

## End and Beginning in the Ancient Roman Year (A Sabine element ?)

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# END AND BEGINNING IN THE ANCIENT ROMAN YEAR (A Sabine element ?)

In a well-documented paper read to the *Primus Conuentus Ovidianis Studiis Fouendis* at Constantza (1972) Henri Le Bonniec has pointed out that according to a number of recent studies Ovid's *Fasti* must be considered to be an intelligent and reliable guide to Roman religion (1). Still, many statements of Ovid's in this work, which at first sight are more or less puzzling, are generally treated of as 'mistakes' or even 'blunders'. Thus the passage *Fast.* 2.47-54 :

Sed tamen, antiqui ne nescius ordinis erres,  
primus, ut est, Iani mensis et ante fuit ;  
qui sequitur Ianum, ueteris fuit ultimus anni :  
tu quoque sacrorum, Termine, finis eras.  
Primus enim Iani mensis, quia ianua prima est ;  
qui sacer est imis manibus, imus erat.  
Postmodo creduntur spatio distantia longo  
tempora bis quini continuasse uiri.

Mrs. Agnes Kirsopp Michels interprets the passage as it is generally done : 'This appears to mean that the *decemviri* joined periods which had been separated by a long space, that is, they shifted February from its position as twelfth month to follow January as the second month... I believe that Ovid is here misinterpreting one of his sources... Since he believed that Numa had made January the first month, he could only assume that the

(1) Unfortunately the *Acta* have not yet appeared.

*decemviri* had moved February from twelfth to second place, while his source had meant that the *decemviri* moved the end of the year from February to December (2)'. Le Bonniec notes *ad loc.* : 'Curieuse théorie, qui n'est confirmée par aucun texte ancien et que les Modernes n'ont pas réussi à expliquer d'une manière satisfaisante (3)'. But he adds : 'Ovide se met en contradiction avec lui-même'. The quotations do little credit to Ovid's normal wit and even less to his ingenious versification. For, according to the interpretation involved Ovid's words are, at the utmost, only half true, because considering the supposed sequence February-January there was no distance at all, let alone a *spatium longum*. There must be a different solution to the puzzle.

It is generally agreed that in composing the Second Book of the *Fasti* the poet availed himself of two opportunities for honouring his protector and friend Paullus Fabius Maximus. First, in relating the story of the famous 306 Fabii (195-242) ; secondly, in calling the two teams of Luperci (commonly called Fabiani and Quinctiales) *Fabios* and *Quintilios* (377-78). In dating the story of the 306 Fabii to February the poet is supposed to be relying on the family tradition of the Fabii themselves, probably as stressed by their own historian Fabius Pictor. Elsewhere I have circumstantially pointed out that the tale of the 306 really is the historicized form of a myth explaining ritual, in the case a rite of eliminating the past year, such as is to be expected in February the last month (4). Since traditionally the historical event was dated to July 18th (*dies ater Alliensis*), Ovid — who is the only one to date it to February 13th — expressis verbis has : *Idibus agrestis fumant altaria Fauni ... Haec fuit illa dies...* All the details of the tale, whether legend sounding or not, fall neatly into place when considered as the coherent elements of an aetiological myth.

The name of the *gens Fabia*, as derived in antiquity, is related to the sphere of the dead and the underworld. Likewise, its ancestress, *cum qua Hercules in fouea concubuit* (P.-Fest. 77L), called either Fabula (Faula) or Acca Larentia, is related to the same sphere. Which points to February. The

(2) A. KIRSOPP MICHELS, *The calendar of the Roman Republic*, Princeton, 1967, 129.

(3) H. LE BONNIEC, *Ovide, Les Fastes*, Livre II, Paris, 1969, 17.

(4) A. W. J. HOLLEMAN, *Myth and Historiography : the Tale of the 306 Fabii* in *Numen*, 1975 forthcoming. The present paper contains a summary of the demonstration.

number 306 represents the so-called Romulean ten-month year, i.e. 365 minus the 'dead' period which is tantamount to two lunar months; accordingly, in the Julian calendar the period January-February still amounts to 59 days. The topographical and textual oddities implied in the tradition of either *infelici uia, dextro Iano portae Carmentalis* (Livy 2.49.8) or *Carmentis portae dextra (dextro ?) est uia proxima Iano* (Fast. 2.201) are easily explained as the result of the historicizing of the indispensable element, the *Ianus*, of the original ritual, the elimination-rite. To a Roman an open *Ianus* meant war: The myth of the 306, therefore, was bound to be historicized into a war-event. The irreducible historical rest seems to lie in the gentilician army-organization of early Roman history, when the Fabians were playing a role of importance. Nevertheless, the tradition of the 306 being on their way to a 'sacrifice' was not altogether wiped out (Dion. Hal. 9.19). Even in its historicized form it forced Livy to compute: *trecentos septem milites Romanos captos Tarquinienses immolarunt* (7.15.10) as the commander was exactly a Fabius! It may be clear that sacrifice here as so often is to be taken as creating a communication with the mysterious, or divine, powers for the pursuit of new strength. The *Ianus* of the ritual is indispensable so far as it stands for 'in and out': elimination of the past year means new happiness coming in.

Now Livy has it that the Fabians retained a ritual of their own *in Quirinali colle* (5. 46. 2-3). This brings us to the Sabine settlement there, and therewith the Sabine element, or perhaps origin, of the tale and its underlying ritual. It would seem quite justified to take the tradition of the fusion Latins — Sabines seriously<sup>(5)</sup>. As a matter of fact, the Fabii were of Samnite stock. Furthermore, it has been argued that the Luperci Fabiani represented exactly the Sabine element while the Quinctiales of Romulus represented the Latin one. However, the Sabines seem to have been, so to speak, specialists in elimination-ritual. The *uer sacrum* was one of their specialties. No wonder, therefore, that in 217 B.C. the senate should order exactly a Fabius *omnia ea ut mature fiant curare* (Livy 22.9.11). The

(5) The question has lastly been discussed by J. POUCKET, *Les Sabins aux origines de Rome*, in *Aufstieg und Untergang der römischen Welt*, Berlin-New York, I, 1, 1972, 48-135. Adhering to the theories of Dumézil he feels obliged to conclude that the Sabine presence in the origin of Rome cannot be 'proved' (128). Cf. n. 12.

*collegium pontificum* then knew how to manage in the case of the *uer sacrum*, for it was according to their *sententia* ; but things went differently.

Plutarch (Rom. 21.1) informs us that in the fusion of the Latins and the Sabines the latter 'adopted the months of the Romans'. But Ovid intimates that this adoption did not go as smoothly as Plutarch seems to imply. He has it that the Sabines did not believe in Mars' fatherhood over the twins as told by Rhea Silvia. In fact, Livy says himself: *seu ita rata seu quia deus auctor culpae honestior erat, Martem incertae stirpis patrem nuncupat* (1.4.2). According to Ovid Mars knew the Sabines to doubt it: *Et male credebar sanguinis auctor ego* (F. 3.190). Rather reluctantly he admits as a result of the fusion: *Nunc primum studiis pacis, deus utilis armis, Aduocor et gressus in noua castra fero* (173-74). These words may well mirror the historical situation at the time, such as Ovid could well have known through the family traditions of the Fabii (Fabius Pictor). In adopting the months of the Romans the Sabines must have taken over March as the first month, conditioning Mars now to stand for a more peaceful beginning of the year, such as they were accustomed to themselves. It reminds us of Quirinus who is called *Mars qui praeest paci*. On the other hand, the tradition of the *Ianus* in the tale of the 306 Fabii may well imply that the Sabines from which the Fabii originated called the first month of their year after *Ianus*. These observations may be melted together in supposing that Ovid is right in stating of the Sabines: *huic genti quartus ... deus* (Mars), *Fast.* 3.96. It would follow that prior to the fusion (*proauis ... Sabinis*, *ib.*, 95) Mars occupied the fourth month of the Sabine year, while we are free to interpret 'fourth' either as really fourth or as fourth in the Roman sequence, which would mean April. Next comes the question whether the Sabine year must be taken to have started about mid-winter or at a moment corresponding to the Romulean Roman year. The tradition of the Fabian tale might lead us to believe the latter to be the case. Certainly the tradition of the 18th of July is to be disregarded and counted out. It was already suspected in antiquity, while R. M. Ogilvie figured out that Livy's account points to early spring rather than to summer<sup>(6)</sup>. Yet Livy himself (6.1.11) gives July 18th. It must belong to the embellishments and the process of magnifying the 'facts'

(6) R. M. OGILVIE, *A commentary on Livy, Books 1-5*, Oxford, 1965, 360-61.

of early Roman history, turning the annihilation of the *gens* into a tragedy, a *dies ater*. The sacrifice of the 306, however, was anything but a *dies ater*. The romanization of the myth meant playing havoc with its elements.

One of these elements — as we have seen — is the Janus. So I am impelled to believe that the word has to do with the beginning of the year as mythically explained by the tale. But at which moment of the year the notion has to be placed it is hard to decide. Ovid suggests an obvious connection of the sacrifice with the festival of Faunus (see above). However, Horace knew of a sacrifice to Faunus on the *Nonae Decembres* (Odes, 3.18). Porphyrio in commenting on the passage calls it *Faunalia*, implying that a festival was meant. But it is nowhere to be found in Roman or Italian calendars. It is, however, quite obvious that the poet is, at least, imagining a festival celebrated on the grounds of his *Sabinum* or nearby<sup>(7)</sup>. He must have had some knowledge about a tradition of the Sabines formerly celebrating the god in the course of December. As Faunus is most certainly connected with the end and beginning of the year — or to put it in the words of Angelo Brelich : ‘auf der Grenze der NICHT-EXISTENZ stehend<sup>(8)</sup>’ — with the Sabines the god may well have been connected with December, the tenth and last month of their year (306). If that be the case the Janus of the tale of the 306 may have functioned for a period of about two lunar months, still giving its name to the first month of the Sabine year. But, of course, the memory of the 306 returning through the same Janus — as is surely implied in the original ritual — could not survive in the historicized version as handed down by the Romans. The sacrifice had to become annihilation. In the traditions, however, it transpires that there were *two* passages in connection with that Janus (*dextro, dextra*). It reminds us of the Janus Geminus, bordering on the Forum at Rome. Augustus — who was quite an antiquarian — in boasting of the three closings of the building calls it Janus Quirinus, while Horace in the same connection speaks of *Ianus Quirini* (Res Gestae, 13 ; Odes, 4.15.9). These names evidently conjure up a god who presides over peace and happiness brought back, or

(7) A. W. J. HOLLEMAN, *Pope Gelasius I and the Lupercalia* (diss.), Amsterdam, 1974, 171.

(8) A. BRELICH, *Die geheime Schutzgottheit von Rom*, Zürich, 1949, 49.

coming in. Accordingly, Livy (1.32.9) in explaining what to a Roman was a *iustum bellum* has the formula : *Audi, Iuppiter, et tu, Iane Quirine ...*, implying that the *bellum* was *iustum* in that it brought back peace and happiness. We may compare the Arch of Constantine at Rome. On the West-side, that is going to the *right* when leaving the City, under the medallion of the setting Moon, one sees the *profectio* of the army ; the South-side shows war, and the East-side, under the medallion of the rising Sun, the *adventus* (or *Ingressus Augusti*). Rightly F. Gerke observed : 'das ist mehr als die Heimkehr der Soldaten aus dem Kriege. Es ist der Aufbruch in ein neues Zeitalter, das nunmehr der Kaiser als Friedenshüter von der *rostra* des Forum Romanum verkündigt' (9). The latter activity is shown on the North-side, which is the Peace-side. Here it may be remembered that in the rites of cosmic renovation the chaotic end is as indispensable as the peaceful beginning. Gerke equally correctly noted : 'Die nächsten Nachfolger dieser *profectio* aber sind die Sarkophage des 4. Jahrhunderts, die den Auszug der Israeliten aus Ägypten zeigen, den Durchgang durch das Rote Meer und den Untergang der Armee des Pharao'. Indeed, the Hebrew New Year-ritual was closely connected with the Exodus (10). In this respect the Roman view seems to be in direct line with Hebrew 'history', that is, history viewed *sub specie aeternitatis*, as related to some eschatology. Apparently, this Roman view did not arise only in connection with Christianity. Thus in *Odes* 3.18 a riotous rural end-of-the-year rite is connected with an eschatological vision of the Augustan Golden Age : *cum boue pardus* (not : *pagus* ; see n. 7).

As ordered by the Senate (*S.P.Q.R. ... dicavit*) the structure of the Arch for obvious reasons still embodies the traditional beliefs connected with Janus Geminus and *iustum bellum* ; accordingly the inscription has *iustis ... armis*, while the vexed expression *instinctu divinitatis* is no more than an indication of late antiquity henotheistic thinking (11). In this way may be ex-

(9) *Spätantike und frühes Christentum* (Kunst der Welt), Baden-Baden, 1967, 56.

(10) Mircea ELIADE, *Aspects du mythe*, Paris, 1963, 66, referring to A. J. WENSINCK, *The Semitic Year and the Origin of Eschatology*. Cf. n. 15.

(11) Cf. the pictures of Sol Invictus and Victoria : 'Diese Gottheiten ... beherrschen die ganze religiöse Welt des konstantinischen Bildkreises' (L'ORANGE, *Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens*, Berlin, 1939, 57). Now even J. VOGT, *The decline of Rome*,

plained also why the Janus remained open until war was over. But to the Roman way of thinking the Janus was firstly connected with war. Thus its Sabine origin, or at least background, of marking evil going out and happiness coming in, was obscured: Augustan poets did not even know whether Janus' prisoner was war or peace (Virg. Aen., 1.293-94, 7.607; Hor. Sat., 1.4.60-61, Ep., 2.1.255; Ovid, Fast., 1.121-24, 281). However, we may feel justified to think that originally the Sabines called the first month of their year after Janus, and after the fusion with the Romans after Mars (*qui praeest paci*).

Turning back now to the puzzling passage of the Fasti quoted in the first paragraph of the present paper, it would seem that Ovid in using the words *spatium longum* must have had some knowledge, albeit a confused one, of a 'gap' in the sequence of February to January. It is unacceptable that by that he meant the ten months between January as the first and February as the last. But, if he actually could consult a set of Sabine traditions as is quite possible and even probable this gap may well have been the 'dead' period between the annual cycles. As a Roman he would be apt to call the last month February, but *ultimus* may mean the 'tenth' (cf. Horace, Odes, 3.18). Anyhow, he meant the month of purification, and by tradition Februus was considered to be a Sabine god. It will be clear that Februus, so to speak the spirit of purification, involved elimination as well. Now there was a widespread belief that a proper elimination of the year takes twelve days or nights. Even in Christian times it occasioned the feast of Twelfth Day or Twelfth Night (Epiphany). At Rome in historical times these days covered the period of February 13th-24th. It started with a sacrifice to Faunus (see above), while according to Jo. Lydus (De Mens., 4.24) at the sixth hour of this day the Parentalia began. The period involved, of course, the Lupercalia (15th) but also the Quirinalia (17th), which the Romans, apparently, called also *Stultorum festa* (Fast., 2.513). If the Lupercalia-festival mirrors the fusion with the Sabines (Luperci Fabiani!) the double name of February 17th, in spite of Ovid's explanation of it, may well reflect

1967, 90, admits 'that the arch expressed the views of the Roman senate, which was still wholly loyal to paganism'. We may wonder whether the Senate here opposed Constantine's own premises of the cross monogram (if the sign was as early as that); cf. the exhortatory effects of the incorporated Antonine marbles.



the Roman view of a festival devoted to the Sabine god Quirinus. Since in Ovid's time Quirinus was officially acknowledged as being Romulus divinized the poet could only ask : *Lux quoque cur eadem Stultorum festa uocetur* (12).

So the twelve days of February as discussed here seem to mirror, in a rather unexpected but enlightening way, the fusion amalgamating Latins and Sabines. It might well transpire in much the same way in Ovid's aetiology of the nudity of the Luperci (Fast., 2.305-58), a tale in which Faunus by getting a rough beating at the hands of Hercules comes out as a knight of the rueful countenance. As is now generally agreed, the Hercules who is said to be the ancestor of the Fabii (see above) and Faunus really are manifestations of the same mythical figure (13). But Ovid of Sulmo was of Paelignian stock, and quite proud of being so. Expressis verbis he says : that the Paelignians duly followed their Sabine ancestors with regard to their calendar (F. 3.95-96). So in reading the tale about Faunus and Hercules as told by Ovid (and only by Ovid) we may well be supposed to listen to the animosity between the partners in the fusion of Latins and Sabines. In my dissertation I suggest the row to be a 'memento' of the pre-Augustan custom of the Luperci operating as Fauni, i.e. *incubi*, an operation which must not infrequently have ended in a rough beating indeed. But I did not explain the figure of Hercules beyond his being identical with Faunus. It seems now possible that the rows occurred only when a (Romulean) Quinctialis tried to play the *incubus* to a (Sabine) woman of the Fabiani. To a Roman all this must have been well-known. It explains how in the proceedings against Caelius prosecutor Herennius — who was of Samnite stock — could admit his own Lupercus-ship while attacking Caelius for it in treating of him *de pudicitia* (Cicero, Cael., 26). So far as the Lupercalia-customs as well as the 'rape' of the Sabine Virgins mirror some historical situation of Sabines opposing a marriage-relationship with the Romuleans it

(12) POUJET, *op. cit.*, 105, is apt to call Quirinus 'une très ancienne divinité romaine'. From an anthropological viewpoint Romulus as the divine of the twins is the 'off spring', or manifestation, of the god-*incubus* par excellence, i.e. Faunus. His identification with Quirinus may be seen as the very last step in the fusion, regardless of the question at what moment this fusion had started.

(13) G. BINDER, *Die Aussetzung des Königskindes*, Meisenheim, 1964, 84-88.

must be related to tribal difficulties resulting from the existence of a common Wolf-totem rather than to Sabine feelings of superiority. In literature it led to the supposed Sabine moral austerity, and it transpires in the indignation of the Sabine Claudia Quinta (Fast., 4.305 sqq.) at her reputation of unchastity. Since Fast., 2.571-82 suggests that *puellae* were slandered shortly after the Lupercalia (and Cicero seems to imply the same) Claudia might have got her reputation as a consequence of a Lupercalia-celebration, and accordingly have selected another religious occasion for making a conditional confession. In my opinion the whole matter under discussion reflects a deeply rooted opposition Latins-Sabines, whatever its original nature, particularly manifesting itself on the occasion of the end-of-the-year rites. With a view to the fusion unity and union at this period so vital to the community must have been considered of the greatest importance. To us the romanization in this respect makes it very hard to recognize the historical troubles connected with that fusion. These troubles go on in the tale about Tarpeia as either a Romulean traitress being in love with a Sabine or a fullblood Sabine, as well as in the tale about Verginia being the victim of the Sabine Appius Claudius, etc. As a consequence Dionysius Hal. (2.38) found the Sabines as luxurious as the Etruscans... This, however, does not necessarily mean that the Sabines were no Indo-europeans, as thought by Piganiol. They may well represent what Dumézil calls 'la troisième fonction'. If that be the case they were bound to be in rather constant opposition to the Romans. Dumézil may be right, after all, but in a different manner. His resistance against the Sabine element in Rome's origin seems to be a *parti pris* based upon the thesis of Piganiol. The matter seems to be more complicated than he thought.

The twelve days were closed in the festival called the Regifugium, at February 24th. Rightly J. Heurgon notes: "Le roi n'annonçait pas seulement le calendrier; 'il le vivait'" (14). In historical times he was the *rex sacrorum* but originally he certainly was the real king, impersonating the waxing and waning powers of the year. Indeed, February 24th once was the last day. Even in the Julian calendar the intercalary day was to take its

(14) J. HEURGON, *Rome et la Méditerranée occidentale*, Paris, 1969, 205. The same work contains a good summary on 'les origines de Rome', 79-92.

place and accordingly to be called *dies bissextilis*, followed by the 24th (*sextus*), the Regifugium. Ovid intimates to know this too. After giving the historical explanation as handed down in antiquity : *Tarquinius cum prole fugit ... dies regnis illa suprema fuit* (F. 2.851-52) without any transitional turn he says : *Fallimur an ueris praenuntia uenit hirundo Nec metuit ne qua uersa recurrat hiems* (853-54), implying that with the Regifugium really winter definitely is over (Flight of Winter, or rather of the waning year) (15). So we have to read Ovid's explanations in the Fasti very carefully and with much caution, not to mishear Ovid's own intimations. Of course, to a Roman of his time much must have been immediately clear. This may hold also for the passage Fast., 2.47-54.

Considering that in historical times the Terminalia fell on Febr. 23, Ovid's statement about Terminus being the *sacrorum finis* (v. 50) appears to make sense so far, and as long, as the purifying rites of the period involved (*ueteris ultimus anni*) immediately started after the ancient year of 306 days (16), while the Regifugium had to wait till the very last day of the 'dead' season. Computing the period of the 'Februarian' *sacra* at eleven days would perhaps be pressing the matter too far. At any rate there would still be a big gap (*spatium longum*) between this period and January as the first month of the new year. Last but not least, since End and Beginning are essentially inseparable Janus got active already in the elimination of the 306, only to come into his true colour at New Year. So Ovid's *decemuiri* seem to be justifiable in their calling the beginning of what once was the 'dead' season after this particular god (17). Presumably by then, partly according as agriculture developed partly as a result of the fusion with the

(15) AUGUSTINE, C. D., 2, 6, *Fugalia* is generally taken to denote the *Regifugium* ; it is said to be celebrated *effusa omni licentia turpitudinum*. Indeed, the period of the 12 days was accompanied throughout by public licence ; such licence would be rather incompatible with the expulsion of the licentious Tarquinius. The custom surely was fully alive c. 413 A.D. To replace the *rex sacrorum* a mock-king (as familiar to anthropologists) would do. The new name suggests the occasion to be related to the vernal foot-races in European folklore : ERICH-BEITL, *Wörterb. d. deutschen Volksk. s. Laufspiele ; Wettlauf*. Again, from Augustine's derision of Varro's equation Janus = *mundus* (C. D., 7.7-10) nothing is to be learned, except that Janus was far more than the god of entrances... *eundem et Ianum et Terminum* (7.7).

(16) *Tu quoque* points back to *ueteris* (49) : 'Also you (at that time) ...'.

(17) The action betrays a better understanding of the winter-solstice.

Sabines, the 'Februarian' *sacra* had moved from the beginning to the end of that season, thus joining, strangely enough, the Terminalia with the Regifugium. Since, obviously, the Fabian family tradition only knew of February 13th. While the number 306 became an enigma, Augustine could only poke fun at Janus: *Quae est ista uanitas in opere illi dare potestatem dimidiam, in simulacro faciem duplam?* (C.D., 7.7).

Shall we conclude that Janus — who presided over the 'dead' and nameless season of end and beginning in the ancient year (some 60 days including New Year) — had his name from the gate-structure through which 'evil was eliminated and happiness came in', and gave it to the first 'month' of the Sabine (Italian ?) calendar until the Sabines accepted the Roman god Mars instead; that from then, Mars being (or becoming) first of all a war-god, the Roman Janus came to serve for purposes of war in particular? Shall we conclude also that a number of purificatory rites (*februaris sacra*) — for agricultural reasons — moved from the beginning to the end of the season presided over by Janus; and that subsequently by action of *decemviri* — 'for administrative reasons' (18) — this season was divided into two regular months, both named, quite naturally, after the customs of popular religion characteristic of each of them (*ianus*; *februa*)? Names as old as Numa's (Livy, 1.19).

Finally, it would seem that the ancient ritual of eliminating the year of 306 days as the first act of the 'dead' season became meaningless according as the agricultural year expanded and purificatory rites moved on. Shall we conclude that the memory of it turned into the tale of the 306 Fabii in which the *Ianus*, after the Roman way of thinking, had to play a role connected with war, and that in this connection the Porta Carmentalis was introduced (19)? And may I suggest that the Fabii at some stage in the fusion of Latins and Sabines got another part in the (Roman) end-of-the-year rites, the part of the Luperci Fabiani? Naturally enough the tale of the 306 remained connected with the first day of these rites (20). Ovid's

(18) R. M. OGILVIE, *The Romans and their gods*, London, 1969, 73. It would seem that they, not Numa, added Febr. 25ff.

(19) OGILVIE, *Livy*, 364: 'Porta Carmentalis had originally no connexion with the Fabii'.

(20) If J. BAYET, *Histoire ... rel. rom.*, Paris<sup>2</sup>, 1969, 90, is right in relating the historical

statements, though rather confusing, in the main points of the passage discussed correctly reflect the growing process of the Roman year. They might explain why republican January and February up to the 13th were conspicuously void of festivals, and why the *first* sacrifice to Janus was made on January 9th. The latter point might imply that the days of the old-time *sacra* still were tabooed. In fact, if Regifugium was to be the 59th day of the 'dead' season, according to the republican calendar — (but it must be remembered that this calendar was quite composite) — the first day would be December 24. This would mean that the last of the 306 days was called Larentalia, after the ancestress of the Fabii. Since the sacrifice of this day was made on her tomb (Cato frgm. 16 P) she may be called a Year-demon, or Queen of the Year, dying at December 23<sup>(21)</sup>. No wonder that her 'children' re-enacted her elimination. In historical times Larentia's 'death' was commemorated with a sacrifice by the Flamen Quirinalis, while the Fabii celebrated an annual rite *in Quirinali colle*. This hill seems also to be called *Agonus mons* (P.-Fest. 9L). It fits in with Agonalia as denoting the sacrifice to Janus at January 9. Could this mean that the Fabii had safely returned, and that the second phase of Janus could start<sup>(22)</sup> ? Anyhow, end

'douzaine de jours' to 'le réajustement approximatif du calendrier lunaire' — 355 — 'avec l'année solaire', then Lupercalia fell on the right day to replace the Fabian sacrifice, both for the benefit of the community, viz. the 356th.

(21) That she was imagined as equally being the foster-mother of Romulus may be due to the historicizing of a mythology which had it that all happiness — whether conditioned by the annual fertility or embodied in Romulus — originated from a *lupa*, by her consorting with a mysterious ancestor acting as *incubus*, some wolf. It would seem that Romulus' mythical mother was Acca Larentia, not Rhea Silvia, and his father Faunus, not Mars. In the historicized version Faunus became Faustulus. In the Fabian counterpart of the story the non-royal *Gens* only needed a divine ancestor, no princess etc. Being much less fairy tale-like, composite, and assuming, the Fabian (say: Sabine) version is much nearer to the original myth. This myth might have inspired disreputable Messalina in prostituting herself under the cover of a *galerus* and under the name Lycisca = Luperca (see my note in *Mus. Helv.*, 32, 1975, 251ff. ...). As she was of Sabine stock her equally Sabine husband may have told her of her ancestor who was a prospective successor of Romulus (Plut., *Numa*, 5).

(22) Very impressively M. RENARD, *Rev. Belge de phil. et d'hist.*, 31, 1953, 5-21, has elucidated some cases of cooperation between Janus and Juno. His explanation of the Tigillum Sororium rightly touches upon the arch (13). I doubt, however, whether Augustine really sensed Janus' function as ingeniously shown by Renard: 'La grandeur initiale de la conception représentée par ce dernier' (20). As we know too well the Saint rather detested things like conception and birth.

and beginning of the Roman year as discussed here suggest that the Sabine presence in Rome's origin must be taken quite seriously.

There is still one point to be mentioned. Varro, L. L. 5.156, says : *Lautolae ab lauando, quod ibi ad Ianum Geminum aquae caldae fuerunt. Ab his palus fuit in minore Velabro*, etc. That the tomb of Larentia was situated at the same Velabrum may be related to the fact that hot springs were often connected both with an entrance to the Underworld and with Hercules, as has been argued by J. H. Croon (*The herdsman of the dead*, Utrecht, 1952, *passim*). Propertius (4.9) tells that Hercules with the cattle of Geryon arrived, *et statuit fessos, fessus et ipse, boues, qua Velabra suo stagnabant flumine, quaque nauta per urbanas uelificabat aquas* (4-6), to have there his fight with Cacus, just another force of the Underworld. Certainly, the Velabrum, being once a ferry-place (as confirmed by Varro, L. L. 5.43 sq. ; Tib., 2.5.33-36 ; Plut., Rom., 5), was the proper place for a 'rite de passage' *ad Ianum Geminum*. However, to me it would seem extremely doubtful whether such a gate-structure could involve the conception of a bridge as advocated by Louise Adams Holland (*Janus and the bridge*, Rome, 1961). The very Velabrum-pool seems rather to rule out the possibility. If the 'masculinization' of the rite — the 306 Fabii taking over from 'Mother' Larentia — led to a war-event, the gate still meant hopes for evil being eliminated and happiness coming instead. Eventually the change wrought a *dies ater* ; shifting the waterfront to the Cremera was no success. But one must wonder to what extent the Etruscan element was alien to all this. Anyhow, the Fabii had intimate connections with Etruria. I wonder also whether Regifugium was the next step in that masculinization process.

My explanations of Febr. 23 (Terminalia) and 24 (Regifugium), and particularly my computation of the latter date as the 365th day as related to the 306th, Larentalia, dispense with the suggestion of A. Magdelain, *Cinq jours épagomènes à Rome ?* (R.E.L., 40, 1962, 201-27). In fact the suggestion of such days does not square with any Roman year as handed down, as Magdelain is aware of himself<sup>(23)</sup>. February 25-28 may well have

(23) His solution of 350 + 5 rests on a far-fetched amalgam of disparate Greek and Latin texts. It torpedoed the whole suggestion, I am sorry to say. But he rightly stresses that intercalation was always between Terminalia and Regifugium. Which means : on the last possible occasion !

been added in close connection with the fixation, for whatever reasons (cf. n. 18), of January 1. Thus the period covered would amount to the smallest number of days for two 'regular' months. However, the 'twelve days' of Febr. 13-24 still betray their artificial character. With Caesar, at least the period of the 59 days was restored. But the year beginning at Jan. 1 and the republican intercalation-system must have elicited many an odd explanation of the Roman festivals. Ovid had a flair for that sort of things. He was quite astonished about January 1 (F. 1.149 sqq.)<sup>(24)</sup>.

*The Hague.*

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(24) After launching my interpretation of the 306 Fabii I found out that the late J. HUBAUX, *Rome et Véies*, Paris, 1958, 339ff., made the same suggestion. However, he did not see his way out of the problem of the number 306. He rightly stressed that the number 365 was early known to the Romans (66ff.).