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A METRICAL SCANDAL IN ENNIUS*

Ennius' *Scipio* is represented for us by three fragments explicitly attributed to the poem by our ancient sources,[1] frr. 31, 32 and 33 Courtney (= *var.* 9–12, 13 and 14 Vahlen), along with a detail from the *Suda* s.v. Ἔννιος (E 1348, p. 2.285 Adler = fr. 29 Courtney = *var.* I Vahlen) asserting Homer's pre-eminence as a panegyrist (and Scipio's as a recipient of panegyric), which is echoed (and perhaps amplified) by Valerius Maximus (8.14.1).

Editors have supplemented this small rump of undisputed fragments and testimonia by a variety of criteria, and the result is a *Scipio* comprising anything between three fragments of six lines and seventeen fragments of about twenty-six, the diversity of opinion graphically represented by Russo in his recent commentary.[2] It is fair to say that there is little about this poem (or poems) that is free of controversy: representatively, Russo, after careful weighing of the complex and intensely debated evidence, is obliged to admit that most of the questions we would like to be able to answer about the *Scipio*, whether its date of composition,[3] its metre[4] or its genre,[5] remain stubbornly moot.

* This article benefited immeasurably from the guidance of *CQ*'s anonymous referee, who acutely identified the weaknesses and potential of my original draft. Ed Bispham and Matthew Leigh were both erudite and willing sources of information at critical points in its composition.

[1] 'Ennius in Scipione', Macrob. *Sat.* 6.2.26, 6.4.6; 'ex libro qui Scipio inscribitur', Gell. 4.7. The 'dicit Ennius de Scipione' that introduces fr. 30 Courtney (SHA 25.7.7 = *var.* 1 Vahlen) does not entirely preclude a reference to Scipio in another of Ennius' works, but we return to this fragment on p. 158.

[2] A. Russo, *Quinto Ennio. Le Opere minore*, vol. 1 (Pisa, 2007), 191.

[3] Russo (n. 2), 208–10. The most popular of the favoured dates is 201 B.C., coinciding with Scipio's return from Africa to Rome to public acclamation and a triumph after his defeat of Hannibal. Also suggested have been 180 B.C.; after Scipio's death in 183 B.C.; and after 187 B.C. but before his death, when Scipio found himself under intense political attack.

[4] Fr. 32 Courtney (E. Courtney, *The Fragmentary Latin poets* [Oxford, 1993]) is explicitly identified by Gellius as a trochaic septenarius (*quadratus numerus*), and fr. 31 Courtney is also in septenarii. Inevitably attention has focussed on fr. 33 Courtney, securely attributable to the *Scipio* but also ostensibly a hexameter, although by any standards an atypical example. Attempts have been made to read the verse as an incomplete trochaic septenarius rather than an inept dactylic hexameter, notably O. Ribbeck, *Comicorum Romanorum fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1873[2]), cxvii, and L.A. Mackay, 'In defence of Ennius', *CR* 13 (1963), 264–5, accepted by U.W. Scholz, 'Der "Scipio" des Ennius', *Hermes* 112 (1984), 183–99, at 189 and (with qualifications) Courtney (this note), 29. On the other hand its status as a hexameter has been defended by H.D. Jocelyn, 'Ennius, *Varia* 14 V[2]', *CR* 15 (1965), 146–9, and S. Mariotti, *Gnomon* 70 (1998), 207, elaborated by Russo (n. 2), 234–41 with further scholarly bibliography. Where there is a degree of consensus is in the recognition that the criticism of the Ennian line by Lucilius apparently recorded by Servius on Verg. *Aen.* 11.602 is not of the metrical structure of the line, but rather of Ennius' expression, either his use of homoeoteleuta (Courtney, 29), or of the banal verb *horrere* to describe a battlefield: E. Pasoli, 'Spunti di critica letteraria nella satira oraziana', *Convivium* 32 (1964), 449–78, at 474–5, Russo (n. 2), 242. Cf. Scholz (this note), 186–9.

The metre of fr. 30 Courtney, a fragment preserved within the *Historia Augusta* (SHA 25.7.7) which is unlikely to have been quoted *verbatim*, has also been interpreted in a diversity of ways, recorded by Russo (n. 2), 211–13, who himself prefers the view of S. Mariotti (*Lezioni su Ennio* [Urbino, 1991[2]], 37), that the text is, as it stands, in trochaic octonarii, or perhaps an octonarius followed by a septenarius,

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If the evidence available to us, particularly fragments open to a range of metrical reconstructions, leads us to an impasse, it might be worth trying a different kind of approach to understanding the *Scipio*. This article will thus start from two interrelated assumptions, neither of which commands any kind of consensus from scholars or unequivocal support from the evidence, but which I would still like to insist are the most likely to be true. I shall then show how, if these assumptions were indeed correct, Ennius' *Scipio* could make sense as a metrical artefact, as a composition alert to the 'rules' of genre, and even as the product of a particular juncture in Scipio's career. These guiding assumptions are that the *Scipio* was one poem, not a miscellany; and that its metre, from start to finish, was the catalectic trochaic tetrameter, better known in Rome as the trochaic septenarius or the *uersus quadratus*.[6] Once these assumptions are made (and I am far from the first to make them),[7] the fundamental peculiarity of the *Scipio* snaps into focus, namely the arresting contradiction between the contribution of the *Suda* (that only Homer could praise Scipio adequately) and the trochaic form of Ennius' poem of praise, since Homer and the *uersus quadratus* have very little in common. But as I have commented elsewhere,[8] 'it is when a metre is used anomalously … that it becomes most interesting'. We may not be able to say very much at all about the *Scipio*, but it may at least reveal itself to embody a bold (and, I suspect, quietly influential) exploitation of metrical form.

The assertion of the *Suda* that Ἔννιος, Ῥωμαίων ποιητής … Σκιπίωνα … ᾄδων καὶ ἐπὶ μέγα τὸν ἄνδρα ἐξᾶραι βουλόμενός φησι μόνον ἂν Ὅμηρον ἐπαξίους ἐπαίνους εἰπεῖν Σκιπίωνος is supplemented by Valerius Maximus, who assesses the elder Africanus, subject of Ennius' poem, as *uir Homerico quam rudi atque impolito praeconio dignior*: it is clear that by the *rude atque impolitum praeconium* is meant Ennius' *Scipio*.[9] The claim that only Homer was equal to the task of praising Scipio is thus certainly to be traced to Ennius, but it is entirely likely that Valerius' dismissive evaluation of Ennius' own efforts at panegyric also derives from Ennius' poem, since it sits comfortably with the modesty of the implicit claim of inadequacy conveyed by the Roman poet's assertion of Homer's incomparable ability.

That the lines are trochaic, at any rate, is reasonably widely accepted, and Courtney (26) is able to turn it into a trochaic septenarius with minimal supplementation.

[5] Russo (n. 2), 195–208. A resilient idea, now abandoned, was that the *Scipio* was to be understood as part of the Ennian collection generally referred to as *Saturae*, specifically constituting Book 3 of Ennius' *Satires*. Russo rehearses the arguments, and successfully demolishes them (75, 195–9). Russo also (199–208) revives the idea, until recently comparably out of fashion, that the *Scipio* was in fact a dramatic work, a *fabula praetexta* addressing, in a way easily paralleled in Ennius or other Roman dramatists, contemporary events: on the *praetexta* see, succinctly, E.J. Kenney and W.V. Clausen *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature II* (Cambridge, 1982), 127–8 (A. Gratwick). The major obstacle to this idea, as Russo acknowledges, is the notice in the *Suda*, which implies that Ennius' project was in some sense comparable to Homer's, that is, presented itself as *some kind of* epic. Cf. Ribbeck (n. 4), cxviii: 'si ad poema Scipionem recte referuntur [*sc.* the *Suda*'s words], propter *canendi* verbum et *Homeri* laudem non possunt sana interpretatione nisi de epico carmine intellegi.' Russo canvasses the possibility that the *Suda* is not actually referring to the *Scipio* (206–8), but not convincingly. However, he makes the valid point that if the *Scipio* was indeed an epic rather than a drama, it was in metrical terms a decidedly peculiar one (204).

[6] For the metre, see W.M. Lindsay, *Early Latin Verse* (Oxford, 1922), 284–5; D.S. Raven, *Latin Metre* (London, 1965), 74–83.

[7] That honour goes to Ribbeck (n. 4), cxvi–cxviii; cf. id., *Geschichte der römischen Dichtung*, vol. 1 (Stuttgart, 1894^2), 32–3.

[8] Ll. Morgan, *Musa Pedestris: Metre and Meaning in Roman Verse* (Oxford, 2010), 296.

[9] Courtney (n. 4), ad loc.

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The beauty of assuming that Ennius composed the *Scipio* in trochaic septenarii, furthermore, is that the *uersus quadratus* would give Ennius' stance of poetic inadequacy metrical shape, since what makes trochaic septenarii so unlikely for a poem of epic aspirations (however qualified) – a 'riddle' is Friedrich Leo's apt description[10] – is that a poem that establishes as an ideal the praise forthcoming from Homer is adopting a metrical form as far removed from the Homeric paradigm as it is possible to imagine. *Res gestae regumque ducumque et tristia bella | quo scribi possent numero monstrauit Homerus* (*Ars P.* 73–4), Horace famously insists: the dactylic hexameter, in other words, which under its most familiar ancient appellations (τὸ ἡρωικόν or *herous*) actively advertised its proper application, the Great Man. Even if the citation of Homer on its own did not raise the issue of the proper *metrical* form for praise poetry (although the *Suda* interprets Ennius' remark as an evaluation of τοῦ ποιητοῦ τὴν μεγαλόνοιαν καὶ τῶν μέτρων τὸ μεγαλεῖον καὶ ἀξιάγαστον),[11] Ennius' adoption of septenarii surely would have done. Far from heroic, Ennius' chosen vehicle is one characterized by Fraenkel as a 'simple, almost rustic'[12] form long used in Rome 'for scoptic poetry and verse accompanying play, in short for any kind of easily composed and barely poetic impromptu expression'.[13]

The possibility that Ennius might have employed trochaic septenarii in a poem of praise to Scipio Africanus the Elder has contributed significantly to doubts about the poem's genre and unity. Even among scholars who have shared with me the assumption that *Scipio* was entirely composed in septenarii, the choice of metre has seemed *prima facie* peculiar and in need of explanation; and attempts to explain it have followed. But where all these efforts to elucidate Ennius' choice of metre seem to me to fall down is in their impulse to soften and rationalize the oddness of Ennius' choice. What if, on the contrary, the trochaic septenarii of the *Scipio* were meant to be anomalous and eye-catching, a bold and meaningful 'abuse' of metrical propriety that forces the reader to adopt an unanticipated view of the subject – further evidence of Ennius' readiness to court controversy in his metrical practice (and, I would be inclined to add, of the metrical self-consciousness that Roman poetry seemed to carry with it from its earliest days)?[14] Leo's approach was to posit lost Hellenistic models, whilst Richter explains the metre as 'metrically a kind of intermediate stage between the saturnian that Ennius had rejected and the hexameter he had evidently not yet mastered': 'a dialogue metre from drama' which could make shift in the interim.[15] The septenarius was indeed

[10] F. Leo, *Geschichte der römischen Literatur* (Berlin, 1913), 198.

[11] J. Vahlen, *Ennianae poesis reliquiae* (Leipzig, 1903^2), 212 interprets the paraphrase of Ennius as extending as far as ἀξιάγαστον. W. Suerbaum, *Untersuchungen zur Selbstdarstellung älterer römischer Dichter. Livius Andronicus, Naevius, Ennius* (Hildesheim, 1968), 105 is sceptical.

[12] E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford, 1957), 439.

[13] Id., 'Die Vorgeschichte des Versus Quadratus', *Hermes* 62 (1927), 357–70, at 368 = *Kleine Beiträge zur klassischen Philologie* (Rome, 1964), 2.11–24, at 22.

[14] Morgan (n. 8), 23–7. Representative examples of Ennius' metrical adventurousness might be O. Skutsch, *The Annals of Quintus Ennius* (Oxford, 1985), 3–4 on the metrical peculiarities of the hexametrical *Hedyphagetica*; S.J. Hinds, *Allusion and Intertext* (Cambridge, 1998), 56–7 on the opening line of the *Annals*; and E. Gowers, 'The *cor* of Ennius', in W. Fitzgerald and E. Gowers (edd.), *Ennius Perennis: The Annals and Beyond* (Cambridge, 2007), 17–37, at 22–3 on an iconically anomalous Ennian hexameter. The latter two scholars are in turn explicitly indebted to Skutsch.

[15] Leo (n. 10), 198; W. Richter, 'Staat, Gesellschaft und Dichtung in Rom im 3. und 2. Jahrhundert v. Chr. (Naevius, Ennius, Lucilius)', *Gymnasium* 69 (1962), 286–310, at 301: both scholars also cited by Scholz (n. 4), 192–3.

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an important metre in Republican drama,[16] although that role seems not to have shaped its associations nearly as much as its other applications. But the weakness of Richter's explanation is that it leaves Ennius needlessly exposing his formal shortcomings, advertising his inability, as yet, to write proper panegyric in Homeric hexameters without any obvious pay-off for the poem he is writing.

Scholz recognizes the weaknesses of these arguments, and rightly concludes that the choice of trochaics for the *Scipio* should be assessed as a deliberate artistic decision on Ennius' part rather than some kind of makeshift solution,[17] and if I find his own explanation in turn ultimately less than satisfactory, it will doubtless seem a matter of emphasis rather than outright disagreement. Scholz draws on a scholarly tradition stretching back to Ribbeck[18] which has identified the rationale of the trochaics of the *Scipio*, a nationalistically tinged praise of 'the great Roman commander and victor over Hannibal', in 'the Roman tradition of the triumphal song', for which the *uersus quadratus* was undoubtedly the established vehicle, although Ennius' septenarii in the *Scipio* seem to conform to a more refined register of versification than such extemporized examples, or indeed than was the norm in Roman drama.[19] A small problem here, acknowledged by Scholz, is the failure of this innovation in Roman panegyrical form (on the part of a poet whose influence on Roman metrical practice was generally immense) to establish a precedent for later literary practice,[20] but my larger concern (as anticipated) is that such a reading of the metre of the *Scipio* as a (comparably elevated) alternative to the Homeric hexameter neutralizes the transgressive force of Ennius' metre – robs the metre of its power to compel on its own account.

That notion I shall develop later, but a more basic objection would be Scholz's (and his predecessors') isolation of a distinct genre of trochaic 'triumphal songs', when it seems easier to regard the chants of common soldiers at triumphs as a subset (and not a very clearly defined one) of a broader tradition of popular song. Long before the advent of Roman formal drama, the trochaic septenarius had found a use, as Scholz says, in 'volkstümliche Spiel- und Spottverse, aber auch die Tradition der Triumphallieder der Soldaten',[21] but the distinction implied here between light popular verse and the songs of soldiers at triumphs lacks cogency in the face of the surviving examples.

The soldiers' chants are represented for us by examples such as the refrains from Caesar's Gallic triumph in 46 B.C. (*Gallias Caesar subegit, Nicomedes Caesarem.* | *ecce Caesar nunc triumphat, qui subegit Gallias:* | *Nicomedes non triumphat, qui subegit Caesarem*, and *urbani, seruate uxores; moechum caluom adducimus.* | *aurum in Gallia effutuisti, hic sumpsisti mutuum*, Suet. *Iul.* 49.4, 51) and the triumphs of the alleged fratricides M. Aemilius Lepidus the triumvir and L. Munatius Plancus in December 43 (*de germanis non de Gallis duo triumphant consules*, Vell. Pat. 2.67.4), but in style and sentiment these military *quadrati* are very much in line with the civilian *Spottvers* coined in response to the death of the orator L. Licinius Crassus in 91 B.C. and referring to the enmity between Crassus and the corpulent C. Papirius Carbo 'Arvina'

[16] T. Gerick, *Der versus quadratus bei Plautus und seine volkstümliche Tradition* (Tübingen, 1996), with conclusions about patterns of usage of the metre in Roman comedy at 187–8.
[17] Scholz (n. 4), 194.
[18] Ribbeck, locc. cit. (n. 7); cf. *The New Pauly* 4.987 s.v. 'Ennius' (W. Suerbaum).
[19] Ribbeck (n. 7), cxvii.
[20] Scholz (n. 4), 195–6.
[21] Ibid. 194.

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(*aruina* is 'lard'), *postquam Crassus carbo factus, Carbo crassus factus est*, or the attack on Pompey preserved in the same context (an account of the trope of *astismos*, 'urbanity') of Sacerdos (*Gramm. Lat.* 6.461.26–462.3 Keil),[22] or for that matter the popular (i.e. non-triumphal) responses to Caesarian policy (Suet. *Iul.* 80.2, 3): *Gallos Caesar in triumphum ducit, idem in curiam; | Galli bracas deposuerunt, latum clauum sumpserunt* and (a graffito) *Brutus, quia reges eiecit, consul primus factus est. | hic, quia consules eiecit, rex postremo factus est*. At Dio Cass. 43.20 we are told that Caesar's soldiers made jokes similar to the first of these from the general populace (about new entries to the senate), and the close kinship of triumphal song and popular song in septenarii is also illustrated by yet another chant by Caesar's soldiery recorded by Dio, ἂν μὲν καλῶς ποιήσῃς, κολασθήσῃ, ἂν δὲ κακῶς, βασιλεύσεις, a parody of the trochaic nursery rhyme *rex erit qui recte faciet, qui non faciet non erit* (Porphyrio on Hor. *Epist*. 1.1.62).[23] Horace, as we shall see, implies in a similar way that even during a triumph a distinction between soldiers' songs and those of the wider public might be hard to draw.

Beard insists, in reaction to the long-established interpretation of ribald triumphal song as apotropaic, that in fact soldiers' songs (according to the sources) could be eulogistic as well as insubordinate.[24] An example of a eulogistic *uersus quadratus* from the popular domain is the response of the Roman *ciuitas* to (false) news of Germanicus' recovery from illness (Suet. *Calig.* 6.1), *salua Roma, salua patria, saluus est Germanicus*, loud enough to wake up Tiberius, we are told. But such positive chants differ only in tone from the ribald kind, not in register. Safer, in general, than an arbitrary distinction between extemporized song voiced by soldiers and by the wider public is a recognition that what unites the rather meagre remains of non-dramatic septenarii[25] is rather more than what distinguishes them, and that is their consistently demotic character: popular effusions, as opposed to those emanating from the elite, whether from the processing soldiery or any other kind of popular collective, found their appropriate medium in the 'simple, clear structure' of the *uersus quadratus*.[26]

Consideration of a later exercise in praise of a great man, Horace, *Odes* 4.2, will support this subtle, but significant, recalibration of our reading of Ennius' trochaics – as a popular rather than specifically military form, and as a low-status form that Ennius wanted to be apprehended as such, not somehow to pass muster as a heroic medium. The latter clarification matters, I should say, because the contrast in register between Homeric and popular poetic forms will have been a dynamic one, a dramatic contradiction of readerly expectations surely central to the effect of the *Scipio*; and further evidence of Ennius' status as a revolutionary metrical innovator.[27]

[22] Courtney (n. 4), 470.
[23] Courtney (n. 4), 483–4.
[24] M. Beard, *The Roman Triumph* (Cambridge, MA, 2007), 248, citing Plut. *Aem.* 34.7; *Marc.* 8.2; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 2.34.2 (τὸν ἡγεμόνα κυδαίνουσα ποιήμασιν αὐτοσχεδίοις); Livy 4.53.11–12.
[25] Other examples include a chant that circulated in Galba's camp (Suet. *Galba* 6.2), a riddle at Petron. *Sat.* 58.8 (*qui de nobis longe uenio, late uenio? solue me*), verses *a populo dicta* about Sarmentus the *scurra* (Σ Juv. 5.3), and possibly also shouts of the people directed at Plautianus, the praetorian prefect of Septimius Severus, and at Caracalla in the circus (Dio Cass. 77.2.2, 78.10.3), the last a suggestion of Courtney (n. 4), 482. Courtney's commentary is the source of numerous suggestive remarks on the *versus quadratus*: see his notes on *vers. pop.* 1–2, 5, 10, 12, 15, 19 and 20, and *vers. triumph.* 1–5.
[26] Scholz (n. 4), 194. Beard (n. 24), 247 notes Livy's tendency to use the word *inconditus* of them.
[27] See n. 14 above.

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Certainly the equivalent movement in *Odes* 4.2 is critical to the meaning of that poem, whether we are simply dealing with a close parallel to Ennius' procedure in the *Scipio*, or rather, in a book acknowledged to owe much to Ennius,[28] a rather more direct relationship. Horace's poem is a subtly oblique panegyric of Augustus which is also highly self-conscious about its metrical form, setting the restrictive structures of its sapphic stanzas against the exuberant Pindaric forms to which Horace claims to be unequal.[29] To this extent already 4.2 resembles the *Scipio* in its identification of a figure better able to provide the *laudandus* with appropriate praise, in Horace's case Iullus Antonius – though of course that conceit does not lack parallels elsewhere.[30] But 4.2 takes a further step towards self-effacement, and achieves it as much as anywhere on the metrical plane. After describing Pindar's superlative achievements at 1–24, and his own more limited ambitions at 25–32, Horace sketches the panegyric that Iullus, *maiore poeta plectro*, will deliver (33–44). Then, however, the poem reverts to Horace, and Fraenkel draws out the implications of an exquisite metrical play first noted by Heinze:[31]

> tum meae, si quid loquar audiendum,
> uocis accedet bona pars, et: 'o sol
> pulcher, o laudande!' canam recepto
> Caesare felix;
>
> teque, dum procedis, 'io Triumphe!'
> non semel dicemus, 'io Triumphe!'
> ciuitas omnis, dabimusque diuis
> tura benignis.

Describing the shift back to Horace's perspective as 'extraordinary', Fraenkel sets out the later development of the poem: Iullus Antonius had suggested a Pindarizing treatment of the homecoming of the victorious ruler, but 'Horace declines and steps aside, only to reappear after a moment, not in the role of a Pindarizing bard or any bard at all, but indistinguishable from any ordinary citizen'.[32] Plural verbs take over from the first person singular as the poet imagines 'the whole *ciuitas*' in celebration, himself lost in the throng: 'Thousands and thousands of excited people will be lining the road on both sides and thronging in the wake of the procession, and one amidst the shouting crowd, no more conspicuous than all the others, will be Horace.' And Horace gives his anonymity metrical expression, since *o sol | pulcher, o laudande* is a fragment, brilliantly intruded into the sapphic stanza, of a trochaic septenarius, in style as well as metre typical of public expressions in the *uersus quadratus* at such occasions: 'No Pindaric ode now', continues Fraenkel, 'no elaborate poetry at all; the medium through which he voices his enthusiasm is the homely *versus quadratus*'; in metrical terms, not least, Horace is constructing himself as '*quiuis unus ex populo*'.

[28] Thus, for example, P.D. Hills, 'Ennius, Suetonius and the genesis of Horace, *Odes* 4', *CQ* 51 (2001), 613–16; and, on the *Scipio* in particular, Suerbaum (n. 11), 242–5; G. Davis, '*Quis ... digne scripserit?* The *topos* of *alter Homerus* in Horace *C.* 1.6', *Phoenix* 41 (1987), 292–5, at 294–5.

[29] P. Steinmetz, 'Horaz und Pindar. Hor. Carm. IV 2', *Gymnasium* 71 (1964), 1–17; Morgan (n. 8), 224–37. For a more recent discussion of the metre of 4.2, see T. Phillips, 'Between Pindar and Sappho: Horace *Odes* 4.2.9–12', *Mnemosyne* (forthcoming).

[30] Thus Davis (n. 28), on *Odes* 1.6.

[31] A. Kiessling and R. Heinze, *Q. Horatius Flaccus. Oden und Epoden* (Berlin, 1917[6]), ad loc.

[32] Fraenkel (n. 12), 439.

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We may further note that the Roman *ciuitas* chants a refrain, *io triumphe*, typically associated with the processing soldiery,[33] and at a military celebration: Horace at least recognizes no distinction between the soldier's and citizen's voice.

Horace's approach to panegyrizing Augustus in 4.2 is thus to adopt the perspective, voice and metre of the *ciuis Romanus*. 'Just as devotion to Augustus was not the privilege of any individual, but was felt by thousands of ordinary citizens, so the language in which that devotion was voiced should be one that seemed to come from the heart of the common man. "O sol pulcher, o laudande", that is how the poet echoes the grateful rejoicing of the mass of the people.'[34] What we discover, or rediscover, about this trochaic length is that it shares the mysterious power of other metrical forms to embody a particular personality. If, as Varro succinctly put it, ᾽Αχιλλέως ἡρωικός, ἰωνικὸς κιναίδου (*Men. Sat.* 360 Cèbe), the heroic hexameter is the metre of Achilles and the sotadean the metre of the *cinaedus* (cf. Ov. *Rem. am.* 381–2; Demetr. *Eloc.* 189),[35] the *uersus quadratus* evoked equally vividly the common man. This is surely also what Ennius was aiming to achieve with the trochaic form of the *Scipio*, conveying the greatness of his subject and the universal gratitude he could command (as well as his own inadequacy to a properly Homeric task) by adopting the metrical standpoint of the ordinary citizen – as radical and arresting a strategy as his self-construction as *alter Homerus* in the *Annals*, though metrically and otherwise very different.

Scipio fr. 30 Courtney (*var.* 1 Vahlen) is about Scipio, our source informs us, but we cannot be certain that it originated in the *Scipio*. The passage appears to contemplate the physical memorials, a statue or a column, with which the *populus Romanus* will express their respect for the achievements of the great general, and it has been related, very plausibly, to the (textually controversial) section of Horace, *Odes* 4.8 which compares the poetic celebration of great achievements to the *notae publicae* engraved on marble, exemplifying the power of poetic commemoration with the *Calabrae Pierides* of Ennius, seemingly with specific reference to his praise of Scipio in the *Scipio* (13–20).[36] If *Odes* 4.8 strongly supports the attribution of fr. 30 to the *Scipio*, that fragment in turn parallels rather nicely my characterization of the perspective adopted by Ennius in this poem, an expression of gratitude and respect to a great man emanating from the general populace. Add the parallel in *Odes* 4.2, where Horace, as one of the crowd, will deliver his trochaic praise when Augustus returns in triumph, and one might be forgiven for suggesting that a panegyric of Scipio couched in so overtly popular a metre looks very much like something written, as Ribbeck long ago suspected,[37] in the immediate context of Scipio's return to Rome after Zama in 201 B.C., or at least is a work that harks back very vividly to those circumstances. The sources agree on the effusion of popular enthusiasm that greeted his return (Polyb. 16.23; Livy 30.45).

In conclusion, if indeed the metrical form of the *Scipio* embodied the modest status (the voice of the people) assumed by Ennius in the poem, it may be worth returning to Valerius Maximus' formulation, *uir Homerico quam rudi atque impolito praeconio dignior*. 'Rough and unpolished' is an extremely apt summary of the character of the *uersus quadratus*, subliterary, improvised and popular. But *praeconium* is a suggestive term,

[33] Varro, *Ling.* 6.68 *cum imperatore milites redeuntes clamitant per urbem in Capitolium eunti 'io triumphe'*; Beard (n. 24), 244–6.
[34] Fraenkel (n. 12), 439–40.
[35] Morgan (n. 8), 20, 40–8, 92–7.
[36] Suerbaum (n. 11), 105.
[37] Ribbeck (n. 7), cxviii.

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too. *Praeco* might denote an official herald or an auctioneer, and *praeconium* might also of course just convey an unspecific sense of proclamation. Thus at Cic. *Fam.* 7.24.1 C. Licinius Calvus' choliambic attack on Tigellius, *Sardi Tigelli putidum caput uenit*, is an 'auction cry', *Calui Licini Hipponacteo praeconio*, whilst at *Arch.* 24 Alexander at Achilles' tomb congratulates Achilles for having Homer as his *praeco*: *'o fortunate' inquit 'adulescens, qui tuae uirtutis Homerum praeconem inueneris!'* That is almost certainly where we should leave it in Valerius Maximus, *praeconio* coordinated with both *Homerico* and *rudi atque impolito*, and thus communicating an unmarked sense of 'the action of blazoning abroad, publicity (usu. w. the sense of commendation)'.[38] But it is still tempting to wonder whether Valerius has in fact compressed his Ennian source, and *praeconium*, in the sense of the words of the *praeco publicus*, was originally an exclusive description of Ennius' un-Homeric undertaking. It wouldn't have been a bad one. *Praeconium* could simultaneously convey a humility of register (the *praeco* was not a distinguished position, at least from an elite perspective)[39] and a capacity symbolically to represent the *populus Romanus*. We must assume that the *praeco* was a ubiquitous sight in the day-to-day functioning of the Roman *res publica*, proclaiming bills, summoning assemblies, advertising upcoming festivals, announcing election results (and much more), potentially a physical embodiment of the will of the Roman people:[40] Cicero perhaps implies how far the *praeco publicus* could pass for the voice of the people when he claims, *me non extrema diribitio suffragiorum, sed primi illi uestri concursus, neque singulae uoces praeconum, sed una uox uniuersi populi Romani consulem declarauit* (*Leg. agr.* 2.2.4). Certainly, if one were minded to represent the proclamation of a *praeco* in verse, the *uersus quadratus* would be an appropriate choice of metre.

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[38] *OLD* s.v. 1c.

[39] Th. Mommsen, *Römisches Staatsrecht* I^3 (Leipzig, 1887), 365–6; the *praeco* need not even necessarily be literate. N. Purcell, 'The *apparitores*: a study in social mobility', *PBSR* 51 (1983), 125–73 talks of 'the lowly heralds' (135), bottom of the ladder of the *apparitores*, the latter as a group being 'neither menial nor exalted' (132).

[40] Mommsen (n. 39), 363–6 for a full account of their functions.

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