CHAPTER 2

Generic (Non-)Distinctions in Ennius

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Within a description of the styles of the works of early Roman poets, the imperial writer M. Cornelius Fronto characterizes Q. Ennius as *Ennius multiformis*.[1] This assessment of Ennius' output indicates that Fronto regarded a stylistic range as characteristic of Ennius (and thus refrained from specifying Ennius' style).[2] While Fronto's short statement does not reveal whether it refers to variety within works of a single genre or across genres, the fact that it follows upon *inaequalis Accius*, apparently referring to unevenness of style within works, suggests that it may denote many-sidedness linked to the use of different genres. Indeed, despite the now fragmentary nature of his oeuvre, Ennius clearly stands out among the Roman republican writers of the third and second centuries BCE by being active in a variety of literary genres; although it is distinctive of Latin literature from Livius Andronicus onwards that writers often produce works in more than one literary genre, other republican authors did not cover as wide a range of genres as Ennius.[3] At the same time, other ancient

[1] Fronto, pp. 133.11–34.1 VdH = *Ad M. Antoninum de eloquentia*, *Ep.* 1.2 = T 78: *in poetis <aut>em quis ignorat, ut gracilis sit Lucilius, Albucius aridus, sublimis Lucretius, mediocris Pacuvius, inaequalis Accius, Ennius multiformis?* ("But as regards the poets, who does not know how plain is Lucilius, how austere Albucius, how elevated Lucretius, how middling Pacuvius, how uneven Accius, how many-sided Ennius?")

[2] On the meaning of *multiformis* in Fronto, see van den Hout 1999: 318: "but *multiformis* means 'many-sided' (Haines), 'vario' (Portalupi), and refers to the different styles in his various works ... *Multiformis* of style is further only used by Apoll. Sid. *Epist.* 8, 11,6 of the poet Lampridius: *in comica materia urbanus multiformisque*, where it seems to be 'versatile'." See also van den Hout 1999: 316: "In the following lines we find a variegated mixture of terms, of which *multiformis*, *structe*, *multiiugus* and *singuli* refer to the way in which words and thoughts are arranged, the *compositio* or *structura*, the σύνθεσις."; already Vahlen 1903, 82: "Quae proprietas stili Enniani qua re maxime contineatur dubium est, nisi forte illud dicit Ennium qui multa multumque dissimilia genera poesis tractavit multas formas orationis coluisse."

[3] The only other contemporary writer with a similarly broad coverage of literary genres is M. Porcius Cato (234–149 BCE), with his activity concerning predominantly the field of prose. Their main works, Ennius' *Annales* and Cato's *Origines*, though different in form, are comparable with respect to their focus on a comprehensive account of Roman history (on aspects of the relationship between these two works, with further references, see Elliott 2020).

critics noted a distinctive individual style of writers for particular genres: Cicero states that the three tragedians Ennius, Pacuvius, and Accius each write in a different way, while they are all praiseworthy in their own way (Cic. *De or.* 3.27);[4] similarly, Cicero reports that different people prefer different tragic writers and that some like the fact that Ennius does not deviate from the common use of words, while others appreciate different features in Pacuvius and Accius (Cic. *Orat.* 36).[5]

The fragmentary nature of Ennius' works makes it difficult to establish a more precise view of the breadth of his writing in terms of specific features. Yet, on the basis of aspects such as transmission, content, and/or formal criteria, many fragments can be assigned to individual works or at least different literary genres. While all types of writing were developed in interaction with Greek literature, some of the genres (understood as a group of texts with consistent distinctive features)[6] had been established in Rome by Latin predecessors and were further elaborated by Ennius (e.g., epic, tragedy, comedy), whereas others are first attested in Rome within Ennius' output (e.g., literary satire, literary epigram, philosophical writing).[7] At the same time, such attributions are not without their problems because the modern perception of Ennius' works is shaped by the citational practices and views of later ancient authors quoting extracts

[4] Cic. *De or.* 3.27 = T 15: *atque id primum in poetis cerni licet, quibus est proxima cognatio cum oratoribus, quam sint inter sese Ennius, Pacuvius Acciusque dissimiles, quam apud Graecos Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, quamquam omnibus par paene laus in dissimili scribendi genere tribuatur.* ("And above all it may be observed in the case of poets, who have a very close affinity to orators, how different Ennius, Pacuvius, and Accius are from each other, as among the Greeks are Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, although all of them are granted almost the same praise for their different styles of writing.")

[5] Cic. *Orat.* 36 = T 21: *sed in omni re difficillimum est formam, qui χαραχτὴρ Graece dicitur, exponere optimi, quod aliud aliis videtur optimum. Ennio delector, ait quispiam, quod non discedit a communi more verborum. Pacuvio, inquit alius: omnes apud hunc ornati elaboratique sunt versus, multa apud alterum negligentius. fac alium Accio; varia enim sunt iudicia, ut in Graecis, nec facilis explicatio quae forma maxime excellat.* ("But in every matter it is very difficult to articulate the form, which in Greek is called 'character,' of the best, since what is best seems different to different people. 'I like Ennius,' says one, 'since he does not depart from the common use of words.' 'I like Pacuvius,' says another. 'All his verses are ornate and elaborate; in the former a lot is rather careless.' Suppose another likes Accius. Assessments vary, as among the Greeks, and an account of which form most stands out is not easy.")

[6] On the definition and various meanings of "literary genre" and the scholarly discussion about this term, see the summary in Hempfer 2007.

[7] There is one reference to a *Satyra* of Naevius (Fest. p. 306.25–30 L.), but it is unclear whether it refers to a "medley" performed on stage as described by Livy (7.2.7) or an early version of what was later called "satire." Gellius (*NA* 1.24.1–2) reports an epigram as an epitaph for Naevius allegedly written by the poet, yet it is doubtful whether these lines are genuine (for commentary and discussion of the epitaphs of poets in this chapter by Gellius, see Courtney 1993: 47–50). In view of the uncertainty about these notices, Ennius is generally still regarded as the first writer of satires and literary epigrams in Rome.

and presenting Ennius in line with their own arguments.[8] While the information they provide is crucial for piecing together a portrait of Ennius, the material has to be approached with the appropriate caution.

One may therefore ask whether one should be content with Fronto's assessment of Ennius as a "many-sided" poet or with investigating Ennius' works individually in their own right or as elements in the history of the respective literary genres (as scholars have done). In fact, it is possible to make an attempt to go further and try to identify potential overarching characteristics and generic differences within Ennius' output. Thus, this study will look at a selection of examples taken from different genres and organized according to a range of broad systematic categories in which similarities as well as differences might be noted. Such an intergeneric study can lead to a better understanding of characteristics of Ennius' writings and thus of his poetic identity. Moreover, this analysis can function as a methodological test case of ways of exploring the fragments of a multifaceted author active in a variety of literary genres, and it may point to aspects to be observed for the categorization of unassigned fragments.[9]

Transmission

In order to assess the relevance of generic distinctions and potential cross-generic features in Ennius' output, one first has to consider the assignment of the available fragments to distinctive literary genres. These "fragments" survive because later ancient authors quote them as excerpts; they select these pieces for different reasons, often reproduce the sections out of context, and may combine several quotations for formal reasons. Still,

[8] Zetzel 2007 points out this issue with reference to Cicero (esp. p. 16): "That Ennius wrote important poetry about Rome's history and heroes is evident, and it is not my intention to deny it. But to make that poetry the centre of Ennius' literary endeavours is hard to justify on many counts. . . . Cicero's Ennius is Cicero's: he read, quoted, and used different works of Ennius for different reasons in different contexts and at different times of his life, and what a consummate rhetorician and stylist does with his materials should not be taken unreflectively as an accurate representation of what those materials meant in their original context. Ennius is, from our perspective, a far more complex and varied writer than any of the Ennii imagined or created by Cicero; the great tragic poet who could also write *Epicharmus*, *Satires*, *Sota*, and *Hedyphagetica* may not have been the literary ideal Cicero was looking for, but we need not be influenced by Cicero in that."

[9] Translations of fragments of and testimonia for Ennius are taken from *FRL* I and II. Since for such a thematic study details of the readings and the interpretations of individual fragments are not always relevant, specific secondary literature is referred to selectively. Fuller documentation can be found in the editions listed in this volume's Abbreviations section, as well as in the overview article and the comprehensive bibliography by Suerbaum (2002, 2003). For recent stimulating studies on the *Annales*, see esp. Rossi and Breed 2006; Fitzgerald and Gowers 2007; Elliott 2013; Damon and Farrell 2020.

these writers frequently indicate which work or literary genre an excerpt has been taken from. Moreover, some transmitting authors cite extracts from different types of works by Ennius in the same context since in their view they are examples of the use of the same word or motif irrespective of generic differences. Obviously, the respective interpretation and arrangement is the result of the views of these ancient readers (or their sources), and the occurrence of a particular word in works of different genres is not necessarily meaningful. Yet, if these methods of citation demonstrate that characteristic words, specific collocations, or particular motifs occur across genres, they can reveal telling information in the sense that there is a certain proportion of shared language or conceptual framework across genres.

For instance, to illustrate a vivid descriptive phrase in a line from Virgil's *Aeneid* (*Aen.* 11.601: *tum late ferreus hastis horret ager*), Macrobius (*Sat.* 6.4.6) lists three examples from Ennius, one from the historical epic *Annales*, one from the tragedy *Erectheus*, and one from the panegyric *Scipio*, while he also gives a line from Homer's *Iliad* as a predecessor to all these passages.[10] Apparently, Macrobius regards the excerpts from these different Ennian texts as possibly inspired by Homer and as comparable to the verse in Virgil's epic. He thus indicates that such metaphorical language occurs in all three literary genres from which the Ennian examples derive.

In terms of content, Cicero quotes from the *Annales* and from one of the tragedies in *De natura deorum* when he has one of the interlocutors give a proof of divine existence,[11] and Varro inserts extracts from the *Annales*

[10] Macrob. *Sat.* 6.4.6 (ad Virg. *Aen.* 11.601: *tum late ferreus hastis horret ager*): *horret mire se habet; sed et Ennius in quarto decimo* [*Ann.* 384]: '*horrescit telis exercitus asper utrimque' et in Erectheo* [*Erec.* 51]: '*arma arrigunt, horrescunt tela' et in Scipione* [*Scip.* 4 R = 6 *FRL* II]: '*sparsis hastis longis campus splendet et horret,' sed ante omnes Homerus* [Hom. *Il.* 13.339]: ἔφριξεν δὲ μάχη φθισίμβροτος ἐγχείῃσιν. ("Macrobius, *Saturnalia* (on Virgil, 'then the field, full of iron, bristles with spears'): 'bristle' is a remarkable usage, but so too Ennius in Book Fourteen [*Ann.* 14]: 'on both sides the fierce army bristles with lances' and in *Erectheus* [*Erec.* 51]: 'they raise the weapons, the spears bristle' and in *Scipio* [*Scip.* 4 R = 6 *FRL* II]: the field shimmered and bristled with long spears spread,' but Homer before all the others [Hom. *Il.* 13.339]: 'the man-destroying battle bristled with spears'.") Cf. similarly Macrob. *Sat.* 6.5.10 (ad Virg. *Aen.* 1.224: *despiciens mare velivolum*): *Ennius in quarto decimo* [*Ann.* 379–80]: *'quom procul aspiciunt hostes accedere ventis / navibus velivolis,' idem in Andromache* [*Andr.* 33]: *'rapit ex alto naves velivolas.'* ("Macrobius, *Saturnalia* (on Virgil, 'looking down on the swift-sailing sea'): Ennius in Book Fourteen [*Ann.* 379–80]: 'when far off they see the enemy advance with the winds / on swift-sailing ships.' The same poet in *Andromache* [*Andr.* 33]: 'it hurries swift-sailing ships from the deep sea'.")

[11] Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.4 (cf. *Nat. D.* 2.64–65): *quid enim potest esse tam apertum tamque perspicuum, cum caelum suspeximus caelestiaque contemplati sumus, quam esse aliquod numen praestantissimae mentis quo haec regantur? quod ni ita esset, qui potuisset adsensu omnium dicere Ennius* [*Thy.* 134]: *'aspice hoc sublime candens, quem vocant omnes Iovem,' illum vero et Iovem et dominatorem rerum et omnia nutu regentem, et, ut idem Ennius* [*Ann.* 592]: *'patrem divomque hominumque' et praesentem ac praepotentem*

and the philosophical work *Epicharmus* when he discusses the generative properties of earth and heaven.[12] That these authors adduce extracts from different literary genres as elements in discussions of questions of religion and natural philosophy shows that Ennius addressed these topics in works of various genres. Moreover, that well-read intellectuals of the first century BCE refer to extracts from a variety of works by Ennius indicates that they were familiar with all of them[13] (not even always indicating the source) and regarded all of them (without any obvious hierarchy) as potential evidence that might be adduced for questions of religion and natural philosophy.

The appearance of similar topics in Ennian works of different literary genres also means that in the case of fragments quoted from Ennius, yet without attribution to specific pieces of writing, scholars sometimes debate which kind of work they might come from, as the content may not be decisive. And, at least for short extracts, individual formal generic features might not always be so prominent that generic attribution can be straightforward. For instance, some hexameter fragments often ascribed to the *Annales* (e.g., *Ann.* 458, 494–95) may belong instead to the *Saturae*;[14] and out of the fragments transmitted without an indication of a work, one has been assigned by scholars to the tragedies or to *Epicharmus* (*Op. inc.* 9 *FRL* II); another to the tragedies, the *Scipio*, or the *Saturae* (*Op. inc.* 17 *FRL* II).

deum. ("For what can be so open and so clear, when we have looked up at the sky and have watched the celestial bodies, as that there is some divinity with an outstanding mind by whom these things are directed? If this were not so, how could Ennius have said, with everyone's approval [*Thy.* 134], 'look at this thing shining on high, whom all call Jupiter,' him indeed, Jupiter and lord of the world and governing everything by his movements and, as the same Ennius <says> [*Ann.* 592], 'father of gods and men' and a present and very powerful god?")

[12] Varro, *Ling.* 5.59–60: *haec duo Caelum et Terra, quod anima et corpus. humidum et frigidum terra, sive* [*Ann.* 8–9] *'ova parire solet genus pennis condecoratum, / non animam,' ut ait Ennius,* [*Ann.* 9–10] *et 'post inde venit divinitus pullis / ipsa anima' sive, ut Zeno Cit<ie>us* [Zeno, fr. 126 Arn.], *animalium semen ignis is qui anima et mens, qui caldor e caelo, quod huic innumerabiles et immortales ignes. itaque Epicharmu*s [*<cum>* add. Spengel] *dicit de mente humana* [*Epich.* 2]. *ait: 'istic est de sole sumptus ignis,' idem <de> sole{m}* [Spengel]: *'isque totus mentis est,' ut humores frigidae sunt humi, ut supra ostendi* [Varro, *Ling.* 5.24]. [60] *quibus iuncti caelum et terra omnia ex <se>* [Laetus] *genuerunt, quod per hos natura 'frigori miscet calorem atque humori aritudinem.'* ("These two, Heaven and Earth, are a pair like life and body. Earth is damp and cold, whether [*Ann.* 8–9] 'the race adorned with feathers is wont to bear eggs, / not life,' as Ennius says, and [*Ann.* 9–10] 'that life force comes to the chicks afterward / from the sky,' or, as Zeno of Citium says [Zeno, fr. 126 Arn.], the seed of living things is that fire, which is life and mind; this heat is from the sky, since it has countless and immortal fires. And thus Epicharmus speaks about the human mind [*Epich.* 2]. He says: 'that is fire taken from the sun,' the same poet says about the sun: 'and that is entirely mind' as liquids belong to the cold earth, as I have shown above [Varro, *Ling.* 5.24]. [60] Joined with these, the sky and the earth gave birth to everything out of themselves, since through these nature 'mixes heat with cold and dryness with moisture'.")

[13] On the Roman reception of Ennius *multiformis*, see further Russo, Chapter 4 in this volume.

[14] Cf. Elliott, Chapter 13 in this volume.

Metre, Style, Format

Sometimes, but not always, formal criteria can indicate a generic identity and thus determine the assignment of unspecified fragments.

For instance, Ennius continued developments introduced by his immediate predecessor Naevius in making the content of Roman epic more "Roman"; at the same time, he brought epic closer to the Greek model in form by introducing the metre of the hexameter (instead of the Saturnian), which then became canonical for all later Roman epic (Isid. *Orig.* 1.39.6 = T 109a). In this sense he introduced a Greek literary tradition to Rome and initiated a certain type of metrical form for epic. As in Greek literature, Ennius used the metre of the hexameter for other literary genres too, most prominently for the *Hedyphagetica*, of which a section on different types of fish and the places where the best varieties can be found survives (*Hed.* 1). Yet between the two works differences in the use of this metre can be observed, which is usually explained by the generic distinction: in the *Hedyphagetica* all lines are end-stopped, and there are more examples of hiatus, iambic shortening, hypermetric lines, and elisions.[15] Ennius also moved away from the Saturnian for literary epigrams, for which he started to employ the elegiac distich, again in line with Greek precedents (Isid. *Orig.* 1.39.15 = T 109b). Thus, in the area of metre Ennius seems to have observed generic distinctions. This impression is not contradicted by the *Saturae*, which feature a variety of metres, since this very feature marks the nature of this literary genre in its early shape as introduced to Rome by Ennius. Thus, the use of the metre of Sotadeans is not limited to the *Sota*, but they also seem to appear in the *Saturae* (*Sat.* 12 R = 11 *FRL* II).[16]

While a basic generic distinction in tone and topics between serious and light drama was apparently in operation from the beginning (with some phrases and concepts only attested in one of these types), such distinctions do not apply in the same way to other literary genres. For instance, the *Saturae* include elements of comic diction (*Sat.* 1, 4; *Sat.* 12 R = 11 *FRL* II), a comic character (*Sat.* 9: parasite), and apparent parodies of epic diction, which might be self-parodies (*Sat.* 3, 5; *Sat.* 15, 19 *FRL* II).

In terms of presentation format, there is overlap between epic and tragedy (as there is in Greek literature among the works of different poets), as both these literary genres have narrative and dramatic sections. Accordingly, both the *Annales* and Ennius' tragedies feature speeches of

[15] See, e.g., Courtney 1993: 25, 58; *FRL* II: 261; on metre in the *Annales*, see Skutsch 1985a: 46–67. On the *Hedyphagetica* and its reception, cf. Russo, Chapter 4 and Goh, Chapter 12 in this volume.

[16] Cf. Hill, Chapter 5 in this volume, who tentatively attributes a "new" Sotadean to Ennius' *Saturae*.

characters; for instance, in both the *Annales* and the tragedies there is an example of a female character telling another about dreams and supernatural experiences (*Ann.* 34–50; *Trag. inc.* 151). In their narrative parts both genres include elements of battle descriptions (e.g., *Ann.* 173–74, 266–67, 384, 389–92; *Hect.* 61, 67, 68, 69, 70; *Trag. inc.* 153).

Poetic Self-Descriptions

The wide range of literary genres covered as well as the generic and poetic innovations might suggest Ennius as a distinctive and self-confident poetic personality: he indeed emerges as such not only implicitly from his oeuvre but also explicitly, since a number of works include reflections on the poet's situation.[17]

Such elements are less noteworthy in the epigrams and the *Saturae* in view of the nature of these literary genres, but personal statements also appear in the historical epic *Annales*.[18] The description of the dream encounter with Homer at the start, including a reference to the migration of souls between the two poets via a peacock (T 58; *Annales* 1, t 4 *FRL* I), demonstrates the versatility of poetic creativity.[19] In addition, Ennius comments implicitly on the relation of his poetry to that of his Roman predecessors in what might have been a proem in the middle of the epic; there he seems to have described himself as the first poet to be *dicti studiosus* ("careful of speech") in Rome, coming after, in his view, less polished predecessors (*Ann.* 206–10). Cicero, who quotes the comment (Cic. *Brut.* 71), sees a parallel in that in Greece too there were other poets before Homer, while Homer was the first poet of note. In the original context within Ennius' epic this passage may have been part of a second element of Ennius' portrayal of himself in that he both implies that he is a Homer for Rome (as indicated by the dream narrative at the start of the *Annales*) and sets himself within a Roman tradition in which his work means progress. If Cicero's description of the dream in *Epicharmus* can be taken literally (Cic. *Acad.* 2.51), it would imply that in this work too, as in the *Annales*, the poet speaks in the first person about a dream experience he has had.[20] In any case, by metapoetic comments of this kind Ennius

[17] On these elements in Ennius' work, see Suerbaum 1968 *passim*.

[18] On (potential) poetic self-descriptions in the *Annales*, see further Elliott, Chapter 13 in this volume. On poetic self-descriptions in the *Saturae*, see further Chahoud, Chapter 11 in this volume.

[19] Cf. Glauthier 2020: 32: "The peacock, then, can represent the multiple genres of Ennius' poetic career and prime the audience to be dazzled by whatever the author will produce next."

[20] Cic. *Acad.* 2.51 = T 27: *eadem ratio est somniorum. num censes Ennium, cum in hortis cum Ser. Galba vicino suo ambulavisset, dixisse visus sum mihi cum Galba ambulare? at cum somniavit ita narravit*

introduces himself as qualified to compose such a work not on the basis of autobiographical experiences but by virtue of his being a true and skilled poet. This portrait agrees with statements scattered over works of various genres about his envisaged afterlife and also with the fact that in several genres Ennius describes his works as enduring monuments, thus presenting them as objects of value (*Ann.* 164, 458; *Scip.* 1 *FRL* II).

On a different level, a comment about the citizen status of people from Rudiae, the town Ennius came from (*Ann.* 525), and the description of the so-called Good Companion (*Ann.* 268–86) in the *Annales* are often read as implied references to Ennius' position, although the surviving Ennian texts do not feature direct and obvious links to the poet's biography. If there are connections with Ennius' life experiences, passages with such a dimension occur within the narrative and are indirect, in contrast to the programmatic poetic statements at marked points in the work.[21]

The statement *numquam poetor nisi si podager* ("I'm never poetic unless I'm rheumatic," *Sat.* 14 R = 13 *FRL* II; cf. T 44a, 99, 102), generally attributed to the *Saturae*, similarly suggests first-person comments on the background for writing poetry if the poet can be assumed as the speaker. In another set of lines, attributed to the *Saturae* and phrased in high-flown language, Ennius is addressed: *Enni poeta, salve, qui mortalibus / versus propinas flammeos medullitus* ("greetings, poet Ennius, who pass flaming verses from your very marrow on to mortal men," *Sat.* 5); thus, the reference to Ennius and his poetry is obvious, although it is not clear who the speaker is and whether the phrase might be meant ironically. At any rate the passage reveals the same confident expression of the poet's afterlife that emerges from the first book of the *Annales* (*Ann.* 12–13) and from one of the epigrams (*Epigr.* 2). Generally, details preserved in the later biographical tradition might derive from Ennius' satirical narratives (cf. T 14, 27, 83, 97).

Relationship to Greek Literature

As some of the explicit comments about his poetry reveal, Ennius presented himself in relation to his Greek and Roman predecessors. While all

'visus Homerus adesse poeta' [*Ann.* 3], *idemque in Epicharmo* [*Epich.* 1]: *'nam videbar somniare me{e}d ego esse mortuum.'* ("The same principle applies to dreams. Do you suppose that Ennius, when he had gone for a walk in the garden with his neighbour Servius Galba, said, 'I seemed to go for a walk with Galba'? But when he dreamed, he reported thus: 'the poet Homer seemed to be present' [*Ann.* 3], and the same poet says in *Epicharmus* [*Epich.* 1]: 'for I seemed to dream that I was dead'.")

[21] For the view that *Ann.* 525 stands a good chance of being an autobiographical statement spoken by Ennius, see Elliott, Chapter 13 in this volume.

of Ennius' literary output can be regarded as modelled on earlier Greek literature in one way or another, the relationships in intertextual terms are different, depending on whether there are specific Greek models (e.g., for most tragedies and comedies) or not (e.g., for the *Saturae*). Nevertheless, it seems that a similar method of working on the basis of Greek material and simultaneously deviating from it significantly or inserting individual content can be observed across all literary genres.

For instance, at the start of the *Annales*, which presents Roman history and therefore cannot have a direct Greek source for its subject matter, Ennius famously narrates the story of the dream establishing a connection to Homer via the transmigration of souls (*Ann.* 2–11; cf. *FRL* I, pp. 108–15) and thereby sets himself up as a Homer for Rome: thus, for a work for which it is not self-evident because of the Roman subject matter, a link to Greek literature is established as regards its generic identity, form, and status (not its content), supported by the use of the metre of the hexameter in contrast to his Roman epic predecessors; thereby Ennius also distinguishes himself from the preceding epic tradition in Rome.[22]

If the information in the *Suda* ("Singing of Scipio and wishing to exalt the man to greatness, he [Ennius] says that only Homer could compose praises worthy of Scipio," T 113)[23] is correctly referred to the poem on Scipio, Ennius would have again established a connection to Homer in a work that is Roman in character and content. In this case there would not even be a connection as regards the literary genre, but Homer would be adduced as the key paradigm for an accomplished author, with the implication that Ennius' version might be compared to what Homer could have done.[24] Similarly, with reference to other Greek writers, the titles of the pieces referred to as *Epicharmus* and *Euhemerus* signal a connection to the works of the Greek authors identified thereby, which content-based titles, such as *Sacra historia* in the latter case, would obscure.

Thus, Ennius' writings are presented as continuations of Greek literature in generic terms. At the same time, where there is a specific Greek source, Ennius tends to use it rather freely. In addition to the evidence from the fragments, such an approach can be inferred from a statement by the comic playwright Terence: as an element in the justification of his way of appropriating existing

[22] On the context of Ennius' position in the development of Roman epic, see Sciarrino 2006; on the different forms of engaging with the Greek tradition observable in the early Roman epics by Ennius and his predecessors, see, e.g., Hinds 1998 *passim*.

[23] *Suda* s.v. Ἔννιος (II, p. 285 Adler, E 1348): Σκιπίωνα γὰρ ᾄδων καὶ ἐπὶ μέγα τὸν ἄνδρα ἐξᾶραι βουλόμενός φησι μόνον ἂν Ὅμηρον ἐπαξίους ἐπαίνους εἰπεῖν Σκιπίωνος.

[24] On the proem of the *Annales* and the *Scipio* in relation to Homer, see Suerbaum 1968: 94–113.

Greek dramas, Terence refers to similar methods deployed by predecessors and describes a principle of free treatment of Greek sources for Ennius (as well as for Naevius and Plautus), which he calls *neglegentia* in the specific argumentative context (Ter. *An.* 15–21 = T 1). Terence's discussion applies to comedy, but a similar method can be observed for tragedy too in the case of Ennius, who wrote dramas in both genres.

For instance, where more detailed comparisons are possible on the basis of the extant material, as in the case of the tragedies *Iphigenia* or *Medea (exul)*, differences can be observed: in comparison to the surviving versions of the dramatization of these stories by Euripides, the former features a chorus of soldiers (*Iphig.* 84), which does not appear in Euripides' *Iphigenia in Aulis*, and the latter includes statements on behaviour based on Roman ideology and political conduct, such as service for the *res publica*, which are not directly equivalent to the corresponding Greek version (*Med.* 90) and more reminiscent of maxims in the *Annales* (e.g., *Ann.* 156, 363), as well as a description of the Argo adjusted to the experiences of Roman audiences with a straightforward chronological explanation of the background story (*Med.* 89).

Similarly, in the *Hedyphagetica*, probably based on a gastronomic poem by Archestratus of Gela, the surviving description of different types of fish is adapted to the outlook of a Roman audience (familiar with other parts of Italy) as regards the choice and description of locations, with several of those mentioned situated in southern Italy (*Hed.* 1).[25] For the *Scipio*, if the assumption that it is written in a "popular" metre (*versus quadratus*) and is meant to represent the view of the Roman people is correct,[26] the panegyric is endowed with a Roman character in form, content, and approach. In the *Euhemerus* (*The Sacred History*) the names of the gods are provided in their Latin/Roman versions (*Euhem.* 2–11), and Greek names are glossed (*Euhem.* 4).[27] Accordingly, an approach that could be defined as *neglegentia*, in Terence's words from a specific argumentative perspective (Ter. *An.* 15–21), can be observed across genres in Ennius.

Roman Terminology and Concepts

Corresponding to the "Romanization" sketched in relation to Greek models, the occurrence of Roman terminology across literary genres can

[25] Cf. Biggs, Chapter 1 in this volume. [26] See Morgan 2014.

[27] Elsewhere, however, knowledge of Greek seems to be assumed: in the tragedies (*Alex.* 16, *Andr.* 25) Ennius alludes to the etymology of names of Greek characters, which have been retained, so that Varro, who quotes these lines (*Ling.* 7.82), comments that the etymologies are obvious in the Greek drama but not in Ennius' Latin version.

be observed. Examples of Roman phrases include the titles of Roman offices (*Ann.* 256–57); Roman technical/legal language for begetting children (*Andromeda* 35, *Cres.* 44); key Roman concepts such as *virtus* (*Hect.* 62, *Ph.* 109) and reflections on *otium* versus *negotium* (*Iphig.* 84); and Roman political vocabulary, such as *res publica* (*Med.* 90), *populus Romanus* (*Scip.* 1 R = 7 *FRL* II), *Quirites* (*Ann.* 102), *civis* (*Ann.* 385; *Achill.* 6, *Telamo* 121; *Epigr.* 1.1, 2a.1), *foedus* (*Ann.* 32), *hic ordo* (*Achill.* 4; can also denote the "senate"), *plebeius* (*Telephus* 125; in the sense of "ordinary person"), and *plebs* (*Trag. inc.* 194; in the sense of "common people" in a generic statement contrasted with *rex*). Other fragments emphasize the need and value of deeds for the community and the *res publica* even if they involve personal sacrifices, as well as characteristics of the right or wrong behaviour of rulers.[28] In line with this perspective, in one of the tragedies a comment on the role of reputation for one's impact in the Greek version is transformed into a class-based statement referring to wealth and low birth, more in line with Roman views on society (*Hec.* 73);[29] in another fragment the loss of fortune for someone of noble birth and high standing is described (*Trag. inc.* 157).[30]

Obviously, the ubiquity of such terms and concepts is not surprising in genres dealing with Roman subject matter and aspects of Roman history,

[28] For example, *Achill.* 6; *Erec.* 49; *Hect.* 59; *Med.* 90; *Mel.* 103; *Telamo* 121; *Trag. inc.* 150, 163, 194.

[29] Gell. *NA* 11.4 (*Hec.* 73): *Euripidis versus sunt in Hecuba verbis, sententia, brevitate insignes inlustresque;* [2] *Hecuba est ad Ulixen dicens* [Eur. *Hec.* 293–95]: 'τὸ δ' ἀξίωμα, κἂν κακῶς λέγῃ<ς> [Muretus], τὸ σὸν / νικᾷ [πείσει vel πείθει codd. Eur.]· λόγος γὰρ ἔκ τ' ἀδοξούντων ἰὼν / κἀκ τῶν δοκούντων αὐτὸς [αὐτὸς plur. codd. Eur.] οὐ ταὐτὸν σθένει.' [3] *hos versus Q. Ennius, cum eam tragoediam verteret, non sane incommode aemulatus est. versus totidem Enniani hi sunt: 'haec tu etsi perverse dices, facile Achivos flexeris; / nam cum opulenti locuntur pariter atque ignobiles, / eadem dicta eademque oratio aequa non aeque valet.'* [4] *bene, sicuti dixi, Ennius; sed 'ignobiles' tamen et 'opulenti'* ἀντὶ ἀδοξούντων καὶ δοκούντων satisfacere *sententiae non videntur; nam neque omnes ignobiles* ἀδοξοῦσι, <*neque omnes opulenti* εὐδοξοῦσιν> [add. codd. rec.]. ("There are verses by Euripides in his Hecuba, outstanding and brilliant in their diction, thought and conciseness; [2] Hecuba is saying to Ulixes [Eur. *Hec.* 293–95]: 'But your reputation, even if you speak falsely, / prevails; for a speech coming from those without reputation / and the same coming from those enjoying reputation do not have the same force.' [3] When Ennius adapted this tragedy, he emulated these verses, certainly not unbecomingly. The Ennian verses, the same in number, are the following: 'Even if you say this mistakenly, you will easily move the Achaeans; / for when wealthy people and those of low birth speak in the same way, / the same words and the same speech, though equal, do not have value equally.' [4] Ennius, as I said, did well; but 'of low birth' and 'wealthy,' in place of 'those without reputation' and 'those enjoying reputation' do not seem to render the meaning satisfactorily; for neither are all people of low birth without reputation, <nor do all wealthy people enjoy reputation>.")

[30] *Trag. inc.* 157: *pol mihi fortuna magis nunc defit quam genus. / namque regnum suppetebat mi, ut scias quanto e loco, / quantis opibus, quibus de rebus lapsa fortuna accidat.* ("By Pollux, good fortune is lacking now for me more than noble descent. / For I used to have a kingdom, so that you may know from what standing, / from what power, from what riches fortune may lapse and fall down.")

such as the epic *Annales*, the plays of the dramatic genre *fabula praetexta* (a specific Roman type of history play), or the poem on Scipio. It is noteworthy, however, that this tendency can be observed across all literary genres cultivated by Ennius, including, for instance, tragedies based on Greek myth. Similarly, praise of outstanding deeds of Roman leaders occurs in a variety of genres, particularly the *Annales*, the *fabulae praetextae*, the *Scipio*, and the epigrams.[31]

Thus, it seems that all works were to be made accessible to Roman audiences, and that this aim was more important than precise fidelity to a source. Several pieces include reflections on the use of Greek versus Latin words, which, as ancient authors already note, is sometimes incongruous with the assumed setting.[32] Again, the intention to incorporate such considerations of interest to at least parts of the Roman audience seems to have been more relevant than literary plausibility.

Themes and Topics

Beyond a combination of a Roman colouring and Greek influence, the occurrence of particular themes, for instance from the areas of philosophy and religion, can be observed across genres in Ennius' output. This is especially telling when such elements are not required by the plot or generic conventions.

The attitude to philosophy may be exemplified by the well-known utterance of Ennius' Neoptolemus: "I must philosophize to a limited extent; for doing so entirely does not please me" (*Trag. inc.* 147: *philosophandum est, paucis; nam omnino haud placet*).[33] The statement is often interpreted as a rejection of philosophy, conforming to standard Roman prejudices; yet the speaker does propose a certain amount of

[31] On glorification in both the *Annales* and the *Scipio*, see, e.g., Suerbaum 1968: 236–48.

[32] For example, *Ann.* 139–40: *et densis aquila pennis obnixa volabat / vento quem perhibent Graium genus aera lingua* ("and an eagle came flying, battling with close-packed wings / the wind, which the Greek race in its tongue calls *aer*"); *Ann.* 211–12: *nec quisquam sophiam, sapientia quae perhibetur, / in somnis vidit prius quam sam discere coepit* ("nor did anyone else see the wisdom, which is called knowledge, / in his dreams before he began to acquire it"); *Op. inc.* 9 *FRL* II: *istic est is Iuppiter quem dico, quem Graeci vocant / aerem, qui ventus est et nubes, imber postea, / atque ex imbre frigus, ventus post fit, aer denuo / † haec propter † Iuppiter sunt ista quae dico tibi / † qua † mortalis atque urbes beluasque omnis iuvat.* ("That is this Jupiter, of whom I speak, whom the Greeks call / *aer* ['air'], who is wind and clouds, later rain, / and cold from rain, then becomes wind [*aer*] again. / Therefore (?) these things that I mention to you are Jupiter, / because (?) he strengthens [*iuvat*] all mortals and cities, and animals.")

[33] While the general meaning of this fragment is clear, the precise reading of the text is difficult to establish (for an overview of readings proposed, see *TrRF* II).

philosophizing. Ennius' plays also contain elements of natural philosophy. Irrespective of what kind of assessment of philosophical views was supported by the poet or a play as a whole, inserting such discussions into dramas confronts audiences with these notions.

The dream about Homer featured at the beginning of the *Annales*, whether introduced for philosophical or for literary reasons, seems to presuppose the concept of the transmigration of the soul.[34] In the same passage in which Cicero refers to this dream, he mentions another dream that Ennius is said to have referred to in the *Epicharmus* (Cic. *Acad.* 2.51: T 27 = *Ann.* 3 and *Epich.* 1), by saying, "for I seemed to dream that I was dead." While this could refer to a variety of contexts, it is possible that a concept of reincarnation was evoked there too.

In addition to being appealed to as a god, Jupiter is referred to as representing natural bodies and elements, such as the sun or air (*Med.* 95; *Thy.* 134; *Op. inc.* 9 *FRL* II), which suggests that competing views on divine nature underlie compositions in all literary genres. Moreover, the issue of the elements and of the generation and return of life is also referred to in the *Annales* (*Ann.* 5–10).

The topic of the relationship between gods and humans seems to have had significant dominance and breadth across a variety of Ennius' works, in the sense that it is not just shown and applied but explicitly discussed. Within the tragedies the complex comes to the fore in *Telamo*: according to Cicero's report (*Div.* 2.104; *Nat. D.* 3.79–80), Telamo argues that, even though there are gods, they do not care for humans, for if they did, good humans would do well and bad ones badly (*Telamo* 117). Although Telamo's argument arises from his personal fortune, the fact that this leads to reflections on the gods gives the issue a wider application. Cicero claims that these views met with great approval from the populace, which might refer to performances in his time. In the same play Teucer regards his descent from Jupiter as important and has his piety towards the gods guide his actions (*Telamo* 120, 121; cf. *Thy.* 136).

Telamo also includes criticism of soothsayers and seers (*Telamo* 117; cf. also *Trag. inc.* 160): these people are accused of focussing on their personal gain and not caring about giving proper advice, another issue discussed by Cicero (*Div.* 1.132). Similar scepticism features in *Iphigenia*, where Achilles criticizes the fact that people look to the sky to determine their actions instead of at what is before their feet (*Iphig.* 82). At the same time,

[34] On this dream, its philosophical context, and its relevance, see Glauthier 2021 (with further references).

a fragment from the *Annales* mentions that Venus gave the gift of prophecy to Anchises (*Ann.* 15–16) and the famous augury of Romulus and Remus receives an important role in the history of the city of Rome (*Ann.* 72–89, 154–55). Similarly, the *Annales* features traditional divine genealogy as part of poetic description (e.g., *Ann.* 23–24, 53),[35] while in the *Euhemerus* divine genealogy is linked with the view that the gods originally were great kings subsequently worshipped as gods in honour of their achievements. In turn, the concept that outstanding individuals might win divine honours could have informed Ennius' glorification of Roman leaders in the *fabulae praetextae*, the *Annales*, and the *Scipio*, as well as the tendency to represent their achievements as benefitting all the Roman people.

By contrast, in other fragments from the tragedies Apollo is featured as outlining the helpfulness of his advice, is made responsible for people's actions, and is presented as a determining influence on seers (*Thy.* 136; *Trag. inc.* 146, 151). Bacchic celebrations are presented in *Athamas* (*Ath.* 42). Elsewhere comments on roles of gods, their descriptions (for instance, as anthropomorphic and all-powerful), and human actions, like sacrifices, sound more conventional (*Trag. inc.* 143, 159, 165; *Op. inc.* 44 *FRL* II).

In addition to having the gods as an influence, a role is given to fortune (*fors*, *fortuna*): in various contexts it seems to be assumed that fortune rules and supports the bold and valorous; it can cause sudden reversals of circumstance and create unhappy situations, though it does not take away internal values (e.g., *Ann.* 183–90, 233, 312–13, 353, 385–86; *Thy.* 135, *Trag. inc.* 157).

This ambiguous picture suggests tensions across literary genres between, on the one hand, traditional views and roles of gods in Greek and Roman literature and society, especially with reference to Roman history, and, on the other hand, philosophical, more rationalistic, and "scientific" views of the world, which may be adduced to explain situations otherwise attributed to the gods, and also between the traditional view of the gods and the scepticism about their positive impact on human life and criticism of their cult.[36]

[35] *Ann.* 23–24: *Saturno / quem Caelus genuit* ("to Saturn, / whom Sky fathered"); *Ann.* 53: *respondit Iuno Saturnia, sancta dearum* ("Juno, Saturn's daughter, holy goddess, replied").

[36] On the gods in Ennius' *Annales* in comparison with his other works, see esp. Feeney 1991: 120–28, who notes the combination of a variety of traditional and innovative concepts and the "disparity between Roman state cult and the pictures of the gods offered in these two books [*Euhemerus* and *Epicharmus*]" (p. 120); and Farrell 2020, who argues that rationalizing theology demonstrated in the *Euhemerus* is present in the *Annales* more noticeably than generally thought.

Conclusion

The wide and diverse range of literary genres Ennius produced suggests that he was well aware of the existence of different types of literature and their characteristic features, so that he could take up and develop literary genres already present in Rome and also introduce new types of writing recognizably following a particular format. Since later ancient authors already comment on Ennius' works generically, they must have discerned distinctive features that allow for assigning his (complete) writings to specific and different literary genres. In view of the current fragmentary state of Ennius' output, with some fragments not even attributed to specific works, it is difficult to determine which features can be regarded as typical of the individual genres. Only with reference to the metrical shape of the *Annales*, the *Hedyphagetica*, and the *Saturae* can clear generic distinctions be observed. That Ennius adopted the hexameter as the epic metre from Greek tradition and introduced it in Rome as the canonical metre for this genre, that he used it differently in the *Hedyphagetica*, and that he enriched the satiric character of the *Saturae* by metrical variety might suggest metre as one of the features that define and separate literary genres from each other.

Beyond formal features, this brief overview of themes and approaches in Ennius' works in all literary genres shows that some topics and literary strategies appear in pieces of different genres. Such a common basis applies both to works that Ennius composed following Greek models and to those that Ennius established or developed more freely. It is evident particularly that Ennius has tragic characters discuss philosophical and religious questions and also addresses them in separate works; thus, beyond the traditional views of the gods and their impact on nature and the fortune of human beings, he seems to contribute to a more critical, scientific discourse. Thereby he furthers the Romans' familiarity with philosophical concepts. It is equally obvious that Romanization takes places in several literary genres, not only in the *Annales*, whose content focusses on Roman history. Thus, Ennius continues and enhances a tendency started by his predecessor Naevius and important for a feeling of community among the Romans.

Overall, Ennius can certainly be characterized as *multiformis*. If one looks at his output beyond the focus on style and considers it more broadly and comprehensively, this assessment may be specified and enhanced: Ennius can be said to deal innovatively with literary forms and themes, partly in creative interaction with Greek predecessors or following Roman

predecessors, partly by establishing new genres with characteristic features. Such an understanding of the breadth and variety of Ennius' activity should be taken into account in considerations on assigning unallocated fragments to literary genres. Obviously, one must remain cautious in sketching a portrait of the poet Ennius in view of the fragmentary evidence, especially when the contexts of isolated statements are not clear. Still, it looks as if there are sufficient indications for broader tendencies across the entire output, so that a poetic identity across works can be discerned and descriptions such as "the poet of the *Annales*" might be misleading and one-sided. Of course, some works have become more famous than others and thus have shaped the later view of Ennius, but this may have more to do with their subject matter or the status of their literary genres than with a difference in the messages originally presented by Ennius.