

JUVENAL 1.155–7

pone Tigillinum, taeda lucebis in illa
qua stantes ardent qui fixo gutture fumant,
et latum media sulcum deducit harena.

A. A. Barrett's recent¹ addition of a *raeda* to Juvenal 1.155 is a novel and ingenious contribution to the ago-old debate over the text and meaning of the passage in question. His proposal is, however, vulnerable to the following objections.

First, it is worth emphasizing that there is no manuscript variant for the traditional reading *taeda*. In a passage so fraught with problems and textual discrepancies, this is probably suggestive. Furthermore, *taeda* was indisputably in the text of the scholiasts, since they comment on its meaning, albeit without any suggestion of an alternative reading.

Next, in the Zliten mosaic adduced by Barrett, the vehicle employed is clearly a two-wheeler. A *raeda*, by contrast, was always four-wheeled. It is so defined by Isidore of Seville:² '*reda*: genus vehiculi quattuor rotarum'; also, a rescript in the Theodosian Code contrasts *raeda* with *birota*.³

Nor, apart from this, is the mosaic a cogent parallel. In an activity involving wild animals, the use of a cart with a long pole was surely to guarantee the arena attendants' own safety. This is clearly not a consideration with burning victims.

With regard to the meaning of *sulcum*, Barrett ignores all the evidence for the regular procedure of placing victims and their stakes in trenches. Aulus Gellius (*NA* 3.14.19) quotes Cato to the effect that the Carthaginians '*homines defoderunt in tarram dimidiatos ignemque circumposuerunt, ita interfecerunt*'. Asinius Pollio, in a letter to Cicero (*Ad fam.* 10.32.3) reports the action of Balbus at Gades against the unfortunate Fadius: '*defodit in ludo et vivum combussit*'. By Nero's time, this was the standard method, on the evidence of Seneca: '*circumdati defossis corporibus ignes*' (*De ira* 3.3.6). Valla's scholiast was well aware of all this, as his explanation of *sulcum* shows: '*fossam in qua stipites figebant in quibus ardebant*'. It was precisely this procedure that lent novelty to the fact or fiction produced by the *Historia Augusta*⁴ in claiming that Avidius Cassius was the first man to erect a huge post and tie victims for burning onto it, from top to bottom.

It is legitimate to point out that it is only a presumption that Juvenal is thinking of the burning of Christians under Nero; Barrett's opening paragraph is unwarrantedly confident about this. Given the tone of his Satires as a whole, Juvenal does not strike one as being a man who would have had any more sympathy for Christians than Tacitus had. Nor does it make any obvious sense to say that the sect was punished for exposing Tigellinus. The scholiastic explanation, '*pone Tigellinum: hoc est in satura*', seems a more likely one. We are thereby led to think of the episode reported by Suetonius, *Cal.* 27:

¹ *CQ* 27 (1977), 438–40.

² *Orig.* 20.12. My colleague, Dr. M. B. Walbank, warns me that Isidore can be very unreliable on technological matters. But surely anyone could distinguish a two-

wheeler from a four-wheeler—it involves no more in modern terms than telling a car and a bicycle apart.

³ *Cod. Theod.* 8.5.8.

⁴ *AC* 4.2.

'atellanae poetam ob ambigui loci versiculum media amphitheatri arena igni cremavit'. Christians, after all, were not the only ones to be burned by imperial orders. In the context of Juvenal, it is relevant to adduce the claim of Pliny¹ that under Trajan, unlike Domitian, no one was now burned in the arena.

Yet even allowing that Christians are the inspiration for Juvenal's lines does not help Barrett's case. He takes no account of Tertullian's description (*Apol.* 50.3) of the burning of the martyrs: 'nunc sarmenticios et semaxios appelletis quia ad stipitem dimidii axis revincti sarmentorum ambitu exurimur'.

True, this is not an easy sentence to translate with total confidence, in that *semaxius* is an epithet unique to this passage,² and there are two nouns *axis*, one meaning wheel, the other plank. However, the *TLL* applies the latter sense to Tertullian's account, and *dimidii* ought to mean 'half-way down in the ground', because the aforementioned description of burning by Cato is quoted by Gellius specifically to illustrate this meaning for *dimidiatus*.³ All of this seems to me to prove that Juvenal's victims were tied to stakes in a line, with the stakes buried half-way into a trench for the sake of stability, in the regular way.

With respect to other supposed problems in the lines, Barrett is needlessly troubled by the change of tense from *lucebis* to *deducit*. Friedländer long ago demonstrated that such an enallage temporum, especially the present with the future, is quite usual in Juvenal and other authors. As to the alleged difficulty of finding a subject for *deducit*, I personally am quite convinced by Giangrande's⁴ argument that it is Tigellinus himself. This affords perfect sense, and there is no problem with the word order, since Tigellinus is given the emphatic position at the beginning of the sentence. There is an exact parallel, as Giangrande noted, in the famous *expende Hannibalem* sequence in the Tenth Satire: here Hannibal, so introduced in 1.147, is undeniably the subject of *diducit* in 1.153.

No real problems, then, and no cause or justification for altering *taeda* to *raeda*. For those still bothered by the traditional difficulties, there remains the explanation of *sulcum* as referring to a furrow or beam of light. There is much more to recommend this than Barrett's cavalier dismissal of it as a 'curious notion'⁵ would suggest. A furrow of light is a regular turn of phrase in epic, traceable at least as far back as Apollonius of Rhodes (4.294–7). It was popular with Neronian and Flavian poets—a point of some relevance to Juvenal—as is evidenced by Lucan (5.561–3; 10.502) and Valerius Flaccus (1.568–9).

Most striking of all is Virgil, *Aen.* 2.697–8: 'tum longo limite sulcus/dat lucem et late circum loca sulphure fumant'. Consider the verbal parallels between this and the Juvenalian sequence: *late/latum*; *sulphure fumant/guttur*—or *pectore—fumant*. One might be led to conclude that Juvenal is deliberately echoing a Virgilian original. Given this, the conjecture *dant lucis* for *deducit* would gain strength from Virgil's *dat lucem*.⁶

¹ *Pan.* 33.3: 'nemo e spectatore spectaculum factus miseras voluptates unco et ignibus expiavit'.

² Dictionaries variously register it thus or as *semiaxius* or *semiaxiarius*.

³ This entire notice of Gellius is consecrated to the real and alleged distinctions of meaning between *dimidius* and *dimidiatus*; it is clear from Gellius and Varro that Romans used both words with some

indifference.

⁴ 'Juvenalian Emendations and Interpretations', *Erano*s 63 (1965), 33–5.

⁵ Referring to S. G. Owen's note on the passage in *CR* 11 (1897), 400–1.

⁶ Owen attributes the conjecture to Dobree, although the latter actually says he had it from *adulescens quidam* (very like Aulus Gellius, that!). Owen went on to conjecture and print *dant lucis* in his

University of Calgary

B. BALDWIN

O.C.T. With *taeda* as the subject (cf. Madvig and Mayor on this), *dat lucis* would also be possible. Notice, finally, that retention of *deducit arena* does not dilute the Virgilian flavour, since the phrase occurs in *Georg.* 1.114.

* One afterthought: Lucretius 3.1017 enumerates the standard punishments thus: 'verbera carnifices robur pix lammina taedae'; this might enhance the claims of *taeda* in the Juvenal passage.