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The Number Twenty-Seven in Roman Ritual

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he represents himself as drinking it is in the orgy of Odes ii. 11. In the only other passage where he mentions wine from Formiae he says that he has not got any (iii. 16. 34).

In conclusion, in i. 20. 11 should not *pocula* be nominative to *temperant*, and the verse be read

‘mea nec Falerni
temperant vites neque Formiani
pocula collis,’

‘my cups do not mingle (or rather ‘qualify’) the vines either of the Falernian or Formian hill:’ Lewis and Short give a quotation from Florus of ‘mons Falernus’ i.e. Massicus.

ERNEST ENSOR.

THE NUMBER TWENTY-SEVEN IN ROMAN RITUAL.

THE following note may be taken as a postscript to my recent criticism of Wissowa's theory of a late and Sibylline origin of the Argean ritual (see Classical Review for March 1902).

H. Diels, in his *Sibyllinische Blätter*, pp. 37 foll., maintained that the number three and its multiples are specially connected with the cult of the dead and the Powers of the earth, and as such were specially favoured in the Sibylline oracles: and that the cube of three is a peculiarly mystic number used on extraordinary occasions (p. 42), and having a specially chthonic meaning (p. 43). Thus at Rome the number of the virgines who were concerned in *piacula* ordered by the Sibylline books was as a rule twenty-seven (though not invariably so, cf. Liv. 37. 3: Jul. Obseq. 100), and in Augustus' *Ludi Saeculares* the choirs of boys and girls who sang Horace's *Carmen* were each of them twenty-seven in number. This seems to be the only example of the number in organised Roman ritual; but in a note on pp. 43 and 44 Diels goes on to suggest that the Argean puppets, which *may* have been twenty-seven (though certainty on the point is unattainable) were probably the survival of a sacrifice of 27 Greek captives ordered by the decemviri after inspection of the Sibylline books in the third century B.C. This suggestion, as I have already pointed out, was taken up by Dr. Wissowa and pushed still further: for he maintains that Diels has for the first time taught us the real meaning of the number twenty-seven in Roman worship, i.e. that it is Sibylline and chthonic, and confidently concludes not only that the Argean puppets, but also the Argean *sacella*, being (as he assumes) twenty-seven in each case, were not early or Roman in origin, but late and Greek, owing their existence entirely to the Sibylline books. It is noticeable that this theory is now stated as a proved fact in Dr. Wissowa's

great work on the Roman religion, recently published in Iwan-Müller's series of Handbooks. (p. 355).

On this particular point of the Sibylline origin of the number twenty-seven as it thus appears in Roman ritual, I am no more convinced by Dr. Wissowa's arguments than on the others with which I recently dealt in this Review. The number three and its multiples seem to occur in the folklore of almost all peoples; in Greece and Italy they are by no means the exclusive property of the framers of oracles, nor specially connected with chthonic cults. Even a cursory glance at the ingenious poem of Ausonius on the number three (*Idyll. XI*, with the introductory letter to Symmachus) is enough to satisfy anyone of this. And in the ‘specially chthonic’ number twenty-seven we need see no wonderful meaning on which to base historical conjectures as to the date and origin of institutions.

I find in Varro, *de Ré Rustica*, I. 2 *ad fin.* a popular charm for the gout, which Varro declares had long been well known in his family: it consists in repeating the following words *twenty-seven* times, ‘*Terra pestem teneto, salus hic maneto*,’ while you touch the earth, spit, and so on. Perhaps Dr. Wissowa will argue that there is something chthonic in this nonsense, but he will hardly attribute it to the influence of the Sibylline books. Surely it is likely enough that the numbers three, nine, and twenty-seven were all in the repertory of the magicians long before the Sibylline oracles were heard of. Thus for example the charm used by Circe in Ovid *Metam.* XIV. 56 is repeated *twenty-seven* times: ‘*obscurum verborum ambage novorum Ter novies carmen magico demurmurat ore*.’ Again, the nine-night week, which was common to the Romans and Celts (Rhys, *Celtic Mythology*, p. 360) must have become tripled at a very early period of Roman history into the *trinum nundinum*

or period of *twenty-seven* nights (see Mommsen, *Staatsrecht* III. 375 note and Chronol. 243): and though the first mention we have of it is in the *Senatus consultum de Bacchanalibus*, 186 B.C., even Diels (*op. cit.* p. 43) allows that it must have its origin 'in the oldest epoch of Roman history.'

Once more, the number three constantly meets us in the stamping dance of rustic peoples; it is natural to man in this form of dance, as Mr. W. H. Hadow has pointed out to me, in order to preserve the balance, and may be traced in the song and dance of the Arval Brethren (Henzen, *Acta. Fr. Arv.* p. 26), in the dance of the Salii, in that of Horace's *fossor* (*Od.* III. 18. 16) in the words *tripudium*, *tripodare*, *triumphus*, &c., and in the dance music of every people: I have myself been kept awake a whole night in an inn on the Italian side of the Alps by the constantly repeated *tripodatio*

of dancers celebrating the feast of their patron saint. Now I find in the *Tabulae Iguvinae* (Buecheler, *Umbrica* p. 133), which contain probably the oldest and purest religious ritual to which we have access in ancient Italy, a clear case of this threefold stamp *nine times repeated*. The words 'nuvis ahtrepudato' can hardly be otherwise translated than into 'novies tripodato.' In this case the number twenty-seven grows in the easiest way out of the natural tendency of man to stamp three times in the earliest forms of the dance in which he delights.

I maintain then that the number twenty-seven is not peculiarly Sibylline, and that if the Argean puppets were really of that number, it can be accounted for on other grounds, without ascribing to them a late and Sibylline origin.

W. WARDE FOWLER.

ON THE USE OF *NEQUE* AND *NEC* IN SILVER LATIN.

The writers of the Silver Age stand in marked contrast to those of the Golden Age in their attitude toward *neq.* Both in prose and in poetry a decided preference is manifested for the shorter form. The wider use of the negative particle, *neq.*, may have been influenced by the wider use of the connective, *ac*.¹ This preference for *ac* is shown by the fact in nine of the most important writers² of this period, *ac* is used 4264 times (70 per cent.) and *atque* only 1847 times (30 per cent.). Sen. Mai., e.g., shows his preference in a marked way, using *ac* 728 times to *atque* only 119; Tac., *ac* 893 times to *atque* 312; and Suet., *ac* 627 times to *atque* only 217. In poetry, however, we find a different condition of affairs prevailing. Here metrical considerations often have the deciding vote in determining the particular form to be used, and in this case the verdict

was in favour of *atque*, thereby reversing the decision of the prose writers. In nine of the principal poets of this period we find *atque* used 1132 times (61 per cent.) to *ac* only 735 times (39 per cent.) that is, *atque* in poetry = 61 per cent., in prose = 30 per cent. and in several of the poets the contrast is strongly marked, as, e.g. Val. Flac. uses *atque* 145 times to *ac* 79 times; Statius *atque* 222 to *ac* 107 times; Martial *atque* 59 times to *ac* once; and Juvenal *atque* 156 to *ac* 59 times. Seneca is the only poet to furnish an exception to the rule that *atque* is the poetical preference. He uses *atque* only 46 times, *ac* 109 times; but when it is taken into consideration that the larger part of his tragedies is written in the Iambic trimeter, which is closely allied to prose, the shift to the prosaic usage is explained.³ This tendency, for the prose writers to use *ac*, the poets *atque*, is exemplified in the usage of two earlier writers, Vergil and Livy. In the first six books of the *Aeneid* *atque* is used 95 times (64 per cent.) to *ac* 53 times (36 per cent.); on the contrary, Livy in xxi and xxii uses *ac* 213 times (67 per cent.) to *atque* 104 times (33 per cent.).

Nec, although parallel with *ac* in origin, being brought into existence by the same

¹ *ac*, according to the prevailing view (Stolz, *Formenlehre*³, §§ 46 and 69; Hist. Gram. §§ 250, 353, 355; Lindsay, *Lat. Lang.* p. 598. Luc. Mueller, *De Re Metr.*² p. 426, however, regards the *a* as long. We are without the light that metrical usage might throw upon the subject, as *ac* never occurs in any good poet before a vowel.

² For a list of the prose writers and poets, cf. under *neque enim*, p. 214. In making this investigation the writer made use of the latest Teubner texts, except for Quintilian (Meister), and Juvenal (Friedlaender), and text variants were noted. For Tacitus the lexicon of Gerber and Greef, and for Petronius that of Segebadet Lommatzsch, were used.

³ Cf. further; 'The use of *atque* and *ac* in Silver Latin,' in *Studies in Honor of Professor Gildersleeve*, pp. 413-425.