

O tempora! O causas! 'Brain-balkanising' Ovid's *Fasti*
27 April, 2001 (CAAS: New Rochelle, NY)

(1) SPASTIC IN TIME: KURT VONNEGUT (1966) SLAUGHTERHOUSE-FIVE:

Listen:

Billy Pilgrim has come unstuck in time.

Billy has gone to sleep a senile widower and awakened on his wedding day. He has walked through a door in 1955 and come out another one in 1941. He has gone back through that door to find himself in 1963. He has seen his birth and death many times, he says, and pays random visits to all the events in between.

He says.

Billy is spastic in time, he has no control over where he is going next, and the trips aren't necessarily fun.

(2) OVID'S MISSION, Ovid's *Fasti* 1.1-2:

Tempora cum causis Latium digesta per annum
lapsaque sub terras ortaque signa canam.

The order of the calendar throughout the Latin year, its causes, and the starry signs that set beneath the earth and rise again, of these I'll sing.

(3) POSITIONING OUR SAMPLES IN CONTEXT:

(a) "Scenes from the Life of a Founder"

[from A. Barchiesi (1997) *The Poet & the Prince* Berkeley.]

(b) The Roman Calendar (official *Fasti*)

[from Beard, North, Price (1998) *Religions of Rome* vol 2.]

<u>passage</u>	<u>episode</u>
2.133 ff.	Romulus' accomplishments (Feb. Non.)
2. 361ff.	R & R against the brigands (Lupercalia)
2. 383 ff.	the twins in the river (Lupercalia)
2. 481 ff.	apotheosis of Romulus/Quirinus (Quirinalia)
3. 11 ff.	the twins are conceived (March)
3. 179 ff.	rape of the Sabines (March Kalends)
4. 809 ff.	foundation of Rome (Parilia)
5. 451 ff.	Remus' ghost (Lemuria)

(4) PATER PATRIAE, Ovid's *Fasti* 2.133-144 (FRATRICIDE):

Romule, concedes: facit hic tua magna tuendo
moenia, tu dederas transilienda Remo.

¹³⁵ Te Tatius parique Cures Caeninaque sensit:
hoc duce Romanum est solis utrumque latus.

Tu breve nescioquid victae telluris habebas:

quodcumque est alto sub iove. Caesar habet.

Tu rapis, his castas duce se iubet esse maritas:

tu recipis luco, reppulit ille nefas.

148 Vis tibi grata fuit, florent sub Caesare leges.

Tu domini nomen, principis ille tenet.

Te Remus incusat, veniam dedit hostibus ille.

Caelestem fecit te pater, ille patrem.

Romulus, you must yield place of place. Caesar by his guardian care makes great your city walls; the walls you gave to the city were such as Remus could overleap. Your power was felt by Tatius, the little Cures, and Caenina; under Caesar's leadership whatever the sun beholds on either side is Roman. You owned a little stretch of conquered land; all that exists beneath the canopy of Jove is Caesar's own. You raped wives; Caesar bade them under his rule be chaste. You admitted the guilty to your grove; he repelled the wrong. Yours was a rule of force; under Caesar it is the laws that reign. You bore the name of master; he bears the name *princeps*. You have an accuser in Remus; Caesar pardoned foemen.

(5) PARILIA, Ovid's *Fasti* IV.835-856 (LEGISLATIVE GLITCH):

assignment of task to Celer
Remus mocks the walls
Remus leaps. Celer kills.
anguish of frater
fortitude of rex
anguish of frater
funeral of Remus

835 augurio laeti iaciunt fundamina cives,
Et novus exiguo tempore murus erat.
Hoc Celer urget opus, quem Romulus ipse vocarat,
"Sint," que "Celer, curae" dixerat "ista tuae,
neve quis aut muros aut factam vomere fossam
840 transeat: audentem talia dede neci."
Quod **Remus** ignorans humiles contemnere muros
coepit et "his populus" dicere "tutus erit?"
nec mora, transiluit: retro **Celer** occupat asum;
ille premit duram sanguinulentus humum.
845 Haec ubi **rex** didicit, lacrimas introrsus obortas
devorat et clausum pectore volnus habet.
Flere palam non volt exemplaque fortia servat,
"sic" que "**meos muros transeat hostis**" ait.
dat tamen exequias nec iam suspendere fletum
850 sustinet, et pietas dissimulata patet;
osculaque adipicuit posito suprema feretro
atque ait "**invito frater adempte, vale!**"
arsuosome artus unxit: fecere, quod ille,
Faustulus et maestas Acca soluta comas.
855 Tum iuvenem nondum facti flebere Quirites;
ultima plorato subdita flamma rogo est.

Glad at the augury, the citizens laid the foundations, and in a short time the new wall stood. The work was urged on by Celer, whom Romulus himself had named and said, 'Celer, be this your care, let no man cross the walls nor the trench which the share has made; who dares to do so, put him to death.'

Ignorant of this, **Remus** began to mock the lowly walls and say, 'Shall these protect the people?' And straightway he leaped across them. Instantly **Celer** struck the rash man with a shovel. Covered with blood, Remus sank on the stony ground.

When the king heard of this, he smothered the springing tears and kept his grief locked up within his breast. He would not weep in public; he set an example of fortitude, and 'So fare, said he, 'the foe who shall cross my walls.'

Yet he granted funeral honors, and could no longer bear to check his tears, and the affection which he had dissembled was plain to see. When they set down the bier, he gave it a last kiss and said, 'snatched from thy brother, loath to part, brother, farewell!' With that he anointed the body before committing it to the flames. Faustulus and Acca, her mournful hair unbound, did the same. Then the Quintes, though not yet known by that name, wept for the youth, and last of all a light was put to the pyre, wet with their tears.

(6) LUDIBRIUM FRATRIS & THE CREATION OF CELER:

Ennius' fragments 48 & 50 (Skutsch) and Livy's *vulgatior fama* (I.7.2) provide the standard account of the *ludibrium fratris* punished directly by Romulus rather than indirectly by Celer.

Date of Celer's invention/integration is unknown, though his *terminus post quam* is the Augustan era. Celer does not appear in either of Livy's two accounts, but he does appear in contemporaneous Greek works:

Diodorus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, 8.4.1 - 8.6.3.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 1.87.4.

[Note: Remus' mocking & jumping over his brother's walls are the skeletal elements of any account detailing his death. As revisionist versions attempt to eradicate the fratricide or rationalize the childish sibling rivalry, Remus' actual murderer varies. Suspects include his brother, a rioting pro-Romulean mob, and his brother's henchman (Celer).]

(7) CATULLUS 68

19-20: sed totum hoc studium luctu fraterna mors | abstulit. O misero **frater adempte** mihi.

91-92: quaene etiam nostro letum miserabile fratri | attulit. Ei misero **frater adempte** mihi.

As pointed out by S. Hinds, also found in Catullus, 101.6: heu miser indigne **frater adempte** mihi.

(8) ROMULUS' QUOTATION OF CATULLUS EVALUATED BY S. HINDSS. Hinds (1992) "Arma in Ovid's *Fasti* Part 2" *Arethusa* 25, 148.

How can a comparison with Catullus and his *frater adempte* be anything but unflattering to Ovid's Romulus? In that earlier, oft-repeated farewell was true fraternal *pietas*... Besides these [very genuine tears of Catullus], how much are the tears of a suspected fratricide worth, who only momentarily interrupts a stance of rigid bellicosity to allow a few reluctant drops to flow? Portray Romulus as a man of peace and reconciliation, portray him as a man of elegiac responses and values—how true does it ring? *Te Remus incusat*.

(9) ROMULUS' DECREE IN OTHER EXTANT ACCOUNTS:

Ennius, (Skutsch 50):

[Romulus:] "Nec pol homo quisquam faciet impune animatus
hoc nec tu; nam mi calido dabis sanguine poenas"

Neither you nor any man alive shall do this unpunished:
no, you shall give recompense to me with your life-blood.

Livy, (I.7.2):

[Romulus:] "sic deinde, quicumque alius tansiliet moenia mea,"

So perish whoever else shall leap over my walls!

Diodorus: (8.6.2-3) (proactive decree pronounced by Romulus, activated by Celer):

[Romulus:] "παραγγελῶ πᾶσι τοῖς πολίταις ἀμύνασθαι τὸν ὑπερβαίνειν ἐπιχειροῦντα."

I give orders to all my citizens to exact vengeance of any man who attempts to over the ditch.

[Celer:] "Ἐγώ δέ... ἀμυνοῦμαι τὸν ὑπερπηδῶντα κατὰ τὸ πρόσταγμα τοῦ Βασιλέως."

I will exact vengeance of the man who jumps over the ditch, even as the king commanded.

Dionysius: (1.87.4) ("decree" pronounced by Celer, instead of Romulus):

[Remus:] "Ἄλλὰ τοῦτό γ'... οὐ χαλεπῶς ἄν τις νῦν ὑπερβαίνη πολεμίος, ὥσπερ ἔγω."

Well, as for this wall, one of your enemies could as easily cross it as I do.

[Celer:] "Ἄλλὰ τοῦτον γε τὸν πολεμίον οὐ χαλεπῶς ἄν τις ήμῶν ἀμύναιτο."

Well, as for this enemy, one of us could easily punish him.

(11) DENIS FEEENEY & "BRAIN-BALKANISATION":D. Feeney (1998) *Literature and Religion at Rome: cultures, contexts, and beliefs*. Cambridge.

[The] phrase '*balkanisation des cerveaux*' ('brain-balkanisation') captures the capacity of educated Greeks and Romans of the post-classical era to entertain different kinds of assent and criteria of judgement in different contexts, in ways that strike the modern observer as mutually contradictory.

(12) Characterizing Romulus elsewhere in Ovid's *Fasti*

insufficient (2.133), defeated (2.375), divine (2.482), deceitful (3.197), charitable (3.431), rueful (4.845), passionless (5.479), supplicatory (6.375)

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note: all translations have been adapted from the corresponding editions of the Loeb library.

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(10) LEMURIA, Ovid's *Fasti* V.451-480, (COLD-BLOODED EXECUTION):

Romulus buries Remus	Romulus ut tumulo fraternalis condidit umbras, Et male veloci iusta soluta Remo,
Faustulus & Acca return home	Faustulus infelix et passis Acca capillis Spargebant lacrimis ossa perusta suis.
455	Inde domum redeunt sub prima crepuscula maesti, Utque erat, in duro procubere toro.
appearance of Remus' <i>umbra</i>	Umbra cruenta Remi visa est adsistere lecto atque haec exiguo murmure verba loqui:
SPEECH OF REMUS (459-474)	"En ego dimidium vestri parsque altera voti, Cernite, sim qualis, qui modo qualis eram! Qui modo, si volucres habuissem regna iubentes, In populo potui maximus esse meo, Nunc sum elapsa rogi flammis et inanis imago: Haec est ex illo forma relicta Remo! Heu ubi Mars pater est? si vos modo vera locuti, Uberaque expositis ille ferina dedit. Quem lupa servavit, manus hunc temeraria civis Perdidit. O quanto mitior illa fuit! Saeve Celer, crudelem animam per volnera reddas, Utque ego, sub terras sanguinulentus eas. Noluit hoc frater, pietas aequalis in illo est: Quod potuit, lacrimas in mea fata dedit. Hunc vos per lacrimas, per vestra alimenta rogate, Ut celebrem nostro signet honore diem."
contest of auguries	
Remus as ghost	
biography of 465 Remus	
conviction of Celer	
470	
evaluation of Romulus	
disappearance 475 of Remus' <i>umbra</i>	Mandantem amplecti cupiunt et bracchia tendunt: lubrica prensantes effugit umbra manus. Ut secum fugiens somnos abduxit imago, ad regem voces fratris uterque ferunt. Romulus obsequitur, lucemque Remuria dicit. 480 Illam, qua positis iusta feruntur avis.

When Romulus had buried his brother's ghost in the grave, and the obsequies had been paid to the two nimble Remus, unhappy Faustulus and Acca, with streaming hair, sprinkled the burnt bones with their tears. Then at twilight's fall, they sadly took the homeward way, and lung themselves on their hard couch, just as it was. The gory ghost of Remus seemed to stand at the bedside and to speak these words in a faint murmur: "Look on me, who shared the half, the full half, of your tender care, behold what I am come to, and what I was of late! A little while ago I might have been the foremost of my people, if but the birds had assigned the throne to me. Now I am an empty wraith, escaped from the flames of the pyre, that is all that remains of the once great Remus. Alas, where is my father, Mars? If only you spoke the truth, and it was he who had sent the wild beast's dogs to suckle the abandoned babes. Him whom the she-wolf saved, a citizen's rash hand undid; O how far more merciful was she! Ferocious Celer, mayest thou yield up thy cruel soul through wounds, and pass like me all bloody underneath the earth! My brother willed not this: his pietas is a match for mine: he let fall upon my death—twas all he could—his tears. Pray him by your tears, by your fosterage, that he would celebrate a day by signal honour done to me." As the ghost gave this charge, they yearned to embrace him and stretched forth their arms; the slippery shade escaped the clasping hands. When the vision fled and carried slumber with it, the pair reported to the king his brother's words. Romulus complied, and gave the name of Remuria to the day on which due worship is paid to buried ancestors.

Food for Thought:Robert Hughes (1991) *Shock of the New*.

Picasso and Braque wanted to represent the fact that our knowledge of an object is made up of all possible views of it: top, sides, front, back. They wanted to compress this inspection, which takes time, into one moment—one synthesized view. They aimed to render that sense of multiplicity, which had been the subtext of Cézanne's late work, as the governing element of reality.

Pablo Picasso (1914) *Green Still Life*