Beast in the epic machine: A study of animal imagery in Augustan art and literature

Thomas Wayne Feeley
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THE BEAST IN THE EPIC MACHINE:
A STUDY OF ANIMAL IMAGERY IN AUGUSTAN ART AND LITERATURE

By

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B.A., University of Montana, 1973
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The Beast in the Epic Machine: A Study of Animal Imagery in Augustan Art and Literature (77 pp.)

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This paper explores the rich legacy of animal imagery that Augustus Caesar drew upon to establish, reinforce, and embellish his image as a leader and cultural exemplar. Examined are the roots, the evolution, and the multiplicity of the Augustan image in the context of the animal imagery of ancient sculpture and epic poetry. It concentrates on Vergil's Aeneid and, to a lesser extent, Homer's Iliad. Also evaluated and compared are appropriate examples of Roman sculpture that complement the literature. The Ara Pacis (Altar of Peace), the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus, the Capitoline She-Wolf, and the Gemma Augustea (Augustan Gem) are primary examples of the various sculptures used for reference.

There is a studio art component to this program. Some of the thematic concerns of the thesis research have directed the oil painting throughout the year. Reproduction of the paintings and a short descriptive summary appear in Appendix 3.

The nature of this study has dictated the methodology. On the broad scale the various components dealing with media, history, and culture require comparison and contrast, but after focus and relevance have been established for the major components, the methodology tends toward the descriptive, analytical, and interpretive.

Although the Romans were one of the most syncretic and eclectic societies in history, they never abdicated their individual character. From prehistoric man up through the late Republic Rome was flooded with myriad animal images from religion, politics, and mythology. The use of animal imagery by Augustus is a credit to the man, because he could take the best of all of these influences and work them to his advantage. Augustan Rome carefully retained only those images which best fit Roman ideals and traditions.
This paper will explore the rich legacy of animal imagery that Augustus Caesar drew upon to establish, reinforce, and embellish his image as a leader and cultural exemplar. This study will examine the roots, the evolution, and the multiplicity of the Augustan image by an examination of the animal imagery of ancient sculpture and epic poetry. This is a multifarious undertaking; therefore, rather than being an exhaustive compendium, the study is limited in scope to key works of major importance. It concentrates on the epic poems in the Greco-Roman tradition, Vergil's Aeneid and, to a lesser extent, Homer's Iliad. Also evaluated and compared are appropriate examples of Roman sculpture that complement the literature. The Ara Pacis (Altar of Peace), the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus, the Capitoline She-Wolf, and the Gemma Augustea (Augustan Gem) are primary examples of the various sculptures used for reference.

The concept of working with animal imagery evolved over a long period. The classical authors' close attention to animals and the frequency of their use raised my curiosity. Through classical studies, art history, and a visit to Italy I became increasingly aware of the interesting ramifications such a study could reveal. I saw that there seem to be certain universal associations concerning animal imagery, yet the motifs used surrounding the Emperor Augustus display stirring nuances. Perhaps also, since I am a native Montanan, I have been drawn to animals because of my own awe of the mystery and beauty of nature.
This study is not without problematic relationships. It considers not just what certain animal images may have meant to the Romans, but connects the images with past mythologies and histories. It involves forays into various cultures and various ages. Since art and literature did not evolve in a vacuum, this work must consider the animal imagery in Rome's cultural predecessors: prehistoric man, the Near East, Greece, and Etruria. In this regard the appendices contain helpful information and useful digressions. Certainly not all aspects of the animal imagery of all the provinces influenced the imperial artists; nevertheless, interesting inferences may be made. Therefore pertinent references to non-Roman works are included to indicate contributing artistic and literary traditions.

It would be wonderful if the complex net of background material necessary for this study could somehow be presented simply. The range of concerns requires careful divulgence of information. The reader must be patient enough to realize this thesis deals with animals, imagery, sculpture, epic poetry, and Augustus Caesar. In essence the first three chapters are introductory. The last two chapters deal with specific animal images related directly to Augustus. There is an evolution of ideas that flow from one topic to another, not a flood of seemingly unrelated drivel.

The nature of this study has dictated the methodology. On the broad scale the various components dealing with media, history, and culture require comparison and contrast, but after focus and relevance have been established for the major components the methodology tends toward the descriptive, analytical, and interpretive.
For simplicity the use of Augustan animal imagery in the visual arts is examined with reference only to ancient sculpture, a medium which exhibits a clear, sophisticated development that is especially appropriate here. Epic poetry is used because themes, characters, and imagery parallel and correspond with those in the sculptures. The poems of Vergil and Homer are replete with animal imagery in political and religious contexts. Although a variety of works are referred to, relevance to the central theme has been paramount. This adherence to the theme comes at some cost. No single author or artist is exhaustively reviewed. There are some disadvantages in dealing with literature and art together. However, the advantages of such a multi-media approach are appealing, because through their diversity the unity of the central thesis becomes manifest.

To avoid making endless digressions, a rudimentary knowledge of ancient religion and history is assumed. For continuity in the text, passages from the Aeneid are presented both in Latin and in English. The Latin passages are included for accuracy and contrast. Also, it is crucial that the reader understand that references in art and literature to the legendary Roman hero, Aeneas, usually have underlying references to Augustus. It is generally accepted that the mythic successes, failures, and difficulties after the Trojan War for Aeneas are allegorical of the historical realities of the early Empire for Augustus (much more of this relationship to follow).

There has been a studio art component to this interdisciplinary program. Some of the thematic concerns of this thesis have
directed my oil painting throughout the year. Reproductions of the paintings and a short descriptive summary appear in Appendix 3.

I gratefully acknowledge the members of my graduate committee. Each, in his own specialty, significantly accommodated, encouraged, and guided this study both in the classroom and in tutorials. Maximas gratias vobis professoribus ago: John Hay, John Madden, and James Todd. I owe much to Tina McFetridge and Carol Wilbur for perceptive and thoughtful proofreading and editing. For the Latin citations from Vergil, I have used Hirtzel's Oxford text. For translations of Vergil and Homer, I have used Lind's Vergil's Aeneid and Lattimore's Iliad.
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aetheria quos lapsa plaga Jovis ales aperto 
turbabat caelo; nunc terras ordine longo 
aut capere aut captas jam despectare videntur: 
ut reduces illi ludunt stridentibus alis, 
et coetu cinxere polum, cantusque dedere, 
haud aliter puppesque tuae pubesque tuorum 
at portum tenet aut pleno subit ostia velo. 
Vergil, Aeneid 1.393-400

Look at those twelve swans flying gaily in line! 
Jove's eagle was chasing them over the reaches of heaven, 
in open sky. Now they seem to alight on the ground, 
in a row, or to look down on those who have already landed. 
As they have come home, to play with their whirring wings 
and to cluster in heaven and sing out their songs again, 
So shall they return, your ships, and your sailors too: 
they're in port, or are sailing there under an unfurled canvas.
CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

The diverse nature of animal imagery in classical art and literature offers a broad based field from which to explore. Animal imagery has traditions that reach back toward the origins of man. Since animals have always played a cardinal role in human endeavors, animal motifs contain profound stylistic, cultural, and psychological overtones. Man has always had a certain kinship, symbiosis, awe, and even identification with animals. Animals breathe and bleed, eat and sleep, prey and play, as well as seemingly plan and execute, and remember and cooperate. People came to believe that animals exhibit such emotions and qualities as courage, pride, rage, loyalty, fear, and satisfaction. Animals have traits that man emulated, imitated, or hated. In other words, except for the ability to reason, even far back into prehistory, animals and men have shared a range of special capacities and characteristics and have thus also shared a unique relationship. Consequently the depiction of animals in art richly reveals human meanings. Because animals are part of the physical world, through their representations much has been learned about virtually all aspects of ancient human life. Moreover, since man's primordial beginnings, there have been powerful associations concerning animal imagery, and consequently, certain animal symbols have come to have almost universal connotations. Again, animals have had certain
religious connections, functioning as divine agents in auguries, omens, deific incarnations, and sacrifices (see appendix 1).

The more transcendental aspects of animal imagery are of particular interest and importance in the context of Augustus Caesar. Here at the outset of this study, intriguing questions loom; some of their answers are direct and pragmatic, others are more contemplative. These questions center around the realities of Imperial Rome. First, a great part of the spirit of the age was created and promoted by literature and art. Literally armies of writers, artists, and builders were set to work to construct a new Rome based on old values. Important also was the revival of the old Italic religion with its rituals of sacrifice and divination. In addition, the fact that the symbol system of Augustan Rome was so syncretic and eclectic makes for interesting speculation concerning origins and influences. Although some of these questions are impossible to answer fully, nevertheless, posing them and considering possible solutions is edifying and illuminating.

1. Who was Augustus, and what image did he want to portray?
2. What can be learned about the image of Augustus from the animal imagery in epic poetry and sculpture?
3. Why were certain animals used so frequently in Augustan art and literature?
4. What were the sources of Augustan animal imagery?
5. Are there connections with the symbol systems of the ancients which we moderns may have lost?
6. When an educated Roman encountered an animal image in art or
literature, what associations may have been triggered?
The resolution of these questions is not treated systematically in
this study; they have served to set the parameters and to give focus
to the work as a whole.

Another major concern may arise as to why this study is di-
rected toward the Augustan image. Augustus Caesar occupies a unique
place both in Roman history and in world history. From his seat of
power Augustus enjoyed the vast vista of the combined accomplishments
of Rome and her world empire. The Roman Golden Age, one of the fruits
of Augustus, represents a culmination and focus of epochs of cultural
traditions—a peak in the history of Western civilization. This
period marks a departure from the progressive Greco-Roman sys-
tems of democracy and humanism and anticipates the regressive
institutions of monarchy and theocrancy of the centuries to follow.
Not until the Renaissance did man reach similar levels of uninhibited
excellence.

Of course, situated at the very center of the Roman world was
Augustus. He was the first emperor of Rome and a lavish patron of the
arts. Augustus not only personally effected this prolific period, but
also much of the subject matter in art and literature revolved around
him and his family. Because of the extent and the sophistication of
animal imagery that points directly to the emperor, the study of the
Augustan image through animal imagery is particularly elucidating of
the nature and intent of this most important historical figure.
PART ONE. OVERVIEW
CHAPTER 2
ASPECTS OF THE IMAGE OF AUGUSTUS

On his deathbed Augustus questioned whether he had acted his part well. What was his part? There are at least four distinct aspects of the image of Augustus. First, he chose to present himself in the traditional image of the head of the Roman household, the paterfamilias. This image reflects the family structure of primitive mid-Italic tribal hierarchy—status based upon family tradition and the dominant male. Secondly, in a role that extends the tribal patriarchal system to the national level, Augustus was granted the honorable title pater patriae, father of the homeland. By many Romans he was seen as a political savior; essentially the principate of Augustus was monarchy with republican trappings. Thirdly, he was presented as a descendant of the Olympian gods. His family claimed descent from such mythological luminaries as Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Aeneas, and Romulus. Such a pedigree greatly enhanced his status as a religious exemplar and intercessor. Finally, at least posthumously, the Augustan image assumed the cult worship, divine honors, and apotheosis of the oriental monarchs. The image of Augustus was a fascinating blend of politics, religion, history, and mythology. Since Roman institutions were often interrelated, animal imagery dealing with one area nearly always dealt with another as well.
In order to understand Augustan animal imagery in its cultural context, further historical background is necessary. When he was only nineteen years of age Augustus inherited the vast military and political machinery of his recently assassinated great-uncle, Julius Caesar. After the Battle of Actium (31 B.C.) against Mark Antony, Augustus, then only thirty two years of age, received the reins of government of a world empire. Throughout the period of the late Republic, Rome had suffered through civil wars, cultural and religious decay, ineffective government, and the assassinations of its leaders. For one hundred years Rome had grown fat on the spoils of the provinces. Her leaders operated out of personal ambition and greed. There was little sense of patriotism or self-sacrifice. Generals had personal soldiers; armies were controlled by individuals not by the state. The formal state religion was giving way to the emotional, personal, Oriental religions and to Greek philosophy. Rome needed strong responsible leadership.

Augustus realized that Rome's position of leadership in the Mediterranean was in great jeopardy. Since the senate had failed to exercise its power, Augustus, by whatever means or motives, was able to position himself in the center. It was not enough simply to be in a position of power; Augustus took action. In response to his elevated status, he established far reaching reforms based in the spirit of the early Republic. That was perceived as an era of few laws, but great cooperation and honor. The Romans always looked to their humble beginnings with a romantic respect. Ostensibly working with the senate, Caesar enacted laws to counter the physical and
spiritual erosion. He gained great success and popularity. The people of Rome welcomed their new form of government—the Principate.

Even as Augustus was sincerely trying to revive the traditional state religion, throughout the empire there was emerging the Cult of the Emperor, complete with important animal emblems to proclaim his cosmic associations. Although his adoptive father, Julius Caesar, had been proclaimed to be a state god by an act of the senate, Augustus repeatedly refused divine honors. But, the oriental tradition of emperor worship was firmly entrenched at that time (see appendix 2). The

Fig. 1. Victory Stele of Naram-Sin, c. 2300-2200 B.C. Pink sandstone approx. 2 m. high. Louvre, Paris. (Gardner 1980, 48)
sacral image of Augustus was to become a model for all future emperor worship. Actually "sacral kingship" (Ferguson 1970, 6) was widespread in primitive societies the world over. Even primitive Romans worshipped their early kings. The divine worship of rulers had long traditions throughout the lands that were part of the empire at the time of Augustus. In the East, city-states, kingdoms, and empires all practiced various forms of kingly worship, represented especially by the eagle, bull, and lion imagery. For example, the illustration (Fig. 1) depicts a fallen leader being raised heavenward—an apotheosis. His sacred status is indicated by the bull horns, a symbol of divine power, and by his huge relative size (Gardner 1980, 48). In the Greek world there was a slight variation, "a heroization of prominent individuals" (Ferguson 1970, 7). Demi-gods and famous mortals were the focus of hero cults: Heracles, Asclepius, and Theseus, for examples. The heroes received special honors while alive; they were elevated to immortality after death. The Egyptians had openly worshipped their pharaohs as gods who were accompanied by a veritable zoo of animals: by Anubis, Horus, and the Sphinx, for examples. Alexander the Great was the willing recipient of strains of all of these cults and he pushed this cult worship to new levels of acceptance. By the late 270's B.C., the Pтоломies, Egypt's Macedonian rulers, were also the objects of cult worship.

Romans, too, adopted these varied manifestations of belief in the divinity of exceptional human beings. With Rome's rise to power throughout the third century B.C., conquering Roman generals were granted titles and festivals in the East (Ferguson 1970, 7). There were signs that a more specific idea of a divine monarch was evolving at
Rome. Gaius Marius (fl. 100 B.C.) was hailed as the third founder of Rome; the other two, Aeneas and Romulus, already were considered deified mortals. Augustus was related to all three of these famous Romans. In the middle of the first century B.C., Pompey's self-imposed title, Magnus.

Fig. 2. Bust of Commodus as Hercules, c. 190 A.D., marble, Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome. (Bandinelli 1970, 294)
(the Great), was a borrowing from the divine Alexander. A generation later Mark Antony "openly presented" himself as an oriental monarch, as "Dionysus-Osirus in consort with Cleopatra-Isis" (Ferguson 1970, 7). In the oriental tradition, emperors after Augustus sometimes had themselves carved in portrait busts as Hercules wearing the skin of the Nemean lion (Fig. 2).

Before the time of Augustus the Romans did not worship their rulers, but before Augustus Rome had been a republic. When Octavian became "princeps," he began to assume the trappings of divinity: in 27 B.C. he took the title Divi Filius, son of the divine Julius; his birthday was made a state holiday; he assumed the title Augustus---"the revered one." A month was named after him (it still is). Posthumously the senate enlisted him among the state gods and his apotheosis was assumed. The imperial cult was so popular that it "threatened to displace the Olympian religion" (Ferguson 1970, 92).

In his role as political and religious reformer, Augustus undertook a variety of programs. In order to effect true change and to reinforce his own pre-eminence, Augustus enlisted artists and poets to produce works that would foster his ideals. He was a master at propaganda, but Augustan art and literature far surpassed that limited role. The artists and poets approvingly contributed works which expressed and amplified Roman authority, virtues, and traditions. Augustus initiated magnificent public works: temples, fora, roads, bridges, and theaters. He said himself that he found Rome a city of brick, but left it a city of marble (Suetonius De Vita Caesarum 28,3). By all of these programs, he created, almost singlehandedly, a golden
age. The Roman Golden Age, this flowering of literature and the arts, was consciously conceived, planned, and supported by the inner circle of Augustus. Arguably, never before or after have the efforts of so few effected so much in the arts and literature. Never has there been such a cosmopolitan polymorph of ideas and images (except possibly in our own times); yet herein lies an often overlooked paradox, because Roman arts maintained a strong sense of individuality, purpose, and even native creativity.
CHAPTER 3
AUGUSTAN SCULPTURE AND
EPIC POETRY COMPARED

In this chapter references to the evolution of the Augustan persona will focus on the animal imagery in Vergil's Aeneid, Homer's Iliad, and the exquisite monumental sculpture, the Altar of Peace (Ara Pacis). The references to the Iliad are included to illustrate Vergil's great debt to the epic tradition.(see appendix 2). These particular works, each with a masterful felicity of its medium, exhibit a concordance of animal images dealing with the Augustan house.

There are inevitable pitfalls and shortcomings in using such diverse media as sculpture and epic poetry, but there are advantages too. In his Laocoon, Lessing involves himself in a similar comparison of the Aeneid and the famous Hellenistic sculpture, Laocoon:

The wise poet showed us beauty, which he felt he could depict not according to its parts but only in its effect. In the same way the no less wise painter showed us that same beauty by showing us its constituent parts only, and deemed it improper for his art to have recourse to any other means. (1756, 115)

He goes on to say that art is superior in some ways, poetry in others; the one is a "silent poem," the other a "speaking picture" (Lessing 1766, 4). Where one medium is deficient, the other is efficient.

As specific examples later will illustrate, the same harmony that Augustus brought to the Roman state is reflected in the themes, characters, and imagery in the art and literature. For the Augustan
art and literature this unanimity of purpose focuses directly upon Caesar himself. This commonality begs comparison. The *Aeneid* and the *Ara Pacis* use extensive animal imagery in direct relation to the Augustan house. Both works were commissioned in the Augustan Age to promote political and religious reform. They each employ complex themes and episodes united by reference to Caesar. In both, strange illusions of time, space, and reality occur. There is a suspension and commingling of the normal time and space continua. Mythology becomes substituted for history and vice versa. Pagan religion, long in a state of decline, is vibrant and pervasive. Because of the multi-faceted, programmatic nature of Augustan reform projects, it is only fitting that appropriate works of art and literature be studied together.

The fact that sculpture and poetry both have serious limitations as media of expression only lends validity to their combined treatment in this work. The powerful qualities of the written word sometimes will complement and articulate "mute stone" (Lessing 1766, 4). However, the concise clarity of a visual image can suggest an entire story in a single frame. Sculpture is limited in that it represents frozen time and space. Action is trapped in the moment and eternally suspended. Also sculpture can depict only a limited range of emotion and action. Sculpture has difficulty expressing certain relationships, such as cause, purpose, or result, which are the simple building blocks of writers. Unlike good sculpture, poetry can not express felicitously and quickly range of detail and profound presence. Also, the understanding of poetry requires sophisticated literacy, therefore little of Rome's population could have enjoyed Vergil. On the other hand,
sculpture requires only familiarity with common cultural events and images. The study of poetry and sculpture together in a closely related context draws from the strengths of each medium and diminishes the weaknesses.

As part of his revitalization plan for Rome, Augustus recruited and commissioned Vergil to write a national epic poem. The story of the *Aeneid* charts the legendary quest for a new homeland of Aeneas and his fellow Trojans, the vanquished of the Trojan War. Roman tradition held that these exiles, though buffeted much by the ill-minded Juno, were destined by Fate to settle in central Italy and eventually to rule the world. It is not in the scope of this study to consider the nuances of all of the animal imagery of even this one poem, although the multifarious uses of animal imagery throughout the epic tradition present important ramifications in the context of this study. A brief inspection of the tradition will elucidate the place and the emphasis of the animal imagery in the *Aeneid* and in the sculpture as well.

Greek and Roman poets make great use of animal imagery through devices of comparison: association, simile, metaphor, and epithet. Especially in ancient times animal imagery provided the writers with standards with which to compare heroism or villainy. Although no one animal possesses qualities in the way men do, the poets found it convenient to compare their heroes with certain animals in order to tap into a common world of the collective unconscious, traditional images of memory, dreams, and mythology. Of course, here arises the question of the poets' psychological intentions. As Brooks Otis puts it:

Does modern criticism go "beyond" the poet's conscious intention?
Here, of course, it is possible, as with all poets, to "read in" much that, for better or worse, was never in the poet's mind or to uncover what was at best only in its subconscious recesses. (1964, 56)

6 Carl Jung seems to support this point:

The phenomenology of the psyche is so colorful, so variegated in form and meaning, that we cannot possibly reflect all its riches in one mirror. Nor in our description of it can we ever embrace the whole but must be content to shed light only on single parts of the total phenomenon. (1966, 85)

As a means of communicating complex associations through animal imagery, epic relies heavily upon tradition. Often the significance of an image in Vergil depends on how it differs from a similar image in Homer, as the following examples will illustrate.

For the Homeric Greeks there were "ideals or virtues toward which all eligible men were trained and educated, which they strove to attain and to manifest in all the activities of their lives." (John Hay "Heroic Virtue in Classical Epic Poetry" 1986) These heroic virtues included physical strength and beauty, prowess and good counsel in war, and willingness to risk death for honor. Roman heroism, by contrast, depended on the subordination of the bold qualities of Homeric Greek individualism. The warrior mentality was supplanted by the civic mentality; this Roman notion of heroism stressed the importance of the divinely ordained supremacy of Rome as a collective entity. The difference between the Greek and the Roman heroic ethic is reflected and expressed in the differing use of animal imagery by Homer and Vergil respectively.

The poets must have felt that animals exhibit certain heroic qualities because animal imagery is used so frequently as the familiar vehicle in similes. For example, through the use of simile, the reader
learns of Achilles' character and prowess. Late in the *Iliad* Achilles squares off against Aeneas to do battle:

Achilles across from him rose up like a lion,
Ravening, whom men have struggled to kill,
Collecting all the folk. He first ignores them
And passes, but then some swift spearman
Hits him; he crouches, gaping; the foam from his teeth
Drips; the spirit of wrath constrains his heart;
With his tail the flanks and ribs on his two sides
He lashes, and he drives himself to battle.
Eyes gleaming, he springs forward to slaughter
Some man, or himself to die in the midst of turmoil. (20.164-173)

Here the lion image reveals much about the personality of Achilles: self-defensive, vindictive, and, at times, savage. The similes of Homer seem to be in keeping with Jung's appraisal in that they are complex. They really go beyond and elude full comprehension. Where do the character of Achilles and the lion correspond; where do they diverge?

Vergil, on the other hand, although also using the lion as image, expresses quite a different sort of message. In Book 8 of the *Aeneid*, Evander, after receiving Aeneas and exchanging greetings, seated the men on the grass:

To Aeneas he gave special welcome
Upon a low bed covered with lion-skin; he invited
Him up to the maple-wood throne. (8.177-178)

praecipuumque toro et villosi pelle leonis
accipit Aenean solioque invitat acerno.

Here Aeneas is enthroned upon one of the primeval images of courage, strength, duty, intellect, as well as leadership—the lion. These are important qualities, all appropriate, as the father of the Roman race becomes enthroned, both physically and symbolically, at the very site of the future Rome.
The preceding passages contrast two epic traditions. The lion in Vergil has subtle psychological allusions to royal authority, and to Hercules. Otis says that Vergil's symbol system owes more to the *Georgics* and *Eclogues* (his earlier works) than to Homer. In other words Vergil did not "start" with Homer but with his own Augustan "symbol complex" and his own subjective style (221).

The *Georgics* is in fact a most intricate structure of symbols and its major concerns are those most central in both human life and Augustan Rome: work, play and man's relation to nature in both, and, beyond these, life, death and rebirth. (1964, 146)

As in this dramatic scene of Aeneas enthroned, Vergil's imagery seems to evoke subjective psychological states that often serve highly editorial purposes. The lion simile in the passage above from Homer is, in contrast, simply descriptive. Homer's images may not add anything essential to the narrative, but, as Otis further states:

> his clear objectivity makes for much more vivid and clear characterizations. . . . We have no doubt that here is a man with his own characteristic point of view though we in no sense identify ourselves with him or see him through the poet's emotions toward him. (1964, 51)

Although Vergil and Homer each use a lion to evoke certain associations, the varying results are striking. Because of the deliberate transformation of the image, from Homeric to Augustan, Aeneas is only likened to fierce animals at moments when his behavior is not exemplary.

Throughout the epic tradition animals frequently appear in a variety of religious relationships: auguries, omens, gods incarnate, and sacrifices. Again there is a great variety of images and applications, again great complexity, as a few examples will show. Consider the image of the snake so used, first in the *Iliad* and then in the *Aeneid*. 
As an example of a successful sacrifice and a favorable sign, Odysseus reminds the Achaians of the meaning of the omen of the snake, heaven sent in their stop at Aulis:

There appeared a great sign; a snake, his back blood-mottled, a thing of horror, cast into the light by the very Olympian, Wound its way from under the altar and made toward the plane tree. Thereupon were innocent children, the young of the sparrow, cowering underneath the leaves at the uppermost branch tip, eight of them, and the mother was the ninth, who bore these children. The snake ate them all after their pitiful screaming, and the mother, crying aloud for her young ones, fluttered about him, and as she shrilled he caught her by the wing and coiled around her. (Il. 2.309-316)

Kalkas, the prophet, interprets the nine sparrows as the number of years the Greeks will fight at Troy, thus predicting the completion date and the outcome of the war.

In the Laocoon episode in the Aeneid, even as Laocoon is upon the altar sacrificing to the immortals for casting a spear into the side of the wooden horse, the sea serpents glide over the top of the ocean. Bringing terrible destruction to Laocoon and his sons, they bring as well an ominous image of impending Greek victory and destruction to the Trojans. Amy Rose expands this idea:

The passage so vividly depicting the horrifying appearance and assault of the serpents, as it magnifies all that is more destructive and fearsome in these creatures. . . . (indicates) that the serpents in the Laocoon episode embody all the ferocity, violence and deception of the Greeks. (1982-1983, 117)

In the same sense the wooden horse itself stands as a grim specter for the hapless Trojans.

These few examples must suffice to illustrate that epic poetry is rich with animal imagery with extensive and diverse allusions. Although the Aeneid is much different from the Iliad in theme and style,
Vergil wisely used elements of Homer's craft and sensitivity. In Vergil there is a fusion of traditional Roman lore with Homer's genius, and with the Greek world's extensive animal imagery.

This rich epic tradition of animal imagery is shared by the visual arts as well. As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, the *Aeneid* and the *Ara Pacis* have many characteristics in common, or as Heinz Kahler says in reference to the *Ara Pacis*, "What was expressed in literature of the period is here visible in pictures" (1963, 71). The *Ara Pacis* is an epic poem in stone.

Fig. 3. *Ara Pacis*, 13-9 B.C., marble, 11 X 10 m., Rome. (Bandinelli 1970, 186)
(Fig. 4). View of the Ara Pacis from the northwest. Reconstruction.
(Kahler 1963, 69)

Fig. 5. The east front of the Ara Pacis. Reconstruction.
(Kahler 1963, 70)
To conclude the introductory chapters and to look forward to the more detailed examination of individual animals in the last part of this study, a brief perusal of the monument is needed. The *Ara Pacis* was chosen as the primary source of art for this study because all of the important animals in the Augustan image are represented, except for the eagle (evidently not appropriate on an altar of peace).

Of course the monument is ostensibly a sacrificial altar, but actual sacrifice took place here only on the anniversary of its consecration, 30 January 9 B.C. (See Figs. 3-5.) Dedicated to *Pax*, the personification of peace, this huge altar was commissioned by the senate to honor the emperor. It reveals a cross-section of native Roman traditions and techniques laminated among Hellenistic, Neo-Attic, and Oriental elements. Its rich and varied animal imagery complements and adds to the overall themes of the bountious dawning of a new age and the glorification of the Julian clan. Richard Brilliant speaks clearly to its thematic purpose:

The concept [of the *Ara Pacis*] depends in part on a Roman feeling for symmetry in history and design, responding to the fictional diarchy of the Augustan constitution and a very special historical attitude about the life of the past in the present . . . Each group [of sculptural panels] seems to incorporate an appropriately legendary event brought into the present by readily recognizable symbols. Unity is derived by common themes relating to the Augustan house. (1972, 112)

The altar complex consists of a large elevated altar enclosed by a roofless cubical structure with openings on the west and east sides (Figs. 3-5). The altar itself and the entire cubical structure are richly decorated with a series of marble low-relief carvings. Animal images, referred to throughout this study, are found in many of
the carved panels.

The inside precinct of the altar is decorated with carved religious motifs. The altar itself is decorated with three small friezes: the Roman household gods, the Olympian gods, and a sacrificial procession (Fig. 5 [center]). Such sacrificial processions are common themes
in Augustan art (see also Figs. 17-18) The inner walls of the cubical structure are decorated with garlanded boukrania, carvings of bull skulls, which symbolize successful sacrifice (Fig. 6).

The decoration on the outside of the monument consists of a series of carved panels (Fig. 3). Many of the animal images important in Augustus' religious and political roles are found throughout.

The upper exterior friezes show various mythological and historical events. On the west side there are two panels. One, badly damaged, contained the famous she-wolf nurturing Romulus and Remus. For a similar treatment of this image see Figure 16. The south panel
shows the Lavinian sow before being sacrificed by Aeneas (Fig. 7). Of the two upper panels on the east exterior, only the scene of "Mother Earth" survives. A swan figures prominently in this panel (Fig. 8).

There are two distinct horizontal sections of friezes that encircle the exterior of the monument: the just mentioned mythological panels above, and below designs of nature. All of the lower panels depict the acanthus, flowers, and swans (Fig. 9), representing the teeming proliferation of nature (and of the Augustan Age).

As is evidenced by the rich animal imagery both in the Aeneid and in the Ara Pacis, the traditions from which aspects of Augustan animal imagery are derived are ancient, rich, and varied. Literature and art seem to have drawn from the same fountainhead of sources. The
animal imagery of Augustan Rome began as the local lore of Italian farmers and herdsmen, but later it became fused with Etruscan, Greek, and Near Eastern elements, as Roman contacts and conquests expanded.

To illustrate Roman artists' and writers' great debt to traditions concerning animal imagery, the appendices (1,2) and the Homeric comparisons have been included. This material, directly and indirectly, helped shape Roman sensibilities with connotations and associations evoked from deep down and far back in the Roman psyche.

In the following chapters the same range of animal imagery that was compared in the Iliad, the Aeneid, and the Ara Pacis will assume poignant significance deliberately directed at the person of Augustus. Closer examination of the individual panels of the Ara Pacis will
reveal that all of the animals represented on it have profound connections that refer to Augustus. What may seem to be, at first, a decorative swan, a rather strange she-wolf, or a simple pig will be shown to have remarkable symbolic associations with the emperor Augustus.
PART TWO. CASE STUDIES
CHAPTER 4
ANIMALS IN THE AUGUSTAN HOUSE

The swan, the eagle, and the wolf were the most important animal symbols in the context of Augustus and of Imperial Rome. The legends of Mars' she-wolf, Jove's eagle, and the swan of Venus and Apollo were of particular importance to Augustus, since the Julian clan could trace mythological roots to those four gods. Even though the Roman pantheon traced its origins to Greece, by the time of Augustus the Romans had either invented contexts for the Greek anthropomorphized gods or accommodated their traditional mid-Italic legends to fit the Greek gods or borrowed Greek stories directly. Not all Roman stories had Greek origins; there was a wealth of native Italian traditions concerning these gods and their respective animals.

The image of the swan holds a unique place in Greek and Roman myth and legend, since it represents both Apollo and Venus. As will be shown, the swan, as a symbol of Apollo and Venus, has special significance which focuses directly on the person of Augustus. Many of the following references to swans pertain directly to Augustus; other more general references have interesting connotations in the context of Augustus.

One of the "readily recognizable" symbols (Brilliant 1972, 10) on the Ara Pacis is the swan. Swans are repeated throughout the
acanthus floral design in all of the lower panels (Fig. 9). Also, a swan is prominent in the left portion of the famous "Mother Earth" panel (Figs. 8, 10).

Fig. 10. *Ara Pacis*, detail from "Mother Earth" relief (photo by author)

J. M. B. Toynbee describes the scene thus: "The powerful bird with neck outstretched bears the girl through the air, above reed and other water plants and water gushing from an overturned urn" (1973, 260). While the panel in general symbolizes dominion, generosity, and prosperity, the swan represents peace. Raphaelian says that "Swans are high-flyers, migrating single file, led by a commander flying off the line. They are gregarious and attached to
their birthplace, therefore the swan represents domestic harmony and familial bonding" (1957, 84). The swan as seen on funerary urns is seen as a sign of a happy death (Raphaelian 1957, 82). Raphaelian goes on to say that "sacred birds may represent a god or the soul of man. They often symbolize mind, spirit and conquest. Their energy and independence allude to motivation, imagination, and the ability to raise one's position" (1957, 82). With its many lofty allusions, the swan was a powerful image for Augustus.

The swan was Apollo's special animal totem. Because of its ability to divine when its end was at hand by singing, the Romans (and the Greeks before them) dedicated the swan to Apollo. And Augustus was considered under the special protection of Apollo. Apollo's temple was close to the Battle of Actium (31 B.C.), where Augustus had defeated his last real opponent, Mark Antony. In honor of the god and the victory, Augustus dedicated to Apollo a magnificent temple on the Palatine Hill at Rome. Augustus and Apollo seemed to share common characteristics: youthful appearance, care of flocks and herds, care of higher developments of civilization, approving codes of laws, and inculcating high moral and religious codes (Hammond 1978, 82). Besides music and divination, the swan's origin in northern lands also parallels Apollo's origins. Toynbee further describes this relationship. "It may also have been the Apolline connection that determined the choice . . . of a swan to carry the Nymph with flying veil who personifies the aura (breeze) that blows over inland streams and lakes" (1973, 260).
There is yet another connection between the swan and the Caesars. The swan was also sacred to Venus, goddess of love and beauty. She is often shown being carried by a team of swans. The connection between Augustus and Venus is, of course, deliberately established in history and mythology. In Roman legend the Julian clan (to which Augustus belonged) traced its origins back to the union between Venus and Anchises, a Trojan prince. As the Romans believed, a son, Aeneas, was born, and to him too a son was born, Julius—the eponym of the Julian clan. These events happened in the distant mythic past. After their defeat by the Greeks in the Trojan War, Aeneas and a few survivors set out on an epic search for a new homeland. Under Venus' special protection, the will of the Fates was fulfilled and the Trojans settled in central Italy.

A closer inspection of the epigraph of this study is appropriate here. Early in the poem Venus, disguised as a maiden resembling "Thracian Harpalyce" (Aen. 1. 313-317), allays her son's fears about his ships lost in a storm:

Look at those twelve swans flying gaily in line! Jove's eagle was chasing them over the reaches of heaven, in open sky. Now they seem to alight on the ground, in a row, or to look down on those who have already landed. As they have come home, to play with their whirling wings and to cluster in heaven and sing out their songs again, So shall they return, your ships, and your sailors too: they're in port, or are sailing there under an unfurled canvas. (Aen. 1. 393-400)

Aspice bis senos laetantis agmine cyncnos, aetheria quos lapsa plaga Jovis ales aperto turbabat caelo; nunc terras ordine longo aut capere aut captas jam despectare videntur: ut reduces illi ludunt stridentibus alis, et coetu cinxere polum, cantusque dedere,
haud aliter puppesque tuae pubesque tuorum
aut portum tenet aut pleno subit ostia velo.

As is typical of a Vergilian simile, this passage works on various levels. The obvious parallel is that the swans represent the ships; the eagle, the storm which had scattered the ships. In a more general sense, this simile summarizes a major theme of the Aeneid and of Augustan reform. The ships represent the Trojans who represent the Romans (all of whom are under Venus' special protection). The collective image of the "flock" is interesting in light of the collective (self-less) nature of Roman idealism.

Another reference in this simile of the swan (Venus) and the eagle (Jupiter) is revealed upon closer inspection of a preceding section (1. 225-253): Venus (swan) had appealed to Jupiter (eagle) to intervene after the storm and help the Trojans. Jupiter proceeds to remind his daughter that Fate is sealed and the Trojans will succeed, but they would have to endure hardships before settling in Italy. In this sense, the eagle in the simile also represents Jupiter's inability to change Fate. More directly, the attacking eagle—as also its immediate referent, the storm—signifies the many enemies, calamities, and hardships over which the more civilized, collectively spirited Romans must and will prevail.

There are other significant references to swans, drawn from cultures under the Roman umbrella. These references complete the major cultural connections between the swan and Augustus. As on the Ara Pacis, swans also are frequently shown in mosaics as companions of Orpheus, Adam, and Noah to symbolize teeming life (Toynbee 1973,
Teeming life, burgeoning prosperity, is thus linked through the mediating swan image to the regime of Augustus. Swans were also found in the great zoological gardens of the Asiatic monarchs, and thus have a widespread historic association with power. Notable from Greek mythology is the famous encounter between Leda and Zeus (in the guise of a swan). Zeus, as the father of Venus, is the ancestral paterfamilias of the Julian clan. The fruits of the union between Zeus and Leda were the heavenly Gemini (twins), Castor and Pollux (whom the Romans honored with a temple in the Forum). The connection between the swan and Augustus via Apollo is repeated in one of the stories of Cycnus. In the most famous story, Cycnus was grieving over the death of his friend, Phaethon, Apollo's son, who had insisted on driving the chariot of the sun. Apollo was so moved by Cycnus' sorrow that he changed him into a swan and gave him a place among the constellations. In sum, the swan imagery, as shown by the Ara Pacis, illustrates a tremendous breadth of allusions, yet all references aptly relate to Caesar's political and spiritual roles.

While the swan image symbolizes certain (peaceful) aspects of Augustus Caesar, the eagle and the wolf images are used in literature and art to embellish further and define the image of Augustus in other aspects. Of course, each of these animals had specific traditions and associations which pertain to Caesar's role as a leader. Augustus was careful in the selection and the application of these animal symbols. The eagle and the wolf were adopted by Augustus because each is an important symbol based firmly in Roman traditions related to the Augustan house.
The eagle is probably the single most important animal symbol of Augustus. Not only does it have significance rooted in Roman traditions, but it also has universal associations with power, dominion, intelligence, and independence—all important qualities to Augustus. Throughout the empire the eagle represents the threat of a swift, violent death. It also can symbolize man's transcendence over ignorance, fear, or death (Raphaelian 1957, 90). As stated earlier, the Julian clan took great pride in its mythological ancestry. Augustus could trace his genealogy back to Aeneas. Aeneas' maternal grandfather was Jupiter, the supreme Olympian deity. The eagle was Jupiter's constant companion and is often identified as the god himself. As the beautiful onyx cameo shows, the eagle is often depicted clutching Jupiter's thunderbolts or oak wreath (Fig. 11).

Fig. 11. Eagle with symbols of victory (date uncertain), cameo, Rome. Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Mus. (Bandinelli 1970, viii)
The eagle was a major symbol in man's attempt to describe the nature of the supreme god. It became an emblem to represent the nebulous and aloof nature of a sky-god. By having to use the symbol of a bird to describe such a pervasive force, Dio of Prusa says "that we are like children crying in the night, with no language but a cry" (Ferguson 1970, 30).

As the ruler of a world empire, Augustus was able to use the cult of Jupiter as a unifying element, because virtually all of the provinces had religions based on a similar, primitive sky-god. The eagle figured prominently in many of these religions and thus, through the eagle symbolism, the divinity and power of Augustus were attested. These religions centered around the powers of nature, especially the overwhelming influence of the weather. These sky-gods had many common characteristics: dominion, providence, paternity, fertility and generosity. For the Romans this god was Jupiter; for the Greeks he was Zeus. The Egyptians worshipped Serapis; the Persians—Ahura-Mazda; the Syrians—Ba'al. The Hebrews revered Yahweh (Ferguson, 1970, 33).

Because of the commonality of these religions, the cult of Jupiter held a "predominant position" (Ferguson 1970, 37) in the cities of Asia. Throughout the empire great monuments and temples were dedicated to Jupiter. Like eagles' nests, the places of worship were perched in high places, whether it might be Capitoline Hill, the Acropolis, Mt. Sion, or a ziggurat (Ferguson 1970, 33). As diverse and as distant as the provinces may have been from Rome and each other, the provincials were able to "render unto Caesar" in part because of the universal nature of the cult of Jupiter and its symbol system. At
Rome, Caesar represented himself as the divine representative and medium of Jupiter. The eagle, sceptre, lightning, and oak were readily interchangable symbols of the supreme god and his human counterpart.

Albeit significant, the eagle was not a pre-eminent symbol at Rome even 100 years before Augustus. Its increased importance in the Augustan Age corresponds with the decline of the power of the senate, the prevalence of the military, and the acquisition of empire. The rise of the eagle as a military standard interestingly parallels the dying republic and the emerging principate. The armies of the early Republic had used a variety of emblems for military standards. Since the armies were divided according to tribal affiliation, the various kinds of standards reflected familial totems (Ellis 1869, 45). About the time of Caius Marius (fl. 100 B.C.), already mentioned as the "Third Founder of Rome" (p. 9), the other ensigns were left in camp; only the eagle-standards were carried in actual battle. Marius had rejected the other emblems and used the eagle exclusively (Ellis 1869, 45). The eagle-standard thus became the all-important symbol to the Roman legions. The eagle was represented with its wings spread and mounted atop a long pole (Fig. 12). The standard itself was venerated as a god--the legion's divine protector, *proprium legionis numen* (Toynbee 1973, 241). When not in the field, the standard was kept in a special military chapel.

By the time of Julius Caesar's *Gallic Wars*, the ultimate disgrace that could befall a legion was to lose the eagle-standard. Its loss could result in the disbandment of the legion. In his *Commentaries*, Julius Caesar wrote of the pride and the shame associated
Fig. 12. Roman Standard Bearer.
(Hope 1962, plate 250)
with the standard. As the Roman Army was attempting to land on Britain, the soldiers were reluctant to jump into the sea to engage the enemy. The eagle-bearer of Caesar's beloved Tenth Legion, with his standard in hand, leapt first into the water and exhorted his comrades, "Leap down, soldiers, unless you wish to betray your eagle to the enemy; it shall be told that I at any rate did my duty to my country and my general" (Caes. BGall. 6:25 13-15). The rest of the army followed, lest they suffer such a dire disgrace (dedecus). Thus, in its use as a military emblem, the eagle had become a special symbol of Roman power and pride. With its emphasis and its scope the eagle had a unique Roman character.

Through the eagle's associations with Jupiter and the Roman military, Augustus bolstered his own image by being depicted with the eagle. A beautiful Arabian onyx cameo from the Augustan Age, the Gemma Augustea (Figs. 13-15) vividly illustrates the relationship between Augustus and the eagle. As is typical of Augustan art, the Gemma Augustea reflects an amalgam of Hellenistic and Neo-Attic elements. The theme of the lower section is the erection of war spoils for display. The twisting figures and the angular composition echo Hellenistic style. The upper section is reminiscent of Classical Greece—idealized figures in repose celebrating a triumph. The scene is presided over by a god-like Augustus. This is a heroic and noble event. The seated figure above the eagle is Augustus, who here is given the attributes of Jupiter: the oak wreath crown, the cloak, the regal pose, the sceptre and, of course, the eagle. The mere placement of Augustus above, with the eagle respectfully and
Fig. 13. Gemma Augustea (date uncertain), cameo, Rome Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Mus. (Bandinelli 1970, 195)

Fig. 14. Gemma Augustea, detail (Bandinelli 1970, 195)
obediently at his feet, reinforces his leadership qualities and his divine connections. The mere presence of the eagle with Augustus reminds the viewer of emperor worship and the apotheosis.

The she-wolf, unlike the eagle whose symbolism gained in popularity over a period of time, had traditional roots in Roman mythology. A she-wolf with her head turned to one side nurturing human twins—this is a traditional image in Rome as common in the early Republic as it is even in modern times (Fig. 16). Although only fragments remain, one of the end panels of the Ara Pacis depicted Romulus, Remus, Mars, and the she-wolf. The she-wolf illustrated on the following page is a rare Etruscan bronze, dating possibly from the sixth century B.C. Its early date indicates its
importance and the possible Etruscan origins of the story. The wolf image had a special appeal and relevance to Augustan mythology. The wolf was the sacred animal of Mars, the god of war and agriculture. Because Mars was the father of Romulus, he was the ancestor of Augustus (more about Mars and Augustus to follow). Like Mars, the war-god, the wolf had a cunning and savage nature. From the wolf the Romans believed they derived their aggressive nature. Like Mars, the god of agriculture, the wolf was nurturing, territorial, and withdrawn. The wolf is also known for its keen instincts and adaptability. The legend of the she-wolf, like those of the swan and the eagle, involves the Augustan family and Roman traditions.
The story of Romulus and Remus is yet another important Roman myth which involves an animal image and the Augustan family. The twins' parents were the god Mars and Rhea Silvia, a descendant of Aeneas. There had been a prophecy that Rhea Silvia would parent the next ruler of the land. Rhea's wicked uncle, Amulius, had usurped the rule from her father. To ensure that Rhea would remain childless, Amulius compelled her to become a Vestal Virgin. Legend says that Mars raped the Virgin and the twins resulted. Amulius ordered the babes to be drowned in the Tiber River. The receding waters of the river spared the children, who were found and nurtured by a she-wolf. A shepherd, Faustulus, then found the boys and raised them. They eventually grew up, killed the wicked Amulius, and restored the kingship to their grandfather. The young men each founded a city. Before long the brothers had a heated dispute and Romulus killed Remus. Romulus' town was to become the center of a world empire--Rome.

Romulus was proud of his nurture by the she-wolf and Augustus was in turn proud of his connections with the legend of the she-wolf and Romulus. At one point the young Octavian almost changed his name to Romulus. He was prevented because the name connoted impetuous kingship and fratricide, but he did restore the festival of Lupercalia (Latin lupus, wolf). This festival was believed to have originated in Arcadia, Greece, where there was an ancient festival in honor of Zeus Lucaeus (Greek lukos, wolf) (Grant 1971, 47). Michael Grant describes this celebration:
that extremely ancient and bizarre annual festival . . .
originally conducted by wolf-men (the later Luperci)
impersonating wolves so to exercise a magic control over
[the] scourges of the countryside. (1971, 47)

The Romans believed that a contingent of displaced Arcadians had
settled in central Italy shortly before the Trojan War. Their
leader, Evander, became a close ally of Aeneas. He aided Aeneas in
the wars with the hostile indigenous Italians. In this tradition
Evander's daughter became Aeneas' wife; thus the Augustan house
became fused with the rustic, wolf-worshipping Arcadians.

The connection between Rome and Arcadia is important in this
study because one aspect of Augustan reform was the attempt to revive
the spirit of Arcadia: the urbanized Romans had forgotten their
humble agrarian roots. "Idealized rural simplicity and withdrawal,
and simple happiness" (Homan 1980, 34) are evident in much of
Augustan art and literature. Horace's Odes and Virgil's bucolic
poetry are examples. The vivid portrayal of landscape and floral
designs in the Ara Pacis (Figs. 7-9) also are reminders of the
Arcadian spirit. The wolf was symbolic of this idyllic, romantic
state. As with other animal images of Augustan art, the wolf image
is far reaching and has profound underpinnings.
CHAPTER 5

ANIMALS IN THE AUGUSTAN RELIGIOUS REVIVAL

Early Roman religion centered around magical rituals, divinations, and the worship of *numina*, spirits associated with all things—animate and inanimate. Many rites focused around animals. To understand the unknown, even modern man looks to myths, dreams, and ritual. Animals frequently appear in a variety of religious relationships: auguries, omens, gods incarnate, and sacrifices. Again there is a great variety of images and applications and, in addition, great complexity. The intent of Augustan art and literature was not only to rekindle a basis for religious fervor but also to remind the Romans that they owed their many successes to the gods. References to sacred animals emphasize the traditions and the viability of the old religion. As a result of urbanization, corruption, greed, and foreign influences, Roman religion had long been trivialized, debased, and dispirited.

Religious revival was one of the major components of Augustan reform. Augustus hoped to remind people that their future depended on holding to the traditions of religion. He wanted the people to have an active interest in religion. Since there was no division of church and state, Roman politics and religion were uniquely and inextricably bound to each other; consequently, religious reform was
essential for political stability.

Roman religious reform was led by Augustus, complete with significant animal trappings. In the year after the *Ara Pacis* was commissioned (12 B.C.), Augustus was selected by the Senate as the state's chief priest, the Pontifex Maximus. Augustus, repeatedly depicted on monuments as a priest, is also sometimes represented by the person of Aeneas in art and literature as a priest either about to sacrifice or in a religious procession (Figs. 5, 17, 18). It is common throughout Vergil, Homer and classical art to have prominent individuals make sacrifice.

![Fig. 17. Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus, c. 100 B.C., H. 8m. B 3m., Staatlich Antikensammlungen, Munich. (Bandinelli 1970, 56)](image)

Although Augustus could trace his family genealogy back to Jupiter, Venus, and Mars, the emphasis of Augustan religious reform was not in anthropomorphism but in personal religious experience. Caesar did not rest on his family background and reputation as an important citizen; his contribution to the religious revival was active. In his *Res Gestae* Augustus recounts that he had many temples
built in Rome (Sandys 1919, 268). At these temples priests regularly conducted animal sacrifices and practiced divination. Leading by example, Augustus hoped to revitalize the national religious conscience through works based on the animistic practices of the old Italic religion.

To understand the importance of the animal imagery in this religious revival presupposes a knowledge of the nature of Roman religion. Cyril Bailey identifies four aspects of religion in Vergil: primitive magic and superstition, animism of the old Italic religion, Greco-Roman anthropomorphism, and Greek philosophy (1935, 17). The growing importance of the oriental religions in Rome is deliberately downplayed and even mocked by Vergil and Augustus, although the eventual supremacy of one, Christianity, was soon to come. Of these various strains of religious ideas circulating in Rome, Vergil and
Augustus favored the old Italic religion which depended heavily on ritualistic sacrifice and divination.

The religious spiritualism of sacrifice and divination was a driving force behind Augustan art and literature. Rooted in primitive religion and magic, divination played a great part in Augustan religious reform. Bailey adds that "the sense of higher powers behind the occurrences of life, which is the essential of an animistic religion was to Virgil [and Augustus] a vivid reality" (1935, 29).

Arthur Pease defines Roman divination as:

prediction by supernatural means of future events and interpretation of past occurrences. . . . [Divination] is based on a concept that the soul of the prophet is in open contact with the whole world around him. (Hammond and Scullard 1978, 356)

As these examples illustrate, Roman divination seems to be based on so-called primitive notions of animism and sympathetic magic.

Of course, animals figured prominently in Roman prophecies. Many omens, auguries and haruspicities often centered on the idea that the gods manifest prophecy through the behavior or the aspects of birds or sacrificial animals. The Romans learned from the Etruscans the art of haruspicy. In this practice entrails (especially sheep's livers) were inspected and consulted concerning a range of questions.

Many examples could have been effectively used to illustrate the principles of animal imagery in divination. Since various aspects of animal divination are used extensively in art and literature, only major examples that are typical and significant are used in the following passages.

In the Aeneid the twin doves (Venus' birds) were the subject
of prophecy. The Sibyl told Aeneas that his descent to the under-
world would be delayed until he produced a golden bough from a vast
forest. Later, Aeneas was in the forest and prayed to his mother,
Venus; twin doves appeared:

So he spoke and slowed pace to observe what the signs might bring,
And where the birds moved. They fed, as they flew, at intervals,
Not advancing beyond the sight of the men who followed. (VI 197-200)

Sic effatus, vestigia pressit
observans quae signa ferant, quo tendere pergant.
Pascentes illae tantum prodire volando,
quantum acie possent oculi servare sequentum.

Like a Roman augur, Aeneas paid particular attention to the movement
of the birds. He was careful not to get too close and influence
their god-driven behavior. The twin doves soon led Aeneas to the
golden bough.

The role of the recipient of prophecy seems to be at least
analogous to primitive shamanism and magic. The practice of divina-
tion relies on inspired priests to act as mediums. Bailey elaborates:

Prophecy might be given by the spoken word of a specially gifted
human being, or by an animistic spirit, such as a nymph or a
faun. . . . The Italian conception of prophecy thus belongs to
an animistic stage of religion; the seer is the important person
and he is thought of as having behind him the inspiration of a
divine spirit. (1935, 24, 25)

The role of Aeneas as an augur certainly reflects the old Italic
nature worship. The idea that the seer is exceptional would further
enhance Aeneas' role as a spiritual leader and, by association,
Augustus' role as well.

Early in the Aeneid the prophetic importance of the Lavinian
sow (Figs. 3, 7, 19) is revealed to Aeneas by Helenus, a fellow
Fig. 19 Ara Pacis, detail of the Lavinian sow.  
(Bandinelli 1970, 188)

exiled Trojan:

When you in your sadness shall find near the rush of a lovely Stream a huge sow lying under the oaks on the bank With a litter of thirty just farrowed, all white like their mother, Round her teats, that place shall be the site of your city, Sure respite from labors.  (3. 389-393)

Cum tibi sollicito secreti ad fluminis undam litoreis ingens inventa sub ilicibus sus, triginta capitum fetus enixa, jacebit, alba, solo recubans, albi circum ubera nati, is locus urbis erit, requies ea certa laborum.

After the Trojans' arrival in Italy, the numen of the Tiber River itself, Tiberinus, appears to Aeneas in a dream and reiterates the prophecy of the sow, now about to be fulfilled:

And lest this seem the figment of a dream, Upon the shore beneath oak trees shall lie A huge sow who has farrowed thirty pigs. White she lies on the ground; the young that suck Her teats are white.  Your city shall stand here, A certain rest from labors.  (Aen. 8. 42-46)
iamque tibi, ne vana putes haec fingere somnum,
litoreis ingens inventa sub ilicibus sus
triginta capitum fetus enixa iacebit,
alba, solo recumbans, albi circum ubera nati.
hic locus urbis erit, requies ea certa laborum.

C. J. Fordyce comments on the repetition of this prophecy and the
nearly exact wording of both passages:

What is even more remarkable than the repetition of the
prophecy is that it is repeated in the same words. . . .
Verbatim repetition on this scale is rare in the poem and this
repetition is the more striking since the point of the prophecy
is different in the two passages. (1977, 209)

This rare, striking repetition of passages seems quite intentional.
Although Fordyce further suggests that Vergil does it out of conven­
ience (1977, 210), surely there are other reasons. Emphasis seems a
logical motive, since this is such an important event. Perhaps
Vergil is purposely echoing Homer, whose oral epics relied heavily
upon extended formulaic passages. Perhaps also such exact repetitions
reflect the formulaic, ritualistic nature of Roman religion, where
the ability to duplicate incantations and procedures was cardinal.
After all, the sow represents the essence of prophecy and sacrifice
in Roman religion.

The fact that the Lavinian sow is significant in the Aeneid
and on the Ara Pacis has some interesting general overtones. Con­
sidering the divine familial connections between Augustus and Aeneas,
the prophecy and sacrifice of the sow in art and literature are a
model for proper Roman conduct toward the gods. The episode
emphasizes the role of Augustus as a semi-divine prophet, an inter­
cessor for the people to restore piety and harmony. The fact that
the sign is a sow suggests the prolific bounty and the agrarian roots
of Rome. Also since the mother sow and her offspring are offered to Juno, through sympathetic magic there is the hope "to intensify [Juno's] mana (fertility)" (Hammond and Scullard 1978, 944) or, by association, Rome's mana.

With reference to the thirty piglets sacrificed with their mother, Tiberinus, the river spirit, prophesies to Aeneas:

Thirty years from now Ascanius [Aeneas' son, also known as Julus] will found the famous [city] Alba ["white"]. (Aen. 8. 47-48)

Ex quo ter denis urbem redeuntibus annis
Ascanius clari condet cognominis Albam.

The name Alba is thus connected back to these white pigs. Michael Grant suggests that the thirty piglets could mean thirty curiae, political divisions of Rome. He goes on to say that Indo-European mythologies are "full of animals sent by heaven to guide migrating tribes, and sometimes these are wild boars, which played a part in the warrior ideal" (1971, 77).

The prophecy and the sacrifice of the Lavinian sow are very important in Roman legend. Finding the sow indicates to Aeneas the very location where Rome shall be; this marks his long-awaited arrival—the beginning of a new age (not unlike the Augustan Age). This is a beautiful image of Aeneas enjoying the end of the journey and the fruits of his pietas—his austere loyalty in the fulfillment of divine obligation.

Although all of the animals represented in the Aeneid and the Ara Pacis have some religious significance, sacrificial animals have special roles in the traditional Roman religion that Augustus was attempting to revive. Cattle, sheep, and pigs were ritually slaughtered in sacrifices to glorify, propitiate, or otherwise honor
a god. Augustan art and poetry extol the solemn austerity of the ritual by depicting ceremonial objects and processions of priests, attendants and animals.

The inner sanctum of the Ara Pacis is decorated with carvings of wreathed bull skulls, symbols of successful sacrifice (Fig. 20).

Fig. 20. Ara Pacis, view from inside the precinct.
(Bandinelli 1970, 187)

Such ceremonial skulls, boukrania, were common religious motifs, as Figure 21 shows. The skull is entwined with the sacrificial fillet. In addition to being decorative motifs, these skulls are vivid reminders to the Romans. Augustus wanted the annual day of actual
sacrifice to be vividly remembered throughout the year. Since sacrificial animals were farm animals, the Romans seemed to have been showing appreciation for a source of food and labor, and for their agrarian roots. The repetitive pattern of the skulls is a reminder of the many successful sacrifices performed over the years, and thus these repeated skulls emphasize the religious tradition that made Rome great.

Vergil provides many vivid accounts of animal sacrifice. The following example illustrates a detailed account of such a ritual: Aeneas and the Sibyl are about to embark on the dangerous descent to
Hades. To assure a successful journey they make sacrifice to the
gods of the underworld:

The priestess first stationed here four black bullocks
And poured wine upon their foreheads. Between their horns
She cut off the bristles and laid them in sacred fire,
First fruits of her worship. She called upon Hecate, mighty
In heaven, and Erebus. Others slashed the bulls' throats
And collected their warm blood in bowls. Aeneas himself
Dispatched with a sword a black lamb to the mother of Furies,
Black Night, and to her great sister, Earth, and to you,
Proserpina, sacrificed a cow that was barren.
Then he began the nocturnal rites to Jove Stygian
And laid on the flames the entire bodies of bulls,
Pouring fat oil on the entrails that hissed as they burned.
(Aen 6. 243-254)

Quattuor hie primum nigrantis terga juvencos
constituit, frontique invergit vina sacerdos,
et summas carpens media inter cornua saetas
ignibus imponit sacris, libamina prima,
voce vocans Hecaten, caeloque Ereboque potentem.
Supponunt alii cultros, tepidumque cruorem
suscipient pateris. Ipsa atrī velleris agnam
Aeneas matri Eumenidum magnaeque sororī
ense ferit sterilemque tībi, Proserpina, vaccam.
Tum Stygio regi nocturnas incohat aras,
et solida imponit taurorum viscera flammis,
pingue super oleum infundens ardentibus extis.

This passage illustrates Vergil's (and Augustus') love of sacrifice
and ritual. It also shows that Roman sacrifice was highly formalis-
tic, ritualistic. Successful sacrifice depended upon strict
adherence to specific phraseology and procedures. Frank Fletcher
further comments on this passage.

The detailed account of the sacrifice . . . is part of what
MacKail calls "the elaborate preparation for the main theme" of
the book, the descent through Hades. The sacrificial ritual is
partly Homeric; e.g., the wine poured on the forehead of the
victims and the hairs plucked off and thrown into the flame.
(1972, 49)

Thanks to Vergil's penchant for furnishing details, passages like
this act as major sources for the graphic details of the ritual.
Of course, Roman sculpture also provides information about animal sacrifice. As already mentioned, the *Ara Pacis* depicts Aeneas about to sacrifice the Lavinian sow. Also, a procession of sacrificial cattle is shown in the inner precinct of the altar. Included for a clearer view of processions are two sculptural panels (Figs. 17-18) of carvings. Although the styles contrast, the subjects of both panels correspond—ceremonial sacrificial processions.

Both reliefs depict the *suovetaurilia*, the ritual slaughter of the major sacrificial animals (pig, sheep, and bull) to Mars. Heinz Kahler suggests that the priest at the altar (Fig. 18) with his toga ceremonially draped over his head is the emperor (1963, 83).

Kahler further elaborates on this frieze:

In May 14 A.D., only three months before his death, Augustus . . . held a census and, in accordance with ancient custom, concluded it with the traditional sacrifice. This act was closely connected with the fortieth anniversary of the day on which he had been granted the title of Augustus. It was the last official act which he mentions in the *Res Gestae*, and the monument of which the relief in the Louvre formed a part must have been executed very soon after his death to commemorate it. (1963, 83)

These panels vividly represent the detail of sacrifice. The animals, raised for outstanding physical qualities and demure demeanor, await death patiently. The vivid details, described by Vergil, are visible here: knives, wine beakers, and blood bowls.

According to the Oxford Classical Dictionary, "the prehistoric nature of blood sacrifice makes its origins [and nature] difficult to know" (Hammond and Scullard 1978, 944). The only possible avenue to understanding its longstanding appeal is somehow to reconstruct the primitive mentality. Bailey further explains:
And if we ask why these old Italian traditions were dear to [Vergil and Augustus], it is not, I think, fanciful to believe that in their vague suggestion of the presence of supernatural forces in the world and in man's life, they come nearer to [Vergil's and Augustus'] own religious thought than the more clear-cut figures and customs of anthropomorphism. (1935, 303)

It was much in Augustus' interest to revive a bit of the primitive mentality, especially since so much of the Roman culture was deeply rooted in the primitive.

The original nature of sacrifice has been so mollified and modified (perhaps mostly by Christians) that spiritual effects have been preserved in art and literature, not in personal experience.

Carl Jung puts it another way:

Most of us have consigned to the unconscious all the fantastic psychic associations that every object or idea possesses. The primitive, on the other hand, is still aware of these psychic properties; he endows animals, plants, or stones with powers that we find strange and unacceptable. (1964, 30)

Augustus saw animism as true spiritualism. Anthropomorphism only masked direct divine communion. Sacrificial animals in Augustan art seem to symbolize primitive animism.
 Although the Romans were one of the most syncretic and eclectic societies in history, they never abdicated their individual character. It was no surprise that their society exhibited the effects of change, considering that within 600 years it evolved from simple farming to controlling a world empire. In the late Republic the incipient Empire began to flood Rome with myriad images from religion, politics, and mythology. Roman use of animal imagery is a credit to their society, in that they could take the best of all influences and turn them to their own advantage. Augustan Rome carefully retained only those images which best fit Roman traditions. Their stories may well be shrouded by incalculable chronology, spurious family claims, and false etymologies; however, the fact that these legends represent fundamental Roman beliefs greatly affected how the Romans viewed themselves. Consequently, such legends also greatly affected the history of the world.

The Augustan art and literature examined in this paper may exhibit stylistic debts to Greece or the Hellenistic world, but the intent and the content of these works reflect the tribal politics and animistic religion of central Italy. After Augustus the floodgates broke and there was a proliferation of new contexts for old images.
(the Christian church was quick to tap the rich traditions of Roman animal imagery).

The study of Roman sculpture and epic poetry, although not by any means exhaustive, has shown how the Augustan image was enhanced and confirmed by animal imagery. The range and the dimensions of the animal allusions are a fascinating reflection of the Classical world. It is no coincidence that the imagery of the Augustan house and of Roman traditions merge. The implementation and the articulation of these images by Augustus to establish the Golden Age are a credit to the imagination and creativity of mankind.
APPENDIX 1

PREHISTORIC ANIMAL IMAGERY

Most accounts of early Roman culture do not venture far before written documentation. Animal imagery in ancient civilizations surely has roots based far into prehistory. Archaeological and anthropological discoveries, combined with good common sense, reveal interesting ideas about man's image making. Many of these ideas bear heavily in the context of the animal imagery of the religion and politics of Caesar Augustus.

It is virtually impossible for the Romans not to have been profoundly affected by the practices and beliefs of their not so distant prehistoric predecessors. Although by the Augustan Age the Romans had achieved great sophistication and urbanization, even 300 years earlier most Romans lived close to the land as farmers and herdsmen. Even as late as 500 B.C. most central Italic peoples were illiterate and lived in crude huts in primitive tribal societies. Although the Romans had great abilities for imitation and adaptation, they had difficulty in surrendering their primitive beliefs.

Primitive indeed—there is evidence that humanlike beings have constructed tools and used fire for as long as 2,000,000 years. Mediterranean man surely was the end result of perhaps millions of years of evolution.

The account of man's image making is shrouded by these eons of prehistory, nevertheless certain inferences are possible. Primitive man, no doubt, lived very close to nature. As a result he probably had a very active imagination. Long before he actually produced objects, he noticed strange phenomena in his environment that were the seeds from which image making eventually evolved. It seems to be a universal human experience to see images and make visual associations. Often little imagination is needed to make associations when looking into shadows, clouds, fires, contours, and silouettes. These are all phenomena that suggested images. They all need no hand to be constructed, only the imagination. When one considers the literally millions of hours that man sat in the gloomy twilight hours and gazed at the ever changing cloud formations, shapes, and diminishing colors, it is easy to understand the birth of imagery. Early man was probably greatly influenced by memories, dreams, hallucinations, and deliriums. Another important image maker in very early times were footprints and tracks. These gave man a means to see deliberate pattern and identification.

At some point in time, basic tool making skills and primitive communication were invented. Both of these skills require a degree of sophistication and intelligence. The repetitive nature of both must have put a premium of value an accurate copying and imitation. The ability to copy and mimic is probably the single most important stage in the development of image making. Early peoples probably had some trouble distinguishing an image as being separate from the source. Therefore copying had the special significance that the copier (by this time perhaps a shaman) was considered able literally
to produce living things and thus was endowed with great power and control.

At some point the process of natural selection entered the world of man's image making practices. At least to the primitives themselves, copying or image making was considered somehow essential for the effective evolution of man. This must have been the case because image making was so important to the areas of life essential for survival: hunting rituals, religion, medicine, and bonding.

Although no substantial animal imagery remains from prehistoric times in Italy, it is instructive to consider a cave painting from nearby France (Fig. 22). Italy surely had a similar culture. This cave painting, replete with animal imagery, dates from about 15,000-13,000 B.C. It is easy to see that these images are a testament to eons of image making tradition. They exhibit sophistication and subtlety. The shaman-artist has imitated and supplemented the nature of the rock by using the suggestion of the horse head on the right from the natural contours of the rock. There is a magical quality to these paintings—the spots are rather random and abstract, a kind of artistic shorthand (Gardner 1976, 26). The artist makes natural bulges in the rock to suggest the round body of the animals. The hand prints are also fascinating. Are they the signature of the artist, ritualistic or playful? Are they the artist's fingerprints at all or a kind of cave man graffiti? Why are such well crafted images produced deep inside the ground? Such questions produce much scholarly bantering, although again certain inferences are possible.

Animal imagery probably played an essential role in the
in the ritualistic life of the primitives. These paintings were probably objects of sympathetic magic, dealing somehow with the basics of survival. By the ritualistic picturing of animals primitive man hoped to control his relationship with these animals. Being situated deep within a cave almost certainly rules out functions like pictures for decoration. Assuming they are magical, their function becomes complex. Then they are surely involved in ritualistic sacrifice or spiritual communication. These paintings could well have been produced in relation to a "Great Mother" religion. Painting deep within the earth, an archetypal mother symbol, evokes images of fertility, protection, and reverence. These images could be a form of hieroglyphic language directed to animal spirits or gods. The artist could be hiding from the spirit world; in creating images (and essentially new life) the artists may have had a need to withdraw from open view.

Whatever the purpose was for this painting, its mere existence seems to identify a society that used animal imagery as a means of expression. The context of this animal imagery does not seem much different in spirit from the animistic old Italic religion which Augustus was trying to revive. Early religions combine ritual and imagery to express the very essence of their beliefs. Carl Jung bases much of his system of psychology on such imagery:

Most of us have consigned to the unconscious all the fantastic psychic associations that every object or idea possesses. The primitive, on the other hand, is still aware of these psychic properties; he endows animals, plants, or stones with powers that we find strange and unacceptable.

Through formulaic symbolic rituals the shaman-priest appeases the great forces of nature. It is his skill in a balanced, orderly, and precise adherence to set patterns that brings a sense of predictability and stability to a world that otherwise is hostile and foreboding. To primitive man everything has a numen or a spirit of its own: animals, trees, mountains, waters, and winds. The spirits may be friendly, evil, or indifferent; the only way to be safe is to learn the ways of nature.

In the Aeneid, Evander describes the numen associated with the site of Rome:

Already at that time religious awe of the spot
Kept alarming the shivering farmers, already they trembled
At wood and at rock. 'This grove, this hill with its leafy Top is the home of a god: who he is I know not.
(Aen. 8.349-352)

To understand the universality of animism the following quote of
a Pawnee chief, Letakots-Lesa, seems quite to the point:

In the beginning of all things, wisdom and knowledge were with the animals; for Tirawa, the One Above, did not speak directly to man. He sent certain animals to tell men that he showed himself through the beasts, and that from them and from the stars and the sun and the moon, man should learn. (Campbell, 1983, 12)
This section traces the general contributions to the Augustan animal imagery from Rome's cultural predecessors. This appendix alone, if treated in depth at all, would be voluminous. Overwhelming complexity bears heavily here. Not only did the Roman Empire include a large geographic area, but it encompassed many of the oldest and most sophisticated ancient societies. There has been much confusion concerning which cultures influenced which and in what ways.

There appear to have been four major contributing sources to Roman animal imagery: native Italy, Etruria, Greece, and the Near East. Bandinelli identifies two general misconceptions concerning the sources of Roman art:

First, there is a belief that art throughout the Roman epoch was simply Greek art under Roman domination. Second, there is the tendency to see Roman art as a direct product of some specifically Roman creative spirit, or even of the Roman 'race' (however mixed its composition), which, so the argument runs, must have set up a strong reaction against any contact with the Hellenistic cultural tradition: a reaction aimed, consciously or unconsciously, at preserving the ethnic elements in Roman art. (1970, xi)

What appears actually to have happened is a melting pot effect, brought about by the various historical realities of conquest and trade in the Mediterranean basin. Depending on one's point of view, much or little can be attributed to any one area concerning contributions to the animal imagery of Imperial Rome. By the time of the Augustan Age the so called Roman tradition had been so amalgamated with the eastern provinces that often the Romans themselves could not distinguish their own traditions. The major trends of the traditions of eastern animal imagery follow.

Without a doubt the Greeks exerted the greatest outside influence over Augustan animal imagery. The similarities between the two cultures and the religions, and the proximity of the two areas contributed to this close relationship. At the same time that older Greek civilization was having extended contacts with other advanced cultures (Egypt and the Near East), Rome remained isolated and backward. When the two cultures came into contact during the Greek colonial period (after 800 B.C.), the Romans assimilated great parts of the Greek mythology and religion rich with animal imagery. Beginning with Homer (or perhaps the Minoans) Greek art and literature contained many stories of animals, for example: the Trojan horse, Hercules' Nemean lion and Hades' Cerberus. These and many more Rome readily adopted and adapted. Behind every animal story the Greeks fashioned lessons for humans about heroes, gods, or life in general. Chapter 3 contains much material on the Greco-Roman connection.
Before Rome was even a small town, the Etruscans had an advanced civilization that encompassed all of central and northern Italy. The Etruscan language is still undeciphered; much of our knowledge of this people comes by way of Etruscan art (The She-Wolf of Rome is an excellent example [Fig. 16]). Sometimes with ruthlessness Etruscan kings dominated Rome until the Roman Republic was founded in 509 B.C.

Bandinelli explains some important sources of Etruscan culture:

[Etruscan] economic power had led to the development of a civilization formed largely through regular contact with countries in the Eastern Mediterranean where artistic motifs that went back to the end of the second millenium B.C., derived from Mesopotamian, Hittite or Caucasian cultural patterns, still flourished. These motifs were spread abroad as a result of trade with Cyprus, Phoenicia, Egypt, and later, above all, with Greece. (1970, 5)

Etruscan contributions to Roman animal imagery include bronzes (The She-Wolf of Rome and the famous Chimera), terra cotta sculptures, and richly painted burial chambers.

The Near East had a great influence over Roman animal imagery in many ways, some direct others indirect. As just mentioned the Greeks and the Etruscans had had extended contacts with the East, and these influences indirectly affected Roman imagery long before Romans went east. Greek art had had an "Orientalizing Period" (c. 800-600 B.C.). John Boardman describes the "Oriental" influence:

Animals are the predominant motif, not just ordinary animals like lions, goats, bulls and birds—but new monsters taken for the East—sphinxes, griffins and similar creatures. They are portrayed in new ways—their bodies fill out, jaws gape, tongues loll and muscles bulge. (1964, 48, 49)

This Orientalized Greek art found its way to Rome through Greek and Etruscan sources. The full impact of Eastern influences is difficult to know, some scholars feel that Greek originality is nothing more than a masked Oriental style.

The other great influx of images came when Rome began having direct contact with the Near East, at first through trade but finally through conquest. The third and second centuries B.C. saw Rome's rise to dominance with victories throughout the Mediterranean. During this Hellenistic Period a new openness for the exchange of goods and ideas was prevalent everywhere. The Hellenistic religions which accompanied goods and conquest to Rome brought strange new images. Animals figured dominantly in various aspects of the religions of the East: the taurobolium of Magna Mater, the sacred blood sacrifices of Mythraism, the animalic Egyptian pantheon, and Babylonian astrology.
APPENDIX 3

STUDIO ART COMPONENT

The studio art component of this interdisciplinary master's program involved a year long painting tutorial directed by James Todd. Professor Todd has provided great impetus for my art work this year. He taught me valuable lessons in my search for better understanding and expressing my ideas. He helped me to see my own work in a new perspective, to be more patient, and to push the paintings to higher degrees of refinement. He also made me become concerned with the isolation and the simplification of forms and spaces in my painting. Through his unwavering insistence on attention to detail, I learned to express better the kinds of images that I have always wanted to put forth in oil paint. There are many intrinsic difficulties in attempting to paint spiritual and psychological portraits; Professor Todd showed me that the more convincing the illusion is, the more the viewer is likely to become involved and to understand the painting.

Animal imagery has long been the focus of my art. The animal imagery involved in my thesis research and class work often directly corresponded and, consequentially, influenced the studio art that I was working on at the same time. The disciplines fed off of each other—the Latin and art history classes gave an intellectual basis to animal imagery; at the same time the studio art enabled me to understand the intellectual basis by the personal, emotional experience of painting.

The paintings illustrated in this appendix (Figs 23-26) share in my attempts to depict fantasy, mystery, and spiritual awe through animal imagery. Throughout there is much overlap of my own world view and of the spiritual realities of aspects of the old-Italic animistic religion. The paintings should be considered as relating to the thesis as a whole. To some viewers, these paintings perhaps seem inspired more by the "modern" art movements of surrealism and, ironically, so-called primitive art. I am not sure that my art could be classified as surrealistic or primitive, but animistic allusions in my art certainly parallel and are not contradictory to similar concerns in surrealism or primitivism. I do not mean to imply that these paintings are intended merely to mimic Roman animism, but rather to draw from the same source of inspiration—the great force which drives nature. Arnold Hauser further explains:

For animism divides the world into a reality and a super-reality, a visible phenomenal world and an invisible world of spirits, a mortal body and an immortal soul. (1951, 15)

As with much art, there is a dual world that invites the viewer out of the mundane here and now, and into psychological and spiritual landscapes.

The essential nature of painting is sensory, therefore paintings should stand by their visual qualities of technique and subject matter. The descriptions of the paintings which follow consist of a few of my
own thoughts, concerns, and intentions; ultimately, however, the paintings must and should speak for themselves. Since a great part of this thesis already has dealt with many relationships and associations of animal imagery in spiritual and psychological contexts, it must suffice that general references to animal imagery in the text of the thesis apply with respect to these paintings as well (this is especially important regarding the swan and eagle).

A dreamlike otherworldliness is an intended effect in all four works illustrated in this appendix. These paintings, each in its own way, are meant to refer to the dual nature of the world—the spiritual and the material. To depict dream realities as vividly as possible is an attempt by me, on the one hand, to illustrate aspects of my own personal psychology, and on the other hand, to clarify a spiritual reality by physical, two-dimensional illusion. The Romans regarded dreams as divinely inspired messages from the gods.

Since the subject matter of two of the works included (Figs. 23, 26) represent actual dreams I had, the images and symbols came not from conscious manipulation of thoughts on my part, but rather the subject matter was determined by the unconscious dream world. In the first painting (Fig. 23) I dreamed that I was a great eagle gliding in flight with another eagle over a beautiful landscape distinguished by a clean, round lake. Many of the general associations dealing with eagles seem to apply here (Chap. 4). The two eagles suggest various dualities, especially dealing with bonding. The "lake" area in the bottom, I purposely made a rather indistinct white circular shape. I did this because some people see it as a lake, but others see it as an open space through a rock cliff. Aniela Jaffe describes the psychic associations of the circle, as I believe the lake represents:

[It is] a symbol of the Self. It expresses the totality of the psyche in all its aspects, including the relationship between man and the whole of nature. Whether the symbol of the circle appears in primitive sun worship or modern religion, in myths or dreams, . . . it always points to the single most vital aspect of life—its ultimate wholeness. (Jung 1964, 266)

A great concern in this painting was a simple, direct presentation, uncluttered by distracting details. Even the eagles take on a more generalized "bird-like" quality.

The painting *Ara Pacis Montanae* hearkens back to the acanthus panels on the Roman monumental sculpture, the *Ara Pacis* (cf. Figs. 9, 24). I made a conscious attempt to imitate the Roman themes of teeming life, Arcadian nature worship, and animistic spiritualism. I added the word *Montanae* (of Montana) because instead of copying the Roman model I used some Montana wildflowers and plants. There are subtle spiritual allusions in the *Ara Pacis* of Augustus dealing with the intensity of being in all things, animism, that is important in this work. The *Ara Pacis*' celebration of animism uses Greek realism and attention to detail to create what I call "Roman Surrealism."

A secondary theme deals with the fact that nature is not allowed
boundless proliferation. There is a set pattern and finite boundary to which this design conforms—not unlike Augustus' Pax Romana (Roman Peace) where there was peace throughout the empire, but individual freedoms were limited by Roman law and order. Painting on wooden panels (Figs. 24, 25) presented certain possible conflicts dealing with the light and dark patterns of the wood grain and of the painted images. Some of the techniques of Norwegian tole painting were particularly helpful in painting on wood: economical repetitive strokes, value contrast, and double loaded brushes. Painting on wooden panels was a common practice through the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance; since many of the paintings during those periods had special spiritual associations, I felt the wooden panels shared in that spirit.

I constructed the wooden panel for the Apotheosis of Augustus (Fig. 25) with particular attention to the linear elements of the end panels of the Ara Pacis (Fig. 5). There are vivid descriptions of the details of the ceremonial cremation of a wax effigy of Roman emperors (the actual cremation preceded this public funeral) (Ferguson 1970, 97). In this ceremony an actual eagle was released from a chamber on top of the huge pyre. The overt theme, of course, deals with the (tenuous) Roman belief in the resurrection and deification of the emperor. Augustus' wife, Livia, supposedly initiated the practice of releasing the eagle. Here the eagle represents the deified emperor, but also the eagle has extensive symbolic associations with Jupiter and the Roman state (Chap. 4). The eagle and the apotheosis seem to symbolize, in a more general sense, man's consciousness and his spiritual abilities to transcend the material world by thought. There is an intended element of humor in this painting that involves the folly of man—false hopes and aspirations on not just immortality but also deification. If the emperor, a mortal man, is deified and lifted into heaven, then is there the possibility of the same for the common man?

The Last of the Species (Fig. 26) pokes a bit of fun at the world of psychology. As mentioned earlier, this was a vivid dream I experienced a few years ago—the image remained vivid. This painting, upon much reflection and investigation on my part, turns out to be a caricature of psychology in general and especially of my own psychic world. The animals and the landscape can be seen to depict different aspects of the human psyche. The superego (the woolly mammoth) protects the self (the people inside [myself included]) from the harsh environment of the unconscious (the tiger-creatures, fire, and darkness). The entire picture becomes autobiographical—the people, the beasts, and even the landscape represent aspects of my mind. In a personal interview concerning the psychological associations of the imagery in this painting, Dr. John Means of the University of Montana Psychology Department told me that "we all have beasts and hot spots in our lives that we must deal with." This painting represented a breakthrough in my skill level as an artist. The painstaking detail required to create the illusion entailed many backtracks and corrections, but as a result I learned not to regard any part of a painting as indispensible.
Fig. 23. *Eagle Dream*, 1987, oil on masonite, H. .7 m B. .5 m.
Fig. 24. *Ara Pacis Montanae*, 1988, oil on oak plywood, H. .45 m. B. .40 m.
Fig. 25. *Apotheosis of Augustus*, 1988, oil on oak, H. .6 m. B. .8 m.
Fig. 26. *Last of the Species*, 1987, oil on masonite, H. .6 m. B. .8 m.
1. Understandably some of the statements of Augustus' success and popularity are disputable. He used some of the ruthless methods to assure his power that other powerful Romans had: military might, proscriptions, and political intrigue. Also, the degree of success of some of Augustus' cultural reform measures was tenuous; it has always been difficult effectively to reform religion or political movements.

2. Conspicuously limited as emblems of power in Augustan art are images of the bull and the lion. It might be expected that the eclectic Romans would incorporate these traditional images of royal power from Greece and, especially, the East. Augustus seemed consciously to limit or diminish the role of these two animals in art. Lions and bulls appear in quite specific roles in Augustan art and literature (see notes 3, 7). The bovine is depicted extensively in Roman art as the object of sacrifice, but not as a representative or symbolic of a god. The lion is usually associated only with Hercules and the cult of the Emperors (see note 3). The paucity of these images is significant because it illustrates the selectively eclectic quality of Augustan programs. Perhaps Augustus avoided the lion and bull because they represented the kingly power of Eastern despots. Maybe it was because these two animals represented savage, instinctive, and brutal power. Perhaps also, since these two animals regularly appeared in brutal displays in the Colosseum, the emperor wanted to avoid such immediate brutal associations.

3. There is a broad tangential theme that pervades classical literature and art that deals with animal and human confrontations. The genre depicts man, by wit or device, overcoming an animal-beast. There are allusions to both the physical and the intellectual evolution of man away from the instinctive beast within himself to a rational, compassionate being. As Hercules subdues the Nemean Lion (or Cacus), Odysseus outwits Polyphemus, or Romulus and Remus are reared by the she-wolf, there are common threads of the theme of man's triumph over, or, at least, progress away from the "animalic irrational" (John Madden 1980. "Greek Art and Archaeology") Michael Grant says that the Labors of Hercules "equal Augustus' struggles against anarchy" (1971, 57). The lion skin draped over the shoulders of emperors recalls these allusions.

4. Lessing presents an interesting case comparing art (the Laocoon statue) and poetry (Vergil's Aeneid). His work reflects considerable thought and scholarship. However, in some respects his
comparison is fraught with tenuous conclusions because he bases his conclusions on the uncertain dating of the Laocoon group. Instead of really comparing the two works systematically, he is forced to create hypothetical situations concerning which work predates, and thus influenced, the other. In comparing the Ara Pacis with the Aeneid many of the same problems are circumvented; the Ara Pacis undoubtedly was greatly influenced by Vergil, since it is well documented that the Ara Pacis was commissioned six years after the completion of the Aeneid.

5. These kinds of comparisons using animal imagery may be very difficult for many moderns to comprehend in a meaningful way. Ancient man had close, daily familiarity with animals through religion, hunting, and farming. As perhaps the first moderns, some of the urban Romans may have had the same problem of trying to relate to references not in their sphere of experience.

6. To great avail modern psychology rediscovered the important psychological associations of the animal imagery in classical religions and myths. In Jung's investigations into the unconscious mind, animal imagery repeatedly is used as a bridge to self understanding. Images seem to be the mind's symbolic language.

7. There is an epic wrongheadedness or what the Romans called Furor. The simile of Achilles, like a lion, parallels similar kinds of animal comparisons in the Aeneid. Even Aeneas never fully transcends savage impulses. When he duels Turnus at the end of the Aeneid, Vergil likens them to enraged bulls who "with all of their might / slash at each other and butt with their horns". . .(12.724-725). This image of Aeneas is an example of a Vergilian paradox, where heroes display behavior contrary to the Augustan ideals of order, harmony, and peace. As alluded to in Notes 2 and 3 the lion, bull, wolf, and other animals as well sometimes represent the savage, chaotic, or the irrational side of man.

8. Since the rediscovery of the Ara Pacis in 1518 and its reconstruction in 1937, the monument has been the subject of great controversies. In an illuminating article Stefan Weinstock insists that there is no basis for naming the monument the Ara Pacis. He offers an alternative name, Ara Gentis Iuliae (Altar of the Julian Clan), because, he feels, the imagery deals primarily with the Augustan family and not peace. His premise has merit but he offers no conclusive proof. Stefan Weinstock. 1960. "Pax and the Ara Pacis" Journal of Roman Studies: 44f.. J.M.C. Toynbee responds to Weinstock's article with an eloquent apology, and scholarly bantering ensues. Although neither scholar is thoroughly convincing, their posturings are most illuminating. J.M.C. Toynbee. 1961. "The Ara Pacis Augustae." Journal of Roman Studies: 153.
9. Perhaps coincidentally, in Sanskrit the word *atman* means both swan and soul.

10. Since the subject matter of these two panels is the same, illusions of overlap, depth, and the treatment of the figure contrast well. The *Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus* reflects the native Italian sculptural tradition: oversized forms, little subtlety of definition, and "austerity" (Bandinelli 1970, 28). The panel from the Louvre displays elements of late Roman classicism: greater degree of realism, intricate relations of space, and elegant drapery.


Ellis, William. 1869. The Antiquities of Heraldry.


Suetonius. *De Vita Caesarum*.

