Male Belligerence and Female Pacificism: Homer's and Euripides' Trojan Women and Ovid's Sabine Women (*Fast.* 3.167-234)

The *Fasti* includes several narratives drawn from the early history of Rome which converse intertextually with Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita.* Critics have discussed at length Ovid's allusions to and departures from the Roman historian (Schenkl 1860, Sofer 1095/6, Marchiesi 1910, Heinze 1960, Bömer 1957/1958, Murgatroyd 2005). This paper examines the Ovidian episode of the Sabine women's intervention in the conflict between the Romans and the Sabines (*Fast.* 3.167-234), modeled on the parallel story in Livy (1.13.1-5). Paul Murgatroyd has noticed that Ovid introduces many new elements in his account, the most significant being the prominent role played by Romulus' wife, Hersilia, who overshadows the Roman king. Hersilia devises and implements a bold plan according to which the Sabine women enter the battlefield carrying their children and beseech the two sides to cease the hostilities. In the Livian version, by contrast, Hersilia does not make an appearance and the women interfere between the two armies of their own accord and without bringing along their infants. Scholars have not explored, however, any further intertexts with which the Augustan poet may be engaging to fashion his novel variant of the myth.

This paper argues that Ovid's innovative portrayal of the Sabine women evokes Homer's and Euripides' representation of the Trojan women. To begin with, the Sabines' lot is an inversion of that of their Trojan counterparts: the Sabine women were initially abducted by the Romans but became their lawful wives and mothers of their children, whereas the Trojan women turned from spouses and mothers into captive slaves of the Achaeans. In the opening of the narrative, the Sabine women gather in Juno's temple and Hersilia explains to them that since

their fathers are fighting against their husbands they cannot pray to the gods for either side to win. Instead, they must take decisive action themselves and she reveals to them her courageous scheme. The Ovidian scene echoes and inverts the Iliadic episode, in which the elder Trojan women assemble in Athena's temple and her priestess, Theano, prays to her that Diomedes be defeated and Troy saved but her plea is rejected by the goddess (*Il.* 6.293-311). Moreover, the Sabine women's successful supplication of their fathers to stop the fighting through the emotional force of the children's pleas 'corrects' Andromache's failed entreaty to her husband, Hector, to withdraw from the fray by attempting to rouse his pity for their infant son, Astyanax (*Il.* 6.405-439). Against this background, the touching scene of the Sabines moved by the sight of their grandchildren crying picks up verbally the meeting of Hector with Astyanax, who bursts into tears scared by his father's helmet (*Il.* 6.466-685).

At the same time, the blissful family reunion of the Sabine men with their grandchildren recalls and reverses the painful separation of Astyanax from his mother and grandmother in Euripides' *Trojan Women*. The weeping infant clings to Andromache's bosom before he is taken away from her by the Achaeans to be hurled to his death from the city walls (*Tro.* 749-763) and later Hecuba laments her dead grandson bitterly recollecting moments of domestic bliss with him (*Tro.* 1173-1186). The concluding vignette of the Sabines using their shields as cradles to carry their grandsons 'corrects' the denouement of the Euripidean play, in which Astyanax is buried on his father's shield serving as his tomb (*Tro.* 1192-1193). In short, this study contends that Ovid depicts the Sabine women's successful intervention in the armed conflict between the Romans and the Sabines as an inverted image of the Trojan women's inability to affect the outcome of the Trojan war.

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