

CAPITOLINE JUPITER AND THE HISTORIOGRAPHY OF ROMAN WORLD RULE*

Abstract: This article examines the origins of the idea of Roman world rule and the foundation myths of the Capitoline temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. The temple is associated with world rule by the mid-1st century BC. By the Augustan period its foundation myths are linked with the idea that Rome had been destined, from the time of the Tarquins, to exercise dominion over Italy and the world. The most important of the Capitoline foundation myths describes the prodigy of a human head which was discovered in the ground during the construction of the temple and interpreted as an omen of empire. In its earliest form the story of the *caput humanum* served as an etymological aetiology to explain why Rome's most important temple was called the Capitolium. This article argues that it was transformed into a myth of empire, with the addition of the prophecy of Rome's imperial destiny, in the mid- to late third century. At first it proclaimed Rome to be 'head of Italy'. The language of empire was inflated after the conquest of the Greek East, and by the late first century it was claimed that Rome had been destined to become 'head of the world'.

The historiography of the origins of the idea of Roman world rule focuses on Greek sources of the 2nd century BC. Polybius reflected on the significance of the Roman defeat of the last king of Macedon at Pydna in 168 and announced that Rome had achieved hegemony over the entire inhabited world after only 53 years in the ascendancy outside Italy.¹ But he was not the only Greek writer of the mid to late 2nd century to reflect on Rome's undisputed power in this period: it is possible to find descriptions of universal Roman supremacy 'over land and sea' and ethical reflections on the benefits of Roman peace as well as criticisms of the brutality and greed of Roman imperialism.² There was also a recognition of the long-term historical significance of the Roman victories in the Greek East, as Rome was identified as the successor to the empires of the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Macedonians.³ Philhellenes at Rome must have been aware that Greek observers were describing Roman power in universal terms, but it is not until the early 1st century that the language of Roman world rule

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¹ Pol. 1.1.5; cf. 3.1.4; 3.3.9; 3.4.3. Cf. Werner (1972) 533; Nicolet (1988) 43–4.

² Gruen (1984) 325–9, 337–43.

³ Gruen (1984) 329; Alonso-Núñez (1989) 111–12.

appears in Latin sources. Cicero, in a speech delivered in 80 BC, credited Sulla with ‘guiding the course of the entire world’ in a highly flattering comparison with Jupiter.⁴ There is also a reference to the theme of Roman world rule in a section of a lost speech from the period of the Social War quoted in the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, an anonymous rhetorical handbook written in the 80s BC. Rome is described as holding ‘dominion of the entire globe, a dominion to which all peoples, kings, and nations have given their consent, whether by force of arms or by choice.’⁵ Rome achieved Mediterranean supremacy in the 2nd century, yet if we restrict ourselves to direct statements in Latin literary texts it would seem that the Romans were slow to acknowledge this fact.

In retrospect it was possible to hail Scipio Africanus as the conqueror of entire continents, and to claim that in his pre-battle speech at Zama, in 202, he had argued that victory over Hannibal would ensure Roman rule not just in Africa but over the entire world.⁶ It was recalled or imagined that Scipio Aemilianus had been praised, at his funeral in 129, as a blessing to Rome whose presence safeguarded its dominion of the world.⁷ Tiberius Gracchus is attributed with the lament, in his speeches as tribune in 133, that ordinary Roman citizens and soldiers possessed not a scrap of land even though they were called ‘masters of the world’.⁸ The idea of the ‘westward march of empire’, with Rome as the successor to the Assyrians, Medes, Persians, and Macedonians, is said to have appeared in the *De annis populi Romani* of Aemilius Sura, and it has been suggested that this source dates to as early as the

⁴ Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 131 (*cum ... orbemque terrarum gubernaret*); this passage alludes to the destruction of the Capitoline temple of Jupiter in the fire of 83 BC. See Flower (2008) 83.

⁵ *Rhet. Her.* 4.13: *imperium orbis terrae, cui imperio omnes gentes, reges, nationes partim vi, partim voluntate consenserunt*, noted as the earliest reference to world rule at Rome: Vogt (1960) 156; Werner (1972) 532–3; Gruen (1984) 274, 281; Nicolet (1988) 45. The memoirs of P. Rutilius Rufus (c. 100 BC) attest the phrase *ex orbi terrarum*, but in an unknown context (fr. 11 Peter = Charis. 1, p. 139, ed. Keil).

⁶ Cicero states that the name Africanus testifies to the conquest of a third of the *orbis terrarum* (*Rosc. Am.* 103); Livy’s Tiberius Gracchus (tr. pl. 187) argues that he conquered the richest king in the *orbis terrarum* and extended the *imperium* of the Roman people *in ultimos terrarum fines* (Livy 38.60.5; cf. Polyb. 23.14.10); Scipio’s speech at Zama: Polyb. 15.10.2; cf. Livy 30.32.2.

⁷ Cic. *Mur.* 75 (*terrarum imperium*).

⁸ Plut. *Ti. Gr.* 9.6 (*κύριοι τῆς οἰκουμένης*); cf. Flor. 2.1.2. The attribution to Tiberius Gracchus is treated with caution by Gruen (1984) 280, less so by Nicolet (1988) 44. At App. *B.C.* 1.11, Tiberius Gracchus is said to have looked forward in his speeches to the Roman conquest of ‘the rest’ of the known world.

start of the 2nd century.⁹ But none of these references offers more than tentative evidence for a discourse of world rule in 2nd-century Rome, and ultimately it cannot be known if this idea was recognized at Rome soon after the landmark victories in the Greek East in the early 2nd century, or perhaps only shortly before it is first attested in the early 1st century. That said, it is possible to argue that Rome did reflect on its identity as an imperial power from an early date: the evidence can be found in the foundation myths of the Capitoline temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. In one of the myths a freshly-severed human head is unearthed in the temple foundations, and it is interpreted by the seers as an omen that Rome would in the future emerge as the ‘head of Italy’ or the ‘head of the world’ (*caput rerum*). The vocabulary of world rule is first attested in the Augustan narratives of the myth, but the myth itself was far older: it was discussed by the lost Roman historians, perhaps as early as Fabius Pictor at the turn of the 3rd and 2nd centuries, and it is depicted on Italic gems dated to the 3rd century. Crucially, it is possible to show that at this early stage, in the mid to late 3rd century, the myth already included a prophecy of empire. It was probably framed in terms of hegemony over Italy rather than universal rule, but it is evidence nonetheless that Rome reflected on the scope and significance of its military conquests from an early date.

My focus in this article is on the articulation of Roman imperialism in the 3rd century, and on the historiography of the foundation stories of the temple of the Capitoline triad of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. The Capitol was Rome’s most important temple: it was extremely old and massive in scale, and it had always been a major focal point of collective identity in the symbolic topography of the city. It was the centrality of the Capitoline temple which formed the basis for its association with the idea of Rome’s imperial destiny.

1. The Centrality of the Capitol

The Capitoline temple of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva is said to have been vowed by Tarquinius Priscus during a Sabine war.¹⁰ He chose a location on the south summit of the Capitoline Hill, which was then still called the Tar-

⁹ The attribution of the idea to Aemilius Sura is attested in a textual gloss of Velleius (1.6.6) which first appears in a manuscript of 1591; the idea also appears at D. Hal. *A.R.* 1.2.1–4. On the date of Aemilius Sura: Gruen (1984) 329; Nicolet (1988) 44–5; Alonso-Núñez (1989) 111–12.

¹⁰ Cic. *Rep.* 2.36; Livy 1.38.7; 1.55.1; D. Hal. *A.R.* 3.69.1; 4.59.1; Tac. *Hist.* 3.72; Plut. *Publ.* 14.1.

peian Hill, and he built retaining walls to create a level precinct.¹¹ But the bulk of the work was carried out by Tarquinius Superbus using spoils captured from Suessa Pometia.¹² The booty was valued at forty talents by Q. Fabius Pictor, writing at the turn of the 3rd and 2nd centuries, and at 40,000 pounds of silver by L. Calpurnius Piso in the mid-2nd century. It was a staggering sum, but the plans for the temple were so ambitious, according to Livy, that it barely sufficed for the foundations.¹³ Dionysius of Halicarnassus gives a circumference of 800 Roman feet, and excavations on the Capitol under the Palazzo Caffarelli have revealed a podium just over 53 metres wide and 62 metres in depth, the lower levels of which date to the late 6th century.¹⁴ It is generally assumed that the superstructure of the temple covered the entire podium, and thus it is argued that the Archaic Capitol was a colossal temple built on a scale that can only be compared with contemporary Greek temples in Sicily, notably the temple of Zeus at Acragas and Temple G at Selinus. An alternative view holds that the temple was smaller than its podium but still much larger than any temple built in Latium or in Etruria during the same period.¹⁵ Roman writers felt that the temple's scale and antiquity offered proof in retrospect that Rome's destiny had been fixed at an early date. Tacitus calls the temple a 'pledge of empire' (*pignus imperii*) and he offers his opinion that Tarquin the Elder 'laid its foundations rather to match his hope of future greatness than in accordance with what the fortunes of the Roman people, still moderate, could supply'. For Livy, the work undertaken by Tarquin the Elder 'revealed his prophetic anticipation of the future greatness of the site', whereas Tarquin the Proud 'sketched out the design of a temple to Jupiter, which in its extent should be worthy of the

¹¹ D. Hal. *A.R.* 3.69.1; 4.59.1. Tacitus states that Tarquin the Elder laid foundations, and that work continued under Servius Tullius (*Hist.* 3.72).

¹² Tac. *Hist.* 3.72; D. Hal. *A.R.* 3.69.2; 4.59.1; Livy 1.53.3; Cic. *Rep.* 2.44; Strabo 5.3.4. An alternative tradition referred to the spoils of Apiolae (Valerius Antias ap. Plin. *N.H.* 3.70) which Livy states was captured by Priscus (1.35.7). Apiolae is Greek for Pometia, so would it seem they are both the same place. It is also probable that the attribution of the temple to both Tarquins is a doublet. See Alföldi (1965) 139–40; Cornell (1995) 128–30.

¹³ Livy 1.55.7–9; cf. D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.50.5.

¹⁴ D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.61.3–4. Dating and dimensions: Arata (2010) 593, 595.

¹⁵ Comparisons of scale: e.g. Prayon (1988) 331–2 with fig. 1, Mura Sommella (2009) 347–8 with fig. 26. The exact dimensions of the temple superstructure are unknown, and there are problems with the conventional view that the temple covered the entire podium: see Ridley (2005), Arata (2010) 608–18. That said, the massive scale of the podium indicates that the temple was also extremely large, even if it did not cover the entire podium.

king of gods and men, of Rome's empire, and of the majesty of the site itself.¹⁶

The Capitol of the Tarquins was conceived as a monument to place Rome on the map, and it maintained its symbolic centrality in conceptual geographies which reflected on the Roman conquest of the Mediterranean. Cicero highlights this theme in a discussion of the rebuilding of the Capitol by Q. Lutatius Catulus after the fire of 83 BC. In his *Verrines*, written in the year before the inauguration of the new temple in 69 BC, he imagines the building as the future repository of dedications from all over the Roman world: 'many kings, many free cities, and many rich and powerful individuals have the clear intention of adorning the Capitol in accordance with what the dignity of the temple and the renown of our empire requires'. His aim is to draw attention to a gem-studded candelabrum stolen by Verres from the Seleucid prince Antiochus Asiaticus of Syria: Cicero, addressing Jupiter, alludes to the idea of Roman world rule and describes the object as 'worthy of your most beautiful temple, worthy of the Capitol and of that Citadel of all nations'.¹⁷ In 63, Cicero spoke against plans to distribute public land to Roman settlers at Capua, and in doing so he declared that it was a sinister plan to establish the chief city of Campania as an alternative Rome and as the new capital of the Roman world. Capua was a beautiful city, located in a region of proverbial fertility, surrounded by many prosperous towns and cities, and Cicero argued that colonists sent to Capua would inevitably learn to despise the tenements of Rome and the poverty of the Roman Campagna.¹⁸ He also announces that the Senate of old, in the time of the war with Hannibal, had decided that Capua was one of only three cities in the world, along with Carthage and Corinth, that 'could carry the weight and name of empire'. Capua is presented as an anti-Rome, and as a rival to Rome's claim to be the 'head' of Italy and the world.¹⁹ This rhetorical construction lets Cicero condemn the proposal to send a colony to Capua as an affront to

¹⁶ Tac. *Hist.* 3.72; Livy 1.38.7; 1.53.3.

¹⁷ Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.68; 2.5.184. Antiochus was in Rome from 75 to 73 to press his claims to the thrones of Syria and Egypt. Only briefly, in 69/68 and 65/64, did he assume the title of king, as Antiochus XIII Asiaticus. See Bellinger (1949) 79–85.

¹⁸ Cic. *Agr.* 1.18–24; 2.76; 2.88–9; 2.95–8. Strabo states that Capua was the capital or 'head' (κεφαλή) of the twelve Etruscan cities of Campania (5.4.3) and that the name of the city derived from the word for 'head' (5.4.10). Livy states that the city was called Voltturnus under the Etruscans and that it was renamed Capua by the Samnites, either after their general Capys, or, as he thought more probable, *a campestri agro*, from its location on a flat plain (4.37.1).

¹⁹ Cic. *Agr.* 2.87; cf. Livy 23.10.2; 23.11.11 for the idea that Capua under Hannibal's patronage was the new 'head of Italy' (*caput Italiae*) after Cannae.

‘the name of this Republic, the seat of this city and empire, and lastly this temple of Jupiter the Best and Greatest and citadel of all peoples’.²⁰ Rome is defined by its identity as a Republic and by the centrality of the city and its chief temple in a world under its control.

The Capitol was a symbol of Roman world rule because it was a ‘central place’ par excellence in the symbolic topography of the city. The Forum had the Curia and the Comitium, the Regia, and the temple of Vesta, goddess of the city’s central hearth.²¹ But the Capitol had the cult of the chief deity, Jupiter Optimus Maximus, ‘Best and Greatest’. The temple was massive in scale, and it was the focus of monumental urbanism at Rome till the end of the Republic. Its ritual centrality is best illustrated by the sacrifices offered to Capitoline Jupiter at the end of the Roman triumph and at the inauguration of each new consular year.²² It was possible to reflect on these rituals as guarantees of Rome’s destiny. In his account of the sacrifice on the first day of the year, Ovid describes the procession to the Capitol led by the consuls, and he imagines Jupiter looking out at the world from his Capitoline citadel and seeing the entire globe under Roman control; the conclusion is that this is a feast day ‘worthy to be cultivated by a people whose power is universal’.²³ Livy also felt that Roman identity was dependent on its sense of place, and he makes the case forcefully in a long speech in which Camillus denounces a proposal to move to Veii after the Gallic Sack: the Capitol is highlighted as the location of the couch of Jupiter on the day of his festal banquet, and the temple of Vesta in the Forum, with its perpetual flame, is cited as the repository of a talismanic statue, the Palladium, which is described as a ‘pledge of empire’ (*imperii pignus*).²⁴ Another focus for the idea of Rome’s imperial destiny was the Aventine temple of Diana: it is said to have been founded by Servius Tullius as a common cult for Rome and the Latins, and it was then, according to Livy, that the Latins conceded Rome’s universal sovereignty as *caput rerum*.²⁵ The temple also housed the talismanic horns of a cow said to have been sacrificed by a Roman priest at the time of the temple’s foundation: a heifer of miraculous size had been born in the Sabine

²⁰ Cic. *Agr.* 1.18.

²¹ Hölkeskamp (2001) 119–23; Purcell (2007) 184–5.

²² On the rituals of the Capitoline cult: Fears (1981a) 12–14; Hölkeskamp (2001) 106–11; Purcell (2007) 186–8; Flower (2008) 76–7.

²³ Ov. *Fast.* 1.79–89.

²⁴ Livy 5.52.6–7.

²⁵ Livy 1.45.2–3; cf. Varro *Ling.* 5.43; D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.26.2; *Vir. Ill.* 7.9; Zon. 7.9. The temple is best dated to the 5th century, given that it assumes Roman hegemony in Latium: Alföldi (1961) 25–6; (1965) 141; Grant (1971) 161.

country, and the *vates* had revealed that the city of the person who sacrificed the animal was destined to be the seat of empire (*ibi fore imperium*). The Roman priest used trickery to gain possession of the animal when it was brought to Diana's temple, and the sacrifice was conducted in the name of the Roman people.²⁶ Rome was defined by multiple centres, from the Forum to the Capitol and the Aventine and beyond, and this, as Purcell explains, was a key principle in Roman ideologies of space: 'If centrality is good, it is worth over-specifying it, with multiple, repeated, overlapping centers'.²⁷ One may note, in addition, that central places could be duplicated. There were two 'huts of Romulus', one on the Palatine and one on the Capitol.²⁸ There was even more than one Capitolium: there was the temple on the Capitoline Hill and there was an older shrine to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva on the Quirinal that was known as the Capitolium Vetus.²⁹

The centrality of the Capitol defined the symbolic topography of Archaic and Early Republican Rome. This was reinforced in later periods by the construction of temples to the Capitoline Triad in Italy and the provinces, a phenomenon best attested in Africa from the 2nd century AD.³⁰ There was also one very early, very different 'copy' of the Capitol at Rome: a temple of Capitoline Jupiter initiated by the philo-Roman Antiochus IV Epiphanes in the Seleucid capital of Antioch in the second quarter of the 2nd century BC. This project complemented his extensive construction work on the Olympieum at Athens.³¹ There were also colossal bronze statues, to Olympian Zeus and Capitoline Jupiter, which he probably erected in the precincts of the Olympieum at Athens and the temple of Capitoline Jupiter at Antioch.³² The Olympieum was dedicated to the chief deity in the Greek pantheon,

²⁶ Livy 1.45.4–7; cf. Val. Max. 7.3.1; Varro and Juba ap. Plut. *Mor.* 264c–d; *Vir. Ill.* 7.10–14; Zon. 7.9. The cow's owner was instructed to wash himself in the Tiber before conducting the sacrifice, and it was in his absence that the animal was sacrificed. The prophecy was framed in terms of *imperium* (Livy 1.45.5), *summam imperii* (*Vir. Ill.* 7.10), *totius terrarum orbis imperium* (Val. Max. 7.3.1), or rule over τῆς Ἰταλίας ἀπάσης (Plut. *Mor.* 264c).

²⁷ Purcell (2007) 186; cf. Hölkeskamp (2001) 107.

²⁸ Balland (1984).

²⁹ Varro, *Ling.* 5.158. The name Capitolium developed in connection with the Capitoline cult: Varro, *Ling.* 5.41. It was subsequently applied to the older cult of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva on the Quirinal. See Hackens (1961) 83–5.

³⁰ See Quinn and Wilson (2013); cf. Purcell (2007) 193–4, who notes that the Imperial phenomenon of the construction of Capitolia is first securely attested in the late 1st century BC.

³¹ Livy 41.20.8–9. Cf. Quinn and Wilson (2013) 147–9, for a catalogue of other, later cults of Capitoline Jupiter in the Greek East.

³² Gran. Lic. 28.10–11.

and it stood in Athens, one of the main cultural centres of the Greek world. It was a 'central place' and thus a fitting showcase for Seleucid euergetism. The decision to build a temple to Capitoline Jupiter paid homage to Roman power in the Mediterranean. It was a symbolic copy of the chief Roman cult of Jupiter and as such it reveals that the Capitol, even in the Greek world, was held to be the centre of Roman power in the 2nd century BC.

2. The Site of the Capitol

Livy praises the manifest destiny of the site of Rome in his narrative of the aftermath of the Gallic Sack and one section of the long speech of Camillus expresses the view that this destiny was dependent on the site of Rome and its mythological topography:

'Here is the Capitol where in the old days a human head was found, and this was declared to be an omen, for in that place would be fixed the head and supreme sovereign power of the world (*caput rerum summamque imperii*). Here it was that when the site of the Capitol was being cleared with augural rites, Juventas and Terminus, to the great delight of your fathers, would not allow themselves to be moved. Here is the Fire of Vesta; here are the Shields sent down from heaven; here are all the gods, who, if you remain, will be gracious to you.' (Livy 5.54.7)³³

Livy's Camillus argues that it was only at Rome that the destiny of Roman People was guaranteed, and to illustrate his point he alludes to two of the foundation myths of the temple of the Capitoline triad. The portent of the human head is examined in the next section; this section deals with Juventas and Terminus.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus offers the longest narrative of the preliminaries to the foundation of the Capitoline temple. He tells us that Tarquin the Elder summoned the augurs and asked them to consult the auspices to determine the correct site in the city for the new temple; when they pointed to the Tarpeian Hill, he asked them to consult the auspices again to find the correct site on the hill. At the time, we are told, there was a multitude of altars on the site of the new temple, and the augurs decided that each deity had to be consulted in turn to give divine blessing for the removal of each altar. All the gods gave their consent except Terminus, the god of boundaries, and Juventas, the goddess of Youth, and their altars were therefore incorporated in the new temple. Dionysius states that in his day one of them

³³ Similarly: Plut. *Cam.* 31.4.

stood in the *pronaos* of Minerva's shrine, the other in the *cella* near her cult statue.³⁴ He ends with the statement that 'the augurs concluded that no occasion would ever cause the removal of the boundaries of the Romans' city or impair its vigour'.³⁵ Florus links the myth with Tarquin the Proud, and he relates how the seers interpreted the refusal of Juventas and Terminus to leave their cult sites as an omen of eternal strength (*firma omnia et aeterna*).³⁶ Livy also connects the myth with the reign of Tarquin the Proud: the decision was made to deconsecrate various shrines dedicated on the hill by Titus Tatius after the battle with Romulus in the Forum, and the gods chose to demonstrate 'the future vastness of the empire' (*tanti imperii molem*); the auguries taken at the shrine of Terminus were not favourable, and 'this was interpreted to mean that as the abode of Terminus was not moved and he alone of all the deities was not called forth from his consecrated borders, everything would be firm and constant' (*firma stabiliaque cuncta*).³⁷ Ovid's treatment of the myth and cult of Terminus concludes with the comment that the city of Rome extends to the ends of the earth (*Romanae spatium est Urbis et orbis idem*). The god of boundaries is thus presented as a patron of world rule. Servius describes the refusal of Terminus to vacate the site of the Capitol as an omen of empire without end (*aeternum urbi imperium*).³⁸

The cults of Juventas and Terminus each illustrate the centrality of the Capitol. The cult of the goddess of youth was linked to the life-cycle of the citizen body, for on assumption of the *toga virilis* the family of each young adult male deposited a fixed sum of money in her treasury on the Capitol.³⁹ The centrality of Terminus was spatial: he protected the frontiers of Roman territory and the property boundaries of individual citizens, and at his annual festival, the Terminalia, there was a sacrifice at the sixth Mile of the Via Laurentina, a spot no doubt which had once marked the southern border of Roman territory.⁴⁰ It is assumed that the cults of Terminus and Ju-

³⁴ D. Hal. *A.R.* 3.69.3–5. The *aedicula* of Juventas stood in the *delubrum* of Minerva (Plin. *N.H.* 35.108), thus it seems that the shrine of Terminus stood in front of Minerva's shrine, under the porch of the temple. There is a possible parallel in the temple of Ara della Regina at Tarquinii: in its *pronaos* there is a rectangular base, perhaps for an altar, at an oblique angle to the temple's main axis. See André (1959–60) 30 n. 22 with 31 fig. 7, cf. 45–6.

³⁵ D. Hal. *A.R.* 3.69.6.

³⁶ Flor. 1.7.8–9.

³⁷ Livy 1.55.2–4 (only Terminus); cf. 5.54.7 (also Juventas).

³⁸ Ov. *Fast.* 2.684; Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 9.448.

³⁹ L. Calpurnius Piso ap. D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.15.5.

⁴⁰ Ov. *Fast.* 2.679–82.

ventas were very old and that they both had an early and intimate association with the cult of Capitoline Jupiter.⁴¹ But the fact that their cult sites stood in the Capitoline temple was an anomaly, hence the aetiology which explained that their shrines were older than the temple. The story is recorded in detail by Augustan authors, and it is worth noting that Ovid, Livy, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus all claim to follow a standard narrative.⁴² The earliest reference to the myth is found in a fragment of Cato's *Origines*, written in the mid-2nd century: at this time it seems that the cult of Juventas was not yet thought to be older than the Capitoline temple, for Cato stated that only Terminus refused to leave his cult site.⁴³ It has been suggested that the inclusion of Juventas in the myth was due to Varro.⁴⁴

Terminus was the god of boundaries and the story of his refusal to leave the site of the Capitol, invented by the mid-2nd century, presents him as the guarantor of firm and stable frontiers. It may be that by this time he had also come to be associated with territorial expansion, a key theme in public discourse in the early 2nd century. In 200, 191, and 171, on the outbreak of war with Philip V, Perseus, and Antiochus III, the *haruspices* predicted the expansion of Rome's borders, and in 172 they issued the same prophecy in response to the portent of a lightning strike which destroyed a rostrate column erected on the Capitol during the First Punic War.⁴⁵ The importance of the myth of Terminus in the 1st century is indicated by Ovid, who tells us that there was a small aperture (*foramen*) in the roof over the shrine of Terminus.⁴⁶ This no doubt was a feature of the original Tarquinian temple scrupulously reproduced by the architects of Sulla and Catulus when it was rebuilt following the Capitoline fire of 83 BC. It is only in the Augustan period, and then only in Ovid, that Terminus is linked with the idea of Roman world rule.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Fears (1981a) 27–8, 32. According to Augustine (*C.D.* 4.23) a shrine of Mars also stood within the Capitoline temple. It is not clear when the cult might have been introduced.

⁴² Ov. *Fast.* 2.669 (*ut veteres memorant*); Livy 1.55.3 (*traditur*); D. Hal. *A.R.* 3.69.3 (*ἅπαντες οἱ τὰς ἐπιχωρίους συναγαγόντες ἱστορίας*).

⁴³ Cato, ap. Fest. p. 160, ed. Lindsay.

⁴⁴ See Ogilvie (1965) 750.

⁴⁵ Livy 31.5.7 (200 BC) *prolationem finium*; 36.1.3 (191 BC) *terminos populi Romani propagari*; 42.20.2–4 (172 BC) *prolationemque finium*; 42.30.9 (171 BC): *propagationem imperii portendi*; with Piccaluga (1974) 198–200; Gruen (1984) 283–4; Santangelo (2013) 84–5.

⁴⁶ Ov. *Fast.* 2.671–2; cf. Paul. Fest. p. 505, ed. Lindsay; Lact. *Inst.* 1.20.40; Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 9.448.

⁴⁷ Ov. *Fast.* 2.683–4.

3. The Portent of the Human Head

Isidore of Seville, writing in the 7th century AD, claimed that the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus was called the Capitolium because it had represented the head and summit of the city of Rome and its public religion (*quod fuerit Romanae urbis et religionis caput summum*). It was the ultimate ‘central place’ of the city of Rome, and its conceptual and topographical centrality was reflected in its name.⁴⁸ Isidore supplements his definition with an alternative tradition (*alii aiunt*) which created an aetiology to explain the origin of the name: ‘when Tarquin the Elder excavated the foundations of the Capitol at Rome he found a man’s head inscribed in Etruscan writing (*caput hominis litteris Tuscis notatum*) in the site of the excavations, and accordingly he called the temple the Capitolium’.⁴⁹ Varro also alludes to the discovery of a human head (*caput humanum*) in the foundations of the temple of Jupiter, and he, like Isidore, mentions it only to support an etymological argument, in this case for the name of the hill not the temple.⁵⁰ The myth of the Capitoline head, it would seem, originated as an aetiology which explained the name of the temple and the hill. In its basic outline it is surely early, but it is impossible to know exactly when it developed.⁵¹

The centrality of the Capitol in the conceptual topography of the city of Rome was reflected in its name. Over time it became a symbol of Rome’s centrality in the political geography of Italy and the Mediterranean world as a whole. Plutarch and Dionysius of Halicarnassus speak of the Capitol as the ‘head of Italy’ while Livy, Florus, Servius, and the author of the *De Viris Illustribus* refer to the Capitol in terms which suggest world rule.⁵² In each case, the myth of the discovery of the *caput humanum* in the foundations of the Capitoline temple in the regal period is presented as a portent of Rome’s future dominion, and several writers highlight the miraculous nature of the prodigy by emphasizing that the head appeared to be freshly-slaughtered, not skeletal or decomposed; it was dripping with blood, and its facial fea-

⁴⁸ Isid. *Orig.* 15.2.31. Likewise: Lact. *Inst.* 1.11.49; 3.17.12. Cf. Suda, s.v. Καπιτώλιον, κ 341, for the idea that the Capitol was ‘the head of the city’ (ὁ ἐστὶ κεφαλὴ τῆς πόλεως).

⁴⁹ Isid. *Orig.* 15.2.31, in a section called *de aedificiis publicis*.

⁵⁰ Varro *Ling.* 5.41.

⁵¹ Weinstock (1931) 2445–6; Alföldi (1965) 141; Ogilvie (1965) 211.

⁵² Head of Italy: D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.61.2 (κεφαλὴν ... συμπάσης Ἰταλίας); Plut. *Cam.* 31.4 (τῆς Ἰταλίας κεφαλῆ); head of the world: Livy 1.55.6 (*caput rerum*); Flor. 1.7.9 (*caput terrarum*); head of the nations: *Vir. Ill.* 8.4 (*caput gentium*); global rule: Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 8.345 (*orbi imperitare*). This conception of the Capitol as the seat of Rome’s empire persisted into the medieval period: Edwards (1996) 89–90.

tures seemed alive and intact.⁵³ In Livy's narrative the interpretation of this portent takes place at Rome, and its message confirms the prophecy of empire revealed in the refusal of Terminus to leave the site of the Capitol (Livy 1.55.5–6):

There followed another prodigy foretelling the grandeur of their empire. A human head, its features intact, was found, so it is said, by the men who were digging the foundations of the temple. This appearance plainly foreshowed that here was to be the citadel of the empire and head of the world (*arcem eam imperii caputque rerum*), and such was the interpretation of the seers (*vates*), both those who were in the city and those who were called in from Etruria to consider the matter.

According to Florus, the discovery of the *caput humanum* was 'more disturbing' (*horrentius*) than the refusal of Terminus and Juventas to leave the site of the Capitol. However, 'no-one doubted that it was a most favourable omen, portending that here would be the seat of an empire and the capital of the world' (*imperii sedem caputque terrarum*).⁵⁴ Other writers state that Tarquin sent an embassy to an Etruscan *haruspex* to discover the meaning of the portent.⁵⁵ The ensuing encounter is summarized by Pliny as follows (*N.H.* 28.15):

When the men digging the foundations for a temple on the Tarpeian Hill discovered a human head, ambassadors were sent to Olenus Calenus, the most famous seer of Etruria, to consult him on the matter. Perceiving that it was remarkable and fortunate, he tried in the manner of his questioning to transfer the omen to his own people. Having first marked out the likeness of a temple in the ground in front of him with a rod, he said, 'So is this what you are saying, Romans? Is this where the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus will be? Is this where we found the head?' And as the annals reliably affirm, this destiny would have passed to Etruria had not the ambassadors, warned by the seer's son, responded thus: 'Not right here, of course, but at Rome. That is where the head was found, as we have said'.

The seer perceived the significance of the prodigy and attempted to transfer Rome's destiny to his own people. But the envoys refused to point to the

⁵³ D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.59.2; Livy 1.55.5; Zon. 7.11; Plut. *Cam.* 31.4, Suda, s.v. *Καπιτώλιον*, κ 341.

⁵⁴ Flor. 1.7.9; cf. *Vir. Ill.* 8.4.

⁵⁵ The *haruspices* specialized in reading the entrails of sacrificial victims; in Latin they were called 'gut-gazers'. See MacBain (1982) 48 n. 112.

plan of the temple marked on the ground, aware that it was inscribed on Etruscan soil. Pliny highlights the trickery of the Etruscan seer, as does Zonaras, who tells a very similar but slightly more detailed story of contested dominion and attempted fraud. In his account, the sketch drawn on the ground by the Etruscan seer was of Rome and the Tarpeian Hill, not the future temple (Zon. 7.11):

He intended to ask the envoys: ‘Is this Rome? Is this the hill? Was the head found here?’ They would suspect nothing and would assent, and so the efficacy of the portent would be transferred to the place where it had been shown in the diagram. This was his design, but the envoys learned of it from his son, and when the question was put to them, they answered: ‘the settlement of Rome is not here, but in Latium, and the hill is in the country of the Romans, and the head was found on that hill.’ Thus the seer’s design was thwarted and they learned the whole truth and reported it to their fellow-citizens, namely that they should be very powerful and rule a vast multitude. This, then, was another event that inspired them with hope, and thus they renamed the hill Capitolium; for *capita* in the Roman tongue means the ‘head’.

The responses given by the Roman envoys in this account are ritualistically precise: the head, they say, was found on a hill, in Rome, in Latium. In the account of Dionysius of Halicarnassus there is an even more pronounced emphasis on ritual precision. When the head is discovered in the foundations of the temple Tarquin first assembles the local seers and asks them to interpret the meaning of the prodigy; when they confess that only the Etruscans can provide an explanation he asks for the name of the best seer among the Etruscans, and when he receives an answer he selects the most distinguished citizens to send out as envoys.⁵⁶ When the envoys arrive at the house of the Etruscan seer they are invited by his son to tell him the nature of their enquiry; this they do, trusting in his advice that ‘the correct form of question is not the least important part of the art of divination’.⁵⁷ The young man then offers them the following advice (D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.60.2–4):

‘Hear me, Romans. My father will interpret this prodigy to you and will tell you no untruth, since it is not right for a seer to speak falsely; but, in order that you may be guilty of no error or falsehood in what you say or in the answers you give to his questions (for it is of im-

⁵⁶ D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.59.3.

⁵⁷ D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.60.1–2.

portance to you to know these things beforehand), be instructed by me. After you have related the prodigy to him he will tell you that he does not fully understand what you say and will circumscribe with his staff some piece of ground or other; then he will say to you: “This is the Tarpeian Hill, and this is the part that faces east, this the part that faces west, this point is north and the opposite is south.” These parts he will point out to you with his staff and then ask you in which of these parts the head was found. What answer, therefore, do I advise you to make? Do not admit that the prodigy was found in any of these places he shall inquire about when he points them out with his staff, but say that it appeared among you at Rome on the Tarpeian Hill. If you stick to these answers and do not allow yourselves to be misled by him, he, well knowing that fate cannot be changed, will interpret to you without concealment what the prodigy means.’

The envoys then meet the seer, and after he draws a series of straight and circular lines on the ground he asks them with reference to various points on his diagram whether or not the head had been found there (D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.61.1–2):

But the ambassadors, not at all disturbed in mind, stuck to the one answer suggested to them by the seer’s son, always naming Rome and the Tarpeian Hill, and asked the interpreter not to appropriate the omen to himself, but to answer in the most sincere and just manner. The seer, accordingly, finding it impossible for him either to impose upon the men or to appropriate the omen, said to them: ‘Romans, tell your fellow citizens it is ordained by fate that the place in which you found the head shall be the head of all Italy (*κεφαλὴν ... συμπάσης Ἰταλίας*).’ Since that time the place is called the Capitoline Hill from the head that was found there; for the Romans call heads *capita*.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus offers the most detailed narrative of the attempted trickery of the Etruscan seer, and it is his account in particular which supports MacBain’s observation that the story indicates ‘familiarity with haruspical techniques of orientation and with their belief that destiny could be altered by the capturing or transferring of an omen’.⁵⁸ In each of the above

⁵⁸ MacBain (1982) 53; cf. Haack (2003) 22. Implicitly, the emphasis on ritual orientation also alludes to augury and to the centrality of the Arx on the Capitoline Hill as the principal lookout of the augurs at Rome: Purcell (2007) 190–1; cf. Hölkeskamp (2001) 106–7. There is also a strong focus on augural ritual in the myth of Terminus (esp. D. Hal. *A.R.* 3.69.3–5).

narratives it is made clear that the trickery of the Etruscan *haruspex* was thwarted only because his son had schooled the Roman envoys in how to answer the questions that would be put to them, and Servius offers a version of the myth in which the son betrays his father: he had been told that the discovery of the head was an omen of world rule (*ut is locus orbi imperitaret, in quo illud caput esset inventum*) and he revealed this secret to the Roman envoys in advance; the latter, having been warned to be on their guard, were able to thwart the seer's trickery, but his suspicions were aroused and when he asked if they had met anyone before the consultation they told him, in their naivety, that they had come across his son. The seer is then said to have mounted a horse and pursued his son to Rome where he killed him in the Argiletum, the street that linked the Forum and the Subura; the son's name was Argus, hence the street was called the *Argi-letum* or 'Death of Argus'.⁵⁹

The myth of the Capitoline head is presented as a venerable and often-repeated story: thus we find phrases such as 'it is said' or 'as the annals reliably affirm'.⁶⁰ These statements attest a tradition, but no sources are named. Scholars have therefore been attracted to a passage in which the Christian polemicist Arnobius offers a discussion of the myth and does name his sources: one of them is Fabius Pictor, Rome's first historian.

4. The Head of Olus

By the Late Republic it was felt that the name Capitolium was derived from the word for 'head' (*caput*) and there was a story that a human head had been discovered in the ground during the construction of the Capitoline temple.⁶¹ In the version of the myth known to Pliny, the Etruscan seer who interpreted the omen had a name, Olenus Calenus, and this implies a derivation of Capitolium from *caput Oleni*, the 'head interpreted by Olenus'.⁶² In Late Antiquity the head was given an identity. For Servius it was the 'head of Olus' (*caput Oli*). As in earlier writers, it is treated as a portent of Roman world rule, and it is said to have been interpreted by an Etruscan seer whose son thwarted his attempt to transfer the omen to his own people.⁶³ Arnobius

⁵⁹ Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 8.345. Vergil's Argus was a guest (*hospes*) of Evander (*Aen.* 8.346).

⁶⁰ Livy 1.55.5 (*dicitur*); Varro *Ling.* 5.41 (*dicitur*); D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.59.2 (*λέγεται*); Plin. *N.H.* 28.15 (*constantissima annalium adfirmatione*); cf. Isid. *Orig.* 15.2.31 (*alii aiunt*); Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 8.345 (*quidam dicunt*).

⁶¹ Varro *Ling.* 5.41.

⁶² Plin. *N.H.* 28.15, with Borgeaud (1987) 89.

⁶³ Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 8.345; cf. Mart. Cap. 3.223 for a passing reference, without any indication of the content of the myth, to the *Olum caput*. A chronicle from the mid-4th

states that it was the head of a man called Olus or Aulus from the Etruscan city of Vulci, and he claims in addition that the death of the man and the fate of his head had been recorded in detail by previous historians (Arnob. 6.7):

What person is there who is unaware that the Capitol of the imperial people is the tomb of Olus Vulcentanus? Who is there, I say, who does not know that beneath its foundations there was found a man's head, buried no very long time before, either by itself without the other parts of the body (for some state this) or with all its limbs? Now, if you require this to be made clear by the testimonies of historians, Sammonicus, Granius, Valerianus, and Fabius will tell you whose son Aulus was, of what clan and nation, why he was robbed of life and light by the hand of a slave, and for what crime committed against his fellow-citizens he was denied burial in his fatherland. You will also learn, even though the sources claim not to wish to make this public, what was done with the head when it was discovered, or in what part of the citadel it was hidden, with careful secrecy, so that the omen which the gods had attested might seem fixed, permanent, and eternal... and the state which is greatest of all, and worships all deities, did not blush, in giving a name to the temple, to call it the Capitolium after the head of Olus rather than to name it after Jupiter.

Arnobius tells the story of Olus as an etymological aetiology for the name of the Capitoline temple, and in doing so he explains that the discovery of a head in the foundations of the temple was interpreted as a positive omen. Otherwise he departs from the standard narrative of the myth: he makes no mention of seers who interpreted the omen, and he is unwilling to accept the tradition (for him a view held only by some) that the head was found freshly-severed, on its own. Instead, he argues that the excavation of the temple foundations revealed the tomb of a man with a name and a history in his native city of Vulci, and that it was the expiatory reburial of the head in a secret place on the Capitol which secured the goodwill of the gods. The narrative is highly unorthodox, yet Arnobius claims that it is a standard account, and he lists the names of four historians who, he tells us, explained why the tomb of a man from an Etruscan city was placed on the Capitol. One view is that he relied exclusively on the first two sources he cites, Q. Sammonicus Serenus and Granius Licinianus, who were writing in the 2nd and 3rd cen-

century states that the head was inscribed with Etruscan writing (cf. Isid. *Orig.* 15.2.31) which spelled out the words 'caput Oli regis'; this is said to have occurred under Tarquin the Elder (*Chronica minora* I, p. 144, ed. Mommsen).

turies AD.⁶⁴ But for the most part his citations are trusted, and it is felt that his testimony derives ultimately from the second pair of sources he names, Valerius Antias (corrected from Valerianus) and Fabius Pictor. Indeed, the standard editions generally cite the above passage in its entirety as a fragment of both lost historians.⁶⁵

Arnobius speaks of a man called Olus (or Aulus) of Vulci who was killed by a slave and found guilty of a crime that condemned him to burial in exile. Modern scholars identify him with Aulus Vibenna, attested as the brother of Caeles Vibenna on the wall-paintings of the François Tomb at Vulci.⁶⁶ It is felt that the Late Antique story of the *caput Oli* preserves traces of a reliable historical tradition, and it is this conviction which forms the basis for the further conjecture that Aulus Vibenna ruled Rome as king or warlord.⁶⁷ Scholars who wish to use the evidence of Arnobius to reconstruct the history of Early Rome are not, however, required to work on the assumption that the citation of Fabius Pictor is reliable. One school of thought holds that the story of Olus/Aulus of Vulci derives not from Rome's first historian but from an Etruscan myth known to Arnobius only from Roman writers of the Imperial period.⁶⁸ This lets us argue that the name

⁶⁴ Gjerstad (1967) 271–2; Heurgon (1967) 375; (1986) 274; Valditara (1988) 279. The first source cited by Arnobius is Q. Sammonicus Serenus (early 3rd c. AD). Granius is probably Granius Licinianus (2nd c. AD) rather than Granius Flaccus (late 1st c. BC).

⁶⁵ Arnob. 6.7 = Fabius Pictor fr. 12 Peter; fr. 16 Beck/Walter; fr. 16 Chassignet = Valerius Antias fr. 13 Peter; fr. 14 Beck/Walter; fr. 14 Chassignet. The attribution to Fabius Pictor is broadly accepted: e.g. Alföldi (1965) 216; Borgeaud (1987) 99; Cornell (1995) 145; Coarelli (1996) 155; Hölkeskamp (2001) 97; Ridley (2013) 29–30. In the new edition of the fragmentary Roman historians, the passage of Arnobius is included among the 'possible fragments' of Fabius Pictor (*FRHist* 1 F 30) and the 'doubtful fragments' of Valerius Antias (*FRHist* 25 F 69). In each case emphasis is given to the sentences which follow the citation. The passage is also listed as one of the 'possible fragments' of Q. Fabius Maximus Servilianus, an almost unknown historian of the 2nd century BC (*FRHist* 8 F 9).

⁶⁶ See Cornell (1995) 134–6, for a discussion of the tomb and further evidence for Aulus Vibenna. The identification with Olus of Vulci is generally treated as certain: Alföldi (1965) 216–8; Cornell (1995) 145; Coarelli (1996) 154; Hölkeskamp (2001) 98; Beck & Walter (2001) 105; Wiseman (2004) 44, 124; Ridley (2013) 38; or probable: Momigliano (1969) 17; Grant (1971) 165.

⁶⁷ This hypothesis relies on Late Antique evidence: Arnob. 6.7 (Aulus of Vulci buried on the Capitol); *Chron. min.* 1, 144 (Olus as *rex*). See Alföldi (1965) 216–7; Cornell (1995) 145; Beck & Walter (2001) 105; with the critique of Momigliano (1969) 17–18.

⁶⁸ The story of Aulus Vibenna, it is argued, was unknown at Rome before Claudius published his Etruscan history: Heurgon (1967) 375; Chassignet (2003) 83; and it was known to Arnobius only from the works of Granius or Sammonicus: Valditara (1988) 279. The Augustan antiquarian Verrius Flaccus alludes to a brother of Caeles Vibenna (*Fest.* p. 486 Lindsay). But this fact alone does not let us argue, *pace* Bispham and Cornell (2013)

Capitolium was not derived from *caput Oli* until a late date, and that the biography of the invented ‘Olus’ was based on the life-story of the almost homonymous Aulus Vibenna of Vulci. The citation of Fabius Pictor in Arnobius can thus be dismissed as a fiction. Scholars have insisted on its reliability, so that they can trace the Capitoline myth back to Rome’s first historian, but none have been able to explain how the version of the myth familiar from Augustan and later sources could have taken shape if Fabius Pictor, and then Valerius Antias, had narrated any part of the highly unorthodox account found in Arnobius.⁶⁹ In my view it is Livy and Pliny who provide the best evidence for the attribution of the Capitoline myth to individual lost historians of the Middle to Late Republic. Both authors claim to offer a traditional narrative, and in their discussions of the funds used to finance the construction of the Capitoline temple they cite their sources by name. Pliny cites Valerius Antias for the statement that one of the Tarquins used the booty taken from Apiolae.⁷⁰ Livy argues that the sum of forty talents in Fabius Pictor is more credible than the figure of 40,000 pounds of silver in L. Calpurnius Piso.⁷¹ It would seem that the authors cited by Livy and Pliny examined the construction of the Capitol in detail, so perhaps we can assume that all three also described the myth of the Capitoline head, a story that is treated as an old tale in the surviving sources. That said, it is not possible to conjecture on this basis alone how they might have discussed the theme of Rome’s imperial destiny.

5. Olenus Calenus

The myth of the Capitoline head is treated as an old tale in the surviving sources, and it is reasonable to assume that it was part of the annalistic tradition from an early date, but there is no citation of any particular lost historian in any of the sources which supply us with the standard narrative of the myth. Weinstock was willing to conjecture, in his seminal discussion of the

III.47, that the story of Aulus Vibenna and his brother Caeles might have featured in the early books of Fabius Pictor.

⁶⁹ Ridley ((2013) 29–30) wonders why Livy chose not to mention the story of Olus, while Alföldi ((1965) 216 n. 2) makes the desperate claim that its omission from all sources until Late Antiquity was due to Varro. Coarelli ((1996) 154) argues that the ‘vulgate’ tradition censored the myth because it was unflattering to Rome. The more obvious solution is to reject the story of Olus for the historiography of the Republic.

⁷⁰ Plin. *N.H.* 3.70. This is the only basis for the attribution of the story of Olenus Calenus at Plin. *N.H.* 28.15 to Valerius Antias: Münzer (1897) 179–80; accepted by Peter (1914) 1.23–4, 244–5; Weinstock (1931) 2450; Ogilvie (1965) 211.

⁷¹ Livy 1.55.8–9; cf. 1.53.3.

myth in his *RE* article on Olenus, that the story of the Capitoline head was discussed by Valerius Antias, Piso, and Fabius Pictor, but in doing so he ignored Arnobius and focused instead on the evidence of a series of gems which attest the currency of the myth from the 3rd to the 1st centuries.⁷² Some examples depict a standing bare-chested figure pointing with a rod at a human head on the ground.⁷³ In other versions there is an addition to the scene: two toga-clad figures who stare intently at the head on the ground indicated by the figure with the rod.⁷⁴ In the literary narratives of the myth the head is found at Rome, envoys are sent to one of the neighbouring cities in Etruria, and the seer points at his own markings on the ground when he interprets the prodigy. It is possible to argue, however, that the gems combine the discovery of the head and its interpretation by the Etruscan seer into one scene; the toga-clad figures represent both the Romans who discover the prodigy and those who consult the seer to discover its meaning.⁷⁵ One gem depicts a more complex scene: the head appears on rocky ground in the centre, indicated by the seer with his rod; on the right there is a standing and a seated figure; on the left there is a third figure standing behind a bearded herm statue.⁷⁶ The herm may be identified as a representation of the god Terminus, and thus as an allusion to the exauguration of the site of

⁷² Weinstock (1931) 2447–50; on the gems, cf. Blanchet (1925) 251–4. Weinstock's reading of the gems is followed inter alia by Alföldi (1965) 218–20; Heurgon (1967) 375; Zwierlein-Diehl (1969) 137–8; Grant (1971) 165; MacBain (1982) 53; Zazoff (1983) 294–5; Coarelli (1996) 156; Haack (2003) 23; Bispham and Cornell (2013) III.45–6; Ridley (2013) 30 n. 8.

⁷³ Description: Alföldi (1965) 219. Illustrations: Furtwängler (1900) vol. II, pl. XXII no. 7; Blanchet (1925) 252 fig. 2; Alföldi (1965) pl. XIII, nos. 13–14; Zazoff (1983) pl. 85, no. 3. Two examples in Berlin (Inv. FG 403, 404) date to the 3rd century. See Zwierlein-Diehl (1969) 137–8, with pl. 63 no. 346, pl. 64 no. 347.

⁷⁴ Description: Weinstock (1931) 2448; Alföldi (1965) 219. Illustrations: Furtwängler (1900) vol. II, pl. XXII nos. 8, 13–14; Blanchet (1925) 252 figs. 3–5, 253 fig. 6; Walters (1926) pl. XV, nos. 995–7; Alföldi (1965) pl. XIII, nos. 1–10, pl. XIV, no. 2; Zazoff (1983) pl. 85, no. 4. An example in Berlin (Inv. FG 405) dates to the 3rd century. See Zwierlein-Diehl (1969) 138, with pl. 64 no. 348. An example in Vienna (Inv. 1821, 185 no. 166) dates to the late 1st century BC. See Zwierlein-Diehl (1979) 51, with pl. 23, no. 720. Two examples from the British Museum are illustrated below as figures 1 and 2; their museum reference numbers are 1872,0604.1230 and 1867,0507.554, and they are published by Walters (1926) as nos. 996 and 997. The British Museum website dates both gems to the 3rd/2nd centuries BC.

⁷⁵ Weinstock (1931) 2448; Alföldi (1965) 219.

⁷⁶ Description: Babelon (1899) 44; Weinstock (1931) 2448; Alföldi (1965) 220. Illustrations: Babelon (1899) pl. VII, no. 111; Blanchet (1925) 248 fig. 1; Alföldi (1965) pl. XIII, nos. 12, 12a. This miniature intaglio, in the Cabinet des Médailles in Paris, is dated to the Early Imperial period by Blanchet (1925) 249.

the Capitol before the discovery of the *caput humanum*.⁷⁷ There is no reason to doubt that it is the Capitoline myth which is depicted on these gems.⁷⁸



Figure 1. Chalcedony gem engraved with the myth of the Capitoline head. Length 1.2 cm. Width 1 cm. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved.



Figure 2. Sard gem engraved with the myth of the Capitoline head. Length 1.6 cm. Width 1.4 cm. © The Trustees of the British Museum. All rights reserved.

The identification of the gems as visual narratives of the myth of the Capitoline head lets us date the story to the Middle Republic. But they offer only an abbreviated outline of the myth, and thus they do not reveal exactly what form it took in the 3rd century. The figure of the Etruscan seer clearly had a prominent role, but the images cannot tell us if his portrayal was negative or if his prophecy was framed in terms of Roman dominion over Italy or the world. The assumption of scholars who accept a 3rd-century date for

⁷⁷ Babelon (1899) 44; Blanchet (1925) 248; Weinstock (1931) 2448; Alföldi (1965) 220. According to Babelon, the seated figure is a priest, and the standing figures, both nude, are Mars and Juventas; this reading is followed by Blanchet; for Alföldi the seated figure is Tarquin, and the nude standing figures, both male, are workmen engaged in the digging of the temple foundations.

⁷⁸ Contra: Furtwängler (1900) III.247–52, followed by Borgeaud (1987) 89, and in part by Walters (1926) I, 116, for whom the gems depict the prophetic head of Orpheus. This interpretation should be reserved for a different set of gems which depict a standing figure writing on a tablet and leaning over a head on the ground: thus Blanchet (1925) 250–1; Alföldi (1965) 219; Zazoff (1983) 298, with pl. 85, no. 5; cf. Zwierlein-Diehl (1969) no. 345, (1979) no. 717. There is also a third category of gems which depict rustic figures contemplating the discovery of a skull; this motif evokes the theme of *memento mori*. See Himmelmann-Wildschütz (1973).

the myth of the Capitoline head is that it did already include a prophecy of empire. Ogilvie uses Livy's term, *caput rerum*, though he does not use it to mean world rule. He argues that 'when the wars with Pyrrhus and Carthage taxed her morale, the myth of the Capitolium took on a new prophetic guise, assuring Rome of ultimate mastery'. In other words, he is thinking of what Fears labels the 'theology of victory'.⁷⁹ The idea that the Capitoline myth highlighted the theme of universal military victory finds support in the intimate association of Victory and Jupiter in the 3rd century. The first temple to Victoria at Rome was dedicated in 294, and in the previous year a temple was vowed to Jupiter Victor.⁸⁰ On the coinage Jupiter appears brandishing his sceptre and thunderbolt, standing in a four-horse chariot driven by the goddess Victory on the *quadrigati* minted in bulk from 225 to 212; on the *victoriati* introduced in 211 the head of a laureate Jupiter is paired with a Victory decorating a trophy on the obverse and the reverse.⁸¹ The goddess even took up residence on the Capitol. In 216, a 220-pound golden statue of Victory presented to the Senate by Hiero of Syracuse was dedicated in the Capitoline temple of Jupiter: the statue of the goddess was placed in Rome's chief temple, according to Livy, in order that 'she would be gracious and propitious, and firm and constant, in her support of the Roman People'.⁸² The relationship between Victory and Capitoline Jupiter finds a parallel in the cults of Juventas and Terminus, and one may note that the language used by Livy to describe the dedication of Hiero's Victory statue echoes his own statement that the refusal of Terminus to leave the site of the Capitol portended that Rome's future would be 'firm and constant'.⁸³ The 'theology of victory' gives us a 3rd-century context for the Capitoline foundation myths, and it lets us understand how Rome *might* have claimed to be *caput rerum* before it embarked on the conquest of the Greek East at the start of the 2nd century. But it need not be assumed that the term was attached to the Capitoline myth at such an early date. Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Plutarch prefer the term 'head of Italy', and this lets us argue for an initial

⁷⁹ Ogilvie (1965) 211–12 on Livy 1.55.5. On the 'theology of victory', see Fears (1981b).

⁸⁰ Fears (1981a) 34–6.

⁸¹ Fears (1981a) 38–9. *Quadrigati*: *RRC* 28/3, 29/3, 30/1, 31/1, 32/1, 33/1, 34/1, 42/1. *Victoriati*: *RRC* 44/1.

⁸² Livy 22.37.5; 22.37.10–12.

⁸³ Livy 22.37.12: *uolentem propitiamque, firmam ac stabilem*; cf. 1.55.4, *firma stabiliaque cuncta*.

phase, in the 3rd century, in which the myth asserted no more than hegemony over Italy.⁸⁴

It is problematic to assume that the Capitoline myth of the 3rd century proclaimed Rome to be *caput rerum*, even if this term is diluted into something less than ‘universal rule’, and there is also the problem that the existence of the Capitoline myth in this period does not ipso facto demonstrate that it was already a myth of empire which included a prophecy of Rome’s imperial destiny. Borgeaud finds proof in one of the foundation myths of Carthage: the head of an ox discovered in the ground at the first site selected for the city was interpreted as an omen of prosperity and servitude, so the city and a temple to Juno were established at a spot where a horse’s head was unearthed and interpreted as an omen of martial prowess.⁸⁵ Like the Capitoline myth, it is a foundation story, it features the prodigy of a head discovered under the ground on the site of the chief deity’s temple, and it ends with a prophecy of future greatness.⁸⁶ Borgeaud, following Gerschel, applies Dumézil’s theory of the tripartite ideology in a synkrisis of the two myths: the heads of the ox and horse unearthed on the site of Carthage stand for the second and third functions of the martial and the economic, while the Capitoline head stands for the primary function of sovereignty and the sacral. The Roman myth is hierarchically superior, and Gerschel thus came to the conclusion that the Carthaginian myth was a Roman invention. Borgeaud proposes instead that the symbolic inferiority of the Carthaginian myth formed the basis, from the late 3rd century, for the reinvention of the Capitoline story as a myth of empire which proclaimed Rome’s cosmic sovereignty as *caput rerum*.⁸⁷ There are two fundamental problems with this idea. Firstly, it is far from certain that the Carthaginian myth existed at this time in the form in which it appears in later Roman sources.⁸⁸ Secondly, it is a fallacy to cite the Carthaginian parallel as proof that the myth of the *caput hu-*

⁸⁴ D. Hal. *A.R.* 4.61.2; Plut. *Cam.* 31.4; cf. Borgeaud (1987) 92 n. 23. One may note that Fears (1981a, 37–8) discusses the genesis of the ‘theology of victory’ in the 3rd century only in the context of the Roman conquest of Italy.

⁸⁵ Justin 18.5.15–16; Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 1.443; cf. Eustath. ad Dionys. *Perieg.* 195, for the idea that the horse head was found under a palm tree.

⁸⁶ The parallel is noted by Weinstock (1931) 2449–50.

⁸⁷ Gerschel (1952) 51–4; Borgeaud (1987) 98–9.

⁸⁸ Vergil alludes to the discovery of the horse-head (*Aen.* 1.443; cf. Steph. Byz., s.v. Καρχηδών), and the story of the ox-head was no doubt also known at this time, for it is mentioned by Justin (18.5.15) in an epitome of an Augustan writer, Cn. Pompeius Trogus. It is argued that the earliest treatment of the myth was by the Sicilian historian Timaeus in the first half of the 3rd century: Weinstock (1931) 2449; without the story of the ox-head: Bayet (1941) 167–70.

manum became a myth of empire during the 3rd-century Punic wars—for that is to assert that a prophecy of empire could not have been inserted into the Capitoline myth except during a conflict with an enemy which happened to possess a parallel foundation story.⁸⁹ One must look elsewhere for a solution to the problem of when the Capitoline myth of the *caput humanum* evolved into a myth of empire.

Rome's imperial destiny is revealed at the climax of a battle of wits between the Romans and the Etruscan seer: the seer employs trickery but his son reveals that the prodigy of the Capitoline head is a transferable omen and thus the Romans are able to thwart his attempt to capture Rome's destiny. The negative portrayal of the seer and the intervention of his son are integral to the narrative and they are the product of a radical reworking of the myth at some point from the mid-3rd century. The seer's son is based on a character in a myth made famous by an episode in the conquest of Asia by Alexander the Great: the cutting of the Gordian knot. Local legend held that anyone who was able to untie the knot of a chariot-yoke dedicated in the temple of Zeus Basileus at Gordium was destined to rule Asia. It was believed that the yoke came from a chariot which had belonged to the father of Midas, a farmer called Gordius who had once witnessed an prodigy while ploughing: an eagle settled on the yoke of his oxen, or birds of every variety flew around his head; he resolved to visit the seers in another town, but when he arrived he met a young woman from a priestly family who revealed that he was destined to be a king or instructed him to return to the spot where the prodigy had occurred to offer sacrifice to Zeus Basileus; she returned with him and became his wife. In this narrative, as in the Capitoline myth, the prodigy is an *omen imperii*, a journey is made to consult seers in another town, and there the account of the prodigy is first heard and interpreted not by the seers but by a young person with prophetic gifts from a family of seers.⁹⁰ The scene in which Gordius meets his wife is the model for the meeting of the Romans and the Etruscan seer's son. In the Gordian myth the seers make no appearance, and there is no hint that trickery was avoided. The vilification of the seer in the Capitoline myth is a motif which derives not from the Gordian myth but from a Roman stereotype of the Etruscan *haruspex* as cunning and untrustworthy. According to MacBain, there

⁸⁹ Contra: Ogilvie (1965) 212; Borgeaud (1987) 98–9; Edwards (1996) 85. It is more useful to compare the Carthaginian foundation story with the Terminus myth, both of which focus on the selection of the correct site for the city's chief temple; the promise of steadfastness in the Terminus myth responds to the prophecy of Carthaginian military strength, and thus it offers a message which suits the context of the 3rd-century Punic Wars.

⁹⁰ Arr. *Anab.* 2.3.2–6; Justin 11.7.5–14; with Borgeaud (1987) 92–5.

was hostility to the influence of the *haruspices* after their first invitation to Rome during the war with Pyrrhus, and the Capitoline myth was rewritten as ‘a cautionary tale on the craftiness and hostility of *haruspices*.’⁹¹ The best illustration is an episode from the second quarter of the 3rd century: lightning struck the statue of Horatius Cocles at the Comitium, the *haruspices* prescribed the wrong expiation, it is said, due to their enmity to Rome, and when this was revealed they were put to death.⁹² This was not long after the first involvement of the *haruspices* in Roman public life, in 278. On this occasion, a statue of Summanus on the roof of the Capitoline temple was struck by lightning, its head was dislodged and lost, and the *haruspices* used their arts to locate the head and retrieve it from the Tiber.⁹³ These episodes provide the models for the twin motifs which define the Capitoline story of the Etruscan seer: mistrust towards the *haruspices* and deference to their skills of divination. It is thus possible to conclude, with MacBain, that the story postdates the war with Pyrrhus.⁹⁴

The crafty Etruscan *haruspex* whom Pliny calls Olenus Calenus is absent from Livy’s version. In his narrative there is no contest, no villain, and no drama: the prodigy is interpreted by *vates* from Rome and Etruria, the action takes place at Rome, and the possession of the omen is never in doubt; its meaning is ‘plainly foreshadowed’.⁹⁵ This simple narrative lets us imagine the myth in its original form. The action took place at Rome, and it focused on the discovery of the head and its interpretation as a positive omen of future prosperity.⁹⁶ There was no journey to Etruria, no encounter with a crafty *haruspex* or his honest son, and no contest for possession of the omen until the foundation myth of the Capitoline temple was rewritten as a myth of empire: it was then that the story of ‘Olenus Calenus’ was invented, to give drama to the prophecy of Rome’s imperial destiny. The story of the Etruscan seer postdates the war with Pyrrhus and there are gems from this

⁹¹ MacBain (1982) 53; followed by Haack (2003) 23–5.

⁹² Gell. *N.A.* 4.5.1–7. The episode is dated to the early to mid-3rd century by MacBain (1982) 54–5; to circa 270 by Rasmussen (2003) 59; and to the period 278–250 by Haack (2003) 39. A similar incident is recorded for 102 BC (Obs. 44).

⁹³ Cic. *Div.* 1.16, 2.45, Livy, *Per.* 14, with MacBain (1982) 45–9, 52–3; cf. Santangelo (2013) 84. It was not until the Second Punic War that the *haruspices* were consulted on a regular basis: Cornell (1995) 167.

⁹⁴ MacBain (1982) 53–4 argues that ‘the story of Olenus reflects anti-haruspicial sentiment at Rome going back probably to the generation which saw their first appearance there’.

⁹⁵ Livy 1.55.6 (*haud per ambages*).

⁹⁶ Cf. Plin. *N.H.* 28.15 (*praeclarum id fortunatumque cernens*).

period in which strong visual emphasis is placed on the seer who interprets the prodigy of the Capitoline head. It is reasonable to assume, in my view, that the gems portray the figure of Olenus Calenus, not a generic seer, and that they postdate the transformation of the Capitoline myth into a myth of empire. The earliest gems were produced during the 3rd century, and this lets us argue that the story of Olenus Calenus and his prophecy of Rome's imperial destiny were added to the Capitoline myth not long after the war with Pyrrhus, in the mid to late 3rd century.⁹⁷ At this stage, I would suggest, the myth declared Rome to be the 'head of Italy', at first in celebration of the conquest of Italy in the period between the dissolution of the Latin League in 338 and the fall of Tarentum in 272, then perhaps as a myth of Italian unity for Rome and its allies in the war with Hannibal.⁹⁸

6. The Portent of the Terracotta Chariot

Pliny's narrative of the myth of the Capitoline head and the contest for dominion with Olenus Calenus ends with an allusion to a second portent: the terracotta statue of a four-horse chariot intended for the roof of the Capitoline temple grew in size when it was placed in the furnace; this was a positive omen, retained by Rome after a contest for its possession. The myth is mentioned in passing, as a parallel for the myth of the Capitoline head, but with no comment on what was portended by the prodigy or how its possession was secured for Rome.⁹⁹ Pliny offers a further reference to the terracotta chariot statue in a passage in which he cites Varro and states that Vulca, a sculptor from the nearby Etruscan city of Veii, was brought to Rome by Tarquin the Elder to make the cult statue of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. But this passage states only that the chariot was made of terracotta and that it

⁹⁷ Cf. Blanchet (1925) 255, for the conjecture that the composition of the gems copied a statue group set up long before the 3rd century, shortly after the foundation of the temple.

⁹⁸ In 217, Naples donated forty heavy gold bowls to the Roman treasury, and their envoys are said to have stated that the war with Hannibal was being fought for the cities and farmlands of the allies, not just for Rome, 'the capital and citadel of Italy' (*pro capite atque arce Italiae*, Livy 22.32.4–6). There are also passages in which Livy presents the Hannibalic War as a contest for world dominion (29.17.6; 30.32.2; 30.33.11) but this idea is no older than Polybius (1.3.7; 15.9.2–5). See Gruen (1984) 322–5.

⁹⁹ Plin. *N.H.* 28.16. This notice opens with the phrase 'they say this happened a second time' (*iterum id accidisse tradunt*). This refers back to the story of Olenus Calenus and implies that the terracotta chariot was also a transferable omen and the subject of attempted Etruscan fraud. See Hubaux (1950) 344; (1958) 205–6; Gerschel (1952) 62.

stood on the Capitoline temple.¹⁰⁰ A full narrative of the myth of the terracotta chariot is provided by Plutarch in his *Life of Publicola*. The Capitoline temple was almost finished, we are told, when Tarquin the Proud decided, perhaps in response to a prophecy, to commission craftsmen from Veii to make a terracotta chariot for the temple roof. It was at Veii, after Tarquin was driven from his throne, that a prodigy was observed: when fired the statue did not shrink as the moisture in the clay evaporated; rather it expanded in size and could not be removed except by dismantling the furnace. According to the seers, this was ‘a sign of good fortune and power’ (σημείον εὐτυχίας καὶ δυνάμεως) for the people who possessed the chariot. Veii was thus reluctant to deliver the sculptures to Rome. Their agreement, they said, was with the exiled Tarquin and so they had no obligation to give the statues to the Republic. They changed their minds after a second portent. There was a festival at Veii, and a victorious charioteer was parading in front of the crowd when his horses suddenly took fright and carried him at full speed the ten miles from Veii to Rome, where he was thrown from his chariot beneath the Capitol at a gate in the city-wall which came to be called the ‘Porta Ratumena’.¹⁰¹

Pliny mentions the story of ‘Ratumenna’ in a discussion of the intelligence of horses; it is one of two examples from the distant past in which horses are said to have driven their own chariots after losing their drivers (Plin. *N.H.* 8.161):

Our ancestors considered it as a still more remarkable portent that when a charioteer had been thrown from his place, in the plebeian games of the Circus, the horses ran to the Capitol, just as if he had been standing in the car, and went three times round the temple there. But what is the greatest prodigy of all is the fact that the horses of Ratumenna came from Veii to Rome, with the palm branch and chaplet, he himself having fallen from his chariot, after he gained the victory; this explains the name of the gate.

Solinus conflates the two episodes: in his narrative ‘Ratumanna’ is thrown from his chariot, his horses leave the racetrack, they dart up to the Capitoline Hill, and they do not come to a rest until they have completed three ritual lustrations of Jupiter’s temple. In this account there is no mention of Ve-

¹⁰⁰ Varro, ap. Plin. *N.H.* 35.157. The reference to the terracotta chariot is framed by references to two statues made by Vulca, hence scholars attribute the terracotta chariot to Vulca as well. Thus: Gjerstad (1967) 264–5.

¹⁰¹ Plut. *Publ.* 13.

ii, the gate in the Capitoline walls, or the terracotta chariot.¹⁰² Festus discusses the myth in his commentary on the ‘Ratumenna porta’. It was named, he says, after a nobleman from Veii who was victorious in a chariot race and met his death at Rome when he was thrown from his chariot after his horses took fright; the horses then ascended the Capitol and did not come to a rest until they were within sight of the terracotta chariot on the roof of Jupiter’s temple. As an addendum, Festus offers an account of the history of the statues: they had been commissioned by Rome from an expert sculptor from Veii, when fired they had grown in size and could not be removed from the furnace, and this was a portent of supreme power for the people who owned them; their possession was contested but Rome ‘recovered’ them in a war.¹⁰³ Servius mentions the terracotta chariot and states that it occupied a special place in Rome’s sacred topography, since, like the Palladium in the temple of Vesta, it was held to be one of the seven canonical ‘talismans of empire’ (*septem pignora imperii*). Interestingly, he calls it the *quadriga fictilis Veientanorum* and thus he suggests it was a talisman belonging to Veii which was captured by Rome.¹⁰⁴

The history of the myth of the terracotta chariot and its pendant myth of Ratumenna has been the subject of two detailed studies. Hubaux argues that in its original form the myth of the terracotta chariot was an aetiology which reflected on the lifelike realism of a very old acroterial sculpture on the Capitoline roof which was known to have been made by sculptors from Veii; it was felt that a miracle must have accompanied the creation of such marvellous works of art, and it was also felt necessary to explain why the people of Veii had been willing to part with them; the rational explanation was that they had been captured by Rome in war, and the mystical tale, according to Hubaux, was that they had been imbued with a supernatural power to travel to Rome of their own accord and place themselves in front of the Capitoline temple.¹⁰⁵ He also draws attention to the 4th-century terra-

¹⁰² Solin. 45.15; his debt to Plin. *N.H.* 8.161 is noted by Gagé (1953) 164 and Hubaux (1958) 209.

¹⁰³ Fest. pp. 340–2, ed. Lindsay. Festus does not explain how Rome can defeat Veii in war when Veii is in possession of talismanic statues that guarantee supremacy; this is noted by Hubaux (1950) 343; (1958) 204–5. Festus alludes to the war in which Veii and Tarquinii joined Tarquin against Rome in the first year of the Republic (Livy 2.6.2–4; 2.8.6; D. Hal. *A.R.* 5.14.1). Likewise: Wiseman (2004) 58, 125.

¹⁰⁴ Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* 7.188, cf. Serv. ad Verg. *Ecl.* 6.22 for the statement that the statue of Capitoline Jupiter in his chariot was painted with cinnabar. On the *pignora imperii*, see Groß (1935), Hartmann (2010) 545–8.

¹⁰⁵ Hubaux (1950) 349–50; (1958) 210–11; cf. Groß (1935) 46, who also assumes that the miracle statue of the terracotta chariot was originally imagined to have moved autonomously from Veii to its rightful place on the Capitol. According to this view, it was not

cotta plaque of two winged horses attached to a chariot from the Ara della Regina temple at Tarquinii: this leads him to suggest that the Capitoline chariot statue flew through the air on its autonomous journey from Veii to Rome.¹⁰⁶ Gag e departs even further from the narrative of the myth found in the sources. He interprets the story of the terracotta chariot as a rationalization of an ancient ritual associated with the Porta Ratumenna, and he proposes that this was a walled-up gate which was unblocked only when athletic victors were granted permission to make an ‘iselastic’ entry into the city via a breach in the walls. The gate, he argues, was in fact an arch (*fornix*) and the breach made in its walls to allow for the entry of an athletic victor in a chariot formed the basis for the story of a terracotta chariot that expanded when it was fired and could not be extracted except by demolishing the furnace (*formax*).¹⁰⁷ But no source refers to the Porta Ratumenna as an arch, and there is no evidence for ceremonial entries of athletic victors in Archaic Rome; it was a Greek ritual attested in connection with the panhellenic games, and it was imported to Rome only once, by Nero in AD 68, to celebrate his return from his Olympian and Pythian victories.¹⁰⁸ Other scholars remain much closer to the sources in their reconstructions of the myth.¹⁰⁹

The myth of the terracotta chariot describes a contest for dominion between Rome and Veii in the first year of the Republic, and it is felt that the story alludes to the epic ten year war which ended with the Roman conquest of Veii in 396. Hubaux suggests in passing that the myth dates to the time of the *evocatio* of the cult of Juno Regina (whose temple on the Aventine at Rome was vowed in 396 and dedicated in 392).¹¹⁰ Alf ldi argues that the myth was created during the war with Veii, at the end of the 5th century, and as proof of ‘the age and the genuineness of the legend’ he cites the fact that a new statue of Jupiter in a four-horse quadriga was set up on the Capitoline roof in 296.¹¹¹ The assumption is that the original statue of terracotta

only the driverless horses of Ratumenna which found their way to the Capitol of their own accord.

¹⁰⁶ Hubaux (1950) 352–3; (1958) 213–15.

¹⁰⁷ Gag e (1953) 167–73, viewed with extreme scepticism by Rawson (1981) 3.

¹⁰⁸ Iselastic entries: Vitr. 9.pr.1; Plin. *Ep.* 10.118, 119; breach in walls: Plut. *Mor.* 639e; Nero in AD 68: Suet. *Nero* 25.1–2; Cass. Dio 63.20.

¹⁰⁹ See, e.g., Wiseman (2004) 125, who offers a narrative of the myth in which Rome goes to war with Veii to seize the statues after the prodigy of the horses of Ratumenna reveals that they belong to Rome by divine right.

¹¹⁰ Hubaux (1958) 351.

¹¹¹ Alf ldi (1965) 141, with Livy 10.23.12. It is generally assumed that the new statues were bronze.

could not have come to be venerated as a talisman except in the period before 296 when it enjoyed a physical presence on the temple roof.¹¹² An alternative suggestion is that the myth was the product of Roman antiquarianism, inspired by archaic sculptural fragments found in the sacred storage spaces under the temple.¹¹³ It is also argued that the myth was created to give mystique and meaning to the new statues set up in 296, perhaps in the late 3rd century when the image of Jupiter riding in a four-horse chariot driven by Victoria defined the official message of the Roman state on the *quadrigati* minted from 225 to 212.¹¹⁴ In my view the myth evolved in two distinct stages.

In its original form, I would suggest, the myth of the terracotta chariot was an aetiology which explained what was felt to be the unusually large size of a terracotta chariot statue group on the roof of the Capitoline temple: it was therefore claimed that they had miraculously grown in size in the furnace and that they had a talismanic power to safeguard the well-being and future prosperity of the city.¹¹⁵ Perhaps, like the cult statue of Capitoline Jupiter, it was held to have been made by an Etruscan artist brought to Rome.¹¹⁶ In its final form, the myth introduces a contest for dominion: the chariot is made by Etruscan artists in nearby Veii, and it is there that the prodigy is observed, but the omen belongs to Rome, and the statues can eventually be placed on their rightful position on the roof of the Capitoline temple. It is to this reworking of the myth that the story of Ratumenna must be assigned, for it has no place except in a narrative in which the possession of the talismanic statue is the subject of a contest; its own narrative is a duplication, re-located to Veii, of a prodigy that is said to have taken place at the plebeian games when the horses of a driverless chariot raced from the Circus to the Capitol and made three ritual circuits of Jupiter's temple.¹¹⁷ It may be that these accretions to the myth are a product of the conquest of Veii at the start of the 4th century. But it is more likely that they date to the period after the

¹¹² Groß (1935) 49.

¹¹³ Hartmann (2010) 547. Cf. Glinister (2000) 64–5, for the similar conjecture that the impetus for the myth of the *caput humanum* was a decorative terracotta head deposited in the sacred storage spaces after it fell from the Capitoline temple, at some point before 200 BC.

¹¹⁴ Fears (1981a) 38; cf. Haack (2003) 24.

¹¹⁵ The idea of a talismanic object of miraculous size finds a parallel in the story of the Sabine cow, one of the foundation myths of the temple of Aventine Diana: see Weinstock (1931) 2450; Gerschel (1952) 58–61.

¹¹⁶ See Plin. *N.H.* 35.157.

¹¹⁷ See Plin. *N.H.* 8.161. Cf. Rawson (1981) 3, who suggests in passing that the story of Ratumenna might not have been in the oldest version of the myth.

transformation of the myth of the Capitoline head into a myth of empire in the mid to late 3rd century.

The portent of the terracotta chariot forms a pair with the myth of the Capitoline head, and it duplicates the idea of a contest between Rome and Etruria for the dominion of Italy or the world. But there is also a crucial addition: divine approval for the foundation of the Roman Republic. The prodigy occurs after Tarquin has been expelled from Rome, and the people of Veii argue that the Republic has no claim to the talismanic sculpture, but then the prodigy of the horses of Ratumenna confirms that it belongs to Rome. The central message is that Rome's imperial destiny was dependent on its identity as a Republic.¹¹⁸

7. Conclusion

The temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, its precinct, and the hill on which it stood could all be called the Capitolium.¹¹⁹ The name was thought to derive from the word for 'head', *caput*, and the etymology was presented in the form of an aetiology which told the story of the discovery of the *caput humanum* in the temple foundations in the time of the Tarquins. In the mid to late 3rd century it was rewritten to include the contest for dominion with Olenus Calenus and a prophecy which predicted that Rome had an imperial destiny to become 'head of Italy'. It was now a myth of empire, and its final narrative form had taken shape. Cato the Elder discussed the myth of Terminus in the mid-2nd century, and it is reasonable to assume that the early annalists also discussed the myths of the Capitoline head and the terracotta chariot. It is not known if the idea of Roman world rule was attached to the myths in the 2nd century, or even if it was current in Rome at this time, but from the early 1st century it is both attested and associated with the Capitoline temple of Jupiter. The idea that Roman rule encompassed the *orbis terrarum* appears in speeches from the 80s.¹²⁰ In the following decade the theme of universal rule is depicted on coins: one coin from the mid-70s shows a globe or a shield flanked by a wreathed sceptre and a rudder, symbols of Roman rule 'over land and sea' (*terra marique*); another coin

¹¹⁸ See Bloch (1961) 68–9 for the hypothesis that the Capitoline foundation myths were created in the 4th century in order to promote the claim that the Capitol was dedicated not by the Tarquins but in the first year of the Republic.

¹¹⁹ On the terminology: Tagliamonte (1993) 227. The temple was surrounded by its namesake precinct and hill, thus it was a central place reinforced by two outer circles of centrality.

¹²⁰ Cic. *Rosc. Am.* 131; *Rhet. Her.* 4.13.

from the mid-70s shows a figure who seems to be the *Genius populi Romani*, holding a sceptre and cornucopia, his foot on a globe, crowned by a flying Victory; a coin minted in 70 depicts a personified Italia holding a cornucopia; her hands are joined with a personified Roma, who stands with her foot on a globe.¹²¹ The earliest textual references to the Capitol in connection with world rule are found in two speeches of Cicero, from 70 and 63, which describe the temple as the ‘citadel of all nations’ and the ‘citadel of all peoples’.¹²² The Capitoline associations with world rule are also apparent in one of the honours voted to Caesar in 46: a chariot statue group placed in the Capitoline temple precinct in which he was shown subjugating ‘the world’ (perhaps the goddess Oecumene kneeling in submission).¹²³ A different visual representation of world rule, from the Augustan period, appears in a depiction of the pediment of the Capitol on the Tiberius Cup from Boscoreale: it shows Jupiter’s eagle, with its wings outstretched, and its talons fastened around a globe.¹²⁴ In the Augustan period it was also possible for Livy to retell the story of the Capitoline head and to assert that Rome had been destined to enjoy universal dominion as *caput rerum*, while Ovid celebrated empire without boundaries under the patronage of the Capitoline cult of Terminus.¹²⁵ World rule is a key theme in the literature and art of the Augustan period.¹²⁶ But the Capitoline associations of world rule are attested before Augustus and they remained strong in the generation after his death. In AD 69, the druids in Gaul are said to have predicted that the mantle of universal rule would pass from Rome to the peoples beyond the Alps because its talismanic temple of Jupiter on the Capitol had been destroyed by fire in the civil war fighting in the final days of the reign of Vitellius.¹²⁷

The Capitoline temple is important because it lets us trace the evolution of Roman conceptual geographies from the Archaic to the Augustan period. It was first and foremost, throughout its history, a monument which asserted Rome’s centrality, and as Rome’s horizons expanded it was thus possible to claim that the temple on its citadel stood at the centre of Italy and the entire Mediterranean world. The centrality of the Capitol was defined by its

¹²¹ *RRC* 393, 397, 403, with Crawford (1974) ad loc.

¹²² Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.184: *arce omnium nationum*; Cic. *Agr.* 1.18: *hanc arcem omnium gentium*.

¹²³ Cass. Dio 43.14.6, with Sauron (1994) 243.

¹²⁴ Kuttner (1995) pls. 9 and 23. The cup shows the sacrifice at the climax of one of the two triumphs celebrated by Tiberius, in 7 BC or AD 12.

¹²⁵ Livy 1.55.6; Ov. *Fast.* 2.684.

¹²⁶ Note the preface of the *Res Gestae* and *RG* 13, with Vogt (1960) 151, cf. 157–8, 161; Nicolet (1988) 27–40, cf. 41–2, 59–68.

¹²⁷ Tac. *Hist.* 4.54, cf. 3.72.

location overlooking the Forum, by the monumentality of its architecture, and above all by the fact that it was the cult site of Rome's chief deity. The temple was also defined by its name, and from an early date it was felt that the name Capitolium reflected its primacy as *caput* in the symbolic topography of the city and in the conceptual geography of the wider world; this symbolic centrality was reinforced by the fact that its temple precinct and the hill on which it stood shared the name Capitolium. There was an etymological aetiology which explained the name, and in the mid to late 3rd century it evolved into a myth of empire which proclaimed that Rome had been destined to become the 'head of Italy'. It was a claim which reflected the recent Roman conquest of Italy, yet it was also rooted in the old idea of the Capitol's centrality. By the end of the 1st century it was claimed that the Capitol was the 'head of the world'. The vocabulary of world rule was borrowed from Greek writers who had begun to describe Roman power in universal terms in the 2nd century. But the idea of Rome and the Capitol as the centre of all things was not entirely new or foreign.

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