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The Boundaries of Violence in Horatius' Battles (Livy 1.22–26)

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According to the foundation story of Rome Livy claims to be more common,[1] the city's boundaries were contentious from the beginning. When Romulus slays Remus for mocking his new walls, he ascribes to these limits a particular danger and ensures that the city will take on his name. Establishing boundaries contributes to the development of civic identity, but no straightforward formulation captures the uncomfortable repercussions that attend this process at Rome. A few generations after Rome's founding, Livy embeds the political problem of separating insider from outsider in the cause of a conflict between Rome and Alba: "By chance it happened that Roman farmers were driving off cattle from Alban territory, and Alban farmers, in turn, were driving off cattle from Roman territory" (*forte evenit ut agrestes Romani ex Albano agro, Albani ex Romano praedas in vicem agerent*, 1.22.3).[2] The rustics enter each other's land to steal cattle, enacting a low level of violence across a boundary that ought to separate them. At the same time, though, as Livy distinguishes the two groups, he implies that the farmers commit violence against those who are much like themselves.[3] Engaged in the same activity, the groups' similarity is reinforced by Livy's carefully crafted language: he underscores this similarity with parallel designations of people and territory (*Romani ex Albano…Albani ex Romano*) and an interlaced description of their activity (*agrestes* and *agro* must be carried over from the sentence's first half to the second, *praedas* and *agerent* from the second to the first).

[1] See Livy 1.7.2 and Wiseman (1995) 5–11 on the various accounts of Rome's foundation.

[2] The text of Livy is from Ogilvie (1974). All translations are my own.

[3] Mensching (1966) 106 and Feldherr (1998) 125 note how this sentence marks the two sides' motivations for battle as similar. Erb (1963) 15–17 points out, though, that Rome's and Alba's responsibility is not entirely equal, as Tullus "was looking everywhere for the occasion for stirring up war" (*undique materiam excitandi belli quaerebat*, 1.22.2).

Through delay and dissimulation, the Roman king Tullus Hostilius turns these minor incursions into the spark for a war between Rome and Alba, an amplification of violence that begins an episode exploring the formation of boundaries at Rome. Much of this episode revolves around Horatius, a young man who first fights on Rome's behalf and then slays his sister as he returns to the city in triumph. Rich in mythological connections and aetiological explanations, this section of the *History* invites consideration from many angles,[4] but a survey of Horatius' narrative arc demonstrates that his story confronts themes central to Livy's work.[5] In this article I argue that the historian's portrayal of Horatius casts violence as the destabilizing engine of Rome's growth, a force that is intended to effect and clarify boundaries but instead often transgresses and confuses them. Although Horatius' victory results in Rome's incorporation of Alba, the battle's aftermath shows that not every Roman views the city's new boundaries in the same way. When Horatius sees his sister mourning one of the Albans he killed, he slays her on the spot, and the Romans' subsequent reaction raises doubts about violence as an instrument of identity formation.[6] The implications of these concerns, I claim, extend back to Rome's beginnings. As a refoundation episode in which Horatius' words to his sister echo Romulus' taunt of Remus, Livy's account prompts a reevaluation of the originary founder's exemplarity and reveals the moral ambiguity inherent in an act of expansion that borders on civil war.

Uneasy Distinctions

In Horatius' encounters with the Albans and his sister, violence creates divisions yet also crosses them, with the ramifications of these actions remaining in dispute. Twice Horatius kills in order to distinguish closely linked parties, but his attempted separations are not universally accepted. These boundaries shift according to perspective, and the tenuous nature

[4] Scholars consider it, for instance, with regard to Livy's treatment of mythology (Dumézil (1949); Koptev (2005)); his characterization of the Roman legal system's development (Cloud (1977); Watson (1979); Rüpke (1992)); and the relationship between Livy's rendition of this story and those offered by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (3.13–22) and Valerius Maximus (6.3.6, 8.1.1) (Burck (1964) 150–53; Oakley (2010)). Koptev (2005) 382 n. 2 offers a comprehensive bibliography on the episode, to which Oakley (2010) may be added.

[5] On the episode's moral complexity, see Solodow (1979) 257–60; Rüpke (1992) 72; Feldherr (1998) 143; and Oakley (2010) 137. On the general tendency toward complexity and dilemmas in Livy's *History*, see Levene (2006) 103.

[6] The Romans are figured as the episode's internal audience, namely those people within a narrative who watch and react to events. See Levene (2006) 75–76 on scholarly analysis of internal audiences in Livy. The narratological concept of focalization, which considers from what point of view events are narrated, underlies the concept of the internal audience. For more on this see Bal (1997) 46 and Fludernik (2009) 36.

of any dividing line is emphasized by the fact that Horatius' second act of violence occurs within Rome's *pomerium*, a boundary that ought to keep martial actions outside the city. Looking first at the battle between Rome and Alba and then at Horatius' sororicide, this section considers how Rome's champion wins dominion for his city yet also unwittingly calls into question the effects of his actions.

As the armies begin their preparations, Livy draws out the conflict's similarity to a civil war but then hastens to dismiss the worry that such a battle might be catastrophic. Since the descendants of Alban kings founded Rome, the cities' war is "most like a civil war, almost as if between fathers and sons" (*civili simillimum bello, prope inter parentes natosque*, 1.23.1). In Livy's formulation, Rome and Alba are not enemies, but rather members of the same family. The prospect of a quasi-civil war would remind Livy's readers of Rome's recent internecine conflicts. The historian hastens to assuage any anxiety over such a battle's potential for bloodshed (1.23.2):

> eventus tamen belli minus miserabilem dimicationem fecit, quod nec acie certatum est et tectis modo dirutis alterius urbis duo populi in unum confusi sunt.
>
> The outcome of the war, nevertheless, made the conflict less lamentable, because there was no pitched battle and two peoples were combined into one with only one city's buildings demolished.

Livy sacrifices a share of drama in order to decrease the concern over how the war will play out. The conflict will finish with a minimum of violence to people and places, its most consequential result being that "two peoples were combined into one" (*duo populi in unum confusi sunt*). Simultaneously ending Livy's sentence and describing the end of the war, this phrase forestalls any worry about massive destruction with its teleological pronouncement of unification. The boundary between Alba and Rome, already characterized as an almost negligible line, will soon disappear entirely as part of the seemingly painless process of Rome's growth.

Similar concerns about the war's impact trouble the *History*'s characters, and they too desire to minimize its harm. After the Alban dictator Mettius Fufetius reveals his fear that a long conflict between these "related" (*cognatos*, 1.23.7) opponents would leave even the victor vulnerable to an Etruscan attack, Fortune offers a solution (1.24.1):

> forte in duobus tum exercitibus erant trigemini fratres, nec aetate nec viribus dispares. Horatios Curiatiosque fuisse satis constat, nec ferme res antiqua alia est nobilior; tamen in re tam clara nominum error manet, utrius populi Horatii, utrius Curiatii fuerint. auctores utroque trahunt; plures tamen invenio qui Romanos Horatios vocent; hos ut sequar inclinat animus.

> By chance it happened then that there were triplets in the two armies, dissimilar neither in age nor in strength. It is generally allowed that they were the Horatii and the Curiatii, and scarcely is another ancient matter better known; in spite of the affair's fame, though, uncertainty remains as to their names, that is, to which people the Horatii belonged and to which the Curiatii belonged. Writers lean in both directions; I find, nevertheless, a greater number who call the Roman brothers Horatii, so my opinion follows theirs.

A distillation of Rome's and Alba's similarities, the triplets elide any remaining gap between the two cities. Their likeness bewilders historians, and Livy does not know which brothers belong to which city. He simply chooses to follow the majority opinion,[7] with the implication being that markers of identity such as names are inconsequential.

The match begins with the brothers' similarities being extended to the crowds watching them. The viewing armies encourage each trio with the same exhortations (1.25.1) and watch them with the same concerns (1.25.2).[8] Eschewing proper nouns and adjectives that would separate Alban and Roman, Livy speaks of "either side" (*utrosque*, 1.25.1), the "two armies" (*duo exercitus*, 1.25.2), and the "three youths" (*terni iuvenes*, 1.25.3). The tension of a conflict between two indistinguishable opponents reaches a peak when the youths' figurative joining becomes literal: their shields and arms clash without any result and the physical boundaries between them actually vanish. When Livy notes how, "with hope tilting to neither side, no one could speak or breathe" (*neutro inclinata spe torpebat vox spiritusque*, 1.25.4), the debilitating stress of the narrative's internal audience, reflected in their physical paralysis, models a response for the historian's readers.

The two sides only become differentiated with the first successful act of violence. Livy describes the moment in a dramatic period (1.25.5):

> consertis deinde manibus cum iam non motus tantum corporum agitatioque anceps telorum armorumque sed volnera quoque et sanguis spectaculo essent, duo Romani super alium alius, volneratis tribus Albanis, exspirantes corruerunt.

[7] Koptev (2005) 394 posits that the Sabine "colours of the names" might result in the confusion, and Deroy (1973) 199 also comments on the matter, searching for significance in the names' etymology. Whatever the reason for the historiographical uncertainty, Livy's emphasis on it further erases any boundaries between Roman and Alban.

[8] Fries (1985) 73 notes that Livy's description occurs mainly from the audience's perspective. See Feldherr (1988) 129 on the link formed by viewing that brings together the spectators and the triplets and Oakley (2010) 125, 130 and 132 n. 52 on the role of the spectators as the narrative's internal audience.

> Then, as they battled with their hands intertwined, when already not only struggling bodies and indecisive[9] thrusts of spears and swords, but also wounds and blood were visible to the spectators, two Romans fell, one upon the other, dying, while the three Albans were wounded.

Just when the combatants' bodies become so intertwined that it is impossible to separate one side from the other, blood is drawn. By setting the word "spectacle" (*spectaculo*) between the initial wounding and the revelation of its result, Livy projects the separation between the Horatii and Curiatii onto the watching Romans and Albans. And, indeed, the sides' reactions mirror this newfound difference between the triplets: the Albans look on with joy, while the Romans are seized by fear (1.25.6).[10]

As the battle goes on, violence further sharpens the lines of separation between Alban and Roman. Dissimilarity becomes a central theme of the text as Horatius, having killed two of the three Curiatii, fights his last remaining enemy. The opponents "stood on similar terms, but equal neither in hope nor strength" (*iamque aequato Marte singuli supererant, sed nec spe nec viribus pares*, 1.25.11). Such differences soon extend to the triplets' communities: after Horatius' victory, the two armies bury their dead "with spirits in no way equal" (*nequaquam paribus animis*, 1.25.13). The violence needed to decide Rome's and Alba's dispute has driven a boundary between them. In one sense, the differentiation accomplished by Horatius' victory turns a nearly civil war into an external conflict, a psychologically helpful result for the Roman victors.

Yet the boundary between Rome and Alba effected by Horatius' violence is soon erased. Mettius and Tullus had agreed in their treaty that the victor would hold dominion over the loser (1.24.2), and this arrangement is confirmed after the triplets' fight is over (1.26.1):

> priusquam inde digrederentur, roganti Mettio ex foedere icto quid imperaret, imperat Tullus uti iuventutem in armis habeat: usurum se eorum opera si bellum cum Veientibus foret.
>
> Before they left, Mettius asked what Tullus ordered in light of their treaty, and Tullus commanded him to keep his young men in arms so that he might use them if war broke out with the Veientes.

As the armies leave the field, the boundary between Rome and Alba is dissolved and the two sides stand ready to face an external enemy together.

[9] For this translation of *anceps*, see Ogilvie (1965) ad loc., who remarks on the contrast the word makes between the unknown outcome of a "confused mêlée" and the battle's decisive first wounding.

[10] Oakley (2010) 133 also notes that the Alban and Roman spectators are first distinguished by their reactions to this initial bloodshed.

Their war has achieved the end Livy predicted: two cities, already linked by their shared lineage, will join as one.

Horatius' homecoming, though, destabilizes this simple ending. Finer, more challenging distinctions between Roman and Alban still remain to be evaluated. As Horatius returns to Rome with his enemies' spoils, his sister meets him before one of the city's gates. She weeps as soon as she sees her fiancé's bloodied cloak on his shoulders. Horatius' reaction is swift and final (1.26.3–4):

> movet feroci iuveni animum comploratio sororis in victoria sua tantoque gaudio publico. stricto itaque gladio simul verbis increpans transfigit puellam. "abi hinc cum immaturo amore ad sponsum," inquit, "oblita fratrum mortuorum vivique, oblita patriae. sic eat quaecumque Romana lugebit hostem."
>
> His sister's lamentation at the hour of his victory and among such great public joy moves the fiery youth's heart. And so, drawing his sword and uttering a rebuke at the same time, he runs the girl through: "Go from here to your fiancé with your untimely love," he says, "since you have forgotten your brothers, both the dead and the living, and you have forgotten your country. So let each Roman woman die who will mourn a foe."

The fight between the Curiatii and the Horatii had differentiated the two sets of brothers, yet the aftermath of the battle brought the triplets' cities together. Now, with the civic divisions between Alba and Rome supposedly erased, a dangerous ambiguity persists on the personal level. The relationship of the dead Curiatii with Rome could have been left unspecified, but Horatia's public grief forces the issue: her mourning displays her connection with a Curiatius.[11] Despite the erasure of any separation between Rome and Alba, Horatius' reaction shows that he still sets a divide between himself and the three Albans he slew. In his double accusation of forgetfulness, Horatius implies his sister's obligations, which ought to lie with her family and country, instead are turned toward the enemy.[12] Horatius cannot let her stand as an example of a Roman woman, and his murder, coupled with his order that she go to her dead fiancé, depicts her as an outsider.

Yet even as Horatius tries to reinforce the boundary between insider and outsider, the details of his killings render the divide between battlefield

[11] As Feldherr (1998) 135 remarks, Horatia "challenges the radical differentiation between the Alban and Roman champions that was won by the duel."

[12] Horatius charges his sister with violating both public and private interests, an action which recalls Livy's charge to his readers in *praef.* 10, quoted and discussed below, to imitate examples that will benefit both themselves and their republic. On the balance of public and private in Book 1, see Fox (1996) 137–39 and Vandiver (1999) 207.

slaughter and home front murder negligible, stripping away the qualifiers from Livy's earlier claim that the conflict between Alba and Rome was "a war most like a civil war, almost as if between fathers and sons" (*civili simillimum bello, prope inter parentes natosque*, 1.23.1). Horatius kills the last Curiatius and his sister with the same "sword" (*gladium*, 1.25.12; *gladio*, 1.26.3). Furthermore, just as Horatius taunts his sister at her death, so too does he taunt the final Curiatius he defeats, a repetition highlighted by the fact that these are his only two instances of direct speech in Livy's narrative.[13] The revelation of Horatia's betrothal emphasizes the civil nature of all Horatius' killings. The fight between the triplets was actually a fight between future brothers-in-law. Moreover, the bloody cloak Horatia recognizes as her fiancé's is one that "she herself had made" (*ipsa confecerat*, 1.26.2), meaning that one of the Curiatii entered battle in clothes made by a Roman woman.

Horatia's death poses a conundrum for the community. As a soldier returning from war Horatius is a hero, but as a Roman citizen he has committed an act his countrymen think "horrid" (*atrox*, 1.26.5).[14] His subsequent trial is as much about his battle with the Curiatii as it is about his killing of his sister. In an impassioned speech, Horatius' father casts his son's military success as a potent emblem of the honor he ought to receive (1.26.10–11):[15]

> "huncine," aiebat, "quem modo decoratum ovantemque victoria incedentem vidistis, Quirites, eum sub furca vinctum inter verbera et cruciatus videre potestis? quod vix Albanorum oculi tam deforme spectaculum ferre possent...verbera vel intra pomerium, modo inter illa pila et spolia hostium, vel extra pomerium, modo inter sepulcra Curiatiorum; quo enim ducere hunc iuvenem potestis ubi non sua decora eum a tanta foeditate supplicii vindicent?"
>
> "This youth," he said, "whom you just now saw advancing decked with spoils and triumphing in victory, Romans, could you bear to see him tied beneath a fork for scourging and torture? Scarcely could Alban eyes bear to look upon so hideous a sight.... Scourge him within the *pomerium*, provided that it be among the enemies'

[13] In addition to their thematic associations, Horatius' fight with the Curiatii and his sororicide are linked by several verbal repetitions, noted by Solodow (1979) 252–54 and Oakley (2010) 126 n. 27.

[14] See Watson (1979) 441 on how this tension impacts the structure of the subsequent legal proceedings.

[15] Horatius' father gains the chance to speak when the judgment of his son is referred to Rome's citizens. The entire procedure (1.26.5–12) offers an aetiology for Roman trials of treason (*perduellio*). For more on this, see Ogilvie (1965) 114–15 and Watson (1979). See Burck (1964) 153 on how Horatius' father depicts his son as Rome's liberator and his acquittal as a matter of Roman honor.

> spears and trophies, or outside the *pomerium*, provided that it be among the Curiatii's graves; for to what place could you lead this young man where his own honors would not protect him from so great a foulness of punishment?"

Horatius' father emphasizes one boundary while discounting another, as he distinguishes between the Curiatii and the Albans but minimizes the significance of the *pomerium*. His imagined Alban viewers model the reaction the Romans ought to have, while the Curiatii's trophies and graves imply that Horatius ought to be allowed to act the same way on either side of the *pomerium*. Horatius' transgression is not a transgression at all, and the only true separation that exists is the one that marks the Curiatii and Horatius' sister as non-Roman.

The Romans acquit Horatius, but he does not succeed in characterizing his sister as an outsider. Two monuments position her to be remembered as Roman. One is a beam that goes across a street, under which Horatius had to pass. Called "The Sister's Beam" (*sororium tigillum*, 1.26.13), it serves as a reminder of the state's need to punish Horatius. The second memorial is Horatia's grave (*Horatiae sepulcrum*, 1.26.14), constructed in the very place where she was struck dead. Horatia, thus, is still memorialized within the Roman landscape and not fully rejected as an outsider. These monuments commemorate her death as well as the expiatory rite her murderer underwent, projecting an ambiguous attitude towards Horatius' sororicide.

Alongside these monuments, a seemingly meaningless aside emphasizes the moral challenge posed by Horatius' acts of violence. In Livy's description of Horatius' father, he writes that the old man embraces his son "among these spoils of the Curiatii fixed in that place, which now is called 'The Horatian Spears,'" (*inter haec…spolia Curiatiorum fixa eo loco qui nunc Pila Horatia*[16] *appellatur*, 1.26.10). Early in this episode Livy describes how, in the face of uncertainty surrounding the triplets' names, he follows the majority of historians in calling the Roman brothers Horatii and the Alban brothers Curiatii (1.24.1). Now, as the battle is over and Horatius' father stands among monuments that should reify the separation between the sets of triplets, Livy brings that same confusion to the fore.[17] The location's current designation reflects the naming-tradition Livy has not been following,[18] and this detail elides any difference between the

[16] See Ogilvie (1965) ad loc. on the interpretation of the phrase *Pila Horatia*.

[17] Miles (1988) 205 finds that Livy's characters, but not Livy himself, appeal to the authority of the elders in their speeches, "a political appropriation of the past." A similar phenomenon occurs here, as Livy undermines Horatius' father's appeal to the past by implying that this monument may not have a straightforward connection with what it supposedly commemorates. On the potentially open-ended meanings of Rome's monuments, see Favro (1996) 82; Fowler (2000) 193–217; Barchiesi (2002) 3–4 and 6; and Gowing (2005) 143.

[18] This confusion about their names picks up on an implication in Livy's specification of the burial sites for the three dead Albans and the two dead Romans.

Horatii and Curiatii, a distinction that Horatius intended his actions first to create and then to reinforce. As the narrative arc of Horatius' story ends, Livy leaves open the possibility for all of Horatius' killings to be regarded as morally ambiguous acts: at the same time as they guarantee Rome's survival with a minimum of bloodshed, they come dangerously close to marking all the bloodshed that does occur as civil.

Founding Examples

The movement from the triplets' battle to Horatius' slaughter of his sister is a shift from the metaphorical to the literal, as Livy's narrative transitions from a quasi-civil war to a brother's murder of his sibling. A sense of discomfort marks each of these battles, a discomfort that builds from the first episode to the second. When the triplets battle this feeling comes from their essential similarity, a feature that disappears only with the first wounding. In the case of Horatia's death the unease stems from Horatius' inability to create a boundary that characterizes his sister as non-Roman. This discomfort lurks in the Romans' reasons for acquitting Horatius, a decision they reach "more out of admiration for his virtue than for the justice of his cause" (*admiratione magis virtutis quam iure causae*, 1.26.12).[19] The jury is swayed by the young man's valor in battle, not by his assertion that Horatia is an outsider, and this rationale fits well with the monuments sympathetic to Horatia's plight that dot the Roman landscape.

Although Horatius is acquitted by his fellow Romans, a comment of his father prompts Livy's readers to judge him from a different frame of reference. As Horatius' father speaks in his son's defense, he asks: "For to what place could you lead this young man where his own honors would not protect him from so great a foulness of punishment?" (*quo enim ducere hunc iuvenem potestis ubi non sua decora eum a tanta foeditate supplicii vindicent*?, 1.26.11).[20] Horatius' father wants only to sway his audience by drawing attention to the contrast between the monuments that testify to Horatius' honor[21] and the "foulness" (*foeditate*) that marks his prospective punishment. His choice of words, though, opens up a larger perspective.

The tombs for the Romans lie nearer Alba, and those for the Albans lie closer to Rome, a situation that sees the brothers buried nearer to the city against which they had fought (1.25.14).

[19] Livy's use of *virtutis* here echoes its appearance in his discussion of the triplets' fight, where the outcome rested upon their "virtue and fortune" (*virtute atque fortuna*, 1.25.2). This fits with the argument of Moore (1989) 5–14 that Livy uses *virtus* to signify courage or endurance in the service of Rome. See Rüpke (1992) 70 on the particular blend of "public interest and prestige" that results in Horatius' acquittal for treason.

[20] "From so great a foulness of punishment" is a quite literal translation of the phrase *a tanta foeditate supplicii*. As Gould and Whiteley (2004) ad loc. remark, the meaning of the phrase is something close to "from so shameful a punishment."

[21] For *decus* as a material source of honor, see *OLD* 2b.

"Foulness" (*foeditate*) recalls a sentence from Livy's *Preface* that discusses examples of behavior at each end of the moral spectrum (*praef.* 10):

> hoc illud est praecipue in cognitione rerum salubre ac frugiferum, omnis te exempli documenta in inlustri posita monumento intueri; inde tibi tuaeque rei publicae quod imitere capias, inde foedum inceptu foedum exitu quod vites.
>
> In the study of history it is an especially salutary and beneficial practice for you to consider examples of every sort of behavior, examples set out on a clear monument; from there you may take for yourself and your republic what to imitate and what to avoid, foul in its beginning and foul in its ending.

The noun *foeditate*, used by Horatius' father to characterize the penalty faced by his son, recalls Livy's repetition of the adjective *foedum* to describe the sort of actions one ought to avoid. In this programmatic statement, Livy frames his work as a morally beneficial repository of examples, and he charges his audience with the task of using them to guide their behavior.[22] His *Preface* only mentions examples that are wholly good or bad, with this quality of totality emphasized all the more for negative examples by the phrase "foul in its beginning and foul in its ending" (*foedum inceptu foedum exitu*). Viewed from this binary perspective, Horatius is a difficult character to evaluate: his actions against Alba deserve to be emulated, but his sororicide stands as a deed potentially worthy of "so great a foulness of punishment" (*tanta foeditate supplicii*, 1.26.11).[23]

What raises the stakes even more in the assessment of Horatius is the link that Livy crafts between Horatius and Romulus. As Horatius murders his sister, he says "So let each Roman woman die who will mourn a foe" (*sic eat quaecumque Romana lugebit hostem*, 1.26.4). This sentence recalls Romulus' dire prediction to Remus as he kills him: "So will it be for any other man who will leap over my walls" (*sic deinde, quicumque alius transiliet moenia mea*, 1.7.2).[24] Both Horatius and Romulus open their pronouncements with *sic* and end them with longer relative clauses that are identical in word order: an indefinite relative pronoun is followed by an adjective, a future verb, and a direct object. Context reinforces this link, as Romulus and Horatius each slay a sibling who transgresses a recently established civic boundary. Strengthening this association further, Horatius' actions and their results also figure him as another founder of Rome. His

[22] See Chaplin (2000) 1–5 on how *praef.* 10 prompts an evaluation of how characters in Livy's *History* turn to the past as a guide. Kraus (1997) 54–56 marks how this statement sets the reader's present perspective as a filter for Livy's work.

[23] See Chaplin (2000) passim and esp. 3–4 on the sometimes ambiguous and shifting meanings of Livy's *exempla* within his text.

[24] Ogilvie (1965) ad loc. notes the link between these two phrases as well.

victory over the Curiatii incorporates the Albans into the city, leading to a new level of political and military dominance as well as to a new Roman identity. Moreover, Horatius too, just like Romulus, is intensely invested in establishing and policing the boundaries of this new entity.[25]

Horatius' association with Romulus raises a series of questions about the audience's judgment of the examples offered by these mythical founders. Rex Stem has convincingly argued that Livy characterizes Romulus as "an exemplary figure worthy of imitation," since Romulus' deeds, even when they are morally questionable, always benefit Rome.[26] The fratricide recalled by Horatius' words, for instance, falls into such a category. Since it is difficult to evaluate as a single deed, the reader must judge Romulus' slaying of Remus within Livy's entire account of Romulus' story, a telling that in the end portrays Romulus and, consequently, his fratricide in a generally favorable light.[27] Horatius, though, enjoys no exculpatory context. In his final appearance in the *History*, he proceeds underneath a beam in atonement for his sororicide (1.26.13). This beam, along with Horatia's tomb, are the monuments that cap Horatius' story, commemorations of his deeds which communicate the city's unease with his act of murder.

They are not, though, the only monuments that memorialize Horatius' actions. The sentence quoted above from Livy's *Preface* likens his *History* to a "clear monument" (*inlustri...monumento*),[28] and this monument offers all of Livy's stories to his audience to be evaluated as examples. Matthew Roller makes a distinction between an action's different audiences that proves useful for a consideration of Romulus and Horatius. Roller writes that a deed may have both a primary and secondary audience. A primary

[25] Mencacci (1987) 142–48 also considers this episode from the perspective of foundation, remarking on how it results in the construction of a new identity and new institutions. While Konstan (1986) 204–5 does not explicitly draw a parallel between Romulus and Horatius, he points out how both Romulus' foundation of the city and this episode are instances of the "coalescing of distinct populations into a single people, a process that occurs repeatedly in the first book of Livy." Livy frequently calls attention to the refoundation of Rome. See, for instance, his description of both Augustus (4.20.7) and Camillus (5.49.7) as *conditor*, as well as his remark at 2.1.2 that any king might be thought of as the founder of the part of Rome he had increased. See Konstan (1986) 205 on 2.1.2; Miles (1986) on 5.49.7 and on the refoundation of Rome as part of a cycle in Livy 1–5; and Miles (1988) 199–200 on 4.20.7 and 5.49.7. Serres (1991) sees refoundation as a central theme of the first two books of Livy's *History*. Lowrie (2010) 23–49 argues that Livy depicts Rome as having multiple founders; see also Lowrie (Forthcoming) on foundation and false closure in Livy and Vergil.

[26] (2007) 466. See also Penella (1990) on how Romulus' qualities are linked with the city he founded. See Langlands (2011) on how the Romans took account of the circumstances in which actions were performed when evaluating examples.

[27] Stem (2007) 448.

[28] See Meadows and Williams (2001) 41 and Roller (2004) 5 on the various types of commemoration, including physical, ritual, and written, that *monumentum* may indicate in Roman culture.

audience are the eyewitnesses to an event, while a secondary audience are those who learn "of the deed through the monument" and who therefore consider that deed through the primary audience's commemoration of it.[29] In the case of Horatius' sororicide, the primary audience are the Romans who see him kill her and the secondary audience are those who look on Horatia's beam and grave. What, then, of Livy's readers, who witness both the deed and the commemoration it receives from other characters within his *History* as well as from the historian himself? Privileged with a synoptic view of the text, they can reflect on the totality of a deed's representations and then gauge that deed's representations in light of the representations of another deed. The historian's *Preface* implies that a monument "makes a moral demand" on its audience[30] and requires that it take up an active role,[31] and the link between Horatius and Romulus asks the audience to consider Horatius' story in light of its connection with Romulus' tale.

In one sense, this consideration casts Romulus in a positive light. Livy likely gives the episode of Horatius its unique features and particular narrative bent,[32] and, in doing so, he crafts a troubling dynamic that revolves around violence moving or attempting to move its recipient from insider to outsider, as Horatius attacks first the Curiatii and then his sister. Offering up Horatius as a new iteration of Romulus, Livy points to a concern over another act of foundation that rests on intrafamilial killing. Yet while Horatius' murder troubles the Romans and this internal audience models a possible reaction for Livy's audience, the text offers no indication that Remus' death worries those who see it. The sentence immediately following Romulus' killing of his brother states that this event resulted in him acquiring sole power and the city taking on his name.[33] Horatius' murder of his sister is not justified by its service to the Roman state, while Romulus' actions are, and this comparison reaffirms Romulus' positive exemplarity.

From a different perspective, though, this reiteration of Rome's foundation, similar to the original act but more morally equivocal than it, questions Romulus' paradigm of foundation. Even if Romulus' deed proves acceptable within its immediate context, his act contains the origins of Horatius' slaughter. From a very literal perspective, Horatius' killing of his sister follows through on Romulus' threat of death for anyone who transgresses Rome's boundaries. Rome's early growth, in its movement from Romulus to Horatius, shows signs of repetition and degeneracy, as

[29] (2004) 5.

[30] Moles (1993) 153.

[31] Jaeger (1997) 23.

[32] Solodow (1979) 261–68. On Livy's treatment of the myth, see also Dumézil (1949) and Cloud (1977).

[33] "Thus Romulus alone acquired rule, and the city, founded in this way, was called by its founder's name" (*ita solus potitus imperio Romulus; condita urbs conditoris nomine appellata*, 1.7.3).

intrafamilial killings become unyoked from service to the state and the ameliorative excuses such service provides.

Horatius' murder of his sister reformulates the discomfort of growth via civil war and reflects some of that discomfort back onto Rome's originary act. Romulus' exemplarity may be a false fantasy, similar to Livy's promise that "two peoples were combined into one" (*urbis duo populi in unum confusi sunt*, 1.23.2) with no battle between armies and the destruction of only one city's buildings. This statement, much like Livy's portrait of Romulus, attempts to imagine civil war without bloodshed or blame, but the trauma of unification is already buried within Livy's words. The verb *confusi sunt*, while its primary connotation here is "to combine," can also connote an action that brings ruin or confusion.[34] These inseparable connotations reflect the complex effects of Horatius' actions, which lead to unification but draw painful and unclear boundaries in the process of doing so. Through their dark moral entanglements, Horatius' deeds allude to the difficulties such wars pose for the community and undermine their positive representation. Horatius kills on the home front, claiming that this action is a rightful extension of an external war, but his sororicide poses a difficulty for his community, destabilizing the positive evaluation of Romulus.

For the Romans of Livy's age, it would be the normal course to attribute the upsetting aspects of Horatius' actions to Romulus. At this point in Livy's narrative Romulus' example is still pristine, but this is not the case when Livy composes his history.[35] Writing against the backdrop of decades of civil war, Horace gloomily concludes that the Romans are condemned to fight each other again and again because of the "crime of a brother's death" (*scelus...fraternae necis*, *Ep.* 7.18). In this sentiment lies the belief that Romulus' killing of Remus contains the doomed seeds of Rome's later civil wars.[36] A similar attitude is reflected in Octavian's decision about the new name he will assume in 27 BCE. The name of Romulus would associate Octavian with the city's foundation, but it also carries the responsibility for Rome's terrible civil wars. As Cassius Dio relates in his *Roman History*, Octavian contemplates taking the name of Romulus but ultimately decides against it, choosing to avoid the implications of kingship and fratricide

[34] For the former meaning, see *OLD* 3 and *TLL* 260.61–261.25; for the latter, see *OLD* 5, 6 and *TLL* 261.26–262.7.

[35] Bannon (1997) 159 notes how the Romulus and Remus myth took on "contemporary significance" during Rome's civil wars, expressing "not just battlefield trauma but a more pervasive sense of loss, a loss of social cohesion and civic identity rooted in shared moral assumptions." On the evaluation and significance of the Romulus and Remus myth at Rome along with further references, see Wiseman (1995) and Bannon (1997) 137 and 158–73.

[36] See Watson (2003) ad loc. on how Horace's phrase alludes to Remus' death as well as to civil war's guilt. In addition to this Horatian example, Cic. *Off.* 3.40–41 criticizes Romulus' murder of Remus as an action committed in order to attain sole power (see Wiseman (1995) 11 on this passage).

attached to Rome's founder.[37] For Horace and Octavian, Romulus is a figure of decided moral ambiguity, one who is simultaneously responsible for Rome's foundation as well as for the Romans' most destructive qualities.

Even though Romulus' exemplarity was such an issue in Livy's epoch, he is nowhere explicitly linked with Horatius. No judge of his deed, from the murderer himself to Livy, compares Horatius to Romulus in spite of their undeniable similarities. It is not that the early Romans or Livy have suddenly forgotten Romulus' deeds or would hesitate to cite them as examples: Livy compares Tullus with Romulus (1.22.2) and Numa mentions Romulus' augury as an example he will follow (1.18.6). Numa's citation demonstrates that the early Romans envision their history in the same way Livy's readers are enjoined to do, searching for examples to copy or avoid. All those involved in the evaluation of Horatius' actions, though, whether they wish to see him condemned or acquitted, refrain from citing Romulus as an example. They leave him to the side because the articulation of any parallel between Romulus and Horatius would run the risk of polluting their past, an idea as uncomfortable to them as the potential for devastation in a civil war.

Any mention of Romulus as part of an evaluation of Horatius would raise the possibility that Horatius modeled his own actions on Romulus' and that Romulus' positive example inspired a decidedly mixed imitation. Livy alludes to this possibility by having Horatius taunt his sister in much the same way Romulus taunts his brother, but the historian ultimately allows the link to lie under the surface. In doing so, he portrays a situation where Romulus was not automatically held up as the party responsible for civil strife. The text's silence contrasts with the chorus of voices in Livy's day linking Romulus with Rome's civil wars. By compelling his audience to reflect on the shifting meaning and value of the past, Livy adds another layer to his *Preface*'s injunction. As he complicates the relationship between the various examples on his own metaphorical monument he also complicates his audience's relationship with them, thus charging his audience with the task of considering their own responses to these examples just as critically as the examples themselves.[38]

[37] See Dio 53.16.7–8 and Syme (2002) 313–14. See Chaplin (2000) 168–96 for an overview of Augustus' use of examples and Lowrie (2007) 102–12 on Augustus' effort to control both the interpretation of past examples and the manner in which his example would be received and followed in the future.

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