

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05774-5 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 2

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

THE
CLASSICAL MUSEUM.

I.

THE HELLENICS OF XENOPHON, AND THEIR DIVISION
INTO BOOKS.

IN a paper published in the first number of the *Rheinisches Museum*, and since reprinted in his Miscellaneous Works¹, Niebuhr propounded a theory respecting the Hellenics of Xenophon, which, he says, had long before occurred to him, but of which he had been then accidentally reminded by the remark of a contributor to the same journal upon a passage in the life of Thucydides by Marcellinus. He considers the Greek History of Xenophon as formed of two distinct works, written at different times, viz. the conclusion of Thucydides, and the Hellenics. The conclusion of Thucydides, consisting of the first two books, was, he thinks, written in the interval between the return of the Ten Thousand and the recall of Agesilaus from Asia (B. C. 400—394); whereas the last five books, which form a whole by themselves, were written after the beginning of Olymp. 106 (356 B. C.), as appears from the account of the tyrants of Phæræ². The early date of the first two books is, he remarks, proved by the words

¹ See *Kleine Schriften*, Vol. I. p. 464. A translation of the paper, by the Bishop of St. David's, is in the *Philological Museum*, Vol. I. p. 485—9.

² Xenophon, *Hellen.* VI. 4. § 35-7, after having described the assassination of Alexander the tyrant of Phæræ by his wife and her brothers, says: τὰ μὲν οὖν αἴτια τῆς ἐπιβουλῆς ὑπὸ τῆς γυναικὸς οὕτω λέγεται· τῶν δὲ ταῦτα πραξάντων ἄρχοις οὗ ἕδε ὁ λόγος ἐγράφετο Τισίφο-

νος πρεσβύτατος ὦν τῶν ἀδελφῶν τὴν ἀρχὴν εἶχεν. § 37. where ἕδε ὁ λόγος means 'this history,' or 'this part of this history.' Mr. Clinton thinks that Alexander was slain in Ol. 105. 1. (B. C. 360), and that Tisiphonus ruled from that year till Ol. 105. 4 (357). See his *Fasti*, Vol. II. ad ann. 359, and App. c. 15. Diodorus places the death of Alexander in 357 B. C.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05774-5 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 2

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

2

THE HELLENICS OF XENOPHON,

at the end of the second book; ἔτι καὶ νῦν ὁμοῦ πολιτεύονται, καὶ τοῖς ὄρκοις ἐμμένει ὁ δῆμος; which could not have been written by Xenophon forty-four years after the amnesty. Niebuhr adds, in confirmation of this view, the following arguments:

“Another statement which appears to me likewise well deserving of attention is, that Xenophon published the books of Thucydides... It is extremely probable that he resided at Athens for some time after the battle of Cnidus, and that he was living under the eyes of his fellow-citizens, when he brought out the two supplemental books; and that he subjoined them as such from the first to those of Thucydides. According to the *Bibliotheca Græca*, all the seven in the Aldine edition bear the title of Parlipomena of Thucydides; and this was no doubt taken from some manuscript: it is appropriate for the first two books, and was assuredly their original one: it only becomes absurd by being extended too far: Marcellinus, I conceive, was acquainted with the two books in their separate state, and it is they οἷς Ξενοφῶν συνάπτει τὰ Ἑλληνικά. For this again is the appropriate title for the last five.

“The ancients set so high a value on harmony of numbers in their distribution of parts, and on symmetry in general, that one may hazard the conjecture that the Parlipomena formed only one book; so that, including them, the whole history of the Peloponnesian war made up nine, like that of Herodotus. As a single book they would not be more bulky than one of Thucydides. Ten however is likewise a suitable number, especially for Athens; whereas seven is one altogether accidental and arbitrary³. The five of the Hellenics would be the half of the former, and combined with the seven of the Anabasis, would make twelve.” (*Phil. Mus.* Vol. I. p. 488).

The argument derived by Niebuhr from the occurrence of the word *Parlipomena* in the Aldine edition of the Hellenics, has been shewn by L. Dindorf to be founded on a mistake⁴. The name appears to have been given at a late date to the Hellenics of Xenophon, and some other works, including the later Greek

³ ‘Doch auch zehn ist eine angemessene Zahl, zumahl für Athen; wogegen sieben eine ganz zufällige und unbegründete.’ *Kleine Schriften*, Vol. I. p. 468.

⁴ His remarks were published in the *Neue Jahrbücher für Philologie und*

Pädagogik for 1833, Vol. I. p. 254, and a translation of them is given in the *Philol. Mus.* Vol. II. p. 241; where see the editor’s note. Compare Renouard, *Annales de l’Imprimerie des Aldes*, Tom. I. pp. 96, 97. (ed. 2).

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05774-5 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 2

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

AND THEIR DIVISION INTO BOOKS.

3

history, considered in connexion with Herodotus and Thucydides; and it was probably, as Dindorf remarks, suggested by the Alexandrine title of the books of Chronicles. Neither Diodorus, he adds, nor the old grammarians who cite the Greek history of Xenophon, are acquainted with any other title of it than 'Ελληνικά⁵.

Dindorf however concludes his remarks thus: "Although the external evidence which Niebuhr has adduced in support of his opinion seems to me to have no weight, yet any person who considers the internal proofs as convincing, is still at liberty to hold that the Hellenics were written at different times, and even with different objects."

Setting aside the argument founded on the title of *Paralipomena*, as unsupported by sufficient testimony, I propose to examine whether the arguments derived from the character of the Hellenics, and the division and number of its books, are sufficient to establish the view taken by Niebuhr.

In the first place it may be remarked that Niebuhr's arguments with respect to the different periods at which the earlier and later books of the Hellenics were composed, do not prove that the work was not considered by the author as one. Even if the first two books were written soon after the return of the Ten Thousand, and the later books were completed forty years afterwards, it does not follow that Xenophon considered them as belonging to different works. The ancient writers appear to have often kept their works under revision during a large part of their life. This was probably the case with the history of Herodotus; and Niebuhr himself particularly remarks the same fact with respect to the *History of Plants*, by Theophrastus. "From the archons mentioned in the *History of Plants*," he says, "the time of its completion and publication may be deduced negatively. These chronological notices show indeed during how long a time previous to the publication such additions as suggested themselves were incorporated by the philosopher with his work, which had been composed, but not yet laid before the world. In the year 117. 2. he wished to state that Cyrene had then stood for about three hundred years; so he named the archon of the day (vi. 3). Thus natural phenomena were related to him as having occurred about so many years before; all these dates might have been referred to the year of the publi-

⁵ For example, Diog. Laert. ii. 57. | ker. Athen. v. p. 217 F. cites *Ξενοφῶν*
and Phot. *Biblioth.* p. 532 a. 19. ed. Bek- | *ἐν πρώτῳ* 'Ελληνικῶν, i. e. i. 7. § 14.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05774-5 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 2

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

caution; but it was quite superfluous. Numberless other additions must have been made in the same way, which are not to be detected, not being appended externally, but immediately wrought into the work itself. In like manner (he adds) Aristotle has evidently enlarged his Rhetoric, which in his first sketch was one of his earlier works, with additions till toward the close of his life." (*Hist. of Rome*, Vol. I. note 30).

It is to be observed, with respect to the Greeks of the fourth century before Christ, that the publication of a book was a far less marked and precise event than it has become since the invention of printing, or than it even became at a later date in Greece. When Plato, or Xenophon, or Aristotle, had composed a work, probably he read it, or portions of it, to some of his friends or disciples⁶; perhaps, too, a few persons caused copies to be made; but the publicity was so limited that the author naturally continued to revise it so long as his interest in the subject remained alive⁷. After a literary class had been formed in Greece, the deposit of a book in the Alexandrian library, as in the temple of the Palatine Apollo at Rome, might have formed nearly as distinct an epoch in an author's mind as an advertisement of his book in a newspaper forms at present; but the Athenian writers before the age of Alexander had no such event for marking the time at which a writing became the property of the public⁸.

⁶ Favorinus reported an anecdote respecting Plato, that on an occasion when he read aloud his dialogue of the Phædo, all the audience went away except Aristotle. *Diog. Laert.* III. 37.

⁷ ὁ δὲ Πλάτων τοὺς ἑαυτοῦ διαλόγους κτενίζων καὶ βοστρυχίζων καὶ πάντα τρόπον ἀναπλέκων οὐ διέλιπεν ὀγδοήκοντα γεγονούσ' ἔτη. *Dionys. Hal. de Comp. Verb.* c. 25, (p. 406, Schaefer), who goes on to tell the well-known anecdote of the first words of the Republic having been found, after Plato's death, written in different ways on his tablet. Compare *Diog. Laert.* III. 37, and *Ast ad Rep. init.* With respect to the successive alterations and improvements of his works by Aristotle, see the remark of Stahr, *Aristotelia*, Vol. II. p. 43, and as to the question whether Aristotle published his own works, *ibid.* pp. 35, sq.

⁸ There was no public library at

Athens at this period. See the accounts of the early libraries, in Gräfenhan, *Geschichte der Klassischen Philologie*, Vol. I. p. 58, sq. Strabo, XIII. p. 608, states that Aristotle was the first person who collected a library: *πρῶτος ὦν ἴσμεν συναγαγὼν βιβλία, καὶ διδάξας τοὺς ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ βασιλέας βιβλιοθήκης σύνταξιν.* Compare Stahr's *Aristotelia*, Vol. II. p. 25. The important influence which the foundation of the Alexandrine libraries and the creation of a set of literary endowments by the Egyptian princes produced upon Greek literature, is remarked by Littré, in his Introduction to Hippocrates: "Les conquêtes d'Alexandre, les communications multipliées qui s'établirent entre la Grèce et l'Orient, la fondation d'Alexandrie en Egypte, la formation des grandes bibliothèques dans cette ville et à Pergame produisirent, dans les relations littéraires, une revolu-

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05774-5 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 2

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

AND THEIR DIVISION INTO BOOKS.

5

We may therefore admit that the earlier and later portions of the Hellenics were written by Xenophon at distant periods of time and in different states of mind; without authorizing the inference that they were regarded by him as forming distinct works. That the second and third books were not less closely connected with one another than the first book was connected with the termination of Thucydides, is proved by the beginning of the third book, the first words of which—*ἡ μὲν δὴ Ἀθήνησι στάσις οὕτως ἐτελεύτησεν*—are unintelligible if they are not referred to the narrative in the preceding book. The only argument which now remains to be considered is that derived from the division of the Hellenics into books, and their number. It is advanced by Niebuhr with apparent confidence in its soundness, and its grounds require a detailed examination.

Adopting the statement of Diogenes Laertius⁹, that Xenophon published the history of Thucydides; he adds to it the conjecture, that Xenophon subjoined to the eight books of Thucydides either two books, or one book, of his own supplement; thus making altogether either *ten* or *nine* books. Either of these numbers would, he thinks, be consistent with probability; ten being a number suitable to Athens, and nine being that of the books of Herodotus; whereas seven, which is the number of the books of the Hellenics according to our copies, is, in his view, altogether arbitrary and unfounded, and inconsistent with the respect for numerical symmetry by which the ancients were distinguished.

But these arguments, even upon the supposition made by Niebuhr, are extremely doubtful. The statement of Diogenes respecting the publication of the history of Thucydides by Xenophon, is too uncertain to serve as the foundation of historical inferences: Poppo rejects it altogether, as devoid of authority¹⁰. Moreover, if the division of books in our copies of the early Greek historians is to be considered as made by the authors themselves, it cannot be permitted to combine the two first books of the Hellenics into one, in order that with the eight books of Thucydides they may form nine books, after the model of Herodotus. But the history of Thucydides was not constantly divided into eight books by the ancients. Diodorus mentions a division into nine as well as eight

tion comparable, quoique sur une moindre échelle, à la révolution causée par la découverte de l'imprimerie." Tom. I. p. 80.

⁹ λέγεται δ' ὅτι καὶ τὰ Θουκυδίδου βιβλία λαμβάνοντα ὑφέλεσθαι δυνάμενος αὐτὸς εἰς δόξαν ἤγαγεν. II. 57.

¹⁰ Thucyd. Pars 2. Vol. I. p. 6.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05774-5 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 2

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

books¹¹; and the Life of Marcellinus states, that there was likewise a division into thirteen books¹², traces of which occur in the Scholia¹³. It is, besides, difficult to see what ground there is for resorting to these conjectures, or why the number *seven* should be pronounced arbitrary and unfounded, and repugnant to the laws of symmetry observed by the ancients in such matters. If *ten* was an admissible number, because there were ten tribes of Attica, and *nine* because there were nine Muses; if writers of the school of Socrates determined the number of books into which they divided their works, not by the convenience of their readers, or the extent of their materials, but by fanciful numerical analogies, worthy of a Pythagorean mystic; why might not the seven wise men of Greece¹⁴, the seven mouths of the Nile, the seven planets¹⁵, the seven Pleiades, the seven strings of the lyre, the seven sons and seven daughters of Niobe¹⁶, or the seven gates of Thebes, serve as a sufficient precedent, and redeem this number from the discredit of being unauthorized and arbitrary? More-

¹¹ 'Ο Θουκυδίδης ἔτη δύο πρὸς τοῖς εἴκοσι γέγραφεν ἐν βιβλίοις ὀκτώ, ὡς δὲ τινες διατροῦσιν, ἐννέα, xii. 37. Compare XIII. 42, where this statement is repeated.

¹² 'Ιστέον δὲ ὅτι τὴν πραγματείαν αὐτοῦ οἱ μὲν κατέτεμον εἰς τρεῖςκαίδεκα ἱστορίας, ἄλλοι δὲ ἄλλως. ὅμως δὲ ἡ πλείστη καὶ ἡ κοινὴ κεκράτηκε, τὸ μέχρι τῶν ὀκτῶ διηροῦσθαι τὴν πραγματείαν, ὡς καὶ ἐπέκρινεν ὁ Ἀσκληπιός. Marcell. Vit. Thuc. ad fin. The date of Asclepius is unknown: he wrote likewise upon Demosthenes.

¹³ See Westermann on Voss, *de Hist. Gr.* p. 42.

¹⁴ The number of the seven sages had been fixed before Xenophon's time: see Plato Protag. § 82.

¹⁵ See Plato Tim. § 14.

¹⁶ The Niobidæ were seven males and seven females, according to Apollodorus, II. 5. § 6. Euripides likewise spoke of the twice seven children of Niobe in the Cresphontes (fragm. 11), and in the Phenissæ (v. 161) he places the tomb of the seven daughters near the walls of Thebes. Ovid, likewise, adopts this number, Met. vi. 221, 297–8, and it occurs in the Latin mythographers (II. 71. ed. Bode). The number of the chil-

dren of Niobe was however variously reported by early writers; Lasus, the master of Pindar, had preceded Euripides in calling them twice seven: Ælian V. H. xii. 36. Euripides says that all the children were killed by Apollo: according to Antipater, *Anth. Plan.* iv. 131, Apollo killed the seven sons and Artemis the seven daughters:—

κούρα γὰρ προὔπεμψε κόραις φόνον, ἄρσσει δ' ἄρσην

δισσοὶ γὰρ δισσοῦς ἕκτανον ἐβδομάδας.

Amphion, the husband of Niobe, who built the walls of Thebes with his lyre, was said to have given the names of his seven daughters to the seven gates (Hygin. fab. 69. conf. fab. 11). The tomb of the daughters of Niobe is placed by Euripides under the walls of Thebes; but the legend which derived the names of the gates from them is not ancient: see Paus. ix. 8. § 4–7, and Porson *ad Phœn.* 1150. It appears from the account of Pausanias that Thebes really had seven gates. According to Philostr. Imag. i. 10, Onest. *Anth. Pal.* ix. 250, and Schol. Eurip. Phœn. 114, the number of the seven gates was borrowed from the seven tones of the lyre with which Amphion built the walls.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05774-5 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 2

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

AND THEIR DIVISION INTO BOOKS.

7

over, Xenophon might have remembered that, in order to appease the wrath of Achilles, Agamemnon offered to give him seven new tripods, seven Lesbian damsels, and seven cities in Peloponnesus¹⁷; and likewise that Ulysses passed seven long years with Calypso in the island of Ogygia¹⁸. Perhaps too Xenophon in his Asiatic expedition might have heard of those eastern nations in which the septenary division of the week was adopted, as being the quarter of a lunar month¹⁹. Nor was the number seven unknown to literature in the time of Xenophon. Pherecydes of Syros, the early philosopher, had written a treatise, which, from the nature of its contents (and not from the number of its books) was styled *Ἐπτάμυχος*, or the *Seven Arcana*²⁰. That seven was not the strange and unusual number, which the Greeks are supposed by Niebuhr to have regarded it, is proved by the legend that Cleomenes the Spartan king killed *seven thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven* Argives in combat; the tradition further sported with this number by supposing a battle on the same occasion to have been fought on the *seventh* of the month, and a *seven days' truce* to have been made and violated by Cleomenes²¹. A more important legendary event, viz. the taking of Troy, was reported by early historians to have taken place on the *ἑβδόμη φθινόγοντος*²². If however these precedents should not be thought sufficiently domestic and national, and something should be required to outweigh the ten tribes of Attica, we may refer to the seven folds of the shield of the Salaminian Ajax, and especially to the seven youths and seven maidens who were annually sent from Athens to Crete in memory of the mythical age²³. Pythagoras con-

¹⁷ Iliad. ix. 264, 270, 291.

¹⁸ Od. vii. 259. It is possible that the period of seven months, during which Orpheus, according to Virgil, mourned Eurydice, was borrowed from some Greek source:—

*Septem illum totos perhibent ex ordine menses
Rupe sub aëria, deserti ad Strymonis undam,
Flevisse, &c. Georg. iv. 507—9.*

¹⁹ See Winer, *Biblisches Real Wörterbuch*, art. *Woche*.

²⁰ Suidas in *Ἐπεκύδης*. See *Fragm. Histor. Græc.* p. 35. ed. Didot. Callimachus, *Del.* 65, applies the epithet *ἑπτάμυχος* to the cave of Boreas. At a later time, the Alexandrines formed two canonical lists of poets,—one tragical, and the other general,—each con-

sisting of seven names, which they called the *Pleiads*: see Matter, *Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie*, Tom. i. p. 168. (ed. 2.)

²¹ Polyæn. viii. 33. Plutarch *de Mul. Virt.* c. 5. Aristot. *Pol.* v. 3. § 7. Plutarch, *Apophth. Cleomen.* § 2. See Müller's *Dorians*, b. i. ch. 8. § 6. note, and Larcher on Herodotus, vi. 77.

²² Plutarch. Camill. 19, citing as his authorities Ephorus, Callisthenes, Damastes, and Phylarchus. Damastes lived before the Peloponnesian war, and was contemporary with Hellanicus.

²³ Eurip. *Herc. Fur.* 1327, Plato *Phædo*, § 2, and Wytttenbach's note. Compare Servius on *Æn.* vi. 21.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05774-5 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 2

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

sidered seven as the sacred number of the Athenian goddess²⁴ Seven was likewise the sacred number of Apollo: on this day of the month he was born, and on this day he was worshipped at many festivals²⁵. Now Apollo, by his oracle concerning Socrates²⁶, had earned the gratitude of all the disciples of that philosopher; Socrates himself shewed his devotion to the Delphian god by composing a pæan to him²⁷; and perhaps Xenophon felt nearly as much veneration for Apollo as for the sister-goddess to whom he dedicated the grove in Scillus²⁹. If the reports of an enmity between Xenophon and Plato has no better foundation than that of the enmity between Plato and Aristotle, perhaps the belief that Plato was born on the 7th of Thargelion, the birthday of his supposed divine father, might have removed some of the prejudice which Niebuhr supposes Xenophon to have entertained against the number seven²⁹. It was moreover the custom of the Athenians to name children on the seventh day after birth; the reason being, as Aristotle says, that weakly infants commonly die before that day³⁰. The seventh days of the moon were likewise celebrated at Athens by convivial meetings of friends³¹. Solon, too, (or some ancient elegiac poet) in some verses still extant, divided the life of man into periods of seven years; assigning ten of these periods

²⁴ Stob. *Ecl. Phys.* Vol. I. p. 22. Compare Philo, *de Mund. Opif.* § 33. Philolaus thought that intelligence, health, and light, resided in the number seven: see Boeckh's *Philolaos*, p. 150.

²⁵ Hesiod, *Op.* 771. Æsch. *Theb.* 801. Herod. vi. 57. and Schol. Aristoph. *Plut.* 1127, with the note of Hemsterhuis, (Vol. iv. p. 332. ed. Oxon.). Compare Spanheim *ad Callimach. Del.* 251, and Müller's *Dorians*, b. II. ch. 8. § 4 and 5. According to Pindar, Agamedes and Trophonius, having built the temple at Delphi, asked Apollo for a reward. The god returned for answer that he would give it on the seventh day. At the close of that day, after having been present at a banquet, they went to sleep and never awoke: Plutarch, *Consol. ad Apollon.* c. 14. Lydus *de Mens.* II. 11, cites an Orphic verse,—

ἑβδομη ἦν ἐφίλησεν ἀναξ ἑκάεργος Ἀπόλλων.
Compare Lobeck, *Aglaopham.* Tom. I. pp. 505, 557, 716.

²⁶ Plat. *Phæd.* § 5.

²⁷ Diog. Laert. II. 42. It may be observed that Cebes, the disciple of Socrates, wrote a dialogue entitled *ἑβδομή*, ib. 125.

²⁸ Anab. v. 3. § 13.

²⁹ Diog. Laert. III. 2. Plut. *Symp.* VIII. quæst. 1. The birthday of Socrates was celebrated on the 6th of Thargelion, on which day Artemis was said by the Delians to have been born: Diog. Laert. II. 44. Plut. ubi sup. Ælian. V. H. II. 25. Artemis was supposed to have been born before her brother, Apollod. I. 4. § 1, and the passages cited by Spanheim *ad Callim. Del.* 255.

³⁰ Harpocrat. in *ἑβδομομενομένου* and Aristot. *Hist. An.* VII. 12, cited by him, also Hesych. in *ἑβδομαί*, and *Etym. Magn.* in *ἑβδομενόμενα*. Compare Meurs. *Gr. Feriat.* in *ἀμφιδρόμια*. Amongst the Jews, circumcision took place upon the eighth day after birth.

³¹ Is in conviviiis juvenum, quæ agitare Athenis hebdomadibus lunæ solemnè nobis fuit, &c. Gellius N. A. xv. 2.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05774-5 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 2

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

AND THEIR DIVISION INTO BOOKS.

9

to human existence³². This division is alluded to by Aristotle, as made by some of the poets³³; and it was adopted by the author of one of the Hippocratic treatises, who however allowed only nine septenary periods, or *κλιμακτήρες*³⁴. Hence originated the importance attributed in antiquity to the sixty-third or grand climacteric year³⁵.

So little do the ancients who speculate on the virtues of numbers confirm Niebuhr's views as to the arbitrary and unfounded character of the number seven, that they seem, on the contrary, to consider it the most absolute and perfect of all numbers. To say nothing of Philo, who may be thought to have a national and religious bias, Gellius, Censorinus and Macrobius, can scarcely find words to describe its manifold virtues, and to unfold the mysteries which it contains. Cicero in his *Somnium Scipionis*, had said that "seven is the master key of all things³⁶;" and Macrobius, in commenting upon the words, fully supports this exalted view of the properties of the septenary number. He under-

³² Solon, fragm. 14. ed. Gaisford, who mentions (*Poet. Min.* Vol. i. p. 337), that Porson considered the verses to have been fabricated by a Jew or Christian; relying principally on the ground that the phrase *ἔρκος ὀδόντων* is used to signify *teeth*, and not in the Homeric sense of lips. (Compare Porson's *Tracts*, p. 207). Nitzsch, *Odyss.* Vol. i. p. 21, thinks that *ἔρκος ὀδόντων* in Homer means the teeth, and does not admit that the argument derived from the use of the expression in these verses justifies their rejection. Heyne likewise is of opinion that *ἔρκος ὀδόντων* in Homer means the teeth: see his note on *Iliad* iv. 340, (*Vol.* iv. p. 621). Schneidewin, fragm. 23, and Bergk, fragm. 25, the two last editors of Solon, do not appear to condemn these verses. It is evident from the passage of the Politics of Aristotle cited in the next note, that the division of human life into hebdomads had been mentioned by some early poet.

³³ *Polit.* vii. 16. § 17. 17. § 15.

³⁴ The treatise *περὶ ἰσδομάδων*; see Littré, *Œuvres d'Hippocrate*, Tom. i. pp. 384-410, who has discovered in the Bibliothèque du Roi a Latin translation of this lost treatise. He considers the author

of it as posterior to the great Hippocrates, (p. 407,) and as identical with the author of the treatise *περὶ σαρκῶν*, where the septenary division of human life likewise occurs. This division was so diffused in antiquity, that, according to Varro, the life of man was, in the *libri fatales* of the Etruscans, made to consist of twelve hebdomades, Censorin. *de die nat.* c. 14. Compare Müller's *Etrusker*, Vol. ii. p. 31. According to Plutarch, *De Plac. Philos.* v. 23, Heraclitus and the Stoics thought that man reached his perfection at the end of the second hebdomad.

³⁵ Censorin. *ubi sup.* Gellius xv. 7. Plin. *H. N.* vii. 50. Concerning the climacteric years (in the determination of which the septenary and novenary numbers played the chief part) and their connexion with astrology and other unreal sciences, see the long and learned dissertation of Salmasius, *De annis climactericis et antiqua astrologia Diatriba*, Lugd. Bat. 1648, 8vo. The belief in the great climacteric year is laboriously refuted by Sir T. Browne in his *Vulgar Errors*, iv. 12.

³⁶ *Qui numerus rerum fere omnium nodus est.* § 5.

Cambridge University Press

978-1-108-05774-5 - The Classical Museum: A Journal of Philology, and of Ancient History and Literature: Volume 2

Edited by Leonhard Schmitz

Excerpt

[More information](#)

takes to prove that no other number is so prolific of admirable qualities³⁷, and he performs this promise by expatiating upon its various excellencies. According to him, the heavens, and the earth, and all that is upon the earth, are full of sevens. The motions of the heavenly bodies are determined by this number; the age of man, and his bodily organization³⁸, are regulated by the same standard. "Tot virtutibus insignitus septenarius (he concludes by saying) quas vel de partibus suis mutuatur, vel totus exercet, jure plenus et habetur et dicitur." Philo, in like manner, enlarges at great length on the virtues of this number³⁹; and after having remarked that the Latin *septem* is derived from *σεμνός* and *σεβασμός*, he winds up his discussion by saying that this number has the utmost importance in outward nature, and that it is treated with honour by the most distinguished of the Greeks and barbarians, who cultivate the science of mathematics⁴⁰. Varro had likewise written a treatise entitled *Hebdomades*, of which a summary account is given by Gellius; the object of its first book was, (as the latter writer states, and shews by examples) to enumerate the manifold virtues and powers of the septenary number⁴¹. If therefore Xenophon had been in search of some casual association or analogy to justify the division of his *Hellenics* into seven books, he need not have been at a loss, even if we suppose that many of the fancies just mentioned had not originated in his lifetime.

Furthermore, on looking to the number of books in the other works of Xenophon, as well as those of other writers, we cannot trace any such numerical symmetry as Niebuhr supposes. The *Anabasis* of Xenophon has seven books, as well as the *Hellenics*;

³⁷ Singularum compagum membra tractemus; ex quibus fatebimur nullum alium numerum tam varia esse majestate fecundum. Macrob. in *Sonn. Scip.* I. 6.

³⁸ Macrobius and Gellius III. 10, both observe that man cannot live without food beyond seven days. Dante seems to make Ugolino die on the seventh day: *Inf.* XXIII. 70-5.

³⁹ τί γάρ οὐ φιλέβδομον (he says) τῶν ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ μέρος, ἔρωτι καὶ πόθῳ δαμασθὲν ἑβδομάδος; § 38.

⁴⁰ De mundi Opif. § 42, 43. That is to say, those who cultivated mathematics for *astrological* purposes. Gellius III. 10, mentions that the climacteric periods were used by the Chaldeans.

⁴¹ Septenarii numeri virtutes potestatesque multas variasque dicit. Gell. III. 10. Hierocles in *Aur. Carm.* p. 222 (ed. Warren), likewise eulogises this number: *μονάδος* (he says) *καὶ ἑβδομάδος τὰ ἰδιώματα κάλλιστα εἰσι καὶ ἀριστα*. Hermippus of Berytus, who lived in the time of Hadrian, also composed a treatise *περὶ ἑβδομάδος*. Clem. Alex. *Strom.* VI. p. 291. It seems not inappropriate that he likewise wrote a history of dreams. Voss, *de Hist. Gr.* II. 12. p. 263. ed. Westermann. Compare the passages of Chalcidius and Eulogius, cited by Littré, ubi sup. p. 394-5, and Lydus *de Mens.* II. 11, III. 6. See also Martin, *Études sur le Timée de Platon*, Tom. II. p. 35.