



ITINERARIUM IMPERII

THE EMPIRE AND ITS ROADS



Rome has always taken into great account the works of ingenuity and everything that is needed to create the structure of civilization. In fact, while the Greeks deemed that founding cities and giving them beauty was sufficient, our fathers understood that a people also needs safety and comfort. In ancient times, we began to channel water, build sewers, and pave streets. The territories were made secure by the passage of cobbled roads. Hills were cut and valleys filled so that the stride of our legions and the carriages of our people could traverse the world, bringing peace and prosperity. Compliant with the mandate of the great architect Vitruvius, who recommended “solidity, utility, and beauty”, our roads were built to last, and also to make the journey pleasant.

THE ROADS

The entire Empire is crossed by almost four hundred *viae publicae*, large and well-paved roads, with the exception of some remote regions beyond the Vallum Antoninum, in Britannia, in inner Dacia, and beyond the Euphrates. From these main roads radiates a network of minor trod roads, suitable for both horses and heavy carriages, and countless secondary roads. The system is so well connected that the Divine Caesar, departing from Gallia, could reach Brundisium, Apulia, in just three days, although with obvious forced stops. The Roads are divided into categories, based on dimension and the level of finiteness.



AVERAGE JOURNEY TIMES

Traveler	Miles traveled per day
Post rider	From 90 to 120
Private on a carriage pulled by a horse or a mule	From 35 to 45
Army on foot with normal equipment on flat terrain	20
Wagon pulled by horses	20
Wagon pulled by oxen	10
Caravan in the desert with dromedaries	18

These values refer to ideal travel conditions, with fair weather and a paved road. In different conditions, apply the following (cumulative) penalties: on unpaved roads the values go down by one third (e.g., a horse-pulled carriage travels only 25 miles a day on unpaved roads or in the rain); on mountain roads or snowy grounds the values are halved (e.g., an army on foot covers only 10 miles a day on the mountains).

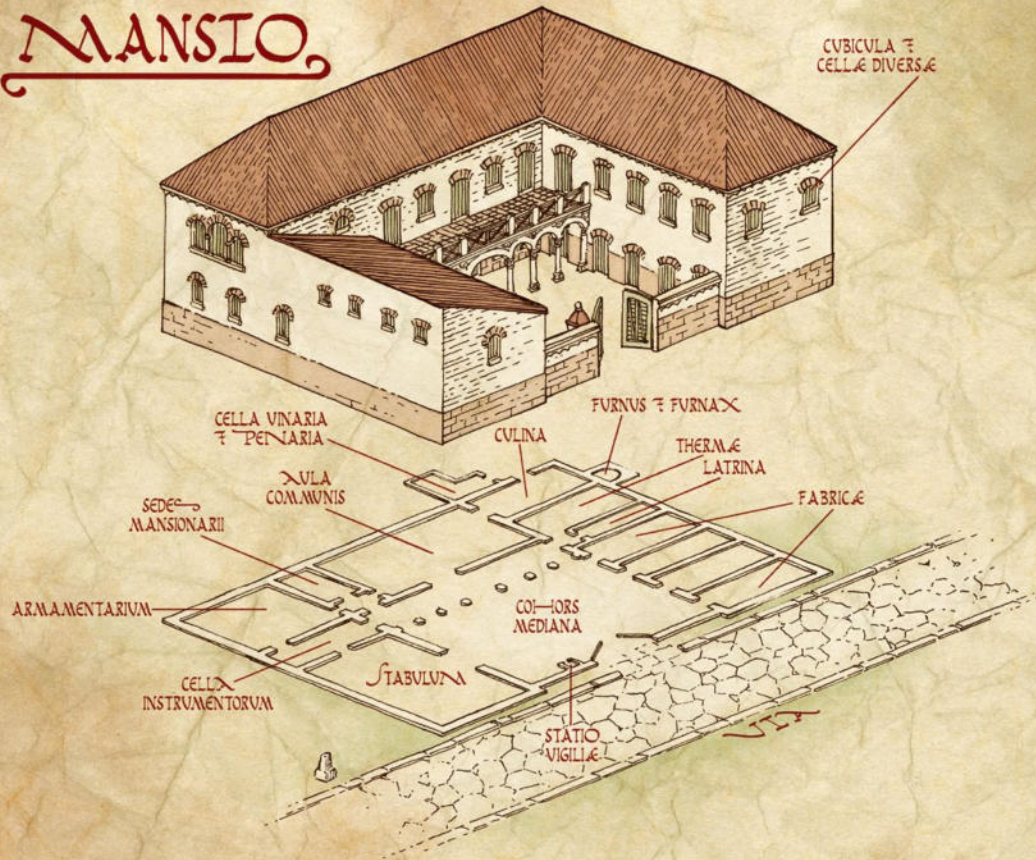
- Viae publicae.** These are well-paved main roads (*selciatae*), wide enough to allow two carriages to pass side by side, between 15 and 18 feet. Usually built and then maintained by the State, they take their name from the magistrate curating their construction (hence they can also be defined *consulares*, *praetoriae*, and *militares*). They connect main cities to other important towns and often merge one into the other, forming long trajectories that pass through a number of provinces, like the Via Aurelia – Via Aemilia Scauri – Via Julia Augusta axis, which, from Rome, leads directly to the Pillars of Hercules, in Ispania, through a path 1,840 miles long.
- Viae privatae.** These are roads produced by private citizens and dedicated to public use. They can be fairly wide and usually connect main roads to minor towns or private properties.
- Viae vicinali.** These connect *vici*, the minor towns, to one another and to the *viae publicae*. They are usually under direct control of the city administration. Sometimes *selciatae*, most often trod.
- Viae rusticae.** These are country roads, frequently unpaved and simply trod.
- Caravan routes.** The Empire also stretches to regions where it's not possible to lay actual *viae*, but where extremely ancient tracks are still travelled by caravans carrying fine wares from faraway lands. These tracks are hard to cross without an adequate guide and a proper means of transportation, usually a mule, and in desert areas mainly camels or dromedaries.

SERVICES ALONG THE ROAD

The Empire's road network was initially destined for the displacement of troops. There was therefore no need for eateries or places for the restoration of vehicles because our armies are always self-sufficient. But later on, our beautiful roads also welcomed emissaries and post riders, as well as travelers, merchants, and pilgrims, so it became necessary to offer them some kind of assistance. Nowadays the main roads are all riddled with staging posts and tabernae, and journeys are progressively safer and more comfortable. Naturally, on minor roads and in wastelands it's hard to be certain of the quality of services or of the honesty of tavern keepers, thus prudence is always advised.

- Mansio.** This is an official staging post managed by the Central administration. The name, derived from *manere*, “to stop”, suggests the idea of a longer stay, and they are especially chosen to spend the night. Usually the access to mansiones is reserved to Imperial personnel on official missions, and is therefore necessary to show an official travel document (*diploma*), in which the reasons and the manner of traveling must be specified. Occasionally, they also accommodate personalities and wealthy travelers who received a special permit. They are equipped with a change of horses, mules, or oxen, service workshops for people and animals, farriers and blacksmiths for restorations, and veterinaries.

MANSIO



Legend

statio vigiliae = guardroom

stabulum = stables

cohors mediana = central square

cella instrumentorum = equipment room

armamentarium = armory

aula communis = common room

sedes mansionarii = mansonarius' office

cella vinaria et penaria = cellar and pantry

furnus et furnax = oven and furnace

thermae = baths

latrina = lavatory

fabricae = workshop

cubicula = bedrooms

cellae diversae = other rooms



ROADS AND RISK OF ACCIDENTS

The chance of hindrances to the journey is linked to the type of road; the better the overall path, the less likely it is to have an accident. A roll on 1d8 will establish if the inconvenience occurs, then 1d6 on the table below will state what kind of problem has arisen.

Type of road	Chance of accident
Via publica	1
Via privata	1-2
Via vicinalis	1-3
Via rustica	1-4
Caravan route	1-5

TABLE OF ACCIDENTS

D6 roll	Type of accident
1	One of the spokes of a wheel snapped. In case it's a filled wheel, a big crack forms from the edge towards the center. If the damage isn't fixed, the wheel will break within a mile of road.
2	The road is full of holes, more or less visible: a bump harder than the others snaps the axle joining the wheels. It's impossible to continue the journey unless you have the necessary material to repair the damage or specialized personnel.
3	One of the shafts joining the carriage with the animals has loosened: the tow is misaligned and this tires the animals and consumes excessively only one side of the wheels. If the problem isn't fixed by 1d3 hours of travel, one of the wheels will break and the animals will refuse to move forward.
4	A terrible jolt makes part of the cargo fall from the vehicle. If it's fragile material the goods can be damaged.
5	A wheel gets stuck in a mud-filled hole. To put the vehicle back on track, it's necessary to unload it, push it out of the hole, then reload it.
6	A shoe detaches from the hoof of one of the animals pulling the vehicle. If you don't have the tools necessary to fix it, someone must reach the closest mansio on foot and beg the farrier to come to the place of the accident and fix the damage.

They are often small establishments of three or four joint buildings; the smaller mansiones are simply a spacious building, with a room for travelers, stables, accommodations on the upper floor, and sometimes even a small thermal plant on the first floor. The mansiones are surveilled establishments: on the street side, they are closed by a fence, and the entrance gate is watched by a sentinel. In some border areas the mansiones are like a small military encampment. Usually they are located about 15-18 miles from one another, which, on average, is the distance a carriage can travel. The mansiones are under command of the praepositus mansionum (also called mansionarius), official commander of the garrison.

- U **Mutatio.** From *mutare*, "to change", since it's possible to change horses or mules and rapidly continue the journey, these are more frequent than mansiones, with a distribution along the route of about four or five mutations for every mansio. On particularly uncomfortable, rough roads, or in places devoid of water sources, the frequency is even higher, and many are also equipped with accommodations, since accidents could prevent reaching the mansiones. These establishments are official as well, and they are subjected to the same rules of the mansiones, hence the right to use public animals and provisions is granted only to those who show a regular diploma.
- U **Taberna viaria.** These are destined to the assistance of private travelers, and can usually be found a few steps away from the mansiones. They offer more or less the same services, except they obviously require payment. If the Custodes travel undercover, they will have to pay for the service. The quality of the tabernae viariae is very uneven, since they are not under State control. Therefore, some offer mediocre meals and dirty accommodations, at times even in the company of the beasts, for an absurd price, taking advantage of the state of need the travelers find themselves in. They are very often frequented by crooks and women of ill repute, so it's important to be careful. Many others, though, have a very good name and attract many visitors, to the point that around some tabernae have emerged actual villages, like the Germanic towns of Tabernae, along the limes, and Tres Tabernae, west of Argentoratum.
- U **Stabulum.** The word strabulum merely indicates a stable, which speaks volumes about the nature of these places. They are, in fact, cheap dives that offer food and beverages of questionable quality, and are often situated far from the best stations. The stabula, however, offer a service to those who must travel on secondary roads far from the comforts of Imperial viae, and a stroke of luck can always happen. Some excellent tabernae viariae started off humbly, but the ability of the managers and the good cooking of their wives managed to transform them from mere stabulum to renowned inn, as in the case of a taberna on the Via Appia, near Sinuessa, recommended on all travel itineraries.



PRAEPOSITUS MANSIONUM

Average value: DV 6

1 die: Sensibilitas

2 dice: De Bello, De Corpore, De Scientia (*Investigation*)

3 dice: De Societate (*Command, Negotiation*), Ratio

Hit Points: 12

Weapons: Gladius (damage 6)

Protection: Corium Lorica (protection 3)

The *Praepositum* at the head of a *mansio* is an official who must have many competencies. The fact that he resides in a fixed location and doesn't fight on the battlefield doesn't mean his job has no challenges. He, in fact, has to adapt to unforeseeable situations. Although the *mansio* is reserved for travelers on official missions on behalf of the Empire, it can't be ruled out that civilians in need, unannounced nobles, bandits, or crooks might show up.



MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION

According to their necessities, travelers can also choose from different types of vehicles. The differences lie not only in speed or capacity, but also in greater or lesser efficiency of travel time. Vehicles pulled by oxen can carry a lot of weight, but they can only ride for eight out of twenty-four hours, since these animals need eight hours of rest and eight more to ruminate their meal. Vehicles pulled by horses are faster and they can make better use of the day, if well-watered, but they can carry less weight. However, horses need to rest every evening as well, and if forced to travel for more than two days without proper rest they can die of fatigue. The desert animals, camels or dromedaries, only need to drink every six or seven days in winter and every three days in summer.



- Carpentum.** Closed carriage which allows comfortable journeys, since the covering (made of canvas or of hide) protects the travelers from bad weather. Usually pulled by horses. In Rome, among patricians, and in particular dames, a variant with colorful silk drapes is very much in vogue.



- Carruca Dormitoria.** A pelt-covered carriage, of Gallic origin. Suitable for long journeys and cold climates, since the coachman can sit inside as well, driving through a frontal opening in the covering. Can be used to sleep in, and can accommodate up to six people. The mobile shaft makes it very maneuverable.



- U **Carrus.** Transport vehicle especially used in the military. It has a very basic trunk structure, open on the sides to facilitate loading. Fairly easy to drive, it has a mobile shaft and it is sometimes provided with brake levers, for greater control on slopes.
- U **Cisium.** Swift cart for two people with no baggage, pulled by horses or mules. Commonly used for short and quick errands in the city or the surrounding area, sometimes for a fee. The *cisarii* are a highly respected Guild and they perform an irreplaceable service to the Empire.
- U **Plastrum.** Transport cart with only two wheels, made of a simple wooden loading bed on which the cargo is piled, either loose or in containers. It's pulled by oxen. The fixed shaft doesn't allow much maneuverability.
- U **Raeda.** The preferred vehicle for long journeys, almost a small house with a door for better accessibility, and seats. It can transport both people and baggage, up to a maximum of 1,000 pounds. Depending on the use it can be pulled by horses, mules, or oxen.

AIDS TO THE JOURNEY

✦ LAPIS MILIARIUM (MILESTONE)

The roads of the Empire are always equipped with signals that help even the most distracted traveler understand not only which road they're on, but also where it originated and for how long they've been traveling.

These are columns or *cippi*, up to 8 feet tall for better visibility, placed on the side of the road at regular intervals, normally a mile. That's why this column is called "*lapis miliarius*" (milestone) or simply *miliarius*. *Miliari* in Italia always display the distance calculated from the City of Rome, specifically from the Capitol. In other provinces, on the *miliari* is stated the city of origin, for example *a Alexandria CXXV*, "125 miles from Alexandria". This city is usually the most important on the local road network and it's called "*caput viae*", origin of the path. Some *miliari* close to borders between regions or provinces also state the distance from the crossing point. On the *cippi* there also is the name of the person who financed the construction of the road and that of the current reigning Emperor. The *miliari* are especially useful in territories where there are no geographical landmarks, such as the vast Padan Plain in Italia, the tangled northern forests, or the sandy expanses of the southern and eastern provinces. These reference points are so vital that whoever removes them or makes them useless is severely punished.

In the heart of Rome, in the Forum, there is the Miliarium Aureum, a golden pillar on which the distances from the major cities of the Empire are engraved.



DRIVING A CARRIAGE

The required skill to drive a carriage is *De Natura*. Usually no rolls are required, unless the driver faces an unexpected event of some kind and is forced to make a sudden or risky maneuver. In this case, the DT is typically 6 on normal terrain, or 9 on rough terrain.

✦ ITINERARY MAPS AND CHARTS

The Imperial administration has gifted cartographers that have created useful travel tools. These are always fully available to the Cohors Arcana and if they so wish, the Custodes can request them at will.

In case it's necessary to get an itinerary during a mission, some can be bought in the major cities of the Empire.

- U **Itinerarium Agrippae.** Itinerary of Agrippa: This derives from the official map of the Empire, first commissioned by Agrippa, friend and right-hand man of the Divine Augustus. It was realized as a monumental painting, called *Orbis Pictus*, kept inside the portico of Campo Marzio, and it represented the full extent of the Empire during the reign of Augustus. From this map was then manufactured a schematic *Itinerarium*, made of 11 sheets that together cover a length of 23 feet. For convenience, travelers only carry with them the sheets that cover their journey route. The itinerary contains every road, city, staging post, taberna, river, mountain range, and forest that exists in the Empire, from Gades, the westernmost point (sheet I), to well beyond the edges of the Empire in the East. In sheet XI, in fact, are even displayed the territories of far India and beyond, all the way to Sina. Since the time of Agrippa it has constantly been revised, and is therefore a reliable travel tool. It can be bought in the major cities, usually on parchment sheets that guarantee good duration.

- Itinerarium Antonini Augusti.** Antonine Itinerary: Realized by the Imperial cartographers during the reign of Antoninus Pius for the postal couriers, this begins at the Pillars of Hercules and it goes through the Empire in a circular direction. The copy kept in Rome is bound in the fashion of a codex, but there are partial versions in loose sheets that only concern a single region. It doesn't contain maps or charts, but it's a rather schematic list of the main roads with an indication of the distances and of the stations located along them. The section concerning Britannia is considered a standalone itinerary and is often dubbed *Iter Britanniarum*.

There are also itineraries drawn up by private citizens, whose degree of reliability is inferior to the Imperial ones, but that locally can be useful. Unfortunately, in this case there's always a certain risk, and it must well considered whether to trust them.

- Itinerarium Artemidori.** This very ancient document, made by the Greek cartographer Artemidorus, is used as basis for the cartography of the Iberian peninsula. To this day, the modern maps of this region carry the name of the ancient cartographer.
- Itinerarium Burdigalense.** This is an interesting example of itinerary, drawn up by a Christian pilgrim headed to Judaea, departing from the Gallic city of Burdigala.

UNITS OF MEASURE

Unit	In Roman feet	US (Imperial) system
<i>pes</i> (foot)	1	0.971 ft.
<i>gradus</i> (step)	2.5	2.427 ft.
<i>passus</i> (pace)	5	4.854 ft.
<i>stadium</i> (stade)	625	607.14 ft.
<i>miliarium</i> (mile)	5,000	4,854 ft. (0.919 mi.)
<i>leuga</i> (league)	7,500	7,281 (1.379 mi.)



THE LARES COMPITALES

At the *compita*, the crossroads, there is often an edicule containing statues or painted pictures of two smiling young people, dancing and holding a drinking horn brimming with wine, as if toasting. These are the *Lares Compitales*, deities that not only protect the crossroads, but also the surrounding roads and communities. The roads protected by these edicules are less vulnerable to the accidents listed in the table "Roads and risk of accidents" (add 1 to the results of a d10). On the edicules it's likely to see offerings, usually small honey cakes or flower crowns. Damaging the edicule or taking away the offerings causes the loss of 2d6 *Pietas* points and unleashes the hostility of the *Lares Compitales*. To placate them it's necessary to repair the damage and renew the offerings.



INFRASTRUCTURE

Our roads follow a trajectory that stays as rectilinear as possible to allow the troops to easily reach every corner of the Empire. For this reason, it's often necessary to be aware of the many obstacles nature lays on the ground, be they rivers, mountains, or other hindrances.

BRIDGES

Building bridges is for us a sacred craft, to the point that Rome's highest sacerdotal office is that of Pontifex ("bridge builder") Maximus. We don't put servile workers in charge of the construction of bridges, it's the army that cares for these works, so essential to the Empire. Generally, bridges differ in construction technique, and have different degrees of stability and duration.

-  **Wooden bridges.** This technique has been used since the beginning of Rome's history, as in the bridge Sublicio on the Tiber. If entrusted to an experienced workforce it's the fastest construction system, but it can't be used to cover too large a space. Caesar, with this technique, built a bridge on the Rhine River, not far from Autunnacum, in only ten days. It was made of wood and bound with ropes, instead of being nailed, so that the structure was elastic enough to endure the violent currents. These constructions need constant and careful maintenance.
-  **Stone bridges.** These are slower to build, but more durable. They permit covering bigger gaps, as the road lies on wide round arches. A magnificent example is the bridge on the Tagus River in Ispania, on the road that leads to Lusitania. Built by the architect Caius Julius Lacer, in honor of the Divine Trajan, it rests on five imposing stone pillars of different heights, so to adapt to the shape of the river banks. Some bridges fulfil more than one purpose, like the magnificent viaduct on the Vardo River, in Gallia, built to allow the passage of the Nemausus aqueduct through the gorge of the river at the dizzying height of 160 feet. It also has a road surface accessible to carriages and travelers.
-  **Mixed techniques bridges.** Usually, stone is used for the base pillars, especially in case of strong currents, and wooden planks are used for the arches and the upper parts. The most inventive example is surely the bridge that Apollodorus of Damascus, the architect of the Divine Trajan, built across the Danuvium in the province of Dacia. In that spot the river is a little less than half a mile wide, and its waters are deep and raging. For this reason, the road surface is about 60 feet above the water level, and it lies on a wooden floor that extends over twenty stone pillars, 170 feet apart from one another. This construction is portrayed on Trajan's Column, a rightful source of pride among the many works accomplished by the Divine Emperor.

VIADUCTS

In some cases, bridges are built to overcome a significant difference in altitude rather than a water course. They are therefore less subject to wear due to the constant pressure of water on the pillars, and maintenance mostly concerns the road surface. The arches they rest on can reach a span of 130 feet, as in the bridge of Narni, in Italia. The most splendid example is the viaduct on the Via Appia, near Aricia: it extends for more than 700 feet and reaches 40 feet in height.

GALLERIES

Despite the fact that opening passages inside mountains is a difficult and expensive task, the Empire never hesitated when it was necessary. Luckily, there are galleries only in a few places, such as over Neapolis in the Regio I Campania, where the so-called Crypta Neapolitana, almost 6,000 steps long, passes through the Pausilipon hill, and in the area of Cumae, in Campania again, where the Crypta of Cocceio connects Cumae with the Portus Julius. The most exceptional construction is perhaps the gallery in the Regio VI Umbria, built by Emperor Vespasian through the Furlo Gorge, 115 feet long and wide enough to allow two carriages to pass side by side. In that spot, in Intercisa, there is also a comfortable staging post.

TOLLS

Normally, passage on the Imperial roads is free for everyone. Only on some stretches a special toll is required due to the local conditions. This is the case, for example, of the great bridges across rivers, which need constant maintenance.

In some cases, it's also necessary to pay a special garrison to control and protect them. A toll is due, for example, on the bridge built by The Divine Trajan on the Danuvium, between Moesia and Dacia, protected on both sides by a small camp with a stationary garrison. Caravan routes in the Egyptian desert are also subject to a toll, since a lot of work is necessary to keep them free from sand and to guarantee the presence of water sources at fixed intervals.

In Aegyptus, for example, the "Antinopolis tariff" is imposed on all caravans that from the commercial junction in the city of Antinopolis head east to reach the Silk Road, or south, towards the Incense Route.

The tax is imposed proportionally on the merchants' wealth, and not on their cargo.

The Empire's justice taxes richer merchants more, and less those who, despite having few resources, courageously venture on the desert roads. The lowest duty is imposed on the sailors who arrive on the coasts of the Mare Rubrum (also called Sinus Arabicus) not to trade luxury goods, but to exchange or sell necessary goods to ships: sails, parts of masts, and various equipment.



BRIDGES AND RISK OF ACCIDENTS

The chance of hindrances to a journey is linked to the type of road. The sturdier the materials, the less likely it is to have an accident. A roll on 1d10 will establish whether an inconvenience occurs, then 1d6 on the table below will indicate what kind of problem has arisen.

Type of construction	Chance of accident
Stone bridge	1
Mixed bridge	1-2
Wooden bridge	1-3
Viaduct	1-4
Gallery	1-5

TABLE OF ACCIDENTS

1d6 roll	Type of Accident
1	Damage to the floor paving makes a section unsteady. Anyone who crosses it must roll Coordinatio or De Corpore (DT 6), otherwise they will trip, and by falling they will get 1d3 damage.
2	A wheel gets stuck in the bridge's uneven floor. To free it, the carriage must be unloaded. Then you can proceed in one of two ways: you can try to convince the draft animals to forcefully free the stuck wheel (De Natura DT 6), or you can try to unfasten the wheel and put it back after moving the carriage (De Scientia DT 6).
3	A section of the walking surface has collapsed. You see the water foaming under the bridge (or small rocks falling down). To cross the collapse and continue your journey, you must jump, by successfully rolling De Corpore (DT 3). Falling causes at least 3d6 damage (armor doesn't protect you).
4	The noise of the current rumbling under the bridge (or the gallery's booming echoes) frightens the horses and oxen. They refuse to step on the bridge. To convince them to cross the bridge you must roll De Natura (DT 3).
5	The overall structure of the bridge (or gallery) seems quite unsteady. It would be prudent not to pass all at once. Each traveler must dismount and cross by themselves for the bridge's entire length.
6	The structure seems quite damaged. The pillars tremble under the push of the current (or under the pressure of the overhead mountain). The structure may not bear the passage of the full carriages. You must unload them, make them cross over, empty, carry the cargo by hand and then reload everything.



ADVENTURES ALONG THE ROAD

LITTLE SCENARIOS TO LIVEN UP A JOURNEY

MOUNTAIN ROAD. The Custodes witness a young girl fleeing from a small group of peasants with pitchforks and torches. If the Custodes rescue her and disperse her pursuers, she will lead them to a remote *taberna viaria*, where they can spend the night. However, the girl is a Versipellis (see *Core Rulebook*), and during the night she will try to kill the Custodes one after the other. The Custodes will have to understand the situation and fix it before moving forward. There's a risk of infection by the Versipellis, but in that case, as soon as they resume the journey, they can search for an experienced *rhizotoma* (herbalist), who will cure them.

INSIDE A TABERNA VIARIA. The *taberna* is run by a young couple that has just started the activity. They have many problems that they attribute to sabotage at the hands of the owners of a much more settled *taberna*, less than half a mile down the road: wine barrels mysteriously become empty, bread doesn't leaven, preserves spoil, and the guests' horses have run away more than once. The Custodes who successfully roll Sensibilitas (DT 6), however, realize there's something odd about that place. If they decide to investigate they will find that the *taberna* rises on a forgotten sacred area. Moreover, the hearth was built reusing a small edicule. The owners knew nothing of this and didn't become suspicious of the incredibly low price of the property. The Custodes will have to identify the problem and present them with the possibility of appeasing the deity by restoring the edicule and perhaps rebuilding the hearth somewhere else. The placated deity will grant the Custodes a Sensibilitas roll to recover Pietas Points (equal to the difference between the result of the roll and the DT), plus a possible omen or a premonitory dream useful for the current adventure.

ROAD ALONG THE COAST. The Custodes pass through a half-deserted village. Interacting with the locals, they find out that various people have disappeared in the weeks before, with no reason and no explanations. Continuing their journey, they discover that the road is blocked because of a landslide below the road surface, along a slope over the sea. The collapse reveals a sea cave. If they climb down inside it, they find a system of caves, one inside the other, full of people. These are the ones who have disappeared from the village. If the Custodes try to take them home, they resist, as they are under the spell of a Siren (see *Core Rulebook*) that lives there. The Custodes will have to avoid being enchanted themselves and break the spell, defeating the creature and bringing the people back home.

CARAVAN IN THE DESERT. A sandstorm gets the Custodes lost. When the party gets back on track, it wanders aimlessly in the desert, and little by little it runs out of water. Eventually it reaches a cavity under some rocks. Inside there is a small spring, but it's almost entirely obstructed by fallen rocks. If the Custodes get very close to the spring and try to drink from it, they suddenly feel a deep sadness. A Sensibilitas (DT 6) roll will reveal that the spring is guarded by a spring sprite. Interacting with the sprite, the Custodes will learn that the creature is dying because the water, not gushing out freely anymore, is reabsorbed by the sand. If they clear the spring and create a small basin, the sprite will reward them with its water. A sip quenches thirst for a whole day, therefore a canteen filled with this water lasts much longer than normal. The sprite will then send them off in the right direction to get back on track.

SECONDARY ROAD. The Custodes meet a caravan of merchants in trouble, trying to repair a broken wheel of their carriage. If they offer their help, they are warmly thanked by one of the girls, who kisses them. These merchants are, however, smugglers of valuable goods (of Demiurge's choice, but perishable) who must resume the journey as quickly as possible, lest they lose their cargo. A few miles down the road, the Custodes are intercepted by a squad of local authorities, flanked by detection dogs, that come from further up the path. They have arrested the smugglers, that have, however, laid the blame on the Custodes. The dogs will sniff the goods that the girl has cleverly hidden on the Custodes or in their horses' saddles. A successful De Societate roll (DT 9) will have them immediately discharged, otherwise they will be taken away for questioning. It will take a full day for information on the Custodes' identity to arrive from the provincial command, exonerating them. If they are operating incognito it will be up to them to handle the situation.

FOREST ROAD. The Custodes reach a *trivium*, in the middle of which there is a *compitum*, an edicule dedicated to the Lares Compitales, deities that protect travelers. The edicule appears damaged and the Lares statues are missing. Continuing the journey, they realize they are walking in circles, since every hour they still find themselves in front of the edicule, whatever road they may have taken. Any *Retrocognition* ritual will reveal that the statues have intentionally been removed, while *Clairvoyance* will disclose that the statues are in a sort of hut, not far away. They have been taken away by a small group of raiders that, causing travellers to get lost, can rob them of all their possessions. If the Custodes defeat them, they will be able to put the statues back where they belong and break the spell.

