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The Chiasmus of the *Augustus of Prima Porta* and its Propagandistic Utility

Ignoring the frequently sidelined chiasmus of the *Augustus of Prima Porta* risks overlooking the propagandistic utility of the statue that directs thought and discourse by conveying Rome's progressively expanding military and political power and preservation of past administrative and civil systems. Most importantly, however, the statue accomplishes this with ambiguous connotations so as to understate the impact of the transformation of Roman government into an autocratic and centralized imperial entity. Scholars such as Arias give passing credence to the chiastic shape of the statue (Arias 277) without noticing how it directs the attention of the audience to progressive and conservative themes. Others, such as Pollini, manage to recognize the chiastic form, also referred to as *contrapposto*, and the manner in which it creates an aesthetic sense of authority and majesty while comparing the statue to the Greek *Doryphoros* (Pollini 270). Nonetheless, they fail to recognize the chiastic structure of the statue that moves beyond the expression of individualistic emotions and traits to consist of national narratives that critique and glorify the restructuring of Roman civilization's allocation of martial and bureaucratic power. Moreover, this previously ignored chiasmus goes further by providing the statue's audience the ability to understand the progressive and conservative themes from a variety of different angles, settings, and directions of viewing the chiasmus. Going even further, the chiasmus also draws attention in towards a metaphor for Rome's geopolitical empire: the

statue's cuirass, rich in symbolism and icons recounting the recovery of Rome's sacred standards from Parthia.

Figure 1:

Cuirass of the Augustus of Prima Porta



Source: Coral, Guilherme. Cuirass of the Augustus of Prima Porta. Digital image.

*Antiguidade Clássica - UNIRIO - 2013.1*. N.p., 14 Aug. 2013. Web. 16 June 2017.

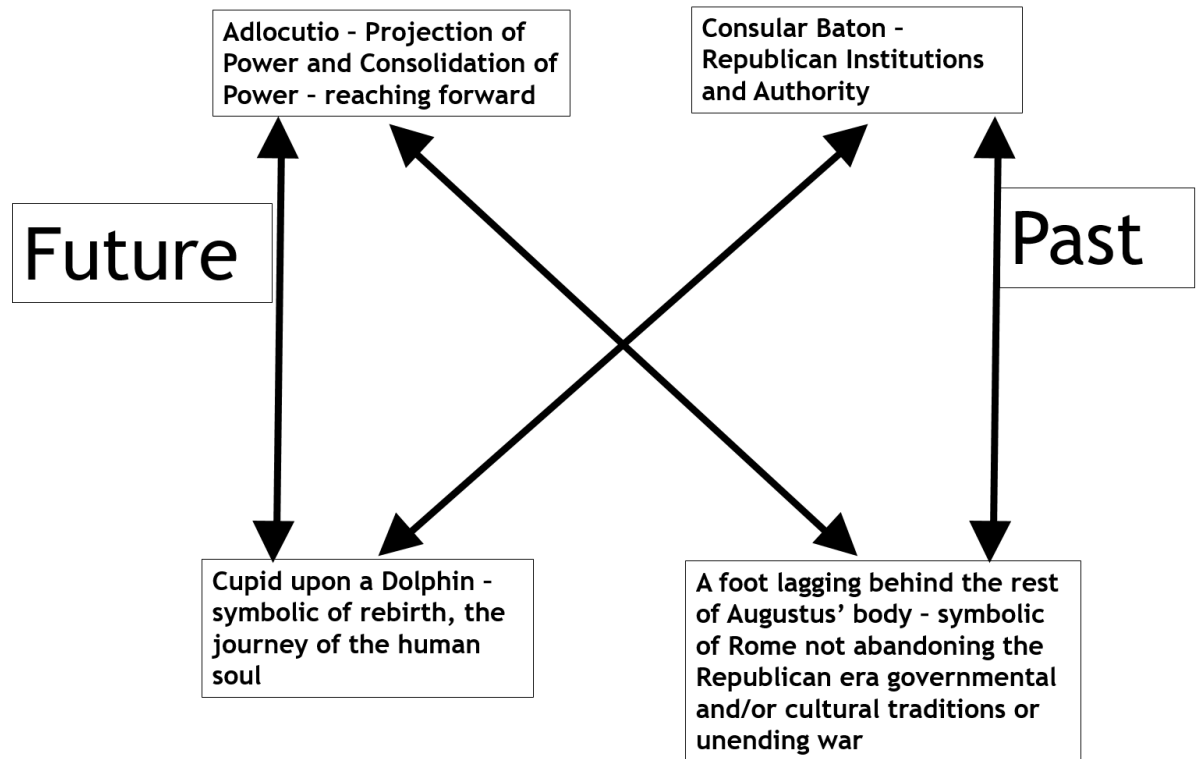
<<http://classicaunirio.blogspot.com/>>.

The aforementioned chiasmic form of the Augustus of Prima Porta, by drawing attention to the statue's cuirass and its *aquila*, the sacred standard of the Roman legions, which lies atop Augustus' heart, establishes the strengthening of Roman martial and abstract power over its domains and neighbors as an unchallengeable foundation from which discourse regarding the conservative and progressive directions Roman civilization may develop. Four points of focus: Augustus' right hand, baton, left foot, and right leg accompanied by Cupid, capture a viewer's gaze and drive it in towards the central cuirass of the statue. As the statue's right hand stretches forward and outward, the baton sits upon Augustus' shoulder, and as the left leg extends back and at an angle further to the left, the right leg stands straight with Cupid riding upon a dolphin to its side, thus forming the shape of an X with each of the letter's limbs flowing toward the center that is Augustus' decorated torso. There, all figures face towards the aquila, with the majority of them gazing directly at the Roman standard. The figures are gods and personifications of conquered provinces (Ingholt, "The Prima Porta Statue of Augustus" 178). Additionally, the Roman reaching out for the aquila and the Parthian holding out that standard might represent Romulus, founder of Rome, and Mithridates, the deified, late ruler of the Parthian Empire (185). On the other hand, the two figures can be approached differently, as they could represent a mortal Roman officer and Parthian (Arias 277). Nonetheless, the ambiguity regarding the divinity of the two figures permits the audience to choose between glorifying the importance of Roman civilization and control of political power to levels of the divine or recognizing a real event that in this portrayal still elevates Roman power and supremacy. As gods and the peoples subjugated by Rome orbit the Parthian submitting to the Roman by returning the aquila, the details of the cuirass infer that Rome consolidates control over its provinces by retaking ownership of the sacred symbol of Roman imperial power. That the aquila

sits upon Augustus' heart expresses that the pursuit of sanctified, metaphorical representations of imperial power lie at the core of his vision for Rome and its territories. Furthermore, the aquila functions as a synecdoche for the Roman Empire itself as it unifies the attention of all the personifications and gods depicted on the cuirass. With the aquila representing Roman imperialism and the gaze of all figures along with the focus points of the statue leading a viewer's attention towards it, the cuirass conveys the consolidation and centralization of military and bureaucratic forces into the hands of Rome with points of ambiguity where viewers may argue and disagree trailing away from this assertion of the statue. Consequently, the cuirass of the *Augustus of Prima Porta* sets the stage for the fundamental ideology from which discourse between those engaging with the statue depends on, rather than challenges. Thus, the statue does not merely serve to impart one obvious glorification of direct imperialism as perhaps the most quintessential propaganda piece might endeavor, but rather it seeks to define an aspect of Roman imperialism – its consolidation and strengthening – and allow individuals to form their own glorifications and critiques of Roman imperialism based upon that one assertion.

Figure 2

Diagram of the *Augustus of Prima Porta's* Chiasmus



Source: Wilkinson, Philip. Diagram of the *Augustus of Prima Porta's Chiasmus*. 2017.

PNG file.

Figure 3

*Augustus of Prima Porta*



Source: Niermann, Till. *Augustus of Prima Porta*. Digital image. *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Commons, 20 Oct. 2007. Web. 10 Apr. 2017. <<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Statue-Augustus.jpg>>.

Figure 4

Artist's conception of the Prima Porta statue in its original position on the base of the Round Monument at Pergamum



Source: Ingholt, Harald. "The Prima Porta Statue of Augustus: Part II: THE LOCATION OF THE ORIGINAL." *Archaeology*, vol. 22, no. 4, 1969, pp. 304–318. Digital Image.

While the chiasm works to highlight its point of intersection, the cuirass, and form the foundation for discourse regarding the impacts of strengthened Roman imperialism, the chiasmic structure's symbolism further controls the basis from which arguments regarding the statue's themes diverge and take shape. An interpretation of the statue through basic awareness of the chiasmus and the iconography of each focal point follows this framework: the strengthening of the Roman Empire enabled by the projection of power and the control of consular authority leads to a rebirth of Rome that does not fail, or succeed, to leave behind the traditional or violent past. Augustus' right hand, extended in *adlocutio*, an address given to an army by a general, represents a projection of Roman imperial influence and bears associations with the future, as Augustus'

adlocutio connotes the action of projecting and consolidating power at the same time by gathering attention to one place and projecting authority. While the forward position and the index finger's gesture in the adlocutio clearly conveys the projection of authority, the communication of power consolidation is far less obvious without awareness of the chiasmic structure and the inward movement created by three fingers pointing towards the cuirass. Without noticing the adlocutio's associations with the consolidation of authority and attention, the framework through which the statue may control and direct discourse remains relatively hidden. In contrast to the right hand's symbolism, the other hand, holding the consular baton, represents Republican institutions and authority and harkens back to the past with its Republican associations and its angle that leans back. Following the cross shape that travels from the statue's right hand to its left leg and its left hand with a baton to its right leg with Cupid upon a dolphin, the lines created by the adlocutio and consular baton converge at the cuirass, a representation of Rome's consolidation of imperial authority to highlight how the symbols of the two ends lead to this strengthening of Rome. As the line associated with Augustus' adlocutio continues, it switches to association with the past, for the line ends with his left foot trailing back behind him, thus symbolizing Rome and Augustus still have a foot in the previous era, perhaps in respect to either promoting perpetual war or conserving traditions of culture and government.. In contrast, the chiasmic movement connected with the consular baton finishes at the statue's right leg accompanied by Cupid upon a dolphin. While many interpretations of Cupid upon a dolphin engage in biographical analysis and identify Cupid as an allusion to Augustus' de facto heir (Holland 282), ignorance of the icon's role in the chiasmic structure and narrative framework passes by the significance of the allusion and the symbolism of the Cupid riding a dolphin in terms of rhetorical significance. While it is important to recognize that the Cupid alludes to



Augustus' designated heir, Gaius Caesar, it is also essential to recognize the general symbolism of Cupid riding a dolphin, which is an "allegorical reference to the ascent of the human soul," (Perring 108). By alluding Augustus' heir and symbolizing a desirable journey of the human soul, the Cupid upon a dolphin in the *Augustus of Prima Porta* represents a rebirth of Rome, therefore shifting the line connected with the baton to associations with the future and completing the chiasmic structure. Additionally, the depiction of Cupid as a baby that represents Rome's future creates pathos that reminds viewers that Rome's future lies with their own children and cements the notion that a stronger Rome will allow the upcoming generation to inherit the empire. Therefore, the chiasmic structure, with symbols of the past on the left and symbols of the future on the right, expresses Rome's rejuvenation that connects with the consolidation of imperial power and moves towards a stronger future that retains Rome's past heritage and Republican systems. However, one may also take a less optimistic interpretation while working off the framework created by the chiasmus by understanding the past as representative of the frequent wars and civil turmoil experienced just prior to Augustus' rise to conclude that while Rome holds a stronger geopolitical position in the world, a rebirth of Rome represents a change in governance rather than a rejuvenation of Rome. With these two possible interpretations in mind, the allegorical framework of the chiasmus directs discussion to accept the consolidation of Roman power and a resulting transformation by driving critique towards Rome's movement into the future and retention of the past.

The chiasmus of the *Augustus of Prima Porta*, though building upon the widespread contrapposto pose in sculpture, as seen in the *Doryphoros*, devises a method of rhetorically propagating the might of Roman imperialism while generating discussion regarding Rome's future and relationship with its history, as echoed in statues created after it. Unlike the

*Doryphoros*, which possesses an ambiguous and unclear chiastic form that conveys the state of the youth it portrays, the *Augustus of Prima Porta* forms a chiasm consisting of abstract, imperial symbolism. Richard Tobin proposes three possible chiastic forms in the *Doryphoros*, one consisting of each hip and shoulder that switch in terms of their relative height, the second consisting of the elbows and knees that alternate between “bent” and “straight” positions, and the third consisting of the limbs that move to being “taut” and “relaxed” (Tobin 54). He concludes that these chiastic forms work together in order to depict a man “whose slow gait is represented at the moment at which the right leg assumes a fully supportive role while the left leg, stepping off, begins to move forward”, as if the youth begins walk forward, perhaps in pursuit of something or someone (58). Thus, following his interpretation, the overall chiastic shape of the *Doryphoros* works to elaborate upon a story regarding the individual portrayed. On the other hand, the *Augustus of Prima Porta* employs its detailed chiasm to form a narrative regarding Rome itself. Furthermore, the *Augustus of Prima Porta* diverges from the *Doryphoros* in its unambiguous chiasmus, as its four ends extend further beyond its central point at the torso and possess iconographic value integral to the composition. This exaggerated chiasmus appears in sculptures depicting the emperor after the creation of the *Augustus of Prima Porta*, as seen in a statue of Emperor Domitian (see figure 6), for he leans back holding up a scroll to form a line connecting with his foot stabilized against a tree trunk, and his hand thrust forward holding an orb runs down to his foot lagging behind to complete the chiasm. As shown by the statue of Diocletian and many other sculptures depicting emperors, the chiasmus initiated by the *Augustus of Prima Porta* became a staple in Imperial artwork and propaganda.

Figure 4

*Doryphoros*



Source: Frantz, Ricardo André. *Doryphoros from Pompeii*. Digital image. *Wikimedia*.

Wikimedia Commons, 13 Feb. 2012. Web. 27 May 2017.

<[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Doryphoros\\_MAN\\_Napoli\\_Inv6011-2.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Doryphoros_MAN_Napoli_Inv6011-2.jpg)>.

Figure 5

*Diadumenos*



Source: Frantz, Ricardo André. *Diadumenos*. Digital image. *Wikimedia*. Wikimedia Commons, 10 Oct. 2007. Web. 7 June 2017.

Figure 6

*Statue of Emperor Domitian*



Source: Steerpike. *Statue of Emperor Domitian*. Digital image. *Wikimedia*. Wikimedia Commons. 11 August 2008. Web. 7 June 2017.

Figure 7

*Octavian Augustus at Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum*



Source: Haklai, Yair. *Octavian Augustus at Thessaloniki Archaeological Museum*. Digital image. *Wikimedia*. Wikimedia Commons. 18 October 2008. Web. 7 June 2017.

Figure 8

*Statue of young Marcus Aurelius from a private collection housed in the San Antonio Museum of Art*



Source: Jamesgottfredson. *Statue of young Marcus Aurelius from a private collection housed in the San Antonio Museum of Art*. Digital image. *Wikimedia*. Wikimedia Commons. 13 July 2013. Web. 7 June 2017

While setting a standard for imperial sculpture, the *Augustus of Prima Porta*'s technique of solidifying Rome's physical imperial power while diverting arguments towards Rome's fate also occurs in Augustan literature, further asserting that imperial Roman artists engaged with a common paradigm for propaganda. Specifically, *The Aeneid*, which was composed in the same years in which the *Augustus of Prima Porta* was created follows this propagandistic model to convey to the public Rome's unassailable, perhaps even divine military and political force. Aeneas, traveling through the underworld, looks upon Augustus Caesar himself and listens to a

prophecy predicting the rise of Augustus' empire that brings back the prosperous "Age of Gold", expands Rome's borders to cosmic proportions, and inspires fear amongst rival empires (Virgil, 6. 911-923). Yet, later on, when the Trojans are triumphing over the Latins, Jupiter declares that, after conquering the Latins, "the Trojans will subside./ And I will add the rites and the forms of worship,/ and make them Latins all," (Virgil, 12. 969-971). The expression of Rome's metaphorical and physical imperial power through *The Aeneid's* prophecy of Augustus and plot in which the Trojans conquer the Latins mirror the essential message of Roman consolidation of power communicated by the *Augustus of Prima Porta's* cuirass. In addition, the ambiguity pertaining to Rome's future, created by the statue's chiasmic framework, reappears in *The Aeneid*, for the epic also brings forward discourse about the past and present through themes concerning leaving behind Rome's past, progressing into prosperity, and perpetuating imperialistic war. That the *Augustus of Prima Porta's* paradigm for imperial propaganda, which later statues employ, occurs in *The Aeneid* suggests that Roman imperial administrators and artists sought to render Rome's physical power and abstract dominance over subjugated peoples as undeniable to the Roman Empire's collective while directing its debate.

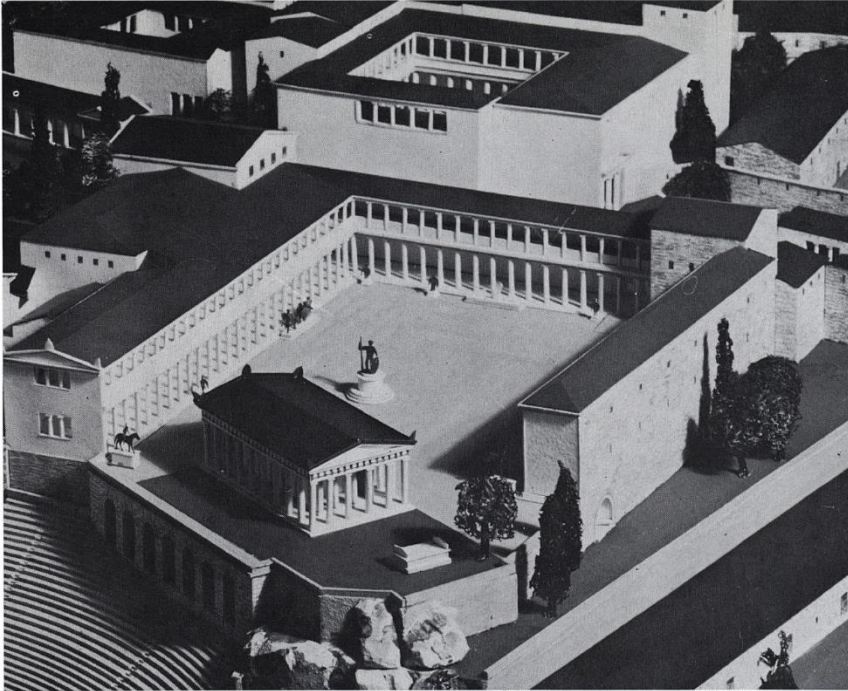
Much like the model for propaganda set by the statue could be transferred to other mediums, *The Augustus of Prima Porta* maintains its narratives and themes from multiple angles to enable it to function in both the private Villa of Livia and the public Sanctuary of Athena and thus enhance the statue's utility as propaganda that establishes the consolidation of Roman martial and administrative power. From many positions of viewing the statue, including looking at its profile and its back, the piece maintains its chiasmic form. Furthermore, the back of the statue, though largely undetailed on the contemporary artifact, possesses unfinished details on the cuirass that suggest the statue surviving today is a copy of an original with a fully detailed



back. As a result, the statue functions to convey the consolidation of imperial Roman power coupled with a rebirth of Rome with extensive flexibility in terms of how one physically views the statue. Indeed, not only did the surviving artifact likely “stand in a shallow niche” of the Villa of Livia where it was found, but also another copy may have stood in the courtyard of the Sanctuary of Athena at Pergamon, as evidenced by meticulous analysis of the area and a surviving pedestal. (Ingholt, “The Prima Porta Statue of Augustus: Part II: THE LOCATION OF THE ORIGINAL.” 304, 309). Therefore, the statue maximizes its potential audience by effectively displaying its chiasmus both against a wall and out in the open as well as in both the private setting of a Villa, where friends and influential guests might be invited, and the public setting of a religious area, where individuals of faith went to their duties. Moreover, that the statue is in both private and public religious settings attests to matters of the empire pervading throughout the Roman Empire’s collective consciousness as well as an effort to shape and control this consciousness through the framework of the chiasmus that glorifies metaphorical and martial Roman might.

Figure 9

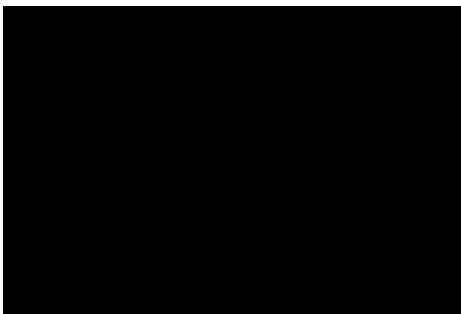
Reconstruction of the Sanctuary of Athena of Pergamon



Source: Ingholt, Harald. "The Prima Porta Statue of Augustus: Part II: THE LOCATION OF THE ORIGINAL." *Archaeology*, vol. 22, no. 4, 1969, pp. 304–318. Digital Image.

Figure 10

*Livia's Villa Reloaded*



Source: *Livia's Villa Reloaded*. Dir. Claudio Rufa, Eva Pietroni, and Massimiliano Forlani. *Livia's Villa Reloaded*. CNR ITABC, 23 Nov. 2013. Web. 23 May 2017. <<https://vimeo.com/80151975>>.

An analysis employing formalist methodology in the field of art history reveals that, unlike statues prior to its time, the *Augustus of Prima Porta* employs chiasmus to form a

propagandistic narrative regarding Rome's rejuvenation that retains aspects of the past, all made possible by strengthening Roman might in the face of her enemies. To the contrary, viewers of the statue could associate the past with fairly recent memories of destructive civil war, thereby inhibiting the statue's value as overt propaganda advocating for Roman imperialism. However, this contradiction reveals that the statue functioned to direct thought and discourse towards acceptance that the Roman Empire became stronger under the leadership of Augustus rather than to simply form an allegory glorifying or criticizing his principate.

Although missing how the chiasmic structure amplifies the importance of the two figures on the cuirass exchanging the aquila and sidelining how ambiguity of whom the figures represent may be purposeful, both Ingholt and Arias draw valid claims regarding the mortality and immortality of these two figures. Arias asserts: "Two figures standing in the centre represent, on the right, a barbarian...and on the left, a Roman officer...indeed, in 20 B.C. Augustus did secure the return of standards lost to the barbarians when Crassus was defeated in 53 B.C. and Mark Antony in 40 and 35 B.C.," (277). While this argument relies on an appeal to probability to assume that because the figures likely allude to an event that took place between men, the figures themselves must simply be mortal, the conclusion that the men on the cuirass are mortal is not entirely implausible. Indeed, Ingholt states that the two figures are Mithridates and Romulus, two once mortal men who were deified. Indeed, he brings to attention that no cuirass out of over 400 examples from Cornelius Vermeule's corpus of cuirassed statues depict mortal figures, that the figure depicting Mithridates bears resemblance to his image on reliefs and coins, and that Romulus, as he is on the statue, is "generally portrayed as bareheaded" as seen in a painting from Pompeii (Ingholt, "The Prima Porta Statue of Augustus" 179,181,185). Ingholt's conclusion, being backed by more substantial evidence, provides a more plausible alternative to the

assumption that the figures are simply mortals. Even so, the notion that the figures may depict mortals cannot be entirely discarded even with the conclusion that they represent Romulus and Mithridates, as the two were once mortals themselves. Thus, as mortality and immortality are ambiguous, the allusions to Romulus or the Roman emissary retaking the aquila from Mithridates or a Parthian warrior blend to elevate service to the empire to a divine mission or trial and suggest that individuals can strengthen Rome and restore its dignity to attain immortality through the recording of significant deeds. With this in mind, not recognizing the central position of these figures in the chiasmic structure amounts to sidelining that these figures form the core of the statue's propagandistic message about the supremacy of Roman imperialism which the chiasmus directs criticism and dissent away from.

Similarly, without recognizing the chiasmic structure of the statue, the Cupid upon a dolphin at the side of Augustus is disconnected from the rest of the statue, resulting in ignorance of the icon's pathos and role within a propagandistic framework. While scholars such as Holland aptly identify that the Cupid alludes to Gaius Caesar by using the historical context in which the statue was created, they minimize the role of the two figures in the statues' overall composition. Although Holland declares that Cupid upon a Dolphin was a common and "accepted artistic convention" (281), she also misses the general connotations expressed by the icon of Cupid and the dolphin. Perring, on the other hand, references Bacchic iconography, Christian iconography, and Romano-British mosaics to contend that the "swimming dolphin symbolized the journey of the human soul", alluding to imagery of a dolphin swimming from the mouth of Neptune towards Cupid, in order to determine that as a Dolphin is depicted swimming towards Cupid, it represents the journey of the human soul headed towards ascension (108). Thus, Perring's interpretation of the symbolism of Cupid and Dolphins in antiquity adds another layer to the

symbolism of those figures in the *Augustus of Prima Porta* missed by biographical analyses. It is there that interpretations of Cupid and the Dolphin without knowledge of the chiasmus in the *Augustus of Prima Porta* end to treat the figures as mere accessories of the statue, rather than elements essential to the allegorical framework in which Rome experiences a rebirth, for better or worse. Moreover, ignorance of the chiasmus poses the risk of overlooking how the Cupid manipulates the emotions of viewers by connecting it with the upcoming generation of Roman civilization destined to inherit the Roman Empire, thus also posing the gravity of strengthening Rome's bureaucracy and military, as depicted by the cuirass.

In determining where the *Augustus of Prima Porta* functioned as a statue, archaeological approaches that take into account the details and current state of the artifact provide the most convincing conclusions that ultimately assert the statue's function as propaganda communicating the strength of Rome throughout public and private spheres of Roman territories and Rome itself. Indeed, Klynne and Liljenstolpe combat assertions in Reeder's article which conclude that the *Prima Porta* stood in a garden because Augustus' hand may have held a laurel while potted plants and laurels would have existed in the garden (Reeder 90-91). While this conclusion by Reeder not only relies upon a post-hoc fallacy, it also ignores evidence posed by the statue itself, as the well-preserved state and incomplete back of the statue infer that the statue was placed indoors, untouched by the elements, and against a wall, where the backside would not have been seen and its hole would have held the statue to the wall with an iron rod (Klynne and Liljenstolpe 122-127). Furthermore, an exceptionally well-preserved mosaic at one spot shows that the base of a statue likely stood where this mosaic was, which was clearly not in the gardens and indoors. Similarly, Ingholt analyzes the specific details of the statue, pointing to the allusion to the Anatolian goddess Cybele as well as the position of the feet which match depressions of a statue

base at Pergamon with inscriptions that read “The people of Pergamon and the Romans residing there have consecrated this statue of the son of a god, Augustus Caesar, overseer of land and sea,” as well as “Imperator Caesar, the son of a god, emperor, dedicates the [spoils and standards] to Athena,” (“The Prima Porta Statue of Augustus: Part II: THE LOCATION OF THE ORIGINAL.” 306-307). As Ingholt employs physical evidence, he also employs epigraphical evidence directly tying to the subject of the statue, therefore making a strong case that the statue not only functioned in the private, enclosed setting of the Villa of Livia, but also the open, public setting at the Sanctuary of Athena at Pergamum. This shows that the statue’s discourse, based on the framework of the chiasmus that glorifies Roman might, permeated throughout multiple spheres of Roman Imperial societies. Yet, it also stresses the importance of the three-dimensional chiasmus which functions from multiple angles to create a design able to serve in a wide range of spaces for the sake of impacting and shaping the Roman Empire’s collective consciousness to a higher degree.

Without realizing the *Augustus of Prima Porta*’s chiasmus, the statue’s strategy in conveying the consolidation of Roman power is overlooked, as are the imperializing and Romanizing effects of the statue due to discounting the chiasmus which bestows great versatility in terms of being displayed in different ways while still expressing its message. As the statue employs an allegorical framework in which iconographic allusions to Rome’s past are ambiguous, the lens through which the audience views this past determines whether this past takes on connotations of stability or destruction, for through an idealist’s eyes the past could conjure imagery of a moral, just, and republican society, whereas a realist could imagine unending, costly expansionism and civil war. While initially this suggests the statue’s utility was likely limited at best, the statue’s flexible allegory can appeal to supporters and dissenters of the

Roman Empire, enhancing the work's resilience throughout Rome's domains, its ability to be tolerated by those dissatisfied with Roman rule, and most importantly its effectiveness in establishing that Roman imperial civilization became stronger militarily and administratively under the guidance of Augustus Caesar. These features would have been essential in placing the statue beyond the city of Rome, for one copy of the *Augustus of Prima Porta* likely was "erected on the Round Monument at Pergamon to replace the Attalid figures of the defeated Gauls," (Ingholt 308). Therefore, the mission of the statue extends beyond merely rallying support for the emperor and his nation by propagating the Romanization of subjugated provinces. The statue accomplishes this by establishing for non-Roman viewers the unchallengeable military power and government efficiency of Augustus' principate and steering their conversation towards progressive and conservative themes concerning the future of the Roman Empire, thereby incorporating them into a national, imperial discourse rather than one limited to local or regional matters. Within Rome itself, at the Villa of Livia, the statue asserts the imperialization of Rome's government by communicating the enhanced strength, and perhaps even stability of Roman dominance over its territories and neighbors, and directing arguments towards retention of Republican values and practices as well as the violent cost of pursuing empire. While the cuirass illustrates the consolidation of Roman power, the statue itself cements Roman influences and abstract notions regarding imperial power into the culture and aesthetics of a city. The statue accomplishes this through directing disagreement towards the Empire's fate away from what the statue seeks to establish: the strengthening of Roman military and abstract control over its provinces.

As the *Augustus of Prima Porta* employs chiasmus in a manner unprecedented by previous statues by forming an ambiguous narrative regarding Rome's progression into the

imperial future and retention of the Republican past, either violent or stable depending on the audience's interpretation, the statue functions to further the imperialization of Roman elite and the Romanization of subjugated peoples. Past statues, such as the *Doryphoros*, merely employ chiastic form to convey individualistic details and anecdotes, rather than using abstract chiasmus to communicate national narratives just as the *Augustus of Prima*. As a result, the statue of Augustus marks a significant shift in the function of statues depicting powerful men in antiquity and serves as a paradigm for analyzing the utility of such sculptures that later on employed chiasmus and the contrapposto pose. If the chiasmus and its functions are unheeded, scholars risk passing by the manner in which Roman imperial artwork controlled and shaped the thoughts of its viewers.

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