

## *Concordia* and the Early Visual Rhetoric of Augustan Peace

The famous terracotta plaques discovered by Gianfilippo Carettoni in the late 1960s on the SE brow of the Palatine Hill in Rome are often considered an early visual statement of Augustus' hope-filled rhetoric of peace for Rome (Strazzulla 1990, 11). With these plaques, it is thought, Augustus marked the beginning of a new era after the defeat of Antony at the Battle of Actium (31 BCE). Since Carettoni's publication of these tiles, they have been associated with the Temple of Apollo Palatinus, which Octavian had supposedly vowed to construct after his victory over Sextus Pompey. The disposition of these tiles, however, remains unclear—were they part of the temple, the nearby portico, or Augustus' house?

In reconciling this historical account with new evidence from archaeological sites throughout the city of Rome, including the work at the Palatine East Excavations to which I have contributed, my research into this class of Roman material culture has revealed an alternative historical context for these plaques. In this paper, I argue that the terracotta tiles found in the area of the Temple of Apollo should not be connected with post-Actium Augustan ideology, but rather belong to a visual language linked to events before Actium and just after the defeat of Sextus Pompey in 36 BCE. Octavian's place as top dog was yet to be clearly affirmed and still relied on an outwardly-harmonious relationship with Antony. Regardless of their personal animosity, Octavian needed to espouse a message of "mission accomplished" in order to move forward (cf. Levick 2010). By understanding these terracotta plaques, which integrate an iconography that features Hercules, Apollo, Perseus, and Athena, into this larger campaign of urban renovation performed by Octavian and his surrogates, especially Marcus Agrippa, this talk considers an early Augustan visual culture of *Concordia*, which practiced and preceded the

mature iconography that he would develop after his power was solidified following the battle of Actium.

#### Works Cited

Levick, Barbara. *Augustus: image and substance*. Harlowe, Eng.: Pearson education Limited, 2010.

Strazzulla, M. J. *Il principato di Apollo. Mito e propaganda nelle lastre "Campana" dal tempio di Apollo Palatino*. Studia archaeologica 57. Rome: "L'Erma" di Bretschneider, 1990