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Connotation and Commotion: Putting the *Kinesis* into the *Cinaedus*

[This paper is dedicated to the memory of Professor William Nethercut (1936-2020)]

Our discussion builds on earlier efforts to explore the specific sexual connotations of the Greek-derived Latin noun *cinaedus*. It attempts to distinguish them from those of *pathicus*, another Greek-derived Latin noun with which it often appears (e.g. at Catullus 16,1-2: *Pedicabo ego vos et irrumabo/Aureli pathice et cinaede Furi*, “I will fuck you up the asshole and force you to suck me off, Aurelius and Furius”). We scrutinize what the term seems to imply in passages from several Latin literary poetic and prose texts, focusing on Petronius, *Satyricon* 16-26. Here, in both prose and verse, Petronius depicts two *cinaedi* as performing in a dramatic scenario controlled by Quartilla, an ailing priestess of Priapus, who seeks a medical remedy (*medicinam*) for her tertian fever. This episode represents *cinaedi* as aggressively seeking anal and oral penetration from both males and females by energetically moving their bodily parts, especially their buttocks and lips.

Admittedly, the popular derivation of *cinaedus* from Greek words meaning “to move one’s shameful bodily parts” (κινεῖν τὰ αἰδοῖα, found in the 12th century *Etymologicum Magnum* of Johannes Zonaras), is easily discredited on purely linguistic grounds: the iota in the first syllable of the Greek verb κινεῖν, “to move”, is long, that in κίναϊδος is short. But notions of motion, the idea expressed by κινεῖν itself, and particularly of moving the buttocks and lips, bipartite fleshly organs in close proximity to anus and mouth, vigorously and forcefully, inform Latin literary portrayals of how *cinaedi* offer themselves to potential and actual sexual partners. Yes, *cinaedi* resemble *pathici*—and contrast with *irrumati*, *pedicati* and *fututi*—by being attributed with agency in their own penetration. But we argue that the kinetic intensity displayed by *cinaedi* in importuning, “servicing” and “making a move on” others through active manipulation of their sexually-charged physical parts is what primarily differentiates them from *pathici*.