

***The Rape of the Sabine Women.* School of Sebastiano Conca**

Oil on canvas

2.90 × 4.08 m

Historic Building. University of Barcelona

On loan from the Prado Museum, no. P-5274

The Rape of the Sabine Women evokes a legendary episode in the early history of Rome, given extensive treatment by several Roman authors in antiquity. According to tradition, the Sabines were invited to a festival in Rome. At a signal from Romulus, the Roman hosts grabbed the Sabine women and fought off the Sabine men. Legend makes reference to two circumstances behind this action. The first is a shortage of women in Rome, which had just been founded, and the second is that some societies in antiquity viewed kidnapping and rape as an accepted social practice. The list of artists who have portrayed this iconographic subject throughout the history is long and includes Nicolas Poussin (1594-1665), Jacques Louis David (1748-1825) and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973). Sculptural depictions include the famous work of Giambologna (1529-1608).

This *Rape of the Sabine Women* is attributed to Sebastiano Conca (ca. 1680-1764). Conca was trained in the school of Francesco Solimena in Naples and drew on the splendid scenery of the Italian Late Baroque of Luca Giordano. The painting belongs to the collection of the Prado Museum and was given on loan to the University of Barcelona in 1881. It has an exceptional history, because it appears to have been part of the collection of Manuel Godoy (1767-1851). Between 1792 and 1808, Godoy brought together nearly a thousand paintings obtained through his social position and unscrupulous practices. Some paintings from his collection, now in the Prado Museum, include Goya's *La maja vestida*, *La maja desnuda* and *The Countess of Chinchón*, and Velázquez's *Christ*.

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