On the Way: a Poetics of Roman Transportation

by

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Professor Maurizio Bettini
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Abstract

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The first chapter examines the role played by the litter (*lectica*) and sedan chair (*sella*) in Roman literature and culture. The portrait of the wealthy freedman, lounging in his deluxe *octaphoros* (litter carried by eight imported slaves), is one which appears repeatedly, taking shape in the late Republic and reaching a climax of frequency in the satires of Juvenal and the epigrams of Martial, in the late first century CE. While by this stage the conveyance undeniably functions as a satirical symbol, the origins and constructedness of its role as such have been surprisingly under-examined by modern scholars. In order to excavate the litter's developing identity, I first unravel Roman accounts of the vehicle's origins. The *lectica* was repeatedly framed by Roman authors such as Cicero as an exotic import from the near east (Bithynia, in particular), only available to Romans upon their exposure, through the process of imperial expansion, to eastern softness. However, such a projection involved carefully distinguishing this "decadent" litter from already existing, sanctioned litter use: thus the *lectica* also encompasses a category closer to our "stretcher." Indeed, the litter's status as a newfangled import is belied by coexisting narratives of republican-era patriarchs riding in the *lectica*, usually because of injury, old age, or disability. At the same time, there are numerous accounts of able-bodied Roman commanders who take the field in a *lectica*. That the notion of the litter as a stand-in for decadent luxury was still up for negotiation in the late Republic is demonstrated by Cicero, who could at one moment lambaste his juridical or political opponents for employing the litter, and at the next boast of his latest litter acquisition or invite his friends on a litter joy-ride at his villa. I argue that the litter's repeated configuration as an awkward boundary-crosser, constantly out of place whether in public or in private, contributes to the strengthening of dominant categories.

Chapter Two treats the more central image of the chariot (*currus*) in Roman literature and culture. The Roman chariot was a symbol of unique power and prestige in part because of built-in, inherited features: its role as the vehicle of the Homeric battlefield, as the preferred mode of transport for divinities and celestial bodies, as the metapoetic chariot of song of Greek lyric, and as a Platonic metaphor for the soul's constitution. While the complex reception of these individual and often overlapping strands in Roman poetry has been extensively examined, less studied is their intersection with the more distinctively Roman uses to which the chariot was put. In fact, the resonances of the four-horse *currus triumphalis*, in which generals rode during the triumphal procession, and the circus chariot, the breakneck-fast racing vehicle of the Roman

circus, are frequently far more vital to understanding the function of the chariot in Roman literature. Starting from the assumption that the opposition between the two is central to understanding the Roman concept of *currus*, I explore how, on the one hand, literary chariots constantly invoke the transcendent power of the triumphal chariot, and yet, with increasing frequency, are represented as suffering terrible crashes. I read this obsessive fetishization of chariot crashes, which reaches a peak by the late first century CE, as attesting to an underlying anxiety about matters of imperial succession and expansion, and, at the same time, a willful articulation of a collective desire on the part of Romans to witness the collapse of the *princeps*. A counterpoint to Rome's most central vehicle is the *essedum*, of which I offer an account as a postscript to the second chapter. This war-chariot of the Britons, first encountered and described by Caesar during his British expedition, was subsequently appropriated as an exotic and fashionable means of getting around Rome and its environs. As the vehicle's original associations fade through time, the conveyance becomes increasingly normalized for quick trips and even seems to have become a kind of light stage-coach for long-distance journeys. Nevertheless, as I argue, the *essedum*'s lingering identity as mobile spoils of war available for leisure use by elites allowed the vehicle to function as a safe, subordinate alternative to the pinnacle achievement represented by the triumph.

The third and final chapter explores the cultural significance of the *carpentum* and its prestigious relative, the *pilentum*, two special carriages sanctioned for use by Roman matrons, but nearly always portrayed as problematic or else dangerous. Through an examination of several stories involving the *carpentum*—most importantly that of Tullia, who famously drove over the corpse of her father, King Servius, in the carriage—I show how this conveyance served to focalize Roman patriarchal anxieties surrounding women's conflicting loyalties as daughters and wives. Next, I analyze accounts of the prohibition of women's privilege of using the *carpenta*, the attempts of moralizing senators such as Cato the Elder to oppose the repeal of this ban, and the dramatic protest of the women themselves. I demonstrate how its occasional, but conspicuous use by men was represented as effeminizing, and I trace the recurring theme of hybridity in its depictions. I conclude by arguing that, rather than being exclusively about Roman attitudes towards women's mobility, the representations of the *carpentum* reveal an underlying crisis of individual agency in the late Republic and early Principate, for which vehicular transport—and the *carpentum* especially—functioned as a most powerful metaphor.

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Introduction: Setting Out

Let us begin with two stories of Romans on the move, and others who get in the way. The first comes from a section of Aulus Gellius, in which the lettered collector offers a focused *collatio* of the style of three orators, Gaius Gracchus, Cicero, and the elder Cato. Gellius quotes the following anecdote from Gracchus:

> *quanta libido quantaque intemperantia sit hominum adulescentium, unum exemplum vobis ostendam. his annis paucis ex Asia missus est, qui per id tempus magistratum non ceperat, homo adulescens pro legato. is in lectica ferebatur. ei obviam bubulcus de plebe Venusina advenit et per iocum, cum ignoraret, qui ferretur, rogavit, num mortuum ferrent. ubi id audivit, lecticam iussit deponi, struppis, quibus lectica deligata erat, usque adeo verberari iussit, dum animam efflavit.*
>
> I shall give you just one example of the excessive wantonness and lack of self-control of young men. A few years ago, a young man who had not yet held office as a magistrate was sent as an envoy from Asia. He was carried in a litter (*lectica*). A ploughman, a commoner from Venusia, came up to him and, not knowing who was being carried, asked as a joke whether it was a dead man they were carrying. When the young man heard this, he ordered that the litter be set down and that the man be beaten to death with the straps holding the litter together.[1]

The second is about a different kind of quasi hit-and-run, one whose infamy is much better known. It comes from Livy's narration of the fall of King Servius Tullius at the hands of his son-in-law Tarquin and daughter Tullia.

> *carpento certe, id quod satis constat, in forum invecta nec reverita coetum virorum evocavit virum e curia regemque prima appellavit. a quo facessere iussa ex tanto tumultu cum se domum reciperet pervenissetque ad summum Cyprium vicum, ubi Dianium nuper fuit, flectenti carpentum dextra in Vrbium cliuum ut in collem Esquiliarum eveheretur, restitit pavidus atque inhibuit frenos is qui iumenta agebat iacentemque dominae Seruium trucidatum ostendit. Foedum inhumanumque inde traditur scelus monumentoque locus est—Sceleratum vicum vocant—quo amens, agitantibus furiis sororis ac viri, Tullia per patris corpus carpentum egisse fertur, partemque sanguinis ac caedis paternae cruento vehiculo, contaminata ipsa respersaque, tulisse ad penates suos virique sui, quibus iratis malo regni principio similes propediem exitus sequerentur.*
>
> There is at any rate sufficient agreement that she rode in a *carpentum* and, undaunted in the presence of the crowd of men, summoned her husband from the curia and was the first to call him [Tarquin] king. He commanded her to depart from such mayhem. Returning home, she had reached the top of the Vicus

[1] *N.A.* 10.3.5, C. Gracchus (fr. 49 Malcovati)

> Cyprius, where the temple of Diana recently stood, and was having her driver turn the *carpentum* to the right, onto the Clivus Urbius so that she could go to the Esquiline Hill, when the driver stopped, terrified, and, pulling the reins, pointed out to his mistress the slaughtered Servius, lying in the road. It is here that tradition records a foul and inhuman crime, and the place is a monument to it—they call it Wicked Alley—where Tullia, insane and driven by the furies of her sister and husband, is said to have driven her *carpentum* over her father's body. She herself, stained and spattered, bore part of her slaughtered father's blood to her own and her husband's *penates*. As a result of their anger, the evil start to this reign was soon enough followed by a similar end.[2]

How are we to understand these stories? More importantly, how are we to place them within the context of ancient Roman transportation? A great deal of scholarly attention has been paid to many of the everyday, nuts-and-bolts aspects of transit—subjects such as the manufacture of milestones, the composition of harnesses, the average stage-length on the *cursus publicus*, the paving materials employed, the precise routes followed, maximum speeds attained—while surprisingly little has been devoted to the significance of these realities within Roman culture and literature, and to their functions as bearers of cultural meaning. A revised set of questions and concerns will, then, be necessary for the ensuing discussion.

How does a culture, or an empire, declare its ability to produce, parcel out, and regulate speed? How does it celebrate its capacity to collapse space and time while dramatically limiting access to this movement? What are the varieties of objects and practices, symbols and images, which a particular culture harnesses to achieve these ends? What is the relationship between human beings—passengers, drivers, and onlookers—and technologies of motion? How do hierarchies of vehicles take shape to reflect and complement human social ladders? Is it possible to sketch a map of a culture's transportational universe, assigning to each conveyance a special node in the network? What then is the relationship between such cultural patterns and literature? These are the questions with which the following investigation will be concerned. Rather than viewing the numerous appearances of vehicles—both foregrounded and peripheral—in Roman literature as more or less transparent reflections of the reality of ancient vehicular movement, I count these literary manifestations as special instances of a variety of discourses that constitute "Roman transportation." Despite the obvious importance of travel, mobility, and the mastery of space in the late Republic and early Principate, what work has been done on the subject already can be characterized by two approaches. One attempts to assemble an accurate portrait of "how it actually was" to travel through the Roman empire by cart, carriage, litter or chariot, but frequently fails to recognize the shifting dynamics involved in discursive representations of Romans on the move.[3] By contrast, a long and well-developed tradition of scholarship has studied the explicitly metaphorical employment of vehicular or road imagery in Roman poetry, often to the exclusion of much of the surrounding context. This project will seek to steer clear of these extremes by positing a simple axiom: that Roman culture had a powerful and highly developed system of discourses surrounding transportation which had its reflexes both in

[2] Livy 1.48

[3] See the surveys of Casson (1974), Chevallier (1988), André and Baslez (1993), and Giebel (1999). The bibliography on specific aspects of ancient transportational technology is vast, as is that concerning the routes of Roman roads. For more recent approaches, see Laurence (1999), on the development of Roman roads and social history, and Laurence and Newsome (2011), on movement within Roman cities.

"actual" practice and in metaphors—ranging from the highly self-consciously literary to the quotidian, in the form of proverbs and idiomatic phrases—which could be invoked, enacted, or challenged. The underlying assumption throughout is that an account of such discourses is of the utmost importance for understanding a culture whose control of space and viability was a central, and ever increasing, feature of its identity. Lastly, it is my hope that examining the representations of these cultural phenomena will help to enrich our understanding and interpretation of the texts themselves, especially since few of them have ever been read from this perspective in the past.

We shall return to the special significances of the vehicles (*lectica* and *carpentum*) in our two introductory stories below, both in this prefatory discussion and in the course of the chapters themselves. But first, I want to dwell for a moment on an opposition that is germane to questions of movement, that of proximity and distance. I mean the tricky coexistence of steady familiarity and repeated bafflement that has come to characterize Classics, and has proved to be perhaps its most compelling resource. It is the sense we often have when reading Greek and Latin texts that we are at home in our texts, that we know just where we are—which is so reliably shaken up when we realize, upon closer examination, that we are instead in entirely strange and unfamiliar surroundings. Let us take the example of terrestrial vehicles. Carriages, wagons, and roads are such a basic feature of the everyday life that seems to peek through our literary texts—they are apparently so straightforward and *un*complicated—that we tend not to think twice about them when they crop up in our authors. Litters are perhaps less familiar and more exotic, but have more recently found their way into contemporary, popular depictions of Roman life in such a way as to seem, if a quirky cultural practice, nevertheless straightforward enough.[4] The considerable power—both physical and cultural—furnished by animal- and human-driven vehicles is easy for us to overlook, surrounded as we are by an array of speeding contraptions with many times the momentum and technological sophistication of their ancient forebears (although we tend to be relatively blasé about modern horsepower too). It is very difficult to remind ourselves that at the level of people walking around, a chariot can seem a technological marvel, a sedan is flashy and imposing, and a mule-drawn carriage can be huge, heavy, and loud. We have to remind ourselves that by the time of the early empire great numbers of men and women were routinely carried around by groups of slaves in lavish beds-on-poles, throughout the city, and over vast distances; that there was a thriving trade in litter-bearers; and that laws were passed—even some employing congestion pricing!—to limit litter gridlock. Similarly, the complex multiplicity, the sheer number of types of ancient vehicle (*arcera, basterna*, *carpentum*, *carruca*, *carrus*, *cisium*, *clabulare*, *covinnus*, *currus*, *essedum*, *lectica*, *petorritum*, *pilentum*, *plaustrum*, *raeda*, *serracum*, *sella*, *tensa*, not to mention a handful of barely-attested others), can be easy to block out as so much background noise. But clearly there are significant differences lurking in that dizzying array. Although it may not be possible to construct a perfect, Levi-Straussian periodic table of vehicular elements (so complex and shifting is the evidence and the terms themselves, especially diachronically), we must nevertheless try to foreground its otherness and texture. In order to grasp such complexities, a kind of *Verfremdungseffekt* must be embraced.

But the truth is that transportation, as a cultural phenomenon, is frequently elided in Roman literature—a fact that at first glance may seem deserved. Aside from being dirty and exhausting, it is often rather dull and predictable, and so apparently not especially worthy of discussion, not to mention careful analysis. Transportation means time spent waiting to arrive in

[4] For example, several litters have cameo appearances in the HBO/BBC series *Rome*.

one place, having left another behind. It is rarely the focus of things, almost always in service of something else: war, diplomacy, imperial administration, tourism. Even when going out for a friendly visit, transport is a means to an end. Nevertheless, as unimportant and undeserving of examination as transportation may seem, most of our surviving Roman authors spent great lengths of time in transit themselves and, as tedious and forgettable as they may have found it, we do find them expressing strong opinions about it from time to time. It may come as no surprise that, when the movement of conveyances is given a more significant role, brought into the spotlight, it tends to play the part of the villain. The scenes we stumble across often highlight supposedly *anomalous* or *inappropriate* means of getting around: pompous retinues, too many litters, dressed-up mules or, sometimes, reckless driving. We might say, dejectedly, that this skews our understanding of what transportation really meant for the Romans, and we will learn more by harnessing our energies to focus exclusively on aerial photography and excavated milestones after all. On the other hand, the fact that Romans represented transportation in this manner is *in itself* significant, and worthy of much closer study.

1. Road Rage

A motorcycle ridden by a spare little man wearing spectacles and plus fours had gone around me and planted itself in front of me at the red light. As he came to a stop the little man had stalled his motor and was vainly striving to revive it. When the light changed, I asked him with my usual courtesy to take his motorcycle out of my way so I might pass. The little man was getting irritable over his wheezy motor. Hence he replied, according to the rules of Parisian courtesy, that I could go climb a tree. I insisted, still polite, but with a slight shade of impatience in my voice. I was immediately told that in any case I could go straight to hell. Meanwhile several horns began to be heard behind me.[5]

My introductory anecdotes aside, Latin literature does not offer many depictions of road rage, at least as we usually understand it: the hostile or aggressive behavior exhibited by vehicle operators who are frustrated for certain reasons, most of which have to do with perceptions of delay. They are sideswiped or cut off, stuck in traffic or forced over by late-mergers, caught behind trucks or buses or slowpokes.[6] If we have any doubts about the real existence of the phenomenon, we can take comfort in its recent official recognition by no less weighty an authority than the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, produced by the American Psychiatric Association, where it has been recognized as a symptom of "intermittent explosive disorder."[7] Like many other newly identified diagnoses, its cases are no doubt on the rise. But perhaps as ubiquitous as this conventional road rage in our contemporary experience is the frequent *outrage* expressed as a result of other people's alleged rage. This is the familiar shock and anger we experience when we observe, or describe, someone else behind the wheel in the full grip of road rage, like some modern-day berserker. Perhaps if we were to measure the sum total of all rage pertaining to the roads, we might even discover that "true" road rage is really just a minority occurrence, that there is much more in the world of this second, derivative variety of anger. That is, perhaps representations, or perceptions, of the phenomenon are more significant than the phenomenon itself.

What is important for our discussion here is that, while we do not encounter many portraits of road rage in Latin literature, we do come across "intermittent explosive disorder" of

[5] Camus, *The Fall* (trans. Justin O'Brien), 51-2.
[6] On road rage, "late mergers," and similar concepts, see Vanderbilt (2008).
[7] *DSM-IV-TR*

the secondary category: there is no shortage of texts that represent the *outrage* prompted by the road behavior of others. But unlike modern responses to road aggression, which are usually about rudeness or recklessness (Ratso Rizzo's "I'm walkin' here! I'm walkin' here!"), ancient versions tend to be more concerned with pompous display, luxurious conveyances, and supersized entourages. These tend to be articulated in terms of moralizing discourses, with which interpreters of Roman culture will be well familiar. So before moving on to a discussion of the specific vehicles, I would like to linger for a moment on this special outrage, expressed by several authors who are especially good at outrage (Seneca and Cicero in particular), when these men are presented with the spectacle of ostentatious transport.

It perhaps comes as no surprise that lavish travel would furnish a ready target for these cultural chroniclers to be seen mouthing off at. After all, it is easy to lump the comings-and-goings of bombastic beast- or man-powered vehicles (along with their passengers) together with any number of behaviors and practices (extravagant eating, drunken carousal and aftermaths, inroads into theatre, adulterous entanglements, etc.) designated by the calumniators as off-limits for self-respecting Romans and deserving of much laughter and/or scorn. Viewed from a certain distance, the litter-borne butts of Cicero's and Juvenal's jokes are certainly meant to belong to a hypothetical class, one whose members exhibit one or more of the following typical traits (to name a few): sloth, softness, effeminacy, gluttony, greed, deceit, social ambition, low or freed status. But there are features unique to habits of transport, even despite their many-faced representations, in genres as diverse as satire, epigram, oratory, and philosophy. What was it precisely that so piqued the ire of these commentators? That is, what makes land transport special as a bearer of cultural considerations, and in how literature chooses to portray it? I shall begin with Seneca because, aside from the setting the tone of earlier and subsequent raillery, he is one of the most outraged, and most vocal, of the complainers. Moreover, he offers us a tidy, introductory opposition—of unencumbered versus encumbered travel—which, we shall see, was particularly fertile in the Roman literary imagination.

Seneca presents ostentatious transport as ubiquitous following a rhetorical strategy of hysteria dear to diatribe. The extreme conduct of a few is no longer idiosyncratic, a few blips on the radar, but made commonplace, everywhere—or at least it will be soon enough, says Seneca's worked-up reportage.[8] Since so much of the philosopher's epistolographic energies are taken up with redefining his own apparently eccentric tendencies as the true center, and recasting the mainstream as actually, or deservedly, marginal, whenever we come across an "everybody's doing it," what we are surely dealing with is a charge of "un-Roman activities!" Thus, in a delightfully Senecan paradox, what is marginal is made the norm in order to be rendered marginal once more. It's just that, the second time around, Seneca has put his signature to the Venn diagram. Letter 123 is exemplary in this respect—roughly speaking, an attack on riches. The philosopher says, in high dudgeon:

> *omnes iam sic peregrinantur, ut illos Numidarum praecurrat equitatus, ut agmen cursorum antecedat; turpe est nullos esse, qui occurrentis via deiciant, aut qui honestum hominem venire magno pulvere ostendant.*[9]

[8] That is, despite the more tempered observation, that *quod* [i.e., over-indulgent behavior]*, si pauci facerent, nollemus imitari, cum plures facere coeperunt, quasi honestius, quia frequentius, sequimur. et recti apud nos locum tenet error, ubi publicus factus est*, implying of course that the trend is not quite so widespread as he asserts in the portraits that follow.

[9] *Ep.* 123.7

Everyone "wanders about" now, accompanied by hordes of Numidians who take over the roads, knock people out of the way, and stir up a lot of dust: a sign now betokening the arrival of an "honorable personage." In this topsy-turvy world, an otherwise base man has become *honestum*, and *not* to have slaves to fulfill these tasks has become base. And there is the ubiquity once more, clearly undercut by Seneca's outrage at witnessing such a fantastic spectacle.
omnes iam mulos habent qui crustallina et murrina et caelata magnorum artificium manu portent: turpe est videri eas te habere sarcinas solas quae tuto concuti possint.[10]

And now everyone drives mules decked out with outlandish adornments (crystal, murrine, engraved) of the art world's latest darlings. It is, once again, *shameful* to be seen having only luggage that can do what it's supposed to: namely, get jostled around on a trip.[11] It is unthinkable *not* to participate in the kind of extreme paradox that a decorated mule represents. That universal *omnes* has now been replaced by a specific, deictic "you," a subtle shift in perspective that relocates Seneca from the position of heckler on the sidelines, alone against the crowd, to empowered accuser leading the charge.

> *omnium paedagogia oblita facie vehuntur ne sol, ne frigus teneram cutem laedat: turpe est neminem esse in comitatu tuo puerorum cuius sana facies medicamentum desideret.*[12]

To top it all off—and we'll leave aside for the moment the question of why this would feature as the climax of the rhetorical flight—everyone's pages ride around in such fancy vehicles smeared with sun-block in the heat, and covered in some kind of embrocation in the cold. It is now lowly *not* to have someone in your cortege of slaves who doesn't daub himself with this kind of make-up. Once again relishing his rigged-up paradox, Seneca the auditor is here to put things right, and show us that these degenerates have their definitions backwards.

It is a vivid and inventive passage, and yet, as we shall see, the above description contains elements—peregrination, exotic Numidian *cursores*, hordes of attendants, lavish decoration, dust—that form almost a commonplace in texts decrying showy transport, especially those that portray imperial corteges. Indeed, the indignant philosopher's roadside view may have been partly inspired by his own emperor Nero's prominent movements.[13] A passage from Pliny the Elder locates Neronian vehicular adornment within the familiar Roman narrative of declining morals:

> *vas cocinaria ex argento fieri Calvus orator quiritat; at nos carrucas ex argento caelare invenimus: nostraque aetate Poppaea coniunx Neronis principis delicatioribus iumentis suis soleas ex auro quoque induere iussit.*[14]

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[10] *ibid.*
[11] For the benefits, salutary and otherwise, of jostling (usually conveyed by the term *gestatio*, "riding"), cf. *Ep.* 55.1, on which see below.
[12] 123.7
[13] There is at least a metaphorical reference in the *De Clementia*, addressed to Nero: *aberrare a fortuna tua non potes; obsidet te et, quocumque descendis, magno apparatu sequitur* (1.8.2).
[14] *N.H.* 33.140

Whereas good old Calvus complained about silver dishes, in Pliny's day, men have figured out how to cover (or carve?) carriages in silver, and Nero's wife Poppaea had her favorite beasts shod with golden shoes. Dressed-up mules and, as in Seneca, Numidian pages crop up again in Suetonius' *Nero*:

> *numquam minus mille carrucis fecisse iter traditur, soleis mularum argenteis, canusinatis mulionibus, armillata phalerataque Mazacum turba atque cursorum*.[15]

As was the case with Seneca's *omnes*, here too exaggeration ("never fewer than a thousand coaches") seems to be a vital part of watching entourages march by (is it very different with contemporary accounts of road rage?). The same is true of the sense of paradox expressed, of categories confounded: mules shouldn't wear silver shoes; fancy woolen livery looks absurd on scruffy muleteers. It is not just extravagance that we are encouraged to disapprove of, but extravagance funneled downwards, onto the extremely humble—a mixture of high and low that is both baffling and disgusting. But, most of all, it is just wasted energy. As Seneca himself says in another letter, *quid ad rem pertinent mulae saginatae unius omnes coloris? quid ista vehicula caelata?... ista nec dominum meliorem possunt facere nec mulam.*[16]

These descriptive elements, clearly already part of a well-established discourse about ethical commuting, had great staying power in the tradition of imperial life-writing.[17] In the *Historia Augusta*, the emperor Elagabalus is made heir to Nero's processional excesses.

> *iter privatus numquam minus sexaginta vehiculis fecit, avia sua Varia reclamante, quod omnia perditurus esset; imperator vero etiam sescenta vehicula dicitur duxisse, adserens decem milibus camelorum Persarum regem iter facere et Neronem quingentis carrucis iter inisse. causa vehiculorum erat lenonum, lenarum, meretricum, exoletorum, subactorum etiam bene vasatorum multitudo.*[18]

The nod to Suetonius is clear. *Numquam minus* reappears, even if Nero's procession has now been cut in half to make way for Elagabalus' longer one. There is also a fascinating association, already latent in many of the passages but stated here explicitly, between the size of one's train and the number of one's dissolute companions. Why else would you need so many carriages, the rhetoric of the passage seems to ask: vehicles of that multitude, as everyone knows, are for

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[15] *Nero* 30.3. The Mazaces appear to have been a Numidian people.

[16] *Ep.*87.8 (N.B. *omnes* once again). In the ellipsis, Seneca's quotes, rather subversively given his re-purposing here, Vergil, *Aen*. 7.277-9, a description of the gifts sent to Aeneas by Latinus: *instratos ostro alipedes pictisque tapetis: / aurea pectoribus demissa monilia pendent, / tecti auro fulvum mandunt sub dentibus aurum*.

[17] Claudius is given his own funny version of extravagant transportation. His well-known fondness for dice-throwing has led him to have a special carriage designed which will keep the table steady while on the go (*aleam studiosissime lusit, de cuius arte librum quoque emisit, solitus etiam in gestatione ludere, ita essedo alueoque adaptatis ne lusus confunderetur*, 33). The weird tinkering implied is in line with Suetonius' portrait of the emperor as characterized by eccentric, antiquarian fixations. Claudius' dice-wagon is reminiscent of his ultimately unsuccessful campaign to revise the Latin alphabet: both represent goofy naivety stemming from a certain kind of misplaced practicality. This discourse on imperial transport also finds room to accommodate overly *inconspicuous* movements, which can run the risk of seeming aloof or tight-fisted. Not surprisingly, Tiberius stands out here. In Tacitus (*Ann*. 4.58), he departs *arto comitatu*. In Suetonius (*Tib*. 46), he is described as providing his retinue with food, but no money. As we shall see below, the litter functions as an even more telling symbol of various emperors' reigns and behaviors.

[18] S.H.A *Elag.*31.4-6

transporting revelers from one party to the next. Or if the outrage we are meant to experience was in any doubt, the emperor's grandmother Varia is briefly glimpsed verbalizing her disapproval, in somewhat vague terms: "He'll ruin everything!"

By the fourth century, Ammianus, not to be outdone by his predecessors, transforms these tentative sketches into a kind of wild, pandemonic nightmare. And just as nightmares often are, his is helpful in bringing certain issues to the surface. His frenzied description rushes along from a complaint about the excessive speed of riders through the streets (kicking up paving stones with fiery hooves) to a dizzying account of hordes of attendants arrayed and marshaled like battle ranks, and somehow arrives at a tirade about the depravity of eunuchs:

> *Mensarum enim voragines et varias voluptatum inlecebras, ne longius progrediar, praetermitto illuc transiturus quod quidam per ampla spatia urbis subversasque silices sine periculi metu properantes equos velut publicos ignitis quod dicitur calcibus agitant, familiarium agmina tamquam praedatorios globos post terga trahentes ne Sannione quidem, ut ait comicus, domi relicto. quos imitatae matronae complures opertis capitibus et basternis per latera civitatis cuncta discurrunt. utque proeliorum periti rectores primo catervas densas opponunt et fortes, deinde leves armaturas, post iaculatores ultimasque subsidiales acies, si fors adegerit, iuvaturas, ita praepositis urbanae familiae suspensae digerentibus sollicite, quos insignes faciunt virgae dexteris aptatae velut tessera data castrensi iuxta vehiculi frontem omne textrinum incedit: huic atratum coquinae iungitur ministerium, dein totum promiscue servitium cum otiosis plebeiis de vicinitate coniunctis: postrema multitudo spadonum a senibus in pueros desinens, obluridi distortaque lineamentorum conpage deformes, ut quaqua incesserit quisquam cernens mutilorum hominum agmina detestetur memoriam Samiramidis reginae illius veteris, quae teneros mares castravit omnium prima velut vim iniectans naturae, eandemque ab instituto cursu retorquens, quae inter ipsa oriundi crepundia per primigenios seminis fontes tacita quodam modo lege vias propagandae posteritatis ostendit.*
>
> For I shall omit the feasts of gluttons and the multifarious lures of pleasure, lest I go on too long; instead, I shall pass to the fact that certain people speed through the open spaces of the city and over dislodged paving stones without fear of danger, as if driving post horses with fiery hooves (as they say), dragging behind them ranks of slaves like gangs of plunderers, not leaving even Sannio at home, as the comic poet says. And numerous matrons imitate them, hurrying back and forth through all corners of the city, veiled and in closed sedans. And just as skilled battle commanders marshall first the dense ranks of sturdy fighters, then the light-armed soldiers, then the javelin-throwers, and lastly the reserves, to aid the rest if need should arise, so those in charge of the urban households, standing out with batons held in their right hands, assiduously direct the throng; and, as if the signal had been given in camp, near the front of the vehicles all the weavers march; following these come the blackened cooking staff, then all the others indiscriminately, together with the loafing commoners from the neighborhood; last come the hordes of eunuchs, starting with old men and ending with boys, pale and disfigured by the misshapen form of their features; so that, wherever anyone

> goes, seeing the ranks of mutilated men, he will curse the the memory of the ancient Queen Semiramis, who was the first to castrate young males, as it were laying force on nature, and diverting her from her established route; nature, who at the very cradle of birth, through the primeval founts of seed, by some unspoken law, points the way to future propagation. [19]

It seems remarkable to us that an aside about the transportation habits of certain Roman elites could so quickly and emphatically end up ranting about *spadones*, castration, and the laws of nature. Is there a connection? As one possible explanation, we might be tempted, as discussed above, to view "the pretentious retinue" as one straightforward sign (more or less interchangeable with many others) for "effeminate luxury." The passage moves from fancy conveyances to eunuchs because they belong to one and the same category. That is, what we have are merely items on a metonymic list: if the list had gone on (any) longer, we would encounter other, similar markers: actors and prostitutes, mullets and dormice, etc.[20] Once again, at a certain level of abstraction, this is undeniable. But already in the passage from the *Historia Augusta*, we saw Elagabalus' "pretentious retinue" not simply as a sign standing in for effeminate luxury, but as a vehicle in which to transport it, or even a place in which to locate it. This is not surprising, given that the passing of an imposing imperial train could be one of the most compellingly visible manifestations of an emperor's power, or excess. To see the emperor in transit was no doubt an extraordinary spectacle, perhaps as close as one could get to the true "center" of Rome, and so locating decadence here is a way of identifying Rome, and Roman culture, with decadence.

But the way that Ammianus associates vehicles and luxury is somewhat different. First, he says he must sidestep a full account of dinnertime and nighttime indulgences, lest he go on too long, or go too far (*ne longius progrediar*), in order to pass on (*transiturus*) to transport. There is too much material, too much legwork required in order to root out all the private dining- and hiding-places. It's much easier instead simply to stand (or leap) aside and watch the whole disgusting pageantry unfold before your very eyes, right out in the open (*per amplia spatia urbis*). Even matrons, inspired by the example of parading slaves, are to-ing and fro-ing (*discurrunt*) all over the city (albeit veiled and in covered sedans). *Luxuria* has become so flagrant and widespread that it no longer needs to hide, or even stay in one place. It now has freedom of movement, and so will surely pass by sooner or later. Private households have, paradoxically, settled in to a semi-permanent state of moving around in public spaces. The fact that these representatives of various domestic activities—some possibly innocuous (*omne textrinum*, *atratum coquinae…ministerium*—although probably not), others obviously less so (*multitudo spadonum*)—have taken up temporary residence in public raises questions about the nature of the (apparently) novel mobility described by Ammianus, similar to ones we have already encountered. Is it a symptom, or a cause, of moral degeneracy? Is domestic transparency simply revealing perversities that were already there, or is this new transience at the root of the problem, introducing elements or practices that were otherwise kept out?

But other, more concrete metaphorical cues link arrogant processing with Ammianus' shock at *castrati*, young and old. Semiramis is, we are told, ultimately to blame for the

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[19] 16.6.16-7

[20] Seneca himself lumps such practices together, vehicles included, at *Ep.*122.18: *quomodo cultu se a ceteris distinguunt, quomodo elegantia cenarum, munditiis vehiculorum, sic se volunt separare etiam temporum dispositione*.

perversity: she turned nature back from its laid-out course (*ab instituto cursu retorquens*)—nature, which shows the way (*vias…ostendit*) towards reproduction. Thus, eunuchs and pretentious retinues are not so very different: both have strayed, or been forced, from the customary path. Just as the eunuchs' journey to manhood has been interrupted, cut short, so, as we shall see below, promenading entourages represent a culturally aberrant way to move about. In the case of transport, going about *secundum naturam* seems to be, for Seneca and many other Roman authors, to move steadily, directly, and without encumbrance, ideally on foot.

Seneca's letter 87, although in some ways revisiting ground already covered above, nevertheless enters new territory by providing a somewhat different, and more sharply defined, criticism of bombastic transportation, this time framed in terms of two divergent varieties of nomadism. The letter, a mini-lecture in which literal and metaphorical journeying are richly commingled, is ostensibly about ridding oneself of unnecessary burdens in order to live the simple life in pursuit of philosophy.[21] But it is also about, literally, "roughing it." The opening hook recounts a trip Seneca says he took with a friend, Maximus, with rather humble equipment and (relatively) few attendants.[22] In order perhaps to invest this awkward venture with greater authority (Seneca himself expresses mixed feelings about it), he cites the austere transit habits of Cato the Censor, in contrast to those of present-day Romans:

> *M. Cato Censorius, quem tam e re publica fuit nasci quam Scipionem (alter enim cum hostibus nostris bellum, alter cum moribus gessit), cantherio vehebatur et hippoperis quidem inpositis, ut secum utilia portaret. o quam cuperem illi nunc occurrere aliquem ex his trossulis, in via divitibus, cursores et Numidas et multum ante se pulveris agentem! hic sine dubio cultior comitatiorque quam M. Cato videretur, hic qui inter illos apparatus delicatos cum maxime dubitat utrum se ad gladium locet an ad cultrum. o quantum erat saeculi decus, imperatorem, triumphalem, censorium, quod super omnia haec est, Catonem, uno caballo esse contentum et ne toto quidem; partem enim sarcinae ab utroque latere dependentes occupabant. ita non omnibus obesis mannis et asturconibus et tolutariis praeferres unicum illum equum ab ipso Catone defrictum?*
>
> Cato the Censor, whose birth was as much a benefit to the state as Scipio's (for one man made war on our enemies, the other on our [bad] morals), used to ride a gelding—and what's more, one loaded with saddle-bags, so that he could take only the essentials with him. O how I would love to see him now meet one of those fops, rich men on the road, accompanied by forerunners, Numidians, and a great cloud of dust! This fellow would no doubt seem more refined and better-attended than Cato—a man who, surrounded by these dainty accoutrements, most of all can't make up his mind whether to become a gladiator or a beast-fighter. O

[21] At one point in the letter, the shift from literal to figurative quest is self-consciously foregrounded when Seneca resolves, in disgust, to have done with *ista materia* (both "this subject" and "this paraphernalia"). The word *impedimenta*, "baggage," serves as the link: *video non futurum finem in ista materia ullum nisi quem ipse mihi fecero. Hic itaque conticiscam, quantum ad ista quae sine dubio talia divinavit futura qualia nunc sunt qui primus appellavit 'inpedimenta'* (87.11). Hence even *discussing* the material realities of travel is relegated to an accessory position similar to that (properly) occupied by the material realities themselves. The metaphorical potential of travelling—the "philosophical" content—is, he insists, what really matters in his discussion.

[22] *Ep.*87.2-4

> what an honor it was to his generation, that a general who had celebrated a triumph, was a censor and, above all, a Cato, was content with a single nag—and in fact not even a whole one, for the panniers that hung down from both sides took up some of the space. And so, next to those stout Gallic ponies, Spanish amblers, and trotters, wouldn't you prefer that lone horse, one that was rubbed down by Cato himself?[23]

The picture is familiar and certainly no less a fiction than the many other scenes we have seen that portray hordes of gussied-up mules. But it is nevertheless striking that Seneca imagines the two parties meeting along a single road, as if in some Western showdown at high noon. Cato seems, at first glance anyway, to be something of a construct meant to stand at the opposite pole on the axis of transport ethics. While our throngs of immoral travelers ("everybody") are characterized by foppery, abundant wealth, exotic couriers, clouds of dust, grotesque embellishment, skin creams—in short, vulgar excess and indulgence—the Censor is distinguished by his single gelding (*cantherio*, or was it a nag, *caballo*?), saddlebags, prudent packing, and, implicit in the discomfort involved, his tough endurance.[24] The closing rhetorical question, of course, makes clear which of the two, in Seneca's view, is the better, more Roman choice.

But the contrast is not just about differences in behavior, one good, the other bad: it also handles internal essences and ephemeral exteriors. Part of the rhetorical punch comes when it turns out that the pompous *trossuli* are in fact mere pretenders, men reduced to fighting as gladiators in order to make ends meet (*hic qui inter illos apparatus delicatos cum maxime dubitat utrum se ad gladium locet an ad cultrum*), which is never a good sign. They are wealthy men—but only on the road, in passing (*in via divitibus*). What is true and lasting is their lowly nature, the dramatic paraphernalia mere trappings. As we shall see, riding around with a large retinue almost always means, in Latin literature, not deserving that retinue. Cato's prominent stature, by contrast, (*o quantum erat saeculi decus, imperatorem, triumphalem, censorium, quod super omnia haec est, Catonem*) hides quietly within a simple, rustic bearing—or, in the end, rises above them. Instead of being dwarfed by overblown equipment, Cato seems almost too big for his lone horse, and will suffer no loss in self-respect by rubbing down the nag with his own hands (*equum ab ipso Catone defrictum*).[25]

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[23] *Ep*.87.9-10

[24] In Plutarch's *Life* (6.2), while governor of Sardinia he is described making his rounds to the various cities on foot, with a single attendant, in contrast to his profligate predecessors. And Plutarch depicts the younger Cato as following in his illustrious ancestor's footsteps. He repeatedly opts for walking instead of riding, and even keeps up with those on horseback: ἐθιζόμενος βαδίζειν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς πᾶσαν ὥραν ἄτερ ὀχήματος. τῶν δὲ φίλων οἱ συνεκδημοῦντες ἵπποις ἐχρῶντο, καὶ πολλάκις ἑκάστῳ παρέβαλλεν ὁ Κάτων ἐν μέρει προσδιαλεγόμενος, περιπατῶν αὐτὸς ὀχουμένων (5.6-7). Similarly, almost word for word, at 9.4:
εἵποντο δ' αὐτῷ πεντεκαίδεκα μὲν οἰκέται, δύο δ' ἀπελεύθεροι, φίλοι δὲ τέσσαρες,
ὧν ὀχουμένων ἵπποις, αὐτὸς ἀεὶ περιπατῶν ἑκάστῳ παρέβαλλεν ἐν μέρει προσδιαλεγόμενος. In section 11, the younger Cato takes only two friends and three servants on a sea voyage. Later (20), after declining to run for tribune, he sets out on a journey to Greece and, accompanied only by books and a few philosophers, encounters a huge entourage. Upon learning that it belongs to Metellus Nepos, who is on his way to Rome to run for tribune himself, Cato turns around to stand for the office himself, so determined that Metellus not win the election (20).

[25] It is tempting to interpret *defrictum*, as Gummere's Loeb version does, as "saddle-worn," despite the attested technical meaning of *defricare*, "to rub down, comb" a horse. The notion that Cato is *wearing down* his horse, and not the other way around, would accentuate Cato's transcendence of material circumstances. The pronoun *ipso*, here endowed with almost reverential qualities, is, conversely, often used in making fun of social climbers who—scandalously—drive their own vehicles. This "*ipse* of carriage-driving" is doubly mocking because of the additional

But what of these Numidians, whom we have seen appear in several cameo roles already?[26] The answer seems to be that Numidans tend to stand in, concisely, for wandering behavior—"running around." Besides being the eponymous "nomads," they are consistently represented as a people in perpetual motion by Latin literature.[27] They are first-rate horsemen (*id longe primum equitum in Africa est genus*, says Livy, 29.34), and in a startlingly high proportion of their appearances in historical narrative, they are riding around, racing up, or taking off.[28] They are also known for their slack morals (Livy 29.23: *sunt ante omnes barbaros Numidae effusi in uenerem*), and the two features coalesce elegantly in a passage in the *Aeneid,* where they become *Numidae infreni* (4.41), "riding unbridled horses," but also, implicitly, "out of control"—both reckless as equestrians and lacking self-control.[29] In Sallust's *Jugurtha* we are told that they are, in Metellus' estimation, untrustworthy, fickle, and seditious (*genus Numidarum infidum, ingenio mobili, novarum rerum avidum esse*, *Jug*. 46).[30] In Lucan, they are simply *vagi* (4.677) and *fugaces* (4.746). In Sallust, Metellus sets up a garrison at a Numidian city called, appropriately, Vaga.[31] Their battle-charges are described as *vagos* by Silius Italicus (*cetera iam Numidis circumvolitare uagosque / ferre datur cursus et toto fervere campo*, 9.242-3).

But nomadism per se appears to be their most characteristic trait. Pliny the Elder tells us that they live in portable huts, *mapalia*: *Numidae vero Nomades a permutandis pabulis, mapalia sua, hoc est domos, plaustris circumferentes.*[32] In Sallust, these *mapalia* are compared to ships: *ceterum adhuc aedificia Numidarum agrestium, quae mapalia illi vocant, oblonga, incurvis lateribus, tecta quasi navium carinae sunt*.[33] And as in Vergil's *infreni*, the entry on *mapalia* in Festus highlights the moral implications of this type of mobile home: ***mapalia*** *casae Poenicae appellantur: in quibus quia nihil est secreti, solet solute viventibus obici id vocabulum.*[34] Their roving way of life—in which everything is out in the open, nothing kept private—seems to explain their dissolute morality, or at least so Festus suggests. But what matters here is that the

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meaning of "the master" it can connote. See, e.g., Juvenal 1.61-2 (*nam lora tenebat / ipse*), 8.147-8 (*et ipse, / ipse rotam adstringit sufflamine mulio consul*). For a woman at the reins, see Propertius 4.8.21-2 (*spectaculum ipsa sedens primo temone pependit, / ausa per impuros frena movere locos*).

[26] The Mazaces from the Suetonius passage above (*turba Mazacum*) were apparently Numidians, perhaps a particularly exotic group—the *crème de la crème* of all Numidian outriders. In any case, while Numidians were the proverbial nomads of North Africa, these roaming tendencies were associated with most groups from the region. The passage from Lucan, cited above, is instructive, in that what we are offered is a kind of potpourri of African peoples and epithets, the connections between the two by no means fixed. cf. *Mazax* at Lucan 4.681.

[27] Paulus (Festus) 173L: *Numidas dicimus quos Graeci Nomadas, sive quod id genus hominum pecoribus negotietur, sive quod herbis, ut pecora aluntur.*

[28] E.g., Sallust *Jug*. 38; 56 (*tanta mobilitate sese Numidae gerunt*).

[29] The identification of rider and means of transport is of course important. cf. Horace *Ep.*16, where, at the imagined sack of Rome, a *barbarus…urbem / eques sonante verberabit ungula* (11-2). Cars obviously become extensions of, or surrogates for, ourselves: we say, "he cut me off" or "she veered into me." But we also say, as if to dissasociate ourselves as agents from our vehicles, "he was hit by a car."

[30] *nam vulgus, uti plerumque solet et maxime Numidarum, ingenio mobili, seditiosum atque discordiosum erat, cupidum novarum rerum, quieti et otio adversum.* The etymolology of *seditio* (*sed-* and *itio*, "going aside, going away") may be worth recalling here.

[31] *Jug.* 47: *oppidum Numidarum nomine Vaga, forum rerum venalium totius regni maxime celebratum, ubi et incolere et mercari consueuerant Italici generis multi mortales.*

[32] *N.H.* 5.22. cf. Isidore 9.2. Also, Ammianus 31.2, in which the wandering Halani are compared to the *Nomades*.

[33] Sallust *Jug.*18.8

[34] The word was also used metaphorically: *vos mera mapalia fecistis*, "you've made a real mess of things," Seneca *Apoc.* 9.1; *at nunc <mera> mapalia*, "but as it is, it's all a shambles," Petronius 58.

Numidians are an ethnic group that is almost entirely defined by the way they get around, unlike, say, the elder Cato (or Seneca). He, like certain other Romans, is endowed with the special ability to transcend or pass through potentially humbling circumstances, to rub down his own horse without getting his hands dirty.[35]

One couldn't get away with the opposite, however. Aulus Gellius 15.4 recounts the story of Ventidius Bassus, a man who gained wealth and power by working in transportation (*comparandis mulis et vehiculis*). Eventually hired by Caesar as a defense contractor ("specialization: *impedimenta*"), he was launched into a stellar political and military career that culminated with the celebration of a triumph over the Parthians and the consulship itself. His humble origins and original profession were not forgotten and Gellius tells us that the Romans couldn't take it when he became consul (*eamque rem tam intoleranter tulisse populum Romanum*): the following verses were tacked up in public: *concurrite omnes augures, haruspices! / portentum inusitatum conflatum est recens: / nam mulos qui fricabat, consul factus est*.[36]

A similar disapproval is contained in the Vergilian parody of Catullus 4, *Catalepton* 10, in which Catullus' rather more innocent *phaselus* is replaced by a bustling, impatient self-made man, Sabinus the muleteer (*Sabinus ille quem videtis, hospites / ait fuisse mulio celerrimus…*), identified by some as (surprise!) the same Ventidius Bassus who appears in Gellius.[37] Besides demonstrating that the realities of vehicular transportation don't really belong in higher literary genres, *Catalepton* 10 lends further support to the notion that founding fathers can, from time to time, tend mules, but muleteers, even when they become consuls, will always stay muleteers.[38] Just as Cato's nomadism is carefully distinguished from the other, more extravagant variety described above (as well as that of mule-workers), Horace's own moseying mule-ride in satire 1.6 is contrasted with the stressed-out senator Tillius' ponderous train.

> *nam mihi continuo maior quaerenda foret res*
> *atque salutandi plures, ducendus et unus*
> *et comes alter, uti ne solus rusve peregre<ve>*
> *exirem, plures calones atque caballi*
> *pascendi, ducenda petorrita. nunc mihi curto*
> *ire licet mulo vel si libet usque Tarentum,*
> *mantica cui lumbos onere ulceret atque eques armos.*
> *obiciet nemo sordis mihi, quas tibi, Tilli,*
> *cum Tiburte via praetorem quinque secuntur*
> *te pueri, lasanum portantes oenophorumque.*

[35] Another way to look at this could be in terms of Marc Augé's "non-places." Those who get overly comfortable in transit, such as Seneca's fops and the Numidians, mistakenly turn non-places—vehicles, horseback, roads, waysides, inns—into actual places in which to dwell (just as Claudius plays board-games free of upset in his own bespoke carriage). Cato's comportment, by contrast, shows a proper disregard for those non-places. See Augé (1992).
[36] Ventidius Bassus is called *mulio* by both Cicero (*N.H.* 7.135) and Plancus (*ad Fam*. 10.18).
[37] The true identity of *Sabinus ille* has been much discussed, but it is a question that is peripheral to this discussion. See Syme (1958) and, most recently, Shaw (2007).
[38] The figure of the *mulio* could also be proverbial for wandering. Hercules is described as having traveled through *plura loca quam ullus mulio perpetuarius* in Seneca *Apoc.* 6, although there is some evidence that a *mulio perpetuarius* was a specific type of long-distance mule-driver.

hoc ego commodius quam tu, praeclare senator…[39]

The details of this staring contest are somewhat different from Cato's, but similar issues are nonetheless at stake. Not weighed down by hangers-on and excess vehicles or baggage, the strolling satirist-*flaneur* is free to wander wherever he wants (in the country, even abroad, *peregre*), and as humbly and slowly as he wishes (*licet*, *libet*). Questions of *libertas* and agency are of course always involved in modes of transport. The touch of mock-grandeur (*eques*) and the hint that Horace and his luggage are perhaps a bit too heavy for the poor animal, both create an atmosphere of quixotic humor that is largely absent from Seneca's portrait of Cato. Tillius is meanwhile worn-out and harried by vehicles and attendants. The joke is that Horace is actually more comfortable (*commodius*—with a hint perhaps of the Aristotelian *modus*, "moderation," as in, *est modus in rebus*) than the senator with all his creature comforts. But perhaps more important than this is that, once more, the problematic retinue is both too big and, paradoxically, not big enough, as Tillius' mere five slaves and Horace's dig (*obiciet nemo sordis mihi, quas tibi, Tilli*) make clear.[40]

Our texts seem to relish these ethical face-offs. We bump into such literary path-crossings repeatedly, and it is striking how often the same themes recur, and how insistently certain values are reinforced, varied as the episodes themselves are, and their contexts. In a letter to Atticus (6.1), Cicero describes an encounter (*obviam*, once again) with a certain Vedius, who, despite being a scoundrel (*magno nebulone*), rides around with an oversize retinue, which includes, among other things, a baboon:

hic Vedius mihi obviam venit cum duobus essedis et raeda equis iuncta et lectica et familia magna pro qua, si Curio legem pertulerit, HS centenos pendat necesse est. erat praeterea cynocephalus in essedo nec deerant onagri. numquam vidi hominem nequiorem.[41]

In somewhat similar fashion, Cicero envisions another telling run-in in the *Pro Milone*. It turns up twice, in fact, in the course of the speech. In an interesting twist, Cicero here uses Clodius' *lack* of retinue to argue for his guilt in the attack on Cicero's client Milo—but only because Clodius is the type of man who would, in normal circumstances, ride around with hordes of questionable attendants. Indeed, in the scene described, Milo is the one with the more sizeable retinue, but this fact is used as evidence against the probability of Milo having attacked Clodius.

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[39] *Sat*. 1.6.100-10. Martial 12.24 conjures up a similar ideal, or fantasy, of free, unencumbered transport, this time in a sleak *covinnus*: *O iucunda, covinne, solitudo, / carruca magis essedoque gratum / facundi mihi munus Aeliani! / hic mecum licet, hic, Iuvate, quidquid / in buccam tibi venerit, loquaris: / non rector Libyci niger caballi, / succinctus neque cursor antecedit; / nusquam est mulio: mannuli tacebunt. / o si conscius esset hic Avitus, / aurem non ego tertiam timerem. / totus quam bene sic dies abiret!*

[40] Freudenburg (2001) 58-9 touches on the passage in a discussion of equids in satire.

[41] *Att.* 6.1.25. The law referred to was probably the *lex viaria* of *ad Fam.*8.6, which would have taxed large entourages. Cicero's anecdote continues and it is revealed that, among Vedius baggage, which he had had stored at one Vindullus' house, busts of married women were discovered: *sed extremum audi. deversatus est Laodiceae apud Pompeium Vindullum. ibi sua deposuit cum ad me profectus est. moritur interim Vindullus; quae res ad Magnum Pompeium pertinere putabatur. C. Vennonius domum Vindulli venit. cum omnia obsignaret, in Vedianas res incidit. in his inventae sunt quinque imagunculae matronarum in quibus una sororis amici tui hominis 'bruti' qui hoc utatur et illius 'lepidi' qui haec tam neglegenter ferat. haec te volui paristoresai. sumus enim ambo belle curiosi.* The punchline helps confirm the notion that inside large retinues lurk dubious morals.

> *Milo autem cum in senatu fuisset eo die quoad senatus est dimissus, domum venit, calceos et vestimenta mutavi, paulisper, dum se uxor, ut fit, comparat, commoratus est, dein profectus id temporis cum iam Clodius, si quidem eo die Romam venturus erat, redire potuisset. obviam fit ei Clodius, expeditus, in equo, nulla raeda, nullis impedimentis, nullis Graecis comitibus, ut solebat, sine uxore, quod numquam fere: cum hic insidiator, qui iter illud ad caedem faciendam apparasset, cum uxore veheretur in raeda, paenulatus, magno et impedito et muliebri ac delicato ancillarum puerorumque comitatu.*[42]

Even so, the contrast between Clodius' implicit entourage—that is, the one he does *not* have with him here; the way he *usually* goes about—and Milo's actual one, is striking. First, Clodius' loneness is expressed in mostly negative terms: unencumbered, on a horse, without wagon or baggage, unattended by Greek sidekicks (unusually), without his wife, to whom he was joined at the hip. In a rhetorical approach similar to Seneca's imagined collision between Cato and the fops, Cicero in effect strips away Clodius' habitual trappings in order to reveal his true villainy. Secondly, Milo's own retinue, while no doubt larger, is described mainly in terms which are meant to undermine the likelihood that it was Milo who attacked Clodius and not vice versa. He is riding in a *raeda*, wearing the cloak of a *viator*, accompanied by his wife and a harmless group of slaves (*muliebri ac delicato ancillarum puerorumque comitatu*)—certainly no roadside attacker bent on slaughter. Cicero returns to the contrast later in his speech:

> *age nunc; iter expediti latronis cum Milonis impedimentis comparate. semper ille antea cum uxore, tum sine ea; numquam nisi in raeda, tum in equo; comites Graeculi quocumque ibat, etiam cum in castra Etrusca properabat, tum nugarum in comitatu nihil. Milo, qui numquam, tum casu pueros symphoniacos uxoris ducebat et ancillarum greges; ille, qui semper secum scorta, semper exoletos, semper lupas duceret, tum neminem, nisi ut virum a viro lectum esse diceres. cur igitur victus est? quia non semper viator a latrone, non num quam etiam latro a viatore occiditur: quia, quamquam paratus in imparatos Clodius, tamen mulier inciderat in viros.*[43]

A similar rhetorical strategy is employed, but this time it is simply magnified. Clodius' accustomed company—still absent from this roadside scene, lest we forget—are nevertheless now made even more present by their absence. Cicero makes them more vivid, fleshes them out: Clodius' Greeklings who follow him everywhere (even on an attempted military junta), his jesters, various prostitutes, male and female. Milo, on the other hand, happens to have some musicians with him—they belong to his wife. There are *ancillarum greges*, bands of maidservants, but their participation appears innocent enough. Thus, although the scene is in certain ways the reverse of Seneca's portrait of the itinerant Cato—no doubt played this way by Cicero mainly to help make his case that Milo killed in self-defense—both portraits nevertheless flag important differences in wayfaring behavior, but, ultimately, in order to reveal that this importance is in fact misplaced, or merely peripheral to more essential considerations. Both authors insist and protest—perhaps too much—that this external apparel is not what really matters, that it is unimportant or trivial, in any case always secondary to or in service of

[42] *Mil.*28
[43] *Mil.*55

something else. This assumption will be essential to our investigation of the individual vehicles in the subsequent chapters, since it will frequently be seen to underpin the associations and functions of the different conveyances themselves.

2. *Discursus*: Gridlock and Traffic Flow

When a road is once built, it is a strange thing how it collects traffic, how every year it goes on, more and more people are found to walk thereon.[44]

By now it should be clear that one major way that Romans articulated transport discursively was through expressions of moral outrage at the behavior of those who are thought to lavish too much attention and expense upon its material aspects. Long, detailed accounts of such allegedly transgressive behaviors tend to linger on and explore in tantalizing detail the objects they are supposed to abhor. This uncomfortable cultural relationship with transportation finds similar expression in another recurring amibiguity, this time surrounding the phenomenon of what takes place when groups of vehicles and travellers move en masse, in cities, and in variously predictable ways. Like most modern cultures, Roman discourses of "traffic" highlight the problematics of mass movement.[45]

The Roman satirist Juvenal voices the exasperation most have felt when stuck in a lurching, constraining traffic jam. Indeed, few situations can be as frustrating as being offered an image, and a promise, of free, unfettered movement stretching off onto the horizon, while having it simultaneously and decisively curtailed, and seemingly without cause. No doubt the assumed ease—and speed—of car transit makes this contrast between mobility and standstill especially grievous. But Roman culture, even if it quite literally moved slower than ours, nevertheless was able to articulate a familiar version of this frustrating dissonance.

In his third satire, Juvenal has a friend, Umbricius, mouth a lengthy tirade on the crushing burdens of urban life, before departing for good from the ancient world's biggest metropolis. He can barely move in Rome's congested streets, so he's moving on, away, out to the still countryside. *Eundum est*, are some of his final words in the poem, as he climbs aboard his carriage piled with a household worth of stuff: "Time to go." The hub of Umbricius' ecstatic catalogue of grievances is his vivid portrait of a Roman traffic jam, in some ways reminiscent of Jean-Luc Godard's 1967 gridlock nightmare, *Weekend*. Both bottlenecks are staggeringly surreal, and apparently omnipresent; and both tend to veer off into glimpses of gruesome collisions. Juvenal's back-up is so lengthy that it actually takes shape before sun-up, in the middle of the night, interrupting the sleep of all but the most wealthy and insulated:

> *nam quae meritoria somnum*
> *admittunt? magnis opibus dormitur in urbe.*
> *inde caput morbi. raedarum transitus arto*

[44] From Robert Louis Stevenson's Speech to the Chiefs in Samoa (October 1894), referring to a newly built access road to Vailima, in Stevenson (2004), 150.

[45] While there is no single Latin word for the two, contradictory senses of vehicular "traffic" in English (as both, "movement of vehicles" on the one hand, and "blockage of vehicles" on the other), *discursus*, as invoked by Juvenal at 1.86 (one of the objects of his satire), seems to have the sense of hectic "moving back and forth" in the crowded city, and seems to be the nearest equivalent. *Commeatus*, "passage" or "transport," frequently refers to the actual goods being hauled. *Transitus* easily and frequently describes metaphorical "transitions" but can refer to physical "passage" or "throughput."

uicorum in flexu et stantis conuicia mandrae
eripient somnum Druso uitulisque marinis.
si uocat officium, turba cedente uehetur
diues et ingenti curret super ora Liburna
atque obiter leget aut scribet uel dormiet intus;
namque facit somnum clausa lectica fenestra.
ante tamen ueniet: nobis properantibus obstat
unda prior, magno populus premit agmine lumbos
qui sequitur; ferit hic cubito, ferit assere duro
alter, at hic tignum capiti incutit, ille metretam.
pinguia crura luto, planta mox undique magna
calcor, et in digito clauus mihi militis haeret.
...
scinduntur tunicae sartae modo, longa coruscat
serraco ueniente abies, atque altera pinum
plaustra uehunt; nutant alte populoque minantur.
nam si procubuit qui saxa Ligustica portat
axis et euersum fudit super agmina montem,
quid superest de corporibus? quis membra, quis ossa
inuenit? obtritum uolgi perit omne cadauer
more animae.

Which apartments let you rest, anyway? It takes a fat paycheck to get to sleep in Rome: the Infernal City (*inde caput morbi*). The constant traffic of carriages in the narrow twisting streets, and the swearing of the driver when his herd stops, would wake up even Claudius, or seals! If duty calls, the backed-up crowd gives way as the rich man is carried on through, flying along in his giant litter (Liburnian galley), reading or writing all the way, or sleeping inside—you know how a closed litter lets you nap. And he'll arrive first. But as I try to hurry along, the wave ahead of me blocks my path and the great massed ranks of people behind crush my kidneys; one fellow hits me with his elbow; another with the hard litter pole; this guy bashes my head with a beam, that guy with a wine cask. My legs are caked with mud. Before long I'm trampled by mighty feet from every side and a soldier's boot stamps on my toe…Tunics just mended are torn. A long fir log looms as its wagon steers closer and another cart hauls a whole pine trunk: they sway threateningly, high above the crowds. What if the axle that's transporting boulders from Liguria collapses and dumps an overturned mountain onto the lines of people—what will be left of the bodies? Who will be able to find any limbs, or bones? Every corpse, crushed indiscriminately, will disappear, just like its soul.[46]

Juvenal surrounds Umbricius on all sides with such a fantastic pile-up of obstacles that the entire clog seems expressly designed to hold *him* up, alone, especially—and really no one else. If mobility is a vital ingredient to identity—and precisely how one walked or rode carried great

[46] 3.234-61

weight in Roman culture—then being prevented from advancing is symbolic death.[47] The hysterically mock-epic scenario of the collapsing timber and stone loads seems at first glance to have merely a generic thrust. Tree-felling is a well-worn set piece of epic narrative, so the point seems to be that satire is the rear-end(ing) of epic, the place where all the once lofty lumber of Homer and Virgil ends up: on trucks on the backed-up off-ramp. That Juvenal has in fact recycled some *Aeneid* tree material—metrical scrap-metal for his satirical junkyard—is certainly corroborating.[48] But surely a weightier point is being made, about the potentially terrifying claustrophobia induced by a traffic jam. Amidst the tightly packed conglomeration of mass immobility, how can people properly be said to have limbs, bones—bodies—even souls? Of course, such anxieties are deeply solipsistic. The provocation represented by traffic is possible mainly because we imagine that other people have nowhere to get to. Others' loss of identity through immobility is independent from—irrelevant to—ours. It is true that the scene paints Umbricius as just one desperate commuter among hundreds, *all* on their way to the daily hand-out (*sportula*). But they get little sympathy from him as fellow (downtrodden) travellers. Rather, they are the problem, either barring the way, knocking him back and down—or, even worse, proceeding relatively unimpeded. Forever plaguing and tantalizing the inconceivably immobilized subject is the well-funded flyover, sailing fast and free above the heads of the queuing classes. For Umbricius, this imagined ideal takes the all too tangible form of a man of ample means in a huge litter, here fantastically conceived of as a Liburnian galley—probably the fastest, most maneuverable of all Roman vessels.

The tight-packed streets of Rome open up to the wide expanse of the sea. Shut off from the world in his portable palace, the passenger is transported *away* from traffic and crowding and noise, to a place where he can do as he pleases without inhibition. In a kind of rhetorical compaction, this transcendent destination (a place where there is no more traffic) is actually identified with the vehicular ride: inside the litter, the rich man reads, writes, sleeps. He does the kinds of things one *cannot* usually do in stop-and-go traffic, in the scramble to squeeze one's way through the occluded streets. But it is clear from the rest of Juvenal's rather obsessive treatment of litter riders—they are almost always freed slaves who have lately struck it rich, usually through nefarious means—as well as from Roman culture's widespread disapproval of litter use (particularly by men), that this fantasy, as alluring as it may be, is simply not available to any self-respecting (if cash-strapped) aristocrat such as Umbricius, or even Juvenal himself. Hence the opting out: traffic, the VRBS, Roman society—all a structure of ineluctable obstacles. *Eundum est.* Time to go.

But while Juvenal's conception of urban traffic as an unintended system of blockage—the breakdown, or byproduct, of throughput—is rather intricate in terms of articulation, it is nevertheless familiar. Despite the ongoing dictates of Level of Service and seemingly limitless freeway widening, bumper-to-bumper traffic, as a phenomenon and, inevitably, a defining quality of transportation, has hardly decreased. But I would like to turn now to a rather less self-evident feature of Roman representations of urban traffic, one which stands in direct opposition to the notion of traffic as obstacle.

Access to wheeled transport in general was highly restricted at Rome: legal limits were placed on the entrance of yoked vehicles into the city by several emperors turned traffic czars,

[47] See Corbeill (2004), 107-39 and now O'Sullivan (2011).
[48] Verg. *Aen.* 2.628-9, itself a special variant of the epic tree-felling motif. Cf., e.g., *Iliad* 23.110-26; Enn. *Ann.* 175; Verg. *Aen.* 6.156-82, 11.133-8; Ovid *Met.* 10.86-108; Lucan *B.C.* 3.399-452; Statius *Theb.* 6.84-125; Val. Flacc. *Arg.* 3.161-72; Sil. Ital. *Pun.* 10.524-39.

such as Julius Caesar and Claudius (and given the repeated issuing of such bans, their actual success must remain in question). And on a more overtly symbolic level, permission to ride in the four-horse chariot as *triumphator*—the focal point of the lavish and spectacular triumphal procession, as well as the pinnacle of Roman public (male) achievement—was strictly regulated, and highly contested. The vast majority of Roman men would never set foot in a chariot. The litter, while never officially regulated, was nevertheless, as a site of conflicting ideologies of masculinity, a vessel in which prominent Roman men could only recline publicly with a great deal of circumspection. But the most highly (officially) regulated "class" of passenger was certainly Roman women, and while there is no doubt as to the pervasive gendering of conveyances in American automobile culture (think mini-vans, etc.), no parallel exists for an officially sanctioned "women's vehicle," such as the Roman *carpentum*, a two-wheeled, usually mule-drawn, carriage.

The origins of this state-sponsored privilege are complex, but most ancient accounts agree that the senate granted it to matrons in return for their assistance in bailing out the state while in straitened circumstances. The Roman *dictator* Camillus had made a vow to the god Apollo if he should be allowed to defeat the city of Veii. When this took place in 396, he could not summon the necessary funds to fulfill his part of the bargain. The women stepped in, collected their gold jewelry and donated it to the senate, who promptly rewarded them with the right to ride in *carpenta*. Nearly two centuries later (215), in the midst of the Second Punic War, sumptuary legislation (*Lex Oppia*) was passed that strictly limited women's possession and display of wealth: under the terms of the law, their privilege of riding in carriages within the city was taken away. About twenty years later (196), a repeal of the law was proposed, which led to a deep rift among leading politicians. The historian Livy describes the civic crisis which the proposal precipitated. At first, "many distinguished men came forward to speak for and against it; the Capitoline was filled with crowds of supporters and opponents of the bill," but then:

> *matronae nulla nec auctoritate nec verecundia nec imperio virorum contineri limine poterant, omnes vias urbis aditusque in forum obsidebant viros descedentes ad forum orantes ut florente re publica, crescente in dies privata omnium fortuna, matronis quoque pristinum ornatum reddi paterentur. augebatur haec frequentia mulierum in dies; nam etiam ex oppidis conciliabulisque conveniebant. iam et consules praetoresque et alios magistratus adire et rogare audebant.*
>
> The matrons could not be kept inside their homes by either official influence, modesty, or their husband's commands, but occupied all the city streets and entrances to the forum, imploring the men as they entered the forum that, as the state was flourishing and the private fortune of all was growing day by day, they allow the women too to have their former decorations restored. This concourse of women was increasing daily; for they were now coming in from the towns and rural villages. Soon they even dared to approach and appeal to the consuls, praetors, and other magistrates.[49]

An extraordinary breakdown of social order is imagined here, as the normal checks on women's mobility—state authority (*auctoritas*), their own personal modesty or shame, their sense of

[49] 34.1

"knowing their place" (*verecundia*), and their husband's power over them (*imperium viri*)—are incapable of *containing* them within their wonted domestic spaces. They move into the public realm and move like men, literally "laying siege to" (*obsidebant*) all the city streets and entrances to the center of Roman political activity. Their otherwise voiceless role in state politics is now given voice as they accost the men physically and confront them with their pleading (*oratio*). Their intervention, despite the gloomy opposition of Cato the Censor and others, is ultimately successful, and the law is in fact repealed. This, even if Livy devotes the majority of his treatment of the episode to the actual speeches delivered, both for and against, as if ultimately to squelch this challenge posed to officially sanctioned and authorized speech (which Livy's own historiography of course indirectly participates in). Nonetheless it is important, as Livy emphasizes throughout, that the women have unilaterally moved their bodies through the space of the city in order to directly influence the outcome of the debate: in this sense they are enacting a version of what the Oppian Law had prohibited them from doing in the first place—moving through the city openly, even spectacularly. This direct action, despite Livy's interest in and focus upon the content of the senators' speeches, will have to linger as a dangerous threat to Roman political culture.

But one final observation concerns the terms in which the matrons make their impromptu case, reported only indirectly and in passing by Livy. It is significant that they claim their right to mobility is now, once again, in a time of relative peace, warranted—now that the commonwealth is *flourishing (florente re publica*), and that the private prosperity of all is *growing* day by day (*crescente in dies privata omnium fortuna*). Implicit in this configuration is the equation of movement, the flow of people and goods, traffic, with prosperity and growth. If, they suggest, the growth and fertility of the Roman state was temporarily blocked by the ravages of the Second Punic War, it was not inappropriate that their movement between parts of the city, between Roman households, as wives and mothers, should also be interrupted. But now that Rome has begun reproducing itself again, so the matrons should resume mobility: traffic figured as fertility. What may seem merely a turn of phrase in Livy becomes actual narrative content in another well-known take on the story, Ovid's simultaneously grim and glib version in his *Fasti,* his poem on the calendar of Roman Religious festivals. Instead of just preemptively resuming their temporarily obstructed mobility, as in Livy, Ovid's matrons actually refuse to reproduce future Romans, by voluntarily aborting their unborn children:

> *nam prius Ausonias matres carpenta vehebant*
> *(haec quoque ab Euandri dicta parente reor);*
> *mox honor eripitur, matronaque destinat omnis*
> *ingratos nulla prole novare viros,*
> *neve daret partus, ictu temeraria caeco*
> *visceribus crescens excutiebat onus.*
> *corripuisse patres ausas immitia nuptas,*
> *ius tamen exemptum restituisse ferunt.*

> For in ancient times Italian (*Ausonias*) matrons drove in carriages (*carpenta*), which I suspect were also named after Evander's parent (*Carmentis*). Later their honor was snatched away, and every matron vowed not to propagate the line of their ungrateful husbands by giving birth to any offspring; and to avoid bearing

> children, she rashly by a secret thrust expelled the growing (*crescens*) burden from her womb. They say the senate rebuked the wives for daring such cruelty, but restored the right that was stripped away.[50]

No doubt the poet's motivations are different from those of Livy's senate-focused historiography, and Ovid has certainly seized on this version (attested elsewhere), at least in part, for shock value.[51] But once again growth and prosperity are directly linked to the movement of vehicles, here quite literally specified as essential to human fertility. Far from the crushing, deadening blockage we saw in Juvenal's portrait, traffic now licenses and facilitates the city's capacity to reproduce Roman citizens. From these two seemingly incompatible visions glimpsed here, it seems safe to say that Roman culture's view of urban traffic was no less ambiguous than our own.

3. A Parade of Vehicles

> From early in the morning they taught him that all those whistles, shrieks, sighs, roarings and gruntings were not at all what he thought, but were called bells, klaxons, hooters, buzzers, and sirens; they were all machine contraptions. The giant anteaters grinding along, the will-o'-the-wisps, the royal palms with plumes of smoke were really contraptions such as trucks, trams, trolley buses…the brown and black pumas leaping along the streets were not really jaguars leaping on their prey, they were called Fords, Hupmobiles, Chevrolets and Dodges and were automobile contraptions; everything in the city was some kind of machine contraption.[52]

Before embarking on our exploration of Roman varieties of transport, it will first be vital to take account, via a brief inventory, of the fleet of vehicles in operation. While only four—*lectica, currus*, *essedum*, and *carpentum*—will get comprehensive treatment in the chapters that follow, it will be essential to inspect all of the types, in order to allow each model to begin to take shape. This survey will line them up, and briefly sketch what is known (or, in many cases, unknown) about their special, individual functions and physical reality. It will proceed with two purposes in mind.

First, because reading Latin literature too often means having to elide the variegated realities of material objects and, in the case of the stuff of transit, identifying (or at least *picturing*) Roman vehicles as "carts" or "chariots" more or less indiscriminately, this stock-taking will aim to sharpen the resolution of what has frequently remained a rather hazy image. Instead of a long list of words for "wagon," a set comprised of functionally identical items, let us here outline a diversified, heterogeneous assortment of signs, each conveying a distinct set of associations, with all the shifting complexities such entities inevitably involve. If this approach may seem, at times, to *over*emphasize the differences among the vehicles, the guiding proposition will be that, abundant articulation is frequently more illustrative—turns out to convey more—about our understanding of Roman transportation, than reductive standardization.[53] A concerted attempt will be made to avoid the assumption that a cart is always just a cart. After all, the Romans did have some fifteen words for varieties of "carriages," while

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[50] *Fast*. 1.619-26.
[51] E.g., Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 56.
[52] de Andrade (1928), 34.
[53] By "transportation," both here and throughout, I mean the entire complex of discourses, practices, and artifacts involved in the cultural relationship with organized movement through space.

analogous English terms for types of horse-drawn vehicles have mostly fallen out of use.[54] And these multiple, different words do repeatedly turn up in a wide variety of contexts in which we might expect any generic "cart" to do just fine.

Secondly, this schematic account of the range and variety of Roman vehicles will facilitate the beginnings of an understanding of how the entire convoy, this aggregation of moving vehicles, might function as a structure, even if that structure is not perfectly coherent, nor without numerous contradictions, redundancies, and gaps. It will be worth examining to what extent this vehicular hierarchy—for, as will become clear, it is arranged hierarchically—might actually articulate complex arrangements and dynamics of power. As literary texts will be our primary focus in the ensuing discussion, it will unavoidably express literary concerns—generic, narrative, metapoetic—whether overtly or implicitly.

The resulting catalogue is thus intended as a kind of key—or, more aptly perhaps, a roadmap—designed to guide the reader through the exploration that follows, to help her maintain her bearings along the way. It is arranged, as much as possible, in order of most powerful and imposing first, and quietest and least last. As is the case in any semiotic system such as this, roles are differentiated more often through contrast and opposition, rather than by being straightforwardly self-evident. Distinguishing juxtapositions will be marked out where feasible. Surviving images of the conveyances are noted wherever possible.[55] Because our three major vehicles, *lectica*, *currus* (together with *essedum*), and *carpentum*, receive fuller discussion below (as well as in the ancient sources themselves), they will be described relatively briefly here, and the focus will be on their physical characteristics.

Currus

unde [sc. *a cardine rotarum*] *et currus dicti, quod rotas habere videntur*.[56]
currus autem a cursu dictus, vel quia rotas habere videtur; unde et carrum quasi currum.[57]

The most powerful and the fastest of Roman vehicles, this two-wheel, horse-drawn conveyance is split into two significant segments by Roman categorizing: the *currus triumphalis*, the tall, august car used in the triumphal procession, and the *currus circensis*, the low, fast, and dangerous racing vehicle. Even if the triumphal *currus* itself ultimately derives from both the racing chariot and the Bronze Age Greek chariot of war (not to mention strands from both Hellenistic and Etruscan processional vehicles), it is clear that it was a special, uniquely Roman

[54] The translator of *carpentum*, *cisium*, or *essedum* is thus faced with the problem of deciding whether to use obsolete terms for roughly analogous types of conveyances (e.g., buggy, cabriolet, chaise, coach, curricle, gig, phaeton, shay, stanhope, Tilbury, and the numerous variants of each of these), but since both these vehicles and their associations have largely disappeared, generic terms such as "carriage" or "chariot" are frequently used, a tendency that often obscures important differences. During the ensuing discussion, automobiles will occasionally function as handy, analogous "tools for thinking with," in as much as we are very sensitive to the significant differences between myriad varieties of cars. No simple one-to-one set of correspondences is implied by this, but rather the recourse to automobile parallels will act as a convenient (if not especially precise) metalanguage for teasing out the meanings of the individual Roman conveyances.

[55] For the most useful account of the various types with some accompanying images, see Pisani Sartorio (1988), though her identifications are sometimes conjectural. The entries for each conveyance in the *Dictionaire des Antiquités grecques et romaines* of Daremberg-Saglio also include some relevant images.

[56] *ibid.*

[57] *ibid*. 18.35.1. The *currus triumphalis* is probably the most depicted of all Roman vehicles. Aside from numerous appearances on coinage, prominent examples in sculptural relief include that on the arch of Titus, Marcus Aurelius' triumphal chariot in a relief panel preserved in the Palazzo dei Conservatori, and the reliefs on the arch of Septimius Severus showing the emperor's triumphal chariot.

conveyance, specifically adapted for prominent processing in what was the culture's pinnacle ceremony. Notable modifications included the elevation of the body (with solidified, semicircular rail), in order to make the *triumphator* more visible, and lavish adornment: precious materials were customarily employed, as was extensive decorative relief. Four white horses were a standard ingredient in the depiction of the triumphal vehicle.[58] The circus *currus* was by contrast light, low to the ground, and furnished with a more open chassis, in order to allow the *agitator* to lean forward and sideways with his galloping team.[59] For a more detailed discussion of the *currus*, see Chapter Two.

Carpentum

carpentum pompaticum vehiculi genus, quasi carrum.[60]
***Pilentis** et carpentis per Urbem vehi matronis concessum est, quod cum aurum non repireretur, ex voto, quod Camillus voverat Apollini Delphico, contulerunt.*[61]

Aside from the *pilentum*, the *carpentum* is the only Roman vehicle explicitly designated for women. This stately, two-wheeled carriage was used most infamously by Tullia to run over her father's corpse during her involvement in Tarquin's coup. Central to its role were the aetiological accounts of its origins as a privilege. Conceived of as a reward for the women's financial assistance of the Roman state in fulfilling a vow made by Camillus in 396 BCE, the matronly privilege of riding in *carpenta* through the city was revoked by the *Lex Oppia* during the Second Punic War, and then reinstated when the law was repealed (196). In post-Republican Rome, its use continued to be granted to members of the imperial household for conspicuous procession. For further details concerning the *carpentum*, see Chapter Three.

Pilentum

pilentum vel petorritum contecta quattuor rotarum vehicula quibus matronae olim utebantur.[62]

Differentiated from the *carpentum* by being equipped with four wheels instead of two, the *pilentum* is perhaps best known from its appearance on the shield of Aeneas in *Aeneid* 8: *castae ducebant sacra per urbem* / *pilentis matres in mollibus* (665-6). Otherwise, it is only attested in Classical Latin in Horace *Epistles* 2.1, as part of a convey of vehicles that appear in hack dramas (192), and in Livy 5, in his account of the women's privilege of riding in carriages (*carpenta* on holidays and work days, *pilenta* in processions to sacred festivals and games).[63]

Essedum (*esseda*)

[58] E.g., Servius *ad Aen.* 4.543: *qui autem triumphat, albis equis utitur quattuor.*
[59] Mosaics and terracottas offer the best glimpses of the physical reality of the *currus circensis*. For details see Humphrey (1986).
[60] *ibid*. 20.12.4. For examples of images, see the Etruscan urn relief of a *carpentum* (Museo Archeologico, Florence); coins of Livia, Agrippina, Julia Flavia, Domitilla the Younger and Elder, Vibia Sabina, and Faustina the Younger, depicting *carpenta*.
[61] Festus L 282
[62] Isidore 20.12.4
[63] 5.25: *ut pilento ad sacra ludosque, carpentis festo profestoque uterentur*. For images, a *pilentum* can be seen on the arch of Constantine; on a bronze medal of Cybele, the goddess rides in what appears to be a *pilentum* pulled by lions (Richter, *Cat. of the Metrapolitan Museum of New York*, p. 192, fig. 3).

ESSEDA *s(unt) Gallorum vehicula, quibus tamquam victi reges vehuntur.*[64]
'esseda' autem vehiculi vel currus genus, quo soliti sunt pugnare Galli.[65]

First attested in Caesar's memorable account of fighting against detachments of them in during his first British expedition, the *essedum* begins life in Roman culture as a dangerous war-chariot. Novel because chariot warfare was otherwise obsolete, the chosen vehicle of special ranks of British warriors evoked both wonder and terror in Roman observers. Summoning up mythic images of the chariotry of Homeric heroes, the *essedarii* simultaneously unnerve Caesar and Roman spectators with their free-wheeling mobility that transcends stable categories of cavalry and infantry. After the conclusion of Caesar's Gallic campaign, the vehicle was appropriated for everyday use by wealthy, leisured Romans. It is generally assumed to have been adapted for this purpose, but remained a two-wheeled, open conveyance as the *cisium* (see below), except that the latter was drawn by one animal and the *essedum* by two. For a detailed examination of the *essedum*, see Chapter Two.

Covinnus

dimicant non equitatu modo aut pedite, verum et bigis et curribus Gallice armatis: *covinnos vocant, quorum falcatis axibus utuntur.*[66]

So little attested in extant Latin literature as to be nearly a phantom, the Gallic *covinnus* is further mysterious because it is twice—once by Pomponius Mela (above) and once by Silius Italicus (17.417)—explicitly described as a scythe-chariot (*currus falcatus*, ἅρμα δρεπανήφορον), a vehicle otherwise only employed by the Persians, and adopted for use by Antiochus and Mithridates.[67] Silius' image comes in the context of an account of a charioteer from Thule, a fact that should suggest to us its imagined status.[68] Aside from these two murky passages, the *covinnus* appears simply as an alternate term for the British *essedum*. In Tacitus' *Agricola*, *covinnarii* are not significantly distinguishable from Caesar's *essedarii*, and these charioteers may simply be an ethnographic variant.[69] In any case, no mention of scythes is made, a detail that it is difficult to imagine Tacitus deliberately omitting, especially given the already well-established notoriety of the Persian combat vehicle within the ethnographic and

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[64] Pomp. Porph. *Comm. in Horat. Epist*. 2.1.192. Images of the *essedum* are scarce and difficult to identify. One example is a sculptural relief depicting a travelling group, some of whom appear to be in an *essedum*, preserved in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Aquileia.
[65] Servius *in Verg. Georg.* 3.204
[66] Pomp. Mela *de Chor*. 3.52, on the Britons.
[67] *OLD* defines *covinnus* as, "a war-chariot with scythes attached to the axles, used by some Celtic peoples," but it is important to remember that this is based on Pomponius Mela and Silius Italicus. Frontinus (*Strat.* 2.3.18 depicts Caesar fighting *Gallorum falcatas quadrigas*, perhaps an interpolation—Caesar is mentioned after Sulla's tactic of using pikes to stop *falcati* is described, *eadem ratione*). Reinach (1889) doubts the existence of Gallic scythed chariots, as does Mau in *RE covinnus*. Arrian's clear contrast between the British war chariots and the Persian scythe-chariots appears to decide the issue (*Tactica* 19.2): Ῥωμαῖοι μὲν γὰρ οὐδὲ ἐπήσκησάν ποτε τὴν ἀπὸ τῶν ἁρμάτων μάχην, οἱ βάρβαροι δὲ οἱ μὲν Εὐρωπαῖοι οὐδὲ αὐτοὶ διεχρήσαντο ἅρμασιν, πλήν γε δὴ οἱ ἐν ταῖς νήσοις ταῖς Βρεττανικαῖς καλουμέναις. οὗτοι γὰρ συνωρίσι τὸ πολὺ χρῶνται ἵππων καὶ σμικρῶν καὶ πονηρῶν, οἱ δίφροι δὲ αὐτοῖς ἐπιτήδειοί εἰσιν ἐς τὸ ἐλαύνεσθαι κατὰ χωρίων παντοίων. τῶν δὲ Ἀσιανῶν πάλαι μὲν Πέρσαι ἐπήσκησαν τὴν τῶν δρεπανηφόρων τε ἁρμάτων καὶ καταφράκτων ἵππων διφρείαν, ἀπὸ Κύρου ἀρξάμενοι. There is, however, a vivid and terrifying portrait of the Old Irish hero Cuchulain's scythe-chariot in the *Táin Bó Cúailnge*.
[68] 17.416-7: *caerulus haud aliter, cum dimicat, incola T<h>yles* / *agmina falcigero circumvenit arta covinno*.
[69] *Ag.* 35.3; 36.3

historiographic tradition.[70] Lucan summons it up in the context of his dramatic enumeration of the Gallic and German tribes who rejoice upon seeing Caesar leave their land in order to "descend upon Rome": [sc. *gaudet*] *et docilis rector monstrati Belga covinni* ("and the Belgian rejoices, well-taught driver of a *covinnus*, shown to him by others").[71] But, while this terse image does seem to attest to the existence of a belief that the use of the *covinnus* by the Belgae was borrowed from others (most likely from the Britons), it does not settle the question of whether they were equipped with *falces*. Finally, the only other appearance of the vehicle in Latin literature is Martial 12.24, a poem addressed directly to his *covinnus*, and its privacy-affording qualities. In an interesting reversal of the familiar set-piece of castigating outrageous vehicular entourages (discussed above), Martial instead praises its *lack* of associated crew horse-driver, footman, and muleteer: *non rector Libyci niger caballi*, / *succinctus neque cursor antecedit;* / *nusquam est mulio: mannuli tacebunt* ("No black master of a Libyan horse leads the way, and no girded-up footman; there isn't a muleteer: the ponies will keep quiet," 12.24.6-8). *This* leisure-mobile, more so than other rides, offers a refuge and intimacy to its passengers: *O iucunda, covinne, solitudo,* / *carruca magis essedoque gratum* / *facundi mihi munus Aeliani*! ("O sweet solitude, *covinnus*, eloquent Aelianus' gift to me, more welcome than a *carruca* or an *essedum*!" 1-3).[72]

Lectica

lecticae a lectis herbis vocatae.[73]

The Roman *lectica* is etymologically connected to *lectus*, "bed," and this fact proves to be a key to its representation in Latin literature. Most often a problematic vehicle in Roman culture, the litter simultaneously exposes too much, in that it often reveals an intimate, domestic space in public, and at the same time can conceal to excess by hiding its passenger behind curtains, even in the midst of a probing crowd. This ambiguous operation is an essential part of a vehicle that is represented as being perpetually out of place. While Latin authors assert its eastern, usually Bithynian, origins, its appearance in several early Republican scenes raises doubts. That such a delicate negotiation of function was part of its identity is confirmed by the fact that in these supposedly native scenes, its true job was to carry the sick, elderly, or wounded: thus, a stretcher. This important detail added to its awkwardness. As its popularity as a leisure conveyance increased, the *lectica*'s role as a fundamentally discretionary, or even unnecessary vehicle was confirmed. The *lectica* is discussed at length in Chapter One.

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[70] It seems similarly unlikely that Caesar would fail to mention the *essedum* as being equipped with *falces* if in fact it was.

[71] *B.C.* 1.426. Various alternatives for *monstrati* have been proposed: *rostrati*, "pointed" (based on Columella *de R.R.* 2.20.3, on plows: *falcibus…rostratis*); *constrati*, "covered" (based on Martial 12.24, on which see below). Caesar's withdrawal and "invasion": *Romam motis petit undique signis* (395).

[72] The poem also situates the vehicle within the paranoid context of the culture of the *delatores*, from which it acts as a welcome refuge. It nevertheless seems unusually sincere for Martial's usually sarcastic tone. If in fact Pomponius Mela and Silius Italicus were correct and the *covinnus* was actually a scythe-chariot, it is almost tempting then to suggest instead that the poem is ironic, the joke being that Aelianus has actually acquired a *scythe-chariot* for his friend to ride around the city in—hence the privacy and silence! It is after all the sole instance of a *covinnus* used at Rome for leisure transit.

[73] Isidore 20.11.1. The Lettiga Castellani, a partially reconstructed *lectica*, is preserved in the Capitoline Museums.

Sella

unde [sc. a sedendo] et sella quasi sedda dicta est.[74]

In many ways very similar in function and cultural associations to the *lectica*, the *sella*, sedan chair, allowed the passenger to ride seated, instead of lying down as in a litter. See Chapter One for further discussion.

Carrus (*carrum, carra)*

carrum a cardine rotarum dictum.[75]

The *carrus*, though rarely attested in literary sources, appears to have been an all-purpose, four-wheeled wagon of Celtic origin. It was frequently employed in military contexts, and its use by the Romans to transport baggage on campaign may have been adopted directly from the Gauls.[76]

Petorritum

***Petoritum**, et Gallicum vehiculum esse, et nomen eius dictum existimant a numero quattuor rotarum. alii Osce, quod i quoque pitora quattuor vocent, alii Graece, sed* αἰολικῶς *dictum*.[77]

Despite Festus' report of others who claim an Oscan or Greek origin, the *petorritum* seems to have been Celtic in origin. This was the belief of Aulus Gellius who, in the course of ridiculing an unnamed would-be scholar's claim that *petorritum* was actually Greek (changed from *petorrotum*, "flying wheels"), quotes Varro in support of a Gallic origin.[78] Though its function and associations must unfortunately remain rather shadowy for us because it is so little attested, it is clear that the *petorritum* was a four-wheeled travelling carriage, and Porphyrio, in his commentary on Horace, claims that it is the kind of vehicle that is generally (*vulgo*) called a *carrus* (*carrum*).[79] In Horace (*Sat.* 1.6.104), it is the vehicle of choice of the excessively encumbered traveller, whose ostentation he pointedly contrasts with his own humble wayfaring, and so must convey an impression of luxury.

Cisium

vehiculi biroti genus.[80]

The *cisium* is a quick gig. The light, open two-wheeled carriage seems to have been customarily hired out for getting around in a hurry: the Roman taxi.[81] Cicero mentions a

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[74] Isidore 20.11.10. A terracotta statue group from Pompeii shows two bearers carrying a *sella gestatoria*.

[75] Isidore 20.12.1. Non. Marc. (195M): *CARRA neutri generis esse consuetudine persuasum est. Masculini.* (he goes on to cite Sisenna and Varro writing *carros*). For a possible image of a *carrus*, see the four-wheeled military baggage train depicted on the Column of Marcus Aurelius.

[76] E.g., Caes. *B.G.* 1.26, 3.1, and *passim*.

[77] Festus L 226-8.

[78] *N.A.* 15.30.5-7: *"petorritum" enim est non ex Graecia dimidiatum, sed totum Transalpibus; nam est vox Gallica. id scriptum est in libro M. Varronis quarto decimo* Rerum Divinarum*, quo loco Varro, cum de "petorrito" dixisset, esse id verbum Gallicum.*

[79] *Comm. in Horat. Serm.* 1.6.104 (*ducenda petorrita*): *petorritum genus vehiculi est, quod vulgo carrum dicitur*.

[80] Nonius Marcellus 86M (*CISSIUM*), who quotes Cicero *Phil.* 2.77. The next lemma is *CELERATIM*. For an image, see the wall painting from Ostia (in the Biblioteca Vaticana) depicting two men hauling a ship in what appears to be a *cisium*.

messenger speeding (*pervolavit*) fifty-six miles in ten hours at night by *cisia*, and portrays Antony slipping into the city quickly (*celeriter*) in a *cisium*, his head covered to avoid being recognized.[82] It is the vehicle driven by Sabinus the muleteer in the pseudo-Vergilian *Catalepton* 10, where it is speedy indeed (*volantis*, 3). Seneca (72.2.1) speaks of certain subjects that can be written about even when one is riding in a *cisium* (*quaedam enim sunt quae possis et in cisio scribere*), in contrast with topics requiring study, time, and privacy (*quaedam lectum et otium et secretum desiderant*). Writing in a cab is a jolting business. The *Digesta Iustiniani* records cases involving a slave being hit by a speeding *cisiarius*, presumably one travelling too fast, or recklessly.[83] If Festus' definition is correct, the chassis of the *cisium* was called *ploxinum*, known from Catullus 97. There malodorous Aemilius' gums are likened to it: *gingivas vero ploxeni habet veteris* (97.6).[84] Here part of Catullus' joke seems arised from the similarity between the *cisium* as a public vehicle for hire, and a filthy man used sexually by all and sundry. Both offer quick service, and presumably have seen much wear and tear.

Raeda

reda genus vehiculi quattuor rotarum. has antiqui retas dicebant, propter quod haberent rotas.[85]

The *raeda* is a four-wheeled riding carriage, said by the Romans to be Gallic in origin: yet another instance, in the context of transportation, of the Romans "making something foreign their own," as in the case of the *essedum* and *covinnus*.[86] The *raeda*'s connotations are practical

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[81] Taxicab: taxi(meter)(< *taximètre* (*taxe* tax + *mètre* –meter, replacing earlier *taxameter* < German, equivalent to *Taxa* (Medieval Latin: tax, charge) + *meter* –meter) + cab(< *cabriolet* French: little caper <*cabriole* leap < *capriole* < Middle French < Italian *capriola* derivative of *capriolare* leap < *capri(u)olo* roebuck < Latin *capreolus*, equivalent to *capre(a)* roe deer, derivative of *caper*, male goat.

[82] *pro Roscio Amerino* 19.6; Cicero *Phil*. 2.77.4.

[83] 19.2.13.pr.1 *item quaeritur, si cisiarius, id est carucharius, dum ceteros transire contendit, cisium evertit et servum quassavit vel occidit. Puto ex locato esse in eum actionem: temperare enim debuit*

[84] *Ploxenum* was a rare word: Quintilian (1.5.8) says that Catullus picked it up from the Po valley (*Catullus 'ploxenum' circa Padum invenit*); Festus (260L) has more detail: ***Ploxinum*** *appellari ait Catullus capsum in cisio capsa<m>ve cum dixit*…(Catul. 97.6). The meaning seems to be the "body" or "chassis" of the *cisium*, as Garrod (1910) suggests. Whatmough's (1956: 49) conjecture is that *ploxenum* is a separate vehicle, a dung-cart, which could fit the context, but seems arbitrary. Garrod's explanation is that Catullus' image actually refers to pieces of the taximeter, which a *cisium* could have. He compares Virtuvius' (10.9.14) fascinatingly detailed description of the device on a *raeda*: it has *loculamenta*, "brackets," to which are fastened the *dentata tympana*, "drums with teeth" (long *dentes* in rows of *denticuli)*. These *loculamenta*, Garrod suggests, may have been called *gingivae*, "gums," because of their appearance. All of this seems quite possible, but nevertheless misses the connotations of the man's gums as part of a "worn-out, battered mouth for hire." This would fit with O'Bryhim's (2012) general picture of Aemilius, though the connotations of *ploxeni…veteris* are not explored; he calls it an "old wagon," and apparently follows Whatmough.

[85] *ibid*. 20.12.2. Cf. Non. Marc. (451 M, Book VI, *de Inpropriis*): *RAEDAM pro curru Varro Marcipore* (284): *dixe regi Medeam advectam per aera in reda anguibus*. Varro seems to be swapping high for low in his substitution of the everyday *raeda* ("grocery-getter") for Medea's snake-drawn chariot. For images, see a gravestone relief depicting a family in a *raeda* from Alsó-Szent-Iványi (Történeti Múzeum, Budapest); a relief of a *raeda* drawn by four horses and carrying four (possibly five) passengers, from Langres (Musée de Langres); Metope IX from the Tropaeum Traiani, commemorating Trajan's victory over the Dacians at the battle of Tapaea, 102, depicting barbarians in a mule-drawn *raeda* (Adamclisi museum, Corbu).

[86] Quintilian (*Inst. Orat.* 1.5.68, on compounds in Latin) mentions *raeda* while explaining the double origin of *epiraedium* ("thong for attaching a horse to a *raeda* (or, apparently, a *plaustrum*) "): [sc. *iunguntur*] *aliquando et ex duobus peregrinis, ut "epiraedium"*; *nam cum sit "epi" praepositio Graeca, "raeda" Gallicum (neque Graecus tamen neque Gallus utitur composito), Romani suum ex alieno utroque fecerunt.* Cf. the scholiast on Juvenal 8.66: *ornamentum raedarum aut plaustrum*. Caesar *B.G.* 1.51 provides an early glimpse of *Germans* "circling their

A true *vehiculum*, it is an instrument for schlepping. Still enough of a prestige object that to own one would have been relatively unusual, the *raeda*'s associations are nevertheless quotidian enough for Varro to write, in a letter, "but if I hadn't had your *raeda* yesterday, I would have varicose veins."[87] These middle-of-the-road overtones are further attested by its appearances in contexts of "ordinary" travel, and especially of trips involving the transport of the *familia*, typically with much baggage. Indeed, being packed up with household goods seems to have been important to its identity—an ancient station wagon or mini-van, then, or perhaps a mid-size SUV. Cicero employs just such an image of it in his portrayal of Milo's fatal encounter with Clodius on the Via Appia near Bovillae.[88] How could his client have possibly plotted Clodius' murder, instead of merely killing him in self-defense, when they crossed paths as they did? Clodius was on horseback, had no luggage, no *raeda*, no attendants, and not even his wife (a rare occurrence!), while Milo was riding in a *raeda* with his wife, in a traveller's cloak, with an excess of baggage and an entourage of slaves.[89] The brawl unfolds around his *raeda* (*ad raedam*, 29), and, in Cicero's account, it stands in for the wealthy man's household, as if he and his family were the victims of home (*domus* or *villa*) invasion.[90] And Cicero emphasizes that Milo would travel this way to and from Lanuvium regularly, as *dictator* of the town, presumably in the *raeda* he owned. If so, this carriage for occasional commuting could function as a symbolic extension of a Roman man's domestic space.[91]

At the same time, this portable version of a man's home on offer by the *raeda* could cause problems—or else, it was an established enough concept that it could be the object of ironic parody. In the first of two epigrams mocking one Bassus (3.47), Martial sketches him making his way through the Porta Capena, his *raeda* laden with an abundance of local produce from a fertile farm (*plena Bassus ibat in raeda,* / *omnis beati copias trahens ruris*, 5-6). The twist comes in the final line: *urbem petebat Bassus*? *immo rus ibat* ("Was Bassus on his way into the city? No, he was going off to his 'country villa'!"). We hear more about this city-country mix-up in epigram 3.58, a poem about the productive villa of Faustinus, the addressee of 3.47, but this time the addressee is *Bassus*. Whereas Faustinus' estate is a cornucopia of farm-fresh goods, Bassus is once again shown feeding his sham chateau with deliveries of imports carted back out of the city: *pictamque portas otiosus ad villam* / *holus, ova, pullos, poma, caseum, mustum*. / *rus hoc vocari debet, an domus longe*? ("You're idly hauling to your Potemkin villa vegetables, eggs, chickens, fruit, cheese, new wine. Should this be called, "your place in the country," or just a city-home you have to commute to?" 49-51). While no *raeda* is named this time, we are invited to supply it from the previous portrait, once again required to bear such an excessive load. The two, mirrored poems thus enact the two men's contrasted roles. Faustinus would never need a *raeda*, or if he did, he would use it to *bring in* to the city his country home's

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wagons," which are specified as *raedae* and *carri*: *tum demum necessario Germani suas copias castris eduxerunt generatimque constituerunt paribus intervallis, Harudes, Marcomanos, Tribocos, Vangiones, Nemetes, Sedusios, Suebos, omnemque aciem suam raedis et carris circumdederunt, ne qua spes in fuga relinqueretur*.

[87] Varro ap. Non. Marc. (246M): *REDA*. *Varro Epistula ad Varronem*: *'quodsi tuam heri redam non habuissem, varices haberem*.' But we can infer that the vehicle was rare or expensive enough for Varro to need to borrow one (or else there were logistical complications that would have made it impractical for him to have access to his own). Cf. Varro *de R.R.* 2.7, where *raeda* is said to have a slower pace than a cavalry horse.

[88] On the afternoon of January 18, 52 BCE.

[89] *Mil.* 28: *ob viam fit ei Clodius, expeditus, in equo, nulla raeda, nullis impedimentis; nullis Graecis comitibus, ut solebat; sine uxore, quod numquam fere: cum hic insidiator, qui iter illud ad caedem faciendam apparasset, cum uxore veheretur in raeda, paenulatus, magno et impedito et muliebri ac delicato ancillarum puerorumque comitatu.*

[90] *ibid.* 29

[91] *ibid.* 27

abundant produce: one of the proper functions of a *villa* in the first place. For Bassus, by contrast, the *raeda* is a means for him to prop up an elaborate fiction. The *raeda* is big enough to cater to the displaced, wasteful lifestyle of a man who is *otiosus*; that is, both "leisured" and "idle."

It is in the same vehicle that Juvenal's Umbricius, worn out by the pressures of city life, has packed up his belongings, ready to escape to the countryside via (once again) the Porta Capena: *sed dum tota domus raeda componitur una*.[92] There seems to be a joke here, though, on the man's relatively limited means, in that his *whole house*, all of his worldly possessions, actually fit into a single *raeda*. As a vehicle, it can be adequate enough for getting people and things around, but easily becomes ridiculous when pressed into service as a do-it-yourself moving van.

***Plaustrum* (*plostrum*)**

plaustrum vehiculum duarum rotarum quo onera deferuntur: et dictum plaustrum, quia volvitur, quasi diceret pilastrum.[93]

But if the *raeda can* actually be overburdened, the *plaustrum*'s task is to haul what nothing else can, or will. This lowly cart, the Roman vehicular train's humble caboose, will always bring up the rear. A heavy-duty, indestructible pick-up, the *plaustrum* easily turns into a garbage truck, since one of its most characteristic loads is *stercus*, manure. It is a two-wheeled cart customarily drawn by oxen, but also by mules and asses.

***Serracum* (*sarracum*)**

Impedimentum conlocant omne, construunt carros et sarraca crebra disponunt.[94]

A special variant of the *plaustrum*, the *serracum* seems to have been distinguished from its more common relative by being even more sturdily built, and seems to have been laden with even heavier burdens. It was likely always furnished with *tympana*, solid wheels, and never spoked ones, in order to support such loads. In the traffic jam of Juvenal 3, a *serracum* is depicted as piled high with lumber. It is elsewhere used to bear corpses out of Rome during a plague.[95]

4. Stopping for Directions

The first chapter examines the role played by the litter (*lectica*) and sedan chair (*sella*) in Roman literature and culture. The portrait of the wealthy freedman, lounging in his deluxe *octaphoros* (litter carried by eight imported slaves), is one which appears repeatedly, taking shape in the late Republic and reaching a climax of frequency in the satires of Juvenal and the epigrams of Martial, in the late first century CE. While by this stage the conveyance undeniably functions as a satirical symbol, the origins and constructedness of its role as such have been surprisingly under-examined by modern scholars. In order to excavate the litter's developing identity, I first unravel Roman accounts of the vehicle's origins. The *lectica* was repeatedly

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[92] 3.10.
[93] Isidore 20.12.3. Surviving images of the *plaustrum* are numerous. Several appear in paintings in the Domus Aurea, on the arch of Septimius Severus, and on the Column of Trajan, laden with military equipment.
[94] Sisenna *Hist*. 61 (Non. 195M).
[95] *HSA Anton. Philos.* 13: *vehiculis cadavera sint exportata sarracisque*.

framed by Roman authors such as Cicero as an exotic import from the near east (Bithynia, in particular), only available to Romans upon their exposure, through the process of imperial expansion, to eastern softness. However, such a projection involved carefully distinguishing this "decadent" litter from already existing, sanctioned litter use: thus the *lectica* also encompasses a category closer to our "stretcher." Indeed, the litter's status as a newfangled import is belied by coexisting narratives of republican-era patriarchs riding in the *lectica*, usually because of injury, old age, or disability. At the same time, there are numerous accounts of able-bodied Roman commanders who take the field in a *lectica*. That the notion of the litter as a stand-in for decadent luxury was still up for negotiation in the late Republic is demonstrated by Cicero, who could at one moment lambaste his juridical or political opponents for employing the litter, and at the next boast of his latest litter acquisition or invite his friends on a litter joy-ride at his villa. I argue that the litter's repeated configuration as an awkward boundary-crosser, constantly out of place whether in public or in private, contributes to the strengthening of dominant categories.

Chapter Two treats the more central image of the chariot (*currus*) in Roman literature and culture. The Roman chariot was a symbol of unique power and prestige in part because of built-in, inherited features: its role as the vehicle of the Homeric battlefield, as the preferred mode of transport for divinities and celestial bodies, as the metapoetic chariot of song of Greek lyric, and as a Platonic metaphor for the soul's constitution. While the complex reception of these individual and often overlapping strands in Roman poetry has been extensively examined, less studied is their intersection with the more distinctively Roman uses to which the chariot was put. In fact, the resonances of the four-horse *currus triumphalis*, in which generals rode during the triumphal procession, and the circus chariot, the breakneck-fast racing vehicle of the Roman circus, are frequently far more vital to understanding the function of the chariot in Roman literature. Starting from the assumption that the opposition between the two is central to understanding the Roman concept of *currus*, I explore how, on the one hand, literary chariots constantly invoke the transcendent power of the triumphal chariot, and yet, with increasing frequency, are represented as suffering terrible crashes. I read this obsessive fetishization of chariot crashes, which reaches a peak by the late first century CE, as attesting to an underlying anxiety about matters of imperial succession and expansion, and, at the same time, a willful articulation of a collective desire on the part of Romans to witness the collapse of the *princeps*. A counterpoint to Rome's most central vehicle is the *essedum*, of which I offer an account as a postscript to the second chapter. This war-chariot of the Britons, first encountered and described by Caesar during his British expedition, was subsequently appropriated as an exotic and fashionable means of getting around Rome and its environs. As the vehicle's original associations fade through time, the conveyance becomes increasingly normalized for quick trips and even seems to have become a kind of light stage-coach for long-distance journeys. Nevertheless, as I argue, the *essedum*'s lingering identity as mobile spoils of war available for leisure use by elites allowed the vehicle to function as a safe, subordinate alternative to the pinnacle achievement represented by the triumph.

The third and final chapter explores the cultural significance of the *carpentum* and its prestigious relative, the *pilentum*, two special carriages sanctioned for use by Roman matrons, but nearly always portrayed as problematic or else dangerous. Through an examination of several stories involving the *carpentum*—most importantly that of Tullia, who famously drove over the corpse of her father, King Servius, in the carriage—I show how this conveyance served to focalize Roman patriarchal anxieties surrounding women's conflicting loyalties as daughters and wives. Next, I analyze accounts of the prohibition of women's privilege of using the *carpenta*,

the attempts of moralizing senators such as Cato the Elder to oppose the repeal of this ban, and the dramatic protest of the women themselves. I demonstrate how its occasional, but conspicuous use by men was represented as effeminizing, and I trace the recurring theme of hybridity in its depictions. I conclude by arguing that, rather than being exclusively about Roman attitudes towards women's mobility, the representations of the *carpentum* reveal an underlying crisis of individual agency in the late Republic and early Principate, for which vehicular transport—and the *carpentum* especially—functioned as a most powerful metaphor.

Chapter One: *Lectica*

1. The Pick of the Litter

One of the best-known *lecticae* in Latin literature appears in a scene of Petronius' *Satyricon*, where it is suddenly trotted out only to be promptly whisked away once more, in order to carry its passenger to dinner.[96] The passenger is of course Trimalchio, and his litter-embarkation serves as a fitting entrée into the ensuing banquet-scene proper: it is a mini-spectacle by itself—outrageous, absurd, and characterized by the subtle irony resulting from the gap between the naïve wonderment of the young observers and the sneering disapproval that we reconstruct for Petronius and his stylish milieu.[97] The protagonist Encolpius, even if he cannot quite describe every detail of this spectacle at the baths (for, *longum erat singula excipere*, he says), nevertheless paints the scene of the wealthy freedman's departing entourage with luxuriant attention:

> *iam Trimalchio unguento perfusus tergebatur, non linteis, sed palliis ex lana mollissima factis. tres interim iatraliptae in conspectu eius Falernum potabant, et cum plurimum rixantes effunderent, Trimalchio hoc suum propinasse dicebat. hinc involutus coccina gausapa lecticae impositus est praecedentibus phaleratis cursoribus quattuor et chiramaxio, in quo deliciae eius vehebantur, puer vetulus, lippus, domino Trimalchione deformior. cum ergo auferretur, ad caput eius symphoniacus cum minimis tibiis accessit et tanquam in aurem aliquid secreto diceret, toto itinere cantavit.*
>
> Soon Trimalchio was anointed with perfumed oil and rubbed down, not with linen but with the finest woolen cloths, and all the while three massage therapists were drinking Falernian wine in plain sight of him. After they spilled some while squabbling with each other, Trimalchio said they had offered him a toast. Then, wrapped in a scarlet robe, he was placed upon a litter. Four liveried lackeys and a rickshaw, in which rode his favorite—somewhat past his prime, his eyes bloodshot, even less attractive than his master Trimalchio—led the way. And while he was carried off, a minstrel strode alongside, just by his head, with dainty reed-flutes and, as if whispering a secret in his ear, played the whole way.[98]

Trimalchio's litter-ride is certainly consonant with the rest of his extravagant behavior in the *cena* episode, as commentators have not failed to point out.[99] There is the accumulation of lavish, and lavishly supplied—as well as probably gaudy—luxury items: *unguento perfusus*; *palliis ex lana mollissima factis*; *iatraliptae*; *Falernum*; *coccina gausapa*; *phaleratis cursoribus quottuor*;

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[96] Another, perhaps equally well-known *lectica* which plays a supporting role appears in Catullus 10, on which see below.

[97] That is, when the young observers are not sarcastic themselves.

[98] *Sat.* 28. In its only other appearance in Petronius, the *lectica* performs a similar function. Baragates the "building supe" (*procurator insulae*), his dinner interrupted by the clamor caused by Eumolpus fighting off the cooks, is carried in by litter-bearers, perhaps, our narrator informs us, because he suffers from gout (*…cum procurator insulae Bargates a cena excitatus a duobus lecticariis mediam rixam perfertur; nam erat etiam pedibus aeger,* 96).

[99] See, e.g., Courtney (2001), 73-4.

chiramaxio; symphoniacus cum minimis tibiis. When the *lectica* takes its place among this parade of dazzling accessories, we can begin to grasp what kinds of associations the conveyance carried with it: the litter is perhaps just one luxury item among many, the vehicular equivalent of purple, or scented oil. Or, given its placement within the list, the litter itself may act as the culmination of the vignette: the height of luxury and pretense for which the other details are largely preparations.

But the scene, like the rest of the *Cena*, is not simply about luxury: it is about misplaced, or misguided, luxury. Foregrounded here (for further development later in the scene) is Trimalchio's misreading of "proper" social codes. Even the conspicuous waste caused by his masseurs—but, implicitly, resulting from Trimalchio's own carelessness (*in conspectus eius*)—when they gulp down and then spill (*effunderent*) the Falernian, Trimalchio interprets as a cultured, deferential gesture: they are drinking to his health, he says. Similarly, while Trimalchio adopts the "elite" practice of keeping a young male sweetheart (*deliciae*), his is troublingly mature, bleary-eyed, and not very handsome.[100] And it is no doubt disturbing that he has this young(-ish) man carted around with him in a small wheelbarrow (*chiramaxio*), itself a kind of less imposing, and more ridiculous, litter.[101] Trimalchio's personal music player (*symphoniacus*) is used, like Andreas Pavel's Stereobelt, to "add a soundtrack to real life," one that only Trimalchio can hear.[102] While making use of a personal musician seems rather hedonistic, it is even more self-indulgent to have him play in such a way that nobody else can hear (if that is even possible). To employ him as private accompaniment for the length of a litter-ride appears beyond the pale. This eager appropriation—and then excessive or distorted use—of various status symbols is very much characteristic of the whole banquet episode. Just as, later on, Trimalchio's awful puns, culinary confections, and train-wreck versions of myth all represent a failure to properly grasp and manipulate prevailing signs, so this scene functions as a parody of an elegant or respectable post-bath departure. Here, as elsewhere, Trimalchio does not know his place: he has no sense of *verecundia*.

As it turns out, Trimalchio and litters have a fair amount in common. In their easy ability to attract the disapproving stares of others who know better, both occupy a similar, problematic position in Roman literature and culture. They are oversized and move at inappropriate speeds (sometimes too fast, at times annoyingly slow), plowing people out of the way or hindering their progress—even sometimes barring their way entirely. They come from, or belong, somewhere else (or are believed to do so: at any rate, they are of dubious origin). They are dazzling, gorgeous, but in the end, mere show: they make too much of a scene. But beyond all this and, as we shall see, more problematically, they confound categories that are meant to be distinct. To take just one example, litters, as we shall see, tend to displace the private onto the public and vice versa. Because of their hybridity—as personal "beds," on the one hand, and as a means of

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[100] Since, as we learn subsequently, Trimalchio himself was a *puer delicatus* (*tamen ad delicias ipsimi annos quattuordecim fui*, 75.11), the washed-up *puer*—and especially the phrase *domino Trimalchione deformior*—stands in nicely for the "decadence" that was such a concern to authors of the period: as bad as these Trimalchios are, how much worse will their successors be?

[101] This parodic doubling of the litter-bound Trimalchio through the presence of his even more grotesque sidekick, Croesus, recurs later (64). There, Croesus is depicted wrapping his tiny, fat dog, Margarita ("pearl"—the puppy is black) in a green scarf and trying to force-feed her bread, which she refuses (*nausea recusantem*). This leads Trimalchio to call in *his* dog, the giant Scylax ("puppy"). His doting on the dog leads the indignant Croesus to set Margarita on Scylax, who almost tears her up. Trimalchio then makes Croesus literally into his own passenger, giving him a ride on his back.

[102] L. Rohter, "Portable stereo's creator got his due, eventually," *The New York Times*, Dec. 16, 2005.

promenading in public, on the other—they are subject to special scrutiny on the part of Romans. To begin to understand the rhetoric and ethics of Roman transportation, it will be important to come to terms with this significant vehicle—in all its manifestations, *lectic(ul)a, sella*, *cathedra*, and their Greek equivalents, φορεῖον, σκιμπόδιον, κλινίδιον, δίφρος—arguably the most distinctively Roman of land conveyances and at the same time one which Romans so emphatically disavowed.[103]

2. Road Hogs

Petronius' characterization of Trimalchio, over-the-top as it may seem, is not without parallel. Much of our cultural commentary from the late 1st century CE felt the urge to bear witness to (what would seem to be) an uptick in litter manipulation.[104] So, for example, whereas the *lectica* occurs just twice in Horace's *sermones* (the passengers are, respectively, one woman and one lamb), Juvenal's satires seem almost crowded with litter-jams, with thirteen references in the first ten poems.[105] In comparing the two satire-worlds, over a century apart, it is hard not to sense a kind of rise in movement, and displacement. Horace may be on his way down the *via sacra* when accosted by "the bore," but surely the point is that he wasn't really going anywhere in the first place (*nescio quid meditans nugarum, totus in illis*). In this (idealized) world, *trans Tiberim* is a great distance away (*longe*), there is no need to move about (*nil opus est te / circumagi*), and everyone has his own place (*est locus uni / cuique suus*). The speakers of Juvenal's satires, by contrast, allow themselves no such refuge (or illusion): the satires seem filled with mini-narratives of transportation.[106] Whereas the two Horatian *lecticae* represent relatively stationary snapshots, Juvenal's litters, as appropriate for the bustling *Vrbs* of his time and the way it saw itself, are constantly moving through space.[107] It is perhaps telling that in Juvenal's self-proclaimed list of ingredients in his satire, *discursus*, 'running about' or 'traffic', comes prominently last: *quidquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas, / gaudia,*

[103] *Lectus* and *cubile* are used for *lectica* several times. *Basterna*, a mule-drawn litter or chair, appears at a late date. *Arcera*, a kind of covered wagon, seems to have served as a vehicle for the sick or elderly early on (*"arcera" autem vocabatur plaustrum tectum undique et munitum quasi arca quaedam magna vestimentis instrata, qua nimis aegri aut sense portari cubantes solebant*, Gell. 20.1.29, on *XII Tabb.* 1.1 and 1.3; cf. Nonius 55.3, *ARCERA plaustrum est rusticum tectum undique, quasi arca. hoc vocabulum et aput Varronem et aput M. Tullium invenitur. hoc autem vehiculi genere senes et aegroti vectari solent*, hence Quicherat's *solebant* for *solent*. For the present, I shall treat *lectica* and *sella* as occupying a similar place in the Roman vehicular imaginary, but some distinctions will be observed below.

[104] Lamer locates a major first spike in litter traffic during the reign of Nero, with near-ubiquity coming soon afterwards.

[105] *Sat.* 1.2.98 (*multae tibi officient res, / custodes, lectica, ciniflones, parasitae*) and 2.3.214 (*siquis lectica nitidam gestare amet agnam*).

[106] Besides litters, to signal just a few examples, there are, in satire 1, literal and figurative charioteers (the prodigal young man flying down the Flaminian, 60; and Lucilius *eques*, epic heroic-ish founder of the genre, 19-20), lots of unsavory pedestrians (33, 37, 46), clients paying visits on foot (127f.), mythological trips (Jason, 10, Daedalus and Icarus, 54, Deucalion 81-2). Satire 3 is all about displacement—of die-hards down on their luck like Umbricius, fleeing to the suburbs, and foreign transplants setting up shop in the city.

[107] Neither of Horace's is cited for motion: the first litter is really part of a sturdy defensive wall used to ward off access to its mistress; the shock of the second is mostly conveyed by the spectacle of its passenger—a (supposedly theoretical) sign of the owner's insanity.

discursus, nostri farrago libelli est.[108] *Sermo* has been interrupted by *discursus*, and many of our litter examples will involve various parties rushing back and forth to pay homage, be haughty, or get ahead.

Juvenal's first satire presents a dizzying array of outrageous scenes and characters which, altogether, function as a long-winded, affirmative reply to the programmatic *recusatio* of the opening lines. That is to say, the poem itself acts as an answer to its own rhetorical question, i.e., why one should bother to write satire and not, say, epic (19-20): *cur tamen hoc potius libeat decurrere campo, per quem magnus equos Auruncae flexit alumnus?* (founding-father Lucilius). Or, to put it another way, the persona of the first poem is so inundated with material that it is difficult *not* to compose satires (*difficile est saturam non scribere*, 30). It is interesting that in the course of this heaped-up mélange of diverse instances—even if they are all alike, so Juvenal has it, in being appalling—litters keep marching onto the scene.[109] And, as we shall see, they are never innocent or unproblematic vessels, their appearances never simply about traversing spatial ground. Besides being a kind of recurring theme of the whole poem, a litter takes its place at the front of the parade of outrageous characters that goad any potential satirist to get the words down. Indeed, who *couldn't* compose satires when faced with overstuffed lawyers like Matho bouncing around in their fancy litters:

> *nam quis iniquae*
> *tam patiens urbis, tam ferreus, ut teneat se,*
> *causidici noua cum ueniat lectica Mathonis*
> *plena ipso*[110]

It would require great mental and physical toughness—perhaps of the sort that Romans *used to* show in getting around on their own two feet (*iniquae…patiens urbis*, *ferreus*)—to restrain oneself (*teneat se*, with emphatic line-ending monosyllable) in the face of such a moving display.[111] Self-restraint is just what the now massive Matho does not practice, and has not in the past. He is no *orator*, but instead here a *causidicus*—probably not just 'lawyer' but, as often, 'ambulance-chaser'.[112] That the *lectica* is brand-new (*nova*) helps to identify Matho with the grasping arrivistes (*veniat*) who surround him in the poem's imagined procession. That the litter is 'full of him(self)' (*plena ipso*) suggests, besides a big physique, he is gobbling up space reserved for others—something which social climbers by definition do. Litters, it seems, could usually seat two, but there is no need to decide whether this particular one was a two-seater, filled by Matho, or a one-person litter which he appeared to be overflowing. The word *ipso* itself

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[108] 1.85-6. Noticed by Brown (1983), 266, in an article that collects many of the relevant passages and devotes special attention to Juvenal. While he maintains that the litter is a "satirical symbol"—which it no doubt is—the article's main value is as a list of examples.

[109] Of course, the hybridity of satire is entirely in line with what we know of ancient views of the genre, e.g., Festus' etymologies of *satura* as both a smorgasbord and an omnibus bill: *et cibi genus ex variis rebus conditum est, et lex <mul>tis aliis legibus conferta*…(L.416). Satire as banqueting has been explored in detail by Gowers and there is an interesting overlap between ceremonial food delivery and other forms of portage in the word *ferculum*: both a litter-like conveyance for parading gods or stolen goods and a dinner tray (and then "course").

[110] *Sat.*1.30-3.

[111] For *patiens*, cf. Cic. *Verr.* 2.5.27, (ironically) on Verres' grueling 'marches', *quibus eo usque se praebebat patientem atque impigrum ut eum nemo umquam in equo sedentem viderit.* On this passage, see below.

[112] Quint. 12.1.25: *non enim forensem quandam instituimus operam nec mercennariam vocem neque, ut asperioribus verbis parcamus,non inutilem sane litium advocatum, quem denique causidicum vulgo vocant*. Martial speaks of *raucos causidicos* (4.8.2). cf. Tacitus *Dial*.1.1.

carries with it the sense of *dominus* and is intended to jar.[113] And a *lectica*, as we shall see below, is often meant to be faster than walking (in part because the *lecticarii* seem often to have trotted, and also because in practice pedestrians were meant to make way), and so we have here a subtly developed metaphor for vaulting up the social ladder in order to occupy positions set aside for—well, whom? Someone else. It is not the job of satire to make such positive affirmations. The point is that none of this belongs, everything is out of place, askew. Neverthless, social mobility is expressed literally by movement through space thanks to the vivid trajectory of the litter. The subsequent caricatures help to strengthen the association. The backstabbing informer appears right behind Matho in the parade of scoundrels: *post hunc magni delator amici et cito rapturus de nobilitate comesa / quod superest* (34-5). He is on the move (*cito*, like the speeding litter) and determined to snatch up space that doesn't belong to him—what's left of it, anyway (*rapturus de nobilitate comesa / quod superest*, like Matho, filling the litter). Next in the parade come the legacy-hunters: *cum te summoveant qui testamenta merentur / noctibus, in caelum quos evehit optima summi / nunc via processus, vetulae vesica beatae* (37-9). In an image that will come back several times in Juvenal's work, these men shove you aside, since they've been raised up by seducing their way into the wills of wealthy old women. Or rather, as the satire expresses it, the best (i.e., smoothest, fastest) route to highest advancement—rich old women's 'bladders'—has elevated them. While we needn't decide whether the poem means them *literally* to be carried in litters, thus forcing innocent pedestrians out of the way, there is nonetheless once more a tidy connection between two types of mobility. Just as *discursus* stands in economically for the 'comings-and-goings' of both Roman city life and the content of Juvenal's satire, so *processus*, 'progress, advancement', can stand in for both forms of getting ahead.[114] This is one reason why the *lectica* repeatedly appears in Juvenal's satire: because it concretizes and visualizes the rather abstract notion of social climbing.

The refrain proclaiming the need for satire is, once again, followed closely by another litter-borne transgressor, this time a forger of documents:

> *nonne libet medio ceras inplere capaces*
> *quadriuio, cum iam sexta cervice feratur*
> *hinc atque inde patens ac nuda paene cathedra*
> *et multum referens de Maecenate supino*
> *signator falsi, qui se lautum atque beatum*
> *exiguis tabulis et gemma fecerit uda*?[115]

Juvenal must simply stand at the crossroads (elsewhere a place of shady dealings—*nunc in quadriviis et angiportis*) and let the material come flowing in, enough to fill voluminous wax tablets. Surely he gets to (or has to) take it all down, if the sneaky but shameless fraud-specialist

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[113] Courtney (1980), ad loc., takes *ipso* as *ipso solo* (by analogy with αὐτὸς sometimes meaning μόνος). *Ipse* appears below in the portrait of the aristocrat of lines 58-62 who has squandered his money on chariot-racing (*cum fas esse putet curam sperare cohortis / qui bona donavit praesepibus et caret omni / maiorum censu, dum pervolat axe citato / Flaminiam puer Automedon? nam lora tenebat / ipse, lacernatae cum se iactaret amicae*). The implication, following Courtney, is that despite hopes of being praetorian prefect (the traditional first step in an equestrian career), he doesn't have the money to make it into the equestrian census: another example of *iniquae…Romae*. The wealthy don't deserve their wealth: either they've acquired it corruptly (Matho), or squander it (*puer Automedon*).

[114] As *summoveant* in line 37 undoubtedly does.

[115] 1.63-8. Cf.

gets to parade his ill-gotten gains in a flashy *cathedra* (or *sella*) *hexaphoros*—soon to be *octophoros* (*iam*). Licentious behavior, we are here told, directly warrants the license to write satire, the correspondence fairly direct. Like Matho's litter (*pleno ipso*), the *signator falsi* (perhaps) fills up his sizeable sedan as the notebooks get filled with verses. His wealth, and perhaps his girth, are fast-growing: soon he will likely need more shoulders to carry him along. The extensive tablets (*ceras capaces*) are a lengthy reply to the curt craftiness of the forger's work (*exiguis tabulis*). The speaker's wax notes respond to his signet ring (*gemma…uda*) stamped in wax. But the portrait of the sedan is certainly quite harsh. The phrase *cum iam sexta cervice feratur*, elsewhere used disapprovingly, conveys the degradation experienced by the bearers.[116] The vehicle itself, probably a *sella*, since the *cathedra* seems to have been reserved for women (but that may be part of the outrage), is open on all sides (*hinc atque inde patens ac nuda paene*), the curtains drawn aside. He lives his life like laid-back (*supino*) Maecenas who wanted everything on display.[117] Juvenal has created an interesting triplet of monstrous vehicular images: after the *puer Automedon* flying on his chariot and the forger sprawled out in his *sella*, a woman poisoner (*melior Lucusta*) comes along (*occurrit*) who has inspired a horde of acolytes. Once unsophisticated neighbors (*rudes…propinquas*), they now walk alongside the biers (*efferre*) of their murdered husbands in funeral trains. The usual play on litter and bier is there amidst the processions.

In a surreal scene later in the poem, the litters come thick and fast, cueing for the morning handout, the *sportula*:

> *densissima centum*
> *quadrantes lectica petit, sequiturque maritum*
> *languida uel praegnas et circumducitur uxor.*
> *hic petit absenti nota iam callidus arte*
> *ostendens uacuam et clausam pro coniuge sellam.*
> *'Galla mea est' inquit, 'citius dimitte. moraris?*
> *profer, Galla, caput. noli uexare, quiescet.'*[118]

In a brilliant and absurd reversal, the litters themselves have now assembled for the bread dole, instead of the usual throng of clients following after their litter-bound patron, in

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[116] cf. Pliny *Pan.* 22.1, in praise of Trajan's entrance on foot: *iam hoc ipsum, quod ingressus es, quam mirum laetumque! nam priores invehi et importari solebant, non dico quadriiugo curru et albentibus equis sed umeris hominum, quod adrogantius erat*. Ibid. 24.5: *ante te principes fastidio nostri et quodam aequilitatis metu usum pedum amiserant. illos ergo umeri cervicesque servorum super ora nostra, te fama te gloria te civium pietas, te libertas super ipsos principes vehunt; te ad sidera tollit humus ista communis et confusa principis vestigia*. Also Lucan 9.589, in praise of Cato in the field: *et nulla vehitur cervice supinus*. An image of Cybele gets carried, with a similar mix of decadence and solemnity, in Ovid *Fast.*4.186: *ipsa sedens molli comitum cervice feretur / Vrbis per medias exululata vias*.

[117] Seneca discusses Maecenas in his letter on the interconnectedness of literary style and lifestyle, but there Maecenas is a walker (to a fault): *quomodo Maecenas vixerit notius est, quam ut narrari nunc debeat, quomodo ambulaverit, quam delicatus fuerit, quam cupierit videri, quam vitia sua latere noluerit. quid ergo? non oratio eius aeque soluta est quam ipse discinctus?* (114.4). For the *cathedra* as a women's vehicle, cf. Mart. 3.63.7 (*inter femineas…cathedras*), Calp. Sic. 7.28 (*inter femineas…cathedras*), Plin. 16.68 (*supinarum in delicias cathedrarum aptissimae* [sc. *salices*])

[118] 1.120-6

hope of a few handouts.[119] The image of the litter crowded by dependents is well-worn, and the twist of the wealthy man looking for schwag (whether because he has already squandered his riches or because he's greedy for more) appears a few times in Martial, but Juvenal has combined the two into a nightmare scenario of litters mustering to collect their rations, as if the entire city were sedan-bound hangers-on, delicate scroungers.[120] One man brings his ill or pregnant wife along for extra cash at numerous stops (*circumducitur*). For another, the additional *sportula* for his 'wife' turns out to be a ruse: the litter is empty. The *sella*'s usual tendency towards ostentatious display, here taken to an extreme, becomes a cloaking mechanism: lots of exterior fanfare devoid of substance within. Or, put another way, litters carry nobodies around. The trickster is skilled, the trick familiar (*nota iam callidus arte*)—but whether solely to its practitioner, or to everyone on the *salutatio*-circuit is unclear. It has more punch—and is consistent with the uses of *iam* already pointed out—if the trick is in fact old hat to all, and this operator is just taking it further. But the implication throughout is that no one can really afford to maintain this kind of lifestyle, that it is not just a sign of the decadence of the times, but is also corrupting and debasing: toxic assets (the expensive litter-cum-status-symbol) are used to shore up further bogus liquidity, however meager (*centum quadrantes)*. It's a log-jam of flashy accessories that no one really deserves and, at the same time, just like the earlier mugs on their way up (and down) the power ladder, it's all moving very fast (*citius*).

This theme of the litter as fundamentally empty status symbol and one that will lead to its passenger's financial ruin appears again in Satire 7, where the well-attended (*lutulenta…turba*) advocate Tongilius flaunts his litter in the forum as a way to attract clients:

> *perque forum iuvenes longo premit assere Maedos*
> *empturus pueros, argentum, murrina, villas;*
> *et tamen est illis hoc utile.*[121]

His litter-bearers are imported, impressive Thracians (*iuvenes…Maedos*), his litter is large (*longo…assere*), and he appears to move fast (*premit*), on his way to buy up lots of things—the ultimate source of his downfall (*sic Pedo conturbat, Matho deficit, exitus hic est / Tongilii*, 129-30). And yet it just about works. Somehow he can get by through amassing trappings he can't afford, but which attract clients. It is not through eloquence, but merely through this paraphernalia that pleaders command respect:

> *respicit haec primum qui litigat, an tibi servi*
> *octo, decem comites, an post te sella, togati*
> *ante pedes.*[122]

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[119] For images of the litter trailed by clients cf. Martial 2.57 (on a patron *poseur*, *quem grex togatus sequitur et capillatus recensque sella linteisque lorisque*), 3.36 (to Fabianus, a decline of his request that the speaker be dragged through the muck by his litter: *horridus ut primo semper te mane salutem / per mediumque trahat me tua sella lutum*), 9.22 (on a rejection of the use of wealth for the usual trappings, e.g., *ut canusinatus nostro Surus assere sudet / et mea sit culto sella cliente frequens*). Also Juvenal 7.141-3, on how a pleader attracts customers (not by eloquence): *respicit haec primum qui litigat, an tibi servi / octo, decem comites, an post te sella, togati / ante pedes.* The *servi octo* must be bearers.

[120] Martial 10.10, on a rich man, Paulus, competing with everyone else (*densa…turba*), and the speaker, for the dole. He even bears the litter himself: *lecticam sellamve sequar? nec ferre recusas, / per medium pugnas et prior ire lutum* (7-8). Also 12.26

[121] 7.132-3, 135. cf. Naevolus at 9.27: *utile et hoc multis vitae genus*.

Similar longing for these trappings appears in Naevolus' prayer in satire 9:

> *et duo fortes*
> *de grege Moesorum, qui me cervice locata*
> *securum iubeant clamoso insistere Circo;*[123]

We get here a rare behind-the-windshield view from inside the litter, looking out. And the view is a frightened one

Satire 1 wraps up with one more stab at the litter-ati, and one more mimetic link forged between satire-fodder and outraged satirist. In response to the warning not to get too outspoken or specific in his assaults, the speaker seems to maintain his right to criticize:

> *qui dedit ergo tribus patruis aconita, uehatur*
> *pensilibus plumis atque illinc despiciat nos?*[124]

Does the man who has poisoned three uncles get to ride on down cushions and 'look down on' me—and you?[125] The answer is of course famously puzzling—our speaker seems first to say, "by no means!" and then, admitting that satire is indeed more dangerous than epic, to give in and agree only to attack those dead and buried along the *via Flaminia* and *Latina*. How unreliable or hypocritical we want to interpret our speaker as being is not here our primary concern. What is important is to note that the litter has stood as a prominent visual metaphor for "social climbing," for movement between hierarchical categories that are meant to be impermeable. This vehicle can then either garishly broadcast one person's "being out of place" or awkwardly attempt to conceal it.

In Satire 3, inside Umbricius' rant on the trials of the city, a litter-portrait crystallizes the thought that certain (un)worthies get to live in the city of Rome without living with its problems—the deafening street noise of overnight trucking traffic, the churning seas of pedestrian stampedes—that is, without really being there. The rich man on the fast track to pick up his handout sails smoothly above it all:

> *si vocat officium, turba cedente vehetur*
> *dives et ingenti curret super ora Liburna*
> *atque obiter leget aut scribet vel dormiet intus*
> *(namque facit somnum clausa lectica fenestra),*
> *ante tamen veniet: nobis properantibus obstat*
> *unda prior, magno populus premit agmine lumbos*
> *qui sequitur; ferit hic cubito, ferit assere duro*
> *alter…*[126]

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[122] 7.141-3
[123] 9.142-4
[124] 158-9
[125] Brown (1983), 277, compares the haughty lobster of 5.82, who is also carried (*fertur*), looks down on the guests (*despiciat convivia*) as it arrives on high, thanks to a tall server (*dum venit excelsi manibus sublata ministri*)—clearly a scene modeled after litter transit.
[126] 3.239-46

Whereas the poor man can't sleep (not without wealth—*magnis opibus dormitur in Vrbe*, 235) because of the noise of traffic in narrow streets (*raedarum transitus arto / vicorum in flexu*, 236-7), the rich man, "when duty calls," (i.e., the *salutatio*) gets to nap while ferried along in his swift airship, gliding high above the clamorous gridlock.[127] Closed litters (with curtains or *lapis specularis*) can put one to sleep, as they did Galla, the imaginary wife in satire 1 (*noli vexare, quiescet*). One can even read or write on the way (*obiter*). The crowd parts (*turba cedente:* viam faciente, sch.) for the *dives*: he gets the right of way, and gets there first.[128] Much-discussed in the commentaries is what *Liburna* (or *Liburno*) signifies, whether a type of *lectica* decked out to resemble a Liburnian galley (lectica magna Liburnata, sch.), or one carried by Liburnians (nunc gerulos Liburnos (dicit). ipse 'tarde venisse Liburnus' in secundo libro, ibid.). A "dramatic hyperbole" seems more likely, the litter becoming a fast Liburnian galley that cleaves the crowd like water and leaves a human wake (*unda prior*) behind.[129] That the *navis Liburna* was originally used by Illyrian pirates (and of course adopted by the Roman navy) helps fill out the picture of the grasping *dives* who beats everyone else to the plunder.[130] But there is no respite behind either, since our speaker is sandwiched between the blocking wave of those in front and the seething ranks behind. From among them come sharp elbows and yet another litter (*assere duro*).

A swift warship here, the litter becomes a cave in satire 4, a yawning hideout for a wealthy woman, powerful friend of Domitian-in-miniature Crispinus,:

> *consilium laudo artificis, si munere tanto*
> *praecipuam in tabulis ceram senis abstulit orbi;*
> *est ratio ulterior, magnae si misit amicae,*
> *quae uehitur cluso latis specularibus antro.*
> *nil tale expectes: emit sibi.*[131]

If Crispinus had given the mullet as a gift in order to get added to an heir-less old man's will, that would have been skilled work, worthy of praise (our speaker says, ironically). Or, even better, if he had sent the fish to a female big-shot with a litter so spacious it's practically cavernous, that would have been clever too. But he's no legacy-hunter, *captator*: he bought it for himself. The "closed litter" is also tricky and pointed since it is not visually closed, not opaque: it has broad windows all around (*latis specularibus*, made of mica or glass) and thus puts its passenger on permanent display.

But it is worth noting that in the case of female litter passengers, Juvenal presents their outrageous license as more or less given, a basis on which to build a more elaborately amplified rhetoric of shock. In the previous example, the woman's cave-like litter, the poem asserts, is old news, a(n already perverse) norm that is there for a Crispinus to transgress (or outdo). This stance of quickly tossing off meta-critiques no doubt helps to enhance the authority of the

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[127] Cf. Martial 4.64.18-20, on the view from gardens on the Janiculum: *illinc Flaminiae Salariaeque / gestator patet essedo tacente, / ne blando rota sit molesta somno*. Another example of being in the city without being there.
[128] The implication is of course, as throughout his tirade, that Umbricius is on a mad dash for subsidies too—but just isn't quite quick enough.
[129] cf. Baines (2003), 223, who cites Harrison (1960) and Brown (1983). Mayor follows the scholia in taking it too literally ("a peculiar kind of litter").
[130] The metaphor is then reminiscent of H(igh)M(obility)M(ultipurpose)W(heeled)V(ehicle)s, Humvees, revamped as civilian Hummers for the benefit of the American consumer.
[131] 4.18-22

speaker. He becomes the master of analyzing depravity by turning it all around—for he gets to realign, however slightly, the categories of morality. When the gang of noblewomen defame the temple of Pudicitia at night, they are on their way home in litters (*noctibus hic ponunt lecticas*, 309). Litter-bound women were perhaps already an affront to Romans like the speaker of 6, but these women use it as a mere starting place (for urination and other horseplay). A similar gesture takes place in satire 6, when the by-now worn topos of licentious litter-bound lady is actually revealed to be on a par with the supposedly humble pedestrian:

> *iamque eadem summis pariter minimisque libido,*
> *nec melior silicem pedibus quae conterit atrum*
> *quam quae longorum vehitur cervice Syrorum*[132]

That is, women carried in litters by strapping Syrians are *obviously* possessed of unbridled lust, but at this advanced stage of decline (another world-weary *iam*), the barefooted girl who tromps the dark pavement is actually no better. It is a reversal that would seem to take apart the earlier opposition, between (deserving but oppressed) pedestrian and (proud but rotten) passenger, except that our two apparently opposite specimens are, it turns out, indistinguishable: they are both women, and so in the misogynistic logic of the poem, such distinctions break down. All women are in effect licentious/litter-borne.[133]

3. In Bed in Public

Petronius' scene cited above, in its finely enumerated details and precocious gestures at narrative realism, owes a great deal to several other famous snapshots of litter abuse, most notably those of Cicero. In the *Verrines*, Cicero had perhaps been inspired in turn by an earlier orator, Dinarchus, in his attack on Demosthenes for showing off his luxury in a litter while the city was suffering.[134] Indeed the *lectica* crops up a number of times in Cicero's second *actio* against Verres and ends up as a kind of mascot for the corrupt governor. In one pungent vignette, Verres, *praetor laboriosus et diligens*, arrives at the seaside below Haluntium in search of some fine silver and Corinthian bronzes. Since he finds the ascent to the town proper too strenuous, he commands a local noble, one Archagathus ("Noble-ruling," in counterpoint to the governor), to go up and collect whatever precious metals the village has, all the while relaxing below by the seashore. The litter, in Cicero's construction of the scene, is there to prop up Verres as he presides over the forced funds transfer.

> *Illa vero optima [est], quod, cum Haluntium venisset praetor laboriosus et diligens, ipse in oppidum noluit accedere, quod erat difficili ascensu atque arduo, Archagathum Haluntinum, hominem non solum domi, sed tota Sicilia in primis nobilem, vocari iussit. ei negotium dedit ut, quidquid Halunti esset argenti caelati aut si quid etiam Corinthiorum, id omne statim ad mare ex oppido deportaretur. escendit in oppidum Archagathus. homo nobilis, qui a suis amari et diligi vellet,*

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[132] 6.349-51

[133] *nam quo non prostat femina templo?*

[134] 1.35: τρυφῶν ἐν τοῖς τῆς πόλεως κακοῖς, καὶ ἐπὶ φορείου κατακομιζόμενος τὴν εἰς Πειραιᾶ ὁδόν, καὶ τὰς τῶν πενήτων ἀπορίας ὀνειδίζων.

ferebat graviter illam sibi ab isto provinciam datam, nec quid faceret habebat; pronuntiat quid sibi imperatum esset; iubet omnis proferre quod haberent. metus erat summus; ipse enim tyrannus non discedebat longius; Archagathum et argentum in lectica cubans ad mare infra oppidum exspectabat. [135]

The detail of the litter is important to the scene and conveys at once Verres' laziness (*cubans*; *ipse in oppidum noluit accedere, quod difficili ascensu atque arduo*—i.e., he would have to get up and walk, even if it wasn't far, *non…longius*) and his despotic bearing in ramming through the revenue-capture (*iussit*; *statim*; *ferebat graviter illam sibi ab isto provinciam datam; nec quid faceret habebat; pronuntiat quid sibi imperatum esset; metus erat summus; tyrannus*). There is something about a litter—perhaps because it is still considered a spectacle—that makes the plundering seem all the more bare-faced and brazen. Just afterwards, Cicero flaunts a bit of false modesty (*ut ipse de me detraham*), and says that whereas other corrupt officials have only been prosecuted thanks to the painstaking investigations of their prosecutors, Verres' transgressions are so flagrant that Cicero's case has basically been made for him. Here the litter once again helps support this impression of glaring violation. Is it any great achievement then for the orator to recount Verres' rapine?

permagnum est in eum dicere aliquid qui praeteriens, lectica paulisper deposita, non per praestigias sed palam per potestatem uno imperio ostiatim totum oppidum compilaverit?[136]

The phrases *praeteriens*, "on his way by," and *lectica paulisper deposita*, "having his litter set down for a momen," are at once farcical and devastating. Moreover, they exemplify a certain fixation, present in much Roman literature, on coincidences of (questionable) refinement and vicious cruelty, a juxtaposition often conveyed by litters.

Verres' litter will continue to play a supporting role in the unfolding drama of the second *actio*. The *lectica* receives more extended ekphrastic treatment in book five—something of a model for Petronius' sketch above—where we are given the impression that the governor lives out his days *in lectica*, and it is difficult to picture him actually walking *suis pedibus*, on his own two feet.

cum autem ver esse coeperat—cuius initium iste non a Favonio neque ab aliquo astro notabat, sed cum rosam viderat tum incipere ver arbitrabatur—dabat se labori atque itineribus; in quibus eo usque se praebebat patientem atque impigrum ut eum nemo umquam in equo sedentem viderit. nam, ut mos fuit Bithyniae regibus, lectica octaphoro ferebatur, in qua pulvinus erat perlucidus Melitensis rosa fartus; ipse autem coronam habebat unam in capite, alteram in collo, reticulumque ad naris sibi admovebat tenuissimo lino, minutis maculis, plenum rosae. sic confecto itinere cum ad aliquod oppidum venerat, eadem lectica usque in cubiculum deferebatur. eo veniebant Siculorum magistratus, veniebant equites Romani, id quod ex multis iuratis audistis; controversiae secreto deferebantur, paulo post palam decreta auferebantur. deinde ubi

[135] *Verr*. 2.4.51
[136] *Verr.* 2.4.53

paulisper in cubiculo pretio non aequitate iura discripserat, Veneri iam et Libero reliquum tempus deberi arbitrabatur. [137]

The passage paints Verres' provincial administration in mock-military terms and then inserts a deluxe litter in the midst of this (parodic) backdrop, with absurd results. The arrival of spring for Verres means toil and marches, and an opportunity to display his tireless resilience. He is so hearty in fact that not once is he seen on horseback—the suggestion being that he goes on foot, like a Cato.[138] The surprise is that instead he is carried in an *octaphorus* (as big a litter as they come) like the Bithynian kings (*ut mos fuit Bithyniae regibus)*. *Rex* is of course a dangerous word in Roman culture, but eastern kings are particularly problematic.[139] His long march completed (*confecto itinere*), he is carried straight into his bedroom *eadem lectica*, where he attends to diverse nefarious business, political, juridical, and otherwise.[140] *Eadem lectica* probably has a part to play in the nightly afterparty (*Veneri*, *Libero*) as well.

Important here is that Verres has confounded public and private spheres in a most flagrant way, and the *lectica* is the symbol of that confusion. The governor, in what Cicero elaborates into a bizarre and complex orchestration, has devised a way to conduct his official business without ever getting out of bed.[141] And the contamination works in both directions. He goes out in public, on his official tour of the Sicilian towns—in bed. The cot strikes out into unfamiliar, civic territory. At the same time, Verres manages to introduce public affairs into his own *cubiculum*.[142] This blending of worlds and functions is then a spatial and vehicular representation of corrupt governance, since that is what extortion is thought to be: the toxic melding of private and public. But more importantly, I think, it articulates Roman anxieties about the dangers of empire—still undergoing negotiation at this stage.[143] Verres' dangerous reapplication of alien refinement for use in situations of colonial subjugation seems especially intolerable in Cicero's account. That is, by a process of aggressive expansion that simultaneously exposes Roman culture to foreign immoral practices, they have established a means, paradoxically, to export both luxury and oppression.

While thus far primarily a vehicle of exposure, as in the passage above, the *lectica* can also serve to veil and conceal. Later in the *actio*, Cicero passes by the whole backlog of instances of Verres' moral turpitude in order to mention just two recent rumors about his conduct. The first is that his urban praetorship in 74 was driven completely (*gubernari*) by the prostitute Chelidon (his benefactor). The second is that after leaving the city on command, he liked to slip back into town for recurring adulterous liaisons:

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[137] *Verr.* 2.5.27

[138] cf. Lucan 9.587-90: *ipse* [sc. *Cato*] *manu sua pila gerit, praecedit anheli / militis ora pedes, monstrat tolerare labores, non iubet, et nulla vehitur cervice supinus / carpentoque sedens*. Plut. *Cat.Min.*6: δαπάνης μὲν γὰρ εἰς οὐδὲν οὐδεμιᾶς προσεδεήθη δημοσίας, ἐπεφοίτα δὲ ταῖς πόλεσιν αὐτὸς μὲν ἄνευ ζεύγους πορευόμενος, εἷς δ' ἠκολούθει δημόσιος ἐσθῆτα καὶ σπονδεῖον αὐτῳ πρὸς ἱερουργίαν κομίζων. See Chapter Three below for a discussion of Cato's, and other men's, relationship with the *carpentum*.

[139] More on Bithynia and the litter origins below.

[140] *confecto itinere* used of military marches (Suet. *Claud*. 17, *pedestri itinere confecto*; Caes. *B.C.* 3.76)

[141] The point is made succinctly by Cicero's earlier quip: *hic ita vivebat iste bonus imperator hibernis mensibus ut eum non facile non modo extra tectum sed ne extra lectum quidem quisquam videret* (2.5.26)

[142] See Riggsby (1997) for a discussion of the Roman *cubiculum*.

[143] See Steel (2001), whose emphasis in her discussion of Cicero's Verres is on the governor's *personal* failings.

> *cum paludatus exisset votaque pro imperio suo communique re publica nuncupasset, noctu stupri causa lectica in urbem introferri solitus est ad mulierem nuptam uni, propositam omnibus, contra fas, contra auspicia, contra omnis divinas atque humanas religiones!*[144]

It is noteworthy that the *lectica* is the mode by which Verres is shown entering the city for his nocturnal visits. An *operta lectica* is probably the best way for an official such as Verres to get around without attracting too much attention (not that it worked, says Cicero's speech). Important once again is the contrast between public business—*paludatus* has the suggestion of active duty and Verres has sworn oaths on behalf of his own *imperium* and the general commonwealth—and his private transgressions. Instead of making this violation of categories visible and performative, the litter has now become a (moving) den of iniquity (veiled, but still widely known), with the mere closing of curtains.[145]

Perhaps sensing that he had struck a rich vein with this previous characterization, Cicero would re-enlist the prop in his speeches against Antony. While the villain turns up only once himself riding in a litter, the accessory creeps in at several significant moments to help undercut his authority. When Caesar departs for Spain in 49 and leaves Antony the tribune in charge of Italy, there is a much to-ing and fro-ing (*quae fuit eius peragratio itinerum, lustratio municipiorum!*) with requisite entourage, a portable orgy. Cicero here has Antony trampling every inch of Italy with errant disgraces:

> *Etenim quod umquam in terris tantum flagitium exstitisse auditum est, tantam turpitudinem, tantum dedecus? vehebatur in essedo tribunus pl.; lictores laureati antecedebant, inter quos aperta lectica mima portabatur, quam ex oppidis municipales homines honesti ob viam necessario prodeuntes non noto illo et mimico nomine, sed Volumniam consalutabant. sequebatur raeda cum lenonibus, comites nequissimi; reiecta mater amicam impuri filii tamquam nurum sequebatur. o miserae mulieris fecunditatem calamitosam! horum flagitiorum iste vestigiis omnia municipia, praefecturas, colonias, totam denique Italiam inpressit.*[146]

By here identifying Antony as *tribunus pl.*, Cicero makes this ostentatious love parade even more egregious in that tribunes were not allowed to be outside Rome overnight in the first place.[147] Nor were they permitted to have lictors. Never mind that Caesar had made him propraetor and thus with *imperium* he could have lictors and stay outside of Rome. Antony carries his mime-mistress (stage-name, Cytheris, awkwardly sidestepped by the upstanding town-folks' "Volumnia") in an open litter, *aperta lectica*, scandalous because female passengers ought to be hidden by curtains.[148] A *raeda* full of "pimps" follows behind.[149] Antony's mother follows the actress,

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[144] *Verr.*2.5.34

[145] That is, assuming that this *lectica* is *operta*, and the earlier one at, e.g., Haluntium seems to be *aperta*, since Verres is directing the show.

[146] *Phil*.2.57-8

[147] Gellius 13.12.9 on overnighting outside Rome; Plut. *Quaest.Rom.* 81 on lictors. cf. Ramsay (2003) ad loc.

[148] cf. Prop. 4.8.78; implied in Apul. *Flor*. 76.5. More on this below. Denniston (1926), ad. loc., cites Lamer's argument in *RE* concerning the terms *aperta* and *operta lectica*, that *aperta* can refer either to an entirely open litter, without awning or curtains, or to a litter with awning, closeable by curtains. It is important because "if this [Lamer's

probably also in a *lectica*, but Cicero's stating this would distract somewhat from the main focus on the *mima*. Plutarch's version provides comparable pride of place to Cytheris' litter, but admits that his mother received just as many attendants. That the two women were on an equal footing is still a scandal for Plutarch, but the make-up of the parade has been shuffled slightly, since the biographer's purpose is not (simply) invective.

> ἦν δὲ καὶ Σέργιος ὁ μῖμος τῶν μέγιστον παρ' αὐτῶι δυναμένων, καὶ Κυθηρὶς ἀπὸ τῆς αὐτῆς παλαίστρας γύναιον ἀγαπώμενον, ὃ δὴ καὶ τὰς πόλεις ἐπιὼν ἐν φορείωι περιήγετο, καὶ τὸ φορεῖον οὐκ ἐλάττους ἢ τὸ τῆς μητρὸς αὐτοῦ περιέποντες ἠκολούθουν.[150]

Cicero, pointing out the spectacle to Atticus in a letter of 3 May 49, had at that stage actually depicted something more like a mobile harem, with multiple litters: *hic tamen Cytherida secum lectica aperta portat, alteram uxorem. septem praeterea coniunctae lecticae amicarum; et sunt amicorum*.[151] Note that boyfriends (*amicorum*) too have litters in this account.[152] But Cytheris takes center stage again in another letter to Atticus of a few days later (14 May). The paradox of a "litter amidst lictors"—partly obscured by all the garish pageantry in the *Philippics* passage—emerges here as a sneering (and rather bitter) jingle: [*Hortensius*] *misit enim puerum se ad me venire. hoc quidem melius quam conlega noster Antonius, cuius inter lictores lectica mima portatur.*[153] Whether or not Antony and Cytheris rode around like this all the time, the fact that Cicero mentions this episode three times in his extant work shows that it could be deployed repeatedly for effect.

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argument], as appears, is sound, there is some difficulty in determining the meaning of *aperta* and *operta* in any particular passage." But this is only true for *aperta*. *Operta* can only refer to something that *can* be "closed."

[149] "Slime balls" perhaps (cf. 6.4: *semper eum duo dissimilia genera <ten>uerunt, lenonum et latronum*; and 8.26: *cavet mimis, aleatoribus, lenonibus*). In any case, probably not 'lions' (the *leonibus* of one MS), since those came after the battle of Pharsalus. To Pliny (8.55), that the two rode together in this stupendous vehicle was ominous enough: *iugo subdidit eos* [sc. *leones*] *primusque Romae ad currum iunxit M. Antonius, et quidem civili bello cum dimicatum esset in Pharsaliis campis, non sine ostento quodam temporum, generosos spiritus iugum subire illo prodigio significante. nam quod ita vectus est cum mima Cytheride, super monstra etiam illarum calamitatum fuit*. Cicero tells Atticus (10.13.1): *tu Antoni leones pertimescas cave. nihil est illo homine iucundius.*

[150] Plut. *Ant.* 9.7. The passage continues with yet another set-piece on the 'pompous retinue' (8-9): ἐλύπουν δὲ καὶ χρυσῶν ἐκπωμάτων ὥσπερ ἐν πομπαῖς ταῖς ἀποδημίαις διαφερομένων ὄψεις, καὶ στάσεις ἐνόδιοι σκηνῶν καὶ πρὸς ἄλσεσι καὶ ποταμοῖς ἀρίστων πολυτελῶν διαθέσεις, καὶ λέοντες ἅρμασιν ὑπεζευγμένοι, καὶ σωφρόνων ἀνδρῶν καὶ γυναικῶν οἰκίαι χαμαιτύπαις καὶ σαμβυκιστρίαις ἐπισταθμευόμεναι. Δεινὸν γὰρ ἐποιοῦντο Καίσαρα μὲν αὐτὸν ἔξω τῆς Ἰταλίας θυραυλεῖν, τὰ περιόντα τοῦ πολέμου μεγάλοις πόνοις καὶ κινδύνοις ἀνακαθαιρόμενον, ἑτέρους δὲ δι' ἐκεῖνον τρυφᾶν τοῖς πολίταις ἐνυβρίζοντας. Later, Antony leaps up in the middle of a speech by Furnius and abandons the trial in order to hang on Cleopatra's litter that happens to pass through the forum (58.11): Φουρνίου δὲ λέγοντος, ὃς ἦν ἀξιώματος μεγάλου καὶ δεινότατος εἰπεῖν Ῥωμαίων, τὴν μὲν Κλεοπάτραν ἐν φορείωι διὰ τῆς ἀγορᾶς κομίζεσθαι, τὸν δ' Ἀντώνιον ὡς εἶδεν ἀναπηδήσαντα τὴν μὲν δίκην ἀπολιπεῖν, ἐκκρεμαννύμενον δὲ τοῦ φορείου παραπέμπειν ἐκείνην. Cf. Dio 50.4, where Antony follows her sedan around with the other eunuchs. Note that Marius also leads a Syrian prophetess, Martha, about with him in a litter (ἐν φορείῳ κατακειμένην σεμνῶς περιήγετο) (*Marius* 17.1).

[151] *Att.*10.10.5. *aperta* can be contrasted with a passage in *Att*.9.11.1, where Cicero tells Atticus that he has learned discovered Lentulus at Puteoli (*Lentulum nostrum scis Puteolis esse? quod cum e viatore quodam esset auditum, qui se diceret eum in Appia, cum is paulum lecticam aperuisset, cognosse…*). The phrase *in Appia* suggests that Lentulus has travelled from Rome to Puteoli in a litter.

[152] Unless these are the same *lenones* (*comites nequissimi*) that appear in the *raeda* in the *Philippics* passage.

[153] *Att.*10.16.5. cf. Juvenal 10.35, the list of trappings that weren't even around for the laughing philosopher Democritus to laugh at: *praetextae, trabeae, fasces, lectica, tribunal* (10.35). The *lectica* is here meant to be jarring, but part of the joke is that by the satirist's day litters *were* in effect standard regalia.

Besides feminizing Antony or rendering him more decadent, the *lectica* can also serve to degrade and humiliate him in his relationship to Caesar. Antony may have his call-girls and groupies, but Caesar has his own bunch of lackeys, Antony included:

> *Quis umquam apparitor tam humilis, tam abiectus? Nihil ipse poterat, omnia rogabat, caput in aversam lecticam inserens beneficia, quae venderet, a collega petebat.*[154]

That is, far from acting his role as consul since he has no power (*nil ipse poterat*) he must defer to Caesar in order to get anything done. That the picture does not jibe with its broader context, a brief narrative which depicts Antony's success in blocking Caesar's attempt to make Dolabella suffect consul, only underlines how portable and laden the litter image can be, as it is here.[155] Identifying Antony as an *apparator*, a free public attendant (such as *praecones* and lictors—rather like later *lecticarii*), is demeaning, especially for a consul. The visual image of him scurrying behind while Caesar lounges inside his litter confers special disgrace. Perhaps this is because the (implicitly) closed litter is conceived of as a personal space, one into which Antony must carefully insinuate himself.[156]

And as was the case with Verres above, the *lectica* can suddenly transform from a mechanism for disclosing vices into a cloaking device, used to put up barriers. On his return to Rome, Antony—deliberately, Cicero suggests—fails to return the greeting of the people of Aquinum and Anagnia, by hiding inside his litter:

> *cum inde Romam proficiscens ad Aquinum accederet, ob viam ei processit, ut est frequens municipium, magna sane multitudo. at iste operta lectica latus per oppidum est ut mortuus. stulte Aquinates; sed tamen in via habitabant. quid Anagnini? Qui, cum essent deuii, descenderunt ut istum, tamquam si esset consul, salutarent. incredibile dictu, sed inter omnis constabat neminem esse resalutatum…*[157]

The people of Aquinum were lining the sides of the *via Latina*, but he does not even acknowledge them. It was silly of them to have turned up. But what about the people of Anagnia, who had to tramp a ways to reach the thoroughfare? Even despite the presence in Antony's entourage of two Anagnines, Mustela the Weasel (in charge of swords, *gladiorum princeps*) and Laco the Spartan (in charge of cups, *poculorum*), they got reply no reply either. Here the *lectica* attracts everyone's attention, but simultaneously snubs them. There is basically no other way in

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[154] *Phil*.2.82.

[155] Note Denniston (1929), "this description of Antony's subservience is rather oddly inserted in an episode which illustrates his recalcitrance," and Ramsay (2003), "It is odd, as Denniston remarks, that C. makes this point here…" (both ad loc.), as if oratory were all about being consistent and "telling the truth." For "odd" read "strategic" or "characteristic of rhetoric": the litter image was probably meant to be loud enough to drown out the surrounding evidence of Antony's independence.

[156] The jibes of Licinius Calvus (*Bithynia quicquid / et paedicator Caesaris umquam habuit*), Dolabella, (*paelicem reginae, spondam interiorem regiae lecticae*) and Curio **(***stabulum Nicomedis et Bithynicum fornicem*) Suetonius seem vaguely relevant

[157] *Phil*.2.106. It is possible that Antony was actually ill as Ramsay notes, citing Becht (1911) (cf. *Att.* 15.3.2: *Antonio quam iam est volo peius esse*), but if so, Cicero has deliberately harnessed Antony's litter-borne return to different effect.

Roman culture to be at once "in public" and "not in public" (a variation on peekaboo logic).[158] Since litters or similar conveyances could be used at times as biers, Cicero jokes with *ut mortuus*.[159] Indeed, that is the only other way to be "in public" and "not in public": at your own funeral.

In the final instances of the *lectica* in the *Philippics*, the conveyance is used to bear arms. Despite seeming rather soft and delicate elsewhere, here the litter is made of sterner stuff, and now used for weapons transit. The *lectica*'s attention-grabbing qualities are certainly invoked, and a contrast between Antony's "armed" inroads here and previous shows of force—of Cinna, Sulla, Caesar—comes through.

> *qui vero inde reditus Romam, quae perturbatio totius urbis! memineramus Cinnam nimis potentem, Sullam postea dominantem, modo Caesarem regnantem videramus. erant fortasse gladii, sed absconditi nec ita multi. ista vero quae et quanta barbaria est! Agmine quadrato cum gladiis secuntur, scutorum lecticas portari videmus.*[160]

The passage has it both ways (in several ways). The earlier take-overs were (no doubt: *potentem…dominantem…regnantem*) overwhelming, but "hidden" and "small." Antony's a real horrorshow, complete with defensive formation for urban guerilla warfare. Now the swords are carried openly and the shields are trucked in by the cart-(i.e., litter-)load. But why aren't these men carrying their shields like real men? And aren't litters kind of an effeminate choice anyway, especially given how—and how memorably—that conveyance has been characterized in the speech thus far? In any case this vague suggestion, that the men are too weak or effeminate to carry the shields themselves, gets articulated later, in the fifth *Philippic*, as if to confirm that in the passage above, Cicero *was* constructing a two-sided image (heaps of weapons trucked in conspicuously, and props or crutches for those too soft to stage a real *Putsch*):

> *cum autem erat ventum ad aedem Concordiae, gradus conplebantur, lecticae conlocabantur, non quo ille scuta occulta esse vellet, sed ne familiares, si scuta ipsi ferrent, laborarent*.[161]

Antony is this time slammed both for being the first Roman to appear in public with armed men (openly, *palam*), and for resorting to weird, semi-eastern tactics to accommodate his and his associates' decadence. The clause *non quo ille scuta occulta esse vellet*, confirms the usual—that is to say, marked and pejorative—associations of the *lectica*.

It is clear then, from this brief excursus on Cicero's litters, that the vehicle could be deployed in oratory for powerful effect, that there was a range of negative associations from which a vivid narrator such as Cicero could choose. But without attempting, mechanistically, to debunk such invocations as somehow "artificial" or "untrue"—for this variety of roles that the litter could play for Roman audiences was no doubt "real" and "true"—I would like to point to

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[158] Cf. Pliny *Pan*. 48 (of Domitian): *non adire quisquam, non adloqui audebat tenebras semper secretumque captantem, nec umquam ex solitudine sua prodeuntem, nisi ut solitudinem faceret.*

[159] See below for more jokes involving the litter/bier ambiguity. cf. also the Gellius episode mentioned in the introduction.

[160] *Phil*.2.108

[161] *Phil*.5.18. *barbari sagittarii* appear in the bunch (apparently Itureans).

just a few places in which the *lectica* performs a different function. That is, his *Letters* have quite a few litters in them, which carry both Cicero himself and his correspondents at various times. For example, he recounts a postprandial ride he took to Pompey's villa.[162] In a letter to his friend M. Marius (*Fam.*7.1.5), Cicero promises to share his leisure once he has released himself from his burdensome tasks: *quibus si me relaxaro (nam ut plane exsolvam non postulo), te ipsum, qui multos annos nihil aliud commentaris, docebo profecto quid sit humaniter vivere.* This will mean a visit to one of his (or Marius'?) villas complete with litter-ride (*tu modo istam imbecillitatem valetudinis tuae sustenta et tuere, ut facis, ut nostras villas obire et mecum simul lecticula concursare possis*). This is in part because Marius is elderly and frail. Nevertheless, Cicero will be riding in the litter along with him (*concursare*). The same Marius is mentioned in a letter from Cicero to his brother in which he says that he should have brought the valetudinarian along to his villa. Reference to the conveyance reminds him of another litter ride the two took together, this time in a (borrowed?) litter of state with armed *machaerophori*.[163] The litter once belonged to Ptolemy, and Marius is terribly shocked when, somewhere along the trip, the curtains are opened to reveal one hundred armed guards. Whether this was an orchestrated practical joke on Cicero's part or simply a coincidence (the guards have caught up with the litter after the curtains have been closed), the point is that here the *lectica* is not a source of moral outrage. So although Cicero, in his speech on behalf of Roscius Amerinus, could attack Chrysogonus' luxury and include *lecticarii* among his indulgences without further comment or elaboration, he himself can use the vehicle as an aid in a form of aristocratic play.[164]

This (gesture at a) glimpse of an inside-the-litter view comes up again, this time in far a less light-hearted version, in Plutarch's account of Cicero's entry into Rome before delivering his speech *pro Milone*. After Pompey lined the forum with soldiers, Cicero's client Milo persuaded him to ride in a litter and await quietly the start of the trial (ἐν φορείῳ κομισθέντα πρὸς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἡσυχάζειν), presumably to avoid the sight and thus control his nervousness (and not botch the defense). Nevertheless, when he exited the vehicle he was so frightened that he nearly couldn't begin his speech.[165] There is, lastly, another example of the litter's ability to shut out the world to the benefit of its passenger. Discussing divination *ex acuminibus* (from the flashes of light from spear-points), Cicero says that M. Marcellus used to keep his litter closed to avoid seeing omens that needed interpreting and could thus hamper his progress: *et quidem ille* [sc. *Marcellus*] *dicebat, si quando rem agere vellet, ne impediretur auspiciis, lectica operta facere iter se solere.*[166] This is in part tongue-in-cheek, and certainly of a piece with the self-concious skepticism put forth by Cicero in the dialogue, but the point here is that the litter is not really a focus of mockery or invective as it is in its better-known appearances in Cicero's oratory. Instead, it is introduced here as a given, one that is familiar to Cicero and his readers, and one over which a *different kind* of playful speech is embroidered. That these few rather less marked instances of litte-use would be there lurking all the time in Cicero's work reinforces just how constructed this form of transit could be.

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[162] *ad* Q. fr. 2.5.3: *eo die cenavi apud Crassipedem. cenatus in hortos ad Pompeium lectica latus sum*.
[163] Cic. *ad Q. Fr.* 2.9.2, *Marium autem nostrum in lecticam mehercule coniecissem – non illam regis Ptolomaei Asicianam; memini enim, cum hominem portarem ad Baias Neapoli octaphoro Asiciano machaerophoris centum sequentibus, miros risusnos edere cum ille ignarus sui comitatus repente aperuit lecticam et paene ille timore, ego risu corrui*.
[164] *Rosc.Am.*134
[165] Plut. *Cic.*35. The narrative is no doubt entwined with Cicero's reputation for nerves and cowardice.
[166] *de Div.* 2.77.

4. *Iam sedeo?* Impediments to Virtue

Petronius was not the only Neronian author to draw critical attention to outrageous litter abuse, even if the satirical portraits offered by his contemporaries were more overtly aggressive than his own. Retaining our focus for now on the theme of indignant outbursts at litters and their passengers, let us move on to Petronius' contemporary, Seneca. Seneca's letters (and to a large extent dialogues/treatises) are well-known for being filled with depictions of and reflections on "real life," most of said material playing the role of *impedimenta* to the real work of existence. If Lucilius and readers are to find, and set off down, the true path of philosophy, getting rid of such stuff is contantly presented as vital. But as often happens in such programmatics-by-negation, the thing(s) to be avoided often end up receiving the most attention. Litters, usually complete with bearers and other paraphernalia, figure repeatedly in Seneca's enumerations of vices of indulgence. In this universe of *luxuria*, they might seem to fulfill a function that is not fundamentally different from the other items in the lists, the other targets of Seneca's artful tirades. That is, to some extent, they are all stand-ins for decadence, like Trimalchio's litter above. More often than not, the *lectica* or *sella* appears together with several other items and the heaping up is central to the assaulting rhetoric. But Seneca equips his litters with special force such that they can function in several novel capacities.

First, there is the fairly straightforward notion that the preponderance of litters is a sign of the times, a marker of general moral decline and overturned categories. Unsurprisingly, women are mostly to blame.

> *coniugibus alienis, nec clam quidem, sed aperte ludibrio habitis, suas aliis permisere. rusticus, inurbanus, ac mali moris, et inter matronas abominanda conditio est, si quis coniugem in sella prostare uetuit, et uulgo admissis inspectoribus uehi undique perspicuam.*[167]

Shameless adultery, says Seneca, is now the order of the day. But another by now standard practice receives more elaborate treatment from him and is presumably even more disturbing: the fact that husbands all but prostitute (*prostare*) their wives by sending them out in transparent litters for all to gape at—such that a man becomes a backwoods bumpkin if should he forbid it. The implication here is that the situation is the fault of women: after all, they *want* to be licentious and are not only if men forbid it. The story of Roman decadence is then, in part, a story of men simply loosening the reins and relaxing their grip, allowing women to run wild. The thought recurs in rather more explicit terms in another passage, again linking women and litters.

> *tanta quosdam dementia tenet ut sibi contumeliam fieri putent posse a muliere. quid refert quam <beatam> habeant, quot lecticarios habentem, quam oneratas aures, quam laxam sellam? aeque inprudens animal est et, nisi scientia accessit ac multa eruditio, ferum, cupiditatum incontinens*.[168]

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[167] *de Ben.* 1.9.3. cf. Plutarch on peeking into women's litters: ἡμεῖς δὲ [i.e., in contrast to examples of heroic restraint] τοῖς φορείοις τῶν γυναικῶν ὑποβάλλοντες τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ τῶν θυρίδων ἐκκρεμαννύντες οὐδὲν ἁμαρτάνειν δοκοῦμεν οὕτως ὀλισθηρὰν καὶ ῥευστὴν εἰς ἅπαντα τὴν πολυπραγμοσύνην ποιοῦντες (*de Curios.* 522a).

[168] *de Const.* 14.1

The context deals with the aspiring wise man's immunity to insult. Some men, Seneca says, are insane enough to take reproaches from women to heart, to believe that they count, when they do not. Despite possessing an outward appearance of standing and importance—wealth, jewelry, upholstered sedans with numerous bearers—women are ignorant wild animals, unable to control their passions. The thought is of course tied to a widespread Senecan (<Stoic) discourse about the ephemerality of external possessions and their irrelevance to (and hindrance of) the philosophical life. Lurking in the passage is a pattern of misplaced loads and backwards burdens: an excess of carrying on the one hand (*oneratas aures*), and too much *being carried* on the other (*lecticarios…laxam sellam*).[169] Moreover, an implicit equation is nevertheless here posited, or recalled, between a sizeable, comfortable litter and unrestrained desire. That is to say, these vehicles are prominent instantiations of such dangerous longing. The freighted connection is varied in another passage, where Seneca advises marriage to the sort of woman who is not overly concerned with luxurious lifestyle:

> *duc bene institutam nec maternis inquinatam vitiis, non cuius auriculis utrimque patrimonia bina dependeant, non quam margaritae soffocent, non cui minus sit in dote quam in veste, non quam [in]patente sella circu[m]latam per urbem populus ab omni parte aeque quam maritus inspexerit, cuius sarcinis domus non sit angusta. hanc facile ad mores tuos rediges, quam nondum corruperunt publici [corruptores]*.[170]

Take care, says Seneca, to marry a woman who is well-trained and not corrupted by maternal vices, not one of those who have already developed a special attachment to luxury items such as earrings, pearls, expensive clothing, and dramatically visible rides in open sedans. As before, here again the imagery of excess baggage (*sarcinis*) and its smothering capacity is invoked, but the thrust is different. Instead the revealing, debasing sedan, while no doubt a marker of corruption, is ultimately one imposed on women from the outside. Feminine purity does exist (vs. the earlier *imprudens animal et ferum* with hardly a chance), but it's just a challenge to seek it out. The usual confused anxiety about symptoms and causes is once more at issue.
But in his lost work *de Matrimonio*, Seneca appears to display less optimism. He cites Theophrastus' conclusion that since the ideal conditions for marriage (*si pulchra esset, si bene morata, si honestis parentibus, si ipse sanus ac dives, sic sapientem aliquando inire matrimonium*) will very rarely obtain, the wise man must not marry:

> *non est ergo uxor ducenda sapienti. primum enim impediri studia philosophiae nec posse quemquam libris et uxori pariter inservire. multa esse, quae matronarum usibus necessaria sint: pretiosae vestes, aurum, gemmae, sumptus, ancillae, supellex varia, lecticae et esseda deaurata.*[171]

The point this time is that a wife comes with lots of accessories—among them litters and gilded chariots, all of which will serve as obstacles (*impediri*) to the pursuit of philosophy. A man cannot serve both his books and his wife equally. However, as if to show how hypothetical and

[169] Women are similarly laden with earrings at *Ben.* 7.9.4: *exercitatae aures oneri ferendo sunt*.
[170] *Rem. Fortuit.* 16.7
[171] Fr. 48 H (*de Matrimonio*=Jerome *adv. Iov.* 1.47)

abstract these scenarios are, Seneca elsewhere turns the tables, painting women as (almost) the true heirs of ancient Roman *virtus*, this time scorning the pillow-borne *jeunesse dorée* from on high:

> *in qua istud urbe, di boni, loquimur? in qua regem Romanis capitibus Lucretia et Brutus deiecerunt: Bruto libertatem debemus, Lucretiae Brutum; in qua Cloeliam contempto et hoste et flumine ob insignem audaciam tantum non in viros transcripsimus: equestri insidens statuae in sacra via, celeberrimo loco, Cloelia exprobrat iuvenibus nostris pulvinum escendentibus in ea illos urbe sic ingredi in qua etiam feminas equo donavimus*.[172]

We are, after all, speaking of Rome, which boasts of a Lucretia alongside a Brutus, and which contains in its cultural memory Cloelia, who has been all but added to the ranks of manly heroes. Her escape as a hostage of Porsenna was famously vessel-less when she bravely swam across the Tiber. Here sculpted on horseback, she gazes down reproachfully on young men (of military age, *iuvenibus*) mounting their upholstered litters in the busy *via sacra*. No doubt Seneca's trick here is that *women* are supposed to be the ones in litters, there to be scorned (or at the very least, put up with) by those wise enough to strive after askesis. To put the young men in sedans with tough old Cloelia mocking them from a horse is a way, rhetorically, to make men beneath women in self-control. Again, litters are there as more or less backdrop, a given against which the real ethical riffing can take off.

But the device of the *lectica* or *sella* assumes more flexible and productive qualities when it is harnessed in Seneca's ongoing discourse on the ephemerality of material things. Throughout the letters we are treated to a repetitive but never tedious refrain that wealth is merely external, a façade that the discerning eye can strip away. In this respect, litters too are dispensable together with the rest of the clutter:

> *idem de istis licet omnibus dicas quos supra capita hominum supraque turbam delicatos lectica suspendit; omnium istorum personata felicitas est. contemnes illos si despoliaveris.*[173]

Idem here refers to the example that Seneca has just cited (and which he says he has to resort to frequently, *saepius hoc exemplo mihi utendum est*), embodied in two unidentified quotations from Roman tragedy, both of which involve proud swaggering on the part of some character (Atreus? Agamemnon?) who is in fact, Seneca reminds us, a mere actor, a slave earning a pittance.[174] His version of the proud bearing of the characters who utter these lines nicely

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[172] *Cons. ad Marc.* 16.2. cf. Plin. *N.H.* 34.28-29

[173] *Ep.* 80.8-9.

[174] *Saepius hoc exemplo mihi utendum est, nec enim ullo efficacius exprimitur hic humanae vitae mimus, qui nobis partes quas male agamus adsignat. Ille qui scaena latus incedit et haec resupinus dicit,*

en impero Argis; regna mihi liquit Pelops,
qua ponto ab Helles atque ab Ionio mari
urguetur Isthmos,

servus est, quinque modios accipit et quinque denarius. Ille qui superbus atque impotens et fiducia virium tumidus ait,

quod nisi quieris, Menelae, haec dextra occides,

diurnum accipit, in centunculo dormit (80.7-8).

forecasts the subsequent comparison. Just as the actor struts onto stage and delivers his lines "with swelling port [*latus*] and head thrown back [*resupinus*]" (Loeb), litters, in Roman imagining, tend to be (too) wide and of course their passengers lie sprawling inside. Seneca's lesson, that everything is put on, mere ornament, then reaches for an image that must have been fairly familiar to his readers, that is, of dandies being paraded in litters over the heads of everyone else. Their *felicitas*—"happiness," "prosperity," perhaps here even "success" or "wealth"—is donned just like a mask onstage. There is nothing impressive within after the shiny exterior has been stripped away. Here the litter is a kind of shell that hides an interior unable to live up to its exterior pomp. But note that Seneca's "all the world's a stage" (*hic humanae vitae mimus*) is perhaps slightly different from what we might expect, as the rest of his introductory sentence makes clear: *nec enim ullo* [sc. *exemplo*] *efficacius exprimitur hic humanae vitae mimus, qui nobis partes quas male agamus adsignat*. What Seneca is saying is that our "true roles" are those assigned by, or according to, Stoic virtue, and we are frequently (i.e., usually) unaware of what those are, in our tendency to resort to fancy trappings. But this is when we play our parts badly (*male agamus*), so Seneca is not in fact saying that *no one* deserves to be carried in a litter, only that *lectica* passengers are usually undeserving of that form of conveyance. In any case, Stoics seem to believe that vehicular transport is *contra naturam*, and the apparent contradiction can probably be reconciled by treating vehicles as one example of the indifferents.[175] Nevertheless, the litter in this passage functions as a device which blurs categories (of status, moral stature, slave/free).

In another striking moment of unveiling scorn that proceeds on roughly similar lines, Seneca has a rather nice definition of outward trappings as mere show—the word is *pompa*—and the symbolic potential of transportation and objects associated with its movement is drawn out. Such things, Seneca assures us, do not stay put; they are transitory:

> *hoc itaque ipse mihi dico, quotiens tale aliquid praestrinxerit oculos meos, quotiens occurit domus splendida, cohors culta servorum, lectica formonsis inposita calonibus: quid miraris? quid stupes? pompa est. ostenduntur istae res, non possidentur, et dum placent, transeunt. ad veras potius te converte divitias.*[176]

The fact that the Latin word *pompa* (πομπή, procession, parade, train, entourage, retinue) can, by Cicero's time, mean "display" and "ostentation" points towards a cultural anxiety about non-essential transport. This is especially striking given that one of the most dramatic instance of Roman *pompa* was the *pompa circensis* in which the images of the gods were carried in litter-like *fercula* and mule-drawn *tensae*. Perhaps an explanation lies in the fact that any obviously non-sacral version of *pompa* was seen as presumptuous. Nevertheless, Seneca's use here of the metaphor of transit to convey a sense of the passing nature of things (*transeunt*) is just one moment in which litter-use begins to stand out from the crowd of its kindred luxury signs. The imagery continues in his exhortation to Lucilius to "take a turn" (*te converte*) towards real wealth, and there is here a further connector between the rhetoric of processional ephemerality and the well-established language of philosophical wayfaring ("choosing the correct path," etc.). In another similar passage, Seneca expands the metaphorical potential of the image-set, this time

[175] The thought that transport is *contra naturam* appears explicitly at the opening of letter 55, in which Seneca recounts being carried to Vatia's villa.
[176] *Ep.*110.17

exploiting the possible relevance of "extraneous baggage" which is already latent in the transportational context.

> *parem autem te deo pecunia non faciet; deus nihil habet. praetexta non faciet; deus nudus est. fama non faciet nec ostentatio tui et in populos nominis dimissa notitia; nemo novit deum, multi de illo male existimant, et impune. non turba servorum lecticam tuam per itinera urbana ac peregrina portantium; deus ille maximus potentissimusque ipse vehit omnia*.[177]

The real import of the imagery and its trajectory is difficult to follow. There is a list of the usual ephemeralities (including wandering, well-accompanied litter trips through the city) that cannot but weigh the would-be *sapiens* down, distancing him from his goal of virtue. This burdening is at first contrasted with the god's utter nakedness: he has no possessions. But the thrust comes in the final sentence, when we learn that the god, *though*[178] most great and all-powerful, actually carries "everything" himself. First of all, the image of a god as transcendental litter-bearer—the substance of his load being the weight of the world—is difficult to suppress given the proximity of the *deus…vehit omnia* clause to *turba servorum…portantium*, presumably an easy shift for Romans to make given familiar depictions of Atlas. That is to say, this *deus* is not proud and haughty, but stoops to carry others (everyone) on his back (*collo*). If this is right, then we have an unusual shift of attention from the arrogant passengers of litters to their encumbered carriers. This inchoate concern for the degradations suffered by others (such as, famously, by slaves) is pressed further in Seneca's other deployments of litters for rhetorical illustration. We see this in particular in his accounts of the aimless commutes that urbanites feel compelled to make. For example, in letter 22,

> *facile est autem, mi Lucili, occupationes evadere, si occupationum pretia contempseris. illa sunt, quae nos morantur et detinent: "quid ergo? tam magnas spes relinquam?ab ipsa messe discedam? nudum erit latus, incomitata lectica, atrium vacuum?"*[179]

And in a series of attacks on those overly busy with *otium* in the *de Brevitate Vitae*, which includes among its targets hairstyling and banqueting, Seneca reserves a special place for those who take regular litter rides. For Seneca here the litter captures with visual eloquence the aimless lack of agency displayed by his philosophy-less society men:

> *ne illos quidem inter otiosos numeraverim, qui sella se et lectica huc et illuc ferunt et ad gestationum suarum, quasi deserere illas non liceat, horas occurrunt, quos quando lavari debeant, quando natare, quando cenare, alius admonet: et usque eo nimio delicati animi languore solvuntur, ut per se scire non possint, an esuriant. audio quendam ex delicatis - si modo deliciae vocandae sunt vitam et consuetudinem humanam dediscere - cum ex balneo inter manus elatus et in sella*

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[177] *Ep*. 31.10

[178] i.e., *maximus potentissimusque* must be contrasted with *ipse vehit omnia*. This is how Gummere's Loeb interprets the sentence (and the passage seems too paradoxical taken otherwise given *deus nihil habet* and *deus nudus est*: "this god carries everything himself, being most great and all-powerful.")

[179] *Ep.* 22.9

> *positus esset, dixisse interrogando: ' iam sedeo?' hunc tu ignorantem, an sedeat, putas scire an vivat, an videat, an otiosus sit?*[180]

Seneca's brief aside explaining the meaning of the word *delicatis* is important. We can see here, once again, that for the Roman *senex* such practices are *contra naturam*. But his accont of the bather's pondering is also interesting. Seneca frames this as a stupid question, "Am I sitting now?", meant here to be set up for ridicule, a sign of the man's complete surrender to the mind-numbing effects of *otium*. But, as usual, in his miniature invective Seneca has hit upon something rather central to the whole issue of litter transport, that is, the dangerous messiness introduced by having people carry one about. For the question is far from a stupid one: am I, in such a situation, truly *sitting*, really *at rest*? The *lecticarii* are certianly not; and the passenger is in motion. But at the same time, I am sitting in a *sella*. I would read this set-up question, *iam sedeo?*, as a crystallization of a particular cultural anxiety. The concern is that although harnessing the metabolic energy of other humans to one's own benefit (in this case, for mobility) could be a sign of status and power, a certain degree of control and agency is thus surrendered in the process. Aside from the real potential dangers involved in such a relinquishing (to which we shall return again below), there is a more radical and metaphorical disempowerment that relying on others for movement, against their will, entails. Blown up to a macroscopic scale (to the level of the empire, say), this deep-seated worry very promptly ceases to seem as silly as Seneca here suggests.

In yet another passage, Seneca expresses something approaching sympathy for the utterly dependent *clientes* who run about the city to accompany their litter-bound patrons.

> *quorundam quasi ad incendium currentium misereberis: usque eo inpellunt obvios et se aliosque praecipitant, cum interim cucurrerunt aut salutaturi aliquem non resalutaturum aut funus ignoti hominis prosecuturi aut <ad> iudicium saepe litigantis aut ad sponsalia saepe nubentis et lecticam adsectati quibusdam locis etiam tulerunt; dein domum cum supervacua redeuntes lassitudine iurant nescire se ipsos, quare exierint, ubi fuerint, postero die erraturi per eadem illa vestigia.*[181]

Here again we see an enhanced picture, and an increased focus on the people associated with litter transit, but do not ride in then. And the interchangeability of riders and bearers comes together in one final passage from the *de Beneficiis*.

> *quid superbia in tantam uanitatem attollimur, ut beneficia a seruis indignemur accipere, et sortem eorum spectemus, obliti meritorum? seruum tu quemquam uocas, libidinis et gulae seruus, et adulterae, immo adulterarum commune mancipium ? seruum uocas quemquam tu? quo tandem ab istis gerulis raperis cubile istud tuum circumferentibus? quo te penulati isti in militum et quidem non uulgarem cultum subornati? quo, inquam, te isti efferunt? ad ostium alicuius ostiarii, ad hortos alicuius ne ordinarium quidem habentis officium. et deinde negas tibi beneficium a seruo tuo posse dari, cui osculum alieni serui beneficium est. quae est tanta animi discordia? eodem tempore seruos despicis, et colis.*[182]

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[180] *De Brev.* 12.6.1
[181] *De Tranq.* 12.4
[182] *de Ben.* 3.28. This concern for unmasking degradation appears in [Lucian]'s *Cyn.* 10 as well: καὶ οὐδ' εἰς ταύτην

It is noteworthy that Seneca here calls the litter a *cubile*. By a kind of semantic distillation, he has drawn out concisely the dangerous "bed-ness" of litters, as if to remind that the (rare) compound in *–ica* has masked the true essence of the vehicle.

In spite of these numerous, empassioned examples, as we saw with Cicero above, our trusted guide by no means renounced the use of litters himself. This is a fact which by itself shows how much the meaning of the conveyance was up for negotiation and a site of contestation. In Letter 15, Seneca recommends a salutary ride to keep the body and mind nimble.

> *Neque ego te iubeo semper imminere libro aut pugillaribus: dandum est aliquod intervallum animo, ita tamen ut non resolvatur, sed remittatur. gestatio et corpus concutit et studio non officit: possis legere, possis dictare, possis loqui, possis audire, quorum nihil ne ambulatio quidem vetat fieri.*[183]

Here a bracing *gestatio* (*concutit* suggests the jostling of a *lectica*) serves to assist and support the learning process—it certainly doesn't block its progress (*officit*). Indeed, compounds from *quatio* bubble up from time to time, strikingly, in the *Letters*, with a sense of "examination by shaking" (*excutio, concutio*) and the correspondence between this bumpy transport and a philosophical self-examination—of physical jarring and purposeful ejections from one's mental comfort zone—is already there for the philosopher to apply and explore. But the litter has been transformed from its more formulaic applications already charted. And shaking by *gestatio* comes up once more, where he describes *his own* litter-borne visit to Vatia's seaside villa.

> *A gestatione cum maxime venio, non minus fatigatus quam si tantum ambulassem quantum sedi; labor est enim et diu ferri, ac nescio an eo maior quia contra naturam est, quae pedes dedit ut per nos ambularemus, oculos ut per nos videremus. debilitatem nobis indixere deliciae, et quod diu noluimus posse desimus.*[184]

Although the metaphorical thrust is certainly there to be harnessed for Seneca's for project of therapy by soul-jolting (it's hard work, *labor*, and exhausting, *fatigatus*) our correspondent veers off on a set-piece denunciation of the practice of going by litter. He was no doubt aware of the potential contradictions, conscious that being carried runs counter to Stoic notions of living *secundum naturam*. So it is certainly striking that even Seneca would be able to sidestep this philosophical orthodoxy for the sake of some amount of convenience and, perhaps, prestige.

ἡ μανία καὶ διαφθορὰ φαίνεται τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἀρκεῖν, ἀλλ' ἤδη καὶ τῶν ὄντων τὴν χρῆσιν ἀναστρέφουσιν ἑκάστῳ χρώμενοι πρὸς ὃ μὴ πέφυκεν, ὥσπερ εἴ τις ἀνθ' ἁμάξης ἐθέλοι τῇ κλίνῃ καθάπερ ἁμάξῃ χρήσασθαι.
{ΛΥΚΙΝΟΣ}
Καὶ τίς οὗτος;
{ΚΥΝΙΚΟΣ}
Ὑμεῖς, οἳ τοῖς ἀνθρώποις ἅτε ὑποζυγίοις χρῆσθε,
κελεύετε δὲ αὐτοὺς ὥσπερ ἁμάξας τὰς κλίνας τοῖς
ταχήλοις ἄγειν, αὐτοὶ δ' ἄνω κατάκεισθε τρυφῶντες καὶ ἐκεῖθεν ὥσπερ ὄνους ἡνιοχεῖτε τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ταύτην, ἀλλὰ μὴ ταύτην τρέπεσθαι κελεύοντες· καὶ οἱ ταῦτα μάλιστα ποιοῦντες μάλιστα μακαρίζεσθε.

[183] *Ep.* 15.6
[184] *Ep.*55.1

5. Transported Origins

pedestres sine dubio Romae fuere in auctoritate longo tempore.[185]

As is the case with much origin-tracing, Roman commentary on the history of litter use involves a considerable amount of squirming. If we are never told outright, we are nevertheless led to believe, and repeated insinuations are made, that the conveyance is of eastern provenance, and that, for example, the Bithynians are the true inventors and experts when it comes to the litter.[186] The original, historical path of the vehicle's adoption is certainly westward and so in one sense the Romans are not "wrong" when they claim that they took on the practice from Eastern neighbors. And the "oriental" feel and connotations of the conveyance would certainly have a long afterlife, lingering on until a very late date. However, insufficient circumspection has been applied to the contexts in which these mini-narratives are deployed. After all, they crop up repeatedly in literary moments when a great deal is at stake in negotiating Roman/non-Roman, West/East, or sanctioned/illicit oppositions. Instead of nodding along with our texts at every turn in their repeated assertions that litters are *unRoman* (i.e., as we have mostly done in our discussion thus far), it will be helpful in our discussion of litter-ary representations to ask ourselves, repeatedly, why Romans would have been so keen to foist responsibility for or ownership of this vehicle onto someone else. That is to say—just as we saw with ostentatious entourages—what is it that causes Romans to rail at litter-use so?

To begin with, some issues of semantics need clarifying: namely, what we mean by the English word "litter." Considerable differences in how English and Latin slice up semantics have led to some confusion in our understanding of how this vehicle functioned as a sign. Contemporary English tends to distinguish between (more or less obsolete) "litter" (or "palanquin" or "sedan") in the sense of "fancy, often ceremonial, padded box-like vehicle for lying or sitting in, carried by men" and "stretcher," "device for transporting the wounded, ill, or aged, carried by EMTs, medics or the like." In other words, English (at least in recent history) decided to make overt a distinction based on implied need: the use of a "litter," so English has it, is (was) basically discretionary (given requisite wealth and/or status), but when a "stretcher" is employed it is, by definition, more or less indispensible. On the other hand, Latin *lectica* carries both senses, in neither case losing its fundamental connection to *lectus*, "bed."[187] A wounded general such as Scipio, or an aging senator such as Appius Claudius, should a pressing need for transport arise, is carried in the same kind of conveyance as Verres (lording it over the Sicilians) or Antony (his latest rager turned road trip) or Nero (nighttime surveillances thus kept quiet): that is, in all cases, *lectica deferuntur*. Viewed from one angle, it may seem that Latin is thus

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[185] Plin. *N.H.* 34.28, segueing to ancient equestrian statues, of which Cloelia's was prominent (see above).

[186] Cic. *Verr*. 2.5.27, *ut mos fuit Bithyniae regibus*; Catul. 10.14-6, *"at certe tamen," inquit, "quod illic / natum dicitur esse, comparasti / ad lecticam homines"*; Valla's scholiast ("Probus") on Juvenal 1.121, *lecticarum usum, inquit Probus, primi dicuntur invenisse Bithyni*; 6.351, δίφρον *significat, inquit Probus: apud Bithynos autem usus lecticae inventus est*. Two Byzantine passages offer further corroboration, perhaps late enough to discount circular arguments on the basis of the Cicero passage: Photius *Lexicon* (654, 9. Pors.=II 268 Nab.) **φορεῖον**: ὁ νῦν ὄκνος λεγόμενος; Suid. **ὄκνος χαλκοῦς**: βούλεται τοῦτο τοῖς Βιθυνοῖς ἐπιχωρίως δίφρου τινὸς γυναικείου εἶδος εἶναι.

[187] Though the *TLL* demarcates sub-meanings, the *OLD* has simply "litter." It may be that for some English speakers "litter" encompasses a sub-category of "stretcher," but in my (American) idiolect it does not. The *OED* records that English : "litter" used to work like Latin *lectica* through at least 1894 (p. 153 Robertson's *Nuggets* etc.): "**2.a.** A vehicle in use down to recent times, containing a couch shut in by curtains, and carried on men's shoulders or by beasts of burden. **b.** A framework supporting a bed or couch for the transport of the sick and wounded."

more straightforward, more transparent than English, at least in its dealings with this particular verbal item: a *lectica* is a small bed used to carry various men and women about, all other connotations and value-laden judgments set aside. In fact, that both distinct uses are subsumed under one concept makes the situation hazy. Our tendency as Latinists, I think, is to conceive of the "litter" only in pejorative terms, that is, only in the terms presented to us most memorably by our most eloquent critics (e.g., Cicero, Seneca, Martial, Juvenal). The result is that we tend to think of other, more culturally acceptable litter-rides (for the wounded, ailing, aged, etc.) as "being carried in a stretcher," i.e., a fundamentally different type of vehicular use. This is, as already noted, partly due to complications injected by English terminology, but it is also, and more significantly, a result of Latin's privileged—and to us largely ignored—term (the marked term need not be the privileged term). Put another way, we could say that in ignoring those "stretcher" instances of *lectica*, or even in conceiving of them as fundamentally different activities from "litter" transport, we miss out on the fact that Romans would have seen *all* transport by *lectica* as forms of "stretcher-transport," with the (to them) more perverse manifestations on the rise as Rome grew. Thus it is probably more fruitful to view Trimalchio's litter ride as, in our terms, more akin to using a chrome-plated mobility scooter despite not being disabled: that is, he uses one simply because it is more comfortable and requires less effort than walking, and he can afford it.[188] Let us examine some details of where this vehicle was thought to have come from in order to understand this more carefully.

It is clear that, so far as the Roman cultural imagination is concerned, the growth and expansion of discretionary litter use proceeds in step with the growth and expansion of Rome herself. Wrapped up in our chroniclers' casual trend-tracing are the usual narratives of decadence. Whereas litter-rides never seem quite to belong in the Roman streetscape, are always butting or marching in inappropriately, stretcher-rides, supposedly, have been there since time immemorial. This is despite the fact that there is little evidence that the *lectica* was used by Romans *in any capacity* before the 1st century BCE.[189] If we were to trace the *lectica*'s *Urgeschichte*—our nostalgic Roman sources have it—our reconstructed proto-litter would have appeared only in circumscribed situations, in circumstances of urgent need. To take one example, a much-repeated anecdote about the necessity of obeying divine commands includes what is Roman history's first stretcher ride. It is no doubt significant that it comes about as the direct result of divine displeasure (subsequently identified as Jupiter's wrath). Cicero recounts the story in the first book of the *de Divinatione*:

> *Cum bello Latino ludi votivi maxumi primum fierent, civitas ad arma repente est excitata, itaque ludis intermissis instaurativi constituti sunt. qui ante quam fierent cumque iam populus consedisset, servus per circum, cum virgis caederetur, furcam ferens ductus est. exin cuidam rustico Romano dormienti visus est venire qui diceret praesulem sibi non placuisse ludis, idque ab eodem iussum esse eum senatui nuntiare; illum non esse ausum. iterum esse idem iussum et monitum ne vim suam experiri vellet; ne tum quidem esse ausum. exin filium eius esse*

[188] Alternatively, the two vehicles English calls "mobility scooter" and "golf cart," respectively, might provide a more useful analogy, if *both* were termed "mobility scooter," even despite being physically distinguishable (just as there do seem to have been physical differences between the two basic categories of *lectica*). In that case, the original and proper function of "mobility scooter"—to transport the sick, elderly, or disabled—would be invoked, with relevant moral problematics, even when used discretionarily by non-disabled men to move around on gold courses for amusement.

[189] That is, little evidence outside the ancient historiographical tradition. See Lamer *RE*

mortuum, eandem in somnis admonitionem fuisse tertiam. tum illum etiam debilem factum rem ad amicos detulisse, quorum de sententia lecticula in curiam esse delatum, cumque senatui somnium enarravisset pedibus suis salvum domum revertisse. itaque somnio comprobato a senatu ludos illos iterum instauratos memoriae proditum est.

When, during the Latin War, the great votive games were being held for the first time, the state was suddenly roused to arms, and since the games were thus interrupted repeat games were decided upon. Before these could be held and when the people had already been seated, a slave bearing a *furca* was led through the circus and beaten with rods. Afterwards a certain Roman peasant had a dream in which someone came to him and said that the *praesul* of the games had not pleased him, and that he ordered him to tell this to the Senate; he did not dare do this. He was ordered the same thing a second time and warned not to test his power; even then he did not dare. Then his son died and the same warning was given the third time in a dream. Then he became ill as well and related the matter to his friends, on whose advice he was born in a *lecticula* to the Senate-house, and when he had recounted the dream to the Senate he returned home on his own feet, healthy again. It is recorded that the dream was accepted by the Senate and the games were repeated for the second time.[190]

The connection between the punishment of the slave and the sudden crippling of the *rusticus Romanus*[191] is certainly important: both victims have been deprived of their ability to walk upright, as a man should; the slave being reduced essentially to a beast of burden (the *furca* as a kind of *iugum*), forced to carry others, the peasant in turn forced to be carried by others. But for the moment we should note the verbal expression of an important difference, the one between being carried by others and walking on one's own feet. The contrast between *lecticula esse delatum* and *pedibus suis salvum domum revertisse* is one which will recur in most of the retellings of this anecdote. Livy, in recounting the miraculous healing (*ecce aliud miraculum*, 2.36.7), likewise highlights in similar language the same opposition: *qui captus omnibus membris delatus in curiam esset, eum functum officio pedibus suis domum redisse traditum memoriae est* (8). Valerius Maximus has *magna cum admiratione recuperata membrorum firmitate pedibus domum rediit.* Dionysius has a similar version of this: καὶ ἐπειδὴ πάντα διεξῆλθεν, ἀναστὰς ἐκ τοῦ κλινιδίου καὶ τὸν θεὸν ἀναβοήσας ἀπῄει τοῖς ἑαυτοῦ ποσὶ διὰ τῆς πόλεως οἴκαδε ὑγιής (7.68.6).[192] Plutarch has ταῦτα δ' ἐν κλινιδίῳ φοράδην κομισθεὶς εἰς τὴν σύγκλητον ἀπήγγειλεν. ἀπαγγείλας δ' ὡς φασιν εὐθὺς ᾔσθετο ῥωννύμενον αὑτοῦ τὸ

[190] Cic. *de Div.* 1.55, recorded, Cicero says, by the annalists Q. Fabius Pictor and Cn. Gellius, and 'most accurately' by L. Coelius Antipater: *omnes hoc historici, Fabii, Gellii, sed proxume Coelius*. Other versions appear in Livy 2.36, Val. Max. 1.7.4, Dion. Hal. 7.68, Plut. *Cor.* 24, Augustine *civ. d.* 4.26, Macrob. *Sat*. 1.11.3-5, Min. Fel. *Oct.* 7.3.27, Arnob. 7.38, Lact. *Inst.* 2.7.20. Cicero (Coelius) together with Livy, Dionysius, and Plutarch situate the event in the early 5th century, while Macrobius has 280/79. Livy's version (2.36.1 ff.) names the mysterious visitor as *Juppiter*, as does Valerius Maximus and Macrobius; Dionysius has τὸν Καπιτώλιον Δία. For a discussion of Valerius Maximus' version, see Mueller (2002), 90-2.

[191] Identified by various other names in the other versions: T. Latinius, T. Atinius, Annius.

[192] For Greek parallels, which however work in reverse, cf. Demosthenes 54.20.5, ὑγιὴς ἐξελθὼν φοράδην ἦλθον οἴκαδε after being eaten by Conon and the gang. Also note a similar trope at Achilles Tatius 1.13.

σῶμα, καὶ ἀναστὰς ἀπῄει δι' αὑτοῦ βαδίζων.[193] In all cases, the conveyance is something one must resort to in cases of physical need; natural parity and balance is restored once the conveyance is discarded because no longer required. But central to this return to stasis is of course the official, sanctioning role with which our narratives charge the senate. Without that body's regulating acknowledgment that a true *omen* is at work, things cannot be put right, and the *rusticus* cannot be set back on his feet. Moreover, the senate is represented as fundamentally responsible for mediating this particular type of vehicular use, for it is only because the afflicted man perceives the *need* to report to the senators that he resorts to a *lectica* at all.

A later, equally foundational, litter myth is a variation on the former story, this time imbued with greater authority, and more clearly concerned with officially sanctioned norms of masculinity. The stretcher ride is that of Appius Claudius Caecus, and it is no doubt fitting that this highway backer and builder of aqueducts extraordinaire, the Ancient World's Robert Moses, would figure prominently in these early negotiations. More so than that of the *rusticus Romanus* above, his ride marks out the bounds of licit litter behavior with his illustrious *exemplum* once and for all. Appius is portrayed, in Valerius Maximus' and Plutarch's versions, as being so provoked by the possibility of peace terms with Pyrrhus, that he, extremely aged, crippled, and blind, has himself introduced into the Senate in a litter in order to deliver a fierce speech of saber-rattling, ultimately a successful one.[194] Thus, somewhat paradoxically, Appius' recourse to the *lectica* guarantees and authorizes the Romans need to make war, at a critical moment for the future of expansion. Valerius Maximus sets out the scene:

> *Appi vero aevum clade metirer, quia infinitum numerum annorum orbatus luminibus exegit, nisi quattuor filios, v filias, plurimas clientelas, rem denique publicam hoc casu gravatus fortissime rexisset. quin etiam fessus iam vivendo lectica se in curiam deferri iussit, ut cum Pyrro deformem pacem fieri prohiberet. hunc caecum aliquis nominet, a quo patria quod honestum erat per se parum cernens coacta est pervidere?*[195]

That the underlying narrative—and not just this particular (late-ish) representation of it—is concerned with categories of health and ailment, upright sturdiness and bent or hunched weakness, is well shown by the manner in which all accounts frame this story in language. The tradition seems to relish various oxymorons, as it does here (*hoc casu gravatus/fortissime rexisset*; *caecum, parum cernens/pervidere*; even *deformem pacem*/Appius not being "on form"), and though it may seem that Appius' entrance and delivery is *striking* or *unusual* (and the

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[193] *Cor*. 24

[194] As it happens, this is the first (i.e., the oldest "real") speech in Malcovati's *Oratorum Romanorum Fragmenta*. cf. Cic. *Brut.* 61: *nec vero habeo quemquam antiquiorem, cuius quidem scripta proferenda putem, nisi quem Appi Caeci oratio haec ipsa de Pyrrho et nonnullae mortuorum laudationes forte delectant*. Isid. *Etym*. 1.38.2: *apud Romanos Appius Caecus adversus Pyrrhum solutam orationem primus exercuit*.

[195] Val. Max. 8.13.5. The story shows up in Plutarch's *Pyrrhus* 18: ἔνθα δὴ Κλαύδιος Ἄππιος, ἀνὴρ ἐπιφανής, ὑπὸ δὲ γήρως ἅμα καὶ πηρώσεως ὀμμάτων ἀπειρηκὼς πρὸς τὴν πολιτείαν καὶ πεπαυμένος, ἀπαγγελλομένων τότε τῶν παρὰ τοῦ βασιλέως, καὶ λόγου κατασχόντος, ὡς μέλλει ψηφίζεσθαι τὰς διαλύσεις ἡ σύγκλητος, οὐκ ἐκαρτέρησεν, ἀλλὰ τοὺς θεράποντας ἄρασθαι κελεύσας αὑτόν, ἐκομίζετο πρὸς τὸ βουλευτήριον ἐν φορείῳ δι' ἀγορᾶς. γενόμενον δὲ πρὸς ταῖς θύραις οἱ μὲν παῖδες ἅμα τοῖς γαμβροῖς ὑπολαβόντες καὶ περισχόντες εἰσῆγον, ἡ δὲ βουλὴ σιωπὴν αἰδουμένη τὸν ἄνδρα μετὰ τιμῆς ἔσχεν. Also, Aurelius Victor *vir. Ill.* 34.9: *cum de pace Pyrrhi ageretur et gratia potentum per legatum Cineam pretio quaerereretur, senex et caecus lectica in senatum latus turpissimas condiciones magnifica oratione discussit.*

tradition no doubt presents it as such), in his function as *exemplum*, he seems instead to approach some kind of ideal form of the Roman *senex*. For such seeming paradoxes were no doubt central to a culture which placed *senes* (old men, *senatus*) in charge of directing and sending out *iuvenes* to do the work of fighting and of maintaining and expanding the empire. Thus, Appius' inability to bring himself into the *curia* and his reliance on younger, stronger men to carry him represents in cameo the proper functioning of empire. What is more, we are offered here a glimpse of the essential function of transportation, according to a dominant ideology. If in Valerius Maximus' version of power, vehicular mobility is granted (solely) to an archetypal *senex* (the senate), this is no doubt tied closely to a certain republican nostalgia that his compilation exudes.[196]

But Valerius is not alone. That harnessed mobility and direct, unswerving movement are at the heart of the episode is confirmed by our oldest version of the story, which appears, appropriately, in Cicero's dialogue *de Senectute*. Here Cicero has Cato quote Ennius' version of Appius Claudius' speech (*quae versibus persecutus est Ennius*), in which the patriarch scolded, *quo vobis mentes, rectae quae stare solebant / antehac, dementis sese flexere viai?*[197] In spite of the dense layers of representation behind this brief passage, the importance of *senes*—and this particular, archetypal instantiation of them—to the regulation of norms and forms of mobility nevertheless shines through.

In an additional, similar instance in Livy, the ambassador Micythio from Chalcis is carried into the Senate because he cannot walk. The urgent necessity of his appearance, despite his physical condition, receives special emphasis. His tongue is described as his only working body part remaining—his only means of recounting his people's plight, at the hands of the Roman praetors C. Lucretius and L. Hortensius.

> *Chalcidenses vocati, quorum legatio ipso introitu movit, quod Micythio, princeps eorum, pedibus captus lectica est introlatus; ultimae necessitatis extemplo visa res, in qua ita adfecto excusatio valetudinis aut ne ipsi quidem petenda visa foret, aut data petenti non esset. cum sibi nihil vivi reliquum praeterquam linguam ad deplorandas patriae suae calamitates praefatus esset…*[198]

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[196] In the other republican example of the litter in Valerius, its use by a wounded consul during a naval battle is presented as problematic, but perhaps only because he was "lying immobile." There is a dispute between a consul (C. Lutatius) and a praetor (Q. Valerius) over which of the two has the right to celebrate a triumph commemorating a victory over the Punic fleet (at the Aegatian islands, 242). Valerius claimed that the consul had been lying crippled in a litter at the time of battle, while he did the commanding (*consulem ea pugna in lectica claudum iacuisse, se autem omnibus imperatoriis partibus functum*, 2.82). The only further instance is of Octavian's demand, despite his ill health, to be carried into the field of battle at Philippi in a litter (*lectica se in aciem lectica deferri iussit*, 1.7.1).

[197] That is, if *viai* (emended for *via*) is correct. Skutsch calls it "senseless and ungrammatical," but no one appears to have pointed out the appropriateness of Appius scolding the Romans for straying from the straight and narrow (PACEM.FIERI.CVM.PYRRHO.REGE.PROHIBVIT.IN.CENSVRA.VIAM. APPIAM.STRAVIT). Ennius has thus recast the Iliadic intertext (24.201, ὤμοι πῇ δή τοι φρένες οἴχονθ', ἠΐς τὸ πάρος περ / ἔλκε' ἐπ' ἀνθρώπους ξείνους ἠδ' οἷσιν ἀνάσσεις;) by way of a more Roman image. Skutsch nevertheless inclines towards Scaliger's *vietae* (for a contrast with *rectae*), which would edit out the wayfaring imagery. Cicero himself drove this potential irony home in his prosopopeia of the transpo magnate cursing his descendant Clodia's defilement of his *via* in *pro Caelio* 34 (*ideone ego pacem Pyrrhi diremi, ut tu amorum turpissimorum cotidie foedera ferires, ideo aquam adduxi, ut ea tu inceste uterere, ideo viam munivi, ut eam tu alienis viris comitata celebrares?*), perhaps aware he was passing through familiar ground.

[198] Livy 43.7.5-7

He goes on to recount his region's support of the Romans and its recent suffering at the hands of Roman administrators. As in the Appius episode, pressing need (*ultimae necessitatis*) is presented as overcoming severe physical obstacles. The phrase *pedibus captus lectica introlatus est* recalls Livy's earlier language in narrating the story of the stricken *rusticus* (*captus omnibus membris delatus in curiam esset*), reinforcing the notion that we are dealing with a kind of set-piece discourse, a certain well-established way of representing the senate's proper mediation of the use of human-powered transport. This, in other words, is how it should be.[199]
Contrasted with this allegedly home-grown purpose—the delivery of physically impaired men to senate to deliver some pressing report—is a likewise aetiologically-tinged representation of the importation of soft, eastern discretionary litter use. This view does of course accord to some extent with surviving evidence of litters in Greece and the East in the Hellenistic period, especially among the Diadochi and their descendants. Because of a grave illness, Eumenes appears on the battlefield in a litter before fighting Antigonus Monophthalmus in 317 BC, a fact which prompts the latter to mock his rival.[200] Antigonus Gonatas uses, among other devices, a fancy litter to distract Nicaea, the queen of Corinth, sending her to the theater and thus wresting control Acrocorinth.[201] Polybius describes gold- and silver-footed litters used to carry women (80 and 500, respectively) in Antiochus IV's games procession.[202] Diodorus Siculus, in recounting L. Aemilius Paulus' triumph at Rome after the battle of Pydna, includes among the magnificent parade of vehicles and spoil, a golden litter draped with purple curtains (φορεῖον χρυσοῦν περιπεπετασμένον πορφύραν, 31.8.12). It is hard not to see a narrative of imported decadence behind these relatively isolated instances of spectacular litter rides. This would be compatible with firmly-rooted and long-lasting accounts of exposure and decay, along the lines of Sallust's story about the spread of Roman *avaritia* stemming from the corruption of Sulla's troops in Asia[203] The setting is nearly a century later, but the idea is similar. In any case, there is Gellius'

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[199] The upshot of the episode is that the offending praetors receive due punishment, Micythion's troubles being thus vindicated.

[200] εἶτ' ὤφθη τὸ φορεῖον ἀπὸ θατέρου κέρως ἐπὶ θάτερον διαφερόμενον. γελάσας οὖν ὁ Ἀντίγονος ὥσπερ εἰώθει μέγα καὶ πρὸς τοὺς φίλους εἰπὼν „τοῦτ' ἦν [τὸ φορεῖον] ὡς ἔοικε τὸ ἀντιπαρατταττόμενον ἡμῖν", εὐθὺς ἀπῆγε τὴν δύναμιν ὀπίσω καὶ κατεστρατοπέδευσεν. (Plut. *Eum*. 14)

[201] παρέπεμπε τὴν Νίκαιαν αὐτὸς ἐπὶ τὴν θέαν ἐν φορείῳ κεκοσμημένῳ βασιλικῶς, ἀγαλλομένην τε τῇ τιμῇ καὶ πορρωτάτω τοῦ μέλλοντος οὖσαν (Plut. *Arat*. 17.4). Aratus himself, however, is portrayed as being carried in a litter because battle injuries (ἅπαξ δὲ καὶ τὸ σκέλος ἔσπασε διὰ τοῦ Θριασίου φεύγων, καὶ τομὰς ἔλαβε πολλὰς θεραπευόμενος, καὶ πολὺν χρόνον ἐν φορείῳ κομιζόμενος ἐποιεῖτο τὰς στρατείας 33.6), and in order to assist the Athenians (αὐτὸς δὲ δι' ἀρρωστίαν τινὰ μακρὰν κλινήρης ὑπάρχων, ὅμως ἐν φορείῳ κομιζόμενος ὑπήντησε τῇ πόλει πρὸς τὴν χρείαν, 35.6).

[202] ταύταις δ' ἑξῆς ἐπόμπευον ἐν χρυσόποσι μὲν φορείοις ὀγδοήκοντα γυναῖκες, (ἐν) ἀργυρόποσι δὲ πεντακόσιαι καθήμεναι, πολυτελῶς διεσκευασμέναι. καὶ τῆς μὲν πομπῆς *τὰ ἐπιφανέστατα ταῦτα ἦν.* Notice again, the trope of these splendors being difficult to describe: τὴν δ'ἄλλην πομπὴν λέγειν ἐστὶ δυσέφικτον, ὡς ἐν κεφαλαίῳ δὲ λεκτέον.

[203] *Cat.* 11.5-6. According to Athenaeus, in a story that takes place at a roughly comparable date, the Romans are explicitly *not* responsible for corrupting their satellite Athenians with demeaning displays of litter use. Rather, it is a combination of eastern importation and Athenian groveling that allows its pompous procession. In the rags-to-riches account of one Athenion, when, returning from an ambassadorial mission to Mithridates, he has trouble landing at Carystia, the Athenians send him a silver-footed litter in which to enter the city triumphantly: ἤδη οὖν τῆς Ἀσίας μεταβεβλημένης ὁ Ἀθηνίων ἐπανῆγεν εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας καὶ ὑπὸ χειμῶνος ἐνοχληθεὶς εἰς τὴν Καρυστίαν κατηνέχθη. τοῦτο μαθόντες οἱ Κεκροπίδαι ἔπεμψαν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀνακομιδὴν αὐτοῦ ναῦς μακρὰς καὶ φορεῖον ἀργυρόπουν. ἀλλ' εἰσήειν ἤδη, καὶ σχεδὸν τὸ πλεῖστον μέρος τῆς πόλεως ἐπὶ τὴν ἐκδοχὴν αὐτοῦ ἐξεκέχυτο· συνέτρεχον δὲ πολλοὶ καὶ ἄλλοι θεαταὶ τὸ παράδοξον τῆς τύχης θαυμάζοντες, εἰ ὁ παρέγγραφος Ἀθηνίων εἰς Ἀθήνας ἐπ' ἀργυρόποδος κατακομίζεται φορείου καὶ πορφυρῶν στρωμάτων, ὁ μηδέποτε ἐπὶ τοῦ

report of C. Gracchus's outraged account of young men's unbridled *libido* and *intemperantia*, involving a certain *homo adulescens pro legato* who has a passing peasant beaten to death for making fun of his *lectica*. The key phrase in this passage is certainly *ex Asia missus est*, which seems to confirm (and, no doubt, excite) Roman fears that these wanton behaviors are being carried in from outside.[204] Plutarch has Marius carting a dangerous Syrian prophetess, Martha, around with him in a litter (*Mar*.17), much to the alarm of the senate. Lastly, we can see in a fascinating scene from Curtius' history of Alexander further fragments of a tale along similar lines, even though its imperial vision is displaced one step eastward. Here Alexander and company visit India and amidst Curtius' traditional ethnography, we see glimpses of luxury that recur in contemporary accounts of Rome. Here is a vision of the king of the *Indi* on parade:

> *cum rex semet in publico conspici patitur, turibula argentea ministri ferunt totumque iter, per quod ferri destinavit, odoribus conplent. aurea lectica margaritis circumpendentibus recubat; distincta sunt auro et purpura carbasa, quae indutus est; lecticam sequuntur armati corporisque custodes, inter quos ramis aves pendent, quas cantu seriis rebus obstrepere docuerunt*.[205]

The incense, lavish cloth, and (avian) music will harmonize with Petronius' vision of Trimalchio, but the pearls in particular appear in Pliny's account of Nero's embellishments of imperial litters (*Neronis principis, qui sceptra et personas et cubilia viatoria unionibus construebat*, 37.17). The context is of course yet another concerned tracing of the development of Roman indulgence, a motif which pervades Pliny's encyclopaedia. And the Indian king's armed guards reappear in Cicero's account in a letter to his brother Quintus of a humorous ride he takes with the aged Marius in a litter-of-state once belonging to Ptolemy.[206] Either because Cicero has decided to play a practical joke on his friend or through a sort of accident, when the curtains are opened to reveal a mass of armed guards (*machaerophori*), Marius is deeply frightned; Cicero is amused. Clearly there is a component of real, historical east-to-west movement of litters that begins to spike in the first century BC so that by the end of the first century AD they are a well-known feature of the Roman scene. But there is important *ex post facto* aetiology in accounts such as that of Curtius that has been all but ignored by modern scholarly reception of the *lectica.* And in our readiness to accept *lecticae* as vehicles which simply *do not belong* in Rome (as most of our sources have it), we fail to acknowledge the constructedness of that story.

6. Licit Itineraries

In discussing these brief Roman explorations of litter origins, we have thus glimpsed the kinds of persons and functions that the vehicle is meant to bear, but it remains to examine in

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τρίβωνος ἑωρακὼς πορφύραν πρότερον, οὐδενὸς οὐδὲ Ῥωμαίων ἐν τοιαύτῃ φαντασίᾳ καταχλιδῶντος τῆς Ἀττικῆς (5.212 b-c). A story of Athenion's misguided tyranny follows.

[204] *item Gracchus alio in loco ita dicit: "quanta libido quantaque intemperantia sit hominum adulescentium, unum exemplum vobis ostendam. his annis paucis ex Asia missus est, qui per id tempus magistratum non ceperat, homo adulescens pro legato. is in lectica ferebatur. ei obviam bubulcus de plebe Venusina advenit et per iocum, cum ignoraret, qui ferretur, rogavit, num mortuum ferrent. ubi id audivit, lecticam iussit deponi, struppis, quibus lectica deligata erat, usque adeo verberari iussit, dum animam efflavit."* (10.3.5)

[205] 8.9.24

[206] *ad Q. fr.* 2.10 (8).2

further detail several more explicit accounts of that more overt regulation. I would like to suggest that the reason for this obsession with granting (or not granting) use of the litter is that the litter stands as a metaphor for political power and its potential (or inevitable) abuse. When they weren't busy serving as symbols of every manner of immoral indulgence, what were litters supposed to be for?

First of all, there is one additional account of original litter use, which has been ignored in the standard discussions of the *lectica*'s real and imagined diachronic development.[207] To the Roman investigations of litter origins explored above, I would add another foundational passage, this one concerning the hallowed use of the litter by the Vestals, which appears in Plutarch's *Numa*. This account is also to some extent characterized by a drive for archaeological inquiry, but clearly documents one of the most important uses to which the conveyance could be put.

> τιμὰς δὲ μεγάλας ἀπέδωκεν αὐταῖς, ὧν ἔστι καὶ τὸ διαθέσθαι ζῶντος ἐξεῖναι πατρὸς καὶ τἆλλα πράττειν ἄνευ προστάτου διαγούσας, ὥσπερ αἱ τρίπαιδες. ῥαβδουχοῦνται δὲ προϊοῦσαι· κἂν ἀγομένῳ τινὶ πρὸς θάνατον αὐτομάτως συντύχωσιν, οὐκ ἀναιρεῖται. δεῖ δὲ ἀπομόσαι τὴν παρθένον ἀκούσιον καὶ τυχαίαν καὶ οὐκ ἐξεπίτηδες γεγονέναι τὴν ἀπάντησιν. ὁ δὲ ὑπελθὼν κομιζομένων ὑπὸ τὸ φορεῖον ἀποθνῄσκει. κόλασις δὲ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἁμαρτημάτων πληγαὶ ταῖς παρθένοις, τοῦ μεγίστου Ποντίφικος κολάζοντος ἔστιν ὅτε καὶ γυμνὴν τὴν πλημμελήσασαν, ὀθόνης ἐν παλινσκίῳ παρατεινομένης· ἡ δὲ τὴν παρθενίαν καταισχύνασα ζῶσα κατορύττεται παρὰ τὴν Κολλίνην λεγομένην πύλην· ἐν ᾗ τις ἔστιν ἐντὸς τῆς πόλεως ὀφρὺς γεώδης παρατείνουσα πόρρω· καλεῖται δὲ χῶμα διαλέκτῳ τῇ Λατίνων. ἐνταῦθα κατασκευάζεται κατάγειος οἶκος οὐ μέγας, ἔχων ἄνωθεν κατάβασιν. κεῖται δὲ ἐν αὐτῷ κλίνη τε ὑπεστρωμένη καὶ λύχνος καιόμενος, ἀπαρχαί τε τῶν πρὸς τὸ ζῆν ἀναγκαίων βραχεῖαί τινες, οἷον ἄρτος, ὕδωρ ἐν ἀγγείῳ, γάλα, ἔλαιον, ὥσπερ ἀφοσιουμένων τὸ μὴ λιμῷ διαφθείρειν σῶμα ταῖς μεγίσταις καθιερωμένον ἁγιστείαις. αὐτὴν δὲ τὴν κολαζομένην εἰς φορεῖον ἐνθέμενοι καὶ καταστεγάσαντες ἔξωθεν καὶ καταλαβόντες ἱμᾶσιν, ὡς μηδὲ φωνὴν ἐξάκουστον γενέσθαι, κομίζουσι δι' ἀγορᾶς. ἐξίστανται δὲ πάντες σιωπῇ καὶ παραπέμπουσιν ἄφθογγοι μετά τινος δεινῆς κατηφείας· οὐδὲ ἐστὶν ἕτερον θέαμα φρικτότερον, οὐδ' ἡμέραν ἡ πόλις ἄλλην ἄγει στυγνοτέραν ἐκείνης. ὅταν δὲ πρὸς τὸν τόπον κο μισθῇ τὸ φορεῖον, οἱ μὲν ὑπηρέται τοὺς δεσμοὺς ἐξέλυσαν, ὁ δὲ τῶν ἱερέων ἔξαρχος εὐχάς τινας ἀπορρήτους ποιησάμενος καὶ χεῖρας ἀνατείνας θεοῖς πρὸ τῆς ἀνάγκης, ἐξάγει συγκεκαλυμμένην καὶ καθίστησιν ἐπὶ κλίμακος εἰς τὸ οἴκημα κάτω φερούσης. εἶτα αὐτὸς μὲν ἀποτρέπεται μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ἱερέων· τῆς δὲ καταβάσης ἥ τε κλίμαξ ἀναιρεῖται καὶ κατακρύπτεται τὸ οἴκημα γῆς πολλῆς ἄνωθεν ἐπιφορουμένης, ὥστε ἰσόπεδον τῷ λοιπῷ χώμα τι γενέσθαι τὸν τόπον. οὕτω μὲν αἱ προέμεναι τὴν ἱερὰν παρθενίαν κολάζονται.
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> But Numa bestowed great privileges upon them, such as the right to make a will during the life time of their fathers, and to transact and manage their other affairs without a guardian, like the mothers of three children. When they appear in public, the fasces are carried before them, and if they accidentally meet a criminal on his way to execution, his life is spared; but the virgin must make oath that the

[207] Lamer in *RE* and Girard in *DS*.

> meeting was involuntary and fortuitous, and not of design. He who passes under the litter on which they are borne, is put to death. For their minor offences the virgins are punished with stripes, the Pontifex Maximus sometimes scourging the culprit on her bare flesh, in a dark place, with a curtain interposed. But she that has broken her vow of chastity is buried alive near the Colline gate. Here a little ridge of earth extends for some distance along the inside of the city-wall; the Latin word for it is "agger." Under it a small chamber is constructed, with steps leading down from above. In this are placed a couch with its coverings, a lighted lamp, and very small portions of the necessaries of life, such as bread, a bowl of water, milk, and oil, as though they would thereby absolve themselves from the charge of destroying by hunger a life which had been consecrated to the highest services of religion. Then the culprit herself is placed on a litter, over which coverings are thrown and fastened down with cords so that not even a cry can be heard from within, and carried through the forum. All the people there silently make way for the litter, and follow it without uttering a sound, in a terrible depression of soul. No other spectacle is more appalling, nor does any other day bring more gloom to the city than this. When the litter reaches its destination, the attendants unfasten the cords of the coverings. Then the high-priest, after stretching his hands toward heaven and uttering certain mysterious prayers before the fatal act, brings forth the culprit, who is closely veiled, and places her on the steps leading down into the chamber. After this he turns away his face, as do the rest of the priests, and when she has gone down, the steps are taken up, and great quantities of earth are thrown into the entrance to the chamber, hiding it away, and make the place level with the rest of the mound. Such is the punishment of those who break their vow of virginity.[208]

Just as the cult of the Vestals has been seen as an idealized version of Roman female virtue, so this account of their use of the litter can be read as the symbolic ideal of female transportation.[209] The Vestals had the privilege to ride in the *carpentum* within the city in certain situations.[210] The litter seems to perform two functions for the priestesses, a fact which has important repercussions for how we are to understand official state control of women's access to vehicles. On the one hand, confining these prominent women to the enclosed space of a litter is about control and security—a certain version of "putting them in their place"—which at once guarantees and reinforces both their submission and their immunity from violation. It is thus a kind of mobile "House of the Vestals." At the same time, these particular women, generally speaking, were endowed with extraordinary power. In addition to the privileges enumerated here by Plutarch, they had, unusually for Roman women, the right to draw up wills. The fact that men who pass under their litter are executed without exception, and that they had the ability to free condemned men from a death-sentence suggests a version of the *patria potestas*. Granting them the use of the litter is thus a means of displaying and enhancing their power in public.

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[208] Plut. *Numa* 10.3-7, (Loeb translation of Perrin). cf. Dionysius of Halicarnassus account of the burial alive of the Vestals (*Ant. Rom.* 2.67.4), and Pliny's first-hand account (*Ep.*4.11). On the penalty

[209] Cornell (1981), 27.

[210] Thus Tacitus' mention of Agrippina's assumption of this privilege is presented as overstepping certain bounds.

But women in general are of course significant passengers in the litter's representations.[211] For elegists, they become primarily objects of attraction.[212] In Propertius 4.8, Cynthia lays out the terms by which she will take back the speaker, one of which is that he not pay attention to passing litters, i.e., other women (*cave…aut lectica tuae se det aperta morae*, 78). In the *Ars Amatoria*, after recommending long-distance wooing by love-letter, Ovid suggests a more direct approach instead: the pursuing man should walk up to her litter in public nonchalantly (*interea, sive illa toro resupina feretur, / lecticam dominae dissimulanter adi*.[213] In this context, the litter is there to draw men to it. In Martial, the *sella* serves a site for a certain curly-haired (*crispulus*) legal counselor to make advances on another man's wife: *nescio quid dominae teneram qui garrit in aurem / et sellam subito dexteriore premit* (5.61.3-4). Another chatterer, Cotilus, lingers all day among women's sedans: *inter femineas tota qui luce cathedras / desidet atque aliqua semper in aure sonat* (3.63.7-8). There are also, not surprisingly, the strapping *lecticarii* themselves to worry about, and in one epigram, a man's wife is called a *lecticariola* (a bearers' lover, a chairman-moll, a chair-telaine): *ancillariolum tua te vocat uxor, / et ipsa lecticariola est: estis, Alauda, pares* (12.58). This loss of control and self-control becomes more explicit in a mini-narrative about breaking off relationships in the *Remedia Amoris*. On his way to sue his wife in court, an angry man bids her exit her litter. As soon as she does, he sees her, they embrace, and he admits defeat.[214] The *lectica* here serves as prop for proper male control and self-control, keeping the woman's power over her husband, and his own susceptibility to it, in check.

Another major permitted use of the litter is for the transport of wounded soldiers, especially commanders who are thus allowed to transcend their metabolic bodies. Plutarch has Publicola, while defending Rome against the forces of Tarquin and Lars Porsenna, wounded and removed from battle in a litter, paving the way for Horatius Cocles to perform his famous feat.[215] Or, alternatively, we have generals continue to direct their operations from inside litters. Hannibal, stricken with an eye injury is nevertheless borne in a litter during the battle of Trasimene.[216] Scipio appears in the battle of Auringis in a litter after a thigh wound.[217] Marcellus could barely endure the shaking of the litter that carried him with his legions to Capua (in 208).[218] Pompey is described in the *de Bello Hispaniensi* as being carried in a litter.[219] Octavian is confined to a litter because ill before the battle of Pharsalus.[220] Severus is carried through Britain

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[211] Dio 57.4. refers to a covered litter as something senators' wives use (ἔν σκιμποδίῳ καταστέγῳ, ὁποίῳ αἱ τῶν βουλευτῶν γυναῖκες χρῶνται).
[212] Plut. *de Curios.* (522a-b): ἡμεῖς δὲ τοῖς φορείοις τῶν γυναικῶν ὑποβάλλοντες τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ τῶν θυρίδων ἐκκρεμαννύντες οὐδὲν ἁμαρτάνειν δοκοῦμεν οὕτως ὀλισθηρὰν καὶ ῥευστὴν εἰς ἅπαντα τὴν πολυπραγμοσύνην ποιοῦντες.
[213] *A.A.*1.488
[214] 665-9: *forte aderam iuveni; dominam lectica tenebat; / horrebant saevis omnia verba minis. / iamque vadaturus "lectica prodeat" inquit; / prodierat; visa coniuge mutus erat; / et manus et manibus duplices cecidere tabellae; / venit in amplexus atque ita "vincis" ait.*
[215] Plut. *Public.* 16.5: ἔφθη δὲ πρὸ τῶν πυλῶν ἐκβοηθήσας ὁ Ποπλικόλας, καὶ μάχην συνάψας παρὰ τὸν ποταμόν, ἀντεῖχε πλήθει βιαζομένοις τοῖς πολεμίοις, ἄχρι οὗ τραύμασι νεανικοῖς περιπεσὼν ἀπεκομίσθη φοράδην ἐκ τῆς μάχης. Notice that he sallies forth bravely until he is cut down and carried off.
[216] Nep. *Hann.* 4, *qua valetudine cum etiamtum premeretur lecticaque ferretur*.
[217] Livy 24.42.5, *ibi iterum Scipio lecticula in aciem inlatus conflixit nec dubia victoria fuit*
[218] Livy 27.29.2, *ipse cum legionibus suis Capuam profectus uix lecticae agitationem prae grauitate uolnerum patiens nec viae laborem passurus videretur*
[219] 32.38, 39
[220] Suet. *Aug*. 91

in a covered litter for the whole of his campaign.[221] Velleius, although saying that Tiberius only rides on horseback (*solus semper equo vectus est*, 2.114.3), says he makes carriages, and his litter, available to soldiers in need (*erat desiderantibus paratum iunctum vehiculum, lectica eius publicata, cuius <usum> cum alii tum ego sensi*, 2.114.2). This comes in the context of a list of Tiberius' ideal traits as a commander in the field.[222]

Litters are not just meant for transporting the sick or wounding because they have difficulty getting around on foot. They are also though to be good for *curing* various conditions. Celsus recommends "shaking" or "rocking" for chronic ailments which are on the wane (*gestatio quoque longis et iam inclinatis morbis aptissima est* 2.15.1), and gives a miniature hierarchy of varieties of jolting: *lenissima est navi vel in portu vel in flumine, vehementior vel in alto mari navi vel lectica, etiamnum acrior vehiculo; atque haec ipsa et intendi et leniri possunt* (2.15.3).[223] The notion that litters were meant for the sick becomes fodder for Martial when, in an epigram addressed to Avitus ("Ancestral Man") he mocks one Philippus for being carried in an eight-man litter: *octaphoro sanus portatur, Avite, Philippus. / hunc tu si sanum credis, Avite, furis*.[224] But the main joke is on *sanus*, which means "healthy" in the first line of the couplet, and "sane" in the second.[225]

Children were also known to ride in litters, but doing so was meant to be moderated. In the course of a discussion about whether to educate a child at home or at school, Quintilian allows himself a brief tirade on the contemporary spoiling of children (*mollis illa educatio, quam indulgentiam vocamus*…).[226] Often, he says, it is not schools that corrupt children (though that sometimes happens), but luxurious treats at home which become ingrained before long. Infants crawling in purple, palates trained before mouths, and, unsurprisingly, litters from an early age. *In lecticis crescunt: si terram attigerunt, e manibus utrimque sustinentium pendent*.[227] In short, they can't even stand on their own two feet. Their mental and physical tone is ruined (*illa educatio…nervos omnis mentis et corporis frangit*).[228] They become loose and floppy (*inde soluti ac fluentes*).[229]

But there is, by contrast, the possibility of working while riding in a litter, as the well-known account of Pliny's working habits, as recounted by his nephew in a letter to Baebius Macer (3.5.14), shows. This may have been somewhat eccentric, but not inappropriate. We have already seen Seneca (cautiously) recommend the practice.

It is difficult to exclude the numerous occasions on which the images of the gods or other objects such as the *spolia opima* and funerary urns—non-anthropomorphic but still belonging to humans—were borne cerimonially in litter-like conveyances, usually *fercula* in Latin, but φορεῖα in Greek. Images of the Olympian gods were carried in *fercula* in the *pompa circensis*.

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[221] Dio 77.13.4: καὶ ὁ μὲν οὕτω διὰ πάσης ὡς εἰπεῖν τῆς πολεμίας κομισθεὶς (ἐκομίσθη γὰρ ὡς ἀληθῶς ἐν σκιμποδίῳ καταστέγῳ τινὶ τὰ πολλὰ διὰ τὴν ἀσθένειαν)

[222] See Woodman's note for parallel instances of the topos of the sturdy general.

[223] cf. 4.26.5, where riding in a carriage or on horseback are held to strengthen the intestines (unlike walking or rubbing): *vehiculo sedisse vel magis etiam equo prodest: neque enim ulla res magis intestina confirmat.* But the smoothness of carriage-riding is suggested by 1.3.12: *qui vero toto die vel in vehiculo vel in spectaculis sedit, huic nihil currendum sed lente ambulandum est.*

[224] 6.84

[225] Note also Philippus ("horse-lover").

[226] 1.2.6

[227] 1.2.7

[228] 1.2.6

[229] 1.2.8

The sacred geese were borne in them.[230] Although it may seem tenuous to connect these obviously disparate conveyances given that both the Latin language and Roman culture seemed clearly to separate them, Seneca at one point does appear to do just that. In a passage of the *de Vita Beata,* the philosopher quotes Socrates on the importance of humility. Even if he is hailed as a *triumphator*, he will still be aware of his humanity:

> *fac me uictorem uniuersarum gentium, delicatus ille Liberi currus triumphantem usque ad Thebas a solis ortu uehat, iura reges ~penatium~ petant: me hominem esse maxime cogitabo, cum deus undique consalutabor. huic tam sublimi fastigio coniunge protinus praecipitem mutationem; in alienum inponar fericulum exornaturus uictoris superbi ac feri pompam: non humilior sub alieno curru agar quam in meo steteram.*[231]

But the purpose here is to recognize that there is an element in which litter-transport could approach that most sacred and hallowed of ceremonial movements: the public procession of the gods themselves.

7. The Litter-Borne Principate

We have already seen how the litter is often represented as a dangerous, too-powerful tool, when its use is granted to (or usurped by) those without the appropriate self-restraint or good morals. When it is imperial *lecticae* or *sellae* that are at issue, it is easy for these conveyences to stand in for the entire reign of a particular *princeps*—or, at least, Suetonius' narrative of that reign. That is to say, the litter in this context neatly focalizes, or represents, Roman worries about the dangers of monarchy. It is not surprising that chroniclers such as Suetonius would pay special attention to how a *princeps* would handle the particular privilege of being carried around in public (and to what extent he would dole out that privilege to others), since that is after all what Suetonius' *Lives* are about: how certain Romans handle the enormous power entrusted to (or usurped by) them. The litter is probably not unique in this capacity for symbolic potential, and it would no doubt be possible, and fruitful, to focus attention on other elements—attire, physiognomy, eating habits, for instance—which are all very important to Suetonius' character sketches. But this particular vehicle has a representational potential that these other life details do not: both in its metonymic relationship *to* empire (it is associated with and partakes of a larger category of route-expansion and transportation that is at the very heart of Roman imperialism) and in its readiness as a metaphor *standing in for* empire (it places subject, generally exotic, peoples under a form of yoke that is quite literally oppressive). For these

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[230] ταῦτά τοι τίνουσι δίκας οἱ κύνες παρὰ Ῥωμαίοις καὶ νῦν ἀνὰ πᾶν ἔτος προδοσίας
ἀρχαίας μνήμῃ, τιμᾶται δὲ χὴν τεταγμέναις ἡμέραις, καὶ ἐν φορείῳ πρόεισιν εὖ μάλαπομπικῶς (*N.A.* 12.33).
And πομπεύει δὲ μέχρι νῦν ἐπὶ μνήμῃτῶν τότε συμπτωμάτων κύων μὲν ἀνεσταυρωμένος,
χὴν δὲ μάλα σεμνῶς ἐπὶ στρωμνῆς πολυτελοῦς καὶ φορείου
καθήμενος (325d)

[231] *de Vita Beata* 25.4. Cicero also toys with *ferculum* as a metaphor, but the import is very different. In discussing *constantia* in the *de Officiis* (1.131), he warns against a too languid gait: *cavendum autem est ne aut tarditatibus utamur <in> ingressu mollioribus, ut pomparum ferculis similes esse videamur*. The point seems to be that *fercula pomparum* move slowly.

reasons it will be worthwhile to survey briefly the ways in which the *lectica* arrives in Suetonius' biographical narratives.

When it comes to offical litter policy and regulation, Julius Caesar deserves a kind of founding father status, since he was the first to restrict its use: *lecticarum usum, item conchyliatae vestis et margaritarum nisi certis personis et aetatibus perque certos dies ademit.*[232] That this *lex Iulia sumptuaria* was passed in 46 has led some to suggest a connection with Cleopatra's arrival in Rome in that year, an attempt to deny the most threatening woman in Roman history the opportunity to display her power at Rome. In any case, details of this law elsewhere suggest that the regulation of litters would have served as a kind of public branding for unmarried women without children under the age of 45. That is because such women would have been forced to appear in public without the concealment that the litter could provide (that is, for women of families who could have afforded such transport in the first place). Denying such women this accustomed veil no doubt served to regulate public morality in a way that would anticipate Caesar's adopted son's own moral legislation (edict on the use of purple and the *lex Iulia de maritandis ordinibus*). In another passage, though, we see the litter embodying a concern that Caesar would become at once too despotic and too soft—that is, too much like an eastern king (a Bithynian one, say). Indeed, says Suetonius, the only thing that harmed his reputation for moral rectitude was his much-mocked involvement with king Nicomedes of Bithynia, a connection that the orator Dolabella's jibe, identifying Caesar as the *spondam interiorem regiae lecticae*, summed up nicely.[233] Naming Caesar as the "inner pillow of the royal litter," (i.e., the one that the king lies on top of) is a vivid way of representing the alleged softening that overtook Rome as it acquired provinces, a variation on the *Graecia capta* motif and certainly akin to accounts supplied by decadence chroniclers such as Sallust and Pliny. The paradox of "the conqueror (already) conquered" appears in the same passage of Suetonius, where he reports that at Caesar's Gallic triumph, the soldiers following their commander's chariot shouted scurrilous verses (*Gallias Caesar subegit, Nicomedes Caesarem: / ecce Caesar nunc triumphat qui subegit Gallias, / Nicomedes non triumphat qui subegit Caesarem*).[234] Conquest carries with it its own conquest. Nevertheless, Suetonius depicts Caesar as faithful and accommodating to his dependents, and the litter is a tool for that purpose as in section 71, when Caesar defends one youth Masintha and bears him away in his own litter, primarily for the purpose of concealment.

According to Suetonius, Augustus had a great deal more to do with litters. In fact, there is a *lectica* at his very conception. While his mother Atia was worshipping Apollo at night, and her litter was set down in the temple (*posita in templo lectica*, a recasting of Cicero's Verres), a snake slips into to her while she sleeps. One strange serpentine birthmark and nine months later, she gives birth to the son of Apollo.[235] His divine favor would return later during another nocturnal litter-ride. He set up a temple to Juppiter Tonans after surviving a lightning strike to

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[232] *Iul.* 43. Eusebius (Jerome) *Chron.* anno 46, specifies: *prohibitae lecticis margaritisque uti quae nec viros nec liberos haberent et minoris essent annis* XLV.

[233] *Iul.* 49.1: *Pudicitiae eius famam nihil quidem praeter Nicomedis contubernium laesit, gravi tamen et perenni obprobrio et ad omnium convicia exposito. omitto Calvi Licini notissimos versus: Bithynia quicquid / et pedicator Caesaris umquam habuit. praetereo actiones Dolabellae et Curionis patris, in quibus eum Dolabella 'paelicem reginae, spondam interiorem regiae lecticae', at Curio stabulum Nicomedis et Bithynicum fornicem' dicunt.* Commentators seem to take *lectica* as simply *lectus*, because of *spondam interiorem*, "inner pillow (i.e., the one closest to the wall)," but the connection between litters and Bithynians must be part of the joke.

[234] 49.4. Note that *subigere* can refer to driving animals, or bringing them under the yoke, or taming them *OLD* 3a, 3b; 4.

[235] *Aug.* 94.4

his litter during a night march (*per nocturnum iter*) on his Cantabrian expedition.[236] The slave lighting the way (*praelucentem*) did not survive. Another close call occurred when, after sitting out the battle of Philippi in camp in order to rest in his litter, he decided to obey his friend's dream of warning and fled. When the camp was taken, his litter was pierced and ripped to pieces.[237] Prone to sickness, perhaps, but ever vigilant, says Suetonius, and immune to luxury's lulls. In a passage which may seem vaguely reminiscent of Cicero's attacks on Verres and Antony, the emperor is represented as doling out justice even until after dark: *ipse ius dixit assidue et in noctem nonnumquam, si parum corpore valeret lectica pro tribunali collocata, vel etiam domi cubans* (33.1). The collocation of *lectica* and *tribunali* is meant to startle and, once again, we have a mixing of private and public spheres, but here the function of the litter is more to enhance Augustus' diligent and tireless governing. Similarly, this Appian resonance of mind over body is again at play in the account of Augustus' unprecedented dedication to public games (*spectaculorum et assiduitate et varietate et magnificentia omnes antecessit*, 43.1). When taken ill before the start of games that he had vowed, he led the *poma circensis* in a litter (instead of the usual chariot with triumphal insignia): *accidit votivis circensibus, ut correptus valitudine lectica cubans tensas deduceret* (43.5). There is certainly also an association between the deities borne in *tensae* and the emperor himself. Nevertheless, to acquit the *princeps* of charges of excessive pomp, Suetonius has him go on foot when consul, but ride in a closed sedan otherwise (*in consulatu pedibus fere, extra consulatum saepe adaperta sella per publicum incessit*, 53.2), again unlike Antony.[238] As further evidence of his abstemious self-control, he cites the emperor recounting a *light* meal he took while on the road (*"Dum lectica ex regia domum redeo, panis unciam cum paucis acinis uvae duracinae comedi,"* 76.2).[239] The litter becomes a place of nighttime study (*a cena in lecticulam se lucubratioriam recipiebat*, 78.1), where he would stay to finish his business for the day, and then transfer to a proper bed (*in lectum inde trangressus*) and sleep no more than seven hours, with interruption. This vigilance—and not laziness—led to his nodding off often in his litter: *sic quoque saepe indigens somni, et dum per vicos deportaretur et deposita lectica inter aliquas moras condormiebat*. Like the *Liburna* passenger in Juvenal 3, he gets to nap in public, but notice that even Augustus himself gets stuck in traffic. Notice again how the phrase *deposita lectica*, used by Cicero in his account of Verres' forced ransacking, has been repurposed to suggest gentle patience. For longer distances, Augustus travels by litter, at night, only because of his sensitivity to the sun (82.1), and when he can he prefers sailing. His recourse to the litter is presented in the context of his ability to overcome certain chronic weaknesses.

For Tiberius, the litter is harnessed more or less as a sign of haughtiness or cruelty. Refusing to allow others pay their respects to him, he would not let senators approach his litter (*adulationes adeo aversatus est, ut neminem senatorum aut officii aut negotii causa ad lecticam*

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[236] *Aug.* 29.3

[237] *cessitque res prospere, quando captis castris lectica eius, quasi ibi cubans remansisset, concursu hostium confossa atque lacerata est*, 91.1. A more flattering version of the story appears in Valerius Maximus, where Octavian's doctor Artotius has a dream urging him to take part in battle *in spite of* his ill health, which he does—in a litter: *eius medico Artorio somnum capienti, quam diest insecutus est, quo in campis Philippiis Romani inter se exercitus concurrerent, Minervae species oborta praecepit ut illum gravi morbo implicitum moneret ne propter valetudinem proximo proelio non interesset. quod cum Caesar audisset, lectica se in aciem deferri iussit. ubi dum supra vires corporis pro adipiscenda victoria excubat, castra eius a Bruto capta est* (1.7.1).

[238] Hence Beroaldus' conjecture *adaperta* for *adoperta*.

[239] Right after another meal "to-go," this one in an *essedum*: *verba ipsius ex epistulis sunt "nos in essedo panem et palmulas gustavimus*". For the *essedum*, and this passage, see Chapter Two below.

suam admiserit, 27).[240] It is true, that, like Appius Claudius, he appears once in the senate in a litter while sick, but it is in the context of his loner-dom: *numquam curiam nisi solus intrauit; lectica quondam intro latus aeger comites a se remouit* (30). That is, the only time he allows hangers-on is when necessity demands it—and once they have carried out their charge he sends them away. In contrast to Augustus' sleepy tolerance of road delays is Tiberius' brutal chastisement of a scout who fails to alert him to some brambles on Capri which block the progress of his litter: *in quodam itinere lectica, qua uehebatur, uepribus impedita exploratorem uiae, primarum cohortium centurionem, stratum humi paene ad necem uerberauit* (60). Gellius' account of Gracchus is lurking in there somewhere. Similar cruelty comes through in his punishment of his daughter-in-law and grandchildren, whom he ships out in a sealed-up litter, rather like a cage, or a paddy wagon: *nurum ac nepotes numquam aliter post damnationem quam catenatos obsutaque lectica loco mouit, prohibitis per militem obuiis ac uiatoribus respicere usquam uel consistere* (64). This public invisibility, a means of very manifestly "disappearing" them, is an ingenious a way of concretizing banishment procedure.[241]

Cruelty is likewise the key to Caligula's litters in Suetonius' lurid account of that emperor's monstrous reign, but added to it now is wasteful luxury. As one of the examples of his inborn viciousness (*saevitiam ingenii*), the biographer cites an instance of a father being forced to witness the execution of his own son: when the man used his poor health as an excuse, the *princeps* sent him a litter (*valetudinem excusanti lecticam misit*, 27.4). This is clearly a perversion of the Appian *exemplum*. A similar corruption occurs on his out-of-season impromptu campaign (*neque ex destinato*, 43) against Germany where he confounds categories of proper pacing and timing. He drives his troops so fast that the praetorian cohorts have to lay aside their heavy standards on pack animals. Meanwhile, he is carried along at a leisurely tempo in an *octophorus*, exacting a mobile project of street-cleaning along the way: *iter ingressus est confecitque modo tam festinanter et rapide, ut praetorianae cohortes contra morem signa iumentis imponere et ita subsequi cogerentur, interdum adeo segniter delicateque, ut octaphoro veheretur atque a propinquarum urbium plebe verri sibi vias et conspergi propter pulverem exigeret* (43). By compelling the towns to sweep their roads and spread water to keep down the dust he has weirdly turned spaces through which he should be zooming into semi-beautified places. And Cicero's account of Antony's men carrying their junta shields clumsily in litters is probably relevant: praetorians are city troops, not really up to tough trudges.[242] Finally, loading Gaius' death with special significance as wonted (sort of anti-*exitus illustrium virorum*), he grants the imperial litter and bearers a telling part. Writhing shamefully and denying his very assassination (*iacentem contractisque membris clamitantem se vivere*, 58.3), he gets aid only from the *lecticarii* ludicrously armed with just their poles: *ad primum tumultum lecticari cum*

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[240] He literally falls over backward to avoid flattery and fawning, and *supinus*, hitherto associated with lazy lethargy (and litters), is now only a sign of flight or revulsion: *consularem vero satisfacientem sibi ac per genua orare conantem ita suffugerit, ut caderet supinus*, 27. Dio also activates the litter to convey Tiberius' aloofness (57.11.3): εἴ τέ ποτε ἐπὶ τοῦ δίφρου κομίζοιτο, οὐδένα οἱ παρακολουθεῖν οὐχ ὅπως βουλευτὴν ἀλλ' οὐδὲ ἱππέα τῶν πρώτων εἴα. This suggests that although pompous retinues were the butt of much criticism, no attendance was weird.

[241] According to Dio, a similar use of the litter for cruel purposes occurs in Tiberius' handling of Libo: καὶ Λούκιον Σκριβώνιον Λίβωνα, νεανίσκον εὐπατρίδην δόξαντά τι νεωτερίζειν, τέως μὲν ἔρρωτο, οὐκ ἔκρινε, νοσήσαντα δὲ ἐπιθάνατον ἔν τε σκιμποδίῳ καταστέγῳ, ὁποίῳ αἱ τῶν βουλευτῶν γυναῖκες χρῶνται, ἐς τὴν γερουσίαν ἐσεκόμισε (57.4). cf. Tac. *Ann.* 2.29 for somewhat different version, though Libo is still brought to the senate in a *lectica*.

[242] e.g., Tac. *Hist.* 2.19.1

asseribus in auxilium accucurrerunt (58.3). Since *asseres* can be real weapons in actual military contexts, a form of pun is at play.[243]

Claudius' reign is well-suited to litter-transport, since the vehicle conveys the two awkward problems facing this principate's public image: physical weakness and disability on the one hand and feeble submission to the excessive power of women and freedmen on the other. Both represent sizeable obstacles to projecting a picture of strong masculinity.[244] The future emperor's very entrance into Roman manhood, his "procession" before the donning of the *toga virilis*, takes place, unusually, in a *lectica*. Instead of the public ceremony expected for a boy of his standing, he is carried to the capitol under cover of darkness and without escort in order to undergo the rite: *togae virilis die circa mediam noctem sine sollemni officio lectica in Capitolium latus est* (2.2). Whether Claudius was carried out of necessity or in order that his limp could be hidden, it is as if Suetonius has negated the entire proceedings by his list of inverted practices. This absence of agency recurs in the scene of his being hailed emperor. After being discovered cowering behind some curtains he is presented to the other soldiers, confined to the litter, as if in a cage: *ab his lecticae impositus et, quia sui diffugerant, vicissim succolantibus in castra delatus est tristis ac trepidus, miserante obvia turba quasi ad poenam raperetur insons* (10.2). Unlike Caligula, Claudius' bearers flee at the first sign of danger. Having no control over the situation, he is even pitied by the crowds that see him. Nevertheless, once *princeps*, Claudius famously limits municipal transport to food or sedan or litter *viatores ne per Italiae oppida nisi aut pedibus aut sella aut lectica transirent, monuit edicto* (25.2), either renewing a daytime ban from Julius Caesar's reign, or extending it to other towns besides Rome.[245] While this may perhaps be seen as a nod towards the positive and authoritative aspects of Claudius' rule, of his ability to regulate and dole out power successfully, the privileges, including the use of a litter in Rome, which he grants to his cabinet of freedmen could no doubt cut against that: *et Harpocran, cui lectica per urbem vehendi spectaculaque publice edendi ius tribuit* (28).

A hasty litter-ride is there at the very start of Nero's reign. Because of the need for smooth, swift succession upon Claudius' death and the necessity of presenting the sixteen-year-old, in the flesh, to the powers that be, a *lectica* is the fastest mode for this kind of courier service. He is rushed from the palace to the praetorian camp to guarantee the military's cooperation, and then quickly to the *curia* to make sure that the senate too was a reliable partner (*proque Palati gradibus imperator consalutatus lectica in castra et inde raptim appellatis militibus in curiam delatus*, 8).[246] As it did for his adopted father, Nero's litter helps to emphasize, at this stage, his lack of control in the process of governance (Agrippina and Seneca were no doubt behind this delivery-by-litter), which is to a certain extent understandable given

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[243] Noted by Hurley (1993), ad loc.

[244] Dio actually portrays Claudius as the first Roman to use a covered sedan: καὶ μέντοι καὶ δίφρῳ καταστέγῳ πρῶτος Ῥωμαίων ἐχρήσατο, καὶ ἐξ ἐκείνου καὶ νῦν οὐχ ὅτι οἱ αὐτοκράτορες ἀλλὰ καὶ ἡμεῖς οἱ ὑπατευκότες διφροφορούμεθα· πρότερον δὲ ἄρα ὅ τε Αὔγουστος καὶ ὁ Τιβέριος ἄλλοι τέ τινες ἐν σκιμποδίοις, ὁποιοις αἱ γυναῖκες ἔτι καὶ νῦν νομίζουσιν, ἔστιν ὅτε ἐφέροντο. The passage comes in the context of a description of his physical ailments, the litter serving as a kind of segue between this disability and subsequent remarks, about his being ruled by women and freedmen: οὐ μέντοι καὶ διὰ ταῦθ' [sc., these physical conditions] οὕτως, ὅσον ὑπό τε τῶν ἐξελευθέρων καὶ ὑπὸ τῶν γυναικῶν αἷς συνῆν, ἐκακύνετο. περιφανέστατα γὰρ τῶν ὁμοίων ἐδουλοκρατήθη τε ἅμα καὶ ἐγυναικοκρατήθη·

[245] Dio has Claudius' edict refer to Rome, probably by mistake (ἀπηγόρευσε δὲ καὶ τὸ καθήμενόν τινα ἐπὶ ἅρματος διὰ τῆς πόλεως ἐλαύνειν, 60.29.7b. Evidence for the earlier ban appears in *ILS* 6085.56-67. Another similar prohibition reappears under Hadrian, *SHA*, *Hadr*. 22.6: *vehicula cum ingentibus sarcinis urbem ingredi prohibuit. sederi equos in civitatibus non sivit.*

[246] cf. Tac. *Ann.* 12.69: *inditur lectica…inlatusque castris Nero*

his youth. But the device reappears as an important prop to the construction of his incest with his mother, for he would often ride together with her in public in *her* litter (*deinceps eiusdem* [sc. *matris*] *saepe lectica per publicum simul vectus est*, 9).[247] This returns later in a discussion of Nero's *libido*. After his marriage to the castrated Sporus ("Seed"), he brings him around dressed as an empress, in a situation reminiscent of Antony's Cytheris (*hunc Sporum, Augustarum ornamentis excultum lecticaque vectum*, 28.2). The final item in the list reveals that the litter ride was not just about a powerful woman running the principate, but rather a site for incest (*olim etiam quotiens lectica cum matre veheretur, libidinatum inceste ac maculis vestis proditum affirmant*, 28,2). Finally, the vehicle aids in his passion both for the theatre and for violence. A sedan allows him "secretly" to indulge these vices, such as sneaking into the pantomime both to observe and to rouse on the brawling factions of supporters (*interdiu quoque clam gestatoria sella delatus in theatrum seditionibus pantomimorum e parte proscaeni superiore signifer simul ac spectator aderat*, 26.2).[248]

The litters become less prominent in the intervening chaos of imperial transition, only to resurface more robustly under the terrifying rule of Domitian. Otho's overthrow of Galba is aided by a women's sedan, as he hides in it on the way to the camp of the praetorian guard, only to abandon it when the bearers grew tired. After trying, but failing, to leg it (his shoe comes untied), he is hoisted up (*succollatus*) and proclaimed emperor.[249] For Vitellius, a sedan is a getaway car for his secret flight (*continuo igitur abstrusus gestatoria sella duobus solis comitibus, pistore e coco, Aventinum et paternam domum clam petit, ut inde in Campaniam fugeret*, 16). Titus' deathbed is a litter, the curtains of which he opens to complain of his undeserved death.[250] Domitian's being forced to defer to his father Vespasian and his brother Titus is articulated by having to follow their upright sedans in public, himself forced to recline in a litter (*quo magis et aetatis et condicionis admoneretur, habitabat cum patre una sellamque eius ac fratris, quotiens prodirent, lectica sequebatur*, 2.1), as if planting the seeds of resentment to grow up and lash out at his subjects. In any case, he took up the by now long tradition of imperial regulation of litters, perhaps along similar lines to that of Julius Caesar, depriving certain "shameful" women of the privilege (*probrosis feminis lecticae usum ademit* (8.3). But later he is subtly criticized for never going on foot but rather being carried in a litter: *laboris impatiens, pedibus per urbem non temere ambulavit, in expeditione et agmine equo rarius, lectica assidue vectus est* (19).[251]

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[247] cf. Dio 61.3.2: καὶ τὸ μὲν πρῶτον ἡ Ἀγριππῖνα πάντα αὐτῷ τὰ τῇ ἀρχῇ προσήκοντα διώκει, καὶ τὰς ἐξόδους ἅμα ἐποιοῦντο, πολλάκις μὲν καὶ ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ φορείῳ κατακείμενοι· τὸ δὲ δὴ πλεῖον ἡ μὲν ἐφέρετο, ὁ δὲ συμπαρείπετο

[248] Tacitus does not mention the *sella* (*Ann*.13.25.4). cf. Dio 61.8.2: καὶ γὰρ ἔχαιρε τοῖς δρωμένοις, ἔν τε φορείῳ τινὶ λάθρᾳ ἐς τὰ θέατρα ἐσκομιζόμενος, κἀκ τοῦ ἀφανοῦς τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐφορῶν τὰ γιγνόμενα.

[249] *Oth*.6.3: *tunc abditus propere muliebri sella in castra contendit ac deficientibus lecticariis cum descendisset cursumque cepisset laxato calceo restitit, donec omissa mora succollatus et a praesente comitatu imperator consalutatus inter faustas adclamationes strictosque gladios ad principia devenit*. For *succollare* of litters, cf. Claudius' being made emperor (10). The process is applied to the "king" bee by Varro: (*apes*) *regem suum secuntur, quocumque it, et fessum sublevant, et si nequit volare, succollant, quod eum servare volunt* (*R.R.* 3.16.8).

[250] *Tit*.10.1: *deinde ad primam statim mansionem febrim nanctus, cum inde lectica transferretur, suspexisse dicitur dimotis pallulis caelum, multumque conquestus eripi sibi vitam immerenti*.

[251] *lecticarii* appear in various inscriptions as part of the *familia Caesaris* (e.g., *CIL* vi.8872-8875). See Weaver (1972), 6 and 228 (a *decurio lecticariorum* who died at 60, vi 8873). for more details about the imperial litter-bearers. For other emperors on the march and the privileged status of going on foot, cf. Julius Caesar (*in agmine nunnumquam equo, saepius pedibus anteibat*, *Iul.* 57), Otho (*nec illi segne aut cuorruptum luxu iter; sed lorica ferrea usus est et ante signa pedes ire*, Tac. *Hist*.2.11), and Trajan (*cum legions duceres seu potius (tanta velocitas*

8. The End of the Line: Death by Litter

We have already noted the frequency with which litters turn up in lethal or near-death contexts. Caesar is displayed in a litter after his assassination; Cicero dies aboard a litter; Augustus has two *lectica*-l near-misses (his abandoned litter assaulted at Philippi, another one struck by lightning during a night ride)[252]; Tiberius' litter-cum-prisoner-transport becomes a suicidal chamber and weapon; Caligula is murdered alongside his bearers; Titus' deathbed is a litter. The examples are numerous. This is partly accounted for by the ease with which, in the Roman mental landscape of mobility, litters can rapidly transform into biers. Cicero had mocked Antony for hiding inside his litter while touring through Italy, *ut mortuus*, no doubt playing on the likeness of litters and biers. S. Sulpicius Rufus writes to Cicero from Athens to describe the murder of M. Marcellus at the hands of P. Magius Cilo. Sulpicius has to carry Marcellus' body from Piraeus back to the city with his own litter and litter-bearers (*coactus sum in eadem illa lectica qua ipse delatus eram meisque lecticariis in urbem eum referre*...4.12.3), and then attend to his funeral. And of course, in Plutarch and Seneca the Elder, Cicero, first attempts to flee by sea, but is unable to, either because of unfavorable winds, or because of the tossing of the ship (*iactationem navis caeco volvente fluctu*); he resorts to a litter.[253] He is cut down while aboard the vehicle—that is, at his most vulnerable ("in bed") and in a place that is already associated with death. Caesar in Nicolaus Damascenus (26) is described as being put in a litter and carried through the forum, arousing the pity of all bystanders. In the presence of such a sight, the people stand stunned. The image is seconded by Appian, who says there were a mere three slaves, drawing the contrast between humility of being in a litter and Caesar's former glory (2.116). In another narrative of a death that is almost bigger than life, the consul Pompeius (56.45.2) goes to meet the body of Augustus, hurts his leg and is carried along in the litter with the body (μετ' αὐτοῦ φοράδην ἀνεκομίσθη). This is of course a bad omen, presaging the rule of Tiberius. The *lectica*'s lethal potential appears in Seneca, in a discussion of Libo's trip to the senate in a litter, as if already dead.[254] Martial exploits this slipperiness and turns one of his favorite targets, Zoilus, into a kind of living corpse, transforming the oversize litter in which he is allowed to ride (*licebit*) into a poor man's bier: *Laxior hexaphoris tua sit lectica licebit: / cum tamen haec tua sit, Zoile, sandapila est*.[255] Another poem tells the story of a huge Gaul who, returning home by night, falls and twists his ankle. When his tiny slave can do nothing to help his master, he

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erat) raperes, non vehiculum umquam, non equum respexisti, Plin. *Pan.* 14.3). Obviously Cicero's Verres is the archetype.

[252] And a third, sort of, when (Dio 56.43.2) a certain Athenodorus has himself brought into Augustus' room in a covered sedan, as if a woman, (ἐν δίφρῳ ποτὲ καταστέγῳ ἐς τὸ δωμάτιον αὐτοῦ ὡς καὶ γυναικός τινος ἐσκομισθέντος), and jumps out to show Augustus how vulnerable he is to assassination. Augustus' appreciation (and not anger) is highlighted to draw a contrast with Tiberius' coldness and hostility.

[253] *Suasoria* 6.17: *satis constat servos fortiter fideliterque paratos fuisse ad dimicandum; ipsum deponi lecticam et quietos pati quod sors iniqua cogeret iussise. prominenti ex lectica praebentique immotam cervicem caput praecisum est.*

[254] *Ep.* 70.10: *cum aeger a senatu in lectica relatus esset non sane frequentibus exequiis, omnes enim necessarii deseruerant impie iam non reum, sed funus: habere coepit consilium, utrum consciscceret mortem an expectaret.*

[255] 2.81

improvises and foists the immense hulk onto the *sandapila* of some passing bier-bearers (*vispillones*).[256] Suetonius has Domitian carried out in lowly *sandapila* (17.3).

But, as often, a late-ish author unconsciously probing earliest origins offers perhaps the most incisive view. In Gellius' story, meant to be our tradition's oldest account of a man aboard a non-essential *lectica*, that *lectica* is actually harnessed to kill—in this case, to flay to death—a passing clown who deliberately (but for just a moment, and unsuccessfully) negates what the reigning tradition holds to be a perverse repurposing of a catafalque for luxurious ends. The result (i.e., brutal tyranny) equals the damage wrought by imported *luxuria*. I would like to close with the suggestion that litter transit—with its controversial confounding of supposedly stable categories, its aggressive harnessing of imported material and manpower, which stand in for and are closely associated with empire, and its ostentatious transformation of what was before (supposedly) just an innocent *passeggiata* into pseudo-epiphanic processional—thus represents *in nuce* the inherent dangers posed by Roman transport in general.[257] Phaedrus gets the idea, and expresses it much more humorously:

> *Feles habebat gallus lecticarios.*
> *hunc gloriose uulpes ut uidit uehi,*
> *sic est locuta: "Moneo praecaueas dolum;*
> *istorum uultus namque si consideres,*
> *praedam portare iudices, non sarcinam."*
> *postquam esurire coepit felum societas,*
> *discerpsit dominum et fecit partes funeris.*[258]

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[256] *Dum repetit sera conductos nocte penates*
Lingonus a Tecta Flaminiaque recens,
expulit offenso vitiatum pollice talum
et iacuit toto corpore fusus humi.
quid faceret Gallus, qua se ratione moveret?
ingenti domino servulus unus erat,
tam macer, ut minimam posset vix ferre lucernam.
succurrit misero casus opemque tulit:
quattuor inscripti portabant vile cadaver,
accipit infelix qualia mille rogus;
hos comes invalidus summissa voce precatur,
ut, quocumque velint, corpus inane ferant:
permutatur onus stipataque tollitur alte
grandis in angusta sarcina sandapila.
hic mihi de multis unus, Lucane, videtur,
cui merito dici "mortue Galle" potest.
(8.75) Various attempts at explaining the joke (*mortue Galle*) have come up, cf. Schöffel ad loc. A similar jump from litter to bier occurs in Martial 9.2, on one Lupus, who treats his mistress to all manner of luxuries while neglecting his friends: *octo Syris suffulta datur lectica puellae, / nudum sandapilae pondus amicus erit* (11-2). The twist to the poem is that the final couplet is an address to Cybele: *I nunc et miseros, Cybele, praecide cinaedos: / haec erat, haec cultris mentula digna tuis*, another association that could be used in support of the interpretation of *mortue Galle* in 8.75. The *sandapila* comes up close to *galli* at Juvenal 8.175-6.

[257] Thus, an ancient version of Virilio's integral accident, a characteristic feature of technologies of speed.

[258] *[Gallus et feles lecticarii] Nimiam securitatem saepe in periculum homines ducere*.

Chapter Two: *Currus*

1. Pre-Race/Preface

"le film que vous allez voir a été réalisé sans aucun trucage ni accéléré"[259]

It is no accident that Roman culture had no Litter of the Sun. No cot-like frame flew across the sky each day, borne along swiftly (if joltingly) by four gleaming *lecticarii*, lavish curtains blown aside to reveal a resplendent Sol or Phoebus within, cruising at ease, supine on soft pillows. Instead, these cosmic deities were always in firm control, alert and upright, hands at the reins, driving the fastest and most powerful conveyance in existence: the *quadrigae*, the four-horse chariot.

If, as we have seen in the previous chapter, the *lectica* and its relative *sella* represent a concrete, too-realistic form of technological movement—an undiluted shot of pure, reified mobility, getting around with all of its humdrum, bumpy complications and delays—then the *currus* will take motion (and, frequently, flight) as the Roman cultural imaginary's most abstract, stylized version of passage through space. If the litter is slow and awkward, the chariot represents speed and agility. The litter is marked by feminine softness and relaxed lassitude; the chariot surges forth, upright, with manly prowess; is tense, tight, taut. In other words, both vehicles are marked, separated out from the bulk of other varieties of conveyance, but, even despite their elaborate complexity and variation, they form two extremes of a diametric pole. Not surprisingly, each contains built into it a specific danger, an unavoidable accident variously manifested. For the chariot, the risk is an excess of speed, which can tear it apart, smashing its driver to the ground, trampling him, or dragging him gruesomely from behind. Its power (technological and metabolic) can cause it to blow itself up. The litter, on the contrary, is a danger precisely because of its ease and laxness, its deferral of power: the litter-passenger, sprawled out in his bed-in-public, has relinquished too much control. This, Roman literature suggests, is either because he has either succumbed too much to his appetites, or because he has deactivated his own metabolic power in order to harness that of his slaves. Certainly his supine position obviates any risk of self-inflicted toppling or upset. As we have already seen, he is all but laid out for burial.

The matter is, however, more complicated. Just as we caught glimpses of the litter picking up speed every so often, so the chariot often moves quite slowly. The parts are not equal. When the litter accelerates, the results are ungainly and not especially dignified. The metonymic stain of slaves scampering about is hard to shake, as is the instability brought about by boundary-crossing. Somehow, the *lectica*'s hybridity—it is both a vehicle and a bed—works against it in two directions: its slow progress disqualifies it from being a proper vehicle, but then few things could be more ridiculous than a fast-moving bed.[260] As we might expect, the *currus*, the fastest

[259] From the opening credits of *C'etait un rendez-vous*, Claude Lelouch's 1976 single-take short film (8 min. 38 sec.) of his high speed drive through the city of Paris early one August morning (approximately 5:30 AM). He has acknowledged that he was the driver of a Mercedes-Benz 450SEL 6.9, capable of reaching a top speed of 235 km/h, and has claimed that the top speed achieved was between 230 and 240 km/h. An Eclair cam-flex 35mm camera with wide-angle lens was mounted to the bumper. The more aggressive sound of Lelouch's Ferrari 275 GTB (which has a V-12 instead of the Mercedes' 6.9-liter V-8) was dubbed in during post-production.

[260] Derek Clanfrance's recent film *Blue Valentine*—in a memorable scene at the center of which moves a (rotating) bed—confirms this postulate, even if the humor there is grimmer. The *lectica* was also hybrid with respect to Roman

ride around, is allowed to lumber along proudly (menacingly?) at sub-human pace with no harm to its powerful image. The triumphal *pompa* is the most striking and obvious example of a slow-moving *currus*, and perhaps reflects a vehicular version of the freeborn male's steady, measured gait idealized by ancient rhetorico-ethical prescriptions.[261] All of this should come as no surprise and is really just one way of beginning to explicate the *currus*' status as *the* privileged term in Roman vehicular discourse, the focus of the following inquiry. It has, I suggest, to do with the special power of speed, possibly human culture's most squabbled over commodity—certainly one vital to any militaristic culture, and especially to one interested in expanding its command of space.[262] The chariot is expressly designed for speed, even if it does not manifest that quality at every turn, indeed even if one important aspect of its power seems merely to be *having the capacity* to move quickly (without always needing to employ it). The *lectica*, by contrast, is built for slowness, or at least is meant to soften the journey and put one at ease (even if it struggled to do either in practice).

In what follows, I shall explore the ways in which the *currus* is at the very center of Roman representations of vehicular movement, defining and demarcating all mobility as no other vehicle could do. Paradoxically, given its highly symbolic, ceremonial, and abstract qualities—that is, it was never used for everyday, functional, A-to-B travel—it nevertheless functions as *the Roman transportational symbol of power* par excellence, a kind of paragon and measuring rod of what earthbound movement is and can be. It darts (or processes) onstage wherever power (political, social, literary) is at issue, up for contestation. Even if it had long since ceased to have quotidian use, no other conveyance was capable of generating greater surges of wattage. Even if, say, the ox-drawn *plaustrum* was technically *more powerful*, the *currus* was nevertheless peerless when it comes to symbols of force exerted through spatial distance. No other conveyance is capable in the same way of deriving political prestige from its focalized passengers/drivers while simultaneously enhancing those personages' individual status. And, as a result, no other vehicle's employment is more carefully licensed and controlled. The result is that no other vehicle gets stared at by greater numbers of spectators.

The above sketch may come as no surprise, and yet it has not been systematically documented or explored. What is less clear and deserves further conceptualization are questions of why, exactly, and how. The ensuing discussion will attempt to move beyond tautologous explanations which end up affirming that chariots were symbols of power in Roman culture because they were inherited (symbols of power), and then proceed to chart and survey putative ramifying branches (pruning away recalcitrant shoots). This is not to deny that the chariot was—had already been for literally millennia—the most prestigious conveyance in which to cover ground in ancient culture.[263] Given its longstanding function as a symbol for regal authority since prehistory and its special status as the vehicle of choice for deities, the sun, moon, and other celestial bodies, it is certainly no accident that it would end up being harnessed for use in Roman cultural meaning-making. But just as modern etymologies and charting diachronic semantics are just one aspect of coming to terms with the slipperiness and complexity of linguistic meaning, so tracing the triumphal chariot back to prototypical vehicles traversing the Russian steppes or

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traffic ordinance: its relative speediness for the purposes of intra-urban transit mainly arose from the ban on wheeled vehicles in the city during daytime—further evidence of interloping, squeezing into the larger picture.

[261] Such as *ad Herennium*, Cicero, Seneca, Quintilian. Slaves, by contrast, are habitually represented as legging it. Cf. Corbeill (2004), 107-39 and O'Sullivan (2011).

[262] For a sophisticated analysis of the centrality of speed to militarism, see Virilio (1989).

[263] Piggott (1983)

charging in the battle of Kadesh is revealing, though only part of the story of vehicular significance. If our goal is to uncover and probe one relatively overlooked corner of the Roman discursive universe, esoteric (as opposed to exoteric) material will serve primarily to determine the bounds of our survey.

2. Origins: *ortus*

carrum a cardine rotarum dictum; unde et currus dicti, quod rotas habere videntur.[264]

Roman thoughts on chariot origins are sporadic and fleeting, a feature which might lead us to suspect that not a lot was at stake in pinning down the meaning of this floating image. This would be mistaken. Still, there is no doubt that for chariots the process of essentialization through origins plays out very differently from how it did for the *lectica*, which we saw was quite readily framed (mocked, blacklisted, defamiliarized, explained away, or exonerated) as a non-native import, fad, latecomer, interloper, etc. The chariot, by contrast, had already been there for a very long time. Fragmentary, intermittent notices do attest to various divine or mythological origins, which is one way of saying, not simply that the vehicle is situated beyond historical scrutiny, but that its existence is guaranteed by special authority: it has every right to be there. Here then is a reflex of the robust trope of technological items emanating from divinity, an arrangement that cannot apply to just any old tool or gewgaw. Athena Koria, according to Cicero and several other sources, was the inventress of the *quadrigae*.[265] Poseidon, Barkaios, Barke, Trokhilos, even Romulus are held responsible in other notices. Further protoheuretical narratives recur, with Erichthonius taking pride of place.[266] While the narrative scraps do suggest a bringer of civilization—besides the *quadrigae*, he is also credited with establishing the Panathenaic procession and sacrifices—problems peek through. There is of course his strange conception—his dirty autochthony and associated snakiness. Minerva's resistance to Vulcan's assault is memorialized in Erichthonius' name, says Servius: *quasi de terra et lite procreatus, nam* ἔρις *est lis,* χθὼν *terra*. Servius even says that he invented the chariot in order to conceal his serpentine hybridity, as a *puer draconteis pedibus*.[267] If walking is an ongoing struggle with the earth, then the *quadrigae* becomes a solution to a most persistent and pedestrian problem, a way to transcend lowness and dirt. Or else, according to Varro's account, Erichthonius' main drive for yoking horses was to compete in the Panathenaic games (possibly in order to enter as a competitor)—a slightly different way to escape the humble ground. Further ascendance takes place via his catasterism, which Eratosthenes explains as a result of Zeus' admiration at this human's intelligence (though not his *invention*: it is stamped as an *imitation* of the Sun's chariot, ἀντίμιμος).[268] Devise a means to overcome the creeping, groveling nature of humans (*ab humo*

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[264] Isidore 20.12.1

[265] Cicero is speaking of the "fourth" Minerva: *quarta Iove nata et Coryphe, Oceani filia, quam Arcades* Κορίαν *nominant, et quadrigarum inventricem ferunt* (*de nat. deorum* 3.59). In Ampelius (*Lib.Mem.* 9.10): *quarta* [sc. *Minerva*] *Solis filia, quae quadrigas iunxit*. The entry on ἵππια Ἀθήνα names her as first chariot-yoker, in Harpocration, Phot. *Lexicon*, Suidas. Poseidon in Schol. Soph. *O.C.* 712; Romulus according to Tertulian (*de spect.* 9); Barcaeus in Hesychius; Barke in Steph. Byz.; Trochilus in Prosper. Chron. 689

[266] Virgil *G.* 3.113-14, with Servius *ad loc.*; Germanicus *Arat.* 158-9; Pliny *N.H.* 7.202; Aristid. *Or.* 2 p. 18 Dindorf; Hygin. *Astr.* 2.13

[267] ad *G.* 113: *hic ad tegendam pedum foeditatem iunctis equis usus est curru, quo tegeret sui corporis turpitudinem*.

[268] Eratosthenes *Catast.* 13, on Auriga, together with Hyginus *de Astr.* 2.13 (*admiratus est ingenium hominis ad solis inventa accessisse, quod is princeps quadrigis inter deos est usus*). Interestingly, the other possible identification of

humanus), separate us out from the slithering snakes (or at least conceal our being coiled up with them), and you will soar very high.[269]

But if this variety of vehicular technology represents a striving towards elevation and divine realms, or, somewhat less gloriously, a kind of copy in miniature of divine conveyance (but why must the gods have arranged transport in the first place?), it obviously carries with it built-in risks. Virgil's lines in the *Georgics* on Erichthonius already partake of set pieces about the dangerous effrontery of any πρῶτος εὑρετής:

> *primus Erichthonius currus et quattuor ausus*
> *iungere equos rapidusque rotis insistere uictor*.[270]

What someone has dared (*ausus*) to do may not end well, or shouldn't have been undertaken in the first place, although *uictor* (as Servius takes it) suggests that in this case it did.[271] For now, let us admit that in Virgil's picture of the chariot's first step, the danger-courting qualities of the act of balancing on rushing wheels (*ausus…rapidus …rotis insistere*)—with the paradox of standing still while zooming forwards—is what comes through most of all.

Lucretius represents a more explicitly teleological version of chariot development, one which takes place, as we might expect, without the help of divine(-ish) consultants brought in to implement the restructuring. But if the effects of Erichthonius' boldness are left ambiguous by Virgil, Lucretius' primeval men are certainly *too bold*: their innovative resourcefulness ends spectacularly badly. A digression on iron's origins (*quo pacto ferri natura reperta sit*) recounts how that discovery fires men into a kind of arms race, the logical culmination of which is a rather unexpected and elaborate form of mutually assured destruction. In their attempts to outdo each other in inflicting casualties, men yoke, or rather chain, wild beasts which they can never possibly control. But, before these chaotic rampages are unintentionally but unavoidably unleashed (and after they've made the switch from bronze to iron, "rationalizing" Hesiod's ages into physical tools), men get a quick crash course in graduated charioteering. This kind of discrete enumeration—again, a cleaner, more material version of periodized age-myths—is not simply about condensing the shapeless (sheepless) void of prehistory into tight, tidy stages, as, say, the measured, sequential rows offered by lines of verse: it is also about locating one turning point (post?) on the slippery slope that extends down from mining and metallurgy into the bestial butchery of total war. And the *currus* here *is* a turning point, the *biga* framed at the center of a mirrored panel dedicated to equine defense research. If riding horses was a kind of first-beginning in the decadence brought about by technology, the leap from horseback to yoking pairs for vehicular use is at the center and focal point of the ring composition. But it is also about heightening the drama, that is, precipitating the fall: who knew how brief was the leap from horseback to gruesome scythe-car?

Auriga offered by Eratosthenes and Hyginus is Myrtous, Oenomaus' treacherous charioteer, associated with crashing and falling—a figure to whom we shall return later.

[269] Priscian *Inst*.2.79

[270] 3.113-4

[271] Thomas (1988) compares the description of Daedalus at *Aeneid* 6.14-15 (*Daedalus…praepetibus pennis ausus se credere caelo*), noting also the ambiguity of *uictor* (in a race, in a battle?), but Servius has *propositi sui effector*, which recalls perhaps Horace *Ep.*1.13.11 *uictor propositi*. Another ill-omened *uictor* is the barbarian rider of *Epode* 16.11: *barbarus heu cineres insistet uictor et Vrbem / eques sonante uerberabit ungula*.

et prius est armatum in equi conscendere costas
et modarier hunc frenis dextraque vigere
quam biiugo curru belli temptare pericla.
et biiugo prius est quam bis coniungere binos
et quam falciferos armatum escendere currus.[272]

First-position, paratactic *et*s mark out the steps in the process in order to help us reading observers witness the rapidly changing scene: change only "takes place," is recognizable, if some items remain the same, and Lucretius strips historical trajectory to a few repeated refrains and recurring constants. Similarly earmarking and highlighting are *armatum…armatum* and *conscendere…escendere,* as if to reveal the quasi-elemental deep structure, the parallel kindredness shared by curbing a horse, steering it, driving it, driving a chariot, revving a scythe-chariot, and then of course in driving a bull or an elephant or a lion.[273] The development of military technology, Lucretius has it, is terribly simple, a matter of the augmentation or multiplication of primary elements: one horse is doubled into *bigae,* the *bigae* duplicated becomes a *quadrigae*. This turns out to be a rare moment in which the chariot is reckoned within the well-worn narrative of proto-technological discovery (navigation, mining, metalworking) hurling humanity onto a crash course straight to ruin.

Lucretius rolls out another telling image of ferocity yoked to flashy wheels in his account of Magna Mater's lion-drawn chariot, a further document in the complex dynamics of civilizing technology, albeit with a different thrust:

hanc veteres Graium docti cecinere poetae
sedibus in curru biiugos agitare leones,
aeris in spatio magnam pendere docentes
tellurem neque posse in terra sistere terram.
adiunxere feras, quia quamvis effera proles
officiis debet molliri victa parentum.[274]

Here is not just another depiction of man's swift overstepping of his appointed bounds. An already well-outlined portrait of the earth goddess is delineated according to the poetic tactics that pervade the Lucretian project: the seductive, transporting powers of language are enlisted for supposedly utilitarian ends, to help the bitter medicine go down more smoothly.[275] After a lavish description of some forty lines, we are abruptly pulled back, the portrait revealed to be transitory. The Greek poets of old have sung that the Earth Mother's conjugated lions mean two things: that the huge earth dangles in mid-air, not poised upon another twin, and, secondly, that none of her offspring is so fierce as not to be tamed.[276] How does this moving allegory jibe with the primeval, divinely originating chariot's status as "civilizing symbol" or "tool," even if we have already seen that that status was never totally free of complicating burdens? Since the *absinthia taetra*

[272] 5.1297-301
[273] Lucretius has a thing for scythe-chariots, as they are steered towards the illustration of the soul's pervading the body at 3.642-51, a description of still-twitching limbs dismembered by the speeding juggernauts.
[274] 2.600-5
[275] For other visions of Cybele/Magna Mater cf. Catullus 63.76, Ovid *Met.* 10.703, 14.538
[276] Varro corroborates the allegoresis, as reported by Augustine *Cic. Dei* 7.24: *quod sedens fingatur, circa eam cum omnia moveantur, ipsam non moveri…leonem…adiungunt solutum ac mansuetum, ut ostendant nullum genus esse terrae tam remotum ac vehementer ferum quod non subigi colique conveniat*. cf. Ovid *Fasti* 4.215.

concealed by the honeyed cup of the extended passage says that all this is far removed from the truth: *quae bene et eximie quamvis disposta ferantur, longe sunt tamen a vera ratione repulsa*. The trajectory of this driving Cybele may seem impressive as borne along (*ferantur*) by harmonizing poets (including Lucretius), but it has in fact been driven far from (off? back?) the true account. The primary aim then of Lucretius' highly wrought reconstruction is disassembly. Even if *our* main purpose here is not to elucidate Lucretian poetics, we have nevertheless uncovered further evidence of both a (perhaps *the*) most obvious version of the chariot known to Roman literature and culture—that is to say, it is only the *currus* that could so concisely symbolize control and power—and, simultaneously, the non-version or built-in problematization of that version which we have already seen glimpses of in the *Georgics* passages.

It is in this vein that I suggest we interpret the recurring association of primal chariots with the beginnings of agriculture, a collocation which is set up most memorably in Virgil's *Georgics*. To be fair, the connection between the two is never explicitly posited or interpreted, but a web of associations creates links that move in two directions: on the one hand is a civilizing function shared by the two, and on the other, similarity of violation, that is, cleaving the earth and turning animals into a machine. The latter process is frequently reflected in poetic language, as *currus* often fades out of "chariot" into "horses" (and back again). Consider indiscrete labeling of pure chariot form (Ur-Pflug) by Virgil in *Georgics* 1 as a *currus*. Cutting furrows into the earth is not dissimilar to harnessing horses to pain-inducing chariots, or yoking oxen to the plow. Both conveyances are easy to set up as instructive milestones along the path from primitivism (whether hard or soft) to moral decay.[277] We might also adduce Lucretius' favorite scythe-chariot as partaking of this conceptual network, since the *falx* is really first and foremost an agricultural implement, and not a combat weapon.[278] The mowing down of men on the battlefield resembles the reaping of crop fields, and then the analogy echoes back: the field of agriculture has been left tainted by the brutality of the *falciferi*.[279]

3. Picking up Speed

[277] It is surely telling that the *currus* sometimes morphs into "ship," as at Catullus 64.9, where it describes the Argo, a stand-in for yet another variety of proto-technology. Thus the plow, ship, and chariot can represent a triad of the original sin of harnessing conveyance. However, the Argo is linked to the chariot primarily through swiftness (*volitantem*). Another take on this multiplicity would be to take *currus* in what must have been its original meaning: a thing which *currit*, "something that goes (relatively) fast" and then read both Catullus' Argo and Virgil's plow as archaizing "conveyances."

[278] It is true that the Greek synonym δρεπανηφόρος is somewhat different, since Herodotus and others had used the pruning-hook word to refer to eastern scimitars. In any case, Lucretius elsewhere uses the souped-up ride to illustrate the claim that the soul is immortal: when men's bodies are chopped up by scythe-chariots, their limbs continue to move:

falciferos memorant currus abscidere membra
saepe ita de subito permixta caede calentis,
ut tremere in terra videatur ab artubus id quod
decidit abscisum, cum mens tamen atque hominis vis
mobilitate mali non quit sentire dolorem;
et simul in pugnae studio quod dedita mens est,
corpore relicuo pugnam caedesque petessit,
nec tenet amissam laevam cum tegmine saepe
inter equos abstraxe rotas falcesque rapaces,
nec cecidisse alius dextram, cum scandit et instat. (3.642-51)

[279] Verg. *Aen.* 9.435-7

carceres dicti, quod coercuntur equi, ne inde exeant antequam magistratus signum misit.[280]

Steering a slightly different course, let us trace out some other varieties of origins, that is to say, origins that are less explicitly framed as such. If the overarching attempt here is to arrive at a notion of *currus* as *about representation* and not *solely* or even *primarily* about referring to circus racecars or triumphal conveyances or British war chariots or Median scythe-chariots or Achilles' *Streitwagen* (or Turnus'), or Virbius' ancestral chariot, or chariots of Sol (or of Aurora, of Luna, of Jupiter, of Juno, of Neptune, of Pluto, of Magna Mater, of Bacchus, of Minerva, *quasi ad infinitum*), we shall try to isolate instances in which the *currus* or *quadrigae* is *about* something else. That is, our initial focus will be with moments in Latin literature in which the *currus* is consciously employed as a means for representing something else, something with which it is perceived (or made) to have a great deal in common.

With the possible exception of certain types of ships (*Liburna*, *celox, phaselus*), Roman transportation on the whole, as a vast, changing complex of material realities, cultural practices, and discourses, did not especially or automatically convey breakneck speed.[281] That is to say, even if by ancient (and, from certain perspectives, modern) standards of people and provision movement, their official transport system (at least for certain privileged persons and items—a huge caveat) *was* quick and efficient, it was not *represented* by ancient authors as being overwhelmingly so. "Everyday" terrestrial transit, when not altogether elided, tends to be depicted as a slow and plodding process.[282] There is, however, a notable exception to this tendency: from the misty beginnings of literary Latin, chariots are consistently able to convey swiftness. I say, "are…able to" because while they can and do represent fast movement, they do not do this exclusively. This turns out to be an essential point. Central to the chariot's place within the Roman vehicular universe is a recurring opposition that our discussion will reveal—that between circus and triumph—one term of which, the *pompa*, is purposely characterized as *not* fast, a distinction whose maintenance has significant functions. What exactly the speeding chariot means in Roman discourse will be the focus of this section.

While the presence of *quadrigae* as an entry in Otto's *Sprichwörter* confers on this lexical item the status "proverbial," this should not be for us an endpoint, but rather the place of departure. It is true that some linguistic items (words, phrases, etc.) exist only in proverbs and "sayings," but that is not the case for the *currus.* It is rather that marker's special status as an over-(turbo-)charged sign, that its seemingly secondary status as a "proverb" emerges. The speeding chariot in fact seems to refer to the circus chariot most of all, even if divine chariots sometimes receive simultaneous invocation. Already Plautus had treated audiences to a handful of drive-by chariot glimpses, quick snapshots of how best to capture velocity in language. While these fleeting instants may seem trivial, interesting only in and of themselves—as linguistic ticks, bubblings-up in the stew of popular speech—their relevance to the lively spectacularity that is common to both theatre and the races must not be accidental.[283] Plautine comedy very

[280] Varro *L.L.* 5.32

[281] And even the *phaselus* is called (or rather tells us itself, *ait*) *nauium celerrimus*, i.e., relative to other ships. The baggage-laden *cisium* in *Catalepton* 10 is meant to raise a laugh because mule-trains are not *supposed to be* characteristically swift, even if the *cisium* was a relatively fast way to cover ground with burdens.

[282] The scattered notices, of course not in and of themselves free from complication or somehow reflecting the "reality" of ancient travel, nevertheless assemble a fairly coherent picture. Speeds were fairly slow: road-bound vehicles did not exceed 10-15 mph.

[283] Aristotle's *Poetics* seems to be the first to have linked the (Homeric) drama of chariot power (Achilles chasing Hector) with tragic stage drama. I know that the following Plautine chariots have "nothing to do with" the plot and

often performs speed in its freewheeling exuberance—plotting always in danger of careening out of control, fast-thinking, impromptu arias and quick-talking, dialogic riffs—a mood or flavor that resembles the unrestrained spirit of the circus. In *Aulularia* the slave Strobilus outlines how he is supposed to know his master's wishes and commands without their being verbalized:

> *eri ille imperium ediscat, ut quod frons uelit oculi sciant;*
> *quod iubeat citis quadrigis citius properet persequi*.[284]

That the *quadrigae* is "proverbially" fast is underlined by *figura etymologica*: quicker than quickness itself (*citis…citius*). *Asinaria* offers a scenario of pickpocket time (that is, καιρός) stealing away a promising opportunity for acquiring requisite cash lately presented to two slaves:

> *nam si occasioni huic tempus sese subterduxerit,*
> *numquam edepol quadrigis albis indipiscet postea*.[285]

A high-speed chase is envisioned as the result, but on-the-run *tempus* will be too fast even for a *quadrigae* drawn by white horses to catch. Here is another stand-in for "the fastest means conceivable," *albis* being Plautine *auxesis* for the marketing tag, "—and more!" since white horses were also (proverbially) fast.[286] Chase roles are reversed at another moment, in *Menaechmi*, when through a characteristic Plautine "riddle-joke," the parasite Peniculus compares Menaechmus I to a circus charioteer, constantly looking back to see that his wife doesn't catch him:

> PEN. *eu edepol ne tu, ut ego opinor, esses agitator probus.*
> MEN. *quidum*? PEN. *ne te uxor sequatur, respectas identidem.*[287]

Once again, speed, or rather a particular variety of speed, flight—in a racecourse breakaway, and in the mad pursuit of henpecked husbands—is the basis of analogy.
But the association of speed and being caught (or not) in Plautus is made more concrete and less figurative in several further instances. Punishment is explicitly set out in one passage in *Poenulus*:

> *mene ego illaec patiar praesente dici? discrucior miser,*
> *nisi ego illum iubeo quadrigis cursim ad carnificem rapi*.[288]

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action of their comedies: no one here is *really* driving chariots, whether offstage (as in, say, Sophocles' *Electra*) or on (in Aristotle's imaginary flop: the *Iliad* the play). But just as Aristotle's connection is about two types of spectacle, so these comedic chariot flights of fancy are also about giving visible images.

[284] *Aul.* 599-600

[285] *Asin.* 278-9

[286] The list of quick white horses is very long, but includes, most relevantly, Catullus 58b.4 (*Rhesi niveae citaeque bigae*); *Aen.* 12.84 (Turnus' use of Pilumnus' team, *qui candore niues anteirent, cursibus auras*); Horace *Sat.* 1.7.8 (Persius's oratory is so fierce that he could outdo Sisenna and Barrus "by leaps and bounds," *Sisennas, Barros ut equis praecurreret albis*; interestingly, the image is explained by pseudo-Acro and Porphyrio as signifying not speed but triumphal pomp, *idest adeo sermonis fuit maledici, ut Sisennas et Barros uideretur uincere et de his triumphare, qui et ipsi maledici fuerunt* and *sed hoc ipso ita gloriabatur, quasi quadrigis triumphalibus incederet*);

[287] *Men.*160-1

[288] *Poen*. 369. "Sehr witzig ist die zweckentfremdete Verwendung des feierlichen Gefährts," says Maurach 214.

Quickness is again conveyed by *quadrigis* (accentuated by *cursim*), but the goal is, if not a chop-up, then probably at least a beat-down. Commentators have noted the humor in the contrast between faux-execution and the "celebratory" conveyance, which must be there. Dismissing the juxtaposition as merely playful irony ("I'll have him take a joy-ride in my Lamborghini—on the fast-track to death row!") misses something deeper, though, and I think we cannot escape seeing repeated associations of chariots with overpowering violence. In a remarkable scene in the *Menaechmi*, Menaechmus (Sosicles) feigns insanity to frighten off (the real) Menaechmus' wife and father-in-law. After first impersonating a raving Bacchant, he mimes mounting a racing chariot, at the eerie behest of Apollo, and threatens to run the old man down with it:

> MEN. *multa mihi imperas, Apollo: nunc equos iunctos iubes*
> *capere me indomitos ferocis, atque currum inscendere,*
> *ut ego hunc proteram leonem <u>etulum, olentem, edulentum.*
> *iam adstiti in currum, iam lora teneo, iam stimulum: in manust.*
> *agite equi, facitote sonitus ungularum appareat*
> *cursu celeri; facite in flexu sit pedum pernicitas*.
> SEN. *mihin equis iunctis minare?* MEN. *ecce, Apollo, denuo*
> *me iubes facere impetum in eum qui <ob>stat atque occidere.*
> *sed quis hic est qui me capillo hinc de curru deripit?*
> *imperium tuom demutat atque <e>dictum Apollinis.*[289]

We may choose to read the whole exchange as a kind of tantalizing glimpse of release staged for the delectation of Roman spectators—a fantasy of getting free-rein to really hand it to the family and in-laws or, for that matter, to run down any threats or perceived obstacles to one's individual civil *libertas*. But I want to underline how easily the *currus* as conveyor of speed can morph into a vehicle of violence (whether liberating or oppressive). If there was any doubt about this quick transformability, in the ensuing mistaken-identity slapstick, when the real Menaechmus encounters his real father-in-law, the latter lays into him for threatening to run over him with his car:

> SEN. *t<u> istic, qui mihi*
> *etiam me iunctis quadrigis minitatu's prosternere.*[290]

The appearance of *prosternere* in the context, here obviously quite literal ("mow down") prefigures its increasingly standard use in later Latin for slaying in battle and, more metaphorically, imperial subjugation.[291] It is all the more striking that the *quadrigae* is thus not just about abstract speed, but about velocity directed for control or violence, given that both Greek and Roman chariots do not have actual military application.

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[289] *Men.*862-71
[290] *Men*. 937-8
[291] This identification of the *currus* with physical punishment is one of its oldest reflexes, many of the earliest invoking Achilles' dragging Hector's corpse (Ennius: *vidi, videre quod me passa aegerrume, Hectorem curru quadriiugo raptarier*). Livy describes the drawing and quartering of Mettus Fufetius by a *currus*: *exinde duabus admotis quadrigis in currus earum distentum inligat Mettium, deinde in diversum iter equi concitati lacerum in utroque curru corpus, qua inhaeserant vinculis membra, portantes* (1.28.10). Tullia's drive-by defiling of her father Servius Tullius' body was in most accounts emphatically done in a *carpentum*, but some later sources settle for a *currus*.

Let us return to the image of chariot pursuits. The circus chase gets pictured at one point in the *Amphitruo*, in a rather complex manner given the presence of divine characters acting out the stage drama, and Plautus cannot resist the irony of having Jupiter's right-hand deity, brought down to earth to engage in a bit of midmarket scolding:

> ME. *quadrigas si nunc inscendas Iouis*
> *atque hinc fugias, ita uix poteris effugere infortunium*.[292]

The melding of racecourse and divine rigging is thus established. Even if Sosia, Mercury says, climbed aboard his boss' *quadrigae* and took off (home), he would never be able to outrun the pain that's after him. Past scholars have located in this particular instance of the proverb a specific reference to the *quadrigae* that decorated the *fastigium* of the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, a Veientine clay sculpture thought to be a victory-bearing talisman because of a *prodigium* that took place at its firing.[293] It is a helpful connection, but the pattern of argument which attempts to reduce an apparently flourishing turn of speech (which attests to an underlying discourse) to a specific legendary incident—in this case just barely attested in Pliny, Festus, Solinus, and Plutarch—is characteristic of a traditional variety of hermeneutics that appears misguided.[294] It is in theory probably possible to analyze all of ancient literary artifacts into real source-moments but surely any resulting edifice (or family-tree diagram) would be far too rigid and synthetic an account of cultural processes as played out in language. It is not that these Altertumswissenschaftler didn't do well to draw our attention to these moments; on the contrary, they were on to something. These notices are most precious for understanding the web of Roman cultural discourse. To put it another way, just because Festus elegantly exemplifies the etymological mode as a means to interpret discourse—as he does here, in the case of *Ratumenna porta*—we need not (exclusively) employ that model in our own analysis of Roman discourse, in this case that surrounding the *currus* and its relation to speed. The story of the clay *quadrigae* is interesting not first and foremost as a means of distilling so vast and complex a sign as *quadrigae* into one originary moment ("that one time way back when the Veientines wouldn't complete the work-order that we commissioned and this crazy proto-charioteer Wheelman got dragged all the way from Veii to Rome and made those ceramicists change their minds pretty quick!") but rather as one (yet another) telling facet of a most significant nexus. This is not to say that *currus* or *quadriga* each holds a chaotic, undifferentiated stew of meanings with no structure among them—and the job of term-interpretation merely to tick off the instances, with as specific

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[292] *Amph.* 450-1

[293] Romanis…notissima et apud ipsos orta erat fibula illa ad quam alludit Amph. V. 450, ubi Mercurius dicit: [our passage]. Quam quadrigam cum Veientes urbe capta Romanis victoribus tradere nollent, fama fert, maxima celeritate Romam cucurrisse nec equos prius stetisse quam in Capitolium advenissent. Quo factum est ut si poetae de quadriga Iovis vel de quadrigis albis loquitur summam celeritatem significare velit. (quoted by Bertini, presumably in approval, p. 205-6—Keseberg, A. *Quaestiones Plautinae et Terentianae*, pp. 23-4).

[294] Festus' version (340-2 L): ***Ratumenna porta*** *a nomine eius appellata est, qui ludicro certamine quadrigis victor, †clarusci† generis iuvenis Veis, consternatis equis excussus Romae perit; qui equi feruntur non ante constitisse, quam pervenirent in Capitolium, conspectumque fictilium quadrigarum, quae erant in fastigio Iovis templi, quas faciendas locaverant Romani Veienti cuidam artis figulinae prudenti. Quae bello reciperatae; quia in furnace adeo creverant, ut eximi nequirent: idque prodigium portendere videbatur, in qua civitate eae fuissent, omnium eam futuram potentissimam.* Pliny (*N.H.* 8.161): *maximum [sc. augurium] vero eodem [sc. in Capitolium] pervenisse a Veis cum palma et corona effuso Ratumenna qui ibi vicerat: unde postea nomen portae est.* Solinus (*collectanae rerum mirabilium* 45.15): *excusso quoque auriga, quem Rutumannam nominabant, relicto certamine ad Capitolium quadriga prosiliuit nec ante substitit quam Tarpeium Iouem trina dextratione lustrasset.*

and cordoned-off a definition for each floating example as possible. Rather we shall attempt to show, through this apparent scrap heap, that there *are* underlying structures linking parts, even if they are not entirely coherent and systematic, riddled with contradictions and forever dependent on fleeting terms.

To return to this particular example it is worth examining given its importance as a telling narrative, even if it does *not* tell us that it stands behind the *quadriga* proverbial for speed. The story has several versions, the most complete surviving in Plutarch's *Publicola*:

> While Tarquin was stirring up in Tuscany another war against the Romans, a thing of great portent is said to have happened. When Tarquin was still king, and had all but completed the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, either in consequence of an oracle, or else of his own good pleasure, he commissioned certain Tuscan craftsmen of Veii to place upon its roof a chariot of terracotta. The Tuscans, however, modelled the chariot and put it in a furnace for firing, but the clay did not contract and shrink in the fire, as it usually does, when its moisture evaporates. Instead, it expanded and swelled and took on such size, strength, and hardness, that it could only with difficulty be removed, even after the roof of the furnace had been taken off and its sides torn away. To the seers, accordingly, this seemed a divine portent of prosperity and power for those who should possess the chariot, and the people of Veii determined not to give it up. When the Romans asked for it, they were told that it belonged to the Tarquins, not to those who had expelled the Tarquins. But a few days afterwards there were chariot races at Veii. Here the usual exciting spectacles were witnessed, but when the charioteer, with his garland on his head, was quietly driving his victorious chariot out of the race-course, his horses took a sudden fright, upon no apparent occasion, but either by some divine ordering or by merest chance, and dashed off at the top of their speed towards Rome, charioteer and all. It was of no use for him to rein them in or try to calm them with his voice; he was whirled helplessly along until they reached the Capitol and threw him out there, at the gate now called Ratumenna. The Veientines were amazed and terrified at this occurrence, and permitted the workmen to deliver their chariot.

Plutarch's version, which is tightly allied to Festus' account, is valuable for filling in the background about the legendary chariot order. Moreover, Plutarch—and, more tersely, Festus—significantly situates the struggle for mastery over destiny-presaging *prodigia* within the larger military struggle between Rome and Veii, which crisscrossed Tarquinius Superbus' reign. Omens, as usual, represent not simply intriguing emblems of Roman "otherness" or marginal exotica for anthropological or antiquarian interest, but also function as sites for broader discursive contests—both for the purported context in which they appear (here, in the Roman regal period), but also for the context of textual production (for Plutarch, Festus, Pliny, and Solinus). To tease apart all the intricate strands in this particular instance would be fascinating but is not our primary purpose here. Since our aim is to discover the ideological aspects of the *currus* in Roman culture, such a discussion will have to be limited (at least somewhat). While the backdrop of the Roman-Veientine clash adds political weight to this seemingly one-off, harmless story of the marvelous that Roman historiography and antiquarian writing so relishes, I think it is not the most valuable revelation about chariotry contained in the vignette. It is true that we could

say, accurately, if rather vaguely, that the camera pull-back enacted by Plutarch and Festus by comparison to Pliny (and Solinus) proves that the *currus*, in particular the *quadriga*, whether we want to limit its symbolic power to religious practice or to ludic leisure-time pursuits, is clearly associated with power—i.e., it is something that people thought worth bothering to exert some manner of control over.[295] That is, instead of agreeing with Plutarch's account of events, which paints the expanding terra cotta group as a kind of surprise, we should see the fact that a *prodigium* story attached itself to this item as indicative of the importance of this item, and of its potential to induce anxieties of control for those dealing with it. Nevertheless, I want to draw attention to the collocation of divinely associated victory *quadriga* and "realistic" circus chariot that the story displays. For that is probably the most striking and unexpected coincidence that the episode discloses.

After all, what is the connection between the triumphal procession and the circus race? Is there any connection whatsoever, other than the minor detail that at the very center and focal point of each cultural practice/ritual is the apparatus identified as *currus*, in which a very special person or persons are permitted to ride? What if we were to assume that, aside from the struggle between Rome and Veii for military power, that we have an attempt by the Roman state through the means of the temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus and its pinnacle symbol (perhaps, quite literally, *the highest point* in the city of Rome?), the *quadriga* of Jupiter, to exert control or governing influence over that more multiple, less spatially located, dialogic, ritual that is the chariot race? For it is quite difficult to ignore that in almost every version of the story, the victorious horses, instead of paying heed to their skilled jockey, Ratumenna, pay homage to Jupiter Capitolinus, even, in Solinus' version, performing a devotional and/or auspicious *dextratio*? Or else they are simply on their way back home, to Jupiter's house. If, as Walde maintains, the connection of the (Etruscan) Rat- portion of his name to Latin *rota* is "bloße Volksetymologie," is it automatically to be ruled out as significant for the Roman context? Why not see our poor dragged-along driver as a kind of proto-charioteer, here forced to submit to a most power-wielding locus of chariotry—the Capitoline (and, incidentally, commemorated as a kind of dedicatory spoils offering of both internal and intra-Latial strife, the *porta Ratumenna*)? Are the slowed-down but likewise clockwise worshipping laps of the yoked team meant to symbolize the conscription of circus race laps in service of a more straightforward state power?[296]

All of this is tantalizing, but deserves further tracing. Let us press on with the following contention: first, that the *currus* is not merely a symbol of power, but a site for contesting power; and, second, that the two most distinctively Roman takes on chariot use, namely the circus race and the triumphal procession, represent two conflicting versions of what this terribly fast and powerful vehicle could possibly be allowed to mean: release, on the one hand, and control or restraint, on the other. Such a template is no doubt overly schematic (and may seem, for now, rather vague), but it does, we shall see, capture an essential, underlying structure that reflects

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[295] It could be argued that the fact that the *prodigium* happens to be a clay *quadriga* is immaterial, that is, that it occupies a discursive position that could be held by *any* object. But only certain special objects are given the attention that can result in their involvment in events being categorized as *prodigia*.

[296] In case this seems a mere fluke, cf. Pliny, in the same passage, on another runaway team turned Capitoline pilgrims: *maius augurium apud priscos plebeis circensibus excusso auriga ita, ut si staret, in Capitolium cucurrisse equos aedemque ter lustrasse* (8.161). There are some scraps suggesting that Roman circus racing was thought to be of Etruscan origin. We shall deal below with the suggestive opposition between the end goal and culmination of the *pompa triumphalis* with the leading of captured commanders *in carcerem* (over the back side of the Capitolium), and the beginning of the circus race as departing *e carceribus*, as well as with the mirroring courses of the actual triumphal procession and the *pompa circensis*.

Roman discursive enunciation. Moreover, it will serve as a guiding or organizing principle as we make our rounds through the complex and extensive material.

The interaction of Roman state power and chariot racing was articulated near the very beginnings of Roman literature, in a familiar moment in Ennius' *Annals,* from the *auspicium* of Romulus and Remus:

> *expectant, ueluti consul cum mittere signum*
> *uolt omnes auidi spectant ad carceris oras,*
> *quam mox emittat pictis e faucibus currus,*
> *sic expectabat populus atque ore timebat*
> *rebus, utri magni uictoria sit data regni.*[297]

This programmatic comparison sets out the rules to come. It is certainly telling, as Skutsch and others point out, that the traditional Homeric chariot simile is recast in terms specifically reminiscent of the Roman circus racing, with touches such as *carceris*, *pictis e faucibus*, and the presence of the presiding consul, but that should come as no surprise.[298] But the implications of this Romanizing, namely that Ennius has here yoked a Homeric chariot for metapoetic purposes, are more noteworthy: the spirited, well-trained team of Greek epos harnessed for performance in a bold new arena—the fresh rookie that will be the patriotic Roman *carmen*. But I think there is something more significant going on in the deployment of a circus chariot for reign-definition. While it is easy for us—hard for us not—to see the circus as a microcosmos replete with solar obelisk at the heliocentre, twelve zodiacal laps, Actiacal dolphin lap-counters reflecting back on Agrippa and Octavian, and a variety of other markers that would have made the point un-missable, these associations were by no means guaranteed at the time of Ennius' poem.[299] Much of the consolidation of power-trappings took place over subsequent centuries, with Augustus' reign representing a significant milestone. But it was really the Constantinopolitan hippodrome of late antiquity that most fully and elaborately articulated the astrological dimensions, completing the picture of circus-as-cosmos which is by now at least somewhat familiar. So, assuming for the moment that the circus race chariot was still relatively open for rhetorical activation in the early second century BCE, I want to read this simile somewhat perversely, at the risk of appearing overly literal-minded. After all, comparing a contest for foundational kingship (the dominant term of the simile) to a chariot race (the comparandum) is a sure way to slip a potentially popular cultural phenomenon under the notional purview of state political power—chariot racing was *always* there to serve the powers that be (whether monarchic or senatorial—the presence of the presiding *consul* grounding the image in a second-century republican milieu).

How are these jockeying dynamics of circus racing and triumph played out in subsequent charged literary moments? After all, what was at stake in defining the parameters of what the chariot could represent in Roman discourse? What does it mean for a poet to press a circus chariot into the service of political ideology? I think we can chart a coherent development as we trace recurring instances of chariots pouring forth from the starting barriers. Consider another Ennian moment, of chariots flying out onto the racecourse:

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[297] *Ann.*84-8

[298] Skutsch ad loc.: "most Ennian similes are imitations or adaptations of Greek models. This one, however, is either entirely original or so completely recast in a Roman mould as to conceal its origin." `

[299] See Lyle (1984), for a Dumézilian approach, Wuilleumeir () on astrological elements; Henderson (2002) on the *circus* and *Amores* 3.2

cum a carcere fusi
currus cum sonitu magno permittere certant.[300]

Metonymic blending of conveyance and horses lends a blurred quality to the instantaneous rush: the horses are too fast to pin down precisely through word and image. They gush forth from the starting gates and struggle to make their way (through the gates or, once out on the course, past the other teams?). The *currus* here is an image of speed, but speed configured as release (*fusi*, *permittere*). The rush of movement unleashed bears an impressive sound (*cum sonitu magno*, and alliterative velar hoof beats), but it is difficult to see the fragment as overall dark or terrifying (thought it is hard to say without more context).[301] What happens as the image is repeatedly reconfigured is an increasingly nervous vision.

In a passage meant to illustrate the workings of atomic movement while still providing for animate will, Lucretius directs attention to the behavior of chariot horses at the very instant of the beginning of a race. After the starting barriers burst open, the animals' avid spirits take a mere fraction of time to activate their limbs for galloping:

nonne vides etiam patefactis tempore puncto
carceribus non posse tamen prorumpere equorum
vim cupidam tam de subito quam mens avet ipsa?[302]

The image is summoned to demonstrate the time lag between engaging the will and the resulting physical movement (stemming ultimately from the atomic swerve). This instantaneous gap that Lucretius' take on Epicurean physics envisions allows us a glimpse of free will that is distinct from the constant chaotic flux of motion. Because this gap exists, this tiny ecphrasis states, we can be sure that the will exists. But why situate this observation—meant to attest to the existence of a feature so vital to the Lucretian physical universe—at the beginning of a circus race? The primary purpose must be to heighten the contrast between still stasis and pure speed that a racing circus team automatically conveys. For the exemplum offers the most powerful image of Roman acceleration on hand—for no other speed-gain (from zero to around thirty-five or forty mph) was more forceful. That is, the fastest thing we can think is the result of the will of the mind. He has almost said that the will is faster than the mind—one step head of it, swifter than swiftness itself. Given the apparent centrality of the *clinamen* and the place thereby reserved by Lucretius for free will, this setting in motion of purest speed by release must be mainly celebratory. And yet, release is here expressed in terms of breaking out and eager, grasping force: potential danger lurks in the language. After all, things that burst forth or break out (*prorumpere)* are frequently dangerous or harmful (*pestis*, say, or *vis morbi* or *incendium*, not to mention *cupiditas*), and the horses themselves get compressed into a sort of synecdoche (clarified by appositional genitive) of *vis cupida*, craving exertion, which looks rather problematic in the context of Epicurean ethics. It seems possible that the image of the chariot team let loose, while no doubt mainly applied to convey the motivating power of the soul, cannot escape the possibility of danger inherent in such a forceful release. That such a phenomenon is articulated in such terms here—even despite Lucretius' primary objective in the passage—attests to the existence of a larger

[300] *Ann.*463-4
[301] For metrical galloping, cf. also Enn. *Ann.* fr. 431 Sk. *it eques et plausu cava concutit ungula terram*.
[302] 2.263-5

struggle for definition, both of the nature of the racing chariot itself, and of contemporary political dynamics.

A similar paradox appears in the course of Lucretius' discussion of sleeping circus horses in book four:

> *quippe videbis equos fortis, cum membra iacebunt,*
> *in somnis sudare tamen spirareque semper*
> *et quasi de palma summas contendere viris*
> *aut quasi carceribus patefactis †saepe quiete†.*[303]

If it is true that this vivid moment is part of a general inclination characteristic of Lucretius' dreamscape which tends towards the material or rational grounding of *somnia* at the expense of identifying them as divine emanations, then certainly the fact that horses, or for that matter, any animals, apparently do dream is a convenient help. In the case of race horses, how better to depict being at rest than by showing, well, beings at rest in contrast with the purest form of fast motion, the chariot race? The hypnotic paradox is intended to represent the reality-derived nature of dreams with special relief. Again, the horses are released (*carceribus patefactis*), and the general tenor is not overly dark (*palma*, *summas viris*), but there is a struggle or rat-race (picked up by Horace's image in *Satires* 1).

But it appears that the *Georgics* represent a decisive transition. A race-start takes place in the *Georgics*, and it is here that letting this speedy power break free to run loose becomes an explicit emblem of danger, and of circumstances spiraling out of control:

> *hinc movet Euphrates, illinc Germania bellum;*
> *vicinae ruptis inter se legibus urbes*
> *arma ferunt; saevit toto Mars impius orbe:*
> *ut cum carceribus sese effudere quadrigae,*
> *addunt in spatia, et frustra retinacula tendens*
> *fertur equis auriga, neque audit currus habenas.*[304]

It is important that *external* strife is represented, not *internal* political chaos, which surely must represent a realignment of the prior opposition set up between Roman state power and an unruly plebs. Through Lucretius and Horace, the chariot race starting image had had represented until now in Latin literature primarily a struggle waged within the city of Rome. Redefining the primary unleashed force to be constrained by Roman state power as a mass of eastern (*Euphrates*) and northern (*Germania*) barbarians (instead of the Roman plebs), together with "neighboring cities" (*uicinae…urbes*) surely renders that state power (some, any power?) more desirable and more necessary, distracted and debilitated as it is by the civil contest disputed by Antony and Octavian culminating at Actium.

A different, but similarly ambiguous, version of the chariot race start is offered by Virgil later in the *Georgics*, in book 3. While the simile no doubt conveys the excitement and exhilaration experienced by circus spectators, the danger of things run amok is hardly absent:

> *nonne vides, cum praecipiti certamine campum*

[303] 4.987-90
[304] 1.509-14

corripuere ruuntque effusi carcere currus,
cum spes arrectae iuvenum, exultantiaque haurit
corda pavor pulsans?[305]

4. *Quadrigae* on the mind: yoking words/conjugating the world

It is perhaps the chariot's extraordinary cultural legitimacy that makes it especially useful for Romans as a tool to think with, and leads to its appearance in rather startling contexts, especially those that deal with comparison, and particularly with those comparisons that deal with language. From its deployment as a fictional object in Homer (representing both heroic "realism" and patriarchal didaxis), through its realignment in archaic lyric as a most expressive marker of metapoetics, via its transformation into a site for glimpsing individual catastrophe in Athenian tragedy, through to its re-elevation as one of Platonic philosophy's most transcendent metaphors, Romans inherited a concept that was already oversaturated with meaning, both because of its obvious primacy as a "high" term, and as a result of the staggering diversity of the concepts it could express. The latter list represents just several pinnacles of meaning that the Latin word *currus* and *quadrigae* couldn't very easily have avoided, even if the word has already further ramified by the time of its earliest attestation. And in the realm of the non-verbal, of course, the ancient world was certainly littered with representations of horse-drawn chariots in religious and ritual contexts, and chariot-racing as a special site of spectacle is both widespread and long-lived. In other words, it seems that few other Latin words for *objects* encompass within their semantic bounds such stylistic height and such wide-ranging diversity.[306]

So it is perhaps telling that Varro's chosen image for the first principles of "almost everything" (*fere omnia*) is a four-horse chariot. Before embarking on his lengthy catalogue of etymologies of words representing or pertaining to space which comprises book 5 of the *de lingua latina*, he corrects the Pythagorean tendency towards binarism, opting instead for *quadripertitio*. These remarks, part of a brief preface to his lengthy tour of language for space (book 5) and time (book 6), conclude with a striking image: *igitur initiorum quadrigae: locus et corpus, tempus et actio*. Conceding that a fundamental distinction exists between immobility (*status*) and motion (*motus*) as consonant with dualism, he elaborates: "a body is what is stationary or is moved; space is where a body is moved; time is when space is moved; action is the fact of its being in motion (*quod stat aut agitatur, corpus; ubi agitatur, tempus; dum agitatur, tempus; quod est in agitatu, actio* 5.11). The verb *agitare* is very frequently used of chariot-driving, and that fact, together with Varro's chosen illustrations of his quadripartite principles (body, space, time, action), all of which have to do with *currere* (*corpus est ut cursor, locus stadium qua currit, tempus hora qua currit, actio cursio*-so, for running, not chariot-racing), suggest that the four horse chariot would have easily lent itself to functioning as vessel for thinking through with. There are several points here. One is that the four-horse chariot *was* objectively useful for talking about four-part things: especially given that Varro has separated each pair (*locus et corpus*, *tempus et actio*) just as in ancient practice, the quartet consisted of two yoked pairs, of which each pair was not yoked to the other pair. There were not many other things in Roman culture that worked like that, and given the amount of time a Roman would have spent staring at chariot horses, it appears that it would have been hard to miss. Second is

[305] 103-6
[306] The word *via* perhaps contains more semantic variation, though without being a marker of high style.

that, these observations aside, the image seems less odd when we recall the wideness of its pre-Latin semantic heritage. The chariot had *always* been used for comparison with other things.[307] Plato's chariot of the soul in the *Phaedrus* was certainly a model image for positing fundamental structural categories. As Roman culture's unanimously hailed most learned man, he probably would have seen more written chariots than any other Roman reader. The last point is a suggestion: that we read his terse quadripartite mantra as a sort of emblem for the functioning of the term itself—its striking capacity to yoke various essential concepts together with astounding results.[308]

This is not the only place in which the four-horse chariot is applied to the conceptual representation of language and its parts, and the term comes up several times in Varro as a way of grappling with grammatical number.[309]

Caesar in a fragment of the *de analogia* turns up another "chariot of grammar" in a proscriptive remark about grammatical number.[310] The remark is preserved, once again, inside an anecdote recounted by Aulus Gellius, which deals, ostensibly, with correct grammatical speech. Before moving from Rome to Athens, Gellius says, he was as a young man taught by the learned Cornelius Fronto. Once, while in his company, a friend of Fronto said that he had managed to cure himself of dropsy by using *harenis calentibus* (heated sands). Fronto responds critically (but playfully) to this "friend": *morbo quidem…cares, sed uerbi uitio non cares* ("you may be over your illness, but you're still lacking in grammatical wellness") and goes on to quote Caesar who says that *harenis* is incorrect (for *harena*, just as *caelum* and *triticum* don't have plurals): *contra autem "quadrigas", etiamsi currus unus, equorum quattuor iunctorum agmen unum sit, pluratiuo semper numero dicendas putat sicut "arma" et "moenia" et "comitia" et "inimicitas."* Fronto goes on to challenge this "best poet" (*poetarum pulcherrime*) to prove him wrong. Recourse is then made to a copy of the *De Analogia* itself, and Gellius quotes the passage, which, as he says, he committed to memory that day. Caesar, Gellius reports, after first saying that none of the words *caelum*, *triticum*, or *harena* can be allowed express plurality (*multitudinis significationem pati*), poses this rhetorical question:

> *'num tu…harum rerum natura accidere arbitraris, quod "unam terram" et "plures terras" et "urbem" et "urbes" et "imperium" et "imperia" dicamus, neque "quadrigas" in unam nominis figuram redigere neque "harenam" in multitudinis appellationem conuertere possimus?'*

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[307] Varro's repeated return to thinking and categorizing in terms of fours is related, and I assume the quadriga is a manifestation of this, and not vice versa!

[308] I don't mean that the four horses of Varro's *quadriga* need be thought of as representing its four special semantic areas (it is tempting but could only be arbitrary, as, say: "the chariot as concrete vehicle": *corpus*; "the chariot of the sun and moon": *tempus*: "the chariot as metonymy for the circus or the pompa": *locus*; "the chariot as metaphor for fast motion": *actio*), rather that Varro's metaphorical use of the term here ("chariot=the world") must also be a comment on that term's propensity for prolific metaphorization.

[309] The *quadrigae* comes up again at 6.41 as one of the derivatives of the verb *ago*: *actio ab agitatu facta. hinc dicimus "agit gestum tragoedus," et "agitantur quadrigae."* Clearly Varro was not unaware of the connection between action and chariots.

[310] Caesar had linked language and transport elsewhere in his *de analogia*, when he envisioned the flowing course of speech being interrupted by arcane diction, as a ship by a shoal: *tamquam scopulum, sic fugias inauditum atque insolens uerbum*. The fragment, from Gellius 1.10.4, is actually embedded within another fragment, in which the philosopher Favorinus rebukes a young man for employing archaic words.

> "Surely you don't think it occurs by the nature of these things that we say 'one land' and 'many lands', 'city' and 'cities', 'command' and 'commands', but *cannot* express *quadrigae* in the singular or change *harena* into the plural?"[311]

Strange as it may seem we must then admit that Caesar, together with his Atticist-analogist peers responding to the free-wheeling version of eloquence propounded in Cicero's *de Oratore*, must have argued for the imposition of a theoretically-based grammatical theory or *ratio* on language, which would guarantee simple but pure and correct speech as exemplified by the commander's *commentarii*. Caesar's weighing in on the controversy over matters like the grammatical status of *quadrigae* is significant. What is at stake beyond mere usage becomes clear when we pause to reflect upon the semantic fields from which his chosen examples are taken. These are, after all, slices of language he was grinding his way through literally *en route* to conquering Gaul.[312] Is it just crass literalism, circularity, or arguing after the fact, to say that these are images that we would expect a future world-conqueror to chose: *arma*, *moenia*, *terra, urbs, imperium*—even *harena*?[313] The concern with *quadrigae* may very well represent an obsession with triumphs (could any ambitious Roman politican or *imperator not* have been obsessed with triumphs). And it seems possible that this seemingly arid treatise constitutes a dry-run or foretaste of colonization—even if, as it were, by analogy. At the very least, the technical work might have allowed Caesar to maintain an authoritative presence in an intellectual world in which it was important to appear, while he went ahead with his subjugation of Gaul. In short, the *de analogia* must have represented a subtler variety of ideological grappling than did his explicit *commentarii*.[314]

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[311] Rolfe's Loeb translates *num tu…harum rerum natura accidere arbitraris* as, "Do you not think that it happens from the nature of these things that…?"—that is, he reads *num* as expecting a positive answer, as it sometimes does ("don't you think that it's by nature that…?"). Although Caesar was observing that one doesn't say *quadriga* or *harenae* in Latin, his point may have been that these are examples of anomalies, instances where language is not systematic. So, *contra* Rolfe, I understand him as saying, "Although it is the case that certain words do not have extant plurals or singulars, but can only be employed in one number or the other, there is nothing *natural* about this: rather, it represents instances where language's natural systematicity has been messed up by irregular human convention." This implies that Caesar would have actually argued for *quadriga* and *harenae* as legitimate forms. Therefore, Gellius (with Fronto and circle) seems to have somewhat distorted Caesar's larger point in their narrow focus on consulting him as a reliable authority for late Republican Latin usage.

[312] *reliquit et de analogia duos libros et Anticatones totidem ac praeterea poema quod inscribitur Iter. quorum librorum primos in transitu Alpium, cum ex citeriore Gallia conuentibus peractis ad exercitum rediret, sequentes sub tempus Mundensis proelii fecit; nouissimum, dum ab urbe in Hispaniam ulteriorem quarto et uicensimo die peruenit.* (Suet.*Iul.*56.5). Fronto tries to get Marcus Aurelius working with a comparison to Caesar composing the *de analogia* on campaign: *quod te vix quicquam nisi raptim et furtim legere posse prae curis praesentibus scripsisti, fac memineris et cum animo tuo cogites C. Caesarem atrocissimo bello Gallico cum alia multa militaria tum etiam duos De analogia libros scrupulosissimos scripsisse, inter tela volantia de nominibus declinandis, de verborum aspirationibus et rationibus inter classica et tubas*

[313] Caesar's *commentarii* provide numerous examples the use of *redigere* in a more oppressive sense. Even if his purpose here in the *de analogia* was to expand the allowed usage of *quadrigae*, his straight-jacketing language represent yet another an attempt to "curb" the careening chariot through grammatical systematizing (in this case, Stoic *natura*-based *ratio*). Compare the technical expression for turning a territory into a province: *in formam* / *formulam provinciae redigere*.

[314] Cf. Riggsby (2006) and Sinclair (1994). That there was a great deal at stake in matters of "transport" for both literature and the state—that is, who controls it in discursive and physical terms—even during the civil wars is shown by the fact that Caesar wrote a poem "on" his expedition to Spain: *Iter* (Suet. *Iul.* 56.5). This terribly swift "March" (i.e., at that stage, "Foreign Campaign," not yet "Civil War") against Afranius and Petreius culminated in the battle of Ilerda in June 49. The defeated generals attempted flight to join with Varro's army. After a failed

Lingering for a moment on this instance of "grammar's *quadrigae*" has opened up the possibility of reading the few surviving fragments Caesar's work *de analogia*—as concise and opaque as they may seem—as handling issues of political power and empire, even if in an oblique or virtual manner. In other words, the traditional distinction between Caesar "statesman/general" and "man of letters" (usually highlighted by the paradoxes reported by Suetonius and Fronto) is too artificial. Struggles over who gets to harness the *quadrigae* authoritatively was clearly a pressing enough concern that it could take shape in such an oblique articulation.

We may now turn to Caesar's long-term respondent in the Atticist/Asianist controversy, Cicero, as another version of the chariot as a means for thinking through contemporary political powerplay (and his own anxieties). I suggest that we read Cicero's chariots as repeatedly configured as a kind of unreachable ceiling of accomplishment, functioning in actual, linguistic practice as a fixed term against which to compare and define other messy realities.

In his second *actio* against Verres, Cicero takes his opponent to task for failing to bring the pirates he allegedly captured to public justice, as P. Servilius Vatia, a famous pirate wrangler, used to do.[315] Servilius, Cicero says, netted more live brigands than any other Roman before and, moreover, knew well that ridding the sea-space of these obstacles to transit had deserved a public spectacle, which he dutifully provided. Romans were thus given a chance to see (perhaps for the first and only time) these brigands whom they had so often feared dragged off to death (*quia nihil est victoria dulcius, nullum est autem testimonium victoriae certius, quam quos saepe metueris eos te vinctos ad supplicium duci videre*, 2.5.66). But Verres instead kept the lead pirate alive:

> *vivum tu archipiratam servabas: quo? per triumphum, credo, quem ante currum tuum duceres; neque enim quicquam erat reliquum nisi uti classe populi Romani pulcherrima amissa provinciaque lacerata triumphus tibi navalis decerneretur.*[316]

The sneer embodied in this made-up, ironic triumph, shows how the *currus* works rhetorically as a kind of ultimate trump-card: there is no way that Verres can live up to the transcendent meaning conveyed by the triumphal *currus*, given that so few outstanding Romans were able to do so. If we combine Cicero's heavy sarcasm here with his portraits of the litter-bound Verres examined earlier, we begin to glimpse a vision of Roman culture embodied in these two marked, interlocking vehicles. Verres sprawled in his *lectica* represents a vision of the world as it is, but shouldn't be: lazy, greedy, consuming. The imagined triumphal *currus* that Verres could never deserve represents a glimpse of the way Rome should be, but isn't: energetic, efficient, pacifying, and just. It is true that this world-picture, though oblique and articulated through metaphor, is still mainly a caricature. Since its primary purpose was persuasion, we should not automatically assume that it represents "the world in vehicles" of elite Romans in 70 BC. Rather, we should see it as a powerful contemporary discourse that, when put to work by Cicero and

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attempt to fight Caesar and a mutiny of his soldiers, Varro the Pompeian would eventually come over to Caesar's side, lapping up his *clementia* enough to get a grant for a library. Perhaps his not long subsequent synthesis of arguments *pro analogia* and *pro anomalia* in books 8-9 of his *de Lingua Latina* can be seen as some sort of virtual mediation between Ciceronian, republican *copia*-eloquence, and Caesarian grammatical, rule-bound *analogia*. Interesting, though, that Fronto's protreptic urging would lead Gellius to dig up an instance of *quadriga*: it was from one of Varro's Menippean satires, the *Ecdemiticus* (*N.A.* 19.8.17).

[315] And, as it happens, he was a *iudex* at Verres' trial.

[316] 2.5.67

others, could tidily structure the intersection of issues such as "public service" through imperial expansion and administration, personal career ambition, and moral decline.

This overdetermined significance that the *currus* possesses returns a bit later in the *Verrines*, when Cicero sums up his point about Verres' treatment of the arch-pirate. It is a passage that is important in the development of Roman thinking about triumphs in general, but has the additional advantage for this particular discussion in explicitly stating the proper function, and physical endpoint, of the triumphal course:

> *populi Romani hostis privati hominis custodiis adservabitur? at etiam qui triumphant eoque diutius vivos hostium duces reservant ut his per triumphum ductis pulcherrimum spectaculum fructumque victoriae populus Romanus percipere possit, tamen cum de foro in Capitolium currus flectere incipiunt, illos duci, in carcerem iubent, idemque dies et victoribus imperii et victis vitae finem facit.*
>
> Shall an enemy of the Roman people be kept in the custody of a private person? But even those who hold triumphs, and for that reason keep the generals of the enemy alive for a longer time, in order that, while they are led in triumph, the Roman people may experience an ennobling spectacle, and a splendid fruit of victory, nevertheless, when they begin to turn their chariot from the forum towards the Capitol, order them to be taken to prison, and the same day brings to the conquerors the end of their authority, and to the conquered the end of their lives.[317]

The only legitimate reason why a captured enemy should be kept alive, in this strict interpretation of the function of the triumph, is so that he can be displayed as an honorable spectacle (*pulcerrimum spectaculum*) and reward of victory (*fructum…victoriae*) for the Roman people to witness. The terrifying circularity of this justification—conquest purely for the sake of being publicly recognized as conquest—almost vanishes as Cicero underlines the true goal and purpose of this public ritual: the confinement of the captured leader *to prison* (*in carcerem*) for immediate (*idem...dies*) execution. The turn (*flectere*) from the forum onto the Capitol and, ultimately, towards the *carcer*, thus neatly expresses the proper functioning of the offices of *imperium*. The end of the general's *imperium* ideally coincides with the termination of the enemy's life (via confinement and execution). And, on the other hand, the general's role as private individual endowed with special power only exists as long as a public enemy (*hostis*) remains unrestrained. Matters were of course far more complicated in reality, but Cicero's clean formulation is nevertheless of essential importance, mainly because it places the *carcer*, and the triumphal chariot's movement towards it, at the center of this reestablishment of stasis, the balance that had been temporarily upset by the unbounded activity of *hostis* and the transfer of extraordinary power from the *civitas* to one citizen that mirrors it. Even if the wielding of supposedly extraordinary powers by *duces* becomes increasingly *ordinary* by the time of the late Republic, and so, to us at least, Cicero's articulation can only seem artificial or imaginary, nevertheless it is still clear that it must have remained a powerful and persuasive—and in that sense very *real*—one. After all, Verres' activity can only be understood as improper or

[317] *Verr*.2.5.77

transgressive if such a conception was already perceived as being there as a backdrop against which to transgress.

The inability of Romans (in this case, Verres) to live up to the hallowed institution surrounding the *currus triumphalis* acquires additional meaning when Cicero's *own* anxiety about being awarded a triumph comes into play. The passages in which Cicero discusses the possibility of celebrating a triumph are numerous, but his deployment of the *currus* image frequently functions to represent his concern with that possible lack.[318] In his speech *post reditum in senatu*, he relates his return thanks to Lentulus:

> *itaque P. Lentuli beneficio excellenti atque divino non reducti sumus in patriam sicut non nulli clarissimi cives, sed equis insignibus et curru aurato reportati.*[319]

It is not an actual triumph, but the implication is that, we are meant to understand, it is as good as one.

In a revealing *synkrisis* in his speech against Piso, Cicero compares his own glorious march out of exile with Piso's allegedly skulking, meandering return from his post in Macedonia—*without* a triumph. Cicero describes his arrival and procession through the peninsula in suggestively, though not explicitly, "triumphal" terms: he is accompanied all the way from Brindisi to Rome by an unbroken train of all Italy (*a Brindisio usque Romam agmen perpetuum totius Italiae*, 51) and, by way of a similarly immodest take on the pathetic fallacy, sees the very walls, buildings, and temples rejoicing at his presence (*moenia ipsa viderentur et tecta urbis ac templa laetari*, 52).[320] If Cicero's return was straight and direct—one long procession stretching from Brindisi to Rome—Piso's, by contrast, is a series of wanderings, sidetracks, and diversions (*maeandros…diverticula flexionesque*, 53), an opposition which must be indicative of how the triumph is conceptualized in space. In imagery reminiscent of Cicero's depiction of Verres' and Antony's nighttime litter trips, Piso's sneaking home disrupts categories meant to be respectfully honored by public officials: night and day, solitariness and crowds, shady taverns vs. municipalities, a visible conveyance (such as a chariot or other wheeled vehicle) and the concealed litter. Or rather, Piso opts for the less appropriate of each of these terms at every turn. Instead of a triumphant general he is carried along like a dead criminal to his unceremonious funeral—in a litter.[321] Cicero then proceeds to attack his opponent's explanation for not celebrating a triumph as claiming to be somehow "above" such worldly attainments, as if it were possible somehow to scorn the achievements of men such as Camillus and Scipio (*O*

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[318] The triumph comes up repeatedly in the letters.

[319] *post red.* 28

[320] Compare another very similar description of Cicero's triumphant return from exile in his speech *post reditum* 28: *quando tantam frequentiam in campo, tantum splendorem Italiae totius ordinumque omnium, quando illa dignitate rogatores, diribitores custodesque vidistis? itaque P. Lentuli beneficio excellenti atque divino non reducti sumus in patriam sicut non nulli clarissimi cives, sed equis insignibus et curru aurato reportati*. The gilded chariot is elsewhere shorthand for the triumphal vehicle; e.g., Decius defending the proposed Ogulnian law, by which plebeians would be allowed to hold priesthoods, at Livy 10.7.10: *qui Iovis optimi maximi ornatu decoratus curru aurato per urbem vectus in Capitolium ascenderit, is non conspicietur cum capide ac lituo, non capite velato victimam caedet auguriumve ex arce capiet?*

[321] *Nonne tibi nox erat pro die, solitudo pro frequentia, caupona pro oppido, non ut redire ex Macedonia nobilis imperator sed ut mortuus infamis efferri videretur?* (53). The description is of course similar to that of Antony at *Phil*.2.106: *at iste operta lectica latus per oppidum est ut mortuus*. It seems fair to say that Cicero is depicting Piso's return as in fact *in a litter*, given the frequent occurrence of the expression *ut mortuus* and forms of *efferre* with descriptions of litter use.

stultos Camillos Curios Fabricios…! 58). The entire elaborate comparison, of Cicero's return with Piso's, reaches a kind of fever pitch in an extended and ridiculous *prosopopoeia*, which is given in two parts. Cicero imagines and acts out the advice that this triumph-shunning philosopher would give to his ambitious son-in-law, Julius Caesar. Piso's Epicureanism is sent up in the process (together with his lack of learning, polish, and self-restraint), but the chariot features centrally. After an initial attempt at persuading Caesar of the gods' indifference to human affairs, Cicero plays out Piso's second, more sustained speech:

> *vertes te ad alteram scholam; disseres de triumpho: 'quid tandem habet iste currus, quid vincti ante currum duces, quid simulacra oppidorum, quid aurum, quid argentum, quid legati in equis et tribuni, quid clamor militum, quid tota illa pompa? inania sunt ista, mihi crede, delectamenta paene puerorum, captare plausus, vehi per urbem, conspici velle. quibus ex rebus nihil est quod solidum tenere, nihil quod referre ad voluptatem corporis possis.'*
>
> Turn to your second disquisition, and lecture on the triumph: "What after all is the significance of this chariot? What is the purpose of those generals bound in front of the chariot? and of the images of towns? and of the gold? and of the silver? and of the lieutenants on horseback? and of the tribunes? What avail all the shouts of the soldiery? and all that procession? To hunt for applause, to ride through the city, to wish to be stared at, are all mere trifles, believe me, things to please children. There is nothing in all those things which you can grasp as solid, nothing which you can use for bodily pleasure."[322]

The iconoclasm will be familiar from later (in particular, Senecan) diatribes, but the punchline here, based upon a reductive take on Epicurean hedonism ("a triumphal chariot isn't very good for lying down in"), makes it clear that this is a parody of the pretentious detachment of the Garden, or, at the very least, of Piso's disingenuous application of its tenets. Piso's imaginary lecture underlines the sheer ludicrousness and impossibility of somehow transcending Roman political culture's transcendent *currus*. The vehicle returns at the end of the *prosopopoeia*, after Cicero has Piso ill-advisedly conclude his words of advice with a mention of his ingenious accounting. All his money—which he most artfully embezzled, he assures Caesar—was not wasted on pointless triumphal expenses. Cicero brilliantly repurposes Stasimus' quip in Plautus' *Trinummus* as a devastating comment of the puzzled scribe in charge of accounts (still the acted out words of Piso): *ratio quidem hercle apparet, argentum* οἴχεται ("everything adds up alright—it's the money that's AWOL!" 61). Even if not quite ὀχεῖται (Greek for *vehitur*, which appeared a few lines earlier, *vehi per urbem*), the quip still rather concisely captures Piso's trade-off: instead of wishing (or being able) to be carried into town in a triumphal chariot once back from Macedonia (a spectacular symbol of individual achievement in support of collective conquest), he has been intent on funneling cash illicitly into his own coffers (that is, ultimately from a pool meant to be, at least in part, recycled for functions such as triumphal celebrations). Cicero closes the entire scenario by evaluating Piso's persuasiveness: *hac tu oratione non dubito quin illum iam escendentem in currum revocare possis* ("with that kind of case I'm sure you'll have no trouble changing Caesar's mind even as he's climbing into the triumphal chariot!" 61). The absurdity—indeed the sheer impossibility—of a stance which would scorn or somehow

[322] 60

surpass the triumphal *currus*, is by Cicero's posturing taken as a given, but is simultaneously reinforced as well. After all, it is significant that Caesar himself—the gold standard which serves to guarantee and conclude the entire portrait—had not yet actually celebrated a triumph, and would not do so for nearly a decade, even if he was already active in Gaul.[323] In other words: the inconceivability of transcending the chariot is demonstrated by positing an additional (non-existent) transcendent chariot.

4. Inventing barbarian chariotry: harnessing the *essedum*

This section charts the development of a particular version of the chariot, the Gallic *essedum*, from the first sightings of it in its native British habitat to its appropriation as a status- and leisure-symbol among the commuting classes of Martial's Rome. Throughout these representations, the *essedum*'s free-wheeling mobility, its light flexibility, and its unencumbered trajectories recur as its most defining characteristics. My argument proceeds along two lines: first, I show how the potential, symbolic threat of the Gallic chariot—a rediscovered version of Iliadic chariots—is overcome in Caesar's account of his dealings with British chariot-bound warriors; second, I argue that, following its importation and cooption as a symbol of free mobility (and of moving spoils), its glaring use by Roman elites constitutes a participation in the power-wielding potential of the *currus*, despite its hierarchically lower station with respect to the dominant triumphal chariot.

Perhaps the most telling moment in Roman construction of the British chariot comes near the center of Caesar's narration of the conquest of Gaul, in which the predominantly no-nonsense narrative pauses, mid-battle, for a brief digression. It is a combat version of the well-known "customs and habits" ecphrasis of Book 6, here distilled down to what makes the Britons most impressive and formidable to the (a) Roman general: their war chariots (*esseda*).

> *genus hoc est ex essedis pugnae. primo per omnes partes perequitant et tela coiciunt atque ipso terrore equorum et strepitu rotarum ordines plerumque perturbant et, cum se inter equitum turmas insinuaverunt, ex essedis desiliunt et pedibus proeliantur. aurigae interim paulatim ex proelio excedunt atque ita currus conlocant ut, si illi a multitudine hostium premantur, expeditum ad suos receptum habeant. ita mobilitatem equitum, stabilitatem peditum in proeliis praestant, ac tantum usu cotidiano et exercitatione efficiunt uti in declivi ac praecipiti loco incitatos equos sustinere et brevi moderari ac flectere et per temonem percurrere et in iugo insistere et se inde in currus citissime recipere consuerint.*
>
> Their species of combat by *essedum* is this. First, they ride about all over and cast their weapons, for the most part confounding the (enemy) ranks with the terror caused by their horses and the noise of the wheels. Once they have infiltrated the ranks of the cavalry, they leap from their *esseda* and fight on foot. The charioteers (*aurigae*) meanwhile gradually withdraw from battle and position their chariots so that if the warriors are overwhelmed by the enemy number, they have a

[323] In 46 (a quadruple splurge, commemorating Gaul, Egypt, Pontus, Africa) and 45 (after Munda, a fifth, this time explicitly over Roman citizens).

> convenient (*expeditum*) retreat to their ranks. Thus they offer in battle both the mobility (*mobilitas*) of cavalry and the stability (*stabilitas*) of infantry. Moreover, by daily practice and exercise they become so skilled that they are accustomed, even on steep descents and ascents to check their horses at full gallop, and to control and turn them in an instant, and to run along the pole and stand on the yoke and make their way back into the chariots with the greatest quickness.[324]

Caesar's near-clinical, ethnographic tone struggles to keep its awe and excitement under wraps over the course of the paragraph, lapsing at moments almost into a specimen of paradoxography. The opening sentence, *genus hoc est ex essedis pugnae*, marks out the passage as a digressive embellishment, but one which participates in ethnography's analytic processing of alien, undifferentiated static into coherent, recognizable parts or types (*genera*). Indeed, Caesar's first (and Latin literature's first extant) mention of this "species" of chariot warfare, earlier in book 4, had made use of a similar ethnographic flourish (*at barbari, consilio Romanorum cognito praemisso equitatu et essedariis, quo plerumque genere in proeliis uti consuerunt, reliquis copiis subsecuti nostros navibus egredi prohibebant*, 4.24.1).[325] To understand barbarian>British>chariot>*essedum* combat, according to Roman military ethnography, it is important to classify. These are of course precisely the terms in which the *commentarii de Bello Gallico* begin (*Gallia est omnis divisa in partis tris*…) and this kind of parsing is a recurring generic marker of the more articulated ethnographic digression on Gauls and Germans in Book 6 (e.g., on castes, *in omni Gallia eorum hominum qui aliquo sunt numero atque honore genera sunt duo*, 6.13.1), and in the briefer excursus on the geography and ethnography of Britain in Book 5 (e.g., on timber, *materia cuiusque generis ut in Gallia est, praeter fagum atque abietem*, 5.12.5).[326] To write in terms of "types" is a means of conveying—in style and diction as well as in actual content—a certain mentality, a concise expression of the mutually reinforcing concerns of spatial and epistemological conquest. Essential to this process of description as mastery is an all-pervasive conceptual pigeonholing: the ineluctable *interpretatio Romana*. The paradox of ethnography is after all its claim to represent incomprehensible otherness in comprehensible terms. Precisely such a process can be glimpsed in the above passage.

The ethnographic tag (*genus hoc est ex essedis pugnae*) marks out the main goal of the passage: cultural mastery through classification, and with it, objectification. The rest of the paragraph then enacts the steps taken in order to carry out that process. There is thus a subtle shift in Caesar's brief account. He moves from a rather terrifying portrait of British *essedum*-warfare as boundless, chaotic, and seemingly random, to an incisive analysis of its fundamental nature, in Roman terms: the vehicle is, as it turns out, a "hybrid" type. British chariotry represents the straddling of a seemingly irreconcilable contrast—that between *mobilitas* and *stabilitas*.[327] At first, Caesar writes, the *esseda* range everywhere (*per omnes partes perequitant*),

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[324] *B.G.* 4.33

[325] At times Caesar's use of *genus* in this context becomes something of a mannerism: *toto hoc in* ***genere*** *pugnae, cum sub oculis omnium ac pro castris dimicaretur, intellectum est nostros propter gravitatem armorum, quod neque insequi cedentes possent neque ab signis discedere auderent, minus aptos esse ad huius* ***generis*** *hostem* (5.16.1).

[326] *sed de his duobus generibus alterum est Druidum, alterum equitum*, 6.13.2; *alterum genus est equitum*, 6.15.1; *qua ex parte* (sc. *occidente*) *est Hibernia*, 5.13.2; *cui parti* (sc. *septentrioni*) *nulla est obiecta terra*, 5.13.6.

[327] Compare Servius' comment on *Aen.* 4.331: *INMOTA TENEBAT LVMINA physicum enim est ut qualitatem animi oculorum aut corporis* stabilitate *aut* mobilitate *noscamus. ergo modo vult ostendere Aeneam a proposito non esse deviaturum.* One really cannot (or should not) be both *mobilis* and *stabilis* at the same time, even in the most basic, bodily terms.

their passengers hurling missiles, the horses and screeching wheels terrifying the Roman ranks and, perhaps more importantly, throwing them (mostly) into disorder (*ordines plerumque perturbant*).[328] This is in fact what they have done not long previously in Caesar's narrative: after surprising the unprepared Romans, who have set aside their weapons for foraging, the barbarians throw them into confusion by surrounding them with their cavalry and *esseda*.[329] But Caesar's description functions on a conceptual level as well: the *essedarii* are transgressing categorical spaces (*per omnes **partes** perequitant)* and confounding established patterns (***ordines** plerumque perturbant*), by being at once mobile and stable.

The shock subsides as the analysis sinks in, and the account wrests control. *Plerumque* (in the phrase, *ordines plerumque perturbant*) is subtly defiant here ("—but not quite!"), and looks forward to the conclusion of the passage.[330] This wild, unpredictable guerrilla warfare is obviously quite dangerous, but is perhaps not entirely manly or courageous. Rather paradoxically given their initial headlong assault, the chariots are said to "work their way into," almost "steal" or "sneak into" the Roman ranks (*inter equitum turmas insinuaverunt*).[331] But the emphatic *ipso* (*ipso terrore equorum*, "*merely* by the terror caused by the horses"), together with the bombastic clamor of the wheels, implies that this power and courage is perhaps exaggerated, a sham not to be feared.[332] Nevertheless, the suggestion remains that the real significance (and advantage) of the *essedum*, according to Caesar, is its ability to fly in the face of the standard categories of Roman military combat, the *mobilitas* of the cavalry and the *stabilitas* of the infantry. But precisely by resolving this formless flux into stable categories—even if they have been

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[328] *Perequitare* is a marked verb, which tends to appear in situations of unusual riding. Caesar (*B.G.* 7.66) describes the ominous oath of Vercingetorix's Averni cavalry: they will foreswear shelter, children, parents and wife should they fail to "ride through" the enemy's forces not once, but *twice* (*qui non bis per agmen hostium perequitasset).* Livy offers an account of an equestrian *monomachia* between the Campanian Cerrinus Jubellius Taurea and the Roman Claudius Asellus during the siege of Capua (23.46-7). After an inconclusive encounter in open space, Taurea suggests they transfer their trial onto a narrow, carved out road. Asellus' ready compliance, and Taurea's arrogant taunt, (*Taurea verbis ferocior quam re, minime sis, inquit, cantherium in fossam, quae vox in rusticum inde proverbium prodita est*), provide an aetiology for the proverb, *cantherium in fossam* ("[don't lead] a gelding into a ditch"). Despite his challenge, Mr. Bull does not actually face Mr. Ass, the latter having ridden up and down the road at length (*ea via longe perequitasset*). Later, when in hot pursuit of Taurea, he manages to ride straight through the besieged city after gates were opened for the Campanian, to the astonishment of all. Pliny the Elder (9.27) recounts a story of a boy, Hermias, from Iasus, who used to ride about through the sea on a dolphin's back (*maria perequitantem*). When the boy dies in a sudden storm, the dolphin carries him ashore as if confessing his own guilt, beaches himself, and promptly dies (*delphinumque causam leti fatentem non reversum in maria atque in sicco expirasse*). This uncanny role-reversal (*fatentem*!) represents a kind of real-life *adynaton*.

[329] *tum dispersos depositis armis in metendo occupatos subito adorti paucis interfectis reliquos incertis ordinibus perturbaverant, simul equitatu atque essedis circumdederant* (4.32.5).

[330] The repeated spitting labial plosives apear to express surprise and disdain.

[331] The connotations of *insinuare* are very often creepy and slinking, e.g., of the terror that seeps through the hearts of the Trojans (*Aen.* 2.228-9), *tum vero tremefacta novus per pectora cunctis / insinuat pavor*.

[332] Compare Hector's assertion to Glaucus, that he does not fear the din of chariots (17.175): οὔ τοι ἐγὼν ἔρριγα μάχην οὐδὲ κτύπον ἵππων (with mimetically resounding *–on* endings). Indeed, it is hard not to find other echoes—more situational than strictly verbal—of Homeric chariot practice in Caesar's picture: the British warriors leap from the *esseda* (the formula, αὐτίκα δ' ἐξ ὀχέων σὺν τεύχεσιν ἄλτο χαμᾶζε, of Hector at 6.103, with variants *passim*); the *aurigae* stand aside, stationing their *esseda* for when their warriors need them (Agamemnon's charioteer holds his master's chariot apart while he reviews the ranks: καὶ τοὺς μὲν [sc. ἵππους] θεράπων ἀπάνευθ' ἔχε φυσιόωντας / Εὐρυμέδων, 4.227-8). And we can almost hear in *per omnes partes perequitant* Diomedes' description to Nestor of his own Trojan chariot/horses (seized from Aeneas), which know how to "pursue and retreat very quickly here and there" (κραιπνὰ μάλ' ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα διωκέμεν ἠδὲ φέβεσθαι, 8.107), a succinct statement of the ideal of Iliadic chariotry.

momentarily transgressed—Caesar enacts conceptually what he has achieved (i.e., will have achieved) militarily. Nevertheless, we are left with the lingering impression that there is something appealing about transcending the opposition in order to possess a supply of ultra-fast *and* steadfast man(and horse-)power. The special cachet acquired by the *essedum* in subsequent Roman culture may be in part accounted for by precisely this versatility, the intriguing capacity of this exotic chariot-carriage to evade and dance around dominant Roman categories.

The passage finishes with a rather surprising turn. Beginning with the connective *ac*, the sentence spins off into a vivid portrait of British charioteers in action. It is a lively set-piece describing the "kind" of thing they do (*tantum usu cotidiano et exercitatione efficiunt uti…consuerint)*, *enargeia* clearly at work. The playful, acrobatic virtuosity of the horsemen is enhanced by a string of rapid-fire infinitives in polysyndeton (*sustinere et…moderari ac flectere et …percurrere et…insistere et…recipere*). The British charioteers are quick and ubiquitous, but by this point in the narrative have been reduced to a kind of spectacle, a mere circus act.[333] For, aside from excessive maneuverability and the shock induced (which turns out to be short-lived), it is not clear that this bravura chariot dancing offers the *essedarii* any lasting advantage, at least in military terms. In the span of a brief paragraph, Caesar has gone far to make the *essedum* knowable and familiar. He first introduces Roman readers to the potentially terrifying wildness of British chariot warfare, but at the same time contains it by marking it out as a recognizable type; he then accounts for its foreignness by analyzing its transgressiveness in distinct terms, as a blending of familiar categories of mobility and fixity; finally, he offers a vivid and bracing portrait of the spectacle of the charioteers' acrobatic feats. The logic of such an account suggests that such a vehicle no longer has a place on the dangerous frontier, but belongs in the center, in Rome, either in the amphitheater for spectacular amusement, or as an exotic import repurposed for fashionable transit.

An analogous course can be charted for the subsequent construction of this tricky conveyance, this time by authors whose first encounter with the *essedum* almost certainly did not take place in combat, on the frontier. The passage discussed above features in Caesar's account detailing his first, 55 BCE expedition to Britain, and before long the *essedum* has emerged as a quiet sensation in Roman elite culture. It seems unlikely that a vivid ethnographic ecphrasis such as this could have made it into the general's annual summary *epistulae* to the senate, but they must have made mention of British chariot warfare in the course of even a curt report on each of

[333] Interestingly, a fable of Phaedrus (3.6) has a fly—while sitting on the pole (of a wagon, presumably)—threaten to sting a mule if she doesn't speed up: *Musca in temone sedit et mulam increpans / "quam tarda es" inquit "non vis citius progredi? / vide ne dolone collum conpungam tibi"* (1-3). The mule retorts that the mule-driver calls the shots and, more importantly, holds the whip and reins (*respondit illa "verbis non moveor* (!) *tuis; / sed istum timeo sella qui prima sedens / cursum flagello temperat lento meum, / et ora frenis continet spumantibus. quapropter aufer frivolam insolentiam; / nam et ubi tricandum et ubi sit currendum scio."* 4-9). The moral states that a man should be mocked who makes empty threats without power (*hac derideri fabula merito potest / qui sine virtute vanas exercet minas*, 10-11). We can see this position "on the pole," *in temone* (Caesar's *per temonem*), as symbolic of being a pseudo-charioteer, who is incapable of real "driving" because he occupies a hybrid space between driver and pack-animal. In the case of Caesar's *essedarii*, at any rate it is clear that they do not really belong "on the pole." Juvenal has one of Domitian's advisors prophesy about the emperor's military success: *"ingens / omen habes" inquit "magni clarique triumphi. / regem aliquem capies, aut de temone Britanno / excidet Arviragus* (4.124-7). And Propertius (4.8.15-26) envisions Cynthia hurdling towards Lanuvium from Rome at the reins of an effete boyfriend's *carpentum*, a sight to behold, "sitting on the end of the pole" (*spectaclum ipsa, sedens primo temone pependit*). The epicene qualities of the latter vehicle are explored in the next chapter.

the expeditions.[334] Soon a few have slipped into Cicero's correspondence, first as marvels—almost simply figures of speech, apparently because still largely imaginary to those back in Italy—and eventually as ostentatious displays of status.[335] In May 54, not long before the second invasion of Britain, Cicero writes to his friend C. Trebatius Testa, a young jurist whom he has recommended to Caesar (*ad fam.* 7.5, April 54) and who has in fact joined the general in Gaul (and, apparently, in Britain) by May 54:

> *tu modo ineptias istas et desideria urbis et urbanitatis depone et, quo consilio profectus es, id adsiduitate et virtute consequere. hoc tibi tam ignoscemus nos amici quam ignoverunt Medeae*
> *'quae Corinthum arcem altam habebant matronae*
> *opulentae, optimates,'*
> *quibus illa 'manibus gypsatissimis' persuasit ne sibi vitio illae verterent quod abesset a patria. nam*
> *'multi suam rem bene gessere et publicam patria procul;*
> *multi, qui domi aetatem agerent, propterea sunt improbati.'*
> *quo in numero tu certe fuisses nisi te extrusissemus.*
> *Sed plura scribemus alias. tu, qui ceteris cavere didicisti, in Britannia ne ab essedariis decipiaris caveto et (quoniam Medeam coepi agere) illud semper memento:*
> *'qui ipse sibi sapiens prodesse non quit, nequiquam sapit.'*
> *Cura ut valeas.*
>
> Now just set aside this foolish longing for Rome and the urban lifestyle, and achieve through perseverance and energy what you purposely set out to do. We your friends will forgive you just as the "well-off, well-born ladies who dwelt in the high citadel of Corinth" forgave Medea. She persuaded them, "hands made up thick with plaster," not to count it against her for living abroad. After all:
>
> "Many have improved affairs, both public and their own, far from home;
> many, in leading their lives at home, have for that reason come to nothing."
>
> You would certainly have been counted among the latter number if I had not driven you off.

[334] The first was undertaken in late summer 55, the second in the summer of 54. The publication of the *de bello Gallico* is usually assumed to be in early 51. The question of composition is a fraught one: some scholars have argued for composition in the winter of 52/51 (after the completion of the campaign; others have seen in the various contradictions within the work, and in its stylistic development, evidence that Caesar composed the work in installments, each year during the winters. In either case, he appears to have sent dispatches annually to the senate, which were still available to consult in the time of Suetonius (*Iulius* 56.6).

[335] On the relationship of Cicero's mentions of *esseda* in his letters to Trebatius and Caesar's depictions in his *commentarii*, see Nice (2003), who argues that Cicero had read Caesar *BG* 4 before writing to Trebatius and thus that books 1-4 cannot have been published after 55-54. Wiseman (1998) also argues for this earlier date. There is an additional reference to the British *essedarii*, preserved in a fragment of a letter of Caesar to Cicero (Serv. *Georg*. 3.204): *multa milia equitum atque essedariorum habet*. The subject of *habet* is thought to be the British chief Cassivellaunus, who first appears in *BG* 5.11.8.

> But I'll write more again soon. Now you, who have learned how to offer legal precautions for others, take precautions for yourself so you don't get tricked by the charioteers in Britain. And, since I've started playing Medea, always remember this one of hers: "The wise man who cannot help himself is wise in vain."
> Take care of your health.[336]

Cicero's overt concern here is to help promote his younger friend by having Caesar take him under his wing, but his bantering encouragement of Trebatius' apparent hesitation is expressed in terms of an underlying contrast between urban softness and refinement on the one hand, and foreign daring and dangerous risk-taking on the other. Trebatius' painful separation from the city and from urban ways (*desideria urbis et urbanitatis*) is reconfigured as a kind of imitation military campaign abroad that Cicero can somehow both preside over—by directing him and giving him advice, as an overseeing senate—and, in the role of relations left behind at home, mock-tragically lament—and then forgive. Like a soldier, he has set out (*profectus es*) with a certain purpose in mind, and must attain his goal with constant attendance and bravery (*adsiduitate et virtute consequere*).

But Cicero goes on with a rather convoluted analogy. To Trebatius' fierce and audacious Medea, having blazed her path abroad (to Corinth), Cicero and associates will play the part of her homebound peers—the chorus of Corinthian women (as imagined in Ennius' version of Euripides' tragedy)—who will excuse her expatriation. While Cicero's comparison surely reads as a bit of gentle sarcasm, Medea will always make for a rather unsettling comparandum, however playfully intended. Amidst the increasingly inevitable confrontation between Caesar and Pompey, the stakes were undoubtedly very high from Trebatius' perspective, but presumably a fair amount was riding on Trebatius' success for Cicero as well. Having a close friend as legal advisor to Caesar would at least keep him on decent terms with the general.[337]
Cicero introduces the *essedum* via a similarly ambiguous process. He couches his warning not to be deceived by British charioteers in terms of light wordplay: Trebatius, the legal expert in *caveats* for his clients, should not overlook Cicero's *caveat* about these slippery warriors. But the jesting surface conceals real concerns. No doubt the dangers presented by the wild British frontier were very threatening. That Caesar and forces are about to try again after the inconclusive expedition of 55 is evidence of this. But we might read the tricky *essedarii* as standing in for Trebatius' own critical position politically, as well as for the precarious bet-hedging Cicero was increasingly engaging in as Caesar's power grew, and a rift with Pompey seemed unavoidable. The British *essedum*, a vehicle that Cicero most likely had not actually seen at this point (and in any case certainly not one driven by the gymnastic charioteers described so vividly by Caesar), then becomes a sort of vector for broader concerns.

To summarize, the *essedum* is invoked here primarily as a symbol of the elusive and shifty combat habits of a foreign people still unconquered and therefore dangerous. It is the kind of vehicle that can give even a masterful commander such as Caesar a run for his money. Thus, Cicero's off-the-cuff reference to it represents a continuation of the first stage of the conquering ethnographic mentality we glimpsed in Caesar's passage of his *commentarii*. Unlike there, it is in this case voiced by someone who has not been present at the contact-zone. But at the same time, I am suggesting that Cicero's comment expresses deeper anxieties about Caesar's dangerous

[336] *ad fam.* 7.6.
[337] Cicero's brother Quintus would serve as legate to Caesar on the upcoming British expedition.

challenge to Roman culture's hitherto largely stable opposition of center and periphery.[338] The *Vrbs* will of course always be the hub, but the general's swiftly growing influence on the geographical margin points to power's potential displacement. The fact that the young lawyer has had to travel to the very edge of the Roman-controlled world to advance his personal career confirms this notion.

By the time of Cicero's next extant letter to Trebatius, the function of the *essedum* (or, more specifically, its casual mention) has shifted slightly. It appears in the context of the disappointing revelation that there may in fact not be very much in Britain worth conquering, as rumor has apparently spread that there are no precious metals on the island:

> *illud soleo mirari, non me totiens accipere tuas litteras quotiens a Quinto mihi frater adferantur. in Britannia nihil esse audio neque auri neque argenti; id si ita est, essedum aliquod capias suadeo et ad nos quam primum recurras. sin autem sine Britannia tamen adsequi quod volumus possumus, perfice ut sis in familiaribus Caesaris.*
>
> What I am continually amazed at is that I don't receive a letter from you whenever one comes from my brother Quintus. I hear there is no gold or silver in Britain. If that's really true, I advise you to grab an *essedum* and fly back to us as soon as possible! But in case we can actually achieve what we want even without Britain, see to it that you become one of Caesar's confidants.[339]

The shift in attitude regarding the British expedition—from "be careful out there" in the previous letter, to "not worth the trouble" in this one—might be more abrupt if Cicero were not up to his usual epistolary playfulness. Aside from straightforward puns or double-entendres, much of his jesting involves teasing out ambiguities and shifts in meaning. Nevertheless, two different images of the vehicle are being offered up, however casually. An *essedum* is no longer a volatile threat to guard against, a challenge to Rome both militarily and epistemologically, but rather an exotic artifact in which to joyride back to the city rather quickly, not to mention potentially flashy spoils of war. We can then read these two instances as part of a complex process of cultural appropriation; if not an actual semantic shift that can be located during the months May and June 54 BCE, still evidence of a broader discursive transformation that was taking place during the time of the Gallic campaign. But the notion of the *essedum* as not simply a dangerous military obstacle to be overcome abroad, but a possible prestige item to be consumed at home, is linked in Cicero's letter to the news that Britain may in fact hardly be worth conquering. After all, the province doesn't even possess *proper* valuable natural resources, such as gold and silver. Perhaps its greatest value will be instead as a source of a kind of symbolic capital, something much more ineffable than actual tribute or plunder. This might be conveyed, say, by parading a captive *essedum* in triumphal procession, or by having captive *essedarii* gladiators wheel around in mock-combat for the amusement of spectators, or even by speeding down the *via Appia* in decked-out *essedum* to one's country villa. That this may be an important part of the function of Caesar's campaign must be an unsettling consideration to Cicero, as this letter suggests.

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[338] Cf. Riggsby (1995), ch. 4.
[339] *ad fam.* 7.7.

The next time the conveyance comes up in Cicero's correspondence is in December 54, once again in a letter to Trebatius, after the second expedition to Britain, in which, we learn, Cicero's younger friend did not actually take part:

> *valde metuo ne frigeas in hibernis; quamobrem camino luculento utendum censeo, idem Mucio et Manilio placebat, praesertim qui sagis non abundares: quamquam vos nunc istic satis calere audio; quo quidem nuntio valde mehercule de te timueram. sed tu in re militari multo es cautior quam in advocationibus, qui neque in Oceano natare volueris studiosissimus homo natandi neque spectare essedarios, quem antea ne andabata quidem defraudare poteramus. sed iam satis iocati sumus.*
>
> I am very much afraid that your winter quarters will give you an icy reception. Therefore I am of the opinion that you should employ a brilliant stove. Mucius and Manilius concur, especially since your supply of military cloaks is not ample. Even so, I hear matters are now heating up enough for you out there! But that's really the news that made me quite concerned about you. All the same, you are much more cautious in military affairs than as an advocate. You, avid swimmer that you are, didn't wish to take a dip in the Ocean or watch the *essedarii*, even though in the past we couldn't cheat you of a blindfold gladiator (*andabata*). But enough jokes for now.[340]

Cicero's jibes continue. We have to imagine that Trebatius' replies must also have contained similar banter in order for Cicero to keep up the ribbing even despite the apparent difficulties experienced by Trebatius. Although his attempts to ingratiate himself with Caesar seem to have made some progress (*legi tuas litteras, ex quibus intellexi te Caesari nostro valde iure consultum videri*, 7.10.1), he may not have been well received by the rest of the staff on the campaign, as *frigeas in hibernis* suggests.[341] Overall, the sense is that Trebatius is a city lawyer cast out into the wild frontier, a fish out of water. Cicero pokes fun at him for being ill-prepared as a soldier (*praesertim qui sagis non abundares*), tells him he'd better get hold of a good stove to keep warm (*quamobrem camino luculento utendum censeo*), and then makes a punning reference to the recent uprising of the Eburones (*quamquam vos nunc istic satis calere audio*)—all of which may be meant to come across as a small dose of the *urbanitas* Trebatius was missing (*desideria urbis et urbanitatis,* 7.6.1; *mihi interdum (pace tua dixerim) levis in urbis urbanitatisque desiderio…videbare,* 7.17.1). The ironic reference to the imaginary recommendation of legal authorities Mucius and Manilius that Trebatius secure himself a warm place by the fire manages to send up the young lawyer's dislocation: "A lot of good your legal training will do you now!"

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[340] 7.10.2. Cicero puns on two senses of *frigere*: (1) "to be physically cold" and (2) "to be given the cold shoulder." Mucius and Manilius seem to have been introduced as legal authorities (possibly Q. Mucius Scaevola the Pontifex, and M'. Manilius, consul in 149). *Calere*, in the sense of "to be in difficulty," must refer to the uprising of the Eburones which was just taking place. Trebatius is an interlocutor, with Horace, of the poet's *Satire* 2.1, and there recommends swimming across the Tiber (as well as getting an oil massage and drinking unmixed wine before nightfall) as a remedy for insomnia: *ter uncti / transnanto Tiberim somno quibus est opus alto* (7-8). The third-person imperative form *transnanto* is a bit of legalese that helps to fill out Horace's portrait of Trebatius as token "legal expert."

[341] Trebatius would however ultimately be successful, and subsequent letters from Cicero make reference to his eventual contentment in Gaul (e.g., 7.15.1).

Cicero then retreats from joking for a moment to express his sincere worry (*valde mehercule de te timueram*), but then closes with one final jest about Trebatius' fondness for swimming and watching gladiatorial combat. The first is a reference to Caesar's forces' difficult landing on the coast of Britain, and the general sense of foreboding that the English Channel inspired in the Roman imaginary.[342] The second, our focus here, is striking because of its prescience. Cicero, in an attempt at humor, has apparently anticipated the subsequent adoption of British charioteers, *essedarii*, as a stock variety of gladiators.[343] Trebatius has succeeded in not joining Caesar's British expedition, even despite his love of swimming and observing skilled military spectacles. Cicero's dark humor is meant to lighten what was undoubtedly a rather grim situation: the danger presented by the unpredictable combat techniques of the British *essedarii* was very real and frightening to those directly involved. But by preemptively redefining the *essedum* as an object for *symbolic* consumption among privileged Romans back home, he has shifted the goals and parameters of military conquest in discursive terms.

Several years later (Feb. 24, 50 BCE), the *essedum* shows up in a decidedly different context. In a letter to Atticus, Cicero describes coming across one P. Vedius in transit, together with his conspicuous train of vehicles:

> *haec ego ex P. Vedio, magno nebulone sed Pompei tamen familiari, audivi. hic Vedius mihi obviam venit cum duobus essedis et raeda equis iuncta et lectica et familia magna pro qua, si Curio legem pertulerit, HS centenos pendat necesse est. erat praeterea cynocephalus in essedo nec deerant onagri. numquam vidi hominem nequiorem.*
>
> I heard this news from P. Vedius, a real lowlife, but a friend of Pompey. I met him on the road with two *esseda*, a horse-drawn *raeda*, a *lectica*, and a huge entourage. If Curio passes his law, he will have to pay one hundred sesterces for each of them. There was also a dog-faced baboon in one of the *esseda*, along with some wild asses. I've never seen a more worthless man.[344]

We have already seen how parading around an excess of conveyances, especially lavish ones, occupied a special role in Roman moralizing discourse, and this is a flagrant example of how such displays could figure into detailed descriptions by outraged—and morbidly curious—observers. With that backdrop in mind, it was easy to read the *esseda* that make up part of Vedius' train here as provocative mainly as items in an inappropriately long list. But now that we have begun to explore the connotations of this exotic import more precisely (as we did with the

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[342] Caesar describes the landing at *BG* 4.25. Cicero voices to his brother Quintus (*ad Quint fr.* 2.16.4) his fear concerning the expedition: *timebam oceanum, timebam litus insulae*.

[343] The other possibility is of course that *essedarii* have by this date already been adopted for gladiatorial use and Cicero's joke is instead based on a double-entendre, *essedarius* meaning *already* both "British charioteer" and "gladiator who fights from an *essedum*." But given that Caesar's description of his encounter with actual British charioteers, and Cicero's references to them here, are the earliest attestations of the word, it seems more likely that some of the charioteers were subsequently put to use as gladiators and *essedarius* then acquired its secondary meaning. Servius' note to *Georgics* 3.204 names Caesar as a *testis* for the Gallic/British *essedum*, which may mean "eyewitness": *'esseda' autem vehiculi vel currus genus, quo soliti sunt pugnare Galli: Caesar testis est libro ad Ciceronem III: multa milia equitum atque essedariorum habet. hinc et gladiators essedarii dicuntur, qui curru certant.*

[344] *Att.* 6.1.25. It is possible that the clause, *erat praeterea cynocephalus in essedo*, actually refers to a third *essedum*, for the baboon as sole passenger!

lectica in the previous chapter), its significance as a particular source of outrage has become clearer. With Caesar's Gallic campaign only just completed, the *essedum* must still have been a relatively uncommon sight on Roman streets, and for a scoundrel (*magnus nebulo*, in Cicero's words) such as Vedius to have two—or even three, one of which bears a rare ape—for country jaunts would surely have raised eyebrows. As a friend of Pompey, Vedius most likely would not have served under Caesar in Gaul, and laying claim to such a symbolically laden vehicle for personal amusement may have been fairly transgressive. Cicero's prophetic gestures at appropriation (because merely linguistic) that we have already examined have by now been transformed into actual practice.

By the time of Cicero's second *Philippic* (Nov. 44 BCE), the *essedum* seems to have become a well-established symbol of inappropriate vehicle use. The orator's outburst at Antony's employment of the *essedum* (in 49, during Caesar's absence in Spain) for travel around Italy can be invoked as a devastating detail without further explanation: *vehebatur in essedo tribunus plebis; lictores laureati antecedebant*.[345] Cicero has highlighted the ambiguity in Antony's status, as plebeian tribune with *imperium* (*tribunus plebis pro praetore*) imparted to him by Caesar, but has emphasized his more limited position. Tribunes were not permitted the use of lictors and could not be outside of Rome overnight, but his propraetorian *imperium* did grant him these privileges.[346] Given that his lictors—and their *fasces*—have been covered with laurels, most likely in recognition of Caesar's Gallic successes, it is probable that the *essedum* may have functioned as a further nod to his commander's pacification of northern barbarians, a process in which Antony had taken part as an officer. There is then a possibly awkward usurpation of the trappings of a triumphal procession, since an *essedum* is after all itself a foreign form of *currus*.[347] At the same time, according to Cicero's representation, to make use of it for dubious roaming across Italy should be immediately problematic. Antony's attempt to appear in some sense "triumphal," Cicero implies, must be read instead as dangerous and self-indulgent dabbling with triumphs.

This theme of the *essedum*'s repurposing—from wild, dangerous, and primitive "tank" (*carro armato*, *char de combat*, *Panzerkampfwagen*) in need of subjection by Roman manpower, to luxuriant vehicle of choice for pleasure driving by urbane fops and/or wastrels—recurs in Propertius' postmortem vision of intercity transit, at the end of his programmatic poem 2.1. In a roughly contemporary work, Vergil's *Georgics*, brief gestures at the vehicle's origins remain,

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[345] 2.58. The rest of Cicero's elaborate enumeration of the items, both vehicular and human, in Antony's sordid entourage have been discussed above.

[346] Lictors: Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 81; leaving Rome overnight: Gell. 13.12.9. Cicero depicts Caesar's handing over of Italy to Antony rather vividly, and envisages him aimlessly trampling—with his caravan, of course—throughout the country (2.57): *in eodem vero tribunatu, cum Caesar in Hispaniam proficiscens huic conculcandam Italiam tradidisset, quae fuit eius peragratio itinerum, lustratio municipiorum!* The contrast between Caesar's direct, purposeful travel and Antony's lengthy, pointless wandering undergirds Cicero's portrait.

[347] *Esseda* could themselves be paraded in triumph (lesser barbarian chariots drawn before the *triumphator*'s dominant *currus*), as Horace's image of overblown stage productions of such *pompae* shows:
Quattuor aut pluris aulaea premuntur in horas
dum fugiunt equitum turmae peditumque cateruae;
mox trahitur manibus regum fortuna retortis,
esseda festinant, pilenta, petorrita, naues,
captiuum portatur ebur, captiua Corinthus. (*Epist.* 2.1.189-93)
This passage should be read together with Porphyrio's over-tidy schema for the roles of captive vehicles in triumphs (*ad loc.*): ***esseda*** *s(unt) Gallorum uehicula, quibus tamquam uicti reges uehuntur;* ***pilenta,*** *quibus regina capta;* <***pe***>***torrita,*** *qu<ibus> familiae regum;* ***naves,*** *quibus hi, qui nauali bello uicti.*

and the *essedum* can still function as a sign of vaguely northern wildness, suitable for only certain varieties of extremely spirited racehorse:

> *hic uel ad Elei metas et maxima campi*
> *sudabit spatia et spumas aget ore cruentas,*
> *Belgica uel molli melius feret esseda collo.*
>
> This horse will either sweat towards the turning-posts of Elis and the great laps of the plain, and shed from its mouth bloody foam, or will bear better with its pliant neck the Belgian *essedum*.[348]

But it is significant that the vehicle's ethnographic marker has shifted to "Belgian," a detail which is more likely connotative of northern Gallic tribes, rather than a pointed reference to the vehicle's inventors (as Servius claims).[349] Nevertheless, these explicitly "ethnographic" uses quickly disappear, and Propertius' poem carries on where Cicero's tirade against Antony and Vedius had left off. In the concluding lines of his 2.1, he transports Maecenas (and the reader) into the future, after the poet's death. He asks his patron, if by chance passing by Propertius' grave in his *essedum*, to pay his respects:

> *quandocumque igitur vitam mea fata reposcent,*
> *et breve in exiguo marmore nomen ero,*
> *Maecenas, nostrae spes invidiosa iuventae,*
> *et vitae et morti gloria iusta meae,*
> *si te forte meo ducet via proxima busto,*
> *esseda caelatis siste Britanna iugis,*
> *taliaque illacrimans mutae iace verba favillae:*
> *'Huic misero fatum dura puella fuit.'*
>
> Therefore, when fate demands back my life, and I shall be a brief name on small marble, then, Maecenas, envied hope of Roman youth, true source of glory for me in life and death, if your path happens to take you near my tomb, stop your British *essedum* with its engraved harness, and, shedding tears, say these words to my mute ashes: "A harsh girl was the death of this poor one."[350]

The vehicle's metapoetic potential is now firmly harnessed, especially in the context of the poem's *recusatio*, addressed directly to Maecenas. Propertius refuses to write about the traditional military subjects of epic—which he will replace with songs of his own bedroom sagas (*nos contra angusto versamus proelia lecto*, 45, and *seu nuda erepto mecum luctatur amictu,* /

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[348] 3.202-4. Silius Italicus reworks the line in his description of Astyrian (Celtiberian) horses, which offer a smooth ride, even when swiftly drawing a "peacetime" *essedum* (*Pun.* 3.335-7): *his* [sc. *Asturibus*] *parvus sonipes nec Marti natus, at idem* / *aut inconcusso glomerat vestigia dorso,* / *aut molli pacata celer rapit esseda collo*.

[349] Servius' note *ad loc.*: ***belgica esseda*** *Gallicana vehicula: nam Belgi civitas est Galliae, in qua huius vehiculi repertus est usus. et aliter: 'Belgica' Gallica. 'esseda' autem vehiculi vel currus genus, quo soliti sunt pugnare Galli: Caesar testis est libro ad Ciceronem* ***iii*** *"multa milia equitum atque essedariorum habet." hinc et gladiatores essedarii dicuntur, qui curru certant. 'molli' autem mobili dixit, ut "oscilla ex alta suspendunt mollia pinu."* ***molli collo*** *domito, ut "et mollia colla reflectunt."*

[350] 2.1.71-8. The text quoted here is that of Heyworth (2007). Cf. Hubbard (1974), 102.

tum vero longas condimus Iliadas, 13-4)—and has declared his inability to compose well-worn portraits of triumphal processions (31-4) without weaving Maecenas into them as well, a man who straddles the spheres of both war and peace (*te mea Musa illis semper contexeret armis* / *et sumpta et posita pace fidele caput*, 35-6).[351] The closing image of Maecenas riding around in a British *essedum*, a potent symbol of Rome's imperial conquest and related prosperity, represents a playful (and apparently deflating) invocation of the conventional terms of triumph poetry: instead of a more straightforward panegyric poem celebrating, say, Caesar's victories, we are given a portrait of Maecenas riding about in a vehicle that may (still) more appropriately belong among the train of captives in a triumphal procession. The fact that it is not just a British *essedum*, but a modified and lavishly decorated one (*caelatis…iugis*) seems to affirm—although not without irony—that *this*, and not the well-worn image of the triumphal chariot, or even the racing *quadrigae*, is a more fitting metapoetic symbol for Propertius' love elegy.[352]

As if to highlight the vehicle's leisure function, while raising previously unforeseen problems resulting from that function, Propertius' only other mention of the *essedum* appears in his indignant, but resigned, account of Cynthia's outings away from Rome and throughout Latium:

> *nam quid Praenesti dubias, o Cynthia, sortes,*
> *quid petis Aeaei moenia Telegoni?*
> *cur ita te Herculeum deportant esseda Tibur?*
> *Appia cur totiens te via Lanuvium?*
>
> Why, Cynthia, do you seek doubtful oracles at Praeneste, why make for the walls of Aeaean Telegonus? Why so often do you ride in an *essedum* to Herculean Tibur, why so often along the Appian Way to Lanuvium? [353]

Why can't Cynthia stay in Rome when she has spare time (*hoc utinam spatiere loco, quodcumque vacabis,* / *Cynthia!* 32.7-8)? There is plenty of sightseeing to be done in Rome. After all, the portico of the temple of Palatine Apollo has just been opened (31.1-16). Instead, she rides to Aricia (32.10), Praeneste, Tibur, and Lanuvium, allegedly for religious or touristic reasons, but Propertius knows better: "You're mistaken: these trips of yours point to a theft of my love; it's not the city you're fleeing, you crazy woman, but my eyes" (*falleris: ista tui furtum via monstrat amoris;* / *non urbem, demens, lumina nostra fugis*, 32.17-8). There's no need for hazy oracle consultations (*dubias…sortes*) at Praeneste, since Propertius can already divine what

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[351] Triumphs: *nam quotiens…aut canerem Aegyptum et Nilum, cum attractus in urbem* / *septem captivis debilis ibat aquis*, / *aut regum auratis circumdata colla catenis,* / *Actiaque in Sacra currere rostra Via;* (27-34). And if Housman's transposition of 3.9.33-4 (*Caesaris et famae vestigia iuncta tenebis: Maecenatis erunt vera tropaea fides.*) is correct, we would then have Maecenas himself pictured within that triumphal procession, marching in step with Caesar.

[352] It is true that 3.1 takes up the familiar chariot of song as its metapoetic emblem (8-14), but this seems to correspond to a programmatic realignment of elegy's aesthetic concerns (even if the ensuing book does not exactly deliver on this promise). Moreover, Propertius' *currus* image is a bizarrely self-conscious hybrid, which sets out as a triumphal car, but soon morphs into a kind of circus chariot race among poets.

[353] 2.32(31+32).3-6. Cf. Heyworth (2009) *ad loc*. It should be noted that in line 5, N actually reads *deportantes sed abitur*. *Deportare* is a slightly odd verb to describe riding in an *essedum*, instead of, say, a *sella* (possible for a shorter trip such as that to Tibur). If Propertius' did not in fact picture Cynthia riding in an *essedum* here (she drives a boyfriend's *carpentum* in 4.8), then Ovid's (longed for) visit by his mistress to Sulmo would be the sole instance of a woman in an *essedum* in Latin literature. See below.

is going on. Cynthia's conveyance is a quick one (*esseda* is presumably poetic plural), and manages to cover a lot of ground fast. The risky, freewheeling chariot of the Britons, adapted for comfortable travel, has granted this Roman woman a great deal of freedom, which, for all his protestations, Propertius ends his poem by claiming to accept (*semper vive meo libera iudicio*, 32.62).[354]

Ovid then flips this image of the roving, mistress-driven *essedum*, in *Amores* 2.16, when he *begs* his girlfriend to leave Rome and ride down to his hometown of Sulmo, where he is staying:

> *siqua mei tamen est in te pia cura relicti,*
> *incipe pollicitis addere facta tuis,*
> *parvaque quamprimum rapientibus esseda mannis*
> *ipsa per admissas concute lora iubas.*
> *at vos, qua veniet, tumidi, subsidite, montes,*
> *et faciles curvis vallibus este, viae.*
>
> But if you have any loyal concern for me, abandoned as I am, begin to reinforce your promises with action, and as soon as possible, your ponies racing your little *essedum* onwards, shake the reins yourself amidst their flowing manes! But you, puffed up mountains, sink down wherever she goes, and be yielding in the winding valleys, roads.[355]

The poem toys with notions of distance, travel, and physical separation—all familiar pretexts for elegiac rumination—but the main joke here seems to be that it is absurd for Ovid to expect his mistress to make the long journey down to the Paelignian countryside, alone at the reins. This is especially true since in *Amores* 2.11, he had attempted to *dissuade* Corinna from undertaking a voyage for a very similar catalogue of reasons. Moreover, despite his dramatic claims earlier in poem 16 that he would easily and fearlessly travel the world over (Alps, 19; Libyan Syrtes, 21; Malea, 24; Scylla and Charybdis, 25-6, etc.) so long as his mistress is with him (*cum domina*), he makes no gesture at an offer to travel back to Rome from Sulmo to meet *her*. For this reason, by another playful inversion, the *locus amoenus* that is his Sulmo (1-10, 33-6) has turned into the remotest wilderness: Scythia, Cilicia, Britain, and the Caucasus (39-40). Surely this can only hurt his case. Then, because he claims she has sworn always to be his (*at mihi te comitem iuraras usque futuram*, 43) and isn't now with him in Sulmo, he decides she is—all girls are—fickle, their words lighter than falling leaves. But, he'll apparently look past this flightiness if she has an ounce of devoted concern (*pia cura*) and will begin to do what she has (supposedly) promised. The celerity of the *essedum* must be part of its function in the passage. As a modified chariot, it does seem to have been already built for speed, and being equipped with most likely Gallic ponies, famous for being quick and expensive. (*rapientibus…mannis*).[356] More shockingly, she is to seize the reins herself behind the ponies' flowing manes, and fly along through the countryside, which, Ovid urges, will sympathetically

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[354] For a more developed depiction of Cynthia's independent mobility, see 4.8 and the discussion of her use of a *carpentum*, below. She travels to Baiae in 1.11, and out of Rome into the country in 2.19.
[355] *Am.* 2.16.47-52
[356] Cf. Lucr. 3.1063 (*currit agens mannos ad villam praecipitanter*). Propertius 4.8.15 (*detonsis…mannis*), an important intertext for the Ovidian passage. Cynthia's driving the *carpentum* there is discussed below.

give way, becoming flatter and straighter. In this tossed-off pathetic fallacy, there also is a whimsical nod to the *adynaton* discourse of oath-swearing, whimsical because usually this sort of image works in the other direction: "I will sooner be untrue to you than dolphins will swim in trees, rivers will turn around, mountains will subside, winding valleys will straighten, and girlfriends will drive chariots across Italy!" The closing entreaty thus subtly underscores the impossibility of Ovid's mistress actually making the trip.

In an important intertext for this passage, Propertius 4.8 envisages Cynthia in a similarly shocking position, at the reins of her depilated, spendthrift companion's *carpentum* (*sed vaga iam taceo vulsi carpenta nepotis*, 23), on her way to Lanuvium (*huc*), supposedly to celebrate the fertility ritual there, but apparently in order to cheat on Propertius:

> *huc mea detonsis avectast Cynthia mannis:*
> *causa fuit Iuno; sed mage causa Venus.*
> *Appia, dic, quaeso quantum te teste triumphum*
> *egerit effusis per tua saxa rotis*.
> *spectaclum ipsa, sedens primo temone pependit*
> *ausa per impuros frena movere iocos.*
>
> Hither my Cynthia drove off, drawn by mane-less ponies: allegedly for Juno's sake, but rather for Venus'. Tell please, O Appian Way, what triumphal procession you witnessed as she drove over your paving stones at full speed! A sight to see, she herself leaned forward, sitting at the end of the pole, daring to ply the reins amidst bawdy jokes.[357]

Propertius' *huc* is somewhat jarring ("here" is not his Rome, but refers to Lanuvium), especially followed by *avectast*, but is clearly in dialogue with Ovid's request that his mistress come "hither" from Rome to his Sulmo. And as in Ovid's poem, there is a similar personification and apostrophe of aspects of landscape, in this case specified as the *via Appia*. Both vehicles are drawn by ponies (*mannis*, in the same metrical *sedes*), and their flowing manes in Ovid's version (*per admissas…iubas*) recall Propertius' whirling wheels (*effusis…rotis*). Each woman is driving *personally* (*ipsa*), though Ovid has commanded his mistress to shake the reins (*ipsa…concute lora*), while Propertius' Cynthia has already dared to do so *ipsa…ausa…frena movere*). The main difference between the two passages seems to be that, while both images represent the fairly transgressive act of women at the reins of a vehicle, it is even more unthinkable and shocking for a young woman to drive an *essedum* through the Italian countryside than a *carpentum*.

The *essedum*'s role as potential facilitator of leisured travel, as well as an aid to personal contact, is further clarified in an exile poem of Ovid (*Ep. ex Ponto* 2.10), addressed to Macer, in which he escapes the monotonous motionlessness of life in exile by reliving the touring he did with his friend. There are echoes of *Amores* 2.16 here, specifically in the notion that the trials and length of travel can evaporate when undertaken with a companion, but this time there is a more accentuated reality effect: instead of braving mythical journey-obstacles such as Scylla and Charibdis *cum domina* or reaching far-off Scythia, on his trip with Macer, the long miles (to rather closer destinations) flew by, or were shortened, by friendly chat. He has just finished a summary of part of their itinerary, which included Asia and Sicily, ending with Ortygia (28):

[357] 4.8.15-18, 21-2.

hic mihi labentis pars anni magna peracta est.
eheu, quam dispar est locus ille Getis!
et quota pars haec sunt rerum, quas vidimus ambo,
te mihi iucundas efficiente vias,
seu rate caeruleas picta sulcavimus undas,
esseda nos agili sive tulere rota!
saepe brevis nobis vicibus via visa loquendi
pluraque, si numeres, verba fuere gradu.

There I passed the greater part of a gliding year. Alas, compared to it, how this land of the Getae is poles apart! And that much was only a part of what we saw together, as you made the road rise to meet me, whether we cleaved the blue waves with painted bark, or an *essedum* bore us along with quick wheel. Often, the journey seemed brief to us with our changing talk, and, if you counted them up, there were more words than steps.[358]

It is clear that by this point, the *essedum* has developed into something entirely different from its roots as a British war chariot. It is now a more generic vehicle, though still a fast one, that can stand in for open-ended, wandering travel as relaxation.

Martial's uses of the vehicle help to confirm this function. Poem 4.64, on his *iugera pauca* with a view of the city, includes a glimpse of a traveller in an *essedum* making his way along the Flaminian or Salarian way: *illinc Flaminiae Salariaeque* / *gestator patet essedo tacente* / *ne blando rota sit molesta somno* (4.64.18-20). The speaker can see the *essedum* but cannot hear it, and thus gets a good night's sleep, unlike the less fortunate city-dwellers of Juvenal 3 or Martial's own 12.57, who are tormented by the screeching wheels of vehicles in the early hours. His epigram 10.104, concluding the book, is a *propempticon*, sending off his collection to Spain with a friend Flavus. After sailing to Tarraco, they will take *esseda* to Bilbilis and Salo: *illinc te rota tollet et citatus* / *altam Bilbilin et tuum Salonem* / *quinto forsitan essedo videbis* (10.104.5-7). The *essedum* is by now used as a kind of stage coach (*quinto…essedo*), though still a quick one (*citatus*). In 12.24, a poem in praise of his *covinnus*, a gift from his friend Aelianus, that conveyance is favorably compared to an *essedum* (and a *carruca*), because it offers more privacy than they do: *O iucunda, covinne, solitudo* / *carruca magis essedoque gratum* / *facundi mihi munus Aeliani*! (12.24.1-3). The last menion of an *essedum* comes in Poem 12.57, which is a half-serious defense of Martial's habit of embarking on holiday retreats to his country home. This is justified, the poem argues, because unlike its addressee, Sparsus, who has an extensive villa in the midst of the city (*rus in urbe*, 21), most residents, Martial included, cannot even get to sleep at night on account of the urban racket. Sparsus' inner-city palace even includes a spacious hippodrome for a gentle *essedum*-ride: *intraque limen latus essedo cursus* (12.57.23). The paradox *intra…limen latus* makes clear that even if the *essedum* has here been entirely domesticated, an indoor chariot ride is still a marvel.

But the *essedum* did occasionally revert to its original identity, as the token combat vehicle of northern barbarians, in the middle first century CE. Persius lists it among enumerated items that are being prepared for Caligula's planned triumph commemorating his German expedition. According to Suetonius (*Cal*. 43-9), the procession was intended to be more lavish

[358] *Ep. ex Ponto* 2.10.29-36.

than any before it, but would be prepared at the lowest cost (since the emperor owned everyone's property). After changing his mind, Caligula became outraged at the senate for not proceeding with the triumph (after he had order them not to carry it out), and entered the city by *ovatio* instead. The sham, cobbled-together character of the intended triumph is captured Persius' satire 6:

> *o bone, num ignoras? missa est a Caesare laurus*
> *insignem ob cladem Germanae pubis et aris*
> *frigidus excutitur cinis ac iam postibus arma,*
> *iam chlamydas regum, iam lutea gausapa captis*
> *essedaque ingentesque locat Caesonia Rhenos.*
>
> Don't you know, my good man? A laurel has been sent from Caesar because of his outstanding slaughter of German manhood. The cold ashes are being brushed out of the altars and Caesonia is already contracting weapons for doorposts, kings' cloaks, yellow cloth for the captives, *esseda*, and gigantic paintings of the Rhine.[359]

While obviously still a symbol of British/Gallic/German combat, the *essedum* is nevertheless put to use in Persius' passage as one counterfeit marker among many. The *clades Germanae pubis* is a grim overstatement, smirking at the minimal military gains the ceremony is intended to celebrate; the altars are cold perhaps because of an longstanding absence of concrete conquering; *Caesonia* is in charge of the planning, not the emperor; the plural *ingentes…Rhenos* pokes fun at the concept of subduing Germany decisively, once and for all; and *locat* probably hints at the cost-cutting measures of Caligula's planners, who had to hire out all the trappings, a situation that also implies that all this gear was available for hire whenever a last-minute *pompa* had to be thrown together. In Persius' iconoclastic snapshot, Caligula (or perhaps Nero too? Rome, in general, these days?) is only worth a Rent-a-Triumph. And *esseda* are now a dime a dozen, the empty, rusted-out chassis of conquests past.

A final chapter in the development of the *essedum* has commenced, and while vestiges of its beginnings as a British war vehicle remain, its primary connotation shifts to excessive, pompous luxury, although its associations with Gaul and Germany linger. The Elder Pliny, always keen to pinpoint seminal moments in the progress of immorality, actually locates the early stages of silver plating in the decoration of *esseda* (as well as *colisata* and *petorita*), an invention which he attributes to the Bituriges, and practiced in Alesia. After plating silver items for horses, beasts of burden, and yokes, they turned to vehicles themselves:

> *coepere deinde et esseda sua colisataque et pertorita exornare simili modo, quae iam luxuria ad aurea quoque, non modo argentea, staticula pervenit, quaeque in scyphis cerni prodigum erat, haec in vehiculis adteri cultus vocatur.*
>
> They then began adorn their *esseda*, *colisata*, and *pertorita* in a similar way, and this luxury has now been extended to gold, and not just silver, standing platforms

[359] 6.43-7.

(?), and what used to be a marvel to behold on cups, is called "refinement"—being trod on and worn away on vehicles.[360]

Most likely underlying this miniature history of Gallic silver plating by Pliny is a moral narrative familiar to ancient ethnography (and glimpsed in Caesar's account of the Gaul and Germans in *de Bello Gallico* 6), that luxury is infectious. First lead, then silver, and then gold. And once applied to special, precious objects, sumptuous adornment can spread, being applied to even the most humdrum of utensils—even vehicles. Though his object of reference is specifically Alesia, and the Bituriges (*sua*), this critical account of lavish vehicular decoration must have been taken to refer to the expensive conveyances, *esseda* among them, equipped by the emperors.

In fact, by the time of Suetonius, the *essedum* has become yet another prop with which to dramatize the quirks and excesses of imperial power. In this regard, Augustus is largely a foil against which subsequent emperors are degenerations, and the only appearance of the *essedum* in his *Life* is a quoted anecdote attesting to his parsimonious eating habits (76): *verba ipsius ex epistulis sunt*: *'nos in essedo panem et palmulas gustavimus.'* This seems innocent enough. But Caligula and Claudius form the pair who have the most to do with the extravagant chariot. Caligula rode back and forth across his quixotic "Hellespont," first on an ornamented horse, then in a chariot (*curriculo…biiugi*), with a train of friends following behind in *esseda*. This is clearly a sign of hierarchy, even if extraordinarily simple—Caligula on top, everyone else below—and even if his insignia of power rather muddle the roles of *agitator* and *triumphator*.[361] This vehicular power dynamic is later shifted down a notch, when his disdain for the senate is demonstrated by his having them run alongside *his own essedum* in togas for several miles.[362] He takes to riding in an *essedum* when on campaign in Germany, perhaps as part of his technique of making many threats (*minacissimus*), or else as a nod to former conquerors of northern tribes. But while driving through a narrow gorge he is told that the soldiers will panic if the enemy were to appear; he immediately jumps on a horse and rides off. Upon reaching crowded bridges, he is carried over the men's heads, almost as if in a *lectica*. The implication here seems to be that he is not enough of a general to master and control even *symbolic* trappings of war.[363]

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[360] *N.H.* 34.163

[361] 19.2: *per hunc pontem ultro citro commeavit biduo continenti, primo die phalerato equo insignisque quercea corona et caetra et gladio aureaque chlamyde, postridie quadrigato habitu curriculoque biiugi famosorum equorum, prae se ferens Dareum puerum ex Parthorum obsidibus, comitante praetorianorum agmine et in essedis cohorte amicorum*

[362] 26.2: *nihilo reverentior leniorve erga senatum, quosdam summis honoribus functos ad essedum sibi currere togatos per aliquot passuum milia*. Interestingly, Galba, we are told in Suetonius' *Life* of the latter (6.3), runs beside Caligula's *essedum* for 20 miles, all the while directing military exercises. The words used are *decursio* and *cucurrit*, which must play on *currus*: Galba runs although worthy of a *currus*, while Caligula rides an imitation *currus*, because he does not deserve to ride in a real one. It is true that Galba himself is depicted as riding in an *essedum* when emperor, though it is associated with one of many bad omens accompanying the beginning of his reign: a bull, driven mad by the sacrificial axe, charges it, and covers him in blood (18.2). Caligula's use of an *essedum* around town may have in part been related to his desire to challenge the popularity of celebrity gladiators. He is outraged when the people applaud an *essedarius* Porius for freeing his slave and trips on his own toga, falling down the stairs and cursing (35.3): *cum quodam die muneris essedario Porio post prosperam pugnam servum suum manumittenti studiosius plausum esset, ita proripuit se spectaculis, ut calcata lacinia togae praeceps per gradus iret, indignabundus et clamitans dominum gentium populum ex re levissima plus honoris gladiatori tribuentem quam consecratis principibus aut praesenti sibi.*

[363] 51.2: *adversus barbaros quoque minacissimus, cum trans Rhenum inter angustias densumque agmen iter essedo faceret, dicente quodam non mediocrem fore consternationem sicunde hostis appareat, equum ilico conscendit ac*

Claudius' relationship with the *essedum* is also problematic, if more nuanced. As a show of his intolerance of excess luxury while censor, he orders a silver *essedum* chopped to pieces in public.[364] In contrast to Caligula's hostility towards *essedarii*, Claudius' fondness for the gladiatorial shows includes granting discharge to an *essedarius* in response to his sons' entreaties. That Claudius functions as the inverse of Caligula in this respect is shown further by the fact that his gesture receives much approval among the people. His rather playful reply is to urge the public to have children, since they can help and protect even gladiators.[365] Finally, in reference to his well-known love of gambling, Claudius is said, in addition to writing a treatise on the subject, to have had his *essedum* specially equipped so that he could keep gaming while in transit.[366] A symbol of one of Rome's most formidable military feats, the conquest of Gaul, and of one of its most imposing commanders, Julius Caesar, has ended up being rebuilt as a bumbling autocrat's plaything.

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propere reversus ad pontes, ut eos calonibus et impedimentis stipatos repperit, impatiens morae per manus ac super capita hominum translatus est.

[364] 16.4: *fuerunt et illa in censura eius notabilia, quod essedum argenteum sumptuose fabricatum ac venale ad Sigillaria redimi concidique coram imperavit*

[365] 21.5: *illud plane quantumvis salubriter et in tempore: cum essedario, pro quo quattuor fili deprecabantur, magno omnium favore indulsisset rudem, tabulam ilico misit admonens populum, quanto opere liberos suscipere deberet, quos videret et gladiatori praesidio gratiaeque esse.*

[366] 33.2: *aleam studiosissime lusit, de cuius arte librum quoque emisit, solitus etiam in gestatione ludere, ita essedo alveoque adaptatis ne lusus confunderetur.*

Chapter Three: *Carpentum*

What do Roman women drive? Or rather, *do* they drive—or ride—at all? Except for some brief glimpses of litter-bound ladies and a handful of goddess-piloted chariots, Latin literature scarcely images women at the reins, or even brought along for the ride. Indeed, this apparent *immobility* is striking, especially given that Roman women no doubt did actually circulate in vehicles on Roman roads. Modern accounts have stressed the relative independence and freedom of (affluent) Roman women, in dramatic contrast to, say, fifth-century Athenian society, in which wives and daughters were supposedly locked away in their husbands' and fathers' houses. Female passengers do sneak in to Latin literary accounts of transit on occasion, but what representations of Roman women travelling by carriage we do have make clear that driving, or being driven, was certainly a gendered activity. The very fact that in the majority of instances of transit, women appear as "extras"—whether part of the family effects (e.g., Cicero's account of Milo) or as assorted hangers-on of dubious morality (think of Antony's litter train)—should confirm that, with regards to envisioning and articulating transport, Roman culture does not seem to relish contemplating women on the move. On the contrary, this chapter will propose that the Roman culture of gendered mobility be thought of as more similar to contemporary Saudi automobile discourse than previous scholarship has allowed.

But riding women were not always passed over in awkward (relative) silence: the centerpiece of this chapter will be the one conveyance that was explicitly granted for use by women, the *carpentum*. An impossible vehicle, the *carpentum* officially licenses women to drive while simultaneously facilitating their reckless misbehavior. A privilege accessible to only the most prominent of Roman women, that privilege is almost never *not* abused dramatically. This is, according to Roman literature, the irresolvable dilemma posed by the idea of mobile women. Accordingly, when men climb aboard the *carpentum*, as literary texts sometimes have them doing, the *carpentum* becomes instead an infamous space for them to parade their effeminacy conspicuously, rather as the *lectica* does, but without the bootleg illegitimacy that that vehicle symbolizes. The *carpentum*, by contrast, is ancient and sanctioned, repeatedly appearing in official contexts and often represented on coinage. Thus: a state-sponsored product, specially built for looking at (as the *currus*), which neither women nor men can really ever drive with innocence. If, as we have already seen, Roman culture constantly holds vehicular transport at arm's length—as if anxious about both the excessive power it can accord drivers and the softening vulnerability it brings about in its passengers—then the *carpentum*, the female vehicle par excellence, will effect even greater discomfort in the eyes of Roman viewers. For women in *carpenta* are either too dominant and threatening (too unlike women) or too soft and luxurious (too much themselves). Or else, often, they are somehow both of these things at once.

1. Tullia's triumph

"And she'll have fun fun fun till her daddy takes the T-Bird away."[367]

There is one particular *carpentum*, that of King Servius Tullius' daughter Tullia, which overtakes the others as the single most infamous and spectacular and, I suggest, should be read as paradigmatic of the vehicle's function in general. Indeed, it is likely that, with the possible

[367] The Beach Boys, "Fun, Fun, Fun" (Capitol, 1964). The chorus later becomes, "And we'll have fun fun fun now that daddy took the T-Bird away," because she will now have to ride in the male speaker's own T-Bird.

exception of several individual triumphal chariots, Tullia's *carpentum* has a unique position as the most famous individual vehicle in Roman culture. This startling assertion requires clarification. Tullia's *carpentum* should be distinguished from "literary" conveyances—(the implied *lectica* of Catullus 8 or Trimalchio's very explicit one) or the "generic" vehicles of divinities (Cybele's lion-drawn chariot in Lucretius or Ericthonius' chariot in Virgil's *Georgics*).[368] Tullia's *carpentum* was, by contrast, "real" enough to have an actual street named after its fateful career. Certainly streets making up part of the triumphal procession would have been identified as such (though not as their ordinary name), but given the iterative nature of the *triumphus*, a distinction is worth being made: the "accidental," one-off nature of Tullia's *carpentum* is central to its outstanding infamy. But more important than its notoriety is its special function: this carriage is repeatedly presented as an original, negative *exemplum*, one which constructs a normalizing portrait of a cultural world by enacting a transgression of its bounds.[369] But what cultural entities, and what boundaries, are being represented by it? Since relatively little has been written about the Tullia episode directly, many questions remain. In the ensuing discussion of the numerous reinforcing retellings of this bloody ride, it will be important to take account of why it is that *this* vehicle, instead of any of the others, should occupy such a privileged position. That is, does this *carpentum*'s place in the limelight of Roman legend reveal more Roman anxieties surrounding women, or about Roman relationships with technologies of motion?

Livy's account is the most detailed and vivid, and will serve as the starting point for our examination of storie's various articulations. King Servius, after being flung down the steps of the curia by Tarquin, is murdered as he attempts to stagger home:

> *Creditur, quia non abhorret a cetero scelere, admonitu Tulliae id factum. carpento certe, id quod satis constat, in forum invecta, nec reverita coetum virorum, evocavit virum e curia regemque prima appellavit. a quo facessere iussa ex tanto tumultu, cum se domum reciperet pervenissetque ad summum Cyprium vicum, ubi Dianium nuper fuit, flectenti carpentum dextra in Urbium clivum ut in collem Esquiliarum eveheretur, restitit pavidus atque inhibuit frenos is qui iumenta agebat, iacentemque dominae Servium trucidatum ostendit. foedum inhumanumque inde traditur scelus, monumentumque locus est—Sceleratum vicum vocant—quo amens agitantibus furiis sororis ac viri, Tullia per patris corpus carpentum egisse fertur, partemque sanguinis ac caedis paternae cruento vehiculo, contaminata ipsa respersaque, tulisse ad penates suos virique sui, quibus iratis malo regni principio similes propediem exitus sequerentur.*
>
> It is believed, since it is not inconsistent with the rest of her wickedness, that the deed [the actual murder] was done at Tullia's urging. There is at any rate sufficient agreement that she rode in a *carpentum* and, undaunted (shameless?) in the presence of the crowd of men, summoned her husband from the curia and was

[368] *de Rerum Natura* 2.600-9; *Georgics* 3.114-5.

[369] This is not to say that "literary" vehicles are not "real" or "historical"—Gaius Cinna may very well have had a *lectica*—or that "historical" vehicles cannot be literary, only that Tullia's *carpentum* seems to have taken shape as a cultural paradigm not primarily or solely through literary texts. Livy's own *oratio obliqua* qualifications, together with the reported existence of an alley known as the *vicus sceleratus*, confirm the status of Tullia's *carpentum* as having a cultural status that transcends literature.

> the first to call him [Tarquin] king. He commanded her to depart from such mayhem. Returning home, she had reached the top of the Vicus Cyprius, where the temple of Diana recently stood, and was having her driver turn the *carpentum* to the right, onto the Clivus Urbius so that she could go to the Esquiline Hill, when the driver stopped, terrified, and pulling the reins, pointed out to his mistress the slaughtered Servius, lying in the road. It is here that tradition records a foul and inhuman crime, and the place is a monument to it—they call it Wicked Alley—where Tullia, insane and driven by the furies of her sister and husband, is said to have driven her *carpentum* over her father's body. She herself, stained and spattered, bore part of her slaughtered father's blood to her own and her husband's *penates*. As a result of their anger, the evil start to this reign was soon enough followed by a similar end.[370]

Livy's articulation of the episode meshes nicely with his broader trend of imagining the rise and fall of the Roman monarchy as a special reflex of Greek tragedy.[371] Indeed, he makes the point explicitly when beginning his account of Tullia's instigation of Tarquin: *tulit enim et Romana regia sceleris tragici exemplum, ut taedio regum maturior veniret libertas ultimumque regnum esset quod scelere partum foret* ("For the Roman palace too provided an *exemplum* of a crime belonging to tragedy, such that the loathing of kings would cause freedom to arrive more promptly, and the last rule of a king would be one born of crime, 1.46.3).[372] *Scelus* will be the watchword in his version.[373] It gives the narrative a thematic continuity (Tullia's actions represent a "tragic" transgression, which will inevitably be punished) and it anticipates the coming aetiology of the *vicus sceleratus*. It is the "alley where an exemplary *scelus* was committed." The story's well-established moral structure is attested also by the approach of Valerius Maximus, who patterns his brief version of the Tullia story in a similar way, employing a combination of sign-posted exemplarity and topographical aetiology. His account likewise culminates in a link between Tullia's *scelus* and the infamous *vicus*:

> *unde autem potius quam a Tullia ordiar, quia tempore vetustissimum, conscientia nefarium, voce monstri simile exemplum est? cum carpento veheretur et is, qui iumenta agebat, succussis frenis constitisset, repentinae morae causam requisivit, et ut comperit corpus patris Servii Tulli occisi ibi iacere, supra id duci vehiculum iussit, quo celerius in complexum interfectoris eius Tarquinii veniret. qua tam impia tamque probrosa festinatione non solum se aeterna infamia, sed etiam ipsum vicum cognomine sceleris conmaculavit.*
>
> Indeed where better to begin than with Tullia, since she stands as an *exemplum*, most ancient in history, vile in conscience, and like a monster in utterance? When she was riding in a *carpentum*, the mule-driver pulled back his reins and came to a stop. She demanded the reason for the sudden delay and, upon learning that the body of her slain

[370] *AUC* 1.48.5-7.
[371] Cf. Feldherr (1998), 191-3.
[372] The language of coming of age and giving birth (*maturior*, *partum foret*) is important and will be discussed below.
[373] Its recurrence is summed up pointedly by Livy, as he transitions from the crime-ridden backstory (Tullia and Tarquin's conspiracy to murder their spouses—also "Tullia" and "Tarquin"—in order to marry each other), to the central crime of the drama: *ab scelere ad aliud spectare mulier scelus* (47.1).

> father Servius Tullius lay there, ordered the vehicle to be driven over it, so that she might more quickly enter the embrace of his killer Tarquin. With this irreverent and shameful haste, she stained not only herself with everlasting infamy, but also the alley itself with the name of the wicked act.[374]

In his rushed telling, Valerius conveys the reckless speed of Tullia's ride. In a slight twist, she drives over her father's body "in order more quickly" (*quo celerius*) to embrace his killer Tarquin. Her "so irreverent and disgraceful haste" (*qua tam impia tamque probrosa festinatione*) is identified as the real cause of her eternal infamy (and the origin of the name of the alley). When her driver screetches to a halt, her impatience and desire for velocity is focalized in the phrase, *repentinae morae*. Speed, we have already seen, often has automatically tragic qualities, which are here latent. The double meaning in *conmaculavit*—she is both literally and figuratively stained with the blood of her father—confirms the tragic terms of Tullia's *scelus* in Valerius.

Scholars have attempted to tease out what substrate was already there for Livy to embellish upon, and comparison with Dionysius of Halicarnassus (4.28ff.) reveals that some tragic details were indeed special Livian touches.[375] But, as Ogilvie notes, the Tullia legend was already well known to Romans as, literally, a tragedy performed onstage: Accius and others had written *praetextae* on Tarquin.[376] Gellius, in a section on the usage of the verb *mutare,* "change," quotes Varro on the contrast between two illustrious kings' daughters, Greek and Roman: *inter duas filias regum quid mutet inter Antigonam et Tulliam est animadvertere*: "what a difference there is between two kings' daughters is to be seen in Antigone and Tullia."[377] In point of familial *pietas*, Varro seems to suggest, Tullia is a kind of anti-Antigone.[378]

It is certainly worth considering the significance of the tragic ingredients in Livy's Tullia episode, especially because a focus on such generic components represents a refreshing departure from a view of the Tullia story as "history," a reliable account of events as they transpired in seventh-century Rome. But it must remain an impossible task, *pace* Ogilvie, to strip off the secondary layers added by the historian in order to arrive at a central core of the legend.[379] Instead, I suggest that the presence of a "tragic" template in Livy's narration of Tullia's involvement in Tarquin's coup d'état signals two things. The first—a point that has already been made above—is that vehicles often have a tragic quality automatically built into them in Roman (and Greek) contexts. Put simply, ancient stories about vehicles often end very badly.[380] Thus, the Tullia story belongs to a broader category of tragic "road incident" narratives, as the proximity of

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[374] 9.11.1. Tullia comes first in his chapter on "terrible words and wicked deeds," after a short preface: *nunc, quatenus vitae humanae cum bona tum etiam mala substitutis exemplorum imaginibus persequimur, dicta improba et facta scelerata referantur*.

[375] For example, Livy follows what he terms "the majority of sources" (*pluribus…auctoribus*, 1.46.4) in designating Lucius Tarquinius as the son, and not the grandson, of Tarquinius Priscus. The choice renders Tarquin the Younger's takeover as more personally motivated and pressing.

[376] cf. Ogilvie's introductory remarks to Livy 1.46-8 in his commentary.

[377] *N.A.* 18.12.9

[378] Antigone's devotion to her father and the honor she pays to her brother's body (and for which she dies) stand in contrast to Tullia's plotting her sister's murder and her desecration of her father's corpse.

[379] Sometimes almost at odds with a central concern of the commentary—that of identifying and untangling Livy's sources—Ogilvie's sensitivity to the subtle details of the historian's "tragic" style is very elucidating.

[380] Phaethon, Hippolytus, Oedipus, Pelops (and Oenomaus), Myrtilus, Achilles and Hector, etc.

her fender-bender to a cult associated with Hippolytus-Virbius attests.[381] Secondly, the representation of Tullia's story through the modes of tragedy suggests that it may be productive to view it in symbolic terms. At play then must be an attempt by a culture—or elements within a culture—to act out linguistically and narratively its most deep-seated concerns.
For Roman culture, such articulations often take place through exemplarity, even if negative, as here.[382] We can glimpse two central imperatives of historiography—aetiology and exemplarity—coalesce in the origin stories of "Wicked Alley." Here the significance is accentuated by a contrasted doubling, present in Livy's as well as other ancient versions, of the speaking name, *vicus sceleratus*, with another, *vicus Cyprius*, which apparently meant "Good Alley" (*cyprum* meaning "good" in Sabine). A similar point is clarified by Varro's concise version of the episode, which is likewise framed and represented in spatial terms, between "good" and "bad" places in the city:

> *Vicus Cyprius a* cypro*, quod ibi Sabini cives additi consederunt, qui a bono omine id appellarunt: nam* cyprum *Sabine bonum. prope hunc Vicus Sceleratus, dictus a Tullia Tarquini Superbi uxore, quod ibi cum iaceret pater occisus, supra eum carpentum mulio ut inigeret iussit.*
>
> The *vicus Cyprius* ["Good Alley"] is from *cyprum*, because it was there that the Sabines who were added as citizens settled, and they named it after the good omen: for *cyprum* means "good" in Sabine. Near this is the *vicus sceleratus* ["Wicked Alley"], named after Tullia, the wife of Tarquin the Proud, because when her father was lying there struck down, she ordered the mule-driver to drive the *carpentum* over him.[383]

Tullia's devious turn from "good street" to "bad street" is thus reinforced and highlighted by the topography of the city, and by antiquarian accounts of that topography.[384]
But to return to Varro's earlier, (effectively) offhand remarks quoted above (*inter duas filias regum quid mutet inter Antigonam et Tulliam est animadvertere*), note that Tullia's role is encapsulated in the word *filia*: she is identified not as overbearing, power-hungry wife, or cruel sororicide, or daring co-regicide, but as powerful father's daughter and, by implication, as patricide. Just as we have seen that the *currus* frequently turns up to contest or reaffirm power relations between father and son, so, I suggest, one major function of the *carpentum* is to articulate the relationship between Roman fathers and daughters. This, it appears, is what the Tullia episode is *about*.

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[381] The cult of Diana Nemorensis at Aricia (where a street called the *clivus Virbi* led uphill to the temple) was associated with the worship of Virbius, an Italian god identified with the resurrected Hippolytus (cf. Serv. *ad Aen.* 7.761: *sed Diana Hippolytum, revocatum ab inferis, in Aricia nymphae commendavit Egeriae et eum Virbium quasi bis virum iussit vocari*). Diana's cult at Aricia apparently inspired a similar worship on the *Urbius clivus* (cf., *ubi Dianium nuper fuit*), a process that was helped by the similarly sounding names (*Urbius* probably has a separate, Etruscan origin). It has been suggested that the similarity of the two mythical stories—Hippolytus undone by ἅρμα/ἵπποι, Servius Tullius splattered by *carpentum*—helped provide a location for Tullia's hit and run. On the Clivus Virbi, cf. Juvenal 4.116 with Persius 6.56, and Martial 2.19 and 12.32.10.
[382] See Chaplin (200).
[383] *L.L.* 5.159. Ogilvie, on Livy 48.6, treats the Sabine origin as genuine.
[384] Cf. Bayet (1971). Within Varro's brief account, *omen* is clearly important in establishing the terms of the polarity, given that Tullia's carriage ride acts as a *malum omen* for the forthcoming reign of Tarquin.

In terms of vehicular discourse, how exactly is this relationship framed? Aside from Varro's hints towards a Roman interpretation of the Tullia story, there are several important details, some of which are clarified through recourse to parallel versions of the episode. First of all, it is important to note that Livy's account of the "Tullia" story—at least up until his death and the immediately subsequent carriage incident—is actually focalized through King Servius. That is, even if Tullia is the primary actor throughout the narrative, we are encouraged to identify with, and take pity on, Servius. When we are granted some access to how Tullia views her situation as, for example, in her speech rousing her husband (1.47.3-5), as impressive and commanding as her rhetoric may be, the effect is nonetheless to distance us from her perverse ambition. Certainly the drama of the episode partly results from the unsettling disjuncture between Tullia's powerful, manly activity and the horrifying results of her exertions. Her speech does contain moments of subtle slippage: Roman readers may perhaps be tempted, for a moment, to forget that the speaker is a daughter, one who is hell bent on having her own father brutally murdered, and not a courageous man, a Brutus figure.[385] Nevertheless, Livy's text asserts that the overarching, sympathetic perspective of the narrative is ultimately that of poor old Servius. For, underlying the entire episode is the rather simple assumption that, whatever the circumstances, surely no one deserves to be run over by a carriage, whether alive or dead. Even if Tullia controls the action, Servius, as sympathetic victim, becomes a poignant hero. And aside from his generally positive portrayal of Servius' reign, Livy concludes his account of the elderly king's life with the suggestion that he had actually hoped to give up the throne, "if an in-house crime had not interrupted his plans to liberate his country" (*ni scelus intestinum liberandae patriae consilia agitanti intervenisset*, 48.9).[386] Tullia's coup is thus all the more catastrophic in that it results in the felling of a quasi-founding father of the Roman republic—even though, that is, she has just engaged in what is perhaps the most ideologically patriotic of Roman activities: to kill a king.[387]

But in addition to Livy's portrayal of Tullia as non-subject usurper and of Servius as innocent victim of vehicular cruelty, there is the implicit suggestion that Tullia's role as wife poses a terrible threat to her identity as daughter. Or, put another way, although Livy certainly develops Tullia's role as overambitious, even uncontrollable, wife, it is really her transgression as daughter that is actual focus of the story, and not her tyrannical behavior as wife. We might even say that, troublingly, she is an excessively bad daughter *because* she is an excessively good

[385] More on this clash of voices, or disjuncture between form and content (if it can be called this), below.

[386] Or perhaps, for *scelus intestinum*, "an inside(s) job." Livy's summary coda is worth quoting in full: *Ser. Tullius regnavit annos quattuor et quadraginta ita ut bono etiam moderatoque succedenti regi difficilis aemulatio esset. ceterum id quoque ad gloriam accessit quod cum illo simul iusta ac legitima regna occiderunt. id ipsum tam mite ac tam moderatum imperium tamen, quia unius esset, deponere eum in animo habuisse quidam auctores sunt, ni scelus intestinum liberandae patriae consilia agitanti intervenisset* (48.8-9). It is hard not to detect in this recap a wistful, almost escapist comment on the politics of mid- to late-first-century BC Rome.

[387] It is also possible to see the violence of political upheaval—the bloody turmoil of the first century BCE, here reimagined by Livy as one of several prototypical civil clashes of the regal period—as displaced from its public, masculine context onto the private sphere of one semi-deranged daughter. Civil war is thus re-articulated as the fear of every Roman patriarch that his daughter will somehow uproot and destroy his patrimony by means of a usurping son-in-law. While Augustus' family-focused moral legislation, which cast a particularly paranoid and outraged light upon the evils of a non-reproducing nobility, was passed after the completion of Livy's first pentad (between 27 and 25 BCE; the *leges Iuliae* are dated to the early teens BCE), we can see them both as voicing a similar anxiety. After all, the Tullia narrative goes, the decadence targeted by the *leges Iuliae* is not fundamentally different from descendants trampling on the memory of their begetters.

wife (to the extent that she will stop at nothing to help further her husband's ambitions).[388] While she is certainly labeled as *uxor* and *mulier* in the narrative, these identifications function rather as a backdrop against which to accentuate her outrageous role as *filia*, the most crucial in the story.[389] In Brutus' (reported) invective against King Tarquin, her part in the tragedy of the royal household is summed up rather succinctly: *indigna Ser. Tulli regis memorata caedes et invecta corpori patris nefandoque vehiculo filia*, "he recalled the intolerable slaughter of King Servius and how his daughter drove over her father's body in an impious vehicle."[390] The proximity of the words *patris* and *filia* serves as an interpretative guide for how, at least at the most immediate level, we are to understand the story of Tullia. Significantly, she is not named as Tarquin's wife in Brutus' harangue. In its function as moralizing *exemplum*, it is Tullia's transgressive behavior as *filia* that forms the kernel and point of the story, with the introductory narrative of her role as dominant wife acting almost as a secondary substrate of tragic *enargeia*.

How do Tullia's movements via *carpentum* map onto this familial conflict? In rather concrete terms, it is this vehicle that facilitates her movement between the two male-dominated spaces with which she is associated. For, it is no accident that her carriage strikes her father precisely when, in Livy's ambiguous phrasing, "she was on her way home" (*cum se domum reciperet*, 48.6). Servius himself has just been described in identical terms only several lines earlier (*cum se domum reciperet*, 48.4). The ambiguity of the second *domum* is of course significant: "whose home" is exactly the point at issue. In the second instance, *domum* must mean Servius' house (that is, not the one previously occupied by her and Tarquin), which she is hurrying to seize possession of now in order to establish Tarquin's claim to the kingship.[391] The repeated clause *cum se domum reciperet* thus envisions a kind of desperate race for occupancy: a half-dead (*prope exsanguis*), lone Servius limping his way back to his palace vs. a spirited (*ferox*) Tullia flying over hills in her *carpentum*. For such a competition to take place at all would of course have seemed shocking and outrageous to Romans. But implicit in this suggested dash for property is the notion that Servius deserves a seat in a carriage as an elderly—and now badly injured—man.

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[388] That is, according to Livy's rather complex backstory, after she has dispatched her first, *un*ambitious husband (also Tarquin), together with his too meek wife (also Tullia). Tullia's role as "bad daughter" (and Tarquin's as "bad *gener*"), is highlighted by the existence of her silent double, the *other* Tullia: *his duobus* [*Tarquiniis*]*...duae Tulliae regis filiae nupserant, et ipsae longe dispares moribus* (46.5). Thus her behavior throughout the narrative becomes marked, by this preliminary contrast, as even more deranged and out of the ordinary. Compare also the striking double present in the *vicus Cyprius* (48.6), which Tullia travels immediately before encountering her father on the *vicus sceleratus*.

[389] She is in fact first introduced as Tarquin's overbearing wife: *et ipse* [*Tarquinius*] *iuvenis ardentis animi et domi uxore Tullia inquietum animum stimulante* (1.46.2).

[390] 1.59.10. Also noted by Hallett (1984), 115.

[391] Thus Ogilvie, who describes Livy as "over-compressed." An interpolation is of course possible. Bettini *per litteras* suggest instead that it is one and the same house to which Tullia (and Servius) was hurrying; that is, she and Tarquin lived in her father's house, following the Roman custom of patrilocality. In any case, *domus* is repeatedly associated with Tullia in the episode: first, when she is introduced as a goading influence on her dissatisfied (second) husband (*domi uxore Tullia inquietum animum stimulante*, 46.2); then, as a constant reminder to her of her first husband's inadequacy (*si sibi eum, quo digna esset, di dedissent virum, domi se propediem visuram regnum fuisse, quod ad patrem videat*, 46.8); next, further house-swapping as Tarquin *frère* and Tullia *sœur* are dispatched to make room for a new marriage (*prope continuatis funeribus cum domos vacuas novo matrimonio fecissent*, 46.9); and finally, in her speech urging Tarquin to seize the throne, the royal *domus* is invoked as *his* ancestral house (*di te penates patriique et patris imago et domus regia et in domo regale solium et nomen Tarquinium creat vocatque regem*, 47.4).

It is tempting to interpret the invocation of *domus* at this narrative juncture, however pointed it may seem, as mainly a feature of Livian tragic style, a way of heightening the drama. And yet the word serves as something of an emblem of the Tullia story as recounted in nutshell form by other authors, even in the curtest of snippets. Compare, for example, Paulus-Festus' entry on the *Sceleratus Vicus*:

> ***Sceleratus vicus*** *Romae appellatur, quod cum Tarquinius Superbus interficiendum curasset Servium regem, socerum suum, corpus eius iacens filia carpento supervecta sit, properans in possessionem domus paternae.*
>
> **Wicked Alley** in Rome is so named, because when Tarquin the Proud brought about the slaying of king Servius, his father-in-law, Servius' daughter drove over his body lying [dead?] in a *carpentum*, hastening into the possession of her father's house.[392]

While Tarquin now seems to become the driving force behind the coup in this account (*interficiendum curasset*), the rhetorical point of the brief entry is obviously Tullia's transgressive act. But, interestingly, it is the phrase *properans in possessionem domus paternae*, which—besides being strikingly expressive for an epitome of an excerpt of a reference work on Latin arcana—carries the weight of the sentence.[393] With its sputtering alliteration, it enacts through its readers the outrage at a daughter's (*filia*) aggressive usurpation of her father's house. In this succinct account, the bloody carriage accident becomes almost secondary. That is, the former clause (*corpus eius iacens filia carpento supervecta sit*) is symbolic of the latter (*properans in possessionem domus paternae*).[394] Festus' account suggests that, as lurid and memorable as it is—as much as it may seem to be the legend's "punchline"—Tullia's *carpentum* functions symbolically as an encapsulation of patriarchal worry about losing a household to one's daughter and her husband.

Ovid's version of the Tullia story in the *Fasti* (6.585-610), though on the whole quite differently motivated, nevertheless reaffirms this underlying concern in several central lines:

> *ipse sub Esquiliis, ubi erat sua regia, caesus*
> *concidit in dura sanguinulentus humo.*
> *filia carpento patrios initura penates*
> *ibat per medias alta feroxque vias.*

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[392] Festus L 451.1-4

[393] The phrase is partially preserved in the *codex Farnesianus* of Festus (and reconstructed by Lindsay) and is perhaps a survival from Verrius Flaccus' original *de Verborum Significatu*.

[394] Livy had already hit upon this pointed parechesis of ***corp****us* and ***carp****entum* (something like the opposite of Lysias' σῶμα σώσω, from the context of his terrifying encounter with Peison, one of the Thirty, 12.11), suggestive of a gory mess: "carcass" is swallowed, subsumed by "carriage." Or perhaps an etymology from *carpere* is suggested: *carpentum* as *carpens*, "car" as "carver" (cf. Cic. *de Orat.* 3.190, *saepe carpenda membris minutioribus oratio est*, with Mankin *ad loc.*, "must be carved up"). In any case, Festus' etymology of *tullii* is likewise telling: "violent jets of blood flowing bow-like": <***Tullios*** *al>ii dixerunt esse silanos, ali rivos, ali vehementes proiectiones sanguinis arcuatim fluentis, quales sunt Tiburi in Aniene. Ennius in Aiace* (18)*: "Aiax; misso sanguine tepido tullii efflantes volant."* (L 482).

Servius himself, at the base of the Esquiline, where his palace stood, fell
slaughtered, bleeding on the hard ground. His daughter, on her way to her father's
home in a *carpentum*, went right down the streets, high and bold.[395]

Once again, the collocation of *filia* and *patrios* is significant. The line has been arranged such that a *carpentum* literally comes between Tullia and her father, just as he has come between her and his house: the vehicle thus facilitates her arrival at her destination. The pronoun *ipse* is here primarily resumptive and emphatic, but also has the connotation of "master," which we have seen as especially prominent in contexts involving vehicles, as a means of drawing attention to the question of who is actually in control. This coloring of *ipse* is strengthened by the assertion that the palace belongs to *him* (*ubi erat sua regia*). Ovid has moreover revisited several of Livy's images. Tullia is now hurrying towards, and into, her father's *penates* (*patrios initura penates*), just as in Livy's version, "on the gory vehicle she carried to *her own* and *her husband's penates* part of her murdered father's blood" (*partemque sanguinis ac caedis paternae cruento vehiculo…tulisse ad penates suos virique sui*, 48.7). *Ad suos virique sui* here is predicative: "to the house that was now to be hers and her husband's." In both versions, she crushes her father to take up occupancy of his house.

We have seen thus far the association of *carpentum* with father-daughter conflict limited to the story of Tullia and Servius, even if it has been suggested that this particular carriage is paradigmatic of the conveyance's function in general terms. Thus, the subsequent question becomes: is it possible to see this or a similar collocation in other instances of the vehicle? Let us turn to the very first appearance of the word in Latin literature, in a fragment of Livius Andronicus' translation of Homer's *Odyssey*. It comes from Nausicaa's speech to Odysseus in book 6:

ibi manens sedeto donicum videbis
me carpento vehentem domum venisse

Sit waiting there until you see
I have come home, riding in the *carpentum*[396]

As Sander Goldberg has pointed out, the two extant lines of Livius represent a recasting not of two (6.295-6, as earlier commentators had it), but of five lines of the *Odyssey*:

ἔνθα καθεζόμενος μεῖναι χρόνον, εἰς ὅ κεν ἡμεῖς
ἄστυδε ἔλθωμεν καὶ ἱκώμεθα δώματα πατρός.
αὐτὰρ ἐπὴν ἡμέας ἔλπῃ ποτὶ δώματ᾽ ἀφῖχθαι,
καὶ τότε Φαιήκων ἴμεν ἐς πόλιν ἠδ᾽ ἐρέεσθαι
δώματα πατρὸς ἐμοῦ μεγαλήτορος Ἀλκινόοιο. (6.297-9)[397]

The important point here is Livius' choice of Roman vehicle to represent Nausicaa's ἀπήνη (57, 69, 73, 88, 90, 252) or ἅμαξα (37, 260).[398] As Goldberg notes, the more expected word would be

[395] *Fasti* 6.601-4.
[396] Fragment 15
[397] Goldberg (1995), 71-2. He argues that *videbis* is thus a translation of ἔλπῃ, and thus means, not "see," but "think," a meaning that is well-attested in Plautus and early Latin.

plaustrum, the humble cart or wagon. He thus argues that Livius has elevated Homer's more homely details in order to achieve "a kind of epic dignity," prophetic subsequent Latin approaches to recasting Homer, such as the *Aeneid*.[399]

While this is a convincing suggestion, I would add that Livius' choice of *carpentum* as Nausicaa's vehicle arose also from the kinds of associations this conveyance had in Roman culture. For, while the Livius fragment does not specify Nausicaa's *domus* as her father's, the Homeric passage does, and does so quite emphatically (δώματα πατρός, 296; and again δώματα πατρὸς ἐμοῦ μεγαλήτορος Ἀλκινόοιο, 299). These phrases should remind us of Ovid's *patrios...penates* and Festus' *domus paternae*, both involving another fraught *carpentum* trip. But the context of *Odyssey* 6 is of course highly relevant as well. Much of the plot and drama of the episode revolves around the fact that Nausicaa, a maiden on the verge of marriage, has been given special permission to leave her father's house in a special vehicle, one which serves as a potential vector into another man's household.[400] Athena, after all, had framed her laundry instructions in these terms (disguised as Nausicaa's friend, the daughter of Dymas):

> "Nausicaa, how is it that your mother bore such a careless daughter as you? The shining clothes are lying uncared for, though your wedding is close at hand, when you yourself should wear beautiful clothes, and provide some for those who attend you (σοὶ δὲ γάμος σχεδόν ἐστιν, ἵνα χρὴ καλὰ μὲν αὐτὴν / ἔννυσθαι, τὰ δὲ τοῖσι παρασχεῖν οἵ κέ σ᾽ ἄγωνται)…I too will accompany you as a helper, so that you can get it ready most quickly, since you won't remain unmarried for long (ἐπεὶ οὔ τοι ἔτι δὴν παρθένος ἔσσεαι). For already the best men of the Phaeacians in this area are courting you (ἤδη γάρ σε μνῶνται ἀριστῆες κατὰ δῆμον), and this is your own stock too." (25-8, 32-5)[401]

In addition to doing her general laundry chores as royal daughter, she must wash her own clothes—and quickly (τάχιστα, 32)—to get ready for her own possible marriage. Thus, besides being a necessary, concrete step in preparing for her own wedding, Nausicaa's ἀπήνη outing functions as a foil for it. This, the metaphorical significance of her departure from her father's palace in a special vehicle, is what informs Livius Andronicus' choice of *carpentum*. Moreover, in light of the pervasiveness of the theme of Nausicaa's marriagability and departure from her father's palace (both actual, for washing, and future, for marriage), it is tempting to see the *lack* of any paternal marker (*paterna, patris, patria*) to reflect Homer's marked wording (δώματα

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[398] 6.69-70: '…ἀτάρ τοι δμῶες ἐφοπλίσσουσιν ἀπήνην / ὑψηλὴν εὔκυκλον, ὑπερτερίῃ ἀραρυῖαν.' 252-3: εἵματ᾽ ἄρα πτύξασα τίθει καλῆς ἐπ᾽ ἀπήνης, / ζεῦξεν δ᾽ ἡμιόνους κρατερώνυχας, ἂν δ᾽ ἔβη αὐτή.

[399] Goldberg (1995), 72. Despite this insight, he continues to refer to the *carpentum* as a "cart." In any case, the opposition of "homely" vs. "grand" must be an oversimplification. Nausicaa describes the ἀπήνην as ὑψηλὴν εὔκυκλον ("elevated, with good wheels," 57-8) and her father quotes, and expands upon, her wording (in the same *sedes*): ἀπήνην / ὑψηλὴν εὔκυκλον, ὑπερτερίῃ ἀραρυῖαν ("elevated, with good wheels, fitted with an upper body," 69-70), as if to demonstrate his superior expertise ("You'll need the one with the bodywork already fitted to the chassis, to carry the laundry."). It is subsequently described as the "well-wheeled mule wagon" (ἄμαξαν ἐΰτροχον ἡμιονείην, 72) and the "well-polished wagon" (ἐϋξέστῳ…ἀπήνῃ, 75).

[400] We can compare Apollonius' account of Medea's use of an ἀπήνη for her rendezvous with Jason (3.838-90).

[401] Nausicaa herself broaches the subject of impending marriage later, when she approaches her father to ask for the family wagon (57-65). But she modestly shifts attention away from herself to her five brothers, three of whom are unmarried (οἱ δύ᾽ ὀπυίοντες, τρεῖς δ᾽ἠΐθεοι θαλέθοντες): *their* clothes must be washed before their upcoming weddings.

πατρός, 296; and δώματα πατρὸς ἐμοῦ μεγαλήτορος Ἀλκινόοιο, 299) as in itself significant, as if to highlight the fact (or the concern) that Nausicaa's ride in the *carpentum* might very well have her end up in another man's house. Livius' *carpentum* interprets the Odyssean narrative by means of a very specific Roman cultural symbol. He has not simply opted for a stately carriage that befits a king's daughter (instead of a "lowly" cart), but one which arises out of and summons up a discourse of women's privileged movement between households and between roles as daughters and wives.

2. Miscarriages of Justice: the repeal of the *Lex Oppia*

"Repealing the ban on women driving would provoke a surge in prostitution, pornography, homosexuality and divorce…Allowing women to drive will result in no more virgins."[402]

But how did Roman women come to possess the right to ride in *carpenta* (and *pilenta*) in the first place? Or, more specifically, how did Roman culture choose to represent its decision (in the distant past) to grant matrons the privilege of wheel-bound mobility? The few surviving stories that touch upon this conferral concur in asserting that the privilege was, in essence, a reward for outstanding behavior. Although there is some disagreement as to what precisely the matrons were being rewarded *for*, it is important to observe that access to the *carpentum* was conceived of in terms of an exchange. It needs hardly be mentioned that no equivalent strictures existed that dealt with men's right to ride in wheeled vehicles. Even if, as we have seen, access to the *lectica* or *currus* could be hotly contested and severely limited, there was nevertheless no accompanying belief that, prior to a particular decision of the senate, men as a group simply were not allowed to ride in conveyances. Instead, Roman men are assumed to have ridden in chariots, carriages, wagons (and, sometimes, litters) since time immemorial. Roman women, by contrast, did not.[403] This in itself will have implications for how we choose to read Roman expressions of women's mobility, a discussion to which we shall again return below.

Livy's account of the repeal of the *lex Oppia* offers the fullest articulation of the terms and stakes involved in officially (re-)licensing women to ride through the city. Soon after the conclusion of the second Macedonian War (with the defeat of Philip V at Cynoscephalae in 197 BC), the tribunes M. Fundanius and L. Valerius propose to the assembly that the *lex Oppia* be repealed. The year is 195. The law, passed during the second Punic War (215 BC, or possibly 213), had prohibited women from possessing more than a half-ounce of gold (*ne qua mulier plus semiunciam auri haberet*, 1.34.3), wearing "multi-colored" (probably, "dyed") clothing (*neu vestimento versicolori uteretur*), and riding in a yoked vehicle within a mile of the city or a town, except for religious festivals (*neu iuncto vehiculo in urbe oppidove aut propius inde mille passus nisi sacrorum publicorum causa veheretur*).[404] Whether it was passed as a wartime curb on

[402] A report "On Women Driving Cars," written by Dr. Kamal Subhi (management consultant and retired professor at King Fahd Universitiy of Petroleum and Minerals, Dhahran) in collaboration with the scholars of the Majlis al-Ifta' al-A'ala (Saudi Arabia's highest religious council), 2011.

[403] This is of course directly contradicted by the story of Tullia, as well as by Livy's portrait of the arrival of Lucumo (soon to be L. Tarquinius Priscus) and Tanaquil in Rome in a *carpentum* (1.34.8). Both images of powerful wives riding in *carpenta* in public are placed in the earliest days of the regal period (late seventh century for Tanaquil; 534 for Tullia), long before they were supposedly granted the privilege. The associations of both women with Etruscan intrusion is no doubt significant.

[404] *Versicolor* is usually taken to refer primarily to purple-trimmed garments. The law thus could represent an assertion, during a time of crisis, of the privileges of certain males (curule magistrates and priests, but also freeborn boys) to wear the purple-striped *toga praetexta*. This aspect of the measure may also have had specific

private expenditure, or as a worried assertion of male privilege, Livy suggests (here and elsewhere in his narrative) that its passage may have been impulsive (*in medio ardore Punici belli*, 3), or at the very least, that the specific emergency that had prompted it had now passed. In any case, it is clear that the women found the ban particularly oppressive, and that the senate was divided.

Livy begins book 34 by insisting on the relative unimportance of the episode (in the context of the weighty Macedonian and Punic Wars), but then rather ironically proceeds to devote considerable space (chapters 1-9) to it. Livy's account contains two lengthy speeches, that of Cato the Censor (against the repeal), and the tribune Lucius Valerius (for), following a brief description of the civic crisis the proposal to abrogate the law precipitates. What might have been a rather minor, straightforward matter (*res parva dictu*, 34.1.1) that happened to "crop up" or "intervene" (*intercessit*, 1) in the midst of (real, actual, serious) concerns about huge wars, both barely concluded and still looming (*inter bellorum magnorum aut vixdum finitorum aut imminentium curas*), was something which "went so far as to become" (*excesserit*) a major conflict as a result of the zeal involved (*studiis in magnum certamen*).[405] The contrast between *intercessit* and *excesserit* highlights the extent to which the episode represents a paradoxical transgression of normal categories and expectations. It is an affair that goes where it shouldn't, in two senses: it both "interrupts" more pressing concerns and "transgresses" appropriate limits. Continuing with the metaphor of egregious motion, Livy has many notable men "stepping forward" to speak for and against abrogation (*ad suadendum dissuadendumque multi nobiles prodibant* (4). The movement escalates, and soon a crowd convenes on the Capitol.[406] But even more aberrant is the participation of the matrons, who throng the city in support of the law's repeal:

> *matronae nulla nec auctoritate nec verecundia nec imperio virorum contineri limine poterant, omnes vias urbis aditusque in forum obsidebant viros descendentes ad forum orantes ut florente re publica, crescente in dies privata omnium fortuna, matronis quoque pristinum ornatum reddi paterentur. augebatur haec frequentia mulierum in dies; nam etiam ex oppidis conciliabulisque conveniebant. iam et consules praetoresque et alios magistratus adire et rogare audebant.*
>
> The matrons could not be kept inside their homes by either official influence, modesty, or their husband's commands, but occupied all the city streets and entrances to the forum, imploring the men as they entered the forum that, as the state was flourishing and the private fortune of all was growing day by day, they allow the women too to have their former decorations restored. This concourse of women grew daily; for they were even arriving from the towns and rural villages. Soon they even dared to accost and beg the consuls, praetors, and other magistrates.[407]

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patriotic/xenophobic motivations, given the powerful associations of "Tyrian purple" and the Phoenician origins of Carthage.

[405] *inter bellorum magnorum aut vixdum finitorum aut imminentium curas intercessit res parva dictu, sed quae studiis in magnum certamen excesserit*. I read the subjunctive *excesserit* as part of a relative clause of result, the perfect tense of the subjunctive stressing completion.

[406] *Capitolium turba hominum faventium adversantiumque legi complebatur.*

[407] 34.1.5-6

Several thematically important details stand out in this description.[408] It is first of all significant that the matrons cannot "be contained" within their thresholds (*contineri limine*) by any of three rather abstract entities: *auctoritas* (something between "authority" and "influence" or "persuasion") *verecundia* (their own sense of modesty or shame), or *imperium virorum* ("their husbands' orders"). All represent aspects of ideal Roman male behavior, temporarily incapacitated. *Auctoritas,* in the sense of using one's influence and political power to influence individuals and events (and so structure the world), often has forensic or deliberative application, and here seems to refer mainly to the senate and magistrates (as opposed to the women's husbands in general). The opposition between the Roman (male) political establishment and the physically protesting wives and mothers is thus established. Formalized speech has become momentarily powerless over the movement of actual bodies. *Verecundia*, though certainly an ideal quality of Roman *virtus*, here refers to the *women's* (lack of a) sense of shame, and is reminiscent of Livy's similar characterization of Tullia, when he describes her immodest appearance in public before the *curia* (*nec reverita coetum virorum*).[409] In both cases, a proper attitude of deference has temporarily evaporated. But, unlike Tullia's transgression, the matrons' defiance of a socially determined "knowledge of one's place" (here based on gender) also potentially threatens the efficacy of *verecundia* as a structuring device for hierarchies among men—perhaps a more dangerous prospect for Livy and his readers. The final item in this list of failed defenses—a kind of last resort—is the *imperium virorum*, which in context must signify something between "their husbands' authority (over them and their household)" and, more literally (from *imperare*), "their husbands' orders." Livy thus focalizes the three successive *metaphorical* spaces that the matrons have transgressed—political, social, and domestic—before moving on to describe the details of their *physical* trespass.

Next, it is important, as Livy emphasizes here and throughout the narrative, that the women have unilaterally moved their bodies through the space of the city in order to directly influence the outcome of the debate: in this sense they are enacting a version of what the Oppian Law had prohibited them from doing in the first place—moving through the city openly, even spectacularly. By a form of direct action, they are in a sense challenging the senators to stop their movement through the city. This direct action, despite Livy's interest in and focus upon the content of the senators' speeches, will have to linger as a dangerous threat to Roman political culture.

Employing a deliberately paradoxical image, Livy envisions the women "laying siege to" the city *from within*, by blocking its vital arteries. They occupy not only "all the city streets," but also, more specifically, the entrances to the forum (*omnes vias urbis aditusque in forum obsidebant*). The notion of (contested) authoritative speech, glimpsed already in the failure of *auctoritas*, recurs in the indirectly reported and, in comparison to the subsequent speeches of Cato and Lucius Valerius, rather short-winded pleading of the women. Their "*oratio*" takes up a mere two lines of text (*viros descendentes ad forum* ***orantes*** *ut florente re publica, crescente in dies privata omnium fortuna, matronis quoque pristinum ornatum reddi paterentur*).[410] The well-worn phrase, *descendentes ad forum*, used to describe the husbands, rather fussily revises the

[408] cf. Milnor (2005), 154-185; Chaplin (2000), 97-100; Culham (1982) and (1986); also, Briscoe (1981) *ad loc*.
[409] While *verecundia* is by no means only a feminine virtue in Roman culture—Roman men can possess (or lack) *verecundia*—purported lapses of it among women seem to have been the object of greater collective anxiety. Cf. Kaster (2005), 13-27 (25-6 on women's *verecundia*).
[410] In contrast to the over 10 OCT pages devoted to the speeches of Cato and Lucius Valerius.

women's more literally physical approach (*aditusque **in** forum obsidebant*). The matrons are attempting to occupy a space that does not belong to them, a process which takes place by their concrete movement into it (or, technically, towards its entrances). For the men, by contrast, the *forum*, as the center of legal and political activity, is presented as a more abstract, conceptual realm—a location that they make for. The forum, as a place, really takes shape through *speeches*, and this is one way that Livy's narrative seeks to master the audacious challenge offered by the protesting matrons: the subsequent speeches (in *oratio directa*) offer a powerful rejoinder to the women's attempt to use their physical, bodily presence to influence the outcome.[411]

Indeed, the first of the two speeches reenacted by Livy's ventriloquism, that of the intractable Cato (*minime exorabilem...consulem*, 1.7) begins by addressing the *physical* appeal made by the *matres*.[412] This is first implicit in the nod Cato makes to the terms in which Livy had conceptualized the women's transgression (*si in sua quisque nostrum matre familiae, Quirites, ius et maiestatem viri retinere instituisset, minus cum universis feminis negotii haberemus*, 2.1): if each husband had resolved to *hold onto* (*retinere*) his husbandly authority (*ius et maiestatem viri~imperium viri*), we would have been able to *contain* the women in their homes (*contineri limine*, 1.5), and would be relatively free of this "business with the women."[413] It then becomes explicit in Cato's description of the women's protest as essentially a violent assault on male *libertas*: *nunc domi victa libertas nostra impotentia muliebri hic quoque in foro obteritur et calcatur, et quia singulas non continuimus universas horremus* (2.2). The men's freedom, having been conquered at home, is being trampled and trod on by the women's lack of self-restraint (*impotentia*).[414] The theme of "containment" recurs in *singulas non continuimus*. Cato's vivid image, of womanly *impotentia* conquering and oppressing masculine *libertas* (almost as if in a triumphal *pompa*), takes its cue from the Livy's own framing description of the woman's demonstration as a "siege" or "occupation" (*omnes vias urbis aditusque in forum obsidebant*, 1.5).[415] The military imagery continues when Cato recounts the self-control *he* felt when passing through the ranks of women (*per medium agmen mulierum*, 2.8). His modesty restrained him from rebuking them directly—an outburst which he expresses in his speech instead.

> *'qui hic mos est in publicum procurrendi et obsidendi vias et viros alienos appellandi? istud ipsum suos quaeque domi rogare non potuistis? an blandiores in publico quam in privato et alienis quam vestris estis? quamquam ne domi quidem vos, si sui iuris finibus matronas contineret pudor, quae leges hic rogarentur abrogarenturve, curare decuit.'*

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[411] Livy's description of Cato as *minime exorabilem* (1.7) reads nearly as a dismissive joke on the women's ad-lib "*oratio*": their unauthorized pleas won't work on *this* consul.

[412] A single fragment of Cato's *de Vestitu et Vehiculis* survives (Malcovati 93): *nam periniurium siet, cum mihi ob eos mores, quos prius habui, honos detur, ubi datus est, tum uti eos mutem atque alii modi sim*. Cato must be speaking about himself analogously. At issue here is most likely the women's *honos* of riding in *carpenta* (as a reward for good *mores* in subsidizing the state treasury), which, he believes, they no longer deserve (because they have changed their *mores* and are different).

[413] A slight paradox in the juxtaposition *feminis negotii* conveys Cato's outrage: the women are out of place in the midst of the business of the city.

[414] It is of course deliberately paradoxical that "powerlessness" could have the capability to overpower.

[415] *Obteritur et calcatur*, as *victa*, may simply refer to "actual" conquest (as opposed to symbolic conquest in triumph), but the two-step process involved, *domi victa* and then *in foro obteritur et calcatur*, seems to mirror ironically Roman conquest's two components: victory (abroad) and symbolic reenactment (at home, in town). As Briscoe notes, Livy may also be referencing Cato's famous maxim (reported by Plutarch *Cat. Mai*. 8.4): πάντες ἄνθρωποι τῶν γυναικῶν ἄρχουσιν, ἡμεῖς δὲ πάντων ἀνθρώπων, ἡμῶν δ' αἱ γυναῖκες.

> 'What behavior is this, running out into public and blockading the streets and accosting other women's husbands? Was each of you incapable of making just this appeal to your own husbands, at home? Or are you more captivating in public than in private, and to other women's husbands than to your own? Even so, not even at home—if modesty kept matrons within the limits of what is acceptable for them to do—would it be appropriate for you to worry about what laws are to be proposed or repealed.'[416]

The asymmetry is of course important: Cato's modesty prevents him from addressing the women on his approach to the forum, while their own shame fails to stop them from overstepping the limits of their homes and entering the forum. Thematized here, and throughout Cato's speech, is the opposition between *suus*/*alienus* and *privatus*/*publicus*, and it is clear in Cato's vision of Roman social space that, while men are allowed to pass between these realms, women are not. So, by this schema, the *matronae* should of course not concern themselves with legislation (in public, let alone in private). Pointed reference to this detail is made in the repetition of *rogare* (of the women beseeching men in public) and *rogarentur abrogarenturve* (of laws), the thrust of which depends on the shift in sense. At the very least (although he makes clear his disapproval of even this), the women should have *appealed* to their own husbands concerning this issue, instead of actually attempting to bring about the *repeal* of the law in a public setting. But by highlighting this similarity (here, seemingly innocuously, as a stylistic flourish), Cato has in fact drawn attention to the significant danger the women's protest represents. After all, what becomes of senatorial and tribunal authority if the matrons' makeshift "*rogatio*" can trump official, authorized *rogatio* or *abrogatio*, as it in fact does? He makes this point explicit several lines later: *quid enim nunc aliud per vias et compita faciunt quam rogationem tribunorum plebi suadent, quam legem abrogandam censent?* (2.12) That is, according to Cato's outraged argumentation, the *matres* are coopting access to political deliberation by occupying public space—the latter a preemptive enactment of what the appeal would bring about (or rather, restore): greater movement and participation in the public sphere. A striking connection between transport and political power (or, at least, engagement or participation) has been established by this implicit link.

But it is important to remember that Cato's speech ostensibly treats all three "decorations" covered by the *lex Oppia*, and not simply transit. In addition to the privilege of riding in *carpenta* and *pilenta*, it concerns the possession of large amounts of gold and the wearing of colored garments. So while our focus here is obviously on the first of the three, we must be careful to distinguish among them when analyzing Cato's speech. There is no doubt that the speech as a whole is not simply about *carpenta*: some sections deal explicitly with gold and purple. Cato's agitation in part results from what he sees as the uncurbed growth of *luxuria*, which, though it must include *carpentum* use, gets articulated primarily through *aurum* and *purpura*. It is the dramatic visibility, the fact that the women are thought to be showing them off, that so incenses Cato, even more than the fact that they possess such luxury items at all, or in more significant quantities than in the time of *maiores nostri*. Section 4, for example, deals largely with the growth of *luxuria* at Rome brought about by imperial expansion and exposure to

[416] 2.9-10.

foreign wealth, concluding with a dramatic peak of impassioned *prosopopoeia*.[417] Cato mouths wealthy women's indignation at being prohibited from displaying their wealth in public (and being seen doing so). *"Cur non insignis auro et purpura conspicior?"* "Why am I not noticed, outstanding in gold and purple?"[418] But it is clear from the section that Cato's critique of ostentatious *luxuria* is by no means confined to *women's* showy display of prestige goods. Rather, they appear to the be the most visible symbol of his moralizing tirade, a sort of weather vane indicating the prevailing direction of Roman morality in general, among men as well.[419] But I suggest that it is women's mobility that is particularly problematic for Cato and his fellow opponents of the repeal. That, after all, is the only component of the *lex Oppia* that allegedly went back to an officially granted privilege, which was then taken away once again. Gold and purple, by contrast, had no history of special conferral. Cato's most striking and feverish images concerning the women's free-wheeling behavior come from driving vehicles.

> *Date frenos impotenti naturae et indomito animali et sperate ipsas modum licentiae facturas; nisi vos feceritis, minimum hoc eorum est, quae iniquo animo feminae sibi aut moribus aut legibus iniuncta patiunutur.*
>
> Give free rein to their unbridled nature and to this uncontrollable animal and hope that they themselves will put a limit on their license; unless you do it, this is the least of the things imposed upon women by custom and law to which they submit while feeling they are unjust.[420]

What may seem merely a metaphor—women as draught animals—is a disturbing revelation of Cato's implicit logic. Woman cannot be allowed to drive, or be in charge of, yoked vehicles when they themselves have no more self-control than the animals themselves. They, like wild horses or mules, must be "reined in," and the only option for the senate is to have the women submit (*patiuntur*) to what has been "yoked to" them (*iniuncta*) by law and custom. Otherwise, it will be as if the horses have been handed the reins.

> *quid honestum dictu saltem seditioni praetenditur muliebri? 'ut auro et purpura fulgamus' inquit 'ut carpentis festis profestisque diebus, velut triumphantes de lege victa et abrogata et captis et ereptis suffragiis vestris per urbem vectemur; ne ullus modus sumptibus, ne luxuriae sit.'*
>
> What pretext—proper even to mention—is being given for this sedition of the women? 'That we glitter with gold and purple,' one says, 'that we ride in

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[417] Especially 4.12-4: *nam ut quod alii liceat tibi non licere aliquid fortasse naturalis aut pudoris aut indignationis habeat, sic aequato omnium cultu quid unaquaeque uestrum veretur ne in se conspiciatur? pessimus quidem pudor est vel parsimoniae vel paupertatis; sed utrumque lex uobis demit cum id quod habere non licet non habetis. "hanc" inquit "ipsam exaequationem non fero" illa locuples. "cur non insignis auro et purpura conspicior? cur paupertas aliarum sub hac legis specie latet, ut quod habere non possunt habiturae, si liceret, fuisse videantur?"*

[418] This, he argues, will inevitably lead to a *certamen*, a kind of arms race of wealth-display among wives. *Certamen* is, incidentally, the word used by Livy to describe the entire conflict surrounding the repeal of the Oppian Law (1.1).

[419] The significance of purple (and, to an extent, gold) in Roman male political culture has already been pointed out—we might read Cato's speech as, at least in part, a defense of a male monopoly over these items. Cf. Tac. *Ann.* 3.33-34, on a debate about prohibiting women from accompanying their husbands to their provinces.

[420] 2.13-14

> *carpenta* on festal and ordinary days, and ride through the city as if in triumph over the conquered and repealed law and over your votes that we have taken and snatched away; that there be no limit to our spending, and to our luxury.'[421]

In his run-up to this spirited mime performance, Cato's mention of the women's *seditio*, while obviously referring to the secessions of the plebs, invokes also the literal meaning of *seditio*, "a going apart" or "aside": the women have quite literally "moved away" from their accustomed place. Their intent through this insurrection is to win a kind of triumph over the vanquished law and over the conquered votes of the senators: their subsequent carriage rides will then be sort of *pompa triumphalis* through the city. Once again, Cato's portrait reminds us, this has been brought about by a preemptive movement through the city.

How does Lucius Valerius' reply (34.5-7), in favor of the law's repeal, take up this theme? With respect to Cato's description of the women's activity as an "insurrection," he replies:

> *coetum et seditionem et interdum secessionem muliebrem appellavit, quod matronae in publico vos rogassent ut legem in se latam per bellum temporibus duris in pace et florenti ac beata re publica abrogaretis.*
>
> He called this gathering of women a sedition and at times a secession, because the matrons had asked you (*rogassent*) in public to repeal (*abrogaretis*) in a time of peace, when the state is flourishing and wealthy, a law that was passed against them in a difficult period of war.[422]

Careful to name the women's demonstration a "gathering" (*coetus*)—that is, a coming together of women, rather than a departure of women from the men—he insists that Cato has overemphasized the novelty of what the *matronae* are doing: "For what new thing have the matrons done anyway, by coming forth in great numbers in public in a case that pertains to them? Have they never before now appeared in public?" (*nam quid tandem novi matronae fecerunt, quod frequentes in causa ad se pertinente in publicum processerunt? numquam ante hoc tempus in publico apparuerunt?* 4.7). He then proceeds to list moments when the Roman women have affected events by mass demonstration. Two examples are significant, because they are parallel to the origin of the women's privilege of the *carpentum.* Valerius mentions the ransom of the city of Rome from the Gauls; it was the women who contributed their gold to pay the ransom.[423] During the war with Hannibal, the Roman widows supplied money to the state treasury.[424]

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[421] 3.8-9

[422] 5.5

[423] *iam urbe capta a Gallis, quo redempta urbs est? nempe aurum matronae consensu omnium in publicum contulerunt.* (5.9) Livy treats the story in 5.50, where he recounts that the matrons were rewarded with having funeral orations delivered for them as men. Alternatively, Diodorus Siculus (14.116.9) identifies this as the reason for the matrons being granted the privilege of riding in carriages (or rather, ἅρματα, "chariots"): λέγουσι δέ τινες καὶ διότι τὸν χρυσοῦν κόσμον αἱ γυναῖκες εἰς τὴν κοινὴν σωτηρίαν εἰσενέγκασαι ταύτης ἔτυχον παρὰ τοῦ δήμου τιμῆς, ὥστ' ἐξουσίαν ἔχειν ἐφ' ἁρμάτων ὀχεῖσθαι κατὰ τὴν πόλιν.

[424] *proximo bello, ne antiqua repetam, nonne et, cum pecunia opus fuit, viduarum pecuniae adiuverunt aerarium…?* (5.10)

The origins of this state-sponsored privilege are complex, but most ancient accounts agree that the senate granted it to matrons in return for their assistance in bailing out the state while in straitened circumstances.[425] The Roman *dictator* Camillus had made a vow to the god Apollo if he should be allowed to defeat the city of Veii. When this took place in 396, he could not summon the necessary funds to fulfill his part of the bargain. The women stepped in, collected their gold jewelry and donated it to the senate, who promptly rewarded them with the right to ride in *carpenta*. Livy narrates the events:

> *cuius cum copia non esset, matronae coetibus ad eam rem consultandam habitis communi decreto pollicitae tribunis militum aurum et omnia ornamenta sua in aerarium detulerunt. grata ea res ut quae maxime senatui unquam fuit; honoremque ob eam munificentiam ferunt matronis habitum ut pilento ad sacra ludosque, carpentis festo profestoque uterentur.*
>
> Since there was not a sufficient amount, the matrons, after holding a meeting to discuss this matter, by common agreement promised their gold to the tribunes, and dedicated all of their jewelry to the treasury. The senate could not be more grateful for this; they say that in return for this munificence an honor was conferred upon the matrons, that they use the *pilentum* to go to festivals and games, and the *carpentum* on festal and ordinary days.[426]

The resulting gold was used to make bowl that was dedicated to Apollo at Delphi, the vow thus fulfilled. We are led to believe that then, nearly two centuries later (215), in the midst of the Second Punic War, sumptuary legislation (*lex Oppia*) was passed that strictly limited women's possession and display of wealth: under the terms of the law, their privilege of riding in carriages within the city was taken away.

But let us return finally to Livy's *oratio obliqua* of the women. What the *matronae* plead is interesting, and, as it happens, an important component to our understanding of Roman conceptualizations of traffic. Unlike numerous other portraits of collective urban movement, which represent it as a *breakdown* (or a byproduct) of vehicular or pedestrian throughput—in

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[425] Cf. Livy 5.50.7

[426] 5.25. cf. also Festus 283.25-8 L: *Pilentis et carpentis per Vrbem vehi matronis concessum est, quod cum aurum non reperiretur, ex voto, quod Camillus voverat Apollini Delphico, contulerunt*. The *pilentum* is a more formal and elaborate version of the *carpentum*, but is rather elusive because poorly attested. Best-known is Virgil's famous image on the shield of Aeneas of the "chaste mothers" riding in soft *pilenta* through the city: *castae ducebant sacra per urbem* / *pilentis matres in mollibus* (8.665-6). Fordyce *ad loc.* translates *ducebant sacra* as "formed religious processions," an extension of the use in expressions such as *pompam ducere* and *funus ducere*. Servius compares it to the contemporary *basterna*, and says it was in ancient times (*tunc*) blue (*veneti coloris*), as opposed to red (*russati*) now. The commentator has several concerned notes about the meaning of *mollibus*, and interprets it as either *pensilibus*, "hanging" (comparing Pallas' bier, *molle feretrum*, *Aen.*11.64 and the swings for Bacchus, *oscilla…mollia, G.*2.389) or *molliter stratis* (softly upholstered). His note on *Aen.* 11.478 is illuminating: *SUBVEHITVR proprie*: *matronae enim pilentis vehebantur ad templa pergentes, ut "pilentis matres in mollibus."* Virgil's picture is a reimagining of the Trojan women's appeal to Athena in *Iliad* 6, but with proper Roman carriages grafted in: *nec non ad templum summasque ad Palladis arces* / *subvehitur magna matrum regina caterva* / *dona ferens* (11.477-9). Horace includes it in his parade of vehicles he faults playwrights for dragging onstage in order to amaze their audiences (*mox trahitur manibus regum fortuna retortis,* / *esseda festinant, pilenta, pertorrita, naves* (*Ep.* 2.1.191-2). The *pilentum* must then be something more lavish and august than the *carpentum*, used especially for religious procession, and something vaguely approaching a women's *currus triumphalis*. Unfortunately, it is only appears in these passages.

essence a dysfunctional system of blockages—Livy's matrons offer a vision of traffic flow as intrinsically tied to the flourishing of Rome.[427] It is significant that they claim their right to mobility is now, once again, in a time of relative peace, warranted—now that the commonwealth is flourishing *(florente re publica*), and that the private prosperity of all is growing day by day (*crescente in dies privata omnium fortuna*). Implicit in this configuration is the equation of movement, the flow of people and goods, traffic, with prosperity and growth. If, they suggest, the growth and fertility of the Roman state was temporarily blocked by the ravages of the Second Punic War, it was not inappropriate that their movement between parts of the city, between Roman households, as wives and mothers, should also be interrupted. But now that Rome has begun reproducing itself again, so the matrons should resume mobility: traffic figured as fertility.[428]

What may seem merely a turn of phrase in Livy becomes explicit narrative content in another version of the story, Ovid's simultaneously grim and glib version in his *Fasti*. Instead of just preemptively resuming their temporarily obstructed mobility, as in Livy, Ovid's matrons actually refuse to reproduce future Romans, by voluntarily aborting their unborn children:

> *nam prius Ausonias matres carpenta vehebant*
> *(haec quoque ab Euandri dicta parente reor);*
> *mox honor eripitur, matronaque destinat omnis*
> *ingratos nulla prole novare viros,*
> *neve daret partus, ictu temeraria caeco*
> *visceribus crescens excutiebat onus.*
> *corripuisse patres ausas immitia nuptas,*
> *ius tamen exemptum restituisse ferunt.*[429]
>
> For in ancient times Italian matrons rode in carriages (*carpenta*), which I suspect were also named after Evander's parent (*Carmentis*). Later their honor was snatched away, and every matron vowed not to propagate the line of their ungrateful husbands by giving birth to any offspring; and to avoid bearing

[427] Perhaps the most prominent example is in Juvenal's third satire. There he has Umbricius mouth an outraged tirade against the ills of city life, one centerpiece of which is his extended account of an urban traffic jam (3.231-264), before packing up his household (in a *raeda*) and departing for the country. This opting out (*eundum est*, "time to go," says Umbricius before leaving) is the only way to escape the ramifying obstacles to physical and social mobility that the city offers. It is particularly unbearable for the speaker that the only figure to transcend the gridlock and move "freely" is a rich man in a litter (represented by Juvenal as a speedy Liburnian galley), and thus probably a freedman who acquired his wealth through nefarious means. We might see read a similar connection between the flourishing of the state and the *in*accessibility of the streets in Diodorus Siculus' account of the sack of Rome by the Gauls, mentioned above (14.116.9). When rebuilding, says Diodorus, the state gave citizens permission to build homes wherever they wished, supplying them with roof tiles. The result was chaotic, winding streets, which couldn't subsequently be straightened: ἁπάντων οὖν πρὸς τὴν ἰδίαν προαίρεσιν οἰκοδομούντων, συνέβη τὰς κατὰ πόλιν ὁδοὺς στενὰς γενέσθαι καὶ καμπὰς ἐχούσας· διόπερ ὕστερον αὐξηθέντες οὐκ ἠδυνήθησαν εὐθείας ποιῆσαι τὰς ὁδούς. Cf. Livy 5.55.

[428] The notion is reminiscent of *Iliad* 5.642 (Tlepolemus to Sarpedon), Ἰλίου ἐξαλάπαξε πόλιν, χήρωσε δ᾽ἀγυιάς, "[Heracles] laid waste to the city of Troy, and *widowed* its streets."

[429] 1.619-26. The story explains the origin of the *Carmentalia*:
binaque nunc pariter Tegaeae sacra parenti
pro pueris fieri virginibusque iubent.
scortea non illi fas est inferre sacello,
ne violent puros exanimata focos. (627-30)

children, she rashly by a secret thrust expelled the growing (*crescens*) burden
from her womb. They say the senate rebuked the wives for daring such cruelty,
but restored the right that was stripped away.

No doubt the poet's motivations are different from those of Livy's senate-focused historiography, and Ovid has certainly seized on this version (attested elsewhere), at least in part, for shock value.[430] But once again growth and prosperity are directly linked to the movement of vehicles, here quite literally specified as essential to human fertility. Far from the crushing, deadening blockage we saw in Juvenal's portrait, traffic now licenses and facilitates the city's capacity to reproduce Roman citizens.

3. A Hybrid Vehicle

sunt et qui [*suber*] *feminam ilicem vocent atque, ubi non nascitur ilex, pro ea subere utantur in carpentariis praecipue fabricis.*[431]

In Cato's opposition to the matrons' use of *carpenta* within Rome, we encounter what is presented as something of a *Porcii* family tradition: the severe disapproval of softening conveyances when good, old-fashioned walking will do. Plutarch, as we have seen earlier, records the fervid pedestrianism of Cato the Younger, who, in keeping with his rigorous physical training and stout resistance to heat and cold, is described as going on foot year-round, without a vehicle, and walking alongside his fellow travellers who opt for the (somewhat) more comfortable horseback instead.[432] We can almost hear the scolding voice of his great-grandfather's speech *de vestitu et vehiculis* in Lucan's moralizing lines describing the Younger Cato's refusal of either litter or *carpentum* during his march through the harsh desert of Libya:

ipse manu sua pila gerit, praecedit anheli
militis ora pedes, monstrat tolerare labores,
non iubet, et nulla vehitur cervice supinus
carpentoque sedens;

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[430] Plutarch cites this alternate version in his Roman Question 56: 'Διὰ τί τὸ τῆς Καρμέντης ἱερὸν ἐξ ἀρχῆς δοκοῦσιν αἱ μητέρες ἱδρύσασθαι καὶ νῦν μάλιστα σέβονται;'
λέγεται γάρ τις λόγος, ὡς ἐκωλύθησαν ὑπὸ τῆς βουλῆς αἱ γυναῖκες ὀχήμασι χρῆσθαι ζευκτοῖς· συνέθεντο οὖν ἀλλήλαις μὴ κνῆσκεσθαι μηδὲ τίκτειν ἀμυνόμεναι τοὺς ἄνδρας, ἄχρις οὗ μετέγνωσαν καὶ συνεχώρησαν αὐταῖς· γενομένων δὲ παίδων εὐτεκνοῦσαι καὶ πολυτεκνοῦσαι τὸ τῆς Καρμέντης ἱερὸν ἱδρύσαντο. τὴν δὲ Καρμένταν οἱ μὲν Εὐάνδρου μητέρα λέγουσιν οὖσαν ἐλθεῖν εἰς Ἰταλίαν ὀνομαζομένην Θέμιν, ὡς δ' ἔνιοι, Νικοστράτην· ἐμμέτρους δὲ χρησμοὺς ἆδουσαν ὑπὸ τῶν Λατίνων Καρμένταν ὀνομάζεσθαι· τὰ γὰρ ἔπη 'κάρμινα' καλοῦσιν. οἱ δὲ Μοῖραν ἡγοῦνται τὴν Καρμένταν εἶναι καὶ διὰ τοῦτο θύειν αὐτῇ τὰς μητέρας. ἔστι δὲ τοῦ ὀνόματος τὸ ἔτυμον 'ὑστερημένη νοῦ' διὰ τὰς θεοφορήσεις. ὅθεν οὐ τὰ κάρμινα τῇ Καρμέντῃ τοὔνομα παρέσχεν, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἀπ' ἐκείνης ἐκλήθη διὰ τὸ τοὺς χρησμοὺς ἐν ἔπεσι καὶ μέτροις ἐνθουσιῶσαν ᾄδειν.

[431] Pliny *N.H.* 16.34: "There are also those who call cork the 'female ilex' and, where the ilex does not grow, use it in place of cork, especially in the case of *carpentum*-builders." This passage suggests the possibility that we think of the *carpentum* as a kind of "substitute" for the more masculine vehicles such as *currus*.

[432] *Cato Minor* 5.6: καὶ διεπόνει τὸ σῶμα γυμνασίοις ἐνεργοῖς, ἐθιζόμενος ἀνέχεσθαι καὶ καύματα καὶ νιφετὸν ἀκαλύπτῳ κεφαλῇ, καὶ βαδίζειν ἐν ταῖς ὁδοῖς πᾶσαν ὥραν ἄτερ ὀχήματος. τῶν δὲ φίλων οἱ συνεκδημοῦντες ἵπποις ἐχρῶντο, καὶ πολλάκις ἑκάστῳ παρέβαλλεν ὁ Κάτων ἐν μέρει προσδιαλεγόμενος, περιπατῶν αὐτὸς ὀχουμένων.

> He himself carried his own javelin in his hand, went before the panting ranks himself on foot and on display, showed them—with shock and awe—how to bear toils, didn't command them to. And he was borne by no neck—human or animal—either sprawled out in a litter, or sitting in a *carpentum*.[433]

The physical agency (*ipse manu*) and competitive leadership (*praecedit anheli militis ora*; *monstrat…non iubet*), as well as the physical toughness (*pedes*; *tolerare labores*) and rigid refusal to give in to the temptations of soft luxury (*nulla vehitur cervice supinus carpentoque sedens*), together create a vivid portrait of a particular (Stoic) version of Roman masculinity. That such a portrait of ideal manly behavior would in part be defined by eschewing the *carpentum* certainly reinforces the vehicle's feminine associations, a fact which then highlights even more emphatically the severity of the Elder Cato's opposition to women using *carpenta.* Even *women*, Cato's hard line affirms, should not be allowed to use a women's vehicle! Alternatively, instead of being merely a marker of the Elder Cato's extreme repudiation of *luxuria*, we might interpret (Livy's articulation of) his moral outrage as an imagined milestone along Roman culture's narrative of its own inevitable path to decadence.[434] That is, a critical moment when the status of the *carpentum* as a "women's" vehicle was still up for negotiation (even if Cato's position represented a rather hardline view). Nevertheless, Lucan's perverse, barely glimpsed (non-)fantasy of Cato the Younger riding in a matronly *carpentum* (or *lectica*) hints at the complications that result when such a difficult vehicle is used by those outside the select subset of Romans to whom access has been grudgingly granted. Yet strangely perhaps, given how uncomfortable our passages have appeared to be with respect to women in carriages, they are even more uneasy when men climb aboard. That is, besides the vehicle's ability to focalize anxieties surrounding women's independence, the *carpentum* will usually draw attention to ambiguities or complications surrounding gender in general.

A central passage appears in Propertius 4.8, a poem that is much concerned with—in addition to the specifics of Cynthia's mobility—the subversion and swapping of gender roles. On her way to Lanuvium to participate in a fertility ritual connected with the cult of Juno Sospita, Cynthia is vividly portrayed flying along the *via Appia* in the *carpentum* of a foppish male friend:

> *huc mea detonsis avecta est Cynthia mannis:*
> *causa fuit Iuno, sed mage causa Venus.*
> *Appia, dic, quaeso quantum te teste triumphum*
> *egerit effusis per tua saxa rotis.*
> *spectaclum ipsa sedens primo temone pependit*
> *ausa per impuros frena movere iocos.*
> *sed vaga iam taceo vulsi carpenta nepotis*
> *atque armillatos colla Molossa canes;*
> *qui dabit immundae venalia fata saginae*

[433] 9.587-90. Plutarch also mentions Cato's Libyan march, which he completed "without horse or pack animal" (μήθ' ἵππῳ μήθ' ὑποζυγίῳ χρησάμενος, 56.7).

[434] Cato's misogyny and pedestrianism meet in an anecdote recorded by Plutarch (*Cato Maior* 9.9), who has the Censor claiming to have felt regret only three times in his life: once when he trusted his wife with a secret, once when he sailed to a place to which he could have walked instead (πλεύσας ὅπου δυνατὸν ἦν πεζεῦσαι) (and once when he remained intestate for a single day!).

vincet ubi erasas barba pudenda genas.

> Hither my Cynthia drove off, drawn by mane-less ponies: allegedly for Juno's sake, but rather for Venus'. Tell please, O Appian Way, what triumphal procession you witnessed her lead over your paving stones at full speed! A sight to see, she herself leaned forward, sitting at the end of the pole, daring to ply the reins amidst bawdy jokes. But I keep quiet now about the roving *carpentum* of her hairless playboy and his dogs, bracelets around their Molossian necks. He will give his life for sale to the filthy porridge of a gladiator, when a beard (for shame!) conquers his shaved cheeks.[435]

The speaker's ecphrastic portrait participates in an aesthetic of disapproval that is by now familiar from Roman denunciations of elaborate entourages. While claiming the moral high ground is one vital function of such descriptions, essential too is the careful lingering over details. There is an appeal to morbid curiosity: readers, and viewers, are expected to want to pore over each of the salacious ingredients. Gallic ponies were an exotic luxury import, often highlighted for their speed.[436] Their trimmed manes must be an additional mark of exquisiteness, and moreover point forward to the depilated *nepos*. The mock-epic invocation to the *via Appia* as Muse playfully raises the stakes of Cynthia's reckless speeding. Comparing her breakneck dash—and, presumably, her sexual conquest—to a dignified triumph recalls the Elder Cato's image of the *matres* triumphing over the law (discussed above).[437] It also recalls Cicero's prosopopoeia of Appius Claudius Caecus scolding his descendant Clodia for her pollution of his eponymous highway.[438] If the dirty jests are not in fact those of the spectators they pass, they may be made by Cynthia herself as she drives the carriage (instead of the *nepos*, who after all owns it).[439] Propertius' portrait of Cynthia leaning onto the end of the *carpentum* pole (*spectaclum ipsa sedens primo temone pependit*) is reminiscent of Caesar's account of the daringly acrobatic

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[435] 4.8.15-26. I have followed Heyworth's OCT, reading *iocos* (22) instead of *locos*, and Bonnazi's *sed vaga iam* (23) rather than *serica nam* (23) of the *recentiores*, for the transmitted *siriganam. Serica*, "silken," i.e., "fitted out with silk" (rather than "made of silk"), may very well be possible for a *carpentum*, but can only be an ingenious suggestion without other parallel. *Vaga* does fit with Roman disapproval of apparently pointless commuting (see introduction). Compare the discussion of Heyworth (2009), 477-8. Following Barber and Goold, I have removed Heyworth's coma between *ipsa* and *sedens*, which would lessen the force of *ipsa* as an "emphatic pronoun of carriage driving." *Ipsa* goes closely with the rest of the line: "a sight to behold, *she herself was at the reins*," rather than, "she herself was a spectacle, leaning forward…" Hubbard (1974) 155, sees the portrait as invoking an image of Juno's goat-drawn chariot: "The misconduct is perhaps heightened even by blasphemy: why else the detailed description of Cynthia's triumph as she drove her own chariot along the Appian way, in the posture of the goddess of the festival as we see her depicted on coins of Lanuvium?" Cynthia does much commuting, elsewhere by *essedum*, according to 2.32.5-6: *cur ita te Herculeum deportant esseda Tibur? / Appia cur totiens te Via Lanuvium?*

[436] Cinna (fr. 9 Courtney) describes a swift ride, through the osiers of the Po Valley, in a *raeda*, drawn by a "dwarf team": *at nunc me Genumana per salicta / bigis raeda rapit citata nanis*. Horace (*Epod.* 4.14) also envisions *manni* on the *via Appia*. Lucretius uses the swiftness of a *manni*-drawn vehicle as part of his portrait of a restless man's aimless movements: *currit agens mannos ad villam praecipitanter, auxilium tectis quasi ferre ardentibus instans* (3.1063-4).

[437] Livy 34.3.9: "*quid honestum dictu saltem seditioni praetenditur muliebri? 'ut auro et purpura fulgamus' inquit 'ut carpentis festis profestisque diebus, velut triumphantes de lege victa et abrogata et captis et ereptis suffragiis vestris per urbem vectemur; ne ullus modus sumptibus, ne luxuriae sit.'*"

[438] *Cael.* 34: *'ideone ego pacem Pyrrhi diremi ut tu amorum turpissimorum cotidie foedera ferires, ideo aquam adduxi ut ea tu inceste uterere, ideo viam munivi ut eam tu alienis viris comitata celebrares?'*

[439] Either way, the jesting takes the place of the ritualized jeering of the soldiers during actual triumphal processions.

British *essedum*-charioteers who dance back and forth on the pole *(per temonem percurrere et in iugo insistere et se inde in currus citissime recipere consuerint*, 4.33), as well as actual racing charioteers.[440] Besides the obvious sexual allegory implicit in an extended portrait of Cynthia taking the reins and triumphing over her submissive partner, her daring activity as *carpentum*-driver is shocking because excessively masculine.

Her effeminate spendthrift (*nepos*) companion, by contrast, is already a dubious character in that he owns a *carpentum* in the first place. The vehicle's silk upholstery (if the conjecture *serica* is correct), like the man's own skin (*vulsi*), is too *mollis* to belong to a man. Molossian dogs are known for being large and fierce, but we are encouraged to see these intimidating creatures as compensating for the dandy's weakness. In any case, the hounds' proper role as tough guard-dogs is probably undercut by the fact that they are wearing necklaces (*armillatos colla*).[441] But the man's wealth is a fleeting illusion, as his debts will catch up with him: soon he'll have to sell himself as a gladiator, fed by lowly mash, and no longer able to keep shaving his beard. It's an issue of proper Roman masculinity deferred or perverted for too long, until the *nepos* is forced to compensate by aberrant, shameful masculinity as an indentured show-warrior. That he should be ashamed of his resulting beard (*pudenda*)—and at none of the rest of his behaviors—sums up the picture with a memorable image. Ring-composition of *detonsis~erasas* and *vincet* (recalling Cynthia's transgressive triumph on the road) pointedly encloses the troubling swap of gender roles. The *carpentum*, in Propertius' vivid picture, has facilitated an unsettling blurring process (and one which contains in miniature the role-reversal of Cynthia and the speaker): Cynthia is no longer—or is more than—a woman, and the spendthrift is not quite a man.[442]

The theme of gender hybridity associated with the *carpentum* becomes even more explicit in a passage of Pliny the Elder on sexual organs. He concludes the section with a brief description of a team of hermaphroditic horses paraded by the emperor Nero:

> *contra mulierum paucis prodigiosa adsimulatio, sicut hermaphroditis utriusque sexus, quod etiam quadripedum generi accidisse Neronis principatu primum arbitror. ostentabat certe hermaphroditas subiunctas carpento suo equas, in Treverico Galliae agro repertas: ceu plane visenda res esset principem terrarum insidere portentis.*
>
> On the contrary, there is in a few women an unnatural likeness (to men), such as hermaphrodites, who belong to both sexes; the latter, I believe, first appeared among quadrupeds during the rein of Nero. Indeed he displayed hermaphrodite horses yoked to his *carpentum*, which had been discovevered in the territory of the Treveri, in Gaul: as if it was by all means a sight to be seen that the ruler of the earth be seated upon monstrosities.[443]

[440] *Aen*. 5.147: *pronique in verbera pendent*. Man. 5.77.
[441] A Molossian has the epithet of "fierce" in the *Georgics* (*acrem…Molossum*, 3.406). In Horace's *Satire* 2.6, after the crash of doors in the city mouse's house (rather as when Cynthia abruptly breaks down the speaker's *valvae* at 4.8.51), it is the Molossians dogs that finally frighten the country mouse back to his humble, rustic lifestyle (111-7).
[442] Cf. Hutchinson (2006), 190-1.
[443] *N.H.* 11.262

Nero's yoking of the ambiguously gendered animals to his *carpentum* takes on further significance if we assume that the emperor's very use of this particular vehicle represents a provocative and spectacular instance of gender-bending travel, regardless of its harnessed team. He has seated himself in a conveyance more strictly appropriate for matrons—his own mother, for example—and has done so, Pliny highlights, in a way designed to draw attention to himself (*ostentabat, plane visenda res esset*). While his yoking of these portentous creatures is ostensibly meant as a show of imperial control—Nero can rein in even ill-omened monsters—the showy gesture instead comes off as a dangerous symbol, or outcome, of the emperor's depravity. Pliny subtly highlights this by the off-hand observation (*arbitror*) that hermaphroditic horses first appeared under Nero's rein, as if nature itself has been forced to respond to the *princeps*' hybridization.

The only other time Pliny mentions the *carpentum* can serve to as a check to this interpretation. In his account of human feats of strength, he describes the achievements of one Vinnius Valens ("Strongman"):

> *at Vinnius Valens meruit in praetorio Divi Augusti centurio, vehicula v<ini> culleis onusta, donec exinanirentur, sustinere solitus, carpenta adprehensa una manu retinere, obnixus contra nitentibus iumentis, et alia mirifica facere, quae insculpta monumento eius spectantur.*[444]
>
> Vinnius Valens, who served as centurion in the praetorian guard of Augustus, used to lift up vehicles laden with casks of wine [sc. *plaustra*] until they were emptied out, and to hold back *carpenta* with one hand, resisting the team struggling to pull it, and to accomplish other incredible feats, which can be seen carved on a monument to him.

While *plaustra* are simply the heaviest, slowest vehicles in Roman culture, and to lift one up is surely a mark of sheer brute strength, the "manliness" involved in Vinnius Valens' triumph over the *carpentum* is no doubt enhanced by the implied contrast between masculine weightlifting and a properly feminine comfort-carriage.

Juvenal offers a sidelong glance at *carpenta*, in a harsh bit of advice to the client Naevolus, who after satisfying the duties and demands of his former patron, is at a loss about what to do next:

> *ne trepida, numquam pathicus tibi derit amicus*
> *stantibus et salvis his collibus; undique ad illos*
> *convenient et carpentis et navibus omnes*
> *qui digito scalpunt uno caput.*
>
> Never fear, you'll always find a pathic friend as long as these hills stay standing. From far and wide they come hither in ships and *carpenta*, all who scratch their head with one finger.[445]

[444] *N.H.* 7.82
[445] 9.130-3

Juvenal's bitter sarcasm (*ne trepida*) imbues his mock-solemn pronouncement. *Stantibus et salvis his collibus*, almost a form of *adunaton*, is applied to the ridiculous assertion that "for all time" Rome will have a copious supply of patrons wishing to be penetrated by their clients. Notice however that these dubious characters are portrayed as flocking towards the city from elsewhere. And the phrase *et carpentis et navibus* represents an updated take on the seemingly proverbial *navibus atque quadrigis* (Hor. *Ep.* 1.11.28), which seems to mean instead of simply "by land and sea," rather "by hook or by crook" (i.e., by any any and every means). That Juvenal has replaced *quadrigis* with *carpentis* must surely be motivated by the questionable morals and effeminacy of the *pathici amici*.

Juvenal's other picture of the *carpentum* involves an extended use of the vehicle's associations of hybridity. This is an elaborate centerpiece that appears in his eighth satire, on the rag-tag low-lifes currently passing for aristocrats in Rome, and describes the all too physical transportation of the mule-driving consul, Lateranus:

> *praeter maiorum cineres atque ossa volucri*
> *carpento rapitur pinguis Lateranus et ipse,*
> *ipse rotam adstringit sufflamine mulio consul,*
> *nocte quidem, sed Luna videt, sed sidera testes*
> *intendunt oculos. finitum tempus honoris*
> *cum fuerit, clara Lateranus luce flagellum*
> *sumet et occursum numquam trepidabit amici*
> *iam senis ac virga prior adnuet atque maniplos*
> *solvet et infundet iumentis hordea lassis.*
>
> Fat Lateranus careers past the ashes and bones of his ancestors in a flying *carpentum* and by himself—himself—applies the brake to the wheel: a muleteer consul! At night, to be fair, but the Moon sees him, and the stars are witnesses, straining their eyes to observe. When his term of office is finished, Lateranus will take up his whip in broad daylight and he'll never worry about meeting a now elderly friend; rather, with his switch he'll first "nod at" him and undo his bales of hay and pour out the barley for his tired team.[446]

Lateranus ("Brick House") hurtles by his ancestors' tombs, thus acting out a stark contrast between their illustrious lives and his lowly preoccupation with the material reality of carriages.[447] His fatness (*pinguis*) is perhaps meant to result from sitting in his (single-occupancy?) vehicle for far too many hours. The enjambed epanalepsis *ipse,* / *ipse,* beyond being yet another example of the "emphatic pronoun of (problematic) vehicle driving" that repeatedly occurs in Roman passages of wheeled transport, conveys the outrage of the speaker. Lateranus puts the brakes on his speeding vehicle personally, an act which our bus-driver-turned-statesman keeps secret (for now), watched only by the moon and the stars. The consul thus becomes a kind

[446] 8.146-54, most likely Plautius Lateranus (*RE* no.45), consul designate in 65 CE, but executed before serving because implicated in the Pisonian conspiracy. Tacitus calls him *corpore ingens* (*Ann.* 15.53)

[447] Implicit is the suggestion that the roads just outside of Rome are for visiting tombs, not for joyrides, and thus serve a natural contrast between illicit trips and monuments to nobility. cf. 1.171 (the *via Flaminia* and *Latina*) and 5.55 (a nocturnal litter (?) ride past the tombs on the *via Latina*).

of vile witch, casting spells by moonlight.[448] When the consul's term is over, he'll revert to his mule-driving occupation, shamelessly cracking the whip in front of his former colleagues. Nevertheless, the speaker's outrage at a consul driving a vehicle is somewhat perplexing.[449] But the feminine associations of the *carpentum* may explain the special transgressiveness of Lateranus' movement: it is even more outrageous for a consul to ride in—and drive—a matronly carriage. Whether or not these associations are still felt in Juvenal's day is difficult to determine, but even if they are not, we have yet again encountered the vehicle in a context of hybrid behavior. Lateranus' dissolute, possibly effeminate behavior is only hinted at (a visit to the prostitute Cyane, 161-2, and wine-drinking at the baths as a youth, 167-8) and it it difficult to say whether the *carpentum*'s gender-blurring function colors its driver. But even so, he is undoubtedly a hybrid character, who occupies two conflicting roles, as simultaneously lowly muleteer and elevated Roman magistrate

It remains to examine several instances of lavish imperial *carpentum* use as depicted by Suetonius. In his life of Tiberius, the biographer revisits a well-worn image, familiar from the numerous portrayals of Tullia, of the imperious Roman matron who oversteps her bounds while carriage-borne. While tracing the family history of the Claudii—an account rife with transportational import—he narrates an anecdote involving one Claudia:

> *et quae nouo more iudicium maiestatis apud populum mulier subiit, quod in conferta multitudine aegre procedente carpento palam optauerat, ut frater suus Pulcher reuiuisceret atque iterum classem amitteret, quo minor turba Romae foret.*
>
> And [the Claudia] who was tried by the people for treason, a new thing for a woman, because when the progress of her *carpentum* was slowed by the packed crowds she openly expressed the wish that her brother Pulcher might come back to life and lose another fleet, so that there might be less crowding in Rome![450]

The concept of traffic as a byproduct of an overabundant population is certainly familiar from various Roman authors, most notably Juvenal, but the (implicitly) murderous wishes of a powerful noble woman must recall Tullia in particular. The continuity of the *carpentum* as a prop for this motif is striking, and confirms its function as a vehicle of treason, employed by high-handed women.

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[448] The detail of the moon and stars as witnesses seems to invoke (by a kind of reverse) the terms of the καθαίρεσις, the pulling down of the moon and stars by witches, in order presumably for them to engage in magical activity unseen by others. Horace (*S.*1.8.35-6) has Luna blush and *avoid* witnessing the witches' dealings with the statue of Priapus: *Lunamque rubentem* / *ne foret his testis post magna latere sepulcra*. And they first approach the statue when Luna appears (21-2). Cf. also Juvenal 6.311 of the moon as witness (*Luna teste,* though Hendry emends to *nullo teste*) to women urinating on the *ara Pudicitiae*. The unavoidable presence of puns on *testis*, "testicle" in all of these passages may endow Lateranus' portrait with a further suggestion of lewdness (cf. his later dealings with the prostitute Cyane, 161-2).

[449] Courtney, *ad loc.*, "To drive oneself instead of being driven was undignified, but hardly the moral scandal Juvenal considers it."

[450] 2.3. Besides Appius Claudius Caecus, and Claudius Caudex (the first to cross the straits with his fleet), Suetonius mentions another Claudia who dragged the ship bearing the sacred effects of Magna Mater from a shoal in the Tiber, and the Vestal Virgin who rode in her brother's triumphal chariot (in order to make it a sacrilege for the tribunes to oppose his triumph, which had not been sanctioned by the people).

Other instances of the *carpentum* in Suetonius function as a symbol for overbearing female members of the imperial household, and, at the same time, of the excessive subservience of emperors to them. The emperor Caligula, the biographer tells us, had an image of his deceased mother carried in a *carpentum* before the games (15.1). Claudius likewise had his mother's image borne in a carriage—significantly, a privilege that she had declined while alive: *parentibus inferias publicas, et hoc amplius patri circenses annuos natali die, matri carpentum, quo per circum duceretur, et cognomen Augustae ab uiua recusatum.*

During Claudius' celebration of his triumph over Britain, his wife Messalina followed his chariot in a *carpentum* (*currum eius Messalina uxor carpento secuta est*, 17.3). Tacitus similarly frames Agrippina's *carpentum* privileges as a mark of her excessive power, and of Claudius' role as henpecked husband:

> *suum quoque fastigium Agrippina extollere altius: carpento Capitolium ingredi, qui honos sacerdotibus et sacris antiquitus concessus venerationem augebat feminae, quam imperatore genitam, sororem eius qui rerum potitus sit et coniugem et matrem fuisse, unicum ad hunc diem exemplum est.*
>
> Agrippina too continued to raise her authority even higher. She would enter the Capitol in a *carpentum*, an honor which, granted in ancient times only to priests and sacred images, increased the veneration of a woman who to this day represents the only instance of one who, an emperor's daughter, was sister, wife, and mother of the ruler of the world.[451]

That is to say, even when officially sanctioned as the vehicle of choice for female members of the imperial household, the *carpentum* never facilitates an entirely smooth ride.

4. Agents of motion

"Wir fahren fahren fahren auf der Autobahn."[452]

I would like to close by returning to the Tullia episode, and reading it in conjunction with the narrative of the repeal of the *lex Oppia*, in order to revise the conclusions reached in the above discussion and to situate them within the context of more general Latin literary articulations of vehicular transit. We have seen that on a deeper, more implicit level, representations of the *carpentum* appear to be *about* Roman anxieties surrounding powerful women, whether daughters or wives. Tullia's *carpentum* surely constitutes the most pointed and dramatic instance of this phenomen, but the carriages at stake in the matrons' demonstration in support of the repeal of *lex Oppia* are certainly illustrative of it as well. But what has been for the most part passed over in the foregoing discussion is the way in which this conveyance's movement through space is articulated. Given the significance of these discursive patterns for an

[451] *Ann.* 12.42

[452] Wolfgang Flür, on "Autobahn," Kraftwerk's meditative hymn to high-speed car transport: "…We had no speed limit on the autobahn, we could race through the highways, through the Alps, so yes, '*fahren fahren fahren*…fun fun fun,' but it wasn't anything to do with the Beach Boys!" Thompson (2009), 250.

understanding of the power-relations involved in Roman versions of vehicular transport, it is appropriate to analyze them here.

To take up the Tullia narrative first, one most salient feature is the underlying schema of upward and downward motion in which her *carpentum* participates. Underlying this arrangement are the rather obvious metaphoric poles of height, representating power and authority, and lowness, indicative of weakness, abjection, and loss of influence. Less immediately evident, however, is the fact that it is against this backdrop of extremes of elevation that a balanced economy of movement plays out. Such an economy of movement—a kind of balance of spatial elevation—is perhaps unsurprising for a culture whose pinnacle achievement was to surmount the Capitoline hill in a raised triumphal chariot, and whose most notorious punishment consisted in being hurled down from the Tarpeian rock just nearby. Nevertheless, this spatial trend is well-developed in Livy's text and, in the closing chapters of Book 1, acts as a figurative expression for the transfer of power from Servius to Tullia/Tarquin.[453] Before discussing the implications of this particular version of spatial exchange, I will describe its unfolding in Livy's narrative. Tarquin's overthrow of Tullius is first envisioned as the rather concrete act of stealing his seat before the curia (*in regia sede pro curia sedens*, 1.47.8), which itself is elevated, with a flight of stairs leading up to it (48.3). The royal *sedes* is the physical and metaphoric peak of Roman monarchical power. After having the *patres* summoned into the Curia to their "king" (*patres in curiam per praeconem ad regem Tarquinium citari iussit*, 8), Tarquin delivers a stinging attack (*maledicta*, 10) on Tullius, starting from the beginnings of his family (*ab stirpe ultima*). His particular "roots" are about as low as can be: his name Servius, Tarquin suggests, stems from the fact that he is a slave, born of a slave-woman (*servum servaque natum*, 10). Hence, then, his support for the "lowest" class of people (*fautorem infimi generis hominum*, 11), and his weighting down of the foremost citizens with burdens that used to be commonly shared (*omnia onera quae communia quondam fuerint, inclinasse in primores civitatis*, 12). Servius' own arrival as Roman monarch is configured in terms of a movement from the very bottom to a metaphoric height—an ascendancy that is coupled with an inverse, downward motion of the previously dominant parties. Here they are especially pushed down by once evenly-distributed loads.

When Servius confronts Tarquin for "sitting in his seat" (*in sede considere mea*, 48.1), Tarquin claims it as his father's (*se patris sui tenere sedem*, 2). Servius, Tarquin proclaims, has for long enough insolently mocked and reviled his masters (*satis illum diu per licentiam eludentem insultasse dominis*, 2), but in the context of the extended metaphor of "king of the hill" and seat-seizing one-upmanship, the literal sense of *insultare*, "to leap upon," is not entirely suppressed. Servius, a lowly slave, has been jumping on top of his highers-up. A climax of swapped trajectories is reached when Tarquin, "forced to dare," grabs his father-in-law, carries him out of the curia, and hurls the old man down the steps of the senate-house: *tum Tarquinius necessitate iam etiam ipsa cogente ultima audere, multo et aetate et viribus validior, medium arripit Servium elatumque e curia in inferiorem partem per gradus deiecit* (3). The cast-out king,

[453] It is pointed that Brutus', and the Romans', overthrow of Tarquin is *not* described in similar spatial terms: he, and they, do not precisely "rise" to power, even if it could be said that Tullia "falls," in that she ends up as a wandering fugitive, now carriage-less and *on foot* (1.59.13, on which see below). Livy's interruption of this cycle of "elevation swaps" must be central to his conception of the establishment of the Republic. Brutus' drive towards liberation only gets spatial articulation through his movement from Collatia toward Rome, where he delivers a tirade in the forum (he subsequently withdraws to Ardea). A restructuring of power's spatial terms, from vertical to horizontal, accompanies the shift from monarchy to republic.

as we have seen, makes his way homeward, half-dead (*exsanguis*), and is caught by Tarquin's henchmen and killed.

After such a catastrophic fall, it may seem that Servius could not possibly descend any further. But Tullia, after flouting the taboo on appearing in public and being the first to hail her husband king (first, that is, after Tarquin himself had done), sets off homeward once again, and Livy's account of this trip ends with her on an upward trend. Her *carpentum* climbs to the top of the *vicus Cyprius* and turns right onto the *clivus Urbius* in order to ascend the Esquiline Hill (*pervenissetque ad summum Cyprium vicum…flectenti carpentum dextra in Urbium clivum ut in collem Esquiliniarum eveheretur*, 6). It is interesting that we don't quite see Tullia reach the summit of her journey—perhaps this is because Tarquin's assumption of the *sedes* is symbolic of their shared upward arrival—but this must be because the depiction of inverse movements of father and daughter shifts modes slightly for its tragic dénouement. Whereas until now the economy of ascending or descending movement has been merely associative or symbolic, Tullia's decision to have her carriage driven directly over her father's body represents a sudden distillation of spatial thematics into real, physical terms: Servius has been brutally put down because of/simultaneous with her self-willed (and perverse) elevation.[454] Indeed, as already discussed, Livy has their crossing trajectories meld in a graphic use of the preposition *per* to describe the destructive motion of the carriage: *Tullia **per** patris corpus carpentum egisse fertur* (7). While still cohering with the up/down schematic, *per* conveys more vividly than, say, *super*, the penetration and tearing apart of Servius' body by hooves and wheels. The jingle of ***corp**us **carp**entum* suggests a gruesome blending of body and vehicle: the two have become an almost indistinguishable mess. Livy's selection of grim *per* stands out all the more when we once again compare him with the other extant accounts. Varro's more concise version has simply *supra*: *cum iaceret pater occisus, **supra** eum carpentum mulio ut inigeret* [Tullia].[455] Valerius Maximus follows Varro: *supra id* [*corpus*] *duci vehiculum iussit* (9.11.1.3). And Festus is similar: *corpus eius iacens filia carpento supervecta sit* (450-1 L). But instead of reading Livy's substitution of the more graphic *per* for the traditional *supra* as somehow undercutting his own configuration of the spatial terms traced above, we should more plausibly view it as a slight, momentary departure—for dramatic purposes, for the sake of *enargeia*, etc.—from a pre-existing, conventional backdrop of vertical economy that an image of Tullia (high in a carriage) *above* her father (lying below on the pavement) crystallizes. That is to say, Livy's *per* presumes this up/down relationship for his portrait of the collision, but shifts the focus subtly onto the point of contact—onto the intersection of the two characters' crossing trajectories.

It is worth tracing how the up/down economy unfolds after Tullia's, and Tarquin's, ascent. If the power that replaces the last and worst of the kings—the Roman people driven by Brutus—does not exactly "rise up," Tullia is nevertheless taken down several notches. Her own story ends with a grimly ironic role-reversal: in the midst of the uprising spurred on by Brutus, she is driven off by the Roman crowds. Whereas her earlier, fateful drive had been "homeward" (i.e., to take possession of her father's home, *cum se domum reciperet*, 1.48.6), she is now a homeless exile, forever moving away from home wherever she goes, *on foot*—a pointed contrast with her earlier carriage travel (*quacumque **incedebat***). She has been dramatically stripped of her *carpentum* privilege, forced to walk the earth aimlessly:

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[454] The closest our narrative has come to an explicit articulation of this "economy of elevation" is when Tarquin physically throws Servius down the steps of the curia, but even here there is a delay and a multi-step process: Tarquin occupies the throne, Servius confronts him, and Tarquin ejects him from the senate house.
[455] *LL* 5.159

inter hunc tumultum Tullia domo profugit exsecrantibus, quacumque incedebat, invocantibusque parentum furias viris mulieribusque.[456]

With this postscript, Tullia's unsettling *exemplum* is emphatically concluded: her eminence has been downgraded. She had never truly deserved to ride in a *carpentum*, but now must humbly hit the road, impelled along by cursing hordes. But while Tullia has certainly been physically lowered, the prevailing economy of verticality has otherwise been shut down at this point in Livy's narrative. Brutus' drive towards liberation only receives spatial articulation in his movement from Collatia toward Rome, where he delivers a tirade in the forum, and his subsequent withdrawl to Ardea, before his final, exultant return to the city. Livy's interruption of this (regal) cycle of "elevation swaps" must be central to his conception of the establishment of the Republic. A restructuring of power's spatial terms, from a vertical pole to a horizontal plane, accompanies the shift from monarchy to republic.

I would like to point to a similar structural pattern in Livy's narrative of the repeal of the *lex Oppia*, despite the fact that the spatial terms in which the two accounts are expressed are distinct. Whereas the rise to power of Tullia and Tarquin, and the concomitant fall of Servius (as well as the subsequent rise of Brutus), takes shape through an economy of vertical movement, the challenge presented by the matrons to the senate takes place via an opposition between political power as physical movement, on the one hand, and as fixed (centrally located—at the *forum*) authoritative speech, on the other. Implicit in the matrons' preemptive move to reclaim their privilege to intra-urban *carpentum* use is the dangerous suggestion that legislation, even policy, could be determined not by officially sanctioned verbal persuasion (over which the senators and magistrates have control), but by physical motion (if not pressure) and impromptu speech.

The interaction of the *carpentum*'s path with the motions of power ramifies with the appearance of language of mounting a wheeled carriage and driving a team of draft animals. Tarquin's appearance in the forum with an armed entourage has the effect of everyone being "knocked over" with fear (*omnibus perculsis pavore*, 47.8); *percellere* is the standard verb used to describe the overturning of *plaustra*.[457] The verb of Tarquin's "summoning" of the senators (*patres…ad regem Tarquinium citari iussit*, 47.8), *citari*, is frequent in an idiom for riding or driving "at full speed": *citatis equis*.[458]

The people think that "that's the end of Servius" *iam de Servio actum rati* (47.9): it is a grimly prescient pun, since the metaphor of *actum est de aliquo* ("x is all over", probably from *res acta est*, "the case is over") is of course made violently concrete when the driver (*is qui iumenta agebat*, 48.6) or Tullia (?) drives (*egisse*, 7) the *carpentum* over Servius' body. It's striking—as if a kind of cledonomancy. And Servius himself is described as having "instigated plans for liberating his country" (*liberandae patriae consilia agitanti*, 9). I would not argue that Livy is deliberately repurposing language to do with carriage driving to create troubling ambiguities, though it seems fair to say that the concentration of such metaphors shows the extent to which the entire passage can be read as a kind of *meditation* on this disturbing "tragic"

[456] 1.59.13. Not only men, but women also disapprove of her conduct (*viris mulieribusque*): her debasement receives universal welcome. Note also that Brutus' band marches about in identical phrasing: *quacumque incedit armata multitudo* (59.6).
[457] E.g., the apparently proverbial *perii, plaustrum perculi!* (Plaut. *Ep.* 592)
[458] Horses: at Livy 1.57.8, 3.46.6.3, etc.; chariot: Sil. 8.663

story of regal overthrow and family turmoil. Instead, I suggest that the recurrence of ambiguous-making language represents the artificiality—the impossibility, even—of such a structured economy of movement. For, once stability has been reestablished, trajectories retraced, lingering questions are left: why are certain ascensions disallowed, whereas others are not?

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