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ROMAN IDENTITY

Between Ideal and Performance

Edited by
Lautaro ROIG LANZILLOTTA
José Luís BRANDÃO
Cláudia TEIXEIRA
and Ália RODRIGUES



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The completion of this volume would not have been possible without the support of several individuals. We would like to thank to Delfim Leão (University of Coimbra) for his advice and help, Greg Woolf (Institute of Classical Studies, University of London) for his prompt feedback and suggestions, Salam Rassi (University of Oxford) for his valuable insights, and an anonymous referee whose recommendations greatly improved the volume as a whole. Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the Editorial Board and to Tim Denecker for their continuous guidance and patience throughout this process.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Unless listed below, abbreviations follow *L'Année philologique*.

BMCR = GRUEBER H., *Coins of the Roman Republic in The British Museum*, 3 vol., London, British Museum, 1910.

MRR = BROUGHTON T. R. S., *The Magistrates of the Roman Republic*, 3 vol., New York, American Philological Association, 1951-1960.

RRC = CRAWFORD M. H., *Roman Republican Coinage*, 2 vol., Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1974.

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PYTHAGOREANISM AND ROMAN IDENTITY IN PLUTARCH'S *AEMILIUS PAULLUS*¹

Roman identity is a fluid concept. Fourth-century Rome did not have the same cultural environment that characterised, for example, the Late Republic or the Early Empire. This means that the same concept of *Romanitas*, the ideal of Roman identity, changed through time and space.²

There are virtually no contemporary sources on fourth-century Rome. This leads us to rely on later witnesses who employed earlier sources, and who are thus able to retrieve missing information from the distant Roman past. Plutarch is clearly one of the most interesting authors doing so. However, one must be aware of the risk involved in dealing with later authors talking about the Roman past: every ancient author weaves his own interpre-

¹ I deeply thank Prof. Cláudia do Amparo Afonso Teixeira and Prof. Lautaro Roig Lanzillotta, organisers of the panel “Shaping Roman Identity: Self-Perceptions and its Tensions in Ancient Biography” (12th Celtic Conference in Classics, Coimbra, June 26th–29th, 2019). The discussion during the conference was very helpful in better defining some aspects of this study. Special thanks to Dr. Valentina Arena, who kindly allowed me to read the draft of her then forthcoming paper V. ARENA, “The Status of Marsyas, Liber, and Servius: an Instance of an Ancient Semantic Battle?”, in M. NEBELIN, C. TIERSCH (eds), *Semantische Kämpfe zwischen Republik und Prinzipat*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2021. Finally, my gratitude goes to Prof. John Thornton, for his priceless advice. Every mistake in the paper remains, clearly, my responsibility.

² E. DENCH, *Romulus' Asylum. Roman identities from the Age of Alexander to the Age of Hadrian*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, significantly, talks about “Roman identities” in the plural form. E. DENCH, “Roman identity”, in A. BARCHIESI, W. SCHEIDEL (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Studies*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2010, pp. 267–80, in part. pp. 267–68, warns against the anachronism of the term “ethnicity”, besides “identity”, when talking about ancient societies.

tations and characterisation into his works. This does not mean, nonetheless, that one can ignore their testimony, for historical memory preserves ancient conceptions and traditions even when these same conceptions and traditions are long gone.

This seems to be the case of the *gens Aemilia*, with their familiar traditions changing through time. These traditions defined their identity, which was definitely a Roman one, even in the presence of “foreign” elements. No one could question the “Romanness” of mid-Republican personalities such as M. Aemilius Lepidus, *cos.* 187, L. Aemilius Paullus, *cos.* 182 and 168, or M. Aemilius Scaurus, *princeps Senatus* and *cos.* 115, who undoubtedly embodied the very essence of a Roman of their time. One of their ancient familiar traditions, however, had much to do with Great Greece, and it was born in the historical moment that led Rome to rule over the whole of Italy. Plutarch knew this, and he seems to have modelled his entire *Life of Aemilius Paullus* according to this lead. The interesting fact is that, by doing so, he did not in any way diminish the level of *Romanitas* of his character; instead, he succeeded in painting a picture of the perfect Roman: as politician, general, educator, even as a father. Plutarch did in fact choose to follow an ancient tradition, long gone in first century CE Rome, which helped him to delineate this ideal *exemplum* of “Romanness”,³ albeit by following a tradition with Greek origins, as he himself tells us. Specifically, the Aemilian tradition was a Pythagorising one.⁴

The emergence of Pythagoreanism in the Roman world marked an important development for Graeco-Roman relationships.⁵ In the following pages, I will examine some of the wit-

³ See R. LAURENCE, “Territory, ethnonyms and geography. The construction of identity in Roman Italy”, in R. LAURENCE, J. BERRY (eds), *Cultural identity in the Roman Empire*, London-New York, Routledge, 1998, pp. 95–110, for the concept of Romanness from an ethnic perspective.

⁴ It is “Pythagorising” because, as we will see, we cannot talk about Pythagoreans in Rome in this period. Stating the assumption of Pythagorising characteristics, principles, and examples in general is more equilibrate.

⁵ L. FERRERO, *Storia del pitagorismo nel mondo romano (dalle origini alla fine della Repubblica)*, Forlì, Victrix, 2008² [or. ed. Cuneo, Giappichelli, 1955] remains the most complete work on this subject. See also, for example, M. HUMM, “Les origines du pythagorisme romain. Problèmes historiques et philosophiques I”, *LEC* 64 (1996), pp. 339–53, and M. HUMM, “Les origines du pythagorisme romain. Problèmes historiques et philosophiques II”, *LEC* 65 (1997), pp. 25–42;

nesses who connect the *gens Aemilia* to Roman Pythagoreanism. This *gens* was one of the first Roman families to establish a connection with Italiote philosophy and culture.

It is very important to highlight that there are no traces of Roman Pythagoreanism as a sect until the first century BCE, when Nigidius Figulus, the first true Roman Pythagorean, lived.⁶ However, we can observe a Pythagorean cultural influence on Roman familiar traditions from much earlier periods. This emerges from literary sources in particular. We cannot truly determine whether a philosophical component was really embraced by these families or not; we have no evidence of the Romans talking openly about Pythagoras until the discovery of the “arches of Numa”, in 181 BCE.⁷ Pythagoreanism did nonetheless leave some traces on Rome, which we can analyse.

In the first part of this paper, I will examine the Aemilii as a Numaic *gens*, with its tradition linked to Pythagoras. In the sec-

M. MAHÉ, “Le pythagorisme d’Italie du Sud vu par Tite-Live”, *Ktèma* 24 (1999), pp. 147–57; A. STORCHI MARINO, *Numa e Pitagora*. Sapiencia constituendae civitatis, Napoli, Liguori, 1999; A. STORCHI MARINO, “Il pitagorismo romano. Per un bilancio di studi recenti”, in M. TORTORELLI GHIDINI, A. STORCHI MARINO, A. VISCONTI (eds), *Tra Orfeo e Pitagora. Origini e incontri di culture nell’antichità*, Atti dei seminari napoletani 1996–1998, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2000, pp. 335–66; C. RIEDWEG, *Pythagoras: His Life, Teaching, and Influence*, Ithaca-London, Cornell University Press, 2005 [or. ed. München, C. H. Beck, 2002], pp. 195–97.

⁶ There are nonetheless interpretations which, in the expression *Roma quadrata*, see a reflection of Pythagorean influences on Rome: see D. MIANO, “Roma quadrata. Un elemento pitagorico nello spazio romano?”, *Storia, antropologia e scienze del linguaggio* 24.1–2 (2009), pp. 149–80, and related bibliography for the discussion. A further analysis in B. POULLE, “Les réincarnations de Pythagore et de Numa à Rome”, *REL* 88 (2010), pp. 92–105, who interprets the episode of the “arches of Numa” (see also *infra*) as a witness to active Pythagorean interests in Rome during the second century BCE. On P. Nigidius Figulus, see A. DELLA CASA, *Nigidio Figulo*, Roma, Edizioni dell’Ateneo, 1962; more recently, and with bibliographical updates, M. MAYER I OLIVÉ, “Publius Nigidius Figulus Pythagoricus et magus”, in M. PIRANOMONTE, F. M. SIMÒN (ed.), *Contesti Magici – Contextos Mágicos*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale, Roma 4–6 novembre 2009, Roma, De Luca, 2012, pp. 237–45 (with focus on Figulus as a “magician”).

⁷ Liv. XL 29; Plin. *nat.* XIII 87. See the discussion, for example, in J.-M. PAILLER, Bacchanalia. *La répression de 186 av. J.-C. à Rome et en Italie: vestiges, images, tradition* (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d’Athènes et de Rome 257), Rome, École française de Rome, 1988, pp. 653–55; STORCHI, *Numa e Pitagora*, pp. 163–96; recently G. ROCCA, “I libri di Numa Pompilio”, in D. MARAS (ed.), *Corollari. Scritti di antichità etrusche e italiche in omaggio all’opera di Giovanni Colonna* (Studia erudita 14), Pisa-Roma, Fabrizio Serra, 2011, pp. 84–86.

ond part, I will define certain elements that can be connected to an aristocratic Pythagorising ethic. These elements are taken from the literary sources that provide us with an account of Aemilius Paullus, in particular from Plutarch's *Life of Aemilius Paullus*. I will then observe the survival and decadence of Numaic familiar traditions in late Republican coins. Finally, I will seek to highlight the importance of Plutarch in defining this characterisation of Paullus, which most likely constituted a Roman identity.

* * *

1. *The Aemilii as a Numaic gens*

In the first lines of the *Life of Aemilius Paullus*, Plutarch tells us that there is a tradition linking the origins of the *gens Aemilia* to Pythagoras' son. His name was Mamercus, but he was known as Αἰμίλιος for his exceptional αἰμυλία, the "charm of his discourse":

“Ὅτι δ’ὁ πρῶτος αὐτῶν καὶ τῷ γένει τὴν ἐπωνυμίαν ἀπολιπὼν Μά<με>ρκος ἦν, Πυθαγόρου παῖς τοῦ σοφοῦ, δι’ αἰμυλίαν λόγου καὶ χάριν Αἰμίλιος προσαγορευθεὶς, εἰρήκασιν ἔνιοι τῶν Πυθαγόρα τὴν Νομᾶ τοῦ βασιλέως παιδευσιν ἀναθέντων.

That the first of them, and the one who gave his surname to the family, was Mamercus, a son of Pythagoras the philosopher, who received the surname of Aemilius for the grace and charm of his discourse, is the statement of some of those writers who hold that Pythagoras was the educator of Numa the king.⁸

This paragraph offers some discussion points. Firstly, there is a link between Numa and Pythagoras. The tradition, says Plutarch, considered the former a pupil of the latter.⁹ Cicero declared it not

⁸ Plut. *Aem.* 2, 2 (transl. B. PERRIN, *Plutarch's Lives*, VI, *Dion and Brutus, Timoleon and Aemilius Paullus*, London-Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁹ Most authors who wrote about Numa reported this tradition; see, for example, Liv. I 18, D.H. II 59, *Ov. fast.* III 151–54, and Dio Chrys. 49, 6. This tradition survived in later times, as witnessed by Eus. *PE IX* 6, 3 (following Clem. Al. *Strom.* I 15, 71) and Lyd. *Mens.* I 17. See also, among others, K. R. PROWSE, “Numa and the Pythagoreans: a curious incident”, *G&R* 11.1 (1964), pp. 36–42, P. PANITSCHKEK, “Numa Pompilius als Schuler des Pythagoras”, *GB* 17 (1990), pp. 49–

only false, but false “in a wrong and absurd way”.¹⁰ First-century-BCE Romans knew well that this tradition was not possible due to chronological discrepancies, since Pythagoras lived a century *after* the second Roman king.¹¹ This was certainly known by Plutarch as well, but speaking of Numa he preferred a more positive approach:

[2] Λεγομένου δὲ οὖν ὡς Νομᾶς γένοιτο Πυθαγόρου συνήθης, οἱ μὲν ὅλως ἀξιοῦσι μηδὲν Ἑλληνικῆς παιδεύσεως Νομᾶ μετεῖναι, καθάπερ ἢ φύσει δυνατὸν καὶ αὐτάρκη γενέσθαι πρὸς ἀρετὴν ἢ βελτίονι Πυθαγόρου βαρβάρῳ τινὶ τὴν τοῦ βασιλέως ἀποδοῦναι παιδευσιν· οἱ δὲ Πυθαγόραν μὲν ὀψὲ γενέσθαι, τῶν Νομᾶ χρόνων ὁμοῦ τι πέντε γενεαῖς ἀπολειπόμενον, [3] Πυθαγόρου δὲ τὸν Σπαρτιάτην Ὀλύμπια νενικηκότα στάδιον ἐπὶ τῆς ἐκκαιδεκάτης Ὀλυμπιάδος, ἧς ἔτει τρίτῳ Νομᾶς εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν κατέστη, πλανηθέντα περὶ τὴν Ἰταλίαν συγγενέσθαι τῷ Νομᾶ καὶ συνδιακοσμήσαι τὴν πολιτείαν, ὅθεν οὐκ ὀλίγα τοῖς Ῥωμαϊκοῖς ἐπιτηδεύμασι τῶν Λακωνικῶν ἀναμειχθαι Πυθαγόρου διδάξαντος, ἄλλως δὲ Νομᾶς γένος μὲν ἦν ἐκ Σαβίνων, Σαβίνοι δὲ βούλονται Λακεδαιμονίων ἑαυτοὺς ἀποίκους γεγενῆσθαι. [4] Τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους ἐξακριβῶσαι χαλεπὸν ἐστὶ, καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς ἐκ τῶν Ὀλυμπιονικῶν ἀναγομένους, ὧν τὴν ἀναγραφὴν ὀψὲ φασιν Ἰππίαν ἐκδοῦναι τὸν Ἥλείον, ἀπ’ οὐδενὸς ὀρμώμενον ἀναγκαίου πρὸς πίστιν· ἃ δὲ παρειλήφαμεν ἡμεῖς ἀξία λόγου περὶ Νομᾶ, διέξιμεν ἀρχὴν οἰκείαν λαβόντες.

[2] Accordingly, when it is said that Numa was an intimate friend of Pythagoras, some deny utterly that Numa had any Greek culture, holding either that he was naturally capable of attaining excellence by his own efforts, or that the culture

65, STORCHI, *Numa e Pitagora*, M. HUMM, “Numa et Pythagore: vie et mort d’un mythe”, in P. A. DEPROOST, A. MEURANT (eds), *Images d’origines, origines d’un image. Hommage à Jacques Poucet*, Louvain-la-Neuve, Bruylant-Academia, 2004, pp. 125–37, POULLE, “Les reincarnations de Pythagore”.

¹⁰ Cic. *resp.* II 28: *falsum est enim [...] id totum, neque solum fictum sed etiam imperite absurdeque fictum.*

¹¹ Assuming that the traditional chronology of the Roman kings is correct, which is not certain. See some recent analysis of this topic in G. FORSYTHE, *A Critical history of Early Rome. From Prehistory to the First Punic War*, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, University of California Press, 2005, pp. 96–100, A. ΚΟΡΤΕΒ, “Reconsidering the Roman king-list”, in C. DEROUX (ed.), *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History XIV* (Collection Latomus 315), Bruxelles, Latomus, 2008, pp. 5–83, and C. SMITH, “Thinking about Kings”, *BICS* 54.2 (2011), pp. 21–42, with related bibliography.

of the king was due to some barbarian superior to Pythagoras. Others say that Pythagoras the philosopher lived as many as five generations after Numa, [3] but that there was another Pythagoras, the Spartan, who was Olympic victor in the foot-race for the sixteenth Olympiad (in the third year of which Numa was made king), and that in his wanderings about Italy he made the acquaintance of Numa, and helped him arrange the government of the city, whence it came about that many Spartan customs were mingled with the Roman, as Pythagoras taught them to Numa. And at all events, Numa was of Sabine descent, and the Sabines will have it that they were colonists from Lacedaemon. [4] Chronology, however, is hard to fix, and especially that which is based upon the names of victors in the Olympic games, the list of which is said to have been published at a late period by Hippias of Elis, who had no fully authoritative basis for his work. I shall therefore begin at a convenient point, and relate the noteworthy facts which I have found in the life of Numa.¹²

It is clear that Plutarch is not particularly concerned with the reliability of his historical reconstruction.¹³ In this case, Plutarch opts to narrate a tradition that, for at least a century, had been considered false because of its chronological issues; he also references a Pythagoras of Sparta as potentially being Numa's teacher. It seems that Plutarch favours the Pythagorean tradition:¹⁴ the criticism against the Olympic dating system gives lesser credit to the tradition of Pythagoras of Sparta. The consequence is that the other tradition, which connects Pythagoras the philosopher and

¹² Plut. *Num.* 1, 2–4 (transl. PERRIN, *Plutarch's Lives*).

¹³ This subject has been thoroughly investigated. See D. H. J. LARMOUR, "Statesman and self in the *Parallel Lives*", in L. DE BLOIS, J. BOND, T. KESSELS, D. M. SCHENKEVELD (eds), *The Statesman in Plutarch's Works*, Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of the International Plutarch Society, Nijmegen-Castle Hernen, May 1–5, 2002, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2005, vol. II, pp. 43–51; and L. VAN DER STOCKT, "Compositional methods in the *Lives*", in M. BECK (ed.), *A Companion to Plutarch*, Chichester, Wiley Blackwell, 2014, pp. 321–32.

¹⁴ Or, better, *this* Pythagorean tradition. A vast group of traditions was born around the "Italiote philosopher". As for those that concerned Italy and Italic people (including Romans), see briefly S. CALDERONE, "La conquista romana della Magna Grecia", in *La Magna Grecia nell'età romana*, Atti del quindicesimo convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia, Taranto 5–10 ottobre 1975, Napoli, Arte Tipografica, 1976, pp. 33–81, in part. pp. 45–50.

Numa, becomes preferable. There is also an element of irony: how could a barbarian, such as a Sabine, learn so many things without listening to Pythagoras? It would not have been possible for Numa to learn such things without him, “naturally”, or worse, with “some barbarian superior to Pythagoras”. The choice of the Pythagorean tradition (even if impossible, and Plutarch probably knew it) fits the biographer’s purpose: to give an *exemplum uirtutis*.¹⁵

Whether Plutarch believed the tradition or not, this is how he reported it. Later, in fact, he insists on the same topic: in chapter 21 of the *Life of Numa*, Plutarch summarises the traditions around Numa’s children. According to some historians, he had four sons: Pompus (or Pompo), Calpus, Pinus, and Mamercus. The Roman *gentes* of Pomponii, Calpurnii, Pinarii, and Mamercii descended from them,¹⁶ and because of this, they would have borne the *cognomen* of *Rex*. For other historians, who consider this tradition artificial and propagandistic in favour of these *gentes*, Numa only had a daughter, Pompilia. It is generally agreed,¹⁷ however, that Pompilia married Marcius, the son of Numa’s friend who convinced him to accept the crown. This friend would have

¹⁵ Plut. *Aem.* 1 points out this purpose. See also Plut. *Num.* 8, 16–21, discussed by F. RUSSO, “Genealogie numaiche e tradizioni pitagoriche”, *RCCM* 47 (2005), pp. 265–90, in part. pp. 272–75, where Plutarch, on the contrary, seems to attribute lesser credit to this version. If the biographer wants to give an *exemplum*, the fact that we find many different versions in his works is not surprising: the use of a specific tradition is defined by the work’s purpose. P. DESIDERI, “Teoria e prassi storiografica di Plutarco: una proposta di lettura della coppia Emilio Paolo-Timoleonte”, *Maia* n.s. 41 (1989), pp. 199–214 [now in P. DESIDERI, *Saggi su Plutarco e la sua fortuna* (Studi e testi di scienze dell’antichità 29), Firenze, Firenze University Press, 2012, pp. 201–18], p. 214, offers an interesting interpretation: he sees in the Plutarchean couple, Aemilius-Timoleon, the “effetto di una riassunzione, da parte degli uomini di oggi, delle motivazioni, degli ideali, delle capacità operative, dei grandi uomini di ieri”.

¹⁶ STORCHI, *Numa e Pitagora*, p. 24 and n. 20 (with related bibliography) argues that Pinarii and Mamerci (which is, the Aemilii) were the most ancient *gentes* to use this tradition, and Calpurnii and Pomponii started to do it only later. See also R. VERDIÈRE, “Calpus fils de Numa et la tripartition fonctionnelle dans la société indo-européenne”, *AC* 34.2 (1965), pp. 425–31, for the *gens Calpurnia*; T. P. WISEMAN, “Legendary Genealogies in Late-Republican Rome”, *G&R* 21.2 (1974), pp. 153–64, in part. p. 155, for a summary of this genealogy; K. BURASELIS, “Numa Pompilius und die *gens Pomponia*”, *Historia* 25.3 (1976), pp. 378–80, for the *gens Pomponia*.

¹⁷ Plut. *Num.* 21, 4: πάντες δ’ οὖν ὁμολογοῦσι.

become senator and, later, *pontifex*. The couple's son would be king Ancus Marcius.

This passage is confused. *Rex* is effectively an attested *cognomen*, but for the Marcii, the family that would have Numaic origins through Pompilia.¹⁸ The Mamercii are clearly the Aemilii, who bore the *cognomina* of *Mamercinus* and *Mamercus* between the fifth and fourth century BCE.¹⁹ Finally, the same criticism that the historians levelled at the former Numaic genealogies can also be directed towards the latter one, since it provides an ancient and noble origin for the Marcii.

Modern studies offer a series of hypotheses that attempt to clarify this tradition. Storchi's analysis is the most convincing one.²⁰ She thinks that this tradition constitutes an attempt by the *gens Marcia* to link itself to both Ancus and Numa Pompilius, but also to Numa Marcius, who is the first *pontifex maximus* in Livy.²¹ The struggles for the plebeian pontificate, at the end of the fourth century BCE, led to the birth of this tradition; in this case, the Numaic aspect involved is Numa's role in defining Roman religion, rather than his supposed Pythagoreanism.²² Aemilian

¹⁸ F. MÜNZER, *s.v. Marcius* nrr. 89–92, *RE*, XIV.2, 1930, cols 1582–86. There is also a *P. Rupilius Rex*, friend of Brutus, proscribed in 43 BCE (see F. MÜNZER, *s.v. Rupilius* nr. 10, *RE*, I A.1, 1914, cols 1231–32). WISEMAN, “Legendary Genealogies”, p. 155, talks about “a confused reference for the Marcii”, which is very likely.

¹⁹ E. KLEBS, *s.v. Aemilius* nrr. 93–101, *RE*, I.1, 1894, cols 568–72. Some Pinarii brought this *cognomen* too: see O. STEIN, *Pinarius* nrr. 11–13, *RE*, XX.2, 1950, cols 1400–01. On the origin of this *cognomen*, see L. DEROY, “Les noms latins du marteau et la racine étrusque ‘mar-’”, *AC* 28.1 (1959), pp. 5–31; in part. pp. 19–22.

²⁰ STORCHI, *Numa e Pitagora*, pp. 120–24.

²¹ The sources reflect this confusion. The kinship between Ancus and Numa is attested, among others, in Liv. I 32, 1, while the same Livy mentions in I 20, 5 a Numa Marcius, *Marci filius*, as *pontifex* created by Numa – without pointing out any relationship between them. Storchi thinks that Livy here uses two different sources, which is likely. The other possibility is the existence of a *gens Marcia* so numerous that it can, in two different family branches, give both a grandson to Numa and the first *pontifex maximus*. On Marcian tradition, see specifically A. STORCHI MARINO, “C. Marcio Censorino, la lotta politica intorno al pontificato e la formazione della tradizione liviana su Numa”, *AION(archeol)* 14 (1992), pp. 105–47; F. RUSSO, “I *carmina marciana* e le tradizioni sui Marcii”, *PP* 60 (2005), pp. 5–32; D. MORELLI, “The family traditions of the *gens Marcia* between the fourth and third centuries BC”, *CQ* 71 (2021), pp. 189–99.

²² WISEMAN, “Legendary Genealogies”, pp. 154–55; STORCHI, “C. Marcio Censorino”.

tradition (with the other *gentes*) would not have been born much earlier, since the Marcian genealogy is opposed to the Aemilio-Pinarian one.²³

The creation of a Numaic genealogy for the Aemilii dates back to the fourth century, linking this mid-republican *gens* to the Sabine king. The connection with Pythagoras must now be analysed.

Livy does not provide us with any information about the etymology of the gentilician name. In his work, Livy refers only to Numa's daughter, mother of Ancus, as becoming, more or less voluntarily, part of the Marcian tradition. The only other source connecting the Aemilii and Pythagoras is Festus. We can read in there that

Aemiliam gentem appellatam dicunt a Mamercio, Pythagorae philosophi filio, cui propter unicam humanitatem cognomen fuerit Aemylos. Alii, quod ab Ascanio descendat, qui duos habuerit filios, Iulium et Aemylon.

They say that the Aemilian family is named this way because of Mamercus, son of the philosopher Pythagoras, whose *cognomen* was Aemylus, after his exceptional humanity. Some others state that it descends from Ascanius, who had two sons, Iulius and Aemylus.²⁴

Festus' work is a synthesis of that of Verrius Flaccus, while Flaccus, in turn, mainly employed Varro as a source.²⁵ Without considering the question of the information's provenience, it remains clear that, in the Late Republic, this information still exists, despite Cicero's considerations. Together with Aemilian Numaic

²³ STORCHI, *Numa e Pitagora*, p. 129; RUSSO, "Genealogie numaiche", p. 281; MORELLI, "The family traditions".

²⁴ Paul. Fest. p. 22 L. My translation.

²⁵ W. SCHWARZE, *Quibus fontibus Plutarchus in Vita L. Aemilii Paulli usus sit*, Lipsiae, Typi L. B. Hirschfeldi, 1891, pp. 13–14, discussing the sources of Plutarch's *Aemilius Paullus*, includes Varro. On Flaccus' work in general, see F. BONA, *Contributo allo studio della composizione del De verborum significatione di Verrio Flacco*, Milano, Giuffrè, 1964. There is an active discussion on Flaccus' use of Varro: see, for example, F. GLINISTER, "Constructing the past", in F. GLINISTER, C. WOODS, J. A. NORTH, M. H. CRAWFORD (eds), *Verrius, Festus & Paul* (Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies Supplement 93), London, Institute of Classical Studies, 2007, pp. 11–32, in part. pp. 13–19, with related bibliography.

and Pythagorean ancestry, there is a second piece of information: Aemylus would have been Ascanius' son, and therefore Aeneas' grandson and Romulus' ancestor. Plutarch affirms a rather similar fact: Αἰμυλία would have been the daughter of Aeneas and Lavinia, as well as Romulus' mother.²⁶

These, for instance, are the accounts of the Aemilii's origins:

- 1) from Mamercus, Pythagoras' son;
- 2) from Mamercus, Numa's son, whose name pays homage to Pythagoras;
- 3) from Aeneas, either through his grandson (Ascanius' son) or daughter (Romulus' mother).²⁷

The Aemilii descended from philosophers, priest-kings, or a Trojan hero. If we are to listen to the rumours on Numaic genealogy referenced by the historians in Plutarch, it seems that the Aemilii were busy constructing their own noble tradition.

Here we will consider just the first two points, linked to Pythagoras. Since this tradition was born at least in the fourth century, when the Mamercini were powerful, it is probable that it emerged during the first contact with Great Greece, where Pythagoreanism was widespread. The use of this genealogy can be connected to Roman interests in Southern Italy, as has been argued.²⁸ Besides the convincing arguments cited about the Pythagorean origin of the Aemilian tradition, we must add that the Aemilii were by far the most powerful of the Numaic *gentes* in the fourth century BCE.²⁹ The birth of the Pythagorean tradi-

²⁶ Plut. *Rom.* 2, 3. For other parallel traditions about Aeneas and Romulus, and in general on Trojan ancestry in Roman myth, see for example E. S. GRUEN, *Culture and national identity in Republican Rome*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1992, pp. 14–51.

²⁷ Despite the diversity of these traditions, they are here listed under the same point, since they belong to the same myth. We must note that, in the *Life of Romulus*, Plutarch mentions Aemilia without pointing out any relation to Roman Aemilii. On the political importance of these Roman traditions before the Greeks, see again GRUEN, *Culture and national identity*, p. 31.

²⁸ See for example HUMM, “Les origines du pythagorisme romain II”, pp. 35–36.

²⁹ The Pinarii gave a consular tribune and two consuls in the fifth century and a *magister equitum* in the fourth; the Pomponii gave a tribune of the plebs in the fifth, and two other tribunes in the fourth, together with a consular tribune;

tion would thus most likely be their responsibility, as it would be setting an example for other Roman *gentes* in terms of linking their families to Southern Italian culture for political gain.

The Aemilii and other Numaic *gentes*, however, are not alone in their connection with Pythagoras: a prominent figure of fourth-century Rome such as Appius Claudius Caecus, for example, has long been identified as a key representative of Roman Pythagorising culture in this period.³⁰

2. *Pythagorean Elements* in *L. Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus*' Life

One of the most famous exponents of the Aemilii is L. Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus, the main character of Plutarch's *Life*, with which we started. Paullus was born around 229 BCE; his homonymous father died at Cannae in 216.³¹ Becoming Consul for the first time in 182, he was re-elected in 168 to face the war against Perseus of Macedonia, whom he defeated at Pydna on 22 June 168, after a lunar eclipse. After capturing the king, he organised a *panegyris* at Anphipolis where he announced, in Latin, his decision about Macedonian reorganisation under Roman rule. His triumph, the most abundant ever seen until that day, was three days long: the richness of the plunder allowed the Romans to cancel the *tributum* for a century. At this time, his younger sons died: the first a few days before and the second a few days after the triumph. His elder sons, who had been previously adopted, were P. Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus and Q. Fabius

there are no Calpurnii among the magistrates of the period. On the contrary, thirteen Aemilii (mostly Mamercini and Mamerci) fulfilled magistracies in the fifth-fourth centuries.

³⁰ See for example M. HUMM, "Una sentenza pitagorica di Appio Claudio Cieco?", in M. TORTORELLI GHIDINI, A. STORCHI MARINO, A. VISCONTI (eds), *Tra Orfeo e Pitagora. Origini e incontri di culture nell'antichità*, Atti dei seminari napoletani 1996–1998, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2000, pp. 445–62, and M. HUMM, *Appius Claudius Caecus. La République accomplie* (Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome 322), Rome, École française de Rome, 2005, pp. 541–600. We must remark that, in Appius' case as well, one can talk about Pythagorising, and not fully Pythagorean, culture and cultural influence, since Appius was quite certainly not a proper Pythagorean.

³¹ See *MRR*, I, p. 347.

Maximus Aemilianus. Censor in 164, he died four years later. His coffin was carried by some exponents of the peoples he subdued (Ligurians, Iberians, Macedonians). In the end, L. Aemilius Paullus is in every source one of the most glittering *exempla* of the Roman world.³²

To compare his behaviour to the Pythagorean way of life – if there were any relation – we must recall some fundamentals of the doctrine. Firstly, Pythagoreanism is built on multiple beliefs, often with internal divergences. There is, on the one hand, the βίος θεωρητικός, the philosophical contemplative way of life; on the other hand, there is the βίος πρακτικός, the active life in society and politics.³³ We can detect scientific rationalism and natural studies, but also esoteric mysticism (often connected with eastern cults and Orphism).³⁴ The original doctrine, as Pythago-

³² On Paullus, see generally W. REITER, *Aemilius Paullus. Conqueror of Greece*, London-New York-Sidney, Croom Helm, 1988. The critical bibliography on him is obviously vast; see recently P. J. BURTON, *Rome and the Third Macedonian War*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2017, and M. J. TAYLOR, “The Battle Scene on Aemilius Paullus’s Pydna Monument: a Reevaluation”, *Hesperia* 85.3 (2016), pp. 559–76, with related studies and sources.

³³ The Aristotelian distinction finds its roots in Plato, who learned it from Italiote Pythagoreanism (see for example Archytas *apud* Stob. II 31, 120, pp. 129–32 Hense). Much has been said about the connections among these philosophical schools. As for the relationship between Aristoteles and Pythagoras, see M. TIMPANARO-CARDINI, “Introduzione”, in G. REALE (ed.), *Pitagorici antichi. Testimonianze e frammenti*, Milano, Bompiani, 2010, pp. xliii–lxxviii. There are many accounts of Pythagoreanism and Platonism: Plato was a friend of Archytas (Cic. *resp.* I 16; D.L. III 21–22 and VIII 79–81) and many theories, in Platonism, have a Pythagorean origin (see M. BONAZZI, C. LÉVY, C. STEEL [eds], *A Platonic Pythagoras. Platonism and Pythagoreanism in the imperial age*, Turnhout, Brepols, 2007, and P. S. HORKY, *Plato and Pythagoreanism*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2013). For an analysis of Aristotelianism, Platonism and Pythagoreanism in their reciprocal relations in the late Hellenistic world, see also M. SCHOFIELD (ed.), *Aristotle, Plato and Pythagoreanism in the first century BC*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013.

³⁴ On Pythagoras’ relationship with the East and Egypt as perceived by Greek culture, see Hdt. II 123 and Isocr. *Bus.* 28. The link with Orphism, as for the doctrine of the souls, is mentioned for example in Hdt. II 81. See also W. BURKERT, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1972 [or. ed. Nürnberg, Hans Carl, 1962], pp. 120–65 (Eastern doctrines in Pythagoras’ thought defined as “shamanism”); RIEDWEG, *Pythagoras*, pp. 7–8 (his travels in the East and related sources); and FERRERO, *Storia del pitagorismo*, pp. 95–103, for the connection between Pythagoreanism and mysticism (with eastern cults and Orphism) and its elaboration, particularly in Philolaus’ school. We must finally remember that the connection with ancient eastern culture is a philosophical *topos*.

ras elaborated on in Croton, has had many inheritors. Archytas of Tarentum³⁵ (fourth century) was one of the most important; his doctrine was based upon the concepts of harmony, geometrical proportion, and aristocratic government. This trend will arrive in Rome through Great-Greek, Campanian, and even Samnite mediation during the fourth century BCE.³⁶

Therefore, it is particularly important to summarise some concepts from Archytean Pythagoreanism that we can locate in Plutarch's *Life of Aemilius Paullus* as well as in earlier sources. Firstly, *ὁμόνοια*, "concord", which assumes a political sense.³⁷ Concord, in fact, constituted in Tarentum what Ferrero defined as a "governo di aristocratici illuminati", in which "la partecipazione del popolo al potere è prospettata come una largizione limitata e controbilanciata dall'influenza debitamente riservata agli ottimati, come una beneficenza paternalistica".³⁸ It is, clearly, the fundamental characteristic of good government, without which it is impossible to avoid *στῆσις*.

³⁵ On Archytas, see C. A. HUFFMAN, *Archytas of Tarentum. Pythagorean, philosopher, and mathematician king*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2005 and, recently, M. RAFFA, "Acustica e divulgazione in Archita di Taranto: il fr. 1 Huffman come 'Protreptico alla scienza'", in A. BELLIA (ed.), *Musica, culti e riti nell'Occidente greco*, Pisa, Istituti editoriali e poligrafici internazionali, 2014, pp. 95–101, with related bibliography. M. GIANGIULIO, "L'eredità di Archita", in *Alessandro il Molosso e i condottieri in Magna Grecia*, Atti del quarantatreesimo convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia, Taranto-Cosenza 26–30 settembre 2003, Taranto, Istituto di Studi per la storia e l'archeologia della Magna Grecia, 2004, pp. 55–81, and M. LOMBARDO, "Dopo Archita: la vicenda storica di Taranto tra IV e I sec. a.C.", *Notiziario del portale numismatico dello Stato* 8 (2016), pp. 60–73 (in part. pp. 60–62), among others, have recently underlined his utter political importance for Tarentum and Great Greece.

³⁶ See A. MELE, "Il pitagorismo e le popolazioni anelleniche d'Italia", *AION (archeol)* 3 (1981), pp. 61–96; HUMM, "Les origines du pythagorisme"; ΜΑΗÉ, "Le pythagorisme d'Italie du Sud"; in particular about Samnites and Pythagoreanism, A. MELE, "Archita e Gaio Ponzio sannita", in M. TORTORELLI GHIDINI, A. STORCHI MARINO, A. VISCONTI (eds), *Tra Orfeo e Pitagora. Origini e incontri di culture nell'antichità*, Atti dei seminari napoletani 1996–1998, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2000, pp. 433–44, and P. S. HORKEY, "Herennius Pontius: The Construction of a Samnite Philosopher", *CA* 30.1 (2011), pp. 119–47. It is difficult to consider the Samnites as an active vector (towards Rome) of philosophical thought; at least, however, they witness the large success of Pythagoreanism among Italic people.

³⁷ The most important witness, from Archytas' *περί μαθημάτων*, can be found in *D.-K.* 47 B 3 (*apud* Stob. IV 1, 139, p. 88 Hense). See HUFFMAN, *Archytas of Tarentum*, pp. 182–224.

³⁸ FERRERO, *Storia del pitagorismo*, p. 117.

Central to Pythagoreanism is also the study of heavens, as both natural phenomenon and otherworldly universe. Many currents addressed this issue in a range of ways, but cosmology remained a deeply rooted Pythagorean field of investigation.³⁹ As we have said, there is a double approach: naturalistic, with astronomy (following rationalism), and mystic, with astrology (derived from eastern thought and developed particularly in Hellenistic Pythagoreanism).

Two other concepts seem to be widespread in Greek thought, but with a significant role in Archytean doctrine: the subjugation of Fortune to virtues, and self-control against passions.⁴⁰ These aspects can also be found in Roman gnomic, for example in Appius Claudius' *sententiae*;⁴¹ however, there are also other, more or less clear, attestations.⁴²

³⁹ In general, for an evolution of Pythagorean thought on cosmology, see BURKERT, *Lore and Science*, pp. 299–368. The whole volume by FERRERO, *Storia del pitagorismo*, refers to various characters who dedicated their life to these investigations. The main role, on this topic, was played by Philolaus and his school (pp. 75–78; see also BURKERT, *Lore and Science*, pp. 218–98, and C. H. KAHN, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans. A brief History*, Indianapolis-Cambridge, Hackett, 2001, pp. 23–38), the Hellenistic and Imperial Pythagorean schools (FERRERO, *Storia del pitagorismo*, pp. 102–09, with a focus on the connection with eastern mysticism), and Roman Late-Republican and Early Imperial Pythagoreanism (Ibid., pp. 245–326). Moreover, we must recall Timaeus, the expert on heavenly phenomena in Plato's homonymous work (Pl. *Ti.* 27a). Finally, Archytas too was a valid astronomer: see KAHN, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans*, p. 40, and the discussion in HUFFMANN, *Archytas of Tarentum*, pp. 22–23.

⁴⁰ Archytas *apud* Stob. III 1, 196 (p. 149 Hense): ἂ δ' ὑπερβολὰ τὰς εὐτυχίας τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς οὐ κρατεῖσθαι πέφυκεν ὑπὸ τὰς ψυχᾶς, ἀλλὰ κρατὲν αὐτᾶς, "when fortune changes it is proper, for good men, not to become enslaved by the soul, but to master it". Archytas is the *exemplum* of self-control also in Cic. *resp.* I 59–60. See also FERRERO, *Storia del pitagorismo*, pp. 163–64. As for the link between ἀρετὴ and εὐτυχία in pseudo-Pythagorean works and for the influences on Platonism and Aristotelianism, see also B. CENTRONE, "The pseudo-Pythagorean writings", in C. A. HUFFMAN (ed.), *A history of Pythagoreanism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 315–40, in part. pp. 329–32.

⁴¹ The most famous sentence is Ap.Claud. *carm.*, fig. 3 B. Moreover, Cic. *Tusc.* IV 4 calls Appius' poem *Pythagoreum*. G. DE SANCTIS, *Storia dei Romani. II. La conquista del primato in Italia*, Torino, Fratelli Bocca, 1907, p. 507, already thought that Cicero's definition was right.

⁴² As for Fortuna, see for example Cic. *parad.* 34; Nep. *Att.* 11, 6; Verg. *Aen.* VIII 334, defined *sententia philosophica* in Non. p. 526 M. together with similar passages; for self-control, see Fest. p. 418 L., but also Plaut. *Trin.* 363 and Val. Max. VII 2, 1.

Ultimately, the concept of *πολυμαθία* has Pythagorean origins too. It means “to be versed in many fields”, conceived not simply as different topics, but also as an expression of the world as a whole, and even as a representation of the divine.⁴³

It was necessary to enumerate these elements because, in the *Life of Aemilius Paullus*, they seem to emerge as characteristics of Paullus himself. These behaviours can be found in other sources (such as Polybius, Livy, Diodorus, Appian), but Plutarch bases his representation and reflections upon them, thus giving rise to a peculiar interpretation of Paullus.

2.1. *ὁμόνοια*

Paullus mentions this principle after the division of Macedonia into districts, together with *εὐνομία*:

Διωκημένων δὲ πάντων αὐτῷ καλῶς, ἀσπασάμενος τοὺς Ἕλληνας, καὶ παρακαλέσας τοὺς Μακεδόνας μεμνήσθαι τῆς δεδομένης ὑπὸ Ῥωμαίων ἐλευθερίας, σφύζοντας αὐτὴν δι' εὐνομίας καὶ ὁμονοίας, ἀνέζευξεν [...]

When he had put everything in good order, had bidden the Greeks farewell, and had exhorted the Macedonians to be mindful of the freedom bestowed upon them by the Romans and preserve it by good order and concord, he marched [...]⁴⁴

The most striking element in the passage is that the exhortation to concord is not universal, but rather related to a specific political measure following a legislative change: from monarchy to “republic”, the transition from autonomous reign to Roman protectorate. The term *ὁμόνοια*, therefore, assumes this political and legislative meaning. On the one hand, political connotations

⁴³ On Pythagorean use and origin of the word, see BURKERT, *Lore and Science*, pp. 208–10, and G. LLOYD, “Pythagoras”, in C. A. HUFFMAN (ed.), *A history of Pythagoreanism*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2014, pp. 24–45. G. CORNELLI, *In search of Pythagoreanism. Pythagoreanism as an historiographical category* (Studia Praesocratica 4), Berlin-Boston, DeGruyter, 2013, pp. 96–99, shows how the term *πολυμαθία* was used both to define and mock Pythagoras, so being (at least) one of his main characteristics (see also *infra*, n. 76). It could be significant that the Latin calque *multiscius* is attested for the first time in Apul. *apol.* 31, 5, for Pythagoras.

⁴⁴ Plut. *Aem.* 29, 1 (transl. PERRIN, *Plutarch's Lives*).

recall the Archytean ideal of enlightened government (as the Roman one claims to be, with its propagandistic theme of the *libertas restituta*). On the other hand, the legislative aspect⁴⁵ is itself a Pythagorean *topos*: Pythagoreanism, with Charondas of Catania, Zaleucus of Locri, and Diocles of Syracuse, often assumed the role of “lawgiving philosophy”. This same element is, partly, the model for Numa’s characterisation as lawgiver.⁴⁶

This witness could represent a lexical choice made only by Plutarch: there is no mention of *ὁμόνοια* in either Polybius (although fragmentary) or Livy (as *concordia*). Making a comparison with other passages, the theme of the *libertas restituta* (brought into Roman political language by Flamininus in 196 BCE) is shared considerably with Livy and Diodorus Siculus.⁴⁷ This could mean that Plutarch lifted these words from common sources (Polybius?). If on *libertas* there is no uncertainty and this topic was fully expected from a victorious general in Greece, we cannot see *ὁμόνοια* and *εὐνομία* as being linked in the sources before Plutarch. The only exception seems to be Flamininus’ speech at Corinth after his presidency of the Nemean Games in 195, where *ὁμόνοια* and *εὐνομία* are listed among other features (*δίκη* and *σωφροσύνη*).⁴⁸

It might be possible to find further evidence in coinage, specifically a *denarius* coined by L. Aemilius Lepidus Paullus (fig. 1),⁴⁹ who took his *agnomen* in honour of his ancestor. On the reverse we can see a representation of the Macedonian triumph with its spoils at the centre, the general on the right, and Perseus with his

⁴⁵ We read Plutarch; but Livy too (XLV 31, 1) remarks on Paullus’ role as lawgiver.

⁴⁶ STORCHI, *Numa e Pitagora*, pp. 73–75. For Pythagoreanism as “philosophy of lawgivers”, and especially for Charondas and Zaleucus, see now A. MELE, “Tra Zaleuco, Caronda e Parmenide: legislatori e filosofi in Magna Grecia e Sicilia”, in *Polis e Politeiai nella Magna Grecia arcaica e classica*, Atti del cinquantesimo convegno di studi sulla Magna Grecia, Taranto 26–29 settembre 2013, Taranto, Istituto per la storia e l’archeologia della Magna Grecia, 2016, pp. 235–64.

⁴⁷ Liv. XLV 29, 4 and 30, 1; D.S. XXXI 8, 4. On this subject, see for example J. J. WALSH, “Flamininus and the propaganda of liberation”, *Historia* 45.3 (1996), pp. 343–63, and recently R. PFEILSCHIFTER, *Titus Quinctius Flaminius: Untersuchungen zur römischen Griechenlands politik*, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2005, pp. 278–342.

⁴⁸ Plut. *Flam.* 12, 6.

⁴⁹ *BMCR* Rome 3373 = *RRC* 415. 62 BCE. See also *infra* for other considerations on Late Republican coinage.



FIG. 1.
RRC 415/1; L. Aemilius Lepidus Paullus, *denarius*, 62 BC.
 Courtesy of Goldberg, Los Angeles
 (Auction 80, 03.06.2014, lot 3045).



FIG. 2.
RRC 417/1a; L. Aemilius Lepidus Paullus, L. Scribonius Libo, *denarius*, 62 BC.
 Courtesy of Numismatica Ars Classica NAC AG, London-Zürich-Milano
 (Auction 63, 17.05.2012, lot 279).

sons on the left. On the obverse there is a representation of the goddess *Concordia*.⁵⁰ Crawford thus comments on this choice: “The head of *Concordia* on the obverse presumably reflects the *concordia ordinum* which was central to Cicero’s policy in 63 [...]; the moneyer was Cicero’s convinced supporter⁵¹”. There are other representations of *Concordia* in late-Republican coinage, but they

⁵⁰ This is the first known representation of *Concordia* in coins: there is another similar representation in the same year (62 BCE) in a *denarius* coined by the same moneyer together with L. Scribonius Libo (*BMCR* Rome 3383 = *RRC* 417/1; fig. 2). Its faces are marked differently for the two moneyers: *Concordia* with the name of Paullus, the Scribonian *puteal* with Libo’s name. This adds evidence to the fact that the concept of *Concordia*, at least, was chosen by L. Aemilius Lepidus Paullus as a characteristic for himself.

⁵¹ *RRC*, I, p. 441.

refer mostly to triumviral concord⁵² and to the desired peace between Caesar and Pompey,⁵³ while there are also other, more obscure references.⁵⁴ In general, the presence of *Concordia* on this coin cannot suggest any relationship between the Aemilii and the concept (or the goddess). Plutarch's reference, an uncertain one, remains the only account witnessing the use of *concordia-ἁμόνοια* by Paullus in a political key. As a result, this must be considered as a clue, and not as proof.

2.2. Cosmology and Astronomy

The episode of the lunar eclipse preceding the battle of Pydna (the only one certainly known from the Antiquity⁵⁵) is well recounted in the sources.⁵⁶ The different versions vary slightly: in Polybius, it is fragmentary, with only a moralising comment. In Plutarch, the eclipse makes the Romans audacious and the Macedonians discouraged, since it was interpreted as foreshadowing Perseus' death. Paullus had first-hand knowledge of the eclipses; despite this, he made a great sacrifice in accordance with Roman ritual. Zonaras, which generally means Dio Cassius, reports that the general is aware of the event, deciding to explain it to his soldiers. Finally, according to Livy, it was the tribune C. Sulpicius Galus, summoning the army *consulis permissu*, who explained the natural phenomenon to the soldiers in order to reassure them. The same Galus (*cos.* 166 BCE⁵⁷) is mentioned in Cicero's *de re publica*, where this eclipse is described by Scipio Aemilianus, who witnessed it.⁵⁸ It follows a discussion about the

⁵² For example, *BMCR* East 128 = *RRC* 529/4; *BMCR* Rome 4236 = *RRC* 494/41; *BMCR* Rome 4242 = *RRC* 494/42.

⁵³ *BMCR* Rome 3923 = *RRC* 436/1.

⁵⁴ A coin by Fonteius Capito in 55 BCE (*BMCR* Rome 3856 = *RRC* 429/2) represents the head of *Concordia*. *RRC*, I, p. 453, also assigns to Capito a relationship with Cicero's thought.

⁵⁵ P. J. BICKNELL, "The lunar eclipse of 21 June 168 b.C.", *CR* 18 (1968), p. 22.

⁵⁶ Among others: Polyb. XXIX 16, a fragment from Suida; Liv. XLIV 37, 5–9; Plut. *Aem.* 17, 7–10; Zonar. IX 23.

⁵⁷ See *MRR*, I, p. 623, for his career.

⁵⁸ *Cic. resp.* I 21–23.

usefulness of science in government matters. Galus' deep doctrine and investigating spirit act almost as a counterpart to this idea, since he would have been a typical "man of academia", far from any *maiora* occupations (Laelius says: *eas artis, quae efficiant, ut usui civitatis simus*). For this reason, Sex. Aelius Paetus compares him to an *astrologus*, quoting Ennius, as a man who looks high in the sky, but does not see what happens at his feet.⁵⁹

These words, true or not, recall the Pythagorean distinction between βίος θεωρητικός and βίος πρακτικός. Sulpicius is here depicted as a pure theorist, versed only in astronomy and astrology (we must remember that this modern distinction was less prominent in ancient times). As we have said, this dichotomy has Pythagorean origins; we can see in this case the rationalism of the "Scipionic Circle"⁶⁰ – or, better, its Ciceronian version⁶¹ – opposed to the esoteric mysticism that part of the previous generation assumed to be a distinctive element.⁶² However, Sulpicius was a military tribune in Spain and Macedonia and became consul; he was certainly not a pure theorist, and this characterisation is used here as a mere rhetorical device.

⁵⁹ Ibid. I 30. Ennius grew up in a Pythagorean environment: see for example E. FLORES, "Ennio e il pitagorismo", in M. TORTORELLI GHIDINI, A. STORCHI MARINO, A. VISCONTI (eds), *Tra Orfeo e Pitagora. Origini e incontri di culture nell'antichità*, Atti dei seminari napoletani 1996–1998, Napoli, Bibliopolis, 2000, pp. 507–12.

⁶⁰ FERRERO, *Storia del pitagorismo*, p. 234, talking about βίος θεωρητικός and βίος πρακτικός in the second half of the second century BCE (the environment of the so-called Scipionic Circle), says that this distinction was seen "non tanto [...] in funzione della conquista dell'immortalità ultraterrena, quanto in funzione di norma pratica, politica, per la direzione degli affari di questo mondo".

⁶¹ Much has been written about the "Scipionic Circle"; its very existence is still debated. The only sources related to it are Cicero's philosophical dialogues, which may not reflect historical reality. See the critical H. STRASBURGER, "Der Scipionenkreis", *Hermes* 94.1 (1966), pp. 60–72, but also other aspects of the debate in G. FORSYTHE, "A philological note on the Scipionic Circle", *AJPh* 112 (1991), pp. 363–64, and J. P. WILSON, "Grex Scipionis in *De amicitia*: a reply to Gary Forsythe", *AJPh* 115 (1994), pp. 269–71.

⁶² In particular Scipio Africanus with his "legend": see FERRERO, *Storia del pitagorismo*, pp. 180–88; F. W. WALBANK, "The Scipionic legend", *PCPhS* 13 (1967), pp. 54–69 [now in F. W. WALBANK, *Selected papers. Studies in Greek and Roman history and historiography*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1985, pp. 120–37]; E. GABBA, "P. Cornelio Scipione Africano e la 'leggenda'", *Athenaeum* 53 (1975), pp. 3–17 [now in E. GABBA, *Aspetti culturali dell'imperialismo romano*, Firenze, Sansoni, 1993, pp. 113–31].

Returning to the eclipse, the way in which Plutarch and Zonaras narrate the episode diverges from that of Livy.⁶³ Galus' cultural mediation is completely absent; Paullus' direct knowledge is therefore privileged. This knowledge of nature is present in other anecdotes; for example, when Paullus found water supplies for the army while digging underground wells under Mount Olympus, believing that the luxurious vegetation growing there must be drawing water from somewhere not visible from the surface.⁶⁴ Similar expedients, however, have much to do with military experience and field study.⁶⁵ It is not uniquely related to theoretical knowledge; on the contrary, it could well be the result of field experience, which Paullus was far from lacking in.⁶⁶

Plutarch chooses his anecdote, and he selects the version in which Paullus has a direct naturalistic knowledge, in spite of a different version where his role was more marginal. He portrays a man versed in philosophical (in this case, naturalistic) matters. The relationship between Plutarch and Dio-Zonaras is not traceable: they could both refer to the same source, or Plutarch himself could have been Dio's source. The tradition is twofold, with a narrative line for (Polybius and?) Livy and another one for Plutarch, Cassius Dio and Zonaras.⁶⁷

Livy's words *consulis permissu* mean that, besides the existence of a chain of command, Paullus was at least aware of the situation, and that he trusted Sulpicius Galus. Moreover, in Polybius, the eclipse sparked some rumours, favourable to the Romans and

⁶³ Zonaras attributes to the general not only the knowledge of the phenomenon, but also the speech to the soldiers. Since the surviving Greek sources (Plutarch and Zonaras, which means Cassius Dio) used this version, it is likely that they found it in a common source, while Livy used (also?) another one. Livy's version, with Galus' intervention, is the most likely.

⁶⁴ Plut. *Aem.* 14, 1–2, but also Liv. XLIV 33, 1–4.

⁶⁵ It is important to underline the military importance of such naturalistic knowledge on water supplies, which is not uncommon for a general as expert as Paullus. Polybius (IX 16) also includes astronomy among the necessary fields of expertise for military men, on the model of Odysseus.

⁶⁶ In particular, a general who fought in Spain knew the mountain environment very well.

⁶⁷ This does not mean that these sources could not have had any reciprocal contact: Plut. *Aem.* 19 explicitly quotes Polybius as a source for Perseus' flight from Pydna. This supposed bipartition concerns only the eclipse episode, where different authors made different choices. The fact that Plutarch read Polybius but chose (presumably) to report a different version is in itself important.

adverse to the Macedonians; this is nonetheless a mere fragment in the Suida, fairly unreliable without its context. The Plutarchean characterisation suggests that Paullus is conscious of the phenomenon, while the Livian version also implicitly indicates some kind of awareness of it. The latter, moreover, shows that the “expert” Sulpicius Galus was trusted by Paullus. These elements lead us to think that, even if the Livian version is the most plausible, Paullus’ knowledge of this natural phenomenon was at least true.⁶⁸

2.3. Fortune and Virtue, Self-Control and Passions

The preliminary theme of the *Life of Aemilius Paullus* is Τύχη, the Roman *Fortuna*,⁶⁹ *trait d’union* with Timoleon (the parallel Plutarchean character).⁷⁰ From the first chapter, in fact, Plutarch underlines how these characters were

οὐ μόνον ταῖς αἰρέσεσιν, ἀλλὰ καὶ ταῖς τύχαις ἀγαθαῖς ὁμοίως
κεχρημένων ἐπὶ τὰ πράγματα

alike not only in the good principles which they adopted, but also in the good fortune which they enjoyed in their conduct of affairs.⁷¹

Fortune, together with virtue(s), is the main theme underpinning Paullus’ entire career, as many sources point out. Some examples: from his youth, Paullus distinguishes himself from his fellow

⁶⁸ The combination of scientific knowledge and military deployment of it can be seen, with more esoteric meanings, in the known episode of Scipio Africanus at Cartagena, when he spread the rumour that the low tide in the marsh around the city was a sign of divine intervention (Polyb. X 15; Liv. XXVI 45). There is also the suggestion of Pythagorean influences on Scipio Africanus (see FERRERO, *Storia del pitagorismo*, pp. 180–87 and 215–16).

⁶⁹ On *Fortuna*, see D. MIANO, *Fortuna. Deity and concept in Archaic and Republican Italy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2018.

⁷⁰ See S. C. R. SWAIN, “Plutarch’s Aemilius and Timoleon”, *Historia* 38.3 (1989), pp. 314–34, for an analysis of the topic; I here disagree from his opinion in considering Τύχη present not only in Plutarch, as he says, but also in Polybius and Livy. Plutarch particularly underlines the facts related to *Fortuna*, but we can read the same facts with similar descriptions in both the other historians (for Polybius, unfortunately, in fragments). On the subject, see also W. J. TATUM, “Another look at *Tyche* in Plutarch’s *Aemilius Paullus-Timoleon*”, *Historia* 59.4 (2010), pp. 448–61.

⁷¹ Plut. *Aem.* 1, 6 (transl. PERRIN, *Plutarch’s Lives*).

Romans in preferring the exercise of virtues rather than factious tribunal speeches.⁷² He has philosophical ἡσυχία when he loses the consular elections.⁷³ He is νοῦν ἔχων.⁷⁴ He succeeds in all that he undertakes, for his virtues rather than by fortune (Fortune)⁷⁵ – while Perseus, on the contrary, blames Fortune for his own failures.⁷⁶ He gives a long speech about fate and the transience of empires.⁷⁷ Furthermore, the most important evidence of Paulus' relationship with Τύχη, a sign of his enormous self-control, is his speech to the people after the death of his youngest sons.⁷⁸ In this speech, the ill luck of his family is presented as a counterpart to the good luck and glory that the Roman Republic achieved through Paullus' victory on Perseus. Paullus himself thanks *Fortuna* for having taken her pledge from his family and not from Rome. This is how Appian, Diodorus, and Livy⁷⁹ recount the speech, which means that it was probably quite similar in Polybius as well; everybody points out how great an impression it made on the people.

Moreover, the restoration of the Temple of *Fortuna Respiciens* in Rome is, with good credibility, dated to Paullus' censorship; a statue of the general was probably also erected in this temple.⁸⁰ Together with these findings, the recurrence of *Fortuna* in the sources about Paullus has been a striking element for this attribution.

⁷² Ibid. 2, 6.

⁷³ Ibid. 6, 8.

⁷⁴ Ibid. 10, 1; and Polyb. XXIX 20, where the words νοῦν ἔχων are in general, but clearly referring to Paullus. There is another link between *polymathia* (see also *infra*) and being νοῦν ἔχων in a famous fragment by Heraclitus (*D.-K.* 22 B 40): πολυμαθὴν νόον ἔχειν οὐ διδάσκει. Ἡσίοδον γὰρ ἂν ἐδίδαξε καὶ Πυθαγόρην αὐτὶς τε Ξενοφάνεά τε καὶ Ἐκαταῖον, “Knowing many things [πολυμαθὴν] does not teach to think rightly [νόον ἔχειν]. Otherwise, it would have taught it to Hesiod, Pythagoras, Xenophon, and Hecateus”. Heraclitus mocks Pythagoras, while Paullus, in Polybius, seems to have succeeded in uniting both the qualities.

⁷⁵ Plut. *Aem.* 12, 2.

⁷⁶ Ibid. 26, 10–12.

⁷⁷ Ibid. 27, 2–6, similar to Demetrius Phalereus “prophecy” in Polyb. XXIX 21. In Plutarch (*Aem.* 27, 6) and Livy (XLV 8, 6) Paullus speaks to the youngest officers, thus assuming a teaching, educational role.

⁷⁸ Plut. *Aem.* 36, 1–37, 1.

⁷⁹ Liv. XLV 41–42, 1; D.S. XXXI 11; Ap.*Mac.* 19.

⁸⁰ F. COARELLI, *Palatium. Il Palatino dalle origini all'impero*, Roma, Quasar, 2012, pp. 216–19, and related bibliography.

The characterisation of Paullus' figure, in this case, again reveals vague Archytean elements. The opposition of Fortune and virtue is one of the general's peculiar marks; so it is his self-control in the face of passions, especially when related to the topic of good and ill luck. Archytean Pythagoreanism seems to be personified here in the deeds and words of L. Aemilius Paullus. We must note, however, that both Τύχη and self-control are widespread themes in ancient (and especially Greek) culture. Even if Pythagoreanism was one of the first witnesses of philosophical reflection on them,⁸¹ in this case it is not possible to hypothesise anything more than a reference.

2.4. *Polymathia*

The concept of *polymathia* embraces a wide range of behaviours, attitudes, and characterisations; it is therefore applied to many "virtuous" personalities in the ancient world. No one could ever doubt that vast culture, practical knowledge and the ability to act quickly in many different situations are positive things. In its context, this *polymathia* is not a singular characterisation, but rather a further indication that the ancient idea of Paullus was based on his life's achievements and deeds.

We have already spoken about Paullus' naturalistic knowledge. To this we can add other elements: the extreme competence and attention Paullus reserved for religious matters in his role of augur;⁸² his precision, from religion to politics;⁸³ his tacti-

⁸¹ This is also underlined in HORRY, "Herennius Pontius", pp. 138–40, referring to Gavius Pontius' speech at *Caudium*. Putting aside the enormous historiographical problem, it is clear that, between Archytean Pythagoreanism and Aristotelianism (the two fourth-century philosophical schools that gave major importance to Τύχη), a Samnite aristocrat would have been closer to the former.

⁸² Plut. *Aem.* 3, 2–3. Furthermore, this seems similar to a Pythagorean *sententia* reported in Cic. *leg.* II 11, 26: *illud bene dictum est a Pythagora, doctissimo viro, tum maxime et pietatem et religionem uersari in animis, cum rebus diuinis operam daremus*, "that most learned man, Pythagoras, was right when he said that piety and religion are uppermost in our minds when we are attending to divine observances" (transl. N. RUDD, *Cicero. The republic and the laws*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1998). See also the considerations of R. M. OGILVIE, *A commentary on Livy. Books 1–5*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1965, p. 89, who sees a smart Roman application of this Greek concept in Numa's laws.

⁸³ Plut. *Aem.* 3, 5–7. A *sententia* by Nigidius Figulus (fr. 4 Swoboda) in Gell. IV 9, 1–2 seems very similar: *religentem esse oportet, religiosus ne fuas* [or *nefas*],

cal skills against the Ligurians and Iberians (even without taking into account the Macedonian campaign, which would in itself deserve a single comprehensive study).⁸⁴ Moreover, the passion for art and literature he displayed during his travels in Greece,⁸⁵ a philosopher's request for the education of his sons,⁸⁶ the requisition of Perseus' library as only spoil for himself.⁸⁷ Finally, a γνώμη in which he states that *et conuiuium instruere et ludos parare eiusdem esse, qui uincere bello sciret*, "the man who knew how to conquer in war could also arrange a banquet and organize games".⁸⁸ In this moment, Paullus surprises the Greek aristocrats by organising a perfect *panegyris*, further demonstration of his mastery of both *mos maiorum* and Greek habits.⁸⁹

This *polymathia* does not constitute any proof of a supposed Pythagoreanism; its presence, however, is undeniable.

* * *

This characterisation is neither precise nor directly explained by Plutarch; moreover, it is a literary characterisation, which could have nothing to do with Roman identity. There are nonetheless two considerations to make. The first one relates to the Aemilian tradition as a whole: as we will see, in the first century the Aemilii chose not to continue their Pythagorean and Numaic tradition. On the contrary, other Numaic and Pythagorean traditions will endure (for Marcii, Pomponii, and Calpurnii). This means that

"[in religion] one must be scrupulous, not superstitious". HUMM, *Appius Claudius Caecus*, pp. 521–24, thinks that its first author could be Appius Claudius. It could well be a Pythagorean *sententia* reported by Figulus, and Humm's argument (based on versification, language and citation) is convincing.

⁸⁴ Plut. *Aem.* 4, 3 and 6, 1–6, but also Frontin. *strat.* III 17, 2. Moreover, Liv. XLIV 35 describes precisely Paullus' movements on the Macedonian front. For a military analysis of the battle of Pydna, see N. G. L. HAMMOND, "The battle of Pydna", *JHS* 104 (1984), pp. 31–47, and D. MORELLI, "La battaglia di Pidna. Aspetti topografici e strategici", *Klio* 103.1 (2021), pp. 97–132.

⁸⁵ Plut. *Aem.* 28, 1–5; Liv. XLV 27, 5–28, 6.

⁸⁶ Plin. *nat.* XXXV 135.

⁸⁷ Plut. *Aem.* 28, 11. Isid. *orig.* VI 5, 1 tells us that it became the first big private library in Rome.

⁸⁸ Liv. XLV 32, 8 (transl. A. SCHLESINGER, *Livy: in fourteen volumes*, XIII, *Books 43–45*, London-Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 1961). The same sentence can be found in Polyb. XXX 14; Plut. *Aem.* 28, 5; D.S. XXXI 8, 13.

⁸⁹ Plut. *Aem.* 28, 5; Liv. XLV 32, 10.

Plutarch decided to develop such a philosophical characterisation even when the same Aemilii were no longer interested in associating themselves with their ancient traditions. This is, of course, a literary choice, favouring Plutarch's purpose in delineating a perfect Roman *exemplum*. At the same time, it is also a reconstruction of what effectively was not "the", but "a", Roman identity. Plutarch seems to have chosen; luckily for us, this choice preserved a very important tradition, which guided the entire *gens* for (at least) over a century in its political relationship with Southern Italy.⁹⁰ The fact that Plutarch's choice was a literary one does not diminish the importance of his account, since he effectively preserved an existing tradition surviving only in historical memory, even if he was not aware of doing such a thing. As we saw, however, he seems to be well aware at least of his "Pythagorising" choice.

The second consideration deals with the very concept of "identity". Plutarch gave Paullus a characterisation; this does not automatically mean that his Pythagorising attitude constituted a Roman identity. Nor did it: as we have argued, Roman identity is not a fixed concept, a canonical group of elements and behaviours, but rather it changed through time and space and, we could assume, even in the same place and at the same time. For Roman familiar traditions in particular, whose origin could have had (as for the Aemilii) political purposes, we cannot define Roman identity as a whole and relate all Roman traditions to it. Instead, we can observe how a philosophical characterisation, starting from Great-Greek elements and underlined by a Greek imperial biographer, could be so Roman.⁹¹ This points to the fact that, even in a literary characterisation, even talking about Pythagoreanism, even with Plutarch's work, the Aemilian tradition was Roman enough; and, by all means, this is the sign of a strong, unbreakable Roman identity. This may confirm the assumption at the beginning of this paper: Roman identity truly is a fluid concept.

⁹⁰ DENCH, *Romulus' Asylum*, p. 153: "during the Republic and at the beginning of the imperial period Italy was both the site and itself the end product of distinctively Roman modes of growth, expansion, and self-perception, of the accommodation and rewriting of ethnic and cultural diversity".

⁹¹ See also DENCH, *Romulus' Asylum*, pp. 272–73, and DENCH, "Roman identity", p. 270, for the fictitious division between "Greek" and "Roman" in some ethical characterisations of identity in the middle Republic and in Plutarch.

It is very difficult to talk about a “Pythagorean” Paullus, least of all “Archytean”. However, by examining traces in the literary sources and in his deeds in Rome and elsewhere, some of his aristocratic elements draw parallels with the Pythagorean tradition, and in particular with the Archytean one. We must ask ourselves whether Paullus and other Romans considered these elements Pythagorean or whether, on the contrary, it was only later sources that characterised them as such. We cannot, unfortunately, be certain of the answer, and so the question remains partly open.⁹²

A balanced hypothesis could be found in considering these elements as part of the Aemilian education, influenced by its role in the first contact with Great Greece during the fourth century BCE. What, at that time, was propaganda would have entered the Aemilian *paideia*, until it became manifest in the figure of L. Aemilius Paullus.⁹³ This evidently happened due to his important role in Roman history, which induced a (limited) abundance of sources on his character, while we know almost nothing about the Aemilii Paulli from the *cos.* 302⁹⁴ to Macedonicus’ father. The benefit that this interpretation gives us is the potential to give historical definition to Paullus’ capability in dealing with Greece. Paullus’ distinctive features would be the consequence of neither an undefined “philhellenism”, nor a personal appreciation of Greek culture; they would be the result of his familiar education. This would have made him very capable of relating to Greece, without diminishing his adherence to the *mos maiorum*.⁹⁵

⁹² On the scholarly divergences about Pythagorean presence in Rome, see again STORCHI, “Il pitagorismo romano”, in part. pp. 335–38.

⁹³ On education in Roman *gentes*, see for example P. SCHOLZ, “*Imitatio patris* statt griechischer Pädagogik. Überlegungen zur Sozialisation und Erziehung der republikanischen Senatsaristokratie”, *Jahrbuch des historischen Kollegs* 6 (2006), pp. 121–48 (in part. pp. 132–33) and P. SCHOLZ, *Den Vätern folgen. Sozialisation und Erziehung der republikanischen Senatsaristokratie*, Berlin, Verlag Antike, 2011, passim. Scholz highlights that the father was the most important figure in Roman education (at least in the early years). This led to continuing and perpetuating familiar traditions as behavioural schemes, which young Roman aristocrats adopted voluntarily. These schemes were also applied during a political career.

⁹⁴ *MRR*, I, p. 169.

⁹⁵ S. C. R. SWAIN, “Hellenic Culture and the Roman Heroes of Plutarch”, *JHS* 110 (1990), pp. 126–45, in part. pp. 132–33, interprets the description of his “atypical” education in Plut. *Aem.* 2, 6 as a reflection of his son’s philhellenism, with a procedure of transferring this feature from son to father. This hypothesis is persuasive: the “ancestral discipline in which he himself [Paullus] had been

It is more likely that many of the concepts we found in the sources reflect an ancient relationship with Greek culture, more ancient than the recent contact with Greece, which leads us to look for another “Greekness”, the Italiote one.⁹⁶

A second possible explanation is that some Italiote and Pythagorean cultural elements became part of Roman culture (the *mos maiorum*, as we know it) when Rome made its first contact with Great Greece.⁹⁷ This would bring the focus out from both Paullus and the *gens Aemilia*. This interpretation is not impossible: Ferrero already thought it when analysing Appius Claudius Caecus and his *sententiae*.⁹⁸

The analysis of this pseudo-Pythagorean tradition for Paulus, which is traceable in the sources independently of his historical veracity, needs further discussion in itself. We must look for some trace of its survival in later years, in order to understand if and how it developed.

trained” (Plut. *Aem.* 6, 8) seems to be the *mos maiorum*, to which he does only add (not substitute) Greek *paideia* for his sons. This same atypical education is also another part of Plutarch’s peculiar characterisation.

⁹⁶ Later philosophical schools developed a reflection upon *τύχη* and the distinction between theoretical and practical life, but the origin of this thought is probably Pythagorean. The hypothesis of such provenience of these elements is therefore more probable. There is another detail: before the Macedonian campaign, Paullus does not seem to be particularly versed in Greek culture. However, his “Greek” abilities were already well developed in Macedonia, and the sources largely reported it. For this reason, it is easier to think that these ideas were already present in him than it is to assume a previous, unattested study of Greek culture for military and, possibly, diplomatic and cultural relations.

⁹⁷ In Cic. *Tusc.* IV 1–5 there is such a hypothesis: *quin etiam arbitror propter Pythagoreorum admirationem Numam quoque regem Pythagoreum a posterioribus existimatum* “On the contrary, I am persuaded that it was because of their admiration for the Pythagoreans that later Romans believed King Numa to have been a follower of Pythagoras” (transl. M. GRAVER, *Cicero on emotions. Tusculan disputation 3 and 4*, Chicago-London, Chicago University Press, 2002). There is much difference from Scipio’s words in *de re publica* (see *supra*). This sentence occurs in a philosophical work, therefore there is no proof of a relationship between Pythagoreanism and *mos maiorum*. Nevertheless, one cannot deny that it bears some interest in Pythagoreanism by at least a part of Roman *nobilitas* (and by historiography and annalists: the subject is Numa), and that Cicero still knew it. Other passages recounting some Roman appreciation for Pythagoras can be found in Plin. XXXIV 26 and Cic. *Cato* 21, 78. We have already talked about the denomination of Pythagoras as “Italic philosopher”: for the Romans, see recently CORNELLI, *In search of Pythagoreanism*, pp. 27–28.

⁹⁸ FERRERO, *Storia del pitagorismo*, pp. 161–65, and HUMM, *Appius Claudius Caecus*, pp. 526–38.

3. *The Decline of the Tradition: Coins from First Century BCE*

We have talked about the Numaic and pontifical tradition of the Marcii, as opposed to the Aemilian one (with Pythagorean implications). The plebeian *gens* had another mythical tradition, linked to Marsyas, possibly in connection with the idea of liberation from the aristocracy.⁹⁹ The first-century emissions by C. and L. Marcius Censorinus (an *as* and a *denarius* in 88 BCE and a *denarius* in 82 BCE; see fig. 3)¹⁰⁰ used both these traditions.



FIG. 3.

RRC 346/1a; C. Marcius Censorinus, *denarius*, 88 BC.

Courtesy of Gorny and Mosch, München

(Auction 241, 10.10.2016, lot 2049; ph. Lübke & Wiedemann).

⁹⁹ The link between Marsyas and the Marcii has been defined in various ways. As Crawford, *RRC*, I, p. 378 notices, the resemblance of the name is clearly important. M. TORELLI, *Typology and structure of Roman historical reliefs*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press, 1982, pp. 99–105 (followed by F. COARELLI, *Il Foro romano II. Periodo repubblicano e augusteo*, Roma, Quasar, 1985, pp. 91–119) thought that the Marcii placed the statue of Marsyas in the Forum (see Hor. *Sat.* I 6, 120). Torelli too thought, probably with reason, that the resemblance of the name was not enough to build a genealogy: the symbology of “freed Marsyas” and the prophetic role of the satyr contributed to this tradition (recalling, for the Marcian part, the *carmina Marciana*). This led to dating the statue to the censorship of C. Marcius Censorinus (294 BCE). A second, more recent analysis, which confirms Torelli and Coarelli’s arguments, is in D. MIANO, *Monimenta. Aspetti storico-culturali della memoria nella Roma medio-repubblicana*, Roma, Bulzoni, 2011, pp. 109–41. He examines the diffusion of the myth of Marsyas in fourth- and third-century Italy. Recently, however, ARENA, *The Status of Marsyas*, thoroughly investigated and convincingly questioned the association of Marsyas with liberty; on this subject, see also P. LÓPEZ BARJA DE QUIROGA, “The *Quinquatrus* of June, Marsyas and *libertas* in the late Roman republic”, *CQ* 68.1 (2018), pp. 143–59, and MORELLI, “The family traditions”.

¹⁰⁰ The *as*: BMCRR Rome 2419 = RRC 346/3; Gaius’ *denarius* (88 BCE): BMCRR Rome 2383 = RRC 346/1; Lucius’ *denarius* (82 BCE): BMCRR Rome 2657 = RRC 363/1.

Gaius put Numa and Ancus' heads on the obverse; Lucius placed Apollo on the obverse and Marsyas on the reverse. During the first century BCE, the Marcian kinship with Numa was an active tradition.

Two other emissions represent Numa. L. Pomponius Molo coined in 97 BCE a *denarius* with Apollo on the obverse and Numa sacrificing a goat on the reverse (fig. 4);¹⁰¹ Cn. Calpurnius Piso coined in 49 BCE a *denarius* with Numa on the obverse (fig. 5).¹⁰² These two Numaic *gentes* also decided to represent their mythical origins and Numaic tradition.¹⁰³

Aemilian emissions, on the contrary, represent different situations and people. We saw L. Aemilius Lepidus Paullus' coin in



FIG. 4.
RRC 334/1; L. Pomponius Molo, *denarius*, 97 BC.
 Courtesy of Nomos AG, Zürich
 (Obolos Web Auction 9, 25.03.2018, lot 43).



FIG. 5.
RRC 446/1; L. Calpurnius Piso, *denarius*, 49 BC.
 Courtesy of Gorny and Mosch, München
 (Auction 228, 09.03.2015, lot 478; ph. Lübke & Wiedemann).

¹⁰¹ *BMCRR Italy* 733 = *RRC 334/1*.

¹⁰² *BMCRR Spain* 62 = *RRC 446/1*.

¹⁰³ *RRC*, I, respectively pp. 333 and 737.

62 BCE with the triumph over Perseus, but there are also other emissions. L. Aemilius Buca coined with various references to his political friend Caesar.¹⁰⁴ M. Aemilius Lepidus, the triumvir, used many iconographies: the equestrian statue of his homonymous ancestor (fig. 6), the Aemilian Basilica, his role of *pontifex maximus*.¹⁰⁵ M. Aemilius Scaurus (pr. 56 BCE) represented on his *denarius* of 58 BCE (fig. 7) the surrender of Aretas of Nabataea,¹⁰⁶ which he received personally in 64 BCE under the command of Pompey.¹⁰⁷



FIG. 6.

RRC 419/1a; M. Aemilius Lepidus, *denarius*, 61 BC.

Courtesy of Gorny and Mosch, München

(Auction 228, 09.03.2015, lot 443; ph. Lübke & Wiedemann).



FIG. 7.

RRC 422/1; M. Aemilius Scaurus, P. Plautius Hypsaecus, *denarius*, 58 BC.

Courtesy of Bertolami Fine Arts, Roma

(Auction 7, 20.05.2013, lot 457).

¹⁰⁴ RRC 480.

¹⁰⁵ See for example Lepidus' equestrian statue: RRC 419/1; Ptolemaeus' protector: RRC 419/2; Basilica *Aemilia*: RRC 419/3; *pontifex maximus*: RRC 489/1–4 (with M. Antonius).

¹⁰⁶ RRC 422, with his colleague P. Hypsaecus.

¹⁰⁷ See J. *AJ* XIV 81.

No member of the Late-Republican Aemilii used a Numaic iconography, despite the critical role their own family had played in the building of that tradition, and despite the importance of this same tradition during Roman expansion in Italy. Meanwhile, Numaic tradition is still alive and active in the *gentes* Calpurnia, Pomponia and Marcia, even if these *gentes* seem to have added themselves to this Numaic tradition later than the Aemilii. We must note, however, that the Pinarii, at least apparently, did not use the Numaic tradition on their coins.¹⁰⁸

We can infer that, between the second and first centuries, the Aemilii privileged a different tradition, based on their recent historical personalities: Paullus and Lepidus (*cos.* 187) *in primis*. In addition, they underlined their own personal merits, like the triumvir Lepidus and Scaurus did in their coins. Finally, they used coins to declare their political proximity, as was becoming common during the Late Republic. The Numaic tradition, for the Aemilii, vanished, while it did not for other *gentes*. One could also think that this tradition has been abandoned in favour of the solid familiar list of *exempla* that the second-century Aemilii constituted, but this would not explain Scaurus and Lepidus' representation of their own merits as well. On the contrary, we could hypothesise that, during the second century, some *gentes* developed criticism against mythical genealogies, preferring more recent familiar glories for more efficient propaganda.¹⁰⁹ Nonetheless, these genealogies continued to be used by the Marcii, Pomponii and Calpurnii, plebeian *gentes* that could still profit from their connection to early Roman history.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ There are very few Pinarian emissions: excluding two mid-second century BCE coinages by (perhaps) the Pinarii Natta brothers (*BMCR* Rome 756 et al. = *RRC* 200 and *BMCR* Rome 844 = *RRC* 208), there is only one other emission, too recent to be compared with the others mentioned here. It is *BMCR* Cyrenaica 1 et al. = *RRC* 546 (31 BCE).

¹⁰⁹ See K.-J. HÖLKESKAMP, *Reconstructing the Roman republic: an ancient political culture and modern research*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2010 [or. ed. München, Oldenbourg, 2004], p. 112: "Symbolic capital had to be cultivated and regularly refreshed not only by updating it by new 'deposits', but also and at the same time by renewing the memory of the previously accumulated capital, recently acquired as well as that of old". The recent glories of the Aemilii constituted an "update" of their familiar tradition and symbolic capital, while the old tradition seems to have been abandoned.

¹¹⁰ See generally E. FABBRICOTTI, "Numa Pompilio e tre monetieri di età repubblicana", *AION* 15 (1968), pp. 31–38; T. J. LUCE, "Political Propaganda

The least we could say with some probability, however, is that the Aemilii voluntarily refused to use Numaic tradition, while other *gentes* did not.

4. Conclusion:

Plutarchean Intervention on Aemilian Pythagorean Tradition

The *gens Aemilia* followed a Pythagorean tradition that was born during the fourth century; the context of its birth was the first contact between Rome and Great-Greek aristocracy. Italiote and Italic peoples, strictly involved in Archytean policy, were also, in this moment, the mediators of Pythagoreanism in Rome. This kind of Archytean Pythagoreanism was, therefore, the kind that Roman culture knew (for example, with Appius Claudius).

In Plutarch's *Life of Aemilius Paullus* we see a sort of canonisation of Greek virtues and behaviours. Plutarch particularly underlines them, but these elements can be seen in other sources as well, albeit with a less pronounced characterisation. Plutarch placed Greek aristocratic ethics at the forefront of his narration: the relationship with *Fortuna*, *polymathia*, *concordia* in law-giving, naturalistic knowledge, astronomy and astrology. Most of these elements seem to reflect the supporting structure of Archytean Pythagoreanism.

From the second century BCE, the Aemilii abandoned this tradition, preferring a more concrete and self-referential culture while exalting their role in Roman history. This seems to bring with it a strong diversification in coinage: the Aemilii produced coins with an iconography based on themselves, while other Numaic *gentes* continued their previous traditions. We can understand how Numaic-Pythagorean Aemilian tradition, useful during the fourth century, was no longer believed to be as beneficial in the first century. As for Aemilius Paullus, Plutarch's strong characterisation, so different from the same Aemilian choice and from other sources, is quite surprising.¹¹¹ Many elements are strik-

on Roman Republican Coins: Circa 92–82 B.C.", *AJA* 72.1 (1968), pp. 25–39 (in part. p. 29); and recently HÖLKEKAMP, *Reconstructing the Roman Republic*, pp. 116–20.

¹¹¹ This is valid for Numa as well: his "Greek" characteristics are underlined by Cicero and Plutarch, but find no witness in Livy: see for example V. BUCH-

ing in his biographic reconstruction: Paullus' religious characterisation and his precision in augural matters, his naturalistic and physical knowledge, his behaviour in the face of ill luck, his vast culture and appreciation of Greek art, philosophy, and culture, and his talent in dealing with Greek aristocracy. Finally, with some doubt, the importance of *δύμνοια*, reported only by Plutarch.

Paullus was certainly a peculiar character: he lived through many significant events, saw Rome change during and after the Hannibalic war, and was a capable general and politician. Put simply, he was a "great" Roman, the perfect example of *virtus*. Nonetheless, his familiar history had included a direct link with Numa and Pythagoras since the fourth century. Plutarch therefore chose to underline all the elements that connected his protagonist with his own familiar tradition, even if the same tradition was abandoned two centuries before he wrote Paullus' *Life*. We could hypothesise many reasons for this. Plutarch's priesthood in Delphi certainly played a significant role in underlining Paullus' religious aspects (and, in general, it had a place in most of Plutarch's *Lives*). Many of the elements in the *Life of Aemilius Paullus*, however, have nothing to do with religion.

Moreover, Paullus' *Life* describes, similarly to the *Life of Numa*, the behaviour of the perfect philosopher-statesman.¹¹² Their characterisation is certainly different, and so are their characters: Numa was Rome's lawgiver in peace, while Paullus struck the ancient Macedonian kingdom, and a characterisation too similar would have been neither credible nor possible. Nonetheless, both *Lives* have a Pythagorean presence: in the *Life of Numa*, many deeds and laws ordered by the king would have

HEIT, "Plutarch, Cicero und Livius über die Humanisierung Roms durch König Numa", *SO* 66 (1991), pp. 71–96, on the concept of peace in both "Greek" and "Roman" Numa. This leads us to consider with interest how voluntarily Plutarch chose his characterisations.

¹¹² B. BOULET, "Is Numa the genuine philosopher-king?", in L. DE BLOIS, J. BOND, T. KESSELS, D. M. SCHENKEVELD (eds), *The Statesman in Plutarch's Works*, Proceedings of the Sixth International Conference of the International Plutarch Society, Nijmegen-Castle Hernen, May 1–5, 2002, Leiden-Boston, Brill, 2005, vol. II, pp. 245–56; L. HOLLAND, "Plutarch's *Aemilius Paullus* and the model of the philosopher statesman", *ibid.*, pp. 269–79; B. BOULET, "The philosopher King", in M. BECK (ed.), *A Companion to Plutarch*, Chichester, Wiley Blackwell, 2014, pp. 449–62.

been inspired by Pythagorean tradition.¹¹³ As for Paullus, the references are less direct, but no less striking; and, in his case, they are closer to an Archytean kind of Pythagoreanism, more recent (and apt) than the “original” Numaic Pythagoreanism. Plutarch seems to operate a choice in defining not only the pseudo-Pythagoreanism of his characters, but also the kind of Pythagoreanism that would model them. Many people have written about a “Pythagorean moment” in Plutarch’s life;¹¹⁴ one could cautiously ascribe these Pythagorising elements in Plutarch’s *Lives* to this particular moment. We are unable to date with certainty the composition of the *Lives* of Numa and Aemilius Paullus: we only know that they are late, but we are quite certain that they were composed in the same period.¹¹⁵ The common presence of Pythagoreanism could strengthen the idea that the temporal distance between these two works was minimal. Unfortunately, in the parallel *Lives* (Timoleon and Lycurgus), we have no Pythagorean elements; this means nothing, however, for both the characterisation of the Roman characters and the date of composition.

Plutarch wanted to delineate, through Paullus, the perfect example of the philosopher-statesman; yet with a characterisation perfectly acceptable for both Greeks and Romans (a distinction that in first-second century CE was much less striking than in Paullus’ years). Weaving Pythagoreanism into Numa’s *Life* leads to a unification of these two cultural identities.¹¹⁶ We can consider that the elements stressed by Plutarch have the same aim in Paullus’ *Life*: to make this exemplary Roman “more Greek”

¹¹³ For example: Plut. *Num.* 8; 11; 14.

¹¹⁴ See J. DILLON, “Plutarch and Platonism”, in M. BECK (ed.), *A Companion to Plutarch*, Chichester, Wiley Blackwell, 2014, pp. 61–72, in part. p. 61. On the relationship between Plutarch and the Imperial philosophical schools the words of E. ZELLER, *Die Philosophie der Griechen in ihrer geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 2 vol., Tübingen, Fues Verlag, 1856–1862, vol. I [1856], pp. 141–45, seem still valid: Plutarch as a “Pythagoraisirende Platoniker”, but underlining his philosophical eclecticism.

¹¹⁵ J. GEIGER, “Plutarch’s *Parallel Lives*: the choice of Heroes”, *Hermes* 109.1 (1981), pp. 85–104, p. 88; see also SWAIN, “Plutarch’s Aemilius and Timoleon”, p. 315, n. 6.

¹¹⁶ BOULET, “The philosopher king”, pp. 254–55, also discerns the attempt to unify Greece and Rome in other elements.

without diminishing his perfect adherence to the *mos maiorum*. This *mos maiorum* is used in the same manner, as shown by Paulus' precision in relation to religious rituals.¹¹⁷

There is therefore a historiographical matter: we cannot know how Pythagorean Paullus was, but we can see how Pythagorean Plutarch made him. As for the first question, the answer is probably negative.¹¹⁸ The second consideration, on the contrary, explains why several historians doubted the historical reliability of Plutarch's account.

In conclusion, in his *Life of Aemilius Paullus* Plutarch wanted to delineate and provide an *exemplum* of the perfect Roman character in highlighting his Greek, Pythagorean identity, thus creating another, different Roman identity, suitable to everyone. We can see in this biography the extent to which self-perception and tension emerge in defining this Roman identity. Self-perception is placed by Plutarch in Paullus' *Life*, along with religion and Pythagoreanism, and with the ideal of the philosopher-statesman. Tension arises in characterising Paullus in a very different way (pseudo-Pythagoreanism) from his historical context (we could say, *mos maiorum*), without doing any wrong to his memory and his reception in the Early Empire, and trying to re-unite this diversity. Plutarch, incidentally, moves past this tension, using an ancient Roman identity to provide a perfect *exemplum uirtutis* for both Greeks and Romans, theoretical and practical people, philosophers and generals: which is exactly what, in the end, he wanted to do.

¹¹⁷ SWAIN, "Hellenic Culture and the Roman Heroes", p. 142, thinks that Plutarch underlines Roman religion as being similar to Greek religion in practice, but in this case, this is not entirely true. On Paullus and *mos maiorum* in Plutarch, see recently M. TRÖSTER, "Plutarch and *mos maiorum* in the *Life of Aemilius Paullus*", *AncSoc* 42 (2012), pp. 219–54.

¹¹⁸ See CORNELLI, *In search of Pythagoreanism*, pp. 52–85, for Pythagorean basic characteristics. The scholar isolates two of them, maths and metempsychosis. This is valid, however, for the scholars and proper Pythagoreans, while a different Pythagorean characterisation could also be seen in more practical elements – especially if we start from Archytean Pythagoreanism, the basis of which was political.

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