THE HAG AND THE HOUSEHOLD GODS: SILENCE, SPEECH, AND THE FAMILY IN MID-FEBRUARY (OVID *FASTI* 2.533–638)

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WHY, AMONG THE FAMILY festivals of Ovid's mid-February, is there a little old lady gulping wine, fooling with fish, and stuffing bits of incense beneath a doorsill? These are odd doings the poet presents between the evening of the Feralia and the dawn of the Caristia, in which a hag makes offerings to the goddess Tacita (*Fast.* 2.571–82):

ecce anus in mediis residens annosa puellis
  sacra facit Tacitae (vix tamen ipsa tacet),
et digitis tria tura tribus sub limine ponit,
  qua brevis occultum mus sibi fecit iter:
tum cantata ligat cum fusco licia plumbo,
  et septem nigras versat in ore fabas,
quodque pice adstrinxit, quod acu traiecit aena,
  obsutum maenae torret in igne caput;
vina quoque instillat: vini quodcumque relictum est,
  aut ipsa aut comites, plus tamen ipsa, bibit.
"hostiles linguas inimicaque vinximus ora,"
  dicit discedens ebriaque exit anus.

Behold, an old hag sitting in the midst of girls, performs rites to the Silent Goddess (she is hardly herself silent), and with three fingers places three lumps of incense beneath the threshold where the little mouse makes his secret route. Then she binds enchanted threads with dark lead, and rolls seven black beans in her mouth. Next a fish head, tarred and sewn up with piercing bronze needle, she roasts in a fire, dripping a little wine on it; what's left of the wine she and her companions drink, though she has more of it. "We have bound hostile tongues and unfriendly mouths," she says as she leaves, and so the drunken hag exits.

In this passage we find an essentially straightforward piece of what might be called either "sympathetic magic" (Frazer 1929, 2:451) or "persuasive analogy" (Faraone 1991, 7–8), in which, accompanied by some abracadabra,

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the trussing of a herring's mouth is meant to silence some unsuspecting soul. As a document in the history of magic, this binding rite has been studied in isolation by Françoise Bader (1992), who illuminates its Pythagorean and Near Eastern elements through a broadly structuralist study. As literature, it has been aptly called a "ritual comedy" by John Miller (1991, 105–7), who likewise discusses it as a discrete episode within the poem.[1]

Is the rite for Tacita an independent sketch? Because it so abruptly opens—*ecce*—and closes—*exit anus*—the episode looks as though it has been shoehorned into place in the text, but a closer consideration of this passage reveals its place in the narrative of *Fasti* 2. Our ancient weird sister serves as a literary linchpin joining up themes in the entries that precede and follow it in a larger panel treating issues of family morality and freedom of speech, matters closely linked with important ideological concerns of Augustus' later reign. The festival preceding the silencing rite, the Feralia, centers on the small but necessary duties owed to the ancestral dead, whose displeasure, the poet shows, will not go unvoiced. The unusual toast in the festival that follows, the Caristia, has attracted scholarly opinion, though none of it draws a connection to the little old lady at the gate. The *Fasti* as a whole concerns the relationship of *tempus* and *causa,* and even the hag's hocus-pocus elicits an aetiology unsettling in its implications for relations between family members. The poet explores these matters in mid-February from various points of view and, significantly, in various tones of voice.

This section of *Fasti* 2 proceeds by fits and starts, and so this discussion will unfold in a less-than-straightforward manner. But as we undertake this inquiry, let us first examine whether Ovid's location of the hag's spell in this part of February has any basis in actual religious practice, a matter scholars of religion generally do not accept: there is no "real connexion," writes William Warde Fowler (1899, 310), seconded by H. H. Scullard (1981, 75),[2] between this black magic act and the Feralia's ritual proceedings, though these days of the dead perhaps offered a fittingly spooky occasion for the practice of sorcery, as others suggest (Frazer 1929, 2:446, and Miller 1991, 105 and p. 170, n. 24). The little we know of this spell from literary sources can be expanded a bit further by inscriptional evidence. In a collection of *defixiones* from late Republican Rome now in the Johns Hopkins University Archaeological Collection, for instance, several individuals are cursed in a rather elaborate head-to-toe fashion. In addition to this anatomical litany, two specific remarks bear on our hag's rite: first, that Cerberus be rewarded *hoc sei perfecerit ante mensem Martium* ("if he fulfill this before the month of March," lines 16–17), and second, *ut tradas mandes mense Februario ecillunc* ("that you [i.e., Persephone, the tablets' addressee] hand over and

1. See, too, the recent discussion of this section of *Fasti* 2 by Littlewood (2001, 922), though her assertion that "[t]here is in Ovid's choice of words *hostiles linguas* and *inimicaque ora* an implication of unseemly gossip about a girl's reputation" (implying thus a thematic amatory link between the binding rite and the Lara story that follows) is unconvincing.

2. One of *CP*'s anonymous readers points out that, as the Mater Larum (associated here by Ovid with Tacita) has her own honors in December (cf. Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 34), this is "a deliberate intrusion" into February's proceedings.

consign him [the victim] in the month of February," lines 42–43).[3] But it is difficult to say whether the mention of February in the tablets has a quasi-ritual basis (as the spell of the old woman is thought to) or if it is purely coincidental.

Of greater use to us in understanding the Ovidian ritual is another curse tablet, discovered at Kempten (ancient Cambodunum) in southern Germany, the text of which runs as follows (*AE* 1958, no. 150 [p. 38]):

mutae tacitae!
ut mutus sit quartus,
agitatus erret ut mus fugiens
aut avis adversus basylicum,
ut e[i]us os mutu(m) sit, mutae!
mutae [d]irae sint!
mutae tacitae sint!
mutae! [qu]a[rt]us ut insaniat,
ut eriniis rutus sit quartus et orco.
ut mutae tacitae
ut mut[ae s]int ad portas aureas.

mutae tacitae ⟨Goddesses of silence?⟩! So that Quartus might be mute, that he might wander, frenzied, like a fleeing mouse, or like a bird against the basilisk, that his mouth might be mute, *mutae*! Let the *mutae* be fatal! Let the *mutae* be *tacitae*! *mutae*! So that Quartus might go mad, so that Quartus might be ⟨rushed? dug up?⟩ by the Erinyes and Orcus. So that the *mutae tacitae* might be mute at the golden gates.

As it is difficult to know whether *mutae* or *tacitae* are proper names or not, the translation above must be vague (from Quartus, it is perhaps worth noting, nothing more is heard). What the context of this curse might have been we cannot say, though it is noteworthy that the script of the *defixio* dates to the early Julio-Claudian era (*AE* 1958, no. 150 [p. 37]): this would make Ovid's text and the curse tablet roughly contemporary (Egger 1962–63 and Tupet 1976, 412–13). In addition to the specific mention of a mouse in both documents, the mention of "golden gates" in the final line of the *defixio* opens up another point of contact with Ovid's text. We are reminded of the threshold location of the hag's silencing rite, performed at least in part *sub limine* (2.573). Notable too is the fact that, upon discovery, the *defixio* still bore traces of mortar, indicating that it had originally been immured (*AE* 1958, no. 150 [p. 37]), much like the tablets by which Germanicus was thought to have been afflicted during this same period (Tac. *Ann*. 2.69 and Dio Cass. 57.18).

The location of these tablets within walls or under portals accords with more generally held beliefs about those who carry out sorcery. Because they do not fit into established social categories, witches and other practitioners of magic are often figured in overtly ambiguous or confused terms: to use anthropologist Victor Turner's phrase, they are represented as being "betwixt and between" (Turner 1967, 97), so that their unusual appearance matches

3. See Fox 1912 generally and, for the lines cited, esp. 18–19, with 40 and 46 for commentary; see too Warmington, *ROL* 4:280–85, no. 33, as well as Gager 1992, 240–42.

their subversive nature. Thus, among the Kaguru, for instance, witches are believed to walk on their hands, so confusing the idea of above and below (Needham 1978, 35); interestingly, Trimalchio in the *Satyricon* warns against nocturnal witches who *quod sursum est, deorsum faciunt* ("turn everything upside down," Petron. 63.9). Often it is the witches' location that is betwixt and between (Johnston 1991), and hence they are thought to occupy places on the cusp, such as crossroads, graveyards, or, as here with Ovid's old woman, thresholds. The liminal situation of the hag's silencing rite might well be compared to the story Ovid tells of the nymph Carna, goddess of *cardines* (*Fast.* 6.101–82), who defended the infant Proca from the evil *striges* by magically reinforcing the doors and windows of the household (McDonough 1997, 330–32). With these cultural associations in mind, it is worth probing what the poet might have meant by placing a subversive character like our hag on a threshold.

A consideration of its liminal nature is key to understanding this ritual's presence at this point in the *Fasti,* for a palpable sense of transition—literary if not exactly ritual in nature—underlies this episode. Age is set off against youth, for instance, as is silence against speech (571–72), and we find these strongly marked contrasts mirrored in the grammatical structure as well (577, 579, and 580). While the *sacra Tacitae* do not in themselves constitute a *rite du passage* as delineated by Arnold van Gennep, they nonetheless form a pointed entr'acte between the festivals devoted to the dead and those dedicated to the living. In the passage from Feralia and Caristia—for which this little binding rite forms the unlikely hinge—the poet exhibits a sensibility that itself might be characterized as "betwixt and between": Ovid will present at times straightforward exegesis, at other times playful spoofing, at still other times a tragic bitterness, and occasionally will straddle the line with ironic aloofness. If, as Philip Hardie has noted (1992, 72–74), the guiding spirit of the *Fasti* is the liminal god *Ianus,* our *anus* can be seen as a smaller-scale transitional figure in the movement from one mid-February holiday to the next.

The progress of Ovid's narrative is desultory, to be sure, but by no means random, as can be seen in the connection of the Tacita ritual with the brutally compelling tale of Lara that follows it. In the lines cited below, the poet begins and ends with the naïve tone of a tour guide chirpily explaining some native Roman customs; what comes between is far darker in spirit. The relevant passage is as follows (*Fast.* 2.583–616):

protinus a nobis quae sit dea Muta requires:
disce per antiquos quae mihi nota senes.
Iuppiter, inmodico Iuturnae victus amore,
multa tulit tanto non patienda deo:
illa modo in silvis inter coryleta latebat,
nunc in cognatas desiliebat aquas.
convocat hic nymphas, Latium quaecumque tenebant,
et iacit in medio talia verba choro:
"invidet ipsa sibi vitatque quod expedit illi
vestra soror, summo iungere membra deo.

consulite ambobus: nam quae mea magna voluptas,
utilitas vestrae magna sororis erit.
vos illi in prima fugienti obsistite ripa,
ne sua fluminea corpora mergat aqua."
dixerat; adnuerant nymphae Tiberinides omnes
quaeque colunt thalamos, Ilia diva, tuos.
forte fuit Nais, Lara nomine; prima sed illi
dicta bis antiquum syllaba nomen erat,
ex vitio positum. saepe illi dixerat Almo
"nata, tene linguam": nec tamen illa tenet.
quae simul ac tetigit Iuturnae stagna sororis,
"effuge" ait "ripas," dicta refertque Iovis.
illa etiam Iunonem adiit, miserataque nuptas
"Naida Iuturnam vir tuus" inquit "amat."
Iuppiter intumuit, quaque est non usa modeste
eripit huic linguam, Mercuriumque vocat:
"duc hanc ad manes: locus ille silentibus aptus.
nympha, sed infernae nympha paludis erit."
iussa Iovis fiunt. accepit lucus euntes:
dicitur illa duci tum placuisse deo.
vim parat hic, voltu pro verbis illa precatur,
et frustra muto nititur ore loqui,
fitque gravis geminosque parit, qui compita servant
et vigilant nostra semper in urbe Lares.

Right away you will ask, Who is the Mute Goddess? Learn what was made known to me by old men. Jupiter, smitten by an excessive love for Juturna, put up with much that such a god should not have to. In the woods among the hazelwood she would be hiding now, and now diving into her sister waters. He called together the nymphs who inhabit Latium and tossed these words into the group, "Your sister does herself harm by avoiding the very thing that would help her, to have lain with the greatest god. Think of us both: for my great pleasure will be her great advantage. Keep her from fleeing at the bank's edge, so she cannot plunge into the river water." He had spoken; they had nodded, all those nymphs of the Tiber, and those who dwell in your bridal bowers, Ilia. By chance there was a Naiad named Lara (whose name, composed to suit her flaw, had been Lala, the first syllable being repeated). Often Almo had told her, "Daughter, hold your tongue." But she didn't. As soon as she reached the pool of her sister Juturna, she said, "Flee from the bank!" and repeated Jupiter's words. She then approached Juno and, pitying married women, said, "Your husband loves the nymph Juturna." Jupiter swelled with anger, and ripped out that tongue she had used so unwisely, calling to Mercury, "Take her to the ghosts, that is a place fit for the silent." Jupiter's orders were carried out. A grove greeted the two as they went: it is said that she pleased her guide. He used violence, she pleaded with her face instead of words, and vainly tried to speak with her mute mouth. She became pregnant and bore twins, the Lares, who guard the crossroads and are ever vigilant in our city.

This story, oddly called "pretty" by Warde Fowler (1899, 310) and "pleasant" by Georges Dumézil (1970, 367), has received more serious though limited critical treatment in the past decade.[4] The political dimension of Lara's

4. See Richlin 1992, 172 (particularly on gender), Newlands 1995, 159–62, and most recently, Littlewood 2001, 923–24.

tragedy, in particular, has been brought out by Denis Feeney, who notes that "by linking these little deities to his fictions about excessive speech, enforced muteness, and rape, [Ovid] tranforms them into an ever-present warning of the dangers of using our tongue without restraint" (1992, 12). While we will return to this insight below, it is worth noting here that no scholar has drawn any convincing connection between the rites for Tacita and the Lara *aition*.

The poet's transition from *tempus* to *causa* is worth considering, for it plays upon larger themes in *Fasti* 2: *protinus a nobis, quae sit dea Muta, requires* ("Right away you will ask us, who is the Mute Goddess?" *Fast.* 2.583). The change of the goddess' name to Muta—if indeed he has altered her name—is subtle but significant.[5] The goddess Tacita presides over silence, and as such, is a mighty figure: to command silence is the prerogative of authority, especially in a religious setting. *Favete linguis* ("Hold your tongues!") demands the *sacerdos* in the first Roman ode (Hor. *Carm.* 3.1.2), for instance, in imitation of cult practice.[6] While carrying out the binding spell, the old woman who serves her partakes of the power of Tacita. But Ovid toys with the literal meaning of *tacita* as "quiet" and, in moving to the goddess' aetiological story, substitutes the synonym *muta.* In exploiting the imprecision of her name, Ovid robs the goddess of the power to enforce silence, and so leaves her powerless and silent. With this sly bit of lexical legerdemain, the poet demonstrates the power of words as power itself. Indeed, throughout this passage, Jupiter's power (especially over women) has been figured in terms of speech: to make his demands, *convocat hic nymphas* ("he calls together the nymphs," 2.589), asserting his supremacy by his summons as he will again with Mercury (608). After the god had made known his desires to the nymphs, Ovid writes, *dixerat: adnuerant* ("He had spoken; they had nodded," 597), the wordlessness of their assent made starker still by juxtaposition with his verbal command.[7] Perhaps the most vivid

5. Lara does not appear to be a genuine figure of Roman legend (Tabeling 1932, 68–81), and it has been questioned whether the Mute Goddess is, either. "Die Bezeichnungen *dea muta* und *Lara* sind ausschließliches Eigentum des Ovid," Wissowa notes (1912, p. 235, n. 5), while Frazer remarks, "We may, indeed, conjecture that Ovid invented the name Muta in order to explain the authentic name Tacita . . ." (1929, 2:445). But perhaps Ovid invented nothing of the sort. As Feeney has recently pointed out, the lack of distinction between majuscules and minuscules in ancient Roman writing obscures whatever differences there may have been between proper and common nouns or adjectives (1998, 88). In the end, it may be that, when Ovid wrote *DEA MUTA* (as he most certainly did), he did not mean *dea Muta,* "the goddess Muta," but *dea muta,* "the unspeaking goddess." In that case, it would have been not Ovid but his editors who ushered this new goddess into the pantheon. Word order is of no particular help here: contrast Dea Dia with Bona Dea. Lactantius, clearly having read Ovid, was the first to speak of the deified Muta (*Div. inst.* 1.20.35): *quis, cum audiat deam Mutam, tenere risum queat? hanc esse dicunt, ex qua sint nati Lares, et ipsam Laram nominant, vel Larundam* ("Who can help but laugh at the goddess Muta once he hears of this goddess? They say that it is she from whom the Lares were born, and they call her Lara or Larunda"). But, of course, hostile Christian sources frequently distort the evidence. I will discuss the relationship of the *defixio* discussed above and the issues raised here in a future publication.

6. For further examples, see Cic. *Div.* 1.102, with Pease's note; cf. Latte 1960, 386, and Mensching 1926, 101–2.

7. The reluctance of Juturna's sisters is well expressed by their nod. To be noted here is Justinian's remark that a contract is not binding, *si sine verbis adnuisset* ("if one party should nod without words," *Dig.* 45.1). Contrast Jupiter's own nodding earlier in this book (modeled on Zeus in *Iliad* 1): *Iuppiter adnuerat: nutu tremefactus uterque / est polus, et caeli pondera movit Atlas* ("Jupiter nodded, at which both poles shook and Atlas shifted the heavens' weight," 2.489–90). His power is such that he need not speak, unlike the nymphs who dare not.

example of Jupiter's authority is found in the verse in which Lara's punishment is enacted: *eripit huic linguam Mercuriumque vocat* ("he tears out her tongue and calls Mercury," 608). In a cruel conceit, Ovid's caesura separates the nymph's tongue from both the verb "to call" and the eloquent divine messenger.[8] After her muting and mutilation, the nymph is killed—sent to the Underworld in the company of Mercury, acting now as Hermes Psychopompos (Bömer ad loc.)—by the command of Jupiter, who intones, *duc hanc ad manes, locus ille silentibus aptus* ("Take her to the ghosts, a place fit for the silent," 609). Let us turn, too, to the *manes,* as we have been bid.

Now, in Roman thought generally, the dead were thought to be silent—the *umbrae silentes* of the Vergilian underworld (*Aen.* 6.264) come to mind here—and Ovid himself later mentions offerings made *tacitis manibus* ("to the silent shades," 5.422). The force of Jupiter's command ought to be strengthened by such beliefs, as well as by the placing of Lara's story during the Feralia, a private commemoration of the dead that, unlike the eerie Lemuria of May, was "a quieter period of remembrance" (Scullard 1981, 74). But earlier in the exegesis of this holiday—less than fifty lines before the mutilation of Lara—Ovid presents a story of angrily ululating ghosts, quite at odds with the tradition (547–56):

at quondam, dum longa gerunt pugnacibus armis
  bella, Parentales deseruere dies.
non impune fuit; nam dicitur omine ab isto
  Roma suburbanis incaluisse rogis.
vix equidem credo: bustis exisse feruntur
  et tacitae questi tempore noctis avi,
perque vias Urbis latosque ululasse per agros
  deformes animas, volgus inane, ferunt.
post ea praeteriti tumulis redduntur honores,
  prodigiisque venit funeribusque modus.

But once, when waging a long war with fighting weapons, they [the early Romans] forgot the Parentalia. This did not go unpunished: it is said that, from the time of that evil omen, Rome became hot from the pyres outside the city. I hardly believe it, but they say that the ancestors left their tombs, complaining, in the middle of the quiet night; through the city streets and broad fields the formless ghosts—the insubstantial throng—howled, they say. Afterwards, the honors that had been forgone were granted again to the tombs, and so came an end to prodigies and funerals.

After a lovely recitation of the small gifts acceptable to the dearly departed during this festival, the poet moves suddenly from peaceful reflection to a scene of fear and panic, in which "the graves stood tenantless and the sheeted dead / Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets," to quote *Hamlet* (1.1.115–16). Why should Ovid choose to make a Halloween story out of this Memorial Day observance? Let us leave to one side the question of whether this passage has misrepresented the nature of the Feralia, recalling John Scheid's observation that poetic interpretations "were a *reflection*

8. On this topic, see the recent theoretical study by Keegan (2002).

not a *revelation*" of cultic reality (1992, 123).[9] With an overt invitation to disbelieve (551), the poet deliberately gives voice to the dead here in order to intensify the noise righteously sounded against impiety.

The howling ghosts of the Feralia cry foul, it must be noted, at the failure of duty toward family. Such failure reaches a pernicious climax in Sextus Tarquinius' violation of kinship bonds (Newlands 1995, 163–64), and indeed, it may be that the Feralia's *inane volgus* (2.554) intentionally points to Lucretia's self-inflicted *inane volnus* (2.850), which spurs Brutus to decisive political action.[10] Less overtly political is the way such domestic matters operate in the Lara episode, where the multiplicity of tensions between family members has not thus far attracted critical attention. While Juturna initially finds refuge in her sister waters, for instance, these same siblings end up handing her over, voluntarily or not, to the would-be rapist (blood being, apparently, no thicker than water).[11] Lara, refusing to partake of the treachery, points out another breach in family trust by exposing Jupiter's infidelity to Juno, framing his faithlessness in general terms (*miserataque nuptas,* "pitying married women," 2.605). In this same light, we may note that Lara's father, the river god Almo, had bid her to hold her tongue, a paternal commandment she disobeys to her own misfortune. Sisters betray sisters, husbands cheat on wives, daughters defy fathers, all here by the banks of Tiber, under *thalamos, Ilia diva, tuos* ("your bridal bowers, O divine Ilia," 2.598). Ovid's explicit reference here to the mother of Romulus and Remus links Lara's story to the Lupercalia narrative (*Fast.* 2.381–82) and to the beginning of March (3.11–42), passages where the details of her children's conception and birth are both set out (Connors 1994). Herself a victim of divine assault, Ilia is, like Lara, also an embattled daughter (caught in the cross fire between Numitor and Amulius) and mother: in fact, she is the mother of twins.[12]

With such twins in mind, we are led to consider the conclusion of the Lara *aetion*, which closes with the following couplet (615–16):

9. Older scholars of religion sought to explain the shift in tone by suggesting either that the poet had confused the Feralia with the Lemuria, or that some sort of pre-Ovidian contamination had taken place between the two festivals. On the history of interpretation, see Fauth 1978, p. 120, n. 100, and pp. 141–42, with further bibliography, cited by Miller (1991, p. 170, n. 25). Phillips (1992, 66–67) notes that "the distinction is false" and the festivals should be understood as "complementary." See now the recent discussion of Littlewood (2001, 925–29), arguing for the poet's deliberate linking of the festivals.

10. This scene would seem to point to the silence of Lucretia when threatened (2.797–98), as well as her faltering remarks to her father and husband (2.819–20). Indeed, the rape of Lucretia and this little ghost story share various themes. Both occur against a wartime background: had her male relatives not been besieging Ardea, Lucretia would never have suffered at Sextus' hands. Further, the ululating shades here may anticipate those *manes* by whom Brutus swears vengeance (2.842). Looking upon Lucretia's corpse, Brutus is inspired to open his mouth—*animo nomina fallit* ("with spirit he belies his name," 2.837)—and now no longer playing the brute, he casts off his false dumbness to speak (his speech, ironically enough, rehearsing the *facta nefanda* ("unspeakable deeds") of the Tarquins (2.850). With the expulsion of the kings, Brutus ushered in a *libertas* that encompassed free speech, but under the *princeps,* such freedom had grown increasingly constricted (Syme 1939, 481–86), a fact informing the composition of the *Fasti.* As Feeney (1992, 6) has rightly observed, "[T]he question of what may be said, and when, and by whom, is one of the poem's key thematic preoccupations."

11. On this scene, see now the recent discussion of Murgatroyd 2003.

12. Ilia is also called Rhea Silvia by Ovid and other authors (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.76.3 and Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 3.3). See Frazer 1929, 2:452–53, and Ogilvie 1965 on Livy 1.3.10. Fantham (1998, 96, ad 4.23) notes, "O.'s use of both variants for Romulus' mother in this poem is an unobtrusive mark of his erudition." On artwork of this figure, see Littlewood 2001, pp. 923–24, n. 25.

fitque gravis geminosque parit, qui compita servant
et vigilant nostra semper in urbe Lares.

She became pregnant and bore twins, who watch over the crossroads, and the Lares are ever vigilant in our city.

With this hackneyed happy ending, the poet jumps indecorously from the nymph's personal anguish to the common good it produces, a jarring mixture of private misfortune with public benefit that is also at the heart of the Lucretia narrative later in the month. But there is always a certain "double-edged" quality to Ovid's twins, as in the stories of Romulus and Remus told elsewhere. The contrived resolution of Lara's story provokes an uncertain response: though the nymph has been raped en route, the protection of the Lares Compitales over dangerous passageways is assured. We arrive at a crossroads of sorts with the origin of the Lares, uncertain in what spirit to approach the family festival that follows.

That the ending of Lara's tragedy ought to be read together with the opening of the Caristia, however, is obscured by the editorial practice—first introduced with the publication of Alexander Riese's 1874 Teubner and standard since then (Goold 1989, viii)—of prefacing each of Ovid's days with the symbols of calendrical notation found in the epigraphical *fasti.* This convention, while forcing the material into a handbook-like format, exaggerates the episodic character of the poem while eclipsing the subtle touches that link section to section (Barchiesi 1997, 103). Hence, the transition to the Caristia appears in print thus (615–17):

fitque gravis geminosque parit, qui compita servant
et vigilant nostra semper in urbe Lares.

22. E C

Proxima cognati dixere Caristia cari
et venit ad socios turba propinqua deos.
scilicet a tumulis et qui periere propinquis
protinus ad vivos ora referre iuvat,
postque tot amissos quicquid de sanguine restat
aspicere et generis dinumerare gradus.

Yet, as Ovid composed them, the lines ought to read thus:

fitque gravis geminosque parit, qui compita servant
et vigilant nostra semper in urbe Lares.
Proxima cognati dixere Caristia cari
et venit ad socios turba propinqua deos.
scilicet a tumulis et qui periere propinquis
protinus ad vivos ora referre iuvat,
postque tot amissos quicquid de sanguine restat
aspicere et generis dinumerare gradus.

Dispensing with the nineteenth-century textual divisions, we can see more clearly the logic of Ovid's segue from Lara and Lares to *cari* and Caristia (perhaps deriving from the poet's programmatic interest in *aras,* cf. l.13).[13]

13. On wordplay involving the syllables *ar* and *car,* cf. McDonough 1997, 333.

The conception of Lara's children—the rape that punishes her speaking—looks backward to the rites for Tacita, while the birth of the Lares anticipates the holiday celebrating family, a point underscored by Ovid's use of *parit,* which takes part in the verbal play as well (and is possibly meant to recall the *Par*entalia). To be noted in this connection, too, are the celebrants of this festival, the *cognati* who are styled *cari.* Forms of *cognatus* appear in this book in only two other places: in the immediately preceding passage, Juturna had rescued herself by escaping to the *cognatas aquas* ("relative waters," 588), while, in the Lupercalia narrative, Romulus and Remus are saved by the she-wolf, *quos perdere cognatae sustinuere manus* ("whom family hands had attempted to destroy," 415). With Numitor and Juturna's sisters as the most immediate models of kin, any sense of reunion can be at best uneasy. But as he moves from Lara's tragedy to the gathering otherwise called Cara Cognatio, Ovid assures us that family will be held dear.[14]

As a matter of devotion, the Caristia was a ritual response to the previous day's remembrance of the dead, a subject to which Ovid draws attention: at the Feralia, he noted, *est honor et tumulis* ("There is honor as well to tombs," 2.533), though now our attention is directed *a tumulis . . . ad vivos* ("away from the tombs to the living," 619).[15] The occasion during which this transition was made—from dead to living, from grief to joy—was a communal banquet, a less lugubrious counterpart to the graveside meal of the Feralia.[16] The proceedings of this feast are described in greater detail by Valerius Maximus (2.1.8):

> convivium etiam sollemne maiores instituerunt idque Caristia appellaverunt, cui praeter cognatos et adfines nemo interponebatur, ut, si qua inter necessarias personas querella esset orta, apud sacra mensae et inter hilaritatem animorum et fautoribus concordiae adhibitis tolleretur.
>
> Our ancestors established a ceremonial feast and called it the Caristia, in which nobody but relatives and in-laws is included, so that, if any disagreement has arisen among the kinsfolk, it might be removed amidst the rites of the table and the good cheer, in the company of those fostering *concordia* [harmony].

According to this description, the Caristia served as an annual meeting of the clan where, under the family's protective gaze, conflicts could be safely aired and settlements dutifully hammered out. When one recalls the tremendous importance of family in Roman political life (Syme 1939, 12), the usefulness of such an institution becomes eminently clear; perhaps the chill of

14. Fowler 1899, 308–9, and Scullard 1981, 75–76; see the discussion of Miller 1991, 91–98, to which I am thoroughly indebted here.

15. The deadly wrath of Jupiter against Lara—*intumuit* (607)—is perhaps intended to remind us of the centrality of the tomb (*tumulus*) in these festivals.

16. Varro derives Feralia from the verb *fero* (*LL* 6.13; Ovid echoes this at *Fast.* 2.69), and speaks of a meal carried to the tomb on this day, thus commemorating the two meals eaten by the graveside at the time of the funeral—the *silicernium,* the feast offered on the day of the burial, and the *cena novendialis,* that offered nine days later to conclude the period of mourning. In the fourth century C.E., Augustine's mother, Monica, appears to be carrying out a Christian version of the Feralia, bringing food to saints' graves, a practice Ambrose reprimands as pagan (August. *Conf.* 6.2). Archaeological evidence shows that the mausolea of the wealthy were provided with kitchens and dining rooms (Toynbee 1971, 51, 136).

the recently visited grave helped to cool any overheated tempers. The feeling of reconciliation in the festival underscores the poet's description of the return to the ancestral estate—*et venit ad socios turba propinqua deos* (618)—in which the family gods surround the *turba propinqua,* a poetic rendering of an affectionate embrace.

At the Caristia, it would appear, lighthearted talk was not just allowed but encouraged for the sake of the family's greater interests. Into this congenial setting, Ovid inserts an unusual passage, ostensibly a litany of those kept away from the feast, spoken in an officiant's voice (623–30):

innocui veniant: procul hinc, procul impius esto
  frater et in partus mater acerba suos,
cui pater est vivax, qui matris digerit annos,
  quae premit invisam socrus iniqua nurum.
Tantalidae fratres absint et Iasonis uxor,
  et quae ruricolis semina tosta dedit,
et soror et Procne Tereusque duabus iniquus
  et quicumque suas per scelus auget opes.

Let the innocent approach—far, far from here be the impious brother and mother who hates her children, the one whose father seems to him too long-lived, or the other who calculates his mother's age. No room here for the brothers of Tantalus' family or Jason's wife, or she who gave burnt seed to the farmers, or Procne and her sister and Tereus so evil to both, or any whosoever increases his property through crime.

Although it opens with authentic religious language, the tone of this prayer becomes difficult to assess, given its inappropriate length and elaborate enumeration of Greek exemplars illustrating "familial *impietas,*" as Miller puts it; he further notes how Ovid both enlivens the drama of the scene and widens his exegesis by drawing on this mythological material (1991, 94–95). Beyond explicating the festival at hand, however, such allusions help join the *Fasti*'s disconnected narratives on a thematic level. This is especially true here of the reference to Philomela—pointedly called *soror* here—which, as Carole Newlands observes, "reinforces the link with Lara and anticipates the myth's interplay with the story of Lucretia" (1995, 162). But while tragic echoes are to be heard in this speech, it remains nonetheless a comic catalogue, an example of the *hilaritas* Valerius notes as a hallmark of the day: from a different perspective, this "prayer" returns to the complaints of the Feralia ghosts about family duty, albeit in the form of a burlesque. Within the intimate confines of family cult, however, even irreverent banter of this sort is permitted, since the laughter it provokes serves the festival's purpose by breaking the ice for any awkward or confrontational dialogue that might follow.

Less facetious in tone is the poet's handling of the cultic activity that follows the religious utterance (2.631–38):

dis generis date tura boni: Concordia fertur
  illa praecipue mitis adesse die;
et libate dapes, ut, grati pignus honoris,
  nutriat incinctos missa patella Lares.

iamque, ubi suadebit placidos nox umida somnos,
larga precaturi sumite vina manu,
et "bene vos, bene te, patriae pater, optime Caesar"
dicite; suffuso sint bona verba mero.

Offer incense to the family gods, good people, for Concordia is said to be especially kind on this day; and as a pledge of welcome duty, offer food to the Lares in their high-girt robes so they might eat from the plate offered to them. And now as dewy night will urge on pleasant dreams, lift wine generously to hand as you pray, saying, "Bless you all, and you, great Caesar, father of the country!" Let good words flow with the wine.

With the mention of Concordia, the goddess of harmony sustaining the heart—the *cor*—of family and state, whom Valerius also puts at this feast, we have moved from the tombs outside the city (the *suburbani rogi* of the Feralia, 550) to the intimate center of the household. It may seem inappropriate that, in the most private space of the home, at a time when everybody but relatives or in-laws was excluded (as Valerius specifies), Ovid's family should pay homage to the single most public figure in the entire Roman world. While it is true that after Actium libations were customarily offered to the *princeps* at public and private banquets (Dio Cass. 51.19.7, and Hor. *Carm.* 4.5.35–36), nonetheless it is jarring to find a toast here to the *pater patriae* where we expect one to the *paterfamilias.*[17] In some sense, this infringement foreshadows the irruption of Sextus Tarquinius into the *penetralia Collatini* (787), an offensive violation of the private sphere by a public figure.[18] But we must especially bear in mind that the title of *pater patriae* was bound up with Augustus' moral legislation, the aim of which was, in Ronald Syme's phrase (1939, 444), "to bring the family under the protection of the State." Horace had noted that if the *princeps* wished to be known as the Father of Cities, he must first *refrenare licentiam* ("put a brake on sexual license," *Carm.* 3.24.27–29). Toward this end, Augustus at length introduced the *leges Juliae* and *lex Papia Poppaea,* laws with far-reaching effects on family and marriage which, generally unpopular (Suet. *Aug.* 34.1, and Dio Cass. 56.1.2) and especially loathsome to the love poets (Prop. 2.7; Williams 1962), were in Tacitus' opinion an unprecedented transgression of individual privacy. *Altius penetrabant,* he writes memorably (*Ann.* 3.28.1), "These laws penetrated very deeply," a statement that takes on a virtually Orwellian cast when we remember how much official scrutiny of their personal lives Romans already expected (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 20.13.2–3).[19]

If the *pater patriae* represented Big Brother to Ovid, however, we find little trace of it in the concluding toast. Despite the satiric tone of the opening prayer, at this point the poet instead plays the part of panegyricist, carefully

17. See now the remarks of Littlewood (2001, 920–21).

18. One of *CP*'s anonymous readers notes that, although he is a prince, Sextus Tarquinius is admitted by Lucretia because *sanguine iunctus erat* (788). The Caristia prayer may well point to just such a criminal of familial *impietas.*

19. On Augustus' legislation, cf. Treggiari 1991, 60–80. On the motivations informing these laws, cf. Edwards 1993, 29–30, 34–62, des Bouvrie 1984, and Raditsa 1980, 330–34. In general, cf. Galinsky 1995, 128–30, with further bibliography.

conforming to Augustan ideology about morality and the family. Within the *Fasti* itself, the reference to the *pater patriae* recalls Ovid's earlier entry for the Nones of February (2.119–46), where the poet had celebrated the bestowing of this title upon Augustus in 2 B.C.E. by likening the *princeps* to Jupiter and Romulus. (The latter of these comparisons is longer and, because of its intentional humor, more controversial: Miller aptly observes that whatever irony there may be in the Nones passage "is here [at the Caristia], as it were, corrected in Ovid's version of a solemn ritual moment" [1991, 98]. More recently, Geraldine Herbert-Brown has supplied a credible nonsubversive interpretation of the Nones entry.)[20] But more directly concerning the Caristia toast is the briefer comparison with Jupiter which, also addressed to Augustus, precedes the comparison with Romulus (131–32):

> hoc tu per terras, quod in aethere Iuppiter alto,
> nomen habes: hominum tu pater, ille deum.
>
> You have on earth the title that Jupiter has in high heaven: you are the father of men and he of gods.

This exaltation of the *princeps,* fulsome as it appears, is undermined, according to Byron Harries, by the reference to Ganymede that rounds out the poet's description of the Nones (145–49): if the *pater deum* abuses his power to satisfy his own ignoble personal ends, then the *pater hominum* must be under suspicion as well (Harries 1989, 166–67; cf. Barchiesi 1997, 84). In the juxtaposition of Lara's suffering with the Caristia, a similar pairing of Jupiter and Augustus occurs on a somewhat wider scale. Unlike the Nones, however, a contrast rather than comparison is implied in the steady passage from Lara to Lares to *cari:* while Jupiter's immorality takes place against a host of family tensions, Augustus is saluted as such tensions are resolved. Just as the Lares, whose violent conception had been depicted only twenty lines earlier, are rehabilitated at the Caristia as the focus of domestic piety,[21] so the *pater patriae* presides over a ritually renewed family quite distinct from the dysfunctional domain under Jupiter's control.

The transformations that come about with the Caristia are numerous and multilayered: there is, to begin with, intrinsic to the festivals that Ovid is adapting, an advance from the gloomy Feralia to the family reunion. Likewise, within the text itself we have progressed from the tragic past of Lara's tale to a happy future of feasting and dreaming. On what might be called an intertextual level, too, we have a significant change in spirit (Miller 1991,

20. Herbert-Brown 1995, 43–63, with negative assessments of Wallace-Hadrill 1987, 228–29, and Hinds 1992, 113–53. Of the Romulus-Augustus passage, Hinds' caveat (1987, 25) is worth citing: "Ovid was a formal poet who wrote and recited publicly, under his own name, in a city where the emperor's word was law. If he was subversive in his writing (as I believe he was), how could he possibly proceed but by indirection and nuance? . . . Every passage ever written by Ovid about Augustus admits of a non-subversive reading: but that is not in itself a refutation of Ovidian subversion." Fantham (1983, 210) had more succinctly noted that "the irony is latent for those who wish to find it."

21. Scholars of religion will balk, rightly, at the facile association of the Lares Compitales, i.e., Augusti, mentioned earlier (615–16) with the Lares Familiares toasted at the Caristia (634). The distinction between the various Lares, however, is by no means clear-cut (cf. Orr 1978, 1563–69). Given the proximity of the references here, it seems evident that the poet wishes us to draw some connection between the two sets of Lares.

96). The night that Ovid evokes (635) is reworked from the opening of *Aeneid* 2, in which Aeneas weakly protests against Dido's request to recount his wanderings: *et iam nox umida caelo / praecipitat, suadentque cadentia sidera somnos* ("Already the dewy night rushes down through the sky, and the sinking stars urge on dreams," *Aen.* 2.8–9). In this passage, Vergil had signaled a shift in mood from the Bacchic *laetitia* of the Tyrian banquet (*Aen.* 1.734) to the *infandum dolorem* Aeneas is about to renew (*Aen.* 2.3). More to the point, however, is the general hush against which Aeneas' story unfolds: *conticuere omnes* ("Everybody became quiet"), Vergil famously writes (*Aen.* 2.1). Ovid could hardly have alluded to a more eminent literary scene of silence, combining as it does the speechlessness of the audience and the unspeakability of the tale. But, whereas the Vergilian feast had fallen silent with the night, the Caristia inverts this picture to come alive with speech, both banter and benediction.

A consideration of the cultic activity in Ovid's Caristia, however, draws out these inversions best, and brings us back to the old woman's rites with which we began: the material of the rite is of special interest here. The role of incense in this festival, for example, offered presumably at the hearth *dis generis* ("to the family gods," 631), is quite different from the *tura* that, hidden by the hag beneath the threshold, had marked her rites as marginal. Furthermore, the festival concludes with the association of wine and word, as *verba mero* at the line's end balances *dicite suffuso* at its beginning (638). The coupling of prayer with wine libation, customary in ancient religious practice (Burkert 1985, 71), takes on special significance in the immediate context of the poem. We recall that, in the ritual performed on the previous day, the hag had made magical use of wine to bind the tongues of the unfriendly (579); but here the liquor flows freely with words of blessing to signify the restoration of family relations under the *pater patriae*'s custody, a ritual redress of the old woman's spell.[22]

The rites to Tacita presented by Ovid occur in the text as an interlude between the important family festivals of February. In both a literal and figurative sense, our old woman stands at the threshold of this narrative about silence, speech, and the family. As a liminal figure, she serves several functions in the text: the poet employs the hag's rites as a simple segue from the Feralia to the Caristia, it is true, but her rites also present an inverse portrait of the themes of these midwinter holidays, often unsettling the progress of the poem. The story of Lara, for example, which follows as a purported

22. In addition, the *anus ebria,* whose rite is "undone" with the Caristia toast, finds a ritual counterpart in the *anus pota* of the Anna Perenna holiday (3.542). Ovid relates with relish how this drunken old woman led home an equally drunk old man during the earthy folk festival, a carnivalesque period of license when *ioci veteres obscenaque dicta canuntur* ("old jokes are told and ribald songs sung," 3.695). The aetiology explaining the generous freedom of speech on this occasion echoes themes found in Lara's tale. When approached by Mars Gradivus to help satisfy his lust for Minerva, the river goddess Anna Perenna fooled the god with a veil, and, as the poet ends the episode, *et iuvat hanc magno verba dedisse deo* ("It is pleasant [to recall how] she hoodwinked the great god," 3.696). Ovid's noteworthy idiomatic phrase for "hoodwink" here is *verba dare* (*OLD,* s.v. *verbum,* 6): in an inversion of the hag's binding spell, Anna "gives words" during the *anus'* carousal of March.

aetiology of the *dea muta,* shows her as a victim rather than master of silence. It is an episode shot through with broken trust among family members, and finishes with Lara's severe punishment and exile to Hades, "a place fit for the silent." If we stop reading here, as Riese's textual markers encourage us to do, however, we lose sight of the tensions in Ovid's treatment of these topics. It is true, as Feeney notes in his discussion of free speech in the *Fasti,* that Lara's tale "comes seventy lines before the larger story of rape and silence, the story of Lucretia" (1992, 12). But, just as a little earlier, Ovid had presented the normally silent dead as quite vociferous in their outraged response to familial impiety, so we must read further on to the Caristia to see how the poet gracefully resolves such complications with a few well-chosen words in honor of family and the Father of the Fatherland. Between the holidays that celebrate family comes the hag with her magical activity, which acts in the text both as a rebuke to impiety as well as a spur to beneficial dialogue, all of which the poet appears to acclaim. But, having noted this, we are aware that such infringements of free speech and family morality will arise again in the Lucretia "epyllion" with which *Fasti* 2 concludes. Let us not forget that the Caristia was established as an annual venue for discussion because ruptures between relatives were (and are) not unique events, but rather represented the normal course of events. Augustus, with all the political power of the Principate behind him, could not bring malicious gossip to an end; to do those things would require a real conjuror's trick.

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