

Rudra-Shiva and Silvanus-Faunus: Savage and Propitious

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Contemporary history of religion affirms that Roman Faunus and Silvanus represent the same divinity. This article argues for the Indo-European parallel between Faunus/Silvanus and Vedic Rudra/Shiva based on several similarities. They both possess two names that should be interpreted thus: one as wild and savage (Silvanus/Rudra) and the other as favorable and propitious (Faunus/Shiva). The male divinity can appear in both the plural and the singular, or he can have a homonymous female counterpart (Faunus/Fauna/Fauni — Rudra/Rudrāni/Rudrās). They have a cult and abode distinct from other gods, closely associated with woods and wilderness. They are in special relation to animals, cattle, in particular. They have common abilities, such as healing all creatures. Their destructive character puts them in relation to the god of war. Poetry is the function of Faunus while Rudra's sons, the Maruts, accompanying Indra on his martial exploits, sing hymns of praise.

I

In his seminal work on Vedic religion, first published more than a century ago (1894), Hermann Oldenberg describes the god Rudra, mentioning the possible connection between the savage Rudra and European woodland deities, Faunus and Silvanus (Oldenberg 1993: 113). The issue was raised again by George Dumézil (1972: 350, 420-421) who notes that Rudra and Faunus/Silvanus are homologous deities. We believe that these divinities share a number of common traits and can be traced back to a common Indo-European source.

Faunus and Silvanus are to be considered two different aspects of what was originally one and the same

divinity. Their evident similarities are found throughout the Roman tradition and are enumerated as evidence of their shared identity by G. Dumézil (1972: 350-352), K. Latte (1960: 83) and G. Wissowa (1912: 213). Faunus and Silvanus greatly overlap in their divine function. Both are perceived as gods of the wilderness, closely associated with shepherds and invoked to protect cattle. The difference is found in their worship, Faunus generally having an urban, public cult, and Silvanus having a private, mostly rural cult that was later transposed to the Roman provinces. The later, Roman interpretation associated both the divinities with Greek Pan.¹ Furthermore, as to the period prior to Greek influence, there is ambiguity in the ancient tradition as to the battle between Romans and Etruscans. Some claim it was Faunus whose voice was heard from the Arsian forest announcing Roman victory (Dion. Hal. V 16, 2; Cic. *N. D.* II 6), while others name it as that of Silvanus (Liv. II 7, 2; Val. Max. I 8, 5). Although some have tried to argue away the parallel (Dorcey 1992: 33-40), there is a general consensus on the issue among historians of Roman religion, as confirmed in recent publications (e.g. Wiseman 1995: 6).²

II

Among the several concepts that link Vedic Rudra with Roman Faunus/Silvanus, the most obvious is their very name and their adjoining epithets. Although no common Indo-European name can be reconstructed for the divinity, there is an obvious conceptual parallel between its Vedic and Roman counterparts. Silvanus was perceived as the divinity of the forest, which is his abode.

¹The Roman cults of Faunus and Silvanus were not particularly paralleled by the Greek cult of Pan. As to the literary, poetic interpretation, Pan corresponds to Faunus, and Silvanus to satyr (i.e. Silvani to satyrs) in the classical period. In earlier times, however, the interpretation seems to have been variable, e.g. Accius ap. Cic. *N. D.* II 89: *Silvani melo consimilem ad aures cantum et auditum refert*. Here Silvanus obviously corresponds to the Greek Pan.

²T. P. Wiseman's article "The God of the Lupercal" is quoted as an example of recent scholarly consensus on this issue. We couldn't, however, agree with Wiseman in several other respects including his proposal that Pan is "the god of the Lupercal".

The original meaning of the word *silva*, however, as opposed to *nemus* and *lucus*, is wild and uncultivated wood, as attested by Servius (Serv. A. I 130).³ This association of *silva* with wilderness/wildness has been preserved in modern Romance languages (OF *salvage*, Fr. *sauvage*, Pr. *salvatge*, Sp. *salvaje*, Pg. *salvagem*, It. *selvaggio*, Rom. *sălbatic*) in derivatives from Vulgar Latin *silvaticus/salvaticus* whence came the English word *savage*, a modern echo of Silvanus (Meyer-Lübke 1935: 653).

Faunus, as mentioned, is Silvanus' urban counterpart. Most sources from Antiquity derive the name Faunus either from *fāri* 'to speak, utter with divine inspiration' due to Faunus' prophetic function or from *favēre*⁴ 'to be favorable, inclined', which is accepted by modern historical linguists. The latter explanation is strengthened by the indisputable etymological connection of *favēre* with the sacral terms *faustus* and *favor*, as well as Umbrian *fons*. *Fons* is found in the formula, repeated many times in the Iguvine tables, *fons pacer* where the meaning is the same as in *volens propitius*, all these implying the favor of the gods. Historical grammar affirms the notion while rejecting that of deriving Faunus from **Dhaunos* (both Walde-Hoffmann 1938: 464 and Ernout-Meillet 2001: 220; Latte 1960: 83. fn. 3), an exaggerated etymology that connects Faunus with the wolf and the Italic tribe of Dauni, mostly based on a Hesychius' gloss listing *θαννός* as animal (cf. Altheim 1938: 206-217).

As to the Vedic counterpart, Rudra, the Indian tradition has insisted on deriving it from the Sanskrit root *rud* 'weep, cry, howl, roar' as if the god were one who weeps or howls, a notion that cannot be found in the Rig Veda. It has also been derived from the root **rudh-* (Eng. *red*, Lat. *ruber*, Gk. *έρυθρός*, OCS. *rudъ*, Lit. *raūdas*) which is untenable as Sanskrit would retain the aspiration. The most probable explanation, accepted by Dumézil (1972: 420-421), that sums up the aggressive character of the god

³Serv. A. I 310: *interest autem inter nemus et silvam et lucum; lucus enim est arborum multitudo cum religione, nemus vero composita multitudo arborum, silva diffusa et inculta.*

⁴Serv. A. I 18: *quidam faunos putant dictos ab eo, quod frugibus faveant.* Macrobius I 12, 22: *Faunam, quod omni usui animantium favet.*

of the Rig Veda is the derivation from the Indo-European root **rud-*, Latin *rudis* (Mayrhofer 1992: II 452-453; Gonda 1964: 112) 'wild, rude', where we find the same semantic concept that was expressed in Silvanus. Due to Rudra's violent nature, the god is often implored to be merciful and benevolent and invoked with the epithets *Bhava* and *Śiva* (Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā 16, 18. 28), both meaning 'favourable, propitious' which find a semantic equivalent in Faunus.⁵ The semantic connection having been firmly established, it would also be attractive to link *Bhava* with *Faunus* in etymological terms. *Bhava* is, however, more probably derived from Skr. *bhāvayati* 'be favorable', which is in turn a causative derived from Skr. *bhū-* 'to be', IE **bhū-* (Walde-Hoffman 1938: 465).

These considerations suggest the existence of an Indo-European divinity of the wilderness who is ambiguously characterized as wild and savage (Silvanus — Rudra), yet also as propitious/favorable (*Bhava/Śiva* — Faunus) once it has been placated. Thus, it is no surprise that Faunus' cult was originally found in Rome within the city walls,⁶ and that of Silvanus in the countryside (later extended to the provinces) as attested as early as Plautus: *silvani lucus extra murum* (*Aul.* 674). The same divinity is called favorable once expiated and within the walls of a civilized city, yet wild and savage while remaining outside its walls.⁷

III

The second connection between Rudra and Silvanus/Faunus is their divine function as protectors of

⁵Rudra's epithet *Śiva* would only later, in Post-Vedic literature, acquire independent existence as the name of the famous Hindu god.

⁶The position of temples in Republican Rome leaves no room for accidents. Thus, gods with destructive character do not have temples within the city walls. For example, not even Mars, a divinity of enormous importance to the Romans, had a temple within the city walls.

⁷Archaeological finds stress this most clearly with innumerable dedicatory inscriptions to Silvanus throughout the provinces. There is only one exception, however, as Faunus' name appears in Africa (DESSAU 3580) on a dedicatory inscription. There are many other instances of Faunus' name appearing elsewhere, but these are not of cultic significance.

cattle. Rudra is invoked as *paśupati* (lord of the cattle), beseeched not to harm the cattle and provide it with health and blessings (RV I 43, 2; 114, 1. 8). The poet offers him hymns “like a herdsman” (RV I 114, 9), and asks health for “our steeds, wellbeing to our rams and ewes, to men, to women and to kine” (RV I 43, 6). In rites he receives what is left from the sacrifice to other gods, but also various other forest products, as Oldenberg sums up: “wild sesame, wild wheat, milk of deers in short, things growing wild or originating from the forest” (Oldenberg 1993: 200).

Silvanus’ rural cult is practiced to protect cattle. In the period of the Republic, his rite is described only by Cato (A. C. 83) who associates Silvanus with Mars and cites the purpose of the proceeding is *pro bubus uti valeant*.⁸ Notably, it is performed in the forest with offerings of grain, fat, meat and wine. In the imperial period, Silvanus is worshiped as the protector of cattle and shepherds as confirmed on the inscriptions set up by *saltuarii* ‘rangers, foresters’ (CIL V 2383. 5548. IX 3421. X 1409), and as noted by the poets. A good example is that of Virgil (A. VIII 601) who calls him *arborum pecorisque deo*.⁹ In time, Silvanus’ domain extended to other areas, such as the protection of borders (Hor. *Epod.* 2, 22), a function that was originally associated with the divinity Terminus. A true expansion came when Silvanus was transposed to the provinces, where he merged with numerous local divinities of the autochthonous populations. At that time, various sources seem to imply Silvanus was offered different sorts of sacrifices, from pig and milk to lamb and kid.¹⁰

With the exception of the Lupercalia where a goat

⁸Cato A. C. 83: *Votum pro bubus, uti valeant, sic facito. Marti, Silvano in silva interdus in capita singula boum votum facito. Farris L. III et lardi P. IIII S et pulpae P. IIII S, vini S. III, id in <un>um vas liceto coicere, et vinum item in unum vas liceto coicere. Eam rem divinam vel servus vel liber licebit faciat. Ubi res divina facta erit, statim ibidem consumito. Mulier ad eam rem divinam ne adsit neve videat quo modo fiat. Hoc votum in annos singulos, si voles, licebit vovere.*

⁹Servius’ commentary on the verse affirms this: *publica caerimoniarum opinio hoc habet, pecorum et agrorum deum esse Silvanum* (Serv. A. VIII 601).

¹⁰Iuv. VI 447; Hor. *Epist.* II 1, 143; Mart. X 92, 6-7. It is no surprise to find a great variety in sacrificial offerings, especially in the later period. For greater detail see Dorcey (1992: 27).

and a dog are sacrificed to him, Faunus' cult is scarcely mentioned, but is virtually identical to that of Silvanus. Livy (XXXIII 42, 9-10) writes that the construction of the temple of Faunus was financed using money collected from the fines incurred from cattle-breeders (*pecuarii*). Horace (*Carm.* III 18) describes Faunus' rural rites on the Ides of December, a time when cattle returns from their seasonal pastures to their winter barns. On this occasion, a kid is offered to him, along with wine. Thus, the cult of Faunus/Silvanus mainly revolves around a village economy, maintaining this god's specific function as protector of cattle which does not differ from that of Vedic Rudra.

IV

One of the most distinct traits of Rudra is his wild and savage nature. As opposed to other Vedic gods who dwell in the east, Rudra lives in the north of the Vedic lands as "Mountain-dweller, Mountain-wanderer and Protector of mountains" (Oldenberg 1993: 111). He is depicted as sinister and frightful, so destructive and unpredictable that he must be implored in a sequence of verses to have mercy and spare both people and cattle (RV I 114, 6-8. 10). His shafts are a danger to all living creatures: "May Rudra's missile turn aside and spare us, the great wrath of the impetuous One avoid us. Turn, Bounteous God, thy strong bow from our princes, and be thou gracious to our seed and offspring" (RV II 33, 14). Rudra's malevolence is even more prominent in later Vedic texts, Atharvaveda and Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā where he turns all the more aggressive, a trait that will continue with Shiva in Hinduism (MacDonell 1897: 75-76).

Although Faunus and Silvanus are not literally implored to spare people and cattle, their dangerous nature is evident. As mentioned, Silvanus' savage nature is first observed in his very name. He lives in the forest and wild, uncultivated land. The only two rites of Silvanus described completely by the sources warn of his danger to women. Cato says: *Mulier ad eam rem divinam ne adsit neve videat quo modo fiat* (A. C. 83) and Varro, quoted by Augustine (*C. D.* VI 9) describes a ritual in which three guardian deities are invoked to prevent Silvanus from

harassing a mother and her newborn baby. After the baby is born, three men would strike the threshold with an ax and a pestle and then sweep it with a broom so that Silvanus would not enter the house and violate the mother.¹¹ In his poem to Faunus, Horace asks the god to pass his estate being gentle (*lenis*) to his flocks, implying Faunus can be dangerous to flocks as well (*Car.* III 18).

Silvanus' danger to women is also testified on Latin inscriptions (CIL VI 576. 579) which repeat Cato's prohibition in a similar way. Notably, there is also a myth where Faunus beats Fauna, identified as being either his daughter or his wife, to death with myrtle sticks (Lact. *Inst.* I 22, 11; Macrob. I 12). We should also consider it to be no accident that in the later Greek interpretation Faunus and Silvanus were identified with Pan who instills panic as the similarities between them involve not only cattle and their abodes, but perhaps as they both share a terrifying aspect as well.¹² Another of Faunus' epithets, *Inuus* (Liv. I 5, 2) describes well his savage nature. The sources derived it from *inire* in the sense 'to penetrate' and Servius explained it as *ab innuendo passim cum omnibus animalibus* (Serv. A. VI 775).¹³ The wild and uncivilized nature of

¹¹Aug. C. D. VI 9: *mulieri fetae post partum tres deos custodes commemorat adhiberi, ne Silvanus deus per noctem ingrediatur et vexet, eorumque custodum significandorum causa tres homines noctu circumire limina domus et primo limen securi ferire, postea pilo, tertio deverere scopis, ut his datis culturae signis deus Silvanus prohibeatur intrare, quod neque arbores caeduntur ac putantur sine ferro, neque far conficitur sine pilo, neque fruges coacervantur sine scopis; ab his autem tribus rebus tres nuncupatos deos, Intercidonam a securis intercisione, Pilumnum a pilo, Deverram ab scopis, quibus diis custodibus contra vim dei Silvani feta conservaretur.*

¹²A parallel between Pan and Faunus was the result of a later Roman tendency to associate their own divinities with those of the Greeks (*interpretatio Romana*). This essay aims at establishing an Indo-European original parallel and does not explore the connection with Pan, although he resembles the same pattern in some respects. However, as Dumézil often asserted, Greek mythology presents us with such a mixture of layers that separation of Indo-European elements among them is quite difficult, especially as Pan's first appearance in literature is in the 5th century BC, as late as Pindar *P* III 78.

¹³Serv. A. VI 775: *CASTRVMQVE INVI una est in Italia civitas, quae castrum novum dicitur: de hac autem ait 'castrum Inui', id est Panos, qui illic colitur. Inuus autem latine appellatur, graece Πάν: item Ἐφιάλτης graece, latine Incubo: idem Faunus, idem Fatuus, Fatuchus. dicitur autem Inuus ab ineundo*

Faunus is also exemplified in his festival, the Lupercalia, where young men, acting as his priests (Luperci), run around naked striking women with goatskin thongs to ensure fertility. Cicero explicitly claimed such a custom is older than civilization itself (Cic. *Cael.* 26).

V

Healing and fertility is another aspect of the multifaceted Rudra. In the Rig Veda, he is said to have “a healing hand” (II 33, 7) and “a thousand remedies” (VII 46, 3) and invoked to remove sickness and ensure health (VII 46, 2; I 114, 1). He is the greatest physician of physicians (II 33, 4), and that ability is passed on to his sons. In the Sūtras, sacrifices to him are prescribed for removing or preventing disease in cattle (see Macdonell 1897: 76). During the autumnal commemoration of the dead, a ritual to Rudra Tryambaka is performed in which sacrificial flat cakes are offered. One chants to him: “You are medicine: medicine for the cattle, medicine for horse and man, prosperity to the ram and mother sheep”. The family goes around the fire three times to the left and three times to the right, clapping their hands on the left and right thighs, while young unwed girls pray Tryambaka to grant them a husband: “I would like to loosen myself from here like the cucumber from its stalk, not from there”, i.e. from the parental home, not from the husband’s house (ŚB II 6, 2, 10; Oldenberg 1993: 237-238).

Although Faunus’ festival, the Lupercalia is a custom with many layers and one of the most discussed issues in Roman religion, it is parallel to the autumnal rite to Rudra Tryambaka as a fertility ritual. It was established to repel the sterility of women and ensure their fertility, although it was also perceived as a cult of ensuring health in general, as told by Livy (Liv frg. 63 Gelas. adv. Androm. 35) and Ovid (Ov. *F.* II 425-452).¹⁴ Another interesting

passim cum omnibus animalibus, unde et Incubo dicitur.

¹⁴Gelas. adv. Androm. 35 (=Liv. frg. 63): *Lupercalia autem propter quid instituta sint, (quantum ad ipsius superstitionis commenta respectant) Livius secunda decade loquitur: nec propter morbos inhibendos instituta commemorat, sed propter sterilitatem mulierum, quae tunc acciderat, exsolvendam.*

ritual is the *Fordicidia*, the sacrifice of a pregnant cow to Tellus to ensure the fertility of the fields and cattle. Ovid (*F. IV* 641-672) reports it was the problem of a poor harvest that forced king Numa to invoke Faunus who gave him a mysterious reply:

*morte bovum tibi, rex, Tellus placanda duarum
det sacris animas una iuvenca duas. (F. IV 665-6)*

But how is one heifer to give two souls? The queen realised a pregnant cow should be sacrificed. The fertility of the fields was restored with Vestals performing the ritual. In his essay *Fordicidia*, Dumézil found a parallel to this ritual in Indian *aṣṭāpādi*, a sacrifice offered to the Earth and Maruts to ensure the fertility of both plants and animals (Dumézil 1952: 11-25; Littleton 1973: 112-113). Maruts (or Rudrās) assume a number of functions of their father Rudra, and although *Fordicidia* is offered to Tellus, it was Rudra's counterpart, Faunus who instituted the rite. From this we may conclude that it was originally performed to both Earth (Tellus) and to Faunus¹⁵, as it was to Earth and Rudrās in India, providing yet another parallel between these gods.

As to the healing function of Faunus, however, it is mostly found in his female counterpart Bona Dea, a name whose use is said to be taboo in order not to reveal her real one, Fauna or Fatua (*Serv. A. VIII* 314). Along with its auspicious connotation that recalls Fauna, the title Bona Dea and her cult imply a contamination of the goddess' original Roman nature with Italic and Greek elements (Kleine Pauly I 926; Dumézil 1974: 355), although healing is not to be considered a Greek addition (Brouwer 1989: 347). It is interesting to note the fact her cult is accessible only to women while Silvanus' is only accessible to men, which draws another contrastive parallel in terms of cult, like that of favorable Faunus and savage Silvanus in spatial terms. Roman tradition depicts her variously as Faunus'

¹⁵ Dumézil points out other reductions in this Roman ritual in relation to the Indian sacrifice. In India it was a part of other complex rituals, one of them the institution of the new king while in Rome it was an independent festival not related to kingship.

wife (Arn. I 36; Iust. XLIII 1, 8; Lact. I 22, 11) and daughter (Serv. A. VIII 314; Tert. *Ad Nat.* II 9; Macro. I 12).

Inscriptions from Rome testify that Bona Dea had many smaller shrines and a few temples of which the most famous is situated on the Aventine hill having, according to Macrobius, a pharmacy: *quidam Medeam putant, quod in aedem eius omne genus herbarum sit ex quibus antistites dant plerumque medicinas* (Macro. I 12). Numerous inscriptions are dedicated to her as healer (Brouwer 1989: 346-347), especially on the Tiber island. We may presume she was associated with the cult of Asclepius whose temple was built on the island in 293 BC, making it a sort of medical center (Suet. *Claud.* 25). It is possible that she herself had a temple nearby in what is now Trastevere (Kleine Pauly I 926). It is no accident that the prior mentioned temple to Faunus was also located on the same island and, thus it too was probably associated with medicine. Here again, we may mention Cato's telling remark on Silvanus' rite as performed *pro bubus uti valeant* (Cat. A. C. 83).

VI

It is a known fact that in the case of sylvan deities there is a fluctuation between plural and singular. In Greece these are Silenus and Sileni, Pan and Panes, in Rome Faunus and Fauni, Silvanus and Silvani (West 2007: 281). The male sylvan deity can also have a homonymous female counterpart: Faunus and Fauna, Silvanus and Silvana. This fluctuation is found often and from the oldest Roman sources on Faunus. In his comment on Ennius' famous verse *versibus quos olim Fauni vatesque canebant*, Varro adds: *Fauni dei Latinorum, ita ut et Faunus et Fauna sit* (L. L. VII 36). This shift between plural and singular as well as between the sexes is highly unusual in the case of Roman deities and is peculiar to the case of Faunus and Silvanus.

In the Vedic tradition, however, it can hardly be said that deities appearing in group form are exceptional. One such a case is that of Rudra, whose sons the Maruts often have the same function as Rudra, and are then simply referred to in the plural as Rudrās (e.g. RV I 39). As to the

female counterparts of a god, they are quite rare in India, as are goddesses in general. Rudra, however, in the later tradition (the sūtras) has a female counterpart, his wife Rudrānī, whose cultic role is, not incidentally, greater than those of other goddesses named after their husbands (Macdonell 1897: 125), which corresponds to Fauna's importance as Bona Dea in Rome.

VII

The previously described aggressive nature of Rudra places him in relation to war and destruction. Rudra's aggression, however, is like that of a "dread beast of the forest" (RV II 33, 11) so that it must be placated and repelled as opposed to the organized martial exploits of Indra, god of war proper, whose grace needs to be attained for help in battle. The Maruts, Rudra's sons (or simply Rudrās), sometimes display the malevolence of their father and are similarly repelled and deprecated. However, they also employ their skills in useful warfare as warriors who accompany Indra on all his celestial exploits (RV I 100. 101. 165). Generally, they are his constant fighting associates (RV VIII 65; X 113).

It is no accident that in describing the aforementioned ritual, Cato says the offerings are given to *Marti Silvano* (Cato A. C. 83), both Mars and Silvanus, an obvious asyndeton which was mistakenly interpreted as referring to the same divinity (Mars Silvanus). The genealogy of Latinus, the king who receives Aeneas upon his arrival in Italy, serves as another link between Mars and Faunus. The genealogy is listed in several places with Faunus as the father of Latinus, and Picus as the father of Faunus (e.g. Verg A. VII 45-49).¹⁶ Picus, the woodpecker, is the animal sacred to Mars and as such is even listed in Carl

¹⁶Virgil's genealogy of Latinus is not the only one. In the genealogy of Dionysus of Halicarnassus (I 31) Faunus is the son of Mars. The idea of gods having lived on Earth in some remote historical period should not surprise us; the same was also said of Saturn. Although not much is said of this allegedly historical Faunus, the fact that the Romans imagined him as an Italic king, who instituted the Lupercalia along with Evander, speaks in favor of the god's ancient, pre-civilized nature, and his relation to Latinus and thus to Aeneas underlies his importance to the Roman people.

von Linné's taxonomy as "Picus Martius". While it is common knowledge that the she-wolf suckled Romulus and Remus, Plutarch relates they were also fed by the woodpecker, which brought them small bits of food (Plut. *Rom.* 4, *Q. R.* 21).¹⁷ Picus and Faunus are again found together in Ovid's vivid description of Numa's arrangement with Jupiter. Numa captured them at the spring where they came to drink, so that they would tell him how to expiate a thunderbolt (Ov. *F.* III 291-322). Furthermore, in the Lupercalia, the priests of Faunus are called *Luperci*, derived from *lupus*, the animal of Mars. The cave Lupercal from which they start their running ritual is said to be the place where Mars impregnated Rea Silvia with Romulus and Remus and located next to the place where they were later suckled by the she-wolf. (Verg. *A.* VIII 630; Serv. *A.* ad loc. Fabius, *Ann. Lat.* fr. 4P) Thus, we find a close association between Faunus and Mars, mostly through Mars' sacred animals. As in India, Mars retains the domain of organized warfare (Indra with the Maruts) while Faunus (Rudra, Maruts alone) has the savage aspect associated with the wild and with animal nature.¹⁸

VIII

Roman literature was influenced by the Greeks from a relatively early period. It is then no surprise to find Greek patterns in Roman poetry, such as invocation of the Muses, rendered as the native Camenae or Pieridae. In turning to the Greeks, however, Roman poets such as Ennius are still aware that there existed a tradition of Roman poetry with its own customs and patterns. In replacing the native *versus saturnius* with the Greek hexameter, Ennius description of the former is *versibus quos olim Fauni vatesque canebant*. In his comment on this verse, Varro explains that Fauns predicted the future by their speaking (*fāri*) (*L. L.* VII 36).

¹⁷Plut. *Rom.* 4: ἐνταῦθα δὴ τοῖς βρέφεσι κειμένους τὴν τε λύκαιναν ἱστοροῦσι θηλαζομένην καὶ δρουκολάπτῃν τινὰ παρεῖναι συνεκτρέφοντα καὶ φυλάττοντα. νομίζεται δ' Ἄρεως ἱερά τὰ ζῶα, τὸν δὲ δρουκολάπτῃν καὶ διαφερόντως Λατῖνοι σέβονται καὶ τιμῶσιν...

¹⁸Regarding Roman Mars and Vedic Maruts as warriors of Indra, a proposed common etymology that would yield a PIE **māwort-* is doubtful (Mallory-Adams 2006: 433).

Thus, Faunus was originally also a god of poetry and prophecy¹⁹ (Wiseman 2005: 518). Virgil (A. VII 81-101), for example, has Faunus prophesy to his son, king Latinus, the arrival of Aeneas and the rise of the Roman Empire. A clear confirmation of the connection between Faunus and *fāri* can be found in another of Faunus' epithets, Fatuus, which, as opposed to Faunus, really is derived from *fāri*. The original meaning of *fāri* in Latin is to sing or to prophesy as can be seen from another fragment of Ennius (ap. Prob. *Ecl.* 6, 31):

...*Anchisa, Venus quem pulcra dearum
Fari donavit, divinum pectus habere
face vero quod tecum precibus pater orat.*

Etymological parallels of *fāri* affirm the hypothesis. It is paralleled not only by Greek *φημί* but also by common Slavic *bajati* which has both the connotations to narrate and enchant (Machek 1971: 42), as in English spell.

In accompanying Indra on his martial exploits, the Maruts do more than simply fight. They also sing hymns of praise and are called the singers of heaven (RV V 57, 5). Their song is perceived as powerful since with it they create Indra-might, cleave a mountain with the sound of the pipe or make the sun shine (see Macdonell 1897: 80). Their prayers, hymns and songs are, alongside their fighting, perceived as assistance to Indra. It is significant that Maruts' sing a hymn of praise just after Indra's slaying of the dragon — Vṛtra (RV V 29, 2; 30, 6). This is one of the numerous attestations of Indo-European oral poetry springing from the praise and glory of warriors' excellence in battle. It is said Fauns were the divine patrons of poetry. Besides being a metaphorical broadside on the poet Gnaeus Naevius, Ennius' verse could also be literally interpreted: '(with) verses which Fauns and poets have once sung'. We have here a confirmation of Fauns not

¹⁹The meaning of both poetry and prophecy is also confirmed in the other word used by Ennius — *vates* that preserved the meaning of poet and prophet in later times as well. The same was already said of *fāri*. *Carmen* and *canere* also have the meaning of prophecy, cf. Liv. I 45, 5; V A. VI 99, etc.

only having the divine function of poetry, but literally singing/prophesying (*fāri*) themselves as the Maruts sing. Not surprisingly, no more information on the circumstances of their singing survive as original Roman poetry was early abandoned for Greek models, and sadly all that remains are fragments such as the *Carmen Saliare* and the *Carmen Arvale*, scant traces of what must have been an ancient poetic tradition of its own,²⁰ sung under the auspices of Fauns. Both poetry and prophecy are confounded as a province of Faunus²¹ and, although there are no more places where Fauns are said to sing, there are still indications of Faunus' (or Fauns') prophetic function connected to war in Roman history. It is no accident that Faunus' or Silvanus' voice was often heard after a battle (Cic. *Div.* I 101). One such instance is a voice heard from the Arsian forest announcing Roman victory, in a decisive moment when the nascent Republic is fighting against the expelled tyrant Tarquin. Could this be a distant echo of the same tradition whereby Maruts or Rudrās sing hymns of praise after a battle, e.g. when they celebrate Indra's famous victory over the dragon?²² If so, this would affirm the inseparable connection between war and poetry in the Indo-European world, in this case related to Faunus and Rudra; this issue, however, calls for a separate study.

Finally, while Rudra's connection to Apollo has often been observed based only on their healing aspect and their destructive nature, associated with the picture of the bow (West 2007: 148), this essay demonstrates a more probable Roman parallel to this Vedic deity, especially as many other parallels exist between Roman and Vedic

²⁰For the existence of the old oral Italic tradition see Fisher (2008: 335-355) who recognizes Italic elements in Ennius such as alliteration, phraseology and *figurae etymologicae* that are a continuation of Indo-European poetry.

²¹Varro *L. L.* VII 36: *Fauni dei Latinorum, ita ut Faunus et Fauna sit; hos versibus quos vocant Saturnios in silvestribus locis traditum est solitos fari futura, <a> quo fando Faunos dictos.*

²²The argument might seem stretched, but not if seen from a Roman perspective. Namely, a number of words that have both the meaning 'to sing' and 'to prophesy' (fn. 15) demonstrate that the two were perceived as closely connected, almost inseparable to the ancients. Thus, in some places Fauns are said to prophesy, but they are also said to sing.

religion.²³ The great number of similarities excludes accidental occurrence and their existence in the opposite ends of the Indo-European continuum argues for the possible existence of a divinity whose traces and manifestations in other Indo-European mythologies remain to be explored.

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²³Many religious parallels have been found between Sanskrit and Latin, some of which do not exist in other Indo-European languages, e.g. Lat. *pontifex*, Skt. *pathi-kṛt*; Lat. *flamen*, Skt. *brahman*. For greater detail see Mallory–Adams (2006: 409-413).

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