

not anticipate how the women will respond to their hopeless situation.

The inversion of the action in *The Trojan Women* thus deprives it of an end or goal. By so doing, it dramatizes human experience deprived of a goal, suffering stripped of false hopes and expectations. And since we, the audience, have no plot to guide us through this experience, the wave of suffering may threaten us also:

οὕτω δὲ κἀγὼ πόλλ' ἔχουσα πήματα
 ἄφθογγός εἰμι καὶ παρεῖσ' ἔῶ στόμα·
 νικᾷ γὰρ οὐκ θεῶν με δύστηνος κλύδων. (694–96)⁴⁴).

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44) This article is an expanded version of a paper delivered at the 1985 Annual Meeting of the American Philological Association. My thanks to John Herington for his helpful suggestions.

THE GENERIC USE OF *MULA* AND THE STATUS AND EMPLOYMENT OF FEMALE MULES IN THE ROMAN WORLD*)

I. Introduction

Sometimes linguistic history can throw light on social and economic history or practices. The use of *mula* in Imperial Latin requires one to assume a pattern of usage of mules in the Roman world which our sources felt no need to comment on explicitly.

The history of the pair *mulus/mula* offers an interesting case of a grammatical rule in conflict with the facts of everyday life. The general rule is that in masculine / feminine pairs of animal names of

*) I am grateful to J. Bta. Aparicio Macarro, D. M. Bain, J. R. Baker, H. D. Jocelyn and J. N. H. Lawrance for much useful advice and information.

the type *equus/equa*, *asinus/asina* in Latin, the masculine form functions as the generic term. The feminine form is marked for sex, and is only used when a specific reference to the female of the species is required. But the behaviour of the pair of words *mulus/mula* is quite unlike that of *equus/equa* and *asinus/asina*. *Mulus* is indeed attested as a generic term¹), and *mula* often refers to the female, but there are many passages in which *mula* has to be taken as generic. It became so well-established in a generic sense that it entered late Greek as a loan word: note e.g. Alex. Trall. 1.15, p. 571 Puschmann πεσεῖται δέ, ἐὰν τρίχας ὄνου καὶ μούλης ὑποθιμίᾳσης. This form is the base of Mod. Greek μουλάρι²). It will be shown here that female mules were for various reasons more sought after in antiquity (as indeed they have been in more modern times), particularly for certain tasks (see below). There must have been speakers who were uncomfortable about using the masculine *mulus* as the general term for the *genus*, indicating as it did the less valued and (in an entire state) less common male (see below, Section III). For this reason the grammatical rule stated above tended to be abandoned, though it constantly reasserted itself. I return to this point in section III.

The generic use of *mula* has sometimes been noted in isolated passages (note TLL VIII.1620.62 ff. 'de toto hoc genere animalium, sc. ita ut muli simul intellegantur, dictum esse uidetur'³), with some examples), but no systematic collection of examples has been made, and no serious explanation has been offered of how the feminine form developed its generalised meaning⁴).

I begin with some illustrations of the generic use of *mula*, and of the variability of usage, particularly as between the Republican and Imperial periods.

1) Note Dig. 32.62 *Iulianus libro singulari de ambiguitatibus. qui duos mulos habebat ita legauit: 'mulos duos, qui mei erunt cum moriar, heres dato': idem nullos mulos, sed duas mulas reliquerat. respondit Seruius deberi legatum, quia mulorum appellatione etiam mularum continentur, quemadmodum appellatione seruorum etiam seruae plerumque continentur*. This passage is cited by Olck, RE VI.1.656.

2) See G. P. Shipp, *Modern Greek Evidence for the Ancient Greek Vocabulary* (Sydney 1979), 170.

3) See also Olck, RE VI. 1.656, J. M. C. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art* (London 1973), 185 on Pliny the Elder.

4) It is sometimes stated without explanation that the female was more 'valued' than the male: see O. Keller, *Die antike Tierwelt* (Leipzig 1909–13), I, 265; *Der kleine Pauly III* (Stuttgart 1969), 1090. The latter work states that there was no distinction in the uses to which the male and the female mule were put. Note too TLL VIII.1620.64 (on the generic use) 'fortasse quia -ae magis idoneae erant ad usum'.

II. Evidence for the generic use

Columella, observing that the mule might be the offspring of either a mare and an *asinus*, or a stallion and an *asina*, uses *mula* to embrace both sexes: 6.37.3 *mula autem non solum ex equa et asino, sed ex asina et equo . . . generatur*. The generic use here is the more striking in that *equus*, *equa*, *asinus* and *asina* are all marked for sex in this sentence. By contrast Varro preferred *mulus* when making the same observation: Rust. 2.8.1 *ex equa enim et asino fit mulus, contra ex equo et asina hinnus*. Pliny agrees with his near-contemporary Columella in using *mula* in the same context: Nat. 8.171 *ex asino et equa mula gignitur mense XIII, animal uiribus in labores eximium* (cf. Nat. 8.167, 8.174 for similar contexts). On this evidence the generic use of *mula* might have gained ground between the time of Varro and the first century A.D.

In Varro (*Res rusticae*) *mulus* outnumbers *mula* by about 15 : 5, and it is *mulus* that is the generic term (see e.g. 2.1.12, in a list of various categories of animals). *Mula* usually has a specific reference to the female (2.1.27 three times, 2.8.4). Earlier, in Cato, the generalising sense of *mulus* is obvious at Agr. 62 *quot iuga bouerum, mulorum, asinorum habebis* (cf. Plaut. Aul. 494 in a contrast with *equus*). For the generic use in Cicero, see Nat. 2.159 *longum est mulorum persequi utilitates et asinorum*.

But in Columella about 10 of the 13 examples of *mula* are generic⁵). Note, for example, the following lists of animals consisting in other respects of masculine generic terms: 6 praef. 6 *cum sint duo genera quadrupedum, quorum alterum paramus in consortium operum, sicut bouem, mulam, equum, asinum*, 7.5.5 *si stabulo utaris, in quo mulae aut equi aut asini steterunt*. The class of mules is called *genus mularum* at 6.36.1 and 6.37.5. Columella's phrase *mularum greges* at 6.35.2 contrasts with *grex mulorum* in various places in Varro (Rust. 2.8.5, 2.8.6, 2.9.2).

There are perhaps 4 cases of *mulus* in Columella. I omit from consideration the form *mulis* (2.21.5, 6.38.4), which does not show its gender⁶). One generalising masculine example is in a quotation from the books of the *pontifices* (2.21.5, in the form *mulos*). There is another general instance of *mulos* at 6.7.1, but some manuscripts have a variant (*mulus* ΣΑψω: from *mulas*?), and Palladius, drawing

5) Probably generic: 6 praef. 6, 6.27.9, 6.35.2, 6.36.1, 6.37.3, 6.37.5, 6.37.6, 6.37.7, 6.38.4, 7.5.5; as marked female term: 6.37.3, 6.38.1. I am uncertain about the interpretation of the example at 6.37.11.

6) Moreover the first of these examples is in a quotation of Cato (Agr. 138).

on the passage, writes (14.7.1) *eadem anas . . . mulas et equinum genus conspectu suo sanat*. Vegetius (Mul. 4.4.6) has *mulos* in his version of the same passage of Columella, but he regularly uses *mulus* as the generic term, and elsewhere changes *mula* in his source to *mulus* (see below). At Col. 6.37.11 (*nam clitellis aptior mulus; illa quidem agilior*) *mulus* is marked for sex in contrast with the female. And the example at 2.21.3 may also be so marked (in the expression *mulo clitellario*; on the suitability of males for this role, see the preceding passage, and see below p. 42). There is thus very little clear-cut evidence for the generic use of *mulus* in Columella. The relative frequency of *mulus/mula* in Columella is the reverse of that in Varro (*Res rusticae*).

Mula was also preferred by Pliny the Elder. *Mula* occurs 15 times (I omit here a few examples of *mulus/mula* found in the index to the *Naturalis historia*), and in 11 cases it seems to be generic⁷). *Mulus* is used only 7 times, once in a quotation of Varro (Nat. 7.83), 3 times as a marked masculine form (8.174, 29.106, 30.80), and only twice with generic meaning (8.172, 11.191).

I illustrate further the generic use of *mula* from a variety of Imperial authors.

At Met. 7.14 Apuleius writes: *suadens ut rurestribus potius campis in greges equinos lasciniens discurrerem, daturus dominis equarum inscensu generoso multas mulas alumnas*. If Lucius were to mount *equae*, he would of course engender mules in general, not females exclusively. This passage can be compared with the various passages in Columella and elsewhere where *mula* rather than *mulus* is used of the offspring of the *asinus* and *equa* (see above).

Later, in the fourth century, *mula* was Pelagonius' generic term. A particularly clear example is found at 276: *equus habet dentes XLII, equa XXXVI, mula XXVIII, asinus XXXII, asina XXV*. Whereas the male and female horse and the male and female ass are distinguished, *mula* alone represents its *genus*, and obviously includes both males and females. At 268.2 Pelagonius glosses *animal quod patitur* by *equus* and *mula*, independently of the Greek source: *multi in stercore obruunt animal quod patitur, id est aut equum aut mulam*; cf. Apsyrus, Hipp. Ber. 34.2, CHG I, p. 178.6 τινές δὲ γῦρον ὀρύξαντες ἐν κοπρίᾳ καταχωννύουσι τὸν τοιοῦ-

7) Nat. 8.167, 171 twice, 174, 28.57, 30.72, 88, 142(?), 148, 149 twice; cf. 8.173, 29.106, 30.80. Not all of these passages are easy to interpret, and in various places I would not be confident about pressing the generic meaning. On Nat. 8.170, see below n. 56.

rov. One might be tempted to see *id est ... mulam* as a scribal gloss, but this use of *mula* is typical of that elsewhere in Pelagonius. At 138.1 also *mula* is juxtaposed with *equus*: *uentrem ipsius uel gallinae crudum cum stercore equo uel mulae deuorandum dabis*. And at 50.1 the contrast is again (by implication) with the *equus*: *signa tamen in ipso* (sc. *equo*) *haec erunt ... si mula erit, iungatur artius iugo* (on this passage see, however, below, Section III). There are 5 other examples of *mula* in Pelagonius, but I leave them for discussion in sect. III.

Mula was not universally preferred as the generic term in the fourth century. The author of the *Mulomedicina Chironis* tends to use *mulus* thus. There are 4 examples of the masculine in the text (153, 554, 703, 777), most of them generic: e.g. 554 *si equus aut mulus aut alia bestia ueterina*, 777 *equus omnino dentes habet superiores et inferiores numero XL, sed asinus et mulus habent numero XXX*. This second passage should be contrasted with Pel. 276, quoted above.

The generic use of *mula* occurs 4 times in the *Mulomedicina*, but in three of these cases it is taken directly from Columella (782 = Col. 6.37.6, 783 = Col. 6.37.7, 946 = Col. 6 praef. 6). The remaining example 965 (*ad morbum equorum, equarum et mularum*) is also likely to have been taken over from a source. The whole passage, but without the heading quoted here, is found in much the same form at Pel. 18 (cf. Veg. Mul. 1.17.15), and must therefore come from a lost source common to the *Mulomedicina* and Pelagonius. Presumably the heading was in the source.

Vegetius (*Mulomedicina*) also preferred *mulus* as the generic term. *Mula* appears only once in the text (4.26), and there it specifies the female. *Mulus* occurs 5 times (1 prol. 10, 2.59.1, 2.149.4, 4 prol. 5, 4.4.6), always with generic meaning. In three cases (1 prol. 10, 2.59.1, 4 prol. 5) the word is in passages of Vegetius' own composition (as distinct from passages taken from a source). At 2.149.4 Vegetius has changed *mula* which he found in his source (Pel. 138.1, quoted above) to *mulus*: *pullum uel gallinam occidere uentremque ipsius crudum et adhuc calentem cum stercore suo equo uel mulo, inuolutum melle, digerere per fauces optimum creditur*. Vegetius' preference for *mulus* contrasted with Pelagonius' for *mula* might be taken as evidence that in the fourth century *mula* was the more colloquial term in a generic sense, but given that *mulus* is also preferred by the author of the *Mulomedicina Chironis* it would be rash to draw this conclusion.

The generic use of the feminine did not die out. Note, for

example, Sulp. Sev. Dial. 2.3.6, p. 183.23 *consumit Gallicas mularum poena mastigias. tota rapitur silua de proximo, trabibus iumenta tunduntur*, Pall. 14.8.3 *eaque uelut mulam saliuare* (the one example of *mulus/mula* in the work which is not in a passage taken from Columella), Anon. Med. ed. Piechotta (Progr. Leobschütz 1887) 145 *stercus mularum cum oleo roseo frontem linito*. The Latin name for an emollient preserved at Hipp. Ber. 130.13, CHG I, p. 403.11 μάλαγμα τὸ καλούμενον ἄμβλα μοῦλα (= *ambula, mula*: see TLL VIII.1620.42 f.) presumably derives from the standard order by which a mule was directed to walk on⁸). *Mula* would be generic in this formula if it were addressed indifferently to males and females, as it must have been. For *ambulo* of *mulae* walking, see Sen. Epist. 87.4 (quoted at p. 46). *Ambulo* is often used in reference to the gait of equine animals in the *Mulomedicina Chironis* (e.g. 122, 129, 311 etc.).

On the evidence considered so far Republican usage seems to be distinguished neatly from Imperial. Cato, the books of the *pontifices* as quoted by Columella, Varro and Cicero have only *mulus* in a generic sense, whereas *mula* was well established from the first century A.D., and not only in colloquial writers. The frequent use of *mulus* in a generic sense in an inscription from Pisidia recently published by S. Mitchell in JRS 66 (1976) 106 ff. would seem to fit in with this chronology, because the inscription dates from the beginning of the reign of Tiberius. But it may well be that the diachronic variation is an illusion. I return to this question below (Section V).

III. Explanation

At Varro Rust. 3.17.7 a joke is told about the fish-fancier Hortensius: one could more easily take from him his carriage mules than remove a mullet from his pond: *celerius uoluntate Hortensi ex equili educeres redarias, ut tibi haberes, mulas, quam e piscina barbatum mullum*. In the play on words here it is the feminine *mulas* which is contrasted with *mullus*. The masculine *mulus* would have given an even better word-play, and it was

8) For a colloquial name consisting of an imperatival verb-phrase, cf. the nickname *Cedo alteram* of the centurion Lucilius, explained by Tacitus, Ann. 1.23.3 *centurio Lucilius interficitur, cui militaribus facetiis uocabulum 'Cedo alteram' indiderant, quia f(r)acta uite in tergo militis alteram clara uoce ac rursus aliam posebat*. I am grateful to H. D. Jocelyn for reminding me of this passage.

moreover Varro's generic term. Why then did he choose the less effective *mulas*? The answer can only be that female mules were preferred to males for drawing carriages, *raedae*. If both sexes were employed indifferently, Varro would have favoured *mulus* here.

Why would females have been preferred for this purpose? An explanation must partly be sought in the temperament of the female compared with that of the male. The female has a sober temperament, and with her good size (if, that is, she is the offspring of a male donkey and a mare, rather than of a male horse and a female donkey) and notable longevity she makes an ideal working animal. J. Gendry⁹) notes: 'la mule, grande et forte comme le cheval, sobre comme l'âne et d'une exceptionnelle longévité, était très estimée au Moyen Age tant comme monture que pour l'attelage'. Similarly Aristotle comments on the longevity and size of the female mule as compared with the male, though his assertion about comparative size is misleading, because the female has a finer bone structure than the male: Hist. Anim. IV.538a22 ff. ἐν μὲν οὖν τοῖς πεζοῖς καὶ ἐναίμοις τῶν ζῴων ὅσα μὴ ψοτοκεῖ, τὰ πλεῖστα μεῖζω καὶ μακροβιότερα τὰ ἄρρενα τῶν θηλειῶν εἰσι, πλὴν ἡμίονος· τούτων δ' αἱ θήλειαι μακροβιότεραι καὶ μεῖζους. The male mule, on the other hand, like other males within the *genus equinum*, has a less manageable character, which makes it unsuitable as a working animal unless it is castrated. Indeed mules with undescended testicles which cannot be castrated are quite wild. Castration, however, while rendering the animal more docile, has the effect of depressing its character and depriving it of vivacity¹⁰). For this reason in societies which make use of mules the female is far more sought after than the male. There is also another factor, related rather to the comparative status of the male and female animals than to their utility, which has traditionally motivated a predilection for the female. The sexual integrity of the female has always given it a higher status than the incomplete castrated male in societies employing mules, and persons of distinction have preferred to be transported by females, even though the male's capacity for work is not inferior to that of the female. Grandees of Italy and

9) Le Cheval (Paris 31981), 103.

10) I am particularly grateful to Prof. Dr. Juan Bautista Aparicio Macarro, of the Departamento de Produccion Animal, Facultad de Veterinaria, Universidad de Cordoba, for supplying me with a great deal of information about morphological and physiological differences between male and female mules, and about their traditional roles and status.

Spain in the medieval period used female mules to draw their carriages, and the Pope was also transported thus¹¹). One thinks of Alphonse Daudet's story 'La Mule du Pape' in *Lettres de mon Moulin*; the Pope is called Boniface and the story is set in the fourteenth century¹²). These remarks will prove to be of direct relevance to the interpretation of certain passages in early Imperial writers (see Section IV).

The implication of a remark by Columella at 6.37.11 can be explained in the light of what has been said above: *nam clitellis aptior mulus; illa quidem agilior*. The male mule, he says, is more suitable as a pack animal¹³), whereas the female is more agile. He must have had in mind the castrated male here. With its strength undiminished, the male when castrated will have been serviceable for the slow transport of heavy loads on its back, while the more lively (*agilior*) and mettlesome female was no doubt preferred for faster carriage transport. In extant Latin it is regularly the masculine *mulus* rather than *mula* which is used in conjunction with *clitellae* (or the derivative adjective *clitellarius*): note Plaut. *Most.* 780 *mulos clitellarios*, Cic. *Top.* 36 *mulus clitellarius*, Hor. *Sat.* 1.5.47 *muli ... clitellas ... ponunt*, Livy 10.40.8 *mulos detractis clitellis*, Col. 2.21.3 *mulo clitellario*, Phaedr. *app.* 31.7 *mulus clitellarius*. I have not found a *mula* described as carrying *clitellae*. This consistency of usage cannot be accidental, but must reflect a preference for the (castrated) male in this role. There are undoubtedly many other passages in extant literature where a writer using *mulus* had the castrated male specifically in mind, but such examples are often difficult to distinguish from those in which *mulus* is generic. A case in point is Apul. *Met.* 9.13, where Lucius describes the hardships of some decrepit beasts in a mill: *quales illi muli senes uel cantherii debiles*. It was chiefly the donkey which was used to work the mill¹⁴); the horse and female mule will have been too valuable as a rule for this task. The feeble horses here may be

11) See A. Sanson, *Tratado de Zootecnia*. Tomo III, *Equidos caballares y asnales* (Madrid 1905), 181. I am again indebted to Prof. Aparicio Macarro, who drew my attention to this work.

12) The story first appeared on 30 October 1868 in *Le Figaro*, but unfortunately a source does not seem to have been identified. No Boniface reigned as Pope in Avignon between 1309 and 1378. See Alphonse Daudet, *Lettres de mon moulin*, ed. L. Forestier (Paris 1985), 240.

13) For the meaning of *clitellae* (= 'pack-saddle', supporting loads on both sides of the animal), see P. Vigneron, *Le cheval dans l'antiquité Gréco-Romaine* (Nancy 1968), I, 133, and see below, p. 57f.

14) See Olck, *RE* VI.1.641.

geldings (*cantherii*)¹⁵), and the mules would certainly be castrated males.

Varro's use of the feminine in the expression *redarias mulas* seen above is obviously an accurate reflection of reality, in that wherever possible female mules must have been preferred to males for drawing carriages. A man of Hortensius' standing and taste for luxury would inevitably have had female mules for his vehicles. In another passage Varro goes so far as to assert that mules drew all vehicles on the roads: Rust. 2.8.5 *hisce enim binis coniunctis omnia uehicula in uis ducuntur*. This remark was probably something of an exaggeration, but there is no doubt that mules were highly favoured for drawing wagons¹⁶), and this may have been the most distinctive role of the female. That is the implication of Pelagonius 196.2, where typical activities of the horse, the *burdo* (on which see Section VII) and the (female?) mule are distinguished: *si aut in duro aut inter lapides equus fortiter tripodauerit aut burdo maiorem sarcinam tulerit aut mula iuncta diu laborauerit*. The *mula* is yoked (*iuncta*) (for drawing vehicles). Cf. Pel. 50.1 (quoted in full above) ... *si mula erit, iungatur artius iugo*. In four other passages (241, 242, 243, 244) Pelagonius gives treatments for the necks of mules (*colla mularum*); again the implication is that the animal was typically used for pulling wagons (cf. Mart. 9.57.4).

With mules pulling many, perhaps most, vehicles, and with females preferred to males for this task, the roads must have been full of female mules drawing vehicles. If this was considered the distinctive task of the mule, it follows that the mule *par excellence* in the perception of many people will have been the female. Speakers needing to refer to a mule employed for draught purposes may automatically have selected *mula*, indifferent to the sex of the referent and merely making the assumption that the beast was female. *Mula* will have acquired its generic use partly because of this preponderance of and preference for females in a vital area of everyday life. There is probably also a tendency in many languages, albeit not a particularly common one, for words indicating the most desirable, most common or best known member of a species or set to be generalised to serve as the designation of all members of that species or set. A 'Chippendale chair' is usually

15) Though that is not necessarily the meaning of the word (see E. Wölfflin, ALL 7 [1892] 316).

16) Toynbee 175 f., 185 ff., K. D. White, Roman Farming (London 1970), 300 f., Olck, RE VI.1.659 ff.

not a chair made by Thomas Chippendale, but a chair of a certain style which is given the name of the best-known maker of that style. In late Greek words for 'sparrow' (στρουθός, στρουθίον) were sometimes used in the sense 'bird' in general¹⁷). In some Southern Slav languages the word for 'rose' has the generic sense 'flower'¹⁸). 'Biro' tends to be used in English of any brand of ballpoint pen, and a 'Hoover' can be any type of vacuum cleaner. I return in section VI to analogies for the generalisation of *mula*.

On the other hand it is not hard to see why *mulus* should have kept on reasserting itself as the generic term. Not only was there the grammatical analogy of words such as *equus*, but it is also certain that there will have been speakers (and writers) who were ignorant of and indifferent to details of animal husbandry. Columella, the first writer to use *mula* with any frequency in a generic sense, was himself a farmer with first hand experience of mules. A more bookish writer with no practical knowledge of animals might have been more likely to use *mulus* with generic meaning on the analogy of other such masculines.

Another factor may have played a part in the generalisation of *mula*. Since the mule is sterile¹⁹), there is no need in societies dependent on the mule for males to be kept entire for stud purposes. If all or most males were castrated in the Roman world to maximise their potential for work²⁰), the opposition *mulus/mula* will have been rendered virtually redundant, with the neutered male tending to be subsumed under the designation *mula*. One

17) See D. W. Thompson, *A Glossary of Greek Birds* (Oxford 1936), 268 f. στρουθίον often means 'bird' in the late work the *Kyranides* (information from D. M. Bain).

18) See S. Ullmann, *Semantics. An Introduction to the Science of Meaning* (Oxford 1962), 230.

19) For this fact discussed in relation to antiquity, see Olck, RE VI.1.657 f.; hence the prodigy of the mule which gives birth, and proverbial expressions of the type *cum mula peperit* (A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer* [Leipzig 1890], 232).

20) Veterinary texts (most notably the *Mulomedicina Chironis*) give directions for the castration of equine animals (see J. N. Adams, *The forfex of the ueterinarius Virilis* [Vindolanda Inv. no. 86/470] and ancient methods of castrating horses, *Britannia* 21 [1990] 267 ff.). While the operation will no doubt sometimes have been carried out by professional *ueterinarij*, particularly on valuable animals, the sheer numbers of beasts needing to be castrated would presumably have forced many animal owners to develop the expertise themselves. There are occasional hints in literature that non-specialists were capable of performing the operation. At Apuleius, *Met.* 7.23 a 'rustic' (*quidam de coetu illo rusticorum*) offers to fetch his *ferramenta* and castrate the *asinus* himself. And Palladius (1.42.3) lists *castratoria ferramenta* among items of equipment needed on a farm.

might compare the use by Catullus of a series of feminine adjectives and participles in reference to Attis once he had been castrated: e.g. 63.8 *niueis citata cepit manibus leue tympanum*, 11 *canere haec suis adorta est tremebunda comitibus* (contrast 1 *super alta uectus Attis celeri rate maria*, before the castration²¹). A further loose analogy is provided by the history of *ueruex* (*berbex*), originally masculine, = 'wether, castrated ram', which passed into French (*brebis*) as a feminine ('ewe'). This though is a complicated case, which should not be pressed as a parallel²²).

By contrast the opposition *equus/equa* (for example) was necessarily maintained, because stallions had to be kept for stud purposes²³) and also as war horses²⁴).

IV. Problematical examples; the 'mula' as an indicator of status

When Columella spoke of the mule, *mula*, as the offspring of the *asinus* and *equa*, he was unequivocally using *mula* as a generic term, since the offspring of such a union may be male as well as female. But many other cases of *mula*, especially in the Imperial period, are more difficult to interpret. I refer particularly to the frequent use of the feminine applied to mules as draught animals. Either a writer may use the feminine with animals of the female sex specifically in mind, given that females were favoured for drawing carriages; or, indifferent to sex, he may use *mula* mechanically, as the established generic term. It is hard in any given case to determine a writer's motivation. I discuss some problematical cases of *mula* in various writers. It will become clear that a man might display his status by the possession of a good female mule, and that

21) Note too *Gallae* at 1. 12, of the castrated priests usually called *Galli*. Commentators quote the example of *Γάλλαι* in a fragment of verse quoted by the metrician Hephaestion (12.3).

22) See W. von Wartburg, *Französisches etymologisches Wörterbuch XIV*, 338.

23) See Varro Rust. 2.7.1 on the ratio (1 : 10) of stallions to mares for breeding purposes.

24) Note Varro Rust. 2.7.1 *e quis feminas Q. Modius Equiculus . . . etiam in re militari iuxta ac mares habere solebat*. *In re* is an emendation (Ursinus; *patre* codd.); see C. Guiraud, *Varron, Économie rurale, Livre II* (Paris 1985), 142 f. on the text. Guiraud quotes Plin. Nat. 8.165, who states that the *Scythae* preferred females in war, *quoniam urinam cursu non impedito reddant*. By implication it was abnormal not to prefer males. Cf. Amm. 17.12.2.

many examples of *mula* which might appear to be generic refer specifically to the female.

The mule which pulls the barge during Horace's *iter Brundisinum* of 37 B.C. (Sat. 1.5) is three times called a *mula* (1.5.13, 18, 22). Elsewhere Horace uses *mulus* of animals which carry loads or riders on their backs (Sat. 1.5.47, 1.6.105, Epist. 1.6.61). The gender differentiation may not in this case be accidental, if Horace (like Columella) thought of the castrated *mulus* as suitable for carrying loads. The *mula* may therefore have been intended to be a female.

In the circumstantial fable of the fly and the mule told by Phaedrus 3.6, the mule who is slowly pulling a wagon along was no doubt imagined as being a female: lines 1–2 *musca in temone sedit et mulam increpans / 'quam tarda es' inquit 'non uis citius progredi'?*; cf. 4 *respondit illa*.

Mulae at Sen. Epist. 87.4 draw a *uehiculum*: *uehiculum in quod inpositus sum rusticum est. mulae uiuere se ambulando testantur*. Twice later in the same epistle (87.8) the feminine form again indicates carriage animals, in this case belonging to the wealthy. At Epist. 123.7, however, it is *muli* which transport the wealthy: *omnes iam mulos habent qui crustallina et murrina et caelata magnorum artificum manu portent*. It is unlikely that the method of transport envisaged here is different from that at 87.8. The adjectives *crustallina*, *murrina* and *caelata* will have referred to the adornment of the carriage; cf. Epist. 87.8 . . . *mulae saginatae unius omnes coloris? quid ista uehacula caelata?* If the *mulae* in the first passages were seen as females, Seneca has presumably lapsed into the generic use of the masculine at Epist. 123.7. Alternatively, if he was unconcerned about the sex of the animals to which he refers, the examples of *mula* in Epist. 87 would be generic, with the generic use of the masculine and feminine forms in free variation in his idiolect.

A final instance of *mula* in Seneca I would take in a generic sense: Dial. 5.27.1 *numquis satis constare sibi uideatur, si mulam calcibus repetat* (on the futility of revenge; it is pointless, as it were, to kick a mule back). Pliny also mentions the 'kick of a mule': Nat. 8.174 *mulae calcitratus inhibetur uni crebriore potu* (cf. Nat. 30.149; again *mula*). Certainly the uncastrated *mulus* is as capable of such aggression as the *mula*.

Of the 2 examples of *mula* in Juvenal (who does not have *mulus*), one is marked for sex (13.66), and the other again refers to a beast which transports a rich man (7.181 *hic potius, namque hic*

mundae nitet ungula mulae). The owner drives his mule around under a portico so that its hooves will not get dirty. This is a significant example, as will become clearer below: one indicator of the rich man's status is the appearance of the mule which transports him.

At 14.162.1 Martial speaks of depriving a *mula* of its *faenum* so that a *culcita* might be stuffed: *fraudata tumeat fragilis tibi culcita mula*. In this generalising context there would be no point in his excluding the male, and it is likely that *mula* is generic. Martial has *mula* in 6 other places (1.79.3, 3.62.6, 8.61.9, 9.22.13, 9.57.4, 11.79.4), compared with just one example of *mulus* (5.22.7); there are also 2 cases of the form *mulis*. Most examples of *mula* indicate mules used for transportation. The context usually does not make it clear how Martial thought of the animal as transporting its load or passenger, though the *mula* at 9.57.4 certainly draws vehicles (cf. 1.79.3).

A particularly revealing example of the word is found at Mart. 3.62.6: *aurea quod fundi pretio carruca paratur, / quod pluris mula est quam domus empta tibi*. The extravagant Quintus pays more than the price of a house for an expensive mule, which, to judge by the previous line, will draw an equally expensive carriage. *Mula* must be marked for sex here. Since female mules were more desirable than males for the purpose Martial had in mind, they will have been more expensive. The animal here could only be a particularly fine female specimen. This passage, though it no doubt has an element of epigrammatic exaggeration, suggests that a very high price might be paid for a good female mule. It is also obvious that one's status might be marked by possession of an expensive female (and of an elaborate *carruca*: see below). We are manifestly in the same world as that of medieval Italy and Spain, where men of standing were typically transported by female mules (see above).

There are other passages in Martial where ownership of a *mula* seems to be a mark of wealth and status. Note 9.22.13 *ut lutulenta linat Tyrias mihi mula lacernas*. The referent is envisaged as travelling the muddy streets adorned in Tyrian purple, drawn by a *mula*. And in 8.61 it is an indication of Martial's success as a poet that (6f.) *sub urbe rus habemus aestiuum / uehimurque mulis non ut ante conductis*. He wishes the same for his jealous rival Charinus: 1. 9 *hoc opto: mulas habeat et suburbanum*.

The one example of the masculine form in Martial (5.22.7 *uixque datur longas mulorum rumpere mandras / quaeque trahi*

multo marmora fune uides) is in a context in which the feminine would also have been metrically possible. Since Martial was capable of using *mula* with generic meaning (see 14.162.1 above), it is a reasonable assumption that here *mulorum* is a marked masculine form. The droves of mules which block the sordid city streets are presumably to be taken as castrated males engaged in heavy work (note the next line). The epigrams of Martial nicely illustrate the contrasting status of *mulae* and (castrated) *muli*.

The desirability of expensive female mules in the eyes of those aspiring to higher social status is also evidenced by Petron. 38.4. One of the freedmen, commenting on Trimalchio's wealth and extravagance, remarks: *nam mulam quidem nullam habet quae non ex onagro nata sit*. The mule which was born of the wild ass (*onager*) and mare must have been rarer than that sired by a domestic *asinus*, and for that reason, and also because of its special qualities, its price would have been especially high. The feminine gender adds further point to the remarks: Trimalchio not only had mules sired by the *onager*, but female mules at that. On the qualities of such beasts, see in particular Plin. Nat. 8.174 *generantur ex equa et onagris mansuefactis mulae ueloces in cursu, duritia eximia pedum, uerum strigoso corpore, indomito animo*. Columella however thought that they exhibited too much of the wild character of their sire (6.37.4).

Suetonius uses *mula* 4 times (*mulus* once; one example in the form *mulis*). Twice *mula* refers specifically to the female (Galb. 4.2), and in two other passages mules under the direction of *muliones* are called *mulae*: Nero 30.3 *numquam minus mille carrucis fecisse iter traditur, soleis mularum argenteis, canusinatis mulionibus*, Vesp. 23.2 *mulionem in itinere quodam suspicatus ad calciandas mulas desiluisse, ut adeunti litigatori spatium moramque praeberet*. In the first passage it is alleged that the extravagant Nero always travelled with a train of 1,000 carriages, his mules shod in silver and his *muliones* clad in the expensive wool of Canusium. Such a display of extravagance would be incomplete without female mules, and one must therefore take *mularum* as sexually explicit. Whether *mulas* is generic in the second passage it is impossible to say. The association of *mulae* with adorned *carrucae* in a display of luxury recalls Martial 3.62.5 f., discussed above²⁵). The significance of a *uehiculum* as marking its passen-

25) On the *carruca*, a particularly luxurious carriage, see Vigneron, 168.

ger's high (or low) standing is fairly familiar²⁶), but it is now clear that the sex and quality of the mules which drew the *uehiculum* were also socially significant.

In the *Historia Augusta* 4 of the 5 instances of *mula* are opposed to *mulus*. At Ver. 5.4 *mulae* alone is used of beasts used to draw sumptuous carriages which display the wealth of the owner: *data et uehicula cum mulabus ac mulionibus cum iuncturis argenteis*. This example should be added to those seen above indicating female mules transporting the rich.

26) It is worth illustrating the significance of the carriage as a mark of status from some passages other than those cited in this section. Seneca, travelling in a *rusticum uehiculum* which he also calls *sordidum*, blushes in embarrassment when he meets a more impressive entourage: Epist. 87.4 *quotiens in aliquem comitatum lautiorum incidimus inuitus erubescit*. He draws a moral from his embarrassment: *qui sordido uehiculo erubescit pretioso gloriabitur*. The symbolism attaching to carriages is particularly clear in Lactantius' account of the forced abdication of Diocletian: Mort. Pers. 19.6 *descenditur, et reda per ciuitatem ueteranus rex foras exportatur in patriamque dimittitur*. The *raeda*, though robust and of good size, was not a luxurious vehicle (Vigneron, 167 and especially n. 7); it was one of the most common wagons for transport. Diocletian's return to civilian status is symbolised by his departure in a commonplace vehicle. Similarly the disaster facing the Caesar Gallus is foreshadowed when he is humiliatingly placed in a private (as distinct from state) *carpentum* and carried off to his fate: Amm. 14.11.20 *inopinum carpento priuato impositum ad Histriam duxit*. For the grander *iudiciale carpentum*, see Amm. 29.6.7 and H.A., Aurel. 1.1 (and on the *carpentum* in general, see Vigneron, 170 with n. 4). A revealing anecdote is told by Ammianus at 14.11.10: *et in Syria Augusti uehiculum irascentis per spatium mille passuum fere pedes antegressus est Galerius purpuratus*. After his defeat by the Persians, Galerius is compelled by Diocletian to walk in full purple regalia in front of his vehicle. It is clearly humiliating for the Caesar, *purpuratus*, to be on foot, while the Augustus is in a carriage as befits his status. Further light is thrown on this passage by Amm. 19.8.6. Ammianus, forced to travel a long distance on foot, comments that 'as an *ingenuus*, a man of breeding', he was unused to walking: *incedendi nimietate iam superarer, ut insuetus ingenuus* (see the remarks of J. F. Matthews, *The Roman Empire of Ammianus* [London 1989], 78). If walking was inconsistent with the dignity of an *ingenuus*, it was certainly inappropriate for a Caesar, *purpuratus*. Note too Amm. 22.7.1, where Julian shows himself to be *humilior* by going to the inauguration of the new consuls on foot, an action which did not meet with universal approval: *humilior princeps uisus est, in officio pedibus gradiendo cum honoratis, quod laudabant alii, quidam ut affectatum et uile carpebant*. Another illuminating passage is at Amm. 16.10.12: *quod autem per omne tempus imperii, nec in consessum uehiculi quemquam suscepit*. It is proof of Constantius' haughtiness that he never admitted anyone into his carriage with him. By contrast Ammianus describes how Julian was prepared to invite a provincial governor called Celsus into his carriage: 22.9.13 *ascitumque in consessum uehiculi Tarsum secum induxit*. It is not only the possession of an ostentatious carriage which confers status, but the opportunity which it affords either to exclude, or condescendingly to admit, one's inferiors. I mention finally Amm. 14.6.9, on grand Roman families who seek to emphasise their rank by the height of their *carrucae*: *alii summum decus in carruchis solito altioribus et ambitioso uestium cultu ponentes*.

In the *Vulgate* the masculine *mulus* is preferred to *mula* by 13 : 4. An example of *mula* at II Regn. 13.29, translating, as *mulus* usually does, Hebr. *pěřed*²⁷), may have been motivated by the status of the riders: *surgentesque omnes filii regis ascenderunt singuli mulas suas et fugerunt* (cf. III Regn. 1.33, 38, 44). Cf. too Verecund. Cant. Deb. 9.63–65, p. 181 (CCL 93) *sed et Salomon, extra ciuitatem sanctam unctus et haereticus, unguento regali, utique chrismatis, mulam sedit.*

Claudian's poem (Carm. Min. XVIII) in praise of Gallic mules (*De mulabus Gallicis*) consistently uses the feminine throughout (1 *morigeras* ... *alumnas*, 2 *nexas* ... *uagas*, 5 *quaeque*, 7 *constricta*, 11 *sparsas* ... *coactas*, 15 *famulae*, 16 *exutae*, 17 *hirtae*). The poem illustrates the way in which the feminine *mula* might have shifted towards a generic meaning. A writer praising the excellent mules of Gaul might well have had females chiefly in mind (note that they pull *essedae*, 1. 18)²⁸), but the poem is written at such a level of generality that some readers will inevitably have taken it as referring to the *genus* as a whole.

The *mula* also turns up outside literary sources as an animal which draws vehicles. Note CIL VI.10229.71 (the *testamentum Dasumii*, A.D. 108) *paria m]ularum quae elegerit cum [carrucis*. For *mulae* mentioned in connection with the *cursus publicus*, see Cod. Theod. 8.5.8.2 *octo mulae iungantur ad raedam aestiuo uidelicet tempore, hiemali decem*, 8.5.53 *si qui uel per unam mutationem ueredum mulamue aut bouem superducendum esse crediderit*. In the second passage *ueredus*, *mula* and *bos* together comprise the *animalia publica* mentioned earlier in the section. Good female mules would presumably have been preferred for the Imperial service, but it is hard to believe that *mula* is not generic in this second passage.

There is an obvious question which ought to be considered briefly at this point. If fine female mules were in demand to draw the carriages of the wealthy, what was the relative desirability and

27) See Olck, RE VI.1.665.

28) Note that the celebrated mules of Poitou of more modern times (on which see Gendry, op. cit., see above, n. 9) seem generally to have been referred to in the feminine. Note F. Faelli, Razas bovinas, équidas, porcinas, ovinas y caprinas (Revista Veterinaria de España, Barcelona 1932), 289, who speaks of 'las mulas del Poitou', though his generic term is *mulo* (see below n. 62), and the title of the section in question is 'Produccion del mulo en Francia'. Cf. Sanson (cited above, n. 11), 178 f. on 'las mulas del Poitou'. The assumption seems to be that the finest mules will be female, but a feminine usage based on this assumption is liable to reinterpretation as generic.

status of the horse? In fact the horse and the mule were not in direct competition because their uses did not overlap completely. Varro (Rust. 2.7.15) lists the uses of horses as *res militaris, uectura, admissura* and *cursura*. He does, it is true, include traction of vehicles along with riding under *uectura* (*qui uectorios facere uult ad ephippium aut ad raedam*), but this remark has to be read in the light of his assertion that mules drew all vehicles on the roads. Significantly, Vegetius does not mention the pulling of vehicles among the main uses of horses at Mul. 3.6.2: *nam ut uiliora ministeria taceamus, equos tribus usibus uel maxime necessariis constat: proeliis circo sellis*. Horses were employed in the army, for pulling chariots in the circus races, and as saddle animals in daily life, but it is likely that they were less favoured than mules for drawing carriages, except in special ceremonies and processions, such as triumphs²⁹). When horses were used to pull vehicles, it seems to have been ponies, *manni*, rather than *equi* which were preferred³⁰). A fine saddle horse would undoubtedly have served to advertise the standing of its rider³¹), but in fact the saddle horse was of limited utility compared with the carriage mule, because it could only be ridden by the young and the healthy (particularly soldiers)³²). Stirrups were unknown, and riding uncomfortable³³). A carriage such as a *carruca* drawn by mules not only provided a more comfortable ride for men and women of different ages, but it could in itself display the social distinction of its occupants by luxurious fittings and adornment. Thus the grand Roman families satirised by Ammianus (14.6.9) who paraded the city streets travelled not on horseback but in *carrucae*.

29) See Toynbee 168, 176; cf. 381 n. 65.

30) To the passages cited by Toynbee, 177 add Prop. 4.8.15 *huc mea detonsis auecta est Cynthia mannis*. These *manni* pull a *carpentum* (1. 23), which is decked out in silk and regarded as fashionable and ostentatious. On the significance of the styled manes (*detonsis*) of the *manni*, see Veg. Mul. 1.56.34–5. On the meaning of *mannus* (and on the uses of the animal), see E. Wölfflin, ALL 7 (1892) 318 f.

31) Note Veg. Mul. 1. prol.11, where it is stated that horses were suitable for carrying the rich (*ad uehendos locupletes aptos*). Similarly at 1.56.34–5 Vegetius shows great concern about the *decor* of the saddle horse, the impression that it creates *sub honesto sessore*. For the attitude of Pelagonius' rather grand addressees to their *nobiles equi*, see praef. 1–2. Vegetius (1. prol. 10) makes the revealing observation that horses, and, significantly, mules, often cost more than slaves: *praesertim cum mancipia, quorum plebeia curatio non putatur, saepe uilioribus pretiis quam equi uendantur aut muli*.

32) See Vigneron I, 158.

33) Vigneron I, 161 f.

V. The generic use of 'mula' in the Republican period?

The earliest possible generic example of *mula* is at Plaut. Most. 878: *iam hercle ire uis, mula, foras pastum*. The word is addressed abusively to a slave. S. Lilja³⁴), arguing that *mula* probably suggests stupidity (like the masculine vocative *mule* at Catull. 83.3), thought that there was an additional insult in the use of the feminine gender³⁵). But it is impossible to see what point might be conveyed by the feminine. Usually feminine nouns or names addressed to men imply effeminacy³⁶), but that could not be the intention here. Since the female mule is superior in temperament and generally better thought of than the male, it could not be more offensive to call someone *mula* rather than *mulus*³⁷). The *mula* must represent its *genus* in this passage. That would suggest that in the eyes of Plautus the female was the mule *par excellence*, but it need not mean that *mula* was already fully established in a generic sense. It is *mulus* which is generic at Aul. 494 *ego faxim muli, pretio qui superant equos, / sient uiliores Gallicis cantheriis* (note the contrast with *equi*; cf. v. 501); presumably *mula* was now in rivalry with *mulus* in this sense in colloquial Latin (the register to which the abusive use would have belonged).

An example of *mulus* at Most. 780 (*nam muliones mulos*

34) Terms of Abuse in Roman Comedy (Helsinki 1965), 32.

35) See also F. Buecheler, *Kleine Schriften III* (Leipzig and Berlin 1930), 246.

36) Note, for example, Cic. Att. 1.14.5 *filiola Curionis*, Att. 4.11.2 *illa populi Appuleia*, Cic. De Orat. 2.277 *Egilia mea*, Juv. 2.120 *noua nupta*, Suet. Iul. 22.2 *femina*, Apul. Met. 8.26 *puellae*. Cf. Orelli on Hor. Sat. 1.8.39 *Pediatia*.

37) Lilja finds two other abusive feminine animal-names directed at men in Plautus, but in neither case does the choice of gender definitely heighten the insult. At Bacch. 1121a it is said of some old men, *quis has huc ouis adegit?* Lilja (32) comments: 'apart from being harmless... the old men are certainly considered to be stupid, and the feminine gender, moreover, adds to the insult'. But a glance at G. Lodge's *Lexicon Plautinum* shows that *ouis* is always used in the feminine by Plautus, whether it has its literal sense or is abusive. There can therefore be no particular significance to the feminine in the passage quoted. *Ouis* does occasionally turn up in the masculine, but it is far more common in the feminine at all periods. Because flocks of sheep usually consisted of females only, the feminine became established as the generic form. *Culex* is used as a feminine with the adjective *cana* at Cas. 239. Lilja (35) states: '*cana* describes an old man, who is bustling, like a *culex*, around a young girl, and the feminine gender in a noun which is generally masculine is an additional insult'. It is unclear why Plautus has used the feminine here, but Lilja's explanation is not convincing. There can be no question of a charge of effeminacy in this context. And why would it be more insulting to liken someone to a female gnat rather than a male, especially since the ancients will not have distinguished between the two?

clitellarios / habent, at ego habeo homines clitellarios) probably refers to castrated males (see above p. 42 on *muli* bearing *clitellae*).

The feminine *mula* is also used abusively on some *tesseræ*³⁸, but without any context.

Gellius quotes some verses which had been circulated against the alleged upstart Ventidius Bassus. Ventidius supposedly began his career in the late Republic by supplying mules and vehicles: Gell. 15.4.3 *eumque (uictum) sordide inuenisse comparandis mulis et uehiculis, quae magistratibus, qui sortiti prouincias forent, praebenda publice conduxisset*. In the verses these mules may be called *mulae*: *nam mulas qui fricabat, consul factus est*. A low-grade *mulio*, as Ventidius was supposed to be, may perhaps not have been thought of by his detractors as having only the more expensive female beasts at his disposal, but unfortunately the passage does not advance the argument because of a textual problem³⁹).

If the interpretation of the passage of Plautus offered here is correct, the generic use will already have been established during the Republic in the colloquial levels of the language in which personal abuse was expressed. The emergence of *mula* in a generic sense in Columella must represent a surfacing into the literary language of a usage which had long existed in subliterate registers.

VI. Analogies for the generic use of 'mula'

When there is masculine-feminine pair of animal names such as *equus/equa*, the feminine form may become generic if it is the female animal with which speakers are chiefly familiar. A straightforward case is that of *ouis*, which has already been mentioned above. Flocks of sheep will usually have comprised females alone⁴⁰). A parallel is provided by the history of *capra*, lit. 'she-goat'. This word survived in all Romance languages, both as a

38) See Ch. Huelsen, Mitt. des röm. archäol. Instituts 11 (1896) 227 ff. (nos. 47, 74). Cf. Buecheler, Kleine Schriften III, 246.

39) The manuscripts are split between *mulas* (Q) and *mulos* (rell.). P. K. Marshall, A. Gellii Noctes Atticae (Oxford 1968), prefers *mulos*, whereas the Teubner editor C. Hosius (A. Gellii Noctium Atticarum libri XX [Leipzig 1903]), prints *mulas*. *Mulas* is defended by H. Haffter, Hermes 87 (1959) 92 ff., though on dubious grounds.

40) See A. Ernout and A. Meillet, Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue latine (Paris 1959), s.v. on the continuous modifications which took place in this semantic field.

generic term and of the female (e.g. Fr. *chèvre*, Ital. *capra*)⁴¹). The masculines *caper* and *hircus* disappeared almost without trace⁴²), and different languages went to different sources for marked terms indicating the male animal⁴³). The she-goat is of course the domestic goat *par excellence*. *Caper* would have fallen out of use because many speakers would only ever have needed to refer to *caprae*. For a generic use of *capra*, see Cato Orig. 52 (cited by Varro Rust. 2.3.3) in *Sauracti et Fiscello caprae ferae sunt, quae saliant e saxo pedes plus sexagenos*. In a flock of wild goats there would of course be males as well as females. In a comparable passage about various species of wild animals Varro (Rust. 2.1.5) talks of *boves perferi*, *asini feri* and *equi feri* in the masculine, but of *caprae*: in *Samothrace caprarum (greges) . . . sunt enim in Italia circum Fiscellum et Tetricam montes multae (sc. caprae)*. Later note Anon. Phys. 104 ed. André *ita et alia animalia, ut asinus et capra et equus*.

The generalisation of *mula* is illuminated particularly by the history of *iumentum* as it passed into French. In classical Latin *iumentum* is an all-embracing term, indicating working members of the genus *equinum* of both sexes indifferently, whether horses, donkeys or mules. But the word survives in French as *jument*, 'mare'⁴⁴). This specialisation must reflect a preference for the relatively gentle mare as a working animal⁴⁵). The mare is far more manageable than the stallion. Stallions are unpredictable, given to turning on their keepers without apparent reason, and to fighting among themselves, particularly if there are mares about⁴⁶). Today most male horses are castrated when young, unless required for stud purposes. If castration in antiquity was a more hazardous operation than it is now, females will obviously have been more sought after as working animals.

Various passages in Varro already hint at practices of the sort which were later to bring about the specialisation of *iumentum*. At

41) See G. Rohlfs, *Romanische Sprachgeographie* (Munich 1971), 161.

42) See W. Meyer-Lübke, *Romanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg 31935), 1624a, 4140.

43) See Rohlfs, loc.cit., noting eight different word-types denoting 'male goat'.

44) See REW 4613, FEW V, 64. For *iumentum* = *equa* in Latin, see TLL VII.2.647.44 ff.

45) See Rohlfs, 85, who draws attention to an interesting analogy (loc. cit., n. 241). In Provence and Gascony *sauma* (*sagma*, *sauma*, lit. 'pack-saddle', then 'pack-animal') survived in the sense 'female donkey'. Note too that *iumentum* survives as Portuguese *jumenta* ('female donkey') (FEW V, 64).

46) Cf. Amm. 17.12.2.

Rust. 2.10.5 Varro mentions *domini* who favour *equae* as *iumenta dossuaria: ad quam rem habent iumenta dossuaria domini, alii equas, alii pro his quid aliut, quod onus dosso ferre possit. Iumenta dossuaria* is the collective term for the pack animals which transport the equipment of *pastores*. Included within that general class are first and foremost mares⁴⁷); other possible pack animals are not even named. Varro would not have expressed himself thus unless mares were considered particularly desirable as working animals. Another suggestive passage is at Rust. 2.1.17: *qui potissimum quaeque pecudum pascatur, habenda ratio, nec solum quod faeno fit satura equa aut bos, cum sues hoc uitent et quaerant glandem, sed quod hordeum et faba interdum sit quibusdam obiciendum et dandum bubus lupinum et lactariis medica et cytisum*. Varro is here dealing with the feeding of different species of animals. The mare, *equa*, juxtaposed with the *bos*, is in effect the representative of its species. Presumably herds of mares were kept together as working animals whereas the less manageable stallions were kept apart.

The analogies cited in this section illustrate contrary semantic developments, generalisation and specialisation of meaning, but in all cases it is the desirability of the female of the species as a domestic animal which motivates the semantic change.

VII. The meaning of 'burdo' and its place in the semantic field

The mule is the offspring of the *asinus* and *equa*, while the hinny is the offspring of the *equus* and *asina*. The hinny was called *hinnus* in Latin (Gk. γίννος): see e.g. Col. 6.37.5 *qui ex equo et asina concepti generantur, quamuis a patre nomen traxerint, quod hinni uocantur, matri per omnia magis similes sunt. itaque commodissimum est asinum destinare mularum generi seminando, cuius, ut dixi, species experimento est speciosior*. The hinny is smaller than the mule, and was less sought after, as is made clear by the remarks of Columella quoted here (cf. Anatolius, Hipp. Ber. 14.9, CHG I, p. 82.16 f.). The relative rarity of the word *hinnus* in Latin is presumably in part a reflection of the rarity of the animal itself⁴⁸).

47) Note the (correct) translation of Guiraud, Varron, Économie rurale, livre II: 'les propriétaires ont des bêtes de somme, les uns des juments, les autres à leur place quelque autre animal qui puisse porter les charges à dos'.

48) An alternative possibility is that the word itself had little currency, perhaps because hinnies tended to be described loosely as *muli/mulae* (see below,

There is another word belonging to this general semantic field which ought to be discussed here, viz. *burdo* (also in the form *burdus*). *Burdo* is attested for the first time under the Empire, and is of obscure origin, though it must be a loan word and is possibly Celtic⁴⁹). Its meaning is a matter of some uncertainty. According to Isidore, *burdo* indicated the hinny (Etym. 12.1.60 *ut mulus ex equa et asino; burdo ex equo et asina*), and this remark has been influential in the lexica⁵⁰). Against Isidore can be set CGL II.324.56 ἡμίονος ἔξ ἵππου θηλίας καὶ ὄνου *mulus uurdo*, equating *burdo* with the mule rather than the hinny⁵¹). Most of the Romance reflexes have metaphorical or derived meanings (note It. *bordone*, Fr. *bourdon*, Cat. *bordó*, Sp. *bordón*, Pg. *bordão*, ‘pilgrim’s staff’)⁵²), and are of no help, but *burdo* may have a reflex in Old French meaning ‘mule’, ‘mulet’ (*bordon*)⁵³). On the other hand Sp. *burdegano*, which seems to be a derivative of *burdus* with an obscure suffix, means ‘hinny’⁵⁴). Isidore’s assertion might well have been correct for the Iberian peninsula, but not necessarily for the whole Latin-speaking world. It is said that Sic. *burduni* (< *burdo*) can mean ‘hinny’⁵⁵), but I have not been able to confirm this. The issue has probably been confused by a failure of ancient speakers to distinguish consistently between the hinny and mule⁵⁶).

n. 56). Referring to the diminutive *hinnulus*, Pliny (Nat. 8.172) says that it had been used by *antiqui: equo et asina genitos mares hinnulos antiqui uocabant*. *Hinnus/hinnulus* may have had an old-fashioned flavour.

49) See Ernout-Meillet, s.vv.

50) See, e.g., Ernout-Meillet, C. T. Lewis and C. Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford 1879), s.v., Shipp (see above, n. 2), 170. The article at TLL II.2248.28 ff. makes no attempt to distinguish the senses ‘mule’ and ‘hinny’. The meaning is given as ‘*mulus*’ (30) without discussion, but this assertion is followed by citation of the passage from Isidore. *Mittelateinisches Wörterbuch I* (ed. O. Prinz, Munich 1967), s.v. cites examples which are said to mean ‘hinny’.

51) See in general the useful discussion of Olck, RE VI.1.664–66.

52) See REW 1403, 1405, FEW I, 633.

53) FEW I, 632, with 633 n. 1. The general uncertainty is reflected in Olck’s remark, RE VI.1.656 ‘In späterer Zeit bezeichnete vielleicht *burdo* auch ein männliches Maultier statt eines Malesels’.

54) See REW 1405, J. Corominas, *Diccionario crítico etimológico de la lengua castellana I* (Madrid 1954), 545 “hijo de caballo y burra”, origen incierto, al parecer derivado de lat. tardío *burdūs*’.

55) FEW I, 633.

56) Note that Pliny Nat. 8.174 glosses *hinnus* (spelt with a *g* in some manuscripts) with *id est paruum mulum*. Olck (RE VI.1.664) points out that ἡμίονος includes the hinny as well as the mule, as too does Mod. Greek μουλάρι. Col. 6.37.3 shows that *mula* (*mulus*) also subsumed the hinny: *mula autem non solum ex equa et asino, sed ex asina et equo ... generatur*. There is also a case of *mula* =

Some of the Latin attestations of *burdo* are unrevealing, but the two examples of the word in Pelagonius throw much light on the problem. At 141.3 the *burdo* is contrasted with the *equus*: *sane rhododafnen si burdo comederit, uesica ipsius rumpitur et inde moritur; equus autem si comederit . . .* This passage is translated from Apsyrtyus, who contrasts ἡμίονος with ἵππος: Hipp. Ber. 33.5, CHG I, 167.5 ff. καὶ τοῦτο δὲ γίνωσκε, ὅτι καὶ ἡμίονος ἐὰν φάγη ῥοδοδάφνας, πλείονα ῥῆξιν λαμβάνει ἢ κύστις, . . . ἵππῳ δὲ οὐ δύναται τοῦτο συμβῆναι . . . Although ἡμίονος might sometimes have included the hinny as well as the mule (see n. 56), it is inconceivable that the word could indicate the hinny on its own in this passage. Usually ἡμίονος refers to the common mule, and that is the natural sense to give the word here, though if one were to be ultra-cautious, one might allow the possibility that it embraces both the mule and the hinny. *Burdo* therefore does not specifically mean ‘hinny’ in the passage of Pelagonius. Either it is intended as a masculine word for the mule, or it might just be intended to include the mule and the hinny.

The second example of the word in Pelagonius takes one a step further: 196.2 *hoc autem uitium a labore contrahitur, si aut in duro aut inter lapides equus fortiter tripodauerit aut burdo maiorem sarcinam tulerit aut mula iuncta diu laborauerit*. Here the *equus*, *burdo* and *mula* are contrasted. If *burdo* embraced both the mule and the hinny, a possibility which was left open in the last paragraph, there would be no place for a contrast of the type *burdo . . . aut mula*. If one can generalise from the deduction made in the previous paragraph and accept that *burdo* is unlikely to have had the restricted meaning ‘hinny’ in Pelagonius, it must necessarily be concluded that the masculine *burdo* here is used of the male mule, which is contrasted with the female. This interpretation is supported by the context. The *mula* is yoked, and is thus conceived as pulling a vehicle. A female is likely to be intended. The *burdo*, on the other hand, carries a pack, *sarcina*. We have seen earlier that the (castrated) male mule was considered serviceable as a pack animal, and indeed that it is always *mulus* rather than *mula* which is used in association with *clitellae* and *clitellarius* (p. 42). The

‘hinny’ at Plin. Nat. 8.170: *quaestus ex his opima praedia exuperat: notum est in Celtiberia singulas quadringentena milia nummum enixas, mularum maxime par-tu*. Pliny has been talking of she-asses in §§ 168–69 (note the feminine *eaedem* at 169). The ‘mule’ which is the offspring of the she-ass is of course the hinny. Is *mularum* here sexually explicit or generic? Presumably the female hinny foal was more valuable, and *mularum* may therefore be marked for sex.

sarcina was the pack which was carried by the *clitellae* (note Paul. Fest. p. 52.9 *clitellae dicuntur non tantum eae, quibus sarcinae conligatae mulis portantur...*; cf. Phaedr. 2.7.1 *muli grauati sarcinis ibant duo*, and for the singular, see Mul. Chir. 703 *si mulus dorsarius erit sarcina maiore simul et lassus erit*; this last passage is a close parallel to that of Pelagonius, and gives additional support to the interpretation of *burdo* offered here). I conclude that in Pelagonius a *burdo*, to borrow the phraseology of the *Mulomedicina Chironis*, was a *mulus dorsarius*.

The argument stated here depends on deductions made from the two passages of Pelagonius taken in close conjunction with each other. It is an argument which would obviously be strengthened if one could exclude the possibility that the two passages were from different hands; the text of Pelagonius is a compilation, with genuinely 'Pelagonian' parts (notably in the epistles at the start of chapters), but probably also later additions⁵⁷). There is little doubt that both passages are Pelagonian. The first is in an epistle, and translated from Pelagonius' source Apsyrtus. The second is discursive, rather than a brief recipe of the sort which might have found its way into the text at a later date. It also has a few stylistic features which allow it to be associated with other parts of the work. Most notable is the unique verb *tripodare* = 'gallop', with which can be compared the base noun *tripodum*, which occurs at 269.2 in an epistle translated from Apsyrtus. The expression *mula iuncta* should also be compared with 50.1 *si mula erit, iungatur artius iugo*. With *hoc autem uitium a labore contrahitur*, cf. 33.2 *frequentius autem hordeo nouo contrahitur*, 270 *ostendam sane quibus ex causis aegritudo contrahitur*. The latter two passages are both in epistles drawing on Apsyrtus.

A few general observations can be made about this use of *burdo* = *mulus*. It seems likely that the masculine form *mulus* was so effectively ousted from use by *mula*, at least in the speech of certain individuals, groups or regions, that the way was open for a loan word to step into the gap which it had vacated. Whereas *mula* occurs 9 times in Pelagonius, there is not a single case of *mulus*; *burdo* has taken its place. There was of course a need for a masculine form, mainly because the tasks typically assigned to male and female mules were different. While *burdo* is a marked masculine form at 196.2, at 141.3 it must be a generic term which includes both sexes (see below on the *Kyranides*). It follows that

57) See e.g. K.-D. Fischer, *Pelagonii Ars Veterinaria* (Leipzig 1980), XII ff.

the marked masculine term *burdo* which had tended to replace *mulus* had itself set up a new rivalry with *mula* as the generic term. But it must be stressed that usage will not have been uniform throughout the empire. In many areas and idiolects *mulus* must have lingered on, and if *burdo* found its way into those areas or idiolects it will have been assigned a different place in the semantic system. It is not surprising that *burdo* should be attested in the sense 'hinny' as well as 'male mule'.

The interpretation of the two passages of Pelagonius above is confirmed by a passage in the late Greek work the *Kyranides*⁵⁸). Various Latin loan words are found in the text. At 2.15, p. 141 Kaimakis βουρδών and μουῖλα are opposed to each other, indicating respectively the male and female mule: εἰ δέ τις ἔχη ψυγμοκατάρουρον καὶ φιλήση βουρδῶνος τὰς ῥίνας, ἰαθήσεται, εἰ καὶ κόρουζαν ἔχει. ἐὰν δέ τις λάθρα λάβῃ τὸ οὔρον τοῦ βουρδῶνος καὶ συνεψήσῃ κηρῶ καὶ ἐλαίῳ καὶ λιθαργύρω, καὶ καταπλάσῃ ποδαγρῶ, ὁ μὲν ἀσθενῶν ἰαθήσεται, ὁ δὲ βουρδῶν ποδαγριᾶ. καὶ ἐπὶ μὲν ἀνδρῶν βουρδῶν, ἐπὶ δὲ γυναικῶς μουῖλα. In the first two sentences βουρδῶν is three times used generically of the mule, like *burdo* at Pel. 141.3. In the third sentence the masculine/feminine opposition is the same as that at Pel. 196.2. The correctness of this interpretation of the second sentence is shown by a similar passage at Marcellus, Med. 10.60, where it is *mulus* which is opposed to *mula*: *cuius nares faetebunt, remediabitur, si nares muli osculetur; similiter proderit mulieri, si nares mulae basauerit.*

It should now be clear that Isidore's definition of the meaning of *burdo* is something of a red herring, in that the word is well-attested as an equivalent of *mulus*. I now illustrate this sense from a few other late texts.

In Diocletian's Prices Edict *burdo* (or a derivative) is regularly juxtaposed with *asinus* (or a derivative), and in the Greek version βουρδῶν is opposed to ὄνος. Note 11.4a *sagma burdonis*, followed immediately by *sagma asini* (11.5). The Greek version of the first phrase is σάγμα βουρδῶνος, which, taken in conjunction with the passage above from the *Kyranides*, shows that *burdo* had definitely entered later Greek. Cf. further 7.17 *camelario sibe asinario et burdonario pasto*, 37.70 *burdo et bos et asianu[s]* (*sic*: = *asinus*), and in the Greek version 14.10–11, where βουρδῶν and

⁵⁸ D. Kaimakis (ed.), *Die Kyraniden* (Meisenheim am Glan 1976). I am grateful to my colleague D. M. Bain for supplying me with this obscure reference.

ὄνος are in juxtaposition. *Mulus* does not occur in the extant Edict as printed by Lauffer⁵⁹). In the language of the Edict, as in that of Pelagonius, *mulus* will have been replaced by *burdo*; and consequently it is the mule which has been juxtaposed with the donkey in all of these passages. The *sagma* mentioned at 11.4–5 is a pack-saddle. The *burdo* at 11.4a is therefore a *mulus dorsarius*, like that at Pelagonius 196.2.

Burdo is again opposed to *mula* in c.15 of the medical work of Sextus Placitus. The title of the chapter is *de mula uel burdone*. The meaning of *burdo* can be determined not only from its opposition to *mula* (note 15.3 *burdonis testiculum supra sterilem arborem combustum et extinctum de lotio spadonis, inligatum in pellem mulae et post menstrua brachio suspensum*), but also from the alternation of *burdonis testiculum* (see the passage just quoted) with *testiculum muli* (15.4 *si qua post primam uirginitatis purgationem testiculum muli biberit simili modo combustum et a brachio suspensum habuerit, nunquam concipiet*).

I mention finally an example of *burdo* in the *Vulgate*, at IV Regn. 5.17 *concede mihi seruo tuo ut tollam onus duorum burdonum de terra* (LXX γόμος ζεῦγους ἡμιόνων). The Hebrew word rendered here is *pěřed*, ‘mule’, which is usually translated by *mulus* in the *Vulgate*⁶⁰).

VIII. Conclusion

Mules played such a mundane part in everyday life that Latin writers rarely commented overtly on their uses. Modern discussions of the animal have generally been content to list these uses⁶¹), without considering the significance of the variations between the masculine and feminine forms in Latin texts. An analysis of the usage of the feminine form reveals that the female mule was the animal of higher status, used especially for drawing carriages. It could be expensive. The less desirable castrated male seems to have been commonly employed as a humble pack animal. Imperial literature tends to use *mula* for the mule as a *genus*, and this usage must reflect the fact that many speakers (particularly the wealthy)

59) S. Lauffer (ed.), *Diokletians Preisedikkt* (Berlin 1971), 250 ad 11.4a. Lauffer takes *burdo* correctly in the sense of ‘Maulesel’ (not ‘Maultier’).

60) See above, n. 27.

61) Perhaps the best discussion is that of Olck. See also the works of Toynbee and White, cited earlier.

would normally only have needed to refer to the female. *Mula* thereby became established, at least in some writers, as the basic or 'unmarked' term, *mulus* as the unusual or 'marked' term of the opposition. In the opposition *equus/equa*, on the other hand, it is *equus* which is the unmarked term, and indeed in the opposition *mulus/mula* itself *mulus* was originally unmarked. The status and desirability of the female mule among those who could afford such an animal in effect brought about a reversal of the usual opposition masculine (= unmarked, generic) vs. feminine (= marked, sexually specific). The decline of *mulus* in some idiolects left the way open for a new masculine (*burdo*) to come into use. It is significant that in those late works in which *mulus* continues to be preferred to *mula* (e.g. the *Mulomedicina Chironis*, Vegetius), *burdo* is not found. Where it was in use, *burdo* on the one hand established a rivalry with *mulus* as the masculine term, and on the other hand with *mula* as the generic term. It is occasionally used in a generic sense, but it eventually lost its struggle with *mulus* and was diverted into metaphorical meanings.

The generalisation of *mula* left its legacy in the Romance languages. Although both *mulus* and *mula* survive as a contrasting pair potentially marked for sex, there are contexts and collocations, certainly in French and Spanish, in which the reflexes of *mula* can be interpreted as generic⁶²).

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62) Information from native speakers. Dictionaries seem not to note the generic use of the reflexes of *mula*. In the work of Sanson, cited above n. 11, chapter VI (pp. 173 ff.) is entitled 'Mulas y Burdéganos' (= 'mules and hinnies'), and the feminine form is used throughout as the generic term. On the other hand in another work drawn to my attention by Prof. Aparicio Macarro, that of F. Faelli, cited above, n. 28, chapter XXI (pp. 286 ff.) is headed '*Mulos y Burdéganos*' (my italics). In this chapter the author switches backwards and forwards between the masculine and feminine forms (see, e.g., pp. 290 f.) in a generic sense. In French note the proverb 'têtu comme une mule', 'stubborn as a mule'.