Semiotics and Archaeology

The symbolic meaning of art and space in imperial Rome

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The specificity of Roman art as the expression of individual status

Art and architecture, but also urban organization, when seen as cultural manifestations, are not composed simply of morphological elements. It is true that art serves for communication purposes while space is a functional, utilitarian system, and thus art and space are in one aspect radically different. But they converge in that they both, beyond and behind their visual forms, integrate and are animated by meanings, symbols, and value systems. Roman imperial art and spatial organization are maybe the most important material remains of corresponding society and as such they are to the present day the subject of vivid archeological interest. But it is our contention that a semiotically sensitive archeological look is better able to penetrate into this material and locate some of its deeper meanings. The present paper is an example of such an enterprise. We shall focus on the fundamental ideology inspiring imperial Rome, but also take into consideration its historical origins. This ideology is delivered by the dynamics of semiosis and this fact will also give us the opportunity to discuss certain aspects of these dynamics.

Each civilization is a unique and specific historical phenomenon and never a reflection of another civilization as a whole. This is the case with Roman culture, in spite of its strong influences from Greece. In the domain of the theory of art and architecture this Greek influence is evident. The central Roman theory of art, the *decor* theory, incorporates Greek classical rationalism and was probably founded on the rhetorical theory of Greek peripatetic philosophy; it appears in Roman sources from the end of the Republic (509-31 BC) and in the Early Empire (Empire: 31 BC-476 AD). this theory of "appropriateness as applied in Vitruvius' *De architectura* brings together different dimensions, such as a functionalist dimension according to which a building should be adapted to its environment and the form of an architectural element to its function, and a morphological dimension, in the sense that the same criterion of appropriateness is applied to the relation between the details of a building and its total form. The *decor* theory encompasses the Greek concepts of *symmetria e eurhythmia*, that art should be faithful to nature, and that there is an appropriate scale for a cult image in its relation to a temple. *Symmetria* (συμμετρια) is a term marking the discourse on art in 5th-century and to some extend also 4th-century Greece. *Symmetria* corresponds to the philosophical idea of the principle of order in the universe and denotes the commensurability between the parts of a work of art, and between them and the whole (Pollitt 1974: 15, 26, 162); thus *symmetria* locates beauty in the objective structure of the work of art. *Eurhythmia* (ευρυσμια), on the other hand, acquired importance in the 4th century and denotes the subjective quality of being visually well-proportional. It thus locates beauty in the perception of the beholder.

The other art theory found among the Romans, called by Pollitt the museographic theory, also involves the notion of realism. This theory, found in Pliny (23-79 AD), could possibly be related to what Pollitt calls the *phantasia* theory, a classicizing subjectivist theory of the 2nd century BC, according to which the great artists of the classical past were considered as seers, moved by inspiration and able to physically render transcendental beauty (Pollitt 1974: 53-55). Pollitt, however, inclines rather toward a Roman origin and indicates Varro (116-27 BC) as possible source.

Roman art theory presents a movement from rationalism to subjectivism, also observed in Greece. Indeed, late antiquity moved away from the classicism of the *decor* theory - though it is possible to find counter-examples, such as the *Eikones* of the Elder Philostratus in the 3rd century AD - toward transcendental mysticism and an intuitional approach to art, related to the *phantasia* theory. The latter appears in Roman sources with the histories of Greek art by Cicero (106-44 BC) and Quintilian (35-95 AD). This intuitional approach is by the neo-Platonist Plotinus (205-270 AD), who criticizes the concept of *symmetria* on the grounds that beauty also characterizes simple things not divisible into parts (Pollitt 1966: xiv ff, 213ff, and 1974: 68ff, 81ff).

But if Roman art criticism presents these Greek influences, the social function of art for the Romans was far removed from its function in Greek society. The Romans, in contrast to classical Greece, did not give art any central role in their life, quite the contrary. This attitude toward art should be sought in the history of Rome. Rome was economically backward in the early 5th century and developed later with the policy of expansion of the 4th and 3rd centuries. In spite of this development, both the state and individual families were of very limited means up to the 1st century BC. This poverty, which was turned into a virtue, did not make any real place for art. But the situation was reversed in this century, when Rome reached a peak of public and private wealth, and was flooded with art objects from all over the mediterranean. In view of the dominant attitude toward art, Roman collectors were apologetic about their artistic interests, and there was a feeling that a contradiction existed between art and the traditionally austere Roman way of life. This negative attitude toward art goes back at least to the Elder Cato (243-149 BC). Bianchi-Bandinelli, considers the realistic Roman portrait of the Sulla period during the Late Republic as a Roman achievement, and the expression of an ideology praising the patrician family as the incarnation of the early republican way of life and values (Pollitt 1966: xiiff, and Bianchi-Bandinelli 1960: 276ff).

Thus, Roman art did not function as a socially central or essentially esthetic product as in greece. In fact, at some moment in Roman history art and architecture acquired a new social function as an individual status symbol. Indeed, at least from the 1st century BC the Romans show a strong consciousness of history and their position in it. This consciousness combined with the old commemorative function of Roman art, which came to reinforce the new status function of art. State art and architecture - sculpture, painting, cameos, coins, buildings - now commemorate military and political achievements, and state personalities, thus becoming part of the structure of power relations and serving the policies of the ruling class. This propagandistic art is found already in the Republican period and continues throughout the Empire. Similar trends are found in the private domain. Individual portraits commemorated an individual to his descendants, decorative art in private spaces seems not to be innocent of the selection of subjects relating to its function as a status symbol, and decorative art in public buildings financed by the citizens had the same character. It then becomes clear that the dominant codes of Roman art and architecture, both in their production and consumption, are, at least from the 1st century BC, the socio-political and the personal-historical code; these codes are complemented by the religious code (cf. Pollitt 1966: xiff, and Hannestad 1986: 9ff, 77).

This Roman specificity pervades the whole domain of Roman art, from what has been considered its most to its least hellenized part. Indeed, it has been argued that Roman art is split between a state "high" art with strong Greek influences, and a middle-class less sophisticated art extending from the late Republic to late antiquity. This second type of Roman art would be a descendant of an idiosyncratic middle-italian version of hellenistic art, producing specifically Roman themes, and

having its own attributes, such as an axial and paratactic syntax, no-illusionistic perspective and the use of the size of a figure to connote its importance (Bianchi-Bandinelli 1960: 272ff).

Another important trait of the specificity of the Roman approach to art is, ironically, the use and reproduction of Greek art. By the late 2nd and 1st centuries BC the habit of acquiring Greek art objects became widespread and was accompanied by a growing art market, and it is in this context that the activity of copying Greek originals began. Many Greek masterpieces would have been lost if Roman copying practice did not preserve them for us.

Semantization and desemantization in sculpture

One of the principal functions of sculpture in Rome during the period of the kings (754-510) was the commemorative function, which accompanied portraits statues erected in public spaces. It has been argued that these statues show Etruscan influences. However, the portrait sculpture of the late Republic and the Empire shows to a greater or lesser degree a native Roman realism in spite of different influences to which it was subject (Pollitt 1966: xiii, 12, 53). The portrait statue holds a dominant position in Roman sculpture and a deeper study of the semiotic processes related to it reveals central traits of Roman values.

Thus, a portrait denoted a specific person, but this signification was coupled with a connotative signification of a glorifying nature. This nature is clear from the political and spatial context of honorific public statues, since they were authorized by the state, and located in public spaces and the forum. Glorification, however, was selective since it concerned in the beginning only men, while the erection of female statues was denounced by Cato in the early 2nd century BC. We have here an opposition to a positive semantization process, which was turned in the mid-2nd century against non-authorized statues erected around the forum. The pragmatic result of this kind of attitude could take the milder form of removing the statues, or the more violent forms of defacing or breaking them or melting them down. We can find behind this behavior a magical attitude toward art objects as almost animated doubles of the depicted persons.

The combination of glorification and magical animation seems to characterize the habit of removing the portrait statues of famous citizens from the public buildings where they were kept to exhibit them in public processions. Magical animation appears in many other instances. It is mentioned that Augustus was in the habit of kissing daily the statue of a young relative kept in his bedroom; according to an exaggerated description, Tiberius also placed Lysippus' *Apoxyomenos* in his bedroom because he was in love with it; the Senate voted in 176 AD, according to Dio Cassius, that a golden statue of the deceased Faustina, wife of Marcus Aurelius, should be carried in the theater when the emperor was present and put in the front box, "from which she used to look on when she was living" (cf. Pollitt 1966: 54f, 132, 184, and Hannestad 1986: 32, 50).

Scale was a morphological component related to the glorifying connotation of portrait statues and, following Pliny, a height of three feet seems to have been considered enough in the 3rd century BC to convey this signification. but the head of the empire was not limited to this moderate scale in later times. The equestrian statue of Domitian, erected in the forum in 91 AD, must have been quite large; Nero ordered a statue of himself probably 120 feet high which he put in his place, Domus Aurea; and Alexander Severus in the 3rd century set up colossal statues of deified emperors which functioned as a metaphor for himself (cf. Pollitt 1966: 54, 144, 163, 200). Imposing scale was associated for the Romans with size and height, and height could also be achieved through physical elevation on horseback, or on a chariot - common from the 3rd century BC -, a column, or a triumphal arch, connoting other kinds of elevation.

Other physical characteristics of a statue also had a connotative signification. An important one was the material of the statue, a fact also acknowledged by Pliny. Following Pliny, bronze was first used in Rome to make statues of gods, and later used for mortals. in the 1st century AD, Claudius accepted the erection of two relatively inexpensive statues of himself, one of bronze and other of stone. The most valued materials were silver and gold, which also had a high price in the market.

These were the only materials Domitian allowed to be used for his statues, while he demanded that they be of a high quality. The direct relation between the market price of the material and its cultural evaluation is an instance of the commercialization of art in ancient Rome. In the middle of the 1st century BC the sculptor Arkesilaos was able to sell even his sketch-models at a high price, while Augustus was selling paintings showing only their back side, thus making their purchase a kind of lottery (cf. Pollitt 1966: 19, 88, 116, 139, 155f, 163ff).

All the main morphological attributes of Roman statues had a connotative signification. One of these was color. Thus, in the late 6th century the Etruscan sculptor Vulca made a terracotta figure of Jupiter colored red, the color of the god. Later, we find with Cicero and Pliny a current of "classicist" conservative Roman thought associating the kind and set of colors used in painting with broad cultural values; for Cicero, approaches to color and rhetorical styles are closely connected. The two praise the classical four-color system in painting as an aspect of the flamboyance of the rich coloring of their times. The *colores austeri*, connote the traditional Roman (and Attic) values, which are opposed to the foreign luxury connoted by the bright artificial *colores florid* (Pollitt 1966: 88f, and Bruno 1977: 68ff).

Returning to sculpture, we observe the existence, beyond the semantization and desemantization processes examined above, of a special case of the former, resemantization processes. In the 1st century AD, Caligula intended to remove the heads of outstanding Greek statues, including the Zeus of Olympia, and replace them with his own. We have here an attempt at a double resemantization, of himself as incarnation of supreme values through the statue and of the statue which would associate its values with a specific person. It is manifest that both operations converge in the same result: the glorification of the emperor. This kind of practice was rather repounded in Roman society. Pliny complains about it, deploring the replacement of the heads of statues. In a similar line, there was a statue of Domitian in the guise of Hercules. Commodus, in the end of the 2nd century AD, replaced with his own the head of the colossus of Nero, which in the meanwhile had been reshaped as a statue of the Sun, and like Domitian associated himself with Hercules by adding a club and a lion. Resemantization was not restricted to the manipulation of the head or of pattern attributes, but could also extend to the body members. Thus, in the 4th century Constantine I removed the lions flanking a statue of the goddess Rhea and altered the position of its hands from holding the lions to a position of prayer (cf. Pollitt 1966: 134f, 144, 156, 165, 185f, 213).

Gestural semiotics, narrative, and metaphor in art

The example of the Rhea statue shows us that the position of the members of the body was one of the signifying morphological attributes of a statue, and this observation extends, as we shall see, to the whole of the body. However, the principal emphasis is given to the hand, *manus*, mainly the right hand, as a symbol of power possession and bond. Not only sculpture but also all the pictorial arts incorporate these gestural semiotics borrowed from everyday cultural practice. Gestures in the arts were used by the Romans to connote their own significations, and through them the status of the gesticulating person and its relation to other depicted persons or the observer. Following Brilliant, the emphasis of Roman art on gesture is due to the influence of the rhetorical training of the ruling class, used in their public appearances, and to the taste for theater as a form of visual recreation.

However, while gestures in the arts were thus anchored in Roman social life, they found in Greek and Italian art a precedent, which was adapted to the Roman search for status symbols. The basis for the Roman gestural tradition was established during the Republic and its presence is paralleled by an increasing individualization in numismatic iconography from the 3rd to the 1st century BC, so that there appears in the 2nd century an increasing reference to the ruling-class families and in the 1st an emphasis on individuals. This approach to art matured in the 2nd century AD and was intensified in the 3rd and 4th centuries as a result of increased social stratification (Brilliant 1963: 9ff, 37ff, 215).

The handshake, *dextrarum iunctio*, presupposes the connection of two gesticulating individuals and signified for the Romans the establishment of a bond, concord and obligation, as the farewell; it appears with a similar signification in classical and hellenistic Greek art, and Etruscan art. If the extended right forearm moves outwards in different heights around the elbow or evolves 90m iwards to touch the left part of the toga while being raised a little higher, its signification becomes <<dignity>>. The right arm raised bent from the level of the shoulder and up in a lateral, usually is an imperial gesture of address, *adlocutio*; the same signification is conveyed by the arm of the bronze Etruscan "Orator" of the late 2nd century BC.

A signification of greeting, appearing in early Etruscan art, is found, if we follow Brilliant, in another gesture, where it would represent a semantic addition to the significations of adoration of the gods and respect. This gesture, which with the latter significations originated in Greece, is the vertical raising of the right forearm with the palm turned outward and slightly bent at the wrist, at about the height of the shoulder. The gesture was resemantized in Roman art in the 4th century AD when it came to signify the supreme imperial power. Respect is also signified by a greater elevation of the vertical arm, with open palm, as testified by Roman examples. The raising of the right arm also has the signification of greeting for the Romans. Two other gestures of adoration of the gods in Greek art are proskynesis, kneeling - found also among the Persians in respect to the king - and the raising of both arms open diagonally to the heavens. The gesture arrived at through the lowering of the arms from this position by about 90m signifies both for the Greeks and the Persians a donation; the Roman equivalent is the *liberalitas* gesture, comprising the almost horizontal extension of the right hand (cf. Brilliant 1963: 14ff, 46ff, 67ff, 119f, 173, 208f, 215f).

The central status gesture in Roman art is *adlocutio*, whose signification of address is coupled with the signification of command. The earlier *adlocutio* on coin reverses refers to the emperor alone, while under Caligula an audience is added in 37/38 AD together with the legend "Adlocut Coh"; under Constantine I the last *adlocutio* on coinage appeared. In the mid-1st century AD, when the statues of gods and emperors became identical, the *adlocutio* signified also the superhuman power of the emperor. From the early 3rd century, the right hand of the emperor came, according to Brilliant, in the context of the new absolutism of the emperor to signify his divine protection. An imperial gesture similar to the adlocutio is the raising of the right hand, associating the signification of greeting and majesty. The combination of this gesture with an equestrian representation of the emperor and the sacral *adventus* theme, the arrival of the emperor in a place, appears on coins from Septimius Severus on (reign: 193-211). In the 3rd century an association was made of the military triumph with *adventus*, and persons accompanying the emperor were added on the coin representations. Another important imperial gesture was *liberalitas*, signifying the imperial generosity. The importance of the gesture decreased in the 3rd century AD and it was replaced in the 4th century by the *largitio*, which had a general signification of donation lacking the commemorative character of *liberalitas* (Brilliant 1963: 57, 65, 77, 132f, 169ff).

In all the above cases, imperial gestures are used to connote the status of the emperor, but there are also other means to connote his authority: focusing on him - frequently through movements and visual lines - increased frontality from the 3rd century AD, greater size, elevation - on horseback, on a podium, on a balcony. Thus, height and physical elevation as a status device do not only concern sculpture, but the whole of Roman art. The only case where a lower person, in absolute and not necessarily relative terms, is "higher" than a higher person is when the lower height is due to seating, which connotes superiority. The notions of height and elevation, and superiority, belong to two semantic axes whose other poles are lowness and inferiority.

Physical lowness is created by its very relation to height, but is also absolutely depicted, as in Greece. Different means were used in the latter case, and one of them was the hand-kiss, presupposing a bending of the body and signifying homage and gratitude. Another means of depicting lowness was *proskynesis*, signifying servitude, whose association with the Barbarians was accompanied by the forward extension of both arms, a gesture of supplication. The most emphatic rep-

resentation of lowness, with the signification of defeat, is achieved through the representation of a Barbarian head or body under the right foot of the emperor or the hooves of his horse (cf. Brilliant 1963: 54, 72ff, 96, 117, 122ff, 175f, 182ff).

The gesticulating person can be independent, but can also belong to a wider, restricted or extended, whole. The movement from one to the other implies an increasing reliance on narrative devices. While narrative in natural language is a temporal semiotic system, pictorial narrative constitutes a spatial system, and thus the semiotic principles on which it rests are different from those of literary narrative. The Archaic period in Greece developed three such principles. The first is "simultaneous narrative", according to which successive events and different places are depicted in one and the same pictorial space. Following the second principle, "fragmented narrative", parts of the same event or even object occupy separate pictorial spaces, such as the different sides of a vase or contiguous metopes. The third principle is "serial narrative", in the case of which a series of related events occupies a corresponding series of pictorial spaces. Roman art allows us to complement these types of pictorial narrative with a fourth type, "continuous narrative", where the same characters appear in a series of progressing scenes which evolve in a continuous pictorial space. This type can be traced back to classical Greece and the morphologically cyclical narrative of the "Theseus cups" of the very early 5th century BC. the type characterizes hellenistic and roman reliefs, such as the spiral relief of the column of Trajan, which represents the most elaborated narrative work of antiquity. The structure of the relief follows from the combination of two different structures, the one supporting, narrative and chronological, thus syntagmatic, and the other of a paradigmatic nature, since it is composed of scenes centering on and glorifying the emperor; the latter scenes are repetitive, and intercalated in the syntagmatic chain without any temporal relation between them, securing however, the denotative and connotative coherency of the whole (cf. Hurwit 1985: 170, 314, 347ff, and Brilliant 1984: 29f, 90ff).

A simple and fragmented form of narrative is found on the front reliefs of Etruscan cinerary urns of the last centuries BC, whose themes seem to originate in hellenistic picture books, probably composed of different scenes with simple labels. These urns are compared by Brilliant to the Megarian bowls, whose representations seem to be abbreviations of extensively illustrated hellenistic papyrus rolls including pictorial narrative cycles corresponding to well known literary texts. The Roman equivalent of these pictorial cycles are the *Tabulae Iliacae* dating from the 1st century BC to the mid-2nd AD.

The programmatic painting in Pompeii is much more monumental than these Etruscan urns. Programmatic should be understood here as referring to the specific association of the individual paintings within the same room and not necessarily to systematically occurring regularities. Each panel refers to a broader context, and the panels in the same room are associated in narrative, as is for example the case with the long frieze of the trojan cycle in the House of the Cryptoporticus, or metaphorically as in the case of Room of Fateful Love in the House of Jason. We saw in 1.2. that such metaphorical compositions appeared on pediments in 5th-century Greece, while they continued to exist in the hellenistic period. Brilliant considers that the Pompeian metaphorical wholes follow rhetorical constructions, and compares them to the hellenistic romances and Roman literature (Brilliant 1984: 21ff, 41ff, 62ff).

Cosmic power and urban space

The triumphal arches are a typical example of the combination of history, commemoration, propaganda and mainly demonstration of the imperial power in the Roman semantic universe, although some of them are know from the Republic. This character is stressed when a statue of the emperor on his chariot, *quadriga*, or a rampant equestrian statue of him, both connoting victory and power, is placed on the attic of the arch. Once more the superiority of the emperor is connoted by physical elevation, which also characterizes the temple of Jupiter on the Capitol, the Capitolium, whose name derives from *caput*, head, and which is the eternal head of the city, and the place

from which the gods inspect and protect it. But *caput* also signifies the high status of an individual, who as such possesses *manus*, power (cf. also Brilliant 1963: 56; 215f). Thus, height, head, superiority, and power are associated, and this ideological complex can be extended. A digression on the matter of Etruscan and Roman urban planning is needed in order to clarify the nature of this extension.

In spite of the difficulties in detecting the Etruscan elements in the description of the Roman texts, we could argue convincingly that the form and functional organization of the Etruscan settlement obey a cosmological model, realized through a foundation rite and consisting of a whole of standardized elements. This model was applied, following Plutarch, by Romulus in his founding of Rome in 754 BC. The geometrical and symbolic center of the model was called *mundus*, possibly an Etruscan word denoting the entrance to the underworld, and was a circular hole in the ground, covered by a stone, the *lapis manalis*. The *mundus* connotes <<hell-mouth>>, and probably <<center of the world>> and <<quadripartite world>>. A second element of the Etruscan settlement is probably the *sulcus primigenius*, the sacred moat dug around the settlement by the founder in an anti-clockwise direction, *sinistratio*. The third element is probably the *pomoerium*, a sacred zone surrounding the settlement of unclear location but related to the sacred walls.

The last probable element of the settlement is the *templum* which was considered as corresponding to a celestial *templum*. The celestial *templum* is circular and probably divided according to three interrelated significant manners. It seems that the first division was done with a N-S axis probably facing toward the south, which created one left and east semicircle considered as favorable, and one right and west semicircle considered as unfavorable. The relation to the cardinal points is clearly established only for the Empire. The second division is an extension of the first and is accomplished through the crossing of the first axis with a vertical E-W axis, dividing the *templum* into a hither and a beyond. The four sectors thus arrived at correspond to the four parts of the world. The four points of the compass are grouped in couples, east with north and west with south. The third division consists in the subdivision of the four sectors into four parts each, leading thus to sixteen sectors. This celestial templum with its two cosmic axes was projected on earth during the foundation rite by a priest-augur seated in the center of the *templum* and facing south - the direction to which the Etruscan temple also was oriented.

Irrespectively of the Etruscan origin of these urban elements, the fact is that they appear in association with the Roman settlement. They are realized through the foundation rite which aims at transforming the settlement into an image of the universe. While the old Etruscan settlements were probably circular, the Roman settlements had from the 4th century BC a chessboard plan, taken from the Etruscans, who used it from the late 6th century BC following Greek influences and a square or rectangular contour. The Roman surveyors, the *agrimensores*, who operated parallel to the augur, used a kind of system of Cartesian coordinates to trace the roads, which evolved around three crucial elements referred to above: two vertical axes oriented toward the four points of the compass and the *mundus*; the same system was used for the division of the fields. The E-W axis is the *decumanus*; it was considered as splitting the universe in the middle, and was during the Empire the main axis of the settlement. the N-S axis, the *cardo*, was probably the main axis in earlier times; it was identified with the cosmic axis and considered as passing through the highest point in the universe, the polar star. Thus, the *cardo* represents the projection of the "perpendicular" cosmic axis on a horizontal plane and the association of north with east extends to also include "up". These two axes ended in four gates. The four parts thus obtained, the four parts of the world, were considered as emanating from their intersection, which connoted <<center of the world>>, associated, as for the Greeks, with the notion of *umbilicus* navel, the zero-point in space and time. A similar symbolism was also attached to the *mundus*, which also connoted, like the *templum*, the revolving heaven and the quadripartite world; it has been argued that these significations were restricted during the empire to the earth and humanity (Müller 1961: 9ff, Rykwert 1976: 45ff, 117ff, and Lagopoulos 1978: 117ff).

The Capitolium, as the forum, is spatially related to the center of the settlement, as maximal (cosmic) height is related to (cosmic) centrality (through the cosmic axis). "Up" is the heavens and it is exactly this connotation which is carried by the superior part of a structure shaped in the form of a dome. The emperor was closely associated with the heavenly dome and his throne was covered by a dome. The dome of the main dining room of Nero's "golden" palace could rotate "like the heaven", while the "heaven and the north pole" which Martial associated with Domitian's palace should equally be conceived of as a dome. According to the same author, the height of this palace equals that of the heaven and the stars. Thus, the emperor is also related to the stars. A star, which according to Dio Cassius is a comet, is already depicted on the forehead of the statue of the demigod Julius Caesar in the cella of the temple of Mars Ultor of the Augustean forum. This star was posthumously added to his statues and also accompanied many of his coin portraits. We also know of paintings depicting Nero as the Sun-god in the midst of the stars (Pollitt 1966: 93, 143, 162, Hannestad 1986: 85f, and Lehmann 1945: 11, 22ff).

We can now define the central ideological complex animating the Roman sign systems of art and space. It operates as a whole at least during the Empire, and in the earliest times without yet being appropriated by the individual status component. It exalts individual power and associates it with the hand and with height, which is expressed through physical elevation and associated with the head and the navel, and with a cosmological complex including the heavens with the stars and the polar star, cosmic directions, and cosmic centrality. This cosmic power complex activates the art and architecture of the Empire and most eminently their state variants, and elevates the emperor symbolically into the sphere of the divine.

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