

INTRODUCTION: THE AUTHORITY OF PRECEDENT

It is my contention . . . that authority has vanished from the modern world, and that if we raise the question of what authority is, we can no longer fall back upon authentic and undisputable experiences common to all. The very term has become clouded by controversy and confusion.

– Hannah Arendt, “What Was Authority?”

The design of sacred architecture, whether we consider temples, synagogues, churches, or mosques, inherently involves the concept of authority. It is present in the interpretation of a building’s form – that is, we say a building has dignity, unity, conviction, or authority because of the skills of its designer and the quality of its composition. Such authority, *auctoritas*, lends itself readily to symbolic connotations related to the building’s use and the person, institution, city, or state for whom it was built. Vitruvius, for instance, emphasized the link between public buildings and the authority of the state in his *Ten Books of Architecture*, which he addressed to Augustus in the mid-20s B.C.:

when I saw that you were giving your attention not only to the welfare of society in general and to the establishment of public order, but also to the providing of public buildings intended for utilitarian purposes, so that not only should the State have been enriched with provinces by your means, but that the greatness of its power might likewise be attended with distinguished authority in its public buildings, I thought that I ought to take the

first opportunity to lay before you my writings on this theme.¹

Vitruvius’s primary concern was that public buildings in Rome should possess the necessary dignity and authority appropriate for Augustus to express his power. The statement reveals the motivation behind the many large-scale public building projects in Rome: the display of power in costly, elegant structures. There was an obvious link in this sense between authority in architecture and authority in political leadership.

At yet another level, architecture operates in terms of the authority of precedents. Certain buildings, because of the quality of their forms or the reason for their construction, become paradigms, or primary models for later buildings. The first and most important Roman example that influenced many later religious buildings was the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline Hill. Because of its associations with the triad Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva and with the founding of Rome and the Republic, it possessed unparalleled associations with authority. Here again we cross the boundary into politics, for as the philosopher Hannah Arendt writes, Roman politics was based on the sacral character of foundation: “once

something has been founded it remains binding for all future generations.”² Anyone engaged in Roman politics was expected to preserve the memory and the act of the foundation of the state. Similarly, in architecture, builders often sought to recall the character of the Republic’s most important early monuments.

Building on the accomplishments of their ancestors – the tradition and memory of those who came before them, those who had laid the foundations – was an important way in which rulers obtained their *auctoritas*, a word derived from *augere*, “to increase.”³ Those with political authority in both republican and imperial Rome – the elders, senators, consuls, dictators, and emperors – commemorated the city’s foundation through their actions; those engaged in architecture honored the important precedent set by the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus by emulating it. This book shows that certain details of later buildings, for instance, the Temple of Mars Ultor and the Pantheon, were in part references to the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

Precedents in architecture form the basis of a continuous evolution of style and building practice. One architect described precedent as “a form which has been accepted as the proper expression of good logic, fitness and beauty, proven by the test of time and accepted as a standard upon which new expression can be modeled and with which it may be compared.”⁴ Architects in the Roman world operated much more in terms of precedent than most architects are accustomed to today. As Arendt states, the notion of authority has virtually vanished from the modern world. In the culture of self-expression that typifies the contemporary West, where any overt use of an architectural model is often considered derivative and retrograde, it is hard to imagine the necessity for, or the authority of, precedent as it existed in the Roman world. Building types evolved over a long period of time, changing slowly according to new uses and outside influences. Features such as fitness, beauty, or political connotation captured the imagination of later architects and patrons and manifested themselves in subsequent buildings. Through these later generations of builders, the paradigms they followed were modified into new designs that met new conditions.⁵ There were certain periods of high achievement – periods of perfection – and others of decline or decadence. By political and cultural necessity, however, the authority of the models

remained constant. Certainly, the authority of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was evident throughout the Republic and Empire until at least the second century A.D.

This study examines how Roman designers based the plans of their temples on earlier precedents and how, by such a progressive emulation, members of the Roman ruling class established and maintained their political control. The ancient Romans clearly understood that impressive architectural settings and elaborate public ceremonies were acknowledged modes of demonstrating power or establishing *auctoritas*. The spectacle of a triumphal procession amid glorious marble-clad buildings served as an important form of propaganda for the emperor, meant to impress and mediate between the ruler and the people.

While most books on ancient Roman architecture are organized on the basis of either topography or typology, this one is organized chronologically. There is a great deal to learn by studying the temples at different stages of their development, to see how they evolved over time through successive reconstructions and political regimes. For instance, discussion of the Temple of Castor and Pollux in the Forum Romanum occurs in three of the book’s chapters because it – like most other temples in Rome – was built and rebuilt in three or more distinct periods of time. These periods in turn reflect different attitudes toward precedent, authority, and architectural design. This temple is first mentioned in the section on Etrusco-Roman temples; it is cited again in the discussion of the assimilation of the Corinthian Order; and, finally, its last reconstruction is analyzed in the chapters on Augustus. Each discussion corresponds to a major reconstruction and is addressed within its respective social and political context. Likewise, the all-important Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus is discussed in three chapters that take up its construction by the Etruscans and its reconstructions by Sulla and then the Flavians. This book attempts to link developments in building practice and theory to specific historical events and modes of authority.

The first chapter, “Building the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus,” introduces Rome’s first, largest, and symbolically most important religious structure. It describes its site on the Capitoline Hill, reviews historical accounts of its construction, and situates it within the

political and religious context of Rome in the sixth century B.C. It then recounts how the building was “lost” for several centuries, how it was rediscovered in the nineteenth century, and how our present understanding of its architectural character evolved.

The second chapter, “A New Reconstruction of the Temple,” is more technically oriented than the rest, but it is crucial to understanding the book’s principal theme. It challenges the currently accepted reconstruction of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, focusing especially on the version published in the late 1950s by the Swedish archaeologist Einar Gjerstad. His proposed dimensions of the temple, that is, its width, length, height, and interaxial spacings, are, in my opinion, far too large for the technology of Roman builders in the sixth century B.C. The temple as Gjerstad reconstructs it is such an anomaly in Roman architectural history that it is impossible to relate it to later Roman building practices and styles.

This book proposes a reconstruction that is based on a different interpretation of the building’s physical and written evidence and one that takes into account a comparative study of both contemporary and later temple architecture in Rome. It proposes a building with dimensions that are more in keeping with the capabilities of sixth-century B.C. building techniques and one that is more compatible with later temples. The Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus presented here, in fact, would have been a paradigmatic building, one that had a major influence on the designs of many later temple structures and iconographic programs, especially during the early and middle Empire.

Chapter 3, “Etrusco-Roman Temples of the Early Republic,” provides a comparative study of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus and the Roman temples that were built after the fall of the Etruscans. Among these are the earliest Etrusco-Roman temples of the Forum Romanum, Forum Holitorium, and the Largo Argentina, as well as examples in colonies such as Paestum and Cosa. In the latter, it was especially important for builders to emulate the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus as a way of appeasing Rome and appealing to its political leaders. Although most of these temples from the early Republic were built at a scale about half the size of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, they owe much to it in terms of their plans, architectural forms, and symbolism.

The fourth chapter, “Assimilation of Hellenistic Architecture after the Punic Wars,” analyzes Roman temple architecture in the third and second centuries B.C., an important period of transition from the Etrusco-Roman tradition to the Hellenistic style, especially the Ionic Order. As Rome systematically conquered more territory in the eastern Mediterranean, it increasingly absorbed the architectural forms of Hellenistic Athens, Priene, and Pergamon. This chapter examines temple architecture from this period in the Porticus Metelli, the Forum Romanum, Forum Holitorium, and Forum Boarium. It traces the introduction into Rome of the Ionic Order as it gradually appealed to and was accepted by Roman builders and the public alike as a replacement for the Tuscan-Doric Order.

This chapter also introduces the writings of Vitruvius. Although he wrote his *Ten Books of Architecture* much later, in the first century B.C., his theories most directly apply to the Ionic Order as it developed in the previous two centuries. The Temple of Portunus in the Forum Boarium, for instance, closely corresponds to his theories of architectural beauty. Discussion of Vitruvius’s theories is also important for understanding his systems of categorization according to plan and façade types. These categories apply to most temple architecture from the Republic to the Empire.

The fifth chapter, “The Corinthian Order in the First Century B.C.,” describes the introduction of the Corinthian Order as another aspect of the Hellenistic influence in Rome. Examples of the new style include the Round Temple by the Tiber, the Temple of Vesta at Tivoli, Temple B in Largo Argentina, and the Temple of Vesta in the Forum Romanum. At the time these temples were being constructed, the dictator Sulla ordered the use of Corinthian columns in his rebuilding of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus after its destruction by fire. He brought to Rome pieces of marble Corinthian columns from the Temple of Olympian Zeus in Athens that were used in part in the Capitoline Temple’s reconstruction. The use of at least the capitals, thus giving it a semblance of the Corinthian style, coincided with the Capitoline Temple’s renewed political importance and served to reassert its role as a significant architectural precedent for many decades to come.

Chapter 6, “Architecture and Ceremony in the Time of Pompey and Julius Caesar,” analyzes Roman

temple architecture in a changing political climate dominated by civil unrest and the emergence of the dictatorship. The assimilation of Hellenistic architecture into Roman building practices that had characterized the second century B.C. began to change at this time. Roman builders and architects continued to be influenced by eastern styles and building techniques, especially those of Asia Minor, but now they also began to exert their own influence on other regions, including Athens. This chapter discusses the theater and temple complex built by Pompey the Great, then focuses on the city's architecture and urban development under Julius Caesar, his transformation of the Forum Romanum, and the building of the Temple of Venus Genetrix in his Forum Julium. Integral to this discussion is an analysis of the role of both temples in the tradition of processions and ceremonies of the late Republic.

The seventh chapter, "Rebuilding Rome in the Time of Augustus," discusses the origins of the Empire after Caesar's assassination, the role played by the second triumvirate in making yet another transformation of Rome's political landscape, and the ascent of Augustus as emperor. Architecturally, it focuses on Augustus's construction projects on the Palatine Hill and in the Forum Romanum, as well as developments in the Campus Martius. In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus noted that he restored eighty-two temples in Rome, an achievement that dramatically changed the city's architectural character. This chapter discusses the temples on the Palatine, in the Campus Martius, and in the Forum Romanum that were built or rebuilt during the first half of Augustus's reign.

Continuing the previous discussion, Chapter 8, "Augustus and the Temple of Mars Ultor," focuses on the emperor's most important building in Rome, constructed in 37–2 B.C. A comparison with the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus as reconstructed in this study reveals dimensional similarities that suggest a direct architectural link. It is a clear indication that Augustus and his architects looked at the Capitoline Temple as a reference point with renewed interest. They saw it as a building to emulate or recall as an important part of Augustus's efforts to establish and maintain the legitimacy of his rule. At the same time, this comparison provides a good review of the substantial differences between the Etrusco-Roman style of the early Republic

and the classicism of Augustus. The architectural forms of temples had changed greatly during the 500-year period between the Etruscans and the early Empire. This comparison demonstrates the precise nature of both the differences and the similarities.

Chapter 9, "Temples and Fora of the Flavian Emperors," provides an analysis of the architecture of the Flavian dynasty from the second half of the first century A.D. The Flavians built a temple in the Forum Romanum and two imperial fora, and they rebuilt the Capitoline Temple not once but twice, both times after its destruction by fire. They also constructed the Arch of Titus, which had an important urban relationship with the Capitoline Temple because it was placed on the axis of the Via Sacra at a point where it precisely framed a view of the temple across the Forum Romanum. It was the Flavians' way of honoring the memory of Jupiter and associating their name with the temple's long history as the symbol of Rome's founding.

Chapter 10, "The Forum Traiani," discusses one of Rome's largest building complexes, built by one of its most prodigious builders. It focuses on the Temple of Divus Traianus, a giant temple begun by Trajan and finished by Hadrian. As with the Temple of Mars Ultor, it points out similarities in the dimensions that may have existed between this temple and those of the Capitoline Temple. Trajan responded to the city's most important architectural precedent, continuing the revival of interest in its history and exploiting its compelling power to sustain the legitimacy of his rule.

Chapter 11, "Hadrian's Pantheon," focuses on the most important Roman building constructed by Hadrian, an emperor who associated himself with both Zeus and Jupiter. It discusses his link to the deities and his emulation of certain aspects of the Capitoline Temple in his design of the Pantheon. Numerous architectural issues are brought up, including the form of the original Pantheon built by Agrippa, the debate over the height of the Hadrianic building's pronaos columns, the question of whether it was a temple or an audience hall, an analysis of its interior architectural features, and its iconographic meaning.

The final chapter, "Hadrian and the Antonines," analyzes Hadrian's Temple of Venus and Rome and two temples built by his successor, Antoninus Pius. It considers Hadrian's link to Zeus in Athens and the

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influence of the precedent of the Temple of Olympian Zeus. It concludes with the work of Antoninus Pius and the transformations his architects made in the Hadrianic style.

In summary, this book seeks to draw attention to the authority of precedent in the design of Rome's temple architecture from the early Republic to the time of Hadrian and the Antonines. Crucial to this thesis is the new reconstruction of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, which allows us to recognize its central role as a paradigm in Rome's architectural development. Possessing the political status of its association

with the founding of the Republic and its religious authority as the temple dedicated to Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva, it was by inference the most important architectural model for generations of temple builders. The site of Rome derived its authority from the history of its founding, and the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus symbolized the legitimate access to and the maintenance of political power. Underlying all authority in Rome, this foundation bound every act, including the construction of sacred buildings, honoring the beginning of Roman history and the original authority of its first ruler.

I

BUILDING THE TEMPLE OF JUPITER CAPITOLINUS

Temple architecture in early Rome from the sixth to the fifth centuries B.C. was dominated by a combination of Etruscan and Latin influences. By the beginning of the Republic in 509 B.C., however, it had a grandiosity of scale and opulence that set it apart from neighboring Etruscan and Latin cities. This was especially the case with the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus (Fig. 2), built from ca. 525 to 509 B.C. It was more lavish in its decoration and larger in both plan and elevation than any other structure in the region. It was a building constantly cited by ancient writers with admiration and praise. Livy, for instance, called it a temple “so magnificent that it should be worthy of the king of gods and men, the Roman Empire, and the majesty of the site itself.”¹

The Capitoline Temple was a unique building in many ways. Commissioned by a succession of Etruscan kings, constructed by a combination of Etruscan and Roman builders, and dedicated by the founders of the Republic, it represented a city that was attempting to distinguish itself militarily, economically, and politically from its neighbors. As the earthly residence of the city’s most important deity, located on its most prominent hill, and of an architectural style and form deemed paradigmatic in the Etrusco-Roman world, the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus had a far greater influence on subsequent political, social, and architectural events in Rome than virtually any other building.

The temple stood majestically in a large, walled precinct on the southern summit of the Capitoline Hill and faced southeast across the Tiber valley and the Aventine Hill (Fig. 3). Its south front and east flank could be seen from both the Forum Romanum and the Tiber River, while its north wall was prominently

visible from many points in the Campus Martius. Dominating the top of the hill, it stood out as the destination point for those traveling to Rome in much the same way as the Parthenon still does in present-day Athens. Although its style differed substantially from the Parthenon, its image as a temple on an acropolis, an elevated sacred site, or *templum*, represented an important parallel to the Greek world and accounts in large measure for its long-standing role in establishing and maintaining the authority and legitimacy of Roman leadership.

The Capitoline Hill already had religious shrines before the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was begun. For instance, there was the small shrine dedicated to Jupiter Feretrius, reportedly built by Romulus and used by him to consecrate the spoils of war from his victory over King Acron.² There may have been a small shrine dedicated to the triad Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva as early as the late seventh century B.C.³ There were also some shrines that had been vowed by the Sabine King Tatius, who had temporarily occupied a stronghold on the Capitoline Hill after a battle against Romulus.⁴ All of these earlier structures reflect a long and complicated history that extended back over 200 years before the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus was constructed.

The Kings of Early Rome

Rome’s early history, including its first temple structures, would form an essential link to the access and maintenance of political power for several centuries. The date of Rome’s founding is generally ascribed to the year 753 B.C.⁵ Its population from the earliest times



2. Rome, Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, ca. 580–509 B.C., model of reconstruction according to Einar Gjerstad. Photo: Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, Rome. 73.1159.

was a combination of Etruscan, Latin, and Sabine. Every Roman citizen shared the belief in the sacral character of the site of Rome. The political culture of the Romans from the very beginning was rooted in the soil, the word *patria*, fatherland, which derived its full meaning from Roman history.⁶

The extent of Roman territory at the time of the city's founding was about 115 square miles, with an estimated 10,000 free inhabitants, mostly farmers, builders, and merchants. The first bridge over the Tiber River, the Pons Sublicius, became the most important link between the regions of Latium on the south and Etruria on the north.⁷ Roads leading eastward connected to the Sabine territory, which extended into the Apennine Mountains. The earliest settlement of Rome, perhaps located on the Palatine Hill, was known as *Roma Quadrata* because of its

roughly quadrangular form.⁸ In the first century B.C., Dionysius of Halicarnassus recorded the legend of its foundation:

Romulus first offered sacrifice to the gods, then watched for omens, which were favorable. He then commanded fires to be lit in front of the tents, commanded the people to come out and leap over the flames in order to expiate their guilt. He then led the people to a spot on the Palatine Hill, and proceeded to describe a quadrangular plan for the defensive wall by leading a plough drawn by a bull and a cow around the edges of the summit. Afterward, he sacrificed the bull and the cow as a further gesture toward the gods, and then ordered the people to begin work. The day of

the founding, the *parilia*, is still celebrated on April 21st.⁹

Included within the sacred boundary, *pomerium*, of *Roma Quadrata* were primitive houses, a building for religious and assembly purposes, the meeting house of the *Curia Saliorum* in which the sacred shields of Mars were preserved, and the *Lupercal*, or Sanctuary of the Wolves. The southwest corner of the Palatine was also the legendary site of the straw-covered house of Romulus and the sacred fig tree toward which the cradle bearing the twins Romulus and Remus had floated.¹⁰

The founding of Rome and the creation of its *pomerium* were connected to the legendary story of the tragic death of Romulus's twin brother Remus. Ovid recounts that after Romulus marked out the city's boundary, he instructed a guard, Celer, to stop and kill anyone who stepped over the furrow whether intentionally or by accident. Unaware of the ban, Remus walked across the furrow and was immediately killed by Celer.¹¹ The festival of the *parilia* and the founding of Rome thus possessed not only a sense of authority but also a tragic aspect that it retained throughout the Republic and Empire.

It was also largely a fiction. The story was derived from two traditions, the first by the accounts of ancient Roman authors who attributed Rome's founding to Romulus in 753 B.C., the second, by Greek authors who attributed it to Aeneas, who arrived in Rome after the fall of Troy in 1184 B.C. When Greek writers confronted the tradition of Romulus and Remus, the twins reared by a she-wolf, they invented the idea that they were descendants of Aeneas. Then, to fill the time gap between the fall of Troy and the time of Romulus and Remus, the Romans invented a succession of thirteen kings who reigned at Alba Longa between the time of Aeneas and that of Romulus.¹² After Romulus, there was a second series of kings, some of them equally legendary, and others, like Numa Pompilius and Ancus Marcius, representing a measure of historical truth.¹³

The record becomes more certain by the sixth century B.C., which corresponds to the reign of the city's three Etruscan kings. The first was Tarquinius Priscus, an immigrant to Rome from the Etruscan city of Tarquinii, who ruled from 616 to 579 B.C. The second was his adopted son Servius Tullius, who reigned from

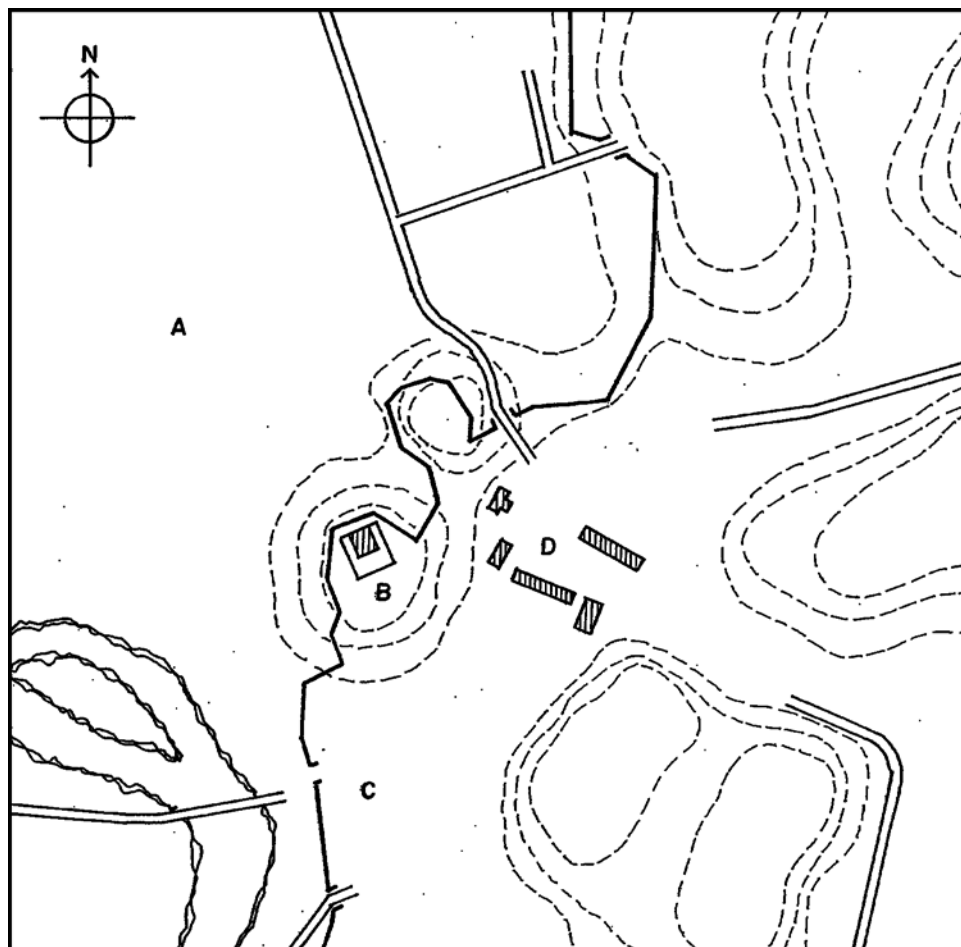
578 to 535 B.C. The third was Tarquinius Superbus, who ruled from 534 to 509 B.C. He was either the son or grandson of Tarquinius Priscus.¹⁴

The principal structures erected in Rome as it expanded beyond the initial boundary of the *Roma Quadrata* – the city walls, streets, and other public amenities that extended into the lowlands between the Palatine and Capitoline Hills – date primarily from the time of these three kings. The Tarquins carried out the great projects of urban improvement, including the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, the Circus Maximus, the Cloaca Maxima, and the early shops around the Forum Romanum.¹⁵ It was Servius Tullius who enlarged the city and built the first stretches of its expanded defensive wall circuit.¹⁶ He was also responsible for constructing a large shrine dedicated to Diana on the Aventine Hill, which became an important Latin cult center.¹⁷

The architecture of the three kings embodied Etruscan and Latin building traditions, but they were adapted to suit both Rome's topography and its growing political aspirations. Construction demanded manpower, a need that was met by combining the skills of Etruscan technicians and workmen with the strength and numbers of the Roman labor force.¹⁸ The Etruscans developed the tradition of temples with high, square podia, widely spaced columns, broadly overhanging roofs, strongly emphasized front façades, and elaborate terra-cotta ornamentation and statuary. With many variations in details of plan and elevation, these features became common in Roman temple architecture by the end of the sixth century B.C.

The Etruscans also affected other aspects of Roman culture. Theirs, for instance, was the concept of the *imperium*, the absolute supreme power entrusted to a person approved by the gods who governed in accordance with their wishes.¹⁹ Additionally, the Etruscans influenced the procedures for divination, the organization and equipment of the military, the calendar, the legal system, the alphabet, social relationships between patrons and clients, public games, and religion.²⁰ In particular, they introduced the cult of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva (Tinia, Uni, and Menerva), which became the focus of the state religion of the early Roman Republic.²¹

The fundamental elements of authority in Etruscan Rome were found in the family, *familia*: father



3. Rome, Capitoline Hill in ca. 509 B.C., plan: (A) Campus Martius, (B) Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, (C) Forum Boarium, (D) Forum Romanum. Drawing: John W. Stamper.

and mother, sons and daughters, home and homestead, servants and chattels. The inherent social structure of the family, with the father as the authority figure, the *paterfamilias*, had important implications for the structure of Roman society as a whole. The absolute master of his household, the father maintained the strictest discipline, with the right and duty to exercise judicial authority over family members.²² Clans headed by fathers made up much of Roman society. In this larger association, sons and clients gained a greater legal standing and could themselves participate in worship and rituals. The state was thus made up largely of principals (the *patres*) and their dependents – a patron–client relationship.²³

As the clans and their constituent families composed the state, so the form of the government was modeled after that of the family. The power of the earliest kings over the community mirrored that of the household father over his family, and like the household

father, they ruled for life. The king nominated all priests and priestesses; he concluded treaties; and he controlled the public treasury. The king's authority, or command, was all powerful in both peace and war. When he appeared in public, the guards, or lictors, who carried axes and rods before him symbolized his authority. Like the *paterfamilias*, he had the right to exercise discipline on those within his jurisdiction and could inflict penalties on those who broke the law.²⁴

The king also built temples and carried out religious ceremonies. He communicated with the gods, consulting and appeasing them by observing the auspices, *auspicia*, objects or events (animal entrails or flights of birds) that revealed divine approval or disapproval of an act.²⁵ Like the founding of Rome, the authority of the auspices traces its origins back to Romulus who, according to legend, refused to accept the title of king until he had received a favorable omen

from heaven. Taking a stand under the open sky in a clear space, a *templum*, he offered a sacrifice and prayed to Jupiter to sanctify his monarchy by a favorable sign.²⁶ Interpreting the lightning or birds as a positive omen, Romulus established it as a custom – an authoritative observance to be followed by all of his successors – that none should accept the office of king or any other public office until heaven had given its sanction.²⁷

The Latin word *templum* did not originally refer to the temple building that sheltered a god's image. The word for that was *aedes*, or house. A *templum* was a space either in the sky or on the earth marked out by an augur for the purpose of taking auspices.²⁸ On earth, a *templum* was a place set aside and limited by certain formulaic words for the taking of the auspices. Trees often served as boundaries, marking the space to be viewed by the augur's eye. As such, this was a special, permanently inaugurated place, so designated by an *augurium*.²⁹

In the sky, following the model of Romulus, the priest marked out a portion of the sky and then watched for omens from the gods. In this sense, wherever the eye gazed was the *templum*.³⁰ The augur's gaze, the *conspicio*, was the equivalent of contemplation. When the augur defined a *templum*, his *conspicio* delimited a view. Looking attentively, he hoped to perceive and identify an omen.³¹

The Romans distinguished between a *templum* for observing flashes of lightning and a *templum* for observing the flight of the birds, each of which had its own orientation. The celestial *templum* for the observation of flashes of lightning was oriented from the point of view of the gods who sat in their northern abode and gazed southward.³² Birds, in contrast, were watched in a setting in which the auspicious looked eastward. If a bird appeared in the southeastern part of the *templum*, it was a right-hand sign for the auspicious.³³

The essential elements of a temple complex were thus the viewing space, the *aedes*, the boundary, and an altar. Such ritualization of space is perhaps the most characteristically Roman feature of temple architecture and urban design in the Roman world. This accounts for the tendency to enclose open spaces, impose human demands on the limitless forces of nature, control earth and sky to practical ends, and bargain with the gods on human terms.³⁴

The Romans regarded their divinities as all-powerful beings that dominated everyday activities and set restrictions on daily existence. It was the religious duty of the rulers and their attendant priests to interpret the deity's rules or wishes and to conform to them through adherence to prescribed norms, ceremonies, and sacrifices.³⁵ As auspices were traced back to the great sign given to Romulus, so all authority in Rome derived from his act of foundation, binding each action to the sacred beginning of Rome and the original divine authority of its first ruler.³⁶

Construction and Dedication

The influences and transformations inherent in Rome's early political, social, and religious life – and the authority of its mythological beginnings – were all expressed in the architecture of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus. Built during the reigns of Tarquinius Priscus and Tarquinius Superbus, its planning fulfilled a vow Tarquinius Priscus made to the gods during a battle against the Sabines. Preparation of its site was begun in the 580s B.C., but the temple's actual construction was carried out by Tarquinius Superbus from ca. 525 to 509 B.C.³⁷ There was a political upheaval in 509 B.C. which resulted in the Etruscan king being driven from Rome and the Republic established. The temple was thus dedicated not by the Tarquins but by the first rulers of the Republic.³⁸

Just as the Capitoline Temple's size and prominent location were crucial to the efforts of the Etruscans to maintain their authority in Rome, so, too, was it important in the attempts of the Republicans to establish their legitimacy after the Etruscans' defeat. As successive rulers and emperors used the Capitoline Temple on countless occasions as a setting for ritual and sacrifice and as a precedent for the design of other Roman temples, its role in establishing and maintaining political authority continued through the Republic and into the Empire. In every case, these successive generations of rulers recalled its link both to the events and personalities associated with the origins of the city and to the divine presence of Jupiter.

When Tarquinius Priscus selected the Capitoline Hill as the site for his new temple dedicated to Jupiter,