Patroness of the Arts in the Polacak Principality of Eastern Europe. We thank her daughter Natalia Rusak for allowing us to include her mother's paper in this volume and for her assistance. Halina Rusak was head Librarian of the Rutgers University Art Library, author, and artist. Her love for her native land, Belarus, was immense and she was committed to bringing awareness of the injustices perpetuated by the Russian communist regime to her country, including the looting of its treasures. Her article in this volume, which she completed while receiving treatment in a hospital, was her last effort. It deals, among other things, with a jeweled cross commissioned by St. Euphrosenia for St. Saviour Cathedral at Sialko which disappeared during the communist occupation. For the editors, Halina was a colleague, friend, and exemplar of strength and determination. This volume is dedicated to her memory.

Engendering Space: Octavia's Portico in Rome

Margaret Woodhull

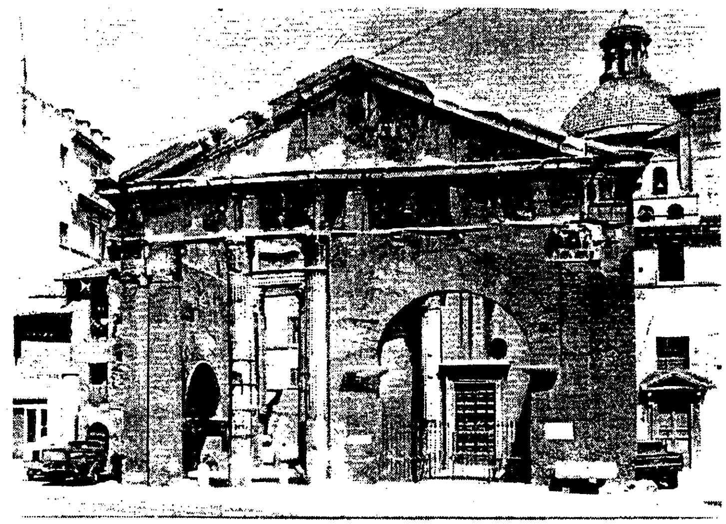

Fig. 1. *Porticus Octaviae, Rome*, southwest façade, main propylon (Photo: American Academy in Rome, Photographic Archive).

In a recent essay, Diana Kleiner wrote, "The scholarship on the early Roman empire has largely ignored the power of women and the impact of their monuments...The evidence exists, but it has not been sufficiently explored."[1] Despite plentiful literary and archaeological evidence, patronage histories of Roman imperial architecture have nearly forgotten women's contributions by focusing instead on the accomplishments of men – the imperial fora for instance, or the massive Colosseum, the theaters and amphitheaters, temples and centers of state cult. But what of the buildings commissioned by women in cities across the empire? Where is their history? Where do the monumental benefactions of Livia, Rome's first empress, fit into current architectural histories? How can we more fully integrate the buildings

[1] D.E.E Kleiner, "Imperial Women as Patrons of the Arts in the Early Empire," in *I, Claudia. Women in Ancient Rome*, S. Matheson and Kleiner, eds., New Haven, 1996, 40 n. 7.

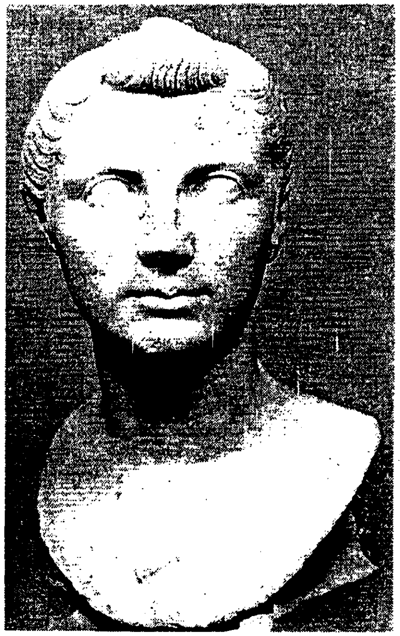

Fig. 2. *Octavia*, Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano alle Terme (Photo: Author).

commissioned by Eumachia and her fellow priestess Mamia in Pompeii or Salvia Postuma's commemorative arch for her family in Pola (modern Pula, Croatia)? In the ancient Roman empire, women built. Yet the impact of their patronage within the urban landscape has yet to be fully considered.[2]

In an attempt to direct scholarly attention to works by women patrons of the ancient era, this paper explores one monument in particular, the Porticus Octaviae, built by Augustus' sister, Octavia, for the city of Rome between 27 and 13 BCE (Figs. 1 and 2).[3] Because of the prominence of her

[2] On Livia's benefactions, see generally ibid.; on the Pompeian benefactions, see J. J. Dobbins "Problems of Chronology, Decoration, and Urban Design in the Forum at Pompeii," *AJA*, XCVIII, 1994, esp. 647-668. On Salvia Postuma's arch, G. Traversari, *L'arco dei Sergi*, Padua, 1971; Margaret Woodhull, "Matronly Patrons in the Early Roman Empire: The Case of Salvia Postuma's Arch," in *Women's Influence on Culture in Antiquity*, E. Marshall and F. McHardy, eds., London (forthcoming).

[3] Scholars generally believe that the portico was dedicated around the same time, if not in conjunction with the Theater of Marcellus completed by Augustus in memory of Octavia's son.

sister-in-law Livia in Augustan politics in Rome, Octavia's historic role tends to be overshadowed in literature as does the important colonnade she built at the southeastern edge of the Circus Flaminius in the Campus Martius (Fig. 3). Yet, Octavia deserves closer attention than she has received because she, not Livia, was the first woman to serve Augustus' political needs during civil conflict by marrying his opponent, Marc Antony. Moreover, it was she who initially joined her brother in revitalizing the capital city as an architectural patron. In doing so, Octavia promoted not only her brother's hegemonic claims and social reforms, but her own public persona. The portico is here examined in terms of how it reflected Octavia's role in dynastic and imperial politics, and how, through its design, decoration, and topography, the building provided an example for the woman of means to construct a civic identity typically closed to her in public life.

Octavia in Republican History. Octavia's colonnade does not represent her first foray into the public eye. To understand how she gained the right to erect a monument on the scale of the Porticus Octaviae, we must first consider her earlier role in politics of the late republic. From this context, it will become clear that Octavia's portico formed part of a network of urban projects carried out by members of the imperial family, designed to shift the character of the Campus Martius from a martial locus to a center of the regenerative efforts that characterized Augustus' reign.

Having inherited the mantle of power from his uncle and adoptive father Julius Caesar in 44 BCE, Augustus, then Octavian, faced a Roman world burdened by civil strife and perceived moral decay.[4] It was in this context that he began his slow ascent to power which would culminate with his victory at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE. During the intervening years of struggle for Roman rule, Octavia offered her brother a powerful link to political allies. In 39 BCE, she married Mark Antony, one of Augustus' co-triumvirs, in an attempt to strengthen their weakened friendship. She subsequently accompanied Antony on his travels in the eastern Mediterranean, spending 39-37 BCE in Athens.[5] During this time she became the first Roman woman to have her portrait struck on coinage along with her husband's. The couple appears on *aurei* and *sestertii* struck in the years following their marriage in celebration of the union. The production of these coins confirms that Octavia was the cement that ensured political

E. M. Steinby, ed., *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* (henceforth referred to as *LTUR*), Rome, 1999-2003, s.v. *porticus Octaviae*; L. Richardson, "The Evolution of the Porticus Octaviae," *AJA*, LXXX, 1976, 62.

[4] The senate conferred the honorific title Augustus in 27 BCE.

[5] For an historical summary of Octavia and Antony's relationship, see S. A. Cook et al., eds., *Cambridge Ancient History*, X, Cambridge, 1923-1939, 51-54.

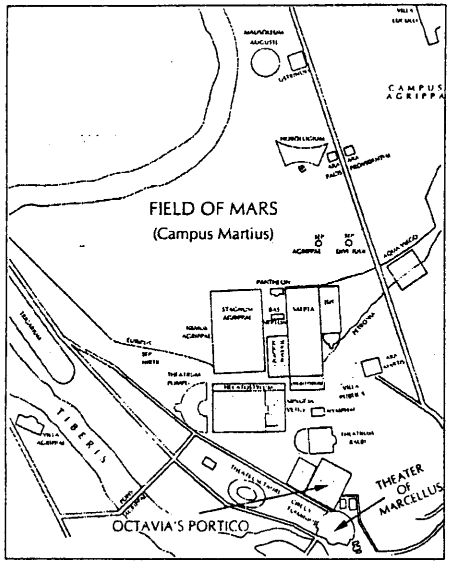

Fig. 3. Plan of the Campus Martius.

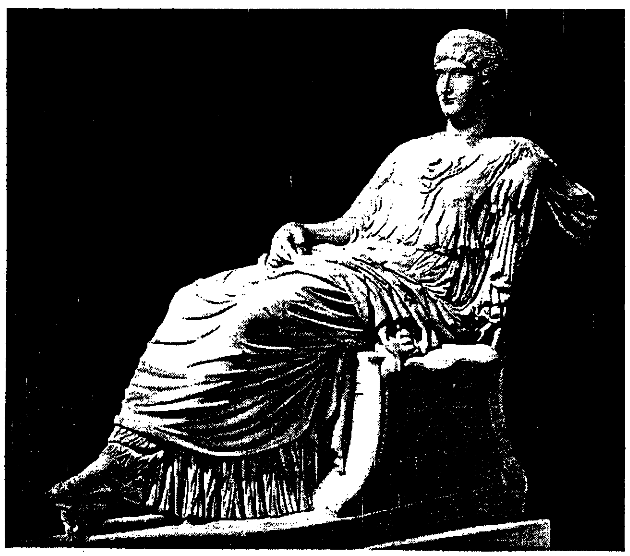

Fig. 4. *Roman Woman,* sometimes called *Agrippina,* c. 2d. Century CE. (Photo: Art Resource).

reconciliation between her brother and her new husband.6 Though the marriage appeared to be a political victory for Augustus and Antony, in reality it was a tenuous bond. By 37 BCE, Antony's political ambitions had exacerbated the unraveling marriage. Pregnant with Antony's child, Octavia returned to Rome at the end of the year, while Antony turned his attentions to Egypt's Queen Cleopatra.

With Octavia in Rome, Antony seized the opportunity to present publicly his twin sons by Cleopatra and in so doing he sent a blatant message to Augustus and Octavia: the marriage to Octavia was no longer politically expedient; she had been supplanted by a foreign queen.[7] Soon Cleopatra's portrait replaced Octavia's on Antony's coins. Yet, despite insult, Octavia continued to offer Antony her support politically, financially, and maritally. In 37 BCE, she intervened on Antony's behalf and persuaded Augustus to continue with his alliance, thereby securing a brief peace between the men. Two years later, she raised supplies for Antony during his Armenian campaigns, a gesture he promptly rejected in favor of Cleopatra's support.[8] Throughout, Octavia continued as the dutiful Roman wife, raising not only her child by Antony, but also his children by former wives Fulvia and Antonia.[9] Though the couple did not formally divorce until 32 BCE, five years after Octavia's return to Rome, Antony's initial estrangement from his wife laid the foundation for a fierce campaign of character assassination by the Augustan camp. The beleaguered Octavia was its standard.

Augustus moved swiftly to action. Soon civil war between the two men erupted, and Octavia became a political weapon against Antony.[10] Cast as the paradigmatic Roman *matrona*, a devoted wife faithfully committed to the values that made for a strong Roman republic, Octavia continued to withstand Antony's insults. Even after war erupted between the two men, she

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[6] Kleiner "Politics and Gender in the Pictorial Propaganda of Antony and Octavian." *EchosCl,* XXXVI, nos. 11, 1992, 362; Matheson and Kleiner, eds., Cat. 5, 56-57.

[7] Whether Antony and Cleopatra married at this time is not clear. Regardless, Antony's actions made obvious his intentions to make Cleopatra his new consort. On Antony and Cleopatra, see H. H. Scullard, *From the Gracchi to Nero: A History of Rome 133 BC to AD 68*, 5th ed., London and New York, 1982, 167, 441 n. 17 with bibliography.

[8] On Octavia's intervention in Tarentum, see Appian, *De bellis civilibus romanis*, 93; Plutarch, *Antony*, 35.1; Cassius Dio, 48.54; M. W. Singer, "Octavia's Mediation at Tarentum," *JRS*, 1947, 174-175; R. G. Cluett, "Roman Women and Triumviral Politics, 43-37 B.C.," *EchosCl*, XLII, nos. 17, 1998, 70. On her offering of supplies, see Plutarch, *Antony*, 53; Scullard, 167.

[9] Plutarch, *Antony*, 54; Scullard, 167, n. 7.

[10] M. B. Flory, "Livia and the History of Public Honorific Statuary for Women in Rome," *TAPA*, CXXIII, 1993, 292-293. See also, Plutarch, *Antony*, 54.

maintained residence in her husband's house despite Augustus' pleas. To the Roman public for whom duty to one's country and kinsmen was paramount, Antony's abandonment of Octavia for a foreign queen was akin to high treason. Her image came to stand in marked contrast to the menacing Cleopatra, whose alien charms threatened traditional Roman customs.

In 35 BCE, Augustus intensified his attack on Antony by gathering Senate support to grant Octavia significant privileges generally accorded to notable men. By bestowing *sacrosanctitas tribunicia*, or tribunician sanctity, Augustus liberated Octavia from *tutela mulieris* – lifelong legal guardianship directed at women.[11] This liberty assimilated Octavia to the Vestal Virgins, the only other women in Rome to enjoy sacrosanctity at the time. Most notably perhaps, Octavia was additionally distinguished with honorary portrait statues to be displayed publicly.[12]

The late 30s saw the culmination of enmity between Augustus and Antony ending with the emperor's victory at the Battle of Actium in 31 BCE, followed by Antony and Cleopatra's suicides.[13] Octavia, in turn, became an important character in Augustus' imperial designs. Her son Marcellus was Augustus' favored heir, and she thus remained a linch-pin in an evolving dynasty. In the 20s, she remained prominent while Marcellus was groomed for leadership. It was during this time that renovation of the portico that would bear her name began along the Circus Flaminius in the Campus Martius.[14]

History of the Porticus Octaviae. Prominently positioned at the juncture between republic and empire, Octavia was set to wield influence in her own right after her brother's Actian victory. Her architectural benefaction gave public voice to the persona he had begun to promote. How, then, might these characteristics have been apparent in the monument that bore her name? Octavia's portico in its Augustan phase is best understood if we first consider its past. Begun in c. 27 BCE, the portico replaced an earlier colonnade built in 146 BCE by the general Q. Caecilius Metellus using

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[11] On *tutela mulieris*, see J. Gardner, *Family and Familia in Roman Law and Life*, Oxford, 1998, 14-22.

[12] At the same time, Livia, too, received these honors. For Octavia's and Livia's sacrosanctity, see B. Scardigli, "La sacrosantitas tribunicia di Ottavia e Livia," *AFLS*, III, 1982, 61-64.

[13] On the battle of Actium, see, for example, Cassius Dio, 50.15-35; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 17; *Cambridge Ancient History*, VI, 100-105.

[14] E. Bartman, *Portraits of Livia: Imaging the Imperial Woman in Augustan Rome*, Cambridge, 1996, 80. Octavia's central role in the imperial family diminished in the years following Marcellus's death, but she was still recognized as significant, as demonstrated by her portrait on the *Ara Pacis Augustae* (13-9 BCE).

victory spoils from his Macedonian campaigns.[15] Inside the enclosure stood two temples honoring Juno Regina and Jupiter Stator respectively. The Temple of Juno had been erected as an offering of thanks by the general M. Aemilius Lepidus in 179 BCE, and, thus, predated the colonnade by some thirty-three years.[16] Metellus added the Temple of Jupiter when he erected the colonnade and placed spoliated artworks inside the templum proper, in particular the famed Granikos monument executed by Lysippos for Alexander the Great.[17] Sometime in the succeeding decades, probably around 121 BCE, the Senate and the Roman people added to the collection a seated portrait of Cornelia, mother of Tiberius and Gaius Gracchus, well-known champions of populist causes.[18] Though the bronze statue no longer exists, its base was unearthed by nineteenth-century excavators in the area of the portico.[19] Its accompanying portrait is thought to have emulated a nearby image of a seated Aphrodite by the Greek artist Phidias, no doubt forming a visual link between the idealized goddess and the idealized

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[15] M. J. Boyd, "The Porticoes of Metellus and Octavia," *PBSR*, XXI, 1953, 152-159; H. Lauter, "Porticus Metelli-Porticus Octaviae: Die baulichen Reste," *BullComm*, LXXXVII, 1980-1981, 37-46; L. Richardson, Jr., "The Evolution of the Porticus Octaviae," *AJA*, LXXX, 1976, 57-64. Based on archaeological remains, Lauter offers the most comprehensive and recent study of the Metellan colonnade and its relationship to its successor. Metellus was consul in 143 BCE and censor in 131 BCE and probably erected the portico between his victories in 146 and his censorship. Lauter placed the beginning of construction for the Augustan phase of the colonnade in c. 33-27. However, others have argued for a slightly later date based on Vitruvius, *de Architectura*, III.2.5.

[16] *LTUR* 3, s.v. *Iuno regina, aedes in campo, ad circum flaminium.*

[17] The monument was commissioned by Alexander the Great after his battle at the Granikos river in 334 BCE. For the monument, see J. J. Pollitt, *Art in the Hellenistic Age*, Cambridge, 1986, 41-43. On the battle, see P. Green, *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.: A Historical Biography*, Berkeley, 1974, 172ff. On the republican practice of expropriating art as triumphal *manubiae* to decorate one's benefaction, see T. Hölscher, *Monumenti statali e pubblico*, L'erma di Bretschneider, Rome, 1994, 20ff.

[18] M. Kajava, "Cornelia Africani F. Gracchorum," *Arctos*, XXIII, 1989, 119-132; F. Coarelli, "La statue de Cornélie, mère des Gracques et la crise politique à Rome au temps de Saturninus," in *Le dernier siècle de la republique romaine et l'époque augusténne*, H. Zehnacker, ed., Strassbourg, 1978, 13-28; A. Pellegrini, "Statue di Cornelia, Madre dei Gracchi nel portico di Metello e Ottavia," *Buonarrotti*, 1879, 238; R. Lanciani, "Scavi nel portico d'Ottavia," *BullInst*, 1878, 209.

[19] Pellegrini, "Scavi del Portico di Ottavia," *BullInst*, 1861, 241-245. The base bears an inscription: CORNELIA AFRICANI F[ILIA] GRACCHORUM (Cornelia, daughter of Africanus, [mother of] the Gracchi).

matron.[20] The type exists today in copies, for example, the one at the Capitoline Museum in Rome (Fig. 4). Roman women of later generations adopted this model for their portraits to exemplify their own virtuous womanhood.[21] Thematically, these would become cornerstones of the ideological message conveyed by the portico after Octavia's reconstruction.

By the beginning of the empire, many of Rome's public monuments stood in various stages of decay. As the Mediterranean's newest power, Rome demanded a public image that would rival the famed cities of the Attalids and the Ptolemies.[22] Augustus' political strategy as the new leader in the capital city included not only new construction, but rebuilding of Rome's infrastructure and renovations of its older structures. These typically were reattributed to their Augustan patrons as older patronal affiliations took second stage. Such was the case with Octavia's portico. Metellus' structure was razed and its foundations re-used for a grand rebuilding. Reconstruction began contemporaneously with other projects by Augustus and various members or the imperial retinue in the Campus Martius: In the north, the emperor began his mausoleum and its associated monuments; Agrippa, Augustus' son-in-law and military comrade, built his bathing complex, completed the Saepta Iulia, and erected the Pantheon. To the south, Augustus' ally Sosianus restored the Temple of Apollo Medicus while Augustus took over construction (begun by Julius Caesar) of a large theater, later dedicated to the late Marcellus. The whole of the region, previously characterized by victory monuments built by rivaling republican generals, began to emerge as a center of Augustan civic beneficence specifically tied to the imperial family. Octavia's portico was the principal contribution by a woman.[23]

In its refurbished state, the colonnaded complex provided the Roman people with a splendid, enclosed quadriportico set off from the bustle of the nearby forum Boarium (Rome's cattle market), the Campus Martius,

[20] Coarelli, 21.

[21] On the type, see Kleiner, *Roman Scultpure*, New Haven, 1992, 442.

[22] D. Favro, *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome*, Cambridge, 1996, esp. 42-56.

[23] According to Cassius Dio, 55.8, Agrippa's sister, Vipsania Polla, also built a colonnaded structure to the east of the Campus Martius. It was erected much later than Octavia's. See also *LTUR*, IV, s.v. *porticus Vipsania*.

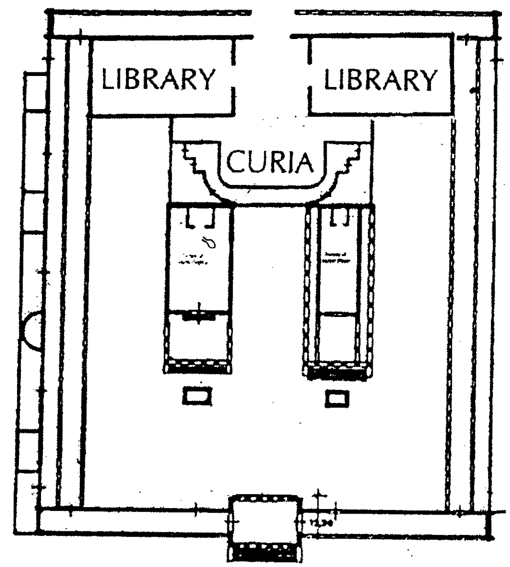

Fig. 5. Reconstruction Plan of the Porticus Octaviae.

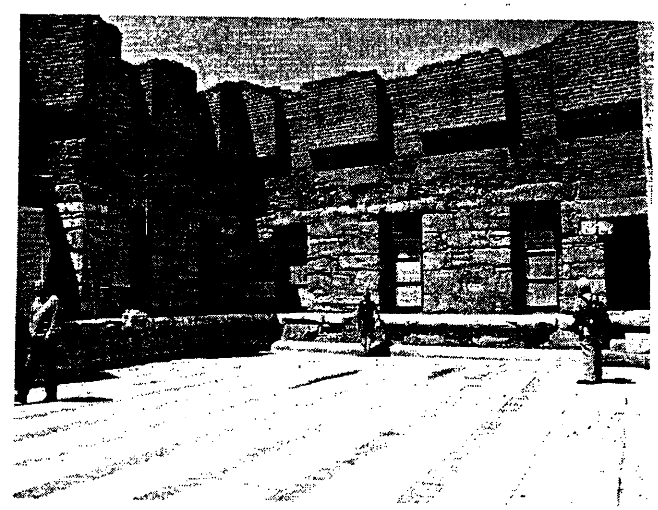

Fig. 6. *Library of Celsus,* interior view with niches for scrolls, Ephesus, Turkey, 110-135 CE (Photo: Author).

river traffic, and urban life in general (Fig. 5).[24] A large portal centered along the building's southwest façade provided access to the interior court. Inside, the portico's walls and floors were covered in colorful marbles and, according to Pliny the Elder, other famous statues and sculptural ensembles joined the Granikos monument and Cornelia's portrait.[25] To the restored temple's inside, Octavia added a curia (a meeting hall) and two libraries for Greek and Latin literature inside the precinct.

The Porticus Octaviae's Significance in Augustan Politics and Propaganda. It seems that the impact of the portico and of Octavia as its patron has been overlooked in past scholarship primarily because its reconstruction occurred at a time when other building projects by men of note were just beginning. However, careful analysis of the complex will reveal that Octavia and her monument were critical links in the developing dynastic ideology focused on women and family. Her beneficence, not only represented a highly generous outlay of capital, but a virtuous selflessness that characterized the ideal Augustan woman. It was this facet of her persona that had garnered her fame as Antony's beleaguered wife. From this perspective, the Porticus Octaviae emerges as both a part of a larger Augustan initiative to rebuild Rome, thereby promoting the emperor's political hegemony and social legislation, and as a unique monument that spoke to the life of its patron. Octavia, a woman – albeit of high standing – had gained access to this predominantly masculine region, thereby also gaining placement among some of Rome's most powerful men. Her access to the region can be seen in the context of political transformations taking place in Rome.

With a shift to dynastic rule from a republic came a contemporaneous shift in the importance of women as producers of heirs. It is for this reason, as Natalie Kampen has contended, that mortal women began to be represented in the visual arts of the imperial era, specifically in Roman historical reliefs. Kampen has argued that women appear in visual

[24] At least two recorded fires damaged portions if not all of the Porticus Octaviae, one in 80 CE during the reign of Titus (79-81 CE) and a second in 191 CE during Commodus' reign (180-192 CE). The current inscription on the entablature of the propylon records the building's restoration by Septimius Severus and his son Caracalla in c. 203 CE. One can still see the reused column drums and marble blocks in the reverse of the pediments of the propylon. Lauter's study of the monumental remains confirms that the Severan plan follows relatively closely that of the Augustan phase, which, in turn followed the Metellan plan, perhaps with slight modifications. See also, P. Ciancio Rossetto and R. Motta, "Uno 'scavo' in facciata," in *L'agorà efficiente: l'impresa e la cittá creativa*, G. Amendola and G. Sivo, eds., Rome, 1995; Ciancio Rossetto, *ArchLaz*, XII/1, 1995, 96-99.

[25] On the decorative marble, see Ovid, *Ars Amatoria*, 1.69-70. On the art in the portico, see e.g., Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, 34.31, 35.22, 35.114, 36.29, 36.35, 36.28, 36.43.

arts at moments when they were ideologically most central to the dynastic or hegemonic claims of a regime.[26] We might consider Octavia's entrance into the male-dominated world of architectural patronage in the Campus Martius analogously. Octavia's prominence in Augustan politics after the Battle of Actium was largely due to her role as mother to Augustus' heir apparent and as a figure with the potential for fecundity. In this position she provided in her son a link in the new dynastic line of succession. Her architectural patronage in the Campus Martius must be seen as a logical extension of her role in the imperial family dynamics.

Historically the massive field that stretched from the east bank of the Tiber to the slopes of the Quirinal hill had been the principal staging ground for military exercises and the place where Roman men assembled for the census and voting.[27] Its southern end, the Circus Flaminius, had been the site of massive displays of *manubiae* (battle spoils) and enormous triumphal monuments erected by victorious republican generals competing for the most impressive building (e.g., Pompey's theater, Metellus' earlier portico, and C. Octavius' portico). During the early imperial era, Augustus and members of the imperial circle replaced the fragmented, competitive identity of the region with a unified building plan whose structures complemented one another and presented a harmonious display of imperial power.[28] Octavia's contribution to the agenda added a woman's hand to the family tree of buildings arising here. Indeed, Octavia's benefaction helped shift the character of the region from a staging ground for individual displays of power by men to a tableau of familial largesse.

Yet, perhaps due to the novelty of her unusual benefaction in a traditionally male-dominated world of architectural patronage, scholarly accounts of the portico have questioned Octavia's actual role. Modern studies often cite Augustus as author of the monument that bore his sister's name, pointing to literary sources that credit him with the erection of buildings to which he gave the names of female relatives.[29] A passage in

[26] Natalie Kampen, "Between Public and Private," in *Women's History and Ancient History*, S. Pomeroy, ed., Chapel Hill, 1991, esp. 219.

[27] *LTUR* I, s.v. *Campus Martius*; Coarelli, *Il Campo Marzio*, Quasar, 1996.

[28] See Favro, 108-115, n. 20; idem, "Reading the Augustan City," in *Narrative and Event in Ancient Art*, P. Holliday, ed., Cambridge, 1994, 230-257.

[29] B. Olinder, *Porticus Octavia in Circo Flaminio: Topographical studies in the Campus region of Rome*, Rome, 1974. See especially, Cassius Dio 49.43, 55.8, 66.24; Livy, *Epistles*, 138, 149; Suetonius, *Augustus*, 29.4.

Augustus' *Res Gestae* (19), the autobiographical account of his life's accomplishments, has also provoked modern confusion. Here, Augustus describes his restoration of a portico called the porticus Octavia – that is, the Octavian portico, rather than the portico of Octavia – located along the Circus Flaminius. Though a seemingly innocuous difference, the implications for authorship are significant. An ancient source from the philologist Festus clarifies these ambiguities as he explains that there were two porticoes on the Circus Flaminius associated with the Octavian name: one was near the Theater of Marcellus and was built by Octavia, while the other stood near the Theater of Pompey and was built by an ancestor of Augustus, Cn. Octavius, and later rebuilt by the emperor (Festus, 188L).[30]

Some scholars have resisted the attribution to Octavia, instead holding fast to the idea that Festus erred and that it is the later ancient authors who give the monument to Augustus – namely Suetonius and Cassius Dio – who are in fact correct.[31] This position is problematic, for both Suetonius and Cassius Dio wrote their commentaries much later than the erection of the portico. Their attributions, then, should be used judiciously, and contemporary sources, like Festus, given greater weight. The Augustan poet Ovid provides further evidence for Octavia's patronage and adds further that she was joined by her son, Marcellus, in this effort (*Ars Amatoria*, 1.69-70).[32] If, as Ovid suggests, Marcellus participated in the benefaction, probably in its early years, then it is likely that he and Octavia first worked on the project jointly, but that she added the libraries and meeting hall after his premature death. In fact, evidence for comparable mother/son collaborations existed in some of the most notable benefactions by women in the Augustan era, such as Empress Livia's porticus Liviae in Rome carried out with her son Tiberius, or the famous colonnaded building in Pompeii paid for by the

[30] This second colonnade was erected in 168 BCE. Augustus specified that he left the original donor's name on the building in what must have been a calculated display of *pietas* towards his ancestor. See also Augustus, *Res Gestae*, 19; Vellerius Paterculus, 2.12; Pliny, *Historia Naturalis*, 34.13.

[31] Most recent scholarship on Octavia's portico attributes patronage to her. See for example Richardson, *A New Topographical Dictionary of Rome*, Baltimore, 1992, s.v. *porticus Octaviae*; G. Morgan, "The Porticus of Metellus, a reconsideration," *Hermes*, XCIX, 1971, 489; T. Wiseman "Two Questions on the Circus Flaminius," *PBSR*, XLIV, 1976, 246; P. Gros "Les premières générations d'architectes hellénistiques à Rome," in *Mélanges J. Heurgon*, I, 1976, 387-409; F. Zevi "L'identificazione del tempio di Marte in Circo ed altre osservazioni," in *Mélanages J. Heurgon*, II, 1976, 1047-1064; Coarelli, 1996, 521-530, esp. 521-522; *LTUR*, s.v. *porticus Octaviae*.

[32] Aut ubi muneribus nati sua munera mater/addit, externo marmore dives opus: "... where the mother has added her own gifts to her son's a work rich with marble coating...," Ovid, *The Art of Love and Other Poems*, J. H. Mozley, trans., Cambridge, 1929, 16-17.

priestess Eumachia and dedicated in her own name and her son's.[33] In both examples, scholars have interpreted the joint benefaction as a means by which a publicly prominent mother lent political support to her son.[34] Such was probably the case with Octavia, who was no doubt interested in promoting her son's future in the imperial lineup.

The Ideal Mother: Decorative Ensembles in The Porticus Octaviae. Painted and sculptural embellishments inside the portico reinforced the ideology of dynasty and woman's role in its creation. Though much of the artwork is lost to us today, literary sources describe these images dispersed throughout the grounds. A brief iconographic analysis of some of the more notable images reveals that they promoted feminine behavior considered ideal for a woman, such as chastity, fecundity, piety, and moral rectitude, the same values which Octavia came to represent in her capacity as an imperial woman.[35] The messages conveyed by the art were grounded in legislation enacted by Augustus to discourage adultery in favor of legitimate reproduction within the bounds of marriage. For women, the rewards were liberation from financial tutelage after having borne three children.[36] The statue that perhaps best illustrated these Augustan ideals was the aforementioned republican portrait of Cornelia.

For the Roman people, Cornelia was a paradigm of female virtue. Her chastity, education, and eloquent speech earned her the admiration and respect of Roman senators as well as foreign dignitaries. After her husband's untimely death, she honorably remained a *univira* (a woman who married only once), one of the highest demonstrations of marital devotion a woman could display, even rejecting a proposal from King Ptolemy of Egypt. Instead she chose to dedicate herself to the rearing and education of her twelve children. Quintilian writes that her famous sons, Gaius and Tiberius,

[33] M. B. Flory, "*Sic exempla parantur*: Livia's shrine to Concordia and the Porticus Liviae," *Historia*, XXXIII, 1984, 309-330. On Livia's colonnade see *LTUR*, V, s.v. *porticus Liviae*. For the Pompeian monuments, see most recently Richardson, *Pompeii: An Architectural History*, Baltimore, 1988, 191-198.

[34] For example, see Richardson, "Concordia and Concordia Augusta: Rome and Pompeii," *La Parola del Passato*, XXXIII, 1978, 260-272.

[35] Several important works on Roman womanhood are N. Purcell, "Livia and the Womanhood of Rome," *PCPhS*, nos. 32, 1986, 78-105.; S. Dixon, *The Roman Mother*, Norman, 1988; J. Hallett, *Fathers and Daughters in Roman Society*, Princeton, 1984.

[36] Gardner, 47-55.

owed much of their own eloquence to their mother.[37] After their premature deaths, she continually honored their memories, and according to Plutarch (*Tiberius Gracchus,* 1.1-5), it was as a mother that Cornelia gained most attention. For this, she was considered an exemplum of matronhood. It may have been the historic association between the portico and the republican icon of motherhood and her politically influential sons that attracted Octavia and Marcellus to reconstruct the building in the early imperial years, in an attempt to create a perceived likeness between the two pairs.

Cast as a Cornelia for a new era, Octavia presented the Roman people with a renewed ideal of womanhood invested with the weight of traditional republican values. The analogy would have been more profound as Roman viewers recognized distinct biographical parallels between the two women. Like Cornelia, Octavia devoted herself to rearing her children, honoring her marriage, and remaining a *univira* after her husband's death (not to mention his abandonment). Like Cornelia too, she had come to figure in the political aspirations of the men in her family, counseling, supporting, and providing beneficence in ways unusual for a woman, and likewise had a famous son who predeceased her. Finally, both were given the rare honor of public portraits. In fact, it seems likely that a portrait of Octavia – that most biographical of art forms – stood in the portico as a physical and visual parallel to Cornelia's, one that would have underscored the similarities for viewers.[38]

Art relating to Augustan femininity was displayed elsewhere in the portico. Specifically, Pliny the Elder (*Historia Naturalis*, 36.28) describes the famous Aphrodite by Phidias, which formed one of the jewels of the collection. Its erection here would have evoked for the viewer the proclaimed divine ancestor of the *gens Iulia*, Venus Genetrix. As mother of Aeneas, who founded the Alban settlement that later would become Rome, Venus legitimized Augustus' dynastic and hegemonic claims. In art and literature, her nurturing aspect was emphasized above her erotic character, as is suggested by the so-called Venus/Tellus/Italia relief on the Ara Pacis Augustae. As noted, the Phidian statue may have been paired with the Cornelia figure, and, if true, the two surely would have created a striking

[37] Quintillian, *Institutio Oratorio*, 1.1.6; S. Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome: From the Elder Cato to the Younger Pliny*, Methuen, 1977, 15.

[38] R.G. Lewis, "Some mothers...," *Athenaeum,* LXVI, 1988, 200, has suggested the possibility that a group monument of famous Roman matrons was displayed in conjunction with Cornelia. Though the existence of such an ensemble is controversial, it is clear that some conceptual link between Cornelia and Octavia existed which could easily have been visual.

visual and conceptual parallel between Rome's ideal matron and the Julian family's progenitor.

Other images in the portico provided exempla of a different nature. Festus wrote that a statue of the legendary Tarpeia stood in the Temple of Jupiter Stator. A seminal figure in Rome's early history, Tarpeia betrayed the Roman people to their Sabine enemies for promises of gold. When the Sabine warriors attacked the Roman citadel, they killed Tarpeia for her treachery (Festus, 496L; Livy, 1.11.6-9).[39] To later Romans, Tarpeia's story was a cautionary tale, extolling women to eschew the pleasures of *luxuria* gained by betrayal in favor of patriotic devotion. In the context of the Augustan portico, Tarpeia's image played off of Cornelia's; she was an example of inappropriate feminine behavior and a constant reminder of the consequences of immoral acts.

Tarpeia's actions resonated in other ways for Romans. Kampen argued convincingly that the story of Tarpeia's treachery and the related rape of the Sabine women linked early Rome to the later Augustan city through the social policies the tale promoted.[40] In the story, Roman men, lacking women to bear their children, kidnapped the Sabine womenfolk, an act that precipitated the later attack in which Tarpeia's treachery cost her her life. Tarpeia's interference signaled an attempt to foil Rome's growth and ultimately its expansion. Though the historical accuracy of the story may be uncertain, it was a popular narrative in imperial Rome, appearing not only in the Porticus Octaviae, but in the extensive relief that decorated the Augustan renovations of the republican Basilica Aemilia in the Roman Forum, that most political of civic spaces.[41] The story's popularity suggests a general anxiety about a shrinking citizenry, and its appearance as a theme in the portico should be considered not only as a didactic tale of immorality, but as a call to women to place the interests of the state – the reproduction of citizens – first.

In combination, images of Cornelia, Venus, Tarpeia, and, in all likelihood, Octavia created a web of historically significant women related to each other through their stories, virtue, or disloyalty. Together these came to provide moral guidelines for the women of a new Rome with Octavia

[39] See also Bartman, 63.

[40] Kampen, "The Muted Other," *ArtJ*, 1988, 15-19; Kleiner, 1992, 89; *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, Oxford, 1996, s.v. *Sabini*.

[41] Kampen, 1988, 15-16; idem., "Reliefs of the Basilica Aemilia. A reading," *Klio*, 1991, 448-458.

presented as a kind of generic proper matron, a living embodiment of and a reinforcement to a traditional notion of femininity.[42]

Biography, Memory, and Metaphor in Octavia's Portico. Artwork in the Porticus Octaviae celebrated feminine ideals by evoking Octavia as a contemporary representative. But more than the art inside, features of the building added by Octavia, specifically the libraries, represented acts of maternal duty expected of the Roman matron at the death of a family member. Dedicated to the memory of her late son Marcellus, the libraries must also be understood as commemorative monuments and a public statement of private loss.[43] Marcellus' death shook the imperial family, and was marked with much public fanfare. Indeed, he became the first member of the Julian line to be placed in the monumental mausoleum at the northern end of the Campus Martius built by his uncle as a family tomb.[44]

Few scholars have considered the implications of choosing public libraries as a commemorative monument. In the Classical world, libraries originated in the private sphere of fifth century in Greece. They became a public institution in the Hellenistic world where they were generally associated with *gymnasia*, and subsequently became the model for later Roman libraries. Libraries became implicated in commemoration in the Hellenistic world where they were often a feature of commemorative sanctuaries, or *heroa*. *Heroa* were places in which to worship heroic figures, deemed close to the gods, though not of divine status themselves.[45] Homer is a classic example of the kind of hero worthy of a *heroon*, and a sanctuary known as the Homereion in Smyrna (modern Izmir) honored the poet. The Greek geographer Strabo described the site in the Augustan period, observing that it included a rectangular *temenos*, or sacred space, enclosed

[42] On a gender theory in ancient art, see ibid., "Gender Theory in Roman Art," in Kleiner and Matheson, eds., 14-25.

[43] The *Forma Urbis Romae*, a marble plan of Rome dating to the Severan era, does not indicate where the libraries were located. This has led scholars to believe that they were lost and never replaced probably after destruction by one of several recorded subsequent fires that swept through the building. Coarelli, 1996, 537, Fig. 133 provides a plan with a likely reconstruction of the libraries.

[44] Several ancient literary sources record that Marcellus' death was cause for public grief. Compare Vergil, *Aeneid*, 6.860-86, 6.1178; Propertius, 3.18; *Consolatio ad Liviam*, ll. 441-444.

[45] E. Makowiecka, *The Origin and Evolution of the Architectural Form of the Roman Library*, Warsaw, 1978, 7-13.

by a portico with an adjoining library.[46] Historically closer and perhaps more familiar to early imperial Romans was a similar sanctuary in Alexandria established by Augustus for his adoptive father, Julius Caesar. The Sebasteion (or Caesareum), as it was called, had a temple honoring the deified Caesar and included Greek and Latin libraries.[47] It is likely that these types of *heroa* inspired Octavia's commemoration. Indeed, with the neighboring theater which her brother dedicated to Marcellus, Octavia's portico marked out extensive commemorative space for her son in the southern end of the Campus Martius. Thus, in conjunction with Augustus' Mausoleum, it bracketed the region with Julian memorials.

Octavia's libraries relate her benefaction to several others in contemporary Rome where the public library was yet a novelty in the cultural landscape. During the 20s, Augustus had built and completed his Palatine complex which included two libraries, and by 28 BCE, C. Asinius Pollio had incorporated new libraries into his reconstruction of the Atrium Libertatis, a project begun by Julius Caesar.[48] Ovid wrote that Asinius' libraries were the first in Rome open to the public, and Cassius Dio recorded that art from Asinius' eastern campaigns decorated the buildings. Octavia's libraries obviously followed a growing tradition.

Perhaps most significantly, a library was a particularly apt metaphor for a memorial for the dead. For an ancient, preserving the memory of the deceased in his tomb – through inscriptions noting lifetime accomplishments or perhaps through portraits – perpetuated his presence for the living, keeping him perpetually alive in their minds. Metaphorically a library served much the same purpose; it was a place where visitors found permanent records of works by long-dead authors, a repository of memories in the form of written texts.[49] Moreover, literary and archaeological evidence suggests that ancients conceived of libraries as metaphorical vessels for the storage

[46] Ibid., 13; Strabo, *Geographia*, 14.1.37. See also F. Poland, "Öffentlichen Bibliotheken in Griechenland und Kleinasian," *Festschrift Förstenamm*, Leipzig, 1894, 10-12. The Homereion is known through literary references.

[47] E. Parsons, *The Alexandrian Library*, Amsterdam, 1952, 134; Makowiecka, 48, 13, n. 26. On *heroa*, see B. Frischer, "*Monumenta et Arae Honoris Virtutisque Causa*: Evidence of Memorials of Roman Civic Heroes," *BullComm*, 1983, 51-86. See also, P. Davies, *Death and the Emperor: Funerary Monuments from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius, 28 B.C.-A.D. 193*, Cambridge, 2000.

[48] Favro, 95, 302 n. 33.

[49] A. Pauly and G. Wissowa, eds. *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Stuttgart, 1894- s.v. *Bibliotheken*.

of knowledge and records of memories. For example, rhetoricians recommended memory exercises that created architectural compartments in the mind to store the information to be remembered.[50] Libraries were analogously designed and typically had niches in their perimeter walls where wooden chests literally contained the written texts and stored memories of writers, often long dead. In this way, the physical design of the libraries formed an architectural metaphor for the commemorative process. Just as the mind could be trained to store memories in metaphorical "rooms," so too a library literally stored the physical embodiment of those memories in real spaces.[51] Indeed, some tombs took the symbolism further and integrated the deceased within the library proper. In Ephesus, for instance, Celsus was actually memorialized by his son in the public library and his tomb was placed in the building's foundations (Fig. 6). Similarly, Trajan's ashes were deposited in the base of the column between his two libraries in the Forum Traiani. Not only did his funerary monument associate with the libraries, but the very column itself presented the story of his military accomplishments, literally the visual record of these events, thought to have also been recorded on scrolls housed in the libraries.[52] Since Romans designed their funeral monuments to bear for the living memory of the deceased, a library then seems ideal for their commemoration.

The commemorative process itself was yet another means by which Octavia gave public face to a profoundly intimate loss, for in the ancient world, the act of commemoration was traditionally carried out by women who acted as official mourners in family deaths or those of important members of the community.[53] Katariina Mustakallio wrote:

[50] Cicero, *de Oratore*, 2.86.351-354; Quintilian, *Instituto Oratatorio*, 11.2.17-22; *Ad Herennium*, 3.16-24.

[51] M. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory*, Cambridge, 1990, 33ff, 116, 121ff. On memory training and practice in the ancient world, see F. Yates, *The Art of Memory*, Chicago, 1966; B. Bergmann, "The Roman House as Memory Theater: The House of the Tragic Poet," *AB*, LXXVI, 1994, 225-257.

[52] On the libraries in Trajan's forum, see *LTUR*, II, s.v. *forum Traiani*; B. Fehr, "Das Militär als Leitbild: Politische Funktion und Gruppen spezifische Wahrnehmung des Traiansforums und der Traianssäule," *Hephaistos*, VII-VIII, 1985-1986, 44. On Trajan's forum as a commemorative and dynastic monument, see P. Davies, "The Politics of Perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration," *AJA*, CI, 1997, 41-66.

[53] See for example, J. Gagé, *Matronalia: essai sur les devotions et les organisations cultuelles des femmes dans l'ancienne Rome*, 1963, 104-105. For early representations of women mourning, consider the female figures on the so-called Dipylon vases from Athens, c. 750 BCE. See B. Schweizer, *Greek Geometric Art*, New York, 1971, Fig. 29. See also, T. Corbeill,

> In Roman culture, female mourners formed an institutionalized part of the rituals performed during unusual situations. They were connected to the rites of passage, e.g. funerals, and formed an important and expressive part of many ceremonies. The act of lamentation and mourning formed likewise a sign and a symbol of passing from the sphere of everyday life to a new and exceptional space.[54]

Nicole Loraux also suggested that public mourning allowed women to be figures of catharsis for a community aggrieved at the loss of an important member.[55] In this way, women took on the public, though intimate role of guardians during the crisis of death. Mourning rituals gave women an official role in public life. In Octavia's case, Marcellus' death was a tragedy felt beyond the imperial family and remembering him moved beyond the confines of the family. As Vergil records in his *Aeneid* (6.1178), it was a loss for Romans at large. Commemorative public portraits of Marcellus have been found in Pompeii, testifying to the far-reaching impact of his death.[56] Octavia's libraries created an enduring memorial that addressed public and private needs.

Moreover, the choice of libraries resonates with other cultural practices tied to motherhood, for Roman mothers were charged with their children's earliest education. In this light, the benefaction evokes a relationship between the repositories of learned texts and the thematically related role of an educator mother. Tacitus reports that Aurelia, who bore Julius Caesar, and Atia, mother to Augustus and Octavia, both taught their

Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome, Princeton, 2004, whose chapter, "Blood, Milk, and Tears: the Gestures of Mourning Women," gives important attention to women's role in mourning rituals as figures who deliver bodies into this world and are thus socially sanctioned to deliver the deceased body into the next world.

[54] Katariina Mustakallio, "Some Aspects of the Story of Coriolanus and the Women Behind the Cult of Fortuna Muliebris," *Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum*, XCI, 1990, 129.

[55] Nicole Loraux, *Mothers in Mourning*, C. Pache trans., Ithaca, 1998, esp. 9-34. Though Loraux examines the hegemonic forces that came to associate mourning with femininity in the Greek world, her analysis applies to Roman practice too. She argues that mourning women in Greek tragedy served as figures of catharsis for the corporate body to provide an outlet for public grief which, in extreme circumstances, such as massive losses of youths in wartime, might threaten the stability of the state. By configuring mourning as an effeminate activity, a weakness of character, state-sanctioned drama discouraged men from expressing excessive grief publicly. Women therefore became important vehicles of public commemoration, and the masculine identity characterized by military prowess remained uncompromised.

[56] E. La Rocca, *et al.*, *Guida Archeologica di Pompei*, Milan, 1994, 99, 147.

children to serve their country.[57] Both mothers had been widowed and were left to care for their young alone. Similar stories are told about Cornelia,[58] and surely Octavia, abandoned by Antony when Marcellus was only five, had been similarly influential in the education of her offspring. The libraries perhaps offered a biographical note about the patron in addition to commemorating the deceased.

In light of a woman's social roles, we can begin to understand Octavia's commemorative act on various levels. On the one hand, the libraries expose biographical information about Octavia. The death of her son occasioned their erection; they are markers of a profound life event unique to her. Through the dedication, Octavia was able to offer the public a funnel for its communal grief over Marcellus's death. In essence, her benefaction was a permanent expression of those emotions. Yet, beyond the biographical, her patronal actions participated in a broader discourse on the proper actions of a Roman matron and linked Octavia to a noble heritage of republican predecessors.

Conclusion. Octavia's public image as an ideal *matrona* as well as biographical references within the portico repeatedly confronted the ancient visitor to the complex. Entering through the monumental propylon, a dedicatory inscription probably informed viewers of Octavia's magnificent benefaction to the city. A walk through the complex forced the visitor into a visual and mental dialogue with the buildings, its honoree, and its patron. Further along, one would encounter images of Venus, and the gleaming bronze statue of Cornelia, and soon connect Octavia to these ideal mothers, remembering that she was descended from Venus, and that her own life paralleled Cornelia's in so many ways. Indeed for all who entered, the space engendered by Octavia provided constant reminder of the feminine forces that contributed to Rome's greatness. These factors converged to make the Porticus Octaviae stand out as a "feminized" space in the urban fabric of the male-dominated Campus Martius.

With Marcellus' death, Octavia's role in Augustan politics diminished. She took a notable secondary position to Julia on the north panel of the Ara Pacis Augustae, Augustus' monumental commemoration of

[57] Tacitus, *Dialogues*, 28.5-6. See Dixon, 109-110, 170 where she notes, "Not only was [a woman] praised for attention to his morals, as in the case of Atia's supervision of Octavian but she might take it upon herself to direct the course of his studies. Neither Julia Procilla, mother of Agricola, nor Agrippina minor, mother of Nero, appears to have had any training in philosophy, yet each checked her son's study of the subject on grounds of propriety." See also Tacitus, *Agricola*, 4; Suetonius, *Nero*, 52.

[58] Bonner, 15, n. 37.

Roman peace, completed in 9 BCE, though she remained an important presence for the family.[59] The honors she received upon her death later that year cast her as a hero of the state. It was marked by official public mourning: senators designated her passing with a change of public dress; Augustus arranged for her body to lie in state in the Temple of Deified Julius Caesar, where it was shielded from public view by a curtain; both Augustus and Livia's son Drusus provided funeral orations; and in the end she was laid to rest next to her son in the family mausoleum (Cassius Dio, 54.35). Such elaborate funerary honors had generally been foreign to a Roman woman and would not be seen again until Livia's death four decades later. Indeed Octavia's importance to the family line garnered her as much attention in death as it had in life.

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[59] As noted by Bartman, 14, 80 n. 49, the identifications are provisional because the figures are headless.