THE ENEMY'S BRIDES:
DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS ON
THE ABDUCTION OF THE SABINE WOMEN*

Abstract: Unlike other ancient sources focusing on the origin of Roman marriage, Dionysius of Halicarnassus read the abduction of the Sabine Women as a story to extol Roman foreign policy, based as it was on the principle of φιλανθρωπία as well as the foresight and political wisdom of the Roman ruling class. Romulus as a king-legislator and the Roman senate are the real protagonists of the episode; the abducted women are bereft of, or given, agency according to their social and civic status: at first passive foreigners, they become fully sentient political beings after gaining Roman citizenship through marriage.

Keywords: Sabine women, Sabine war, female agency, Romulean constitution, Roman marriage, Roman identity

I. Introduction

Facing the scarcity of women in his newly founded colony, or perhaps seeking a pretext for war, the first Roman king, Romulus, organised a mass abduction of women of marriageable age, whom he allotted as spouses for his male subjects. The abduction took place during the celebration of *ludi*, to which families from all over Latium had flocked, wishing to attend spectacles and tour the new city. The kidnapping of their daughters, an obvious transgression of basic principles of hospitality, caused the affected Latin peoples to coalesce and declare war on Rome. Legend has it that the Sabines took the lead of the offensive against the Romans and almost defeated them, had not the abducted women—now Roman wives and citizens— intervened, suing for peace, under the guidance of an older *matrona*, Hersilia.[1]

[1] Accounts of the abduction and ensuing war are given in Liv. 1.9–13; D.H. *AR* 2.30–46; Ov. *Fast.* 3.167–258 and *Ars Am.* 1.101–34; Plut. *Rom.* 14–19. Shorter mentions are found in the annalist Cn. Gellius (*FRHist* 14 FF 1, 3, 5 = D.H. *AR* 2.31.1; Charis. 67; Gell. *NA* 13.23.13); Cic. *Rep.* 2.12–13; Val. Max. 2.4.4; Just. 43.3.2; Dio 1.5.4–7; see Poucet (1967) 156–7 for a comprehensive list of written sources. The frieze of the Basilica Aemilia (late first century BCE) includes a visual representation of the episode, on which see, e.g., Albertson (1990) and Arya (2000), with previous bibliography. Traditionally, the *ludi* in question were dedicated

Among the most famous of the early Roman legends, the abduction of the Sabine women has yielded a plethora of interpretations in modern scholarship centring, for instance, on the notion of rape as a foundation myth or as a mythological paradigm for Roman conquest, on the nature of Roman marriage, and on the role of women in Roman society and public life.[2] Of our main sources for the episode (Livy, Dionysius, Ovid, and Plutarch) three wrote their accounts in the Augustan age,[3] prompting scholars to establish connections between the legend, which revolves around the first Roman marriage, and Augustus' laws on marriage and family ethics.[4] Unlike these sources, who overall appear more interested in the socio-political and moral implications of the institution of marriage, Dionysius focuses on the process of integration of conquered peoples into Roman society as well as the role, in this process, of the Roman king and ruling class. This issue seems to resonate with Rome's overseas conquests and post-Social and Civil Wars settlement and would also speak to Dionysius' audience.[5] To understand this difference in emphasis, it is

to Consus or Neptunus Equestris/Poseidon Hippios, who were often identified together: on Consus and his identification with Poseidon Hippios see Strab. 5.3.2, 230C; Plut. *Rom.* 14.3–4; *Mor.* 276C; Serv. ad *Aen.* 8.636; Ogilvie (1965) 66. On the relation between the Consualia and the Sabines' abduction see Varro *Ling.* 6.20; Ov. *Fast.* 3.199–200; Tert. *Spect.* 5.5; see discussion in Bremmer and Horsfall (1987) 43–5; Noonan (1990); Wiseman (2008) 151. I do not discuss here, except for occasional mentions, Ovid's account in either poem, on which see Fox (1996) 184–6, 192–3, 196–201; Landolfi (2005); and Labate (2007) (both on the *Ars Amatoria*).

[2] Cf., e.g., Hemker (1985), who highlights the analogies between rape and conquest in the myth as related by Ovid and Livy; Bremmer and Horsfall (1987) 43–5, who emphasise similarities with Indo-European myths. Miles (1992) and (1995) 179–219 discusses anthropological readings of the episode; see esp. (1992) 169–73 and (1995) 192–6 on interpretations of the abduction as a rite of passage, although the female initiation is framed within the fulfilment of male goals. Mastrocinque (1993) 53–5, dealing with the theme of *violenza fecondatrice*, observes how abduction, rape, and procreation are typical elements of foundation myths set before civilisation and the institution of marriage. Dench (2005) 4–5, 11–15, 20–5, discusses the notion of mythological rape as a metaphor for conceptualising the origins of a mixed race people (namely, the Romans) as well as a paradigm for Roman expansion. Ver Eecke (2008) 81–4 focuses on the rape as a foundation myth; cf. also La Follette (1994) 60 on the connection between the first Roman marriage, war, and fertility, based on Plut. *Rom.* 15.5 (about the custom of Roman brides to part their hair with a spear).

[3] On the time of composition of the early books of Livy's history, see Luce (1965); Woodman (1988) 128–35; Galinsky (1996) 281–2; Burton (2000).

[4] See discussion in Miles (1992) 196 and (1995) 213–16, with previous bibliography. On Augustus' moral legislation see, e.g., Edwards (1993) 34–62; Galinsky (1996) 128–40; Wallace-Hadrill (2008) 329–53; on marriage legislation specifically, see Treggiari (1991) 60–80, 277–8, 453–6.

[5] The question of the composition of Dionysius' audience has been long debated. Scholars have been traditionally divided between those supporting the view of an ethnically targeted audience (primarily Greek: Gabba (1991) 79–80; Fox (1993) 34; Fromentin (1993);

important to consider the aims of Dionysius' historical work, and especially the idea that, through it, Dionysius was to demonstrate the Greek legacy of the Romans, both ethnic and cultural, and the providential character of their domination, ultimately supporting empire-wide appreciation of Roman hegemony.[6] In line with these tenets, his historical reconstruction frequently justifies, through various narrative devices, instances of Roman aggressiveness or elements that might have been morally challenging for a non-Roman audience, stressing, in fact, the legitimacy of Roman initiatives.[7] As I suggest, Dionysius' version of the Sabine women's abduction reinforces an idealised view of Rome's early government by underlining the Romans' exemplary conduct in foreign policy; it also furthers the theory of the Greek legacy of the Romans through parallels with Greek practices and hints at the 'Greekness' of the Latin peoples involved; and, lastly, it creates a highly positive depiction of Roman society by illustrating how proper sexual behaviour and gender and age relations were at play in it. In what follows, I hope to show that Dionysius' account of the abduction strengthens his edifying presentation of early Rome and, in general, the pro-Roman views advanced in his work, further illustrating Dionysius' engagement with both the Roman annalistic tradition he was drawing on and the Augustan cultural setting in which he was operating.

I begin with a discussion of the causes of the abduction (II) and its immediate aftermath (III) focusing, in both cases, on the role of Romulus and the Roman senate in its planning and actualisation and highlighting Romulus' preoccupation with the political rather than 'biological' expansion of the city. Next, I consider the agency of the abducted women in the narrative development of the story through a close reading of Dionysius' text (IV) and, subsequently, I advance some hypotheses on how the character of Hersilia fits in his story (V). In the last section (VI), I propose some reflections on Roman

Galinsky (1996) 340–1; primarily Roman: Palm (1959) 10–11; Hill (1961); Bowersock (1965) 130–2; Luraghi (2003) 270–7) and those arguing for an ethnically mixed audience with similar intellectual backgrounds and interests (Schultze (1986) 136–9; Hidber (1996) 78 n. 325; Fromentin (1998) xxxv–vii; Delcourt (2005) 65–9; Weaire (2005) 246–7; Hogg (2013) 141–2); for a recent overview of the question, see Meins (2019) 108–12; de Jonge and Hunter (2019) 31–3.

[6] As clarified in D.H. *AR* 1.1–8. The aims of the *Roman Antiquities* have been thoroughly examined in the last few decades by a proliferation of excellent studies; see, e.g., Gabba (1991) 60–90; Fox (1993); Schultze (2000); Delcourt (2005) 47–80; Wiater (2011) 165–223; Oakley (2019).

[7] See, e.g., D.H. *AR* 2.27.1 and 5.8.1 on the tradition of paternal severity at Rome, a plain admission of how Greek readers would find certain Roman practices unacceptable and even barbarous. Cf. Schultze (2019), who illustrates how Dionysius 'sanitised' the rape stories of Horatia and Lucretia. Schultze notices how Dionysius' narrative was coloured by contemporary concerns for sexual morality, an observation that one might easily apply to the story of the rape (or abduction) of the Sabine women as well.

ethnic and political identity in the late Republican and early Augustan periods and how Dionysius tried to harmonise its Sabine component with the 'Greekness' he painstakingly constructed for the ancient (and contemporary) Romans.

II. What Prompted the Abduction?

The circumstances of the Sabine women's abduction are inscribed in the framework of Rome's early expansion and Romulus' attempts to promote the colony's growth by attracting or subduing neighbouring peoples. The abduction has a close parallel with the establishment of an asylum for fugitives, which Romulus created specifically to increase the number of male citizens and thereby manpower.[8] The story also supplies a foundation myth for the institution of marriage in Rome.[9] The ancient accounts of it provide both political and social considerations as motives for the seizure of 'foreign' women, although presentations vary in details and tones following the individual authors' different concerns. Cicero and Livy offer the simplest explanations for organising the abduction. Cicero frames it in terms of protecting the resources of the new colony,[10] while Livy, more explicitly, cites the scarcity of women (*penuria mulierum*), which evidently could not be resolved by peaceful means because of the Latins' unwillingness to mingle with the 'lowly' Romans (1.9.1–6).[11] Dionysius advances three competing explanations for the abduction and supports the first one, namely, Romulus' intention to tie diplomatic

[8] Romulus' institution of an asylum for fugitives was a traditional element of Rome's foundation legend; see accounts in Liv. 1.8.5–6; D.H. *AR* 2.15.3–4; Plut. *Rom.* 9.3; also, Cato *Orig.*, *FRHist* 5 F 117 = Gell. 18.12.7; Cic. *De Or.* 1.37; Strab. 5.3.2, 230C; Virg. *Aen.* 8.342–3; Ov. *Fast.* 3.431–4; Vell. Pat. 1.8.5; Dio 47.19.3; Serv. ad *Aen.* 2.761, 8.342. On Romulus' asylum see, e.g., Dench (2005), esp. 15–20; Ver Eecke (2008) 71–4, 78–80; Zelaschi (2017).

[9] On which see Miles (1992) and (1995) 179–219, with discussion of previous interpretations.

[10] Cic. *Rep.* 2.12: … *et ad firmandam nouam ciuitatem nouum quoddam et subagreste consilium, sed ad muniendas opes regni ac populi sui magni hominis et iam tum longe prouidentis secutus est* (… and in order to strengthen the new commonwealth he pursued a plan somewhat unusual and rather savage, but which for securing the prosperity of his kingdom and people revealed a great man who even then saw far into the future). On Cicero's version see Poucet (1967) 161–2.

[11] On Romulus' motive, cf. Liv. 1.9.1: *penuria mulierum hominis aetatem duratura magnitudo erat, quippe quibus nec domi spes prolis nec cum finitimis conubia essent* (By the scarcity of women, the greatness [of Rome] was going to last for [only] one generation since they had neither hope of offspring at home nor rights of intermarriage with neighbouring nations). On the Latins' response to the Roman embassy, see 1.9.5: *nusquam benigne legatio audita est: adeo simul spernebant, simul tantam in medio crescentem molem sibi ac posteris suis metuebant. ac plerisque rogitantibus dimissi ecquod feminis quoque asylum aperuissent; id enim demum compar conubium fore* (Nowhere was

contacts (φιλίας) with Rome's neighbours, while the other two, the scarcity of women (σπάνιν γυναικῶν, recalling Livy's *penuria mulierum*) and Romulus' fondness for war, are rejected as implausible. It is worth considering his full account (*AR* 2.30.2–3, 31.1):

πολλῶν περιοικούντων τὴν Ῥώμην ἐθνῶν μεγάλων τε καὶ τὰ πολέμια ἀλκίμων, ὧν οὐδὲν ἦν τοῖς Ῥωμαίοις φίλιον, οἰκειώσασθαι ταῦτα βουληθεὶς ἐπιγαμίαις, ὅσπερ ἐδόκει τοῖς παλαιοῖς τρόπος εἶναι βεβαιότατος τῶν συναπτόντων φιλίας, ἐνθυμούμενος δὲ ὅτι βουλόμεναι μὲν αἱ πόλεις οὐκ ἂν συνέλθοιεν αὐτοῖς ἄρτι τε συνοικιζομένοις καὶ οὔτε χρήμασι δυνατοῖς οὔτε λαμπρὸν ἔργον ἐπιδεδειγμένοις οὐδέν, βιασθεῖσαι δὲ εἴξουσιν εἰ μηδεμία γένοιτο περὶ τὴν ἀνάγκην ὕβρις, γνώμην ἔσχεν, ᾗ καὶ Νεμέτωρ ὁ πάππος αὐτοῦ προσέθετο, δι᾽ ἁρπαγῆς παρθένων ἀθρόας γενομένης ποιήσασθαι τὰς ἐπιγαμίας. γνοὺς δὲ ταῦτα θεῷ μὲν εὐχὰς τίθεται πρῶτον ἀπορρήτων βουλευμάτων ἡγεμόνι, ἐὰν ἡ πεῖρα αὐτῷ χωρήσῃ κατὰ νοῦν θυσίας καὶ ἑορτὰς ἄξειν καθ᾽ ἕκαστον ἐνιαυτόν· ἔπειτα τῷ συνεδρίῳ τῆς γερουσίας ἀνενέγκας τὸν λόγον, ἐπειδὴ κἀκείνοις τὸ βούλευμα ἤρεσκεν, ἑορτὴν προεῖπε καὶ πανήγυριν ἄξειν Ποσειδῶνι καὶ περιήγγελλεν εἰς τὰς ἔγγιστα πόλεις καλῶν τοὺς βουλομένους ἀγορᾶς τε μεταλαμβάνειν καὶ ἀγώνων· καὶ γὰρ ἀγῶνας ἄξειν ἔμελλεν ἵππων τε καὶ ἀνδρῶν παντοδαπούς ... τῆς δὲ ἁρπαγῆς τὴν αἰτίαν οἱ μὲν εἰς σπάνιν γυναικῶν ἀναφέρουσιν, οἱ δ᾽ εἰς ἀφορμὴν πολέμου, οἱ δὲ τὰ πιθανώτατα γράφοντες, οἷς κἀγὼ συγκατεθέμην, εἰς τὸ συνάψαι φιλότητα πρὸς τὰς πλησιοχώρους πόλεις ἀναγκαίαν

Since many nations that were both numerous and brave in war dwelt round about Rome and none of them was friendly to the Romans, [Romulus] desired to conciliate them by intermarriage, which, in the opinion of the ancients, was the surest method of cementing friendships; but considering that the cities in question would not of their own accord unite with the Romans, who were just getting settled together in one city, and who neither were powerful because of their wealth nor had performed any brilliant exploit, but that they would yield to force if no insolence accompanied such compulsion, he determined, with the

the embassy received favourably: at the same time, they scorned [the Romans] extremely and they feared such a great might growing in the middle [of their territory]; and they were dismissed with the majority asking whether they had opened an asylum for women; for that only would be intermarriage on equal terms; tr. Canon Roberts, modified). On Livy's account, see Miles (1992) and (1995) 179–219; Brown (1995); also, Ogilvie (1965) 64–70; Poucet (1967) 158–9 and 164–7 (comparison with Dionysius' account); Jaeger (1997) 30–56; Wiseman (1983) 445–7; Fox (1996) 58–9, 106–9; Liou-Gille (1998) 29–38; Stevenson (2011) 179–81; Keegan (2021) 71–80.

approval of Numitor, his grandfather, to bring about the desired intermarriages by a wholesale seizure of virgins. After he had taken this resolution, he first made a vow to the god who presides over secret counsels to celebrate sacrifices and festivals every year if his enterprise should succeed. Then, having laid his plan before the senate and gaining their approval, he announced that he would hold a festival and general assemblage in honour of Neptune, and he sent word roundabout to the nearest cities, inviting all who wished to do so to be present at the assemblage and to take part in the increases; for he was going to hold contests of all sorts, both between horses and between men … As regards the reason for the seizing of the virgins, some ascribe it to a scarcity of women, others to the seeking of 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 neighbouring cities, founded on affinity.

There is no mention here of the Latins' disparaging feelings—an obvious cause for resentment and thus an incentive for war—as if to deny that the early Romans could be perceived as undesirable kinsmen by their neighbours.[12] On the other hand, such a claim would be inconsistent with the remarks that Dionysius appends to the account of Romulus' foundation ritual (1.88) at the closure of Book 1, namely, that Rome was not a city of 'barbarians, runaways, and vagabonds' but 'the most impartial and benevolent of cities' (κοινοτάτην τε πόλεων καὶ φιλανθρωποτάτην, 1.89.1) as well as, of course, a Greek city (Ἑλλάδα πόλιν).[13] The notion of φιλανθρωπία as a distinctive political approach towards foreigners is especially important to understand how Dionysius explained Rome's expansion. Romulus initiated it by opening the asylum and granting citizenship rights to conquered nations with the aim to increase Rome's population and workforce. This policy is mentioned twice in the *Roman Antiquities*' preface as Dionysius asserts that Rome's growth was enabled 'through kindly reception of and by giving a share in citizenship to those with a virtuous mind who had been conquered in war' (φιλανθρώπῳ ὑποδοχῇ καὶ πολιτείας μεταδόσει τοῖς μετὰ τοῦ γενναίου ἐν πολέμῳ κρατηθεῖσι, 1.9.4; cf. 1.3.5) and it is developed in the narrative of Romulus' constitutional activity

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[12] As also remarked by Mora (1995) 204.

[13] D.H. *AR* 1.89.1: ὥστε θαρρῶν ἤδη τις ἀποφαινέσθω, πολλὰ χαίρειν φράσας τοῖς βαρβάρων καὶ δραπετῶν καὶ ἀνεστίων ἀνθρώπων καταφυγὴν τὴν Ῥώμην ποιοῦσιν Ἑλλάδα πόλιν αὐτήν, ἀποδεικνύμενος μὲν κοινοτάτην τε πόλεων καὶ φιλανθρωποτάτην (As a result, let everyone now confidently decide to dismiss the many views of those who make Rome a refuge of barbarians, runaways, and vagabonds and declare that [Rome] is a Greek city, demonstrating that it is the most impartial and benevolent of the cities; my translation). On Romulus' foundation ritual in the *Antiquities*, see Delcourt (2005) 264–8.

through the discussion of the initiatives that Romulus designed to make Rome 'great and populous' (μεγάλην δὲ καὶ πολυάνθρωπον, 2.15.1).[14] But the notion of φιλανθρωπία is not only praised by Dionysius as a manifestation of Roman political wisdom; it is also integral to Roman ethnic and cultural identity as Hellenic. In Book 1, Dionysius describes the formation of the Latin ethnos from the amalgamation of five successive waves of Greek settlers (Oenotrians, Pelasgians, Arcadians, Peloponnesians, and Trojans: *AR* 1.9–44, 89).[15] As Greek colonisers, the first group that arrived in Italy drove out indigenous inhabitants and occupied their lands, but they did welcome subsequent groups of Greek immigrants who accrued to their number and, with time, founded new towns all over Latium (*AR* 1.17–20, 31–5, 45). The peaceful process by which earlier settlers admit Greek newcomers, whose union results in a proliferation of nations and city-states of Greek heritage, implicitly shows how the principle of φιλανθρωπία was already at work well before the city foundation and its 'institutionalisation' by Romulus.

Additionally, Dionysius underscores Romulus' scrupulous compliance with tradition when designing his plan by defining the practice of inter-marriage as the safest way to form alliances according to the ancients (ὅσπερ ἐδόκει τοῖς παλαιοῖς τρόπος εἶναι βεβαιότατος τῶν συναπτόντων φιλίας, 2.30.2). The reference to ancestral customs is significant, for it supplies a morally acceptable precedent for an inherently violent initiative, in fact emphasising its established and effective character.[16] It also marks a crucial aspect of the Roman kingdom, since Romulus established it based on the people's vote for τὴν [sc. πολιτείαν] δ' ὑπὸ τῶν πατέρων δοκιμασθεῖσαν (2.4.1): the Romans' fondness of the ancestors' way is thus set from the beginning as the backbone and strength of Roman polity.[17] The biological necessities of the colony, which emerge as the only motive in Livy, become secondary, as Dionysius appears

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[14] See D.H. *AR* 2.15.3–4 on Romulus' asylum (see also above, n. 8), 2.16.1 on the bestowal of citizenship on war captives (a theme also discussed below, §§III and VI), and 2.15–16 for the full account of Romulus' relevant initiatives. On φιλανθρωπία in the *Antiquities*, see especially Poma (1989) and (1981) 71, 89–90.

[15] On the ethnogenesis of the Latins in the first book of the *Antiquities*, see Gabba (1991) 98–111; also, Musti (1970) 11–20; Delcourt (2005) 130–56; Fox (2019).

[16] Cf. Fox (1996) 58–9, who defines Dionysius' conception as a 'morally improved rationalization'. For a succinct overview of the causes in Ovid, Propertius, Dionysius, Livy, and Plutarch, see Landolfi (2005) 97–101.

[17] Cf. D.H. *AR* 2.3: Romulus asks the people to vote upon the constitution that should be imposed upon the new colony, professing his willingness to comply with whatever they decide. On this passage see, e.g., Fromentin (2006) 233–4; Wiater (2011) 176–7; Meins (2019) 90–2, with previous bibliography. As I discuss in Poletti (2018) 143–50, the notion of ancestral constitution (πάτριος πολιτεία) was a well-known *topos* in earlier Greek literature: cf., e.g., Isoc. 7.15–17; Xen. *Hell.* 2.4.42; and [Arist.] *Ath. Pol.* 29.3.

more interested in praising Romulus' leadership.[18] This is unsurprising, since Dionysius consistently depicts early Rome as a progressive and well-organised city-state from its foundation, characterised as it was by an articulated set of institutions, both civic and religious, and specialised governing bodies created by its founder.[19] The suggestion that the women's abduction was solely (or mainly) a means for foreign alliances, and not the solution for a crisis that endangered Rome's very existence, is therefore well suited to the picture of early Rome as an advanced political entity, a *polis*, ruled by a capable and forward thinking leadership.[20]

It is important to underline, in this regard, that Romulus is said to have implemented his plan with the support of the elderly Numitor and the senate (*AR* 2.30.2–3). As his grandfather and king of Rome's motherland, Alba Longa, Numitor is the model for good kingship that Romulus ought to emulate and that he implicitly endorses right from his appointment.[21] The senate, on the other hand, features as Romulus' advisory board and is normally consulted by the king on civil and military matters.[22] As scholars have observed, this

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[18] In Plutarch, too, the preferred explanation for the women's abduction stresses Romulus' political foresight, whereas his bellicose nature is not deemed as a sufficient motive for the abduction's scheme (λέγουσι μὲν ἔνιοι τὸν Ῥωμύλον αὐτὸν τῇ φύσει φιλοπόλεμον ὄντα … τοῦτο δὲ οὐκ εἰκός, *Rom.* 14.1–2). Like Dionysius, Plutarch suggests that Romulus viewed the abduction as an opportunity for alliances (ἐλπίζων δὲ πρὸς τοὺς Σαβίνους τρόπον τινὰ συγκράσεως καὶ κοινωνίας ἀρχὴν αὐτοῖς τὸ ἀδίκημα ποιήσειν ὁμηρευσαμένοις τὰς γυναῖκας, *Rom.* 14.2). On Plutarch's text see Poucet (1967) 162–3; on Plutarch's conception of marriage see, e.g., Nikolaidis (1997); Tsouvala (2008) and (2014).

[19] Cf. D.H. *AR* 2.7–29, which comprises the so called 'Romulean constitution'. Dionysius presents Romulus' legislative activity as overarching, encompassing the political, administrative, familial, moral, and religious spheres of early Roman society and prompting the depiction of Romulus as a king legislator. This view was in countertendency with the more common notion of gradual accruing of Roman institutions and perfecting of its governance, already expressed in Polybius (esp. 6.4.13 and 6.10) and Cicero (e.g., *Rep.* 2.2, 37). Scholarship on the 'Romulean constitution' includes Gabba (1960); Balsdon (1971); Poma (1981) and (1989); Sordi (1993); Fraschetti (2002) 75–80; Delcourt (2005) 272–99; Wiseman (2009) 81–98; Wiater (2011) 168–93; on the different views of Polybius and Dionysius in matter of constitutions see Mora (1995) 192–6; Wiater (2011) 194–8; Pelling (2016), esp. 155–61, and (2019) 205, 210–11.

[20] Antemnates and Crustumerians are admitted into Roman citizenship right after their defeat (D.H. *AR* 2.35; cf. n. 54 below). On the 'pro-Roman' view promoted by Dionysius in favouring the motive of friendship, cf. Wiseman (1983) 446: 'In [Dionysius'] version, the Rape is a foretaste not of Roman conquests but of Roman *pietas* and *fides*.'

[21] Cf. the people's response to Romulus' speech at D.H. *AR* 2.4.1, after he asks them to choose a suitable form of government for their colony (see above, n. 17); as previously discussed, according to Dionysius, the speech itself was inspired by Numitor (ἐκ διδαχῆς τοῦ μητροπάτορος, 2.4.1).

[22] See, e.g., D.H. *AR* 2.9.1 on the patricians' duties and prerogatives, 2.12 on the creation of the senate, and 2.14.1 on the senate's powers. Cf. Cicero's comparable sentiment in *Rep.*

markedly pro-senatorial description appears to align with Dionysius' overall conservative views and his frequent use of senatorial or pro-*optimates* sources, which is especially recognisable in his reconstruction of Romulus' reign.[23] It also agrees with Dionysius' overall conception of the nature of the Roman government, particularly with his viewing it as a 'mixed constitution'—that is, as based on the balance of powers of kings/chief magistrates, the senate, and the populace—which is so often emphasised in the *Antiquities* beyond the account of the city's foundation and which undoubtedly represents a mainstay of Dionysius' political thought.[24] The preamble to the Sabine women's abduction with the explanation of its causes constitutes an opportunity for Dionysius to introduce some recurrent—and indeed central—motifs of his narrative, such as the necessity of cooperation between the political bodies, the preeminent role of the senate in Roman public life, the ubiquitous influence of ancestral traditions, and the Romans' wisdom in foreign policy, which they express (if anywhere, in Dionysius' reading) through their willingness and ability to integrate conquered peoples into their political and civic systems.

III. Women's Abduction and Foreign Policy

The claim to a Greek legacy for the Romans resurfaces in the account of the reconciliatory speech that Romulus addresses to the Sabine girls in the aftermath of their abduction, as he seeks to soothe their spirits, justify their kidnapping, and officialise, as it were, their new condition (D.H. *AR* 2.30.5–6, discussed below). The speech also appears in the contemporary, better-known account of Livy. Indeed, a comparison between the two will prove particularly instructive to highlight the idiosyncrasies of Dionysius' version and, possibly, his intentions. As argued below, Dionysius uses this episode to establish a connection between Roman and Greek marriage customs and, ultimately, show the superiority of Roman foreign policy. Livy, in line with contemporary concerns with family and marriage, focuses on the women's transition and prospective role in Roman society; accordingly, his account details their range of emotions as they shift from despondency to compliance as well as the

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2.14: *Romulus patrum auctoritate consilioque regnavit*, with Gabba's comments in Gabba (1991) 163–4. Livy, too, hints at Romulus' cooperation with the senate as the king seeks intermarriage rights *ex consilio patrum* (1.9.2).

[23] See Gabba (1991) 162–6, who suggests a Sullan age source; see also bibliography above (n. 19). On Dionysius' sources see Gabba (1991) 81–90, 93–8; Schultze (2000) 6–49, esp. 22–6, 30–40; Wiater (2017).

[24] Romulus' distribution of powers between the different political bodies is related at D.H. *AR* 2.14. On the 'mixed' character of the Roman constitution in the *Antiquities*, see Delcourt (2005) 284–7; Pelling (2019), esp. 210–5.

psychological manipulation they are subjected to by Romulus and the Roman men (Liv. 1.9.14–16):

> nec raptis aut spes de se melior aut indignatio est minor. sed ipse Romulus circumibat docebatque patrum id superbia factum qui conubium finitimis negassent; illas tamen in matrimonio, in societate fortunarum omnium ciuitatisque 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 uiris quod adnisurus pro se quisque sit ut, cum suam uicem functus officio sit, parentium etiam patriaeque expleat desiderium. accedebant blanditiae uirorum, factum purgantium cupiditate atque amore, quae maxime ad muliebre ingenium efficaces preces sunt.

> The abducted maidens were quite as despondent and indignant. Romulus, however, went around in person and pointed out to them that it was all due to the pride of their parents in denying the right of intermarriage to their neighbours. They would live in honourable wedlock and share all their property and civil rights, and—dearest of all to human nature—would be the mothers of free children. He begged them to lay aside their feelings of resentment and give their affections to those whom fortune had made masters of their persons. An injury had often led to reconciliation and love; they would find their husbands even more affectionate, because each would do his utmost, as far as in him lay, to make up for the loss of parents and country. These arguments were reinforced by the endearments of their husbands, who excused their conduct by pleading the irresistible force of their passion—a plea effective beyond all others in appealing to a woman's nature.[25]

The girls initially experience despair and resentment because of their treatment and, one might assume, the blatant breach of the principles of hospitality. Their attitude, however, improves rapidly thanks to the entreaties of Romulus, who manages to appease them using a twofold ruse: he blames their parents'

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[25] It is worth comparing Romulus' words with the speech of Canuleius in Book 4 about the intermarriage between patricians and plebeians and the right of the plebeians to access the consulship (Liv. 4.3–5). In it, Canuleius reminds his fellow patricians that many of them descended from the Albans and the Sabines and their 'nobility' depended on their cooptation into the patrician ranks rather than blood (4.4.7), thus equating foreigners with non patricians. On Canuleius' speech, see Ogilvie (1965) 527–8, 533–8; Chaplin (2000) 159–60; Vasaly (2015) 116–21.

superbia[26] as the true cause for their misery, exculpating the Romans for it, and he predicts a rosy future for them as Roman *matronae* and mothers. The appeal to womanly feelings and instinct of motherhood thus combines with the implication that, after all, the abducted girls will be better off without their native families. The Roman men—their future husbands—facilitate the reconciliation process resorting to another type of emotional manipulation, this time involving shows of sexual desire and passion (*cupiditate atque amore*).[27] Livy's claim to the effectiveness of such means (*maxime … efficaces preces*) results in an unflattering portrait of the women, whose nature appears fickle and impressionable. Livy's account unfolds the different emotional stages experienced by the abductees,[28] stressing throughout the primary aim of Romulus' scheme, namely, acquiring wives for his men and thereby legitimate children to increase the city's workforce.

Shifting focus and tone, Dionysius' account overlooks the girls' emotional journey as they are forced to marry in a foreign city and centres instead on the political significance of the marriage rite performed by Romulus for the new, 'mixed' community (*AR* 2.30.5–6):

τῇ δ' ἐξῆς ἡμέρᾳ προαχθεισῶν τῶν παρθένων, παραμυθησάμενος αὐτῶν τὴν ἀθυμίαν ὁ Ῥωμύλος, ὡς οὐκ ἐφ' ὕβρει τῆς ἁρπαγῆς ἀλλ' ἐπὶ γάμῳ γενομένης, Ἑλληνικόν τε καὶ ἀρχαῖον ἀποφαίνων τὸ ἔθος καὶ τρόπων συμπάντων καθ' οὓς συνάπτονται γάμοι ταῖς γυναιξὶν ἐπιφανέστατον, ἠξίου στέργειν τοὺς δοθέντας αὐταῖς ἄνδρας ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης· καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο διαριθμήσας τὰς κόρας ἐξακοσίας τε καὶ ὀγδοήκοντα καὶ τρεῖς εὑρεθείσας κατέλεξεν αὖθις ἐκ τῶν ἀγάμων ἄνδρας ἰσαρίθμους, οἷς αὐτὰς συνήρμοττε κατὰ τοὺς πατρίους ἑκάστης ἐθισμούς, ἐπὶ κοινωνίᾳ πυρὸς καὶ ὕδατος ἐγγυῶν τοὺς γάμους, ὡς καὶ μέχρι τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐπιτελοῦνται χρόνων.

The next day, when the virgins were brought before Romulus, he comforted them in their despair with the assurance that they had been seized, not out of wantonness, but for marriage; for he pointed out that

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[26] A rather strong attribute, generally reserved for depictions of tyrants, as already noted by Stevenson (2011) 180; cf. Keegan (2021) 75.

[27] Cf. Stem (2007) 455–6 on the effects of the men's persuasion and the women's acceptance of their new status; also, Zelaschi (2017) 4 with n. 10; Keegan (2021) 76.

[28] Cf. Ogilvie (1965) 65 on the 'emotional structure' of the episode, and 70 on the parallel between this scene (especially Romulus' arguments) and Greek tragedy; see also Miles (1992) 178–83 and (1995) 203–8 on the subtle psychological processes at play in this exchange, and (1992) 166–7 and (1995) 182–3 on the theft as a metaphor for the passive role of women in Roman marriage as they were transferred from the authority of their fathers to that of their husbands; cf. Brown (1995) 296–300 on the reconciliatory roles of Romulus and the Roman men and the women's emotional manipulation.

this was an ancient Greek custom and that of all methods of contracting marriages for women it was the most illustrious, and he asked them to cherish those whom Fortune had given them for their husbands. Then counting them and finding their number to be six hundred and eighty-three,[29] he chose an equal number of unmarried men to whom he united them according to the customs of each woman's country, basing the marriages on the communion of fire and water, in the same manner as marriages are performed even down to our times.

References to emotions and sexual agency are minimised as Romulus is made to assume that his mention of marriage and explanation of the abduction in terms not of violence but as an established marital practice will be sufficient to win over the girls' minds. His approach appears to imply that the girls' transition to their new life will be unproblematic, as is also evident by his request that they accept the husbands allotted to them 'by fate' ($\dot{v}\pi\grave{o}\ \tau\hat{\eta}s\ \tau\acute{v}\chi\eta s$). Like the disregard for the girls' emotions, the randomness of the couples' pairing contributes to eliminating personal considerations from the future marriages.[30] Romulus also avoids allusions to childbearing and motherhood when addressing the abductees, discounting not only a traditionally important aspect of women's lives and expectations but also the biological needs of the colony—a prime concern in Livy's version. That his focus is on the political rather than social implications of Romulus' plan is supported by his identifying the abduction with an ancient and 'most renowned' Greek custom (Ἑλληνικόν τε καὶ ἀρχαῖον … τὸ ἔθος καὶ … ἐπιφανέστατον, 2.30.5). This identification is important in the context of the city's early developments since it strengthens the view that the early Romans shaped their society on Greek models and it furthers the idea that Romulus complied with tradition when creating the city's institutions by following practices approved by 'the ancients' (cf. 2.30.2, above).[31] It is also conceivable that Dionysius had in mind actual Greek precedents for the abduction of the Latin girls. A compelling parallel is found,

[29] On the number of abducted girls, see discussion below, n. 61.

[30] There is surely a certain 'randomness' in Livy's account, too, but with limitations: the most attractive girls were reserved to the patricians. See Liv. 1.9.11–12; Miles (1992) 167 and (1995) 188; Landolfi (2005) 103. Keegan (2021) 74 provides a useful and concise reading of the passage: 'So, too, in the same way as the allocation of spoils reflects a retrojected social hierarchy, the choice associates male status, and female appearance.'

[31] See discussion above, §1 with n. 7. Numerous Roman institutions are given Greek origins or parallels in the *Roman Antiquities*; e.g., describing the Roman religious institutions, Dionysius equates the girls who served as basket-bearers of Athena Polias with the *tutulatae*; the *camilli* (i.e., the assistants of the *flamen dialis*) are matched with the κάδμιλοι, ministers in the rites of the Great Gods (2.22.2). The term *aruspex* is derived from ἱεροσκόπος (2.22.3); the banquets held by the *curiae* are related to the Spartan public banquets (2.23.3), etc.; see Capdeville (1993) 156–8. See also below, n. 32.

for instance, in Plutarch's biography of the Spartan ruler, Lycurgus. The rite therein described begins with the woman being abducted by the bridegroom (ἐγάμουν δὲ δι' ἁρπαγῆς, Plut. *Lyc.* 15.3), although it continues, in the subsequent stages, with a period of detention for the future bride and the private validation of the marriage bond through the sexual union of the new couple. Dionysius makes several parallels between early Rome and Sparta, especially when discussing laws and institutions, as well as between the legendary kings Lycurgus and Romulus,[32] so a connection between the two marriage rites might appear reasonable. According to Greaves, however, the similarities are not sufficient to justify a direct relation between them, and a more likely inspiration for Dionysius' passage would have come from Herodotus.[33] In narrating the story of the foundation of Miletus, Herodotus says that the Athenian settlers took women of Caria as wives after slaying their parents and husbands (Hdt. 1.146). As Greaves fittingly observes, both episodes present 'the violent abduction of wives as part of an act of colonization'.[34] The Herodotean influence on Dionysius' writings is broadly recognised,[35] just as his knowledge of ancient Spartan history and customs, so I do not think we should exclude either as a source for Dionysius' statement about the resemblance of early Greek and Roman marriage rites. Furthermore, Dionysius was aware of the tradition (discussed below, §VI) that considered the ancient Sabines as descendants of the Spartans. The episode of the Sabines' abduction and subsequent marriage to the Romans, then, could be read as the union between two peoples of Greek backgrounds which, additionally, was carried out according to Greek marriage customs—another piece of evidence of the Greek legacy of Rome.

[32] Sparta works as a foil and often a contrast for Rome; see Delcourt (2005) 174–95, 288 on the comparison between their early governments (175–80, 288 on the comparison between Romulus and Lycurgus). Dionysius mentions Lycurgus in comparison with Roman kings multiple times (cf., e.g., 2.23.3 and 2.49.4 on Romulus, and 2.61.2 on Numa). On the theft of brides see also Miles (1992) 166–8 and (1995) 186–9: as in animal thefts, the women are not regarded as 'valuables' but as means to establish a relationship between the thief and the owner of the stolen object.

[33] Greaves (1998); cf. Santamato (2018) 270, who also agrees on the Herodotean influence.

[34] Greaves (1998) 573.

[35] Cf., e.g., Dionysius' praise of Herodotus' style throughout the *Letter to Pompeius* and in *De compositione verborum* (19) as well as 'Herodotean' passages in the *Roman Antiquities* such as 1.6.3 (cf. Hdt. *praef.*), 1.27.3–4 (cf. Hdt. 1.94), 1.29.3 (cf. Hdt. 1.57.1), 1.51.1 (cf. Hdt. 1.14, 1.50–51), 2.3.7–8 (cf. Hdt. 3.8.–83). See full treatment in Ek (1942); also, Gabba (1991) 60–62, 65, 94, 112, 191; Schultze (2000), esp. 8–12, 27–9; Santamato (2018) 271–9, with a thorough discussion of Ek's treatment and further bibliography.

IV. The Agency of the Sabine Wives

Romulus' speech, together with the preceding abduction scene (D.H. *AR* 2.30.4, below), shows another unique element of Dionysius' description, namely, the initial passive, even motionless state ascribed to the abducted girls, which is highlighted in the text by specific syntactic and stylistic choices. This description has an important narrative function, as it provides a counterpart for the episode that concludes the Sabine war and marks the beginning of the 'Sabine synoecism',[36] in which the Sabine women become main characters acting as ambassadors for the Roman people and negotiating peace with their relatives. As I argue, through these contrasting characterisations, Dionysius may have intended to illustrate the effects on conquered people of full incorporation into Roman society, which entailed, in this reading, the opportunity to become political agents and active parts of Roman public life. Instead of stressing how the Sabine women embraced their role as Roman wives and mothers—which is alluded to several times by Livy[37]—Dionysius focuses on their political emancipation. The first relevant text concerns the girls' abduction and the previously examined speech by Romulus and marriage ritual (*AR* 2.30.4–6):

> παράγγελμα δίδωσι τοῖς νέοις, ἡνίκ' ἂν αὐτὸς ἄρῃ τὸ σημεῖον **ἁρπάζειν τὰς παρούσας ἐπὶ τὴν θέαν παρθένους**, αἷς ἂν **ἐπιτύχωσιν** ἕκαστοι, καὶ **φυλάττειν ἁγνὰς** ἐκείνην τὴν νύκτα, τῇ δ' ἐξῆς ἡμέρᾳ πρὸς ἑαυτὸν ἄγειν. οἱ μὲν δὴ νέοι διαστάντες κατὰ συστροφάς, ἐπειδὴ τὸ σύνθημα ἀρθὲν εἶδον τρέπονται **πρὸς τὴν τῶν παρθένων ἁρπαγήν**, ταραχὴ δὲ τῶν ξένων εὐθὺς ἐγένετο καὶ φυγὴ μεῖζόν τι κακὸν ὑφορωμένων. τῇ δ' ἐξῆς ἡμέρᾳ **προαχθεισῶν τῶν παρθένων**, παραμυθησάμενος **αὐτῶν τὴν ἀθυμίαν** ὁ Ῥωμύλος, ὡς οὐκ ἐφ' ὕβρει τῆς ἁρπαγῆς ἀλλ' ἐπὶ γάμῳ γενομένης, Ἑλληνικόν τε καὶ ἀρχαῖον ἀποφαίνων τὸ ἔθος καὶ τρόπων συμπάντων καθ' οὓς συνάπτονται γάμοι ταῖς γυναιξὶν ἐπιφανέστατον, **ἠξίου στέργειν τοὺς δοθέντας αὐταῖς ἄνδρας** ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης· καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο **διαριθμήσας τὰς κόρας ἑξακοσίας** τε καὶ ὀγδοήκοντα καὶ τρεῖς **εὑρεθείσας** κατέλεξεν αὖθις ἐκ τῶν ἀγάμων ἄνδρας ἰσαρίθμους, οἷς **αὐτὰς συνήρμοττε** κατὰ τοὺς πατρίους ἑκάστης ἐθισμούς, ἐπὶ κοινωνίᾳ πυρὸς καὶ ὕδατος ἐγγυῶν τοὺς γάμους, ὡς καὶ μέχρι τῶν καθ' ἡμᾶς ἐπιτελοῦνται χρόνων.

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[36] Ogilvie (1965) 64.

[37] Cf. his version of Romulus' speech and the following flirtation scene (1.9.14–16, above); also, the speech of Hersilia to Romulus at 1.11.2–3 and the supplication of the women to end the war 1.13.1–3 (mentioned below).

[Romulus] ordered the young men when he should raise the signal, to seize all the virgins who had come to the spectacle, each group taking those they should first encounter, to keep them that night without violating their chastity and bring them to him the next day. So the young men divided themselves into several groups, and as soon as they saw the signal raised, fell to seizing the virgins; and straightway the strangers were in an uproar and fled, suspecting some greater mischief. The next day, when the virgins were brought before Romulus, he comforted them in their despair with the assurance that they had been seized, not out of wantonness, but for marriage; for he pointed out that this was an ancient Greek custom and that of all methods of contracting marriages for women it was the most illustrious, and he asked them to cherish those whom Fortune had given them for their husbands. Then counting them and finding their number to be six hundred and eighty-three, he chose an equal number of unmarried men to whom he united them according to the customs of each woman's country, basing the marriages on the communion of fire and water, in the same manner as marriages are performed even down to our times.[38]

Both syntax and word choice contribute to conveying the perception of the girls as submissive and almost inanimate beings, whose only value rests on the diplomatic exchange they involuntarily enable. Looking closely at the text structure, the girls appear in several instances as direct objects of transitive verbs: ἁρπάζειν τὰς παρούσας ἐπὶ τὴν θέαν παρθένους (also, note the adjectival participle used, whose meaning denotes static presence);[39] φυλάττειν ἁγνάς; διαριθμήσας τὰς κόρας ἑξακοσίας … εὑρεθείσας; οἷς αὐτὰς συνήρμοττε (it is

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[38] It is notable, though not relevant for the present argument, that before the abduction scene, Dionysius has Romulus order his men to preserve the abductees' virginity; this is later presented as the assurance of the Romans' good intentions, namely, legitimate marriage (2.30.5). Plutarch has a very close remark in the *Comparison of Theseus and Romulus* (6.2): Ῥωμύλος … τῇ μετὰ ταῦτα τιμῇ καὶ ἀγαπήσει καὶ δικαιοσύνῃ τῇ περὶ τὰς γυναῖκας ἀπέδειξε τὴν βίαν ἐκείνην καὶ τὴν ἀδικίαν κάλλιστον ἔργον καὶ πολιτικώτατον εἰς κοινωνίαν γενομένην (Romulus … by the subsequent honour, love, and righteous treatment given to these women, made it clear that his deed of violence and injustice was a most honourable achievement, and one most adapted to promote political partnership). Cf. also *Rom.* 14.6. Livy, too, seems to imply that the girls were abducted but not raped, as most scholars have argued; see Brown (1995) 296–7; Vandiver (1999) 209–12, with nn. 14–29; Stem (2007) 454–5; on rape scenes in Livy see Joshel (1991) 122–30, who also discusses Livy's conception of the female body. Vandiver compares Livy's description with accounts of the rape of Lucretia, where the act of physical violation is explicit, and outlines the difference in meaning between *rapere* and *stuprum*. Stem (454 n. 52) observes that Cicero, too, may imply something similar (i.e., no rape was involved, only marriage plans) when he states that the women came from reputable families (*Sabinas honesto ortas loco virgines*, *Rep.* 2.12).

[39] See LSJ s.v. πάρειμι.

worth noticing, in this case, that the girls, and not the young men, are the direct object of the matching); next, as a dative object (αἷς) of ἐπιτύχωσιν; as objective genitive (πρὸς τὴν τῶν παρθένων ἁρπαγήν, cf. ἁρπάζειν τὰς … παρθένους above). In one instance—in the genitive absolute construction προαχθεισῶν τῶν παρθένων—they feature as the subject but, in fact, of a verb in the passive voice, which vividly depicts how the girls are being led around. In the indirect command ἠξίου στέργειν τοὺς δοθέντας αὐταῖς ἄνδρας ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης, the girls are the indirect object of another verb in the passive voice (the participle δοθέντας), which accompanied by its agent, ὑπὸ τῆς τύχης, accentuates not only their lack of agency but also the sense of inevitability of the girls' future condition. The use of ἠξίου, moreover, suggests that Romulus anticipates a positive response to his demand that the girls cherish their new companions,[40] further stressing their want of alternatives. Lastly, the mention of ἀθυμία adds to the description of the girls as lifeless by hinting, quite literally, at their 'absence of spirit' and reaction as opposed to the outrage or despair that might be expected of them in their current situation.[41]

 In striking contrast with this description, in the concluding episode of the war between the Romans and the Sabines, Dionysius has the Sabine women—now Roman wives and mothers—act as skilled and inventive ambassadors in a peace mission (*AR* 2.45.1–46.1):

> While both sides were consuming the time in these considerations, neither daring to renew the fight nor treating for peace, the wives of the Romans who were of the Sabine race and the cause of the war, assembling in one place apart from their husbands and consulting together, determined to make the first overtures themselves to both armies concerning an accommodation … After the women had taken this resolution they came to the senate and having obtained an audience, they made long pleas, begging to be permitted to go out to their relations and declaring that they had many excellent grounds for hoping to bring the two nations together and establish friendship between them. When the senators who were present in council with the king heard this, they were exceedingly pleased and looked upon it, given their present difficulties, as the only solution. Thereupon a decree of the senate was

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[40] See LSJ s.v. ἀξιόω.

[41] Cf. the girls' *indignatio* in Liv. 1.9.14. See LSJ s.v. ἀθυμία. Cf. the term's use in D.H. *AR* 5.16.2; 10.54.5. In most instances, Dionysius seems to prefer ἀπογιγνώσκω and its cognate ἀπόγνωσις to indicate feelings of despair, which have the more active connotation as 'rejection' (see, e.g., 1.81.6; 2.5.5; 3.5.2; 5.3.1, 16.2, 59.4, 60.1; 6.76.1; 8.8.4, 46.2, 66.1; 9.12.5, 21.5, 68.4; 10.24.6); cf. also the use of ἀπονοέομαι and ἀπόνοια (e.g., 4.28.5; 5.55.2; 6.23.3, 40.1; 9.21.5, 38.3, 43.3; 10.9.2, 31.6; 11.38.3), and δυσθυμία (10.59.4). I limited the lexical search to the complete extant Books, 1–11.

passed to the effect that those Sabine women who had children should, upon leaving them 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 endeavour to reconcile the two nations. After this the women went out dressed in mourning, some of them also carrying their infant children. When they arrived in the camp of the Sabines, lamenting and falling at the feet of those they met, they aroused great compassion in all who saw them, and none could refrain from tears. And when the councillors had been called together to receive them and the king had commanded them to state their reasons for coming, Hersilia, who had proposed the plan and was at the head of the embassy, delivered a long and pathetic plea, to those who were interceding for their husbands and on whose account, she pointed out, the war had been undertaken. As to the terms, however, on which peace should be made, she said the leaders, coming together by themselves, might settle them with a view to the advantage of both parties. After she had spoken thus, all the women with their children threw themselves at the feet of the king and remained prostrate till those who were present raised them from the ground and promised to do everything reasonable and in their power. Then, having ordered them to withdraw from the council and having consulted together, they decided to make peace. And first, a truce was agreed upon between the two nations; then the kings met together, and a treaty of friendship was concluded.

In asserting that the peace process was initiated by the Sabine women, Dionysius keeps with the tradition of a deliberate intervention of the former in ending the war, but he ascribes a remarkably different meaning to the episode when compared to other sources. First, in reporting the women's motivations, he omits references to personal feelings, stressing twice that their intention was the establishment of φιλία between the two nations (2.45.1, 3). Next, before the final plea and reconciliation scene on the battlefield, Dionysius inserts an embassy of women led by Hersilia to the Roman senate, in which the women seek and obtain official ratification of their resolution through the passing of a decree (δόγμα βουλῆς). The latter also prescribes, step by step, how the women's intervention with the armies ought to be carried out, removing any spontaneous or emotional character from it.[42] The close interaction between

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[42] The punctilious compliance with institutional niceties is not new to Dionysius, who elsewhere recounts episodes of Roman history diminishing their emotional force and highlighting instead their 'lawfulness', as well exemplified by his account of the expulsion of the Tarquins and institution of the Republic (4.71–84). Through an evocative term, Schultze (2011) 87 and (2019) 173 defines Dionysius' tendency as 'hyperconstitutionality'.

the women 'of Sabine descent' and the Roman senate is a significant addition to the episode. It emphasises that the women's intention was primarily political as they put Rome's interest before any private preoccupations and act following the directions of Rome's leading council. Secondly, it shows how new citizens (in this case, women!) could participate in the state's decision making process and influence the course of public and foreign affairs, including war.

While the latter point may be implied in other versions of the episode, none of the extant sources has the women openly invested with a public role and act as envoys of the senate. Both Livy and Plutarch, for instance, emphasise the impulsive nature of the women's intervention and heighten its dramatic tones by borrowing from the language of tragedy and epic poetry.[43] Livy focuses on the women's unruly appearance (*crinibus passis scissaque ueste*, 1.13.1) and their pathetic plea, which culminates in the offer to die in place of their relatives (*melius peribimus quam sine alteris uestrum uiduae aut orbae uiuemus*, 1.13.3). In his account, the women take full responsibility for the conflict and are ready to give their own lives rather than lose those of their husbands or kinsmen.[44] Their claim is, of course, extreme and quickly leads to the reconciliation of the two parties. Besides the emotional overload of the scene, it is notable that Livy's Sabine women explicitly lack the propriety suitable to their gender by interrupting male activities and interfering in a sphere that does not pertain to them, as they rush through flying missiles to stop the fighting.[45] This unsettling aspect is accentuated in Plutarch's later account, in which the Sabine women are compared to maenads in their frenzied run through the fighting armies (ὥσπερ ἐκ θεοῦ κάτοχοι, Plut. *Rom.* 19), suggesting that their behaviour was excessive and even on the brink of social acceptability.[46]

The contrast with Dionysius' description could not be more striking. Dionysius not only depicts the women's intervention as an official embassy, but he also sets it during an interval from battle, in which both armies are pondering how to end the war: the rush amid fighting soldiers is replaced by

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[43] Cf. Ogilvie (1965) 78: *crinibus passis* is found in the *Aeneid* (1.480; 2.404) to describe hysterical women, and *inter tela uolantia* is arguably an Ennian phrase; see full comment with references in Ogilvie (1965) 78–9.

[44] See comments in Miles (1992) 168–9 and (1995) 190–2; Vandiver (1999) 213–15; Stem (2007) 459; Keegan (2021) 76–9.

[45] Cf. Liv. 1.131, *ausae se inter tela uolantia inferre*; Stevenson (2011) 179–81. Cf. Brown (1995) 306–10: Cicero (*Rep.* 2.13) has Romulus, not the women, petition for peace; Brown argues that this solution 'operates within the normal political and social parameters, which excluded women from the process of public decision making' (306).

[46] Dionysius uses a close simile in his description of Horatia, as she leaves her house to meet her surviving brother (*AR* 3.21.3, on which see Schultze (2019) 163–4 with n. 13). The association between female frantic behaviour and maenads occurs as early as Homer (cf. *Il.* 22.460, describing Andromache).

an orderly procession, and the novelty of the women's action is moderated by the fact that the desire for peace is already in the air. Robert Brown has observed how this version has the advantage of showing that the negotiations between the Romans and the Sabines are based on an equal footing as neither king nor army needs to beg for peace; however, it diminishes the women's bravery as they calculatedly confront dangers.[47] But while Dionysius' women lack spontaneity and base their action on the senate's instructions, their presentation, and especially their promotion to ambassadors, shows the advantages of full integration into Roman society, which might lead to an active role in public decision-making processes and career advancements for conquered people and new citizens. The transformation of the Sabine women from subordinate and lifeless beings to proactive citizens—who do not operate outside social norms, as in Livy's and Plutarch's accounts—subtly but persuasively proves this point.

V. Hersilia

Dionysius assigns a leading role in conducting the peace negotiations and ending the war to one of the Sabine women, Hersilia (see 2.45.6, above), whom he presents as the only one already married at the time of the abduction as well as a 'volunteer' expatriate rather than an abductee (*AR* 2.45.2):[48]

> The one who proposed this measure to the rest of the women was named Hersilia, a woman of no obscure birth among the Sabines. Some say that, though already married, she was seized with the others as supposedly a virgin; but those who give the most probable account say that she remained with her daughter of her own free will, for according to them her only daughter was among those who had been seized.

In a later book, we learn that Hersilia married (Hostus) Hostilius and eventually became grandmother to the third king of Rome, Tullus Hostilius.[49] Her

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[47] Brown (1995) 307.

[48] According to a less known tradition, among the abducted women there was also Tarpeia, who—in this version of the legend—betrays the Romans not out of greed but as her captors: see Neel (2019) 119–20, 124.

[49] D.H. *AR* 3.1.2: 'From Medullia, a city which had been built by the Albans and made a Roman colony by Romulus after he had taken it by capitulation, a man of distinguished birth and great fortune, named Hostilius, had removed to Rome and married a woman of the Sabine race, the daughter of Hersilius, the same woman who had advised her country-women to go as envoys to their fathers on behalf of their husbands at the time when the Sabines were making war against the Romans, and was regarded as the person chiefly

marriage to this man appears in Plutarch and Macrobius as well,[50] while most sources, including Livy, made her the wife of Romulus himself.[51] Her status as an originally married woman was also debated.[52] In the earliest surviving account mentioning her, the second century annals of Cn. Gellius, Hersilia is abducted as a virgin with the other girls (cf. *uti nos itidem integras raperent*), a reading later followed by Ovid (cf. *o pariter raptae*).[53] Livy, who acknowledges her role as a promoter of peace, does not specify her ethnic identity or background. He also locates her intervention within a different timeframe— after the defeat of the Antemnates and Caeninenses and before the showdown between the Roman and Sabine armies—and a different setting, namely, in a private conversation with her husband, here identified as Romulus (1.11.2):

> Whilst Romulus was exulting over this double victory, his wife, Hersilia, moved by the entreaties of the abducted maidens, implored him to

responsible for the alliance then concluded by the leaders of the two nations.' See also *AR* 3.1.3 on Tullus Hostilius' birth.

[50] Plut. *Rom.* 14.7; Macr. *Sat.* 1.6.16.

[51] Liv. 1.11.2; Ov. *Met.* 14.829–51 and *Fast.* 3.205–14; Sil. 13.811–15; Plut. *Rom.* 14.7; Serv. ad *Aen.* 8.638. In the *Fasti*, Romulus' wife is referred simply as Mars' *nurus* (206); on Ovid's text, see Landolfi (2008/9).

[52] On Hersilia, see Liv. 1.11.2; D.H. *AR* 2.45.2, 6; 3.1.2; Ov. *Met.* 14.829–51 and *Fast.* 3.205–14; Sil. 13.811–15; Plut. *Rom.* 14.6–7; 18.5; 19.5; and *Comp. Thes. Rom.* 6.2; Gell. 13.23.13; Dio 1.5 (frag.) and 56.5.5; Macr. *Sat.* 1.6.16; Serv. ad *Aen.* 8.638. On the issue of her identity in the ancient sources, see Gagé (1959); Ogilvie (1965) 73–4; Poucet (1967) 214–40, who also discusses her role in the context of the Sabine women's intervention; Wiseman (1983), esp. 448–50; recently, Picklesimer Pardo (2009), with further bibliography. Ogilvie (73) argued that the presence of Hersilia in the saga offered 'an aetiological rationalization' of Hora Quirini, the goddess who was associated with Quirinus as his wife; Quirinus was in turn identified with Romulus.

[53] Gell. 13.23.13 = *FRHist* 14 F 5: *sed id perite magis quam comice dictum intelleget, qui leget Cn. Gellii annalem tertium, in quo scriptum est Hersiliam, cum apud T. Tatium uerba faceret pacemque oraret, ita precatam esse: 'Neria Martis, te obsecro, pacem da, te 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* (But whoever will read the third book of the *Annals* of Gnaeus Gellius will find that passage shows learning, rather than a comic spirit; for there it is written that Hersilia, when she pleaded before Titus Tatius and begged for peace, prayed in these words: 'Neria of Mars, I beseech thee, give us peace; I beseech thee that it be permitted us to enjoy lasting and happy marriages, since it was by thy lord's advice that in like manner they carried off us maidens, that from us they might raise up children for themselves and their people, and descendants for their country'). On the prayer to Neria Martis in this fragment, see Morisco (2009); cf. 530 n. 3 on Dionysius' sources. Ov. *Fast.* 3.207: *o pariter raptae, quoniam hoc commune tenemus.*

pardon their parents and receive them into citizenship, for so the State would increase in unity and strength. He readily granted her request.[54]

Plutarch reports both variants about Hersilia's Roman marriage (namely, Romulus and Hostus Hostilius) without granting preference to either and, like Dionysius, he describes Hersilia as an originally married woman. However, Plutarch notably diverges from his predecessor by making Hersilia's abduction completely accidental and mentioning the offspring allegedly born of Hersilia and Romulus' union (Plut. *Rom.* 14.6–7):

> This was the strongest defence which Romulus could make, namely, that they took only one married woman, Hersilia, and by mistake, since they did not commit the rape out of wantonness, nor even with a desire to do mischief, but with the fixed purpose of uniting and blending the two peoples in the strongest bonds. As for this Hersilia, some say that she was married to Hostilius, a most eminent Roman, and others, to Romulus himself, and that she also bore him children: one daughter, Prima, so-called from the order of birth, and one son only, whom Romulus named Aollius, from the great concourse of citizens under him, but later ages Avillius. However, Zenodotus of Troezen, who gives us this account, is contradicted by many.[55]

The version, also supported by Dionysius, that made Hersilia a married woman and, more importantly, the mother of one of the abducted girls may have originated in contemporary (Augustan) elaborations of Romulus' life. This interpretation is largely based on a later source, specifically, Cassius Dio's report of Augustus' speech to promote the *lex Papia Poppaea* (9 CE) (Dio 56.5.5):

> How wrathful would the Romans who were [Romulus'] followers be, if they could realize that after they had even seized foreign girls, you are not satisfied even with those of your race, and after they had got children

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[54] On Livy's text see Brown (1995) 300–3; Vandiver (1999) 213, 224 n. 18, 226–7 n. 30; Stem (2007) 457; Stevenson (2011) 177–8; Keegan (2021) 77, 122. Dionysius describes the incorporation of Antemnates and Crustumerians in comparable terms; in his version, however, it is Romulus who decides, in agreement with the senate, to bestow citizen rights upon the defeated, without female intercession. The women abducted from those cities are summoned when he announces his decision (see the full account at D.H. *AR* 2.35).

[55] Cf. *Comp. Thes. Rom.* 6.2: 'Romulus, on the other hand, in the first place, although he carried off nearly eight hundred women, took them not all to wife, but only one, as they say, Hersilia, and distributed the rest among the best of the citizens.' On Plutarch's account see Poucet (1967) 226–33. On the question of Romulus' children (only attested here), see Wiseman (1983), esp. 450–2. The relation between Hersilia and the Hostilii is discussed in Gagé (1959.

even by enemy wives, you will not beget them even of women who are citizens! How angry would Curtius be, who was willing to die that the married men might not be bereft of their wives! How indignant Hersilia, who attended her daughter at her wedding and instituted for us all the rites of marriage![56]

Wiseman has argued that presenting Hersilia as the mother of one of the abducted girls had the purpose of legitimising the marriage between the latter and the Roman men: 'if Hersilia's daughter is the first of the kidnapped girls to be married, and with her mother's consent, the others would be willing to follow suit'.[57] In his seminal study on the Sabine roots of the Romans, Poucet had already noticed the peculiarity of Hersilia's status as a *matrona*, which is stressed by all the sources reporting this tradition, suggesting that her being married and thus an elderly woman also gave her the authority to speak in public as the leader of the women's embassy.[58] The *topos* of women acting in public in a situation of crisis is well attested in Roman literature, from the delegation of *matronae* to Coriolanus led by Coriolanus' mother, Veturia, and his wife, Volumnia, to the *comitatus muliebris* who assist Verginia at the time of decemviral oppression.[59] It has been argued that the leadership of older women in these instances reflects actual practices in Roman life, such as religious celebrations, weddings, and public mourning, where the women's action is generally directed by an older *matrona*.[60]

[56] Dio was conceivably familiar with Dionysius' work and may have used it as a source for his account of early Roman history: see Fromentin (2016).

[57] Wiseman (1983) 448; cf. Picklesimer Pardo (2009) 352, 355, who also argues that Hersilia as the mother of one of the Sabine girls may be depicted in the relief of the *basilica Aemilia* (on which see bibliography at n. 1).

[58] Poucet (1967) 220–1; see full discussion at 219–23; cf. also Poucet (1985) 209, on the anachronistic character of the women's embassy to the senate.

[59] For the embassy to Coriolanus, see Liv. 2.40; D.H. *AR* 8.45–54; Plut. *Cor.* 33 and *Fort. Rom.* 5; Dio 5.18.7–12 in Zon. 7.16 and Tz. *Chil.* 6.551–5; *De vir. ill.* 19.5–9. Both Dionysius and Plutarch stress the similarity between the Sabine women's embassy and the embassy to Coriolanus (D.H. *AR* 8.40.4; Plut. *Cor.* 33.3). On the *comitatus muliebris* surrounding Verginia, see Liv. 3.47.3. On women carrying out public supplications, see, e.g., Liv. 2.33.8; 3.7.8; 5.21.11, 40.3; 6.3.4; see Mustakallio (2011) 50–2, with further examples at n. 30. Mustakallio also draws an interesting connection between the *praefica*, the leading female mourner (on which, see Varro, *Ling.* 7.70), and older women leading embassies or groups of suppliants in literature. Keegan (2021) has the most recent and complete treatment on the subject of women's collective interventions in Livy: see esp. 62–106.

[60] On the topic of women speaking in public see, in addition to the bibliography provided above (n. 59), Valette (2012), who focuses specifically on the speeches of Veturia, Valeria, and Hersilia, and Mustakallio (2011), discussing the same women as well as the role of Vestals in public life as examples of age hierarchy. On the similarities between the two episodes see also Gagé (1959) 258–9; Landolfi (2008/9) 158; Picklesimer Pardo (2009) 357.

Both motifs, the legitimisation of the Sabine girls' abduction through parental consent and the status of Hersilia as an older *matrona* (and therefore an authoritative figure), seem to fit Dionysius' aims, in that they reinforce the idea that the abduction was a lawful political measure and also present early Roman society as one in which traditional hierarchy, based on age and status, mattered. More intriguingly, Hersilia also embodies here the expectations of the young Sabine wives. She escorts her daughter and the other girls, who are initially foreign virgins, to their new life based on marriage and motherhood within the Roman citizen body, herself representing the culmination of the status they ought to attain, marked by social prestige and the ability to shape Roman public life.

VI. Romans, Sabines, and Greeks

The successful intervention of the Sabine women on the battlefield is arguably the emotional climax of the story. But the happy conclusion is not just about reconciliation, it is about union: the Romans and the Sabines become one people, thereafter, called by the common name of Quirites, ostensibly, from the name of the Sabine town of Cures, hometown to Titus Tatius and the later kings Numa and Ancus Marcius. The new citizens are enrolled in the thirty *curiae*; whether or not these were (re)named after some of the Sabine women was a much-disputed issue.[61]

By the late first century BCE, when Dionysius and Livy were writing, the Sabine component of early Roman society was considered as ancient as the city foundation. It is unclear, however, when this tradition became established.

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[61] See Cic. *Rep.* 2.14; Liv. 1.13.4–7; D.H. *AR* 2.46.2, 47.3–4; Plut. *Rom.* 14.7; 19.7; *Num.* 3.4; on the name Quirites, see also Strab. 5.3.1, 228C; Ov. *Fast.* 2.479–80; Fest. 304 L; Serv. ad *Aen.* 7.710. Cicero says that the *curiae* were named after the women who pleaded for peace; Livy expresses his doubts about the criterion used to name the *curiae*, for surely the girls abducted were more than thirty; Dionysius reports in 2.47.3 the same version as Cicero but immediately casts doubt upon the fact, stating that, according to Varro, the *curiae* were named before the abduction (as also implied in Dionysius' own account of the establishment of the *curiae* at 2.7.2–4) and that the women in the embassy were 527 in number (2.47.4). At 2.30.6 (quoted above) Dionysius states that 683 women were abducted. Plutarch (*Rom.* 14.7) cites not Varro but Valerius Antias for the figure of 527 women seized and Juba for 683 (respectively, *FRHist* 25 F 5 and *BNJ* 275 F 23). Commenting on Juba's fragment, Dwane Roller (ad loc.) suggests that Varro may have been the common source of Juba and Dionysius, but Plutarch does not name the latter, possibly indicating his preference for Juba. Dionysius' conclusion (2.47.4) demonstrates his familiarity with a well-known dispute, one he regards as not deserving undue attention. See Ogilvie (1965) 79–80; Poucet (1967) 216–17, 219, 223–6, 228–9, 236; Musti (1970) 33–4, 63; Brown (1995) 310–1. On the origins of the *curiae*, see, e.g., Palmer (1970) 80–175; Cornell (1995) 114–18; Liou-Gille (1998) 71–83; Forsythe (2005) 108–15; Smith (2006) 184–234. I thank the anonymous reviewer for suggesting a more accurate rephrasing of the last sentence of the text and part of this note.

It appears that in earlier stages, the legend about the abduction of women and subsequent war may not have revolved around the Sabines specifically but may have included Latin peoples more generally.[62] It is certain, at any rate, that interest in the Sabine heritage of the Romans was already emerging in the second century BCE and progressively increasing in the first century, when numerous aristocratic Roman families were claiming Sabine ancestors through inscriptions, monuments, and especially coin types.[63] What was so appealing about the ancient Sabines that many Romans wanted them in their family tree was not merely their alleged early communion with the Romans, but rather the virtues traditionally ascribed to them, such as an austere lifestyle, regulated by a strict discipline even in war, a frugal diet, and a pious religiosity—this embodied, of course, by Numa as the 'founder' of Roman religion. Sabine identity became a paradigm of idealised rusticity, a new way for the Roman elites to think about themselves and their ancestry and present their *mores* in opposition to the corrupting influences of wealth and foreign conquest.[64] A contributing factor to the formation of this ideology was the genealogical tradition that linked the ancient Sabines with the Spartans. This

[62] See Poucet (1967) 156–7, with list of sources; Bremmer and Horsfall (1987) 43–5 maintain that the women started to be identified as Sabine from the late sixth or fifth century, when the first Sabine groups moved to Rome. Mastrocinque (1996) 42–3 has argued that two separate issues may have merged into the story of the Sabine women's abduction: the integration of Sabine groups into the Roman state and the acquisition of the *ius connubii* with the Latins. This would explain why several sources, including Livy, Dionysius, and Plutarch, contain reduplications in their accounts of the abduction and the war; see also Mastrocinque (1993) 112–14. The historicity of a possible union between Romans and Sabines in the regal period is much debated. Several Roman families, including the Valerii and the Claudii (on whom, cf. mention in Canuleius' speech at Liv. 4.3.14), claimed that their ancestors migrated to Rome from Sabine towns as early as the sixth century, but there is unclear evidence for earlier contacts. Poucet (1985) 213–15, among others, argued that the Sabine war at the time of Romulus was a projection of the rivalry that opposed Romans and Sabines in the late sixth and early fifth centuries BCE; Cornell (1995) 75–7 and 306 is more cautious, pointing to the scarcity of archeological evidence to support but also to disprove earlier contacts; see also Dench (2005) 231, 317 with n. 58; Farney (2007) 78–82.

[63] See Dench (2005), esp. 11–25, 172–3, 183, 251–5, 317–18, 330–1, 343–4 (on coin types with Sabine themes); cf. Musti (1970) 36 with n. 14. For a thorough analysis of the use of Sabine identity by the Roman aristocracy in the second and first centuries BCE, see Farney (2007) 78–82 and 82–8 (on coins advertising Sabine family origins), 88–97 (on the adoption of family names suggesting Sabine origins), and 112–24 (further case studies); cf. id. (2014), esp. 443–4. In his analysis of the Roman annalistic tradition, Mazzarino identified the historiography of the *gens* Claudia (represented by C. Acilius and Claudius Quadrigarius), together with that of the Fabii, as one of the factors responsible for most distortions of early Roman history; Mazzarino (1973), esp. 245–50, 281–5, 291–5, 311–15. The topic of rival traditions stemming from rival families is also touched upon in Farney (2007), esp. 78–82.

[64] See Farney (2007) 97–101, with discussion of the literary sources.

tradition went back at least to Cato the Elder, who in his *Origines* wrote that
Sabus, the eponymous founder of the Sabines, was a Spartan who migrated to
Italy and there expelled the Sicels from the territories historically occupied by
the Sabines. Cato also explicitly connected the Sabines' *seueritas* and *disciplina*
to their Spartan legacy.[65] In his study of Roman aristocratic identity, Farney
has emphasised that the *prisca uirtus* of the Sabines was a relatively late
fabrication, conceivably traceable to the work of Cato himself, and previous
sources attest to a tradition of luxury for Titius Tatius and his men, as evident
from early annalistic accounts of the story of Tarpeia, as well as stories of
tyrannical behaviours of Sabine legendary characters.[66] The change in percep-
tion that followed may have coincided with the above mentioned interest in
an austere lifestyle that emerged within aristocratic Roman families as a result
of overseas conquests and the afflux of wealth.[67]

Dionysius was also aware of the tradition that regarded the Sabines as
descendants of the Spartans. He inserts his discussion about the city of Cures
and the ethnicity of the Sabines after concluding the account of the war with
the peace made by Romulus and Tatius, as they distribute the new citizens
into the *curiae* and bestow honours upon the women who partook in the
embassy (*AR* 2.47).[68] As often, Dionysius offers several variants on his topic
citing the respective authority for each.[69] According to the version ascribed to
Varro, the Sabines are said to be descendants of the Aborigines and to have
had a semi-divine progenitor, Modius Fabidius (2.48). Zenodotus of Troezen
made the Sabines descendants of the Umbrians, an autochthonous people
(2.49.1). Cato's version is also mentioned, but in Dionysius' report, Cures'

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[65] Cato in Serv. ad *Aen.* 8.638 = *FRHist* 5 F 51, with Farney (2007) 101 and nn. 75–6; see
full discussion at 101–4; also, Farney (2014) 448–9; Dench (2005) 64–5: claiming a Sabine
ancestry had the advantage to create, through its Spartan background, a connection with
the Greek world—not with the contemporary, 'decadent' Greece but rather with its
glorious past and ideals.

[66] On Tarpeia, D.H. *AR* 2.38.3 = *FRHist* 1 F 7 (Fabius) and 2 F 3 (Cincius); On the wealth
of the Sabines, Strab. 5.3.1, 228C = *FRHist* 1 F 24 (Fabius); Enn. *Ann.* 104 Sk. = Prisc. *GL*
2.591K, and D.H. *AR* 10.14.1 (Tatius and Appius Herdonius as aspiring tyrants).

[67] Farney (2007) 105–11. On the wealth of the Sabines see Musti (1970) 71–4 (on the
account in D.H. *AR*) and especially id. (1985), arguing that the double tradition depended
on the archaic separation between the inhabitants of the lower Sabinia and those of the
poorer inland.

[68] The discussion of the Sabines' origin and ethnicity is presented as a necessary addition
to the narrative since henceforth the Sabines will be a part of it (D.H. *AR* 2.48.1). This is
also in line with Dionysius' historiographical method and, particularly, his intention to offer
detailed and precise accounts whenever relevant. See Oakley (2019), esp. 141–4.

[69] On Dionysius' historiographical methods and source criticism, see Schultze (2000) and
Oakley (2019).

founder, Sabus, was the son of a local god, not a Spartan.[70] The Spartan genealogy is reported last (*AR* 2.49.4–5):

> There is also another account given of the Sabines in the native histories, to the effect that a colony of Lacedaemonians settled among them at the time when Lycurgus, being guardian to his nephew Eunomus, gave his laws to Sparta. For the story goes that some of the Spartans, disliking the severity of his laws and separating from the rest, quitted the city entirely, and after being borne through a vast stretch of sea, made a vow to the gods to settle in the first land they should reach; for a longing came upon them for any land whatsoever. At last, they made that part of Italy which lies near the Pomentine plains and they called the place where they first landed Foronia … And some of them, setting out from thence, settled among the Sabines. It is for this reason, they say, that many of the habits of the Sabines are Spartan, particularly their fondness for war and their frugality and severity in all the actions of their lives.[71]

Stressing the Greek origin of the Sabines would have been quite convenient for Dionysius; yet, as scholars before me have pointed out, he does not explicitly endorse it.[72] Musti, in particular, observed that while Dionysius does not include the Sabines in any list of 'barbarian' (that is, autochthonous) peoples that lived in Italy before the Romans—even though in Zenodotus' version the Sabines are associated with the Umbrians, whom Dionysius identifies as 'barbarians' (1.89.3)—he does not make any effort to prove otherwise.[73] His cautiousness, Musti argued, could depend on the earlier allusion to the Sabines' taste for luxury in the story of Tarpeia (*AR* 2.38.3), which explicitly disagrees with the frugality and generalised austerity that the Sabines would have inherited from the Spartans (τὸ λιτοδίαιτον καὶ παρὰ πάντα τὰ ἔργα τοῦ βίου σκληρόν, 2.49.5, above).[74]

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[70] See Gabba (1991) 115–16; Musti (1970) 64 and (1985); also, Santamato (2018) 436–7.

[71] Cf. Plut. *Num.* 1.3: ἄλλως δὲ Νομᾶς γένος μὲν ἦν ἐκ Σαβίνων, Σαβῖνοι δὲ βούλονται Λακεδαιμονίων ἑαυτοὺς ἀποίκους γεγονέναι (Numa was of Sabine descent, and the Sabines will have it that they were colonists from Lacedaemon). According to Mazzarino (1973) 90, the ἱστορίαι ἐπιχώριοι mentioned by Dionysius could be the annals of Cn. Gellius; see full discussion on the Sabines' origin at 89–91.

[72] E.g., Musti (1970) 64 and (1985); Gabba (1991) 116.

[73] Musti (1970) 18 and (1985). It is worth remembering that, according to Dionysius, the Aborigines descended from the Greeks (1.9–13; 1.89.1–2), so Varro's version could also tie the Sabines to the Greeks.

[74] Musti (1970) 64 and (1985). Musti also emphasises that one needed not to look at Sparta for frugal customs and warlike *uirtus*: the Sabines might have achieved their reputation regardless of their alleged Spartan relations.

Be that as it may, I do not think that explicit endorsement was necessary to prove the point. The subtlety of the historian often emerges through nuances and allusions, and Dionysius was quite an expert in guiding and moulding his readers' opinion.[75] While he does not put too much emphasis on the 'Greekness' of the Sabines and the credibility of this version of their provenance, the reference to their Spartan ancestry would not go unnoticed by the Greek reader, especially on account of the various references to Spartan customs that are scattered in the account of Romulus' institutions.[76] Also, a Greek provenance is mentioned for other nations subdued in the same war by the Romans, such as the Caeninenses, the Antemnates, the Crustumerians, and—slightly later in the narrative—the people of Cameria, which is said to be an Alban colony inhabited in ancient days by the Aborigines.[77] In this context, the attribution of Spartan origins to the Sabines cannot be 'neutral' (as Gabba and, to some extent, Musti imply), but probably had the purpose of stressing the Greek contribution to the quantitative and qualitative growth of the early Roman state. Previously in his account, Dionysius defines Rome as a Greek city—as opposed to a refuge of slaves and barbarians—in both an ethnic and an ethical sense.[78] The qualities of its first ruler and early inhabitants (in particular, their $\phi\iota\lambda\alpha\nu\theta\rho\omega\pi\iota\alpha$) granted the city's expansion in terms not merely of manpower, but specifically of Greek workforce and virtues through the incorporation of groups of Greek heritage.

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[75] See, recently, Wiater (2017); Schultze (2019).

[76] See references above, nn. 31–2. Musti (1970) 64 makes a similar point: 'D'altro canto nel territorio sabino erano già presenti sufficienti elementi greci perché non si dovesse compiere lo sforzo di grecizzare anche il ceppo principale degli abitanti.'

[77] On Caenina and Antemnae, see D.H. *AR* 2.35.6–7, in which Caeninenses and Antemnates are said to be descended from the Aborigines. Crustumerium is described as a colony of the Albans (2.36.2), thereby also originally Greeks. On Cameria, see *AR* 2.50.5.

[78] Cf., in particular, D.H. *AR* 1.89.1, mentioned above, p. 211 with n. 13.

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