

ENNIUS AND HIS PREDECESSORS

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Abstract

The Annales of the Roman poet, Quintus Ennius, was not an isolated example of an historical epic. Other poets before Ennius' time had written epics of various types, and different sorts of poems that dealt with historical or national material, and some of these influenced Ennius.

This study will consider Ennius' relationship to the Homeric epics, and show how he imitated them in form and style. The writings of other Greek poets who preceded Ennius will be examined to determine whether they might also have influenced the Roman poet. The works of the two Roman poets who wrote before Ennius will be looked at, and some observations made about other historical materials that may have been available for the poet to use in his work. Finally, the place of Quintus Ennius and his Annales in the historiography of Rome will be discussed.

The Annales seems to have been unique in that it was an epic poem which encompassed the whole history of the Roman people from the earliest times right down to the period in which the poet lived. Other poets before Ennius had dealt with some aspects of their cities' backgrounds, including mythological and legendary material. Ennius was the first to combine ancient legends and more recent history into one coherent epic poem, his Annales.

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Abbreviations used

The standard abbreviations are used for the works of the classical authors.

| | |
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| AJAH | American Journal of Ancient History |
| AJPh | American Journal of Philology |
| ANRW | Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt |
| CB | Classical Bulletin |
| CPh | Classical Philology |
| CQ | Classical Quarterly |
| GRBS | Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies |
| ICS | Illinois Classical Studies |
| JHS | Journal of Hellenic Studies |
| JRS | Journal of Roman Studies |
| MAAR | Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome |
| PCPhS | Proceedings of the Cambridge Philological Soc. |
| RFIC | Rivista di Filologia e d'Instruzione Classica |

Introduction

This study will look at the poem, Annales, by the early Roman poet, Quintus Ennius, and attempt to place it in a historical context. The basic topic to be discussed is whether the poem is an isolated example of an epic poem written on historical and national subject-matter, or whether other poets before Ennius wrote similar types of poems.

Surely no writer of poetry or prose ever writes in isolation from his own age, or from the works of literature that have preceded him. There were many poets before Ennius who dealt with a variety of subjects in epic style, especially with myths and legends whose origins were lost in the dim and distant past. Before Ennius sat down to compose his Annales, there were also many prose writers who chronicled the histories of their various cities. These authors often included in their works details of the local folklore, culture and mythology of their people. Ennius almost seems to have sought to join together in one these two streams of literary endeavour. The Annales was at once a history of the Roman people and their achievements, and also a great epic poem written in the style of Homer.

The works of the poets, both Greek and Roman, who preceded Quintus Ennius and his Annales will be considered, especially the writings of those who wrote national poetry of a historical nature. (The works of the writers of prose histories comprise too vast a field to be discussed here.) Ennius may have had access to a great amount of poetry. Works which are known now by name only may have been well-known to the Roman poet and inspired him in some way. The writings of earlier poets may have influenced Ennius with regard to the form and style of his epic.

With regard to the content of the Annales, however, Quintus Ennius seems to have chosen a subject of great interest, the whole history of the Roman people and their accomplishments. By the early second century B.C. when Ennius was writing, Rome already had several hundred years of history behind her, so there was plenty of scope for the poet. Latin literature was still in its infancy, though, and there was little for Ennius to work with. It fell to him to experiment and invent, and advance the development of the Latin language himself. He introduced the Greek hexameter into Latin, and also greatly expanded Latin vocabulary.

In the first chapter of this study, the life of the poet will be sketched, and a few general observations made about his works. The second chapter will look at the relationship of Ennius to Homer. A brief survey of some of the other Greek poets who preceded Ennius will follow in the next chapter. A further chapter will consider the works of the Roman predecessors of Ennius. The final chapter will deal with the actual subject-matter of the Annales and with Quintus Ennius as an historical poet.

Chapter 1: the Life and Works of Quintus Ennius

The life of the poet, Quintus Ennius, unlike those of his fellow-writers, is quite well documented in ancient sources. His birth-date of 239 B.C. is known from Cicero: "...anno ipso antequam natus est Ennius, post Roman conditam autem quartodecimo et quingentesimo...."¹ His birth-place was Rudiae, now Rugge, in Calabria. "Nos sumus Romani qui fuimus ante Rudini."² Calabria was also called Messapia, after King Messapus, an ancient hero of that area, from whom Ennius claimed descent. Silius Italicus mentions: "Ennius, antiqua Messapi ab origine regis...."³ He must have had some Oscan connections, too, for Aulus Gellius says of him: "Quintus Ennius tria corda habere sese dicebat quod loqui Graece et Osce et Latine sciret."⁴ The poet was probably educated at nearby Tarentum, one of the cities of Magna Graecia.

Quintus Ennius saw service in the Roman army, and must have acquitted himself well, for Silius Italicus tells that he attained the rank of centurion. "Ennius...miscebat primas acies Latiaeque superbum vitis adornabat dextram decus."⁵ While Ennius was serving in Sardinia in 204 B.C., he met Marcus Porcius Cato who was quaestor there. The poet is said to have spent time with Cato teaching him Greek: "...in praetura Sardiniam subegit, ubi ab Ennio Graecis litteris institutus...."⁶ Cato took Ennius back to Rome with him, where Ennius continued to do some teaching of Greek. Suetonius comments: "Initium quoque eius mediocre

¹ Cicero Brutus 18.72.

² Ann. 525 (I use Skutsch's numbering.)

³ Silius Italicus Punica xii.393ff.

⁴ Aulus Gellius N.A. 17.17.1.

⁵ Silius Italicus Punica xii.393ff.

⁶ Aurelius Victor de Vir. Illus. 47.

exstitit siquidem antiquissimi dotarum, qui iidem et poetae et semi-graecae erant (Livium et Ennium dico, quos utraque lingua domi forisque docuisse adnotatum est) nihil amplius quam Graecos interpretabantur, aut si quid ipsi Latine composuissent praelegebant."⁷

Quintus Ennius also began to write poetry, and produced tragedies on stage. Evidently he did not become rich from his writing, as Cicero observes: "...annos septuaginta natus. tot enim vixit Ennius, ita ferebat duo quae maxima putantur onera, paupertatem et senectutem, ut eis paene delectari videretur."⁸ Just after the poet had produced the tragedy 'Thyestes', in the year 169 B.C., he died of gout. Cicero records: "Nam hoc praetore ludos Apollini faciente cum Thyeste fabulam docuisset, Q. Marcio Cn. Servilio consulibus mortem obiit Ennius."⁹

Quintus Ennius was certainly a prolific writer, but as Skutsch notes, little information is available about the chronology of his works.¹⁰ Skutsch thinks it likely that the poet worked on his tragedies, translating and adapting them from Greek for production at Rome, over a period of many years.¹¹ Many fragments of his tragedies are extant. Comedy was evidently not Ennius' forte. Gellius quotes the list of authors of comedy compiled by Volcatius Sedigitus, in order of merit: "Decimum addo causa antiquitatis Ennium."¹²

The poet worked in other genres, as well. He translated the 'Sacred Scripture' of Euhemerus into Latin verse, and a number of fragments of Satires have survived. A poem called 'Scipio' dealt with the African

⁷ Suetonius de Grammaticis 1.

⁸ Cicero de Senect. 5.14.

⁹ Cicero Brutus 20.78.

¹⁰ Otto Skutsch. The Annals of Quintus Ennius (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985) p.2.

¹¹ Skutsch Ann. p.2.

¹² Gellius N.A. 15.24.

campaigns of Scipio, and Ennius also wrote an 'Ambracia', lauding the victory of his patron, M. Fulvius Nobilior, at Ambracia.

The great work of Ennius' life was, however, his Annales.

It was a very long epic poem which detailed the whole history of the Roman people, from the earliest times right up to the period in which Ennius lived. Skutsch feels that the Annales must have been the work of the poet's later middle age because it would have taken a few years for Ennius to become familiar enough with the culture, history, and customs of Rome to undertake such a venture.¹³ A great many years seem to have been spent working on the Annales. Perhaps Ennius felt that it was complete at one point, and then decided to add to it. Pliny the Elder, for example, mentions: "Q. Ennius T. Caelum Teucrum fratremque eius praecipue miratus propter eos sextum decimum adiecit annalem."¹⁴ This certainly suggests that Ennius may have resumed his work after a break. Gellius, too, comments that the poet himself observed that he was working on his masterpiece in his old age. "Ennium...M. Varro...scripsit ...cum septimum et sexagesimum annum haberet, duodecimum Annalem scripsisse idque ipsum Ennium in eodem libro dicere."¹⁵

The Annales consisted of eighteen books, structured (as Skutsch suggests), in groups of three books.¹⁶ He goes on to say that the poet did not necessarily edit or publish the triads of books separately.¹⁷ In his commentary on the fragments of Book VII of the Annales, the same scholar

¹³ Skutsch Ann. p.4.

¹⁴ Pliny the Elder N.H. vii.101.

¹⁵ Gellius N.A. 17.21.43.

¹⁶ Skutsch Ann. p.6.

¹⁷ Skutsch Ann. p.6.

observes that the book begins with a proem in which the poet speaks about himself and his work. This suggests to Skutsch that Ennius made a new beginning at this point, and may already have published the previous books.¹⁸ The Annales was well received in the poet's own time. The poem was also copied extensively for study in Roman schools, and was generally held in some regard until the Aeneid of Virgil superceded it as Rome's national poem. Suetonius mentions how Quintus Varguntius expounded the Annales of Ennius to large audiences in later times.¹⁹

Ennius had himself been made a citizen of Rome, as Cicero reports: "Quintus Nobilior, son of Marcus,using his privilege as a triumvir in establishing a colony, bestowed citizenship on Quintus Ennius, who had campaigned with his father in Aetolia."²⁰ The poet had served in the Roman army and developed a patriotic feeling that the achievements of the Roman state and people were remarkable, and worthy of being celebrated in a great epic. Although there are only a small number of fragments of the Annales extant (relative to the size of the poem), those verses and phrases that remain give a glimpse of what the whole poem must have been like, and also provide a little insight into the poet's style and talent, as well as his feeling for Rome.

In reading the fragments of the Annales, one can easily discern that Quintus Ennius loved the sounds of the Latin language, and used them to great advantage. Time and again sounds are echoed from one verse to another.

¹⁸ Skutsch Ann. p.367.

¹⁹ Suetonius de Gram. 2. (My paraphrase.)

²⁰ Cicero Brutus xx.79. (Translation of G. L. Hendrickson).

For example, the poet is fond of puns, and frequently uses two compound words which have the same root in one line or in adjacent lines. One line which shows this technique is Ann. 518: "navibus explebant sese terrasque replebant." This kind of word-play is both facilitated by and made effective in an inflected language. Skutsch observes that Ennius loved to tease his readers with a pun, and frequently used proper nouns in ambiguous contexts so that they could be mistaken for appellative nouns or adjectives.²¹ Examples of this are Ann. 222: "Sulpureas posuit spiramina Naris ad undas;" and Ann. 540: "unus surum Surus ferre."

The Annales were likely read aloud in public presentations so the effect of sound was very important. Alliteration and assonance abound in the fragments, and their use was obviously a significant attribute of the poet's style. These effects were occasionally carried to extremes as in Ann. 620: "machina multa minax minitantur maxima muris," or in the well-known Ennian line, Ann. 104: "O Tite, tute, Tati, tibi tanta, tyranne, tulisti." Perhaps if the context of these verses were known, they might not seem so odd. Perhaps the poet had some purpose which it is now not easy to appreciate because of the fragmentary nature of the poem.

Another important feature of the Annales was Ennius' use of imagery. With regard to this aspect of the poet's work, Skutsch observes that Ennius' metaphors are numerous, bold, and often original.²² Some of the poet's images are without doubt inspired by the works of Homer, but

²¹ Otto Skutsch Studia Enniana (Univ. of London: Athlone Press, 1968) p.45, n.5.

²² Skutsch Ann. p.445.

many of them seem to be his own invention. In Ann. 432-434, Ennius describes the fighting between the warriors in a dramatic simile:

concurrent veluti venti, quom spiritus Austri imbricator
suo cum flamine contra indu mari magno fluctus extollere
certant.

The winds named by the poet were famous for driving on violent storms, and thus the use of the names helps to conjure up the violence and spirited action of the scene. Gordon Williams compares this same fragment to

Iliad ix.4-8:

"Like as two winds stir up the main, the home of fishes,
even the north wind and the west wind that blow from
Thrace, coming suddenly; and the dark billow straightway
lifteth up its crest and casteth much tangle out along
the sea; even so was the Achaians' spirit troubled in
their breast."²³

Homer describes a tempest within the hearts of the Greek heroes. He, too, names the winds, but as Williams points out, there is more concrete detail in Homer than in Ennius.²⁴ Williams observes that what Ennius does "is to create an onomatopoetic impression of a storm without visual detail."²⁵ He feels that Ennius generally gives memorable expression to his ideas by making a strong emphasis on the sound of the language, rather than conjuring up visual images.²⁶ This seems to be an example, then, where Ennius perhaps got the idea from Homer, but he takes it and makes something different, something his own.

There is an interesting simile inserted into the long fragment which deals with the taking of the auspices for the founding of the city:

²³ Lang, Leaf, and Myers' translation.

²⁴ Gordon Williams Tradition and Originality in Roman Poetry (Oxford, 1968) p.697.

²⁵ Williams p.697.

²⁶ Williams p.693.

Expectant veluti consul quom mittere signum
 Volt, omnes avidi spectant ad carceris oras
 Quam mox emittat pictos e faucibus currus:
 Sic expectabat populus atque ore timebat
 Rebus utri magni victoria sit data regni.

This simile is uniquely Roman in its conception, and likely original with Ennius. Skutsch has to admit that this simile is either entirely original or so recast in a Roman mould that its origin is concealed.²⁷ The typically Ennian device of using different forms of the same verb is seen here. The poet starts out with 'expectant', uses 'spectant' in the middle, and concludes with 'sic expectabat'. The crowd's restless and eager anticipation of the outcome is kept before the audience's eyes the whole time. As Williams says, the simile is sparing in its details.²⁸ The poet keeps his emphasis where he wishes it to be.

Another striking feature of the Annales that also shows the poet's great awareness of the effects of sound is his use of chiasmus. In the few fragments available there are several excellent examples. One is found in Ann.248: "spernitur orator bonus, horridus miles amatur." Once again, the inflected language particularly lends itself to such convenient and dramatic parallelism and balance. Chiasmus and the other literary devices of which Ennius makes use must have helped to sustain interest in his long narrative, and added variety and different points of view, as well as lending emphasis to particular passages.

Many other observations could be made about the fragments of the Annales. The verses are quite varied and contain different usages and interesting material. They show that Quintus Ennius was an accomplished poet in full control of his language.

²⁷ Skutsch Ann. p.228.

²⁸ Williams Trad. p.690.

Chapter 2: Ennius' Relationship to Homer

In setting out to write his Annales, Quintus Ennius saw himself as a Roman Homer who would bring renown to the accomplishments of the Roman people. Homer occupied a totally unique position in the life, history, and culture of the Greek people. As M. I. Finley notes, "He was their pre-eminent symbol of nationhood, the unimpeachable authority on their earliest history, and a decisive figure in the creation of their pantheon, as well as their most beloved and most widely quoted poet."²⁹ Ennius considered himself a Homer reborn, and the later Roman poet Horace referred to him as "et sapiens et fortis et alter Homerus."³⁰ Ennius sought to occupy a position in the lives of the Romans that Homer would have if he had been a Roman.

In the first book of the Annales, Ennius describes how he receives the soul of his Greek predecessor. He tells how "visus Homerus adesse poeta," and a little further on, Homer himself says to Ennius "memini me fieri pavom." Curiously, then, the soul of Homer passes to Ennius after it has been in a peacock. Skutsch points out that the passage of Homer's soul to Ennius via rebirth in a peacock was modelled on that of Pythagoras' soul from Euphorbus, a story prevalent in the regions of south Italy in Ennius' time.³¹ It is quite possible that the poet was inspired in such a way since he was obviously very well read, and his acquaintance with philosophical matters is ably demonstrated by his other works.³²

²⁹ M.I. Finley The World of Odysseus (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954; reprint ed. 1984) p.15.

³⁰ Ep. II.1.50.

³¹ Skutsch Ann. p.164.

³² Eg. Epicharmus & Euhemerus.

Quintus Ennius saw himself as making a completely new beginning of epic. The Roman Homer was not to be merely a slavish imitator of the Greek one. He felt that the history of the city of Rome and the accomplishments of her people were comparable to the adventures and wonderful deeds of the great heroes of Homer's works, and hence were suitable subjects for an epic poem. Ennius had become a Roman citizen, and his patriotism towards his adopted state would add a new element to epic. Homer was objective in his narrations, but Ennius could be subjective. Moreover, he saw himself as a "rerum scriptor", a recorder of history, not merely a poet relating the legends of his people.

Gordon Williams observes, "The greatest Roman poets found an inexhaustible source of poetic inspiration in transferring ideas and images of Greek poets to a new context of their own creation."³³ This is precisely what Ennius did. He showed from the very beginning of the *Annales* that he was operating in a Greek mode. The hexameter was the metre of choice, and in the very first fragment he addresses the Muses. "Musae, quae pedibus magnum pulsatis Olympum,"³⁴ is thought to have been the opening line of the poem. Skutsch observes that the name of the Muses was hardly unknown at Rome, but this is the earliest occurrence in Latin poetry.³⁵ He suggests that an address to the Muses was symbolic of much more than merely a change of metre. The Muses had become in Greek literature the patrons of all intellectual pursuits. Hence Ennius is claiming to write as one who is master of his craft and as one who works in the full light of this knowledge.³⁶

³³ Williams *Trad.* p.255.

³⁴ *Ann.*1.

³⁵ Skutsch *Ann.*p.147.

³⁶ Skutsch *Stud. Enn.* p.5.

Another interesting observation is made by Skutsch about Ann.1. He notes the interlocking alliteration of the 'm's and the 'p's, but hints that the resemblance of that to *Odyssey* I.1 (... Μοῦσα, πολὺ-τροπον ὅς μ' ἄλλα πολλά) is probably coincidental. He says the same thing about the resemblance of Ann.1 to *Iliad* 8.443 (... ὕπὸ ποσσὶ μέγας πελεμίζετ' Ὀλύμπου) also.³⁷ There is much in the fragments of the Annales to indicate that Ennius knew his Homer very well, so it is not surprising to find various echoes of the bard.

Just as Ennius had addressed the Muses rather than the Camenae as his Roman predecessors did, so, too, he calls himself 'poeta', adapting the Greek 'ποιητής', rather than the 'vates' of earlier poets. For him the work at hand is a 'poema' rather than a 'carmen'. Ennius sets the Annales apart from anything that had been done in Latin before. In Ann.206-7 the poet mentions this point again. He says: "scripsere alii rem/ vorsibus quos olim Faunei vatesque canebant." "Others have written history in verses which once the Fauns and rustic bards used to sing."³⁸ Other poets, writing in Latin, notably Livius Andronicus and Cnaeus Naevius, had used the old Saturnian metre which seems to have been native to Italy. Ennius obviously saw the Annales as a new kind of undertaking.

Adapting the Latin language to the demands of the Greek hexameter was a difficult endeavour. Many Latin words just do not work in hexameters. One of Ennius' answers to this problem was to coin some new words. Some of these words imitated Homeric epithets; for example, Ann. 451 has:

³⁷ Skutsch Ann. p.147.

³⁸ My translation.

"Iovis omnipotentis." Such phrases no doubt served an additional function of Homeric formulae, namely that of providing convenient metrical units. Several phrases are repeated in the various fragments of Annales, suggesting that the poet found this a useful resource. Perhaps he even had stock phrases to describe various activities as Homer had.

In other fragments it can be seen that Ennius simply took words over directly from the Greek into Latin. For example, in Ann. 217, the poet uses the word 'pontus',³⁹ which, as Skutsch notes, is a Latinization of the Greek $\pi\acute{o}\nu\tau\omicron\varsigma$. He adds, that except as a name with "Euxinus", the word 'pontus' belongs exclusively to poetry, and is found here for the first time in Latin.⁴⁰ The same thing is true of the word 'oceanum' in Ann. 415-416: 'interea fax / occidit Oceanumque rubra tractim obruit aethra.' This is the first instance of the word in Latin. 'Aethra' is also a Greek word transliterated into Latin from 'αἰθήρη'. As well as enlarging vocabulary in this way, the used Greek words must have added some Homeric flavour to Annales, and perhaps some additional interest as well.

The enclitic '-que' seems to have been one of Ennius' favourite connectives in the Annales. The poet contrives to use it in a Homeric way, too. He imitated Homer's use of 'τε... τε...', as for example in Iliad 1.544: $\pi\alpha\tau\eta\rho\ \alpha\upsilon\delta\rho\omega\nu\ \tau\epsilon\ \theta\epsilon\omega\nu\ \tau\epsilon$ Ennian examples are: Ann. 592 'patrem divomque hominumque', and Ann. 344 'noctesque diesque.' By using the enclitic in this way the poet had extra short syllables at his disposal, a distinct advantage when so many Latin words have long syllables only and are very difficult to fit into dactylic hexameters.

³⁹ Skutsch Ann. p.390.

⁴⁰ "urserat huc navim compulsam fluctibus pontus."

Some of the fragments of the Annales show how well the Roman Homer had mastered the hexameter. For example, Ann. 505: "labitur uncta carina per aequora cana celocis." This is a masterful line, with its sea-imagery rather reminiscent of Homer's works.

Moreover, in this line, the poet has succeeded in attaining that ease and rapidity of movement which so characterizes the poetry of Homer. Ennius used the same opening phrase in Ann. 376 too: "labitur uncta carina volat super impetus undas." This is also a very smooth, rapidly flowing verse also. The repetition would call to mind other contexts where Ennius had used the same words.

Ennius was not always so successful in writing hexameters, and some of his verses are rather leaden-footed or just plain prosaic. One example is Ann. 117: Palatuaem Furinaem Floralemque." All of the six measures are spondees. Of course, these names, with all their long syllables, would be difficult to place in any context. Perhaps the names are meant to be pondered over, or the line may reflect the source from which the poet took his material. There are quite a number of such lines. Ann. 621 has "olli creterris ex auratis hauserunt". The heaviness of the line seems almost to belie the joyful activity it describes. It must, however, be recalled that in dealing with fragments conclusions can often be only conjectural.

Other areas in which Ennius borrowed from Homer, may include the description of warriors in battle. Ennius usually changed some detail, or used the Homeric descriptions in a different sort of context. Of course the warriors of Homer's epics never saw elephants or siege-works, so presumably Ennius still had considerable scope to be original. There is at least one council of the gods, and the deities are called upon at various times, as

in Homer. Night, the sun, and dawn are animate beings as they are in the Iliad and the Odyssey. There are, then, a number of ways in which it can be seen that Quintus Ennius was inspired by Homer.

Elinor Duckett, however, observes that although Ennian borrowings from Homer may be numerous, they often do not extend beyond form. They consist merely of openings and closings of verses, phrases and even whole lines that are adapted by Ennius because he deems them suitable for the expression of his record.⁴¹ She concludes that Ennius merely cast his narrative into a Homeric mould, reproducing colours and phrases, and now and then shaping an incident in imitation of Homeric episodes.⁴² This seems to be a good summation of Ennius' attempt to write in the form and style of Homer, but this study has tried to show that Ennius owed more to Homer than merely form and style in his Annales. He wanted to create a Roman epic that had the ethos and feeling of the Homeric epics.

J. Wight Duff makes the following judgment of Ennius in his attempt to be Homeric: "If Ennius remains Homeric, he does so in virtue of rapid descriptions and of that energy with which he can make his heroes speak. What unity the work possesses lies in its permeation with the idea of greatness gradually achieved by Rome. In this sense it was a Romaid."⁴³

⁴¹ Elinor S. Duckett Studies in Ennius (Bryn Mawr; 1915) p.41.

⁴² Duckett Stud. p.45.

⁴³ J. Wight Duff A Literary History of Rome (Unwin; 1909; reprint ed. London; Benn, 1953) p.108.

Chapter 3: Other Greek Predecessors of Ennius

A. Very early Greek Epic other than the Iliad or Odyssey

The Greek poet who most influenced Quintus Ennius was undoubtedly Homer. In the years after Homer, the epic tradition continued in the works of other writers. On the one hand there was a group of poets or reciters of poetry who were alleged to be the sons and heirs of Homer, the Homeridae. They supposedly recited only authentic material handed down from Homer. T.W. Allen points out that to Pindar the Homeridae were the equivalents of rhapsodes, with a private store of material.⁴⁴ To fourth century writers they were persons who possessed the history of Homer, a body of recondite verse, and functioned as a sort of guild.⁴⁵

On the other hand, the Homeric tradition was also continued by a group of poets working in Ionia, whose poems were later loosely linked together under the name, the 'Epic Cycle'. Among these poets, style and methods were Homeric, as were most of the vocabulary and dialect used. For subject-matter, however, the poets of the 'Epic Cycle' looked to material which lay outside the scope of the Iliad and Odyssey. They chose to relate legends and myths which preceded the action of Homer's works, or happened afterwards, so that eventually there was a whole body of poetry by a variety of writers that dealt with the entire Trojan story.

The 'Epic Cycle' was a later designation for this body of poetry. The poets themselves did not use that name. During the Hellenistic period, the industrious scholars of Alexandria, among them, Zenodotus of Ephesus,

⁴⁴ Thos. W. Allen Homer: the Origins and the Transmission (Oxford: Clarendon, 1924) p.43.

⁴⁵ Allen Homer p.45.

compiled all the poems of the 'Epic Cycle', as it had become known by then, and arranged them in chronological order. From this mass of poetry, unfortunately, only a smattering of fragments remain. However, knowledge of the main threads of the stories and a few other bits of information have come through synopses made by Proclus (or Proculus) of Sicca, in the fifth century, A.D., in his Chrestomathia. This, too, was lost, but fairly copious extracts of it survived in the Bibliotheca of Patriarch Photius and other Byzantine works. By a roundabout route, involving, so to speak, epitomes of epitomes, scholars have been able to reconstruct the subject-matter of the lost poems of the 'Epic Cycle'.

The 'Epic Cycle' was a sort of connected history of the whole heroic Greek world.⁴⁶ The Kyprian Lays or Kypria contained the earliest parts of the tale of Troy. It was eleven books in length, and apparently began with the plan of Zeus to relieve the earth of her burden of too many people by a great war. The story went on to the apple of discord, the judgment of Paris, and the abduction of Helen. The gathering of the Achaeans was related in several incidents, and the tale was brought up to the point at which the quarrel between Achilles and Agamemnon breaks out. This poem was variously ascribed to Homer himself, to Stasinus of Cyprus, or to Hegesinus of Salamis.

The poems Aithiopis and the Sack of Ilium described events that took place after the close of the Iliad. These two works were attributed to Arctinus of Miletus, of whom nothing else is known. Included in Aithiopis were episodes such as the coming of the Amazon Penthesilea to

⁴⁶ In the discussion which follows, I am indebted to George Huxley Greek Epic Poetry from Eumelos to Panyassis (London: Faber & Faber, 1969) pp.144-173.

help the Trojans, the similar arrival and death of the Ethiopian Memnon, and the slaying of Achilles by Paris. The dispute between Ajax and Odysseus over the arms of Achilles formed the last part. The story related in the Sack of Ilium was rather similar to Virgil's telling of events in Book II of his Aeneid. Here were found the wooden horse, Laocoon, Sinon, the Achaeans return from Tenedos, and the actual sacking of the city by the Greeks. Final episodes dealt with the division of the spoils and the burning of Troy. There was also another re-working of the story called the Little Iliad. It seems to have been more elaborate, and was ascribed to Lesches of Pyrrha or of Mytilene in Lesbos.

The Nostoi was an epic in five books that told the stories of the hero's returns from the Trojan War, and was attributed to Agias or Hegias of Troezen. The final chapters of the Trojan saga were dealt with in the Telegony. This poem in two books regaled the further adventures of Odysseus, and told how the hero met his death at the hands of Telegonus, his son by Circe. It had, however, a happy, if somewhat bizarre ending, with Telegonus marrying Penelope and Telemachus wedding Circe. This work was ascribed to Eugammon of Cyrene, who flourished about 568 B.C.

These were the cyclic poems, then. They carried the story of Troy and all the associated myths from the beginning of the world right up to the death of Odysseus which was the end of the heroic age. All of the poems depended on what Homer had already established. Their handling of material continued in the way that he had set for them. The characters presented are Homer's characters, and they behave as they did in the Iliad and the Odyssey.

There are some differences, however, between the cyclic poems and Homer's two epics, as Evelyn-White points out.⁴⁷ Poems such as the Nostoi, for instance, show a far more exact knowledge of geography than Homer does. Another aspect in which they differ greatly is that the main interest is in facts rather than character. Epic poetry after Homer showed more fidelity to "real life". Actual places were mentioned, and some of the individuals were actually historical, rather than legendary.

Stories other than those related to the Trojan War were also found worthy of epic treatment. Another group of poems that were well-known in antiquity was called the 'Theban Cycle'. One poem of this group was the Oidipodea, of which little is known beyond the tradition that it contained 6600 lines. It told the story of Oedipus, and was attributed to Kinaithon, a Lacedaimonian poet.⁴⁸ A second poem of this cycle was the Thebais, an epic extending to 7000 lines, which told of the attack against Thebes and the events that preceded it. This poem is mentioned in the fragments of the work of the poet Callinus, who thought that Homer had written it. The first line of Thebais was " Ἄργος ἀεὶδε θεὰ πολυ-
δύκλον ἐνθ' ἄνκτες " , obviously in imitation of the Iliad.⁴⁹ Pausanias comments that he rates the Thebais as "the best poem after the Iliad and the Odyssey."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ H. G. Evelyn-White Hesiod, The Homeric Hymns, and Homerica (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1914. Loeb Library Ed., Reprint 1982 pp.xxx, xxxi.

⁴⁸ Huxley Greek Epic pp.40-42.

⁴⁹ Thos. W. Allen Homeri Opera vol.v. (Oxford, Clarendon, 1912, Reprint ed. 1978) p.113.

⁵⁰ Pausanias. Guide to Greece trans.Peter Levi (Harmonds-worth: Penguin, 1971; Reprint ed. 1984) p.327.

The Epigoni carried the Theban saga into the next generation, telling how the "successors" mounted an assault against Thebes and sacked it.⁵¹ These poems were considered a part of the larger Epic Cycle too, though the connections seem tenuous.

These brief remarks convey at least some idea of the vast body of material that had been written or was known from the archaic period of Greece. No one can tell the extent of Ennius' acquaintance with this material. A remark of the later Roman poet, Horace, in the Ars Poetica, 136-7, seems to indicate such an acquaintance on his part: "Nec sic incipies ut scriptor cyclicus olim:/ 'Fortunam Priami cantabo et nobile bellum'." This comment has long puzzled scholars. Brink suggests that the line quoted may be a translation of a proem of one of the cyclic epics no longer known.⁵² If some of the poems of the 'Epic Cycle' were still known in Augustan times, it is possible that Ennius had some access to them, too.

Thus far, all of the poems mentioned are in a rather impersonal realm where the poet speaks for a god, or at the inspiration of the Muses. The idea of invoking the Muses remained a conventioned of literature through the ages. Ennius, too, used this device to begin his work, but did not keep the Annals on a completely impersonal level as the poet speaking. His own thoughts and feelings were brought into the poem at several points, and this may be due to the influence - perhaps only indirect - of the school of poetry that sprang up on the mainland of Greece, that of Hesiod and his fellow poets.

⁵¹ Huxley Greek Epic pp.46-7.

⁵² C.O. Brink Horace on Poetry. The 'Ars Poetica'. (Cambridge, 1971) p.214.

Hesiod is really the earliest poet to reveal something of himself, and to express his thoughts as being his own, and not merely those of the Muses. He does, however, invoke the Muses at the beginning of his poems, and even describes how he encountered them on Mount Helicon, where they taught him to sing. In the Works and Days and the Theogony, the Homeric hexameter and the epic dialect are used. No other literary forms had yet been invented. The poet puts them to quite a different use from Homer.

The Theogony is a mythological treatise, with long lists of the gods and their histories back to the beginning of the world. Quintilian observes that Hesiod seldom reaches any great height, and that much of his work is taken up with names.⁵³ The Works and Days, as its name might imply, is an epic exhortation to Hesiod's brother, Perses, about the virtue of work. The subject-matter is didactic. Hesiod uses stories as exempla, gives advice on different aspects of life, makes comments on the best times to plough, and notes a list of lucky and unlucky days in the calendar. It will be noticed at once that this poet has turned away from the adventures of the great heroes, and is dealing with very down-to-earth concerns. The epic has become didactic in nature, and the life of the ordinary person has come into poetry, and with it the thoughts and values of the individual. The concern is with the present and its hardships, rather than with a glorious past.

Other epic poems seem to date from the same period, some of which were ascribed to Hesiod. One of these that is still extant is the Shield of Heracles, a poem that is mostly taken up with "an inferior description of the shield of Heracles, in imitation of the Homeric shield of Achilles

⁵³ Quintilian Inst. x.1.53.

(Iliad xviii.478ff.)."⁵⁴ There was also a Catalogue of Women, a long epic poem relating the stories of famous women which now survives only in fragments.

The Hesiodic school of poetry was much interested in the adventures of the hero Heracles. Athenaeus mentions an epic called Aigimios whose author may have been Hesiod or Kercops of Miletus.⁵⁵ This epic told the tale of the ancient Dorian king, Aigimios, who, being hard pressed in a war, invited Heracles to come and help. Heracles obliged and the war was won. Aigimios adopted Heracles' son, Hyllos, because he was so thankful, and also gave some land to the hero. H. J. Rose observes that the Aigimios was a sort of historical poem in which the poet attempted to connect the Dorians to the legendary past of the country they had over-run.⁵⁶ Here, then, is a new element added to epic. The epic is seen as a vehicle for legitimizing the claims of a conqueror, as well as a way of recording (or perhaps creating) history.

Pausanias mentions a poet from Naupactus on the Corinthian Gulf, Karkinos, to whom was ascribed the Poem of Naupactos. It seems to have been similar to the Catalogue of Women, dealing as it did with the lives of famous women. It also dealt with the story of the Argonauts, and two of the fragments are about the legend of Admetus.⁵⁷ It seems to have been mostly genealogical and quasi-historical in nature.

⁵⁴ Evelyn-White Hesiod p. xxiv.

⁵⁵ Athenaeus xiii.503d.

⁵⁶ H. J. Rose A Handbook of Greek Literature (London: Methuen & Co., 1934; Reprint ed. 1964) p.67.

⁵⁷ Huxley Greek Epic pp.69-70.

The city of Corinth in this archaic period of Greek history had also attained a position of some prominence, especially because of export of pottery. Dunbabin suggests, however, that the people of Corinth were dissatisfied with the fact that they had no glorious past extolled in Homer.⁵⁸ The Iliad mentions Corinth briefly twice, and the city is not cited in the Odyssey at all. In the 'Catalogue of the Ships', Corinth is named as a part of the kingdom of Agamemnon. Later on, a son of Corinth is referred to as one of those whom Paris slew.⁵⁹

Eumelos, a member of the ruling Bacchiad family, in the eighth century B.C., set out to provide his city with a real epic past.⁶⁰ He was quite ingenious in this undertaking. Eumelos simply adopted for Corinth a body of poetry loosely attached to a place called Ephyre. Ephyre was a rather obscure place, of which Homer says only: ἔστι πόλις Ἐφύρη μυχῷ Ἀργεὸς ἑπποβότοιο.⁶¹

No one knew much about Ephyre, but it was thought to be somewhere on the Greek mainland. The legends and myths attached to this obscure place included the stories of Jason and Medea, and the Argonauts. The verses from Eumelos' work that survive are found mainly in the Scholia to Apollonius Rhodios, because of their relevance there, as Huxley notes.⁶² Perhaps Eumelos influenced or inspired Apollonius in his epic on the voyage of the Argo.

⁵⁸ T. J. Dunbabin 'The Early History of Corinth' JHS 68 (1948) 59-69, p.66.

⁵⁹ Il. II. 570-1; XIII.663-5.

⁶⁰ Huxley Greek Epic p.61.

⁶¹ Il. VI.152.

⁶² Huxley Greek Epic. p.63.

Pausanias cites a prose history of Corinth as perhaps being a work of Eumelos.⁶³ Dunbabin points out that it is generally agreed that what Pausanias had before him was a prose work which purported to be an epitome of Eumelos' verses.⁶⁴

Eumelos seems to have been the earliest poet to have thought in terms of writing the history of his city, or perhaps of providing a history for his homeland. Huxley explains the genealogy created by the poet to account for the change of name from Ephyre to Corinth. The brothers Sikyon and Korinthos were given rule over the lands watered by the Asopus (Sikyon), and the land of Ephyre, respectively, by their father, who was a great-grandson of Helios.⁶⁵ No doubt other details were worked out equally expeditiously, with the poet adapting his material as necessary. Huxley concludes that the poet was so successful in giving his city a glorious if rather fictitious past that Corinth produced no other native-born in the archaic period, as far as can be determined from literary material available.⁶⁶

At Athens, too, poets were at work in the archaic period. Pausanias quotes at second hand some verses of Hegesinous, who apparently wrote a poem dealing with the legendary history of Attica called the Atthis.⁶⁷ Huxley also mentions a Theseid which may have treated the ancient legends of the hero Theseus, but no fragments survive.⁶⁸ There are also other poems known from this period, mainly by title alone, which were epic in style and written in hexameters. Among them are the Minyas and several works which told the many myths of Heracles.

⁶³ Pausanias ii.1.1.

⁶⁴ Dunbabin Early History p.66.

⁶⁵ Huxley Greek Epic p.63.

⁶⁶ Huxley Greek Epic p.79.

⁶⁷ Pausanias ix.29.1.

⁶⁸ Huxley Greek Epic p.118.

Even Lacedaimon had its own epic poet in the archaic period.

This was Kinaithon, to whom was ascribed the Oidipodea mentioned above on page 19. He may also have composed a poem on Heracles and his adventures, but Huxley observes that the sources are not at all clear.⁶⁹ A few fragments of the Genealogies are extant, and this is the only work that can be attached with any certainty to Kinaithon. Huxley notes that the fragments deal with Crete, the Argonautica, and with the family of Menelaus, and that some of Kinaithon's genealogies differ from others that are known.⁷⁰

The major importance of all of these early epics is that they preserved many ancient stories, and hence made them available to later poets and writers. Perhaps their techniques, style, and vocabulary were sources of influence to those who followed them, too. Eumelos, for example, seems to have been the first to use the epic as a vehicle to convey historical material and, in particular, to use epic to glorify the past of his city. Hegesinus attempted to relay in an epic the legendary past of the land of Attica. To judge from the scanty fragments of poetry that have survived from the archaic period, it still seems that Quintus Ennius undertook something totally unique. The archaic period saw the tentative beginnings of epic being used for historical purposes, but, as Skutsch notes, "...we know of no epic poem before Ennius' Annales which covered the history of a nation from its beginnings to the poet's own day."⁷¹

⁶⁹ Huxley Greek Epic. p.86.

⁷⁰ Huxley Greek Epic. p.87.

⁷¹ Skutsch Annales p.6.

B. Epic Poetry in the Lyric Age

The Iliad and the Odyssey were composed by a poet who remained anonymous himself. That is, he did not enter his poetry as a particular persona and guide the outcome of the story. He was merely the narrator of the story, from which the audience then drew its own conclusions. The poet did not reveal his personal feelings at all, and the epic was essentially impersonal. In the poems of Hesiod, a difference appeared. This poet still used the Homeric hexameter and the Homeric dialect, but he did not merely relate the ancient tales. His poetry reveals a man with his concern for homely things which touch his everyday life. The old myths and legends began to be more simply exempla from which lessons might be learned. Poetry took on a didactic and personal aspect. The discussion thus far has shown how these early poets may have influenced the Annales of Quintus Ennius. As times continued to change, so did literary pursuits, and gradually the epic style gave way to the rise of lyric poetry, the poetry of the individual. Some of the lyric poets, in pursuing their various personal interests, may have had an influence on Ennius, too.

In the Lyric Age, poets turned away from the epic style. Although the hexameter was retained, to it was added a pentameter, - creating the elegiac metre, which proved much more apt for conveying personal thoughts and feelings. Experimentation brought about new metres as well, thus enabling each poet to have a wide scope in his individual works. The same wide scope was available to each poet when it came to choosing themes. The critic, R. Lewis, sums up neatly many of the themes that occur in the beautiful poetry of the Lyric Age. "In these poems there are feelings we recognize: man's

response to a season's change; his joy in love; his pain and despair in war; his brooding thoughtfulness about himself; his courage in confronting nature; his sorrow with advancing age; his puzzlement over life and death."⁷² Several of the poets also turned their interest to what might be termed historical or national poetry.

Callinus was a poet who lived in the seventh century, B.C., in Ephesus. In the fragments that remain of his elegiacs Callinus urges his fellow-citizens to fight bravely in the struggle with a neighboring city, or perhaps the invading Cimmerians. (The chronology is not clear.) The poet considers it to be an honour for a man to do battle, and claims that people would look up to a brave warrior. The vocabulary used by the poet is largely Homeric, but his emphasis is more on the individual. It is not a matter of following great heroes into battle. The poet says every soldier can become a hero in the defense of his city.

Mimnermus of Colophon flourished about 630 B.C. He wrote chiefly in the elegiac metre, but he developed the amatory side of elegy. The few extant fragments of his poetry exhibit a melancholy tone. Many of the fragments deal with the short-lived pleasures of youth. His interest here, however, is due to the ascription to him of a work called Smyrneis, which may have dealt with the legends and founding of Smyrna. As only two lines have survived and no other information has come down, no firm judgments can be made.

Tyrtaeus lived and worked in Sparta of Laconia. He flourished

⁷² R. Lewis Muse of the Round Sky. Lyric Poetry of Ancient Greece (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1969) p.12.

about 650 B.C., and Strabo says he served as a general in the second Messenian War.⁷³ He wrote patriotic poems in elegiacs to rouse the Spartans and to encourage them in the war. Of his works only fragments remain, and in them the poet appeals to courage. His emphasis is on the excellence of the individual soldier fighting for his country. There are some Homeric echoes in the poetry of Tyrtaeus, in both language and style, but Tyrtaeus uses them, as Callinus does, to urge on the individual to attain heroic status by doing battle on behalf of his homeland.

Another poet of the city of Colophon was Xenophanes. He flourished about 565 B.C., and wrote a variety of works. Among those ascribed to him were poems entitled The Founding of Colophon and The Colonizing of Elea in Italy. The titles certainly seem to be historical in nature, but nothing else is known, and no fragments survive. A philosophical poem dealing with the origin of the universe survives in fragments, and other surviving fragments are criticisms of Homer and Hesiod.

A few of the poets of the Lyric Age, then, turned their attention to historical and national themes. Callinus urged his fellow-citizens to take up arms bravely, while Tyrtaeus exhorted each soldier to seek excellence on the battlefield. Both felt that the individual fighting for his country would attain heroic status. Mimnermus and Xenophanes may have written works detailing the history of their cities. Of more interest to these poets was the present and the demands made on the individual in war-time.

Aspects of the style of Quintus Ennius which might be termed 'lyric' are dealt with in an interesting study by George Sheets.⁷⁴ He points out

⁷³ Strabo 8.352.

⁷⁴ George Sheets "Ennius Lyricus" ICS viii.1(1983)22-32.

that Ennius set a precedent for borrowing from and making use of material found in the works of earlier poets, and especially the poets of Greece. The attitude of Ennius and others was that they were free to do as they wished with what they had borrowed, and also free to adapt this material without any restrictions. This concept remained a fundamental principle of Roman literary activity, but Ennius was the first to make use of it. For example, Sheets observes that Ennius, in the Proem of Book I of Annales, said that he was Homer reincarnated. The poet, however, set this thought in a scene which is rather more reminiscent of Hesiod and his encounter with the Muses. Moreover, Ennius also had Callimachus in mind, for the dream-motif is borrowed from the Aitia. The result of all this, according to Sheets, is that a reborn Homer experiences the privileged initiation of Hesiod and retravels the aesthetic journey of Callimachus. Ennius is free to mix together things previously unmixable.⁷⁵ Quintus Ennius thus makes it plain to his audience that he is doing what Homer would have done had he been a Roman, but that he is not limiting himself to Homeric style and technique. He borrows and adapts freely to create his own unique style.

Sheets then goes on to show that Ennius broadened the epic style to include features that are generally associated with lyric, and especially with the epinikia of Pindar. Lyric and epic may be similar in that they can both celebrate the famous deeds of men, but there is a great difference in how the poets approach their subjects, especially in the attitude they take towards those subjects. In heroic epic the poet keeps his distance. He has no particular persona because the heroic narrative of character and action

⁷⁵ Sheets "Ennius" p.23.

move forward on their own and do not need the poet's interpretive commentary on them. In the epinikia, however, Pindar does not let the audience overlook the fact that the famous deeds of men are preserved through his agency. For example, in Pythians III.114-5, Pindar remarks, "Greatness in noble songs/ endures through time: but to win this, few find easy."⁷⁶ Similar sentiments are found fairly frequently elsewhere in the poet's work. Pindar is also at pains to emphasize that the true significance of these heroic achievements can only be revealed through his sophia, as he indicates in Olympians II. 83-6: "In the quiver under my elbow/ are many swift arrows that speak to the wise,/ but for the crowd they need interpreters./ He knows, whose blood tells him much."⁷⁷ There is very much a feeling, as Sheets suggests, that the poet, his poem, and the subject are inseparable from each other.⁷⁸ Sheets believes Quintus Ennius meant to imply exactly the same as Pindar in Annales 12 and 13: "Latos per populos res atque poemata nostra/ clara cluebunt." "Widely among the peoples shall my subject and my poem have renown."⁷⁹ As Sheets observes, this kind of conceit is not usually found in epic.

Another example of a lyric intrusion into epic noted by Sheets is Ennius' personal evaluation of his subject for which there is evidence in a notice by the Elder Pliny: "Q. Ennius T. Caecilium Teucrum fratremque eius praecipue miratus propter eos sextum decimum adiecit annalem." "Quintus Ennius added a sixteenth book to his Annals because he especially admired Titus Caecilius Teucer and his brother."⁸⁰ Ennius apparently added the

⁷⁶ C. M. Bowra The Odes of Pindar (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p.99.

⁷⁷ Bowra Odes p.83.

⁷⁸ Sheets "Ennius" p.25.

⁷⁹ E.H. Warmington Remains of Old Latin v.1 (W. Heinemann Ltd. Loeb Library, 1935; Reprint ed. 1956) p.3.

⁸⁰ Pliny the Elder N.H. vii.101. (My translation.)

sixteenth book to his poem so that he could include the exploits of the two brothers. The poet is in full control of the subject-matter to be included in his poem, and he can add or subtract from it as he sees fit. Sheets discovers a similar attitude in Pindar's Pythians vii, where that poet declares in line 13 that "There call to me also/ Five victories at the Isthmus," and in line 18, "And in this last happy fortune/ some pleasure I have."⁸¹ The individual personality of the poet intrudes into his poem here, whereas it was not usual for an epic poet to enter his narrative in any way. Aurelius Victor remarks on the Ambracian victory of M. Fulvius Nobilior: "Quam victoriam per se magnificam Q. Ennius amicus eius insigni laude celebravit."⁸² This notice prompts Sheets to ask why 'insigni laude'? Did the passage in question include, perhaps, a personal encomium? He compares Victor's statement to Annales 363-5: "Unus homo nobis cunctando restituit rem./ Noenum rumores ponebat ante salutem,/ ergo postque magisque viri nunc gloria claret." "One man by his delays restored the state;/ Hearsay he would not put before our safety;/ Hence to this day the warrior's glory shines --/ In after time, and more than it shone once."⁸³ Sheets suggests that the 'nobis' and the 'nunc' in this passage hint at a personal perspective the poet wants his audience to share. Good deeds are great examples: the lyric poet draws from them the appropriate inferences for his audience and so does Quintus Ennius.⁸⁴

Another passage Sheets considers is Annales 522-3, which Vahlen, whom Sheets is citing, assigned to the end of Book xv. Skutsch, however, puts

⁸¹ Bowra Odes p.34.

⁸² Aurelius Victor de Vir. Illust. 52.3.

⁸³ Warmington Remains p.133.

⁸⁴ Sheets "Ennius" p.27.

it among his "Sedis Incertae Fragmenta." "Sicuti fortis equus spatio qui saepe supremo/ vicit Olympia nunc senio confectus quiescit." "Just as a valiant steed who has often won victories at the Olympic games in the last lap, now at length, worn out by old age, takes rest."⁸⁵ Cicero, who preserved the citation in de Senectute 14, seems to feel that Ennius is definitely speaking of himself, ready to take a rest after completing his work. Sheets notes that if the reference of the fragment is indeed to Ennius' reasons for concluding his poem at this point, then the audience perceives a persona of the poet very similar to that in Pliny's notice.⁸⁶ The poem may end if the poet wills it so, not necessarily because the story is completed. Skutsch remarks about these lines that this is the first example of an epic poet applying a simile to himself.⁸⁷ The same scholar notes further that there are two more references to old age in the Annales which appear to apply to the poet himself.⁸⁸ The first is Ann. 410: "post aetate pigret sufferre laborem," and the other a statement attributed to Ennius by Gellius after Varro that the poet was sixty-seven years old when he was writing Book xii of the Annales. It is possible, then, that Ennius was referring to himself in these passages, and these and other personal intrusions of the poet into his epic are rather unusual.

George Sheets concludes that Ennius transformed epic style as part of a reborn tradition of epic poetry, one based on a new language wielded by a new Homer, and making use of adaptations from many sources.⁸⁹ His article gives some interesting insights into how the poets of the Lyric Age could have influenced Ennius. Even though so little of the Annales has survived, one can

⁸⁵ Warmington Remains p.145.

⁸⁶ Sheets "Ennius" p.28.

⁸⁷ Skutsch Annals p.674.

⁸⁸ Skutsch Annals p.674.

⁸⁹ Sheets "Ennius" p.32.

still see from the fragments that the Annales was not merely a poem in the epic tradition. It seems to combine many aspects of different types of poetry, and so many have been influenced in a variety of ways by many authors.

C. Epic Poetry in the Hellenistic Age

There was a flurry of interest in epic poetry again late in the fifth and early in the fourth centuries, B.C. Once more historical/national topics came to the fore as suitable subject-matter for epic. It was as though the old stock of myths and legends had been exhausted, or merely that a new interest in things historical had arisen. Perhaps Quintus Ennius may have known something of the works of the following three poets and so may have been influenced by them in some way in the writing of his Annales.

Antimachus of Colophon flourished about 410 B.C., and was a grammarian as well as an epic poet. His lengthy epic was entitled Thebais, and told the story of the siege of Thebes. This work was apparently admired, or at least well-known in antiquity. Cicero called Thebais "that long and famous poem of his."⁹⁰ Newman notes that Antimachus took 24 books even to get his heroes to the gates of Thebes.⁹¹ Perhaps that was the reason that Cicero observed a little further on in his discussion that in the middle of a reading by Antimachus, everyone got up and left except Plato. Cicero also noted that a poem of such obscure allusions could from its nature only win the approval of the few.⁹² Quintilian praises Antimachus for his vigour, dignity, and elevation of language. He goes on to say, however, that although practically all teachers of literature rank him second among epic poets (presumably after Homer), he himself finds Antimachus deficient in charm and totally devoid of real art.⁹³ The fragments of the Thebais that survive are citations made by

⁹⁰ Cicero Brutus 191

⁹¹ J.K. Newman The Classical Epic Tradition (Madison, Wisc. & London, 1986) p.101.

⁹² Cicero Brutus 191.

⁹³ Quint. Inst. x.1.53.

later authors to illustrate obscure words and unusual mythological detail. In his use of such material as neologisms and obscure mythological details, Antimachus perhaps set a precedent for the Hellenistic poets who would later pride themselves on their learning. Quintus Ennius had to resort to neologisms, too, to extend Latin vocabulary. He may have been influenced by Antimachus in this.

Choerilus the poet from the island of Samos, lived from about 479 to about 399 B.C. In a fragment still extant the poet laments the decline of the epic tradition, and exclaims that all the arts are at an end, the ways are all used up and there is simply no place for him to drive his newly-yoked chariot.⁹⁴ This conclusion led him to turn to recent history as a source of subject-matter. He is said to have composed a verse history of the Persian Wars. He is also credited with an epic poem called Samiaca. Nothing is known of this work. Plutarch notes that Lysander kept Choerilus in his retinue to adorn his achievements with verse.⁹⁵ The poet spent his last days in Macedon, at the court of Archelaus.

J. K. Newman points out that Choerilus of Samos was the first poet to honour contemporary military achievements in heroic hexameter verses.⁹⁶ He also suggests that the use of 'authorial prefaces' to epic was as old as Hesiod, and observes that Choerilus had used his preface to comment on his difficulties.⁹⁷ Ennius was taken along on the Aetolian campaign in 189 B.C.

⁹⁴ H. Lloyd-Jones, P. Parsons, ed. Supplementum Hellenisticum (deGruyter: Berlin & N.Y., 1983) p.157. My translation.

⁹⁵ Plutarch Lysander xviii.4.

⁹⁶ Newman Class. Epic p.17.

⁹⁷ Newman Class. Epic p.377.

by Fabius so that he could record the history of the war, and, presumably, the noteworthy deeds of the general who was his patron. This work would have been similar to what the earlier poet did at Lysander's court. Also, Ennius' Annales celebrated the military achievements of contemporaries, for the poet's whole field of study was history, ancient and modern, as had been that of Choerilus. Ennius makes use of 'authorial prefaces' just as Choerilus did. The Roman poet uses prefaces to comment on his age, his difficulties, and his reasons for not going into lengthy detail.

The third poet of this late epic revival was Panyassis who was a cousin of the historian, Herodotus, and, like him, a native of Halicarnassus. He wrote a poem called Heracleia detailing the adventures of the hero Heracles. Only small fragments remain of this and his other work which was an elegiac poem named Ionika, which dealt with the settlement of Ionia by the Greeks. Quintilian feels that Panyassis combined the qualities of Hesiod and Antimachus although he was inferior to them in style, yet he surpassed Hesiod⁹⁸ in the choice of his subject and Antimachus in the arrangement of his material. Here was another poet who dealt with historical subject-matter, and perhaps could have influenced Ennius.

Ennius was undoubtedly greatly influenced by the poets of the Hellenistic Age itself. This period is also called the Alexandrian Age because of the school of poets that flourished at the great library of Alexandria. Many of the poets were philologists and grammarians as well as writers, and they also collected and researched manuscripts.

The poet Apollonius of Rhodes was from Alexandria originally, but retired to Rhodes to make a revision of his epic poem, the Argonautica.

⁹⁸ Quint. Inst. x.1.54.

It is written in hexameters, extends to a length of 5,835 verses, and is divided into four books. It is extant in its entirety, and deals with the story of Jason and his epic voyage to procure the golden fleece. The love between Jason and Medea is dwelt on at some length, an unusual intrusion in epic. Skutsch suggests that in the passage from Annales (34-50) which deals with the dream of Ilia, Ennius makes use of a realism developed in a similar passage in the Argonautica.⁹⁹ In Book iii.616 ff., the Greek poet describes Medea sleeping and dreaming about Jason, the contest of the oxen, and of turning away from her parents to marry him. She is startled and wakes up, making several hesitant attempts to go to her sister's room. Apollonius uses short, choppy, rather disjointed phrases to show her halting and uncertain movements. The effect created is one of unreality and action suspended. The picture is vivid and rings true. Ennius' scene is similar in some ways: Ilia is startled out of sleep and reports her dream; she speaks of vague, fleeting shadows of things, and mentions that there was no path for her feet to follow. She has a vision of her father who tells her of the sorrows she must suffer, and her foreboding about this is palpable. The effect that Ennius attains is similar to that created by Apollonius in his scene: there is an aura of mystery and uncertainty about everything. Skutsch thinks that Ennius is superior in the poetic merit of his dream psychology.

It is possible that Apollonius could also have influenced Ennius in matters of vocabulary. For example, in Ann.384, Ennius has: "horrescit telis exercitus asper utrimque." This is somewhat reminiscent of Argonautica iii.1355-7: "The plot of Ares, the death-dealer, bristled with sturdy shields and double-pointed spears and shining helmets."¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ Skutsch Annals p.194.

¹⁰⁰ Translation of R.C. Seaton (Loeb ed.)

In Skutsch's commentary on Ann. 384, he identifies Lycophron, a contemporary of Apollonius of Rhodes, as having been the first poet to combine the two Homeric ideas of the bristling field of corn and the bristling field of battle. Skutsch cites Lycophron's Alexandra 252: "It bristles just as the fields shine bright with the spear-heads of corn."¹⁰¹ This line is compared to Iliad 13.339: "The field of death bristled with the long flesh-cutting spears."¹⁰² Homer uses the imagery both for battle and for a field of corn, but Lycophron seems to combine the two pictures.

It is thought that Apollonius also included among his works a group of poems in different metres called 'Foundations', *Κτίσεις*, which may have dealt with the foundation legends of a number of cities, perhaps even Alexandria itself. No fragments have survived, but historical poetry of this type may well have influenced Quintus Ennius for he seems to have told the foundation legends of Rome in the Annales.

A contemporary of Apollonius who also wrote epic poems was Rhianus of Crete. To him are ascribed several epics, among them poems about Achaia, Elis, and also Heracles. The work for which Rhianus is best known is his long epic called the Messenika. This poem was not less than six books in length and was certainly considered an historical epic because Pausanias used it as his main source of information on the Second Messenian War.¹⁰³ The poem apparently dealt with the story of Aristomenes, the half-legendary leader of the Messenians, and their struggle with Sparta. There are not enough fragments surviving to give any more information. Here, though, there may have been another precedent for Quintus Ennius in using an epic poem as a vehicle for history.

¹⁰¹ Skutsch Annals p.548.

¹⁰² Translation of E.V. Rieu (Penguin ed.) pp.428, 243.

¹⁰³ Pausanias iv.6.1ff.

Callimachus was probably the poet of the Alexandrian period who most influenced Quintus Ennius. His works included a catalogue of the manuscripts in the Great Library, epigrams, hymns in a variety of metres, iambics and short epics. One of his most famous poems was the Aitia, a didactic elegy in four books, which dealt with mythological and legendary origins of places and other related material. As was mentioned above on page 29, some scholars feel that Ennius may have borrowed the dream motif at the beginning of his Annales from a part of Callimachus' Aitia where the Greek poet met the Muses in a dream.

Another area in which Callimachus may have influenced Ennius is in vocabulary. Skutsch, for example, sees in Ann. 63, 'qui est omnibus princeps', a resemblance to Aitia 1.7.34:¹⁰⁴ Φᾶσις ποταμῶν ἡμετέρων βασιλευς. Ennius' use of compound words might be another area in which he was influenced by Callimachus. This poet and his fellow Alexandrians often coined new words or made up learned compounds to achieve a certain nuance. An interesting example in Ennius' Annales is found in line 300: "rastros dentefabres capsit causa poliendi/ agri." The word 'dentefabres' is found only here in Latin literature. The use of this 'new' word with the archaic future 'capsit', and the rather unusual imagery of 'grooming the field' may indicate some influence from the Alexandrine poets.

In the discussion above (pages 38-9), it was noted that some scholars feel that Ennius' intrusion of personal thoughts into his epic may have been inspired by Pindar. Gordon Williams, however, observes that the intrusions may have come from the influence of Callimachus.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ Skutsch Annals p.214.

¹⁰⁵ Williams Trad. & Orig. p.697.

He refers especially to the beginning of the narrative where Ennius explains how he became the new Homer, and also to the beginning of Book vii, where the poet gives his reason for not dealing with the First Punic War in his Annales. At other points, as has been noted above (pages 31-2), the poet made several references to his own old age. Williams does not refer to a specific passage of the works of Callimachus, but in the Aitia, the Greek poet also speaks of old age: "...that I may then shed old age, which weighs upon me like the Three-cornered Island upon deadly Enceladus."¹⁰⁶ This is certainly very similar to what Ennius says in his Annales. Perhaps the burden of old age was something of a topos or commonplace in literature as well, for Cicero also makes several references to old age in much the same terms, also. Williams concludes that Ennius may have modelled his epic on Homer, but it is a Homer viewed through the artistic eyes of a Callimachus.¹⁰⁷ Quintus Ennius took inspiration from different sources in fashioning his unique poem.

One last poet of the Alexandrian period with whom Ennius might have been familiar is Aratus. He composed a poem in hexameters called the Phainomena, extending to 1154 lines, and still extant today. The Phainomena was based on the work of the earlier astronomer, Eudoxus of Cnidus, and it is a treatise on the stars which makes much use of geography and mythology connected with the various celestial bodies. Skutsch suggests that the Ennian phrase 'in nocte serena' (Ann. 387) may have been derived from Phainomena 323, where Aratus uses the phrase καθαρὴ ἐνὶ νυκτί. ¹⁰⁸ Later on, Cicero would find the Phainomena of Aratus interesting enough to translate into Latin, and if Ennius knew it, no doubt it was of some interest

¹⁰⁶ C.A. Trypanis The Penguin Book of Greek Verse (1971) p.310.

¹⁰⁷ Williams Trad. & Orig. p.696.

¹⁰⁸ Skutsch Annals p.552.

to him also, but perhaps more for its poetic technique than for its subject-matter.

These were some of the poets of the Hellenistic or Alexandrian Age, talented and learned scholars who added much to the world of literature by their research and experimentation. There is much in the Annales of Quintus Ennius to show that he was quite familiar with the world and work of the Alexandrians, and that he was influenced by them.

In this chapter the discussion of the various Greek poets has shown the great abundance of material that may have been available to Quintus Ennius in his work. Ennius sought to make his subject of interest to all while giving it treatment worthy of such lofty and noble material. He was able to adapt freely from a variety of poetic techniques and styles to create something which would be a lasting treasure for the ages. The idea of poetry bestowing immortality on its subject seems to be found first in Pindar. Ennius brings out his awareness of that fact in Ann. 12-3: "Latos per populos res atque poemata nostra/ clara cluebunt." Skutsch thinks the poet meant to say something similar in Ann. 514, if only the rest of the passage had survived: "dum quidem unus homo Romanus toga superescit."¹⁰⁹ Would the rest of the verses say something about the poet's name being known also? Ennius, in his own epitaph, expressed the same certainty: "Nemo me lacrimis decoret, nec funera flatu/ faxit. cur? voluto vivus per ora virum." In view of the amount of scholarly attention the fragments have received, Ennius' hope and prophecy can be said to have been fulfilled.

¹⁰⁹ Skutsch Annals p.667.

Chapter 4: Ennius' Roman Predecessors

Quintus Ennius had many predecessors among the poets of Greece. He may have had access to a large amount of material no longer extant, and may have been influenced in a variety of ways by Greek poets. However, at the time he was writing, in the late third and early second centuries, B.C., Latin literature had barely begun, so there was not a great body of material in Latin on which the poet could build nor were there many Roman poets who preceded him. Two poets only had composed works at Rome before Ennius. They were Livius Andronicus and Cnaeus Naevius.

Livius Andronicus was a Greek of south Italy who was brought to Rome as a slave after the fall of Tarentum in 272 B.C. Suetonius speaks of him teaching Latin and Greek: "...antiquissimi doctorum ... (Livium et Ennium dico...) nihil amplius quam Graecos interpretabantur, aut si quid ipsi Latine praelegebant."¹¹⁰ Certainly there was not much subject-matter to be taught in Latin. Wight Duff points out that a study of the Twelve Tables of Law may have been useful but not aesthetic, while a study of the few old Saturnian verses available was neither useful nor aesthetic.¹¹¹ There was a real need of something to fill the gap. Livius Andronicus set out to provide this by translating the Odyssey of Homer into Latin verses. Livius chose the native Saturnian metre for his poem, and must have succeeded in giving it some authentic Roman flavour, for it was used as a textbook in Roman schools for years. The poet Horace recalls: "Non equidem insector delendave carmine

¹¹⁰ Suetonius de Grammaticis 1.

¹¹¹ J. Wight Duff A Literary History of Rome (Unwin; 1909 Reprint ed. London: Benn, 1953) p.108.

Livi/ esse reor, memini quae plagosum mihi parvo/ Orbilium dictare."¹¹²

Cicero knew the poem well, too, and observes that: "...nam et Odyssia Latina est sic tamquam opus aliquod Daedali Livianae fabulae non satis dignae quae iterum legantur."¹¹³

Modern scholars vary in their opinions about the worth of the 'Odyssia'. Few fragments remain, so of course it is difficult to judge their value. Wight Duff thinks that Livius' selection of the Odyssey was a testimony to the acumen of Livius.¹¹⁴ Wigodsky expands on Wight Duff's idea to note that Andronicus' choice was probably influenced by the traditional identification of Sicily and Italy as the setting of Odysseus' wanderings.¹¹⁵ The Roman people of the day likely appreciated their language being linked to the adventures of the great hero, and perhaps they could then more easily identify with the other Homeric heroes, too. Livius evidently made a great effort to make his poem memorable, and to cause it to have appeal for his Roman audience. For example, he Romanized some of the names of the deities: *Μοῖρα* became 'Morta', and *Ποσειδών* became 'Neptune'. Wigodsky remarks that the Romanization of names and epithets both human and divine, and also the use of the Saturnian metre, were intended to appeal to Italic sentiment.¹¹⁶

Wight Duff wittily observes that the number of fragments whose place is uncertain is the best proof of Livius' inexact translation.¹¹⁷ The Latin 'Odyssia' began with: "Virum mihi, Camena, insece versutum." It is interesting to note that the poet calls on the Italic 'Camena', rather than the Greek Muse,

¹¹² Horace Epistles ii.1.69-71.

¹¹³ Cicero Brutus xviii.71.

¹¹⁴ Wight Duff Literary History p.123.

¹¹⁵ M. Wigodsky Virgil and Early Latin Poetry (Wiesbaden: Hermes Eizelschiften, 1972) p.16.

¹¹⁶ Wigodsky Virgil p.16.

¹¹⁷ J. Wight Duff Literary History p.124.

thus bringing in a more local flavour to the Romans. The line does not quite have the drama of Homer's ἄνδρα μοι ἔννεπε, μοῦσα, πολύτροπον, ὃς μάλα πολλὰ. Ennius, however, liked Livius' use of the word 'insece', and used it similarly in Ann. 322, the first fragment of Book x: "Insece, Musa, manu Romanorum induperator." Note that Ennius uses 'Muse' rather than 'Camena'. Quintus Ennius sought to cast his Roman epic into a Greek mould, while Livius sought to cast the Greek epic into a Roman one. In his commentary on Ann. line 322, Skutsch notes that Andronicus had used the highly archaic form, 'insece', as a literal rendering of Homer's ἔννεπε, and that Ennius, who generally shuns extreme archaisms, saw the advantage of using this one for tone and flavour.¹¹⁸ Perhaps the word 'insece' had also become a word one would expect to find in the context of beginning an epic, or a new section of an epic, even if it was not in everyday use.

Wigodsky suggests that the 'Odyssea' must have retained some interest for later poets because it was a first attempt at the creation of a Latin epic diction.¹¹⁹ This first attempt at or beginning of Latin epic diction was certainly a notable contribution to the growth of a Latin literature. Quintus Ennius at least had some point from which to begin his search for suitable epic vocabulary. Ennius' use of the word 'insece' in a similar way to that of Livius has already been discussed. Another word he used in the same way as Livius was 'mandebat' in Ann. 125: "volturus in spineto miserum mandebat hominem." Livius' line is: "cum socios nostros mandisset impius Cyclops" (Morel, 32). Skutsch emphasizes that this verb stresses the visual aspect of

¹¹⁸ Skutsch Annals p.499.

¹¹⁹ Wigodsky Virgil p.16.

eating and therefore tends to be used in scenes of horror such as the Cyclops devouring Odysseus' companions.¹²⁰ In Ann. 444, Ennius uses the word 'Saturnie', probably modelling his vocative form after 'filie' in one fragment of Livius, and 'Laertie' found in another fragment (Morel, 2, 38), as Skutsch suggests.¹²¹ Another Livian echo found in the work of Ennius is in Ann. 589 "ausus est hoc ex ore tuo." The last three words were used by Livius in: "Mea puera, quid verbi ex tuo ore supra/ fugit?" (Morel, 3) This verse was Livius' translation of the Homeric $\tau \acute{\epsilon} \kappa \nu \omicron \nu \epsilon \mu \omicron \nu, \pi \omicron \lambda \acute{o} \nu$
 $\sigma \epsilon \epsilon \pi \omicron \varsigma \phi \acute{\upsilon} \gamma \epsilon \nu \epsilon \rho \kappa \omicron \varsigma \omicron \delta \acute{o} \nu \tau \omega \nu,$
 found at Odyssey I.64 and elsewhere. The translation does not have the force of the Homeric line, nor does it convey the idea of a forbidden word spoken that should have been held back.

Whatever the poetic merits of the 'Odyssia' of Livius Andronicus from the few examples cited one can see at least that it provided some inspiration to later poets. It is difficult to say whether Livius may have influenced Ennius in any other way besides in vocabulary. Perhaps it was he who inspired the idea of a Roman Homer, for he certainly tried to bring a Roman flavour to Greek epic and to make it more accessible to the Romans. Livius Andronicus laid a foundation on which Ennius could build. He began the creation of an epic diction for the Latin language, and showed that epic could exist in Latin. He also opened up a new world to the Romans, by showing how Greek works could be translated and used, for he himself translated many Greek plays also and brought them to the Roman stage. Livius Andronicus created all sorts of possibilities for the growth of Latin literature.

¹²⁰ Skutsch Annals p.278.

¹²¹ Skutsch Annals p.602.

Gnaeus Naevius, Ennius' other Roman predecessor in poetry, was a Roman from Capua, at least so it was commonly held, because Gellius refers to the 'Campanian haughtiness' of his epitaph.¹²² His epitaph is as follows:

Immortalis mortalis si foret fas flere,
Flerent divae Camenae Naeviom poetam:
Itaque postquam est Orci traditus thensauro,
Oblitei sunt Romai loquier lingua Latina. (Morel, 64-67)

One can see why Gellius might have felt that way. Naevius served as a soldier in the First Punic War, and later on he was inspired to write an epic poem about the war. He also wrote and produced many plays, including some comedies on Greek subjects, and others on Roman or Italian subjects. Volcatius Sedigitus placed Naevius third in his list of the writers of comedy: "Dein Naevius qui fervet pretio in tertio."¹²³ In some of his plays on Roman subjects Naevius attacked leading men of the state, and was cast into prison. After making apologies in two plays written while in prison, he was released. However, his opponents either did not forgive him, or possibly he resumed his attacks. For some reason or other, he was driven into exile, and died in Utica in northern Africa. Jocelyn believes the poet composed his Carmen Belli Punici in his old age while in exile.¹²⁴

The Carmen Belli Punici was an epic poem in seven books which dealt mainly with the First Punic War. The poem did not merely tell the story of the war, but apparently looked back through history to delve into the causes of the enmity between the Romans and the Carthaginians. Scholars are not completely clear as to how Naevius handled his material because there are so few fragments. Some think that he introduced the mythological aspect

¹²² Gellius N.A. xviii.9.5.

¹²³ Gellius xv.24.

¹²⁴ H.D. Jocelyn "The Poems of Quintus Ennius", ANRW (1972) p.998.

as an excursus, once he had begun his discussion of the war, and then returned to the war itself. Others think Naevius may have handled all of his material in a chronological way, and so may have begun with the mythology. Mackail notes that Naevius showed a constructive power of a very high order in his interweaving of the great pageant of history with the ancient legends of both cities, and in his connecting it through the story of Aeneas to the war of Troy.¹²⁵ Indeed, he must have been a fairly skillful poet to be able to combine so many elements. Perhaps it was from Naevius, then, that Quintus Ennius got the idea of writing the whole history of Rome as an epic poem. Naevius showed him what could be done in a poem by juxtaposing mythology and history.

The Carmen Belli Punici was composed in the Saturnian metre. Ennius remarks at the beginning of the seventh book of Annales: "scripsere alii rem/vorsibus quos olim Faunei vatesque canebant." (Ann. 206-7) Most scholars think that he is referring to Naevius and his use of the Saturnians. Skutsch comments that the Saturnian line is very much a mystery with regard to its origin, its name, and its nature, though it did possess dignity and force.¹²⁶ He suggests that it is the short, sharp cola which give the Saturnian metre its force. He notes, however, that the hammering rhythm of its brief cola impeded the free flow of the sentence, and made the metre unsuitable as a vehicle of sustained narrative.¹²⁷ Perhaps this was one of the reasons Quintus Ennius turned to the hexameter. Of course, there were other factors as well that influenced Ennius' choice of metre. He felt that he was doing something different from what Naevius and others had done, and that the hexameter was a

¹²⁵ J.W. Mackail Latin Literature (London: John Murray, 1895; 17TH impression 1958) p.6.

¹²⁶ Skutsch Studia Enniana (London: Athlone, 1968) p.4.

¹²⁷ Skutsch Stud.Enn. p.4.

better vehicle for his purposes. The Saturnian metre was also associated with Roman and Italian poetry, and Ennius was taking Latin literature into the realms of the Greeks.

Quintus Ennius was influenced by Naevius in other ways, however. In fact, Cicero remarks that those whom Ennius dismisses so casually (Ann. 206-7, mentioned above) wrote very well, if a little less polished than he, and that Ennius had indeed borrowed many things from Naevius if only he had admitted it.¹²⁸ Scholars unfortunately are not exactly sure of Cicero's meaning in this passage since the fragments of Ennius' works that have survived do not reveal an extensive reliance on Naevius. There are some passages in the Annales of Quintus Ennius where some influence of Naevius can be seen, however. For example, Ann. 15-16: "Doctusque Anchisesque Venus quem pulcra dearum/Fari donavit, divinum pectus habere." In his commentary on these verses, Skutsch remarks that the scholiasts on Virgil refer both to a passage in Naevius and to these lines of Ennius in order to prove that Anchises possessed the gift of divination, and for that reason, perhaps, both poets had a common source.¹²⁹ It is easy to forget that most of Naevius' sources would have been readily available to Ennius as well. In Ann. 28-9, Ennius describes Anchises as 'pium/ Anchisen'. Naevius uses 'senex fretus pietati' (Morel, 12) in his poem. Naevius seems to mean the attitude of Anchises towards the gods, and so, Skutsch infers, does Ennius.¹³⁰ In Ann. 25 Ennius uses the word 'Titanus'. This is a Latinized form of the Greek word ΤΙΤΑΝ. It also occurs in Naevius (Morel, 19) where the poet has 'quo modo Titani'. These are the

¹²⁸ Cicero Brutus xix.75. (My paraphrase.)

¹²⁹ Skutsch Annals p.171.

¹³⁰ Skutsch Annals p.187.

earliest usages of this word in Latin, as Skutsch points out.¹³¹

In Ann. 12-13 Quintus Ennius proclaimed: "Latos per populos res atque poemata nostra/ clara cluebunt," a passage mentioned above (page 30) in connection with 'Lyric intrusions' into epic. Skutsch suggests that Ennius chose the word 'poemata' with the greatest of care to replace the 'carmen' which Naevius had used in the title of his epic poem. For Ennius, 'carmen' is inseparably linked to the earlier phase of poetry with which he means to break. 'Poemata' is the more sophisticated poetry, modelled after that of Greece, with which Ennius wants his name associated.¹³² In a similar vein is the poet's thought in Ann. 206-7: "Scripsere alii rem/ vorsibus quos olim Faunei vatesque canebant." (This passage was discussed briefly above on page 47.) Quintus Ennius seems to use the word 'vates' in a rather slighting way. The ancient 'vates' combined the functions of bard and entertainer. In some way the 'vates' knew all the old stories and legends and could provide an evening's entertainment by reciting them. Ennius did not see himself in quite that capacity. He saw himself as a poet and an historian, a 'scriptor rerum'. His 'poemata' recorded the actual happenings and accomplishments of a noteworthy people. For him the real people of history were the great heroes.

Another aspect of epic vocabulary where Naevius probably influenced Ennius was in the use of compound verbs. For example, in Ann. 198: "Bellipotentēs sunt magis quam sapientipotentēs." In his commentary on this line Skutsch observes that it was very likely Naevius who coined these interesting compound words, because some of them are found in the works of Plautus also, and the first few books of Annales were not published before

¹³¹ Skutsch Annals p.184.

¹³² Skutsch Annals p.168.

Plautus' death.¹³³ On page 12 above it was observed that Ennius may have coined some of his compound words himself, to meet the demands of vocabulary suitable for use in hexameters.

In the Carmen Belli Punici Homeric mythology and rather bald history are set alongside each other, as Brooks Otis notes. He observes that one cannot expect of that early era a great sensitivity to style, or any strong sense of the incongruity between annalistic history and Homeric narrative.¹³⁴ Naevius tried very hard to make poetry out of history, and deserves full credit for composing the very first real national epic. Perhaps it was crude in some ways, but Otis finds a genuine Roman feeling in the Carmen Belli Punici.¹³⁵ Quintus Ennius sought to produce just such an epic, full of national feeling, but more polished, and in the style of Homer.

Although Ennius seems to have written of his predecessors in a disparaging way, he obviously owed them a debt. He wanted to minimize that debt because he felt that he was doing something new in the realm of poetry. Perhaps Livius Andronivus gave Ennius the idea of writing an epic poem in Latin. He also left to the 'alter Homerus' the beginnings of Latin epic diction. From Cnaeus Naevius Ennius may have gotten the idea of choosing history as the subject-matter for an epic poem. Ennius could see from Naevius' poem what pitfalls were to be avoided, and he could also see, perhaps, ways in which history could be handled more dexterously in verse. Naevius, too, would have enhanced Latin epic diction, leaving much more scope for Ennius. He also demonstrated how mythology and history could be combined. If he was not totally successful, he may nevertheless have had some influence on Ennius.

¹³³ Skutsch Annals p.359.

¹³⁴ Brooks Otis Vergil, a Study in Civilized Poetry (Oxford, 1964) p.20.

¹³⁵ Otis Vergil p.21.

Quintus Ennius wanted to be known as the first Roman poet to have executed an epic poem which would show the greatness of Rome and her achievements, so he down-played the roles of his predecessors.

Besides the works of the poets, Livius Andronicus, and Cnaeus Naevius, there may have been other material available which Ennius drew from, or which influenced him in writing his Annales. There were, for example, the records kept by the priests that were known as the 'Annales Maximi'. As Cicero tells his audience in de Oratore:

"For history began as a mere compilation of annals, on which account, and in order to preserve the general traditions, from the earliest period of the City down to the pontificate of Publius Mucius, each High Priest used to commit to writing all the events of his year of office, and record them on a white surface, and post up the tablet at his house, that all men might have liberty to acquaint themselves therewith, and to this day those records are known as the Annales Maximi."¹³⁶

Frier points out that different titles were used for the records, and that Cicero himself used four names for them.¹³⁷ Frier also notes that Servius 'Auctus', Macrobius, and Paulus all say firmly the second component of the name 'Annales Maximi' came from the title Pontifex Maximus.

It is uncertain when the pontifical records began to be kept. According to Frier there are various references to the regal section of the chronicle, but nothing to indicate that the very early portion of the record was based on contemporary archival notices.¹³⁸ There are also some references to the early Republican portion of the chronicle but most of these are very unspecific. One reference to the early Republican period is the mention of an eclipse in Ennius, Ann. 153: "Noñis Iunis soli luna obstitit et nox."

¹³⁶ Cicero de Oratore II.xii.52, translated by E.W. Sutton.

¹³⁷ B.W. Frier "Libri Annales Pontificum Maximorum: The Origins of the Annalistic Tradition" Papers & Monographs of the American Academy in Rome xxvii (1979) p.47.

¹³⁸ Frier "Libri" p.114.

Cicero preserved this citation in his Republic, in mentioning the date of the eclipse as being 350 A.U.C., and he also observes that the same eclipse is noted in the 'Annales Maximi'.¹³⁹ Cicero does not say specifically that Ennius got his information from the chronicle, though Frier suggests that he may be implying it by introducing the chronicle into his discussion.¹⁴⁰ On the basis of this reference, then, and some others, Frier concludes that his sources, though scanty, witness to the existence of a pontifical chronicle derived from contemporary notices before 390 B.C.¹⁴¹

The historian Livy relates that "...even such records as existed in the commentaries of the pontiffs and in other public and private documents, nearly all perished in the conflagration of the city."¹⁴² He refers to the sack of the city of Rome by the Gauls in 387 B.C. Crake suggests that a reconstruction of the records was likely undertaken immediately, and notable events of the recent past, such as an eclipse, would have easily been recalled.¹⁴³ Perhaps this reconstruction is what Livy refers to when he says: "Clariora deinceps certioraque ab secundo origine velut ab stirpibus laetius feraciusque renatae urbis gesta domi militaeque exponentur."¹⁴⁴

In accordance with sources available Frier summarizes his findings as follows. In the fifth century, B.C., the Pontifex Maximus began to set up a 'tabula' yearly recording events of importance to the state. This was a means of informing the populace. From an early time the contents of each 'tabula', after the year had passed, were transferred into a continuous record.

¹³⁹ Cicero Rep. I.25. (My paraphrase.)

¹⁴⁰ Frier "Libri" p.119.

¹⁴¹ Frier "Libri" p.119.

¹⁴² Livy vi.1.2. Translated by B.O. Foster.

¹⁴³ J.E.A. Crake "The Annals of the Pontifex Maximus"

CP 35 (1940) 375-386; p.379.

¹⁴⁴ Livy vi.1.3. Translated by B.O. Foster.

which became known as the *Annales Maximi*. The collation of the 'tabulae' continued down to 130 B.C. when P. Mucius Scaevola ended it.¹⁴⁵ The form of the chronicle is uncertain, but it survived and was 'exhibited' in some way in the time of Claudius Quadrigarius, as Plutarch records.¹⁴⁶ Grant thinks that some of the inscriptions from the 'tabulae' were transferred to stone.¹⁴⁷ There seems to have been some sort of document or source that could be consulted.

Whatever the shape or form of the '*Annales Maximi*' may have been, some scholars feel that Ennius might have been influenced by them or used them as one of his sources, Skutsch suggests that the '*Annales Maximi*' may even have put into the poet's mind the idea of recording the whole history of Rome in verse. He notes also that Ennius took his title from the priestly records, and followed them in using the consuls' names to designate years.¹⁴⁸ In *Ann.* 153, as was mentioned above (on pages 51-2), Ennius describes an eclipse: "Nonis Iunis soli luna obstitit et nox." Aulus Gellius reports that Cato said of the '*Annales*' of the priests, "Non lubet scribere, quod in tabula apud pontificem maximum est, quotiens annona cara, quotiens lunae aut solis lumine caligo aut quid obstiterit."¹⁴⁹ Skutsch, in his commentary on *Ann.* 153, observes that the Cato passage shows how closely Ennius followed the official terminology.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁵ Frier *Libri* p.175.

¹⁴⁶ Plutarch *Numa* 1.2.

¹⁴⁷ Michael Grant *The Ancient Historians* (N.Y.: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1970) p.168.

¹⁴⁸ Skutsch *Annals* p.6.

¹⁴⁹ Gellius ii.28.6.

¹⁵⁰ Skutsch *Annals* p.313.

H. D. Jocelyn also thinks that the 'Annales Maximi' had considerable influence on Ennius' style, as well as giving him a good title for his work. He definitely feels that the point of view adopted over all by the poet is likely the one held in the priestly records, namely that events are considered with regard to whether or not the gods of the Roman state gave their approval.¹⁵¹ In some verses of the Annales of Quintus Ennius, Jocelyn sees the use of a style which must have been very like that which would be found in the priestly 'Annales'. He observe that the style in which the scribae of the pontiffs wrote was bald in the extreme, and Ennius in many of his verses seems deliberately to affect just such a plainness of style. For example, Ann. 324 simply has: "Graecia Sulpicio sorti data, Gallia Cottae." Facts are plainly stated and no ornamentation is added at all. Surely a verse such as this and others like it must have stood out in the usually more ornate narrative of an accomplished poet.¹⁵² Certainly part of the problem was the vast amount of material the poet wanted to record in his Annales. Jocelyn notes that the fragments of Ennius' poem contain every type of information that may have been found in the 'Annales Maximi'. The poet did not confine himself to merely relating the great military campaigns of the Roman people. He was concerned with many different aspects of civic life. Jocelyn concludes, "This was not a poet struggling unsuccessfully with an intractable subject-matter but one indicating to knowledgeable readers a style of narrative which he honoured in its own context but sought to surpass in his new kind of epic poetry."¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ Jocelyn "Poems" p.1008.

¹⁵² Jocelyn "Poems" p.1009.

¹⁵³ Jocelyn "Poems" p.1009.

As well as the 'Annales Maximi', there may have been other historical materials available to Quintus Ennius. He must have had some access to Treaties, for example. Polybius records the text of the Treaty of 509 B.C. with Carthage, while Dionysius of Halicarnassus gives the text of the Treaty of 493 B.C. between Rome and the Latin League.¹⁵⁴ Cicero mentions a Treaty that "was struck with all the Latins in the consulship of Spurius Cassius and Postumus Cominius which not so long ago we remember was engraved and written out upon a column of bronze standing behind the Rostra."¹⁵⁵

There must also have been other items of private and public record. There were likely some 'laudationes funebres', orations used at funerals which praised the deceased and joined his accomplishments to those of his glorious ancestors. Livy advises that sometimes these orations could falsify history.¹⁵⁶ Cicero cautions that some 'laudationes' distort the facts or exaggerate them.¹⁵⁷ Ennius moved in aristocratic circles, so perhaps he also had some access to other family records which recorded the noble deeds of ancestors. There may have been also available to Ennius some 'commentarii' such as are mentioned in Livy I.60.4, and iv.3.9. Ogilvie notes that the 'commentarii' were procedural handbooks indicating method and protocol, and that they seem to have been common to all the priestly colleges.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁴ Polybius iii.22; Dionysius of Halicarnassus vi.95.1-2.

¹⁵⁵ Cicero pro Balbo xxiii.53 (trans. R. Gardner)

¹⁵⁶ Livy viii.40.4.

¹⁵⁷ Cic. Brut. xvi. 62.

¹⁵⁸ R.M. Ogilvie A Commentary on Livy Books I-V (Oxford Clarendon, 1965) p.231.

In addition to these types of materials, Cicero refers several times in his dialogues to ancient 'carmina', some sort of traditional or oral poetry or ballads which were sung at banquets in times past. For example, in Tusculan Disputations 4.2.3, the orator notes: "Gravissimus auctor in originibus dixit Cato, morem apud maiores hunc epularum fuisse, ut deinceps qui accubarent canerent ad tibiam virorum laudes atque virtutes." Cicero had also mentioned these ancient 'carmina' earlier in the same dialogue, at 1.2.3: "Quamquam est in originibus solitos esse in epulis canere convivos ad tibicinem de clarorum hominum virtutibus." In the Brutus, the orator expresses a wish that the old songs still existed which Cato mentioned had been sung at banquets ages before his time.¹⁵⁹ Other Roman authors make references to ancient songs, too.

E.M. Steuart points out that the existence of the 'cantus convivales' was not really challenged, as they are so well attested.¹⁶⁰ She suggests that as well as the banquet songs and funeral songs attested to in ancient authors, there were probably epitaphs in Saturnians like those of the Scipios, and perhaps other very old Saturnian poems also existed. With regard to Livius Andronicus and Naevius choosing the Saturnian metre for their poems, Steuart observes that the choice may have been made because that metre had already been proved a fit vehicle for narration on such a scale. She mentions the 'Carmen Priami' and the 'Carmen Nelei' as possible early examples of narratives in Saturnians.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁹ Cicero Brutus 19.75. (My translation.)

¹⁶⁰ E.M. Steuart: "The Earliest Narrative Poetry of Rome"
CQ 15 (1921) 31-37.

¹⁶¹ Steuart "Earliest Poetry" p.35.

These poems, however, are known only from small fragments, and no firm conclusions have been reached as to what they were. Momigliano, for example, notes that the 'Carmen Nelei' was probably part of a drama rather than a narrative, and that the 'Carmen Priami' may not even be an archaic poem.¹⁶²

Momigliano examines the theories of earlier scholars such as Perizonius, who worked in the 17TH century, and Niebuhr, who worked in the last part of the 19TH century, and who was influenced by Perizonius. Perizonius apparently was the first one to introduce the 'carmina' into a discussion on the relation between history and poetry in Rome. Momigliano points out, however, that Perizonius attached little importance to the 'carmina' himself, and made no attempt to explain how the songs influenced Roman historical tradition.¹⁶³ Niebuhr, though, felt that the 'carmina' were very important, and that they represented the voice of the Roman plebs. He noted, too, that the Roman historical tradition was exceedingly rich in episodes that would have made excellent ballads. Momigliano suggests that many of the old Roman legends have Greek elements, too; that the majority of heroes are patricians rather than plebeians; and that, though the sources speak only of 'gesta virorum', women also figure prominently in some legends.¹⁶⁴

The conclusion reached by Momigliano is that no doubt some such 'carmina' existed, and they may indeed have influenced the Roman historical tradition, but by and large they simply became a part of the tradition. The annalists, as each based his work on the other, managed to select, combine, and unify the tradition of the past with considerable success, as Momigliano observes. They created a pattern and only a few pieces of information which

¹⁶² Momigliano "Perizonius, Niebuhr, and the Character of Early Roman Tradition" Secondo Contributo, Alla Storia Degli Studi Classici (ROMA, 1960) p.69.

¹⁶³ Momigliano "Perizonius" p.75.

¹⁶⁴ Momigliano "Perizonius" pp.83-4.

did not fit into it managed to survive outside it.¹⁶⁵

A dissenting voice about the ancient 'carmina' is that of Michael Grant.¹⁶⁶ He observes that the 'carmina' may not have existed at all. He thinks that Cato may have wanted to show the Romans that they could manage quite well without Greece. To prove his nationalistic point, Cato fabricated the custom of ballad-singing at ancient Roman banquets so that his compatriots could feel that their own tradition contained a patriotic counterpart of Homer's works.¹⁶⁷ This might be a possible explanation of the 'carmina', since there are no fragments from an oral tradition. It seems rather unlikely, though, when there are so many attestations about the songs.

Although there may have been some ancient songs sung at banquets in old times, it is impossible to be certain whether Ennius knew anything of them. One must note, however, that the 'carmina' were said to have dealt with the 'gesta virorum', matters which greatly concerned Ennius, and which he related in the Annales. Cato and Ennius were contemporaries, so the poet could have learned of the 'carmina' from Cato.

One other source of historical information that would have been available to Quintus Ennius was the history composed by Fabius Pictor. The works of the prose historians have generally not been discussed in this study because, as noted above on page 1, these writings encompass too vast a field. The 'Annals' of Fabius Pictor, however, will be considered briefly, since Ennius is bound to have read this work, as Skutsch notes.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Momigliano "Perizonius" p.86.

¹⁶⁶ Michael Grant The Ancient Historians (N.Y.; Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1970) p.171.

¹⁶⁷ Grant Historians p.171.

¹⁶⁸ Skutsch Annals p.7.

Quintus Fabius Pictor was an elder contemporary of Ennius, who was born about 254 B.C. He was a Roman of senatorial rank, and fought in the Second Punic War. His work, which was written in Greek, chronicled the history of Rome from Aeneas to his own times, and it survives now only in a few fragments. On Pictor's use of the Greek language, Badian comments that he may have written for Greek audiences, perhaps, to explain Roman history and institutions. He notes also, though, that the Latin language was not yet fitted for literary prose.¹⁶⁹ Frier observes that Fabius' choice of Greek suggests that he wrote in reaction to the Greek historians of Rome, a few of whom had been hostile, but most of whom had been ill-informed.¹⁷⁰

The 'Annals' of Quintus Fabius Pictor fall into three parts, as several scholars note. Pictor seems to have dealt at length with the earliest periods of Roman history. Badian observes that some of the Greek antiquarians had studied this period, and it seems likely that Fabius had read their works.¹⁷¹ Duckett notes that Fabius gave legends as the earliest history, for legends were all that he could give. He seems to report them word for word, even to inconsistencies in statement.¹⁷² Pictor treated more briefly the period of the early Republic. Duckett feels that Pictor was avoiding unauthenticated family legends and sticking closely to the statements found in the 'Annales Maximi'.¹⁷³ Frier notes that most of the surviving fragments tend to derive from Book I (better than a third of them),

¹⁶⁹ E. Badian "The Early Historians" The Latin Historians ed. T.A. Dorey (London: Routledge & Kegan, Paul, 1966) p.3.

¹⁷⁰ Frier "Libri" p.281.

¹⁷¹ Badian "Historians" p.3.

¹⁷² E.S. Duckett Studies in Ennius (Bryn Mawr, 1915) p.24.

¹⁷³ E.S. Duckett Studies p.23.

which dealt with the foundation legends of the city.¹⁷⁴ The historian was able to expand his information as he approached his own time. The work became a detailed account of the First Punic War, at the latest, as Badian comments.¹⁷⁵

Quintus Fabius Pictor probably had three main sources for his information, as Frier notes.¹⁷⁶ The first source was in the Greek authors, and especially Philinus of Agrigentum, a principal pro-Carthage author as Polybius remarks.¹⁷⁷ Pictor seems to have sought to represent Philinus' hostile account in a pro-Rome way. Polybius observes that Fabius' interpretation is opposite to that of Philinus.¹⁷⁸ The second source for Fabius' work would have been his own personal knowledge of Rome, and indeed, parts of the work may be autobiographical. Frier notes further that Fabius' understanding of Roman institutions would have been an advantage in eking out the exiguous record of the past. The third source for Fabius' history that Frier finds are the documents.¹⁸⁸ He does not feel that Fabius consulted all the documents that may have been available, but he comments that the 'Annales Maximi' must have been his major source.¹⁸⁰ Perhaps the annalistic form is only a highly stylized version of the original contents of the 'Annales Maximi', Frier remarks.¹⁸¹ Fabius may have used a variety of sources, Greek and Roman, and

¹⁷⁴ Frier "Libri" p.322.

¹⁷⁵ Badian "Historians" p.3.

¹⁷⁶ Frier "Libri" pp.260-262.

¹⁷⁷ Polybius 1.14.3. (Translator Ian Scott-Kilvert).

¹⁷⁸ Polybius 1.15.12. (Same translator)

¹⁷⁹ Frier "Libri" p.268.

¹⁸⁰ Frier "Libri" p.269.

¹⁸¹ Frier "Libri" p.272.

some of his history reflects that fact. He must have used the names of Consuls of the year, at least in his detailed history, but Badian observes that he also used Olympiad dating, in the Greek manner of establishing an internationally acceptable chronology.¹⁸²

With such a wealth of material incorporated into one work, the 'Annals' of Quintus Fabius Pictor would have been as great a source for Ennius as it was for Polybius. There are so few fragments surviving of either the work of Pictor or the work of Ennius that it is difficult to tell where Ennius may have been influenced by Fabius. Skutsch notes that Ennius may have differed from Pictor in his account of Rome's beginnings, but is likely to have drawn on him for the history of the early republic.¹⁸³ One interesting point at which Ennius certainly followed Fabius is at Ann. 216: "Appius indixit Carthaginiensibus bellum." Skutsch notes in his commentary on this line that there didn't seem to have been a formal declaration of war, and that the Roman historical tradition, as represented by Fabius Pictor and Polybius, vainly tried to deny or conceal the fact.¹⁸⁴ Another line where Fabian influence seems probably is Ann. 230: "Dum censent terrere minis hortantur ibe sos." (Note the archaic 'ibe' for 'ibi', and 'sos' for 'eos'.) This line is placed as part of the Gallic War, and Skutsch observes that the work of Fabius Pictor was in all likelihood Ennius' source for material about the war because he (Pictor) had served in that war.¹⁸⁵ Another line belonging to the Gallic War is Ann. 229: "Marsa manus, Paeligna cohors, Vestina virum vis." Skutsch remarks that this Ennian line belonged to a catalogue of

¹⁸² Badian "Historians" p.3.

¹⁸³ Skutsch Annals p.325.

¹⁸⁴ Skutsch Annals p.386.

¹⁸⁵ Skutsch Annals p.410.

warriors that was based on the census of 225 B.C. as reported by Fabius Pictor.¹⁸⁶ There are some other very superficial resemblances between lines of Ennius and fragments of Fabius which could be coincidental.

Frier remarks that it makes sense to assume that Ennius consciously modelled his epic on the Greek histories of Pictor and others, though he points out that in substance the poem is not infrequently at variance with the annalistic tradition.¹⁸⁷ Eponymous dating in Ennius' Annales is first attested in the Second Punic War, in Ann. 290: "Quintus pater quartum fit consul." Ennius may have avoided it in earlier books for reasons of poetic economy, as Frier remarks.¹⁸⁸ It may be that there are just not enough fragments to be certain, or perhaps the poet sought to set a different tone for this part of his poem.

There were other early annalists of the history of Rome, too, of whom little more is known than their names. Some of these could have influenced Ennius in some way also, but no firm conclusions can be drawn. This chapter has tried to show how Quintus Ennius might have been influenced by his Roman predecessors. The works of the two epic poets, Livius Andronicus and Naevius, were considered. Livius began the process of creating a Latin epic diction on which Ennius could build. Naevius showed Ennius how to deal with history in an epic poem. The priestly chronicle known as the 'Annales Maximi' was considered as a source of material for the poet. Some scholars conclude that Ennius drew on the chronicle for much of his information. The references to ancient 'carmina' were examined briefly, and the conclusion reached that their subject-matter, the 'gesta virorum', would have interested and inspired Ennius if he had any knowledge of them. Finally, the 'Annals'

¹⁸⁶ Skutsch Annals. p.409

¹⁸⁷ Frier "Lubri" p.259.

¹⁸⁸ Frier "Libri" p.259.

of Quintus Fabius Pictor were brought under scrutiny. It is reasonably certain that Ennius was very much influenced by the work of Fabius, but the extent to which Ennius used him as a source cannot be detailed in any way because of the paucity of fragments of both authors.

Chapter 5: Ennius and History

Besides being a long poem of epic style and proportions, the Annales of Quintus Ennius was an attempt to record history poetically. The poet narrated the whole history and accomplishments of the people of Rome as best he could in an epic style. He considered himself not merely a poet, but also a historian, a 'scriptor rerum'.

A brief outline of the Annales will give some indication of its scope. The whole work consisted of eighteen books. The first book, after an invocation to the Muses, began with the poet's explanation of how he became 'alter Homerus'. The book then proceeded to recount the landing of Aeneas in Italy. Apparently no time was spent in narrating the hero's adventures en route. The narration continued to the death of Romulus. Books II and III told the stories of the rest of the kings of Rome, and related the establishment of the Republic. The early history of the Republic was then carried on through the fourth book. Book V dealt with the Samnite Wars, and the rise of Pyrrhus, with all of Book VI being devoted to the war against Pyrrhus.

In a proem to Book VII, Ennius explained why he did not plan to cover the First Punic War in detail. In Ann. 206-7, the poet writes: "Scripsere alii rem/ vorsibus quos olim Faunei vatesque caneant." He may have referred to Naevius and his Carmen Belli Punici. The discussion of the wars with Carthage continued through the eighth and ninth books of the Annales. Book X also began with a proem in which the poet sought the aid of the Muses in narrating the events of the Second Macedonian War. The eleventh book is a problematical one for students of Ennius. Skutsch

observes that not one fragment of this book can be placed in its context with any degree of certainty. He notes that it seems likely the book contained the successful conclusion of the war against Phillip and the declaration of freedom for Greece in 196 B.C.¹⁸⁹ Sellar remarks that the tenth and eleventh books of Annales probably dealt with the Macedonian War and the deeds of T. Quinctius Flaminius.¹⁹⁰ Warmington puts Books XI and XII together as covering the period from the peace made in 196 B.C. to the opening of the war with Antiochus.

The war against Antiochus provided the subject for the thirteenth and fourteenth books of the poem according to Skutsch's interpretation.¹⁹¹ Warmington, however, feels that these books contained the story of the Scipios departing for the east, and likely carried the history as far as the settlement of Asia after the battle of Magnesia.¹⁹²

Book XV seems to have been intended as the completion of the Annales. Jocelyn notes that there was even a published version known in antiquity that had Book XV as the final one.¹⁹³ The poet wanted his work to finish with an account of the campaign conducted by his patron, M. Fulvius Nobilior, in Aetolia, of which he himself had been a witness. The conclusion would have dealt with Fulvius' triumph in 187 B.C. and his founding of the temple Herculis Musarum at Rome, as Skutsch notes.¹⁹⁴

¹⁸⁹ Skutsch Annals p.520.

¹⁹⁰ W.Y. Sellar The Roman Poets of the Republic (Oxford: 1880; Reprint ed. Oxford: Clarendon, 1905) p.91.

¹⁹¹ Skutsch Annals p.535.

¹⁹² Warmington Remains pp.135, 139.

¹⁹³ Jocelyn "Poems" p.1005.

¹⁹⁴ Skutsch Annals p.553.

As was discussed above (on pages 30-1), Pliny the Elder had noted that the sixteenth book of the *Annales* was added to celebrate the deeds of the Caecilii.¹⁹⁵ Skutsch feels that there must have been a proem followed by the story of the Caecilii and their accomplishments. The poet probably also dealt with the reconciliation of Fulvius and Aemilius Lepidus, and there may have been an 'Origo gentis Illyricae' included.¹⁹⁶ Warmington notes merely that Book XVI covered the period from 188 B.C. to the end of the Istrian War.¹⁹⁷

It is known that the *Annales* comprised eighteen books. The subject-matter of the last two books is a matter for conjecture. Skutsch suggests that the pitiable remains of the last two books give no indication of how far the poet took the story. He notes, however, that it is certain that the *Annales* ended before the defeat of Perseus at Pydna.¹⁹⁸ Warmington considers that the seventeenth book may have contained material dealing with the period from the end of the Istrian War to the defeat of P. Licinius Crassus at Callinicus, 171 B.C., during the third Macedonian War.¹⁹⁹ The same editor assumes that Book XVIII of the *Annales* may have dealt with further events of 171 B.C., but was in all likelihood unfinished when Ennius died in 169 B.C.²⁰⁰ Jocelyn remarks that some scholars have supposed that Book XVI might have differed fundamentally in the style of narrative from Books I to XV, since it was devoted to the description of individual exploits, and that the last

¹⁹⁵ Pliny the Elder *N.H.* vii.101.

¹⁹⁶ Skutsch *Annals* p.564.

¹⁹⁷ Warmington *Remains* p.147.

¹⁹⁸ Skutsch *Annals* p.563.

¹⁹⁹ Warmington *Remains* p.159.

²⁰⁰ Warmington *Remains* p.163.

two books (XVII and XVIII) would have been of a similar type.²⁰¹

The Annales of Quintus Ennius was an historical epic poem narrating the history of Rome from Aeneas' arrival in Italy to the time when the last war with Macedon was nearing its end, as Skutsch notes.²⁰² One might observe, as Skutsch continues, that if the work had survived, it would be one of the oldest and most important sources of Roman history. Ennius could watch events take shape from the center, as it were, since he was on friendly and intimate terms with members of some of the aristocratic families who were the leading lights of Rome.²⁰³ Skutsch concludes, however, that the poetic eye of Ennius was fixed not on politics, but on battles, the glamour and horror of war, and on the valour and the varying fortunes of men.²⁰⁴

The valour and fortunes of men and the 'gesta virorum' seems to have been a prime concern of Quintus Ennius. Silius Italicus, in mentioning Ennius, says of him: "Hic canet illustri primus bella Itala versu/ attolletque duces caelo."²⁰⁵ Ennius' view of history appears to have been that it is the record of the great deeds of great men, an idea which is eminently Homeric in its conception. Ennius wrote his historical poem as Homer might have written it had he been a Roman. The Iliad is the story of one man, his wrath, and the consequences of it for all. The Odyssey is the story of one man and his endless wanderings as he made for home. Perhaps the Annales encompassed the stories of many persons and the great deeds they wrought, and all together represented the history of the Roman people.

²⁰¹ Jocelyn "Poems" p.1021.

²⁰² Skutsch Stud. Enn. p.1.

²⁰³ Skutsch Stud. Enn. p.2.

²⁰⁴ Skutsch Stud. Enn. p.2.

²⁰⁵ Silius Ital. Punica xii.410-11.

As was mentioned just above (on page 75 and earlier (on pages 30-1), Pliny the Elder gives notice that: "Quintus Ennius added a sixteenth book to his Annales because he especially admired Titus Caecilius Teucer and his brother."²⁰⁶ The poet was interested in recording the great deeds of the Caecilii brothers as part of his Annales. Skutsch observes that the identity of the Caecilii Teucris is unknown, and suggests that the poet merely put them forward as being examples of men worthy of poetic praises.²⁰⁷ Regrettably the meagre fragments give no hint of what form the narration may have taken, or whether it was in any way different from previous narratives in the Annales.

Some consideration was also given above (on page 31) to the remark of Aurelius Victor about the Ambracian victory of M. Fulvius Nobilior: "Quam victoriam per se magnificam Quintus Ennius amicus eius insigni laude celebravit."²⁰⁸ The poet celebrated his patron's victory at Ambracia with 'conspicuous praises'. There was obviously no mistaking the poet's intention here. Ennius had accompanied Fulvius on the campaign, so he was a first-hand witness of all that transpired. As was also noted above (on page 74), the story of Fulvius' victory at Ambracia was to be the center-piece of Book XV of the Annales, and its finale. Ennius had honoured his patron in a poem, too, called Ambracia, whose object was to glorify Fulvius with special reference to his capture of Ambracia, as Warmington notes.²⁰⁹ Whether the

²⁰⁶ Pliny the Elder N.H. vii.101, (my translation).

²⁰⁷ Skutsch Annals p.570.

²⁰⁸ Aur. Victor de Vir. Illust. 52.3.

²⁰⁹ Warmington Remains p.359.

'conspicuous praises' mentioned by Victor belonged to the poem or to the Annales is unknown. The point is that the story of Fulvius' accomplishments at Ambracia certainly seems to have been exactly the type of thing that Ennius wanted included in his epic, namely, great deeds of great men.

Another famous Roman whom Quintus Ennius wrote about was Scipio Africanus. Book IX of the Annales seems to have dealt with the African campaigns of Scipio. None of the fragments that survive from this book, however, mention the great man by name. Skutsch notes that Book IX of the epic could not have been written before 179 B.C., but he admits to much uncertainty in placing the fragments in context.²¹⁰ It is totally unclear how Ennius dealt with Scipio in the Annales.

Ennius also wrote another poem in honour of Scipio, called simply 'Scipio', where he seems to have praised Scipio highly and portrayed him as a hero of old. Haywood notes some reasons why Ennius is likely to have regarded Scipio as a hero. The poet was not a Roman, but came from Tarentum, a Greek region where hero-cults abounded; he was a friend of the great man and knew him well; and Ennius had considered Romulus a hero and may in fact have originated that idea, and thought of Scipio in the same terms.²¹¹ With regard to the fragments of the 'Scipio', Warmington notes the comment of Aelian through the Suida Lexicon that Ennius observed that only a Homer could utter praises worthy of a Scipio.²¹² The 'alter Homerus' could obviously rise to the demands of the moment, and do his best. The few fragments that remain of the 'Scipio', however, do not yield any clear information about Ennius' method in the poem.

²¹⁰ Skutsch Annals pp.475-6.

²¹¹ R.M. Haywood Studies on Scipio Africanus (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1933) p.20.

²¹² Warmington Remains p.395.

Ennius also praised Scipio generously in some of his epigrams. Into Scipio's mouth he puts the words: "If it is right for anyone to go up into the regions of heaven's dwellers, for me alone, heaven's great gate lies open."²¹³ In another epigram Ennius speaks of Scipio as one "To whom no one, fellow-countryman or foeman, will be able to render for his pains a recompense fitting his deeds."²¹⁴ Perhaps Ennius made similar remarks about his friend Scipio in the Annales. Cicero in his pro Archia remarks that Ennius was so dear to Scipio Africanus that the Scipios had a statue of him erected in their own burial place. He notes further that by the plaudits of the poet not only was Africanus himself praised, but the name of the Roman people was adorned.²¹⁵ Cicero must have felt that Ennius succeeded in his purpose of glorifying Rome in his epic, and part of the success was due to his way of praising the great deeds of great men.

It was suggested above (on page 76) that if the Annales of Quintus Ennius had survived, they would have been the oldest and most important source of Roman history. Were they a source of information and inspiration to those historians who followed Ennius, and who might have had access to them? For example, Scullard observes that though Polybius must have read the poetry of Ennius, there is nothing to show that Polybius made any use of him.²¹⁶ Badian does not mention Ennius or his Annales at all in looking into the early Roman historians, so it would seem as though he had not found Ennius' work significant in the development of historiography.²¹⁷

²¹³ Warmington Remains p.401.

²¹⁴ Warmington Remains p.401.

²¹⁵ Cic. pro Arch. 9.22 (my paraphrase).

²¹⁶ H.H. Scullard Scipio Africanus: Soldier & Politician
(London: Thames & Hudson, 1970 p.16.

²¹⁷ Badian "Early Historians".

Elinor Duckett remarks that the influence of the Annales of Quintus Ennius can only be estimated indirectly.²¹⁸ She notes that Ennius, as a creative poet with a gift for character-drawing and graphic narrative, probably stamped his own interpretation permanently upon many personalities and events, more especially in recording the history of his own day. She uses the poet's portrait of Pyrrhus in the Annales as an example. Pyrrhus had helped Ennius' people, the Messapii, and from that came the poet's kindly appreciation and graphic description of his merits.²¹⁹ The views of Pyrrhus taken by later historians would always be coloured by the picture of him left by the early poet. With regard to Ennius' accounts of the men of Rome, Duckett finds little trace of his influence on prose annalists.²²⁰

Duckett's conclusion is that the story of the Annales remained alive at Rome long after the dry statements of Fabius and the other historians had been forgotten. The Roman historians of the first century are likely to have studied Ennius' Annales as boys in school. Many of the poet's graphic phrases and descriptions would stay with them so that later they could scarcely write without showing some trace of Ennian and Homeric style. Hence it is Ennius' unobtrusive but pervading influence over the writers of the first century that gave the poet a significant place in the historiography of Rome.²²¹

It is precisely this pervading influence of Ennius that Walsh notes in his study of the historian Livy. He observes that a clear distinction must be made between Livy's attempts to lend his early books some poetic flavour by deliberate reminiscences of Ennius, and using the Annales as the basis of his account.²²² Walsh attributes any poetic features found in the early books of the history to the fact that a certain poetic licence was

²¹⁸ Duckett Studies p.46.

²¹⁹ Duckett Studies p.49.

²²⁰ Duckett Studies p.48.

²²¹ Duckett Studies p.52.

²²² P.G. Walsh Livy. His Historical Aims & Method. (Camb., 1963) p.136.

allowed to writers of 'historia', and partly perhaps to sources influenced by Ennius. There may even have been some influence from the rhetorical schools. "Nowhere can any extreme dependence on Ennius be demonstrated," he states clearly.²²³

Livy probably knew some portions of the Annales of Quintus Ennius by rote. Skutsch finds a few examples of passages where the historian seems to echo Ennius, especially in the early books of the history, notably in the speeches. He notes that Ennius' power of expression reached its highest height in the speeches, and he feels it is possible that their striking formulations left their mark. At the same time, perhaps the poetic narrative was not deemed a proper source for historians.²²⁴ This seems to be a logical conclusion. After all, the poet was composing an epic poem, as well as relating historical material. Poetic licence would have dictated where some aspects might be exaggerated, while others might be downplayed. Perhaps occasionally information would have been omitted or altered in some way if it was not inherently poetic or did not suit the tone the poet was setting at that point in his poem. For example, the poet wanted to glorify Rome, so any major military defeat would have posed a problem. It is not clear how Ennius dealt with this sort of question. Of course, it would also depend on the source he was following.

It seems, then, that while the Annales of Quintus Ennius was no doubt read and enjoyed, and even studied in schools, it was not of great value to later historians as a source of historical information. J. Wight Duff, however, suggests that the Annales had a value beyond their possible (but

²²³ Walsh Livy p.136.

²²⁴ Skutsch Stud,Enn. p.14.

hypothetical) influence on later historians. He remarks that the Annales and other early Latin poetry possess value more because of the linguistic, epigraphic, historic and social elements found in them than because of literary merit. They also have some importance in literary history, he notes, because they are a contrast with and a preparation for what was to follow.²²⁵

O'Neal's very recent article "Ennius as an Historical Source", just came to this writer's attention as this study was being completed.²²⁶ He notes Ciceros' high regard for and use of Ennius as a source for information and quotations. The conclusion he reaches is much the same as this study, namely that any direct influence of Quintus Ennius on later historians is impossible to demonstrate, but that it would be safe to assume an indirect influence at least.

²²⁵ Wight Duff Literary History p.47.

²²⁶ W. J. O'Neal "Ennius as an Historical Source"
CB 64 (1988) 35-39.

Conclusion

Quintus Ennius, in writing his Annales, had a great many predecessors in the field of epic and national poetry. After a brief consideration of the life and works of the Roman poet, his relationship to Homer was examined. It was concluded that the Annales of Ennius owed much to the epics of Homer in matters of form and style. The fragmentary early Greek epics other than the Iliad and the Odyssey were discussed, and it was noted that the importance of these works probably lay in the fact that they preserved ancient stories and legends. In this archaic period a history of the whole Heroic world was formulated in the Epic Cycle. History was also deemed suitable as subject-matter for epic poems in the works of Eumelos and others.

In a consideration of some of the poets of the Lyric Age as predecessors of Ennius, it was demonstrated that the Annales seemed to make use of techniques more usually found in lyric works. The poets of the Hellenistic Age were also shown to have influenced Ennius in technique, vocabulary, and perhaps even in arrangement of historical material in epic poetry.

The writings of the two poets who preceded Ennius in the Roman world were studied. The conclusion reached was that Ennius was considerably influenced by these two. Livius Andronicus showed that epic could be written in the Latin language, and made a beginning for a Latin epic diction. Cnaeus Naevius expanded the development of Latin vocabulary in his many plays, as well as in epic poetry. He perhaps influenced Ennius by demonstrating to him how the epic could become a vehicle for history. In the same chapter, the

'Annales Maximi' were considered as a source of historical information for Ennius. A brief look was also taken at the possible existence of early songs. The fragments of the 'Annals' of Quintus Fabius Pictor, Ennius' immediate predecessor in writing history, were compared to the remnants of Ennius' Annales, and some suggestions made about the ways in which Pictor may have influenced the poet.

The last chapter of this study attempted to show the place of Ennius' Annales in the historiography of Rome. The conclusion drawn was that the Annales are important more because of their pervading influence than as a source of historical material. The later Roman historians probably studied the Annales at school, and were so steeped in Ennian style and forms of narration that his influence in those areas can occasionally be seen in their works. This type of influence was noted in the early books of the Historian Livy.

The Annales of Quintus Ennius was not an isolated example of an historical epic, then. It has been shown that many poets and authors had written works on historical and national themes. Ennius almost certainly had access to a great variety of material, and was no doubt influenced by many of his predecessors. The Annales of Ennius seems to have been unique in the fact that the poet had encompassed the whole history of the Roman people in one epic poem. He had combined legendary and mythological material with contemporary history to form a continuous chronicle from the earliest times to his own day. No poet had undertaken such a venture before.

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