

The Public Festivals of Rome

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Introduction

There have been many important advances in the study of the Roman festivals in the last quarter century. R. SCHILLING has given us a most useful account of the work from 1950 to 1970 relating to the whole area of Roman

Abbreviations:

AJP	American Journal of Philology, Baltimore
ANRW	Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt. Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung, ed. H. TEMPORINI—W. HAASE, Berlin—New York 1972ff.
BIBR	Bulletin de l'institut historique belge de Rome, Bruxelles
CR	Classical Review, Oxford
CRAI	Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Paris
HThR	Harvard Theological Review, Cambridge, Mass.
JRS	Journal of Roman Studies, London
MDAI(R)	Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Röm. Abt., Mainz
RAC	Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum, ed. TH. KLAUSER, Stuttgart 1950ff.
RE	PAULYS Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft, ed. G. WISSOWA e. a., Stuttgart 1893ff.
REL	Revue des études latines, Paris
RHR	Revue de l'histoire des religions, Paris
RIDA	Revue internationale des droits de l'antiquité, Bruxelles

religion during the Republic¹. This article will focus attention upon a large number of the major public festivals of Rome and will include a survey of the recent scholarship which pertains to each. For the sake of convenience, the festivals will be taken up under four general headings: the festivals of the early city, the festivals of the new year (including those opening the military season), the festivals of the cycle of growth and the harvest, and the women's festivals. By far the most perplexing are the Lupercalia and the Sacra Argeorum (which fall in the first category); it will be necessary to discuss them at considerably greater length².

I. Festivals of the Early City

In three of the festivals, scholars have seen vestiges of the gradual enlargement of the primitive city of Rome. The rite of the Lupercalia has often been treated as a survival of the earliest stages in the development of the city. The Sacra Argeorum has been seen as representing a further stage in the growth of Rome, and the Septimontium, still another³. These festivals, however, are among the most puzzling of the Roman calendar, and it is clear that the Romans of the Late Republic and Early Empire no longer fully understood their meaning.

1. Lupercalia

We know that at the beginning of the Lupercalia, celebrated on February 15, priests sacrificed goats and probably a dog (Plutarch, *Q.R.* 68, *Romulus* 21.5) in the Lupercal, a cave at the southwest corner of the

ROL	Remains of Old Latin. Newly edited and translated by E. H. WARMINGTON, London-Cambridge, Mass. 1956
RPh	Revue de Philologie, Paris
SMSR	Studi e Materiali di Storia delle Religioni, Rome
StudRom	Studi Romani. Rivista bimestrale dell'Istituto di Studi Romani, Rome
TAPA	Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association, Cleveland, Ohio

¹ R. SCHILLING, *La situation des études relatives à la romaine religion de la République (1950—1970)*, ANRW I 2, Berlin-New York 1972, pp. 317—347.

² On the special difficulty of these two festivals, see SCHILLING (above, note 1), pp. 332—333. SCHILLING gives a convenient list of standard reference works in the field of Roman religion, which readers should consult in addition to the specialized works cited under individual festivals in this article. I shall not deal extensively with the subject of the *ludi*; for a discussion of the matter, see G. PICCALUGA, *Elementi spettacolari nei rituali festivi romani*, Quaderni di SMSR II, Rome 1965.

³ See, e.g., E. GJERSTAD, *Legends and Facts of Early Roman History*, Kungl. Humanistiska Vetenskapssamfundet i Lund. Scripta minora 1960—1961, II, Lund 1962, pp. 9—24.

Palatine Hill. After the sacrifice, blood from the victims was smeared with a knife on the foreheads of two young men and then immediately wiped away with wool dipped in milk (Plutarch, Rom. 21.5). We are told that the youths were then obliged to laugh. We do not know whether the two were themselves priests but we are told that the Luperci, having girded their naked bodies with the skins of sacrificed goats, feasted and then ran about in two companies (the Quinctiales and the Fabiani) with strips cut from the goat skins to strike any — especially the women — who presented themselves⁴.

Since the time of JORDAN it has usually been assumed that the Luperci ran around the base of the Palatine Hill to create a magic circle; the rite, according to this common opinion, was a "beating of the bounds"⁵. But the 1953 study of AGNES KIRSOPP MICHELS has cast much doubt upon this interpretation⁶. The phrase (Varro, Ling. Lat. 6.34) which has so often been cited in support of the old view need not mean that the Luperci ran around the base of the Palatine: *lupercis nudis lustratur antiquum oppidum Palatinum gregibus humanis cinctum*. The last three words do not describe the course of the Luperci themselves but rather the *oppidum*, which was "girded about with a human flock". The *greges humani* are, of course, not the Luperci but must be either those who await the stroke of the goat-skin thongs, or as MICHELS suggests (though as I think less likely), they are a flock of the dead (*humanus* = χθόνιος "belonging to the earth [*humus*]"⁷). At this time of year, when the Parentalia were also celebrated, spirits were thought to be abroad. Dionysius (Ant. Rom. 1. 80) describes the course of the original Luperci with the phrase περιελθεῖν δρόμῳ (cf. Plutarch, Rom. 21, 7.8: περιτρέχειν, περιθεῖν). The expression could, but need not, denote running in a circle. As a synonym for the words compounded with περί, Plutarch uses διαθεῖν (see also Appian, B.C. 2.109) and the Latin writers employ *currere*, *discurrere* and *decurrere*⁸. One might object that the town was "girded around", hence "encircled" with people ("a human flock") who were waiting along the expected (circular) route of the Luperci; i.e., around the base of the Palatine. Moreover, when Dionysius

⁴ The literature on the Lupercalia is extensive; see, of more recent works, U. BIANCHI, Cesare e i Lupercali del 44 a. C., StudRom VI, 1958, pp. 253—259; K. KERÉNYI, Wolf und Ziege im Lupercalienfeste, in: ID., Niobe: Neue Studien über antike Religion und Humanität, Zürich 1949, 136—147; P. LAMBRECHTS, Les lupercales, une fête pré-déiste?, Hommages J. Bidez—F. Cunnont, Collection Latomus II, Bruxelles—Berchem 1949, pp. 167—176; A. K. MICHELS, Topography and Interpretation of the Lupercalia, TAPA LXXXIV, 1953, pp. 35—59; M. P. NILSSON, Les luperques, Latomus XV, 1956, pp. 133—136; G. PICCALUGA, L'aspetto agonistico dei Lupercalia, SMSR XXXIII, 1962, pp. 51—62; H. J. ROSE, Two Notes on Roman Religion, Latomus VIII, 1949, pp. 9—14; E. SACHS, Some Notes on the Lupercalia, AJP LXXXIV, 1963, pp. 266—279; K. W. WELWEI, Das Angebot des Diadems an Caesar und das Luperkalienproblem, Historia XVI, 1967, pp. 44—69.

⁵ H. JORDAN, Topographie der Stadt Rom II, Berlin 1871, p. 269.

⁶ See note 4 above.

⁷ MICHELS (above, note 4), pp. 40—41, 49.

⁸ MICHELS, pp. 43—44.

(1.80.2) describes the naked youths of Pallanteum "running around their village", he does seem to imply that they are going around in a circle, and we are expected to see in this ritual a miniature form of the Roman Lupercalia. If this is so, it would follow that the Luperci ran in a circle around the Palatine.

MICHELS gives special weight, however, to the information from Augustine (*De Civ. Dei*, 18.12, which in her view must come ultimately from Varro) that the Luperci ran up and then down the slope of the *Sacra Via* (*Lupercorum per sacram viam ascensum atque descensum*):

"What picture do we now have of the course of the Luperci? There can be no doubt that they started from the Lupercal. Dionysius says that originally they ran about the village which he locates at the foot of the Palatine, and Varro adds that they went up the *Sacra Via* and down again, that is to the *summa Sacra Via* and back. Other writers refer to their *discursus*, and give us a picture of them dodging back and forth among the crowds whom they hit as they ran. This apparently took place in the Forum area, between the Lupercal and the *summa Sacra Via*. Thus when Caesar, according to Plutarch's description of the most famous celebration of the Lupercalia (*Caes.* 61), sat on the rostra, he would have been in a position to watch the whole performance, instead of having to wait a considerable length of time for Antony to come back into sight after running some two kilometers around the Palatine"⁹.

MICHELS concludes that, in the earliest phase of the city, the Luperci had run through this area of the Forum because it was originally the place of burial: the rite of the Lupercalia, in her view, concerned the spirit world¹⁰. Even if one insists that the Luperci did encircle the base of the Palatine (as well as run to and fro) MICHELS' study has shown that the rite was not the typical *lustratio*, in which the victims were sacrificed after having been led in procession to form a magic circle. The sacrifice in this instance precedes the running of the Luperci. The evidence pertaining to the route of the Luperci is ambiguous; but, whatever view one holds about the course, MICHELS has shown that the festival did not include a "beating of the bounds".

The offer of the kingly crown to Caesar by Marc Antony during the festival of 44 B.C. has suggested a different line of interpretation to several scholars. ALFÖLDI and DUMÉZIL have treated the concern with kingship as an essential feature of the rite rather than an incidental matter pertaining only to the one year¹¹. For DUMÉZIL Caesar's choice of the

⁹ MICHELS, pp. 45—46.

¹⁰ MICHELS, pp. 48—59.

¹¹ See A. ALFÖLDI, *Die Struktur des voretruskischen Römerstaates*, Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften, N.F., I 5, Heidelberg 1974, pp. 86—106; G. DUMÉZIL, *Archaic Roman Religion*, Chicago 1970, pp. 349—350, tr. PHILIP KRAPP (hereafter cited as DUMÉZIL, A.R.R.). I shall usually cite the more recent works of DUMÉZIL, in which he refers to his earlier works.

Lupercalia as the occasion for testing public opinion must have been based upon a recollection, however hazy, of a time when kings were made or confirmed during the Lupercalia¹². In a recent work he compares one of the myths by which Ovid explains the festival with a Vedic custom. In the *rājasūya*, the Indian king, imitating the sovereign god Varuna, symbolically eliminates a rival who is a blood relation. By a symbolic conquest of the rival's herd of cows, the king recovers the vital energy that the family member is thought to have taken from him and which has now passed into the animals. Through this act, the king prevents the risk of a revolt from within his own family^{1,3}.

In the Roman myth, in which DUMÉZIL finds parallels to the Vedic rite (see Ovid, *Fasti* 2.363—382), Romulus, Remus and the young shepherds of Rome, all naked, were exercising in the sunshine while the priests were roasting the *exta* of a she-goat sacrificed to Faunus. One of the shepherds saw a band of robbers stealing their bullocks; and at his cry, the brothers ran in different directions, each with a group of shepherds. It was Remus and the Fabii who recovered the bullocks. When Remus returned, he took the *exta* from the spit and said, "Surely only the victor may eat these!" As soon as Romulus came back, he and the Quintilii saw that the Fabii had eaten everything. Romulus laughed but was also pained that he and his men had not been able to do what Remus and the Fabii had done. The whole story is intended to explain why the Luperci are naked during the rite and why there are two companies. The myth does, as DUMÉZIL observes, foreshadow the later rivalry of the brothers for the kingship: at this moment, Remus has the upper hand. He and his companions have won back the herd and have partaken of the *exta*, the portion of the sacrifice that properly belongs to the gods. There is perhaps some analogy between the possession of the 'vital energy' which the king recovers through capturing the herd of his relative in the Vedic custom, and Remus' eating of the *exta*, the gods' portion, after recovering the bullocks. The Roman myth, however, is not about the possession of cattle but about the vanquishing of cattle thieves and the recovering of the herd — which still belongs to Romulus, Remus and their community of shepherds. The story is a foil for Romulus' later success. Only a few lines further on, when Ovid writes of their birth, he says that Romulus had more vigor and seems to have had "some god" in him (396). Remus' exultation in the story of the cattle theft has thus been premature. This myth which Ovid relates in connection with the Lupercalia may, perhaps, be in part a variation of the theme which DUMÉZIL discusses.

But the hypothesis that the Lupercalia in origin had to do with the conferral of royal power is not convincing¹⁴. There is little to indicate that

¹² *ibid.*

¹³ G. DUMÉZIL, *Fêtes romaines d'été et d'automne*, Bibliothèque des Sciences Humaines, Paris 1975, pp. 157—160.

¹⁴ See the study of WELWEI (above, note 4).

possessed, to avert wolves. The Luperci, then, were priests who were believed to confer vitality and to avert those forces, especially that of the wolf, which threatened the life of the flock.

By the time of the late Republic, when there were no longer wolves nor shepherds on the Palatine, the only function of these priests would seem to have been that of ensuring the fertility of the human flock. Professor MICHELS has noted in her excellent article that February was one of the months when spirits were thought to be at large. In discussing the Argei, I shall point out that infertility was commonly attributed to the work of malign spirits. In the case of both festivals, we are uncertain about the god for whom the rite was celebrated¹⁹. It is still possible to agree with FRAZER's conclusion that "the Lupercalia was a magical rather than a religious rite, and hence that it did not involve a reference to any particular deity"²⁰.

2. Sacra Argeorum

On the Ides of May the Romans celebrated the Sacra Argeorum, which Plutarch describes as the greatest of all their rites of purification²¹. It was the combined observance of the pontiffs and the Vestals. The two priesthoods were closely associated in the religious structure of the Romans, in part because they shared responsibility for the sacred fire. DUMÉZIL has persuasively argued that the Roman fire cult was derived from a common source with that of ancient India²². I hope to show that a recurring theme in the Vedic prayers to the god Agni ("Fire") supplies a rationale for the Roman festival.

Dionysius (Ant. Rom. 1.38) gives the fullest account of the ceremony, which culminated on the ancient *pons sublicius*: "The most eminent of the priests, called the pontiffs, with the Virgins who guard the eternal fire, accompanied by the praetors and all other citizens who might lawfully attend . . . hurl thirty effigies fashioned in the likeness of men, from the sacred bridge into the current (τὸ ῥεῦμα) of the Tiber; and they call these images the Argei." Ovid (Fasti 5.621) and Paulus ex Festo (14L²) inform us, more precisely, that it was the Vestals who cast the effigies into the river. Plutarch adds the information that the *flaminica*, the priestess of Jupiter, also participated in the rite, and that she bore a stern countenance, wearing no ornamentation of any kind (Q.R. 86). When she went to the Argei, Gellius writes (10. 15.30), the *flaminica* neither combed nor dressed her hair. Varro (Ling. Lat. 7.44) names the officiants only by the collective term

¹⁹ According to Ovid, Fasti 2.268 and 5.101 (cf. Plutarch, Rom. 21) it was Faunus; according to Livy 1.5,2, it was Inuus. See Sir J. G. FRAZER, *Publii Ovidii Nasonis Fastorum Libri Sex*, Vol. II, London 1929, p. 334, and WELWEI, pp. 48—50 for discussions of the problem.

²⁰ FRAZER (above, note 19), p. 335.

²¹ Q.R. 86.

²² DUMÉZIL, A.R.R., pp. 311—326.

sacerdotes; and he speaks not of thirty, but of twenty-seven effigies, the number which most scholars accept²³. Varro, Ovid, Paulus and Festus all tell us that the images were made of rush²⁴.

Several of the ancient authors presume that the custom arose from an earlier rite of human sacrifice²⁵. The most common view which the sources express, however, is that the effigies called Argei represented the corpses of Argives²⁶. The earliest mention of the ritual occurs in a verse of Ennius' 'Annales'²⁷, where the poet includes the Argei among the customs instituted by Numa. Varro indicates (Ling. Lat. 5.45—54) that there were twenty-seven shrines mentioned alternately as *sacraria* or *sacella* which were called Argei or Argea, the same name used of the effigies which were thrown into the Tiber²⁸. Varro's discussion of the shrines includes extensive quotations from a priestly manual, which apparently had the title 'Sacra' or 'Sacrificia Argeorum': the passages which he cites indicate that the book gave a detailed account of the locations of the *sacella*, probably (as most scholars have inferred) to map out the route of a procession (or of separate processions)²⁹. The very title of the priestly book seems to indicate that sacrifices were offered in these shrines; and we can make the same inference from an observation by Livy: *multa alia sacrificia locaque facienda, quae Argeos pontifices vocant, dedicavit* (sc. Numa)³⁰. Dionysius (Ant. Rom. 1.38) tells us that the pontiffs offered sacrifice (προθύσαντες) before the climax of the festival took place on the *pons sublicius*.

Finally, Ovid, without giving any details, relates that people went (perhaps in procession) to the shrines (*itur ad Argeos*) on March 16 and 17 (Fasti 3.791—792). We know nothing of a connection (if any) with the rites of May; but Gellius (loc. cit.) uses a similar expression (cf. *it ad Argeos*) in his discussion of the manner in which the Flaminica dressed. Since Plutarch (Q.R. 86) observes that the priestess appeared in this guise during the mid-May festival, it is most probable that the procession to the Argei which Gellius mentions took place before the ritual on the bridge in May. The *sacella* are sometimes called *sacraria* (Varro, loc. cit.); the word *sacrarium* refers to a place in which sacred objects were deposited³¹; hence, it

²³ For a discussion of the number, see FRAZER (above, note 19), vol. IV, pp. 76—77; WISSOWA, s. v. Argei, RE II, 1, 1896, col. 689; J. COLLART, VARRON: De lingua Latina Livre V, Publications de la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université de Strasbourg CXXII, Paris 1954, p. 171.

²⁴ Varro, Ling. Lat. 7.44; Ovid, Fasti 5.621—622, 659; Paulus 14L²; Festus 450L².

²⁵ Dionysius, Ant. Rom. 1.38, Macrobius, Sat. 1.11.47, Lactantius, Inst. 1.21.

²⁶ Macrobius, Sat. 1.11.47, Varro, Ling. Lat. 5.45, Paulus 18L², Festus, 450L²; cf. Plutarch, Q.R. 32, Ovid, Fasti 5.621—662.

²⁷ I. VAHLEN, Ennianae Poesis Reliquiae, Leipzig 1854, p. 20 assigned the lines to Book II (123—124).

²⁸ Cf. Paulus 18L², s. v. *Argea loca*, and see Livy 1.21.

²⁹ See, e.g. LATTE, R.R., p. 412 and R. E. A. PALMER, The Archaic Community of the Romans, Cambridge 1970, p. 85.

³⁰ Livy 1.21.

³¹ M. VAN DOREN, Les sacraria catégorie méconnue d'édifices sacrés chez les Romains, L'Antiquité Classique XXVII, 1958, p. 74.

is tempting to assume that the effigies were placed in the shrines during the observances of March.

Modern theories about the meaning of the festival have been quite numerous but those which still enjoy some acceptance fall into three broad classes. The first is based upon the conclusion that the effigies represented the victims of a human sacrifice. WISSOWA and CLERICI, for example, look to the circumstances of Roman political life in an attempt to find the origin of the practice. The second class stresses the material from which the images were made. The third emphasizes that the festival concluded upon the *pons sublicius*.

WISSOWA advanced the hypothesis that the ritual began in response to a Sibylline oracle during the period of stress between the first and second Punic wars³². We have no direct evidence that there ever was such an oracle. But the images made of rush, in WISSOWA's view, were eventually offered in place of Greeks, the human victims which the assumed oracle had demanded. WISSOWA was convinced that the festival was a late addition to the civic worship of the Romans. He observed that none of the ancient calendars mentions the rite and that, in contrast to all but one of the old *feriae stativae*, the Argei fell on an even-numbered day. FRAZER and many contemporary scholars have followed WISSOWA in concluding that Ovid assigns the festival to May 14³³, but even if this were the date in Ovid's time, we would have no sure indication that the rite was a late addition since it must have been one of the *sacra publica pro sacellis*, which were not always indicated in the calendars³⁴.

It is quite doubtful, however, that Ovid dates the festival on the 14th rather than on the 15th. He writes (*Fasti* 5.600) that the Pleiades become visible "when there is still one night before the Ides". Three verses later he tells us that, before the Ides, the face of Taurus appears. It was then, he continues, that the Vestals performed the Argei ritual. Ovid apparently means that the Pleiades rise on the night of the 13th to the 14th and that "the remaining night before the Ides" (when the face of Taurus appears) is the night of the 14th to the 15th. It is true, as FRAZER notes, that half of this night would belong to the Ides themselves since the Roman day (like our own) began at midnight³⁵. FRAZER concludes that the expression *nox . . . una super* must refer to a complete rather than to one-half of a night; and the only whole night that intervenes before the Ides is the 13th to the 14th. In this view, the Pleiades rise before the dawn of the

³² Op. cit., coll. 689—700.

³³ FRAZER, op. cit., p. 75; F. BÖMER, P. Ovidius Naso: Die Fasten, Vol. II, Heidelberg 1958, p. 327.

³⁴ A. K. MICHELS, *The Calendar of the Roman Republic*, Princeton 1967, pp. 73—74; W. WARDE FOWLER, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic. An Introduction to the Study of the Religion of the Romans*, London 1899, repr. Washington—London 1969, p. 16; LATTE, R.R., p. 414; GJERSTAD (above, note 3), p. 21.

³⁵ Above, note 33, p. 73f.

13th, and Taurus appears on the early morning of the 14th; i.e., on the day (May 14th) before the Ides.

This reading is based upon the assumption that Ovid is writing with unusual exactness in the matter, whereas in reality he nearly always thinks of the festival day as though it began at dawn³⁶. We might just as appropriately insist that, if he were being so precise, Ovid would have said that the Pleiades appear when a night and one-half remain before the Ides. It is more natural to understand the phrase "before the Ides" (*Idibus . . . prior*) to mean that the face of Taurus rises just before the Ides, which begin for all practical purposes, if not in the strict sense, at dawn. Ovid's account, if understood in this way, agrees with that of Dionysius, who states that the festival occurred on the 15th³⁷. The calendric evidence is an inadequate proof that the feast was a late addition³⁸.

WISSOWA's theory, however, raises a much more important issue: he concluded that the word *Argei* did, in origin, mean 'Greeks', just as many of the ancients believed; and he compared the casting of the effigies into the Tiber with the well-known cases of ritual murder in 228 and 216 B.C., when two Greeks and two Gauls were buried alive in the *forum boarium* on the authority of the oracular books³⁹. WARDE FOWLER long ago identified one problem with this hypothesis: it is most unlikely, as he states, that within the half century before Ennius' birth the Romans would have forgotten the sacrifice of Greek victims with which the *Argei* festival supposedly began; but both Ennius and the annalistic tradition upon which Livy draws attribute the foundation of the *Argei* to Numa⁴⁰. The festival was a regular observance, in which the traditional Roman priesthoods took part each year. Plutarch, on the other hand, states that the "sacrifice" of the two Greeks and two Gauls must have been made to "strange and alien gods" (Q.R. 83). Livy describes the atrocities of 216 as *sacrificia extraordinaria*: the event, he concludes, was wholly foreign to normal Roman practice (Livy 22.57.6). The burying of live victims was quite possibly borrowed from Etruscan lore, as LATTE suggests; and the assumed Etruscan practice must date from around the early fourth century⁴¹. We are told that the *decemviri*, rather than the pontiffs, presided over these *sacrificia extraordinaria* at Rome⁴². By contrast, the

³⁶ See, e.g., *Fasti* 1.317—318, 461—462; 2.73—78, 267—269, 475—476, 639—640, 857—864; 3.713—714; 4.373—374, 389—390, 629—630, 679—680, 713—714, 721—722, 943—947; *Idibus* at 5.670 need not imply that Ovid is discussing a different day from that in 621—662; 663—692 describe the second observance of the day.

³⁷ *Ant. Rom.* 1.38.

³⁸ MICHELS, *Calendar*, has a helpful discussion on pp. 133—135.

³⁹ Pliny, N.H. 28.12, Livy 22.57.6; Plutarch, Q.R. 83, Marc. 3; Orosius 4.13.3. On this problem, see C. BÉMONT, *Les enterrés vivants du forum boarium*, *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* (École Française de Rome) LXXII, 1960, pp. 133—146.

⁴⁰ W. WARDE FOWLER, *Religious Experience of the Roman People*, London 1911, pp. 55, 321—322.

⁴¹ LATTE, R.R., pp. 256—257.

⁴² Livy and Pliny, loc. cit. (above, note 39).

celebrants of the Argei rite were among the most ancient of the city's religious functionaries. The combined presence of the Vestals, the pontiffs, and the Flaminica in the Argei procession in all probability confirms the Roman tradition that the festival was of great antiquity: GJERSTAD dates the origin of the *sacella* and the processions to the earliest phases of the pre-urban epoch⁴³.

The proposed etymology, however, still concerns us. The name Argei occurs only once in early Latin, in the very passage in which Ennius refers to the ceremony established by Numa. Elsewhere in archaic literature the word 'Argives' is invariably *Argivi*, which preserves the digamma (*Argivi* = *ArgiFi*: Ἄργειοί). In much the same way, we read *Achivus* rather than *Achaeus* in archaic Latin⁴⁴. Loan-words from Greek which show the digamma, as L. R. PALMER states, must have entered the language in a very early period⁴⁵. During the Republican era, the name Argei (which does not preserve the digamma) appears only in association with the festival. In the Augustan age, we find the noun with the meaning 'Greeks' once in Horace (Carm 2.6.5: *Tibur Argeo*) and again in Ovid (Am. 3.6.46: *Tiburis Argei*); in both cases, however, the juxtaposition of the noun to *Tibur* (cf. *Tiberis*) creates a play on words so that *Argeus* retains much of its special association with the festival. Even in later Latin (as the compiler of the Thesaurus article s. v. *Argos* remarks) *Argivi* is still much more common than Argei⁴⁶. Argei in the name of the festival seems to mean 'Greeks'. But that the annual rite had once been an exorcism of the spirits of any Greeks who happened to die in the city during the year is most improbable, especially if the custom dates to the pre-urban epoch. Both the rarity of the word Argei and the unlikelihood that the custom had anything to do with Argives make it improbable that the association is anything more than a folk etymology. When we compare the words *cerei* and *laneae* (which belonged to the effigies of the Saturnalia and Compitalia) with Argei, we can suspect that the original form of the name may have been a material adjective (but from what root?) and that the form Argei that we meet in the Republic has resulted from a number of changes. Perhaps the original name was close enough to the word for 'Greeks' to have inspired a change to the form Argei when the festival (whose meaning was forgotten) was given a new interpretation. The origin of the word Argei may be lost beyond recall.

L. CLERICI puts the origin of the rite near 390, in agreement with a lesser tradition, preserved only by Festus (450 L²) that the practice emerged after the invasion of the Gauls⁴⁷. Upon the withdrawal of the enemy (Livy

⁴³ op. cit., pp. 21—22.

⁴⁴ *Argivi* appears in Ennius, *Medea Exul* 257 (ROL), *Telephus* 343 (ROL), Accius, *Astyanax* 131 (ROL), *Atreus* 194 (ROL), *trag. inc.* 52 (ROL), Plautus *Am.* 208. For *Achivi* see the *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae* II. 533 s. v. *Argos*.

⁴⁵ L. R. PALMER, *The Latin Language, The Great Languages*, London 1955, p. 50.

⁴⁶ *Argei* = *Argivi* in Statius, *Theb.* 8.742 and Martial 4.57.3. For a discussion of etymologies, see LATTE, R.R., p. 413, note 2.

⁴⁷ L. CLERICI, *Die Argei*, *Hermes* LXXVII, 1942, pp. 89—100.

5.50), the *duumviri* turned to the oracular books in search of rites to purify the shrines which the Gauls had defiled; and we read in the same passage that a college comprised *ex iis qui in Capitolio atque arce habitarent* was established to organize Capitoline games in thanksgiving to Jupiter. CLERICI infers that there were, in reality, two separate bodies, a *collegium Capitolinorum* (who supervised the games) and another, composed of dwellers on the *arx*, an area which was not yet embraced by the designation 'Capitoline'. The latter college, he suggests, was charged with the task of expiating the ancient *sacella* by the rite which came to be called the *sacra Argeorum*⁴⁸.

This explanation depends upon the hypothesis that Argei is the plural of an original form **Arceius* 'one who inhabits the citadel'⁴⁹. The change from *c* to *g* which we read in Argei could only have taken place as a mistake in spelling after *g* was introduced into the written language to indicate the voiced stop. Such a mistake is possible but CLERICI's thesis demands that we suppose a second change, as well, the loss of an *i* in the nominative plural. Even if we are prepared to agree that both are possible at the same time, we still confront a problem: the termination *-eius* is found in gentilicia (cf. Tarpeius) and in transliterations of Greek words; there is no convincing parallel in early Latin which supports the conclusion that the ending should occur in a native Latin word meaning 'the inhabitant of [a place]'⁵⁰. The basic difficulty in CLERICI's interpretation, however, comes in his theory that the twenty-seven victims were Gauls, offered in retaliation for a sacrifice of Romans which the Gauls themselves made (he infers) in 390⁵¹. We would have to conclude from the lines of Ennius, in which Numa is the founder of the Argei, that if the spectacular event had ever occurred (the sources do not mention it), the memory of its connection with the Argei rite must have faded within about a century and a half.

In the second class of interpretation, the human form of the effigies is considered an incidental development. The explanations of LOUISE ADAMS HOLLAND and of ROBERT E. A. PALMER attach much more significance to the material from which the effigies were made than to the meaning of the name Argei. HOLLAND emphasizes the role of the Vestals and interprets the ceremony in the context of their other activities during the days immediately preceding⁵². From May 7th to 14th, the Virgins were engaged in the preparation of grain and salt for the sacred cakes (Servius Auct. ad Ecl. 8.82). HOLLAND concludes that in the bridge ritual the Vestals disposed of the grain which was left over from the completion of their work by casting it into the Tiber⁵³. She does not take up the question of why

⁴⁸ CLERICI, pp. 91—96.

⁴⁹ CLERICI, p. 96.

⁵⁰ See objection of LATTE, R.R., p. 413, note 2.

⁵¹ CLERICI, pp. 98—99.

⁵² L. A. HOLLAND, Janus and the Bridge, Papers and Monographs of the American Academy in Rome XXI, Rome 1961, pp. 313—331.

⁵³ *ibid.*, pp. 321—323.

the state should have mobilized the greater part of its religious machinery for such a task; and it is difficult to understand why the left-over grain would have been fashioned into the shape of men. The sources more surely indicate that the effigies were made of rush than of grain⁵⁴. But it is often the case that the rites which belong to a particular religious season form a coherent pattern. HOLLAND's suggestion that the Vestals' role in the Argei bears some relation to their other duties at this time of year is thus most helpful. These tasks included the preparation of the *mola salsa* from the first ears of standing grain, and in the following month, the annual cleansing of the shrine which housed the sacred fire⁵⁵. In both of these activities, the Vestals prepared for rites which were to be offered in the year ahead.

PALMER has interpreted the festival from the point of view of its itinerary, about half of which the 'De Lingua Latina' preserves (5.45—54)⁵⁶. He has noticed that Varro locates one shrine of the first of the four regions and another of the second *in tabernolis*. The phrase *in tabernola* (5.47, 50) has usually been taken to mean that each of the two shrines was "in a small booth" of some type. But PALMER observes that in the third region, one of the *sacella* was "the solitary building within an augural precinct", and from the association of this shrine and of another shrine (*apud aedem Romuli*) in the fourth region with augury, he infers that the *tabernolae* of the first and second districts were augural huts⁵⁷.

Varro's itinerary, according to PALMER, represents the "vestige of four processions to sacred areas once used by twenty-seven curias for taking the auspices"⁵⁸. Nearly all of the *sacella*, we learn from Varro, were situated in proximity to other cult places. The oldest of the temples which Varro mentions dates to 466, and the newest, to 241 B.C.⁵⁹ By the time the handbook from which Varro quotes had been composed, PALMER suggests, tracts of land which belonged to twenty-three of the Argei had been given over to other sacred use from that for which they had originally been intended; but one augural seat, he infers, had been conscientiously preserved in each of the four regions⁶⁰. These *tabernolae* would have been made of stakes, branches, twigs, reeds (*harundines* and *calami*) and straw (*stramentum*), the same material from which other ancient huts were constructed. PALMER concludes that the effigies were also fashioned from reeds and straw, as well as from rush, and that they must have been made of the old thatching which would have been gathered during an annual procession established for the purpose of repairing the augurs' huts⁶¹.

⁵⁴ Ovid in one verse describes the effigies as *straminei*; on the meaning of this word, see A. FRIDH, *Stramentum*, *Eranos* LXIX, 1971, pp. 151—165.

⁵⁵ Ovid, *Fasti* 6. 219—234, 711—714.

⁵⁶ above, note 29, pp. 84—97 (hereafter cited as PALMER).

⁵⁷ PALMER, pp. 86—89.

⁵⁸ PALMER, p. 85.

⁵⁹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰ PALMER, pp. 88—90.

⁶¹ PALMER, p. 90.

We have no instances from other ancient writers which show whether or not the word *tabernola*, which we read in Varro, was ever used as a synonym for the specialized term *tabernaculum* 'augur's hut'. Yet, it is quite possible that several of the shrines were located upon such sites. PALMER bases the hypothesis that all the shrines were originally used for augury in part upon his view that the manual entitled the 'Sacra Argeorum' was an augural book⁶². Frequent citations throughout Varro's work show that he knew the *libri augurum* well⁶³. But it is also evident that Varro was familiar with the pontifical books; and we know from Livy's account that the *sacella Argeorum* were the concern of the pontiffs⁶⁴, who actually took part in the May festival. In all likelihood, it seems to me, the 'Sacra Argeorum' were pontifical books. Indeed, it would follow from PALMER's hypothesis that the augurs, who are never mentioned as participants, should have played a leading role in the rite of the Argei. Nor, I think, can we be sure that the material from which the effigies were made came from the augurs' huts. The sources indicate that the effigies were made of rush but probably not of straw and other types of reed; on the other hand, rush is never listed among the materials from which the Romans constructed huts⁶⁵.

In the past, scholars have laid much emphasis upon the climax of the rite which took place on the *pons sublicius*; PALMER focuses attention upon the *Argea loca*, and for this reason (as well as for many others), we are most indebted to his study, which is one of the most valuable to date. On the basis of our present evidence, however, I am inclined to take a somewhat different view of the festival from that which PALMER has offered. We cannot, it seems to me, be certain that the later shrines and temples near the *sacella* had encroached upon sanctuaries which had originally belonged to the Argei. There is no sure indication in the sources that tracts of land had once been attached to the *sacella* as cult property. Festus and Gellius define the word *sacellum* as a small and usually open area which was consecrated and furnished with a small altar⁶⁶. The proximity of the *sacella Argeorum* to the sanctuaries of other cults can best be explained by the inherently sacred character of the places themselves⁶⁷. As NILSSON has observed, it is usually not the shrine that makes a place holy, but the natural sanctity of a place which accounts for the establishment of the shrine⁶⁸. At least five of the *sacella* bordered on groves; and the word *lucus* probably indicates that they were sacred⁶⁹. The *aedes Deum Penatium*, which stood

⁶² PALMER, pp. 90—91.

⁶³ *ibid.*

⁶⁴ Livy, 1. 21.

⁶⁵ See above, note 54.

⁶⁶ Festus 422L², Gellius 7.12.5, Livy 10.23.6.

⁶⁷ PALMER, in my view, is almost certainly correct that a number of these places had originally been augural sites.

⁶⁸ M. P. NILSSON, *Greek Piety*, Oxford 1948, repr. New York 1969, p. 9.

⁶⁹ On the sacred character of groves, see the entry s. v. *lucus* in A. ERNOUT—A. MEILLET, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine. Histoire des mots*, I, Paris 1959, p. 368.

in the vicinity of a *sacellum*, occupied land which had formerly been regal property, and the temple of Quirinus, which was close by another of the *sacella Argeorum*, had apparently replaced an older shrine of the god⁷⁰. It seems, then, that the Romans consistently used these sacred areas as cult places and that, following the usual practice, they added numerous shrines and temples as time went on. Varro's quotations from the priestly manual suggest that many — and perhaps all — of the *sacella* were located in holy places of Rome's oldest communities.

The third and perhaps the most widely accepted interpretation of the festival is that the images were sacrificed to Father Tiber in place of the human victims which he would otherwise have taken. In support of her conclusion that the pontiffs were, in origin, "bridge-makers" (just as the name seems to indicate) JUDITH HALLETT calls attention to the participation of the priests in the Argei rite⁷¹. HALLETT explains that the sacerdotal office was conferred upon the bridge-builders in recognition of their awesome accomplishments:

"The bridge-maker must have originally gained the reverence of his fellow citizens by reason of his ability to create a concrete, tangible artifact which enables one to cope with dangerous, uncertain, other-worldly situations. In short, he possessed power not unlike that of the gods of the Rig Veda, who can make as well as have a *pánthāh* ['path']. The sacrifice of human forms from the *pons sublicius* in the festival of the Argei may thus function as a token apology for the competition with the river spirits, the effigies in this case representing the lives which the waters would have taken if left unchallenged⁷²."

HALLETT's conclusion about the meaning of the word *pontifex* is most persuasive even without the aid of this explanation of the Argei rite, which was first advanced by JORDAN and later (independently) by FRAZER⁷³. The etymology 'bridge-maker' for *pontifex* was apparently the most widely accepted by the Romans; and the May ritual did take place on the *pons sublicius*, which the pontiffs themselves maintained and were thought to have built⁷⁴. The acceptance which FRAZER's interpretation has won is thus understandable, especially in light of the numerous instances of sacrifice to water spirits which he has adduced from widely divergent cultures⁷⁵.

Ovid and Paulus ex Festo tell us, however, that it was the Vestals who cast the effigies into the river. If the intention of the rite was to appease

⁷⁰ See S. PLATNER—T. ASHBY, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome*, London 1929, p. 438.

⁷¹ J. HALLETT, "Over Troubled Waters": the Meaning of the Title Pontifex, *TAPA CI*, 1970, pp. 219—227.

⁷² HALLETT, p. 226.

⁷³ JORDAN (above, note 5) I, p. 398; FRAZER, IV, pp. 91—109.

⁷⁴ Varro, *Ling. Lat.* 5.83.

⁷⁵ FRAZER, IV, pp. 97—109.

Father Tiber, we would expect the pontiffs themselves to have thrown the *simulacra* from the bridge since, as the bridge-makers, the *pontifices* were responsible for having deprived the river of its human victims. But the greatest obstacles to this common interpretation are the incredible number of supposed victims offered each year and the fact that the river was so often worshipped as a life-sustaining bestower of health and blessings. The Argei rite is very similar to other purificatory rituals in which the Tiber merely carries away the sources of defilement⁷⁶. There is no evidence that Father Tiber ever received expiatory sacrifice, even after great floods when such offering might most reasonably be expected⁷⁷. In most of the analogies which FRAZER cites from other cultures, river gods receive one or even several substitute victims (the Neckar was apparently satisfied with a loaf of bread) but nothing on the order of twenty-seven every year⁷⁸. Perhaps it is because, on the whole, the Romans held a positive attitude toward the river that the kind of interpretation which FRAZER advanced seems never to have occurred to the ancients whose writings on the festival survive.

The interpretation which I would like to offer builds upon an observation of FRAZER but one which he quickly dismisses in favor of the view that the images were sacrificed to the Tiber. FRAZER notes that the *sacra Argeorum* followed immediately upon the conclusion of the Lemuria, which occupied the days from May 9th to 13th. If we remember that Rome was besieged by spirits (the *lemures*) at this time of year, we can discover a relationship between the *sacella*, the effigies, and the officiants which offers a clearer picture of the ritual of the Argei and its origin.

When Ovid describes the rite of exorcism which was performed during the Lemuria, he remarks that the visitation of the ghosts makes the days of the Lemuria unsuitable for marriage (Fasti 5.487—489). The manner in which the Flaminica dressed on May 15th warned that this prohibition extended to the time of the Argei. The priestess put aside the bridal veil which she customarily wore and appeared with her hair uncombed instead of with her usually elaborate coiffure⁷⁹. We know that she presented herself in a similar guise in March, when the Salii danced (Ovid, Fasti 3.397/398), and again in June until the purification of Vesta's shrine was completed (Fasti 6.219—234). On both occasions, we are told the Flaminica's uncombed hair reminded women that they should consider the marriage season closed. Ovid adds that she abstained from intercourse with her husband, the Flamen, during these days. The manner in which she appeared at the festival of the Argei betokened the presence of some threat to wives and prospective brides. The proximity of the bridge ritual to the Lemuria is evidence that the threat came from hostile spirits.

⁷⁶ See J. LE GALL, *Recherches sur le Culte du Tibre*, Publ. de l'Inst. d'Art et d'Archéol. de l'Univ. de Paris II, Paris 1953, pp. 72—82, 111.

⁷⁷ LE GALL, p. 66.

⁷⁸ FRAZER, IV, 86—91.

⁷⁹ Plutarch, Q.R. 86; Gellius 10.15.30.

The Vestals' participation in such a rite is in keeping with the nature of their priesthood. Much as the Flamen Dialis, by his peculiar manner of life, assured the presence of Jupiter in the city, the Virgins were the living representatives of the divinity whom they served⁸⁰. ANGELO BRELICH shows that, although Vesta is the goddess of the hearth and its fire, she is identical with neither⁸¹. The Romans thought of the fire itself as male. By the Classical age, Vesta assumed certain characteristics of the Mediterranean earth goddesses. Her interest extended to the fertility and the general well-being of her worshipers. But Vesta was given the title Mater and equated with the earth primarily because the earth was regarded as the source of the fire⁸². The derivation of her name (from IE **a₁eu-* 'to burn')⁸³ and the purpose for which the fire, purifying water and *mola salsa* (the basic elements of her cult) were employed reveal that her first concern was the offering of sacrifice: Vesta was herself the eternal priestess, wholly consecrated to her tasks through virginity.

All of our evidence supports BRELICH's thesis that the priesthood of the Vestals was of Roman origin; DUMÉZIL, nonetheless, has shown that the Romans preserved the basic components of the Indo-European fire cult and that the three fires of Roman ritual correspond in essential ways to the three-fold fire in the religion of Vedic India⁸⁴. The hymns of the Rig Veda show that the rite of exorcism was a constant feature of the Indian cult. In numerous prayers, the god of the sacred fire is invoked to cast out malevolent spirits, for whom *rakṣases* is by far the most common name⁸⁵. Rig Veda 7.15.10 extols the god by declaring that "Agni, the immortal pure, purifying and praiseworthy god of brilliant lustre" chases away the hostile spirits⁸⁶. The guileful creatures, who are repeatedly called 'slanderers' and 'liars', are above all enemies of the fire⁸⁷:

"With your sharp eye protect the sacrifice, O Agni; carry it forward to the gods, O very wise one. May not the . . . Yātudhānas injure you, while you, their habitual killer, burn fiercely by their side, O observer of men" (10.87.9).

⁸⁰ DUMÉZIL, A.R.R., pp. 151—153.

⁸¹ Op. cit., p. 17, 50—52; Varro, Ling. Lat. 5.61.

⁸² A. BRELICH, *Vesta, Albae Vigiliae N.F. VII*, Zurich 1949, pp. 48—59. Ovid, *Fasti* 6. 267—268, Dionysius, *Ant. Rom.* 2.66.3.

⁸³ DUMÉZIL, A.R.R., p. 322 gives this etymology. See also BRELICH, p. 58.

⁸⁴ DUMÉZIL, A.R.R., pp. 311—326; BRELICH, p. 11, pp. 104—105.

⁸⁵ For discussions of the subject, see A. B. KEITH, *The Religion and Philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, I, Harvard Oriental Series XXXI, Cambridge, Mass. 1925, pp. 236—242; J. GONDA, *Some Observations on the Relations between "Gods" and "Powers" in the Veda a propos of the phrase sūnuḥ sahasaḥ*, *Disputationes Rheno-trajectinae I*, The Hague 1957, p. 38; A. PANDE, *The Evil Spirits of the Gṛhyasūtras*, *Journal of the Bihar Research Society* XXXIV, 1948, pp. 59—74.

⁸⁶ I use the translations of H. VELANKAR, *Hymns to Agni*, *Journal of University of Bombay* n.s. XXV.2, 1956, pp. 9—31, XXVI.2, 1957, pp. 1—24, XXVIII.2, 1959, pp. 1—19, XXXI.2, 1962, pp. 1—24 throughout this discussion.

⁸⁷ See especially Rig Veda 7.104.

Because the *rakṣases* spoil the oblations of the sacrifice, they are especially hateful to Agni, who is himself portrayed as an ideal priest: "The thousand-eyed and very active Agni . . . is praised as the praiseworthy Hotṛ" (1.79.12)⁸⁸.

Like nearly all demons, those of the Rig Veda love the night and are frequently described as 'spirits of the darkness': Agni expels them with the brilliance of his light (10.118.7)⁸⁹. Although they are conventionally associated with the darkness, these malign spirits also appear by day, either to invade the place of sacrifice or to disturb funerals, at which they assume the likeness of ancestral spirits⁹⁰. They take particular delight in hovering around brides at weddings and are a constant source of danger to women, especially in pregnancy and childbirth⁹¹. They even contaminate the food supply in their attempt to destroy life⁹². The *rakṣases* appear as vultures or as animals that crawl in the night; but they are most often described as human in shape, probably (as KEITH explains) because the ancients imagined that they were the malevolent spirits of ancestors⁹³. Vedic prayers invoke the gods to shackle and burn the demons, to sink them under all three earths, or to plunge them into the gloom of the abyss from which they had come⁹⁴.

The *rakṣases* are similar in a number of ways to the ghosts which were thought to invade Rome during May: the *lemures*, like the *rakṣases*, were usually identified as hostile spirits of ancestors; both the Roman and Vedic ghosts were associated with the darkness; and we are told of both that they could assume animal as well as human form⁹⁵. The appearance of the Flaminica, which warned of the perils to women at this season of the year, carries the analogy even further: the Roman spirits, like those of Vedic India, were thought to endanger the powers of fertility; and it must be largely for this reason that the Vestals, whose priesthood was concerned with fertility as well as with the fire, played a role in their expulsion.

Varro, Ovid, Macrobius and Festus all preserve the tradition that the effigies represented corpses⁹⁶. There is no indication in the actual descriptions of the rite itself that the Vestals intended to drown the images when they cast them from the bridge. Dionysius says that the Argei were thrown

⁸⁸ Agni is the model of the sacrificer: see KEITH, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

⁸⁹ See also J. GONDA, *Epithets in the ṚgVeda*, *Disputationes Rheno-trajectinae* IV, The Hague 1959, pp. 80, 91.

⁹⁰ *Atharva Veda* 18.2.28; see KEITH, pp. 72—74, 238.

⁹¹ See KEITH, p. 237, *Rig Veda* 10.162, and J. C. HEESTERMAN, *The Ancient Indian Royal Consecration. The Rājasūya described according to the Yajus texts and annotated*, *Disputationes Rheno-trajectinae* II, The Hague 1957, p. 38.

⁹² *Rig Veda* 7. 104. 10.

⁹³ *Rig Veda* 7. 104.17—22. See also KEITH, pp. 72—74.

⁹⁴ *Atharva Veda* 8.3.11; *Rig Veda* 7. 104. 3—5, 11; 10. 87. 11.

⁹⁵ Nonius 197 L: *lemures larvae nocturnae et terrificationes imaginum et bestiarum*.

⁹⁶ Ovid, *Fasti* 5. 655—660; Varro, *Ling. Lat.* 5. 45; Macrobius, *Sat.* 1.11.47.

into the current (τὸ ρεῦμα) of the Tiber; and the flow of the water would have carried the rush effigies away⁹⁷.

In their manner of disposing of the effigies, the Vestals followed an old Roman practice, of which LE GALL has collected numerous examples⁹⁸. The Romans freed the city of all sorts of pollution, both physical and spiritual, by casting the source of defilement into the Tiber⁹⁹. The Vestalia are typical of such rites, in which the flow of the Tiber's water (*flavis . . . Thybris aquis*) was thought to carry the contamination out to sea (*in mare*)¹⁰⁰. This custom at times extended even to the disposal of corpses of certain criminals and enemies of the state¹⁰¹. The intent of the measure was not to punish the deceased by depriving him of a normal burial but to release the land from pollution and to forestall the threat that the spirit of the dead man might come back in retaliation¹⁰². The practice, which Dionysius records, of binding the Argei hand and foot, is consistent with such a purpose. FRAZER cites analogous instances, including one from Attica, in which the hands and feet of effigies were shackled with the intention of immobilizing a victim by sympathetic magic¹⁰³. GJERSTAD discusses an unusual burial in the archaic Roman city in which the arms of a corpse were apparently bound, perhaps to prevent the spirit of the dead man from striking back¹⁰⁴.

The route of the Argei processions suggests that the spirits were thought to haunt the sacred places of the city, much as the *rakšases* infested the area of the sacrifice. We must suspect that the choice of the *pons sublicius* as the site of the climax of the Roman rite was dictated by the pontiffs. The sight of the Vestals on the bridge which was sacred to the pontiffs would have lent a note of unity to the ceremony, which was the common concern of the priests and priestesses. But what active role did the pontiffs play in the ceremony? From Dionysius we learn that they offered preliminary sacrifices. Were these offered in the *sacella Argeorum*, as Livy's comment (1.21) seems to mean? Do the titles of the pontifical manual ('Sacra' or 'Sacrificia Argeorum') and Livy's words *sacrificia locaque sacris faciendis, quae Argeos pontifices vocant* refer to the casting away of

⁹⁷ Ant. Rom. 1.38. ⁹⁸ LE GALL, pp. 83—95.

⁹⁹ Ovid, Fasti 6. 713—714; also 6. 227.228 and Tibullus 3. 10, 7—8.

¹⁰⁰ Ovid, Fasti 6.227—228. On Vesta and the Vestalia, see G. GIANELLI, *Il sacerdozio delle Vestali romane*, Florence 1913; F. GUIZZI, *Il sacerdozio di Vesta. Aspetti giuridici dei culti romani*, Naples 1962; C. KOCH, *Drei Skizzen zur Vesta-Religion*, Studies presented to D. M. Robinson II, ed. by G. MYLONAS and D. RAYMOND, St. Louis 1951, pp. 1077—1091 = *Id.*, *Religio. Studien zu Kult und Glauben der Römer*, Erlanger Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kunstwiss. VII, Nürnberg 1960, 1—16; C. KOCH, *Vesta*, RE VIII A, 2, 1958, col. 1717—1776; H. HOMMEL, *Vesta und die frühromische Religion*, ANRW I 2, Berlin—New York 1972, pp. 397—420.

¹⁰¹ See LE GALL, pp. 88—92 and M. RADIN, *The Lex Pompeia and the Poena Cullei*, JRS X, 1920, pp. 119—130.

¹⁰² LE GALL, pp. 90—92.

¹⁰³ *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 448—450.

¹⁰⁴ E. GJERSTAD, *Early Rome*, Vol. I, Acta Instituti Romani Regni Sueciae, Series in 4°, XVII, 1, Lund 1953, p. 50.

the effigies or to the offering of sacrifices beforehand — even to the *προθυσία* which Dionysius mentions? Was the whole rite of the Argei a purification by fire (i.e., by the fire of sacrifice) as well as by water?

We must conclude that the climax of the ceremony performed by the Vestals was so dramatic that it overshadowed the role of the *pontifices*. The pontiffs and the Vestals shared a general concern with the effective offering of sacrifice in Rome. The Vestals concern was derived from their service to the sacred fire, which was indispensable to the offering of oblations. In Vedic India, the fire itself was invoked to drive away the hostile spirits which attacked the sacrifice. In Rome, I would suggest, the priestesses of the fire (who were concerned with the offering of a number of important sacrifices), along with the pontiffs, acted out a ritual which had the same goal. In a rite of sympathetic magic, effigies resembling corpses were cast into the Tiber; and apparently hostile spirits were thought to be expelled from the shrines and carried away with the shackled effigies¹⁰⁵.

3. Septimontium

There were two categories within the *sacra publica*; first, those *pro populo*, and second those *pro montibus, pagis, curiis* and *sacellis* (Festus 284L²). The *sacra publica* of the second class (though public) were originally the concern of a particular region or institution rather than of the whole population¹⁰⁶. The *Sacra Argeorum* were *pro sacellis*. The Septimontium, which also belongs to the second category, was *pro montibus* (Varro, Ling. Lat. 6.24). The festival had nothing to do with the seven hills of Classical Rome. Festus tells us that there was a sacrifice on the Palatium, as well as on the Velia (474, 476L²); and from Plutarch (Q.R. 69) we learn that carts drawn by animals were not permitted in the city on that day. Our most reliable testimony about the Septimontium is preserved in a text transmitted by Antistius Labeo which, as JACQUES POU CET has noted, is probably older than the Augustan age. It concerns an annual rite (probably held on December 11) celebrated by eight groups inhabiting the Palatine, the Velia, the Germalus, the Cispian, the Oppian, the Fagutal, Subura and a portion of the Caelian¹⁰⁷. WISSOWA explained the occurrence of the Caelian in the list as a gloss on Subura, which area he interpreted not as the Subura of the Classical age but rather as the Succusa, a summit of the Caelian¹⁰⁸. POU CET reopens the question, posed by HOLLAND, as to whether

¹⁰⁵ KLOTZ, s. v. Sexagenarii, RE II A, 2, 1923, col. 2025 shows that the proverb "Sexagenarians over the bridge!" has nothing to do with the festival.

¹⁰⁶ Above, note 34.

¹⁰⁷ J. POU CET, Le Septimontium et la Succusa chez Festus et Varron. Un problème d'histoire et de topographie romaines, Bulletin de l'institut historique Belge de Rome XXXII, 1960, pp. 25—73.

¹⁰⁸ G. WISSOWA, Septimontium und Suburra. Ein Beitrag zur römischen Stadtgeschichte, in: Satura Viadrina. Festschrift zum 25jährigen Bestehen des philologischen Vereins zu

the name Septimontium was originally a compound of *saepti* (rather than *septem*) and *montes*. In HOLLAND's view, the feast of the Septimontium (sc. *saepti*) "intended to invoke a blessing on the enclosure and its barrier"¹⁰⁹. It is true that, in some country districts, the diphthong *ae* was pronounced as a single vowel. But Varro must have heard the word pronounced at Rome and must have known the antiquarian name from his research. According to GJERSTAD, we have "no archaeological evidence for an artificial fortification of the pre-urban villages . . . and the natural defence of the hills in question would hardly justify calling them *saepti* in a more specific way than any other hills"¹¹⁰.

It is possible that the area referred to as the Septimontium was named from the seven eminences which it embraced but that it also included the valley called Subura. In GJERSTAD's chronology, the Septimontium belongs to the second phase (periods I and II) of the pre-urban epoch¹¹¹.

II. Festivals of the New Year

Although in the Republican calendar the year began on January 1, the traditional or religious New Year (Lydus describes it as *πάτριος*) was March 1¹¹². On the Kalends of March, fresh laurel branches were placed over the doors of the Regia and Curia, and a new fire was struck in the *aedes* of Vesta (Ovid, *Fasti* 3.140—144). On this day, the holy shields of Mars were said to move: they were taken from the Regia by the Salii, who opened the campaign season by performing their war dances, which they repeated several times until the twenty-fourth of the month¹¹³. On the 14th — an even-numbered and hence an exceptional day for a religious festival (cf. the Regifugium) — a man dressed in skins was driven out by the crowd, who beat him with long wands as they shouted "Mamurius!" (Lydus, *De Mens.* 4.49). The rite occurs immediately before the Ides, the day which would originally have been that of the full moon. In legend (Ovid, *Fasti* 3.383—392) Mamurius becomes the blacksmith who made copies of the *ancile* (the shield of Mars and the Salii) that fell from the sky; but this rite is now usually recognized as a New Year's observance in which

Breslau, Breslau 1896, 1—9 = ID., *Gesammelte Abhandlungen zur römischen Religions- und Stadtgeschichte*, Munich 1904, pp. 230—252.

¹⁰⁹ POUCEY, above, note 107, p. 73; L. A. HOLLAND, *Septimontium or Saepimontium*, TAPA LXXXIV, 1953, p. 30.

¹¹⁰ GJERSTAD (above, note 3), p. 23, note 1.

¹¹¹ GJERSTAD, p. 24.

¹¹² Lydus, *De Mens.* 3.22.

¹¹³ J. P. V. D. BALSDON, *The Salii and Campaigning in March and October*, CR XVI, 1966, pp. 146—147. See R. BLOCH, *Sur les danses armées des Saliens*, *Annales: Economies, Sociétés, Civilisations* XIII, 4, 1958, pp. 706—715.

the "old (or the old one of) March" was expelled¹¹⁴. In the Salian hymn, the old one is called Mamurius Veturius. H. STERN has given us an excellent article, with illustrations, discussing two mosaics which depict Mamurius and the Marmuralia¹¹⁵.

On the Ides themselves, the plebs celebrated a New Year's rite of a very different type, the festival of Anna Perenna. Somewhere between the area of the present Piazza del Popolo and the Tiber, the common folk encamped. Some pitched tents, others made temporary huts of boughs and still others merely slept under the open sky (Ovid, *Fasti* 3.523—530). They sang, danced and drank generous quantities of wine, praying for as many years as the number of cups they emptied (Ovid, *Fasti* 3.531—532):

Et publice et privatim ad Annam Perennam sacrificatum itur, ut annare perennareque commode liceat (Macr. Sat. 1.12.6).

Anna is not to be interpreted as the spirit of the old year, who had to be driven out like Mamurius Veturius. There is no good evidence to support the theory that her image was cast into the Tiber each year¹¹⁶. Anna is the symbol of longed-for fulness of years. The myths in which she plays a part depict her either as a benevolent old woman or as a clever wag who makes a fool of Mars by disguising herself as the Minerva he loves: Anna is thus old in years but not at heart. Her first name seems to be a common nursery word (which occurs with variant forms in many languages) for an old woman. And the second name is similar to the kind of gemination which we observe in *Prorsa Postverta*, *Panda Cela*, *Patulcius Clusius*, etc.¹¹⁷ By popular etymology, based on a resemblance of her name to *annus*, Anna becomes the spirit of the New Year's wish; indeed, this wish is in all probability echoed (and thus explains the conjunction) in Varro's reference to the goddess (in *Aul. Gell.* 13.23): *Anna ac Peranna*¹¹⁸. We need not conclude, in spite of the general license which characterized her festival, that the rite was a kind of common celebration of marriage intended to promote the fertility of the earth¹¹⁹.

In the calendar we can observe a number of paired festivals occurring at different times of the year; e.g., the *Regifugium* of February 24 and the *Poplifugia* of July 5 (about both of which we know very little¹²⁰). In the case of the military rites, two groups of festivals which answer to one another have a clear rationale. Indeed, we find the same rationale in the nature

¹¹⁴ See A. ILLUMINATI, *Mamurius Veturius*, *SMSR* XXXII, 1961, pp. 41—80; J. LOICQ, *Mamurius Veturius et l'ancienne représentation italique de l'année*, *Hommages à J. Bayet*, *Collection Latomus* LXX, Bruxelles-Berchem 1964, pp. 401—426.

¹¹⁵ H. STERN, *Note sur deux images du mois de Mars*, *REL* LII, 1974, pp. 70—74.

¹¹⁶ Cf. R. LAMACCHIA, *Annae festum geniale Perennae*, *Parola del Passato* XIII, 1958, p. 384.

¹¹⁷ LAMACCHIA, p. 404.

¹¹⁸ D. PORTE, *Anna Perenna, «Bonne et heureuse année»?*, *RPh* XLV, 1971, pp. 282—291, especially p. 287.

¹¹⁹ LAMACCHIA, p. 390.

¹²⁰ See W. KRAUS, *RE* XXII, 1, 1953, col. 74—78, s. v. *Poplifugia*.

of the two colleges of Salii: the Salii of Mars, established ironically by the peaceful Numa, effect the transition to war while the Salii of Quirinus, established by the warrior king Tullus, effect the transition to peace¹²¹. The military festivals of March open the campaigning season: the moving of the shields on the Kalends, the races of the Equirria (March 14), the lustration of arms on the Quinquatrus (March 19), and the lustration of trumpets on the Tubilustrium (March 23)¹²². The October *armilustrium* (October 19) answers to the lustrations of March, and the sacrifice of the October horse (October 15) — a rite which has been well explained by DUMÉZIL — assures that the king (or the *regnum*) is the beneficiary of the works of Mars at the close of the military season¹²³. Most scholars, while admitting that the god plays an agricultural role (by protecting the crops against hostile forces), now view Mars as the warrior, the divinity (in DUMÉZIL's terminology) of the second function¹²⁴.

III. The Cycle of Growth and the Harvest

The admirable work of HENRI LE BONNIEC, 'Le Culte de Cérés à Rome', published in 1958, reveals the complex interdependence of the festivals in the "Cycle of Vegetation". LE BONNIEC's special interest throughout the book is Ceres, whose name is derived from IE **ker-*, **kere* "make to increase" and related to *creare* and *crescere*¹²⁵. The work, however, considers the festivals of a number of divinities who have to do with growth. LE BONNIEC concludes that there was an old festival of Tellus and Ceres in the temple of Tellus, celebrated on its *natalis* (December 13)¹²⁶. This will have been after the autumn sowings not too long before the sprouts begin to appear. Both Tellus, the nourishing earth, and Ceres, who assures growth, must have been invoked to protect the seeds and sprouts from the perils of winter at this time¹²⁷. The Sementivae, announced at some time during

¹²¹ DUMÉZIL, A.R.R., p. 276—277.

¹²² See J. LOICQ, Le témoignage de Varron sur les Ecurria, Latomus XXIII, 1964, pp. 491—501; UDO W. SCHOLZ, Studien zum Altitalischen und Altrömischen Marskult und Marsmythos, Bibliothek der klassischen Altertumswissenschaften, N.F., 2. Reihe, XXXV, Heidelberg 1970, pp. 12f., 75—76, 148f.; V. BASANOFF, L'épisode des joueurs de flûte chez Tite-Live et les Quinquatrus, fête de Minerve, RIDA II, 1949 (Mélanges F. de Visscher I), pp. 65—81. O. HENTSCHEL, s. v. Quinquatrus, Name zweier römischer Feste, RE XXIV, 1, 1963, col. 1149—1162.

¹²³ DUMÉZIL, A.R.R., pp. 215—228 and Id., Fêtes romaines d'été et d'automne, pp. 181—219.

¹²⁴ DUMÉZIL, A.R.R., pp. 205—245; cf. SCHOLZ, pp. 78—79 and M. D. PETRUŠEVSKI, L'évolution du Mars italique d'une divinité de la nature à un dieu de la guerre, Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae XV, 1967, pp. 417—422.

¹²⁵ H. LE BONNIEC, Le culte de Cérés à Rome, des origines à la fin de la République, Études et Commentaires XXVII, Paris 1958, p. 23.

¹²⁶ LE BONNIEC, p. 53.

¹²⁷ LE BONNIEC, pp. 54—56.

the middle of January and celebrated toward the end of the month, again invoked the goddesses in common to protect the wheat — this time, when it was passing into the blade. On the (one) day of this rite, Tellus and Ceres were offered spelt and the flesh of a pregnant sow (Ovid, *Fasti* 1.671—672)¹²⁸. The oxen which plowed the field were garlanded and prayers were addressed to Tellus first, and then to Ceres¹²⁹.

It was not until mid-April that the grain reached the third critical phase of its life; and at that time of the year, there were two feasts, the *Fordicidia* to Tellus alone (April 15) and the *Cerialia* to Ceres independently (April 19). In one sense, the cultic unity of the two goddesses was broken with these two festivals, but in another, the unity was preserved since an interval of four days normally establishes an interrelationship between two festivals¹³⁰.

On the *Fordicidia*¹³¹, there were sacrifices of cows in calf to Tellus in the buildings of the thirty *curiae*, as well as on the Capitol, and on private farms. The offering of pregnant cows to earth, teeming with the new grain, was thought to enhance the fecundity of Tellus and to assure thereby the success of the crop. The oldest Vestal burned the calf embryos (apparently during the rites on the Capitol) and saved the ashes for use in the rites of the *Parilia* several days later¹³². DUMÉZIL draws a parallel between this custom and the Vedic *aṣṭāpadī*, "the cow with eight feet", offered to Earth and to the Marut¹³³. The Indian priest faces the difficulty that, while such an offering is unusually abundant, it is also imperfect and hence unsuitable since the calf is not fully developed. To solve the difficulty, only the juice of the embryo was offered along with the cow; and the embryo itself, put to another ritual use, was offered without words of consecration to Marut in a supplementary rite¹³⁴. In a similar way at Rome, the ashes of the calves, which were offered separately, were put to an additional liturgical use.

The *Cerialia* (April 19) occurred at about the time that the ear of grain was forming in its sheath¹³⁵. It was not a festival of the plebeian triad (Liber and Libera took no part) but of Ceres alone. We can assume that Ceres was offered her usual victim, the sow; and we hear that during her games, there was a *sparsio nucum*, a folk ritual to promote the creative energies of nature. But the feature of the *Cerialia* which has received most

¹²⁸ LE BONNIEC, pp. 58—62; see also A. DELATTE, *Recherches sur quelques fêtes mobiles du calendrier Romain*, Liège 1957, pp. 381—391; J. BAYET, *Les feriae sementivae*, CRAI 1949, p. 410—411; J. BAYET, *Les feriae sementivae et les indigitations dans le culte de Cérès et de Tellus*, RHR CXXXVII, 1950, pp. 172—206.

¹²⁹ LE BONNIEC, p. 64.

¹³⁰ LE BONNIEC, pp. 66—67.

¹³¹ LE BONNIEC, pp. 66—67, 111.

¹³² Ovid, *Fasti* 4.637—640.

¹³³ DUMÉZIL, A.R.R., pp. 371—373.

¹³⁴ See also G. DUMÉZIL, *Rituels indo-européens à Rome*, *Études et commentaires* XIX, Paris 1954, pp. 11—25.

¹³⁵ LE BONNIEC, pp. 108—112.

attention is the letting loose in the Circus of foxes with torches tied to their backs (Ovid, *Fasti* 4.682–712)¹³⁶. The event cannot be explained by analogy with the sacrifice of a dog on the Robigalia, or with the story of Samson's foxes (Judges 15:1–5); nor, it seems to me, should we interpret it as a magic rite intended to arouse the vital heat of the earth for the benefit of the grain¹³⁷. It is certainly one of the more spectacular elements in Roman religion; indeed, we might look for the explanation of this spectacular, if cruel, practice in rural folk custom, just as Ovid suggests¹³⁸. Did it grow out of the farmers' revenge upon the fox for damaging the crops (Ovid, *Fasti* 4.711–712)? Is it, then, a spectacle of the games without any deep ritual meaning?

There is some analogy between the release of the foxes in the Circus and the letting loose of hares and goats in the arena during the *ludi* of the Floralia on May 3 (Ovid, *Fasti* 5.371f., Martial 8.67.4)¹³⁹. The foxes are destructive to Ceres' grain and are in turn destroyed. The hares and the goats are prolific animals. Their presence at the games carries out the same theme as the throwing of beans, lupines and peppers at the spectators (Horace, *Sat.* 2.3.182f.; Persius 5.177f.). The presence of courtesans and a general mood of abandon during the festival will have helped to establish the same motif: it was the festive celebration of the coming of the growth process to flower; and if the more expansive side of the worship was inspired by that of Aphrodite Antheia, we still see vestiges of Flora's ancient rites (she had her own *flamen*) in the Florifertum, the carrying of an offering (as the word must mean) to the goddess¹⁴⁰. There was apparently an offering of first fruits — in this case of blossoms — probably in Flora's ancient sanctuary on the Quirinal. Ceres makes the *fruges* grow; Flora was thought to preside over them at the crucial moment of their coming to flower. But once more, before the harvest, the worshipper turned to Ceres, who was offered the *porca praecidanea*¹⁴¹.

Although her annual rites of the agricultural cycle continued to be observed, in the last two centuries of the Republic and in the Early Empire Ceres became much more to the Roman imagination than the goddess who presided over the growth of the grains. She came to be more and more identified with the Greek Demeter, and in the Aventine temple of the plebeian triad, completed according to tradition in 493, she was worshipped with Liber and Libera¹⁴². The old Roman god Liber — whose name is a

¹³⁶ LE BONNIEC, p. 114 and ID., *Les renards aux Cerialia*, *Mélanges Carcopino*, Paris 1966, pp. 605–612.

¹³⁷ LE BONNIEC, *Cérès*, p. 121. See also K. BUSCHENHAGEN, *Das Cerealienfest, die Robigalien und Simsons Füchse*, *Gymnasium LXI*, 1954, pp. 422–426.

¹³⁸ *Fasti* 4.682–712.

¹³⁹ See I. MUNDLE, s. v. *Flora*, *Floralia*, *RAC VII*, 1969, col. 1124–1131, LE BONNIEC, pp. 199–200.

¹⁴⁰ LE BONNIEC, pp. 197–199.

¹⁴¹ LE BONNIEC, p. 148.

¹⁴² LE BONNIEC, pp. 213–275.

derivate in -es- of IE**leudh* (the name seems to mean "he who brings growth or increase") — had affinities with Ceres herself¹⁴³. On the March 17 festival of the Liberalia, old women (who called themselves his priestesses!) sold cakes and made offerings of them, in the name of the buyer, on small portable hearths. On this same day, young men assumed the *toga virilis* or *libera*, a custom which may have arisen from the mere similarity between the names 'Liber' and *liberi*¹⁴⁴. In association with Ceres and Libera, however, Liber became both a symbol of *libertas* for the people, whose grain supply he watched over along with his colleagues in the plebeian triad, and he became Iacchos or Bacchus. Ceres began to have her own mysteries, patterned in large measure after those of the Eleusinian Demeter: Liber became (to some extent) Bacchus, and Libera, Kore; at the same time, the old Italic Liber was overshadowed by the god of the Bacchic mysteries which became so popular at the end of the Republic¹⁴⁵.

Several feasts of a rather different nature, about which we are not very well informed, complete the cycle of growth and harvest. There are two pairs of feasts in which Consus (whose name is related to *condere*)¹⁴⁶ and Ops "Abundance" are closely associated: the August 21 Consualia are followed, in four days, by the Opiconsivia, and the December 15 Consualia are followed in four days by the Opalia¹⁴⁷. We read (Tert. Spect. 5) that in the August feast, the Flamen Quirinalis and the Vestals sacrificed at an underground altar in the Circus. The altar belonged to Consus, and we hear of the offer of first fruits there (Dionysius Hal. 2.31.2), as well as of the crowning of work animals with garlands on this day (Plutarch, Q.R. 48). DUMÉZIL cites Indo-European analogies to this pairing of abundance (*ops*) with the divinity who protects the stores (Consus)¹⁴⁸. In her August rite, and as she was worshipped in the Regia, the goddess was Ops Consiva¹⁴⁹.

Jupiter, the sovereign god, also takes his part in the realm of growth and the harvest. The two Vinalia (the Priora of April 23 and the Rustica

¹⁴³ A. BRUHL, *Liber Pater, origine et expansion du culte dionysiaque à Rome et dans le monde romain*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome CLXXV, Paris 1953, p. 22.

¹⁴⁴ BRUHL, p. 16; E. BENVENISTE, *Liber et liberi*, REL XIV, 1936, pp. 52—58.

¹⁴⁵ LE BONNIEC, pp. 292—310, 379—455; H. WAGENVOORT, *De dea Cerere deque eius mysteriis Romanis*, Mnemosyne, Ser. 4, XIII, 1960, pp. 111—142; M. P. NILSSON, *The Bacchic Mysteries of the Roman Age*, HThR XLVI, 1953, pp. 175—202 and *Id.*, *The Dionysiac Mysteries of the Hellenistic and Roman Age*, Skrifter utgivna av Svenska Institutet i Athen, Ser. in 8°, V, Lund 1957.

¹⁴⁶ DUMÉZIL, A.R.R., p. 156; LE BONNIEC, pp. 185—195.

¹⁴⁷ BÖMER, *Die Fasten*, p. 156. On Consus, see A. FIGANIOL, *Consus, dieu du Cirque*, Scripta varia, Collection Latomus CXXXII, Bruxelles—Berchem 1973, pp. 175—187; P. H. N. G. STENOEWER, *Étude sur Ops et Consus*, Diss. Utrecht, Groningen 1956; A. ERNOUT, *Philologica II, Études et commentaires XXVI*, Paris 1957, p. 174; K. LATTE, *Religion romaine et critique philologique, le flamen Quirinalis aux Consualia*, REL XXXIX, 1961, pp. 91—93.

¹⁴⁸ DUMÉZIL, A.R.R., p. 268.

¹⁴⁹ See G. DUMÉZIL, *Les cultes de la Regia, les trois fonctions et la triade Jupiter, Mars, Quirinus*, Latomus XIII, 1954, pp. 129—139.

of August 19), and probably also the Meditrinalia (October 11), were sacred to him¹⁵⁰. But the Vinalia were also festivals of Venus (Ovid, *Fasti* 4.877), whose name seems to be derived from a neuter **venus*, meaning 'the power to charm'. From this root come *venerari* 'to captivate the good will of the gods by charm', *venia* 'grace' and *venenum* 'a magic charm'¹⁵¹. We can attribute the goddess' interest in the Vinalia in large part to the power of the wine which (in addition to its other uses) was regularly offered in sacrifices¹⁵². The festivals were primarily, however, rites of Jupiter; and as BAYET has observed, we have, at the side of Jupiter-Fides, the pair Jupiter-Venus: the first represents the contractual reciprocity between gods and men; the second, free grace¹⁵³.

Of the Vinalia Priora (April 23), Pliny writes (N.H. 18.287) that *de-gustandis vinis instituta nihil ad fructus attinent*. On this day there were libations to Jupiter and the pressings of the new wine were tasted (Plut. Q.R. 45, Pliny N.H. 18.287). At the Vinalia Rustica (August 19), the priest of Jupiter plucked the first grapes of the season and offered them in sacrifice to the god (Varro, *Ling. Lat.* 6.16). Jupiter's interest is not in the natural process by which wine is made but only in the product which he appropriates through these rites for himself. DUMÉZIL has shown that such an interest in wine, which is valued more for its potency than for its nourishing qualities, is to be expected of the sovereign god. At Rome, wine is offered to the sovereign deity; in Vedic India, where there are several analogies to Jupiter's interest in wine, *Soma* — the divine drink — is personified and invoked as a royal sovereign¹⁵⁴. The interest, then, of both Jupiter and Venus, who cooperate in these festivities, can be explained by the power that inheres in the wine.

IV. Women's Festivals

During the Veneralia of April 1, however, Venus was worshipped independently of Jupiter. The name of the festival appears only in the late

¹⁵⁰ On the Vinalia see, above all, R. SCHILLING, *La religion romaine de Vénus, depuis les origines jusqu'au temps d'Auguste*, Bibliothèque des Écoles françaises d'Athènes et de Rome CLXXVIII, Paris 1954, and ID., *Les origines de la Vénus romaine*, *Revue des Études Anciennes* LXI, 1959, pp. 108—110. On the name Venus, see SCHILLING, *La relation Venus—Venia*, *Latomus* XXI, 1962, pp. 3—7. See also DUMÉZIL, *Fêtes romaines d'été et d'automne*, pp. 87—107 and ID., *Quaestiunculae indo-italicae* 14—16, *REL* XXXIX, 1961, pp. 261—274.

¹⁵¹ See R. SCHILLING, *Die Sinnbezogenheit des Wortes Venus zu seinen stammverwandten Formen*, *Hermes* XCIII, 1965, pp. 233—234.

¹⁵² SCHILLING, *La religion romaine de Vénus*, p. 133.

¹⁵³ JEAN BAYET, *Histoire politique et psychologique de la religion romaine*, Bibliothèque historique, 1969, p. 142.

¹⁵⁴ DUMÉZIL, *Fêtes romaines d'été et d'automne*, p. 93.

calendar of Philocalus but SCHILLING concludes that the rites themselves, or at least parts of them, were quite old¹⁵⁵. For ladies of high rank the emphasis was upon lustral fumigations and upon the purifying bath which was analogous to that given on the day to the cult statue of Venus herself. These rites of renewal must have endowed the worshiper with the power to captivate or to charm her beloved; hence, the epithet *Verticordia* under which Venus was honored in the ceremony¹⁵⁶. The ritual apparently had almost a moral dimension and is not to be confused with the service conducted on the same day for the *humiliores* (especially courtesans) under the patronage of *Fortuna Virilis* in the men's baths. This latter rite, as SCHILLING convincingly explains, was aphrodisiac in character¹⁵⁷. Was it a later development annexed to the more lofty conceptions which belonged to the rites of Venus *Verticordia*? *Verticordia* seems to be closer to the spirit of the old Roman Venus.

The *Veneralia* are among a number of festivals reserved exclusively or at least primarily for women. One of the most archaic was the cult of *Mater Matuta*, whose festival was limited to the *bonae matres* and celebrated on June 11 (Ovid, *Fasti* 6.475, *Tert. Monogam.* 17). DUMÉZIL and GAGÉ¹⁵⁸ have contributed extremely valuable studies of the rite, during which a female slave (the only slave who participated in the ceremony) was ritually driven out with a box on the ear. Women prayed to the goddess for their nieces and nephews. DUMÉZIL has shown that *Matuta* (> *Matutinus*) clearly means 'the Dawn'; and much as the Vedic *Uṣásahī* 'the Dawns', who are sisters of the Night, violently drive out the demoniac and shapeless shadows at the coming of day, during the *Matralia* the *bonae matres* expelled the slave woman who represented the base-born element¹⁵⁹.

The worship of the *Bona Dea* was very popular among women, who tended her Aventine temple which, at least in the late Republic, had snakes and an *herbarium* for rites of healing¹⁶⁰. During her moveable feast, held on an early December night in the house of a magistrate, the goddess was offered sacrifice by noble ladies. The most famous celebration is, of course, that of 62 B.C. when P. Clodius sneaked in in disguise, only to be apprehended¹⁶¹. Veneration of Cybele, the *Magna Mater*, was also a mark of the noble *matrona*. The goddess was a late arrival, having made her way with her own native priest and priestess from Pessinus in 204 in answer

¹⁵⁵ La religion . . . de Venus, p. 389; see also CH. FLORATOS, *Veucralia*, *Hermes* LXXXVIII, 1960, pp. 197—216; and J. GAGÉ, *Matronalia*, *Collection Latomus* LX, Bruxelles—Berchem 1963, pp. 39—48; G. RADKE, s. v. *Verticordia*, *Kultbeiname der Venus in Rom*, *RE* VIII A, 2, 1958, col. 1650—1661.

¹⁵⁶ SCHILLING, *op. cit.*, pp. 391—394.

¹⁵⁷ SCHILLING, *op. cit.*, pp. 394—395.

¹⁵⁸ DUMÉZIL, *A.R.R.*, pp. 50—55, 337—339; GAGÉ (above, note 155), p. 159f., 225f.

¹⁵⁹ DUMÉZIL, p. 52.

¹⁶⁰ LATTE, *R.R.*, pp. 228—231; J. MAROUZEAU, *Juppiter Optimus et Bona Dea*, *Eranos* LIV, 1956, pp. 227—231; G. PICCALUGA, *Bona Dea*, *SMSR* XXXV, 1964, pp. 195—237; P. STICOTTI, *Bona Dea*, *Aquileia Nostra* X, 1939, pp. 27—34.

¹⁶¹ Plutarch, *Cicero* 28, and *Caesar*, 9f.; Dio Cassius, 37.45; Cicero, *Ad Atticum*, 1.12.

to a Sibylline oracle. All Romans were forbidden by a *senatusconsultum* to take part in the worship which her native clergy conducted; the goddess was honored, instead, by *ludi*, and by lavish dinner parties given on her festival, April 4, in the homes of upper-class women¹⁶². The importation of this foreign cult, perhaps more than that of any other, foreshadowed the decline of the traditional Roman religion which, during the Empire, gave way to the worship of a host of foreign deities.

¹⁶² On the worship of the Magna Mater in Rome, see F. BÖMER, *Kybele in Rom: Die Geschichte ihres Kults als politisches Phänomen*, *MDAI(R)* LXXI, 1964, pp. 130—151; P. BOYANCÉ, *Cybèle aux Mégalesies*, *Latomus* XIII, 1954, pp. 337—342; TH. KOEVES, *Zum Empfang der Magna Mater in Rom*, *Historia* XII, 1963, pp. 231—247; P. LAMBRECHTS, *Cybèle, divinité étrangère ou nationale?*, *Bull. Soc. belge d'Anthropol. et de Préhist.* LXII, 1951, pp. 44—60 and *Id.*, *Les fêtes 'phrygiennes' de Cybèle et d'Attis*, *BIBR* XXVII, 1952, pp. 141—170; P. ROMANELLI, *Magna Mater e Attis sul Palatino*, *Hommages à J. Bayet*, *Collection Latomus* LXX, Bruxelles—Berchem 1964, pp. 619—626.

SONDERDRUCK AUS

AUFSTIEG UND NIEDERGANG DER RÖMISCHEN WELT

GESCHICHTE UND KULTUR ROMS
IM SPIEGEL DER NEUEREN FORSCHUNG

HERAUSGEGEBEN

VON

HILDEGARD TEMPORINI

UND

WOLFGANG HAASE

II

PRINCIPAT

SECHZEHNTER BAND

(2. TEILBAND)

HERAUSGEGEBEN VON W. HAASE



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