

Victoria Györi  
King's College, London

## THE MARS ULTOR COINS OF C. 19-16 BC

In 42 BC Augustus vowed to build a temple of Mars if he were victorious in avenging the assassination of his adoptive father Julius Caesar<sup>1</sup>. While *ultio* on Brutus and Cassius was a well-grounded theme in Roman society at large and was the principal slogan of Augustus and the Caesarians before and after the Battle of Philippi, the vow remained unfulfilled until 20 BC<sup>2</sup>. In 20 BC, Augustus renewed his vow to Mars Ultor when Roman standards lost to the Parthians in 53, 40, and 36 BC were recovered by diplomatic negotiations. The temple of Mars Ultor then took on a new role; it honoured Rome's *ultio* exacted from the Parthians. Parthia had been depicted as a prime foe ever since Crassus' defeat at Carrhae in 53 BC. Before his death in 44 BC, Caesar planned a Parthian campaign<sup>3</sup>. In 40 BC L. Decidius Saxa was defeated when Parthian forces invaded Roman Syria. In 36 BC Antony's Parthian campaign was in the end unsuccessful<sup>4</sup>. Indeed, the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor was not dedicated until 2 BC when Augustus received the title of Pater Patriae and when Gaius departed to the East to turn the diplomatic settlement of 20 BC into a military victory. Nevertheless, Augustus made his Parthian success of 20 BC the centre of a grand "propagandistic" programme, the principal theme of his new forum, and the reason for renewing his vow to build a temple to Mars Ultor.

One of the ways in which Augustus immediately advertised his Parthian success was by issuing coins depicting a temple of Mars Ultor at Pergamum and Spain (at Colonia Caesar Augusta and Colonia Patricia) from c. 19 BC to 16 BC<sup>5</sup>. The signifi-

<sup>1</sup> Suetonius, Augustus 29 and Ovid, *Fasti* 5.577.

<sup>2</sup> Roman society at large: Appian, BC 3.6, 11, 12, 32, 40, and 43; Augustus and the Caesarians: Appian, BC 3.12; Florus 2.14; Dio 45.4.3 and 47.42.

<sup>3</sup> Dio 43.51.1.

<sup>4</sup> For further references, see A.N. Sherwin-White, *Roman Foreign Policy in the East: 168 B.C. to A.D. 1*, London 1984, p. 279-290 on Crassus, 302-303 on Saxa, and 307-321 on Antony.

<sup>5</sup> In fact, the epithet "Ultor" for a Roman deity is not known before the Augustan age. This epithet was not connected to Caesar's planned temple to Mars on the Campus Martius (Suetonius, Julius Caesar 44). "Ultor" is first employed as part of the legend accompanying these Augustan coins minted from c. 19 BC to 16 BC depicting a temple of Mars. Augustus explicitly calls the temple in his Forum Augustum the temple of Mars Ultor in *Res Gestae* 21.1-2. Other sources name either a temple of Mars or a temple of Mars Ultor in reference to the same structure. Some texts simply refer to a temple of Mars such as Velleius Paterculus 2.100.2 and Dio 55.1-9. Others, such as CIL VI 8709: *aedituus aed. Martis Ultoris*, clearly uses the epithet "Ultor". L. Morawiecki, *The beginnings of the cult*

cance of these coins has been a question of debate for centuries. Since these coins were minted well before the Forum Temple of Mars (Ultor) was completed and do not in any way resemble the rectangular Forum temple with an octastyle pronaos and flanking colonnaded porticoes, the majority of scholars have interpreted these coins as representative of another temple of Mars Ultor, which was supposedly decreed in 20 BC to be constructed at Rome on the Capitol. The belief is based on Cassius Dio 54.8.3:

Thus sacrifices in honor of his achievement and a temple of Mars Ultor on the Capitol for the reception of the standards, in imitation of that of Jupiter Feretrius, were decreed on his [Augustus'] orders and carried out by him. Moreover, he entered the city on horseback and was honored with a triumphal arch. (trans. J. Rich).

No other author records a Capitoline temple of Mars Ultor, and there is no archaeological evidence for this temple, so only the coins of c. 19-16 BC might support Dio's report of a Capitoline temple of Mars Ultor. Excavations conducted on the Capitoline to date have not provided any archaeological evidence of a temple of Mars Ultor<sup>6</sup>. Nevertheless, in 1993 Reusser still lists a Capitoline temple of Mars Ultor. He does not cite any archaeological evidence for his entry, but refers to Dio 54.8.3 and the Mars Ultor coins of c. 19-16 BC<sup>7</sup>. In *Mapping Augustan Rome*, published in 2002, Thein provides this very reasonable description for his entry on the Area Capitolina: "[a] temple of Mars Ultor would be placed 'on the Capitol' ... if only we could believe in its existence"<sup>8</sup>.

---

*of Mars Ultor*, "Prace Historyczne" 70, 1981 rightfully argues against Weinstock's proposal that the epithet "Ultor" was already employed for Mars in relation to Caesar's projected Parthian campaign, S. Weinstock, *Divus Iulius*, Oxford 1971, p. 128-132. Weinstock says that Caesar's sacrifice to Mars at Pharsalus (e.g. Appian BC 2.68.281) was made on account of a prospective victory against Parthia and that the vow to build a temple to Mars (Ultor) was made not only by Octavian alone, but also by Antony and Lepidus; thus, according to Weinstock the vow to Mars was not made in thanks for having avenged Caesar's death, but rather, in anticipation of a Parthian war. Morawiecki, on the other hand, says that Venus was Caesar's primary patroness at Pharsalus and that it cannot be denied that the general slogan propagated by all triumvirs at the Battle of Philippi was revenge for Caesar's death. Octavian could also have vowed alone at Philippi. Morawiecki is correct to divide the development of the cult of Mars Ultor into two phases: the first stage occurred in 42 BC when Octavian vowed to build a temple to Mars because Caesar's death was avenged and the second stage occurred in 20 BC when Augustus renewed his vow to build a temple to Mars Ultor because the Roman standards lost to Parthia were restored. Only after the return of these Roman standards could the term "Ultor" be employed and this extension of Mars' cult be officially expressed.

<sup>6</sup> H.R.W. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 195-196. See p. 195 n. 14 for the excavation reports Smith cites and for his observation that "the really striking and cogent part of the archaeological case against Dio is contributed by the diplomata: no temple of Mars is among the Capitoline landmarks to which these refer".

<sup>7</sup> C. Reusser, *Der Fidestempel auf dem Kapitol in rom und seine Ausstattung*, Rome 1993, p. 32-51. See especially p. 41 and 49.

<sup>8</sup> L. Haselberger et al., *Mapping Augustan Rome*. JRA Supplementary Series 50, Rhode Island 2002, p. 53. Italics are my own. No mention of a Capitoline temple of Mars Ultor is made in A. Claridge,

Some scholars, such as Paul Zanker, believe that a temporary temple of Mars Ultor was built on the Capitol in 20 BC constructed to temporarily house the restored Roman standards from 19 BC to 2 BC, while others deny the existence of this temple<sup>9</sup>. Rich and Spannagel take a slightly different approach and argue that these coins portray a projected design of a permanent Capitoline temple. Rich believes that the Senate first wanted to build the temple of Mars Ultor on the Capitol, but this proposal was then rejected by Augustus who wanted to make the temple a part of his new Forum<sup>10</sup>. Spannagel believes that Augustus first wanted to build his temple of Mars Ultor on the Capitol, but then decided to construct it in his new Forum<sup>11</sup>. Van der Vin suggests some building in Asia Minor is represented on the cistophori and that the coins from Spain portray the supposed temporary Capitoline temple of Mars Ultor<sup>12</sup>. Morawiecki believes that both the cistophori and the Spanish aurei and denarii commemorate the imperial cult in Ephesus<sup>13</sup>. Smith, who was the first to deny its existence, thought these coins portray a projected design of the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor, either “an architect’s tentative plan or only a die-sinker’s fancy”<sup>14</sup>.

The idea of a temporary Capitoline temple can justifiably be questioned. The building of any kind of temple would have to be accompanied by strict ritual observances by religious authorities, and it is debatable whether or not religious principles would have allowed for the dedication of this type of temple. Furthermore, I am unaware of the existence of any other temporary temple in Rome. I agree with Rich in saying that Morawiecki’s interpretation of these coins is “wholly unconvincing”<sup>15</sup>. First of all, the legends all explicitly give the name MARS VLTOR, although sometimes abbreviated. Secondly, the imperial cult is not attested at Rome at this time. It is unlikely that the coins show a projected design of the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor because that was built as an octastyle peripteros!<sup>16</sup>

---

*Oxford Archaeological Guides: Rome*, Oxford 1998. However, it is accounted for in *LTUR III*: 230-1 (entry by C. Reusser).

<sup>9</sup> J.W. Rich, *Augustus’ Parthian honours, the temple of Mars Ultor, and the arch in the Forum Romanum*, *PBSR* 66, 1998, p. 82, provides complete lists of all those who support and reject the idea of a temporary Capitoline temple of Mars Ultor.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 86.

<sup>11</sup> M. Spannagel, *Exemplaria Principis. Untersuchungen zu Entstehung und Ausstattung des Augustusforums*, Heidelberg 1999, p. 41-72 and 79-85.

<sup>12</sup> J.P.A. van der Vin, *The return of the Roman ensigns from Parthia*, “*Bulletin Antieke Beschaving Babesch*” 56, 1981, p. 125-127; R. Hannah, *Games for Mars and the temples of Mars Ultor*, “*Klio*” 80, 1998, p. 432-433 follows van der Vin’s thinking.

<sup>13</sup> L. Morawiecki, *Le monoptère sur les monnaies alexandriennes de bronze du temps d’Auguste*, “*Eos*” 64, 1976.

<sup>14</sup> H.R.W. Smith, *Problems historical and numismatic in the reign of Augustus*, “*University of California Publications in Classical Archaeology*” 2.4, 1951, p. 202.

<sup>15</sup> J.W. Rich, *Augustus’ Parthian honours...*, p. 85, n.56.

<sup>16</sup> Interestingly enough, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, engravings depict the Forum

It should be noted that there has been an attempt to emend Dio's text. Fabricius "corrected" this passage by saying that "on the Capitol" should come after "Jupiter Feretrius"<sup>17</sup>. No modern scholar, and rightfully so, has accepted this emendation. Rich believes that Dio most likely gave the topographical location for the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius in another passage which is now lost; in fact, three other passages that mention the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius do not record the location of the temple<sup>18</sup>. Thus Smith says, "in the circumstances it is methodical to trust the text of [54.8.3] and question only its information"<sup>19</sup>.

Dio lists a number of honours voted to celebrate the return of the standards, including the approval of the temple. The crucial passage is where Dio reports the approval of the construction of a temple of Mars Ultor on the Capitoline. But Dio concludes this passage by noting that these honours, notably the temple of Mars Ultor and the triumphal arch, were only constructed later. In my opinion, Dio's text is compatible with the view that a vow of a temple on the Capitoline was only fulfilled later when this temple was instead built in a new forum of Augustus. That Dio did not give the location of the Forum Augustum may not be so surprising. Indeed, the text of Dio, as we have it, is known to have some factual problems. Two curiosities to do with other Augustan buildings will suffice. In 53.27.2-3 the explanation of the Pantheon's name (that is, the Pantheon is called so because it is "a temple of all the gods") that Dio gives as an alternative is actually correct<sup>20</sup>. In 54.25.3 he mentions that the Senate voted an altar to be erected in the senate-house in 13 BC, but does not mention anything about the Ara Pacis. Another factual problem is that Dio gives August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2 BC as the dedication date of the Temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum Augustum<sup>21</sup>. That 2 BC was the year of the dedication of this temple is undeniable. Velleius Paterculus says that the temple was dedicated during the consulship of Augustus and L. Caninius

---

Augustum with a round temple of Mars Ultor. For instance, see Pirro Ligorio's map of Rome from 1561 and Pietro Bartoli's 1699 engraving. There are four main manuscripts of Ligorio's antiquarian papers (the Paris, Oxford, Naples, and Turin manuscripts). The Naples and Turin manuscripts are primarily devoted to studies on Greek and Roman numismatics (e.g. Naples B.6 is a corpus of Roman coins from Caesar to Constantine VI). Thus, it is more than likely that the round temple of Mars Ultor that is seen on this map of Rome is derived from his study of a coin collection that included these Augustan Mars Ultor coins (E. Mandowsky and C. Mitchell, *Pirro Ligorio's Roman Antiquities: the Drawings in MS XIII. B 7 in the National Library of Naples*, London 1963, p. 35-45).

<sup>17</sup> H.S. Reimar, *Cassii Dionis Cocceiani Historiae Romanae quae supersunt*, Hamburg 1750, p. 736.

<sup>18</sup> J.W. Rich, *Cassius Dio: The Augustan Settlement (Roman History 53-55.9)*, Warminster 1990, p. 80.

<sup>19</sup> H.R.W. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

<sup>20</sup> J. Stamper, *The Architecture of Roman The Republic to the Middle Empire*, Cambridge 2005, p. 200-203.

<sup>21</sup> Dio 60.5.3.

Gallus which occurred in 2 BC<sup>22</sup>. The source of the problem then lies with the fact that there is another date given for games of Mars in association with the dedication of the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor: four ancient calendars (Feriale Cumanum, Fasti Maffeiani, Philocalus, and the Feriale Duranum) record May 12<sup>th</sup> for the Ludi Martiales. Ovid also gives May 12<sup>th</sup> as the date for the Ludi Martiales in *Fasti* 5.545-598 which gives his grand description of the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor. Indeed, games occurred on both of these days in 2 BC; but only one of these days was the dedication date of the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor<sup>23</sup>. It is also known from Suetonius that the Forum Augustum was opened before construction of the temple was finished<sup>24</sup>. It seems most logical that the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor was dedicated on May 12<sup>th</sup> as part of the first opening of the Forum. Thus, Dio must be read with caution<sup>25</sup>. There are two possible interpretations of Dio's passage. Either the Capitol was never specified or the Capitol was specified in 20 BC, but a change of plan came later. It is my opinion that the latter is more likely. It may be safe to say that while a decree was passed in 20 BC to build a Capitoline temple of Mars Ultor, the temple was not eventually built in that location.

It is not implausible that the original location of the temple of Mars Ultor would have been on the Capitol. There were sacred spaces to Mars inside the pomerium. In fact, there was an archaic shrine to Mars on the Capitol. St. Augustine relates the story that when Tarquin was building his Temple to Jupiter Optimus Maximus, Mars, Juventus, and Terminus refused to move to make room for Jupiter<sup>26</sup>. There was also a votive helmet dedicated to Mars on the Capitol that was struck by lightning in 49 BC<sup>27</sup>. A sacrarium to Mars was located in the Regia<sup>28</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> 2.100.2.

<sup>23</sup> R. Hannah, *Games for Mars and the temples of Mars Ultor*, *Klio* 80, 1998, p. 425.

<sup>24</sup> Suetonius, *Augustus* 29.1.

<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that problems in Dio may also stem from Byzantine chroniclers, notably Zonaras and Xiphilinus, who made the excerpts from Dio's History which survive to us.

<sup>26</sup> *De Civitate Dei* 4.23. C.J. Simpson, *A shrine of Mars Ultor revisited*, *RPh* 71, 1993, p. 121 says Augustine based his story on his reading of Varro.

<sup>27</sup> Dio 41.14.2.

<sup>28</sup> Servius, *ad Aen.* 7.603 and Dio 44.17.2. It should be noted that Augustus could propose a location inside the pomerium for his temple to Mars Ultor because of his consular imperium. With this power in his hands, Beard et al. write: "the pomerium as a religious boundary ceased to exclude the military" (M. Beard et al., *Religions of Rome*, Vol. 1: *A History*, Cambridge 1998, p. 198). Furthermore, a question arises in regards to where the returned standards were stored until the opening of the Forum temple in 2 BC. Two literary passages say these standards were placed in a non-specific temple of Jupiter on the Capitol: Horace, *Ode* 4.15.6-8 and Propertius, *Elegy* 3.4.6. It is possible that they were placed in the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius, which housed the time-honoured spolia opima (spoils taken from an enemy commander). However, it is more likely that they were placed in the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus.

I will show, then, how the temple structures and the objects within these structures on the Mars Ultor coins of c.19-16 BC reflect an idea of a permanent Capitoline temple of Mars Ultor. The standards, figure of Mars Ultor, and the triumphal chariot are simply symbolic allusions to Augustus' Parthian success of 20 BC. However, I argue that the circular form of these temple structures is significant and was not chosen haphazardly. It is linked to Augustus' evocation of archaic Rome; that is, the circular form of these temple structures recalls the primitive Italic huts that once occupied the Capitoline.

### The Mars Ultor coins and their mints and date

Coins portraying a temple of Mars Ultor were minted at Pergamum and in Spain at Colonia Caesaraugusta and Colonia Patricia. The cistophori issued at Pergamum have an obverse portraying a bare headed Augustus with the legend IMP IX TR PO V and a reverse showing a domed tetrastyle temple with five steps enclosing a standard and the legend MART VLTO. Aurei and denarii were issued at Colonia Caesaraugusta and Colonia Patricia. The coins of Colonia Caesaraugusta have obverses showing a bare headed Augustus with the legend AVGVSTVS or CAESAR AVGVSTVS and a reverse depicting a domed tetrastyle temple with four steps enclosing a figure of Mars Ultor holding an aquila and a standard and the legend MARTIS VLTORIS. At Colonia Patricia, some coins have an obverse depicting a bare headed Augustus with the legend CAESAR AVGVSTVS and reverses portraying either a tetrastyle or hexastyle domed temple with three steps enclosing a figure of Mars Ultor holding an aquila and a standard with the legend MAR VLT, MART VLT, MART VLTO, or MARTIS VLTORIS, whereas the other coins have obverses showing a laureate Augustus with the legend CAESAR AVGVSTVS or CAESARI AVGVSTO and reverses portraying a domed, hexastyle temple with three steps enclosing three standards and the legend MAR VLT or MART VLTO, and yet other coins have an obverse depicting a laureate Augustus with the legend CAESARI AVGVSTO and reverses with either a domed tetrastyle or hexastyle temple with three steps enclosing a quadriga, shaft up, containing an aquila and four miniature galloping horses with the legend SPQR<sup>29</sup>.

<sup>29</sup> The wall inside the temple shown on the Mars Ultor cistophori is a cella wall. Numismatic convention generally eliminates the cella from portrayals of temples to bring forth the cult statue or other cultic objects (figs. 1a-e, RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 507, 39a, 69a, 103, and 108a). It should also be noted that Alexandrian bronzes from about 17 BC or later depict the head of Augustus with the legend SEBASTOS on the obverse with a reverse bearing the legend KAISAR and a tetrastyle round, conical temple containing one standard, in the same manner as the Mars Ultor cistophori from Pergamum (RPC 1: 5003).

There has been much debate over the mints and dates of these issues. Scholars disagree about the location of the mint that issued these cistophori with Mars Ultor, and also the Commune Asiae and the Parthian arch reverses. Mattingly and Morawiecki, for instance, attributed them to the mint at Ephesus<sup>30</sup>. These cistophori however, have since then been more plausibly assigned to Pergamum by Woodward and Sutherland<sup>31</sup>. The portrayal of a temple of Roma and Augustus justifies Pergamum as the appropriate mint because a temple of Roma and Divus Julius was built at Ephesus, but a temple of Roma and Augustus was constructed at Pergamum<sup>32</sup>. Sutherland has also demonstrated how these cistophori were minted alongside aurei and denarii that allude to the Parthian and Armenian settlements of 20 BC, that is coins with the reverse legends Armenia Capta, Armenia Recapta, Signis Receptis, Signis Parthicis Receptis and various reverse images depicting Parthian and Armenian motifs<sup>33</sup>. The cistophori were presumably for local circulation, and the aurei and denarii were minted to pay the legionaries who were involved in the mobilisations that resulted in the Parthian and Armenian settlements. Moreover, while the aurei and denarii were produced with urgency, the cistophori were produced with greater preparation. For instance, the first group of denarii to be issued bore uninscribed obverses. On the other hand, the Mars Ultor cistophori show that “obvious skill was applied in suggesting the temple’s circular shape and the depth of the central opening conveys a real idea of the interior perspective”<sup>34</sup>.

The location of the western mints that issued Mars Ultor coins has also been debated. Mattingly attributed these coins to the Spanish mints of Colonia Caesaraugusta and Colonia Patricia<sup>35</sup>. Grant attributed them to Nemausus on the grounds that an obverse die found there has similar stylistic characteristics to the coins given to Colonia Patricia by Mattingly<sup>36</sup>. Mattingly’s attribution has now been accepted by Sutherland<sup>37</sup>. More simply, perhaps, the belief that Nemausus would have minted these aurei and denarii rather than Spain is not so plausible. Spain was the focus of military activity in the west from 27 BC to 19 BC. Colonia Caesaraugusta received three of the four legions stationed permanently in Spain<sup>38</sup>. The overall character of the gold and silver

<sup>30</sup> BMCRE 1: p. cxxv and 114; L. Morawiecki, *Le monoptère sur les monnaies alexandriniennes de bronze du temps d’Auguste*, “Eos” 64, 1976.

<sup>31</sup> A.M. Woodward, *Notes on Augustan cistophori*, NC 12, 1952; RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 36 and 82.

<sup>32</sup> Dio 51.20.

<sup>33</sup> RIC 1<sup>2</sup>: p. 82-83.

<sup>34</sup> C.H.V. Sutherland, *The Cistophori of Augustus*, London 1970, p. 117.

<sup>35</sup> BMCRE 1: p. cviii.

<sup>36</sup> M. Grant, *A step toward world-coinage: 19 BC*, [in:] P.R. Coleman-Norton (ed.), *Studies in Roman Economic and Social History in Honor of Allan Chester Johnson*, New York 1951, p. 100-104.

<sup>37</sup> RIC 1<sup>2</sup>: 25-26.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 26.

coinage minted in Colonia Caesar Augusta and Colonia Patricia is militaristic. A general theme runs through both mints: Augustus' accession honours, military victories and triumphal honours are completely intertwined, so that Victory and the personage of Augustus are inseparable and one cannot be honoured without the other<sup>39</sup>.

These Mars Ultor coins have been variously dated, most commonly to 19-18 BC. Two of these types can be more or less precisely dated. The Mars Ultor cistophori bear the obverse legend IMP IX TR PO V. The other two Pergamene cistophoric types (the Commune Asiae and the Parthian arch) have obverses bearing the legends IMP IX TR PO IV or IMP IX TR PO V. No Pergamene cistophorus depicting a temple of Mars Ultor has been found that is dated prior to June 27<sup>th</sup>, 19 BC. However, this does not necessarily mean that Mars Ultor cistophori bearing the obverse legend IMP IX TR PO IV were not minted. As mentioned before, the triumphal chariot was awarded to Augustus only on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 19 BC<sup>40</sup>. Thus, the earliest date of the Mars Ultor aurei and denarii depicting a temple enclosing a triumphal chariot can only be the late autumn of 19 BC. Some numismatic catalogues and handbooks simply group all the coins minted in Colonia Caesar Augusta and Colonia Patricia into large chronological blocks. Robertson's HCC 1 dates the coins of Colonia Caesar Augusta from 25 to 16 BC and those of Colonia Patricia from 19 to 16 BC. Sutherland and Carson's AMCRE 1 date the coins of Colonia Caesar Augusta from 25 to 17 BC and those from Colonia Patricia from 25 to 16 BC. Sutherland's *Emperor and the Coinage* also gives 25-17 BC for Colonia Caesar Augusta and 25-16 BC for Colonia Patricia<sup>41</sup>. Some catalogues propose tighter dating. In BMCRE 1, Mattingly dates the coins of Colonia Caesar Augusta from 18 to 17 BC, and the coins from Colonia Patricia from 19 to 16/15 BC. In BMCRR II, CBN 1, and RIC 1<sup>2</sup>, the Mars Ultor coins are attributed to 19/18 BC. Various recent articles also attribute these coins to 19/18 BC<sup>42</sup>. However, there is no reason to limit the Mars Ultor coins to 18 BC. Other elements of the Parthian theme are still advertised down to 16 BC. Aurei and denarii minted at Colonia Patricia have reverses depicting a Parthian arch with obverses bearing the legend SPQR IMP CAESARI AVG COS XI TR PO VI<sup>43</sup>. At Rome, L. Vinicius issued denarii depicting the Parthian arch in 16 BC<sup>44</sup>. "Vota" types and "civil works" types

<sup>39</sup> For all the coin types of Colonia Caesar Augusta and Colonia Patricia that were minted in 19-18 BC, see C.H.V. Sutherland, *The gold and silver coinage of Spain under Augustus*, NC 5, 1945 and RIC 1<sup>2</sup>: p. 43-49.

<sup>40</sup> Cassiodorus, *Chronica: Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, Auctorum Antiquissimorum, 135.

<sup>41</sup> Earlier scholarship has dated the foundation of Colonia Caesar Augusta to 25 BC; hence, the start date of 25 BC. More recently, the foundation of this colony has been down dated to c. 19 BC (e.g., RPC 1: 117).

<sup>42</sup> E.g. van der Vin, Simpson, Spannagel, Hannah, and Rich.

<sup>43</sup> RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 131.

<sup>44</sup> RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 359.

minted in Rome are dated to 16 BC by their obverse legends, AVGVSTVS TR POT VII or AVGVSTVS TR POT VIII (or TR POT IIX). Similar types are also found in Colonia Patricia<sup>45</sup>. It is possible, then, that these Mars Ultor coins were still being minted in 16 BC; and so, as a whole, it may be best to date these reverse types from around 19 BC to 16 BC. Furthermore, it was in 15 BC that aurei and denarii began to be minted in Lugdunum.

### Architectura numismatica

A comparative study of Roman coinage portraying temple architecture from the Republican period to the end of the Julio-Claudian dynasty period suggests that these Mars Ultor coins do not depict an existing temple or a projected design of a temple. Numismatic portrayals of temples on Roman coinage can be divided into three categories: accurate portrayals of existent temples, imagined representations of temples not yet existent, and symbolic representations of temples. Burnett says that “it is the idea rather than the actual structure that is the objective of the die-engraver” and that numismatic depictions of monuments can simply be “interpretations rather than reproductions of buildings”<sup>46</sup>. Thus, I rather propose that the images on these Mars Ultor coins depict some idea that a temple will be built.

Accurate portrayals of temples can indeed be found on Roman coins from the Republic to the end of the Julio-Claudian period. These depictions are supported by literary and/or archaeological evidence. Coins in this category show consistent portrayals of temples. Minor variations do take place, such as the direction the temple faces or the proportion of a temple structure, but essentially all the same features are seen. Features that were not a part of the temple are never added.

Brown refers to the coins depicting the Temple of Concord as “a splendid example of the adherence to actuality”<sup>47</sup>. From AD 35-37, Tiberius minted sestertii in Rome depicting the Temple of Concord as an obverse type<sup>48</sup>. These coins portray a hexastyle temple with lateral extensions, a statue is seen in the central doorway and two other statues flank the podium. The lateral extensions on the coins give way to a sideways layout in which the width of the building is greater than the length. All of these features are supported by archaeological evidence<sup>49</sup>. Coins depicting the Temple of

<sup>45</sup> RIC I<sup>2</sup> 350-369 (Rome) and 140-153 (Colonia Patricia).

<sup>46</sup> A. Burnett, *Buildings and monuments on Roman coins*, [in:] G.M. Paul and M. Ierardi (eds.), *Roman Coins and Public Life Under the Empire: E. Togo Salmon Papers II*, Ann Arbor 1999, p. 152. See also T. Drew-Bear, *Representations of temples on the Greek imperial coinage*, ANSMN 19, 1974, p. 63.

<sup>47</sup> D. Brown, *Temples of Rome as Coin Types*, New York 1940, p. 14.

<sup>48</sup> Fig. 2, RIC I<sup>2</sup> Tiberius: 67.

<sup>49</sup> S. Cox, *The temple of Concord on Tiberian sestertii*, [in:] T. Hackens and G. Moucharte (eds.), *Proceedings of the 11<sup>th</sup> International Congress of Numismatics*, Louvain 1993, p. 262-263, figs. 4-5.

Janus were minted by Nero in Rome and Lugdunum from AD 65-67. The coins depict garlanded, arched doors flanked by columns as well as two lines of windows. Minor variations do occur, such as the direction in which the temple is facing, but the main features are always invariable<sup>50</sup>. In his *History of Wars* 5.25.19, Procopius gives a detailed account of this temple that incidentally corresponds to the image seen on these coins; that is, this temple was a small, rectangular building made of bronze and two doors opposite each other.

Some Roman coins show projected temples which had not yet been built or were never built. Coins minted in Rome in 44 BC show a tetrastyle Ionic temple of Clementia and Caesar with a globe on the pediment and no steps. The Temple of Clementia Caesaris was decreed to be built in 44 BC, but was never actually built<sup>51</sup>. It seems that by numismatic convention the podium on these coins is seen without steps to show a yet not existent temple. Coins were minted in Africa in 36 BC that portray a tetrastyle temple within which is a veiled figure with a lituus, the *sidus Iulium* on the pediment, and a high podium without steps. The Temple of Divus Julius was vowed in 42 BC, did not begin to be built until 31 BC, and was not dedicated until 29 BC<sup>52</sup>.

One post-Augustan example seems to reflect a change in design. Coins minted at Tarraco in the period AD 15-23 depict the temple of Augustus, authorized by Tiberius in AD 15, as an octostyle temple on a high stylobate which resembles two steps, while a second issue, minted around AD 22-23, depicts an octastyle temple on a podium with four steps; also the design changes from a figure of Augustus on a throne in the first issue to a figure of Augustus on a *sella curulis* in the second issue, apparently reflecting a change in the realization of the cult statue<sup>53</sup>.

Coins can also depict features closely related to the cult of a temple or to an event or idea associated with a temple in a symbolic rather than a realistic manner. For example, the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on coins of the gens Volteia from 78 BC has a thunderbolt on the pediment; the thunderbolt is just a common attribute used as a visual identifier for the temple<sup>54</sup>. Coins of Mark Anthony minted in 42 BC show the Temple of Sol enclosing a medallion bearing the radiate bust of Sol<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> Fig. 3, RIC 1<sup>2</sup> Nero 270.

<sup>51</sup> Fig. 4, RRC 480/21. S. Weinstock, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

<sup>52</sup> Fig. 5, RRC 540/2.

<sup>53</sup> Figs. 6a, b, RPC 1: 222 and 224. For further reference on these coins, see D. Fishwick, *Coinage and cult: the provincial monuments at Lugdunum, Tarraco, and Emerita*, [in:] G.M. Paul and M. Ierardi (eds.), *Roman Coins and Public Life under the Empire: E. Togo Salmon Papers II*, Ann Arbor 1999, p. 102-112.

<sup>54</sup> Fig. 7, RRC 385/4.

<sup>55</sup> Fig. 8, RRC 496/1. The Temple of Vesta in the Forum Romanum as seen on the gens Cassia is another clear example of the symbolic representation of a temple (fig. 9, RRC 428/1).

The Mars Ultor coins also portray a symbolic representation of a temple of Mars Ultor. Indeed, Smith's question is fitting: "who can believe their farce of 'Box and Cox', this romping in-and-out of cult statue and chariot was ever really played out in a real temple?"<sup>56</sup> These coins portray either a tetrastyle or hexastyle temple that enclose either standards, a figure of Mars Ultor, or a triumphal chariot. Some coins combine these objects: Mars Ultor is seen with an aquila and a standard while the triumphal chariot is seen with an aquila. There are varying aquilae and signa shown on the Mars Ultor coins and are simply to be regarded as an allusion to the Parthian success and not as representations of the actual Roman standards that were returned<sup>57</sup>.

It seems unlikely that a specific cult statue of Mars Ultor was the model for the figure of Mars Ultor seen on these coins<sup>58</sup>. One might suppose that there are so many variations because this image is just a projected design of the cult statue. However, the coins depicting a temple of Divus Julius, minted long before the temple was completed, invariably depict a veiled figure holding a lituus and facing front. More simply, perhaps, other representations of the cult statue thought to have been erected in the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor do not resemble the figure seen on these Mars Ultor coins or on the Signis Receptis coins that depict Mars Ultor. For instance, the Algiers relief shows Mars Ultor bearded and armed, holding a shield and a spear while the polychrome mosaic from the Villa Borghese depicts him wearing a golden helmet and holding a lance and a shield. Numismatic representations of Mars Ultor from the first to the third centuries AD portray him in a similar manner to the figures seen on the Algiers relief and the polychrome mosaic from the Villa Borghese. It might be possible to say that the change in the design of the cult statue came after the minting of these Mars Ultor coins. However, considering the great importance of the returned Roman ensigns in the whole Forum Augustum complex, if the cult statue of the temporary temple of Mars Ultor on the Capitol or a projected design of the cult statue held an aquila and a standard, it is unlikely that the Forum Temple's cult statue would not also hold these signa<sup>59</sup>. As Kraus believes, the figure on these

<sup>56</sup> H.R.W. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

<sup>57</sup> It is even unlikely that the denarii of 19 BC from Rome that portray a kneeling Parthian extending a vexillum marked X depict an actual vexillum that was returned to Rome in 20 BC (RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 287). It cannot be known with certainty that a tenth legion was among the legions defeated by Parthia in either 53 or 36 BC. See J.P.A. van der Vin, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

<sup>58</sup> Compare the figure on these coins to the copy of the cult statue of the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor.

<sup>59</sup> For further reference on the Algiers relief and the polychrome mosaic from the Villa Borghese, see J.C. Anderson, *Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora*, Brussels 1984, p. 71. For further reference on the numismatic representations of the figure of Mars Ultor from the 1<sup>st</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries AD, see, for instance, RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 161 (Nero), 204-205 (Vindex and Galba); RIC 2: 45 (Vespasian); Strack I: 216 (Trajan); Cohen II: Antoninus Pius no. 550; H.C. Dodd, *Chronology of the eastern campaign of emperor Lucius*

Mars Ultor coins should be interpreted symbolically and should simply allude to the god Mars Ultor<sup>60</sup>.

The triumphal chariot was a non-existent feature of the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor. Clearly, it stood outside of the temple in the forum. Furthermore, it seems impossible to say that the specific triumphal chariot awarded to Augustus was depicted on this coinage. The triumphal chariot is sometimes ornamented, sometimes not. At times, it is seen on a slablike base. The SPQR temple coins do not only differ internally, but also in regards to the other coins portraying a triumphal chariot in Sutherland's Colonia Patricia Group (iii). None of the SPQR temple coins show Victory at the front of the chariot, while the SPQR and CAESARI AVGVSTO quadriga coins do so<sup>61</sup>. It simply alluded to the triumphal honours that were awarded to Augustus in 19 BC. Thus, the purpose of issuing these coins was to celebrate Augustus' Parthian success of 20 BC and to anticipate the idea of a temple of Mars Ultor.

### **The significance of the circular form of the temple structures**

The one consistent feature on all these coins is the circular form of the temple structures. As argued above/below, these Mars Ultor coins depict a temple as yet to be built. One would expect a schematized version of a temple to show a rectangular plan, clearly the more common temple structure throughout Greece and certainly in Rome. While it could simply be said that the prototype was a Greek tholos, the portrayal of a round temple here has an even wider significance. The primitive Italic hut was also circular in structure. There was an independent Italic tradition of circular huts and hut-urns. The round form employed on these coins is thus evocative of archaic Rome. Already by the twenties BC, Augustus was promoting the awareness of Rome's origins. For instance, Augustus placed his own domus on the Palatine next to the casa Romuli, and between 26 BC and 20 BC he erected a replica of this Romulean hut on the Capitoline. The Augustus/Numa asses of 23 BC clearly identify Augustus with his legendary ancestor, Numa<sup>62</sup>. This archaizing Augustan programme can also conceivably be applied to Mars, who was one of the earliest Roman divinities and the father of Romulus.

---

*Verus*, NC 11, 1911, pl. XII, 6 and 7 (Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, respectively); BMCRE 5: lxxviii (Albinus); RIC 4 (i): 213, 276, 289, and 293 (Caracalla); RIC 4 (ii): 120 (Severus Alexander).

<sup>60</sup> T. Kraus, *Münzbild und Kultbild*, [in:] E. Homann-Wedeking and B. Segall (eds.), *Festschrift Eugen von Mercklin*, Munich 1964, p. 71.

<sup>61</sup> RIC 1<sup>2</sup>: p. 48-49.

<sup>62</sup> V. Gyóri, *Augustus and Numa: the asses of 23 BC*, [in:] G. Rosati and M. Labate (eds.), *La costruzione del mito augusteo*, Heidelberg 2013.

As Brown noted, “just why a round temple was considered an appropriate form to house the recovered standards is a mystery”. He refers to Servius *ad Aeneid* 9.408 who says that only Vesta, Diana, Mercury, and Hercules were divinities for whom circular temples were appropriate<sup>63</sup>. The three definitions Servius gives for the word *tholos* all pertain to the round form of the roof rather than the form of the whole structure. The central explanation of the *tholos*, as the highest point of the roof from which offerings/gifts were hung, derives from Varro<sup>64</sup>. In both passages it is clear that there were offerings suspended from the dome.

Several theories as to why this circular structure was used have been put forward, but none has proved convincing enough to receive acceptance. Donaldson suggests the circular form is “a temple within a larger temple”<sup>65</sup>. There is no indication on any of these coins, however, that these structures are baldachinos. What is more, it has been suggested that the numismatic convention for portraying “a temple within a larger temple” usually shows an arched lintel on the temple structure as can be possibly seen on Samian coins showing the Heraion at Samos<sup>66</sup>. There is no suggestion, however, of an arched entablature on any of these Mars Ultor coins.

Smith proposes the circular form is appropriate for housing trophies and refers to the rounded apse of the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor. He then, however, correctly rejected his own suggestion by saying that the temple’s apse was not necessarily meant to be a storeroom for trophies, but was developed from the interior apses of the Temple of Venus Victrix and the Temple of Venus Genetrix<sup>67</sup>. These apses rather housed the cult statues of Venus Victrix and Venus Genetrix, respectively. What is more, the apse of the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor is not a true apse, but rather a segmented, polygonal apse (photo 1).

Similarly, Schäfer suggests that round temples are appropriate for holding *spolia* and *signa*<sup>68</sup>. However, the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius, which held the *spolia opima*, and the Temple of Diana, which housed a military trophy, are not round<sup>69</sup>. Rich suggests the circular form is related to size. He thinks that because the Capitol was quite crowded by the Augustan age this temple would have had to be small<sup>70</sup>. This does not mean, however, that the temple would have had to be circular.

<sup>63</sup> D. Brown, *Architectura Numismatica I: Temples of Rome*, New York 1941, p. 181.

<sup>64</sup> Varro ap. Non. 6.2.

<sup>65</sup> T.L. Donaldson, *Architectura Numismatica: Architectural Medals of Classical Antiquity*, London 1859, p. 95.

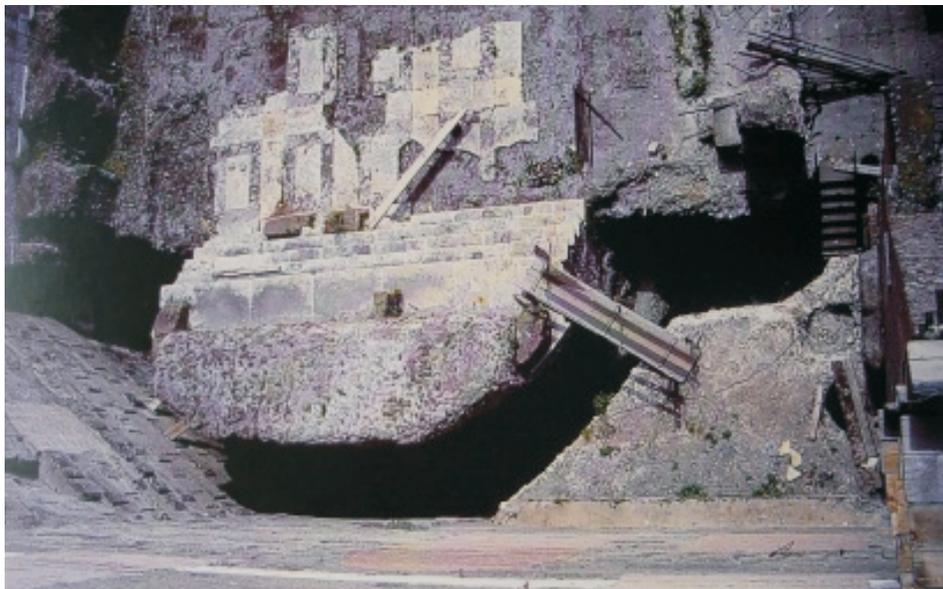
<sup>66</sup> Fig. 10. For further reference, see T. Drew-Bear, *op. cit.*

<sup>67</sup> H.R.W. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 202-204.

<sup>68</sup> T. Schäfer, *Spolia et Signa: Baupolitik und Reichskultur nach dem Parthererfolg des Augustus*, “Nachrak” 2, 1998, p. 49-70.

<sup>69</sup> Fig. 11 (RRC 439) and fig. 12 (RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 273).

<sup>70</sup> J.W. Rich, *Augustus’ Parthian honours...*, p. 86.



**Photo 1.** The apse of the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor (J. Ganzert, *Im Allerheiligsten des Augustusforums: Fokus "Oikoumenischer Akkulturation"*, Mainz 2000)

One suggestion proposed by Spannagel is that the circular form is related to the cult of Vesta<sup>71</sup>. Scholarly tradition links Mars Ultor with Vesta as avengers of both Caesar and Crassus on the basis of four passages of Ovid<sup>72</sup>. This connection, however, is only found in Ovid's works, and in two passages the link is only implicit at best. There have been vague suggestions that the candelabrum on the cult statue of Mars Ultor represents the hearth of Vesta and that there was a partial transfer of the cult of Vesta from the Forum Romanum to the Forum Augustum based on Herz's reading of the word *megaron* (ἄεγυρον) in Dio 55.10.6 as a *cella* with a hearth<sup>73</sup>. These ideas, however, are purely conjectural.

<sup>71</sup> M. Spannagel, *op. cit.*, p. 65; M. Kajava, *Livia and Nemesis*, "Arctos" 34, 2000, p. 57-58 and *Vesta and Athens*, [in:] O. Salomies (ed.), *The Greek East in the Roman Context*, Helsinki 2001, p. 91.

<sup>72</sup> Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 15.776-778; *Fasti* 3. 699-700, 5.573-576, and 6. 465-468. E.g., R. Riedl, *Mars Ultor in Ovids Fasten*, Amsterdam 1989; G. Herbert-Brown, *Ovid and the Fasti: An Historical Study*, Oxford 1994, p. 95f.; A. Barchiesi, *The Poet and the Prince: Ovid and Augustan Discourse*, Berkeley 1997; R.J. Littlewood, *A Commentary on Ovid' Fasti, Book 6*, Oxford 2006, p. 194f.; P. Knox, *The Cambridge Companion to Ovid*, Cambridge 2009, p. 135f.

<sup>73</sup> P. Herz, *Zur Tempel des Mars Ultor*, [in:] Ganzert J. (ed.), *Der Mars Ultor auf dem Augustusforum in Rom*, Mainz 1996, p. 289f. Robert discusses a second meaning of a *megaron* other than as a hall or atrium; that is, that a *megaron* is an hearth used for chthonic sacrifices (F. Robert, *Thymèlè: recherches sur la signification et la destination des monuments circulaires dans l'architecture religieuse de la Grèce*, Paris 1939, p. 210-227). *Megaron* in Dio 55.10.6, however, should refer to the shrine of Mars Ultor.

Another suggestion given by Spannagel is that the circular form is related to the cosmos, on the grounds that Dio 53.27.2 compares the domed roof of the Pantheon, as rebuilt by Hadrian, to the heavens<sup>74</sup>. De Fine Licht suggests that the Pantheon was the physical embodiment of the Roman concept of the cosmos<sup>75</sup>. Simon too makes the same suggestion, claiming very briefly that round temples are related to the cosmos and would be fitting for Mars since he is a planetary deity<sup>76</sup>. Some ancient authors do associate round temples with the cosmos. Servius explains that round buildings had domes so they “resemble the heavens by their shape”<sup>77</sup>. Vitruvius calls a domed ceiling a caelum<sup>78</sup>. Ovid relates the round form of Vesta’s temple to Archimedes’ globe<sup>79</sup>. The two model globes, one a solid model, the other an armillary model, made by Archimedes were brought to Rome after the sack of Syracuse in 212 BC<sup>80</sup>. Ovid equates Vesta’s temple to the armillary model which Archimedes himself called the model of the cosmos<sup>81</sup>. Thus, Vesta’s temple is an *imago mundi*, like Archimedes’ armillary globe which was his abstract image of the universe. Plutarch says that the Temple of Vesta was built as a circle not in imitation of the earth, but of the cosmos<sup>82</sup>. Varro’s garden tholos at Casinum was modeled on Catulus’ temple in the Largo Argentina and had a dome in which Hesperus and Lucifer revolved<sup>83</sup>. However, even if circular temple structures with domes did evoke the cosmos to Romans, that is not necessarily why a circular form was chosen.

Another suggestion made recently by Kuttner is that the circular form on these Mars Ultor coins was inspired by Pompeian style landscape paintings depicting round temples surrounded by porticoes, as in the Oplontis triclinium<sup>84</sup>. However, it seems unlikely that fictive architectural paintings had inspired the temple shape on these coins.

---

Siebler suggests that the candelabrum between the two griffins represents the fire of Vesta being defended by two griffins, symbols of vengeance (M. Siebler, *Studien zum Augusteischen Mars Ultor*, Munich 1988, p. 69.n404).

<sup>74</sup> M. Spannagel, *op. cit.*, p. 65. Ammianus Marcellinus compares the Pantheon to a city district “vaulted over in lofty beauty” (16.10.4).

<sup>75</sup> K. De Fine Licht, *The Rotunda in Rome. A Study of Hadrian’s Pantheon*, Copenhagen 1968, p. 199.

<sup>76</sup> E. Simon, *Die Kultstatue des Mars Ultor*, MarbWPr, 1982.

<sup>77</sup> Servius ad Aen. 1.105.

<sup>78</sup> Vitruvius, De Arch. 7.3.3 and 8.2.4.

<sup>79</sup> Fasti 6.277-280.

<sup>80</sup> Cicero, De Republica 1.21.

<sup>81</sup> Arenarius 1.4.5.

<sup>82</sup> Numa 11.

<sup>83</sup> Varro, Rust. 3.5.17.

<sup>84</sup> A. Kuttner, *Prospects of patronage: realism and Romanitas in the architectural vistas of the second style*, [in:] A. Frazer (ed.), *The Roman Villa: Villa Urbana (First Williams Symposium on Classical Architecture held at the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, April 21-22, 1990)*, Philadelphia 1998, p. 106.

We need to re-examine the use of round temples in the Hellenistic world as well as Republican Rome. Tholoi originated in the Greek world and became increasingly popular in the fourth century BC. Although traditionally viewed as serving heroic or chthonic cults, tholoi housed many other cultic deities and had numerous other religious and secular functions<sup>85</sup>. For instance, the Tholos (or Skias) in the Athenian Agora, dated to the fifth century BC, was a secular building employed for the meeting place and banquets of the Prytaneis<sup>86</sup>.

Monopteroi, or round temples which do not have a cella wall (as opposed to tholoi), of the fourth century BC were known to house cult statues. The monopteros of Aphrodite at Knidos dated to 360-350 BC housed the famous statue of Aphrodite made by Praxiteles. This temple was most likely the inspiration behind a tradition of numerous Hellenistic and late Republican round temples dedicated to Aphrodite such as the tholos of Ptolemy IV and Caesar's shrine in his gardens<sup>87</sup>. The monopteros of Lysikrates in Athens, dated to 334 BC, housed a statue of Dionysus also made by Praxiteles<sup>88</sup>.

The Philippeion at Olympia was a victory monument started by Philip II in 338 BC at Olympia after the fall of Greece to essentially house a sculptural display of the Macedonian royal family<sup>89</sup>. It was later finished by Alexander the Great and is a heroön which represented the "perpetuity and prosperity of a royal race" related to an architectural form (i.e., the tholos) symbolizing "both fertility and the cult of the dead"<sup>90</sup>. These chryselephantine portraits of the sculptor Leochares can also be connected to the divine ancestors of the Macedonian royal house – Herakles and Pelops – as the Philippeion was strategically located next to the temple of Pelops. The rotunda of Arsinoë II at Samothrace, built c. 275 BC, was dedicated to the Great Gods. It has been suggested that this tholos not only served cultic purposes (chthonic libations),

---

<sup>85</sup> K.Th. Pyl, *Die griechischen Rundbauten*, Greifswald 1861 categorizes tholoi as heroa and Robert 1939 assigns them as being chthonic in nature. Robert's work has been criticized for his exclusive focus on the chthonic functions of circular temples (e.g. L.B. Holland, *Review of Robert, F. (1939) Thymèlè : recherches sur la signification et la destination des monuments circulaires dans l'architecture religieuse de la Grèce*, Paris, AJA 52, 1948). G. Roux, *Trésors, temples, tholos, in Temples et Sanctuaires*, Lyon 1984 and *Structure and style in the temple of Arsinoe*, [in:] J. McCredie (ed.), *Samothrace. Vol. 7. The Rotunda of Arsinoe*, Princeton 1992 and F. Seiler, *Die griechische Tholos: Untersuchungen zur Entwicklung, Typologie und Funktion kunstmässiger Rundbauten*, Mainz 1986 primarily discuss their secular functions.

<sup>86</sup> H.A. Thompson, *The Tholos of Athens and its Predecessors*, "Hesperia Suppl. American School of Classical Studies at Athens" 4, 1940.

<sup>87</sup> A. Kuttner, *op. cit.*, p. 105.

<sup>88</sup> G. Roux, *op. cit.*, p. 200-202.

<sup>89</sup> Pausanias 5.20.9-10.

<sup>90</sup> F. Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 404.

but also was an assembly hall for assemblies and a reception hall for international ambassadors<sup>91</sup>.

It can be said that Roman Republican round temples of the second and first centuries BC, although rare, were influenced by these earlier Greek models. Two temples were dedicated to Fortuna: one was the Temple of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste built in 110-100 BC, and the other was the Temple of Fortuna Huiusce Dei in the Largo Argentina dating to 90-80 BC. There are three round temples dedicated to Hercules in Rome. The Temple of Hercules Musarum was erected in the Circus Flaminius by M. Fulvius Nobilior after 187 BC. It is backed by semicircular exedra on top of which was most likely the sculptural display of the Muses in the manner of classical Greek and Hellenistic exedrae<sup>92</sup>. Two temples to Hercules Victor are recorded<sup>93</sup>. The Round Temple on the Tiber is a “pure product of Greek hands” from its use of Pentelic marble, Attic bases, and Corinthian capitals<sup>94</sup>. What is more, the discovery of a bothros in the temple’s foundation may suggest Hercules’ chthonic as well as heroic nature here<sup>95</sup>.

Agrippa’s Pantheon in the Campus Martius was constructed in 27 BC. A now obsolete interpretation was that the Agrippan structure was an elongated rectangle. It has been demonstrated that the Agrippan Pantheon was a circular structure with an entrance to the north like the existing Pantheon<sup>96</sup>. The patron deities of this temple were all the gods. It was also connected with the Julian family. Dio specifically mentions the statues of Mars and Venus, the protective deities of the Julian gens, as well as a statue of Divus Julius within the cella of the temple. He also says that statues of Augustus and Agrippa stood in the pronaos<sup>97</sup>. This was, in essence, a heroön. A close parallel that may have directly influenced this structure is the round heroön in the sanctuary of Artemis at Stymphalos which had an elongated rectangular porch.

The eventual Temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum Augustum embodied many of the religious and secular functions related to the Greek tholos. Mars appeared here as both a heroic war deity and as a fertility deity. To begin with, Mars was also a lustral god. The clearest example for this is that the ceremony of the lustratio took place at the aram Martis in the Campus Martius<sup>98</sup>. Incidentally, the censor drove a nail into

<sup>91</sup> F. Seiler, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

<sup>92</sup> For further reference on this temple, see M.T. Marabini Moevs, *Le muse di Ambracia*, BdA 12, 1981.

<sup>93</sup> Ser.ad Aen. 8.363.

<sup>94</sup> J. Stamper, *op. cit.*, p. 74.

<sup>95</sup> F. Robert, *op. cit.*, p. 372-373.

<sup>96</sup> M. Wilson Jones, *Principles of Roman Architecture*, Yale 2000, p. 182.

<sup>97</sup> Dio 53.27.2-4.

<sup>98</sup> This ceremony was a circumambulation of a suovetaurilia. For further reference on Mars as a lustral god, see V.J. Rosivach, *Mars, the lustral god*, “*Latomus*” 42, 1983.

the temple of Mars Ultor after a *lustratio* every five years. The route of the Salian dance was extended to include the Forum Temple of Mars Ultor. The *Salii* also held ceremonies and banquets in the Temple of Mars Ultor and had a space of their own in the Forum<sup>99</sup>. The cult statue of Mars Ultor symbolized his dual role as he is depicted both as a warrior and as a fertility god. *Cornucopiae* are seen on the shoulder flaps and vine leaves decorate the cuirass instead of the usual animals adorning cuirasses on statues of Mars<sup>100</sup>. What is more, the theme of the future of Rome is evident throughout the complex. It housed the ensigns returned from Parthia, but also became the depository for future ensigns won from an enemy and for the crown and sceptre worn by victorious generals in their triumphal processions. The sculptural galleries in the Forum were clearly a crowning achievement of the complex. This “hall of fame” served as a type of state atrium for Rome. It was also decreed that statues of future triumphatores also be placed in the Forum<sup>101</sup>. Semi-circular *exedrae* and colonnades extending from the temple exhibited the kings of Rome, members of the Julian gens, and Rome’s *summi viri*. These hemicycles recall, for instance, the *exedrae* at Delphi with its sculptural display of the kings of Argos. The Forum’s statue gallery is reminiscent of the *Philippeion*<sup>102</sup>. The idea of a Roman “hall of fame” was already in an embryonic state as early as the twenties BC<sup>103</sup>. The Forum and its temple also became a grand civic centre. The Senate met in the temple to deliberate about war and the granting of triumphs. Governors took leave to their provinces from the Forum and young men assumed the *toga virilis*. However, Roman rectangular temples held many of the same functions as these tholoi. Thus, these multi-purpose functions of tholoi would not have become immediately apparent while viewing these Mars Ultor coins.

Perhaps the most probable explanation for the circular form of the temple structures found on these Mars Ultor coins is that they are derivative of primitive Italic huts. Numerous Iron Age huts and hut-urns were circular in shape. At the time these coins were minted, there was an active interest in recalling these Italic villages of primitive huts. The memory of the *casa Romuli*, for instance, was evoked by its careful preservation and by the works of Augustan authors.

Primitive Italic huts from the ninth and eighth centuries BC in central Italy, including the Palatine, Capitoline, and the Forum Romanum, were either circular, oval, or rectangular (with round corners). They were composed of wattle and daub, and

<sup>99</sup> CIL VI: 2138.

<sup>100</sup> K. Galinsky, *Augustan Culture*, Princeton 1996, p. 111.

<sup>101</sup> On the Forum as a “state atrium”, see D. Favro, *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome*, Cambridge 2005, p. 246. Dio 55.10.3.

<sup>102</sup> The hemicycles of the Temple of Fortuna Primigenia and the Temple of Hercules Musarum are other exempla.

<sup>103</sup> V. Gyóri, *op. cit.*, p. 99-100.



**Photos 2a-c.** Reconstructions at the Palatine Antiquarium and at the Museo della Civiltà

the roofs were thatched with straw. Circular huts were primarily employed as single-family residences<sup>104</sup>. Some of the huts discovered on the Palatine in 1948, dating to the eighth century BC, were oval rectangles or described as oblong in shape, slightly convex with rounded corners<sup>105</sup>. Modern reconstructions, based on these excavations on the south slope of the Palatine are on display at the Palatine Antiquarium and at the Museo della Civiltà (photos 2a-c).

<sup>104</sup> L. Karlsson *et al.*, *From Huts to Houses: Transformations of Ancient Societies Proceedings of an international seminar organized by the Norwegian and Swedish Institutes in Rome, 21-24 September 1997*, Stockholm 2001, p. 451.

<sup>105</sup> A. Claridge, *op. cit.*, p. 125 and E. Gjerstad, *Early Rome*, Vol. III, Lund 1966, p. 48.





**Figures:** **1a** – RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 507; **1b** – RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 39a; **1c** – RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 69a; **1d** RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 103; **1e** – RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 108a; **2** – RIC 1<sup>2</sup> Tiberius: 67; **3** – RIC 1<sup>2</sup> Nero 270; **4** – RRC 480/21; **5** – RRC 540/2; **6a** – RPC 1 222; **6b** – RPC 1 224; **7** – RRC 385/4; **8** – RRC 496/1; **9** – RRC 428/1; **10** – for further reference, see T. Drew-Bear, *Representations of temples on the Greek imperial coinage*, ANSMN 19, 1974, p. 27-63; **11** – RRC 439; **12** – RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 273; **13** – RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 27

Hut-urns were models of these dwellings. The majority were circular with conical, thatched roofs. Oval and rectangular huts were also produced<sup>106</sup>.

The Augustan age propagated the memory of these primitive villages. Vitruvius describes the construction of Italic huts in *De Architectura* 2.1.5. In *Elegy* 2.16.20, Propertius wishes that Augustus would live in a thatched hut. The *casa Romuli* and the Temple of Vesta are by far the most well known survivals of these huts. The Romulean hut is traditionally said to have been built at the top of the *Scalae Caci* on the Palatine<sup>107</sup>. Post holes near the precinct of the Temple of Victory have now identified this structure<sup>108</sup>. It was consistently maintained, particularly by the pontifices, and became what Edwards describes a “vivid symbol of the Roman past”<sup>109</sup>. In Livy 5.38.8, Camillus refers to the hut of Romulus as the *casa illa conditoris nostri* (that house of our founder). In fact, in Ovid’s *Fasti* 3.183-184, it is Mars who points out that Romulus’ house was made of straw and reeds. Augustus’ own *domus* on the Palatine was surrounded by archaic monuments. As already mentioned, the *casa Romuli* was at the top of the *Scalae Caci*. At the bottom of the Palatine was the *Lupercal* and the *ficus Ruminalis*, and the *Roma Quadrata*. Augustus faithfully restored the *casa Romuli* when it burnt in 38 BC and again in 12 BC. Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 2.1, and Virgil, *Aeneid* 8.651-653, mention a second *casa Romuli* on the Capitoline, recently constructed. The reduplication of the Palatine hut, most likely occurring between 26 BC and 20 BC, was intended to reinforce the importance of the Capitoline. The Temple of Jupiter Feretrius was also recently restored in 31 BC, and the Temple of Jupiter Tonans was built in 22 BC. The monuments were meant to symbolize Romulus’ modesty and Rome’s humble beginnings<sup>110</sup>. In *Fasti* 6.265-266, Ovid mentions that the Temple of Vesta, established by Numa, was regularly restored to its original appearance.

Mars was inextricably linked to Rome’s origins. He is traditionally known as the father of Romulus and Remus. Major developments in his cult took place during the regal period. Numa established the office of the *flamen* for Mars (alongside those of Jupiter and Quirinus – these three deities make up the archaic triad that was worshipped in early Rome)<sup>111</sup>. The *Salii*, priests of Mars, were also founded by Numa. As mentioned above, there was an archaic shrine of Mars on the Capitol and a *sacrarium*

<sup>106</sup> L. Karlsson *et al.*, *op. cit.*, p. 245. It should also be noted that the Pergamene Mars Ultor coins show a conical roof.

<sup>107</sup> DH 1.79.11 and Plutarch, *Rom.* 20.4.6.

<sup>108</sup> P. Pensabene, *Casa Romuli sul Palatino*, *RendPontAcc* 63, 2002, p. 87.

<sup>109</sup> C. Edwards, *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City*, Cambridge 1996, p. 37.

<sup>110</sup> For the Capitoline *casa Romuli*, see A. Balland, *La casa romuli au palatin et au capitol*, *REL* 62, 1984.

<sup>111</sup> Livy 1.20.

in the Regia. Mars was also the founding deity of the census<sup>112</sup>. It is thus possible to imagine the Capitoline with four interrelated Augustan monuments: the Temple of Jupiter Feretrius, a casa Romuli, the Temple of Jupiter Tonans, and a temple of Mars Ultor. In fact, these Mars Ultor coins are contemporaneously issued with coins depicting a temple of Jupiter Tonans<sup>113</sup>.

## Conclusions

The existence of a temple of Mars Ultor on the Capitol in Rome during the age of Augustus will undoubtedly continue to be debated by scholars. I believe, however, that a permanent Capitoline temple of Mars Ultor was decreed in 20 BC, but was never actually built. The Mars Ultor coins of c.19-16 BC commemorate this decree and depict symbolic allusions to Augustus' Parthian success of 20 BC. The circular form of the temple structures on these coins can be explained by Augustus' archaizing program of the Capitoline, that is, a temple of Mars Ultor would perfectly complement, for instance, the casa Romuli.

### Numismatic Catalogues

BMCRE 1 – H. Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum. Vol. I: From Augustus to Vitellius*, London 1923.

BMCRR 1-3 – H.A. Grueber, *Coins of the Roman Republic in the British Museum*, London 1910.

CBN 1 – J.B. Giard, *Bibliothèque Nationale: Catalogue des monnaies de l'empire romain. I: Auguste*, Paris 1976.

CNR – A. Banti, L. Simonetti, *Corpus Nummorum Romanorum*, Rome 1972.

HCC 1 – A.S. Robertson, *Roman Imperial Coins in the Hunter Coin Cabinet, University of Glasgow. Vol. I: Augustus to Nerva*, Oxford 1962.

RIC 1 – H. Mattingly, E.A. Sydenham, *Roman Imperial Coinage I: Augustus to Vitellius*, London 1923.

RIC 1<sup>2</sup> – C.H.V. Sutherland, *Roman Imperial Coinage. Vol. I: From 31 BC to AD 69*, London 1984.

RPC 1 – A. Burnett, M. Amandry, P. Ripollès, *Roman Provincial Coinage. Vol. 1, From the death of Caesar to the death of Vitellius (44 BC-AD 69)*, London 1992.

RRC – M. Crawford, *Roman Republican Coinage*, Cambridge 1974.

<sup>112</sup> T.J. Cornell, *The Beginnings of Rome: Italy and Rome from the Bronze Age to the Punic Wars (c. 1000-264 BC)*, New York 1995, p. 173-197.

<sup>113</sup> Fig. 13, RIC 1<sup>2</sup> 27. It should also be noted that the monopteral Temple of Roma and Augustus on the Athenian Acropolis, built c. 19 BC, was modelled on this planned Capitoline temple of Mars Ultor. M. Kajava, *op. cit.*, p. 50 says “in view of the decisive role of Mars Ultor in the Parthian question, the Athenian monopteros can surely be taken as homage to this god as well” and in 2001:83 that the Athenian monopteros was to recall “the lost standards and even to serve as a temporary pavilion for them (or a more permanent one for [their] copies)”.

## MONETY Z OKRESU OK. 16-19 R. P.N.E. ZWIĄZANE Z MARSEM ULTOREM

## Streszczenie

Istnienie świątyni Marsa Ultora położonej na Kapitolu w Rzymie było przedmiotem długiej dyskusji w literaturze przedmiotu. August ślubował wybudowanie świątyni dedykowanej Marsowi Ultorowi w 20 roku p.n.e., kiedy oznaki legionowe utracone podczas wojen z Partami zostały odzyskane w wyniku negocjacji dyplomatycznych. Część uczonych uważa, że dedykowana wówczas świątynia miała zostać wzniesiona na Kapitolu. Podstawą takiej opinii jest passus z Kasjusza Diona (54, 8, 3) oraz monety wemitowane ok. 19-16 roku p.n.e. w Pergamonie (Colonia Caesar Augusta) i Hiszpanii (Colonia Patricia). Widnieje na nich wyobrażenie świątyni Marsa Ultora. Sądzę, że przedstawione na monetach wyobrażenie odbija ideę świątyni, która miała powstać na Kapitolu, a która nie została nigdy wybudowana. Forma rotundy natomiast może zostać potraktowana jako odwołanie się Augusta do czasów archaicznego Rzymu.