THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

ANOTHER HOMER:

THE FIGURE OF THE ROMAN HOMER FROM ENNIUS TO MACROBIUS

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Acknowledgements

Who reads the acknowledgment of a dissertation? Friends who ought to be thanked; but also, fellow graduate students who would like to know how it came to be. So here I do offer my gratitude, but also, first, an account of my fortunes and errors to aid those still seeking to make it through the woods safely.

This dissertation's topic is the *alter Homerus*, literally, 'another' or 'second' Homer. This phrase is the most explicit form of the concept that there is or ought to be an equivalent figure to Homer in Latin literature. This is a common but slippery trope. It threads in and out of Latin literature over centuries, sometimes obvious, sometimes forced. My big idea is that such a role begins with poets but ends up with the grammatical-rhetorical tradition. The sometimes eclectic uses of this trope come into better focus when we see where it is rooted.

But how did I come to this topic? My study of the Roman Homer arose in the most general terms from an interest in what reading a 'classic' or authoritative text meant. I had personal experience of living with authoritative texts in the Christian church I belong to; I also had felt the odd reactions, both positive and negative, to the canonical texts of classical authors in the course of degrees in Classics and English. I studied both ancient Christian and Homeric exegesis in my early graduate studies. This project arose in turn from that extended attention to the commentary on the original Homer's epics.

There was not a little contingency too. In a comprehensive exam, I had studied part of an obscure commentary on the Iliad by a 12th c. Byzantine bishop (Eustathius of Thessalonica, who gets a cameo in this project in chapter 4). The week after the exam I was to discuss my next steps with my advisor. I had many thoughts about how to extend that work. But when I sat down, he said, "So that was good—but you're not writing your dissertation about that, right? What else do

you have in mind?" And I was so flummoxed I actually said, "What about Macrobius?" All I knew about Macrobius at the time was that he was a late antique reader of Vergil (occasionally allegorically) and that he had written a dialogue in which Vergil was treated as a figure of great authority and knowledge. But when a visiting distinguished professor showed approval of my interest a week or so later, I was hooked.

Vergil's authority seemed to neatly parallel with how Greek Neoplatonists treated Homer. Moreover, I had a model in Robert Lamberton's *Homer the Theologian*, a book I had long admired. Lamberton patiently reconstructs the surprisingly coherent interpretative system developed by Neoplatonists writing about Homer. He links the exegesis practiced by figures such as Porphyry (3rd c. AD) and Proclus (5th c. AD) with the long and various history of Homer's authority in Greek culture. This is expressed everywhere from Plato and Thucydides, who dispute that authority, to Aristarchus' careful observations about Homeric norms, to Ps. Heraclitus' pious allegorizing to rhetoricians throughout antiquity who drew their examples and origins from Homer. This broad coalition of readers agrees that Homer does have something to say not only about poetry, but about the world.

So when I approached Macrobius, the job seemed clear. Macrobius expressed his Neoplatonist commitments in a commentary on Cicero's Somnium Scipionis (much of which draws on Porphyry). Neoplatonist exegesis: check. He was also the author of a dialogue called the *Saturnalia*, in which Vergil's knowledge of many disciplines is systematically expounded. Homer-like authority in all areas of knowledge: check. The parallels between claims to knowledge and the Neoplatonist framework were fairly straightforward. So what was needed was to identify and explain the account of Vergil that Macrobius made—just as Lamberton had explained Porphyry and Proclus on Homer—and to establish how it fit into the Vergilian

tradition.

This investigation was a total failure. Macrobius made frequent comments about Vergil's infallibility and his comprehensive knowledge, but he never gave an account of that knowledge—neither its origins, nor the method by which one identified it. It was taken for granted. The longer Vergilian tradition was still worse. I had begun with a vague sense that Latin literature was full of statements confirming Vergil's authority and knowledge, from the Augustan period on. But upon collecting and examining them, it became apparent that they were seldom more than passing references. Still fewer could be linked into a coherent tradition over time. Propertius called Vergil's *Aeneid* greater than the *Iliad*; Tacitus noted Vergil receiving applause in public; Velleius called Vergil *princeps carminum* (prince of poems); others exalted Vergil in comparison to Ennius, or else recorded the miraculous signs at his birth, or remembered his very fastidious methods. All they seemed to have in common was going to extremes—whatever trait Vergil possessed, he had it in spades.

None of this seemed as interesting as the Greek tradition on Homer. There was no careful methodology like Aristarchus' supporting these judgments; no philosophical grounding of critique like Plato's; let alone an attempt to reconcile the two, as in Plutarch or Porphyry. There is no Strabo in Latin, turning superficial claims of authority into relevant geographical information, neither is there an Eratosthenes to dispute the foolishness of this practice. Although a few (mostly commentators and rhetoricians) repeatedly pointed to Vergil's expertise in many areas, almost no one actually writing in philosophy, astrology or other non-literary disciplines actually leaned any weight on Vergil's authority. Vergil was nothing like Homer in this regard.

All of which led to—well, first, to banging my head against the wall of my parents' basement as I tried to complete my prospectus. But second, to the realization that the absence of

a tradition like Homer's was not a problem but actually the main point to explore. The traditions themselves do not, on any close examination, share parallel circumstances. But structural parallels obtain even where the origins of those structures differed. The treatment of Vergil in Latin literature often does echo the Greek uses for Homer. So on what did that treatment rely? This gave me something to chase down. And briefly put, the answer I found was: not on philosophical or astronomical uses of Vergil, but above all on Vergil's place in grammatical instruction.

This set the course for the dissertation, but of course research led to further shifts in the structure of the project. The biggest led to including Ennius and the origins of the Roman Homer into my analysis. Horace records Ennius being treated as an *alter Homerus* long before Vergil ever receives such a title. And that suggested that I was not looking at a peculiarly Vergilian phenomenon, but one that had a broader history in Latin literature. In fact, it went back to the beginnings of that literature. As Denis Feeney outlines in his *Beyond Greek*, Romans developed their literature by transferring defining traits of Greek literature into Latin. Genres, texts or even authors who had specific roles in Greek culture could be passed over this imaginary line of symmetry between the cultures—including Homer. Moreover, the details of the transfer were flexible: at different moments, different traits could define the 'Roman Homer.' This is apparent in comparing the concept of Livius Andronicus' archaic translation of the *Odyssey* with Ennius' claim in the Annales to be Homer reincarnated. The *Odyssia*, the first Latin epic of which we have notice, takes the poem as the point of contrast; it is the plot of Homer's work rendered in Latin. In Ennius, however, it is the poet who has been translated; his poem is not another *Odyssey*, but he himself another Homer.

This became the story of my first chapter. It serves as an example of how the notion of an

alter Homerus could remain stable while the content of that notion could vary significantly. The Roman Homer was constructed and then reconstructed as readers needed and circumstances allowed. The remaining chapters developed in turn as explorations of where one particular version of this Roman Homer—the one developed in grammatical and rhetorical instructional contexts—came to influence authors of both meta-literary and literary texts touching on Vergil's legacy.

Although more follows within, I will touch briefly here on what I think I have accomplished for those scanning for the big takeaway. The first thing to note is that I have collected the material that speaks about Roman Homer. There have been several synoptic studies of Vergil's tradition, but no one has expressly sought out and categorized the ways in which one could be another Homer. This is a first pass and not a complete collection of that process, but I believe I have set out enough to chart some major avenues of further research.

My work will interest those researching the 'construction' of poets (in the vein of Graziosi, Peirano Garrison, Laird—see my introduction for more points of connection with other research). I have pointed out several instances where there was a need for a figure to slot into the 'Homer' position of a literary system based on Greek models. As such, I demonstrate that Vergil-as-Roman Homer is better understood as an exegetical practice than a doctrine. I also show the determining role of Ennius and Macrobius in shaping how that practice was passed on to Vergil's ancient and medieval readers and ultimately to us.

My results will also interest those who study Latin Neoplatonists. I have argued that grammatical education determines how Neoplatonist exegesis works in Latin. It's up to them to see if that holds water from the perspective of those who study formal Neoplatonist doctrine. What I describe as norms in the classroom are also largely based on ancient accounts of what

teachers and students generally did in those spaces. Accordingly, it also needs to be tested against papyrus and other evidence of what happened in individual classrooms.

Lastly, I hope to offer aid to those who have to teach these texts 'after' Vergil too. Students' impressions of classic epic are sometimes filtered through notions like a Roman Homer before they even come into class. And that's not to mention what they receive from translators, publishers, and even how we organize our courses. I don't think this influence can be avoided, or even should be. But it makes our students better readers when they can see it, and when we can discuss openly what kind of frameworks they are and what our attitude towards them should be.

So much for service; now to thanksgiving. Some scholars' work is so important to what follows that I could not have written this without them. To that end, I offer a special thanks to Domenico Comparetti, Robert Lamberton, Robert Kaster, Denis Feeney, Andrew Laird, Barbara Graziosi, and Joseph Farrell. I of course owe something to each author cited (others could be added for their contribution of a vital article or chapter: Mario Citroni; Werner Suerbaum, Stephen Hinds). But these served not only as teachers but also models of practice. I am grateful to them, and hope to have continued their work in ways that would be satisfying to them.

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I also want to acknowledge some faculty members who made a vital impact on my ability to finish this dissertation, all in different ways—perhaps even in ways they may not recognize,

but I could not have done without: Shadi Bartsch-Zimmer, Michèle Lowrie, David Martinez. Thank you all.

I saw a number of graduate student cohorts pass through the department, and I am grateful for the comradery and support to be found among them. I learned much from you all, and wish you well in your own paths!

I also must recognize the 'house' of undergraduates that my wife and I have overseen as Resident Heads over the last years at this university. First as Tufts, later as Thangaraj House, the students we worked and lived with offered a community away from the pressures of the academy. (To any graduate students reading, I must recommend some community outside the department. You will need victories and duties beyond the academic world in order to thrive in it.) Whether celebrating another resounding Sports Frolic/Sport Fest victory, or coming home to chat about the latest memes, it was good to live with you. Devin and I are grateful for you all. And a special thanks and congratulations to Muriel Bernardi, who won the right to be mentioned in this dissertation at Service Auction in the winter of 2015. You will find yourself cited appropriately, if you have the patience to find it.

My parents, my brother, my remarkably supportive in-laws, my glorious wife: thank you.

And thanks be to God, source and end of all good things, faithful to thousands of generations, including mine. I'm done. Solo Dei Gloria.

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Introduction

Project Summary

Consider two courses at the University of Chicago. GREK 20300 is the sixth in the Classics department's sequence of courses on ancient Greek. In it, students read a selection from the Homeric epics. LATN 20300 is the sixth course in the Latin sequence. In that class students read a selection from Vergil's *Aeneid*. I wish to draw attention to two contrasting aspects of the relationship between Vergil and Homer presented by this pair of courses.

Considered one way, the symmetry here runs deep. Two languages are studied in a traditional Classics program, associated with two literatures. The classes treat the work of poets at the center of each—the poets both most alluded to by other writers and also most studied in ancient, medieval and modern classrooms. Moreover, students learning both languages will arrive at the epic at the center of these literary traditions at the same point of each sequence. The preparation required of them before they read each author is, in formal terms at least, equal.

But in another way, the symmetry is quite artificial. Despite the similarities in the cultural terms outlined above, there is much to distinguish what each course requires of its students and professors. Homer's Greek differs in syntax and morphology from the Attic that students will have read to this point. Nor will it be replicated by more than a handful of other authors students encounter. Vergil's Latin, on the other hand, is largely identifiable with that of Caesar, Cicero and Ovid, and can serve as a model for future poets in the finer points of grammar in ways that Homer (for all his influence and even his many uses in ancient Greek scholarship) does not. Besides this, there is the difference between studying a work that is an oral composition and a written work deeply engaged in allusive and Callimachean poetics. The fit into the sequences is not forced, for the reasons already given above. But neither is it natural; it could be otherwise.

This pair of courses illustrates the figure studied in this dissertation: the *alter Homerus*. Although the actual phrase is used only a handful of times in surviving Latin literature, the concept itself is familiar from a wide variety of circumstances: Ennius' claim to possess Homer's soul, the evocation of the *Aeneid*'s unique relationship with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Vergil's parallel roles to Homer in classrooms and exegetical texts, and Vergil's eventual place as a cosmological authority in late antiquity and medieval culture. The idea of a structural parallel between Greek and Latin literature is reiterated in the parallel structure of contemporary curricula.

The pairing of the courses likewise propagates the belief that this notion is important to the study of Roman literature. The *alter Homerus* is an influential idea, but applies mainly to the roles Vergil and his epic play in literary culture more broadly understood. Obviously it relates to how the composition of the *Aeneid* is thoroughly entwined with Homer's poems. Both Vergil and Homer composed long hexametric poems about the Trojan war and its aftermath, and Vergil's poem can hardly be understood apart from the two Homeric epics. But the idea of 'another Homer' moves far beyond what such textual and allusive connections can support. It is not so much a conclusion drawn from the relationship of the *Aeneid* to its models as a scaffolding for something more. It allows Romans to develop structures in Latin literary culture in parallel to those in Greek. Those structures hold weight even now: Homer's legacy is shaped decisively by Vergil's prominence in the literature of the societies who established the modern study of the Classical world. As such it is not only reasonable but scarcely even notable for professors to set both in parallel in contemporary curricula.

What are these literary structures? And what weight are they meant to support? These course sequences replicate the symmetry between Greek and Latin literature first proposed by

Roman elites in the 3rd century BC and carried forth for millennia since. It is important to recognize that 'literature' here means much more than written words. Many times the word 'literature' denotes the most notable accomplishments in that language. But when considering the symmetry between Greek and Latin writings, one must consider the ecosystem of words in which the most valued poems, speeches, histories and the like were written, preserved and read. This included not only the works themselves, but basic instruction, scholarship and commentary, and rhetorical methods. Latin literature not only imitated the best works of Greece, but the institutional components of Greek education and authorship as well. By structures, then, I refer to these means or ordering and classifying the works composed in each language, including genres and canons, but also the practices of teachers, scholars, and readers. Since these structures in Latin are developed from Greek models, Latin literature must be studied next to Greek; and so too the designated greatest Latin epic poet, Vergil, by the side of Homer.

This means that even an account of Vergil's use of Homer must go far beyond his use of the text of the Homeric epics. Any parallel drawn between Homer and Vergil must surely have a basis in the *Aeneid*'s large scale project of allusion to those poems. One can track allusions back to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* on the level of plot, scene, characters, passages, images, individual lines and even in ancient commentary on each epic. The Homeric poems influence the meter, vocabulary, style, and arrangement of Vergil's epic. The *Aeneid* was so deeply involved in Homer's poems that it required knowledge of them simply to make sense of its arrangement and aims.

But such intense focus on imitation can fail to take some account of the broader context in which the original work is read. Homer's poems were transmitted within cultural institutions that affected how they were received at Rome. Accordingly, the *Aeneid*'s imitation of Homer's

poems was inflected by the poems' central place in Greek literature. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were considered the first and greatest poems in Greek. They were and continued to be part of the education of Greek elites for centuries, assuring that almost all other canonical authors in Greek referred to Homer. Matching these poems required taking stock of Homer's reputation.

The *Aeneid* did exactly that. Vergil's imitation of the largest and most detailed elements of the poem reflects the intense study that had been applied to the poems for centuries. In requiring such study it also implies the possibility of just such a level of study for the *Aeneid*. The *Aeneid*'s relation to the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* would scarcely have registered if Homer did not matter in Rome. Awareness of the widespread influence of Homer's poems was a part of their reception in Rome, and Vergil's project took for granted an intense interest in the significance of Homer in Greek culture—and, more broadly, the influence of Greek literature on its Roman counterpart.

Vergil's imitation of Homer thus formed part of a wider pattern of symmetry between Greek and Latin literature. From at least the 3rd century BC, Romans projected selective genres, styles, and values of Greek literature onto their own writing. The precise elements that should be identified with a Greek equivalent varied over time and circumstances. At times it was a matter of producing a translation of a Greek model (Livius Andronicus, *Odyssia*) of which there might be several versions (as in the multiple versions of Aratus' *Phaenomena*) or even of combing several Greek models into one (e.g., the prologues of Terence, *Eunuchus*, *Adelphoe*). At others a work ostentatiously paired with a Greek original might depart significantly and openly from it (Cicero, *De re publica*). Equivalence, or lack thereof, could be considered in terms of genre (Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.1-8, and more systematically Quintilian, *IO* 10.1.86-101) or by similarity in style

or even equivalent reputation.[1] Republican and early Augustan poets often situated themselves within a longer tradition of imitating Greek authors in order to suggest the measure for evaluating their own work.[2]

This last approach, identification between poets, proved especially important in the case of Vergil and Homer. But even here, Homer might be identified with more than one poet, and even a sequence of poets who satisfied the right conditions. Long before Vergil, Ennius was already presenting himself as the reincarnation of Homer, whose abilities to reproduce Homeric effects earned him the right as the foremost Latin epic poet, in distinction to predecessors like Livius and Naevius. Ennius' success made him the first known to be called an *alter Homerus*, another or second Homer after the Greek first (Horace, *Ep.* 2.1.50-52). With Ennius, the figure standing opposite to Homer became a role with an independent history in Latin literature.

The development of Homeric roles along multiple lines can be observed in how Ennius' status as 'another Homer' extends beyond the poets' sphere. Ennius makes his own case for being another Homer, but he is also cited as a canonical equivalent to Homer by authors such as Varro and Cicero. Horace makes a distinction between the poet's modeling himself on Homer and the conditions for being recognized as an *alter Homerus* by others. It is the *critici* who term Ennius as such, not poets, he says; he himself dismisses this tendency to pair up contemporary writers with their Greek equivalents (*Ep.* 2.2.99-101).

Again, understanding Ennius' multiple roles requires looking beyond imitation of poets and to the wider literary contexts in which it takes place. Conceptually, it need not be single authors or works that are flipped over the line of symmetry. Multiple ways of finding symmetry

[1] Citroni, "The Concept of the Classical," collects many more examples.
[2] See especially Gordon Williams, "Roman Poets as Literary Historians," 211–37. On identifying with Greek precedents, see also Thill, *Alter Ab Illo*, 24. Further discussion below, pp. 34ff.

led to multiple possible equivalents. Symmetrical relationships with individual authors also implied symmetry with the circumstances in which that author was read and understood. Different ways of being like Homer assume different conditions for recognizing a 'Homer'. Certain aspects of Homer's poems can only be reproduced if the poet assumes readers who have been formed to read Homer (or his current Latin equivalent). Those habits point to the institutions of Greek literature and the practices of teaching, reading and writing associated with it.

And so the many roles of the Roman 'Homer' were determined in synergy with the roles the original played in Greek literature. Romans consciously (if selectively) modeled their own equivalent literary institutions on Greek ones. But Homer plays a key role in many of those institutions: in rhetoric, as an inventor, exemplar and source of material; in basic educational contexts, as a canonical author emphasized in curricula (which in turn emphasized the notion of a canon); in metaliterary genres, such as commentary, works about education or literary history. Each of these depended on Homer's status to fulfill a particular function. His assumed ubiquity, quality, and authority was adapted to serve the different purpose and role required in each case.

As Romans reproduced such institutions, they reproduced structures that presumed a role for Homer. Often a Latin text or author serves as a substitute in the equivalent role. To be equivalent here depended on fitting the needs of the literary institution, not necessarily on success according to the standards of imitation. Ennius' entry into multiple roles opposite Homer allowed a more definite sense of the Roman Homer to develop. As the *Aeneid* became the standard epic of Latin instruction and culture, Vergil also came to replace Ennius in his varied roles as Homer—and to branch out into others.

This process created two lasting effects. First, the appearance in multiple Homeric roles

encouraged the expansion of roles available for an *alter Homerus*. Conceivably one might be Homeric in one arena (in Livius' Andronicus' case, imitating the *Odyssey*, or being Greek, writing in archaic language, serving as a school text) but not in others (composing tragedies and comedies, failing to maintain one's status as the premier epic poet forever). But the more circumstances in which a given author was able to replicate Homer's role, the more the identification appeared to lie beyond the immediate uses of a given literary institution. This impression could in turn license inserting an author like Vergil into Homeric roles which might otherwise have required traits unique to the original Homer—most notably, claims that depended on Homer's ancient priority over all other Greek authors.

A second consequence was to establish an increasing number of situations in which the equivalent roles had little or nothing to do with the imitation of the Homeric epics. In these circumstances, being 'another Homer' was not a matter of being the best imitator of Homer in Latin but performing a precisely equivalent cultural function. In certain roles, Homer and Vergil can even be treated reciprocally. Imitation is immaterial in such contexts. This extreme can be seen in a passage early in Justinian's *Institutes*:

> Sed ius quidem civile ex unaquaque civitate appellatur, veluti Atheniensium: nam si quis velit Solonis vel Draconis leges appellare ius civile Atheniensium, non erraverit. sic enim et ius quo populus Romanus utitur ius civile Romanorum appellamus, vel ius Quiritium, quo Quirites utuntur; Romani enim a Quirino Quirites appellantur. sed quotiens non addimus, cuius sit civitatis, nostrum ius significamus: sicuti cum poetam dicimus nec addimus nomen, subauditur apud Graecos egregius Homerus, apud nos Vergilius.
>
> But each civil law is so defined according to its own city, for example that of the Athenians: for if anyone wishes to call the laws of Solon or Draco the civil law code of the Athenians he makes no mistake. For just so we call the law which the Roman people use the civil law code of the Romans, or the law of the Quirites that which the Quirites use (since Romans are named Quirites after Quirinus). But so often as we do not specify which city's law, we indicate it is our law: just as when we say "the poet" and do not specify a name, it is understood among Greeks to indicate the excellent Homer, and

among us, Vergil. (Justinian, *Inst.* 1.2)[3]

Justinian's statement is an apt point to pause to observe the complex history involved in this simple gesture. Justinian intends the comparison to Homer and Vergil's relationship to clarify his point about law codes. He implies that each city has its own law code, which might be described in the same terms as the laws the Romans themselves employ. The judicial situations would thus be commensurable over two (or more) separate communities. Homer and Vergil are useful because they are an obvious example of a similarly commensurate relationship. In rhetorical or educational contexts, an appeal to ὁ ποιητής would refer to Homer. Justinian claims that Roman readers would naturally supply Vergil in the equivalent Latin circumstances.

Implicit in Justinian's formulation is the possibility that just as law codes are established in comparable cities, so too Homer-like poets are established in comparable languages. That literature should take this common form in different cultures is taken for granted. The artificial and contingent elements by which a Roman Homer was constructed are thus left almost entirely out of view. In contrast to the deliberate strategies of cultural imitation described above, the simplicity with which their outcome can be referred to is striking. But the fact that the example appears obvious represents the entrenchment of the category in a great variety of Latin literary institutions. Justinian can put it so simply because of a long and complex interaction of a great variety of ways of constructing a Latin literature out of a great variety of corresponding Greek institutions.

The functional of equivalence of Homer and Vergil thus develops over time, although its expression in one area does not supplant or exclude the original imitative relationship from coming to the fore in another. Just as some circumstances allow Vergil and Homer to stand as

[3] Translation throughout are mine unless otherwise noted.

equals, others preclude the relationship. One might imagine the legacy of the relationship between Homer and Vergil as a continuum. Sometimes Vergil's subordination to Homer looms large, as particularly in discussions of the practice of imitation or the relationship between Vergil's life and poetic practices. Commentaries on the *Aeneid* may thus draw on commentaries on the *Iliad*, but never the reverse. This Vergil is always at best the closest approximation to Homer in Latin. In other situations, the uses to which the poems are put are more distant from the original derivative relationship. Thus in taking *sortes*, writing centos, or language instruction, the activities in parallel do not or even cannot receive any assistance to meet their aims from their Homeric equivalents. They mimic the situation in which the epic is employed, but not, for the most part, the characteristics of its text. Although they derive their form from Greek models originally, they operate independently of them on the other side of the line of symmetry between the two languages.

Two last observations regarding this process will become themes of this dissertation. First, the development of the role of *alter Homerus* in educational contexts is critical to the expansion of culturally equivalent functions. For the most part, instruction in and illustration of the uses of language operates independently of its Greek model, even where the two authors are taught side by side. (Illustrating Latin syntax with Greek examples would be perverse even for the most committed Homerist.) As such, the presence of the *Aeneid* in the classrooms and written works related to them was the single greatest factor in the development of Vergil's more conspicuously Homeric roles. In particular, as explored below, the use of Vergil by Neoplatonist exegetes depended on norms established in the classroom.

Second, an increasingly 'Homeric' version of the poet arises out of increasingly Homeric treatment of the poet's epic. Ennius begins this process by linking his identification with Homer

to his similarity in matters such as meter, diction and learning. Vergil resists this identification, and his presentation of his career in Italy emphasizes the differences between his own situation as a poet and Homer's. But Ennius' model and the *Aeneid*'s dependence on the Homeric epics together allow the construction of a more 'Homeric' Vergil. When habits of explaining the compositional choices in the *Odyssey* or *Iliad* were also applied to the *Aeneid*, it became easy to imagine their poets as similar too. When mentioned in such contexts, Vergil tends to exhibit more Homeric traits (at least, the traits attributed to Homer by these readers). For instance, Homer's expertise in rhetoric, by reason of age, can be attributed to his invention of the subject. But Vergil, who arrives late even in the history of Latin oratory, nonetheless achieves a comparable authority.

The exact construal of how Vergil is like Homer in a given situation will depend on which particular strands of its history are evoked: imitation, comparable or related functions, even incidental factors such as being 'ancient' (a stretch in the 1st century AD but quite plausible in the 5th). And yet Justinian is typical in the simplicity with which he makes his claim. In a constellation, the relative spacing of the stars may not, from any other angle or measurement, be accurately depicted on the surface of the sky. And yet the constellation may nonetheless be legible and recognizable to even a casual stargazer. Vergil's likeness to Homer in the Roman literary world operates in a similar fashion. An evaluation of the two poets on any other lines might dwell on their differences or focus primarily on Vergil's allusive practices. But from within the structures of Roman literature, there remains a fixed impression that Vergil is another Homer.

Sources, Methods and Survey of Relevant Scholarship

This project is about the conditions for recognizing Vergil as a Roman Homer. As such, I look mainly for evidence of perceptions: explicit statements of the equivalence, structures or decisions that reveal or encourage assumptions to the same effect, clear utilization of authors in a role that implies equivalent functions. More specifically, I look for instances where Homer and Vergil (or Ennius, or others) are juxtaposed. I also look for structures in Latin literature that are either based on Greek models (e.g., lists of canonical authors) or else are treated as equivalents (e.g., commentaries). Additionally, I consider more contingent circumstances that make two authors appear more alike (e.g., by late antiquity, both Homer and Vergil have been cited authoritatively for centuries)—especially when they play a role in developing new criteria by which an author may be considered a Roman Homer.

A major challenge is that much of the evidence is brief, conventional, and imprecise. *Vita Caligulae* 34.2 mentions the emperor's disdain for Homer and for Vergil (and Livy too) as representative outrages. Seneca observes in passing that both Homer and Vergil deserve the gratitude of all the human race (*Cons. Polyb.* [=*Dial*.] 11.8.2). The reputations of Homer and Vergil are conjoined casually, often with hardly a thought for justifying or developing their connection. I have done my best to be considerate of the varying contexts, time periods and circumstances in which these statements are made. But vague appeals to what is 'obvious' is part of the game here. And part of the evidence too: the wide variety of contexts and time periods in which these claims made is also significant. Most such comments are deliberately attempting to draw on the apparent timeless truth of the similarity of these two authors. Their continuing ability to do so speaks to the continuation and even strengthening of the literary forms that allow the comparison to make sense.

Although the collection of sources is eclectic, two main features stand out. First, most of

the evidence is related to the study of language and rhetoric. Even where a Homeric analogue can be found apart from such material, its Roman equivalent can normally be related back to an educational context. This accurately reflects the means by which the concept of the *alter Homerus* spread and gained a foothold in Roman literary thought.

Second, most texts that articulate or demonstrate a strong notion of an *alter Homerus* were composed in the 4th and 5th century. The high density of late antique sources means that my questions are inevitably keyed to that perspective. Jerome, Donatus, Augustine and Macrobius will repeatedly set the point of departure.[4] This is for two reasons. First, much of the earlier evidence of attitudes towards Vergil is preserved in late antique texts. The 4th and 5th centuries saw a revival of interest in Vergil and a burst of scholarship devoted to his poems. One consequence of this was the preservation or reworking of much earlier material into different forms. Lucilius' comment on Ennius as *alter Homerus* is preserved by Jerome; the 2nd century *Vita Vergilii* of Suetonius was adapted by Aelius Donatus into the *Vita Suetonii vulgo Donatania*; Macrobius' *Saturnalia* and Servius' commentaries integrate much earlier material otherwise unknown.

Some excellent examples of parallel uses for Homer and Vergil will receive very limited attention in this study. In the case of reported *sortes Vergilianae* and the *cento* by Proba, where the parallel with Homeric counterparts is quite precise, there is nonetheless little overt reflection on their symmetrical roles. Neither is the context in which they are practiced readily compared. The evidence of the early *sortes* is scanty and disputed.[5] Centos meanwhile are a relative rarity

[4] See also the essays collected in *Romane Memento*: *Vergil in the Fourth Century* (Rees, ed.) for a survey of Vergil's role in that period. In many of the instances discussed in that volume, Vergil is generally treated as an authority and occasionally deployed directly in parallel to Homer.
[5] Better attested in later periods, they famously they make an appearance in a single ancient text, the *Historia Augusta* (e.g., 2.8). This is usually dated to late antiquity, when not only Homeric

compared to commentaries. In the case of Proba, the transformation of Vergilian lines into a retelling of Biblical narrative involves the reading practices of late antique Christians and their multiple models of authoritative texts. A venture into the role of the Homer-Vergil relationship on Proba's cento would thus require a careful examination of the relationship of both Vergil and Homer to models of Biblical authority—a project worth pursuing but beyond the scope of this dissertation.[6]

The commentary by Servius likewise has a smaller role than might be expected. This is for three reasons. First, Servius' commentary resisted my early attempts to categorize how it related Homer to Vergil. Not only are there different layers of sources for the commentary Servius preserves, but also varying degrees of responsiveness to the parallels in the text and parallels in practice. Each verse may serve as a point of departure for a different way of framing Vergil and Homer's relationship, and they do not require (nor really allow) either extended reflection or theoretical coherence. A convincing pattern of responses requires both an exhaustive reading and a clear sense of the possible conditions operating in individual notes. (In other words, I needed this dissertation to organize a study of Servius!) Where possible I have drawn on the excellent scholarship regarding where Servius appears to have recognized and taken advantage of the parallel exegetical work in Homeric commentaries (see p. 22 below on Farrell, "Servius and the Homeric Scholia"). There are further levels to untangle: Scaffai's work on Homer's varied roles in the commentary (both as an authority and as a source for Vergil) is a

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but biblical practices could serve as a model. See Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome* 608 (who denies Christian influence) and Ziolkowski and Putnam, *The Virgilian Tradition*, 829-30.

[6] On this topic, see especially McGill, *Virgil Recomposed: the Mythological and Secular Centos in Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press 2005) and Stephen Hinds, "The Self-Conscious Cento" (in *Décadence: Decline and Fall or Other Antiquity?*, edited by Marco Formisano and Therese Fuhrer, with Anna-Lena Stock. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag, 2014).

necessary tool for further research in this area. It should facilitate determining where conceptions of Vergil as imitator give way to various approaches that treat Vergil as equivalent to Homer.[7]

To discuss Vergil as a version of Homer one must have a concept of what sort of thing a 'Homer' is and how to track its development. Robert Lamberton's *Homer the Theologian* deserves special mention for its pioneering account of the conditions for Neoplatonist exegesis of Homer. Lamberton's importance to my project does not lie in the exact parallels between Homer and Vergil's status as cosmological poets (there are rather few, in fact). Instead his method stands out for its attention to the wide variety of circumstances that contributed to a very idiosyncratic set of exegetical practices. Lamberton not only delimits a particular subset of the approach to Homer—as theologian—but observes its rough edges: how it drew on many other common and ancient but not necessarily rigorously considered aspects of Homer's reception (not least, how the poet presents himself in the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*). The result is a patient account of the long cultural history that made the idea of a theologian poet plausible. Some of that history had an intellectual or specifically philosophical basis (see especially Long, "Stoic Readings of Homer," and Lamberton "The Neoplatonists and the Spiritualization of Homer"), but much of it was contingent on Homer's long history as an authority (handled in detail in Hunter, *The Measure of Homer*). As accounts of Vergil as an *alter Homerus* are particularly short on philosophical defenses for his similarity to Homer, the model of collecting a variety of historical circumstances that make a cosmological poet credible is invaluable.

In at least one other sense, my work is an extension of studies on the reception of Homer

[7] Vergil's own use of commentary on the Homeric epics may reveal a further force influencing the parallels perceived by commentators on his own poem—see Schlunk, *The Homeric Scholia and the* Aeneid*,* Murrin, "The Goddess of the Air," and Schmit-Neuerberg, *Vergils Aeneis und die antike Homerexegese*.

in the ancient world. Where Vergil is taken to be an equivalent to Homer, he is almost always assimilated into an existing category in which Homer has been placed. As such, it is important to be clear on what kinds of models of Homer Vergil might have been like and whether there are particular treatments of Homer that might serve as reference points for the *alter Homerus*. Graziosi, *Inventing Homer*, offers an account of the Homer constructed for use off the page as well as on it; Kim, *Homer Between History and Fiction*, explores the functions such a figure might play in elite Greek culture of the High Empire. Kennedy, "The Ancient Dispute," explains circumstances under which Homer may be taken as inventor of rhetoric particularly clearly. Moreover, in *The Measure of Homer*, Richard Hunter demonstrates how that the problem of who Homer is and how to reconcile his many roles is not a modern conception. It was experienced by individual ancient interpreters struggling under the burden of getting 'Homer' on their side. As a result, different modes of interpretation were blurred together. Notably, a drive to determine what was normal in Homeric poetry—and so what Homer was like—led scholars like Aristarchus to conceive of a figure of the poet to whom such habits could be attributed.[8]

The recent *Living Poets* project spearheaded by Graziosi ("Living Poets") expands on the role of the poet in the reader's imagination. Following Lefkowitz and others, Graziosi distinguishes between the robustness of the historical information available concerning the poet proper and the poet as constructed in the reception of the poems. Graziosi's contribution is to argue that the poet as received is an important object of study in its own right, even where it contradicts the historical record as known. An imagined poet can have a significant history well worth scholarly investigation, complete with personal habits and her own literary legacy. This insight is doubly important for this project. First, it acknowledges that the impressions and

[8] Hunter, *The Measure of Homer* 147, 149-50.

notions about a poet that ancient readers brought to the texts were influential and can be studied from the written record of their interpretations. The influence of conceptions of poets on the reception and treatment of their work can, at times, match or outweigh the influence of the poetry's own presentation of the author. Second, Graziosi's approach recognizes the important role of idiosyncratic and ahistorical conceptions of authors in shaping reception. She recognizes that even features ungrounded in reality can create a coherent figure when repeated over time. What being a 'Roman Homer' means to particular writers can thus be studied with reference to the kind of traits that each writer ascribes to Homer. The 'Homers' described in this way are not freely constructed but are developed from traditions that reinforce certain beliefs about the authors. There is a coherent history to be told of a poet's legacy, one that does not require discarding beliefs that are influential even if they are false. Thus too in this dissertation I stress the importance of Ennius and Vergil's self-presentation in their poetry to the notion of a Roman Homer. I likewise highlight the contingent circumstances that lead to the creation of new versions of these poets—and even how those versions may survive still today in particular interpretative stances.

If one attempts to look for the Latin equivalents of such discussions of Homer, it becomes apparent how much more narrow the body of material on Vergil is. There are many arenas where Homer has an important role to play but where the *alter Homerus* is absent in Roman literature. There are limits to what can be reflected in this mirror world. There is no Roman Thucydides who parses the historical character of Vergil's narrative, nor a Strabo who dilates on Vergil's reliable geographical knowledge.[9] Tellingly, the majority of the texts relate in some manner to

[9] Although in late antiquity even this would be possible in poetic contexts: See Gibson, "Vergil, Homer and Empire."

educational contexts, whether grammatical or rhetorical: references to canonical lists, descriptions of the role of Vergil's poems in classrooms, commentaries by *grammatici*, collections of rhetorical illustrations, theoretical reflections on language. As such, the background on practices of education in the Roman world is vital (Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome*, Kaster, *Guardians of Language*, Irvine, *The Making of Textual Culture*), as well as studies on how the texts used there are produced and received (Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World*; *The Last Pagans of Rome*), and still more generally the conditions of reading pragmatic terms and the social dimension of reading (Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture*, Kaster "Macrobius and Servius").

My articulation of a line of symmetry between Latin and Greek literatures owes much to Feeney's *Beyond Greek*, in which he explores how Roman literature came to organize itself around the categories native to Greek culture. Feeney's history of the conditions under which translation and imitation of Homer first occurred in archaic Latin poetry is critical background for McElduff's discussion of translation in the period (*Roman Theories of Translation*). Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext* remains critical for understanding Ennius' literary reception, and particularly Cicero's account of it (on which Zetzel, "The Influence of Cicero on Ennius," is also important).

Jackie Elliott's *Ennius and the Architecture of the* Annales is indispensable for its thorough sorting of the fragments of that poem and an analysis that attends to the context in which they are preserved—contexts that are often the vital clue in understanding the status of *alter Homerus* as it changed from Ennius to Vergil. Goldschmidt, *Shaggy Crowns* surveys mentions of Ennius in Republican and Augustan authors and offers an excellent starting point for tracking the transfer of status and where it was most and least emphatic. Prinzen, *Ennius in*

Urteil der Antike gives a thorough account of Ennius' literary afterlife that is vital for understanding what kind of *alter Homerus* Vergil supplanted. Prinzen also outlines the institutional legacy of Ennius' previous occupation of that role, which continued to have influence even after the loss of the *Annales*.

Vergil's imitation of Homer is the foundation of other relationships posited between the two poets. A key theme that emerges from treatments of imitation is that such accounts always imply or articulate a relationship between readers and authors. Several studies supply important pieces of the story of practices and concepts that regulated an individual author's transfer of Greek poetry into Latin. Thill, *Alter ab Illo*, gives a general overview of the practice and theory of imitation by Augustan poets, and Vardi, "Diiudicatio Locorum," explains how assumptions built into notions such as *synkrisis* could predetermine the outcome of comparisons. But the dominant theme of more recent studies is that no such transfer is done in private. The audience's interest and evaluation is always at stake, for the reason that reading was itself a social and shared practice (Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture*). Thus McElduff stresses how translation aimed at competitive emulation and restatement among readers who already comprehended an original; McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*, points out the factors that led to individual imitators being accused of abusing both authors and their own audience.

Special attention is due to Weiß, *Homer und Vergil in Vergleich*, whose project operates in parallel to many of my own themes. Weiß follows how Seneca the Elder, Aulus Gellius, and Macrobius treat the foundational relationship of imitation between Vergil and Homer. Weiß stresses the tension between the hierarchy inherent in the evaluation of imitation (with its questions, who did better? who depends on whom? and by what standards?) and the canonical status of Vergil in the Latin-speaking Roman world. Neither Homer's nor Vergil's status in their

respective canons was ever at stake in such contests. Rather, the special conditions that obtained in a comparison between two untouchable authors promoted the development of aesthetic categories that could apply to each author and articulate both the difference implied by imitation and the honor implied by canonical status (e.g., *ars* vs. *natura*). Although imitation is only one relationship between Homer and Vergil, Weiß is invaluable both in establishing how stable and common this pairing of Homer and Vergil is over time and also in developing an account of the ways their relationship could be expressed.

Accounts of the composition of Vergil's poems often drew attention to the poet's habits and experiences. Especially after the *Aeneid* becomes a canonical poem, visions of Homer influence this tradition too. If Vergil is a poet like Homer, then Homer must be taken into account when determining what kind of poet he is. But deliberate constructions of the poet Vergil go back to Vergil himself in the *Eclogues* (Kania, *Virgil's* Eclogues *and the Art of Fiction*) and are found in Republican poets who present them alongside versions of their own literary lives (Graziosi, "Horace, Suetonius and the *Lives* of the Greek Poets"). The poet's persona plays a special role in the development of a notion of a career for Vergil, which in turn structures later accounts of Vergil's life (Farrell, "Greek Lives and Roman Careers in the Classical *Vita* Tradition"). It also extends to variety of circumstances where the poet may be evoked: especially poetic reminiscences, lives of the poet (Laird, "Recognizing Vergil") and pseudepigraphy (Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*). An important tool in examining this material is Suerbaum's meticulous survey of the development of literary, historical and material evidence of Vergil's canonical status over time ("Der Anfangsprozess der ‚Kanonisierung' Vergils"). Suerbaum offers the principle of "kein Vergil, kein Kanon, kein Literaturpapst"—observing that the concept of the poet, canons, and the centralized enforcement of the relevant status are all descriptive notions

better thought of as outcomes of Vergil's legacy rather than forces driving it.

To this one might add: kein *alter Homerus*. Homer plays an important but nonetheless limited role in the story of Vergil's canonization in Roman literature. Vergil's relationship to Homer tends produce sweeping statements—as Homer to Greeks, so Vergil to us; the Mantuan Homer; the imitator of Homer in all things. But these claims fall quite short of a full account of Vergil's roles in Roman society. The idea of a Roman Homer does not offer much help with the legacy of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, for instance. Although the notion of an *alter Homerus* can be found in all periods of Roman literature, it cannot serve as a comprehensive account of Vergil's reception.

For this reason, one need not even appeal to Homer give a synthetic treatment of Vergil's legacy. Nor was Vergil inseparable from Homer in Roman culture. As Joseph Farrell observes, Homer was never absent from Roman literature or art; the 'Roman Homer' was, for most intents and purposes, Homer (Farrell, "The Roman Homer"). Tiberius Claudius Donatus' 4th century rhetorical commentary on the *Aeneid* covers the entire epic without a single mention of Homer. The most thorough contemporary collection of texts regarding Vergil's reception is Putnam and Ziolkowski's *The Virgilian Tradition: The First Fifteen Hundred Years.* This volume's table of contents lists dozens of categories where Vergil's relationship to Homer might be discussed (notably, "Virgil as Philosopher and Compendium of Knowledge," "Virgil as Worthy of Veneration and Divine," "Virgilian Cento," a section on Macrobius in "The Commentary Tradition," and "Introduction to the Latin Homer") but the authors find no need to propose a category dedicated to comparisons to Homer.

Domenico Comparetti's *Vergil in the Middles Ages* remains an impressively comprehensive summary of the Vergilian tradition from its beginning to the Middle Ages.

Comparetti is particularly attuned to the attitudes of readers to Vergil and cites several instances where treatment of Vergil is modeled on treatment of Homer in Greek culture, including writing commentaries, recognizing insoluble questions, composing centos, and using allegory (on which see below).[10] Comparetti classifies such parallels as the invention of readers unable to grasp the purposes of Vergil's imitation. In doing so he helpfully acknowledges the artificial, contingent and incomplete status of such parallels. Something must be keeping them in place. This is a valuable insight, even if his preferred explanation (a haze of mystical thinking descending upon the empire with the advent of Christianity) is less convincing.

These observations direct us beyond where statements concerning the equivalence of Homer and Vergil are made and on to more formal parallels in institutions. Such parallels tend to revolve around areas where the institution was derived from a Greek model that included Homer. Most importantly, this includes specific methods for organizing and practicing the study of texts. A prime example is the use of canons to organize and distinguish authors appropriate for study, which influenced practice in the teaching and theory of language and rhetoric (Corbeill, "Education in the Roman Republic," and especially Citroni, "The Concept of the Classical and the Canons of Model Authors in Roman Literature").

Such formal features represent a standard for considering Vergil to be like Homer that is independent of Vergil's imitation. As such, they also can lead to situations where the two kinds of likeness overlap and reinforce each other. Grammatical commentary is an example. The formal features of a commentary on epic in Greek and Latin are quite similar—they are lengthy works of line-by-line exegesis written in conjunction with teaching. They are tools employed for

[10] Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middles Ages* 54, 57-58, 60, 73f. Homer serves a foil for Vergil in his discussion of earlier periods as well. Comparetti begins with a contrast between the mythological Homeric epics and the historical requirements of Roman epic that the *Aeneid* must meet (1-11).

similar ends and with homologous practices.

In the case where one author has imitated another, these formal similarities allow for further layer of interaction. Vergil's imitation of Homer may be registered within the commentary itself, producing a regular reminder of Homer's poetry as a point of interest (Scaffai, *La Presenza di Omero nei Commenti Antichi a Virgilio*). Questions asked of Vergil may be modeled on questions asked of Homer in parallel situations (e.g., the opening lines of the epic). Moreover, where a passage of Vergil and its Homeric analogue provoke the same question, the exegesis of a passage may draw on the same resources to produce as similar answer (Fraenkel, "Review of: Servianorum in Vergilii Carmina Commentariorum Editionis Harvardianae Parts I & II; Mühmelt, *Griechische Grammatik in der Vergilerklärung*; Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World*). Indeed, the exegesis of Homer may itself be imitated or translated by the Vergilian commentator (Farrell, "Servius and the Homeric Scholia"). Note that in this last situation the similarity between the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* need not be an issue of direct imitation of a given passage. Some information that is perceived as useful in reading the Homeric epics—e.g., legends concerning the Trojan war—may remain useful in reading the *Aeneid* too. The process reinforces the similar treatment owed each poet. For this reason the multiple and varied ways in which Vergil models his work on the Homeric epics (Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer*; Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation*; Barchiesi, *Homeric Effects in Vergil's Narrative*) may continue to produce formal but inadvertent similarities in how their readers treat the poems.

The other major area marked by formal similarity is the treatment of Vergil as an authority in the fashion that Neoplatonists treated Homer. This has long stood out as a significant parallel. But explanations often miscast such readings as the trickle-down effect of religious

(Den Boeft, "Nullius disciplinae expers") or Neoplatonic fads (Comparetti; Jones, "The Allegorical Traditions of the Aeneid"). A consistent weakness of these arguments is their aggregation of too many phenomena (e.g., *sortes* and centos, treatment of Vergil in grammatical commentaries) without distinguishing between their different practitioners, contexts, and origins.[11] They especially tend to treat allegory and its role in Vergilian exegesis as an innovation of late antiquity (against which note especially Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*, and Struck, *The Birth of the Symbol*; and for its role even in the composition of the *Aeneid*, Murrin, "The Goddess of the Air."). A longer view and more contingent account is needed. As Delvigo ("*Mythici* vs *Physici*," and *Servio e la Poesia della Scienza*) argues, the idea that Vergil's readers drew their models for Vergilian exegesis from Homeric readers is correct; but "the risk of this correct idea is an underestimation of the specificity of the cultural context in which the ancient commentators of Vergil are found: specifically Roman, and specifically late antique." (Delvigo "*Mythici* vs *Physici*," 20, my translation). Delvigo points to the influence of increasingly influential claims by Christians and the make-up of sources available to commentators on the exegesis of Vergil. Notably, this way of framing the issue draws it closer to questions about the manner in which Vergil's authority was constructed in exegetical works more generally. The focus is on its relationship to practices and not doctrines of reading (Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*; Keeline, "Did (Servius') Vergil Nod?").

Attention to the common practices of late antique exegetes of Vergil also highlights the unique place of Macrobius in that history. Macrobius is often treated as representative of approaches to Vergil in late antiquity. But he is better understood as a kind of climax of a renewal

[11] Another common fault is to lean too heavily on the analogy to the authority of the Bible in Christian exegesis—e.g., Cameron, *The Last Pagans* 593 on a "doctrine of infallibility," which even when deployed ironically does more to confuse than enlighten.

of Vergilian scholarship. No other commentator or figure puts Vergil in Homeric roles quite as consistently as Macrobius. Building on Jocelyn, "Ancient Scholarship and Virgil's Use of Republican Latin Poetry, I & II" and Kaster, "Macrobius and Servius," studies have continued to point to a deliberate and sophisticated program for the *Saturnalia* (Goldlust, "Un manifeste sur l'organicité littéraire," and *Rhétorique et Poétique de Macrobe dans les "*Saturnales;" Vogt-Spira "Les *Saturnales* de Macrobe: Une manifeste poétique de l'Antiqué tardive;" Angelucci, "La tipologia Macrobiana," Kelly, *The Conspiracy of Allusion*). This stands in contrast to works on the *Somnium Scipionis*, which though offering useful accounts of the sources and of the commentary nonetheless attribute Homeric parallelism to a combination of convention and wishful thinking (Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers and Their Greek Sources*; Stahl, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*; Cameron, *The Last Pagans of Rome*). Here I offer a corrective to this view, both in underscoring the unusually frequent and specific uses of Vergil in the role of a Neoplatonic Homer and also in noting the continuing significance of imitative practices of the *Saturnalia* in the commentary.

Chapter Summaries

The first chapter explores the origins of the equivalence of Homer and Vergil in archaic Latin epic. The notion of an *alter Homerus* develops out of a concept of Latin literature's foundational symmetry to Greek literature. But this symmetry is flexible: the precise unit of correspondence (genre, work, author) varies, even in epic poetry that deliberately models itself on Homer. Thus where Livius Andronicus in his 3rd century BC *Odyssia* focused on reproducing certain experiences of Homer's readers, Ennius instead focused on identification with the poet himself. In the *Annales*, Ennius made a particular case for taking on the role of an *alter Homerus*,

establishing a rubric by which to judge his epic predecessors.

But other rubrics quickly came define what success in that role meant. Scholars and teachers shaping their work after Greek models found places to evoke Ennius where he would serve the same function as mentioning Homer in Greek. Cicero and other elites fit him into their own systems, often selectively suppressing or exaggerating one Homeric correspondence or another. The growing number of accounts meant Ennius' reputation as Homer became overdetermined. There were multiple forms of equivalency to Homer, multiple systems that could be symmetrical. Grown dense enough, this forest of Homeric roles even allowed Ennius to take on Homer-like functions without any deliberate appeal to a likeness with the Greek poet.

The second chapter turns to Vergil's legacy as a poet. More specifically, it traces the construction of a Homer-like persona for Vergil that corresponds with the Homer-like roles he plays in Latin literature. As a text, the *Aeneid* is readily described as Homeric: the relationship of Vergil's and Homer's epics is built upon the structure of imitated plot, scenes, images, characters and stylistic choices that link the poems. But that Vergil in turn must himself be understood as a poet with Homeric traits was less obvious. This is particularly so as Vergil developed a persona in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* whose career did not hinge on success in epic. That poet often draws attention to his own compositions and observes his change of genres, locations, and acknowledges his influences and contemporaries in a way Homer never did. This Vergilian persona proved to have a lasting influence on later Roman poets, pseudepigraphers, commentators and others who felt a need to evoke a Vergilian poet rather than a Homeric epic in Latin.

Nonetheless, a more Homeric Vergil can be observed developing in commentaries, lives, and other moments where such a poet was needed. In lists of canonical authors and educational

contexts, the metonymy that allowed 'Homer' to stand for the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* was applied to Vergil as well, resulting in a 'Vergil' whose bucolic, didactic and even Augustan characteristics were muted. This Homeric persona could in turn be further developed in imitation of the commentators of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. A Homeric persona for Vergil worked quite well on this two-level imitation: where Vergil imitated Homer in the *Aeneid*, Vergil's readers might imitate the questions and genres of Homer's readers.

The next two chapters are about specific claims made about Vergil and the uses to which these claims may be put. In the third I consider further how Vergil's imitation of Homer could be integrated with approaches that insist that Vergil possesses Homeric traits. Vergil's imitation of Homer drew much attention soon after the publication of the *Aeneid*. Because it paired the two authors, discussions of imitation could often fit into schemes of analysis demanding two figures treated in parallel. And yet imitation was frequently associated with judging one poet better than another—often specifically that Vergil's versions of Homeric passages were inferior to the original. Though this judgment did little to affect Vergil's canonical place in Latin literature, its history left a lasting influence on the reception of Vergil's works.

The issue is especially pronounced in book five of Macrobius' *Saturnalia*. Macrobius was more explicit and systematic in folding Vergil into the role of a Roman Homer. In the *Saturnalia* the overarching characteristic is the poet's work as a treasury of learning. To make this case, Macrobius brings in different streams of commentary on Vergil's works and reproduces them in the guise of interlocutors in a dialogue. In one section of the work, *Sat.* 5.2-17, this means drawing on sources concerned with Vergil's imitation of Homer. These sources are at odds with Macrobius' broader aims. They present Vergil as a plagiarist and stress his inferiority to Homer. As a result, Macrobius must refit these observations into a vision of Vergil's authority

that also acknowledges his difference to Homer. By trading on the different social relationships between authors, imitators and audience that are implied in different paradigms of imitation, Macrobius is able to present Vergil as a kind of perfect reader to complement Homer's perfect model author. The strategies employed in this part of the *Saturnalia* demonstrate the degree to which Vergil's Homeric role depends on—and can change in—a particular reading context.

The final chapter examines Macrobius' commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis*, the source of the most explicit and insistent statements in antiquity regarding Vergil's perfect knowledge. Macrobius recast polemics against Vergil as testimony of his extensive reading. His success in doing so demonstrates how the role Vergil plays in the curricula of the *grammatici* and rhetoricians can be leveraged to wider claims to knowledge. The experience of the norms of a classroom was widespread among Roman elites, and so served as a broadly accessible foundation for claims about Vergil. That experience was characterized by a set of heuristics and experiences that emphasized that breadth, sufficiency, and authority of Vergil (and, accordingly, the knowledge of those who taught his poetry). The study of Vergil served as a kind of synecdoche for the pursuit of knowledge in general—a position he came to share in parallel to Homer's in Greek-speaking classrooms.

The authority Vergil enjoyed in an educational context offered the most robust foundation for claims that his works offered access to deeper knowledge. Macrobius' commentary on Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis* famously sets Vergil in the role enjoyed by Homer in Neoplatonic works. Exegesis of Vergil's poetry in this work, as of Homer's epics in Porphyry or Proclus, offers access to knowledge of the cosmos otherwise shut off even to the learned mind. But whereas there is a long tradition of accounting for Homer's privileged knowledge in Greek literature, there are far fewer resources available to Vergil. In order to establish Vergil's authority,

Macrobius appeals to the pedagogically motivated discourse of infallibility and omniscience that had its origins in the classroom. The more sophisticated theoretical apparatus available in the Greek tradition offered Greek Neoplatonists a way of building on the ancient tradition of accepting Homer's authority in all sorts of contexts of knowledge. Absent these resources, the repetition of language and strategies typical of an educational context finds grounds for Latin Neoplatonic exegesis in the arena where Macrobius' readers would most commonly experience Vergil's authority.

Together these chapters sketch the figure of the Roman Homer over time. To do so, I have accepted a kind of conceit of continuity. I attempt to trace this figure as if a thread that passes through Latin literature in a variety of modes and contexts in which Vergil's poetry played a Homeric role in Latin literature. The comments and reflections of these ancient readers, like many modern studies of Vergil, consistently take the comparison to Homer to be natural and well-founded. The main contribution of the dissertation is to make explicit how the equation of the status of the poets required a deliberate cultivation (and at times even invention) of Vergil's Homeric traits. In light of the tradition's claims and its further development in the Middle Ages, the presumption of an all-knowing, foundational cultural figure in Vergil is indeed appropriate; but that appropriateness is sustained by tradition of interpretation and their related practices. Vergil's imitation of Homer nor by his historical role in Latin letters would not suffice alone to elevate his status in this way. Nor was his firm association with Homer more intrinsic to his poetry than Ennius' had been. To realize this is not to sideline Vergil's ambition to be like Homer, but to recognize that a particular set of circumstances makes the claim plausible: a pattern of beliefs and practices must sustain these uses of Roman literature in the ancient world—and soo too in the present.

Chapter 1. "Not a second Homer, but the first Homer among the Latins": Ennius as the Roman Homer

Introduction

The notion of Vergil serving as an equivalent figure in Latin to Homer in Greek has a long history, and one that is far from finished.[1] But the role of 'another Homer' in Latin long preceded Vergil. The first poet we hear of named as such is Quintus Ennius. Although his epic survives only in fragments, Ennius' career as *alter Homerus* at Rome defined the role in ways that long outlasted the *Annales*.

The phrase *alter Homerus* itself is relatively rare, but it proves a useful handle on the notion of a Roman Homer as it is evoked by Latin authors who lived centuries apart.[2] The 4th century Christian ascetic Jerome uses it twice and in doing so illustrates the stakes of judging between two 'Homers'. In a letter answering some frequently asked questions about the Bible, Jerome asserts the equivalence of Vergil and Homer almost in passing:

> Nec hoc miremur in apostolo, si utatur eius linguae consuetudine, in qua natus est et nutritus, cum Vergilius, alter Homerus apud nos, patriae suae sequens consuetudinem 'sceleratum' frigus appellet.
>
> Nor will we wonder at this in the case of the apostle, if he employs the custom of his own tongue into which he was born and in which he was bred, since Vergil—a second Homer among us—calls cold 'wicked' following the custom of his own fatherland. (*Ep*. 121.10, 42-3)

In this passage, Jerome appeals to Vergil as a standard of comparison. To show that an obscure reference made by the apostle Paul is of no concern, he finds a similarly unusual

[1] I have already mentioned how Vergil and Homer can have symmetrical roles in courses at a university. But the relation of the two can frame more scholarly experiences as well, as in a preface by Francis Cairns: "Writing a book on Virgil has been, inevitably, a humbling experience. More than any other ancient writer except Homer, he defies expectation and generalisation, instantly deflating pretensions to define him." *Virgil's Augustan Epic*, ix (emphasis mine).

[2] In addition to Lucilius and Jerome discussed below, Horace, *Ep*. 2.1.50. Cf. *App. Tibull.* 3.7.180 [4.1.180]: *Valgius, propior aeterno non alter Homero* (Valgius: no other is nearer to everlasting Homer).

reference to local custom in Latin literature's sterling example of proper usage. This status is what he has in mind when he describes Vergil as 'a second' or 'another Homer': the normative role of the *Aeneid* in education, literature, and reasoning about language in the empire during late antiquity.

Jerome appeals again to the words *alter Homerus* in making a similar point in his commentary on Micah. When the prophet counsels distrust of one's loved ones (e.g., one's wife), Jerome links it to more familiar judgments in Latin literature. In introducing *Aeneid* 4.569 (*varium et mutabile semper femina*), he gives another gloss on Vergil's status:

> Sed et poeta sublimis—non Homerus alter, ut Lucilius[3] de Ennio suspicatur, sed primus Homerus apud Latinos…
>
> And even the exalted poet—not a second Homer, as Lucilius suspected of Ennius, but the first Homer among the Latins, [says…][4]

A lot of literary history is packed into this quip.[5] As in *Ep.* 121, the aim is to invoke Vergil as a norm capable of grounding foreign texts in trusted Latin categories. Again, Jerome does so by defining the role by reference to Homer. But now Vergil's role is also contrasted with an older figure, Ennius, who once had been called a *Homerus* too. The position is thus not unique to Vergil; but a joke marks an easy judgment between their two claims. In Ennius' day someone may have called him a 'Homer,' but for Jerome, Vergil obviously had to be ranked before him. If Ennius truly is a second (*alter*) Homer, better to call Vergil the first (*primus*) one among the Latins, and leave second place to Ennius. (Although, as the earlier passage shows, Jerome is willing to use *alter Homerus* for Vergil when the competition is not

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[3] Jerome, *In Michaeam* 2.7 CCSL 76 (M. Adriaen ed., 1969) 511. The correction of the text's *Lucillus* to *Lucilius* goes back to the 18th c. (Vallarsi), and I have also adopted it here in light of corresponding evidence for Lucilius' engagement with Ennius more generally (see Skutsch, *The Annals* 11f., Christes and Garbugino *Lucilius* 16-17).
[4] On the uncertain meaning of *suspicatur*, see below p. 45 n. 37.
[5] The sentiment may be far older than Jerome. Jerome studied under Aelius Donatus (see, e.g., *Comm. Eccl.* 1.9), compiler of a major and influential commentary on Vergil's poems. Donatus may have in turn learned this remark from another, earlier source. At any rate, Jerome gives no attribution, and so I treat only Jerome's claim here.

present.)

Jerome's asides here present two issues that are at the center of this chapter. First, Latin literature presumes a Roman Homer. When Jerome defines the normative position of Vergil in Latin literature, he does so in relation to Homer: *Homerus apud Latinos*. That the phrase *alter Homerus* remains an informative and complimentary phrase, almost a title, testifies to how foundational the parallel between Latin and Greek literatures was to the conception of Latin literary culture. Jerome writes more than three centuries after Vergil's poetry entered the curriculum used to teach young Roman elites in Roman schools. But the notion of a Roman Homer continues to mark Vergil's role, even when its standing is very secure. Certainly Vergil's place did not depend on such comparisons. In the centuries to come in the remains of the western empire, Vergil would continue to be influential apart from any instruction in Greek at all. Rather, the role itself was modeled after Homer's, and retained that shape even when Homer was no longer part of the curriculum. The modeling of Latin literature on Greek is the framework for any discussion of a Roman Homer, whether Ennius or Vergil.

The second issue relates to the competition for the role that Jerome implies. The play on *primus* and *alter* implies a judgment,[6] but by what criteria does one distinguish two candidates for such a position? How does one determine how Homeric an author is? In Jerome's situation above, the argument is easy. He needs a Vergil who is, like Homer for Greeks, a touchstone for all literary usage. And while the *Aeneid* seems to have been taught in every classroom in the 4th century, the *Annales* was decidedly not (and could not have been).[7]

[6] The weighing of the difference between first and second place here recalls Domitius Afer's judgment that Vergil was second to Homer, but closer to first than third. Quintilian, *IO* 10.1.85-86.

[7] Although Ennius continues to be cited by authors in late antiquity, the vast majority of quotations seem to be derived from Augustan sources. At the very least we can say direct knowledge of the text was rare. See Skutsch, *The Annals*, 10, 24-26, 31ff.

The contrast confirms Vergil's position while also implying he has it with merit. Case closed.

And yet, a lot rides on when the question is posed. The situation would have been quite different at the time of the publication of the *Aeneid.* At that time, the *Annales* were studied in classrooms, quoted in public speeches, and used by scholars in need of an apt illustration of good Latin. To use Jerome's criteria then would have left Ennius as a Roman Homer and Vergil an unproven challenger. In this case, the contingencies of reputation have a significant impact on who looks more Homeric.

Moreover, while being a foundational figure in education is an important characteristic of Homer, there is more than one way to measure a Roman Homer's suitability for the role. And this is no surprise if indeed Latin literature takes Greek literature for its model. Latin writers not only drew on Greek models for meter and genre but also on structures that ordered literary work and analysis: uses literary works were put to in educational contexts, terms of organization and analysis, functions the figure of an author could play in the wider culture. Each of point of contact between literatures supplied a venue for a Roman Homer, because the original Homer or Homeric epics had a role to play in each. And although the touchstone role that Jerome brings out remained the most influential 'Homeric' role a poet might play, such a poet might nonetheless be a more or less appropriate fit to other cultural roles. A successful construction of a Homer in one place might still require further adjustment to work in another; a perfect fit for one role might under different conditions be overlooked in favor of an alternative.

To understand how Vergil came to be treated as a Roman Homer, one must begin with Ennius' season in the role. In this chapter I survey four ways Ennius' Homeric role is negotiated. Some involve one author and some survey a number, but all derive from the period before Vergil's *Aeneid* became established in the Roman classroom. Together they map out interactions between the notion of a Latin literature, the possible places for a Homer

in it, and the means by which Ennius became more or less suitable for the role in different contexts.

First, I outline Ennius' own criteria for being Homer to Latin speakers, which he defined against the Latin epic poets who preceded him. Here Ennius creates a rubric by which one may evaluate not only the poem but the poet's Homer-like qualities. The textual features of a poem that link it to Homer are decisive for distinguishing one poet from another in Ennius' account.

Second I will examine the influential role of pedagogical and heuristic pairings of Ennius and Homer. Two main points will occupy us: the irrelevance of Ennius' rubric to the deployment of these roles, and new opportunities opened up by a sustained role in the schooling of the Roman elite. Negotiation between different ways of taking Ennius as a 'Homer' is the norm even when he is most established in that role.

Third, and as an example of such negotiations, I introduce a point of conflict between the two visions of Homer above. Homer was understood by many ancient exegetes as a poet of natural philosophy. Ennius' interests and writings in this area made it an obvious area in which to stress Ennius' Homeric character. But there were attempts to undercut the comparison too. Here I turn to the ability of two Late Republican readers, Cicero and Lucretius, to play Ennius' satisfaction of criteria in one context against a claim in another context.

Fourth and finally, I address the curious possibility of being Homeric while avoiding comparisons to Homer. Cicero's varied citations of Ennius often read like a sketch of how later generations would deploy Vergil as their Homer. But while Cicero presses Ennius into Homer-like roles, he plays down or ignores explicit parallels to Homer. Ennius is framed as a parallel figure, but not a dependent one.

1. Livius, Ennius, and 'Greek' Literature in Latin

From the Beginning: Greek Literature in Latin and Livius' Latin Epic

Although we have no record before Ennius of any poet or critic explicitly positing a Roman analogue to Homer, the potential for such a figure can be found in the earliest moments of Latin literature. This is particularly so if one considers Latin literature as Greek literature written in another language.[8] The imitation of Greek poetry and prose meant Latin-speakers consciously mirrored the norms by which Greek-speakers characterized their writing. Thus from the mid 3rd century BC on Greek genres, mythological history, rhetorical effects, and eventually even meters and literary criticism became standard in Latin. The process was selective; but both the norms and their origin in Greek became inseparable from Roman concepts of literature.

Modeling a literary culture on this scale implied a sort of line of symmetry over which the two cultures' creations might be compared. In practice over the centuries, comparisons could be as general or specific as the borrowed norms allowed. Cicero might list out entire genres that Romans had imitated in order to point out the empty shelf of Latin *philosophia*;[9] but he also could compose a *De re publica* whose title and subject answered to Plato's Πολιτεία (often translated in Latin, not least by Cicero, as *res publica*). Translations of specific Greek works offered the opportunity for particularly fine-grained correspondences. In such cases one might compare genre, title, plot and even word choice across the line of symmetry.

Livius Andronicus' version of Homer's *Odyssey* fell exactly into this category. Here one might see the origin of a Latin 'Homer.' If one were to continue expanding mirroring

[8] Denis Feeney lays out the unusual but foundational relationship between Latin and Greek writing in *Beyond Greek,* 1-8.
[9] *Tusc*. 1.1-8, esp. 1.5 *philosophia iacuit usque ad hanc aetatem nec ullum habuit lumen litterarum Latinarum* (Philosophy has been neglected until this age, nor is there any luminary of Latin letters [in this genre]).

elements of the works, one would find the answering figure for the author of the original *Odyssey* will be its translator into Latin. The author's name crosses the line of symmetry as readily as other features. If one matched Ὀδύσσευς to *Ulixes*, and Ὀδυσσεία to *Odyssia*,[10] would not the counterpart to Ὅμηρος be Livius himself? As Feeney points out, Livius' translation of the first line of the Odyssey, *Virum mihi, Camena, insece versutum*, immediately raises the question of whether the poet referred to by *mihi* is the same as that of Homer's μοι. The two words correspond in meaning and accidence, but they also bring to the fore the slippage between the identity of the author of this poem: is *mihi* Livius, or Homer?[11]

There is reason to think that Livius himself framed himself explicitly as a new Homer. What we know of Livius' output and its reception suggests that he thought of analogies between texts, not authors. His reputation as founder of Roman literature certainly did not rely on his epic alone: ancient sources cite his tragedies and cultic hymns as key moments of the early development of Latin letters. Of Livius we hear that he was a popular and influential figure on stage, that he first brought tragedy to Rome, and that he was asked to compose a hymn in a time of need.[12] Such anecdotes suggest the *Odyssia* was one more poetic translation project among many, and Homer one more poet among the many tragedians and comedians to whom one might set oneself in parallel.[13] The orienting point of comparison

[10] I follow Feeney's spelling in contrast to the more traditional scholarly anglicization *Odusia* (Feeney, *Beyond Greek,* 62-64).
[11] Feeney, *Beyond Greek,* 55.
[12] Popular on stage: Livy, *AUC* 7.2.8-10, Valerius Maximus 2.4.4. Writing tragedy: Cicero *Brut*. 72, Gellius, *AN* 17.21.42. The hymn to Juno: Livy, *AUC* 27.37.7ff. with Feeney *Beyond Greek*, 225f. for its significance. Even where Cicero contrasts the *Odyssia* to the *Annales* in *Brut*. 72, he immediately turns to a discussion of the dating of Livius' first tragedy. The point is that Livius is remembered for a number of contributions to Roman literature, a pioneer in tragedy (in 240 BC), a public figure, and more generally as an exemplary old or foundational author (see also Horace, *Ep.* 2.1.62 and Quintilian *IO* 10.2.7). Livius has a role in the history of Latin comedy too (Diomedes, *GL* (Keil) 1.489.8), but he is not remembered in earlier lists of significant comic writers.
[13] See Feeney *Beyond Greek*, 157 on Livius' involvement in multiple genres in distinction to the tendency of Greek dramatic poets to stick to either tragedy or comedy.

was with the poem, not the poet—not encountering a new 'Homer,' but reading a new and different *Odyssey.*

Homer was already well known to Rome, and Romans who had encountered Greek *paideia* would know precisely the kind of roles that such epics could play in literary and non-literary contexts.[14] It exaggerates the evidence to say Livius wrote for the classroom, but Horace confirms that his poems were eventually taught there (*Ep*. 2.1.69-72).[15] Livius is cast in a similar role in all accounts that trace the origins of the influence of the *Aeneid* or *Annales* back to the *Odyssia.*[16] Although the poem was not Livius' own claim to fame, it nonetheless became a landmark in the history of Latin literature, with Livius becoming known as the forerunner of Naevius, Ennius, and Vergil.

The later identification of Livius in these roles point back to two ways in which Livius plays the part of 'Homer'. First, he invents an archaic idiom that mirrors not only the words of a Greek poem but even the experiences of the Greek reader. And second, he becomes the normative author of epic for a nascent Latin literature, just as Homer serves as the definitive model epic in Greek.

Livius' use of archaism is part of a larger pattern of accommodating epic to Latin. Beyond mirroring features of Homer's poetry in Latin, Livius sets both poem and reader in parallel. He strives to replicate for a Roman audience reading the epic in Latin aspects of a

[14] Concluding his review of the ubiquitous presence of Homer in Roman culture, Joseph Farrell observes "it is clear the Roman Homer was none other than Homer himself." "The Roman Homer," 271.
[15] Suetonius (*Gram. 1.2*) reports Livius was a teacher who presumably would have taught Homer, but there is no reason to think the work was written primarily for his students (Goldberg, *Epic in Republican Rome,* 46). That said, Feeney (*Beyond Greek,* 52) points out how regular conversation with Roman students would be a promising opportunity for testing out ways of making Homer suit a Roman audience. On the naturalness and perhaps inevitability of pairing educational roles with canonical ones, see Citroni, "The Concept of the Classical," 214.
[16] e.g., Cicero *Brut*. 70

Greek reader's experience of Homer in the original.[17] The surviving fragments of Livius' *Odyssia* show a deliberate and sophisticated approach to relating the Homeric text to his own. McElduff has argued that translators in the Roman context were seldom concerned with providing access to the original text.[18] But one might argue that Livius is concerned to give access to the encounter with a long history of reception and widespread familiarity which Homer's poems offered to Greeks. The domestication of the Μοῦσαι as *Camenae* was repeated in the introduction of familiar Latin deities in place of Greek ones (e.g., *pater noster, Saturni filie*, fr. 2 for ὦ πάτερ ἡμέτερε Κρονίδη, *Od.* 1.45—or more boldly, *nam diva Monetas filia docuit*, fr. 21 for Μοῦσ' ἐδίδαξε, *Od.* 8.481 and 488).[19] Similarly, Livius adjusts common Homeric locutions to avoid giving offense to his readers. The address to Patroclus as counselor to the gods (θεόφιν μήστωρ, *Od.* 3.110) might sound impious to a Roman ear, but in *vir summus adprimus* (fr. 10) it is softened and transmuted into a similarly complimentary but more familiar phrase.[20]

Livius' use of archaism followed suit: it served to make reading his poem more like reading Homer. Livius is remembered as an archaic poet, but in the fragments that remain of the *Odyssia* he uses words no longer in common use even in his day.[21] Even his tragedies do not share this idiom.[22] The text of the *Odyssia* thus offers evidence of being older than it actually is: it is removed from the original audience's present time, even as Homer was far

[17] Feeney, *Beyond Greek*, 77-78; McElduff, *Roman Theories of Translation*, 49-55.
[18] McElduff, *Roman Theories of Translation*, 7-15, esp. 15: "Many of us now read translations because we cannot read the original…. But in Rome, literary translation were frequently produced for those who were (nominally at least) able to read the [source text]."
[19] Feeney, *Beyond Greek*, 54-55, and on Moneta, see Aicher, "Homer and Roman Republican Poetry," 5-6.
[20] fr. 10 (Blänsdorf); Feeney, *Beyond Greek,* 74-75. See Possanza, *Translating the Heaven,* 49 and Aicher, "Homer and Republican Poetry," 6.
[21] "Livius' archaic rhythms, forms, and phrases, with their reminiscences of Roman legal and religious traditions, were elements in an entirely plausible epic style." Aicher, "Homer and Roman Republican Poetry," 20. See also Possanza, *Translating the Heavens,* 49-50.
[22] Feeney, *Beyond Greek*,78-79; Fraenkel, "Livius Andronicus," 606.43ff.

removed from Livius' contemporary Greek reader.[23] Livius' choices testify to his sense of the importance of Homer's perceived antiquity to the Greek experience. It also points up the lack of any equivalent archaic literature in Rome—this in a society whose first extant writing, in the form of inscriptions, can be dated centuries earlier.[24]

Even in this early instance of composing Homeric poetry in Latin one can observe a strategy that persists in later attempts to Homerize. Livius seeks not only to translate Homer's words, but also some aspect of Homer's status within the broad system of Greek literature and language. In the case of the Livius, the reproduction of old-fashioned language implies a connection between Homer and the experience of the Greek language. Even though his Latin *Odyssia* lacks the original circumstances of being ancient, it replicates the effects of being ancient. Rome had an archaic period without an archaic literature, and so Livius invents a style for that imagined literature. This allows Livius to sound ancient, just as Homer sounded ancient to a Greek. In later periods, the particular aspects of Homer's reception in Greek culture that are replicated in a given instance changes with time and circumstances. But the preservation (or perhaps better, invention) of features of Homer's Greek reception in Latin will remain a key tactic in all future attempts to write Homeric poetry or bring Homeric roles into Latin.

Livius' experiment points to a further question too: what would Roman epic look like from here? As the first to chart the experience of an 'archaic' Latin past, Livius' selection of features to mark it become normative. In supplying such a standard, he can and does serve in place of Homer for a Latin epic tradition. Beyond producing a translation of the *Odyssey*, he produced a template for a genre that did not exist in Latin. Hereafter, others engaged in producing the Roman version of this crucial element of Greek literature would have his

[23] Waszink, "Tradition and Personal Achievement in Early Latin Literature," 24-25.
[24] Feeney, *Beyond Greek*, 77-78.

model to respond to. The *Odyssia* could be a first Latin epic that could be evoked just as Homer's was continually in Greek—and through which the foundation of a literature could be evoked too. Naevius treats Livius in precisely this way. He reproduces a number of generic distinctives that derive from Homer, such as divine councils and the use of epithets. But in our surviving fragments he regularly employs Livius' choices in language and culture, beginning with his recognition of Livius' Saturnian as the meter of Latin epic. To invoke Homer in Latin, Naevius invokes Livius.[25]

Even the few remnants of the *Odyssia* can reveal a pattern that we will see repeated. From its beginnings Latin epic has deliberate 'Homeric' effects that seek to replicate intrinsic features of Homeric language and prosody in the target language of Latin (e.g., the archaizing features discussed above). These features are not readily separable from the extrinsic features: in seeking to make his *Odyssia* sound archaic like Homer, Livius appeals to the relationship of Homer to the literary Greek of later periods (and so to Homer's status in that literature as well). At the same time, unintentional symmetries may develop on other levels. Livius' poem can retrospectively become a school text, or else a model for epic in Latin. These parallels speak to how certain attempts to imitate Greek literary culture would necessarily reproduce the foundational place Homer's epics had in it. Those imitating a culture of Homer might soon find need of 'another Homer' to fill their own needs.

Ennius and the Measure of a Homer

Ennius' *Annales* left a lasting legacy for the concept of the *alter Homerus*: he linked the status of the poem to that of the poet. On Ennius' model, to call an epic poem Homeric offers evidence that its author is Homeric too. This key contribution to the notion of an *alter Homerus* arises from his resistance to Livius' (and Naevius') priority. Ennius distinguishes himself from Livius and Naevius as first to do epic to standard. In doing so, he both rejects

[25] Feeney, *Beyond Greek,* 108, 166.

their model (albeit selectively) and substitutes his own, complete with a rubric by which to judge his own success and his predecessors' failure. Significantly, that rubric made much of how many recognizably Homeric features a poet's epic possessed. That in turn allowed Ennius to argue that he as a poet was more like Homer than his predecessor. The plot and characters of Livius' *Odyssia* might be drawn from Homer's epics, but Ennius would prove that he himself was more like Homer—even that he actually was Homer, despite working with material almost entirely removed from the historical content of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.*

The emphasis on the poet's status begins at the start of the *Annales*. Ennius famously stages an encounter between the shade of Homer and the poet Ennius. In contrast to Livius' strategy, the passage draws attention to the comparison of authors rather than texts. This is most explicit in the revelation that Homer's very soul has transferred to Ennius. Livius' translation of the *Odyssey* had stressed aspects of the experience of reading the Homeric epics. Transmigration of the soul pointed instead to the abilities and characteristics of a particular author. The distinction from his predecessors is a sharp one: if a personal revelation from Homer's shade did not set Ennius apart from Livius and Naevius, possession of Homer's soul would be an especially exclusive manner in which to underwrite the abilities to produce genuinely Homeric poetry.

Moreover, Ennius offers a different approach to the line of symmetry between Greek and Latin literature. Identity with Homer makes him more than a merely parallel figure. It allows him to align adopting the identification of Ennius and Homer with Homer's *de facto* position as the only foundational poet for Greek literature and culture—even when filtered and translated into Latin.[26] Taking the *Annales* as a work by Homer (in some sense) means

[26] Cf. Farrell, "The Roman Homer," on Homer's constant presence in Roman culture even absent a suitable Latin equivalent (above p. 36 n. 14).

considering it less as imitation than a renewal of Homer's function as a founder in a new language.

The singular relationship of Ennius to Homer is cashed out in Ennius' singularly Homeric idiosyncrasies. Signs of his Homeric soul could be found in the many Graecisms Ennius introduces into his epic. The dream offered a ready explanation for why a Latin epic poet would sound like he had a Greek accent. Poetry which is successfully Homeric in Latin will be marked by a variety of characteristics proper to Homer in Greek too, beginning with meter.

Ennius made much depend on his hexameter. A fragment usually located at the start of the seventh book of the *Annales* explains why Ennius chose to treat the First Punic War in the *Annales* when it was the subject of Naevius' *Bellum Punicum*. Ennius admits the war's story had been told already, but

> vorsibus quos fauni vatesque canebant… (*Ann*. 206-7)
>
> in rhythms (meters) which fauns and prophets once sang…

Ennius has the older Latin epic poets in his sights. Varro observes that *vates* and *fauni* refers to 'old' poets who wrote their Saturnians in the rustic and uncultured woods (*LL* 7.3.36). Cicero reveals Ennius especially meant to include the most recent Latin epic poet of note, Naevius, among that number (*Brut*. 75-76). As Stephen Hinds demonstrates, Ennius purposefully casts Naevius (and implicitly Livius too) as not merely old but also old fashioned. He must reinvent Naevius as 'archaic' in order to cast him as alien to contemporary sensibilities.[27] Ennius thus offers the choice of Saturnians as a symbol of the difference between previous Latin epics and his own. He links an ability to compose sophisticated, contemporary, successful verse with traditionally Greek characteristics: hexameter verse, the Muses (*Musarum scopulos*, the cliffs of the Muses, *Brut.* 71=*Ann.* 208)

[27] Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext*, 55-63.

and the name *poeta* (absent here but Ennius' preferred nomenclature elsewhere—cf. *Ann.* 3, 12), as opposed to being bound to the Italian born Saturnians, *Camenae* and *vates*. The passage outlines a history of Latin letters that sees a progression from unsophisticated Italian works to more refined and more Greek ones. As such Ennius argues that while the topics of Roman history may have been dealt with previously in Latin verse, the result rose no higher than an attempt at epic. It was left to a later generation first to dare to inaugurate a suitable way to write such poetry in Rome's native tongue.

Ennius also insisted that the poet's incorporation of Greek elements into his poetry reflected his abilities more generally. The aim was not to affect the judgment of poems only but also, again, their poets. Ennius scorns Saturnians, but still more the fauns and seers who once sang them. According to Cicero, Ennius claims the distinctions between his work and his predecessors' is that no one before him was so devoted to words.[28] Cicero's repeated citation of this verse in situations where one individual or group's abilities are elevated above another's demonstrates that it was a framework with some lasting power.[29] Moreover, Cicero's frequent appeals to Ennius magnified that power. Cicero's subsequent canonical influence spread widely the opinion that for all one might quibble with Ennius' refusal to acknowledge his debts, the poet did not speak falsely in his boasting (*nec mentitur in gloriando*, *Brut.* 71).

The hexameters are thus imbued with special symbolic value by Ennius. The passage above has long been recognized as an important and programmatic statement, likely a 'proem in the middle' of the *Annales*.[30] Although the hexameters will have been obvious from the epic's first line, here they are explicitly advanced as the primary exhibit that Ennius is a

[28] *Brut*. 71 (=*Ann.* 208): *cum neque Musarum scopulos nec dicti studiosus quisquam erat ante hunc ait ipse de se*: since no one before now [climbed] the cliffs of the Muses nor was devoted to words.
[29] *Orat.* 171, *Div.* 1.114-115.
[30] Skutsch, *The Annals,* 365-69.

better poet. There is a very condensed series of associations here: Ennius demonstrates a greater ability to produce Homeric Greek features in Latin than Naevius (and, again, by extension Livius). Moreover, he suggests that he is a more devoted student (*dicti studiosus, Brut.* 71=*Ann.* 209)—not only of Greek poetry and Latin poetry, but implicitly of Homer as well.[31] Ennius thus frames all the Homeric imitations and features of the *Annales* as the result of his study and ability.

Ennius' claim is overstated, but even readers who were not persuaded would find the history of Latin epic effectively reframed. It seems all too likely that poets who were able to write Latin in the difficult meters of Greek tragedy might have written in hexameters too;[32] but Ennius elides any such poetic judgment. And as argued above, Livius and Naevius were far from ignoring Homeric features. Moreover, Ennius' poetry emulates many of the same Homer elements as Livius and Naevius did: archaism, epithets, formulas, adaptation of scenes, and similes.[33] Ennius was in debt to them. But as Cicero himself observed in the passage of the *Brutus* cited above, Ennius' account diminishes this sense of continuity in favor of accenting Ennius' hitherto unique abilities. Ennius is the first to use hexameters for Latin epic, and it serves an efficient mark of separation from his predecessors.

If one did indeed grant Ennius his meter was evidence of a superior ability to imitate Homer, then hexameters become a pervasive and impressive argument to the reader of the *Annales*. Every line of the poem incorporates the structural difference between Ennius and his predecessors. This in turn facilitates interpreting the innovations of Naevius and Livius adopted by Ennius less as models and more as premonitions of Ennius' fuller ability to Homerize. Even where he does the same as his predecessors, it testifies to his nearness to

[31] One might even understand φιλόλογος, employing a Hellenistic Greek term to compound the distinction drawn between Latin poets. Feeney, *Beyond Greek*, 159.
[32] Feeney, *Beyond Greek*, 111
[33] Dominik, "From Greece to Rome," 22-23.

Homer, not his debt to a Latin tradition. They approximate what he has perfected. Where he does differ, the effect is all the more pronounced. Homerisms that sound harsh or alien in Latin can be justified as indications of how close Ennius comes to reproducing Homer in Latin: *dia dearum* (*Ann.* 19) for δῖα θεάων (e.g., *Il.* 5.381, *Od.* 1.14) or the archaic Greek genitives *Mettoeo<que> Fufetioeo* (*Ann.* 120) .[34] Hexameter serves as a powerful metonymy for a more general category of Homeric features.

Ennius also deploys these features in ways that encourage his readers to understand his style to be closer to Homer's than his predecessors. Like Livius, Ennius uses formulas that will sound Homeric—for instance, *haec ecfatus* (fr. 46, 57) for ὣς φάτο. But as Aicher points out, these are located strategically where they will do the most to recall Homer's precedent. Whatever the content of a speech, to follow it with a two word translation of ὣς φάτο will recall Homer's usage of the phrase and give the poet's voice a Homeric color, even where he is not imitating a particular passage of the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey*.[35]

The *Annales* thus present a demand to a rewriting of the history of epic in Latin. If in the dream that begins the *Annales* Ennius stages a direct encounter with Homer, he stages a different sort of meeting with poets in the middle of the *Annales*. Livius and Naevius are invoked as authors whom tradition allowed wrote Latin epic—Homeric poetry of a sort. But in contrast with his identification with Homer, Ennius makes a point in distinguishing himself from his predecessors. He defines what elements do and do not successfully characterize imitations of Homer's works. Some of the lasting effects of this encounter include multiplying the points of contact with the text of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, the emphasis placed on the poet's Homeric status in addition to the text's, and especially the need to push back against and even exclude previously valid definitions. And this perhaps is the key point: that

[34] Aicher, "Ennius' Dream of Homer," 228-29 offers several more examples. See also Aicher, "Homer and Roman Republican Poetry," 45, 47.
[35] Aicher, "Homer and Roman Republican Poetry," 38.

the figure of a Homer in Latin literature required a constant upkeep in line with changing views of what it meant to imitate Greek literature.[36]

2. Ennius as *alter Homerus* after the *Annales*

Although taking Ennius as an equivalent for Homer is a truism prior to Vergil, Ennius' own explanations for that connection are seldom adopted. Perhaps this is why none of the explicit references to Ennius as *alter Homerus* seem entirely comfortable ones. Lucilius (perhaps?) suspects it, Jerome dismisses it, and in between Horace attributes the opinion to someone else.[37] This uncertainty reflects the conditional character of the role. There are points where the case for one author or another becomes shakier, and other contexts where it will appear stronger.

Peter White observes that in *Ep*. 2.1 Horace sets two judgments of Ennius in contrast. On the one hand, he evokes Ennius' reputation among the *critici*: "sage and bold—another Homer, as the professors say."[38] On the other hand, Horace observes that Ennius' own attempts to mark himself off from Naevius have failed to distinguish him from his predecessor in the eyes of the common reader. Both poets are valued simply because they are old. For all attempts to distinguish himself by dreams and Homeric elements, being *alter Homerus* did not afford him the unique estimation Homer enjoyed.

Horace's account gives warning of the distinction between a poet's account of being Homeric and the ways they actually are treated like Homer. One might think that since the

[36] A theme developed by Gordon Williams in "Roman Poets as Literary Historians," 211-237, esp. 211-214.
[37] The character of Lucilius' judgment is debated. Jerome's use of *suspicatur* is ambiguous in context at *In Michaeam* 2.7. Was Lucilius deploying the name straightforwardly as praise? Or was it meant ironically, as Horace in *Ep.* 2.1.50-52? See Herbert Prinzen's discussion in *Ennius im Urteil der Antike,* 114. I side with Sebastiano Timpanaro's counterpoint in the review of the same (*Gnomon* 74, 674): Horace's skepticism tends to bias us here in the face of too little evidence to make a firm judgment.
[38] White, "Horace, *Epistle* 2.1.50-54," 234.

critici support Ennius' claim to be better than Naevius, they also accept the rubric Ennius himself supplies. But there is no need to presume they adopt Ennius' reasons for believing Ennius Homeric. No doubt the poets themselves are able to exercise enormous influence over the way their antecedents are read.[39] Vergil and Ennius both equip their readers with the means to render their predecessors 'archaic.' But even if *critici* tout Ennius as *alter Homerus*, they may do so in ways not foreseen by Ennius.

The surviving reflections of critics, poets, and school teachers lay out a number of Homeric roles for Ennius. Most do not respond directly to the connections to Homer Ennius proposes in the *Annales.* They do however offer a view of the conditions under which Ennius serves as 'another Homer' before Vergil ever mounted a claim for the role. Rather than concerning themselves with indications of *how* Homeric Ennius is, they take it as a given that Ennius' epic corresponds to Homer's epics. Their deployment of Ennius or the *Annales* in roles reserved in Greek literary culture for Homer and his epics establishes a structure independent of Ennius' arguments, even if it too identifies him as a Roman Homer.

The symmetry between Roman and Greek literature is again in view, but from a different angle: not a parallel between models of how literature is created but of how it functions. In an important article on canonical works in Rome, Marco Citroni argues that just as Roman works of literature are modeled on Greek ones, so too the categorization and uses of Roman literature was bound up with those of Greek literature. We have encountered this notion with Livius already: if Homer supplies norms for epic in Greek, Livius supplies them in Latin. But Homer's role was a multifaceted one, and in practice this meant the work that aimed (or was recruited) to supply a 'Homeric epic' to Rome was asked to perform several

[39] The broader point of Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext* 52-83. Nora Goldschmidt provides a neat summary: "Our conventional narrative of literary history, Hinds argues, is thus implicitly constructed by the ancient poets themselves, and Virgil's is the version that won." *Shaggy Crowns*, 37.

functions simultaneously. It must be the exemplary representative of epic (in Latin, at least), a sound foundation for the formation of the identity and abilities of the young, and a stable presence in readings of the schools that formed them.[40]

These interwoven roles reflects how Homer's epics were read in Greek speaking literary culture. The epics provided a text familiar to all readers. They were read across the Greek-speaking Mediterranean and used at multiple levels of instruction from earliest letters to elite rhetorical training. Moreover they were prominent in theoretical treatments of all sorts, which either attempted to explain Homer's works or else employ them a benchmark to be used in analysis of literature. Familiarity and authority were also self-reinforcing: if Homer was familiar to all, his words could be cited in a theoretical text; and if influential theoretical texts leaned on Homer's reputation, then they offered more support for his work.[41]

This network of roles for an epic adopted by the Romans was a long standing feature of Latin epic, and will be familiar to any student of the Vergilian tradition. The interlocking positions of authority in several contexts strengthen each other's legitimacy, while the multiple functions symmetrical to Homer's in Greek suggests the possibility of further parallels that might be drawn in. It is no far distance from Homer's universal use in rhetorical curricula to Homer's mastery and invention of that curricula. Similarly the *Aeneid*'s universal acceptance in Latin rhetorical curricula can lead to questions such as, *Vergilius orator an poeta?*[42] In the case of Ennius one might ask: what can we see of these interlocking parts, and

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[40] Citroni, "The Concept of the Classical," 213-14.

[41] Ps. Heraclitus' *Homeric Questions* 1.5-6 gives a famous description of how Homer accompanies Greek speakers from cradle to grave. More telling perhaps is the wide range of disciplines which a *grammatistes* such as Ps. Plutarch assigns Homer in his *De Homero*. The claim that one poet knew all these subjects can profitably be read in reverse: everyone who was an expert in those subjects had read at least some Homer by virtue of being literate. (See pp. 197ff. for more on this theme.) Robert Lamberton (*Homer the Theologian*, 14-15) describes how accordingly the definition of Homer's status varies to suit the tradition of inquiry each reader is working in. For Ps. Plutarch as *grammatistes*, see Lamberton, "Homeric Allegory and Homeric Rhetoric."

[42] For an overview of claims that Homer invented rhetoric, see Kennedy, "The Ancient

did he expand in any particular directions in parallel with Homer?

The loss of most of Ennius' epic and its commentary tradition makes it difficult to lay out something more than a plausible reading of the evidence. But two of Citroni's features of canonical Latin epic remain discernible and relevant to understanding the extent of Ennius' role as another Homer. First, as the best epic in Latin, it is also the exemplar and synecdoche for all epic in Latin. As such, the *Annales* is cited alongside or as an equivalent to the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in theoretical arguments that demand an exemplary instance of an epic. The connection to Homer or his epics is assumed and often made explicit, and usually with no reference to the Homeric features highlighted by Ennius himself.

Second is the familiarity with the *Annales* among the educated class. Evidence suggests that the *Annales* becomes a stable part of the literary training of the educated Roman elite. In doing so it also becomes a point of reference for literary reflection that corresponds to the theoretical status granted to it. Widespread respect (or the presumption of respect) for the *Annales* leads to the possibility of imitating Homeric treatment that depended on (and encouraged) such familiarity as well.

Heuristic and Pedagogical Tools

Both aspects of the *Annales'* role depend on pedagogical and heuristic practices, including the privileged place it comes to occupy in classrooms of the Republic. Homer and Greek authors were taught at the same time as Latin authors.[43] This bilingual classroom was an unusually concrete instance of the line of symmetry running between the two literary cultures. Thus as students began to encounter formal literary culture, their teachers would be

Dispute over Rhetoric in Homer," 23-35. A more straightforward claim to his sufficiency is found in Ps. Plutarch, *De Homero*, where Homeric poetry is used to illustrate every figure and function of rhetoric. Florus is the source for the question cited for Vergil in the (mostly lost) work of the same title; Macrobius makes the more expansive claim to mastery in *Sat*. 1.24.9-14 and 4.1.1-5.1.20. See also below, pp. 189-90.

[43] Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome,* 212-13 with Feeney, *Beyond Greek,* 50-52.

able to reinforce the equivalence of Homer and Ennius in simple ways, e.g., by comparing passages of Ennius' epic as translations or reworkings of Homer's.

Many Greek tools of literary analysis could be brought over to Latin by virtue of Latin texts that mirrored aspects of Greek literature. Methods developed in Greek to address the very features imitated in Latin were readily transferred over. Some of these were applied quite deliberately and explicitly in parallel with the Greek originals, citing the model and its Latin counterpart together as an examples. Thus where the standard example was Homer, a Latin epic could be expected to fill many of the roles the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* played.

As such, points that could be made by appeal to Homer could simultaneously be attached to Ennius too. A good example is the use of the *Annales* as an illustration in literary analysis. In his late 4th or early 5th century work *De compendiosa doctrina ad filium*, Nonius preserves two instances of pre-Vergilian writers treating the *Annales* as the obvious correspondent to Homer's epics. Nonius is presenting the distinction between two words with a similar meaning as reported by different authorities. In this case he cites both Lucilius and Varro to illustrate the difference between *poesis* and *poema*. Here is Varro's definition:

> poema est lexis enrythmos, id est, verba plura modice in quandam coniecta formam; itaque etiam distichon epigrammation vocant poema. poesis est perpetuum argumentum ex rythmis, ut Ilias Homeri et Annalis Enni. Poetice est ars earum rerum.[44]

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[44] Lucilius makes a similar point, and is notable for the early adoption of Ennius in parallel with Homer:

> ¯ ˘ *epistula item quaevis non magna poema est.*
> *Illa poesis opus totum, ut tota Ilias una est*
> *una θέσις sunt Annales Enni atque ἔπος unum,*
> *et maius multo est quam quod dixi ante poema.*
> *Quapropter dico: nemo, qui culpat Homerum,*
> *Perpetuo culpat neque quod dixi ante poesin:*
> *Versum unum culpat, verbum, enthema locumve.*
> …an epistle, again, is not a large *poema*. That *poesis* I mean is a whole work, as the whole *Iliad* works out one theme, the *Annals* of Ennius is also one epic, and is much greater than what I called a *poema* before. For which reason I say: no one who blames Homer blames him continually, nor what I called the *poesis*: he blames one verse, a word, a thought or passage. (fr. 343-49 Christes and Garbugino=fr. 341-7, Marx)

> A *poema* is words in meter, that is, multiple words connected measuredly in a certain pattern. Thus they call even a two-line epigram a *poema*. *Poesis* is a continuous representation in meter, like the *Iliad* of Homer and the *Annales* of Ennius. *Poeticê* is the art of [doing] these things. (fr. 398, Astbury=p. 691, Lindsay)

The distinction has a history stretching back to Greek commentators who define *poesis* as a whole poem and *poema* as a shorter poem or subdivision of the whole. This is repeatedly illustrated by appealing to the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* as a whole as opposed to an episode or book within each epic.[45]

As part of their attempt to translate the distinction, the Latin authors give Latin equivalents for the works cited as examples. Varro's choices here (and Lucilius' too) are notable both for establishing the appropriateness of the *Annales* as a counterpart to the *Iliad* but also for establishing a need for such a counterpart in the first place. Given the presence of Homer in the Roman classroom, the *Iliad* might have sufficed for their Roman readers as an example. But although it was not logically necessary, they supplied the *Annales* as an equivalent for 'Latin epic' as opposed to Greek rather than allow the *Iliad* to serve as synecdoche for 'epic' more generally in both cultures.

This structure for literary analysis proved quite durable. Thus in at least three instances over the centuries from Ennius' own day to Nonius', Ennius serves as a Latin *Iliad* in a parallel function to Homer's poem. But this function outlasts Ennius too. The *Annales* are the earliest work which we have evidence of serving as a parallel illustration. But for a contemporary of Jerome such as Marius Victorinus, making a similar point about *poesis* and *poema* would elicit the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* as illustrations:

> poetice est ars ipsa. nam poesis et poema distant eo, quod poema <uno> tantummodo clauditur carmine, ut tragoedia vel rhapsodia, poesis autem ex pluribus <est contextus carminibus> id est corpus operis confecti ut Ilias Homeri et Aeneis Vergilii.
>
> *Poeticê* is the art itself. For *poesis* and *poema* differ in this, that a *poema* is

[45] See the examples collected by Marx, *Lucilii Carminum* vol. 2, 129.

> contained in one poem only, such as a tragedy or a book of epic, while a *poesis* is a combination of many poems—that is, a collection of written work, like the *Iliad* of Homer or the *Aeneid* of Vergil. (*Ars Grammatica*, *GL* 6.56.18, Keil)

Very few adjustments are needed for the transition, since one Latin epic makes the point as well as another.

This use of Ennius as a synecdoche for Latin epic is closely related to use of canonical lists of best authors. Mario Citroni argues that just as genres were adopted from Greek sources, so too Roman authors adopted the concept of lists ranking authors in a particular genre.[46] The list is a heuristic that also associates Ennius with a Homeric role outside the interpretation of the poem's text. To make a Latin list that mirrors the list first posed in Greek creates another situation where two poets might have the same function in different languages. Homer almost by definition stands at the top of a list of epic poets in Greek. When Ennius tops such a list in Latin—as he does for Cicero in the *Brutus* (70-76), for instance—he is in this way a functional equivalent in a Latin canon for what Homer is in the Greek.[47]

Evidence of this sort of parallelism appears is also reflected where some poets educated in the late Republic or early Augustan period reflect on poetic projects. Often these passages appear to take the canonical parallels as a given. After Horace attributes the title of *alter Homerus* to the *critici* in *Ep.* 2.1.50-54, he continues on down a list of Roman poets, offering parallels in Greek for several.[48] He also suggests a parallel for himself in *Ep*. 1.19.6-8. In Ovid's *Amores* 1.15.19-26, Homer leads the pack of Greek poets who will earn immortality, while Ennius heads the Latin poets.

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[46] Citroni, "The Concept of the Classical," 214-17.
[47] Cf. Citroni, "The Concept of the Classical," 220: "The point which I would like to underline is that from Livius Andronicus to the early imperial age, the aim, explicitly or implicitly, of every Latin writer who is confident about the quality of his work is to be recognized as the worthy imitator of a great author of the Greek canon, and thus to enter into the Latin canon, occupying one of the positions established by the Greek canon." For more on the use of canonical lists in the *Brutus*, see below, pp. 57-59.
[48] Note too the image of weighing the Greek poets against the Roman: *Ep.* 2.1.28-30. Cf. Cicero, *Tusc.* 1.3-6 for a list similar to Horace's.

At other points the Greek equivalents are implicit but unmentioned. In *De oratore* 1.154, Cicero has Crassus recall setting himself the exercise of rehearsing the weightiest verses and speeches in Latin. These turn out to be Ennius and C. Gracchus, respectively. Here it is the casual identification of that superlative *versibus… quam maxime gravibus aut oratione* with particular authors, just as in Greek one might readily identify Homer and Demosthenes in those roles.[49] Although Propertius identified the *Aeneid* as *nescioquid maius… Iliade* (2.34.65-66) he still turned to Ennius to represent the epic tradition he rejected in elegy 3.3.[50] Both Lucretius and Vergil associate Ennius with Homer too.[51]

Ennius' intentions of leaving his predecessors behind neatly dovetails with a canonical ranking he can climb. More notably, again the use of this organizational scheme and Ennius' place in it extends beyond Ennius' time. Ennius lists himself above Livius and Naevius, and Cicero adopts the same order. But the tool persists when Ennius' time on top expires. When Quintilian offers a list of Roman authors and epic in particular, it is Vergil who is in the forefront and the other Latin poets, including Ennius, who lag far behind (*IO* 10.1.85-86).

Institutional Momentum: Schools and Familiarity with Texts

The epitaph attributed to Ennius (*Varia* 17-8, Vahlens) cites his confidence that he would live on in his reputation, flitting from mouth to mouth long after he died (*volito vivos per ora virum*). This sense of permanent presence was one that Lucretius marked as a

[49] Especially as Crassus recounts deciding to practice his oratory by imitating Greek authors rather these specific Latin ones. He leaves the Greek exemplars unnamed, however. Cf. *Rhetoricum ad Herrenium* 4.2, where the same authors have a similar role.
[50] One might also note that Propertius' famous phrase preserves for the *Annales* the role of the equivalent epic to the *Iliad* in Latin: the coming *Aeneid* will be greater than the *Iliad*, not its equal. Similarly, to say it is something more than the *Iliad* may be a way of suggesting the work supersedes Ennius as much as Homer.
[51] On Lucretius, see *DRN* 104 (and p. 65ff. below). Ennius' place at the top of the canon of epic is plainly in view in *Georgics* 3.8ff. through allusions to Lucretius' treatment of him in *DRN* 117-19 and his epitaph (17-18 *Varia*, Vahlens)—although it oversimplifies the passage dramatically to focus on this one element. See Gale, *Virgil on the Nature of Things,* 12ff.

similarity between Ennius and Homer.[52] But by what means did a long-lasting and general familiarity with Ennius come about?

Permanence may imply quality in these passages. But in practical terms, the preservation of Ennius' institutionalized role was crucial. Educators and writers of the late Republic and empire might have linked Ennius to Homer on the grounds of his own claims in the *Annales*. But they did not. The system of parallel Greek and Roman authors in which he is often found suggests a different framework than the one supplied in the *Annales*.

Schools and in particular their curricula were key to normalizing Ennius' role as Homer. The practices of teaching Latin were modeled on the exercises performed on texts by students in Greek schools. Whenever those exercises involved the Homeric epics, they also implied a figure to stand in for Homer's prodigious influence in Greek education. Homer's permanence (and indeed the introduction of his texts to Latin speakers) was institutionalized in the educational practices of Greek culture.

Placing one poet at the foundation of education is in a way simply another pedagogical strategy, and this is one more role that Ennius adopts and then later cedes to Vergil. The latter's role in education is far better attested. Over centuries, Vergil's place in the school curriculum of the Empire cemented his place as a counterpart to Homer. It served as a three part confirmation of this status: first, it accorded him authority as the first author read for instruction and a privileged place of authority. Second, the widespread regularity of the curricula that featured the *Aeneid* assured that Vergil could supply securely familiar examples for instruction. And third, because education was a marker of elite status, his citations could also serve as standardized markers of status and erudition. In all these matters the use of the

[52] *Ennius… detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam…Ennius aeternis exponit versibus edens,* (Ennius brought down from Helicon the crown of the perennial bough) *DRN* 117-16, 121 with *Homerus semper florens…*124 (ever thriving Homer). See p. 65-70 for further discussion.

Aeneid corresponded to the use of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* among the Greek-speaking population of the Empire.

Our evidence makes it plausible to expect that Ennius had a recognizably similar role to Vergil's in the schools.[53] Ennius' educational role would be in a way just one more transposition into a role Homer played in Greek literary culture. However, surviving information about Ennius' role in the schools of the Republic is patchy. There are few specifics concerning the use of the *Annales* in the classroom that survive, apart from the theoretical usages discussed above.[54] These at least suggest it was possible to use the *Annales* as an example for instruction. But the remainder of the evidence concerns the widespread familiarity of Ennius among educated Latin speakers. This marks a role as a reference point where Ennius' poem again stands in parallel with Homer's epics.

There are enough reports of scholarly works on the *Annales* by *grammatici* to make his presence in curricula likely. If Ennius was being studied by teachers, they were likely reading him in the classroom as well. Several figures who are identified as teachers of famous literary figures of the late Republic and early Empire are also said to be involved in Ennian

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[53] One should be wary of accounts which like Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome*, 213-215 treat Ennius' place in the schools of Rome as secure and widespread on the basis of a few reminiscences. But there is much circumstantial evidence. Comparisons of Vergil and Ennius sometimes suggest that they received recognizably similar treatment. Martial exclaims in horror, *Ennius est lectus salvo tibi, Roma, Marone!* ('Rome, you read Ennius while Vergil lived!' *Mart.* 5.10.7). Martial does not specify when or in what circumstances oblivious Romans once read Ennius instead of Vergil. But in evoking as broad a reading public as 'Rome' implies, he suggests one in place of the other. The broad *lectus…Roma* may also point to the experience of schooling assumed to be shared by all literate Romans. Horace did similarly in discussing the city's reading habits as a whole, and more explicitly in terms of its studies. He includes the *Annales* among the older poems that mighty Rome insists on studying merely for their age (*hos ediscit… Roma potens, Ep.* 2.1.60-61). Given how firmly the *Aeneid* came to be installed in the regular teaching curriculum, Ennius' former position of prominence would seem increasingly inappropriate over time.

[54] Unless Macrobius' source for *Sat.* 6.3.1-8 itself draws upon a commentary listing Ennius' imitations of Homer. Skutsch, *The Annals*, 32-34 describes the construction of Macrobius' source material. Skutsch, *The Annals*, 9 suggests M. Pompilius Andronicus' work on Ennius (Suet. *Gram.* 8.3) might be such a collection of comparisons.

scholarship. Since Horace recalls his own teacher Orbilius teaching Livius Andronicus' *Odyssia* (*Ep.* 2.1.69-71), it is likely Orbilius taught Ennius' epic too—particularly so as Suetonius reports he was involved in the publication of work about the *Annales*.[55] Similarly, Gellius attributes a comment on a passage of the *Annales* to Aelius Stilo, whom Cicero names as one of his teachers (*Brut*. 207) and Gellius says was one of Varro's (*N.A.* 16.8.2—both Cicero and Varro quote from Ennius often).[56] M. Antonius Gnipho, who taught Julius Caesar (Suet. *Gram.* 7.2), is also said to have published on the *Annales*.[57]

More telling than the teacher's work is the widespread familiarity with Ennius evinced by their students. Allusions to Ennius are quite common among the late Republican writers educated before or just after the *Aeneid*'s publication. Ennius is alluded to by almost every major surviving author from the period.[58] The *Annales* can be quoted on the assumption that others have read and even studied them too.[59] This is evident among elite circles: Cicero's makes several such references in letters to Atticus, and Augustus can parody the famous line on Fabius Maximus with confidence Tiberius will recognize it.[60] During the Augustan period, Livy notably makes allusion to the *Annales* in a manner that presumes his audience will be familiar with Ennius' words.[61]

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[55] Goldschmidt, *Shaggy Crowns* 19-20, with Suet. *Gram.* 8.3. The work is the same M. Pompilius Andronicus mentioned by in the previous note, and is described as *praecipuum illud opusculum suum Annalium Enni elenchorum* (that excellent little work of his on the disputes concerning Ennius' *Annales*).
[56] Gellius, *NA* 12.4.4. On Cicero and Varro's use of Ennius, see Prinzen, *Ennius im Urteil der Antike*, 149-185.
[57] *Schol. Bern. G*. 2.119. See also Skutsch, *The Annals*, 9 (who notes the later reputation of Lampadio for working on Ennius), and Goldschmidt, *Shaggy Crowns* 19-20.
[58] Goldschmidt, *Shaggy Crowns* 17-35; Skutsch, *The Annals*, 8-35, 44-45.
[59] Prinzen, *Ennius im Urteil der Antike*, 150-1: Prinzen accepts Cicero's quotation of Ennius without his name as evidence of Ennius' generally accepted place in the regular school curriculum.
[60] Cicero: *Att.* 2.19.2, 6.2.8, 12.5.1. Augustus: Suet. *Tib.* 21.5, (*Ann*. 363) with Goldschmidt, *Shaggy Crowns* 30.
[61] Skutsch, *The Annals*, 22-24. Prinzen, *Ennius im Urteil der Antike*, 320 observes that Livy's use recalls the use of poetry in declamatory exercises, which may be also additional evidence of the *Annales* educational role. (Prinzen also notes Cicero projects such a use of Ennius onto

There is also evidence that the *Annales* are a point in common beyond a small faction of the elite. In his speech *Pro Murena*, Cicero quotes a verse of Ennius without naming the poet—as if the audience should understand whom was meant and where the line was drawn from.[62] Moreover, as Elizabeth Rawson points out, he took a different tack with his description of Stoicism, which he later admitted he had manipulated to take advantage of how unfamiliar it was to the jury and *corona* alike.[63] In a speech where Cato's Stoic excessively intellectual severity is contrasted with Cicero's common sense approach, he reasoned it would not undermine his point to assume his audience would recognize Ennius.[64] Cicero assumes not only the jury but even the still less educated crowd in the *corona* will find such a reference to be accessible if not commonplace.[65]

There are two Homeric roles at stake here. Ennius' role in education reproduces not only the significance of being the author set in schools—that of being the best quality epic, or the best poetry for educating youth—but also over time gains the Homeric quality of being familiar to a broad and even intergenerational company of educated readers. This has the effect of bolstering all the other ways Ennius can claim to be like Homer. Because Ennius becomes commonly known in this role to those who have passed through the schools, the *Annales* takes on characteristics in its native culture that are the same as those the *Iliad* enjoys

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Crassus in *Or.* 1.154.)

[62] *Mur.* 30: *ut ait ingeniosus poeta et auctor valde bonus,* "as a clever poet and a very good author says…"

[63] Rawson, *Intellectual Life in the Late Roman Republic,* 52-53. Cicero points directly to the *Pro Murena* in *De finibus*: *non ego te cum iam ita iocabor, ut isdem his de rebus, cum L. Murenam te accusante defenderem. apud imperitos tum illa dicta sunt, aliquid etiam coronae datum; nunc agendum est subtilius. Fin.* 4.74. (I am not joking with you now as I did on these very same matters when I was defending L. Murena and you were prosecuting. Then those words were said among the unknowledgeable, and there was even something offered to the surrounding crowd; now we must be more precise.)

[64] Goldschmidt, *Shaggy Crowns* 20 with n. 18.

[65] Goldschmidt, *Shaggy Crowns* 21 also argues for the influence of school-learned lines of the *Annales* in a hexameter inscription by banker L. Munius in earlier part of the 1st century BC. However, she follows Courtney, *Musa Lapidaria,* 213 in believing the allusion is unlikely to be deliberate.

among Greeks. This functional equivalence reinforces Ennius' own arguments—shared meter, imitated passages, cosmological insight. As a result, Ennius as Homer becomes a common and even overdetermined claim.

Ennius before Homer

This overdetermined quality also means that the connection to Homer can be held more loosely. The more securely Ennius' work is lodged in the curriculum and culture, the more easily Ennius' authority can be separated from his reliance on Homer as a model. Cicero offers an instance of this process in *Brutus* 69-76. Here Cicero uses lists to coordinate Ennius' role and Homer's directly across the line of symmetry between literary Greek and Latin cultures, but compares them on the basis of their stage of cultural progress. The similarity of the two authors is not at stake, but rather their ability to represent a particular stage of cultural development.

More than one list is in play in this passage. At this point of the dialogue Cicero has just paused his history of Roman orators to reflect on why the elder Cato is not admired as older Greek writers are. Cicero argues that one can appreciate the superlative qualities of one period while acknowledging their lack of the polish and development in comparison to later practitioners of the same arts (69). As an example, he lists famous Greek sculptors and evaluates how 'natural' they are. Canachus is too rigid, Calamis is more lifelike but still too hard, Myron is beautiful though not yet natural, and Polyclitus is both beautiful and lifelike—*plane perfecta* ("entirely perfect," 70) observes Cicero. This account of artistic development both introduces and exemplifies a more general principle of development in the arts. Cicero traces the development of Greek painting from the rudimentary to completion (…*iam perfecta sunt omnia*, "are now all perfected," 70), then the same in Greek poetry and Roman poetry before linking it back to oratory. Of these, Roman poetry receives the most attention and is most explicitly tied to the sculptors' narrative.

Cicero takes for granted the narrative of progress implied in Ennius' polemic against Naevius in book seven of the *Annales*.[66] Cicero quotes Ennius' "rhythms of fauns" and affirms that Ennius' self-regard is evidently justified (71).[67] As he says later, he is *perfectior*, echoing the status of the final sculptors and painters discussed above (75). At the same time, Cicero explicitly corrects Ennius' account by rescuing Naevius from the crowd of failed *vates* to which Ennius had consigned him. Livius' work is indeed like a statue of Daedalus (72), but Naevius is rather the equivalent to Myron (75). The lost banquet songs of early Romans are the proper starting point for Ennius' story of progress. Cicero molds one narrative of progress in the arts to fit the other, and offers one artist to represent each stage in both cultures.

Although Cicero links these two accounts for the sake of his broader argument, the connection establishes a basis for comparing Homer and Ennius as well. The combination of the two narratives suggests a general principle of progress in the arts, which in turn supports Cicero's point about the value of each stage of Roman oratory. But Cicero also makes a sly intervention in the history of epic. The two accounts Cicero links are the most detailed and have the most stages. But Cicero also evokes the example of Homer as a bridge between a discussion of Greek arts and their Roman equivalents. Cicero contends that Homer, like the sculptors and painters of the first rank, is necessarily the culmination of a long sequence of artists. It is difficult however to think of a poorer example to illustrate this point: a major, foundational and mature artist with no surviving witnesses to his antecedents. To fit him into his scheme, Cicero first simply asserts that he must have had predecessors, pointing to the internal evidence of the Homeric poems. If Homer can describe Demodocus and Phemius, then there clearly were bards doing something like what Homer did in ages past.[68]

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[66] Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext*, 64ff.

[67] *Brut.* 71, cited in part above, p. 42: *ait ipse de se nec mentitur in gloriando; sic enim sese res habet.* (He says [this] about himself, nor does he speak falsely in boasting. For it really is the case.)

[68] A point made by contemporary scholars too: Charles Segal also takes the role of the bards

Cicero lines up the parallels between the authors in a familiar way, but they fit a more general principle than Ennius' ties with Homer. The implication of contemporary crowds being turned off by Cato is that his style is primitive compared to later speakers, just as later Greek sculptors could produce effects that early artists could not. For Cicero this progress is a cross-cultural principle whose signs are easily read: no one should have a problem discerning Livius' inferiority to Ennius (72). As such, its analysis links the *Annales* and the *Iliad* as illustrations of the same step of development in their respective cultures.

Cicero writes in a literary context where Homer and Ennius' similarity may be taken for granted. But his account of that similarity owes nothing to either Ennius' own description of his relationship to Homer nor to accounts that concede or even stress Ennius' imitation of Homer (or, for that matter, Ennius' readers' imitation of Homer's readers). Ennius' authority stands on its own power. In fact, the roles have been reversed here: in the *Brutus*, Ennius actually serves as a model for understanding Homer instead of vice versa. By giving each analogous positions in the curricula of their cultures, Cicero can reconstruct how Homer's past must have looked, even if there is no more surviving evidence for it than there is for the Roman banquet songs. The connection between the two poets remains their poetry, but it is defined along different lines than what Ennius proposes. Ennius argues possessing many Homeric traits is a mark of his poetic excellence; but Cicero suggests instead that the status of poetic excellence makes him like Homer.

Negotiating between Homeric Roles

The *Brutus* illustrates a complex interaction between Ennius' own presentation as a new Homer and the constructions of a Latin literary elite that employs the *Annales* in roles reserved for Homer. Ennius' own account of his improvements on Latin epic dovetails nicely

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as a starting point for his analysis of what the first audiences of the Homeric epics might have expected of their singers. "Bard and Audience in Homer," 3-29.

with Cicero's Whig history of the Roman arts. Yet Cicero's account also shifts the role of Homer from an irreplaceable model to a convenient comparandum. Ennius' dream of reincarnation had played on the uniqueness of Homer. Successfully continuing the inimitable Homer in Latin gives Ennius unique prestige. But Cicero's account presents a natural development in which the parallelism of Latin and Greek arts is a result of natural development within a culture. There is no need to understand Ennius in Homeric terms, since both are two instances of the same phenomenon—close enough that Latin epic's history can be used to illustrate that of Greek. The upshot is that while the rubric Ennius proposed can fit the ranking Cicero offers, it does not propose the role of *alter Homerus* on the same terms.

There are a multitude of ways that one could be another Homer in Latin. But there is also a multitude of stakeholders in that claim: Ennius, his readers, and those more generally engaged in outlining the significance of Latin literature all select structural parallels appropriate to their own ends. The result is a continuing need to negotiate what the role of *alter Homerus* would mean. Even where Ennius' role appears generally secure, certain aspects could be reworked or excluded. The next portion of this chapter explores how Lucretius and Cicero undermined one way Ennius could have been 'like' Homer: as an authority on natural philosophy.

3. The Dream of Homer and its Discontents

Ennius' Dream and Natural Philosophy

So far I have emphasized treatments of the Ennius as a Homeric figure or the *Annales* as a kind of equivalent to Homeric poetry. But it was possible to resist positioning Ennius as another Homer, or to accept the parallel only selectively. This was easier once Ennius was established in the 'Homer' role for instruction in Latin literary pursuits. Thereafter Ennius' status as Homer would be overdetermined for most readers encountering him. In the *Annales* itself Ennius had offered several ways of being like Homer, most notably in terms of allusion

and reincarnation. But his role in education and literary culture came to suggest a structural parallel apart from such arguments. This meant the educated would quite likely get the argument twice over: Ennius was granted a place opposite Homer in the classroom, and then the poem read in the classroom itself offered a different, supporting account.

This also allowed for accepting Ennius' role as Homer in one context while denying it in another. Separating Ennius' claims to being Homer allowed his readers to emphasize or abandon aspects of the role without compromising their ability to use Ennius in 'Homeric' roles in other contexts. One part that a number of writers proved eager to jettison was the dream of Homer. The dream at the start of the *Annales* has been one of the more enduring elements of the epic, but its legacy has been mixed. On the one hand, it proved a memorable symbol of Ennius' relationship to Homer and the unique status it accorded him. Lucretius, Cicero, Horace (*Ep.* 2.1), Propertius (3.3), Persius (*Sat.* 6.9-11), Fronto (*De eloqu.* 2.15) all allude to the dream, while the prologue with which it is associated is referred to even more frequently when addressing matters of poetic vocation and authority.[69] On the other hand, it was also an easy target for criticism and even parody.

Objections often form around Ennius' portrayal of *metempsychosis* or Pythagorean reincarnation. In the dream Homer's shade gives an account what has transpired to his soul since his death, one that matches Pythagorean doctrine closely. After Ennius many would deride this as implausible and even in poor taste. Persius for instance cites Ennius' prologue but undermines the dream's seriousness:

> Lunai portum, est operae, cognoscite, cives!
> Cor iubet hoc Enni, postquam destertuit esse
> Maeonides, Quintus pavone ex Pythagoreo.
>
> 'Get to know the harbor of Luna, citizens, it is worth the effort!'
> This is what the heart of Ennius commands, after he snorts awake from being
> Quintus Maeonides [Homer] by way of a Pythagorean peacock. (Pers. 6.9-11)

[69] Prinzen, *Ennius im Urteil der Antike*, 113f. treats these passages along with references to Ennius' special relationship to the Muses.

Persius sets up a contrast between the clever Ennius who may be quoted profitably and the snoring dreamer who confuses himself with Homer and imagines that a man could once have been a peacock. For Persius and his fellow critics, Ennius would have done better to leave aside the Pythagorean teachings and keep succession a matter of poetry. It is simply impossible to take Ennius seriously on this point, or at least to accept the literal reading of the episode.

But denying the dream a literal reading plays down a significant function Ennius might play as 'another Homer.' The dream with its philosophical undertones carries the potential to connect Ennius' expertise outside the literary sphere to natural philosophy—an area of study where, in particular contexts, the Homeric epics were well-established authorities.[70] Readers of the late Republic appear to deliberately resist this connection. In doing so they offer an example of an area where the Ennius was denied an affinity to Homer that he sought.

My position moves somewhat across the grain of arguments that emphasize the literary effects of Ennius' appeal to Pythagoreanism. Skutsch, Aicher and Waszink all offered arguments that subordinated the Pythagorean elements of the dream to the issues of succession. For them, the point of the dream was not primarily to present a notion of reincarnation per se, but to link Greek and Latin literary cultures.[71] Moreover, as argued above, Ennius' metapoetic claims against Livius and Naevius are carefully aligned with his metaphysical claims. The upshot of the dream recapitulates the points that will give Ennius a place over his predecessors in Latin epic.

But one should not therefore diminish Ennius' appeal to Pythagoreanism as a set of

[70] Hardie, *Virgil's* Aeneid, 25-29 offers a succinct summary of this tradition. On physical allegory see too Buffière, *Les Mythes d'Homère*, esp. 79-245.
[71] See Skutsch, "The Annals of Quintus Ennius," 8 and Waszink, "Ennianum," 100-101 with Aicher, "Ennius' Dream of Homer," 227-32, esp. 229-30, citing both.

beliefs that describes the universe. Ancient readers certainly did not: their focus on Ennius' beliefs is one reason why a corrective to the notion of a proselytizing Ennius was necessary in the first place. One might argue that for Persius and later generations reared on the *Aeneid*, Ennius' Pythagoreanism seemed especially prominent in comparison to Vergil's eschewing such a metapoetical device in his own voice in the *Aeneid*. But this aspect of the dream is a noted point of distinction and criticism even at the height of Ennius' identification with Homer in literary contexts. A reader like Horace was familiar with the concept of metapoetic dream visions as in Hesiod or Callimachus (or Propertius for that matter). But what stands out for him in specifying this dream is its particular beliefs about how the cosmos worked.[72]

Indeed, deemphasizing the cosmological aspect of the dream risks obscuring a crucial aspect of the relationship Ennius claims to have with Homer: that it obtains independently of any literary relationships of influence. Aicher has argued that Ennius here offers an explanation for Graecisms in the continuity with Homer's spirit. Why introduce a Homerism that has no place in Latin into a Latin epic? The dream's answer is because the *Annales* represent Homer himself at work.[73] But precisely in order to serve as explanation, reincarnation must logically precede literary imitation. Understood literally, Ennius did not have the dream because he aspired to be like Homer; he had the dream because he actually possessed Homer's soul. The difference can be observed in the trouble there is in squaring Ennius' actual claim with the title of *alter Homerus*. *Alter Homerus* is the term used by someone looking for the analogue of Homer in Latin; but in the Pythagorean world he presents, Ennius is *Homerus ipse*.

And yet just as the episode works in tandem with Ennius' arguments against Livius

[72] The Pythagoreanism is explicitly a distinguishing characteristic for Horace, who summarizes Ennius' efforts to evoke his Homeric pedigree with *somnia Pythagorea* (*Ep.* 2.1.52), but also is clearly in view for Lucretius in *DRN* (on which see below).
[73] Aicher, "Ennius' Dream of Homer," 231-2.

and Naevius, it actually aids in identifying Ennius in a particular Homeric role: as source and guide to natural philosophy and reflection on the cosmos.[74] The shade of Homer who explains the Pythagorean character of the cosmos to Ennius fits the reputation of the Homer who is knowledgeable about the structure of the universe. Thus even as Ennius claims the mantle of Homer in his poetry, he also reaffirms authority in natural philosophy as a characteristic trait of Homer.[75]

The appeal to natural philosophy recalls Ennius' cosmological writings apart from the *Annales*. Homer's reincarnation into Ennius meshes with more than the Homeric tics of Ennius' style but also with his ventures into natural philosophy beyond the *Annales*. The lost *Epicharmus* in particular appears to have related teaching concerning the four elements in the voice of the Greek philosopher it is named for. Notably, Ennius frames the discussion with a dream in which he imagines himself in the underworld, listening to Epicharmus' shade. Whatever order they were written in, the two accounts of the world's workings echoed each other in frame, subject matter and their mechanism for passing learning from Greek culture to Latin.[76]

The link between Latin epic and cosmology is more readily discerned in Vergil's *Aeneid*, which blends etymology, natural philosophy and a sensitivity to the Homeric

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[74] Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium*, 25-29. See also Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian,* 31-33 on the early provenance of physical allegory in the interpretation of Homer. The tradition of cosmological readings of ancient poets is robust and well-established in Ennius' day. The Derveni papyrus provides a secure instance from late 5th century BC but Porphyry attributes particular readings of the *Iliad* in this vein to Theagenes of Rhegium in the 6th century BC. Crates' famous stay in Rome suggests the possibility of direct influence on Latin readers from Homeric scholars with cosmological exegeses. See Suetonius, *Gram.* 2.1-2, and on Crates' exegesis of Homer, see Porter, "Hermeneutic Lines and Circles."

[75] Note too the vague but suggestive claim that Ennius is distinguished for his study of *sophia* in *Ann.* 211, perhaps short for *philosophia* (Skutsch, *The Annals* 375ff.). This idea may have been picked up by the *critici* Horace has in mind when he writes *Ennius et sapiens et fortis et alter Homerus* (*Ep.* 2.1.50). Cf. however Brink, *Horace on Poetry,* 94, who doubts any specific appeal to Homer's reputation for knowledge or wisdom.

[76] Cicero in fact links the two dreams together in *Acad. Pr.* 51/88. Discussion at Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium*, 81-8; Elliott, *Ennius and the Architecture of the Annales*, 181-3.

commentary tradition. But as Hardie has shown, Vergil's firm hold of the role of a cosmological poet looks back to a tradition of linking epic to cosmological themes well-established before Ennius.[77] Given his own interests, it would not be surprising for such themes to appear in the *Annales*, nor for Ennius to prefigure Vergil here as in other manners of being 'Homeric.'[78]

But whereas Vergil's commentators certainly do see physical allegory at work in the *Aeneid*, there is less indication of readers employing the *Annales* as an authority in natural philosophy. Surviving accounts from the late Republic do address however the possibility of adopting Ennius in this role. Lucretius is especially notable in firmly resisting Ennius' claim to be a cosmological Roman Homer.

Lucretius on the Dream

Lucretius reiterates Ennius' portrayal of Homer as a poet of the cosmos, one who speaks about the way things are (*DRN* 1.126). But where Ennius emphasizes the union of the literary and philosophical legacies of Homer, Lucretius insists on dividing them. The former he is content to leave to Ennius; the latter he takes as his own—it is after all, his own poem that speaks *de rerum natura*. For Lucretius, Ennius' Homeric qualities lie in his permanence and excellence. If anything, Ennius' venture into cosmology undermines his claim and places him among the *vates* he despised.

Lucretius criticizes the dream at the start of the *Annales* as unreasonable, much as

[77] Explored in Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium* as well as in Murrin, "The Goddess of the Air."
[78] Adopting Ennius into the role of natural philosopher-poet would be still more plausible if the etymologies of divine names as found in the *Epicharmus* were present in the *Annales.* In the *Epicharmus*, Iupiter/Iovis is linked to *iuvat* because he helps all living things (*Var*. 54-58, Vahlen), and Ceres is so-named *quod fruges gerit* (*Var.* 50, ibid.), "since she produces crops." Feeney sees a hint at such an etymology in *Ann.* 444 where Jupiter *genitor* is also pointedly *Saturnie*, as if to hint at another word for begetting, *sator* (*The Gods in Epic*, 120-21). At any rate, such etymologies often bridged poetic discussion of gods and the natural world in commentaries on Homer (e.g., in the scholia, Σ A *in Il.* 1.53-55) and are present in the *Aeneid* as well. As Feeney, *Beyond Greek* 54-55 also notes, they appear to have influenced Livius' link between *Moneta* and *moneo* (fr. 21). See above, p. 37 n. 19.

Persius later implied. But he makes an effort to preserve Ennius' high reputation. In a passage near the beginning of *De rerum natura*, Lucretius' reflections on the tendency of human beings to fear death turn to Ennius' portrayal of the afterlife:

> Tutemet a nobis iam quovis tempore vatum
> terriloquis victus dictis desciscere quaeres.
> quippe etenim quam multa tibi iam fingere possunt
> somnia, quae vitae rationes vertere possint (105)
> fortunasque tuas omnis turbare timore!
> et merito; nam si certam finem esse viderent
> aerumnarum homines, aliqua ratione valerent
> religionibus atque minis obsistere vatum.
> nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas, (110)
> aeternas quoniam poenas in morte timendum.
> ignoratur enim quae sit natura animai,
> nata sit an contra nascentibus insinuetur
> et simul intereat nobis cum morte dirempta
> an tenebras Orci visat vastasque lacunas (115)
> an pecudes alias divinitus insinuet se,
> Ennius ut noster cecinit, qui primus amoeno
> detulit ex Helicone perenni fronde coronam,
> per gentis Italas hominum quae clara clueret;
> etsi praeterea tamen esse Acherusia templa (120)
> Ennius aeternis exponit versibus edens,
> quo neque permaneant animae neque corpora nostra,
> sed quaedam simulacra modis pallentia miris;
> unde sibi exortam semper florentis Homeri
> commemorat speciem lacrimas effundere salsas (125)
> coepisse et rerum naturam expandere dictis.
> quapropter bene cum superis de rebus habenda
> nobis est ratio, solis lunaeque meatus
> qua fiant ratione, et qua vi quaeque gerantur
> in terris, tunc cum primis ratione sagaci (130)
> unde anima atque animi constet natura videndum,
> et quae res nobis vigilantibus obvia mentes
> terrificet morbo adfectis somnoque sepultis,
> cernere uti videamur eos audireque coram,
> morte obita quorum tellus amplectitur ossa.

> In time you will seek to break away from us for any position but this one, defeated by the fearsome sayings of seers [*vates*]—since of course even now they are making up so many dreams for you, to distort reasonable accounts of life and upend all your circumstances with fear! And with good cause: for if humanity saw there is a fixed end to sufferings, it would, through some reason, be strong enough to resist the scruples and threats of seers. Now reasonable thought gives no help in resistance, no power, since one must fear eternal punishments in death.
>
> For no one knows what the nature of the soul is, whether it is itself

> born or instead enters in those who are born, and whether it perishes at the same time with us when, torn apart by death, either it beholds the dark and empty pits of Orcus or introduces itself by divine order into other animals—as our own Ennius sang, who first brought down from pleasant Helicon the crown of the perennial bough, which is gloriously renowned among the Italian peoples among humanity—even if, despite this fame, Ennius expounds in the eternal verses he brings forth that there are precincts of Acheron where neither souls remain nor our bodies, but a certain pale shade of a wondrous sort; from where is drawn up for him the image of ever thriving Homer which he recounts poured out salty tears and began to lay out the nature of things in speech.
>
> On account of which, we must deal with the reason for higher things—by what reasonable order the movement of the sun and moon come about, and by what power each thing comes to be in the earth—then above all with keen-scented reasoning we must see what breath and the frame of sense is made from, and what manner of thing meeting us as we keep watch frightens our minds when suffering illness and buried in sleep too, so that we appear to see and hear them as present to us who have met death, whose bones the earth embraces. (*De Rerum Natura* 1.102-35)

Lucretius concedes quite a lot to Ennius' self-portrayal. He admits Ennius is the first to bring the crown from Helicon[79] to Italy, leaving aside Livius and Naevius as rivals. He notes his wide fame and emphasizes the permanent value of his poetry in particular: the famous pun in *perenni fronde* (118) reinforced by *aeternis versibus* (121). Being first, widely known and permanent are especially Homeric features for a poet's work. It is hard not to see an evocation of Ennius as Homer here—and all the more so when Lucretius rehearses the dream with the appearance of *semper florentis Homeri.* The words one the one hand acknowledge the relationship of the poets while also supplying an alternative reading of the dream apparition. Context demands that one understand *semper florentis* to mean not 'perpetually alive and flourishing' but 'perpetually read with an undying reputation.' Lucretius grants Ennius' literary immortality makes him like Homer, but not transmigration. While doing so he also brings the metaphorical concept of the 'afterlife' of a poet to the fore, as if to offer Ennius' defenders a way out in a less literal reading.[80]

[79] A famous problem, since Persius has him on Parnassus. See Skutsch, *The Annals*, 147-50 for a brief overview with basic literature.
[80] Cf. Aicher, "Homer and Republican Poetry," 76-78, who argues Lucretius actively

But for all that, Ennius is among the villains of this philosophical drama. Lucretius pursues a series of strategies to associate Ennius with unlearned and even unreflective beliefs about the soul. In this passage he is particularly concerned to speak directly to his addressee Memmius (*tibi* 104, cf. 106) about the different people whose opinions might carry weight and how they might affect his way of life. Against Lucretius (and reason) stand the *vates* and their old threats and superstitions (109). Lucretius frames the argument against the backdrop of general ignorance: fearfulness results from people who do not know about the nature of the soul. They are not sure whether souls go down to the caves of Orcus, or whether they can move from people to animals (115-16). This last of course is what he says Ennius sang, referring to Homer's transmigration into a peacock.[81]

For this reason, says Lucretius, he has to explain natural phenomena, from the movement of the celestial bodies to souls, dreams, and the appearances of the dead in visions. *Quapropter* here is ambiguous: it may point to Memmius' own doubts and to general ignorance. But it certainly also suggests that Ennius' account in particular requires a response. Ennius tells of *Acherusia templa* where the simulacra (neither soul nor body)[82] go following death, and even presents Homer brought up to pour out tears and explain the nature of things. When Lucretius lists the topics he must address he also summarizes the way that Ennius is wrong: about the soul, afterlife and about what dreams of the dead are in the first place (127ff.).

'misreads' Ennius' dream, treating doctrine as the main point rather than literary allusion. Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium* 235-6, describes Lucretius' method in adopting and retooling available explanations to use their observations to advance his own arguments. The form of immortality that Lucretius allows Ennius—namely, that his name and influence continue—appears quite similar to the kind he implies for Epicurus in *DRN* 5.1-12. (Thanks to Jed W. Atkins for pointing this out to me.)

[81] *Memini me fiere pavom* (I remember I became a peacock), *Ann.* 11.

[82] Zetzel, "*De Rerum Natura* and *De Re Publica*," 233-4 argues that Lucretius is here critiquing Ennius' account as implausible: if the soul passes from body to body, why should there be an underworld from which to call up Homer? Who is this Homer who appears, if not the soul in Ennius? Cf. Waszink, "Ennianum," 100-101.

For Lucretius these errors put Ennius in the company of the *vates.* It is a striking juxtaposition, one that reverses Ennius' attempts to distance himself from the all too Roman *vates* with whom he associates his predecessors (*Ann*. 207 again).[83] Moreover, it elides Ennius' history as a preeminent rationalizer of traditional explanations of the cosmos: both the *Epicharmus* on the nature of the physical world, but also the *Euhemerus* on the view that stories about gods derive from the accomplishments of humans.[84] The *Annales* itself contained references to Empedoclean doctrines about the elements.[85] And the dream can be seen as grounding the fantastic and implausible stories of his Greek models. In place of Homer's prayer for inspiration by the Muses or even Callimachus' account of Apollo's injunction, Ennius gives a concrete mechanism from a recognized system of natural philosophy. This after all is why Lucretius objects: the apparition in the epic is not a mere literary issue. Ennius' Homer makes his claims about how the world works in terms actual Pythagoreans use. Yet Lucretius does not only claim that Ennius is wrong to put forth Pythagorean ideas, but undermines Ennius' claim to being a writer who is knowledgeable of the world at all. Instead, he is treated like the priests who must carefully guard their *religiones* from reasonable discourse that would undo their power.

Although Lucretius does not address the issue of Ennius' identification with Homer directly, he speaks all around it. His attack on transmigration serves to undermine the dream's ambitions to natural philosophy. In his poetry Ennius is immortal, influential, reverend, known everywhere and followed by distinguished writers. Lucretius himself follows him in meter and style. But whatever Ennius' poetic talents, on these matters he merely illustrates what ignorant people believe. Ennius is folded into the discourse between the *vates* and their ignorant audience, repeating ancient fictions with no true referent. He thus falls into the same

[83] Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium*, 17-18.
[84] Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium* 79-83; Skutsch, *The Annals*, 109f.
[85] *Ann.* 220-21. See Hardie, *Cosmos and Imperium* 82.

category of *vates* he proposed for Livius and Naevius, if for quite different reasons. Lucretius accepts that Homer was a poet who spoke *de rerum natura*, and that this aspect of Homer could be recapitulated in Latin. But he, not Ennius, is the one who has done the job right. He divides up the roles of a Roman Homer, and leaves for Ennius only part of the Homeric legacy he claimed: that of literary founder, excellence in poetry, lasting fame. He restricts Ennius to playing Homer for poets and readers.[86]

Cicero on the Dream of Ennius

As an opponent of Epicureanism and a proponent of Ennius' authority, Cicero has reason to defend the dream against Lucretius. In the dream of Scipio that concludes *De re publica*, Cicero offers a more sympathetic interpretation of the dream of Homer. *De re publica* is one of the few Roman texts where there is strong evidence of a direct engagement with *De rerum natura*.[87] Cicero, a firm opponent of Epicureanism, resists Lucretius on a number points. It is not surprising that unlike Lucretius, Cicero accepts that Ennius' dream is a significant sign of his relationship to Homer.

From here, however, he begins to move against the grain of the *Annales*. Cicero grants a literal reading of Ennius' dream insofar as he grants that it actually took place.[88] But he elides the content of Homer's speech almost completely. This is especially notable because Scipio's dream shares a number of features with Ennius': both feature an older, exemplary figure who instructs a descendant on the way the cosmos is ordered. But there is no hint of Pythagorean transmigration here, as Cicero links Scipio's dream to quite a different cosmic order. Accordingly, Cicero offers a rationalizing explanation meant to replace Ennius' and

[86] Gordon Williams also notes the importance of 1.921-34, where Lucretius asserts his own originality in terms quite similar to those offered to Ennius earlier ("Roman Poets as Literary Historians," 224-7).
[87] Zetzel makes the case persuasively in "*De Rerum Natura* and *De Re Publica*."
[88] A move hinted at in *Acad. pr.* 51/88's handling of the dream: Prinzen, *Ennius im Urteil der Antike*, 182ff.

repurpose Homer's cameo in the *Annales*.

Plausibility is a key factor in *De re publica* 6. Scipio's description of the dream of Homer intersects not only a tradition of responses to Ennius, but also to the Myth of Er in Plato's *Republic.* Scipio's dream corresponds with that famous conclusion to Plato's work, but the change to a dream instead of a resurrection is both deliberate and explicitly marked. *De re publica* preserved a criticism of this account of the afterlife because of its implausible framing narrative. Favonius Eulogius summarizes this lost passage, presenting a contrast between making up a story and creating a dream in line with reasonable principles:

> Imitatione Platonis Cicero de re publica scribens locum etiam de Eris Pamphylii reditu in vitam, qui, ut ait, rogo impositus revixisset multaque de inferis secreta narrasset, non fabulosa, ut ille, assimulatione commentus est, sed sollertis somnii rationabili quadam imaginatione composuit, videlicet scite significans haec, quae de animae immortalitate dicerentur caeloque, <nec> somniantium philosophorum esse commenta, nec fabulas incredibiles, quas Epicurei derident, sed prudentium coniecturas.
>
> In writing the *De re publica* in imitation of Plato, Cicero also [imitated] the passage about the return to life of Er the Pamphylian who, as he says, 'returned to life after he was laid upon the pyre and recounted many mysteries of the underworld.' But Cicero did not compose an implausible fiction, as [Plato] did, but wrote it with a kind of reasonable picture of a clever dream, plainly showing 'these things which were spoken concerning the immortality of the soul and the heavens were neither the contrivances of dreaming philosophers nor unbelievable tales which the Epicureans laugh at, but the conjectures of knowledgeable men.'[89] (*Disputatio de Somnio Scipionis*, Weddingen p. 13.1-7)

Cicero appears to have granted the Epicurean critique its full force.[90] In lieu of Er's resurrection in Plato's *Republic*, Scipio had a dream of the afterlife that served as a vehicle for that knowledge. But he still required a plausible justification for that account. Cicero's Scipio himself offers a rationalization, beginning with Ennius' dream as an example. Lucretius had finished his recollection of the dream of Homer by noting that the images of

[89] Following quotations suggested by Zetzel, *On the Commonwealth and On the Laws,* 94.
[90] Zetzel, "*De Rerum Natura* and *De Re Publica*" 235-7. Note that elsewhere in the dialogue Laelius is critical of Plato for the implausibility of the city he invents in the *Republic*: *Rep.* 2.21-22.

those dead would sometimes appear to us in dreams. It is an indirect and not entirely apt explanation in the case of Ennius, who never laid eyes on Homer, but sufficient to shed some doubt on Ennius' interpretation.[91] Scipio shifts the emphasis from what one sees to what one thinks. He observes of his own dream that it, like Ennius', was likely the result of some extensive attention to the subject of that dream:

> Hic mihi—credo equidem ex hoc, quod eramus locuti; fit enim fere, ut cogitationes sermonesque nostri pariant aliquid in somno tale, quale de Homero scribit Ennius, de quo videlicet saepissime vigilans solebat cogitare et loqui—Africanus se ostendit …
>
> At this point I saw—naturally, I think, because of that which we [i.e., Scipio and Masinissa] were speaking about; for in general it happens that our thoughts and conversations give rise in dreams to something (as in his case Homer, writes Ennius) which when awake we obviously tend to think and speak about most often. At this point Africanus showed himself to me… (*Rep.* 6.10)

Scipio has been describing conversing long into the night with Masinissa about his adoptive grandfather, Scipio Africanus. The analogy offered with Ennius suggests that the dream reported by Ennius in the *Annales* was a result of similarly intense attention to Homer's works.[92]

Cicero offers here in passing a plausible, plain sense account of Ennius' dream. It is no poetic fiction or superstition. Rather, by Scipio's account, the dream is a natural consequence of Ennius' devoted reading of Homer. Just as talking attentively and continually about his grandfather gives rise to a dream of Scipio Africanus, so too Ennius' constant reading and rereading of the Homeric texts gave rise to a vision of their author. By this measure, the dream gives witness to Ennius' impressive but nonetheless acceptably mundane dedication to the Homeric poems. Its occurrence is more relevant than its more questionable

[91] *DRN* 1.132-5.
[92] Cicero recounts a familiarity between Ennius and Scipio Africanus and the family more generally in *Pro Archia* 22. This association may have given the impression that the younger Scipio was well poised to make a guess at what habits brought about his dream.

content.

The similarities between the dreams themselves cannot help evoking Ennius' cosmological ambitions. But Cicero is careful to block out this aspect of Ennius' Homeric legacy. Like Lucretius, he divides the legacy of Homer, confining Ennius to a literary arena. Cicero does not need to undermine Ennius to do so. Rather, he merely elides one aspect of his self-presentation in favor of another. The attentive reading of Homer he attributes to Ennius is characteristic of a *dicti studiosus* (*Ann.* 209) and required for the kind of allusive style Ennius claims in the *Annales*. But Ennius the natural philosopher can be isolated and discarded without disrupting Cicero's plans.

The legacy of the dream of Homer that began the *Annales* is shaped by two cultural forces. The first is the robustness of the role of a 'Homer' for Latin literature. One conclusion that our survey of pre-Vergilian structures associating Ennius with Homer reveals is that the need for a Latin equivalent for the Homeric epics anticipated and in some ways remained independent of the epics that were made to serve that role. Commitment to using Greek literature as a model as well as the continuing theoretical work evaluating that project made the notion of a Roman 'Homer' a constant. That gave continuing relevance to evocations of Ennius' dream.

On the other hand, the changing reputation of the ideas expressed by Ennius affected how they were received. When Ennius so to speak baked the Pythagoreanism into his dream, he linked the *Annales* to his other work in natural philosophy permanently. And yet he also made this connection to Homer vulnerable to shifting opinions on the acceptability of such opinions. Had Pythagoreanism had a different trajectory among the elites of Rome, Ennius could have been the natural philosopher poet for Latin speakers—and perhaps was for some who left no record. But for others it became important to actively exclude Ennius from being this particular kind of *alter Homerus*, even while affirming him in the role in other ways.

The dream thus offers an instance of installing limits on a figure who is already accepted as Homer on many fronts. Lucretius and Cicero deny neither that Ennius is a Roman Homer, nor even that a Roman Homer might include cosmological accounts. Nonetheless, both keep Ennius from recapitulating the role in their own readings. Instead, they seek to channel his authority as a 'Homer'-like author into more manageable spaces. Doing so requires them to make distinctions between possible ways of being Homer that are neater than what either Ennius or his pedagogical readers had supplied.

4. Cicero as *alter lector* to Ennius' *alter Homerus*

Cicero's treatment of Ennius is also worth noting as a preview of the roles occupied by Roman Homers to come. His frequent and casual reference to the *Annales*' authority foreshadows the manner in which the *Aeneid* is treated by later generations of writers.[93] Ennius' works more generally are a persistent and frequent reference point for Cicero in a variety of genres—epistles, speeches, rhetorical works, and above all philosophical texts.[94] The variety of occasions and audiences reflects confidence in a general familiarity with and respect for Ennius. His allusions are almost uniformly positive: Ennius is *ingeniosus*,[95] *summus*,[96] *egregius*;[97] he illustrates points in arguments,[98] gives reliable witness to past events,[99] and sounds the truth like an oracle.[100] Cicero uses superlative language to describe

[93] Prinzen, *Ennius im Urteil der Antike*, 151-2, who points out a similar role for Ennius for Varro and others as well.
[94] Elliott, *Ennius and the Architecture of the Annales*, 576-7 supplies a list of Cicero's references to the *Annales*. 152-195 is an invaluable survey of the variety of Cicero's usages of the work. See also Provis, "The Authority of Ennius and the *Annales* in Cicero's Philosophical Works," 5.
[95] *Pro Plancio* 59, *Pro Murena* 30.
[96] *Pro Balbo* 51, *Or.* .1.198, *Opt. Gen*. 2.13.
[97] *Tusc*. 3.19.45 (referring to the *Andromache*, not *Annales*).
[98] *Off.* 1.38, *Nat. D.* 2.4-5.
[99] *Sen.* 16, *Tusc.* 1.27.
[100] *Rep.* 5.1.

poets other than Ennius —Accius or Sophocles can be *dissertissimus*[101] or *doctissimus*[102]— but he consistently returns to Ennius as a touchstone, both in casual uses and more theoretical consideration of poetry. The effect is only heightened by occasions where he omits the name of the poet or his poem.[103]

Cicero's effusive language may give the impression that he is more thoroughly familiar with Ennius' writings than he is. He uses only particular aspects of Ennius' work, and those selectively and repetitively. There is a limited range of quotations and works he is familiar with.[104] His use of the *Annales* varies with circumstance and at times is even contradictory.[105] But this underscores a sort of robustness to the claim. If Cicero can call on Ennius casually (even inconsistently) but still persuasively, then Ennius' authority does seem to approach the broad and flexible authority Homer enjoyed among Greek writers and that Vergil would enjoy later too. In each case, keeping the limits of the poet's knowledge and abilities usefully vague is an indication of a more generally accepted authority.[106]

Where Cicero's practice differs markedly from later generations is in resisting leaning Ennius' authority upon Homer's. Vergil's all-purpose authority could be explicitly linked with his role as a Roman Homer. If one needed evidence that Vergil played the role of 'Homer' for Latin speakers, the constant mention and praise of Vergil across genres and times would be a prime example. But if Cicero does something quite similar with Ennius within his own works, he nonetheless tends to distance Ennius' authority from Homer's. Earlier we observed in *Brutus* 69-76 that Cicero shifts the question surrounding the relationship between

[101] *Pro Sestio* 122.
[102] *Div.* 1.54: *poetam quidem divinum* (a poet certainly divine).
[103] e.g., *Mur.* 30. This is by no means rare. A third of Cicero's quotations of Ennius are unattributed (Skutsch, *The Annals*, 27 and Prinzen, *Ennius im Urteil der Antike*, 150-1).
[104] Zetzel, "The Influence of Cicero on Ennius," 2-3.
[105] Elliott, *Ennius and the Architecture of the* Annales, 154.
[106] A point captured by Provis, "The Authority of Ennius," 23 where he notes the various kinds of authority Cicero can assign to Ennius depending on genre and circumstance.

Homer and Ennius. Ennius employed Homer as a benchmark, arguing he was better than his predecessor because he was more like Homer than they were. But Cicero instead argued that both Ennius and Homer met the same, independent standard. In doing so, Cicero loosens the Homeric qualities of Ennius from their attachment to Homer. This is the pattern of Cicero's treatment of the *Annales* more generally. Although he supplies almost a sixth of the surviving fragments of the *Annales*, a minimal amount of these quotations feature any direct allusions to Homer's epics.[107]

This is not to say that Cicero does not use the parallel roles of Ennius and Homer in order to make a point. But by and large Ennius' debt to Homer is not in view. Rather, Ennius figures as a Roman equivalent both where Cicero directly elaborates on the poets' roles in their mutual cultures (*Brut.* 71) as well as where the symmetry can suit in other ways. When he wishes to demonstrate that omens on the right side are deemed favorable by Greeks but those on the left by Romans, Cicero appeals to Homer as an authority in the first case and Ennius to serve the equivalent source for Roman practice.[108]

> quae autem est inter augures conveniens et coniuncta constantia? ad nostri augurii consuetudinem dixit Ennius: tum tonuit laevum bene tempestate serena. at Homericus Aiax apud Achillem querens de ferocitate Troianorum nescio quid hoc modo nuntiat: prospera Iuppiter his dextris fulgoribus edit. ita nobis sinistra videntur, Graiis et barbaris dextra meliora.
>
> What fixed constancy however is agreed upon among augurs? According to the custom of our augury, Ennius said: "then out of the bright sky [Jupiter]

[107] "None of Cicero's quotations give us any sense at all of the macroscopic engagement with Homer that the Vergiliocentrics consistently reveal." Elliott, *Ennius and the Architecture of the Annales*, 10. 'Vergiliocentrics' refers to sources citing Ennius for the purpose of commenting on Vergil's poetry; see 75ff.

[108] Similarly in *Orator* 109 Cicero argues in favor of a varied speaking style: *An ego Homero Ennio reliquis poetis et maxime tragicis concederem ut ne omnibus locis eadem contentione uterentur crebro que mutarent, nonnunquam etiam ad cotidianum genus sermonis accederent: ipse nunquam ab illa acerrima contentione discederem? sed quid poetas divino ingenio profero?* (Should I allow to Homer, Ennius, the other poets and above all the tragedians that they not employ the same powerful formality in every passage, that they repeatedly change it, and even that they sometimes reach for everyday sort of speech, while I never break from that most severe formality? But why do I appeal to poets of divine talent?)

> thundered favorably on the left." But Homer's Ajax,[109] complaining before Achilles about the fierceness of the Trojans, speaks something of this sort: "Jupiter gives signs of good fortune for them in flashes of lightning on the right." Thus to us, signs on the left seem better, but to Greeks and barbarians, signs on the right. (*De divinatione* 2.82)

Here Ennius is treated as the natural counterpart to Homer. As in the *Brutus* above, the citation of Ennius' poetry here demonstrates that he may perform the equivalent function as Homer in an explanation. This case however adds the possibility of offering an equivalent authority: as Homer supplies a reliable measure of Greek cultural norms, so Ennius may do the same for Romans.

Attributions of this kind of authority to Ennius are of particular interest because they foreshadow the far reaching appeals to Vergil as an authority on any number of subjects. In her survey of Cicero's varied uses of Ennius, Jackie Elliott concludes that Cicero normally treats him as authoritative on a wide range of topics:

> [His authority] encompasses command of historical fact, which in Cicero's treatment included even qualities of character and attitude; but, beyond that, also the ability to offer moral and religious guidance and even access to the arcane secrets of the universe, such as the laws of astronomy and metaphysics; and one has the sense that the list is theoretically extendible to anything.[110]

This liberal appeal to Ennius' authority is reminiscent of uses the *Aeneid* is put to when it comes to be a frequent and familiar reference point in later Latin literature. For instance, compare the long list of topics the guests in Macrobius' *Saturnalia* wish to demonstrate Vergil was expert in: ritual and augural practices, Greek and Roman literature, Latin syntax, rhetoric, philosophy, and astronomy.[111]

Cicero certainly is not at the point of writing commentaries or treatises with the aim of opening up the treasure hidden with the *Annales*—he is no Ps. Heraclitus, nor even a scholiast. But the variety of topics Elliott describes could as easily be used to describe

[109] Actually Odysseus—*Il.* 9.236.
[110] Elliott, *The Architecture of the Annales*, 193.
[111] *Sat.* 1.24.10-21.

Homer's authority in the Greek commentary tradition as Ennius' in Cicero's. Assertions of universal expertise are still more typical of Greek exegetes of Homer than of later Vergilian interpreters.[112] Extravagant claims for Vergil's learned authority often closely associate it with his knowledge of and similarity to Homer.[113] Cicero's recruitment of the *Annales* into such a role would be evidence of Ennius serving in one of the most distinctly 'Homeric' roles Vergil adopts.

When Cicero does bring Ennius into the role of an expert, he does so under the broader aim of establishing a network of Roman authorities for his cultural and political designs.[114] This can be observed in an instance that especially recalls Vergil's later use as an authority on astronomy. In *De re publica* 1.25, Ennius is one of a series of authorities who are cited with approval for their understanding of eclipses. The Roman legate Galus and the Greek leader Pericles were able to explain such phenomena and so calm their perturbed soldiers and citizens. The Greek Thales was the first to recognize the explanation, but Ennius knew it too:

> id autem postea ne nostrum quidem Ennium fugit: qui ut scribit, anno quinquagesimo et trecentesimo fere post Romam conditam "Nonis Iunis soli luna obstitit et nox." atque hac in re tanta inest ratio atque sollertia, ut ex hoc die quem apud Ennium et in maximis annalibus consignatum videmus, superiores solis defectiones reputatae sint usque ad illam quae Nonis Quinctilibus fuit regnante Romulo.
>
> Later on this was known even by our own Ennius; as he writes, in roughly the three hundred and fiftieth year after the foundation of Rome, "on the first of June, moon and night blocked the sun." Astronomical knowledge is so precise that from the date which is indicated in Ennius and the great Annals, previous eclipses of the sun have been calculated back to the one which took place on the seventh of July in the reign of Romulus. (*Rep.* 1.25; trans. Zetzel, adapted)

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[112] For more on the vast number of bodies of expertise attributed to him by Ps. Plutarch and others, see below pp. 196-202.

[113] Thus for Servius (*ad Aen* 6, praef.) Vergil's knowledge of arcane cosmology derives from reading Homer, and in Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.16.43-44 the invocation of Vergil's extensive knowledge provokes the epithet *Homerus vester Mantuanus.*

[114] For more on Ennius' "prodigious cultural authority," in such accounts, see Cole, "Cicero, Ennius, and the Concept of Apotheosis at Rome," 533.

Ennius is not only knowledgeable about astronomy, but his calculation is precise and trustworthy. Moreover, he has himself been placed into a cultivated garden of authorities. Galus' ability to explain the eclipse and so dispel his men's fears is said to suit his role as a "very authoritative man" (*Rep.* 1.24). Ennius' contribution is listed alongside other authorities famed either for political (Pericles) or scientific expertise (Anaxagoras, Thales).[115] The list itself is delivered by a figure who was himself famed for political leadership and antiquarian knowledge.[116] Furthermore, Ennius is linked to the older priestly authority of the *annales maximi* by their shared accuracy regarding eclipses. The result is a sort of ecosystem of authority and persuasion established within *De re publica*, as each one's special status bolsters the others'. As the dialogue progresses, the repeated references to the eclipse and the related phenomenon of Romulus' apotheosis reinforce the sense that the authorities gathered are indeed intertwined. When Scipio tells of his own dream of the fate of the politically virtuous soul after death, Ennius, the eclipse, and Romulus are all in close proximity.[117]

Cicero often deploys Ennius' authority within similar networks of authorities. In *Disputationes Tusculanae* 1.27-28, Ennius' citations are interwoven with the claim that the ancients believed in the survival of the soul after death. His authority is treated as consonant with and a trustworthy summary of what ritual and lore can say about past beliefs.[118] Spencer Cole observes that an appeal to a poet's authority on such matters is unusual in Republican Rome. But Ennius' involvement in civic cult and philosophical works make it plausible to bring him in. One could add that the example of Homer being cited as a cultural authority for Greeks could provide a model for using Ennius the same way here, just as Cicero did with

[115] Elliott, *Ennius and the Architecture of the* Annales, 174; See Provis "Authority," 43ff. On the deliberate arrangement of Greeks and Romans, see Zetzel's commentary *De Re Publica*, 1.25.3.
[116] Cole "Cicero, Ennius, and the Concept of Apotheosis," 538-9.
[117] *Rep*. 6.10, 6.24 with Cole, "Cicero, Ennius, and the Concept of Apotheosis," 544-5.
[118] Cole, "Cicero, Ennius, and the Concept of Apotheosis," 538-9

both in *Div.* 2.82 cited above.[119]

We may be struck by how Ennius' work in natural philosophy makes a comeback here. We saw earlier that Cicero played down the proposal that Ennius was a natural philosopher at the end of the very same dialogue. There similarity to Homer is limited to Ennius' studies. Here he nonetheless finds a place for Ennius as an authority on the natural world. Critically, Cicero limits his attention to Roman affairs. This allows authority to be built on an alternative line to Homer's.

What makes Cicero's use of Ennius remarkable is the suite of Homeric functions we find Ennius playing in his version of Latin literature. In Cicero the influence of Homer on this situation is intentionally at a remove, even and especially where he leans heavily on Ennius as an authority on a variety of disciplines. There is a certain irony here. Later, explicit links between Vergil and Homer bolster the former's claims to have remarkably broad and accurate knowledge of the world. But although Cicero cites Ennius' authority in ways that foreshadow Vergil's reputation as learned in all disciplines, Homer plays a very small role in the establishment of that authority in Cicero's own writings.

Cicero offers an example of how the overall dependence of Latin literature on Greek can bring in Homer into relationship with Ennius even when he is being avoided. We have discussed how Ennius could, by means of being placed in the role of Homer in schools modeled on Greek schools, gain the widespread familiarity among the educated Latin speakers that Homer enjoyed among educated Greeks. It is that familiarity that allows Cicero to use Ennius as an authority on Roman matters.[120] Although he does not appeal to Homer explicitly to ground his use of Ennius, the effects of other treatments of Ennius that were

[119] Cole "Cicero, Ennius, and the Concept of Apotheosis," 535 observes that this means Ennius had a voice in all three of Varro's 'theologies', making him a supple witness in any debate about the gods.
[120] Cornell, "Review of Skutsch 1985," (*JRS* 76) 244.

derived from Homer's persist. Ennius can retain the 'shape' of a Roman Homer even where Homer is deliberately absent.

Conclusion: Whose Homer?

This chapter has surveyed how Ennius was treated as *alter Homerus apud Latinos*. In a way, this chapter serves as a microcosm of the issues considered in the chapters to come: the interplay of the poet's self-representation and function in other Homeric roles; the effects of serving as a Homeric figure over the long run; the attempts to link the role of Homer in natural philosophy to a Roman equivalent. The questions that apply to Ennius as Roman Homer largely apply to Vergil as well. In conclusion, I offer some reflections on how this material affects our study of Vergil in the same role.

The history of the role of Homer's equivalent in Latin is the history of negotiations of what Homeric qualities matter in a given time and context. The construction of a Latin literature over a line of symmetry with Greek literature recreates spaces suited for Homeric epics, outlining certain general categories and roles that a poem might fit. Specific poets like Livius and Ennius and readers such as Lucretius and Cicero propose poems to suit those categories or reevaluate attempts to fill those roles and fit their characteristics. The constant is the need to appeal to the Greek Homer and his roles in Greek culture. One consequence is that the process of constructing the Roman Homer is never quite closed.

It is tempting to conflate Jerome's observation with those of the generation that read both the *Annales* and the *Aeneid* and judged the latter to be a worthier poem. Both found Vergil to be best (certainly a very Homeric feature). But it is not one characteristic that makes a Homer. The differences between Livius and Ennius demonstrate that there is more than one way to make a correspondingly Homeric figure in Latin, and more than one attempt to make the intrinsic characteristics of a poem recall the experience of reading Homer.

Indeed, there are as many points of reference for defining Ennius as another Homer as

there are points of reference in Greek literature: allusion, theoretical structure, familiarity, poetic excellence, exegesis, teaching. In the right context, a successful combination of any of these points of reference in one author can make him a persuasive example of a Roman Homer. But even a successful poet's role is subject to negotiation at every step. One element might be eliminated, another added; simple historical contingency might change his ability to fulfill the criteria. Ennius' fate, for example, was affected in unpredictable ways by Vergil's success.

Reflection on how Vergil's case for being Homer improved over time can demonstrate how changing circumstances play a vital role in a given account's argument's effectiveness. We have observed already how three hundred years of reverent citations of Vergil's work made Jerome's case against Ennius easy. But one may also observe that the long lasting political success of Vergil's patron made the poet appear prophetic; or that since *Eclogue* 4 chimed so neatly with the imagery of the prophet Isaiah, Vergil appeared all the *more* Homeric in late antiquity, inasmuch as it reinforced his status as a singularly universal authority in Latin literary culture.

For these reasons, Jerome's invocations of Ennius' past claims to being Homer does not tell a simple story of how Vergil was a better poet than Ennius. Rather, it tells the story of Vergil in Jerome's day: the one where the ubiquity of Vergil and his poem's centuries old presence in multiple roles—in the classroom, commentaries, theories, and bookshops make him an obvious selection over Ennius as an exemplar of good Latinity. And, moreover, a Vergil whose present success elevated the significance of Ennius' time in that role and helped to preserve his predecessor's memory.

In Jerome's time to claim Vergil as Homer was commonplace and uncontroversial. But this does not mean it was not subject to negotiations of the sort outlined for Ennius when he was the obvious Homer figure. Such negotiations are where the specifics of textual

decisions and contingencies meet with the demands placed upon the text by readers. Whenever Vergil is taken to be the Roman Homer we must still be asking ‘what sort of Homer?’ and ‘for whom?’

Chapter 2. "And no wonder—not even Homer was": The Homeric Life of Vergil

Introduction

Jerome suggested that Vergil beat out Ennius to the title of *alter Homerus*, and handily. If the rivalry is taken for granted, then the comparison between the loss of the *Annales* and the sizeable number of manuscripts of the *Aeneid* tells of a crushing defeat. Moreover, it must come early—the younger Seneca is already confidently rejecting Ennius out of hand in discussing Vergil. Accession to the role of the Roman Homer would seem a matter of course.

And yet in between Horace and Jerome, no surviving texts speaks precisely of an *alter Homerus*. During this lengthy period Vergil's *Aeneid* certainly takes on some significant Homeric functions, but these are seldom the traits highlighted by his contemporary poets and admirers. The status of 'Roman Homer' is almost never invoked directly in the reading of the *Aeneid*, whether in justifying an interpretation or else a use of the text.

One way to trace Vergil's substitution of Ennius is to consider the different accounts of what kind of poet he is. Over time, there are an increasing number of ways of reading Vergil that imply he is a Homeric poet. In many cases these rely on reading back the perceived connections between the *Aeneid* and the Homeric epics into their respective poets. If early readings of the *Aeneid* provokes few Homeric claims on behalf of Vergil, the uses it can be put to can nonetheless make a case that its poet should—at least in some situations—be understood as Homeric.

In this chapter I approach the history of Vergil as 'another Homer' from the perspective of those who tried to construct a life for the poet Vergil. Clearly the 'life of the poet' often appended to the front of ancient commentaries will be in view here. But there are many others who must construct a Vergil poet for their ends: contemporary poets referring to him in poetry, pseudepigraphers who offer their work as Vergil's, rhetoricians who need a line

from the *Aeneid* to illustrate expert command of a figure, school teachers presenting an imitation of a Homeric text as a model, commentators who need to explore the motives of a poet for using this word or that image.

My contention is that there are at least two poets that populate these regions: the Vergil who is another Homer, and the Vergil whose career spanned the *Eclogues*, *Georgics* and the *Aeneid*. Although both are prominent, the Homeric persona of Vergil has a curiously privileged place in accounts of Vergil's reception. It is easy for us to tell a story about Vergil's long standing role as a Roman Homer in Latin literary history. One begins with before the *Aeneid* comes on the scene, as Propertius hails it as *nescio quid maius Iliade* (2.34). Then one notes the *obtrectatores* who follow in line with Homer's, parodying his work and matching each *Homeromastix* with an *Aeneidomastix* (*VSD* 44). One can point out along the way how Vergil is mentioned by Juvenal in parallel with Homer (6.434-7 and 11.180-1), and how Florus exalts Vergil to the role of orator much as Homer was touted as the Greek source of that art (*Vergilius orator an poeta?*). Valerius Probus becomes the Roman Aristarchus for employing the *diplê* and *asterisk* and the like on Vergil's texts as the Alexandrian scholar had on Homer's (*Anecdotum Parisinum*, Keil *GL* 7.534.4-6). And finally in late antiquity there are examples from Vergil's works in every rhetorical manual, the Neoplatonic allegories of Macrobius, and even Christian centos by noble women made of Vergilian and Homeric verse respectively (Proba and Eudocia). And thus one might return to Justinian's aside at the beginning of the *Institutiones: cum poetam dicimus nec addimus nomen, subauditur apud Graecos egregius Homerus, apud nos Vergilius* (when we say "the poet" and do not specify a name, it is understood among Greeks to indicate the excellent Homer, and among us, Vergil. *Instit.* 1.2). What could be more natural?

The story is easy to tell because it is well-curated. At key moments it conflates the reception of the *Aeneid* with that of Vergil. It is obvious that in considering the *Aeneid*, the

Homeric epics will loom large due to Vergil's monumental project of imitation of and allusion to those poems. In that context, the author of one (Vergil) and the other (Homer) are naturally compared. This relationship clearly lies behind the parallel addressed in some cases above: Propertius is not comparing the *Georgics* to the *Iliad*; the *Aeneidomastix* is not concerned with the *Eclogues*. But the greater part of this catalogue applies the relationship that obtains between Homer and Vergil in the *Aeneid* to Vergil's corpus in general. We expect someone reading 'Homer' is reading the texts of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*—the name Homer is a metonymy for the poet's corpus. By analogy the name 'Vergil' ought to represent the *Eclogues*, *Georgics* and *Aeneid* altogether. But in this list it often evokes instead 'Roman Homer'—without a thought for Vergil's earlier poems. The relationship to Homer, which obtains only in the *Aeneid*, has taken priority over all others in defining what kind of poet Vergil is.[1]

Such judgments depend on a kind of vision of who Vergil is as a poet. These readers did not require a biography or an account of Vergil's life as a man who wrote verse. Rather, they used a narrative or even dramatization based on the experience of reading his poems. The question is not so much what kind of man would write these words as what kind of poet a reader invokes in order to interpret them. The proposed author's characteristics may determine the questions asked of the text, or the style of questioning build in assumptions about him. But in either case, the author's traits impact the interpretation of the text.[2] And once identified, such a figure—what I call a persona—could guide questions concerning the

[1] The list is well curated in another way too. My list comprises single texts that serve as clear examples of 'Homeric' usage. Such parallels are not always so distinct, nor are they equally widespread. I offer that warning because it is one of my points that this secure impression of comprehensive similarity—a function of these lists, not a side effect—often relies on some careful arrangement of the evidence.

[2] See Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext*, 47ff. on how the process of imagining an author behind the poem is taken to be part of the process of reading in much Latin poetry.

process of composition and the significance of his reception.[3]

The author's persona comes to the fore in the ancient lives of poets. In discussing these 'lives,' it is a scholarly commonplace today to refer to Lefkowitz's conclusion that the poet remembered in these lives is constructed—for instance, depicting experiences recounted in the poems as events once experienced by the author.[4] On this reading such lives are not real accounts (that is, historical or empirical), but almost scripts for characters in a drama that features both author and the reader.

But who directs the show? One would presume the reader, who interprets what that author means. Reading provokes questions about who wrote this, and how to judge its meaning. But perhaps also the teacher, who often asks the questions explicitly and points students to particular issues. The teacher presents this drama for his students and directs the players in their roles of reader and author alike, at time even characterizing the author in

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[3] My use of the word 'persona' shares with Andrew Laird's the perspective of observing a character constructed by others, but is developed in a somewhat different direction (cf. "Recognizing Virgil," 74-75). One might understand my term as a subcategory of the notion of the 'implied author' developed by Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, 71-76. The idea of the implied author has arisen in contexts where readers ask of text, 'who's behind this?'—or more specifically, 'who is outside the text producing what I am reading?' The historical author and the implied author are distinguished because the implied author does not necessarily exist apart from the reader's construal of the evidence in the text. (NB the first person narrator may at times be conflated with either, but that term may also simply refer to a character who happens to be telling the story, without any pretense that the character is the author of the piece.) One must use caution with such terminology, as it can muddle our understanding of readers even as it clarifies their actions. Most readers will not split hairs this finely, even when it accurately describes the distinctions they make. With 'persona' I wish to address the complex interactions of a community of readers which characterizes an author, but I also hope to recognize that readers may draw freely from whatever seems to give information about the author they are reading. A persona may be the reader's invention, but the raw material of that invention may is received from others—even, often enough, from the historical author. Moreover, that persona may in turn have been previously derived by others from any of the other actors, historical and fictional, who claim a hand in bringing the work into being. For a brief account of these distinctions with respect to Vergil (with examples and further bibliography), see Raymond Kania, *Virgil's* Eclogues *and the Art of Fiction,* 77-78 and Laird, *Powers of Expression, Expressions of Power*, 71-4 and 211-13 and *Re-inventing Virgil's Wheel*, 139n.11.

[4] Lefkowitz, *The Lives of the Greek Poets,* 1-5.

ways that suit the aims of the class.

But as Andrew Laird has pointed out, the author can have a say too. A certain consistency in Vergil's characterization in ancient and Renaissance readings of his work suggests Vergil's own influence in establishing how he was remembered as a poet.[5] Vergil's persona may be drawn from his texts, but those texts themselves offer suggestions (and not always consistent ones) on how to portray their author. And as one might expect, the author's notion of what a poet is does not neatly align with what later readers expect.

Moreover, the expectations of those readers will necessarily reflect their own context. Evoking Vergil in persona will reflect a particular situations in which the author was read. For the author of pseudepigraphic work, Vergil's self-portrayal of his development from the lowly themes of the *Eclogues* to *Georgics* and *Georgics* to *Aeneid* may lead him to style his own poems on low themes as Vergilian juvenilia. But the commentator who approves of using the *diplê* on the texts of Vergil may be more inclined to draw on traditions that emphasize Vergil's symmetrical position to Homer. Not only texts, but also particular treatment of texts—and the implicit message sent about their authors—will shape the development of the persona in a life. And so the text, the context and the keepers of that context in which readers interpret the *Aeneid* all have a say on who this 'Vergil' is. Individual accounts of Vergil's persona abound in proportion to differing circumstances.

No pattern is perfectly robust, and any firm distinction will have its exceptions. My aim in this chapter is only to sketch instances where constructions of Vergil's persona characterize him as a Homeric poet. I do not attempt to catalogue every instance where Vergil is treated in a way that could be understood in parallel with a way that Homer is treated by Greek readers. Rather, I am concerned with the view of the playwrights and producers behind

[5] Laird, "Recognizing Virgil," 75-76 and *passim*. Laird' theatrical description of this process gave rise ot my own: "The role ascribed to the poet by his ancient readers amounts to a dramatic role." (76).

this drama: under what conditions did it make sense to characterize Vergil *qua* author as Homeric? I offer the broad outline of the history of how a persona is deployed over time—its origin, the conditions shaping its development, and what part it comes to have in a system of connections between Homer and Vergil.

I review the construction of Vergil's persona as poet from three different angles. The first concerns the effects of the poet's own construction of his persona and the response of the first generation of Vergil's readers to that voice. Vergil's canonicity is shown to be separable from his reputation as another Homer.

The second offers an illustration of how the characteristics of the Homeric persona of Vergil can affect accounts of the poet's 'life'. In this instance, I explore the construction of Vergil in the *Vita Suetonii vulgo Donatiana* (*VSD*), the earliest surviving life of Vergil. I then trace the features of that persona in earlier authors, observing common elements that suggest educational uses of the *Aeneid* had a special influence on the development of Vergil's Homeric identity.

Lastly, I show how the construction of a Homeric Ennius plays a role in establishing a Homeric Vergil. To do so I return to Ennius and the conditions under which he was replaced by Vergil in these scholarly and educational contexts. I also note the ways in which the *Aeneid* is particularly suited to the demands placed on it by commentators insisting on a Homeric persona for Vergil.

1. The Canonical Vergil

I began the previous chapter with Jerome's rejection of the claim that Ennius was an *alter Homerus*. His ruling in favor of Vergil[6] instead feels today like a late statement of what was known to Vergil's contemporaries mere moments after the publication of the *Aeneid*: that

[6] Jerome, *In Michaeam* 2.7 CCSL 76 (M. Adriaen ed., 1969) 511—see above p. 30 n. 3.

in this poet we have the best candidate for a Homer in Latin.

On this view Propertius looks especially prescient in his famous praise of the as yet unpublished *Aeneid*. While Vergil was still alive, Propertius recommends the *Aeneid* in specifically Homeric terms:

> cedite Romani scriptores, cedite Grai!
> nescio quid maius nascitur Iliade.
>
> Make way, Roman author, make way Greek scribes! This is the birth of something bigger than the *Iliad*. (Prop. 2.34.65-66)

So here we find the birth of the new Roman Homer. But is it really so? Strictly speaking, the point of comparison is between the *Iliad* (no *Odyssey* in sight here) and the unpublished *Aeneid*—not the poets Homer and Vergil. It is true that the opposition of *Romani scriptores* to *Grai* arranges an analogy as neat as we would find on any SAT (Greek writers : Roman writers :: *Iliad:…*). But the lines leave that inference to us. What they actually say is that the *Aeneid* that is fast rushing on the Romans and Greeks will best both their writers equally. It is not an equivalent to the *Iliad* at all: it is a greater poem. Propertius does not insist on a Homeric 'role' that Vergil is auditioning for, nor even that Ennius and Vergil are competing for the same honors. When he writes elegy 3.3, Propertius gives Ennius as the model instance of epic in Latin (3.3.5-11). Additionally, nothing he says here would require him to reject Ennius as 'Roman Homer', even if he accepts Vergil's superiority to both. Propertius opens the door to analogies with Homer by evoking the *Iliad*, but they are neither straightforward nor very developed. He evokes Homer's status as surely as Jerome, but appears to be using a different rulebook for this game.

Moreover, caution is due when a self-styled Roman disciple of Callimachus offers praise for an epic 'greater' than the *Iliad*. Propertius often invokes Callimachus' slender style and disdain for larger works (e.g., 2.1.40; 3.1.1-6; 3.3). In this elegy he does so as well, discounting the help of ancient authors in preference for Philitias and Callimachus (2.34.30-

32). In 2.34, Propertius is less interested in affirming Vergil's role in a traditional canon of epic than in disrupting epic's role altogether. These lines come in a poem cataloguing a dispute as to whether achievements in elegy may be matched against those in epic. Propertius smugly rejoices that his poem's addressee, Lyncaeus, is smitten at last (even if it means he is after Propertius' own lover—line 15-24). Lyncaeus' passion even drives him to write elegy instead of epic. Propertius dwells on this proof of the rule that even the mightiest Paris or Jason—or even Homer—may be laid low by love (7-8; 45-6). This point is sharpened by a catalogue of elegists placed at the poem's end. There Propertius not only makes a canonical list but also insists that elegy can make an enduring legacy of the sort typically associated with epic. Love has the power to trip up even epic heroes and poets (Homer) and to draw the attention of epic poets to matters best suited to elegaics (Lyncaeus, Vergil). Surely then it is appropriate for an expert practitioner of love poetry to employ the epic-sized norm of canonical disputes. On the balance, the bold prediction of the *Aeneid*'s greatness seems at best constrained by Propertius' revision of the meaning of epic and at worst a well-aimed and backhanded compliment. [7]

Reading Propertius in the shadow of Jerome allows two important observations about how Vergil's Homeric persona develops. The first is that the tradition of Vergilian interpretation primes readers like Jerome to work such statements to fit into the conventional view of Vergil's legacy. When one wishes to stress the relationship of Homer and Vergil it is indeed convenient to cite these two lines of Propertius in isolation. Just so, at *VSD* 30 they are included as straightforward high praise for the *Aeneid,* as if the connection was apparent from the first.

[7] Donncha O'Rourke, "Representation and Misrepresentation," 464-5 reviews accounts that accept these lines as genuine praise as well as those that see an implicit criticism. She offers a compelling argument that Propertius is particularly occupied with Vergil's shift in genres over time, and moreover that he is at least dubious about Vergil's shift into epic (492).

Second, more often than not, something must be added or subtracted from the context to make the story cohere. Set in its original context, Propertius 2.34.65-66 simply does not fit so snugly into a history of Vergil's role as a 'Homeric' poet. Vergil and Homer are linked from the beginning, but not as exclusively as the later tradition would lead us to expect. To understand how connections between Vergil and Homer operate in each instance, one must ask why—or whether—the connection is made in the first place.

To that end, in the following section I attempt to recover Vergil's canonicity apart from any Homeric role. The Vergil Propertius lauds is not properly the author of the *Aeneid* yet. When he composes 2.34, the work has not yet been published.[8] Whether sincere or not, Propertius' claim is not that the *Aeneid* has already achieved parity with the Homeric poems so much as that it will be an instant classic. By all surviving accounts of Vergil's fame, this was to be expected. The lives of Vergil preserve anecdotes of Vergil being mobbed on the street.[9] Suetonius reports C. Epirota was teaching Vergil's poetry early, perhaps even while the poet still lived (and so necessarily what poetry was available before the *Aeneid* was published).[10] Tacitus tells of Vergil receiving an ovation at a performance of the *Eclogues* just as Augustus used to receive upon entering a public space.[11] By the time he turned to epic Vergil had the *princeps* for a patron, who pestered him for sneak peeks and recitations.[12] The *Aeneid* seems to have been born canonical.[13]

None of these marks of status depend on any 'Homeric' aspects of Vergil or the *Aeneid*. Vergil's canonicity stands apart from his role as Roman Homer. It is true that since Latin literature was structured on symmetry with Greek genres and authors, simply to be

[8] In the mid 20s BC. "The chronology is indicated by the recency of Gallus' suicide: *modo*, 2.34.91." (O'Rourke, "Representation and Misrepresentation" 458).
[9] *VSD* 11.
[10] Suet. *Gramm.* 16.3 with Wallace, *Virgil's Schoolboys*, 4-5.
[11] Tac. *Dial.* 13.2
[12] *VSD* 31; cf. Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.24.11.
[13] Suerbaum, "Der Anfangsprozess der ‚Kanonisierung' Vergils," 174-5.

canonical implied some kind of comparison to Homer.[14] But even for a would-be epic poet, it was possible to attain fame and canonicity in other terms than those of being like a Greek author, and even for others to describe it without reference to Homer.

This is reflected in the various ways that Vergil's place as an author is expressed among his contemporaries and near contemporaries. Horace's coolness towards the idea of styling himself or others as 'alternate' versions of Greek poets is evident in how he distances himself from the *critici* who title Ennius an *alter Homerus*.[15] His evocations of Vergil never dwell on any sort of singular cultural role for him. When recommending Vergil for a place in Augustus' library on the Palatine, Vergil is not treated as a singularly dominant figure, but paired with Varius as the two exemplars of the Augustan Latin epic:[16]

> At neque dedecorant tua de se iudicia atque
> munera, quae multa dantis cum laude tulerunt,
> dilecti tibi Vergilius Variusque poetae
> nec magis expressi vultus per aenea signa
> quam per vatis opus mores animique virorum
> clarorum apparent.
>
> Neither do Vergil and Varius, poets dear to you, dishonor your judgment of them and your gifts, which they receive to the giver's great credit; nor are the features pressed on bronze figures displayed more plainly than the virtues and souls of famous men expressed in the craft of a poet. (*Ep.* 2.1.245-7)

This connection with Augustus was also stressed over that with Homer in Velleius Paterculus' account of the great literary figures that arose in the lifetime of the *princeps*:

> paene stulta est inhaerentium oculis ingeniorum enumeratio, inter quae maxime nostri aevi eminent princeps carminum Vergilius Rabiriusque et consecutus Sallustium Livius Tibullusque et Naso, perfectissimi in forma operis sui; nam vivorum ut magna admiratio, ita censura difficilis est.

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[14] Citroni, "The Concept of the Classical," 212-214.
[15] *Ep.* 2.1.50ff. with Feeney, "The Odiousness of Comparisons," 7-12.
[16] Suerbaum, "Der Anfangsprozess der ‚Kanonisierung' Vergils," 190-3 observes that Vergil and Varius are paired in *Ars Poetica* 53ff. as well. In *Carm*.1.6.1-2, it is Varius whose song is Homeric (*Maeonii carminis*—cf. the singular position attributed to him by Horace, *S.* 1.10.43f., *forte epos acer, / ut nemo, Varius ducit…*, albeit prior to the *Aeneid*'s composition.).

> To list the great talents who remain impressed on our eyes is almost foolish. Among those who especially stand out in our time are Vergil, the *princeps* of poetry, and Rabirius, and Livius who follows next to Sallust, and Tibullus and Ovid, all most accomplished in the designs of their own work. But as to the still living: my admiration is as great as the criticism is difficult. (Vell. 2.36.3)

Even after the *Aeneid*, Vergil could also be treated as a poetic authority without the intervention of the epic's reputation. When he appeals to the *Georgics* on agricultural matters, Vergil is treated more like Cato and Varro than Homer: he is part of a living tradition that can be corrected as well as cited. Despite being quoted verbatim and treated as a respected representative of traditional wisdom, Vergil does not yet accrue the kind of authority attributed to him in late antiquity.[17] By contrast, when Macrobius' Praetextatus cites *Georgics* 1.272 on the proper washing of sheep, he prefaces the verses with the phrase, *Maro omnium disciplinarum peritus*—Vergil, expert in every branch of learning (*Sat.* 1.19.3). It is a judgment more typically made of Homer, and far less amenable to critique.[18]

This reticence to name Vergil Homeric is at odds with Jerome's late antique classification. But it likewise sits uncomfortably with both ancient and modern accounts of Vergil's allusive project. Given our own awareness of Vergil's multifaceted engagement with the Homeric poems, what cries out for explanation is why Vergil was treated as an *alter Homerus* so haphazardly. The sheer volume of allusions to Homer in the *Aeneid* offers an obvious way in which Vergil is a Homeric poet. In Conte's terms, we have not only a dense nest of exemplary allusions in the *Aeneid*, but the appropriation of the already canonical Homer as a code model. For Conte this is a bid to be a canonical code model as well, and indeed it is for this reason he calls Vergil an "*alter Homerus*": by entwining his poem so closely to Homer, Vergil amalgamates them, becoming a suitable code model for later poets

[17] Doody, "Virgil the Farmer?" esp. 183, 188ff.
[18] This universal expertise will be treated at length in chapter four.

as well.[19]

No one denies that Vergil became in some sense a canonical reference point for Latin literature (and epic in particular). And yet there is no long line of Propertii ready to recognize the new Homer everyone was waiting for. For our purposes, what is most relevant is that there is no record of anyone before Jerome naming Vergil 'another Homer'—still less employing a comparison to Homer in order to describe the 'code model' role Conte describes by that term. It not necessary to name Vergil as a Roman Homer in order to use him in such a role. In this way the matter is purely practical: where Vergil really can take the place of Homer, Homer is no longer needed and there is no need to mention him. [20] Thus even in the striking evocation of Vergil at the end of the *Thebaid* (12.808ff.), Statius need not mention or invoke Homer at all to recognize the "divine" *Aeneid*'s place at the unreachable summit of Latin epic.[21] Nor does he fail to distinguish between poet and poem: it is not he but the *Thebaid* that must walk in the footsteps of, not Vergil, but the *Aeneid*. Such distinctions, as will become evident, are critical in separating a persona that defined by its association with Homer from a persona who authors one poem with a special relationship to the Homeric epics.

And yet, one could say that Vergil himself has made the case quite strongly. The *Aeneid* could not avoid being compared to its Homeric models. Its sheer density of allusions in plot, style and words plainly demanded it. And there are patterns both within and without of Vergil's corpus that seem to guide readers to a series of Greek models that ends with

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[19] Conte, *The Rhetoric of Imitation,* 64, cf. 31 (interpreting Macrobius' *de Homeri speculo*, *Sat.* 5.2.13) and 37 ("the Latin Homer").

[20] One can compare this 'Homeric' status apart from any direct comparison to Homer to the role Ennius plays for Cicero in most of his works. Ennius' uses also simultaneously suit 'Homeric' roles without using a vocabulary that mentions or otherwise directly evokes Homer. See above, pp. 74-81.

[21] In the famous lines *Theb.* 12.816-17: *vive, precor; nec tu divinam Aeneida tempta, / sed longe sequere et vestigia semper adora* (Live, I pray, nor test the divine *Aeneid*, / but follow it from a distance and always honor its footsteps).

Homer. First, any readers who had begun with Vergil's *Eclogues* and *Georgics* would perceive an easily legible pattern of emulation of Greek authors in his poems. Vergil refers obliquely but unmistakably to Theocritus in the *Eclogues* (*Sicelides Musae*, *Ecl.* 4.1 and *Prima Syracosio dignata est ludere versu… Ecl*. 6.1). So too his ambition to sing Hesiod's song in Roman territory is acknowledged openly in the narrator's voice in the *Georgics* (*Ascraeumque cano Romana per oppida carmen*, *G.* 2.176). So when easy references to Homer (*Arma virumque cano*, *Aen.* 1.1) and Apollonius (*Nunc age… Erato*, *Aen.* 7.37) follow prominently at the opening and the middle of the poem, the Vergilian reader is well-primed to understand that Vergil is signaling his models in a similarly overt manner.

Appearances are deceiving here, and in more ways than one. The allusive models of Vergil are not so easily accounted for. But Vergil has nonetheless laid out a superficially simple list of models who could be taken for his 'alternates' in Greek literature. Moreover, laying things out in this manner elides a significant change in the Vergil's self-presentation as author. Vergil's narrator's voice, much noted and discussed in the *Eclogues* as well as in the *Georgics*, has suddenly grown quiet in the *Aeneid*. Although the pattern of allusions to his models has not changed, the relationship of his persona to them has.

In the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, the narrator repeatedly draws attention to his status as a poet and author. What follows are only some of the more prominent instances of a well-studied phenomenon. The blurring of the lines between Vergil as author and the bucolic poets he depicts is a key feature of the *Eclogues.* In *Ecl.* 5.85-87 the second and third *Eclogues* by Vergil are treated as compositions of herdsmen. But Vergil invites the identification of himself as poet with Tityrus in *Ecl.* 6.1-5. There Apollo addresses the poem's narrator as *Tityre* while commanding a plan for his poetry that happens to align with the ambitions Vergil has for the *Eclogues.* Moreover, he brings features contemporary to Vergil's Rome into the world of the poem (e.g., the poets Gallus in 6.64-73, and 10, Varus in 6.6-12, and Cinna and

Varius in 9.35-36; a visit to Rome 1.19f.; a song worthy of a consul in *Ecl.* 4.1-3.).[22]

The process of authorship is part of the show: the development of poems and multiplicity of voices is left open to view. In other words, it drives the reader to acknowledge that there is a poet is composing, editing, arranging the work before them—someone to whom the suggestive images of delaying an epic (*Ecl.* 6.1-5) or finishing a rustic basket may apply (*Ecl.* 10.70ff.). This in turn invites (and here even implies) a set of traits, aims and habits that can be attributed to that author at work.

Even though the *Georgics* are usually less subject to a biographical reading in ancient sources, there is a similar pattern of overt reference to the poet's models and circumstances. Here too the narrator speaks as a poet. He discusses his models, his patrons, his ambitions as a poet. It is he who asserts, "I sing an Ascraean [that is, Hesiodic] song through Roman towns" (*G*. 2.176), who alludes to Ennius' epitaph and questions his primacy (3.9-11), and who promises a temple for Augustus' epic deeds (3.11-48). As in the *Eclogues*, the reader is regularly faced with asides, reflections, and frames that bring the figure of the poet to mind. The poet or author keeps on coming into view. The climactic instance is at the end of the *Georgics*, where this poetic persona is linked back to the one in the *Eclogues* through the famous *sphragis* that concludes the work:

> Haec super arvorum cultu pecorumque canebam
> et super arboribus, Caesar dum magnus ad altum
> fulminat Euphraten bello victorque volentis
> per populos dat iura viamque affectat Olympo.
> illo Vergilium me tempore dulcis alebat
> Parthenope studiis florentem ignobilis oti,
> carmina qui lusi pastorum audaxque iuventa,
> Tityre, te patulae cecini sub tegmine fagi.

[22] Farrell, "Greek Lives and Roman Careers," 25-6 and Peirano, *Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 107-9 offer summaries. Kania, *Virgil's Eclogues and the Art of Fiction*, 73-110 not only describes the issues of identification at length but also considers how in *Ecl.* 4, 5, and 6 Vergil "subtly interweaves authorial and figural discourse (that is, the speech of characters)… as several distinct speakers claim positions proximate to authorship of the book of *Eclogues* as a text" (77).

> I sang these things about the cultivation of fields and cattle and about trees while great Caesar was thundering against the deep Euphrates in war and as conqueror gave laws to consenting peoples and sought the way to Olympus. At that time sweet Parthenope nurtured me, Vergil, as I flourished in pursuits of undistinguished leisure, I who played with the songs of herdsmen, and as a daring youth, Tityrus, sang of you under the spreading beech tree. (*G.* 4.559-66)

In this passage Vergil names himself and summarizes his body of work, finishing with a near quotation of the first line of the *Eclogues* (*G.* 4.566). Even on a cursory reading of the passage, one cannot avoid thinking about the author (*canebam…* 559; *Vergilium me*, 563), his previous works (*Tityre, tu*… 566), where he was when he wrote them (*Parthenope*, 564), and when (*dum Caesar magnus illo Caesar dum magnus ad altum / fulminat Euphraten* 560-1; *illo…tempore* 563). There is a storyline to the poet's work, a narrative of progress through life's changing circumstances that tracks with progress in poetry and status. We are led to recognize the persona of *Georgics* 4 as the same who is presented in the *Eclogues*.[23] Again, the reader's attention is turned to the fact of composition and performance, to imagine the persona as author.[24]

In the *Aeneid* by contrast, this aspect of Vergil's persona is comparatively submerged. The author is not entirely absent—apostrophes are not uncommon—but the authorial persona is no longer the vehicle for discussing models, traditions and authorship. Metapoetic references to Homeric elements abound in the *Aeneid*,[25] but the only two places the narrator delivers them in his own voice are the first line *Arma virumque cano* (*Aen.* 1.1) and the reference to eternal fame and Roman imperium in the apostrophe to Nisus and Euryalus (*Aen.*

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[23] On the author's naming himself and the use of sphragis here, see Peirano, "*Ille ego qui quondam,*" esp. 281. On using one's authority to rename the subject more generally, see M. Bernardi, "Going Twice: Replacing Shashank at Service Auction," (*New Graduate Studies* 2, February 7, 2015).
[24] Laird, "Re-inventing Virgil's Wheel," 158. See also his "Recognizing Virgil" *passim* on how Vergil's self-presentation provokes repeated patterns in reconstructions of him as author.
[25] E.g., Iopas in *Aen.* 1.740ff., a figure that alludes to Homer's Demodocus and whose song references Vergil's own poetry. Peirano, "*Ille ego qui quondam*" 276ff.

9.446-450).

Again, this is not to say that the elements that mark Vergil's movement in career are absent, or even hidden: patron as well as models both Greek and Roman are well in view. But these references are not made by the narrator. Augustus is mentioned by Jupiter, not the poet, or else displayed on a shield (*Aen.*1.286, 8.678). Certainly there is no explicit naming of Homer as model, even by circumlocution.[26] His presence is elided even from the company of poets he might have been expected to join in the underworld (*Aen.* 6.660ff.). Instead, Vergil most often leaves such connections to be made by characters. Ennius' famous programmatic meeting with Homer's shade is replayed, but between Aeneas and Anchises (6.679ff.). In one case the distinction holds even when a phrase is repeated in two works. In *Georgics* 2.43-4 and *Aeneid* 6.625-6, Vergil reworks one of the few instances where the Homeric narrator speaks in his own voice, denying he could sing what follows without one hundred tongues and an iron voice (cf. *Il.* 2.488-92 —a passage adapted by Ennius as well).[27] But whereas in the *Georgics* this famous Homeric tag is recounted in the narrator's voice, in the *Aeneid* the exact same phrase falls to the Sibyl (*Aen.* 6.625-6). Explicit allusions in the narrator's voice are suddenly very rare.[28]

Ironically, the perceived distance between model and author that follows may result from trying to be more like Homer. Less expression on the poet's craft in a poet's voice can be accounted for, at least in part, by the different genres Vergil is writing in. Self-referential poetry is not foreign to bucolics, and the autobiographical interpretation of Theocritus' *Idyll* 7 sets precedent for the readers of the *Eclogues*.[29] Similarly, the persona of Hesiod is prominent

[26] *arma virumque cano* (*Aen.* 1.1) is the most explicit allusion to Homeric texts in the narrator's voice, and notably singular and early.
[27] *Ann.* 469-70 (Skutsch).
[28] The other important exception besides the proem is the invocation of Erato in *Aen.* 7.36-45 mentioned above, which points back to Apollonius' proem to *Argonautica* 3.
[29] See Gow, *Theocritus,* vol. II, 127-130 for discussion on ancient and modern readings, with further discussion in Thill, *Alter Ab Illo,* esp. 46.

both in the singer's meeting with the Muses in the *Theogony*'s proem and in the conflict with his brother Perses in the *Works and Days* (where his victory over other poets factors in as well).

So too the suppression of metapoetic comments in the *Aeneid*'s narrative persona is Homeric. Homer is notoriously quiet about his origins, rivals, audience. He says little directly, requiring others who want a biography to supply it for him. Nonetheless, much can be gleaned from how Homer presents bards and their listeners, or else uses retellings of stories to correct or supplement alternative versions of myths.[30] These aspects of Homeric epic's relationship to its predecessors and rivals are adopted with gusto in the *Aeneid*.

One may ask whether such a distinction would be strongly felt by readers. My answer is: it depends on the context. But if one reads with the expectations of the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* in view, one may well be surprised at the dramatic change. Petrarch makes the case well in a letter addressed to the shade of Homer in Hades (*Epistolae rerum familiarum* 24). Petrarch's Homer is indignant, and not least over Vergil's epic. Petrarch writes in order to sooth the wounded pride of the ancient poet, who resents that Theocritus and Hesiod received explicit nods from Vergil while the great debt owed to him is left unremarked in the *Aeneid*. So Petrarch responds:

> Nempe ille Theocritum in *Bucolicis* ducem nactus, in *Georgicis* Hesiodum, quemque suis locis inseruit. 'Et cur' inquies, 'tertium in heroyco carmine ducem habens, nulla eius operis in parte me posuit?.' Posuisset, michi crede…. Licet autem alios ubi occurrit atque ubi commodum fuit annotasset, tibi uni, cui multo amplius debebat, non fortuitum sed certum certoque consilio destinatum reservabat locum. Et quem reris, nisi eminentiorem cuntis atque conspectiorem? Finem ergo preclarissimi opera expectabat, ibi te suum ducem tuumque nomen altisonis versibus laturus ad sidera.
>
> For Vergil took Theocritus as his guide in the *Eclogues* and Hesiod in the *Georgics*, and he included each man in his text. And you will protest: "Why, since he took me as his third guide in the epic, did he not mention me in any part of that work?" He would have included you, believe me….

[30] Segal, "Bard and Audience in Homer," and Finkelberg. "The Canonicity of Homer," 138-43.

> Even if he referred to others where it occurred to him and was convenient, he reserved for you alone, to whom his debt was far greater, no random place but a fixed place marked off by a fixed plan. And what place do you think, if not a position more prominent and noticeable than all the rest? So he waited for the end of his most glorious work, and was going to raise you there as his highest guide to the stars, and mark your name in lofty verses. (*Ep. Fam.* 24.12, 22-23; trans. Fantham)[31]

Vergil's first readers might also have paused. Those moving within the Latin epic tradition from Ennius' *Annales* to the *Aeneid* might have felt the contrast with Ennius' loud persona. Ennius not only recounts meeting with Homer's shade but apparently referred to his reworking of material recounted by Naevius in his narrative voice.[32] Ennius' persona is the sort to claim Homer's soul; Vergil's, in the *Aeneid* at least, retreats backstage. Even the relationship to the older poet has changed. In the *Georgics* at least he was far readier both to discuss models explicitly and vaunt his own abilities against Ennius.[33]

The 'career' persona of Vergil maintains at least as dominant an influence as any 'Homeric' persona in the Vergilian tradition. The notion of the poetic career proved a powerful and enduring frame for thinking about the development of a poet through different genres. Imagining Vergil as a poet who has a career offered a way to reflect on careers more broadly. Joseph Farrell argues that the notion of Vergil's career serves as a frequent reference point for Ovid. Ovid evoked Vergil generally and the *Aeneid* specifically in many ways. And yet he often stresses Vergil as poet too—a poet one could know personally. *Vergilium tantum vidi*, Ovid says in *Tristia* 4.10.51 ("I only saw him")—but on analogy to the others mentioned, he could have listened to, learned from, and even befriended him. The *arma* at the beginning of the *Amores* stresses the disjunction between Ovid's incipient career and Vergil's completed one. Ovid's many echoes of the pithy summary of Vergil's career in the *ille ego qui quondam* offer him a way of continuing to measure his own career's progress against

[31] *Ep. Fam*. 24=VIII.9 in Fantham's numbering.
[32] *Brut*. 71, 76 (on *Ann.* 206-8). See above, pp. 39-45.
[33] E.g., *G.* 3.8ff.—see above, p. 52 n. 51.

Vergil's.[34] Statius made similar use of the career motif to make an evaluation of Lucan, comparing his earliest 'juvenile' work the *Pharsalia* to the *Culex* attributed to Vergil.[35]

Nor was this version of Vergil incompatible with treatments of him as another Homer. To frame Vergil's career thus imagines a move from genre to genre, finishing with epic. Yet that framework is developed primarily in the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*, and later attempts to place the *Aeneid* in that history lean on the history of the persona developed in those earlier works. Three well-known examples can illustrate how Vergil's readers could supply their own explicit allusions to Homer to fill out Vergil's career. The first, the supposedly excised opening to the *Aeneid*, extends a summary of Vergil's career comes in exactly the self-conscious voice of the persona in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*:[36]

> ille ego qui quondam gracili modulatus avena
> carmina et egressus silvis vicina coegi,
> ut quamvis avido parerent arva colono,
> gratum opus agricolis, at nunc horrentia Martis
> arma virumque cano.
>
> I am he who once played my songs on the slender reed pipe and, on leaving the woods, compelled the neighboring fields to yield to the ever unsatisfied farmer, the favored work of plowmen, but now Mars' bristling arms and a man I sing. (*VSD* 42)

As in the *sphragis* at the end of the *Georgics*, these lines connect Vergil's works under one author and develop the notion of progress from one genre to another. But whether a Vergilian composition or not,[37] this addition to the proem stands in contrast to the remainder of the *Aeneid* precisely in making an explicit connection between voice of the epic poet and the voice of the poet who wrote the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics*. It sounds so different from the poet's voice in the remainder of the epic that it could only be appended to the beginning

[34] Farrell, "Ovid's Virgilian Career," 41-55.
[35] Stat. *Silv*. 2.7.73-4. A similar comment is attributed to Lucan himself in the *Vita Lucani* (Reifferscheid, 50).
[36] Laird, "Recognizing Virgil," 90-92.
[37] For a brief summary of positions, see Farrell, "Ovid's Virgilian Career," 47-8 and 54-55.

of the poem, because the poem offers no other natural location for it.

A similar construction of Vergil's intentions is made by the anonymous reader who appended *Catalepton* 15 to the supposed collection of Vergil's earliest poetry:

> Vate Syracosio qui dulcior Hesiodoque
> maior, Homereo non minor ore fuit,
> illius haec quoque sunt divini elementa poetae
> et rudis in vario carmine Calliope.
>
> He who was sweeter than the Syracusan bard and greater than Hesiod and not less than the Homeric voice, these too are the building blocks of that divine poet[38] yet untaught by Calliope in changing song. (*App. Vergil*. 15)

Because of the importance of progress from one genre to the other in Vergil's career, juvenilia is an especially inviting form of pseudepigrapha. It is easy to project the process of development backward. This summary acknowledges that these poems are merely a taste of what is to come before laying out the career ahead.[39] And it defines that career by the models rather than the works referred to by the *ille ego qui quondam* and his epitaph: Theocritus, Hesiod, and finally Homer. In doing so it again highlights the distinction between the *Aeneid* and the other works of Vergil: *Syracosio* is taken verbatim from the first line of *Ecl.* 6, and Hesiod is referred to by the circumlocution *Ascraeus* more than once (*Ecl.* 6.70, *G.* 2.176). But the role of Homer must be projected onto the Vergilian persona who never takes the name himself.

We see the same orderly progress through genres in the epitaph attributed to Vergil:

> Mantua me genuit, Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc
> Parthenope; cecini pascua rura duces.
>
> Mantua begat me, Calabria took me, Parthenope now has me. I sang of pastures, farms, captains. (*VSD* 36)

[38] More on this in the *VSD* below. However, note the career persona of Vergil may still take on more Homeric traits where the account of his career allows special stress on the *Aeneid*: *divini poetae* invokes the common designation of Homer as θεῖος. (Peirano, *The Rhetoric of the Roman Fake*, 84).
[39] Cf. *Catalepton* 14 with Peirano, *Rhetoric of the Roman Fake,* 82-3.

Here Vergil is imagined summarizing his own life as well as his career. The two neatly fit together: his progress from birth to burial and his progress through each poem are covered in three steps. The Vergilian career demonstrates its more biographical tendency here. To invoke Vergil as a man who was a poet with a particular history tends to evoke Vergil's poetic persona offering a reading of his own development.[40]

It takes a focus on the *Aeneid* only to produce the comparison with Homer only. A similar distinction comes into play whenever the question concerns Vergil himself. If you are looking in particular for biographical clues about Vergil, the relative lack of evidence in the *Aeneid* is notable. As Laird notes, the same absence has led many to exclude the *Aeneid* from discussions about certain questions—for instance, concerning Vergil's voice.[41] Vergil's relative silence on questions of authorship, rivalry, and models in the *Aeneid* makes it easy to supply a voice for the poet. Since that epic borrows much from Homer, a number of Homeric templates may be fitted readily. But Vergil is most successfully cast in the role of the Roman Homer where those who construct his persona have the greatest latitude to ignore the career he designed.

2. The (Homeric) Life of Vergil

The life of Vergil that goes under the name *Vita Donatiana vulgo Suetonii* (*VSD*) is preserved as forematter to a commentary on the *Eclogues* by the influential 4th century commentator Aelius Donatus. It common to conclude the majority of this account derives from the centuries older *Vita Vergilii* of Suetonius, but apart from some clear interpositions it is difficult to identify where Suetonius ends and Donatus begins.[42] Its later version at least is a life written for readers. The *VSD* uses the resources of the Vergilian tradition of

[40] Laird, "Recognizing Virgil," 93.
[41] Laird, "Recognizing Virgil," 76.
[42] Stok, "The Life of Vergil before Donatus," 107-108.

interpretation to construct a poet who can aid in answering questions provoked by reading Vergil's poems.

The *VSD* is an account keyed to the experience of readers, ordered by patterns recognizable to Vergil's audience. Donatus recognizes and reinforces the literary character of Vergil's life. He appends the life to his commentary as a preparation for the reader to begin on the *Eclogues*. In doing so he presents the life that can be constructed out of Vergil's works as good preparation for reading those same works. It not only draws on the poems themselves for details about Vergil, but recapitulates the poetic career Vergil maps out in the poems in the structure of the poet's life. In doing so the *VSD* repeats and preserves the pattern of other evocations of Vergil's life as a poet, such as the epitaph, *praeproemium* and *Catalepton* 15 examined above. (The first two are quoted in the text itself.) The history on offer thus repeatedly organizes the events of Vergil's life around the sequence of the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and *Aeneid* already familiar to Vergil's readers. The three structure several aspects of Vergil's life, from his move to the city, to his patrons, to his interests.

In patterning the *VSD* in this way, Donatus accepts Vergil's invitation to chart his persona's life by his poetic achievements. The structure of the *Vita* correlates the events from Vergil's life it recounts with the account of Vergil's poetic development available in his works. Those poems progress from the competing herdsmen of the *Eclogues* to the world of cultivation to themes of rulers and generals. So too the account of Vergil's early life is populated by themes of the earlier works: the woodlands and bees tended by his father (*VSD* 1), his 'rustic' facial features (8). Lines from the *Eclogues* are cited to support assertions about Vergil's taste in boys (9, *Eclogues* 2: Alexis stands in for Vergil's slave, Alexander), his mourning for his brother (14: Flaccus is mourned under the name Daphnis in *Ecl.* 5.20). The *VSD* adopts and extends Vergil's narrative of development back into his juvenilia (15-18). It follows the claims of *Ecl.* 6.3-5 that Vergil turned away from *reges et proelia* to bucolic

themes and follows the common pattern of ancient interpreters of *Eclogue* 1 in taking Vergil's invitation to read himself in the role of Tityrus (19).

The correlation with Vergil's self-presentation requires the *VSD* to change tacks when it recounts the composing of the *Aeneid*. The persona available in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* drops away. But the *Aeneid* nonetheless serves as a reference point, exercising a different kind of influence on the depiction of Vergil. For instance, a few incidents in Vergil's life come to have the flavor of scenes from the *Aeneid*. The recitation before Augustus and Octavia (*VSD* 32) replicates the scene of Aeneas reciting his travels before Dido—in fact, Aeneas' recitation of the fall of Troy in book 2 is first book Vergil recites. Octavia is affected by the lines which concern her son Marcellus in the story about Aeneas; Dido, to a lesser extent, by the parallels to her own story in the story about Aeneas.[43]

These incidents may or may not report actual occurrences. But in fact it is a typically epic and typically Homeric thing to do to swoon at the power of a line of poetry. (There is a parallel here too, as in *Aeneid* 2-3, with Odysseus' performance before Alcinous and Arete in *Od.* 9-12. The king and queen are stunned there too: *Od.* 13.1ff.) Such occurrences are either remembered or else invented because they fit the profile of the *Aeneid*. Moreover, the repetition and recycling of epic themes and actions is typical of the *Aeneid*'s composition. The verses by Sulpicius recorded in *VSD* 38 present the parallel still more vividly:

> Infelix gemino cecidit prope Pergamon igni,
> et paene est alio Troia cremata rogo.
>
> Unhappy Pergamon nearly fell into a second flame
> and Troy is almost burned on a different pyre. (*VSD* 38)

These lines, like Vergil's recitations, imagine the patterns of epic passing not only from the Homeric poems into the *Aeneid* but also into Vergil's life. Repetitions such as these

[43] Peirano, *Rhetoric of the Roman Fake,* 105-6 sees a similar transfer of Aeneas-like actions onto Vergil in the pseudepigraphal *Catalepton* 8.

operate in the *Aeneid* too: a simile from the *Iliad* is repurposed to describe an analogous scene set in Italy; Homer's hero returns, in a way, to Latium as the different Achilles promised by the Sibyl; the outbreak of civil war prefigures a repeated pattern in Roman history. The cycles deliberately blur the lines between epic poetry's tales of the past and recent events of Roman history. Extension into Vergil's own life is no great stretch.[44]

Vergil becomes 'like' the *Aeneid* by other means too, and again this is especially notable when the *VSD* follows the history of Vergil's composition of the *Aeneid* or the final days and publication of the epic. When *VSD* 23 tells that Vergil wrote the *Aeneid* in prose, that account is implausible as history. But it plainly reflects some aspects of the reader's experience of the text. It supplies an origin for the careful arrangement revealed by the reader's efforts. The employment of 'lighter verses' as 'struts' to hold passages together until stronger lines could be composed likewise illustrates a care for revision and perfection well-known to a dedicated reader of the *Aeneid* (23-24). The existence of the two, poet and poem, are linked moreover in a special way: Vergil himself is said to request the *Aeneid* be destroyed when he perishes, so that save for the intervention of Varius and Tucca (and Augustus), the poet and poem would be naturally coterminous. And they are conjoined in still other ways too. The perfection of the *Aeneid* will mean the end of Vergil's work: he will set aside poetry to devote himself to philosophy afterward.

> anno aetatis quinquagesimo secundo impositurus Aeneidi summam manum statuit in Graeciam et in Asiam secedere triennioque continuo nihil amplius quam emendare ut reliqua vita tantum philosophiae vacaret.
>
> In his fifty-second year, when he was about to put the last touches to the *Aeneid*, he decided to withdraw to Greece and to Asia and do nothing else but edit for three straight years, so that the remainder of his life might be free for philosophy. (*VSD* 35)

Vergil never finishes this task, and neither does he reach the proposed end to his

[44] Cf. Peirano, *Rhetoric of the Roman Fake,* 107-9

career—just as his final voyage home with Augustus does not make it all the way to Rome. And so in this sense Vergil's life remains incomplete. As the *VSD*, observes the *Aeneid* is too: its *versus etiam imperfectos* are left in place by Varius (41)—sufficient for greatness, but nonetheless unfinished.

Reading back an author's works into his or her experiences is the common stuff of ancient literary lives. Even in the *VSD*, this process is not exclusive to the *Aeneid*. Vergil's father tends the bees of *Georgics* 4 in *VSD* 1; and Vergil's diligence and perfectionism is evident in his composition of the *Georgics* as well as the *Aeneid* (22). But the conflation of Vergil and the *Aeneid* is far more marked. The biographical information used to outline Vergil's life runs out as the *Vita* finishes with the *Eclogues* and *Georgics.* But as the *Vita* discusses the *Aeneid* and its composition, episodes and characteristics continue to be drawn from the text and are even elaborated at greater length.

The persona of Vergil that emerges from this part of the *VSD* is indeed more Homeric—not only in experiencing events typical of and epic, but especially in being subject to practices of interpretation typical of Homer's readers. Vergil's relationship to the *Aeneid* in the *VSD* is similar to Homer's relationship to the *Odyssey* in several ancient lives of Homer. Given the personal (if poetry-focused) history available in Vergil's own poetry, it is unlikely that either Suetonius or Aelius Donatus should have turned to any of the lives of Homer as a model for a life of Vergil. But the *VSD* does nonetheless share with those lives the tendency of allowing the episodes of the poem to bleed into the life of the poet. Thus in a life of Homer like that of Ps. Herodotus, we discover characters and experiences of Odysseus in particular, from wandering islands to a teacher named Phemius, incorporated into Homer's life.[45] Likewise, as noted earlier, in both the Homeric epics and the *Aeneid* the authorial persona is

[45] Ps. Hdt. *Vit. Hom.* 4 (Phemius), 6-7 (Mentes and Mentor) and 26 (explicit claim that Homer honored these figures from his life in his poetry). Wandering from place to place across the sea is a constant theme of the work. Lefkowitz, *Lives of the Greek Poets,* 15.

relatively quiet. In case of Homer the relative absence of information serves as an invitation to rework episodes from the epic into a life about which the author has little to say. Ironically, following the career trajectory laid out in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* may lead to the same invitation. The history in the first two can be extended to include the *Aeneid*. However, a biographer attempting to create an account of how Vergil composed the *Aeneid* that is equally rich in episodes suddenly will have little to add about that persona from the poem itself—unless he imports the characteristics and scenes of the epic into the poet's life.

So far this reading of the *Vita* follows how a reader looking for a connection between narrator and author in the *Aeneid* (at least the author as perceived by the reader looking for one) can be led to stretch Vergil's life in directions the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* alone would not. The parallels between how one constructs a life of Homer out of his epics and elements of Vergil's life from the *Aeneid* are particularly salient here. The more isolated the *Aeneid* is from the other works of Vergil with a less Homeric voice, the more influence the *Aeneid* has on the reconstruction of Vergil as a poet, and the easier it is for the *Aeneid* to take a special role in defining Vergil. As a result, focusing on or prioritizing the *Aeneid* goes hand in hand with finding the poet 'Vergil' to be a Homeric poet.

VSD 43-46 gives just such a privilege to the *Aeneid.* Here, Vergil's importance as a poet is more explicitly defined along a parallel to Homer. The means is the response to their respective epics. The first sentence of the section reads: *Obtrectatores Vergilio numquam defuerunt, nec mirum, nam nec Homero quidem* (Vergil was never at a loss for detractors, and no wonder—not even Homer was.) The line does not posit an equivalence to Homer—one could in theory replace 'Vergil' in this sentence with any author under fire. But this opening sets the two poets as the relevant points of reference for the remainder of the discussion of the *obtrectatores*. Importantly, it does so by reference to poets and not to their works. Most any criticism of Homer will be directed to the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, whereas criticism of Vergil listed

in the *VSD* includes works besides epic. Making Homer the comparandum prepares the reader to interpret the criticism of Vergil in a Homeric paradigm, which in turn leans on parallels with the *Aeneid*.

That some of the detractors cited by the *VSD* draw the same parallel makes it easier to draw works with more varied origins into the orbit of a 'Homeric' Vergil. The list begins by following Vergil's career path, isolating works specific to the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* first. But the text that follows has roots in the Homeric tradition: the *Aeneidomastix* of Carvilius Pictor. This title reworks that of Zoilus' famous *Homeromastix*, a collection of criticisms of Homer's epics. Although Carvilius Pictor sets only the *Aeneid* against the Homer of Zoilus' title, the connection reinforces the parallelism between Homer and Vergil in the opening line. He also gives it a more literal interpretative possibility. It is not simply that as Homer had critics, so did Vergil; it is that they produced the same kind of critical responses—as if responses to Homer were a genre being copied into Latin as well.[46]

It is entirely possible that Carvilius Pictor meant this ironically.[47] A faux-*Homeromastix* is a way of drawing attention to a faux-Homer—perhaps even one who plagiarized as blatantly from Homer as Carvilius Pictor's title does from Zoilus.[48] But in the context of the *VSD* it becomes a blueprint for how to argue for a Homeric status for Vergil: epic poets of commensurable status will produce readers with commensurable features.

The list of detractors is arranged in such a fashion as to cast even critics who did not grant a Homeric status to Vergil into a position broadly symmetrical to Homer's critics. To

[46] Farrell, "Servius and the Homeric Scholia, 120-1.
[47] Farrell, "Servius and the Homeric Scholia," 121.
[48] There is little specific evidence here of the work's content, although the majority of the works cited on the *Aeneid* in *VSD* 43-6 concern Vergil's thefts from Homer (*furta*)—a common theme of Vergilian criticism, and the point of interest of Asconius Pedianus, cited both here and *VSD* 10. Weiß, *Homer und Vergil im Vergleich*, 45f. argues that the parallel with Zoilus implies an interest in moral faults, but that could include thefts (*furta*) as well. Evidence exists of a perhaps distinct *Vergiliomastix* as well in Serv. *ad Buc*. 2.21 and *ad Aen*. 5.521. See Scaffai, *La presenza di Omero nei commenti antichi a Virgilio*, 47-48.

begin with, the progression through works related to the *Eclogues*, *Georgics*, and finally *Aeneid* implies that all the works listed after the *Aeneidomastix* respond to the *Aeneid* in particular. Since more works are listed after the *Aeneidomastix* than before, the impression is that the *Aeneid* attracts more critics than the other works and commands a greater role in defining Vergil's legacy. Works with titles such as *vitia* (faults), *furta* (thefts) or ὁμοιοτελεύτων (similar endings?)[49] need not be exclusively concerned with the *Aeneid*. Perhaps the *Aeneid* did have an outsized role, and these works did primarily treat the *Aeneid*—the later evidence for works similar to the *furta* of Perellius Faustus and ὁμοιοτελεύτων of Q. Octavus Avitus place a strong emphasis on the epic. But it is not necessarily so.[50] Something like Herennius' pursuit of *vitia* must sound Homeric in this context, since Homer is the only other poet mentioned (and specifically in recalling that he too had his fault finders). The close of the passage suggests that this framing has been deliberate. Asconius Pedianus in writing against *obtrectatores,* is said to admit that Vergil did derive much from Homer. The *VSD* reproduces the quotation he assigned to Vergil: "why do they not also attempt these thefts? Then they would understand it is easier to take Hercules' club from him than a verse from Homer."[51] If taken as a kind of recapitulation of the opening lines of this section of the *VSD*, this conclusion produces a final sleight of hand. Two senses

[49] The purpose of the text is clear (*quos et unde versos transtulerit, VSD* 44) although the title as most straightforwardly reconstructed is curious. Reifferscheid, *Vita Vergilii*, 66 proposes *homoeon elenchon* (finding fault for similar lines) as the original text. Hagen (*Scholia Bernensia ad Vergili Bucolica atque Georgica*, 688) suggests the title was ὁμοιότητες (similarities).

[50] There is no shortage of material to investigate in the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, even if one stuck strictly to Vergil's explicit models. (e.g., Serv. *ad Buc*. 2.21, n. 48 above.) The ancient material gathered in the *Saturnalia* demonstrates a broader ambit for such studies (and likewise an interest in borrowings from authors aside from Homer). See Macrobius, *Sat.* 5.3ff. and 6.1ff., which catalogue Vergil's borrowings from Greek and Latin authors respectively.

[51] *Asconius Pedianus libro, quem contra obtrectatores Vergilii scripsit, pauca admodum obiecta ei proponit ea que circa historiam fere et quod pleraque ab Homero sumpsisset; sed hoc ipsum crimen sic defendere adsuetum ait: 'cur non illi quoque eadem furta temptarent? verum intellecturos facilius esse Herculi clavam quam Homero versum subripere.'* (*VSD* 46)

of being 'like Homer' are blurred together: on the one hand to have detractors (because one is great); on the other to imitate Homer's verse. The poet's work and the reader's work touch on the same idea. The conflation strengthens the impression that when considering Vergil's legacy, Homer has a necessary and determinant role in framing the discussion.

Here the outlines of a 'Homeric' persona for Vergil comes into view. It is a view of the author defined by facing outward to an audience and its questions instead of inward to the poet's own ends. The concern is not the poet whose work progresses or changes over the course of a career, but the one who can answer (and even speak directly) to the concerns of his critics—that is, his readers. The concerns and questions he produces in those readers are symmetrical to Homer's. And most often, the *Aeneid* is primarily meant, even where the poet alone is mentioned.

The *VSD* offers a relatively late moment where Homeric responses to the *Aeneid* collect alongside an account of Vergil's career. But these features, and particularly the parallel in reading functions, occur early in the reception of Vergil.[52] Looking back from the *VSD* one can observe that the common element to most occasions on which Vergil is paired with Homer is a context connected to the dedicated study of literature. This holds even for the poets who were especially interested in the model of Vergil's career, like Ovid. In *Remedia Amoris* 357-396, Ovid defends himself against critics of his shameless Muse (*Musa proterva*). Ovid contrasts the topics appropriate to elegy to those typical of epic and tragedy. Ovid mentions no tragic poets by name, but he evokes both Vergil and Homer to make the contrast in manner quite reminiscent of the *VSD*.[53] Ovid says his critics are motivated by envy, and that this is a sign of achievement: the highest accomplishments draw spite: *summa*

[52] The incidents preserved in the *VSD* include live performances by Vergil, suggesting some early and even contemporary sources for such criticism. But Asconius Pedianus himself may have been the first to collect the names of *obtrectatores* as a group and attach them to the symmetry with the Homeric tradition. See Görler, "obtrectatores," 808.
[53] Weiß, *Homer und Vergil in Vergleich*, 45ff.

petit livor (369). Ovid illustrates the vanity of envy by noting that those who criticize great poets derive any fame they have from the reputations of those they attack:

> Ingenium magni livor detractat Homeri:
> Quisquis es, ex illo, Zoile, nomen habes;
> Et tua sacrilegae laniarunt carmina linguae,
> Pertulit huc victos quo duce Troia deos.
>
> Envy disparages the abilities of Homer:
> Zoilus (whoever you are), your fame rests on his.
> And profane tongues butcher your song too,
> you by whose guidance Troy carried her defeated gods to this place. [54]
> (365-8)

There is a studied equality between Vergil and Homer here. Each is equally representative of epic and excellence. As noted above, Zoilus' *Homeromastix*, or scourge of Homer, famously catalogued inconsistencies and errors in the Homeric epics. Vergil's critics are by this measure equally brutal. Ovid even splits things evenly, two lines to each. Moreover, the Vergil of the *Aeneid* only is in view. Ovid implies that his own critics point to a poor match between the meter and theme of his poetry. Vergil, who took up quite different themes in the same dactylic hexameter, might have been given as an instance of an author capable of matching a variety of themes to one meter. But instead he is invoked exclusively in terms of epic, be it in character (Andromache), content, or plain comparison to Homer. It is in comparison to the greatest epic poet that Ovid claims his verse represents the pinnacle of elegiacs:

> Tantum se nobis elegi debere fatentur,
> Quantum Vergilio nobile debet epos.
>
> They will say elegy owes as much to us
> as renowned epic does to Vergil. (395-6)[55]

[54] Partly based on the translation of Mozley and Goold, 203. NB the conflation here of the role of Aeneas and Vergil as the *dux* who brings the gods from Troy to Rome, a further complication in the authorial voice. For more on Aeneas as a stand in for Vergil, see Kofler, *Aeneas und Vergil*.

[55] *Epos* may refer to meter only, and so could include the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*. But since the broader context of the poem appeals to more Homeric terms, it tends to accentuate Vergil's most prominent role as the canonical poet of epic proper.

This passage serves as an early testimony both to Vergil's critics and to the possibility of understanding them in Homeric terms. As in the *VSD*, where Homer had his *Homeromastix*, and so Vergil too must have his own scourge. Again, similar authors seem to produce similar readers.

Symmetry between the Vergilian and the Homeric in other poets frequently involves reading too. Juvenal complains of a woman who praises Vergil, addresses Dido's innocence and weighs Vergil against Homer—all typical activities of critics and teachers.[56] Meanwhile he announces in another poem that at his dinner party both Vergil and Homer will be read aloud for entertainment (11.179-182).[57] A similar situation obtains, in parody, at Trimalchio's feast.[58] Statius cites both in consecutive lines as comparisons to the greatest song one might sing, and both feature in his praise of Lucan. With the exception of Statius, who mentions the *Aeneid* in the last piece, each author cites Vergil and Homer by name, matching poet to poet and not text to text. And once more, in the absence of any mention of the *Eclogues* or *Georgics*, this means the Vergil of epic and the *Aeneid.* There is no need for the persona of

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[56] *Illa tamen gravior, quae cum discumbere coepit*
laudat Vergilium, periturae ignoscit Elissae,
committit vates et comparat - inde Maronem
atque alia parte in trutina suspendit Homerum.
But still worse is that woman who as soon as she reclines at dinner begins to praise Vergil, acquit Dido, set poets against each other and compares them—here she hangs Vergil and, on the other end of the scale, Homer. (6.434-7)
Note that it is the school teachers and rhetoricians who give way before her:
cedunt grammatici, vincuntur rhetores, omnis turba tacet. (6.438-9)

[57] *nostra dabunt alios hodie convivia ludos:*
conditor Iliados cantabitur atque Maronis
altisoni dubiam facientia carmina palmam.
quid refert, tales versus qua voce legantur?
Our party today will have other entertainments: the author of the *Iliad* will be sung, and the songs of sublime Maro that make [Homer's] prize uncertain. When such works are being read, what does it matter in what voice they are recited? (11.179-82)

[58] *Petr*. 59 (Homer), 68 (Vergil) and 118 (both cited as exemplars) are all instances of Trimalchio's failed attempts to display his 'learning'.

Vergil with a career.

In each of these instances Vergil is easily yoked with Homer to pull the same load. The sort of questions applied to one are easily and naturally applied to the other; comparison to one as to the other gives honor and praise; the roles played by one in Greek are matched by the roles of the other in Latin, particularly when erudition (or attempts at it) are at on display. Moreover, the Homeric roles outlined above—both in educational contexts and also in the social engagements shared by those who were educated—represent a broader range of interactions than in the case of one poet copying another. In these texts the citation of the poets refers to some common sort of educational experience—a signal of class and training in letters. The implication is that Vergil's pairing with Homer itself is recognizable as a symbol of that education. Something more than the relationship of one author and one reader is at play. Instead, what many readers do together (or presume they do together) gives the frame in which the symmetry between Vergil and Homer can be recognized.

3. Transforming Homerica into Vergiliana

The role of the Roman Homer in the early Principate was not a blank slate. The paradigm that brought Vergil's persona into a pairing with Homer likewise led to a competition with its previous occupant, the Homeric Ennius. The elevation of Vergil over Ennius is in its most memorable forms cast as the triumph of stylistic and formal excellence over rough or shaggy genius.[59] It is easy to conflate, again, the victory in one arena with that elsewhere, and see the replacement in 'Homeric' roles across the board.

[59] Propertius grants Ennius the shaggy crown (*hirsuta…corona*) in 4.1.61; Ovid says he lacks skill, *Amores* 1.15.19 (*Ennius arte carens*) and that nothing is shaggier than the *Annales* (*nihil est hirsutius illis*, *Trist*. 2.259); cf. discussion of these passages in Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext* 66f. Gellius *NA* 12.2.10 preserves Seneca's judgment that Vergil's clunkier phrases result from an attempt to please an *Ennianus populus*. See too the previously mentioned observation of Martial: *Ennius est lectus salvo tibi, Roma, Marone*! ('Rome, you read Ennius while Vergil lived!' *Mart.* 5.10.7).

But this aesthetic judgment does not suffice to explain the replacement of Ennius with Vergil in school curricula. Changes in taste could be slow to influence areas in which a text remained useful. Horace notes that he still studied Livius Andronicus in school, and blames a tendency to value older authors over new.[60] This Homeric role at least did not depend on contemporary judgments of style (and, after all, tastes change—Hadrian would prefer Ennius to Vergil).[61] In this section I take a closer look at where Vergil replaced Ennius in those scholastic contexts he once dominated.

As observed in the last chapter, Ennius frequently appeared in canonical lists opposite Homer. Columella offers an illustration of Vergil's ability to slot into Ennius' role as *alter Homerus* in these formulas. I noted earlier that Columella usually treats Vergil as an authority in his function as a preserver of agricultural knowledge rather than as an educational symbol. Yet in the preface to the work he makes a brief but tellingly different reference. There Columella recognizes that his reader may not wish to read about so many different topics concerning agriculture. He diagnoses this as a lack of confidence: the reader is unsure he can sustain the necessary enthusiasm or retain the knowledge demanded of him. So Columella attempts to encourage his reader and stoke his enthusiasm by remembering that even the second best have often made it into the canon, albeit below the greats they emulate. The peak Columella has in mind is Vergil:

> Summum enim columen adfectantes satis honeste vel in secundo fastigio conspiciemur. An Latiae musae non solos adytis suis Accium et Vergilium recepere, sed eorum et proximis et procul a secundis sacras concessere sedes?
>
> For we will be held in high enough esteem if in making for the highest peak we reach only the second tallest summit. Or is it not the case that the Latian muses admit not only Accius and Vergil, but have also granted their

[60] *Ep.* 2.1.50ff.; on Livius, 69-71.
[61] According to the late antique *Historia Augusta* 16.6. Recall that Cicero also classified Livius as a "Daedalus"-like stage of Latin poetry, too primitive to read more than once (*Brut.* 71-72).

> sacred dwellings to those who follow them and even those who are far from next in line? (*Agr. praef.* 30)

The mention of Vergil is telling because while Accius is often used as a representative of the best of Latin literature he is usually paired with Ennius. The two together—Ennius and Accius—can be taken as a symmetrical pairing to Homer and Sophocles, each acknowledged as a convenience as a top representative of their respective genres.[62] Despite the respect offered to the second best in this passage, Ennius is not mentioned at all. In substituting Vergil for Ennius, Columella has made a number of judgments: that Vergil and Ennius are comparable poets (presumably on the basis on both writing epic), that Vergil has surpassed Ennius, and most relevant to the current question, that Vergil is therefore a better candidate to stand in for a Latin equivalent to Homer.[63]

Taking Vergil as the 'peak' of Latin epic represented a substitution of one poet for another. Vergil replaced Ennius as the acknowledged best author in the most serious genre. The process was not immediate—Ennius continued to be known and studied—yet to some extent Vergil's adoption into the educational scheme in Ennius' role may seem as overdetermined as his reception as a Roman Homer. Acknowledged as the best Latin epic, with Augustus for a patron, the *Aeneid* was, as argued before, born canonical. What could impede its replacing the *Annales*?

And yet, there were reasons why substituting the *Aeneid* for the *Annales* might be inconvenient. The paradigms of Roman education were deliberately symmetrical to Greek

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[62] So in Vitruvius, 9 *praef.*16, Ovid, *Am.* 1.15.19, Seneca *Ep.* 58.5, Pliny the younger *Ep*. 5.3.6 and Fronto *Ep.* 4.4 as a pair; but also frequently recalled together as representatives of archaic epic and tragedy (complicated by Ennius' role as a canonical representative of both). See also Horace *Ep.* 2.1.56, Quint. *IO* 1.8.11 and 10.1.97 ranking Accius as canonical, and Citroni, "The Concept of the Classical" 216 n. 39 on Cicero's invocation of both in a Roman triad corresponding to Sophocles, Euripides and Aeschylus in e.g., *Acad.* 1.10 among other places. (Though as Citroni notes, when Cicero pairs Ennius with another as a representative of tragedy, it is Pacuvius and not Accius he chooses, e.g., *Opt. Gen.* 18.).

[63] The archaic tragedians were never completely replaced. Citroni, "The Concept of the Classical," 225-6.

ones.[64] Whatever such roles existed or developed in the century or so between the Ennius' publication of his epic and Vergil's birth, the *Annales* filled them. Not only was Ennius a counterweight to Homer in lists of canonical authors, but the *Annales* had come to be a ready substitute for Homer when rhetorical or other Latin-specific discipline demanded a Latin equivalent.[65] In theory the *Aeneid* could have this place; but it would mean a break with Varro, Cicero and other figures that had already made a significant impact on Latin letters. Moreover, the *Aeneid* might also have been included on different grounds. The ancient account of Vergil's first entrance into the schoolroom say that it happened while Vergil lived.[66] If so, it was presumably the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* that were studied, as the *Aeneid* was not published until after his death. It is hard to imagine Vergil not substituting Ennius in any Homeric role given the prominence of his project and its links to the Augustan regime. But it is possible to imagine him not taking every role available for a Roman Homer, just as Ennius appears to have split his role in the classroom with Livius in Horace's day.[67]

Ironically, Ennius himself had done much to establish the conditions under which Vergil could be Homeric. First, Ennius had focused on whether the poet could be called Homeric rather than the text. As outlined in the previous chapter, in the *Annales* Ennius develops a persona who could be said to be Homer. In the first lines of the epic, he recounts the dream in which the shade of Homer revealed that his own soul was now dwelling in Ennius. This contrasts with Vergil's more muted approach in the *Aeneid*. Ennius' narrator not only names his model but also introduces him as a figure in the epic and even claims identity with him. But the reader whose expectations were formed by Ennius' epic would ask the

[64] Significantly but selectively so: see Corbeill, "Education in the Roman Republic."
[65] Discussion in previous chapter, pp. 48-52.
[66] Suet. *Gramm.* 16.3 with Wallace, *Virgil's Schoolboys* 4-5.
[67] By the criteria Horace attributes to his teachers—the older, the better—Vergil would certainly have taken a backseat to Ennius (*Ep.* 2.1.50ff. again).

same of Vergil: is this a Homeric poet? Vergil's own self-presentation as an imitator facilitated imagining a poet of whom the question could be asked.

Furthermore, it would not be difficult to read Vergil as Homeric on the terms set by Ennius in the *Annales*. As argued earlier, the dream recharacterizes an otherwise well-established epic practice of allusion to Homer as evidence of the poet's unique status. In the *Annales*, such allusions come to function as manifestations of the presence of Homer's soul within the narrator-poet. Ennius' audience need not believe the claim, but they must attend to it, as the narrator's status is inextricable from understanding the *Annales*.[68] In this way Ennius establishes a rubric by which to judge whether a Latin poet ought to be considered Homeric: Homeric traits of a text are signs of the Homeric character of the poet. Readers of the *Annales* who internalized this understanding of Homeric allusions would find much material to argue for a Homeric persona in the *Aeneid*. The adoption of hexameter and a densely allusive style would support a claim similar to that made by Ennius, even where the reader had to supply the argument him or herself.

Lastly, Ennius suggests the *Annales* be read differently from the rest of his career. This too sets precedent for Vergil's relationship to the *Aeneid*. The persona Ennius develops in the *Annales* cannot be understood apart from Homer, but his earlier career can. Ennius' reputation as a poet was established long before the publication of his epic. His tragedies,

[68] Note that even before Ennius, the persona of an epic poet could offer a significant impact on interpretation. As observed in the previous chapter, Livius Andronicus' status as a Greek writing in a variety of Greek genres in Latin used his authority in both languages to undergird his translation of the *Odyssey.* Similarly, Naevius' personal experience of the Punic Wars and the geography of Sicily (overlapping with the traditional path of Odysseus) allowed him to be evoke the authority of autopsy. Ennius cultivated both elements of this role: first in his claim to possess Homer's soul (and proficiency in Greek) and second in concluding the first publication of the *Annales* with the Battle of Ambracia and its aftermath, on which campaign he accompanied M. Fulvius Nobilior in 189 BC (Suerbaum, "Der Anfangsprozess der ‚Kanonisierung' Vergils," 187; Farrell, "Greek Lives and Roman Careers," 38, with Skutsch, *The Annals*, 6, 553; for more on the influence of Naevius' incorporation of Roman history into epic, see also Feeney, *Beyond Greek* 108).

comedies and didactic poetry had made him a well-known figure.[69] But Ennius casts the *Annales* as a climax to his literary endeavors, and his presentation of himself as a Homeric poet in the *Annales* fits this new reading of Ennius' own development. He is not here a dramatist or didactic poet trying his hand at epic; he has always been an epic poet at heart. Even the reader who insists that Ennius' dramas are not superseded in importance or quality by the *Annales* must observe that the persona here recasts Ennius' career and his prior fame as a prologue to this moment. The Ennius of the *Annales* called to be treated as a Homeric poet in ways that required consideration apart from his previous poetic work. That process suited Vergil's corpus well too. Separating out the persona of the *Aeneid* from that of the *Eclogues* and the *Georgics* matched the change in self-representation in those works outlined above.

Ennius was not just a model for Vergil as a poet. The strategies of reading Ennius were also models and precedents for the readers of Vergil. Being able to read the persona of the *Aeneid* as a Homeric poet in Ennian terms helped make Vergil's adoption in other contexts more plausible. Vergil did not explicitly claim to best Ennius in the *Aeneid*, nor to be Homeric in Ennian terms. Yet he satisfied the criteria Ennius had made available, and this facilitated his deployment in other roles which Ennius had fit.

The introduction of Vergil into Ennian roles is most consequential in the adoption of the *Aeneid* in scholarly and educational contexts. The lasting traits of Vergil's theoretical role as Roman Homer are forged here, and they owe much to the role as played by Ennius. Here Ennius' own Homeric persona had become a point of reference.[70] The ability to read Vergil into an Ennian role as a Homeric poet made the substitution more feasible. But Vergil's

[69] NB again his dual role as a Roman Sophocles as well as a Roman Homer—see above, n. 62. On Ennius' career culminating in epic, see Farrell, "Greek Lives and Roman Careers," 37-40.
[70] See above, pp. 45-60.

assumption of that role depended not only on his ability to serve as a Roman Homer, but on his ability to fulfill the functions Ennius had too. Notably, where the generations that immediately followed Vergil stressed the difference in style or quality between the poets, here Vergil's rivalry with Ennius played out in quite different terms in the *Aeneid*'s replacement of the *Annales*.

Vergil's lasting legacy in educational circles depended on the conservatism of grammarians and rhetoricians. That conservatism should make us wary of assuming Vergil would replace Ennius in every situation. Given their purposes, what reason was there for grammarians to cast aside their old Roman Homer in favor of Vergil? Vergil supplied in his own works a persona that was readily adapted for canonical use. But he offered no Homeric persona as directly as Ennius did. Vergil's had to be constructed, primarily in terms of his imitation. Ennius had successfully made the claim and was already ensconced in the role. He was old-fashioned and out of date, but so was Homer; and he was a capable Latin model for Homeric passages. What advantage should readers in need of a Roman Homer find in switching to the *Aeneid*? And why should it be so durable a fit that no one else subsequently challenged Vergil?

Earlier I outlined how Ovid and the *VSD* suggest that authors like Homer tend to attract similar detractors. The principle can be extended to readers without animus as well. What works for interpreting the Homeric texts might well be tried out on Latin epic. In this regard the *Annales* certainly could offer material above all for rhetorical instruction that took advantage of passages written in imitation of Homeric ones. Jackie Elliott's treatment of the *Annales* demonstrates that even the surviving fragments show a remarkably dense engagement with the Homeric epics. As impressive as the *Aeneid*'s allusive program is, no one can say for sure that it is a greater than the *Annales*'.[71]

[71] Elliott, *Ennius and the Architecture of the Annales*, esp. 75ff. on the Vergilocentric tradition

The lasting role for Vergil might have as much to do with the curricular possibilities each author offered. In this, Vergil could indeed offer something more Homeric than Ennius: readers who could outright copy Homeric scholarship. Readers of Vergil and Homer together might not just judge translations of passages or illustrate rhetorical tropes (things possible with the *Annales* too). They could be readers of Homer, reading the *Aeneid*. The experience of reading the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* was, in a way, proper training for reading Vergil's epic.

One place where the *Aeneid* can be distinguished from the *Annales* is in its continuation of the Homeric plot. The *Annales* picked up its story from Aeneas and presumed a connection between Juno and Hera, Jupiter and Zeus. But so far as can be discerned from its fragments, the largest part of its characters and geography are drawn from Roman history, and the best guide to those figures will be accounts of Roman history or exemplars.[72] The situation in the *Aeneid* is quite different. The *Aeneid* is constructed as an alternate *Odyssey*, almost as another sequel to the *Iliad*.[73] Not only was Aeneas himself a character in the *Iliad*, but other Homeric characters are constantly referred to: Ulysses, Achilles, Hector, Priam, Circe and all the gods are figures whose history in the Homeric epics is relevant to their role in the *Aeneid*. Some such as Diomedes, Andromache, and even Polyphemus make brief appearances, still bearing the consequences of the troubles they met in their Homeric iterations. In every case it is useful and even necessary for the comprehension of the text to know who the figures are and what their history in the Homeric epics is. The same goes for the Homeric geography, much of which is retraced in *Aeneid* 2-3 and 6, and even some Greek mythological figures who are referred to in passing in both epics (e.g., Daedalus, *Il.* 18.590-

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that often demonstrates that both the *Aeneid* and the *Annales* have debts to Homer. (Cf. 57f. and 280f. on particular ways Ennius deploys Homeric allusions for effect.)

[72] fr. 14-15 suggest the Aeneas plotline formed part of the epic. Skutsch gives a plausible outline summary of the *Annales* (*The* Annals *of Q. Ennius*, 5). But cf. Elliott, *Ennius and the Architecture of the Annales* 19ff. rightly contesting some of the assumptions Skutsch makes (for instance, that all passages involving action by gods must be placed in the earliest books).

[73] An idea developed at length in Dekel, *Virgil's Homeric Lens*, esp. 1-28.

92, *Aen*. 6.14ff.). Even where Vergil's point depends on transformation and resetting the Homeric precedent, the knowledge of the original is often necessary to get the point. Circe is treated much more obliquely in *Aeneid* 7.10-24 than in *Od*. 10-12. Likewise the prediction of an *alius… Achilles* (6.89) in Latium requires a working knowledge of Achilles' role in the *Iliad* (and beyond) for its full force to be felt.

In other words, a student of the *Aeneid* would do well to read the Homeric poems—so long as she understands them. There are many landscapes, dangers, histories, stories, and even conversations from the Homeric epics that resurface in the *Aeneid*. But not a few of these would be as obscure to a Greek student as to a Roman one. The beginning reader of the *Aeneid* then would find almost as good a use for commentaries on the Homeric poems as the reader of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. And as such the critic glossing or commentating on Vergil's epic would be able in many cases to find useful information readily laid out in those same Homeric commentaries. Should a *grammaticus* need an aid for students reading the *Aeneid* for the first time—or even help on a more obscure point—there was much in the Homeric scholia that could be translated and transferred directly into a commentary on the *Aeneid.*

The situation I describe above accords with long standing views on the sources of Vergilian commentary.[74] Much of it derives, directly or indirectly, from Homeric scholia. Mühmelt's study of the Vergilian tradition found extensive overlap between the Homeric D-scholia, Servius and similar commentaries. These late antique sources do not appear to have drawn directly from the Homeric commentaries known to us, but nonetheless share a general body of information.[75]

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[74] See Fraenkel, "Review of: *Servianorum in Vergilii Carmina Commentariorum Editionis Harvardianae…*" esp. 152-4. Although note that a different situation obtains with regard to the sources of mythography: see Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World*, esp. 184-208.

[75] Mühmelt, *Griechische Grammatik in der Vergilerklärung,* 53; see 134-6 for a summary of the results of his research.

Mühmelt held that Servius or his predecessors received much of this information from their own schooling or from handbooks. But as Farrell argues persuasively for a special relationship obtaining between Homeric scholia and Vergil's.[76] Notably the question at stake in evaluating what is preserved in Servius was not whether Vergil's exegetes drew on the Homeric scholia, but when and in what manner that information might be transferred.[77] Farrell proposes the hypothesis that the commentaries are gathered under the name of Servius show an intent (whether his own or a more general aim of the tradition) to mirror Homeric commentary. Not only the epic itself or even practices of reading, but Vergilian commentary itself could be understood as a project symmetrical to Homeric commentary. Thus, for example, the deliberate echo of the first question in the A Scholia on the *Iliad* at the beginning of Servius' commentary points not only to recognition but deliberate modeling on Homeric sources.[78] These represent circumstances where even a teacher invested in conserving both labor and culture would find exchanging Ennius's poem for Vergil worthwhile.

A final point: modeling *Aeneid* scholarship on Homeric scholia not only reflects the intent of the commentators, but can shape the perceptions of epic (and an epic poet) with unexpected Homericisms. Farrell observes such a moment in *Aen.* 9.307, where the word *galea* is identified as a helmet appropriate for a scout:

> GALEAM FIDVS PERMVTAT ALETES] aliae enim sunt exploratorum, sicut etiam Homerus ostendit.
>
> GALEAM FIDVS PERMVTAT ALETES] Since these are for scouts, as Homer demonstrates.

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[76] Mühmelt, *Griechische Grammatik in der Vergilerklärung,* 135. See Farrell, "Servius and the Homeric Scholia" 116ff. esp. with bibliography.
[77] Farrell, "Servius and the Homeric Scholia" *passim*, but the possibilities are laid out clearly in 115-16.
[78] Both ask why the poet begins the poem that particular first word, and both point out that this question has occupied many others. Farrell, "Servius and the Homeric Scholia" 119, comparing Serv. *in Aen.* 1.1 with *Σ A in Il.* 1.1.

Although the common word *galea* required no special interpretation, Servius nonetheless supplies a gloss which he refers back to Homer. More than Homer is needed for the explanation, however. The parallel passage in the *Iliad* features the *hapax legomenon* καταῖτυξ, which indeed was supposed by some scholiasts to be a helmet suitable for covert exploration (*Σ AD in Il.* 10.258, 26).[79] The solution to a problem in the Homeric passage has been transferred to a passage in the *Aeneid* where there was (previously) no difficulty in the reading. Here the commentary on the *Aeneid* attains a sufficiently robust relationship to commentary on the *Iliad* to impose a reading experience which has not been recreated by Vergil. Rather, commentators project onto Vergil's imitation of the Homeric passage an imitation of a situation faced by readers of Homer. Reading Vergil with Servius is here Homeric in ways that reading the *Aeneid* alone is not.[80]

To be sure, this does little to prove a particular role that Vergilian commentary had in the eventual disappearance of the *Annales* from Roman curricula. And yet correspondence between the Homeric and Vergilian commentary on various levels—from mythography to commentary on the Homeric action proper—points to a range of usefulness which is not apparent in surviving evidence about Ennian scholarship. Moreover, it is difficult to imagine a similar relationship obtaining between commentaries on the *Annales* and the Homeric epics. Surviving evidence does not indicate that the superior match between Homeric and Vergilian commentary resulted in the selection of the *Aeneid* over the *Annales*. Nonetheless, certain kinds of reading practices are employed with both Homer and Vergil's epics that are closed off to readers of the *Annales*.

Augustus exercised enormous influence on the cultural program of the early empire

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[79] καταῖτυξ] παρὰ τὸ κάτω τετύχθαι· λόφον γὰρ οὐκ ἔχει. (From 'made low'; for it does not have a crest.)

[80] Farrell, "Servius and the Homeric Scholia," 124-5, and NB 125: "the basic assumption that underpins this entire note is that Vergil cannot be understood, at least in this passage, without reference both to Homer and to the Homeric scholia."

and on Vergil's legacy in particular. But there remains something to be said for the conservatism of the *grammatici*, whose model of education far outlasted Augustus and even the empire itself. The usefulness of the Homeric scholia in teaching the *Aeneid* meant one more dimension of correspondence with Homer in Latin literary culture. Here was a poem imitating Homer, taught in an environment imitating that in which Homer was taught, treated with the similar genre of commentary, and which, remarkably, responded to that treatment—so much so that one might even translate some kinds of *Homerica* into Latin and produce, almost automatically, a species of *Vergiliana*.

Conclusion: The Home of the Homeric Vergil

In this chapter I have traced the development of a Homeric persona for Vergil in three stages.

First, I noted that a distinction may be drawn between two personas for Vergil. In the *Eclogues* and *Georgics*, a persona is developed around the poet's progress through genre, improvement in skill, and status. 'Homeric' persona of Vergil, more typical of late antique and commentary approaches, is much rarer and less dominant in the early reception of Vergil than its later influence makes it appear in retrospect.

Second, I argued the Homeric persona of Vergil is typical of approaches to Vergil's poetry that stress the role of the *Aeneid* or isolate it from Vergil's other works. It also tends to be more prominent in situations where Vergil's canonical status is referenced and where reading, reciting or other performances of erudition are being represented.

Third, I claim this form of the Homeric persona likely derived from the role developed by Ennius and his readers during an earlier stage of development of Latin literature. Vergil suits the role in ways Ennius cannot, particularly in the ability to transfer commentary on Homer to the *Aeneid*. As such when Vergil replaces Ennius as Roman Homer in educational contexts, he fits even more firmly into the cultural space the older poet had

previously occupied.

Two final observations may be added. First, this last process is especially remarkable as it fulfills the possibility imagined in *VSD* 43-6: the response of the reader of Vergil is successfully constructed from response of the reader of Homer.[81] In such transfers we see the promise of more striking transformations. The more tightly linked the Roman Homer's epic is to the Homeric scholia, the more opportunity there is to adapt Vergil's text to other more esoteric elements of Homeric interpretation.

Second, the natural home of the Homeric persona of Vergil appears to be the classroom. Although Vergil can be treated as a Homeric poet in other circumstances, the most powerful effects of labeling Vergil as an alternative to Homer occur in situations of exegesis and instruction. The continuities of instruction in Latin from late antiquity into the Middle Ages and Renaissance would ensure that the Homeric persona of Vergil maintained a long influence on Latin letters.

One major element of that teaching environment which has not been addressed here is Vergil's imitation of Homer. In the next chapter I take up these issues. Imitation insists on a different relationship from the equivalence or mirrored function I have explored in this chapter. How does Vergil's Homeric persona affect accounts of his imitation of Homer over the long run? And how does the difference between the two authors interact with the ability of his readers to consider Vergil an author 'like Homer'?

[81] A connection made by Farrell as well: "Servius and the Homeric Scholia," 121.

Chapter 3. "Hearing the two foremost poets": Between Likeness to and Imitation of Homer

Introduction

The broader theme of this dissertation concerns the enduring role of a conviction that Vergil and Homer are the same kind of poet. In general this means Vergil was considered like Homer in some way—that is, that he can fill some equivalent role for Latin literature as Homer does in Greek. In some cases, the situation was reciprocal: Greeks have a poet who is *the* poet, and Latins have a poet who is *the* poet.[1]

Ancient discussions of imitation have a mixed relationship to the figure of the *alter Homerus*. On the one hand, the comparison itself assumes that Vergil and Homer are alike in some fashion, and even especially alike. The frequency of their comparison argues that they are widely perceived as commensurable figures: a pair of similar stature that offer a comparison of apples to apples.[2] Thus widespread acknowledgment of Vergil's literary imitation of Homer can be used as evidence of imitation in other areas, and imitated passages can serve as signs of the transfer of Homer's authority.

The ancient critics discussed in this chapter generally described imitation as an act of the author rather than a feature of the text.[3] Its regular role in commentary on literary texts centered on evaluating the author's aims, success in meeting those aims, and finally his character. Servius famously defines Vergil's purposes for the *Aeneid* as "to imitate Homer and to praise Augustus through his ancestors" (*intentio Vergilii haec est, Homerum imitari et*

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[1] To return again to Justinian, *Inst*. 1.2. See above, pp. 7-8 and 85.
[2] Weiß, *Homer und Vergil im Vergleich,* 17.
[3] Strictly speaking, I disagree only in emphasis with Weiß, *Homer und Vergil in Vergleich* 19, who stresses how *imitatio* is properly a term that denotes the critic or reader's observation and not the intentions or actions of the poet. His point is that we risk misinterpreting ancients who discuss *imitatio* if we imagine that when they analyze an instance of *imitatio* they are making claims about how the poem was written rather than how it is read. But here I am observing the terminology of that ancient practice of analysis, which is expressed not concerning texts but authorial choices.

Augustum laudare a parentibus, praef. ad Aen.).[4] This phrase refers to the complex allusive project preserved in the text of the *Aeneid*. But it casts this essential relationship in terms of authors, not texts: it is *Vergil* who chooses to imitate *Homer*. In this way, one author seeks to be like the other.

Macrobius' commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis* from Cicero's *De re publica* gives an instance of how this similarity of authors can even overshadow the similarity of texts. In *In somn.* 2.8.5, Macrobius notes how Vergil and Homer both tend to remove superfluous information to improve their poetry:

> … scimus autem et Homerum ipsum et in omnibus imitatorem eius Maronem saepe tales mutasse particulas.
>
> [For the zodiac acts differently than is said here]; but we know that both Homer himself and his imitator in all things Maro often changed such small matters. (*In somn.* 2.8.5)

The unnecessarily broad statement "his imitator in *all* things" points to a much broader set of similarities than merely taking license with details. Vergil's *Aeneid* is being deployed in this Neoplatonist work in much the manner that the Homeric poems are in corresponding Greek Neoplatonic works.[5] Vergil's well-known practice of imitating Homer in matters of composition is here supplying some heft to the more unusual claim that Vergil's text is as valuable and reliable a deposit of truths about the universe as Homer's.[6]

However, treatments of imitation were in another way least suited to expressing the similarity of Homer and Vergil. The same stress on authors instead of texts also creates a divide between the imitator and the imitated. Imitation presumes ranking, and thus distinction. The sheer volume and complexity of the allusions made to the *Iliad* and the

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[4] Thilo and Hagen p. 4.10-11, Rand et al. p. 4.83-4.
[5] See Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*, especially sections III, "Plotinian Neoplatonism" and V, "Proclus."
[6] Macrobius' strategies for making this claim work for Vergil as it does for Homer will be addressed in the following chapter.

Odyssey in the *Aeneid* ties Vergil closely to Homer. But it also makes for a view of Vergil that is decidedly not reciprocal. Vergil may serve as a canonical figure for Latin literature, as Homer does for Greek. His poems may be in every classroom where Latin is studied, as Homer is in every one where Greek is. But his poem depends on Homer's, and not vice-versa. Similarities in passages always point to Vergil's reading of Homer, not the reverse. Any way that Vergil strives for an effect similar to Homer's derives from the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* in a way that those poems never derive from Vergil's poems. In any discussion of Vergil's imitation of Homer, the stress on *alter Homerus* must be on being the *second* Homer, the one who follows after: a poet dependent on the original, and as it is conceived most often in ancient sources, an imitator. In this way, Vergil is not like Homer, and cannot be.

Macrobius' 5th century symposiastic dialogue the *Saturnalia* offers a prime location for reflecting on the relationship of these different themes in the reception of Vergil as imitator of Homer. Few writers in antiquity support Vergil's status as a Homer-like poet more directly than Macrobius. (One need not read far in the work before the Greek character Eustathius refers to him as *vester Homerus Mantuanus,* your Homer from Mantua, *Sat*. 1.16.43.) Macrobius proposes to summarize in the seven books of the *Saturnalia* a vast quantity of knowledge drawn from older sources for the education of his son (*Sat. praef.* 1-2).[7] But the majority of his dialogue presents this knowledge in a conversation about Vergil's great expertise in a variety of areas—philosophy, augural law, rhetoric, Greek learning, Latin poetry and language. Vergil's learning mirrors a typically Homeric capacity for encyclopedic knowledge, while several of the categories themselves reflect a specific Homeric antecedent

[7] Large parts of books 2-4 and 7 are lost, but the plan is laid out clearly in what survives. See Kaster's discussion of the plan of the work in his Loeb Classical Library edition, vol. 1 pp. xlv-liii.

(as an expert in philosophy and rhetoric in particular).[8] The characters in the dialogue are explicitly concerned with establishing Vergil's cultural authority. As in the commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis*, this involves a certain parallelism to Homer.

Yet one part of the *Saturnalia* is specifically concerned with Vergil as imitator, and in particular with Vergil as imitator of Homer. Book five features a discussion of Vergil's debt to Greek learning (5.2-22) by one of the dinner guests, a rhetorician named Eustathius. This Eustathius (the same introduced above) is at pains to demonstrate the extent of Vergil's debt to Homer. The greater part of his speech presents a large amount of verses from the *Aeneid* and the Homeric verses from which they were derived. Equivalence in roles is nearly impossible to maintain in this collection. Rather than present Vergil an equally capable Homer from Mantua, setting Homer's words next to Vergil's makes a clear distinction between source and imitator. The section stands out from others in the work in pointing to and evaluating how successfully Vergil borrowed from one author.

Concentrating this material in one place, and in one character's voice, creates tension between Eustathius' speech and the broader aims of the work. In the greater part of the *Saturnalia*, any evaluation of Vergil as less than authoritative and uniquely knowledgeable is rebuffed. But in this section, Vergil becomes vulnerable to critique. In bringing attention to Vergil's practice as a writer and imitator, Macrobius also draws on material that is critical of him. The majority of the sources for Eustathius' speech are explicitly hostile to Vergil.[9] Moreover, the focus on comparing Vergil to his Homeric sources tends to accentuate the problem. At times, instead of being bolstered by Homer's reputation, Vergil's status is even diminished by being set in competition with an incomparable model.

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[8] For Homer and encyclopedic knowledge, see below, pp. 197-202. The most straightforward correspondence is Ps. Plutarch in *De Homero*, observed by Lausberg, "Seneca und Platon (Calcidius) in der Vorrede zu den *Saturnalien*," 184.
[9] See below, pp. 138-41.

Macrobius addresses this tension by offering another interpretation of Vergil's practice. The interpreters that Macrobius draws upon regarding Vergil's imitation ask their readers to judge the imitator as fraud or success, thief or educated writer. These questions focus on the poet as imitator, a role in which he depends on his model. Macrobius instead shifts his readers' focus onto judging Vergil's actions as a reader—or even a student—who is engaged with Homer's text.

Tellingly, Macrobius does not propose an explicit reinterpretation of this relationship. He neither discovers nor suppresses evidence of Vergil's debts to Homer.[10] Instead, he edits and rewrites his source material to evoke a different point of view on the same facts. But Macrobius is not inventing a new perspective. Rather, he is toggling between and blending a limited number of ways of discussing authors, readers, and the social and ethical obligations of each. He is a reader of Vergil's place within the Vergilian tradition.

This becomes clear early in the *Saturnalia* at the very moment when Vergil enters as the main subject of conversation. This negotiation is at the heart of Macrobius' treatment of Vergil in Eustathius' speech. The evidence that Macrobius inherits brings with it a set of roles for Vergil and his readers to play. Restaging the questions and observations meant for one set of circumstances in another proves an effective method for shifting the reader's approach. Instead of changing the script of this play, Macrobius changes the characters, the setting and then presents a comedy instead of a tragedy. In *Saturnalia* 5, Macrobius reshuffles an old script. The result is that Vergil's imitation of Homer is restaged as student's reading of an authoritative past.

[10] Ignoring Homer where it was convenient was far from unknown in late antique discussions of Vergil. Servius rarely cites a line from Homer when flagging Vergil's dependence. More dramatically, Tiberius Claudius Donatus makes no mention of Homer at all in his rhetorical commentary on the *Aeneid*, suggesting it was sometimes possible to eschew imitation as a category entirely.

This chapter begins by reflecting on how the overall aims of the *Saturnalia* are in conflict with Macrobius' source material. I focus on *Sat.* 5.2-17, in which Vergil's relation to Homer is treated at length. I demonstrate that Macrobius is engaged in a number of strategies that tend to conflate Vergil's role with Homer's. I also show how the norm in discussions of imitation is to present the imitator as the inferior, and that surviving judgments of Vergil's imitation of Homer typically find fault with Vergil.

Next I observe that Macrobius' use of dialogue encourages him to present different modes of reading as paradigms defined by particular roles and behaviors towards authors and audiences. I argue that the variety of presentations of imitation possible in different contexts may be treated as separate paradigms Macrobius draws upon as needed.

I also show that Macrobius' sensitivity to such paradigms is due to his own investment in imitation as a central theme of the *Saturnalia*. Macrobius' justification of his own borrowing links Vergil's allusive project to his own aim in the *Saturnalia*. To Macrobius' way of thinking, collection and reuse is the sign of the attentive and active reader.

Following this I outline how the faults attributed to Vergil in the imitative tradition are transformed into the faults of a different kind: Vergil is presented not as overly derivative, but as overly committed to one model. In doing so, Macrobius simultaneously satisfies the need to show Vergil inferior as an imitator while presenting Vergil as a superlative instance of the attentive reader. The shift of one mode of reading into another allows the evidence of Vergil's borrowings to speak more loudly of his disposition towards Homer rather than his dependence. Vergil's status as a unique model reader in Latin literature proves the counterpart to Homer's role as the unique model author in Greek.

1. Imitating Only Homer

One distinctive about Macrobius' approach to Vergilian imitation is its volume. Between the end of *Sat.* 5.2 and the beginning of 5.17, he reproduces over one hundred passages of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* in parallel with an equivalent in the *Aeneid*. In contrast to how Servius limits himself to a few lines of Greek,[11] Macrobius allows his reader the chance to examine Vergil's allusions herself in detail. One effect of this list to produce a visceral sense of the extent of Vergil's borrowing—an ancient predecessor of Georg Knauer's appendices.[12] But does this make him more like Homer than any other author, or permanently distinguish imitator from imitated? There is clearly much to say about Vergil and Homer together—but in what relationship?

If nothing else, Eustathius' speech establishes the special connection of the *Aeneid* to the Homeric epics as a focal point of the relationship between Homer and Vergil. The exclusive attention to Homer in any account of Vergil's imitation is artificial. Vergil imitated many different Greek authors, and Eustathius himself draws attention to this point early in his discourse. The stated aim of his discourse is to refute the claim that Vergil could not have studied Attic orators (and by implication, other and more obscure Greek authors—*Sat.* 5.2.1). He thus sets out to demonstrate Vergil's broad knowledge of Greek authors, beginning with passages that are expressly imitations (*Sat.* 5.2-17).[13] He begins with a simple scheme for classifying Vergil's poems:

> 'Dicturumne me putatis ea quae vulgo nota sunt, quod Theocritum sibi fecerit pastoralis operis auctorem, ruralis Hesiodum, et quod in ipsis Georgicis tempestatis serenitatisque signa de Arati Phaenomenis traxerit, vel quod eversionem Troiae cum Sinone suo et equo ligneo ceterisque omnibus quae librum secundum faciunt a

[11] Scaffai, *La presenza di Omero*, 14ff.
[12] Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer*, 370-527, with supporting diagrams in endpapers.
[13] The second part, 5.18-22, demonstrates Vergil's knowledge of obscure Greek lore. It is more concerned with the explanation of puzzling passages by reference to little marked passages of Greek literature. Eustathius makes the distinction between the two sections first at 1.24.18, then flags the transition at 5.18.1.

Pisandro ad verbum paene transcripserit...?

> 'Do you think I am going to say the things which everybody knows? —that Vergil made Theocritus his model for his pastoral poetry, Hesiod for the agricultural, and that in those Georgics he derived the signs for storms and clear weather from Aratus' Phaenomena, or that he copied the sack of Troy, with his Sinon, the wooden horse, and all the rest that make up the Aeneid's second book nearly word for word from Pisander...? (*Sat*. 5.2.4, trans. Kaster)

This list of models is 'well-known' because typical of the schoolroom and the commentaries associated with it.[14] Its simplistic frame grants permission to the inexperienced beginner to focus on one or two crucial relationships between the poet and his sources. But it would satisfy no student of Vergil as a full account of Vergil's Greek sources—where are Apollonius, Pindar, and Euripides, among many others? Eustathius himself dismisses this account of Vergil's imitation. Not only does he explicitly scorn this simple distribution of authors to works, he also complicates the account by including first Aratus as a model for the *Georgics* (an obvious choice) and the obscure Pisander for the *Aeneid* (far less so). Even this more sophisticated version of the conventional schoolroom heuristic must be rejected in order to move beyond the basics. Eustathius seems to be promising an account more adequate to Vergil's actual use of models.

But if this is his intention, it is surprising to find that from this point onward Eustathius begins to narrow his focus onto one author. *Sat.* 5.2-17 addresses the *Aeneid* and its relation to Homer's epics almost exclusively: parallel scenes, verses, and methods that

[14] The standard list of Theocritus, Hesiod, and Homer can be found in Servius' commentary on the *Georgics* (Thilo p. 128 1-4) and the *Vita Philargyriana* (Thilo I p. 175 4-6, and II p. 188, 10-14). Notably, the list does not fit easily here either—Servius has to point out that the relationship of the *Georgics* to its sources is not strictly analogous to that of the *Eclogues* or *Aeneid* to theirs (11-14). Unfortunately, Macrobius' attempt to raise the stakes must fall flat for us, as he has confused his Pisanders. Pisander of Laranda (2nd c.) indeed wrote a history of the world, but could not have been an influence on Vergil. See Kaster's Loeb on *Sat.* 5.2.5 (vol. 2, p. 228, n. 12). For an account of how this mistake was made, see Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World*, 257-60. It might also be familiar from reading Vergil's poems. The simple pairing of *Eclogues*/Theocritus, *Georgics*/Hesiod, *Aeneid*/Homer dismissed by Eustathius flattens the subtleties of Vergil's work, but it is nonetheless consistent with the poet's own self-representation. See in the previous chapter pp. 95-101.

Vergil has drawn from the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*.[15] A scant appendix to this lengthy catalogue begins at 5.17.4: book four of the *Argonautica* as a model for book four of the *Aeneid*;[16] a passage of Pindar (5.17.7-14); a catalogue of Greek words incorporated into Vergil's vocabulary (17.15-20). But although Eustathius claims that Vergil's vintage is made of grapes from more than one vine (5.17.4), a summary of Vergil's actions from earlier in his account seems to express Eustathius' approach more accurately:

> sed haec et talia ignoscenda Vergilio, qui studii circa Homerum nimietate excedit modum. et re vera non poterat non in aliquibus minor videri, qui per omnem poesin suam hoc uno est praecipue usus archetypo.
>
> But these and other such [errors] must be forgiven Vergil, who overwhelmingly exceeds the measure of study regarding Homer. And truly he could not help but appear the lesser in other matters, since he used above all this one archetype in all of his poetry. (*Sat*. 5.13.40, trans. Kaster)

There is certainly some truth in this statement, at least as far as the *Aeneid* is concerned.[17] But it is perhaps more true to say Eustathius used Homer as his one archetype in all the discussion of Vergil's poetry. Although Homer was a special model for Vergil in composing the *Aeneid* in particular, there were many other poets whose work he imitated openly. Eustathius says even the simplest critics could draw attention to the role of Theocritus

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[15] Out of hundreds of quotations, only a select few are not from the *Aeneid*. Passages of the *Georgics* are given as imitations at *Sat.* 5.13.3, 4, and 7, while others are used as instances of imitating Homer's style, e.g., hypermetric lines (two in 5.14.4), direct address of the reader (two in 5.14.10), or examples of *sententia*, 5.16.7 (including two from the *Eclogues*). Two lines of the *Eclogues* are also cited as examples of common speech used in poetry in 5.14.5. NB too 5.16.5, where breaking up monotonous passages in the didactic material of the *Georgics* is said to repeat a Homeric practice, giving rise to the claim that *ita in omni opera Maronis Homerica lucet imitatio* (Thus in every aspect of his oeuvre Maro's imitation of Homer is clear as day, trans. Kaster).

[16] Presumably an error for book three. cf. Servius, *In Aen.* 4 *praef.*

[17] Particularly if one reads *per omnem poesin suam* as "throughout his whole poem" instead of Kaster's translation "poetry." Gian Biagio Conte understands Macrobius' focus on Homer as a premonition of his own notion of Homer as a 'code model' in *The Rhetoric of Imitation,* 31, citing *Sat.* 5.2.13. As observed above, n. 12, the massive role Homer played in Vergil's composition of the *Aeneid* must be apparent to anyone examining Knauer, *Die Aeneis und Homer*.

in the *Eclogues*, Hesiod and Aratus in the *Georgics*. What then limited the scope of Eustathius' discourse?

In the previous chapter I observed the practice of referring to the *Aeneid*'s relationship to Homer's epics by means of the authors' names. This makes it easier to treat Homer and Vergil as the same kind of author. Setting Vergil next to Homer helps to elide the *Eclogues* and *Georgics* and allows Vergil to be thought of predominantly as an epic poet with the same traits as Homer. Macrobius accomplishes something similar in Eustathius' speech. The first comparisons Eustathius makes between Vergil and Homer focus on the ways Vergil follows Homer's strategies as a poet, rather than on passages in their epics (*Sat.* 5.2.6-12, esp. 7, 9, 11 on decisions on plot structure). This is underscored by the affective responses of the characters. Although the other authors whom Vergil imitates are given mention, the line of reasoning is deemed elementary and uninteresting. On the other hand, the analysis of his imitations of Homer is absorbing, and treated at length. When Eustathius hesitates to continue for fear of boring his listeners, the young Avienus enthusiastically requests he continue: *quid enim suavius quam duos praecipuos vates audire idem loquentes?* ("What could be more pleasant than hearing the two foremost poets treating the same subjects?")

Avienus here reiterates that the two are similar: both can be paired as the best poets. This is a message that Macrobius sends elsewhere too. Vergil's substitution for Homer in his commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis* has been mentioned. Macrobius also links the structure of both Homer and Vergil's work to nature in similar ways. The correspondence between the structure of an authoritative literary work and the structure of the cosmos was a special feature of Neoplatonic allegory. The allegorical interpretations of Homer and Vergil make them both *naturae conscius* for Macrobius (the former twice in the *Saturnalia*, 1.12.9 and 7.13.25; the latter once in the commentary on the dream of Scipio, 1.16.5). This is especially significant as a way of thinking of both authors as a kind of imitators. Traditionally

Homer could not be considered an imitator of any author, for the simple reason of having no surviving predecessors. But he could be understood as an imitator of nature. If Vergil were considered an imitator of nature as well, then again, both poets would be of the same kind.[18] In that context, it telling that immediately before Eustathius begins his discourse, another character, Eusebius, links the variety of Vergil's rhetorical styles to the variety of terrain in nature (*Sat.* 5.1.18-20). In doing so he explicitly compares the poet to nature (*naturae rerum Vergilium comparavi*), leading Evangelus to accuse him of comparing the poet's relationship to his text to the creator deity's relationship to the world.[19] Such an extravagant statement sets a tone that cannot help but carry over into Eustathius' discussion.

Macrobius' overall aim is relatively clear: present Vergil as a Mantuan Homer, a corresponding figure to the Greek poet. But the long list of citations that follows sits oddly with this goal. The catalogue of passages gives opportunity to consider the two poets together. But it also drives home the *Aeneid*'s special dependence on the Homeric epics. This is because imitation tends to name either a category of analysis or else a rhetorical exercise in antiquity. In either case, there are fixed roles and characteristic traits of success and failure in imitation. And one of the most common traits for the imitator is failure. Quintilian is representative of a number of voices that stress that imitation always falls short of perfect reproduction of the virtues of an author (*IO* 10.2.11, 24-26). As a result, imitation of one

[18] Vogt-Spira, "Les *Saturnales* de Macrobe," 263–77, esp. 266 (on *imitatio auctorum* vs. *imitatio rerum* or *naturae*) and 277 on diminishing the effect of Vergil's being second to Homer. Vogt-Spira attributes the fact that Vergil is compared favorably to Homer in *Sat.* 5.11.1-30 (unusual in a sequence of *any* length) to a kind of equal standing Macrobius attributes to Vergil and Homer as poets who are imitators of nature and *naturae conscii* (275). See also Weiß, *Homer und Vergil in Vergleich,* 166-70.

[19] These passages are drawn together by Lausberg, "Seneca und Platon (Calcidius) in der Vorrede zu den *Saturnalien*," 183-4 and Goldlust, "Un manifeste sur l'organicité littéraire," 279–96. The typically Neoplatonic tendency to draw an analogy between the structure of a text and the structure of the universe as well as the author and the creator is described by Coulter, *Literary Microcosm*, especially 95-126.

author exclusively is commonly taken as a fault in ancient imitation theory.[20] Such a large collection of passages proving Vergil's dependence on a single author seems at cross-purposes with Macrobius' aims in two ways. First, these elements tend to emphasize Vergil's difference and inferiority to Homer. Second, they imply Vergil gives too much of his attention to one model.

They are also represented extensively in the surviving treatments of Vergil's imitation of Homer. These too cast Vergil's imitations in an almost uniformly negative light. The 1st century critic Valerius Probus finds fault with Vergil's reworking of Homer's simile comparing Nausicaa to Artemis into one concerning Dido and Diana.[21] In the 2nd c., Aemilianus Asper notes where an excessive fidelity to Homer has led to unflattering diction (*Schol. Veron. Aen*. 10.559). The life of Vergil written by Suetonius in the 2nd century and adapted by Aelius Donatus in 4th (*VSD*) records several full scale works that also take the binary relationship for granted. Collections of Vergil's *furta* followed a Hellenistic tradition of searching for thefts from other authors (although as noted last chapter, the *VSD* especially emphasizes Homeric debts).[22] The ὁμοιοτελεύτων by Q. Octavius Avitus explained which verses Vergil had lifted from Homer and from where (*VSD* 45). Vergil's defender Asconius Pedianus admitted the that Vergil had taken much from Homer, but also supplied Vergil with an answer to those who accused him of thievery: "why do they not also attempt these thefts? Then they would understand it is easier to take Hercules' club from him than a verse from Homer." (*VSD* 46).[23]

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[20] See p. 159 n. 55.
[21] Preserved by Gellius *NA* 9.9.12ff.
[22] McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature* 178-9
[23] *Cur non illi quoque eadem furta temptarent? Verum intellecturos facilius esse Herculi clavam quam Homero versum surripere.* This is the earliest version of an anecdote often repeated in other discussions of imitation, including Aelius Donatus' pupil Jerome (*Hebraicae Quaestiones in Libro Geneseos*, p. 1.7-11, ed. Lagarde, *CCSL* 72), Philargyrius p. 8.15, Isidore (*Etym.* 10.44), and also Macrobius (*Sat.* 5.3.16, on which see below in the conclusion of this chapter). Although when speaking in general terms authors tend to treat the

Interest in the imitation of Homer by Vergil had not diminished in Macrobius' time. If anything, it was a still more established vein of criticism. The fragments of earlier critics testify that it was not uncommon for early and prominent critics of Vergil to discuss his use of Homer. But due to their fragmentary character it is hard to discern the importance of material on imitation relative to other themes that might have been taken up by Vergil's 1st and 2nd century commentators.[24] In contrast, the preservation of these fragments testifies to the importance of the topic to late antique readers. Most evidence concerning Vergil's earliest commentators is supplied by authors and commentators of the 4th and 5th centuries who copied older observations:[25] Aelius Donatus preserves Suetonius' observations in the *VSD*; Macrobius draws on works containing large bodies of critical comparisons of passages (perhaps even the works on *furta* and similarities mentioned above).[26] Servius supports his view of Vergil's intention to imitate Homer with over two hundred observations on passages, verses and poetic habits based on a Homeric antecedent. It is difficult to know in every case whether an observation was drawn from an older critic or originated with a late antique writer. But tellingly, even in a culture where the knowledge of Greek was waning, linking Vergil to Homer through the passages he copied remained an important exegetical tool.[27]

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weighing of Homer and Vergil as an open question, the vast majority of the observations on specific passages take a negative view of Vergil's imitation. For instance, Macrobius preserves a fragment of the Stoic Cornutus in which he implies that writing myths without a precedent is a fault, which suggests Stoic criticism also pushed at Vergil's sources (*Sat.* 5.19.2). A number of other references do not testify strictly to imitation but indicate the comparison of the authors was common. Juvenal indicts as tired and trivial a habit of putting Vergil and Homer in the balance, line by line (6.434-7, quoted with the less dismissive 11.179-82 on p. 114 n. 56-7).

[24] Although see Weiß, *Homer und Vergil in Vergleich* 60ff. for an exploration of the possible contexts in which they first arose.

[25] The great exception is Aulus Gellius from the 2nd c., who preserves a number of passages from older critics and in turn served as a model and source for Macrobius and other late antique writers.

[26] See Jocelyn, "Virgil's Use of Republican Latin Poetry," I and II.

[27] Note that other responses to declining Greek were possible. See above p. 132 n. 10 on the *Interpretationes Vergilianae* of Tiberius Claudius Donatus, which does not even mention the name of Homer. In the 4th century, the prestige of Greek citations was chafing against the

These page and pages of pairings in *Sat.* 5.2-17 are thus hardly inert material. Rather, Macrobius has drawn them some of the most negative writings about Vergil's borrowings into the midst of a large scale characterization of Vergil's special knowledge. Moreover, he has even preserved some of the polemical tone of their original context. The list of passages in *Sat.* 5.13 where Vergil fails to match Homer has a distinctly hostile tone (e.g., *postremo locum loco si compares, pudendam invenies differentiam*, "In short, if you compare the two passages, you'll find the difference embarrassing," *Sat.* 5.13.19, trans. Kaster). Words such as *surripere*, *dissimulanter*, *dissimulando* in *Sat.* 5.16.12-14 indicate Macrobius took them from a source that accused Vergil of plagiarism.[28] The subject matter itself left Vergil open to criticism that even the most well-intentioned editor could not entirely suppress. Eustathius' material handily demonstrates his immediate aim that Vergil knew his Greek literature very well.[29] But how does copying these texts fit with Macrobius' vision of an equal status with Homer?

2. Imitation in Context: Paradigms and Roles

Macrobius faces a twofold challenge. First, according to the most common theories of imitation (and in line with that which his characters themselves profess), Vergil is not

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decreasing number of Greek readers in the west, with knock on effects for the role of invoking Greek sources. A variety of perspectives on this topic is helpful. O'Donnell ("Review of: The Shadows of Poetry," 192) has brief observations on the 'invention of Latin literature' in the 4th century as Greek declined. Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World,* 192-209 sketches the reasons for increasingly watered down accounts of Vergil's debts to Greek literature in commentaries, as the fact of Greek sources became easier to assert than to verify. Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers,* 13-19 traces what Greek was still attainable. Scaffai, *La presenza di Omero,* 24-25 argues that preservation of what was possible to keep grew more important in response to spreading Christian and Neoplatonist perspectives.

[28] McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature,* 193-5, with Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World,* 258-60. (Though I follow McGill in believing the remaining passages Cameron attributes to works devoted to *furta* have other sources.)

[29] Weiß, *Homer und Vergil in Vergleich,* 329-330.

equivalent to but dependent on Homer. Additionally, part of his source material is explicit about Vergil's failures at imitation. Vergil is not only dependent but also demonstrates his inferiority in two ways: first, in not matching Homer, and second, in not integrating borrowed passages sufficiently well. But Macrobius has a high view of Vergil's knowledge. To preserve its coherence, he needs on the one hand to change the significance of Vergil's actions as an imitator, and on the other to change what that relationship of imitation entails. Understanding Macrobius' strategy in facing these challenges requires a detour: first, to review the social implications of reading in late antiquity, and second, to show how the relevant relationships tend to be evoked in discussions of imitation.

Reading in late antiquity is imagined in social terms. Reading in late antiquity as in all of the empire was an elite activity, a marker of status and belonging. Books, training in reading, leisure to practice and aids to facilitate reading are in the first place expensive.[30] Readers are further stratified by distinctions in their abilities. Those distinctions can be measured in particular circumstances: boys in the classroom competing with one another; teachers in the forum disputing one another's authority by matching knowledge of rare facts or obscure knowledge; or even senators artfully demonstrating an author's learning and each other's ignorance at a dinner.

In the *Saturnalia*—but also more broadly in the tradition of Vergilian criticism—this social aspect of reading is mapped onto the evaluation of texts.[31] Since Vergil's failure in imitation affects his relationship with Homer and with his audience. The common appeal of biographical interpretation in antiquity is instructive here: evaluating a text often involves evaluating its author. Authors are, through the text, in a community with the interpreter. The

[30] On this topic, see Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture,* 17-31, much of which remains relevant for a late antique context.
[31] On the social norms that govern the relationships represented in the *Saturnalia*, see Kaster, "Macrobius and Servius."

ability of text to allow distant or dead people to communicate with others also allows for relationship. One can owe reverence to an author (as to a flesh and blood teacher). One can also in turn imagine the relationship between the author being read and the authors of the texts he read in turn. And so it becomes possible for those relationships to be violated or strengthened by the actions of readers, authors and others. Imitation of an author is an opportunity for a writer to betray, compete, or pay homage; interpreting a text is an opportunity for showing oneself wise, learned, or a charlatan.[32]

The social interactions imagined between author, reader and audience can be depicted in texts themselves. When told anecdotally, these relationships lend themselves to a narrative. But they suit a dialogue as well. William A. Johnson has argued that in the case of Gellius, repeated situations involve often involve repeated stock characters who help act out a point—the presumptuous *grammaticus*, for instance, who challenges his betters and is fittingly humiliated.[33] For Macrobius too, the *grammaticus* represents a type. Macrobius does not represent this type in repeated anecdotes or in characters (indeed, the only *grammaticus* present at the conversation is Servius, who is specifically excepted from the negative opinion offered about his profession—*Sat.* 1.24.8). But he associates *grammatici* with an ignorant or insensitive approach to Vergil's works. The practices can then offer a sort of paradigm into which a character might fit. The situation is meant to be recognizable: those who treat Vergil incorrectly can be accused of being a *grammaticus*.

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[32] In describing the ethical relationship between different members of a reading community, I fit into a broader conversation concerning the involvement of social context of Roman readers in the texts they wrote. In particular see the studies on plagiarism and translation respectively in McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature* and McElduff, *Roman Theories of Translation*, and on reading cultures by Johnson, *Readers and Reading Cultures.* In different ways, these works demonstrate how such charged concepts carried with them narratives that could be shaped to suit different audiences and contexts.

[33] e.g., *NA* 19.10 with Johnson, *Readers and Reading Culture* 110. On Gellius' tendency to use types or stock characters, 101ff.

This paradigm is visible in two such accusations that occur early in the *Saturnalia.* After the host Praetextatus gives a lecture on solar theology, Evangelus objects to the use of Vergil as an authority on one point. Symmachus in turn asks whether he means to be quite so dismissive of Vergil. He suggests that Evangelus has confused the context in which they speak—a dinner with learned senators—with another, namely, a classroom. Evangelus, the foil to the enthusiasm the other characters show for Vergil, retorts that it is Symmachus who has mistaken their circumstances. Here is their exchange:

> Symmachus: nunc quia cum Marone nobis negotium est, respondeas volo utrum poetae huius opera instituendis tantum pueris idonea iudices, an alia illis altiora inesse fatearis. videris enim mihi ita adhuc Vergilianos habere versus qualiter eos pueri magistris praelegentibus canebamus.
> Evangelus: Immo pueri cum essemus, Symmache, sine iudicio mirabamur, inspicere autem vitia nec per magistros nec per aetatem licebat.

> Symmachus: Right now Maro is our concern: so tell me, please, do you think his works are fit only for teaching boys, or do you admit that they have a deeper content? For you seem to me still to think of Vergil's verses the way we did as boys, when we chanted them out for our teachers when they lectured.
> Evangelus: Not at all, Symmachus: when we were boys we admired the verses without judging them, and neither our teachers nor our stage in life allowed us to take a good look at the faults. (*Sat* 1.24.5-6, trans. Kaster)

This passage shows that there are recognizable modes of reading associated with particular readers, places and times. Both characters identify a simple, inadequate practice of reading Vergil with a set of circumstances related to the *grammaticus*' classroom. It has to do with age and ability, but also with what teachers would allow. For Evangelus a *magister* would prevent boys from looking at faults; for Symmachus, he demands mere chanting back without further reflection.[34]

Macrobius presents both characters not only as readers of Vergil, but recipients of a tradition of reading Vergil. The stock characters of Gellius are here instead well-known situations. But Macrobius' characters are themselves represented in a position more like

[34] For more on this exchange, see p. 178ff. below.

Gellius' readers: they can recognize and employ the stock figures themselves. Macrobius does not merely stage the *grammaticus*' failure, but the debate about who is more like the *grammaticus*. Settling that dispute requires more than a label, and more than one anecdote. It requires an appeal to social norms represented in the dialogue itself.[35]

Social situations implicit in the imitation of authors may be considered in terms analogous to social situations implied in references to *grammatici*. A character who figures another as a teacher points to a mode of interacting with authoritative texts typical of the grammarians' classroom. But he also brings to mind many well-known features and unflattering aspects of that relationship (recall Horace's *plagosus Orbilius*!)[36] Some approaches to imitation are, like comparisons to the *grammatici*, associated with particular attitudes and habits toward literature. And, like comparisons to *grammatici*, they can produce strong reactions. Literary actions such as translation and imitation can also be unbecoming. Blameworthy acts such as the plagiarism associated with the sources of *Sat.* 5.13 are not only characteristic of the intellectually incapable but also the socially inept.

Plagiarism is only one of a number of ethical interpretations possible where one author imitates another. The meaning of a given act of imitation also depends on the broader context in which it is examined. Imitation has a secure place in ancient theoretical accounts of

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[35] cf. Weiß *Homer und Vergil in Vergleich*, 328.

[36] One may also be pressed to rehabilitate certain kinds of reading that have a negative social connotation. The information Macrobius draws in the *Saturnalia* frequently overlaps with what can be found in the commentaries of a *grammaticus* such as Servius. It is particularly important then for Macrobius to distinguish his work from theirs, and he does this in part by repeatedly dismissing and denigrating the approaches of the *grammatici*. The process is not unique to Macrobius in late antiquity. A similar story could be told concerning Augustine's attempts to accommodate his views of ancient poetry to different communities. Lim ("Augustine, the Grammarians and the Cultural Authority of Vergil,") argues that Augustine is caught between the paradigms of three different commitments that form a 'triangle' of concerns about literature: his own views as a new Catholic Christian, the typical method of the grammarians, and his recent objections to Manichaean critiques of Biblical exegesis (112-13). Even where values or attitudes overlap, the drive to distinguish the communities leads Augustine to insist on the distinction between their practices too.

composition. And yet it is a name that covers a variety of acts, and whose terminology is in turn vague and unstable.[37] A specific and even obvious example of imitation (e.g., a given passage of the *Aeneid* and its model) does not necessarily have single meaning: what is virtuously exact in one circumstance may be insufferably derivative in another; what is *imitatio* in one reader's eyes is *furtum* in another's.[38]

This means the ethical significance of a given act of imitation depends on its precise configuration of the relationships between author, imitator and audience. Even an unintentional change in the paradigm can alter the meaning of the evidence. An illustration of the contrasting consequences of different frames may be drawn from an article by Amiel Vardi on the role of *synkrisis* in the *Attic Nights* of Aulus Gellius.[39] Vardi observes two separate streams of criticism in Gellius, both of which involve the comparison and judgment of related texts. In the first, *synkrisis* proper as practiced by at least from Aristophanes onward, two authors are judged by the same external standard. In the second kind of criticism, one author is judged by how closely his work reproduces the virtues of the source text. Both methods tend to work best for pairings where one text is an imitation of the other. In the latter case this must be the case by definition, while in the former this is because a

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[37] Poets and critics employ a variety of terms to describe the use of models, but the great majority of these are too common and have too broad a range of meanings to define a particular relationship without further elaboration. (See McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature* 8-9 along with the appendix of words used to indicate translation in McElduff, *Roman Theories of Translation,* 189-96). Thill, *Alter Ab Illo,* 464-7 points out how individual authors establish their own contrasts between common words like *interpretari, aemulari* and *sequi* to designate whether an imitative behavior worthy of invective or praise. There is no stable system of relationships between such words that could categorize instances of these words without context. (This last point in particular responds to the overly rigid system developed by Reiff in the conclusion of "Interpretatio, Imitatio, Aemulatio," esp. 111ff.)

[38] On variation in the meaning of an act of imitation, see Vardi, "Diiudicatio Locorum," 505-9 and McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*, 24. On the virtues and vices of being exact: McElduff, *Roman Theories of Translation,* 131-5 on the phrase *fides interpres* in the *Ars Poetica*, and also McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature,* 22n.76. *Aemulatio* that improves on the original is not stealing: McGill, 207-8, with *Sat.* 6.1.5-6, discussed below p. 150-51.

[39] Vardi, "Diiudicatio Locorum."

meaningful comparison requires the two texts selected to treat the same topic (a common occurrence where one text is an imitation of the other).

Each method has consequences for how an interpreter approaches a text. In a *synkrisis* type comparison of a passage from Homer with one from Vergil, the two are notionally treated as equals: even if Homer regularly comes out on top, it is at least possible that Vergil might treat the same topic better. By contrast, texts treated in terms offered by the second form of criticism are locked into a hierarchy: the source is presumed to be worthy, and the best the imitator can do is equal his model. In this reading, improving on Homer is impossible, even for Vergil. The relationship between the two authors shifts dramatically with the method.

Such changes naturally point outward to the other who may be involved in reading. These same authors and the same texts in comparison form part of different narratives. The paradigm each employs will imply whether the reader or listener ought to take the authority of a text for granted or not; and what they themselves might employ as a standard in their own critiques.

3. Macrobius and Paradigms of Imitation

Macrobius is more sensitive than Aulus Gellius to the distinctions between different ways of presenting Vergil's relationship to Homer. This is because imitation is at the center of his concerns in the *Saturnalia*. This work stands out for the several levels on which Macrobius has connected past discussions of imitation to his present work. First, Macrobius' work is a species of imitation itself, a collection of texts borrowed from various sources and rearranged into a learned dialogue on different subjects. Second, Macrobius devotes portions of the work to explicit discussion of imitation in Vergil. Third, on a number of occasions and particularly in books five and six, these discussions of imitation are themselves adapted from

other sources. Macrobius makes changes in arrangement and content in his reproductions of the original passages. These amount to an affirmation or adjustment of their theoretical proposals and help to illustrate his own principles.

This is so despite Macrobius' reputation as an inept borrower. While many scholars have observed that he is actively reworking the texts he draws upon, they have judged him to do it unskillfully. The lists of passages Macrobius uses to make a case for Vergil's knowledge of Greek literary culture are drawn from writers who accuse Vergil of stealing from Homer.[40] These sources can be identified by language that does not suit the setting of the *Saturnalia*. For example, as noted above, Eustathius occasionally employs hostile language typical of Vergil's *obtrectatores.* At other times, admonitions are addressed to an individual (rather than the group supposedly convened for the conversation).[41] In general, the ability of modern scholars to identify these sources has been attributed to a defect in Macrobius' writing. If Macrobius were a better imitator, they assume, he would have hidden his sources better.

Moreover, if he were a more powerful thinker, he would have had no need to borrow at all. The mere fact of depending on borrowed material is often taken as a sign that Macrobius must be simple-minded or lazy. Juxtaposed with Vergil's active and even aggressive relationship to his sources, Macrobius' borrowing appears an altogether passive aggregation of bits and bobs of ancient knowledge, arranged with a minimal editing and understanding. He copies extensively from Aulus Gellius' own miscellany and Seneca's letters; translates whole sections of Athenaeus' *Deipnosophistes* and Plutarch's *Table Talk*

[40] Already in 1866 Ribbeck, *Prolegomena Critica*, 111, observed that Macrobius counted passages dependent on Homer to the poet's credit, whereas it was common for Vergil's detractors to call them faults; cf. Cameron, *Greek Mythography in the Roman World*, 257-8. Jocelyn, "Ancient Scholarship," brought together evidence that multiple sources were in play in *Sat.* 5.3-13 and 6. (See also on *Sat.* 5.14.1-5: Scaffai, *La presenza di Omero,* 48). McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*, 189-196 reviews the characteristics of sources accusing Vergil of *furta*, theft.

[41] Jocelyn, "Ancient Scholarship I," 287-8.

into his own symposiastic dialogue; and even copies lists from previous catalogues without adjusting the language that indicates its original setting. All this works against thinking of Macrobius as an intelligent imitator.[42]

But Macrobius is not only open about his borrowing but even identifies the practice explicitly in his preface. He makes no effort to hide his weak position from those who would accuse him of *furta*. One classic mark of literary theft is to feign one's sources are one's own work; the model is hidden so the author may be thought to be saying something original (or at least proprietary).[43] Macrobius by contrast acknowledges his work is derivative. In his preface, he describes the *Saturnalia* as a storehouse of written knowledge (*litterarum penus*) collected from a wide variety of Greek and Roman works (*Praef.* 1.2). He even defends the borrowing word for word from authors when appropriate:

> Nec mihi vitio vertas, si res quas ex lectione varia mutuabor ipsis saepe verbis quibus ab ipsis auctoribus enarratae sunt explicabo quia praesens opus non eloquentiae ostentationem sed noscendorum congeriem pollicetur; et boni consulas oportet, si notitiam vetustatis modo nostris non obscure, modo ipsis antiquorum fideliter verbis recognoscas, prout quaeque se vel enarranda vel transferenda suggesserint.
>
> Please do not fault me if I often set forth the accounts I draw from my varied reading in the very words that the authors themselves used; the work before you promises not a display of eloquence but an accumulation of things worth knowing. You should, furthermore, count it as a bonus if you sometimes gain acquaintance with antiquity plainly in my own words, at other times through the faithful record of the ancients' own words, as each item lends itself to being cited or transcribed. (*Sat. praef*. 4, trans. Kaster)

[42] Nettleship, "On Some of the Early Criticisms of Virgil's Poetry," xxxi is most straightforward about the "very slovenly style of [Macrobius'] patchwork." But there are subtler forms of the same approbation. Jocelyn, "Ancient Scholarship I," 285ff rightly discerns the language drawn from other sources, but counts his ability to find it a sign of Macrobius' failure to adapt his sources as well as he might have. The tendency to link Macrobius' methods with his character has been very strong in, and can persist even in accounts less critical of his aims (e.g., Flamant, *Macrobe et Le Néo-Platonisme Latin,* 293 on Macrobius' "shameless" citation of authors). The reflection in McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*, 1-30 on the differences and similarities between ancient and modern accounts of plagiarism serves as important background for this section.

[43] McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*, 207-8.

Macrobius associates the constant rewriting of one's sources with the aim of demonstrating good use of language (*eloquentiae ostentationem…pollicetur*). But he insists his concern is different: how best to make the knowledge in older writers available to his present audience. Sometimes one accomplishes that goal by restating older knowledge; at other times it is better to transcribe it exactly. Furthermore, a writer must be able to judge which is most appropriate in any given situation (*vel enarranda vel transferenda suggesserint*). By framing the issue in terms of knowledge, Macrobius sidesteps the question of originality entirely. Macrobius lays out a paradigm for imitation that does not fix its bearings by originality and theft. The question is not whether to write an old idea or a new one, but how best to pass on the old ideas you encounter.[44]

Macrobius believes Vergil shares the same goal. In fact, Macrobius suggests Vergil has the same practice of alternately copying and reworking of phrases in his own imitations. Book six of the *Saturnalia* begins with a discussion of what Vergil brought into his own work from ancient Roman writers (6.1.1). Rufius Albinus describes a process that is the same as that described in the preface: Vergil first reads broadly, then chooses what ought to be imitated or even brought in unchanged:

> hunc [est] fructum legendi, aemulari ea quae in aliis probes, et quae maxime inter aliorum dicta mireris in aliquem usum tuum opportuna derivatione convertere.
>
> This is one of the benefits of reading, to imitate the things you approve in others and by a timely borrowing to turn to your own use the words of others that you most admire. (*Sat.* 6.1.2, trans. Kaster)

[44] In a way, being openly defensive naturally draws attention to the possible accusation against him. But Macrobius is at least not shy about offering a target: he follows the excuse above with a description that doubles as an example of what he means, drawing *ipsis saepe verbis* from two other authors. In the first, Macrobius cites extensively from Seneca's *Ep.* 84.3-5. (The only attribution is the immediately prior announcement that he would be borrowing *verbatim* at times, leaving it to the reader to recognize his sources.) In the second, he criticizes Aulus Gellius through a quotation of his description of the *Noctes Atticae.* See on these passages Goldlust, "Un manifeste sur l'organicité littéraire," 279–96.

The description is restated a little later to emphasize Vergil's ability to integrate these elements into his own work:

> denique et iudicio transferendi et modo imitandi consecutus est ut quod apud illum legerimus alienum, aut illius esse malimus aut melius hic quam ubi natum est sonare miremur.
>
> Thanks, furthermore, to the manner of his imitations and the good judgment he displayed in his borrowings, when we read another's material in his setting, we either prefer to think it actually his or marvel that it sounds better than it did in its original setting. (*Sat*. 6.1.6, trans. Kaster)

Just as in Macrobius' description of his own practice, there are two possible responses to good sources: either repeat them, or else adapt them. The language here (*aemulari, imitandi*) is typical of discussions of both rhetorical and poetic imitation. But those practices are treated as part of a process of transfer involving several tasks. These stages of imitation here described—reading, choosing and incorporating—all have their analogies in Macrobius' description of his own activities in the preface. They indicate that whatever Vergil is found to do here, Macrobius claims to be doing the same in the *Saturnalia*.[45]

This is why Macrobius is especially sensitive to which paradigms are at work in his sources concerning Vergil's imitation of Homer: arguments about Vergil's imitation often enough apply to Macrobius' imitation too. Moreover, the work's organization shows a concern for actually preserving signs of different perspectives. Macrobius seeks to represent and overcome other paradigms rather than suppress them. Removing material from its original context could have deadened the effect of each competing storyline. But the arrangement of the material actually emphasizes the differences, for three reasons.

[45] Angelucci, "La tipologia Macrobiana," demonstrates that these two practices map onto the species of borrowing that are present in the different sections of book six. In broad terms he is certainly right about the connection between these sections and the distinction between *transferendi* and *imitandi/aemulari.* I am less convinced by his attempt to attach certain phrases used by Macrobius (e.g., *flores*) to define further subcategories of borrowing. The terminology does not seem sufficiently fine-grained or stable to support such a conclusion.

First, differences in approach are hard to hide. Much of the material deals with a single author, Vergil, and in books five (and part of six) with Vergil and Homer in particular. The changes in perspective on the poet are more easily discerned because the objects of study do not change. That effect is only heightened when Macrobius' sources include both commentaries presuming Vergil's full knowledge of rhetoric and also works that are set on tarnishing the poet's name.[46]

Second, the material is put into the form of a dialogue. This allows Macrobius to incorporate the opposing views in his sources as disagreements between characters. The reality of clashing views is not hidden from the reader. Eustathius gives *Aen.* 6.625 as an imitation of *Il.* 2.489, while Rufius Albinus names it as a an imitation of a line from book 2 of Hostius' *Bellum Histricum* (*Sat*. 6.3.6). That Albinus explicitly announces his intention to demonstrate that Vergil did *not* draw the line directly from Homer (*Sat.* 6.3.1) certainly suggests Macrobius used different sources for each section. But it also simply represents the different aims attributed to the characters involved.[47]

Third, and in the same vein, the dialogue form also allows Macrobius to bring the ethical questions of interpretation to the fore. The interpreter is a character interacting with other characters, and as such his acts are ethical as well as intellectual. Macrobius can attribute the choice of particular approaches to characters with traits that cue the reader on how to judge them. Note that in the above example, Eustathius is proudly a Greek, while Rufius Albinus is particularly concerned to emphasize the importance of Latin authors. Each character who speaks relates to Vergil within a paradigm in which their own traits figure in defining their own role too. A preference for Homer over Vergil counts less against him in the mouth of a Greek who has reason to prefer his own author than in the mouth of a Roman

[46] For more on the *obtrectatores*, see also Görler, "Obtrectatores," and Scaffai, *La presenza di Omero,* 45-46.
[47] See Jocelyn "Ancient Scholarship I," 287-8, n. 37.

critic. Similarly, as noted above, Evangelus' rudeness undermines his ability to persuade. Making an arrogant and uninvited guest the representative skeptic of Vergil's learning makes it unlikely Macrobius' readers will take that position seriously.[48]

The opening speech of book six referenced above supplies an instance where Macrobius clearly signals the intention to move evidence from one storyline to another. At the beginning of this book, Rufius Albinus sets out to demonstrate Vergil's debt to Republican poetry by exact quotation of phrases and half-lines, whole lines and passages with varying correspondence to their source, and finally passages thought to be imitations of Homer but which are better understood as borrowed from earlier Latin authors who themselves copied Homer (6.1.7). Rufius also expresses his fear that in laying out this material he may supply Vergil's detractors (*maligni et imperiti*) with evidence they can use to accuse Vergil of theft (6.1.2). Rufius' fear appears to be an indication of the kind of source Macrobius used for this material. The defensive tone of the introduction suggests that is the very approach taken by one of the writers who first collected it together.[49] At the very least, it advertises Macrobius' own recognition that one can toggle from a judgment of 'failure' to one of 'success' on the basis of the same evidence.

In order to defend Vergil from accusations of theft, Rufius Albinus articulates a set of norms by which one might interpret parallels between one's poet's work and another's. In the first place, he explains, finding something worth incorporating into one's own work is the main benefit of reading (6.1.2). Borrowing and imitation are natural and even characteristic features of the reader's practice—and have been for both Greek and Roman authors since the

[48] Note that elsewhere other an educated figure like Augustine may pronounce something very like it in a much less offensive tone—if no more irenic. Lamberton (*Homer the Theologian*, 267) makes the connection to point out that the similarity likely indicates it was not unusual to view an overly enthusiastic evaluation of Vergil's authority with skepticism in educated late antique Roman society. See also the next chapter, p. 178 n. 13.
[49] See Jocelyn, "Ancient Scholarship I," 289-293 for an account of the path this collection of passages took before reaching the *Saturnalia*.

beginning of their literatures (6.1.3-4). Second, they reveal Vergil's tastes and abilities. Because of his own excellence, the forgotten work of other poets is preserved in Vergil's work. Because of his judicious selection, these fragments are put to an even better use than they had in their original context (6.1.6-7).

The shift from a paradigm about plagiarism to one about preservation has consequences for audience and imitator alike. The former uses the poet's words as evidence of his fault, climaxing with the triumphant reader and foiled author: identifying a stolen verse demonstrates the reader's learning and the guilty author's incapacity. He can neither rework his material nor hide his deception. By contrast, the audience Rufius expects looks at the consequences of the Vergil's borrowings. When he claims Vergil is the benefactor of his sources in preserving them for later generations, he points not only at the act of imitation but on its effects—effects that can only be observed from a far enough remove that those poets Vergil could access in his own day might now require his help to be remembered. As a result, he places himself and his audience not only before Vergil but before the impressive legacy he developed over time.

At the same time, Vergil's own experience is in one way less distant from that of the audience: like them, he is reader. Those accusing Vergil of plagiarism think of him as a poor poet looking for inspiration: instead of producing one's own material, he takes another's. But in Rufius Albinus' comments, Vergil is portrayed as a wonderfully accomplished reader. Reading is part of the writing process in both cases, but in the latter it is not a means to theft. His borrowings are even an aid and resource for his own readers, pointing out and preserving worthy passages for them. Thus whereas a charge of *furta* separates the accused from his audience and source (both of whom he has defrauded), the imitator in Rufius' account shares the experience of his readers, who like him improve their writing with older texts.

4. Vergil's Happy Fault: Imitating Homer in *Saturnalia* 5

Macrobius' treatment of Vergil's debt to Republican authors is a helpful analogue to book five's discussion of his borrowings from Homer. Like Rufius Albinus in book six, Eustathius preserves and yet works against the paradigm about imitation on offer in Macrobius' sources. Again the source material has been prepared with the intention to accuse Vergil of plagiarism. Like Rufius Albinus, Eustathius will deflect this move, but not as one might expect. No accusers are mentioned on this occasion. Rather than draw attention to Vergil's mistaken critics, he instead allows that Vergil is indeed at fault in his imitation of Homer. The fault however is not theft, but excessive attention to one author—a charge that will ultimately prove to redound to Vergil's favor.

By and large, Macrobius does avoid a paradigm involving plagiarism in *Sat.* 5.1-17. Instead, Eustathius judges Vergil according to standard rhetorical prescriptions for imitating older authors. But in doing so Eustathius does not exonerate Vergil entirely. Instead, he blames the exaggerated attention to Homer typical of Vergilian criticism on Vergil's bad habits. Although this creates some tension in Eustathius' account, it also firmly establishes Vergil as a reader of past texts—a reader like Eustathius and his audience, but also a reader like Macrobius and the readers of the *Saturnalia* as well. The poet's unique reputation for imitating Homer presents as something mundane, a kind of excessive proclivity to study. As a result it also serves as an accessible as a model for engagement with the past.

As in book six, imitation is taken as a natural result of reading well. But what does reading well look like? Macrobius establishes a standard for reading by dramatizing Eustathius' own attention to Vergil's poetry. Eustathius passes through the whole *Aeneid* three times in order during the course of his speech. Each time he takes an increasingly fine-grained approach. In the first (*Sat.* 5.2.13-7) he lists key events in the *Aeneid* with their models in the Homeric epics. The second time (5.3.1-15) he restates a set of passages from

memory with their immediate models. The third performs a return to the text: after a special request by the young Avienus to give a thorough account of all such passages, Eustathius asks for a copy of the *Aeneid* to leaf through while making his commentary (5.3.16-5.10.13).

Eustathius' attention is thorough and impressive, and the great learning he displays in turn maps onto Vergil. Eustathius begins by making plain his intention to leave baseline accounts of Vergil's borrowings far behind (*sed et haec et talia pueris decantata praetereo*, "I leave these things aside and other such matters recited by schoolboys," *Sat*. 5.2.6, trans. Kaster). As the accounts grow progressively more detailed, Eustathius increasingly puts his powers of memory on display: from remembering events in the epics, to quoting both the *Odyssey* and *Iliad* and the *Aeneid* verbatim, to a lengthy list of selections from the *Aeneid* to which he consistently matches a Homeric equivalent. Macrobius establishes that Eustathius is a talented and well-educated reader—the only sort fully able to understand Vergil's use of Greek sources, as he finally declares (*Sat.* 5.18.1).[50]

As Eustathius himself notes, this extensive display of learning is merely a response to Vergil's poem: *locos singulos eius inspiciens Homericorum versuum promptius admonebor* ("I will recall Homer's verses more readily as I look over individual passages [of Vergil's poetry]," *Sat.* 5.3.17, trans. Kaster). As such, it indicates the degree of Vergil's engagement with the Homeric epics.[51] Of course no such mnemonic feats of strength are actually occurring: Macrobius may choose out the supposedly random passage[52] and copy from a

[50] Note that the effect is heightened because Eustathius is able to do so with passages both plucked at random (5.3.18) and in order (5.4.1ff.). On Eustathius as a model reader, see also Pucci, *Full-Knowing Reader,* 64-69.
[51] Pucci, *Full-Knowing Reader*, 67-68. NB the similarity of this line of thought with Cicero's account of Ennius' relationship to Homer in *De re publica* 6. See above pp. 70-74, esp. 73.
[52] The passage of the *Aeneid* in question imitates a passage of the *Odyssey* who interpretation is the central concern of Porphyry's *De antro nympharum* (*Aen.* 1.159-69= *Od.* 13.96ff.) For an author familiar with that text and specially concerned with Neoplatonic doctrine, it is difficult to take the choice of the passage as unintentional. For *De antro's* influence on *In somn*. 1.12.1-3, see Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers*, 31, 37-44. On Macrobius' practices as a copyist, see Kaster, *Studies on the Text of Macrobius'* Saturnalia, 65-84.

manuscript of his source. But in Eustathius' impressive feat Macrobius represents both the intensity of Vergil's study of Homer and also begins to populate a new paradigm about reading and imitation with an impressive exemplar.

For Eustathius, the proliferation of such passages points to an obsession on Vergil's part. This becomes evident in the later part of his discussion. Eustathius' lecture culminates in a series of *synkrises* (5.11-13) before dribbling off into shorter sections (5.14-17) exploring particular features Vergil has borrowed (or failed to borrow) from Homer. The *synkrisis* of the two poets is the first time anything but praise has been said about Vergil's relationship to Homer. The introduction of material more critical of Vergil leads Eustathius to pause and (as observed earlier) to apologize for Vergil's failures:

> sed haec et talia ignoscenda Vergilio, qui studii circa Homerum nimietate excedit modum. et re vera non poterat non in aliquibus minor videri, qui per omnem poesin suam hoc uno est praecipue usus archetypo.
>
> But these and other such errors must be forgiven Vergil, who overwhelmingly exceeds the measure of study regarding Homer. And truly he could not help but appear the lesser in other matters, since he used above all this one archetype in all of his poetry. (*Sat.* 5.13.40, trans. Kaster)

Even Vergil's errors are a sign of his excessive devotion to Homer—a devotion that will be repeatedly cited as the motive behind Vergil's reproduction of technical features of Homeric poetry that Eustathius will list next (5.13.40ff.). Eustathius attributes one fault to Vergil, which is uncontrolled admiration for an effect he could not quite pull off himself: *miratus supra modum Vergilius immodice est usus* ("Vergil admired this touch immoderately—and used it immoderately," 5.13.35). Shortly thereafter, Vergil's eagerness has become a reference point for the critique: *vultis aliam aviditatem fruendi videre?* ("Would you like to consider another example of the greedy pleasure [Vergil takes in Homer]?" 5.13.37). Vergil's admiration for Homer, his desire to enjoy what Homer enjoys, leads him to imitate even errors in his source deliberately:

> Adeo autem Vergilio Homeri dulcis imitatio est ut et in versibus vitia quae a non nullis imperite reprehenduntur imitatus sit.
>
> Moreover Vergil takes such great pleasure in imitating Homer that he even imitates flaws in versification that some people ignorantly criticize. (*Sat.* 5.14.1, trans. Kaster)

This attention to one model above all is a fault often noted in rhetorical instruction, and a paradigm also evoked in the *Saturnalia*. As mentioned earlier, it is a commonplace of ancient theories of imitation that any attempt to copy will fall short of the original.[53] Imitating multiple authors allows one to compensate for imperfect copying by choosing the best elements from many authors. This approach seems to lie behind both Quintilian's extensive list of authors suitable for imitation (*IO* 10.1.37ff.; cf. 10.2.1) and also Rufius Albinus' own praise of Vergil's reading in book six. The catalogue of Republican authors whose works Vergil imitated implies that a wide range of sources were an asset to Vergil's writing. Rufius Albinus' intention after all was to defend Vergil against such a charge. He claims that what was often taken to be Vergil's dependence on Homer on closer inspection reveals a broad reading in Republican authors (6.1.7, 6.3.1). As was noted earlier, Macrobius describes his own borrowing practices in similar terms (*praef.* 4). A diverse selection of models is implied by numerous images in the preface that illustrate selective borrowing. These images align Macrobius with a paradigm that portrays diversity of sources as a virtue, and concentration on one as a vice.[54]

The flip side of praising the properly varied diet of authors to imitate is the critique of stubbornly sticking to one model. Eustathius' negative remarks about Vergil's excessive

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[53] See the elder Seneca *Controv.* 1.1.6-7 and Dionysius of Halicarnassus *De imitatione* frag. 6 (in *Opusculorum Volumen*, ed. H. Usener and L. Radermacher (Stuttgart 1963), 202-3), with Perry, "Roman Aesthetics of Artistic Imitation," 161-2. Cf. also on Seneca, Weiß, *Homer und Vergil in Vergleich*, 73-4.

[54] Some of these are taken from the younger Seneca's *Ep.* 84.4-7, including both the bee who collects nectar from a variety of flowers and the digestion of a mass of food into a harmonious selection of nutrients that suits the body's needs. Quintilian also refers to the 'digestion' of authors (*IO* 10.1.19).

devotion (*nimietate*) seem to derive from this aspect of the tradition. The replication of errors is a standard sign of an over-reliance on one source, and to imitate only one author is commonly a sign of poor judgment and mechanical dependence on authority.[55] This criticism fits awkwardly into the generally positive treatment of Vergil in this section of the work. The problem might, as in *Sat.* 6.1.2, be attributed to Vergil's critics. Why does Macrobius allow the blame for single-minded attention to Homer to fall on Vergil?

There are three reasons that suit Macrobius' broader goals in the *Saturnalia*. First, it serves to deflect the strongly critical tone of Macrobius' sources for this section. Even among authors sympathetic to Vergil, it is almost a rule that his poetry must be judged wanting when compared to Homer's.[56] Macrobius presents Vergil's imitation in a more positive light in general, but he would have a formidable task in obscuring all of the critical language of sources (let alone the basic fact of his great debt to the Homeric epics). Instead, he softens the force of a well-known critique by reducing the penalty for a guilty verdict. Yes, he admits, Vergil's approach to Homer has its faults—but he is neither deceptive nor a thief. He is just too enthusiastic. Macrobius allows that Vergil has a character flaw that brings him in for critique. But enthusiasm for Homer does not reflect so poorly on Vergil's taste or abilities as theft.

The second reason is that Vergil's own excellence ensures the consequences of the critique are negligible. The paradigm drawn from rhetorical contexts does not sit easily with the outsized authority both Homer and Vergil share in the wider educational context. Typically, the paradigm describes the progress of unskilled imitators. Quintilian, for instance, writes concerning how a student may be improved through practicing imitation. The climax

[55] Quintilian, *IO* 10.23-25; Russell, "De Imitatione," 5; Perry, "Roman Aesthetics of Artistic Imitation," 161-2.
[56] See above, p. 146-7, and also discussion of the extraordinary successive judgments in Vergil's favor in *Sat.* 5.11 in Vogt-Spira, "Les *Saturnales* de Macrobe," 275.

of good imitation practices is the development into a mature orator.[57] But the well-established role of Vergil as an authority in classrooms (rhetorical and otherwise) makes him ill-suited to the paradigm. Although Homer fits comfortably into the role of a classic, Vergil hardly works in the role of the inexperienced pupil. And apart from Homer, no poet could plausibly be imagined putting Vergil in this position.[58]

When Eustathius criticizes Vergil for focusing almost exclusively on Homer as a source, his criticism seems to highlight Vergil's powers rather than his errors. He does not stress the fault of looking to only one model so much as sticking to *this* one model (*hoc uno… archetypo*). The unique position of both poets in their respective traditions overwhelms the paradigm to which they are fit. Homer's place in the history of Greek and Latin literature can be expressed in explicit declarations that he is an unmatchable and perfect model.[59] Eustathius means that in setting such a standard for himself and maintaining it to the exclusion of others, Vergil made it impossible for himself to make an imitation that could be judged successful. Thus when Eustathius concludes that Vergil cannot help appearing the lesser of the two when set next to Homer (*Sat.* 5.13.40), there remains plenty of room for judging Vergil superior to any other poet. Although Vergil fails to match Homer in everything, no one is able to. Comparisons to other poets would not have been able to obscure Vergil's better qualities in the same way, but they also might not illustrate how high he rises above his other rivals. Vergil certainly remains impressive to Eustathius too, perhaps

[57] Quintilian, *IO* 10.2, esp. 1-3, 18ff.; on serving the end of becoming a mature orator, 10.2.28.
[58] Not that it was any dishonor to be less of a poet than Homer in a Roman context. As Cicero had observed that when imitating, it was no failure to fail to best the ancients (*Orator* 1.5). Cf. Columella's similar argument in *Agr. praef.* 30 (quoted on p. 116-7).
[59] Quintilian 10.1.65 (and 85-86 below); Velleius Paterculus 1.5.1. See Thill, *Alter Ab Illo* 14. For Greek accounts of Homer's incomparable features see Focke, "Synkrisis."

even (as Domitius Afer put it) 'second, but closer to first than third' (Quintilian, *IO* 10.1.85-86).[60]

Vergil's excellence plays into the third and final reason for allowing the critique as well. If setting Vergil in this rhetorical paradigm for imitation highlights his use of one model, it also makes it natural to turn attention to the consequences of that obsessive attention. These are, despite his fault, almost entirely positive. Vergil's excessive study of Homer does not only lead to error, but also to the replication of many of the features typical of Homer's poetry. Thus immediately after critiquing Vergil's restriction to this one author, Eustathius continues with a catalogue of Vergil's debts:

> acriter enim in Homerum oculos intendit ut aemularetur eius non modo magnitudinem sed et simplicitatem et praesentiam orationis et tacitam maiestatem. hinc diversarum inter heroas suos personarum varia magnificatio, hinc deorum interpositio, hinc auctoritas fabulosorum, hinc adfectuum naturalis expressio, hinc monumentorum persecutio, hinc parabolarum exaggeratio, hinc torrentis orationis sonitus, hinc rerum singularum cum splendore fastigium.
>
> He keeps his keen gaze fixed on Homer with the goal of imitating not just his grandeur but also his straightforwardness, the vividness of his speech, and his quiet majesty. That is where he derives the varying degrees of lordliness that his heroes' different personalities display, that is where he derives the gods' interventions, the credibility of his mythical touches, the realistic expression of the emotions, his complete command of ancient history, the cumulative effect of his comparisons, the sound of his flowing speech, the dignity and brilliance he lends to every detail. (*Sat.* 5.13.40-41, trans. Kaster)

If one of Quintilian's students failed, he might have been accused of naïveté or laziness. Or, perhaps, his teacher might instead be faulted for not measuring the abilities of his pupil (*IO* 10.2.20-21). But Vergil's failed attempts to imitate Homer have nothing to do with a lack of attention or energy. Instead, they highlight his attentiveness and its role in producing the Homeric traits he exhibits. Although the passage retains a critical and dismissive tone, the terms on which it leaves Vergil to be judged reveal an accomplishment based on an admirable dedication. The resulting picture of Vergil implies that his imitation of

[60] See also above, p. 31 n. 6 and p. 52.

Homer can only be described with superlatives. Vergil as imitator is exceptionally enthusiastic and mature, outstanding among Homer's many imitators, and successful in a uniquely broad range of excellences in which he follows his model.

Macrobius has grafted the traditional discussion of Vergil's imitation of Homer into a kind of paradigm that is familiar enough, but not as a way of understanding the relationship of the *Aeneid* to the Homeric epics.[61] Vergil's detractors would count his imitations as evidence that he is less of a poet than his admirers claim, while his defenders would use it to rate him a poet inferior only than his model Homer. Macrobius instead imagines a student whose devotion and abilities outstrip any other's. Homer's role as the object of study is familiar, while Vergil fits the role of student oddly. But not incoherently. Imitation was often framed as means by which one might learn composition or improve one's speaking ability. In such a situation, Quintilian advises sensibly that readers should not use only one model, no matter how perfect. The issue is not merely that every author has his errors (*IO* 10.2.24), but also a matter of recognizing one's own limits:

> sed non qui maxime imitandus, et solus imitandus est. quid ergo? non est satis omnia sic dicere, quo modo M. Tullius dixit? mihi quidem satis esset, si omnia consequi possem.
>
> The author who is most to be imitated is not also the only author to be imitated. "What! is it not good enough to say everything as Cicero said it?" Personally, I should answer yes, if I could achieve it all. (*IO* 10.2.25, trans. Russell)

Vergil's exceptional performance makes it just possible for Eustathius to suggest that he in fact can do (almost) everything that Homer does—large scale and singular imitation is, in this case, justified by the imitator's abilities.

[61] For another instance of Macrobius nullifying a source's argument by resetting it into a context that does not suit it, see Rauk, "Cutting of Dido's Lock." For more on strategies that presume the reader's active and even hostile role in argumentation, see on Latin commentaries, Starr, "Role of the Reader in Roman Antiquity," and more generally, see Konstan, "Active Reader in Classical Antiquity."

This new situation suggests a different narrative about how Vergil uses Homer's poems, one that in turn changes the critic's attitude. In accounts accusing Vergil of plagiarism, the clever critic wins approbation for exposing the imitator's deception. But Eustathius' critique of Vergil's excess actually leads him to admire how carefully Vergil works to recreate elements of the source author's poetry. This last connection proves the most important: the most striking elements of Vergil's achievement can be traced back to a rare, excellent kind of imitation, one marked by not only by labor but also by love.

Conclusion: Imagining Vergil after the Vergilian Tradition

Saturnalia 5.2-17 offers a cross-section of the issues that attend Vergil's imitation of Homer among his ancient readers. It falls in the midst of a work in which both the practice of imitation and the reputation of Vergil have a special role in establishing the writer's relationship to the past. In a broader view of Macrobius' dialogue, Vergil's similarity to Homer as a cultural touchstone comes to the fore. Yet Eustathius' speech emphasizes their positions in a hierarchy. Here we meet with lists of specific passages by Homer and Vergil where the latter can be said to have borrowed from the former. Here the concerns of the practice of imitation meet within aims of being 'like' Homer in status and authority.

That status and authority are never at risk. They are as firm as Vergil's role as a canonical author. Although the sources Macrobius uses tend to take Vergil's imitation of Homer in a negative light, Macrobius incorporates them into the broader set of contexts in which Vergil serves as an authority—a set of contexts covered extensively in the *Saturnalia*'s other books. As such, Macrobius' version of Vergil as an imitator is an interpretation not only of the *Aeneid* or of Vergil as author, but of his readers too. It is an attempt to account for the Vergilian tradition as a whole. Macrobius' account of Vergil's imitation relates that part of Vergil's legacy with Vergil's canonical reputation as it had developed over time.

The significance of this approach lies not in the defense of Vergil's reputation per se but in making the authority Vergil enjoyed in late antiquity a normative way of understanding his poetic work. Macrobius' strategy centers on shifting the paradigm in which Vergil's imitation was understood. Macrobius defines the aims of the *Saturnalia* itself in terms of imitation. As such, he is particularly attentive to the possible variations in the meaning of different paradigms of imitation. He is thus also able to re-situate Vergil's borrowings in terms of his own. By invoking Vergil's status, he makes the practice of borrowing normative—as indeed, imitation understood in more general terms had long been itself.

One way of understanding Macrobius' defense of Vergil against the charges of plagiarism was that Vergil was an excellent reader. This defense had been made before. In *VSD* 46, the argument is put in Vergil's own mouth: *cur non illi quoque eadem furta temptarent? Verum intellecturos facilius esse Herculi clavam quam Homero versum surripere* ("why do they not also attempt these thefts? Then they would understand it is easier to take Hercules' club from him than a verse from Homer.") The effect here lies in the play on *furta*: what Vergil's critics characterize as a fault of the author (presenting another author's work as his own) is in this particular case a virtue. Homer is so well-known that to present his work as one's own requires remarkable poetic talent. The case of Homer is a special one, and defuses the doubts that a list of borrowings would provoke.[62]

But Macrobius' own defense goes farther than this. In the *Saturnalia*, Vergil's abilities as a reader excel all others as Homer's does as a model. This proves Vergil to be like Homer in having a unique quality—in this case, uniquely able to imitate Homer. Vergil shows superlative enthusiasm for a superlative author, with the exceptional ability to match. As such Vergil too serves as a model too—not a model poet, but a model reader. Macrobius

[62] McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*, 204-5, and Weiß, *Homer und Vergil in Vergleich*, 69.

establishes imitation as a normative measure of a reader's abilities, both in his own case and in Vergil's. In Macrobius' account, well-practiced imitation does not defraud either author or audience, but can even offer a benefit to both: the audience can take from the treasure stored by the imitator, and the author's best can be preserved (*Sat.* 6.1.6.) This makes the imitator himself a source of learning—a *litterarum penus* that preserves the same knowledge as is offered in the original (*Praef.* 1.2).

The reader's perspective is in focus here. Imitation usually asks us to judge the imitator as one of us. In this case, Vergil's example is the reader's standard—and indeed, Macrobius' exemplar. As such, Vergil's imitation need not be defended, but celebrated; the long list of passages borrowed redounds to his credit. Macrobius' version of the anecdote recorded in the *VSD* is accordingly triumphant and not defensive.[63] To begin with, it is not Vergil who speaks but Avienus, the youngest and most inexperienced character in the dialogue.

> 'perge quaeso,' inquit Avienus, 'omnia quae Homero subtraxit investigare. quid enim suavius quam duos praecipuos vates audire idem loquentes? quia cum tria haec ex aequo impossibilia putentur, vel Iovi fulmen vel Herculi clavam vel versum Homero subtrahere, quod etsi fieri possent, alium tamen nullum deceret vel fulmen praeter Iovem iacere, vel certare praeter Herculem robore, vel canere quod cecinit Homerus: hic opportune in opus suum quae prior vates dixerat transferendo fecit ut sua esse credantur.
>
> 'Please do go on,' Avienus said, 'and track down everything he took from Homer: what could be more pleasant than hearing the two foremost poets treating the same subjects? These three things are all reckoned equally impossible: taking a thunderbolt from Jupiter, his club from Hercules, or a line from Homer. And even if it could be managed, still no one could fittingly hurl a thunderbolt save Jupiter, or wield a club in combat save Hercules, or sing what Homer sang: and yet by choosing just the right spot in his own work to take over the earlier bard's words he caused them to be thought his own. So you'll satisfy us all if you'll kindly share with the present company all that our poet borrowed from yours.' (*Sat.* 5.3.16, trans. Kaster)

Avienus' response makes it clear that it would be inapt and even ignorant to forget Vergil's status while attending to an aspect of his legacy that stresses hierarchy. These are

[63] McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature*, 204-206 observes this change as well.

both foremost poets, after all. And as with many of his own borrowings in the *Saturnalia*, Macrobius changes the significance of a passage by rearranging the circumstances in which the comment is delivered. Avienus presents Vergil's provocation as a commonplace—as indeed, it was[64]—and, notably, not as a defense of Vergil but an encouragement to Eustathius. There are no plagiarists to combat here; only the ready audience formed almost entirely of Vergil's admirers, and moreover, readers, who are present at Praetextatus' dinner. Avienus offers a different reason for exploring these passages, namely admiration and enjoyment. Avienus waves away Eustathius' protestations that he is boring his audience by continuing. Despite the criticisms of Evangelus that opens this moment, it is not anxiety but enthusiasm that drives the examination forward—an enthusiasm that is a more appropriate illustration of the widespread teaching of Vergil than pointing at his errors.

Where discourses about Vergil's status clash, some of the most substantive interventions occur in the writer's handling of the different assumptions and starting places of these discourses. Macrobius does not simply reassert Vergil's authority by rejecting other accounts. Rather, he reuses and reshapes the vocabulary of his sources and reorders them in a way consonant with his project. This means that Vergil's treatment by individual critics is depicted from the perspective of the late antique reader who sees the big picture of Vergil's legacy. The *Saturnalia* stresses that Vergil's distinctiveness as a reader complements his uniqueness as a source for knowledge, and does so better than addressing him as a thief—a position whose negative social implications could not be plausibly squared with the attention he received in late antique literary contexts.

Changing the paradigm in which familiar evidence or claims are made makes a difference, at times significantly more of a diference than direct argumentation. The characterization of Vergil as an authoritative imitator or perfect reader successfully mutes

[64] See citations listed above, p. 139 n. 23 and cf. Cassiodorus, *Exp. Ps. praef*. 97.19.

some powerful interpretative traditions that had targeted Vergil. These had their own basis in Vergil's practices. Many commentators cast imitation in terms of a Vergilian *agon* with Homer (whether successful or, as more often, not). This suited his competitive Augustan context. For Pliny the Elder in the *Natural Histories,* it was typical Vergilian behavior to compete with this models: *illa Virgiliana virtute, ut certarent* (*praef.* 21-24).[65] Macrobius resists contextualizing Vergil in an earlier period where he his competition with other poets would be more obvious. Instead, he keeps the authority won over centuries firmly in view. For this reason, Macrobius' approach h to Vergil cannot be separated from dispositions of readers, the roles imposed by paradigms, and other features that structure late antique reading and interpretation. In the chapter to come, I shall revisit Macrobius' manipulation of such paradigms again, with regard to Vergil's reputation for extensive knowledge.

[65] See McGill, *Plagiarism in Latin Literature* 48-49. Wigodsky, *Vergil and Early Latin Poetry*, 6-8 gives further examples of such characterization.

Chapter 4. "Apart from no form of learning": Claims that Vergil Knows All

Introduction

My previous chapters have surveyed a variety of ways that a poet may be labeled or employed as another Homer and the effects on that poet's reception among later Roman readers. One way to think about the consequences of having an *alter Homerus* in Roman literature is to consider the claims that it licensed readers to make over time. As we have seen, claims made in independent circumstances for different purposes may nonetheless work in concert in another situation. Ennius' claim to be Homeric may weigh on his use in a grammatical or canonical role, even when the rubric he employs to make that claim is largely irrelevant. The likeness of Vergil and Homer's roles in the educational systems of their respective languages can support claims that they are poets who are alike—both in Vergil's imitation of Homer's language and in his superlative abilities.

This chapter concerns explicit claims that Vergil has especially vast knowledge of the world. Such claims are extravagant and grandiose, and draw attention to the extensive authority being asserted. Particularly in their association with the allegorization of Vergil, they have long been treated as the apotheosis of Vergil's parallel role to Homer. This is because they are quite far afield from what passes as a plausible claim to authority among contemporary students of the ancient world. As such they here appeared explicable only as unsubtle aping of Neoplatonist treatments of Homer's epics: mere insertion of Vergil where Homer's name appears, with little interest in texts or their histories.

In this chapter I argue that Vergil's great knowledge has a rather different origin. I show that it is the long standing role of the *alter Homerus* in educational contexts that makes such a conception of Vergil possible. As in many other cases examined thus far, such claims derive from employing Vergil's poetry in functions similar to those to which Homer's poetry was put in Greek literary contexts. But it is not a matter of forcing Vergil into a foreign

paradigm he cannot fit. Rather, the traditional uses of Vergil had already supplied the raw material for the concept of an all-knowing Vergil through the common experience of Roman readers who studied Vergil in their youth.

A well-known instance of such a claim by Servius can helps clarify the issues at hand:

> Totus quidem Vergilius scientia plenus est, in qua hic liber possidet principatum, cuius ex Homero pars maior est.
>
> The whole of Vergil, of course, is full of knowledge, in which matter this book [i.e., *Aeneid* 6] holds first place, of which the greater part is drawn from Homer. (Servius, *ad Aen.* 6.*praef*)

This passage illustrates two important themes: Vergil's ancient reputation for extensive knowledge, and Homer's association with it. On the one hand, Servius' claim is a commonplace in the late 4th and early 5th century writings on Vergil, which supply most of the evidence available about ancient views of the poet and did the most to shape views of Vergil's readers in the centuries to follow. As a whole such claims reflect a special relationship Vergil has to the process of gaining knowledge.

And yet though it is indeed a commonplace, the manner in which that relationship is expressed is relatively varied. Such claims come in a few different forms. Some denote the comprehensive knowledge available in Vergil. In Macrobius' *Commentarii in somnium Scipionis*, Vergil is alien to no discipline, (*nullius disciplinae expers, In somn.* 1.6.44) and most learned in all disciplines (*disciplinarum omnium peritissimus, In somn.* 1.15.12—also in *Sat*. 1.16.12). Favonius Eulogius (again commenting on the *Somnium Scipionis*) agrees: Vergil is the most learned of the Romans (*Maro doctissimus Romanorum*, *Disputatio* 19.4). Others stress Vergil's ability to impart that knowledge. Tiberius Claudius Donatus, whose rhetorical commentary on the *Aeneid* is roughly contemporaneous with Servius' commentary,[1] makes Vergil not only learned but a teacher of many areas of knowledge. He

[1] Squillante Saccone, *Le Interpretationes Vergilianae di Tiberio Claudio Donato,* 11.

promises his reader that he or she too will find good reason to praise Vergil:

> Laudabis eum cui licuit universa percurrere, qui se diversae professionis et diversarum sectatoribus artium benivolum praebuit peritissimumque doctorem.
>
> You will praise him who was able to cover all things, who presents himself to the followers of different professions and cultivators of different skills as both a teacher of good will and most learned. (*Interp. Verg*. 1.5.4-7, Georgii)

A close cousin is the claim that Vergil's knowledge in a particular area is infallible. Here is Macrobius, again in the commentary on the *Somnium Scipionis*, as he concludes his exploration of a problem in Cicero's astronomy:

> verum quoniam in medio posuimus quos fines numquam via solis excedat, manifestum est autem omnibus quid Maro dixerit, quem constat erroris ignarum, erit ingenii singulorum invenire quid possit amplius pro absolvenda hac quaestione conferri.
>
> But since we have made known to all what boundaries the path of the sun never crosses, and, moreover, it is clear to all what Vergil said—a man clearly unacquainted with error—it will be up to the capacity of each individual to find what may be able to contribute further to the solving of this question. (*In somn.* 2.8.8)

Although the claims share a common sense of Vergil's sufficiency, they express it in different ways. These differences can affect how Vergil's authority is invoked. He who knows all does not necessarily teach all; he who never errs may nonetheless not know all things. But surveyed together, the exact nature of Vergil's special relationship to knowledge is less consistent than his role as an authority in the processes by which knowledge is gained. In practice that authority is more commonly assumed than stated outright. Servius' tendency to avoid criticism of Vergil and to fill out his commentary with information is more telling than the few instances in which he makes a claim that Vergil is a particular expert. Not only Vergil's authority but his correctness is a given in most educational contexts. Thus in the *Scholia Bernensia* (*ad G.* 1.45), the exegete justifies his reading by saying: "unless 'ox' is understood, he [Vergil] made a mistake." (*nisi bos intelligitur, erravit*).[2]

[2] *Schol. Bern. ad Georg.* 1.45 (Hagen p. 179)

Explicit claims nonetheless serve as useful handles on the concept of Vergil's knowledge. But as they express what is otherwise taken for granted, they often mark places where the concept of Vergil's knowledge is under stress, making the claim rather than tacitly operating under it. For this reason Macrobius stands out from other readers of Vergil, because he makes such claims explicitly and at greater length than any other surviving writer in Latin. As shown above, Macrobius' *Commentarii* depicts Vergil's knowledge as infallible, expert, and varied—but all in one work. And in this work Macrobius is indeed elaborating at length a role for Vergil modeled on that which Homer played for Greek Neoplatonic interpreters.

Which brings us to the second theme which Servius' passage lays out nicely: that this extensive body of knowledge in Vergil could be taken to have something to do with his relationship to Homer. Servius takes Homer as a special (though not exclusive) source for the material of *Aeneid* 6. More generally, being "full of knowledge" is a trait understood to be typical of both Homer and Vergil. Homer's special status with regard to knowledge was very secure in Greek literary culture. As in Vergil's case, the exact quality of Homer's knowledge—whether wisdom, disciplinary expertise, natural philosophy, history, language, teaching ability—is flexible.[3] The similarity of their roles has been evident to both ancients and moderns alike. Macrobius, for example, takes full advantage here to extend this parallel to the poets' knowledge of the natural world. Recall he calls both *naturae conscius*: Homer twice in the *Saturnalia* (1.12.9, 7.13.25), Vergil once in the *Commentarii* (1.16.5).[4] So too both are *vates*, Homer a *divinus vates* (*Sat*. 7.13.27) and Vergil a *doctissimus vates* (*In somn.*

[3] Verdenius, "Homer, the Educator of the Greeks," 1-19 offers a general survey of areas in which Homer was believed to be able to educate. I have already mentioned Ps. Plutarch, *De Homero*, as something of a *grammaticus*' index of topics one could use Homer to study. Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian,* 1-43 also offers a survey geared towards allegorical traditions. See also Sluiter, "Commentaries and the Didactic Tradition," 176-9 on scholiasts who present Homer composing with the intention to teach his readers.
[4] See above, p. 137-8.

1.13.12), and both with connotations of special knowledge or special ability to divulge it.

No one makes more claims than Macrobius about Vergil's knowledge, and especially in the *Commentarii*. But Macrobius' project does run into a significant problem in its adoption of a Neoplatonic approach to Vergil. From the cross-cultural perspective of a Greek Neoplatonist, the comparison between the poets was not flattering to Vergil. Both Homer and his reputation were simply more ancient, and for a Neoplatonist this meant special access to knowledge.[5] The long standing role of Homer in Greek culture as a source or interlocutor for those seeking knowledge is crucial background to the Neoplatonic readings analyzed in Robert Lamberton's *Homer the Theologian.* As Lamberton argues, the Neoplatonic interpretation of Homer distinguishes itself from alternatives in being "committed to finding in Homer a single, fixed, and accurate account of reality."[6] Moreover, the plausibility of seeking knowledge in Homer was greatly increased by the long tradition of claims that knowledge was there for the finding. The disparate voices over centuries lend a kind of tensile strength to a claim to knowledge: everyone from Plato to Ps. Plutarch to Ps. Heraclitus to Strabo to Porphyry to the scholiasts to Homer himself made some claim of special knowledge on Homer's behalf. The more interpreters who argued from Homer's authority, the more plausible it became. And so too the more easily a more specific set of claims concerning the nature of that knowledge could be made by readers committed to Neoplatonic views like Porphyry's.

Vergil is a far less likely candidate for an ancient sage in Neoplatonic terms. First, when compared to the Homeric tradition, Vergil's general claims to knowledge are not so robust. The knowledgeable Vergil is a common trope of late antiquity but has only a few suggestive precedents in earlier in the Latin tradition. Notably, such claims are not and cannot

[5] Lamberton, "The Neoplatonists and the Spiritualization of Homer," 118, 122-3 (with Long, "Stoic Readings of Homer," 52-57).
[6] Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*, ix.

be traced to origins of Latin literature, let alone the Greek tradition that co-existed with the Latin intellectual world for so long a time. Homer could be argued to be the founder of disciplines, the source or earliest exemplar of skills later developed by others. Vergil's chronology impeded such claims. By the time he was born, Cicero and Varro were already shaping the categories by which he would be received. And this makes the claims made on Vergil's behalf appear more scanty and exaggerated—as if motivated merely by a desire to claim the same honors for Vergil as for Homer rather than reflecting a genuine similarity. This is borne out by the attitude of the earliest surviving claims regarding Vergil's special status, which are far more tentative than the comprehensive statements of Servius and Macrobius. We hear of something greater than the *Iliad*, of the applause of the crowds, of the capacity to support various kinds of study—but nothing on which to hang privileged access to knowledge.[7] As such the support for a miraculously knowledgeable epic poet in the Latin literary and intellectual corpus is far leaner, even if the claims are no less extravagant.

The reader of Macrobius' *Commentarii* thus faces a puzzle. Macrobius is obviously attempting to evoke a role for Vergil symmetrical to that which Homer plays for Greek Neoplatonists. But there is deep divide here. That a great variety of parallels that can be established between Vergil and Homer has been a theme of this dissertation. But so too that those symmetries are often depend on context for their effect. This Homer has a fixed relation to the cosmos. What context, if any, could sustain a viable argument for Vergil in this cosmic role?

This question points us to the imitation of Homeric exegesis once again. Close imitation of the uses for Homer's knowledge is a double-edged sword for Vergil's readers. The more closely they imitate the powerful tools of Homeric exegesis on this point, the more it highlights the gap between the two poets and their traditions. In fact, since the 19th century,

[7] Propertius, 2.34.65-66; Tacitus, *Dialogus* 13, Seneca *Ep.* 108.24-29.

reflections on allegorical interpretations in the interpretation of Vergil have produced several explanations of why his exegetes feel they can bridge the gap of cultural history. Two influential theories are especially noteworthy. Bitsch observed the strong claims made for Vergil and a shared body interpretations of his poems among 4th century writers. He posited a lost *Quaestiones Vergilianae* that might supply a grounding in Latin for the Neoplatonic interpretation of Vergil. This led to decades of investigation into its supposed contents.[8] Earlier, in his seminal *Vergil in the Middle Ages*, Domenico Comparetti articulated a still more durable account. Comparetti argued that late antique readers of Vergil treated him as if he had Homer's history because they were limited by their circumstances. Blinkered by their own cultural exhaustion and the rise of Christianity, they mistook Vergil's esteemed position in education for grounds to claim great knowledge on his behalf. Crudely put, Vergil's late antique readers are too dumb to realize the mismatch.

These two views are insufficient, but each grasps onto a key element of the problem. The existence of a specific text like the *Quaestiones Vergilianae* has come to seem less crucial to explaining Platonizing tendencies in Vergil's exegetes.[9] Yet the inquiry that hypothesized it was correct to recognize that some grounding was needed for these claims. Why did claims made on Vergil's behalf not collapse on their own weight in a work like Macrobius', where the Neoplatonic legacy was cited explicitly? Comparetti's account in turn identified the main source of Vergil's influence in education but did not seek out how that role in education might be linked to authority. The legacy of the theory has been to license scholars to forget about why Vergil should ever have had authoritative knowledge in the first

[8] Bitsch, *De Platonicorum quaestionibus quibusdam Vergilianis*, 7-8. The proposal, rooted in Servius' claim that there are many treatises on *Aeneid* 6 (*ad Aen.* 6.*praef*), is likewise supported by Courcelle, *Late Latin Writers,* 46.

[9] See review of literature and discussion in Setaioli, *La vicenda dell'anima*, 239-42. Setaioli dismisses attempts to determine one author of a supposed *Quaestiones Vergilianae* and notes in particular how Servius' passages reveal a pastiche of different teachings quite different from the coherence one might expect from a single source.

place. Vergil was read this way simply because there were Neoplatonists around to influence the commentators lower down on the intellectual food chain.[10] Yet this thesis has been durable because it is right to point to the cultural circumstances of late antiquity as decisive, and in particular to the experience and behavior of Vergil's readers.

In what follows I argue that the grounds for the cosmic Vergil are, in fact, found precisely in those lower ranks of the intellectual hierachy—specifically, in the classrooms of late antiquity. Vergil's status as a source of all knowledge could not be grounded in the same historical and cultural terms that secure Homer's status in the Neoplatonic tradition. But contrary to what has been argued previously, such Neoplatonic concerns are rather more incidental to the phenomenon of claims that Vergil knows all. The grounds for such claims was not an argument from texts or history, but rather the common experience of the educated in the classrooms of the empire. It was there that Vergil found a common point of history with Homer, as both fulfilled a cultural function in the classroom as the principle authority in education. In doing so, both authors also played a unique role in the education of each individual who passed through the classrooms of late antiquity. Each student had personal experience of Homer or Vergil at the center of their education (or at least presented as such). Moreover they shared the experience with the remainder of the educated class they encountered, both in their contemporary society and reaching centuries back. In sum, Vergil's role as the poet who knows all is primarily a function of being deeply embedded in forms of education widespread in the empire. And this accords with surviving late antique evocations of Vergil, which draw far less on the doctrines of Neoplatonism than the commonplaces of the schoolroom—even and especially in the case of a patently Neoplatonic work like Macrobius' *Commentarii*.

In order to demonstrate this, my chapter covers three areas. The first section will

[10] e.g., Jones, Jr., "Allegorical Traditions of the *Aeneid,*" 113.

develop a reading of how exaggerated claims for Vergil's capacities could serve as a heuristic in a classroom environment. I observe how Macrobius himself records how a supernaturally knowledgeable Vergil appeared implausible to parts of the Roman elite. I also show that Macrobius associates such claims with those made by *grammatici* concerning Vergil's infallibility in educational contexts. Examining Augustine's account of the role of such claims about Vergil in the classroom in *De utilitate credendi* will also give a clearer picture of the function of Vergil's infallibility in teaching.

Second, I consider circumstances that can make claims to Vergil possessing all knowledge plausible in a specifically educational context. Beyond a simple heuristic function, exaggerated claims find purchase in the experience of the literary tradition by students. By looking to the experience of reading Vergil in the classroom through the lens of Vergil's commentators, I recognize correspondences between the claims to Vergil's comprehensiveness and the comprehensive authority Vergil's texts held in Roman literary education. Drawing on these conditions will allow an examination of how explicit claims to all knowledge might depend less on the unmatchable cultural history of Homer and more on Vergil's still formidable educational role in Latin letters.

Lastly, we will return to Macrobius' particular invocations of Vergil's knowledge in the *Commentarii* to see how well they fit the above scheme. I lay out how the relationships between Cicero, Vergil, and Macrobius are constructed in parallel to those of Plato, Homer, and their Greek Neoplatonist commentators. I also show how the parallel breaks down precisely where the history of the poets do not match. Finally, I demonstrate how an appeal to claims about Vergil's knowledge drawn from the familiar context of grammatical and rhetorical instruction can fill that very gap.

1. Infallibility as a Heuristic

Many scholars have found Vergil's reception in late antiquity jarringly foreign to

classical Latin literary culture. It is thus common to characterize the impulse to claim so much for Vergil's knowledge as foreign to that culture. Such claims drawn, it is said, from textual traditions with different histories. Thus on the one hand Vergil's treatment at the hands of Macrobius is treated as a deliberate attempt to rival the Christian Bible (or even to make an equivalent);[11] while on the other, Vergil's readers are said to emulate the Greek traditions of Neoplatonism.[12] In either case, the tendency is to view the match between Vergil's authority and these claims as forced.

Some late 4th century readers seem to have agreed. While introducing his rhetorical commentary on the *Aeneid*, Tiberius Donatus Claudius reassures his son that those who find fault in Vergil for having contradictory things to say about gods and fate and other such matters mistake the poet for a philosopher:

> denique, si ad propositum thema redeamus, inveniemus Vergilium id esse professum, ut gesta Aeneae percurreret, non ut aliquam scientiae interioris vel philosophiae partem quasi adsertor adsumeret.
>
> And finally, if we return to the proposed theme, we will find Vergil has set it out so that he may go through the deeds of Aeneas, [and] not so that he might join to it some part of inner knowledge or philosophy as if he were their advocate. (*Interp. Verg.* 1.6.9-12)

Donatus implies that the sort of problems the *obtrectatores* of Vergil like to raise are an issue for those who insist that Vergil is involved in philosophical matters. Augustine similarly dismisses the validity of poets in philosophy. In a passage where Augustine cites a Stoic idea illustrated by a verse of Homer, he is quick to distinguish the authority of the

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[11] Explicitly by Bloch, "The Pagan Revival in the West," 208-9. Vogt-Spira invokes scriptures as a model for Macrobius' *Saturnalia* but notes that the comparison is excessive and often criticized ("Les *Saturnales* de Macrobe, 264). The comparison can also be implicit. Den Boeft attempts to frame the reading of Vergil as a religious act ("Nullius disciplinae expers," 175-186); Goldlust appeals to the aesthetic of "revelation" in a religious sense (*Rhétorique et Poetique*, 287); while Delvigo argues that the growing influence of Christian exegesis pushes Vergil's exegetes to recuperate older Latin traditions of allegory ("*Mythici* vs *physici,*" esp. 1, 11, 20-21).

[12] Comparetti, *Vergil in the Middles Ages*, 73 (cf. 57-58). Jones, Jr., "Allegorical Traditions of the *Aeneid,*" 113.

philosophers from that of the poet: "not that the poet's opinion bears on this issue" (*nec in hac quaestione auctoritatem haberet poetica sententia*, *Civ. Dei* 5.8).

Upon finding Macrobius at pains to refute this view in the *Saturnalia*, it begins to seem as though skepticism on the use of Vergil as an authority in philosophy or theology was a view with its advocates among the Roman elite.[13] Macrobius puts this opinion in the mouth of Evangelus, the troublesome guest whose disdain for Vergil's capacities provokes the other banqueters' speeches. Upon hearing Praetextatus' discourse on solar theology, Evangelus responds to the evocation of Vergil as an authority on such matters:

> inter haec Evangelus, 'equidem', inquit, 'miror potuisse tantorum potestatem numinum comprehendi; verum quod Mantuanum nostrum ad singula, cum de divinis sermo est, testem citatis, gratiosius est quam ut iudicio fieri putetur. an ego credam quod ille, cum diceret Liber et alma Ceres pro sole ac luna, non hoc in alterius poetae imitationem posuit, ita dici audiens, cur tamen diceretur, ignorans? nisi forte, ut Graeci omnia sua in immensum tollunt, nos quoque etiam poetas nostros volumus philosophari…
>
> 'I for my part am impressed that the power of such great divinities could be thus comprehended; but that you call our friend from Mantua as a witness to this detail and that, when matters divine are the subject—that should be thought more a display of favoritism than of good judgment. Or am I to believe that when he says "Liber and nurturing Ceres," meaning "sun and moon," he's not doing it out of imitation of some other poet, hearing the words spoken but without a clue as to why? Unless, perhaps, just like the Greeks, who puff their accomplishments up out of all proportion, we too want to claim that even our poets are philosophers…' (*Sat.* 1.24.2-4, trans. Kaster)

Almost everything Evangelus says is meant to be contradicted elsewhere in the *Saturnalia*.[14]

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[13] As noted above, p. 153 n.48, a point made well by Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*, 267 with 261. In addition to linking Augustine and Evangelus' arguments, Lamberton also cites *De magistro* 28, where Augustine caps his dismissal of Persius' opinion on knowing your vices with this: *non enim horum auctoritati subiecti sumus in talibus rebus* (for we are not subject to the authority of these sorts [i.e., poets] in such matters).

[14] One line of argument sees Evangelus as a representative Christian who is hostile against the pagan Vergil. As Kaster notes, neither his name nor his hostility to Vergil are telling indications of a Christian, and Evangelus actually claims to know something about pontifical lore (*Sat.* 3.10.2ff.; Kaster, Loeb, xxxii-iii). This view of Evangelus is closely aligned with the view of Macrobius as a pagan campaigning against an increasingly Christian elite in the late 4th century. For an argument against Evangelus in this role, see Cameron, *Last Pagans*, 595ff. (and against a 'pagan reaction' more generally, *passim*), and on evidence for Macrobius as a Christian, see Kaster, Loeb, xxi-xxiv. Cf. the response to Kaster by Jones, *Between Pagan*

(Indeed, every other guest at dinner reacts to these views with repugnance.) And yet his doubts about the relevance of poets to philosophical matters appears to refer to concerns about the appropriateness of assigning to Vergil the 'Greek' characteristic of philosophical learning that were held more widely.

Macrobius aligns Evangelus against different claim about Vergil's authority too: he is against Vergil's infallibility. In reply to Evangelus' initial concerns about philosopher-poets, Symmachus tries to get Evangelus to acknowledge that there is something deeper (*altiora*) in Vergil's verses. In his disregard for them, he seems childish, like a boy who is still getting the basics down. (*Sat.* 1.24.5) But in a passage cited earlier,[15] Evangelus turns the tables on Symmachus by associating him with the teachers of those boys. He reminds Symmachus that it was only in the classroom that it was possible to hold fairy tales about Vergil to be true:

> Immo pueri cum essemus, Symmache, sine iudicio mirabamur, inspicere autem vitia nec per magistros nec per aetatem licebat. quae tamen non pudenter quisquam negabit…
>
> Not at all, Symmachus: when we were boys we admired the verses without judging them, and neither our teachers nor our stage in life allowed us to take a good look at the faults. Yet no one can brazenly deny they're there…. (*Sat.* 1.24.6, trans. Kaster)

The discussion between Evangelus and Symmachus is important for two reasons. First, Evangelus identifies two different approaches to Vergil he finds excessive: one that allows the poet to be a philosopher, the other that allows him to have no faults.[16] He associates the latter with the former by implying that Symmachus would hold both views. This suggests an alternative foundation for superlative views about Vergil than the Neoplatonic or Christian imitation proposed by Comparetti and others—one embedded in a

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and Christian, 151-7, who offers some worthwhile critiques of that evidence. Nonetheless, I do not find that Jones does more than underscore Macrobius' interest in Neoplatonism's pagan sources. I am not convinced this makes Macrobius *more* likely to be a pagan than—at least nominally—a Christian.)

[15] p. 144.

[16] A little later he disparages a third kind of authority too: Vergil's supposed expertise in oratory. (*Sat.* 1.24.9).

context with a decidedly firmer history in Latin literary culture.

Second, the sharp distinction between the reading of *pueri* before their *magistri* with that of adult readers points to an understanding that classrooms operate under different rules than other contexts in which Vergil might be interpreted. For both Symmachus and Evangelus, the schoolroom is the home of the immature reader. Both refuse to be associated either with *magistri* or their students (even with the *grammaticus* Servius present in their group).[17]

The schoolroom Evangelus and Symmachus refer to has a particular ethos that can be recognized. The attempts of both characters to saddle the other with the charge of being 'school' readers highlight the importance of identifying the circumstances in which a claim can be plausible. Some claims may be appropriate to make in the classroom, but will not transfer easily to an adult context. The classroom thus has a curious role in elevating others while not being elevated itself. The grammatical education undertaken in classrooms of the empire is not only appropriate but even necessary for children who will be elites. This makes it a common and formative experience across the empire's higher classes. But the classroom is nonetheless no place of honor for adults. *Grammatici* in Roman society had a liminal status. They were an essential part of the process of endowing elites with status, and yet did not possess that status themselves.[18] As guardians of the language of elites, they formed them in their habits of language. Yet they were readily dismissed once those benefits had accrued. As a result, there is a difference between how literary matters look from inside and outside the classroom.

This difference extends to opinions of what is studied there too. The vision of Vergil

[17] Symmachus is careful to elevate Servius *ex plebeia grammaticorum cohorte* (out of the common crowd of grammarians) when he characterizes them as interpreters of common abilities (*Sat.* 1.24.8). See above, p. 143.
[18] This aspect of the social position of *grammatici* is laid out in Kaster, *Guardian of Language*, esp. 11-31, 201-5.

that relegates intensive study of the *Aeneid* to one's years in the classroom is in tension with (say) Quintilian's view that it is all right to read Vergil badly once, because it will not be the only time.[19] There are few positive accounts of how grammarians treat Vergil in late antiquity, and still fewer theoretical accounts by grammarians.[20] This makes it difficult to find an account of Vergil's treatment in the classroom that discusses the purposes teachers had for the use of these claims.

One example that comes close to such a theoretical account may be drawn from an illustration in Augustine's *De utilitate credendi.* Augustine's aside uses the treatment of Vergil in the classroom as an exemplar for good reading. Macrobius' Symmachus shows one way of bringing Vergil's special status outside the classroom: he disassociates the claims he makes from the approach of the *grammatici*. But Augustine presents a different account of the practices typical of teachers. He focuses on the behaviors encouraged in students by such claims. These statements are ways of guiding students into practices and behaviors that will help them understand the text correctly. Superlative claims for infallibility have a heuristic purpose—at least when practiced in the right context.

Augustine's account is of special interest for three reasons: first, Augustine is deeply experienced in the educational system of antiquity. It bears remembering that Augustine had firsthand experience of both sides of this education. Besides having been formed in it, he also served as a teacher of rhetoric in Milan prior to his return to North Africa.[21] Second, the traditional education of Roman elites had been much on Augustine's mind in years prior to

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[19] *ideoque optime institutum est, ut ab Homero atque Vergilio lectio inciperet, quamquam ad intellegendas eorum virtutes firmiore iudicio opus est: sed huic rei superest tempus, neque enim semel legentur.* (The practice of making reading start with Homer and Vergil is therefore excellent. Of course it needs a more developed judgement to appreciate their virtues; but there is time enough for this, for they will be read more than once. Quint. *IO* 1.8.5, trans. Russell)

[20] Kaster, *Guardians of Language,* 137.

[21] *Conf.* 5.13.24. The exact lines between grammatical and rhetorical teaching were not fixed.

writing *De utilitate credendi*. After his conversion to Christianity, Augustine retreated with friends into a community at Cassiciacum. At this time Augustine wrote a number of books in which issues of teaching, interpreting, and reading were core issues.[22] Thirdly, Vergil was a significant figure in these reflections, and continued to be over years to come. These works happen to include some of Augustine's least adversarial uses of Vergil, who plays a fairly neutral role. But later Augustine could also frame Vergil as enemy of Christian enculturation, as in the *Confessions* and especially the *City of God*.[23] Altogether, Augustine is well-placed both as a witness to the manner in which Vergil tended to be read in classrooms. Augustine sees through the lens of a man very preoccupied with the way practices and reading practices in particular form beliefs. (It is no surprise that Vergil makes a cameo in the beginning of the *Confessions* as well.[24])

In this case, Augustine's doubts are tempered by his appeal to a shared formative experience. The addressee of the work is his sometime schoolmate Honoratus. The account of the classroom in *De utilitate credendi* is meant to be recognizable to his former friend. Augustine seeks to leverage their common experience towards a common belief. As such, Augustine cites Vergil's authority in school as a point of reference that would remain familiar to both of these educated figures even as they now operated in different contexts.

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[22] Pucci, *Augustine's Virgilian Retreat*, discusses a number of these—*De beata vita, De ordine, Soliliquia*, among others. Pucci argues Augustine strenuously worked towards understanding how a reader of the Bible and of Vergil could use their training in ways proper to each text. Augustine continued to develop these thoughts throughout his life—see Stock, *Augustine the Reader*, *passim* but esp. 175 on the comparison of the church to a school of rhetoric in *De dialectica* 7.

[23] The story is complex. The persistent but ambiguous influence of Vergil on Augustine is well-covered in MacCormack, *Shadows of Poetry*. He is deeply ambivalent about Vergil's role in education. In MacCormack's formulation, Vergil's descriptions of reality were decisive on certain matters for Augustine, even as he disputes his authority (xviii). A good discussion of Augustine's ability to treat even the same part of the *Aeneid* differently in different contexts can be found in Kaufmann, "Virgil's underworld in the mind of Roman late antiquity," 153-5, contrasting his use of *Aeneid* 6 in *Cur. mor.* 2.1 and *Civ. Dei* 21.27.

[24] *Conf.* 1.13.20

Formally, *De utilitate credendi* concerns where errors may arise in reading texts. But the shared trajectory of Augustine and Honoratus as readers serves as a framework for the argument. Augustine and Honoratus shared not only schooling but also a conversion to Manichaeism. Since then Augustine only has become a Christian. The work addresses the objections of the Manicheans (and, presumably, Honoratus) to the Bible's authority. And at one point in his argument, Augustine turns his attention to the problems that arise from rejecting an only apparently illegitimate authority.

A repeated concern in *De utilitate credenda* is to look at the context in which texts are read, criticized or praised.[25] The question for Augustine is not merely why but also who dismisses scripture. What relationship do they, and you, have to it? Augustine wishes to demonstrate that the disdain for scripture that motivates the Manicheans' criticisms also impedes them from understanding the text. He claims it is in their interest to avoid giving it proper study. Augustine compares trying to learn about the Bible from Honoratus' Manichean instructors to that of trying to understand Aristotle by reading his detractors. Someone who wishes to tarnish Aristotle's reputation need not limit himself to thoughtful critique—any cheap hit will do the job.[26] So too, he claims, Manicheans who dismiss the Bible have very little motivation to read it well. By contrast (and analogous to Christians teachers such as himself) a commentator on Aristotle is motivated to show what the text says and explicate it, because he does so out of a conviction of its being worthy of attention.[27]

Augustine argues that what we believe about a text affects how we treat it and what we can do with it. He insists that the scriptures are "deep and divine" and are plainly open to

[25] For a nuanced reading of the problem that brings out how reading in this scheme depends on relationships between author, reader, and their respective intentions, see Stock, *Augustine the Reader* 169-70.
[26] *util. cred.* 13/p.17.15ff. Zycha.
[27] There is an easy objection to Augustine's argument here. One may not be motivated to make Aristotle look right, but one may be motivated to speak truthfully about the topic on which Aristotle wrote. This could lead to a useful critique of Aristotle.

one who wishes to learn from them, "if only he accepts to drink devoutly and religiously, as true religion seeks." (*si modo ad hauriendum devote ac pie, ut vera religio poscit, accedat*, *util. cred.* 13/p. 18.10-12 Zycha). So Augustine goes on to suggest that Honoratus' problems with the scripture is not a matter of difficult questions but of his disposition toward them. "For first it must come to pass with you, that you do not hate the authors themselves, and then that you love them." (*agendum enim tecum prius est, ut auctores ipsos non oderis, deinde ut ames* (*util. cred.* 13/p. 18.14-15 Zycha). As it is, observes Augustine, no one could care about the sort of minute problems that come up in trying to exegete a text unless they held the author in esteem. Here he introduces, as a contrast to Honoratus' treatment of scripture, Vergil before the *grammaticus:*

> propterea quia si Vergilium odissemus, immo si non eum, priusquam intellectus esset, maiorum nostrorum commendatione diligeremus, numquam nobis satis fieret de illis eius quaestionibus innumerabilibus, quibus grammatici agitari et perturbari solent; nec audiremus libenter, qui cum eius laude illas expediret, sed ei faveremus, qui per eas illum errasse ac delirasse conaretur ostendere.
>
> If we should have hated Vergil—rather, if we should not love him on the commendation of our ancestors before understanding him—we would never be contented with those innumerable questions about him by which the *grammatici* tend to be stirred and bothered; nor would we willingly listen [to anyone] who would disclose the answers to them with praise for him. Instead, we would cherish him who would attempt to show through these [questions] that [Vergil] had made mistakes and been off his rocker. (*util. cred.* 13/p. 18.16-23, Zycha)

There are two things of note here. First, Augustine treats the phenomenon he discusses as immediately recognizable. From the fact that Vergil is continually posed "innumerable questions" about his poems by the *grammatici* to the understanding that the unmotivated student would find this tedious, this is an unexceptional account of reading Vergil in the classroom.

But second, Augustine's main interest is the effect of one's disposition towards the author on one's behavior while reading. The common practices of the classroom are reimagined here as a result of specific attitudes towards the author. The difficult line by line,

problem-and-answer work of understanding letters and sentences typical of the *grammatici* is hard to stomach—unless one cares deeply for the author.[28] One can of course imagine a number of other motivations (Augustine himself recalls corporal punishment as one in *Conf*. 1.12). But Augustine is affirming that love is indeed able to motivate these behaviors. Indeed, he even seems to suggest that the latent meaning of the widespread commitment to reading Vergil's poetry so carefully is some kind of love for him. The emphasis on one's love for the author becomes important as Augustine moves to discuss teachers too. If love of the author motivates the kind of work common in classrooms, then it is a condition of the work of *grammatici* as well as their students. Moreover, the behavior of *grammatici* towards the author can also be an index of the quality of their teaching. Showing due reverence to an author will lead to reading him well.[29]

The norm Augustine uses to measure the successful *grammaticus*' attitude towards Vergil is the capacity to sustain a plausible claim to infallibility. The ability to interpret well is marked by demonstrating Vergil is consistently in the right; inability to do so is the sign of a bad teacher, so obvious even students perceive in it a breach of professional conduct:

> nunc vero cum eas multi ac varie pro suo quisque captu aperire conentur, his potissimum plauditur, per quorum expositionem melior invenitur poeta, qui non solum nihil peccasse, sed nihil non laudabiliter cecinisse ab eis etiam, qui illum non intellegunt, creditur. itaque in quaestiuncula magistro deficienti et quid respondeat non habenti suscensemus potius quam illum mutum vitio Maronis putamus. iam si ad defensionem suam peccatum tanti auctoris adserere voluerit, vix apud eum discipuli vel datis mercedibus remanebunt.
>
> Now truly it is accepted that as many variously attempt to open these [questions], each according to his own ability, he is most powerfully applauded in those [questions] through whose explanation the poet is found to be better—[a poet] who

[28] See also Eustathius' anxiety that he is boring his interlocutors with an excessively thorough account of Vergil's borrowing from Homer (*Sat.* 5.3.15). Just as Augustine's ideal *grammatici* pose their questions so meticulously out of love of Vergil, Avienus' affirms that his admiration for Vergil makes a long speech about him seem all the more worthwhile. See above, p. 137, 164ff.

[29] Cf. Macrobius' Eustathius criticizing grammarians who do not show *diligentia* in pursuing all the knowledge available in Vergil: *Sat*. 5.22.2, 5.22.11, with Kaster, "Macrobius and Servius," 234-7.

> not only made no error but sang nothing that was not worthy of praise, even by those who did not understand him. Thus we become angry with a teacher who holds back and does not have anything to say to a trifling question, rather than thinking that he is silent due to a fault of Vergil's. And if in his defense he wished to ascribe a mistake to such an author, his students will hardly remain with him, even if they have already paid their fees. (*util. cred.* 13/p. 18.23-19.2, Zycha)

The teacher fails his students in not selling the right claim—as a teacher, but also, in Augustine's view, as an interpreter.

The context of Augustine's argument makes clear that the claims made on behalf of Vergil are not about the character or nature of the text. Augustine's end is to persuade Honoratus to accept the authority of scripture. But this is a tall order, as he himself acknowledges, and so Augustine turns to a more general argument. Despite according scripture unique status, he does not argue for its treatment as special on that basis. Rather he attempts to draw an analogy to the behavior he thinks appropriate for scripture from other texts in other contexts. For this reason he turns to descriptions of other works being revered, such as Aristotle's philosophy in the hands of his commentators and Vergil's poetry in class with the *grammatici*. He makes no outright claim that the *Aeneid* is a perfect text or Vergil infallible; the only thing he suggests that might command our love for Vergil is the recommendation of our ancestors (*maiorum nostrorum commendatione*, *util. cred.* 13/p. 18.18). The claims are rather a function of how the teacher is kept to the difficult task of exegesis, and how he in turn encourages an appropriate reverence in his students.

De utilitate credendi suggests that Vergil's infallibility may be more of a performance than a doctrine. It is a show put on as a way to teach students well. In an account concerned with the results of one's beliefs and attitudes, Vergil's inability to be wrong on matters of language at least proves useful to achieving the right ends. Infallibility proves a good practice for teachers and a guide to good reading for students.

But importantly, infallibility is also heavily dependent on context. It is for a particular end—good practices of teaching, good practices of reading. But it is also formulated to work

in a particular relationship between student and teacher. Augustine does not intend to say that Vergil should be read infallibly everywhere and in every situation—his own practice and his consistent emphasis on the Bible's superior standing, here as elsewhere, would suggest as much.[30] But so does the continuing presence of the distinction between classroom and elite values. Augustine's vivid image of students walking out of class and his easy invocation of Honoratus' anger towards the hapless *grammaticus* both betray a comfortable distance from those who ask their innumerable questions of Vergil.

Infallibility, as Evangelus maintains, is a kind of neighbor to claims that Vergil knows everything. But it differs in being primarily found made an educational setting. Augustine's question then may be pressed again. What are the circumstances of the claim that Vergil knows all? What elements of the classroom or their situation are being evoked? What performance does the claim suggest is underway, and who is in it? These questions will occupy us next.

2. The Plausibility of Vergil Knowing All in the Classroom Environment

Flattering remarks about Vergil are not rare in Latin literature, but educational texts prove to be the native soil of the all-knowing Vergil. This is despite their supplying the least intellectually developed versions of these claims. Claims made with a Neoplatonic inflection stand out for this reason, but are represented almost entirely in surviving works by Macrobius. Other examples are of minor importance: Vergil's philosophy is attested to briefly and favorably by Favonius Eulogius (*Maro, doctissimus Romanorum*, *Disputatio* 19.4).[31] Christian authors such as Lactantius and Augustine offer a significant but narrow witness.

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[30] This is evident even in the conclusion to the above argument in *De utilitate credendi*: *quantum erat, ut similem benevolentiam praeberemus eis, per quos locutum esse sanctum spiritum tam diuturna vetustate firmatum est?* (How much was it [the case] that we should have offered similar good will to those through whom it has been affirmed for so long an age that the Holy Spirit has spoken? *util. cred.* 13/p.19.2-4)

[31] Cited above p. 169.

These writers are keen to undermine or subvert Vergil's claims to authority and to support the rival authority of the Christian scriptures. As such they occasionally refer to how knowledge can define Vergil's special status.[32] But Christian responses to Vergil are less philosophical than polemic. They tend to reflect anxiety over his cultural authority as reflected in his singular role in grammatical and rhetorical education.

The great remainder of both overt and implicit claims to knowledge on the poet's behalf are rooted in the context of teaching Vergil. In the course of direct commentary on Vergil's work, Servius, the so-called DS scholia where preserved with Servius' commentary, the Scholia Bernensia, Ps. Probus, Tiberius Claudius Donatus, Philargyrius, and Fulgentius all make gestures of varying exuberance towards Vergil's knowledge.[33]

The purpose of this section is to examine the conditions in educational contexts where claims that Vergil has special knowledge, and particularly *all* knowledge, are made. I argue for the plausibility of such claims—not as statements of doctrine, but as accounts of the role Vergil played in educated culture as viewed from the educator's sphere of authority. Though they have a superficial implausibility, their effect is quite pragmatic. And when considered from the viewpoint of a student, they highlight aspects of the educational experience of a student that encourage the study of Vergil. An account of how these claims function reveals how in a given context, claims that are historically implausible may both reveal and enable practices necessary for the classroom's purposes.

I will look at three conditions that suit an all-knowing Vergil. First, the great amount

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[32] Late antique Christian writers tend not to address claims to Vergil's great knowledge directly, but often affirm that Vergil has passed on prophetic information (Aug., *Civ. Dei* 2.29—cf. Constantine, *Oratio ad sanctos*, 19-20) or philosophical teachings (Lact. *Inst*. 7.20.7-11, Aug. *cur mort*. 2.1). Such references tend to crowd around a particular set of passages (e.g., *Ecl*. 4 and *Aen.* 6.750ff.).

[33] With no pretensions to thoroughness: Serv. *ad Aen*. 6 *praef*.; *DS ad Aen.* 1.305, *Schol. Bern. ad G.* 1.45; Ps. Probus, *In Verg. Buc.* 6.31; Tib. Claud. Donatus, *Interp. Verg.* 2.642.5ff.; Philargyrius I (*Virgilium, qui omni genere scientiae praevaleret*, Hagen, p. 12.27f.); Fulgentius, *Exp. Virg. cont.* 83-84.

of information required to study the *Aeneid* in particular; next the scope of the commentaries; and third, the example of Homer. Throughout I emphasize the importance of considering the student's perspective—both real and as imagined by the ancient instructor.

I considered above how a claim to Vergil's infallibility names a practice or performance in the classroom rather than a truth about the text: the author will be assumed to be right, and so a special effort is made to make the author right. Other claims can produce similar results. Let us consider a similar claim made on a smaller scale: Vergil's expertise in oratory. That Vergil is an orator is the third kind of exaggerated statement on Vergil's behalf that Evangelus objects to in his broadside against Vergil in the *Saturnalia*.[34] This statement has a history at least as old as Florus' fragmentary *Vergilius orator an poeta?*, and has the function of securing Vergil's sufficiency as an authority in rhetorical matters.

As long as this function is fulfilled in the specific instance, details on a particular claim may vary. In the preface to his commentary on the *Eclogues*, Servius observes

> tres enim sunt characteres, humilis, medius, grandiloquus: quos omnes in hoc invenimus poeta. nam in Aeneide grandiloquum habet, in georgicis medium, in bucolicis humilem pro qualitate negotiorum et personarum.[35]
>
> There are three styles: lowly, middle, and grand; all of which we find in this poet. For in the *Aeneid* he uses the grand, in the *Georgics* the medium, and in *Eclogues* the lowly on account of the nature of the subject matter and the characters. (*Praef. in Buc.* 1.16-2.4)

A different version of the claim is found in the *Saturnalia.* The guest Eusebius states that he has demonstrated Vergil is an orator as well as a poet.[36] He claim follows closely on a speech that gives example after example of rhetorical usages from Vergil.[37] Following on this he proceeds to claim that all styles of speaking may be discerned in Vergil's works. But

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[34] *Sat.* 1.24.9; see above p. 179 n. 16.
[35] Or more succinctly in Philargyrius II (Hagen p. 2 7-11): *Humile, medium, magnum, physica, ethica, logica; Bucolica, Georgica, Aeneades; naturalis, moralis, rationalis; pastor, operator, bellator.*
[36] *Sat.* 5.1.1, discussed above pp. 137-8.
[37] It survives only in part, taking up the whole of what remains of *Sat.* 4.

Eusebius' account of what "all styles" are is different: for him there are four, not three, none of which aligns precisely with the three adduced by Servius.[38] Moreover, the styles are not limited to works. Indeed, more like Homer (see below), Vergil is said uniquely to be able to combine all styles (*Sat.* 5.1.7). In fact, Eusebius finds one passage in the *Georgics* that he claims shows a balance of all styles within the scope of ten lines (5.1.13-15).[39]

These are scarcely the same approach to a theory of styles or the use of the texts. But while Philargyrius and Macrobius disagree on the specifics, their agreement stands on the sufficiency of Vergil's text for teaching rhetoric. This is reflected in a general agreement on practice. Both are able to draw a variety of examples that may illustrate different rhetorical concepts; both may draw on a long history of where Vergil has served as a normative figure for language.

The character of the performance and the claims may be illustrated by another comparison—one that would be made regularly in the classroom. Both Eusebius and Philargyrius are able to lean on the long history of taking Homer and Vergil to have parallel roles in teaching rhetoric. The same drive to assign comprehensive knowledge of rhetoric can be seen in Ps. Plutarch, who strives to put every category he can within Homer's grasp. Like Macrobius' Eusebius, he stresses his poet's unique capacity to do so. Like Servius, he assigns his poet the three styles.[40] His intention to include all he can is illustrated by his decision to add the flowery style to Homer's portfolio. Whereas each of the first three is attached to a particular character in the *Iliad*, he has no example to hand or character to whom it might be attached, limiting himself to a general statement ("his poetry is stuffed with that kind of

[38] See note *ad loc*. in Kaster, Loeb (vol. 2), and Goldlust, *Rhétorique et Poétique de Macrobe,* 379.
[39] *G.* 1.84-93.
[40] This division and the assignment of the three styles to Menelaus, Nestor and Odysseus respectively is quite common. See Kennedy, "Ancient Dispute over Rhetoric in Homer," 25-26.

artfulness.")[41] Nonetheless, he prefers to add the style than let Homer appear to be wanting in any way.

That this is simply how poets of Homer's status work might give an initial impetus to the similar usage of Vergil. But the similar claims were backed up by a history of both being studied alongside one another in Roman classrooms in similar ways. The practical experience to which these claims correspond are not difficult to find. Vergil's sufficiency for teaching rhetoric may be explained in very pragmatic terms. After the *Aeneid* became a standard text for education, it became an obvious source for a rhetorician seeking to write a manual.[42] Not only were text and commentaries alike relatively accessible to the writer, but familiarity with, comprehension of, and a willingness to cede authority to the examples were all more likely. In some cases this pragmatism is dramatic: in the case of Ps. Julius Rufinianus' *De schematis lexeos,* nearly all examples are from the works of Vergil.

Vergil's position in this regard is very similar to Homer's, whose poetry was also used for such purposes. Greek rhetoricians frequently raided the Homeric epics for illustrations. A counterpart to Ps. Rufinianus' description of figures is Lesbonax's περὶ σχημάτων, where again nearly every example is from the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. The list of examples in Ps. Plutarch's *De Homero* is similar.[43] Ps. Plutarch's list is put to the purpose of demonstrating Homer's knowledge in this area. It is only one out of many he claims for the poet. In his introduction he asserts that Homer is "adept at every kind of wisdom and skill and provides the starting points and so to speak the seeds of all kinds of discourse and action from those who come after him, not only for the poets but for writers of prose as well, both historical and speculative."[44]

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[41] Μεστὴ γάρ ἐστιν ἡ ποίησις τῆς τοιαύτης κατασκευῆς. *De Homero* 54B,73.
[42] Thanks to Albertus G. A. Horsting for this observation.
[43] *De Homero* 54B, 15-71.
[44] φανεῖται πάσης λογικῆς ἐπιστήμης καὶ τέχνης ἐντὸς γενόμενος καὶ πολλὰς ἀφορμὰς καὶ οἱονεὶ σπέρματα λόγων καὶ πράξεων παντοδαπῶν τοῖς μετ' αὐτὸν παρεσχημένος, καὶ οὐ τοῖς

In reviewing these claims together, we can see how similar claims made for two authors may nonetheless require different justifications. Although Vergil and Homer's uses are in parallel here, the claims made about them cannot be transferred. Ps. Plutarch's treatment of Homer as an inventor or founder has a long history prior to and after his work. But Vergil has no plausible standing to make this claim in Latin. His use of rhetoric is predated by Cicero, let alone others.[45] Even where Vergil is the model for Latin, Homer can retain his claim. Thus Quintilian still compares Homer to Ocean, the latter the source of all streams, the former of all rhetorical knowledge: *omnibus eloquentiae partibus exemplum et ortum dedit* ("he gives rise to and exemplifies every aspect of eloquence," *IO* 10.1.46, trans. Russell).

Still, a certain amount of flexibility is worth noting. According to the purposes and abilities of the writer, aspects of properly Homeric claims could be adapted. In the above passage Quintilian not only refers to Homer's originality, but also draws an analogy to nature: everything flows from Homer, as it does from Ocean. Macrobius may not be able to make Vergil a source, but he can appeal to nature. Eusebius, who had drawn out long lists of figures and examples from Vergil himself, finishes his praise of Vergil by linking his universal usefulness to his likeness to the universe:

> quam quidem mihi videtur Vergilius non sine quodam praesagio, quo se omnium profectibus praeparabat, de industria permiscuisse idque non mortali sed divino ingenio praevidisse: atque adeo non alium secutus ducem quam ipsam rerum omnium matrem naturam.
>
> I think, in fact, that Vergil took pains to achieve this blend because he sensed that he was preparing himself to serve as a universal resource, and I further believe that this foresight off his was the product of a divine, not merely mortal intelligence: he followed no guide but nature, the very mother of all things… (*Sat.* 5.1.18, trans. Kaster)

ποιηταῖς μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς πεζῶν λόγων συνθέταις ἱστορικῶν τε καὶ θεωρηματικῶν. 54B, 6 trans. Keaney and Lamberton. The passage concludes with an invitation to explore Homer's πολυφωνία and πολυμάθεια (the variety of his diction and his vast knowledge of things).

[45] Again, thanks to Albertus G. A. Horsting for this formulation.

Much more could be said about Macrobius' adaptation here,[46] but for our purposes it suffices to observe the interactions of three elements in these claims. First, the conditions imposed by the uses to which the texts were put; second, the history of those uses and of the authors; and lastly, the example of claims about Homer which may be purposefully reworked for Vergil.

I begin with the circumstances faced by students reading Vergil. The first issue is the text itself. Vergil's poetry is dense with information which is subtly deployed. The *Aeneid* in particular appears to touch on an enormous range of topics. Nicholas Horsfall concludes his book *The Epic Distilled* with a catalogue of "languages" that Vergil employs in the *Aeneid*. What he means is that Vergil repeatedly deploys vocabulary appropriate to distinct spheres of experience. In doing so Vergil evokes (or provokes) his reader to respond to a verbal context in which distinctions and forms of knowledge typical of those categories can evoke the attention and emotional responses typical of the use and pursuit of those branches of knowledge. Not surprisingly, all this evoking requires the display of a fair amount of knowledge. Horsfall's list includes animals, colors, parts of the body, clothing, arms and armor, people and places, metapoetic references, and religious rites.[47]

The enormous range of information required of Vergil's readers was evident from early on. Claims that Vergil was learned about even obscure topics, though not undisputed, seem to have always been at least plausible in antiquity. The technical concerns of the *Georgics* inspire warm references to Vergil's accurate knowledge and warnings against being taken in by a superficial expertise.[48] Biographies from Suetonius on stressed Vergil's

[46] On what Macrobius gains by introducing nature as Vergil's model see above p. 138 n. 18 and 19 with Vogt-Spira, "Les *Saturnales* de Macrobe," esp. 269-272.
[47] Horsfall, *The Epic Distilled*, 146-47.
[48] See Doody, "Virgil the Farmer? Critiques of the *Georgics* in Columella and Pliny," 180-197 on Columella and Pliny's differing responses to Vergil's authority in this area. Doody observes that the claim that Vergil is in fact a reliable source of knowledge about farming persists to our own day.

education, his access to libraries, and the enormity of his accomplishment.[49] In Macrobius' *Saturnalia*, Symmachus produces a letter of Vergil to Augustus lamenting the enormous amount of study required of him to complete the *Aeneid*:

> …sed tanta inchoata res est ut paene vitio mentis tantum opus ingressus mihi videar, cum praesertim, ut scis, alia quoque studia ad id opus multoque potiora impertiar. Nec his Vergilii verbis copia rerum dissonat…
>
> '[I would send you something,] but the thing I have begun is so big that it seems to me almost by some fault in my mind that I entered in on so great a work, especially since, as you know, I am bringing into the work other topics of study too, and much more important ones.' Nor does the abundance of things in those writings of Vergil dissent…" (*Sat*. 1.24.11, my translation)

The claim of course dovetails wonderfully with the guests' claim that they can demonstrate Vergil's multivalent expertise.[50] Even Tiberius Claudius Donatus, who is wary of attempts to justify Vergil's expertise in matters of philosophy, cannot resist adding in a long list containing the many kinds of things his son will learn from studying Vergil.[51]

The large amount of information in Vergil's poems may serve as a first instance of how conditions for reading Vergil in the classroom are commensurable with the claims made there about Vergil. A second and related aspect is the sheer volume of commentary the poems require. That which survives under Servius' name gives a sense of how much teachers expected to explain to unprepared readers of Vergil's poetry. The enormous length of these commentaries seems to imply both a kind of ideal reader of Vergil's works (who would know all the things explained) and its obverse, a kind of ideally ignorant student (who would know none of it). Not even Servius would say that his commentary contains all knowledge or mentions all disciplines, let alone all required to understand Vergil's poems. And yet surely

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[49] *VSD* 66 with Horsfall, *The Epic Distilled*, 18.
[50] One might even point to the deliberate references of the *Eclogues* as a crucial indication of the possibility of matching subtle relationships, facts and events to even the most obscure poems—whence allegorical readings from Constantine to Servius and onward. Cf. Patterson, *Pastoral and Ideology* on how the search for extra-textual significance is built into bucolic model.
[51] Tib. Claud. Donatus, *Interp. Verg.* 2.642.5ff. (Georgii).

the commentary serves as a sign that reading and comprehending what Vergil wrote requires an extensively broad learning—much more than a student has, and perhaps much more than this superabounding attempt by a teacher to capture as much of it as was in his grasp. And if Macrobius' cultured guests (and Horsfall too)[52] marvel at the abundance of information, then how much more students who faced Vergil in the classroom for the first time.

The difference between the vast amount of knowledge required for understanding Vergil's poems and the sum total of all knowledge is rather small in the case of the new student. The beginner new to Vergil has, so to speak, everything to learn. And given that the *Aeneid* was introduced early in the curriculum,[53] the need to understand the *Aeneid* in turn could serve as a metonymy for the whole of education. The student is (potentially) at once inspired and put in their place, and the teacher takes his role as the guide to learning all the student must learn—and, since education proceeds from the grammar and rhetoric studied with the poem to all other disciplines, potentially everything there is to learn.

A final relevant condition under which Vergil was read in late antiquity is the apparent ubiquity of his study. Vergil was strongly associated with grammatical-rhetorical tradition. Surviving evidence strongly suggests that all over the empire, grammatical and rhetorical training served as a marker of entry into the elite positions of the empire.[54] With Vergil serving as a common feature of most curricula (and as noted above, a ready and frequent source of grammatical and rhetorical examples) convenience ensured at least a passing familiarity with his works for the Latin-educated elites of the Roman world. Some familiarity with Vergil coincided with education of any level among Latin speakers.

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[52] Horsfall, *The Epic Distilled,* 34, comparing Eustathius' evaluation of Vergil's deep and carefully hidden knowledge of Greek matters at *Sat.* 5.18.1 to the evaluations made by scholars in recent decades.
[53] Already in Quint. *IO* 1.8.5, confirmed among others by Augustine *Conf.* 1.13.20ff. See Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity* 277-8 and Bonner, *Education in Ancient Rome* 213-14.
[54] Kaster, *Guardians of Language* 15-31, esp. 27-30.

The conservatism of this education ensured this role held fast over time as well. Vergil's works had begun to be used by Latin instructors before his death, was well-ensconced by the time of Seneca, and continued to be an important point of reference well into the Middle Ages. He was a stable presence in the work of rhetoricians, grammarians, antiquarians of late antiquity. Any reader who cared to investigate would find his authority well-established in earlier writings too. Authors since the Augustan age had treated him with reverence, so that even reading other authoritative figures of the past reinforced the judgment of the present. Not least Augustus, with whose success and praise he was long associated. Universal cultural authority across the empire or over a long period of time did not imply comprehensive knowledge. But it could imply an enduring value and even permanence, and with it the permanence of any knowledge or authority he did possess. The solidity of Vergil's authority in so many periods reinforced claims that extended that authority to particular realms, and all the more since Vergil was so closely associated with education. He was a figure who was useful to educating all—regardless of their particular expertise, or the circumstances of their time. His ability to serve as a conduit to all knowledge made for a plausible explanation of that usefulness, even if only on a general level.

Parallels between Vergil and Homer in the classroom also allowed claims about Homer's knowledge to serve as models for Vergil. The 4th century Christian poet Juvencus not only treated Vergil and Homer as parallel in role and function, but projected equally powerful reputations that would last to the end of time.[55] Much the same could be said about Homer's role in classrooms as was said above concerning Vergil's. As with Vergil among the Latin speakers, his works also inaugurated the studies of the majority of students of Greek in the empire. His poems were, like Vergil's, served by extensive commentaries that seemed to

[55] Juvencus, *Evangeliorum Libri praef.* 6-14.

ascribe an enormous amount of information to the ideal, learned reader.[56] He was a mainstay of reference among late antique writing, and his presence in the Greek literary past was even more extensive than Vergil's because of his greater antiquity. Moreover, in Latin classrooms Homer was often taught as well as Vergil.[57] It was not merely that parallels were drawn, but these parallels were played out before students.

The similar functions Vergil and Homer played for students in Latin and Greek made it more plausible to translate ideas that attached more cleanly to the Homeric tradition into the Vergilian. But as in the case of Homer as 'founder' of rhetoric, so too certain elements could not transfer. This is especially notable in the case of Vergil's purported knowledge of so many disciplines. The tradition of Homer's extensive knowledge is well-represented in educational writings. But the notion of Homer as a privileged source of information about the cosmos was far better supported outside the immediate grammatical and rhetorical tradition than was Vergil's. In the Latin tradition, explicit claims about Vergil's knowledge are mostly found in commentaries (or in the *Saturnalia*) and are relatively late. By contrast, Homer is linked to education and to a knowledge is repeated time and again in Greek literature from its inception to the Byzantine period. The theme of Homer's relevance to a broad range of disciplines is found as early as Plato's *Ion* and as late as Eustathius of Thessaloniki's 12th century *Parekbolai* on the *Iliad*, with the scholiasts' views reinforced by poets, historians, and philosophers (particularly Stoics).[58] As observed in the case of rhetoric, Homer could be taken as a founder of many of the disciplines he touched on, thereby linking him still more

[56] This parallel functionality extended beyond form. The same information was distributed in commentaries on Homer and Vergil, often attached to the passages where the latter imitated the former. See above pp. 122-126 with Farrell, "Servius and the Homeric Scholia."
[57] Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity,* 258-262, Bonner *Education in Ancient Rome* 212-3. *Conf.* 1.13-14 is a famous example of such practices (and their mixed results). See also Ausonius *Protr*. 46.
[58] At least by reputation. The actual position of Stoics with regard to ancient poets was more nuanced than the common portrayal in ancient and hostile accounts. See Long, "Stoic Readings of Homer."

tightly to education and training beyond training in grammar and rhetoric. Vergil by contrast could never be understood as an original founder of any discipline of note in Latin—not even epic, where he was almost universally held to have triumphed over his predecessors.[59] Moreover, most kinds of disciplines were perceived to have been established in Greek prior to coming to be practiced and discussed in Latin. In this respect Homer could often serve as the founding figure in Latin as well as Greek (recall Quintilian's praise of Homer as the source of rhetoric).[60]

At first glance, then, this is an instance of claim that could refer to a practice in reading Homer, but which historical circumstances impede from attaching to Vergil. Vergil's history was shorter and his impact distinctly narrower than Homer's. But in fact, although the difference in age of the authors was immense, the late antique student's experience of their role in their respective cultures was not nearly so different. In terms of an individual Latin student's cultural formation, Vergil and Homer were equivalents: thus Juvencus' elevation of both equally.[61] This was particularly the case from within the confines of the classroom. To read Vergil in late antiquity with a view to education was not so different from doing so with Homer, and the experience of doing so in the classroom made it still more plausible to do so.

The Homeric claim to all knowledge was after all available to Vergil, but in a form firmly rooted in the instructional norms of the classroom. This can be more easily seen in relation to an example drawn from the Homeric tradition that could, *mutatis mutandis*, also be adapted to Vergil's situation. Eustathius of Thessalonica offers a particular fulsome version of the claim that Homer is an expert in all disciplines. It is given in the preface to his *Parekbolai*

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[59] At least in the sense of being an original founder of the genre. Replacement of Ennius, who already rejected of old models of Latin epic, association with Augustus'rhetoric of refounding Rome, and especially retelling Aeneas' foundation story are all means by which the distinction of being a founder accrued to Vergil.

[60] *IO* 10.1.46, p. 192 above.

[61] See p. 196 n. 55 above. The same idea is reflected in Justinian's formulation in *Inst.* 1.2 (pp. 7-8, 85 above) and other similar passages (e.g., Cassiodorus *Inst. Praef.* 4).

on the *Iliad*, which itself comes nearer to the end of the Greek grammatical-rhetorical tradition. But it has parallels far earlier. Ps. Plutarch's similarly grandiose illustration, point by point, of Homer's expertise in all fields has a similarly broad scope, and so too the rhapsode's view parodied by Plato more than a thousand years earlier in the *Ion*.

Eustathius' version is notable because its exaggerated claim is so readily connected to a practical reality of instruction. He shows that it is possible to make a claim about knowledge that is not ultimately based on the history of Homer so much as the history of his reception in Greek culture.

> …μάλιστα καὶ ἡ Ὁμηρικὴ ποίησις, ἧς οὐκ οἶμαι εἴ τις τῶν πάλαι σοφῶν οὐκ ἐγεύσατο καὶ μάλιστα τῶν ὅσοι τῆς ἔξω σοφίας ἠρύσαντο. ἐξ Ὠκεανοῦ μὲν γὰρ ποταμοὶ πάντες, πηγαὶ πᾶσαι, φρέατα πάντα κατὰ τὸν πάλαι λόγον· ἐξ Ὁμήρου δέ, εἰ καὶ μὴ πᾶσα, πολλὴ γοῦν παρεισέρρευσε τοῖς σοφοῖς λόγου ἐπιρροή. οὐδεὶς γοῦν οὔτε τῶν τὰ ἄνω περιεργαζομένων οὔτε τῶν περὶ φύσιν οὔτε τῶν περὶ ἦθος οὔθ' ἁπλῶς τῶν περὶ λόγους ἐξωτερικούς, ὁποίους ἂν εἰπῇ τις, παρῆλθε τὴν Ὁμηρικὴν σκηνὴν ἀξεναγώγητος, ἀλλὰ πάντες παρ' αὐτῷ κατέλυσαν, οἱ μὲν ὡς καὶ διάγειν παρ' αὐτῷ μέχρι τέλους καὶ τῶν αὐτοῦ συσσιτίων ἀποτρέφεσθαι, οἱ δὲ ὥστε χρείαν ἀποπλῆσαί τινα καὶ συνεισενεγκεῖν ἐξ αὐτοῦ τῷ λόγῳ τι χρήσιμον. ἐν οἷς καὶ ἡ Πυθία, πολλοὺς τῶν χρησμῶν πρὸς Ὁμηρικὴν μέθοδον ἀποξέουσα. φιλόσοφοι περὶ αὐτόν, εἰ καὶ Ἵππαρχος φθονεῖ, ὡς μετ' ὀλίγα ἱστορηθήσεται. ῥήτορες περὶ αὐτόν. γραμματικοὶ δὲ οὐκ ἄλλως εἰς τέλος, εἰ μὴ δι' αὐτοῦ. ὅσοι δὲ μετ' αὐτὸν ποιηταί, οὐκ ἔστιν ὃς ἔξω τι τῶν αὐτοῦ μεθόδων τεχνάζεται, μιμούμενος, παραποιῶν, πάντα ποιῶν δι' ὧν ὁμηρίζειν δυνήσεται. ἄγουσιν αὐτὸν καὶ γεωγράφοι διὰ ζήλου πολλοῦ καὶ θαύματος. ὁ περὶ τὴν Ἀσκληπιαδῶν δίαιταν καὶ τὰ τραύματα ἐρανίζεται καὶ αὐτὸς ἐκεῖθεν ἀγαθά. ἐφέλκεται τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ βασιλεῖς· καὶ μαρτυρεῖ ὁ μέγας Ἀλέξανδρος, κειμήλιον εἴτε καὶ ἐφόδιον καὶ ἐν αὐταῖς μάχαις τὴν Ὁμηρικὴν βίβλον ἐπαγόμενος, καὶ τὴν κεφαλήν, ὅτε ὑπνοῦν δέοι, ἐπαναπαύων αὐτῇ, ἵνα τάχα μηδὲ ἐν ὕπνοις αὐτοῦ ἀπέχοιτο, ἀλλὰ καὶ φανταζόμενος εἴη εὐόνειρος. καὶ ἔστιν ἀληθῶς βασιλικὸν πρᾶγμα ἡ Ὁμήρου ποίησις καὶ μάλιστα ἡ Ἰλιάς.
>
> …above all the Homeric poems, of which I do not think anyone among the ancient sages did not taste—especially among those who drew from pagan knowledge. For all rivers, all springs, all wells flow from Ocean, according to the old story; and, if not all, surely at least a mighty influx of knowledge flows to the wise from Homer. Be it higher things, or matters of nature, or matters of character, or worldly disciplines in general, certainly no one among those diligently investigating whatever sort of topic one could name passed by the Homeric tent without receiving hospitality. Rather, everyone lodges with him: some remain with him to the end and continue to be nourished in his mess hall, whereas others satisfy a need and owe a debt to him for some useful contribution to their thinking. Among these is even the Pythia, who used to polish many of her oracles according to Homeric practice. Philosophers must deal with [Homer] (even if Hipparchus begrudges him this, as will soon be explained). Public speakers must deal with him. And teachers of language cannot reach their goal

> in any other way save through him. However many poets came after him, there is none who contrives something which is foreign to his own practice, but by imitating and adapting, they do everything by which it will be possible to 'Homerize'. Geographers also engage him in rivalry and wonder. To those practicing medicine[62] Homer contributes both the names they use for wounds and for their livelihood. The matters draws in even kings. Alexander the Great bears witness, bringing Homer's book as a treasure or even a provision both in battle and, when there was need to sleep, resting his head upon it, so that perhaps not even in sleep would he be apart from him, but even while dreaming he might have fine dreams. And the Homeric poems are truly a kingly matter, and especially the *Iliad*. (1,1.7-2,3, Van der Valk)

Eustathius offers a fairly traditional exaggeration of Homer's knowledge: practitioners of any and all disciplines will find Homer an expert or authority in their field. Eustathius also gestures at what makes such a claim plausible. As an account of research and study, to say information derives from Homer seems at best a pious fantasy. Who would begin their medical studies by opening the *Iliad* to make sure their terminology was correct? Yet as a reflection on the role of Homer in Greek schooling, it is remarkably accurate. Perhaps not everyone feels a particular debt to Homer. But it is nonetheless true that every philosopher, rhetorician, poet, doctor, geographer, historian, king and general of any education at all read Homer as part of their introductory studies—all those known to Eustathius at any rate, or, for that matter, to us.

This suggests two more plausible ways of understanding Homer as a source. First, Homer is a source of education because he is a reference point for all Greek texts. Although one need not have read Homer to write in Greek, in practice every Greek writer with literary ambitions had. As far back as one casts one's vision, there was a virtually no text whatsoever surviving from any time in Greek antiquity written by someone who had not read Homer's epics (or who had not at least pretended to have done so). It is this peculiar circumstance that Eustathius' story celebrates. He does not outline a method for research using Homer, but a tangible circumstance of culture in his own day: to have read Homer was a sign of having

[62] More literally, "in the way of life of the sons of Asclepius."

been educated. He introduces his indebted experts not so much as thinkers, but as students: those who are "diligently investigating whatever sort of topic." They all sit in Homer's mess hall to receive what they need, even if not everyone's debt is equally large.

The tendency in the Vergilian tradition is again to elide notions of source and invention in favor of exemplarity and excellence. When Tiberius Claudius Donatus makes a similar list with regard to the *Aeneid*'s sufficiency for anyone and from all walks of life, he lines up a long parade of figures who will find examples of virtuous conduct proper to their roles and situations. (Donatus, as noted above, concedes that the poet is able to handle many topics, but rejects the notion of a Vergil with 'philosophical' knowledge of the cosmos.)[63]

But Eustathius here offers an instance where the idea of Homer as source of knowledge may apply more tangibly to Vergil as well. We may discern at least three practices it licenses or encourages that could apply to either poet. First, Eustathius treats Homer as a foundation for study of further authors. Although Vergil could never be an influence on Cicero or Terence as Homer was on Plato and Sophocles, he was certainly a touchstone of all Latin writing from the Augustan period on. When combined with the dominance he exerted in grammatical instruction, Vergil could easily be treated as an entrance point into and an authority in the study of many authors.

Secondly, Eustathius justifies the introduction of any topic into discussion of the interpretation of Homer. Although this may produce fanciful readings—the sort of claims that Homer 'knows' astronomy and medicine and the like—the more general, softer version of the claim is quite sensible in the educational context in which it is made. That Homer has positive knowledge about philosophy was a claim treated as naive even in antiquity, but certainly philosophy could be taught using Homer. The same can be said of Vergil, as Macrobius' ability to discuss philosophy, exceptions to proper diction, Greek poetry, augural

[63] *Interp. Verg.* 1.5.4-7 (cf. 2.642.5ff.) and 1.6.9-12. See above, p. 194 n. 51.

and sacral law, rhetoric and oratory exclusively by reference to Vergil's poems demonstrates.[64]

The third practice associated with such a claim is a present reverence for a poet in the classroom. The 'glow' of such a unique and powerful work may not always instill awe or even attention in students, but it rationalizes what attention and respect they do give the text. There is good reason to read, and indeed to talk at length about this text. (And in Eustathius' case, it is at quite some length!)

The claim that Homer knows all here does not function as a conclusion to be drawn about Homer by the studied researcher (despite being presented as such). Rather, as its location in the work suggests, it is a premise for study. It underwrites the student's performance of a curriculum with the promise of historical and universal presence of the author in Greek thought and promotes readiness for a variety of topics and attentiveness.

It is just such an appeal to Vergil's role in education that is needed in Macrobius' *Commentarii.* Neoplatonic readings of Homer depended on an antiquity that Vergil could not imitate. But the long-term and ubiquitous presence of Vergil's poems in the curricula of the empire was a circumstance where Vergil could meet Homer on equal terms in Latin literary culture. Although the claims of the *grammatici* and *rhetores* appeared less considered, they captured a cultural circumstance that was both personal and widespread. Vergil was an important figure in the acquisition of knowledge. As such, these claims proved a sturdier hook on which Macrobius could hang an argument than those supplied by the philosophers.

3. Vergil the Theologian

As we saw previously, certain contexts encourage Vergil's readers to model their own practices on those of Homer's readers. But in this case it is the modeling of Cicero on Plato

[64] Seneca also makes a similar but more modest claim for the usefulness of Vergil's poetry in philosophical instruction: *Ep.* 108.24.

that sets the course for Macrobius' *Commentarii in somnium Scipionis.* Here as clearly as in any other instance in late antiquity, Vergil is set into a recognizably Homeric role. But Macrobius builds this parallel in a commentary on a passage of Cicero's *De re publica*—a text where the line of symmetry between Greek and Latin literary works is already quite pronounced. Cicero situates himself as a Roman Plato, writing a Roman Πολιτεία, at the conclusion of which there is a Roman (and more plausible) Dream of Er. Macrobius makes this symmetry an explicit point. Just in case his readers do not follow, Macrobius spells this all out in the commentary's introduction:

> Inter Platonis et Ciceronis libros, quos de re publica uterque constituit, Eustachi fili, vitae mihi dulcedo pariter et gloria, hoc interesse prima fronte perspeximus, quod ille rem publicam ordinavit, hic rettulit; alter qualis esse deberet, alter qualis esset a maioribus instituta disseruit. in hoc tamen vel maxime operis similitudinem servavit imitatio quod, cum Plato in voluminis conclusione a quodam vitae reddito, quam reliquisse videbatur, indicari faciat qui sit exutarum corporibus status animarum, adiecta quadam sphaerarum vel siderum non otiosa descriptione, rerum facies non dissimilia significans a Tulliano Scipione per quietem sibi ingesta narratur.
>
> Between the books of Plato and Cicero that each composed concerning the republic, Eustachius my son (equally the charm and glory of my life!), we perceive this difference at a first glance: that the former proposed a republic, and the latter administered it; that one treated how it ought to be, the other how it was instituted by our ancestors. Nevertheless, in this point the imitation preserved similitude to the work in the greatest way, namely that as Plato at the conclusion of his scroll makes it be disclosed by someone who returned to life (although he appeared to have perished) what was the condition of souls stripped from their bodies (along with the addition of a certain description, not superfluous, of the spheres or stars), a situation expressing not dissimilar matters that were received by him in sleep is told by Tullius' Scipio. (*In somn.* 1.1.1-2)

These opening lines represent what Macrobius later describes as his account of the differences and similarities between the texts of Plato and Cicero (*inter libros… quae differentia quae similitudo habeatur*, *In somn.* 1.5.1). But Macrobius seems more interested in highlighting similarities than differences between the works. Here Macrobius notes the difference between analyzing an ideal or historical city in passing. But Cicero himself uses the same point to set his work against the 'fictional' work of Plato in particular—a far more

aggressive stance.[65] Macrobius smooths over this tension and focuses instead on the vision of Er and dream of Scipio, which he says are the point of greatest similarity between the two works (*in hoc tamen vel maxime operis similitudinem servavit imitatio*).

But the dream is also an odd place to insist on similarity. Macrobius says that Colotes' famous criticism of Plato's Er would hold for Cicero's Scipio too, and must be addressed lest it discredit both authors.[66] Macrobius suggests that the distinction between dream and vision is in this case a difference of no interest—both are fiction. But Cicero seems to have thought differently. In Favonius Eulogius' commentary on the dream, he appears to quote part of *De re publica* that accepts Colotes' criticism of Plato.[67] Macrobius' own account gives Cicero a different motivation for changing Er's death into Scipio's dream. Here Cicero stands with Macrobius against Plato's critics: Macrobius says Cicero was pained by the ignorant criticism of Plato, and merely sought to avoid more of the same superficial response.[68] In other words, Cicero departs from his model for reasons extrinsic to the point he wishes to make.

Similitudo here tends towards more than imitation of words or images. The authors are presented as having similar topics and so too similar ends. In declaring the two works' common vulnerability to Epicurean critiques, Macrobius reinforces the connection between the closeness of Cicero's imitation to Plato's original and the closeness of their docrtines. The texts prove to have a common function and a common teaching, both preserved in the transfer of the passage over the line of symmetry that runs between the languages. And this in turn can license Macrobius to imitate the purposes that the text is put to use.

The weight placed on similarity across the line of symmetry between Cicero and Plato

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[65] In *Rep.* 2.21-22, Laelius criticizes Socrates explicitly for using a fictional city in his reasoning.
[66] *In somn.* 1.2.3
[67] *Disputatio de Somnio Scipionis*, van Weddingen p. 13.1-7, with Zetzel "*De Rerum Natura* and *De Re Publica*" 235-7.
[68] *In somn.* 1.1.8

affects how Macrobius portrays his own relationship to his Greek models. Macrobius is not only an interpreter of Cicero, but of a Cicero whose teaching and purposes are in line with Plato's. As interpreter of a Latin 'Plato,' Macrobius places himself in the position of a Latin equivalent to a Greek commentator on Plato's Πολιτεία. This means more than that Macrobius depends on the content of Greek commentators.[69] He does not simply adopt arguments of Greek Neoplatonists, but acts as if they apply equally well to the Latin authors with which he works. Macrobius supports an approach to Cicero in Latin symmetrical to that he found in Neoplatonic commentaries on Plato. To do so, he presents a whole Latin literature that functions in the same manner.

A mirror world of Latin Neoplatonism cannot be independent of its model. Some practices of Neoplatonic reading are firmly attached to their original Greek milieu. Thus to make himself intelligible, Macrobius earmarks particular words in Latin as translations or calques for Greek words with a particular history.[70] Similarly, there is occasionally no hiding the basis of an argument in the exegesis of Homer and Plato, so both act as authorities for

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[69] A point securely established. Here I merely touch on a much discussed subject with a few illustrations: Macrobius shares precedents with Proclus on the use of myths in philosophy (*In somn.* 2.1.1 ff., Stahl, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, 83 n. 8); he defends Zeus' deception of Agamemnon by a dream in 1.3.14 employing sources common to him and Artemidorus (and many others—see Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*, 270-71 and Stahl, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, 87-88 n. 1); he employs a reading of the Cave of the Nymphs from *Odyssey* 13 ultimately derived from Numenius. (Porphyry may have been the source for this as well as the above passage, but no argument has decisively linked the surviving *De antro nympharum* to Macrobius. A discussion of views on the problem of the origin of the cave of the nymphs may be found in Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*, 318-24). See also below on *In somn.* 2.10.11. Stahl, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, 34-5 has a chart collecting the immediate sources for various passages proposed by Karl Mras, Paul Henry, and Pièrre Courcelle. Other figures whom Macrobius names explicitly as prominent interpreters of Plato and who he appeals to in his interpretation of the *Somnium* are Plotinus (2.12.7, 1.8.5, 2.12.7, 1.13.9, 2.12.14, 1.17.11, 1.19.27; cf. *Sat.* 1.17.3) and Numenius (1.2.19; cf. *Sat.* 1.17.65).

[70] Especially notable in the introduction of some key Neoplatonic terms in *In somn.* 1.2.14 or Plato's division of the soul, 1.6.42. At 1.6.70 Macrobius appeals to the number of vowels to make a point about the importance of the number seven, but is forced to admit that usually Latin speakers only discern five. In general, Macrobius invokes Greek vocabulary quite frequently: e.g., 1.3.2, 1.3.7, 1.4.1, 1.4.5, 1.5.7, 1.5.9-10, 1.6.18, etc.

Macrobius just as they do for Porphyry and Plotinus (and for many other Latin authors as well). For instance, when Macrobius recounts the opinion of *physici* in *In somn.* 2.10.10-11, he preserves the interpretation of Zeus' visit to the Aethiopians in *Il.* 1.423-25.[71]

And yet Macrobius' intentions to craft a mirror image of Plato's commentary tradition for Cicero allows Latin equivalents to fill out the roles available for different authorities too. If Cicero's imitation of Plato licenses a Neoplatonic treatment of Cicero, it also licenses a similar treatment of Vergil in turn. That Vergil himself imitates Homer allows for easy evocation of the line of symmetry between them. This allows Macrobius to take advantage of a practice in Vergilian commentary outlined earlier: where Vergil is found to be imitating Homer, the scholia on the relevant passage of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* may be adapted or translated into a comment on the *Aeneid*.[72] Something like this occurs at *In somn.* 1.6.42 where *Aeneid* 1.94 is cited to make a numerological point about the importance of the number seven: *o terque quaterque beati... Troiae sub moenibus altis, / contigit oppetere!* ("Oh three and four times blessed… who managed to perish under the high wall of Troy!" (*Aen.* 1.94-96). The line itself is a close translation of *Od*. 5.306-7: τρὶς μάκαρες Δαναοὶ καὶ τετράκις, οἳ τότ' ὄλοντο / Τροίῃ ἐν εὐρείῃ ("three times blessed and four, the Danaans who then died at far-spreading Troy…"). The passage seems to be a likely spot for Macrobius to have traded in the Vergilian quote for its Homeric equivalent. The Homeric line itself is quoted to make a similar numerological point in Ps. Iamblichus (specifically on three and four rather than seven).[73] Much later Maximus Planudes would not hesitate to make the appropriate swap in his 13th century translation of the *Commentarii* to Greek (1.6.44).

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[71] Or again, *In somn.* 1.6.37, where Menelaus' exact words are needed to make the point about the elemental composition of human beings. For a survey of Macrobius' use of Homer as an authority, see Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian*, 270-71.
[72] Above, pp. 122-126, with Farrell, "Servius and the Homeric Scholia."
[73] See Stahl, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, 108 n. 43. Ps. Iamblichus supplies frequent parallels at this portion of Macrobius' text, suggesting either a common source or Macrobius' direct use of that work.

A more notable move occurs when Macrobius explicitly appeals to Porphyry as an aid to the interpretation of Vergil. Porphyry's expertise is cited towards the end of Macrobius' typology of dreams. Here he cites Vergil for the first time in the work in order to support his claim that one species of dream (*insomnium*) has no meaning. In an aside, Macrobius proceeds in a way that makes it plain that Porphyry's exegesis of Homer is interchangeable with exegesis of Vergil:

> his adsertis quia superius falsitatis insomniorum Vergilium testem citantes, versus fecimus mentionem eruti de geminarum somnii descriptione portarum, siquis forte quaerere velit cur porta ex ebore falsis et e cornu veris sit deputata, instruetur auctore Porphyrio, qui in commentariis suis haec in eundem locum dicit ab Homero sub eadem divisione descriptum: latet, inquit, omne verum.
>
> After these matters have been affirmed, that they bring forth Vergil as a witness of the falseness of *insomnia* in what precedes, the verses we have mentioned bring up a matter concerning the description of the twin gates of dream [*somnii*]. If anyone by chance wishes to ask why the gate of ivory is allotted to false [dreams] and of horn to true ones, he will be instructed with Porphyry as his authority. He says these things in his commentaries on the same place described by Homer on the same subject: "All truth," he says, "hides…" (*In somn.* 1.3.17)

On one level, what is happening here is similar to the above substitution: Vergil has imitated a passage of Homer, and the exegesis of that Homeric text is being applied to Vergil's version. But in this case it is not a matter of substituting one similar verse for another, but of establishing the equivalence of their meaning and how it is derived. Not only the words but the significance of Vergil is so close to Homer's that a Neoplatonist reader with no intention of discussing Vergil is an equally apt guide to understanding him. The logic is similar to that by which Colotes' criticism was handled: Colotes criticized Plato, but Cicero's imitation is close enough that it applies to Scipio's dream as well. Here Porphyry's interpreted Homer, but the closeness of Vergil's imitation allows Macrobius to use Porphyry's argument to exegete Vergil.

Ultimately, it is not the passage that is imitated, but the teaching. The point can be made more clearly in *In somn.* 1.7.7, where the similarity of doctrine is more prominent than

verbal correspondence between passages. Here Vergil is said to follow Homer in demonstrating that the gods never lie in the dreams they send. The agreement is explicitly attributed to his diligent imitation:

> parem observantiae diligentiam Homericae per omnia perfectionis imitator Maro in talibus quoque rebus obtinuit.
>
> Maro, in all things the imitator of Homeric perfection, maintained the same reverent attentiveness in these matters too. (*In somn.* 1.7.7)

Despite the appeal to imitation, in this case the point in common is not the action of the epic but the content of the teaching attached to it. Macrobius here defends Zeus against the charge that he sent Agamemnon a deceitful dream in *Iliad* 2. His argument is quite close to that preserved in Proclus: the dream promises victory to Agamemnon when he brings the *entire* army; but Agamemnon overlooks this key word when he ignores Achilles and his Myrmidons.[74] Macrobius then offers a passage of Vergil he claims makes the same point. This time the passage of the *Aeneid* is not a simple imitation of the passage of Homer, but draws on a dream in a rather different situation. In *Aeneid* 3.148ff., the Penates appear to Aeneas and tell him he has erred in his interpretation of the Delian oracle. In each case the point is that the dream carries a true interpretation, while the mortal interpreters make the errors. But notably Agamemnon has made the error after the dream, whereas Aeneas receives the dream as a corrective to his mistake. What Vergil is meant to have copied from Homer is not the epic scenario, but the teaching that god-sent dreams are trustworthy.

Macrobius is pointing to a different kind of relationship between Homer and Vergil than one might expect from simple literary imitation. It is not simply that Vergil is imitating Homer's words. Rather, the content of Homer is present too—and that content matches what the Neoplatonists teach about Homer and, importantly, the unity of his doctrines with that of

[74] *In somn.* 1.7.4. Proclus: I.115, Kroll. The point may have been drawn from the *Quaestiones Homericae* of Porphyry, who was a source for both authors. See Stahl, *Commentary on the Dream of Scipio*, 119 n. 3 for bibliography. See also *De Homero* 219.

Plato. The line of symmetry here is between a specifically Neoplatonic conception of Plato and Homer and a similar relationship between Cicero and Vergil. This has its difficulties: while Plato of course quotes the Homeric epics in his dialogue, Cicero could not do the same with the as yet unwritten *Aeneid*. But the perspective of Cicero and his imitative project is neatly swallowed up in the Neoplatonic mode: there is no room for Ennius as Homer, nor for the distance Cicero places between himself and Plato. And so Vergil is pulled into a relationship that would never have occurred to any Roman reader without some experience with Plato's interpreters.

In Macrobius' work the expectation is less that Vergil should be a mirror of Homer but rather that he can serve as a functional substitute for doing exegesis in a Neoplatonic mode. It follows that true knowledge about the cosmos must be available in Vergil as much as Homer. As we have seen, Macrobius follows this scheme even where a strict parallel requires an ahistorical relationship to other texts. The end is not chronological coherence or literary imitation, but replication of an author's function.

But what if one asks why Vergil should be taken to be a privileged in this way? One function for Homer's authority in a Neoplatonist commentary was to support their account of the arrangement of the cosmos. This could be attributed to Homer's status as an ancient. Porphyry appears to have accepted from the Stoics a theory of "cultural transmission, degeneration, and modification"[75] whereby Homer's myths preserved knowledge now lost to contemporary interpreters. Homer's history could in this way explain how he came about this knowledge.

And yet at certain moments, Macrobius' Neoplatonic model will require its authoritative poet to speak on the cosmos and its workings. Here the Greek Neoplatonist

[75] Long, "Stoic Readings of Homer," 53. Again, for Porphyry see Lamberton, "The Neoplatonists and the Spiritualization of Homer," 118, 122-3.

tradition puts pressure on Macrobius' parallels. Macrobius follows Porphyry in arguing that fiction may be put to the use of truth (*In somn.* 1.2.6-11). But where is the truth to come from? Why should we imagine that the poet has any privileged insight into truth? The view of Homer as ancient supplied a rationale for this, and at the same time made sense of Greek culture's high estimation of Homer since ancient times.

Such arguments could be made on Vergil's behalf, but not on the basis of history. Macrobius turned instead to the vocabulary of educators on Vergil. There he could find an account of Vergil's great knowledge on the scale required for Homer's use in a Neoplatonic context.

Models for this kind of interpretative move were ready at hand in the grammatical commentary tradition. A comment in the expanded form of Servius' commentary, the *DS*, offers a prime instance. At *Aen.* 1.305, the commentator wishes to introduce a discussion of religious rites of the *flamini* through Vergil's poetry. The extended note finishes with a claim to Vergil's insight, but not on religious matters alone. Rather, the commentator observes that Vergil has the capacity of teaching any discipline by the means he employs here:

> sed haec Vergilio et his similia sufficiunt ad indicandum omnium disciplinarum scientiam narrantem aliud ponere, neque propositum habet talia plenius exsequi.
>
> But these things and things similar to them suffice to demonstrate that Vergil includes knowledge of all disciplines while narrating something else, but does not have the intention to follow such matters out more fully. (*DS ad Aen.* 1.305)

There is something of Eustathius' Homer here. The student who begins studies with the *grammatici* and continues on will move from Vergil into the study of any and all other disciplines. This experience is replicated here in the claim that Vergil may himself open up paths into any and all subjects. The emphasis on all disciplines rather than one opens the possibility of exploring all knowledge. The use of the word *disciplina* also underscores the formal organization of this knowledge: what one can teach through Vergil falls into the categories known and used in schools. It is wide-ranging knowledge, but within the bounds of

education's norms. The immediate intention of the commentator is to discuss one discipline in particular; but occasion of discussing one discipline becomes an opportunity to evoke the broader role of Vergil in education.

On a number of occasions, Macrobius makes this move in reverse. In Servius, reading line by line sequentially turns up passages where Vergil's knowledge is evident. But on a number of occasions when a topic arises in the *Commentarii* that affords some connection to a verse from the *Aeneid*, Macrobius adds a remark regarding Vergil's expertise in all disciplines. As noted above, at *In somn.* 1.6.44 the numerological significance of Vergil's *o terque quaterque beati* (*Aen.* 1.94) is invoked in place of Homer's similar line in the *Odyssey*. In quoting this line, Macrobius characterizes the poet as "Vergil, who is unfamiliar with no discipline," (*Vergilius nullius disciplinae expers*). The pattern repeats itself elsewhere. At *In somn.* 1.15.12, a quotation of Vergil regarding eclipses is marked as something said by "Vergil who is most learned in all disciplines" (*Vergilius disciplinarum omnium peritissimus*); at *In somn.* 1.13.12, the verse belongs to the most learned *vates* (*doctissimi vatis*); at *In somn.* 1.7.4, his opinion arises out of the inmost depth of a discipline (*Maronis est ex intima disciplinae profunditate sententia*). At each of these moments the mention of a form of knowledge is closely attended by the quotation of a line by Vergil.

Any one such explicit claim regarding Vergil's knowledge would not be unusual. But these come remarkably frequently in Macrobius' commentary. As shown earlier, similar claims are made by Servius, Tiberius Claudius Donatus, Favonius Eulogius, and others. But though the type is well-known, its insistent repetition in a single work is unique. Moreover, whereas such claims are as often implied as stated outright in other authors, Macrobius is repeatedly explicit about Vergil's special knowledge. The claim that Vergil knows no error that bookends one exegesis (2.1.1, 2.1.8) is a marked contrast with the implicit infallibility described by Augustine in *util. cred*. 13. There taking Vergil as infallible was tied to

behaviors in the classroom. Here it has been moved to a notionally foreign environment, the study of philosophy, while retaining the familiar air of the school teacher's authority. It is Vergil's position opposite the Neoplatonist Homer that demands he have such status.[76] Macrobius is not so interested in encouraging specific behaviors towards the text as sustaining the scheme whereby Cicero and Vergil agree with and correspond to Plato and Homer. Previously, that same claim emphasized the performance of a certain reverence. Here it recalls those previous performances for the sake of making the transformation of Vergil into a Neoplatonist's idea of an authoritative poet stick.

Macrobius proposes a Latin literary system that works symmetrically to that which the Greek Neoplatonists enjoy. This section has laid out how deliberately he must work to establish that symmetry. The process of mapping a relationship between Plato and Homer onto that of Cicero and Vergil has often been treated as straightforward. But Macrobius is anything but casual in his attempts to fit Neoplatonist doctrine into a Latin frame. It is plausible to understand Macrobius as auditioning Vergil for role of 'Homer the Theologian'. But as I have shown, this audition demands he offer a foundation for Vergil's knowledge.

The work comes in supplying a context in which such a transfer can be persuasive. Ironically, in this matter a Neoplatonist's Vergil finds little to imitate in a Neoplatonist's Homer. Vergil's relative lack of antiquity makes him unable to make claims about having a better vision of the world. So to supply the security for Vergil's authority, Macrobius must turn to the area where Vergil does have a history of fantastic knowledge: the grammatical commentary tradition and, more broadly, the experience of that tradition each of his readers will have. Macrobius finds that foundation for Vergil's expertise not in naive and universal

[76] My argument here is in harmony with Delvigo, "*Mythici* vs *physici,*" 11, which supplies the view of this process from the Neoplatonists' side. Delvigo argues that the late antique Latin allegorical readings of Vergil's poetry are indeed in parallel with Neoplatonic readings of Homer, but do not arise out of a rhetorical-grammatical tradition attached to Vergil. For Delvigo too, their origin lies in the needs of Latin Neoplatonists in late antiquity.

assumption of Vergil's knowledge per se, but in the (relatively) universally shared experience of the classroom where Vergil's authority was taken for granted.

Conclusion: Practicing Reading a More Homeric Vergil

In a way, this chapter is an extended attempt to come to terms with Macrobius' deployment of Vergil's authority in the *Commentarii*. The claims he makes are more frequent than in any other work, and are more urgent than appeals to Homer in similar works of Greek Neoplatonism. And yet as Evangelus' disdainful speech reveals, Macrobius is well aware of the criticism that awaits such statements. I have attempted to outline a plausible explanation of what Macrobius may have been trying to do with these insistent claims.

One aim of the chapter has been to investigate carefully the purpose of claims made on Vergil's behalf. This has been a missing piece in prior reviews of this material. Attempts to explain Vergil's status as a result of 'Neoplatonism' more generally fail to distinguish between a claim casually borrowed from Neoplatonism and the recapitulation of the conditions for Neoplatonic exegesis represented in the *Commentarii.* By contrast, my analysis allows us to see that even a relatively common claim like infallibility can function quite differently depending on context, audience, and how explicitly it is made.

Such claims are generally intended to guide the reader's behavior towards a text. When late antique readers of Vergil claim that Vergil knows everything, it may well sound like a conclusion they believe follows from centuries of investigation. But the statement is not concerned with research, reasoning or even doctrine. Instead, it is the behavior of readers that is at stake. The infallibility decried by Macrobius' Evangelus may be typical of the limited vision of the classroom. But the claim is not designed to transgress those limits. Instead, it encourages a particular attitude within them. In *De utilitate credendi*, Augustine observes that beliefs about the text affects how students read. How well they understand an author may depend upon their aim in reading him. If the aim is to read Vergil with diligence,

performing his infallibility may get students and teachers alike to their goal. In Augustine's view, exaggerated claims about the author can even serve as a measurements of one's attitude towards the author.

Such an attitude was of great use to Macrobius. His Neoplatonic ambitions were counterbalanced by the claims typically made on behalf of Vergil's knowledge in grammatical and rhetorical instruction (e.g., Vergil's sufficiency for teaching rhetoric). Macrobius models his exegesis of Vergil on Neoplatonic readings of Homer. But although he writes outside of an educational context, he relies upon claims best understood from the perspective of a *grammaticus*' students. The assertion that 'Vergil knows all' is more plausible where the habits of school remain legible. Homeric exegetes did not need to stay so close to the schoolhouse: there was a long history of appealing to Homer's authority even outside educational contexts. But since both poets do hold an educational role in parallel (and sometimes even in the same classroom) Vergil's role in the education of the student is the bridge to Homer's claims to knowledge.

The claims regarding Vergil in the *Commentarii* derive their practical authority from their appeal to these educational experiences. They prove a critical stopgap in Latin Neoplatonism, filling in what antiquity (and authority) Vergil lacked. Macrobius' commentary is distanced from these classroom issues in its careful imitation of Neoplatonist treatments of Plato. Certainly Cicero is the main focus, and Vergil is a supporting figure to this end. But although appeals to Vergil's 'hidden' truths play an important role in the allegorical treatment of Vergil, they do not themselves grant him the authority of an ancient. That is supplied by the reader's recollection of Vergil's authority in the instructional context evoked by the claims Marobius makes for Vergil's knowledge.

It is common to assume that there can be no rational explanation for making these claims. It may seem disappointing to compare the exegetical method of a Porphyry to the

relatively simplistic claims of the *grammatici.* But this result perhaps can emphasize how reading practices can undergird exegesis as much as abstract reasoning. Importantly, this account presents a view of the claims made about Vergil that takes them as pragmatic intellectual work rather than mistakes or fallacies. Comparetti's work, for all its age, still exerts a significant influence in this regard at least. Such statements may seem foreign both in post-pagan and post-Enlightenment worlds. But they represent an investment in Vergil's status. That status continues to influence the reading of Vergil's poems and the way the practices of reading Vergil is understood. This chapter has observed the resulting attention to the circumstances which these practices require. I hope it also makes it appear more plausible to think that late antique readers were attuned to the effects claims could have, and to illustrate one way they read, manipulated, and learned with them.

Conclusion

This dissertation surveys several episodes in the history of the concept of 'another Homer' in Roman literature. I began with the model developed from Ennius and the archaic poets. That initial pattern can be examined more thoroughly with Vergil, whose readers fill out the structures and models received from Ennius and his exegetes. To do so I first reviewed how Vergil's canonical persona came to compete with a Vergilian, Homer-like poet. Next, I explored how Vergil's established equivalence to Homer can reshape the paradigms offered by ancient imitation theory. Lastly, I considered how the structures and practices of classroom education enable readers to understand Vergil as all-knowing in a way surprisingly consonant with Homer's role as 'theologian' in Greek interpretive traditions.

Summarized in this way, the dissertation may appear to offer little in the way of solid historical conclusions—at least, little of that might indicate a decisive change in how we should read Vergil and Homer together. A project like this lends itself to pronouncements on an approach to Vergil that can be attributed to 'all' Roman readers in a given context. But linking four different moments in the wider context of Roman literature can give a false sense of confidence that one has covered those moments thoroughly. What could I say about the 'actual' relationship of Homer and Vergil in antiquity? And what could interest readers of Vergil today?

At this point, it is worth restating the limits and benefits of my approach. It is difficult to say something substantive about the history of Vergil's reception. There is far more writing concerning Vergil's ancient reputation that is lost than is known. Of that which remains, there is much I have not touched upon. As such, I have attempted to keep close to my evidence, pointing to general possibilities more often than sharp conclusions. This means my project provides a somewhat simple map—not inaccurate, but by necessity vague. In terms of exploring the territory of how Vergil's reputation functions, however, it can be quite useful. Think of it as

something more akin to a subway station grid than a topographical relief; it may not give detailed directions, but it can help you find your next station.

One of the project's uses is to show that overstated claims are not incidental but central to how the notion of the *alter Homerus* develops. Roman literature 'is' an imitation of Greek literature; Ennius 'is' Homer; Vergil knows 'all'. As much as I have sought to resist broad conclusions, the material itself deals in broad, generalizing assertions. The sources are constantly encouraging philologically untenable views about the history and meaning of Vergil. Thus the history of Vergil's reception is also the history of the use and development of exegesis within the terms set by these claims. Vergil's readers reinterpret his earliest reception, assert analogies between Vergil's history and Homer's, make judgments about *grammatici* of all times and places, collect all knowledge in one place. This is one reason that much foundational scholarship on this topic has focused on explaining what sustains such unbelievable claims. It is a traditional philological approach: deconstructing myths and institutions based on mythical versions of history. But if we leave them destroyed, we risk missing their meaning.

Indeed, sometimes the simplistic explanations are precisely the thing we should be studying. At a number of points in this dissertation I have touched on well-known stories about Vergil: that he replaced Ennius, that he modeled himself after Homer, that his imitations always fail to match his model's. (The *vitae* are in a way simply collections of such stories, with a few anecdotes added to entertain.) These are to varying degrees true, and varying degrees helpful in telling Vergil's history. But true or not, their most striking characteristic is their stability over time. Vergil began replacing Ennius in Roman education during Augustus' lifetime. But the fact that Vergil replaced Ennius was remembered over and over again over centuries; it was an

important story about Vergil for Seneca, Fronto, Jerome, Petrarch, and others. And it is the main reason Ennius is still remembered today.

There seems to have been few attempts to get beyond these stories in antiquity, that is, to surpass and leave them behind. Ancients positioned themselves towards these stories in various ways. One believed Vergil was a better poet than Ennius, another that Ennius was not worse. But any ancient reader who wished to speak intelligently about Vergil had to know his way around the contours of these ancient 'lives'. These stories became landmarks for Vergil's readers. Just as good architecture reflects an understanding of local geography, good exegesis in these conditions means putting one's knowledge of the stories to good effect. These approaches to Vergil framed key issues and drew attention to specific aspects of Vergil's poetry. Macrobius' response to the critical tone of the scholarship on Vergilian imitation is an excellent example of what this looks like. Macrobius does not abandon one story for another, but deftly links them in ways that contradict neither.

The notion of the Roman Homer is one of these landmarks not only in the Vergilian tradition, but in Latin literature understood more broadly. I hope to have shown that the claims that reference this idea are neither aberrant nor eclectic but rather a kind of norm. Embedded in Roman literature is the claim that epic is properly understood as a Greek genre, and still more that its perfect exemplar is Homer. This is constitutive of not only Roman epic but also of a variety of activities that are undertaken with epic, from education to reasoning about language to philosophical and rhetorical argumentation. Vergil's likeness to Homer is a part of a hermeneutical superstructure that is not argued for, but taken for granted. It is for this reason that it has so tenacious a role in the practices of Roman literature.

I understand my work then as a series of readings that illustrate how the *alter Homerus* serves as a conceptual tool that is conserved and used repeatedly over time. By no means does this offer a comprehensive account of the phenomenon, let alone of the character of the symmetry presupposed by Roman literature. But these cases supply an orientation for further studies that treat such stories and claims as the background architecture of reading in the Roman literary world.

In the following I attempt to point out a few roads that open up from my work here. First, to expand on a principle here tested: the concept of 'another Homer' is neither a doctrine nor conclusion, but a heuristic. The symmetry proposed by the *alter Homerus* is a subset of the broader symmetry with Greek literature that undergirds the notion of a Roman literature. Like that broader symmetry, it shapes the pattern by which literature is both produced and also by which it is classified and understood. It is rare to find any justification for such practices—they are simply presumed for certain kinds of work in Roman literature. Nor should we expect one. The work the concept does as it organizes and aligns is almost never a point of anxiety for Roman readers (save for some who are also Christians—see below). It is both hard to see anyone reading Roman literature without encountering the idea, and also difficult to imagine someone who proposed the connection between Homer and Vergil (or other poets) without first having understood the notion of symmetry implicit in that literature.

It is also a notion that owes as much to Ennius as to Vergil. When two or more attempts to supply a Homer for Roman literary practices intersect, the figure of the *alter Homerus* grows in influence. Ennius is recruited to serve as 'Homer' in two instances with lasting effects. On the one hand, he is the most successful among the Latin poets who attempt to identify themselves with figure of Homer. On the other, when the pioneers of the study of the Latin language need a

Roman substitute for models of exemplary Greek poetry, he supplies the need. The confluence of two kinds of Homer gives a common point of reference to two literary contexts. For this reason, one conclusion of this study is that Ennius was a more crucial figure in the development of the idea of the Roman Homer than Vergil. Vergil resisted being Homeric in ways that Ennius embraced, notably in refusing an explicit identification with his model. It was the *Aeneid*'s extensive allusive network with the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that made it possible for Vergil to inhabit roles developed by and for Ennius. Once set in the stable and decisive context of Augustan literature, Vergil was ultimately able to fill Ennius' place more successfully than Ennius had himself.

Macrobius' contribution should be reevaluated as well. Macrobius is often seen as representative of his period's opinion of Vergil. But his approach in his commentary on the *Somnium* suggests a more deliberate attempt to put Vergil in a specifically Homeric role than any other surviving author made. Supplying a Neoplatonic Vergil was an obvious parallel but difficult to make work systematically. Here Macrobius' genius shines: he recognizes the contexts in which an all-knowing Vergil could be practical. It is not so much the content of his works that distinguishes him (much of which is drawn from or shared with other authors) as his mastery of the landmarks important to the Vergilian tradition. His ability to weave together the different strands of Vergilian authority in the *Saturnalia* separates him from other authors who make boldly Homeric claims for Vergil. He does more to articulate what being a Roman Homer consists in than anyone apart from Ennius.

Second, the role of the *alter Homerus* is tied closely to the history of education in the ancient world and its classicizing descendants. The most prominent, most frequent and most widely distributed versions of the Roman Homer are in literary and rhetorical contexts. The last

chapter puts us in a good position to reflect on this phenomenon. For a now older but influential line of scholarship, the more extreme authority granted to Vergil's texts could only be explained by reference to more thorough accounts of authority. Thus either Neoplatonism or Christianity's treatment of texts was the main reference point for understanding Vergil's 'Homeric' role in late antiquity. But the structures that lead to Vergil occupying traditionally Homeric roles are not top down impositions. Rather, they emerge from the conditions of Latin literature more generally and the special role of Homer more specifically. Without denying the influence on the imagination and even exegetical practices of Vergil's readers, Neoplatonic ideas alone cannot account for Vergil's status. It is more than a matter of determining how far down these ideas trickled. Rather, a far more mundane, universal and so consequential set of parallels supplied the foundation on which the more esoteric readings of Vergil were established. Perhaps a Homeric Vergil might have been fitted to the Neoplatonic schema otherwise. But the rhetorical and grammatical parallels made the fit persuasive and broadly effective in ways that the most sophisticated philosophical or doctrinal justifications alone could not.

This has some consequences for how we view the later legacy of Vergil, particularly in the Middle Ages. For one thing, understanding that the issues are neither religious nor philosophical clarifies where idea of the Roman Homer diminishes in force over time. The growing abilities of Vergil, including magic and prophecy, combine some traits of the *alter Homerus* with some contingent elements of the changing literary contexts brought about by Christian elite exegesis. Reading Vergil's poetry is now related to reading the Bible—the change in the status of the fourth *Eclogue* is particularly famous in this regard. But we should also consider how Vergil came to be treated as such an authority. There is little evidence if any that any ancient non-Christian thought the Christian treatment of the Bible was analogous to that of

Vergil. Instead, it was Christians like Lactantius and Augustine who brought the *Aeneid* in contrast with scripture. Anxious about the practices and loyalties built by traditional education, they proposed comparisons between the two books that could clarify the relationship of these authorities. The notion of a Bible for pagans is, unsurprisingly, a Christian formulation. This builds off of Vergil's role in Homer's central civilizational role and even chimes with it. But it likewise represents as much a departure from the Homeric mold as a continuation of it.

At the same time, the continuing use of Vergil in educational contexts meant that certain Homeric elements were communicated, as is to be expected, through teaching and commentaries. The example of Fulgentius is instructive. Although his exaggerated view of Vergil's knowledge and its allegorical approach are sometimes taken as a departure from common educational practice, most everything here is in tune with the kind of all-knowing Vergil that Macrobius drew in from the classroom—not least the figure of Vergil as a *magister*.[1] Fulgentius' exaggerations are not, again, either Neoplatonist or Christian. They are literary. The prophetic Vergil is less holy than he is grammatical. It is just that Vergil's works, through their association with education, continue to carry the extensive authority claimed for the poet well into the Middle Ages. To my mind, this remains the most likely source for Dante's own high view of Vergil (and likewise his experience of its limitations).[2]

Lastly, my arguments here should make plain both that the notion of Vergil serving as an equivalent figure in Latin to Homer in Greek has a long history, and also that it is far from

[1] Hays, "Tales Out of School," esp. 27-30, with Jones, "Vergil as *Magister* in Fulgentius."
[2] An argument to be made at much greater length another time, but centering on the kind of contrast presented between a fantastically knowledgeable Virgilio (e.g., *Inf.* 8.7, *E io mi volsi al mar di tutto senno*, "and I turned myself to the sea of all wisdom") and his uncertainties and failures (e.g., *Inf.* 9.7-8, '*Pur a noi converrà vincer la punga,' / cominciò el, 'se non… Tal ne s'offerse'* "'Still we must win the fight, he began, 'if not…'" trans. Durling).

finished after antiquity. This is despite the limitations evident in the concept. The episodes I have surveyed could be taken as a history of failed attempts to make a category fit where it could not: writing poetry in another's persona, treating Vergil's life in Homeric terms it did not fit, or Vergil as an ancient he was not. Neither Ennius, Vergil nor any other poet would ever serve in as many capacities as Homer did in Greek culture. This always made the deployment of the category an exercise that worked in narrow contexts where the illusion of perfect symmetry could be preserved.

On the other hand, the concept proved quite durable and repeatable. Roman elites passed on an array of reading technologies for forming and navigating the structures of a literature. The *alter Homerus* could be thought of as a tool for preserving certain patterns of relations between texts and cultures. It was adapted to many ancient literary contexts, and created a legacy that then shaped first how Roman poets and readers responded to their own literature and later how other readers of their tradition did as well. The concept of the *alter Homerus* continued to work in later attempts to model epic on Vergil and literatures on Latin. Vergil became the protoypical imitator of ancient epic, the first in a line which took the *Aeneid* for their model: Dante, Camões, Milton, and others.

And so in a sense to reconstruct and reread Roman literature is also to maintain a place for the Roman Homer. The *alter Homerus* remains a potent way to organize reading. Even today, when Vergil's differences from Homer as a poet and historical figure loom large, the comparison between Vergil and Homer feels natural and sometimes even necessary. Studying Roman literature requires the concept of a symmetrical literature, and studying the *Aeneid* requires understanding his context—a context in which the Roman Homer was already fixed as a concept, and which presumed its continuation as a valid category of analysis. Where Roman authors

operate under these terms, understanding the *alter Homerus* becomes part of the study of Vergil. Vergil's continuing cultural centrality is not our discovery or invention, but how the text and the means of its reception were designed. Such tenacity in a norm may be lamented or celebrated (as it was among the ancients too). But it should not ignored. The role persists in the ancient works themselves, in their reception, and in our own readings. As such, our studies require a recognition of the Roman Homer.

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