

Tree-Worship, Sacred Groves and Roman Antiquities in the *Aeneid*

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Although there is nothing surprising about the close attention to trees in Virgil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, their continued prominence in the *Aeneid* – in forest settings, as individual landmarks, and in similes – demands interrogation. According to one recent commentator, “It makes strange sense ... to read the *Aeneid* on arboricultural lines ... it is well known that Virgil presses arboreal imagery especially hard throughout his poem”.¹ Trees would of course have earned a place in the *Aeneid* through their Greek epic pedigree alone. In Homer, individual trees are significant elements of the scenery, and the felling of a tree is a simile for warriors' deaths.² However, a far stronger impulse towards tree-reverence came from the nationalistic focus of the poem itself. The ancient forests of the Italian landscape were deeply implicated in Rome's sense of its own rustic past and therefore present identity. Roman poets, when describing ancient groves, often specify that nobody has cut them (there are several “virgin” forests in Ovid);³ this guarantees both their

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¹ Gowers (2011). Gowers's article shows that arboreal imagery was applied to human fates and genealogies both in the *Aeneid* and in Roman culture more generally.

² Significant Homeric trees include the wild fig-tree past which Achilles chases Hector (*Il.* 22.145) and that to which Odysseus clings after shipwreck by Charybdis (*Od.* 12.103, 432); on the patriarchal significance of the orchard in *Od.* 24, see Henderson (1997). For the “felling” of warriors see *Il.* 4.482-87; 13.289-91; Virgil compares the Cyclopes (*Aen.* 3.677-81), Pandarus and Bitias (9.672-82), and Aeneas himself (4.441-46) to trees; cf. Roux (2008) 44. Tree-felling is described at *Il.* 23.108-26 without special emphasis, but becomes a Latin topos (*Enn. Ann.* 175-79 Skutsch; *Aen.* 6.176-82; 11.133-38; *Luc.* 3.440-45; *Stat. Theb.* 6.84-117).

³ *nulla violata securi* (*Ov. Met.* 3.28); *adituque carentia saxa* (3.226); *quam nulla ceciderat aetas* (8.329); *nec equo loca pervia silvas* (8.377); *multis incaeduus annis* (*Fast.* 2.436).

antiquity and their strangeness. In the *Aeneid*, Virgil creatively adapts many elements of antiquarian lore, for aesthetic as well as ideological purposes. I will argue that in a number of key episodes he contrives to portray archaic Rome as a tree-worshipping society, based on the traditions of his day. Several scenes take place in supernatural groves, individual sacred trees appear in significant locations, and archaic Italy is made out to be thickly covered in ancient forests.⁴ More strikingly, Virgil creates new histories for distinctive Roman traditions. Not only did he reinvent the figure of Faunus, already emblematic of the connections between Latin poetry and archaic religion, but he adapted other traditions, including the use of the *tropaeum* as war memorial and the suspension of votives in groves, to emphasise the importance of tree-reverence in Rome's earliest history.

Tree-worship (or *Baumkultus*) claimed a significant place among the grand new theories of pagan religion in the Victorian era, thanks to the magisterial study of Karl Bötticher.⁵ Ambitiously claiming that tree-worship was the origin of all Greek religious practice, Bötticher traced the origin of the *tropaeum*, a victory monument decked with a suit of enemy armour erected on the battlefield, to what he called the *Waffenbaum* ("weapon-tree"), one of the most primitive representations of a god.⁶ Others have used the tree-worship theory in arguing that anthropomorphism evolved from the veneration of trees and other unshaped or crudely-hewn objects; the herm, the *tropaeum*, and the cult of Jupiter Feretrius have all been identified as transitional forms.⁷ These views seem simplistic by current standards, but might have found some agreement among the ancient Romans, who considered forests as the oldest sites of cult. For my part, I shall argue that, although tree-worship was scarcely practiced in Virgil's day, it had a considerable claim on the imagination of Roman poets and of their society. It symbolised the piety and rusticity of a primitive past thought to have left an indelible stamp on the national character.

1. Sacred Groves and Roman Primitivism

I propose that there are two aesthetic models for the sacredness of trees in ancient Rome. On one hand is the "monumental tree", a single tree notable for its size, beauty,

⁴For an extended discussion of trees in Virgil's Italy see Maggiulli (1995), esp. 120.

⁵See Bötticher (1856); Mannhardt (1875); Jennings (1890); Philpot (1897). Bötticher's influence is also reflected in Frazer (1890) 56-108 and Cook (1904). Weniger's revival of the focus on tree-worship (1919), which concentrates on the four types of tree used for wreaths in panhellenic cult sites, was clearly inspired by contemporary Olympic idealism.

⁶Bötticher (1856) 71-76.

⁷Visser (1903) is the key exponent of this once widespread theory. In recent times it has been contested by Donohue (1988) and Gaifman (2005; 2010). I thank Emma Aston for these references.

or location; on the other is the “dark mass”, a grove notable for its age, density, shade, or silence. Virgil stresses the age of the various consecrated trees of the *Aeneid*, partly because revering “monumental trees” was considered a throwback to archaic religious practice, found mainly in rural areas; a pious rustic might consecrate any isolated or beautiful tree.⁸ (Virgil locates trees within royal courtyards, just as the Roman villas of his day could enclose either artificial groves or large sacred trees).⁹ The “dark mass” was even more potent, since sacred groves were associated with civic cult and designated as ritual spaces all over the known world, including within the city of Rome itself. They maintained a strong claim upon the spiritual sensibilities of Roman authors, which the *Aeneid* arguably helped to assert. The mere sight of old, dense trees could provoke religious awe, indicating that a *numen* resided there: Ovid says so when creating a suspenseful atmosphere; Seneca claims the same phenomenon as evidence for Stoic pantheism; and according to Pliny, the very silence of groves inspires as much reverence as chryselephantine statues.¹⁰ Sometimes there is no sharp distinction between the monumental tree and the dark mass, since an especially colossal tree becomes a self-contained grove.¹¹ In every case, venerability appears to be cumulative and age comes before beauty. This is borne out by ancient images of suspended votives, both Greek and Campanian, in which the trees are small and wizened, their foliage scant, their branches often broken.¹² Size, shade or beauty mattered only as symptoms of hardihood, which in turn embodied long tradition, with its attendant values of piety and simplicity. The sacred tree betokens the *mos maiorum*.

⁸ *venerator, seu stipes habet desertus in agris* (Tib. 1.1.11); *prisco ... ritu simplicia rura etiam nunc deo praecellentem arborem dicant* (Plin. *HN* 12.3). Calpurnius’ herdsman Idas promises to consecrate at least one tree to any god who brings Crocale to him: *decernamque nemus dicamque: ‘sub arbore numen / hac erit’* (*Ecl.* 2.54-55).

⁹ Virgil’s vast elm, in which Dreams roost, stands in a courtyard within the palace of Dis (*Aen.* 6.282-84), just as laurels stand within Priam’s and Latinus’ palaces (2.513-14; 7.59-63). Sumptuous houses might contain grove-like gardens (Hor. *C.* 3.10.5-7; [Tib.] 3.3.15). The Sabine villa owned by the Flavii contained an oak sacred to Mars (Suet. *Vesp.* 5). At *C.* 3.22.5-8 there is a pine tree looming over Horace’s own villa, which he consecrates to Diana.

¹⁰ *fons sacer – hunc multi numen habere putant – / quem supra ramos expandit aquatica lotos, / una nemus* (Ov. *Her.* 16.158); *stat vetus et densa praenubilis arbore lucus; adspice – concedas numen inesse loco* (*Am.* 3.13.6-7); *lucus Aventino suberat niger ilicis umbra, / quo posses viso dicere ‘numen inest’* (*Fast.* 3.295-96); Sen. *Ep.* 41.3; Plin. *HN* 12.3; cf. *lucos ... vetusta / religione truces et robur numinis instar* (Claud. *Cons. Hon. Cons. Stil.* 229-30).

¹¹ Pliny describes an (impossibly) enormous holm-oak near the grove of Diana at Aricia as “a wood by itself” (*silvam ... sola faciens*, *HN* 16.242); Ovid describes a holm-oak (*Met.* 8.743-50) and a lotus-tree (*Her.* 16.159-60) as groves unto themselves.

¹² See Bötticher (1856) 56-100, esp. figs 1-13. De Cazanove (1993) has contested Bötticher’s case for tree-worship, at least in Campanian art, arguing that trees are interchangeable with other items of scenery in sanctuaries (columns etc.) as supports for ex-votos.

Roman poets' portrayals of grove religion reflect a widespread presumption that archaic Italy (including Latium) had two sets of characteristics. On one hand, it enjoyed moral superiority and close contact with the gods, thanks to its rural lifestyle and strong sense of religious awe. On the other, it was wild, unkempt, and so primitive as to seem barbarian by later standards. These characteristics of the Italians and Romans were also embodied in the trees among which they dwelt. They also evolved into a suite of metaphors for archaic Latin culture in general, and above all for its poetry, which had its own strong connection with ancient groves via the link between prophetic voices and "vatic" inspiration. This should affect our understanding of sacred woods both in Roman verse in general, and in several key episodes in the *Aeneid*.

The grove (*lucus* or *nemus*),¹³ always potentially sacred, was a distinctive feature of Roman poetry.¹⁴ For example, the "grove of Mars" is one of the scenes which Juvenal knows all too well among the litany of epic recitations.¹⁵ Indeed, Virgil's attribution of numinous properties to ancient groves did much to establish them as a regular feature of subsequent Roman epic. His reverent attention to trees can in part be found already in the *Georgics*, where repeated allusions to divine powers when introducing wild trees imply that they are all numinous.¹⁶ Even the supernatural climax of that poem, Aristaeus' near-necromantic

¹³ Some, including Scheid (1993) and Dowden (2000) 91, sharply distinguish *nemus* as a forest from *lucus* as a clearing within it. In the present discussion I refer to both *lucus* and *nemus* as "grove", since by the late first century they often appear together (e.g. Virg. *Ecl.* 6.72-73; 8.86; *Aen.* 7.82-83; 8.597-99; Prop. 4.9.24; Ov. *Fast.* 6.755-56) and the semantic distinction is weak. Distinctions between *luci*, *nemora* and *silvae* were already blurred by the late first century (cf. Maggilli (1995) 116-17) and became progressively more so. In late antiquity, one authority claims that a *silva* produces fruit but a *nemus* is shady and infertile (Isid. *Diff.* 1.44), another that a *nemus* is a pleasant type of *silva* (*nemora significant silvas amoenas*, Paul.-Fest. 159.2 L). Servius' differentiation between *nemus*, *lucus* and *silva* (*ad Aen.* 1.310) is inadequate. I use the term "grove" to include any especially atmospheric wooded place, whether explicitly consecrated or not.

¹⁴ This has been acknowledged by Fantham (1996) 147-49 and Newlands (2004) 139, among others. Santini (1999) and Leigh (1999) 172 rightly identify the *lucus horridus* as a distinct Roman trope, though the label was lacking in antiquity.

¹⁵ *lucus / Martis*, Juv. 1.79. This location points towards distant mythic pasts: Juvenal may be sick of the grove of Ares / Mars containing the Golden Fleece (Ap. Rhod. *Argon.* 2.404; Val. Flacc. *Argon.* 5.228; [Apollod.] *Bibl.* 1.109; Hyginus, *Fabulae* 188; the serpent which attacks Cadmus also inhabits the grove of Ares at Ismene: Paus. 9.10.5; [Apollod.] *Bibl.* 3.22), or possibly that in which Romulus and Remus were conceived (extant authors all agree that the rape of Ilia / Rhea Silvia (usually by Mars) took place in a grove, but only Fabius Pictor and the mysterious "Vennonius" spelt out that this was the grove of Mars: *Origo Gentis Romanae* 20). Virgil's "son of Arcens" was born in a grove of Mars by the Symaethus in eastern Sicily (*Aen.* 9.584, though some editors emend MS *Martis* to *Matris*).

¹⁶ Virg. *Ge.* 2.9-21, with Wilkinson (1969) 86.

revival of his bees from dead cattle, takes place in a grove in his native Thessaly (*frondoso ... luco*, 4.543). Forests usually feature in Virgil's accounts of humankind's primeval past, providing bountiful sources of food in soft primitivism and objects of hard labour in hard primitivism (Taylor, 1955). Several minor characters in the *Aeneid* passed their childhood in groves,¹⁷ as if emerging from this same primitive origin. In the landscape of regional cult sites from which the Italians march to war in *Aeneid* 7, there are numerous sanctuaries featuring sacred groves.¹⁸ Actual descriptions of groves in the poem provide not only an eerie atmosphere, but also a venue for the effective presence of the gods (supernatural epiphanies in books 6, 7, 8 and 9 all take place in groves).¹⁹ They are usually consecrated to specific deities with a bearing on the action of the poem. To find Dido in book 1, Aeneas must navigate one territory of the hostile Juno with the help of Venus, coastal Africa with its dark grove; in book 6 he must navigate another, this time Juno's very own dark grove, to find the Golden Bough. At Albunea, Latinus receives divine guidance in the grove of his father Faunus; when Turnus receives divine guidance from Juno via Iris, he is in the grove of his father Pilumnus.²⁰ When the Trojans first approach Pallanteum, Evander is performing sacrifice in a grove of Hercules, whose significance for Aeneas (and Augustus) is well known. Venus gives Aeneas his divine weaponry in a grove sacred to Silvanus; later she assists him in using this weaponry at the site of a tree sacred to another rustic deity, Faunus.²¹ Virgil also has a tendency to speak, either literally or figuratively, of voices and sounds in groves, as pathetic fallacy or in other contexts.²² In the *Georgics*, one of the sinister portents of Caesar's imminent assassination is "a huge voice heard by many hrough the silent groves".²³ In the Italian portion of the *Aeneid*, invocation by prayer is

¹⁷ For the "son of Arcens" see n.15 above; the Cretans Pandarus and Bitias were born in a grove of Jupiter (9.672-74); the Volscian Camilla was raised in the wild as an acolyte of Diana, "goddess of the grove" (*nemorum cultrix*, 11.557).

¹⁸ *arva Gabinae / Iunonis* (782-83); *lucosque Capenos* (697); *nemus Angitiaie* (759); *Egeriae lucis umentia circum / litora* (763-64); *viridi gaudens Feronia luco* (780).

¹⁹ The Golden Bough is revealed to Aeneas in a dark grove; Faunus speaks to Latinus in the grove of Albunea; Venus appears to Aeneas in a grove of Silvanus; and Iris appears to Turnus in a grove of Pilumnus. Hardie (1994) 65 lists the latter three examples, noting that they all occur at or near the beginning of a book. Isidore derives the word *nemus* itself from *numina* (*nemus a numinibus nuncupatum, qua pagani ibi idola constituebant*, *Or.* 17.6.6).

²⁰ Carthaginian grove: *Virg. Aen.* 1.441-52; Golden Bough: 6.138-39 (cf. 185-96); Albunea: 7.81-106; Turnus in grove of Pilumnus: 9.34.

²¹ Aeneas and Evander in grove of Hercules: *Aen.* 8.102-4; Aeneas and Venus in grove of Silvanus: 8.597-616; Aeneas and Venus at tree of Faunus: 12.766-87.

²² *formonsam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas* (*Ecl.* 1.5); *te nemus omne canet* (6.11); *nemorum increbrescere murmur* (*Ge.* 1.359); *vox adsensu nemorum ingeminata remugit* (3.45); *omne nemus strepitu collesque resultant* (*Aen.* 8.305); *vocem late nemora alta remittunt* (12.929).

²³ *vox ... per lucos vulgo exaudita silentis / ingens* (1.476-80).

at least as important as spontaneous epiphany, and groves are a means of resorting to the supernatural.

The Romans of the Augustan era were well aware that their land was covered with trees of enormous antiquity, and firmly convinced that their ancestors always revered them. Pliny mentions ilexes that are older than the founding of Rome – three in Tibur and one on the Vatican hill. A bronze inscription in Etruscan letters upon the latter indicated not only how long it had stood, but how early it had been venerated.²⁴ A number of landmarks within the city of Rome, including several of its hills, were thought to derive their names from trees.²⁵ Italy’s “astounding forests”, more than anything else, made Dionysius understand why the Romans believed Italy to be sacred to Saturn.²⁶ Latium was a patchwork of groves inhabited by the most ancient divinities.²⁷ When Romulus himself founded his asylum in the heart of Rome, between the Capitol and the citadel, it was known as “the place between two groves”.²⁸ The longevity of trees provided an awe-inspiring link to the past. Evander’s tour of the future site of Rome, with its dark woods and brambles, is a vision of that nation’s past as well as of its future.

In a range of contexts in Roman society, including the late first century BC, reverence for groves provided the moral high ground. Thomas’s classic study (1988) has shown that tree-violation was not only a central concern in the *Aeneid*, but also had sacrilegious overtones in historical contexts, in Greek but especially in Roman society. Cato’s famous all-purpose prayer for cutting down trees, in which one apologises to the unidentified god or goddess of the thicket, shows that all forests were by default sacred, whether or not a specific god was known to dwell there.²⁹ Even the unnamed farmer in the *Georgics* who frees up good soil by destroying “idle” ancient groves does so in a state of anger (*iratus*),

²⁴ Plin. *HN* 16.6-7, 237.

²⁵ [Roma] *silvarum certe distinguebatur insignibus* (Plin. *HN* 16.37). The Caelian was supposedly once called *mons Querquetulanus* because it was covered in oak woods (Tac. *Ann.* 4.65; Plin. *HN* 16.37); the Viminal was where osiers grew (*vimina*, Plin. *HN* 16.37). The Aventine was thought to have once been covered by various trees, explaining why one place was called the *Lauretum*, “Laurel Grove”, even though it was built over (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 3.43.1; Plin. *HN* 15.40); the *Aesculetum*, “Winter-Oak Grove”, lay on the Campus Martius (Varro *LL* 5.152; Plin. *HN* 16.37); the southern spur of the Esquiline known as *mons Oppius* had once been called the *Fagatal*, “Beech Place” (Plin. *HN* 16.37). The goddess Lucina herself was named after an ancient *lucus* standing in front of her temple in Rome (Ov. *Fast.* 2.449; Plin. *HN* 16.85).

²⁶ οἱ δρυμοὶ θαυμασιώτατοι (Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.37-38).

²⁷ See Ulback (1934); Coarelli (1993).

²⁸ Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.15; Liv. 1.8.5-6. Cf. Cic. *Att.* 4.3.4; Virg. *Aen.* 8.342-43.

²⁹ Cf. *si deus, si dea es* (Cato, *Agr.* 139). See Thomas (1988) 263-64.

as if propelled beyond the bounds of acceptable behaviour.³⁰ Jordan and Perlin (1984) attest various legal strictures against harming sacred groves in ancient Greece, although they consider resource management a significant factor, especially since Greek and Roman generals plundered groves for timber in time of war.³¹ In late republican political invective, grove-violation was apparently on the set menu of wicked men's sins, alongside pathic promiscuity and drunkenness.³² Horace says that uncut woods are ploughed up to satisfy the desires of self-indulgent people.³³ Harming sacred groves was disapproved in historical instances too: Sulla was criticised for desecrating a grove to get wood for warfare, and when Octavian executed Antony's friend Turullius in 30 BC, this was seen partly as punishment for his despoliation of Asclepius' grove on Cos in order to build a fleet.³⁴ Gowers has assembled numerous anecdotes in which the health of individual trees at Rome was believed closely bound to the fortunes of its citizens or emperors.³⁵ A pious reverence for trees bespoke the oldest native virtues, as shown by an anecdote in Livy (3.25.7-8). An Aequian general, who does not want to hear the demands of the senate's envoys, tells them to give their orders to a nearby oak tree. As they depart, one of them prays for the sacred oak, and any gods present, to hear that the Aequi broke the treaty and to favour the Roman army when they take revenge. History of course proves them right and implies that tree-reverence is a valid expression of Roman solemnity and piety.

Virgil enhanced this established Roman virtue by connecting it with concrete cult practices, both historical and imaginary. In the heroic past of the *Aeneid*, the veneration of trees is represented as a universal phenomenon, and Aeneas' progress is punctuated by a series of encounters with sacred trees which betoken various cultural pedigrees. In Troy, he sees an ancient, sacred laurel tree standing in King Priam's palace, which foreshadows the laurel planted by King Latinus in his own palace, after which Laurentium was named.³⁶ The foundation-spot of Carthage, where Dido builds her temple to Juno and Aeneas receives his first comfort, is in the middle of a grove (1.441-52). Other trees connected

³⁰ *iratus silvam devexit arator / et nemora evertit multos ignava per annos, / antiquasque domos avium cum stirpibus imis / eruit; illae altum nidis petiere relictis, / at rudis enituit impulso vomere campus* (2.207-10); on this passage, see Thomas (1988) 272.

³¹ See Meiggs (1982); Hughes (1983).

³² Leigh (1999) 183 cites Cic. *Rab. Perd.* 6, *Inc. Or.* fr. 4 Puccioni, and *Mil.* 85, in which Clodius has allegedly destroyed altars and groves to build his mansion.

³³ *incultae pacantur vomere silvae* (Hor. *Ep.* 1.2.45; cf. *silvestrem flammis et ferro mitiget agrum*, 2.2.186).

³⁴ Sulla: Plut. *Sull.* 12.3; Appian *Mith.* 30; Turullius: Dio 51.8.3.

³⁵ Gowers (2011).

³⁶ Virg. *Aen.* 2.513-14 (*ingens ara fuit iuxtaque veterrima laurus / incumbens arae atque umbra complexa penatis*); 7.59-63 (esp. 59: *laurus erat tecti medio in penetralibus altis*).

with gods and venerated by generations of ancestors include the cypress near a temple of Ceres where Troy's fugitives gather, the oleaster sacred to Faunus felled to make a duelling-ground for Aeneas in Latium, and Cybele's pine-grove on Ida from which Aeneas cut the timber for his fleet.³⁷ The tree-marked cultures in the *Aeneid* are called *antiqua*,³⁸ just as the trees themselves stand untouched *per annos* ("through the years").³⁹ The Italians have the longest and most intimate relationship with their trees: Aeneas' first glimpse of Latium is a "huge grove", and the first men there, says Evander, were born from oaks.⁴⁰

Seeing the Italians, with Virgil, as virtually forest-dwelling is fully compatible with the above-mentioned stereotypes about early Romans, which Virgil helped to establish. While vigorous in their piety, nationalism and moral rectitude, they were also coarse, primitive and rustic in their dress and diet; the outward signs and the inward character created one another.⁴¹ The entire package then furnished a metaliterary language for describing early Roman authors, whom later critics praised for their *mores* and criticised for their *cultus*. The Romans wore beards before the Hellenistic period,⁴² but from then until Hadrian's time beards were a sign of rusticity or squalor, associated with ragged clothing and body odour; according to Livy, the "rusticated" Marcus Furius Camillus was ordered to shave as well as wash before re-entering the senate-house.⁴³ Critics of prose accordingly saw Cato the Elder's Latin as admirably forceful but rough, hairy, and unkempt,⁴⁴ and for

³⁷ Virg. *Aen.* 2.714-15; 7.5-63; 9.85-87. Many of my observations here are drawn from Gowers (2011).

³⁸ Troy (*Aen.* 1.375; 2.137, 363); Carthage (*Aen.* 1.12-13; 4.670); Italy in general (1.531; 3.96, 164; 11.253) and Latium in particular (7.38).

³⁹ This phrase is used of the "idle groves" at *Ge.* 2.208, the tree of Ceres (*Aen.* 2.715), Laurentium's laurel (7.60) and Cybele's pine-grove (9.85).

⁴⁰ *Aeneas ingentem ex aequore lucum / prospicit* (*Aen.* 7.29-30); *gens ... virum truncis et duro robore nata* (8.315). On the genealogical symbolism of old trees in the *Aeneid*, see Gowers (2011).

⁴¹ Diet is at least as important an indicator of archaic rusticity as dress. Examples include the turnips eaten by Romulus (*Sen. Apoc.* 9; *Mart.* 13.16) and the boiling vegetables awaited by the Scipiones (*Hor. Sat.* 2.1.71-74); on the extensive symbolism of diet in Roman culture see Gowers (1993). The *locus classicus* for stereotypes of early Italian hardiness is of course the speech of Numanus Remulus (*Aen.* 9.598-620).

⁴² *Liv.* 5.41; *Cic. Cacl.* 14; *Varr. Rust.* 2.11; *Plin. HN* 7.59. Early Romans were thought to grow their hair long too: in Juvenal, a rare wine was "pressed when the consuls had long hair" (5.30, *capillato diffusum consule*).

⁴³ *Liv.* 27.34. On the rusticity of beards, cf. *Mart.* 7.95; 12.59.

⁴⁴ *orationes illae ipsae horridulae Catonis* (*Cic. Orat.* 152); *antiquior est huius sermo et quaedam horridiora verba* (*Brut.* 68); imitations of Cato's vocabulary will become *horridi* (*Quint. Inst.* 2.5.21); his habit of calling a rough hill a "wart" (*verruca*, *Gell. NA* 3.7.6) certainly implies this. Some enjoyed early Roman oratory for the "shadow and colouring of shady antiquity" (*umbra et color quasi opacae vetustatis*, *Gell. NA* 10.3.15-16). In Gellius' metaphor, the shade of oVirgrowned foliage offers a cool retreat. Whether physically, stylistically or metaphorically, Cato was *intonsus* (*Hor. C.* 2.15.11). On hirsuteness as stylistic metaphor, see Leigh (2000) 288.

critics of poetry, his close contemporary Ennius was *hirsutus* and wrote among goatish-smelling men.⁴⁵ Stephen Hinds⁴⁶ points out that these goatish men resemble the half-goat *Fauni* (discussed below) thought to haunt the countryside; Ennius himself, along with his early readers, is identified with the half-bestial population of Italy's prehistoric wilderness. Archaic poetry, like archaic fashions and personal hygiene, reflected the cultural values and aesthetic standards of its time. Quintilian hits the nail on the head by likening Ennius to an oVirgrowned forest:

“We ought to revere Ennius for his antiquity, like sacred groves in which the huge ancient oaks are now more hallowed than they are beautiful”.⁴⁷

As symbol of Rome's cultural past, Ennius is a gnarled oak, uncouth but powerful, whose power may indeed come from his hoariness. It was already true in antiquity that “the obscurity surrounding early Roman religion is profound”.⁴⁸ Homegrown Italian poets are like sacred groves in the Italian landscape. Both provide access to ancient numinous powers, and both possess the same brutish alien splendour, which is the antithesis of *cultus* in all its senses.

2. Sacred Poetry, Oracular Verse, and Faunus

Before exploring Virgil's portrayals of groves and their gods in the *Aeneid*, particularly Faunus, it will be useful to outline what beliefs and ideas existed about them, especially in connection with tree-worship and with poetic theory. A surge of antiquarian interest in the late first century influenced Augustus' programme of religious and social reform in various ways. One of these is that Latin literature was traced back to primitive religious practices involving prophetic utterances, a phenomenon often located in sacred groves.

Thus, the home-grown Latin verse form, the so-called Saturnian metre, was extinct as an art form, but carried a heavy cultural freight which attracted new interest.⁴⁹ The name may have been thought to recall the prehistoric reign of Saturnus, a sacro-idyllic golden age when mortals and deities communed in the Italian landscape. Saturnians

⁴⁵ *Ennius hirsuta corona* (Prop. 4.1.62); *nihil est hirsutius* (Ov. Tr. 2.259-60); *inter hircosos* (Sen. apud Gell. NA 12.2.11); *Musa rudis ferocis Enni* (Stat. Silv. 2.7.75).

⁴⁶ Hinds (1998) 73-74.

⁴⁷ *Ennium sicut sacros vetustate lucos adoremus, in quibus grandia et antiqua robora iam non tantam habent speciem quantum religionem* (Quint. Inst. 10.1.88). Hinds (1998) 14 notes the connection of this passage with the use of ancient trees to symbolise ancient poetry.

⁴⁸ Smith (2007) esp. 31; cf. de Cazanove (2007).

⁴⁹ For a full edition of the Saturnian inscriptions with commentary, see Kruschwitz (2002). For Livius Andronicus' and Naevius' Saturnian fragments see Warmington (1936).

themselves had faded into respectable security: In the earliest days of Roman literature, Livius Andronicus used Greek metres for his plays but “the old Latin meter of hymns, epitaphs, and incantations”, for his epic.⁵⁰ Its defeat by the Greek hexameter is dramatised by Ennius’ oft-quoted lines: “others have written their subject in those verses which *Fauni* and bards of old once sang”.⁵¹ This quotation, which linked the hoary rustic metre with hoary rustic gods, was evidently well known in the late first century BC. It appears thrice in Cicero, from whom we know that these lines were a criticism of a rival poet, Naevius, for using old-fashioned Saturnians,⁵² and once in Varro, who claims that *Fauni* delivered their mysterious woodland prophecies in Saturnian metre.⁵³ According to Festus, there was a solitary Faunus who uttered oracular Saturnian verses.⁵⁴ Since Festus’ source was the Augustan grammarian Verrius Flaccus, the first century association of Saturnians with Faunus’ oracles goes beyond Varro. This sheds light on Horace’s comment in *Epistle* 2.1 that Ennius’ criticism did not stick and Naevius was read with similar reverence: “so sacred is every ancient poem”.⁵⁵ A few dozen lines later, he says that although the “bristly” Saturnian metre faded, traces of the Italian countryside lingered on in Latin poetry of his own day.⁵⁶ Horace reaffirms the push-pull tension between rejecting Saturnians as primitive, and claiming them as purely, pungently Roman. By the late republic, despite the confusion and mystery that had arisen, the bardic Saturnian verse was the pedigree

⁵⁰ Goldberg (1995) 46-47.

⁵¹ *scripsere alii rem / vorsibus quos olim Faunei vatesque canebant* (Enn. *Ann.* 7, fr. 206-07 Skutsch). On the significance of these words, see Habinek (2005) 79-80; Wiseman (2006).

⁵² Cic. *Brut.* 75. Cf. Hinds (1998) esp. 56-58, Wiseman (2006) 13-14.

⁵³ Cic. *Brut.* 71; *Orator* 171; *Div.* 1.114; Varro *LL* 7.36. Pasco-Pranger (2002) takes Varro’s comment as an inference made from Ennius. On the disembodied voices of Fauni, see Cic. *Div.* 1.101; *Nat. D.* 2.6; Lucr. 4.577-94. Other Roman traditions of prophetic voices in groves include the following: Cic. *Div.* 1.101 records that a disembodied prophetic utterance from the otherwise unidentified *Aius Loquens* emerged from the grove of Vesta. Gellius mentions a nameless *Vaticanus deus* with an altar in the same vicinity (*infima nova via*), whose name Varro derived *a vaticiniis* (16.17) because the altar commemorated a disembodied utterance. The two may be identical. Among omens of Caesar’s forthcoming assassination, a huge voice is heard by many through the silent groves (*lucos*, Virg. *Ge.* 1.476-80). Ov. *Fast.* 2.436-40 sets a grove of Juno as the scene for an aetiology of the festival of the Lupercalia, in which she makes a disembodied pronouncement.

⁵⁴ *versus quoque antiquissimi, quibus Faunus fata cecinisse hominibus videtur, Saturnii appellantur* (Festus 432 L; cf. *Origo Gentis Romanae* 4.4-5: *is [i.e. Faunus] solet futura praecinere versibus quos Saturnios dicimus; quod genus metri in vaticinatione Saturniae primum proditum est.*

⁵⁵ *adeo sanctum est vetus omne poema* (*Ep.* 2.1.54).

⁵⁶ *sic horridus ille / defluxit numerus Saturnius et grave virus / munditiae pepulere; sed in longum tamen aevum / manserunt hodieque manent vestigia ruris* (*Ep.* 2.1.157-60).

through which Roman poetry ultimately derived from oracular voices in sacred groves, especially that of Faunus.

Faunus' role in the *Aeneid* as an oracular god has no obvious Greek model. Nevertheless, he held special attraction for Virgil because, although aboriginal and ancient, he was also mysterious and highly malleable. He possessed no iconography whatsoever that may be securely identified,⁵⁷ and by the time of the earliest literary sources he had already been conflated with Pan.⁵⁸ The plural *Fauni* mentioned by Ennius, Lucilius and Varro were concurrently identified with Greek satyrs, probably via Paniskoi.⁵⁹ Indeed this provided a fresh link between *Fauni* and poetry for Horace, who associates wine with poetic inspiration.⁶⁰ Yet before they became Satyrs the plural *Fauni* were, just like Faunus, grove-dwelling spirits who uttered prophecies.⁶¹ They are also frequently situated at the

⁵⁷ Pouthier & Rouillard (1986); Dorsey (1992) 34. Virgil wittily acknowledges Faunus' lack of visual representation by omitting him from the rank of statues in Latinus' palace.

⁵⁸ The identification of Pan with Faunus was well established by the Augustan period (cf. Hor. *C.* 1.17.1-2; Ov. *Fast.* 2.267-80, 424). In the *Fasti*, Ovid progressively adapts Faunus from a lecherous and comical Pan on Greek soil to a more authoritative deity in Italy (Parker, 1993). Calpurnius' Faunus usually resembles Pan, and at one point (*Ecl.* 1.33-35) becomes a jolly prophet of a golden age, like the vatic Silenus of Virgil's own *Eclogues*, whose topics include the *Saturnia regna* (6.41). It is worth remembering that the grounds for identification included not only country haunts and disembodied voices, but also a sense of lurking menace. Virgil follows a tradition, dating back at least to the second century BC, that Faunus was also the god of the Lupercalia (Acilius *FGrH* 813 F2 = Plut. *Rom.* 21.7; Virg. *Aen.* 8.343-44); in the Greek translation of the *Res Gestae*, "Lupercus" is rendered as "Pan" (*Res Gestae* 19.1, with Cooley (2009) 186). Cf. Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 1.32.3 on the Arcadian origin of the Lupercalia. See discussion in Wiseman (2008).

⁵⁹ Roman poets regularly conflated grove-dwelling *Fauni* with playful Satyrs. Lucretius accuses rustics of pretending that there are *Fauni* in the countryside, frolicking to the music of Pan (4.581-90). Horace speaks of woodland *Fauni* on the stage (*Ars P.* 244-47), an unparalleled suggestion which, unless highly metaphorical, probably refers to Satyr-plays or something like them. Virgil often represents *Fauni* as frolicking in the woods (*Ecl.* 6.27-28; *Ge.* 1.11; *Aen.* 8.314-15). For Calpurnius, *Fauni* are indistinguishable from Satyrs. A crucial difference thus elided is that Satyrs were not indigenous nature-spirits; images and texts had them roam in Dionysus' entourage, or indulge in rustic work or play, but unlike *Fauni* they never resided in groves, least of all dark and eerie ones. Statius, identifying *Fauni* as Satyrs, even says that such a place is not for them (*Stat. Theb.* 2.519-23).

⁶⁰ *ut male sanos / adscriptis Liber Satyris Faunisque poetas, / vina fere dulces oluerunt mane Camenae* (*Ep.* 1.19.3-5). Horace also puts Satyrs (and Nymphs) in the icy grove (*gelidum nemus*, *C.* 1.1.30) which separates him and the Muses from the common mortals.

⁶¹ Varro says that *Fauni* are male and female Latin gods, who are traditionally said to speak (*fari*) in woodland places, hence their name (*LL* 7.36. Cf. Serv. *ad Aen.* 7.47, 81, Serv. *Auct. ad Ecl.* 6.27, with Bettini, 2008). The female name *Fauna* was a title of the Bona Dea, herself a prophetic deity, in the pontifical records (See Wiseman (2008) 42 for references). See also Segarra Crespo (2007) on *Fauni* and the role of prophetic utterances in Roman religion.

origin of the Latin race, and even of the earth itself. Ovid puts them among a confused mixture of countryside beings at the beginning of the Iron Age (*Met.* 1.192-95); other sources, including of course Virgil himself, mingle *Fauni* with the earliest Latins.⁶² As Newman⁶³ suggests, Virgil responds to Ennius by locating “indigenous” *Fauni* at the site of Rome, reasserting the place of primitive poetry in Rome’s heritage.

Indeed by the Augustan age, Faunus’ name had become a floating signifier of native cultural heritage which accumulated various identities: “Faunus as king of the Latins, Faunus as one of a race of Fauni, Faunus as Pan and the Fauni as Satyrs, and the oracular Faunus or Fauni”.⁶⁴ In fact, outside the shrine he shared with Jupiter on Tiber Island, Faunus was not a prominent recipient of cult (see Dorcsey 1992, 33-38). Cicero’s Cotta probably speaks for the majority when he accepts that Faunus might be heard, but remains cautious: “what Faunus might be I have absolutely no idea”.⁶⁵

When Virgil integrated Faunus into the *Aeneid*, he blended separate traditions together, creating not only a consistent genealogy for the Latin kings, but also a harmonious mythology for Rome which integrated Italic traditions into a largely Hellenic age of heroes. The link between early Latin poets and *Fauni*, which Ennius made in the passage discussed above, is significant to Virgil’s treatment of Faunus. Three generations after Ennius, Lucilius scoffs at naïve superstitions about “Lamiae and Fauni” that “Numa Pompiliuses” instituted.⁶⁶ The plurals deride old-fashioned beliefs, just as Ennius’ term *vates* did. Ironically, Augustan poets would redefine both *Faunus / Fauni* and the concept of the *vates* as quaint yet authoritative voices. Virgil prefers to make Faunus a native Italian deity, rejecting the obvious identification with Pan. He links Faunus with Latinus and the Latins rather than with Evander and Arcadia (contrast *Ov. Fast.* 6.91-102), splicing together two separate traditions. In one, Faunus was a mortal link in the chain of descent from the gods to the Latin kings.⁶⁷ In the other, he was a mysterious oracular god, a

⁶² Virg. *Aen.* 8.312-15 (*Fauni*, Nymphs and oak-born men); Lucilius, *Satires* 15.490-91 Krenkel (“*Fauni* and Numa Pompiliuses”); Gell. *NA* 5.21.7-8 (*Fauni* and Aborigines); Suet. *Vit.* 1.2 (Faunus and Aborigines).

⁶³ Newman (1967) 41.

⁶⁴ Babcock (1961) 15. For a more recent exposition of the *Faunus / Fauni* problem, see Wiseman (2008) 42-44.

⁶⁵ ... *etsi Faunus omnino quid sit nescio* (Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.6.15); cf. Briquel (1993) 80. In a catalogue of divinities, Silius shelves Faunus between two other obscure figures, the Di Indigetes and Quirinus the Sower (*Pun.* 9.294).

⁶⁶ *terrículas, Lamias, Fauni quas Pompiliique / instituere Numae, tremat has, hic omnia ponit* (Lucilius, *Satires* 15.490-91 Krenkel = Lactant. *Div. inst.* 1.22.13).

⁶⁷ *Aen.* 7.47-49; Dion. Hal. 1.31.2; Justin 43.1.6; *Origo gentis Romanae* 5.1-3. On Latinus’ genealogy, see Rosivach (1980) with Moorton (1988).

disembodied voice dwelling in an eerie grove.⁶⁸ Faunus was an ancient, prestigious and versatile ingredient for Virgil's new national myth.

Roman poets and authoritative speakers followed Greek precedents in calling themselves oracles of divine inspiration.⁶⁹ In the republican era, no poet is known to have styled himself *vates*, and the word seems to have still meant “bard” in a ritual context.⁷⁰ But the semantic shift of *vates* merely reflects a longstanding association of poets with bards; “song” and “singing” (*carmen* and *canere*) had always been regular words for poetry of various kinds, and even Ennius still called poets sacred.⁷¹ Horace credits Orpheus with distracting the primitive *silvestris homines* (“woodland men”) from slaughter, and *divini vates* (“divine poets”) with taming the savages and introducing civilization (*Ars P.* 391-400). When he says that all ancient poems are holy (*Ep.* 2.1.54), he is being sarcastic, but building on a widespread trope frequently found in his own self-descriptions. He says that the poet who commemorates great men is a *sacer vates* (*C.* 4.9.28); he also calls himself a *vates*, a *poeta* by Apollo's own appointment, and a *sacerdos*.⁷² Ovid strikes the same pose, parodically perhaps, but with extraordinary frequency. He too calls himself a *vates* and a *sacerdos*.⁷³ He claims that poets are favoured by the Muses and other gods, that they are *sacri* and their writings *sacra*, that they possess a *numen*, and even that they are potentially, or actually, mantic.⁷⁴ Newman⁷⁵ argues that Ovid misunderstands the concept of the *vates*. Given the number and extremity of his claims, it seems better to say that he takes

⁶⁸ Rosivach (1980) esp. 141 argues that there were two Faunuses: the little-known oracular version, and the rustic recipient of cult identified with Pan. The Faunus who fathered Tarquinius is a hybrid: a forest-dweller, he became part of a human genealogy by sleeping with a dryad (*silvicolae Fauno Dryope quem nympha creatat*, *Virg. Aen.* 10.551).

⁶⁹ Among those identified as soothsayers and prophets are Socrates (*Pl. Phdr.* 292c), Pindar (*Pind. fr.* 150 Maehler), and all archaic poets (Xenophanes *fr.* 11 D-K). Cf. Lucretius on Epicurus as a *deus* (5.8, 51) with *divina mens* (3.15).

⁷⁰ Newman (1967) 17, followed by Bettini (2008) 362.

⁷¹ On *carmen* and *canere*, see Habinek (2005), esp. 75-79; Ennius ‘*sanctos*’ *appellat poetas* (*Cic. Arch.* 18).

⁷² Horace as *sacer vates*: *C.* 4.9.28; as *vates*: 2.6.24, 20.3; 4.3.14-15, 6.44; *Ep.* 1.7.11; 2.2.94; as Apollo's *poeta*: 4.6.29-30; as *sacerdos*: 3.1.3-4.

⁷³ Ovid as *vates*: *Tr.* 5.9.10; *Ib.* 244-5; *Pont.* 2.5.58; 3.4.65-7; 4.8.43; as *sacer poeta*: *Rem. Am.* 812-13; as *sacerdos*: *Am.* 3.8.23; *Tr.* 2.1.3056; 3.2.3-4; *Ib.* 95.

⁷⁴ Poets divinely sponsored, *sacer*, and containing a *numen*: *Am.* 3.9.17-18; *Ars Am.* 3. 539-40, 547-48 (cf. *Pont.* 3.4.93, *deus est in pectore nostro*). Poetry as *sacra*: *Ars Am.* 3.616; *Tr.* 4.1.87; *Pont.* 2.5.72, 9.64, 10.17; 4.2.49-50, 13.43. Poets as prophets: *Tr.* 4.10.129 (*si quid habet igitur vatum praesagia veri*); *Pont.* 1.1.47 (*vaticinor*); 2.1.55 (*sunt quiddam oracula vatum*); 3.4.89 (*praesagia vatum*), 94 (*praedico vaticinorque*); 4.2.25 (*impetus ille sacer, qui vatum pectora nutrit*).

⁷⁵ Newman (1967) 100-14.

outrageous liberties with it, or even that it had become a regular idiom for the personal voice in Augustan verse.

Roman poets could themselves tap into the state of mind, perhaps even the divine help, which led to great poetry, by spending time alone in groves (*nemora et lucos*). There was a long Greek pedigree for this idea, more Dionysiac than oracular, to judge by Plato's Socrates when he jokes that standing in a grove is affecting him supernaturally, mutating his speech into inspired dithyrambs and even hexameters.⁷⁶ Horace, also with tongue in cheek, claims that authors prefer the grove to the city because they are the *clientes* of Bacchus, lover of sleep and shade.⁷⁷ A century later, the prose authors Tacitus and Pliny the Younger profess an outdoorsmanly spirituality reminiscent of Thoreau. In Tacitus' *Dialogus de oratoribus* both Aper and Maternus acknowledge the inspiring quality of the silent grove; Pliny does likewise in a defensive letter to Tacitus, protesting that shallow leisure in carriages and villas only facilitates frivolous verse.⁷⁸ Here, the scorn of the urban and superficial in favour of the rural and wholesome, as a moralising stance, intersects with actual Roman beliefs about the primacy of grove-cult in Roman religion. According to the antiquarian Varro, Romans had originally worshipped the gods without representing them with statues: ("If this had continued until today ... the gods would be honoured more purely").⁷⁹ This vision of a purer piety towards disembodied *numina* has been debunked as a misty-eyed fantasy: Varro probably wanted the earliest Romans to be too sophisticated for anthropomorphic gods, like Hellenistic philosophers,⁸⁰ but we may also presume he imagined these imageless cults taking place in groves instead of temples. Tacitus manifests a similar idealism in his ethnography of Germania. He claims that German religion was aniconic, even pantheist, the names of gods being mere labels for the mystic *secretum* only encountered during worship in sacred groves.⁸¹ Varro and Tacitus both admire the alleged primitive reverence for unseen powers, which helps to explain why Virgil, as a Roman intellectual, emphasised the role of grove religion in his vision of the heroic age.⁸²

⁷⁶ Pl. *Phdr.* 238d, 241e. On various divine powers in Greek verse, including the Dionysiac and Apollonian, see Sperduti (1950).

⁷⁷ *scriptorum chorus omnis amat nemus et fugit urbem, / rite cliens Bacchi somno gaudentis et umbra* (*Ep.* 2.2.77).

⁷⁸ Tac. *Dial.* 9.6; 11.1; Plin. *Ep.* 9.10.

⁷⁹ *quod si adhuc ... mansisset, castius dii observarentur* (Varro fr. 18 Cardauns = August. *Civ. D.* 4.31).

⁸⁰ Feeney (1998), esp. 92.

⁸¹ *lucos ac nemora consecrant deorumque nominibus appellant secretum illud, quod sola reverentia vident* (Tac. *Germ.* 9).

⁸² Fantham (1996) reads Lucan's Massilian grove as a displacement of the atmospheric *religio* which Virgil properly located at the site of Rome.

For the Romans, groves could be pleasant retreats providing shade, water, game, and privacy. Both in Campanian frescoes and in Horace's *Odes*, they are accessible and inviting places where piety is combined with peace and pleasure.⁸³ In the *Georgics*, Virgil calls the whole countryside "divine" (*divini gloria ruris*, 1.168), giving a pantheistic spin to the presence of deities in its landmarks. Thomas (1988, 262) observes an "animism" in which "vines, trees, beasts and bees, even the soil, are all sentient". However, in Virgil as in Roman culture in general, there is a darker side: the landscape is filled with largely anonymous and potentially rancorous powers that must be treated carefully. The most likely place to encounter such beings is a grove, where unknown gods and hidden dangers lurk. Servius famously records the derivation of the word *lucus* by opposition from *lux*, *lucere*, because it is a dark place.⁸⁴ This etymology is of course false, yet suggestive. In the *Aeneid*, King Evander's tour of the wild land where Rome will be built illustrates the menace of groves very clearly. The future site of the Capitol, bristling with thorns (*silvestribus horrida dumis*, 8.348), is a grove haunted by an unidentified god, where strange earthquakes happen (8.349-54):

*iam tum religio pavidos terrebat agrestis
dira loci, iam tum silvam saxumque tremebant.
'hoc nemus, hunc' inquit 'frondoso vertice collem
(quis deus incertum est) habitat deus; Arcades ipsum
credunt se vidisse Iovem, cum saepe nigrantem
aegida concuteret dextra nimbosque cieret'.*

If this god is indeed Jupiter (Evander and his Arcadians are uncertain), he is an unfamiliar version who summons dark clouds from within the darkness of the trees.

Another dwelling of a mysterious god, which bears more directly upon Aeneas' fate, is the grove of Faunus at Albunea visited by Latinus. It is a forbidding place (*Aen.* 7.81-84):

*at rex sollicitus monstris oracula Fauni,
fatidici genitoris, adit lucosque sub alta
consulit Albunea, nemorum quae maxima sacro
fonte sonat saevamque exhalat opaca mephitim.*

⁸³ Hor. C. 1.1.30-31, 7.13-14, 17.5-9, and esp. 3.4.6-8 (*videor pius / errare per lucos*). Even the grove and altar of Diana (*lucus et ara Dianae*, Hor. *Ars P.* 16) inspired some poets to write over-indulgent "picturesques". On Campanian art, see Bergmann (1992) esp. 303.

⁸⁴ *dictae sunt Parcae κατὰ ἀντίφρασιν, quod nulli parcant, sicut lucus a non lucendo, bellum a nulla re bella* (Servius *ad Aen.* 1.29; cf. *ad Aen.* 1.441, *lucus autem dicitur quod non luceat*). Servius' "antiphrasis" is apparently a form of euphemism: a grove is a hazardous thing, like death and war.

Latinus' consultation of the oracle of his father, the late King Faunus, deviates from mainstream Roman religion both in its primitivism and in its novelty. Faunus himself is neither manifest god nor underworld shade, but merely an utterance: "a sudden voice came out of the deep grove".⁸⁵ The details of the incubation have Greek parallels and probably reflect local historical practice,⁸⁶ although historical accuracy is not Virgil's primary concern. Latinus had received the Trojans in a vast, ancient palace "bristling with woods and with the religion of generations past".⁸⁷ With its hundred columns, wooden statues, forest surroundings and long tradition of cult, this building is an architectural version of Albunea and a fitting residence for the son of a grove-god. Virgil reminds us seven times that the oracular deity is also Latinus' own father, which was probably his own invention (the Greek tradition was that Latinus was fathered on Circe by Odysseus or Telemachus).⁸⁸ As stated above, Virgil distances the grove-god Faunus from Greece, in order to keep the Roman reverence for trees aboriginal. He ages him through a form of chronological sleight of hand used elsewhere in the poem: the nascent Carthage is already an "ancient city"; the grove newly added to Anchises' tomb is instantly "sacred far and wide"; and the Arcadian cult of Hercules "recognises the ancient gods", even though it was founded within living memory.⁸⁹ Faunus is likewise *vetus* and his oleaster in Book 12 was sacred "from of old" (*olim*).⁹⁰ However geriatric Latinus is, Faunus has only been dead during his lifespan: Virgil proleptically endows him with the prestige of long antiquity. But Virgil's Faunus, "always-already" ancient though he may be, is also very novel in function. As Eric Orlin has recently argued, pronouncements on the future by Virgilian deities, especially Faunus and Jupiter, reflect an Augustan tendency to state divine opinions explicitly.⁹¹ So the venerable Faunus in fact breaks with Roman tradition, which minimized the role of oracles in the dictation of religious practice.

⁸⁵ *subita ex alto vox reddita luco est* (7.95).

⁸⁶ The priests of Zeus' oracle at Dodona slept on the ground (*Il.* 16. 235), and to consult with Amphiaraus, a man had to sleep on the skin of a sacrificed ram and await enlightening dreams (*Paus.* 1.34.5).

⁸⁷ *Aen.* 7.171.

⁸⁸ Faunus as Latinus' father: *Virg. Aen.* 7.47-48, 82, 97, 102, 213, 254, 368. Odysseus: *Hes. Theog.* 1011-13 (cf. *Serv. ad Aen.* 7.47). Telemachus: *Dion. Hal. Ant. Rom.* 1.72; *Plut. Rom.* 2; cf. Ferenczi (2000) 97. In the *Aeneid* Faunus is still the son of Circe, but now by a native Italian, Picus. See Moorton (1988).

⁸⁹ *urbs antiqua fuit ... Karthago* (*Aen.* 1.12-13, with Reed (2007) 129-30); *lucus late sacer* (*Aen.* 5.759-61), a phrase re-used for the arguably much older grove of Silvanus at Caere, where Aeneas finds Vulcan's shield: *lucus ... / religione patrum late sacer* (8.597-98); *non ... vana superstitio veterumque ignara deorum / imposuit* (8.185-88).

⁹⁰ *veteris Fauni ... sortem* (*Aen.* 7.254); *olim venerabile lignum* (12.767).

⁹¹ Orlin (2007). Briquel (1993), by contrast, suggests that unorthodox divine communications via disembodied voices point back to a pre-civilised condition.

A counterpoint to Faunus is provided by another native rustic deity, Silvanus, who appears momentarily in the poem as the patron of another gloomy grove, where Aeneas receives Vulcan's magic armour from Venus. The ancient Pelasgians are said (*fama est*) to have given this patron of woodland and shepherds a grove and a festival (8.597-602). Venus leaves the divine arms for Aeneas beneath a *quercus* (the tree of choice in Roman *Baumkultus*), just as Livy's Romulus dedicates the first *spolia opima* beneath another *quercus* sacred to shepherds.⁹² Silvanus is rather different from Faunus, since he had a clear iconographic tradition as a humanlike shepherd and was not considered menacing, but both inhabited uncultivated woodland and had obscure origins. Perhaps already in the late first century, as by late antiquity, the two gods were closely identified; Dionysius tells a story about a disembodied voice from a grove about Silvanus and Livy tells the same story about Faunus.⁹³ According to Dorsey's extended study, poets say far less about Silvanus than about Faunus because he was "evidently a bit too mundane for lofty bucolic poetry", yet he does appear a few times in Horace's lyrics and even here in the epic *Aeneid*.⁹⁴ Silvanus certainly introduces another Italian cult into the age of Aeneas, but he remains mute and invisible. He is easily over-written by a Greek goddess bearing Iliadic gifts (cf. *Il.* 19.1-19), and does not interfere with Aeneas, unlike Faunus, whose tree-stump endangers him in the final duel (discussed below). In Silvanus' grove, Aeneas himself is able to rest and recuperate (8.606-07), as well as experience both privacy and a divine encounter. Silvanus offers all of the advantages of Roman tree-reverence, and with them a promise of cultural harmony.

3. Suspended Votives and the *Tropaeum*

After killing Mezentius and winning a battle, Aeneas sets up an oak-trunk and decks it in Mezentius' spoils as an offering to Mars.⁹⁵ On the face of it, this is a straightforward retrojection of the battle memorial, or *tropaeum*, into the age of heroes, as a precedent for an established Roman military tradition. Since the spoils are those of an enemy general, it also suggests, as I shall argue, the dedication of the *ferculum* which was traced back to Romulus. Yet Virgil uses the Mezentius monument as a key element in the broader pattern of tree-reverence in the world of the *Aeneid*, inventing the Roman *Waffenbaum* in the process, which became an ahistorical but symbolically potent tradition in later Latin epic.

⁹² *arma sub adversa posuit radiantia quercu* (*Aen.* 8.616); cf. *ad quercum pastoribus sacram* (Liv. 1.10); *glandiferi maxime generis omnes, quibus honos apud Romanos perpetuus* (Plin. *HN* 16.6-7).

⁹³ Faunus: Liv. 2.7.2, followed by Val. Max. 1.8.5. Silvanus: Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 5.16.2-3.

⁹⁴ Dorsey (1992) surveys all of the available literary references to Silvanus.

⁹⁵ *Aen.* 11.5-16. The standard work on the *tropaeum* is Picard (1957). On the *tropaeum* in the *Aeneid*, see Dyson (2001), chapter 10, where she argues that the Mezentius monument contributes to Virgil's theme of the sacrificial king of the wood, the *Rex Nemorensis*.

The suspension of military votives was frequently practised at Rome, although not in groves. Poetic sources imply that it was common for victorious Roman generals to hang up votives on the inside or outside of temples, usually inside the cupolas (*tholi*) or on internal or external walls.⁹⁶ For example, the clutter of votives which Lepidus removed from the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus to improve its appearance included numerous shields and standards fixed to the columns.⁹⁷ Such practices are foreshadowed by Aeneas' suspension of a golden shield at the future site of Actium, and by the large and numerous military souvenirs on the doorposts of Latinus' palace.⁹⁸ Although the dedication of military equipment had been practiced by the Greeks,⁹⁹ it came to define triumphal ostentation at Rome, both literal and metaphorical. Gallus envisions Octavian's spoils adorning many temples; Propertius, within an extended metaphor of amatory conquest as military triumph, plans to affix votives to the column of Venus' temple with an inscription beneath them.¹⁰⁰

However, historically, the *tropaemum* was not an adornment of a living tree; it is important to recognise this in order to appreciate Virgil's treatment of the motif. Evidence that the Greeks identified the *tropaemum* with a living oak-tree is slight. There is scant evidence from the visual arts,¹⁰¹ and written sources provide only one example of military votives suspended on a tree, which is not on a battlefield. An ancient sacred oleaster stood in the Megarian agora, and after it was cut down the city fell, in fulfilment of a prophecy. Theophrastus cites it as evidence

⁹⁶ *tholi*: Virg. *Aen.* 9.408; Stat. *Silv.* 1.4.32; *Theb.* 2.734; Val. Flacc. *Argon.* 1.56; doorposts of houses: *Aen.* 2.504; 5.393; facades of temples: 3.287; 5.360; 8.721; 11.778, Hor. *C.* 3.5.16-17; 4.15.6-8; *Ep.* 1.18.56. The dedicant need not be a soldier: Propertius' Arethusa proposes to display her husband's *arma ... votiva* at the Porta Capena (4.3.71-72) and Horace's Veianus fixes his gladiatorial sword to the posts of Hercules' temple on retirement (*Ep.* 1.1.4-5). Basto (1984) plausibly argues that Dido hangs Aeneas' sword in her bedroom (4.494-96) to represent her conquest over him.

⁹⁷ *signa amovit clipeaque de columnis et signa militaria adfixa omnis generis dempsit* (Liv. 40.31.3).

⁹⁸ *Aen.* 3.286-88; 7.183-86.

⁹⁹ The Aetolian league had supposedly dedicated fifteen thousand suits of armour in the porticoes of Thermus (Polyb. 5.8.9); Plut. *De Pyth. Or.* 15 = *Mor.* 401c-d implies that temples were filled with inscribed booty in classical Athens.

¹⁰⁰ *postque tuum reditum multorum templa deorum / fixa legam spolieis divitiora tuis* (Gallus fr. 2.4-5 Courtney); *magna ego dona tua figam, Cytherea, columna* (Prop. 1.14.25-28).

¹⁰¹ One of Bötticher's best sources is a "hero-relief" (1856, 75, fig. 63), now in the Athens Archaeological Museum, in which a warrior feeds a large snake entwining an oak-tree, which is dressed in a sword, spear, shield and breast-plate. A boy is even bringing a helmet. However, the "warrior" has now been identified as Polydeukion, heroised in the second century AD by the Roman senator Herodes Atticus after a premature death, and is not a reliable representative of Greek military or religious practice.

that trees can absorb objects; in Pliny's account it was found, when felled, to have swallowed greaves and helmets hung upon it long ago by "brave men".¹⁰² Like the tree of Faunus in the *Aeneid*, this was a humble oleaster, a living tree, which became a strange imitation of a *tropaeum* through an accumulation of votives. In fact, the Greek *tropaeum* was at first made from timbers lying to hand,¹⁰³ then later replaced by sturdier monuments of metal or stone.

The best evidence for battlefield tree-worship comes from Latin epic, and the monument to Mezentius is in fact the earliest example. As a tree-trunk shorn of its branches and decked with a suit of armour, it is a battlefield *tropaeum* which resembles the triumphal *ferculum*, yet as a massive oak mounted upon a hill, it resembles the monumental trees found elsewhere in the poem. Virgil implies that such fabrications were regular in the heroic age, by having Aeneas, Mezentius and Turnus all refer to the practice.¹⁰⁴ In fact

the historical origin of the *tropaeum* (and indeed the word itself) was Greek, so Aeneas' monument is a literary invention.¹⁰⁵ As a huge felled oak (*ingentem quercum*) representing Mezentius, it inverts the epic comparison of mighty men to mighty trees. Likewise, when Pallas vows that if he successfully kills Halaesus, a *quercus* sacred to Tiber will "receive" the spoils, Virgil invites us to compare the practice of the battlefield *tropaeum* with his many examples of the veneration of living trees.¹⁰⁶

It will be helpful at this point to demonstrate how far the symbolic value of *tropaea* exceeded the historical reality, and how rarely they were made of wood, let alone from trees. Most *tropaea* set up "in the field" by Roman generals were permanent memorials,

¹⁰² Theophr. *Hist. pl.* 5.2.4; *Megarīs diu stetit oleaster in foro, cui viri fortes adfixerant arma, quae cortice ambiente aetas longa occultaverat ... ocreis galeisque intus repertis* (Plin. *HN* 16.199).

¹⁰³ διὰ δὲ τῶν τυχόντων ξύλων ἰστάναι τὰ τροπᾶια (Diod. 13.24.5-6).

¹⁰⁴ Aeneas claims that had Pallas been full-grown, Turnus would now be a tree-trunk (*tu quoque nunc stares immanis truncus in arvis*, *Aen.* 11.173). Mezentius impiously vows that the *tropaeum* clad in the spoils of Aeneas will be his son Lausus (10.774-76), rather than an offering to a god. Turnus claims to have dotted the countryside with *tropaea* (11.383-86). Serestus carries off the spoils of Haemon's son in order to make a *tropaeum* for Mars (10.541-42), which would presumably also be made from a tree. The Trojans collaborate in fashioning several *tropaea* for the funeral procession of Pallas (11.83-84).

¹⁰⁵ Flor. 3.2; cf. Strab. 4.1.11. Florus comments that early Romans did not make monuments on the battlefield, but mounted enemy *spolia* upon walls, as Aeneas does at 3.286-88.

¹⁰⁶ *haec arma exuviasque viri tua quercus habebit* (*Aen.* 10.423). Virgil is less concerned than Ennius with accurately representing Roman cult (Feeney, 1998, 141); a putative *Waffenbaum* sacred to a river god, like the veneration of Faunus by sailors, reflects his blending of cult practices.

built shortly after the fact.¹⁰⁷ Greek ones had been made from durable materials as early as the fifth century BC.¹⁰⁸ Most if not all of those seen in Rome, which could stand alone as monuments, be carried in procession, or decorate the tops of victory arches, were permanent replicas in metal or stone.¹⁰⁹ Historical references to the genuine *ad hoc* monument decked with enemy spoils, which we may call the *tropaeum armatum*, are very rare. By the late republic, the word *tropaeum* had expanded to mean any kind of victory monument or trophy; Cicero uses it metaphorically (e.g. *tropaeum necessitudinis*, *Verr.* 2.2.115). The term gained currency among Augustan poets, but they normally use it to refer to architectural monuments.¹¹⁰ The uses of the *tropaeum armatum* were primarily iconographic: it remained a private and public symbol of success from the third century BC onward.¹¹¹ Its symbolic resonance was often independent of any actual victory monument;¹¹² variants could even be employed to rouse shame rather than pride in Roman onlookers.¹¹³

¹⁰⁷ *Tropaea* were routine markers of victories (*totidemque tropaea / quot loca*, Manil. 4.622-23); they were set up e.g. by Sulla (Plut. *Sull.* 19; *De fort. Rom.* 3.18c-d; Paus. 9.40.7), Piso (Cic. *Pis.* 92), Pompey (Plin. *HN* 3.18), Julius Caesar (Dio 42.48.2) and Augustus (Dio 51.1). All of these were supported by earthwork or masonry and many, including those of Augustus, were in fact architectural monuments or shrines.

¹⁰⁸ Bronze (Plut. *Alc.* 29), marble (Paus. 1.33.2).

¹⁰⁹ Freestanding: known examples include those of Germanicus (*CIL* 16.32, 33), Nero (Tac. *Ann.* 15.18), and Marius (Plut. *Caes.* 6.1-2); these last, at least after Caesar restored them in 65 BC, were actually a sculptural group featuring images of Nikes carrying *tropaea armata*. In procession: Manilius knows of “*tropaea* wearing Mithridates’ face” (*Mithridateos vultus induta tropaea*, 5.510) made out of gold, probably relics of Pompey’s lavish third triumph in 61 BC; Ovid may have these in mind when he imagines golden *tropaea* in Germanicus’ triumph (*Pont.* 2.1.41-42); later he imagines *tropaea* accompanying prisoners of war (*stentque super victos trunca tropaea viros*, *Pont.* 3.4.104); later reliefs indeed often represent captives chained to them. Decorating victory arches: Plin. *Pan.* 59.2; Tac. *Ann.* 15.18; Suet. *Cl.* 1.3; Serv. *ad Aen.* 11.6.

¹¹⁰ Gow (1895).

¹¹¹ The *victoriatas*, a coin issued between the late third and late second centuries BC (see Crawford (2001) 44-168), always featured a Victory crowning a *tropaeum* on the reverse; Greek speakers called it the *tropaikon*. Both Sulla and Pompey had *tropaea* on their signet rings (Dio 42.18.3); one of Pompey’s coins (Crawford no. 426) features three of them, one for each triumph. The *tropaeum* reappeared on many later coin issues (see Crawford nos 281, 415, 427, 439, 452, 460, 468, 482, 503-06, 510, 519, 536. The *tropaeum* is often carried by Victoria, and less frequently by Mars, Minerva and Hercules). A gem representing Victory and trophy is mentioned at Suet. *Galb.* 10. See also Mackay (2000).

¹¹² A denarius of Sextus Pompey (Crawford 511) translates the *tropaeum* into a strange maritime version assembled from unreal objects: the top end is a trident, the bottom an anchor, the miniaturised rudder and prow of a ship are attached to the arms, and Scylla’s dog heads emerge from the waist.

¹¹³ The Lusitanian Viriathus set up *tropaea* dressed in Roman state robes and *fasces* (Flor. 1.33), and at the head of Julius Caesar’s funeral procession was a *tropaeum* decked in the clothes he was wearing when he died (Suet. *Jul.* 84).

Allusions to *tropaea armata* on the battlefield, which are always in the plural, do not connect them with oaks or with enemy generals as Virgil does. In visual sources they are clearly imagined as made from a smooth pole or post (*stipes*), which is in a sense “lopped” (*trunca*), but does not resemble a whole trimmed trunk (*truncus*).¹¹⁴ As an explicit precedent for later generals, Livy’s Romulus dedicates the spoils of the king of the Caeninenses on the Capitol “at an oak held sacred by the shepherds”,¹¹⁵ though he brings them upon a *ferculum* (probably a stretcher borne on the shoulder, as shown in a relief on the Arch of Titus). Marcellus’ *tropaeum* (made in imitation of Romulus’) consisted of a slender felled oak, dressed in his enemy’s armour and carried in procession to the temple of Jupiter Feretrius.¹¹⁶ This is as close as the *tropaeum* comes to a full tree in historical sources, but even here it was an *ad hoc* portable frame (the donor was able to carry this object, at least in theory, upon his own shoulder)¹¹⁷ and not a living tree. Tacitus refers to battlefield monuments made from enemy spoils, but their precise form is unclear. Drusus and Germanicus both built earthen mounds and heaped captured *arma* upon them “in the manner of a *tropaeum*”, although the second time Germanicus does this it is clearly a heap (*congeries*) of equipment, as often represented in reliefs (*e.g.* on the base of Trajan’s column), rather than anything anthropomorphic.¹¹⁸ The sole historical occasion on which *tropaea* are fashioned from living trees occurs in an anecdote about Caligula. After a feigned skirmish with some Germans, he and his companions cut the branches from some trees and decked them as *tropaea*, after which he invented a new military decoration.¹¹⁹ I would argue that the Virgilian portrayal of living *tropaea* was not inspired by historical reality, represented solely by Caligula; instead, this whimsical historical “reality” was itself inspired by the Virgilian portrayal.

However, the suspension of votive offerings from trees has been attested in various eras from antiquity to the present day, and (as shown by Dafni, 2002) in diverse regions

¹¹⁴ Cf. *spolia capta fixa in stipitibus* (Varro *Bimarcus* fr. 61 Bücheler).

¹¹⁵ *ad quercum pastoribus sacram* (Liv. 1.10).

¹¹⁶ Plut. *Marcell.* 8 (cf. *Romul.* 16).

¹¹⁷ In the *Forum Augusti*, the statue of Romulus bore the *tropaeum* of Acron in the same way that Aeneas’ statue bore Anchises (Ov. *Fast.* 5.565). A denarius of P. Cornelius Lentulus Marcellinus in 50 BC (Crawford no. 493/1) shows Marcellus holding out his *tropaeum* to Jupiter Feretrius.

¹¹⁸ Drusus: *Marcomannorum spoliis et insignibus quendam editum tumulum in tropaei modum excoluit* (Flor. 2.3); Germanicus: *in modum tropaeorum* (Tac. *Ann.* 2.18); *congeriem armorum* (22). Juvenal describes the battlefield *tropaeum* (10.33) as the pitiful fruits of the soldier’s labour, though this does not necessarily reflect contemporary reality. Picard (1957) sharply distinguishes the upright *tropaeum* from heaps or other arrangements of arms.

¹¹⁹ *truncatisque arboribus et in modum tropaeorum adornatis* (Suet. *Cal.* 45).

including Siberia, West Africa, Russia, Japan, Mexico and much of the Middle East. In Patagonia in 1843 Charles Darwin saw a tree growing on a hill in prominent isolation, which the locals considered sacred. Countless threads were tied onto it, either on their own or for suspending offerings of bread, meat and cloth.¹²⁰ There is some evidence for such treatment of sacred trees in ancient Greece, though the role of suspended votives in early cult is difficult to judge.¹²¹ In the *Odyssey*, Aegisthus gives thanks for his success both by burning offerings on altars and by “hanging up” gold and fine cloths. Unless this contradicts the well-known lack of temples elsewhere in Homer, the hanging was probably done in a grove.¹²² Herodotus says that when Xerxes encountered a plane-tree in Lydia that he considered especially beautiful, he not only adorned it with gold robes and ornaments but appointed a hereditary custodianship. In Apollonius, the Golden Fleece was hung upon a huge oak in a grove of Ares.¹²³ These Greek sources, though scant, imply a folkloric topos of splendid golden objects being hung on trees. It is tempting to see some such image behind Virgil’s golden bough.

The decoration of sacred trees was a historical reality in Rome, though not in military contexts, and probably underlies the many references to votives on trees in Latin poetry. The most famous grove, that of Diana at Aricia, contained *longas . . . saepes* that were covered in threads, as well as many votive tablets.¹²⁴ Ovid’s description of the imaginary ancient oak cut down by Erysichthon as clad in votive ribbons, tablets and garlands probably reflects Roman practice.¹²⁵ An imperial visitor to the grove at Aricia fed one particularly fine tree draughts of wine.¹²⁶ Such offerings seem to have been conventional but not obligatory. Probably the only exception is a tradition associated with the Vestal Virgins, whose ritual actions were strictly prescribed rather than voluntary. A very ancient lotus known as the *Capillata / Capillaris* (“Hairy Tree”) got its name because the Vestals hung their hair upon

¹²⁰ Suspended offerings were the main, but not the only, form of votive: drinks could be poured into a hole or cigar-smoke blown into the branches, and the bones of sacrificed horses lay all around (Darwin, 1913 [1860], 98).

¹²¹ One late source (Philostr. *Imag.* 2.33) explicitly says that the oracular oak at Dodona in Greece was dressed with garlands and sacred fillets, but this is of doubtful value.

¹²² *Od.* 3.273-74, with Dowden (2000) 115-16.

¹²³ *Hdt.* 7.31; *Ap. Rhod. Argon.* 4.123-66.

¹²⁴ *licia dependent longas velantia saepes* (*Ov. Fast.* 3.267). On votive *tabellae*, see n.134 (below). On the nature and importance of this cult site, see Green (2000, 2007).

¹²⁵ *vittae mediam memoresque tabellae / sartaque cingebant, voti argumenta potentum* (*Ov. Met.* 8.744-45).

¹²⁶ This was Nero’s stepfather Passienus Crispus, who loved the tree so much that he kissed it, hugged it, and gave it wine (Plin. *HN* 16.91). A liquid offering also seems to be meant at *Hor. C.* 3.22.5-8, where Horace promises to offer boar’s blood every year to Diana’s pine tree.

it.¹²⁷ The tying of ritual tokens normally worn on the body (*vittae, licia, capilli*) might suggest anthropomorphism, since the sacred tree is dressed or adorned.¹²⁸ Another tokenistic or symbolic form of suspended offering, which more explicitly evokes the ancient piety of a simpler past, is the spoils of the hunt.¹²⁹ This caught the imagination of Roman poets, who imagine hunters, especially in rural and primitive societies, as hanging pelts and antlers in temples or upon sacred trees.¹³⁰ Statius (*Theb.* 9.585-92) invents a famous *quercus* consecrated by Diana for worship, which was laden with hunting weapons and animal trophies. In pastoral poetry and art, suspended votives belonged to the picturesque piety of rural cult, as did the shade of dense trees.¹³¹ By choosing to portray the *tropaemum* as a form of tree-reverence, Virgil combined military triumphalism with much the same rustic and archaic qualities which he saw in grove-cult. This in turn helped to make the *Aeneid* an aetiology for Rome's virtuous character.

4. Faunus' Oleaster

The most important sacred tree in the *Aeneid*, and the most enigmatic object of tree-reverence, is the oleaster of Faunus which intrudes upon Aeneas' climactic duel with Turnus. The Trojans had destroyed it, but the remaining stump clings to Aeneas' hurled spear as Turnus prays it will. This would have cost Aeneas the duel, if an outraged Venus had not plucked the spear out again. This incident is significant for tree-reverence in the *Aeneid* for two reasons. One is the apparent conflict between native and Olympian supernatural powers; the other is the cult formerly paid to the oleaster.

The tree-stump episode is usually interpreted as dramatising the usurpation of the native Italian gods by the more powerful Olympian pantheon.¹³² More than two opponents are involved: Turnus prays not only to Faunus, but also to "the most excellent Earth" (*optima ... Terra*, 12.677-78), recalling Virgil's nationalist assertions in the *Georgics* that Italy's soil is the best. Furthermore, when Venus intervenes on behalf of her son, she does so out of

¹²⁷ *Capillata*: Plin. *HN* 16.85; *Capillaris*: Fest. 50.12 L.

¹²⁸ On the treatment of trees as images of gods, see Bötticher (1856) 101-06.

¹²⁹ It was customary to nail up stags' horns in temples of Diana (Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 4 = *Mor.* 264c); the one on the Aventine contained an ancient set of cow's horns instead (Liv. 1.45).

¹³⁰ *si qua tuis umquam pro me pater Hyrtacus aris / dona tulit, si qua ipse meis venatibus auxi / suspendive tholo aut sacra ad fastigia fixi* (*Aen.* 9.406-08); Statius likewise presumes that Moorish hunters would hang up the pelt of a lion either from a roof or in an ancient grove (*seu iam sub culmine fixus / excubat, antiquo seu pendet gloria luco*, *Theb.* 9.194-95).

¹³¹ In Theocritus, Spartan maidens promise to hang a garland of flowers and pour oil on a plane-tree inscribed "Worship me: I am Helen's tree" (σέβευ μ' Ἑλένας φυτόν εἰμι, *Id.* 18.43-48).

¹³² e.g. Putnam (1965) 89-90; Thomas (1988) 269-70; Maggiulli (1995) 135; Skinner (2007) 87-88; Fantham (2009) 61-62.

irritation because the Italian *nympha* Juturna has intervened on behalf of her brother (786-87). Thomas notes that Aeneas is only able to pluck his spear from the stump after initial resistance, as with the Golden Bough. The spear, as part of Vulcan's *arma*, is the stuff of epic, whereas Faunus' oleaster asserts Italian roots (We might even see them as replaying the defeat of native Saturnians by Ennian hexameters). Whereas Silvanus had provided a venue for Venus to help Aeneas spontaneously, Faunus presents an awkward and undignified obstruction, requiring Venus to help Aeneas overcome it. Yet once extracted, the spear which strikes Turnus a crippling blow is *ingens, arboreum* ("huge and tree-like", 888), as if Aeneas has now claimed the supernatural might of the sacred stump, just as Jupiter has promised that Aeneas' descendants will take on native religious traditions and bloodlines.

Virgil tells us that the felled oleaster had been paid cult by locals, but in an unexpected form. Sailors who escaped drowning would hang their clothes and other offerings upon it (*Aen.* 12.766-72):

*forte sacer Fauno foliis oleaster amaris
hic steterat, nautis olim venerabile lignum,
servati ex undis ubi figere dona solebant
Laurenti divo et votas suspendere vestis;
sed stirpem Teucrici nullo discrimine sacrum
sustulerant, puro ut possent concurrere campo.
hic hasta Aeneae stabat ...*

It would be interesting to know whether Virgil knew of the speech of Lysias in which the occupying Spartan army was blamed for the removal of a sacred olive-stump.¹³³ Yet the obvious question, which has plagued commentators, is why survivors of shipwreck at sea should hang offerings on a tree for Faunus, a god of the grove. Roman shipwreck survivors did commonly offer tokens of themselves in temples and shrines, including the clothes from their backs, but these were deposited in temples.¹³⁴ Servius *ad loc.* guesses

¹³³ Lys. 7.7. Virgil's Trojans are actually said to have "removed" the "base" or "root" (*stirpem* ... *abstulerant*, 770-71), like Lysias' Spartans, even though the *stirps* is present at line 781.

¹³⁴ On Roman shipwrecks, see Huxley (1952). Sailors offered their clothes (Hor. C. 1.5.13-16; Virg. *Aen.* 12.768-69), their hair (Petr. *Sat.* 103; Juv. 12.81-82), or votive paintings (*tabulae / tabellae pictae*) which probably depicted the shipwreck (Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.89; Juv. 12.27-28; the non-votive pictures often kept as begging aids (Phaedr. 4.22.24-25; Pers. 1.88-90; Juv. 14.301-02) certainly showed the survivor in his crisis. Votive paintings also commemorated survivors of grave illness (Tib. 1.3.27-28) or of childbirth (Ov. *Fast.* 3.268, where the *tabella* may also have been written texts), and later authors imagine painted memorials for other happy endings ([Virg.] *Catalepton* 14.5-6; Apul. *Met.* 6.29). The medium of the portable painting probably gained exultant overtones from being used for self-promotion in sacred spaces (e.g. Plin. *HN* 35.3-4, 52) and in the various forms of *pompa*.

that the sailors give votives to Faunus because they prayed to him, as their *deus patrius*, to bring them home. However, Faunus was never a civic deity and all other known offerings to him, including the sheep slaughtered by Latinus, were rustic. Dyson (2001) prefers to see the association of shipwreck with Faunus, who had a shrine on Tiber Island, as a token of Aeneas' eventual death by drowning in the river Numicus. This does not explain why Faunus is chosen as the deity of the tree-stump rather than, for example, Tiber or Numicius.

The offerings to the oleaster are enigmatic, since there is no nautical Faunus. On the dramaturgical level, nautical votives are attached to the tree because the whole battle between the Trojans and Italians in book 12 is set on the seashore near the Tiber estuary,¹³⁵ and we are thereby reminded that Aeneas' journey in the poem ends on the shore of Latium, just as it began on the shore of Libya. Although there has been no better answer to Servius' question, we may move beyond it onto a more symbolic level, in view of Virgil's keen interest in tree-reverence itself. Ferenczi has observed that Faunus' oleaster is introduced by a reworked line from the *Georgics*, and furthermore that it is almost the sole indication that Virgil's Latins knew of sailing, an activity sometimes considered post-lapsarian. (The native Italians may not inhabit the idyllic Golden Age of Saturnus, but they do share several features with it).¹³⁶ Ferenczi argues that the oleaster betokens the idyllic agrarian simplicity of Latinus' world, now perverted into the world of war. On this reading the Trojans, who are survivors of stormy seas, with grim irony destroy what they should have revered.¹³⁷ I agree that Virgil uses the oleaster as an anchor of ancient tranquillity amidst the new turbulence of international warfare (represented by the Trojan War, the conflict between Aeneas and the Latins, and finally between Aeneas and Turnus). Moreover, while Faunus and the sailors are incompatible, they share the same function of establishing religious continuities between the Italy of Aeneas and that of Augustus. In his equivalent of Homer's duel scene, Virgil transforms an ordinary wild fig tree into a sacred wild olive possessed by Faunus and Tellus. Somewhat arbitrarily, he recasts a form of votive offering well known in his own day (those of shipwreck survivors) to resemble tree-worship, just as he did with military votives in his adaptation

¹³⁵ There are seagulls overhead (*litoreas ... aves*, *Aen.* 12.248) and sand underfoot (*fulva ... harena*, 276; *spargit ... ungula rores / sanguineos mixtaque cruor calcatur harena*, 339-40; *fulva ... harena*, 741).

¹³⁶ See Moorton (1989).

¹³⁷ *forte sacer Fauno foliis oleaster amaris* (*Aen.* 12.766); cf. *infelix superat foliis oleaster amaris* (*Ge.* 3.314); Ferenczi (2000).

of the *tropaeum*. More fundamentally, Faunus' oleaster reinforces the myth of the cult of the living tree, which the Trojans disregard at their peril. Despite the disappearance of the actual tree, the root lives on, just as traces of tree-cult (according to Virgil) live on in modern Roman culture.

Tree-cult certainly lived on in Roman epic, since Virgil's successors enthusiastically take his cue in "naturalising" the equipment-laden *tropaeum* by identifying it with the cult of the living tree. Where it recurs in later poems, it is cast as deriving from the worship of a *quercus* oak dedicated to one of the gods. After Virgil, these *Waffenbäume* appear in Lucan, Statius and Claudian.¹³⁸ Virgil and Claudian probably mean felled *tropaea*, but Lucan and Statius definitely do not. Lucan compares Pompey to a tottering oak, clinging to life; its glory days are gone forever. But it remains an object of cult, bedecked with "the spoils of an ancient people and the sacred gifts of generals".¹³⁹ The spoils on the Pompey-oak make it a hybrid: on the one hand, it resembles the tree-trunk *tropaeum* erected on the battlefield; on the other, because it is ancient and still living, it is also an ancient cult-object, a monumental tree. Statius' Tydeus, on the battlefield itself, bedecks an ancient *quercus* growing on a hill with a quantity of his enemies' broken *arma*; when Claudian's Proserpina enters the grove containing the remains of the defeated Giants, every tree is a living *tropaeum* dressed in the panoply of a fallen monster.¹⁴⁰ Virgil and his successors connect the *tropaeum* with tree-worship in all the various ancient places and peoples they describe. Even though this was an antiquarian fantasy, divorced from historical Roman cult practice, it provided an evocative blend of military grandeur and rugged, primitive piety: the living heritage of the landscape literally covered in glory. As a consequence of Virgil's emphasis on tree-worship in his anthropology of early Rome, the *Waffenbaum* claimed a place both in Latin epic and in the Roman national myth.

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¹³⁸ Bötticher (1856) 71-76. At *Aen.* 10.423 Pallas promises to hang spoils on oak of Tiber; at *Luc.* 1.136-38 Pompey is described as an arms-hung oak; at *Stat. Theb.* 2.707-12 Tydeus hangs arms on an oak; at *Claud. In Rufin.* 1.338-39 Stilicho promises to dedicate a spoils-hung oak.

¹³⁹ *qualis frugifero quercus sublimis in agro / exuvias veteris populi sacrataque gestans / dona ducum* (*Luc.* 1.136-8); *sola ... colitur* (143).

¹⁴⁰ *Stat. Theb.* 2.704-12 ; *Claud. De Rapt.* 3.344-52.

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