

Access for Augustus: The ‘House of Livia’ and the Palatine Passages

T. P. WISEMAN

ABSTRACT

*This article draws attention to a neglected archaeological datum (pointed out by Amanda Claridge in 2014) that has important consequences for our understanding of the Augustan Palatine. The ‘house of Livia’, excavated in 1869, has always been thought of as belonging to the Augustan complex, but the evidence suggests that it did not exist above ground level after the 30s B.C.; its basement, on the other hand, was connected with an underground passage that was evidently an integral part of the building project begun by Imperator Caesar (‘Octavian’) in 36 B.C. Claridge’s argument, with its corollary, that the Apollo temple faced north-east to the summit plateau of the hill, explains the surviving textual sources much more satisfactorily than the current orthodoxy. In particular, it casts significant new light on Suetonius’ statement that the name ‘Augustus’ referred to Romulus’ *augustum augurium* at the foundation of the city.*

Keywords: Augustan Palatine; Imperator Caesar; ‘house of Livia’; ‘hut of Faustulus’; *augustum augurium*; *ludi Palatini*; Amanda Claridge

In memoriam A.C.

I THE AUGUSTAN PALATINE

It was probably in December 43 B.C. that the twenty-year-old Triumvir ‘Octavius Caesar’ acquired his house on the Palatine, a comparatively modest one by the standards of the time.¹ When adjacent properties were then bought up by agents acting on his behalf, it was not to provide more private space but to create the site for a great public building project, announced in 36 B.C. and completed in 28: a magnificent new temple of Apollo in solid marble, and grand porticos around it.² With temple and house in close proximity, and evidently a new piazza as well,³ Rome now had a specifically Augustan urban focus.

It is a historical site of great importance, but thanks to the devastating fire of A.D. 64 and the vast ruins of the post-Neronian palace complex that came to dominate the hill, practically nothing of the Augustan Palatine is visible today. All that remains of the

¹ Suet., *Aug.* 72.1, ‘*aedibus modicis Hortensianis*’; since Q. Hortensius fought for the assassins at Philippi, the house was probably bought in the proscriptions. For ‘Octavius Caesar’ (not yet ‘Imperator Caesar’, his later name), see the Triumvirs’ edict at App., *B Civ.* 4.8.31.

² Vell. Pat. 2.81.3; cf. Verg., *Aen.* 6.69 (*solido de marmore*), Cass. Dio 49.15.5 (‘he made public the place on the Palatine which he had bought in order to build something, and consecrated it to Apollo’). The temple was dedicated on 9 October 28 B.C.: *Inscr. Ital.* 13.2.209 (*Fasti Antiates minores*), Cass. Dio 53.1.3.

³ The *area Palatina* (n. 86 below) is not referred to in any pre-Augustan source.

Apollo temple is most of the concrete core of the podium it stood on, and the house on display to the public as the ‘Casa di Augusto’ was never in fact completed, but incorporated into the foundations of the artificial platform on which the temple and porticos were built. Archaeologists have made confident attempts to reconstruct the Augustan complex, but the arguments they are based on are inadequate.⁴

One reason for that is the assumption that the Apollo temple faced south-west, accepted as an unexamined axiom ever since Pietro Rosa excavated the site in 1865. The only evidence for it is a row of four holes in the concrete, two square and two rectangular, towards the south-west end of the podium, which are interpreted as the footings of six columns, a hexastyle south-west-facing pronaos.⁵ In 2014, Amanda Claridge challenged that inference: having established from surviving fragments the colossal size of the temple’s Corinthian order, she pointed out that the hypothesis of six such frontal columns is incompatible with Vitruvius’ description of the temple as ‘diastyle’.⁶ She presented instead a forceful argument in favour of the opposite orientation of the temple, facing north-east.⁷ That was accepted in my own historical analysis of the topography of the Palatine, but so far archaeological opinion remains unconvinced.⁸

One part of Claridge’s argument concerns the so-called ‘house of Livia’, excavated by Rosa in 1869 and famous for its wall-paintings.⁹ We know from a contemporary text that the frontal columns of the Apollo temple stood ‘high on lofty steps’;¹⁰ and we know from the surviving remains that if the temple did face north-east, that long flight of steps would come improbably close to the southern corner of the ‘house of Livia’. According to Claridge, however, the house was not there when the temple was built.

Her argument, which has hardly been noticed in the subsequent literature, deserves to be taken seriously:¹¹

[T]here is no evidence that the two buildings ever co-existed in space or time. Carettoni’s excavations in and around the house in 1949–53 not only dated its original construction to 100–80 B.C. but also indicated that its drains went out of operation in the 40s or 30s B.C.,¹² that is, as the temple was being built. The floor level of the house lies over 6 metres lower in the ground (41 masl) and none of its walls is standing higher than about 46.50 masl, i.e., a metre below the temple level. The walling confusingly visible above ground today is all modern, for the safety of pedestrians, or supporting the roofing that protects the paintings in the rooms at the NW end. The excellent state of preservation of the latter is best

⁴ See Wiseman 2022 for detailed discussion.

⁵ ‘The SW orientation of the Palatine temple of Apollo was never questioned over the last 150 years for a single, good reason: a series of enormous foundation holes indicates the location of the temple’s columnar façade’ (Zink 2012: 389).

⁶ Claridge 2014: 138–40 on Vitruvius 3.3.4, noting also that a detailed survey of the holes (Zink 2008: 56 fig. 10) shows that they are too small to have contained column foundations, even for the smaller columns that Zink would place on them.

⁷ Claridge 2014; cf. Claridge 2010: 142–3; Claridge 2018: 123. Amanda died on 4 May 2022; even in her final illness, commenting on the text of this article, her characteristic blend of generosity and scepticism was undiminished.

⁸ Wiseman 2019: 122–8; *contra* Lipps 2020 and Ippoliti 2021: 173, both continuing to insist on the row of holes in the concrete.

⁹ Renier 1870 (‘La maison de Livie’), Tomei 1999: 363–440 (Rosa’s account); Pensabene 2021a (full details and analysis). Confusingly, some authorities refer to it as ‘the house of Q. Lutatius Catulus’ (Carandini *et al.* 2010: 120–5; Carandini and Carafa 2017: tab. 68; Carandini 2018: 225 tav. 7; Ippoliti 2021: 173–4); that house is mentioned by Cicero (*Caes.* 59) and Suetonius (*Gram.* 17.2), but with no indication of its site.

¹⁰ Ov., *Tr.* 3.1.59 (A.D. 9 or 10): *gradibus sublimia celsis*.

¹¹ Claridge 2014: 131, absent from the updated bibliography of Carandini and Carafa 2017 and ignored in the summary of recent scholarship at Pensabene 2021a: 245.

¹² [= Claridge’s n. 23] Carettoni 1953: 137–8 and 1957: 118–19. The fill of the drains contained pottery and coins, none of which dated later than the Caesarian/very early Augustan period. Carettoni also remarked that pottery of any later imperial date was strikingly rare in the upper levels he excavated within the house.

explained by their interment very soon after they were made.¹³ The subterranean passage leading from the direction of the Flavian palace to the SE end of the house only connected with the foot of a stair up to the Augustan level, not with the house as such. We should mentally eliminate the ‘House of Livia’ from the picture.

In *The House of Augustus* (2019), I took this as proof that the ‘house of Livia’ was demolished down to ground level in 36 B.C. (when the Apollo temple project was begun), and its basement paved over to create space for a piazza north of the temple.¹⁴ However, that reconstruction has not found favour in recent major publications on the Augustan Palatine.¹⁵

The aim of this article is to test the plausibility of the Claridge–Wiseman model by examining the evidence for the ‘subterranean passage’ and its two branches to north and south (respectively ‘passages 1, 2 and 3’ in what follows).¹⁶ Can the surviving remains provide any useful information on their date and purpose?

II THE PASSAGES

The essential data are presented in Fig. 1.¹⁷

Passage 1 was a regular vaulted structure about two metres wide, running directly south-eastwards from the basement area of the ‘house of Livia’ to a point just inside the Flavian palace; its floor level was about 44.20 masl.¹⁸ At two points oblique shafts admitted light from above, where the ‘Augustan’ paving of the Palatine summit was at about 47.60 masl.¹⁹ At the south-eastern end it was blocked by the foundations of the palace,²⁰ and immediately beyond that point the passage in its present form ends in a roofless space,²¹ perhaps the site of the original staircase up to ground level. (At right angles to the left a later corridor, wider and of a different architectural form,²² leads off north-eastward through the basement of the Flavian palace entrance porch.)

¹³ [= Claridge’s n. 24] The dating of the wall-painting has tended to be brought down (see Iacopi 1995) into the 20s B.C. to meet the expectation that the house remained standing as part of the House of Augustus, but their style was already current in the 40s B.C. if not earlier.

¹⁴ Wiseman 2019: 130–1, cf. 142 fig. 67 for a conjectural plan of the Augustan complex on the assumption that the temple faced north-east.

¹⁵ Not mentioned in Pensabene 2021b, briefly dismissed by Carandini and Carafa 2021: 16 and Ippoliti 2021: 173; see Lipps 2020 for a critical review, based on my ‘general disregard for the self-evident nature of archaeological finds’.

¹⁶ See Tomei 1998: 169–75 (with figs 8–12) and 2000: 17–18. I am very grateful to Maria Antonietta Tomei for a memorable guided tour in 1989, and for expert help since then.

¹⁷ The passages are represented as on the large-scale plan provided with Tomei 2014 (smaller-scale version at Tomei 2019: 15 fig. 3); for the northern branch I have used Tomei and Filetici 2011: 37 tav. III (= tav. A in separate folder).

¹⁸ The spot heights given on Tomei’s plan, reading north-west–south-east, are 44.16, 44.30, 44.25, 44.07, 44.19.

¹⁹ Claridge 2014: 130, 145 figs 4 and 5; that paving level was evidently extended over the south-west slope of the hill to create the platform on which the Apollo temple and its porticos were built. (‘Augustan’ is strictly speaking a misnomer, since the project was begun in 36 and finished in 28 B.C.; Emperor Caesar was given the name ‘Augustus’ on 16 January 27 B.C.)

²⁰ As explicitly stated by the original excavator (Tomei 1999: 423–4, transcribing folios 343 and 366 of Rosa’s excavation notes in the Biblioteca Nazionale di Roma); he removed the obstacle in order to explore further (Tomei 2000: 18).

²¹ Pensabene and Gallochio 2021b: 158 n. 8 (‘una sorte di pozzo di luce’). I am very grateful to Patrizio Pensabene for help on this point (and also for allowing me to use Figs 4 and 5, below).

²² Reinforced at regular intervals by brick arches (Pensabene and Gallochio 2021b: 158 n. 8), it is apparently an integral part of the Flavian construction. Although this corridor is at the same level (44.19 masl), it is misleading to describe it as a continuation of our passage 1 (Tomei 2000: 18: ‘la galleria, restaurata e ampliata in età flavia, piegava a gomito e si dirigeva verso nord-est’); passage 1 was blocked by the Flavian builders (n. 20 above).

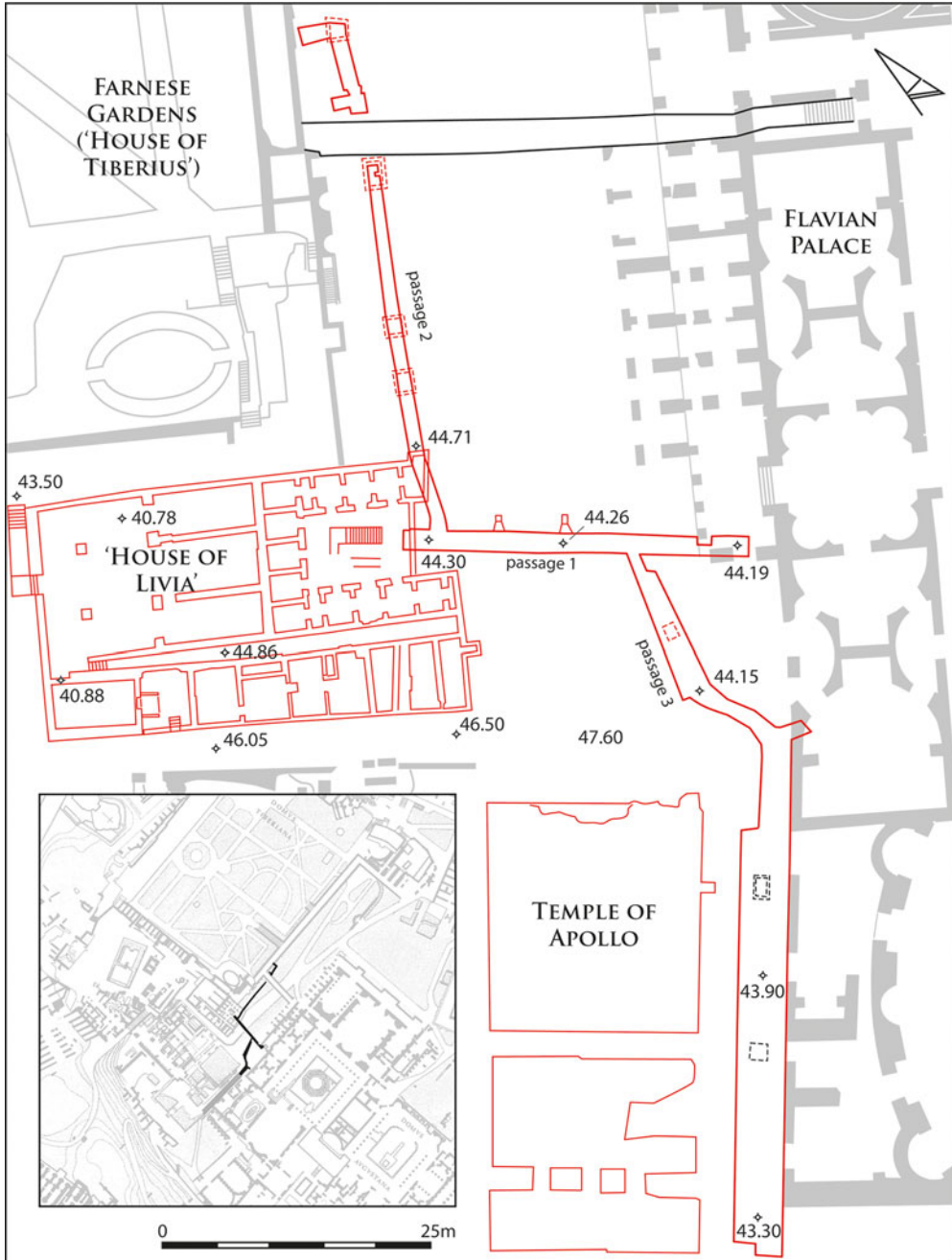


FIG. 1. Plan of the underground passages. Spot heights are in metres above sea level; pre-Neronian structures are in red. (Drawing: Seán Goddard)

Passage 2 branched off northwards immediately after the entrance to passage 1 from the ‘house of Livia’. It is narrower than passage 1,²³ less direct in its course, and with light sources directly above; its direction suggests that it provided access to and from the ‘house of Tiberius’ complex.

Passage 3 began from the extensive underground space, 4.30 m wide and over 40 m long, that flanked the Apollo temple on the south-east side;²⁴ the end wall of this structure was evidently pierced to provide an entrance to the passage. Just a few metres in, the passage divided: the right-hand branch is lost (destroyed by the foundations of the Flavian palace),²⁵ but the left-hand branch survives as an irregular passage leading north. After about 8 m it enters what looks like another pre-existing feature (floor level 44.15 masl), a near-rectangular space roughly 12 m metres long by 2 to 3 m wide, with a central ceiling aperture as a light source. From the north end of it a short link leads into passage 1.²⁶

These details suggest that the three passages were not designed as a single homogeneous project. The simplest explanation is that passage 1 was constructed first and that at some later date (or dates) the other passages extended it to north and south. For passage 2 there is a fixed *terminus ante quem*: it was cut through and blocked by the spacious underground corridor that linked the two ‘wings’ of the huge palace complex laid out by Nero’s architects after the great fire of A.D. 64.²⁷

Our passage 1 may be analogous to the later corridor, though on a smaller scale. In this area of the Palatine, space for a major planning project had previously been achieved in 36 B.C., when ‘Imperator Caesar’ demolished the houses that his agents had been buying up for him and thus made room for the Apollo temple and its lavish porticos.²⁸ To judge by its regular layout, passage 1 could date from that very year, part of the infrastructure created in the initial stages of the project. Passage 3, on the other hand, gives the impression of a later improvisation, exploiting with *ad hoc* linking tunnels whatever pre-existing underground space happened to be available beneath an Augustan complex that was already in place.

The south-eastern terminus of passage 1 was within the layout of the Flavian palace, and the Flavian palace was called *domus August(i)ana*.²⁹ It is an obvious possibility that that was the site of Augustus’ house.³⁰ For the last sixty years, however, orthodox opinion has identified Augustus’ house as the one excavated by Gianfilippo Carettoni immediately north-west of the Apollo temple at a level 9 m below it.³¹ That orthodoxy has survived the demonstration in 2006 that the house Carettoni excavated was abandoned before completion and incorporated into the foundations of the platform for the Apollo temple and its porticos; the ‘Carettoni house’ is now reconceptualised as ‘the house of Octavian’ or ‘the interrupted house’, with the true ‘house of Augustus’ a conjectural later construction at a higher level as part of the temple project itself.³²

²³ Tomei 1998: 170 (‘più basso e stretto’), 174–5 figs 11 and 12 (respective illustrations); 2004: 8, 12 fig. 15.

²⁴ Pensabene and Gallochio 2021b: 151–4; Tomei 2014: 194 fig. 173, where the floor levels are given as 43.30 (south end) and 43.90 masl.

²⁵ Clearly marked on the plan in Tomei 2014 (n. 17 above), though only a short stretch of one wall of it survives.

²⁶ Illustrated at Tomei 1998: 172 fig. 9, where there is no sign of the ‘cambio di livello’ mentioned by Pensabene and Gallochio 2021b: 153.

²⁷ Tomei and Filetici 2011: 37 tav. III (joining the ‘Criptoportico neroniano’).

²⁸ See n. 2 above. For the porticos, see also Prop. 2.3.1.1–8; Ov., *Am.* 2.2.3–6, *Ars am.* 1.73–4, 3.389–90; Suet., *Aug.* 29.3; Cass. Dio 53.1.3; *CIL* VI 32323.31–2; *Tabula Siarensis* b.2.20–1; *Tabula Hebana* 1 (Crawford 1996: 518–19, 529–30); *SC de Cn. Pisone patre* 1 (Potter and Damon 1999: 14–15); *AE* 1978, 145.2.

²⁹ *CIL* VI 2271, 8640–51, 33736, 10.8650, 15.1860; *AE* 2007, 252; Panciera 2007.

³⁰ Castagnoli 1964: 186–7; Claridge 2010: 141–2; Wiseman 2019: 34–5.

³¹ Carettoni 1963; Tomei 2014: 41–192 (Carettoni’s notes on excavations from 1955 to 1979).

³² Iacopi and Tedone 2006: 363–71; Iacopi 2007: 10–14; Carandini and Bruno 2008: 30–50 and 138–79 (‘la casa di Ottaviano’), 51–104 and 180–198 (‘la casa di Augusto’); Carandini and Carafa 2017: tabs 64E, 69–72;

Fortunately the north-west end of passage 1 survives, and thanks to Patrizio Pensabene's detailed up-to-date analysis of the 'house of Livia',³³ the complex archaeological data are now much easier to understand.

III THE 'HOUSE OF LIVIA'

The house was excavated by Rosa in the early months of 1869. He was working for the French emperor Napoléon III,³⁴ and reporting regularly to Léon Renier, head of epigraphy and Roman antiquities at the Collège de France.³⁵ It may have been with his report of 10 April that year that he sent the first schematic plan of the house, which was printed in Paris and published by Renier in the *Revue archéologique* (Fig. 2).³⁶ The engraver got one important detail wrong: the two-flight staircase in the middle of the 'Peristylum' was aligned not with the surrounding rooms but with the underground passage that entered the courtyard on the south-east side ('A-A', our passage 1).³⁷ Nevertheless, this plan is the earliest record of what Rosa found, and the names he chose for the rooms have influenced discussion ever since.

The plan represents the basement or semi-basement rooms of a house now known to have been built about 100 B.C.³⁸ The common floor level of the 'Atrium', 'Tablinum', 'Ala sinistra' and 'Ala dextra' is just under 41 masl,³⁹ 5 m below the level of the street outside;⁴⁰ the 'Atrium' and 'Triclinium' were presumably lit by windows high in the north-west wall. To the south-east, the construction of the 'Peristylum' began at a similar level (just below 40 masl), but it took the form of two storeys of vaulted 'rooms' around a courtyard, the lower of which may not have been accessible.⁴¹ The upper rooms had a floor level of just under 44 masl,⁴² with access at the western corner to a long corridor that led back to a staircase down to the level of the 'Triclinium'.⁴³ The row of rooms on the other side of the corridor was also at about 44 masl, 1 to 2 m below the level of the street outside.⁴⁴

Access to these low levels was by a sloping corridor at the north corner of the house leading directly into the 'Atrium'.⁴⁵ Did Rosa think that was the main entrance to the

Pensabene and Gallochio 2021c: 19–44 ('la casa di Ottaviano'), 69–85 ('la casa interrotta'). *Contra* Claridge 2010: 140–2; Wiseman 2009: 529–30 and 2019: 23–9; see Hall 2014: 167–85 for judicious discussion.

³³ Pensabene 2021a. See also Carandini and Carafa 2017: tab. 68; Sauron and Torrisi 2019; Carandini and Carafa 2021: 91–2, 229 tav. 17, 232–4 tavv. 20–22; Ippoliti 2021: 167, 173–4.

³⁴ His reports used the letterhead 'Ministère de le Maison de l'Empereur: Palais des Césars: Cabinet du Conservateur' (Tomei 1999: xxx fig. 2).

³⁵ Tomei 1999: xxvi, xxix fig. 1; cf. 488–91 for the sometimes difficult relationship between the two men.

³⁶ Renier 1870: 331 ('une lettre du 10 avril dernier'), pl. XIV (plan); the report does not survive, but cf. Tomei 1999: 363–4 for a transcription of Rosa's rough draft, dated 9 April. Renier was the first to give the house its now traditional name; for Rosa it was 'la casa paterna di Tiberio Cesare' (Tomei 1999: 422, transcribing folio 343 of Rosa's notes).

³⁷ It is correctly represented in a plan by Henri Deglane in 1886, reproduced in Sauron and Torrisi 2019: 40 fig. 3.

³⁸ Coarelli 2012: 337; Claridge 2014: 131; Pensabene 2021a: 246.

³⁹ See Pensabene 2021a: 246 fig. IV,1 (spot heights ranging from 40.50 to 40.90 masl); cf. Iacopi 1995: 130 and Tomei 2014 (n. 17 above), who give 41.11 and 41.05 masl respectively.

⁴⁰ Tomei 2014 (n. 17 above): from the southern to the western corner of the house it descends from 46.50 to 45.44 masl.

⁴¹ Pensabene 2021a: 255–8 (esp. 256 fig. IV,13), 263 fig. IV,28–9. Cf. Carandini and Carafa 2017: tab. 68, where the lower-storey spaces are described as 'substructure concamerations'.

⁴² Pensabene 2021a: 246 fig. IV,1, 256 fig. IV,13.

⁴³ Pensabene 2021a: 247, 248 fig. IV,5; the access opening is clearly marked by Renier 1870 (Fig. 2 above) and Deglane (plan of 1886, n. 37 above).

⁴⁴ Pensabene 2021a: 246 fig. IV,1 (the spot heights range from 43.45 to 44.57 masl); cf. n. 40 above, for the street level.

⁴⁵ Coarelli 1974: 141 ('un corridoio a piano inclinato'); cf. Iacopi 1995: 131 ('un vestibolo coperto'), but it was not a *uestibulum* in the Roman sense of an open forecourt (Gell., *NA* 16.5.2–3, with Wiseman 2008: 283–4).

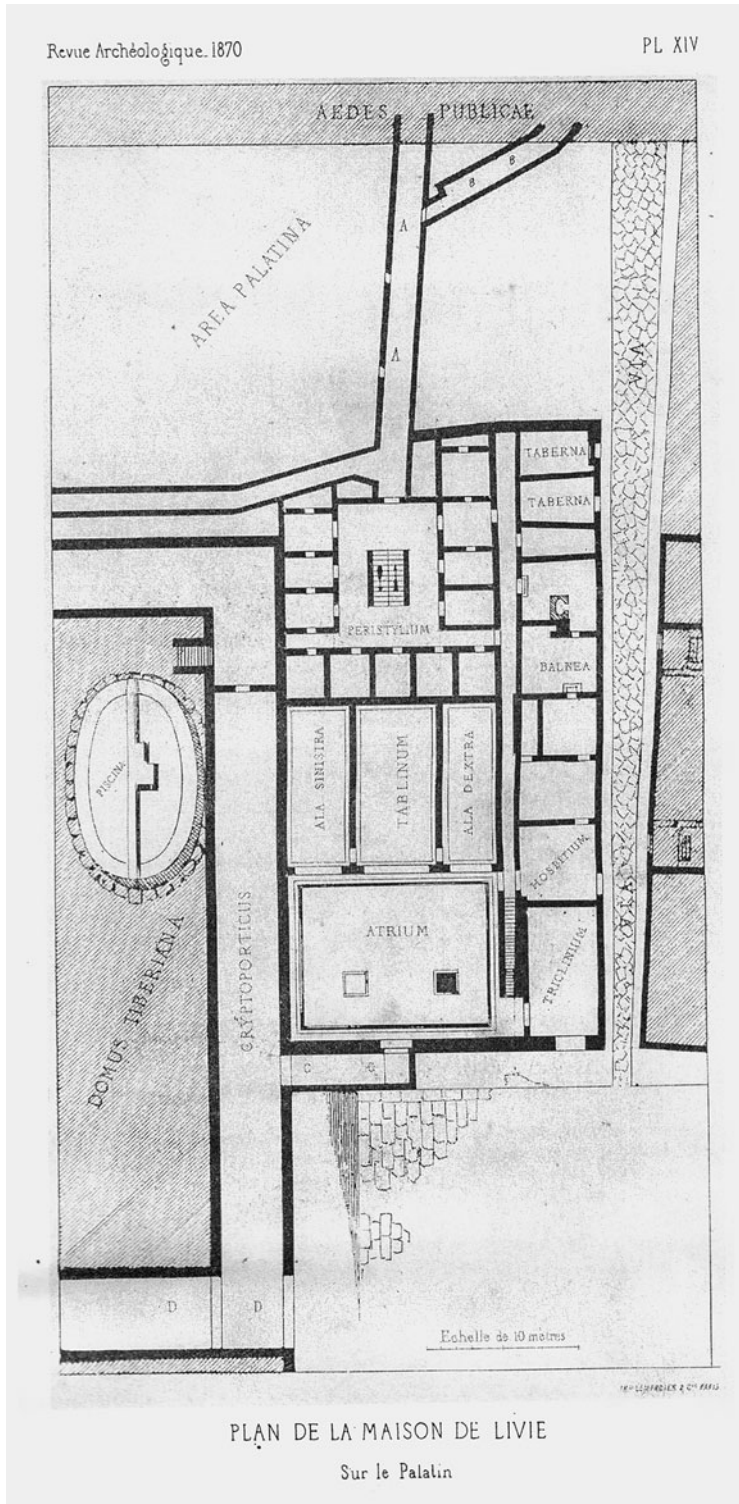


FIG. 2. Rosa's original plan of the 'house of Livia'. North is to the bottom left. (Renier 1870: pl. XIV)

house? Certainly the large rooms at this level were appropriately grand and beautifully decorated; but the main access to the reception areas is much more likely to have been at or above street level. Three different reconstructions have been offered of the lost upper storey of the house.

The first assumes that it duplicated what lay below: Rosa's 'Atrium' supported an *atrium*, Rosa's 'Peristylum' supported a peristyle with a pool in the centre, and the main entrance porch was on the north-west side above the sloping corridor.⁴⁶ That hypothesis has the virtue of simplicity, offering something like the conventional 'atrium-peristyle' layout best attested on the Severan marble plan.⁴⁷

The second reconstruction also assumes an entrance at a higher level on the north-west side,⁴⁸ but takes more account of the architecture of Rosa's 'Peristylum'. That area was structured round a series of twelve substantial travertine pillars embedded into the dividing walls of the rooms,⁴⁹ an armature that seems designed to support something heavier than a mere peristyle portico. Gilles Sauron and Valentina Torrisi have recently proposed that the upper storey at this point consisted of an elaborate *oecus Corinthius* in the form of a private theatre.⁵⁰ Other such conjectures are possible in the absence of any surviving upper-level remains.

According to the third reconstruction, what Rosa's 'Peristylum' supported was the *atrium* itself with its *impluvium*; the surviving rooms below it were for storage or slave quarters. The main entrance to the house is assumed to have been at the south-east end, and Rosa's 'Atrium', 'Tablinum' and 'Alae' are reinterpreted as a *cortile* or 'sunken dining-court'.⁵¹

In assessing these rival hypotheses, it is important to remember that the level of the lost upper storey of the 'house of Livia' was about 47 masl,⁵² and that the north-west end of the house was only 10 m distant from the old temple of Victoria, which was constructed at a level of about 40 masl.⁵³ That downward slope of the terrain makes it hard to visualise an entrance to the upper level of the house on that side, as assumed in the first and second reconstructions; the only measured section-drawing that has been offered has to postulate a ramp and a steep staircase to reach the entrance porch from street level.⁵⁴ The third reconstruction avoids that objection, since a main entrance at the south-east end would be at much the same height as the summit level of the hill.

The point at issue in this still unresolved debate is the design of the house as it was originally built about 100 B.C. What happened to it after 36 B.C. is a separate question, equally unresolved.

IV THE HOUSE OF AUGUSTUS?

As noted in Section II above, the house discovered below the north-west side of the Apollo temple was identified by Carettoni as that of Augustus himself,⁵⁵ and then reinterpreted as

⁴⁶ Carandini and Carafa 2017: tab. 68; Ippoliti 2021: 167 ('un peristilio rettangolare con ... al centro una vasca'); cf. Pensabene 2021a: 259 for the pool ('un bacino che si trova ad una quota di m 42,50 s.l.m.').

⁴⁷ *Forma urbis Romae* fr. 11E-f (Viminal, *uicus patricius*); Boëthius and Ward-Perkins 1970: 88 fig. 53.

⁴⁸ Sauron and Torrisi 2019: 54 fig. 16.

⁴⁹ Carrettoni 1957; Sauron and Torrisi 2019: 39–45; Pensabene 2021a: 254–8.

⁵⁰ Sauron and Torrisi 2019: 51–2. Nero had a *domestica scaena* (Tac., *Ann.* 15.39.4) and there was a theatre and an *odeion* at the villa of Pausilypon (Sear 2006: 129–30), but those were much more elaborate properties.

⁵¹ Coarelli 1974: 141 (Coarelli 2007: 138–9); Claridge 2010: 135. Iacopi 1995: 131 notes the hypothesis without comment.

⁵² Cf. Carandini and Carafa 2017: tab. 72 and Carandini and Carafa 2021: 234 tav. 22.

⁵³ Croci and Biritognolo 1998: 178, 180 fig. 2 (data for the temple of Magna Mater, which shared the same building level); cf. Pensabene 2002: 78 (44 masl for the top of the podium). The temple of Victoria was dedicated in 294 B.C., that of Magna Mater in 191 B.C.: Carafa and Bruno 2013: 736 fig. 9, 738 fig. 11 put the paving level at 41.9 masl in 191 B.C. and 44 masl in 111 B.C. (reconstruction after the fire of that year).

⁵⁴ Carandini *et al.* 2010: 167 fig. 66; cf. Sauron and Torrisi 2019: 54 fig. 16.

⁵⁵ See n. 31 above. The level of the house, terraced into the slope of the hill, was 38.70 masl.

‘the house of Octavian’ or ‘the interrupted house’ when it became clear that it had been destroyed to create the platform for the temple and its porticos.⁵⁶ As a corollary of that hypothesis, it is widely believed that the actual house of Augustus was at a higher level on the same site, extending northwards to incorporate the ‘house of Livia’.⁵⁷

Those who disagree point to the absence of positive evidence, whether textual or archaeological.⁵⁸ As Claridge insists, nothing of the ‘house of Livia’ survives above c. 46.50 masl, which is a metre below the Augustan ground level.⁵⁹ Everything depends on the interpretation of the basement area at the south-east end (Rosa’s ‘Peristylum’), and in particular the point where our passage 1 begins. The essential information is provided by Carettoni’s plan from 1957 (Fig. 3).

The tunnel was at the same level as the basement of the house (about 44 masl),⁶⁰ but joining the two was not just a matter of breaking through a wall. It is clear that the creation of the entrance to passage 1 involved a major reconstruction (Fig. 4). At basement level, three of the rooms around the ‘courtyard’ were destroyed; necessarily, the floor above must have been rebuilt, possibly including the main entrance to the house.⁶¹

The passage (Fig. 3 ‘Ga’) was aligned with a new stairwell (Fig. 3 ‘S’, ‘B’, ‘A’), the concrete core of which is a conspicuous surviving feature in the centre of the ‘courtyard’ (Fig. 3 ‘S’; Fig. 5). What sort of space did the stairs lead up to? It is hard to imagine an upper-level *oecus Corinthius* or *atrium* (the second and third reconstructions listed above) that featured a staircase in the middle of the floor. On the other hand, according to Claridge’s hypothesis that the upper levels of the house no longer existed when the passage was created, it was simply ‘a stair up to the Augustan level’, with no further explanation.⁶²

The entrance to the passage was set into a concrete wall (Fig. 3 ‘m’; Fig. 4), with a wide block of travertine as the threshold.⁶³ Immediately to the left of the entrance the wall turned at an acute angle to run parallel to the north-east range of basement rooms; it seems to have continued into the grand suite of rooms at the north-west end of the house, in the form of a brick wall abutting one side of the ‘Tablinum’ and extending right across the full width of the ‘Atrium’.⁶⁴ Rosa regarded it as a late and ‘barbaric’ intrusion, and spent three weeks demolishing it.⁶⁵

Ever since 2002, when Clemens Krause first made the conjecture, it has been widely believed that this wall formed the north-east corner of the foundations of a large near-rectangular building erected on the combined sites of the ‘house of Livia’ and the house excavated by Carettoni.⁶⁶ Krause identifies the supposed building with the

⁵⁶ See n. 32 above. Pensabene (2021b: 14) describes it as ‘la prima casa voluta dal futuro Augusto, che ormai viene definita comunemente “Casa di Ottaviano”, anche se sappiamo che così non è mai chiamata dalle fonti antiche’.

⁵⁷ Carandini *et al.* 2010: 221–4; Carandini and Carafa 2017: tabs 71–2; Carandini 2018: 228 tav. 9a, a *domus (priuata) Augusti* supposedly matching a *domus publica* on the other side of the temple. For an up-to-date statement of the orthodoxy, see Ippoliti 2021: esp. 169–72 on the history of the hypothesis, 173–4 and 180–2 on ‘la casa attribuibile a Lutazio Catulo’ (i.e. the ‘house of Livia’, n. 9 above); for critical discussion, see Wiseman 2022.

⁵⁸ Claridge 2010: 140–2; Wiseman 2013b: 255–7; 2019: 22–8.

⁵⁹ Claridge 2014: 131.

⁶⁰ See nn. 18, 39 and 44 above.

⁶¹ Sauron and Torrisi 2019: 39: ‘Ces deux aménagements [the passage and the staircase] ... ont dû être construits à une époque où cette partie de la *Casa di Livia* a été profondément restructurée.’ Main entrance: see n. 51 above (the ‘third reconstruction’).

⁶² Claridge 2014: 131.

⁶³ Illustrated at Pensabene 2021a: 260 fig. IV,25.

⁶⁴ Illustrated at Tomei 1999: 401 fig. 299 and Coarelli 2012: 426 figs 142–4.

⁶⁵ Tomei 1999: 397–400 (Rosa’s reports of 12 and 18 June 1869, and folios 436 and 447 of his notes); cf. Coarelli 2012: 436–7. Believing it irrelevant, Rosa omitted it from his plan (Fig. 2 above).

⁶⁶ Krause 2002; for full details, see now Pensabene and Gallochio 2021a: 206–16, esp. 208 fig. III,55.

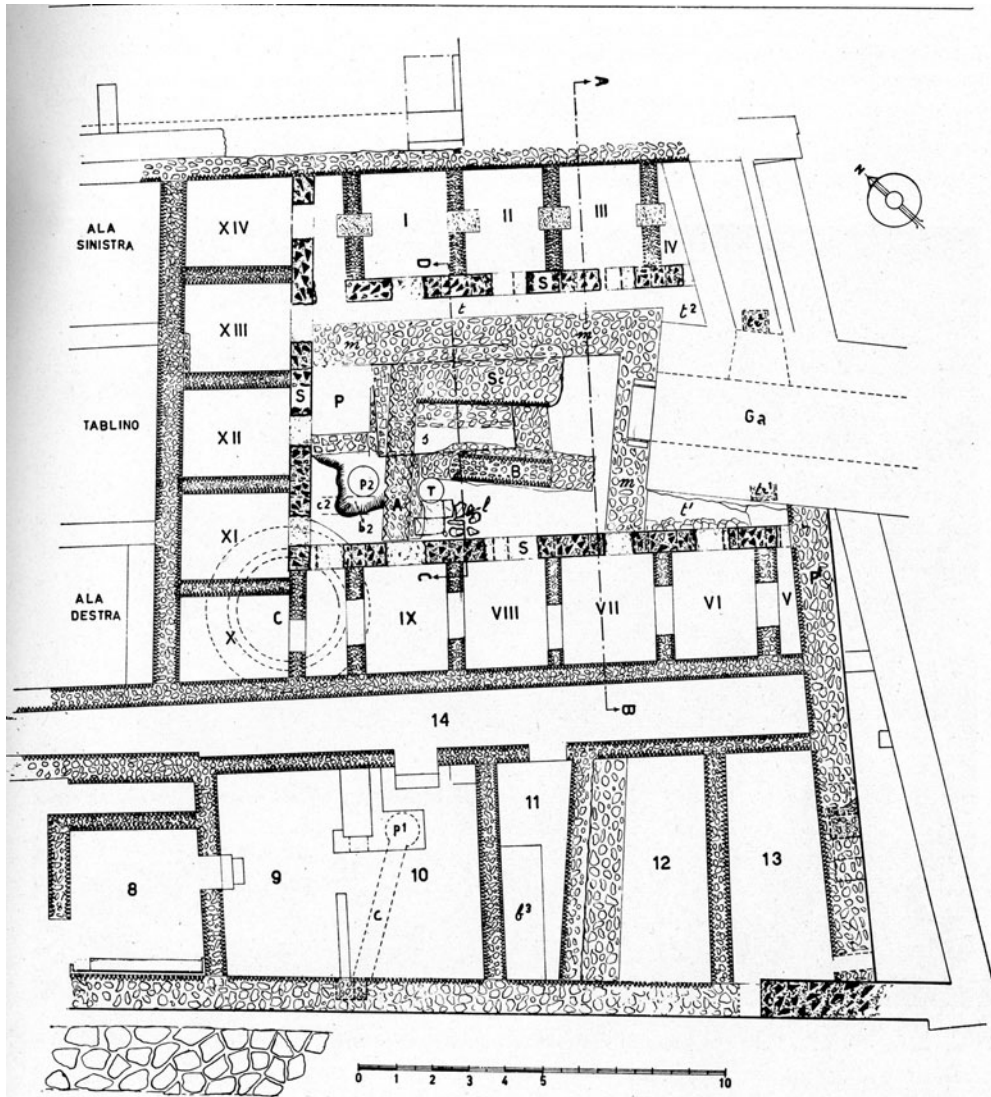


FIG. 3. The south-eastern area of the 'house of Livia'. (Carettoni 1957: 73, fig. 1)

mysterious 'temple of the Caesars' attested in A.D. 68;⁶⁷ but if the wall and the passage are contemporary, as the remains seem to suggest, a hypothesis that identifies the former as the foundation-wall of a necessarily post-Augustan building does not seem very satisfactory.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Krause 2004: 48–9, followed by Coarelli 2012: 421–32; Suet., *Galb.* 1 (*nouissimo Neronis anno ... tacta de caelo Caesarum aede*). Cf. Plin., *HN* 12.94 for 'the Palatine temple built in honour of the deified Augustus by his wife Augusta', i.e. Livia, whose name after A.D. 14 was *Iulia Augusta*; water-pipes found by Rosa in the underground passages name *Iulia Aug.* and *L. Pescennius Eros [aedis?] Caesarum* (CIL VI 7264–5, with Coarelli 2012: 430–2); however, Pliny reports that that building was destroyed by fire, presumably in A.D. 64.

⁶⁸ Cf. Tomei 2014: 294 fig. 283, describing the proposed foundations as a 'muro in laterizio postaugusteo' (so too Coarelli 2012: 437–8, disputed by Carafa and Bruno 2013: 749–52); but the north-east corner of the near-rectangle was in concrete, not brick.



FIG. 4. The entrance to passage 1, and to passage 2 on the left, from the 'Peristylum' area of the 'house of Livia'.
 (Photo: Patrizio Pensabene 2021a: 260, fig. IV,25a)



FIG. 5. View from passage 1 into the basement area of the 'house of Livia'; the concrete core of the staircase (Fig. 3 'S') is visible in the middle of the 'Peristylum'. (Photo: Patrizio Pensabene 2021a: 260, fig. IV,24)

Krause's argument is exploited differently by those who believe that the 'house of Augustus' extended on to this site.⁶⁹ According to Irene Iacopi, the supposed foundations were of the house of Augustus itself.⁷⁰ That suggestion was immediately taken up by Andrea Carandini and Daniela Bruno as one of the corner-stones of their ambitious reconstruction of Augustus' supposed 'palace-sanctuary',⁷¹ and throughout the subsequent evolution of that hypothetical complex the acute-angled wall next to the entrance to the underground passage has continued to define the shape of their '*domus privata di Augusto*'.⁷²

Their first model envisaged the effective destruction of the 'house of Livia', and the imposition on to the site of a new house with a totally different internal plan.⁷³ That was very soon revised,⁷⁴ and since 2010 successive plans have presented the supposed '*domus privata*' as partly consisting of the 'house of Livia' itself, imagined with its entrance at the north-west end.⁷⁵ Since 2018 the same interior layout has even been adopted, in reverse, for a supposed '*domus publica*' on the opposite side of the Apollo temple.⁷⁶ If ancient evidence really existed, as is claimed, for separate 'private' and 'public' houses of Augustus, passage 1 would be immediately comprehensible as a private communication between them; but there is no such evidence.⁷⁷

It is hardly possible to reconcile these rival developments of Krause's idea,⁷⁸ and perhaps the idea itself should be queried. In the absence of any evidence at ground level, why must it be assumed that the wall (Fig. 3 'm'; Fig. 4) was the foundation of some grand building which has subsequently disappeared? It may have had a quite different purpose, as part of the infrastructure required by the extension of the 'Augustan' paving (at 47.60 masl) over ground that was sloping down to a much lower level.⁷⁹ Robust walls would be needed at the earliest stages of the project to contain the huge amounts of earth infill required and to stabilise the site before work could begin on building the Apollo temple and the portico that surrounded it.⁸⁰

V AN ALTERNATIVE SOLUTION

For the last thirty years the leading authorities on the archaeology of the Palatine have been Patrizio Pensabene and Andrea Carandini. Both scholars have recently published books

⁶⁹ See n. 57 above.

⁷⁰ Iacopi 2007: 13 (plan), 14: 'Alcuni resti di murature attestano che alla nuova *domus* venne congiunta anche l'attigua Casa di Livia le cui sale affrescate, attraversate dalle strutture murarie della nuova costruzione, non dovettero più assolvere l'originario, aulico ruolo'.

⁷¹ Carandini and Bruno 2008; cf. Wiseman 2009 for extensive criticism, Coarelli 2012: xii–xiii for complaints of 'estremismo metodologico' and 'affermazioni apodittiche', Carafa and Bruno 2013: 752–80 for a detailed restatement.

⁷² Most recently in Ippoliti 2021: 231–2 tavv. 19 and 20, 237–8 tavv. 25 and 26.

⁷³ Carandini and Bruno 2008: 52 fig. 23a, 56 fig. 24, 188–9 figs. 82a–b, 190 (new plan based on examples in Pompeii).

⁷⁴ Carandini *et al.* 2010: 188 ('ricostruzioni migliorate'); Carafa and Bruno 2013: 767 ('una successiva fase della ricerca').

⁷⁵ See Carandini *et al.* 2010: 222 fig. 77; Carafa and Bruno 2013: 758 fig. 160, 767 ('la casa ... conservata e inclusa nel progetto della nuova dimora del principe'); Carandini 2014: 371–2; 2016: 183 fig. 11; Carandini and Carafa 2017: tabs 70–72.

⁷⁶ Carandini 2018: 228 tav. 9a ('Ricostruzione in base al confronto con la *domus privata*'); Carandini and Carafa 2021: 232 tav. 20, 237 tav. 25; Ippoliti 2021: 175 ('ricostruire la presenza di un corpo edilizio simmetrico e di identica superficie della casa privata nel quale riconosciamo il settore pubblico del complesso').

⁷⁷ Carandini and Bruno 2008: 65 ('La casa di Augusto è definita da Svetonio al plurale', based on a mistranslation of Suet., *Aug.* 57.2), 182 ('un collegamento diretto e preferenziale').

⁷⁸ As attempted by Pensabene and Gallochio 2019 and 2021a, with no clear result.

⁷⁹ I am very grateful to Amanda Claridge for this suggestion.

⁸⁰ Vell. Pat. 2.81.3 (*templumque Apollinis et circa porticus*), Cass. Dio 53.1.3 (τὸ τεμένισμα τὸ περὶ αὐτό); confirmed by Propertius (2.31.9), who describes the portico with the temple in the middle (*medium*).

that encapsulate their ideas about the Augustan Palatine project,⁸¹ works very different from each other but taking the same fundamental beliefs for granted: first, that the Apollo temple faced south-west; second, that Augustus' house was where Carettoni said it was; and third, that that house formed part of a palace. The first two of those axioms are disputed by Claridge, and I would dispute all three of them.⁸²

What would the Augustan Palatine have looked like if (a) the Apollo temple faced north-east, (b) the house of Augustus was on the site of the *domus August(i)ana*, and (c) the 'house of Livia' was demolished, with only the basement levels surviving? Fig. 6 is based on my own suggested reconstruction, highly speculative but I hope 'good to think with', which locates Augustus' house on the assumption that the position of its forecourt and entrance corresponded to the forecourt and entrance of the Flavian palace.⁸³ Since passage 1 terminates below the porch of the Flavian palace, with one necessary adjustment this model accommodates the evidence surprisingly well.⁸⁴

The elements of this area of the Augustan Palatine are listed in the *Notitia*, a fourth-century register of the fourteen *regiones* of the city, the nucleus of which evidently dates back to when the system of city-regions was first instituted in 8 or 7 B.C.⁸⁵ The list for the Palatine (*regio X*) includes the sequence 'Houses of Augustus and Tiberius – augur's station – Palatine piazza – temple of Jupiter Victor',⁸⁶ which suggests some significant myth-historical juxtapositions.⁸⁷

The Palatine piazza (*area Palatina*) was 'where Rome was first founded';⁸⁸ Rome was first founded 'around the hut of Faustulus', foster-father of Romulus and Remus;⁸⁹ the hut of Faustulus was 'in the precinct of Jupiter', presumably Jupiter Victor;⁹⁰ the augur's station (*auguratorium*) from which Romulus sought divine approval for the new foundation was a hut 'in a clear space' on the summit of the Palatine;⁹¹ and Romulus' 'august augury' was the reason why Emperor Caesar was given the name 'Augustus'.⁹²

The position of the Jupiter Victor temple is unknown;⁹³ destroyed in the fire of A.D. 64, it may have been rebuilt on another site.⁹⁴ But the 'houses of Augustus and Tiberius',

⁸¹ Carandini and Carafa 2021; Pensabene 2021b.

⁸² Claridge 2010: 140–3; 2014; Wiseman 2019; 2022.

⁸³ Wiseman 2019: 102 fig. 46, 142 fig. 67. The layout of Augustus' forecourt in Fig. 6 is merely a schematic indication: nothing is known of it except that it was large and featured an Ionic colonnade, as shown on the 'Sorrento base' (Hölscher 1988: 375–6, Kat. 308a–d; Coarelli 2012: 402–4 figs 124–6; Wiseman 2019: 93 fig. 39).

⁸⁴ The hypothetical site for the house of Augustus and its forecourt has been moved about 10 m forward (to the north-west), to enable passage 1 to terminate inside the forecourt area.

⁸⁵ Valentini and Zucchetti 1940: 164–83, cf. 89–148 for a similar but less complete list (the *Curiosum*); Coarelli 2012: 112–15; Wiseman 2013b: 249–51 (Augustan origin). Institution of *regiones*: Cass. Dio 55.8.6–7 (7 B.C.), Suet., *Aug.* 30.1; cf. Augustus, *Res Gestae* 8.3 (census of 8 B.C.) with Lott 2004: 84–9.

⁸⁶ Valentini and Zucchetti 1940: 177–8: *regio X Palatium, continet ... domum Augustianam et Tiberianam, auguratorium, aream Palatinam, aedem Iouis Victoris.*

⁸⁷ For detailed argument see Wiseman 2019: 82–97.

⁸⁸ Joseph., *AJ* 19.223: ἐν εὐρυχωρίᾳ δὲ τοῦ Παλατίου ... πρῶτον δὲ οἰκηθῆναι τῆς Ῥωμαίων πόλεως τοῦτο παραδίδωσιν ὁ περὶ αὐτῆς λόγος.

⁸⁹ Zonar. 7.3 (περὶ τὴν τοῦ Φαυστοῦλου οἰκησιν), Tzetz. on Lycoph., *Alex.* 1232 (περὶ τὴν Φαιστούλου οἰκίαν ἐν ὄρει Παλατίῳ); cf. Val. Max. 2.2.9 (the twins founded their city *eo loco ubi educati erant*).

⁹⁰ Conon, *BNJ* 26 F1.48 (ἐν τῷ τοῦ Διὸς ἱερῷ), with Wiseman 2019: 90 (source evidently pre-Augustan); it is sometimes assumed that Conon was referring to the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, but 'the hut of Faustulus' must have been on the Palatine, not the Capitol. Cf. Tib. 2.5.10 and Prop. 4.6.14 for Jupiter *uictor* in the context of the Augustan Apollo temple.

⁹¹ Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 2.5.1 (ἐκ τῆς σκηπῆς προήλθεν ... ἐν καθαρῷ χωρίῳ), 14.2.2 (on the summit).

⁹² Suet., *Aug.* 7.2, citing Enn., *Ann.* 155 Sk (*augusto augurio*).

⁹³ It was built probably in the 290s (Livy 10.29.14 and 18, 10.42.7) with a podium not of concrete, which would survive, but of masonry blocks, which would be reused.

⁹⁴ For another A.D. 64 casualty rebuilt elsewhere, Jupiter Stator in *Palatio* (thereafter in *regio IV*), see Wiseman 2017: 23–4. The concrete podium on the so-called Clivus Palatinus, excavated by Rosa in 1866 and wrongly attributed by him to Jupiter Stator, could easily be the rebuilt Jupiter Victor temple (Tomei 1999: 67–79; Wiseman 2019: 94–5).

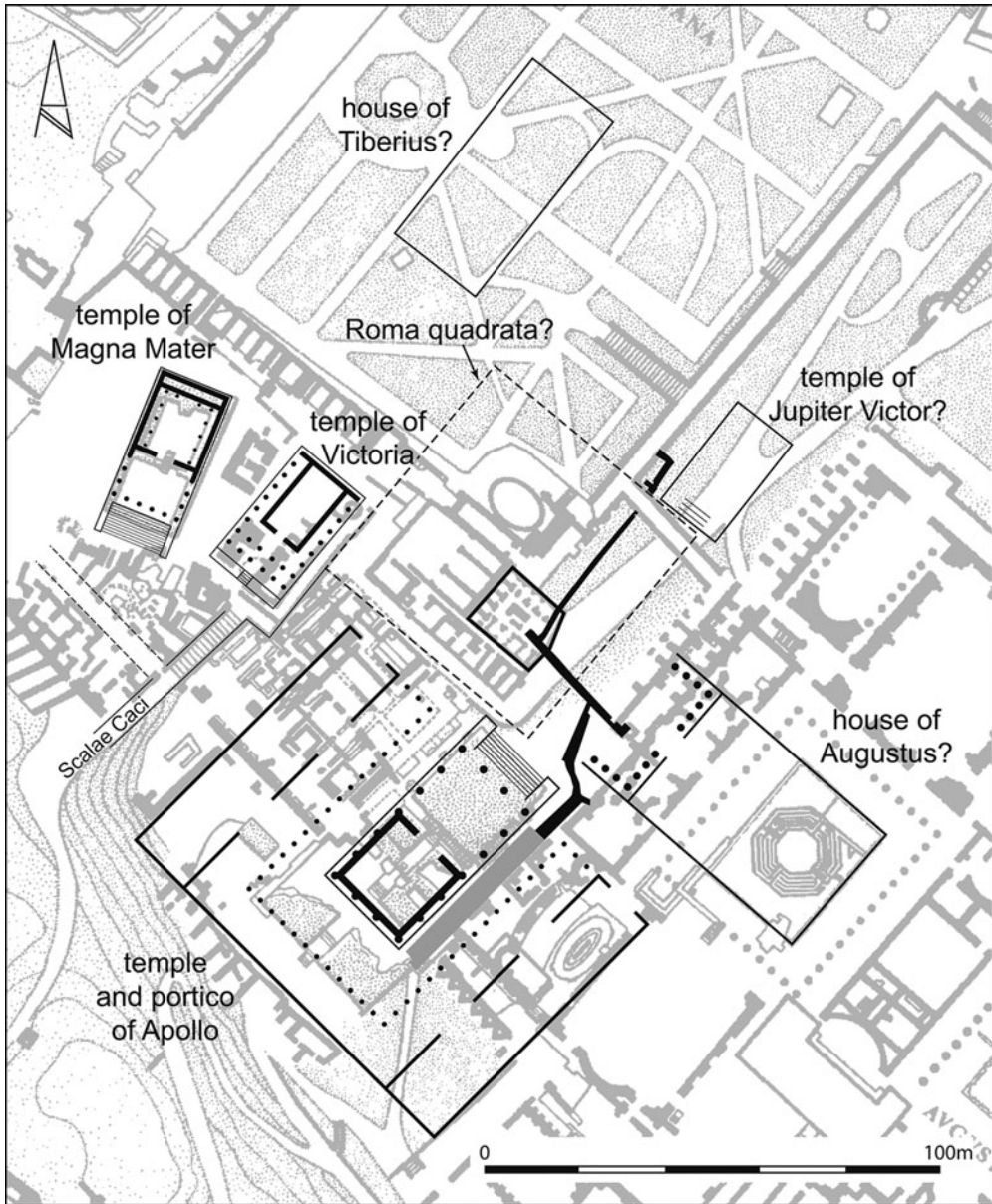


FIG. 6. The plan of the passages superimposed on to a conjectural plan of the Augustan Palatine; the position of the Jupiter Victor temple and the configuration of the portico of the Apollo temple and the forecourt of Augustus' house are purely *exempli gratia*. (Drawing: Seán Goddard, adapted from Wiseman 2019: 142, fig. 67)

identified by the post-Neronian palaces that were named after them,⁹⁵ are enough to place all these interconnected toponyms in the area covered by Fig. 6. When the *Notitia* list was first drawn up in 8 or 7 B.C., Tiberius was not only Augustus' son-in-law but also his

⁹⁵ For the *domus August(i)ana*, see nn. 29 and 30 above.

acknowledged deputy, with independent proconsular *imperium*.⁹⁶ Both houses would now be significant features of the Palatine landscape.

The derivation of Augustus' name is profoundly significant.⁹⁷ From the very start of his extraordinary career, he had modelled himself on Romulus the augur, one who followed the will of the gods. On 19 August 43 B.C., taking the auspices after his election as consul at the age of nineteen, the young Caesar was granted the same divine sign (twelve vultures) that Romulus had received.⁹⁸ Seven years later, victorious in two devastating civil wars, Imperator Caesar (as he now was) set about creating a grand new temple complex for the god whom the poets would call 'augur Apollo'.⁹⁹

He was 'Commander Caesar', and a Roman *imperator* led his forces not only by command (*imperio*) but also by augury (*auspicio*).¹⁰⁰ In every Roman military camp or fortress, the broad assembly area next to the commander's quarters featured altars for sacrifice, an *auguratorium* for the commander to consult the will of the gods and a tribunal for the commander to address his men.¹⁰¹ The same was true of the piazza created by Imperator Caesar in 36 B.C. on the site of the demolished houses of the defeated oligarchs.¹⁰²

On the Claridge–Wiseman hypothesis, the 'house of Livia' was one of those demolished properties. The surviving remains make it very likely that part of its basement area was exploited in order to create, via the underground passage 1 and the staircase to which it led,¹⁰³ a direct link between the house of the victorious *imperator* and a site in the new piazza in front of the Apollo temple. It is a reasonable guess that that site was the tribunal and/or *auguratorium*.

As Triumvir, Imperator Caesar had twelve lictors waiting outside his door to escort him when he appeared in public, but on occasions when the piazza was very crowded, direct access to the tribunal would avoid the invidious necessity of having the lictors force a way through.¹⁰⁴ Compare Appius Claudius, praetor in 57 B.C., who came up on to his tribunal through a trapdoor, like a stage character emerging from Hades;¹⁰⁵ how he got there is not clear from Cicero's satirical account ('the Appian way'), but the very fact that he chose to do so may be significant.

Since Imperator Caesar was also an augur,¹⁰⁶ private access would be equally useful for the *auguratorium*. The augur's station was usually called a *tabernaculum*, and the normal procedure was for the augur to choose his vantage point (*tabernaculum capere*) and stay there overnight, rising at dawn to make his observations.¹⁰⁷ The underground passage 1 would enable this particular augur to sleep at home and still carry out his duty.

⁹⁶ Cass. Dio 54.33.5 and 34.3 (*imperium*), 54.35.4 (marriage to Julia), both 11 B.C. Augustus prided himself on sharing power and responsibility (*Res Gestae* 34.3, with Rowe 2021: 139–45).

⁹⁷ See n. 92 above; he wore on his left hand a ring with an augur's *lituus* engraved on it (Wiseman 2019: 66 fig. 27), and the Augustan poets pointedly refer to Romulus' auspices at the foundation of Rome (Hor., *Carm.* 2.15.10–12; Prop. 4.6.43–4).

⁹⁸ Suet., *Aug.* 95; Julius Obsequens 69; Cass. Dio 46.46.2–3 (and 56.30.5 for the date). Later that year he chose to live on the Palatine because Romulus had lived there (Cass. Dio 53.16.5, cf. Suet., *Aug.* 72.1).

⁹⁹ 'Imperator Caesar': details in Syme 1958. 'Augur Apollo' (an unprecedented epithet): Hor., *Carm.* 1.2.32, *Carm. saec.* 61; Verg., *Aen.* 4.376.

¹⁰⁰ Wiseman 2019: 104–7; see for instance Augustus, *Res Gestae* 26.5 on armies led *meo iussu et auspicio*.

¹⁰¹ Hyg., *De castrorum munitionibus* 11, cf. Polyb. 6.26.12–27.2.

¹⁰² Hor., *Carm. saec.* 65 ('augur Apollo' looks out on 'the Palatine altars'); Cass. Dio 55.33.5 (Augustus uses 'the tribunal on the Palatine'); cf. Ov., *Met.* 14.822–4 (Romulus gives judgement 'on the summit of the Palatine'); Wiseman 2019: 19–23, 105–7.

¹⁰³ Claridge 2014: 131: 'a stair up to the Augustan level.'

¹⁰⁴ As unpopular magistrates did: see for instance Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 10.59.5 (the Decemvirs); Livy 6.38.8 (Camillus as dictator).

¹⁰⁵ Cic., *Sest.* 126; the context is gladiatorial games, which would be held in the Forum.

¹⁰⁶ Augustus, *Res Gestae* 7.3; in 29 B.C. he performed the *augurium Salutis* (Suet., *Aug.* 31.4; Cass. Dio 51.20.4).

¹⁰⁷ As Romulus did on the occasion that gave Augustus his name: Solin. 1.18 (*mansitavit*); Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom.* 2.5.1 (περὶ τὸν ὄρθρον ἐκ τῆς σκηνῆς προήλθεν); Wiseman 2015: 101–3.

It is not clear from the extant remains (Fig. 3) whether the passage gave access only to the stair or to some of the basement rooms as well, which could have been used for storage. That may be relevant to a notoriously controversial passage in Festus:¹⁰⁸

‘Square Rome’ is the name of [a place] on the Palatine in front of the temple of Apollo. It is where those things have been stored which are customarily used for the sake of a good omen in founding a city. [It is so called] because it was originally defined[?] in stone in a square shape. Ennius refers to this place when he says ‘And [...] to rule over square Rome’.

I suggested in 2019 that *Roma quadrata* was a marked-out space 240 feet square, representing the first plot (*heredium* or *quadratus ager*) of Romulus’ equally divided settlement.¹⁰⁹ Beginning at an unidentified ‘grove in the *area Apollinis*’, it ended at ‘the top of the *scalae Caci*, where the hut of Faustulus was’.¹¹⁰ Since its conjectured position (Fig. 6) includes the basement of the ‘house of Livia’, it seems possible that ‘the things used for the sake of a good omen in founding a city’ could have been stored there in the surviving rooms. In 36 B.C. Emperor Caesar was much concerned with the founding of cities, as colonial settlements for the veterans of the civil wars.¹¹¹

Putting all these scraps of evidence together, the simplest explanation is that the new piazza featured a raised platform, roughly 18 m by 14 m in size and based on the walls and travertine pillars of Rosa’s ‘Peristylum’ (Figs 2 and 3), with a newly built staircase down to the private passage to Commander Caesar’s house. Obviously usable as a tribunal, such a platform would be large enough to accommodate the historic ‘hut of Faustulus’ that had stood in the precinct of Jupiter Victor, and high enough to provide the clear view to the east required of an *auguratorium*.¹¹²

VI AFTER AUGUSTUS

Passage 2, the northern branch, was evidently a later development, added to provide the same privileged access from Tiberius’ house as well. The context of its construction may have been A.D. 4, when Tiberius was adopted as Augustus’ son and successor, or A.D. 14, when he became *princeps* himself. It is possible that passage 3 was made at the same time, extending his access also to the Senate chamber in the portico of the Apollo temple,¹¹³ though that can only be speculation.

Augustus named Tiberius and Livia as his heirs, specifying that they should use his name.¹¹⁴ Livia’s new identity as *Iulia Augusta*, the result of a ‘testamentary adoption’

¹⁰⁸ Festus 310–312L (trans. Wiseman 2019: 97): *quadrata Roma in Palatio <locus> ante templum Apollinis dicitur, ubi reposita sunt quae solent boni ominis gratia in urbe condenda adhiberi, quia saxo †munitus† est initio in speciem quadratam. eius loci Ennius meminit cum ait ‘et †quis est erat† Romae regnare quadratae’.* See Wiseman 2019: 199 for the proposed emendation *finitus* (most editors read *munitus*), and Goldberg and Manuwald 2018: 186–7 for the Ennius quotation.

¹⁰⁹ Wiseman 2019: 95–102, with Campbell 2000: 10.21 (text of ‘Julius Frontinus’) for two *iugera* as a *quadratus ager*.

¹¹⁰ Solin. 1.18: *ea incipit a silva quae est in area Apollinis et ad supercilium scalarum Caci habet terminum, ubi tugurium fuit Faustuli.* Solinus goes on with Romulus’ augury and foundation.

¹¹¹ Details in Keppie 1983: 58–73; *denarii* of 29–28 B.C. show Imp. Caesar ploughing a foundation furrow, with laureate Apollo on the obverse (Sutherland 1984: 60 no. 272; Wiseman 2019: 101 fig. 45).

¹¹² See nn. 90 and 91 above. A century later, the great post-Neronian palaces (*domus Tiberiana*, *domus Augustiana*) would obstruct some of the view.

¹¹³ *Tabula Hebana* 1 (Crawford 1996: 519): *in Palatio in porticu quae est ad Apollinis, in eo templo in quo senatus haberi solet.* It is not known on which side of the temple the Senate chamber was situated, but the side nearest Augustus’ house is an obvious guess.

¹¹⁴ Tac., *Ann.* 1.8.1; Suet., *Aug.* 101.2; Cass. Dio 56.46.1.

by her late husband,¹¹⁵ happens to be attested at the very place where that name was most significant: on a lead water-pipe in the passage that linked the *domus August(i)ana* with the site (on this hypothesis) of the *augustum augurium* itself.¹¹⁶

As the priestess in charge of the deified Augustus' cult, Livia set up a shrine to him on the Palatine and instituted annual games in his honour.¹¹⁷ It was at those games in January A.D. 41 that Gaius 'Caligula' was killed, and Josephus' narrative of the event provides some important details. It begins as follows:¹¹⁸

[The conspirators] decided that the best time to make the attempt was while the Palatine games were on. These shows are held in honour of the Caesar who first transferred power from the Republic to himself. There is a wooden hut just in front of the imperial residence, and the audience, besides the emperor, consists of the Roman nobility with their wives and children.

How the hut was relevant to the audience becomes clear later, in the only other passage where the hut is mentioned. As Josephus narrates it, Gaius began the proceedings with a sacrifice to Divus Augustus. Then,¹¹⁹

after the sacrifice, Gaius turned to the show and took his seat, with the most prominent of his friends around him. The theatre was a wooden structure, put up each year in the following way. It had two doors, one leading into the open, one into a *stoa* for going in and out without disturbing those segregated inside, and within from the hut itself, which separated off another one by partitions as a retreat for competitors and performers of all kinds.

The meaning here is not obvious, and Josephus may not have fully understood what he read in his source text.¹²⁰ Nevertheless, it is clear that the hut was somehow part of the temporary theatre.

What did Josephus mean by *στοά*? The obvious translation is 'portico', and it could refer to the Ionic colonnade of the forecourt of Augustus' house as portrayed on the 'Sorrento base'.¹²¹ But since the word could also be used in the sense of 'gallery, communication trench, whether above ground or excavated' (*LSJ*), it is possible that the contemporary author used by Josephus was referring to the underground passage 1. Although the normal Latin word for such a passage was *crypta*, in the late first century A.D. *cryptoporticus* was sometimes used as an equivalent,¹²² and that could have influenced Josephus' choice of a Greek translation.

¹¹⁵ For the details of Livia's unprecedented new status, see Barrett 2002: 148–54: 'The nature of the change was not spelled out precisely, and its consequent ambiguity laid the foundation for major confrontation between mother and son over their respective roles in the new order' (148).

¹¹⁶ *CIL* VI 7264 (*Iuliae Aug.*); see Renier 1870: 328 for Rosa's report of its discovery in 'un couloir souterrain qui se dirigeait de cette maison vers celle d'Auguste' (above, Fig. 2 'A–A', our passage 1).

¹¹⁷ Priestess (*sacerdos*, *ἱερεῖα*): Ov., *Pont.* 4.9.107; Vell. Pat. 2.75.3; Cass. Dio 56.46.1; her formal title was probably *flaminica Divi Augusti* (Rüpke 2008: 772). Shrine: Plin., *HN* 12.94 (n. 67 above). Games (*ludi Palatini*): Joseph., *AJ* 19.75 and 87; Tac., *Ann.* 1.73.3; Cass. Dio 56.46.5; Degraffi 1963: 238–9 and 264 (*Fasti* of *Furius Filocalus* and *Polemius Silivius*); Barrett 2002: 229–30.

¹¹⁸ Joseph., *AJ* 19.75 (trans. Wiseman 2013a: 12): *καλῶς οὖν ἔχειν θεωριῶν ἐν τῷ Παλατίῳ ἐπιτελουμένων ἄπτεσθαι τοῦ χρήματος· ἄγονται δὲ ἐπὶ τιμῇ τοῦ πρώτου μετασησαμένου τὴν ἀρχὴν τοῦ δήμου Καίσαρος εἰς αὐτὸν μικρὸν τε πρὸ τοῦ βασιλείου καλύβης πηκτοῦ γενομένης, καὶ Ῥωμαίων τε οἱ εὐπατριδαὶ θεωροῦσι ὁμοῦ παισὶν καὶ γυναῖξιν καὶ ὁ Καίσαρ.*

¹¹⁹ Joseph., *AJ* 19.89–90 (trans. Wiseman 2013a: 14, adapted): *μετὰ δὲ τὴν θυσίαν ἐπὶ τὴν θεωρίαν τραπεῖς ἐκαθέζετο καὶ περὶ αὐτὸν τῶν ἐταίρων οἱ ἀξιολογώτατοι. κατεσκευάστο δὲ τὸ θέατρον, πηκτὸν δὲ ἐγίνετο κατὰ ἑκαστον ἐνιαυτὸν, τοιόνδε τρόπον· θύρας ἔχει δύο φερούσας τὴν μὲν εἰς αἶθριον, τὴν δ' εἰς στοᾶν εἰσόδους καὶ ἀποχωρήσεις, ὅπως μὴ ταρασσίντο οἱ ἔνδον ἀπειλημμένοι, ἐκ δ' αὐτῆς τῆς καλύβης ἔνδοτέρω διαφράγμασιν ἐτέραν ἀπειληφύϊας ἐπ' ἀναστροφή τῶν ἀνταγωνισταῖς καὶ ὅσα ἀκρόαματα.*

¹²⁰ For Josephus' main source (Cluvius Rufus?), see Wiseman 2013a: 109–16.

¹²¹ Wiseman 2013a: 103–5; see n. 83 above.

¹²² *TLL* 4.1260.45–67 (*crypta* 1: *i.q. uia uel ambulatio tecta aedibus addita*); 4.1261.55–66 (*cryptoporticus*: *idem fere significat, quod crypta* 1), with eight examples from Pliny's letters.

Despite the unavoidable uncertainties, Josephus' narrative fits very well with the idea of a raised platform (tribunal doubling as stage), and on it the 'hut of Faustulus' connected to passage 1 by a stair and used by performers for exits and entrances. That idea presupposes Claridge's hypothesis that the 'house of Livia' was demolished before the temple of Apollo was built, and that the temple faced north-east. It would be invalidated by the current archaeological consensus, that the temple faced south-west and the 'house of Livia' remained standing, redeveloped either as Augustus' own house or as the *aedes Caesarum* (Section IV above).

VII CONCLUSION

A valid hypothesis is one that makes sense of all the available evidence. By that criterion Claridge's hypothesis, that 'we should mentally eliminate the "House of Livia" from the picture',¹²³ is indeed valid, and preferable to that of the current orthodoxy. Once we accept it, and focus on how the basement area of the house was exploited and reconstructed, the scattered and enigmatic evidence for the Augustan Palatine can fall into place at last.

My own tentative reconstruction depends on Claridge's hypothesis but is not a necessary consequence of it, and so must be assessed separately.¹²⁴ But it, too, is compatible with the evidence of the passages, as Fig. 6 shows, and it also helps to explain something that has caused much confusion in recent years, Ovid's extraordinary claim that Augustus shared his house with Vesta and Apollo.¹²⁵

When his calendar poem reached 28 April, the day when in 12 B.C. a shrine of Vesta was set up 'in the house of Emperor Caesar Augustus, *pontifex maximus*',¹²⁶ Ovid provided the necessary celebration:¹²⁷

Take the day, Vesta! Vesta has been received at her kinsman's threshold, as the just Fathers have decreed. Phoebus has one part, a second has gone to Vesta, he himself as the third occupies what is left from them. Stand, you Palatine laurels! May the house stand, wreathed with oak! One [house] holds three eternal gods.

'At his threshold' must mean 'in his forecourt',¹²⁸ as illustrated on the 'Sorrento base', where Augustus' house-door and a round temple of Vesta are linked by an Ionic colonnade.¹²⁹ The scene on the relief shows that Vesta's shrine was at the south-west end of the forecourt, close to the Apollo temple in the reconstruction presented in Fig. 6. So if that reconstruction is anything like the reality, the Romans in the piazza could see three separate elements of the newly built environment — Apollo's temple, Vesta's shrine and Augustus' door with the laurels and the oak-leaf crown — so close together that it was natural to think of them as a unit.

Looking that way, to the southern corner of the piazza, they saw Augustus' house and the divinities who favoured him. Turning to look the other way (if our inference from the passages is justified), they saw his tribunal, and on it the ancient hut where Romulus and

¹²³ Claridge 2014: 131.

¹²⁴ See nn. 83–4 above.

¹²⁵ Ov., *Fast.* 4.949–54, cf. *Met.* 15.864–5. It does not follow that Augustus had a palace, as assumed by Carandini and Carafa 2021 and Pensabene 2021b; see Wiseman 2022.

¹²⁶ Degrassi 1963: 132–3 (*fasti Praenestini*): *in domu imp(eratoris) Caesaris Augu[sti po]ntif. ma[x.].*

¹²⁷ Ov., *Fast.* 4.949–54: *aufer, Vesta, diem: cognati Vesta recepta est | limine; sic iusti constituere patres. | Phoebus habet partem, Vestae pars altera cecit: | quod superest illis, tertius ipse tenet. | state Palatinae laurus, praetextaque quercu | stet domus: aeternos tres habet una deos.*

¹²⁸ Cf. Verg., *Aen.* 2.469, with Servius' note (*sane uidetur uestibulum et limen pro una re dixisse*).

¹²⁹ See n. 83 above.

Remus had grown up and where the founder had sought the gods' approval for his city by the 'august augury' that was now personified in Augustus himself.

University of Exeter
T.P.Wiseman@exeter.ac.uk

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