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The Annals of Quintus Ennius and the Italic Tradition

Jay Fisher

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Quintus Ennius, often considered the father of Roman poetry, is best remembered for his epic poem, the *Annals*, a history of Rome from Aeneas until his own lifetime. Ennius represents an important bridge between Homer's works in Greek and Vergil's *Aeneid*. Jay Fisher argues that Ennius does not simply translate Homeric models into Latin, but blends Greek poetic models with Italic diction to produce a poetic hybrid. Fisher's investigation uncovers a poem that blends foreign and familiar cultural elements in order to generate layers of meaning for his Roman audience.

Fisher combines modern linguistic methodologies with traditional philology to uncover the influence of the language of Roman ritual, kinship, and military culture on the *Annals*. Moreover, because these customs are themselves hybrids of earlier Roman, Etruscan, and Greek cultural practices, not to mention the customs of speakers of lesser-known languages such as Oscan and Umbrian, the echoes of cultural interactions generate layers of meaning for Ennius, his ancient audience, and the modern readers of the fragments of the *Annals*.

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