

C. TREBATIUS TESTA AND THE BRITISH CHARIOTEERS:
THE RELATIONSHIP OF CIC. *AD FAM.* 7.10.2 TO CAES. *BG*
4.25 AND 33*

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ABSTRACT

This paper responds to the suggestion of H.A. Sanders, 'Swimming among the Greeks and Romans', *CJ* 20 (1924-25) 567, that the phrase 'qui neque in Oceano natate volueris' at Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.10.2 points to an exaggerated report of the difficulty of Caesar's landings in Britain. In the clause that follows Cicero also refers to Trebatius' reluctance to look on the British charioteers ('essedarii'). In a note on the term 'essedum' Servius (*in Verg. Georg.* 3.204) suggests that Cicero's source for its use was his correspondence with Caesar. This article reviews the use of the term 'essedum' and its derivative 'essedarius' by Caesar and Cicero and places the reference to Britain at *Ad Fam.* 7.10.2 in the wider context of Caesar's *Commentarii* and Cicero's letters. I argue that *De Bello Gallico* 4 is a more likely inspiration for Cicero, *Ad Fam.* 7.10.2 and that, if this is the case, then we must concur with T. P. Wiseman, 'The publication of *De Bello Gallico*', in K. Welch & A. Powell (eds), *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter* (London 1998) 1-9, that the first four books of Caesar's work were published no later than 55-54 BC.

1. Introduction

In December 54 BC, whilst congratulating C. Trebatius Testa on his new-found relationship with Caesar, Cicero poked fun at his discomfort in winter quarters and his recent avoidance of military service in Britain:

Legi tuas litteras, ex quibus intellexi te Caesari nostro valde iure consultum videri: est, quod gaudeas te in ista loca venisse, ubi aliquid sapere viderere. Quod si in Britanniam quoque profectus esses, profecto nemo in illa tanta insula peritior te fuisset. ... Sed tu in re militari multo es cautior quam in advocationibus, qui neque in Oceano natate volueris studiosissimus homo natandi neque spectare

* I am grateful to the Earnest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust and the University of the Witwatersrand Anderson Capelli Fund for financial support for this project.

essedarios, quem antea ne andabata quidem defraudare poteramus.
Sed iam satis iocati sumus.¹

Trebatius' and Cicero's fondness for joking is evident in this passage, but the hypothetical situation implied by the jibe appears to indicate a more serious sentiment.² In 1925 H.A. Sanders suggested that 'qui neque in Oceano natate volueris' 'seems to point to an exaggerated report of the difficulty of [Caesar's] first landing in Britain and the expectation in Rome of similar trouble the second time.'³ From other letters dateable to between July and November of 54,⁴ it seems likely that Cicero had already received news regarding the British campaign of 54 by the time he replied to Trebatius. There are, however, evident parallels in this passage with Caesar's published *Commentarii* for the year 55 which describe the problems associated with the landing in Britain and the unaccustomed spectacle of charioteers.⁵

Caesar, Quintus Cicero, or Trebatius, not to mention other acquaintances of Cicero such as Balbus,⁶ would all have been well-placed to comment in detail on the general's activities in Britain and Gaul in their correspondence with Cicero. Furthermore, it is self-evident from Cicero's letters that he was eager for first-hand information from the front lines.⁷ Alternatively, Caesar's correspondence and yearly reports to the Senate may have furnished Cicero with the requisite information. Was Cicero drawing directly on Caesar's published *Commentarii*? Or did he gain the information from other communiqués? Conventional wisdom informs us that the first time the Roman public would have received the rhetorical accounts of the landing and problems faced by the Roman troops in Britain would have been

¹ Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.10.2. The line before runs: 'Valde metuo, ne frigeas in hibernis. Quam ob rem camino luculento utendum censeo; idem Mucio et Manilio placebat, praesertim qui sagis non abundares.' P. Sonnet, *Gaius Trebatius Testa* (Giessen 1932) 15, dates the letter to the end of Dec. 54; D.R. Shackleton-Bailey, *Epistulae ad Familiares* (Cambridge 1977) 95, simply to December 54.

² See G.O. Hutchinson, *Cicero's Correspondence* (Oxford 1998) 181: 'Trebatius' present situation, and the friendship with Cicero, provide the serious element in the letters to Gaul, as well as the humorous one.'

³ H.A. Sanders, 'Swimming among the Greeks and Romans', *CJ* 20 (1924-25) 567.

⁴ Cic. *Ad Q. fr.* 3.1.25 (Sept. 54), *Ad Att.* 4.16.7 (Jul. 54), *Ad Att.* 4.18.5 (Oct. or Nov. 54). See Appendix 2 for references to Britain in Cicero's letters.

⁵ See especially Caes. *BG* 4.25 and 3.

⁶ For their close relationship see, for example, *Ad Fam.* 7.5.2; for his intervention with Caesar on Trebatius' behalf, 7.7.2.

⁷ For example, Caes. *Ad Q. fr.* 2.14.2; 2.16.4, although these might also show concern on Cicero's part to hear from his brother.

post-52 BC.⁸ If Cicero had not seen Caesar's *Commentarii* prior to then, how can we explain the references to the rare and specialist terminology of Celtic charioteering coupled with a reference to the forbidding English Channel? The ongoing debate regarding the publication of the *De Bello Gallico* precludes obvious answers to these questions.⁹ The intent of this paper is to shed some light on the interrelationship of *Ad Fam.* 7.10.2 with the *Commentarii* and Cicero's other correspondence regarding Britain.

2. Caesar's narrative at *De Bello Gallico* 4.25 and 33

To what difficulties was Sanders referring? It seems sensible to turn to the fullest account of the events in Britain in 55 BC: Caesar's *De Bello Gallico* 4. As the Romans approached the rocky shores of Britain, they were confronted by British cavalry and charioteers ('equitatu et essedariis') ranged on the beach. This is the first attested reference in extant Latin literature to the words 'essedum' ('a two-wheeled war chariot') and its derivative 'essedarius' ('charioteer' or 'one who fights from a chariot').¹⁰ This unusual sight (the last time the Romans had engaged chariots was in the second century BC) and the swell of the English Channel caused Caesar's hardened veterans to hesitate. The 'imperator' gives the following account:

At nostris militibus cunctantibus maxime propter altitudinem maris, qui decimae legionis aquilam ferebat, obtestatus deos, ut ea res legioni feliciter eveniret, 'Desilite' inquit 'commitiones, nisi vultis aquilam hostibus prodere. Ego certe meum rei publicae atque imperatori officium praestitero.' Hoc cum voce magna dixisset, se ex navi proiecit atque in hostes aquilam ferre coepit. Tum nostri cohortati inter se, ne tantum dedecus admitteretur, universi ex navi desiluerunt. Hos item ex proximis [primis] navibus cum conspexissent, subsequuti hostibus adpropinquaverunt.¹¹

Just eight chapters later the cavalry and charioteers reappear:

⁸ C. Meier, *Caesar*, trans. D. McClintock (London 1995) 253; cf. T.P. Wiseman, 'The publication of *De Bello Gallico*', in K. Welch & A. Powell (eds), *Julius Caesar as Artful Reporter* (London 1998) 1-9.

⁹ See above, note 8.

¹⁰ LS and *OLD* s.vv. 'essedarii'; 'essedum'; *TLL* 5.2, 861 s.v. 'essedarii'; 861-62 s.v. 'essedum'; A. Walde, *Lateinisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Heidelberg 1938-1956) 1.413.

¹¹ Caes. *BG* 4.25.3-6.

Tum dispersos depositis armis in metendo occupatos subito adorti paucis interfectis reliquos incertis ordinibus perturbaverant, simul equitatu atque essedis circumdederant.¹²

and Caesar regales his audience with a description of the extravagant tactics of the British charioteers:

Genus hoc est ex essedis pugnae: primo per omnes partes perequiant et tela coniciunt 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 paulum 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 efficient, uti in declivi ac praecipitati loco incitatos equos sustinere et brevi moderari ac flectere et per temonem percurrere et in iugo insistere et inde se in currus citissime recipere consuerint.¹³

Anxiety because of the unaccustomed peril overcomes the soldiers: paralysed by fear, they hesitate. In dramatic fashion the standard bearer of the Tenth Legion comes to the rescue. The enduring image of him is his hands raised aloft, praying to the heavens before appealing to his comrades not to lose the legionary standard. Caesar uses the language of prayer and ritual pronouncement ('obtestatus deos, ut ea res ... feliciter eveniret').¹⁴ The centurion entreats his peers with a wonderfully balanced and chiasmic phrase ('meum rei publicae atque imperatori officium'). Remarkably in the heat of battle he remembers that his duty to his general, Caesar, is synonymous with the glory of the state. Throughout the centurion's actions and address we are reminded three times that the object of preservation is the legionary eagle, and by extension the preservation of Rome's honour. The rank and file remember their military 'virtus'; conquer their mental anxieties; and overcome their 'dedecus'. They emerge from the waves and, after fierce

¹² Caes. *BG* 4.32.5.

¹³ Caes. *BG* 4.33.1-3.

¹⁴ LS and *OLD* s.v. 'obtestor'; *TLL* 9.2 s.v. 'obtestor'; 280-82 ('obtestor' = 'adiuro'). For examples see Livy 2.10.3; 6.14.5; 8.33.23; 21.10.3. The phrase 'res ... feliciter eveniret' has its parallels at Livy 21.17.4; 31.5.4; 31.7.15; 31.8.3; 36.1.3; 38.17.19; 40.46.9. Cf. 22.27.12; 22.40.3; 27.27.12; 37.47.5. For the significance of 'feliciter', see *TLL* 6.2 s.v. 'felix - feliciter' 450-54, esp. 2a-b (451). See F. Hickson, *Roman Prayer Language. Livy and the Aeneid of Vergil* (Stuttgart 1993) 120-21: 'the compound "obtestor" is primarily a verb of intensive supplication'; and 70-72 for the phrase 'bene ac feliciter eveniret' as a 'common propitiatory prayer'.

fighting, in which the outcome remains uncertain until the intervention of Caesar, the Romans win the day to establish the first Roman beachhead on British soil. This is not the arid style of the chronicle that Cicero so despised, but the essence of great historiography.¹⁵ There is a central hero, variety of circumstance, and a virtuous 'exemplum': the very elements that Cicero felt were essential for the writing of history.¹⁶

In describing the gymnastic ability of the British charioteers, Caesar is anxious to explain the difficulties encountered by the Seventh Legion when it was suddenly attacked while collecting corn. In part, he wants to inform his audience and, in part, to show how important was *his* success against this tricky and unpredictable foe. The text reveals too how he maintains the theme of the difficulties associated with conquest in Britain. The phrase 'equitatu atque essedis' recalls the 'equitatu et essedariis' of 4.24.1. At 4.34.1, 'quibus rebus perturbatis nostris novitate pugnae' is reminiscent of the fear of the Romans on disembarkation. A variety of linguistic devices – alliteration, assonance, and balancing 'sententiae' – highlight the skills and abilities of the British charioteers. Particular stress is placed on their acrobatic prowess: 'in iugo insistere et se inde in currus citissime recipere consuerint', a display worthy of a circus spectacle. Their daily training allows them to demonstrate remarkable ability and discipline while displaying the lack of organisation typical of native fighting ('primo per ... partes perequitant'). In this dramatic portrait, Caesar allows his audience to appreciate the bravery, dexterity, and novelty of the British charioteers. Furthermore, the use of the term 'essedum' would have emphasised that novelty for, as Gellius comments, Caesar 'avoids the unusual word as a sailor avoids a rock.'¹⁷

It seems difficult to believe that either passage would have formed the substance of a senatorial dispatch. Their dramatic appeal is all the more marked if we compare them to the aridity of, for example, Cicero's letters to the Senate from Cilicia.¹⁸ Cicero is concerned with the movements of his

¹⁵ Cic. *De Orat.* 2.53; *Ad Fam.* 5.12.5; cf. Sempronius Asellio, fr. 1 and 2P (= Gell. *NA* 5.8.8-9).

¹⁶ Cic. *Ad Fam.* 5.12.

¹⁷ Gell. *NA* 1.10.4; Macr. *Sat.* 1.5.2: 'tamquam scopulum sic fugias inauditum atque insolens verbum.' On Caesar's language and his self-conscious use thereof, see L. Hall, 'Ratio and Romanitas', in Welch & Powell (note 8) esp. 13-22.

¹⁸ See, for example, Cic. *Ad Fam.* 15.1; 2 (cf. *Ad Fam.* 15.4 to Cato). There is detail, but they are extremely arid reports and certainly contain nothing comparable to Caesar's *Commentarii*. See Hutchinson (note 2) 80-81 on the simplicity of the Roman military letter – a simplicity that 'was encouraged by tradition'. Cf. *RE* 3 (1899) 836-43 s.v. 'Brief' (Dziatzko) esp. 838 on the form of Caesar's letters to the Senate.

army, legates, emissaries, the importance of diplomatic relations, the military manoeuvres of the enemy, and advice to the Senate from his province on the courses of action that should be taken. There is no room for colourful displays of historiographical technique. They would, however, have offered the bare material from which a more exciting narrative could be produced. This was presumably Caesar's normal practice, changing the first person form to third person to produce an account that appeared to be more objective and inserting enough rhetoric for it to be palatable for public reception.¹⁹

3. Cicero, *Ad Fam.* 7.10.2 and the terms 'essedum' and 'essedarius'

Was Caesar Cicero's source? A fuller commentary on Cicero, *Ad Fam.* 7.10.2 is necessary. Firstly, the reference to swimming: 'Sed tu in re militari multo es cautior quam in advocationibus, qui neque in Oceano natare volueris studiosissimus homo natandi.' From Horace, *Satire* 2.1 we gain independent confirmation of Trebatius' enthusiasm for swimming.²⁰ It is perhaps no surprise to discover that Trebatius was reluctant to dip his toes in the English Channel. The sentence serves to underline Trebatius' dislike for danger, literally and metaphorically.²¹ The English Channel's capricious mood and the uninviting dark green waters can be full of foreboding and danger for the best of swimmers.²² In the Roman world this was enough to evoke fear and anxiety amongst the hardest men, as the hesitation of Caesar's

¹⁹ See Hutchinson (note 2) 88 on Caesar's choice of the third person narrative for his *Commentarii* (in which he followed Xenophon), creating 'authority and proud detachment' from the events described; J. Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge 1997) 197-98, suggests that the use of the third person indicates 'Caesar's attempt to provide a definitive account in the manner of a historian.' On the purpose of the Gallic War *Commentarii* see K. Welch, 'Caesar and his officers in the Gallic War Commentaries', in Welch & Powell (note 8) 85-86: 'It was his presentation of himself as the great Roman Imperator to the Roman people, in a manner befitting a literary stylist and major orator.'

²⁰ Hor. *Sat.* 2.1.7-8: 'ter uncti / transnanto Tiberim, somno quibus est opus alto.'

²¹ His dislike for the cold conditions of winter camp and military service in general are gently derided by his mentor: Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.17.1 with 6.1; 11.2; 13.1.

²² P. Lee Dean, *Open Water Swimming* (Champaign, Ill. 1998) *passim* but esp. 137-38; C. Wennerberg, *Wind, Waves and Sunburn* (New York 1997) esp. 45-77. In addition, there are many books on individual channel swims which detail the difficulties of the crossing. See, for example, K. Watson, *The Crossing. The Glorious Tragedy of the First Man to Swim the English Channel* (New York 2000); or S. Rockett, *Its Cold in the Channel* (London 1956), an auto-biographical account of his swim.

veterans to land in Britain in 55 BC demonstrates.²³ As the soldiers hesitated to enter the waves terrified ‘maxime propter altitudinem maris’, they were saved from shame and disgrace, where ‘dedecus’ has overt pejorative connotations,²⁴ by the brave actions of the legionary ‘aquilifer’.²⁵ Cicero expressed his own fear of the ocean and the shores of Britain in a letter to Quintus: ‘timebam oceanum, timebam litus insulae’.²⁶ Furthermore, channel-fear is apparent long after Caesar’s expeditions. Later sources referred to the island of Britain as an island peopled by shadowy beasts and men, protected by a monster-filled sea.²⁷ In AD 43 Claudius had to send his freedman Narcissus to persuade Aulus Plautius’ legions to embark,²⁸ in what was possibly a replay of events surrounding Gaius’ manoeuvres on the same coastline three years earlier.²⁹ Conquest of ‘Oceanus’ was highly symbolic. After his ‘conquest’ of La Manche, Julius Caesar hung a breast-plate studded with pearls in the temple of Venus Genetrix.³⁰ The Emperor Caligula may have wanted to be seen as the conqueror of Ocean³¹ and Claudius’ desire to cross the Channel was likely inspired by the feats of Germanicus and his ancestor Julius in this region.³² With our minds focused on Caesar’s

²³ Caes. *BG* 4.25.3-6.

²⁴ *OLD* s.v. ‘dedecus’ 1a & c; *LS* s.v. ‘dedecus’.

²⁵ Caesar had set off for Britain late in the season. The moods of the English channel are frequently variable. Caesar gives clear indications that the weather was breaking not too long after his departure as 18 ships carrying the cavalry were blown off course (Caes. *BG* 4.28), while a storm on the same night as a full moon, on a neap tide, wrecked the ships that had been pulled up on the shore (*BG* 4.29). It is unlikely that the rank and file had experienced the turbulence of rough seas prior to this.

²⁶ Cic. *Ad Q. Fr.* 2.16 (15).4 (= Shackleton-Bailey 20); full text below, on p. 87, with note 86.

²⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 2.24: ‘Quidam in Britanniam rapti et remissi a regulis. ut quis ex longinquo reuenerat, miracula narrabant, vim turbinum et inauditas volucris, monstris maris, ambiguas hominum et beluarum formas, visa ex metu credita’, probably based on the epic poem of Pedo Albinovanus. See also *Anth. Lat.* Nos. 419-426; cf. Cat. *Carm.* 29.4; 11.11.

²⁸ Dio 60.19.2-3.

²⁹ Gaius’ manoeuvres: Suet. *Cal.* 46; Dio 59.25.2-3.

³⁰ Pliny, *HN* 9.116.

³¹ Suet. *Cal.* 44-47; Dio, 59.21.3. P. Bicknell, ‘Gaius and the seashells’, *ACI* 5 (1962) 73, interprets his short voyage in a trireme (Suet. *Cal.* 47) in this way.

³² Cf. Tac. *Agr.* 13; B. Levick, *Claudius* (New Haven 1990) 139: ‘the dream of conquering Britain was one of Julius Caesar’s legacies’; V. Scramuzza, *The Emperor Claudius* (Cambridge, Mass. 1940) 201: ‘Caesar’s expeditions made a deep impression on his fellow Romans’; 204-05: Claudius was inspired to invade by his father’s ambitions in this region; cf. A. Momigliano, *Claudius, the Emperor and his*

description of his troops wading through the surf towards the British shore, Cicero's reference to Trebatius' inaction conveys a heightened sense of irony. I would read this line as a hypothetical reference to the events of the first invasion of Britain in order to emphasise the successful avoidance of military action by Cicero's protégé.

Trebatius' refusal to observe the British charioteers seems to support Professor Sanders' viewpoint that this is a reference to the problems encountered in Britain in 55 BC and the anticipation of similar problems in 54. In both years the Romans were unnerved and outmanoeuvred by the British charioteers.³³ Servius thought he knew the origin of the word:

BELGICA ESSEDA Gallicana vehicula: nam Belgi civitas est Galliae, in qua huius vehiculi repertus est usus. et aliter: 'Belgica' Gallica. 'essedae' 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.³⁴

This passage of Servius would seem to be the lynchpin in determining the source for Cicero's use of 'essedarii' in his letter to Trebatius. Servius identifies Caesar as the earliest Roman writer to make use of the word 'essedarius', referring to him as 'testis', or 'eye witness'. Servius evidently believed that the word entered the Latin language as a technical term for the Gallic chariot and was first used by Caesar in a letter to Cicero. Servius appears to be confused. Chariots had not been used in Gaul since the second century BC. It seems likely that he means the British chariots encountered by Caesar in 55 and 54 BC. In his *Alt-Celtischer Sprachschatz*, Holder suggested that the subject of 'habet' in Servius should be understood to be the British chieftain, Cassivellaunus.³⁵ This supposition is problematic. The first reference to 'essedae/essedarii' in Cicero occurs at *Ad Fam.* 7.6.2 which was probably written in May 54 BC.³⁶ Cassivellaunus is mentioned for the first

Achievement, trans. W. D. Hogarth (Oxford 1934) 54-57: Claudius was inspired by hardening of British resistance to Rome, in addition to economic motives. Suet. *Claud.* 17.1 appears to hint at a desire to emulate his ancestors. See also B. Levick, 'Antiquarian or revolutionary? Claudius Caesar's conception of his principate', *AJPb* 99 (1978) 99, on his desire to surpass Julius Caesar by bringing many elephants to Britain.

³³ See Appendix 1, nos. 1-4 (55 BC), 9-14 (54 BC), although at *BG* 5.9.2 and 5.15.1 Caesar indicates the Roman superiority over the British.

³⁴ Serv. *In Verg. Georg.* 3.204.

³⁵ P.A. Holder, *Alt-Celtischer Sprachschatz* (Leipzig 1896) 1.1474.

³⁶ Shackleton-Bailey (note 1) 89.

time only at Caesar, *De Bello Gallico* 5.11.8. There is nothing in the narrative of the *Commentarii* to suggest that Caesar knew of him in the previous year. If it is supposed for a moment that Servius is correct about the correspondence, then the assumption would be that Cicero had received a letter from Caesar prior to *Ad Fam.* 7.6 in May of 54 BC when Cicero first uses the term 'essedarius'. Although it was possible for letters from Britain to arrive at Rome in less than four weeks, this supposition seems unlikely for the reasons I outline below.³⁷

At this point a brief history of the term 'essedum' is necessary. Etymologists are agreed on the roots of the word 'en' (Latin 'in') and 'sed-' (Latin 'sedere').³⁸ It is unclear, however, whether the noun 'essedum' has a specifically Celtic origin or was a word coined by Caesar. The earliest references to 'essedum' and 'essedarius' cling specifically to the meaning of British chariot/charioteer, as revealed by the table in appendix one. By 50 BC Cicero felt comfortable in using 'essedum' as a generic term for any kind of chariot, as his letter to Appius from Laodicea in February of that year demonstrates.³⁹ However, here there are pejorative overtones as Cicero describes his meeting with Vedius who is ridiculed for his lack of intellect and the proof of his scandalous affair with Junia.⁴⁰ Frequently 'essedum/essedarius' is associated with a barbarian and foreign context.⁴¹ Sometimes it is explicitly associated with the wild and the taming of nature.⁴² Occasionally it is associated with men of ignoble character, as in the case of Vedius above, and also of Caligula. For example, in the case of the latter, he is portrayed riding over the bridge of boats at Baiae accompanied by a cohort of his friends riding in 'essedum'. Here there is a joke at the expense of his 'comites' who are contrasted with the 'agmen praetorianum'. They are described as a 'cohors', yet travel not on foot and in military order like the praetorians, but ride, like Vedius, in carriages. It seems possible that Suetonius uses the word in this instance inspired by the possibility that the bridge was built as part of Gaius' preparations for a campaign in Germany and Britain.⁴³ 'Essedum', then, as used by Cicero in his letter to Trebatius, is

³⁷ See below, section 4, pp. 82-88.

³⁸ Holder (note 35) 1470; Walde (note 10) 421.

³⁹ Cic. *Ad Att.* 6.1.25.

⁴⁰ *Idem.*

⁴¹ See Appendix 1, nos. 17, 18, 20, 21, 28, 31, 32, 38, 41.

⁴² See Appendix 1, nos. 17, 28, 32, 33.

⁴³ Suet. *Cal.* 19.3. Some writers thought that Gaius built the Bridge in rivalry of Xerxes who had bridged the Hellespont, others that he hoped to inspire terror in Germany and Britain, which he was threatening, with the reputation of some great

a technical word specific to the British chariot. Its later development into a more generic term continued to betray its foreign and barbarous origins.

As Cicero balances his comment regarding Trebatius' with his refusal to take a dip in the English Channel, despite his passion for swimming, so in his refusal to observe the British charioteers, Cicero refers to Trebatius' passion for watching the 'andabatae'. This is surely an example of rhetorical hyperbole to emphasise Trebatius' enthusiasm for the gladiatorial shows at Rome. Later sources confirm that 'andabatae' were 'blindfolded gladiators'.⁴⁴ In Classical Latin occurrences of this noun are extremely rare, only recurring in the headings of Varro's *Menippean Satires*.⁴⁵ Cicero says very little about his approach to letter writing but in a letter to Paetus remarks: 'epistulas vero cottidianis verbis texere solemus',⁴⁶ and in his recommendation of Trebatius remarks on Caesar's mockery of him for using an old-fashioned phrase.⁴⁷ Contrary to what might appear appropriate to the art of letter writing, Cicero follows one unusual and technical word, specific to a British or Gallic context, with another that is specific to the language of gladiatorial combat. The combination of these words with the verb 'spectare'⁴⁸ implies that the British charioteers offered a display reminiscent of gladiatorial entertainment, even if they had not yet been incorporated into the spectacles of the amphitheatre.⁴⁹ The text suggests that Cicero's 'esse-

building work' ('alios, ut Germaniam et Britanniam, quibus imminebat, alicuius immensi operis fama territaret').

⁴⁴ Hier. *Ad Heb.* 5: 'More andabatarum gladium in tenebris ventilans'; *Adv. Iov.* 1.36, 294A: 'Clausis quod dicitur oculis andabatarum more pugnare.' For other occurrences of the noun see Inscr. Orell. 2577; Cic. *Virg. Mar.* 5.210a; *RE* 1.2117 (Meyer).

⁴⁵ Varro, *Menippean Satires* fr. 25 (title). See *TLL* 2.33-34 s.v. 'andabata'.

⁴⁶ Cic. *Ad Fam.* 9.21.1. See Hutchinson (note 2) 5-6 for a discussion of Cicero's stylistic choices when writing letters. The letter to Paetus implies a need to maintain a suitably 'elegant' and 'plain' style which sets letter-writing apart from other forms of literature.

⁴⁷ Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.5.3: 'De quo tibi homine haec spondeo, non illo vetere verbo meo quod, cum ad te de Milone scripsissem, iure lusisti sed more Romano quomodo homines non inepti loquuntur ...'

⁴⁸ LS s.v. 'specto' B1, 'to observe as a spectator'; *OLD* s.v. *specto* 3.

⁴⁹ See M. Junkelmann, *Das Spiel mit dem Tod so Kämpften Roms Gladiatoren* (Mainz am Rhein 2000) 54-58, 98-102, 108, 116-19 ('essedarii'), who raises the possibility that the 'essedarii' were a well-known type of gladiator in the East and West. However, this supposition cannot be correct if Caesar introduced the term to Rome only in 55-54 BC. British captives in substantial numbers were presumably only brought back to Rome in the years after the more successful expedition of 54 BC. On 'andabatae' see Junkelmann (127-28), where he notes that the etymology of the term is unknown.

darii' might have engaged in the athleticism which Caesar had spelled out in Book Four of his *Commentarii*.⁵⁰ Certainly the skill of the chariot drivers who could drive this way and that to confuse the enemy, their ability to hold their horses and chariots on an incline, the warrior running along the yoke, all seem to point more to a show in the Roman amphitheatre than behaviour appropriate for battle, so different was it from Roman fighting methods and so removed from their ordinary experiences of military combat. This view seems to be supported by other internal references from Cicero's letters.

As early as May 54 BC, in one of those famous instances where Cicero takes Trebatius' measure with a humorous allusion to the law, he remarks: 'tu, qui ceteris cavere didicisti, in Britannia ne ab essedariis decipiaris, cave-to'.⁵¹ There is evident word play on technical legal terms: the use of 'decipio'; the impersonal, future imperative 'caveto', reminiscent of legal decrees⁵² in order to emphasise their 'trickiness', alluded to in the Caesarian narrative. In another letter (also from mid-54),⁵³ Cicero alludes to their 'celeritas', encouraging Trebatius to capture an 'essedum' in order to return as soon as possible to Rome.⁵⁴ Caesar had taken special care to mention the 'mobilitas equitum' of the British charioteers.

These aspects of British charioteering had clearly captured the popular imagination by the 20s BC. In addition to the dramatic picture in Vergil's *Georgics*, Livy's account of the battle of Sentinum in 295 BC runs: '... et iam inter media peditum agmina proelium cientes novum pugnae conterruit genus; essedis carrisque superstans armatus hostis ingenti sonitu equorum rotarumque advenit et insolitos eius tumultus Romanorum conterruit equos'.⁵⁵ The inspiration for the Livian description seems to be Caesar's references to the British 'essedarii' who terrified his own soldiers with their new form of fighting and the sound of their wheeled chariots.

The way in which the uniqueness of the 'essedum' gripped the Roman literary imagination is also apparent in ironic references to their qualities. In contrast to Vergil's untamed horses, and in an apparent play on the *Georgics* passage, Silius Italicus has the unwarlike Astyrian steeds submit their soft necks to the 'essedum'. He retains, however, the connotations of speed to

⁵⁰ See above, section 2, pp. 73-76.

⁵¹ Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.6.2; Shackleton-Bailey (note 1) 1.233 s.v. 2.1 'cavere'.

⁵² F. Muecke, 'Law, rhetoric, and genre in Horace, *Satires* 2.1', in S.J. Harrison (ed.), *Homage to Horace. A Bimillenary Celebration* (Oxford 1995) 208.

⁵³ Perhaps the end of June: D. R. Shackleton-Bailey, *Cicero's Letters to his Friends* (Atlanta 1978) 75.

⁵⁴ Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.7.1: 'In Britannia nihil esse audio neque auri, neque argenti. Id si ita est, essedum aliquod suadeo capias, et ad nos quam primum recurras.'

⁵⁵ Livy 10.28.9.

which Caesar and Cicero allude. Martial too refers to the celerity of the 'essedum'. Elsewhere he pokes fun at the noise and tumult described by Caesar and Livy: 'gestator patet essedo tacente / ne blando rota sit molesta rumpo'.⁵⁶ These images were all surely inspired by Caesar's *Commentarii* and not his senatorial reports or letters to Cicero. In the same manner, I would argue that it is most likely that Cicero himself was inspired not by Caesar's epistles but by the *Commentarii*, written with his popular audience in mind.

One possibility then for an understanding of Servius and its interpretation by Holder is that a generic noun such as 'hostis' be understood as the subject of 'habet' rather than the proper noun, Cassivellaunus. However, a survey of Caesar's *Bellum Gallicum* reveals that Caesar only specifies the numbers ('four thousand') of charioteers at 5.19.2.⁵⁷ This seems to support Holder's view that the events of the letter from Caesar's third book to Cicero, referred to by Servius, should be dated to 54 BC and the reference to 'essedarii' associated with the marshalling of the British forces by Cassivellaunus. I think there are stronger reasons for supposing that Cicero's source for the use of the term in this letter is prompted by Caesar's *Commentarii*.

4. Correspondence between Britain and Rome

As early as 56 BC, Cicero could remark in praise of Caesar in the *De Provinciis Consularibus*:

An ego possum huic esse inimicus, cuius litteris, fama, nuntiis celebrantur aures cotidie meae novis nominibus gentium, nationum, locorum?⁵⁸

A little later he goes on to say that this is the first time the northern nations have been revealed to the Roman people by literature, spoken word, or report ('litterae', 'vox', 'fama').⁵⁹ The evidence from the *De Provinciis Consularibus* is demonstrative of the interest taken in Caesar's Gallic campaign in Gaul during the 50s. It is the latest news and, presumably, was being eagerly consumed by his reading and listening public. If 'fama' and 'nuntii' ('vox') refer to the spoken word, to what literature does 'litterae' refer?

Caesar's biographer, Suetonius Tranquillus, offers three possibilities:

⁵⁶ Mart. *Ep.* 4.64.19.

⁵⁷ Caes. *BG* 5.19.1: 'milibus circiter quattuor essedariorum relictis.'

⁵⁸ Cic. *De Prov. Cons.* 22.

⁵⁹ Cic. *De Prov. Cons.* 33.

Reliquit et rerum suarum commentarios Gallici civilisque belli Pompeiani ... Pollio Asinius parum diligenter parumque integra veritate compositos putat, cum Caesar pleraque et quae per alios errant gesta temere crediderit et quae per se, vel consulto vel etiam memoria lapsus perperam ediderit; existimatque rescripturum et correcturum fuisse. Epistulae quoque eius ad senatum extant, quas primum videtur ad paginas et formam memorialis libelli convertisse, cum antea consules et duces non nisi transversa charta scriptas mitterent. Exstant et ad Ciceronem ...⁶⁰

Caesar left information about his affairs in Gaul via his well-known *Commentarii*, by means of his letters to the Senate, and through his own letters to Cicero. Suetonius refers to the production of his letters to the Senate as ‘forma memorialis libelli’. Previous generals had composed their reports at right angles to the grain of the papyrus, which meant that the grain ran down the page (| | | |) as opposed to Caesar’s method where he wrote with the grain of the papyrus (----). This meant that Caesar’s dispatches could be transformed into the ancient form of a book (‘libellus memorialis’) by being unrolled left to right (or vice versa). However, the language does not mean that Caesar ever published his senatorial dispatches in this form. Indeed, Suetonius’ use of ‘forma’ seems to suggest that they could have the ‘representation’ of a small book, without the necessity of publication. Suetonius’ point is that Caesar’s practice contrasted with that of previous commanders. Presumably the book form of these dispatches would have made it easier for them to be copied and read by interested senators. It would also have made it easier for Caesar to have begun the process of revision in order to turn these dispatches into his *Commentarii*. Evidence from later works does not seem to shed any light on what form this ‘libellus’ might have taken. For example, the later *Liber Memorialis* of L. Ampelius (c. 2-3 AD) has an encyclopaedic feel and treats cosmology, geography (including ‘miracula mundi’), mythology and history.⁶¹ This would hardly have been material appropriate for inclusion in Caesar’s dispatches to the Senate. Finally, the use of the diminutive ‘libellus’ indicates a tiny volume, much less detailed than the Gallic War account. The word suggests the brevity requisite for campaign reports and points to their lack of literary embellishment in variance with the rhetorical and stylistic demands of successful Roman historiography.⁶²

⁶⁰ Suet. *Inl.* 56.1, 5, 6.

⁶¹ *RE* 1 (1894) 1880-81 (Wissowa); *OCD*³ 75 (Holford-Strevens).

⁶² Cic. *De Orat.* 2.52-54; *Ad Fam.* 5.12.4; Asellio fr. 1 and 2P (= Gell. *NA* 5.8.8-9) on the difference between annals and history. For modern commentary see S. Oakley, *A Commentary on Livy Books 6-10* (Oxford 1997-99) 1.7; A. Woodman, *Rhetoric in*

Despite the evidence of the *De Provinciis Consularibus*, Cicero's letters prior to May 54 BC betray little interest in Gaul or Britain and then mainly in relation to how it affects the political situation at Rome.⁶³ It appears that it is only in 54 with the appointment of his brother Quintus as legate and the arrival in Gaul of other members of Cicero's circle – Balbus, Oppius, Trebatius – that the consul takes an avid interest in affairs to the North.⁶⁴ Letters from Britain or Gaul would take between three and four weeks to reach Rome, provided they met with no mishap.⁶⁵ Post to and from the front could be notoriously unreliable: Cicero refers to a letter to Caesar that was so waterlogged as to be unreadable;⁶⁶ on another occasion the courier bringing Quintus' tragedy *Erigona* was attacked;⁶⁷ at *Ad Q. Fr.* 3.3 (21 Oct. 54) Cicero remarks that he has had no replies for seven weeks; letters from Trebatius, dispatched at different times, arrived in the same batch.⁶⁸

The first direct reference to Britain and to British 'essedarii' occurs in Cicero's first letter to Trebatius which can be dated to late May 54 BC.⁶⁹ From the *De Bello Gallico* we learn that at the beginning of 54 Caesar travelled to Italy, took a census of Nearer Gaul, and went to Illyricum.⁷⁰ He returned to Nearer Gaul to find 600 transport ships and twenty-eight warships ready for his British expedition.⁷¹ Next, Caesar set off for the territory of the Treveri to pacify the German border.⁷² At this point he then went to Boulogne, the departure point for his British expedition⁷³ where the

Classical Historiography (London 1988); T.P. Wiseman *Clio's Cosmetics* (Leicester 1979).

⁶³ References to Gaul in the Letters: *Ad Att.* 1.19.2; 1.20.5, both datable to 60 BC; *Ad Fam.* 7.5.2 (54 BC), Cicero's letter of recommendation for Trebatius.

⁶⁴ For direct references to Britain in the letters of Cicero see Appendix 2.

⁶⁵ For the speed of correspondence: *Ad Q. Fr.* 3.1.13, dispatched 10 August, arrived Ides of September; 3.1.25, dispatched Kalends September, arrived 27 September; *Ad Att.* 4.18.5, dispatched 25 September, arrived 24 October. See L. Friedlaender, *Roman Life and Manners under the Early Empire* (originally published as *Sittengeschichte Roms*), trans. L.A. Magnus (London 1928-1936) 168-322, on the reliability and difficulties of communication in the Roman world, esp. 286 on the letters from Gaul and Britain. See also *RE* 16 (1935) 1446-1541 s.v. 'Nachricht-wesens' (Reincke). More generally, see the detailed analysis of W. Riepl, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Nachrichtenwesens bei den Römern* (Leipzig 1911).

⁶⁶ *Ad Q. fr.* 2.11.4.

⁶⁷ *Ad Q. Fr.* 3.7.7.

⁶⁸ *Ad Fam.* 7.18.1.

⁶⁹ Above note 36.

⁷⁰ Caes. *BG* 5.1.5.

⁷¹ Caes. *BG* 5.2.1.

⁷² Caes. *BG* 5.2.4-3.7.

⁷³ Caes. *BG* 5.4.1.

Romans were delayed for twenty-five days as they waited for good sailing weather.⁷⁴ There was a further postponement when Dumnorix, chieftain of the Aedui, broke his allegiance with Rome.⁷⁵ It would have been impossible for Caesar to have experienced all of this in less than four to five months. Caesar himself is the source for his return to Gaul – prior to the September equinox.⁷⁶ A date as late as 1 July can, therefore, be postulated for the departure of the expedition with an arrival on 7 July.⁷⁷ This tardy departure seems confirmed by Cicero's letters. For he supposes that Quintus is only in Britain on 27 July 54.⁷⁸ The dating then precludes the possibility that Cicero received a letter from Caesar referring to British 'essedarii' in 54 and supports the supposition above that Servius has erred in his attribution of the origins of the word 'essedum' to the third book of Caesar's letters to Cicero.

Furthermore, although the argument *ex silentio* for letters from Caesar to Cicero in 55 might place us on slippery ground, it seems that relations between Caesar and Cicero had only become affable enough again for their correspondence to resume on familiar grounds during the course of 54. Quintus urged his brother to exert himself to make Caesar the one man whom he should please. Cicero admits in the same passage to his reticence in pursuing Caesar's friendship more actively.⁷⁹ Later letters from 54 indicate a blossoming of this relationship.⁸⁰ In particular, Cicero's letter to Lentulus Spinther at the end of 54 seems to imply that the 'letters and friendly acts' which Caesar bestowed on Cicero included the appointment of his brother as legate.⁸¹ The context, then, for the evolution and revival of their correspondence is 54 BC. The contrast with letters from 55 is striking: Caesar is not mentioned in a single letter: not in *Ad Q. fr.* 2.8 or 2.9; nor in *Ad Fam.*

⁷⁴ Caes. *BG* 5.7.3.

⁷⁵ Caes. *BG* 5.7.5.

⁷⁶ Caes. *BG* 5.23.5.

⁷⁷ S.S. Frere, *Britannia* (3rd edition, London 1987) 21; P. Beresford Ellis, *Caesar's Invasion of Britain* (London 1978) 116.

⁷⁸ Cic. *Ad Att.* 4.15.10.

⁷⁹ Cic. *Ad Q. fr.* 2.14.1.

⁸⁰ See *Ad Q. fr.* 2.15; 2.16; 3.1. Cf. *Ad Fam.* 1.9.7. See H.C. Gotoff, *Cicero's Caesarian Speeches* (Chapel Hill 1993) xxii, who suggests that there was a change in the nature of the relationship between Cicero and Caesar by the end of 54; Hutchinson (note 2) 177 notes that the humour of the letters between the two men was a feature of their developing intimacy. Cf. D. Stockton, *Cicero. A Political Biography* (Oxford 1971) 194-226, esp. 211-21 for a discussion of Cicero's capitulation to Caesar and Pompey; E. Rawson, *Cicero. A Portrait* (London 1975) 133-34; D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero* (London 1971) 91-92 on the warmth between the two men in 54 BC.

⁸¹ Cic. *Ad Fam.* 1.9.7.

1.8, 5.12 or 7.1; nor in *Ad Att.* 4.6, 4.9-11 or 4.13. The evidence then is overwhelmingly in favour of the notion that Cicero did not get information about British (and even Gallic) affairs prior to 54 via the letters of Caesar.

In my introduction, I raised the possibility that the correspondence between Cicero and his friends in Gaul would have offered him an alternative source of information regarding Britain. However, even during 54 the correspondence suggests that Cicero was not getting full information from the frontlines. It is clear from the references in Cicero's letters to Quintus and Atticus that, in fact, very little was being communicated from them regarding the war in Britain. The letters to Quintus hardly overflow with information and do not add greatly to Cicero's knowledge about the island,⁸² despite Cicero's request that his brother provide him with the raw material for his epic poem about Britain, a project of interest to Caesar.⁸³ For example, at *Ad Att.* 4.15.10 (27 July 54) in response to a letter from Quintus, Cicero can only guess that he is now in Britain. In another letter to Atticus in July 54, Cicero mentions simply that he had already received letters from Quintus and Caesar informing him that there was no booty, hostages and a ransom had been taken, and that the army was returning from Britain.⁸⁴ The lack of booty was of concern to Cicero since one of his plans for both Quintus and Trebatius was that their Gallic service would provide an opportunity for self-enrichment.⁸⁵ But the information is surprisingly sparse given the 'richest of letters' from Caesar himself.

⁸² Cic. *Ad Q. Fr.* 3.1.10 (Sept. 54): 'De Britannicis rebus cognovi ex tuis litteris nihil esse nec quod metuamus nec quod gaudeamus.' Cf. 3.1.13: 'Quarta epistula mihi reddita est Id. Sept., quam a.d. III Id. Sext. ex Britannia dederas. In ea nihil sane erat novi praeter Erigonam ...' Presumably this means there was nothing new to report either about Britain or Quintus' affairs. Cf. 3.1.25: 'Ex Britannia Caesar ad me Kal. Sept. dedit litteras, quas ego accepi a.d. III Kal. Oct., satis commodas de Britannicis rebus, quibus, ne admirer quod a te nullas acceperim, scribit se sine te fuisse cum ad mare accesserit. Ad eas ego ei litteras nihil rescripsi, ne gratulandi quidem causa, propter eius luctum.'

⁸³ Cic. *Ad Q. fr.* 2.16.4; 3.4.4; 5.4; 6.3 (Caesar's interest); 7.6.

⁸⁴ Cic. *Ad Att.* 4.16.7: 'Britannici belli exitus exspectatur; constat enim aditus insulae esse muratos mirificis molibus. Etiam illud iam cognitum est, neque argenti scrupulum esse ullum in illa insula neque ullam spem praedae nisi ex mancipiis; ex quibus nullos puto te litteris aut musicis eruditos exspectare' (c. 1 July 54); Cic. *Ad Att.* 4.18.5: 'A Quinto fratre et a Caesare accepi a. d. VIII Kal. Nov. litteras datas a litoribus Britanniae proximae a. d. VI Kal. Oct. profecta Britannia, obsidibus acceptis, nulla praeda, imperata tamen pecunia exercitum e Britannia reportabant.' Dated to between 24 Oct. and 2 Nov. 54 BC.

⁸⁵ The donatives of Caesar and the gold fever besetting his men are well documented: Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.17.3; 7.2; 8.1.5; *Ad Att.* 7.7.6; Caes. *BC* 1.15.2; Cat. 29.57;

The fullest response from Cicero to Quintus reveals his relief at hearing from his brother:

Venio nunc ad id quod nescio an primum esse debuerit. O iucundas mihi tuas de Britannia litteras! Timebam Oceanum, timebam litus insulae; reliqua non equidem contemno, sed plus habent tamen spei quam timoris magisque sum sollicitatus exspectatione ea quam metu. Te vero ubi quae in scribendi egregiam habere video. Quos tu situs, quae naturas rerum et locorum, quos mores, quas gentis, quas pugnas, quem vero ipsum imperatorem habes!⁸⁶

The balanced repetition of 'timebam Oceanum, timebam litus insulae' is on the one hand a revealing moment of brotherly intimacy, on the other it contains an allusion once more to the difficulties faced by the Romans in 55 and 54 when storms caused severe destruction to the fleet, and perhaps alludes to the difficulty of the invasion of 55, as described above. The final sentence here suggests that Quintus might have the material for his own historical account of the British invasion. But it is also not clear from the other letters, as I have indicated, that Quintus had spoken in detail to Marcus about his British experiences. Geography, ethnography, military encounters, and the 'imperator' himself are all features of Caesar's *Commentarii*. It is possibly significant that one of the few letters we possess from 55 is Cicero's letter to Luceius on how to write history, a letter that Cicero recommended to Atticus.⁸⁷ Cicero urges his potential biographer to concentrate on a single subject and a single figure and prompts him to indulge in personal bias towards the central character. He reminds Luceius of the doubtful and varying fortunes of an outstanding individual and the contrasting emotions of surprise and suspense, joy and distress, hope and fear.⁸⁸ Evidently what made for good historiography was very much on Cicero's mind in 55-54. I suspect that the letter to Quintus conveys self-conscious and double-edged Ciceronian humour at the expense of his brother's literary ambitions and the published war accounts of Caesar. The anaphoric stress ('quae, quos, quas,

Plut. *Caes.* 17.1; App. *BC* 2.17. Gold fever: Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.7.1; *Ad Att.* 4.14.7. Cicero refers three times to Caesar as 'liberalissimus': Cic. *Ad Fam.* 7.7.2; 7.10.3; 7.17.3. Cf. *Ad Att.* 12.49.2.

⁸⁶ Cic. *Ad Q.* Fr. 2.16.4.

⁸⁷ Cic. *Ad Fam.* 5.12; cf. *Ad Att.* 4.6.4.

⁸⁸ Cic. *Ad Fam.* 5.12.5: 'Etenim ordo ipse annalium mediocriter nos retinet quasi enumeratione fastorum; at viri saepe excellentis ancipites varique casus habent admirationem, exspectationem, laetitiam, molestiam, spem, timorem; si vero exitu notabili concluduntur, expletur animus iucundissima lectionis voluptate.'

quas, quem) and the alliterative and weighty 'vero ipsum imperatorem' draw attention to the subject matter and the future dictator's self-preoccupation.

It was only on 27 September that Cicero received a 'satisfyingly full' ('satis commodas') account of British affairs from Caesar (*Ad Q. fr.* 3.1.25). What that account consisted of is impossible to tell. It seems unlikely that Caesar would have revealed too much. For, as Welch has argued, Caesar 'would be ahead of his officers with his own account rather than behind them, and that he would do his best to ensure that their literary efforts produced *ex castris* were influenced by his works rather than his by theirs.'⁸⁹ Certainly Caesar would not have wanted to anticipate his own, presumably impressive, senatorial dispatches, nor would he have wanted to preempt the eventual publication of his *Commentarii*, whether they were to appear at the very end of the campaigning season in question or at some point in the more distant future.

In short, I do not think that letters between Cicero and his correspondents revealed any firm details about British affairs either in 55 or in 54. The term 'essedum/essedarius' is only present in its meaning as British chariot/charioteer in the letters to Trebatius. It seems unlikely that Cicero could have gleaned the term either from his brother or from the correspondence of Caesar, since the letters from Quintus and Caesar are all to be dated post-June 54, by which time the statesman had already written in jocular terms to Trebatius about the British 'essedarii'.

5. Conclusion

Cicero regarded his letters as sufficiently stylistic and artistic for publication. They were not dressed up for this purpose in the same way as, for example, were the letters of Pliny. Therefore, it should be assumed that the essential form of the letters is as Cicero wrote them in 54 BC, that he did not redraft them to create a contemporary feel or for the sake of literary allusion. What, then, should we make of Cicero's references to swimming and charioteering in his letter to Trebatius?

It seems unlikely that the references to Ocean and British charioteers at *Ad Fam.* 7.10.2 were drawn from Caesar's yearly campaign reports presented to the Senate. Such reports would have offered a fairly arid account of Caesar's activities in Gaul and Britain. I suspect that, in the case of the latter, he would have had little to say, except on the matter of the taking of hostages and receiving a tribute from the British tribes. It is unlikely that he would have included unfamiliar vocabulary which would need explanation.

⁸⁹ Welch (note 19) 86-87.

Nor is there any real evidence to suggest that Cicero might be drawing on contemporary hearsay via the letters from his friends in Gaul, or from Quintus in Britain. Although there is a slim possibility that letters from Caesar's third book were a source, there is no internal evidence from Cicero to support this viewpoint. Indeed, the terms in which Cicero refers to the British charioteers elsewhere in his letters seems more reminiscent of the *Commentarii*. Further, it seems too much of a coincidence that his mockery of Trebatius appears to draw directly on two famous descriptive scenes from book four of the *Gallia War*.

Since Cicero evidently thought that his letters had literary appeal, it seems more likely that, rather than a dry campaign report or a personal letter, he would have alluded to a contemporary literary account of Caesar's affairs in Britain. Cicero made known his admiration for Caesar's *Commentarii* in the *Brutus*:

Nudi enim sunt, recti et venusti, omni ornatu orationis tamquam veste detracta. Sed dum voluit alios habere parata, unde sumerent qui vellent scribere historiam, ineptis gratum fortasse fecit, qui illa volent calamistris inurere, sanos quidem homines a scribendo deterruit; nihil est enim in historia pura et illustri brevitate dulcius.⁹⁰

Cicero's admiration is all the more marked since he would probably have agreed with the Greek critic Democritus' view that his letters should avoid 'pomposity, intellectualism, or length';⁹¹ that they should have a literary style not too dissimilar to that adopted by Caesar for his *Commentarii*. I would argue that a published version of Caesar's events in Gaul for 55 BC must have been available prior to Cicero's letters to Trebatius. References to Caesar's campaigns, and vocabulary specific to them, give the letters a sense of contemporary immediacy and intimacy that we would expect in Cicero's dealings with his nearest and dearest friends and relatives. The obvious inspiration is Caesar's *De Bello Gallico*. Trebatius, on the basis of the letters and the humorous portrait of Horace, *Satire* 2.1, would have enjoyed the joke immensely.⁹² It seems, therefore, that Professor Wiseman's suggestion that

⁹⁰ Cic. *Brut.* 262. But see the remarks of Marincola (note 19) 197-98, who suggests that we should dismiss Cicero's remark that the *Commentarii* were intended as raw material for others. Caesar's commentaries were a 'very finished piece'.

⁹¹ Democ. *Eloc.* 223-35; see Hutchinson (note 2) 6.

⁹² See Hutchinson (note 2) 172-99 on humour in the letters of Cicero, esp. 179-87 on *Ad Fam.* 7.18, and humour in the letters to Trebatius. For the humorous interplay in Hor. *Sat.* 2.1 see J.J. Clauss, 'Allusion and structure in Horace *Satire* 2.1: the Callimachean response', *TAPhA* 115 (1985) 199; E. Fraenkel, *Horace* (Oxford 1959)

‘each winter Caesar wrote up the events of the year’s campaigns’,⁹³ and that the publication of the first four books of the Gallic War commentaries should be dated no later than 55-54 BC, is likely to be correct.⁹⁴

145-53; A. Kiessling & R. Heinze (eds), *Q. Horatius Flaccus. Satiren.* (Berlin 1961) 177-91; N. Rudd, *The Satires of Horace* (Cambridge 1966) 124-31.

⁹³ Wiseman (note 8) 4.

⁹⁴ For the publication of Caesar’s *Commentarii* see Wiseman (note 8) 6: there were ‘two stages in the creation of the Gallic War commentaries, the first (Books 1-4) from 58-57 to 55-54, the second (books 5-7) from 53-52 to 52-51.’ *Contra* Meier (note 8) 253; M. Gelzer, *Caesar: Politician and Statesman*, trans. P. Needham (Oxford 1968; orig. ed. Stuttgart 1921) 171; M. Rambaud, *L’Art de la déformation historique dans les commentaires de César* (Paris 1966) 9-12, 365, 403-05.

**Appendix 1: *essedum/essedarius*: Table of Occurrences
in Literary Sources**

No.	Source	Date of Production	Context	Meaning
1	Caes. BG 4.24.1	Post 55 BC	<i>at barbari, consilio Romanorum cognito praemisso equitatu et essedariis, quo plerumque genere in proeliis uti consuerunt</i>	C, B
2	Caes. BG 4.32.5	Post 55 BC	<i>simul equitatu atque essedis circumdederant</i>	G, B
3	Caes. BG 4.33.1	Post 55 BC	<i>genus hoc est ex essedis pugnae</i>	G, B
4	Caes. BG 4.33.2	Post 55 BC	<i>et cum se inter equitum turmas insinuaverunt, ex essedis desiliunt et pedibus proeliabantur</i>	G, B
5	Caes. Ep. ad Cic. Book 3 fr. 1	55 or 54 BC	<i>multa milia equitum atque essedariorum habet</i>	C, B
6	Cic. Ad fam. 7.6.2	May 54 BC	<i>tu, qui ceteris cavere didicisti, in Britannia ne ab essedariis decipiaris caveto</i>	C, B
7	Cic. Ad fam. 7.7.1	end of June(?) 54	<i>in Britannia nihil esse audio neque auri neque argenti: id si ita est, essedum aliquod capias suadeo et ad nos quam primum recurras</i>	G, B
8	Cic. Ad fam. 7.10.2	Dec. 54 BC	<i>sed tu in re militari multo es cautior quam in advocacionibus, qui neque in Oceano natare volueris, studiosissimus homo natandi, neque spectare essedarios, quem antea me andabata quidem defraudare poteramus</i>	C, B
9	Caes. BG 5.9.3	Post 54 BC	<i>illi equitatu atque essedis ad flumen progressi ex loco superiore nostros prohibere et proelium committere coeperunt</i>	G, B
10	Caes. BG 5.15.1	Post 54 BC	<i>equites hostium essedariique acriter proelio cum equitatu nostro in itinere conflixerunt</i>	C, B
11	Caes. BG 5.16.2	Post 54 BC	<i>cum paulum ab legionibus nostros removissent, ex essedis desilerent et pedibus dispari proelio contenderent</i>	G, B
12	Caes. BG 5.17.5	Post 54 BC	<i>praecipitates hostes egerunt magnoque eorum numero interfecto neque sui colligendi neque consistendi aut ex essedis desiliendi facultatem dederunt</i>	G, B

13	Caes. BG 5.19.1	Post 54 BC	<i>Cassivellannus, ut supra demonstravimus, omni deposita spe contentionis dimissis amplioribus copiis milibus circiter quattuor essedariorum relictis itinera nostra servabat</i>	C, B
14	Caes. BG 5.19.2	Post 54 BC	<i>omnibus viis semitisque essedarios ex silvis emittebat et magno cum periculo nostrorum equitum cum eis confligebat</i>	C, B
15	Cic. Ad Att. 6.1.25	20 Feb. 50 BC	<i>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</i>	G, P?
16	Cic. Phil. 2.58.2	Nov. 44 BC	<i>vehebatur in essedo tribunus pl.; lictores laureati antecedeabant</i>	G, P
17	Verg. Georg. 3.204	29 BC	<i>ille nolat simul arua fuga simul aequora verrens./ hinc vel ad Elei metas et maxima campi/sudabit spatia et spumas aget ore cruentas./ Belgica vel molli melius feret esseda collo.</i>	G, Cel
18	cf. Serv. In Verg. Georg. 3.204	post AD 384	<i>BELGICA ESSEDA Gallicana vehicula: nam Belgi civitas est Galliae, in qua huius vehiculi repertus est usus. et aliter: 'Belgica' Gallica. 'essedae' 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.</i>	C, Cel
19	Hor. Epist. 2.1.192	17-13 BC	<i>mox trahitur manibus regum fortuna retortis,/ esseda festinant, pilenta, petorruta, naues,/ captivum portatur ebur, captiva Corinthus.</i>	G, P
20	cf. Porphyry. In Hor. Ep. 2.1.192	c. 201-250	<i>essedae Gallorum vehicula sunt, quibus victi reges ab aliis regibus captivi, pilenta, quibus vebuntur reginae captivae. petorruta. vehicula familiarum captivarum, quae iam [omnia] ad spectaculum ducebantur.</i>	G, Cel

21	Livy 10.28.9	20s BC	<i>essedis carrisque superstans armatus hostis ingenti sonitu equorum rotarumque aduenit et insolitos eius tumultus Romanorum conterruit equos.</i>	G, Cel.
22	Ov. <i>Am.</i> 2.16.49	25-16 BC?	<i>siqua mei tamen est in te pia cura relictis, incipe pollicitis addere facta tuis, parvaque quamprimum rapi-entibus esseda mannis ipsa per admissas concute lora iubas!</i>	G
23	Ov. <i>Ex Pont.</i> 2. 10.34	AD 12-13	<i>et quota pars haec sunt rerum quas uidimus ambo, te mihi iucundas efficiente uias, seu rate caeruleas picta sulcauimus undas, esseda nos agili siue tulere rota.</i>	G
24	Sen. <i>Ep. Mor. ad Luc.</i> 29.6	AD 63- 65	<i>de eodem cum consuleretur Iulius Graecinus, vir egregius, quid sentiret, 'non possum', inquit, 'tibi dicere; nescio enim, quid de gradu faciat,' tamquam de essedario interrogaretur</i>	G1
25	Sen. <i>Ep. Mor. ad Luc.</i> 56.4	AD 63- 65	<i>in his, quae me sine auocatione circumstrepunt, essedas transcurrentes pono et fabrum inquilinum et serrarium vicinum, aut hunc, qui ad metam Sudantem tubulas experitur et tibias, nec cantat, sed exclamat</i>	G
26	Petr. <i>Sat.</i> 36.6	AD 60	<i>processit statim scissor et ad symphoniam gesticulatus ita laceravit obsonium, ut putares essedarium bydraule cantante pugnare</i>	G1
27	Petr. <i>Sat.</i> 45.7	AD 60	<i>iam Manios aliquot habet et mulierem essedariam et dispensatorem Glyconis, qui deprehensus est cum dominam suam delectaretur</i>	G1
28	Sil. Ital. <i>Pun.</i> 3.337	c. AD 88-96	<i>his paruus sonipes nec Marti natus, at idem/aut inconcusso glomerat uestigia dorso, aut molli pacata celer rapit esseda collo.</i>	G, O
29	Plin. <i>HN</i> 34.163	AD 77	<i>deinde et argentum incoquere simili modo coepere equorum et maxime ornamentis iumentorumque ac iugorum in Alesia oppido; reliqua gloria Biturigum fuit. coepere deinde et esseda sua colisataque ac petorita exornare simili modo</i>	C, Cel

30	Plin. <i>HN</i> 37.140	AD 77	<i>essedariis [Mayhoff], staticula, equorum ornamenta inde medicisque coticulas faciunt, nam spectasse etiam prodest oculis.</i>	G1
31	Pers. <i>Sat.</i> 6.47	Pre-AD 62	<i>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.</i>	G, Cel
32	Mart. 1.104.8	AD 86	<i>et, quantum Calydon tulisse fertur,/paret purpureis aper capistris,/turpes esseda quod trabunt uisontes/et molles dare iussa quod choreas/nigro belua non negat magistro.</i>	G, O
33	Mart. 4.64.19	AD 88-94	<i>illinc Flaminiae Salariaeque/ gestator patet essedo tacente,/ne blando rota sit molesta somno,/quem nec rumpere nauticum celeuma/nec clamor ualet helciariorum,/cum sit tam prope Muluus sacrumque/lapsae per Tiberim uolent carinae.</i>	G
34	Mart. 10.104.7	AD 98	<i>illinc te rota tollet et citatus/altam Bilbilin et tuum Salonem/Quinto forsitan essedo videbis</i>	G
35	Mart. 12.24.2	AD 100	<i>o iucunda, covinne, solitudo,/carruca magis essedoque gratum/facundi mihi munus Aeliani!</i>	G
36	Mart. 12.57.23	AD 100	<i>nec in Falerno colle maior autumnus,/intraque limen latus essedo cursus,/et in profundo somnus, et quies nullis/offensa linguis, nec dies nisi admissus./nos transeuntis risus excitat turbae</i>	G
37	Suet. <i>Aug.</i> 76.2	AD 117-126	<i>nos in essedo panem et palmulas gustavimus</i>	G
38	Suet. <i>Cal.</i> 19.2	AD 117-126	<i>per hunc pontem ultro citro com- meavit biduo continenti, ... postri- die ... comitante praetorianum ag- mine et in essedis cohorte amicorum</i>	G, Cel.
39	Suet. <i>Cal.</i> 26.2	AD 117-126	<i>nibilo reverentior leniorve erga sena- tum, quosdam summis honoribus functos ad essedum sibi currere toga- tos per aliquot passuum milia</i>	G, P. cf. <i>Gal.</i> 6.3

40	Suet. <i>Cal.</i> 35.3	AD 117-126	<i>cum quodam die muneris essedario Porio post prosperam pugnam servum suum manumittenti studiosius plausum esset</i>	G1
41	Suet. <i>Cal.</i> 51.2	AD 117-126	<i>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 propere reversus ad pontes</i>	G, Cel
42	Suet. <i>Claud.</i> 16.4	AD 117-126	<i>fuertunt et illa in censura eius notabilia, quod essedum argenteum sumptuose fabricatum ac venale ad Stigillaria redimi concidique coram imperavit</i>	G
43	Suet. <i>Claud.</i> 21.5	AD 117-126	<i>cum essedario, pro quo quattuor filii deprecabantur, magno omnium favore, indulisset rudem, tabulam ilico misit admonens populum, quanto opere liberos suscipere deberet, quos videret et gladiatori praesidio gratiaeque esse</i>	G1
44	Suet. <i>Claud.</i> 33.2	AD 117-126	<i>solutus etiam in gestatione ludere, ita essedo alveoque adaptatis ne lusus confunderetur</i>	G
45	Suet. <i>Gal.</i> 6.3	AD 117-126	<i>ipse maxime insignis, quod campestram decursionem scuto moderatus, etiam ad essedum imperatoris per viginti passum milia cucurrit.</i>	G, Cel Cf. <i>Cal.</i> 26.2
46	Suet. <i>Gal.</i> 18.1	AD 117-126	<i>taurus securis ictu consternatus rupto vinculo essedum eius invasit elatisque pedibus totum cruore perfudit</i>	G, P
47	Artem. <i>Oneir.</i> 2.32.6	c. AD 150-200	ol de ajsidario- archn kai mwran eihai thn gunaika shmainei	G1

- G = Generic of any kind of wheeled vehicle
C = Charioteer (not a gladiator)
G1 = Gladiator
B = British/British Context
Cel = German/Gallic Context
O = Other Foreign Context
P = Pejorative Connotation

**Appendix 2: Chronological References to Britain
in the Letters of Cicero
(Based on Shackleton-Bailey's Dating)**

Reference	Addressee	Date
<i>Ad Fam.</i> 7.6.2	Trebatius	Late May 54
<i>Ad Q. fr.</i> 2.14.2	Quintus	Beg. June 54
<i>Ad Fam.</i> 7.7.1 & 2	Trebatius	End June (?) 54
<i>Ad Att.</i> 4.16.7	Atticus	1 July 54
<i>Ad Att.</i> 4.15.10	Atticus	27 July 54
<i>Ad Fam.</i> 7.8.2	Trebatius	Mid-Late Aug. 54
<i>Ad Q. fr.</i> 2.16.4	Quintus	Late Aug. 54
<i>Ad Q. fr.</i> 3.1.10	Quintus	Sept. 54
<i>Ad Q. fr.</i> 3.1.13	Quintus	Sept. 54 (response to letter of 10 Aug.)
<i>Ad Q. fr.</i> 3.1.25 (2 times)	Quintus	Sept. 54 (response to letter of Caesar on 1 Sept.)
<i>Ad Fam.</i> 7.17.3	Trebatius	Oct. or Nov. 54
<i>Ad Att.</i> 4.18.5 (3 times)	Atticus	24 Oct – 2 Nov 54
<i>Ad Fam.</i> 7.16.1	Trebatius	Late Nov. 54
<i>Ad Fam.</i> 7.10.1	Trebatius	Dec. 54
<i>Ad Fam.</i> 7.11.3	Trebatius	Jan. 53
<i>Ad Fam.</i> 7.14.1	Trebatius	May or June 53
<i>Ad Fam.</i> 15.16.2	Cassius	Mid-January 45