

“Stuck in the middle with you: Vediovis, god of transitions and in-between places”

Dr. Erin Warford

1. Livy XXXI.21.12 (200 BCE, Battle of Cremona)

id ubi vidit praetor, ut et ipse dilataret aciem, duas legiones ex subsidiis dextra laevaue alae, qua
ein prima acie pugnabat, circumdat aedemque Diiovi vovit, si eo die hostis fudisset.¹

When the praetor [L. Furius Purpureo] saw this, that he too might extend his front, he threw in
two legions from his reserves on the right and left flanks of the front-line force and vowed a
temple to Diiovis² if he routed the enemy on that day.³

Livy XXXIV.53.7 (194 BCE)

et in insula Iovis² aedem C. Servilius duumvir dedicavit; vota erat sex annis ante Gallico bello ab
L. Furio Purpurione praetore, ab eodem postea consule locata.¹

Likewise, on the Island, Gaius Servilius the duumvir dedicated a temple to [Vediovis]; it had
been vowed six years before in the Gallic war by the praetor Lucius Furius Purpurio, and
contracted for by the same man as consul.³

Livy XXXV.41 (192 BCE)

aedes duae Iovis² eo anno in Capitolio dedicatae sunt; voverat L. Furius Purpureo praetor Gallico
bello unam, alteram consul; dedicavit Q. Marcius Ralla duumvir.¹

Two temples to Jupiter⁴ were dedicated that year on the Capitoline; Lucius Furius Purpurio had
vowed one while praetor in the Gallic war, the other while consul; the dedication was performed
by Quintus Marcius Ralla the duumvir.³

2. Ovid, *Fasti*, I. 289-294 (January 1st)

As I was allowed to learn from the Fasti themselves,

The Fathers consecrated two shrines today. 290

The son of Phoebus and of nymph Coronis settled

On the island which the split river hugs.

Jupiter has a share; the one place took them both.

The grandson's shrine joins his high grandfather.⁵

3. CIL 40896a (published by Alföldy)

C(aius) Serveili M(arci) f(ilius) pr(aetor) [- - - ?, C(aius), M(arcus), P(ublius) (?)]

(vac.3) Serveilieis C(ai) F(ili) (vac.3) faciendum coeraverunt eidemque probav[erunt].

Gaius Servilius, praetor, son of Marcus, Gaius, Marcus, and Publius attended to the making (of
this monument) and the same men sanctioned it.

¹ Livy. W. Weissenborn. H. J. Müller. *Ab urbe condita*. Berlin. Weidmannsche Buchhandlung. 1883.

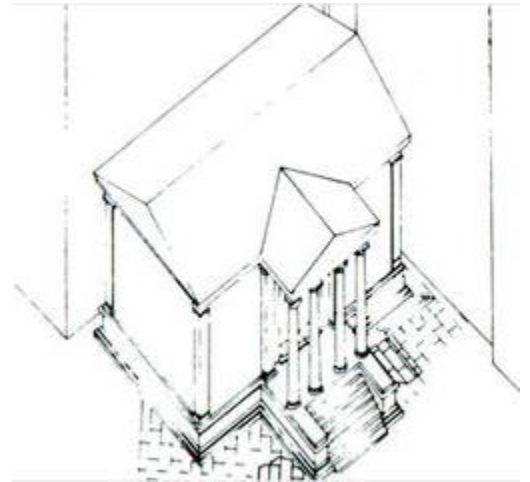
² Emended to Vediovis by the majority of commentators.

³ Translated by Evan T. Sage, Harvard University Press, 1935.

⁴ This passage is badly corrupted, but the archaeological evidence supports the identification of temple to Vediovis
on the Capitoline dedicated in the early 2nd century BCE.

⁵ Translated by A.J. Boyle and R.D. Woodard, Penguin Classics, 2004.

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Above: reconstruction of the Capitoline temple, facing the Clivus Capitolinus

Left: Vediovis cult statue from the Capitoline temple, now in the Capitoline museum. Photo by presenter.

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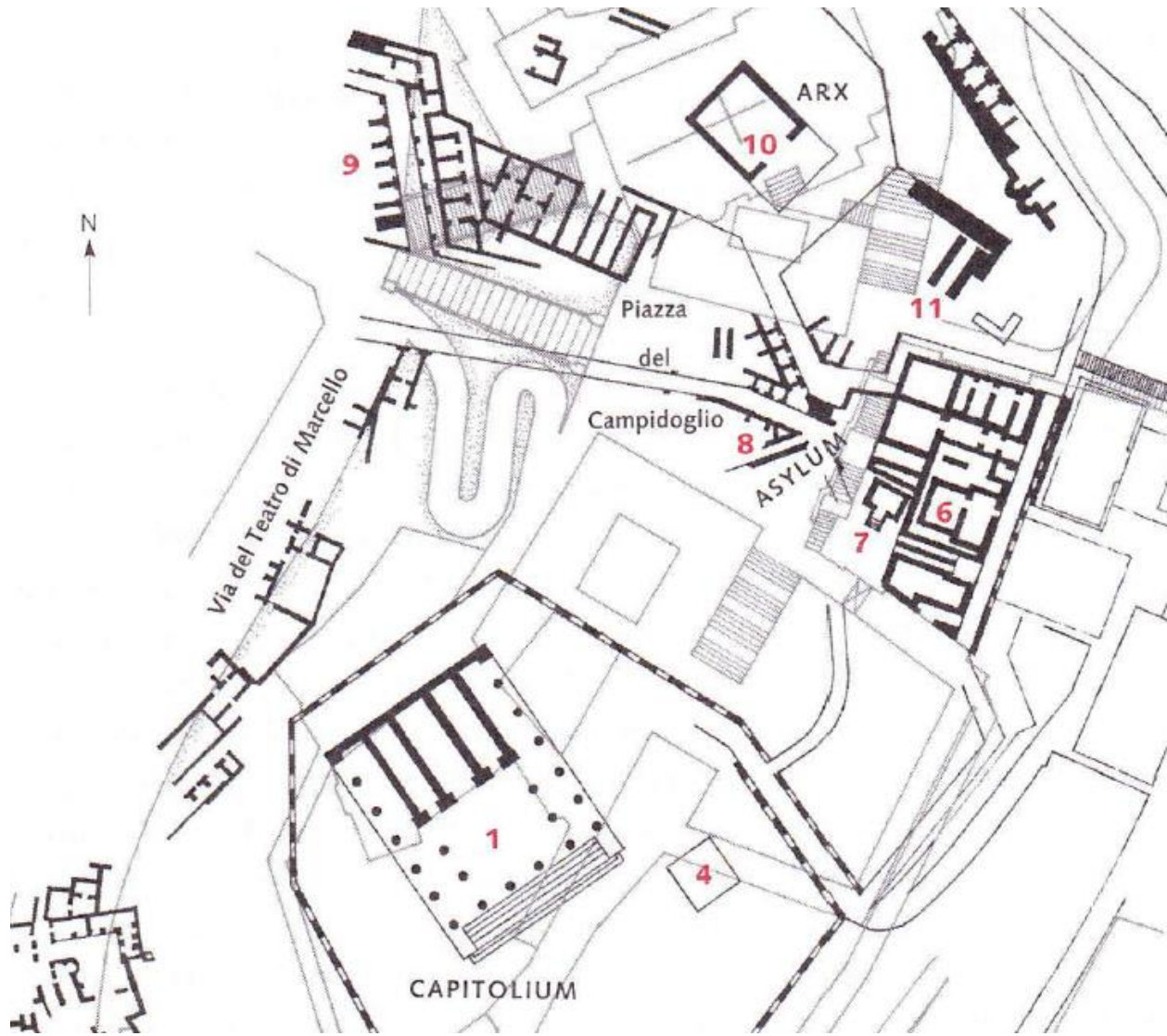


FIGURE 10. Map of the Capitoline in antiquity. **1** Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. **2** Temple of Ops Opifera. **3** Temple of Fides. **4** Ara Gentis Iuliae? **5** Unidentified temples from the Severan Marble Plan. **6** Tabularium. **7** Temple of Veiovis. **8** Buildings of the Imperial period. **9** Insula of the Ara Coeli. **10** Traditional location of the Temple of Juno Moneta. **11** Probable remains of the Temple of Juno Moneta and of the Auguraculum.

Map from Coarelli, F. *Rome and Environs: An Archaeological Guide*. University of California Press, 2007. Fig. 10, p. 28.

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Issuer: L. Caesius
 Date: 112 or 111 BCE
 Crawford 298

Issuer: L. Julius Bursio
 Date: 88 BCE
 Crawford 352



Issuer: Mn. Fonteius C.F.
 Date: 85 BCE
 Crawford 353

Issuer: C. Licinius L.F. Macer
 Date: 84 BCE
 Crawford 354

Possible additional Vediovis coins:



Issuer: L. Memmius
 Date: 109 or 108 BCE
 Crawford 304

Issuer: Anonymous
 Date: 86 BCE
 Crawford 350A

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4. Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, 5.12

In ancient prayers we have observed that these names of deities appear: *Diovis* and *Vediovis*; furthermore, there is also a temple of Vediovis at Rome, between the Citadel and the Capitolium. ...Accordingly, when they had given the names *Iovis* and *Diovis* from *iuvere* (help), they applied a lame of the contrary meaning to that god who had, not the power to help, but the force to do harm—for some gods they worshipped in order to gain their favour, others they propitiated in order to avert their hostility; and they called him *Vediovis*, thus taking away and denying his power to give help. For the particle *ve* which appears in different forms in different words, now being spelled with these two letters and now with an *a* inserted between the two, has two meanings which also differ from each other. For *ve*, like very many other particles, has the effect either of weakening or of strengthening the force of a word; and it therefore happens that some words to which that particle is prefixed are ambiguous and may be used with either force, such as *vescus* (small), *vemens* (mighty), and *vegrandis* (very small), a point which I have discussed elsewhere in greater detail. But *vesanus* and *vecordes* are used with only one of the meanings of *ve*, namely, the privative or negative force...It is for this reason that the statue of the god Vediovis, which is in the temple of which I spoke above, holds arrows, which, as everyone knows, are devised to inflict harm. For that reason it has often been said that that god is Apollo; and a shegoat is sacrificed to him in the customary fashion, and a representation of that animal stands near his statue.⁶

5. Ovid, *Fasti*, III. 429-448 (March 7th)

The Nones of March are marked: they think Vediovis' shrine
By the two groves was dedicated then. 430
Romulus ringed his grove with massive stone and said:
'Come here, whoever you are: you'll be safe.'
O from what a lean beginning the Roman grew!
How unenviable was that ancient mob!
But so that you are not baffled by the name's strangeness, 435
Learn who that god is and why he's so named.
He is the young Jupiter: examine his young face.
Then examine his hand: it holds no thunder...
A she-goat stands there, too: the Cretan nymphs, they say 443
Fed Jove and the goat gave the infant milk.
Now I come to the name. Farmers call poorly grown 445
Spelt *vegrandia*, and small things *vesca*.
If that is the term's sense, why should I not infer
Vediovis' shrine is that of little Jove?⁷

⁶ Translated by John C. Rolfe, Harvard University Press, 1927.

⁷ Translated by A.J. Boyle and R.D. Woodard, Penguin Classics, 2004.

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6. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Antiquitates Romanae*, II.15:

“For [Romulus] consecrated the place between the Capitol and the citadel which is now called in the language of the Romans "the space between the two groves,"— a term that was really descriptive at that time of the actual conditions, as the place was shaded by thick woods on both sides where it joined the hills, — and made it an asylum for suppliants. And built a temple there, — but to what god or divinity he dedicated it I cannot say for certain, — he engaged, under the colour of religion, to protect those who fled to it from suffering any harm at the hands of their enemies; and if they chose to remain with him, he promised them citizenship and a share of the land he should take from the enemy.”⁸

7. Altar from Bovillae, CIL I 2² 1439 a.k.a. ILS 2988, ca. 100 BCE

Vediovei patrei genteiles Iuliei / Vedi[ovei Iu][e]i [a]ara leege Albana dicata.

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⁸ Translated by E. Cary, Loeb Classical Library, 1937.