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# Rape and Revolution: Tacitus on Livia and Augustus

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## **Rape and Revolution : Livia and Augustus in Tacitus' *Annales* (\*)**

1. *Introduction.* – Roman historiography often associated Rome's various stages of political development with an attendant physical violation of a woman, such as the rapes of Rhea Silvia, the Sabine women, Lucretia, and the attempted rape of Verginia (1). All of these rapes were connected to the development of the Roman state in some manner – respectively, the transition of power from Alba Longa to Rome, the establishment of the city of Rome, the founding of the Republic, and the restoration of the Republic after the Decemvirate (2). C. S. Kraus has called this theme of Roman historiography the 'Lucretia story' wherein 'an outrage committed against a woman is avenged, usually by her relatives, by punishing her attacker ; since he is by convention a tyrant, political upheaval follows naturally on his death or exile', and the offense against the woman 'is explicitly said to be the catalyst for political change' (3). This paradigm does not fit exactly every 'Lucretia story', but rather provides a broad outline of what may be in a 'Lucretia story'.

In this paper, I would like to explore in Tacitus another moment of revolution and sexual violence – the founding of the Principate and the attendant abduction of Livia by Augustus and its effect on the Roman state. Two events, as Tacitus portrays them, coincide with Kraus' 'Lucretia story' : the abduction of a woman

(\*) A version of this paper was presented at the Classical Association of the Middle West and South annual conference in 2009 in Minneapolis where I received helpful comments from the audience. I would like to thank the anonymous referee for suggesting a number of important revisions. I would also like to thank Patrick McBride who served as my research assistant during the research and writing of this article.

(1) J. A. ARIETI, *Rape and Livy's View of Roman History* in S. DEACY / K. F. PIERCE (eds.), *Rape in Antiquity : Sexual Violence in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, London, 1997, p. 209-29 at 209, most succinctly points out the historical moments which fall into this category. See Liv. I, 3, 10 - 4, 3 ; I, 9-13 ; I, 58-60 ; III, 44-57.

(2) For the purposes of this paper, I use the word rape in its classical sense – the abduction of a woman for the purpose of sexual intercourse and sometimes marriage, that is, in the sense conveyed by the phrase 'rape of the Sabine women' ; hence I use interchangeably the words rape and abduction for the sake of *variatio*. See Oxford English Dictionary, *rape*, n.<sup>3</sup>, 2a and 3.

(3) C. S. KRAUS, *INITIUM TURBANDI OMNIA A FEMINA ORTUM EST : Fabia Minor and the Election of 367 B.C.* in *Phoenix* 45, 1991, p. 314-325 at 314-15, 318.

and a revolution in the state. Yet Tacitus' account is an 'anti-Lucretia story' since several important events run counter to the paradigm outlined above by Kraus : specifically, Livia's abduction is not avenged by her relatives ; Augustus as the abductor is not punished but accrues more power ; and Livia as the abducted does not suffer further but is portrayed as exploiting her position to advance her own political agenda, playing no small part in the revolution from Republic to Principate.

I will focus on two moments that intersect to form Tacitus' 'anti-Lucretia story' : the abduction of Livia and the ensuing political revolution. I will be analyzing Tacitus' 'anti-Lucretia story' in light of Livy's accounts of various rapes in the *Ab urbe condita*, specifically the rape of the Sabine women, Lucretia, and Verginia. By creatively re-using the theme of rape and revolution from Roman historiography, Tacitus makes several emphatic points : Augustus' abduction of Livia reveals his tyrannical nature, which shares a number of attributes with the nature of Rome's founder Romulus ; Livia's marriage to Augustus was an abduction and the catalyst for the events that followed ; the abducted turned out to be an agent in her own right and carried out the ensuing political revolution by taking advantage of her position and establishing her son Tiberius as successor ; lastly the Romans' passive toleration of this abduction demonstrated the rising servility and adulation engendered by the new political system in stark contrast to traditional Roman *uirtus* <sup>(4)</sup>.

2. *Tacitus and the Rape of Livia*. – The love affair between Livia and Augustus is one of the most remarkable from all of antiquity <sup>(5)</sup>. At a time when

(4) Scholars have pointed out that Tacitus portrays the marriage of Livia and Augustus as an abduction : see M. FLORY, *Abducta Neroni uxor : the Historiographical Tradition on the Marriage of Octavian and Livia* in *TAPA* 111, 1988, p. 343-59 ; A. A. BARRETT, *Livia : First Lady of Imperial Rome*, New Haven, 2002. Flory explores the theme of the abduction in order to trace its source, which she attributes to the propaganda of Antony, while Barrett records all the historical details and largely follows Flory in his interpretation ; neither have connected the abduction with the political revolution in the state. Scholars have for a long time recognized that in the first fifteen chapters of *Annales* book one Tacitus stresses the changes undergone by the Roman constitution : see F. KLINGNER, *Tacitus über Augustus und Tiberius : Interpretation zum Eingang der Annalen* in *Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 7, 1953, p. 1-45 ; R. SYME, *Tacitus*, Oxford, 1958, p. 431f ; E. KOESTERMANN, *Der Eingang der Annalen des Tacitus* in *Historia* 10, 1961, p. 330-55 ; H. BENARIO, *Tacitus and the Principate* in *CJ* 60, 1964, p. 97-106 ; F. R. D. GOODYEAR, *The Annals of Tacitus, Vol. 1 (Annals 1.1-54)*, Cambridge, 1972, p. 154-69 ; E. KEITEL, *Principate and Civil War in the Annals of Tacitus* in *AJP* 105, 1984, p. 306-25. These sources, however, do not address the abduction of Livia as part of the revolution in the state.

(5) For the sake of clarity and consistency, I shall be using the name Augustus throughout to refer to Octavian for events before 27 BC.

romance rarely played a role in marriage, our ancient sources suggest that Livia and Augustus truly were in love (6). Thus, Suetonius writes how Augustus died in the arms of Livia bidding her farewell and asking her to remember their marriage (7). The couple apparently thrived off mutual and well-matched ambitions. Tacitus notes that Livia complemented Augustus effectively (8), which served them well politically in guiding the Roman *res publica*, while maintaining power within the *domus Caesarum*. Just as Ovid poignantly described Augustus' position as *res est publica Caesar* (9), so he also reasonably characterized Livia as *femina princeps* and the model of a good wife (10).

Yet the marriage of Livia and Augustus was not without controversy. Despite the positive images of their marriage cited above, Tacitus paints a less than idyllic portrait of Rome's first family in his *Annales*. For Tacitus, the marriage of Livia and Augustus is regarded as one founded on calculation and aggression, indicative of the political violence and despotism of Augustus, whose ambition was equalled only by Livia and her own unswerving resolve.

Tacitus twice makes reference to the wedding of Augustus and Livia in the first hexad of the *Annales*. The first time is in the anti-Augustan commentary on Augustus' life (11). While most accounts suggest that Livia and her husband, Tiberius Claudius Nero, were willing parties to their divorce and Livia's remarriage to Augustus (12), in Tacitus' anti-Augustan account Augustus has taken Livia away from her previous husband forcefully:

*abducta Neroni uxor et consulti per ludibrium pontifices an concepto necdum edito partu rite nuberet; fque tedii etf Vedii Pollionis luxus; postremo Liuia grauis in rem publicam mater, grauis domui Caesarum nouerca* (13).

Although these words are spoken by contemporaries of Augustus, Tacitus' use of indirect characterization is a common means by which he conveys malicious

(6) HOR., *Od.* III, 14, 5; OV., *Tr.* I, 161-4; SUET., *Aug.* 62, 2; *Cons. ad Liu.* 380; DIO XLVIII, 34, 3.

(7) SUET., *Aug.* 99, 1.

(8) TAC., *Ann.* V, 1, 3: *cum artibus mariti . . . bene composita.*

(9) OV., *Tr.* IV, 4, 15.

(10) OV., *Tr.* I, 6, 25-7; *Ex Pont.* III, 1, 125-6. See also OV., *Tr.* II, 161-4; *Ex Pont.* I, 4, 56; II, 2, 69; II, 8, 29; III, 1, 114-18; *Fast.* I, 536, 640, 649. For Livia's public life and political legitimacy, see N. PURCELL, *Livia and the Womanhood of Rome* in *PCPS* 32, 1986, p. 78-105; BARRETT, *Livia: First Lady* [n. 4], p. 124-45.

(11) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 5.

(12) VELL. II, 79, 2; II, 94, 1; PLIN., *N.H.* XV, 136; SUET., *Aug.* 62, 2; *Tib.* 4, 3; *Claud.* 1, 1; DIO XLVIII, 44.3.

(13) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 5. For the textual crux, see GOODYEAR, *The Annals* [n. 4], p. 163-65.

content while distancing himself from the source only to vindicate the malicious content throughout the rest of his narrative (14).

Tacitus' vocabulary is very telling. *Abducere*, which is used by Tacitus in the *Annales* only in this passage, can convey the meaning of rape (15) and strikes a contrast to the sources cited above, who use traditional marriage vocabulary: *ducere, nubere, pacisci, concedere, ἐκδιδόναι* (16). Suetonius alone in his life of Augustus also uses *abducere*, but in the same breath he still stresses the love and fidelity shared by Livia and Augustus (17). Tacitus does use *nubere* in the question put to the pontiffs, conveying a sense of propriety, but this juxtaposes harshly with *abducta* and *uxor* at the beginning of the sentence. Tacitus emphasizes the fact that Livia was pregnant when Augustus abducted her by using the adjective *gravis*, a double entendre for Livia's pregnancy and her domineering personality. The consultation of the pontiffs is also portrayed as a sham, since both Augustus and Tiberius Nero were among them, and the move was little more than a point of propaganda (18). Moreover, Tacitus is suggesting that after her abduction Livia became an agent for political change by portraying her powerful influence on both the *domus Caesarum* and the *res publica*.

The second reference to the wedding is in Livia's obituary, which begins book five:

*Julia Augusta mortem obiit, aetate extrema, nobilitatis per Claudiam familiam et adoptione Liuiorum Iuliorumque clarissimae. primum ei matrimonium et liberi fuere cum Tiberio Nerone, qui bello Perusino profugus pace inter Sex. Pompeium ac triumuiros pacta in urbem rediit. exim Caesar cupidine formae aufert marito, incertum an inuitam, adeo properus ut ne spatio quidem ad enitendum dato penatibus suis grauidam induxerit. nullam posthac subolem edidit sed sanguine Augusti per coniunctionem Agrippinae et Germanici adnexa communis pronepotes habuit* (19).

(14) See R. DEVELIN, *Tacitus and Techniques of Insidious Suggestion* in *Antichthon* 17, 1983, p. 64-95; I. SHATZMAN, *Tacitean Rumors* in *Latomus* 33, 1974, p. 549-78 at p. 570-72; I. S. RYBERG, *Tacitus' Art of Innuendo* in *TAPA* 73, 1942, p. 383-404.

(15) *TLL* 61, 5-15; P. G. W. GLARE, *Oxford Latin Dictionary*, Oxford, 1992, art. *abduco*, def. 5, p. 4; A. GERBER / A. GREEF, *Lexicon Taciteum*, Hildesheim, 1962, p. 4.

(16) VELL. II, 79, 2; II, 94, 1; PLIN., *N.H.* XV, 136; SUET., *Tib.* 4, 3; *Claud.* 1, 1; DIO XLVIII, 44.3.

(17) SUET., *Aug.* 62, 2: *statim Liuiam Drusillam matrimonio Tiberi Neronis et quidem praegnantem abduxit dilexitque et probauit unice ac perseueranter*. Suetonius uses *abducere* for a number of other instances of emperors abducting other men's wives: *Cal.* 24, 1; *Oth.* 3, 1; *Dom.* 1, 3.

(18) BARRETT, *Livia: First Lady* [n. 4], p. 23-4 n. 12 notes that the matter did not seem to be a concern of sacred law and that the consultation by Augustus was most likely a public relations move, seeing that four out of the seven known pontiffs (out of fifteen total) were outside of Italy at the time of the consultation.

(19) TAC., *Ann.* V, 1, 1-2.

As customary, Tacitus uses the obituary to reflect on Livia's life and its impact on the Principate, yet he opts to focus on the scandalous details of the wedding and not the laudable duration of her marriage to Augustus<sup>(20)</sup>. Here in a classic example of innuendo, Tacitus repeats the reported criticism from I, 10, 5 that Augustus had actually stolen Livia away from her husband Tiberius Nero on account of her beauty and led her into his home while still pregnant. The use of *aufferre*, like *abducere*, again is suggestive of physical force<sup>(21)</sup>. Tacitus also uses *aufferre* at XV, 59, 5 of Piso, the conspirator under Nero, who, captivated by her good looks, stole Satria Galla away from her husband Domitius Silus – *sola corporis forma commendatam amici matrimonio abstulerat*<sup>(22)</sup>. Similarly, Tacitus mentions Augustus' lust for Livia's beauty (*cupidine formae*), which puts him in the same company as Piso and such notorious Roman tyrant-rapists as Sextus Tarquinius and Appius Claudius the decemvir<sup>(23)</sup>. The words *cupidine formae* also echo Tacitus' earlier description of Augustus as *cupidine dominandi*<sup>(24)</sup> and further mark him as the tyrant who is unable to control his desires for power and women. Tacitus again notes Livia's pregnancy and seems to be hinting that while Augustus put so much emphasis on family and childbearing, he ignored his own moral legislation by abducting a pregnant mother from her husband and placing her in a marriage in which she would bear no children<sup>(25)</sup>.

3. *Tacitus on Augustus and the Return of Tyranny*. – Tacitus' portrayal of Augustus' marriage to Livia as an abduction raises the question of what Tacitus is suggesting about Augustus, particularly in light of the connection between violence against women and their families and ensuing political revolution. A key point of Tacitus' introduction to the *Annales* is the political change brought on by the creation of the Principate. Although the *Annales* ostensibly begin *ab excessu Diui Augusti*, Tacitus' concise introduction covers the sweep of Roman

(20) In contrast to DIO LVIII, 2, 1-6.

(21) TLL 1327.78-1328.76; GERBER / GREEF, *Lexicon Taciteum* [n. 15], 117; GLARE, *OLD* [n. 15], art. *auffero*, def. 3b, p. 212. *Aufferre*, in addition to an association with wife-stealing, has the sinister connotation of murder at I, 3, 3 (*uel nouercae Liuiae dolus abstulit*), where Tacitus maliciously insinuates that Livia might have been involved in the deaths of Lucius and Gaius Caesar, and I, 10, 2 (*machinator doli Caesar abstulerati*), where Augustus is linked to the murder of Hirtius in 43.

(22) Tac., *Ann.* XV, 59, 5 describes Satria Galla and Domitius Silus as possessing respectively *impudicitia*, which suggests the shamelessness of a woman willingly abducted, and *patientia*, which denotes the passivity of a man who would let his wife be taken away by another man.

(23) Respectively, LIV. I, 57, 10 : *forma . . . incitat* ; III, 44, 4 : *uirginem adultam forma excellentem*.

(24) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 1.

(25) TAC., *Ann.* V, 1, 3.

history from the monarchy to the founding of the Republic and on to the Principate of Augustus and Tiberius. The first fifteen chapters of *Annales* book one record the establishment of autocracy under Augustus and its consolidation under Tiberius. To a large extent the remainder of the *Annales* is a history of the effects of this autocracy on the Roman *res publica*. F. R. D. Goodyear summed up succinctly the opening sentences of the *Annales* (26) :

The series of unconnected clauses in the first paragraph leaves it to us to work out the connexion of thought. In the earliest times there was *regnum*. Then came *libertas*. Freedom depended on power being collegiate and limited in duration. It was temporarily impaired in various ways, but only temporarily. The crucial change came when Augustus established his power permanently. After that the old forms might remain, but the reality of freedom was gone. Thus the wheel had turned full circle.

Tacitus' portrayal of Augustus' principate as a tyranny begins as soon as he introduces Augustus at I, 1, 1 where he describes Augustus as taking everything under his command with the name of *princeps* as the pretext : *arma in Augustum cessere qui cuncta discordiis ciuilibus fessa nomine principis sub imperium accepit*. In this passage, Tacitus contrasts the public façade (*nomine principis*) constructed by Augustus with his real motivation (*sub imperium*) (27). This pretence and duplicity displayed by Augustus will become a hallmark of Tacitus' portrayal of the Principate.

Tacitus records how following the civil war with the republicans Augustus eliminated all his rivals until he alone was the sole leader of his party. Tacitus describes this process by emphasizing again the gap between pretence and reality, this time by stressing Augustus' appropriation of the traditional offices of consul and tribune (28) :

*nisi Caesar dux reliquus, posito triumuiroi nomine consulem se ferens et ad tuendam plebem tribunicio iure contentum . . . munia senatus magistratum legum in se trahere, nullo aduersante.*

This sentence along with I, 1, 1 quoted above reveals the tyrannical disposition of Augustus' rule, the true nature of which is elided in Augustus' own state-

(26) GOODYEAR, *The Annals* [n. 4], p. 88.

(27) GOODYEAR, *The Annals* [n. 4], p. 94, compares these comments at *Ann.* I, 1, 1 with *Ann.* I, 9, 5 : *neque regno . . . neque dictatura . . . sed nomine principis constitutam rem publicam*, and SALLUST, *Hist.* 1.12 M : *sub honesto . . . nomine dominationes affectabant*.

(28) TAC., *Ann.* I, 2, 1 : These words are Tacitus' language for the usurpation of power : *Ann.* I, 2, 1 *munia senatus magistratum legum in se trahere* ; *Ann.* XI, 5, 1 : *nam cuncta legum et magistratum munia in se trahens princeps* ; *Hist.* IV, 11, 1 : *Mucianus urbem ingressus cuncta simul in se traxit*. For similar phrasing of the corruption of power, see Appian Claudius' ironic definition of *libertas* at LIV. V, 6, 17 : '*quoniam ea demum Romae libertas est, non senatum, non magistratus, non leges, non mores maiorum, non instituta patrum, non disciplinam uereri militiae*'.

ment in the *Res Gestae*: *nullum magistratum contra morem maiorum delatum recepi* (29). Elsewhere Tacitus also writes critically of Augustus' adoption of the *tribunicia potestas* (30):

*id summi fastigii uocabulum Augustus repperit, ne regis aut dictatoris nomen adsumeret ac tamen appellatione aliqua cetera imperia praemineret.*

Tacitus is again writing against the view promoted in chapter six of the *Res Gestae* to show Augustus in a negative light, which he does by juxtaposing *tribunicia potestas* with the power of dictators and kings and asserting that Augustus took up powers contrary to republican tradition.

Tacitus also presents an unsympathetic account of Augustus' attempt to find a successor. He writes that Augustus was seeking a bulwark for his *dominatio*: *Augustus subsidia dominationi* (31), thereby linking him to the unconstitutional rule of Sulla and Cinna cited just two chapters earlier (32). The words *subsidia dominationi* represent a challenge to Augustus' depiction of his rule as recorded in his *Res Gestae*, wherein Augustus writes, *rem publicam a dominatione factionis oppressam in libertatem uindicauit* (33). The effects of Augustus' reign are made plain by Tacitus at the opening of the next chapter: a revolution has occurred in Roman politics and society (34). Tacitus' words clash with those immediately preceding where he has just observed that the names for the magistrates remained the same (35). Tacitus' meaning becomes clear: the public façade,

(29) AUG., *Res Gest.* 6. For Tacitus and the *Res Gestae*, see D. C. A. SHOTTER, *The Debate on Augustus (Tacitus, Annals I 9-10)* in *Mnemosyne* 20, 1967, p. 171-74; R. URBAN, *Tacitus und die Res gestae divi Augusti. Die Auseinandersetzung des Historikers mit der offiziellen Darstellung* in *Gymnasium* 86, 1979, p. 59-80; E. O' GORMAN, *On not Writing about Augustus: Tacitus' Annales Book I* in *MD* 35, 1995, p. 91-114; P. J. DAVIS "Since My Part Has Been Well Played": *Conflicting Evaluations of Augustus in Ramus* 28, 1999, p. 1-15.

(30) TAC., *Ann.* III, 56, 2.

(31) TAC., *Ann.* I, 3, 1. Tacitus uses *dominatio* thirty-five times throughout his writings and almost always in a negative sense. Pliny the Younger offers a revealing comment: *Pan.* 43.3 *sunt diversa natura dominatio et principatus*. For Tacitus, see GERBER / GREEF, *Lexicon Taciteum* [n. 15], 312; for general usage of *dominatio*, see *TLL* 1878, 28-40; 1879, 26-38.

(32) TAC., *Ann.* I, 1, 1: *non Cinnae, non Sullae longa dominatio*. In addition, Tacitus attacks Augustus' appointment of Marcellus to the pontificate, the most prestigious priesthood, and the curule aedileship by writing that Marcellus was still a youth, *admodum adulescentem* (I, 3, 1). He also describes the desire of the *princeps* to promote his grandsons, Gaius and Lucius, as an act of dissimulation, *specie recusantis* (I, 3, 2).

(33) AUG., *Res Gest.* 1, 1.

(34) TAC., *Ann.* I, 4, 1: *igitur uerso ciuitatis statu nihil usquam prisci et integri moris: omnes exuta aequalitate iussa principis aspectare*.

(35) TAC., *Ann.* I, 3, 7: *eadem magistratum uocabula*. For Tacitus' use of *uocabulum*, see H. HAYNES, *Tacitus's Dangerous Word* in *ClAnt* 23, 2004, p. 33-61.

including the text of the *Res Gestae*, suggested continuity and restoration, but behind this superficial mask were revolution, tyranny, and duplicity.

Furthermore, Tacitus provides a disparaging account of Augustus' funeral. Tacitus omits all mention of the ceremony and the eulogies of Tiberius and Drusus and instead focuses on the adulation of the senate leading up to the funeral and the great number of soldiers in attendance, which reminded contemporaries of Julius Caesar's funeral, a time when servitude was not yet fully developed and liberty had been reasserted<sup>(36)</sup>. Instead of a funeral speech, Tacitus evaluates the life of Augustus and his rise to power through paired speeches by unnamed contemporaries, which act as pro and contra *laudationes* thoroughly subverting the traditional funeral oration.

The first appraisal of Augustus presents an apology for the dead *princeps*, wherein his *pietas* for his father is cited to justify his civil wars<sup>(37)</sup>. The vices of Antony and the indolence of Lepidus necessitated rule by one man<sup>(38)</sup>, but to his credit he did not establish either a *regnum* or a *dictatura*, but restored the Republic under the name of *princeps*<sup>(39)</sup>.

Scholars have long been divided over the interpretation of this positive estimation of Augustus. Syme wrote, 'the favorable tribute of Tacitus (some will object) is unduly brief. Yet it is not perfidious or grudging. It is monumental'<sup>(40)</sup>. Goodyear disagreed<sup>(41)</sup>:

What is said in 1.9.5 is, we must remember, not strictly a tribute by T., but a purported representation of opinion at the time, and, even if it does show that T. half acknowledged a favourable side to Augustus' life and career, it is nevertheless a 'perfidious and grudging' acknowledgement.

Indeed, for the favorable evaluation of Augustus is *very* brief, amounting to less than half a page in the Oxford edition, while the unfavorable assessment is more than a complete page. Moreover, rather than a triumphant account of Augustus' accomplishments, the pro-Augustan appeal is merely an *apologia* that contains within it the seeds of its rebuttal by admitting that Augustus acted dishonorably<sup>(42)</sup>. The attribution of *pietas* to Augustus by his supporters should not be surprising, but Tacitus only uses this ideologically loaded term to describe one

(36) TAC., *Ann.* I, 8, 6 : *die funeris milites uelut praesidio stetero, multum inridentibus qui ipsi uiderant quique a parentibus acceperant diem illum crudi adhuc seruitii et libertatis inprosperae repetitiae, cum occisus dictator Caesar aliis pessimum aliis pulcherrimum facinus uideretur.*

(37) TAC., *Ann.* I, 9, 3 : *pietas erga parentem.*

(38) TAC., *Ann.* I, 9, 4 : *ab uno regetur.*

(39) TAC., *Ann.* I, 9, 5 : *sed principis nomine constitutam rem publicam.*

(40) SYME, *Tacitus* [n. 4], p. 432.

(41) GOODYEAR, *The Annals* [n. 4], p. 156.

(42) TAC. I, 9, 3 : *neque haberi per bonas artes.*

other *princeps* in the *Annales*, Nero, hardly good company for Augustus and a clear indication that Tacitus put little stock in this word so worn out by propaganda<sup>(43)</sup>. This connection between Nero and Augustus helps to provide a type of ring composition to Tacitus' *Annales* and implies that Nero fully manifests the innate corruption of the dynasty founded by Augustus. Tacitus, through such verbal echoes, reveals that the true character of the Julio-Claudians had been fraudulent all along.

Tacitus' omission of the pomp and circumstance and the eulogies of Tiberius and Drusus could be read as critique enough of Augustus, a kind of *damnatio memoriae*. But by offering a hostile assessment Tacitus provides not only an immediate refutation to the previous evaluation but also another response to the propaganda of the *Res Gestae*, which, in contrast to Suetonius and Dio<sup>(44)</sup>, he never directly mentions. Such a hostile critique is unique to Tacitus' account and attacks nearly every aspect of the Augustan principate. Thus filial piety is turned into a pretense for usurpation<sup>(45)</sup>; a desire for *dominatio* results in the bribing of the legions<sup>(46)</sup>; the murder of the consuls and the extortion of a consulship are charged against Augustus<sup>(47)</sup>; enemies are eliminated through deceit and the dissimulation of friendship<sup>(48)</sup>; the *pax Augusta* is marred by military disasters and executions<sup>(49)</sup>; the position of the gods is even usurped by permitting Augustus' worship in temples<sup>(50)</sup>. An inferior successor was chosen not for the good of the *res publica*, but for the glory of Augustus<sup>(51)</sup>; this final point contrasts sharply with the versions presented in Velleius and Suetonius<sup>(52)</sup>, both of whom suggest that Augustus was acting in the best interests of the Republic. Tacitus' account of Augustus' funeral contrasts with the account of Suetonius, who writes that Augustus had two eulogists, Tiberius and his son Drusus, and that Augustus' spirit was seen ascending into heaven<sup>(53)</sup>. Tacitus' version is also radically different from that of Dio, who provides a lengthy version of Tiberius' eulogy<sup>(54)</sup> and presents the funeral procession including the *imagines* of great Romans all the way back to Romulus as if it were a performance of book six of

(43) TAC., *Ann.* XIII, 5, 2 : *specie pietatis* ; TAC., *Ann.* XIV, 3, 3 : *additurum principem defunctae templum et aras et cetera ostentandae pietati*.

(44) SUET., *Aug.* 101 ; DIO LVI, 33, 1.

(45) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 1 : *pietatem erga parentem . . . obtentui sumpta*.

(46) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 1 : *cupidine dominandi concitos per largitionem ueteranos*.

(47) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 2 : *extortum inuito senatu consulatum*.

(48) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 3 : *specie amicitiae deceptos*.

(49) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 4 : *pacem sine dubio post haec, uerum cruentam*.

(50) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 6 : *nihil deorum honoribus relictum*.

(51) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 7 : *comparatione deterrima sibi gloriam quaesiuisset*.

(52) VELL. II, 104, 1 : *hoc, inquit, rei publicae causa facio* ; SUET., *Tib.* 21, 3 : *rei publicae causa adoptare se eum*.

(53) SUET., *Aug.* 100.

(54) DIO LVI, 35-41.

the *Aeneid* in the Roman forum<sup>(55)</sup>. Tacitus simply refuses to disseminate such imperial propaganda.

Thus it is hard not to read the anti-Augustan critique as the culminating argument in Tacitus' case for viewing Augustus as a tyrant, and readers would not be surprised to learn that as such a tyrant Augustus had abducted another man's wife. If ancient historiography contends that abduction of wives is characteristic of the tyrant<sup>(56)</sup>, and Augustus is such an abductor, as Tacitus suggests, then Augustus who stole the wife of Tiberius Nero could only be a tyrant. This much is in accord with the traditional 'Lucretia story'. What is remarkable is that he suffers no immediate negative consequences, thus subverting a central tenet of the paradigm.

Although Tacitus never directly refers to Augustus' abduction of Livia after her obituary, there is one last allusion to it which sheds a great deal of light on Tacitus' portrayal of Augustus as a tyrant. The reference is made by L. Vitellius in his speech to the senate on behalf of Claudius' marriage to his niece Agrippina<sup>(57)</sup>. To win the approval of the senate, Vitellius argued that the senate was gaining the privilege of appointing a wife for the *princeps*. This of course was in great contrast to what had happened under previous *principes*, so Vitellius asserted, under whom wives were abducted for the lusts of the Caesars – *audiuisse a parentibus, uidisse ipsos abripi coniuges ad libita Caesarum*<sup>(58)</sup>. Since no story of abduction is associated with Tiberius, the allusion must be to Augustus (*audiuisse*) and Caligula (*uidisse*), another infamous wife-stealer<sup>(59)</sup>. *Abriperere* is a very harsh word with little ambiguity; Tacitus uses it only twice more in the *Annales*, both times to express violence and pillage<sup>(60)</sup>. The word *libita* connects the Caesars, Augustus and Caligula, to Sextus Tarquinius and Appius Claudius who were likewise overcome with *libido*<sup>(61)</sup>. By recording Vitellius' speech, Tacitus has chosen to record here a perversion of Augustus' tendency to seek exemplary status and has fixed Augustus firmly as an exemplar

(55) DIO LVI, 34, 2.

(56) J. R. DUNKLE, *The Rhetorical Tyrant in Roman Historiography: Sallust, Livy and Tacitus* in *CW* 65, 1971, p. 12-24.

(57) TAC., *Ann.* XII, 6.

(58) TAC., *Ann.* XII, 6, 2.

(59) H. FURNEAUX, *The Annals of Tacitus*, Vol. II, Oxford, 1896, p. 223; H. W. BENARIO, *Tacitus Annals 11 and 12*, Lanham, 1983, p. 149.

(60) *TLL* 133.21-35; GERBER / GREEF, *Lexicon Taciteum* [n. 15], 5. TAC., *Ann.* XIV, 8, 2 in the account of Agrippina's murder, and TAC. XV, 45, 2 to describe the theft from provincial temples to rebuild Rome after the fire in 64.

(61) LIV. I, 57, 10; 58, 5; 59, 8; III, 44, 1-2. *libita* is used only two other times in the *Annales*: to describe Tiberius' slaves who use for their own sexual gratification the young boys rounded up for Tiberius' pleasure (TAC., *Ann.* VI, 1, 2) and for Agrippina's yielding to the lust of Pallas (TAC., *Ann.* XIV, 2, 2). FLORY, *Abducta Neroni* [n. 4], p. 351.

of abduction beside the infamous tyrant Caligula. The extent to which Augustus became notorious as a wife-stealer is demonstrated by Caligula himself, who also cited Augustus and Romulus as exemplars to justify his own physical violence against women when he abducted Livia Orestilla from Cn. Piso – *statimque e conuiuio abduxisse secum ac proximo die edixisse : matrimonium sibi repertum exemplo Romuli et Augusti* <sup>(62)</sup>.

4. *Exemplary Abduction : Romulus and the Rape of the Sabine Women.* – Caligula’s evocative collocation of the abductors Augustus and Romulus, after whom Augustus once fancied naming himself, is worth exploring further <sup>(63)</sup>. Although Augustus tried to connect himself to all the positive images of Romulus, he ran the risk of being associated with Romulus’ negative qualities, namely abducting women, inciting *bellum ciuile*, and establishing a tyranny. For under the reign of Romulus, the rape of the Sabine women resulted in political change, but similar to the ‘anti-Lucretia story’ of Augustus and Livia it did not end necessarily in greater political freedom for the victims’ fellow citizens, teaching that the abduction of women by an autocrat can lead to subjugation if tolerated <sup>(64)</sup>.

(62) Suet., *Cal.* 25, 1. Flory, *Abducta Neroni* [n. 4], p. 357-8 ; Barrett, *Livia : First Lady* [n. 4], p. 24.

(63) Suet., *Aug.* 7 ; Flor. 4, 66 ; Dio LIII, 16. Augustus strove to make connections between himself and Rome’s founder in a number of prominent monuments. In 19 BCE, Augustus built a small temple to Mars Ultor to temporarily house the standards regained from the Parthians. This temple stood on the Capitol conspicuously close to the temple of Jupiter Feretrius, originally built by Romulus to house his *spolia opima* and restored by Augustus himself prior to the battle of Actium. Romulus was featured prominently in the Forum of Augustus, both on the pediment of the temple of Mars Ultor, dedicated in 2 BCE to permanently house the recovered standards, and in the central niche of the exedra, which stood across from the exedra of Aeneas (Ov., *Fast.* V, 550-98). The triumphal *fasti*, beginning with Romulus’ victory over Caenina following the rape of the Sabine women, adorned the triumphal arch of Augustus adjacent to the temple of Caesar. Romulus was also portrayed on the front of the Ara Pacis, dedicated in 9 BCE, once again across from Aeneas, but this time as an infant suckled by the she-wolf. Augustus had even restored the famed site of the Lupercal at the foot of the Palatine. In addition, when Augustus first entered the consulship twelve vultures appeared (Suet., *Aug.* 95), just as twelve vultures appeared to Romulus on the Palatine at Rome’s founding (Liv. I, 7, 1). Augustan poets willingly drew associations between Romulus and Augustus : Verg., *Georg.* III, 27, *Aen.* VI, 777-807 ; Prop. IV, 6, 21 ; Ov., *Fast.* II, 133-44. See further R. J. Getty, *Romulus, Roma, and Augustus in the Sixth Book of the Aeneid in CP* 45, 1950, p. 1-12 ; K. Scott, *The Identification of Augustus with Romulus-Quirinus in TAPA* 56, 1925, p. 82-105 ; P. Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, Ann Arbor, 1988, p. 187, 203.

(64) I generally use the word ‘rape’ as it has become conventional (see n. 2), but for the scholarly debate over interpreting the Sabine affair as a rape in the modern sense or as a marriage by abduction, see respectively J. Hemker, *Rape and the Founding of Rome*

In his account of the rape of the Sabine women, Livy downplays any hint of lust on behalf of the Romans and uses the episode as an example of Roman *uirtus* and superior masculinity over Rome's neighbors. Romulus solicits Rome's neighboring towns seeking marriage alliances for his citizens, emphasizing the Romans' *uirtus* (65), but finding them uncooperative, Romulus turns to force (66) and strikes upon the idea of inviting the Sabines and the inhabitants of Antemnae, Caenina, and Crustumium to the Consualia festival (67). The rape of the Sabine women fulfills a number of functions, namely women were introduced to Roman society, but equally important the abduction of the Sabine women demonstrated the courage and manliness of the Romans, who were denied by communities unwilling to recognize them as legitimate partners. Once the Romans have taken the Sabine women, they are designated for the first time by Livy as *uiri* (68).

The Romans further revealed their *uirtus* in the wars that ensue. Rome's neighbors, not to be so slighted, resort to force themselves (69), and herein lies the lesson. Livy writes that the towns of Antemnae, Caenina and Crustumium were disorganized, and rather than unite they faced Rome haphazardly and half-heartedly. In this weakened state, they were no match for the Romans. Livy expresses the matter succinctly when he writes, *Romulus leuique certamine docet uanam*

in *Helios* 12, 1985, p. 41-7 at p. 41-3 ; P. K. JOPLIN, *Ritual Work on Human Flesh : Livy's Lucretia and the Rape of the Body Politic* in *Helios* 17, 1990, p. 51-70 at p. 56-9 ; S. R. JOSHEL, *The Body Female and the Body Politic : Livy's Lucretia and Verginia* in A. RICHLIN (ed.), *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, Oxford, 1992, p. 112-30 at p. 126 ; and conversely G. B. MILES, *The First Roman Marriage and the Theft of the Sabine Women* in R. HEXTER / D. SELDEN (eds.), *Innovations of Antiquity*, New York, 1992, p. 161-96 ; E. VANDIVER, *The Founding Mothers of Livy's Rome : the Sabine Women and Lucretia* in F. B. TITCHENER / R. F. MOORTON Jr. (eds.), *The Eye Expanded : Life and the Arts in Greco-Roman Antiquity*, Berkeley, 1999, p. 209-10. The rape of the Sabine women was a popular topic with the poets : *OV. A.A.* I, 89-134 ; *Fast.* III, 200 ; *PROP.* II, 6, 19-22. See A. E. WARDMAN, *The Rape of the Sabines* in *CQ* 15, 1965, p. 101-103. The fullest account comes from DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS (*Ant. Rom.* II, 30-48) ; PLUTARCH too records the event (*Rom.* 14-19).

(65) *LIV.* I, 9, 4 : *non defuturam uirtutem.*

(66) *LIV.* I, 9, 6 : *ad uim.*

(67) *LIV.* I, 9, 6-9.

(68) *LIV.* I, 10, 15-16 ; F. S. L'HOIR, *The Rhetoric of Gender Terms : 'Man', 'Woman', and the Portrayal of Character in Latin Prose*, Leiden, 1992, p. 75, writes, "vir in such a case is an earned appellation of merit." For masculinity in the Roman world, see M. W. GLEASON, *Making Men : Sophists and Self-Presentation in Ancient Rome*, Princeton, 1995 ; EDD. L. FOXHALL / J. SALMON, *When Men Were Men : Masculinity, Power and Identity in Classical Antiquity*, London, 1998 ; C. A. WILLIAMS, *Roman Homosexuality : Ideologies of Masculinity in Classical Antiquity*, Oxford, 1999 ; M. McDONNELL, *Roman Manliness : Virtus and the Roman Republic*, Cambridge, 2006.

(69) *LIV.* I, 10.

*sine uiribus iram esse* <sup>(70)</sup>. Romulus kills the opposing general himself, winning the first *spolia opima*, and is duly described by Livy as *uir magnificus* <sup>(71)</sup>. Following their easy defeat of these three towns, the Romans send out colonists to occupy their fertile land, and the parents of the captured women must move to Rome to be with their daughters <sup>(72)</sup>. Moreover, Romulus uses the victories as an opportunity to dedicate the *spolia opima* to Jupiter Feretrius <sup>(73)</sup> and to celebrate Rome's first triumph <sup>(74)</sup>. In this case, abduction has led to political domination.

In contrast to these emasculated municipalities, the Sabines mount an organized and spirited attack on the city of Rome. The hostilities rage until the Sabine women throw themselves between the warring parties and beg for an end to the violence, even blaming themselves for the hostilities <sup>(75)</sup>. In return for the Sabine resistance, there is no colonization and relocation, Romulus and Tatius rule as joint kings, and the two peoples become one. The Romans become Quirites after the Sabine town of Cures; the Sabine women lend their names to the thirty tribes of the people; and Romulus and Titus Tatius give their names to two of the three centuries of knights <sup>(76)</sup>. As Livy indicates, the Sabines have been rewarded for their resistance and unwillingness to accept the abduction of their women without receiving a commensurate share of the Roman state.

While the rape of the Sabine women provides an arena for the Romans and Sabines to reveal their virtues, Livy, Dionysius, and Plutarch also record an alternative history of the protagonists. Titus Tatius, the king of the Sabines and corruptor of the murdered maiden Tarpeia, comes to his own violent demise when he is assassinated in a riot at Lavinium during a religious sacrifice <sup>(77)</sup>. Livy writes that Romulus refused to punish the people of Lavinium and showed but meager sorrow at the death of his co-regent, revealing his reluctance to share power <sup>(78)</sup>.

Romulus, as much as he was remembered as the founder of Rome, was also the founder of *bellum ciuile*, which broke out with the very foundation of the city

(70) Liv. I, 10, 4.

(71) Liv. I, 10, 5.

(72) Liv. I, 11, 4.

(73) Liv. I, 10, 6; *ILS* 64. It should be noted that Augustus denied the *spolia opima* to M. Licinius Crassus, the proconsul of Macedonia, in 29 BCE for his defeat of the Bastarnae and their chieftain, Deldo (DIO LI, 24). Allowing Crassus to dedicate the *spolia opima* would have been politically inexpedient just as Augustus was seeking to draw connections between Romulus and himself. See H. I. FLOWER, *The Tradition of the spolia opima: M. Claudius Marcellus and Augustus* in *ClAnt* 19, 2000, p. 34-64, at p. 48-58; R. SYME, *Livy and Augustus* in *HSCP* 64, 1959, p. 27-87, at p. 44-47.

(74) PLUT., *Rom.* 16; DION. HAL., *Ant. Rom.* II, 34.

(75) Liv. I, 13, 1-5.

(76) Liv. I, 13, 5-8.

(77) Liv. I, 14, 1-3; DION. HAL., *Ant. Rom.* II, 51-2; PLUT., *Rom.* 23.

(78) Liv. I, 14, 3.

and resulted in the fratricide of Remus<sup>(79)</sup>. In addition, the sources record two versions of Romulus' death : the official version that he was taken up in a cloud to the heavens<sup>(80)</sup>, and the persistent rumor that Romulus was assassinated by senators because of his growing tyranny<sup>(81)</sup>. Tacitus picks up on the tyrannical aspect of Romulus' character when he describes the development of the rule of law in Rome, writing that Romulus ruled as it pleased him<sup>(82)</sup>. For Tacitus, as for Augustus, Romulus could be an effective referent, albeit for two different purposes.

5. *Tacitus on Livia and Political Revolution.* – Similar to Livy's account of Romulus' rape of the Sabine women, which led to the political subordination of the neighboring towns, Tacitus' account of the abduction of Livia by Augustus resulted in the subordination of the senatorial class, which was either unable or unwilling to challenge Augustus on the matter. However, the abduction did not result in the subordination of Livia, who did not remain a passive victim, but rather the initial act of force only led to greater disorder in the Roman state<sup>(83)</sup>. There is an apparent contradiction in Tacitus' account, for most readers would not expect an abducted woman to become the political force Livia is portrayed as, yet that is precisely how Tacitus develops his narrative. Tacitus suggests that Livia could dissemble as adroitly as Augustus, writing that it was uncertain whether Livia was abducted against her will<sup>(84)</sup>.

Although *Annales* I, 1-15 is generally read as Tacitus' account of Augustus' rise to power and the transference of that power to Tiberius, these chapters can also be read as Tacitus' version of how Livia gained and wielded her own power. *Annales* I, 3, in particular has been described as Tacitus' account of the survival of Tiberius over so many rivals just as I, 2 recorded the survival of Augustus<sup>(85)</sup>. While this is a valid reading of I, 2-3, we could also read I, 3 as Tacitus' account of Livia as the agent for political change. Tacitus asserts that Augustus himself was revolutionizing the Roman constitution by bypassing the senate and people

(79) LIV. I, 7, 1-3.

(80) LIV. I, 16, 1-3 ; DION. HAL., *Ant. Rom.* II, 56, 1-2 ; PLUT., *Rom.* 26-8.

(81) LIV. I, 16, 4 ; DION. HAL., *Ant. Rom.* II, 56, 3-6 ; PLUT., *Rom.* 14-16.

(82) TAC., *Ann.* III, 26, 4 : *nobis Romulus ut libitum imperitauerat* ; A. J. WOODMAN / R. H. MARTIN, *The Annals of Tacitus Book 3*, Cambridge, 1996, p. 245f.

(83) Tacitus' portrayal of Livia first as abducted wife and then as an uncontrollable, domineering matriarch in the *domus Caesarum* calls to mind Aeschylus' metaphor for Helen from the *Agamemnon* wherein a lion cub was adopted into a family and then grew into a destructive and deadly force (AESCH., *Ag.* 717-36). F. S. L'HOIR, *Tragedy, Rhetoric, and the Historiography of Tacitus' Annales*, Ann Arbor, 2006, passim, writes with great insight on the influence of Aeschylus on Tacitus but does not comment on *Ann.* V, 1.

(84) TAC., *Ann.* V, 1, 2 : *incertum an inuitam*.

(85) KOESTERMANN, *Der Eingang* [n. 4], p. 332.

of Rome and looking within his own *domus* for a bulwark of domination<sup>(86)</sup>. Yet the chapter is more about Augustus' failure to find an heir and Livia's own successful attempt to bypass even the *princeps* in order to place her son on the throne by removing more favored rivals. Tacitus portrays the *domus Caesarum* as being stealthily taken over by Livia and her *muliebris impotentia*, which is Tacitus' preferred means of referring to Livia's violent ambition. In I, 3 and following, Tacitus lays bare how political power worked in secret under the Principate and how a woman, Livia, was its primary wielder, not any of Rome's traditional institutions.

Tacitus' Livia enters the narrative already in full possession of her authority and using it to clear the way for the succession of Tiberius. Tacitus introduces Livia by suggesting that she may have been behind the deaths of Gaius and Lucius, the grandsons of Augustus<sup>(87)</sup>. Tacitus describes Livia here as a *nouerca*, which is particularly spiteful as she was not the stepmother of Lucius and Gaius<sup>(88)</sup>. The term is also highly suggestive of sinister and malicious intentions including murder and poison. Moreover, *nouerca* is a particularly Tacitean epithet for Livia; Suetonius never refers to Livia as *nouerca*<sup>(89)</sup>. The phrase *nouercae Liuiæ dolus abstulit*<sup>(90)</sup> is full of words that resound throughout Tacitus' opening chapters of book one. *Auferre* is used along with *dolus* to implicate Augustus in the murder of Hirtius in 43 BCE<sup>(91)</sup>; *nouerca* is repeated at I, 10, 5 and *nouercalis* at I, 6, 2 and 33, 3 in regard to Livia<sup>(92)</sup>. L'Hoir notes Tacitus' keen ability to use such sinister associations to lay the framework for a 'hidden discourse' that encourages certain responses from his readers<sup>(93)</sup>. Through the associations in these passages Tacitus is painting a rather negative portrait of Livia, and by doing so at such an early stage of his narrative he is setting his readers up to expect Livia to fulfill such a characterization.

(86) TAC. I, 3, 1 : *subsidia dominationi*.

(87) TAC., *Ann.* I, 3, 3 : *Lucium Caesarem euntem ad hispaniensis exercitus, Gaium remeantem Armenia et uulnere inualidum mors fato propera uel nouercae Liuiæ dolus abstulit*. On the deaths of Lucius and Gaius and Livia's role, see also PLIN., *NH* VII, 149; DIO LV, 10, 10; BARRETT, *Livia : First Lady* [n. 4], p. 53-54.

(88) Tacitus uses *nouerca* only in the *Annales* and always with a negative connotation : once of the step-mother of Radamistus XII, 44, 5 ; twice of Livia I, 3, 3 and 10, 5 ; and thrice of Agrippina the Younger XII, 26, 6 ; 41, 3 ; 65, 2 ; see GERBER / GREEF, *Lexicon Taciteum* [n. 15], p. 972. For the generally negative associations of stepmothers, see P. A. WATSON, *Ancient Stepmothers : Myth, Misogyny and Reality*, Leiden, 1995, p. 179.

(89) BARRETT, *Livia : First Lady* [n. 4], p. 242.

(90) TAC., *Ann.* I, 3, 3.

(91) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 2 : *machinator doli Caesar abstulerat*. *Auferre* is also used of Livia's abduction at V, 1, 2.

(92) TAC., *Ann.* I, 6, 2 : *nouercalibus odiis* ; I, 10, 5 *grauis domui Caesarum nouerca* ; I, 33, 3 : *nouercalibus Liuiæ in Agrippinam stimulis*.

(93) L'HOIR, *Tragedy, Rhetoric* [n. 83], p. 24-26.

Augustus' inability to dominate Livia demonstrates that Livia's abduction by Augustus is an 'anti-Lucretia' story. In fact, Tacitus depicts Livia subjugating Augustus to such an extent that she had Agrippa Postumus exiled to Planasia<sup>(94)</sup>; the language Tacitus uses is echoed in his description of Sejanus' hold on Tiberius<sup>(95)</sup>. There is a striking irony here: the *princeps* himself, the most powerful man in Rome who was to be the guardian of *libertas* for the people, was ultimately subservient to his wife. In addition, the successor to Augustus would not be determined by the *princeps* himself, but by Livia, a revelation of the *arcana imperii* that could scarcely have heartened Tacitus' readers. In Tacitus' account, Livia is the origin of the dynastic intrigues that would be a hallmark of the reign of the Julio-Claudians.

It is not only Augustus that Tacitus portrays as subservient to Livia, but also his successor Tiberius; in *Annales* I, 4 Tacitus records Livia's continued control of political power from *princeps* to *princeps*. By reporting the words of Tiberius' contemporaries, Tacitus provides his readers with a most unsympathetic introduction to Tiberius<sup>(96)</sup>, citing the haughtiness (*superbia*) of the Claudian family, Tiberius' own savagery (*saeuitiae*), his upbringing in a royal house (*domo regnatrice*), his anger (*ira*) and deception (*simulatio*), and secret lusts (*secretae libidines*)<sup>(97)</sup>. Most critically, Tacitus' anonymous sources describe the *princeps*' mother as possessing a womanly unruliness and Tiberius with compulsory enslavement to this woman<sup>(98)</sup>. The conclusion is rather emphatic: if the *princeps* is subservient to a woman then so is the entire *populus Romanus*; the emasculation of Rome's political class, as demonstrated by the acceptance of Livia's abduction, is thus taken to its most radical completion.

Tacitus' language at the close of this chapter reflects the revolutionary nature of Livia's involvement in politics, which results in a ring composition, for the chapter began by addressing the radical changes that had occurred in Roman society, *uerso ciuitatis statu nihil usquam prisca et integri moris*<sup>(99)</sup>, and it ends

(94) TAC., *Ann.* I, 3, 4: *nam senem Augustum deuinxerat adeo.*

(95) TAC., *Ann.* IV, 1, 2: *mox Tiberium uariis artibus deuinxit adeo*; GOODYEAR, *The Annals* [n. 4], p. 113; BARRETT, *Livia: First Lady* [n. 4], p. 57-9; F. S. L'HOIR, *Tacitus and Women's Usurpation of Power* in *CW* 88, 1994, p. 5-25 at p. 25. L'HOIR, *Tragedy, Rhetoric* [n. 83], p. 47, 79, 146-48, also sees in Livia's binding of Augustus allusions to Aeschylus' *Oresteia* and Clytemnestra's domination over Agamemnon and Argos.

(96) TAC., *Ann.* I, 4, 3-4.

(97) This passage is a classic example of Tacitus' use of innuendo and rumor, as his final verdict in Tiberius' obituary (*Ann.* VI, 50-51) largely reflects the report at *Ann.* I, 4, 3-4. Tacitus' description of Tiberius and the Claudian gens as *superbus* recalls the arrogance of Tarquinius Superbus, the haughty tyrant par excellence (LIV. I, 49-50), and Appius Claudius the Decemvir, the conceited Claudian par excellence (LIV. II, 56, 5-7). *Regnatrice* is a spitefully employed *hapax*, see GOODYEAR, *The Annals* [n. 4], p. 121 and L'HOIR, *Tragedy, Rhetoric* [n. 83], p. 37-38.

(98) TAC., *Ann.* I, 4, 5: *muliebri impotentia: seruiendum feminae.*

(99) TAC., *Ann.* I, 4, 1.

with the state subservient to a woman, *accedere matrem muliebri impotentia : seruiendum feminae* <sup>(100)</sup>.

Through the indirect characterization of I, 4, Tacitus draws attention to the tyrannical nature of Tiberius but also highlights the detrimental role of Livia in imperial politics. The phrase *muliebris impotentia* is the key to Tacitus' portrayal of Livia. As Rutland and L'Hoir have shown, *muliebris* in Tacitus signifies emotion and deception <sup>(102)</sup>. Livia's imperious temperament is a pronounced feature of her portrayal throughout the *Annales* <sup>(102)</sup>, and Tacitus comes back to this notion of Livia's *muliebris impotentia* at key points in his narrative. Tacitus suggests at IV, 57 that Livia and her *matris impotentia* were the impetus for Tiberius' departure from Rome, since Tiberius did not want her any longer as a partner in domination (*dominationis sociam*), but he could not be rid of her as he had received his *dominatio* from her as a gift. Tacitus again uses the phrase in Livia's obituary <sup>(103)</sup>. The phrase *muliebris impotentia* stands in contrast to traditional Roman *uirtus*, which dictated masculine control over women, and *libertas*, which in turn was antithetical to the rule of a woman, as Livy and Tacitus point out <sup>(104)</sup>. Augustus might have abducted Livia, but she, in turn, stripped him of much of his power, at least in Tacitus' account. Livia's behind-the-scenes political manoeuvrings, which were instrumental to placing Tiberius on the throne, bypassed the traditional, male Roman institutions of the senate and people of Rome, and even the *princeps* himself <sup>(105)</sup>.

Tacitus not only criticizes Livia's political machinations, but he also questions whether her commitment and love for Augustus were trumped by her political

(100) TAC., *Ann.* I, 4, 5. The language is similar to Tacitus' description of another questionable marriage and its deleterious ramifications for the state, the marriage of Claudius to his niece Agrippina the Younger : *uersa ex eo ciuitas et cuncta feminae oboediebant . . . adductum et quasi uirile seruitium : palam seueritas ac saepius superbia ; nihil domi impudicum, nisi dominationi expediret. cupido auri immensa obtentum habebat, quasi subsidium regno pararetur* (TAC., *Ann.* XII, 7, 3). The nouns *cupido* and *dominatio* and the phrases *uersa ciuitas* and *subsidium regno* hark back to Tacitus' portrayal of Augustus and Livia at I, 3, 1 : *Augustus subsidia dominationi*, and V, 1, 2 : *cupidine formae*. The result of course was that the state had been overturned and made subservient to a woman. See L'HOIR, *Tragedy, Rhetoric* [n. 83], p. 78.

(101) L. W. RUTLAND, *Women as Makers of Kings in Tacitus' Annals* in *CW* 72, 1978, p. 15-29 at p. 15 ; L'HOIR, *Tacitus and Women's* [n. 95], p. 5-6, and more recently, *Tragedy, Rhetoric* [n. 83], p. 111-156.

(102) TAC., *Ann.* II, 34, 2-3 ; II, 77 ; II, 82 ; III, 64 ; IV, 12, 4 ; IV, 21, 1.

(103) TAC., *Ann.* V, 1, 3 : *mater impotens*. Tacitus uses the same expression to portray Agrippina the Younger at *Ann.* XII, 57, 2.

(104) LIV. XXXIV, 2, 2 : *uicta libertas nostra impotentia muliebri* ; TAC., *Germ.* 45, 6 : *femina dominator : in tantum non modo a libertate sed etiam a seruitute degerant* ; GOODYEAR, *The Annals* [n. 4], p. 124.

(105) RUTLAND, *Women as Makers* [n. 101], p. 15, 17-22.

aims. Tacitus reports that some suspected that Livia, who was motivated by a desire to prevent the reconciliation of Augustus and Agrippa Postumus, was responsible for the death of Augustus<sup>(106)</sup>. Moreover, as Tacitus suggests, Livia's manipulation of Augustus' health mirrors her control of the state. Tacitus emphasizes that Livia had complete power over the succession as she kept Augustus' death a secret by cordoning off the streets with armed guards until Tiberius' arrival, upon which it was announced simultaneously that Augustus had died and Tiberius had control of affairs<sup>(107)</sup>. Tacitus' account of Augustus' death stands in stark contrast with that of Suetonius, who records that Augustus died peacefully after having conversations with Tiberius and Livia and bidding them goodbye<sup>(108)</sup>. Moreover, Suetonius does not even hint that Livia had a hand in Augustus' death. By giving Livia such a significant role, in fact *the* principal role, at this point in his narrative, Tacitus is recognizing not only Livia's level of influence but also emphasizing that she had in essence usurped the power of the senate and people of Rome.

Equally pernicious is Tacitus' description of the first act of the new regime : the infamous murder of Agrippa Postumus<sup>(109)</sup> :

*primum facinus noui principatus fuit Postumi Agrippae caedes . . . propius uero Tiberium ac Liuiam, illum metu, hanc nouercalibus odiis, suspecti et inuisi iuuenis caedem festinauisse.*

A fruitful comparison is provided by Suetonius who records that Tiberius had Agrippa Postumus murdered before announcing the death of Augustus, although he recognizes divergent accounts that attributed the murder to the command of Augustus or Livia<sup>(110)</sup>. Tacitus, however, mentions the various accounts not merely to record the diversity of rumors as do Suetonius and Dio<sup>(111)</sup>, but to correct the historical record and to fix the blame squarely on Livia and Sallustius Crispus, since, as Pappano and Woodman have shown, Tiberius and Augustus had little to do with Agrippa Postumus' murder<sup>(112)</sup>. Tacitus' account of Agrippa

(106) TAC., *Ann.* I, 5, 1 : *grauescere ualitudo Augusti, et quidam scelus uxoris suspectabant* ; H. FURNEAUX, *The Annals of Tacitus*, Oxford, 1934, p. 186 suggests that *scelus* may refer to poisoning here. See also BARRETT, *Livia : First Lady* [n. 4], p. 66-68 and L'HOIR, *Tragedy, Rhetoric* [n. 83], p. 173-74, 182.

(107) TAC., *Ann.* I, 5, 3-4.

(108) SUET., *Aug.* 98-99 ; *Tib.* 21.

(109) TAC., *Ann.* I, 6, 1-2.

(110) SUET., *Tib.* 22.

(111) SUET., *Tib.* 22 ; DIO LVII, 3, 6.

(112) A. E. PAPPANO, *Agrippa Postumus* in *CP* 36, 1941, p. 30-45 and A. J. WOODMAN, *A Death in the First Act (Annals 1.6)* in *Tacitus Reviewed*, Oxford, 1998, p. 23-39. See also SYME, *Tacitus* [n. 4], p. 306, 418 ; SHATZMAN, *Tacitean Rumors* [n. 14], p. 560-63 ; P. SINCLAIR, *Tacitus the Sententious Historian : A Sociology of Rhetoric in Annales 1-6*, University Park, PA, 1995, p. 5-10 ; S. BYRNE, *Pointed Allusions : Maecenas and*

Postumus' murder demonstrates more than any other story how power under the Principate lay neither with the senate and people of Rome, a devastating critique in its own right, nor even with the *princeps*, but with imperial women and ministers who deliberately skirted the senate and *princeps* to achieve their own ends. Tacitus' recording of the machinations behind the murder here at the beginning of the *Annales* is not merely to chronicle a historical event but to set out programmatically how power functioned under the Principate.

According to Tacitus, Augustus' abduction of Livia, which demonstrated his dominance over the men of Rome by taking his pick of their wives, profoundly marks the revolution that was taking place. The abducted Livia, however, revealed herself not as a victim, but as an agent furthering the revolution with the goal of establishing her son as successor to the *princeps* through whom she could continue to exert her influence. Thus Livia's abduction by Augustus played a pivotal role in the Roman revolution from Republic to Principate.

6. *Abduction and Autocracy*. – Mistreatment of women and their male family members were not always so willingly accepted as the abduction of Livia. Tacitus' portrayal of Livia contrasts with Livy's accounts of the violence against Lucretia and Verginia, which emphasize the excesses of tyrannical power, the expulsion and death of the offender, and the creation a more democratic constitution for the state<sup>(113)</sup>.

The rape of Lucretia and the surrounding events are among the most compelling episodes in Livy's history, and there are a number of points in his narrative worth highlighting<sup>(114)</sup>. Sextus Tarquinius, the son of Tarquinius Superbus,

*Sallustius in the Annals of Tacitus in RhM* 142, 1999, p. 339-45 ; BARRETT, *Livia : First Lady* [n. 4], p. 68-72.

(113) LIV. I, 57-60 ; III, 44-48. Tacitus' use of Livy to inform his narrative of events under the Principate has long been demonstrated ; one of the more well known examples is the account of Tanaquil's role in the succession of Servius Tullius to Tarquinius Priscus, which resembles Livia's role in the succession of Tiberius to Augustus. See M. P. CHARLESWORTH, *Livia and Tanaquil* in *CR* 41, 1927, p. 55-57 ; GOODYEAR, *The Annals* [n. 4], p. 128.

(114) The rape of Lucretia has inspired a vast bibliography : see R. M. OGILVIE, *A Commentary on Livy Books 1-5*, Oxford, 1965, p. 218-32 ; I. DONALDSON, *The Rapes of Lucretia : A Myth and Its Transformations*, Oxford, 1982 ; HEMKER, *Rape and the Founding* [n. 64], p. 41-7 ; JOSHEL, *The Body Female* [n. 64], p. 112-30 ; R. A. BAUMAN, *The Rape of Lucretia, quod metus causa and the Criminal Law* in *Latomus* 52, 1993, p. 550-66 ; ARIETI, *Rape and Livy's View* [n. 1] ; J. M. CLAUSSEN, *The Familiar Other : the Pivotal Role of Women in Livy's Narrative of Political Development in Early Rome* in *Acta Classica* 41, 1998, p. 71-104 ; S. DIXON, *Rape in Roman Law and Myth* in S. DIXON (ed.), *Reading Roman Women : Sources, Genres, and Real Life*, London, 2001, p. 45-55. See also OV., *Fast.* II, 723-856 ; DION. HAL., *Ant. Rom.* IV, 64-85.

is consumed by his *libido* <sup>(115)</sup>, and he forces himself on Lucretia. The beauty of Lucretia overwhelms Tarquinius <sup>(116)</sup>, just as Augustus was struck by Livia's beauty <sup>(117)</sup>. By emphasizing Tarquinius' *libido*, Livy rhetorically portrays Sextus Tarquinius as a stereotypical tyrant who cannot control his appetites and is willing to use force to indulge his lusts. Through this use of violence, Tarquinius demonstrates his dominance, albeit temporary, over the women of Rome and through them the men of Rome, just as Augustus did when he abducted Livia.

What the Tarquinius do not count on is Lucretia's suicide <sup>(118)</sup>, before which she relates the violence she has suffered and challenges the men to avenge her rape with the words, *si uos uiri estis* <sup>(119)</sup>. Faced with this direct test of their manhood, L. Tarquinius Collatinus and L. Iunius Brutus take up the challenge of Lucretia, refusing to tolerate the violence of the monarchy and the threat to their own masculinity. Brutus seems to respond directly to Lucretia's words when he addresses the crowd in the forum: *tum Brutus castigat lacrimarum atque inertium querellarum auctorque quod uiros, quod Romanos deceret, arma capiendi aduersus hostilia ausos* <sup>(120)</sup>. When Lucretia's dead body is carried into the forum, violated and fatally wounded like the Roman state, the subsequent outrage results in the overthrow of the monarchy and the creation of the annual, collegial consulship <sup>(121)</sup>. So out of the suffering of Lucretia rises the Republic, wherein power is shared and tyrannical vices are subdued through the virtue of *libertas*.

Thus the course of Livy's narrative in book one moves from *regnum* to *libertas* <sup>(122)</sup>:

*L. Tarquinius Superbus regnauit annos quinque et uiginti. regnatum Romae ab condita urbe ad liberatam annos ducentos quadraginta quattuor. duo consules inde comitiis centuriatis a praefecto urbis ex commentariis Ser. Tulli creati sunt, L. Iunius Brutus et L. Tarquinius Collatinus.*

This is in stark distinction to the first book of the *Annales* which moves in the opposite direction from *libertas* <sup>(123)</sup> to *seruitium*, the very last word of the

(115) LIV. I, 57, 10 ; 58, 5 ; 59, 8.

(116) LIV. I, 57, 10 : *forma . . . incitat.*

(117) TAC., *Ann.* V, 1, 2 : *cupidine formae.*

(118) LIV. I, 59, 11.

(119) LIV. I, 58, 8. As pointed out earlier [p. 15], Livy often associates *uir* with courage.

(120) LIV. I, 59, 4.

(121) LIV. I, 60.

(122) LIV. I, 60, 3.

(123) TAC., *Ann.* I, 1, 1 : *urbem Romam a principio reges habuere ; libertatem et consulum L. Brutus instituit.*

book<sup>(124)</sup>. Tacitus' comments on Tiberius' handling of the consular elections emphatically close book one of the *Annales* and strike a strong contrast not only with the opening of the *Annales*, but also with the conclusion of book one of Livy's history. The movement from *libertas* to *seruitium* in *Annales* book one is partly the result of an abduction tolerated, just as the movement from *reges* to *libertas* in Livy is the result of a rape deemed insufferable.

In contrast to Tacitus' *Annales*, which are full of sexual excesses committed by the Caesars and tolerated by the people, Livy continuously associates violence against Roman women perpetrated by tyrants with the *uirtus* of the people who rise up to expel the tyranny and thereby gain greater *libertas*. Nowhere is this more evident than in the episodes of Lucretia and Verginia<sup>(125)</sup>:

*sequitur aliud in urbe nefas, ab libidine ortum, haud minus foedo euentu quam quod per stuprum caedemque Lucretiae urbe regnoque Tarquinius expulerat, ut non finis solum idem decemuiris qui regibus sed causa etiam eadem imperii amittendi esset.*

By recording the episodes of Lucretia and Verginia as he does, Livy has helped to establish a thread that runs throughout Roman history connecting tyranny, violence against women, and resistance to tyranny that leads to greater freedom. As the cases of Lucretia and Verginia indicate, conflict and competition between men could lead to an offense against a female relative of one party by the other<sup>(126)</sup>. This offense was a direct challenge to the masculinity of the offended party, which had the option of responding or tolerating the offense. In fact, the offended men in Livy's accounts claim to be treated as Rome's enemies, conquered enemies, or slaves<sup>(127)</sup>. If the offender was a king or a tyrant, the offended party could choose resistance, possibly leading to greater political freedom, or acceptance, potentially leading to political domination.

Moreover, the participants in Livy's account of the rape of Lucretia behave altogether contrary to the participants in the abduction in Tacitus' *Annales*. Primarily, there is the raped or abducted women: Lucretia claimed that while her body had been violated, her heart was innocent<sup>(128)</sup>, and she kills herself rather than serve as an exemplum for unchaste women<sup>(129)</sup>; Tacitus portrays Livia, although a married woman, as if she might have been a willing partner to her

(124) TAC., *Ann.* I, 81, 4: *speciosa uerbis, re inania aut subdola, quantoque maiore libertatis imagine tegebantur, tanto eruptura ad infensius seruitium.*

(125) LIV. III, 44, 1.

(126) JOSHEL, *The Body Female* [n. 64], p. 121; JOPLIN, *Ritual Work* [n. 64], p. 52f.

(127) LIV. I, 57, 2; 59, 4; 59, 5; III, 45, 8; 47, 2; 57, 3; 61, 4. JOSHEL, *The Body Female* [n. 64], p. 123 and JOPLIN, *Ritual Work* [n. 64], p. 67.

(128) LIV. I, 58, 8: *corpus est tantum uiolatum, animus insons.*

(129) LIV. I, 58, 11.

abduction<sup>(130)</sup>, which she exploited in order to gain influence for herself and thereby further her son's career, ultimately winning for him the Principate<sup>(131)</sup>. As for the husbands of the women, there is a profoundly different reaction: Collatinus swears revenge and successfully conspires to drive out the kings<sup>(132)</sup>; Tiberius Nero, who was once a foe of Augustus, proposing special honors for the tyrannicides, participating in the Perusine War, and earning a place on the proscription lists<sup>(133)</sup>, offers no resistance<sup>(134)</sup> and according to other accounts willingly surrenders Livia<sup>(135)</sup> and even presides at the marriage ceremony between Livia and Augustus<sup>(136)</sup>. And how do the aggressors fare? Sextus Tarquinius and his family are driven out of Rome by force and into exile where he will be assassinated<sup>(137)</sup>; the lusty Augustus first abducts, and then in a pretence of formality and piety consults the pontiffs on the sanctity of marrying a woman still pregnant by her prior husband; he of course receives their approval<sup>(138)</sup>, all of this en route to becoming the master of Rome. Livia, Tiberius Nero, and Augustus might have had good personal reasons for doing what they did; Tacitus, however, does not portray the participants with any sympathy.

As Tacitus makes clear from his narrative, the Romans of the late first century BCE accepted Augustus' abduction of Livia from Tiberius Nero. Tacitus emphasizes the abduction, to which readers, especially those who had read Livy, might expect a response from the offended husband. In Tacitus' portrayal there was no reaction forthcoming, only a silent acquiescence; he adds that those inclined to opposition had died either on the battlefield or in the proscriptions, while those more prepared for servitude were rewarded with wealth and honors<sup>(139)</sup>. So the men who survived the proscriptions and civil wars, Tiberius Claudius Nero among them, were not of the nature to resist the will of Augustus and surely not eager to take up the challenge of a Lucretia, *si uos uiri estis*.

(130) TAC., *Ann.* V, 1, 2: *incertum an inuitam*.

(131) TAC., *Ann.* I, 3-8; IV, 57, 3.

(132) LIV. I, 59, 1-2.

(133) VELL. II, 75, 1; Suet., *Tib.* 4.1-2; TAC., *Ann.* V, 1, 2; VI, 51, 1. He did not achieve much through his cooperation, dying in 33/32 B.C.E. after naming Augustus *tutor* of his two sons. For the ineptitudes of Tiberius Nero, see BARRETT, *Livia: First Lady* [n. 4], p. 10-18, 24, 27.

(134) TAC., *Ann.* V, 1, 1-2.

(135) Suet., *Tib.* 4, 3.

(136) VELL. II, 79, 2; II, 94, 1; PLIN., *NH* VII, 150; XV, 136; DIO XLVIII, 44; *Epit. de Caes.* I, 23.

(137) LIV. I, 60, 2.

(138) TAC., *Ann.* I, 10, 5.

(139) TAC., *Ann.* I, 2, 1: *nullo aduersante, cum ferocissimi per acies aut proscriptione cecidissent, ceteri nobilium, quanto quis seruitio promptior, opibus et honoribus extollerentur*.

In the Tacitean account, it was but a small step from the passive acceptance of the abduction of Livia, by which Augustus demonstrated that he had control over the men of Rome, to a newly inaugurated autocracy at Rome. Livy stresses that the Republic was founded on resistance to a tyrant's rape of a young woman ; Tacitus conversely suggests that the Principate was founded in part on the acceptance of an abduction of a married woman by a new tyrant. Livia's domineering personality only made it worse, for Tacitus makes it clear that beyond the *dominatio* of one man the Romans had submitted to a *muliebris impotentia*, the rule of a woman.

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