

## **T. Keith DIX**

### **Julius Caesar's Plans on the Capitoline**

Suetonius includes in his life of Julius Caesar a list of projects *de ornanda instruendaque urbe* which were cut short by Caesar's death (44.1-3). This paper examines two projects in Suetonius' list, the theater and the library, and argues that both are to be associated with the Capitoline and were elements in a much larger complex planned by Caesar.

Caesar had shown his interest in the Capitoline from early in his political career: as aedile in 65, he restored to the Capitoline the trophies of Marius, which had been removed by Sulla (Vell. 2.43.4, Suet. *Iul.* 11, Plut. *Caes.* 6). On the first day of his praetorship in 62, he disputed the right of Quintus Lutatius Catulus to rededicate the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which had been burned in 83 and rededicated in 69 (Suet. *Iul.* 15, Cass. Dio 37.44).

Suetonius says that Caesar intended to build *theatrum summae magnitudinis Tarpeio monte accubans*. In 44, Caesar destroyed the temple of Pietas in the Forum Holitorium to make space for this theater, in the area where Augustus would later build the Theater of Marcellus (Cass. Dio 43.49.3, Plin. *NH* 7.121). A theater complex stretching from the banks of the Tiber to the slopes of the Capitoline would have been a worthy rival of Pompey's Theater complex in the Campus Martius. Perhaps Caesar even intended to trump the temple of Venus Victrix at the summit of Pompey's cavea, by making the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus his own "theater-temple."

Caesar's plan "to make public (*publicare*) the largest possible Greek and Latin libraries" was also under way, according to Suetonius, with the task of obtaining and arranging the libraries entrusted to Marcus Terentius Varro. While Caesar did not bring these plans to fulfillment, one of his closest lieutenants, Gaius Asinius Pollio (*cos.* 40 BCE), established a library in the Atrium Libertatis, which he rebuilt *ex manubiis* between 39 and 28 (Ov. *Tr.* 3.1.71-2; Plin. *NH* 7.30.115, 35.2.10; Isid. *Etym.* 6.5.1). Pollio's establishment of a library has been viewed as his conscious effort to carry out one of his chief's unfulfilled plans. In particular, Pollio's choice of the *Atrium Libertatis* suggested the connection between Caesar's plans and Pollio's library, since most Roman topographers have believed that the *Atrium Libertatis* stood on the northwest slope of the Arx at the top of the Clivus Argentarius, abutting the spot where Caesar's Forum was to be built (Anderson, *Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora*, 24-6).

Nicholas Purcell has overturned that topographical consensus with his proposal that the *Atrium Libertatis* is the building we have come to call the "*Tabularium*" on the Capitoline (PBSR 61 [1993] 125-155). If the *Atrium Libertatis* was on the Capitoline, we can think of Pollio's public library, the first in Rome, as the "Capitoline Library." Pollio may have been laying claim not only to completion of one of Julius Caesar's unfinished projects but also to a locale and building which figured in Caesar's plans to "adorn and build up" the city of Rome. The building which lay in the saddle between the two summits of the Capitoline would have provided a link between the "theater of Caesar" on the Capitolium and the Senate House of Caesar and Forum of Caesar below the Arx. This Caesarian

complex would have matched Pompey's complex, with its own theater, Curia, and Temple of Venus, but would also have bettered it: in location, with its site embracing the Capitoline and the Roman Forum rather than being in the Campus Martius; in divinity, by replacing Venus Victrix with Venus Genetrix (and Jupiter Optimus Maximus); and in cultural significance, by incorporating Rome's first public library. We might even suggest that this swath of Caesarian territory was intended to isolate Pompey's complex and shut it off from the heart of Rome.