

***Romani numen soli: Faunus in Ovid's Fasti* ***

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Of the mythological characters in Ovid's *Fasti*, there are four—Hercules, Ino, Saturn, and Faunus—who appear in stories set in Greece as well as ones located in the Roman world (i.e. either in early Rome itself or among one of the ancestral peoples of the Romans, such as Evander's Arcadian settlement). Ovid's treatment of these characters when they are in Greek settings is strikingly different from their representation in Roman environments. In Greek contexts they show few redeeming qualities—they are either villainous or buffoonish—but when they arrive in Rome or pre-Roman Italy these same figures are presented in a positive light, which reflects well on the city of Rome and its religious traditions. For example, Ovid retells the familiar Hesiodic tale about Saturn, in which he attempts to kill his own children by swallowing them (4.197-206). That episode takes place in Greece, but when Saturn arrives in Italy after being dethroned by Jupiter (3.796), he is treated as an honored exile by the Italians, and he and Janus oversee Italy's Golden Age (1.233-40): Italy becomes known as Saturnia (1.237) and Latium also receives its name from Saturn, at least according to one peculiar bit of Roman etymology (from *latente deo*, 1.238). Ino is also accused of being involved in a plot to kill children when she is in Greece: she concocts an elaborate scheme involving the destruction of the Theban grain supply and the subsequent starvation of the people of Thebes in order to trick her husband into killing his two children from a previous marriage (3.853-76). Toward the end of the poem, however, she arrives in Italy, where she is transformed into the goddess Mater Matuta and worshipped by the Italians (6.541-50), and we learn that she is actually innocent of these crimes (551-58). In Greece, Faunus is a lecherous

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minor deity who in his eagerness to rape the Lydian queen Omphale inadvertently molests Hercules instead (2.303-58), and in the same episode Ovid portrays Hercules himself as a farcical transvestite. But when these two characters arrive in Italy, the poet treats each of them with great respect. Faunus becomes a divine advisor to King Numa (3.285-328; 4.629-72), and Hercules, as a guest of Evander, establishes the Ara Maxima (1.581-82) and learns of his impending apotheosis (583-84). This article will examine Ovid's treatment of Faunus in both the Greek and Roman contexts of the *Fasti* and his evolution from a Greek lecher into a powerful deity fully worthy of Roman respect.

To appreciate fully Faunus' evolution, we need to examine briefly his treatment by Ovid's immediate predecessors.¹ Here, we shall deal only with Horace and Vergil: Tibullus does not mention him at all, nor does he appear in the poems of Propertius.² In Ovid, his name rarely appears outside the *Fasti*: twice in the *Metamorphoses* (6.329 and 13.750) and once in the *Heroides* (5.138). In addition to the three episodes from the *Fasti* discussed here, there are brief references to him at 2.193; 2.424; 3.84; 4.762; 5.99-101.

In the works of Horace and Vergil we find two distinct manifestations of Faunus. In one, Faunus is the Roman equivalent of the Greek god Pan; in the other, he is an early Italian king who ruled in Latium prior to the arrival of Aeneas.³ As Pan's counterpart, Faunus has a goatish appearance and is connected with rural areas, shepherds, and flocks. In his capacity as *ovium custos*, he makes several appearances in the *Odes* of Horace, where he is portrayed as the tutelary deity of both the Sabine farm and its gentleman farmer.⁴ C. 3.18 is a hymn to Faunus asking him to visit Horace's farm and to protect his flocks, and the poet concludes with a description of the annual December festival held (apparently) in honor of the god (9-16).⁵ C. 1.4 is set in spring, the time of year when the sacrifice of a lamb or kid to Faunus is most appropriate (11-12); in c. 1.17 we learn that Faunus often leaves Arcadia

¹For a more complete survey of Faunus in Latin literature and the Greek literature dealing with Rome, see Smits 5-45.

²Unless one reads *Faunus* for *fautor* at 4.2.34; see Richardson ad loc. on this textual problem.

³On the relationship of these two manifestations of Faunus to each other and his identification with Pan, see Bömer ad 2.271, Frazer ad 2.271, and Wissowa 1.1454-60.

⁴The beneficence of Faunus in the *Odes* has often been noted (e.g., Fraenkel 204-5; Nisbet and Hubbard ad 1.17.2), but it has not gone unchallenged; see Holleman 1972b on the menacing side of the Horatian Faunus.

⁵Horace's poem is the only evidence for this celebration, and it has been argued by Holleman 1972a: 492-94 that no such festival existed.

to visit Horace's farm, where he protects the flocks from heat and rain (3-4), poisonous snakes and wolves (8-9). Finally, in *c.* 2.17 Horace describes how Faunus once saved his life by averting a falling tree just as it was about to strike him (27-30); we should not take the poet's devotion to Faunus too seriously here, however, since elsewhere he attributes his rescue to the Camenae (*c.* 3.4.27) and to Liber (*c.* 3.8.6-8).

Horace envisions Faunus as a single god who acts as protector of farm and farmer, but Vergil follows those writers of the late Republic who preferred to think of this rustic Pan-like divinity as a multiple entity—*fauni* rather than Faunus. Republican writers generally seem to have envisioned *fauni* as gods of the wild countryside rather than of domesticated areas: people claimed that they could hear the voices of fauns echoing from the woods at night (Lucr. 4.581-83) and that these sounds were often sufficient evidence to convince them of the existence of gods (Cic. *N.D.* 2.6). Varro, citing Ennius, also places the fauns in the woods, but he credits them with the gift of prophecy (*L.* 7.36). Vergil throughout his poetry alludes to the Republican *fauni* rather than the Horatian Faunus in rustic contexts. Although Vergil does connect fauns with agriculture on one occasion—in the invocation at the beginning of the *Georgics* he calls them *agrestum praesentia numina* (1.10)—they are otherwise associated with undomesticated rural areas in his poetry. In the very next line of the *Georgics*, in fact, Vergil describes fauns dancing with Dryads, and in the *Eclogues* they are depicted in much the same way: as Silenus sings a song for Chromis, Mnasyllus, and Aegle, fauns begin to dance with wild animals (6.27-28). Furthermore, Vergil tells us in the *Aeneid*, fauns once lived on the very spot where Evander built his settlement in Italy (8.314), but with the arrival of human settlers, they apparently have disappeared.

Although Vergil's *fauni* are rustic divinities, his Faunus is not. For Vergil in the *Aeneid*, Faunus is an early Italian king who obtained oracular powers upon his death.⁶ He was the son of Picus, the grandson of Saturn, and the father of King Latinus (*A.* 7.45-49). It is to this heroic Faunus that King Latinus turns when strange events begin to occur in Latium. After consulting seers about the mysterious swarm of bees in the laurel tree and Lavinia's burning hair (7.59-77), Latinus goes to a grove where Faunus appears to him in his sleep and informs him that these phenomena foretell the arrival of Aeneas into his kingdom (7.81-101). Later in the poem, it becomes apparent that Faunus

⁶Babcock 15 argues that Horace's Faunus exhibits oracular powers as well; also Holleman 1972a: 494.

not only gives advice but is also capable of active intervention. During the fighting in Book 12 the spear of Aeneas becomes stuck in the stump of the tree (772-73), and while Aeneas tries to pull it out, Turnus prays to Faunus for protection, reminding him that he has always held him in honor (778). For this reason, presumably, and because the stump was all that remained of a tree sacred to Faunus which had been cut down by the Trojans (766-71), his prayers are answered and Aeneas is unable to extract his spear from the tree stump (781-83)—at least until Venus overrules Faunus and loosens the spear (786-87). Nowhere in the *Aeneid*, however, does Vergil hint that there is any connection between this native Italian hero and the Greek god Pan; in fact, he treats Pan as an entirely separate figure, a god who had been brought to Italy by the Arcadians (8.344). The poet makes a similar distinction at the beginning of the *Georgics*, where he distinguishes Pan (1.17) from the *fauni* (10-11).

Vergil and Horace thus keep the two traditions of Faunus separate. For Vergil, Faunus is a native Italian king, now deceased, who could be called upon to provide divine aid in the form of either advice or active intervention. Horace's Faunus, on the other hand, although never described in caprine terms, is to be identified with Pan since he is surrounded by bucolic motifs and comes from Arcadia (c. 1.17.2). His personality also has a playful side, since at one point Horace describes him as *Nympharum fugientum amator* (c. 3.18.1).

In the *Fasti* Ovid conflates the rustic Horatian Faunus and the oracular Faunus of *Aeneid* 7 into a single character, and he does this in such a way that as we read the *Fasti* we see him evolve from the mere *Nympharum amator* of Greece into a staid Roman deity who acts as advisor to King Numa in the early days of Rome's history. Yet this evolution pertains only to the god's personality; he retains all his goatish physical characteristics. At the beginning of his description of the Lupercalia, for example, Ovid refers to the festival as *Fauni sacra bicornis* (2.268). Elsewhere in the same book we find the contemporaries of Romulus and Remus making a sacrifice to *cornipedi Fauno* (2.361), and when we see Faunus again later in the poem, as Numa's advisor, he has become a much more serious god, but still retains the appearance of Pan, most notably his horns (3.312) and hooves (4.663).

The first appearance of Faunus in the *Fasti* is in connection with the Lupercalia (2.303-58).⁷ Much of the poet's discussion of this religious celebration centers on the question of why the Luperci, the priests of the festival, run naked through Rome each year on February 15. Ovid offers a choice of

⁷On the Lupercalia and its significance, see Fauth 132-41; Bömer and Frazer *ad* 2.267.

four aetiologies for the nudity of the Luperci, three of them Greek and one Roman. He quickly passes over the first two Greek explanations: Faunus (the Lupercalia's honoree) wears no clothes, and his priests follow suit since clothing hampers their running (2.287-88); the Luperci are nude in honor of the Arcadians, who were the first to worship Faunus and who at one time wore no clothes (289-302). The poet then suggests a third Greek possibility: Faunus does not like clothing since he was once deceived by it when he tried to rape the Lydian queen Omphale. The subsequent account of Faunus' encounter with Hercules and Omphale is exactly the sort of Greek (as opposed to Roman) story that Ovid likes to relate in the *Fasti*. It is a funny story, he assures us (*fabula plena ioci*, 2.304), and its purpose is both to amuse the reader⁸ and to provide a frivolous Greek tale which will contrast nicely with the patriotic legend about Romulus and Remus and the origins of the Lupercalia which immediately follows.

As Ovid tells the tale,⁹ Hercules and Omphale are on their way to celebrate the festival of Bacchus when Faunus sees the couple from afar and immediately falls in love with the Lydian queen as she moves along, shaded by the parasol which Hercules is carrying (2.309-12). The short farewell speech which Faunus gives to the mountain nymphs who have been his lovers is our first indication that he is to be a comic character here (307-8):¹⁰

vidit et incaluit, 'montana' que 'numina,' dixit
'nil mihi vobiscum est: hic meus ardor erit.'

He saw and he grew hot and he said, "Farewell, mountain goddesses,
I'll have no more to do with you; this one will be the object of my
passion."

By bidding farewell to his *montana numina* before running off to Omphale, Faunus burns his amatory bridges behind himself. That he is so sure of his chances for success with his new love leaves the reader with little doubt that his

⁸On the humor found throughout this episode, see Frécaut 290-92.

⁹Faunus' misadventure with Hercules may be one which Ovid invented himself—at least there is no mention of the confrontation in other ancient accounts of Hercules' enslavement to Omphale (e.g., Sophocles, *Tr.* 248-60; Apollod. 2.6.3; D.S. 4.31.5-8). Fantham 192-201 discusses possible sources of inspiration for the episode. See also Littlewood, to whom my own observations on this section of Ovid's poem owe much.

¹⁰All quotations from the *Fasti* are taken from Alton, Wormell, and Courtney's Teubner edition.

wooing of Omphale will end in disaster, especially when one considers that her protector is Hercules.

Faunus follows Hercules and Omphale to the cave in which they intend to spend the night. Inside, the Greek hero and Lydian queen share a meal and exchange clothes, a trade which Ovid describes in some detail: Hercules goes to bed wearing her tunics, girdle, bracelets, and shoes (317-24) while she is dressed in his lion skin and even takes his club and arrows with her (325-26). They are sound asleep in separate beds—sexual abstinence is required of the worshippers of Bacchus before his festival (329-30)—when Faunus enters the cave and begins to grope about in the dark in search of Omphale (335-38):

intrat et huc illuc temerarius errat adulter,
 et praefert cautas subsequiturque manus.
 venerat ad strati captata cubilia lecti,
 et felix prima sorte futurus erat.

The reckless adulterer entered and wandered back and forth, and he held out his hands and groped about cautiously. He came to where the beds had been placed, and on his first try he found himself on the brink of happiness.

By this point in the episode, the reader has guessed that in the dark Faunus will mistake Hercules for Omphale since he is wearing her clothes, but Ovid heightens the comic tension by stretching out his description of Faunus' search (cf. Fantham 195). As he feels his way about the cave he finds his Omphale, but one touch of the queen's Herculean pajamas convinces Faunus that he has made a mistake, and he retreats (339-42):

ut tetigit fulvi saetis hirsuta leonis
 vellera, pertimuit sustinuitque manum,
 attonitusque metu rediit, ut saepe viator
 turbatum viso rettulit angue pedem.

When he touched the tawny hide of the lion with its shaggy bristles, he became very frightened and pulled back his hand. Stunned, he withdrew in fright just as a traveler often does, troubled by the sight of a snake.

Here, Ovid borrows the simile, first found in Homer (*Il.* 3.33-35), of the startled traveler who pulls his foot back after nearly stepping on a snake. In the *Aeneid*, Vergil describes how the Greek Androgeos encounters a band of

Trojans disguised as Greeks during the sack of Troy. After calling out to them, he realizes his mistake, and Vergil likens his reaction to that of a traveler who comes upon a snake (2.379-81):

improvisum aspris veluti qui sentibus anguem
pressit humi nitens trepidusque repente refugit
attollentem iras et caerulea colla tumentem.

Just as someone does who while stamping along tramples on a snake unexpectedly in thorny brambles, and frightened, he recoils suddenly from it as it rears in anger and swells its greenish-blue neck.

Although Ovid does not imitate Vergil's language here, Faunus' situation is very much a parody of the circumstances of Androgeos. Androgeos is fighting a war and, as Littlewood notes (1067) so is Faunus in his own way (*militat omnis amans*), and both are deceived by their enemy's disguises.¹¹

At the climax of the passage in question Ovid fully exploits the comic possibilities of Faunus' misidentification of Hercules by graphically describing his not terribly subtle seduction techniques (2.343-46):

inde tori qui iunctus erat velamina tangit
mollia, mendaci decipiturque nota.
ascendit spondaque sibi propiore recumbit,
et tumidum cornu durius inguen erat.

Next, he touched the soft covers of the adjacent bed, and he was deceived by its misleading texture. He climbed up and lay down on the bed which was nearer to him, and his swollen prick was harder than horn.

Hercules, upon awakening, does not mistake the amorous advances of Faunus for those of Omphale. He hurls the god out of bed with such force that Faunus can barely get up off the ground. Torches are lit, and Hercules, Omphale, and their attendants share a good laugh at Faunus' expense (349-56).

Ovid has succeeded completely in making Faunus a comic character. The episode begins with Faunus' boast that he will make Omphale *meus ardor* (308) and ends not only with his failure but with his humiliation as well. The poet does not connect the god with Rome at all in the Omphale episode and so is

¹¹Ovid's parody of the Androgeos episode is further discussed by Frécaut 66-67.

free to treat him in a comic fashion. In a context that is entirely Greek, Ovid is able to tell a ribald story about a Roman god, which might ordinarily be out of place in a poem dealing with Roman religion. As we shall see below, Ovid treats Faunus very differently in the context of early Roman history.

Before discussing Ovid's Roman stories about Faunus, however, it is worth examining his fourth aetiological suggestion for the nudity of the Luperci, which immediately follows the Omphale episode and which provides a Roman explanation for the custom (359-80). Here, Ovid recounts a tale involving Romulus and Remus, which goes back to at least the second century. (Plutarch *Rom.* 21.7 tells much the same story, citing Gaius Acilius as his source). The twin brothers and some of the other young men of Latium are exercising on the day that a she-goat has been sacrificed to Faunus, and since the youths are exercising, they are naked. When a shepherd calls out to them that Roman flocks are being stolen, the twins and their friends separate into two groups and pursue the robbers, but they do not bother to dress first since to do so would give the thieves more time to escape. It is Remus who succeeds in recovering the herds, and upon his return he and his companions, the Fabii, feast on the meat of the sacrificed goat while Romulus and the Quintilii are still out searching the surrounding countryside. When Romulus finally returns, he is disappointed that he and his companions have failed, but he laughs good-naturedly at his brother's success. From this episode Ovid draws the conclusion that the Luperci of his day still run naked in order to commemorate this event from early Roman history (379-80):

forma manet facti: posito velamine currunt,
et memorem famam quod bene cessit habet.

The renown of this event lingers; they run with their clothes cast aside,
and a day which turned out well has continued fame.

Ovid's Roman legend provides a pronounced contrast to the preceding Greek myth, and there can be little doubt that this contrast is deliberate. The poet accounts for the nudity of the Luperci with both a licentious Greek myth and a patriotic Roman legend. Which of the two would he have us believe?¹² It

¹²Harries' argument that the Omphale and the Romulus and Remus aetiologies are not mutually exclusive but complementary remains unconvincing (1989: 171). I would argue that Ovid wants to draw a sharp contrast between Greek and Roman here rather than use them in "collaborative and mutually supportive" ways. The first two Greek aetiologies (see above, p.

has been stated a number of times in recent years that although Ovid offers three Greek aetiologies and one Roman one for the Lupercalia, he does not assert that any one of the suggestions is preferable to the others, either because he thinks it nearly impossible to make an intelligent choice when so many options are available (Martin 266) or because he wishes to imply that there is a certain equality between Greek and Roman aetiologies (Harries 1989: 171) or because he wishes to maintain the persona that he's adopted in the *Fasti*, that of an *amateur* antiquarian (Miller 1992: 22).¹³ Although Ovid does not explicitly state that he prefers any of these possibilities, there are in fact some indications in the poem that he wishes the reader to conclude that the Romulus and Remus episode is the correct explanation for the custom of the Luperci's nudity. The very fact that the myth about Romulus and Remus is told last is one indication that it is the one Ovid expects us to believe. But beyond this there are other, more important reasons to believe that Ovid considers the Roman legend to be the true story about the origin of the nudity of the Luperci. First of all, he begins it by invoking his Muse (359-60), which adds a certain legitimacy to whatever may follow:¹⁴

adde peregrinis causas, mea Musa, Latinas,
inque suo noster pulvere currat equus.

Add to my foreign explanations, my Muse, some Latin ones, and let my horse run in his own dust.

Carole Newlands (45) notes that the Muses are not always very dependable guides in the *Fasti*, and it is true that they disagree with each other regarding the origin of the name of the month of May at the beginning of Book 5 (1-110). But in the passage under consideration here, Ovid invokes a single Muse in traditional fashion; there seems to be no reason to consider divine inspiration unreliable at this point in the poem. In fact, Ovid often portrays the Muses as reliable sources of information in the *Fasti*. For instance, when the mystified poet confesses that he is unable to find the day of sowing (*dies*

203) are treated in such a cursory fashion that we need not consider the possibility that Ovid favors either of them as the source of the Luperci's nudity.

¹³Miller uses Ovid's amateur status as a starting point and from there discusses several reasons for Ovid's apparent inability to make decisions (23-28). He demonstrates that there is no single reason for Ovid's hesitation in picking a particular *actio* when several are available.

¹⁴Ovid uses the Muses in a variety of ways in the *Fasti*. See Miller 1983: 179-84 and Harries 1989: 171-73.

Sementiva) on the calendar (1.657-58), his Muse tells him that this particular day is proclaimed annually. A far more impressive example of the vast range of a Muse's knowledge is found in Book 4, where Ovid discusses the customs surrounding the worship of the Magna Mater at Rome (179-372). When Ovid asks Cybele for someone whom he can question about the religious customs which surround her, the goddess sends her granddaughter, the Muse Erato, who proceeds to answer a number of questions about the Magna Mater in detail: why she likes so much noise at her festival (197-214), why her priests castrate themselves (223-44), how the Romans came to worship her (4.249-348), and several other questions as well. Again, on the final day of the *Fasti*, June 30, Ovid calls upon the Muses for information about the temple of *Hercules Musarum* and is answered this time by Clio, who is portrayed as being quite knowledgeable on the subject (6.801-10). Admittedly, she does appear to misunderstand Ovid's question about who founded the temple for Hercules and the Muses: she talks about L. Marcius Philippus (the restorer of the temple) rather than about M. Fulvius Nobilior (its founder). This should not be taken as a mistake on the part of Clio, however, but rather as a bit of Ovidian flattery since Marcia, the daughter of Marcius Philippus, was married to Ovid's friend P. Fabius Maximus. It is often assumed that these final lines were written when Ovid was in exile and that Ovid must have hoped that a little flattery might induce Fabius to work for Ovid's recall to Rome (Fantham 214-15; Lefèvre 154-56; Frazer *ad* 6.801). Under such circumstances, we can hardly fault Clio if her answer does not fit Ovid's question perfectly.

A final reason for preferring Ovid's Roman aetiology is that unlike his Greek tales, it accounts not only for the nudity of the Luperci but for another feature of the Lupercalia as well: it explains the origin of the two colleges of the Luperci, the Quinctiales and the Fabiani, which were created to commemorate the companions of Romulus and Remus, the Quintilii and the Fabii.¹⁵ The position of the Romulus and Remus episode in relation to the Faunus story, the invocation of the Muse at its beginning, and its explanation of the origin of the two priestly colleges would suggest that it is to be taken as the true aetiology for the nudity of the Luperci.¹⁶ In a poem about the Roman religious

¹⁵One might go a bit further and argue that Romulus' laughter at his brother's success and his own failure is to be taken as the origin of the ritual laughter of the Luperci during the Lupercalia; Le Bonniec (*ad* 2.377) notes this possibility but rejects it. For a fuller discussion of the relationship between Ovid's four aetiologies and the actual practices of the Lupercalia, see Porte 118-19.

¹⁶Fantham, on the other hand, suggests that the Romulus and Remus episode was an afterthought, added by Ovid after he went into exile to please the Fabii (190 n. 19), but there

year, Roman explanations of religious events are more suitable than Greek ones even if they happen to be less entertaining.

Faunus reappears in Book 3 of the *Fasti* where he helps King Numa summon Jupiter to earth (285-328), a tale which Ovid uses to explain the origins of the Salii and why they sing about Mamurius (259-60).¹⁷ During Numa's reign, Ovid tells us,¹⁸ the lightning and thunder of Jupiter were frightening both the king and his subjects (no explanation for these atmospheric disturbances is given). Egeria, the wife of Numa and one of the Camenae, suggests to her husband that if he can capture Faunus and Picus they will be able to explain how to expiate the thunderbolts. She tells Numa of a spring in a grove near the Aventine, to which the two gods are accustomed to come for water. Numa goes to the spring, sacrifices a sheep, and leaves bowls of wine nearby. When Faunus and Picus arrive, they see the wine, drink it, and fall asleep. Numa then comes out of hiding and binds both of them in chains. When they awaken, he demands their help in putting an end to the lightning storms. Faunus and Picus tell Numa that only Jupiter can grant such a request, but they swear by the river Styx that if he releases them they will call the king of the gods down to earth. Numa frees Faunus and Picus, and by some mysterious process which Ovid declines to describe (*scire nefas homini*, 325), Jupiter is summoned from heaven. At this point Faunus and Picus disappear from the story, and Ovid goes on to tell how Numa deceives Jupiter into stopping the thunderbolts and how the god pledges to the king that someday Rome will sit at the head of a great empire (329-92).

In this tale Faunus is to be identified with Pan, just as he is in the story about Omphale; the poet's reference to the god's horns make that clear enough (*sic quatiens cornua Faunus*, 3.312), but he downplays this identification. Instead of the Greek lecher whom we saw in the earlier story, the Faunus of Book 3 is a Roman god who is concerned with maintaining divine order. In the Omphale episode Faunus is a minor deity who does not know his place. He belongs in the wilds of Mount Tmolus cavorting with the nymphs there, but he aspires to make love to the queen of Lydia, and he believes that he will be able

seems to be little reason for dating this section of the poem later than the rest of the second book. See Harries 1991 on the close association of the Fabii with a number of the events described in Book 2.

¹⁷On the religious practices associated with the Salii, see Bömer and Frazer *ad* 3.259.

¹⁸Ovid is the earliest extant source for this story; it is also found in Plutarch (*Num.* 15.3-4) and in Arnobius (*Adv. nat.* 5.1), who cites Valerius Antias as his source. Ovid does not explain why Faunus has left Greece to come to Italy, but he does state later that it was Evander who introduced the worship of the god there (5.97-100).

to get the better of Hercules in the process. He succeeds at neither, and because he tries to remove himself from where he belongs, he ends up both hurt and humiliated.

The Faunus whom Numa encounters is a very different sort of god. First of all, he is Roman, not Greek, and when Ovid introduces Faunus and Picus in this section of the *Fasti*, he stresses their *romanitas*. Egeria, herself a Roman goddess, when telling her husband that Faunus and Picus are the gods who can help him, emphasizes this trait (291-92):

sed poterunt ritum Picus Faunusque piandi
tradere, Romani numen utrumque soli.

But Faunus and Picus will be able to explain the rite of expiation; each of them is a god of the Roman soil.¹⁹

Since he is Roman and not Greek, this Faunus is a much more honorable character than his debauched counterpart of Book 2. It is true that Faunus and Picus get drunk here, but Ovid says nothing to make us think that intoxication is their normal state.

Once Faunus and Picus have been captured and find that they are unable to escape, they prove willing enough to cooperate with Numa. Here Ovid presents Faunus as a god who knows that he is a minor divinity, and as such he is not eager to transgress the divine bounds by which he is held. When Numa asks him how to expiate the thunderbolts of Jupiter, Faunus makes this modest reply (3.313-16):

‘magna petis, nec quae monitu tibi discere nostro
fas sit: habent fines numina nostra suos.
di sumus agrestes et qui dominemur in altis
montibus; arbitrium est in sua tecta Iovi.’

¹⁹It is a bit unusual that Ovid emphasizes the *romanitas* of Faunus and Picus in this passage since in a number of places in the poem he stresses that he is writing about *Latin* religious traditions (cf. 1.1; 2.270; 2.359; 3.177) although he occasionally does maintain that his theme is Roman (3.75; 6.21). Regarding Faunus in particular, Ovid states that he is Arcadian (2.271-72; 3.84) and that his worship was brought to Italy by Evander long before the founding of Rome (5.99-100). Furthermore, Ovid was certainly familiar with the tradition found in the *Aeneid* (7.45-49) that both Faunus and Picus were Latin rather than Roman. In fairness to the poet, however, there has been some recent discussion of seeming contradictions in the *Aeneid* regarding the ancestors of King Latinus; see Moorton for a history of the problem.

"You are seeking great things, and not the kind of things which would be right for you to learn through our instruction. Our divine power has its limits. We are rustic gods, the sort who have sovereignty in the high mountains. Jupiter has authority in his own house."

This Faunus knows his place in the divine hierarchy. Whereas Ovid's Greek Faunus does not hesitate to step over *finēs suos*, the Faunus of the *solum Romanum* is anxious to remain within his. By telling Numa that he is seeking great things Faunus implies that although he is a god, he is incapable of granting the king's request. He emphasizes that there are boundaries over which he must not step and that he and Picus are merely rustic gods who have little power outside the high mountains. He refers the entire matter to Jupiter.

In these two stories, Ovid creates protagonists for Faunus who are human parallels to the god. In the Omphale episode, Faunus is not the only comic character; Hercules himself is farcical. Carrying a parasol for Omphale, dressing in her clothing, and being subjected to the sexual advances of Faunus all combine to make the Greek hero the object of the reader's mirth. Numa is a character of an entirely different sort. Immediately preceding the account of his capture of Faunus and Picus, Ovid gives a brief description of the king and his reign (3.277-84). In the early days of Rome, the poet tells us, the Romans had been too quick to settle their differences with arms; it was Numa who took Romulus' uncouth band of men and taught them respect for the law, both human and divine (277-78):

principio nimium promptos ad bella Quirites
molliri placuit iure deumque metu.

It seemed a good idea to tame the Romans, who were initially too prone to war, through law and by instilling a fear of the gods.

Then Ovid goes on to describe how Numa changed his subjects into the sort of citizens which later Romans admired (279-84):

inde datae leges, ne firmior omnia posset,
coeptaque sunt pure tradita sacra coli.
exuitur feritas, armisque potentius aequum est,
et cum cive pudet conseruisse manus,
atque aliquis, modo trux, visa iam vertitur ara
vinaque dat tepidis farraque salsa focis.

Thereafter laws were given so that the stronger man would not have power over all things, and the sacred rites which had been handed down began to be kept devoutly. Roughness was cast aside, and right was considered more important than might. To fight with another citizen became shameful. And now someone who until recently was savage, upon seeing an altar, changed and placed wine and salted spelt on warm hearths.

Just as Hercules and Faunus are similarly treated in the Greek story, Numa and Faunus are analogous to one another in the Roman one. Both display those exemplary traits which Augustan Romans saw, or thought they saw, in their early Republican ancestors. Both Numa (*datae leges*, 3.279) and Faunus (*nec quae monitu tibi discere nostro / fas sit*, 3.313-14) show concern for the law. Numa reveres the Roman gods, and in the same way Faunus respects those gods who are more powerful than he is. In Ovid's Greek myth, Faunus is a combination of frivolity and lechery. In this Roman tale, the same character exhibits none of his Greek attributes, nor does the poet hint at them; instead, we find a Faunus full of Roman virtue.

Ovid's third and final story regarding Faunus is told to explain the Fordicidia, a fertility rite which took place on April 15 each year (4.629-72).²⁰ After telling us that on this day at dawn a pregnant cow was sacrificed by the *pontifices* (4.629-30), Ovid goes on to explain the origin of the festival (641-72). During the reign of Numa there was a famine, and the livestock were not giving birth to offspring. Numa goes to a sacred grove where Faunus was accustomed to give advice, and he sacrifices two sheep there, one to Faunus and the other to Somnus. After skinning the sheep, he puts their fleeces on the ground, lies down on them, and goes to sleep. Soon Faunus appears to the sleeping king and advises him to sacrifice two cattle to the goddess Tellus, but he adds cryptically that it must be only one cow which gives up the two lives (*det sacris animas una iuvenca duas*, 666). Numa does not understand the oracle and consults his wife, Egeria, who is able to reveal Faunus' meaning: a pregnant cow is to be sacrificed. Numa obeys the god's instructions, and fertility returns to both crops and animals.

Ovid's story of how Faunus helps Numa end the famine is not found elsewhere in Latin literature, although it is certainly inspired by Latinus' encounter with Faunus in the *Aeneid* (7.81-106; cf. Porte 161-62). In his account of the origins of the Fordicidia, Ovid removes Faunus as far possible

²⁰On the significance of the Fordicidia, see Bömer and Frazer *ad* 4.630.

from the Greek traditions of Pan, although he makes it clear that he still considers Faunus and Pan to be one and the same: when Numa decides that he must do something to stop the famine, Ovid tells us that he goes to the grove of the Maenalian (i.e. Arcadian) god (4.650), and he also describes how Faunus places his hoof on the fleeces upon which Numa is sleeping (663-64):

Faunus adest, oviumque premens pede vellera duro
edidit a dextro talia verba toro.

Faunus was present, and stepping on the sheepskins with his hard foot
he spoke as follows on right side of the bed.

Nonetheless, Ovid here presents a Faunus even more dignified (i.e. more Roman) than the one in the third book of the poem. In Book 3 the god is portrayed as being both drunk (albeit innocently) and overcome by a mere mortal. In the fourth book of the *Fasti* he is a proper Roman god. It is not Numa's deceit which brings Faunus to the grove but his scrupulous religious conduct: the passage is full of allusions to Roman religious practice. Here again, as in the previous book, the action takes place in a sacred grove, and Ovid makes it clear that this is a holy spot (649-50):

silva vetus nullaue diu violata securi
stabat, Maenalio sacra relictæ deo.

There was an old wood which for a long time had been untouched by the
ax but was left sacred to the Maenalian god [i.e. Faunus].

It is the same sort of grove into which Numa went when he wanted to expiate the lightning (3.295-96):

lucus Aventino suberat niger ilicis umbra,
quo posses viso dicere 'numen inest.'

At the foot of the Aventine was a grove dark from the shade of the ilex;
upon seeing it, you might say, "There is divine power in this place."

But from these similar beginnings, the two stories go their separate ways. In the third book, Numa's cleverness (or actually Egeria's) allows him to meet with Faunus; in Book 4 it is the king's observance of religious ritual which draws the god to the grove. After explaining how Numa has sacrificed two

sheep and has placed their fleeces on the ground, Ovid describes the religious restrictions which Numa has followed (4.655-60):

bis caput intonsum fontana spargitur unda,
 bis sua faginea tempora fronde premit.
 usus abest Veneris, nec fas animalia mensis
 ponere, nec digitis anulus ullus inest;
 veste rudi tectus supra nova vellera corpus
 ponit, adorato per sua verba deo.

His unshorn head was twice sprinkled with spring water, and twice he placed sprigs of beech upon his temples. He refrained from love-making, nor did he eat meat, and there was no ring on his fingers. Covered in rude clothing, he lay his body down on new sheepskins after he had prayed to the god in his own words.

Numa's head is unshorn (655), and he has adorned it with a crown of beech leaves (656); he has abstained from sex and from eating meat (657); he wears no rings upon his fingers (658) and only the simplest of clothes (659); instead of tricking the god he prays to him properly (660). This entire passage presents a religious picture. There is none of the good-natured humor that is found in the story of the thunderbolts. In that episode not only does Numa fool Faunus and Picus, but he even succeeds in deceiving Jupiter himself. When Jupiter is summoned to earth, thanks to the information which Numa has received from the two rustic deities, it is his intention to extract a promise of human sacrifice from Numa. Several times Jupiter tries to make this clear to Numa, but each time the Roman king cleverly foils him (3.339-42): when Jupiter tells him to cut off someone's head, Numa agrees to cut off an onion's head; when Jupiter explains that he means a man's head, Numa offers to sacrifice a man's hair; Jupiter then tries to explain that he means the life of a man, but Numa interrupts and agrees to the life of a fish. Jupiter laughs good-naturedly and agrees to Numa's plans of sacrifice and even tells the king that on the next day he will give to the Romans a pledge of empire (345-46). Throughout this entire episode, Numa, although he is not really disrespectful of the gods, is able to get the better of them. In the story of the famine, however, there is no hint of trickery on Numa's part, and Faunus is presented as a powerful god. Anyone who wants to summon Faunus must follow prescribed religious acts; tricks will not suffice.

To summarize briefly, then, in the *Fasti* Faunus evolves from a buffoonish Greek deity whose divinity is incidental into a powerful Roman god. In the story of Omphale and Hercules, which takes place in a Greek setting, Faunus is strictly comic. He is lecherous and foolish, and there is no indication that he has any religious significance. But in the two legends which take place in Italy, Faunus is quite a different character. In the story of the thunderbolts he has undergone a considerable transformation, although it has not yet been completed. Ovid avoids taking advantage of the comic possibilities of that story; certainly the fact that Faunus and Picus become drunk might have allowed the poet to add some humor to the episode, but he forebears. The defeats of Faunus by Hercules earlier and here at the hands of Numa parallel each other, but in the former instance there is ample humor while in the latter there is none. In this encounter with Numa, Faunus knows his place. He may be a god, but he is not a very powerful one, and he does not try to struggle against the Roman king.

In Ovid's third story, Faunus has been transformed into a truly Roman god, one who responds to those who follow prescribed religious actions to the letter. Here Faunus is not the weakling that he has been up to this point. He appears to Numa of his own volition, and he is able to act in his own right in stopping the famine rather than merely telling the king with what god he should be dealing. Faunus may have been a foolish Greek god at one time, but once he arrives in Italy he evolves from his low state to a position of true power and beneficence.

In his survey of Ovid and Ovidian scholarship, John Barsby suggests that "the first obvious question [for anyone concerned with the literary aspects of the *Fasti*] is how far the sceptic of *Ars* 1.637 has altered his stance in an ostensibly serious work...on Roman religion" (25, cf. Mack 31-32). A serious poem on Roman religion is not what a reader coming to the *Fasti* from Ovid's erotic poetry or the *Metamorphoses* would necessarily expect. The poet's other didactic works are so light-hearted (the *Ars amatoria* and the *Remedia amoris*) or deal with such inconsequential subjects (*Medicamina faciei femineae*) that it can be difficult imagining his treating religion in a serious fashion. I would suggest, however, that the *Fasti* is meant to be taken as a bona fide didactic work (which is not to say that it doesn't have its lighter moments) and that the transformation of Faunus from an ineffectual Greek god into a powerful Roman one is evidence for this. As noted above (p. 199), we also find this same type of transformation in the cases of Hercules, Ino, and Saturn. Hercules is comic in his encounter with Faunus in the Omphale episode, but he becomes

truly heroic when he visits Evander's settlement in Italy, where he kills Cacus (1.543-84) and rescues Ino from a band of Maenads (6.519-22). Saturn, after swallowing his own children in Greece (4.199-200), comes to Italy, where he is honored by the inhabitants (1.233-40). Ino attempts to murder her stepchildren in Greece (3.851-76), but in Italy she is hailed as the goddess Mater Matuta and becomes the benefactress of Roman mothers (6.475-550). In Greece all of these characters are treated negatively, but upon their arrivals in Italy, Ovid suppresses or explains away their past offenses, and each one becomes beneficent.

It is worth noting that we find the same sort of change in tone in the final two books of the *Metamorphoses* as well. Book 14 begins with the what we might think of as typically Ovidian metamorphoses, ones in which gods make transformations out of vindictiveness: Circe transforms Scylla into a monster (59-67) and later changes Picus into a woodpecker (388-96). But the metamorphoses which occur in Italy after the arrival of Aeneas in Latium (445-48) are beneficent: the Magna Mater transforms Aeneas' ships into sea nymphs after they have been set on fire by Turnus and his men (546-58); Aeneas is deified (600-08); Romulus and Hirsilie are transformed into Quirinus and Hora (824-51); Diana changes Hippolytus into the god Virbius to save him from death (15.541-46); Cipus refuses to take advantage of his metamorphosis into a horned man, which according to an Etruscan soothsayer would allow him to become the king of Rome, and as a reward for his forbearance he is given all the land he can encircle with his team of oxen in a day (15.594-621); Aesculapius changes himself into a snake and moves from Greece to the Tiber Island (15.665-744); Julius Caesar is deified (15.843-51).

To return to the *Fasti*, although Ovid has no qualms about making characters in the poem either comic or criminal when they are in Greece, he treats them with complete respect in Italy and does not even allude to their earlier behavior except in the case of Ino, where he explains away the accusations of attempted murder which had been made against her (6.551-58). By presenting Faunus, Hercules, Ino, and Saturn in this way Ovid seems to suggest that it was the Romans more than the Greeks who first recognized their religious significance. Horace once observed that captive Greece overcame her fierce Roman conqueror and introduced the arts to rustic Latium (*Ep.* 2.1.156-57), but for Ovid in the *Fasti* it was Italy and Rome which civilized Faunus and these other characters from Greek mythology.

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