

Fig. 1. S frieze, group of *flamines* (after Torelli 1982, fig. II.17).

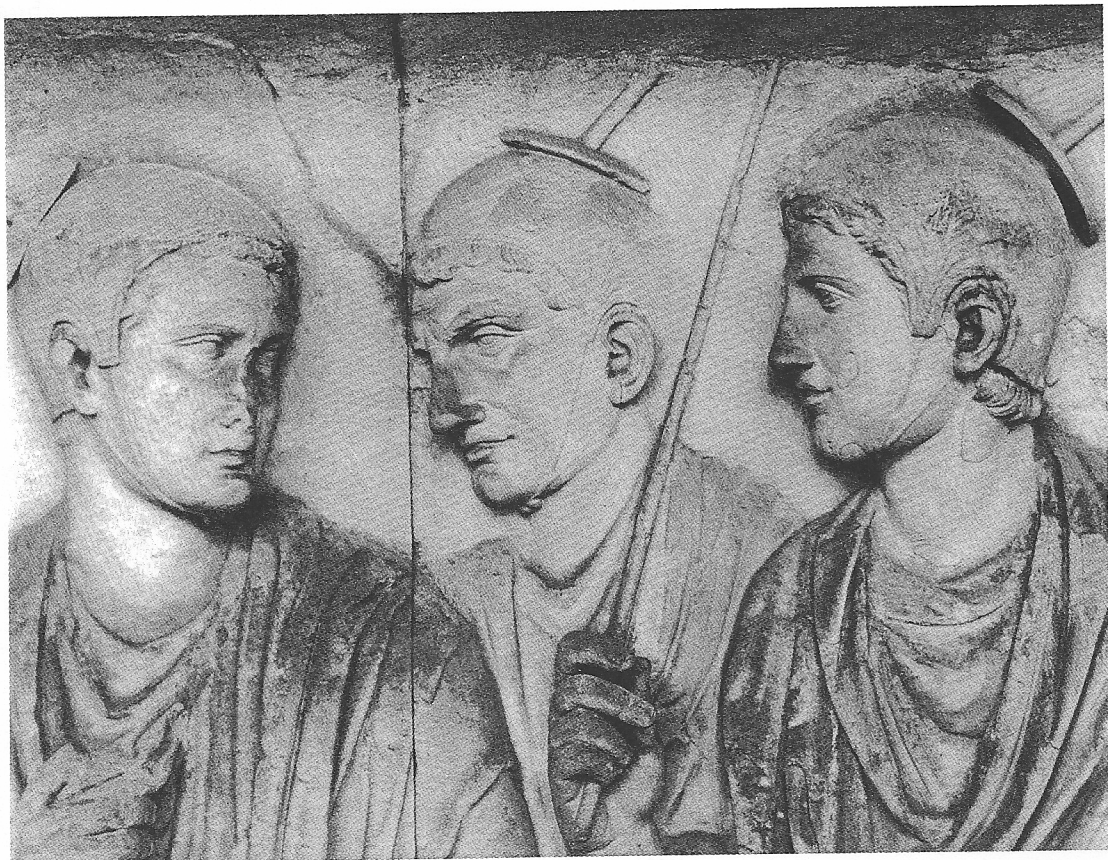


Fig. 2. Figures S-22, 23 and 24 (detail after Conlin 1997 fig. 72).

The fourth *flamen* of the Ara Pacis Augustae

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Four patrician *flamines maiores* appear in the center of the S frieze of the Ara Pacis, in a group between the figures of Augustus and Agrippa (fig. 1).¹ These are thought to represent the *flamines Dialis, Martialis, Quirinalis, and Iulialis*, who were in charge, respectively, of the worship of Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus (the deified Romulus), and (after 42 B.C.) of the deified Julius Caesar.² Following the death of Augustus in A.D. 14, a fifth (*Augustalis*) was added for his cult.³ The presence of the four Augustan *flamines* on the S frieze has been considered a historical crux. The current consensus is that the procession represents a general religious celebration of thanksgiving (*supplicatio*) in 13 B.C., on the occasion of Augustus's return from an extended stay in Spain and Gaul, rather than another one in 9 when the altar was dedicated.⁴ But Tacitus and Dio report that the office of *flamen Dialis* was vacant between the suicide of Cornelius Merula in 87 and the appointment of Servius Cornelius Lentulus Maluginensis in 11 B.C.⁵ Therefore, the presence of the fourth priest seems to argue against the frieze's portrayal of an event in 13. In order to resolve this problem, G. Bowersock argued on textual grounds that Servius Maluginensis became *flamen Dialis* in 14, not 11⁶ — an idea that has not won wide acceptance. I suggest instead that there is a technical, sculptural explanation for the inclusion of the fourth *flamen*.

The *flamines* are carved over two relief blocks and share certain characteristics. All wear a distinctive garment with heavy folds, the *laena*, which resembles a poncho, and they have a special leather cap (*galerus*) tied under the chin and decorated over the ears with palmettes.⁷ It is surmounted by a point of olive wood, mounted on a disk (*apex*).⁸ Each wears high senatorial boots (*calcei senatorii*), and at least two individuals wear a ring on their preserved left hands.

- 1 Augustus and Agrippa are identified by their portraits (though the identification of the latter is not universally accepted), the *flamines* by their costumes and headgear. Of the immense bibliography the following are most relevant here: G. Moretti, *Ara Pacis Augustae* (Rome 1948); I. S. Ryberg, *Rites of the state religion in Roman art* (MAAR 22, 1955) 44, pl. XII figs. 23a-b; J. Pollini, *Studies in Augustan 'historical' reliefs* (Ph.D. diss., Univ. of California, Berkeley 1978) 82-84; M. Torelli, *Typology and structure of Roman historical reliefs* (Ann Arbor, MI 1982) 45-47, pl. II.27; G. Koeppel, "Die historischen Reliefs der römischen Kaiserzeit V. Ara Paris Augustae, Teil I," *BjB* 187 (1987) 101-57; P. Zanker, *The power of images in the age of Augustus* (Ann Arbor, MI 1988) 118-25, fig. 98; D. E. E. Kleiner, *Roman sculpture* (New Haven, CT 1992) 90-99; D. A. Conlin, *The artists of the Ara Pacis. The process of hellenization in Roman relief sculpture* (Chapel Hill, NC 1997). There is a sixth *flamen*, represented on the inner side of the southern *pulvinar* of the central altar (Ryberg 44-45 and n.33; Koeppel 143, Cat. 9 no. 2, 144 fig. 133) which will not be discussed here. In addition to the *flamines maiores*, there were also 12 *flamines minores* in the Augustan period: *RE* VI.2 (1909) 2492 s.v. *flamines*.
- 2 M. H. Lewis, *The official priests of Rome under the Julio-Claudians* (PapAAR, 1955) 74-77.
- 3 Tac., *Ann.* 1.10.
- 4 R. Billows, "The religious procession of the Ara Pacis Augustae: Augustus' *supplicatio* in 13 B.C.," *JRA* 6 (1993) 80-92. Dio 55.25.3-4, however, says that Augustus avoided all honors on the occasion, and entered the city at night.
- 5 Tac., *Ann.* 3.58; Dio 54.36.1. The episode and its implications are discussed by M. Beard, J. North and S. Price, *Religions of Rome* vol. 1 (Cambridge 1998) 130-32. Julius Caesar was briefly *flamen Dialis* in 74 under Marius and Cinna, but he was removed when Sulla annulled their acts: Vell. Pat. 2.43.
- 6 G. Bowersock, "The pontificate of Augustus," in K. A. Raaflaub and M. Toher (edd.), *Between Republic and Empire* (Berkeley, CA 1990) esp. 391-93. Bowersock argued that the S frieze is a specific representation of a celebration in honor of Augustus' assumption of the rôle of *pontifex maximus*.
- 7 A. V. Siebert, *Instrumenta sacra* (Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten Bd. 44, 1999) 265-66 no. 72, s.v. *Galerus*.
- 8 L. Bonfante suggests that this headgear developed out of Villanovan helmet types: "Roman costumes: a glossary and some Etruscan derivations," *ANRW* I.4 (1973) esp. 587-88, 605. The *flamines minores* instead wore a *galerus* with a knob-shaped apex.



Fig. 3. Figure S-23, detail of head (after Conlin 1997 fig. 73).

Three are in high relief (S-20, 22 and 24, by Koeppel's numbering system⁹) (fig. 2). S-20 stands nearly frontal with respect to the viewer, with his head turned slightly to his right; his right arm is bent and the hand raised, palm out; the left extends downward along his side, with the hand lifted forward.¹⁰ Likewise S-22 is nearly frontal, but he turns his head sharply back to gaze toward the two figures behind him (S-23, 24); his right arm is bent at the elbow with the fist held against the breastbone, the left arm with clenched hand is bent with the hand resting near the navel.¹¹ The pose of S-24 so closely resembles that of S-20 that he appears a near double based on the same design, but in his raised right hand he brandishes a wooden wand (*comoetaculum*) used to prevent physical contact with others;¹² the left arm has a restored hand holding a laurel sprig (there is no ancient evidence for the latter).¹³

⁹ Koeppel (supra n.1). The numbering system used by Pollini (supra n.1) is one figure off from Koeppel's.

¹⁰ Koeppel *ibid.* 121-22 cat. 5, no. 20; Conlin (supra n.1) fig. 24 (detail of head), fig. 164 (face), fig. 193 (front view).

¹¹ Koeppel *ibid.* 122 cat. 5, no. 22; Conlin *ibid.* fig. 23 (detail of head), fig. 165 (face).

¹² Siebert (supra n.7) 267 no. 73 s.v. *Commoetaculum*.

¹³ Koeppel (supra n.1) 122 cat. 5, no. 24; Conlin (supra n.1) fig. 34 (detail of face).

Each of the foreground *flamines* occupies his own space and is not overlapped by other figures, in keeping with the special sanctity of his office. Instead, each one is flanked to left and right by background figures in much lower relief (S-19, 21, 23 and 25).

The fourth *flamen* (S-23) is anomalous in several respects (fig. 3).¹⁴ Although he wears the typical *galerus* with *apex*, he is carved in low relief as a background figure, overlapped except for his bust by the *flamines* S-22 and 24. In fact, the *comoetaculum* held by S-24 cuts across the chest of S-23, narrowly clearing his left ear. The face of the background *flamen*, moreover, is carved right up to the edge of the relief slab; the head inclines downward, so his nose (restored) and chin would not project past the edge of the block. In contrast to the cap of the other *flamines*, the profile of his *galerus* at the back of the head is rendered by a shallow V-shaped indentation into the background surface of the block, not a crisp edge that rises sharply from the background. At the nape, the back of the *galerus* disappears directly behind the ear, unlike the other *flamines* whose caps have a horizontal border at the base of the cranium, beneath which locks of hair escape. As a result, the head of S-23 is noticeably narrower than that of the other *flamines*. All these details suggest that his head has been adapted to fit a space too narrow to accommodate it comfortably.

Most scholars seem to have assumed that the N and S processional friezes of the Ara Pacis were planned in 13 and executed over the next 3¹/₂ years according to the specifications of a master design or cartoon. But changes in the status of some important individuals during that period must have necessitated some alterations to this plan. Barely 7 months after the *constitutio* of the altar on July 4, 13 B.C., Augustus became *pontifex maximus* (March 6, 12 B.C.) and his friend and collaborator Agrippa died perhaps two weeks later.¹⁵ Agrippa's death left Julia a widow, and a year later in 11 she was married to Livia's elder son Tiberius, who was first forced to divorce Agrippa's daughter. Augustus's sister Octavia also died in 11 and Livia's younger son Drusus followed in the next year, evidently before the altar was completed. Because the drafting of an architectural plan for the altar, the quarrying and shipping of Luna blocks, and the construction and carving of the lower part of the monument may have taken at least several months, it is unlikely that the carving of the S frieze had been completed by March of 12 B.C.

Therefore it is possible that the N and S friezes incorporate several last-minute changes to the plan. We can imagine that a deliberate decision had to be made in 12 B.C. to retain the deceased Agrippa in the design (although another figure could have been carved in his place), and it would be perverse to deny that Augustus is shown as *pontifex maximus* even if in the initial design he was not going to be shown as such; unlike the *flamines*, the *pontifex maximus* did not wear distinctive headgear or carry attributes, so no changes would have been required in the representation of Augustus as a *togatus* with veiled head and wreath after his elevation to high priest.

By tradition the *pontifex maximus* picked the *flamines maiores*,¹⁶ so it must have been Augustus himself as high priest who selected the new *flamen Dialis* in 11 B.C. Since Jupiter's priest was probably the most venerable *flamen* in the religious hierarchy, his inclusion was surely considered desirable. Because the fourth *flamen* is carved in low relief, appears in the background, and falls at the end of a slab, overlapped by two other *flamines*, I suggest that S-23 represents the carving of a figure originally planned as a background *togatus*. The outward curve of the relief block along its upper edge, and the original left margin of the block, could have allowed the creation of such a figure with his distinctive headgear before the carving of this section began; moreover, the alternating arrangement of high- and low-relief figures in this part of the frieze indicates that some type of background figure was part of the original plan. The notion that the design of the frieze kept evolving during the construction makes good

14 Koeppel *ibid.* 122 cat. 5, no. 23. His left eyebrow, nose, and part of the right foot are restored.

15 RG 2.10-11, on the elevation of Augustus as *pontifex maximus*. On the death of Agrippa see L. Koenen, *ZPE* 5 (1970) 217-83.

16 Cic., *de dom.* 38; Tac., *Ann.* 4.16; cf. Aul. Gell. 1.12.15.

sense in technical terms and explains why one of the major *flamines* is reduced to a background figure and squeezed between two others, rather than presented as their equal in sculptural terms. It also resolves the need to re-interpret the accounts of Tacitus and Dio (Bowersock).

The fourth *flamen* is the only one of this group of priests to have individualized portrait features, and they are suggestive of middle age: deep, horizontal forehead creases, a pair of short, vertical frown lines between the shaggy brows, a deep-set eye with crow's feet, and a pronounced naso-labial fold.¹⁷ Because most other heads in the N and S processions have youthful, classicizing features, the presence of these traits of age has led some to suggest that S-23 represents Augustus's brother-in-law Sextus Appuleius as *flamen Iulialis*.¹⁸ Servius Cornelius Lentulus Maluginensis seems excluded, however: although his elevation as the new *flamen Dialis* after a long hiatus was an important event, he was still politically active more than 30 years later,¹⁹ so he must have been relatively young in 11 B.C., too young to have the aged features of S-23.²⁰

The inclusion of the fourth *flamen* should therefore be viewed as a technical solution by the planners of the altar to accommodate a changed historical situation. If this interpretation is correct, it may also give us an important indication of how far the actual carving had progressed in its first two years and how much remained to be completed before the dedication in 9. The blocky proportions and lack of finish on a number of figures in the N and S friezes indicate that some portions had not been completely finished when the monument was dedicated, suggesting that carving may have continued right up to the last moment.²¹ Furthermore, these observations suggest that the processions of the Ara Pacis do not present a single 'snapshot' of one historical moment, but rather an ideal conception of the close associates of Augustus in the aftermath of his return from the western provinces in the summer of 13.²² We know from the *Res Gestae* that Augustus celebrated many *supplicationes* over the course of his career;²³ it may be significant that the dedication of the altar on January 30, 9 B.C., coincided both with Livia's birthday and with a *supplicatio* to the *imperium* of Augustus as guardian of the Roman people and the world.²⁴ Thus the meaning of the altar may have evolved from the celebration of a particular return by Augustus to a general glorification of his rule.

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- 17 Several of these details are visible in Conlin (supra n.1) fig. 35.
 18 Koeppel (supra n.1) 121 fig. 11, 122 no. 23. R. Syme, *The Augustan aristocracy* (Oxford 1986) 152: Sextus Appuleius or his son (*cos.* in 29); Torelli (supra n.1) 45-46, 46 n.67, 47, pl. II.27. He was the son of Octavia Maior, the emperor's half sister, and was buried in the Mausoleum. Pollini (supra n.1, 82-83) identifies S-24 as the *flamen Dialis* because he alone holds the *commoetaculum* and stands next to the *flamineus lictor* (S-26); the *commoetaculum*, however, was not specific to one *flamen*.
 19 Tac., *Ann.* 3.58.
 20 RE IV.1 (1900) 1387-88 s.v. Ser. Cornelius Lentulus Maluginensis; PIR², C1394.
 21 Conlin (supra n1) has interpreted these features as indicating the work of a local, Italian group of sculptors untrained in Greek techniques of stone-carving, a notion which is correctly challenged by A. Claridge in CR 49.2 (1999) 530. It is not clear why the unfinished areas were not completed after the dedication.
 22 For discussion of this family image and its public dissemination, see M. Fullerton, "The *Domus Augusti* in imperial iconography of 13-12 B.C.," *AJA* 89 (1985) 473-83.
 23 RG 1.3-4 mentions 55 *supplicationes* voted by the senate for a total of 890 days.
 24 *Feriale Cumanum*: [eo die Ara Pacis Aug. dedicata] est. Supplicatio imperio Caesaris Augusti cost[odis civium Romanorum orbisque terrar]um. The first part of the sentence mentioning the Ara Pacis can be restored securely on the basis of other calendars (listed by Koeppel, supra n.1).