

Ovid Unseen 5: Rape of the Sabine Women 1

Ovid's Ars Amatoria, Book 1

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The early Romans under King Romulus have no women. They therefore invite a neighbouring tribe, the Sabines, to attend games in Rome, with the intention of stealing the Sabine womenfolk and taking them as their own wives.

The Roman people sat on seating made of turf, their unkempt hair crowned with whatever leaves they could find.

respiciunt, oculisque notant sibi quisque puellam
 quam velit, et tacito pectore multa movent.
 in medio plausu (plausus tunc arte carebant)
 rex populo praedae signa petita dedit.
protinus exsiliunt, animum clamore fatentes, 5
 virginibus cupidas iniciuntque manus.
 ut fugiunt aquilas, timidissima turba, columbae,
 ut fugit invisos agna novella lupos:
 sic illae timuere viros sine more ruentes;
 constitit in nulla qui fuit ante color. 10
 nam timor unus erat, facies non una timoris:
 pars laniat crines, pars sine mente sedet;
 altera maesta silet, frustra vocat altera matrem:
 haec queritur, stupet haec; haec manet, illa fugit;



Giambologna 1583, *Rape of the Sabine Women*,
Loggia dei Lanzi, Florence

Vocabulary:

quisque ... sibi ...	each (man) ... for himself
noto, -are (1)	mark out, make a mental note
plausus, -us (m)	clapping, applause
tunc	at that time, in those days
careo, carere, carui (2) + abl.	lack, be without
protinus (adv)	straightaway
exsilio, -silire, -silui (4)	leap out (compound of salio, salire)
fateor, fateri, fassus sum	confess (compound: confiteor, -fiteri, -fessus sum)
inicio, inicere, inieci, iniectum	throw on (compound of iacio, iacere)
invideo, -videre, -vidi, -visum	hate, envy
sine more	without restraint
lanio, -are (1)	tear
sileo, -ere, silui (2)	be silent
queror, queri, questus sum	complain
stupeo, stupere, stupui (2)	be struck dumb