THE FINAL YEARS OF THE TRIUMVIRATE: POWER DYNAMICS AND THE ROLE OF OCTAVIAN'S ARCHITECTURE IN POLITICAL MESSAGING

Los últimos años del Triunvirato: Dinámicas de poder y la arquitectura de Octavio como herramienta de mensaje político

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Abstract The primary objective of this paper is to offer an interpretation of the relationship between architectural monuments and the political atmosphere during the years of the Second Triumvirate and the moments immediately following. It will also offer a synthesis of the different theories on the significance of Octavian's architecture in this period. During the years 32-27 BCE, Octavian's constitutional position was outside the law, but this situation was legitimised by the oath of allegiance proclaimed in 32 BCE. This political instability characterised a period dominated by the ongoing struggle against Mark Antony. The position of supreme power, constitutional uncertainty and civil war can be perceived by analysing the monuments of this period, including the Mausoleum and the Temple of Apollo Palatine.

Keywords Augustus; Principate: monuments; politics; Mausoleum; Apollo

Resúmen: La intención principal de este trabajo es la de ofrecer una interpretación sobre la vinculación entre monumentos arquitectónicos y atmósfera política en los años del Segundo Triunvirato y los momentos inmediatamente posteriores. Con esta

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intención también se ofrecerá una síntesis sobre las distintas teorías acerca del significado de la arquitectura de Octavio en este periodo. Entre el 32 y el 27 a.C. la posición constitucional de Octavio estuvo fuera de la ley, sin embargo, esta situación fue legitimada a través del juramento de lealtad pronunciado en el 32 a.C. Esta inestabilidad política fue la tónica de un periodo dominado por la lucha contra Marco Antonio. La posición de poder supremo, la incerteza constitucional y la guerra civil pueden ser percibidos al analizar los monumentos de este periodo: el Mausoleo y el templo de Apolo Palatino.

Palabras-Clave: Augusto; Principado; monumentos; política; Mausoleo; Apolo

1. Introduction: political context of the period 36-27 BCE

The constitutional position of Octavian in the 30s BCE is noteworthy for its uniqueness, as is his monumental architecture from this period. His architectural propaganda at the time reflected constitutional uncertainty and other political issues. The period between 36-27 BCE saw significant political developments and constitutional issues, and the architectural propaganda of this era offers a unique perspective on these events.

The *lex Titia* established the Triumvirate in 43 BCE, comprising Octavian, Mark Antony and Lepidus. This was extended for a further five years at the end of 37 BCE (DC 48.54.1; 49.23.1; APP. *BC*. 5.398; Plut. *Ant*. 35.1-5; RODDAZ, 2003)[1]. Nevertheless, the situation became embarrassing from 36 BCE, when Lepidus was forced to abandon the pact and go into exile, and in practice the Triumvirate became a Duumvirate. Officially, the Triumvirate was set to expire between 33 and 32 BCE, yet none of the remaining triumvirs vacated their positions or transitioned back to private life[2]. Antony and Octavian continued to lead troops and administer their

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[1] The first five-year period finished the last day of 38 BCE, and the new agreement had to be anticipated to the beginning of 37 BCE. This might prove that the triumvirs were not preoccupied about their constitutional situation; after all, they spent a year without regularizing it.

[2] It is not clear whether the Second Triumvirate ended in 33 or 32 BCE, but this is not a main concern of this study. For a solid discussion on the final year of the Triumvirate, see: GIRARDET (1995); VERVAET (2010: 70-152).

imperial territories. Notably, both men engaged in actions that extended beyond the scope of their conventional constitutional powers, with Antony persistently referring to himself as a triumvir until the conclusion of his tenure (LANGE, 2009: 55; VERVAET, 2009: 137). Ancient authors have neither shed light about the constitutional terms of this period nor explained which powers were deposed in 27 BCE when the Republic was restored[3]. Consequently, some modern scholars have theorised that triumviral powers did not expire at the conclusion of the five-year period, and that they were not deposed until 28-27 BCE (MOMMSEN, 1887: 707; 718-720; RODDAZ, 2003; HURLET, 2008; LANGE, 2009; VERVAET, 2009, 2010; RICH, 2012).

The imperium held by the triumvirs was similar to the power held by dictators and censors. As Colli (1953: 395–418) has demonstrated, this power did not end when the period of magistracy came to a close. Instead, it had to be voluntarily relinquished by the holder through a formal act of abdication. Even so, there were precise terms for these magistracies: dictatorship was not to exceed six months, while censure could not last longer than five years. Nevertheless, should they be able to fulfil their duties prior to the end of that period, resignation would be expected; otherwise, their continuity in office would constitute an abuse. In sum, a formal act of *abdicatio* was required. Contrary to this, the termination of the assignments of annual magistrates was automatic and without further ceremony. Their resignation before the fixed term only took place in case of an emergency.

The task commissioned to the triumvirs was clear in the name of the magistracy – *Triunviri rei publicae costituendae*. The three men were not committed to the reform of the State, but to its reorganization and to the restoration of order (RODDAZ, 2003: 403). Octavian maintained his extraordinary command on the basis that the task was not fulfilled until 28-27 BCE, when he deposed the absolute powers, and the Republic was restored[4]. Following the events at Actium,

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[3] LIV. *Per*. 134; TAC. *Ann*. 1.2; SUET. *Aug*. 7.2; VELL. 2.89.3-4; DC 53.3-12.
[4] An inscription from Luni (*CIL* 9.1330 = *ILS* 78) seems to confirm this theory, since it associates both the triumviral title and Octavian's sixth consulship in the year 28 BCE. The maintenance of

the utilisation of the triumviral title could have led to a perceived loss of credibility for the political survivor of the Triumvirate. This may have contributed to its subsequent abandonment. Even if Octavian's position was not illegal, it could be understood as an abuse of power. Conserving the title would have been an unpopular move. The appointment would have been seen as an indication of incompetence and an inability to fulfil one's duties. Additionally, the reluctance to abdicate would have been seen as an authoritarian and tyrannical intention[5].

Apparently, Octavian tried to conceal that reality through the accumulation of consulates (GRENADE, 1961: 29-30; RODDAZ, 2003: 397-418; HURLET, 2008: 228; VERVAET, 2010: 105, 142; LÓPEZ GÓMEZ, 2021: 29-30; 2023)[6], but another scapegoat was possibly used during this period. In *Res Gestae* 25.1, Octavian clearly states that he received the acquiescence of the people through an oath of allegiance pronounced before Actium, meaning that he was put in charge of the war against Egypt. This reference has been interpreted as concealing the truth behind

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triumviral powers until 28-27 BCE was defended by Mommsen, Roddaz, and Lange, among others (MOMMSEN, *Röm. Staatsr.* 23: 718-20; RODDAZ 2003: 409; LANGE 2009: 58). Partially against this theory: GIRARDET (1990: 338-342; 1995: 151). Girardet believes that the Triumvirate and its powers would have lapsed in 33 BCE; thus, Antony and Octavian just kept their positions as proconsuls, and the *imperium proconsulare* was used for the war in Actium. On the other hand, Roddaz clearly demonstrates that the actions taken by Octavian between years 33 and 27 BCE can be considered as neither consular nor proconsular. For example: had Octavian's powers been considered as *proconsulare*, he could not have franchised the *pomerium* for an extended period. Nevertheless, he is proved to have taken part in important discussions in Rome. He was consul after 31 BCE, but still he did not boast of having waged war against Egypt as consul. To his 29 BCE triumph, Octavian included the Dalmatian War, which he had not fought in person. Lastly, the delegation of powers to Maecenas and Agrippa to administer Rome cannot be explained by Octavian's position as consul (Plin. *HN* 37.10; DC 51.3.5-6). However, the possibility of delegating power and leading armed forces in Rome was a privilege conceded to the triumvirs. During the period 31-27 BCE, Octavian continued giving orders to proconsuls just as he had done before. The proconsuls had their own auspices but still needed to ask Octavian's permission to triumph, and he also decided to take part in the celebrations of the victories of Carrinas (DC 51.21.6). RODDAZ (1992: 100; 2003: 405-410) concludes that the consulates held after 31 BCE did not replace the triumviral powers. Also, the classical authors depict the triumvirs discussing the possibility of deposing their powers (App. *BC* 5.73; 132; DC 50.7.1), suggesting that the *imperium* did not end immediately at the end of the period.
[5] Following Coli's theory (1953: 410), Octavian's position can be considered outside the law but not against it.
[6] It should be considered that, while in 33 BCE Octavian kept his consulate just for one day, after 31 BCE it was kept for the full traditional duration of the charge.

his real powers and, furthermore, legitimising them by using a public demonstration of approval (TALAMANCA, 1989: 379; LANGE, 2009: 57; VERVAET, 2009: 114)[7]. Afterwards, in *Res Gestae* 34.1, he states that receiving the name of Augustus was a reward after deposing his powers and restoring the *res publica*[8], and that his position was based on *consensus universorum*. Hence, he says, he had no more *potestas* than the other magistrates. It might be then, that the powers deposed between 28 and 27 BCE were those taken when the Triumvirate was constituted.

As stated, in his intention of reaching supreme power, Octavian's constitutional position during the period 32-28 BCE might be considered outside the law and unclear. In relation to this, Von Premerstein (1937) and Alföldi (1951, pp. 190-215) defined this period as the monarchic or 'Romulean' period of Octavian. Von Premerstein insist on the year 27 BCE as the turning point when the *princeps* developed a more moderate approach to his image. Such a change can be also perceived on the artistic propaganda, as Zanker (1988) and other scholars have already demonstrated [9]. As we shall see, based on the political climate of the period, propaganda mirrors a context that had more in common with Caesar and Romulus than with the 'republican restoration' that came after 27 BCE[10].

The architecture is particularly revealing, as it combines the formal aspects of the building itself regarding shape, size, and form, and the symbolic meaning of its embellishment. At the same time, the buildings are examples of art with a practical purpose, and they continued to be used or inhabited for years, which indicates changing meanings over time, according to the socio-political situation.

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[7] This kind of oath of allegiance did not bear any concession of further powers, but it did legitimate the ones that Octavian already possessed. In this same line: BENARIO (1975: 304); WALLMANN (1989: 313-318); EDER (1990: 99); PELLING (*CAH* 102: 53); OSGOOD (2006: 263-264); LANGE (2009: 55-57).

[8] *rem publicam ex mea potestate in senatus populique Romani arbitrium transtuli. Quo pro merito meo senatus consulto Augustus appellatus sum* (*RG* 34).

[9] Also on ZANKER (1988: 79 ff).

[10] ALFÖLDI (1951) states that the monarchic elements of the period were modelled after the 'Romulean' tradition, rather than imitating the Hellenistic model. Octavian would have liked to present himself as a new Romulus, a true Roman King, instead of another Hellenistic monarch.

2. The Mausoleum of Augustus

Located in the Campus Martius, the Mausoleum of Augustus rose above any other building of its time. It was constructed as an earthen mound, potentially coated with travertine and Carrara marble, and its multiple levels placed a statue of Octavian in a dominant position over the city's landscape. Rising 46m, it could had been the tallest building of its time (STR 5.3.8; VON HESBERG, 1988: 224-251; KRAFT, 1967: 190). The Mausoleum became an impressive monument believed to be still under construction by 23 BCE, when Marcellus' funeral took place (VERG. *Aen*. 8.872-874; DC 53.30.5). According to this estimation, it could be considered to belong to a subsequent period. However, the date of its inception is unclear, and its symbolic meaning matches the political atmosphere of the final years of the Triumvirate.

Suetonius's statement has been interpreted as indicating that construction began in 28 BCE (Suet. *Aug*. 100), though the ancient scholar also notes that the Mausoleum gardens were open in that same year. Consequently, the initial planning of the building would have had to have taken place earlier, potentially as early as 32 BCE. Octavian was pretty young in the 30s BCE, so scholars have wondered what led him to think so clearly about death in this period. Some possibilities have arisen, such as Octavian's tendency to fall ill or his desire to establish a new dynasty as soon as possible (GARDTHAUSEN, 1891: 980)[11]. However, Kraft's interpretation seems most convincing here.

According to Kraft (1967), the political context was of paramount importance in designing the monument, as evidenced by the complex design of the tomb and the impression that Octavian was trying to create among the audience. The author finds a reason for such an early design of the future tomb of Augustus in the historical context of the time, perhaps after the public reading of Mark

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[11] Suetonius (*Aug*. 81.1) and Dio (53.30.1) recall certain episodes of illness, but these fell in a period that comes after the start of the works of the Mausoleum. The sources do not state that Octavian was expecting a sudden death.

Antony's will (PLUT. *Ant.* 58; Suet. *Aug.* 17.1; DC 50.3.3-4) and the disclosure of his willingness to be buried in Egypt alongside Cleopatra. This would have indicated a shift in public opinion, as the statement was interpreted as a sign that Antony was preparing to transfer the capital to the Nile and place the Empire under Cleopatra's command. This perception was further solidified by Octavian's propaganda efforts. (DC 50.4.2; PLUT. *Ant.* 10.6; 28.1-2; 36.2-3; 50.7; 54.5-8; 60.1).

The Mausoleum was constructed as a direct response to Antony's aspirations in the East. In contrast to his opponent, Octavian's tomb ensured a lasting connection to Rome (KRAFT, 1967: 200)[12]. Thus, when Antony and Cleopatra died, Octavian completed the construction of the tomb they had built together, as it was essential for them to remain in Egypt (SUET. *Aug.* 17.4; DC 51.15.1). Meanwhile, in Rome, the enormous Mausoleum reinforced Octavian's link to the *urbs* and underlined Octavian's position as victor in the struggle for power (FUGATE-BRANGERS, 2007: 61). Therefore, even if the start of the works took place in 28 BCE or after that date, the intention of contrasting with Antony would have been the most plausible explanation. The memory of the defeated enemy did not, after all, end up right after Actium (DC 52.42.8; OV. *Pont.* 1.1.23; SUET. *Aug.* 55-56; TAC. *Ann.* 4.34).

A lack of funds for purchasing land in Rome does not seem to have been an issue (as other scholars have stated; DONDERER, 2010: 71; FUGATE-BRANGERS 2007: 36-37), After all, Octavian did buy land on the Palatine in 36 BCE for the construction of the Temple of Apollo and his own house (DC 49.15.5). Thus, even if there were other projects under construction at the same time, the lack of funds does not seem to have been a major concern.

The dynastic purpose of the construction has also been a basis for debate. Donderer (2010) has indicated that, if the monument is to be understood as a dynastic tomb, it could not have been planned in such an earlier moment as 32 BCE.

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[12]Along the same lines: ZANKER (1988: 72 ff), and VON HESBERG–PANCIERA (1994). Against this theory: Richard (1970: 378); FUGATE-BRANGERS (2007: 36-37); DONDERER (2010: 69-78).

However, Kraft (1967) previously clarified that the Mausoleum should not be interpreted as a dynastic building. Dynastic ambitions had been a central part of propaganda against Antony, and Octavian wanted to set himself apart from him. At the same time, the opposition to the new regime continued to be strong at least until 23 BCE, when the *princeps* faced a plot. That same year, Augustus offered to publish his own will to prove that he had not bequeathed the empire to Marcellus when he was at the gates of death (DC 53.31.1). Therefore, the period before 23 BCE was not suitable for grand dynastic displays. Along these lines, Zanker (1983: 25) states that the statue on top of the building meant that, initially, the Mausoleum was understood as a hero's monument, rather than a family grave. Even though the tomb was finally used as a resting place for the *domus Augusta*, it cannot be interpreted as a dynastic monument from its inception, since it was a general practice in Republican Rome to use one tomb for a number of family members (FUGATE-BRANGERS, 2007: 59).

The opulence of the tomb might also be considered in relation to its chronology. Rome and Italy had seen the emergence of lavish funerary displays since the third and second centuries BCE[13], which Octavian could follow as an example in the 30s; nevertheless, the opulent tombs would have been condemned by the future Augustus, both by his personal role model and by his policy against luxury, and so the tomb would be incongruous with the general ambience of the period 27-23 BCE.

The choice of a rather complex location for the building (the Campus Martius) could also be seen as evidence for the date of its planning. The Field of Mars was a great spot for the monument, since being out of the pomerium but in a heavily transited area, it ensured a good exhibition. It was also the place where great figures of the Roman Republic had been laid to rest (LIV. *Per*. 90.1; PLUT. *Sull*. 38.4; DC 78.13.7). However, it seems that the Senate's approval was necessary to construct a tomb in such a place, as it was considered public and sacred, so the

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[13] In this sense: COARELLI (1988); DAVIES (2000: 5-6).

concession needed to be honorific and posthumous (PLUT. *CG.* 3.1; PLUT. *Pomp.* 40.5; 44.3; CIC. *Rab. Post.* 11; *Leg.* 2.23.58; PLIN, *Pan.* 63.7.)[14]. This has led some authors to conclude that the Mausoleum should have been near the Campus but not on the Campus itself, most likely on its northern border (RICHARDSON, 1992: 65-67).

However, alternative possibilities should be regarded. Had the honour of a public tomb been a part of the concessions of the years 28-27 BCE, Augustus would have had it registered on the *Res Gestae*. Thus, it can be concluded that it was not a public honour conceded by the Senate and the people. Nonetheless, if the planning for the Mausoleum is to be understood to have started at least in 32 BCE, Octavian, in his all-powerful position, would not have needed an official ratification for the measures taken. It could be that, before 28 BCE, nobody dared ask about the legitimacy of the construction of the tomb of the main leader.

The source of inspiration for the Mausoleum has been an issue for long time. Authors have discussed possible Trojan (HOLLOWAY, 1966: 171-173), Egyptian (BERNHARD, 1956: 129-156; ORTOLANI, 2004: 197-222)[15], Greek (ABRAMSON, 1978; KOENIGS, 1980; MALKIN, 1981; LESCHHORN, 1983; ALCOCK, 1991; REEDER, 1992; MÜLLER, 1993), Macedonian (REEDER, 1992: 272; ORTOLANI, 2004; FUGATE-BRANGERS, 2007: 53), Italian (KORNEMANN, 1930: 83; FUGATE-

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[14] When people wanted Julia, Caesar's daughter, to be buried in the Campus Martius, Domitius objected that it was sacrilegious to do so without a decree from the Senate (DC 39.64.1). Strabo (5.3.8) says that this was the place for the tombs of Rome's most revered men and women, but Appian (*BC* 106) clarifies that only kings could be buried there. See also: PATTERSON (1992: 186-215); RICHARDSON (1992: 66); DAVIES (2000: 49); FUGATE-BRANGERS (2007: 27).

[15] DAVIES (2000) is also a great supporter of this theory. She analyzes the Egyptian expertise on great buildings (such as the Pyramids, the lighthouse, and, of course, the *Sema* of Alexander the Great). The idea that the internal structure of the Mausoleum was based on Egyptian knowledge is appealing. Against this theory, see: REHAK (2006: 50).

BRANGERS, 2007: 60)[16], Etruscan[17], and even Algerian precedents (COARELLI & THÉBERT, 1988: 761-818), and the influence of the so called 'Heroön of Aeneas' cannot be discarded either[18]. Every theory has a point, but no example is particularly convincing.

There is, however, a startling use of Egyptian motives. Two small obelisks stood at the entrance of the tomb; since Strabo and Pliny do not mention them, they have been assumed to date from a later period[19], but Buchner (1996: 166-167) seems to have found a canal that might have been used to transport the obelisks, and has contextualised them during the period in which the Mausoleum was being built. These two monuments are of plain red marble, which may mean that they were specifically constructed for this building instead of reusing Egyptian artifacts (RICHARDSON, 1992: 275; BUCHNER, 1996: 162; REHAK, 2006: 52). There is also a surviving marble cornice fragment representing the underside of a corona atef between two coffers, one of which represents a Nelumbo nucifera (a type of lotus flower)[20]. All these elements speak about the fascination with Egypt, but, also, and necessarily, about the country's recent defeat in the war.

Regardless of the main influence, the enormous size, and the complexity of the structure should be considered relevant enough. For Trigger (1990: 125-127), monumental architecture should be understood as a display of power, as it

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[16] There are several Italian precedents for round tombs, such as the tomb of the Scipios, the tomb of the Horatians and Casale Rotondo, and there are also precedents for tombs shaped as tumulus, such as the Curiaces. About Escipio's tomb, see: COARELLI (1988); about the Horatians sepulture, Casale Rotondo, and the Curiaces tomb, see: EISNER (1986: 61-62, no. A32; 54-55 no. A23; pp. 56-59, nos. A26, A27; JOHNSON 1996: 222).

[17] Montagnola or Cassale Marittimo, for example. RASMUSSEN (1995-96: 55-56); JOHNSON (1996: 217-239).

[18] About the Heroön: SOMMELLA (1974: 273-297); GALINSKY (1974: 2-11); DURY-MOYAERS (1981); GIULIANI (1981: 175); COGROSSI (1982: 79-98); TURCAN (1983: 41-66) and JOHNSON (1996: 217-39).

[19] Strabo (5.3.8) does not mention them when describing the Mausoleum, and neither does Pliny in his portrayal of Rome's obelisks (*HN* 36.69-74). Ammianus Marcellinus (17.4.12-16) attributes them to subsequent generations.

[20] As pointed out by BARTOLI (1927-28, fig. 14), GROS (1976: 305), REEDER (1992: 274) or REHAK (1992: 39).

demonstrates the amount of resources (both material and human) that the commissioner has access to. In a way, political power is thus reflected through the capacity to control energy and resources. According to this idea, the Mausoleum's enormity was intended as a display of Octavian's power, which as propaganda deeply represented a moment of struggle such as the last years of the 30s BCE. The tomb mirrors a period in which Octavian saw himself as an all-powerful general who smashed his enemies, and, in this sense, Davies (2000: 67 ff) and other scholars (BOSCHUNG, 1980: 38-41; VON HESBERG, 1988: 244, fig. 51; FUGATE-BRANGERS 2007: 62-65) have understood the monument as a triumphal trophy.

The Mausoleum can be interpreted as an ambiguous monument that mixed tomb and trophy, along the lines of the complexes developed by Pompey, who had also chosen the Campus Martius (DAVIES, 2000: 67). This theory aligns with the significant emphasis placed on Octavian's military role and achievements as victor[21], The architectural design of the building served to elevate Octavian's status, both ideologically and physically, as the statue of Octavian oversaw the city of Rome. The building dominated the landscape over the Tiber and the Via Flaminia, and its height seemed to be enhanced by the fact that the building stood alone in a large park (ZANKER, 1988: 74). The victory at Actium served to reinforce the Mausoleum's original significance. It is highly likely that Octavian was anticipating his own triumph when he initiated plans for the tomb, thus rendering the Mausoleum a commemorative monument for the Actian victory (DAVIES, 2000: 7)[22].

According to this idea, main theories about the Mausoleum's planning and building dates could be coordinated: the preparations began (at least) in 32 BCE, after the reading of Antony's will. If the possible manipulation of that document is considered (SIRIANNI, 1984: 236-241), the Mausoleum would represent the

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[21] As in KORNEMANN (1938: 84). This was a strategy to counterbalance Antony's damaging propaganda that presented Octavian as a military nullity.
[22] This idea is also supported by the later building of a whole commemorative complex in the Campus Martius (PICARD, 1957: 185-186; COARELLI, 1997: 539-580).

completion of the propagandistic programme against the enemies of Rome, exemplifying Octavian's opposition to Antony's morality. If the first sketches, the laying of foundations, and the preparation of the gardens begun during the struggle for power (32 BCE), the inauguration of this last element could have could have taken place by 28 BCE (VON HESBERG & PANCIERA, 1994: 54-55). It is even possible, as Davies puts it, that the visit to the *Sema* of Alexander influenced the development of the tomb, even if the construction had already started when Octavian visited Alexandria (SUET. *Aug*. 18.1; STR. 17.1.8). After that moment, the works could have received a great push thanks to the spoils of the Egyptian war.

Elements from later periods were also found, determining the changing meaning of the entire building. Pieces such as architectural embellishments of oak leaves and a relief with a *clipeus virtutis* clearly indicate a moment after 27 BCE, when these honorific ornaments were conceded to Augustus (*Mon. Anc*. 34.1-2; DC 53.4-7; VELL. PAT. 2.91; SUET. *Aug*. 7.2-4; VON HESBERG & PANCIERA, 1994, 14, fig. 45; 18, fig. 53). Further changes took place after the death of Drusus in 9 BCE, and, even some years later, shields were added within the Doric frieze of the upper cylinder, probably after the death of one or both of Augustus' grandsons, representing their function as *principes iuventutis* (VON HESBERG, 1988: 246-249; VON HESBERG & PANCIERA, 1994: 60). In short, the Mausoleum's construction did start in the triumviral era, but the ending of the works is not clear.

The tomb does not have a definite shape and does not draw from a specific tradition. As Zanker puts it, it does not have a coherent structure that could have been motivated by the need to demonstrate Octavian's superiority as quickly as possible. The ambiguity of formal language betrays the absence of a clear message, a characteristic not seen again in future monuments by Augustus (ZANKER, 1988: 76-77). Similarly, Octavian's constitutional position in this period was not clear either. When the building was planned and the land selected, it was important to build fast and big in order to represent the power and determination of the political candidate that was defending the Romans. After 32 BCE, Octavian tried to base his constitutional position on *consensus universorum*. The Mausoleum was a clear

commitment on his part to the Roman people and was made in the context of receiving a declaration of allegiance. Octavian's stand was firmly associated with the triumviral powers (even if it could not be denominated as such any longer) from a constitutional point of view, and the Mausoleum reflects analogous issues. His intention when building the Mausoleum in Rome was to express a link with the people, a response to that oath of allegiance. Nevertheless, it is evident that, from a formal standpoint, the architectural elements of the building serve to underscore his authority and status as the unchallenged leader. Octavian towered above all others in theory and in practice, in power and in the skyline of Rome.

3. The temple of Apollo Palatinus

The planning of the Temple of Apollo in the Palatine was actually undertaken before the construction of the Mausoleum. According to ancient sources, Octavian made a vow following his naval victory in Nauloochus (VELL. PAT. 2.81.3.) and, while the commencement date of the works remains unconfirmed, it is known that Octavian initiated the purchase of land in the area shortly after 36 BCE (DC 49.15.5). The geographical context and interaction with the divine elements provide significant insight into the prevailing political climate of the era.

According to Suetonius, Octavian built a temple to Apollo in the part of his own house that had been struck by lightning (SUET. *Aug*. 29.3)[23]. Thus, Octavian and the divinity lived under almost the same roof. There was even a ramp that connected Octavian's house to the temple of Apollo. Archaeological reconstructions of the area have also demonstrated a connection between the house and the temple on that side of the Palatine (LUGLI, 1952: 261-262; CARETTONI, 1966-1967: 55-73; 1978: 72 ff; ZANKER, 1983: 23).

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[23] When the lightning struck close to Octavian's house the prodigy meant that the land could be declared public, and the temple build upon it. There is no other reported case in which the struck of a lightning on a private property was understood as a public prodigy (SIMPSON, 1993: 634-635).

In this regard, scholars see a clear Hellenistic influence and imitation of palace complexes such as those of Pergamon and Alexandria (SIMON, 1957: 30-44)[24]. The unique connection between the temple and Octavian's house was without parallel in Rome, thereby enhancing the new home of the divinity (ZANKER, 1988: 91; HEKSTER & RICH, 2006: 149)[25]. The fact that some Senate meetings took place within the temple (that is, next to the palace), also spoke about a custom that was alien to Roman tradition (SUET. *Aug.* 29.3)[26]. The residence itself was not of lavish expenditure, and so it was the connection with the temple what gave it its true relevance (SUET. *Aug.* 72.1-2; ZANKER, 1983: 24; GALINSKY, 1996: 220)[27]. Octavian's residence was constructed in close proximity to the site of Romulus's original dwelling, thereby further enhancing the significance of the entire complex (PROP. 4.1.1; DC 53.16.5). In essence, the combination of these factors elevated the Octavian house above the standard established by other Roman houses.

The temple itself can be considered a part of the propaganda aimed to establish links between Apollo and Octavian, which was most intense just before 28-27 BCE (LANGE, 2009; MILLER, 2009). The narrative concerning Attia's conception of Octavian through her union with a serpent introduced the notion that the young candidate for emperor was the son not of one divine father (*divus Iulius*), but two[28]. Propaganda on his participation in the 'Banquet of twelve gods' in the guise of Apollo also displayed the popularity of narratives associating him with this

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[24] ZANKER (1983: 23 ff) engages in an interesting comparison between the Pergamon Palace and the Palatine complex, with the Palatine imitating the Hellenistic model. The same opinion is shared by Reeder (1992: 272).

[25] ZANKER (1983: 24) adds that Octavian was aware that he was going too far in the association between house and temple, and that would be the reason why he insisted the aruspices declare the thunderbolt episode a public prodigy.

[26] The meetings probably took place in the library: THOMPSON (1981: 335-339). The excuse for the selected location was Augustus' old age and illness. However, no other senator at the moment received such a privilege. The meetings on the Palatine speak about the subjection of the ancient republican body to the prince, despite his old age and physical decay (COARELLI, 1995: 144-145).

[27] Further information about Augustus' house on the Palatine on: CORBIER (1992, pp. 871-916); PENSABENE (1997: 149-192); ROYO (1999: 77-80; 119-23; 144-71); TOMEI (2000: 7-36); CARANDINI & BRUNO (2008).

[28] For LAMBRETCHS (1953: 65-83), this episode is an imitation of Alexander's divine conception.

divinity (SUET. *Aug*. 70). In the future, the relationship would continue and have some important episodes, such as the transfer of the Sibylline books to the temple of Apollo, and the important position that this god and his sister Diana occupied on Horatius' *Carmen Saeculare*.

Still, at the time, his connection with Apollo was a part of the struggle for power. In propaganda, the Asiatic Antony-Dionysus was opposed to Octavian-Apollo (ZANKER, 1983: 21; 1988: 86)[29] and, when the temple was built, a statue of Octavian dressed as Apollo was placed on the library (VERG. *Ecl*. 4.10; 19; HOR. *Epod*. 1.3.17). This way, the chosen location for the temple and the propaganda that surrounded Octavian and his divine patron is representative of the personality of a leader that saw himself as the greatest man of his time due to his own achievements, whilst, his relationship with divinity gave him a special aura that placed him above the mere mortals without having to address the issue of his divine nature.

The arch to Octavian's father on the Palatine tells a story similar to that of the location of the palace-temple complex. Pliny (*HN* 36.36) states that there was an arch commemorating the princeps' father with a sculptural group of Apollo and Diana on a quadriga by Lysias on top of it. This group was sheltered by an aedicula with columns. The arch is thought to have been associated with the temple, and some authors suggest that it may have served as the entrance to the temple complex itself[30]. A possible construction date for this structure has been set at 25 BCE (TOMEI, 2000: 570). Still, if the arch is to be considered an integral part of the complex, even a propileus to the porticus, its design, like the rest of the elements, would have to date from before 27 BCE. Accordingly, Kleiner states that the arch could not have been built much later than 28 BCE. In this way, the arch would have been under construction before Octavian's change of policy in 27 BCE, when the

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[29] Moreover, Suetonius tells us that Antony adhered to unhealthy Asian bad taste in his dress and speeches (SUET. *Aug*. 86.2).

[30] As mentioned by Pliny (*HN* 36.36). Also in LANCIANI (1883: 190) and DE MARIA (1988: 268).

associations with Apollo also lost strength (LAMBRETCHS, 1953: 69; Kleiner, 1988: 347-357)[31].

Octavian displayed his filial piety towards the memory of his father in the context of the new temple complex[32]. What is most striking is that the figure on top of the structure was not related to the individual it was devoted to, but to Apollo[33]. Several authors conclude that Octavian willingly tried to give free rein to the legend that presented him as a son of Apollo so that it was up to the visitor's interpretation to decide which father was represented in the arch[34]. The monument would thus commemorate both Octavian's human and divine ancestry.

However, the rest of the temple's decorations, designed later, display slightly different significations; after all, the situation was completely different from 36 BCE, when the construction of the temple was announced. When the temple was inaugurated on 9 October 28 BCE (that is, after Actium), there were allusions to victory. Nonetheless, the temple itself was not conceived as a triumphal monument, and the image of Octavian at that time, on a larger scale, was modest.

The statue of Apollo was placed over a podium adorned with the rostra of Egyptian ships, and Apollo himself was called *navalis* and *actiacus* by Propertius (PROP. 4.1.3; 6.67)[35]. The gates featured depictions of the expulsion of the Gauls from Delphi (the barbarians had been expelled from Greece through the mediation of Apollo) and the Niobids (PROP. 2.31.12-14) (Apollo had avenged his mother, Latona, after Niobe's act of impiety). Apollo was depicted as a saviour and an avenger, two fundamental characteristics after Actium. However, the cult statues of Apollo do not represent him as the warrior at Actium but peacefully holding a patera and leading to an altar (PROP. 4.6.69-70), which has been interpreted by Zanker as

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[31] This process is also visible in numismatics. According to LIEGLE (1941: 91ff), from 27 BCE the issue of coins with Octavian-Apollo reached a halt point.

[32] As mentioned by TOMEI (2000).

[33] Pliny (*HN* 36.36) also states that only the quadriga group by Lisias was dedicated to Octavian's father.

[34] As in TOMEI (2000) and KLEINER (1988: 357).

[35] ZANKER (1983: 30-31) understands that this image of Apollo could have been conceived as the true monument in honour of the victory at Actium.

a symbol of guilt and atonement, an attempt to redeem the mistakes of the civil wars[36]. On a similar note, Galinsky understands it as a reflection of Octavian's desire to leave the civil wars behind and carry on with social reconstruction (GALINSKY, 1996: 216).

The temple of Apollo can be considered as a complex, as it was formed by the temple itself, a library of Latin and Greek authors, and a portico known as the 'Portico of the Danaids'. The whole complex is an enigma in many senses, and there is not even a clear idea of his original layout[37]. The porticus has attracted most attention during the last decades due to its symbolism as there has been much debate around it. The fifty daughters of Danaus were featured there. Danaus was possibly represented as well, but it is not clear whether the sons of Aegyptus, Danaus' brother were featured too[38]. The figures of Danaus' daughters also raise several questions; some information about them has been gained through the finding of a few statues and of some imitations[39]; however, authors disagree about the exact scene of the myth that was represented on the monument: Danaus and his daughters killing the suitors or the Danaids doing penance in the underworld.

According to the myth, Danaus and his fifty daughters sailed from Egypt to Argos in order to escape from the proposals of Aegyptus' sons. The boys followed them to Greece and continued the courtship. Finally, compelled by their father, the girls pretended to accept, just to have them killed on their wedding night. Danaus and Aegyptus are eponymous representations of Greece and Egypt[40]. In this sense, some scholars understand that the fifty daughters were represented defending

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[36] As in ZANKER (1988: 85 ff). The same opinion is shared by RODDAZ (2003: 400).

[37] About this: BISHOP (1956: 187-192; 1961: 127-128), and RICHMOND (1958: 193-226).

[38] There is only one testimony about the presence of the Egyptians (SCH. PERS. 2.56) that has led some authors to argue that the figures could have been introduced in a later period: BISHOP (1956); RICHMOND (1958); BALENSIEFEN (1998: 23-33).

[39] As in TOMEI (1990: 35-48; 2005-2006: 379-384) or TRILLMICH (2010: 179-206).

[40] For a complete analysis of the Danaids myth: BONNER (1902, 129-173) or LUCAS (1991), among others.

themselves from the suitors' attack (that is, on the act of killing them)[41]. The sculptural group would represent the attack of Egypt upon the West in a moment when the propaganda was focused on pointing out that Antony was not Roman, but Egyptian, and that war had been waged against Egypt (DC 50.24-30). The porticus was, therefore, telling the story of the victory of Rome over Egypt that, violent as it was, found justification with the example of the Danaids.

Nevertheless, as Danaus and Aegyptus were brothers, the porticus also represented a strife between siblings (that is, a civil war). Thus, the Danaids episode represented war, and Apollo's presence represented atonement[42]. Similarly, Virgil presented the girls as pious creatures led to crime by desperation, instead of murderers (*Aen*. 10. 497 ff). The allusions to Egypt were powerfully present: Io, the ancestor of the Danaids, was a Greek who had been brought to Egypt, as the Ptolemies. Furthermore, according to the list of Danaids by Apollodorus and Hyginus, one of them was called Cleopatra (*Bibl*. 2.1.5.4;7; *Fab*. 1.70).

There is only one known representation of the Danaids murdering the suitors, on a red figure vase from the fourth century BCE, the images of the girls in the Hades being much more common (SPENCE, 1991; BALENSIEFEN, 1998; TRILLMICH, 2010: 197)[43]. This and the remaining sculptural examples (which might have been used as caryatids), has led scholars to understand that the penitence in

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[41] In this sense: KELLUM (1986: 169-176); SPENCE (1991: 11-19); GALINSKY (1996: 220); BOWDICH (2009: 401-438).

[42] The Danaids as a representation of Octavian's and Rome's victory over Antony, Cleopatra and Egypt: SIMON (1986: 24); SPENCE (1991); WELCH (2005: 86 ff). The porticus as an example of atonement or reconciliation: ZANKER (1983: 31); GALINSKY (1996: 220). KELLUM (1986: 173ff) states that the Danaids represented the bloody past over which Octavian and Apollo had succeeded. After crossing the porticus, the audience would have proceeded into the temple, where a three-dimensional message of peace was displayed. In this sense, Apollo was the deity that brought the acquittal after the civil strife. Not discarding any of these meanings, BOWDICH (2009: 421) introduces the idea of the Danaids as an example of the dangers of women, and the necessity to keep them under vigilance, evidence of Augustus' intention of maintaining control over some aspects of public life that used to be under the jurisdiction of the paterfamilias. For many other scholars, Aegyptus is Mark Antony and Danaus is a pious representation of Octavian, who was forced to eliminate the enemy: LEFÈVRE (1989: 15ff); CARANDINI & BRUNO (2008: 87); CARANDINI (2010: 219); HEIL (2012: 75).

[43] This was also the first time this myth was represented on public architecture.

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the underworld was depicted in the porticus[44]. This was also represented in Ovid's Metamorphoses, and other Augustan poets make allusions to it (Ov. *Met*. 4.462 ff; Hor. *Carm*. 3.11.26-52; Prop. 2.1.67; 4.11.27-28).

Some historical sources provide a full account of the conflict between brothers, in which Danaus and Aegyptos were already experiencing tensions prior to the proposal of marriage [45]. Danaus opted not to engage in conflict with his sibling and instead chose to depart, leading to a pursuit by the Egyptians, both himself and his daughters being targeted. Most sources state the firm determination of the Egyptians to marry their cousins and the rejection of the females. It can therefore be said that the Egyptians pursued their own disgrace by chasing young women and forcing them to marry. Danaus and his daughters are guilty of a disproportionate response but, at the end of the day, they did not initiate the conflict. Some versions even mention a happy ending in which the penitence in the Hades is replaced by a full forgiveness granted by Zeus, Athena, and Hermes (Pind. P. 9.112 ff; B. *Sch*. 9.73 ff; Her. 2.98).

As previously mentioned, it is unclear which myth is depicted in the portico. However, in both versions (the Danaids in the act of killing or as water carriers in Hades), references to Actium and the war are consistently present. If we accept that the Danaids are represented as murdering their Egyptian cousins, the interpretation is clear: the Danaids, ancestors of the Danaans, fight for their freedom against the dreaded sons of Egypt. The context of Actium is pervasive. Conversely, if the porticus is interpreted as symbolising the Danaids' atonement, it can be interpreted in a variety of ways. One of them bears a resemblance to the previous one, but with more pronounced moralistic overtones: the Danaids were compelled to engage in

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[44] Trillmich (2010: 179ff) analyzes the remaining sculptural examples and their later imitations (mostly, Siracuse-Nemi sculptural examples). Through them, the author states that it is highly unlikely that statues were holding daggers. The posture of the Danaids would suggest that they were lifting pitchers instead. The Danaids as water carriers in the underworld: Zanker (1983); Winsor Leach (2008: 13-32). Balensiefen (1998) understands that the Danaids are water carriers but, according to her, the whole complex would not only represent a single part of the myth.
[45] Apol. *Bibl*. 2.1.4-5: Hig. *Fab*. 168, 170; Sch. Hom. *Il*. 1.42; 4. 171; Sch. Pind. P. 9. 194; 195 a. 200; Nem. 10.10 a; Sch. Aesch. *PV*. 853 a; Sch. Eur. *Hec*. 886; Or. 871; Ov. *Ep*. 14.

the confrontation by the insistence of their cousins; initially, they departed from Egypt in an attempt to avoid conflict but were pursued by their relatives to Argos and compelled to marry. Consequently, the Danaids were forced to fight for their freedom, murdering not only their cousins but also their husbands. Thus, they were sentenced to penance in the underworld.

In this version, the Danaids are understood to be incarnations of Rome. Rome was acutely aware that they were not only facing Egypt, but also a fratricidal strife, not only in Actium, but in the whole civil war period that lasted over a century. Apollo, to whose sanctuary the penitents had access, would assist the Danaids and the Romans in their purification, enabling them to enter a new Golden Age. It was Apollo who would help to solve the conflict between the contenders, and so the society would be reunited and escape the horrors of war.

This interpretation is in alignment with the prevailing political climate. It is important to note that the porticus was completed at a later period, after the temple's dedication around 25 BCE. Consequently, the propaganda present in it had a slightly different connotation to be acceptable at that time.[46]. From 28-27 BCE, Octavian became Augustus, and his image was more moderate (*Mon. Anc*. 34.1-2; DC 53.4-7; VELL. PAT. 2.91; SUET. *Aug*. 7.2-4). The period of monarchical overtones came to an end, the absolute powers of the Triumvirate were deposed, and the Republic was restored (at least apparently) (DC 53.4.3-4; *Mon. Anc*. 34.1; VELL. PAT. 2.89.2-3; OV. *Fast*. 1.589). In this context, Augustus could no longer focus on his superiority over his fellow Romans as the basis for his sovereignty and monopoly of power. Augustus, like Apollo, became the one who forgave the adversary and allowed for a time of reunion and prosperity[47]. This would officially have begun by 17 BCE with the Secular Games in which Apollo and Diana played a central role.

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[46]   About the inauguration of the porticus: SUET. *Aug*. 29; PROP. 2.31; OV. *Tr*. 3.1.61. On dating dating to 25 BCE: RICHMOND (1958: 200); GALINSKY (1996: 220); PENSABENE (1997: 153). Still, its planning must be previous to that date.
[47] As Apollo, Octavian deposed the arch after Actium (PROP. 4.6.69), displaying a new attitude of clemency to his enemies (SUET. *Aug*. 51).

However, for some authors[48], the Danaids do not represent Augustus or Rome, but the defeated enemy. There is a possibility of a connection between Cleopatra and the women. The Egyptian queen had also married into her own family, and so did the Ptolemies in general; Argos was the motherland of Io/Isis, and the Ptolemies were also Argive in origin; Antony was related to the progeny of Io, as he claimed descendance from Heracles, and he, the enemy in the civil strife, was represented as a part of a fratricidal line[49].

The possibility that Augustus conceived a monument with a twofold meaning cannot be ruled out. In this regard, the allusions (to Cleopatra, daughter of Danaus; to the Ptolemies and Antony being their descendants; etc.) offer insight into the Egyptian line's perceived arrogance and barbarity. The allusions to Rome would be less pronounced, and given the spouses' affiliation, this appears somewhat uncertain. However, the genealogical connection between the Danaids and the Egyptian royal line is a noteworthy point for consideration.

In any case, both theories point to the prominence of Octavian/Augustus personalism in the propaganda of the time. The essential difference between the two interpretations is a movement of change in propaganda at the end of the period 36-27 BCE, or alternatively, the validation of the leader's unrivaled authority through monumental representations and his affiliation with the divine.

4. Conclusions

As has been argued, both the Mausoleum and the Palatine complex were conceived as elements to emphasise Octavian's superiority in a period prior to 28 BCE. On one side of the city, there was a palace-temple, and on the other, a gigantic tomb with a statue of the leader standing higher than any other monument at the

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[48]   As BALENSIEFEN (1998).
[49] Vitrubius (*De arch*. 1.1.5 ff) also, stated that the caryatids represented defeated enemies. Another example can be seen in the Forum of Trajan, where the Dacians are used as supporting elements (TRILLMICH, 2010: 195; BALENSIEFEN, 1998: 23-33).

time. This created a powerful image of Octavian, which began to overshadow the city's other monuments. However, following the Battle of Actium, a progressive change can be perceived. During this period, even if the triumviral powers survived, there was a tendency to justify Octavian's position on the constitutional tradition, using the several consulships and the oath of allegiance (VERVAET, 2009: 60). This process reached its zenith in 28-27 BCE, when certain acts of the triumviral era were declared illegal, Octavian relinquished his supreme power, and the fasces were shared with his consular college for the first time (DC 53.1.1; TAC. *Ann*. 3.28.2; 40.4).

These events can be read in the monuments. The Mausoleum was 'democratised' by the inclusion of references to Augustus' moderation, such as the laurel leaves or the *clipeus virtutis*, while the Palatine Complex of Apollo underwent an analogous process in its figurative representation when Octavian decided to symbolically represent himself and his triumph. A change can be seen from the 'eclectic' and ostentatious style of the mausoleum to the pure classical form of the temple decoration (ZANKER, 1983: 32; 35-36). The truth of this period, however, is that Octavian's position was of supreme power. As Zanker put it, even if the triumviral powers were deposed in 28 BCE, these forms of self-representation show that issues relating to the new distribution of power had been dealt with before the 'restoration' process had even begun.

The monuments of this phase represent not only the struggle for power, but also the constitutional uncertainty of the period (which is why the Mausoleum presents such extravagant and undefined features). The monuments also mirror Octavian's intention to present himself as something more than a mere mortal, a general or a politician without directly using the words 'king' or 'god'.

Finally, the life of the monuments also speaks of Octavian's coming to terms with the constitutional settlement of 28-27 BCE, his intention to be *princeps* as *primus inter pares*. The meaning of the buildings begins to change at the end of the period, when Octavian, now Augustus, decides to justify his position on the Roman

constitutional tradition, even if he chose the elements of that tradition that suited him best.

These conclusions are all the more emphatic if the practical disappearance of personalistic architectural projects after 27 BCE is taken into account. In the period after 27 BCE and coinciding with the 'republican' phase of Augustan policies, most buildings were dedicated to the public good. During this phase, the now moderate Augustus undertook the construction or rebuilding of eighty-two temples with the intention of restoring traditional Roman mores and religious practices (SUET. *Aug*. 29; *Mon. Anc*. 20). Meanwhile, his colleague Agrippa began work on an impressive complex on the Campus Martius, dedicated to the entertainment of the people, with baths, porticoes, and gardens full of statues and other works of art[50]. The land on the Campus Martius belonged to Pompey but changed hands several times until it was acquired by Mark Antony and, after his death, by Agrippa.[51] In a way, it could be considered as *spolia* from the Egyptian war, dedicated to the enjoyment of the people. The only example of a building that spoke about the main leader was the Pantheon, also commissioned by Agrippa. Even in this case, Augustus was prudent enough to place his image inside a sacred building (DC 53.27.2).

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[50] Agrippa was presented as a man devoted to the people and in his will he bequeathed his baths to the Roman people (DC 53.23.1; 27.2-3; 54.29.4; MART. *Epig*. 10.58; 11.47.5-6; 14.163; OV. *Pont*. 1.8.37-38; PLIN. *HN* 34.62; 36.121; STR. 13.1.19; SEN. *De Ben*. 3.32.4; GALINSKY, 2012: 121).

[51] As stated by JOLIVET (1983), COARELLI (1997: 545-559), MUZZIOLO (2006: 334-335), REHAK (2006: 19-20), CAPANNA (2016: 75), D'ALESSIO (2016: 505; 532). Also LTUR III, 51-52.

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