

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 orta que 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,

passage	episode
2. 133 ff.	Romulus' accomplishments (Feb. Non.)
2. 361 ff.	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 Tattius parvique Cures Caeninaque sensit:
hoc duce Romanum est solis utrumque latus.
Tu breve nescioquid victae telluris habebas:
quodcumque est alto sub love, Caesar habet.
Tu rapis, his castas duce se iubet esse maritas:
tu recipis luco, reppulit ille nefas.
140 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 pnde 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 Tattius, 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: **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):

	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 transeat: audentem talia dede neci."
assignment of task to Celer		
Remus mocks the walls	840	Quod Remus ignorans humiles contemnere muros coepit et "his populus" dicere "tutus erit?" nec mora, transiit: rutro Celer occupat ausum; <u>ille premit duram sanguinolentus humum.</u>
Remus leaps Celer kills.		
anguish of frater	845	Haec ubi rex didicit, lacrimas introrsus obortas devorat et clausum pectore volnus habet. Flere palam non volt exempla fortia servat, "sic" que " meos muros transeat hostis " ait. dat tamen exsequias nec iam suspendere fletum sustinet, et pietas dissimulata patet;
fortitude of rex		
anguish of frater	850	oscula adplicito posito suprema feretro atque ait " invito frater adempte, vale! " arsurosque artus unxit: fecere, quod ille, Faustulus et maestas Acca soluta comas.
funeral of Remus		
	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 Quirites, 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* (1.7.2) 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 mihi 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.

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

Romulus buries Remus	Romulus ut tumulo fraternas 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, 470 Utque ego, sub terras sanguinolentus 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."
evaluation of Romulus	
disappearance of Remus' <i>umbra</i>	475 Mandantem amplecti cupiunt et brachia tendunt: lubrica prensantes effugit umbra manus. Ut secum fugiens somnos abduxit imago, ad regem voces fratris uterque ferunt.
Romulus creates the Lemuria	480 Romulus obsequitur , lucemque Remuria dicit . 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 flung 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 wreath, 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 came slumber with it, the pair reported to the king his brother's words. Romulus complied, and gave the name of Lemuria to the day on which due worship is paid to buried ancestors.

Food for Thought: Pablo Picasso (1914) *Green Still Life*

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.



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