shared Macedonian enemy, may have shaped the architectural context of Octavius’s Hellenizing decision to build a stoa-like structure. In the 180s, during or immediately following Pergamon and Rome’s struggles with Macedon, Eumenes built a double-story, double-aisle L-shaped stoa around the north and east sides of the Temple of Athena Nikephoros (330s–320s BCE) along with a monumental projecting propylon at the southeast corner, now restored in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin (Figures 12–15). An additional double-story, single-aisle stoa on the south side created the effect of a pi-shaped frame, but this last feature may not have been added until the end of Eumenes’ reign. The fact that the temple long preceded these stoas resulted in its oblique position within the enclosure that they defined. On the architrave over the propylon appears the inscription: “From King Eumenes to Athena Nikephoros (Bringer of Victory)” (see Figure 15). The stoa’s function as a commemoration of military victory resonates in the sculptural reliefs on the parapets of the second story of the L-shaped stoa and its propylon. In addition to representations of Galatian booty from the victories of Eumenes’
predecessor Attalos I, these reliefs prominently displayed the Macedonian weapons and shields brought back as spoils after Eumenes’ victory over Philip V (see Figure 15). While one cannot know precisely what Octavius had in mind in building a porticus as a monument to his victory over the Macedonians, this stoa, which his ally Eumenes II built for the same purpose, would have made for an obvious model.

It also is possible that knowledgeable viewers in Republican Rome understood the Porticus Octavia in a context that was not simply Greek or Hellenistic, and that they did not merely connect the Porticus Octavia with the long-standing Greek tradition of stoas built to commemorate victories. Rather, they may have considered the porticus in a specifically Attalid context, which offered a recent precedent for erecting a columnar portico to celebrate victory over the Antigonid dynasty of Macedon. Upon the terrace immediately below Eumenes’ stoas, in the late 170s to early 160s BCE, the same monarch built the famous Great Altar with its
Figure 15  Propylon, Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros, Pergamon, ca. 180 BCE, inv. no. 139, Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany (photo Jürgen Liepe, Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz / Art Resource, NY)

Figure 16  Great Altar, Pergamon, late 170s–early 160s BCE, post-restoration 2004, view of front, marble, h. 9.66 meters, Antikensammlung, Staatliche Museen, Berlin, Germany (Photo Johannes Laurentius, Bildarchiv Preussischer Kulturbesitz / Art Resource, N.Y.)
s sculptural frieze of gods defeating giants, complete with symbolic cues to associate the giants with Macedonians (Figure 16, see Figure 14). Many giants wear Macedonian helmets or corselets, and a giant lying beneath Hera’s horses in the center of the east frieze has a shield with the Macedonian royal emblem of the starburst.94 Viewed from eye level in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin, the Great Altar is as much a monumental portico as an altar, with columns echoing the frame of the Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros above. The latter perhaps offers a more complete precedent for Octavius’s porticus, preceding it as a “double portico” in all possible senses—two aisles, two stories, and an L-shaped configuration—and as a complement to a much older temple. Nonetheless, as a victory monument contemporary with the Porticus Octavia and built during or at the close of the Third Macedonian War, the Great Altar offers a Pergamene parallel for the earliest use of the portico as triumphal architecture in Republican Rome.

There is no need to posit that Octavius’s motivation for erecting a monument of Attalid inspiration was to challenge the traditional Republican magistracy through an expression of his own post-triumphal, quasi-monarchical identity. Nonetheless, in framing a temple instead of building one, his columnar monument opened a real and conceptual space between himself and the cult building, a space pregnant with potential meanings to be interpreted and reinterpreted. It is clear that in subsequent Imperial fora, the model of the portico-cum-temple complex was employed to express the military and religious foundations of imperial power, using a form similar to that of the Sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros created by the Attalid basileus (monarch) Eumenes II. This similarity does not mean that Octavius simply transferred this meaning from Pergamon to Rome in the porticus that he built, however. More accurately, the Imperial fora show the culmination of slow-moving historical processes that began with a Middle Republican naval commander’s construction of a monument whose living architectural sources rendered it capable of expressing a new kind of power in Rome.

Conclusion

Consistent with Michael Baxandall’s observations on art history, one may understand “influence” in the history of architecture not as the passive reception of forms and ideas from earlier monuments, but as a “pattern of intention” in which patrons and architects actively appropriate and reconstitute antecedent forms.95 The intention to make the Imperial fora spaces that glorified the victories of imperatores seems obvious, but tracing their origins to recognizably related Hellenistic and Middle Republican architectural types and patronage reveals underlying complexities.

A pattern of meaning in Rome does not arise until the second example, when Metellus’s porticus construes Octavius’s combination of portico and temple as an architecture of the triumphant commander in the Macedonian wars. The repetition of this architectural type by imperatores of the Late Republic, including its adaptation for a new “forum” as a place of public business commemorating Caesar’s triumphs, provided a source for Augustus’s similar complex—a space for the imperator as victorious monarch.

Within this history, Octavius’s building occupies a position of special interest. From Hellenistic monarchical traditions that reached a culminating surge under Atalid power, the Porticus Octavia diverted a channel for later influences that would come to expand and fill Rome’s sacred core. As a sequence of spaces framed by columnar porticoes, the Imperial fora asserted the power of the imperator in a manner analogous to the sanctuary of Athena Nikephoros in Pergamon. One might conclude that the “imperializing” architectural patronage of Republican era imperatores seems tantamount to architectural Hellenization, but to do so may perpetuate an illusion of the concreteness of architectural cultures and periods. Rather, the subsequent history of Rome’s architectural changes was in no way determined by a fixed correspondence between Hellenistic meaning and form in Octavius’s monument. As a monument to an individual’s role in the Third Macedonian War, the Porticus Octavia existed outside the scholarly designations of Hellenistic or Roman Republican architecture. Retrospectively, it can be recognized as a source of the endless improvisations wherein subsequent porticus, and finally the Imperial fora, responded to one another at a local level, unlimited by cultural or chronological categories. The history of the general architectural type of the porticus is as fluid as that of the Porticus Octavia itself, which was destroyed, rebuilt, built upon, and ultimately resurrected in modern scholarly narratives.

Notes

1. I am grateful to Fikret K. Yegül, who gave invaluable feedback for my developing ideas about Roman architecture of the Middle Republic long before I set out to write this article, and to Heather Hyde Minor, who read an early draft of the manuscript and offered useful advice. I would also like to thank David Brownlee for his helpful editing, and the two particularly thoughtful anonymous readers who gave insightful suggestions. The research for this study was made possible by a grant from the Campus Research Board of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a
Creative Research Award from the College of Fine and Applied Arts of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.


4. In addition to fluidity, Upton suggests “drift” as a metaphor for historical process; Upton, “Starting from Baalbek,” 464.

5. Despite differences in methodology and scope, my interest in the role the Imperial fora as victory monuments and their Hellenistic antecedents owes much to a brief study by Helmut Kyrieleis, although he points to the later Porticus Metelli of the 140s BCE (see below) rather than the Porticus Octavia as the originating architecture of this type in Rome; see Helmut Kyriel- eis, “Bemerkungen zur Vorgeschichte der Kaiserfora,” in Hellenismus in Mittelitalien: Kolloquium in Göttingen vom 5. bis 9. Juni 1974, vol. 2, ed. Paul Zanker (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1976), 431–38.

6. As in its present, largely Domitianic form following destruction by fire, in plan it was a roughly 160-by-75-meter complex stretching between the Arx in the southeast and the Clivus Argentarius in the west, consisting of a long travertine-paved central court enclosed by double-aisled porticoes on three sides. For the topographical details of its setting, see James Anderson, The Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora (Brussels: Latomus, 1984), 45. A thorough archaeological study is Carla Amici, Il foro di Cesare (Florence: L. Olschki, 1991), useful also for its documentation of archival sources from the largely unpublished excavations of the 1930s, and supplemented by subsequent findings summarized by Silviana Rizzo, “Il progetto fori imperiali,” in Crypta Balbi—Fori Imperiali: Archeologia urbana a Roma e interventi di restauro nell’anno del Grande Giubileo, ed. Serena Baiani and Massimiliano Ghiraldi (Rome: Edizioni Kappa, 2000), 67–69. For the remains of the temple of Venus Genetrix and its various constructional phases, see Roger B. Ulrich, “Julius Caesar and the Creation of the Forum Iulium,” American Journal of Archaeology 97, no. 1 (Jan. 1993), 58–66 and figs. 3–7. The series of double-story tabernae (of which ten survive) cut into the slope of the Arx behind the west portico (see Figures 1, 2) were likely part of the Caesarian project rather than an Augustan or Domitianic addition. The presence of opus reticulatum with small facing stones (diameter ca. 5 cm) in the lower walls suggests that the entire structure of the tabernae was initiated only in the Augustan period, based on a comparison with the reticulate work in the Mausoleum Augusti; see Giuliano Fiorani, “Problemi architettonici del Foro di Cesare,” Quaderni dell’Istituto di Topografia 5 (1968), 91. Conversely, Anderson (Historical Topography, 48–49) interprets this work as belonging to a complete rebuilding of the tabernae under Domitian. However, Ulrich’s observation ("Julius Caesar, 70–71") that the materials and size of the tufa ashlars work are identical to the Caesarian blocks in the podium of the Temple of Venus Genetrix should favor an original Caesarian construction of the tabernae with either an Augustan or Flavian/Trajanic restoration (including the opus reticulatum). For overviews of primary sources, topography, and archaeology, see Lawrence Richardson Jr., A New Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1916), 65–67, 188; Chiara Morselli, “Forum Iulium,” Lexicon Topographium Urbis Romae (hereafter LTUR), 2: 299–306; Dorian Borbonus and Lothar Haselberger, “Forum Iulium,” in Mapping Augustan Rome, ed. Elisha Ann Danuser, Journal of Roman Archaeology, suppl. ser. 50 (2002, rpt. 2008), 134–35.

7. As Roger Ulrich persuasively argues, considerations of historical evidence together with an analysis of archaeological evidence suggest that that the planning of the Forum Iulium would not have begun until after the Battle of Pharsalos in August of 48 BCE. In a letter of 54 BCE, Cicero (ad Att. 4.16.8) refers to his own act as an agent of Caesar to purchase land next to the Forum Romanum, but Cicero explicitly states that Caesar’s intention at that point in time is to enlarge the Forum Romanum. The Curia Hostilia, which the Curia Iulia of Caesar’s forum replaced, did not burn down until 52 BCE, and it was at Pharsalos that Caesar vowed a temple to Venus Victrix, later dedicated to Venus Genetrix (see note 26 below). Evidence for hurried construction in the fabric of the podium of the Temple of Venus Genetrix, dedicated in 46 BCE, is consistent with a project that had not begun until after Caesar’s victory over Pompey at Pharsalos. For these arguments and additional considerations, see Ulrich, “Forum of Julius Caesar.”

8. According to the elder Pliny, in the first century CE, the Forum Augustum and Templum Pacis were two of the three most beautiful buildings in all of Rome, along with the Basilica Aemilia in the Forum Romanum (HN


11. Like the Temple of Venus Genetrix, the rostrate Temple of Castor was utilized for the public addresses of high magistrates, including Caesar himself; see Ulrich, “Forum of Julius Caesar,” 73–75.

12. Whereas Caesar’s forum had truly expropriated the political and legislative functions of the Forum Romanum, the Imperial fora, from that of Augustus onward, were primarily ceremonial and symbolic spaces enclosed within a program of representation bespeaking an ideology of absolute power mandated by military triumph. As Roger Ulrich observes, they were but mere “architectural paper tigers” with respect to the idea of the forum as a seat of official business; Ulrich, “Forum of Julius Caesar,” 80.

13. On the difficulty of distinguishing between the Forum Boarium as a forum as opposed to simply a topographic region, see Lothar Haselberger, “Forum Boarium/Boarium,” in Mapping Augustan Rome, 131–32.

14. For the full range of general and specific meanings associated with forum, see Lewis and Short, s.v.

15. “Imperial fora” is a conventional modern designation for this collection of complexes. In the fourth century CE, the Templum Pacis is referred to as forum Pacis (Amm. Marc. 16.10.14). Another two centuries later, Procopius similarly refers to it as phoron (Procop., Goth. 4.21.11). The dedication date is provided by Cass. Dio 65.15.1 and Aaur. Vict., Cass. 9.7, 9.8. In plan, the complex measures roughly 150 by 140 meters, with long rectangular elements indicated on the Severan Marble Plan fragments that excavation has now confirmed to be planters for trees or flowerbeds visible from the Via dei Fori Imperiali, as well as works by famous Greek sculptors; see Rizzo, “Il progetto fori imperiali,” 69–71.

16. Suet. Ves. 9.1; Pliny HN 36.102. Greek writers use the equivalent temenos as opposed to agora or phoron; Joseph. BJ 7.158; Dio Cass. 65.15.1; Hdn. 1.14.2. See Anderson, Historical Topography, 110.

17. For the use of templum to describe a porticoed enclosure for an aedes, as well as other definitions and ancient sources, see Ferdinando Castagnoli, “Il templio romano: questioni di terminologia e di tipologia,” Papers of the British School at Rome 52 (1984), 3–20. For the term temenos, see Bettina Bergquist, The Archaic Greek Temenos. A Study of Structure and Function, Skrifter Ugfivna av Svenska Institutet i Athen 4°, Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae (Lund: Berlinska Boktryckeriet, 1967), 5–6. Neither templum vel temenos were universally employed by surrounding porticoes, nor were all porticoed enclosures sacred spaces, but from the second century BCE onward the combination was prevalent.

18. According to Josephus (BJ 7.158), Vespasian vowed and began constructing the Templum Pacis just after the completion of the Jewish wars, for which Vespasian and Titus together celebrated the triumph represented on the Arch of Titus on the upper Via Sacra. He furthermore tells us (7.161) that the various gold vessels and the monumental menorah from the destroyed Temple of Jerusalem were displayed as booty within the Templum Pacis.

19. Officially called templum Divorum in the Regionary Catalogues, the Porticus Divorum served as a precinct for the temples of the deified Vespasian and Titus (194 by 77 m), whose form is known through a representation on the Severan Marble Plan; for primary sources and scholarly literature, see Richardson, New Topographical Dictionary, 130; Filippo Coarelli, “Divorum,” LTUR 2: 19–20.

20. This complex was part of Augustus’s property on the Palatine. Along with the travertine blocks for the foundations of walls and columns, much of the tufa facing of opus reticulatum on the temple’s concrete podium (ca. 20.5 x 19 meters) has been removed. In addition, the steps on the southwest side date from a nineteenth century restoration. The porticus with colonnades of Numidian yellow marble, exhibiting statues of the fifty daughters of Danaus in its intercolumnar spaces and statues of the sons of Aegyptus, is described by primary sources (Vell. Pat. 2.81.3; Suet., Aug. 29; Cass. Dio 51.13.1; Prop. 2.31.1–2.3–4; Schol. Pers. 2.56); see Lawrence Richardson, New Topographical Dictionary, 14; Pierre Gros, “Apollo Palatinus,” LTUR 1: 55–56; Günder Varinlioglu, “Porticus Apollo (Palatium),” in Mapping Augustan Rome, 202–3.


23. For the Porticus Minucia, see the excellent review of scholarly literature by Erik J. Kondratieff in Mapping Augustan Rome, 205.


25. For the Porticus Octaviae, see Visco, “Porticus Octaviae,” LTUR 4: 141–45; Petruccioli, “Porticus Octaviae,” in Mapping Augustan Rome, 206. For the temples of Juno Regina and Jupiter Stator and the Porticus Metelli that Augustus restored as the Porticus Octaviae, see discussion below.


27. For bibliography, see Valentin Kockel, “Forum Augustum,” LTUR 2: 289–95.
28. Dedicated in 97 CE by Domitian’s successor Nerva following Domitian’s assassination and senatorial issue of damnatio memoriae, the circumstances surrounding the last Flavian emperor’s original intentions for this forum remain mysterious. Beyond the identity of Minerva as a war goddess, there is no known connection to any specific victory, and in this sense Helmut Kyrieleis points to the Forum Transitorium as an exception to the general characteristics displayed by the other Imperial fora; Kyrieleis, “Bemerken,” 433, 434. There exists no testimony for when Domitian vowed his temple, but it could very well have taken place during his conquest of the Agri Decumates. For the architecture and topography of the temple and its forum setting, see Eve D’Ambra, Private Lives, Imperial Virtues: The Frieze of the Forum Transitorium in Rome (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 19–46.

29. In addition, a triple triumphal arch at the entrance to the courtyard of Trajan’s column at the forum’s northwest end underscored the theme of conquest. This feature also compares with the same type of arch found in the entrance to the Porticus Divorum (see above). Coins show the triumphal arch with a single archway, on each side of which appear two aediculae niches filled with statuary and framed by columns. Above the pediments of the niches appear roundels. On the attic appears Trajan’s six-horse chariot, trophies, and human figures; Anderson, Historical Topography, 142–43; Harold Mattingly et al., Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum (London: British Museum, 1926), 3: 102, nos. 509–10. The apparent location of this arch at the northwest end of the forum is suggested by the excavation campaign of 1998–2000 directed by Roberto Meneghini, who found no evidence for the presence of the Temple of the Deified Trajan traditionally thought to have been in this location; see Rizzo, “Il progetto fori imperiali,” 73–74. For a contrary view in support of the traditional location of the temple, see John W. Stamper, The Architecture of Roman Temples: The Republic to the Middle Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 181.

30. It is important to conceive of this connection in terms of a pattern rather than any fixed meaning that the form of the porticus might signify, if for no other reason than that exceptions to that pattern may be cited. For example, the Augustan era Porticus Vipsania initiated by Agrippa’s sister Vipsania Polla lacks any obvious connection to military victory. For sources and discussion, see Coarelli, “Porticus Vipsania,” LTUR 4: 151–53.


32. Vell. Pat. 1.11.3; Livy, Per. 32; Val. Max. 7.5.4; Eur. 4.14.2. This was also the time at which Metellus added Macedonia’s as a cognomen ex victis gentibus (Vell. Pat. 1.11.2); see Leen Pieters-Castren, Magnificentia publica. The Victory Monuments of the Roman Generals in the Era of the Punic Wars (Helsinki: Societas Scientiarum Fennica, 1987), 128–34. For Metellus’s postwar acts, see Robert M. Kallet-Marx, Hegemony to Empire: The Development of Roman Imperialism in the East from 148 to 62 B.C. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), 11–18.

33. First marble temple in Rome: Vell. Pat. 1.11.5. On the Severan Marble Plan (Rodríguez-Almeida, Forma Urbis Marmorea, pl. 23), the Temple of Jupiter Stator lacks a rear colonnade, contradicting Vitruvius’s assertion (De arch. 3.2.5) that it was periperal. This difference probably reflects an Augustan alteration of the temple in order to make room for the semicircular construction added for the Porticus Octaviae visible on the Marble Plan fragments; see Pierre Gros, “Trois temples de la Fortune des 1er et 2e siècles de notre ère. Remarques sur l’origine des sanctuaires romains à absides,” Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome, Antiquté 97, no. 2 (1967), 508; Pierre Gros, “Hermodoros et Vitruve,” Mélanges de l’Ecole française de Rome, Antiquté 85, no. 1 (1973), 143 note 4; Pierre Gros, Aurea temple: Recherches sur l’architecture religieuse de Rome à l’époque d’Auguste (Rome: Bibliothèque des Ecoles françaises d’Athènes et de Rome, 1976), 81 note 21. For the bibliography on arguments concerning the dating of the temples of Juno Regina and Jupiter Stator, see Alessandro Viscogliosi, “Porticus Metelli,” LTUR 4: 130–32.


35. See Kyrieleis, “Bemerken.”

36. Festus 186–88L. Confusingly, he states that there are two monuments called Octavie porticus, and based on this testimony Richardson assigns two separate porticus by this name; New Topographical Dictionary, 317. Yet Festus’s reference to the patronage and location of these monuments seems to indicate that these are the Octavia porticus of Gnaeus Octavius and the Octavia porticus that, as Velleius Paterculus tells us (1.11.3), later replaced the Porticus Metelli.

37. Res Gestae 19; HN 34.8. The Circus Flaminius had nothing in common with a racing track like the Circus Maximus The noun circus simply means a round plane, from which chariot racing tracks derived their name; Lewis and Short, s.v. Since the ancient testimony places at least six known temples in the circus by 220 BCE, it certainly cannot have been a racing track; see Timothy P. Wiseman, “The Circus Flaminius,” Papers of the British School in Rome 42 (1974), 3–26.

38. This latter shrine is depicted on the obverse of an aureus issued by Gnaeus Domitius Ahenobarbus (RE V Domitius 23) in ca. 42–40 BCE showing a Corinthian tetrastyle building; Michael H. Crawford, Roman Republican Coinage (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1974), no. 519, 527, pl. 42 and figs. 100, 101; Coarelli, Campo Marzio, 404 and figs. 83–84. The temple was likely first built sometime between 293 and 218 BCE, the years corresponding to the lost books of Livy; Castagnoli, “Il problema dell’Ara di Domiziano Eneobarb,” Arti Figurative 1, no. 4 (1945), 181–96. Its founder is unknown, but given the cult designation and location among the victory temples of the Circus Flaminius, it was likely vowed in connection with a naval triumph during the First Punic War; Adam Ziolkowski, The Temples of Mid-Republican Rome and their Historical and Topographical Context (Rome: L’Erma di Bretschneider, 1992), 117–19; Coarelli, Campo Marzio, 404. On the backside of the Casa di Lorenzo Marlio, preserved within the basement walls beneath the vicolo Costaguti and behind the Tempietto del Carmelo, there was discovered the remains in situ of a temple podium; Pier Luigi Tucci, “Dov’erano il tempio di Nettuno e la nave di Enea?” Arti Figurative 1, no. 4 (1945), 181–96. S. the podium and the marble columns and capitals nearby, the temple is reconstructed as tetrastyle. A subsequent excavation in 2001 by Tucci along with Filippo Coarelli and Simone Sisani, as yet unpublished, confirms the existence of the temple and modifies its dimensions and form to a larger, hexastyle building. I thank an anonymous reviewer for this newer

39. Seconded by Festus 187–88L.

40. HN 34.8. For what Pliny may have intended by porticus duplex, see below.

41. RE 17 Octavius 17; Plut. Aem. 26–27. Octavius then captured Perseus at Samothrace (Livy 44.45–46, 45.5–6; see Piettilà–Castren, Magnificientia publica, 118–23. For the subsequent activities of Octavius and his assassination in 163 BCE, see Erich S. Grüen, The Hellenistic World and the coming of Rome (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 269.


43. According to Björn Olinder, the Porticus Octavia’s history of the building is tightly interwoven with other porticus. He argues that it was built by Gnaeus Octavius as a single wing portico in the 160s BCE but then suffered damage by a lightning strike in the 150s. In the following decade, Quintus Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus repaired the portico and incorporated it into the fabric of his multiple wing Porticus Metelli; Olinder, Porticus Octavia in Circo Flammino. Topographical Studies in the Campus Region of Rome, Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Rom 8° 11 (Stockholm, 1974), 83–111. There is no evidence that the Porticus Metelli incorporated the Porticus Octavia, however, and there is no reason for Metellus to have done so. For additional arguments against Olinder’s theory, see Timothy P. Wise- man, in the Journal of Roman Studies 66 (1976), 246–47; Filippo Coarelli, Campo Marzo, 519–30.

44. These include the Temple of Bellona vowed by Appius Claudius Caecus in his battle against the Samnites and etruscans in 296; the Temple of Pietas vowed by M. Acilius Glabrio vowed during the 191 war against Antiochus, dedicated by his son in 181; the Temple of Hercules of the Muses dedicated by M. Fulvius Nobilior following his 187 triumph over the Aetolians; and M. Aemilius Lepidus’s Temples of Juno Regina and Diana dedicated in 179 by M. Acilius Glabrio vowed during the 191 war against Antiochus, vowed by M. Acilius Glabrio vowed during the 191 war against Antiochus, and were mistakenly located west of the via Lata in the ruins of the Palazzi Doria e Bonaparte and below the church of S. Maria in Via Lata. Despite questions of identification, Gatti’s placement of the fragments at least is conclusive, since there can be no question that the building represented on the Marble Plan matches the precise layout of the Tiberside building. With the inscription “LIA” as its crucial piece of evidence, Gatti furthermore argues that these newly rejoined pieces and their associated building represent not an earthenium, but the “Porticus Aemilia” located outside the Porta Trigemina, mentioned by Livy to have been repaired by the censors Quintus Fulvius Flaccus and Aulus Postumius Albinus.

45. It is located beside the Via Romolo Gessi and the Via Beniamino Franklin. The remains of opus incertum describe a 48.7-by-87-meter oblong building with arcades supporting fifty barrel vaults. The identification of this structure with the Porticus Aemilia is that of Guglielmo Gatti, who connected Fragments 23 and 24 of the Severan Marble Plan, placing them in the area near the Tiber; Guglielmo Gatti, Saepa Iulia and Porticus Aemilia nella forma severiana,” Bulletino della Commissione archeologica Comunale di Roma 62 (1934), 135–44. Due to the partial inscription “LIA” carved across two of the fragments, these had been thought to represent the Saepa Iulia, and were mistakenly located west of the via Latina in the ruins of the Palazzi Doria e Bonaparte and below the church of S. Maria in Via Latina. Despite questions of identification, Gatti’s placement of the fragments at least is conclusive, since there can be no question that the building represented on the Marble Plan matches the precise layout of the Tiberside building. With the inscription “LIA” as its crucial piece of evidence, Gatti furthermore argues that these newly rejoined pieces and their associated building represent not an earthenium, but the “Porticus Aemilia” located outside the Porta Trigemina, mentioned by Livy to have been repaired by the censors Quintus Fulvius Flaccus and Aulus Postumius Albinus.


48. The facing stones are of a porous yellow tufa, irregularly shaped but consistently 10 to 12 cm in diameter and held well in place with a strong, high quality mortar. According to Mary Blake, the identification of the Porticus Aemilia with the building on the edge of the Aventine “has cogency if this is an unrecorded restoration of about the time of Sulla, which on the whole seems more likely”; Ancient Roman Construction in Italy from the Prehistoric Period to Augustus (Washington, D. C.: Carnegie Institution, 1947), 249. For arguments against this traditional identification of the Aventine structure based on anachronistic materials, unconvincing inscriptive evidence, and inappropriate building typology, see Lawrence Richardson, “The Evolution of the Porticus Octaviae,” American Journal of Archaeology no. 1 80 (1976), 57–64. Building upon Richardson’s arguments, Stephen Tuck argues based on inscriptive evidence that the structure is to be identified with the Horrea Cornelia, the private warehouse of the Sullan family; Stephen Tuck, “A New Identification for the ‘Porticus Aemilia’,” Journal of Roman Archaeology 13 (2000), 175–82. Tuck’s suggested restoration of an “ELIA” on the marble plan fragments reading “ELIA” rests upon his interpretation of the shape of the break in front of the “L.” of the inscription, as well as two small linear scratches appearing to left of the remains of a preparatory inscription. Together, as Tuck observes, these scratches form a letter that “does not appear to be an ‘I’” (180), and therefore may indicate an “E.” According to Tina Najbjerg and Jennifer Trimble of the online Stanford Digital Forma Urbis Romanae Project, however, “close scrutiny of the digital photograph (of the Marble Plan fragment) does not support (Tuck’s) argument”; http://www.formaurbis.stanford.edu (accessed August 2009). Cozza and Tucci (see note 43 above) argue that the “LIA” preserved on the Marble Plan fragments completes the inscription, “Navalia”; Cozza and Tucci, “Navalia,” 175.

49. ... ex ca peonia clipea in inaureata in festigio locis aedibus pavantium, porticularium extra portam Trigemina, emporium ad Tibermis adiacens, alteram a porta Forminitali ad Martis aram, quae in Campus tert eset, perduraeunt. This and subsequent references to Livy’s Ab urbe condita libros cite the edition of Evan T. Sage.

50. These are characterized as a porticus inter lignariae (35.41.9–10) of Ticius and Iunius, and under M. Fulvius a portico built extra portam Trigeminam as well as alium post navalia et ad fanum Herculis et post speci ad Tibermis et ad aedem Apollinis Medici (40.5.1.6–7); RE 7A Ticius 5; RE 10 Iunius 54. For the porticus inter lignariae, porticus post navalia, and porticus post speci ad Tibermis, see Richardson, A New Topographical Dictionary, 314, 317, 319; Coarelli, LTUR, 4: 150–51.

51. As argued by Richardson, New Topographical Dictionary, 311. See also Livy 35.10.2–3, where he mentions fires and floods in the area in connection with the years 193 and 192. Less plausibly, Annette Nünnerich-Asmus suggests a more monumental and urban function for the five early porticus mentioned by Livy, interpreting their function in delimiting of the outer boundaries of the Circus Flaminius; Basilika und Portikus: Die Architektur der Säulenhallen ab Anfand gewandelter Urbanität in später Republik und früher Kaiserzeit (Cologne: Bohlau, 1994). This theory of course depends greatly on the orientations and extensions of the porticoes, for information is lacking.

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53. Examples include the Stoà of Attalos I of Pergamon at Delphi, the Stoà of Eunennes II and Attalos II of Pergamon in Athens, the Stoàs of Antigonos Gonatas and Philip V of Macedon in Delos, and others as well; see Coulton, *Architectural Development*, 13–14, 56 note 5, 59, 69, figs. 54, 55, and pl. 15.

54. Due to the considerable size of the area between the Theatrum Pompei and Porticus Philippi, Nünnerich-Asmus hypothesizes that it might have extended a great distance; *Basilica and Porticus*, 38–39. Yet since our sources offer nothing other than a simple location in this general era, rather than any hint that the *porticus* was large or long or somehow filled or extended across it, this suggestion seems unlikely. For a possible (though difficult to support) proposal that the *porticus* may be represented in two folios of a fifteenth century notebook of Giuliano da Sangallo, see Tacu, “Tempio di Nettuno,” 33. Sangallo attributes this building to the patronage of Pompey. I thank an anonymous reviewer for the helpful suggestion that Sangallo may have seen a colonnade located at the front of the Porticus Philippi and reconstructed the wall behind it. The bases of the columns are currently below the modern street level of the via del Portico di Ottavia and preserved in an archival drawing of 1890 by Domenico Marchetti; see Pier Luigi Tacu, “Nuove ricerche sulla topografia dell’area del circo Flaminio,” *Studi Romani* 41 (1993), 236–37, 241, with Marchetti’s drawing produced in Plate 19.

55. The discovery of this temple’s location and orientation in the 1990s (Tacu, “Tempio di Nettuno”) rendered all previous scholarly hypotheses concerning the orientation and plan of the Porticus Octavia (quadriporticus v. simple portico) obsolete.

56. Marble Plan fragment 3 1hh, corresponding to the location where some columns were discovered in the nineteenth century; Coarelli, “L’ ‘Ara di Domizio Enobarbo,” 302–68; Coarelli, *Campo Marzio*, 521.

57. Olinder (*Porticus Octavia*, 122) hypothesizes Pliny’s description to mean a portico with colonnades on its front and back long sides, and divided by an additional colonnade down its long axis. For a Greek precedent, he looks to the Middle Stoà of ca. 180 BCE in the Athenian Agora. Nünnerich-Asmus (*Basilica and Porticus*, 38) counters that the Middle Stoà was an exception in the Greek world, concluding instead that, since the Porticus Metelli with its double aisles is never described as *porticus duplex*, it is highly probable that Pliny’s description should indicate a double story portico. On the analogy of *porticus duplex* with the Greek *dipêt stoà*, Coulton concludes that it indicated porticoes with two aisles; J. J. Coulton, “‘Dipêt Stoà,” *American Journal of Archaeology* 75, no. 2 (1971), 183–84; Coulton, *Architectural Development*, 3–4. Upon close analysis, however, Gros (L’Architecture romaine, 98) correctly points out that Vitruvius employs *porticus duplex* in the context of multi-sided enclosures as well.

58. Likely, the Porticus Meleagri was named for a sculpted or painted scene of Meleager’s Calydonian boar hunt, and the Porticus Argonautarum named for similar reasons of decoration pertaining to the Argonauts; see Richardson, *New Topographical Dictionary*, 312, 315; Maria P. Guidobaldi, “Porticus Argonautarum,” in *LTUR*, 4: 118–19; Enzo Gatti, “Porticus Meleagri,” in *LTUR*, 4: 130.

59. As in the Sanctuary of Aphroditè at Kos (early second century BCE) and the upper terrace complex of the Asklepieion at Kos (begun around 170 BCE); see John R. Senseney, *The Art of Building in the Classical World: Vision, Craftsmanship, and Linear Perspective in Greek and Roman Architecture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 162–168 with figs. 84–92, along with an analysis of the geometric underpinning of Temple A of the Asklepion's upper terrace complex. This underpinning reveals design-related connections between Temple A and the Middle Republican Temple of Juno at Gabie, where the Koan complex’s axially symmetrical arrangement of temple and surrounding pi-stoà is also repeated (see subsequent note), reflecting possible influences in Middle Republican Rome that are underscored by the Porticus Metelli’s repetition of the double-temple porticoed enclosure found earlier in the Sanctuary of Aphrodite at Kos. For the geometric underpinning of Temple A at Kos and its possible significance for the Hellenization of Roman architecture, see also John R. Senseney, “Idea and Visuality in Hellenistic Architecture: A Geometric Analysis of Temple A of the Asklepion at Kos,” *Hesperia* 76, no. 3 (2007), 554–95.


61. Such as the temples of Apollo Medicus and Bellona. Based on the testimony of Livy, the Temple of Apollo Medicus in Circo was first dedicated in 431 after a plague (Livy 4:25.4), restored following the Gallic sack of 353 (7.20.9), and again probably rebuilt in 179 along with the construction of a theater in front (40.5.4–6). The present Temple of Apollo Sosianus is a first-century-BCE reconstruction begun by C. Sosius and completed under Augustus in the first quarter of the following century. The Temple of Bellona was dedicated in 296 BCE.

62. Coarelli (*Campo Marzio* 517) suggests that Octavius’s *porticus* may have resulted from his plebeian background, which would have prevented him from dedicating a temple in the manner of his many predecessors. If true, this rationale still does not explain the decision to build a *porticus* specifically.

63. The Porticus Octavia stood in the vicinity of at least five temples in the Circus built by past *triumphatores*: the Temple of Bellona vowed by Appius Claudius Caecus in his battle against the Sammites and Etruscans in 296; the Temple of Pietas vowed by M. Aciulus Glabrio vowed during the 191 war against Antiochus, and dedicated by his son in 181; the Temple of Hercules of the Muses dedicated by M. Fulvius Nobilior following his 187 triumph over the Aetolians; and M. Aemilius Lepidus’s Temples of Juno Regina and Diana dedicated in 179 after his victory over the Ligurians; see Wiseman, “Circus Flamininus,” 5–6; Ziolkowski, *Temples*, 18–19, 50–56, 117–19, 120–22, 179–83.


66. Plutarch (*Aem. 28*) informs us of Paullus’s use of Perseus’s portrait base.


68. On the importance of triumphal monuments in transforming ephemeral victories into long-term political power in ancient Rome, see Tonio Hölscher,


72. The first appearance of “Imp. Caesar” is found on a coin struck by Agrippa in 38 BCE; Syme, “Imperator Caesar,” 367, 368.

73. Ibid., 370, 372.


76. Already by the fourth and third centuries, the vast majority of temples in Rome were vowed by generals with *imperium* rather than aediles; see Ziolkowski, *Temples*, 200, 307.

77. See above, note 67.


79. This status is hinted at by his lack of a *cognomen*; Coarelli, *Campos Marzo*, 517.

80. Pietilä-Castrén, *Magnificenta publica*, 122. Pietilä-Castrén also cites Octavian’s strong ties with the Aeumili, builders of Rome’s first *porticus*. As discussed above, however, the utilitarian nature of the early examples known from Livy makes this a less attractive explanation.


82. For the *stoa* at Kirrha (never located) and the two stoas at Sparta, see Coulton, *Architectural Development*, 14, 27, 30, 34, 39, 285.

83. No remains of this *stoa* have been found. Pausanias and Vitruvius (*De arch. 1.1.6*) provide somewhat conflicting descriptions of an interesting feature of this *stoa*. While Vitruvius indicates that Pericrates supported the entablature in the manner of the Erechtheion Caryatids, Pausanias says merely that these captives were “on the columns.”

84. Eris: a *stoa* built with the spoils from the battle against Kerkyra during the Peloponnesian War; *Paus. 6.24.4; Thuc. 3.29.2, 3.79–80*. Thebes: Diod. Sic. 12.70.5. Megalopolis: a *stoa* in the agora built from the booty from the victory over Akrotatos and his Lakiadion expedition as part of the larger battle against Aristodemos; *Paus. 8.30.7*. For these monuments, see Coulton, *Architectural Development*, 14, 45, 47, 237.


86. Russell Meiggs and David Lewis, *A Selection of Greek Historical Inscriptions* (Cambridge: Clarendon Press, 1971), 54. Pausanias guesses that this inscription refers to the naval victories of Phormion in 429 BCE. According to Amandry (*Colonne*, 108–15), however, the inscription style and the architecture of the *stoa* itself both point to an earlier date consistent with the Athenian victory at Mykale at the end of the Persian war. Pausanias 10.11.5 describes the display of booty within the *stoa*.


88. Ibid., 1, 1 note 1, 9 note 3, 10 note 1, 55, 56, 59–60, 66, 67, 75, 78, 111, 117, 119–20, 131 note 4, 133–34, 146, 155, 179, 231, 233–34, 287, and figs. 21, 22, 23, 60.3, 60.12, 61.2, 113.1.


96. See Andrew Stewart, “*Pergamo ara mammorea magna*; On the Date, Reconstruction, and Functions of the Great Altar of Pergamon,” in *From Pergamon to Sperlonga: Sculpture and Context*, ed. Nancy T. Grummond and Brunilde S. Ridgeway (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 40. Since such imagery would otherwise be anachronistic, Stewart argues for a date in the late 170s to early 160s (“*Pergamo ara mammorea magna*,” 41), which is correct in my view.