Father and Sons in Livy
It’s Raining Men

I. Papa Can You Hear Me?
A. Patronymic Society
Silvius deinde regnat Ascani filius, casu quodam in silvis natus
... mansit Silviis postea omnibus cognomen, qui Albae
regnarunt. (I.3.6-7)

“Then Silvius, the son of Ascanius, reigns, by some chance he
born in the woods ... thereafter the surname remained Silvius
for all, who reigned at Longa Alba.”

B. Pater Familias
1. Against a Father’s Authority
Is Numitorem atque Amulium procreat; Numitori, qui
stirpis maximus erat, regnum vetustum Silviae gentis legat.
Plus tamen vis potuit quam voluntas patris aut verucunia
aetatis: pulso fratre Amulius regnat. (I.3.10)

“He (Proca) begets Numitor and Amulius; to Numitor,
who was the oldest child, he appoints the ancient kingdom of
the Silvian people. Force, however, was more powerful than
the inclination of the father or the respect for age: Amulius reigns with his brother having been expelled.”

2. Reconciliation between Father and Son

Ne id quidem Turnum tulisse tacitum ferunt; dixisse enim nullam breviorem esse cognitionem quam inter patrem et filium paucisque transigi verbis posse: ni pareat patri, habiturum infortunium esse. (I.50.9)

“They say that Turnus did not endure even this in silence; that he had said that there was no shorter dispute than that between a father and son and that it could be completed with few words: unless he should obey his father, he would receive misfortune.”

II. Papa Don’t Preach

A. The Trial of Horatius

Moti homines sunt in eo iudicio maxime P. Horatio patre proclamante se filiam iure caesam iudicare; ni ita esset, patri iure in filium animaduersurum fuisses. Orabat deinde ne se quem paulo ante cum egregia stripe conspexissent orbum
liberis facerent. Inter haec senex iuvenem amplexus, spolia Curiatorum fixa eo loco qui nunc Pila Horatia appellatur ostentans, “Huncine,” aiebat, “quem modo decoratum ovantemque victoria incidentem vidistis, Quirites, eum sub furca vinctum inter verbera et cruciatus videre potestis? (I.26.9-10)

“The men were moved in this trial most of all by the father Publius Horatius calling out that he judged that his daughter had been killed justly; were it not so, he would have punished his son with his fatherly right. Then he was begging that they not make him deprived of children—he whom a little before they had beheld with extraordinary offspring. In the midst of these things the old man, having embraced the youth, presenting the spoils of the Curiatii having been fixed in that place which now is called the 'Horatian Spears,' was saying, 'This man whom you saw advancing just now adorned and rejoicing with the victory, Quirites, can you see him bound under a fork among lashes and torments?"

B. The Father Makes Amends
Itaque ut caedes manifesta aliquo tamen piaculo lueretur, imperatum patri ut filium expiaret pecunia publica. Is quibusdam piacularibus sacrificiis factis quae deinde genti Horatiae tradita sunt ... (I.26.12-13)

“And so that the flagrant murder might be paid for yet by some expiatory sacrifice, it was ordered to the father that he atone for his son with public money. He, with certain expiatory sacrifices made that then were handed down to the Horatian family ...”

III. Carry on My Wayward Son
A. Traitorous Sons
Direptis bonis regum damnati prodiores sumptumque supplicium, conspectius eo quod poenae capiendae ministerium patri de liberis consulatus imposuit, et qui spectator erat amovendus, eum ipsum fortuna exactorem supplici dedit. Stabant deligati ad palum nobilissimi iuvenes; sed a ceteris, velut ab ignotis capitis, consulis liberi omnium in se averterant oculos ... (2.5.5-6)

"With the goods of the princes having been divided as spoils the traitors were condemned and the punishment was chosen, more conspicuous because the office of consul placed the duty of taking punishment on the father concerning his children,
and he who should have been withdrawn as a spectator, 
Fortune offered him himself as the exacter of the punishment. 
The most noble youths having been bound to the stake were standing; but from the others, just as from unknown people, 
the sons of the consul had averted the eyes of all onto themselves ...”

B. The On-Looking Father
Nudatos virgis caedunt securique feriunt, cum inter omne 
tempus pater voltusque et os eius spectaculo esset, eminente 
animo patrio inter publicae poenae ministerium. (2.5.8)

“They beat with rods the stripped youths and they strike them 
dead with an axe, while during the whole time the father and 
his face and expression were (for) a spectacle, with the fatherly 
spirit standing out among the service of the public 
punishment.”

IV. Papa’s Got a Brand New Bag
A. Like Father Like Son

Consulis enim alterius, cum nihil aliud offenderet, nomen
invisum civitati fuit: nimium Tarquinios regno adsuessa;
initium a Prisco factum; regnasse dein Ser. Tullium; ne
intervallo quidem facto oblivum, tamquam alieni, regni,
Superbum Tarquinium velut hereditatem gentis scelere ac vi
repetisse. (2.2.3)

"For the name of one consul, although he was giving no other
offence, was hated by the state: (it was said) that the Tarquinii
had grown accustomed too much to the royal power; that the
beginning had been made by Priscus; then Servius Tullius had
reigned; with not even an interval having passed had Superbus
Tarquiniius forgotten the royal power, so as belonging to
another, he had sought it back by crime and force just as an
inheritance of his family."

V. Bibliography


