

## LIBERATING THE *CENA*\*

### I. INTRODUCTION

That the extraordinary narrative experiment known as the *Satyricon* has regularly stimulated scholarly investigation into the relationship between status and freedom is not surprising for a work, the longest surviving section of which features an excessive dinner party at the house of a *libertus*. Much of the discussion has concentrated on the depiction of the dinner's host and his freedmen friends. Following the lead of F. Zeitlin and others in seeing the depiction of a 'freedmen's milieu' in the *Cena*, J. Bodel argued in a seminal paper published twenty years ago that the *Cena* opens a window onto the 'freedman's mentality'.<sup>1</sup> The last ten years or so have seen a revival of the theme, with much emphasis on the display of an open society in the *Cena*,<sup>2</sup> even a Saturnalian world-view, based on a suspension or reversal of the traditional social hierarchies,<sup>3</sup> all framed by a general air of excessive liberality:<sup>4</sup> whatever satirical lens the *Satyricon*'s author is seen to have projected onto Trimalchio and his freedmen friends, they are understood as celebrating 'freedom's defining difference'.<sup>5</sup> In the light of such a

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The text of the *Satyricon* is that of K. Müller in his *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon* (Munich, 1961). The text of Gaius is that of O. Seckel and B. Kuebler, reproduced in the edition by W.M. Gordon and O.F. Robinson (trans.), *The Institutes of Gaius* (Ithaca/NY, 1988).

<sup>1</sup> J. Bodel, 'Trimalchio's underworld', in J. Tatum (ed.), *The Search for the Ancient Novel* (Baltimore and London, 1994), 237–59, at 253; F.I. Zeitlin, 'Petronius as paradox: anarchy and artistic integrity', *TAPhA* 102 (1971), 631–84, at 638. The underlying notion that Trimalchio represents a 'type' and that the *Cena* offers a colourful depiction of a group of parvenus is already fully developed in O. Ribbeck's *Geschichte der Römischen Dichtung* (Stuttgart, 1892), 3.150–69, esp. 152–61, and followed by É. Thomas in his *Pétrone* (Paris, 1912<sup>3</sup>), 140.

<sup>2</sup> J. Perkins, *Roman Imperial Identities in the Early Christian Era* (London and New York, 2009), 127–43, originally published as 'Trimalchio: naming power', in S. Harrison, M. Paschalis, S. Frangoulidis (edd.), *Metaphor and the Ancient Novel* (Groningen, 2005), 139–62.

<sup>3</sup> M. Plaza, *Laughter and Derision in Petronius' Satyricon. A Literary Study* (Stockholm, 2000), 84–164, arguing for a reversal of traditional social hierarchies in opposition to S. Döpp's identification of the inversion as 'carnavalesque': 'Saturnalien und lateinische Literatur', in id. (ed.), *Karnevaleske Phänomene in antiken und nachantiken Kulturen und Literaturen* (Trier, 1993), 145–77.

<sup>4</sup> J. Andreau, 'Freedmen in the *Satyricon*', in J. Prag and I. Repath (edd.), *Petronius. A Handbook* (Oxford, 2009), 114–24, esp. 121, following largely L. Canali, *Vita, sesso, morte nella letteratura latina* (Milan, 1987), 47–67. The idea of an air of liberality goes hand in hand with the notion of a sense of loss of control: see, for example, N.W. Slater, *Reading Petronius* (Baltimore and London, 1990), 62–4, 67 and 83.

<sup>5</sup> Perkins (n. 2), 137.

unifying conceptualization of the *Cena*'s motley crew, it is not surprising that scholars have come to understand the libertine assemblage as a reflection of 'the social class of the "freedmen" in first-century A.D. Italy'.<sup>6</sup> After all, 'class' can be defined as 'a number of individuals (persons or things) possessing common attributes', and, with specific regard to human society, as 'a division of society according to status'.<sup>7</sup>

It is perhaps surprising that the scholarly analysis of the relationship between status and freedom has sidelined the *Cena*'s manumission scenes, i.e. the staged enactments of freedom. Instead, and as stated above, the spotlight has been primarily on the host himself, sporadically enhanced by the odd glance at one or other of his guests.<sup>8</sup> But given that '[Trimalchio's] banquet is an exercise in metamorphosis, where', as W. Fitzgerald put it, 'everything turns into something else',<sup>9</sup> actual emancipations 'on stage', i.e. personified metamorphoses from one status into another, are potentially highly significant for our understanding of the *Cena*'s portrayal of the relationship between freedom and status, as well as of the Roman construction of *seruitus* and *libertas* more generally. It is perhaps not less surprising that the debate has in essence been carried out in a chronological vacuum. This is not to say that scholars have not been keen to contextualize the *Cena* and its freedmen characters within a specific historical period; rather, that historical approaches to the *Cena* have in essence been detached from discussion of the date (and authorship) of the *Satyricon*, just as they have fundamentally been isolated from the analysis of the work's relationship to other texts and literatures of the Imperial period, be they Latin or Greek.<sup>10</sup>

As is well known, the consensus on the work's date that has emerged is for a Neronian date, and with the courtier named Petronius, the *arbiter elegantiae* of Nero in Tacitus' *Annals*, as the text's author.<sup>11</sup> This idea is so entrenched that J. Prag and I. Repath recently concluded that '[...] it becomes little short of perverse not to accept the general consensus and read the *Satyricon* as a Neronian text of the mid-60s A.D.'.<sup>12</sup> But this view is not without its problems especially regarding the text's relationship with the Greek novel, and our view of the literary history of the Roman Imperial period in general. A. Laird therefore argued that '(a) richer literary history, a fuller picture of the Latin accommodation of Greek material, and, most importantly, more interpretative possibilities for future readings of the *Satyricon* require flexibility about chronology, as well as about matters of Roman cultural identity'.<sup>13</sup> In light of the agreed centrality of the depiction of status and

<sup>6</sup> J. Prag and I. Repath, 'Introduction', in Prag and Repath (n. 4), 1–15, at 3. Prag and Repath do not offer a definition of their concept of class.

<sup>7</sup> The definitions are those of the 1968 and 1983 editions of the *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary*.

<sup>8</sup> For attempts at differentiation between Trimalchio and his freedmen guests, see esp. J. Bodel, *Freedmen in the Satyricon of Petronius* (Diss., University of Michigan, 1984); B. Boyce, *The Language of the Freedmen in Petronius' Cena Trimalchionis* (Leiden, 1991); and M. Kleijwegt, 'The social dimensions of gladiatorial combat in Petronius' *Cena Trimalchionis*', in H. Hofmann and M. Zimmermann (edd.), *Groningen Colloquia on the Novel IX* (Groningen, 1998), 75–96.

<sup>9</sup> W. Fitzgerald, *Slavery and the Roman Literary Imagination* (Cambridge, 2000), 88.

<sup>10</sup> To bring together literary and historical approaches to the *Cena* is the stated aim of Prag and Repath (n. 4), xiii; but the potential benefits are not systematically explored in the volume.

<sup>11</sup> Arguments and evidence are discussed in K.F.C. Rose, *The Date and Author of the Satyricon* (Leiden, 1971). See also G. Bagnani, *Arbiter of Elegance. A Study of the Life and Works of C. Petronius* (Toronto, 1954).

<sup>12</sup> Prag and Repath (n. 6), 9. Similarly C. Vout, 'The *Satyricon* and Neronian culture', in the same volume (n. 4), 101–13, at 101: '(w)hen betting on the date of the *Satyricon*, the smart money is on late in the reign of Nero'.

<sup>13</sup> A. Laird, 'The true nature of the *Satyricon*?', in M. Paschalis et al. (edd.), *The Greek and the Roman Novel. Parallel Readings* (Groningen, 2007), 151–67, at 164. See also J. Henderson, 'The

freedom to the story dished up for us in the *Cena*, it should in turn not be surprising that it is precisely at the intersection between the different shades of freedom that we can gain a fresh perspective on the date (and authorship) of the *Satyricon*: the *Cena*'s manumission scenes are the key to a new *terminus post quem* for the text's composition.

## II. ENACTMENTS OF FREEDOM IN THE *CENA TRIMALCHIONIS*

It is a well-known fact that the Romans knew of a number of ways to manumit their slaves. The main modes of manumission under the Empire were manumission *uindicta* ('by the rod'), manumission *testamento* ('in the master's will') and manumission *inter amicos* ('in the presence of the master's friends'): the first two of these—i.e. *uindicta* and *testamento*—fall into the rubric of what scholars typically call formal manumission; whilst manumission *inter amicos* is a so-called informal manumission mode.<sup>14</sup> Both types of manumission are in evidence in the *Cena*.

To start at the end, Trimalchio's announcement of his intention to manumit in his will is a good literary example of (planned) manumission *testamento* (*Sat.* 71.1–4). But given the present focus on status transformations in (and during) the *Cena*, a future testamentary manumission is of no relevance to the analysis of manumissions 'on stage', i.e. during Trimalchio's lifetime. Manumission *uindicta*, which was carried out in front of a magistrate on the basis of a claim that the slave was wrongfully held in servitude, is relevant even though only in a highly parodic manner, as we shall presently see. On the other hand, the Roman slave-master's ability to free in a more informal fashion in the presence of some friends, i.e. *inter amicos*, is brought out fully in the manumissions staged in the *Cena*—on three occasions.

The three emancipation scenes are well known to aficionados of the *Satyricon*, but for quite different reasons to the ones foregrounded here: they are, first, the freedom gained by the boar that appeared twice at the dinner table (*Sat.* 40.3–41.4); second, the manumission of the slave Dionysus, the god of wine, by way of a pun (*Sat.* 41.6–7); and, third, the liberation of the acrobat who fell from the stars (or, rather, from just below the ceiling) onto Trimalchio (*Sat.* 54.4–5). These are taken here in turn, in the order of appearance in the *Cena*, before the status transitions that these manumissions entailed are explored in detail. First, then, the boar.

### II.I *APER PRIMAE MAGNITVDINIS (SAT. 40.3–41.4)*

secutum est hos repositorium, in quo positus erat primae magnitudinis aper, et quidem pilleatus, e cuius dentibus sportellae dependebant duae palmulis textae, altera caryotis altera thebaicis

*Satyricon* and the Greek novel: revisions and some open questions', *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 17 (2010), 483–96, with earlier bibliography. Problems with date and authorship have also been raised on the basis of epigraphic analysis: T. Völker and D. Rohmann, 'Praenomen Petronii: the date and authorship of the *Satyricon* reconsidered', *CQ* 61 (2011), 660–76.

<sup>14</sup> For detailed analysis of manumission under the Empire, see W.W. Buckland, *The Roman Law of Slavery* (Cambridge, 1908), 449–551. I exclude from the list of main manumission modes manumission in *Ecclesiis*, for which the evidence is late antique: Buckland (this note), 449–51, and J. Barschdorf, *Freigelassene in der Spätantike* (Munich, 2012), 32–4; and manumission *censu* ('at the census'), because it was for all practical purposes obsolete under the Empire: Buckland (this note), 441 and 449.

repleta [...] hic aper, cum heri summa cena eum uindicasset, a conuiuis dimissus est; itaque hodie tamquam libertus in conuiuium reuertitur.

A tray was brought in after them with a wild boar of the largest size upon it, wearing a cap of freedom, with two little baskets woven of palms hanging from his tusks, one full of dry dates and the other fresh [...] This boar, although the last course of the dinner had claimed it, was released by the dinner guests; and so today, it returns to dinner as a *libertus*.

Encolpius may not have understood what was going on here, but his neighbour knew: the poor pig was ‘released’ (*dimissus est*) by the dinner guests the previous evening, even though the dinner had ‘claimed’ it (*eum uindicasset*).<sup>15</sup> Scholars have long recognized the linguistic allusions to the world of the games here, especially to that of gladiatorial combat, most notably brought to the fore through the use of *dimissus*, which plays on the language used in the arena to grant a beaten gladiator life.<sup>16</sup> But the chosen terms actually multitask, as so much else in the *Cena*. Thus, the language employed to describe the crucial developments in the boar’s release is that found in our legal sources when describing the manumission process. In his summary of the correct legal procedure, Gaius notes in the *Institutes* that one can manumit (*dimittere*) those under one’s jurisdiction: [...] *ex suo iure eas personas dimittere*.<sup>17</sup> The emancipation mode known as manumission *uindicta* (‘by the rod’), briefly mentioned above, takes its name from the legal formula used in the action for assertion of ownership and other real rights. In a legal dispute over ownership for instance over a slave, the opposing parties would each assert their right of ownership over the slave in front of the praetor: each claimant would hold a rod, take hold of the actual property, i.e. the slave, pronounce that they are the lawful owner, and state that they have imposed the claim—*VINDICTAM INPOSVI*; once both parties made their claim, the praetor would ask them to let go of the property before continuing with the proceedings—*cum uterque uindicasset, praetor dicebat: MITTITE AMBO HOMINEM, illi mittebant*.<sup>18</sup>

The boar’s release plays on the legal procedure used in ownership disputes and, by implication and context, on manumission *uindicta*, even if in effect the ‘emancipation’ is entirely formless and carried out *inter amicos*. In any case, the boar dons the *pilleus* to indicate the status transition. Naturally, only Trimalchio (but not his guests) had the powers to emancipate members of his *familia* informally, i.e. *inter amicos* (even if the ‘friends’ were an essential part of the process).<sup>19</sup> But in this parody of slave manumission, the boar got away no doubt because the dinner guests were already full. Consequently, the porcine returns wearing the *pilleus*. And as stated above, Encolpius’ neighbour has no problems with interpreting the boar’s dress code: *non enim aenigma est, sed res aperta* (*Sat.* 41.4). The *pilleus* was indeed widely understood as a symbol of liberty: Brutus memorably put the *pilleus* on his coins in 42 B.C., in

<sup>15</sup> For discussion, see E. Courtney, *A Companion to Petronius* (Oxford, 2001), 91; V. Rimell, *Petronius and the Anatomy of Fiction* (Cambridge, 2002), 183; G. Schmeling, *A Commentary on the Satyricon of Petronius* (Oxford, 2011), 157 (§ 3); M.S. Smith, *Petronii Arbitri Cena Trimalchionis* (Oxford, 1975), 97; J.P. Sullivan, *The Satyricon of Petronius. A Literary Study* (London, 1968), 226; P.G. Walsh, *Petronius Satyricon* (Oxford, 1996), 169.

<sup>16</sup> C. Saylor, ‘Funeral games: the significance of games in the *Cena Trimalchionis*’, *Latomus* 46 (1987), 593–602, at 594 (with earlier bibliography).

<sup>17</sup> Gai. *Inst.* 1.118.

<sup>18</sup> Gai. *Inst.* 4.193. Elsewhere, Gaius employs *uindicare* with the simple meaning of ‘claiming’: e.g. *Inst.* 3.94 and 3.217. The legal allusion is also evident in the use of *mittere* in the *Cena* (just like the allusion to the games): Saylor (n. 16), 594–5.

<sup>19</sup> Buckland (n. 14), 457–8 discusses the possibility of representation in the manumission process.

combination with two daggers symbolizing the assassination of Caesar, and the legend LIBERTAS; and Suetonius' account of Nero tells the story of the plebs wearing the *pillei* after the emperor's death.<sup>20</sup> Almost predictably, Encolpius' neighbour refers to the boar as a *libertus*.

But the *aper primae magnitudinis* is not the only creature in the *Cena* that indicates their status transition by donning the *pilleus*: this cap plays also a significant role in the immediately ensuing manumission, again *inter amicos*—namely that of the god of wine aka the slave Dionysus.

## II.II DIONYSVS PVER SPECIOSVS (SAT. 41.6–7)

dum haec loquimur, puer speciosus, uitibus hederisque redimitus, modo Bromium, interdum Lyaeum Euhiumque confessus, calathisco uuas circumtulit et poemata domini sui acutissima uoce traduxit. ad quem sonum conuersus Trimalchio 'Dionyse' inquit 'liber esto.' puer detraxit pilleum apro capitique suo imposuit.

As we were speaking, a beautiful boy with vine-leaves and ivy in his hair brought round grapes in a little basket, impersonating Bacchus in ecstasy, Bacchus full of wine, Bacchus dreaming, and rendering his master's verses in a most shrill voice. Trimalchio turned round at the noise and said, 'Dionysus, be free/Liber.' The boy took the cap of freedom off the boar, and put it on his head.

This scene has attracted considerable comment because of the pun on the word *liber*.<sup>21</sup> What may need stressing, however, is Trimalchio's competent use of the technically correct phraseology to set his slave free. Thus, Trimalchio's command is identical with that recorded by Gaius in his *Institutes* for the manumission of slaves in one's testament:<sup>22</sup> *at qui directo testamento liber esse iubetur, uelut hoc modo: STICHVS SERVVS MEVS LIBER ESTO* [...]. The phrase was also employed in manumissions *inter uiuos*, as the example of the emancipation of Messenio in Plautus' *Menaechmi* through (Syracusan) Menaechmus makes clear: *liber esto. quom tu es liber, gaudeo, Messenio*.<sup>23</sup> Since Trimalchio, like (Syracusan) Menaechmus, is alive and kicking when manumitting his slave, the scene parodies the master's capacity to manumit *inter amicos*. Unsurprisingly perhaps, just like the most magnificent boar, the beautiful young god of wine dons the *pilleus*—interpreting Trimalchio's instruction as a command to be free.

The play on the correct terminology is maintained also in the third manumission, that of the acrobat who fell on Trimalchio and who—like Dionysus—is freed 'on stage' through the words of his master.

## II.III 'A FALLING STAR' (SAT. 54.1–5)

cum maxime haec dicente Gaio puer ... Trimalchionis delapsus est. conclamauit familia, nec minus conuiuiae [...] ipse Trimalchio cum grauiter ingemisset superque braccium tanquam laesum incubisset [...]

<sup>20</sup> *RRC* 508.3 and Dio Cass. 47.25.3; Suet. *Ner.* 57.1. But note that the *pilleus* can have multiple meanings: e.g. Gell. *NA* 6.4.1–3 (about a slave sold wearing a *pilleus* to indicate that the seller gave no guarantee).

<sup>21</sup> See Schmeling (n. 15), 161 (§§ 7–8) for a brief summary of current understanding of the *liber*-pun.

<sup>22</sup> Gai. *Inst.* 2.267; see also *Inst.* 2.185.

<sup>23</sup> Plaut. *Men.* 1148–9.

nam puer quidem, qui ceciderat, circumibat iam dudum pedes nostros et missionem rogabat [...] in uicem enim poenae uenit decretum Trimalchionis, quo puerum iussit liberum esse, ne quis posset dicere, tantum uirum esse a seruo uulneratum.

Just as Trimalchio said this, a slave ... of Trimalchio fell. The slaves raised a cry, and so did the guests [...] Trimalchio groaned aloud, and nursed his arm as if it was hurt [...] The slave who had fallen down was crawling round at our feet by this time, and begging for mercy [...] Instead of punishment there came Trimalchio's decree that the slave should be made a free man, so that it would not be possible to say that so great a man had been bruised by a slave.

The interpretation of this passage is complicated by the lacuna in the text and requires more detailed analysis than the previous two manumission scenes.<sup>24</sup> Helpfully, the context is provided by the preceding paragraph, to which we need to turn first. A group of *petauristarii* had entered the dining room and performed in front of Trimalchio and his guests, including a slave who climbed ever higher on one or more ladders, to undertake some rather precarious acrobatics at the top (*Sat.* 53.11–12):

petauristarii autem tandem uenerunt. baro insulsissimus cum scalis constitit puerumque iussit per gradus et in summa parte odaria saltare, circulos deinde arduos transilire et dentibus amphoram sustinere. mirabatur haec solus Trimalchio dicebatque ingratum artificium esse. ceterum duo esse in rebus humanis, quae libentissime spectaret, petauristarios et cornicines; reliqua [animalia] acroamata tricas meras esse.

But at last the acrobats came in. A very dull fool stood there with (a) ladder(s) and made a slave dance from step to step and at the very top to the music of popular airs, and then made him hop through burning hoops, and pick up an amphora with his teeth. No one was astonished by this but Trimalchio, who kept saying that it was a thankless profession. There were only two things in the world that he could watch with real pleasure, acrobats and trumpeters; all other shows were silly nonsense.

Following Festus' entry for *petauristas*, the acrobats may have been performers who jumped on or from something like a trapeze.<sup>25</sup> Yet, it is not possible to glean from the surviving text of the *Cena* whether a trapeze was employed, nor can we be certain about the full range of acrobatics that the *petauristarii* performed. It is also impossible to ascertain whether the slave who fell was the acrobat whom the *baro* sent dancing up the ladder, or a quite different slave who fell in the course of whatever acrobatics they were engaged in.

That said, Encolpius is suddenly reminded of the acrobats and the slave's fall and subsequent emancipation later on in the dinner proceedings, when a noise from the ceiling made him panic and worry about more acrobats falling from the sky (*Sat.* 60.1–4); this scene, too, has a bearing on our reading of the slave's manumission, and needs to be studied in combination with the other two passages:

nec diu mirari licuit tam elegantes strophas; nam repente lacunaria sonare coeperunt totumque triclinium intremuit. consternatus ego exsurrexi et timui, ne per tectum petauristarius aliquis descenderet. nec minus reliqui conuiuiae mirantes erexere uultus, expectantes quid noui de caelo nuntiaretur. ecce autem diductis lacunaribus subito circulus ingens, de cupa uidelicet grandi excussus, demittitur, cuius per totum orbem coronae aureae alabastris unguenti pendebant. dum haec apophoreta iubemur sumere, respiciens ad mensam ...

<sup>24</sup> For previous discussions, see Courtney (n. 15), 99; C. Pellegrino, *Petronii Arbitri Satyricon. Introduzione, edizione critica e commento* (Rome, 1975), 315; Rimell (n. 15), 191–2.

<sup>25</sup> Festus 226 L; see Schmeling (n. 15), 220 (§ 11).



We were not given long to admire these elegant tours de force; suddenly there came a noise from the ceiling, and the whole dining-room trembled. I rose from my place in a panic: I was afraid some acrobat would come down from the roof. All the other guests too looked up astonished, wondering what new portent from heaven was announced. The whole ceiling parted asunder, and an enormous hoop, apparently knocked out of a giant cask, was let down. All round it were hung golden crowns and alabaster boxes of perfumes. We were asked to take these presents for ourselves, when I looked back at the table ...

Modern scholars have attempted to aid the reconstruction of the happenings through the study of possible historical and literary parallels. J. Révay argued for an intertext with the description of the collapsing dining-room canopy in Horace's *Cena Nasidieni*, which J.P. Sullivan later termed 'an obvious model'.<sup>26</sup> In questioning the suggested literary relationship, M.S. Smith foregrounded a historical parallel with the actor playing Icarus, narrated in Suetonius' account of Nero, who plummeted in the arena and crashed near the emperor, splashing him with blood.<sup>27</sup> Further possible literary inspirations are briefly discussed by B. Baldwin, who jokingly titled the slave who fell 'a falling star', despite his critique of the suggested literary allusion to Horace.<sup>28</sup>

That the star motif is in fact essential for tracing intertextual connections between the *Cena* and other texts, including a hitherto unsuspected sparring partner, will become clear in the latter part of this article. For now, it is important to stress that the description of the dinner guests' concern over the noise (and news) from the ceiling (*nam repente lacunaria sonare coeperunt totumque triclinium intremuit ... expectantes quid noui de caelo nuntiaretur*) mocks the type of retractable ceiling known to have existed in the dining rooms of the filthy rich, including Nero's Domus Aurea;<sup>29</sup> and that it recalls at once Trimalchio's earlier description of the heavens, which he combined with an exposition of the star signs, immediately preceding the arrival of the freed boar (*Sat.* 39.5–15): *caelus hic, in quo duodecim dii habitant, in totidem se figuras conuertit*. Seen in the round, the *puer* who fell in the course of the acrobats' performance would have resembled a star falling from heaven; and in Encolpius' (and the modern reader's) mind, the slave could jokingly be perceived as the *puer de caelo Trimalchionis delapsus*.

Following the fall, the *puer* was slow in getting back on his feet. Indeed, the impression one gains of 'the fallen star' is not dissimilar to Cicero's description of the pathetic figure cut by Pompey after he had fallen, in a virtual sense, *ex astris*.<sup>30</sup> The *homo putidus* (*Sat.* 54.1) crawls around on the floor begging for mercy—with success: he is pardoned by his master and manumitted, on the spot—*uenit decretum Trimalchionis, quo puerum iussit liberum esse* (*Sat.* 54.5).<sup>31</sup> Much of the underlying joke thrives on the fun which the passage makes of the emperor's unique legal capacity.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Hor. *Sat.* 2.8.71; J. Révay, 'Horaz und Petron', *CPh* 17 (1922), 202; Sullivan (n. 15), 126; further discussion in Schmeling (n. 15), 222 (§ 1).

<sup>27</sup> Smith (n. 15), 146–7, referring to Suet. *Ner.* 12.

<sup>28</sup> B. Baldwin, 'Catch a falling star: Petronius, *Sat.*, 54.1', *PSN* 20.1/2 (1990), 8. Evidently, I do not follow Baldwin's view that the slave who fell was not one of the acrobats, which he expressed at somewhat greater length in 'Careless boys in the *Satyricon*', *Latomus* 44 (1985), 847–8.

<sup>29</sup> Suet. *Ner.* 31.2.

<sup>30</sup> Cic. *Att.* 2.21.4: *nam quia deciderat ex astris, lapsus potius quam progressus uidebatur*.

<sup>31</sup> If Encolpius' memory is to be trusted, Trimalchio's wording followed once more the technically correct phraseology as recorded by Gaius (*Inst.* 2.267) when advising the testator: *uel hoc: STICHVM SERVVM MEVM LIBERVV ESSE IVBEO, is ipsius testatoris fit libertus* [...]. Plautus, too, makes Menaechmus utter surprise in almost identical terms upon the idea that he should have freed Messenio—*liberum ego te iussi abire?*: *Men.* 1058. See also notes 22 and 23 above.

<sup>32</sup> Courtney (n. 15), 99 wrote that 'Trimalchio can do this, since 53.12–13 imply that he owns the

But despite the allusion to manumission by Imperial grant, Trimalchio evidently has recourse to the procedure we call manumission *inter amicos* in order to emancipate this particular slave. Consequently, in *Sat.* 54.4–5, Trimalchio manumitted a member of his *familia* informally, just as he had done on the other two occasions, by having recourse to the procedure known as manumission *inter amicos*—thereby concluding the business of emancipation on the stage we call the *Cena Trimalchionis*.

### III. *LATINVS ESTO*

What is striking about the three emancipation scenes is that the manumissions are all exclusively master-driven: they do not follow the pattern privileged by modern scholarship that regards the slave's merit, service or contribution as critical for the master's decision to liberate.<sup>33</sup> In this, the *Cena*'s manumission scenes follow the pattern evident in Plautine comedy: there, as R. Stewart has shown, '[...] the staging underscores the definition of manumission at Rome as the generous authoritative act of the master'.<sup>34</sup> Clearly, the depiction of the master's omnipotence was the preferred choice on the Roman stage (even if the *Cena*'s humour does much to pervert the image of the all-powerful master).<sup>35</sup>

But the master's position of power is also central to our understanding of the *Cena*'s slave emancipations beyond the initiation of the actual manumissions. Thus, one of the notable features of the three manumission scenes here discussed is the repeated reference to the technically correct language and legal procedure. This is as such not surprising given the Romans' fondness for legal status definition, even if modern scholars have been reluctant to admit more than a passing interest in the law in the *Cena* (and the *Satyricon* more generally).<sup>36</sup> But if we follow the pointer to the world of legal conceptualization so clearly given in all three manumission scenes, the impression of the master's omnipotence vis-à-vis the slave is reinforced: not only is the master key to the slaves' emancipation, but, furthermore, slave emancipation in the *Cena* works to maintain the manumitter's position of power over his ex-slaves beyond emancipation in ways not hitherto acknowledged.

To begin with, it is important to recall that the Romans devised in their juridical writing two principal categories: those of the free, *liberi*, and those of the unfree, *serui*; and that slaves in the Roman Empire, once freed, were conceptualized amongst the free.<sup>37</sup>

acrobats [...]—either suggesting (wrongly) that slave masters could free by decree like the emperor, or not saying much at all.

<sup>33</sup> Esp. with regard to *manumissio iusta*: e.g. P. López Barja de Quiroga, 'Junian Latins: status and number', *Athenaeum* 86 (1998), 133–63, at 159 (and elaborated in his *Historia de la manumission en Roma. De los orígenes a los Severos* [Madrid, 2007], 58–64).

<sup>34</sup> R. Stewart, *Plautus and Roman Slavery* (Chichester, 2012), 155 (and generally 132–55 for discussion of manumission in Plautine comedy).

<sup>35</sup> On the theatrical aspects of the *Satyricon*, and the *Cena* as a 'stage', see C. Panayotakis, *Theatrum Arbitri. Theatrical Elements in the Satyrica of Petronius* (Leiden, New York and Köln, 1995), esp. 52–109.

<sup>36</sup> This holds true even for discussions of Trimalchio's reference to the *ius cenae* (*Sat.* 35.7): e.g. W.T. Avery, '*Cena Trimalchionis* 35.7: *hoc est ius cenae*', *CPh* 55 (1960), 115–18; G. Mazzoli, '*Ius cenae* (Petron. 35.7)', in L. Castagna and E. Lefèvre (edd.), *Studien zu Petron und seiner Rezeption/ Studi su Petronio e sulla sua fortuna* (Berlin and New York, 2007); P.A. Perotti, '*Ius cenae* (Pétrone 35, 7)', *LEC* 65 (1997), 345–9.

<sup>37</sup> Gai. *Inst.* 1.3.9.



That said, Roman manumission produced as a rule only ever freedmen, i.e. men (and women) of the status of *libertus* (and *liberta*); it did not normally convey freeborn status, i.e. men and women who were regarded as *ingenui*. Roman citizenship could be awarded as well, depending on the mode of manumission and the satisfaction of certain conditions.<sup>38</sup> But just as the Romans subdivided the category of the free (into those born free, *ingenui*, and those freed, *liberti*), so they divided further the category of persons of freed status into three groups: Roman citizens, Latins and *dediticii*.<sup>39</sup> Trimalchio belongs to the first of these three groups, i.e. those endowed with Roman citizenship.<sup>40</sup> Yet, this is not the case with the god of wine and the acrobat (or the *aper*).

First, Bacchus: a delicious boy is how Encolpius remembers him—*puer speciosus*. Notwithstanding the Roman habit of calling even a mature slave ‘boy’, *puer*, if Dionysus was indeed still a boy, he was unable to gain the status of a Roman citizen upon manumission. In fact, as long as he was under thirty years of age, this would have been the case. But whatever Dionysus’ age, to gain Roman citizenship, the slave needed to be liberated through formal manumission.<sup>41</sup> But this is not the case: the mode employed by Trimalchio to free this slave is, as we saw above, that which we refer to as manumission *inter amicos*—a formless act, witnessed by some friends of the master.<sup>42</sup> As a result, the manumission works to endow the slave with a status that is different to that carried by his master-cum-patron—for as Gaius writes so clearly, if any of the conditions for formal manumission is not met, the freedman will be a *Latinus*, or what we typically call in English a Junian Latin; this had been so since the passing of the *lex Iunia* (on which more below).<sup>43</sup> The status, then, of the newly made freedman is that of a *Latinus*. And Trimalchio’s ambiguous command effectively ordered Dionysus to become a Junian Latin: *Latinus esto*.

But Dionysus is not the only Latin made ‘on stage’: the acrobat was also manumitted *inter amicos*, i.e. informally, despite the parody made of the emperor’s capacity to award freedom by decree. Logically, this *puer*, too, became a Junian Latin. Thus, although both Dionysus and the acrobat (and, as we are told, the boar) joined the category of the free as *liberti*, they did so at a different point on the freedman spectrum to that occupied by Trimalchio. And there are enormous repercussions for our view of these freedmen’s status vis-à-vis that of their patron from this observation.

Technically, Latinity was conveyed to the former slave by the state; his (or her) liberty by the former master. Following their manumission, Junian Latins were subject to

<sup>38</sup> Even when a slave was given both freedom and Roman citizenship upon manumission, he or she did not gain the status of a freeborn Roman. The general rule, and deviations from it, are discussed in Buckland (n. 14), 437–8.

<sup>39</sup> Gai. *Inst.* 1.3.12: *rursus libertinorum tria sunt genera: nam aut ciues Romani aut Latini aut dediticiorum numero sunt*. The group of *ingenui*, too, requires differentiated assessment: J.F. Gardner, *Being a Roman Citizen* (London and New York, 1993), 16–19.

<sup>40</sup> A good example is Trimalchio’s legal capacity to inherit and to make wills: *Sat.* 71 and 76.2.

<sup>41</sup> Gai. *Inst.* 1.17: *nam in cuius personam tria haec concurrunt, ut maior sit annorum triginta et ex iure Quiritium domini et iusta ac legitima manumissione liberetur, id est uindicta aut censu aut testamento, is cuius Romanus fit; sin uero aliquid eorum deerit, Latinus erit*. See also the comments on other manumission modes made in note 14 above.

<sup>42</sup> The informal nature of Dionysus’ manumission was correctly recognized by A. Maiuri, *La Cena di Trimalchione di Petronio Arbitro* (Naples, 1945), 63, without, however, providing any comment on it; similarly Pellegrino (n. 24), 283, who opts without discussion for manumission *per mensam*.

<sup>43</sup> Scholars are divided on the date of this statute, with 17 B.C. or A.D. 19 being the most popular options; the discussion is outlined in A.M. Duff, *Freedmen in the Early Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1928), 210–14.

ties of patronal power, including the duties of *obsequium* and *officium*.<sup>44</sup> In principle, there was no difference in this respect between a Junian Latin and a freedman who held Roman citizenship.<sup>45</sup> But upon the death of a Junian Latin, their assets returned to the former master as if they were the *peculium* of a slave. Unlike freedmen who held Roman citizenship, Junian Latins were unable to make wills, which meant that the fruits of their life's labour were reaped by the patron, not by kin or friend; only the acquisition of Roman citizenship would protect the informally (or imperfectly) freed slave from this. *Mutatis mutandis*, Junian Latins lacked the capacity to inherit. That is to say, a Junian Latin lacked a specific power over property enjoyed by a freedman endowed with Roman citizenship: the power of succession.<sup>46</sup>

During the Republic, informally freed slaves maintained the legal status of *seruus*—for they '[...] were slaves under the older concept of *ius Quiritium* and free men under the praetorian edict [...]'.<sup>47</sup> The *lex Iunia* changed this. But the *libertas* that the law awarded those freed under its provision was intellectually construed from the freedom enjoyed by coloniary Latins, whilst it was granted by force of the new statute—for coloniary Latins they were not: a legal dodge in other words. The disabilities concerning succession reflect nicely the legal half-way house that the *lex Iunia* created for those manumitted under its provision. And Gaius consequently called their *libertas* a fiction—*ea fictio*.<sup>48</sup>

In sum, whilst the legal status of an informally freed slave under the *lex Iunia* was by all accounts improved compared to the legal status of a slave—granting the Junian Latin, amongst other things, the privilege of *conubium* and of the *ius commercii*—it was

<sup>44</sup> The exception to this rule is constituted by the slave who was freed by his dying master without provision to transfer the right of patronage to another, and the freedman whose patron did not transfer the right of patronage to another upon death. For general discussion of the ties of patronage between freedmen and their former masters in Roman Imperial society, see Duff (n. 43), 36–49; and H. Mouritsen, *The Freedman in the Roman World* (Cambridge, 2012), 36–65. For a brief discussion of patronal powers and libertine dependence as regards Trimalchio's freedmen, see H. Mouritsen, 'Roman freedmen and the urban economy: Pompeii in the first century A.D.', in F. Senatore (ed.), *Pompeii tra Sorrento e Sarno* (Rome, 2001), 1–28, at 7; and J.H. D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, MA, and London, 1981), 104. And for discussion of the role of patronage in Roman society at large, see A. Wallace-Hadrill, 'Patronage in Roman society: from Republic to Empire', in id. (ed.), *Patronage in Ancient Society* (London and New York, 1989), 63–87.

<sup>45</sup> In the case of Trimalchio and his Junian Latins there existed however a basic distinction because, by the time of the *Cena*, Trimalchio had become independent of patronal power. This freedom from patronal powers entailed also the freedom from potential punishment that may be applied to the ex-slave subject to such powers should he or she not comply with the patron's (reasonable) demands. For discussion of Trimalchio's 'independent' status, see P. Veyne: 'Vie de Trimalcion', in P. Veyne, *La société romaine* (Paris, 1991), 13–56 (originally published as 'La vie de Trimalcion', *Annales ESC* 16 [1961], 213–47); but note that Veyne just assumes that Trimalchio gained his patronal independence early on in life.

<sup>46</sup> The central text is Gai. *Inst.* 3.56. For a detailed display of the patronal claim under different statutes dependent on the different statuses involved, see A.J.B. Sirks, 'Informal manumission and the Lex Junia', *RIDA* 28 (1981), 247–76, esp. Table I: 'Outline of the succession to the *bona libertorum et libertarum* by patrons and their successors, based on Gai. 3.39/53', and 'The *lex Junia* and the effects of informal manumission and iteration', *RIDA* 30 (1983), 211–92.

<sup>47</sup> A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship* (Oxford, 1973<sup>2</sup>), 329. Such informally freed slaves had no legal protection of their actual enjoyment of liberty during the Republic: Buckland (n. 14), 444–5. But note that Sherwin-White (this note), 329 contends that '(a)t the time of its creation Junian Latinity must have been a clear gain to its holders'.

<sup>48</sup> Gai. *Inst.* 3.56: *ut ea fictione res Latinorum defunctorum ad patronos pertinere desinerent*, 'the result of this fiction would be that the property of deceased Latins would cease to go to their patrons'. (The translation is adapted from the Gordon/Robinson edition.)

structurally different in a number of crucial aspects from the legal status of a formally freed slave who received Roman citizenship upon manumission. For all practical purposes, a Junian Latin was a freedman (or freedwoman) of second grade; not only were they juridically bound by patronal ties, but the lack of Roman citizenship meant that they had no final control over their assets either: they were deprived of the benefits of family.

In the language of the scholar of slavery, Junian Latins remained natively alienated; the law actively embraced their (continued) social death beyond manumission.<sup>49</sup> In a sense, Junian Latinity was a legal ring composition: from slavery to freedom and back again. Just like the birds who were caught within seconds after they escaped the boar's gut in the scene preceding the manumission of Dionysus (*Sat.* 40.5–6),<sup>50</sup> the slave freed informally was only allowed to taste freedom, not more: *aquam liberam gustabunt* (*Sat.* 71.1). *Libertas* made in (Trimalchio's) heaven was a fiction.

#### IV. CONTEXTUALIZING LATINITY

The argument presented so far has shown the Trimalchian take on freedom to be substantially more complex than often acknowledged. But the significance of the award of Latinity in the *Cena* in place of freedom with citizenship can only be fully appreciated if evidence for real Junian Latins is taken into account—which in turn opens up, finally, a fresh look at the date of the *Satyricon*. Any attempt at contextualising the freedom created by Trimalchio meets however with one significant problem, i.e. the difficulty in identifying Junian Latins in the sources.<sup>51</sup> This also means that it is extraordinarily difficult to assess how challenging it was for these *liberti* to escape the vicious circle called Latinity after manumission. But there are some Junian Latins that we can identify.

Ladies first: Helena, Paramone and Techosis—three women from Roman Egypt who are known from the surviving documentary records produced for their emancipations; all three were manumitted *inter amicos* after the stipulation and subsequent payment of a price.<sup>52</sup> But we never hear of them again. Next, there is L. Venidius Ennychus from Herculaneum—a Junian Latin who in A.D. 62 gained *ciuitas* together with wife

<sup>49</sup> The concept of the slave's social death is analysed in O. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death. A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA, 1982), including its application to freed slaves.

<sup>50</sup> For further different meanings of the birds' flight from the boar's gut, see F.I. Zeitlin, 'Romanus Petronius: a study of the *Troiae halosis* and the *Bellum civile*', *Latomus* 30 (1971), 56–82, at 63 n. 1.

<sup>51</sup> See P.C.R. Weaver, 'Where have all the Junian Latins gone? Nomenclature and status in the early Empire', *Chiron* 20 (1990), 275–305; and 'Children of Junian Latins', in B. Rawson and P. Weaver (edd.), *The Roman Family in Italy* (Oxford, 1997), 55–72. I entertain the idea that much of the evidence for freedmen (and freedwomen) documents Junian Latins (rather than ex-slaves endowed with Roman citizenship) in 'Peculium, freedom, citizenship: golden triangle or vicious circle? An act in two parts', in U. Roth (ed.), *By the Sweat of Your Brow. Roman Slavery in its Socio-Economic Setting* (London, 2010), 91–120, at 119. The idea that all Latins under the Empire were really Junian Latins is briefly explored in F. Millar, *The Emperor in the Roman World* (31 B.C.–A.D. 337) (London, 1977), 630–5; it is elaborated for the *lex Iritana* in J.F. Gardner, 'Making citizens: the operation of the *lex Iritana*', in L. de Blois (ed.), *Administration, Prosopography and Appointment Policies in the Roman Empire* (Amsterdam, 2001), 215–29.

<sup>52</sup> MChrest. 362 (Helena); *P.Oxy.* 1205 (Paramone); *P.Lips.* 151 (Techosis). All three are discussed in R. Scholl, "'Freilassung unter Freunden" im römischen Ägypten', in H. Bellen and H. Heinen (edd.), *Fünfzig Jahre Forschungen zur Antiken Sklaverei an der Mainzer Akademie 1950–2000* (Stuttgart, 2001), 159–69.

and daughter through *anniculi probatio*, i.e. the presentation of a child of one year of age, recorded in the *Tabulae Herculanenses*.<sup>53</sup> Besides *anniculi probatio*, the Romans thought up a number of challenges, the meeting of which would allow a Junian Latin to gain *ciuitas*, thereby recognizing the severe legal and social disabilities that this category of freedmen experienced. These challenges included, with further conditions and qualifications attached to them, the building of a house at Rome, contributing to the provision of grain at Rome, and service with the *uigiles* in the capital. Alternatively, Roman *ciuitas* could be awarded through a special grant from the emperor. Another remedy consisted in a *second* manumission carried out by the patron<sup>54</sup>—so-called *iteratio*—in one of the formally recognized ways.<sup>55</sup> Unsurprisingly perhaps, the evidence for the acquisition of citizenship through the challenges that focus on Rome is slim. There exist however some good examples for the acquisition of citizenship by Imperial grant as well as through *iteratio* in the correspondence of the Younger Pliny that help to locate Junian Latinity more clearly in the complex web of Roman *libertas* and *seruitus*.<sup>56</sup> Moreover, Pliny's interest in the theme that characterizes the manumissions in the *Cena* functions as a key to his vision of imperial government—which, as will be seen, is critical for a proper understanding of the programme behind the *Cena*'s enactments of freedom.

We begin in A.D. 107. In the spring of that year, Pliny wrote to his grandfather-in-law, Fabatus, concerning the possibility of arranging for some of Fabatus' informally freed slaves to be given Roman citizenship through *iteratio*, in the form of a (second) manumission *uindicta*. In the letter, Pliny informs Fabatus that Calestrius Tiro was setting out as proconsul to Baetica via Ticinum (Pavia); and that Pliny could arrange for Calestrius Tiro to make a detour to pass through Como—which would allow Fabatus to set free formally the slaves whom he previously set free informally through the same procedure that Trimalchio employed when setting free the boar, the god of wine, and the one who fell from the stars—i.e. *inter amicos*:<sup>57</sup>

hic nunc pro consule prouinciam Baeticam per Ticinum est petiturus. spero, immo confido facile me impetraturum, ex itinere deflectat ad te, si uoles uindicta liberare, quos proxime inter amicos manumisisti.

He is now setting out for Baetica as governor of the province, and will pass through Ticinum. I hope, in fact I am sure, that I can easily persuade him to leave his direct route to pay you a visit, if you really intend to liberate by vindication the slaves you recently manumitted amongst your friends.

Pliny concluded the letter by emphasizing his good relations with Calestrius Tiro and by urging Fabatus to accept his offer—which indeed he did, as a later letter commenting on

<sup>53</sup> G. Camodeca, 'Cittadinanza romana. Latini Iuniani e lex Aelia Sentia. Alcuni nuovi dati dalla riedizione delle *Tabulae Herculanenses*', in L. Labruna (ed.), *Tradizione romanistica e costituzione I* (Naples, 2006), 887–904, esp. 902–4; and 'Per una riedizione dell'archivio ercolanese di L. Venidius Ennychus', *Cronache Ercolanesi* 32 (2002), 257–80, esp. 260–6.

<sup>54</sup> I assume, for ease of argument, that the patron was the former quiritary owner of the slave.

<sup>55</sup> For discussion of the different ways open to Junian Latins to acquire Roman citizenship, see Sirks (n. 46 [1981] and [1983]). And for a brief summary of modern views on the acquisition of Roman *ciuitas* by Junian Latins, see López Barja de Quiroga (n. 33 [1998]), 155–9.

<sup>56</sup> The structural consequences of the acquisition of citizenship through *iteratio* are discussed in Roth (n. 51), esp. 106–16.

<sup>57</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 7.16.3–4.

Calestrius Tiro's visit to Como makes clear.<sup>58</sup> Undeniably, the acquisition of citizenship by Fabatus' Junian Latins would have been a substantially more difficult enterprise had it not been for Pliny's socio-political clout.

There is little reason to think, however, that special awards of citizenship from the emperor were easier to get hold of; or that the patron was less instrumental in the request to the emperor.<sup>59</sup> A good example of the patron's role in the request for citizenship for Junian Latins from the emperor is available once more through Pliny's correspondence, in this case concerning a group of Junian Latins over whom Pliny inherited the rights of patronage from his friend Valerius Paulinus, and for whom Pliny sought Roman citizenship from Trajan, in his third year as governor in Pontus-Bithynia.<sup>60</sup>

Valerius, domine, Paulinus excepto Paulino ius Latinorum suorum mihi reliquit; ex quibus rogo tribus interim ius Quiritium des. uereor enim, ne sit immodicum, pro omnibus pariter inuocare indulgentiam tuam, qua debeo tanto modestius uti, quanto pleniorum experior.

Valerius Paulinus, Sir, having passed over his son Paulinus (in his will), has bequeathed to me the (patronal) right over his (Junian) Latins. On this occasion I pray you to grant Roman citizenship to three of them only; it would be unreasonable, I fear, to petition you to favour all alike, and I must be all the more careful not to abuse your generosity when I have enjoyed it on so many previous occasions.

Pliny's proximity to the emperor clearly facilitated these Junian Latins' acquisition of Roman *ciuitas*: Trajan graciously grants the *magnum beneficium* to all three upon Pliny's request.<sup>61</sup>

But the seeming ease with which Pliny arranged for the grants of citizenship is unlikely to have been a typical experience for all patrons and, hence, for their informally freed slaves. Brief consideration of the channels open to promotion to Roman citizenship status demonstrates the problems inherent in the process. First, there was the heavy concentration on the capital city that would have disadvantaged Junian Latins elsewhere in Italy or the Empire. Second, there was the male-gender bias in most promotion modes that disadvantaged female Junian Latins—women like Helena, Paramone and Techosis. And the same structural problem applied also to child and adolescent Junian Latins: L. Venidius Ennychus, whom we met earlier on, took after all over twenty years to shed Latinity through *anniculi probatio*—perhaps implying his informal (or imperfect) manumission in childhood. But Ennychus' efforts might also have been thwarted by high infant mortality rates, which made the raising of children to the age of one difficult at best. And, Pliny apart, there was the difficulty in gaining access to the legal authorities, especially if one's location was removed from the seats of government: not many slave-owners in the Roman Empire enjoyed a direct line to the emperor, or could easily persuade a Roman magistrate that a deviation of some one hundred miles (one way) to assist in the granting of *ciuitas* would *merite le détour*.<sup>62</sup> A.N. Sherwin-White therefore concluded that 'outside Rome Junian Latins must have

<sup>58</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 7.32; see also *Ep.* 7.29.

<sup>59</sup> Such awards can be made without the patron's assistance, knowledge or approval; but Trajan rules that, if a patron was ignorant or opposed to such a grant of citizenship, the freedman would die a Junian Latin: Gai. *Inst.* 3.72 (see also *Inst.* 3.73–6).

<sup>60</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.104.

<sup>61</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.105. Note also that Pliny consistently emphasized the patronal approval (or its irrelevance) whenever requesting an Imperial grant of citizenship from Trajan: *Ep.* 10.5.2; 10.11.2; 10.104.

<sup>62</sup> See the contributions listed in notes 33, 46 and 51 above.

constituted a numerous group of under-privileged half-citizens'.<sup>63</sup> P.R.C. Weaver was more graphic in his assessment of the place of Junian Latinity in Roman society: 'a large undetected black hole at the heart of the "slave" society that is Rome'.<sup>64</sup> Tacitus went one step further still when he reported the view that Junian Latins were in essence still in their slave shackles, i.e. subject to the continued bonds of slavery: *uelut uinclo seruitutis attineri*.<sup>65</sup>

Pliny's successful intercession with Trajan on behalf of the three Junian Latins over whom he inherited the rights of patronage provides both a historical example and a literary model for the award of *ciuitas* to informally freed slaves of the type parodied in the third manumission scene in the *Cena*—i.e. by Imperial grant. But Pliny's correspondence with Trajan concerning these Junian Latins is quite seriously different in a number of crucial ways from the picture sketched in the *Cena*. In his letter, Pliny sets himself up as a facilitator for the acquisition of the freedom that comes with citizenship. And his action is actively embedded in the Imperial structures within which he works and to which he contributes, under Trajan. The exchange lacks any sense of ambiguity. Pliny appears as measured, controlled, sober and humane in his dealings with these Junian Latins. And so does Trajan. Just as in other parts of his correspondence, Pliny creates and celebrates a particular image of emperor and senator that is framed by specific 'imperial virtues':<sup>66</sup> here, Trajan is associated with *indulgentia*, fitting with Pliny's sketch of the man from Italica in Spain as a 'good emperor', whilst Pliny himself shies away from anything *immodicum*, choosing instead to adhere to his *moderatio*. In general, in Book 10, Pliny works hard to elaborate his own role vis-à-vis the emperor, framed by a sustained effort 'to preserve his self-image by reinforcing the distinction between the good senator and the bad senator'.<sup>67</sup> And the choice to include these letters in his published correspondence works to create an image of manumission in general, and Junian Latinity in particular, that is safely and appropriately wedged between the emperor and his official: the Plinian letters concerned with the fate of Junian Latins offer, like the rest of Book 10, what G. Woolf terms 'an upbeat view of the Roman world'.<sup>68</sup>

Freedmen, including Junian Latins, constitute a recurrent feature in Pliny's exchange with Trajan. Twelve of these are named in Book 10 (and another six in the earlier books), spread across thirteen of the 124 letters that make Book 10 (and six in the earlier books).<sup>69</sup> Of these named freedmen, the single largest group is that made up of Junian Latins—seven in total.<sup>70</sup> In contrast, only three slaves are named in the whole of the

<sup>63</sup> Sherwin-White (n. 47), 329–30.

<sup>64</sup> P.R.C. Weaver, 'Reconstructing lower-class Roman families', in S. Dixon (ed.), *Childhood, Class and Kin in the Roman World* (London and New York, 2001), 101–14, at 103.

<sup>65</sup> Tac. *Ann.* 13.27.

<sup>66</sup> I borrow the term from S.E. Hoffer, *The Anxieties of Pliny the Younger* (Atlanta, 1999), 7 (and *passim*).

<sup>67</sup> Hoffer (n. 66), 7. The artful composition of Book 10, and of 'good senator' and 'best of emperors', is increasingly recognized by modern scholarship: G. Woolf, 'Pliny's province', in T. Bekker-Nielsen (ed.), *Rome and the Black Sea Region: Domination, Romanisation, Resistance* (Aarhus, 2006), 93–108.

<sup>68</sup> G. Woolf, 'Pliny/Trajan and the poetics of empire', *CPh* 110 (2015), 132–51, at 149.

<sup>69</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.2; 10.5; 10.6; 10.7; 10.10; 10.11; 10.27; 10.28; 10.63; 10.67; 10.84; 10.85; and *Ep.* 5.19; 6.31; 7.4; 7.11; 7.29; 8.6. I do not wish to engage, here, with the question of the completeness of Book 10. A full overview of the names that appear in Pliny's correspondence is available in A.R. Birley, *Onomasticon to the Younger Pliny. Letters and Panegyric* (Leipzig, 2000).

<sup>70</sup> The seven Junian Latins appear in Plin. *Ep.* 10.2; *Ep.* 10.5 (two); *Ep.* 10.11; and *Ep.* 10.104 (three).



Plinian correspondence.<sup>71</sup> A. Gonzalès concluded therefore that ‘l’impression qui se dégage est celle d’une grande présence du monde des affranchis dans l’entourage immédiat ou élargi de Pline’.<sup>72</sup> Whatever the realistic backdrop, it is plain that Pliny allocates to freedmen a vital role in his correspondence with Trajan—and assigns to himself, as briefly stated above, the seminal role in their acquisition of Roman citizenship. Indeed, Pliny carefully crafts his role to culminate in the final stage of their journey to *ciuitas*: Gonzalès consequently contends that Pliny ‘arrive, en quelque sorte, à l’étape ultime de cette promotion, celle de l’accès à la citoyenneté romaine’—and that this Plinian perspective characterizes Pliny as the key to the creation of *ciuitas*: ‘De ce point de vue, son rôle est essentiel.’<sup>73</sup> Put differently, C. Plinius L.f. Ouf(entina) Caecilius Secundus, the senator on Imperial duty, is the agent through which the *libertas* of the Roman citizen is created, thereby uplifting the affected individuals from the fiction of freedom that is Junian Latinity. Trimalchio, in gross contrast, helps to create this fiction, be it by accident or through a seeming loss of control, drunk and uninhibited.

Slavery (and, in consequence, *libertas*) is of course more generally critical to Pliny’s sketch of empire. One example may suffice here. Earlier on in his published correspondence, Pliny employed the specific topic of slave and estate-owner as a means to construct Imperial praise: both in his letter to his mother-in-law about a possible future ‘estate swap’, as in his letter to Plinius Paternus about a group of slaves that had been bought for him, Pliny aims to create what S.E. Hoffer has called an ‘ideal world of the harmonious strife of cooperation between ranks, between slave and free, and between republican Senate and imperial Princes’.<sup>74</sup> The Plinian discourse on slavery serves to sketch a model for the ideal empire under Imperial government. Indeed, slavery is a central, even uniting theme in Pliny’s correspondence.<sup>75</sup> And Pliny’s Junian Latins are crucial in this sketch of the benefits of (good) government. Pliny’s handling of Junian Latinity not only ends, as we saw, with the acquisition of Roman *ciuitas*, but is moreover characterized by a number of positive attributes exemplified by senator and emperor, as well as an image of Roman imperial government that is well-ordered, reliable and secure.<sup>76</sup> Plinian *buon governo* clashes outright with the sketch of Junian Latinity in the *Cena* that is characterized by chaos, surprise and uncertainty.

<sup>71</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 4.10 (Modestus); *Ep.* 8.1 (Encolpius); and *Ep.* 10.74 (Callidromus).

<sup>72</sup> A. Gonzalès, *Pline le Jeune. Esclaves et affranchis à Rome* (Paris, 2002), 123, and generally 123–38 for a full discussion of the freedmen in Pliny’s letters; see also Weaver (n. 51 [1990]), 279–81.

<sup>73</sup> Gonzalès (n. 72), 123.

<sup>74</sup> Hoffer (n. 66), 54 (and generally 45–54).

<sup>75</sup> The case is made persuasively for Book 8 by C.L. Whitton: ‘Pliny, *Epistles* 8.14: senate, slavery and the *Agricola*’, *JRS* 100 (2010), 118–39. I see no fundamental contrast between Whitton’s stress on slavery as the uniting theme and the argument for Pliny’s self-fashioning as a symbolic father and role model to the young elaborated in R.K. Gibson and R. Morello, *Reading the Letters of Pliny the Younger: An Introduction* (Cambridge, 2012), 126–35: both themes thrive on a paternalistic conception of hierarchy. (The analogy between sons and slaves is fully developed in Roman law.) The centrality of the concept of *humanitas* in the Plinian discourse on slavery, elaborated in E. Lefèvre, *Vom Römertum zum Ästhetizismus* (Berlin, 2009), 181–94, is compatible with the focus on slavery. Key examples from Pliny’s so-called private correspondence that discuss slavery, slaves or ex-slaves are *Ep.* 1.4, 1.21, 3.14, 4.10, 5.19, 6.28, 7.16, 7.23, 7.29, 7.32, 8.1, 8.6, 8.14, 8.16, 8.19, 9.21 and 9.24. The case for the centrality of the concepts (and realities) of freedom and slavery can also be made for Pliny’s *Panegyricus*: M.P.O. Morford, ‘*Iubes esse liberis*: Pliny’s *Panegyricus* and liberty’, *AJPh* 113 (1992), 575–93.

<sup>76</sup> That Book 10 was intended to make its contribution to a ‘planned and balanced collection’ is increasingly accepted: Gibson and Morello (n. 75), 263 (and generally 251–64); see also the studies listed in note 86 below.

The matter that shaped both Pliny's exchange with Trajan and the *Cena*'s manumission scenes is a preoccupation with the quality of the freedom awarded to informally freed slaves and, hence, the nature of Roman *libertas* more generally. Roman discourse on slavery and freedom was obviously not restricted to Pliny's letters and the *Cena*, and both texts would have had multiple intertextual and conceptual sparring partners.<sup>77</sup> But their focus on Junian Latinity is so strong as to suggest a particular relationship between the Plinian correspondence and the *Cena* that would merit further detailed scrutiny to throw properly into relief the proposed interplay. That the interplay is significant can be documented swiftly through a line that concludes one of the letters discussed above—with perhaps surprising consequences. For the three Junian Latins over whom Pliny acquired the right of patronage and for whom he solicits Roman *ciuitas* by special decree of the emperor are C. Valerius Aper, C. Valerius Dionysius and C. Valerius Astraeus—the boar, the god of wine and the one from the stars:<sup>78</sup>

sunt autem pro quibus peto: C. Valerius Astraeus, C. Valerius Dionysius, C. Valerius Aper.

The ones for which I ask are Gaius Valerius Astraeus, Gaius Valerius Dionysius and Gaius Valerius Aper.

The onomastic interplay is striking; but it is also unsettling as regards the traditional dating of the *Satyricon*. For if modern scholarship were not obsessed with a Neronian date for the *Satyricon*, would one not read Trimalchio's 'emancipatory' actions as a deliberate perversion of Pliny's neat model of the relationship between slavery, freedom, citizenship, the emperor and his official? However important or unimportant we consider the Plinian correspondence in the intellectual universe of his days—which has implications for our view of the letters' attractiveness for (later) allusion—it would be difficult to argue that Pliny, measured, controlled, sober and humane as he depicts himself in his letters to Trajan about the three informally freed slaves, made fun of an earlier text by showcasing three Junian Latins in his correspondence with the emperor, at the beginning of the second century A.D., slaves whose *cognomina* moreover overlapped incidentally with the names of the three Junian Latins created in the *Cena*. It would be equally difficult

<sup>77</sup> For general discussion of many relevant texts (in a political context), see C. Wirszubski, *Libertas as a Political Idea at Rome during the Late Republic and Early Principate* (Cambridge, 1950); and V. Arena, *Libertas and the Practice of Politics in the Late Roman Republic* (Cambridge, 2012).

<sup>78</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 10.104. The direct use of a Greek god's name for a slave was largely avoided in both Greece and Rome; instead, onomastic variations were used, such as theophoric names and adjectival renderings (as in the case of 'Διονύσιος'/'Dionysios'): C. Fragiadakis, *Die attischen Sklavennamen von der spätarchaischen Epoche bis in die römische Kaiserzeit. Eine historische und soziologische Untersuchung* (Athens, 1988), 26–32. As Fragiadakis, 27–8 contends: '(a)uch den Namensträger der adjektivischen Form dieser Namen auf -ιος muß man als der betreffenden Gottheit zugehörig ansehen'. Apart from the second named Junian Latin in Pliny's letter, 'Dionysius' is well documented as a slave name at Rome: H. Solin, *Die stadtrömischen Sklavennamen. Ein Namenbuch*, 3 vols. (Stuttgart, 1996), 3.276–9. Note also that Lucian refers to 'Διονύσιος' when speaking about the imitation of the god's names: *Pro imaginibus* 27. On the structure and evolution of personal names in Greek, and on the formation and function, as well as distribution of divine names in a Greek religious context, see the contributions by A. Morpurgo Davies and R. Parker in S. Hornblower and E. Matthews (edd.), *Greek Personal Names. Their Value as Evidence* (Oxford, 2000), 15–39 and 53–79. Note also that Trimalchio does not spell out the slave's name in the nominative, but only in the vocative, thus further (con)fusing the two names (*Sat.* 41.7). The 1502 edition by Avantius (A) gives 'Axe' in place of 'Aper', but the reading of 'Aper' as the cognomen of the third named freedmen is given in the Aldine edition of 1508 (a). Merrill suggests 'Asper?'. Neither 'Axe' nor 'Asper' is otherwise documented in the corpus of slave names from Rome; in contrast, Solin lists six individuals who carried the name Aper in Rome alone: see Solin (this note), 1.156.

to propose that C. Valerius Paulinus thought it funny to name three of his slaves after the three manumission scenes in the *Cena*, and that these three men somehow moved on as a bundle into Pliny's patronage. These would be forced arguments.<sup>79</sup> Coincidence is not a persuasive alternative either. It is much more natural to think that the author of the *Satyricon* deliberately played on the model of Imperial self-representation offered in Pliny's letters in order to pursue to theatrical perfection the goal of staging the fiction that is Roman *libertas*—and to do so exactly at the intersection between the different shades of freedom. The learned dinner-guest would have sat in anticipation to catch the falling star after the manumissions of the *aper* and Dionysus made clear what—or rather who—was to be expected next.<sup>80</sup>

## V. CONCLUSIONS

The crafty staging of the three manumissions in the *Cena Trimalchionis* constitutes one of the finest onomastic plays in Latin literature. But, playing with names is not an activity that is unique to the *Cena*. Varro most famously named the four interlocutors who assembled at the start of the third book of his *De re rustica* after birds: Cornelius Merula, Fircellius Pavo, Minucius Pica and Marcus Petronius Passer.<sup>81</sup> Pliny, too, followed this 'onomastic' tradition. As I. Marchesi has shown, the names of the two men to whom Pliny's first and last letters are addressed in Books 1 and 9 respectively—Septicius Clarus and Pedanius Fuscus—are meaningful; the names provide the formal model for the play on light and darkness that is offered in the Plinian description of his day from dawn to dusk: '(i)t is a particularly refined onomastic game, one deeply indebted to poetic techniques of allusion'.<sup>82</sup> Horace, of course, had been there before.<sup>83</sup> But the novelty in the Plinian version consists in underscoring Pliny's vision of the well-ordered and focussed unit, where everything has its due place and meaning, and where night and day, private and public, *otium* and *negotium* complement one another in perfect style.<sup>84</sup> And what better place to take the mickey out of Pliny's harmonizing Imperial gaze than through an onomastic game that exposes as playfully as brutally the Plinian artifice of the very best of empires and the fairest of governments in Book 10, and to do so right at the point where it hurt most—i.e. the senatorial construction (literally in the case of the three Junian Latins!) of the *libertas* of the Roman citizen?

<sup>79</sup> cf. H. Solin, 'Petron und die römische Namengebung', in J. Herman and H. Rosen (edd.), *Petroniana. Gedenkschrift für Hubert Petersmann* (Heidelberg, 2003), 193–9, who suggests that Petronius invented the name 'Encolpius' (as well as 'Ascyllus'), and that Pliny may have deliberately named his lector Encolpius after the Encolpius of the *Cena*.

<sup>80</sup> The learned Roman reader's capacity to *expect* (an) Astraeus to appear somehow, sometime and somewhere in the course of the dinner proceedings challenges the notion of a 'first reading' as applied by Slater (n. 4) to the *Satyricon*, i.e. that on a first reading the reader cannot foresee (any) ensuing scenes.

<sup>81</sup> Varro, *Rust.* 3.2.2 (and *passim*).

<sup>82</sup> I. Marchesi, *The Art of Pliny's Letters. A Poetics of Allusion in the Private Correspondence* (Cambridge, 2008), 249; *Plin. Ep.* 1.1 and 9.40.

<sup>83</sup> *Hor. Ep.* 1.4 and 1.10.

<sup>84</sup> The literary qualities and artful creations of Pliny's first nine books, and in particular their relationship to the Tacitean *œuvre*, are elaborated in Marchesi (n. 82); see also C. Whitton, "'Let us tread our path together': Tacitus and the Younger Pliny", in V.E. Pagan (ed.), *A Companion to Tacitus* (Chichester, 2012), 345–68.

If this argument is accepted, there are enormous repercussions for our view of the date of the *Satyricon*. Should Aper, Dionysius and Astraeus have been known figures outwith Pliny's correspondence, the new *terminus post quem* for the date of the *Satyricon* might reasonably be set around A.D. 100. More likely, perhaps, and better-fitting with the literary contexts that we are dealing with in the first instance, is the public dissemination of the three men's fates through Pliny's letters. Thus, depending on the view one takes of Pliny's career and the publication dates of his correspondence, the new *terminus post quem* for the date of the *Satyricon* must be A.D. 111, on a 'low count', i.e. the earliest suggested date for the publication of the letter in question.<sup>85</sup> More realistic still, and taking full note of issues of time over the required editorial work and the letters' circulation, as well as of the speed with which the relevant parts of the *Cena* could have been written thereafter, it may be safer to put the new *terminus post quem* a couple of years thereafter, say A.D. 115.<sup>86</sup>

Whether the date of composition of the *Cena* fell into the reign of Trajan, or later, is a question that lies outwith the scope of the present inquiry. Similarly, it is not my aim here to explore the type of intertextual readings that led W.-j. Yeh to argue for Flavian influence on the *Satyricon*, and R. Martin for the identification of Pliny's *lector* Encolpius as the text's author, or even for authorship shared by an 'atelier des écrivains', possibly including the Younger Pliny himself, and even Tacitus.<sup>87</sup> But the first half of the second century A.D. makes for a refreshing new starting point to study the *Satyricon* in the context of other texts of that period that explore, classify and define the idea of *libertas*. The obvious sparring partner (amongst the historians) is indeed Tacitus (whose comment on Junian Latins may by now have acquired an interesting new flavour). Logically, a full comparison with Pliny's letters is equally called for: to read, for instance, the *Cena* as a text written after the Plinian rebuke of Septicius Clarus and

<sup>85</sup> The dates for Pliny's governorship in Pontus-Bithynia are disputed and range from A.D. 109 to A.D. 111 as the start date for his governorship, and from A.D. 111 to A.D. 113 as the end date. The main discussion is still A.N. Sherwin-White, *The Letters of Pliny. A Historical and Social Commentary* (Oxford, 1966), 80–2; for a succinct summary, see Birley (n. 69), 16–17. Pliny is assumed to have approached Trajan on behalf of the three Junian Latins in his final year in the province, i.e. at the latest in A.D. 111. On the dating of Book 10 and *Ep.* 10.104, see Sherwin-White (this note), 529–33 and 714–15. The focus on publication is not aimed at denying the possibility of prior oral or manuscript circulation for the Plinian correspondence with Trajan. The difficulties involved in assessing the publication dates of Pliny's correspondence are now analysed in great detail for Books 1–9 by J. Bodel: 'The publication of Pliny's Letters', in I. Marchesi (ed.), *Pliny the Book-Maker. Betting on Posterity in the Epistles* (Oxford, 2015), 13–109.

<sup>86</sup> On Pliny as editor of the collection, and the required time investment, see P.A. Stadter, 'Pliny and the ideology of Empire: the correspondence with Trajan', *Prometheus* 32 (2006), 61–76, at 64–70. On the question of the date of 'publication' of Book 10, see C.F. Noreña, 'The social economy of Pliny's correspondence with Trajan', *AJPh* 128 (2007), 239–77, at 261–71. There are then also implications for our understanding of Pliny's readership, traditionally identified especially among late-antique writers. The new orthodoxy, supported implicitly by the argument presented here, suggests however that 'rather than experiencing a dramatic moment of "rediscovery" in central Gaul in the second half of the fifth century, Pliny's *Letters* were available to readers of different interests across a considerable geographical range and chronological sweep': B. Gibson and R. Rees, 'Introduction', in id. (edd.), *Pliny the Younger in Late Antiquity* (*Arethusa* 46.2) (Baltimore, 2013), 141–65, at 146. Seminal for the shift is A. Cameron, 'The fate of Pliny's letters in the late Empire', *CQ* 15 (1965), 289–98, and 'Pliny's *Letters* in the later Empire: an addendum', *CQ* 17 (1967), 421–2.

<sup>87</sup> W.-j. Yeh, *Structures métriques des poésies de Pétrone* (Leuven, 2007); R. Martin, 'Qui a (peut-être) écrit le *Satyricon*?', *REL* 78 (2000), 139–63, and 'Le *Satyricon* est-il un livre à plusieurs mains?', *REL* 88 (2010), 206–17. See also P. Flobert, *Grammaire comparée et variétés du latin* (Geneva, 2014), 234–48. My own use of the word 'author' does not exclude collective authorship.

the accompanying diverse dinner descriptions will not just be fun, but will lead to numerous new insights.<sup>88</sup> But there is also substantial scope for comparative analyses of much earlier Latin literature with a Republican stance, including the historians, as well as the products of uniquely special episodes in Rome's transition from Republic to Empire: the overlap between the Augustan claim in the *Res Gestae* to have liberated the Republic—in *libertatem vindicauit*—with Encolpius' description of the boar's release cannot be coincidence.<sup>89</sup> And then there is the wealth of Imperial literature, which has been central in earlier critiques of a Neronian dating, as recently again for J. Henderson who, following Martin, has rightly stressed the *Cena*'s potential borrowing from Martial.<sup>90</sup> the 'Dinner with Zoilus' is an obvious starting point to explore the *Cena*'s intertextual allusions to Martial; likewise, the *amanuensis* Demetrius' acquaintance with the waters of the underworld upon his manumission deserves greater comparative study with Trimalchio's aforementioned *aquam liberam*, and its implications for the portrayal of *libertas* well over a century after the advent of Imperial government at Rome.<sup>91</sup>

There is, then, much work ahead if we are to contextualize the *Satyricon* in general, and the *Cena* in particular, in the sea of Latin and Greek literature of the second century of Imperial rule—and best *without* a chronological ceiling *anywhere* in the so-called High Empire. But before the rush starts to identify Trimalchio's (not so) pretty boy with Antinous, or our *puer speciosus* with Juvenal's *puer delicatus* Bromium,<sup>92</sup> it should be stressed that the purpose of new analyses cannot consist in exchanging Nero with (for example) Hadrian (and so forth), but that they must aim at the creation of a richer literary history, including what Laird called 'a fuller picture of the Latin accommodation of Greek material'—and to rethink some important aspects of Roman cultural, social and political identities of these and earlier periods. And, ultimately, this effort must entail putting greater trust in our knowledge of the literature and history of the period than in some spurious identification of author and of date. And if we do, we will no doubt come to appreciate the *Cena*'s exploration of the themes of slavery and freedom ever less as the tired mockery of a 'freedmen's milieu' that we currently favour, but, more likely, in much the same way in which we appreciate the use of these themes in many other authors, i.e. as what C.L. Whitton called 'a productive source of literary inspiration' and as a 'powerful metaphor in social and political discourse'.<sup>93</sup> It is not less likely that we will come to appreciate the *Cena* itself as a 'senatorial' (or, 'Imperial') project,<sup>94</sup> just like Pliny's letters—albeit deconstructive in mode,<sup>95</sup> i.e. not directed at

<sup>88</sup> Plin. *Ep.* 1.15.

<sup>89</sup> *RG* 1.1. The Augustan rhetoric is contextualised by M.B. Roller in his study of the use of slavery and freedom in Imperial literature: *Constructing Autocracy. Aristocrats and Emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome* (Princeton and Oxford, 2001), 214–33.

<sup>90</sup> Henderson (n. 13), 492–4.

<sup>91</sup> Mart. 3.82 (Zoilus) and 1.101 (Demetrius).

<sup>92</sup> Juv. 6.378 (Bromium).

<sup>93</sup> Whitton (n. 75), 135. I do not mean to suggest with this that Roman aristocratic discourse on slavery and freedom can be understood in isolation from the social reality of the society that produced it.

<sup>94</sup> The *Satyricon* is typically ignored in modern discussions of the Roman elite's written vision of this 'Imperial' project; see, for example, M. Lavan, *Slaves to Rome. Paradigms of Empire in Roman Culture* (Cambridge, 2013), which notably excludes the *Cena* from its analysis.

<sup>95</sup> I develop the argument for a 'senatorial reading' of the *Cena* in a forthcoming monograph: *Changing Trimalchio's Life*. If the *Cena* came to be understood as a critique of the type of intellectual construction of Imperial government and senatorial *libertas* offered in Pliny, as suggested here, our

the establishment and maintenance of the new public transcript under Imperial government,<sup>96</sup> but at the satirical ridicule precisely of such efforts. Regardless, however, of how we come to understand the specific consequences in detail, one thing may be regarded as certain already; and that is that the *arbiter elegantiae* of Nero referred to in Tacitus' *Annals* cannot have been our text's author, nor any other figure from the Neronian period—however 'perverse' this thought may be. Whatever the time left for Trimalchio to live, time is up for what V. Rimell has called '(t)he *Satyricon*'s Neronian over-consumption':<sup>97</sup> the excess has been ours, not that of the text.

In awarding Dionysus and his *conseruus* (as well as the boar) their liberty the way he did, Trimalchio placed the newly made freedmen quite distinctly below himself on the legal and social ladder.<sup>98</sup> And in so doing, he reinforced that ladder, actively maintaining the traditional social hierarchies.<sup>99</sup> Rimell wrote that '*libertas*, as it is enacted and discussed in the *Satyricon*, is plagued by paradox'.<sup>100</sup> And this paradox is brought out to perfection in the manumissions of the 'star performer', the god of wine and the boar, who, contrary to being completely free after their actual or proverbial grab of the freedom cap, will remain, like the 'ambitious contemporary writing' discussed by Rimell, subject to 'the constraints of the past' and 'continued enslavement'.<sup>101</sup> Anyone knowledgeable enough about slave emancipation would have picked up on the differentiation between the freedman Trimalchio, on the one hand, and the slaves (and pig) freed 'on stage', on the other, through the manumission mode employed.<sup>102</sup>

As opposed, then, to staging an act of undue liberality or a growing lack of control, leading to a suspension of the normal protocols of social interaction that is indicative of a Saturnalian world-view and an open society, the *Cena*'s 'personified' metamorphoses mirror to perfection the 'principle of doubleness, contrariety, paradox':<sup>103</sup> Trimalchio loses *and* gains (control) at one and the same time. And the harmonizing drift seen by much modern scholarship in the relations between master and slaves in the *Cena*, along with the elision of all types of freed statuses with each other (as well as with those of the free), begins to crumble too, if the reader brings with him or her not only Bodel's 'accoutrements of literary learning' but also a 'complement of the

view on the realistic backdrop for Pliny's assumed siding with the senatorial opposition to Domitian, as argued for instance in F. Beutel, *Vergangenheit als Politik. Neue Aspekte im Werk des jüngeren Plinius* (Frankfurt, 2000), 116–23 and 220–34, may be in need of revision.

<sup>96</sup> Much literary evidence for Roman slavery is better evidence for the public transcript of the master class, i.e. the masters' embedded justification of their dominant role, than for the realities of slavery as such. A good example (from an earlier period) is Plautine comedy: K. McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters, and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy* (Princeton and Oxford, 2000).

<sup>97</sup> V. Rimell, 'Petronius' lessons in learning – the hard way', in J. König and T. Whitmarsh (edd.), *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire* (Cambridge, 2007), 108–32, at 110.

<sup>98</sup> The relationship between legal and social status was complex, not least with regard to legal privilege: P.D.A. Garnsey, *Social Status and Legal Privilege in the Roman Empire* (Oxford, 1970).

<sup>99</sup> The *conuiuium* is well known as a space for the maintenance of protocols of rank: D. Konstan, *Friendship in the Classical World* (Cambridge, 1997), 137–40; and J.H. D'Arms, 'The Roman *conuiuium* and equality', in O. Murray (ed.), *Symptica. A Symposium on the Symposium* (Oxford, 1990), 308–20.

<sup>100</sup> Rimell (n. 15), 182.

<sup>101</sup> Rimell (n. 15), 182.

<sup>102</sup> The incomplete release from servility was recognized by Ilaria Marchesi, but without further status differentiation and interpretation: 'Traces of a freed language: Horace, Petronius, and the rhetoric of fable', *CIAnt* 24 (2005), 307–30, at 325–6. On the unchanged nature of the boar that wore the freedom cap, see also Bodel (n. 8), 185, and the contributions listed in note 42 above.

<sup>103</sup> Rimell (n. 15), 201, with further discussion of the *Satyricon*'s labyrinthine nature.



contemporary world' that includes the law:<sup>104</sup> the *ius cenae* (*Sat.* 35.7) gives what is dished up for us its most distinctive flavour.<sup>105</sup> Trimalchio did not so much lose his control upon the manumission of Dionysus and the acrobat as the obligation to feed and clothe these slaves, expecting to recover into his patrimony the fruits of these freedmen's labour upon their deaths. It appears, then, that the *princeps libertinorum* remains after all G.B. Conte's 'real victor of the *Cena*'<sup>106</sup> on the occasion of slave emancipation.

None of the above is to deny that Trimalchio, too, was influenced by his servile past—whatever his display of authority and control over those freed 'on stage'. There exist, in other words, attributes that Trimalchio possesses in common with his Junian Latins: some shared elements. But the metamorphoses foregrounded here act as a sharp reminder of the flexibility of thought that is expressed throughout the *Cena*; and for the diversity and variability of freedmen statuses—social and legal—that our author's imagination was able to stage: evidence for the depiction of a 'class', its 'mentality' or 'milieu', these are not. What this tells us about the application of such concepts and terms onto what must be the most opulent dinner party in Latin literature and its highly idiosyncratic characters can be summarized in good Trimalchian fashion then: *si factum non est, nihil est*.

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<sup>104</sup> Bodel (n. 1), 238.

<sup>105</sup> For modern discussion of the pun on the *ius cenae*, see the contributions listed in note 36 above.

<sup>106</sup> 'Il vero trionfatore della *Cena*': G.B. Conte, *L'autore nascosto. Un'interpretazione del Satyricon* (Pisa, 2007<sup>2</sup>), 115 (translated into English by Elaine Fantham as *The Hidden Author. An Interpretation of Petronius' Satyricon* [Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1996]; and 124 for the quotation).