

to relying on his reasonable account. However, the reason why one cannot have God's approval is related to the specific issue which Timaeus is dealing with here. Indeed, the generation of mortal living beings is not produced directly by the Demiurge but by the lower Gods, who are called to imitate the Demiurge's reasoning and action, though dealing with much more unstable objects (41a7–43a6). In other words, the Demiurge cannot give his confirmation here since he is not the divinity who produced human beings<sup>15</sup>—and, more generally, since the objects at stake (that is, individual living beings) have a lower ontological status than the world itself. This, though, does not apply to the generation of the world, which is directly accomplished by the Demiurge, whose reasoning has been clearly and fully unravelled at 30c–31b: briefly, God has already confirmed the metaphysical reasons why there is just one perfect world.<sup>16</sup>

Hence text A is not only (at least) as well attested as text F philologically and more suitable syntactically but also much more effective philosophically. Keeping text A generates a significant philosophical pay-off: not only does Timaeus' account of the uniqueness of the world become much more consistent, but it also confirms that his reasonable account (and, hence, Plato's cosmology) in any case relies on strong metaphysical premisses, which limit the instability of our grasp on the sensible world as far as possible and make Timaeus' account stronger than (or at least not inferior to) any other reasonable account (29c7–d3).

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## A NOTE ON THE ASCRIPTION OF ENNIUS, *ANNALES* 5 SKUTSCH

### ABSTRACT

*This note adduces corroborating evidence for Skutsch's ascription of Enn. Ann. 5 to a description of the water cycle in the speech of Homer in the proem to the Annales. Despite the flawed argumentation in Skutsch's presentation and despite a general reluctance among scholars to endorse his ascription, this note argues that his solution should remain part of the scholarly discussion, not least because there are aspects of Skutsch's argument that remain uncontested and because Lucretius seems to endorse this location of the fragment in the original Annales.*

**Keywords:** Ennius; Lucretius; allusion; metempsychosis; water cycle

Among the more puzzling fragments that remain from Book 1 of Ennius' *Annales* is one that describes the ebbing and flowing of water in the natural world: *desunt riuos camposque*

<sup>15</sup> Even assuming that the Demiurge keeps 'monitoring' the lower gods' activity, he is no longer directly involved in the generation of mortal living beings (41a7–d3, 42e5–6).

<sup>16</sup>  $\mu\eta\nu\upsilon\epsilon\iota$  often refers to someone declaring something *expressly*, but it is not necessary to take this aspect literally. If Timaeus' reasonable account aims to approximate to the Demiurge's reasoning (page 889 above), what Timaeus has said at 30c–31b reproduces the argument which the Demiurge *would give* in favour of the uniqueness of the world, if he were asked to point it out expressly.

*remanant* (*Ann.* 5 Skutsch). In one of his most novel suggestions, Otto Skutsch argued that this fragment describes the water cycle and that it belongs to Homer's speech in the Dream that inaugurates the *Annales*. As a result of this ascription, Skutsch argues that Homer's speech was much closer to Lucretius' idea of *rerum natura* (Lucr. 1.126) than had been assumed: according to Skutsch's reconstruction, Ennius' Homer discussed not only metempsychosis but also the conservation of matter. Almost no one has endorsed this idea.<sup>1</sup> In this note, I want to lend support to Skutsch's interpretation by adducing some corroborating, if circumstantial, evidence. Even if Skutsch's own arguments are not in themselves compelling, this additional evidence should at least allow his theory to remain part of the discussion.

The basic facts are these: the fragment is definitively assigned to *Annales* Book 1 by Festus (pages 354 and 356 Lindsay), and Skutsch's restoration of this fragment to Homer's speech relies on its connection with Lucretius' description of the water cycle. Skutsch argues that Lucretius clearly alludes to this fragment:<sup>2</sup>

desunt riuos camposque **remanant** (*Ann.* 5 Skutsch)

(the waters) subside **and seep back** into the rivers and the fields

percolatur enim uirus retro**que remanat**  
materies umoris et ad caput amnibus omnis  
conuenit. inde super terras fluit agmine dulci (Lucr. 5.269–71)

For the brine is sifted through **and** the substance of the moisture **seeps back**,  
and it all flows back together at the fountainhead of rivers.  
Thence it flows over the lands with a salt-free current.

Some difficulties arise at this point, however, owing to the source that preserves this fragment. Both the lemma (Festus: *remanant*; Paulus: *remant*) and its gloss (respectively: *repliant*, variously corrected to *repliant* or *repetunt*; or *repetant*) vary in the texts of their sources. And the presence of *desunt* further emphasizes our ignorance of context here. Skutsch is correct, however, to accept Festus' *remanant* over Paulus' *remant*, which neither scans nor makes sense. The glosses *repliant* (Festus) and *repetant* (Paulus) must be rejected, as a gloss cannot be in the subjunctive if the lemma is in the indicative. We are left, therefore, with an Ennian *remanant* glossed as either *repliant* (*corr.* Skutsch) or *repetunt* (*corr.* Lindsay).

If we restore Skutsch's line ending *-que remanant*, questions still remain regarding the subject of this corrupt fragment. Before Skutsch's edition, it was almost universally agreed that this fragment described the flooding of the Tiber valley at the exposure of Romulus and Remus; Flores argues for returning *Ann.* 5 Skutsch to the place it traditionally has been thought to occupy.<sup>3</sup> Skutsch argues that we have to reject this

<sup>1</sup> In his most recent edition of the *Annales*, for example (E. Flores, P. Esposito et al., *Quinto Ennio, Annali Vol. II: Libri I–VIII. Commentari* [Naples, 2002], 49), Flores rejected Skutsch's conjecture; cf. the caution expressed at J. Elliott, *Ennius and the Architecture of the Annales* (Cambridge, 2013), 149 n. 40 and at S.M. Goldberg and G. Manuwald, *Fragmentary Republican Latin. I: Ennius* (Cambridge, Mass. and London, 2018), 118–19.

<sup>2</sup> O. Skutsch, *The Annals of Q. Ennius* (Oxford, 1985), 158–9, who, as far as I know, was the first to connect this fragment with Lucretius' water cycle.

<sup>3</sup> J. Vahlen, *Ennianae poesis reliquiae* (Leipzig, 1903) alone thought that this fragment described cattle leaving their barns and returning to streams and fields. See below for further discussion of the traditional ascription of this fragment. Most recently, both Flores (n. 1) in his edition of the *Annales* and Elliott (n. 1) in her extensive study of the poem's architecture have rejected Skutsch's placement.

interpretation on the grounds that, after the Tiber floods, the waters run into fields but not into streams. In questioning Skutsch's ascription, neither Flores nor Elliott addresses this argument. Flores makes no positive contribution to the discussion, merely rejecting Skutsch's interpretation out of hand as one of his 'more incredible' conjectures. Elliott, on the other hand, refutes Skutsch more directly (though not with reference to the topography around the Tiber), arguing that, in privileging the Lucretian characterization of Homer's speech as *rerum natura* in his ascription of *Ann.* 5, Skutsch puts 'the Lucretian cart before the horse of what the fragmentary evidence on its own strengths allows us to establish'.<sup>4</sup> Obviously, Elliott is correct about the flaws in Skutsch's approach. At the same time, we have no positive evidence to connect this fragment with the exposure of the twins, and, in fact, Skutsch's repudiation of this traditional ascription has never been countered on its own terms. The traditional ascription thus rests on equally shaky ground as Skutsch's ascription of the fragment to Homer's speech, if not more so.

Undoubtedly, when Skutsch reads the Lucretian context of this allusion back into the source material in *Ann.* 5, he makes a circular argument. While we should not insist that Skutsch's ascription is right (for, *pace* Skutsch, our current evidence for the *Annales* is not definitive on this point), there *is* further evidence that corroborates the ascription of this fragment that Skutsch endorses. To assign the passage to Homer's philosophical discourse, Skutsch invokes Lucretius' two descriptions of the water cycle (Lucr. 5.269 and 6.635) and emphasizes that these are, together with the Ennian fragment, the only three loci where we find the line ending *-que remanant* in all of Latin literature. On the face of it, such verbal correspondence is powerful evidence that Lucretius was responding to Ennius' fragment and must be factored into any consideration of this issue. We can add the following evidence to bolster Skutsch's arguments:

(1) Lucretius alludes to Ennius throughout this passage on the water cycle: *retroque remanant*, 5.269 (cf. *camposque remanant*, *Ann.* 5 Skutsch); *fluit agmine dulci*, 5.271 (cf. *leni fluit agmine flumen*, *Ann.* 163 Skutsch); *uerrentes aequora*, 5.266 (cf. *uerunt ... mare*, *Ann.* 377 Skutsch); *semper abundare*, 5.262 (cf. *semper abundantes*, *Ann.* 395 Skutsch); and *tollitur in*, 5.265 = *tollitur in*, *Ann.* 428 Skutsch.<sup>5</sup>

(2) In Lucretius we get the line ending *retroque remanant* and, later, *qua uia secta semel liquido pede detulit undas* (5.269 and 5.272), both of which emphasize the movement backwards to an original position contained in both of the two potential glosses on Ennius' *remanant*: *replent* and *repetunt*, which further corroborates the inference that Lucretius is working with this Ennian fragment closely in his own description of the water cycle.

(3) Even more suggestively, Lucretius connects the water cycle passage with its allusion to *Ann.* 5 Skutsch back to his own account of Ennius' Dream of Homer (*latices manare perennis*, Lucr. 5.262; *retroque remanant*, Lucr. 5.269; *perenni fronde coronam*, Lucr. 1.118). The adjective *perennis* here functions as a reflexive annotation of the many allusions to *Ennius perennis* (a pun first attested precisely in Lucretius' account of Ennius' Dream) found in Lucretius' description of the water cycle. The verbal echoes between Lucretius' version of Homer's Speech and his description of the water cycle are even more direct if we accept Politian's emendation at 1.122: *quo neque permanent*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Elliott (n. 1), 149.

<sup>5</sup> Fuller discussion of these allusions at J.S. Nethercut, *Ennius Noster: Lucretius and the Annales* (Oxford, 2021), 135–9.

<sup>6</sup> Suggestive here is the use of the verb *manare* at Manilius 2.51 in the context of a passage on literary tradition that begins with Homer and seems specifically to recall Lucretian poetology

(4) When Lucretius characterizes Homer's speech in the *Annales*-proem as dealing with *rerum natura* (Lucr. 1.126), he may be, and in fact almost certainly is, using the phrase tendentiously and for his own purposes: no other ancient source suggests that the philosophical discourse of Ennius' Homer involved anything other than the doctrine of metempsychosis.<sup>7</sup> The extent of distortion in representing Ennius' Homer as a natural philosopher, however, remains unclear. Physical allegory was among the more common ways of interpreting Homer, long before Ennius wrote; and while it is perfectly possible that Lucretius exaggerates the extent to which Ennius explicitly represented Homer as a natural philosopher, there is nothing implausible in the idea that he did so.<sup>8</sup> While Homer's main philosophical point in the *Annales*-proem had to do with the metaphysical topic of the transmigration of souls, there is nothing implausible in his having illustrated the principle by analogy with a purely physical topic, such as the water cycle.

So (5) if Skutsch is correct in placing his fragment 5 in the context of Homer's speech in the *Annales*, it would make sense (though Skutsch does not make this argument) if the water cycle were introduced primarily as an illustration of the transmigration of souls. After all, the main point of Homer's discourse was that the soul that had once inhabited Homer's own body now resides in the body of Ennius.<sup>9</sup> Therefore, under Skutsch's ascription, Ennius will have introduced the water cycle, according to which water takes different forms as it moves from place to place as river, swamp, flood, rain, and so forth, as an illustration of how a given soul moves between different bodies. This interpretation remains the most likely consequence of Skutsch's identification of the fragment as part of Homer's philosophical discourse in Ennius' dream.<sup>10</sup>

Obviously we cannot be certain about this issue, and the fact that there are some technical flaws in Skutsch's argument is perhaps the main reason for us to remain sceptical of his ascription. However, given that (a) the positive arguments Skutsch makes regarding the dynamics of Tiber-flooding have not been countered and (b) Lucretius seems to associate the water cycle with Ennius' Dream of Homer, I suggest that Skutsch's interpretation should remain very much under consideration, even if, in the absence of further evidence, we cannot be certain that he is right.

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(Manilius 2.49–52 = Lucr. 1.924–30). In other words, Manilius may offer another instance of a poet using Ennius to discuss the water cycle in a context rich in literary historical implications.

<sup>7</sup> Elliott (n. 1), 149–51.

<sup>8</sup> F. Buffière, *Les mythes d'Homère et la pensée grécque* (Paris, 1956); M. Murrin, *The Allegorical Epic: Essays in its Rise and Decline* (Chicago, 1980); R. Lamberton, *Homer the Theologian. Neoplatonist Allegorical Reading and the Growth of the Epic Tradition* (Berkeley, 1986); P. Hardie, *Virgil's Aeneid: Cosmos and Imperium* (Oxford, 1986); D. Feeney, *The Gods in Epic. Poets and Critics of the Classical Tradition* (Oxford, 1991), 5–33; and J. Farrell, *Vergil's Georgics and the Traditions of Ancient Epic: The Art of Allusion in Literary History* (Oxford, 1991) and id., 'Philosophy in Vergil', in M. Garani and D. Konstan (edd.), *The Philosophizing Muse: The Influence of Greek Philosophy on Roman Poetry* (Cambridge, 2014), 61–89, especially 78–83.

<sup>9</sup> Skutsch (n. 2), 147–53 cites all of the testimonia which indicate that metempsychosis was the fundamental doctrine introduced in Homer's discourse.

<sup>10</sup> A further connection between *Ann.* 5 Skutsch and the wider context of metempsychosis in Ennius' Dream is the fact that ancient etymologists frequently connected the *Manes* with the verb *manare*. For example, we find at Festus page 114 Lindsay *manes deos deasque ... ab inferis ad superos emanant* and at Paul. Fest. page 115 Lindsay we read *manalem lapidem ... ostium Orci per quod animae inferorum ad superos manarent*.