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ENNIUS'S COLLECTION *SATURA(E)*¹

In her text the author presents Quintus Ennius as an experimenting writer with many talents. She leaves aside his greatest and best known texts and focuses at opera minora, especially Ennius's collection known as Saturae. The author summarises actual findings about this work and on their basis speculates if it is possible to think about its inclusion into the genre of satire. The paper involves also several fragments of this piece, which have been preserved to our times.

Keywords: Q. Ennius, Roman Verse Satire, literal experiment, genre classification.

Only fragments have been preserved from the extensive writings of Quintus Ennius.² Except the national epic, which made Ennius a renowned poet, he wrote also a lot of other pieces from various genres.³ This differed him from the older authors who used to focus on one or two fields only.

At the turn of the 3rd and 2nd century B.C. the literature in Rome was not diverse much, mostly drama and epic flourished. There were developed especially the areas, which supported the Roman politics, such as rhetoric and historiography. Ennius came to this environment from the South, which was under a strong Greek influence. From his experimenting with different genres we can assume, he wanted to pass to the Romans as many new literal

¹ This paper was written under the auspices of the *Centre for Interdisciplinary Research into Ancient Languages and Early Stages of Modern Languages* (research program MSM 0021622435) at Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic.

² The newest findings on Ennius and his work – see W. SUERBAUM (2003).

³ Among them there are comedies, tragedies, probably the prosaic text *Euhemerus*, poem *Scipio* celebrating the famous victor from the battle of Zama, the poem *He-duphagetica*, epigrams, the text *Sota*, grammatical texts, philosophical texts *Epicharmus* and *Protrepicus* and of course the collection *Satura(e)*.

forms as possible. Ennius's writings – except *Annales*, comedies and tragedies – are called *opera minora*.

In my paper I would like to focus on one of these less known pieces, which is also rather different from all the others, that is Ennius's collection *Satura(e)*.⁴

Since only fragments have survived until now (ca 31 verses are known from the Ennius's collection⁵), our research depends mostly on assumptions. Based on the antique citations⁶ we can claim that the collection was called *Satura* or *Saturae*. There are still disputes over the singular or plural of the title.⁷ Gellius was the first one to use plural in his citation, but Quintilian refers to Ennius with the phrase *in satura*. Based on Waszink's research we can assume that the name of the collection may have been chosen by Ennius himself, who used singular.⁸ Another confirmation of this hypothesis may come from Diomedes,⁹ who claimed Pacuvius to be an author of similar poem medleys like those written by his uncle. Ennius was probably the model, which inspired him.

The title, which is certainly not of a Greek origin, is probably an overall description for a diverse collection, a medley. This suggests that Ennius viewed his *Satura* differently than the dramas published under Greek titles or other *opera minora*, which often refer to Hellenic authors or their opuses.¹⁰ Ennius's collection consisted of four books.¹¹ But this may be a later arrangement. Since there is evidence that Ennius used to divide his writings

4 The text of fragments of Ennius' work *Saturae* see KRENKEL (1970), VAHLEN (1928), WARMINGTON (1967).

5 The enclosed English fragments are numbered and quoted according to Warmington's edition (abbreviation W).

6 QUINT. *inst.* IX, 2, 36: *in satura*; GELL. 2, 29, 20: *in satiris* and 6, 9, 2 and 18, 2, 7: *in satiris*; PORPH. *Hor. comm. ad sat.* I, 10, 46: *Ennius, qui quattuor libros saturarum reliquit*; SERV. *aen.* 12, 121: *Ennius saturarum*; NON. 1.33; 1.66; 2.139; 2.147; 7.470; 7.474; 11.510: *Ennius satyrarum*.

7 WASZINK (1971: 101–105).

8 J. H. Waszink believes it was singular and that Ennius used the name *Satura* as a collective term for several poems, whereas the division into four books is of a later origin. This is why late citations use the term *in satiris*, because each book had the title *satura*, WASZINK (1971: 102 and 105).

9 DIOM. III, GL I, 485: *Et olim carmen quod ex variis poematibus constabat satira vocabatur; quale scripserunt Pacuvius et Ennius*.

10 SCHOLZ (1986: 39–40).

11 Donatus's citation from the sixth book is probably corrupted, GRATWICK (1982: 158).

(at least the *Annales*) into sections himself,¹² it is possible, that it was Ennius himself, who divided this work into four books. The views, that the poem *Scipio* was part of the *Satura* collection, or the belief, that *Satura* was an umbrella term for all his *opera minora*, have already been disproved.¹³ The title may have denoted only a collection of various poems, which could not be classified into any specific genres, but which Ennius wanted to publish anyway. To inform the readers, what to expect from the collection, Ennius labelled it as a diverse mixture.¹⁴ This collection was probably published only in a later period of Ennius's life. Maybe it was his way to preserve the poems he had created over years in various circumstances.¹⁵

Ennius collection was based upon variability – *varietas*. The author combined there various metres and themes. Since only little has been preserved, we cannot – with one exception – say what the individual poems were about. But it is probable that the individual books contained many various poems written in different metres.¹⁶

The only poem, the contents of which we know almost the whole, is the fable about a crested lark,¹⁷ the prosaic version of which is known from Gellius. Crested lark has little younglings, who cannot fly yet. They overhear a farmer saying to his son, that the field must be harvested. The first day the son goes to ask the neighbours for help, but they don't come. The next day he asks the relatives, but they do not come either. The third day he decides to do the work on his own. Only now the crested lark decides to move his younglings to a different location. The moral is: "Do not ask your friends to do, what you can do yourself".

12 SCHOLZ (1986: 35). However than the title of all the books together should logically be *Saturae*.

Ennius was the first writer, who divided his text into books, SUERBAUM (2011).

13 The independence of the individual works is accepted, PRINZEN (1998: 11).

14 Already the ancient scholars were uncertain about the origin of the word *satura*. Nowadays the researchers mostly believe, that the term *satura* was originally related to the term *lanx*. The collocation *satura lanx* denoted a sacrifice bowl.

15 SCHOLZ (1986: 40).

16 The poems are written mostly in iambo-trochaic metres and diction of comedy, but some are in hexameters and perhaps in Sotadeans, GRATWICK (1982: 158).

17 Details in MÜLLER (1999: 526–557). The whole fable in German is available in MADER (1951: 161–162).

The poems are very diverse both in their form and their content. There are: a fable,¹⁸ moral critique,¹⁹ proverb,²⁰ exhortation,²¹ personal expression,²² puns revealing Ennius's favourite alliteration,²³ noble expressions.²⁴ Some scholars speculate that *Satura* was a source of witty and personal details about Ennius's life.²⁵ A poem from the collection might have different forms, such as an epigram or a letter and it may have had a different length.²⁶

When hearing about *satura*, we notice similarity to the term satire. So it seems natural to categorise Ennius's medley of texts to the genre of satire.²⁷ However labelling of Ennius's writing to the genre system is neither easy nor unambiguous.²⁸ All the genres used by the Romans (except satire) can

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- 18 Except the fable about crested lark, Ennius's fragments contain allusions, which might also be a part of a fable, e.g. the verse about the fisher playing the flute (Herodotus). C. W. Müller even thinks, that using fable as a means of popular education Ennius not only anticipated the great possibilities of Lucilius and Horace satire, but he also adapted the popular Greek iambic elements for Roman *satura* (Archilochos, Semonides), which were revived by the Hellenic poets (Callimachus, Phoenix of Colophon), MÜLLER (1999: 528).
- 19 *Malo hercle magno suo convivat sine modo!* (Let him be one of the guzzlers without limit, and, by god, may he be utterly damned for it! W 1)
- 20 *Quaerunt in scirpo soliti quod dicere nodum.* (As the common saying goes, they are seeking a knot in a bulrush. W 27)
- 21 *Nam is non bene vult tibi qui falso criminat apud te.* (For no well-wisher of yours is he who spreads slanders in your family. W 8–9)
- 22 *Numquam poetor nisi si podager.* (I never indulge in poetics unless I am down with rheumatics. W 21)
- 23 *Nam qui lepide postulat alterum frustrari, quem frustratur frustra eum dicit frustra esse; nam qui esse frustrari quem frustra sentit, qui frustratur frustra esse si non ille est frustra.* (For he who wants to be smart and trick his fellow, is tricked when he says the other whom he tricks is tricked. For he who is tricked into feeling that he is tricking someone, the tricker is tricked if the other is not tricked. W 28–31)
- 24 *Contemplor inde loci liquidas pilatasque aetheris oras,* (From that place I gaze on the piled spaces of the ether, W 3–4)
- 25 GRATWICK (1982: 158).
- 26 SCHOLZ (1986: 39).
- 27 Roman verse satire see: HOOLEY (2007), MUECKE (2005). RAMAGE – SIGSBEE – FREDERICKS (1974).
- 28 Henceforth, the author wants to study theoretical classification of satire in the literary system and shaping this genre in general, which should enable her to clarify Ennius' part in developing the genre of satire, if there was any. The author is aware that for classifying Ennius' work as satire it is necessary to try to compare the preserved fragments with the works of Lucilius and Horace. This comparison is the focus of her further studies about the beginnings of satire.

be traced back to a Greek model. This applies to most of Ennius's work as well. But it is uncertain if *Satura* had any model too and the researchers cannot agree on it.

In Hellenism there were collections, the name of which symbolises similar variety as Ennius's *Satura*.²⁹ From around 200 B.C. we have evidence of poems with diverse language, content, form and metre, though we know of no title like Ennius's *Saturas*; on the other hand we know of a book title, which spoke about rich variety, but all of its parts were written in the same genre (*Σωρός* – a heap). However these writings with diverse composition are of younger origin and they are standardised, so they could not have been a model for Ennius.³⁰

The fiercest discussions are about Ennius and Callimachus's collection *Iamboi*, which must have attracted the Roman writer due to its composition – it was a book of poems arranged into a collection on purpose.³¹ Ennius was surely dependent from the Greek models to some extent and though we have found no Hellenist opus of similar variety of meters, themes and forms comparable to Ennius, yet we can assume he was at least inspired by the Greek atmosphere.³²

An independence from Greek models is usually ascribed only to the Lucilius's type of satire, but if we apply Horace's phrase *rudis et Graecis intacti carminis auctor* to Ennius, which is now generally accepted as correct,³³ we must admit at least partial independence in his case too. But how can we explain, that Ennius is considered a poet unfamiliar with Greek literature there? We might assume that it is due to his work *Satura*, which does not have any real Greek model indeed. It would sound logical, that Horace in his satires speaks about the difference between him and the previous authors of this "genre". This is not contradicted even by Quintilian's statement about a unique Roman invention (*satura tota nostra est*). It is interesting, that Iulius Florus, addressed by Horace in his Epistles, chose po-

²⁹ GRATWICK (1982: 160): *Σωρός* (Heap) by Posidippus, *Χρειαί* (Exercises) by Machon, the moralizing of Cercidas of Megalopolis (*Μελιάμβοι*), Timons *Σίλλοι* (Derisions) and writings of Cynics.

³⁰ SCHOLZ (1986: 37–39).

³¹ Callimachus's *Iambi* are diverse in their content and form too, so there were speculations about their similarity to Ennius's *Satura*. The formal similarity is in the use of various metres (including lyrical ones), similarity of content in diversity but an aggressive nature as well, DEUBNER (1982: 768–769).

³² A heavy dependence on Greek models is assumed by M. Puelma Piwonka, see PIWONKA (1949). J. H. Waszink believes the influence was only small or none at all: WASZINK (1971: 120 and 122).

³³ PRINZEN (1998: 246).

ems (*saturae*) from Ennius, Lucilius and Varro, and thus he actually marked these authors as pre-Horace satire writers.³⁴

Ennius was probably inspired by various Hellenic poets and their writing. But he recombined this knowledge in a brand new form – he created a diverse medley of everything he tried and what he wanted to show to the Romans, whose literature was far from being crowded with diverse literal genres.

The question also remains to what extent Ennius was affected by the home environment. This task is even more difficult. Livy left us an allusion to something called dramatic *satura*. It was supposed to be a theatre performance, which however had no firmly fixed elements, so it was very diverse, but these were not “genuine” performances with a plot.³⁵ Most scholars do not consider Livy a reliable source in this matter. J. H. Wazsink does not believe Ennius was influenced by dramatic *satura* either; he only admits, that there existed some pre-literal *satura*, which we might call the old, generally and typically Roman tendency to create *varietas* and Ennius may just share this effort to achieve variety.³⁶

Ennius does not use any personal invectives or specifically focused social criticism. He avoids it for understandable reasons – Naevius was imprisoned for criticising of the Metellus family and Ennius surely did not want to risk this way. On the other hand the well positioned Lucilius had no problems with open criticism several years later.

This separates Ennius from Lucilius and his followers – the attitude and characteristics of this later, differently and narrowly understood Roman *satura* cannot be expected from Ennius of course.³⁷ Though there are some similarities between the two. There are similarities in the variety of metres – the first books of Lucilius’s satires were also written in diverse metres – and especially they share the diversity of themes and forms. This is where we should see the link between Ennius and Lucilius. And also, they both speak about their personal life and work in their texts.³⁸

Satura probably did not have any prominent position among the lesser writings. Ennius’s followers in the field of satire use all elements of Ennius’s *minors*: the lowly language of *Sota*, the blend of noble and colloquial

³⁴ Pomponius Porphyrio: *Commentum in Horatium: Epistulae 1, 3: Hic Florus scriba fuit saturarum scriptor, cuius sunt electae ex Ennio Lucilio Varrone saturae.*

³⁵ WASZINK (1971: 109).

³⁶ Details about various theories and researchers who (dis)agree about the existence of a “dramatic” *satura* see in WASZINK (1971: 111).

³⁷ SCHOLZ (1986: 41).

³⁸ WASZINK (1971: 112–113).

used in *Heduphagetica* – Delicates, use of various metres in a single text (*Scipio*) etc.³⁹

Ennius was a great experimenter. He tried to enrich the Roman literature as much as possible. Some of his texts are based on a Greek model, while others are original.⁴⁰ From the very beginning he tries “*to tell the truth with a smile*” and “*to mix the useful with the sweet*”⁴¹ that is to present an information to the reader in a form, which is both intelligible and pleasing. Fifty years later a similar effort to blend education with entertainment led Lucilius to create a specifically Roman genre – satire.

It was probably Ennius himself, who during his life, most likely towards its end, published a collection of poems, which was probably called *Satura*. It is possible that already then it was divided into four books. I believe, that even from the few fragments, which have survived until now, we can conclude, that the themes for *Satura* varied in content, metre and style as well. We cannot find anything else, they share only one thing, the rich variety.

Concerning Ennius's contribution to the foundation of satire, I agree with Horace, that Ennius is the *auctor*.⁴² Formally Ennius and Lucilius were similar at first – both used diverse metres, though in late Lucilius's satirical books he favoured hexameter. Ennius's *Satura* lacks the very feature, which we now consider to be the crucial element of satire and which later was prominent in the work of Lucilius – it lacks derision, attacks, aggression, humiliation, scolding of human weaknesses and sins. Though only limited fragments have been preserved and we can only speculate, it seems that the content of Ennius's *Saturas* was defined by diverse variety in metres, means of expressions and themes. His writing is a collection of short unrelated poems.⁴³ It is this *varietas* what links Ennius to his successor Lucilius and it allows for a hypothesis that Ennius is sort of a father of the literal genre of satire, which however matured and established firmly only in the work of Lucilius later.

39 GRATWICK (1982: 159).

40 GRATWICK (1982: 156).

41 GRATWICK, (1982: 156).

42 HOR. *sat.* I, 10, 64.

43 SCHOLZ (1986: 33).

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RESUMÉ

Příspěvek představuje Quinta Ennia jako všestranně nadaného a experimentujícího spisovatele; zaměřuje se na Enniovu sbírku označovanou jako *Satura(e)*. Autorka shrnuje dosavadní poznatky o tomto díle a na jejich základě se zamýšlí nad tím, zda lze uvažovat o jeho začlenění do žánru satiry. Na závěr vyslovuje hypotézu, že Ennia lze na základě použití *varietas* (kterou má společnou s Luciliem) označit za jakéhosi praotce žánru satiry.

