INTRODUCTION

Allow me to make a preliminary declaration. There was a time when comparative studies on a universal scale used to appear natural. This tendency is represented, for the Roman sphere in particular, by Sir James Frazer who states in his monumental edition of Ovid’s Fasti (II, p. 431): ‘Human nature is much the same all the world over and in all ages’.

Today the historian of Roman religion is more circumspect in this regard: it is no longer possible simply to project concepts of mana or of orenda into the facts of Roman religion, or to invoke the Hottentots or the Zulus for the clarification of the beliefs of the Romans of the archaic period. We have perhaps become more sensitive to the specific nature of each cultural area. We also know that there exists an Indo-European heritage in the origins of Rome. Nevertheless these reservations ought not to prevent us from appealing to such comparative study as is justified, and is, what is more, always fruitful, when one takes the precaution of comparing facts of the same nature. It is in this perspective that I have attempted a consideration of some Roman festivals, choosing feriae publicae which incontestably go back to the most remote times. They arise from different pre-occupations. In making my choice, which remains arbitrary, I have tried by starting from particular ceremonies to touch upon certain weighty general problems, such as the relationship between magic and religion or the relationship between rite and myth. There is of course no question of treating these problems exhaustively here within the limited space of an article. My purpose is rather to show as precisely as possible how these problems present themselves within the context of Roman traditions.

Let us begin with the relationship between magic and religion. We know that in a sense the two terms are opposed to each other since they define contradictory attitudes. In magic the subject believes sufficiently in his own power to wish to subject external powers; in the religious attitude the subject is sufficiently conscious of his own weakness to subject himself to superior

*Note: The Editorial Committee of Acta Classica wishes to record its thanks to Professor Schilling for agreeing to have this article translated into English so as to ensure the widest possible dissemination in our country of its extremely valuable contents. Professor Schilling is Directeur à l’Ecole des Hautes Études in Paris, responsable for research in Roman religion, and at the same time holds the Chair of Latin at the University of Strasbourg.
beings. In his dissertation on *Magie und Religion* Ludwig Deubner was right in thinking that the two attitudes arise from two different mentalities, a preanimistic mentality in the first case, a belief in animism in the second. At least, we are tempted to postulate that these two stadia are successive, if we allow ourselves to be guided by logic. But logic does not hold supreme sway in human affairs. In reality the two streams, magic and religion, often coexist and can be distinguished by analysis alone. This is what I propose to show with respect to the festival of the Dead at Rome.

Preoccupation with the departed is manifested in rites set down in the months of February and of May. (We shall leave aside the *Larentalia* of 23rd December which present a peculiar character by reason of their reference to *Acca Larentia*, considered as the foster mother of Romulus and Remus.) I have purposely used the expression 'preoccupation with the departed' and not 'cult of the dead': it will immediately become clear why. Which is the most ancient ceremony? Ovid, in an express statement in the *Fasti* accords priority to the *Lemuria* which are celebrated on 9th, 11th and 13th May; the *Feralia* of 21st February are said to have been instituted only after the twelve month year had been substituted for the ten month year, and the month February introduced.

If we pay attention to the two ceremonies, we shall notice a remarkable contrast. Without doubt one can trace in them some similarities, such as the closing of the temples and the forbidding of marriages which measures are common to both funereal periods. But the differences are far more characteristic. First of all there is the name. The *Lemuria* has as its water-mark the name of the *Lemures* who are rightly connected with the λάμψι, phantoms devouring the living—it is a fact that the ancients insisted on the terrifying character of the nocturnal *Lemures*. The *Feralia* of 21st February belong to a different context: they bring to a close with a public festival the cycle of the *dies parentales* which began on the 13th February. The adjective *parentales* corresponds to the verb *parentare* and to the noun *parentatio*. In all these words the reference is transparent: they evoke the *di parentes*, the deceased of the family who had been divinised in ancient

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2. Cf. Varro *L.L.* VI, 23. This festival for which we do not have the commentary offered by Ovid's *Fasti*, moreover raises more than one problem. For example, how should we interpret the 'tomb of Acca' which is said to be the object of a public *parentatio*? How should we explain another reference of Varro, 'prope faciunt diis Manibus servilibus sacerdotes'? (Cf. in this connection the discussion mentioned by Marbach, *R.E.* s.v. *Manes*, 1055).
3. Ovid *F.* V, 423: 'annus erat brevior; nec adhuc pia februa norant'.
4. Ovid *F.* II, 563 and V, 496; II, 558 and V, 487.
6. Cf. the other expressions of Ovid: 'animas placate paternas' (*F.* II, 533); 'dis generis date tura boni' (*F.* II, 631).
Rome. So it is no longer a question of redoubtable phantoms but of familiar spirits who are addressed with respect and confidence.

Let us now consider the inferiae, the sacrifices used. In the ceremony of the Lemuria in May only black beans are used. They enable the celebrant to exorcise the evil action of the spirits; they literally serve as apotropaic bait, as the ritual carmen testifies. The head of the family throws black beans behind himself accompanying his action with the formula: ‘Haec ego mitto; his . . . redimo meoque meosque fabis’ (I throw these beans, by them I redeem my dear ones and myself).

This food was considered a powerful attraction for the Lemures, for in archaic times beans constituted a food par excellence: we recall that on 1st June, which is known as Kalendae fabariae, beans were offered to the goddess Carna who was in charge of the proper conservation of the vital organs.

The offerings of the Feralia in February appear in a quite different light. They consist of garlands and scattered violets, of fruit, grains of salt, and wheat soaked in wine. However modest they still may be, they reveal a mentality more sensitive to shades of meaning: the offerer wishes at the same time to sustain and to honour the dead. This time it is a case of real offerings which are intended to please the deceased. Ovid rightly interprets these munera as signs of pietas: ‘parva petunt Manes: pietas pro divite grata est / munere’. This custom of ‘feeding the dead’ was so widespread that it still existed among the Christians: St. Augustine tells how his own mother who had kept this habit, still widespread in Africa, found herself refused entrance to the cemetery of Milan, for St. Ambrose had forbidden these funerary practices.

Let us study the rite more closely. With the Feralia in February we undeniably have to do with a true cult of the dead which, as we have just seen, arises from the Roman concept of pietas. Traces of this cult subsist even in our own times, for though Christian spirituality has condemned libations and alimentary gifts to the dead, it has left in existence the offering of flowers.

On the other hand the specifically magic character of the ceremony of Lemuria in May is self-evident. Let us reproduce Ovid’s account: ‘When

9. Ovid F. II, 537–540. It is characteristic that the beans are no longer mentioned in this ceremony: the absence of this ‘archaic food’ is a further indication in favour of a more recent date for the Feralia of February in relation to the Lemuria of May. We should note on the other hand that as a tail piece to the cult of the Feralia Ovid evokes a scene of magic addressed to Tacita, ‘the goddess of the silent ones’ (II, 571–582). The old sorceress is busy chewing in her mouth ‘seven black beans’: the presence of the beans in this operation of witchcraft confirms their suitability for an apotropaic use, in the Lemuria.
midnight is there and brings silence for sleep, and the dogs as well as the
birds with many-coloured feathers are silent, then rises the man loyal to
the ancient rite and godfearing; his two feet are free from every bond. He
makes a sign by passing his thumb across the joints of his fingers, lest a light
shade might appear before him in his silent walk. Thrice he cleanses his
hands in fountain water; he turns around and beforehand takes black
beans. He throws them backwards and, throwing them, he says: "I offer
these beans; I redeem my dear ones and myself by these beans". These
words he pronounces nine times without turning around: the shade is con­sidered to pick up the beans and to follow behind without anybody seeing
it. Again he touches the water and makes the bronze of Temesa resound.
He requests the shade to leave that roof. Nine times he says: "Go out,
Manes of my fathers!" He turns around and considers that the ceremony
has been carried out faultlessly.'

Is it necessary to point out all the signs of a magic character? At first
there is the number three, reappearing twice in its multiple of nine (3 × 3):
first to proclaim redemption by the beans, secondly to charge the Manes
to go out. We should not forget that the festival itself of the Lemuria is
repeated thrice (9th, 11th and 13th May). Next there are the apotropaic
gestures: the thumb passing over the hand, which Frazer, with others,
interprets as the magical sign which still persists in Italy and is known as
mano fica. We also point out the absence of all bonds on the feet, the
obligation not to turn backwards, the noise raised by the bronze (to the
exclusion of iron).

Finally, this apotropaic magic appears clearly in the nine times repeated
demand addressed to the spirits: 'Manes exite paterni!' Here there is no
trace of that pietas surrounding the deceased with a kind of emotional com­munion. There should in fact be no misunderstanding on the bearing of the
expression Manes paterni. In describing the scene as it still takes place in
his own times, Ovid uses the words Manes paterni for the ceremony of
May as well as for that of February. All the same, one may ask oneself
whether the term has not been introduced into the rite of the Lemuria by a
sort of 'religious contagion' dating only from a later period. Doubtlessly
the name Manes is in itself equivocal by reason of being able to be con­nected at the same time with maniae (in the unfavourable sense of 'funereal
phantoms') and with manes (in the meaning of 'the good ones', the
euphemism 'the good ones' betraying a captatio benevolentiae). In any case,
accompanied by the adjective paterni, manes can only have a beneficial
signification; for this reason the expression is out of tune in the expulsion
rite of the Lemuria, while contrasting at the same time with the term

13. At the Feralia he speaks exactly of animas paternas (F. II, 533), slightly further on of
*Lemures* implied in the official name. On the other hand, the idea of kinship is present not only in the official designation of the funerary cycle—*dies parentales*—(13th to 21st February) in which the *Feralia* are set, but it also supplies the very name of the rite: *parentare* means ‘to involve the *parentes’; *parentatio* denotes the sacrifice offered in their honour.14

So we can state that the two ceremonies of the *Lemuria* and the *Feralia* by their names, their offerings and their rites reveal two very different attitudes. They correspond, in truth, to two stratifications of human mentality. Although in the classical period the *Lemuria* are suffused by the climate of an evolved religion, their rite has retained the character of apotropaic magic dating back to its origins, while at the *Feralia* the emphasis falls on the reverential cult towards the ancestors. Therefore Ovid was right in dating the former before the latter in point of time, and in reserving the word *pietas*, which has a considerable resonance in the Latin world, for the festival of February. So, thanks to Roman conservatism we have evidence of two successive attitudes in the face of death, the one still dominated by a mentality belonging to magic, the other boldly orientated towards religious veneration.

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The problem of the relationship between rite and myth is of no less interest. Thanks to Ovid’s *Fasti* we possess an extensive record enabling us to study this relationship. Ovid’s method generally consists in presenting the facts of religion on three levels: he describes the *rites*, he assigns to their institution a place in ‘history’, he tries to explain their meaning by a *myth*. The question immediately arises as to whether the relations among these three levels are arbitrary, or if they rather correspond to a complementary illumination of the religious reality. A general answer is hardly possible. There are as many particular cases as there are facts. In some cases the fantasy alone seems to justify the combinations: we should not forget that at his time Ovid could legitimately draw upon the treasuries of Hellenic poetry by virtue of a syncretism which had mixed Greek and Latin pantheons. The result of these combinations is sometimes strange. Let us take again the example of the *Feralia* of February. Ovid assigns their ‘historical’ foundation to the initiative of Aeneas who, being a perfect model of piety, is said to have had taught the Romans piety also towards the dead.15 The myth supposing to explain the nature of the funerary goddess *Tacita*, the ‘goddess of the Silent ones’, is really extravagant: Ovid does not hesitate to present this *Tacita* as the metamorphosis of a nymph called Lara who made the mistake of reporting to Juno the clandestine love affairs of Jupiter: in fury the sovereign Lord deprived the imprudent girl of her tongue and

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condemned her to the silence of the infernal marshes. One notices that in the most austere subjects the frivolous poet of the *Amores* sometimes reappears underneath the solemnity of the liturgist.

In what follows we shall concern ourselves essentially with the relations between rite and myth. A particularly instructive example is furnished by the festival of the *Vinalia* which presents several remarkable characteristics. It is the only festival in the Roman calendar worked out in two periods (gathering of the grapes at the *Vinalia* of 19th August, and offering of the wine at the *Vinalia* of 23rd April). It has baffled many in ancient and modern times by its twofold divine patronage: the evidence is sometimes in favour of Jupiter, sometimes in favour of Venus. Finally, it is concerned with a most important rite—the effusion of the wine—and with a myth of national significance, the Trojan legend.

Without going into aspects discussed elsewhere, I shall confine myself to a recapitulation of the main data of the festival. Like other official names such as the *Fordicidia* (sacrifice—*caedere*—of an heifer with young—*forda*—on 15th April), the name of the *Vinalia* denotes the sacrifice: *uinum*. (It is well-known that other names again disclose the name of the divinity involved, such as the *Cerialia*, *Ceres*.)

The repetition of the *Vinalia* in the liturgical calendar ought not to lead us astray. This is not a case of a doublet. In reality the ceremony develops according to a natural progression: at the *Vinalia* of 19th August the consecration of the grapes takes place, at that of 23rd April the libation of the wine.

How should we interpret this rite? It is the *flamen Dialis* who officiates, that is, the first priest of the city, who is dedicated to the cult of Jupiter. So the wine is offered in honour of the supreme god. Thus, perhaps, the epigraphical peculiarity of the pre-Julian calendar can be explained, which reserves for the *Vinalia* alone the initials *FP* (contrary to the ordinary usage which places behind the names of the festivals the initials *N* or *NP* to mark the sacred character of the day): the most likely reading of this sign is *Feriae publicae*. So the *Vinalia* would be the public festival par excellence, the principal festival of the city!

Could the choice of wine be explained? This question has to be faced in the case of a pastoral and agricultural civilisation, where people used to offer milk more readily than wine, which was then less available: milk is offered, for example, at the Latin festival, the institution of which is anterior to the foundation of Rome. (Wines only became wide-spread in Latium from the 4th century B.C. on, and the ancients often recall for the classical period the scarcity and expensiveness of wine at the beginning.)

However, the most precious offering was not milk: it was the blood of the sacrificial animals. We briefly recall the essence of the doctrine of the Roman sacrifice: the purpose of the sacrifice is to withdraw the offering from the profane world so as to set it aside for the gods. But by virtue of a fundamental principle enounced by Trebatius—sola anima deo sacratur—this consecration does not affect the body of the victim, but only its anima which is considered to reside in the blood and in the vital organs, the exta. This is why the Roman sacrifice consists solely in the effusion of the blood on the altar and in the offering of the exta: the flesh of the victim—viscera—which is not consecrated, can then without objection be given up for profane consumption.

Now, very early wine served as a substitute for blood in the cult practices. This is because wine was not considered as an inactive substance, but as a drink endowed with magical properties: for this reason it was used for curing illness, to judge from the formula used in the Meditralia (vintage festival): 'nouum vetus vinum bibo, nouo veteri morbo medeo' (I drink the wine, old and new, I am cured of ailment old and new). But beside these beneficial properties, the ancients also knew its harmful properties.

For this reason wine was in primitive times forbidden to women, under penalty of death. Pliny the Elder\textsuperscript{18} recalls capital sentences inflicted upon women caught drinking wine; he quotes in evidence the elder Cato according to whom 'close relatives used to kiss women to determine whether they smelled of wine' (Cato (scripsit) ideo propinquos feminis osculum dare ut scirent an tementum olerent). In effect the fact of drinking wine was likened to a state of possession. 'C'est pourquoi,' the Romanist Pierre Noailles\textsuperscript{19} properly observes, 'il constitue une infraction aussi grave que l'adultère à l'obligation de fidélité, qui pèse sur la femme. En buvant, la femme se soumet à un principe de vie étranger, donc hostile. En introduisant cet élément extérieur en elle, dans le sang de la famille, elle en détruit l'intégrité. C'est une souillure de sang.'

This mysterious power ascribed to wine already explains the idea of using it in the cult. Now in this regard we possess a still more interesting piece of evidence which we owe to Isidore of Sevilla:\textsuperscript{20} 'the ancients used to call wine venenum (veteres vinum venenum vocabant); but since the discovery of the mortal potion of poison, the one is called by the name vinum, the other by the name venenum'. This assimilation of vinum to venenum in the archaic period is revealing. Just like wine, venenum too can in effect be taken in a good or in a bad sense, since the word sometimes devotes the philtre used in love incantations, and sometimes the poison prepared by witches.

\textsuperscript{18} Pliny N.H. XIV, 89.
\textsuperscript{19} P. Noailles, Les tabous du mariage dans le droit primitif des Romains, Annales sociologiques, série C, f. 2 (1937) p. 27.
\textsuperscript{20} Isidore of Seville, Etymologiae sive Originex xx, 3, 2 (ed. Lindsay, 1911).
What does *venenum* exactly denote? *venes-nom* etymologically denotes ‘means of seduction’, ‘charm’: the word is connected with Venus. At the same time the participation of the goddess Venus in the festival of the *Vinalia* beside Jupiter finds its explanation. This double divine presence, attested by the inscriptive sources and by the literary tradition, had embarrassed many commentators. Since we know the equation *vinum* = *venenum*, the affinities between Jupiter and Venus are explained by the rite itself: the *vinum* = *venenum* is offered to Jupiter, the supreme god. It holds its mysterious power, because it is considered to possess a ‘charm’ capable of working upon the deity, a charm which participates in the seductive power of Venus.

The calendars which had entered now the name of Jupiter, now that of Venus, had therefore all transmitted an authentic tradition: but instead of including the one at the expense of the other, both of them should be united in a harmonious synthesis. The wine represents the ‘Venusian’ charm capable of moving the sovereign god. Thus justification exists for the presence of Venus in festivals consecrated to Jupiter.

The rite of the *Vinalia* is closely connected with an aetiological myth, in the Roman tradition. The import of this relationship I should now like to examine. In the case of the *Vinalia* we have to do with a privileged situation. The myth is not only connected with one of the oldest legends that became acclimatised in Latium, namely the Trojan legend, but the general outline of the myth has so to speak not changed since its appearance in literature with Cato, passing via Ovid down to Plutarch. It received an official blessing since the scholar Verrius Flaccus in the time of Augustus inserted the mythical narrative in the publication of the *Fasti Praenestini*, by the date of the *Vinalia* in the month of April.

What is its theme? The protagonist of the institution of the *Vinalia* is Aeneas, son of Venus and descendant of Jupiter. This genealogy at the outset assures the Trojan hero of the authority required for officiating at a festival of interest to both Jupiter and Venus at the same time. In this sense the Trojan myth answers the question of the simultaneous participation of Jupiter and Venus: it closely associates the two deities while also strictly maintaining the hierarchy since the son of Venus addresses his wishes to sovereign Jupiter.

What is the nub of the story? The institution of a sacrifice in honour of Jupiter following on a rivalry between two characters. The contest takes place between Aeneas or the Latins on the one hand, and Mezentius, chief of the Etruscans, on the other (in some variants Turnus, chief of the Rutulians also intervenes soliciting an alliance with Mezentius). In all the

authors the line of demarcation is drawn between the two camps having as their champions Aeneas for the Latins and Mezentius for the Etruscans (and the Rutulians).

According to the accounts Mezentius demands either from the Rutulians (in Ovid) or directly from Aeneas (in Plutarch) the tribute of the vintage. It is less important to know to whom he addresses his demands, than to realise the fact that he makes such a demand as calls forth an immediate defiance on the part of Aeneas. This defiance takes the form of a higher bid which deserves some explanation. Let us turn to Ovid’s account.

As the price for his military assistance Mezentius straight out demands from his partner the must of the coming vintage: ‘there’s no time to be wasted: yours is the duty to give, mine to conquer’. The Rutulians accept. Immediately Aeneas addresses to Jupiter this higher bid: ‘The enemy’s vintage has been promised to the Etruscan King; Jupiter, the wine of Latium’s vineyards will be yours’.

Jupiter’s reply is immediate (later with the same effective suddenness he will aid Romulus at grips with the Sabines); ‘The better vows carry the day: massive Mezentius falls’. The crushing victory hallows the god’s superiority over the presumptuous Mezentius.

This short drama implicates the fundamental principle of Roman religion. This rivalry between two men stylises the contradiction between two religious attitudes: this is nothing less than a confrontation between piety and impiety. In this sense antiquity interpreted the lesson of the myth every time that it was analysed. In effect it is an impiety for a mortal to demand the firstfruits of the vintage: this means arrogating to oneself honours reserved for the gods. Cato had underlined the horror which Mezentius’ pretensions had aroused in the minds of the Latins: ‘Mezentius ordered them to offer him, to him, a human being, firstfruits (= the vintage) which they used to offer to the gods, and terrified by such an order the Latins made the following vow: Jupiter, if thou wishest us to make this offering to thee rather than to Mezentius, make us victorious’.

That is why the two protagonists assumed perfectly symmetrical roles. Is it necessary to recall that Aeneas is the very incarnation of piety: ‘Sum pius Aeneas . . . ’ (Virgil A. I, 378). Mezentius in turn is qualified as impious. ‘Contemptor divum Mezentius’ says Virgil (A. VII, 648) who makes him utter sacrilegious words down to the end of his career: ‘nec divum parci mus ulli’ (A. X, 880). The Virgilian commentator Macrobius explains Virgil’s condemnation of Mezentius in the following: ‘so it is for having claimed divine honours that he has rightly been called contemptuous of the Gods by Virgil’ (S. III, 5, 11). Thus, if Aeneas is the champion of piety, Mezentius is the champion of impiety. The swift outcome of the contest between the two adversaries is therefore the more interesting for the religious philosophy.

Now we are in a position to appreciate the correspondence between the
myth and the rite. The rite consists in offering wine to Jupiter. Wine is originally not only a rare drink but also a liquor of exceptional properties, capable of rousing, stimulating and ‘evoking’ the magical aid of Jupiter. In this sense the vinum-venenum is not only a perfect substitute for blood because of being itself charged with anima, but it comprises the promise of unlimited power over the supernatural world. So the annual consecration to Jupiter of the vineyards and of the wine ought to ensure the unceasing renewal of the alliance of the Latins with the supreme god, calling forth the blessings of the Pater omnipotens for the faithful.

If it is true that the whole rite reveals a propitiatory festival, no myth could ‘clothe’ this rite more happily than the aetiological theme of the Vinalia. This myth boldly draws the border-line between piety and impiety by the diptych Aeneas-Mezentius. It suggests that piety ‘pays’ even when it appears to be most disinterested. Far from troubling about contractual clauses, Aeneas’ initiative assumes an unconditional aspect. It presents no explicit demand, but no sooner has Aeneas offered Jupiter the must of Latium than the favour of heaven accords him an overwhelming victory over his enemy.

So the aetiological myth of the Vinalia does not correspond to a formalistic religion of a juridical nature: on the contrary, it is explained in the light of a primitive gift practice which the sociologists denote by the term potlatch, ‘total prestation of an agonistic nature’. We have already noted this aspect of over-bidding which characterises Aeneas’ vow when he learns of Mezentius’ demands. ‘Mezentius has acquired the vintage of the Rutulians; to thee, Jupiter, all the wines of Latium!’ For Aeneas realises as well as the practitioner of potlatch the implicit force of his action: ‘each gift implies restitution . . . and indeed restitution with an increase’. Instead of making a demand in return, he resorts to captatio benevolentiae. Though this offer implies a tacit belief in do ut des, yet it is free from any explicit stipulation; it is not framed on the model dabo cum dederis of the contractual type of prayers which we find in Cato. Thus the Trojan legend perfectly fits the rite of the Vinalia. Is this correspondence not striking? On the level of the rite: the vinum-venenum poured out at the Vinalia of April in honour of Jupiter has to facilitate the beneficial relations between the sovereign god and the representative of the Romans, to entice so to speak the magical intervention of the supreme god. On the level of the myth: Aeneas endeavours to gain Jupiter’s favour by offering the future wine of Latium. The myth exactly explains the rite. And without doubt one of the important reasons for the success of the Trojan legend is its harmonious correspondence to one of the fundamental aspirations of the religious consciousness of the Latins.

One can imagine which hopes the ‘precedent’ of Aeneas suggested to the Romans. While hailing this hero as insinem pietate virum (Virgil A. I,
10), while praising his piety finally rewarded, they did not forget that by the
genealogical fiction of the Trojan descent they could consider themselves
Aeneas' heirs of the celestial favour. Virgil does not fail to notice it: not
only Aeneas but the whole Trojan race is pious (A. I, 526), and the Romans-
Aeneades delight in emphasising the depth of their religious feelings (cf.
Cicero N.D. II, 3: '... ceteris rebus aut pares aut etiam inferiores reperiemur,
religione, id est cultu deorum, multo superiores').

Let us not be deceived: if the Latin authors proclaim Roman piety so
highly, they hint at something else. These zealous worshippers of the gods
mediated the example of Aeneas: on the same grounds as their mythical
ancestor they believed themselves designated for the rôle of a chosen people.
Throughout their whole history they will be anxious always to obtain pacem
veniamque deum. Everything happens as if, in their eyes, their supernatural
privilege had to be earned by exceptional piety. And if they ended by con-
quering the world, one of the most important reasons is to be found after
all in this unshakeable confidence in their gods. Horace once revealed the
implicit expectation of Roman piety: 'dis te minorem quod geris, imperas'
(C. III, 6, 5).

From there the association Jupiter-Venus in the ceremonies of the
Vinalia can be naturally explained. The sovereign Jupiter is involved in
the course of the festival, a Jupiter capable of mobilising all his power in
the service of the worshipper. In the aetiological myth Aeneas gains victory
over Mezentius at the price of offering the vineyards of Latium, as later
Papirius will gain victory over his enemies by promising a cup of wine to
Jupiter Victor (Livy X, 42, 7). In both cases Jupiter intervenes in his capacity
as an all-mighty god to bestow victory.

As for Venus, her presence at the Vinalia beside Jupiter is explained by
the rite as well as the myth. Since the institution of the festival the sorcery
of the venus exerted its magico-religious function by the libation of the
vinum-venenum poured out in honour of Jupiter; in a parallel way the goddess
has since her historical appearance played an intercessory rôle in the elabora-
tion of the myth. It is only by virtue of the Trojan legend that Venus
intervenes in the Vinalia: the mother of 'pious' Aeneas will henceforth
never cease to be a kind of mediator between the Aeneades and Jupiter.
This mediation will in time assume such a considerable importance by
reason of the radiance of Venus that the goddess will sometimes appear to
supplant Jupiter.

In the example of the Vinalia the rite and the myth in the end appear as
parallel translations of the same religious symbolism. The rite was certainly
anterior to the myth: from the time of the institution of the Vinalia their
beneficial function was assured by offering the vinum-venenum; later on it
appeared to be still more assured by the tutelary presence of Venus. The
Trojan legend exalted the rôle of Venus, 'mother of the Aeneades' (Aeneadum
genetrix, Lucretius I, 1) mediator between Jupiter and the Romans.

The festival of the *Vinalia* is by all its characteristics perhaps more than any other indicative of the Latin mentality—a mentality of which I believed I could still recognise today the essential traits, when, in 1958, I attended the ‘Sagra dell’ Uva’ on the first Sunday in October in a locality of the *castelli romani*, at Marino. It was not one of those ‘wine festivals’ of a Bacchic nature which are nowadays multiplying a bit everywhere in the wine-producing regions. The festival of Marino presented three aspects: a religious aspect (the consecration of the grapes), an historical aspect (recalling the Christian victory at Lepanto in 1571), an ideological aspect (the renewal of an alliance between the Virgin protectress and the population of Marino). In fact the grapes were offered to Santa Maria della Vittoria in the course of a solemn procession (‘fanciulle biancovestite offrono in appositi cestini alla Regina delle Vittorie le primizie della terra’). Why this title of victory? In the 16th century a nobleman of Marino, Marc’ Antonio Colonna, had participated as commander of the pontifical galleys at the famous Battle of Lepanto where the Christian world faced the Turks. In this clash with the ‘infidels’ Christianity was victorious. For Marino this glorious historical memory constituted a symbolic pledge: in an atmosphere of profane cheerfulness and of religious fervour the city celebrated the renewal of its alliance with heaven. Do we not, *mutatis mutandis*, meet again in the ‘Sagra’ of Marino analogies recalling the ancient *Vinalia*? Perhaps, in this revival . . . or this unexpected continuation of the *Vinalia* we can find supplementary evidence of the perfect conformity of rite and myth in the great ‘public festival’ of ancient Roman religion.

*Conclusion*

The example of the *Vinalia* is without doubt a privileged case, in the Roman calendar, of harmonious correspondence between rite and myth. We should not suppose that the festivals can always be explained so clearly. I could easily choose examples where the facts are entangled and still resist exhaustive analysis: for instance the festival of Anna Perenna on the 15th of March. This festival doubtlessly consists in marking the expulsion of the old year and celebrating the arrival of the new year: on these grounds it is perhaps continued in the caricatural rites of the modern carnaval! But who could hope to account for all the particulars transmitted to us by the ancients?

At least, at Rome we are always on solid ground when we know a rite. Thanks to Roman conservatism the rites have been transmitted from generation to generation with greater fidelity than elsewhere. In this way

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22. This sentence is taken from the official account in the local newspaper *Il gazzettino del Lazio* (special number of October 2, 1958).
they could survive the mentality from which they were born, as we have seen in the festival of the Lemuria; they then enable us to distinguish the different stratifications of religious mentality.

These rites mostly correspond to myths in a historicised form; Aeneas is considered to have 'founded' the ceremonies of the Vinalia. By this propensity to the 'historical' form of the myth the Romans distinguish themselves in an original way from other Indo-European peoples: the mythology of the Vedic Indians as well as of the Greeks of Hesiod's time is timeless. But while the poets and the philosophers of Greece at a very early stage confused this ideological heritage, Rome (thanks to its sacerdotal organisation) with jealous care guarded its religious inheritance. This is why the latter is one of the favourite domains of the historian of ancient religions who here finds a guiding thread for going back to the remotest stage of history.

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23. This fundamental fact has been well illuminated by the fine studies of Georges Dumézil: cf. in particular L'héritage indo-européen à Rome (Paris, Gallimard, 1949).
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