ON THE INTERSIGNIFICATION OF MONUMENTS IN AUGUSTAN ROME

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Scholars have long recognized that the erection of public monuments in Rome, from the middle Republic into the Augustan age, was an arena of intense competition. Roman aristocrats throughout this era commemorated successes, especially as magistrates and generals, by paying for and erecting temples, porticoes, honorific statues, arches, and so on. They also tended to select the location and form of their monuments to create a studied contrast with preexisting monuments. Thus, new monuments might seek to appropriate their predecessors’ prestige, or alternatively, to modify, reposition, or supersede these predecessors, leaving them and their dedicators in the shadow of the later, and allegedly greater, achievement.¹ The dynamics of reference, inclusion, modification, and appropriation that mark this competition via monumental forms stand in a potentially productive relationship with the concept of “intertextuality” as developed by scholars of Roman poetry over the past three or four decades. Comparison of and interchange between these approaches may produce some cognitive gain both for literary scholars and for those interested in the symbolic dimensions of the visual and built environment.

This comparison requires terminology that can apply to both literary and architectural/iconographical sign systems, or that allows these systems to be described in parallel ways. To this end, we could perhaps broaden the range of the term “intertextuality” to make it refer to iconographical and architectural phenomena as well as literary ones. Yet we

¹For such competition in the middle Republic, see, in general, Hölseskamp 2003, 221–26; 2004, 151–57. Specific cases: McDonnell 2006, 212–28; Hölscher 1980, 353. In the late Republic, the phenomenon is especially well documented for the era of Marius and Sulla: Hölscher 1980, 356–58, 369; 2001, 207–10; and Stein-Hölkeskamp (forthcoming). Roller 2010a, 156–63, discusses the building-and-demolition battles involving Cicero and Clodius in the 50s B.C.E. For Octavian/Augustus’ use of monuments to appropriate his rivals’ prestige or to outstrip them, see Zanker 1988, 37–42, 65–71. Orlin 1997, 66–72, downplays the competitive significance of temple vowing by Republican magistrates, emphasizing the consensus represented in senatorial grants of permission. Yet there are undoubtedly elements of both competition and consensus in these moves.
would have to be careful, at every point, to understand “textuality” in its broad, ecumenical, structuralist and poststructuralist sense of any interworked system of construable signs, so as not to privilege the literary over the visual. Alternatively, we could leave the term “intertextuality” to refer only to literary phenomena and employ a different term—say, “intersignification”—to label such phenomena in sign systems beyond the literary, or in systems of signification more generally. For this article, I adopt the latter approach, which seems to minimize the potential for confusion and ambiguity.

In the following pages, I present two case studies of Augustan-era monuments that involve inclusion of, reference to, or modification of pre-existing monuments, in whole or in part. I contend that the relationship of intersignification so established between the older and newer monuments produces, in each case, an implicit narrative that carries moral and political weight. Comparing the dynamics of monumental intersignification with those of literary intertextuality will reveal both similarities and differences in the ways that these sign systems make meaning. I conclude the article with some thoughts about the characteristics of intersignification in general: how later constellations of signs in any given sign system, and also across sign systems, encounter earlier constellations of signs and produce meaning from these encounters.

Let us turn to the first case study. In 260 B.C.E., early in the First Punic War, the consul Gaius Duilius defeated the Carthaginians in a naval battle off Mylae, a coastal town in northeastern Sicily. The story goes that this was not only the Romans’ first naval victory ever but also their first set naval battle, in which the Romans employed their first purpose-built fleet of warships. Three contemporary or near-contemporary monuments commemorated this victory. First, Duilius celebrated a so-called “naval triumph,” itself the first of its kind. Second, like many other mid-Republican commanders, he erected a temple—in this case, to Janus in the Forum Holitorium—presumably paid for from the spoils of victory.

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2This description of “textuality” is indebted to Geertz’s (1973, 14) definition of “culture.” However, this semiotic concept of “culture” as a system of signs, whose interpretation proceeds by analogy with reading a text, is widespread in structuralist and poststructuralist theory.

3This discussion derives from Roller 2009, 219–23, though expanded and with different emphasis; see 219, n. 11, for full sources.

4The differences between the regular triumph and the triumphus navalis (ten more are attested: InscrIt 13.1, 76–81, 548–56; list at 636) are somewhat obscure; Östenberg 2009, 46–50, provides discussion.
A major monument, this temple showed its dedicator’s concern to secure the *pax deorum* (i.e., to thank and credit the gods appropriately for their support) and to adorn the city with significant buildings. But it also specifically commemorated Duilius’ achievements: for it stood on the triumphal route, providing a backdrop to future triumphs and reminding later victors and spectators of this earlier victory and triumph. It also probably contained an inscription naming its dedicator and paintings illustrating the battle, thus linking the creation of the temple explicitly with this victory and victor.\(^5\) Third, Duilius devised a victory monument whose form was novel at the time: atop a podium stood a column, to which were affixed the bronze rams (*rostra*) of captured enemy ships; and atop this column stood a statue of the victor. The podium bore an inscription, a version of which survives; it narrates highlights of the battle, mentions the triumph, and quantifies the value of the spoils. This monument was erected near the *comitium* in the northwest corner of the Forum Romanum.\(^6\) Via his “naval triumph,” his temple to Janus and the rostral column, then, Duilius was commemorated as an exemplary performer of a great deed, a performance though which he displayed his military valor and his piety.

Now we leap ahead two and a quarter centuries. In 36 B.C.E., Octavian and Agrippa defeated Sextus Pompeius in a naval battle off Naulochos, which lies just 15 kilometers east of Mylae on the coast of Sicily. The sprawling scale of ancient naval combat makes it likely that the later battle took place on much the same stretch of sea as the earlier one. Appian says that Octavian’s victory was commemorated by a rostral column topped by a gilded honorific statue and bearing an inscription; this monument was erected in the Forum Romanum (its exact location within the forum is unspecified).\(^7\) Plainly, this column replicated the form of Duilius’ column, while surpassing it at least one respect (namely, the gilding of the statue); and, standing in at least the same general area, it

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\(^{7}\) App. *BCiv.* 5.130: ἐκ δὲ τῶν ἐφησικμένην τιμῶν ἐδέχετο . . . ἐπὶ κύκον εἰς ἁγορά χρύσους ἔσταιναι μετὰ σχήματος οὗτε ἐξ ἠθήλες, περικειμένων τῷ κύκνι νεῶν ἐμβόλων, καὶ ἐστηκέν ἢ εἰκόνι, ἐπιγραφήν ἔχουσα, ὡς "τὴν εἰρήνην ἐστασιασμένην ἐκ πολλοῦ συνέστησε κατὰ τε γῆν καὶ θάλασσαν."
must have invited comparison. Precisely such a monument is depicted on a denarius of Octavian dating to 29–27 B.C.E.; this is most probably, if not certainly, the Naульоχος monument. In the form and placement of his monument, then, Octavian claimed that his own naval victory bore significant comparison with the earlier one on the same battlefield—that his victory matched, indeed surpassed, its predecessor in terms of the valor displayed by the victor and the service provided to the res publica.

Yet the impressiveness of this claim depends upon Duilius being remembered as a glorious victor: for the better Duilius was, the better Octavian is in surpassing him. And indeed Octavian (or rather, Augustus) took pains to secure that memory. Consider first the inscription from Duilius’ column. Scholars have long recognized, from its letter forms and the luna marble on which it is inscribed, that it was carved no earlier than the Augustan period. In content and linguistic style, however, it clearly seeks to represent aspects of a presumed original of the third century B.C.E. Earlier generations of scholars entertained dates for this inscription as late as the reign of Claudius. In recent years, however, opinion has gravitated toward an Augustan date, with the (re)carving being understood in the context of Augustus’ wide-ranging restorations of older monuments and his general reconfiguration of the west end of the Forum Romanum. Augustus’ effort to ensure the survival of Duilius’ monument, and its legibility as an “old” monument in particular (complete with archaic or archaizing language on the restored inscription), has special point if, indeed, Augustus’ own rostral column derived meaning.

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8 For the effect produced by these columns’ relative proximity, see Bleckmann 2002, 119, 121; Sehlmeyer 1999, 256.
10 By appropriating the monuments and iconography of a famous victory over a feared external enemy, Octavian also parades his recent victory, won over Roman citizens, as a “normal” victory over foreigners—or, at the least, he occludes the distinction between civil and external war (so Bleckmann 2002, 121; Zanker 1988, 41–42). The inscription on his monument, as reported by Appian—“the peace, long disturbed by factional strife, he reestablished on both land and sea” (n. 7 above)—fully supports this effort by its vagueness, which bears instructive comparison to the Duilius inscription’s precise listing of the enemy, the commander, the booty, and so on.
12 Tac. Ann. 2.49: [sc. Tiberius] isdem temporibus deum aedes vetustate aut igni abolitas coeptasque ab Augusto dedicavit: . . . et Iano templum quod apud forum holitorium C. Duilius struxerat, qui primus rem Romanam prospere mari gessit et triumphum de Poenis meruit ("Around the same time Tiberius dedicated sanctuaries of the gods, destroyed by age or fire, whose restoration had been begun by Augustus: [four temples listed] . . . and the temple of Janus built in the Forum Holitorium by Gaius Duilius, who was the first to perform a military feat at sea and earned a naval triumph over the Carthaginians"). The elogium-like information on Duilius may have an epigraphic source—either an inscription in the temple, or perhaps the Forum Augustum elogium (see next note).

Beyond these restorations, Augustus also created an entirely new monument to Duilius: he included him in the gallery of "great men" (principes viri or summi viri) in the Forum Augustum, which was dedicated in 2 B.C.E. Surviving sculptural fragments indicate that the honorands were portrayed by marble statues slightly larger than life size. Beneath these statues were mounted elogia, inscriptions relating the achievements by which each honorand warranted inclusion in this exalted club. Duilius’ elogium from the Forum Augustum survives in a fragmentary but substantially reconstructible state: it describes his victory at Mylae and expressly refers to other monuments that likewise attest the amplitude of this achievement.13 Among the monuments so mentioned is Duilius’ rostral column with its statue: "for him a statue with a column was erected near the precinct of Vulcan" (n. 13, lines 5–6). The temple may also be mentioned here, if Chioffi’s bravura supplement of line 7 is correct (based on placing a fragment with a single sure letter): “From the booty he built

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13 For this elogium, see now the edition and discussion (with further references) by Chioffi, CIL 6.40952 (= vol. 6.8.3 (2000) p. 4858). Chioffi’s text is roughly as follows:

[———] 
[—] navis o[c]t[aginta et Macellam] 
[oppidum c]epit. pri[m]us d[e Poeneis n]aval[em trium] [- 
[phum egit. h]ui[c per[mis]um est ut ab e]pulis domum 
5 [cum tibici]ne e[t] [funali rediret. [ei s]tatua c[um] 
[aedem apud for][m] ho[litorium ex spoliis Iano fecit].

See Kondratieff 2004, 11 n. 40 for additional considerations and new suggestions for supplements in ll. 1–2.
a temple to Janus in the Forum Holitorium.” That Augustus so pointedly mentions these old monuments in this context—monuments already, or soon to be, restored—suggests not only his special interest in ensuring their survival but also his intention to anchor them firmly in the new monumental landscape that he was then creating.

This Augustan monumental landscape was, moreover, oriented toward Augustus’ own achievements. Augustus himself suggests (according to Suetonius) that he put forward the “great men” of the Forum Augustum as exempla for himself and other leading men to emulate; scholars further note that he himself claimed, at least implicitly and in other contexts, to have surpassed these legendary men’s achievements.\(^{14}\) The elogium for Duilius, in referring to the old rostral column/statue and (possibly) the temple of Janus, not only reminded its Augustan-era and later viewers of Duilius’ achievements and of their prior commemoration in monumental form, but also invited them to go and see those monuments for themselves: thus, Augustus places himself and these viewers on the same level as admirers and potential emulators of the exemplary hero. Furthermore, those monuments were there to be seen because they had been restored, which these viewers would no doubt notice, and ponder Augustus’ piety and reverence toward this ancient hero. But they would also notice the Naulochos monument, that close imitator of Duilius’ column, and recognize Augustus’ claim to a greater achievement. Thus the new Augustan monuments—the Naulochos column and the Forum Augustum statue and elogium—work together to provide a new frame for the two old (but restored) monuments and draw them into a new, teleological story. Duilius’ victory is decisively confirmed as a great achievement, but is at the same time positioned as a precursor (see below) to Octavian’s allegedly similar yet greater victory.

In the play of intersignification among these monuments, we can point to specific effects that resemble the intertextual strategies by which poets position themselves relative to predecessors. Let us proceed from a greater to a lesser degree of “exactness” of reference to the predecessor. We have seen that the Augustan monumental program incorporates the Duilian originals themselves, more or less unchanged (as far as restora-

\(^{14}\)Suet. Aug. 31.5: professus et edicto: commentum id se, ut ad illorum < . . . > velut ad exemplar et ipse, dum viveret, et inequentium aetatum principes exigerentur a civibus (“and he declared in an edict that he had thought it up [the gallery of great men], so that he himself, as long as he lived, and leading men of later ages might be measured against these men’s <?standard>, as though against a paradigm, by the citizens”; cf. RG 8.5); discussion by Spannagel 1999, 326–44; Frisch 1980.
tion allows), while giving these originals a new frame and context. To include a predecessor in this way has an authorizing effect analogous to a later poet quoting an earlier poet’s exact words, as Conte argues. For by inclusion and quotation, an upstart looking to enter some field of competitive endeavor shows he has selected an exemplary model; and by bringing himself into the same plane and focus as the model, he seeks to appropriate some of the model’s prestige and credibility. A looser form of reference is on display when Octavian creates a new monument—the Naulochos monument—that closely reproduces the elements and form of an earlier monument. This is, perhaps, the monumental analogue of a literary situation in which a later poet reworks a particular passage of an earlier poet, incorporating particular loci and elements of the original structure in order to make the reference clear. In such a case, the successor is, as it were, merging his own voice with his predecessor’s, but with the ultimate aim of making a different and grander claim. Most distant in form and iconography from any preceding Duilian monument is the statue and elogium in the Forum Augustum. Honorific statue and text are, of course, present on Duilius’ rostral column, but here Augustus has eliminated the other elements—the rostra and the column—and thereby placed the two remaining elements in a completely different relationship to one another. He has also placed them in a new visual and programmatic context overall, namely, a series of other such statues and elogia within the gallery of principes viri. The semantics of honorific monumentality are entirely recognizable in the Forum Augustum statue and elogium honoring Duilius, but more by virtue of their participation in a genre than in their close mimesis of the elements and syntax of a particular model. Here, the literary analogue may be the author who simply chooses to write in the same genre as some predecessor. Hinds has argued that such intertextual strategies, whether more “exact” or less, allow poets to configure their predecessors as “precursors.” This means that they not only create space for themselves in a poetic tradition, but also configure that tradition teleologically, to make it point to themselves

15 Conte 1986, 57–60, 69–71, analyzes direct quotation of Ennius in Ovid, and of Lucilius in Persius: “The dominant function here is the ‘authentication’ of a new text by an authoritative old one” 59. (And so I have just done myself, by quoting Conte: for in scholarship too, the intertextual strategies of quotation, paraphrase, and attribution are means of authentication and authorization, and such activity usually takes place in footnotes.)

16 On tighter and looser degrees of intertextual connection, see, e.g., Conte 1986, 66–67; Conte and Barchiesi 1989, 93–95; and Hinds 1998, 52–55.

as a presumptive acme. Augustus’ engagement with Duilius produces a similar teleological effect in the arena of competition for military glory, a competition carried out first on the battlefield and then—perhaps more importantly—through the erection of monuments. The sign system that communicates this monumental meaning is not literary, however, but iconographical, architectural, and topographical.

My second case study is quite different, involving a building known as the porticus Liviae. Cassius Dio describes this monument’s genesis as follows (Dio Cass. 54.23.1, 5–6).

In that same year [15 B.C.E.] Vedius Pollio died, a man offering nothing worthy of remembrance, since he stemmed from freedmen, arrived in the equestrian order, and did no brilliant deeds, but who did gain renown for his wealth and cruelty, so as to warrant mention in a history... being such a man Pollio died, . . . leaving a large portion of his estate to Augustus . . . and requesting that a work of great beauty be built for the people. So Augustus leveled his house to the ground, allegedly to prepare this work, but so that Pollio would have no monument in the city, and built a quadriporticus, inscribing not Pollio’s name, but Livia’s.

Having mentioned Vedius’ cruelty and extravagance, Dio exemplifies it by relating the lurid anecdote (54.23.2–4) of Vedius threatening to throw a slave to the lampreys in his fishponds, for having broken a crystal drinking vessel at a dinner party Vedius was hosting. Augustus, who was present at this dinner party, saved the slave and punished Vedius in turn by ordering all of his crystal to be broken. Dio thus depicts Augustus as being repelled by Vedius’ threat to consume the slave’s life (and his own wealth) in so cruel a manner, and implies that such comportment justified Augustus’ decision to deprive Vedius of a monument.

18See also Hinds 1998, chap. 3 passim, and Edmunds 2001, 159–63.
19This discussion derives from Roller 2010a, 163–66, with different emphasis.
20All translations are my own.
To make sense of the disposition of Vedius’ house, and to grasp how the succession of structures on this site display intersignification, we must here introduce the (only) other text that addresses the origins of the porticus Liviae. The passage, from Book 6 of Ovid’s *Fasti*, follows (6.639–46):

> disce tamen, veniens aetas: ubi Livia nunc est porticus, immensae tecta fuere domus; urbis opus domus una fuit spatiumque tenebat quo brevius muris oppida multa tenent. haec acquata solo est, nullo sub crimine regni, sed quia luxuria visa nocere sua. sustinuit tantas operum subvertere moles totque suas heres perdere Caesar opes.

Learn, ages to come: where Livia’s portico now is, was a vast house: a single house was a city-sized construction and sprawled over an area larger than many a town encloses within its walls. This was leveled to the ground . . . because it was deemed harmful on account of its *luxuria*. Caesar had the mettle to overturn so massive a structure and, heir though he was, to destroy so much of his own wealth.

Ovid draws attention here to the extraordinary size and luxurious appointments of Vedius’ house (incidentally corroborating Dio’s remarks about Vedius’ wealth and conspicuous consumption): it was as big as a city, and its *luxuria* incurred Augustus’ displeasure. But Livia’s portico was equally large, since it covered the same site, and was luxurious as well. For Dio implies that the portico did indeed fulfill Vedius’ stipulation that something “extremely beautiful” be built for the people; Augustus snubbed Vedius only insofar as he put *Livia’s* name on it rather than Vedius’. Also, the fragments of the *forma urbis* depicting the portico’s plan reveal an ample colonnade with niches for statuary, opening up within a densely built urban environment; the structure must indeed have been astonishingly expansive and beautiful.21

Yet there is a critical difference between these structures. The transition from Vedius’ luxurious *domus* to Livia’s luxurious portico entails the turning outward of *luxuria* into the civic sphere. Scholars reasonably suggest that the conspicuous *luxuria* in the domestic or private sphere associated with Vedius, Maecenas, and certain other triumviral/early

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21 FUR fragments 10ilmnopqrs, 11a, 12; in general, see Panella, *LTUR* 4.127–29 (1999); Zanker 1987, 475–83, discusses the portico’s urbanism and magnificence.
Augustan figures came to seem at odds with the conspicuous moderation that emerged as a hallmark of the Augustan regime—moderation exemplified in Augustus’ own personal style, his moral legislation, and so on. Augustus sought, however, not to squelch the competitive ethos that fostered these displays of domestic *luxuria*, but to harness it for the common good by channeling it into a competition to adorn the city with fine public buildings. In this he led by example. The replacement of Vedius’ house by Livia’s portico, therefore, places these two structures in a pointed, dialogical relationship: each structure comes into its distinctively Augustan meaning precisely through its contrast with the other. *Luxuria* is the vector of the comparison, the trace of the earlier structure that survives in the latter. But its vicious manifestation in the first instance as private extravagance has been transformed, in the second case, into a virtuous manifestation as civic magnificence. Thus the transition from *domus* to *porticus* on this site involves a capping or teleology—a narrative of moral improvement leading to a definitive Augustan statement of correct values. This is precisely the dynamic of intersignification we observed above in Augustus’ incorporation and capping of Duilius.

This second case, however, entails a complication. If we accept our sources’ suggestion that Vedius’ house was completely leveled and left no physical trace (*haec aequata solo est*, Ov. *Fasti* 6.643; τὴν οἰκίαν αὐτοῦ ἐς ἔδαφος . . . καταβαλών, Dio Cass. 54.23.6), then we must ask how information about this house and its allegedly vicious *luxuria* was transmitted to users of the portico such that they could recognize this latter structure’s own *luxuria* as virtuous by comparison. This is no easy question. Dio, indeed, suggests that Augustus intentionally deprived posterity of the “source” sign to which the *porticus Liviae* referred via intersignification, by seeing to it that Vedius had no urban monument. Absent such a monument, how could information about Vedius and his house persist so that later viewers—such as Dio and Ovid—could perceive the intersignification and “get” the Augustan message? In such a case, the necessary information can only be communicated through another sign

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23 Additional Augustan values are also embedded in the *porticus Liviae*. That the portico is named for Augustus’ wife, and that she dedicated a shrine to Concordia inside the portico (Ov. *Fast.* 6.637–38), have caused scholars to suggest, reasonably, that the complex also focuses attention on the emperor’s marriage. The portico and shrine present this relationship as an exemplary model of marital “concord” and so instantiate the marital and sexual mores promoted in Augustus’ familial legislation of 18–17 B.C.E. On these matters, see Flory 1984.
ON THE INTERSIGNIFICATION OF MONUMENTS

The most general term for such an “outside” sign could be “paraseme,” on analogy with the term “paratext.”

Dio expressly raises the question of explication via alternative sign systems when he says that, although Vedius was (rightly) deprived of a built monument, he does nevertheless warrant mention in historiography (§54.23.1). Dio thus suggests that these different commemorative media have different criteria for inclusion, hence that he can monumentalize in historiographical prose what Augustus wouldn’t monumentalize in architecture. Vedius gets his monument in the end, but it is written by literary authors, not built by Augustus.

In contrast to our first case study, where we found parallels for certain kinds of intersignification in the realm of intertextuality, for the second case study, no purely (inter)textual analogues are to hand. I see two reasons for this difference. First, intersignification that takes place between two sign systems—as when architectural signs require a verbal supplement—obviously has no parallel within any single sign system. Second, even within the sign systems of architecture and monumentality, the specific monumental dynamics observed in the latter case simply do not, unlike the former case, find ready parallels within textuality. In the latter case, intersignification arises from the spatial collocation, appearance and disappearance, and temporal succession of the structures. These particular effects depend upon built structures being singular and existing within specific, circumscribed intervals of time and space. Literary texts, in contrast, lack this singularity, perishability, and spatial dimensionality. For once created, a literary text that is copied, circulated, and recopied on papyrus exists indefinitely, hence cannot easily be made to disappear altogether. And since it exists in multiple, portable copies, it has no necessarily fixed physical location relative to other texts. Hence, there is no purely textual parallel to the kind of intersignification that arises from the succession of singular structures on a given site. Yet this does not

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mean that monumental intersignification is inherently more varied and diverse than literary intertextuality: the latter can produce effects without parallel in the former. For example, since words have an auditory dimension that monuments lack, intertextual phenomena arising from metrical or phonetic repetition or other acoustic patterning—which have been heavily studied by scholars of intertextuality—have no monumental analogue. To draw the inevitably banal conclusion, the range of possible effects in each sign system exhibits some overlap and some divergence; in certain cases, we can observe parallels between the effects that are possible in each system, and in other cases, we cannot.

Simply to catalogue differences and similarities between the intertextuality of literature and the intersignification of built monuments is, however, surely too narrow an approach to the problem of intersignification in general. Any given sign system is uniquely anchored in culture, and its signs relate to one another in distinctive ways; therefore, similarities detected between two particular sign systems do not necessarily indicate features of intersignification that are valid in general. Nevertheless, I suspect (pending more study) that certain effects arising from intersignification occur in, and have similar functions in, many or most sign systems. For example, strategies of incorporation and imitation, including capping and teleological representations, seem likely to be found in many sign systems, as later manipulators of signs in any given system seek to define their place in relation to forebears. We observed this dynamic in both case studies and noted its occurrence in Latin poetry; it may well occur more generally. I further suspect that “genres” exist in many sign systems—strategic assemblages of signs into structures that are differentiated from one another, creating subsystems that are to some extent distinctive and durable within the overall sign system. A rostral column, equestrian statue, and triumphal arch may each constitute a “genre” in the sign system of public monuments; and in architecture, particular building types such as temples, porticoes, basilicas, or domus may function likewise. Consequently, intersignification that depends on crossing or mixing genres, a topic of longstanding interest to scholars of intertextuality, may be

26 E.g., Conte and Barchiesi 1989, 101–5; Wills 1996, 18–20, with further references.
27 Pasquali 1951 [1942], one of the foundational texts for the study of intertextuality (or “allusive art”) in Roman poetry, shares this suspicion: he notes in passing (12–13) that “allusive” effects like those he describes for poetry can also be observed in music, painting, sculpture, and architecture.
28 Such intertextual effects were investigated in the early twentieth century under the rubric Kreuzung der Gattungen. For more recent studies, see Conte’s analysis of Virg. Ecl. 10 (1986, 100–129) and his remarks on Propertius’ and Ovid’s manipulations of genre
ON THE INTERSIGNIFICATION OF MONUMENTS

found in many sign systems. An example from architecture is the use of columns and pediments—characteristic elements of civic architecture, especially temples—in ostentatious elite domus, an appropriation that has specific ideological effects. Finally, symbolic supplements imported from one sign system to “complete” the meaning of an ensemble of signs in another system, such as we encountered in the second case study, may also be widespread. For instance, certain mythological panel paintings from Pompeii engage with Ovidian mythological narratives, particularly in their modes of mimesis and the ways they manipulate the viewer’s gaze; thus, the poems may affect how readers/viewers perceive the paintings, and vice versa. Also, if one hopes to understand the sexual and power relations implied in literary descriptions and visual representations of Roman dining, one must have prior knowledge of the semiotics of bodily posture and position in the Roman convivium. Perhaps, however, this is only to say that no sign system by itself contains the entire universe and that no constellation of signs is fully construable from the resources contained within that sign system alone. If so, then intersignification is an inevitable and universal phenomenon.

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31See Valladares 2012.

32For example, the reader is on her own to deduce the exact order of reclining, and to infer the consequent status relations among diners, in Hor. Serm. 2.8; yet this deduction is essential to interpreting the narrator’s positionality correctly (further examples in Roller 2006, 98–123). Edmunds 2001, 144, calls such phenomena “quotations of nonliterary systems,” thus recognizing that intersignification may occur between different sign systems.

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INTERTEXTUALITY

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