

STUDIES IN MAGIC FROM LATIN LITERATURE

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NOTE

This monograph has been approved by the Department of Classical Philology of Columbia University as a contribution to knowledge worthy of publication.

CLARENCE H. YOUNG.
Chairman.

PREFACE

Although references to magic are found in almost every Latin author, there is not available in English any general treatment of the subject of Magic in Latin Literature. We have, it is true, excellent chapters by Fowler,¹ Dill,² Cumont,³ and others, touching upon Roman magic; but these scholars treat the subject rather because of its important relation to some other field of investigation than for its own sake.

This dissertation will attempt, therefore, first, to furnish a general introduction to Roman magic, especially as reflected in Latin literature; and then, to add, as a specimen of detailed study, a chapter on Roman prophylactic magic. To this beginning I hope to add, later, chapters on various phases of the same subject, such as, Magic and Curative Medicine, The Number Three in Magic, and Spitting as an Act of Magic.

By way of further delimitation it may be added that Greek literature has been drawn upon only where it bears directly upon our discussion, and that no exhaustive collection of the material of Latin literature itself has been attempted beyond the third century of our era.⁴ I have been compelled, also, through lack of space and time, to ignore practically all epigraphical and archaeological material.

¹ *The Religious Experience of the Roman People*, Chapters 2 and 3.

² *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius*, 443-483.

³ *Oriental Religions in Roman Paganism*, the chapter entitled *Astrology and Magic*, 162-195.

⁴ To this one important exception has been made in the case of Marcellus Empiricus.

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STUDIES IN MAGIC
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF ROMAN MAGIC

I. THE MEANING OF *Máγos*, *Μαγεία*, *MAGUS*, AND *MAGICUS*

Neither *máγos* nor *μαγεία* is found in Homer,¹ though references to magic are numerous.² Apparently the first reference in Greek literature to the *μάγοι*³ occurs in Herodotus, who tells us that they were a Median tribe.⁴ They formed a priestly caste,⁵ resembling that of the Jewish Levites, were the leaders in wisdom and in the education of the royal household,⁶ and

¹ Cf. August Gehring, *Index Homericus* (Leipzig, 1891), s. vv. *máγos* and *μαγεία*.

² Cf. Pliny, N. H. 30, 5; Iliad 7, 193–196, with Leaf's excellent note: 11, 740–741: 12, 254–255: 13, 434–435: 15, 321–322: 24, 343–345 (magic strokes used by the gods): 14, 214–221 (magic girdles): 16, 235: 23, 135–136; Od. 10, 235 ff.; infra, 19, n. 97.

³ For the derivation of the word cf. A. Vaniček, *Fremdwörter im Griechischen und Lateinischen*, s. v. *μάγοι*; Leo Meyer, *Handbuch der Griechischen Etymologie*, 4, 318, s. v. *máγος*; Emile Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, s. v. *μάγοι*.

⁴ Herodotus, 1, 101. The word is found somewhat earlier in Persian. The great inscription of Behistûn contains seven instances of the nominative *magus*, and five instances of the accusative.

⁵ Cf. Strabo, 16, 762; Lucian, *Μαγέβιοι* 4; Xenophon, *Cyrop.* 8, 1, 23; Clitarchus, apud Diog. Laert., *Vit. Phil.*, Proem. 6; Hesychius, s. v. *máγος*; Apuleius, *Apol.* 25.

⁶ Cf. Apuleius, *De Plat.* 1, 3; Plato, *Alc.* 121E–122A; Cicero, *Div.* 1, 46; 90–91: *Fin.* 5, 87; *Leg.* 2, 26; Valerius Maximus, 8, 7, Ext. 2.

were expert in divination⁷ and astrology;⁸ but were not at all acquainted with what the Greeks called γοητεία, or what is now generally known as magic.⁹

These μάγοι, under the leadership of a certain Osthane, accompanied the army of Xerxes into Greece,¹⁰ where their unhallowed association with the invader, together with their knowledge of the occult influences of the stars, reduced them in the esteem of fifth century Greeks from the position of most influential religious and educational advisers to that of cheats, rascals, and tricksters.¹¹

But Euripides is familiar with the word μάγοι also as applied to those who possess preternatural control over natural phenomena, since he mentions a disappearance that was effected ἤτοι φαρμάκοισιν ἢ μάγων τέχναισιν ἢ θεῶν κλοπαῖς.¹² By Plato's time the word μάγος had become so common in the meaning of 'a controller of natural phenomena' that Plato dares to use it in a metaphorical sense, calling certain desires 'those dire magicians and tyrant-makers.'¹³ Finally, Lucian uses the word freely of a sorcerer or sorceress.¹⁴ There seems there-

⁷ Cf. Clitarchus, apud Diog. Laert., Vit. Phil., Proem. 6; Cicero, Div. 1, 46-47; Velleius Paterculus, 2, 24, 3; Pliny, N. H. 24, 164; Varro, apud Augustinum, C. D. 7, 35.

⁸ Cf. Valerius Maximus, 8, 7, Ext. 2; Suidas, s. v. γοητεία.

⁹ Aristotelis Frag., apud Diog. Laert., Vit. Phil., Proem. 1 (ed. Rose [Leipzig 1886], 44) τὴν δὲ γοητικὴν μαγείαν οὐδ' ἔγνωσαν, φησὶν Ἀριστοτέλης ἐν τῷ μαγικῷ καὶ Δείνων ἐν τῇ πέμπτῃ τῶν Ἱστοριῶν.

¹⁰ Cf. Pliny, N. H. 30, 8; Alfred Maury, *Magie*, 61 and references there given. For Osthane cf. infra, 20 and n. 99.

¹¹ Cf. Sophocles, Oed. Tyr. 387 ὕφεις μάγον τοιόνδε, μηχανορράφον . . . ; Aeschines, In Ctes. 137 Ἄλλ' οἶμαι οὔτε Φρυγῶνδ' οὔτε Εὐρύβατος οὔτ' ἄλλος οὐδὲς πώποτε τῶν πάλοι πονηρῶν τοιοῦτος μάγος καὶ γόης ἐγένετο.

¹² Orest. 1497 ff.

¹³ Repub. 9, 572E δταν δ' ἐλπίσωσιν οἱ δεινοὶ μάγοι τε καὶ τυραννοποιοὶ οὔτοι μὴ ἄλλως τὸν νέον καθέξουσιν. . . .

¹⁴ Lucian, Luc. sive As., 4 μάγος γάρ ἐστι δεινός. . . . Cf. Demonax 23 Ἀλλὰ καὶ μάγου τινός εἶναι λέγοντος καὶ ἐπ' ὧδ' ἔχειν ἰσχυράς, ὥς ὑπ' αὐτῶν ἅπαντας ἀναπελθεῖν καὶ παρέχειν αὐτῷ ὅποσα βούλεται, Μὴ θαύμαζε, ἔφη.

fore to have been a natural transition in the meaning of the word among the Greeks from that of priest to that of trickster, and then to that of one who controls natural phenomena; or, in other words, to our conception of a magician in the darker meaning of the English word. We may be reasonably certain also that in popular usage the word *μάγος* had come to mean 'magician' rather than 'Magian' before the literary usage makes such a development apparent.¹⁵

We turn now to the word *μαγεία*. It is certain that Plato used it in the sense of 'the Magian philosophy and religion.'¹⁶ Aristotle, however, by using the words *γοητική μαγεία*, clearly indicates that, by his time, the words *γοητεία* and *μαγεία* had approached each other in meaning so closely that *γοητεία* was considered a species of *μαγεία*.¹⁷ The development in meaning is apparently carried one step further by Theophrastus, the successor of Aristotle, who uses the word *μαγεία* without any limiting adjective in the sense of *γοητεία*.¹⁸ That a leading Greek philosopher in the early part of the third century B.C. used the word *μαγεία* in the sense of 'magic' is a further proof that the word *μάγος* had also by his time come to mean a 'magician.'

A distinction seems to have been made, however, by the philosophers, after the time of Socrates, between *μαγεία* and *γοητεία*, upon the assumption that, whereas both *μαγεία* and

¹⁵ The meaning 'Magian' seems entirely to have disappeared from popular Greek usage by the fourth century of our era. In Hesychius, s. v. *μάγος*, *μαγον* · τὸν ἀπατεῶνα · φαρμακευτήν. τὸν θεοσεβῆ, καὶ θεολόγον, καὶ ἱερέα, οἱ Πέρσαι οὕτως λέγουσιν, . . . the Greek and the Persian meanings are contrasted.

¹⁶ Alcib. 122A Ὦν ὁ μὲν μαγείαν τε διδάσκει τὴν Ζωροάστρου τοῦ Ὀρομάζου.

¹⁷ Cf. the fragment quoted in n. 9.

¹⁸ Hist. Plant. 9, 15, 7 (he is speaking of the herb moly): χρῆσθαι δὲ αὐτῷ πρὸς τε τὰ ἀλεξιφάρμακα καὶ τὰς μαγείας. This is the only citation for *μαγεία* given in Wimmer's *Index to Theophrastus* (Paris, 1866), notwithstanding the 'etc.' of L. and S. s. v. *μαγεία*.

γοητεία employed δαίμονες, or subservient minor divinities, the former employed only good δαίμονες to accomplish good deeds, whereas the latter employed evil δαίμονες to accomplish evil deeds, through the evocation of spirits.¹⁹ Such a finely drawn distinction should of course not be looked for in popular usage.

The development of meaning in the Greek word μάγος is duplicated in that of the Latin word *magus*. The earlier meaning of the Latin word, i.e. in its application to the religious system of the Persian Magi, is, however, found only in Latin religio-philosophical writings, or in passing remarks of a quasi-historical character.²⁰ In contrast to this we find in the Latin authors countless instances of *magus* with the meaning 'magician,' not 'Magian.'²¹ It is worthy of note also that there is not a single instance in Latin literature, so

¹⁹ Cf. Plato, Sympos. 202E Διὰ τούτου καὶ ἡ μαντικὴ πᾶσα χωρεῖ (sc. Ἐρωτι δαίμονι) καὶ ἡ τῶν ἱερέων τέχνη τῶν τε περὶ τὰς θυσίας . . . καὶ τὴν μαντείαν πᾶσαν καὶ γοητείαν; Apuleius, De Deo Socrat. 6, 133 Per hos eosdem (i.e. δαίμονας), ut Plato in Symposio autumat, cuncta denuntiata et magorum varia miracula . . . reguntur. (This passage is commented upon by St. Augustine, C. D. 8, 16). Cf. also Apuleius, Apol. 26, quoted infra, 5. Suidas, s. v. μαγεία, has: ἐπικλησίς ἐστι δαιμόνων ἀγαθοποιῶν πρὸς ἀγαθοῦ τινος σύστασιν, ὥς τὰ τοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου τοῦ Τυανέως θεσπίσματα· γοητεία δὲ ἐπικλησίς ἐστι δαιμόνων κακοποιῶν περὶ τοὺς τάφους γινομένη. See also Suidas, s. v. γοητεία.

²⁰ Cf., e.g., Apuleius, Apol. 25–26. This passage contains a clear presentation of the philosophic, as distinguished from the popular, conception of a *magus*. Cf. id., De Plat. 1, 3; Cicero, Div. 1, 46; 90–91: Fin. 5, 87: Leg. 2, 26: Tusc. Disp. 1, 108: Nat. Deor. 1, 43; Valerius Maximus, 8, 7, Ext. 2; Velleius Paterculus, 2, 24, 3; Lucan, 3, 223–224: 8, 220; Varro, apud August., C. D. 7, 35.

²¹ See, for example, Horace, Carm. 1, 27, 22; Ovid, Med. Fac. 36; Lucan, 6, 431; 440; 450; 577; 767; Pliny, N. H. (instances are too numerous to cite; but cf. Ian's index to Pliny, s. v. *magi*); Tacitus, Ann. 2, 27; 32: 6, 29: 12, 22; Apuleius, De Deo Socrat. 6: Met. 2, 5: 6, 16; Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Did. Iul. 7; Augustinus, De Divers. Quaest. 79, 4; Pseudo-Vergilius, Ciris 374; Pseudo-Quintilian, Decl. Maior. 10, passim. Cf. also the use of *magus* as an adjective, Ovid, Amor. 1, 8, 5; Seneca, Herc. Oet. 467.

far as I have been able to discover, of the use of the word *magia* with reference to the Persian Magian system of religion and philosophy.²² Of the very numerous instances of the adjective *magicus*, only one is even possibly to be referred to the Magi.²³ It is quite apparent, therefore, that to the average Roman *magus* meant 'magician,' *magia* meant 'magic' (noun), and *magicus* meant 'magic' (adjective); though some few learned writers persisted at all times in using the first of these terms in its earlier and historically correct sense of 'Magian.' In fact, this popular conception of magic is expressly stated by Apuleius²⁴ to have been in strong contrast with the proper conception of the priestly Magi.

II. DEFINITION OF MAGIC

Since it is with this popular conception of the terms *magus*, *magia*, and *magicus* among the Romans that we are concerned, we shall first turn to the Latin authors themselves for their definition of magic. Pliny the Elder, who is our most important source of information upon Roman magic, says: ²⁵

Auctoritatem ei (i.e. arti magicae fraudulentissimae) maximam fuisse nemo miretur, quandoquidem sola artium tres alias imperiosissimas humanae mentis complexa in unam se redegit. Natam primum e medicina nemo dubitabit ac specie salutari inrepsisse velut altiore sanctionemque medicinam, ita blandissimis desideratissimisque promissis addidisse vires religionis, ad quas maxime etiam nunc caligat humanum genus, atque, ut hoc quoque successerit, miscuisse artes mathematicas, nullo non avido futura de sese sciendi atque ea e caelo verissime peti credente.

Apuleius writes: ²⁶

Sin vero more vulgari eum isti proprie magum existimant, qui communione loquendi cum deis immortalibus ad omnia quae velit incredibilia quadam vi cantaminum polleat. . . .

²² Cf. Apuleius, *Apol.* passim: *Met.* 6, 26; Augustinus, *C. D.* 10, 9.

²³ Justinus, 36, 2, 7.

²⁵ *N. H.* 30, 1-2.

²⁴ *Apol.* 26, quoted *infra*.

²⁶ *Apol.* 26.

Pseudo-Quintilian, in describing a magician, uses these words: ²⁷

Advocatur homo cuius ars est ire contra naturam. Qui, simul ore squalido barbarum murmur intonuit, favere superos, audire inferos, tremere terras, ut experimentis loquentium fama est, constitit iuxta tumultum miserrimi iuvenis mors certior.

And again: ²⁸

At tu, cuius in leges di superi manesque torquentur, qui nocturno terribilis ululatu profundum specus et ima terrarum moves, modo serventium revocator animarum. . . .

The attitude of the Christian Fathers is similar; compare, e.g., St. Augustine: ²⁹

Quapropter aliter magi faciunt miracula, aliter boni Christiani. . . . Magi per privatos contractus, boni Christiani per publicam iustitiam. . . .

From the foregoing passages one may obtain a composite but satisfactory idea of the Roman conception of magic. 'It is,' says Pliny, 'a very deceptive, and yet very powerful art, compounded of elements drawn from medicine, religion, and astrology.' The religious element, according to the more specific definition of Apuleius, is the most important source of the magician's power. It is the result of a *communio* between him and the gods, established by means of magic spells, and through this *communio* the magician obtains whatever he may wish. Still more definitely we learn from Pseudo-Quintilian that through the medium of this *communio* the magician has the power of compelling the gods to do his will,

²⁷ Declam. Maior. 10, 15.

²⁸ Declam. Maior. 10, 19.

²⁹ De Divers. Quaest. 79, 4. See also Minucius Felix, Octav. 26, 10: Magi quoque non tantum sciunt daemonas, sed etiam, quicquid miraculi ludunt, per daemonas faciunt: illis adspirantibus et infundentibus praestigias edunt, vel quae non sunt videri, vel quae sunt non videri.

and that, in addition, he controls the earth, stars, rivers, and the spirits of the dead by his incantations. This power of control is called 'going against nature,' or exerting a supremacy over natural forces and phenomena. Such a control of nature differs, however, from Christian miracles, according to St. Augustine, in that magicians act through a private agreement with demons for personal gain, whereas good Christians perform miracles from a love of right in general. We may therefore say that a cultured Roman would have defined magic as an art based on medicine, astrology, and religion, whereby man attempts to control the gods and thereby to control natural phenomena in accordance with his own selfish desires.³⁰ This definition, deduced from the Latin authors themselves, does not differ materially from that of other modern students of magic. Fowler,³¹ for instance, defines magic as "the exercise of a mysterious mechanical power by an individual on man, spirit, or deity, to enforce a certain result." Another definition runs: ³² "(Magic is) the art, or pretended art, of controlling occult forces and of producing effects contrary to the known order of nature." Westermarck ³³ appears to define

³⁰ I am not unaware that it may seem illogical to derive a definition from so many different sources; but, when we consider that we are dealing with folk belief and practice, a phase of human mental life that shows very little variation as a result either of time or of place, neither the few centuries that separate Pliny the Elder from St. Augustine nor the change from paganism to Christianity can be thought to have had great effect upon the Roman attitude toward magic. In fact, even to-day the mental life of Italy is singularly bound up with magic belief and practice. Cf. Leland, *Etruscan Roman Remains in Popular Tradition*, passim, but especially 4; 13; 171; 197-198; 256-298; 303-305; Elworthy, *Evil Eye*, 1-28; 150-155; 204-211; 257-262; 311; 321; 355-364; 403-404; 429; Story, *Castle St. Angelo and the Evil Eye*, 147-238 (the pages here indicated treat of the evil eye, and were originally published as a chapter of Story's work, *Roba di Roma*).

³¹ *Rel. Exper.* 47.

³² *New International Encyclopedia*², s. v. *Magic*.

³³ *Origin and Development of Moral Ideas*, 2, 584.

magic as the exercise of "supernatural mechanical power . . . , without making any appeal at all to the will of a supernatural being, in the interest of the operator." All students of magic are, therefore, agreed with our ancient authorities that the purpose of magic is to control natural phenomena by preternatural means.

III. MAGIC DISTINGUISHED FROM SCIENCE

We quoted above ³⁴ the statement of Pliny that magic sprang from medicine and received added strength from religion. Whether we accept this view or not, we must concede that magic is closely connected with both medicine ³⁵ (i.e. science) and religion, and that we should carefully mark the boundaries between the three. We are still much in doubt whether magic grew out of religion or religion out of magic,³⁶ but we may be sure that magic always antedates medicine and other sciences.³⁷ In fact, magic is the result of unorganized scientific instinct before the principles of the natural working of cause and effect are thoroughly understood. The magician studies plants,³⁸

³⁴ Page 5.

³⁵ Cf. A. Lang, *Mag. and Rel.* 47 ff.

³⁶ Cf. *infra*, 8-10.

³⁷ Cf. A. Lang, *Mag. and Rel.* 3-4; Frazer, *G. B.* 1, 1, 220-222; Tylor, *P. C.* ³ (Am.) 1, 112-137.

³⁸ Both Medea and Circe based their magical skill largely upon their knowledge of herbs. Cf. Daremberg et Saglio, *Dictionnaire des antiquités*, s. v. *magia*. For Circe, cf. Odyss. 10, 213; 276; Ovid, *Met.* 14, 14-22; 34; 43; 56; 266-270; *Rem. Am.* 263; Hyginus, *Fab.* 125; Horace, *Epist.* 1, 2, 23-26; Cicero, *In Caec.* 57; Tibullus, 2, 4, 55-56; 3, 7, 61-63; Propertius, 2, 1, 53; 3, 12, 27; Apuleius, *Apol.* 31; *De Deo Socrat.* 24; Pliny, 25, 10-11. For Medea cf. Welcker, *Kleine Schriften*, 3, 20-26; Ovid, *Her.* 6, 93; *Met.* 7, 98; 149; 224-233; 264-265; Horace, *Epod.* 3, 12: 5, 67-68; Pliny, N. H. 25, 10-11; *Elegiae in Maecenatem* 110; 112; Tibullus, 1, 2, 51; 2, 4, 55-56; Propertius, 2, 1, 54; 2, 4, 7; Lucan, 4, 555-556: 6, 441-442; Seneca, *Med.* 269-270; Valerius Flaccus, 6, 441-442: 7, 355-370. Similar references to magic herbs are very numerous in Latin authors.

animals,³⁹ and stones,⁴⁰ as carefully as does the scientist, but with a very different method of handling the material. Science seeks, by patient observation, experimentation, and reason, to arrive at probable facts and theories in regard to natural phenomena; whereas magic seeks the secret bond of *sympathia* in the world of nature — the unusual, the marvellous. The magician is a keen observer of the world around him whose sense of cause and effect has been warped by his mystical trend of mind or by his ignorance of the true scientific method of investigation. In particular he is influenced to a very large extent by the feeling that like affects like, *similia similibus*.⁴¹ There is a peculiar bond in nature, he believes, which exercises great power. For example, since the word *arista* means both a beard of grain and a hair, it follows that *arista holci* circa caput alligata vel circa lacertum educit e corpore aristas.⁴² In the same manner, a wax image of a person may be treated

³⁹ Animals favorable to magic are the hyena (Pliny, N. H. 8, 106: 28, 102–106; 115; Marcellus Empiricus, 36, 27; Lucan, 6, 672; Scribonius Largus, 172; Columella, 2, 9, 9); the bat (Pliny, N. H. 29, 83: 30, 64; 144; Varro, Sat. Menip., Agatho, Fr. 8; Marcellus Empiricus, 28, 45); the weasel (Pliny, N. H. 28, 106: 29, 99; 131); and the *bubo* (Ovid, Met. 5, 549–550: 6, 432–434: 10, 452–453: 15, 791; Columella, 10, 349–350; Seneca, Med. 733; Lucan, 5, 396; Pliny, N. H. 28, 228–229: 29, 81–82; Statius, Theb. 3, 510–512; Apuleius, Met. 3, 21; Palladius, R. R. 1, 35, 1–2). Similar lists could be given for almost every conceivable animal, especially for those of repulsive appearance or unusual. The chameleon, frog, mole, and lizard are favorite animals among Roman magicians.

⁴⁰ Cf. *Camb. Comp.* 581 ff., and the references there given. See also Hyginus, Fab. 22. Pliny makes the following references to magic stones: N. H. 10, 12: 36, 141; 142; 151: 37, 142; 143; 144; 153; 155; 156; and the following to magic gems: 37, 54; 118; 124; 135; 144; 145; 147; 156; 160; 162; 164; 165; 168; 169; 172; 176; 185; 192. See also Valentin Rose, *Damigeron de Lapidibus*, in *Hermes*, 9, 471–491.

⁴¹ Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 1, 1, 52–219; R. Heim, *Incantamenta Magica Graeca Latina*, in *Neue Jahrbücher für Classische Philologie, Supplementband* 19 (1893), 484–491; Theodor Weidlich, *Die Sympathie in der Antiken Literatur* (in *Programm des Karls-Gymnasiums in Stuttgart* [1894]), 1–76; Tylor, *P. C.* (Am.) 1, 112–159.

⁴² Pliny, N. H. 27, 90

in any way the magician desires, in the full belief that the person represented by the image will undergo identical experiences.⁴³

To the popular mind the practices of magic and of science are often identical. The uninstructed are likely to conclude, for example, that those who know how and when eclipses and other phenomena occur are also able to control them; and so it comes about that the natural philosophers are often called *magi*, quasi *facere etiam sciunt quae sciunt fieri*.⁴⁴ In the case of conflicting explanations of natural phenomena, the explanation that involves magic usually wins with the populace over the scientific; and Pliny deprecatingly remarks:⁴⁵

Inventa iam pridem ratio est praenuntians horas — non modo dies ac noctes — solis lunaeque defectuum; durat tamen tradita persuasio in magna parte vulgi, veneficiis et herbis id cogi eamque unam feminarum scientiam praevalere.

Magic, then, might be called the science of primitive man, before he learns to apply to his thinking a proper consideration of cause and effect; it therefore remains powerful among those elements of a population which have least emerged from primitive mental conditions.

IV. MAGIC DISTINGUISHED FROM ASTROLOGY

If we are correct in declaring that magic seeks to control natural phenomena by preternatural means, it at once becomes apparent that astrology is not magic. For the astrologer seeks merely to foretell future events by his knowledge of the stars.

⁴³ Instances of this practice in Latin authors are Horace, *Sat.* 1, 8, 30–33; 43–44; *Epod.* 17, 76; Ovid, *Her.* 6, 91–93; *Amor.* 3, 7, 29; Vergil, *Ecl.* 8, 74–75; 80–81 (cf. Theocritus, 2, 21; 28–29). Instances of similar practices in all parts of the world will be found in Frazer, *G. B.* 1, 1, 55–79; A. Lang, *Mag. and Rel.* 3; Tylor, *P. C.*³ (Am.) 1, 112 ff.

⁴⁴ Apuleius, *Apol.* 27.

⁴⁵ N. H. 25, 10.

He does not at all attempt to control either the stars or the events, except in so far as his powers of suggestion may influence the minds of his dupes. It may often have happened at Rome, as elsewhere, that astrologers also pretended to a knowledge of magic, in order to gain greater profit; but in so doing they undoubtedly went beyond the field of astrology. With the latter it is not my purpose to deal.

V. MAGIC DISTINGUISHED FROM SUPERSTITION

The definition we have given of magic makes clear also the difference between magic and superstition. It seems best to consider magic as the active practice of controlling natural phenomena by preternatural means, and superstition as the passive belief in the possibility of such wonderful deeds.⁴⁶ Like magic, superstition is, of course, "frequently a survival of formerly accepted beliefs, since disowned by the majority of the more enlightened."

VI. MAGIC DISTINGUISHED FROM RELIGION

With religion, too, magic is often closely associated, as Pliny has intimated in the definition quoted above;⁴⁷ yet magic differs from religion in its attitude toward both gods and men.

⁴⁶ In Plutarch, *De Superstitione*, passim, 'superstition' is excessive religious belief, often leading to mental torture. Cicero, too (*De Invent.* 2, 165), speaks of *superstitio*, quæ religioni propinqua est. In *Nat. Deor.* 2, 72 he is more explicit: *Nam qui totos dies precabantur et immolabant, ut sibi sui liberi superstites essent, superstitiosi sunt appellati, quod nomen patuit postea latius; qui autem omnia, quae ad cultum deorum pertinerent, diligenter retractarent et tamquam relegerent, sunt dicti religiosi. . . . Ita factum est in superstitioso et religioso alterum viti nomen, alterum laudis.* Arthur Palmer's view, set forth in his note on Plautus, *Amph.* 1, 1, 169, that *superstitiosus* means one who believes in ghosts, one who is conversant with ghosts, one who can raise a ghost, a necromancer, a diviner, seems to stress the active side of the word too much. (But cf. Mayor, on Cicero, *De Nat. Deor.* 2, 72.)

⁴⁷ Page 5.

Religion offers its prayers in a spirit of humility, leaving the final decision with the gods. As Cicero says:⁴⁸ *Religio est, quae superioris cuiusdam naturae, quam divinam vocant, curam caerimoniamque adfert.* Magic, on the contrary, assumes to control the gods. Its invocations are imperious, as the following passages will make clear. The first is from the celebrated magic scene in Lucan:⁴⁹

Una per aetherios exit vox illa recessus,
verbaque ad invitum perfert cogentia numen,
quod non cura poli caelique volubilis umquam
avocat. Infandum tetigit cum sidera murmur,
tum, Babylon Persea licet secretaque Memphis
omne vetustorum solvat penetrale Magorum,
abducit superos alienis Thessalis aris.

The second passage is from Apuleius:⁵⁰ *iam scies erae meae miranda secreta, quibus obaudiunt manes, turbantur sidera, coguntur numina, serviunt elementa.* Threats are uttered in order to compel the obedience of the gods,⁵¹ and this power of compulsion was considered so real that Nero attempted to become the master of the gods through magic.⁵²

VII. THE LEGAL ASPECT OF MAGIC AND RELIGION

It should be noted that among the Romans magic was always secret and illegal, while religion was open and legal. As Apuleius tells us:⁵³

⁴⁸ De Invent. 2, 161. Cf. Nat. Deor. 2, 72, quoted in n. 46.

⁴⁹ 6, 445-451.

⁵⁰ Met. 3, 15. For other instances cf. Lucan, 6, 492-499; 527-528; 598-601; 605-607; Valerius Flaccus, 7, 498-499; Pseudo-Quintilian, Decl. Maior. 10, 15; 19; Seneca, Med. 271. In Varro, Res Divin., apud Augustin., C. D. 6, 9, three men are said to control a god, but the men themselves are representatives of other gods. ⁵¹ Lucan, 6, 730-749.

⁵² Pliny, N. H. 30, 14; Suetonius, Nero 34, 4.

⁵³ Apol. 47. Cf. Ovid, Met. 7, 255-257; Fasti 6, 164; Pliny, N. H. 24, 170: 29, 91; and especially, Augustinus, C. D. 8, 19: Porro adversus

Magia ista, quantum ego audio, res est legibus delegata, iam inde antiquitus duodecim tabulis propter incredundas frugum inlecebras interdicta. Igitur est occulta non minus quam tetra et horribilis, plerumque noctibus vigilata et tenebris abstrusa et arbitris solitaria et carminibus murmurata. . . .

We are soon ⁵⁴ to discover, in discussing the history of Roman magic, that religious conservatism retained in Roman religion a considerable amount of outgrown magic practice; and yet, from the time when the Laws of the Twelve Tables were given (451-450 B.C.), throughout the whole history of Roman law, magic is always condemned, while religion is always fostered. Servius tells us: ⁵⁵ cum multa sacra Romani susciperent, semper magica damnarunt, probrosa enim ars habita est. . . .

To enumerate the laws passed at Rome against magicians is but to show how determined the lawmakers were to stamp out magic practices, and how impossible was their task. The Laws of the Twelve Tables expressly forbade anyone, on punishment of death, to entice his neighbor's crops, by magic rites, into his own fields,⁵⁶ or to chant a magic incanta-

magicas artes, de quibus quosdam nimis infelices et nimis impios etiam gloriari libet, nonne ipsam publicam lucem testem citabo? Cur enim tam graviter ista plectuntur severitate legum, si opera sunt numinum colendorum?

⁵⁴ Cf. infra, 24-25.

⁵⁵ Ad Aen. 4, 493. Cf. Augustinus, C. D. 8, 19, quoted above in n. 53.

⁵⁶ Cf. C. G. Bruns, *Fontes Iuris Romani Antiqui*⁷, 30, frag. 8, a and b. The fragments read: (a) qui fruges excantassit, and (b) neve alienam segetem pellegeris. . . . On (a) cf. Pliny, N. H. 28, 18: Non et legum ipsarum in duodecim tabulis verba sunt: "qui fruges excantassit," et alibi: "qui malum carmen incantassit"?; Seneca, Nat. Quaest. 4, 7, 2: Et apud nos in XII tabulis cavetur, "ne quis alienos fructus excantassit." On (b) cf. Servius, on Vergil, Ecl. 8, 99: Atque satas alio vidi traducere messes: Magicis quibusdam artibus hoc fiebat, unde est in XII tabulis: "neve alienam segetem pellegeris"; Augustinus, C. D. 8, 19 quod hac pestifera scelerataque doctrina fructus alieni in alias terras transferri perhibentur; nonne in XII tabulis. . . Cicero commemorat esse conscriptum et ei, qui hoc fecerit, supplicium constitutum?; Apuleius, Apol. 47, quoted above.

tion.⁵⁷ An actual trial for alleged violation of these laws was held before the curule aedile, Spurius Albinus, in 157 B.C.⁵⁸ It is not unlikely that the order issued to the aediles of 428 B.C. to restore the old gods to their former honors and to stamp out the new and foreign rites was aimed in part against magic practices.⁵⁹ Likewise, the praetor's edict of 212 B.C., ordering that all books on foreign cults be burned and that all new rites be suppressed,⁶⁰ as well as the famous *Senatus Consultum de Bacchanalibus*⁶¹ of 186 B.C., was probably necessitated, at least in part, by an increase in magic practices. It is probable, too, that the edict of the praetor, Cornelius Hispanus, expelling the Chaldaean astrologers from Rome, in 139 B.C., included all who practiced occult arts.⁶² Additional light is thrown upon early Roman magic practice by a *senatus consultum* of 97 B.C., forbidding human sacrifice, a practice which Pliny, at least, considered as likely to have been common in times gone by, in connection with magic.⁶³ Astrologers and magicians are mentioned explicitly together as having been driven from Rome by Agrippa in 33 B.C.⁶⁴ Generally speaking, we may

⁵⁷ Bruns, *Fontes*, 28; Pliny, N. H. 28, 18, quoted in n. 56; P. Huvelin, *Les tablettes magiques et le droit romain*, 4 (in *Annales du congrès international d'histoire comparée* [Paris, 1902], 2, 15-81). This ancient law is quoted by Cicero as follows (*De Re Pub.*, apud Augustinum, C. D. 2, 9): XII tabulae cum perpaucas res capite sanxissent, in his hanc quoque sancientiam putaverunt: si quis occentavisset sive carmen condidisset, quod infamiam faceret flagitiumve alteri. If Huvelin is correct (see *La notion de l' "injuria" dans le très ancien droit romain* [*Annales de l'université de Lyons*, 1903], 407-412) in interpreting *occantavisset* of this passage as *incantavisset*, then the Twelve Tables directed that certain magic practices be punished by death. *Occentare* certainly has such a meaning in Julius Paulus, *Sent. Receptae* 5, 23, 15, but the bulk of the evidence (cf. Bruns, loc. cit.) seems to be against such an interpretation.

⁵⁸ Pliny, N. H. 18, 41-43.

⁶⁰ Livy, 25, 1, 6-12.

⁵⁹ Livy, 4, 30, 9-11.

⁶¹ Livy, 39, 16.

⁶² Valerius Maximus, 1, 3, 3. Cf. Cicero, *Div.* 2, 87-99; Dill, *Roman Society from Nero to M. Aurelius*, 446.

⁶³ Pliny, N. H. 30, 12.

⁶⁴ Cassius Dio, 49, 43, 5.

assume that Chaldaean astrologers practiced magic, and that magicians used astrology as an aid. In other words, both classes were trying to reap the greatest possible reward from Roman credulity, and would in all probability use every means to accomplish that end.

But all measures of suppression were in vain; for when, twenty years later, Augustus, as Pontifex Maximus, ordered all books upon occult subjects to be burned, the number collected for the fire reached two thousand.⁶⁵ Again, in 16 A.D., the magicians and the astrologers were expelled from Italy.⁶⁶ But they came back in such numbers that it became necessary to pass a very severe *senatus consultum* in 52 A.D. expelling all *mathematici* from Italy,⁶⁷ and it is very likely that the magicians also shared the rigors of this expulsion.⁶⁸ Similar edicts against astrologers were issued by the Emperors in 69 A.D.⁶⁹ and in 89 A.D.⁷⁰

Up to this point in Roman history there is no evidence that any except those actively engaged in the practice of magic were punished under the various laws; but during Caracalla's reign we find even passive believers in magic condemned and executed,⁷¹ a practice which was crystallized into law a short while thereafter.⁷² Under laws to be found in the *Codex Theodosianus*,⁷³ countless persons were put to death for believing in or having recourse to magic practices.⁷⁴

⁶⁵ Suetonius, Aug. 31.

⁶⁶ Tacitus, Ann. 2, 32.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.* 12, 52.

⁶⁸ For a similar confusion of magic and astrology cf. Julius Capitolinus, Marc. Aur. 19, 3.

⁶⁹ Suetonius, Vitell. 14, 4.

⁷⁰ Hieronymus, Ann. Abr. 2105 = 89 A.D.

⁷¹ Spartianus, Carac. 5, 7.

⁷² Julius Paulus, Sent. Receptae 5, 23, 15; 17-18.

⁷³ Lib. 5, tit. 16, numbers 3; 5; 6; 7; 8; 12.

⁷⁴ For the whole matter of the expulsion of astrologers from Rome cf. A. Bouché-Leclercq, *Histoire de la divination dans l'antiquité*, 4, 325-339; A. Maury, *La magie et l'astrologie dans l'antiquité et au moyen âge*, Chapters 4 and 6; Mommsen, *Strafrecht*, 635-643.

The reason for this persistent opposition of Roman lawmakers to magic is easy to understand. With religion, as "the effective desire to be in right relation to the Power manifesting itself in the universe,"⁷⁵ Roman thought and Roman law were always in complete accord. Such an attitude of spirit produced citizens imbued with a proper regard both for the gods and for their neighbors. Magic, on the other hand, purported to give to a limited number of skilled practitioners supreme control of gods, men, and property in accord with their own selfish desires.⁷⁶ Persons thus endowed would therefore become superior to all legal restraints and dangerous to the common welfare. Accordingly, the practices of magic were always necessarily secret and illegal.⁷⁷

There was, however, at all times in Italy a harmless kind of magic, which sought to control nature in the interests of the population as a whole, and with which the Roman law concerned itself but little. I refer to the magic that was characteristic of the rural districts. It taught the men of the farms how to avert hail storms, how to keep pests from the crops, how to cure disease in man and beast, and a thousand other useful things. It had no professional practitioners as a rule, for everybody knew its precepts. It flourished most vigorously in Italy, as it flourishes most vigorously everywhere, in localities least affected by the rationalizing influences of the cities.⁷⁸ It was, therefore, not an imported product; it did not come first to the cities, and find its way thence gradually into the

⁷⁵ For this excellent definition of religion I am indebted to Fowler, *Rel. Exper.* 8, who in turn quotes it from Ira W. Howerth, *International Journal of Ethics*, 1903, page 205.

⁷⁶ Cf. Augustinus, *De Divers. Quaest.* 79, 4 *Illi* (i.e. *magi*) *faciunt* <*miracula*> *quaerentes gloriam suam*, *isti* (i.e. *Christiani*) *quaerentes gloriam Dei*. . . . Cf. *supra*, 6-7.

⁷⁷ Cf. Apuleius, *Apol.* 47, quoted *supra*, 12, and n. 53.

⁷⁸ It is not surprising, therefore, that Marcellus Empiricus obtained many of his magical cures *ab agrestibus et plebeis* (*De Medic.*, *Introd.* 2).

more remote districts. Though apparently neglected by those who trace Italian magic to Persia,⁷⁹ or begin the history of Italian magic with the advent of Greek influence,⁸⁰ it was certainly of much greater importance in the daily life of the Italian peninsula than all the later magic from the East. The magic of the Italian country people was and is the universal magic on which the anthropologists have written volumes. It represents a survival of prescientific times,⁸¹ and accordingly it finds some response in the minds and hearts of all who will make honest confession, whether they are Romans or Americans. It is this kind of magic which has survived to the present day in parts of Italy as *la vecchia religione*, 'the old religion,' that to many peasants is much more powerful than the priests and the saints.⁸² It is this kind of magic which persists in the inner consciousness of many Latin authors, and often shows itself, though they do not intend to display it, and though they believe themselves altogether superior to belief in magic. Even those who, like Pliny, bitterly oppose magic and magicians, often exhibit an unusual love for repeating popular beliefs and stories of magic.

VIII. FORMAL LATIN TREATISES UPON OCCULT SUBJECTS

Formal treatises upon occult subjects were not lacking among the Romans. P. Nigidius Figulus, a contemporary of Varro and second only to him in breadth of learning, had a strong bent toward the occult. His works upon omens,⁸³ dreams,⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Pliny, N. H. 30, 3 ff.; Varro, apud Augustinum, C. D. 7, 35.

⁸⁰ Daremberg et Saglio, *Dict. des antiq.*, s. v. *magia*.

⁸¹ Cf. *supra*, 8 ff.

⁸² Cf. C. G. Leland, *Etrusc. Rom. Rem.* 1-17, and *passim*.

⁸³ Gellius, 16, 6, 12 P. autem Nigidius in libro quem de extis composuit; 7, 6, 10 Nigidius Figulus in libro I augurii privati. . . .

⁸⁴ Ioannes Laurentius Lydus, De Ostentis 45 ὁ Νιγίδιος ἐν τῇ τῶν ὀνείρων ἐπισκέψει. . . .

and divination from thunder,⁸⁵ together with the magical trend of many items in his work on natural science,⁸⁶ gave him the reputation of a *magus*⁸⁷ and *astrologus*.⁸⁸ His works are known to us only in the quotations of Pliny, Apuleius, Gellius, Augustine, and Ioannes Laurentius Lydus.⁸⁹ A contemporary of his, Appius Claudius Pulcher (consul 54 B.C.), wrote upon augury, necromancy, and other occult subjects;⁹⁰ but his work, too, has perished. Other writers of this same period busied themselves with Etruscan divination,⁹¹ but not all of them from the viewpoint of the believer, as we may judge from the skeptical tone of Cicero's *De Divinatione*. L. Tarutius Firmanus, a friend of Cicero, devoted himself to astrology;⁹² Columella, the pleasing writer on agriculture, composed a work *Adversus Astrologos*.⁹³ Later, in the battle between Christianity and paganism, Minucius Felix is said to have written *Contra Mathematicos*,⁹⁴ while, in the fourth century of our era, Julius Firmicus Maternus defended as-

⁸⁵ Ioannes Laurentius Lydus, *De Ostentis* 27 ἐφήμερος βροντοσκοπία . . . κατὰ τὸν Ῥωμαίων Φίγουλόν. . . .

⁸⁶ Pliny, N. H. 10, 106: 11, 97: 29, 138: 30, 84.

⁸⁷ Hieronymus, ad Euseb. Chron. a. Abr. 1972 = 45 B.C.: Nigidius Figulus Pythagoricus et magus in exilio moritur. Cf. Apuleius, *Apol.* 42 Itemque Fabium, cum quingentos denarium perdidisset, ad Nigidium consultum venisse; ab eo pueros carmine instinctos indicavisse, ubi locorum defossa esset crimina. . . .

⁸⁸ Augustine, C. D. 5, 3; Suetonius, *Aug.* 94, 5; Cassius Dio, 45, 1, 3-5; Lucan, 1, 639 ff.

⁸⁹ See supra, nn. 83-88.

⁹⁰ Cicero, *Tusc. Disp.* 1, 37 ea quae meus amicus Appius νεκρομαντεῖα faciebat; *Div.* 1, 132 psychomantia, quibus Appius . . . uti solebat. From the latter passage it appears that he put his theories into practice.

⁹¹ Cf. Teuffel, *Röm. Lit.*⁶ § 199; G. Schmeisser, *Quaestionum De Etrusca Disciplina Particula* (a dissertation [Breslau, 1872]).

⁹² Cicero, *Div.* 2, 98; Plutarch, *Rom.* 12; Ioannes Laurentius Lydus, *De Mens.* 1, 14; Pliny, *Index Auctorum* to Book 18.

⁹³ Columella, 11, 1, 31 in iis libris, quos adversus astrologos composueram.

⁹⁴ Of doubtful authorship, according to Hieronymus, *De Viris Illustribus* 58 (ed. Richardson).

trology against Christianity.⁹⁵ Of these writings only Cicero's *De Divinatione* and the work of Julius Firmicus Maternus have survived.

The only two works in extant Latin literature which at all resemble a treatise on magic are the *Apologia* of Apuleius of Madaura, his defence against the charge of being a magician; and parts of Pliny's Natural History, especially the first thirteen paragraphs of book thirty. With these latter paragraphs as our main dependence, we shall now consider briefly the source, the antiquity, and the prevalence of Italian magic.

IX. THE SOURCE, ANTIQUITY, AND PREVALENCE OF ITALIAN MAGIC

Pliny informs us in the passage above mentioned that Zoroaster⁹⁶ founded magic about six thousand years before the death of Plato, and that his successors had left behind them nothing more than their names. Strangely enough, continues he, the Iliad is comparatively free from magic,⁹⁷ whereas

⁹⁵ Teuffel, *Röm. Lit.*, 406. It is pleasing to note that he was later converted, and became an ardent defender of Christianity. Cf. Lynn Thorndike, *A Roman Astrologer as a Historical Source: Julius Firmicus Maternus*, in *Classical Philology*, 8 (1913), 415-435.

⁹⁶ For the time of Zoroaster cf. *New Internat. Encyclop.*,² s. v. *Zoroaster*, and authorities cited there. Pliny cites him as an authority for Books 18 and 37, and quotes him in 18, 200: 37, 133; 150; 157; 159. But the works attributed to him, *Περὶ Λιβῶν Τιμῶν*, *Περὶ Φύσεως*, *Λόγια*, etc. are doubtless apocryphal. Cf. also Apuleius, *Flor.* 15; Justinus, 1, 1, 9.

⁹⁷ But cf. Il. 7, 193-196 for secret names of the gods as taboo. In 11, 740-741 *Ἀγαμήδη* is probably to be taken as the Homeric name for Medea. See also 12, 254-255: 13, 59-60; 434-435: 15, 321-322; 594: 24, 343-345 for the use of the magic wand by gods. In 14, 214-221 Hera seeks from Aphrodite, among other endearing charms, a magic girdle. In 16, 235 Achilles, invoking Zeus, speaks of Dodona, where *σοὶ ναίονσ' ὑποφῆται ἀνιπτόποδες χαμαιεῖναι*; compare with this the fact that the much tabooed Flamen Dialis also slept on a bed the feet of which must be smeared with fine mud (Frazer, *Class. Rev.* 2, 322; *G. B.* 2, 14). Accord-

the Odyssey is built almost wholly upon magic episodes. No one has ever explained how magic came to Telmessus or to Thessaly.⁹⁸

The first author on magic whose works are extant, continues Pliny,⁹⁹ is Osthanes, a Persian who accompanied Xerxes into Greece, and introduced a veritable rage for the art. Great philosophers like Pythagoras,¹⁰⁰ Empedocles, Democritus,¹⁰¹

ing to Leaf, on Iliad 18, 418, the animated handmaidens of gold there described "are a relic of the tradition which everywhere attributes magical powers to the mythical founders of metallurgy. . . ." When the companions of Patroclus carry his body to burial, they cover it with their shorn hair, as representative of their own bodies (Il. 24, 710-712. Cf. Tylor, *P. C.* 2, 401; Rohde, *Psyche*³, 16-17; Frazer, *Pausan.* 4, 136).

⁹⁸ For magic in Thessaly cf. Plautus, *Amph.* 1043; Horace, *Epod.* 5, 45: *Carm.* 1, 27, 21-22; *Epist.* 2, 2, 208-209; Ovid, *Am.* 1, 14, 39-40: 3, 7, 27-28; *Ars. Amat.* 2, 99-100; *Rem. Am.* 249; Seneca, *Phaed.* 420-422; 791; *Med.* 790-792; *Herc. Oet.* 465-466; 525; Lucan, 6, 430-820, but especially 434-491; Valerius Flaccus, 1, 736-738: 6, 448: 7, 198-199; 325-326; Statius, *Theb.* 3, 140-146; 557-559: 4, 504; Martial, 9, 29, 9; Juvenal, 6, 610-612; Apuleius, *Met.* 2, 1.

⁹⁹ 30, 8. For Osthanes see above, page 2, and cf. Pliny, *N. H.* 28, 6; 69; Minucius Felix, 26, 11 (Osthanes); Apuleius, *Apol.* 90 (Osthanes); Arnobius, *Adv. Gent.* 1, 52 (Osthanes); Pap. Paris. 2006 βασιλεῖ Ὀστιάη Πίτρος χαλπεύ; Synesius, *Epist. ad Diosc.* (in Fabric. *Bibliotheca Graeca*, 8, 233); A. Dieterich, *Papyrus Magica Musei Lugdunen. Batavi* (Leipzig, 1888), 751-752; A. Maury, *Magie*, 61 and n. 2.

¹⁰⁰ For Pythagoras's study of magic lore cf. Apuleius, *Flor.* 15; Pliny, *N. H.* 24, 160. For his adoption of magic cures, see Pliny, *N. H.* 24, 156-158. For his belief in mystic numbers cf. Apuleius, *Met.* 11, 1. In general, for the wonder tales that were fathered upon Pythagoras cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 1, 1, 213; Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*⁴, 285 and n. 2; K. Kiesewetter, *Der Occultismus des Altertums*, 471-472.

¹⁰¹ For the works of Democritus cf. Columella, 11, 3, 64; Pliny, *N. H.* 24, 160: 25, 13: 26, 19; Vitruvius, *De Arch.* 9, proem. 14. The fragments of Democritus's *De Sympathiis et Antipathiis* are contained in Fabricius's *Bibliotheca Graeca*, libri IV, pars altera 333-338. For their genuineness, however, cf. Theodor Weidlich, *Sympath.* 13 ff. Democritus is severely arraigned by Pliny for magical teaching (*N. H.* 28, 112-118 and elsewhere), but is warmly defended against such a charge by A. Gellius (*N. A.* 10, 12, 1-8).

and Plato,¹⁰² he continues, endured unusual hardships in order to learn of it, and gained great fame by publishing its doctrines. Of these, Democritus especially popularized these attractive chimaeras in the Greek world at about the period of the Peloponnesian War.

Jewish magic, represented by Moses,¹⁰³ Jannes, and Lotapes, is many thousand years posterior to that of Zoroaster, says Pliny (§ 11), and is followed in its turn by the much more recent Cyprian magic. Last of all there were Macedonian additions during the time of Alexander the Great.

Roman magic is then treated by Pliny with disappointing brevity in five and one-half lines of Teubner text (30, 12):

Extant certe et apud Italas gentes vestigia eius in XII tabulis nostris aliisque argumentis, quae priore volumine exposui. DCLVII demum anno urbis Cn. Cornelio Lentulo P. Licinio Crasso cos. senatus consultum factum est, ne homo immolaretur, palamque fit, in tempus illud sacra prodigiosa celebrata.

All else that he might have said is condensed into the words *aliisque argumentis, quae priore volumine exposui*.¹⁰⁴ The passage referred to by these words is N. H. 28, 10-21, where a number of ancient Roman beliefs are gathered together; as, for example, the belief in which, notwithstanding the skepticism of the cultured, the populace persisted, that certain words may have great magic power, as one sees in the story of the Vestal Tuccia, who, by the power of a certain formula, carried water in a sieve;¹⁰⁵ and the fact that the Vestals, as a body, possessed a powerful charm by which they could stop a runaway slave, provided he had not yet gone beyond the city

¹⁰² Cf. Apuleius, *De Platone* 1, 3.

¹⁰³ Cf. Apuleius, *Apol.* 90.

¹⁰⁴ The reason for this brevity seems to have been the author's assumed superiority to such beliefs. He apparently was ashamed of many of the popular beliefs of his day, and did not wish to give them any undue prominence.

¹⁰⁵ N. H. 28, 12.

limits.¹⁰⁶ The experience of Tullus Hostilius proves, we are further informed,¹⁰⁷ the fatal consequences of handling magic words with insufficient understanding. For words have power to transfer crops from one field to another and to injure one's enemy, if one is to believe the Twelve Tables. They can also evoke the gods of hostile cities, bewitch, bind in the bonds of love, control serpents, avert fire, cure wounds and disease, and secure safety.¹⁰⁸ The Romans also have to-day, Pliny concludes, many superstitious and magic practices, concerning which each may judge for himself.¹⁰⁹

Pliny's belief, then, seems to have been that magic gradually worked its way from the East to the West, beginning with the Persian, Zoroaster;¹¹⁰ that in some unknown way it reached Thessaly;¹¹¹ and that finally it was introduced into Greece by Osthanes. He seems also to believe that Italian, Gallic, and British magic came over the sea from Persia through Greece.¹¹² We now know that such a view is untenable, and indeed Pliny himself can be shown to contradict such a theory. The passage in the Twelve Tables to which he refers¹¹³ must reflect a usage not merely contemporaneous with the date of the adoption of that code,¹¹⁴ but anterior to that date. Now, if Persian magic was introduced into Greece in 480 B.C., only thirty years intervened between the date of that introduction and the

¹⁰⁶ N. H. 28, 13.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 28, 14.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 28, 18-21.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 28, 22-29.

¹¹⁰ For Zoroaster as the founder of magic cf. A. Maury, *Magie*, 35 and n. 3.

¹¹¹ For magic in Thessaly cf. *supra*, 20, n. 98.

¹¹² Cf. N. H. 30, 13 *Sed quid ego haec commemorem in arte oceanum quoque transgressa et ad naturae inane pervecta? Britannia hodieque eam adtonita celebrat tantis caerimoniis, ut dedisse Persis videri possit.* The intimation is indeed clear here that the pupil, Britain, was now able to teach the teacher, Persia.

¹¹³ N. H. 28, 17-18. Cf. *supra*, 13, and n. 56.

¹¹⁴ Circa 450 B.C.

time when the Italian farmers had become so expert at enticing their neighbors' crops into their own fields by means of magic that a rigid prohibitory law had to be enacted. We are asked to believe that within this short time Persian magic obtained a firm hold in Greece, made its way thence to the cities of Italy, and thence to the country districts. We are asked also to overlook the fact that the Twelve Tables have nothing at all to say about magic in the cities, where Greek influences were naturally strongest, but are very explicit regarding certain practices in the country, where Greek influences were scarcely felt. The facts are all against Pliny's theory, and we are forced to conclude that this magic of the Italian country districts was a native growth, entirely uninfluenced by Persian or Greek magic. Like all magic, it held its own in the rural sections long after the more sophisticated inhabitants of the cities had abandoned such beliefs. Furthermore, all the Latin authors who refer to this law in the Twelve Tables do so with the superior air of men who have outgrown an early belief which was native and characteristic of their crude ancestors.¹¹⁵ If there had been the least suspicion that such a usage was a foreign importation, it is scarcely likely that these defenders of Rome's more advanced thought would have failed to say so. The passage in the Twelve Tables must therefore be counted as strong evidence for the existence of an early, native Italian magic.

Early tradition also makes Italy the home of magic. Circe,

¹¹⁵ So Pliny (N. H. 28, 13) to the passage in which he quotes among other ancient matters the law of the Twelve Tables prefixes the words, *Prisci quidem nostri perpetuo talia credidere*. He closes the passage with the words (§ 29), *Quapropter de iis ut cuique libitum fuerit opinetur*. Seneca (Nat. Quaest. 4b, 7, 2-3) says, in connection with magic control of the weather, *Et apud nos in XII tabulis cavetur, ne quis alienos fructus excantassit. Rudis adhuc antiquitas credebat et attrahi cantibus imbres et repellere, quorum nihil posse fieri tam palam est, ut huius rei causa nullius philosophi schola intranda sit*.

whose power lay in her knowledge of magic herbs,¹¹⁶ is in Homer a dweller on the island of Aeaea.¹¹⁷ Nor did Roman writers disown her as a fellow Italian.¹¹⁸ It was the universal acceptance of this tradition and probably some first-hand knowledge that led Aeschylus to speak of *refertam Italiam herbarum potentia*.¹¹⁹

That Roman magic was at once very ancient and of native origin is clearly shown by the survival of many magic rites in Roman religion.¹²⁰ Vergil, for example, who was in heart and feeling a genuine Italian, made his early Marruvian¹²¹ and Massylian¹²² priests, like Livy's Attus Navius,¹²³ adepts in

¹¹⁶ Cf. Od. 10, 213; 235-240; 276; 290-292; 317; 326-328; Pacuvius, Frag. ex Incert. Fab. 39 (Ribbeck); Cicero, Div. in Caec. 57; Tibullus, 2, 4, 55-56; 3, 7, 61-63; Propertius, 2, 1, 53; 3, 12, 27; Hyginus, Fab. 125; Vergil, Aen. 7, 19-20; 190-191; Horace, Epist. 1, 2, 23; Ovid, Met. 14, 14; 21; 34; 42-58; 266 ff.; 346-348; 355-360; 403; Rem. Amor. 263; Pliny, N. H. 25, 11; Apuleius, Apol. 31; De Deo Socratis 24; Nemesianus, Cyn. 44; Rutilius Namatianus, 1, 525; Symmachus, Epist. 1, 47, 1. For the herb named after her cf. Pliny, N. H. 25, 147; 27, 60; Dioscorides, De Mat. Med. 3, 124. ¹¹⁷ Od. 10, 135-136.

¹¹⁸ Pliny calls her *Itala Circe*, and places her abode in the territory of Circei (N. H. 25, 10-11). Hyginus places her home either in Aeaea (Fab. 127) or in Aenaria (Fab. 125). (For the location of these two places in ancient geography cf. Pomponius Mela, 2, 120; 121.) Ovid locates her dwelling in *Circaea arva* (Met. 14, 346-348), wherever they may be. Her son, Telegonus, was said to have built the Circaean walls of Tusculum (Horace, Epod. 1, 29-30); her descendants, the Marsi, through their inherited knowledge of magic drugs, possessed a remarkable power over serpents (Pliny, N. H. 7, 15; 25, 11; A. Gellius, 16, 11, 1-2). She was scrupulously worshiped by the inhabitants of Circei in Cicero's time and later (Cicero, Nat. Deor. 3, 48; Strabo, 5, 234; Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus*, 49, n. 6, and 542, n. 5).

¹¹⁹ Pliny, N. H. 25, 11. The statement does not occur in any extant work of Aeschylus; but cf. Theophrastus, Hist. Plant. 19, 15, 1.

¹²⁰ For an excellent discussion of this subject, see W. Warde Fowler, *Rel. Exp.* 24-67. Cf. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus*, 409.

¹²¹ Aen. 7, 750-758.

¹²² *Ibid.* 4, 483-493; 509-516.

¹²³ Livy, 1, 36. Cf. Valerius Maximus, 1, 4, 1 (exc. Par. and exc. Nep.); Apuleius, De Deo Socratis 7; Dionysius, Ant. Rom. 3, 71; Cicero, Div. 1, 32; Pliny, N. H. 15, 77.

magic. The taboos surrounding the person of the *Flamen Dialis*,¹²⁴ the strange rite used in pacifying the Lemures,¹²⁵ the tradition concerning Cunina, the averter of the evil eye,¹²⁶ the magic powers popularly attributed to the Vestal Virgins,¹²⁷ all point to a remote time when unadulterated Italian religion was closely interwoven with magic. That this magic survival represented a part of the religious bone and sinew of the ancient Italian is the real reason why an essential belief in magic has survived the overlaid stratum of Greek religion, and the more recently overlaid stratum of Christianity.¹²⁸ That is the real reason, too, why Pliny's fellow Romans preferred to explain natural phenomena by sympathetic magic¹²⁹ rather than by science, and why the old Italian of Cato's day scorned Greek medicine, but clung to magic cures¹³⁰ and amulets, especially the *bullæ*.¹³¹

Indeed Pliny's *Natural History* alone furnishes abundant proof, even to the casual reader,¹³² that the Roman populace, at least, firmly believed in magic.

X. THE ATTITUDE OF LATIN AUTHORS TOWARD MAGIC

With literary men and the cultured classes the case, however, was different. Here, the rage for everything Greek was by

¹²⁴ A. Gellius, *N. A.* 10, 15. Cf. *infra*, 54-55; Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus*, 34 and n. 1.

¹²⁵ Ovid, *Fasti* 5, 429-444, quoted *infra*, 37, n. 195; Varro, *apud* Nonium Marcellum, 197 (ed. Lindsay).

¹²⁶ Cf. *infra*, 45-46. ¹²⁷ Pliny, *N. H.* 28, 12-13. Cf. *infra*, 58, n. 350.

¹²⁸ Cf. *supra*, 16-17. ¹²⁹ *N. H.* 25, 10, quoted *supra*, 10.

¹³⁰ Cato, *R. R.* 70; 71; 83; 159; 160; Varro, *R. R.* 1, 2, 27.

¹³¹ Cf. Jahn, *Über den Aberglauben des bösen Blicks bei den Alten*, in *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der königlich-sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Phil.-Hist. Classe* (1855), 28-110, and especially the appended illustrations. Fowler, *Rel. Exp.* 59-61. For amulets in preventive medicine, see *infra*, 76ff.

¹³² Cf., e. g., Ian's index to the *N. H.*, s. v. *magi*.

no means confined to literature. Greek medicine and Greek religion were superimposed upon the native beliefs and practices, and to a great extent displaced them. Greek philosophy had ended by producing an almost universal skepticism, either real or affected, among the upper classes, upon which was overlaid, during the first century of our era, a very widespread belief in astrology.¹³³ Nevertheless the Roman remained essentially Roman. As the *sermo plebeius* makes its appearance in Roman literature wherever and whenever the artificial restraints of literary training and tradition are removed, so also many Latin authors unconsciously display an essential belief in the old magic, which antedates Greek influence, though not a few of them, like Pliny, formally disclaim such belief. Indeed, we shall be able to show that there was at Rome a numerous class of cultured men and women who publicly proclaimed themselves superior to popular belief, though in reality they were unable to free themselves from their inherited magic and superstition.¹³⁴ This fact can best be shown by a rapid examination of the Latin authors themselves.

(1) *Agricultural Writers*

Of the agricultural writers, Cato not only gives remedies of a more or less magic character for the cure of both man and beast,¹³⁵ apparently in the best of faith, but he adds to the collection an incantation of very great interest, but, unfor-

¹³³ Cf. Dill, *Rom. Soc.* 443-483.

¹³⁴ So, e.g., Columella, though in 11, 1, 31 he declares that he had written a book *Adversus Astrologos*, still, in 11, 3, 64, quotes, apparently with approval, the following from Democritus: *has ipsas bestiolas enecari, si mulier quae in menstruis est, solutis crinibus et nudo pede unamquamque aream ter circumeat; post hoc enim decidere omnes vermiculos, et ita emori.* We may note that the superstitions of Julius Caesar and Augustus are well attested, not to speak of those of the later Emperors. See *infra*, 47-48.

¹³⁵ Cf. R. R. 70; 71; 83; 159.

tunately, of very great difficulty of interpretation.¹³⁶ He appears to believe in native magic practices, notwithstanding the fact that he ridicules divination, probably because the latter was not a native Roman belief, but had been imported from Etruria.¹³⁷

Varro, on the other hand, though allowing one of the speakers in his *De Re Rustica* to recite a purely magic cure for a certain disease of the feet, disclaims belief in such practices.¹³⁸ Yet even he seems to believe that the waxing or the waning of the moon has a sympathetic effect upon the growth of crops, and otherwise.¹³⁹

Columella's work on agriculture is very sane and in the main free from magic tinge. He wrote, as we have said,¹⁴⁰ a work, *Adversus Astrologos*, and in general was a man of good hard sense. Yet he bows to the popular belief regarding the effect of the moon's phases upon crops and other matters.¹⁴¹

From this presentation of the attitude of the agricultural writers toward magic it is apparent that Cato, who lived on most intimate terms with the people and was least affected by Greek polish, is most frank in declaring his assent to farm practice that smacks of magic. The other two writers give

¹³⁶ R. R. 160. For the text cf. *infra*, 71-72 and n. 38.

¹³⁷ Cf. *Memorabilia Dicta* (no. 65, p. 109 ed. Jordan) *apud Ciceronem*, Div. 2, 51.

¹³⁸ R. R. 1, 2, 27. For the text cf. *infra*, 72.

¹³⁹ Cf. R. R. 1, 37, especially this remark (§ 2): *Ego istaec, inquit Agrasius, non solum in ovibus tondendis, sed in meo capillo a patre acceptum servo, ni decrescente luna tondens calvos fiam.* The views of the speaker apparently coincide with those of the author. In his formal opinions, however, regarding magic, Varro seems to have been a rationalist. Cf. *infra*, 45-47.

¹⁴⁰ 26, and n. 134; 18, and n. 93.

¹⁴¹ For the moon's influence upon crops cf. R. R. 2, 5, 1; 10, 10; 10, 12; 15, 9; 16, 1; 18, 2: 5, 11, 2: 6, 26, 2: 8, 5, 9; 7, 4: 11, 2, 11; 2, 52; 2, 85; 3, 22: 12, 16, 1; 19, 3; 43, 2; 43, 9; 53, 3; *De Arboribus* 15; 26, 2; 29, 1. For menstruation in magic cf. R. R. 10, 360: 11, 3, 38; 3, 50.

evidence of having believed in the efficacy of such practices more than they are willing to admit.

It may be noted that the Georgics and the Eclogues of Vergil are remarkably free from references to rural magic.¹⁴² The Aeneid, however, with its wealth of religious mysticism and story, finds place for a greater amount of magic. The 'golden bough,' made famous as the starting point of Frazer's brilliant anthropological investigations,¹⁴³ the power of Circe,¹⁴⁴ the Marruvian magician-priest,¹⁴⁵ the powerful magician-priestess from the Massylii,¹⁴⁶ and the fire-walking Hirpini of Soracte¹⁴⁷ form an interesting element of his long tale. They are, however, in every instance part of the story and do not of necessity indicate Vergil's personal belief in magic; they show rather his knowledge of the ancient Italian's acceptance of such beliefs. It is possible also that the poet's deep religious feeling led him purposely to avoid any more frequent reference to that outlawed *ars magica*, so dear to his fellow countrymen.

(2) *Dramatic Writers*

Turning to the dramatic writers, we find a marked contrast between Plautus, who was close to the people, and Terence,

¹⁴² In the Georgics I have noted such reference only in 3, 280-283, a passage relating to *hippomane*s as a philter. In the Eclogues, if we except the eighth, which is so largely borrowed from Theocritus, I have found only one magic reference, a countercharm against the evil eye, 7, 25-28.

¹⁴³ The *aureus ramus*, Aen. 6, 136-155; 405-410, gave entrance to the under world to him who, by permission of the fates, should pluck it. The explanation of this legend and of the beliefs underlying it furnishes the starting point of Frazer's elaborate work, *The Golden Bough*.

¹⁴⁴ Aen. 7, 10-24; 189-191; 282-283.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 7, 750-758.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 4, 483-493; 509-516.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 11, 785-788. The comment of Servius upon 787 is: 'Freti pietate': iste quidem hoc dicit, sed Varro ubique expugnator religionis ait, cum quoddam medicamentum describeret, 'Ut solent Hirpini qui ambulaturi per ignes medicamento plantas tingunt.' For a refutation of Varro's rationalizing explanation cf. Andrew Lang, *Magic and Religion*, 270 ff. Cf. Solinus, 2, 26.

who was not. The former refers to magic more than twenty times,¹⁴⁸ while the latter is absolutely silent on the subject.¹⁴⁹

(3) *The Popular versus the Philosophic Attitude*

In general it may be said that those authors who wrote for a limited cultured few condemn magic practices, while those whose works were intended to reach a wider reading public, including the populace, often show a conscious or unconscious love of magic. Thus, the champions of religion and the champions of philosophy necessarily scorned magic, the former, because it claimed to control the gods rather than to adore them,¹⁵⁰ the latter, because it could not be defended by any proper consideration of logical cause and effect. A brief consideration of the attitude of the Roman philosophers toward magic will prove the truth of this latter statement.

Lucretius, the Epicurean, nowhere expressly states his views regarding magic. He does, however, give a rationalizing explanation of the popular belief that the cock had a peculiar antipathetic power over the lion;¹⁵¹ he laughs to scorn the

¹⁴⁸ Many of these references are quite slight, and some of them were no doubt in the original Greek versions. Yet our knowledge of Plautus's Romanism and of his exuberant originality leads us to believe that such references were inserted, or retained, because they found a ready response in the hearts of his Roman audience. Cf. *Amph.* 323; 605; 777; *ib.* act 4, fragmenta 7 and 10; *ib.* frag. incert. 47 (p. 169 Ox. text, ed. Lindsay): *Rudens* 1139. Cf. *Curc.* 397 for *superstitiosus* as a 'wizard.' For the frequent mention of metamorphoses as though of common occurrence, cf. *Amph.* 455-458; 845-846: *Mil. Glor.* 430-432. For *praestigiatrices*, etc., cf. *Amph.* 782-783: *Poen.* 1125-1126.

¹⁴⁹ He does indeed give us one interesting instance of superstition and belief in omens, *Phormio* 705-710; but even this is put in the mouth of a slave.

¹⁵⁰ We have already noted the antagonism of magic and religion, *supra*, 12-13, 16-17. Cf. also Minucius Felix, *Octav.* 26, 10-11; 27; Augustinus, *De Divers. Quaest.* 79, 4.

¹⁵¹ 4, 708-719. For the more prevalent belief cf. Pliny, *N. H.* 8, 52.

possibility of any such mythical beast as the Chimaera.¹⁵² The whole Etruscan system of divination, in his opinion, is foolish and unscientific;¹⁵³ the fear of ghosts must yield to a rational explanation.¹⁵⁴ In the light of these passages we may feel assured that the only reason Lucretius did not condemn magic was either because it did not come within the scope of his subject, or else because he scorned the mention of so unscientific a body of belief.

Cicero, the representative of the New Academy, is no more favorable to the occult. Although he accepts the Stoic doctrine that there is a certain *contagio* or *συμπαθεια* in nature,¹⁵⁵ he is a rationalist. He refuses to believe in ghosts,¹⁵⁶ and recommends a reasonable explanation as the best means of allaying the popular fear of eclipses.¹⁵⁷ He ridicules and condemns the growing belief in astrologers.¹⁵⁸ In fact, he considers all soothsayers, necromancers, augurs, astrologers, and dream seers worthless.¹⁵⁹

How far the Stoic doctrine of *sympathia* drew the Roman followers of that school toward a belief in sympathetic magic we cannot tell with exactness.¹⁶⁰ Certain we are, however, that Seneca, the most celebrated Roman Stoic whose writings we possess, was strongly opposed to belief in magic. It is true that he introduces much magic into his tragedies,¹⁶¹ even

¹⁵² 5, 901-921.

¹⁵³ 6, 379 ff.

¹⁵⁴ 1, 127-135.

¹⁵⁵ Div. 2, 33 Ut enim iam sit aliqua in natura rerum contagio, quam esse concedo (multa enim Stoici colligunt; . . .) . . . quam *συμπαθειαν* Graeci appellant, . . .

¹⁵⁶ Tusc. 1, 37.

¹⁵⁷ De Re Pub. 1, 23-26.

¹⁵⁸ Tusc. 1, 95: Div. 2, 87-99: De Fato 15.

¹⁵⁹ Div. 1, 132: 2, 50; 84.

¹⁶⁰ Theo. Weidlich, *Sympath.* 4-11, is of the opinion that the Stoics pushed their belief in the *sympathia* of nature into the realm of the supernatural to a very considerable extent.

¹⁶¹ Herc. Oet. 452-472; 523-533; 566: Med. 465-476; 575-578; 670-739; 752-811; 817-842: Oed. 559-573: Phaed. 420-421; 790-792.

overdoing the magic element at times;¹⁶² but in all these instances, the magic is in accord with the character in the play, and does not represent the opinion of the author. Seneca's real personal belief can best be seen in his remarks concerning the magic hail averters of Cleonae:¹⁶³

Illud incredibile, Cleonis fuisse publice praepositos chalazophylacas, speculatores venturae grandinis. Hi cum signum dedissent adesse iam grandinem, quid expectas? ut homines ad paenulas discurrerent aut ad scortear? Immo pro se quisque alius agnum immolabat, alius pullum: protinus illae nubes alio declinabant, cum aliquid gustassent sanguinis. Hoc rides? Accipe quod magis rideas: si quis nec agnum nec pullum habebat, quo sine damno fieri poterat, manus sibi afferebat, et, ne tu avidas aut crudeles existimes nubes, digitum suum bene acuto graphio pungebat et hoc sanguine litabat; nec minus ab huius agello grando se vertebat quam ab illo, in quo maioribus hostiis exorata erat.

Rationem huius rei quaerunt. Alteri, ut homines sapientissimos decet, negant posse fieri, ut cum grandine aliquis paciscatur et tempestates munusculis redimat, quamvis munera et deos vincant. Alteri suspicari ipsos aiunt esse in ipso sanguine vim quandam potentem avertendae nubis ac repellendae. Sed quomodo in tam exiguo sanguine potest esse vis tanta, ut in altum penetret et illam sentiant nubes? Quanto expeditius erat dicere: mendacium et fabula est. . . . Rudis adhuc antiquitas credebat et attrahi cantibus imbres et repelli, quorum nihil posse fieri tam palam est, ut huius rei causa nullius philosophi schola intranda sit.

The same attitude is somewhat perceptible in Seneca's nephew, Lucan. Notwithstanding his elaborate magic scene in the sixth book of the *Pharsalia*,¹⁶⁴ we are not sure of his

¹⁶² This is especially true of the *Medea*.

¹⁶³ *Nat. Quaest.* 4b, 6-7. Cf. 1, 1, 3-4 for a similar disbelief in meteors as *prodigia*. Again, in 7, 1, 2, he calls the popular fear of eclipses a *superstitio vana*. He wrote a work *De Superstitione*, which is now, unfortunately, lost; but his general attitude of mind may be gathered from the foregoing passages.

¹⁶⁴ 430-830.

belief or disbelief in magic.¹⁶⁵ He himself asks why it is that magic is superior to the gods, compelling the latter to do the magician's will,¹⁶⁶ but offers no direct answer to his question. He does say, however, that the forces of nature obey the witch, Erietho, as a result of compulsion rather than through the power of religion, for she does not acknowledge religious rites.¹⁶⁷ On the contrary, she strikes fear into the hearts even of the gods:

Omne nefas superi prima iam voce precantis
concedunt carmenque timent audire secundum.¹⁶⁸

Yet Lucan, in this same passage,¹⁶⁹ speaks of magic as a *vanus saevusque furor*. He seems indeed to delight in this magic scene, and to appreciate its dramatic possibilities; but whether he really extended the Stoic belief in divination to the point of making it include magic and necromancy we cannot tell.¹⁷⁰ Does he really believe magic to be a *vanus saevusque furor*, or is he one of those who accepted more of the popular belief in magic than we are accustomed to think? I am inclined to hold that, like his uncle, Seneca, Lucan really scorned magic, but could not forego the opportunity to introduce the long witch scene into Book 6 because of its very great dramatic possibilities.

Apuleius, too, in making his defence against the charge of having practiced magic, adopts the usual philosophic attitude of opposition.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ Cf. Ludovicus Fahz, *De Poetarum Latinorum Doctrina Magica* (Giessen, 1904), Chapter 3, especially 148-167, where the author seeks to prove that the magic details of Book 6 are taken from a Greek manual of magic. ¹⁶⁶ 6, 492-499. ¹⁶⁷ 6, 523-525. ¹⁶⁸ 6, 527-528. ¹⁶⁹ 434.

¹⁷⁰ An interesting paragraph concerning the belief of the Stoics in divination and similar matters, together with a complete list of passages from the *Pharsalia* bearing upon the subject, is given by W. E. Heitland in his Introduction (p. xlv) to Haskins's edition of the *Pharsalia* (London, 1887). Cf. *supra*, n. 160; H. J. Rose, in *Trans. and Proc. of Am. Phil. Assn.*, 44, pp. l-lii; *supra*, n. 165.

¹⁷¹ Cf. *Apol.* 47 (quoted *supra*, 13).

(4) *The Lyric and Elegiac Poets and Magic*

The lyric and elegiac poets, on account of the nature of their themes, and also on account of their great indebtedness to Greek originals, both for subject matter and for treatment, are too far removed from Roman daily life to be of very great value to our survey. Yet even in this field of literature we shall not fail to find interesting material.

Catullus, for instance, repeats what appears to have been a popular tradition to the effect that a *magus* must be the offspring of a mother and her own son: ¹⁷²

Nam magus ex matre et gnato gignatur oportet,
si vera est Persarum impia religio,
gratus ut accepto veneretur carmine divos. . . .

It seems likely that the foregoing passage does not reflect a native Italian belief; but certain recipes, given for averting the evil eye, surely have all the flavor of a native belief, for they are spoken in the heat of a passionate love, when the lover is altogether himself, that is, a thorough Italian: ¹⁷³

dein, cum milia multa (basia) fecerimus,
conturbabimus illa, ne sciamus,
aut ne quis malus invidere possit,
cum tantum sciat esse basiorum.

and again: ¹⁷⁴

(basia) quae nec pernumerare curiosi
possint nec mala fascinare lingua.

and finally: ¹⁷⁵

Ille pulveris Africi
siderumque micantium
subducat numerum prius,
qui vestri numerare vult
multa milia ludi.

¹⁷² 90, 3-6. This tradition, Diogenes Laertius tells us (1, 6 or Proem. 6 [Cobet]), was quoted from Sotion.

¹⁷³ 5, 10-13.

¹⁷⁴ 7, 11-12.

¹⁷⁵ 61, 206-210.

It is these passages that caused Pliny to say ¹⁷⁶ that Catullus wrote an *incantamentorum amatoria imitatio*. In view of these passages I am led to believe that, though Catullus openly and specifically condemns the *magi*, he quite as naturally betrays in his poems of intense personal revelation his own unconscious acceptance of the naïve magic beliefs of his fellow Italians.¹⁷⁷

In Tibullus the magic element is more pronounced. The poet lover represents himself as having had recourse to a practicing *maga*, of whose power he says: ¹⁷⁸

Nec tamen huic credet coniunx tuus, ut mihi verax
pollicita est magico saga ministerio.
Hanc ego de caelo ducentem sidera vidi,
fluminis haec rapidi carmine vertit iter,
haec cantu finditque solum manesque sepulcris
elicit et tepido devocat ossa rogo. . . .

There are three other passages in which the poet seems to indicate his personal belief in magic. In the first,¹⁷⁹ Tibullus represents himself as actually participating in a bit of counter-magic; in the second,¹⁸⁰ he describes his mistress as being under the spell of a *lena* who is skilled in magic, and begs her to break away from this baleful influence; in the third,¹⁸¹ he expresses the belief that perhaps he has been bewitched by some old woman. But in close proximity to all of the foregoing passages are others which indicate that the poet is inclined to speak metaphorically of the magic of love. Thus, for instance, in

¹⁷⁶ N. H. 28, 19 Hinc (i.e. e diris precationibus) Theocriti apud Graecos, Catulli apud nos proximeque Vergilii incantamentorum amatoria imitatio. In this passage the word *imitatio* does not imply that Catullus imitated any other author, as the genitive *Theocriti* shows, but rather that the playful spirit of the love lyric merely imitated the dire *incantamentum* of the darker side of life.

¹⁷⁷ See, in addition to the passages already cited, his references to the popular belief in the good omen of sneezing (45, 8-9; 17-18).

¹⁷⁸ 1, 2, 41-64.

¹⁸⁰ 1, 5, 41-60.

¹⁷⁹ 1, 5, 9-14, especially 11-12.

¹⁸¹ 1, 8, 17-24.

one passage¹⁸² the charge that his mistress has bewitched him he answers by saying that she has indeed bewitched him, but by her beauty rather than by the usual magic means. In another passage¹⁸³ he speaks of himself as having his arms bound by the magic bonds of love. This tendency to speak metaphorically of the magic of love leads us to suspect that Tibullus was following a sort of poetic tradition regarding magic in love, without necessarily indicating his personal views.

A study of Propertius leads me to the same conclusion. He does at times, indeed, seem to strike a genuine Italian note, as when he attributes the estrangement of lovers to the evil eye,¹⁸⁴ or to some magic drug, or indicates a general popular belief in the efficacy of rhombuses and other instruments of magic.¹⁸⁵ Popular beliefs are also probably reflected when he describes a *lena* as having been a powerful sorceress,¹⁸⁶ and mentions the magic power of saliva¹⁸⁷ and of certain herbs.¹⁸⁸

But, like Tibullus, Propertius shows a tendency to speak metaphorically of love's magic. He informs us¹⁸⁹ that, in accordance with Calliope's injunction, his function will be to compose verses by means of which the lover shall charm his mistress from her austere husband; it is very apparent that this magic of a well composed love song is quite different from the common black magic with which we are concerned. At other times his references to magic are of the purely literary and traditional type.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸² 1, 5, 41-44. Cf. also 1, 8, 23-24.

¹⁸³ 1, 8, 5-6.

¹⁸⁴ 1, 12, 9-10. But even in this passage the poet seems to think that the *invidia* comes from the gods.

¹⁸⁵ 3, 6, 25-34; 2, 28b, 35-38.

¹⁸⁶ 4, 5, 1-18. Professor Kirby F. Smith maintains (*Studies in Honor of B. L. Gildersleeve* [Baltimore, 1902], 287; id. *Am. Journ. of Phil.* 28, 3) that the *lenae* as a class were quite generally believed to have magic power. There seems to be much evidence in support of this view. Cf., e.g., Martial, 9, 29, 9-10; Tibullus, 1, 5, 48.

¹⁸⁷ 4, 7, 37.

¹⁸⁸ 4, 7, 72.

¹⁸⁹ 3, 3, 47-50.

¹⁹⁰ As in 2, 1, 51-56; 4, 7-8.

It is worthy of note that neither Tibullus nor Propertius anywhere uses a derogatory epithet in connection with magic; but this bit of negative evidence need not be considered of great value. With the erotic poets it seems, indeed, to have become a fad to appeal to magic in the furtherance of love. How much of this was due to literary convention or to foreign borrowing, and how much to genuine conviction we cannot tell.¹⁹¹ It seems certain, however, that such a convention could not have come into existence unless there had been a substantial body of popular or even personal belief behind it. Pliny's remark, too,¹⁹² that Catullus wrote an *incantamentorum amatoria imitatio*, if taken in connection with his accompanying discussion of early Roman magic, indicates that to him at least such passages in the poets were not altogether the result of convention.

Horace, in his Odes, does not seem to have followed his erotic contemporaries, for he furnishes only one passing reference to magic.¹⁹³

Ovid, though he amused the literary set at Rome with his countless stories of metamorphoses and other marvels, mostly from the Greek, more nearly expresses his own views when he says of the old legends:¹⁹⁴

Prodigiosa loquor veterum mendacia vatum;
nec tulit haec umquam nec feret ulla dies.

¹⁹¹ Ludovicus Fahz, in his dissertation entitled *De Poetarum Romanorum Doctrina Magica* (Giessen, 1904), Chapter 3, seeks to show that the Roman poets in such matters were to a great extent following Greek magic papyri.

¹⁹² Cf. *supra*, 34, n. 176.

¹⁹³ 1, 27, 21-22

Quae saga, quis te solvere Thessalis
magus venenis, quis poterit deus?

It is noteworthy that the *magus* is here placed on a par with the *deus*.

¹⁹⁴ Am. 3, 6, 17-18.

Yet even he yields half-assent when the practices of magic are veiled under the guise of religion.¹⁹⁵

The epigrams of Martial are practically free from references to magic.¹⁹⁶

(5) *The Satirists and Magic*

In the *satura*, on the other hand, we have the right to expect a more complete reflection of popular ideas. The *satura* is a type of poetic composition which, with its *musa pedester*, should give us some idea of Roman magic as it was actually practiced. In Lucilius, however, the first great satirist, there are only four passages¹⁹⁷ at all relating to magic, and of these

¹⁹⁵ In Fasti 5, 429-444 we have a description of the means whereby the Roman householder sought to drive the *lemures* from his home by a religio-magic ceremony. In spite of certain verbal indications that the poet is here reporting popular beliefs and practices, he does not seem to be wholly out of sympathy with the ancient custom. The passage runs as follows:

Nox ubi iam media est, somnoque silentia praebet
 et canis et variae conticuistis aves,
 ille memor veteris ritus timidusque deorum
 surgit; habent gemini vincula nulla pedes:
 signaque dat digitis medio cum pollice iunctis,
 occurrat tacito ne levis umbra sibi.
 Cumque manus puras fontana perluit unda,
 vertitur, et nigras accipit ante fabas,
 aversusque iacit. Sed dum iacit, "Haec ego mitto,
 his" inquit "redimo meque meosque fabis."
 Hoc novies dicit, nec respicit. Umbra putatur
 colligere et nullo terga vidente sequi.
 Rursus aquam tangit, Temesaeaque concrepat aera,
 et rogat, ut tectis exeat umbra suis.
 Cum dixit novies "Manes exite paterni",
 respicit, et pure sacra peracta putat.

¹⁹⁶ He does indeed tell us (9, 29, 9-10) of a certain old woman who had during her life been a powerful sorceress, and that sleep at Rome was much disturbed by the noisy efforts of magicians to call down the moon (12, 57, 15-17); but these are only passing references.

¹⁹⁷ These are (ed. Marx) vss. 62-63, 575-576, 1201-1202, and the passage quoted in the following note.

only one¹⁹⁸ has sufficient context to enable us to draw conclusions regarding the author's views. He seems to have considered himself superior to popular belief, which is exactly what one would expect of Lucilius, the *equus Romanus*.

Horace, on the other hand, in his Epodes and Satires paints many a true picture of the daily practices of the masses at Rome. Thus, in the fifth Epode we meet four witches who are busily engaged in burying a boy alive, in order that from the marrow of one who has died of starvation, with an accompanying intense desire for food set just beyond his grasp, a philter may be made which should fill the absent lover with a similar intense desire for his mistress. The usual magical details are introduced profusely.¹⁹⁹ We meet two of these same sorceresses

¹⁹⁸ 484-489

Terriculas, Lamias, Fauni quas Pompiliique
instituire Numae, tremit has, hic omnia ponit.
Ut pueri infantes credunt signa omnia aena
vivere et esse homines, sic isti somnia ficta
vera putant, credunt signis cor inesse in aenis.
Pergula fictorum veri nihil, omnia ficta.

¹⁹⁹ Magic details are: purity of victim, *impube corpus*, 13; hair unloosed, *incomptum caput*, 16 (cf. also 27); gruesome details, 17-18; frog as magic animal, 19; owl, 20; magic plants, 17, 21-22, 67-68; water from Lake Avernus, 26. The usual feats of magic, such as controlling stars and moon, are mentioned, 45-46; night and Diana are addressed, 49-54; etc. It is not unlikely that such murders of children actually occurred. C. H. Moore, in his edition of the Odes and Epodes, page 415, quotes Cicero, In Vat. 14 *cum inaudita ac nefaria sacra susceperis, cum inferorum animas elicere, cum puerorum extis deos manes mactare soleas*, etc., and C. I. L. 6, 19, 747 *Iucundus Liviae Drusi Caesaris f(ilius) Gryphi et Vitalis*.

In quantum surgens comprehensus deprimor annum,
cum possem matri dulcis et esse patri.
Eripuit me saga manus crudelis ubique,
cum manet in terris et nocet arte sua.
Vos vestros natos concustodite, parentes,
ni dolor in toto pectore fixsus eat.

There can be no doubt that the Roman populace believed implicitly in such magic practices.

in the abandoned cemetery of the Esquiline,²⁰⁰ attempting, by means of sympathetic magic, involving a waxen and a woolen image, to subdue an obdurate lover; again all the customary magic details are employed.²⁰¹ That Horace is deriding magic in both of these poems seems to me apparent from his mock palinode, Epode seventeen.²⁰² And yet, notwithstanding his skepticism regarding magic and marvels,²⁰³ he exhibits a fondness for wandering among the fakers of the circus.²⁰⁴ Even in his later, more sophisticated prime, he does not entirely deny the power of divination²⁰⁵ and he mentions sorceresses in the same breath with gods.²⁰⁶ There are charms, he tells us, to dispel avarice, as well as a manual of magic containing cures for vanity of spirit.²⁰⁷ The evil eye is still to him a possible source of danger,²⁰⁸ though he may smile at those who are the slaves of dreams, magic terrors, omens, witches, hobgoblins, and Thessalian portents.²⁰⁹

Persius heaps scorn upon popular magic beliefs,²¹⁰ yet he

²⁰⁰ Sat. 1, 8, 17-50. Cf. *supra*, 9-10, and n. 43.

²⁰¹ Magic details are: the gruesome in magic compounds, 22, 26-29; magic herbs, 22, 49; black as a magic color, 23, 27; nudity in magic, 24; hair unloosed, 24; *sympathia* or *similia similibus*, 30-33; wolf's beard and serpent's tooth in magic, 42; *licium* or magic thread, 49-50. Hecate and Tisiphone are invoked, 33-34.

²⁰² This conclusion is sound, I think, even if we agree with E. H. Sturtevant (*Class. Rev.* 26 [1912], 19-21) that Canidia was a reality. For a similar slighting attitude toward divination, cf. Sat. 1, 9, 29-34. For Horace's general attitude toward marvellous tales, see *Ars Poet.* 338-340.

²⁰³ Cf. Sat. 1, 5, 99-101.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.* 1, 6, 113-114.

²⁰⁵ *Carm.* 1, 11, 1-3.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 1, 27, 21-22. The playful spirit of this and the preceding passage need not cause us to change our estimate of Horace's attitude toward magic.

²⁰⁷ *Epist.* 1, 1, 32-36. This manual may be nothing more than a sound philosophical treatise of such a character as to correct a vain disposition. Or it may be, on the other hand, that Horace is here merely indulging in a little fun.

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.* 1, 14, 37-38.

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.* 2, 2, 208-209.

²¹⁰ Sat. 2, 31-34. For similar scorn for eastern religions as practiced at Rome, cf. Sat. 5, 179-188.

leaves the impression that such beliefs were very common among all but philosophers. Juvenal gives only passing references to magic practices, but they are all very slighting in tone.²¹¹ It is apparent from his writings that both rich and poor believed implicitly in all kinds of magic practices.

Of the writers of *Saturae Menippeae* Varro presents nothing worthy of note in the extant fragments,²¹² whereas Petronius contains much interesting material. This brings us to our best division, the writers of prose romances.

(6) *The Writers of Prose Romances and Magic*

At Trimalchio's dinner one of the guests commends the good old religio-magic custom in accordance with which the matrons used to march up the *Clivus Capitolinus* with hair unloosed and feet bare to pray to Jupiter for rain; ²¹³ another regales the company with the story of a werewolf, in which he himself

²¹¹ In 6, 133-134 he mentions *hippomanes* and *carmen* as ingredients of a philter; in 6, 610-611 we read: *hic magicos adfert cantus, hic Thesala vendit philtra*. . . . In 6, 443 he tells of a woman who could assist the moon in overcoming an eclipse. According to one interpretation, a boasting lawyer spits on his breast to avoid the evil effect of his boasting, 7, 112. On the other hand Juvenal flays unsparingly in much more extended passages the prevailing rage for astrology and fortune telling: 6, 553-564; 569-691: 7, 194-196; 199-200: 9, 33. He depicts the Emperor Tiberius at Capri *cum grege Chaldaeo* (10, 94), but portrays the good old Roman as saying *motus astrorum ignoro* (3, 42-43).

²¹² I used Buechler's text, bound with his fifth edition of Petronii Satirae (Berlin, 1912). Fragments 284, 285, 490 seem to refer to magic.

²¹³ Sat. 44. The loosing of hair and the baring of feet are well known magic acts. Frazer, *G. B.* 1, 1, 309, quotes for similar magic acts among the Greeks and the Romans in order to produce rain, Pausanias, 2, 25, 10; Marcus Antoninus, 5, 7; Tertullian, *Apol.* 40; P. Cauer, *Delectus Inscriptionum Graecarum*², No. 162; H. Collitz und F. Bechtel, *Sammlung der griechischen Dialekt-Inschriften*, No. 3718; Ch. Michel, *Recueil d'inscriptions grecques*, No. 1004; O. Luders, *Die dionysischen Künstler* (Berlin, 1873), 26 f. Cf. especially M. H. Morgan, *Rain Gods and Rain Charms*, in *Trans. of Am. Phil. Assn.* 32 (1901), 83-109.

was a principal actor;²¹⁴ whereupon the host launches upon a tale of personal experiences with *strigae*.²¹⁵ Both stories are accepted in good faith by the assembled guests as being matters of fairly common occurrence.²¹⁶ Later in the *Satirae* mention is made of sorceresses who know how to draw down the moon,²¹⁷ excite desire,²¹⁸ and even control all the forces of nature.²¹⁹ We are not here concerned with the small details about good luck days,²²⁰ the auspicious right foot,²²¹ how to win a fortune by snatching an incubo's cap,²²² astrology,²²³ and the efficacy of spitting upon one's breast to appease Adrasteia;²²⁴ all these things, however, lend to the entertaining work of Petronius the true flavor of real life among the Roman populace. In the whole work there is not a suggestion that any of the characters disbelieves a single miraculous tale. It is true that the narrator, who probably represents the author's views, does display throughout an amused superiority to all that is going on around him; but in no instance does Petronius utter a word against magic. He was either not altogether free from belief in such tales as the above, or else he had the good judgment not to mar his excellent picture of social life among the vulgar rich

²¹⁴ 62. For a full discussion of the werwolf cf. Kirby Flower Smith, in *Pub. of the Mod. Lang. Assn. of America*, 9 (1894), 1-42; S. Baring-Gould, *The Book of Were-wolves* (London, 1865); and especially Wilhelm Hertz, *Der Werwolf* (Stuttgart, 1862). Friedlaender, in his edition of the *Cena Trimalchionis*² (Leipzig, 1906), 317, refers also to J. Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie* (Berlin, 1877), 915 ff.; Keller, *Tiere des klassischen Altertums*, 165 ff.; and particularly Pischel, on Petronius, *Sat. 62 (Abhand. f. M. Hertz [1888], 70)*.

²¹⁵ 63. For a similar story compare Ovid, *Fast.* 6, 141-168; quoted in part *infra*, 64. For a definition of *striga* cf. Festus (ed. Lindsay), p. 414.

²¹⁶ When the first story is completed, Trimalchio (63) attests his belief with the words, "scio Niceronem nihil nugarum narrare," and, at the conclusion of the second story, the general attitude is expressed (64) by "Miramur nos et pariter credimus, osculatique mensam rogamus Nocturnas, ut suis sedibus se teneant, dum redimus a cena."

²¹⁷ 129.

²¹⁹ 134.

²²¹ 30.

²²³ 39; 126.

²¹⁸ 131.

²²⁰ 30.

²²² 38.

²²⁴ 74.

of Nero's reign by injecting into it any of the skepticism affected by the upper classes.

The entertaining *Satirae* of Petronius almost inevitably suggest the equally entertaining *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius, a tale so fantastic that it had much to do with fastening upon its author in future centuries the reputation of a *magus*.²²⁵ The story deals with

figuras fortunasque hominum in alias imagines conversas et in se
rursum mutuo nexu refectas;²²⁶

but, preceding the main story of the transformation, and interwoven with it, are lesser tales of *sagae*, who are able

caelum deponere, terram suspendere, fontes durare, montes diluere, manes sublimare, deos infimare, sidera extinguere, Tartarum ipsum inluminare.²²⁷

The action of the main story takes place in Thessaly, the home of magic.²²⁸ The hero, Lucius, having seen his hostess, Pamphile, transform herself into an owl and fly away,²²⁹ begs the latter's maidservant to grant him the privilege of doing likewise. Unwillingly consenting, the young woman orders him to undress and anoint himself with the ointment which she gives him. Unfortunately, the wrong ointment is used and Lucius ruefully finds himself changed not into a bird, as he desired, but into an ass.²³⁰ The rest of the tale concerns

²²⁵ Upon the reputation of Apuleius as a magician Teuffel, *Röm. Lit.* § 366. 3, quotes Augustinus, Ep. 2, Quaest. 6 (2, p. 426c, ed. Gaume, Paris, 1838); Epist. 136, 1; Ep. 138, 18; Lactantius, Inst. 5, 3, 7; Monceaux, *Apulée magicien*, in *Rev. de deux mondes*, 1 (1888), 572. Yet Augustinus, at least, shows (C. D. 8, 19) his acquaintance with the *Apologia* and Apuleius's formal condemnation of magic therein contained. ²²⁶ 1, 1.

²²⁷ 1, 8. The incidental magic tales are found in Met. 1, 9-20; 2, 21-30; 3, 16-18; 9, 29-31. ²²⁸ 2, 1. ²²⁹ 3, 21.

²³⁰ 3, 24-25. Cf. H. T. Peck, *Trimalchio's Dinner* (New York, 1899), Introd. 41. Professor Peck's statement that Lucius "accidentally swallowed a magic potion which turned him into an ass" is not in accord with the words of Apuleius (l. c.), *cuncta corporis mei membra perfricui*.

the fortunes of this human ass and his final restoration to his original form, not through magic, but through the intervention of Isis.²³¹

We have noted above²³² that, when Trimalchio's guests told their wonderful, weird stories, no one in the company disbelieved. We may now go one step further in stating that Apuleius himself apparently believed in the magic stories which he relates. He is very likely speaking for himself when he makes one of his characters say at the conclusion of a magic story:²³³

Ego vero . . . nihil impossibile arbitror, sed utcumque fata²³⁴ decreverint ita cuncta mortalibus provenire: nam et mihi et tibi et cunctis hominibus multa usu venire mira et paene infecta, quae tamen ignaro relata fidem perdant. Sed ego huic . . . credo. . . .

Of his mysticism in general there is abundant evidence in the whole eleventh book of the *Metamorphoses*, where he turns what had started out as a magic tale into a highly mystical conclusion, in which Isis plays the leading part.

Certain it is that of the two sole extant specimens of Roman prose fiction,²³⁵ one introduces a number of magic stories, while the other is characterized throughout by a "brooding sense of magic"²³⁶ and mysticism. The magic element is in Apuleius no longer incidental; it has become the principal element in the composition; and we must see in this growth, I think,

²³¹ Met. 11, 6; 12-13. Cf. Purser, *The Story of Cupid and Psyche as related by Apuleius* (London, 1910), Introd. xix-xxi.

²³² Supra, 41.

²³³ Met. 1, 20.

²³⁴ The context forbids us to interpret *fata* in this passage as opposed to the magic control of nature; for the two witches of the story preceding this passage had given ample proof of their control over natural forces. The fates, then, in this instance seem merely to have decreed that the two women of the story should have these magic powers.

²³⁵ Cf. H. T. Peck, *Trimalchio's Dinner*, 1-44, for an interesting account of prose fiction among the Greeks and the Romans. Pages 40-44 especially concern us here.

²³⁶ Cf. Mackail, *Latin Literature*, 241-242.

the line of development of popular taste among the Romans during the century that separates Petronius and Apuleius. It is just because the mystic Apuleius had gained such a grip upon the reading public of a later day that the Christian fathers classed him with Apollonius of Tyana as the magician rival of Jesus Christ.²³⁷

Nor was Apuleius's reputation as a *magus* entirely posthumous; for a few years, perhaps, after the publication of the *Metamorphoses*,²³⁸ his marriage to a rich widow of Oea gave occasion for a lawsuit, in which it was alleged by the relatives of the bride that she had been won by magic arts.²³⁹ His de-

²³⁷ Teuffel, *Röm. Lit.* § 366. 3, gives the following passages to substantiate this point: Augustinus, Ep. 2, Quaest. 6 Si hoc quod de Iona scriptum est Apuleius Madaurensis vel Apollonius Tyaneus fecisse diceretur, quorum multa mira nullo fideli auctore iactitant . . .; Epist. 136, 1 Apollonium siquidem suum nobis et Apuleium aliosque magicae artis homines in medium proferunt, quorum maiora contendunt extitisse miracula . . .; Ep. 138, 18 Apollonium et Apuleium ceterosque magicarum artium peritissimos conferre Christo vel etiam praeferre conantur; Lactantius, Inst. 5, 3, 7 Apuleium, cuius solent et multa et mira memorari. See P. Monceaux, *Apulée magicien*, in *Rev. de deux mondes*, 1 (1888), 572.

²³⁸ Whether or not the *Metamorphoses* was published before the delivery of the *Apologia* we cannot say certainly. Cf. Teuffel, *Röm. Lit.* § 367. 1. Purser, however, in the Introduction to his work, *The Story of Cupid and Psyche as Related by Apuleius* (London, 1910), pp. xv-xxiv, gives what appear to me good reasons for believing that the *Metamorphoses* was published anonymously at Rome some years before the *Apologia*. He further attempts to show that the book probably had no great success at the time of publication, and that it had not, at the time the *Apologia* was delivered, become known in Africa. This would account for the fact that the enemies of Apuleius did not use it as evidence that Apuleius was an adept in magic. Finally, he maintains that the work was never acknowledged by Apuleius as his, for the reason that in his after years as a fashionable teacher of philosophy he was not proud of his earlier effort. W. E. Foster, in a Columbia University dissertation (New York, 1912), *Studies in Archaism in Aulus Gellius*, 10, inclines to the opinion that the *Metamorphoses* is a youthful work of Apuleius. See also Helm, in the *Præfatio* to his edition of the *Florida*, x f.

²³⁹ *Apol.*, Chapters 27, 41, 66, 71, 90, 102.

fence, extant under the title of *Apologia*, brilliantly ridicules the charge, from which he was no doubt acquitted.²⁴⁰ As a matter of fact, in his defence Apuleius even seems to condemn magic as illegal and as dangerous to the best interests of the community,²⁴¹ though in another place he expressly states his belief in the existence of *magi*.²⁴² From all the evidence at our command it seems fair to conclude that Apuleius, as a mystic dabbler in literature, science, and philosophy, was intimately acquainted with all the magic lore of his day, believed in it to some extent, and knew thoroughly how to utilize it in his popular writings; but that his later reputation as a practicing *magus* is not based upon any substantial evidence. He is the victim of the popular fallacy that they who know about magic practice it themselves.²⁴³

(7) *The Historians and Magic*

The Roman historians also show traces of a belief in magic. Of the *Origines* of Cato the extant fragments contain no magic passages.²⁴⁴ The fragments of Varro's *Antiquitates Rerum Divinarum*, a work which must originally have contained a mine of information upon our subject, are more fruitful. It is

²⁴⁰ That the presiding judge, the proconsul Claudius Maximus (cf. Teuffel, *Röm. Lit.*⁸ § 358. 4) was a Stoic philosopher, and hence probably tinged with mysticism, may have made his task easier.

²⁴¹ Apol. 47, quoted supra, 13.

²⁴² *Ibid.* 43 *quanquam Platoni (Sympos. 202E) credam, inter deos atque homines natura et loco medias quasdam divorum potestates intersitas, easque divinationes cunctas et magorum miracula gubernare.* From such passages we may surmise that Apuleius's *Liber Naturalium Quaestionum*, of which he speaks rather grandiloquently in Apolog. 36, may not have been without a mystical element.

²⁴³ Apuleius, Apol. 27 *eos vero vulgo magos nominent, quasi facere etiam sciant quae sciant fieri, ut olim fuere Ipimenides.* . . . Cf. also supra, 10.

²⁴⁴ For the fragments cf. H. Peter, *Historicorum Romanorum Fragmenta* (Leipzig, 1883), 43-65.

very likely that the following passages concerning Cunina, the goddess of the cradle, are from this work: *Adest oculus gravem ad cavendum sumministratque quietem Cunina;*²⁴⁵ and again, *Colitur et Cunina, quae . . . fascinum submovet.*²⁴⁶ If this be true, the great antiquarian attributed to Cunina the power to protect children from the evil eye; though he need not be supposed personally to have shared this popular belief.²⁴⁷ In like manner he speaks of the popular method of expelling *lemures* from the home,²⁴⁸ and speculates in a popular manner about the magic number seven.²⁴⁹ The source of the magic stories quoted from Varro by Apuleius²⁵⁰ can not be determined, nor is there any means of deciding whether the scholarly writer of the original believed his own tales or not. Perhaps Varro's real attitude toward such stories is best given in his celebrated werewolf tale, quoted by Augustine,²⁵¹ who intimates that the

²⁴⁵ Quoted by Tertullian, *Ad Nat.* 2, 11, in a discussion of the multiplicity of Roman gods.

²⁴⁶ Lactantius, *Inst. Div.* 1, 20, 36. These two passages are attributed to Varro by R. Agahd, *M. Terenti Varronis Antiquitatum Rerum Divinarum Libri* (Leipzig, 1898), p. 170, fragmenta 23A and 23B.

²⁴⁷ The power of the evil eye could also be averted from fields by a similar use of the *fascinum* or *membrum virile* employed as an amulet. This is shown by Augustine's quotation from Varro's *Antiq. Rer. Div.* (16, 42 ed. Agahd), found in his *C. D.* 7, 21 *Cui membro inhonesto matrem familias honestissimam palam coronam necesse erat inponere. Sic videlicet Liber deus placandus fuerat pro eventibus seminum, sic ab agris fascinatio repellenda, . . .*

²⁴⁸ Cf. Nonius Marcellus, p. 197 (ed. Lindsay) *Lemures, larvae nocturnae et terrificationes imaginum et bestiarum*; Varro *De Vita Populi Romani* lib. I 'quibus temporibus in sacris fabam iactant noctu ac dicunt se Lemurios domo extra ianuam eicere.' Cf. Ovid, *Fasti* 5, 421 ff., quoted in part supra, 37, n. 195.

²⁴⁹ *Imaginum* lib. I, apud A. Gellium, *N. A.* 3, 10.

²⁵⁰ *Apolog.* 42.

²⁵¹ *C. D.* 18, 17, taken probably from the *De Gente Populi Romani*, as Peter thinks (*Histor. Rom. Frag.* pp. 233-234) *Nec idem propter aliud arbitratu historicus in Arcadia tale nomen adiectum Pani Lycae et Iovi Lycae nisi propter hanc in lupos hominum mutationem, quod eam*

great polymath was more interested in the anthropological and philological aspect of the story than in the popular and the superstitious. Varro's researches in the history of certain kinds of magic are also attested,²⁵² and we are informed that he attempted a rational explanation of such phenomena. In fact there is no evidence whatever that he was not rationalistic throughout, at least when expressing his formal opinions, regarding magic.

Turning now to the Roman historians whose works have survived either in their entirety or to a large extent, we shall find that, though Tacitus alone has given us a rather clear indication of his views upon magic,²⁵³ most of the historians have given some evidence of their beliefs concerning the subject. In general they impress us as men whose intellectual advancement compelled them to condemn popular superstition and magic, though their early training and unveneered natures yielded unconscious assent, at least in part, to those very beliefs and practices. It was this mixture of rationalism and magic practice which led Caesar to secure a safe carriage ride by means of a thrice repeated charm,²⁵⁴ though he did not hesitate to allow his personal ambitions to outweigh popular belief whenever occasion demanded.²⁵⁵ Nor did he fail to interpret

nisi vi divina fieri non putarent. . . . Romanos etiam Lupercos ex illorum mysteriorum veluti semine dicit exortos. For a similar rationalizing tendency cf. *Lingua Latina* 7, 44; 97 (edd. Goetz und Schoell, Leipzig, 1910), where the origin of the *argei* and the *bullā* is discussed. Cf. also Servius on Vergil, Aen. 11, 787, quoted supra, 28, n. 147.

²⁵² Cf. Augustinus, C. D. 7, 35 Quod genus divinationis (i.e. necromantiae) idem Varro a Persis dicit allatum. . . . Quid mihi ergo Varro illorum sacrorum alias nescio quas causas velut physicas interpretatur?

²⁵³ See infra, 50-51.

²⁵⁴ Pliny, N. H. 28, 21 Caesarem dictatorem post unum ancipitem vehiculi casum ferunt semper, ut primum consedisset, id quod plerosque nunc facere scimus, carmine ter repetito securitatem itinerum aucupari solitum.

²⁵⁵ Suetonius, Caes. 59 Ne religione quidem ulla a quoquam incepto absteritus umquam vel retardatus est. Cum immolanti aufugisset hostia,

to his personal advantage any ominous occurrence.²⁵⁶ In like manner, though he appears to have believed in prodigies,²⁵⁷ he was quick to take advantage of the superstitious beliefs of others.²⁵⁸ In a word, he appears superior to popular magic and superstition in general and skeptical concerning them, though cherishing his own personal beliefs and practices.

Of Sallust's attitude toward magic there is not enough evidence to justify an opinion.²⁵⁹

Livy nowhere expresses his personal opinion about magic. The great number of *prodigia*²⁶⁰ contained in his work is doubtless an inheritance from the Annalists whom he followed, and perhaps a concession to popular belief. Moreover, since prodigies are sent by the gods to warn men, they belong to the field of religion rather than to magic. Livy does, however, repeat many stories that combine magic with religion, apparently without recognizing the magic element. Numa, for instance, according to one of his stories, draws Jupiter from heaven by magic,²⁶¹ and Tullus Hostilius attempts unsuccessfully to imi-

profectionem adversus Scipionem et Iubam non distulit. Prolapsus etiam in egressu navis verso ad melius omine, "Teneo te," inquit, "Africa." The same story with slight variations is told by Frontinus, *Strat.* 1, 12, 2 C. Caesar, cum forte conscendens navem lapsus esset, "Teneo te, terra mater," inquit, qua interpretatione effecit, ut repetiturus illas a quibus proficiscebatur terras videretur.

²⁵⁶ Cf. Suetonius, *Caes.* 32.

²⁵⁷ *Bellum Civ.* 3, 105 Item constabat Elide in templo Minervae . . . simulacrum Victoriae . . . ad valvas se templi limenque convertisse.

²⁵⁸ Frontinus, *Strat.* 2, 1, 16 C. Caesar in Gallia, quia compererat Ariovisto . . . institutum et quasi legem esse non pugnandi decrescente luna, tum potissimum acie commissa impeditos religione hostes vicit. Cf. *Bell. Gall.* 1, 50 for the same facts.

²⁵⁹ The only reference in point is *Bell. Cat.* 47, 2, where, as in Cicero, *Cat.* 3, 9, Lentulus affirms that he is fated to rule over Rome, because he is the third Cornelian to arrive at supreme power.

²⁶⁰ Cf. Weissenborn's ed., vol. 6, Index, s. v. *prodigia*.

²⁶¹ 1, 20, 7. Cf. J. Ennemoser, *History of Magic* (Eng. transl., London, 1893), 1, 420. The antiquity of this practice is questioned by Fowler, *Relig. Exper. of the Rom. People*, 51 f.

tate him.²⁶² Attus Navius cleaves a whetstone with a razor,²⁶³ the protecting divinities are evoked from the cities of the enemy by means suggesting magic,²⁶⁴ sacred places are not to be spat upon,²⁶⁵ and pestilences are controlled by driving the sacred nail.²⁶⁶ In all these passages the magic element had apparently become fossilized before Livy's day, and was unrecognized as such by him. On the other hand, he must have recognized as magic the custom of beating on metal in order to assist the moon from an eclipse;²⁶⁷ in this case, however, the absence of any adverse comment cannot be interpreted as approval. It is probable, I think, that Livy believed somewhat in the religio-magic stories of early Rome, though to him the magic element had become entirely submerged in the religious overgrowth.²⁶⁸

Though Velleius Paterculus seems to have believed in astrology²⁶⁹ and omens,²⁷⁰ his formal conclusion about such matters is represented by the following words:²⁷¹ *Sed profecto ineluctabilis fatorum vis cuiuscumque fortunam mutare constituit consilia corrumpit.* A similar fatalistic belief is characteristic of Curtius Rufus also,²⁷² who, though delighting to tell marvelous stories to a public which wanted them, dealing out omens second-hand under the label *dicuntur*,²⁷³ and frankly admitting

²⁶² 1, 31, 5-8.

²⁶⁴ 5, 21, 3-5; 22, 3-6.

²⁶³ 1, 36, 4.

²⁶⁵ 5, 40, 8.

²⁶⁶ 7, 3, 3-9; 8, 18, 4-13; 9, 28, 6; 34, 12. Cf. *Cambridge Companion to Latin Studies*, § 147; Fowler, *Roman Festivals*, 234-235.

²⁶⁷ 26, 5, 9. The Campanian multitude is described as beating upon brazen vessels: *qualis in defectu lunae silenti nocte cieri solet, edidit clamorem, ut averteret etiam pugnantium animos.*

²⁶⁸ It may be, of course, that the inclusion of prodigies, marvels, and fossilized religio-magic customs to so large a degree in his history was in direct response to the wish of Augustus, and in the interest of the latter's deliberately planned religious revival.

²⁶⁹ Cf. 2, 24, 3.

²⁷⁰ Cf. 2, 46, 3; 57, 1-3; 59, 6.

²⁷¹ 2, 57, 3.

²⁷² Cf. 4, 6, 17 *inevitabile est fatum*. See also Teuffel, *Röm. Lit.* § 292. 3, at end.

²⁷³ 8, 9, 33.

that he is reporting more than he believes,²⁷⁴ speaks of the magic art as *vanissimi cuiusque ludibrium*.²⁷⁵ He speaks disparagingly also of superstition²⁷⁶ and of astrology.²⁷⁷

The attitude of Tacitus toward magic and astrology can scarcely be doubted. He believed in astrology but despised astrologers.²⁷⁸ He is uncertain what should be the historian's attitude toward portents,²⁷⁹ but as a rule omits them. That he believed in magic is, I think, certain, for the following reason: he has very many occasions to recount the accusation of magic brought against specific individuals in court, as though such practices were matters of everyday occurrence,²⁸⁰ yet in no instance does he speak of the charge as absurd or groundless. Moreover, the very number of such accusations shows that the classes as well as the masses looked seriously upon them. When, however, Tacitus has occasion to give a more detailed account of magic acts, we do not feel so certain of his belief. For instance, in recounting the wonderful cures wrought by Vespasian at Alexandria, though he appears to give full credence

²⁷⁴ 9, 1, 34 Equidem plura transcribo quam credo; nam nec adfirmare sustineo de quibus dubito, nec subducere quae accepi.

²⁷⁵ 7, 4, 8. It should be noted in passing, however, that the *magi* mentioned in 3, 3, 10 and 5, 1, 22 are 'magians,' not 'magicians.'

²⁷⁶ 4, 3, 23; 6, 12; 7, 26; 7, 29; 10, 7: 7, 7, 8.

²⁷⁷ 8, 9, 33: 10, 4.

²⁷⁸ In Ann. 4, 58 he narrates how the facts revealed by astrology came true, but the interpretation put upon those facts by the astrologers was false: Mox patuit breve confinium artis (i.e. astrologiae) et falsi, veraque quam obscuris tegerentur. Cf. especially Ann. 6, 22 Ceterum plurimis mortalium non eximitur, quin primo cuiusque ortu ventura destinantur; sed quaedam secus, quam dicta sint, cadere fallacis ignara dicentium: ita corrumpi fidem artis, cuius clara documenta et antiqua aetas et nostra tulerit. Cf. also Hist. 1, 22: 2, 78; Ann. 2, 27; 32: 3, 22: 6, 20-21: 12, 22; 52: 68: 14, 9 for further references to astrology.

²⁷⁹ Hist. 2, 50 Ut conquirere fabulosa et fictis oblectare legentium animos procul gravitate coepti operis crediderim, ita volgatis traditisque demere fidem non ausim.

²⁸⁰ Ann. 2, 27-28; 69: 3, 13: 4, 22; 52: 6, 29: 12, 22; 65: 16, 31.

to the facts narrated,²⁸¹ he yet seems to believe that the Emperor acts merely as the avenue through which the *numen* of the god operates. In his more mature years, as represented in the *Annales*, when he has to describe the magic details surrounding the death of Germanicus, he carefully inserts the non-committal word *creditur*.²⁸² He speaks respectfully, however, of the *magorum sacra* when he writes of the expulsion of the *magi* from Italy.²⁸³ He is, of course, superior to the popular magic beliefs connected with eclipses of the moon,²⁸⁴ as was every other cultivated Roman of his day.

We may conclude, therefore, from his avowed belief in astrology, and his failure to express any disbelief in the possibility of magic, though he possessed so many opportunities for doing so, that he really believed in magic, at least in a modified manner.²⁸⁵

Suetonius is careful not to express a personal opinion regarding the many details of omens,²⁸⁶ superstition,²⁸⁷

²⁸¹ Hist. 4, 81. This passage relates how, at the admonition of Serapis, a lame man and a blind man of Alexandria besought Vespasian to cure them by magic means. It concludes thus: *Igitur Vespasianus cuncta fortunae suae patere ratus nec quicquam ultra incredibile, . . . erecta quae adstabat multitudine, iussa exsequitur. Statim conversa ad usum manus, at caeco reluxit dies. Utrumque qui interfuere nunc quoque memorant, postquam nullum mendacio pretium. Teuffel (Röm. Lit.⁶ § 333. 9) seems to conclude from the last sentence of the above quoted passage that Tacitus regarded the whole story as a *mendacium*. To me, however, Tacitus seems to say that even at the time of writing, when all hope of reward for falsehood had disappeared, eye-witnesses continue to vouch for the story, and thus its veracity seems proved to his mind.*

²⁸² Ann. 2, 69 et reperiabantur solo ac parietibus erutae humanorum corporum reliquiae, carmina et devotiones et nomen Germanici plumbeis tabulis insculptum, semusti cineres ac tabo obliti aliaque malefica, quis creditur animas numinibus infernis sacrari. Such a use of *creditur* is at best merely non-committal. ²⁸³ *Ibid.* 2, 27-32. ²⁸⁴ *Ibid.* 1, 28.

²⁸⁵ Cf. supra, nn. 281, 282.

²⁸⁶ Aug. 92; 94: Caes. 59; 81: Calig. 57: Claud. 1, 2; 22; 29, 3; 46: Tiber. 72; etc.

²⁸⁷ Aug. 6; 92: Caes. 88: Nero 56.

astrology,²⁸⁸ amulets,²⁸⁹ and magic,²⁹⁰ of which he writes. But we may judge from his avowed superstition,²⁹¹ and from the very frequency with which he refers to the occult without unfavorable comment, that he was fond of such details, and probably believed in magic. Nor will his occasional apparent superiority to popular beliefs²⁹² cause us to change our opinion of him. He is not the first, as we have shown, whose intellect bade him scorn popular belief in magic, while his heart still clung to it.

The *Scriptores Historiae Augustae* contain very little regarding magic, though they have their quota of references to astrology,²⁹³ omens,²⁹⁴ and *sortes*.²⁹⁵ Spartianus does indeed call magic *amentia*,²⁹⁶ and apparently approves of the punishment of such persons as were proved guilty of wearing amulets

²⁸⁸ Aug. 94, 5: Calig. 57, 2: Domit. 14, 1: Nero 36: Otho 4, 1; 6, 1; Tiber. 69; Vitel. 14, 4.

²⁸⁹ Nero 6, 4.

²⁹⁰ Aug. 90: Nero 34, 4: Vespas. 7: Vitel. 2, 4.

²⁹¹ Cf. Pliny, Epist. 1, 18 addressed to Suetonius: Scribis te perterritum somnio vereri, ne quid adversi in actione patiaris, . . .

²⁹² As in Nero 36 Stella crinita, quae summis potestatibus exitium portendere vulgo putatur. . . .

²⁹³ Spartianus, Geta 2, 6; 3, 1: Severus 2, 8-9; 4, 3; 15, 5: Hadrianus 2, 4; 16, 10: Pescennius Niger 9, 5-6; Julius Capitolinus, Marc. Anton. 19, 3: Helv. Pert. 1, 3: Gord. Tres 20, 1; Aelius Lampridius, Heliog. 9, 1: Diad. Anton. 5, 4: Alex. Sever. 27, 5; 44, 4.

²⁹⁴ Spartianus, Did. Jul. 7, 1: Sever. 1, 6 ff.; 3, 4: Geta 3, 2 ff.; Aelius Lampridius, Diad. Anton. 4, 1 ff.: Alex. Sever. 13, 1 ff.; 60, 3 ff.; Julius Capitolinus, Anton. Pius 3, 1: Marc. Anton. Phil. 4, 3: Max. Duo 30, 1 ff.; Flavius Vopiscus, Aurel. 5, 1 ff.: Tac. 17, 1 ff.

²⁹⁵ Cf. *Scriptores Hist. Aug.*, ed. Peter, vol. 2, Index, s. v. *sortes*.

²⁹⁶ Did. Jul. 7, 9-10 Fuit praeterea in Iuliano haec amentia, ut per magos pleraque faceret, quibus putaret vel odium populi deleniri vel militum arma compesci. Nam et quasdam non convenientes Romanis sacris hostias immolaverunt et carmina profana incantaverunt et ea, quae ad speculum dicunt fieri, in quo pueri praeligatis oculis incantato vertice respicere dicuntur, Iulianus fecit. Tuncque puer vidisse dicitur et adventum Severi et Iuliani decessionem.

in order to cure tertian and quartan fever.²⁹⁷ Lampridius mentions the most horrible magic rite with very mild disapproval.²⁹⁸ The general state of public opinion during the latter part of the second and the early part of the third centuries of our era may be inferred from the fact that two Emperors,²⁹⁹ at least, of this period actually practiced magic.

During the next century, when the Christian Emperors were exerting their utmost strength against all non-Christian influences, it is not surprising to find countless prosecutions on the charge of magic, concerning which one may read in the pages of Ammianus Marcellinus.³⁰⁰ At this period not only the active practitioners of magic, but passive believers as well, were spied out by *delatores* and punished.³⁰¹ Throughout his work, Ammianus, as a heathen eye-witness of this struggle, appears to be at least tolerant of the much prosecuted magic and opposed to the base devices of the *delatores*.

Along with the historians may be mentioned Frontinus, who in his *Strategemata* not only shows himself to be a rationalist, but also represents nearly all his heroes as equally above popular

²⁹⁷ Anton. Carac. 5, 7 *damnatis et qui remedia quartanis tertianisque collo adnexa gestarunt.*

²⁹⁸ Anton. Heliogab. 8, 2 *Omne denique magorum genus aderat illi operabaturque cottidie hortante illo et gratias dis agente, quod amicos eorum invenisset, cum inspiceret exta puerilia et excrucicaret hostias ad ritum gentilem suum.* Cf. also 9, 1.

²⁹⁹ Cf. nn. 296, 298.

³⁰⁰ Cf. Rer. Gest. Lib. 16, 8, 2: 19, 12, 14: 29, 2, 28.

³⁰¹ Ammianus Marcellinus, Rer. Gest. Lib. 29, 2, 2-3, describes the conduct of a certain official named Palladius: *Nactus enim copiam nominandi sine fortunarum distantia quos voluisset ut artibus interdictis imbutos, ita ut ferarum occulta vestigia doctus observare venator, multos inter casses lugubres includebat, quosdam veneficiorum notitia pollutos, alios ut appetitoribus inminuendae conscios maiestatis. Et ne vel coniugibus maritorum vacaret miserias flere, inmittebantur confestim qui signatis domibus inter scrutinia suppellectilis poenis addicti, incantamenta quaedam anilia vel ludibriosa subderent amatoria, ad insontium perniciem concinnata: quibus in iudicio recitatis . . . indefensi . . . ad supplicia sellis gestatoriis ducebantur.*

superstitions and magic, though at the same time able to use such beliefs to their personal advantage.³⁰²

(8) *The Encyclopaedists and Magic*

It is among the Latin authors who wrote works of an encyclopaedic or miscellaneous character, however, that we should more naturally look for statements throwing light upon Roman magic; and in this number we should place Varro, Nigidius Figulus, Valerius Maximus, Aulus Gellius, and Pliny the Elder. The attitude of Varro and Nigidius toward magic has already been discussed.³⁰³ Valerius Maximus contains no clear reference to magic.³⁰⁴ Though he condemns astrology severely,³⁰⁵ and is superior to the popular superstition regarding eclipses,³⁰⁶ he accepts without comment Livy's miraculous tale of Attus Navius, unaware of its magic quality;³⁰⁷ apparently believes in the wonderful tales, omens, and prodigies which he himself repeats;³⁰⁸ and shares in the folk belief regarding the ill luck of stumbling.³⁰⁹ He would therefore appear to resemble Suetonius and others in possessing a mental superiority to belief in magic, coupled with an actual acceptance of some, at least, of its practices.

Aulus Gellius also presents a similar mixture of formal superiority to magic and actual belief in magic. First we have to note that he has preserved for us a very valuable list of the

³⁰² Cf. Strat. 1, 11, 12-14; 12, 1-8: 2, 1, 16.

³⁰³ For Varro cf. supra, 45-47; for Nigidius Figulus cf. supra, 17-18.

³⁰⁴ This is disappointing, especially since the headings of Book I seem so promising. These headings are: (1) De Religione, (2) De Simulata Religione, (3) De Superstitionibus, (4) De Auspicio, (5) De Ominibus, (6) De Prodigis, (7) De Somniis, (8) De Miraculis.

³⁰⁵ 1, 3, 3 Excerpt. Par.

³⁰⁶ 8, 11, 1.

³⁰⁷ 1, 4, 1.

³⁰⁸ Cf. 1, 1, 7; 1, Excerpt. Par. and Nep. 5; 4, Excerpt. Par. and Nep. 5-6; 6, 1-5: 5, 6, 2-3.

³⁰⁹ 1, 4, 2 Excerpt. Par.

taboos surrounding the person of the Flamen Dialis;³¹⁰ but, since to him these curious details were *caerimonia*,³¹¹ and interesting only to the curious scholar, we cannot draw from this important passage any conclusion as to his personal views concerning magic. He does, however, speak of magic practices in another passage³¹² as *deridicula vanitas* and *fallax inlecebra*, and seeks to justify the inclusion of such matters in his work. In the same spirit of mental superiority he apologizes for repeating stories about the evil eye and similar marvels:³¹³

Haec atque alia istiusmodi plura legimus; sed, cum ea scriberemus, tenuit nos non idoneae scripturae taedium nihil ad ornandum iuvandumque usum vitae pertinentis.

Again, he vigorously defends the philosopher Democritus against the charge made by Pliny that he was a devotee of magic and an authority upon the subject.³¹⁴

But, notwithstanding his formal disapproval of magic, he appears to share the popular belief regarding the magic charms of the Marsi and the Psylli,³¹⁵ the possibility of change of

³¹⁰ 10, 15 entire. This chapter, so important to the history of Roman magic and religion, Gellius tells us (10, 15, 1), is taken from the sacerdotal manuals and Fabius Pictor.

³¹¹ 10, 15, 1.

³¹² 10, 12, 4 Item aliud, quod hercle an ponerem dubitavi — ita est deridiculae vanitatis —, nisi idcirco plane posui, quod oportuit nos dicere, quid de istiusmodi admirationum fallaci inlecebra sentiremus, qua plerumque capiuntur et ad perniciem elabuntur ingenia maxime sollertia eaque potissimum, quae discendi cupidiora sunt.

³¹³ 9, 4, 11–12.

³¹⁴ 10, 12, 6–8. See also his apparent approval of the elaborate argument of Favorinus against astrology (14, 1 entire).

³¹⁵ 16, 11, 1–3 Gens in Italia Marsorum orta fertur a Circae filio. Propterea Marsis hominibus . . . vi quadam genitali datum, ut et serpentium virulentorum domitores sint et inentionibus herbarumque sucis faciant medelarum miracula. Hac eadem vi praeditos esse quosdam videmus, qui Psylli vocantur.

sex,³¹⁶ and the frequently fatal effect of the sixty-third year of a man's life.³¹⁷ One may suspect, therefore, that he really believed in these *vanitates* more than he himself was aware.

We have already said ³¹⁸ that Pliny the Elder, while appearing to condemn magic most severely, really believed in the detested art much more than he thought.³¹⁹ To prove this assertion we shall be compelled to content ourselves with only a small proportion of the vast amount of material at our command. It is true that he denounces *magicae vanitates* ³²⁰ in no uncertain terms, and especially Democritus, as the great teacher of the art.³²¹ Asclepiades, the physician, is taken to task for mingling too much magic with his medicine.³²² The

³¹⁶ In 9, 4, 14-15 he quotes with approval a story of Pliny in which the latter vouches personally for a marvellous change of sex: Verba igitur haec . . . ipsius sunt, . . . quae profecto faciunt, ut neque respuenda neque ridenda sit notissima illa veterum poetarum de Caenide et Caeneo cantilena.

³¹⁷ 15, 7, 1-3. This year, called the *κλιμακτηρικόν*, was probably thought of as 3x3x7, thus involving both of the sacred or magic numbers, and one of them, 3, in its square. A thorough consideration of the number three as a magic number in Latin literature is worthy of a special paper, which the author hopes soon to be able to publish.

³¹⁸ Supra, 17.

³¹⁹ For an excellent treatment of Pliny's attitude toward magic cf. L. Thorndike, *The Place of Magic in the Intellectual History of Europe* (Columbia University dissertation, New York, 1905), 37-55.

³²⁰ This is his usual expression for the magic art. Cf. N. H. 30, 1 *Magicas vanitates saepius quidem antecedente operis parte, ubicumque causae locusque poscebant, coarguimus detegemusque etiamnum*. Then follow paragraphs 1-28, the most elaborate discussion of magic in Latin literature (used above, 19-21). Other passages in which he speaks of *magicae vanitates* are: 22, 20: 26, 18: 27, 57: 28, 85: 29, 81-82: 37, 118; 164. Cf. also 37, 169 for *magorum insidiae*. Other uncomplimentary terms might be cited.

³²¹ Cf. 24, 160: 25, 13-14: 26, 19: 30, 9-10: 32, 49. Against such a view of Democritus cf. A. Gellius, N. A. 10, 12 entire. Cf. supra 55, and n. 314.

³²² Cf. 26, 18-20 *Super omnia adiuvare eum (i.e. Asclepiadem) magicae vanitates in tantum evectae, ut abrogare herbis fidem cunctis possent. . . .*

magi are very often held up to scorn,³²³ though at other times he speaks of their beliefs and practices apparently with complete approval.³²⁴ To be more specific, he discredits the belief in such powerful magic animals as the werewolf,³²⁵ the *strix*,³²⁶ and the *bubo*.³²⁷ He does not believe in the magic control of lightning,³²⁸ hail,³²⁹ crops,³³⁰ or health.³³¹ He derides the belief in magic plants,³³² gems,³³³ and amulets,³³⁴ and regarding popular superstitions of various sorts bids each of his readers *ut cuique libitum fuerit opinetur*.³³⁵ Prodigies too, he maintains, are within the interpretative control of each individual.³³⁶

On the other hand, he appears to believe in the evil eye,³³⁷ fire-walking,³³⁸ power to vanish,³³⁹ and power to change one's sex.³⁴⁰ He also believes in the influence of the moon's phases

Then follows a list of wonderful herbs and the powers attributed to them by Asclepiades, all of which Pliny ridicules: *Ubinam istae fuere, cum Cimbri Teutonique terribili Marte ulularent aut cum Lucullus tot reges Magorum paucis legionibus sterneret?* etc. For a more detailed discussion of magic in its relation to the prevention of disease cf. *infra*, 61-123.

³²³ 24, 160: 26, 19-20: 28, 85-86; 89-90; 92-106; 188 (cf. 30, 16): 29, 53; 68; 76: 30, 1-28: 32, 49: 37, 155-156; 165; 169; 192.

³²⁴ 25, 129: 28, 69: 29, 59; 66; 138: 37, 133; 135; 142; 144.

³²⁵ 8, 80-82.

³²⁶ 11, 232. For a discussion of the *strix* in ancient literature, cf. Samuel Grant Oliphant, *The Story of the Strix: Ancient*, in *Transact. of Am. Philol. Assn.* 44 (1913), 133-149; *ib.* 45 (1914), 49-63.

³²⁷ 29, 81-82.

³³⁰ 18, 41-43. Yet cf. 28, 17-18.

³²⁸ 2, 140-141: 28, 14.

³³¹ 17, 267: 26, 18-20: 28, 7.

³²⁹ 17, 267: 28, 29; 77.

³³² 25, 10-11; 25: 26, 18-20.

³³³ 37, 118; 155-156; 164-165; 169; 192.

³³⁴ 37, 118; 169.

³³⁵ 28, 29.

³³⁶ 28, 17 *Haec satis sint, exemplis ut appareat, ostentorum vires et in nostra potestate esse ac, prout quaeque accepta sint, ita valere.*

³³⁷ 7, 16-18: 28, 22.

³³⁸ 7, 19. For a detailed discussion of the magic practice of walking on red-hot stones, see Andrew Lang, *Magic and Religion* (London, 1901), 270-294; and *supra*, 28, and n. 147.

³³⁹ 7, 32. But in 33, 8 the story of Midas's wonderful ring is called *fabulosus*.

³⁴⁰ 7, 36.

upon various phenomena of nature,³⁴¹ the wonderful magic effect of menstrual blood,³⁴² and probably in that *pagana lex* which forbade women to twist their spindles as they walked along the country roads, *quoniam adversetur id omnium spei, praecipue frugum*.³⁴³ These beliefs are all based upon sympathetic magic, and there are not lacking abundant additional examples of Pliny's belief in such a *sympathia* or *antipathia* in nature.³⁴⁴ There is luck, he believes, in odd numbers,³⁴⁵ especially the number three; ³⁴⁶ the magic circle is effective; ³⁴⁷ iron is taboo; ³⁴⁸ and the magic effect of spitting is recognized.³⁴⁹ The magic power of certain words and formulae is especially availing.³⁵⁰ Notwithstanding contrary statements made else-

³⁴¹ 16, 193-194: 24, 149: 29, 59.

³⁴² 7, 64-65: 17, 266. Cf., however, 28, 77-80, where he expresses disbelief.

³⁴³ 28, 28.

³⁴⁴ 18, 160-161; 197: 22, 20: 24, 172: 28, 30-33; 263-267: 29, 67: 30, 143: 37, 142.

³⁴⁵ 10, 151: 28, 23.

³⁴⁶ 24, 172: 25, 148; 167: 28, 36.

³⁴⁷ 21, 42: 25, 50.

³⁴⁸ 24, 149. But in 36, 100 he attempts to rationalize this belief.

³⁴⁹ 28, 35-39 *Omnium vero in primis ieiunams alivam contra serpentes praesidio esse docuimus, sed et alios efficaces eius usus recognoscat vita. Despuimus comitiales morbos, hoc est contagia regerimus. Simili modo et fascinationes repercutimus dextraeque clauditis occursum. Veniam quoque a deis spei alicuius audacioris petimus in sinum spuendo, et iam eadem ratione terna despuere precatione in omni medicina mos est atque ita effectus adiuvere, incipientes furunculos ter praesignare ieiuna saliva.* The passage continues in similar vein through § 39. Cf. also 10, 69: 24, 172: 25, 167: 30, 17; 108: 32, 92.

³⁵⁰ 28, 10-14 *Ex homine remediorum primum maximae quaestionis et semper incertae est, polleantne aliquid verba et incantamenta carminum. Quod si verum est, homini acceptum fieri oportere conveniat, sed viritim sapientissimi cuiusque respuit fides, in universum vero omnibus horis credit vita nec sentit.* Yet, in the face of this statement of disbelief in magic words, Pliny states that the history of Rome supplies various instances of effective magic *carmina*. In 28, 12 we read: *extat Tucciae Vestalis incesti deprecatio, qua usa aquam in cribro tulit. . . .* And again, *Cuius sacri precationem, qua solet praeire XV virum collegii magister, si quis legat, profecto vim carminum fateatur.* In § 13 he continues: *Vestales nostras hodie credimus nondum egressa urbe mancipia fugitiva*

where by him,³⁵¹ Pliny admits that there are effective magic plants,³⁵² gems,³⁵³ animals,³⁵⁴ and amulets.³⁵⁵ He even suggests countercharms to his detested magic, which are themselves magic.³⁵⁶

In view of this conflicting evidence we must agree with Dr. Thorndike³⁵⁷ that "in regard to magic in particular Pliny seems to have flattered himself that his position was quite different from what it actually was," and, to quote that scholar further,³⁵⁸ that "it hardly seems paradoxical to say that he hated the *magi* but liked their doctrines," just as Tacitus³⁵⁹ believed in astrology but despised astrologers.

If, therefore, we are justified in assuming that Pliny was a representative man of science and learning among the Romans, and that he was even superior to the average man of letters in his tendencies toward a rational view of the phenomena of nature and human conduct, the evidence in his case can but strengthen the conclusion, already frequently drawn, that Roman authors, as a rule, when expressing the sober verdict of their reason, unequivocally and honestly condemn all magic practices; but in their hearts they cherish, and in their writings unwittingly display the magic heritage of the Italian race.³⁶⁰

retinere in loco precatatione. . . . It is true that these users of magic are priests and priestesses; but the power attributed to them is magic, nevertheless.

³⁵¹ Cf. *supra*, 57.

³⁵³ 37, 135; 142; et *passim*.

³⁵² 25, 50; 127; 129.

³⁵⁴ 17, 265.

³⁵⁵ 29, 67; 77: 32, 24; 44; 74; 114, etc. For amulets in preventive medicine cf. *infra*, 76-105.

³⁵⁶ Cf. 28, 85 *Id quoque convenit, quo nihil equidem libentius crediderim, tactis omnino menstruo postibus inritas fieri Magorum artes, generis vanissimi, ut aestimare licet.* Cf. also 25, 127: 32, 33.

³⁵⁷ *Mag. in Intell. Hist. of Europe*, 41.

³⁵⁸ *Mag. in Intell. Hist. of Europe*, 45.

³⁵⁹ Cf. *supra*, 50, and n. 278.

³⁶⁰ Cf. the conclusions reached regarding Columella, *supra*, 27; Cato, 26-27; Varro, 27; 45-47; the writers on philosophy, 29-32; Catullus, 33-34;

A discussion of the attitude of Roman medical writers is reserved for the succeeding chapter. It is sufficient here to say that none of the purely Roman medical writers is free from a tendency toward magic.

In the foregoing pages I have attempted to show that among the Romans the conception of magic was essentially what it is among us. Furthermore, it is apparent from a consideration of Roman law, religion, science, folk belief, and literature, that magic was peculiarly prevalent among the Romans from the earliest times, and was not primarily an imported Greek or Oriental product, important as additions from those sources undoubtedly were. Finally, the attempt of cultivated Romans to assume an air of superiority to these earlier beliefs does not convince us of their genuine advance beyond a real belief in such matters; and it is not difficult in many cases to remove the cover and expose the real Roman with his inherited belief in magic showing itself through the veneer of Greek polish. This literary attitude exerted practically no effect upon popular belief in magic, which retained its influence throughout the Republic and the Empire, even into the Christian Italy of to-day.³⁶¹

Tibullus and Propertius, 34-36; Ovid, 36-37; Horace, 38-39; Petronius, 40-42; Apuleius, 42-45; Caesar, 47-48; Livy, 48-49; Tacitus, 50-51; Suetonius, 51-52; Ammianus Marcellinus, 53; Valerius Maximus, 54; A. Gellius, 54-56.

³⁶¹ These facts can be presented with greater detail and convincingness in the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER II

MAGIC AND THE PREVENTION OF DISEASE

On account of the universal and continuous importance of magic in ancient Italy it will be manifestly impossible to treat the subject in its entirety in an essay of the present compass. There were, however, some problems of life that to the early Italian appeared beyond ordinary human solution, and that offered, accordingly, a peculiarly inviting field for the employment of magic. Of these none was more important than the problem of preventing or curing human physical ills. It is the purpose of the present chapter, therefore, to show that the Romans of all periods resorted to magic as a supplement to medicine in general, and to make a detailed study of their use of prophylactic magic.¹ This end can be satisfactorily attained by a consideration of (1) the relation of medical magic to religion; (2) the relation of medical magic to scientific medicine; (3) prophylactic magic among the Romans.

I. MEDICAL MAGIC AND RELIGION

(1) *The Gods as Workers of Magic.* — The proof we have already offered² that the earliest Roman religion contained many magic elements will be strengthened by a closer study of the medical magic of Italy.

Concerning the advent of religion among primitive peoples there is much that is in dispute. It seems probable, however,

¹ The Romans made use of magic in curative and causative as well as in preventive medicine. The limitations of space, however, will not permit the treatment of these important divisions of our subject in this dissertation.

² *Supra*, 24-25.

that in the early history of any people magic is older than religion,³ and that the transition from magic to religion is marked by the belief that the gods themselves are magicians.⁴ Latin literature furnishes considerable proof in support of the latter part of this theory, for literary tradition clearly indicates that the earliest Romans of whom we have a record were in a state of civilization where they had gods, it is true, in addition to magic; but those gods themselves practiced medical as well as other magic, and were approached by their devotees with rites which contained many magic elements.

The following stories from Ovid will show the use of magic by early Roman gods. In the first story Juno is depicted as preventing for a time the birth of Hercules:⁵

Utque meos audit gemitus, subsedit in illa
ante fores ara, dextroque a poplite laevum
pressa genu et digitis inter se pectine iunctis
sustinuit partus. Tacita quoque carmina voce
dixit, et incoeptos tenuerunt carmina partus.

Una ministrarum, media de plebe, Galanthis,
flava comas, aderat, faciendis strenua iussis,
officiis dilecta suis. Ea sensit iniqua
nescio quid Iunone geri: dumque exit et intrat
saepe fores, divam residentem vidit in ara
bracchiaque in genibus digitis conexa tenentem,
et "Quaecumque es," ait, "dominae gratare. Levata est
Argolis Alcmene, potiturque puerpera voto."
Exsiluit, iunctasque manus pavefacta remisit
diva potens uteri: vinclis levor ipsa remissis.

³ This theory, advanced by Frazer (*G. B.* 1, 1, 220-243), seems to me on the whole to be more reasonable than any other that has yet been proposed. Vigorous opponents of Frazer's view are, however, not lacking (see, e. g., Lang, *Mag. and Rel.* 46-75). Mr. F. B. Jevons (*Hist. of Rel.* 24-40) has suggested another view, which regards neither magic nor religion as of necessarily earlier occurrence.

⁴ Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 1, 1, 240-242.

⁵ *Met.* 9, 297-315.

In the foregoing passage Juno not only uses silent charms to accomplish her purpose, but crosses her knees and interlocks her fingers,⁶ with the expectation that by such action she will lock up or prevent the birth of the child. It naturally follows, therefore, that, when the goddess is induced through a stratagem to unlock her fingers and uncross her knees, the magic power vanishes.

That this story contains genuine Italian elements seems clear from the following passage in Pliny : ⁷

Adsidere gravidis vel cum remedia alicui adhibeantur digitis pectinatim inter se implexis veneficium est, idque compertum tradunt Alcmena Herculem pariente; peius, si circa unum ambove genua; item poplites alternis genibus inponi. Ideo haec in consiliis ducum potestatumve fieri vetuere maiores velut omnem actum inpedientia; vetuere vero et sacris votisque simili modo interesse.

From this it would appear not only that Juno used magic to accomplish her ends; but also that the ancient Roman law-makers, Pliny's *maiores*, considered magic acts like hers more powerful than either worldly powers or religion.

The second story of Ovid represents as a magician the ancient Italian goddess, Carna, whose function it was to protect infants from the assaults of *striges*.⁸ In writing of an infant who has been attacked by these creatures, the poet says :

⁶ For similar uses of the interlace in preventive magic, see, besides the passage from Pliny, quoted below, Leland, *Etrusc. Rom. Rem.* 165-172. Closely related to the interlace is the taboo on knots in general, of which Frazer has given some interesting examples (*G. B.* 2, 293 ff.). Cf. also *infra*, 100.

⁷ N. H. 28, 59.

⁸ *Fasti* 6, 147-168. For *striges* cf. *supra*, 57, n. 326. Carna seems to have been the protectress of the heart, liver, viscera, etc. Hence her protective acts in this case are easily understood. Cf. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus*, 236. For the antiquity of the goddess and her cult cf. Fowler, *R. F.* 130-133; Roscher, *Lex.* 1, 854-855.

Territa voce sui nutrix accurrit alumni,
 et rigido sectas invenit ungue genas.
 Quid faceret? Color oris erat, qui frondibus olim
 esse solet seris, quas nova laesit hiems.
 Pervenit ad Cranaen, et rem docet. Illa "Timorem
 pone! Tuus sospes," dixit, "alumnus erit."
 Venerat ad cunas: flebant materque paterque:
 "Sistite vos lacrimas: ipsa medebor!" ait.
 Protinus arbuta postes ter ⁹ in ordine tangit
 fronde, ter arbuta limina ¹⁰ fronde notat,
 spargit aquis aditus — et aquae medicamen habebant —
 extaque de porca cruda bimenstre tenet,
 atque ita "Noctis aves, extis puerilibus," inquit,
 "parcite: pro parvo victima parva cadit.
 Cor pro corde, precor, pro fibris sumite fibras.
 Hanc animam vobis pro meliore damus." ¹¹
 Sic ubi libavit, prosecta sub aethera ponit,
 quique adsint sacris respicere illa vetat: ¹²
 virgaque Ianalis de spina ponitur alba, ¹³
 qua lumen thalamis parva fenestra dabat.
 Post illud nec aves cunas violasse feruntur,
 et rediit puero, qui fuit ante, color.

Here we have a goddess whom, were it not for Ovid's explicit statement of her divine origin (l. 101), any casual reader would

⁹ For the use of the number three in Roman magic cf. *infra*, 119, n. 283.

¹⁰ For other instances of the threshold in Roman medical magic cf. Columella, 7, 5, 17; Pliny, N. H. 29, 83: 30, 82: 34, 151; Marcellus Empiricus, 1, 65: 2, 4: 4, 27: 14, 66: 16, 21: 23, 35; 50: 25, 35; and especially M. B. Ogle, *The House-Door in Greek and Roman Religion and Folk-Lore* (*Am. Journ. of Phil.* 42 [1911], 251-271).

¹¹ The principle upon which this substitution is based is known as *similia similibus* (cf. *supra*, 9, n. 41).

¹² A similar prohibition is characteristic of the ancient rites of the Lemuralia (cf. *supra*, 37, n. 195). That those who were engaged in magic cures were likewise enjoined not to look behind them is made clear by Pliny, N. H. 21, 176: 24, 104: 29, 91; Marcellus Empiricus, 1, 54: 8, 52: 25, 11.

¹³ Of the whitethorn as a countercharm I have been unable to find other instances, except, of course, lines 129-130 of this passage.

consider a mere magician. The frightened nurse runs to her, as to an earthly friend, for aid, which the goddess gives in person. Like any mortal magician she touches the door-posts and the threshold of the nursery three times with the arbutus twig, sprinkles the entrance with holy water, and practices a perfect bit of sympathetic magic by sacrificing a pig of two months, with the accompanying conjuration that the *striges* shall accept this substitute and return the entrails of the infant to their proper place. The entrails of the pig are then placed in the open air, probably in order that the *striges* may have easy access to them, unmolested by any backward glances of mortals. Finally, the window is made impassable for *striges* by means of a twig of the mystic whitethorn, the home is freed from the possibility of further unwelcome visits of these creatures, and the color of health returns to the cheek of the stricken infant.

Ceres,¹⁴ Diana,¹⁵ and even Aesculapius¹⁶ also resorted to medical magic, but their acts are connected with Greek myth¹⁷ rather than with Roman folk lore. Of strictly Italian flavor, however, is the tradition that the miraculous medical powers of the Marsi were given only to those of the tribe whose descent from the magician-goddess, Circe, was uncontaminated by alien blood.¹⁸ From this we may be permitted to conclude that

¹⁴ Ovid, *Fasti* 4, 549-554.

¹⁵ *Ibid.* 6, 746-754.

¹⁶ Hyginus, *Astron.* 2, 14. On incubation, as practiced in the temples of Aesculapius, cf. Magnus, *Superst. in Med.* 50-56. This temple sleep, as a means of curing disease, seems to have been based on genuine religious feeling rather than on magic.

¹⁷ That the Homeric gods indulged freely in magic we have already shown (*supra*, 19, n. 97).

¹⁸ In A. Gellius, *N. A.* 16, 11, 1-2 we read: *Gens in Italia Marsorum orta fertur a Circae filio. Propterea Marsis hominibus, quorum dumtaxat familiae cum externis cognationibus nondum etiam permixtae corruptaeque sunt, vi quadam genitali datum, ut et serpentium virulentorum domitores sint et inentionibus herbarumque sucis faciant medelarum miracula.*

Circe herself used her magic drugs not only to effect transformations, but also to produce cures.¹⁹

If the tradition, as represented in the passages quoted above, is correct in attributing medico-magic functions to the early Italian gods, we should expect to find the priests who served those gods equally versed in curative magic. Such a union of the priestly office with that of the medical magician is indeed represented by Vergil²⁰ as characteristic of Italy at the time of the arrival of Aeneas. In those early days popular and even state customs exhibit a mixture of medical magic with religion.²¹ The gods were besought for medical aid with a combination of prayer and spell,²² and pestilence was thought to be controlled by the ancient custom of driving a nail "into the wall of the cella of Minerva in the Capitoline temple."²³

¹⁹ Her more obscure sister, Angitia, says Solinus (2, 29), was famous for her healing art. Such traditions would make it much easier to explain the continued worship of Circe at Circeii as *Circe sanctissima* (cf. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus*, 542, n. 5).

²⁰ Aen. 7, 750-758. Cf. supra 24.

²¹ Augustine (C. D. 6, 9) has preserved for us the details of a religious custom which shows how closely early Italian religion was allied to magic: mulieri fetae post partum tres deos custodes commemorat (sc. Varro) adhiberi, ne Silvanus deus per noctem ingrediatur et vexet, eorumque custodum significandorum causa tres homines noctu circuire limina domus et primo limen securi ferire, postea pilo, tertio devertere scopis, ut his datis culturae signis deus Silvanus prohibeatur intrare, quod neque arbores caeduntur ac putantur sine ferro, . . .

²² Cf. Ovid, *Fasti* 3, 255-258:

Dicite "Tu nobis lucem, Lucina, dedisti!"

Dicite "Tu voto parturientis ades!"

Si qua tamen gravida est, resoluta crine precetur,
ut solvat partus molliter illa suos.

²³ Cf. Fowler, *R. F.* 234. In describing the revival of this custom A. U. C. 390, Livy says (7, 3, 3-5): cum piaculorum magis conquisitio animos quam corpora morbi adficerent, repetitum ex seniorum memoria dicitur, pestilentiam quondam clavo a dictatore fixo sedatam. Ea religione adductus senatus dictatorem clavi figendi causa dici iussit. This passage, taken with Livy, 8, 18 and 9, 28, 6, makes it quite certain that

(2) *Deification of Diseases.*—Of similar nature and of equally early origin was the Roman custom of deifying the diseases themselves. Of these the *numen*²⁴ of the dread fevers which annually exacted such heavy toll from the Romans seems to have been especially revered. In ridicule of what appears to have been a very general belief in the divine attributes of various diseases, Pliny exclaims :²⁵

numina . . . innumerabilia invenimus, inferis quoque in genera discriptis morbisque et multis etiam pestibus, dum esse placatas trepido metu cupimus. Ideoque etiam publice Febris fanum in Palatio dicatum est. . . .²⁶

It is quite apparent from the words of Pliny that not only was the *numen* of fever especially revered by the Roman populace, but that there were many other diseases also of which the *numina* were held in like respect. Just what diseases were

the purpose of driving the nail was corrective and curative. Epilepsy was cured in a similar way (cf. Pliny, N. H. 28, 63). For the superstitions connected with nails in general, including the archaeological evidence, cf. Jahn, *Bös. Blick* 106 ff.; Marquardt, *Röm. Staatsv.* 3, 106–107.

²⁴ For the word *numen* as used in Roman religion cf. Fowler, *Rel. Exper.* 118–119.

²⁵ N. H. 2, 15–16.

²⁶ There were at least three such temples in Rome in the first century of our era, according to Valerius Maximus, 2, 5, 6: *Febrem autem ad minus nocendum templis colebant, quorum adhuc unum in Palatio, alterum in area Marianorum monumentorum, tertium in summa parte vici longi extat, in eaque remedia, quae corporibus aegrorum adnexa fuerant, deferebantur.* But only the first of these is mentioned elsewhere (cf. Cicero, *De Leg.* 2, 28: *Nat. Deor.* 3, 63 [Pliny, N. H. 2, 15–16, quoted above]; Aelian, *V. H.* 12, 11). Other passages which mention a temple to Febris without specifying the location (such as Augustinus, *C. D.* 3, 25: 4, 15; Seneca, *Apoc.* 6; Theodorus Priscianus *Physicus*, 3 [p. 250 Rose]) probably refer to the Palatine temple. For epigraphical evidence of the cult Wissowa (*Religion und Kultus*, 246) quotes inscriptions dedicated to *dea Tertia* (*C. I. L.* 7, 999) and *Quartana* (*C. I. L.* 12, 3129). It should be noted that Valerius Maximus, in the passage quoted above, is speaking of numerous temples to disease erected by *antiquorum simplicitas*, of which number the three that were existent in his own day comprised probably only a small proportion. Cf. also Roscher, *Lex.*, s. v. *Febris*.

thus deified we are unable to state with any degree of certainty.²⁷

The statements that the temple of *Febris* stood upon the Palatine probably point to an early date as the time of its construction.²⁸ In this and similar temples, we may infer, the Roman populace prayed to be relieved from the attacks of the specific disease to whose temple they had come for aid. Such petitions, we may be sure, differed little from the purely magical *evocationes morborum* which are extant in considerable numbers.²⁹ The deification of disease and the offering of

²⁷ In the *Cambridge Companion to Latin Studies* (§ 1075) we find the following statement: "We hear also of a *Dea Mefitis* (for malaria), *Dea Angerona* (for *angina*, ἀγχόνη, or inflammation of the throat); and even, it is said, *Dea Scabies* (for the itch)." The evidence for this statement is, however, not convincing. The *Dea Mefitis*, so far as our evidence goes, seems to have been nothing more than a goddess of noxious gases (cf. Roscher, *Lex.*, s. v. *Mefitis*; Heim, *Incant. Mag.* 476). That *Angerona* was a goddess of quinsy is very doubtful. The truth seems to be that her cult had become so obscure even to Roman antiquarians that they were unable to agree either upon the etymology of the name or the function of the deity. The idea that she was the goddess of quinsy rests only upon Julius Modestus (apud Macrobius, 1, 10, 9) and Festus, 16 (ed. Lindsay). Many Roman antiquarians gave her an entirely different function (cf. the *Thesaurus*, s. v. *Angerona*, for an exhaustive group of citations concerning Angerona; Roscher, *Lex.*, s. v. *Angerona*). A full statement of our ignorance regarding Angerona will be found in Fowler, *R. F.* 274-275. The evidence for *Scabies* as a deity seems even less substantial. It consists of a single passage (Prudentius, *Hamartigenia* 220); unless, indeed, we understand a deified itch in Horace, *Ars Poet.* 417, a passage which Heim (*Incant. Mag.* 512) has elucidated. More specific is the evidence for *Pallor*, *Pavor* (Livy, 1, 27, 7; Lactantius, 1, 20, 11), *Paventia* (Tertullianus, *Ad Nat.* 2, 11; Augustinus, *C. D.* 4, 11), and *Metus* (Vergil, *Aen.* 6, 276; Claudius Claudianus, 1, 77; Apuleius, *Met.* 10, 31; Seneca, *Herc. Fur.* 693; Dieterich, *Abraxas* 92, n. 5; Roscher, *Lex.* 3, 1341-1343), if one may consider such emotions, when carried to the extreme, in the class with diseases.

²⁸ Cicero (*De Leg.* 2, 28) calls it *ara vetusta*.

²⁹ An excellent collection of such *evocationes* will be found in Heim, *Incant. Mag.* 476-479.

prayer to such deities seems, in fact, but a step in advance of the belief that man could control disease by purely magical means. This conception of disease as a deity seems to supply a connecting link between the purely magical idea of direct control of nature, and the religious idea of gods, who will relieve trouble if they are placated by prayer and sacrifice. We are thus enabled to catch a glimpse of the early Roman as he tried by preternatural means to gain control over natural phenomena. Whether this effort took the form of a prayer or a spell must have depended, at least during the period of transition from magic to religion, upon the disposition of the individual who sought relief; and we may be allowed to surmise that during this period there was only the slightest difference between prayer and spell, between priest and magician.³⁰ As the priestly class grew stronger, and as the more intellectual classes, including the lawmakers, gradually deserted magic for religion, legal worship among the Romans succeeded in freeing itself from all active magic;³¹ but it is probable that the ordinary Roman, even of the most enlightened era, as he stood in the temple of *Febris* and similar temples, uttered a prayer that closely resembled a magic spell.³²

³⁰ Marett (*Thresh. of Rel.* 29-72) has an interesting chapter entitled *From Spell to Prayer*. It is also instructive to note that as Judaism and Christianity spread through Italy there became manifest a disposition to mingle scriptural names and seasons in much the same manner with magic incantations. For this cf. Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 29: 23, 29: 25, 13: 29, 23; *Anecdota Latina* (ed. Piechotta) 77; 199; 200; Helmreich's edition of Marcellus Empiricus, *Index Nominum Propriorum*, s. vv. *Christus*, *Iacob*, and *Sabaoth*.

³¹ In spite of this desire to be free from outgrown magic belief, many fossilized elements from that source remained in Roman ritual. Cf. *supra*, 24-25.

³² That neither the ancient Roman state religion nor Christianity has succeeded in freeing the Italian from his original belief in medical and other magic is abundantly proved by Leland in his *Etruscan Roman Remains*.

II. MEDICAL MAGIC VERSUS SCIENTIFIC MEDICINE

The history of Roman medicine resembles that of Roman religion. It began with the universal employment of magic cures, together with simple household remedies, and ended with the adoption bodily of Greek scientific medicine, at least among the upper classes.³³

(1) *Medical Magic Universal among the Early Romans.* — We know that early Greek medicine was not free from magic; for we read³⁴ that, when Odysseus had been wounded by a boar, the blood was stanching not by the usual means, but by an incantation. Among the early Romans, also, belief in medical magic was universal.³⁵ As time went on, however, the more intellectual classes gradually abandoned magic cures for scientific medicine, though the populace continued to a great extent to believe in the older method of controlling disease.³⁶

³³ For a brief discussion of Roman medicine, together with a bibliography of the subject, cf. *Camb. Comp. to Lat. Stud.* 715–727.

³⁴ Od. 19, 457–458, cited somewhat inaccurately by Pliny (N. H. 28, 21). Apuleius also (Apol. 40) cites this Homeric passage as evidence of magic in early Greek medicine: *Veteres quidem medici etiam carmina remedia vulnerum norant, ut omnis vetustatis certissimus auctor Homerus docet, qui facit Ulixi de vulnere sanguinem profluentem sisti cantamine.* Welcker (*Kleine Schriften*, 3, 64 ff.) attempts rather unsuccessfully to deny to the Homeric heroes the use of magic cures. His views are vigorously opposed by Heim (*Incant. Mag.* 466). Other references to magic cures among the Greeks are Pindar, *Pyth.* 3, 51; Aeschylus, *Agam.* 1020–1021; *Eum.* 648–650; Aelian, *De Nat. An.* 2, 18.

³⁵ Pliny (N. H. 28, 13), after discussing some ancient Roman customs in connection with *incantamenta* as *remedia*, adds: *Prisci quidem nostri perpetuo talia credidere.* The evidence which we have given in our treatment of *Medical Magic and Religion* (supra, 61–69) corroborates the statement of Pliny.

³⁶ Cf. Pliny, N. H. 28, 10: *Ex homine remediorum primum maximae quaestionis et semper incertae est, polleantne aliquid verba et incantamenta carminum. Quod si verum est, homini acceptum fieri oportere*

Many early cures indicate this popular mixture of magic with medicine. Epilepsy, for instance, was thought to be cured, or at least alleviated, by spitting upon the afflicted person. Plautus furnishes the earliest literary reference to such a custom. In the *Captivi* (550–555) we read :

Ty. et illic isti qui sputatur morbus interdum venit.

Proin tu ab istoc procul recedas. *He.* Ultro istum a me.

Ar. Ain, verbero?

Me rabiosum atque insectatum esse hastis meum memoras patrem,
et eum morbum mi esse, ut qui med opus sit insputarier?

He. Ne verere: multos iste morbus homines macerat,
quibus insputari saluti fuit atque is profuit.³⁷

A very primitive method of setting dislocated or broken limbs by the aid of magic is given us by Cato ³⁸ in the following words :

Luxum si quod est, hac cantione sanum fiet. Harundinem prende tibi viridem p. IIII aut V longam. Mediam diffinde et duo homines teneant ad coxendices. Incipe cantare: motas vaeta daries dardares

conveniat, sed viritim sapientissimi cuiusque respuit fides, in universum vero omnibus horis credit vita nec sentit.

³⁷ I have followed Elmer (*Captivi*, 122 [Boston, 1900]) in my interpretation of line 553. It may be noted, however, that both the text and the interpretation of these lines are somewhat in doubt. Cf. Elmer's critical note, pp. 167–168, and Fay's article in *The Classical Review*, 8, 391. That the custom of spitting upon epileptics persisted at Rome until the first century of our era is attested by Pliny (N. H. 28, 35, quoted infra, 108), though this passage would seem to indicate that in Pliny's day the act was intended to protect the spitter rather than to cure the epileptic. We may infer from the silence of Greek authors (Theophrastus, *Charact.*, *De Superstit.*, fin., furnishes the only reference to the subject in Greek literature) that the practice was of native Italian growth. A good treatment of *The Saliva Superstition in Classical Literature* is given by Frank W. Nicolson in the *Harvard Studies*, 8 (1897), 23 ff., though the author's promise to give all the literary references is scarcely fulfilled. For the universal custom of spitting in magic, cf. Elworthy, *Evil Eye*, 412 ff.

³⁸ R. R. 160 (cf. Pliny, N. H. 28, 21). For the text and a thorough discussion of this incantation see Heim, *Incant. Mag.* 533–535; 565–566; Keil,

astataries dissunapiter, usque dum coeant, ferrum insuper iactato. Ubi coierint et altera alteram tetigerint, id manu prehende et dextra sinistra praecide. Ad luxum aut ad fracturam alliga: sanum fiet, et tamen cotidie cantato et luxato.

In like manner Varro quotes from one of the Sasernae a magic remedy for pain in the feet : ³⁹

Cum homini pedes dolere coepissent, qui tui meminisset, ei mederi posse. Ego tui memini: medere meis pedibus. Terra pestem teneto. Salus hic maneto (sc. in meis pedibus). Hoc ter novies cantare iubet, terram tangere, despuere, ieiunum cantare.

We read also in this passage ⁴⁰ that not only did the Sasernae include many such marvels in their agricultural works,⁴¹ but that other early agricultural writers embodied similar items of medical magic in their farmers' guides.

There can scarcely be any doubt that the magic cures mentioned by Plautus, Cato, and Varro represent ancient Italian folk belief. The same is true, also, of the large number of traditional popular cures of a magic character given by Pliny and other Latin writers. That these remedies are of ancient origin is further shown by the fact that in their preparation the use of iron is frequently forbidden. This circumstance

Catonis De Agri Cultura, 106. The original text was probably as I have given it, though it has suffered much from subsequent interpolations. That this remedy was not of Greek origin we may infer both from our knowledge of Cato's hostility to Greek medicine (cf. Pliny, N. H. 29, 14) and from the general nature of the remedy itself.

³⁹ R. R. 1, 2, 27.

⁴⁰ R. R. 1, 2, 28 Multa, inquam, item alia miracula apud Sasernas inuenies, quae omnia sunt diversa ab agricultura, et ideo repudianda. Quasi vero, inquam, non apud ceteros quoque scriptores talia reperiantur.

⁴¹ For a probable instance of such magic in the works of the Sasernae cf. Varro, R. R. 1, 2, 26: Tam hercle quam hoc, si quem glabrum facere velis, quod iubet ranam luridam conicere in aquam, usque quo ad tertiam partem decoxeris, eoque unguere corpus. (Here the hairless frog is probably thought to have a sympathetic effect in producing a hairless head.)

seems clearly to indicate that such magico-medical remedies were in common use before the iron age.⁴²

(2) *Early Magic Cures not Entirely Displaced by Greek Scientific Medicine.* — Even after the introduction of Greek scientific medicine, the common people of Rome and Italy continued to use magic cures. The popular opposition to the more advanced medical theories of the Greeks is probably well reflected in Cato's advice to his son to avoid Greek physicians and to cling to the old Italian folk medicine.⁴³ This popular system of magic cures shows itself at times even in the writings of the foremost champions of the Greek school of medicine at Rome. If we may trust the prejudiced report of Pliny,⁴⁴ Asclepiades, the great Greek physician, resorted to magic in his practice of medicine; nor does Celsus disdain to quote,⁴⁵ for what it may be worth, a magic cure derived exclusively from *auctores ex populo*.

⁴² For the prohibition of the use of iron in medical magic cf. Celsus, 4, 8; Pliny, N. H. 15, 124: 23, 163: 24, 12; 68; 103; 172; 176: 30, 102; Marcellus Empiricus, 19, 52: 20, 106: 23, 35: 25, 13; 14: 26, 25; Pelagonius, 7, 39; Serenus Sammonicus, 410–411; Pseudo-Pliny, 2, 21 (ed. Rose). Similar in intent are those passages where the magic remedy is to be prepared with implements of wood (Cato, R. R. 70: 71; Scribonius Largus, 152; Marcellus Empiricus, 28, 40; Serenus Sammonicus, 306) or of bronze (Columella, 6, 5, 4; Scribonius Largus, 16; Pliny, N. H. 28, 198: 29, 109: 32, 41; Marcellus Empiricus, 29, 45). It is interesting to note that after the taboo on iron had somewhat subsided the strange new metal was actually considered efficacious in certain kinds of magic (cf. Pliny, N. H. 25, 167: 28, 42; 63: 29, 130: 30, 106: 34, 151; Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 49: 27, 87). Cf. also Kroll, *Antiker Aberglaube*, 6–8; Frazer, *G. B.* 2, 225 ff.; and for a like prohibition in Roman religion cf. Wissowa, *Religion und Kultus*, 34.

⁴³ Pliny, N. H. 29, 14 hoc puta vatem dixisse: quandoque ista gens <sc. Graeca> suas litteras dabit, omnia conrumpet, tum etiam magis, si medicos suos hoc mittet. . . . Interdixi tibi de medicis.

⁴⁴ N. H. 26, 18–20.

⁴⁵ Med. 4, 7 Vulgo audio, si quis pullum hirundinis ederit, angina toto anno non periclitari; . . . Id quum idoneos auctores ex populo habeat, neque habere quidquam periculi possit, quamvis in monumentis medi-

To what extent the more intellectual Romans of the Empire still believed in the old magic folk remedies will be shown by a brief consideration of some statements of Pliny the Elder. We have already shown ⁴⁶ that Pliny, the typical representative of Roman scientific inquiry, was not so free from belief in magic as he himself thought. In the special field of medical magic he was equally self-deceived. It is true that at times he speaks in ridicule of the *Magorum commenta* as unworthy of acceptance; ⁴⁷ but these *commenta* of the Magi are of exactly the same character as his own approved Italian remedies. As a matter of fact, cures that depend upon sympathetic magic for their efficacy are borrowed frankly and approvingly by Pliny from these same Magi; ⁴⁸ and, when scientific medicine proved powerless to cure a given disease, Pliny was willing enough to resort to the cures of the Magi. We read, for instance: ⁴⁹

In quartanis medicina clinice propemodum nihil pollet. Quam ob rem plura eorum (i.e. Magorum) remedia ponemus primumque ea quae adalligari iubent.

At other times Pliny appears to believe in popular Italian remedies of a magic nature,⁵⁰ even going so far as to assert

corum non legerim, tamen inserendum huic operi meo credidi. Cf. also *ibid.* 4, 8.

⁴⁶ Supra, 56-59.

⁴⁷ N. H. 28, 47-49. The passage begins with the words, *Magorum haec commenta sunt*, but one is at a loss throughout to determine where the *Magorum commenta* end and popular Italian beliefs begin.

⁴⁸ Cf., e.g., N. H. 28, 232.

⁴⁹ N. H. 30, 98.

⁵⁰ N. H. 28, 35-46. It is true that throughout this passage Pliny indicates that he is quoting from popular beliefs (cf. the words *quidam* . . . *adgravant* [37], *dicitur* [41; 42], *tradunt* [43; 46]); but nowhere does he give convincing evidence of personal disbelief in what he is relating. Upon this point cf. Thorndike, *Place of Mag.* 44 ff. How widely Pliny had culled from books on medical magic is shown by the fact that he cites no fewer than twenty-five authors for items on magic cures. These are: Apollonius (28, 7); Archelaus (28, 34); Artemon (28, 7); Asclepiades

that the magic act of spitting thrice as one utters a charm is a helpful custom in all medicine.⁵¹ In the light of such evidence, we must conclude, I think, that Pliny depended upon scientific medicine wherever it had proved its efficacy in curing specific diseases, but recognized the possibility that an even greater power resided in magic cures, which he did not hesitate to recommend in cases where scientific medicine had failed. It is this more or less unconscious acknowledgment of the superior power of medical magic which proves that among the intellectual classes, no less than among the masses, there still survived an implicit belief in the old Italian folk remedies, which could never be entirely supplanted by Greek science.⁵²

With the decline of classical Latin literature the gulf between the cultivated classes and the superstitious masses of Rome gradually decreased in width, so that in the later Empire there appears a growing tendency among Latin authors to identify themselves in thought as well as in style with the daily life of Rome and Italy. Accordingly, we find in the later literature of Rome, just as in her earlier literature, a fuller and franker indication of a very general belief in medical

(26, 18-20); Bithus Durrachinus (28, 82); Caecilius (29, 85); Cato (28, 21); Chrysippus philosophus (30, 103); Dalion (28, 262); Democritus (24, 156-158; 26, 19-20; 28, 7; 113-118); Deotimus (28, 83); Granius (28, 42); Icatidas medicus (28, 83); Lais (28, 82); Marcion Zmyrnaeus (28, 38); Meletos (28, 7); Metrodorus (37, 178); Ofilius (28, 38); Orpheus (28, 34); Osthane (28, 5-6; 256; 261); Pythagoras (24, 156-158); Salpe (28, 38; 82; 262); Sotira obstetrix (28, 83); Theophrastus (28, 21); Varro (28, 21). There are also numerous references to the works of the Magi as a class.

⁵¹ N. H. 28, 36 'We beg the pardon of the gods,' he says, 'for a too ambitious hope by spitting upon the breast,' *et iam eadem ratione terna despuere precatione in omni medicina mos est atque ita effectus adiuvaré, incipientes furunculos ter praesignare ieiuna saliva.*

⁵² How readily the Roman mind associated trickery and magic with Greek medicine may possibly be indicated by Juvenal's description of a versatile Greek (3, 77): *Augur, schoenobates, medicus, magus, omnia novit | Graeculus esuriens. . . .*

magic.⁵³ The works of Q. Serenus Sammonicus,⁵⁴ Spartianus,⁵⁵ Ammianus Marcellinus,⁵⁶ Pseudo-Pliny,⁵⁷ Pseudo-Apuleius,⁵⁸ Sextus Placitus Papyriensis,⁵⁹ and Marcellus Empiricus⁶⁰ give ample evidence of the continuous and universal nature of this belief.

III. PREVENTIVE OR PROPHYLACTIC MAGIC

A. THE AMULET

Up to the present point we have directed our attention more particularly to the curative phase of medical magic among the Romans. Prophylactic magic was, however, of equal importance in the life of ancient Italy. The chief means through which the aid of prophylactic magic was sought was the amulet.

⁵³ This statement applies equally well to all magic, as I have shown, *supra*, 25-26. I have tried there, also, to indicate the reasons underlying the phenomenon.

⁵⁴ The extant *Liber Medicinalis* of Serenus Sammonicus is full of superstition and folk medicine (cf. lines 410-411; 439-443; 482-484; 609-612; 651-655; 907; 916-918; and especially the celebrated description of the amulet known as the *abracadabra* [935-946]), notwithstanding the author's affected superiority to such beliefs (cf. lines 828-830; 925-931; 1003-1005). The most available text is probably that of Baehrens, *Poet. Lat. Min.* 3, 103 ff.

⁵⁵ Hadrian 25, 1-4; Caracalla 5, 8.

⁵⁶ Cf. 16, 8, 2: 19, 12, 14. In the former of these passages we have the statement that fourth century medicine openly embraced magic cures: *si quis super occentu soricis vel occursu mustelae vel similis signi gratia consulisset quemquam peritum, aut anile incantamentum ad leniendum adhibuisset dolorem — quod medicinae quoque admittit auctoritas — reus . . . delatus. . . .*

⁵⁷ The usual text is that of Rose (Leipzig, 1875). In the same MS with the Pseudo-Pliny (Cod. St. Galli, 752) are found very many other passages giving magic cures, for which cf. Rose in *Hermes*, 8, 48 ff.

⁵⁸ *De Med. Herb.* 19, 4: 24, 1: 91, 2 (ed. Ackermann, Nürnberg, 1788).

⁵⁹ 17, 12; 19.

⁶⁰ This author is a veritable storehouse of late Roman folk medicine. Reference will be made to his work very frequently in the succeeding pages.

It is to this interesting subject, therefore, that we shall now turn our discussion.⁶¹

(1) *Definition of an Amulet.* — The etymology of the word *amuletum* is doubtful.⁶² This, however, is of small importance to our discussion, since most of the amulets mentioned by Latin authors are not called *amuleta* by name, though they are such in fact. It is essential, however, to the prosecution of our study, that we arrive at a satisfactory definition of what an amulet is. F. B. Jevons⁶³ defines it thus :

Charms or amulets are material objects, in which no spirit resides either permanently or occasionally, but which are associated with something, be it blood, or babe, or corpse, or good spirit or bad, which is taboo. They therefore catch the taboo-infection and become charged with the properties of the thing taboo. They may serve, therefore, to do injury to others, by communicating the taboo-contagion; or, by their dangerous character and the fear they inspire, they may protect the owner from both human and superhuman foes; or they may, from some association or other of ideas, be lucky.⁶⁴

⁶¹ So far as I know, the only work that purports to give a complete history of amulets is *A History of Amulets*, by Martin Frederick Blumler (Halle, 1710; Eng. trans. by S. H., Gent., Edinburgh, 1887). This work is interesting, but not thoroughly reliable. The best treatment of the use of amulets among the Romans and the Greeks is a dissertation entitled *De Amuletorum apud Antiquos Usu Capita Duo*, by Gerhardus Kropatscheck (Gryphiae, 1907).

⁶² In Charisius, 1, 105, 9, we read: *φυλακτήριον* quod Graeci appellant, *amuletum* Latine dicimus. Nam et Varro *Divinarum* XIII ita dixit sive a molliendo, id est infringendo vim mali, sive ab aemulatione. The word *amuletum* seems to be related to the verb *amolior*, and to denote something that wards off evil. (Cf. Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclop.*, s. v. *amuletum*; *Thesaurus*, s. v. *amuletum*.) The derivation of the word from the Arabic *hamalet*, though formerly quite generally accepted, is not probable. Cf. also Walde, *Lat. Etym. Wört.*², s. v. *amuletum*.

⁶³ *Hist. of Rel.* 178.

⁶⁴ Marquardt (*Röm. Staatsv.* 3, 107) states that in the early days of Rome the wearer of amulets was thought to put himself under the protection of ancient divinities such as Cunina, just as the Romans of the Empire impressed the image of Serapis upon amulets in order to obtain

Restricting the foregoing definition to the limits of our present discussion, we may say that amulets are material objects in which no spirit resides, but which, through a specific association of ideas, become endowed with the power of taboo,⁶⁵ and, by reason of this power, may protect their owners from disease.

It will be noted that the above definition does not restrict the meaning of the word amulet to objects that can be hung about the neck or other parts of the body. Indeed, the Romans themselves did not so restrict the meaning of the word. A bat, for instance, if carried around a house three times and then hung head downward over the window, was considered an amulet.⁶⁶ In a similar manner the gall bladder of a male black dog when used as a fumigant served as an amulet to protect the home from all magic. Or, if one preferred, the same result might be obtained by sprinkling the blood of such a dog upon the walls of the house, or by burying his *membrum virile* under the threshold.⁶⁷ In fact, Pliny, at least, seems to extend the meaning of the word *amuletum* to make it include any means of protection against any physical ill or misfortune.⁶⁸ Yet it should be added that the great majority of the medical amulets which are mentioned by Latin authors were, as a matter of fact, worn about the neck, upon the arm, upon

the protection of that god (cf. Jahn, *Bös. Blick*, 45-47). It seems hardly likely, however, that the spirit of the god was actually thought of as dwelling in the amulet; but rather, that the image of the god, or some other reminder of the divine power contained in the amulet, possessed a peculiar power due to an association of ideas.

⁶⁵ If this definition is to stand, we shall have to define *taboo* not as "a system of abstinences based on the avoidance of certain calculated . . . evil consequences," but as "negative *mana*," that is, negative "supernatural wonder-working power." (Cf. Marett, *Thresh. of Rel.* 73-74.)

⁶⁶ Pliny, N. H. 29, 83.

⁶⁷ Pliny, N. H. 30, 82.

⁶⁸ Cf., e.g., N. H. 28, 38 *Inter amuleta est editae quemque urinae inspuere, similiter in calciamentum dextri pedis, priusquam induatur, item cum quis transeat locum, in quo aliquod periculum adierit.*

the finger, or upon the part of the body that was to be protected from disease.⁶⁹

(2) *Names Given to Amulets by Latin Authors.* — Various names are applied to amulets by Latin authors. Naevius⁷⁰ called them *praebia*, and this seems to have been the old Latin name for them.⁷¹ We have seen⁷² that Varro was familiar with the word *amuletum*, as was Pliny also.⁷³ By the time of Marcellus Empiricus the words *phylacterium*⁷⁴ and *praeligamen*⁷⁵ seem to have taken the place of *amuletum*. In by far the greater number of cases, however, the Latin authors are content to indicate in numerous ways⁷⁶ the use of amulets without giving any particular name to the object by means of which the desired end is accomplished.

⁶⁹ Cf. *infra*, 102-103.

⁷⁰ Varro (L. L. 7, 107), in speaking of the origin of certain words, remarks: in *Stigmatia* (a comedy of Naevius) 'praebia' a praebendo, ut sit tutus, quod sint remedia in collo pueris.

⁷¹ Cf. Festus, s. v. *praebia* (p. 276, ed. Lindsay): Praebia rursus Verrius vocari ait ea remedia, quae Gaia Caecilia, uxor Tarquini Prisci, invenisse existimatur, et inmiscuisse zonae suae, . . . Ea vocari ait praebia, quod mala prohibeant.

⁷² Cf. *supra*, 77, n. 62. From this passage it is apparent that the spelling in Varro's day varied between *amuletum* and *amoletum*. Varro also calls amulets *scaevolae* (L. L. 7, 97).

⁷³ Cf. N. H. 23, 20: 25, 115: 28, 38: 29, 66; 83: 30, 82; 138: 37, 50; 118. The MSS of Pliny consistently give the spelling *amuletum*.

⁷⁴ Cf. Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 27: 14, 30; 68: 21, 8.

⁷⁵ Cf. Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 57; 58; 59: 29, 26: 31, 33. Other names for the amulet were: when considered from the standpoint of material, *lamina litterata*, *breve*, *anulus*; from the standpoint of the inscription thereon, *character*; from the manner in which it was carried or worn, *ligamen*, *obligamentum*, *ligatura*, *suballigatura*, *suspensio colli*; from its function, *servatorium*, *amolitum* (*amoletum*), *amolimentum*, *fascinus*, *praefascinus* (so W. Froehner, *Sur une amulette basilidienne inédite du musée Napoléon III* [Caen, 1867], p. 10. Cf. with this a similar list in Del Rio, *Disquisit. Mag.*, Lib. I, Cap. IV, Quaestio IV, *De Amuletis et Periaptis*).

⁷⁶ This is most commonly done by the use of the verbs *alligare*, *adalligare*, *suspendere*, etc.

(3) *Antiquity and Continued Use of Amulets in Italy.* — The invention of the amulet was attributed by Roman tradition to Gaia Caecilia, the wife of Tarquinius Priscus.⁷⁷ Such a tradition certainly indicates that the use of amulets in Italy goes back beyond the point where Roman history begins. The antiquity of the practice may also be judged from the ancient Roman custom of suspending the amulet called the *bullā*⁷⁸ from the neck of a child upon his natal day⁷⁹ in order to protect the tender wearer from all physical ills, especially the malign influence of the evil eye.⁸⁰ The *bullā* consisted of a locket, usually of gold,⁸¹ within which was concealed the real amulet. This latter was sometimes a lizard,⁸² or the representation of a heart,⁸³ but most frequently the figure of a *membrum virile*.⁸⁴

Tradition tells us that the *bullā* was first bestowed by Tarquinius Priscus upon his son, who, while still in his *toga praetexta*, had slain a public enemy; and that it was thereafter a badge of noble youths.⁸⁵ On this account it was commonly

⁷⁷ Cf. *supra*, 79, n. 71.

⁷⁸ For the *bullā* cf. O. Jahn, *Bös. Blick*, 44; Marquardt, *Röm. Staatsv.* 3, 106–108; Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclop.*, s. v. *bullā*; *Thesaurus*, s. v. *bullā*; Walde, *Etymol. Wört.*², s. v. *bullā*.

⁷⁹ See Plautus, *Rud.* 1171.

⁸⁰ See Macrobius, *Sat.* 1, 619 *inclusis intra eam* (i.e. *bullam*) *remediis quae crederent adversus invidiam valentissima*. . . .

⁸¹ Cf. Porphyrio on Horace, *Sat.* 1, 5, 65 *generosis pueris, qui bullam auream egressi pueritiae annos apud Lares solent suspendere*; Pseudo-Asconius, *Verr.* p. 199 (ed. Baiter) *simul cum praetexta etiam bulla suspendi in collo infantibus ingenuis solet aurea, libertinis scortea*. . . .

⁸² See Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 50 *Lacerti viridis . . . oculos erues . . . et intra bullam vel lupinum aureum claudes colloque suspendes*. . . .

⁸³ See Macrobius, *Sat.* 1, 6, 17 *cordis figuram in bulla ante pectus adnecterent*.

⁸⁴ See Pliny, *N. H.* 28, 39 *Quamquam religione cum* (sc. *infantem*) *tutatur et fascinus* . . .; Fowler, *Rel. Exper.* 60; and especially Varro, *L. L.* 7, 97 (ed. Goetz and Schoell) *Potest vel ab eo quod pueris turpicula res in collo quaedam suspenditur, ne quid obsit*. . . .

⁸⁵ See Pliny, *N. H.* 33, 10 *Sed a Prisco Tarquinio omnium primo filium, cum in praetextae annis occidisset hostem, bulla aurea donatum*

believed by the Romans to have been introduced from Etruria;⁸⁶ but it is more probably of purely Roman origin,⁸⁷ since the use of such amulets is of universal occurrence.⁸⁸

The *bullā* was not, however, the only form of amulet used by the early Italians. Many of the taboos which were placed upon the person of the Flamen Dialis⁸⁹ may be referred to a very ancient belief in amulets. Among other protective measures we may, for instance, mention the fact that the ring worn by him must be broken; this latter precaution was taken, no doubt, for fear that "the powerful spirit embodied in him might be trammelled and hampered in its goings-out and comings-in by such corporeal and spiritual fetters. . . ." ⁹⁰

Though the amulets we have just mentioned came into use at a remote period in the life of the Romans, they by no means stood alone. In fact, the Romans of the historical period not only retained the *bullā* and the taboos surrounding the Flamen Dialis, but added greatly to the number of amulets. We have already shown⁹¹ that the dramatic writers of the third century B.C. made casual mention of the protective power of the *bullā* as though it were a matter of common experience to their audiences; as, indeed, it must have been. It would seem that there was never a time when the Roman populace was free

constat, unde mos bullae duravit, ut eorum, qui equo meruissent, filii insigne id haberent, ceteri lorum. . . .

⁸⁶ See Juvenal, 5, 164.

⁸⁷ A bit of evidence that points strongly to Roman origin is the fact that, when the Roman boy assumed the *toga virilis*, he dedicated his *bullā* not to any of the newer gods, but to the Lares, the most ancient of the native gods. Pseudo-Acro, on Horace, Sat. 1, 5, 65, says: solebant pueri, postquam pueritiam excedebant, eis Laribus bullas suas consecrare. Cf., also, Persius, 5, 31; Petronius, Sat. 60; Roscher, *Lex.* 2, 1877, 38-53.

⁸⁸ Fowler, *Rel. Exper.* 60.

⁸⁹ A. Gellius, N. A. 10, 15 (cf. supra, 54-55).

⁹⁰ Frazer, *G. B.* 2, 315 f. (cf. ib. 13-14).

⁹¹ Supra, 79, n. 70; cf. Plautus, Epid. 639 f.: Rud. 1171; Jahn, *Bös. Blick*, 42, n. 48.

from a belief in such means of prophylactic magic. This use of amulets seems, however, to have reached greater proportions during the first century of our era.⁹² The common people of that period are said, for instance, to have used the wild grape as an amulet against disease,⁹³ and the cyclamen against all *mala medicamenta*.⁹⁴ Amber, too, was popularly supposed to be a powerful amulet to ward off children's diseases and other ailments.⁹⁵

Nor were the cultivated men of the first Christian century free from the taint of superstition. M. Servilius Nonianus, a historian of the reign of Claudius, used an amulet to protect himself from *lippitudo*; his example was followed by C. Licinius Mucianus, a man of sufficient dignity to have held the consulship three times.⁹⁶ Even the physicians of that century included the use of amulets in their practice of medicine;⁹⁷ while the Magi, if one may judge from the number of times they are slightly mentioned by Pliny the Elder, must have influenced the popular medicine of this period very considerably.⁹⁸ Finally, Pliny himself openly recommends⁹⁹ the use of amulets in the treatment of quartan fevers.

⁹² At least it then, for the first time, becomes the subject of literary discussions such as those contained in Pliny's Natural History.

⁹³ Pliny, N. H. 23, 20 *Utuntur ea* (i.e. *oenanthe*) *pro amuleto et ad expuitionem sanguinis quoque adhibent*. . . .

⁹⁴ Pliny, N. H. 25, 115 *A nostris tuber terrae vocatur, in omnibus serenda domibus, si verum est, ubi sata sit, nihil nocere mala medicamenta; amuletum vocant*.

⁹⁵ Pliny, N. H. 37, 50-51 *Infantibus adalligari amuleti ratione prodest. Callistratus prodesse etiam cuicumque aetati contra lymphationes tradit et urinae difficultatibus potum adalligatumque*. For a detailed account of amulets in preventive medicine see *infra*, 84-105.

⁹⁶ Pliny, N. H. 28, 29 (*infra*, 86).

⁹⁷ Such were Grannius (Pliny, N. H. 28, 42), Caecilius (Pliny, N. H. 29, 85, quoted *infra*, 90, and n. 121), Callistratus (Pliny, N. H. 37, 51), and Scribonius Largus (Comp. 171). Cf. also *supra*, 73.

⁹⁸ See N. H. 28, 228-229: 29, 81-83: 30, 64.

⁹⁹ Cf. *supra*, 74.

This recommendation the populace was evidently disposed to follow, for a century and a half later we find the people resorting so universally to the use of amulets for the prevention of quartan fever that the Emperor Caracalla threatened with death all who should be detected wearing amulets against this scourge.¹⁰⁰ Such violent measures, however, had, so far as we may judge, very slight effect; for in the succeeding generation we find Q. Serenus Sammonicus, himself a physician, recommending amulets as a legitimate adjunct in both preventive and curative medicine.¹⁰¹

The adoption of Christianity as the state religion, though it had very little immediate effect upon popular beliefs, resulted in making those who believed in medical amulets the victims of the imperial Christian zeal. Accordingly, we find in the fourth century of our era renewed punishments inflicted upon those who resorted to prophylactic amulets.¹⁰² The common people, however, clung to their amulets in spite of the imperial disapproval, and, if one may judge from the astonishingly plentiful evidence presented in the interesting manual of popular medicine compiled by Marcellus of Bordeaux (about 410 A.D.), became even more devoted to magical means in preventive medicine.

¹⁰⁰ See Spartianus, Carac. 5, 7 (quoted supra, 53, n. 297).

¹⁰¹ See, e.g., lines 927-931 in which the author gives a remedy for daily recurrent fever:

Nec non ossa iuvant saeptis inventa domorum:
convenit haec tereti pendentia subdere collo.
Multaque praeterea verborum monstra silebo;
nam febrem vario depelli carmine posse
vana superstitio credit tremulaeque parentes.

The air of superiority assumed by Sammonicus in the last three lines of this passage is not at all in accord with his actual belief in such magic.

¹⁰² See Ammianus Marcellinus, 19, 12, 14 *nam si qui remedia quartanae vel doloris alterius collo gestaret . . . pronuntiatus reus capitis interibat*. For the general attitude of Christianity to magic, see Maury, *Mag. et l'astrol.*, Chapter 6.

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(4) *Amulets Used in Preventive Medicine.* — Amulets were, in fact, used by the Romans at one time or another to prevent almost all kinds of disease. It is my purpose to present in the succeeding pages of this chapter the passages in Latin literature that have to do with the prevention of disease either (a) by means of amulets, or (b) by other magic means; to make some general classification of medical amulets; and to discover the fundamental principle upon which Roman prophylactic magic rests.

Amulets were used to prevent,

1. *Headache.* — Marcellus Empiricus (1, 41) furnishes our only amulet for the prevention of headache: ¹⁰³

Limaci calculum, quem in capite habet, tolle; . . . quem lapidem quamdiu tecum habueris, numquam ullum dolorem capitis nec senties nec patieris.

2. *Diseases of the Eye.* — Pains in the eyes might be avoided by means of various amulets. Thus Marcellus Empiricus (8, 27) tells us:

Dolorem oculorum ut anno integro non patiaris . . . de tribus cerasiis lapillos pertundes et Gaditano lino inserto pro phylacterio uteris, voto prius facto contra solem orientem quod eo anno cerasia non sis manducaturus.¹⁰⁴

Stones found in the swallow's stomach were said to have the same beneficent effect, but for a longer period, if we may credit the same authority (8, 45):

Hirundinis ventriculo scisso albi ac nigri lapisculi inveniuntur, qui si lupino aureo includantur et collo suspendantur, omnem dolorem oculorum perpetuo avertent.

¹⁰³ Many other amulets to be found in Marcellus Empiricus are for the cure of headache rather than for its prevention. Such, for instance, are those mentioned in 1, 85: 2, 7.

¹⁰⁴ See *infra*, 121–122.

The green lizard, also, could be worn as a powerful means of preventing pains in the eyes, according to Marcellus (8, 50) :

Lacerti viridis quem ceperis die Iovis luna vetere mense Septembri aut etiam quocumque alio oculos erues acu cuprea¹⁰⁵ et intra bullam vel lupinum aureum claudes colloque suspendes: quod remedium quamdiu tecum habueris, oculos non dolebis.

Another type of amulet, used to protect the wearer from all eye troubles, consisted of an inscribed piece of virgin parchment. To this Marcellus Empiricus testifies (8, 58) :

Hoc etiam remedium indubitate impetus oculorum, si praevenias, prohibebit, scriptum in charta virgine:

ρουβρς ρνοπειρας
ἡέλιος ὃς πάντ' ἐφορᾷ καὶ πάντ' ἐπακούει:

quod ad collum dolentis¹⁰⁶ licio suspendi debet.

Lippitudo was a very common eye trouble among the Romans. Hence we find a number of amulets recommended for preventing this troublesome affliction. The green lizard is again prominent. See Marcellus Empiricus (8, 49) :

Lacertam viridem excaecatam acu cuprea¹⁰⁷ in vas vitreum mittes cum anulis aureis, argenteis, ferreis, et electrinis, si fuerint, aut etiam cupreis, deinde vas gypsabis aut claudes diligenter atque signabis et post quintum vel septimum diem aperies, lacertam sanis luminibus inuenies, quam vivam dimittes, anulis contra lippitudinem ita uteris, ut non solum digito gestentur, sed etiam oculis crebrius adplicentur,

¹⁰⁵ Such references to copper, gold, tin, reed, etc., are probably to be interpreted as a prohibition of iron (cf. supra, 73 and n. 42). There seems to be evidence, however, that gold in itself possessed some magic power (see Fowler, *Rel. Exper.* 60).

¹⁰⁶ It is, of course, inconsistent for the author to use the words *si praevenias*, *prohibebit*, and *dolentis* of the same act; but one should not expect to be able to draw too strict a line of distinction between amulets to protect against future disease, and amulets to cure present ailments.

¹⁰⁷ Cf. supra, n. 105.

ita ut per foramen anuli visus transmittatur . . . observandum etiam ut luna vetere . . . die Iovis Septembri mense capiatur lacerta atque ita remedium fiat, sed ab homine maxime puro atque casto.¹⁰⁸

The head of the dragon and the tongue of the fox possessed similar power. Of the former Pliny says (N. H. 29, 128) : negatur annis multis continuis lippiturus . . . qui draconis caput habeat. Of the latter the same author tells us (N. H. 28, 172) : vulpinam linguam habentes in armilla lippituros negant. The fly, also, could be used as an amulet to avert *lippitudo*.¹⁰⁹ Of the woodland sorrel we are told (Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 41) : quamdiu eam tecum habueris, non lippies.

That amulets of inscribed parchment were useful in this field of preventive magic we see from Pliny (N. H. 28, 29) :

M. Servilius Nonianus princeps civitatis non pridem in metu lippitudinis, priusquam ipse eam nominaret aliusve ei praediceret, duabus litteris Graecis PA chartam inscriptam circumligatam lino subnectebat collo, Mucianus ter consul eadem observatione viventem muscam in linteolo albo, his remediis carere ipsos lippitudine praedicantes.

The use of a golden *lamella* for the same purpose is mentioned by Marcellus Empiricus (8, 59) :

In lamella aurea acu cuprea scribes *ορνω ουρωδη* et dabis vel suspendes ex licio collo gestandum praeligamen ei qui lippiet, quod potenter et diu valebit, si observata castitate die lunae illud facias et ponas.

The strangest of all the means of protection against *lippitudo* is, perhaps, the one given by Pliny (N. H. 28, 42) : in manu

¹⁰⁸ I have given this long passage practically entire in order to exhibit a fair sample of the elaborate precaution often enjoined regarding details in the preparation of an amulet. It is not definitely stated in this passage whether the amulet is to be used to avert or to cure *lippitudo*. The former interpretation seems, however, more probable, since the amulet mentioned in the passage immediately following (8, 50, quoted supra, 85) is said to avert pains in the eye.

¹⁰⁹ Pliny, N. H. 28, 29, quoted infra.

dextera II medii <sc. digiti> lino leviter colligati destillationes atque lippitudines arcent.¹¹⁰

3. *Toothache*. — I have found only one case of the prevention of toothache by means of an amulet. It is in Pliny (N. H. 27, 89) :

In hoc <i.e. quadam parte gallidragae> crescente aestate vermiculos nasci tradit, quos pyxide conditos adalligari cum pane brachio ab ea parte, qua dens doleat, mireque ilico dolorem tolli. Valere non diutius anno et ita, si terram non adtigerint.¹¹¹

4. *Diseases of the Throat*. — Of throat afflictions two were thought preventable by means of amulets. Goitre, we are told (Marcellus Empiricus, 15, 67), may be prevented in the following manner : Caput viperae linteolo conligatum colloque suspensum tolles . . . prohibet innasci. Equally efficacious was the following method of preventing a cough (Pseudo-Pliny, 1, 17):¹¹² scribes in charta virgine hoc nomen Ial-dabrae¹¹³ et de spongia nova tollis lapillum, alligabis tibi et suspendes ad collum.

5. *Diseases of the Stomach and Bowels*. — The amulet most effective in protecting one from abdominal pains in general seems to have been the ankle bone of a hare.¹¹⁴ We read in

¹¹⁰ The tying together of the fingers was doubtless thought to bind up the excretions characteristic of these diseases.

¹¹¹ We shall find in the course of our study numerous cases where it is enjoined that the object possessing the magic power must not touch the earth. For an explanation of this prohibition see infra, 120, n. 292.

¹¹² P. 206, l. 1 of Codex St. Galli 751. Cf. Heim, *Incant. Mag.* 557.

¹¹³ For meaningless words, ἑφέσια γράμματα, on amulets cf. infra, 100.

¹¹⁴ The facts regarding European superstitions concerning the hare will be found in Hazlitt, *Faiths and Folklore*, 1, 305. The custom of carrying in one's pocket or about one's person a 'rabbit foot' is so common in the United States, or at least in the Southern States, that I think no proof of the custom is necessary. Such amulets are especially prized by negroes and small boys as a means of protection against various physical ills and to secure good luck. The foot of the hare was much used by the Romans as an amulet in the cure of physical ailments (cf. Pliny, N. H. 28, 220; Marcellus Empiricus, 28, 21: 29, 35: 36, 26-28).

Pliny (N. H. 28, 199) : Ventris quidem dolore temptari negant talum leporis habentes. This amulet must have been very popular, for we find it mentioned twice by Marcellus Empiricus. In 28, 48 he says : Si quis talum leporis secum habuerit, immunis a dolore ventris et periculo huiusmodi perpetuo permanebit. Again, we find (27, 84) : sed qui talum leporis secum habuerit, huiusmodi casum, id est subitum dolorem ventris, numquam incurret. Of a different kind is the amulet mentioned by Marcellus (34, 34) : Observabis, ut quodcumque de corpore fuerit eiectum licio alligatum candelabro suspendas aut uncta oleo lanula involutum in ventrali gestes; dolorem non patieris eius loci, de quo fuerit aliquid eductum.

Amulets intended specifically for colic are also found. Here we may cite Pliny (N. H. 30, 63) : huius <sc. ossifragi intestini> partem extremam adalligatam prodesse contra colum constat; Marcellus Empiricus (29, 13) : Coli dolorem avertes, si de lacertarum caudis sumitatem tuleris et auro incluseris et ligaveris circa umbilicum aut si de reste ventrem circumcinxeris, de qua quis laqueo vitam finierit. Cf. id. 28, 45.

6. *Urinary Diseases*. — Here we may cite Pseudo-Pliny (2, 38) : ¹¹⁵ Item <ad> vesicae dolorem scribes in vesica procina, mascula de masculo, femina de femina et ad umbilicum suspendes, et eius nomen scribes cui facis : 'abarabarbaricabor-boncabradubrabarasaba.' ¹¹⁶

7. *Diseases of the Groin*. — To protect the groin from swelling ulcers Pliny recommends the following amulet (N. H. 23, 163) : Inguen ne intumescat ex ulcere, satis est surculum tantum myrti habere secum nec ferro nec terra contactum.¹¹⁷ That this

¹¹⁵ P. 239, Cod. St. Galli 751. Cf. Heim, *Incant. Mag.* 559.

¹¹⁶ It seems better to refer such passages as Pliny, N. H. 37, 51; Pseudo-Pliny, 2, 18 (p. 62, ed. Rose); 2, 45 (p. 247, l. 13 Cod. St. Galli 751, quoted by Heim, l. c.); and Marcellus Empiricus, 26, 129-130 to curative rather than to preventive medicine.

¹¹⁷ Repeated in Pseudo-Pliny, 2, 21 (p. 64, ed. Rose). The injunction that the amulet be not allowed to touch the earth is quite common. Cf. supra, 87, n. 111 and infra, 120, n. 292.

amulet was popular seems to be shown by the fact that Pliny himself repeats it with slight change (N. H. 26, 91): Alii adiciunt et puleium, quod ieiunus quis legerit: si post se alliget, inguinis dolores prohibet. . . . These passages are in turn repeated in substance by Marcellus Empiricus (32, 18): Ne inguen ex ulcere aliquo aut vulnere intumescat, surculum anethi in cingulo aut in fascia habeto ligatum; and again (32, 20): Surculum quoque ex myrto terra *non* tactum si quis gerat, ab inguinibus tutus erit.

Of a very different type is the amulet mentioned by Pliny (N. H. 28, 48): Inguinibus medentur aliqui liceum telae detractum alligantes novenis septenisve nodis, ad singulos nominantes viduam aliquam atque ita inguini adalligantes.¹¹⁸ This passage of Pliny is also repeated with some changes by Marcellus (32, 19):

In sparto vel quocumque vinculo, quo holus aut obsonium fuerit innexum, septem nodos facies et per singulos nectens nominabis singulas anus viduas et singulas feras et in crure vel brachio, cuius pars vulnerata fuerit, alligabis. Quae si prius facias, antequam nascantur inguina, omnem inguinum vel glandularum molestiam prohibebis. . . .¹¹⁹

8. *Female Troubles*. — Many of the physical ills peculiar to women were thought to be preventable by medical amulets. Among these were

(a) *Female Complaints in General*. — To this class belongs an amulet described by Pliny (N. H. 28, 41):

Pueri qui primus ceciderit dens, ut terram non attingat, inclusus in armillam et adsidue in brachio habitus muliebrium locorum dolores prohibet.

¹¹⁸ Repeated with some changes by Pseudo-Pliny, 2, 21 (p. 64, ed. Rose).

¹¹⁹ Cf. also Marcellus Empiricus, 32, 21. The same amulet is suggested by Theodorus Priscianus, 4, 313 for the cure of headache.

(b) *Menstrual Irregularities*. — For this compare Marcellus Empiricus (10, 35) :

Item carmen hoc utile profluvio muliebri: Stupidus in monte ibat, stupidus stupuit; adiuro te, matrix, ne hoc iracunda suscipias; ¹²⁰ pari ratione scriptum ligabis.

(c) *Conception*. — This, too, was often considered a physical ill, for the prevention of which medical amulets could be used. Pliny tells us (N. H. 29, 85) :

vermiculi duo (sc. in capite phalangi reperti) adalligati mulieribus pelle cervina ante solis ortum praestare ne concipiant, ut Caecilius ¹²¹ in commentariis reliquit.

(d) *Miscarriage*. — Here, again, Pliny is our authority. In N. H. 28, 98 we read :

Mulieri candida a pectore hyaenae caro et pili septeni et genitale cervi, si inligentur dorcadis pelle e collo suspensa, continere partus promittuntur. . . .

Compare with this N. H. 28, 246–247 :

Tradunt cervas, cum senserint se gravidas, lapillum devorare quem in excrementis repertum aut in vulva . . . custodire partus adalligatum. Inveniuntur et ossicula in corde et in vulva perquam utilia gravidis parturientibusque.

To these passages may be added Pliny, N. H. 30, 125: 36, 151; Solinus, 37, 15.

¹²⁰ Jacob Grimm (*Kleinere Schriften*, 2, 129, § 22) gives the following metrical arrangement of this *incantamentum*:

Stupidus in monte ibat,
stupidus stupuit,
adiuro te, matrix,
ne hoc iracunda suscipias.

For a further discussion of this amulet cf. Grimm, op. cit. 146 ff.; Heim, *Incant. Mag.* 498.

¹²¹ Cf. *supra*, 82, n. 97. This Caecilius is called *Caecilius medicus* in the *index auctorum* to book twenty-nine of the N. H.

(e) *Painful Delivery*. — Here we may cite Pliny (N. H. 28, 114): eundem (i.e. chamaeleonem) salutarem esse parturientibus, si sit domi, si vero inferatur, perniciosissimum.

9. *Galling of the Skin*. — The pertinent passages here are Pliny (N. H. 26, 91): Intertrigines negat fieri Cato absinthium Ponticum secum habentibus; (24, 47): Virgam populi in manu tenentibus intertrigo non metuitur; and (24, 63): Virgam (sc. viticis) qui in manu habeant aut in cinctu, negantur intertriginem sentire.

10. *Tumors*. — The most general means of protection against all tumors (*strumae*) is that mentioned by Marcellus Empiricus (15, 52):

Contra omnes strumas et feminis et maribus utilissimum est, si cor lacertae viridis lupino argenteo clausum in collo suspensum semper habeant.

Another interesting amulet for the prevention of the same disease is given by Pliny (N. H. 23, 130):

Corticem eius (i.e. caprifici) intumescensem puer impubis si defracto ramo detrahat dentibus, medullam ipsam adalligatam ante solis ortum prohibere strumas.

Finally, we find one and the same substance used first as a cure for *strumae*, and then as an amulet to prevent the return of the affliction. The whole passage, found in Pliny (N. H. 26, 24), throws an unusually clear light upon the folk lore of the times:

Sideritis latifolia clavo sinistra manu circumfossa adalligatur, custodienda sanatis ne rursus sata taedium herbariorum scelere . . . rebellet, quod et in iis, quos Artemisia sanaverit, praedici reperio, tem in iis, quos plantago.

Such a substance can, of course, be classed as an amulet only in the broad sense that it protects its owner from physical ills.¹²²

¹²² That the Romans extended the meaning of the word amulet so as to include such means of protection I have shown, supra, 78. The negative principle which underlies the practice here mentioned is apparent also

11. *Infants' Diseases.* — (a) *In General.* — Here, in what seems the natural field of household remedies, we expect a rich store of preventive medical magic, nor are we disappointed. We find, for instance, coral, amber, and malachite used as amulets to ward off children's ills in general. Compare Pliny (N. H. 32, 24): *Surculi* <sc. *coralii*>¹²³ *infantiae adalligati tutelam habere creduntur*; (37, 50): *Infantibus adalligari* <sc. *sucinum*> *amuleti ratione prodest*; (37, 114; quoted by Solinus, 33, 20): *laudata* <sc. *molochitis*> . . . *infantium custodia quodamque innato contra pericula medicamine*. The scarab¹²⁴ was used in much the same way, as we see from Pliny (N. H. 11, 97): *infantium etiam remediis ex cervice* <sc. *scarabaei*> *suspenduntur*. . . .

(b) *Troubles of Teething.* — The troubles of teething were prevented by the use of the wolf's tooth as an amulet. This valuable and suggestive charm was also credited, it may be noted, with power to drive from the mind of a child all fears of the darkness. See Pliny (N. H. 28, 257): *Dens lupi adalligatus infantium pavores prohibet dentiendique morbos, quod et pellis lupina praestat*.¹²⁵ A similar sympathetic amulet is provided by the milk teeth of colts, according to Serenus Sammonicus (1031–1032):

*Collo igitur molli dentes nectentur equini,
qui primi fuerint pullo crescente caduci.*

12. *Night Fears.* — The excessive fear which some persons experience in the dark is little short of a disease. That the

in the various customs of concealing nail parings, hair cuttings, and similar objects. Cf. Frazer, *G. B.* 2, 267 ff.

¹²³ For other instances of coral as an amulet cf. Pliny, N. H. 37, 145; *Gratius*, Cyn. 399–407; *Serenus Sammonicus*, 942.

¹²⁴ For beetles as amulets in general cf. Pliny, N. H. 30, 100.

¹²⁵ One might think that the wolf tooth was intended merely as a hard substance upon which to cut the teeth, were it not for other items in the passage which are not susceptible of such an explanation.

Romans thought it possible to prevent such fears by means of amulets is clear from Pliny (N. H. 28, 98) : Contra nocturnos pavores umbrarumque terrorem unus ex magnis dentibus <sc. hyaenae> lino alligatus succurrere narratur. Other parts also of the hyena were credited with this same power; compare Pliny (N. H. 28, 115) : Pedem <sc. hyaenae> e prioribus dextrum pelle hyaenae adalligatum sinistro brachio contra latrocinia terroresque nocturnos pollere, item dextram mamillam contra formidines pavoresque. . . . The tooth of even so companionable an animal as the dolphin was believed to possess a similar power to drive away fears, according to Pliny (N. H. 32, 137) : Adalligatus idem <i.e. dens delphini> pavores repentinos tollit. Idem effectus et caniculae dentis.

13. *Epilepsy*. — I have found in Latin literature only one instance of the use of amulets to prevent epilepsy, namely, Pliny (N. H. 30, 91) :

Magis placet draconis cauda in pelle dorcadis adalligata cervinis nervis vel lapilli e ventre hirundinum pullorum sinistro lacerto adnexi. . . . Quin et e nido earum lapillus . . . dicitur . . . adalligatus in perpetuum tueri <sc. a morbo comitali>.

14. *Fevers*. — Amulets for the prevention of fevers, particularly tertian and quartan fevers, seem to have been quite commonly employed.¹²⁶ Among these we may mention amulets used to prevent

(a) *Continuous Fevers*. — See Pliny (N. H. 28, 107) : canini dentes febris statas arcent ture repleti . . . ita ne diebus V ab aegro cernatur qui adalligaverit.

(b) *Nightly or Daily Recurrent Fevers*. — Mentioned by Pliny (N. H. 29, 64) : adalligatos <sc. cimices> laevo brachio binos lana subrepta¹²⁷ pastoribus resistere nocturnis febribus prodiderunt, diurnis in russeo panno. We have cited above¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Cf. Pliny, N. H. 30, 98 (quoted supra, 74).

¹²⁷ Cf. infra, 104–105.

¹²⁸ Cf. supra, 83, n. 101.

the amulet mentioned by Serenus Sammonicus as a means of averting daily recurrent fever.

(c) *Tertian Fevers*. — To what extent the Roman populace employed amulets to protect themselves from tertian fever is shown by the statement of Spartianus¹²⁹ that during the third century of our era many persons were severely punished for using such prophylactic magic. That such practices were very prevalent at that time may also be gathered from Serenus Sammonicus (916–918) :

Ut possis igitur talem prohibere furorem (i.e. febrem tertianam),
involves cera sine caudis grana cumini
Puniceaeque indes pelli colloque ligabis.

That the Romans of the first century of our era also possessed amulets for warding off tertian fever we know from Pliny (N. H. 24, 170) :

Herba quaecumque e rivis aut fluminibus ante solis ortum collecta
ita ut nemo colligentem videat, adalligata laevo brachio ita ut aeger
quid sit illud ignoret, tertianas arcere traditur.¹³⁰

(d) *Quartan Fevers*. — We have shown above¹³¹ that Roman medicine was totally unable to cope with this type of malarial fever, and that even Pliny was willing to recommend a trial of amulets in the lack of a better method of treatment. In addition to the passage already cited we may quote from Pliny the following passages : N. H. 28, 111 Cor (sc. crocodili) adnexum in lana ovis nigrae, cui nullus alius colos incursaverit, et primo partu genitae quartanas abigere dicitur ; N. H. 28, 114 cor (sc. hyaenae) adversus quartanas inligatam lana nigra primae tonsurae (sc. pollere Democritus narrat) ; and N. H. 28, 228 Quartanis Magi excrementa felis cum digito bubonis adalligari iubent et, ne recidant, non removeri septeno circumitu.

¹²⁹ Cf. supra, 53, n. 297.

¹³⁰ Cf. also Pliny, N. H. 30, 104.

¹³¹ Pliny, N. H. 30, 98 (supra, 74).

15. *Bites of Poisonous Animals*. — To protect themselves from the bites of serpents and other poisonous animals the Romans made free use of amulets. Most of the objects thus used, however, emit such an odor that one might perhaps maintain that they had a real efficacy arising from natural causes, were it not for certain accompanying details that are clearly magical in character. When Scribonius Largus, for instance, tells us ¹³² that either *hiera botane* or *trifolium acutum*, if bound to the person, will protect the wearer from the bite of serpents, and in the same connection states that both plants *odorem gravem emittunt*, we are tempted immediately to conclude that the serpents were supposed to flee on account of the disagreeable odor of the plant. But Scribonius adds :

Sed utrasque superius dictas herbas cum inveneris, pridie notare oportet et circumscribere sinistra manu fruges aliquas ponentem atque postero die ante solis ortum sinistra manu vellere <et> ita inligatas habere.

Clearly a plant plucked with so much ceremony was thought to possess protecting qualities other than its pungent odor.

A similar doubt attaches to the use of shrew mice as amulets. The bite of this animal was considered dangerous to cattle. Accordingly, we find the following measure of protection suggested by Columella (6, 17, 6) : Solet etiam ipsum animal vivum creta figulari circumdari ; quae cum siccata est, collo boum suspenditur. Ea res innoxium pecus a morsu muris aranei praebet. One might maintain, of course, that the dead shrew mouse concealed within the ball of potter's earth by emitting a characteristic odor acted as a warning to the other shrew mice ; but it seems much more likely that behind this custom lay some magic principle based upon *antipathia*.

The same argument might be advanced to show that those who carried parsnips about their persons in order to avoid

¹³² Comp. 163. Cf. Pliny, N. H. 20, 133-134.

snake-bite did so, not because they depended upon the power of the vegetable as an amulet, but because serpents were supposed especially to dislike and to shun the odor of the parsnip. Yet such an explanation would scarcely suffice in the case of the man who, instead of carrying the parsnip in his clothes, ate it; ¹³³ for he was equally protected. Upon the whole I think that such measures of protection are to be regarded as amulets.

(5) *Materials of Amulets*. — The foregoing passages make it clear that the Romans practiced prophylactic magic by means of amulets made of mineral, vegetable, and animal materials. By arranging these amulets in groups according to the material of which each is composed we shall be able to determine not only the relative importance of the three principal sources of amulets, but also the general nature of medical amulets themselves.

(a) *Minerals*. — We are told that rings of gold, silver, copper, or iron are equally efficacious as amulets in preventing *lippitudo*,¹³⁴ a disease from which one might also be protected by wearing about one's neck an inscribed golden *lamella*.¹³⁵ Precious stones and similar materials were used, especially for warding off the various diseases of infants. We find malachite,¹³⁶ coral,¹³⁷ and amber¹³⁸ thus employed. The last named substance was also used to prevent *lippitudo*.¹³⁹ There were certain small stones, also, which seem to have derived their power as amulets, in part at least, from the sources from which they

¹³³ Gargilius Martialis, Med. 33 *Negant feriri a serpentibus qui pastinacum secum ferant vel ante gustarint*. Cf. Pliny, N. H. 20, 31; 69; 133; 223; 232: 22, 52; 60: 25, 163; Ps.-Apuleius, De Med. Herb. 4, 7.

¹³⁴ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 49 (supra, 85).

¹³⁵ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 59 (supra, 86).

¹³⁶ Pliny, N. H. 37, 114 (supra, 92).

¹³⁷ Pliny, N. H. 32, 24 (supra, 92).

¹³⁸ Pliny, N. H. 37, 50 (supra, 92).

¹³⁹ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 49 (supra, 85).

were obtained. We read,¹⁴⁰ for instance, that a stone found in the head of a snail could free the person who wore it from all fear of headache. A similar stone, found in the stomach of a swallow, if worn as an amulet, was thought to protect the wearer from all pains in the eyes,¹⁴¹ and from epilepsy.¹⁴² Still another stone, found in the womb of the hind, was commonly thought to prevent miscarriage.¹⁴³ Finally, it was believed among the populace that one might avert a cough by swearing about one's person a stone taken from a new sponge.¹⁴⁴

(b) *Vegetable Materials*. — The vegetable kingdom also contributed to the number of prophylactic amulets. Woodland sorrel, according to one authority,¹⁴⁵ protected the wearer from the danger of *lippitudo*, while the myrtle twig offered a like protection against ulcers of the groin.¹⁴⁶ Wormwood, poplar, or vitex twigs, if worn about the person, were thought to protect the wearer from skin galls.¹⁴⁷ Tumors, we read, could be prevented by wearing about one the bark of the wild fig tree¹⁴⁸ or ironwort.¹⁴⁹ Tertian fever, too, might be avoided by the simple means of wearing upon one's person grains of cummin prepared according to certain directions;¹⁵⁰ and snake-bite need never be feared by him who had with him *hiera botane*, *trifolium acutum*,¹⁵¹ or a parsnip.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁰ Marcellus Empiricus, 1, 41 (supra, 84).

¹⁴¹ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 45 (supra, 84).

¹⁴² Pliny, N. H. 30, 91 (supra, 93).

¹⁴³ Pliny, N. H. 28, 246 (supra, 90).

¹⁴⁴ Pseudo-Pliny, 1, 17 (206, 1 Cod. St. Galli 751; supra, 87).

¹⁴⁵ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 41 (supra, 86).

¹⁴⁶ Pliny, N. H. 23, 163 (supra, 88).

¹⁴⁷ Pliny, N. H. 24, 47; 63: 26, 91 (supra, 91).

¹⁴⁸ Pliny, N. H. 23, 130 (supra, 91).

¹⁴⁹ Pliny, N. H. 26, 24 (supra, 91).

¹⁵⁰ Serenus Sammonicus, 916-918 (supra, 94).

¹⁵¹ Scribonius Largus, 163 (supra, 95).

¹⁵² Gargilius Martialis, Med. 33 (supra, 95-96).

(c) *Animal Materials*. — The greatest number of medical amulets, however, was supplied by the animal kingdom. The eye of the lizard, for instance, was considered efficacious in averting pains in the eyes,¹⁵³ while the tail of that animal was thought to be an equally effective amulet in preventing colic.¹⁵⁴ In like manner it was believed that whoever had a dragon's head about him was freed from all fear of *lippitudo*,¹⁵⁵ and that the tail of the dragon would protect anyone who had it on his person from *morbus comitalis*.¹⁵⁶ The head of the viper, according to popular belief, if worn as an amulet, would prevent goitre,¹⁵⁷ while the readily changeable chameleon would insure an easy childbirth.¹⁵⁸

More insignificant animals, too, had the power to prevent disease. Thus, the fly, shut up alive in a capsule, was thought to prevent *lippitudo*;¹⁵⁹ while the shrew mouse, similarly enclosed in a ball of clay and suspended from the neck of cattle, was believed to keep other shrew mice from biting the cattle.¹⁶⁰ Worms were imagined to prevent toothache¹⁶¹ and conception.¹⁶² The scarab was hung from the necks of children as a general prophylactic agent.¹⁶³

The teeth of various animals were especially adapted to use as amulets. To Roman parents it seemed quite a natural deduction that the tooth of the courageous wolf should protect the infant who wore it from childish fears and teething troubles;¹⁶⁴ and even to the first-dropped tooth of a colt

¹⁵³ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 50 (supra, 85).

¹⁵⁴ Marcellus Empiricus, 29, 13 (supra, 88).

¹⁵⁵ Pliny, N. H. 29, 128 (supra, 86).

¹⁵⁶ Pliny, N. H. 30, 91 (supra, 93).

¹⁵⁷ Marcellus Empiricus, 15, 67 (supra, 87).

¹⁵⁸ Pliny, N. H. 28, 114 (supra, 91).

¹⁵⁹ Pliny, N. H. 28, 29 (supra, 86).

¹⁶⁰ Columella, 6, 17, 6 (supra, 95). ¹⁶² Pliny, N. H. 29, 85 (supra, 90).

¹⁶¹ Pliny, N. H. 27, 89 (supra, 87). ¹⁶³ Pliny, N. H. 11, 97 (supra, 92).

¹⁶⁴ Pliny, N. H. 28, 257 (supra, 92).

the same mystic power was accorded.¹⁶⁵ By a similar course of reasoning it was argued that the first milk tooth lost by a boy, if worn in a woman's bracelet, would prevent pain in the female organs,¹⁶⁶ and that the tooth of the hyena would prevent night fears.¹⁶⁷

Such fears might also be prevented by wearing upon one's person the right nipple or the right fore-foot of the hyena.¹⁶⁸ This last named amulet recalls the use of the 'rabbit foot' as an amulet,¹⁶⁹ a custom for which Roman parallels are not lacking. The ancient Romans believed, for instance, that one who kept about his person the knuckle bone of a hare would never suffer a pain in the stomach.¹⁷⁰ Other amulets of animal origin were the tongue of a fox, used to prevent *lippitudo*;¹⁷¹ an inscribed hog bladder, to prevent human bladder troubles;¹⁷² wolf skin, to prevent teething trouble and infants' fears;¹⁷³ bones found imbedded in the wall of a house, to prevent daily recurrent fever;¹⁷⁴ and excreta, bound on the abdomen, to prevent pain in that region.¹⁷⁵

Of animal origin, too, were the bits of inscribed virgin parchment which we find used as medical amulets,¹⁷⁶ though in

¹⁶⁵ Serenus Sammonicus, 1031-1032 (supra, 92).

¹⁶⁶ Pliny, N. H. 28, 41 (supra, 89).

¹⁶⁷ Pliny, N. H. 28, 98 (supra, 93).

¹⁶⁸ Pliny, N. H. 28, 115 (supra, 93).

¹⁶⁹ Cf. supra, 87 and n. 114.

¹⁷⁰ Pliny, N. H. 28, 199 (supra, 88). The popularity and tenacity of this belief are attested by the fact that Marcellus Empiricus thrice (27, 84; 28, 21; 48) repeats the words of Pliny almost verbatim.

¹⁷¹ Pliny, N. H. 28, 172 (supra, 86).

¹⁷² Pseudo-Pliny 2, 38 (supra, 88). Cf. also Pliny, N. H. 30, 63 (supra, 88) for a similar use of the osprey's intestine.

¹⁷³ Pliny, N. H. 28, 257 (supra, 92).

¹⁷⁴ Serenus Sammonicus, 927-928 (supra, 83, n. 101).

¹⁷⁵ Marcellus Empiricus, 34, 34 (supra, 88).

¹⁷⁶ Pliny, N. H. 28, 29 (supra, 86); Pseudo-Pliny, 1, 17 (supra, 87); Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 85 (supra, 85); cf. with these Marcellus Empiricus, 10, 35 (supra, 90).

such cases we should probably attribute as much virtue to the *incantamenta* inscribed thereon as to the material of which the amulet was made.¹⁷⁷

(d) *Miscellaneous Materials*. — In this group may be mentioned the tying of the two middle fingers of the right hand together in order to prevent *lippitudo* or catarrh.¹⁷⁸ We may add the popular belief that one who feared disease in the groin might render himself immune from such afflictions if he took a thread from the loom, tied it into an odd number of knots, at the same time naming each knot for a different widow, and finally bound the knotted thread around the groin.¹⁷⁹ In like manner a piece of rope with which a person had committed suicide might be used as an amulet to prevent colic.¹⁸⁰

(6) *Inscriptions on Medical Amulets*. — Many medical amulets seem to have derived their power from certain unintelligible words that were inscribed upon them.¹⁸¹ Most of these words probably had no meaning originally. At any rate they have lost all meaning for us, and it is likely that they meant nothing to the Romans who used them. Any attempt, therefore, to get a meaning from such words is almost useless.¹⁸² Besides, it is altogether probable that the average Roman

¹⁷⁷ Cf. below, n. 181.

¹⁷⁸ Pliny, N. H. 28, 42 (supra, 86–87).

¹⁷⁹ Pliny, N. H. 28, 48 (supra, 89).

¹⁸⁰ Marcellus Empiricus, 29, 13 (supra, 88).

¹⁸¹ These inscriptions were usually made up, in part or as a whole, of *ἑφέσια γράμματα*, or unintelligible words. Instances of such inscriptions have been given above (Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 58 [supra, 85]; 8, 59 [supra, 86]; Pliny, N. H. 28, 29 [supra, 86]; Pseudo-Pliny, 1, 17 [supra, 87]; 2, 38 [supra, 88]). An excellent treatment of *ἑφέσια γράμματα* will be found in Heim, *Incant. Mag.* 525 ff.

¹⁸² Just how useless such an attempt may be is shown by Bergk's elaborate effort (*Philol.* 21, 481 f. = *Kleine Schriften*, 1, 556 f.) to explain the *incantamentum* of Cato, De Agr. 160. Concerning his interpretation another thorough German scholar (Heim, *Incant. Mag.* 534) remarks: *hariosolatus est*.

who practiced magic, like his modern counterpart, attributed greater power to unintelligible than to intelligible words.¹⁸³

Certain other medical amulets were made more effective by *incantamenta* or *vota* pronounced in connection with their use.¹⁸⁴ It is a noteworthy fact that one of our amulets¹⁸⁵ bears an inscription which, we are told, may be used as an *incantamentum*, or may serve equally well in its inscribed form as a powerful element of the amulet. On this account we should probably consider inscriptions occurring upon amulets as *incantamenta perpetua vel muta*.

(7) *Other Details in the Preparation of Medical Amulets.*— Into the preparation of prophylactic amulets there often entered many additional elements which were thought to increase the virtue of the amulet proper. It was popularly believed, for instance, that certain days, or certain times of the day, were peculiarly suitable for making amulets; that odd numbers, especially the number three, increased the efficacy of an amulet in various ways; and that all persons concerned in the preparation, application, or use of an amulet should be pure. Since, however, these ideas are not restricted to that branch of prophylactic magic which employs amulets, and since they are all based upon the notion of *sympathia*, it

¹⁸³ This seems to be indicated by Ovid's words concerning Circe (Met. 14, 365–366):

Concipit illa preces, et verba venefica dicit
ignotosque deos ignoto carmine adorat. . . .

The evidence of Lucan (6, 686–687) points in the same direction:

confudit murmura primum
dissona et humanae multum discordia linguae. . . .

See also Pliny, N. H. 28, 20 Neque est facile dictu, externa verba atque ineffabilia abrogent fidem validius an Latina et inopinata, quae inridicula videri cogit animus semper aliquid immensum exspectans ac dignum deo movendo, immo vero quod numini imperet.

¹⁸⁴ See Pliny, N. H. 28, 48 (supra, 89); Marcellus Empiricus, 32, 19 (supra, 89).

¹⁸⁵ Marcellus Empiricus, 10, 35 (supra, 90).

seems better to postpone a discussion of them until the whole subject of *sympathia* is taken up.¹⁸⁶

(8) *Where were Medical Amulets Worn?* — Medical amulets, like other amulets, were worn by the Romans on various parts of the body, or even, occasionally, not on the body at all. In the case of amulets worn on the person it happened that certain parts of the body offered more natural advantages for attaching pendants than others did. Accordingly, we find the greatest number of amulets hung around the neck,¹⁸⁷ though many were attached to the arm, preferably the left arm.¹⁸⁸ Frequently, too, the amulet was worn on or near the part of the body for which protection was sought. In fact, many of the amulets that were worn suspended at the neck were so placed not only because that was the most convenient point of attachment, but because the amulet was being used to avert diseases of the head, throat, and neighboring parts.¹⁸⁹ Other parts of the body, especially the abdomen, were protected in the

¹⁸⁶ See *infra*, 113 ff.

¹⁸⁷ I have quoted above (84–95) thirteen instances of amulets worn at the neck. They are Columella, 6, 17, 6 (*supra*, 95); Pliny, N. H. 11, 97 (*supra*, 92): 28, 29 (*supra*, 86); Serenus Sammonicus, 916–918 (*supra*, 94); 927–928 (*supra*, 84, n. 101); 1031–1032 (*supra*, 92); Pseudo-Pliny, 1, 17 (*supra*, 87); Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 45 (*supra*, 84); 50 (*supra*, 85); 58 (*supra*, 85); 59 (*supra*, 86): 15, 67 (*supra*, 87).

¹⁸⁸ Of amulets worn on the arm I have found seven instances. They are (*cf. supra*, 84–95) Pliny, N. H. 27, 89 (*supra*, 87): 28, 41 (*supra*, 89); 115 (*supra*, 93); 172 (*supra*, 86): 29, 64 (*supra*, 93): 30, 63 (*supra*, 88); 91 (*supra*, 93). In three of these passages (Pliny, N. H. 28, 115: 29, 64: 30, 91) the left arm is specified. In three passages (N. H. 28, 41; 172: 30, 63) neither arm is specified; but in one case (N. H. 27, 89), where the amulet is to be worn to avert toothache, it is to be attached to the arm corresponding to the side of the jaw on which trouble is anticipated. It would thus appear that the left arm was favored above the right, a notion quite in accord with Roman ideas of luck in divination.

¹⁸⁹ The following instances will make this point clear: Pliny, N. H. 28, 29 (*supra*, 86) concerns amulets for averting *lippitudo*; Serenus Sammonicus, 1031–1032 (*supra*, 92) has to do with a means of warding off teething troubles; the amulet mentioned in Pseudo-Pliny, 1, 17 (*supra*, 87)

same manner.¹⁹⁰ Sometimes we are not told where the amulet was to be attached.¹⁹¹ Finally, the amulet need not be worn on the body at all, but could be suspended from a *candelabrum*¹⁹² or simply kept in the home of the person who was to be protected.¹⁹³ Amulets were usually attached to the body of the wearer by means of a thread (*licium* or *linum*),¹⁹⁴ though in one instance it is specifically enjoined that the amulet be attached with the tendon of a deer.¹⁹⁵

(9) *Amulet Containers*.—Roman medical amulets were enclosed in containers of various kinds. The most pretentious were in the form of golden locket¹⁹⁶ or bracelets.¹⁹⁷ Occa- was intended to protect the wearer from a cough; that mentioned by Marcellus Empiricus (1, 41 [quoted supra, 84]) was used to avert headache; those spoken of by Marcellus Empiricus (8, 45; 50; 58; 59 [supra, 84–86]) have to do with pains and diseases of the eye; and the amulet given by the same author (15, 67) is for averting goitre.

¹⁹⁰ Amulets were attached to the abdomen in order to protect the wearers from colic (Marcellus Empiricus, 29, 13: 34, 34 [supra, 88]), bladder trouble (Pseudo-Pliny, 2, 38 [supra, 88]); disease of the groin (Pliny, N. H. 28, 48), and probably, to prevent excessive menstrual flow (Marcellus Empiricus, 10, 35 [supra, 90]), and conception (Pliny, N. H. 29, 85 [supra, 90]); though it is not definitely stated in the last two passages where the amulet is to be worn.

¹⁹¹ This is true of Scribonius Largus, 163 (supra, 95); Pliny, N. H. 23, 130 (supra, 91); 163 (supra, 88): 26, 91 (supra, 91): 28, 98 (supra, 93); 111 (supra, 94); 114 (supra, 91); 199 (supra, 88); 257 (supra, 92): 29, 128 (supra, 86): 137 (supra, 93); 32, 24 (supra, 92): 37, 50; 114 (supra, 92); Gargilius Martialis, Med. 33 (supra, 96, n. 133); Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 41 (supra, 86): 27, 84 (supra, 88): 28, 48 (supra, 88).

¹⁹² Cf. Marcellus Empiricus, 34, 34 (supra, 88).

¹⁹³ Cf. Pliny, N. H. 28, 114 (supra, 91).

¹⁹⁴ Cf. Pliny, N. H. 28, 29 (supra, 86); 98 (supra, 93); Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 58 (supra, 85): 34, 34 (supra, 88); and, perhaps, Pliny, N. H. 27, 89 (supra, 87); and Serenus Sammonicus, 927–928 (supra, 83, n. 101); though in the last two passages the thread is not specifically mentioned.

¹⁹⁵ Pliny, N. H. 30, 91 (supra, 93).

¹⁹⁶ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 45 (supra, 84); 50 (supra, 85): 29, 13 (supra, 88). The golden *bulla* was also believed to have prophylactic power (cf. the reference to Marcellus just given and infra, 104, n. 206).

¹⁹⁷ Pliny, N. H. 28, 41 (supra, 89).

sionally the amulet was enclosed in a small box (*pyxis*).¹⁹⁸ Soft materials, such as a linen cloth¹⁹⁹ or a lock of wool,²⁰⁰ were also used as containers. The skins of the hyena,²⁰¹ the deer,²⁰² and the gazelle²⁰³ were also recommended for this use, and in one instance it is specifically stated that the piece of skin should be red.²⁰⁴ Finally, a ball of hardened clay might serve as a fitting receptacle for the amulet.²⁰⁵ To what extent the material of the container was believed to possess magic power we can not be certain. We do know, however, that gold "had some potency as a charm."²⁰⁶

Colors of Amulet Containers. — The color of the case or container in which the medical amulet was enclosed seems to have been a matter of considerable importance. For instance, the amulet that was to be used to avert *lippitudo* should be enclosed in a white linen cloth.²⁰⁷ More interesting, perhaps, from the standpoint of sympathetic magic, is the use of red and of black amulet containers for specific purposes. Thus, an amulet to avert diurnal fever was fittingly enclosed in a container of red cloth, while an amulet to avert nocturnal fever was concealed in a lock of wool that had been stolen at night.²⁰⁸ In this case the red container apparently symbolizes

¹⁹⁸ Pliny, N. H. 27, 89 (supra, 87).

¹⁹⁹ Pliny, N. H. 28, 29 (supra, 86); Marcellus Empiricus, 1, 85: 15, 67 (supra, 87).

²⁰⁰ Pliny, N. H. 28, 111; 114 (supra, 94): 29, 64 (supra, 93); Marcellus Empiricus, 34, 34 (supra, 88).

²⁰¹ Pliny, N. H. 28, 115 (supra, 93).

²⁰² Pliny, N. H. 29, 85 (supra, 90).

²⁰³ Pliny, N. H. 30, 91 (supra, 93).

²⁰⁴ Serenus Sammonicus, 916–918 (supra, 94).

²⁰⁵ Columella, 6, 17, 6 (supra, 95).

²⁰⁶ See Fowler, *Rel. Exper.* 60, n. 41; Frazer, *G. B.* 1, 1, 80. For the requirement of gold in magic, see Pliny, N. H. 20, 29: 28, 259: 29, 130: 33, 84; Marcellus Empiricus, 29, 23; 26.

²⁰⁷ Pliny, N. H. 28, 29 (supra, 86).

²⁰⁸ Pliny, N. H. 29, 64 (supra, 93).

the light of the sun under whose eye the diurnal fever operates,²⁰⁹ while the stolen container of wool symbolizes the stealthy approach of the nocturnal fever. In like manner amulets intended to avert tertian fever were encased in red containers,²¹⁰ while those used against quartan fever were encased in black.²¹¹ We should be very careful, however, not to draw too general a conclusion from these facts.²¹² It seems wiser to limit ourselves to the statement that Roman prophylactic magic practice recommended specific colors as peculiarly suitable for the containers of specific amulets, and that these colors are probably to be explained upon the basis of *sympathia*. More than that we can not say.

B. PROPHYLACTIC MAGIC BY MEANS OTHER THAN AMULETS

In the foregoing pages of this chapter we have considered only the amulet as a means of preventing disease. The amulet was not, however, the only means of prophylactic magic employed by the Romans. Numerous diseases of the head, throat, abdomen, and skin, as well as fevers, were considered preventable by means of magic not involving the use of amulets. It is to this class of beliefs that we shall now devote our attention.

²⁰⁹ For the sun as the all-seeing god in connection with medical amulets cf. Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 58 (supra, 85).

²¹⁰ Serenus Sammonicus, 916-918 (supra, 94).

²¹¹ Pliny, N. H. 28, 111; 114 (supra, 94). The former reference has the words *lana ovīs nigrae, cui nullus alius colos incursaverit*. . . . We may gather, therefore, that the color of the amulet container was not an unimportant matter.

²¹² As a matter of fact, among the amulets used for curing rather than for preventing quartan fever we find the colors of the containers reversed, the red container being recommended (Pliny, N. H. 30, 99).

(1) *Diseases Prevented*

1. *Diseases of the Eye*. — (a) The two remedies which follow were thought to avert all eye troubles. Pliny, N. H. 23, 110 :

Si quis unum ex his <i.e. cytinis malorum Punicorum>, solutus vinculo omni cinctus et calciatus atque etiam anuli, decerpserit II digitis, pollice et quarto, sinistrae manus atque ita lustratis levi tactu oculis in os additum devoraverit, ne dente contingat, adfirmatur nullam oculorum inbecillitatem passurus eodem anno;

28, 73 :

Eum, qui simul matris filiaeque lacte inunctus sit, liberari omni oculorum metu in totam vitam adfirmant.

(b) *Lippitudo*. — In addition to such general measures for the prevention of all eye troubles there are also found specific measures of protection against *lippitudo*.²¹³ Pliny (N. H. 28, 44) is our authority for the following bit of popular belief: Oculorum vitia fieri negant nec lippire eos, qui, cum pedes lavent, aqua inde ter oculos tangant. To this we may add Pliny's statement regarding an Egyptian custom (N. H. 27, 105): Tradunt Aegypti, mensis, quem Thoti vocant, die XXVIII fere in Augustum mensem incurrente si quis huius herbae <i.e. myosotae> suco inungatur mane, priusquam loquatur, non lippiturum eo anno. Saliva, too, furnished a simple means of preventing *lippitudo* (Pliny, N. H. 28, 37): Credamus . . . lippitudines matutina cottidie velut inunctione <sc. salivae arceri>.²¹⁴ Easily available was the following method also (Pliny, N. H. 29, 128): Ciconiae pullum qui ederit, negatur annis multis continuis lippiturus. Of a different character was the popular belief preserved for us by Marcellus Empiricus (8, 55): Ut omnino non lippias, cum stellam cadere vel trans-

²¹³ Cf. supra, 85-87.

²¹⁴ Cf. supra, 71, n. 37. Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 29 and 30 seem to me to reflect popular religion rather than pure magic beliefs.

currere videris, numera, et celeriter numera, donec se condat ; tot enim annis, quot numeraveris, non lippies.

2. *Toothache*. — For the prevention of toothache Pliny mentions two popular practices, both of them based upon the belief in the magic power of odd numbers, more especially of the number three. We are told (N. H. 28, 56) : frigida <sc. aqua> matutinis inpari numero <sc. colluere ora> ad cavendos dentium dolores . . . certum experimentum est. And again we read (N. H. 32, 37) : Quod si dentes ter annis colluantur testudinum sanguine, immunes a dolore fiant. A much more elaborate method of preventing toothache is given by Marcellus Empiricus (12, 46) in the following words :

Cum primum hirundinem videris, tacebis et ad aquam nitidam accedes atque inde in os tuum mittes; deinde digito obscoeno, id est medio, tam manus dextrae quam sinistrae dentes fricabis et dices: 'Hirundo, tibi dico, quomodo hoc <i.e. aqua> in rostro iterum non erit, sic mihi dentes non doleant toto anno.' Iterum alium annum et deinceps sequentibus similiter facies, si volueris remedii huius quotannis manere beneficium.

3. *Quinsy*. — Concerning this disease we read in Celsus (Med. 4, 7) : Vulgo audio, si quis pullum hirundinis ederit, angina toto anno non periclitari.²¹⁵ This bit of preventive medicine persisted among the common people, for some years later Pliny says (N. H. 30, 33) : Multi cuiuscumque hirundinis pullum edendum censent, ut toto anno non metuatur id malum <i.e. angina>. That the vegetable world furnished a similar protective substance we learn also from Pliny (N. H. 24, 174) : Mirum traditur, numquam eo morbo <i.e. angina> temptari qui <sc. herbam impiam> gustaverint. . . .

4. *Uvular Complaints*. — The fact that the word *uva* meant both a grape and the uvula is responsible for the following bit of sympathetic preventive medicine, from Marcellus Em-

²¹⁵ For the full text cf. supra, 73, n. 45.

piricus (14, 52): *Uvam toto anno non dolebit, qui, cum primum uvam viderit procedentem, sinistra manu digito medicinali et pollice granum vulsum sic transglutierit, ut dentibus non contingat.*

5. *Pains in the Neck* were believed to be prevented by the use of saliva, as Pliny tells us (N. H. 28, 37): *Credamus . . . cervicis dolores <sc. arceri> saliva ieiuni dextra manu ad dextrum poplitem relata, laeva ad sinistrum.*²¹⁶

6. *Epilepsy*. — For the prevention of epilepsy the Magi, according to Pliny (N. H. 28, 259), used the following means: *Cerebrum caprae Magi per anulum*²¹⁷ *aureum*²¹⁸ *traiectum, priusquam lac detur, infantibus instillant contra comitiales ceterosque infantium morbos.* With this we may compare the custom prevalent among the Romans of averting epilepsy from one's self by spitting upon the epileptic. We read in Pliny (N. H. 28, 35): *Despuimus comitiales morbos, hoc est contagia regerimus.*²¹⁹

7. *Skin Diseases*. — Under this head I have included all diseases that are apparent on the skin, even though they may be more deeply seated.

(a) *Tetter, Leprosy, and Cancer*. — For the prevention of all of these the saliva of a fasting person seems to have been the popular means. Upon this point we may quote Pliny (N. H. 28, 37): *Credamus ergo et lichenas leprasque ieiunae <sc. salivae> inlitu adsiduo arceri; item . . . carcinomata malo terrae subacto.* . . .²²⁰

²¹⁶ Cf. supra, 71, n. 37.

²¹⁷ Cf. Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 49 (supra, 85).

²¹⁸ Cf. supra, 104 and n. 206.

²¹⁹ Cf. supra, 71, n. 37.

²²⁰ I should hesitate to classify these remedies under the head of prophylactic magic were it not for the context in which they are found. Since, however, paragraphs 35–39 of this book of Pliny are entirely devoted to a discussion of the magic qualities of spittle, we must consider as magic that which is quoted above.

(b) *Wrinkles*. — Here we may cite Pliny (N. H. 22, 65) : *Virus folii* (i.e. *heliotropii*) in *urina pueri inpubis tritum quidem cum aphronitro et inlitum ventri mulierum, ne rugosus fiat, praestare dicitur*.²²¹

(c) *Varicose Veins*. — Pliny informs us (N. H. 30, 76) that this trouble may be prevented in the following manner : *Varices ne nascantur, lacertae* ²²² *sanguine pueris crura ieiunis a ieiuno inlinuntur*. This recipe is repeated with some additional details by Marcellus Empiricus (34, 8) : *Varices ne nascantur, lacertae sanguine crura puero ieiunus inline; in totum carebit hac foeditate*. From these two passages it is quite apparent that the fasting ²²³ of him who was to be protected and of him who applied the ointment was an essential element.

8. *Abdominal Diseases*. — In speaking of the good old days of simple fare Ovid remarks (*Fasti* 6, 180–182) :

Terra fabas tantum duraque farra dabat
quae duo mixta simul sextis quicumque Kalendis
ederit, huic laedi viscera posse negant.

In this passage the poet seems to be repeating an actual ancient Italian belief.

There were certain wonderful external applications also which were believed to have the power of protecting the abdomen from disease. Thus, we read in Pliny (N. H. 30, 64) : *Magi quidem vespertilionis sanguine contacto ventre in totum annum caveri tradunt*. This passage is repeated with a slight addition by Marcellus Empiricus (28, 45) : *Quotiens dolor et contractio intestinorum ventris orietur, vespertilionis sanguine ventre manu perfricato et ad praesens subvenies et in totum annum medebere*.

²²¹ Cf. *infra*, 115.

²²² We have already pointed out (*supra*, 85, 86, 88, 98) the importance of the lizard in connection with prophylactic amulets.

²²³ Cf. Pliny, N. H. 28, 35; 37 (*supra*, 108).

9. *Fevers*. — I have found only one instance of the prevention of fevers by prophylactic magic without the use of amulets. It occurs in Pliny (N. H. 25, 106): *Magi utique circa hanc <i.e. hieran botanen> insaniunt: hac perunctos impetrare quae velint, febres abigere, amicitias conciliare nullique non morbo mederi.*²²⁴

(2) *Materials Used in Magic Prophylaxis Apart from the Use of Amulets*

In the list of materials, other than amulets, which the Romans used to ward off disease we find somewhat the same variety as we discovered in our discussion of amulets.²²⁵ There is, however, the very natural difference that, whereas the materials for amulets were found to consist normally of gold, stones, bits of parchment and the like, which were peculiarly adapted to such uses, prophylactic materials of the kind we are now considering consisted of substances such as blood, spittle, water, and milk, the use of which as amulets was impossible. Such means of preventing disease were almost exclusively of animal or vegetable origin, and they were either applied as an ointment²²⁶ or were eaten.²²⁷

²²⁴ In the paragraph immediately following the one quoted above Pliny indicates with what careful attention to magical detail such plants must be collected: *Colligi debere circa canis ortum ita, ne luna aut sol conspiciat, favis ante et melle terrae ad piamentum datis; circumscriptam ferro effodi sinistra manu et in sublime tolli.* . . .

²²⁵ Cf. supra, 96–100.

²²⁶ Cf. Pliny, N. H. 25, 106 (supra, 110): 27, 105 (supra, 106): 28, 37 (supra, 106, 108); 44 (supra, 106); 73 (supra, 106): 30, 64 (supra, 109); 76 (supra, 109); Marcellus Empiricus, 12, 46 (supra, 107): 28, 45 (supra, 109): 34, 8 (supra, 109). Of a similar character are Pliny, N. H. 28, 56 (supra, 107): 32, 37 (supra, 107), where the liquid is used as a wash; N. H. and 28, 259 (supra, 108), where the liquid is dropped upon the head of the person who is to be protected.

²²⁷ Cf. Celsus, Med. 4, 7 (supra, 107); Ovid, Fasti 6, 180–182 (supra, 109); Pliny, N. H. 23, 110 (supra, 106): 24, 174 (supra, 107): 29, 128 (supra, 106): 30, 33 (supra, 107); Marcellus Empiricus, 14, 52 (supra, 108).

(a) *Animal Materials*. — Of the animal creation the swallow, bat, lizard, she-goat, stork, and tortoise made important contributions to the *materia medica* of prophylactic magic. It was thought possible, for instance, by eating a young swallow to ward off quinsy for a year.²²⁸ Again, if, upon seeing the first swallow of the season, a person went silently to a brook, took water in his mouth, and pronounced a certain formula, he was thought to be freed from all fear of toothache for a year.²²⁹ Likewise one could be freed from abdominal pains for a year by touching that region with the blood of a bat.²³⁰ The blood of the lizard, too, was considered efficacious in preventing varicose veins, if it was rubbed upon the parts likely to be thus afflicted;²³¹ while the she-goat's brain, drawn through a gold ring and dropped upon the head of an infant, was said to be a preventive of epilepsy.²³² It was also believed that if one should eat the young of the stork, one need not fear *lippitudo*,²³³ and that he who washed his teeth three times a year with the blood of a tortoise was freed from all possibility of toothache.²³⁴

Not only were the parts of various animals greatly valued as a means of preventing disease, but certain animal excreta and products also were held in high esteem. Thus, the urine of a *puer impubis*²³⁵ was used as the medium in which to mix an ointment to prevent wrinkles upon the abdomen. Spittle, particularly that of a fasting person, was believed to prevent *lippitudo*, pain in the neck, tetter, leprosy, cancer, and epilepsy.²³⁶

²²⁸ Cf. Celsus, Med. 4, 7 (supra, 107); Pliny, N. H. 30, 33 (supra, 107).

²²⁹ Marcellus Empiricus, 12, 46 (supra, 107).

²³⁰ Pliny, N. H. 30, 64 (supra, 109); Marcellus Empiricus, 28, 45 (supra, 109).

²³¹ Pliny, N. H. 30, 76 (supra, 109); Marcellus Empiricus, 34, 8 (supra, 109).

²³² Pliny, N. H. 28, 259 (supra, 108).

²³³ Pliny, N. H. 29, 128 (supra, 106).

²³⁴ Pliny, N. H. 32, 37 (supra, 107).

²³⁵ Pliny, N. H. 22, 65 (supra, 109).

²³⁶ Pliny, N. H. 28, 35 (supra, 108); 37 (supra, 106; 108).

We are told, also, that, if one were fortunate enough to obtain as an ointment human milk from both mother and daughter at the same time, this wonderful combination would forever free from all eye diseases anyone who was anointed with it.²³⁷ This last beneficent effect might also be produced by thrice touching the eyes with the water which was left over after washing one's feet.²³⁸

Vegetable substances possessing magic prophylactic qualities were sometimes eaten, sometimes used as ointments. Thus, a part of the pomegranate was eaten in order to ward off diseases of the eyes;²³⁹ grapes were eaten to avert diseases of the uvula;²⁴⁰ *herba impia*, to prevent quinsy;²⁴¹ spelt and beans, to free one from all future bowel troubles;²⁴² and parsnip, to avert snake-bite.²⁴³ Heliotrope, when reduced to the form of an ointment, according to popular belief, was a preventive of abdominal wrinkles;²⁴⁴ *hiera botane* could avert the possibility of fevers;²⁴⁵ and the plant called mouse ear (*myosota*) was used to prevent *lippitudo*.²⁴⁶

Some of the means whereby magic prophylaxis was insured were incorporeal, as when one counted as rapidly as possible while watching the course of a shooting star, in the belief that his own eyes would retain the bright gleam of health for exactly as many years as he succeeded in counting before the bright gleam of the shooting star faded in the dark sky.²⁴⁷

²³⁷ Pliny, N. H. 28, 73 (supra, 106).

²³⁸ Pliny, N. H. 28, 44 (supra, 106).

²³⁹ Pliny, N. H. 23, 110 (supra, 106).

²⁴⁰ Marcellus Empiricus, 14, 52 (supra, 108).

²⁴¹ Pliny, N. H. 24, 174 (supra, 107).

²⁴² Ovid, Fasti, 6, 180-182 (supra, 109).

²⁴³ Cf. supra, 96 and n. 133.

²⁴⁴ Pliny, N. H. 22, 65 (supra, 109).

²⁴⁵ Pliny, N. H. 25, 106-107 (supra, 110).

²⁴⁶ Pliny, N. H. 27, 105 (supra, 106).

²⁴⁷ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 55 (supra, 106-107).

C SYMPATHIA THE BASIS OF PROPHYLACTIC MAGIC

A careful consideration of the facts presented in the foregoing pages on Roman prophylactic magic leads me to the conclusion that the basis of nearly all such beliefs was *sympathia*. It is my purpose to present in the remaining pages of this dissertation the evidence for this conclusion.

(1) *Sympathia Essential to Amulets*. — In our definition of an amulet ²⁴⁸ we said that the power of *taboo* which was inherent in the amulet was the result of a specific association of ideas. It should be stated, however, at once that, though in many cases the associated ideas are quite apparent, in many other cases we are somewhat in doubt; and in still others we have lost entirely the thread of thought which, in times gone by and under different conditions, led men to attribute to certain amulets a sympathetic control over certain diseases. We may reasonably assume, however, that, if we were better acquainted with the mental and spiritual life of the common people of Italy during the classical era, we should be able to explain upon the basis of *sympathia* the power of many medical amulets, the secret of which is no longer clear.

Given the fundamental thought that like affects like, we have introduced a principle of magic action, the application of which in the field of medical amulets is almost limitless. This sympathetic power may arise from the source of the amulet, its appearance, its natural qualities in its native state, its action while functioning as an amulet, the sympathetic position of its component parts, or from accompanying *incantamenta*.

(a) *The Source of the Amulet as the Basis of the Sympathia*. — A very common type of amulet is that which is obtained from various parts of animals in order to protect from disease similar parts of those who wear the amulet. Thus, the stone found in

²⁴⁸ Supra, 77-78.

the head of a snail was worn as an amulet to avert headache.²⁴⁹ Certain amulets used to prevent *lippitudo* are even more definitely sympathetic. We read, for instance, in Marcellus Empiricus²⁵⁰ that if the eye of a green lizard is put out and the animal placed in a glass jar along with certain rings, the sight will be restored to the blinded eye. If the lizard is then released, it goes away, taking with it, apparently, all present or prospective human eye diseases. The rings, on the other hand, were thought, through contact with the lizard, to have become powerful amulets for averting *lippitudo*. Sometimes the blinded lizard itself was enclosed in a *bulla* in order to avert pains in the eye, or even a drop of blood from its blinded eye might serve the same purpose.²⁵¹ Doubtless the keen, prominent eye of the lizard was responsible for these beliefs. To the same cause we may attribute the belief that one who kept about his person the head of a dragon would never suffer from bleareye.²⁵² The physical peculiarity of the asp gave rise to an interesting bit of *sympathia*. The neck of this serpent has a loose skin which at times is inflated so that it suggests a goitre or wen. On this account it was commonly believed that the neck of the asp, if hung as an amulet around a man's neck, would avert goitre.²⁵³ The same process of reasoning led the Roman populace to believe that the inscribed bladder of a male hog, if placed upon a man's abdomen, would protect the wearer from bladder troubles, and that the same organ of a female hog would perform a similar service for women.²⁵⁴ Likewise, the tooth of the fearless wolf was quite naturally used as an amulet to allay

²⁴⁹ Marcellus Empiricus, 1, 41 (supra, 84). According to the same author (1, 85), the whole snail, worn in a bag as an amulet, had the power of curing headache.

²⁵⁰ 8, 49 (supra, 85).

²⁵¹ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 50 (supra, 85).

²⁵² Pliny, N. H. 29, 128 (supra, 86).

²⁵³ Marcellus Empiricus, 15, 67 (supra, 87).

²⁵⁴ Pseudo-Pliny, 2, 38 (supra, 88).

childish fears and to assist in teething.²⁵⁵ Upon the basis of association of ideas it is equally easy to explain why the white flesh from a female hyena's breast together with seven of her hairs and the genitals of a deer wrapped together in the skin of a gazelle were thought to prevent miscarriage.²⁵⁶ So, too, it was believed in some quarters that the wonderfully efficacious intestine of the osprey, if worn as an amulet, could prevent colic.²⁵⁷ Cattle also could be protected from the bite of the shrew mouse by having suspended from their necks an amulet containing a shrew mouse.²⁵⁸

The same principle of *sympathia* operated in the field of prophylactic magic by means other than amulets. The Roman populace argued, for instance, that, because the skin of a boy's abdomen was free from wrinkles, it naturally followed that a certain ointment, mixed in the urine of a boy, and spread upon the abdomen of a woman, would keep the latter from becoming wrinkled.²⁵⁹ In like manner the brain of a she-goat was used to prevent epilepsy in children.²⁶⁰

(b) *The Appearance of the Amulet as the Basis of Sympathia.* — Very important, also, is the *sympathia* due to the appearance of the material used for an amulet. The cherry seed, for instance, looks somewhat like an eyeball, especially if a hole is bored through the seed to represent the pupil. Hence, bored cherry seeds were considered, under certain conditions, an effective amulet for preventing pains in the eyes.²⁶¹ Similarity of appearance was responsible also for the belief that the swelling bark of the wild fig tree could prevent the growth

²⁵⁵ Pliny, N. H. 28, 257 (supra, 92). Cf. Serenus Sammonicus, 1031-1032 (supra, 92).

²⁵⁶ Pliny, N. H. 28, 98 (supra, 90).

²⁵⁷ Pliny, N. H. 30, 63 (supra, 88).

²⁵⁸ Columella, 6, 17, 6 (supra, 95).

²⁵⁹ Pliny, N. H. 22, 65 (supra, 109).

²⁶⁰ Pliny, N. H. 28, 259 (supra, 108).

²⁶¹ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 27 (supra, 84); cf. *infra*, 121.

of the tumor known as *struma*.²⁶² Certain inscriptions, too, which appear on amulets, seem to be based upon a *sympathia* of appearance and function. Thus, on an amulet used to ward off diseases of the human eye, the inscription makes mention of the all-seeing eye of the sun.²⁶³ Even the colors of amulet containers were chosen with a view to their sympathetic power.²⁶⁴ Finally, the accidental identity of words was made the basis of *sympathia*.²⁶⁵

(c) *The Natural Qualities of the Amulet Material as the Basis of Sympathia*. — Many objects were used as amulets because in their native condition they possessed certain qualities which the wearer of the amulet wished to reproduce in himself. For example, since the tooth of a colt is cut without apparent pain and is well developed, it followed that the first-dropped tooth of a colt, worn as an amulet, would avert teething troubles.²⁶⁶ In the same way the fact that the hyena prowls by night and devours corpses may be shown to be responsible for the belief that the tooth of this beast was an effective amulet for warding off night fears, especially the fear of ghosts.²⁶⁷ A similar power was attributed to the right foot of the hyena, if it was enclosed in the skin of the same animal.²⁶⁸ The mystic feeling that like affects like lay also at the base of the belief that the presence of the smoothly gliding, changeable chameleon in the home would guarantee an easy childbirth,²⁶⁹ and that knots tied in a string had a sympathetic restraining effect, tying up, so to speak, certain parts, so that they could not

²⁶² Pliny, N. H. 23, 130 (supra, 91).

²⁶³ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 58 (supra, 85).

²⁶⁴ Cf. supra, 104–105.

²⁶⁵ Cf. supra, 107–108.

²⁶⁶ Serenus Sammonicus, 1031–1032 (supra, 92). For the use of the tooth of the wolf as an amulet cf. supra, 114–115.

²⁶⁷ Pliny, N. H. 28, 98 (supra, 93).

²⁶⁸ Pliny, N. H. 28, 115 (supra, 93).

²⁶⁹ Pliny, N. H. 28, 114 (supra, 91).

swell with disease.²⁷⁰ A like inhibiting effect is apparent in the use of a crocodile's heart as an amulet to ward off fever.²⁷¹ For it seems reasonable to suppose that the heart of a cold-blooded animal would be a natural protective agency against the heat of fever. The thought of negation is also prominent in the use of the first lost milk tooth of a boy to prevent pains in the female organs;²⁷² the wearer of this amulet probably reasoned that in the future she would be as free from female pains as was the original possessor of the tooth.

(d) *Growth and Withering of the Amulet as the Basis of Sympathia*. — Sometimes the growth or withering of a vegetable amulet furnished the basis of *sympathia*. It was believed, we are informed by Pliny,²⁷³ that persons who had been cured of a tumor by the use of a plant called *sideritis latifolia* or by *artemisia* or even by plantain should carefully preserve that particular plant, lest wicked and hostile *herbarii* should plant it, and with the second growth of the plant the disease should take on a second growth. Here we have a disease that was made to decrease with the withering plant and to come back again with the reanimation of the plant. Under such circumstances the withered plant becomes a kind of negative amulet, capable of preventing disease as long as it remains under the control of its original owner.²⁷⁴

(e) *Certain Acts or Positions as a Basis of Sympathia*. — There were certain acts, too, of a sympathetic nature, which played a part in the prevention of disease. I have cited above²⁷⁵

²⁷⁰ Pliny, N. H. 28, 48 (supra, 89). ²⁷² Pliny, N. H. 28, 41 (supra, 89).

²⁷¹ Pliny, N. H. 28, 111 (supra, 94). ²⁷³ Pliny, N. H. 26, 24 (supra, 91).

²⁷⁴ Of similar nature, perhaps, was the belief that one might be protected from toothache for the space of a year (Pliny, N. H. 27, 89: cf. supra, 87) by enclosing a certain worm in bread, and the latter, in turn, in an amulet case. It seems likely that the bread was supposed to keep the worm alive for a year, and that when the worm died and decayed, the tooth was believed to do likewise.

²⁷⁵ Marcellus Empiricus, 12, 46 (supra, 107).

a very interesting method of preventing toothache which involves mimetic and dramatic features. Sometimes the person who sought protection from disease loosened from about his body all objects that could possibly bind his person, in order that nothing might hinder the free play of the protecting agency.²⁷⁶ At other times the secret of the *sympathia* lay in the relative position of certain parts of the body, as when the two middle fingers of the right hand were bound together in order to prevent catarrh or *lippitudo*.²⁷⁷

(f) *Sympathia of Seasons*. — Certain seasons of the year were thought to enhance the sympathetic power of various prophylactic substances. In the days of Pliny it was thought best to gather the vervain, a plant which was used to avert fevers, at about the rising of the dog star, when neither sun nor moon might behold the act.²⁷⁸ The same author tells us²⁷⁹ that the Egyptians considered the twenty-eighth day of the month Thoti the only day upon which one should be anointed with the juice of the plant called mouse ear in order to avert *lippitudo*. In much the same spirit the Romans believed that if you ate beans and spelt on the first day of June, your digestion would be guaranteed for the year.²⁸⁰ In the later centuries, as we gather from Marcellus Empiricus,²⁸¹ the Roman populace esteemed the Ides of each month, especially the Ides of September, the most suitable time for

²⁷⁶ Cf. Pliny, N. H. 23, 110 (supra, 106). Cf. also the broken ring of the Flamen Dialis (supra, 81).

²⁷⁷ Cf. Pliny, N. H. 28, 42 (supra, 86-87). Such magic, as we have shown above (62-63), was of very early occurrence among the Romans.

²⁷⁸ Pliny, N. H. 25, 107 (supra, 110, n. 224).

²⁷⁹ N. H. 27, 105 (supra, 106).

²⁸⁰ Ovid, Fasti 6, 180-182 (supra, 109). For beans in ancient Italian ritual see Fowler, *R. F.* 130-133.

²⁸¹ Cf. 8, 49 (supra, 85-86); 50 (supra, 85) for the Ides of September. Other references to the Ides, without specification of the month, are 14, 68: 29, 23.

preparing medical amulets. The time of the day seems also to have had an importance due to *sympathia*, as we know from the fact that believers in magic were enjoined to gather certain vegetable ingredients of amulets before sunrise.²⁸²

(g) *Sympathia of Odd Numbers*. — The Romans, like many other peoples, believed in the superior magic power of odd numbers, particularly the number three and its multiples.²⁸³ We are not surprised, therefore, to find such numbers especially recommended in the composition of medical amulets and other means of prophylactic magic. Sometimes the *sympathia* of numbers is quite apparent, as in the case of the man who counted

²⁸² Scribonius Largus, 163 (supra, 95). Cf. Pliny, N. H. 24, 170 (supra 94): 25, 107 (supra, 110, n. 224). That certain medical amulets were applied to the person before sunrise we know from Pliny, N. H. 23, 130 (supra, 91): 29, 85 (supra, 90). For numerous magical acts to be performed before sunrise cf. Pliny, N. H. 20, 29; 217: 24, 133: 25, 145: 28, 78: 32, 115; Pseudo-Pliny, 2, 54 (p. 252, l. 29 Cod. St. Galli 751; cf. Heim, *Incant. Mag.* 560); Marcellus Empiricus, 14, 65: 15, 101: 26, 41.

²⁸³ H. Usener, in an article entitled *Dreiheit* (*Rheinisches Museum*, 58 [1903], 1-47; 161-208; 321-362), deals admirably with the rôle played by the number three in Roman religion. Of its important rôle in Roman magic, however, he does not treat at all. For the number three and its multiples in Roman magic the important literary references are Cato, R. R. 70; Varro, R. R. 1, 2, 27; Cicero, Cat. 3, 9; Vergil, Ecl. 8, 73-78; Pseudo-Vergil, Ciris 369-377; Tibullus, 1, 2, 53-56; Livy, 27, 37: 31, 12, 5-9; Ovid, Fasti 2, 571-582: 4, 549-554; 727: 6, 155-156; 753-754: Met. 7, 152-156; 188-198; 261 ff.: 14, 58; 387; Seneca, Med. 771-772; Pliny, N. H. 8, 106: 20, 171: 21, 42: 22, 135: 24, 172: 25, 148; 167: 26, 93: 27, 131: 28, 21: 29, 100: 30, 35; 51; 101; 108: 34, 151.

Among the Romans all odd numbers were considered of better omen than even numbers, and hence more efficacious in medicine. Cf. Mommsen, *Hist. of Rome* (Eng. Trans.), 1, 271 and n. 1; Fowler, *R. F.* 3; Varro, R. R. 3, 9, 4; 12; Pseudo-Vergil, Ciris 369-377; Scribonius Largus, 16; Columella, 8, 5, 8; Pliny, N. H. 23, 156: 24, 82: 28, 23; 33; 56: 30, 44; 108; Gellius, 15, 7, 1; 3; Marcellus Empiricus, 1, 50; 78; 100: 7, 7: 8, 49: 9, 2: 15, 9: 16, 26; 32; 40; 64; 86: 20, 35: 25, 21: 27, 42; 47; 52: 34, 67. Cf. C. P. Clark, *Numerical Phraseology in Vergil* (Princeton University Dissertation, Princeton, 1913).

as rapidly as possible while he witnessed the fall of a meteor.²⁸⁴ At other times we feel the mysterious sympathetic power of the number three without being able to trace clearly the association of ideas which underlay the popular belief. It was not without some reason of this kind that persons were enjoined to touch their eyes *three times* with the water left over after washing their feet in order to avert all eye diseases.²⁸⁵ It is difficult, also, to explain why toothache was thought to be prevented by washing one's teeth *thrice* annually with tortoise blood;²⁸⁶ or why *three* cherry stones should be used as a medical amulet,²⁸⁷ unless there was believed to exist some indefinable *sympathia* between the number three and the prevention of disease. Nor are other odd numbers without a similar magic power; for we read of the wonderful prophylactic powers of a thread that is tied in seven or nine knots,²⁸⁸ and of a certain medical amulet that is to be perfected in five or seven days.²⁸⁹

(h) *Sympathia of Purity*. — Greater power, according to Roman popular belief, resided in an amulet that was prepared by pure hands.²⁹⁰ It was doubtless on this account that certain amulets had to be made or applied by *pueri impubes*.²⁹¹ To a similar desire of avoiding contamination may be attributed, perhaps, the often repeated injunction that neither the amulet nor its constituent parts should touch the earth.²⁹² It is a fair

²⁸⁴ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 55 (supra, 106–107).

²⁸⁵ Pliny, N. H. 28, 44 (supra, 106). ²⁸⁶ Pliny, N. H. 32, 37 (supra, 107).

²⁸⁷ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 27 (supra, 84).

²⁸⁸ Pliny, N. H. 28, 48 (supra, 89).

²⁸⁹ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 49 (supra, 85).

²⁹⁰ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 49 (supra, 85); 58 (supra, 85); 59 (supra, 86).

²⁹¹ Pliny, N. H. 23, 130 (supra, 91). That boys, on account of their purity, were considered of great service in magic we may conclude from Apuleius, *Apol.* 42; Spartianus, *Did. Iul.* 7, 10; Pliny, N. H. 28, 41.

²⁹² Pliny, N. H. 23, 163 (supra, 88): 27, 89 (supra, 87): 28, 41 (supra, 89). This injunction is very common in other fields of magic also. That the earth was looked upon as a contaminating substance seems clear

inference, also, that the direction to prepare amulets with implements of reed,²⁹³ copper, or glass²⁹⁴ was but another way of forbidding the polluting touch of iron.

(i) *Sympathetic Incantamenta*. — Finally, the element of *sympathia* may at times appear in the *incantamenta* which frequently accompany the use of amulets in preventive medicine. We have shown,²⁹⁵ for instance, how swellings in the groin were believed to be prevented by the inhibiting power of a knotted string, each knot of which was tied in the name of a certain widow. We can readily understand how the knots in the string were supposed to hold in check any tendency toward swelling in the groin, but we should be at a loss to know why each knot must have pronounced over it the name of a widow, were it not for a passage in Marcellus Empiricus. The latter author tells us,²⁹⁶ that the widows whose names were thus used in the *incantamentum*, while the knots were being tied in the string, must be *anus viduae*. In other words, the *incantamentum* was to be composed of the names of those whose abdomens would never again be swollen in pregnancy, in order to insure that the abdomen of him who wore the amulet would not swell with disease. Likewise, in using bored cherry stones as an amulet²⁹⁷ to prevent pains in the eyes, the wearer of the amulet must utter a vow not to eat any cherries during the year within which the amulet was to be effective; because, from Marcellus Empiricus, 29, 35. There we are told that a certain curative amulet is to come into contact neither with the earth nor with any woman. The well established fact of the ceremonial impurity of women may be taken as proof that the earth is to be placed in the same category.

²⁹³ Marcellus Empiricus, 1, 85.

²⁹⁴ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 49–50 (supra, 85). In this instance the main operation employs glass and copper, but the use of iron is allowed in a detail of secondary importance. For the taboo on iron in Roman medical magic, see supra, 73, n. 42.

²⁹⁵ Pliny, N. H. 28, 48 (supra, 89).

²⁹⁶ 32, 19 (supra, 89).

²⁹⁷ Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 27 (supra, 84).

forsooth, to eat cherries would be equivalent to eating his own eyes, and in this way the sympathetic power of the amulet would be destroyed.²⁹⁸

(j) *The Source of the Sympathia often Obscure.* — The association of ideas involved in *sympathia* is often obscure. We feel reasonably sure, for example, when we read of a remedy for *lippitudo*, of which the principal ingredient is a powder made from the heads of young swallows, whose eyes have been put out during the full moon, and whose sight has subsequently returned, that we are dealing with a purely sympathetic cure. Accordingly, when we read in the same paragraph²⁹⁹ that one who has eaten a young stork, or has a dragon about his person will be protected from the same disease for many years thereafter, we cannot escape the conclusion that there must be some kind of *sympathia* between young storks and dragons, and diseases of the eye. Probably storks and dragons were credited with unusually keen sight and eyes free from disease. We may speculate in like manner over the belief that one could be protected from quinsy for a year by the simple precaution of eating the young of a swallow.³⁰⁰ Just what the association of ideas was in the latter case we can not surely say; but it seems likely that the deeply cleft bill of the swallow, and its comparatively large throat, so useful in the capture of insects, led to the belief that it was free from all throat affections, and that consequently it was useful as a preventive of quinsy.

In fact, when we consider that the person who to-day resorts to sympathetic magic in the cure or prevention of disease is usually entirely unaware of the association of ideas underlying his act, we may be quite certain that the average Roman who

²⁹⁸ Certain inscriptions that appear on amulets are not essentially different from sympathetic *incantamenta*; cf. Marcellus Empiricus, 8, 58 (supra, 85).

²⁹⁹ Pliny, N. H. 29, 128 (supra, 86; 106).

³⁰⁰ Celsus, Med. 4, 7; Pliny, N. H. 30, 33 (supra, 107).

practiced similar acts was equally unaware of the fundamental ideas underlying his acts. It is, then, not difficult to understand why, after the lapse of centuries and the various changes in the modes of civilized thought, it has become almost impossible to arrive at a complete understanding of the principle of *sympathia* as it operated among the ancient Italians in the field of prophylactic magic.³⁰¹ It seems reasonable to conclude, however, from the preponderating importance of the idea of *sympathia* in all the cases where we can trace the association of ideas, that practically all the prophylactic magic of the Romans was based upon this principle.³⁰²

³⁰¹ Much valuable light could doubtless be thrown upon this subject by one who had the leisure to live with Italian peasants for a number of years, and the knack of eliciting from them their secret thoughts regarding such matters. Such a work has been done for Etruria by Leland (*Etrusc. Rom. Rem.*), and the result is both interesting and profitable.

³⁰² The author regrets that the necessary limits placed upon the length of a doctoral dissertation force him to end the discussion of Roman magic at this point. He hopes soon to be able to publish additional chapters upon curative and causative medical magic among the Romans, together with other chapters upon Roman magic which seem to him to be of unusual interest not only to the classical scholar, but to the anthropologist, and to the large number of people who are interested in the strange beliefs and practices of a bygone age.

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