

Livy's Sabine Women and the Ideal of *Concordia**

Robert Brown
Vassar College

The main narratives of the “Rape of the Sabines” have recently been studied by Gary Miles, who discusses common elements and variations in the versions of Cicero (*De Republica* 2.12-14), Livy (1.9-13), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Antiquitates Romanae* 2.30-47), Ovid (*Fasti* 3.167-258; cf. *Ars Amatoria* 1.101-34), and Plutarch (*Romulus* 14-20). Miles interprets the legend as an epitome of the practices and ideology of Roman marriage, seeing it as an exaggerated reflection of the stages whereby a bride was transferred from the authority of her father to that of her husband and from one family to another. The theft of the Sabine women, the resulting war, and the final reconciliation effected by the women themselves correspond to the initial separation of the bride from her home and family, the transferral of authority from her father to her husband, and her incorporation into the new family. From a political perspective, the story also acknowledges the important role of intermarriage between the Romans and other peoples in forming the alliances that facilitated the spread of the Roman community throughout Italy.

In the first part of this interesting study, Miles plays down the differences between the separate narratives in order to uncover their essential similarity, but in the second and third parts he addresses some of these differences with a view toward assessing the authors' individual responses to the ideology of marriage and gender relations embedded in the basic story. Focussing on the “liminal,” or transitional, stage of the story, he finds that Cicero, Dionysius, and Plutarch show little or no interest in the details of the Sabine women's initiation into their new status, thus taking it for granted and apparently finding it unproblematic, both at a narrative level and also by extension in contemporary society. Livy and Ovid, however, both evince strong, though opposed, reactions. Ovid consistently adopts an insensitive male perspective and effaces the individuality and role of the women to the point where they become

* I am very grateful to Rachel Kitzinger and the anonymous referees for their helpful criticisms and suggestions. I shall follow common usage in applying the epithet “Sabine” to all the abducted women, including those from the neighboring towns of Caenina, Crustumerium, and Antemnae as well as the Sabines. Note, however, that Livy scrupulously distinguishes between *raptae*, his term for the whole group, and *Sabinae*.

mere ciphers, important only as producers of children. Ovid, on Miles' interpretation, challenges the prevailing ideology by exposing marriage as an unequal relationship based on force (cf. Hemker). Livy, on the other hand, accepts the prevailing ideology, but by detailing the steps taken by Romulus and the other men to win over the women, he shows that the acquiescence of women cannot be taken for granted. In rationalizing the tradition, however, Livy introduces assumptions about female nature which "become problematic when they are integrated into a larger narrative" (188-89). Miles' analysis of this larger context, which includes the legend of Tarpeia's treachery, leads him to the conclusion that "even as it constructs images of men and women to fit the conventional character and function of Roman marriage, Livy's narrative exposes limitations inherent in the Roman practice of trying to base ideal social and political unions on a relationship of inequality between men and women" (189).

My own study concentrates on the narrative of Livy, arguably the richest and most coherent of those that survive. Its coherence is partly due to Livy's craft, but partly, I will argue, to his unique conception of the role of the Sabine women and his deep underlying conviction of the necessity for socio-political cooperation. Whereas Miles emphasizes the complexity and ambiguity of Livy's narrative, seeing in it an ultimately self-defeating attempt to gloss over the inequality of Roman marriage, I stress its consistency and the relative clarity of its meaning, as conveyed through its treatment of the Sabine women. Its meaning I interpret less in terms of the stance it takes towards Roman marriage customs supposedly epitomized in the basic legend than as an original and powerful expression of the ideal of *concordia*, embracing but transcending the ideology of marriage. I set out to demonstrate three main points: (I) that significantly more than the other authors, Livy emphasizes and develops the role of the Sabine women themselves vis-à-vis the male participants; (II) that his treatment of gender relations in this episode reflects and extends a Roman idea of marital *concordia*; (III) that the episode as a whole expresses his conception of *concordia* as not only a marital ideal but a paramount social and political one as well. Perhaps something may also be gleaned about Livy's methods and aims as a historian, and particularly his originality in the re-fashioning of literary tradition for inspirational ends.

I.

1. The Romans' Lack of Wives

Livy's account is grafted onto his description of Romulus' early attempts to boost the population of Rome (1.8.4-7). Narrative continuity resides in the

theme of Rome's expansion. Originally settled by the excess population of the Albans and Latins, together with herdsmen such as those among whom Romulus and Remus had spent their early life (1.6.3), the new city was growing at a faster rate than its people. Romulus therefore opened up a place of asylum for fugitives, which attracted a motley crowd of male immigrants from neighboring regions. This, says Livy, was the first real accession of strength in the city's progress towards greatness, and Romulus followed it up by tempering strength with counsel through the creation of the senate. Rome was now the military equal of its neighbors—meaning, presumably, that it could field an equal number of male citizen soldiers. But owing to the dearth of women, the incipient “greatness” of Rome, to which Livy has twice alluded (1.8.5, 6), was destined to last no longer than a single lifetime, there being neither expectation of offspring at home nor the right of intermarriage with neighboring peoples (1.9.1).

A parallelism exists between Romulus' creation of a refuge for male fugitives, which constitutes the first step towards the consolidation of Roman strength, and his project of establishing intermarriage with Rome's neighbors, whose aim is the importation of female citizens to ensure the survival and proliferation of the Roman people beyond a single generation. This parallelism is underlined by the insulting words of the neighbors, who inquire whether the Romans have opened up a place of refuge for women too, since that alone would provide them with appropriate wives (1.9.5). An awareness of this connection helps us to understand Livy's choice of motive for the plan of seeking intermarriage—namely, that there were now enough men but not enough women. I say “choice” because competing explanations were current, as we may see from Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Wiseman 445-46):

As regards the reason for the seizing of the virgins, some ascribe it to a scarcity of women, others to the seeking of a pretext for war; but those who give the most plausible account—and with them I agree—attribute it to the design of contracting an alliance with the neighboring cities, founded on affinity.
(*Ant. Rom.* 2.31.1, tr. E. Cary)¹

Dionysius' preference for the third reason accords with his earlier observation that “[i]nasmuch as many nations that were both numerous and brave in war dwelt round about Rome and none of them was friendly to the Romans, he [Romulus] desired to conciliate them by intermarriages, which, in the opinion of the ancients, was the surest method of cementing friendships” (*Ant. Rom.*

¹ Translations of Dionysius, Livy, and Plutarch are quoted, with minor alterations, from the Loeb Classical Library editions of these authors.

2.30.2). Plutarch repeats the second reason listed by Dionysius, with the further allegation that Romulus was fond of warfare and had been convinced by oracles of the future greatness of Rome (*Rom.* 14.1-2)—an explanation which he rejects, however. His own explanation differs from that of Dionysius in identifying the internal cohesion of the Roman populace as one of Romulus' concerns, but Plutarch also mentions that Romulus hoped to promote union and partnership with the Sabines.² Both Dionysius and Plutarch, therefore, favor a political explanation that illustrates the statesmanship of Romulus.

Neither Cicero's nor Ovid's version purports to be a full narrative for the historical record, but they help to place Livy's in clearer perspective. Cicero states vaguely that the purpose of Romulus' plan was "to strengthen the new state" and "safeguard the resources of his kingdom and people" (*Rep.* 2.12). However, he says nothing to suggest that Rome could not have survived without the theft, only that the seizure of the women made Rome stronger than it would have been otherwise. Neither of Ovid's descriptions explicitly states the purpose of the abduction, though both allude to the wifeless condition of the Romans.

In the *Ars Amatoria*, the allusion is neatly accomplished through the single word *viduos*:

primus sollicitos fecisti, Romule, ludos,
cum iuvit viduos rapta Sabina viros.

You were the first, Romulus, to disturb the games,
when the rape of the Sabine women gave pleasure to wifeless men.
(*Ars* 1.101-102)

But the verb *iuvit*, pointedly juxtaposed with *viduos*, hints that sexual pleasure was the chief incentive rather than the need or desire for children—a twist which suits the tone and attitude of the *Ars Amatoria*. Ovid goes on to describe the men ogling the women during the games and looking forward to their sexual conquest. The representation of the rape itself focuses on the appearance of the panicked women, who are carried off as "booty for the marriage couch" (*Ars* 1.125, *genialis praeda*), a phrase which confirms the marital purpose of the abduction but which again puts into the forefront the lustful anticipation of the Romans. In the *Fasti* version, Ovid is more explicit about the lack of wives but ignores its relevance to population growth:

² Cf. *Thes.* and *Rom.* 6.2-3, where Plutarch contrasts the lustful rapes of Theseus with the honorable rape of the Sabines, through which Romulus "intermixed and blended the two peoples with one another, and supplied his state with a flowing fountain of strength and good will for the time to come" (tr. B. Perrin).

iamque loco maius nomen Romanus habebat,
nec coniunx illi nec socer ullus erat.

And now the Roman had a name greater than the place,
and yet had neither wife nor father-in-law. (*Fast.* 3.187-88)

Moreover, as Ovid tells it (through the mouth of Mars), the actual theft of the Sabines seems as much motivated by Mars' resentment at seeing his son rejected by the snobbish neighbors as it is by the necessity of instituting intermarriage.

Livy, as we have seen, attributes Romulus' initiative to the lack of women pure and simple, which was one of the three reasons reported by Dionysius (σπάνιν γυναικῶν = *penuria mulierum*) and which also seems to have been the explanation favored by Gnaeus Gellius (2nd c. BCE).³ This involves a demotion of the political explanations favored by Dionysius and Plutarch, assuming of course that Livy was familiar with the range of possible motives indicated by Dionysius. Ovid is closer to Livy, not surprisingly since the *Fasti* version bears traces of Livian influence (Bömer 155), but he does not represent the situation as being so serious as Livy does. For Livy, Rome is threatened at its most basic level: without women, it will wither and die (1.9.1). Although the ambassadors dispatched by Romulus seek political alliance as well as intermarriage (*societatem conubiumque*), it is clear, from both Livy's introductory comment on the lack of children and the ambassadors' concluding argument (*proinde ne gravarentur homines cum hominibus sanguinem ac genus miscere*), that intermarriage is the dominant motive. *Conubium* was unthinkable without some sort of political cooperation; hence the link to *societas*. But Romulus seeks an alliance only because he needs women, and women can only be secured as part of an alliance, not because he needs alliance for the protection it affords. What is important is that Livy has made the political motive advanced by Dionysius and Plutarch subordinate to the biological (*pace* Miles 165).

This difference is significant. From the beginning, it places the spotlight on the women themselves rather than the political benefits which will accrue from establishing friendly relations. Rome's very survival depends on their acquisition. And although, as yet, no value is placed upon them beyond their

³ Gell. fr. 15 P, *Neria Martis, te obsecro, pacem dato, uti liceat nuptiis propriis et prosperis uti, quod de tui coniugis consilio contigit, uti nos itidem integras raperent, unde liberos sibi et suis, posteros patriae pararent* (apparently a prayer by Hersilia to the wife of Mars). An interesting feature of this fragment is that the idea of abduction is attributed to Mars instead of Romulus; cf. Ov. *Fast.* 3.197-98.

breeding capacity, this will change as the story unfolds. Furthermore, Livy declines an opportunity to praise the political vision of Romulus. Of the three rival explanations for the abduction listed by Dionysius, one, the military, shows Romulus in a bad light and is rejected by all authors. Another, the political, which is favored by Dionysius and Plutarch, is highly flattering to him; Cicero too praises the farsightedness of Romulus, despite some distaste for the boorishness of the plan (*Rep.* 2.12). The third, the scarcity of women, falls somewhere in between and is susceptible of various colorings. Ovid spoofs it. Livy puts noble sentiments into the mouths of the ambassadors but is fairly neutral towards Romulus, who sends the embassy “on the advice of the senate” (1.9.2)—admirably, from a Republican standpoint, but without adding much luster to his own image. I will suggest later that Livy deemphasizes Romulus’ vision at this point, particularly the aim of making alliances, in order for the political advantages of intermarriage to emerge gradually as a result of the efforts of the captured women themselves to steer their menfolk towards peace and partnership.

2. The Seizure of the Sabine Women

Livy’s account of the rape itself stands out for its description of the efforts made by Romulus and the Romans to appease the abducted women. As Miles observes, the versions of Cicero, Dionysius, and Plutarch “are characterized by an essential disinterest in the process by which the Sabine women are initiated into their roles as Roman *matronae* and by a tacit assumption that there is nothing problematic about their initiation” (173). Cicero’s summary is too brief, perhaps, to expect such details, but this is not the case with the others. Dionysius (*Ant. Rom.* 2.30.4-6) relates that Romulus ordered the young men to take home their brides without violating their chastity. Next day, he assures the women that they have been seized for the purpose of marriage not violation, claiming marriage by abduction to be an ancient Greek custom and the one most honorable for women(!). Finally, after urging them to love their husbands, he unites the couples, using the marital customs of the women’s own peoples (we recall that they are not just Sabines, but women of Caenina, Crustumerium, and Antemnae). For Plutarch, the kind treatment of the women is part of Romulus’ plan to establish friendly ties with the Sabines (*Rom.* 14.2), but he does not describe Romulus’ interaction with the women, only remarking that his “strongest defense” for the abduction was that, with one exception, only virgins were abducted, since the aim was not violation but marriage and unification of the two peoples (*Rom.* 14.6). The word “defense” (ἀπολογία) shows Plutarch, like Dionysius, to be more interested in the justification of the

abduction than the conciliation of the women. The argument ascribed to Romulus, with its legalistic distinction and appeal to precedent, is ill adapted to assuage the women's fear and grief. Even the concession of using the women's native marriage customs seems a charade.

By contrast, Livy devotes almost as much space to the conciliation of the women as to their abduction. The artistry of the passage is also notable: for example, the elaborate and contrasting styles of the pleas made by Romulus and his men, and the framing device of referring to the emotions of the victims before and after the Romans' overtures. (After their daughters' seizure, the parents fly in fear, sorrow, and righteous anger, and the girls "were no more hopeful of their plight, nor less indignant" [1.9.14, *nec raptis aut spes de se melior aut indignatio est minor*]. After the pleas of the Romans, the minds of the girls were softened [1.10.1, *iam admodum mitigati animi raptis erant*] but the anger of their parents persisted, causing them to dress in mourning and demand retribution. The second comment echoes the first and reverses the order of reference to parents and girls in a chiasmic pattern.)⁴ Such amplification and embroidery bespeak the importance for Livy of this "liminal" phase in the story.

Comparison with Dionysius of Halicarnassus suggests that Romulus traditionally played a conciliatory role, but whereas Dionysius' Romulus attempts above all to justify and legitimize the abduction, Livy's concentrates on the future. He does indeed blame the arrogance of the girls' parents. But his observation that "a sense of injury [*iniuria*] has often given place to affection" (1.9.15) acknowledges the possibility of wrongdoing on the Roman side.⁵ Nor does he attempt to refute the parents' charge of sacrilege (1.9.13). Implicitly conceding the moral questionability of what has transpired and sensitive to the women's resentment and their yearning for home, he sees that the situation calls for healing, not self-justification. To win their acquiescence, he stresses the positive advantages of marriage rather than taking the negative approach followed by Dionysius and Plutarch of contrasting marriage with rape—that is, of defining what it is in terms of what it is not. These advantages include a share in the windfalls of fortune, the privileges of citizenship, and above all the joy of children. Since it was precisely the need for children which prompted the abduction, Romulus is disingenuous in presenting this as the chief benefit of marriage. However, the thought that there is "nothing dearer [than children] to

⁴ *parentes virginum . . . raptis* (1.9.13-14): *raptis . . . raptarum parentes* (1.10.1). Livy's artistry is obscured by the paragraphing of modern editions.

⁵ The word *iniuria* concurs with Livy's own judgment: 1.13.1, *tum Sabinae mulieres, quarum ex iniuria bellum ortum erat . . .*; cf. 1.10.2.

the human race" appeals shrewdly to the women's maternal instincts and to the common bond of humanity that crosses ethnic lines (cf. 1.9.4).

The pleas of the men belong to a different order of persuasion. Romulus, as sincere as he is, makes an authoritarian impression by the way that he instructs (1.9.14, *docebat*) and exhorts (1.9.15, *mollirent, darent*) the women. His arguments too have a formal character which is enhanced by rhetorical devices of crescendo (*societate fortunarum . . . civitatisque . . . et . . . liberum*), chiasitic antithesis (*quibus fors corpora dedisset, darent animos*), and alliteration (e.g., *parentium . . . patriaeque*). To these is added the weight of literary tradition in the form of the echoes of Homer and Greek tragedy noted by Ogilvie (70), of which the most obvious is the idea of the husband's compensating for the wife's loss of father and homeland, as Hector did for Andromache. Livy may have sensed the human inadequacy of grandiose words in such circumstances. At any rate, the informality and intimacy of the Roman men represents a quite different approach. Romulus, the orator, appeals to the mind, the men to the heart: "His arguments were seconded by the wooing of the men, who excused their act on the score of passion and love, the most moving of all pleas to a woman's heart" (1.9.16, *accedebant blanditiae virorum, factum purgantium cupiditate atque amore, quae maxime ad muliebre ingenium efficaces preces sunt*). The verb *purgo* and the resort to *preces* suggest the men's consciousness of the injustice they have done and their anxiousness to set things right. Their use of *blanditiae*, moreover, places them in a somewhat submissive position that contrasts with the posture of Romulus. The word denotes a coaxing form of persuasion based not so much on the force of ideas as the exploitation of a sentimental attachment; used between men and women it often has an erotic connotation. Through cajolery such as this, women and children in Livy achieve their ends by playing upon sexual attraction or familial affection.⁶ The attribution of *blanditiae* to the Roman men therefore involves a kind of role reversal, which casts the men in a supplicatory position normally occupied by their social inferiors. (This reversal is reminiscent of the servile posture of the elegiac poet beseeching the favors of his hard mistress—Ovid, for example, frequently speaks of his own *blanditiae*—which raises the possibility that Livy is playing off against contemporary literary attitudes.)

Miles rightly questions the sincerity of the men's claim. It is a pretence which the narrative itself unmasks, for most of the women are said to have

⁶ Miles 180-81. An example of the former is Sophonisba (29.23.7; 30.7.8, 12.17) and of the latter, the young Hannibal (21.1.4).

been taken by whomever they chanced to encounter (1.9.11); only a few, like the woman destined for Thalassius, were selected in advance. Romulus too has alluded to the play of chance (1.9.15). Compared with Ovid or even Dionysius, Livy seems to eschew the topic of male desire. It is hinted at in the passage about Thalassius but only comes to the surface in the men's dubious claim to have been motivated by *cupiditas* and *amor*. Paradoxically, therefore, their claim confirms the irrelevance of sexual desire to Livy's interpretation. His sanitization of the legend fits with the pragmatic, reproductive motive to which he ascribes the abduction and with Roman decorum, which frowned upon a man's private desires influencing his public actions.

To the extent that the men's profession of desire is false, they retain control of the situation, placing themselves in an inferior position only as a tactical maneuver. From this perspective, Livy's comment about "female temperament" (*muliebre ingenium*) underscores the male slant of the narrative by invoking a stereotypical idea about the vulnerability of women to emotional manipulation. On the other hand, their distinctly female nature calls for recognition and compromise on the part of the men. The men's recourse to *blanditiae* and *preces* involves, as we have seen, an attenuation of masculinity and dignity. Whether or not they really mean what they say, the psychological reality of the situation demands that what they say be said and in the way that they say it, and this represents a small "concession" (thus Miles) to the women's feelings. That it is precisely this concession which tips the balance is implied by the way in which Livy's comment on the susceptibility of the *muliebre ingenium* is followed by the statement that the *animi* of the kidnapped women were now somewhat mollified (1.10.1). Here we may recall as a contrast the entirely unreasonable rejection of Romulus' initial overtures by the girls' men-folk, a rejection which led directly to the theft of the women. The women's willingness to be won over in a situation where they have a much better reason to resent the Romans is a testament to their flexible and forgiving nature; perhaps, too, a sign of their need to be cherished as individuals.⁷

Livy's reference to the men's *blanditiae* and the women's *muliebre ingenium* reveals a self-consciousness about gender characteristics and roles that is unique to his version, and therein lies much of its originality. In the guise of

⁷ Miles argues that "the Romans' recourse to *blanditiae*. . . implies a particular perception of female nature (its characterization by passion rather than by reason)" (181); he speaks similarly of the Romans' appeal "to the *cupiditas* and *amor* of their individual brides" (182) and of the women's "susceptibility to *cupiditas* and *amor*" (184). However, it is not the women's but the men's passion—or feigned passion—which forms the basis of their plea. There is certainly an implication that women are particularly responsive to demonstrations of affection, but this does not justify such a sweeping and pejorative inference.

a reconstruction of actual events and individuals, he has fashioned a paradigm of male and female nature in conflict and complementarity. I have tried to substantiate two main points. First, that Livy acknowledges the necessity for the men to appeal to the women in terms that have a special force to them. Second, that his generalization about “the female temperament” encourages the reader to think of the Sabine legend as an illustration of the interaction between men and women, a playing out, as it were, of their essential differences. Putting these two points together, we are able to appreciate the subtlety of Livy, who by ascribing to the men the use of *blanditiae* blurs the clear-cut distinctions between male and female, powerful and weak, which appear to be operative in the narrative hitherto. Yet at the very moment that he complicates the issue of gender, Livy also insists on its relevance and importance with his authorial comment on the *muliebre ingenium*. We will encounter a similar complication at the climax of the story (1.13.1), where a reference to “female timidity” (*muliebris pavor*) sits within a depiction of the women’s physical courage in entering the male territory of battle. Men and women in each case bridge the gulf between them by extending themselves beyond their normal limits and making themselves vulnerable.

3. Hersilia

Hersilia, the wife of Romulus in Livy’s account, was herself one of the kidnapped Sabines. So securely was she embedded in the tradition that Livy takes this for granted, but her exact status was the subject of disagreement. According to Plutarch, she was the only previously married woman to be seized, and this by mistake (*Rom.* 14.6); she then became the wife of Hostilius or Romulus. Dionysius knows of the story that she was seized by mistake but prefers the version that she went with the Romans of her own free will, having chosen to remain with her only daughter (*Ant. Rom.* 2.45.2). He does not say whether she subsequently married a Roman. Livy omits these complications, which would only impede his fast-paced narrative. It is interesting, however, that of the Greek sources, only Plutarch mentions a tradition that she married Romulus. Plutarch attributes this to Zenodotus of Troezen along with the observation that it is contradicted by many authors.⁸ Livy appears to have accepted a minority version which reflects a secondary addition to the legend, for, as Ogilvie notes, Hersilia was remembered chiefly as the woman who mediated between the Romans and Sabines, not as the wife of Romulus or

⁸ Cf. *Thes. and Rom.* 6.2, where Plutarch qualifies his identification of Hersilia as Romulus’ wife with a parenthetical “as they say.”

Hostilius.⁹ Livy has removed her from the end or the beginning of the story, where she appears in Dionysius and Plutarch respectively, and transferred her, as the wife of Romulus, to an intermediate stage. The authority of Livy's version was decisive in determining her status as wife of Romulus in the later Roman tradition (e.g., Ov. *Fast.* 3.206 [the *nurus* of Mars], *Met.* 14.830; Sil. 13.812; Serv. *Aen.* 8.638).

Making Hersilia the wife of Romulus lends dramatic interest to the narrative. More importantly, the placing of Hersilia at an intermediate stage permits Livy to prepare for the climax of the second female intervention, which he represents as a spontaneous intervention by *all* the women. Only Livy attributes the intermediate reconciliation to the initiative of Hersilia, which is highly significant. The fullest account is that of Dionysius (*Ant. Rom.* 2.35), who reverses the honors completely by attributing the plan to Romulus and by having him publicize it in a setting that reinforces the dependency of the women. According to Dionysius, Romulus first placed his proposal before the senate and then summoned the women:

And when they had assembled, lamenting, throwing themselves at his feet and bewailing the calamities of their native cities, he commanded them to cease their lamentations and be silent, then spoke to them as follows: "Your fathers and brothers and your entire cities deserve to suffer every severity for having preferred to our friendship a war that was neither necessary nor honorable. We, however, have resolved for many reasons to treat them with moderation; *etc.*

(*Ant. Rom.* 2.35.2-3, tr. E. Cary)

Romulus ends by commanding the women to redouble their love for the husbands to whom their fathers and brothers owe their preservation. The women burst into tears of gratitude and joy.

In Dionysius this episode follows the description of Romulus' triumphal procession and his dedication of the *spolia opima*, and it serves to display the statesmanlike and humanitarian qualities which complement his military prowess. He is a towering figure, who thoroughly dominates the senate and the women brought before him. Reduced to abject displays of grief or joy, they provide little more than a backdrop for his magnanimity. Plutarch's version is similar (*Rom.* 16.4). After the battle, he says, Romulus did no harm to the defeated but ordered them to tear down their dwellings and follow him to Rome, where they would become citizens.

⁹ Ogilvie 73; cf., e.g., Gell. fr. 15 P (n. 3 above), Ov. *Fast.* 3.206, Plut. *Rom.* 19.5. For more on Hersilia, see Wiseman 448-52.

The contrast with Livy is striking. In his version the idea of sparing the defeated peoples comes from the women, not Romulus. In accordance with proper decorum they direct their pleas to Hersilia, who acts as their patroness in putting the request before Romulus. Whereas the Romulus of Dionysius and Plutarch has already made the transition from warfare to politics, Livy's Romulus is still "exulting in the double victory" (1.11.2) when approached by Hersilia. Here we may detect psychological as well as social realism, in the hint that she chooses a propitious moment to ask her husband for a favor. But the main point to emphasize is that Romulus is still, as it were, in a warlike frame of mind, savoring his victory rather than thinking of a political settlement. He accedes readily to Hersilia's request, as one might expect from the man who created an asylum for all-comers and sympathized with the abducted maidens, but the fact remains that Livy has chosen to make Romulus the recipient of advice offered by his wife rather than the independent author of a bold new policy.

Livy's version allows the sparing of the parents to arise from a realistic cause: the appeal of the daughters, mediated through their spokeswoman. But more significantly, it transfers the vision of the proposal from Romulus to Hersilia, who argues not just for mercy but for the incorporation of the defeated parents into the state, which, she says, will heal the breach by promoting harmony (1.11.2, *ita rem coalescere concordia posse*). It is well known that the extension of citizen rights, especially *commercium*, *conubium*, and *migratio* (the right to acquire citizenship in a new state by change of residence), played a crucial role in the Roman assimilation of Italy (e.g., Sherwin-White 32-37, 108-16). As Plutarch says with reference to the present occasion: "Now this, more than anything else, was what gave increase to Rome: she always united and incorporated with herself those whom she conquered" (*Rom.* 16.5, tr. B. Perrin). But Plutarch gives the credit for this farsighted policy to Romulus. Livy attributes it to a woman, and this is a remarkable fact. It is equally significant that Hersilia is the first person in Livy's history to articulate the concept of *concordia*—harmony among the diverse classes and interests of the citizenry—which is one of Livy's dearest political ideals. To this we shall return in the concluding part of this article.

Unless we assume that Livy is following his lost source(s), he has introduced an intervention by Hersilia which is either absent from or contradicted by the other main versions. Livy's innovation, for such I believe it to be, may help to explain why he singles out the scarcity of women—*penuria mulierum*—as the reason for the seizure of the Sabines. Dionysius and Plutarch differ from Livy, as we have seen, in attributing to Romulus the political aim of alliance. I

suggest that Livy wished to reserve for *Hersilia* the credit for initiating a policy of reconciliation with Rome's neighbors—not in order to slight Romulus, but to enhance the role of the women, who represent for Livy the spirit of forgiveness and harmony. Reading between the lines, we sense that *Hersilia's* insight arises from the success of her own marriage and that of the other Sabines, in which we may infer that a sense of injury has given way to affection, true to the prediction of Romulus (1.9.15). Romulus' promise of partnership (*societas*) and the men's affirmation of love have mollified the women, who in turn have given their minds as well as their bodies to their husbands, as he requested. Here, for Livy, are the makings of *concordia*, the spirit of mutual good will and cooperation—literally a concurrence of hearts—which transcends the functional notion of *societas*. And since the establishment of marital concord depended above all else on the acquiescence of the aggrieved women, so it is fitting that it should now be *Hersilia*, in the role of *coniunx* (1.11.2)—a word itself signifying union—who promotes the idea of political harmony; her valuable suggestion is, in fact, the fruit of the assiduous cultivation of the women's good will by Romulus and the Roman men. Perpetuating this spirit of give-and-take, Romulus immediately accepts the wisdom of *Hersilia's* suggestion and acts upon it through reciprocal exchanges of population. Roman colonies are sent to the defeated cities. Simultaneously, substantial numbers migrate to Rome, especially the women's parents and kinsmen. The single city of Rome grows into a state encompassing three others and the crucial process of imperial assimilation is under way.

4. Tarpeia

The seriousness of the war against the Sabines is in large part attributable to the treachery of Tarpeia, who admits king Tatius and his troops into the Capitol. Tarpeia, a virgin, is not one of the abducted women, nor has enough time elapsed for her to be a child of theirs; her mother must have been one of the original Latin settlers. Although she is not a Sabine, we cannot fail nevertheless in considering Livy's overall portrayal of the Sabine women to take account of the presence, embedded within the narrative, of a story which seems discreditable to women.

Neither Cicero nor Ovid mentions Tarpeia in recounting the rape of the Sabines; she is irrelevant to their purposes. But her connection to the Sabine legend was long established in tradition, even if the details varied much from author to author (as Livy indicates). Ogilvie (74) divides the variants into two classes: those which, like Livy, identify Tarpeia's desire for gold as the motive for her betrayal; and those, of which the best known is a poem by Propertius (4.4), that say she was in love with the opposing general. Yet another version,

ascribed to Piso, held that her intention was to deprive the Sabines of their weapons. Livy mentions this interpretation and to some extent leaves the matter open (note the resumptive *tamen* at 1.12.1: "however that may be"), but obviously favors the older tradition that Tarpeia was a traitress, not a heroine, and that her motive was material, not romantic. As for the existence of the famous pact concerning "what the Sabines had on their left arms," Livy is skeptical (1.11.8, *additur fabula . . .*).¹⁰

If we turn to Dionysius, we find, in contrast to what Ogilvie (76) accurately describes as Livy's "bald and brief" account, a lengthy discussion occupying several pages (*Ant. Rom.* 2.38-40). Dionysius weighs the versions of Fabius Pictor and Cincius (which roughly correspond to Livy's) against that of Piso, and though he stops short of a definitive judgment, shows a preference for Piso's patriotic explanation. Plutarch's version is also lengthier than Livy's but follows the Livian tradition that ascribed Tarpeia's action to greed (*Rom.* 17.2-5). The murder of Tarpeia by Tatius is interpreted by Plutarch as a moral lesson about treachery, which corresponds to the second of two possible motives suggested by Livy (the other being the Sabines' desire that the Capitol might seem to have been taken by force). Like Dionysius, Plutarch discusses variants, but not the same ones. He disdainfully rejects Antigonos' idea that Tarpeia was actually the daughter of Tatius and Simylus' supposition that it was the Gauls and not the Sabines whom she let in, having fallen in love with their king. As for Piso's belief that she acted from a patriotic motive, Plutarch is silent.

One is struck by the multitude of variations, major and minor. The failure of any single version to attain undisputed preeminence may attest to the discomfort felt by the Romans—and Greeks—in coping with the topic of betrayal, especially betrayal by a woman. The myth revolves around issues of communal and personal loyalty, its different versions variously portraying Tarpeia and the Sabines as guilty or innocent. For Livy, both are at fault, Tarpeia for her betrayal of family (her father is the commander of the citadel), of gods (she was performing the functions of a priestess—in some versions, a Vestal Virgin¹¹—at the time of her first contact with the enemy), and, of course, of country. But he also emphasizes the active role of Tatius in approaching and bribing Tarpeia. This is "subterfuge" (*dolus*), not an unexpected stroke of good fortune as Dionysius represents it (*Ant. Rom.* 2.38.2); nor does Tarpeia conceive a passion for the Sabines' golden bracelets independently, as

¹⁰ "*Fabula* for Livy means a story to which he attaches little belief," Ogilvie 675.

¹¹ Livy himself implies this by his reference to Tarpeia's drawing of water for cult purposes, a duty of the Vestals (Ogilvie 75).

we read in Dionysius (citing Fabius Pictor and Cincius), and in Plutarch (*Rom.* 17.2). When Livy's Romulus says that "the Sabines already possess the citadel, having purchased it with a crime" (1.12.4), does he mean the crime of bribery or betrayal, or both? The phrase is ambiguous. I suspect that Livy is hinting at a comparison between the Sabine bribery of Tarpeia and the Roman rape of the Sabines. Both are cases of deception (1.9.6, *dissimulans*, 1.9.13, *decepti*, 1.11.6, *dolus*). Both occur in a religious context (the Consualia and the ritual fetching of water by Tarpeia). Both involve the imposition of male control upon young virgins. Both evoke bitter condemnation from the aggrieved male parties (1.9.13, 1.12.4). The careful planning of Romulus is matched by that of the Sabines, who in their attack on Rome did nothing "out of anger or greed" (1.11.5). There is a certain poetic justice in the method of the Sabines' attempted vengeance, but to Romulus—and, one feels, Livy—it is nonetheless a *scelus*, differing from the *iniuria* of the women's seizure, which was an act of last resort necessitated by the unreasonableness of their parents.

It therefore seems to me that for Livy the episode is an illustration of Sabine *dolus* as much as it is of Tarpeia's treachery. As an embodiment of internal disloyalty, Tarpeia nevertheless throws into sharper relief the extraordinary loyalty displayed by the Sabine women at the climax of the battle in the forum. Outsiders who have become Romans by force, they show a loyalty toward their husbands equal to that which they feel toward their parents and powerful enough to effect the union of the two peoples. Tarpeia is an antitype (Kampen 455). While the Sabine women root their identity in the family and maintain their familial loyalties under extreme pressure, Tarpeia abandons hers at the first opportunity, including the filial loyalty owed to her father. Tarpeia and the Sabines are the best and worst that men can imagine about women, whom they perceive as having a pliable nature that can be influenced for good or ill. Excluded from the rewards of political office and military glory and denied financial and marital self-determination, women seem to the men who monopolize these advantages ripe for temptation, deception, and betrayal. And the female who from this point of view seems especially vulnerable to evil influence is the unattached virgin, like Tarpeia, who lacks the stabilizing role of wife and mother.¹² I repeat, however, that Livy chooses not to exploit the

¹² For more on Tarpeia, see Miles 183-85, 189. I basically agree with his interpretation of the story's moral, "that the qualities that make women malleable to men's purposes also make them unreliable members of community" (184); similarly, "Tarpeia (whether guilty of treachery or innocent) embodies possibilities that are inherent in the nature ascribed to women" (189). But I find his argument strained in its insistence upon a significant connection between the Romans' wooing of the Sabine women and Tatius' bribery of Tarpeia (if there is a connection to be made, I think it is rather with the rape of the Sabines, as I argue above).

opportunity for moralizing on the subject of female conduct. It is instructive to compare his account with artistic representations of Tarpeia on Republican coins and the frieze of the Basilica Aemilia, where she is shown in the act of being crushed by the Sabines' shields (Kampen *passim*; Evans 119-34). There is a brutal directness and clarity to these images which is missing in Livy, whose willingness to entertain multiple explanations softens the force of the explanation he in fact prefers.

5. The Women's Intervention in Battle

All versions of the story agree that the women are responsible for ending hostilities between the Romans and Sabines, but they differ in their depiction of the intervention. Cicero, whose sketchy account belongs to an idealistic summary of the achievements of Romulus, emphasizes the role of Romulus himself, not the women, who are relegated to a participial appendage: "When the Sabines, for this reason, made war on the Romans, and the contest of battle was fluctuating and doubtful, Romulus made a treaty with Titus Tatius, the Sabine king, the abducted women themselves begging that this be done" (*Rep.* 2.13); a little later he mentions that Romulus named the *curiae* after the abducted women, "who had begged for peace and a treaty" (*Rep.* 2.14), again parenthetically. As Cicero tells it, the doubtful outcome of the war seems already to have predisposed Romulus to make a treaty, and the petition of the women merely provides the occasion for doing so. It has, as it were, a face-saving function. By being channeled through Romulus in the form of a petition, much like the petition of Hersilia in Livy, it also operates within the normal political and social parameters, which excluded women from the process of public decision-making.

The version of Dionysius (*Ant. Rom.* 2.45-46) places the intervention of the women not at the height of battle but during a respite of several days in which both sides wrestle with the question of how to break the military impasse. During these deliberations, the Sabine women meet together and accept the suggestion of Hersilia (not in Dionysius the wife of Romulus) that they should seize the initiative in seeking a diplomatic solution. They put their proposal before the senate, which passes a decree that the women be permitted to go as ambassadors to the camp of the Sabines. Hersilia there delivers a long speech in which she begs the Sabines to grant peace to the wives petitioning on behalf of their husbands. Consulting with his council, Tatius decides to make peace and at a subsequent meeting the two kings agree on the terms.

Dramatic considerations aside, Dionysius and Livy differ considerably in their conceptions of the part played by the women. Although Dionysius gives them great credit, he restricts their role in ways which probably reflect the

preponderant tradition. To begin with, the originality of the women's initiative lies for Dionysius not in the proposal for peace *per se* but in the decision to proffer it themselves, independently of the men. The idea of reaching an accommodation is not original, because, as Dionysius relates, the men on both sides have been considering it for several days. The advantage of having the women make the proposal themselves is that it allows the two kings to negotiate on equal terms, without either of them confessing weakness through a unilateral approach. Livy, however, says nothing about previous deliberations and sets the women's intervention at a point when the men are renewing battle—indeed, at a moment when the Romans look likely to win.

Thus the peace initiative is entirely the women's in conception—and execution. For in Dionysius the implementation of the women's plan depends upon its approval by Romulus and the senate (*Ant. Rom.* 2.45.3). Livy, however, describes a spontaneous and direct intervention. His women operate contrary to the social and political norms, and to military norms as well, since they must enter the male arena of the battlefield. Which raises a third difference between Dionysius and Livy, since Dionysius has the women travel to the camp of the Sabines during a respite from battle. They do not undergo the same risk as Livy's women, who make their way through flying weapons into the most dangerous part of the battlefield. In representing the women as ambassadors, Dionysius accepts a tradition extending back at least to Gnaeus Gellius (fr. 15) and which may lie behind Cicero's brief account of the women's petition to Romulus.

Plutarch's version (*Rom.* 19) is similar to Livy's in the above respects, perhaps owing to direct influence, perhaps to the influence of a common source such as Fabius Pictor. The intervention of the women is spontaneous and occurs as the two sides are renewing the battle in the forum. In Livy, however, the battle has already been resumed, so that the women risk life and limb, whereas in Plutarch the two sides are still regrouping. Livy's version thus accentuates the distress and courage of the women. Unwarlike and timid by nature, they are nevertheless driven by anguish and horror to enter the dangerous zone of battle, their daring charge (*ausae, impetu facto*) recalling the *audacia* of the Roman heroes Hostilius (1.12.2) and Romulus (1.12.9): "Then the Sabine women . . . with loosened hair and torn garments, their woman's timidity lost in a sense of their misfortune [*victo malis muliebri pavore*], dared to go amongst the flying missiles . . ." (1.13.1). Fear of battle is unbecoming for a man, who might be insulted as a "woman" for cowardice, but the ascription of fear to women who are conventionally regarded as physically and temperamentally averse to warfare is not a criticism but a sign

of their sexual difference. The point of Livy's phrase is not to depreciate the women but to accentuate their extraordinary courage in entering the male arena of battle against their nature—or to put it another way, their courage in suppressing one aspect of their nature in order to give expression to other even more fundamental aspects, such as their peacefulness and familial loyalty. The apparent conventionality of the reference to *muliebris pavor* is belied by its context, since the women's fear is part and parcel with the abhorrence of war that gives them the strength to intervene. As with the earlier reference to *muliebre ingenium* (1.9.16), Livy insists on the relevance of gender to the dynamics of the action but compels a readjustment of conventional assumptions.

A further difference between Livy and Plutarch lies in the words attributed to the women. Here too there are points of similarity, such as the stress upon their mutual ties with both sides, ties that have been cemented by the birth of children. But the bias and bitterness of Plutarch's women strikes a discordant note:

Wherein, pray [they said], have we done you wrong or harm, that we must suffer in the past, and must still suffer now, such cruel evils? We were violently and lawlessly ravished away by those to whom we now belong, but though thus ravished, we were neglected by our brethren and fathers and kinsmen until time had united us by the strongest ties with those whom we had most hated, and made us now fear for those who had treated us with violence and lawlessness, when they go to battle, and mourn for them when they are slain. For you did not come to avenge us upon our ravishers while we were still maidens, but now you would tear wives from their husbands and mothers from their children, and the help with which you would now help us, wretched women that we are, is more pitiful than your former neglect and abandonment of us. Such is the love which we have received from them, such the compassion shown to us by you! Even if you were fighting on other grounds, it would be right that you should cease for our sakes, now that you have become fathers-in-law and grandsires and have family ties among your enemies. If, however, the war is on our behalf, carry us away with your sons-in-law and their children, and so restore to us our fathers and kindred, but do not rob us of our children and husbands. Let us not, we beseech you, become prisoners of war again. (Rom. 19.2-5, tr. B. Perrin)

Time and the birth of children have inured them to their situation, but they remain angrily obsessed with the memory of their abduction, still characterized by them as a brutal wrongdoing that made them "prisoners of war" and forced them into marriage with those they most hated. Even stronger is their resentment towards the Sabines for having left them to their fate when they were first seized and for attempting to restore them only after they have developed

binding ties to their new home. Their anger erupts in double irony: "Such is the love which we have received from them, such the compassion shown to us by you!" The first clause alludes to their violent abduction, the second to the ill-timed rescue attempt of the Sabines. By meting out blame to both sides the women establish themselves as victims twice over, in order to arouse the pity and shame of the men. What begins as an address to both sides soon turns, however, into a harangue against the Sabines. This seems to reveal a pro-Roman bias in Plutarch or his source(s). (We may recall that in the tradition represented by Dionysius, the women's pleas are addressed exclusively to the Sabines.)

Livy's women are by contrast the embodiment of selflessness and mediation. Far from blaming either side, they are even willing to represent themselves as the cause of the war and absorb the men's anger (1.13.3). Making no mention of their own sufferings, they base their appeal upon the familial relationships embracing both sides. Plutarch's women also call attention to these, but what worries them most is not the familial bloodshed itself but the prospect of being parted from their husbands and children. In Livy the women are motivated by a profound sense of the ties created by their marriage, a marriage which they now explicitly acknowledge as such (*si adfinitatis inter vos, si conubii piget* . . .) in an act of self-definition that marks the last stage of their psychological journey from despair to wholehearted acceptance of their marriage and new citizenship. They grasp, moreover, what the men have not yet grasped, that marriage entails a relationship not only between them and their husbands but between their husbands and fathers, too.

Their consciousness of this kinship and abhorrence at its violation is hammered home with a series of five verbal antitheses expressing the women's dual relationship to the men on each side: fathers vs. husbands (*hinc patres, hinc viros*); father-in-law vs. son-in-law (*soceri generique*); grandchildren vs. children (*nepotum illi, hi liberum progeniem*); husbands vs. parents (*viris ac parentibus*); widows vs. orphans (*viduae aut orbae*).¹³ The dense style of the passage has been criticized as impersonal (Collart, Wankenne), but it suits the gravity of the occasion and succinctly encapsulates the women's dilemma. The sequence of antitheses is not just for rhetorical effect but conforms verbally to the physical and familial centrality of the women, situated as they are in the middle of the battlefield between fathers and husbands to whom they feel a dual obligation. Rhetoric lines up with physical situation and personal relationship

¹³ The pattern returns for a sixth time at 1.13.6, *pax cariores Sabinas viris ac parentibus . . . fecit*. A similar series of oppositions occurs in Cassius Dio's report of the women's speech (1, fr. 5.5-7 [Loeb Classical Library edition]), which seems to show Livian influence.

in a powerful and multifaceted expression of the women's conflicting loyalties and their function as intermediaries (cf. Collart 253). Their sense of themselves as the link between two peoples and the tact with which they perform their mediation distinguish them radically from the women of Dionysius and Plutarch. Ovid affords an even sharper contrast. What interests him is the irony of the situation, as for example when Hersilia puts before the women the choice of which side to pray for: "The question is, whether you prefer to be widows or orphans" (*Fast.* 3.210). Her words echo the desperation of the women in Livy ("it will be better for us to perish than to live, lacking either of you, as widows or as orphans"), but Ovid gives a characteristically flippant twist that illustrates the difference in spirit between the two accounts. Hersilia's epigram brilliantly gets to the nub of the matter but precludes a serious exploration of the women's motives. When they intervene in the battle, they merely kneel down and hold up their children in a mute display of pathos without saying anything.

6. Peace and Unification

Livy's concluding sentences develop the theme of unity between equal partners. Two states become one. Power is transferred to Rome, but to balance this the Roman citizens adopt a name deriving from the Sabine town of Cures, and the battle in the forum is commemorated by naming the Lacus Curtius after the Sabine Mettius Curtius. The thirty new political units (*curiae*) into which Romulus divides the populace—now doubled in size—are named after the Sabine women. Of the three new centuries of knights, one is named after the Roman king, Romulus, one after the Sabine king, Tatius, while the origin of the third (which were it to be known might upset the etymological balance) is left in felicitous obscurity. The final sentence is a monument to political union: "From this time forth the two kings ruled not only jointly but in harmony" (1.13.8, *inde non modo commune sed concors etiam regnum duobus regibus fuit*). Two kings, one rule. Two adjectives, sharing the same prefix, to express this union. At the center, the ideal of *concordia*.

That Romulus named the *curiae* after the Sabine women was a traditional claim. Cicero states it without comment (*Rep.* 2.14), but the Greek sources reveal the existence of a controversy. Dionysius (*Ant. Rom.* 2.47.3-4), in noting disagreement among Roman historians, singles out the contradictory view of Livy's older contemporary, Terentius Varro, who is said to have argued that Romulus had given names to the *curiae* earlier than this; in any case, the number of women abducted was five hundred and twenty-seven,¹⁴ and it would

¹⁴ This number apparently derives from Valerius Antias (Ogilvie 80).

not have been fitting for the king to have deprived so many of the honor in order to bestow it upon only thirty of them. Dionysius lays out the controversy without expressing his own opinion, stating merely that it seems appropriate to him neither to omit mention of the matter nor to say any more than is sufficient. Plutarch also shows awareness of the tradition that the *curiae* were named after the women, but he rejects it as false on the ground that many of the *curiae* bore the names of places.¹⁵ Livy, however, states unequivocally, without acknowledging any difference of opinion, that Romulus did name the *curiae* after the women, once again favoring an interpretation that redounds to the credit of the Sabine women. When he adds that tradition fails to record Romulus' criterion for selecting the women, since they doubtless numbered somewhat more than thirty, perhaps we detect a response to one of the objections attributed to Varro by Dionysius, namely that it would have been unlikely for Romulus to have deprived so many women of the honor. Livy's language implies a number greater than thirty but not by so great a margin as five hundred and twenty-seven, and, in line with the reasoning attributed to Varro, this makes it easier to believe that Romulus picked out only thirty. Moreover, Livy's list of the possible criteria used by Romulus—age, social rank, or lottery—looks like a rationalizing attempt to come up with a fair method of selection which might have been acceptable to all.

* * *

This concludes my analysis of Livy's narrative. I have tried to demonstrate that he consistently favors or invents details which bring into prominence the women themselves. Artistic reasons may have influenced his choice, for one of its benefits is to add coherence and dramatic development to a rather complicated story. Ogilvie puts it thus: "His method is to use the Sabine women like a Greek chorus as a constant background to each episode and to allow their emotions gradually to change with circumstances" (65). Having analyzed the formal structure as an alternation between internal and external episodes, Ogilvie goes on to say: "There is also an emotional structure, ranging from defiance and indignation (9.14), through resignation (11.2), to reconciliation (13.8, *non modo commune sed concors etiam*). The whole is knit together; and a comparison with the parallel versions [of Cicero, Dionysius and Plutarch]

¹⁵ On this objection see Holleman 14 n. 3. On the grounds that the legendary Sabine women bore their own names rather than their fathers' gentilician name, Holleman argues that they were actually Etruscan and points out that the Etruscans often derived topographical names from personal ones.

leaves no doubt that the artistry is directly due to Livy." I would add to this a couple of observations.

First, it is impossible to make a clean separation between artistry and interpretation. In other words, Livy's treatment of the Sabine women implies an authorial point of view and demands one of the reader too. To use the Sabine women as the basic structural element is to acknowledge their basic importance to the legend and to bring their experience to the fore as one of the key elements in the narrative. (Here I would take issue with Ogilvie's reference to a "constant background.") Through the prominence given to the women, the story becomes to a large extent *their* story, with the reader being regularly invited to judge the progress of events by its impact upon them.

Second, the principles of structural alternation and development applied by Ogilvie also provide a useful tool for analyzing the narrative in terms of gender. As well as an alternation between external and internal episodes, one may see an alternation based on the male versus female orientation of episodes and a development in the portrayal of the women which charts the evolution both of their psychology and their status and importance within the community. The rape of the Sabines is an act of male aggression arising from a biological need for female bodies. But then the Romans must reckon with the women as human beings—minds as well as bodies—whose acquiescence and cooperation must be enlisted in order for the project of marriage to work smoothly. The attempt to placate the Sabines acknowledges the limitations of force and shifts the orientation from male to female needs by its recognition of the women's psychological autonomy. Next there is a return to male violence, raised now to the level of warfare, which creates a cycle of aggression and defeat that is only broken by Hersilia's appeal for mercy and reconciliation. Her intervention is the first of two unforeseen dividends arising from the men's persuasion of the women. Finally there is the war with the Sabines, the ultimate testing ground of male *virtus*, which begins with an act of female betrayal but ends in peace, unification, and the doubling of Rome as a result of the women's direct intervention. With this the women complete an expansion of their role from prospective childbearers to marital partners and peacemakers; or to put it another way, from passive objects to sentient and articulate actors.¹⁶ Male and female, private and public merge at the end of the

¹⁶ Livy registers these developments with succeeding descriptions of the women as *virgines*, *raptae*, and *mulieres*, the latter coming at the crucial moment of their intervention in battle (1.13.1) and signalling their marital status (cf. Wankenne 353, 355). Correspondingly, the Roman men's feigned *cupiditas* and *amor* (1.9.16) develops into genuine *caritas* (1.13.6).

story as women encroach upon the battlefield and give their names to political divisions of the male citizenry.

II.

It remains to explore further the reason why Livy assigns such an important and independent role to the Sabine women in comparison with the other main versions. This is a difficult question. We cannot even be sure that his portrayal is original, though I think that the consistent divergence between his and the other extant narratives in the way it depicts the women, coupled with the careful artistic construction of the episode, strongly suggest that it is.¹⁷ In this and the concluding section, I would like to examine a concept which I think helped to give Livy's narrative its unique color: the concept of *concordia* as a marital and a socio-political ideal.

The Roman ideal of marriage as a harmonious partnership is documented and discussed by Susan Treggiari in her chapter on *coniugalis amor* (229-61, esp. 249-53). Treggiari states that: "One of the key ideas in Latin literature on the relationship of husband and wife seems to be *societas*. Community of property and partnership in life . . . had been a philosophical point, but the Romans give it more emphasis" (249-50). Related to this idea is that of *concordia*. "An ideal marriage was ensured by harmony, *concordia*, or even identified with it. Concord was the result of a balance of forces, and it took two to produce it" (251).

These comments apply perfectly to Livy's portrayal of the marriage between the Romans and the Sabine women. *Societas* in fortune, citizenship, and children is precisely what Romulus offers the women in a speech which sums up the Roman marital ideal (1.9.14). The possibility of *concordia*, a more affective notion than *societas*, is glimpsed in Romulus' comment upon the *gratia* which might arise *ex iniuria*, in the Roman men's affirmations of love, and in the softening of the women's minds. It is realized in the unanimity of Romulus and Hersilia, the women's loyalty to their husbands in the face of their kinsmen's attack on Rome, and the increased affection felt by the husbands as a result of their wives' peacemaking. Particularly helpful for understanding Livy's conception of marriage is Treggiari's observation that "[c]oncord was the result of a balance of forces, and it took two to produce it." There can be no true *societas* or *concordia* between master and slave or even parent

¹⁷ Regarding the possible significance of Livy's divergencies from Dionysius in particular, see Gabba 96: "Dionysius follows his sources much more closely and presents a more diffuse text than Livy."

and child. Representing the Sabine women as increasingly active partners was for Livy a way of defining a particularly Roman ideal of marital cooperation.

At the same time, of course, he limits the participation of the women to what is socially acceptable. Decision making and the execution of policy are exclusively in male hands. Whatever power the women have is exercised only through persuasion of their menfolk. Moreover, the legitimate sphere of their concern is restricted to the family. Hence it might seem that Livy's narrative merely reinforces traditional ideology, to provide a model for contemporary Roman wives in an era of declining marital standards.¹⁸ But this perspective is too limited. Traditional though his conception of marriage may be, Livy nevertheless pushes to the limit the possibilities for female influence and freedom of action within marriage. He does not question the rightness of male control over the lives of women, but he does believe that the exercise of that power must be tempered with sensitivity, restraint, and reciprocity. He does not question the exclusion of women from the public sphere, but he does believe that women may benefit the state indirectly through private advice and, when all else fails, direct action.

We have seen hints in the narrative that Livy believes in the existence of specifically male and female characteristics. The men, and especially Romulus, excel at stratagems, warfare, and enlisting the aid of the gods but they are unable to find a peaceful way out of the mess created by their pride and violence. While Livy pays tribute to their *virtus*, epitomized in the acts of Romulus, he also suggests its limitations, its inability to fulfill all the needs of a community. The women intervene when the Romans could have won militarily, but a military victory won by *virtus* will serve the state less well than a constructive peace. It is the women who break the cycle of violence, suited to this role by their unwarlike sex and relational social function as wives and mothers. Their pacific action foreshadows the next king, Numa, and elicits admiration from Livy equal to that expressed for the exploits of Romulus on the battlefield and reflecting his own devotion to peace and harmony.¹⁹ Beyond their historical individuality, the women thus hold for Livy a symbolic significance as embodiments of a *concordia* which complements the Romulean qualities of *virtus* and *pietas*.²⁰ The three virtues provide a model for future generations of the

¹⁸ On the possible relevance to Livy of Augustus' legislation on marriage, see Miles 186-89.

¹⁹ Cf. Ogilvie 90: "Livy gives the barest outline of Numa's innovations and subordinates them throughout to the theme of how peace can be held without moral degeneration. . . . It is peace rather than religion which is near to his heart."

²⁰ The complementarity of *concordia-virtus* corresponds to that of *homonoia-andreia* noted by Skard 178, 188-89.

fruits of combining physical courage and religious observance with a policy of forgiveness and reconciliation. This is a message which transcends the issue of gender relations. For Livy, it seems to me, enhances the role of the Sabine women not only to honor an image of marital *concordia* but because by presenting the dynamics between the sexes in this way he can transform the story into a vehicle for expressing a larger, socio-political ideal of *concordia*.

III.

Concordia makes two verbal appearances. The first comes in Hersilia's appeal on behalf of the parents of the abducted women. Their acceptance into the Roman state, she argues, will aid the healing of wounds through harmony (1.11.2, *ita rem coalescere concordia posse*).²¹ The second is in Livy's summation of the co-rule of Romulus and Tatius, which involved not only the sharing of functions but reciprocal good will (1.13.8, *inde non modo commune sed concors etiam regnum duobus regibus fuit*).²² These are Livy's first uses of the words *concordia* and *concors*, which gain in emphasis from their reinforcement by other *cum*-compounds (*coalescere*, *commune*) and the salience of the passages in which they occur. Their use reflects Livy's keen sense of a link between marital *concordia* and *concordia* in a broader context. Parallel to the *societas* which Romulus seeks with neighboring cities (1.9.2) is the marital *societas* which he promises the abducted women (1.9.14); political *societas* is ultimately attained when Romans and Sabines combine states (1.13.4, *regnum consociant*). Similarly, the *concordia* between husbands and wives—not described as such but clearly conceived so—is reflected in the social *concordia* between old and new citizens which Hersilia predicts will arise from merciful treatment of the defeated Caeninenses and Antemnates (1.11.2). Finally, the harmonious co-rule of Romulus and Tatius rounds off the whole story on a note of political *concordia* (1.13.8). The harmonious partnership which evolves between the Romans and their Sabine wives thus becomes a foundation for harmony between peoples, fellow citizens, and co-rulers.

²¹ Livy may not have been the first to make Hersilia articulate the idea of *concordia*: cf. Enn. fr. 101 S, *aeternum seritote diem concorditer ambo*, which Skutsch (249) takes to be an excerpt from a speech of Hersilia. But the term did not attain its full political significance until later; see Skard 175. Livy's language and concept are close to Sallust's description of early Rome: *Cat.* 6.2, *hi postquam in una moenia convenere, dispari genere, dissimili lingua, alius alio more viventes, incredibile memoratu est quam facile coaluerint; ita brevi multitudo divorsa atque vaga concordia civitas facta erat*.

²² Cf. 40.46.10, *Titus Tatius et Romulus, in cuius urbis medio foro acie hostes concurrerant, ibi concordēs regnarunt*. Plutarch similarly has them acting *μάλιστα κοινῶς . . . καὶ μεθ' ὁμονοίας* (*Rom.* 23.2).

The notion of *concordia* (Greek *homonoia*) played a large role in the political rhetoric of the late Republic and early empire²³ and held a special attraction for Livy. Walsh includes it among the key Livian ideas of *pietas*, *fides*, *disciplina*, *prudentia*, *ratio*, *clementia*, *pudicitia*, *virtus*, *dignitas*, *gravitas*, and *frugalitas*. "Livy's emphasis on the civic virtue of *concordia*," he says, "can be seen especially in his portrayal of the struggle of the orders in the early books. Every possible opportunity is seized of praising the measures which advanced such concord, and of condemning the selfishness of sectional interests" (Walsh 66, 69; cf. Ogilvie 2, Briscoe 10). The theme of harmony between patricians and plebeians is introduced early in Book Two, where apropos of Brutus' promotion of leading equestrians to the senate Livy remarks that "it was amazing how successful this was in promoting *concordia* in the state and attaching the minds of the plebs to the Fathers" (2.1.11). Thereafter it is a constant motif. Those politicians who are capable of rising above class interests for the good of the whole community are among Livy's most admired heroes. Such is Menenius Agrippa, who by his fable of the belly and the limbs persuades the seceding plebeians to negotiate with the patricians. When the plebs withdrew, there was fear in Rome of a foreign invasion, the only hope seeming to lie in the restoration of *concordia* (2.32.7). Precisely this hope is realized when Menenius' embassy leads to negotiations (2.33.1, *agi deinde de concordia coeptum*) which result in the concession to the plebeians of allowing the appointment of special tribunes. When Menenius dies soon after, he is lauded by Livy as a man "equally dear to Fathers and plebs" and as "the agent and arbiter of *concordia* among the citizens" (2.33.10-11). The whole episode is an important illustration of Livy's belief in the power of good will and compromise to effect political harmony.²⁴

Although the majority of Livy's uses of *concordia* relate to the struggle of the orders, he applies it to many other relationships, including those between army and commander (2.60.2), fellow decemvirs (3.33.8), consular tribunes (4.45.8), soldiers (7.40.4), consuls (10.13.13), censors (27.38.9), Antiochus and Rome (37.35.7), husband and wife (38.57.8), Aetolian factions (41.25.2), and brothers (42.16.8). His usage comprises roughly four main types of *concordia*: (1) social harmony between groups such as patricians and plebeians; (2) administrative harmony between political colleagues; (3) diplomatic harmony between friendly states; (4) familial harmony. Of the two references to *con-*

²³ For a convenient summary see Weinstock 260-66; further bibliography at Fears 841 n. 67, Flory 315 n. 18.

²⁴ Other heroes of concord in the early period are T. Quinctius Capitolinus and Camillus; see Nicolet 260-61, Momigliano.

cordia in the Sabine narrative, the second—the reference to the *concors regnum* of Romulus and Tatius—clearly belongs to category (2), the cooperation of the two kings being analogous to that between two consuls or censors. The first reference to *concordia*, namely Hersilia's hope for the growth of harmony between the Romans and the defeated peoples who are to be admitted into the state, is a sub-species of category (1).²⁵ On the basis of Livy's general usage, it seems probable that he would have applied the term *concordia* also to other relationships that figure in the Sabine narrative. Thus the synoecism of Sabines and Romans is close to the kind of *concordia* represented by category (3): that which obtains between allies. (As we have seen, Livy uses the verb *consocio* to describe the unification in 1.13.4.) And I have already argued that the relationship between the Romans and their Sabine wives exemplifies marital *concordia*, a species of category (4). The Sabine narrative thus traverses the gamut of harmonious—and disharmonious—relationships.²⁶

Livy's (or his source's) application of the theme of *concordia* to the rape of the Sabines clearly owes something to the political language of the late Republic, in which the word recurs as a slogan of shifting, but, generally speaking, moderately conservative significance. Nostalgic for the lost harmony of archaic Rome, historians such as Sallust, Livy, and Dionysius anachronistically push back into the ancient period a concept which had held political significance in Rome since only about the mid-second century (Skard 192-97, 203-7). For Livy, the war between the Romans and Sabines and the intervention of the women must have had a special resonance with the recent civil wars. So close indeed is the relationship between the opposing sides, so eloquently emphasized by the Sabine women, that the war between the Romans and the Sabines takes on the complexion of a civil war. Specifically, it echoes the war between Pompey and Caesar, inasmuch as the marriage of Pompey to Julia made it possible to think of the civil war as a contest between son-in-law and father-in-law (even though Julia had been dead for five years when it started!). Ovid and Lucan make the connection explicit. On the Roman-Sabine hostilities the former observes that "then for the first time a father-in-law waged war on his sons-in-law" (*Fast.* 3.202); the latter, that but for her premature death Julia might have reconciled Caesar and Pompey, "as the intervening Sabine women joined sons-in-law with fathers-in-law" (Luc.

²⁵ Cf. *concordia* between citizen soldiers and conscripted slaves in 23.35.9.

²⁶ For the latter, cf., e.g., the discord between Rome and her neighbors; the deceptive unity of the Consualia (1.9.8, *convenere*); the lack of unity among Rome's enemies, who prepare *communit* (1.10.2) but fail to act in concert; the treachery of Tarpeia; the murder of Tatius and the dissolution of co-rule (1.14.1-3).

1.118). Perhaps Livy himself envisages the Sabine women somewhat in Lucan's heroic vein, as legendary "Julias" who put a stop to Rome's first civil war (Piper 26-27). (Relevant too is the treaty of Brundisium and the marriage between Antony and Octavia.) Livy's narrative thus alludes to an important function of upper-class Roman marriage in cementing relationships between families and peoples, thereby creating situations where marital, social, and political *concordia* blended into one another as they do in Livy's telling of the legend. Such, roughly speaking, is the motive attributed to Romulus by Dionysius and Plutarch. Livy, on the other hand, presents it as an unforeseen outcome, a benefit of intermarriage brought into being by the women's own keen awareness and vindication of the ties that marriage has created. The role of the Sabine women in reconciling Romans and Sabines through their intervention can thus be seen as a delayed actualization of one of the main preordained functions of marriage under the Republic. But just as political marriages had failed to prevent civil war in Livy's lifetime, so was the *concordia* between Romulus and Tatius—the *concors regnum* with which the story of the Sabine women attains closure—of only short duration (Liv. 1.14.1-3). Tatius is murdered at Lavinium in retribution for his failure to redress a wrong committed by his kinsmen, and Romulus declines to avenge him, "whether owing to the disloyalty that attends a divided rule (*ob infidam societatem regni*), or because he thought Tatius had been not unjustly slain." From the glimpse of a perfect yet unattainable ideal, the sour afternote calls us back to reality.

To conclude: Livy's Sabine narrative might be described as a historical parable on the theme of harmony. Its fundamental concern with issues of unity and division picks up and develops a line of thought that is present from the very beginning of Livy's history. His main topic in Book One is the foundation and growth of the early Roman community, which took time to take shape. Not until "the pledges of wife and children and love of the very place and soil . . . had firmly united their aspirations" (2.1.5) were the Romans ready for the political storms stirred up by liberty. The regal period is thus perceived as a time of maturation, in which the different ingredients of the state gradually coalesced to form a cohesive community. Availing himself of the freedom of interpretation offered by the remote past, Livy in Book One transforms the relation of uncertain and implausible historical facts into a vehicle for expressing his deepest moral, religious, and political beliefs. Among these is the belief that Roman greatness was—and continued to be—a function not of strength alone but strength tempered with cooperation and compromise: that is, the sort of *concordia* embodied and promoted by the Sabine women.

Works Cited

- Bömer, F. 1958. *P. Ovidius Naso: Die Fasten*. Heidelberg.
- Briscoe, J. 1971. "The First Decade." In T. A. Dorey, ed., *Livy*. London and Toronto. 1-20.
- Collart, J. 1969. "À propos de Tite-Live 1.13.1-3." In J. Bibauw, ed., *Hommages à Marcel Renard*. Brussels. 1.250-55.
- Evans, J. D. 1992. *The Art of Persuasion: Political Propaganda from Aeneas to Brutus*. Ann Arbor.
- Fears, J. R. 1981. "The Cult of Virtues and Roman Imperial Ideology." *ANRW* 2.17.2: 827-948.
- Flory, M. B. 1984. "Sic Exempla Parantur: Livia's Shrine to Concordia and the Porticus Liviae." *Historia* 33: 309-330.
- Gabba, E. 1991. *Dionysius and The History of Archaic Rome*. Berkeley, etc.
- Hemker, J. 1985. "Rape and the Founding of Rome." *Helios* n.s. 12: 41-47.
- Holleman, A. W. J. 1986. "The Rape of the Sabine Women." *LCM* 11.1: 13-14.
- Kampen, N. 1991. "Reliefs of the Basilica Aemilia: A Redating." *Klio* 73: 448-58.
- Miles, G. B. 1992. "The First Roman Marriage and the Theft of the Sabine Women." In R. Hexter and D. Selden, ed., *Innovations of Antiquity*. New York and London. 161-96.
- Momigliano, A. 1942. "Camillus and Concord." *CQ* 36: 111-120.
- Nicolet, C. 1960. "Consul Togatus." *REL* 38: 236-63.
- Ogilvie, R. M. 1965. *A Commentary on Livy Books 1-5*. Oxford.
- Piper, L. J. 1971. "Livy's Portrayal of Early Roman Women." *CB* 48: 26-28.
- Sherwin-White, A. N. 1973². *The Roman Citizenship*. Oxford.
- Skard, E. 1967. "Concordia." In H. Oppermann, ed., *Römische Wertbegriffe*. Darmstadt. 173-208.
- Skutsch, O. 1985. *The Annals of Q. Ennius*. Oxford.
- Treggiari, S. 1991. *Roman Marriage*. Oxford.
- Walsh, P. G. 1961. *Livy: His Historical Aims and Methods*. Cambridge.
- Wankenne, J. 1975. "Le Chapitre de Tite-Live 1.13." *Les Études Classiques* 43: 350-66.
- Weinstock, S. 1971. *Divus Julius*. Oxford.
- Wiseman, T. P. 1983. "The Wife and Children of Romulus." *CQ* n.s. 33: 445-52.