
FORM OR FUNCTION? TOWARDS A TYPOLOGY OF AUGUSTAN CITY WALLS IN ROMAN ITALY

Abstract: During the Augustan period, some 18 cities in Roman Italy constructed city walls around their urban centres – the last cluster of city walls to be built here until the late third century AD. There was no defensive imperative for walls at this time, as the heart of the empire was relatively peaceful, so what motivated urban communities to undertake such a time-consuming and expensive project? This article notes the superficial similarities in the physical form of Augustan city walls and their towers and gateways, but downplays the notion of a shared design model. Rather, it argues that a more important theme which links this group of city walls was their symbolic and ideological meaning. The common ways in which Augustan city walls engaged with their physical and cultural environment are examined, and shared characteristics such as the visual prominence and imposing display of city walls and gateways, connections with pre-Roman sanctuaries and foundation rituals, and imperial involvement and patronage are explored. The article concludes that in terms of typology, Augustan city walls are surprisingly diverse in their physical form despite apparent congruencies, but that they share important political and social themes. In summary, Augustan city walls were built to impress – icons of visual dominance and cultural manipulation of the landscape, promoting the status and prestige of the city they surrounded.

Keywords: *city walls, urbanism, Augustus, Roman Italy, defences*

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DOI: 10.14795/j.v4i3.270

ISSN 2360 – 266X

ISSN–L 2360 – 266X

INTRODUCTION

1932, Richmond assessed that the principal gateways of Hispellum and Augusta Taurinorum were so similar that they may have been designed by the same architect. Taking into account parallels with other contemporary gateways, he argued for the existence of a “school of Augustan town-builders”, working to a common scheme with minor local variances. For Fontaine,¹ it was “indisputable” that a school of architects reproducing similar designs was involved, and this point of view has found considerable support.² In this article, I argue that the superficial similarities in the design of the urban walls, towers and gateways of Augustan cities in Roman Italy mask important differences. It is suggested that there was no blueprint for the physical form of Augustan city walls; rather than searching for a school of urban planners or military engineers, we should look instead for common themes in how Augustan walled circuits engage with their political and geographic environment.

¹ FONTAINE 1990: 256.

² See, for example, DELPLACE 1993, SACCHI 2012: 57-62, PERNA 2012a: 386.

WHERE ARE THE CITIES WITH AUGUSTAN CITY WALLS?

Based on a combination of available archaeological, material and epigraphic evidence, literary sources and historical context, I assess that 18 cities in Roman Italy constructed city walls during the Augustan period.³ These cities are Alba Pompeia, Augusta Praetoria, Augusta Taurinorum, Brixia, Concordia Iulia, Emona, Fanum Fortunae, Florentia, Hispellum, Laus Pompeia, Mediolanum, Peltuinum, Saepinum, Tergeste, Ticinum, Tridentum, Urbs Salvia and Venafrum. Their location is shown on the map at Fig. 1 and key information about their circuit walls is in the Appendix. A further four towns (Augusta Bagiennorum, Carsulae, Libarna and Pollentia) did not build a complete circuit of walls around their urban area during the Augustan period but constructed monumental gateways or entrances into their town as a way of delineating their boundary; the location of these towns is also shown on the map at Fig. 1.

The map shows that, while city walls were built across northern and central Italy in the Augustan period, none is known to have been constructed in Italy south of Saepinum (in Samnium). This is perhaps not surprising, given the later spread of Roman influence and growth of urbanisation in the north of Italy, and the founding in northern or central Italy of triumviral or Augustan colonies at locations which were either greenfield sites or unwalled settlements. To the south, most cities were by the Augustan period already furnished with walls.⁴

Because of the difficulties involved in assigning precise chronologies, "Augustan" city walls are defined as covering the approximate period 35 BC to AD 20. Some of the city walls, for example Tergeste, Saepinum and Fanum Fortunae, can be dated with reasonable confidence through inscriptions recording their construction.⁵ Others, such as the city walls of Augusta Praetoria and Augusta Taurinorum, can be dated with reference to the known foundation date of the colony

³ There are a number of difficult unresolved issues in identifying cities with Augustan walls, particularly in terms of chronology. Ultimately, it is a matter of judgement rather than an exact science and new information may cause chronologies to be re-evaluated. The issues are discussed in full in PINDER 2015. However, my assessment of the number of cities with Augustan walls is broadly similar to other commentators, although the list may differ at the margins. For example, JOUFFROY 1986 identified 20 walls as belonging to the Augustan or Julio-Claudian periods while LOMAS 2000 counted 21 walls built between 30 BC and AD 100, all of which date to the early part of the period (Lomas did not identify the individual cities).

⁴ The prevalence of pre-Augustan walled settlements in central and southern Italy is well documented by Sewell in his database of some 600 urban ("higher-order") settlements in Italy south of the River Po (SEWELL, 2015). Sewell assessed that 451 of these sites had or are suspected to have had fortifications. However, it is not possible to cross-refer easily between Sewell's database and the group of Augustan city walls presented here, partly because his geographic coverage is different and partly because Sewell recorded a wide chronological range for the construction of walls at each site, from the earliest possible date to the latest possible date.

⁵ For Tergeste, *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (CIL) 05, 00525 (33 BC); for Saepinum, CIL 09, 02443 (2 BC – AD 4); for Fanum Fortunae, CIL 11, 06218 (AD 9-10). The use of inscriptions to date city walls is not necessarily straightforward. For example, the inscription placed above the principal gateway to Fanum Fortunae refers only to the construction of walls, although archaeological evidence demonstrates that the walls, towers and gateways were undertaken as an integrated whole. At Saepinum, the walls, gates and towers are conventionally dated to 2 BC – AD 4 by reference to identical inscriptions placed above the four gateways, but this has not been universally accepted, principally because the construction technique of *opus quasi-reticulatum* used in building the walls does not sit well with a mid-Augustan date.

which they enclosed. However, we should not assume that the foundation date of a colony and the construction of its city walls were necessarily contemporaneous. Some colonies with Augustan walls were probably founded in the Caesarian period: both Florentia and Tergeste, for example, are now held to be Caesarian rather than triumviral or Augustan foundations.⁶ At Emona, an inscription probably refers to an imperial donation of city walls and gates in AD 14-15 although the foundation of the colony is currently thought to have taken place around 31-27 BC.⁷

There is also growing evidence that the walled circuits of some Augustan cities may not have been finally completed until some considerable time after their commencement (the lack of urgency to complete the walls, even in places as distant from the heart of the empire as Emona and Augusta Taurinorum, indicates that defence was not a prime consideration in building city walls in this period).⁸ Moreover, different components of a walled circuit may have been started and/or completed at different times. There is evidence, for example, from Tridentum that the towers were built earlier than the walls and from Urbs Salvia where at least four of the towers postdate the walled circuit.⁹ At Florentia, the construction of the gateways may have preceded the construction of the city walls by several decades.¹⁰

Finally, in the absence of other more compelling evidence, some city walls can be dated only by comparing their construction style and technique to other similar walled circuits: the walls of Mediolanum are considered to be Augustan in date chiefly by reason of their construction in *opus testaceum* and their narrow width.¹¹ This method of dating is problematic, however; several different construction techniques are evidenced within the group of Augustan city walls, even within those of relatively close geographic proximity.¹² Nevertheless, taking all relevant information into account, a good case can be made for identifying the walled circuits around these 18 cities in Roman Italy as Augustan in date. This was the last cluster of new city walls constructed in Roman Italy until the third century AD.

MAGNA MUNIT MOENIA:¹³ THE PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS OF AUGUSTAN CITY WALLS

The circuit

Augustan walled circuits were not homogenous in appearance: their shape and physical form varied considerably. Their footprints ranged from the precisely rectangular form of Augusta Praetoria to the imperfect rhombus of Saepinum and the very elongated form of Hispellum (Fig. 2). There are some patterns within this *mélange*, however. Most, but not all, of Augustan city walls

⁶ For Florentia, see SCAMPOLI 2010: 9-14. Both Scampoli and CIANFERONI 2015: 55 date the city walls to the early Augustan period following recent excavations. For Tergeste, see BERNARDINI *et alii* 2015.

⁷ CIL 03, 10768. See ŠAŠEL KOS 2012, GASPARI 2010.

⁸ Archaeological evidence at Augusta Taurinorum, for example, shows that the city walls were not completed until the third quarter of the first century AD. See BRECCIAROLI TABORELLI/GABUCCI 2007: 246.

⁹ For Tridentum, see BASSI 2007: 58; for Urbs Salvia, PERNA 2006: 14-45.

¹⁰ PAGNI 2010: 125-128.

¹¹ See SACCHI 2012: 57-62, CONVENTI 2004: 108.

¹² See below and the Appendix for details.

¹³ Titus Maccius Plautus *Miles Gloriosus* 228.



Fig. 1: map showing location of Augustan city walls. Cities without complete circuits of walls are labelled in italics.

built round colonial foundations newly or recently settled on greenfield or non-urban sites had a regular footprint enclosing a regular street grid (Tergeste was an exception).¹⁴ Most, but not all, of the city walls built in the Augustan period around pre-existing urban settlements followed an irregular pattern (Venafrum, Alba Pompeia and Tridentum were exceptions).¹⁵ At two cities, Fanum Fortunae and Tridentum, the Augustan walls were not continuous, the Adriatic coast and the River Adige respectively forming part

of their urban boundary.¹⁶

The walled circuit and towers of Augusta Praetoria were perfectly aligned with the orthogonal street grid, as were those of Augusta Taurinorum and Emona. Saepinum and Hispellum, however, are not known to have had a planned grid in the urban centre, in Saepinum's case because the layout of the urban area was predicated on the irregular course of the pre-Roman roads which formed the *cardo maximus* and *decumanus maximus* through the town, and in Hispellum's case because the steepness of the site is likely to have made a regular pattern of *insulae* impossible.

The size of the enclosed area of Augustan walled cities also varied significantly, ranging from 72 hectares (ha) at Mediolanum to Saepinum's 12ha, with an average in the group of 18 walled cities of 32.5ha. The walled circuit of Mediolanum was significantly larger in area than all other Augustan circuits and its perimeter at 3.5 kilometres (km) nearly three times the length of the smallest circuit (Tridentum at 1.2km). The average perimeter of an Augustan walled circuit was 2.3km.

¹⁴ Colonies with a regular urban plan enclosed by a rectangular walled circuit of Augustan date include Augusta Praetoria (founded 25 BC), Augusta Taurinorum (founded 28-27 BC), Emona (probably founded 31-27 BC), Venafrum (probably a Caesarian or triumviral colony) and Concordia Iulia (probably a triumviral colony, 42-40 BC). The date of the foundation of the colony of Tergeste is disputed, and, according to Santangelo, "unsolvable" on current evidence (2016).

¹⁵ Saepinum, a *municipium*, Fanum Fortunae, probably originally a *conciliabulum*, Hispellum, originally a *municipium*, and Peltuinum, a *praefectura*, built city walls in the Augustan period which followed an irregular line around pre-existing urban settlements. None of these urban areas is known to have had walls previously. For Saepinum, see PINDER 2016; for Fanum Fortunae, see MIGNANI/POZZI 2012; for Hispellum, see FONTAINE 1990: 263-301; for Peltuinum, see MIGLIORATI 2011.

¹⁶ De Sanctis convincingly challenged the conventional view that the city walls of Fanum Fortunae continued along the sea front (2012).

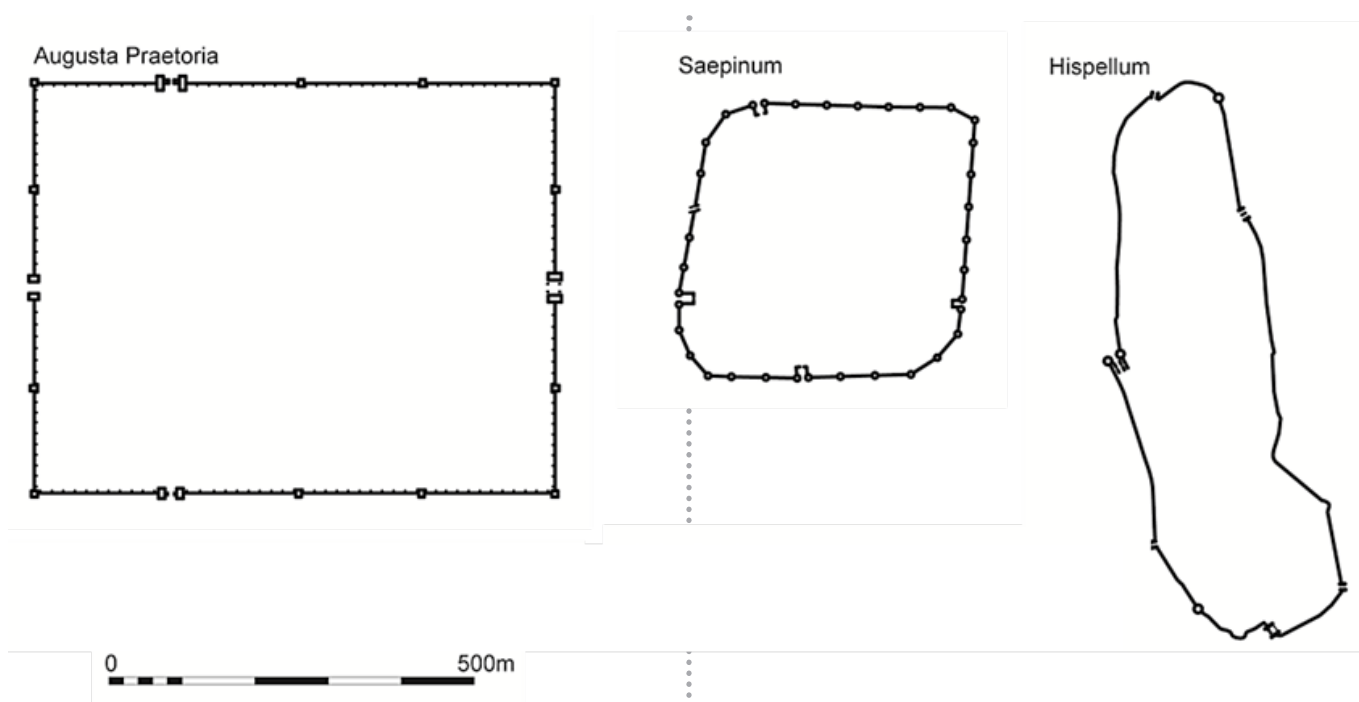


Fig. 2: footprints of selected Augustan circuits, to scale. © author.

The walls

The construction technique employed in building city walls was likely to be influenced by the availability of materials locally, but it is noticeable that a number of different techniques are evidenced among the group of Augustan walls. Five walls were built in *opus vittatum* (Alba Pompeia, Augusta Taurinorum, Brixia, Fanum Fortunae and Hispellum), three in *opus quadratum* (Augusta Praetoria, Emona and Tergeste) and three in *opus testaceum* (Concordia Iulia, Florentia and Urbs Salvia). As is clear from the map at Fig. 1, there is no correlation between geographic proximity and construction technique. The techniques of *opus incertum* and *opus mixtum* are also found, as well as the problematic *opus quasi-reticulatum* at Saepinum. The internal and external facings of Fanum Fortunae, Hispellum, Saepinum and Urbs Salvia were constructed with the same technique and with similar care.¹⁷ This is relatively unusual,¹⁸ and hints that the design of Augustan city walls was aimed as much internally to a city’s inhabitants as externally to visitors or travellers.

Augustan city walls were typically narrow in width, reinforcing the point that defence was not a key consideration in their construction. It is not possible to verify the width of all Augustan city walls (the available data are presented in the Appendix), but where known, the width of Augustan walls ranges from 1.25m (at Tridentum) to 2.5m (at Emona and Tergeste), with an average of 1.85m. A wall less than 2.5m wide was unlikely to be fit for purpose in defensive

terms;¹⁹ it is notable that the average width of city walls in Roman Italy as set out in comparative catalogues such as those compiled by Conventi and Bonetto declines steadily from the mid-republican into the Augustan period and then increases again.²⁰ Latimer noted that the late antique walls of northern Italy averaged 3m-4m in width, compared to the 1m-2m of their Augustan predecessors.²¹

Information about the original height of Augustan city walls is both scarcer and less reliable than data on their width (see the Appendix). In some cases the presumed height of the walls has been deduced from comparisons with other city walls and/or extrapolated from the known width of the wall.²² However, there is reasonable confidence that the highest walls of the Augustan period (Hispellum at 13m, or possibly Fanum Fortunae at 14m)²³ were about three times the height of the lowest walls (Tridentum at 4.5m). Moreover, a comparison of sections through a small number of Augustan walls reveals their very different proportions (Fig. 3) and provides an insight into their purpose. It might be thought that the colony of Augusta Praetoria needed strong defensive walls, being founded in recently pacified Alpine territory in the far northwest of Roman Italy. Yet the city walls of Augusta Praetoria were one of the least robust of Augustan walls, only 1.9m wide at the base, tapering to 1.5m

¹⁷ For Fanum Fortunae, LUNI/GALLO/VALLETTA 2000: 79-81; for Hispellum, FONTAINE 1990: 263-301; for Saepinum, PINDER 2016; for Urbs Salvia, PINDER 2017.

¹⁸ BONETTO 1998: 58. The inner facing of the town walls of Tridentum, for example, was built in stone and pebbles, while the outer façade was more carefully constructed with small slabs of horizontally placed stone (CIURLETTI 2003: 37).

¹⁹ Goodman argued that walls less than 2.5m in width were as likely to be ornamental as military (2007: 86). A width of less than 2.5m would not provide sufficient room for sentries to patrol the walls (Vitruvius *De Architectura* I,5,3).

²⁰ CONVENTI 2004, BONETTO 1998.

²¹ LATIMER 2010: 35-36. I judge Augustan walls to be somewhat wider on average, but certainly less wide than mid-republican or late antique walls.

²² Sacchi, for example, calculated the height of the walls of Mediolanum on this basis (2012: 57-62).

²³ I assess that the Augustan walls of Fanum Fortunae were 12m high, somewhat lower than the 14m estimated by a number of commentators (PINDER 2015: 249-251). In places the walls of Fanum Fortunae still stand to 9m high.

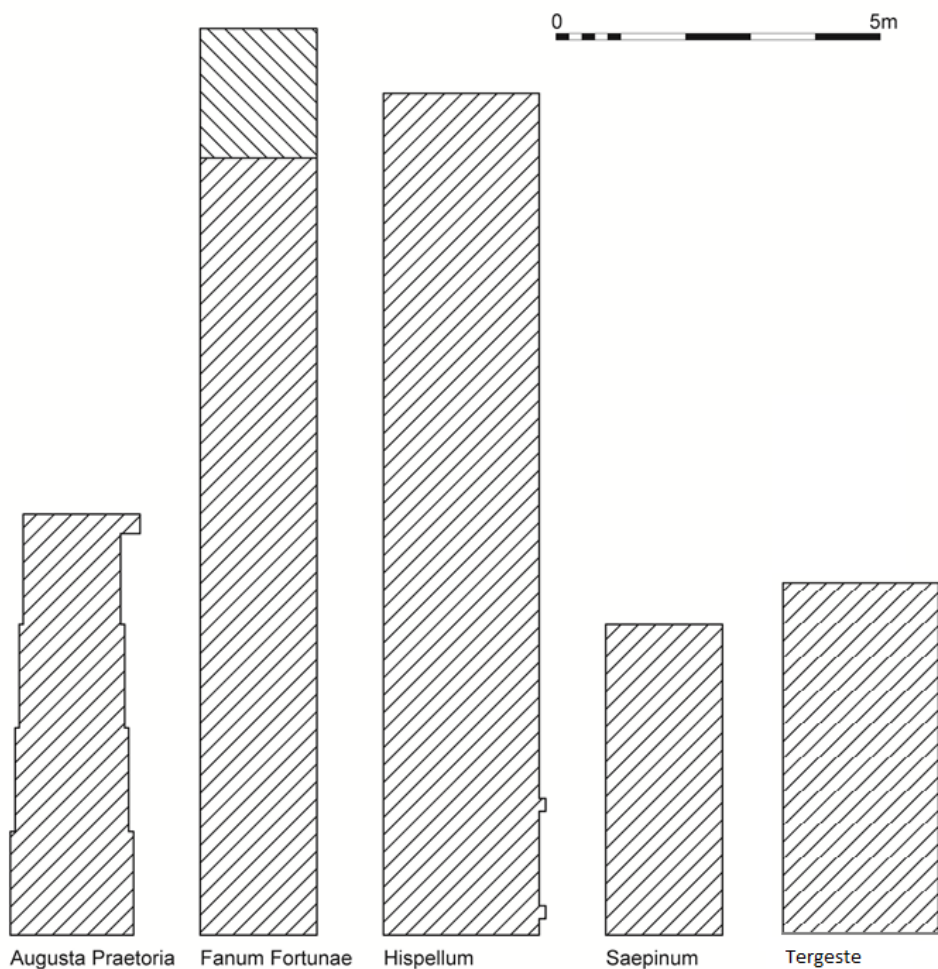


Fig. 3: sections of selected Augustan walls, to scale. © author.

wide at the top, and only 6.5m high. This was half the height of the walls of Hispellum, which at 2.4m wide and (probably) 13m high were much more solidly built than those of Augusta Praetoria. Hispellum's walls surrounded a colony which did not need protection from external threat but which did want to assert its dominance over rival cities and colonies in the Valle Umbra. Given their relatively narrow width, the walls of Fanum Fortunae seem unfeasibly high (12m, possibly 14m) to the point of instability

Although the data are limited, there does seem to be a discernible difference between the scale of the Augustan walls of colonies compared to the Augustan walls of *municipia*. The walls of the *municipium* of Tridentum at 4.5m high and 1.25m wide, for example, seem almost miniature in scale compared to those of the colony of Hispellum. Based on the available evidence, the town walls of *municipia* are slighter in terms of both width and height: the average width of the Augustan walls of *municipia* was 1.5m and that of colonies 2m; the average height of the Augustan walls of *municipia* was 6.5m compared to 8.7m for colonies.

The towers

There is considerable variation among Augustan walled circuits in the use of towers. As well as indicating that there was no blueprint for an Augustan design, this

diversity undermines the case of those who argue that Augustan city walls followed Vitruvian norms for maximum defensive capability.²⁴

The towers of Augusta Praetoria, for example, are regularly spaced but the distances between them are quite considerable (170m-180m on the long sides of the circuit, much further apart than was mandated by Vitruvius).²⁵ The towers themselves had large arched windows on all four sides, designed more for visual impact than security.²⁶ Conversely, only two towers have been identified in Hispellum's walled circuit. Both these towers had postern gates on the outer wall to provide easy access to outside the city. Saepinum had the most elaborate system of towers – 36 in a circuit only 1.27km long – but the defensive integrity of the circuit was broken when one of the towers was dismantled shortly after construction and the

wall breached to provide direct access through the walls to the theatre.²⁷ The 1.8km walled circuit of Florentia had circular towers every 50m but, as at Saepinum, the walls were compromised almost immediately after their construction when the theatre was built up against the elevation of the wall.²⁸ The towers of Augusta Praetoria, Fanum Fortunae and Augusta Taurinorum are all different from each other but internally consistent: excluding the towers flanking the gateways and the square corner towers, the towers of Augusta Praetoria are all rectangular and the same size, the 24 towers of Fanum Fortunae are all circular and the same size (except for two rather larger towers framing the secondary gateway into the city), and the 36 towers of Augusta Taurinorum are all square and regularly spaced at 70m intervals.²⁹

²⁴ See, for example, TAUS 2012, PERNA 2006, FERRARATO 1982 for Fanum Fortunae, Urbs Salvia and Saepinum respectively.

²⁵ Vitruvius prescribed that towers should be no more than a bowshot apart (Vitruvius *De Architectura* I,5,4). The range of a Roman archer is disputed (URECHE 2013: 189) but the maximum distance between towers advised by Philo of Byzantium, on whose work Vitruvius draws, was 46m (ROWLAND/HOWE 2001: 156).

²⁶ BONETTO 1998: 63-65.

²⁷ PINDER 2016.

²⁸ SCAMPOLI 2010: 26-29.

²⁹ For Augusta Praetoria, FAZARI 2005: 11-12; for Fanum Fortunae, LUNI *et alii* 2000: 83-89; for Augusta Taurinorum, ROSSIGNANI/BARATTO/BONZANO 2009: 152. Vitruvius *De Architectura* I,5,5 allowed round or

At most of the circuits, the towers clearly form part of the original concept for the city walls, being carefully tied in even to the extent of aligning the brickwork. The towers of Urbs Salvia are a major exception. Here, archaeological evidence demonstrates that at least four of the towers postdate the walled circuit, and shows that some of the towers sat astride the wall while others abutted it. In addition, the 14 identified towers are far from uniform – rectangular, pentagonal, hexagonal and octagonal towers have all been found and many are irregular in plan – and they are not situated at regular intervals along the circuit.³⁰

Of the four towns which built monumental gateways in the Augustan period but not a complete circuit of walls, Augusta Bagiennorum chose in addition to mark the trapezoidal plot of the town by constructing square towers on the four corners of the urban area. As these towers were not integrated into a walled circuit, their purpose cannot have been defensive, and their role as visual guides to the urban area was negated as the built-up area of the town soon extended beyond their footprint.³¹

The gateways

Superficially, the principal gateways in many of the Augustan walled circuits appear to follow the same pattern. For example, Porta Venere and Porta Consolare at Hispellum, Porta Praetoria and Porta Decumana at Augusta Praetoria and Porta di Augusto at Fanum Fortunae were all triple-arched gateways, with inner and outer archways comprising a central arch between two smaller arches and framing an internal courtyard (*cavaedium*). Porta Palatina, the north gate into Augusta Taurinorum, had four arches rather than three, and was flanked by 16-sided towers which reached 30m high.³² The four gates at Saepinum were single-arched, but like the others they had a *cavaedium* between the outer and inner archways. All these gates except for Porta Palatina were built in *opus quadratum*, contrasting with the polygonal towers, but warned against square towers.

³⁰ PINDER 2017.

³¹ PREACCO 2014.

³² ROSSIGNANI *et alii* 2009:153. A four-arched gateway has also been identified in the walled circuit of Concordia Iulia (CROCE DA VILLA 1998: 498).

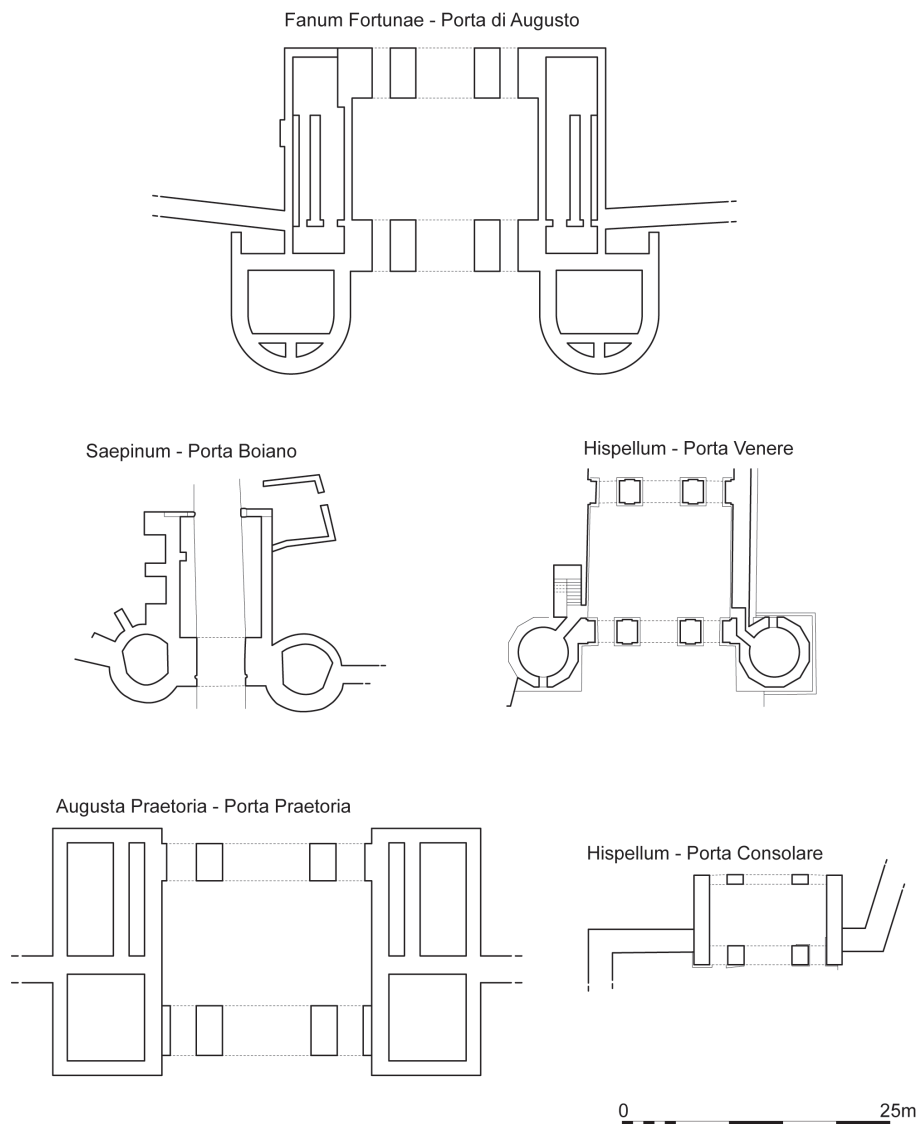


Fig. 4: comparison of gateways of selected cities, to scale. © author.

construction technique used for the walled circuit itself.³³ We know that Porta Venere, Porta Consolare, Porta Praetoria, Porta di Augusto and Porta Palatina all had a galleried arcade or arcades above the outer archway.

But it would be a mistake to view these triple-arched gateways as coming from the same template (Fig. 4). The size of the gateways varies greatly, from the vast 21m span of Augusta Praetoria’s Porta Praetoria to the diminutive 4.5m width of Porta Boiano at Saepinum. The flanking towers are round at Saepinum, 12-sided on plinths – one of which was a massive 10m high – at Hispellum’s Porta Venere, rectangular at Augusta Praetoria and U-shaped at Porta di Augusto in Fanum Fortunae. Most of the gateways were closed with *catractae* but the inner gates at Saepinum were closed by double doors and there is no evidence for means of closing Hispellum’s Porta Consolare at all.³⁴

³³ The walled circuit at Augusta Praetoria was built in *opus quadratum* like Porta Praetoria, but because the blocks used in the gateway are much larger there is a clear contrast between the gate and the walls.

³⁴ For Porta Venere in Hispellum, see MARRONI 2005; for Porta Consolare in Hispellum, see FONTAINE 1990: 263-269; for the gateways of Saepinum,

Oddly, perhaps, in view of its almost miniature status when compared with the walled circuit and gateways of, say, Augusta Praetoria, the embellishment and sculptural detail on the four gateways of Saepinum are more significant than those of the other gateways. The archways of Fanum Fortunae, Augusta Praetoria, Augusta Taurinorum and Hispellum are architecturally magnificent and visually impressive, but they are not ornate. Saepinum, on the other hand, not only has its dedicatory inscription prominently displayed above each archway but it also has an identical ideologically driven sculptural composition carefully framing each archway and the bust of a different deity on each keystone.³⁵ The busy town gateways are being used to make a very clear statement of propaganda and imperial power. This elaborate ornamentation is all the more striking because of the relative paucity of marble and decorative effects elsewhere in the town, which was much less showy in its use of fine materials than, say, Urbs Salvia or Carsulae.³⁶

Double-arched gateways, often with *cavaedia*, are also commonly found in Augustan walled circuits. These are known at Hispellum (Arco di Augusto), Alba Pompeia, Concordia Iulia, Peltuinum, Tridentum and (probably) Mediolanum.³⁷ Porta Veronensis, for example, in the southern side of Tridentum's walled circuit, was a monumental double-arched gateway with a *cavaedium* measuring some 8m by 4m, roughly similar to the size of the *cavaedia* at Saepinum but much smaller than those of Augusta Praetoria or Augusta Taurinorum. It was constructed from white limestone and was flanked by polygonal 16-sided brick towers on a large base in contrasting red Trento stone.³⁸ Free-standing double-arched gateways with *cavaedia* and flanking towers of the Augustan period are also found at Augusta Bagiennorum and Libarna, but they were not integrated into a walled circuit.³⁹

In a discussion of Augustan gateways, those of Urbs Salvia are again the outliers. There are two gateways at Urbs Salvia whose plans are reasonably well understood and both are very different from other Augustan gateways in Roman Italy. Urbs Salvia's north gate was of an unusual concave design, unique among gateways in Augustan walled circuits in Roman Italy. Similar gates in southern Gaul are known from the Augustan period,⁴⁰ but the only known gateway of

see PINDER 2016; for Porta Praetoria in Augusta Praetoria, see PERINETTI 2005; for Porta di Augusto in Fanum Fortunae, see PURCARO 2012.

³⁵ CIL 09, 02443. The sculpted images at Saepinum are of bearded prisoners who are half-naked with their hands tied behind them. Although the depiction of barbarian captives is a relatively common theme in Roman art (FERRIS 2000), it is generally accepted that these statues relate to the military campaigns of Tiberius and Drusus in Germany and their victory of 11 BC. The ensemble of inscription and sculpture is discussed in PINDER 2016.

³⁶ For Saepinum, BARKER 1995: 218. For the widespread use of decorative and rare stone and marble at Urbs Salvia, ANTONELLI/LAZZARINI 2013, at Carsulae, SISANI 2006: 184-189.

³⁷ For Hispellum, FONTAINE 1990: 275-277; for Alba Pompeia, FILIPPI 1997: 55-56; for Concordia Iulia, TREVISANATO 1999: 86-95; for Peltuinum, MIGLIORATI 2011; for Tridentum, BAGGIO BERNARDONI 2000: 347-361; for Mediolanum, CHRZANOVSKI 2006: 186.

³⁸ BONETTO 1998. In this form, the gateway may be Claudian in date and thus a little later than the town walls (BAGGIO BERNARDONI 2000: 356).

³⁹ For Augusta Bagiennorum, PREACCO 2006; for Libarna, GAMBARI 2014.

⁴⁰ Sometimes known as "Fréjus-type" gates (JOHNSON 1983: 15), these gateways have been identified in southern Gaul at Forum Iulii, Arelate and Aquae Sextiae in the Augustan period (REBECCHI 1987: 134). The gateway

a similar design in central Italy, at Septempeda only 25km from Urbs Salvia, is not securely dated and may belong to the earlier part of the first century BC.⁴¹ The east gate at Urbs Salvia, Porta Gemina, was double-arched but dissimilar in design to other Augustan double archways. The gateway had no inner courtyard or flanking towers and was characterised by an abnormally long spine (11.5m deep). Also, unusually, the double arches were not quite parallel, so that the overall width of the gateway was 20m on the exterior side and 23m on the interior side. Porta Gemina's unusual form has led some commentators to question whether it is Augustan in date; pending further archaeological investigation, however, the balance of evidence suggests that the walls and gateways of Urbs Salvia should probably be dated to the Augustan period.⁴²

PULCHERRIMA MOENIA:⁴³ THE IDEOLOGICAL AND SYMBOLIC SIGNIFICANCE OF AUGUSTAN CITY WALLS

The physical nature of Augustan city walls, therefore, was the product of careful but not uniform design. City walls of this period varied considerably in size and form and superficial similarities, such as in the plan of gateways, are not strong enough to support a theory that there was a blueprint for city walls or that one school of architects was responsible for their construction. However, a closer examination of the physical and cultural environment in which Augustan city walls were placed reveals some notable common threads which knit together the city walls of this period as a coherent group. There were important ways in which the physical appearance and positioning of city walls could be deliberately engineered to reinforce their symbolic and ideological meaning,⁴⁴ and this found its highest expression in the Augustan period.

Visual prominence

Augustan city walls were designed to make a statement. Built to impress more than to protect, these city walls were a potent assertion of urban identity, projecting a deliberate statement of power and status. They formed a massive and imposing visual point of reference both for approaching visitors and travellers passing by and for inhabitants of the urban area which they enclosed.⁴⁵ Especially in the Augustan period, the positioning of city walls and their gateways was carefully determined, based on much more than function and practicality.

Several Augustan city walls demonstrate a deliberate

was set back from the line of the walled circuit but, unlike the gates in southern Gaul, the flanking walls at Urbs Salvia connecting the gateway to the walled circuit were straight rather than curved.

⁴¹ PERNA 2012b: 80-84.

⁴² Perna considered that Porta Gemina resembled fortified cities and military camps of the second and third centuries AD on the northern frontiers of the empire (2006: 34-37). See DELPLACE 1993: 265 and PINDER 2017 for the view that the gateway (and the walls) are Augustan in date.

⁴³ *Moenia dum colimus dominae pulcherrima Romae*: Martial *Epigrammata* 10,103.

⁴⁴ GROS 1992: 220-221, ZANKER 1988: 328-329.

⁴⁵ This was a phenomenon apparent to ancient sources, as is indicated for example in Aristides' comment on Rhodes in the mid second century AD that "the circuit of the walls and the height and beauty of the interspersed towers ... were like beacons" (Aelius Aristides *Orationes* 25,7).



Fig. 5: colour banding on the central archway of Porta Consolare, Hispellum. © author

desire to be noticed, including through the use of positioning, materials and colour. Perched on the hillside above the Valle Umbra, Hispellum's massive walls and magnificent gateways dominate not only an Italic sanctuary on the plain immediately below but also the view from many kilometres away. They hold in their line of sight several important Roman cities, including Perugia and Asisium. The position and appearance of Hispellum's Porta Venere underlines this emphasis on visual prominence. Topographically, Porta Venere is located in a very steep and difficult place where construction required considerable engineering effort (the plinth on which one of the flanking towers rests is 10m deep). It is set at an angle to the line of the city walls and to the contours of the hill, dominating the view towards Hispellum's rival Asisium. The city walls themselves are carefully built in *opus vittatum* from small blocks of local limestone with its distinctive pinkish tinge, forming a real contrast with the intense white of Porta Venere's travertine *opus quadratum* blocks. Like Porta Venere, Hispellum's other main gateway, Porta Consolare, also shows signs of the careful juxtaposition of contrasting colours to produce a decorative effect (Fig. 5). The gateway was constructed of large white differently sized limestone blocks interspersed with some pinkish coloured limestone blocks, producing what appears



Fig. 6: colour contrast on Porta di Augusto, Fanum Fortunae. © author

to be a deliberate contrasting decorative scheme.⁴⁶ Some sections of the external façade of Hispellum's wall, on the east where passers-by were few, are noticeably less carefully built than the sections facing the valley and visible to travellers on the nearby Via Flaminia.⁴⁷

A similar effect is achieved in the Augustan city walls of Fanum Fortunae, where the bright white limestone of Porta di Augusto's outer façade stands in deliberate contrast to, but perfect alignment with, the yellow sandstone of the inner gateway and the walls (Fig. 6).⁴⁸ There is some evidence that the Augustan gateways of Saepinum, Augusta Praetoria's Porta Praetoria and Augusta Taurinorum's Porta Palatina were painted or coated in whitewashed plaster, which would transform our understanding of how they were meant to be perceived.⁴⁹ This was an effect known to our ancient sources:

⁴⁶ MANCONI/CAMERIERI/CRUCIANI 1996: 379, however, argued that this was because the gateway reused stones from an existing building but in my view the patterns created by the stonework are too purposefully designed for this.

⁴⁷ FONTAINE 1990: 273.

⁴⁸ It is now thought that the striking two-tone coloured effect on the outer façade of Porta Praetoria at Augusta Praetoria was implemented a few decades after its construction in the Augustan period. See PERINETTI 2005.

⁴⁹ For Saepinum, BRACONI 1979: 56, FERRARATO 1982: 65; for Porta Praetoria, PERINETTI 2005; for Porta Palatina, THOMAS 2007: 110. It should be acknowledged that rendering and whitewashing had the practical

Aelius Aristides, for example, wrote metaphorically of the military cordon round the Roman empire, “these walls have not been built of bitumen or baked brick, nor do they stand gleaming with stucco” and went on to comment that such walls do exist in great number, “gleaming more brilliantly than bronze”.⁵⁰

A number of other cities with Augustan walls exhibit similar characteristics and a conscious intent to emphasise status and symbolism by visual means. At Urbs Salvia, for example, there is a hint that the city walls were deliberately landscaped to provide an impressive introduction to the city. At the northeast corner of Urbs Salvia, where the city wall turns to run parallel to the River Fiastra in the valley bottom, there is a significant difference of some 10m in ground level between the exterior and interior of the wall. This is at the lowest point of the city, which is built on a sloping site. Possibly, the change in level may have been purposively engineered to enhance the visual impression of the city walls.⁵¹ Also built in the Augustan period, it is clear that the Arco di San Damiano at Carsulae was carefully located to create maximum impact for travellers arriving on the Via Flaminia. The archway is placed at the northernmost point of the urban area just before the Via Flaminia drops steeply. Travellers arriving from the north would look up to see the archway, whose purpose appears to have been symbolic rather than functional, dominating the horizon.⁵²

The builders of Augustan city walls were on occasion prepared to source material from some distance away, even when adequate but unremarkable material was available locally. A limited amount of material in the outer facing of the Augustan walls of Mediolanum was sourced from some 70km away and may have been incorporated into the walls for decorative purposes.⁵³ The outer facing of the city walls of Augusta Praetoria was constructed from high quality, neatly cut travertine blocks which were not local; as Goodman commented, this would not have improved the defensive efficacy of the walls but would have increased the conspicuousness of the walls in the landscape.⁵⁴ By contrast, the inner facing of the wall was notably less impressive, being clad in *opus incertum* using stones from the rivers nearby.

The use of different colours and contrasting material in city walls to create a deliberate visual impact was not solely an Augustan phenomenon, of course. One of the most impressive surviving examples of the use of

purpose of protecting masonry from the elements, as well as more aesthetic or decorative meaning (BIDWELL 1996: 19).

⁵⁰ Aelius Aristides *Orationes* 26,83.

⁵¹ The height differential is clearly visible on site. Perna suggested that this might have been to improve the defensive features of the city wall (2006: 27) but in my view it is very difficult to interpret the walls of Urbs Salvia as a predominantly defensive asset (PINDER 2017). Fabrini, who led excavations at Urbs Salvia over several decades, thought that terracing, or perhaps the accumulation of soil over time, might be the explanation (*pers. comm.*), but the ground drops away from the outside of the wall rather than being built up from the inside.

⁵² It is generally held that Roman Carsulae was not surrounded by a walled circuit (see, for example, CIOTTI 1976, PINDER 2015: 343-348, although CIUCHINI 2004 disagreed); Arco di San Damiano was a free-standing liminal structure providing a monumental and symbolic entrance into the town. There is no evidence that the archway could be closed, nor that it had an associated *cavaedium* or was attached to perimeter walls.

⁵³ SACCHI 2012: 57-62.

⁵⁴ GOODMAN 2007: 60.

polychrome patterned masonry is at Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium, whose city walls were built around the middle of the first century AD. One of the watch towers employs different coloured bricks and natural stones not just from the local area but from further afield. The stones were carefully laid in mosaic patterning to form roundels, lunettes and triangles. There was no functional advantage in this choice of materials, so the use of colours appears to be designed for effect and to be as elaborate and visually striking as possible.⁵⁵

Foundation rites, ritual deposits and symbols

Throughout the republic and into the imperial period, a symbolically important part of the process for establishing a new colony was the foundation ritual, which bound the city closely to Rome and imparted a “metaphysical identity” alongside the physical reality.⁵⁶ These rites, during which the boundary of the new settlement was fixed and thereby (usually) the trajectory of the city walls, normally included the *sulcus primigenius* (ploughing the perimeter of the new colony) and burying the “first fruits” in a ceremonial pit, the *mundus*.⁵⁷ Their ephemeral nature makes tracing such rites difficult in the archaeological record, although there is plenty of literary and numismatic evidence.⁵⁸

At least two of the cities which constructed walls in the Augustan period have revealed evidence for foundation rites and ritual deposits. The most significant is at Augusta Praetoria, where archaeological investigations uncovered a sculpted block on the external face of one of the corner towers in the walled circuit.⁵⁹ The carvings on the corner block, which would originally have been in full view, are thought to represent erect phalluses, a spade, a plough and a badly eroded figure which may be a bull or a Capricorn. If the identification of a plough is correct, it should probably be associated with the colony’s foundation and the rite of the *sulcus primigenius*. The bull or Capricorn is likely to be a reference to Augustus.⁶⁰ Phallus symbols are more commonly found, and probably had a more general apotropaic function: there is a phallus carved on Porta Tammara at Saepinum and possibly another near Hispellum’s Porta San Ventura, both of Augustan date.⁶¹ Further evidence for ritual deposits

⁵⁵ BIDWELL 1996: 24.

⁵⁶ REVELL 2009: 48. Religious practice associated with new cities is described in detail by RYKWERT 1988: 44-71. The relationship between the *pomerium*, the *sulcus primigenius* and city walls is discussed by, among others, ANDREUSSI 1999, DE SANCTIS 2007 and STEVENS 2017.

⁵⁷ During the ritual of the *sulcus primigenius*, the founder of the colony ploughed a sacred furrow (*sulcus primigenius*) around the perimeter of the future urban centre, thus forming the *pomerium* (Varro *De Lingua Latina* 5.143). The furrow was held to determine the future line of the city walls. The boundary thus formed was considered to be sacrosanct and inviolable (Gaius *Digest* I.8.1) and it was deemed an act of sacrilege to cross or violate it. Since a city’s boundary was often (though not always) demarcated by a wall, the symbolic significance of the foundation was invested in the walls’ physical manifestation.

⁵⁸ See, for example, a silver *denarius* of 29-27 BC depicting a veiled Octavian driving a yoke of oxen in the *sulcus primigenius* ritual (Roman Imperial Coinage P 272).

⁵⁹ BERTARIONE/JORIS 2012. Bertarione and Joris were confident that the carved block highlighted the sacred value attached to city walls and their role mediating between the human and the divine, describing the block as marking the “act of birth” of the city.

⁶⁰ BERTARIONE/MAGLI 2015.

⁶¹ For Saepinum, DE BENEDITTIS/GAGGIOTTI/MATTEINI CHIARI

comes from Saepinum, where excavators found a pottery vessel containing eight small unguent jars carefully buried in alignment with the foundation of the wall.⁶² As Saepinum was not a colony, this is likely to be ritual deposit in connection with the construction of the walls rather than linked to a foundation rite.

Sanctuaries and processions

Many of the cities which built walls in the Augustan period have a connection with a pre-existing extramural sanctuary, to which they might be linked by means of a processional or sacred way through the city walls. City walls were inextricably linked to religious meaning in the Roman world,⁶³ and thus played an important part in Augustus' drive to restore, or to be seen to restore, the republican past by resurrecting traditional republican ceremonies and rites.

At the newly-founded colonies of Fanum Fortunae and Hispellum, for example, there is evidence that the colony appropriated or absorbed a pre-Roman sanctuary site or cult and specifically incorporated the means to do so in the layout of the Augustan city walls and gateways. The urban layout of Fanum Fortunae followed an orthogonal grid plan except for one road, which cut diagonally across it (Fig. 7). This "anomalous" road exited the urban centre through a secondary gateway in the Augustan city walls. The gateway and "anomalous" road should be understood both in relation to the theatre, amphitheatre and temple complex within the urban centre to which it led, and also in relation to the extramural religious life of the city. The unexpected orientation and narrow width of the "anomalous" road suggests that it may be a road which pre-dated the Augustan development of the city,⁶⁴ but was important enough not only to be preserved within the street grid but also to merit its own gateway into the colony. Outside the city, the "anomalous" road leads in the direction of Roncosambaccio some 5km away, where there is evidence for what may be a pre-Roman sanctuary, possibly the location of the eponymous sanctuary of Fortuna.⁶⁵ In my view, the Augustan city walls and gateway of Fanum Fortunae may have been deliberately

1993: 35. For Hispellum, EVANS 2012, but the carving is not mentioned by other commentators and I was unable to verify it on site.

⁶² CEGLIA/CURCI 2013.

⁶³ PINDER forthcoming.

⁶⁴ LUNI *et alii* 2000: 47, 93.

⁶⁵ DE SANCTIS 1992 noted the discovery at Roncosambaccio of architectural fragments including doric capitols and columns, along with basalt paving stones similar to those used at Fanum Fortunae. The case for Roncosambaccio being the site of the pre-Roman sanctuary of Fortuna is argued in PINDER 2015: 243-245.

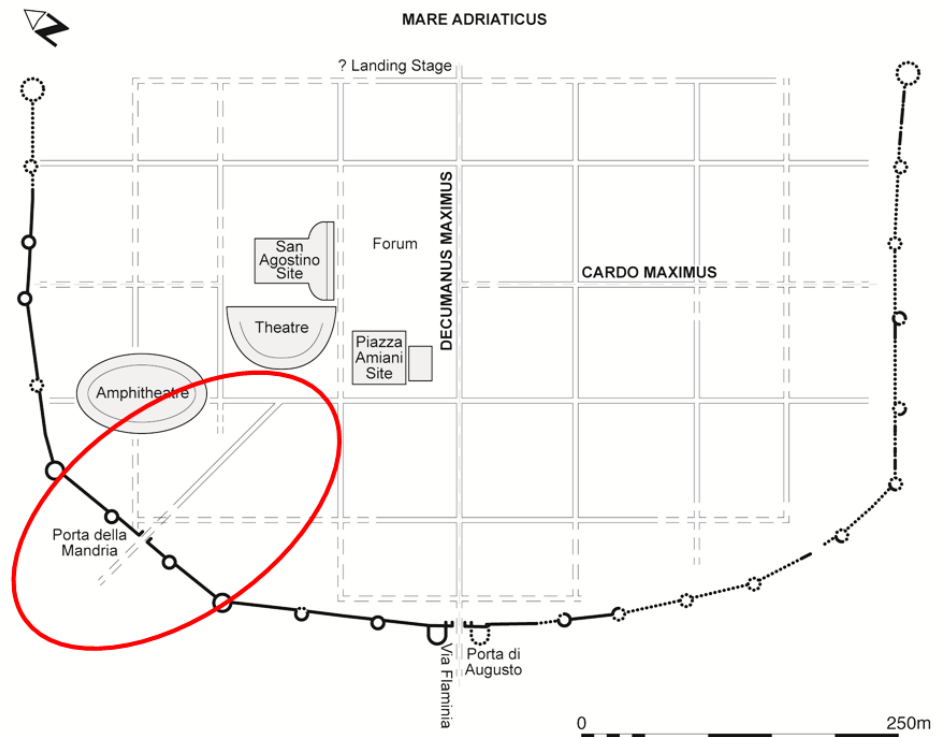


Fig. 7: the anomalous road and its relationship to the city walls at Fanum Fortunae. © author

designed to facilitate the passage of this road as a sacred way maintaining the memory of an earlier route to a pre-Roman sanctuary outside the city, even after the sanctuary had been appropriated or eclipsed by the Roman colony and relocated within the city.

At Hispellum, it appears that the Augustan walled circuit and in particular Porta Venere were deliberately positioned to dominate an important Umbrian cult centre, with a processional way linking the colony and sanctuary. As has already been noted, Porta Venere was built on an exceptionally difficult but precisely chosen and prominent site. Its practical uses as a gateway were limited, as it was not on a through route – the roads to neighbouring towns left from different gateways in the walled circuit. Rather, it should be interpreted as part of an integrated scheme with the Augustan appropriation and monumentalisation of the Italic sanctuary below.⁶⁶ The road which leads through Porta Venere from the centre of the colony is carefully aligned with the sanctuary and would have formed a sacred way for processions from the centre of the city (Fig. 8).⁶⁷ By linking the Roman colony to the existing pre-Roman sanctuary site with a new processional route through the city walls and its gateway, an unambiguous statement was being made about the role of the sanctuary, bringing it clearly within the orbit of the Roman colony.

A more even-handed relationship between Roman settlement and pre-Roman sanctuary, and the role of

⁶⁶ Archaeological evidence shows that the sanctuary had been in use since at least the fifth century BC, while architectural and votive finds indicate that initial monumentalisation of the site took place in the second or first centuries BC (SISANI 2006: 112-113).

⁶⁷ The existence of a processional way is supported by excavation notes from 1915, which recorded a street paved in "magnificent slabs" of white limestone on the slope which led up to Porta Venere (MARRONI 2005: 42).

Augustan city walls in connecting them, can be observed at Saepinum. About 6km distant from Saepinum, the Samnite sanctuary of San Pietro di Cantoni dominated the wide valley in which the Roman town lay and an important pre-Roman track connected the two. The Augustan redevelopment of urban Saepinum incorporated this track into the Roman town: it entered Saepinum through one of the monumental gateways and then formed the *cardo maximus*, but retained its original undulating course. The sanctuary site remained in use into the early and mid empire with some continuing form of cult life, although activity there was reduced.⁶⁸ Evidence has been found of processional routes and multiple entrances along the curtain wall which enclosed the sacred area of the sanctuary;⁶⁹ further work will reveal what, if any, relationship these routes had with Augustan Saepinum.

Imperial involvement and patronage relating to Augustan city walls

During the republic, the construction of city walls had been a local initiative, driven by civic magistrates;⁷⁰ under Augustus, the emperor took a personal interest, using city walls to push his new agenda and investing the material existence of city walls with ideological meaning. This is apparent not only through the physical city walls which he endowed but also through the symbolic representation of city walls in contemporary literature, art and coinage which he sponsored. City walls and their gateways thus formed an important part of Augustus' ideologically driven narrative of urbanism, underpinning a shared new culture.

Of the 18 city walls, towers and gateways constructed during the period 35 BC to 20 AD, six, possibly seven are known from epigraphic evidence to have been the benefaction of the imperial family. These are the colonies of Emona, Fanum Fortunae and Tergeste and the *municipia* of Saepinum, Laus Pompeia and Tridentum;⁷¹ at Hispellum, a fragmentary inscription currently located above one of Hispellum's secondary gates, the Arco di Augusto, refers to Augustus and is likely to relate to an act of imperial benefaction, but whether or not it can be associated with the gateway is disputed.⁷² There may have been more instances of imperial benefactions: the Augustan walls of

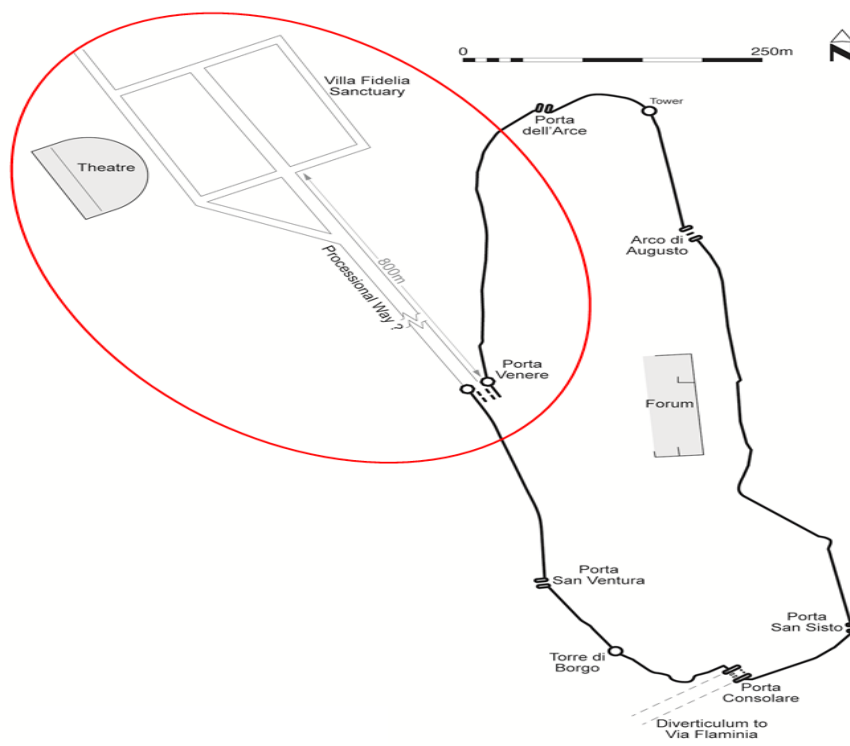


Fig. 8: the relationship between Porta Venere, city walls and Italic sanctuary at Hispellum. © author

Alba Pompeia, for example, followed an unusual octagonal footprint and it is hard not to see something special in such a self-consciously distinctive design. At Urbs Salvia, drawings from the nineteenth century of one of the Augustan gateways records an inscription placed between the arches, of which only the final "S" was then extant and is now lost;⁷³ if recorded accurately, this is likely to have been a building inscription.

Augustus' interest in colonies is readily understandable, and he was proud of his record in founding them.⁷⁴ In practical terms, the provision of land and civic amenities was a key means of rewarding his veterans, but more importantly, colonies were a showcase for imperial values in Italy and beyond – *effigies parvae simulacraque [Romae]* in Aulus Gellius' expression.⁷⁵ But the imperial family was also generous in endowing *municipia* with city walls and/or gates; this is interesting given that, overall, the surviving epigraphic evidence for Augustan benefactions favours colonies.⁷⁶ Notably, the language used in the inscriptions recording imperial donations of city walls differs between colonies and *municipia*. For *municipia*, the formula *faciundum curavit/curaverunt* ([the emperor/the imperial family] saw to it being built) is used, perhaps stressing the maintenance of tradition and imperial *cura* as this was the formula used by civic magistrates in building inscriptions of the republican era, while at colonies the verb *dare* (he/they donated) is used, perhaps stressing imperial generosity.⁷⁷ At colonies, the impetus for imperial generosity is often

⁶⁸ MATTEINI CHIARI 2015. The site is currently being excavated by a team from the University of Perugia.

⁶⁹ MATTEINI CHIARI 2013.

⁷⁰ PINDER 2015.

⁷¹ Emona (CIL 03, 10768), Fanum Fortunae (CIL 11, 06218), Laus Pompeia (CIL 05, 06358), Saepinum (CIL 09, 02443), Tergeste (CIL 05, 00525), Tridentum (CIL 05, 05027).

⁷² CIL 11, 05266. See PINDER 2015: 44.

⁷³ PERNA 2006: 33.

⁷⁴ *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, 28.

⁷⁵ Aulus Gellius *Noctes Atticae* 16,13,9.

⁷⁶ KEPPIE 1983: 117.

⁷⁷ HORSTER 2001: 49-56.

evident: for example, at Fanum Fortunae, situated at an important point of the Via Flaminia which Augustus has recently restored, Augustus' patronage of the city walls came following his foundation of the colony when significant development and monumentalisation of the urban area was also under way. At *municipia*, it is less obvious. The town of Tridentum, for example, established in the mid-first century BC, was strategically sited in the valley of the River Adige in north Italy, but there is nothing unusual about its circumstances which would seem to warrant this scale of imperial munificence.

It is only at *municipia* in the Augustan period that we see the phenomenon of towns constructing monumental gateways at their entrances without building a connecting walled circuit.⁷⁸ These free-standing gateways were generally placed on major through routes – Libarna on the Via Postumia, for example, and Carsulae and possibly Ocriculum on the Via Flaminia. Their function appears to be to announce the town's presence and to advertise to travellers the town's civic pride and sense of importance, displaying the symbolism of membership and the politics of emulation. It is thought that the free-standing double-arched gateways of Augusta Bagiennorum and Libarna, for example, were similar not only to each other but also to double-arched gateways within the walled circuits of cities such as Ariminum, Asculum and Tridentum.⁷⁹ The reason for the lack of continuous walls may be as mundane as insufficient resources to undertake the work, which would be very costly and time-consuming especially if external support was not forthcoming (and given that complete fortification was not necessary at a time of relative peace). Alternatively, it may be that *municipia* did not have the similar expectations or freedoms of colonies at local level so far as wall construction was concerned; this would be supported by the preponderance of inscriptions referencing the imperial family on the new-build walls of *municipia*.

The symbolic importance of Augustan city walls is mirrored in an ideology of walls widespread in Augustan culture. In literature, coinage, and representational and figurative art,⁸⁰ city walls were used as a synecdoche for the city itself, in keeping with Augustus' desire to encourage a model of city life and urban values and his use of cities as an effective means of spreading Roman cultural constructs.⁸¹ For example, Virgil used the Latin word *moenia* (city walls) as a synonym not only for the city but also for the urban moral values which a city represented. He made an explicit link

⁷⁸ Carsulae, Augusta Bagiennorum, Libarna and Pollentia (see map at Fig. 1). Ocriculum may be a further example, although the published evidence on the date of Ocriculum's free-standing monumental gateway is inconclusive (CENCIAIOLI 2000: 25-27).

⁷⁹ For Augusta Bagiennorum, ASSANDRIA/VACCHETTA 1925; for Libarna, GAMBARI 2014.

⁸⁰ For example, city walls are featured on mosaics at Ostia, Pompeii and elsewhere: for LAVAGNE 1988, such mosaics were explicit emblems of "Romanitas", indicating the importance of city walls in spreading the ideological message of the Roman empire. Bronze and silver coins of early imperial date from Emerita in Hispania Lusitania portray a city gate with two archways, flanked by tall towers (BURNETT/AMANDRY/RIPOLLÈS 1992, catalogue numbers 10, 12). In sculpture, the mural crown uses city walls as a metonym for the city and combines with it a representation of symbolic protection offered by the gods; there are examples from Fanum Fortunae (SENSI 2002) and Urbs Salvia (FABRINI/PERNA 2011).

⁸¹ ZANKER 1988: 328-329, ZANKER 2000.

in the ideology of a city between the Augustan vision of a new moral order of society and the security of the empire as symbolised by walls.⁸² This found physical expression in Augustus' patronage of city walls not just in Roman Italy but elsewhere in the empire. City walls were used to promote specific values and messages, stressing the importance of power, security and order within the moral framework in which Augustus positioned himself.

CONCLUSION

The Augustan period saw significant investment in the material reality and symbolic meaning of city walls. The city walls, towers and gateways constructed at this time show a surprising degree of difference in terms of their dimensions, design, form and construction technique, especially given the relatively narrow chronological window in which they were built and the relatively close geographic proximity of at least some of the cities. But some significant common themes emerge in how Augustan walled circuits engage with their physical and political environment. This was not the only period during which the appearance, location and associations of city walls were deliberately engineered for other than purely functional purposes, but it did find its culmination under Augustus. Urban communities wanted to be seen to subscribe to Augustus' programme of renewal, and one way of doing this was through public architecture such as city walls, which could be deliberately used to display power relations and to promote imperial ideology.

Whether for a colony or a *municipium*, the impulse to define the urban boundary in some way was important in the Augustan period. At first sight, this surge in wall construction might seem surprising given that Roman Italy was experiencing a time of relative peace and that defensive needs were not a priority. It is more readily explained in terms of relevance to the political agenda of the period and the association of city walls with a community's physical enactment of notions of urbanism and identity, for example through visual prominence, religious associations or imperial patronage. City walls were a clear sign of status and prestige, and a highly visible sign that an urban community subscribed to Augustus' new ideology.

City walls of this period should be read as a physical manifestation of imperial values, designed to impress and intimidate and to give visual reinforcement to the Augustan order. The importance of city walls in the Augustan period is entirely in keeping with Augustus' strategy to project a vision of peace rather than war but to underpin this message with an emphasis on power and authority. They were highly visible statements of the political strength, status and power of cities and through them of the Roman state. In an environment where public building was used to express social relations and cultural identity, the symbolism of protection projected by Augustan city walls was more important than the reality.

⁸² Virgil *Aeneid* I 263-4. Other examples may be found at *Aeneid* I 3-7; VII 157-9, VIII 714-6.

APPENDIX: KEY INFORMATION ON AUGUSTAN CITY WALLS IN ROMAN ITALY, 35 BC – AD 20

City	Status	Area	Perimeter	Plan	Technique (outer face)	Height/width	Inscription
Alba Pompeia	M	33ha	2.1km	octagonal	opus vittatum	8-9m/1.5m	no
Augusta Praetoria	C	42ha	2.5km	rectangular	opus quadratum	6.5m/1.5-1.9m	no
Augusta Taurinorum	C	48ha	3km	rectangular (chamfered)	opus vittatum	nk/1.8m	yes
Brixia	CC	50ha	3km	irregular	opus vittatum	nk/1.7m	yes
Concordia Iulia	C	40ha	2.1km	rectangular (chamfered)	opus testaceum	8m/2-2.6m	no
Emona	C	22ha	1.9km	rectangular	opus quadratum?	6-8m/2.5m	yes
Fanum Fortunae	C	21ha	1.8km (incl seafront)	irregular	opus vittatum	12m/1.8m	yes
Florentia	C	20ha	1.8km	3 regular, 1 irregular side	opus testaceum	nk/2m	no
Hispellum	C	15ha	1.8km	irregular	opus vittatum	13m/2.4m	possibly
Laus Pompeia	M	36ha?	nk	nk	opus testaceum	nk	yes
Mediolanum	M	72ha	3.5km	irregular	opus testaceum/ opus quadratum	7-9m/1.6m	no
Peltuinum	P	22ha	nk	irregular	opus quadratum (gates)	nk	no
Saepinum	M	12ha	1.3km	irregular	opus quasi-reticulatum	4.8m/1.75-1.9m	yes
Tergeste	C	nk	3km	irregular	opus quadratum	5.5m/2-3m	yes
Ticinum	M	38ha	2.8km	regular?	nk	nk	yes
Tridentum	M	13ha	1.2km	rectangular	opus mixtum	4-5m/1.2-1.3m	yes
Urbs Salvia	C	45ha	2.7km	irregular	opus testaceum	nk/1.5-1.6m	no
Venafrum	C	27ha	2.1km	rectangular	nk	nk/1.3m	no

C=colony; CC=colonia civica; M=municipium; P=praefectura; nk=not known

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