

Assimilating Foreigners into Nascent Rome's Imperium:
Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Livy on Rome's First Expansion

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Abstract: Through a comparison of how Dionysius and Livy depict the rape of the Sabine women and Rome's subsequent wars with her Latin neighbors and Titus Tatius' Sabines, this paper analyzes how these two historians understand the early expansion of Roman *imperium*. While previous scholarship has argued that Livy presents a rather sanitized version of the integration of the Sabine women into Roman society, less attention has been paid to Dionysius' depiction of this process. A comparison with Livy shows how instead of conceiving of the process as easy or seamless, Dionysius includes a steady stream of details that point to the difficulty and messiness of this process. Particular attention is paid to the depiction of violence, childbirth and political integration to highlight the meaningful differences between the each historian's telling of Rome's nascent empire.

Keywords: Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Livy, Sabine women, rape, childbirth, Roman *imperium*.

Resumen: Esta contribución analiza el modo en que Dionisio y Tito Livio entienden la temprana expansión del *imperium* romano a través del estudio de los pasajes relativos al rapto de las Sabinas y a las consiguientes guerras con los pueblos vecinos, tanto los latinos como los sabinos de Tito Tacio. Si bien es cierto que la historiografía tradicional ha defendido que Livio ofrece una versión edulcorada de la integración de las sabinas en la sociedad romana, también lo es que menos atención ha recibido el relato de Dionisio de Halicarnaso, quien presenta un panorama más complejo. Así, al compararlo con Livio, se demuestra cómo el heleno está lejos de concebir este proceso como fácil o ininterrumpido, incluyendo un flujo continuo de detalles que apuntan a la gran dificultad y al caos imperante en el mismo. Especial atención se presta al modo en que cada historiador representa la violencia sexual, el alumbramiento y la integración política, para así subrayar las diferencias entre los relatos de estos dos autores sobre el naciente *imperium* romano.

Palabras clave Dionisio de Halicarnaso, Livio, mujeres sabinas, violación, *imperium* romano.

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In his *Antiquitates Romanae*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus lays particular emphasis on Rome's penchant for assimilating foreigners into her *imperium* as a key to her early success. Instead of simply enslaving or killing defeated men and andrapodizing captive women and girls,¹ the Roman kings often offered their former foes citizenship, established colonies in captured cities and relocated men, women and children to Rome herself. Though this was a practice that could be looked down upon,² this policy, Dionysius maintains, was the source of Rome's strength. In his discussion of the Romulean constitution, for instance, the Greek historian identifies this policy of assimilation as Romulus' greatest political innovation:³

Τρίτον ἦν ἔτι Ῥωμύλου πολίτευμα, ὃ πάντων μάλιστα τοὺς Ἕλληνας ἀσκεῖν ἔδει, κράτιστον ἀπάντων πολιτευμάτων ὑπάρχον, ὡς ἐμὴ δόξα φέρει, ὃ καὶ τῆς βεβαίου Ῥωμαίοις ἐλευθερίας ἤρχε καὶ τῶν ἐπὶ τὴν ἡγεμονίαν ἀγόντων οὐκ ἐλαχίστην μοῖραν παρέσχε, τὸ μῆτε κατασφάττειν ἡβηδὸν τὰς ἀλούσας πολέμῳ πόλεις μῆτε ἀνδραποδίζεσθαι μὴδὲ γῆν αὐτῶν ἀνιέναι μὴλόβοτον, ἀλλὰ κληρούχους εἰς αὐτὰς ἀποστέλλειν ἐπὶ μέρει τινὶ τῆς χώρας καὶ ποιεῖν ἀποικίας τῆς Ῥώμης τὰς κρατηθείσας, ἐνίαις δὲ καὶ πολιτείας μεταδιδόναι.

There was yet a third policy of Romulus, which the Greeks ought to have practiced above all others, it being, in my opinion, the best of all political measures, as it laid the most solid foundation for the liberty of the Romans and was no slight factor in raising them to their position of supremacy. It was this: not to slay all the men of military age or to enslave the rest of the population of the cities captured in war or to allow their land to go back to pasturage for sheep,

¹ For this common Greek practice, see K. Gaca, 2010. It is worth noting that in Dionysius' history there are several examples of this practice (e.g., Tarquinius Priscus' andrapodizing of Apiole at *Ant. Rom.* 3, 49, 3).

² E.g., the speech of Mettius Fufetius at *Ant. Rom.* 3, 10, where he claims, *inter alia*, that the Albans are superior to the Romans for not giving citizenship away willy-nilly.

³ Cf. M. Fox, 1996, pp. 60-61. Later in the same chapter, Dionysius illustrates the success of this policy, claiming that the number of foot soldiers grew 15 fold. It is also worth noting a parallel from Rome's pre-history: in his "truer" version of Herakles' presence in Italy (ἀληθέστερος, *Ant. Rom.* 1, 41, 1), Dionysius explains how Herakles would take captives, incorporate them into his army and then resettle them somewhere else, a process that is dubbed one of his greatest tactics (*Ant. Rom.* 1, 42, 4: στρατηγικὸν γὰρ δὴ καὶ τοῦτο τῶν Ἡρακλέους ἔργων καὶ οὐδενὸς ἤττον θαυμάζεσθαι ἐπιτήδειον). All this stands in stark contrast to the counterproductive Greek policy of andrapodizing conquered enemies (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 17), though see n. 1 above.

but rather to send settlers thither to possess some part of the country by lot and to make the conquered cities Roman colonies, and even to grant citizenship to some of them (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 16; trans. LCL).⁴

The theme resurfaces elsewhere in the *Antiquitates Romanae*. When a group of Patricians are unhappy with the Servius Tullius' choice to grant manumitted slaves citizenship, for instance, the king explains that it is only through Rome's sheer numbers that she can maintain an army without hiring foreign mercenaries.⁵ This is part of what Anouk Delcourt has rightfully analyzed under the umbrella of Dionysius' "polyanthropie."⁶ Though he dedicates less attention to the policy explicitly, Livy also paints Rome's population growth as an important factor for the city's early success.⁷ Thus, from her humble origins,⁸ Rome could grow rapidly and wage a seemingly endless series of battles and wars with neighboring populations.

None of this is new.⁹ This paper, however, does provide a novel analysis of how this process of growth through assimilation could be depicted in ancient sources by examining Rome's first expansionary act: the legend of

⁴ Throughout *Ant. Rom.* this policy is mentioned by different characters. For a good example, see the debate in the senate after the defeat of the Latins at the battle of Late Regillus at *Ant. Rom.* 6, 19-20.

⁵ *Ant. Rom.* 4, 23, 4: ἵνα διαρκέσῃ πρὸς πάντα τοὺς πολέμους οἰκείους ὄπλοις χρωμένη, καὶ μὴ ξενικοῖς στρατεύμασι καταμισθοφοροῦσα συνεξαλωθῇ τοῖς χρήμασι· καὶ διὰ τοῦτ' ἔφη τοὺς προτέρουσ βασιλεῖς ἅπασι μεταδεδωκέναι τῆς πολιτείας τοῖς ξένοις.

⁶ A. Delcourt, 2005, pp. 287-291. For a broader and complementary perspective on the issue, see I. Zoigas, 2021, pp. 304-305.

⁷ E.g., the (re-)twinning of Rome after the peace with Titus Tatius is reached (*ita geminata urbe*, *AVC* 1, 13, 5) or the doubling of the city after the destruction of Alba Longa (*duplicatur civium numerus*, *AVC* 1, 30, 1).

⁸ For Livy's emphasis on the city's humble origins and Dionysius' rejection of this idea, see A. Mayorgas Rodríguez, 2022, pp. 101 & 110.

⁹ For an authoritative treatment of expansion through assimilation in Rome's early history, see M. Humbert, 1993, pp. 76-77. For other pertinent observations about women's role in this process, see M.M. Henry and S.L. James, 2014, p. 85. Of course, the narratives of assimilation and "Romanization" that can be found in historiographical texts are simplistic and elide the much more complex and intriguing processes of identity formation in the ancient world; for just one good introduction to the issue, see D.J. Mattingly, 2014 with further references.

rape of the Sabine women and the resulting wars.¹⁰ Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus offer the fullest historiographical accounts of the legend of the Sabine women,¹¹ an extended episode that begins with their violent kidnapping and concludes with these women orchestrating a truce between Romulus and Titus Tatius' Sabines.¹² While the previous historiographical tradition had established the story's general trajectory (i.e., rape/marriage,¹³ war/expansion¹⁴ and reconciliation)¹⁵ and has generally been seen as excusing Romulus' naughty behavior,¹⁶ a close reading of the historians' accounts

¹⁰ It is conventional to refer to Rome's enemies in the legend simply as 'Sabines,' though Latin communities also play an important role in the conflict. For Caenina, Antemnae and Crustumerium as Latin cities (contra Plut. *Rom.* 16), see Pliny the Elder *N.H.* 3, 68. For the sake of convenience, the phrase "rape of the Sabine women" will nevertheless be used, following normal convention.

¹¹ Unlike later events from Rome's regal period, the reign of Romulus is purely legendary (cf. J. Martínez-Pinna, 2001, p. 694). For a detailed and authoritative analysis of the sources and traditions surrounding Romulus and Rome's pre-foundational legends, see J. Martínez-Pinna, 2011, pp. 99-127.

¹² There are many other ancient accounts: see T.P. Wiseman, 1983 for a summary of the literary evidence; see T.S. Welch, 2015, pp. 95-98 for the rape of the Sabine women on social war coinage. J. Martínez-Pinna 2011, p. 120 notes parallels with the foundation of Praeneste.

¹³ G. Dumézil, 1979, p. 76 argues that the rape in and of itself is of little importance, focusing instead on different Indo-European models of marriage. Some have followed (e.g., J. Poucet, 1985, p. 174 and G. Miles, 1995, pp. 188-9), while others have pushed back (e.g., C. Dougherty, 1998 or M. Beard, 1999).

¹⁴ See S. Treggiari, 1991, p. 4 and M. Fox, 1996, pp. 106 & 109. For *conubium*, *commercium* and citizenship in early Latium, see A.N. Sherwin-White, 1973, pp. 34-7; for *conubium* more generally, S. Treggiari, 1991, 43-49. M. Humbert, 1993, pp. 93-98 offers a nuanced discussion of Dionysius' use of the terms *ισπολιτεία* and *πολιτεία*, suggesting that his knowledge of Roman citizenship was not as flawed as previous scholars had assumed.

¹⁵ For Augustan readership, see C.S. Kraus, 1994b, pp. 13-15 (on the relationship between text and reader) and J.-M. Claassen, 1999, pp. 74-77 (on the need for the narrative to inhabit the realm of the "credible"). On the constraints that writers of Historians of Romans faced and the importance of oral traditions, see J. Martínez-Pinna, 2011, pp. 99-100 and A. Mayorgas Rodríguez, 2022, pp. 100 & 104.

¹⁶ E. g., Plut. *Rom.* 9, 2 where "that thing about the women" is depicted as necessary and the Romans are seen as "gentlemanly" (for lack of a better term). However, not all were so comfortable with this legend: cf. Cic. *rep.*2,

reveals significant differences in *how* these processes could be depicted and understood. Those differences are the subject of this paper, which takes inspiration from recent studies of wartime rape in antiquity¹⁷ and seeks to provide a more literary examination of the two historians' narrative techniques.¹⁸

Although there has been no shortage of scholars who have compared Livy and Dionysius' versions of the rape of the Sabines,¹⁹ their distinct representations of the process of Roman domination and assimilation in the aftermath of the rape have received less attention.²⁰ And yet the *how* of Roman

12 (*novum quoddam et subagreste consilium*) and Verg. A. 8, 635 (*raptas sine more Sabinas*). For Livy steering around "a rather unsavoury history of rapine," see J.-M. Claassen, 1999, p. 83. As P. Keegan, 2021, p. 74 rightly puts it, the abduction of these women would be considered "a criminal act that violates the traditionally inviolable hospitality of guest-friendship (*violati hospitii scelus*) – a fraudulent lie reviling divine law and conventional loyalties (*per fas ac fidem*), something that Livy acknowledges by pointing to the perspective of the families who were wronged by Romulus. For ancient approaches to fratricide in Roman mythology, clearly another potentially fraught issue, see J. Martínez-Pinna, 2011, pp. 123-124.

¹⁷ The work of K. Gaca, in general, is indispensable and will be cited in the final sections of this paper. Also see C. Dougherty, 1998 and C.A. Reeder, 2017.

¹⁸ Due to space limitations, other important issues must be left to the side. As one of the peer reviewers of this article has rightly emphasized, debates over the origins of the Sabines are relevant for how historians could characterize them in this episode: for some Roman authors (beginning with Cato the Elder), the Sabines were autochthonous, whereas other currents claimed that they were descended from the Spartans. See E. Dench, 1995 for the Sabines generally; T.J. Cornell, 1995, pp. 75-77 provides a brief and helpful overview of approaches to the question; J. Martínez-Pinna, 2002, pp. 62-66 offers a thorough discussion of Cato's role in shaping later historiographical narratives concerning Sabine autochthony; E. Gruen 2013, p. 5 offers a brief summary in the context of larger questions about ethnicity in ancient thought; for a more recent examination of the topic with further references, see C.J. Smith, 2021.

¹⁹ Cf. R.M. Ogilvie, 1965, ad loc.; T.P. Wiseman, 1983; G. Miles, 1995; R. Brown, 1995; M. Fox, 1996; B. Poletti, 2018. Ovid is also frequently added to the mix, as is Plutarch (e.g., M. Beard, 1999, pp. 4-5; G. Miles, 1995; or M. Labate, 2006). Indeed, discussions can quickly get overcrowded and different authors' accounts can start to bleed together, leading to simplifications and even minor mistakes. For that reason, I have chosen to focus on just two roughly contemporary historiographical sources.

²⁰ E.g., G. Miles 1995, p. 196 who argues that Dionysius' account betrays an "an essential lack of interest in the process by which the Sabine women are initiated into their roles as

imperium undoubtedly constituted a central question in ancient historiography, to which our two historians offer different answers.²¹ While neither Livy nor Dionysius spells out in precise detail the workings of the assimilation process, a clearer picture of how each historian understood this dynamic does emerge thanks to an accrual of details and noteworthy omissions. While previous studies have offered a balanced assessment of Livy's account, the same cannot so easily be said for Dionysius'. This oversight can be explained by the ways that scholars tend to use and read the two authors as a pair.²²

Many comparisons of Livy and Dionysius, whether implicitly or explicitly, have used the Greek's account as a foil for the originality and brilliance of the Roman's.²³ Unlike Livy, Dionysius is often seen as a passive receiver and reproducer of his sources.²⁴ Even if many readers will judge Livy to be the superior author, subjecting Dionysius' history to the same level of

Roman *matronae* and a tacit assumption that there is nothing problematic about their initiation" (the same argument appears repeatedly throughout his chapter). Another perennial problem is the urge to fit Dionysius into simplistic ideological categories (i.e., pro- or anti-Augustan) that then condition subsequent analysis, a process that can yield unsatisfying results (e.g., H. Hill, 1961). For a rejection of these reductive frameworks, see A. Delcourt, 2005, pp. 65-69; N. Wiater, 2011, pp. 206-214; C.B.R. Pelling, 2019, pp. 218-220.

²¹ Cf. Polybius 1, 1 and Livy praef. 9. Dionysius, for his part, is adamant that this process of growth and expansion began immediately after the founding (e.g., *Ant. Rom.* 1, 3, 4 [εὐθὺς μὲν γὰρ ἐξ ἀρχῆς μετὰ τὸν οἰκισμὸν] and 1, 5, 2 [μετὰ τὸν οἰκισμὸν εὐθὺς]). In his history, the rape of the Sabines is the first extended narrative where these processes can be observed.

²² Late 19th and early 20th century German scholarship could also be quite critical of Dionysius' works. For negative appraisals of his rhetorical works, see the C.C. de Jonge, 2008, pp. 3-5; for Schwartz's criticism of the *Antiquitates Romanae* as pro-Roman propaganda, see N. Wiater, 2011, p. 217. These attitudes had long-lasting effects on how his works were read and understood.

²³ Cf. G. Miles, 1995, p. 179 on Livy's "distinctiveness and originality" and the "other less ambitious narratives." R.M. Ogilvie, 1965, p. 65 argues that a comparison of the accounts "leaves no room for doubt that the artistry [is] directly due to L[ivy]" (for a similar approach see R. Brown, 1995). Importantly, for R.M. Ogilvie, the lack of details in Livy shows his good dramatic and artistic judgment, something that Dionysius lacks (e.g. 1965, pp. 65 & 76-77). This is a defensible position, but it can also overshadow other factors determining each historian's focus.

²⁴ For some useful considerations on Dionysius and the use of sources, see A. Delcourt, 2005, pp. 54-61; M. Fox, 2019; and S.P. Oakley 2019.

scrutiny is a worthwhile endeavor. As T.J. Luce argued, both historians help us glimpse the diversity of ways that crucial moments from the Roman past could be approached and represented in Augustan Rome.²⁵ These choices of how to represent the past most certainly have to be understood in light of the socio-political context in which these historians wrote, not to mention the conventions of different literary genres.²⁶ While many studies have focused predominantly on Livy, here more space will be given to Dionysius, whose work was published later and could very well be responding to the Livian version of Rome's beginning.²⁷ In other words, while differences between the two are often adduced as evidence for Livy's originality, such differences could perhaps point to intentional choices on the Greek's part.²⁸ Be that as it may, what have previously been labeled as superfluous details or missed narrative opportunities in the *Antiquitates Romanae* do not necessarily spoil Dionysius' account.²⁹ Instead, they can contribute to a distinct depiction of the workings of Roman power. In particular, a close comparison of the two authors reveals different understandings of how difficult it really is to subsume or integrate outsiders into Rome's *imperium*.

²⁵ T.J. Luce, 1995, p. 236. Also see E. Gabba, 1991, pp. 20-22; M.Á. Rodríguez Horrillo, 2010, p. 82; N. Wiater, 2011, pp. 8-18 (with further bibliography); C.B.R. Pelling, 2019. Ovid, another Augustan author who deals with the rape of the Sabine women, offers yet other ways of understanding the story. For the actions of Ovid's Romulus as an "anti-exemplum" in the *Ars amatoria*, see M. Labate, 2006; for the *Fasti* and women's passivity, see G. Miles, 1995, pp. 198-203.

²⁶ For Livy's treatment of women in his early books, see J.-M. Claassen, 1999, p. 75 with a good summary of historiographical research. For the influence of Hortensia's public appeal to the Triumvirs in 46 BCE on Livy, see P. Keegan, 2021, pp. 64-71.

²⁷ Livy published his first pentad in the early to mid 20s BCE, whereas Dionysius published his first book in 7 BCE (c.f. T.J. Luce, 1965 & 1995; N. Wiater, 2011, p. 210 n. 546). Dionysius does not mention Livy explicitly among his sources, but he could certainly be included in a catch-all phrase at *Ant. Rom.* 1, 7, 3 (καὶ ἕτεροι συχνοὶ πρὸς τοῦτοις ἄνδρες οὐκ ἀφανεῖς) in his discussion of his Latin sources.

²⁸ Cf. M.Á. Rodríguez Horrillo, 2010, p. 75 on Dionysius' adaptation of the legend of the Horatii to craft a narrative better suited to his readership.

²⁹ For the charge that Dionysius fumbles important narrative moments, see R.M. Ogilvie, 1965, *passim*.

1. Causes of the rape

After founding his new city, Romulus encountered various challenges. Chief among them was recruiting new citizens and forming alliances with neighboring communities. In both historians' accounts, these problems are addressed first through the opening of Romulus' asylum³⁰ and subsequently the abduction of women from neighboring communities during the Consualia.³¹ For both Livy and Dionysius, these two events laid the groundwork for Rome to expand, internally through the birth of offspring and externally by initiating a long process of conquest and assimilation that would continue until these two historians' own time.³² Yet exactly what spurred Romulus to take action and how he went about it were questions that could elicit different answers.

Livy memorably claims that Rome's future was jeopardized by a *penuria mulierum* (AVC 1, 9, 1).³³ To remedy this, Romulus makes a series of diplomatic overtures to neighboring Latin and Sabine communities in an attempt to gain the right of *conubium*.³⁴ All for naught: his ambassadors' overtures are not only rejected, but these men are ridiculed: if the Romans need

³⁰ Whereas Livy describes the men who came to Rome as the dregs of society (*turba omnis, sine discrimine liber an servus esset, avida novarum rerum*, 1, 8, 6) and also jokes about the less-than-reputable origins of other cities, Dionysius attempts to elevate these refugees, insisting that they were freeborn and noble (*Ant. Rom.* 1, 85, 1-3 and 2, 15, 3). A. Mayorgas Rodríguez, 2022, p. 108 rightly argues that, for Livy, Rome's *pauperitas* and humble origins "eran apreciados por los primeros romanos. Se consideraban algo honorable (*honos*)", whereas for Dionysius it was of paramount importance to stress the noble (Greek) origins of early Rome (cf. J. Martínez-Pinna, 2002, pp. 53-55 on *Sal. Cat.* 6, 1-2). For the asylum, see E. Dench 2005; A. Delcourt, 2005, pp. 288-289; B. Poletti, 2018, p. 161.

³¹ For this festival, see R.M. Ogilvie, 1965, pp. 66-67 and G. Miles, 1995, p. 193; for the importance of agriculture and fertility, see K. Mustakallio, 1999, p. 57; for the narrative importance of *ludi* in Dionysius, see C.E. Schultze, 2004, pp. 94-95.

³² S. Treggiari, 1991, pp. 4-5. The trope of a great empire from small beginnings is common. Cf. Liv. praef. 4 [*exiguus... initiis*]. It occurs repeatedly in Dionysius (e.g., *Ant. Rom.* 1, 4, 1; 1, 9, 4; 1, 31, 3; 1, 56, 4; 2, 3, 3; 2, 16, 2; 3, 11, 5-7). For an overview of current debates about Roman imperialism and expansion more generally, see A. Erskine, 2010; C.J. Smith and L.M. Yarrow, 2012.

³³ See R. Brown, 1995, pp. 294-95 for the contrast with Ovid. This concern over Rome's population would later become, as I. Zoigas, 2021, pp. 304-305 argues, a central focus of Augustan moral legislation and his use of biopower.

³⁴ R.M. Ogilvie, 1965, p. 67 argues that sending *legati* is a Livian innovation.

wives, why don't they open up an asylum for women so that they can find mates who are suitable matches for their citizens? This only adds insult to injury, though Romulus manages to hide his anger (*AVC* 1, 9, 8).³⁵ It is only after being rebuffed and insulted that Romulus and the Senate decide to set a trap to abduct women.³⁶

Though his narrative in the early books tends to be much longer than Livy's,³⁷ Dionysius elides this part of the story.³⁸ Instead of actually sending ambassadors and asking for the right of intermarriage, his Romulus simply has a gut feeling (*ἐνθυμούμενος*, *Ant. Rom.* 2, 30, 2) that the neighboring communities would be unwilling to cooperate.³⁹ Rome, after all, had yet to prove herself.⁴⁰ So instead of formally asking for an alliance and doing his due diligence, Romulus skips straight to devising a plan in concert with his grandfather and the Roman senate.⁴¹

³⁵ On this insult and why it stings (if the Romans would take anyone), see P. Keegan, 2021, p. 73.

³⁶ As M. Beard, 1999, p. 5 argues, up to this point in Livy's account it seems that Romans are following diplomatic rules to the T. As C.S. Kraus, 1994a, p. 280 points out, when Roman legates misbehave, there are dire consequences.

³⁷ Livy's version of the story is found in 5 chapters (1, 9-13), whereas Dionysius version takes up a significantly larger amount of space (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 30-46). On the expansiveness of Dionysius' account of the regal period and early Republic, see S.P. Oakley, 2019; A. Mayorgas Rodríguez, 2020, p. 107 & 2022, p. 100. N. Wiater, 2011, pp. 192-193 shows that for Dionysius size matters, with the space dedicated to a subject correlating to its importance.

³⁸ This detail is overlooked by T.P. Wiseman, 1983, p. 446 who almost implies that Dionysius, like Livy and Plutarch, has Romulus send out ambassadors.

³⁹ This slightly complicates the argument put forth by B. Poletti, 2018, p. 177 that in Dionysius' account the actions of the Romans are a clear example of *iustum bellum*.

⁴⁰ *Ant. Rom.* 2, 30, 2: (οὔτε χρήμασι δυνατοῖς οὔτε λαμπρὸν ἔργον ἐπιδεδειγμένους οὐδέν, *ibid.*). Cf. *Ant. Rom.* 1, 2, 2 and 1, 3, 6, where Dionysius justifies his choice of subject by referring to Rome's *πράξεις... λαμπροτάτας*. The rape of the Sabine women will be the first of these most noteworthy deeds.

⁴¹ This constitutes a notable omission given Dionysius' interest in diplomatic procedures and the proper way of initiating hostilities, as seen in discussions of the *fetiales* (*Ant. Rom.* 1, 21, 1 and 2, 72, 3; cf. J.M. Galindo Roldán, 2013, p. 207). In Rome's pre-foundational history, Latinus explicitly chastises Aeneas for making war without following proper procedures or first asking for friendship, to which Aeneas can only respond that he was forced by necessity (*Ant. Rom.* 1, 58). It is also worth noting that Dionysius' Romulus is not above cheating to get what he wants (cf. the augury at *Ant. Rom.* 1, 86, 3 with R.E.

Yet there are more than procedural differences between the two historians' accounts. In Livy the reason for the rape is clear (the need to procure wives), whereas Dionysius explains that the motives for the rape were actually a matter of debate among historians. In the *Antiquitates Romanae*, several reasons are given, and Dionysius chooses the one that he finds most plausible:

τῆς δὲ ἀρπαγῆς τὴν αἰτίαν οἱ μὲν εἰς σπάνιν γυναικῶν ἀναφέρουσιν, οἱ δ' εἰς ἀφορμὴν πολέμου, οἱ δὲ τὰ πιθανώτατα γράφοντες, οἷς καὶ γὰρ συγκατεθέμην, εἰς τὸ συνάψαι φιλότητα πρὸς τὰς πλησιοχώρους πόλεις ἀναγκαίαν.

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 whom I agree—attribute it to the design of contracting an alliance with the neighboring cities, founded on affinity. (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 31, 1; trans. LCL)⁴²

Here Romulus' motivation is overtly political: he is interested first and foremost in forming relationships with his neighbors.⁴³ This is different from Livy's account,⁴⁴ which corresponds with the first possibility (compare σπάνιν γυναικῶν with Livy's *penuria mulierum*). The point is further stressed: when narrating the first triumph, Dionysius mentions that there were already Roman wives and children at Rome, thus further undermining the Livian justification for the rape.⁴⁵

Interestingly, Dionysius' own authorial explanation varies slightly from the reason that his character Romulus gives in the *Antiquitates Romanae*.

Robertson, 2008, pp. 244 & 247). Fundamentally, the rape is based on a trick (P. Pavón Torrejón, 2006, p. 293) and for Romans winning through trickery (δολός or ἀπάτη) is often looked down upon (e.g., *Ant. Rom.* 3, 8, 2 and 3, 28, 2-3; *AVC* 1, 53, 4); for the argument that sometimes trickery is necessary, see Tanquil's speech to Servius Tullius (*Ant. Rom.* 4, 4, 5).

⁴² On the reasons given for the rape more generally, see T.P. Wiseman, 1983, for whom Dionysius champions the “most thoroughly pro-Roman” of the three options (p. 446).

⁴³ R.E. Robertson, 2008, p. 249, argues that Dionysius' Romulus is “racional” compared to the Romulus of Plutarch and Livy, who is more of a “presa de cólera”.

⁴⁴ Contra G. Miles, 1995, pp. 184-186, who sees all the major accounts providing the same reasoning for the kidnapping.

⁴⁵ The conquering army returns to the cheers of Roman wives and children (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 34, 2: οἱ δ' ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ὑπήντων αὐτοῖς ἅμα γυναιξί τε καὶ τέκνοις παρ' ἄμφω τὰ μέρη τῆς ὁδοῦ τῆ τε νίκη συνηδόμενοι). These women cannot be the captured women, who are described in the next chapter as lamenting the defeat of their countrymen (see below).

When speaking to the captive women, the king claims that the Romans simply sought marriage,⁴⁶ leaving out the larger political motivations that the historian gives (i.e., the desire to establish φιλία).⁴⁷ The Romulus of the *Antiquitates Romanae* points to marriage as his ultimate motivation, a domestic partnership in which the production of offspring is central.⁴⁸ This is clearly reminiscent of Livy.⁴⁹ Certainly, the production of offspring is important for cementing relationships between different communities and individuals,⁵⁰ but the historian's emphasis and his character's explanations are distinct: marriage and childrearing are an end in and of itself for Romulus, whereas for Dionysius they are tools for achieving broader political objectives.⁵¹

The differing explanations of the lead up to the abduction has interpretative consequences. Livy depicts these actions as satisfying an immediate and existential threat, which then happen to have larger ramifications. For Dionysius, in contrast, the issue always had to do with Rome's ambitious foreign policy and position among her neighbors. In this respect, Dionysius' version offers a deeper understanding of the cultural work that this myth had for Roman society.⁵² The abduction of women becomes the *ur-act* of Roman expansion.

2. Placating the captured women

In all accounts the captive women must somehow be subdued or won over, accepting their new lives and, to a certain extent, coming to champion

⁴⁶ *Ant. Rom.* 2, 30, 5: ...ὥς οὐκ ἐφ' ὕβρει τῆς ἀρπαγῆς ἀλλ' ἐπὶ γάμῳ γενομένης.

⁴⁷ For a similar argument, cf. *Ant. Rom.* 2, 30, 2.

⁴⁸ C. Dougherty, 1993, p. 62.

⁴⁹ Note Dionysius' use of the participle παραμυθησάμενος (to persuade, sooth), which is also used to console a defeated enemy at *Ant. Rom.* 3, 22, 2; cf. below on AVC 1, 9, 16.

⁵⁰ S. Treggiari, 1991, pp. 107-119 for marriage and *affinitas*.

⁵¹ R. Brown, 1995, p. 295 has put this well, "What is important is that Livy has made the political motive advanced by Dionysius and Plutarch subordinate to the biological." For Plutarch, see *Rom.* 14, 6, where he argues that Romulus wanted to "mix the people together."

⁵² See C. Dougherty, 1993, p. 67, who does not discuss Dionysius, but clearly identified that the legend has more meaning than Livy explicitly recognizes: "It is abundantly clear that within the larger scope of Roman cultural memory and self-representation, the rape of the Sabine women does much more than record how the young Roman state managed to ensure its future population." Cf. M.M. Henry and S.L. James, 2012, p. 85.

the Roman cause. Without such a change of perspective and/or loyalty, the dramatic dénouement where the Sabine daughters/Roman wives help broker a peace between the two warring parties would not be possible narratively. However, the timeline of this process of assimilation and the details given about the specific women who play a role in the eventual negotiations between the Romans and Sabines diverge in Livy and Dionysius.

Livy has Romulus speak to his captives, claiming that their fathers' unwillingness to compromise was the cause of the conflict and that they, in fact, have very bright futures to look forward to:⁵³

sed ipse Romulus circumibat docebatque partum id superbia factum qui conubium finitimis negassent; illas tamen in matrimonio, in societate fortunarum omnium civitatisque et quo nihil carius humano generi sit liberum fore; mollirent modo iras et, quibus fors corpora dedisset, darent animos; saepe ex iniuria postmodum gratiam ortam; eoque melioribus usuras viris quod adnirusur pro se quisque sit ut, cum suam vicem functus officio sit, parentium etiam patriaeque expleat desiderium.

But Romulus himself went amongst them and explained that the pride of their parents had caused this deed, when they had refused their neighbors the right to intermarry; nevertheless the daughters should be wedded and become co-partners in all the possessions of the Romans, in their citizenship and, dearest privilege of all to the human race, in their children; only let them moderate their anger, and give their hearts to those to whom fortune had given their persons. A sense of injury had often given place to affection, and they would find their husbands the kinder for this reason, that every man would earnestly console his wife for the home and parents she had lost. (AVC 1, 9, 14-15; trans. LCL)

As in the lead up to the kidnapping, Livy's narrative focuses on domestic concerns, claiming that the women can enjoy marriage and children. Furthermore, they will join in a partnership with their new husbands. Although the argument addresses here-and-now domestic concerns, the semantics of *societas* proleptically points ahead,⁵⁴ gesturing towards the new types of relationships and partnerships that the rape will make possible: the

⁵³ On the passage, see R.M. Ogilvie, 1965, p. 70, who offers different parallels from Greek epic and tragedy. M. Labate, 2006 also connects Romulus' words to *Iliad* 6, 429-30.

⁵⁴ For *societas* as an aspect of marriage, see S. Treggiari, 1991, pp. 249-251, who shows that Livy's language here is conventional. This is important for R. Brown, 1995 and the notion of *concordia*. For *societas* as a political relationship between communities, see *OLD* s.v. 5 and 6.

submission of the women and the acceptance of their fate foreshadow—and make possible—the later integration of Sabines and Romans.⁵⁵ Romulus then argues that the women, if they change their perspective, will quickly be won over by their doting husbands. And indeed, the Roman men follow Romulus' speech by showering the women with *blanditiae* (AVC 1, 9, 16).⁵⁶

What is striking about Livy's account is how quickly and effortlessly Romulus and the Romans are able to persuade their captives. As Livy puts it in the next chapter, *Iam admodum mitigati animi raptis erant* (AVC 1, 10, 1).⁵⁷ This rapid and frankly fanciful shift of perspective has not gone uncommented, strongly adding to what Carol Dougherty has called “a kind of [trivialized] party game whereby Roman boys get matched up with Sabine girls.”⁵⁸ In other words, the Romans' bad behavior seems to be quickly forgiven and hence excused, not unlike other ways that sexual violence was trivialized in ancient literature more broadly.⁵⁹

In Dionysius, Romulus' speech to the captives contains some of the same elements, such as the idea that the women should accept what fortune has

⁵⁵ The word reappears at the end of the story (AVC 1, 14, 3 and 1, 17, 2). G. Miles, 1995, p. 290 argues that it is the women who “fulfill the original purpose of the abduction and their original function within it.”

⁵⁶ For two different readings of the significance of this word, see G. Miles, 1995, pp. 208-7 and M. Beard, 1999, p. 7.

⁵⁷ Shortly before these same women were described as follows: *Nec raptis aut spes de se melior aut indignatio est minor* (1, 9, 14).

⁵⁸ C. Dougherty, 1998, p. 276. Also see M. Fox, 1996, p. 108 and J.P. Hallett, 2012, p. 379. For women and the “fairy tale” aspects in Livy, see J.-M. Claassen 1999, p. 80. Downplaying or “sanitizing” the violence of rape is common in the interpretation of myth and literature generally, as R. Lauriola, 2022, pp. 10 & 119 n. 206 points out. This also resonates with other accounts—both ancient and unfortunately modern—where “no” does not really mean “no”; for this idea in Ovid's version in the *Ars amatoria*, see M. Labate, 2006, pp. 214-215.

⁵⁹ E.g., new comedy where the harms of rape are often seen as being assuaged by marriage. See K. Gaca, 2014, p. 346; C.A. Reeder, 2017, p. 366; S.S. Witzke, 2020; R. Lauriola, 2022, pp. 46-48. The idea of happy marriage also shifts focus away from the realities of domestic violence, an issue discussed by I. Mañas Romero, 2019, pp. 72-75.

bestowed on them,⁶⁰ but there are also certain differences.⁶¹ Again, it is what Dionysius leaves out that is telling: there are no wheedling words or flattery from the Roman men; crucially, he does not provide any immediate indication that the women have been placated. Dionysius does implicitly explain this process, but it comes significantly later in the story at *Ant. Rom.* 2, 37, 4, when Romulus claims that the women are “not unwilling” to stay at Rome (ἐπειδὴ οὐδ’ αὐταῖς ἀκούσαις ὁ μετὰ τῶν ἀνδρῶν βίος ἦν). This takes place some three years after the women were first kidnapped and after Rome had already conquered several other cities.⁶² It is the birth of children—not the promise of embarking on a shared partnership or some flattery—that brings these women into the Roman fold. As discussed below, this focus on the role of children recalls the ways that sexual violence and resulting pregnancy could be—and still are—used to elide or undermine the identity of women during war.

3. The subjugation and colonization of Caenina, Antemnae and Crustumarium

Because of the Romans’ hostile actions, the aggrieved cities seek to exact revenge on Rome and curb her power.⁶³ In both accounts, Rome’s new enemies are poorly coordinated and foolhardy enough to launch individual attacks against her: first the different Latin communities take on Rome, thus delaying her climactic encounter with Titus Tatius’ Sabines.⁶⁴ As each attack is withstood and each city defeated, Romulus expands Rome’s *imperium* by subsuming these former foes.⁶⁵ While both historians use this story as a model for showing Rome’s later ability to conquer, pacify and assimilate enemies, how this process is depicted and understood reveals distinct ways of conceptualizing Roman power.

⁶⁰ *Ant. Rom.* 2, 30, 5: στέργειν τοὺς δοθέντας αὐταῖς ἀνδρας ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης.

⁶¹ Not all of which can be discussed here. For the interesting case of the number of women involved, see T.P. Wiseman, 1983; for his claim that his actions are traditional and legitimate, see M. Fox, 1996, pp. 58-9.

⁶² See note below on *Ant. Rom.* 2, 52, 5.

⁶³ While Livy and Dionysius’ accounts parallel each other on this point, there were also other versions that included different neighboring communities; cf. T.P. Wiseman, 1983, p. 447.

⁶⁴ For the importance and gendered significance of the emotional response of these three states (and the Sabines more rational approach to war), see P. Keegan, 2021, pp. 76-77.

⁶⁵ A pattern that would repeat itself later; cf. C. Ando, 1999, p. 9.

For Livy, Hersilia, who is Romulus' wife in this version of the story, plays a leading role in the episode.⁶⁶ As the Romans are celebrating their decisive victories over Caenina and Antemnae, Romulus is approached by Hersilia, who begs him to show mercy to the conquered communities and to incorporate them into the Roman state, which would also benefit the city (...*orat ut parentibus earum det veniam et in civitatem accipiat; ita rem coalescere concordia posse*, 1, 11, 2).⁶⁷ Romulus grants her request and then quickly goes on to defeat the Crustumerians, leading to the establishment of Rome's first colonies (*utroque coloniae missae*, 1, 11, 4).⁶⁸ As previously in Livy, conflict quickly gives way to forgiveness and cooperation. With this quick and happy resolution, Romulus manages to showcase his mercy and strengthen Rome at once.

Something that was latent in Livy is made more explicit in Dionysius. Had all the aggrieved parties joined forces, they could have overcome Rome.⁶⁹ Yet perhaps the most crucial difference is how Romulus decides to deal with these conquered foes. Hersilia, who is not Romulus' wife but rather the mother of a captured Sabine, does not appear in this part of *Antiquitates Romanae*. Instead, Romulus deliberates with the Senate concerning the most effective course of action after Rome's victory over Caenina and Antemnae (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 35, 1-2). He then delivers a speech to the kidnapped women from these two

⁶⁶ For the different traditions and treatments of this character, see R.M. Ogilvie, 1965, pp. 73-74 and T.P. Wiseman, 1983. K. Mustakallio 1999, p. 57 rightly stresses Hersilia's role as an advisor and helper to Romulus in Livy's account.

⁶⁷ For the importance of this detail, cf. R. Brown, 1995, p. 302, who notes that in Livy Hersilia is the first person to evoke the concept of *concordia*. Others, e.g., J.-M. Claassen, 1999, p. 84 and P. Keegan, 2021, p. 65, have argued that Hersilia's actions reflect the ways that aristocratic Roman women could wield their influence behind the scenes in Livy's day.

⁶⁸ Livy stresses that more colonists wished to settle in Crustumerium because of the fertility of the land, a detail that plays into the link between of colonization and fertility; see C. Dougherty 1993.

⁶⁹ Dionysius is explicit on this point at *Ant. Rom.* 2, 33, 1: εἰ καθ' ἑν αἱ τρεῖς γένοιτο, μίαν ἄρασθαι πόλιν οὐ μεγάλην. See C. Ando, 1999, pp. 9-10 on a similar thought in later Greek authors' discussions of the Roman empire. That said, Dionysius also suggests that Romulus recognized this potential weakness since in this instance (unlike earlier) he sends out ambassadors to try to placate or at least delay the Sabines' response (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 33, 1: Ἐπεὶ δ' οὐδὲν ἐπέραινον ἀντικαθισταμένων αὐταῖς τῶν παρὰ τοῦ Ῥωμύλου πρεσβειῶν καὶ θεραπευουσῶν λόγους τε καὶ ἔργους τὸ ἔθνος...).

cities, who are described as being distraught and beside themselves with grief.⁷⁰ Although the men deserve punishment, Romulus says, Rome will be lenient.⁷¹ This is not only a way of avoiding the future anger of the gods,⁷² but also a means of rewarding the captured women who have thus far (μέχρι τοῦδε, *Ant. Rom.* 2, 35, 3) behaved themselves.⁷³ He then explains that the men will be given rights and allowed to keep their freedom. This may sound more or less like Livy's version, where conflicts are quickly and seamlessly resolved, but Romulus goes on to add an important caveat:

τοῦ δὲ μηδὲν ἔτι αὐτοὺς ἐπεξαμαρτεῖν μηδ' εὐρεθῆναι τι χρῆμα, ὃ ποιήσει τὰς πόλεις διαλύσασθαι τὴν πρὸς ἡμᾶς φιλίαν, φάρμακον ἡγοῦμεθα κράτιστον εἶναι πρὸς εὐδοξίαν τε καὶ πρὸς ἀσφάλειαν τὸ αὐτὸ χρήσιμον ἀμφοτέροις, εἰ ποιήσαιμεν ἀποικίας τῆς Ῥώμης τὰς πόλεις καὶ συνοίκους αὐταῖς πέμψαιμεν αὐτόθεν τοὺς ἱκανούς.

But, to prevent their ever repeating their fault or the finding of any occasion to induce their cities to break off their alliance with us, the best means, we consider, and that which will at the same time conduce to the reputation and security of both, is for us to make those cities colonies of Rome and to send a sufficient number of our own people from here to inhabit them jointly with your fellow citizens. (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 35, 4; trans. LCL)

Dionysius' Romulus offers a more perceptive understanding of how Roman power works. Even if an alliance is in the best interest of these conquered towns, they cannot be trusted on their own. Colonization, in this case the literal mixing of the populations, is seen as a sort of remedy (φάρμακον) to

⁷⁰ *Ant. Rom.* 2, 35, 2: ὀλοφυρόμεναί τε καὶ προκυλιόμεναί καὶ τὰς τῶν πατρίδων ἀνακλαίουσαι τύχας.

⁷¹ The theme of Rome's moderation and leniency are found repeatedly in the following books and characterize Rome's treatment of defeated foes (e.g., *Ant. Rom.* 3, 49, 6 & 3, 54, 2 for just two of many examples). As one of the reviewers has noted, Dionysius' preferred word in this context, ἐπιείκεια, is closer to Latin *aequitas* than *clementia*. For a recent discussion of Augustan *clementia* and the *princeps*' ability not only to take but also grant life, see I. Zoigas, 2021, p. 305.

⁷² Romulus here says that one day Rome's fortunes may be reversed and she may need mercy. The trope of the mighty city one day falling is common. For example, see Polybius 38, 22, 2, where Scipio cites *Iliad* 6, 448, or Herodotus 1, 5 (Τὰ γὰρ τὸ πάλαι μεγάλα ἦν, τὰ πολλὰ αὐτῶν σμικρὰ γέγονε· τὰ δὲ ἐπ' ἐμέο ἦν μεγάλα, πρότερον ἦν σμικρά).

⁷³ For echoes of this speech, see that of the dictator Postumius at *Ant. Rom.* 6, 21.

ward off this potential disease.⁷⁴ This dynamic of intentionally melding and mixing the communities as a means to subdue a conquered people is a theme that will resurface in Dionysius' account when he narrates the intervention of the Sabine women at the end of the story.⁷⁵

Dionysius next turns to how Romulus quickly bests the men of Crustumerium and follows the same policy of establishing a colony. The news of Romulus' military prowess and "fairness" (*ἐπιείκεια*, *Ant. Rom.* 2, 36, 2) spread, and other cities willingly submit to Rome, thus further increasing her power.

While the outcome is the same in the two historians' accounts, the details are not. In Livy, Romulus is swayed by the pleas of his wife⁷⁶ and acts out of magnanimity; in Dionysius, the king makes a calculated and strategic call to strengthen Rome. As had been the case at the outset of the Sabine episode, Dionysius' Romulus doggedly pursues the goal of increasing Rome's power; his choices are calculated and result from deliberation between men. Whereas Livy's account suggests that being part of Rome is almost a gift, Dionysius emphasizes Rome's need to grow. Furthermore, Dionysius' account hints at the messy work of incorporating defeated foes into Rome's *imperium*. How can Rome ensure the good behavior of conquered communities in the future?

4. Tatius' attack on Rome

Unlike the previous attempts to exact vengeance on Rome, the attack launched by Titus Tatius' Sabines proves to be a much more dramatic conflict in which Rome finally meet her match. While the historians coincide on many of the details, their explanations of how and why the fighting comes to an end are pointedly distinct.

⁷⁴ And yet in the subsequent books Rome will struggle to maintain the loyalty of conquered Latin cities. At *Ant. Rom.* 3, 49, 5-6, for instance, Crustumerium, one of Rome's first colonies, joins other Latins against Rome, though quickly gives up the fight. Rome is clement and leaves behind more colonists.

⁷⁵ It also fits the general argument of Book 1, where Dionysius lays out a complex and at times convoluted argument about the mixed Greek origins of Rome. See M. Fox, 2019 for a brief discussion of this book.

⁷⁶ For Hersilia, see T.P. Wiseman, 1983, pp. 448-50 and her role in the broader historiographical tradition.

After Mettius Curtius escapes the pursuing Roman forces and is cheered on by the Sabines, Livy insists that the Romans have a clear advantage in the battle (*sed res romana erat superior*, *AVC* 1, 12, 10). This lowers the stakes for the upcoming intervention of the Sabine women. Had the two armies continued to fight, Livy implies, the Romans would have come out victorious. In Dionysius, however, the battle is more protracted (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 43), continuing after Mettius flees. The Romans do not have an advantage, but rather there is a stalemate with neither side likely to prevail. While no one has a clear path to victory, all can see the price of retreating. The Sabines are not pleased with any of the options available to them (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 44, 1-2); for their part, the Romans do not want to ask for a truce with unfavorable terms, yet they have no clear path to victory (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 44, 3). Unlike in Livy, there is a clear impasse with neither side knowing how to move forward.⁷⁷ As a result, the intervention of the Sabine women, though certainly less spectacular than in Livy, becomes all the more necessary for bringing an end to the conflict. Dionysius' account points to a very different type of partnership than Livy's had: instead of being based on Roman strength and clemency, it is based on Rome's limitations and the need for compromise (see below). As the Senate itself concludes, the plan presented by the Sabine women was the only option that they had left:

ὡς δὲ ταῦτ' ἤκουσαν οἱ συνεδρεύοντες τῷ βασιλεῖ σφόδρα τε ἠγάσθησαν καὶ πόρον ὡς ἐν ἀμηγάνοις πράγμασι τοῦτον ὑπέλαβον εἶναι μόνον.

When the Senators together with the king heard their plan and, given the trouble that they were in, saw it as the only way out. (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 45, 3; trans. LCL)

These differences build on the historians' previous depiction of the establishment of Rome's first colonies. Up to this point, Livy's version paints the Romans as generous given their willingness to compromise and assimilate others. In this sense, the role of Livy's Sabine women echoes that of Hersilia from the foundation of the city's first colonies. Dionysius' narrative, in contrast, leaves the matter up in the air given that resolving the dispute actually requires the women's intervention. Seeing that the Romans were at a loss and could possibly have lost the war, allowing the Sabine women to intervene becomes a last ditch effort rather than an act of generosity.

⁷⁷ *Ant. Rom.* 2, 45, 1: ἀμφοτέρωι ταῦτα διαλογιζόμενοι καὶ οὔτε μάχης ἄρχειν τολμῶντες οὔτε περὶ φιλίας διαλεγόμενοι παρεῖλλον τὸν χρόνον...

5. Ending the conflict

The intervention of the Sabine women continues to develop the differences between the two historians' depiction of Roman power and foreign policy.⁷⁸ Livy's is certainly the more memorable and cinematic,⁷⁹ with the women spontaneously interrupting the battle, bravely separating the fighting men and making an impassioned and rhetorical plea to both sides:⁸⁰

tum Sabinae mulieres, quarum ex iniuria bellum ortum erat, crinibus passis scissaque veste, victo malis muliebri pavore, ausae se inter tela volantia inferre, ex transverso impetu facto dirimere infestas acies, dirimere iras, hinc patres, hinc viros orantes, ne sanguine se nefando soceri generique respergerent, ne parricidio macularent partus suos, nepotum illi, hi liberum progeniem. 'si adfinitatis inter vos, si conubii piget, in nos vertite iras; nos causa belli, nos vulnerum ac caedium viris ac parentibus sumus; melius peribimus quam sine alteris vestrum viduae aut orbae vivemus.'

Then the Sabine women, whose wrong had given rise to the war, with loosened hair and torn garments, their woman's timidity lost in a sense of their misfortune, dared to go amongst the flying missiles, and rushing in from the side, to part the hostile forces and disarm them of their anger, beseeching their fathers on this side, on that their husbands, that fathers-in-law should not stain themselves with impious bloodshed, nor pollute with parricide the suppliants' children, grandsons to one party and sons to the other. "If you regret," they continued, "the relationship that unites you, if you regret the marriage-tie, turn your anger against us; we are the cause of the war, the cause of wounds, and even death to both our husbands and our parents. It will be better for us to perish than to live, lacking either of you, as widows or orphans." (AVC 1, 13, 1-4; trans. LCL)

The terms of the conflict continue to be domestic and familial (husbands and fathers; fathers-in-law and sons-in-law; fathers and grandfathers),⁸¹ rather than depicting the conflict as being waged between two distinct communities. This way of seeing the war as an interfamilial affair is, of course, evocative of civil

⁷⁸ T.P. Wiseman, 1983, p. 446 argues that before Livy, there was "no one canonical version" of the story.

⁷⁹ So R.M. Ogilvie, 1965, p. 76, who unfavorably compares Dionysius' version. For epic elements of this "peripeteia," see R.M. Ogilvie, 1965, pp. 78-9.

⁸⁰ For the exceptionally active role of the women here, see S.E. Smethurst, 1950. P. Keegan, 2021, p. 78 sees guilt as motivating their behavior rather than bravery.

⁸¹ For the importance of familial and domestic language in depicting the women as *matronae*, see P. Keegan, 2021, p. 78.

discord.⁸² The women's arguments and pleas prove convincing (*movet res cum multitudinem tum duces*, *AVC* 1, 13, 4), and the leaders decide then and there to make peace, joining the Romans and Sabines into one people (*civiatem unam ex duabus faciunt*, *ibid.*). The decision to make peace is as spontaneous as the women's intervention in the conflict. Here Brown is correct to stress that the Sabine women "are motivated by a profound sense of the ties created by their marriage, a marriage that they now explicitly acknowledge as such."⁸³ This theme of marriage, union and cooperation detected throughout Livy's account reaches a crescendo with the intervention of the Sabine women. With this happy resolution to the conflict, Livy claims, Romulus shows his appreciation for the women by naming the 30 curiae after (a subset of) them.⁸⁴ Although Romulus and Tatius both reign as kings, Livy is clear that Rome has gotten the better deal, agreeing to call its citizens *Quirites* as a sort of concession to Titus Tatius:

Regnum consociant: imperium omne conferunt Romam. Ita geminata urbe, ut Sabinis tamen aliquid daretur, Quirites a Curibus appellati.

They shared the sovereignty, but all authority was transferred to Rome. In this way the population doubled, and that some concession might after all be granted to the Sabines, the citizens were named *Quirites*, from the town of Cures. (*AVC* 1, 13, 5; trans. LCL)

As with Rome's calculated decision to establish its first colonies, any trace of spontaneity is lacking in Dionysius.⁸⁵ Instead, the women first make an appeal to the Romans, requesting permission to ask the Sabine men to pursue peace (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 45, 3). The Romans agree, but they lay down one extremely important condition: only mothers will be allowed to speak with the Sabine men. Furthermore, women who have one child should leave him or her behind with the child's father before venturing forth. Women who had given

⁸² R. Brown, 1995, pp. 317-318.

⁸³ R. Brown, 1995, p. 309.

⁸⁴ Dionysius claims that there is much debate on this point among ancient historians, but he maintains that the curiae had already been formed (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 47, 3-4). The issue has attracted much scholarly attention; for a review of the evidence, see C.J. Smith, 2006, pp. 186-198.

⁸⁵ Cf. R. Brown, 1995, p. 307.

birth to more than one child, however, were permitted to take them along to add weight to their pleas.⁸⁶

γίνεται δὴ μετὰ τοῦτο δόγμα τοιόνδε βουλῆς· ὅσαι τοῦ Σαβίνων γένους ἦσαν ἔχουσαι τέκνα, ταύταις ἐξουσίαν εἶναι καταλιπούσαις τὰ τέκνα παρὰ τοῖς ἀνδράσι πρεσβεύειν ὡς τοὺς ὁμοεθνεῖς, ὅσαι δὲ πλειόνων παιδῶν μητέρες ἦσαν ἐπάγεσθαι μοῖραν ἐξ αὐτῶν ὁσηνδήτινα καὶ πράττειν ὅπως εἰς φιλίαν συνάξουσι τὰ ἔθνη.

Thereupon a decree of the senate was passed to the effect that those Sabine women who had a child, upon leaving him or her with their husbands, have permission to go as ambassadors to their countrymen, and that those who had several children should take along as many of them as they wished and endeavor to reconcile the two nations. (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 45, 4; trans. slightly modified from LCL)

Dionysius' detail about children is noteworthy.⁸⁷ The fact that mothers with one child must leave him or her behind suggests that the Romans do not fully trust the women to return.⁸⁸ The child acts as a sort of hostage that guarantees that a mother will actually do as she has said and not simply decamp to the Sabines.⁸⁹ Accordingly, it makes sense that women who did not have children were not allowed to serve as ambassadors: there was nothing anchoring them to Rome.⁹⁰ Women who had birthed multiple children, however, are trusted to take them along, suggesting that after multiple births the women have been more fully integrated into the Roman project. This detail

⁸⁶ When narrating the death of Titus Tatius (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 52, 2), Dionysius claims that he had been at war with Rome for three years, presumably referring to the time between the initial kidnapping and the peace agreement between Romans and Sabines. Accordingly, there would have been time for women to give birth to more than one child.

⁸⁷ Cf. T.P. Wiseman, 1983, p. 447 on the passage of time in the story. Plutarch also recognizes the importance of time and children for the assimilation of the Sabine women (*Rom.* 19, 2-5).

⁸⁸ There are hints of similar concerns in variations of the Tarpeia myth where she was depicted as the abducted daughter of Titus Tatius and the captive/wife of Romulus. Plutarch attributes the story to Antigonos but rejects it himself. For a discussion, see T.S. Welch, 2015, p. 259.

⁸⁹ Contra G. Miles, 1995, p. 191, who offers a different reading of the role of children. For the role of children in political negotiations generally, see F. Rohr Vio, 2020; for her analysis of the Sabine women's intervention in Livy, see pp. 185-187.

⁹⁰ Children had already been used as hostages at *Ant. Rom.* 2, 34, 1 after the fall of Caenina.

stands in stark contrast to Livy, who, as we have seen, claimed that the women were mostly won over immediately after being kidnapped. This passage is also haunting in so far as it parallels contemporary evidence about the use of rape and childbirth as weapons of war and genocide. As Carol Dougherty has put it in a comparison of Livy and the rape of Bosnian women during the war of 1990s,

[R]ape as part of a political strategy in Bosnia is only half the story. Bosnian and Croatian women are raped so that they will give birth to Serbian children, and these children complicate and threaten the native political, ethnic, and religious identity of their mothers as well. The act of rape attempts to replace Bosnians with Serbs.⁹¹

While Dougherty is right to claim that this process is glossed over in Livy's account, it is hinted at in Dionysius, even if it is not spelled out explicitly.⁹² Taking this perspective into account, we can infer that Sabine women without "Roman" children were still considered to be Sabine and hence could not be trusted by Rome. Sabine women with one "Roman" child presented a liminal case, since their natural love for their child would guarantee that they would keep their word and serve the Roman cause. Finally, women with multiple "Roman" children were apparently no longer Sabine but fully Roman, with their former identities being overwritten. Though certainly not expressed in terms of ethnic genocide, as is the case in recent studies of wartime rape,⁹³ Dionysius describes a similar dynamic in which sexual violence and the forced production of offspring play a central role in the expansion of Rome's *imperium*. This parallels what we had seen earlier in Dionysius' account where Romulus did not trust Caenina or Antemnae to keep their end of the bargain after surrendering. It is only through the process of colonization in which Roman male citizens physically occupy the conquered communities that those

⁹¹ C. Dougherty, 1998, pp. 278-79. For further bibliography on other contemporary conflicts, see C.A. Reeder, 2017.

⁹² C. Dougherty, 1998 does not discuss Dionysius' account, focusing instead on Livy and, to a lesser extent, Ovid.

⁹³ K. Gaca, 2010, 2011 & 2014 deal with the issues surrounding rape in warfare extensively. For one telling example, see K. Gaca, 2010, pp.105-6 on the Macedonian sack of Thebes in 335 BCE. Also see C.A. Reeder, 2017 for an overview of ancient and contemporary examples of how rape is weaponized in war; for the idea of ethnic genocide and the loss of status in particular, see p. 378.

peoples can be considered trustworthy and, ultimately, Roman. Elsewhere in the *Antiquitates Romane*, Dionysius alludes to other methods of minimizing conquered subjects' former identities to speed up the process of taking on a Roman one.⁹⁴ The effects of childbirth on a woman's identity and allegiance provide a parallel to and metaphor for larger political processes of assimilation and colonization.⁹⁵

When the Sabine women do venture out and speak to the Sabine men, Dionysius does not give them a direct speech. Instead, he simply states that their arrival in the Sabine camp aroused pity and that in a dramatic speech, Hersilia beseeched the Sabine men to strike a truce with the Romans (μακρὰν καὶ συμπαθῆ διεξῆλθε δέησιν, *Ant. Rom.* 2, 45, 5-6).⁹⁶ The different role that Hersilia plays here is remarkable. In the Roman's account she asks Romulus, her husband, to show mercy to her conquered kinsmen and to kindly welcome them into the fold. For Dionysius, she is a Sabine mother entreating her family members to give in to Rome, strike a deal and make the best of the situation, much like she herself had done when her daughter was first abducted.

6. Conclusions

In ancient and modern warfare alike, rape is commonplace or, as Cicero put it, a *mos belli*.⁹⁷ In Antiquity this is true to the extent that rape becomes a common metonymy for military defeat in ancient literature and

⁹⁴ This is a major theme in the conflict between Rome and Alba Longa in Book 3. Note how Rome distributes the Albans into different tribes and curiae after the destruction of Alba Longa (*Ant. Rom.* 3, 31, 3 and 3, 37, 4, respectively). This contrasts clearly with the incorporation of Lucumo (the future Lucius Tarquinius) who willingly comes to Rome and is grouped together with other Etruscans (*Ant. Rom.* 3, 48, 2) or Appius Claudius Sabinus (*Ant. Rom.* 5, 40, 3-5).

⁹⁵ See T.S. Welch, 2015, pp. 95-98 on empire and the "melting pot" in relation to Social War coinage. These issues also resonate with the wider Augustan context: see K. Milnor 2005, pp. 147-148 on gendered Augustanism and especially Dionysius' Romulean constitution. For biopower in the *Res Gestae*, I. Zoigas, 2021, pp. 303-313. For the *Lex Iulia de adulteriis coercendis*, see R. Lauriola, 2022, pp. 31-35 with further references.

⁹⁶ It is interesting that Dionysius does not write this speech, but rather leaves the reader to imagine it. As noted above, Dionysius places great value on speeches in the *Ant. Rom.*

⁹⁷ Cic. *Verr.* 2, 4, 116. Also see K. Gaca, 2011, p. 85 n.2.

art.⁹⁸ This literary and visual topos, however, is complicated in the Sabine episode: instead of being a result of war, rape becomes its cause.⁹⁹ Instead of symbolizing defeat and the loss of freedom, it is depicted as a marriage and an opportunity to share in a prosperous future. The traditional division between *domi* and *militiae* is also blurred. Common elements of Roman domestic life and foreign policy here mirror each other, linking the beginning of Roman marriage with the origins of Roman expansion.

Within the confines of this Roman myth about the city's first expansion, there is ample opportunity for authors to characterize these expansionary processes differently.¹⁰⁰ Within the defining themes of rape-marriage and domination-cooperation, explanatory weight can be distributed variously: Livy, paralleling other literary depictions of rape with a "happy ending," paints a picture of conflict that is quickly resolved and replaced with a productive partnership, stressing themes of marriage, *venia*, *societas* and *concordia*.¹⁰¹ This is a rather idealized portrait of conquest and empire building that depicts the process as a relatively seamless act of generosity that is mutually beneficial for conqueror and conquered.¹⁰² Livy will express this idea even more explicitly in book 5, when Falerii Veteres willingly surrenders to Rome: *melius nos sub imperio vestro quam legibus nostris victuros*.¹⁰³

⁹⁸ For a list of examples and further references, see K. Gaca, 2010, 2011 and 2014; C.A. Reeder, 2017.

⁹⁹ There is a clear parallel with the abduction of Helen in epic. For a less known parallel, see C.S. Kraus, 1994a, pp. 274-275 on the tradition that the Gauls first came to Clusium as part of an elaborate plot to take revenge for adultery.

¹⁰⁰ On the constraints and flexibilities of telling Rome's early history as well as the importance of orality, see A. Mayorgas Rodríguez, 2020, pp. 108-109 & 2022, pp. 100 & 104.

¹⁰¹ So G. Miles, 1995, chapter 5. He rightly points out that Livy's account, however, is not "realistic" and does not offer "a practical solution to the problems of how to achieve stable marriages and lasting alliances."

¹⁰² In this respect, my analysis concurs with Brown 1995, who argues that Livy's narrative stresses *concordia* on all levels, between husband and wife and between different political actors (Romans and Sabines). Also cf. G. Miles, 1995, p. 203 on "the achievement of harmony between men and women, Sabines and Romans", and Keegan 2021, 102 n.96. C.S. Kraus, 2021, pp. 146 & 161 rightly points out that violence and force are always present, sometimes just lurking below the surface in Livy's narrative.

¹⁰³ *AVC* 5, 37, 12 with C.S. Kraus, 2021, p. 154

Dionysius' depiction better—though certainly not fully—reflects the realities and trauma of war and conquest.¹⁰⁴ His narrative conspicuously lacks the details found in Livy that portray reconciliation as quick or easy. Instead, he implies that this is a more drawn out and difficult process.¹⁰⁵ Rome's first marriage is more like an act of conquest than vice versa, in which marriage is an insoluble relationship in which men rule (κρατεῖν) over women, albeit in a manner that is deemed fair.¹⁰⁶ Importantly, he alludes to how sexual violence and forced childbirth can be used as tools of domination and a means of integrating foreign communities, if not by erasing their previous identities outright, then, at the very least, by complicating and blurring them.¹⁰⁷ Subdued communities are not quickly or seamlessly integrated into Rome. Rather conquered towns must be populated and policed by Roman men while captive women must give birth to “Roman” children before becoming fully integrated and trustworthy members of the community. While this account points to a prolonged and presumably painful process, it nevertheless suggests that such a process is effective; furthermore, it does not suggest that these ends are unworthy or that the means were unjustified.

For a modern reader it would be easy to read Dionysius' account as critical of Roman expansion,¹⁰⁸ but framing his account in simple pro- or anti-

¹⁰⁴ In this respect, he follows Polybius who recognized the importance of coercive force for Roman's expansion. Cf. C. Ando, 1999, p. 24. G. Miles, 1995, p. 217 argues that Ovid's *Fasti* is subversive in so far as it lays bare the role of force and violence in maintaining the Roman social order.

¹⁰⁵ For a similar recognition, see Josephus *Ant. Jud.* 4, 257, where he argues that captured women should not be married until they have gone through the process of mourning. Otherwise, they cannot be happy or willing participants in a marriage.

¹⁰⁶ *Ant. Rom.* 2, 25 presents a detailed discussion of Romulus' marriage policies, stressing that women could not leave a marriage and husbands rule over their wives as needed possessions (*Ant. Rom.* 2, 25, 5: οὗτος ὁ νόμος τὰς τε γυναῖκας ἠνάγκασε τὰς γαμετάς, οἷα δὲ μηδεμίαν ἐχούσας ἐτέραν ἀποστροφὴν, πρὸς ἓνα τὸν τοῦ γεγαμηκότος ζῆν τρόπον, καὶ τοὺς ἀνδρας ὡς ἀναγκαίου τε καὶ ἀναφαιρέτου κτήματος τῆς γυναικὸς κρατεῖν).

¹⁰⁷ See K. Gaca, 2014, p. 307 on Eur. *Andr.* 133-34, for a memorable example of this reduction and erasure of identity. Also see T.S. Welch, 2015, pp. 94-102.

¹⁰⁸ In some ways this recognizes the harm and trauma of expansion highlighted by those who characterize Rome as a “predatory regime.” For one recent discussion, see M. Fernández-Götz, D. Maschek and N. Roymans, 2020.

Roman terms is too simplistic.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, for an ancient audience, the presence of brutal coercion would not have been so shocking.¹¹⁰ Despite Dionysius' suggestion that assimilating others is not without its difficulties, this process is shown to be necessary for Rome and her future: Rome could not have become the *caput orbis* without assimilating foreigners.¹¹¹ Without subduing and joining forces with the smaller Caenina, Antemnae and Crustumerium, Romulus would not have been able to withstand the Sabine attack. And even in its strengthened state, Rome could not beat the Sabines outright, but instead had to find a clever way to elicit their pity and strike an advantageous deal. This departs from Livy's account where joining Rome is represented as a privilege. For Dionysius, Rome, even if the winner, needs the foreign other if she wants to survive and thrive. Not only does this align with Dionysius' general argument in Book 1 about the important and steady accrual of Greek influences on Rome,¹¹² but it implicitly makes an argument that is relevant in Dionysius' own day: with Rome still expanding under Augustus, provincials and newcomers, like Dionysius himself, still had something fundamental to contribute.¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ See the summary of the debate provided by N. Wiater, 2011, pp. 206-209. For recent suggestions that Dionysius is best understood as a "migrant author," see C.C. de Jonge 2022, who follows J. Connolly, 2019.

¹¹⁰ C.A. Reeder, 2017 shows the ubiquity of sexual violence in ancient historiography and war. While we often resort to euphemism to get around our discomfort, this may not have been so necessary for an ancient audience.

¹¹¹ The theme, of course, is not absent from Livy (cf. 1, 8, 3 on building Rome with an eye on the future) or the idea that Romans can observe Roman-like behaviors in non-Romans (cf. C.S. Kraus, 2021, pp. 158-159 on Timasitheus and learning from other outsiders more generally).

¹¹² Cf. J. Martínez-Pinna, 2002, pp. 66-78 on Dionysius' ideologically motivated alteration of his sources to represent the Sabines as Greek in origin; for the issue more broadly, see A. Delcourt, 2005, pp. 105-115 and N. Wiater, 2011, pp. 165-171.

¹¹³ Cf. A. Delcourt, 2005, p. 291: "peut-être pourrait-on ajouter, enfin, que s'y cache l'appel politique d'un fils d'Halicarnasse souhaitant voir concéder la citoyenneté romaine à toute la part hellénophone de l'Empire."

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