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## CICERO, ENNIUS, AND THE CONCEPT OF APOTHEOSIS AT ROME

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It is probably not a coincidence that the first systematic studies of Roman religion, which de facto established religion as a distinct field of research, were produced in the late republic, just when social and political upheavals were threatening the existence of Roman institutions and cultural traditions. Since the study of religion was still in its formative stage, Cicero and Varro, who were the first writers to attempt a rational categorization of Roman religious practices, enjoyed a privileged role. They found themselves in a position that allowed them to define and delimit the vast range of practices that made up Roman religious life<sup>1</sup> and also to create bold connections between recent religious developments and archaic Roman traditions in an overt attempt to legitimize the new religious practices of the late republic. As a case study, this paper examines some of the ways in which Cicero uses Ennius in the *de Re Publica* to give his presentation of the disputed concept of apotheosis the sanction of republican tradition.

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1 Beard 1986.46 argues that the late republic was “the period when ‘religion,’ as an activity and a subject, became clearly defined out of the traditional, undifferentiated, politico-religious amalgam of Roman public life.” So, too, North 1986.254: “Varro’s *Divine Antiquities*, Cicero’s philosophical treatises, Lucretius’ attack on *religio*, the controversial debate on the auspices between Claudius and Marcellus, the works of Nigidius Figulus, together represent a considerable body of literature dealing with a wide range of theological issues, of a kind which had scarcely existed at Rome before.” See also Momigliano 1984.199–200 and Rawson 1985.282–316.

As Laelius laments in the *de Re Publica*, much of archaic Roman history was fragmentary even for republican Romans (2.33), and Cicero's *de Re Publica* (as Laelius reminds us) is itself one attempt to fill this void. The *de Re Publica*, however, is not a passive curatorial gesture, but an act of Roman self-definition triggered by social crisis.<sup>2</sup> In the introduction to Book 5, Cicero intervenes (as narrator) and quotes Ennius as he delineates the nature of this crisis as well as the purpose of his dialogue (5.1): "'moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque,' quem quidem ille verum, [inquit,] vel brevitate vel veritate tamquam ex oraculo quodam mihi esse effatus videtur," "'The Roman state stands upon the morals and men of old.' *He then said*: That verse, in its brevity and its truthfulness, he seems to me to have spoken as if from an oracle."<sup>3</sup> This verse is indeed programmatic for the *de Re Publica*: unlike his speculative predecessor Plato, Cicero searches for the exemplary amongst the aggregate of Roman customs (*moribus*) and individuals (*viris*) passed down by tradition.<sup>4</sup> Cicero warns that this Roman past, the mainstay of *res Romana* according to Cicero's reading of Ennius,<sup>5</sup> is receding into oblivion in the late republic (5.2):

nostra vero aetas cum rem publicam sicut picturam accepisset egregiam, sed iam evanescentem vetustate, non modo eam coloribus isdem quibus fuerat renovare neglexit, sed ne id quidem curavit ut formam saltem eius et extrema tamquam liniamenta servaret. quid enim manet ex antiquis

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2 Cicero's introduction to the *de Re Publica* (1.1–13) positions the work as a call to political action in response to the disintegration of political order in the 50s; Zetzel 2001.86. Cf. Zetzel 1998.237–38. Rawson 1991.61 sees the *de Re Publica*, Atticus's chronological researches, and Varro's *Antiquitates* as clear reactions to the collapse of republican order. So, too, Powell 2001.38: "In the end, the main issue of the *De Re Publica* appears to me to have been: how can we improve matters *now*."

3 The text used is Ziegler 1969. The *inquit* is Augustine's. All translations from the *Rep.* and *Leg.* are Zetzel 1999, the rest are my own.

4 Scipio announces his deviation from Plato's methodology at *Rep.* 2.3. Also note how Plato's *Republic* is judged a failure in the *Rep.* by Ennian criteria (2.21): "civitatem . . . a vita hominum abhorrentem et a moribus" ("a state . . . totally alien to human life and customs").

5 The probable original context of this famous Ennian line ("moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque") might complicate the axiomatic patriotism Cicero attributes to it. Skutsch 1985.317 thinks that these words were uttered in Book 5 of the *Annales* by the consul T. Manlius Torquatus Imperiosus as he handed his son over to the lictor to be executed for military insubordination. At *Sul.* 32, Cicero himself recalls the legendary harshness of the father's act.

moribus, quibus ille dixit rem stare Romanam? quos ita oblivione obsoletos videmus, ut non modo non colantur, sed iam ignorentur.

But our own time, having inherited the commonwealth like a wonderful picture that had faded over time, not only has failed to renew its original colors but has not even taken the trouble to preserve at least its shape and outlines. What remains of the morals of antiquity, upon which Ennius said that the Roman state stood? We see that they are so outworn in oblivion that they are not only not cherished but are now unknown.<sup>6</sup>

Cicero uses Ennius throughout the *de Re Publica* to give his reconstruction of the Roman past a patina of republican authenticity. Ennius's verses are invested with prodigious cultural authority, here elevated to a mantic register ("tamquam ex oraculo quodam mihi esse effatus videtur"),<sup>7</sup> and presented as dynamic links to the republican past—links that would be especially effective for an audience whose initial encounters with this past most likely had been mediated by the *Annales*.<sup>8</sup>

Before we take a closer look at Cicero's use of Ennius in the *de Re Publica*, let us examine a passage on immortality from the *Tusculan Disputations* that will help us illustrate how Cicero treats Ennius's *Annales* as a repository of cultural tradition. After a general statement establishing the weight of ancestral evidence in religious inquiry (1.26), Cicero discusses ancient ideas about the afterlife (1.27):

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6 Cf. how Varro in the *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum*, a work dedicated to Julius Caesar, likens his antiquarian researches to Aeneas's rescue of the Penates at the fall of Troy (frag. 2a Cardauns). Varro's diagnosis of the cause of Rome's cultural crisis (*civium neglegentia*) is much like Cicero's ("eam coloribus isdem quibus fuerat renovare neglexit"). Cf. also Cicero's metaphor of the *res publica* as a painting to Varro's similar analogy (*Ant. Div. frag. 5* Cardauns): "sicut prior est . . . pictor quam tabula picta, prior faber quam aedificium, ita priores sunt civitates quam ea, quae a civitatibus instituta sunt" ("Just as the painter comes before the painting and the builder comes before the building, so states come before the institutions that they create").

7 See Prinzen 1998.168–71 on Ennius as oracle.

8 So Cornell 1986a.244: "What did the Romans of Cicero's day know about their own history? Those who had any sort of education probably obtained their first and most lasting impressions from Ennius's *Annals*."

itaque unum illud erat insitum priscis illis, quos cascos appellat Ennius,<sup>9</sup> esse in morte sensum, neque excessu vitae sic deleri hominem, ut funditus interiret; idque cum multis aliis rebus, tum e pontificio iure et e caerimoniis sepulcrorum intellegi licet,

And so among those people of old whom Ennius called the “ancients,” there was the fixed belief that there is sensation in the state of death, and that in the departure from life, a person is not annihilated so as to perish completely; this may be gathered, among many other things, from pontifical law and the rites of burial.

The evidence of early Roman belief in an afterlife preserved by pontifical law and burial ritual is supplemented by a citation from the *Annales* that presents Ennius as a conduit for prevailing traditions about the divinity of Romulus (1.28): “ex hoc et nostrorum opinione ‘Romulus in caelo cum diis agit aevum,’ ut famae adsentiens dixit Ennius,” “Hence in the belief of our countrymen, ‘Romulus spends eternity in the sky with the gods,’ as Ennius said concurring with tradition.”<sup>10</sup> By using the *Annales* in conjunction with pontifical law and burial rites, Cicero assigns an exceptional role to Ennius.<sup>11</sup> He does not narrowly construe the *Annales* as representing a peripheral “reli-

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9 Cf. *Ann.* 22: “quam prisci, casci populi, tenuere Latini.”

10 Skutsch 1985.262 argues that Cicero tendentiously edits Ennius’s “Romulus in caelo cum diis genitalibus aevom / Degit” (“Romulus abides in heaven with the gods that gave him birth,” *Ann.* 110–11) to shift the focus from Romulus’s divine lineage (*genitalibus*) to his acquisition of divine status by means of earthly achievements, and thereby makes Romulus a more straightforward example of a mortal earning immortality. Perhaps because he is in an experimental mode, Cicero seems to conflate immortality of the soul with apotheosis by using Romulus in this discussion. These two concepts are also conjoined in *Rep.* 6 and *Sest.* 143.

11 Cf. Cicero’s use of the *Annales* in the *de Inventione*. In his explanation of *narratio*, he cites Pacuvius’s tragedies as an example of *fabula* and Ennius’s *Annales* as an example of *historia* (1.27): “fabula est in qua nec verae nec veri similes res continentur, cuiusmodi est: ‘Angues ingentes alites, iuncti iugo . . .’ historia est gesta res, ab aetatis nostrae memoria remota; quod genus: ‘Appius indixit Karthaginensibus bellum’” (“*Fabula* applies to a narrative in which there is neither truth nor verisimilitude, like: ‘Huge winged serpents joined by the yoke.’ *Historia* concerns real events remote from the memory of our age, like: ‘Appius decreed war on the Carthaginians.’” See Wiseman 1994.1–22 on the affinities of historical and “quasi-fictional” narratives at Rome.

gion of the poets,” as would be typical in theological debates at Rome;<sup>12</sup> rather he cites the work as reflecting Roman religious attitudes just as accurately as familial ritual practice and state protocols.<sup>13</sup>

This enlarged sphere of authority befits the learned Messapian who resists categorization. With his poetic output, his translations from Greek philosophical and religious works, and his likely role in producing the *fasti* in the temple of Hercules Musarum, Ennius could claim each of what were to become Varro’s “three theologies”<sup>14</sup> as his domain.<sup>15</sup> Ennius was especially familiar with the concept of apotheosis—in addition to being a peerless singer of the *mos maiorum*, he had also translated Euhemerus’s work on the apotheosis of early kings and benefactors for a Roman audience. During the late republic, according to Cotta in Cicero’s *de Natura Deorum*, Euhemerus’s ideas were particularly associated with Ennius at Rome (1.119): “quae ratio [i.e., apotheosis] maxime tractata ab Euhemero est, quem noster et interpretatus est et secutus praeter ceteros Ennius,” “This theory was mostly developed by Euhemerus, who was translated and followed especially by our Ennius.”<sup>16</sup> It is

12 The citation of a poet in this context was by no means an obvious choice for Cicero. As Feeney 1991.103 points out, poets were traditionally disregarded in religious discussions at Rome: “In Rome, on the contrary, the productions of poets—Greek or native—were marginal not only for actual practice and belief but also for intellectual inquiry into religion.” See also Momigliano 1984.202: “In the period of Caesar the men who discuss religion are concerned with the choice between the rational approach and the political approach to religion, not with any dubious relation between poetry and city-religion.” Cicero elsewhere bears witness to this attitude (e.g., *ND* 1.42, 2.70, 3.5, 3.60). Over half of Cicero’s quotes from the *Annales* (28/52) are found in his philosophical works: Skutsch 1985.27.

13 Cf. the citation of Ennius’s epitaph for Africanus at *Leg.* 2.57, where Ennius (*varia* 19–20 Vahlen) is said to give a faithful representation of burial custom: “declarat enim Ennius de Africano: ‘hic est ille situs.’ vere; nam siti dicuntur ii, qui conditi sunt” (“Ennius says of Africanus: ‘Here lies . . .’; he speaks the truth, since those who are buried are said to ‘lie’”).

14 In *Ant. Div.* (frags. 6–11 Cardauns).

15 And these domains overlap for Ennius. In addition to the deification of Romulus, the *Annales*’s account of Saturn’s quarrel with Titan has a Euhemeristic coloring: Feeney 1991.122 and Skutsch 1985.183–84. Cf. the points of contact between the *fasti* in the temple of Hercules Musarum, the *Annales*, and annalistic historiography at Rome: Rüpke 1995a and pp. 508–10 in the present volume.

16 In this passage, in which the interlocutor Cotta takes the stance against Euhemerism, Cicero describes the doctrine as a rationalization of divinity that *also* includes the translation of exceptional mortals to the gods upon their death (“post mortem ad deos pervenisse,” *ND* 1.119). This interpretation seems to follow Ennius’s *Euhemerus*, where the resourceful benefactor Jupiter gets the same posthumous promotion (“vitam commutavit et ad deos abiit,” 132–41 Vahlen). Courtney 1999.36–37 argues that Ennius’s *ad deos abiit*, along with Cicero’s corroboration (*ad deos pervenisse*), suggests that Euhemerus not only rationalized gods as

indeed quite possible that our translator of the *Euhemerus*, far from “concurring with tradition” on Romulus’s posthumous lot, even invented Romulus’s apotheosis in his *Annales*.<sup>17</sup>

Let us now turn to the *de Re Publica*. In the surviving sections of this work, Cicero invokes Ennian precedent eleven times. Cicero has the interlocutor Scipio establish Ennius’s *Annales* early in Book 1 as a reservoir of republican archival information. In a discussion of astronomy and eclipses, the iconic republican statesman Scipio<sup>18</sup> cites Ennius alongside the *Annales Maximi* as authoritative in his own time (dramatic date 129 B.C.E.) and thus continues to consolidate the poet’s canonical status (1.25):

erat enim tum haec nova et ignota ratio, solem lunae oppositu solere deficere, quod Thaletem Milesium primum vidisse dicunt. id autem postea ne nostrum quidem Ennium fugit; qui ut scribit, anno quinquagesimo <et> CCC 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.

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early culture heroes, but also thought that these benefactors continued to exist among the gods after their mortal demise. Although another important source for Euhemerus’s theology, Diodorus Book 6, states that culture-bringers received only immortal honors after their death, Euhemerism as represented by Ennius and Cicero seems to involve apotheosis. Veyne 1988.47 remarks that the marvelous in the Hellenistic period has a rationalist cast that moderns are mistakenly inclined to construe as part of “a battle for truth and enlightenment.”

- 17 Skutsch 1985.205 thinks that Ennius was the first to turn Romulus into a god and ties this invention to his translation of Euhemerus. Jocelyn 1989.55 concurs, but emphasizes the Pythagorean aspects of Romulus’s apotheosis. Bremmer 1987.46 thinks that the evidence points to a late appearance of the apotheosis in the tradition, but refrains from naming Ennius as the inventor of this tradition. The replacement of the she-wolf with the prostitute Acca Larentia first appears in Ennius and may be his own rationalizing interpretation of the legend, Bremmer 1987.32.
- 18 As Zetzel 1998.236 points out, Scipio lends considerable *auctoritas* to the ideas put forth in the *Rep*. Scipio was an apt choice to present an account of the religious and political cultures of early Rome: along with Laelius, Scipio had a prominent role in the development of a religious antiquarianism that “had a strong practical side to it” (Rawson 1991.101). See also Beard, North, and Price 1998.109–11 on the religious activities of Scipio and Laelius. Cicero’s contemporaries might expect Scipio to know his Ennius, since a statue of the poet was said (*Arch.* 22) to have been placed on the tomb of the Scipios off the Via Appia.

At that time this was a new and unknown explanation, that the sun is eclipsed by the interposition of the moon. They say that Thales of Miletus was the first to recognize this, but later on it 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 fifth 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.

Scipio gives Ennius credentials that would impress Cicero's late-republican audience: he not only treats Ennius's *Annales* as a source that can stand comparison with the *Annales Maximi*, he also connects Ennius's poem to currents of superstition-fighting Greek rationalism.<sup>19</sup> Like Thales, Ennius knew that the sun's light was blocked in an eclipse by the interposition of the moon. The precise astronomical information mined from Ennius and the *Annales Maximi* enabled a secure dating of Romulus's apotheosis, an event here described in language that sets the stage for its fuller treatment in Book 2 (1.25): "quibus quidem Romulum tenebris etiamsi natura ad humanum exitum abripuit, virtus tamen in caelum dicitur sustulisse," "During that darkness, even if nature snatched Romulus to a human death, his virtue is still said to have carried him up to the heavens."

Later on in Book 1 of the *de Re Publica*, Scipio quotes Ennius to offer testimony in support of his claims about the esteem enjoyed by just kings in early Rome (1.64):

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19 Since Ennius was probably instrumental in the production of "official" Roman religious discourses, Scipio's linking of the *Annales* and the *Annales Maximi* is fitting. As Rüpke 1995a argues, Ennius and M. Fulvius Nobilior added a list of censors and consuls to a calendar in the temple of Hercules Musarum and thus brought *fasti* to Rome that were more similar to annalistic historiography, with its aggrandizing distortions, than to straightforward chronological records. Formal affinities between the *Annales* and *Annales Maximi* also recommend Scipio's combination of sources. In the present volume [p. 510], Rüpke observes that the *Annales* is the first non-documentary text in which pairs of consuls and iterations of offices are found.



sicut ait Ennius, post optimi regis obitum:

simul inter  
sese sic memorant: "o Romule, Romule die,  
qualem te patriae custodem di genuerunt!  
o pater, o genitor, o sanguen dis oriundum!"

non eros nec dominos appellabant eos quibus iuste paruerunt, denique ne reges quidem, sed patriae custodes, sed patres, sed deos, nec sine causa.<sup>20</sup>

As Ennius said after the death of a great king; and at the same time they speak this way to one another: "Romulus, divine Romulus, what a guardian of the country the gods brought forth in you! Oh father, oh life-giver, oh blood sprung from the gods." They did not call those whom they justly obeyed "lords" or "masters," and not even "kings," but "guardians of the country," "fathers," "gods"—and not without reason.

Cicero adds a poetic and archaic nuance (*eros*) to Scipio's language that frames Ennius's quotation (Zetzel 1995.151).<sup>21</sup>

According to some later commentators, Cicero makes Scipio wring too much out of these verses. Scipio reads this lament as proof that early Romans addressed Romulus as a god, while both H. D. Jocelyn and Otto Skutsch argue that Ennius's words do not support Scipio's claims.<sup>22</sup>

20 The text used is Zetzel 1995.

21 Skutsch 1985.256 notes that Scipio's *post optimi regis obitum* may also blur the distinction between his language and that of Ennius: "The phrase *post obitum*, though in plain prose, may conceivably have been chosen because Ennius used it in one of the preceding lines." Scipio later emends this phrase to throw added emphasis on Romulus's apotheosis (2.52): "pulsoque Tarquinio, tantum odium populum Romanum regalis nominis tenuit, quantum tenuerat post obitum vel potius excessum Romuli desiderium" ("After Tarquinius was expelled, the Roman people hated the name of king as much as they had loved it after the death, or rather departure, of Romulus"). Zetzel 1995.151 suggests that with *sed patres* Cicero could have his own coveted *pater patriae* title in mind.

22 Cf. Skutsch 1985.256: "Romulus, in spite of Cicero's *deos* (*appellabant*) is very clearly not addressed as a god here," and Jocelyn 1989.45: "Ennius does not have Romulus addressed as any sort of *deus*, even in the hyperbolic manner familiar from the comic scripts of the time . . . Cicero himself got things wrong with 'non eros nec dominos appellabant eos . . . denique ne reges quidem; sed patriae custodes, sed patres et deos.'"

Whatever Ennius's intentions may have been, it is significant in the context of the *de Re Publica* that Cicero has Scipio advance an interpretation of Ennius that emphasizes Romulus's divinity. We may further notice that the pair Scipio-Ennius provides a powerful source of *auctoritas* in support of Romulus's divine status.

The way Cicero shaped his account of Romulus's apotheosis, the primary precedent for a Roman ruler attaining divinity, was crucial for legitimizing or discrediting deification as a Roman custom and one that would have great political importance; after all, this was the time when Roman statesmen like Pompey, Caesar, and Cicero himself were actively redrawing the boundaries between mortals and immortals.<sup>23</sup> The words of Cicero, "the leading philosopher, theologian and theorist of his generation" (Beard, North, and Price 1998.116), had a normative function in late-republican religious dialogues that could help enlarge Roman religious sensibilities and make them more accommodating to the concept of apotheosis.<sup>24</sup> The *de Re Publica* is a text preoccupied with producing a distinctly Roman past,<sup>25</sup> and

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23 See Weinstock 1971 passim and Beard, North, and Price 1998.140–49 on the bold gestures of Pompey and Caesar. In the first public speech of his career, the *pro Lege Manilia* of 66 B.C.E., the praetor Cicero aggressively presents Pompey as superhuman and, as Fears 1981.799 argues, starts paving the way for imperial religious developments. Cicero uses Romulus to speculate on the honors his rescue of Rome in 63 B.C.E. might justify at *Cat.* 3.2: "quoniam illum qui hanc urbem condidit ad deos immortalis benivolentia famaue sustulimus, esse apud vos posterosque vestros in honore debetis qui eandem hanc urbem conditam amplificatamque servavit" ("Since out of gratitude we have raised the man who founded this city to the immortal gods by our tidings, the man who saved this same city after its foundation and growth should be honored by you and your descendants"). At *Rep.* 1.12, Cicero likewise implies that the acts of his consulship were godlike: "neque enim est ulla res in qua propius ad deorum numen virtus accedat humana, quam civitatis aut condere novas aut conservare iam conditas" ("And there is nothing in which human virtue approaches the divine more closely than in the founding of new states or the preservation of existing ones"). In 59 B.C.E., Cicero even suggests that he has supplanted Romulus (*Flac.* 102): "O Nonae illae Decembres, quae me consule fuistis! quem ego diem vere natalem huius urbis aut certe salutarem appellare possum!" ("What a fifth of December during my consulship, I can certainly call it the day of Rome's salvation if not the day of its birth"). Cf. similar claims in the *Cons. (incer.)*: "O fortunatam natam me consule Romam" ("O fortunate Rome, born in my consulship").

24 When late republicans like Pompey and Caesar accumulated unprecedented powers at Rome, religious innovations helped define their status. Feeney 1998.110 sees religion as "the Romans' most supple and responsive medium for experiment in the face of novel demands." North 1986.258 observes how this process of innovation and accommodation was invigorated by the task of interpreting the unparalleled stature of Caesar and Pompey.

25 Cicero passes over Rome's Trojan background: Cornell 2001.48. Etruscan influence is largely overlooked and Roman institutions are usually represented as uniquely Roman and

a native template for apotheosis could be assembled from the Romulus legends.<sup>26</sup> Since no Roman had been officially deified since Romulus (if ever), Cicero aims to ground contemporary religious speculations in republican tradition by drawing on Ennius's authority.<sup>27</sup>

The Ennian precedent for the divinity of Romulus that Scipio sets out in Book 1 of the *de Re Publica* lends formidable support to the account of Romulus's deification that he offers in Book 2. Remarkably, Scipio starts his narrative of early Rome in Book 2 with Romulus and the foundation of the city. Other known pre-Ciceronian versions, with the possible exception of the first-century historian Licinius Macer, all gave Rome expansive pre-histories (Cornell 2001.48). In the introduction to his account of Romulean Rome, Scipio appeals to a Roman tradition that acknowledges the divinity of outstanding servants of the state (2.4):

concedamus enim famae hominum, praesertim non inveteratae solum sed etiam sapienter a maioribus proditae, bene meriti de rebus communibus ut genere etiam putarentur, non solum ingenio esse divino.

We should allow this much to tradition, because it is not only ancient but wisely passed down by our ancestors that men who have deserved well of the community should be thought to be divine by birth as well as by talent.

Scipio deftly handles the question of Romulus's divine origin here by asserting that such reputation was among the honors won by Romulus for

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superior to those of Greek cities (e.g., 2.2). The sections on Romulus (2.4–20) also insistently portray him in a favorable light especially vis-à-vis Lycurgus: Zetzel 1995.161.

26 Jocelyn 1989.40–41 notes that an apotheosis is inherently malleable material that would have been especially pliant in the case of Romulus, whose lack of a public cult gave poets and historians freedom to reshape the various legends circulating in the late republic. The identification of the deified Romulus with Quirinus is first attested at *Rep.* 2.20 and may itself represent a late-republican invention. Cicero's later hesitation about this identification at *ND* 2.62 and *Off.* 3.41 suggests its shaky standing. Classen 1962.192–99 makes the case for late-republican novelty; see Skutsch 1968.130–37 and Jocelyn 1989.39–46 for discussion of the divergent theories about this relationship.

27 Cicero's strategies resemble those that Habinek 1998a.48 finds at work in Cato's *de Agricultura*, a text that attempts to mask the novelty of recent economic shifts (*latifundia*) by interspersing traditional prayers and formulas "to ascribe what Gellius calls in another context the *color vetustatis*, or appearance of antiquity, to what is in fact a revolutionary enterprise."

his service to Rome. He fashions the *maiores* as reflective pragmatists who propagated this “tradition” as an incentive for work on behalf of the community. Scipio admits that Romulus’s earliest years are obscured by legend (and so dodges the Remus problem), but claims that the greater part of his account is historically grounded (2.4):

quorum copiis cum se ducem praeuisset, ut [et] iam a fabulis ad facta veniamus, oppressisse Longam Albam, validam urbem et potentem temporibus illis, Amuliumque regem interemisse fertur.

He became the leader of their forces and (turning from fable to fact) is said to have defeated Alba Longa, a strong city and powerful for those times, and killed King Amulius.

Scipio then describes Romulus’s political wisdom in selecting the site of Rome with language that forecasts his impending apotheosis (2.10):

qui potuit igitur divinius et utilitates conplecti maritimas Romulus et vitia vitare, quam quod urbem perennis amnis et aequabilis et in mare late influentis posuit in ripa?

Could anything display divine ability more than Romulus’s embrace of the benefits of the coast while avoiding its vices by placing his city on the bank of a large river that flows strongly into the sea throughout the year?

The historicity of Romulus’s apotheosis is established by a rather detailed synchronization of Greek and Roman culture. Scipio puts the sophistication of early Romans on par with their Greek contemporaries, who were already well aware of the distinctions between myth and history (2.18–19). He argues that Romulean Romans, long disabused of any primitive naïveté, embraced the newly made god Quirinus because of Romulus’s outstanding *virtus* (2.17):<sup>28</sup>

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28 As Zetzel 1995.174–75 duly notes: “The acceptance of Romulus’ deification indicates a remarkable level of *virtus* on his part rather than an equivalent level of credulity on that of the Romans.” This is also made clear at 2.20.

ac Romulus cum septem et triginta regnavisset annos, et haec egregia duo firmamenta rei publicae peperisset, auspicia et senatum, tantum est consecutus, ut cum subito sole obscurato non conparuisset, deorum in numero conlocatus putaretur; quam opinionem nemo umquam mortalis adsequi potuit sine eximia virtutis gloria.

When Romulus had ruled for thirty-seven years and had created these two excellent foundations for the commonwealth, the auspices and the senate, he was so successful that when he did not reappear after a sudden darkening of the sun, he was thought to have become a god; no mortal could ever have achieved that without an extraordinary reputation for virtue.

Scipio again cites the eclipse at Romulus's apotheosis already mentioned in Book 1 (1.25). And as Scipio had presented an Ennius in Book 1 who was a source of both Roman religious and Greek scientific lore, so here he suggests that acceptance of this apotheosis is perfectly compatible with an educated, skeptical temperament (2.18):

atque hoc eo magis est in Romulo admirandum, quod ceteri qui dii ex hominibus facti esse dicuntur, minus eruditis hominum saeculis fuerunt, ut fingendi proclivis esset ratio, cum imperiti facile ad credendum inpellerentur, Romuli autem aetatem minus his sescentis annis iam inveteratis litteris atque doctrinis omnique illo antiquo ex inculta hominum vita errore sublato fuisse cernimus.

In the case of Romulus that is even more remarkable: all other men who are said to have become gods lived in less sophisticated periods of human history, when such a fiction might be more acceptable, given that the uneducated are more gullible. But Romulus lived less than six hundred years ago at a time when literacy and learning were well established and all the primeval ignorance of men's primitive existence had been eliminated.

Scipio puts the earlier, dubious deifications accepted by an overly credulous populace at further remove from Romulus's by labeling these deifications as *fabulae* (2.19) while pointedly excluding his account of Romulus's later life from this category (2.4: "a fabulis ad facta veniamus"). Ennius's early Romans, discussed by Scipio at 1.64, lived in a relatively advanced society. Their mourning for Romulus becomes all the more powerful and their invocation of him as a god (in Scipio's reading) becomes even more poignant in light of their sophistication. This presentation of early Rome narrows the gap between archaic and late-republican Romans, for it situates both Cicero's original audience and Romulean Romans in a post-primitive stage of Roman history.

Some readers are bound to find Scipio's reconstruction of archaic Rome implausible. His fellow interlocutor Laelius, too, challenges the accuracy of Scipio's explanation of Rome's development.<sup>29</sup> Note that Laelius, however, does not dispute the enlightened mindset that Scipio claims for archaic Romans, nor does he express any doubts about the deification of Romulus.

In the ensuing discussion of Numa, Cicero offers a demonstration of Scipio's rationalizing approach to archaic history. Cicero has Scipio debunk the popular legend that Numa was a Pythagorean and insist on setting the chronology straight (2.28–29).<sup>30</sup> Here, and presumably elsewhere in the *de Re Publica*, Scipio applies a methodological rigor to dismiss popular misconceptions. As T. J. Cornell observes (2001.46), Scipio gives a version of early Roman history that is "purged of its romantic, supernatural and salacious elements." It is also important to keep in mind that the late-republican historical consciousness that informed this rendering of archaic Rome was especially prone to project the present into the past.<sup>31</sup>

29 2.22: "tu mihi videris utrumque facturus: es enim ita ingressus ut quae ipse reperias, tribuere aliis malis quam, ut facit apud Platonem Socrates, ipse fingere, et illa de urbis situ revoces ad rationem quae a Romulo casu aut necessitate facta sunt" ("You seem to me to be doing both: from the outset, you have preferred to attribute your own discoveries to others rather than inventing it all yourself in the manner of Plato's Socrates; and you ascribe to Romulus's deliberate planning all the features of the site of the city that were actually the result of chance or necessity").

30 Rawson 1991.63 rightly points out that Scipio's skeptical stance also meshes with the *Rep.*'s presentation of a purified native culture.

31 See Cornell 1986b.73–75 for illuminating observations on the late-republican use of the archaic period as a medium for self-definition. Recent archeological work suggests that Scipio's reconstruction might not be so far-fetched after all: Wiseman 1989.132 argues

The discussions of Romulus's immortality in Book 2 reverberate in Scipio's dream at the close of the *de Re Publica*. Scipio introduces his dream by likening it to Ennius's vision of Homer. Here again his narrative strategy is evident: Scipio employs Ennius to place his claims within a venerable framework (6.10). In this instance, Scipio's comparison is particularly apt, since both his and Ennius's dream concern the soul and the afterlife (Zetzel 1998.234). In the dream, Africanus tells the younger Scipio that immortality awaits magistrates and generals dedicated to the Roman cause (6.13):

sed quo sis, Africane, alacrior ad tutandam rem publicam,  
sic habeto: omnibus qui patriam conservaverint, adiuverint,  
auxerint, certum esse in caelo definitum locum, ubi beati  
aevo sempiterno fruantur.

But so that you may be all the more eager, Africanus, to protect the commonwealth, know this: for all those who have saved, aided, or increased the fatherland there is a specific place set aside in the sky where they may enjoy eternity in blessedness.<sup>32</sup>

Although Africanus focuses on the immortality of the soul in the *Somnium*, he does not fail to mention (and this is the third time) the eclipse during which Romulus rose to the heavens, the eclipse so precisely dated

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that archaic Romans were "in more or less contact with people whose minds were full of Homer and Hesiod."

- 32 Although Africanus discusses the immortality of the soul using Plato in the *Somnium* (see Zetzel 1995.14–15, 223–53 on specific derivations and departures from Plato and other Greek sources), Gale 1994.77 thinks Africanus's lines here at 6.13 are the most notable allusion to Euhemerism in Cicero's texts. The republican heroes that Cicero claims to be "in deorum immortalium coetu ac numero" at *Sest.* 143, those "qui hanc tantam rem publicam suis consiliis aut laboribus aut auxerint aut defenderint aut servarint" ("those who have enlarged, defended, or saved this great commonwealth by their counsels or labors") fit Africanus's criteria for immortality ("qui patriam conservaverint, adiuverint, auxerint") quite well. Pompey and Cicero also seem to be heading in the right direction at *Cat.* 3.26: "unoque tempore in hac re publica duos civis exstisise quorum alter finis vestri imperi non terrae sed caeli regionibus terminaret, alter huius imperi domicilium sedisque servaret" ("At one time in this commonwealth two men have arisen, one has set the boundaries of your empire not at the limits of the earth but of heaven, the other has saved the home and seat of this empire").

in Book 1 by using the *Annales* and the *Annales Maximi* (6.24): “namque ut olim deficere sol hominibus extinguique visus est, cum Romuli animus haec ipsa in templa penetravit,” “for just as the Sun once seemed to men to fail and be extinguished at the time that the soul of Romulus entered this precinct . . .”<sup>33</sup> Africanus sets the beginning of the “great year” (when all eight celestial spheres return to their original positions)<sup>34</sup> on this date and puts Roman and cosmic affairs in harmony with the apotheosis of Rome’s first ruler (Zetzel 1995.247).

In Cicero’s reconstruction of Rome’s past, Romulus was not the only one who enjoyed divine status. At some point in the *de Re Publica*, Cicero also seems to have specifically addressed the question of Africanus’s own apotheosis. Ennius’s epigram that proposes Africanus’s skyward ascent is pressed into service to voice his claims to divinity (incer. 6 = Ennius *varia* 23–24 Vahlen):

Si fas endo plagas caelestum ascendere cuiquam est,  
Mi soli caeli maxima porta patet.

If it is right for anyone to ascend into the tracts of the  
gods,  
For me alone the greatest gate of heaven stands open.<sup>35</sup>

The *de Re Publica* passage seems to contain a response to Scipio’s citation of the Ennian verse that openly places Scipio on Hercules’ path (incer. 6): “est vero, Africane; nam et Herculi eadem ista porta patuit,” “True enough, Africanus; that same gate stood open for Hercules.” In a passage from the *pro*

33 The use of *templum* here and at 6.15, 6.17 to mean a region in the sky, along with the poetic *Grai* at 6.16, give the *Somnium* an archaic shading that might recall the language of Ennius: Zetzel 1998.231.

34 Cicero calculates the *magnus annus* as every 12,954 solar years at *Hort.* frag. 35 Müller, Zetzel 1995.247.

35 Gale 1994.77 thinks that these lines “tend to confirm” that Ennius was not only a translator but also a follower of Euhemerus. Courtney 1999.37 notes that Ennius’s esteem for the elder Scipio may have originally piqued his interest in Euhemerus’s *Sacred History* and cites this epigram in support of his claim. Ennius’s epigram, along with his *Scipio*, a poem about his friend’s African campaigns, may have helped create Scipio’s exceptional relationship with the divine. For a discussion of the divine associations surrounding Scipio Africanus, see Weinstock 1971.294–95 and Beard, North, and Price 1998.84–86. See Gruen 1990.108–23 on Ennius’s connections with Scipio and other powerful contemporaries.



*Sestio*, a speech composed just a few years prior to the *de Re Publica*, Cicero suggests that Africanus did, in some sense, achieve immortality (143):<sup>36</sup>

qua re imitemur nostros Brutos, Camillos, Ahalas, Decios, Curios, Fabricios, Maximos, Scipiones, Lentulos, Aemilios, innumerabiles alios qui hanc rem publicam stabiliverunt. quos equidem in deorum immortalium coetu ac numero repono.

Let us therefore imitate men like our Bruti, Camilli, Ahalae, Decii, Curii, Fabricii, Maximi, Scipiones, Lentuli, Aemilii, and countless others, who firmly established this commonwealth, whom, indeed, I consider to be among the company and number of the immortal gods.

Cicero goes on to justify his exaltation of these republican statesmen by arguing that their deeds also merit the rewards won by Hercules (143).

The inclusion of apotheosis in the religious laws that the character “Marcus” prescribes for an ideal Roman republic in the *de Legibus* lends support to our interpretation of his (or better, Scipio’s) account of Rome’s early history and Romulus’s apotheosis in its companion piece, the *de Re Publica*. Marcus includes worship of Romulus and other deified heroes in his religious codes (2.19): “divos et eos, qui caelestes semper habiti, colunto et ollos, quos endo caelo merita locaverunt, Herculem, Liberum, Aesculapium, Castorem, Pollucem, Quirinum,” “Let them worship both those who have always been considered gods of heaven and those whose deeds have placed them in heaven: Hercules, Liber, Aesculapius, Castor, Pollux, Quirinus.” His wording of this provision, as noted by P. Boyancé (1955b.64 n. 2), is

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36 Cf. *Arch.* 16: “ex hoc esse hunc numero, quem patres nostri viderunt, divinum hominem, Africanum,” “Our fathers saw one of this sort, the divine man Africanus” [the younger Africanus] and *Sen.* 84, where Cato envisions joining a *divinum animorum concilium* that includes the elder Africanus. We, of course, do not know what exactly Cicero has in mind when he says that a Scipio is “among the gods” or that he is “divine,” but we must avoid dismissive anachronistic interpretations. Nock 1972.145 warns against the application of rigid modern dichotomies that place an impermeable divide between humans and gods. So, too, Beard, North, and Price 1998.141. Nock also points out that ancient metaphoric language associating humans and gods is not simply analogous to our own (1972.235): “The personalities of the divine world and the language of religion did in antiquity constitute a storehouse of metaphor on which men drew continually: and they not merely drew, as we do; but they allowed such ἔπεα πτερόεντα to crystallize.”

reminiscent of Ennius's "si fas endo plagas caelestum ascendere cuiquam est." He also leaves the door open for future deifications (2.22): "bonos leto datos divos habento," "Let them hold good men who have died to be gods." As Marcus himself points out in the preface to his laws, his faux archaic language enhances the *auctoritas* of his religious proposals (2.18).

A similar aura of antiquity validates the ideas set forth in the *de Re Publica*. Much of the discussion comes from Scipio, a towering cultural and military figure from the previous century. Scipio, in turn, anchors his arguments deeper in the past by appeal to Cato (1.27, 2.1–3), the Twelve Tables (2.54), and the *Annales Maximi* (1.25). The only poet Scipio directly quotes in what survives of the *de Re Publica* is Ennius. Scipio underpins the cultural sovereignty of Ennius's *Annales* in the *de Re Publica* by placing the poem alongside the *Annales Maximi* (1.25). The narrator Cicero follows suit by likening a line from the *Annales* to an oracular utterance (5.1). This comparison is perhaps appropriate, since oracles were often used to license religious innovations at Rome in turbulent times.

Cicero had put the possibility of immortality for worthy Romans on the agenda in 63 B.C.E. at *de Lege Agraria* 2.95 and *pro Rabirio Perduellionis Reo* 29–30. His use of the *de Re Publica* for a more wide-ranging investigation of this prospect shows its abiding priority. When Cicero has Laelius extol Scipio at 1.71 as the Roman ideally qualified to explain ancestral institutions and advance provisions for posterity, he signals that the presentation of Rome's past in the *de Re Publica* is also a meditation on its future. As late-republican dynasts accumulated unprecedented powers and honors at Rome, Cicero may have explored the posthumous divinization of Roman statesmen in the *de Re Publica* as a possible means to steer divine ambitions towards service to Rome's disintegrating republican institutions.<sup>37</sup>

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37 Habinek 1998a.13 sees the "manufacture of a past that would authorize arrangements in its [the traditional aristocracy's] present interest" as a "chief social function of Ciceronian 'philosophy.'" Cicero's legitimization of apotheosis at this point in the *Rep.* could, indeed, give historical sanction to the divine aspirations of late-republican elites, though the traditional aristocracy was probably of several minds about these emerging religious practices. The question remains: did Cicero later (e.g., *Phil.* 1.13) cease to think that such innovations were in the aristocracy's "present interest"? Either way, Varro stepped in with his *de Gente Populi Romani* in 43 B.C.E. Varro's work, according to Taylor 1934.225, helps authorize Caesar's deification: "He explained the divinity accorded to the kings by a rationalizing account which showed that the kings had been deified because of services to their people. Although we know of no reference to Julius Caesar in the work, it would have been easy on the basis of the material cited by Varro to justify Caesar's divinity because of his services to the Roman state."

Cicero turns to Ennius to help make his case. The *Annales* underwrite Cicero's rendering of Romulus's apotheosis and naturalize the prospect of divine rewards for Roman statesmen by providing a familiar frame of reference for Cicero's elite audience. Ennian verses, unfortunately unmoored from their original context, also support the divinity of the post-Romulean hero Africanus. By enlisting Ennius's help in the *de Re Publica*, Cicero is able to "put archaism and modernizing hand in hand."<sup>38</sup> As the man who composed the maxim "moribus antiquis res stat Romana virisque" and also boldly presented their Jupiter to Romans as a deified hero in his *Euhemerus*,<sup>39</sup> Ennius was an especially suitable heuristic tool for late republicans trying to reconcile the demands of tradition and innovation.

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38 I borrow North's (1986.254) vivid phrase. North is discussing how Augustus claims to be restoring old religious customs as he introduces new ones. Augustus's wrapping of innovation in the mantle of tradition does not seem to me to differ greatly in kind from the techniques I ascribe to Cicero.

39 *Varia* 140–41 Vahlen. Courtney 1999.36 suggests that an appeal to an inscription in *antiquis litteris Graecis* in the section on Jupiter's deification is itself "a bogus attempt to shore up credibility."