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# L'Année philologique

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF THE CLASSICAL WORLD

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Record 2 of 189 LibriLinks OpenURL link to the library catalogue Aph reference: 83-04805

Type: Article in journal  
Author: Gowers, Emily [View author profile]  
Title of Article: Trees and family trees in the « Aeneid »  
Title of Publication: Classical Antiquity [View journal profile]  
Language of Work: English  
ISSN/ISBN: 0278-6656  
Volume, (year), pages: 30:1 (2011) 87-118  
DOI: 10.1525/ca.2011.30.1.87

CLASSIFICATION DETAILS

Ancient authors and texts:

- Vergilius Maro (P.) [View text in LLT-A]
- Vergilius Maro (P.) - Aeneis 3.19 [View text in LLT-A] [CWKB Resolver]
- Plinius Secundus (C.) [View text in LLT-A]
- Columella (L. Iunius Moderatus) [View text in LLT-A]

ACCESS TO FULL TEXT

- <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ca.2011.30.1.87>

ABSTRACT

Tree-chopping in the « Aeneid » has been seen as a violent symbol of the Trojans' colonization of Italy. A reading can be proposed that sees Aeneas as progressive extirpator not just of foreign rivals but also of his own relatives. Although the Romans had no family trees as such, their genealogical « stemmata » had « rami » and « stirps », and their vocabulary of family relationships takes metaphors from planting, adoption, and uprooting; while plant life is often described in human metaphors. Imperial historians use the growth and collapse of trees to mark the rise and fall of dynasties; natural historians like Columella and Pliny use metaphors of adoption, abortion, and adultery to characterize the perversions of agriculture and horticulture. It is thus no coincidence that Aeneas's encounters with Hector, Priam, and others often take place against a background of real or metaphorical trees. These encourage us to see an element of dynastic encroachment in scenes that look pious but confirm Aeneas's claim to succession. The Polydorus episode in particular (Book 3) can be read not just as a grotesque interlude but as a nightmare about endlessly reproducing heirs. Vergil's account of grating in Georg. 2 is viewed positively, arguably perhaps in order to cast Augustus's adoption of heirs as a miracle solution.

DOI link to the full text of a book or article

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