THE WISDOM OF ENNIUS

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The second-century A.D. scholar Pompeius Festus preserves a fragment of Ennius as follows (*Ann.* 211–12):

> Nec quisquam sophiam sapientia quae perhibetur,
> in somnis vidit prius quam sam discere coepit.
>
> Nor has anyone had dreams of *sophia*, which is called
> *sapientia*,
> before he has begun to study it.

Scaliger's substitution of *sophia* for the manuscripts' *philosophia* makes of the first line, like the second, a dactylic hexameter and has been accepted by all subsequent editors. Festus, together with the epitomator Paulus Diaconus, cites the fragment for its use of *sam* as the feminine accusative singular of the pronoun *is, ea, id.* Festus and Paulus (or their source, probably Verrius Flaccus) thus excerpt enough of the Ennian original to complete both the metrical and the grammatical constituents that contain the pronoun *sam* and its antecedent *sophia*.[1]

The fragment has received less attention than it deserves. Otto Skutsch suggests that it be taken as an inversion of the common claim that

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1 This appears to be the pattern of citation of the other fragment quoted by Festus and Paulus under the lemma *sas*: "uirgines nam sibi quisque domi Romanus habet sas" ("Each Roman has his own maidens at home," *Ann.* 98). For the forms and frequency of the alternative anaphoric pronoun *so*, see Skutsch 1985.64. Throughout this paper, all translations are my own. For comments on an earlier draft, I wish to express my thanks to audiences at USC and Cambridge, the anonymous referees for *Arethusa*, and the editors of this issue.

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dreams correspond to waking activities: people dream of what they do during the day, and don't dream of what they don't do. He takes his lead from Cicero, who claimed that Ennius dreamt of Homer because he thought and spoke about him so much while awake (*Rep*. 6.10), and further notes that the fragment in question formally resembles a saying attributed to Democritus, namely (Democritus B 59 Diels-Kranz):

> οὔτε τέχνη οὔτε σοφίη ἐφικτόν,
> ἢν μὴ μάθηι τις.
>
> Neither craft nor skill is achieved
> unless one studies.

In Skutsch's view, Ennius's reference to a dream encounter with wisdom constitutes a defense against those readers and critics, real or anticipated, who take his dream of Homer to imply a claim to poetic authority based exclusively on inspiration as opposed to learning or effort.[2] Skutsch rejects Hermann Fränkel's proposal (1932) to emend *coepit* to *coepi* and have the fragment announce a programmatic claim to priority in wisdom comparable to Ennius's assertions of literary authority and originality. But in so doing, he misses an opportunity to reflect on the importance of wisdom, or *sapientia*, to Ennius, instead making of wisdom an almost accidental counterpart to poetry and assimilating the fragment to a Democritean saying to which it bears no resemblance except in form. Ennius's otherwise well-attested interest in dreams and, as we shall see, in wisdom, makes it unlikely that our fragment, whether intended defensively or not, contains an offhand remark or randomly chosen analogy. And the Democritean parallel is surely a false lead, for the issue in the Ennian fragment, as Skutsch notes, is the relationship between dreaming and waking reality and not, as in Democritus, the dependence of achievement on effort.

The pressure to understand *sapientia* as the subject of a dream is even greater if we accept Maurizio Bettini's alternative interpretation of the fragment as a boast, but of a slightly different sort than the one proposed by

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2 Skutsch 1985.375–78; cf. Suerbaum 1968.282–95 and Reggiani 1979.74. While it is not certain that the poet himself is the speaker of the fragment, the Ciceronian passage cited by Skutsch provides a plausible context for an Ennian self-defense. It's also difficult to see to what other character in Book 7 the fragment could be assigned, especially with its embedded translation.

Fränkel.[3] Whereas Fränkel has Ennius boast that no one had even conceived of wisdom (at Rome) before him, Bettini takes the fragment to mean that, until Ennius, no one had managed to dream of wisdom without (first) studying it. On Bettini's view, both the dream of Homer and the dream of wisdom (whether recounted as such or not) precede the studying of the relevant material. The interpretations of Skutsch and Bettini are both possible, with the former laying emphasis on the claim to erudition and achievement, the latter more closely aligning the fragment with the mysticism implicit in the claim to be channeling Homer. Whichever we prefer (and I will not attempt to adjudicate here), we are still left to wonder about the larger significance of the fragment in the context of the *Annales*: why defend—or celebrate—a previous dream by reference to a dream of wisdom (and not of something else)? And why equate *sapientia* to *sophia*, especially in this context?

Of the dreaming per se, little can be said with certainty. Dreams figure in many pre-Ennian literary genres, including epic, tragedy, philosophy, and historiography, and Fabius Pictor's introduction of a dream of Aeneas in his Greek *Annals* of Roman history provides close precedent for Ennius's use of dream in his poetic *Annales*.[4] I know of no prior dreams of wisdom, although personifications of wisdom are fairly widespread—from earlier Hebrew scriptures through Hellenistic Jewish treatises (where she is given the Greek name Sophia)[5] to Ennius's younger contemporary Afranius, who has Wisdom announce herself as "daughter of experience and memory,"[6]

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3 Bettini 1979.126–30. Bettini makes the additional suggestion that Ennius, like Callimachus, represents himself as having had his crucial dream encounter in his youth: in Ennius's case, even before he began his schooling (*discere*). On the use of the term *sapientia* in the fragment, see also Homeyer 1956, Luck 1964, Klima 1971.73.

4 Cic. *Div*. 1.43 refers to "a dream of Aeneas in Fabius Pictor's Greek *Annals*, of such a sort that everything that was done by Aeneas or happened to him appeared to him in his sleep." See also Polyb. 12.24.5 for criticism of Timaeus's inclusion of dreams in his historical writings. Hanson 1980 and Walde 2001 discuss dreaming in Greek and Latin literature more generally without considering the Ennian passage about wisdom or the dream in Fabius Pictor's *Annals*.

5 Job 28; Proverbs 1.20–33, 4.8–9, 8.1–36, 9.1–6 (including speeches by Wisdom); Wisdom 6.12–7.14, 7.22–8.18, 9.19–10.21 (including speeches by Wisdom; she is demiurgic); Sirach 1.8–19 (no speeches, but demiurgic). For discussion, see *The Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York 1987) 13.416–17 and *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (New York 1992) entry "Wisdom in the OT." The convergence of Greek and Near Eastern wisdom traditions is as old as Hesiod (see West 1978.3–25), but he offers no personification of *sophiê*, still treating it as technical skill (West 1978.319).

6 "Usus me genuit, mater peperit Memoria / Sophiam vocant me Grai, vos Sapientiam" ("Experience sired me, mother Memory bore me / the Greeks calls me Sophia, you call me Sapientia"). For other instances in Latin literature, see Suerbaum 1968.283 n. 802.

and even perhaps Cicero, who calls her "mother of all good things" (*Leg*. 1.58).[7] Aulus Gellius, who cites the passage from Afranius, praises him for so describing Sophia, in contrast to unnamed others who present her as the product of words or images of the sort that "rave in a mime or in a dream" ("tamquam in mimo aut in somnio deliraverint," Gellius 13.8.3). We may thus infer that someone familiar to Gellius had dreamt of *sophia* (which in Afranius, too, is equated with *sapientia*), but have no way of knowing who that might have been: Ennius, his source, or a third party altogether.

In archaic Greek poetry, *sophiê* is ascribed to the Muses and, by implication, to their poetic devotees. In at least some instances, *sophiê* seems to imply not just technical skill, but "a claim to a superior moral authority" (Thomas 1995.117). It is tempting, therefore, to link Ennius's use of *sophia/sapientia* to his introduction of the Muses, perhaps through the medium of Callimachus; but the surviving fragments of Callimachus's encounter with the Muses contain no reference to wisdom, while his repudiation of the Telchines explicitly links *sophiê* with poetic *tekhnê* (*Aetia* frag. 1.18 Pfeiffer).[8] If that was the meaning of *sophia* Ennius had in mind, then *sapientia* was at best a peculiar translation, and one that left no impact on Ennius's successors.

Moreover, Ennius's Muses, as Skutsch reminds us (1985.146), are "those of the [Pythagorean] Mouseion at Croton as well as those of the Mouseion of Alexandria." And *sophia*, especially in its relationship to *philosophia*, was understood by the ancients to be of particular interest to Pythagoras and his followers.[9] Scholars continue to disagree whether

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7 Possibly relevant as well is the relief by Archelaus of Priene generally known as the "Apotheosis of Homer." There personified Sophia is depicted along with the abstractions Physis, Arete, Mneme, and Pistis among a larger group celebrating the deified Homer. Other bands on the relief depict Apollo, the Muses, Zeus, and Mnemosyne. The likely connection with poetic initiation or reward for poetic achievement as well as the discovery of the relief at Bovillae in Latium make it tantalizing to associate the relief with Ennius. But scholars disagree over the date, with Pollitt 1986.15–16 and Smith 1991.186–87 assigning it to the late third century B.C.E., but Ridgway 1990.1.257–74 considering it possibly as late as the first century B.C.E. Ridgway also seems cautious about the seventeenth-century discovery at Bovillae. Without directly linking the relief to Ennius, Brink 1972 suggests that the depiction of Homer as source of all poetry would have been familiar to him.

8 For further instances of *sophia* used of poetic craft in Hellenistic and later Greek poetry, see Asper 1997.99 n. 330.

9 In later Gnostic texts, the neo-Pythagorean figure of Helena, symbolic of "the falling and reascending heavenly soul" merges with the older Hebrew-Hellenistic tradition of demiurgic or cosmogonic wisdom (*Encyclopedia of Religion* [New York 1987] 13.417). Did

Pythagoras was the first to make the distinction by calling himself a philosopher; what matters for our purposes is that ancient sources attributed the innovation to him.[10] Dreaming, too, was important in Pythagorean teaching and practice. As Peter Kingsley notes (1995.134, 281–88), the famous ritual prohibitions of the Pythagoreans correspond to strictures imposed on those seeking prophetic dreams through incubation, and locations that figure prominently in Pythagorean lore double as sites of oneiromancy. Porphyry reports that Pythagoras gained expertise in the art of interpreting dreams thanks to his travels among Egyptians, Arabians, Chaldeans, and Hebrews (*VP* 11, see also Diog. Laert. 8.32). In other words, not just the content of Ennius's famous dream of Homer, which tells of the process of metempsychosis or transmigration of souls, but, more generally, the reliance on prophetic dreams, whether by the poet within the proem or by a character such as Ilia, links the Ennian dreamworld to Pythagoreanism.[11] Although it's not out of the question that some Pythagorean source familiar to Ennius but lost to us reported a dream of wisdom, without more precise evidence, the most that the Pythagorean connection can do is confirm our sense of the deliberateness and potential significance of Ennius's reference to dreaming of *sophia*.[12]

We can make more headway with Ennius's correlation of the terms *sophia* and *sapientia* via the connecting verb *perhibeo*. Several times in the *Annales,* use of *perhibeo* serves to establish terminological equivalence

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an earlier Pythagorean account of personified wisdom participating in metempsychosis provide a basis for the convergence?

10 Against the ancient view that Pythagoras was the first to call himself *philosophos*, see Burkert 1961 and 1972, endorsed by Skutsch 1985. Against Burkert's critique, see de Vogel 1966.96–102, Gottschalk 1980, and, most recently, Riedweg 2004.

11 See also the first fragment of Ennius's *Epicharmus*, in which the speaker reports: "I seemed to dream that I was dead" ("Nam videbar somniare med ego esse mortuum," *Varia* 45 Vahlen). Cicero (*Luc*. 51) suggests that Ennius speaks here *in propria persona*, but gives us no help in understanding the relationship between this dream and any Greek predecessor. In Ennius's *Alexander*, Cassandra describes Hecuba's dream before she gives birth to Paris: *Trag.* 50–54 Jocelyn.

12 As part of the larger framework of Ennius's interest in Pythagoras, we might note also the Pythagorean associations of the Muses (Skutsch 1985.145–46, following Iamblichus *VP* 45–50) and the interest in astral theology attributed to an unspecified Fulvius (Lydus *de Ost*. 16a, p. 47 Wachsmuth), plausibly taken to be Ennius's patron Q. Fulvius Nobilior (Storchi Marino 1999.157ff.; cf. also Rüpke pp. 505–06 in the present volume). Dreams figured in early Roman historiography as well: Cicero refers to a prophetic dream of Aeneas in Fabius Pictor's Greek *Annals* (*Div*. 1.43) and to dreams recorded by Coelius Antipater (*Div*. 1.48–49) and other early historians (*Div*. 1.55). See also note 4 above.

across cultural or temporal boundaries. We hear of "wind (*ventus*), which the Greeks call *aer*" ("vento quem perhibent Graium genus aera lingua," *Ann*. 140); "the rainbow (*arcus*) . . . which mortals know as Iris ("arcus . . . mortalibus quae perhibetur / <Iris>," *Ann*. 399–400); and "the place [apparently Italy], which used to be called Hesperia" ("est locus Hesperiam quam mortales perhibebant," *Ann*. 20). In the case of the wind, the rainbow, and Italy, the more familiar or up-to-date term takes precedence over the old or Greek term, which becomes the object or passive subject of *perhibeo.* If the same holds true for wisdom, then it is *sapientia*, rather than *sophia*, that Ennius presents as unfamiliar or in need of explanation: perhaps a further indication that he has a particular, well-known dream of *sophia* in mind, and certainly an invitation to reflect on the meaning and use of *sapientia* (as well as *sophia*) in early Latin.

Also to be grouped with these passages, if only for contrast, is the announcement of an equivalence between the Muses and the Camenae: "Musas quas memorant nosce nos esse Camenas" (*Ann.* 487). With his placement of the variant names of the goddesses at the beginning and end of the line and his (momentarily?) ambiguous use of the predicate accusative ("Know us Muses to be the ones they call Camenae" or "Know us Camenae to be the ones they call Muses"?), Ennius suggests an interconvertibility on a par with that between *ventus* and *aer* or *arcus* and Iris. But inasmuch as the Muses are the addressees of the opening of the poem and the Camenae largely vanish from the literary and historical record, the passage is surely to be understood as announcing not just interconvertibility but also, and more importantly, substitution: the Camenae have become the Muses, have taken up residence in their abode, much as the soul of Homer has taken up residence in Ennius. Invoking the Muses or the Camenae is not simply a matter of choice in the way that referring to a rainbow as either *arcus* or Iris might be: the Camenae are no longer productive cultural agents any more than Homer is.

Which is it in the case of *sophia* and *sapientia*: interconvertibility or substitution and replacement? If the latter, which of the terms (or underlying concepts) is to replace the other? These are precisely the questions that Ennius is struggling with here and elsewhere; and in his struggle, he both crystallizes and intervenes in a broader cultural debate over the meaning and social significance of wisdom in Rome and Italy during the second century B.C.E.

Ennius's own use of the verb *sapio* and its derivatives reveals a wide but nuanced semantic range. Apart from the fragment equating *sophia* and

sapientia, the terms in question occur three times in the *Annales* and eight times in seven passages from the dramatic fragments. *Sapientia* describes judgment or foresight with respect to both external and internal affairs: an unidentified speaker, perhaps Appius Claudius Caecus,[13] refers to the people of Pyrrhus as the "dimwitted folk of the Aeacidae, more potent in war than in wisdom" ("stolidum genus Aeacidarum: bellipotentes sunt magis quam sapientipotentes," *Ann*. 197–98), while another fragment from the *Annales* describes the breakdown of civil discourse, perhaps in response to Hannibal's invasion, as the replacement of wisdom by violence: "Wisdom is cast aside, violence rules the day; the good orator is shunned, the frightful soldier embraced" ("pellitur e medio sapientia, ui geritur res; / spernitur orator bonus, horridus miles amatur," *Ann*. 248–49). In these two instances, *sapientia* is contrasted with force; elsewhere it stands in opposition to madness, superstition, and action based on fear. Hecuba looks at raving Cassandra and wonders what happened to "the sane modesty (*sapiens modestia*) that was just here" (*Trag*. 33 Jocelyn).[14] A speaker in *Telamo* denounces the audacity of prophets and soothsayers who "don't discern (*sapiunt*) the right path for themselves, yet point out the way to others" (*Trag*. 267 Jocelyn). And the title character of *Alcmeon* declares that: "Many misfortunes have befallen me . . . and now fear has driven my good sense (*sapientia*) from my breast" (*Trag*. 16–17 Jocelyn).

In a more positive vein, *sapientia* describes competence, once referring to the clinical skill of doctors, called "the children of Aesculapius" (*Trag*. 325 Jocelyn), twice coinciding with discursive or verbal facility—the oft-imitated reference to ten mouths, each with a tongue that knows how to speak (*Ann*. 469), and a somewhat enigmatic mention of "showing good judgment" (*sapere*) placed between references to silence (*tacere*) and telling tales (*fabulari*, *Trag*. 146–47 Jocelyn).[15] Discursive competence is implied as well in the passage describing the expulsion of *sapientia* "from

13 Müller 1884. Skutsch's dismissal (ad loc.) of Müller's suggestion on the grounds that Appius Claudius would not have praised Pyrrhus's military prowess is too hasty. But if Ennius did use *sapientia* of Appius Claudius, it would be the only instance I have found of the term attributed to him, despite its application to several of his contemporaries in other sources. On this passage, cf. Fantham p. 555 in the present volume.

14 On the textual problem in this verse, see Jocelyn 1967.210–11. Jocelyn sees the expression *sapiens modestia* as characteristic of tragedy's tendency "to apply to the inanimate and the abstract adjectives and participles used properly of living things."

15 On *sapientia* associated with the ability to tell tales or recite exempla, see also Plaut. *Rud.* 338.

the middle" and, albeit in a negative light, in the attack on the misguided *sapientia* of the soothsayers.

In two final cases, the noun *sapiens* comes close to delimiting a professional status or supplying an exclusive characterization of its referent. In a passage unparalleled in Euripides' *Medea*, the Ennian namesake remarks: "Whoever, although wise, cannot help herself, is wise in vain" ("qui ipse sibi sapiens prodesse non quit, / nequiquam sapit," *Trag*. 221–22 Jocelyn). The etymological play on *sapiens/sapit*, sharper than the comparable turn of phrase would be in Greek, is most effective if *sapiens* describes a status or category in need of deconstruction. Cicero allows for the possibility of understanding *sapiens* in just this way when he quotes the Ennian expression: "It's easier for a *sapiens* to keep flame in his burning mouth than it is for him to hold back smart sayings" (*Trag*. clxvii Jocelyn = Cic. *de Orat*. 2.221). According to Cicero, some wits understood the passage to refer to people whose love of clever remarks is such that they cannot keep a smart thought to themselves, no matter what the occasion. Whether Cicero (or his speaker Antonius) shares the view that Ennius intended *sapiens* in this way is left unsaid.

Reading Ennius in the light of his near contemporaries Plautus and Terence expands our understanding of the semantic range and connotations of wisdom in Rome of the second century B.C.E. while highlighting the distinctive aspects of Ennius's construction of *sapientia*. The distribution of uses in comedy suggests that wisdom varies not only in accordance with literary genre but also in line with social and political concerns.[16] For Plautus as for Terence, *sapientia* implies an ability to dispense proverbial knowledge (Ter. *Ad*. 426–27; Plaut. *Trin*. 350–75, *Rud.* 1250, *Merc*. 374), to narrate illuminating anecdotes (*Rud.* 338), and to plot or strategize (Ter. *Eun.* 782). It is assumed to be a faculty of old age (Plaut. *Most*. 1147–48, Ter. *Ad.* 832, and Plaut. *Trin*. 367—an exception that proves the rule), but in the topsy-turvy world of comedy, can be claimed by slaves, prostitutes, or young men. It is located physically in the heart (*cor*) or chest (*pectus*), a fact announced a surprising number of times by Plautus (*Miles* 336, 786; *Pers*. 623; *Trin*. 90; *Bacch*. 659; *Epid*. 286; *Truc*. 854–55).[17] Perhaps this is why Alcmeo can "spit it out." The convivial associations implicit in a

16 A point overlooked in the otherwise excellent study of Klima 1971. Klima divides uses of *sapio/sapientia* into high (epic and tragedy) and low (comedy) without seeing that each provides literary and social context for understanding the other.

17 See also Klima 1971.5–6.

word that at base means "taste" are frequently exploited, sometimes simply as a pun (Plaut. *Cas*. 780: if you have taste, you've eaten well), but also as an expression of the social context in which one might be expected to display good judgment (Ter. *Ad.* 769, Plaut. *Truc*. 854–55), even connoisseurship ("I think they're wise, who enjoy old wine," "qui utuntur uino uetere sapientis puto," Plaut. *Cas*. 5).[18] For the most part, *sapientia* is differentiated not from reliance on arms, but from stupidity or drunkenness, if from anything at all.[19]

Indeed, more generally, comedy seems to play off against the claims to wisdom associated with a certain kind of aristocratic braggadocio.[20] In one Plautine scene, an exchange of edifying maxims between father and son culminates in the former's declaration that (Plaut. *Trin*. 363–64):

> nam sapiens quidem pol ipsus fingit fortunam sibi:
> eo non multa quae neuolt eueniunt, nisi fictor malust.
>
> A *sapiens* fashions fortune for himself;
> not much happens against his will, unless he's a bad craftsman.

The couplet echoes the structure of precepts attributed to Appius Claudius Caecus and of anonymous "rustic" maxims (couplets, with each line divided more or less in half).[21] Indeed, the content of the Plautine *sententia* corresponds to a specific saying of Appius Claudius, namely that: "Each man is the craftsman of his own fortune" ("fabrum esse suae quemque fortunae," Sall. *Rep*. 1.1.2). The emphatic position of *suae* in the Appian saying matches the emphasis achieved by the string of particles in the quotation from Plautus.

Elsewhere in Plautus, a character who denounces the ignoble behavior of men of high birth uses language that resonates both with the *sententiae* of Appius Claudius and with contemporary oratory (Plaut. *Merc*. 969–70):

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18 For the etymology and early meaning of *sapio*, see Klima 1971.3–5, Ernout 1994 s.v.

19 Klima 1971.21–24 cites other passages implying that *sapere* has a social dimension, namely a willingness to consult others, as well as oneself, as appropriate. This aspect, too, would fit a convivial context.

20 On Plautine parody of aristocratic self-presentation, see also Cèbe 1966, Gómez Pallarès 1993, Habinek 2005.48–53.

21 The fragments and testimonia concerning early maxims, including those of Appius Claudius, can be found at Morel 1982 p. 3 and pp. 11–13.

qui bono sunt genere nati, <si> sunt ingenio malo
suapte culpa genere sapiunt, genus ingenie improbant.

Those who, although born to good stock, are of an evil disposition,
are wise by birth through their own fault, and disgrace their family ingeniously.

Like the surviving sayings of Appius Claudius, the maxim (in this case parodic to the point of nonsense) consists of two lines, each divided into two parts of roughly equal length. The phrase *bono genere nati* recurs in Cato's speech against Q. Minucius Thermus (58 Malcovati), where *bon-* forms part of a pathetic polyptoton ("eane fieri bonis, bono genere gnatis, boni consultis," "And this happens to good men, born of good family, practiced in goodness"), much as the root *gen-* echoes throughout the Plautine distich.[22]

The association with Appius Claudius—or at least with his sayings—may not be accidental and, in any event, helps to clarify Ennius's contrast between "potent in war and potent in wisdom" in the context of the conflict with Pyrrhus. Appius Claudius famously denounced the terms of peace offered by Pyrrhus, and the problematical nature of Pyrrhus's own wisdom, whether alluded to in the Ennian fragment or not, becomes the subject of comedy in Terence's *Eunuchus*, where a young man, sarcastically dubbed *sapiens* for hiding while his retainers besiege a prostitute's house, defends himself by asserting that "that's what Pyrrhus always did" (*Eun*. 782–83).[23] The reference seems more than incidental, for the topic of wisdom in battle recurs throughout the scene, highlighted by the densest concentration of references to wisdom in the surviving texts of Plautus and Terence.[24]

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22 See also Plaut. *Stich*. 124–25 for a similar two-line maxim, this one pronounced by a woman in response to the question: "quae tibi mulier uidetur multo sapientissima?" ("Which woman seems to you by far the wisest?") Wisdom (or the wise person) is also the topic of sententious sayings at Ennius *Trag*. 221 Jocelyn, Publilius Syrus A 40, and Varro *Sat. Men*. 172 Astbury. Collections of Greek apophthegmata were common in antiquity. What the Latin passages cited here suggest, especially in the interplay between "serious" and satiric, is that a certain form of precept came to be seen as a characteristic utterance of a particular set of social actors at Rome.

23 For sources and discussion of the speech against Pyrrhus, see Skutsch 1985.360–61, who makes no mention of the passage from Terence discussed in the text.

24 I.e., *sapere* at *Eun*. 782, *sapientem* at 789, *sapere* at 791.

Do we have in this material the traces of a popular (i.e., non-elite) tradition concerning the relative wisdom of Appius Claudius Caecus and Pyrrhus, one to which Ennius alludes in his aristocratic epic?[25] Perhaps so, but more important than such a possibility is evidence for contested rankings of the wise in general and for the role of contested attributions of wisdom in intra-elite struggles of the middle to late republic. In comedy, characters boast of their superiority in wisdom (Plaut. *Epid*. 258, Ter. *Phormio* 247), but comic characters are prone to boast of superiority in pretty much every human endeavor. Pliny reports that during the Samnite War, when the oracle of Pythian Apollo advised the erection of statues in the Forum to the wisest (*sapientissimum*) and bravest (*fortissimum*) of the Greeks, Pythagoras and Alcibiades received the respective honors (*Nat.* 34.26).[26] The use of the superlative epithets causes Pliny to wonder why Socrates and Themistocles weren't chosen instead, especially since the oracle had identified Socrates as the wisest mortal. Pliny's puzzlement would seem to confirm the authenticity of the story, as does his report that the statues survived (only) until the time of Sulla: his is no after-the-fact aetiology for enigmatic historical relics.

In his own brief mention of the pair of statues, Plutarch uses the adjective *phronimôtatos* (*Numa* 8.10) where Pliny uses *sapientissimus*: corroboration of the superlative, but indication of continuing dispute over the nature and meaning of Pythagoras's honor. *Sophôtatos* would have been more appropriate in the original context, at least as Pliny imagines it, and *phronimos* sounds like a Greek translation of *sapiens* rather than the other way around. Paradoxically, it seems to have been ongoing contact with Pythagorean thought and practice that led to the broadening of the Roman notion of *sapientia* to encompass more than just shrewdness or foresight: thus the Pythagorean books unearthed near the Janiculum in 181 B.C.E. are alternately referred to in the late republican and early imperial sources as

25 Although Livy's account of the Pyrrhic War is lost, we might compare his discussion of the deceitful Roman embassy to another Greek foe, Perseus, that allowed the Romans to stall for time. It is replete with contrasts between, on the one hand, treachery (*insidiae*), shrewdness (*calliditas*), deceit (*dolus*), and craft (*ars*) and, on the other hand, virtue (*virtus*) and honest warfare (*pium bellum*, 42.47.4–8). To the old-fashioned among the Romans, the embassy was an instance of "a novel and overly cunning kind of advisory competence" ("nova ac nimis callida . . . sapientia," 42.47.9). On non-elite channels of communication more generally and their impact on elite political practices, see O'Neill 2003.

26 The episode is analyzed by Storchi Marino 1999.147–52 and Ferrero 1955.138–41.

containing "precepts of philosophy" (*praecepta philosophiae*) or "systematization of wisdom" (*disciplina sapientiae*).[27]

Cicero is the most important source for contests over wisdom and for the relative ranking of wisdom and other virtues. The *Laelius*, or *de Amicitia*, has Laelius and his sons-in-law discuss the attribution of wisdom to Laelius and Cato (both contemporaries of Ennius) as well as to a cluster of figures from the early third century B.C.E.[28] The characters' identification of different sources of wisdom (legal knowledge, practical accomplishment, philosophical training, endurance in the face of personal loss, even popular acclaim) speaks to contemporary concerns of Cicero and his readership; but I see no reason to dismiss the list of earlier *sapientes* or the varied nature of their *sapientia* as Ciceronian invention, especially given the clustering of names in historical eras for which we have other evidence of conflicts over wisdom. The other *sapientes* mentioned by Cicero's interlocutors, C. Fabricius Luscinus (cos. 282, 278), Ti. Coruncanius (cos. 280), and M'. Curius Dentatus (cos. 290, 284, 275, 274), are all contemporaries of Appius Claudius and important figures in the struggle against Pyrrhus. If we accept Giovanni Forni's argument, their idealization as *sapientes* was promoted by Cato the Elder, in which case *sapientia* would be in use as a political codeword or slogan precisely when Ennius was composing the *Annales*.[29]

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27 Pliny *Nat*. 13.87, referring to the earlier accounts of Varro and Valerius Antias, uses the expression *praecepta philosophiae*. Livy 40.29.7, Val. Max. 1.1.12, and Lact. *Div. Inst.* 1.22.5 have *disciplina sapientiae*. Plut. *Numa* 22.4, also referring to Valerius Antias, uses the expression *Hellenikas philosophous*. These and other sources are gathered at Garbarino 1973.65–9; see also Storchi Marino 1999.157ff.

28 Discussion at Forni 1953, who suggests that Cato may be identifying other new men as *sapientes*, in contrast to Appius Claudius and his like. Besides the figures mentioned in the text, Cicero also refers to a mysterious L. Acilius (see also *Leg*. 2.59), who some think may be the same as the P. Atilius who was given the cognomen Sapiens on account of his legal expertise (*Pomp. Dig*. 1.2.2.38, *RE* 1.252 n. 7, Klima 1971.66–69). C. Sempronius Gracchus extends the semantic range of *sapientia* to include all of the Roman people in their political capacity: 18 and, especially, 44 Malcovati. It is unclear how the cognomen Sapiens relates to that of P. Sempronius Sophus (cos. 304 B.C.E., *RE* 2.2.1437–38 n. 85), who was named such by the *populus Romanus* (*Pomp*. *Dig*. 1.2.2.37). Like a number of men called Sapiens, Sophus was reputed to be a legal expert (ibid.); he was also a contemporary of Appius Claudius (Livy 9.33.5–34, 9.45.1, 10.9.2–4). Did Cato deliberately substitute a Latin honorific for a Greek one?

29 Also relevant is the *elogium* of L. Metellus (ob. 221), attributed to his son Q. Metellus Macedonicus, which lists among the ten greatest and best goals pursued by wise men (*sapientes*) to be the foremost warrior, best orator, bravest general (*fortissimum imperatorem*) . . . and possessed of the greatest wisdom (*summa sapientia*, Pliny *Nat*. 7.139–40). Metellus distributes the characteristics of the *vir bonus* into ten categories and says his father was best in

Cicero's main character, C. Laelius (190–129, cos. 140), is independently attested as wise already by Lucilius (who uses the Greek term *sophos*: 201 Warmington) and later by Plutarch who, as Giovanna Panico notes (1980), implies that the populace gave him the designation for his withdrawal of agrarian legislation in the face of senatorial opposition. Indeed, Laelius-lore sums up the possible meanings of wisdom in republican Rome. In calling him *sophos* for his praise of sorrel, Lucilius plays on the convivial and philosophical connotations of *sapiens*; Plutarch, in discussing Laelius's reputation, tells us that his Latin epithet can mean *sophos* or *phronimos*, i.e., two versions of intellectual wisdom, one broad, the other more narrowly pragmatic; while Cicero, in the eponymous dialogue, has others attribute Laelius's wisdom to his deep learning (*studio et doctrina*, *Lael*. 6) unmatched by any Greek except Socrates, but in *de Finibus* (2.24–25), endorses the Lucilian play on wisdom as connoisseurship (or the rejection thereof!).

Perhaps most striking about Cicero's presentation of the wisdom of Laelius is his implicit revival of an older view that wisdom is a balanced and equal counterpart to bravery in battle. He depicts Laelius and Scipio Africanus as ideal, well-matched friends, despite the fact that the former is famous for wisdom, the latter for his remarkable military and political achievements. Indeed, the repeated insistence on Laelius's wisdom and the extended discussion of its nature and origin seem designed not only to establish his authority as a spokesman for ideal conduct but also to balance the more noteworthy accomplishments of Scipio. In effect, Cicero takes the sentiment contained in the phrase *fortis vir sapiensque*, which was inscribed as part of the *elogium* for Scipio Barbatus sometime after 200 B.C.E,[30] and

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all—a feat unparalleled in Roman history and, as Pliny rather harshly notes, ultimately not constitutive of happiness anyway, because Metellus lost his eyesight rescuing a statue of Pallas from a fire. For discussion of the *elogium*, see Klima 1971.56–60; cf. also Kierdorf 1980.10–21 who (rightly) rejects the view that it is an Augustan invention modeled after Hellenistic interest in the figure of the *prôtos heurêtês*, but also observes that it cannot be earlier than the commencement of the second Punic war since it refers to the first as such.

30 *ILS* 3 = Ernout 1957.12. Although Barbatus died in the first half of the third century B.C.E., the language of the inscription is later (Ernout 1957.12–13). The complementarity of *fortitudo* and *sapientia* is subsumed in the list of Metellus's ten categories of excellence (see n. 29 above) and implied in the erection of statues to Pythagoras and Alcibiades. Perhaps it also figured in the Ennian account of Romulus and Numa. I see no reason for Ernout's assertion, repeated by others, that the phrase *vir fortis sapiensque* is a translation of the Greek *kalokagathos*.

distributes its components between Laelius and Scipio as part of his larger project of promoting the interdependence and complementarity of members of the Roman elite.[31] But in so doing, he schematizes the more complex history that his own dialogue attests. Although we have no accounts of prowess in battle on the part of Laelius or Acilius (Atilius?), the others listed as wise in *de Amicitia* were also successful military leaders.[32]

The distribution of virtue into wisdom and courage shapes the reputation of Ennius as well as that of the friends Laelius and Scipio Africanus. Horace summarizes critical assessment of Ennius as "wise and brave and a second Homer" ("Ennius et sapiens et fortis et alter Homerus," *Epist*. 2.1.50), only to undermine it by suggesting that he falls short of current aesthetic standards (Hor. *Epist*. 2.1.51–52):[33]

> leviter curare videtur
> quo promissa cadant et somnia Pythagorea.
>
> Too little is he seen to care
> how his promises turn out or his Pythagorean dreams.

In Horace's citation, the language of the critics (*et sapiens et fortis*) both elevates and consigns Ennius to the era of the Scipios.[34] His own critique draws on familiar aspects of the *Annales*: the claim to be channeling Homer, the Pythagorean background to the opening dream, the duality implicit in the contrast between *bellipotentes* and *sapientipotentes*. But it should not be allowed to stand for the totality of Ennius's enterprise or to constrain interpretation of his view of wisdom.

Ennius's reference to a dream of "*sophia*, which is called *sapien-*

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31 On Cicero's cultural project of unifying the elites of Rome, see, for example, Habinek 1998a.62–87.

32 Ti. Coruncanius (*RE* 8.1663 n. 3), M. Curius Dentatus (*RE* 8.1841–45 n. 9), and C. Fabricius Luscinus (*RE* 12.1931–38, 8.1663, 8.1841–45; Wheeler 1988). On Acilius/Atilius, see note 28 above.

33 For interpretation of the language of the passage, see Brink 1963–82.3.91–98. Brink suggests that the phrase *et sapiens et fortis* may also recall Hellenistic descriptions of Homer. He rightly notes that the Horatian verses concerning Ennius should be understood as referring exclusively to his epic poetry: subsequent sections of Horace's poem address other literary genres.

34 The identification of Ennius as *alter Homerus* goes back to the second century B.C.E.: see Lucilius 413 Warmington = Jerome *Comm. in Mich*. 2.7.

tia," far from being an innocent translation exercise, intervenes in a roiling debate over the nature, meaning, and class identification of *sapientia*. Does it belong to Romans or Greeks? Plebeians or patricians? Traditional nobles or educated youth? Political or theoretical Pythagoreans?[35] Is its domain the *convivium*, the Forum, the battlefield, or the schoolroom? Does it consist of military acumen? Legal knowledge? Skill in speaking and responding? Practical wisdom? Mystical insight? To say merely that Ennius adapts traditional Roman views to the new vocabulary of Greek philosophy is inadequate to Ennius and to his context. Ennius's specific contribution to Roman debates over wisdom seems to be to assimilate aristocratic assertion of advisory competence to a Pythagorean-inflected notion of a transcendent, comprehensive insight approachable through study but ultimately dependent on mystical revelation. His position would put him at odds with Cato the Elder, who accepted the competence and the discipline, but presumably not the mysticism, and also with those of the populace who mocked the wisdom of the deferential Laelius or parodied the precepts of the *nobiles*.[36] His conceptualization of wisdom fits the aristocratic and militaristic tenor of epic poetry more generally, but demands explanation as more than a generic marker. Other definitions of wisdom in the second century B.C.E. spill across generic boundaries, as we have seen. And Ennius's epic style, as Scevola Mariotti and others have observed, is not restricted by archaic notions of generic decorum: witness his affinity for features otherwise associated with satire, not least the philological aside (as in the very phrase, *quae sapientia perhibetur*).[37] Ennius's definition of wisdom intervenes in cultural as well as generic history.

Ennius, who died in 169 B.C.E. or shortly thereafter (Skutsch 1985.2), anticipated the reevaluation of Roman tradition in accordance with Greek philosophical teaching well before the famous Athenian embassy

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35 Storchi Marino 1999.151–52 makes the interesting argument that the statue dedicated to Pythagoras as *sapientissimus* captures a moment of transition (better: ongoing dynamic tension) within Pythagoreanism between emphasis on political insight and interest in natural philosophy.

36 Interestingly, wisdom is one characteristic Ennius does not assign to the friend and confidant addressed by Servilius (*Ann.* 268–86): perhaps further confirmation of its restriction to leading citizens—and the poet. The companion seems to enjoy a kind of professional expertise that is narrower than the broad advisory competence combined with mystical insight implied by *sapientia*.

37 Mariotti 1991.73–80.

of 155 B.C.E. that featured, as Pliny put it, "three stars of wisdom" (*trium sapientiae procerum*, *Nat.* 7.112). Moreover, Ennius sets the tone for understanding the relationship between Roman *sapientia* and Greek *sophia* less as acquiescence of inferior to superior than as transmittal from one mortal bearer to another. Ennius's dream of Homer, as Giampiero Scafoglio notes, establishes continuity between the Greek and Roman epic traditions, with the latter supplanting even as it extends the former.[38] Ennius's dream of wisdom, if not as explicit or memorable, does something similar, presenting Roman *sapientia* as, in effect, a new player on the stage of intellectual history. *Sophia* is interpreted as yielding to *sapientia*, rather than the other way around. Ennius not only founds the Roman tradition of hexameter epic; he also inaugurates an important aspect of Roman imperial ideology, one of the structuring principles of which is that Greece's past finds its fulfillment in Rome's present.[39]

Three further consequences follow from the foregoing analysis, two substantive, one methodological. First, Ennius's dream of wisdom, like his dream of Homer, can be understood to domesticate the figure of Pythagoras, transforming him from a mystical sage who repudiates and transcends the defining features of polis-society into a legitimator of Roman aristocratic and imperial ambition. Pythagorean *sophia* was in no sense coextensive with the *sapientia* of the Roman aristocrat, no matter what nuance we ascribe to the latter.[40] Nor was Pythagorean belief in the transmigration of souls easily reconcilable with the rising power of a state whose authority depended in large part on its ability to regulate the boundary between the living and the dead and thus make orderly historical transition possible.[41] In Pythagorean natural philosophy, the migration of Homer's soul to the body of a peacock is an issue for Homer, not the peacock, an invitation for the Pythagorean initiate to live his current life in a particular way or accept the consequences in the next.[42]

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38 Scafoglio 2002 interprets Ennius's dream through Virgil's imitation of it in Aeneas's dream of Hector in *Aen.* 2. Hector yields to Aeneas as Homer yields to Ennius. We might hypothesize a similar relationship between Ennius's dream(s) and the dream(s) of Aeneas in Fabius Pictor (see n. 4 above): Ennius transforms Pictor's project (from Greek to Latin, prose to poetry) even as he continues it.

39 See Fabian 1983 for similar strategies in more recent imperialist thought.

40 For the mystical and ritual dimensions of Pythagoreanism, even, perhaps especially, in its early stages, see Burkert 1972 and Kingsley 1995.

41 For this aspect of state-formation, see Gil 1998 and Habinek 2005.

42 See, for example, *Golden Verses* 70–71, where ascent to the aether and even immortality are promised to those who follow Pythagoras's guidance: Thom 1995 ad loc.

In contrast, Ennius makes of the migratory soul yet another colonial resource for the enrichment of the Roman master. So, too, with *sophia*, which through its new equivalence with Roman *sapientia* has its prophetic authority subsumed in the power relations of a given historical moment. No one founds anything except in retrospect; and in retrospect what came to matter about Ennius's intervention in his own historical moment was, in addition to his timely introduction of the epic hexameter,[43] his construction of a governing narrative for the transfer of imperial authority (*translatio imperii*) to Rome. No wonder, then, that Ennius's dream continues to preoccupy the Roman literary imagination for centuries to come.[44] It provides a frame of reference for later acts of appropriation even as it marks the irruption into the present of a past "that had not yet died, returning from a place out of time to haunt and disturb the historical present."[45] The very ghostliness of Ennian apparitions provides a literary analogue to the Greek tradition's refusal to die, to be turned into nothing but legitimizing past for Rome's future.

Second, Ennius's interest in *sapientia* reinforces our own awareness of the importance of conviviality as a frame of reference for understanding early Latin literature. *Sapientia* before, after, and during the career of Ennius retains its etymological association with "taste" or "discrimination." Ennius's privileging of the term *sapientia* assigns to the convivial wisdom of the Roman *sodalis* the cachet of Greek philosophical learning and insight. There is an interesting convergence here between the *Annales* and the *Saturae*. While the surviving remnants of the latter do not refer explicitly to *sapientia,* they do evoke in their title, diction, and presumably setting, a real or projected convivial context: note the expressions *convivat* ("join the party," 1 Vahlen), *propinas* ("toast," 7 Vahlen), *laetus lautus cum advenis* ("decked out to meet his guests," 14 Vahlen), and *dum cibum servat* ("while waiting for the food," 19 Vahlen). I have argued elsewhere that conviviality is one of the ritualized practices through which the authoritative agency of free, adult males is established and transmitted in the Roman world.[46] Ennius's invocation of the *convivium* as a context for display of his

43 I say "timely" in deference to Parsons' argument (Parsons 1999) that phonological changes were altering Latin prosody during the third and second centuries B.C.E. anyway.

44 Hardie 1986.76–83, 1995, 1997a.

45 Harootunian 2000.17, writing of the multiple cultures of modernity. Cf. Scafoglio 2002 on Aeneas's ghostly dream of Hector.

46 Habinek 2005, esp. chapter 2.

advisory competence as satirist builds on and reinforces this broader cultural phenomenon—as would his performance of the *Annales* at *convivia*, if we could be sure that such was his practice.[47]

Finally, as a matter of methodology, it might be noted that as much headway is to be made in interpretation of the fragments of Ennius by placing them in their second-century context and drawing on the ample, if underexploited, body of roughly contemporary material as by situating them between generic predecessors and successors. Indeed, with respect to Ennius's relationship to later generations of writers, I submit that imitation consists as much in repetition of Ennius's act of intervention in his context as it does in citation of his example. To cite Ennius as a predecessor is to consign him to the past, much as his own encounters with Homer and *sophia* seek to consign them. We might consider the possibility that the soul of Ennius migrated to those very writers, such as Lucretius, Horace, and Persius, who, by taking issue with him, kept him alive.

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47 Cf. the disagreement between Rüpke 2001 and Goldberg p. 433 in the present volume.