SATIS SATURAE? 1)

BY

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It may be thought that the origins of the term *satura*, and the words used by Rome's first satirists to describe their poems, have by now been discussed *ad nauseam*. Certainly, C. A. Van Rooy's expatiation on the topic 2) would seem to be the last word. His arguments for Ennius' having adopted the generic title *saturae* for his miscellany appear reasonable; although, with so few lines surviving, they have to rely on external evidence. However, even if the literary term *satura(e)* was current by the time of Ennius, which remains doubtful, to argue that Lucilius adopted the same title for his satires is less justified. For a sufficient number of fragments and contexts survive from his programmatic satires (in books XXVI and XXX especially 3)) to give reasonable reliability to internal evidence; however, a careful assessment of all the terms used by Lucilius to describe his poems has yet to be made; at least, one that starts with Lucilius, not Horace. Its results suggest that neither *satura(e)* nor *poemata per saturam*, nor *schedium*, nor *ludus*, nor even *sermones* can be reliably accepted as titles or generic terms for his 'invention'.

*Schedium* can be dealt with most easily. In fact, when J. W. D. Ingersoll first proposed it as a generic term in 1912 4), his thesis was effectively dismissed by R. H. Webb in the next issue of Classical

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1) With apologies to the T.L.S. leader, 14th December, 1962.
3) Approximately 100 complete lines. There are 321 in Horace's programmatic satires, 1, 4 and 10, and 2, 1.
Philology 1). However, scholars since then have been less cautious. G. C. Fiske suggested 2) that Lucilius “applied the term schedium to individual satires to designate their informality of tone and impromptu composition”, and elsewhere 3) argued that the word was “an admirable designation to indicate the method of one, who, as Horace said, could dictate two hundred verses an hour standing on one foot”. More recently, Puelma Piwonka adopted Fiske’s fanciful theories 4): “Der bezeichnendste Titel seiner Dichtung aber ist schedium, als reinster Ausdruck für den Grundsatzen der Improvisation, wie es dem griech. ἀντίστροφος und dem sermo im Gegensatz zur contentio entsprach. So ist auch der Kompositionsstil des Lucilius in die antike Tradition eingegangen”. U. Knoche is brief but salutary 5): “Eine Bezeichnung als schedium, an die man auch gedacht hat, lässt sich nicht stützen”.

However, if Lucilius did use the term in some context or other with reference to his poetry, as seems probable, Piwonka’s suggestion 6) of a recusatio for the context is apposite. For when Petronius makes Agamemnon refer to Lucilianae humilitatis, the context suggests an apologia, and the ensuing poem contains literary theory and educational advice, possibly parodying one of Lucilius’ poems 7). This would limit schedium to a stylistic qualifi-