

OVID, ARS AMATORIA 1.114

Romulus gives the signal for the rape of the Sabine women:

rex populo praedae signa ꝑpetendaꝑ dedit

petenda ROS₄A ('i. signa prede petende' Schol. Haun.):

petita Bentleius, Madvig: *notamque* o¹

so Kenney's Oxford Text. The consensus is that *petita* is the most likely correction; this supposes deliberate scribal meddling. Kenney himself, however, considered *praedam petente*¹). I would like to propose the reading *pudenda*. This word suits not only *praedae* and *signa* but also the context. Elsewhere Ovid writes *victor erat praedae praeda pudenda suae* (Ars 2.406); *nec Cephalus rosae praeda pudenda deae* (Ars 3.84); *vidit in immundo signa pudenda toro* (Rem. 432)²). Read

rex populo praedae signa pudenda dedit

'the king gave the people the shameful signal for the plunder', or rather, by transference, 'the signal for the shameful plunder'. For *praeda* in the sense of *praedatio* see Hollis (loc. cit. n. 1).

The note of disapproval in *pudenda* is not, of course, seriously meant; Ovid is mischievously tipping his hat to those who did indeed feel uncomfortable with this story and its place in Rome's history. The poet's approbation of Romulus' action at the close of the episode, *Romule, militibus scisti dare commoda solus: / haec mihi si dederis commoda, miles ero* (Ars 1.131–32), is now even more humorous.

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1) CQ 9 (1959) 242–43. Delz, Mus. Helv. 28 (1971) 52–53, favours Burman's *repente*. This passage is also discussed by Goold, HSCP 69 (1965) 60–61, and by Hollis in his edition, *Ars Amatoria* Book 1 (Oxford 1977) 55.

2) Goold, who prints *petita* in his revision of the Loeb edition (Cambridge, Mass. 1985), suggests a number of phrases where *signa* appears with a gerundive as possibly encouraging the corruption in the present passage; Rem. 432 is included (art. cit. n. 1, 61).

ISSN 0035-449 X

Schriftleiter: Akad. Oberrat Dr. Klaus Schöpsdau, Institut für Klassische Philologie
Universität des Saarlandes, 66041 Saarbrücken

Druckerei: Laupp & Göbel, Nehren

Verlag: J. D. Sauerländer, Frankfurt am Main

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Klassische Philologie, Universität des Saarlandes, Postfach 1150, 66041 Saarbrücken, einzu-
senden.

Printed in Germany · © J. D. Sauerländer's Verlag, Frankfurt a. M. 1994