THE FAMILIAR OTHER: THE PIVOTAL ROLE OF WOMEN IN LIVY'S NARRATIVE OF POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT IN EARLY ROME*

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ABSTRACT

This paper sets out to examine Livy's presentation of women as important factors in early Roman political development. After a general discussion of issues involved, it will first give a rapid survey of all references to Roman women in the first six books of his story of Rome from its beginnings. It will then briefly discuss the view of Roman prejudices about women that may be deduced from the known popularity of the work and will try to assess the degree to which Livy and his readership considered women to be part of the Roman socio-political fabric, that is, to what degree women were presented by him, and accepted by his readers, as 'insiders', as an essential part of Roman culture, as 'the familiar Other'.

Introduction

Thirty years ago 'women's studies' were scarcely thought of, particularly in Classics. Now they are main stream, but, in the Classics at least, researchers have moved beyond trying to cut out 'history' for the sake of 'herstory'. The issue now is 'gender studies', particularly the study of relationships and power struggles or power shifts, the issues of 'sameness', that is, the genders as part of the human race, and 'otherness', the suspicion with which one gender sometimes regarded the other. These terms have

* Parts of this paper were delivered as, respectively, a CASA–WP public lecture at the University of Cape Town, and as a discussion of Livy's response to the expectations of his readership, at the biennial conference of CASA, Pretoria. Thanks in both cases to colleagues for useful comments. Attention to the advice of two anonymous readers and of Dr. Suzanne Dixon considerably improved the paper, for which thanks are due. It also changed its tone and thrust; in deferring to 'Anonymous Priscus', I adopted a more serious tone in dealing with an earnest author like Livy, and deference to 'Anonyma Secunda' turned the paper into an obiter critique of some of my predecessors. Dr. Dixon's perspicacious criticism saved me from many solecisms. Thanks to my students for enlightening discussion, to my research assistant Maridien Schneider for bibliographical help, and to my colleague Carina Malan for her final careful scrutiny of the manuscript. Idiosyncrasies of style, tone and insight remain my own.

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been current since Simone De Beauvoir's book *The second sex* first became accepted reading in this field.

This paper does not go out from the assumption that it needs to 'prove' that early Roman women were not 'suppressed' in the way it is often assumed that their Athenian counterparts were. It is common enough knowledge that Roman women as a class were not 'suppressed', and even the 'suppression' of Athenian women is being increasingly reconsidered.¹ More to the point is to consider how Romans of Livy’s day saw the role of women, and in what way these women were portrayed by Livy. It should be stressed that we are in the main talking about the Roman elite, the kind of people who were both of the ruling class and interested in reading about its past. Livy’s tales often reflect more than the interests of this elite only, and his *obiter* references to the ordinary women of Rome will be seen to be as illuminating as his tales of stock heroines. Hence the paper will assume that a more balanced understanding of the conception of gender relations held by Livy’s readers can be reached only by an 'annalistic' approach to his allusions to women. While both analysing and reading past Livy’s stock heroines (to whom the general critical consensus ascribes a heavily symbolic role, in Livy and other authors, strongly related to male power, e.g. Joshel 1992, Moore 1993), it will also look at his incidental references to women, as a reflection of the expectations of power distribution between the sexes held by the Roman elite of his day.

Judith Hallet (1989, 1990) has argued that men of the Roman elite viewed women from different perspectives, sometimes denoting them as part of ‘us, the ruling class’ and sometimes as ‘the other’ in De Beauvoir’s sense. Much earlier, Moses Finley (1968) deplored the dearth of ‘women’s voices’ in extant Roman literature, while stressing the horrifying ‘otherness’ of what he terms ‘that small group of ferocious and licentious royal females’ described by the Roman historians, particularly Tacitus. He adds ‘when the silence breaks, the sounds are not very pretty’ (1968:142). Finley’s comment may by this time be allowed to sink into oblivion. With ears more attuned, we can quite clearly hear more ‘women’s voices’ than he credited Rome with allowing.

Tacitus’ depiction of power-hungry, domineering imperial women has received a great deal of attention, and the general modern consensus seems to be that their ‘otherness’ is a grotesque metaphor for the ills of the state (Joshel 1995, Warner 1985, Moore 1993). Against these Fischler (1994) has the matter-of-fact suggestion that Roman women of the elite did participate in business, did extend patronage and oversee their own properties, but

1. Cohen (1989) bases his interpretation of the relative freedom of so-called ‘secluded’ women on his observation of the differences between ideology and practice and consequent greater freedom of movement than is theoretically allowed to modern ‘secluded’ women from parts of the eastern Mediterranean.
when this ‘normal’ activity was carried out in a more extended sphere, it appeared abnormal, particularly to a conservative senator like Tacitus, who had lived through an era of domination. This era, incidentally, was ended by means of a plot in which another such woman was probably implicated.

**Livy as historiographer and modern ways of reading him**

Titus Livius, living and writing in the Augustan era, when the imperial women were just moving into prominence, has a different thrust. He himself was not a member of the aristocracy, but his readership, we must assume, was, by and large, the elite of Rome, both men and women. His attitude to women, we may assume, would have reflected the prevalent attitude of his time—or of his readership (see discussion below). His tale stretched ‘ab urbe condita’—‘from the founding of Rome’—to his own time. When he wrote about early Rome, the era starting from the sack of Troy and stretching to the sack of Rome, 390 BC, he was working with traditional, that is, largely mythical, sometimes rather intractable material.

Livy’s earliest written sources, so he tells us, date from after the sack of Rome by the Gauls in 390 B.C. (a.u.c. 6.2). For events before that time he was relying on traditional, even mythical, material. These early sources, the annalists, were relying on the same traditions, but had used older records, to which they probably added fictitious details, for the sake of colour (Woodman 1988:199). Wiseman (1998) puts the debate about Livy’s ‘veracity’ in perspective by illustrating the mutually inconsistent nature of Livy’s tales of the first year of the Republic. He ends by posing the question (25): ‘What sort of stories are they, and how may they have come about?’ It is not necessary here to go into greater detail about the essentially literary character of ancient historiography, and its difference from the modern; the contentious and literary nature of both is now being acknowledged more freely by scholars studying the methods of modern historiographers (Woodman 1988:197). That an historian, ancient or modern, has a particular bias nowadays goes almost without saying (cf. Fox 1996:37–47).

Yet the conventionally rhetorical nature of ancient historiography sets it apart from modern theories on historical research and reportage. It is

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2. Dettenhofer (1994:146) postulates that Augustus, himself aware of the topos of women’s power as a synonym for political crisis, deliberately introduced the *ius trium liberorum* as a means of pushing women back into the domestic sphere.

3. These are Valerius Antias, Licinius Macer, Aelius Tubero, Claudius Quadrigarius, and, at second hand, through the above, L Calpurnius Piso and Fabius Pictor. His contemporary, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, may have used the same sources, but the two authors worked independently, so Walsh (1974:17). Texts used here are Foster’s (1953) Loeb, collated against Ogilvie’s (1974) Oxford edition and with reference to Packard’s *Concordance* (1968).
generally agreed that Livy saw moral uplift as the major purpose of historiography (Walsh 1989:21–6; Buchkeit 1991). He aimed by literary means to achieve this: rhetoric, of course, but also, like Tacitus after him, imitation of tragedy, ‘searching to thrill by evoking feelings of pity and fear, by emotional persuasion and by emphasis on the unexpectedness of events and vicissitudes of fortune’ (Walsh 1989:25). Oral presentation of an author’s matter would have lent full scope to his reader’s histrionic abilities.

Livy’s ancient audience would have come to a recitatio with the full expectation of being entertained and of being morally uplifted, but they would not necessarily have expected to be furnished with objective, unadorned, factual truth, no matter how many sources our author could have collated. His auctorial intention would equally have been to entertain and uplift, and to persuade, also of the ‘truth’ of what he wrote, but this truth would lie in the realm of verisimilitude (rather than bare fact) and the audience’s belief or inclination to believe would not have been taxed, because they knew the conventions of historiography and were prepared to accept what he gave them as he gave it to them, and as lying within the framework of the credible.

But who was his audience? Eco (1994: 15–17) summarises the trend in critical theory that postulates that in every work of literature an empirical author writes for a conceptualised ‘model reader’, who in turn creates a ‘model author’, the literary embodiment of the style and auctorial persona of the empirical author. This creative and counter-creative process continues throughout every reading of a text. Pedrick and Rabinowitz (1986:109) consider that all ancient texts suppose a body of readers with a single identity. The question now is, who was Livy’s ‘model reader’—who were the ‘identical’ Romans at whom he pitched his material, and who found this material acceptable? Kraus (1994:13) stresses Livy’s engagement of his readers in the historiographical project, particularly in its moral dimensions. He sees (16) Livy’s narrative ‘like a funeral procession of imagines graphically representing the continuity of tradition, collapsing the generations in imitatio.’ These readers would read themselves and their interests into his tales. I propose below first to consider modern


5. Some other terms for readers are implied, ideal, mock, and inscribed reader, metareader and narratee; for author are ideal, implied, virtual and auctor (also 'as actor'). Without further exploring this minefield I choose to follow Winkler (1985:ix) in choosing the terms that here suit my purpose.

6. The discussion below will in a sense give my ‘model readers’ (the learned Classicists who devour Acta Classica) a feel for the ‘model author’ that I have made of Livy.

7. Woodman and Powell (1992) also stress the intense awareness of authors of their audiences.
interpretations of these tales and then the tales themselves, before finally returning to the issue of Livy’s audience.

Interpretation of ancient authors, whether these were overtly or incidentally literary, can vary greatly: from the philological to the literary, to the literal, to the deconstructive, with endless nuances between (cf. Henderson 1989). Feminist interpretation of (male) authors may be historicist (seeking the ‘silent women’ through an author’s incidental detail, Hillard 1989, Hoffstein 1939) or sociological (‘what was the life of women like in a particular era?’ Best 1970, Dettenhofer 1994, Deissman 1989) ideological (analysis of instances of patriarchal bias, Joshe11992) or contentiously philological (pinpointing the ‘inherent oppression’ which some feminists read as embedded in male-oriented language usage) or, finally, and that will be my approach, they may try to read an attitudinal reality from an author’s pitching of his material (cf. Fantham et al. 1994:217). That means that reading an author like Livy for his narrative of women in early Rome conveys more about the expectations and attitudes of his contemporary readership than ‘facts’ about these women, interesting as he may make them (Smethurst 1950, Hillard 1989).

Livy’s depiction of Roman women has received a fair share of critical attention, particularly his more sensational tales of the victims of lust, Lucretia and Verginia, the Sabine women, and of strong women, the king-maker Tanaquil and Tullia, the villainess daughter of Servius Tullius. Before we turn to discussion, we can just note that the outcome of most of Livy’s tales about women in early Rome is political, but that a few tales explain the architectural features of Livy’s contemporary Rome. That means that these tales partake of the characteristics of aetiological myth; they explain aspects of Roman customary life of his day.

It has been noted that Livy’s first two books, perhaps the first pentad with its apparent themes of Roma and libertas, seem to give a disproportionate degree of attention to incidents involving women (Smethurst 1950). Beside the sensational tales referred to above, women feature frequently as making out a normal part of early Roman society. A chronological survey of references to female participation in early Roman social and political life may offer some interesting insights. Haberman (1980) points out that there was a general taste for a romantic element in political history, and that, although Livy was using material well-established by literary and historical tradition, his treatment ‘obliterated earlier accounts’. His narrative style lent itself to the audience’s visualization of romantic or horrific episodes, but within these episodes lie embedded complex legal or political concepts. Thus Briscoe (1970), commenting on the Verginia episode (of which more below) indicates that Livy may be anachronistically projecting later concepts into an earlier era, thereby using his narrative as a vehicle for the legal thought of his day. Santoro L’Hoir (1994:10 n. 18)
shows that 'rape, for Livy, is a violation of civil rights' and that the tale is a reflection of civil thought about rights and citizenship. On the other hand Bauman (1992:10-11) suggests that the strongly patriarchal society of Livy's day did not like women's involvement in politics; hence Livy's negative depiction of the early villainesses who overstepped the bounds of domestic propriety. Joshel (1992) considers that the Lucretia and Verginia incidents show that of necessity victim 'Woman' must die that patriarchal 'Man' may live a disciplined political life. Her analysis of the relationship between the violation of the civil rights of Roman men and the violation of their women is very strongly grounded in present feminist concerns. It says a great deal about what Livy expected of his male readers, but does not explicitly set out to reflect on what his readers, both men and women, may have expected of him.

Hallett (1984 *passim*) stresses that what she considers was the most important social relationship in later Rome, the continued closeness of fathers and daughters, stemmed from established practices already prominent in monarchic early Rome. She sees the conjugal tie as having been extremely loose in the affective area, that is, that as a rule men loved their daughters more than they loved their wives. Hallett cites (1984:230 and n.17) aspects of the marriages of Marcus and Quintus Cicero to make her point, but these may be open to a different interpretation.⁸ She frequently cites Livy, and, in her detailed interpretations of the behaviour of women like the Sabine brides or Lucretia, postulates that Roman men were closer to their daughters, whereas Greeks and Etruscans stressed the marriage bond.⁹

This will be touched upon *ad loc.* in discussion below. Against this we may consider Konstan's (1986) more neutral view that Roman women were often caught in cross-familial loyalties, and landed in situations where they had to choose between their husbands and their fathers.

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⁸ Among other things, Hallett (1984:230) interprets Quintus' willingness to endure twenty years of verbal abuse from the redoubtable Pomponia as proof that 'he did not care'. It could be interpreted as showing that he cared for her very much, and was willing to put up with a great deal. Hallett bases a further argument about the relationship between Marcus Cicero and Terentia on Plut. Cic. 41.2-6, but Plutarch demonstrably muddles his facts, and not much weight can be attached to his statements (Claassen 1996:210).

⁹ Hallett also discusses (117-129) the strong bond between a man and his sister's daughters and sons. As a concomitant to Hallett's stress on what she terms 'filiofocality', recourse may be had to social anthropology to find other suitable terminology for different aspects of this phenomenon. Hallett is reading into Roman custom a combination of *patronymy* with what may be termed the pale remainder of *matrilinearity* (the importance of the maternal uncle to the next generation) blended with *patrilocality* (the bride goes to live in her husband's—or his father's—home). That these different systems of social ordering are essentially in conflict would not disturb a student of Roman adherence to custom, but whether they can be distinguished as a characteristic Roman trait as opposed to, say, Etruscan practice, is perhaps less sure.
That Livy's narrative, apparent aims and developmental concept of history were acceptable to his contemporaries was stressed by Luce (1977:296) in an era before reception theory and the polemic about auctorial intent had gained prominence: 'What history needed in the Augustan age was what Livy wrote, as the instant success of his work and his personal fame attests.' This is put in more general terms by Fox (1996:41): 'Historical texts are opaque artefacts...history is perhaps a revelation of the cultural values of the times which produced them.' In other words, by his style Livy engages his reader in his historiographical project. Livy's instant popularity shows that this engagement was willing (cf. Kraus 1994:13). Here Hallett (1984:122) usefully stresses that the filiafocal practices she reads in Livy reflect cultural continuity and represent 'a moralistic desire to depict Rome's most hallowed past as mirroring her present in one, admirable regard; after all, an author such as Livy explicitly claims, in sections 8-11 of his preface, to be treating Rome's origins in order to provide readers of his own day with examples of inspiring conduct for emulation.' This was Livy's stated intention, but a simpler explanation for his popularity may be that his ancient readers, as today, found his tales entertaining.

The methods whereby an ancient historian engaged his readers and controlled their response were literary (Pedrick and Rabinowitz 1986). To analyze these, close attention must be paid to his rhetorical and narrative style, and selection and use of vocabulary (Moore 1989, Rutland 1978, Dunkle 1967, 1971). To the latter must be added its converse: we need to study the degree to which characters, actions or situations are used as metaphors or symbols for single concepts (presumably well defined in the author's own mind) which he chooses to convey to his readership in such a manner. These concepts tie in closely with his own Weltanschauung.

Again, the popularity of an author is a measure of his audience's acceptance of both his concepts and his attitude to life, given that audience and author had enough common ground that the audience's understanding would work as a key to fit the lock of his metaphor. After two millennia we examine the workings of the 'lock' in order to deduce the shape of the 'key'.

10. These are two sides of one coin, Woodman and Powell (1992:207); cf. Eco (1995:15-17) on the 'model author' becoming apparent from the effect of the 'empirical author's' style and thrust.
11. Joshel (1992) and Moore (1993) both show how Livy associates the deaths of two women with the downfall of two regimes, thereby showing the relationship between immorality and political disaster. Joshel's approach is more overtly feminist in its assumptions about patriarchal oppression. Joshel's reading of metaphorical aspects of Livy's narrative tends toward anachronism. It is to be doubted whether his contemporary female readership would have accepted her tentative suggestion about the symbolic equation of knife and male organ (127), or of 'woman as space' (121 f.). But cf. Warner (1985) on the female form's 'aptly suggestive resemblance to concepts and claims it represents'.

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Some modern analyses of individual ‘locks’ used by Tacitus (such as Joshel 1995) are highly interpretative, others more straightforward, (Königer 1966, Rutland 1978), others tentative. Stehle (1989a:116) puts it strongly: ‘[H]istoricizing is part of the disguise whereby an ideological stalemate appears to be an empirical one.’ She is referring to the Roman use of the category ‘female’ to reify their construct of political relations and the moral status of the state and public authority. Modern critics’ interpretation of Livy’s use of women in his narrative tends largely to see them as a means whereby his moralistic intentions are conveyed in veiled form (Joshel 1992, Moore 1993, Stehle 1989b, Donaldson 1952). So, for instance, Santoro L’Hoir (1994:11 n. 23) suggests ‘[Livy’s] equation of wool-working with chastity ... [implies that the] ‘Augustan’ message [of the story of Lucretia] could be a metaphor for foreign assaults on Roman family values, equaling rape of the state’ (my italics). Persuasive as that suggestion may be, it may be a case of reading an own ideological interpretation into a far simpler circumstance: that traditional material on early Rome contained many stories about women, and that Livy chose to include these, perhaps because of a dearth of other material, but perhaps also simply because he and his readership enjoyed such tales. A question to ask then may very well be, ‘Why does Livy in his later books cease presenting his readership with stories about women?’ A simple answer may present itself: that when he had more formal political and historical sources to inform him, he did not need to flesh out his narrative with domestic tales. A corollary to this would be the assumption that these traditional tales in the early books were acceptable to his readership as an alternative to the more overtly political (and therefore masculine) history that he could cull from written sources.

This paper will not try to add to our view of Livy’s sources nor his auctorial stance, overt or covert (that is, his aims and the methods he used to achieve them) but it will try to establish the common ground between Livy and his readers which enabled them to appreciate his depiction of the women of early Rome. Smethurst (1950), for instance, considers that Livy plays down the importance of women, who would generally have been considered to be ‘incapable of positive action’. Moore (1989:160), again, stresses the vocabulary of sexual purity as another common denominator. The paper will try to answer the question ‘What did Livy’s readers find in his text which commanded their confidence (cf. Cameron 1989:35) and what attitude to the women of his time did Livy reflect in his portrayal of the

12. Apart from the sensational story of the role of the courtesan Hispala Fecinia in flushing out the Bacchanals (A. u. c. XXXIX.9f.), and women’s protests against the sumptuary rulings of the Lex Oppia (XXXIV.2-4), stories about women feature little or not at all in the rest of his work. See Scafuro (1989), LeFkowitz (1983) and Dettenhofer (1994:142).
myths of early Rome?" This answer cannot be fully-rounded; an ancient readership, as a modern one, would have come to a text from different contexts (Pedrick and Rabinowitz 1986:109).

The nature of Livy’s tales

I have found it expedient to take my discussion beyond the first pentad, to include the first part of Book VI. That means that my analysis includes events of the period 375–371, when all magistracies were opened to the plebeians.

I have said that Livy’s tales of early Roman women were largely aetiological myths: the interpretation of later Roman institutions (social, political or architectural) with reference to real or fictional historical events of great moment, where characters gain a ‘paradigmatic Gestalt’ (so Burck 1934:241). Between these there are, woven into the text of his narrative, obiter dicta which involve women and women’s reactions to passing events. Some may have been of equal moment to the Roman posterity which made up the audience of Livy’s day, but the narratives are less fully worked out. Allusions to women’s reactions, we shall see, appear to have been inserted, not as in the case of the famous victims or notorious villainesses, to point a moral and adorn his tale, but merely as part of the expected fabric of annalistic tradition. These, too, can be taken as reflecting the expectations of Livy’s audience.

Livy conforms to the exigencies of his chosen genre, consistently showing a marked preference for the political interests of the aristocracy, even though he was not himself a member of that class (Porod 1989), but his involvement of women in his narrative reflects a wide range of types, where aristocratic is not always ‘good’ and lowly is not always ‘bad’. Equally, his narrative tone has a wide register, ranging from the sublime (Rhea Silvia’s involvement with a god), the noble (the Sabine brides’ intervention in the war between their fathers and their husbands), the tragic (Lucretia and Verginia), the melodramatic (Tarpeia and Tullia) to the ridiculous (the sisters Fabia and the democratization of magistracies).

Of interest in any discussion of narrative is the content or story (that is, what the author tells) and the manner of telling (the author’s style) and, third, the narrative focus and tone of presentation (that is, the perspective from which stories are told). In all cases the perspective is Roman; the question is whether in any of these cases the perspective is feminine. My stress will largely be on content and narrative focus, with discussion of style only touched upon in relation to the other two aspects. Appreciation of the rhetorical and narrative style of the work may be taken as a given part of the common ground between the ancient author and his ancient readers which we are trying to establish.
Livy's early tales of princesses and queens are very much the stuff, not only of myth, but of fairy-tale. We can identify stock characters, albeit in a somewhat fluid format. Lavinia, as the bride whose hand brought with it a kingdom, merges into the good and resourceful queen, a prototype for the resourceful Tanaquil, whose evil alternative is the murderous Tullia. Likewise, Tarpeia is the treacherous child of an unsuspecting father. The maid of Ardea reprises the Sabine brides, the women about whom two rival factions go to war. Cloelia is a variant of the traditional virginal warrior-maiden. Verginia, with a name evoking her virgin status, is a reprise of Lucretia, the innocent victim of a powerful man's lust. Lucretia's story reflects the 'Potiphar's wife' theme (common in fairy tale) from a new angle—she is won over by Sextus Tarquin with the threat that she will be compromised in death by a staged liaison with a slave. Veturia's maternal power that sways Coriolanus is comically paralleled by Ambustus' fond indulgence of his younger daughter's aspiration to the trappings of power.

The women in *Ab urbe condita* I–VI: a chronological review

The Table (pages 81–82) gives a chronological resume, numbered 1–22, with appropriate quotations, of the women mentioned in Livy I–VI. My further discussion, below, takes these in order, and tries to note, also, what our author does not include. We may pass over Livy's earliest pre-history with fleeting reference to the first female of strong character that he mentions, Lavinia (1 on the Table), who acted as regent for Ascanius after Aeneas died (I.3.1). Interesting here is the assumption of capability in the female regent. Livy does not question or comment upon her appointment. This straightforward account of female regency is offset by the fantastic elements of Livy's first tale of a female 'victim', Rhea Silvia (I.3.11) whose wicked uncle's incarceration of her for the sake of 'perpetual virginity' could not prevent the god Mars from violently impregnating her with the twins Romulus and Remus (I.4.1). This story partakes of all the elements of a fairy tale, but is presented in exactly the same terms as the first. These twins would in the end enjoy the good offices of a female wolf and a shepherd's wife before vindicating both their mother and their grandfather. We may assume a readership comfortable with both the idea of a female in a position of power, and the naive idea of an anthropomorphic wolf bitch. The tale stays on the naive level, with dispassionate recounting of violence. No special account is taken of his female readers' sensibilities. Livy does not strive for 'crowd-pleasing' narrative realism by, for instance, recounting the mother's emotions when Romulus killed Remus for laughing at the small beginnings of his city.

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<td>1</td>
<td>Lavinia</td>
<td>tanta indoles in Lavinia erat</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Rhea Silvia</td>
<td>(Amulius) perpetua virginitate spem partus adimit</td>
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<td>vi compressa Vestalis</td>
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<td>3a</td>
<td>Sabine brides</td>
<td>signoque dato iuventus Romana ad rapiendas virgines discurrit</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Tarpeia</td>
<td>filiam virginem auro corrumpit Tatius</td>
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<td>3b</td>
<td>Sabine wives and mothers</td>
<td>victo malis muliebi pavore, ausae se inter taela volantia inferre</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Horatia</td>
<td>soror virgo, quae desponsa uni ex Curiaius fuerat</td>
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<td>&quot;sic eat quaecumque Romana lugebit hostem&quot;</td>
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<td>6a</td>
<td>Tanaquil</td>
<td>Tanaquil, summo loco nata</td>
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<td>Tanaquil, perita ut volgo Etrusi Caelestium prodigiorum mulier</td>
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<td>Her daughter</td>
<td>filiamque ei suam rex despondit</td>
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<td>6b</td>
<td>Tanaquil again</td>
<td>populum Tanaquil adloquitur</td>
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<td>8a</td>
<td>Her grand-daughters</td>
<td>duas filias iuvenibus regis iungit</td>
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<td>8b</td>
<td>= Tullia</td>
<td>uxore Tullia inquietum animum stimulante</td>
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<td>iam enim ab scelere ad aliud spectare ... scelus.</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Her daughter</td>
<td>ei Mamilio filiam nuptum dat</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Lucretia</td>
<td>nocte sera deditam lanae inter lucubrantes ancillas in medio aedium sedentem inveniunt</td>
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<td>in terrore ... vicisset obstinatam pudicitiam velut vi victrix libido</td>
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<td>cultrum ... in corde defigit, prolapsaque in volnus moribunda cecidit.</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>Brutus' wife</td>
<td>&quot;leges rem surdam, inexorabilem ...&quot;</td>
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<td>Vitellia allied to Tarquins</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>Cloelia</td>
<td>in summa Sacra Via fuit posita virgo insidens equo.</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Veturia &amp; Volumnia</td>
<td>muliebris ... timor ... mulieres precibus lacrimisque defenderent.</td>
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<td>&quot;ad hostem an ad filium venerim, captiva materve in castris tuis sim?&quot;</td>
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<td>vir Romani ... sine obstractione gloriae alienae vivebatur ...</td>
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14. Oppia (ut) Oppia virgo Vestalis damnata incesti II.42,11 poenas dederit
15. The matrons of Rome stratae passim matres crinibus templae verrentes veniam irarum caelestium finem pesti exposcunt
16. Racilia togam propere e tugurio proferre uxorem Raciliam iubet
17. Verginia Hanc virginem adultam forma excellentem Appius amore amens pretio ac spe perlicere adortus ...
   • clienti negotium dedit ut virginem in servitutem adsereret
   • "Virginem ego hanc sum duxit dux ductus
       nuptamque pudicam habiturus ..."
   • constat nudum ... proponendum, decresse vindicias secundum servitutem
   • "Hoc te uno quo possum ... modo, filia, in libertatem vindico"
   • manesque Verginiae, mortuae quam viveae felicioris, per tot domos ad petendas poenas vagati, nullo relictio sone tandem quieverunt
18. Maid of Ardea Virginem plebeii generis maxime forma notam petiere iuvenes
   • contacta civitate rabie duorum iuvenum funestas nuptias ...
19. Vestal Postumia pontifex maximus abstinere iocis colique
20a. The matrons of Rome concursumque in muros est et matronarum
20b. Women of Veii ex tectis saxa tegulaeque a mulieribus ac servitiis iacerentur, inferunt ignes
20c. Juno regina "Visne Romam ire, Juno?" ... adnuisse
20d. Women of Rome plena omnia templo Romanarum matrum grates dis agentium erant
21a. Arruns' wife ira corruptae uxoris ab Lucumone
21b. Soldiers' wives Pavor fugaque occupaverat animos ... ut ...
   Veios in hostium urbem ... quam ...
   Romam ad coniuges ac liberos fugerent
21c. Vestals and Lucius Albiniius' wife ... descendere uxorem ac pueros iussit,
    virgines sacraeque in plaustrum imposuit
22. The sisters Fabia parva ... rem ingentem moliundi causa intervenit
   • eodem propediem domi visuram honores quos apud sororem videat
The heroic Romulus is shown welding the riffraff of Italy into an élite citizen body, a body, however, sadly lacking in female parts. Romulus' overtures were rejected by the Sabine fathers, who sneeringly refused any alliance with their chaste daughters (3 on the Table) and suggested recourse to the female riffraff of Italy, by implication those outcasts known to be of loose morals (I.9.6). Yet the Sabine families could not resist an invitation to a feast in honour of Neptune, and came, so Livy says, 'out of curiosity'. At a given moment, signoque dato, each man forcibly took a girl captive (I.9.10).\textsuperscript{14} It has frequently been remarked that Livy does his best with a rather unsavoury history of rapine, and moves on as rapidly as he can. Davis (1995) comments that 'for Livy, the episode was awkward but defensible'. It was left to Ovid (\textit{AA}\ 1.101–32) to point the savagery of the scene, with among others the still common shift of blame to the victims of the rape: 'their confusion enhanced their attractiveness'. Livy's contemporaries accepted the tale on its own terms, and those terms would have included an earnest intention to portray the 'founding mothers' of Rome as beautiful and virginal recipients of a pure bloodline, stressing the female role as perpetuator of the \textit{familia}.\textsuperscript{15}

The narrative quickly moves on from this sordid episode, to show a self-restraining rectitude on the part of the aspirant husbands. Only on the next day each girl, as bride, was handed over to a bridegroom, Romulus' senators claiming the most desirable. Romulus hastened to allay the victims' fears, explaining that they would enjoy full citizen rights, and each would be to her husband 'as her mother was to her father' (I.9.9–16). This passage is important for the immediate context of \textit{citizenship} assigned to these brides, by virtue of their marriage to Romans. Romulus improved upon the occasion also to institute the first laws—a case where Livy is connecting \textit{iustum connubium} with the underlying legal fabric of society. His interpretation of the status of the young Sabines as 'legal coniuges' here clearly reflects a later era, for the \textit{ius connubii} (legal right to intermarry with citizens of other towns, granted to some enfranchised Italian towns and the towns in the Latin League) did not come into existence at Rome before about the fifth century.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} 'Rape' in this context follows Latin and pre-20th century English usage and means seizure or abduction.

\textsuperscript{15} This line, in the case of Romulus (and his 'descendant' Augustus), could be traced back to a god, Mars (another ravisher of innocent virginity glossed over by our author), and, even more remotely, a goddess, Venus Genetrix, mother of the Julian line.

\textsuperscript{16} The \textit{foedus Cassianum}, c. 493, between Rome and the member cities of the Latin League, fixed certain rights, but only during the last stage of the League, c. 354–338 (Pol. 3.24.5) was \textit{ius connubii} made part of the arrangement between Rome and individual towns, so HG Gundel, \textit{Kleine Pauly}. 3.511.
The outcome was clearly political: these women were, by virtue of their marriage, allowed into full citizenship. In this Romulus’ wife Hersilia is shown by Livy as fulfilling an important political role in persuading Romulus to relent towards the Sabine parents. This may very well be a reflection of the active behind-the-scenes political role of women in Livy’s own era.17

The Sabines as a nation took some time to regroup, but eventually laid siege to the citadel. Either Livy’s sources or the narrative framework into which he arranged their material seem to have let him down here, for we see Romulus ‘forgiving’ the Sabine parents-in-law, inviting them to the city (I.11.2), and then carrying on a defensive war against the same parents and their friends. Here, too, mysteriously, the captain of the Roman guard, Tarpeius, is shown as having a full-grown daughter (no. 4 on the Table). Tarpeia treacherously offered, lured by Tatius’ gold, to let the Sabines in, in exchange ‘for what they wore on their arms’. She did not receive baubles or bangles, but was crushed to death under a heap of shields (I.11.7-9).18 Her treachery offers an early example of what Konstan (1986:211) terms the ‘tension of crossed loyalties’, a topic that is to recur regularly in any further tales of familial relationships and marriage in early Rome.

Betrayal of her father’s cause by this lone Roman maiden contrasts with the two-way loyalty of the Sabine women, for at the decisive battle the Sabine brides, now mothers all (3b) are shown as interposing their bodies and their babies between their warring progenitors and their spouses. Josel (1992) refers to Livy’s ideological use of women’s bodies as ‘space’, here space serving as a boundary between conflicting males, assuming a readiness in the women to absorb the blows of both. Yet no blows fell. Perhaps more important, then, is the certainty ascribed to (or implied of) the women, that they had the power to stop intertribal strife by the interposition of domestic concerns. Livy shows the Sabine grandparents as being incorporated into Rome through the mediation of their daughters (I.13.1–6), and the women as being rewarded by having the wards of Rome named after them (I.13.7,8), a civic reward for conjugal loyalty. One may

17. Livy is careful to stress that Hersilia had bided her time to approach Romulus when he was feeling particularly pleased with himself after a victory against a force from Antemnae (I.11.1). This shows an awareness in Livy of a common wifely ploy. I have not been able to see Hillard’s 1983 paper on the political influence of Roman matronae (Classicum 22, 10–13), but refer the reader to this, as well as to Santoro L’Hoir (1994) and Fishier (1994) for discussion of later examples, on which the earlier may have been modelled, on analogy of Bauman’s thesis (1994) on the relationship between Livy’s historiographical methods and life (see n. 21 below).

18. A student of mine suggests that the Romans could not bear to admit to inefficiency in their defence of the Capitol, and so invented the story in order to be able to shift the blame.
conjecture that the traditional narrative also served partly as an aetiological ploy to explain traces of Sabine influence in Roman place names.

Hallett (1984: 111-114) uses Livy’s depiction of the filial loyalty of the Sabine brides as evidence for early Roman ‘filiationality’, as discussed above. She (113-116, 220 and n.9) plays down the role of Hersilia and emphasises the mediating role of the Sabines as daughters. Tarpeia is, then, a lone aberration. Yet in all encounters between the women and either their husbands or their fathers, marriage and their status as wives is given stress. It could be expected that in a Roman narrative their loyalty to their Roman husbands would receive the greater prominence, for by means of marriage these women were imported into early Roman society. By their intervention they are shown as themselves resolving cross-familial strain by means of compromise.

The death of the Roman Horatia (5) at the hands of her brother, the last of the Horatian triplets to survive the epic encounter in matched combat between two sets of triplets, the Roman Horatii and the Volscan Curiatii, offers a clearer instance of divided loyalties which remained unresolved. Horatia had attempted to mourn her betrothed, one of the Volscan heroes. Their father fully approved the brother’s reaction to her preference for the conjugal (espoused) relationship above the familial. In this case the immediate outcome serves to support Hallett’s (1984: 114) argument that such loyalty was regarded as despicable by the Romans. Custom, however, required the expiation of familial blood-guilt. No great political act is portrayed by Livy as the long-term outcome of this deed. The outcome was architectural; ‘the sister’s beam’ was a yoke under which the young man passed in an act of expiation, and Horatia was given a tomb of hewn stone (I.24.1–26.14). Romans of Livy’s time could still see both monuments. Here again we seem to be dealing with an aetiological myth, that incorporates at the same time a romantic tale. The pathos of the girl’s forbidden love receives greater prominence than the portrayal of Roman custom. The brother’s deed is cited by Cicero (Mil. 3) as the paradigm for justifiable homicide, so the story obviously was current as a legal exemplum even before Livy’s canonization of the incident.

Livy’s narrative then turns to the beginnings of Etruscan rule at Rome. Again women are involved. The high status of Etruscan women has been postulated on the evidence of Etruscan sepulchral art (Hall 1985, Hallett 1984: passim). Livy shows us two such women, one noble, the other base. Tanaquil was an Etruscan, married to Lucumo, a Greek immigrant from Corinth. To escape from their neighbours’ hostility, she urged him to move

19. The Tarpeia incident is aberrant, but on the level of narrative. Livy clearly has introduced an independent story, with an adult daughter of a Roman as protagonist, into the fabric of the tale of the brides as young mothers. All other Romans at this stage are the fathers of infants.
to Rome (1.34.4). She was, as were many Etruscans, *perita caelestium prodigiorum* (learned in augury), and explained the eagle that snatched off and then replaced his cap as a sign of future greatness (1.34.9). Livy seems to hint that much of Lucumo's rapid rise within Roman power structures was the result of his wife's driving influence. With Romulus' line long since superseded, and Ancus the king dead, Lucumo became the first Etruscan king of Rome, as 'Lucius Tarquinius Priscus'. Tanaquil's inspiration of her talented husband brought momentous political outcomes (1.35.1–6). Although some of his political acts were suspect (Livy shows him as the first to enlarge the Senate with his own supporters), Tarquin was a success that justified his wife's encouragement.

The theme of succession by marriage, gaining the kingdom through gaining the hand of the princess, runs through myth and fairy tale—and through early Roman history from Lavinia to the Etruscan kings of Rome. Violent usurpation by a son-in-law was common in some ancient societies, and peaceful succession by this means was, in Livy's era, the only resort of the soulless emperor Augustus. Livy's narrative of Tarquin's successor reflects this theme, as well as showing Tanaquil's continued role as kingmaker.

In the Tarquin home there was, some said, a slave woman, some said a foreign princess, rescued by Tanaquil (1.39.4,5), who, according to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Ant.* 4.1.3f, (a version not given by Livy) saw a phallic vision in the hearth fire. Tanaquil interpreted this strange portent. This fire would impregnate a woman with a future king. And so, miraculously, by due contact with the hearth-fire, the woman bore a son, Servius Tullius. Livy takes up the tale at the point when Tanaquil interpreted the halo of flames that appeared around the boy's head as another sign of future greatness (1.39.1–4). By marrying their daughter (7), he became the son-in-law of Priscus and Tanaquil (1.39.5). In course of time Priscus fell victim to assassins hired by the earlier king Ancus' son. Priscus died (1.40) but Tanaquil kept his chambers shut and for some days pretended frequent consultation with him, reporting to the people (6b), until she had engineered Servius' succession (1.41). The story is reminiscent of the method employed, so Tacitus tells us, by the empress Livia after Augustus' death, to ensure her son Tiberius' succession (*Ann.* I.5). Both authors use the narrative device of a woman's machinations bringing about a political

20. Admittedly Augustus waited until after Tiberius' divorce from Julia to adopt Tiberius as his son. *Adrogatio* of a son-in-law would have amounted to turning their marriage into an incestuous relationship. Julius Caesar's adoption of Octavian, one of the grandchildren of his sister, had been his solution to ensuring succession. In a variation of this theme, Mithridates of Pontus was said to have married one of his own sisters and kept the others celibate, probably in order to avoid having hostile brothers-in-law, *Sall. Hist.* frg. 76.
outcome. Livy reports this incident in neutral terms, Tacitus is heavily negative about Livia.\textsuperscript{21} Livy's next Etruscan example is held before his readership as a model of baseness. Servius Tullius' two daughters (8) were married to the sons of the late king Priscus, but one of each pair and couple is portrayed in Livy's traditional sources as evil (1.46.3-9). Each killed a spouse, thereby becoming free to marry the other. The evil Tullia (8b) inspired by the idea that her maternal grandmother had twice been king-maker, moved from one misdeed to another, spurring on the young Tarquin, her second husband, to kill her own father. Crossed loyalties were no problem for her (1.47.1-48.5).\textsuperscript{22} Livy's stress on the fact that Tullia was 'first to hail him king' (1.48.6) shows his judgement of the unsuitability of the act. He shows Tarquin, embarrassed, chasing Tullia home, to her 'woman's place'. On the way she came upon her father's corpse, and compounded her evil. With not a qualm she drove her chariot over the body, and carried his blood on her wheels into her home (1.48.6-7), a ghastly Clytemnestra or Medea, steeling her bosom to horrific deeds. Here, as touched on above, the influence of tragedy may be read into Livy's depiction. Smethurst (1950) comments on the 'ghoulish delight' with which the tale is drawn out—a clear reflection of the taste of both our author and his readership. Livy's Tullia is a worthy prototype of the bloody heroes and heroines of the later Roman stage. Livy's inclusion of such a melodramatic tale in his Roman history may have pointed a moral, but it could equally have worked as a sop to the blood-lust of a readership inured to the excesses displayed at gladiatorial games.

Tullia then leaves centre stage, a suitable female introduction to a progressively more evil series of male despots. Her husband, the second Tarquin, is depicted in tradition as a tyrant. All the stock 'tyrant tales' adhere to him (e.g. the 'tall poppies story', 1.54.7).\textsuperscript{23} Their daughter (9) was no more than a pawn to fix an alliance with the royal house of Tusculum, thereby strengthening Tarquin's Etruscan ties (1.49.9). Livy

\textsuperscript{21} Bauman (1994) suggests that Livy's tale is an \textit{ex post facto} extrapolation based on contemporary events; that it serves as 'proof' of Tacitus' accurate reportage: that Livy was borrowing from life to portray art. It may perhaps with equal validity be argued that both authors are employing a useful narrative device, which Tacitus re-uses in Ann. XII.68-9 to tell of events after the death of Claudius, at Nero's succession. In either event, the response to both authors seems to have been unquestioning—and may be considered still such, if one judges from the critics quoted here and in n. 17 above.

\textsuperscript{22} Hallett (1984:115 n. 57) shows Livy aware of the impact of this abrogation of the \textit{pietas} involved in \textit{filiafocality} by his stress on the words \textit{patris} and \textit{filia} in the passage describing Tullia's deeds.

\textsuperscript{23} Cf. Dunkle (1967) and (1971).
tells us no more about her, except that this was a political alliance, the type of marriage still prevalent in the Rome of his day.

Not all the Tarquin men are shown as bad; some are drawn as merely foolish. Young Tarquinius Collatinus, cousin of Tarquinius Superbus, the tyrannical king, while idly carousing between campaigns (1.57.4–6) initiated the infamous ‘best-wife’ competition that led to the rape of his wife by the king’s son Sextus Tarquin. There is no need to repeat the well-known tale of his lust, inspired by the very chasteness and industry of Collatinus’ wife, as the hapless Lucretia sat among her maidens, noxete sera, spinning her wool (1.57.7–10). When Sextus came to seduce Lucretia, no blandishments could move his victim, who yielded only before the threat of being implicated with a male slave in a false scene of debauchery. Livy portrays Lucretia as valuing her good name above her body (1.58.1–4). The sad victim vindicated herself by denouncing her tormentor before her father and her husband. Livy shows her choosing what she perceives as the only honourable outcome; against the persuasion of her menfolk, Lucretia ends her life, lest her virtue inspire other women to sin (1.58.5–10). Thereupon Brutus, also a cousin of her husband, discarding his hitherto feigned dumb and brutish ways, drove the kings from Rome (1.59–60.3). For the Romans this story was their own early history. For us it is of greater interest that this momentous political upheaval was traditionally tied to such a pathetic tale, apparently unquestioningly accepted by Livy’s generation.24

Lucretia’s story caught the imagination of later Romans since first it was devised, perhaps developing as an aetiological myth to explain the beginnings of the republic, perhaps even invented by Fabius Pictor (Donaldson 1982:3–6). The depiction of Tarquin changed over time, from the lustful villain aroused by Lucretia’s chaste nobility that Livy presents, to an inspired lover, as postulated by Ovid, to Dio Cassius’ malicious ruiner of a chaste woman’s reputation. With these changing perspectives we have a changing Lucretia, considered for instance by the Christian father Augustine to have been ‘collusive and vainglorious’, technically adulterous, as, for him, ‘even yielding under duress is adultery’. Her portrayal continues to vary, right up to modern times (Bryson 1986, Donaldson 1982, passim).25 Joshel’s (1992) analysis puts Livy’s narrative into modern feminist perspective, emphasising the patriarchal stance of the male protagonists, for whom

24. Bryson (1986) terms the story, as that of the Sabines, ‘not rape, but a fable of law’, essentially political. If such, it carries a contrary message: rape is here equated with lawless power, and not with an essential to the orderly development of civic graces.

not the woman's suffering, but the violation of her husband's and father's civic rights became the rallying point for revolution. Josel emphasises the objectification of the female victim. The body—perhaps merely the name—of Lucretia stands for freedom.

What some critics miss is that, equally, the very name 'Tarquin' stood for despotism in the Roman imagination. Livy shows another sad twist to Lucretia's story. The very name Tarquin tainted her widower Collatinus so that he, too, was exiled (II.1 and 2). This vignette, given without further comment by our author, offers an interesting view of the ascendancy of blood ties above the bonds of marriage. Here we have the husband of the victim not associated in popular imagination with his chaste wife, nor with his political affiliations, but rather with his tainted family.26

The strength of family ties is again pivotal in Livy's next tale, which, however, seems to be illustrating the ascendancy of agnatic connections above the cognatic, as stressed by Hallett (1984:129-188, passim). Brutus the liberator married into the family of the Vitellii, who had been formerly allied to the Tarquins. Vitellia's (11) family connections proved so strong that the two Brutus sons turned to their mother's family cause.27 As traitors to the Republic, the young men were killed by their own father, applying the law as something 'deaf and inexorable' (II.3.1-5,9). Livy does not comment adversely on the incident, which in the end serves as an illustration of the superiority of political loyalty above the familial.

Then followed war against the Etruscans under Lars Porsenna. Here Livy presents as paradigmatic heroine (a third with the heroic Horatius, who held the bridge, and Scaevola, who was reputed to have felt no pain, when he burnt his hand), a young girl, Cloelia (12). Cloelia led a band of Roman girls out of capture and swam across the Tiber, thereby gaining the admiration of Porsenna, who rewarded her bravery with the option of saving the lives of some of her compatriots. Perhaps not surprisingly, Cloelia elected as her boon a group of young boys (L13.6-10). Cloelia, we learn, was honoured by the Romans by having an equestrian statue raised to her in summa Sacra Via, a rather bizarre architectural outcome, given the confines within which females were usually expected to function (11.13.11).28 We can compare the narrative of Cloelia’s bravery with that

26. Hallett (1984:156) discusses Collatinus' lenient treatment of his nephews, the sons of his sisters, stressing his avuncular relationship, without commenting on his status as Lucretia's widower.

27. This is in a sense the opposite of the father–daughter relationship. Hallett (1984: 41) also stresses a general tendency among Roman males to venerate their mothers, as an extension of her 'father-daughter' thesis.

28. See Hallett (1984:118 and n. 59) on Dionysus of Halicarnassus' variant suggestion (supported by Pliny and Plutarch) that the statue represented Valeria, daughter of the consul Publicola.
of the dastardly Faliscan tutor in Livy A.u.c. V.27, who offered to lead the flower of Faliscan youth into the hands of the Roman dictator Camillus. Camillus virtuously rejected the offer.

Cloelia's story is open to various interpretations. Burck (1934:213) dismisses it as 'a theme beloved by the Greeks', and Smethurst (1950) considers Cloelia to be a pale reflection of the brave Scaevola, and speaks of Livy's women as 'puppets', but the apparently verifiable fact of the erection of an equestrian statue (to any young woman, whomsoever) is to me significant of the outlook of the Romans responsible for it. Livy's inclusion of the tale may be explained as aetiological, accounting for a particular, anomalous monument, but the romantic story and its stress on the patriotic virtue of the heroine give an indication of the type of moral precedent which Livy seems to have felt was important to hold before his contemporaries, and which was apparently accepted by his readership. The emphasis on the young woman's nobility, particularly in her decision to free young boys, may perhaps also be ascribed to normal 'us-them' xenophobia. A Roman woman, in the eyes of Livy and his readers, could show more true patriotism than any foreign male.

Next we again hear of war against the Volsci. Here a clash of loyalties contrasts civic and familial values. Cn. Marcius Coriolanus, former Roman hero, had been banished, and he subsequently led the Volsci against Rome. The married women, led by his mother Veturia, and Volumnia, his wife (13), went out to meet him with tears and prayers, precibus lacrimisque (II.40.1–2), but could not move him. Livy lays direct words in the mouth of Veturia, who predictably is shown as reducing patriotic appeal to the familial: 'Have I come to an enemy or a son, am I a captive or a mother ... did you not remember, "Within these walls are my home, my gods, my mother, my wife, my children?"' (II.40.5–8). Coriolanus retreated, taking with him the Volscan army.29 As famously shown by Shakespeare, Coriolanus is swayed by his deference to his mother, but can resolve his inner civic conflict only by a self-imposed retreat into continued exile. For the Romans, the aversion of war was the desired political outcome, and they rewarded its authors with an architectural outcome: the temple of Fortuna Muliebris ('Women's good luck') was erected, which Livy construes as an indication of the pristine virtue of those early Roman men. They did not enviously deny the Roman women their due praise, to such a degree did they always live without a desire to detract from the glory of others, he

29. Hallett (1984:41) quotes the critic Africa on Coriolanus as the Roman prototype 'perpetual mama's boy' (sic). Hallett interprets the tale (probably rightly) as fictional but draws sociological conclusions from it. The fact that his mother could prevail over Coriolanus she ascribes not so much to the force of character ascribed to an individual woman as to the mother-son corollary (above, n. 27) to her original thesis (nn. 8, 9).
says (II.40.11–12). For our purposes the most interesting aspect of his observation is the fact that the women of Rome are designated as ‘others’, without any reference to their gender, or indication that they should be considered as of inferior status. This is one of several instances where Livy draws the women of early Rome as the political equals of their menfolk.

Next follow a few small vignettes with religious undertones, first a woman as victim and then women as mediators between men and gods. In a few throw-away lines Livy tells us of portents implying the anger of the gods. The prophets could find no other cause than that some sacred rites had been violated—and the Romans ended their fears by punishing the Vestal Virgin Oppia (14) (by live entombment no doubt) for unchastity (II.42.11). A little later there was a worse situation; pestilence stalked the streets of Rome. Men, with their women and children, implored the gods. The mothers (15) grovelled on the floors of temples, sweeping up the dust with their hair (crinibus templo verrentes) and the pestilence waned (III.8.7–8).

We are granted few pictures of the day-to-day activities of good wives. Another of the heroic stories of Rome tells of a great man who interrupted his own humble day-to-day activities in order to save the state. The virtuous Cincinnatus was out in the fields ploughing when the Senate called on him to take on the role of dictator against the Sabines. His good wife Racilia (16) was ready with his formal toga, so Livy tells us, so that he could meet the delegation decently clad (III.26.9). We must assume that she had spun and woven the toga herself, as a good wife should. We may perhaps surmise that she was happy to get Cincinnatus back within sixteen days, after the successful outcome of his dictatorship (III.26.10–29.7). It is interesting that this wife’s name had been retained in the traditions that Livy worked with, and that Livy considered her name worthy of inclusion.

By the middle of the fifth century Rome was growing restless. There was political dissension between the patricians, those families from whose ranks the Senate traditionally was drawn, and the plebeians, whose families were in many cases equally deserving, and financially equally prominent. The patrician consuls were hated, as formerly had been the kings; not only this, but the people wanted written laws, to see what their rights were, and to limit the privileges of the powerful. The normal political machinery was suspended for a time, and a board of decemviri was appointed to research and lay down laws (III.33.1–3). Ten tables of laws were published in the forum, but although these men had ‘equalized the rights of all’, the decemvirs’ own power apparently went to their heads and they retained beyond its term the suspension of all other offices. Foremost of these tyrants was Appius Claudius,30 who, although himself a patrician, deviously managed

30. Discussed as such by Ahlheid (1995). Dunkle (1971) shows that Livy’s choice of vocabulary here (crudelem superbunque; libido) reflects the characteristics of a
(as first real patrician demagogue) to defeat the other patricians in an
election over which he himself presided as electoral officer (III.34.1–35).
Together with nine puppets of his, Appius Claudius arrogated virtual regal
power to himself, and all ten colleagues were each given the full regalia and
lictors usually reserved for one of only two consuls (III.36.1–39.3). This
situation obtained for upward of five years.

All Rome fell victim to this anarchic oligarchy, which came to a head
in another incident involving the person of a young and beautiful woman.
Critics have often noted the basic similarities between the pathetic tale of
Virgina and that of Lucretia, to the extent that it is generally accepted
as a doubling of the previous story, an aetiological myth adding dramatic
human interest to a dramatic administrative change in Rome's political
functioning.31 Appius Claudius was *amens amore* (madly in love) with
the grown daughter of the Roman centurion Verginius (17), who was in
camp, and who had betrothed her to a young plebeian, Icilius. Appius
induced a hanger-on publicly to claim the girl as his slave, which he did,
in the forum, when Verginia was on her way to her elementary school class
(III.44.1–6).32 Appius Claudius then presided as judge over a summary
hearing, and although her fiancé tried to uphold his claim on her continued
chastity, as his free-born *virgem* . . . *nuptam pudicam* (his own virgin
bride) (III.45.6),33 Appius Claudius ruled that the issue was not her
freedom. The bare question was 'to whom did she belong, to her father or
to the man who claimed her as slave?' (III.45.2). Her fiancé he dismissed
as a rabble-rouser looking for political clout (III.46.3). However, on the
insistence of the women thronging the forum, he allowed her to go free
until the next day.

Appius Claudius tried to prevent her father from being granted furlough
from the army (III.46.5–10), but on the next day Verginius was in the
forum in time to hear the verdict. With Appius as presiding judge it
went against Verginius' claim on his own daughter (III.47.6). In a bizarre
repeat of the sad tale of Lucretia, the father snatched a butcher's knife,
and, 'Hoc uno quo possum modo' ('in this, the only way I can') he put
his daughter beyond the clutches of her would-be debaucher (III.48.5).34

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31. See Joschel's (1992) interpretation of the 'necessity' of the deaths of Lucretia and
Virgina to the consolidation of male political power; cf. Moore (1998).

32. Best (1970) uses this incident to argue for the relatively high educational status
of Roman women, but one may more reasonably assume that Livy included this
detail to emphasize the youth and innocence of the victim.

33. The important factor here is not retention of Virgina's purity as Icilius' potential
lifelong companion, but her purity as the potential carrier of Icilius' blood line.

34. I do not support Joschel's (1992:127) tentative interpretation of the symbolic nar­
native significance of the knife as 'phallus' in both these tales (above, p. 11), as it

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Appius Claudius had tried to put a political face on the issue by pretending that he had news of a conspiracy in which the betrothed Icilius was involved (III.48.2), but his armed guard could not prevent both the outcry of the women and the real political uprising of the men that followed. Livy's women of Rome, faceless and nameless, won the day, leading their men in decisive agitation. After considerable political turbulence, Appius Claudius was imprisoned, lost an appeal and ended his own life, as did another of the decemvirs, who was deemed guilty by association, for not having prevented the mistrial (III.49.1–58.7). Livy for once allows himself auctorial comment: 'manesque Verginiae, mortuae quan vivae felicior is, per tot domos ad petendas poenas vagati, nullo reposito, tandem requieverunt' (and so the ghost of Verginia, happier dead than she was alive, having wandered through so many homes seeking vengeance, with none of the guilty left, at last came to rest) (III.58.11).35

The story of Verginia adorns a political tale with a far-reaching judicial outcome. The decemvirs laid down their positions, tribunes were elected, and, interestingly, the plebs themselves, fearing that their own 'liberty might become excessive', so Livy, engraved and set up all twelve tables of laws in the forum (III.47.5–6). Here we have two conflicting portrayals of the freedom of women to make decisions in matters of importance. Effective independent action is ascribed to the women in the forum.36 On the other hand, the hapless Verginia is portrayed as a mute, virtually lifeless chattel, about which the decision need only be on ownership. No utterances of any kind are ascribed to her by Livy. Under Roman law a woman in manu technically was a permanent legal minor to be passed from father to husband. As Joscel (1992) emphasises, the tale illustrates the close relationship between violation of a woman representing the parental and espoused rights of Verginius and Icilius—that is, their family honour—and violation of their civic rights.37 For Icilius, his right to a virgin bride was all-important, for Verginius, the display of his patriapotes by application of the ius vitae necisque redeemed his apparent powerlessness in the face

would be anachronistic to ascribe awareness of such a mental connotation to our author or his audience, except perhaps at a Freudian level of the subconscious.

35. Briscoe (1971:12) stresses this rare auctorial comment as a good illustration of Livy's varied technique.

36. These women would have been of plebeian rank, and relatively penurious, to be out of doors—patrician or affluent plebeian women would have been at home or in a covered litter. Their initially successful intervention is ignored by most critics, although it must be conceded that it was in the end futile.

37. It would be otiose to repeat Joscel's (1992) arguments in detail, also because her point of departure is 'modern' in that she is treating the tales of Verginia and Lucretia as instances of patriarchal bias in ancient Rome. My purpose is rather to try to analyze reception of the tales by Livy's readers, without necessarily labelling their attitude as 'patriarchal'.

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of the arrogance of patrician power. Although Verginia's person was the
object of Appius' lust and therefore of his machinations, essentially the
tale shows her as marginal in what amounted to a political struggle about
honour between a powerful patrician and two plebeians with less power.

For our author's narrative purposes, the human interest lies in the sad
date of the young girl. That life at any cost, even with her 'virtue sullied',
might have been preferable to the young woman is an issue that did not
appear to weigh with Livy or his readers, nor the strangeness of a father's
preference for the death of his child above his own loss of political face.
Attractive as the suggestion may be, it would be dangerous to conjecture
that the girl's life as the concubine of an affluent patrician might even have
been more comfortable than within an honourable marriage to a humbler
citizen. The thought is alien to both the romantic and the civic resonances
of the incident as a paradigmatic catalyst of political change.

In an unusual digression Livy features the strife between the upper and
lower classes of another town, where the fate of a young woman again be­
came an issue. Neighbouring Ardea developed a festering civil war because
two young men, one a patrician, the other a plebeian, had aspired to the
hand of a beautiful plebeian girl (IV.9.1-8). The conflict extended across
the Ardean borders when neighbouring towns were involved by both sides.
The Romans were called in as allies to assist the Ardean nobles; the plebs
called in the Volsci. The Ardean plebs, according to the aristocratically­
minded and patriotic Livy, were even more seditious than their Roman
counterparts (IV.9.8). With the help of the Romans, the Ardean nobles won
through. Livy condemns the affair as contaminated by a 'rabies' (IV.9.10),
as were the two young men who sought 'funestas nuptias' (a fatal wedding).

Livy indicates that the Romans were glad of this interlude, for they
felt guilty about some Ardean land that they had previously annexed
on the word of a singularly unreliable aged witness, who had sworn that
this land (the object of a dispute between Ardea and neighbouring Aricia,
that the Romans had been asked to arbitrate) belonged to Rome. After
the successful outcome of the futile war about the 'maid of Ardea' the
Ardeans considered that the Romans had, by their aid, cancelled out their
indebtedness in the affair of the disputed land (IV.10.6). The Romans,
however, wanted to expiate what amounted to a public monument to their
own greed, and they quietly set about compensating the Ardeans with
'colonization', in which they settled more Ardeans than Romans on this
very land (IV.11.5). So in this strange, many-sided dispute a military and
political outcome led to a diplomatic settlement. Livy does not deign to
relate the fate of the maid of Ardea. We must assume she married the
nobleman, as her family had wanted her to do. They had been vindicated
by the success of the Roman intervention. Again we may observe a case
where a young girl is accorded little say in her own fate.

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Next we have another Vestal accused of unchastity (19), but in this case she was vindicated. Livy reports that her only crimes were 'excessive freedom of speech, and unbecoming immodesty of dress'. The pontifex maximus of the day advised the young woman to dress more discreetly (IV.44.11). We may wonder how such a piece of advice (not unfamiliar today) could survive 400 years of mostly mouth-to-mouth retelling, and we may perhaps comment on the banality of such a moral paradigm for emulation to be held before the women of his time, and speculate on whether this is a reflection of Livy's own views of what is suitable behaviour and dress for a Vestal.

Interspersed with the horrific tales of lust and violence toward women, stories about the ordinary women of Rome may be extrapolated from casual descriptions in Livy's history, seen by some as a history of endless wars, written by a man who was no soldier. Reading the history of these wars with an eye to 'women's history', or perhaps, rather, 'gender-free' civic history, we can distil some interesting vignettes from both sides of each conflict. At (20) we have stories stemming from the legendary siege of Veii. First, Livy tells of Roman women thronging the city walls, and then the temples, when the news of the siege of Veii was bad (V.18.12). The Veian women, with their slaves, similarly tried to defend the citadel of Veii and the temple of Juno (V.21.1). When the temple was taken, the goddess Juno nodded assent on an invitation to come to Rome, and she was borne as 'Juno Regina' into a Rome (V.21.11) where the senate saw all the temples filled with mothers 'thanking the gods' (V.23.2). This may again appear as one of those interesting and ornamental tales with little basis in truth, but that evocation of a conquered city's gods continued long as Roman practice is attested by, for example, the fourth-century A.D. 'formula for evocation' from Roman North Africa recorded in Macrobius Sat. 3.9.7f.

The tale of the subsequent Gaulish threat to and invasion of Rome offers equally interesting vignettes. As an ethnographical introduction, Livy tries to explain the Gauls' origins and presence in Italy; they had long ago reached Etruria, enticed, so he says, by Arruns of Clusium, who had been angered by the seduction of his wife (21a) by Lucumo, the man who had formerly been his ward. Livy does not make it quite clear whether this was the Lucumo who became Tarquinius Priscus, but we may assume so (V.33.1–4).38

When the Gauls approached, the Roman soldiers were so frightened, says Livy, that they fled northwards to Veii (the very city they had plundered of her goddess) rather than to their wives and children in Rome (21b, V.38.5). Rome was in disarray. It was clear that the city would be taken and all who could flee, sought refuge elsewhere. The Vestals took the sacred

38. Ogilvie (1965) ad loc. ascribes the story to Posidonius or Timagenes.
objects from the temple of Vesta to the Etruscan city of Caere, with the help of Lucius Albinius, who made his wife and children get down from their wagon and helped the holy women to protect the sacred objects of Rome (21c V.40.8–10). This is a small tale of an ordinary family who offered what aid they could to ensure the safety of things held dear by all at Rome, a case of simple narrative ornament off-setting momentous events.

With this we come to the end of Livy’s first five books. The Roman men of military age retreated with wives and children to the citadel, leaving their elders in sole possession of the city (V.39.9). The marauding Gauls entered, hacked the venerable senators to death, and sacked the city, burning all old records. Written records, which Livy could use for his sources, survived only subsequent to this incident. A researcher like Richard A Bauman (1992) chose to start his history of ‘women in Roman politics’ at this point, for now, he says, Livy becomes reliable as historian. This is then almost exactly the point at which we shall end our study, for as Livy’s ‘historical reliability’ increases, so his fascinating digressions into woman’s lives and actions decrease.

We enter Livy’s sixth book, the start of his second pentad, with continued awareness that we are not so much seeking literal facts of times already long past when Livy wrote, but that we are seeking to understand how Livy and his audience saw what to them was an essential part of their own past, and how they understood the respective roles of men and women in that past. Livy has given us women as tragic victims, women as melodramatic villains and women as full-blown heroes. Livy listed the early historian, the aristocratic Fabius Pictor, as one of his sources, and the story that follows may have been a bit of Fabian family history he culled from this author, whose work is now wholly lost.

Book VI has two women in a situation comedy. Livy uses a minor and apparently ludicrous incident to explain the outcome of a complex and long-drawn out political struggle between the social classes. For the background to this incident we need to return to an earlier part of Livy’s narrative. The Roman legal ban on against intermarriages between plebeians and patricians had been the focus of dissension between the classes, and the patricians had, by 445, with the passing of the Lex Canuleia, given way, in part perhaps to accommodate some of the plebeians’ minor aspirations,

39. I owe this suggestion to Nicholas Purcell, St. John’s College, Oxford.
40. See Kraus (1991) for extensive discussion. Later, Livy uses a similar technique, in which the comedy is even more fully worked out, in his narrative relating to the expulsion of the Bacchanals, A.u.c. XXXIX,8–19. See Scafuro (1989:137) on his exploitation here, too, of the ‘individual female figure as a narrative device to mark a critical turning point in history’.

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while still firmly preventing plebeians from rising to the consulship (IV.1.1–6.2). Livy describes (IV.1.2) the Senate's joy at emerging military threats from all sides during the time that the tribune Canuleius was lobbying for this bill, as they hoped that unsuccessful war would turn the citizens' thoughts aside from an 'ignominious peace'. The argument that a child from a 'mixed marriage' would be unable as adult to participate in rites such as taking the auspices finally sparked off so much plebeian fury that in the end the patricians had had to give way, and the law was passed. The incident casts more light on aristocratic Roman pretensions than on early Roman gender relationships, but its happy outcome is used by Livy as part of the circumstances in which women again are shown as the catalysts of momentous political change.

In spite of this concession, stirrings among the plebeians continued, and certain of the patricians made common cause with them. The issue was again the opening of the consulship to plebeians. It needed an incident of some sort to spark off the events that would lead to full civic rights for the plebeians. The incident that Livy narrates borders on farce.

Livy sets the comic scene as a domestic drama (VI.34.10). Two sisters called Fabia (22), one married to a patrician, the other to a plebeian, are idly chatting 'ut fit' (as happens) when the patrician husband arrives home with full entourage. The plebeian's wife gets a fright and pales at the noise and pomp of his arrival, complete with lictors (VI.34.10–6). Her supercilious sister laughs at her. Hallett (1984:121) suggests that the 'inferior honours' accorded Fabia Minor rankled with her, but Livy suggests a more atavistic impulse. Her sister had laughed at her lack of sophistication, and it was this insult that rankled: is risus stimulus parvis mobili rebus animo muliebri subdidit ('that laugh was the stimulus that bothered a woman's mind, which is often moved by trifles'). When their father, Ambustus Fabius, notices his younger daughter's unhappiness, he comforts her with the thought that she should soon see her husband clothed in equal pomp, 'eosdem honores' (VI.34.10).

This Fabius is a patrician who has allied himself with the plebeian cause, and he helps his plebeian son-in-law and a plebeian friend in their campaign for election as tribunes of the plebs. With the patrician Fabian support, these two introduce far-reaching reforms. At this time the plebeians as a class are heavily in debt, so debts are reduced, possession of land is limited to 500 jugera, thereby placing a limit on patrician landowning (a ruling later to be exploited by the Gracchus brothers). In this year no military

41. Hallett (1984:143) speaks of the father and his daughters as 'imaginary', but this is one incident I am inclined to credit with at least partial historicity; its very ridiculousness enhances the possibility that it really formed part of the Fabian family tradition.
tribunes are to be elected, and, most importantly, from this point hence one of the two consuls must be a plebeian (VI,35–38).

We need not go into all the ramifications of the subsequent politicking, including a nine year continuous tribuneship for these two young men, later called ‘Tarquin tribunes’, for their arrogance (VI,50,8). Suffice it to say that Livy chooses to present this radical change in Roman politics as the result of comic domestic rivalry between two sisters, what he terms a ‘parva causa’ for a ‘rem ingentem’ (VI,34,5), which shows that the whim of a jealous woman is enough to cause constitutional upheaval. He does not pause to consider that the very insignia which to Roman men signified power could not have been considered as of little moment by their women. Kraus (1991) sees Fabia Minor as a rather shadowy figure with status as her sole preoccupation. He analyses verbal and situational similarities with the presentation of the violation of Lucretia, stressing similarities of theme and political outcome: the father, husband and friend of both women become leaders in a new regime. Lipovsky (1988:183) considers that Livy is attempting to show, in display of a concern still relevant today, that ‘public change in attitude depends on private change in hearts and minds’. More to the point is the fact that both Livy and his audience apparently considered that such an incident, involving a fond father’s sympathy for the aspirations of a younger daughter, was a sufficient explanation for a very complex political process. That these aspirations were couched within the framework of her relationship with her spouse would, for his Roman readership, have gone without saying, and should not necessarily be judged by us as automatically negative.42

Conclusion

We need to return to the question, ‘Did Livy and his presumably largely male audience consider women as chattels and props, familiar but dispensable ornaments, which merely adorned but did not really influence the course of events in early Rome, or is here, too, a nuanced awareness of women as both Same and Other?’ Livy’s narrative features, in turn, sex and lust, violence, both extrinsic and self-inflicted, and dirty tricks in which women sometimes were victims, sometimes initiators. Many of these dirty tricks were, as today, political. Where no women feature as antagonist or protagonist in momentous happenings, they occur obiter within the fabric

42. Cf. the problems that first world feminists encounter when they venture to criticize the status and role of women within third world societies, a status which is not always viewed negatively by these women themselves, as quoted by Richlin (1993). This is becoming an increasing problem in widely-nuanced modern South Africa, where the need for an indigenous ‘South African’ feminism, with its own voice, is strongly felt.
of Livy’s narrative as an essential backdrop, without which a picture of early Rome would have been incomplete.

I have deduced from the popularity of the *Ab urbe condita* (above, in my discussion of Livy as historiographer) that Livy’s presentation of what to him was the essential history of early Rome must have been both believable and acceptable to his audience. So, in the end, we can deduce that the audience or readership of Livy’s own time were satisfied to read many aspects of early Roman political history as in a sense ‘a women’s story’, and to see women as closely tied to every major political change in the Roman constitution. Rather than passive victims or extraneous ornaments, Livy has shown his audience a picture of early Roman women as frequent catalysts in the course of Roman political development. That such a depiction proved acceptable to his readers is an indication of the degree to which the Roman reading (and thinking) male public of Livy’s own time were prepared to accept women as the ‘familiar other’ and as intrinsic sharers in their national heritage. This is the common ground between Livy and his audience.

We cannot decide what proportion of these readers were men and how many were women. We have a fair idea of their social status; they were of the ruling class but not all patricians. Livy’s readers lived in an era when chance and virtue both could give prominence to men who had not been born into the aristocracy, and greater privilege was no longer accorded the patricians. These readers were Romans to whom romantic tales of early Rome were consistent with their conception of historiographical verisimilitude, who liked Livy’s moral adornment of these tales, who were prepared to accept that women (in early times, if not in their own present) could act as regents for a king, that women could be brave and resourceful, were worthy of martyrdom, and could also actively sway the men in their lives in their political decision-making, but that women also had a great propensity for evil. They appear to have been willing to accept (at least in the case of Verginia, if not in that of Lucretia) that a woman’s death was preferable to her loss of chastity, and that a woman’s manner of dress was a sign of such chastity, a concept Livy presented as acceptable to both gods and humans. While accepting the moralistic relationship posited by Livy between immorality and political disaster, these readers also accepted the idea of romantic love between a man and woman, but, as with Livy, we may deduce that, with them, both civic and family loyalty ranked higher. 43

In conclusion, we need to move away in two directions from Livy’s model readership and their acceptance of his fabulous heroines. Two questions will point our interest: what were ordinary Roman women of earlier generations really like, and how did Livy’s Roman readership, men and women alike,
react to the picture Livy gives of them? It is only when we get to the
nameless women of Roman society who intervene unsuccessfully in the
Virginius affair, to Cincinnatus' Racilia, simple female complement to his
hardy and masculine rural simplicity, to the women of Veii fighting with
their men against Rome by whichever means they can, or to the Roman
women thronging the temples in times of crisis, that we catch a glimpse of
the 'real women' of Rome—but again we are back with the intricacies of
reception and construction. When Livy finally moves away from mythical
heroines to the amusing reality of a sisterly spat, his Roman women appear
as more than moralistic models of good or evil. They embody the customs
and sensibilities of his own era. More, Livy's inclusion of the tale of the
Fabiae shows us a picture of a Roman elite society of his own time, where
women's aspirations, while reflecting those of the men in their lives, could
be given weight as the reason for political change.

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